
THE B.C. MOUNTAINEER



1994



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Cover Photos: Front Cover: Skiing above Wedge Pass in Garibaldi park. Photo by R. Stoltmann. 7
 Inside Front Cover: Unclimbed peaks above Ovington Ck. in the Kitchi - Kakwa area. Photo by M. Feller
 Inside Back Cover: Mt. Tinniswood. Photo by R. Stoltmann.
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THE BRITISH COLUMBIA MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

CLUB PHILOSOPHY

The British Columbia Mountaineering Club is an incorporated society founded in 1907. Its pioneer members did much of the early exploration and mapping of the then unexplored mountains near the young city of Vancouver. Most of the mountains near Vancouver were first climbed by B.C.M.C. members. This tradition has continued, so that over the years most of the mountains in the lower mainland of B.C. were first climbed by B.C.M.C. members.

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

In addition to direct involvement in the outdoors through trips and camps, the Club is active in conservation, trail and hut construction, trail maintenance, mountain safety, and education. The club has assisted in publishing several guidebooks including the Alpine Guide to Southwestern B.C., 103 Hikes in Southwestern British Columbia, A Climber's Guide to the Squamish Chief, A Guide to Climbing & Hiking in Southwestern British Columbia and the Stein Valley Wilderness Guidebook. Club members regularly act as volunteer instructors in basic summer and winter mountaineering courses offered by the club to its members.

The club has been very active in conservation land use issues almost from its inception. The existence today of Garibaldi Park is a direct result of the discovery and exploration of the area by the Club. Camps held in the area allowed people to become aware of the immense beauty of the alpine region. After the 1926 camp, members of the club petitioned the provincial government requesting protection of the area as a park, and in 1927, the Garibaldi Park Act was proclaimed.

More recently, in the 1970's it was a club member who first drew the attention of society to the values of the Stein Valley. During the 1980's it was club members who were most active in defending the interests of wilderness ski tourers against commercial heliskiers. Today, in the 1990's, club

members are actively involved in B.C.'s Protected Area Strategy. The club continues to play an active role in land use issues relevant to B.C. mountaineering.

CLUB TRIPS AND ACTIVITIES

The most important function of the Club is the running of an extensive schedule of hiking, climbing, and ski touring trips. Usually, a variety of overnight and day trips is scheduled each weekend throughout the year. These trips are all free and are also open to prospective members. All trips are graded in terms of the degree of physical fitness and technical competence required.

Club members organize yearly summer climbing camps to various parts of the province. Numerous climbs, many of them first ascents or new routes, have been made in such areas as the Kakwa and Monkman areas, N. Rockies, (1993, 1992), the upper Lillooet (most recently in 1993), the Chilko Lake area (1992), the Pantheon Range (1991), Clendenning Ck. (1990), Banff park (1989), the Premier Range (1987), Lake Lovelywater (1987), the Falls River/Tchaikazan region (1975,1986), Ape Lake area (1983), the Mount Waddington area (most recently in 1985), and the Howson Range (1981). Occasionally, expeditions are organized by the Club to more remote areas such as in Alaska or South America.

The ski touring program occurs throughout the winter and spring. Recent successful ski camps have gone to the Lillooet Icecap, Kokanee Glacier, Fairy Meadows, the Columbia Ice Fields, the Stanley Smith - Lord Glacier area, the Franklin glacier, and the Homathko icefield. A popular Christmas ski camp is also organized every year, utilizing a large club tent and wood-burning stove.

Rock climbing practice is held mid-week during the summer months. Beginners can receive instruction and more advanced climbers can hone their skills. Rock practice is held in the evening at Lighthouse Park, Murrin Park, the Chief or at Smoke Bluffs. In winter, mid-week night skiing is organized at the local ski hills.

To help the beginner in developing his or her climbing skills, the Club organizes instruction courses and from time to time organizes training climbs. The purpose of these climbs is to allow people to gain experience on roped climbs. All trips run by the club have an organizer who should be contacted well in advance of the trip departure. The organizer arranges car pools to and from the start of

the trip. It is expected that passengers help to defray car driver's expenses including gas, oil, and wear and tear due to rough roads.

SOCIAL EVENTS

Social gatherings are held in the fall, winter, and spring on the second Tuesday of each month at 8 PM, usually in the upstairs room at the ANZA Club, corner of 8th Avenue and Ontario Street in Vancouver. The meetings are informal and the chairs comfortable. Beginning with general club business, there is usually a slide show, film, or talk on some aspect of mountaineering. In the past we have also featured product demonstrations by local mountaineering stores, auctions and equipment swap meets. Refreshments and cookies are served. Beer can be obtained from the licenced premises below the meeting hall.

The September and June social events are usually held at Floral Hall, Van Dusen Botanical Gardens at 37th Avenue and Oak Street. Beer, wine, cheese, and light refreshments are supplied at these socials. At the November social the Club conducts its Annual General Meeting.

Details of these events and other special occasions are announced in advance in the monthly club newsletter.

MEMBERSHIP

The B.C.M.C. has several categories of membership: active, associate, junior, life, senior, and honorary. Persons interested in joining the Club can obtain further information by phoning the Membership Chairman (268-9502) or by attending a club social event. Club social events and trips are open to non-members as well as members. The Membership Chairman can also be contacted through the Federation of Mountain Clubs of B.C. at 737-3053

LIBRARY AND PUBLICATIONS

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

The Club produces ten issues per year of its newsletter. The newsletter contains club news, trip schedules, access information, trip reports and other news. This club journal, The B.C. Mountaineer, is produced every two years and contains accounts of recent climbs, camps, expeditions, photographs and other material. The Club solicits articles of interest written by members.

HUTS AND SHELTERS

There are five B.C.M.C. huts, four of which are unlocked and open to the public. Shelters located in Garibaldi Park have been donated to the people of British Columbia. Club shelters and their general locations are:

HIMMELSBACH	: Russet Lake, Garibaldi Park.
MOUNTAIN LAKE	: Mount Sheer, Britannia Beach
NORTH CREEK	: North Creek, Lillooet Valley
PLUMMER	: Claw Ridge, Mt. Waddington
WEDGEMOUNT	: Wedgemount Lake, Garibaldi Park

Use charges for the Plummer Memorial Hut, North Creek Cabin and Mountain Lake Cabin are requested from non-members and are applied towards cabin maintenance. The North Creek Cabin is locked, the key being kept with the Cabin Chairman.

CONSERVATION GUIDELINES

In order to conserve the alpine environment, the Club tries to adhere to the following guidelines for its trips:

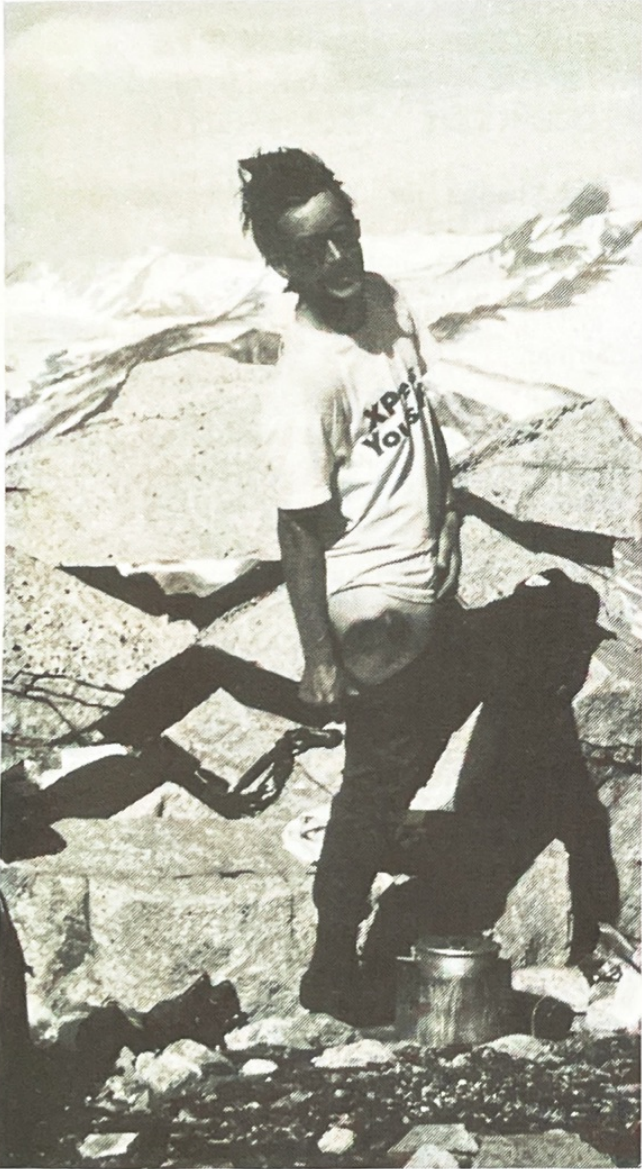
1. Pack out all garbage.
2. Where pit toilets are not provided, select a screened spot at least 50 metres from any water and dig a hole 15 to 20 centimetres deep. Cover the hole with soil and ground cover. Keep water sources free of contamination.
3. Pets are not allowed on club trips. Pets are a threat to human life in bear country, a threat to alpine creatures and they spread communicable diseases such as giardiasis. Animals may abandon burrows bearing the scent of a domestic animal.
4. Alpine life, whether flora or fauna, is fragile and not in abundance. Plants and animals are not killed unless required in an emergency.
5. Stay on trails and do not cut corners on trail switchbacks to avoid erosion.
6. Light small campfires. Use only dead wood and remove traces of the fire site. Ensure that fires are properly extinguished. Do not light fires in alpine areas or in areas where fires are not allowed.
7. Camp in forests or on moraines to avoid damage to meadows, lake shores and stream banks.

On B.C. Mountaineering club trips you are likely to find

hard men

and

enticing women



Photos by B. Gavin

MOUNTAINEERING

1. PROFOUND COMMENTS

ETHICS, AIRDROPS AND THE SEARCH FOR REMOTENESS - by Randy Stoltmann

It was twelve days since we left the logging road at Meager Creek, eleven days since seeing the last sign of other humans in the mountains. I was well settled into that dreamy, timeless feeling that engulfs one after a week or so in the wilderness. All around was a wonderful feeling of remoteness – a feeling of being in tune with natural rhythms and cycles, physically and mentally distanced from the impatience and environmental scourge of civilization. Concentrating on the crevasses at my feet, I topped the last rise before our planned camp on Clendenning Glacier. Before me lay the remains of an airdrop -- metal bucket lids, rusting tins, food wrappers – in short, garbage. Climber's garbage.

The drop may have been raided by wolverines, but why didn't the owners clean up the remains? Did this wild place not deserve at least that level of respect? I know there are still people out there who find ways to justify packing around umpteen kilograms of climbing hardware, but can't even carry out their own garbage. The baggage is only tolerated while it is useful in getting them up the mountain. Beyond that, glacial crevasses become Smithrite machines. Empty airdrop buckets are a burden – but not weighty chocks and friends and 'biners. Just like the treasured cold beer followed by an empty bottle tossed into the bushes. Out of sight, out of mind. Is that really an acceptable solution?

We all love the mountains, admire their beauty, accept their challenges. Visits to remote and pristine areas presumably have something to do with appreciation of nature, self-reliance and a desire to experience untarnished landscapes. While we must have a certain amount of tolerance for the differing viewpoints in our society, we also have a generally accepted wilderness ethic -- take only pictures, leave only foot prints. I do hope people will think; will show respect for the wonderful, pristine mountain wilderness which we are so incredibly lucky to have; will show respect for the overwhelming spirit of remoteness that, remarkably, still exists in our mountains; will endeavour to leave no trace of their passing.

Each metal bucket with lid weighs about 1.4 kilograms. They can easily be carried out intact for use on the next trip, or crushed and folded ready for

the recycling bin. Where animals are not a major threat, polyethylene buckets can be used, cut up, carried out and recycled, or burned without, I am told, producing significant environmentally harmful gases. We need only apply the same care and ingenuity to "leaving no trace" as we do to planning our expeditions, getting our food drops in and protecting them from animals. Accept that as part of the challenge and enjoy the added satisfaction of having left nothing behind but footprints that will dissolve with the next rain or melt in the sun.

With our increasing environmental awareness, let us accept the challenge of travelling through the wilderness and leaving no trace of our passing. Let us also restrict our reliance on wilderness-shrinking, fuel-consuming aircraft to situations without practical options. And let us ensure that some of the remarkable wilderness which we enjoy remains unmarred for those who follow us in search of remoteness.

LA-SHUPPE - by Steve Grant

Sick and tired of your traditional outdoor gear retailers? Well, we're the new kid on the block! Give us a try, ok.

TELLY FLOPPER DEPT.

NEE SKEE - why waste edging potential cranking those rad deep deep telies? These baby dogs replace knee pads, and give extra edging to boot! Be the first on your local yahoo slope!

DR. DELAM - the logical evolution of the fat ski. You told us you STILL can't crank enough turns, so here's what you get! You can't help but turn on `em! In fact, they won't go straight at all. And besides, they're too heavy for touring. Nobody tours anymore anyway, right? If they look like water skis, that's `cause they are, smarty!

EXECUWEAR

To satisfy the screaming mobs demanding outdoor gear that can also be worn in town, our design dudes cooked up ExecuWear. Grot-tex pitched in by running a lot of dark blue, pin striped material. The Jack, Pant, Vest and Shirt are available in men's, women's and kid's sizes, `cause La-Shuppe don't discriminate!

EXECUJAC - a Grot-tex jacket styled by Moor's to look exactly like an executive suit jacket. Lots of pockets for Things, and Stuff, and cut long to cover yer execu-butt. Warning: don't adjust the velcro cuff flaps during an important meeting, or ya might need a career move.

EXECUPANT - a pant to match the Jack. Trendy quadruple pleats, plus roomy pockets, and subtly curved belt loops. Don't forget to wash'em before Monday morning!

EXECUSHIRT - looks exactly like a white cotton dress shirt, except it's made out of woven polypro. Careful with the iron!

EXECUVEST - a trim vest made of the same material as the Jack and Pant, lined with a very thin layer of used Qualofil. Part of the three-piece layered look, essential for survival in the hills or office.

EXECUTIE & HOOD - color coordinated tie and hood. The hood folds small for storage in the breast pocket of the Jack. Leave a corner poking out to look cool! Colors available include: Carmanah / Walbran, Tatshenshini / Temagami, Oldman / Rafferty and Chicoutimi / Chicoutimi. Damned if we know what they are either!

STUNT AXE - the ultimate in short tools! The handle is an incredible 5cm long! 392 different heads available, allowing the honed rad hoser to have the perfect head for each and every placement. Basic kit includes the head of your choice (so you'll have one at least), and assembly tools. This may seem short, but folks told us they want `em that way! A little costly, but foamed titanium made on the space shuttle ain't cheap!

LET SLEEPING BAGS LIE - inspired by a famous flying sleeping bag that wrecked a Hughes 500D, this stuff sack comes with a set of tent pegs, peg loops, and 10kg of lead weights sewn in, plus a bottle of brain function enhancement vitamins.

DECAY IICV - the latest offering from our merry shoemaker elves. Anti-social, aggressive Posi-trac soles lock together when one slips, providing sure traction in steep and deep doo-doo. Non-scuff soles to keep mom happy. One-piece moulded rubber construction, in three variations: white, (looks like costly hi-top Nikes); brown, (appears to be an expensive Swiss leather hiking boot); black, simulated brogue (to go with Execu-Wear).

103 HELI-DESTINATIONS - the best outdoor guide yet! Includes a lengthy chapter on correct posture around helicopters to avoid losing yer haid, plus a chapter packed full of dandy expressions for defending yourself from charges of environmental irresponsibility. Examples include: "I have more dollars than sense." and "Your bicycle makes noise too." An appendix lists which beverage coolers fit best in various choppers.

BUSHWACK EXPEDITION GUIDE INSTRUCTOR PRO PACK - improved! For 1994 we've eliminated the straps, so there's nothing to catch in helicopter doors! No sense paying for things ya don't need, is there? Fits better on hotel baggage trolleys too.

Folks quit carrying overnight packs when helicopter charters got trendy.

ZZIP PARKA - Look your best as you step from the friendly whirlybird. Lots of zippers. In fact, it's made completely of zippers. (eg. 427 for men's med.) We know of no parka on the market that has more, or could possibly have more zippers. We don't like this parka, but we heard tell of folks who said they do, so here it is. Take it or leave it, we don't really care. (Development of the Velcro model was delayed `cause our testers got stuck in `em.)

SILLY HAT - we'll make you a deal. If you buy this hat, we'll put a picture of it in your local paper, every day, forever. If you ever, heaven forbid, get it dirty, return it to us immediately for a free hand washing. We must warn you that our corporate image is important to us: if you leave it dirty we'll send Axel to take it back from you. You don't want that to happen, do you?

LIKEN FUNGUS - rad new tent design! Since folks find vestibules so useful, and the bigger the better, we said "why not take it to the max?" So the Fungus is ALL vestibule. The only compromise we made was to add a floor. We thought you'd like that. The Fungus comes in 2m long sections that zip together to accommodate more bodies, end-to-end, without limit! Make a camp statement by mixing and matching sections of various fluor colors. Made with pre-mildewed material so you don't have to fuss with drying it after trips. Have scared folks running around the North Col screaming: "There's a Fungus among us!"

GLAD GEAR

They're light, they're cheap, they're fun, they're recycled! We took an old standby and honed it into a state-of-the-art line of outdoor gear that is the ultimate expression of minimalism and bad taste. We did it `cause we saw lots of folks doin' it, and we know they're good folks!

THE GLAD ANORAK - one size fits all. Absolutely tight weave, surpasses all other fabrics. Tear custom neck and arm holes. Doesn't have to be washed, ironed, sprayed or sealed. In fact, you iron it and you invalidate the no-leak warranty! 10-packs available for any bushwackin' folks left out there.

THE GLAD PACK - a very light pack with lots of capacity, plus it's completely waterproof! No complicated straps to adjust or zippers to wear out. Single voluminous compartment. Comes with several small disposable, metal reinforced closure straps. Can be carried with both arms in front, or for terrain more uneven than sidewalks, sling it over one shoulder. Equally at home in the mountains or the laundromat. Enjoy! Cheer! Say idiotic things!

THE GLAD TENT - attractive, sleek design with integral floor. No seams to leak! Single door closes with metal reinforced plastic strap (strip of 10 straps provided). More doors can be created by ripping them wherever you want. Available only in a natural emergency orange. Requires optional poles and/or guy lines to set up, but can be used as a free standing bivy bag.

HELL ROAR VACUUM - we spotted this little gem on our fifth trip to Hong Kong this year. A powerful vac with cordless operation makes it handy for keeping fly-in camps free of those bothersome bottle caps, bits of broken wine glasses and shreds of Glad Gear. A bonus is that it is tuned to sound exactly like a Bell 214. Daydream about your last mountain trip while you clean house! It doesn't exactly fit our market niche - we carry it 'cause no one said we can't.

THE SIGNATURE SERIES - Worn-out, broken and discarded items once used by worn-out, broken and discarded climbers. All guaranteed by Woody. Faded neon powdersuits; mouldy tents; delaminated skis; broken poles; defunct stoves (warning: may be explosive); garments made of pre-Version #38 Grot-tex; pots with unremovable, charred food remains (warning: may not be nutritious); loftless, smelly sleeping bags; trashed boots (some pairs); clothing with a wide variety of deficiencies - none smell fresh (warning: may be toxic); decrepit packs, Trapper Nelsons, and on and on. Just in - lots of obsolete avalanche beacons. To guarantee authenticity each item includes a card signed either by the original famous mountaineer, one of their heirs, or someone who had heard of them.

2. TRIPS OVERSEAS AND FAR AWAY

KAOKOLAND, AFRICA

March, 1993 - by James Struempfer.

Namibia is an arid country on the southwestern coast of Africa. It is roughly the size and shape of British Columbia, with a total population of about half a million people. The country is generally arid to bone dry in the west, with typical African savanna in the east. Most of the western half of the country is formed by the Namib desert, and is sparsely inhabited. The eastern half of the country is generally more suitable for human habitation.

The remote northwestern corner of Namibia is known as Kaokoland. It is a wild and remote region, and much of it is seldom visited by outsiders. The land varies from the desert sand dunes of the Skeleton Coast to rocky mountains, dry river beds

and wide open plains further inland. This is the area my brother and I hoped to reach during March 1993.

Windhoek, the capital city of Namibia, is roughly in the geographical centre of the country. It has an atmosphere of African busyness and western business. It is a modern city, a quaint and practical blend of old German colonialism, modern development and tribal Africa. The city seems a model of racial harmony, in contrast to foreign impressions of African conditions. Here one finds local residents with origins in more than a dozen different ethnic groups. One of the most impressive sights on the streets of Windhoek are the tall very dark-skinned German-speaking Herero women dressed in brightly coloured ankle length dresses as a local adaptation of fashions popular in Europe a century ago.

Namibia was a German colony until World War I, when South Africa assumed control. Autonomy and independence returned only in 1990 after a long civil war. German is one of the most common languages spoken here, along with English and Afrikaans and dozens of African languages. A legacy of South African rule is that the officially-shunned Afrikaans language is also the most widely understood in the country.

As with most temperate parts of the world, spring and autumn brings the most comfortable weather conditions. We travelled with a light Isuzu two wheel drive truck. Any Namibian could have told us that a larger four wheel drive vehicle would have been much more suitable, but the higher costs involved precluded that option.

We drove north from Windhoek along the excellent road system inherited from the former South African controlled government. Many years of fighting the forces of the South West African People's Organisation, or SWAPO, during the long civil war demanded good surfaced roads, particularly in the northern part of the country towards the border with Angola.

We spent our first night at the hot springs resort of Gross Barmen, one of many excellent public camping grounds in the country. In less travelled areas almost any spot off the road provides a safe and welcome spot to spend the night.

Towering cumulus clouds announced the coming thunderstorm. At first it seemed a desert rarity, the welcome end of a three year drought. Soon the nightly and sometimes daily rain were to change the character of the journey considerably. With daytime

temperatures generally between 20° and 35°C, and with nights not much cooler, the rain was not uncomfortable. Mosquitoes are usually only found here near standing water, but the wet conditions brought enough flying buzzers to gladden the heart of any Canadian.

Sleeping gear for more normal desert conditions is only a ground sheet, foam mattress and very light sleeping bag. Fortunately we had brought mosquito nets and a floorless pyramid tent. We also had large canvas sacks - arid country bivvy bags. During the sometimes very warm nights we found welcome comfort and coolness by sleeping in these cotton bags after soaking them in water. It takes a while to get used to falling asleep while one is dripping wet. By morning the bags would be quite dry again, after providing night-long coolness and a mosquito proof shelter.

The next day brought a long drive through the generally flat savanna, beautifully lush and green with the recent rain. Spiny *Acacia* trees and grasslands predominate, with vegetable ivory palm trees and termite nests several meters tall increasingly common further north.

The Etosha game reserve is named after the Etosha pan, a shimmering fossil lake shallowly filled with water in some areas during wet years. Long ago it was a huge lake, fed by several large rivers. Now it mostly forms an arid expanse of limestone and sand surrounded by savanna plains.

The brief expanses of water provide wonderfully rich nesting conditions to flamingos and pelicans, and food for many other species of birds. Water holes around the edges of the pan, some now filled by park rangers, provide good habitat for a cornucopia of African mammals and birds. The park forms one of the richest reserves in terms of wildlife in the whole of Africa.

The reserve has one entrance in the south, and one on the northwest, with a tourist camp at each entrance. The northern entrance is built at the German colonial fort of Namutoni, constructed early this century to house a troop garrison to bring the Kaiser's government to the Herero and Ovambo people. The Kaiser's rule was not readily accepted and was violently resisted during many battles in the long and brutal wars that shaped the early history of the country then known as South-West Africa.

Once outside the park the road tends towards the northwest through an almost uninhabited savanna.

Here the ubiquitous acacias start to give way to mopane woodland. The trees varied in size from low scrubby bushes in some areas to tall trees in others. Termitaria, the several-meters-tall clay spires of termite nests, are increasingly common here, and are often seen less than one hundred meters apart. With tens of thousands of the ant-like creatures per nest the countryside supports a huge population density in termites alone.

The abundant rain and moist conditions made for a lush new growth of leaves on the mopane trees. They also triggered the hatching of multitudes of mopane worms. These bright green, yellow and black creatures were busy devouring every scrap of leaf they could get hold of. Sleeping near mopane trees brought nights filled with a hush of soft crunching sounds as the little animals gobbled up the vegetation. The worms quickly grow to lengths of eight or ten centimeters and up to one and a half centimeters thick. Every few kilometers along the road there were camps of small groups of Ovambo tribesmen, to collect what forms a major source of protein in their diet. The worms are boiled and spiced, then dried in the sun to eat during leaner times, or to sell in the village markets.

Near the northern border of Namibia we travelled through the tribal homeland of the Ovambo people. Tall and very dark skinned, they are one of the largest ethnic groups in the country. Ovambos formed the major group in the anti-government forces during the long civil war.

The excellent paved main road that runs through Ovamboland contrasts with conditions beside the road. It is a densely populated area, with the kind of shabby atmosphere of many similar areas in Africa. While very poor compared to Canada, most people here seemed reasonably well off in African terms.

The paved road ends at the Ruacana. Here the Kunene River emerges from the interior of Angola, to flow westwards to the Atlantic Ocean to form the remainder of the border between Angola and Namibia.

Ruacana saw much military activity during the civil war. South African and Namibian troops (formerly with CIA support) battled the USSR and Cuban supported forces of the Angola government, and their SWAPO compatriots intent on a change of rule in Namibia. The Ruacana border crossing provided frequent access to southern Angola during these military campaigns and several battles were fought nearby. Hostilities ended with Namibian

independence, but during our visit the town was under renewed threat. The forces of Jonas Savimbi, the leader of one group in Angola's own civil war, threatened to attack Ruacana unless the Namibian authorities here allowed passage to their military supplies.

The town is surrounded by barbed wire fences hung with pebble-filled beer tins. Anyone trying to cross the fence in former times was sure to alert the town's guard dogs. Nearly every house has a bomb shelter, all now shabby with recent disuse. More peaceful times are coming to northern Namibia, but the abundant reminders of the violent conflicts of recent times remain.

The customs official at the border gate allowed us past to see the Ruacana falls in the area that separates the border fence from Angola's own outposts. He seemed more interested to resume his card game with colleagues and female friends than to waste time on us.

A few hundred meters further we drove right into the courtyard of a small house amongst the trees. We realised too late that this was an encampment of Namibian soldiers. AK47's in hand they reluctantly escorted us a little further to where we could see the river, only to discover that the falls were dry and waterless with the sluices shut in a dam upstream in Angola.

The soldiers were surprised to see us, and their interest seemed to have as much to do with boredom as with security concerns. It took a while to convince them that we had no smoking materials, and no possessions that we wanted to get rid of. We left with much concern about whether we had seen the last of them. We later heard that this group had detained and roughed up other visitors on several occasions in the past. One does not argue with a soldier carrying an AK47 in a remote area, and we were fortunate to get away so easily.

The soldiers told us to camp a few kilometers down river, at a spot known as the Hippo Pools. Fearing further military visits during the night, we carried on for a further fifty kilometers along the riverside jeep track after a brief stop at the pools. We finally spent the night well away from the road, hidden amongst tall hardwood trees on the riverbank. Any curious and bored soldiers were unlikely to find us here.

Our plan was to drive westward from Ruacana, to follow the Kunene river along jeep tracks into Kaokoland. The roads in this area are best travelled

on foot, as the local inhabitants do, or at least with heavy four wheel drive vehicles driving in pairs, as the few safari companies active here prefer. Our unsuitable vehicle clearly was to cause us difficulties on the rough roads.

After a peaceful night in the riverside forest we drove further westwards along the Kunene River. Towards late morning we were stopped by a dry bed of a side stream, now muddy and slippery from recent flooding, and impassable in our vehicle.

The main inhabitants of the habitable part of Kaokoland are members of the Himba tribe. They are a very dark skinned people, and are mostly tall and well built. Their only visible means of livelihood are the cattle herds of which they are very proud. As in many other traditional African societies, the cattle are looked after by the boys and young men, and these were the people we mostly encountered along the roads. It is a society that still lives in a very traditional way. Stone tools were in widespread use amongst the Himba till well into this century.

Near to where our progress along the Kunene was stopped, we found two small huts with several young Himba children. As we had no language in common we could not enquire why there were no adults. The children seemed happy and excited by our arrival. The oldest two, both teenage girls, offered to show us a way around the obstacle.

The two girls led us along a road into the hills away from the river. Once our way was clear they happily climbed off the truck and disappeared into the bush, carrying only our gifts of water and food. Himba men and women commonly cover their bodies with a cream of animal fat, red mineral pigments and herbs. From here on the back of our truck became increasingly coated with the same substance.

For the rest of the day we worked our way westwards along the jeep tracks in the bush. Now and then we would encounter herders who showed little surprise in finding a rare vehicle in their country. They had no hesitation to ask for a ride for part of our way. Some wanted to reach the other side of a mountain to look for lost cattle, others wanted to visit huts some distance away, and all seemed to appreciate not having to walk all the way. Our load of food and camping equipment, while minimal in our own eyes, seemed enormous and excessive in contrast to what the herders carry: a walking stick, sometimes an ancient spear or bow and set of arrows, a leather loin cloth, sandals



Baking lunchtime bread in the shade. Photo - J. Struempfer



Typical Kaokoland road conditions. Photo - J. Struempfer

made of old car tires, and nothing else.

After a night sheltering from the rain in a wooded stream bed we reached the Kunene River at the Epupa Falls. For the last tens of kilometers to the river we followed a newer gravel military road. We passed several vehicle wrecks by the roadside, broken and perforated by land mine blasts.

Epupa Falls is a very beautiful and remote spot. We camped under palm trees on the river bank. The nightly rain did little to reduce the heat of the day, and cooling swims in the river were very welcome. We were careful to only enter the fast flowing water close to the falls, where any crocodiles would not find us.

We spent some time exploring upstream and downstream on foot. We finally left the river with a series of passengers. First an old man who wanted to reach the nearest village with a clinic, then a young man who turned out to be the son of Kapinka, the local chief. A little further another tall and beautiful teenage girl joined us. Her headdress showed that she was already married, and she stopped us at the huts of her family. Her much older husband quickly appeared, together with his two other older wives and several spirited young children. Eventually the husband accompanied us to the clinic village to seek medical attention for a stomach problem. His luggage consisted of a tin filled with cooked meat, a walking stick, and a wooden support to keep his head off the ground while he slept, in the custom of the Himba men.

Later that evening we reached the larger village of Opuwo, where we hoped to find a phone to report our whereabouts. The local police post could only receive calls, but the friendly Cuban-trained policemen arranged for us to use one of the rare phones in the village at the house of a friend.

After another night spent surrounded by multitudes of leaf crunching mopane worms we drove westwards towards the Skeleton Coast, as the very arid area along the coast of northern Namibia is called. A jeep track in very poor condition loops for 400 kilometers, passing within 40 kilometers of the sea. The road finally leads to the the village of Sesfontein (Six Fountains) further south in the interior.

This part of Kaokoland is very sparsely inhabited, and we hoped to see some of the seventy or so desert-adapted elephants that live in the area. This is the only group of elephants known anywhere to live in such arid conditions, and they have

developed special behavioural adaptations to enable them to survive here. Elephants in lush surroundings commonly push over trees to be able to eat the leaves at the top, something the Kaokoland elephant has learned not to do. The rare trees here are precious sources of food and regenerate too slowly to tolerate this kind of feeding behaviour. The Kaokoland elephant will commonly cross large areas of desert to get to water holes. Poaching and loss of habitat have severely reduced the number of survivors in this group.

Travel was very slow, with frequent stops to build sections of road, or to work our way through a stream bed. With the recent heavy rains many normally dry river beds were slippery with mud, or filled with fast flowing water that we had to find fords to cross. A whole day of driving and hard work would bring less than a hundred kilometers of progress. We travelled now over huge plains, then through mountainous areas or along river beds. We spent the nights in the forest along the normally dry river beds, where we found shelter from the sun and wood for our cooking fires.

One night was spent on a wide open gravel plain close to the coast, near Cape Fria. This is the only area in the world where the *Welwitschia mirabilis* grows. This unusual plant survives in the harsh desert climate by sending roots down many tens of meters to where reliable ground water can be found. It produces only two leaves that together completely surround the top of the stem. The leaves grow continuously, with the ends worn away by the wind or eaten by antelope. It was a wonderful experience to sleep in the open next to these plants in one of the most arid desert areas in the world, and then to get soaked by nighttime rain.

Further along we spent a whole day on a river bank, waiting for the floodwater to fall sufficiently to allow us through. At a similar crossing the next day our truck engine cut out in midstream, and with water flowing through the cabin we had no choice but to leave the vehicle in the river for another day till this flood too had subsided sufficiently to allow us further.

The grasslands in this area were rapidly being consumed by commando worms. These insects start life several thousand kilometers away in East Africa, from where their moths follow nightly high altitude trade winds across Africa to reach the abundant food brought by the rains at the end of the drought. Within weeks these worms would consume the

grass and the plains would revert to their normal almost vegetationless state.

We were relieved to finally reach Sesfontein. From here the roads would be much better and we could travel faster towards the city where the inflexible schedules of international flight bookings were becoming a concern.

Kaokoland was not yet finished with us. In the village a loud thump and a trail of oil and metal pieces on the road behind us signalled a piston that had decided to part company with the engine of our truck. It left a large hole in the side of the engine block. We clearly could drive no further.

The owner of the village store eventually agreed to drive us to Windhoek, seven hundred kilometers away, for a large fee. We had no choice but to accept his terms and pay, as no other transport options were available. We left our truck under large wild fig trees at the police post, feeling somewhat uncertain how safe it would be. We distributed our remaining supplies of potatoes, onions and tinned food amongst the friendly bystanders and the policemen, to thank them for their help and to do what we could to ensure the safeguarding of our broken vehicle.

We finally arrived at Windhoek airport at three in the morning, and spent the rest of the night on the floor of the terminal building at an airport called Eros. It was an appropriate conclusion to a journey through a very beautiful land.

SKIING IN THE EASTERN SIERRA NEVADA, April 1993 - by Gavin Thurston

Backcountry skiing in California? In late April? You gotta be kidding!? This was the response from Mary when I suggested bringing our skis to a conference at the University of California, Davis. Looking back now, I wonder where the idea had come from. Maybe it was the abysmal snow conditions and weather that prevailed in BC for most of the spring of 1993. Maybe it was the fact that I was sick of trying to turn on breakable crust with a gimpy ankle. Or maybe it was because I had heard that California had got all the winter storms that we normally get, and had had near record snowfalls. But somehow my conviction was strong enough to convince Mary, so we loaded up the skis and winter camping stuff and drove to California.

The weather in Davis during the short scientific conference was positively balmy, which didn't exactly inspire confidence. Neither did the fact that

the wheat was already waist high in the Central Valley ('those poor buggers in Saskatchewan', I remember thinking). Resisting the urge to buy a new rack and go to Yosemite Valley, we drove from Davis to the Sierras. We had planned to try skiing around Bishop, on the eastern side of the Sierras. Again, I don't know just where this idea came from, but that was our goal. During the crossing of the Sierras on one of the small roads south of Lake Tahoe, we got the notion that maybe there would be some skiing after all. At one of the passes, the plowed snowbank beside the road was over 6m high! So we kept going, and arrived in Bishop. There we had a look in one of the sporting goods stores and found a book by John Moynier on ski touring in the Eastern Sierras that was positively inspiring. Not only does he describe some of the most interesting, committing and challenging ski trips this side of the Bernese Oberland, but he does so with an enthusiasm that borders on maniacal. So finally we knew that we were in the right place.

We arrived just before the opening weekend of the fishing season, which turns out to be a big deal in that part of the world. Bishop, and other towns in the Sierras, get inundated with beer-bellied, loud, ignorant, 4-wheel drivin' semi-urbanites,let's just say 'fishermen' and leave it at that. Anyway, that means that the roads up to the lakes suddenly get plowed, and these roads often go up to 2400m or even 2700m. We decided to drive up to Lake Sabrina (the locals pronounce it *Sa - BRINE - a*) at 2800m, and then do a 4-5 day trip into the Evolution Basin, which itself is around 2500m and is surrounded by peaks up to 4200m. There was also a possibility of doing a very appealing 4 day loop if the weather and our bodies were up to it.



View across Hungry Packer Lake to Picture Pk. and Mt. Haeckel, E. Sierras. Photo - G. Thurston

We headed off on a cool, sunny day, and once we had left the fishermen on the partially frozen lake we had the place to ourselves. The snow was plentiful and in an 'early spring' state, ie not really powder, but not corn snow either. We skinned up beautiful forested slopes above Lake Sabrina. The weather deteriorated and the wind increased as we passed several more small lakes, and we decided to make camp in the last patch of trees, around 3400m. At this point we were also feeling the altitude. As we got settled, the wind really started to howl, and we were glad to have a sheltered spot.

The next day was very windy and partially socked-in, and somewhat reluctantly we made the decision not to attempt the loop, but instead do day trips from our campsite. This turned out to be a good decision, because the weather never really settled, and the loop would have been quite committing (including 2 passes over 3800m). Instead we spent the next 3 days exploring various side-valleys, and skiing on windswept snow that was only slightly better than what we had left in BC (but at least there was lots of it!).

On the ski out we met 3 fishermen huddled in a lean-to beside one of the upper lakes. They had walked up on our ski tracks, sinking to the hips with every step, and had carried a big ice-auger so they could ice fish. I had a certain amount of respect for their perseverance (a la Burke and Wills), but not their notion of 'recreation'.

Above Lake Sabrina we encountered perfect corn-snow, which I gather is the trademark of spring skiing in the Sierra. The telemark turn was dusted off, and quickly put to use. Sailing through the open trees back to the truck made up for many of the ignominities of the winter.

The next day was a rest day, and we did some sight-seeing around Mono Lake, which is well worth a visit. The following day, our last, we drove up to Tioga Pass from the town of Lee Vining. During the third of week of April this road is plowed to the Pass only, so you can't drive across Yosemite Park until mid-June. At the pass there are many good day trips to suit all tastes, from gentle cross-country trails to 50 degree couloirs. We skied up a 3900m peak called Mt. Dana, which overlooks Toulumne Meadows (to the West) and Owens Valley (to the East). We didn't see much of either though, since the cloud came in during the ascent. However, we did enjoy a very nice run down on spring corn.

California seems to have more than its fair share of natural splendour, and add to that good backcountry skiing. So if the storms track south again this winter, don't despair, but head to the Sierras. And bring the fishin' rod.

Party: Mary Prendergast and Gavin Thurston.

3. THE BCMC AT WORK

A TRAIL TO THE NORTHERN TANTALUS RANGE - by Paul Kubik

An old trail along Sigurd Ck has recently seen a lot of work by club members. It is probable the trail was originally built in the 1930's by a prospector. About 20 years ago, some club members discovered evidence of the old trail. As work on the trail progressed we continued to come across signs of previous use - tree blazes, tree felling, pits and trail treadway. The trail, now known as the Sigurd Ck Trail, provides probably the shortest and fastest foot access to the northern Tantalus Range.

While some work remains to be done, Mounts Pelion and Ossa, Sigurd Lake and even "Sigurd Mountain" are now accessible for weekend trips in summer. Previously, summer trips required bushwhacking which was severe enough to discourage most parties.

Two guidebooks, using reports from climbs made in the late sixties and earlier, rated the area accessed by the present trail as very low in popularity. Phrases such as "steep, bushy approach" did not encourage forays into the area. There was possibly the perception that no remaining first ascents were to be made so it did not warrant the bother of getting in. The lack of a road to the base of the climb and the need to begin walking from near sea level did not improve the area's popularity either.

My first trip to Sigurd Creek was in the early 1980's. We followed a sketchy route from the Squamish River through the headwall to the hanging valley of Sigurd Creek. The route was sparsely flagged and we lost it in a patch of swamp and blowdown. The highest point was reached later that day around 3 pm. It can now be reached in about 2 hours along the much improved trail.

Einar Hansen's father developed a gold property in the 1930's near the site of the present day, defunct Osprey Mine on Ashlu Creek. A few million dollars in gold ore was extracted out of the Osprey Mine around that time. The ore was taken out by pack horses through Ashlu Canyon. Einar recalls that the

trail still existed in the 1960's. His father used to drop him off at the bridge over the Ashlu below the canyon. A beaten track there was wide enough for two horses to pass side by side and continued up Ashlu Creek. The trail is now obliterated by logging.

The area surrounding Ashlu Creek must have received extensive mineral exploration at the same time. In fact, a mineral claim was active adjacent to the Sigurd Creek trail as recently as 1985. If you look closely beside the trail you almost step on a white quartz outcrop near the 400m contour. White quartz is often associated with gold deposits.

Above the claim, evidence of historical use of Sigurd Creek is more obvious. Above and below a lookout near 600m (the "Gondola Station"), a number of small trees were cut as handholds on steep sections. The new trail now bypasses the lower of these sections. The lookout has a spectacular view over the Squamish valley from Tricouni to Garibaldi.

Above the "Gondola Station" the steep grade of the headwall levels off. Sigurd Creek is now within earshot in the hanging valley. Old healed over tree blazes on mature trees are easily seen.

At the waterfall cascades near 800m (not the lower Crooked Falls) several large trees were cut with a saw. Harder to find are some small pits, presumably for mineral samples, dug into the earth throughout the valley.

The first ascents of Pelion and Ossa by mountaineers were made from Zenith Lake to the southeast. Possibly the next visitation to Sigurd Creek was by Gernot Walter and Manfred Putz in 1968. They bushwhacked up Sigurd Creek with skis but did not apparently find a trail. A decade later, Sev Heiberg and Howard Rode traced the trail in as far as the waterfall cascades at 800m.

Sev and Howard reached the cascades but could not agree on where to continue. Sev wanted to continue to the headwaters and, over the next decade, through the 1980's, he continued to work on the trail below the cascades. The prospector's trail was lost beyond the cascades near a rock rib. The rib extends south from the valley wall and pinches the creek into a small canyon.

A few years ago, a few more of us became involved in the trail's construction. The rib problem stymied us for a number of years. Sev had once gone around the rib by keeping to the creek but was not convinced this was the best way. So one autumn day Karin Rolfes, Blair Mitten, Sev and I found a better

way by going over the rib. Unfortunately, impending darkness prevented much exploration beyond.

Fate played a hand shortly afterward. A windstorm (or maybe two) ripped through the entrance to the hanging valley, uprooting trees over the trail. The blowdown was exceptional by any standards. Only the Douglas-firs with their deep tap roots seemed immune from the devastation. In places cedars and hemlocks lay stacked three or four high one on top of the other. Elsewhere, trees had fallen like dominoes. The damage was localized, predominantly in several small areas, over a distance of two kilometers. Higher up on the hillside the canopy appeared as though clearcut - virtually all the trees had blown down in one area on the hillside.

Three or four trips with chainsaws were required to cut through the blowdown. Some of the larger trees could not be cut with the 50 cm chains and had to be left. Sev, Blair and I were helped out by Randy and Greg Stoltmann and Ben Wiens.

When we returned to the rib we could not recall where we had crossed earlier as a couple of years had elapsed. We had not left much flagging behind as we did not want to confuse anyone who followed the trail in. We had left the trail flagged only as far as the cascades below the rib.

The rib was scouted a couple more times by Sev with others but no decision on trail location was reached.

One weekend in June, 1993, we finally solved the rib problem for good. Four of us - Sev, Blair, Norbert Grillmair and I - took in overnight gear intending to scout to the end of the valley. We used a 150m forested slope we had noticed on an earlier trip to gain the top of the rib. A 30m elevation loss on the other side was the penalty we had to pay for this route choice. Sev had some misgivings about the "unnecessary" drop but the route otherwise went without difficulty.

That evening we bushwhacked up the valley. We crossed a short swath of slide alder approximately 300m long but stopped at a second swath which appeared to stretch for 2-3 km. We found a cut stake where we turned around, which we attributed to an earlier prospector. Encouraged by our success in punching through, we spent the next morning clearing the first slide alder patch and flagging the trail.



Karin on the Sigurd Ck. trail. Photo - P. Kubik.

A series of rotten weather weekends followed in early July. I was able to convince some club members to forsake sitting in a dripping wet tent staring at the inside of a cloud and accompany me to Sigurd Creek for trail clearing. We were Greg and Randy Stoltmann, Darlene Anderson, Karin, Blair, Doug, and myself. Several km of slide alder, blueberry, false azalea and deadfall were cleared. It was a fine day's work. Another exploration pit was found as well as traces of the old trail treadway.

The following weekend I led a club trip to Pelion. I actually had an ulterior motive. It would allow me to flag the route in the rest of the way. On Saturday, by happenstance, we stumbled upon a log crossing of the creek near 1000m elevation. We used it as a footbridge. This gave access to a broad forested slope which we ascended. It led to a flat campsite on the moraine basin at 1150m elevation below Ossa and Pelion. En route, I found some more old tree felling, presumably by prospectors.

Saturday evening, after dinner, we followed easy ground through the headwaters of Sigurd Creek. Our efforts had finally paid off. It was only five hours with overnight packs from the trailhead at the Squamish - Ashlu confluence to our campsite.

The moraine camp gives access to a variety of terrain both technical and otherwise. Pelion and Ossa rise directly above the camp to the south.

Westward, easy terrain can be followed to the Sigurd Creek headwaters and back around to Sigurd Lake. Moderate terrain lies beyond Sigurd Lake towards Sigurd Mountain.

If one climbs late enough in the summer season the firm snow has melted back enough to provide some ice climbing. Although we were too early in July to find much ice on the Pelion trip, later in August the northeast face of Ossa is free of snow. Randy Enomoto and I did a five pitch climb there in late September, although we came out by headlamp. A month earlier, Andrew Wilkinson and I did a route on the north face of Ossa which intersects the ridge above one of the face glaciers. A couple more unclimbed challenges still exist on this face.

We had a few more trail clearing trips in between. With the help of Darren Quist, Peter Rogers and Randy and Greg we managed to flag the trail as far as the log footbridge using fluorescent orange aluminum trail markers, supplied by Paul Binkert. We also ironed out a few kinks in the trail, bypassed a short swampy section, cut deadfall and did some trail grading. Randy led a trail clearing trip later in October, 1993, which was duly reported in the newsletter.

Conservative estimates of the person-days put into trail clearing for the last two years are as follows - 36 (1993), 10 (1992).

The legal status of the trail is unclear. Steve Grant wrote a letter to the Minister of Forests last summer in reference to logging plans for the area in which he mentioned the existence of the Sigurd Creek trail. He received a reply some months later from the Forests Minister who commended the club for its volunteer efforts but chastized us for not informing the ministry of our plans and getting their approval.

Weldwood Canada plans to cut forest to an elevation of 300m in 1995. They have recorded the existence of the trail on their cutting permit application and have labelled it as an "alpine access trail". They will restore the trail where it is damaged by logging only above the end of the new spur road they will construct.

The area Weldwood plans to cut contains some large Douglas-fir which survived the burn of 80 - 100 years ago. It will be a tremendous loss to see them go. There is such a dearth of hiking from sea level to alpine that goes through such a stretch of old growth forest as does the Sigurd Creek trail.

The proposed logging area contains a large stand of blowdown as a result of the big windstorm in

early September. We did not clear the blowdown as we did not want to expend effort where the trail was going to be destroyed anyway. Most of Sigurd Creek valley lies outside of Weldwood's Tree Farm Licence (38). We do not know if this provides the area with long term protection from road building. However, having it outside a T.F.L. is a plus, especially as the club has put forward a protected area proposal for Sigurd Creek and the rest of the Tantalus Range.

I hope I have presented a fair rendition of the human history of Sigurd Creek over the last 50 - 60 years. I have used the resources with which I am comfortable and familiar with - a couple of much too concise guidebooks, some personal recollections from mountaineers whose memories are unclear due to the passage of time and my own experiences gained from over 18 trips in the area.

Over the several days I have sat here writing this history I have just made a few more imaginary trips to the mountains along the old Sigurd Creek trail.

CAYOOSH CREEK TRAIL BUILDING

- 1992 +1993 - by Brian Gavin

The desire to initiate a trail in this valley was a long time germinating. My first exposure to the upper valley was on a BCMC winter ski trip in the mid-80's. I was impressed with the relatively short access into easy, open alpine travel. The forest was a beautiful mature one and spacious enough that novice to intermediate skiers didn't find it too difficult. Over the following years, I found myself visiting the area more often, both winter and summer.

In the summer of '92 Peter and Andrea Gumplinger has some out-of-town visitors. They were in search of a suitable weekend hiking destination so I suggested "Aspen " Peak. I was invited to join them, so I included two rolls of flagging tape in my pack. Kathrin was pleased to help out, and the route was reasonably well located by the end of the weekend. This was a beautiful summer weekend - hot, dry, no bugs, clear skies. We enjoyed swimming in two lakes, saw a deer and two mountain goats. The reactions of everyone strengthened my resolve to take on this project.

As autumn approached, I realized that the flagged route needed improvement in two wet areas and the creek crossing needed a bridge. One Saturday in October, Peter Katsaris joined me for some route finding and improvement. On this

outing, the lower part of the trail was relocated uphill to the east and a suitable creek crossing spot was found. Our enthusiasm found us flagging a route into the Mount Rohr valley as well - partly from below, finally from above. Peter took home a small log from which he fashioned the trail signs at the Rohr / Aspen junction.

The following weekend was the scheduled club trip. I was joined by Curtis Stringle, Paul Kubik, Karin Rolfes, Darren Quist and then Danika Gilbert (from Portland!). Also, Tim Wilson with his friend Grant Benevides came up on Sunday. We all put in two very full days of effort. Paul and Darren did chainsaw work removing deadfall. Otherwise, everyone pitched in with fine tuning the trail location, trimming branches, removing undergrowth, marking the trail with official Paul Binkert markers, and removing the old flags for recycling. The progress was impressive.

The following weekend was originally intended to be my trail clearing trip to Place Creek. A few phone calls suggested a few finished projects were better than many unfinished. The weather forecast was truly dismal, and so the group opted for a one-day blitz. On that occasion, the first day of November, I had the company of Norbert Grillmair, Peter Katsaris, Janet Lohmann, Susan Nesbit, Layne Reed, Curtis Stringle, Steve Grant, Jayne Hardy, and Randy Stoltmann. The group was split 50/50 between the Mt. Rohr and Mt. Aspen branches of the trail, with the Mt. Rohr section completely finished. A tree was converted to a bridge at the strategic crossing point and properly cleaned up. Beyond the bridge, the route was pushed to the opening of the long flat meadow. More markers. However, the bridge was a little less than perfect - especially just before winter.

The following Saturday proved to be the last effort that year with the objective of improving the bridge. With the effort and creativity of Blair Mitten, Paul Kubik, Tim Wilson and Mark Force, the log was successfully repositioned and a cable installed for a hand line. The trail was upgraded in several spots, and flagged along the hillside above the damp ground of the upper valley.

In the summer of 93, I took Jennifer Nener and a group of friends up the trail to enjoy the BC outdoors - Britons like it too. I stole a few moments to find and flag a route which completely avoided sensitive ground. One soggy day, Jennifer and I returned and spend several hours clearing bush.

However, on an October weekend we were joined by Curtis Stringle, Darren Quist and Martin McCarthy. On the rather wet Saturday, the trail up Cayoosh Creek was completed right to alpine meadows, avoiding virtually all damp, sensitive ground. Official Paul Binkert markers were placed throughout. We spent Sunday in the west fork of Cayoosh Creek. Fresh logging roads don't bode well for the approaches to Cayoosh Mtn., so we elected to work from the top down. A route had been explored on the previous weekend, and was easily improved. Beginning just above treeline, we made our way into the last forest cone and soon had a completed trail down to the crossing of the creek on the flatter valley floor.

4. TRIPS IN AND AROUND B.C.

Southern Coast Mountains area

BLOWDOWN CREEK CHRISTMAS SKI CAMP, December, 1991 - by Brian Waddington

The 1991 version of the classic BCMC Christmas camp was held in the headwaters of Blowdown Creek, southeast of Duffey Lake. This area features relatively high valley bottoms, numerous peaks of around 2400m, and reasonably dry weather. It is ideal for skiing on the short days of midwinter. Furthermore, the straightforward approach to this area promised to avoid the logistical problems of the previous year's Hurley River camp.

We met in the rain early Boxing Day morning at the Pemberton Petro-Can before driving up the Duffey Lake Road. The plentiful snow encouraged us to park right at the highway (leaving plenty of room for the snowplows!) Soon we were on our way, pulling our sleds up the gentle Blowdown road. By this time the precipitation had stopped, allowing glimpses of the peaks and the starting zones of some of the big avalanche tracks that cross the road. We followed the road for about 10.5 km before leaving it where it starts its climb to Blowdown Pass. There the route left the road and cut through the trees (lots of fun for the Crazy Karpets!) and up the open valley bottom. A little clearing about 2 km south-west of Gott Peak was declared to be the camp site.

The morning of the second day was spent setting up the camp. This went very quickly, with excellent effort by all. After a leisurely lunch there was time for a ski up the valley to the south. The weather was pretty socked in at the col but the snow held good news. When I dug a snow pit and did a shear test, I

found that the only way to get a failure was to pull on the column with all my weight! It snowed very little the rest of the week, so the snow pack remained stable and we were able to ski all sorts of steep stuff. At one point Steve declared "If we had done that in the Rockies we would all be dead now."

Next day was basically clear, and we got down to some serious skiing fun. Steve, Betsy, Dave R., and I ascended the 2400m peak west of the previous day's col. Betsy and Dave were satisfied with the impressive views from here, but Steve and I felt compelled to walk the 1 km of ridge to a slightly higher 2500m peak to the southwest. This afforded a view of the Van Horlick valley. The ski descent, down a lovely open bowl, proved to be a little tricky. A slight wind crust ensured a reasonable number of wipe-outs. Fortunately a few cm of snow fell the next night; enough to smooth out the skiing but not enough to de-stabilize the snow pack. A quick descent down the valley on "the expressway" (Christian's name) brought us back to camp.

The rest of the party had a busy day too. They skied up Gott Peak and the peak just south of Blowdown Pass. On the descent through the trees below the pass they found a snowmobiler who had gotten his machine stuck after venturing too far down the heavily-treed slope. (Snowmobile traffic seemed to be pretty common on the Blowdown Pass road. Fortunately the trees kept them away from camp.) The machine was soon freed and all went their respective ways.

Upon returning to camp we immediately set about the important business of enjoying its luxuries. The big tent was warm and cozy, as usual. And the food! The food was extraordinary. It was like a big pot luck, with everyone trying to outdo each other. We were treated to such delicacies as curry with fresh vegetables and yogurt, pudding with Bailey's in it, and even bacon and eggs for breakfast. If only I ate so well at home!

Next day was a big "togetherness" day as we all headed for "Notgott", the peak west of the col south of camp. This peak looked impressive from camp, but we were able to ski to its ridge less than 100m from its southern summit. A few of us carried on to the slightly higher northern summit as cloud blew in.

The descent from this peak proved to be excellent. The new snow in the bowl just below the summit ridge was so good that many of us took a second run there. While most opted to continue



Skiing in. Photo - S. Grant



Summit ridge of "Notgott". Photo - B. Waddington



Setting up camp. Photo - S. Grant



The summit of "Notgott". Photo - S. Grant



The tent up. Photo - B. Waddington



On a summit. Photo - S. Grant

down to the valley for a run down the expressway, a few steep-hounds (Steve, Peter, Dave R., Darlene, Harold, and I) traversed high on a bench on the north side of the valley. After a couple of short steep pitches we arrived at a ridge from which an avalanche path descended to the valley below. There followed an exhilarating run down the steep chute, which became progressively more challenging as we encountered small trees toward the bottom. Amazing skiing - definitely not what I associate with Christmas!

The fourth day in camp we again split into several groups. Darlene, Harold, Peter, Betsy, Denise, Tom, Audrey, and I elected to go for the highest thing around, which was a 2650m bump on the ridge a couple of kilometres northwest of Gott Peak. This involved a mega-traverse across the south slopes of Gott followed by a windy ridge walk. On the ridge we found fresh mountain goat tracks (which wasn't too surprising) and boot prints (which was). Not long afterwards we saw skiers at the head of Gott Creek. We learned later that the skiers (and makers of the tracks) were Michael Feller, Ross Wyborn, and company, who had a Christmas camp of their own in Gott Creek.

After a brief bite on the summit we headed back under increasingly cloudy skies. Threatening clouds that never really amounted to anything were quite a feature of the weather that week. So many times we thought we were having our last good day, but the next day was always perfectly OK. On the way back Tom and I made a detour to Gott Peak (since we missed the trip there earlier in the week) before descending back to camp. The skiing was OK on the amazingly inviting-looking south slope of Gott although the snow was a little wind blown.

Meanwhile others were having similar fun climbing Notgott and a 2300m ridge southwest of camp. Unfortunately on the way down Debbie twisted a knee, causing some concern. With a little ingenuity she was helped back to camp (on her feet) without having to bend the offending joint. She spent the next day enjoying the luxury of camp before staging an amazing recovery in time to ski out.

The next day, New Year's Eve, was to be an easy day, as we all felt pretty tired after so many days in a row of great skiing. So we wandered up the expressway to the bowl between Ridge 2300 and Peak 2400 for a short relaxing day. But it was not to be. The weather was perfect and the snow was excellent. We took a run, then another, and another.

We just couldn't stop, it was so good. Turns were made on every bit of steep face around. Finally we returned to camp, exhausted but happy. This left rather little energy for New Year's Eve celebrations. Only a select few managed to stay up until midnight.

New Year's Day involved the usual leaving kind of stuff: taking down tents, packing up, and skiing out. All of which went so fast that we were out at the cars by lunch time. We should have gone for another run!

Party: Darlene Anderson, Susan Anstett, Russ Brown, Jack Bryceland, Peter Celliers, Betsy Fletcher, Stephen Grant, Denise Hart, Dave Kitzman, Audrey Pearson, Debbie Phillips, Dave Robinson, Christian Rucker, Harold Rydell, Tom Zarzecki and Brian Waddington (organizer)

SKIING SKIHIST - by Randy Stoltmann

Flipping through the *Alpine Guide* looking for an unusual Easter weekend ski trip destination, Dick Culbert's simple description of Skihist Mountain inspired me: "*Highest summit within the range of this guide. A barren scree ridge located at the head of Kwoiek Creek's N fork, 14 miles WSW of Lytton.*" As a high and somewhat aloof summit, Skihist seemed to capture that strangely hollow feeling of remoteness, something that I value as part of mountaineering. And it is certainly a peak not often visited on skis. As a "*barren scree ridge,*" maybe it wasn't even skiable enough to be worth the effort. But some of the most memorable ski runs I've had have been from such summits, not because of particularly good snow conditions, but more because of unusual situations -- combinations of strange snow conditions, wind, exposure and the peculiar joy and thrill of making turns in high and unlikely places. In the spirit of venturing forth into the unknown or uncertain, I wanted to try.

The main problem with skiing Skihist appeared to be access. The mountain is a long way from any highway, and the logging road up Kwoiek Creek is usually snowed-in in winter. Ideally, the steep glacier on the north face would provide the best ski route, but access to this is difficult. The logging road there remains snowed-in much longer. The south side seemed to offer a shorter approach, but because the peak isn't visible from any roads, summit snow conditions on this side would remain a total mystery. An approach ski of twenty kilometres up the logging road seemed likely because, even in

spring, persistent snow patches in shady areas on the road might stop a vehicle a long way from the end. Not very inspiring, especially if the summit turned out to be bare of snow!

It occurred to me that the winter of 1991/92 was developing perfect Skihist conditions – enough snow up high, but a rapid, early melting at lower elevations.

Easter weekend saw Greg and I driving up the Kwoiek Creek road, grinding through deep water bars on the heavily flood-damaged road. The road had deteriorated to four-wheel-drive only in the lower canyon, but further up was in good shape. The elevation increased – five hundred metres, six hundred metres, seven hundred metres – still no snow. Then, at Kwoiek Lake, where a patch of tall trees shaded the road, a deep snow patch blocked the way. A long way to walk. We shovelled wheel ruts and ground the truck through in low gear, then did the same at a second snow patch, gaining another three kilometres to an impassable snowdrift.



En route to Skihist. Photo - R. Stoltmann

Elevation 915m. Sunny skies with a few drifting clouds. No sign of the objective.

We skied and walked for five kilometres up the road to the bridge near John George Lake, then skied another three kilometres to Kha Lake where we had lunch. Still no sign of the objective. Looking up our approach route east of Antimony Creek, we noted that there was no snow on the south-facing slopes to about 1,700m!

Following an obscure spur road up across Antimony Creek, we gained access to the steep, dry ridge east of the creek. Underbrush was minimal in the pleasant Douglas-fir forest. At about 1,600m we traversed left into the Antimony Creek valley where we fought through thickets of avalanche-battered trees. As the forest thinned out, easy travel resumed and we arrived at Antimony Lake at dusk. Still no sign of the objective, which remained hidden behind the craggy bulk of Claimpost Peak.

The following morning was still clear. The massive pyramid of Antimony Mountain soared 800m above the steep cirque containing the lake. We skied across the lake and made an ascending traverse up the steep cirque headwall. A climb up a forty degree snow couloir brought us to the upper bowl where we angled left up more forty degree slopes to the 2530m col between Antimony Mountain and Claimpost Peak. Finally a view of Skihist, high and bleak, thinly covered with snow, its summit in the clouds.

We dug a snow pit, then cranked a few turns down a steep northwest-facing powder chute into the large basin below the south side of Skihist. To the west, other mountains shone silver between black rock ridges. The peak of Skihist appeared off and on as the summit mists swirled and drifted. The south face itself was mostly a bowl of bare talus. A steep snowfield on the west side below the rocky summit ridges offered the only continuous ski route down. Not really a scree ridge, and perhaps not really a ski run!

After skiing up the basin to the base of the talus, we began the final grind up the steep three hundred metre face. A dusting of new snow covered bare ice patches at 2800m. I wished I'd brought my crampons. Skirting most of the ice, I scrambled directly up the south face above the ice while Greg stayed to the right, gaining the summit ridge at a notch. The last section was a ridge of windblown powder leading to the bleak 2973m summit. Skiing time!



Skihist summit. Photo - R. Stoltmann

We donned skis and stood on the snow-covered cairn, gazing out over the vast basin of the Stein River valley to the north. Then we pushed off and made a few careful turns down the summit ridge, bypassing the spine on the fringe of the north side glacier. Skiing through a notch in the ridge to the south face, we edged our way down the series of snow-dusted ice patches and gingerly traversed to the steep snowfield. After digging a snow pit, we judged the slope to be stable and cranked jump turns down a short, steep gully to where the angle eased off. Big, relaxed, cruising turns brought us to the bottom of the basin.

Skinning and climbing up, we regained the Claimpost-Antimony col. This was becoming a long day, so thoughts of climbing Antimony as well were quickly dismissed. A long run through abysmal breakable crust down the steep cirque followed. Camp was a welcome sight, as twilight was already settling over the basin.

Another fine day dawned for our descent to the valley. With some careful route finding, we found pleasant skiing on good corn snow down Antimony Creek. Skiing ended at about 1750m. Here we traversed out of the deepening creek canyon and descended the steep, open forest to the logging slash. Eight km of skiing and walking down the road brought us back to the truck.

Skiing Skihist -- another memorable run!

Party: Randy Stoltmann and Greg Stoltmann

**STEIN VALLEY TRAVERSE - NUMBER 1,
18-25 June, 1993** - by Nick Vipond and Mark Fleming

Part 1 - alpine - by Nick Vipond.

The three of us - Mark Fleming, Suzanne Dorais (Chauffeur) and Myself, Nick Vipond, left

Vancouver at around 6 pm on Friday evening. We wanted to get an early start on Saturday morning so we camped out for the night at Lizzie Bay Recreation site on Lillooet Lake.

We got up around 6 am, ate our non de-hydrated meal, packed up our gear, and headed up towards Lizzie lake. About 4 km from the lake we had to stop the truck. Suzanne drove away leaving the two of us to deal with the bears, bugs, wood rats, and worst of all - each other. After walking up the rest of the dirt road, we arrived at Lizzie lake where we met a fairly hungry Outward Bound group that had spent the last 18 days hiking and climbing along the Stein Divide from the Blowdown area.

It took a little effort to find the trailhead due to all the windfall. When we found the trail, it quickly started climbing up and away from Lizzie lake. We came out of the trees and into the sub-alpine as we passed through the gates of Shangri-la. At this point the sky was clear with a few clouds and we were optimistic that it would remain this way for the full journey. At around noon, we stopped at Lizzie cabin for lunch.

After lunch, our destination was Arrowhead lake. The guidebook told us to follow the creek up to the lake and that we would see the water flowing over the rocks at the end of the lake. Well, this sounded pretty simple so we saw the creek and went at it. Shortly after, we arrived at the end of a fairly long lake - we quickly decided that this was Long lake (the wrong lake). We took a map bearing, and followed some tracks over a fairly rocky ridge until we could see the water flowing out of Arrowhead lake from across a nice alpine bowl. We soon arrived at Arrowhead lake and after a short break continued on to Heart Lake where we would set up camp.

On Sunday we had a rude awakening, when an eagle took a run at, and flew into, the side of our tent. At this point we became concerned about the status of our food hanging in the tree, so we got up. It must have gotten pretty cold that night as Heart Lake had frozen over. After breakfast we started up the hill towards Tabletop Mtn. Our final destination for the day was either the east end of Tundra lake (via the north shore of Tundra) or Figure Eight lake. The Figure Eight route would have taken two day to get to Tundra Lake and we could see there was a lot of snow along this steep route. Since the weather was in our favour, we decided to go for Tundra Lake via its north shore.



Mark above Tundra Lake. Photo - N. Vipond



Mark and Nick with Caltha Pk. in background. Photo - N. Vipond

We crossed over Cherry Pip Pass around noon and continued side-hilling towards Tundra until we were directly north of Caltha Lake. We stopped at a stream for lunch as we saw no need to walk down to the lake. After lunch we continued east towards the Stein Divide (between Caltha and Tundra), losing the trail about four times along the way. As we crossed the Divide and Tundra Lake came into view, I went into a state of shock and depression. The lake was covered mostly in snow and ice, the steep route down to the lake and the route along the steep shore of the lake were half covered in snow. At this point I was very tired, and figured it impossible to traverse the shore of the lake, but Mark calmed me down and we cautiously found a safe route down to the lake.

As we began boulder hopping along the lake, we heard voices behind us. A group of four was at the end of the lake and traveling the same route as us. To our surprise, they ran down the steep snow without any hesitation. They soon caught up with us - they were from Cache Creek and had come for the fishing. They told us their secret - no lunch stop and chocolate bars - it sounded like a crash and burn recipe. But you couldn't argue with their agility. We opted to take the high route over a large knoll while this other group took the low route. The guidebook said the high route was easier. Well, strike one against the guide book - we reached the peak of the knoll and as we looked down the steep snow covered slope we had to descend, the other group was in the clear and heading up the hill towards the campsite.

After twelve hours of hiking, we finally arrived at our campsite at the east end of Tundra Lake. There was no nearby source of running water so we had to melt snow. We ate a gourmet meal of re-hydrated Beef Taco's followed by a mug of hot chocolate.

I had thought the hike to Tundra campsite was tough - it was just a warm-up. On Monday our destination was Stein Lake via a ridge which started north of Tundra Lake. An alternate route would be to side-hill below the ridge to Puppet Lake but this would involve an extra day and again, the weather was in our favour.

So we started up towards the saddle that would take us on to the ridge. It was fairly steep and most of the time we were on snow. The final ascent was up very steep snow-covered talus, without ice axes or crampons. When we got to the saddle, the next challenge was to climb onto the steep rock from the

snow without slipping in between. I am not a rock climber, and a 25 kg pack did not help much, but I finally climbed up the steep rock to the ridge, which was 1m wide and 600m straight down on the other side. I then consulted my altimeter which said we were at 2360m, but the guidebook said we should access the ridge at 2200m. I looked at the ridge walk in store - it looked more like a climb. I then concluded we had accessed the ridge too early. Mark soon caught up to me so I broke the news to him. He would not accept the news and insisted that the cairn on the ridge ahead of us was a route marker. At this point Mark was cool, calm, and fairly relaxed as he looked toward Cherry Pip Pass, Tundra peak and parts of our route from the previous day. On the other had I was quite stressed out and wanting to get off the ridge. Mark calmed me down a little and we continued along the ridge for about 5 minutes with Mark leading until we came to a small cliff and a very large slide and Mark said "Yeah, this is a little over my head".

So now we had no choice but to head down the snow face we just came up. We agreed that our approach thus far had been a little on the unsafe side so we decided it would be best to belay our packs down the slope. But the packs would not slide down the snow because it had softened up, so we ended up dragging them. We soon found the cairns leading to the correct saddle but at this point we had had enough of the ridge and the stormy clouds in the distance forced us to take the low route to Puppet Lake.

We ended up losing a lot of elevation which we had gained earlier that day but the high route looked too steep and had too many trees. Our friends from Cache Creek got a later start than us but were ahead of us as they did not attempt the ridge. The sidehill was very painful on tired feet, and the stormy looking clouds were now above us as we traversed the meadow. It started to snow lightly.

After yet another brutal day of hiking (about seven hours) we finally arrived at Puppet Lake where we met again with our friends from Cache Creek and another family of four from Vancouver who came from Caltha Lake, along the ridge above Tundra Lake, and then also side-hilled at Puppet Lake.

Part 2 - Valley - by Mark Fleming

Puppet lake: at 7:30 am on Tuesday, I decided that I couldn't sleep anymore. The fact that we had

been in the tent for over 11 hours had something to do with that. The storm clouds from the day before had brought us about 3 cm of snow and the wind was still blowing it all around.

We had approximately 800m to descend and several kilometers to go before we would hit the Stein Valley trail at the foot of Stein Lake. By the time we finally left the camp most of the snow had melted.

Following the guide book's advice we followed Puppet Creek down and veered slightly east to avoid some deadfall. Apparently we didn't veer quite enough as we encountered massive deadfall on steep ground and the going was quite slow. Once at the lake, however, we met up with our friends from Cache Creek who were quite happy to lead the way. We let them show off their bushwhacking abilities through 3m tall stands of willow and alder around the lake. Bringing up the rear was no picnic but what did we have to prove?

After a while the bush cleared out and we had game trails to follow around the lake. The only concern here was the abundance of bear scat! There was still a lot of deadfall. With tired feet and empty bellies we plodded on just past the lake to a lunch spot. The first cable car crossing is a few kilometers after the lake.

We used the guide book again to find a suitable camping spot. This proved to be a mistake as the well-recommended Island Camp was not where it was supposed to be, and we ended up doubling back a couple of kilometers to set up camp on the river bank. We had a 1.2 x 2m stretch of sand for the tent, and across a mini channel we had a cook spot on a rocky island just off the shore. Our campfire kept the bugs away and helped to dry our boots that were soaked from the snow the day before. Our spirits were low, feet were wet and dinner was horrible; it could only get better from here.

On Wednesday I thought Nick was tired of me strategically packing my pack. The fact that he timed me at just over 35 minutes might be why. I don't remember much of this day. I think I was very tired. There were swamps, cliffs, and boulder fields. I think there was also a cable car or two. It was really windy in the upper canyon - the big trees in the middle of the canyon moved crazily in the wind. I was starting to see some of the magic of this place.

We camped at Logjam camp, had a fire and made Chili and bannock. Our friends from Cache Creek

showed up looking rather tired. They had enough time to cast their lines into the Stein just before dark.

We had a visitor at Logjam camp. It was grey, about 20 cm long with a bushy tail about 10 cm long. Yes, it was the obligatory pack rat, and it was eating my hiking boots for dinner. It took a severe step to get this rat to leave; I had to bring my boots inside the tent.

After the rat had gone, I couldn't get to sleep because my left eye was giving me great pain. It had been sore after dinner but I thought it was just an irritation from bug spray. The stabbing pain I felt from the light of the flashlight caused me to start wondering about the future of our expedition.

The next morning I found that I could only open my left eye with great effort and even then it would tear up after a very short time. After breakfast I was feeling better and I put on my dark sunglasses and baseball cap and stared straight ahead. I delegated Nick leader and followed his footsteps because looking anywhere else was too painful. We decided to do our best to try and hike out that day because of the very real concern that I needed to see a doctor to treat my eye.

In the end we hiked all the middle canyon and half of the lower - 29.4 km in total. I remember very little of it. We had stashed away our compass and map in favour of the descriptions from the guide book instead.

Of all the Stein Valley, the lower canyon is my favourite part. We camped at Big Teepee. A really nice spot about 8.5 km from the trailhead - sandy, warm, the river close roaring deeply, and the ponderosa pine forest smells like home.

We limped around camp that night, took baths in the Stein, and sundried ourselves on the rocky shore. Oops, we traded the mosquitoes for red ants and noseums. We slept on top of our bags with no fly on the tent in sharp contrast to two days earlier at Puppet Lake.

In the morning my eye was feeling much better by my vision was very blurred. We set out painfully to complete the last 8 km of the trail, saying to ourselves that it was too bad we would miss the pictographs. A few hours later we stumbled upon the pictographs by accident, having wandered off the trail. We took some pictures and plodded back up the trail. I sometimes thought I could hear a very large jet flying overhead very close, but it was the roar of the river keeping us company.

The final ascent to the trail head was almost a sprint as some unknown energy overtook us. We celebrated our triumph over nature and our bodies with iced tea and even doused our heads with water. When we came to our senses we realized that Lytton was 8 km of sunbaked Fraser River canyon away and there wasn't a pay phone in sight. So we trudged on to Lytton in 34°C sun and hitchhiked.

All things considered, it was a good trip. We were well prepared although a little optimistic on the complexity of the terrain. The guidebook was very helpful in preparing us for the trip, planning out milestones and was our major reference source for route selection.

Oh and my eye....well five doctors and about \$70 worth of drugs later. I found that it was infected from an unhealed scratch caused by a piece of gortex 6 months earlier! No permanent damage.

STEIN VALLEY TRAVERSE NUMBER 2, 24 - 31 July, 1993 - by Mike McCullough

About 10 minutes out of the parking lot on the Lytton Indian Reserve at the mouth of the Stein River, there's a porous sculpted rock face called the 'Birthing rock', where legend has it hikers should leave a tribute to the local spirits to guide them safely through the valley. All we had to put in the rock, without taking apart the packs we had just stuffed to bursting, was some pocket change. A warning: don't nickel and dime the weather gods.

Actually, our troubles began with the Lytton ferry, which wasn't running as the result of a missing part. After leaving Paul's car halfway up the Lizzie Lake road, we drove all the way to Lytton, only to head back to Lillooet and from there south along the Texas Creek/West Side Road. By the time we were on the trail, it was 6 pm. We got two hours of hiking in before making camp.

We covered more than 30 km over the next two days - relatively flat, valley-bottom hiking to Logjam Camp. The bugs (daytime) and the rats (nighttime) provided most of the challenge. Past Logjam the trail gets considerably rougher, often washed away by eroding strambanks or mired in blowdowns. Around 11 am on day four we ran into Mark, a real Stein hillbilly with a fishing rod. He had been in the valley for about two weeks, the last five days at Stein Lake, living off berries and rainbow trout. He had left the lake at 7 that morning, so he must have been moving at three times our speed. I don't think it was a coincidence that he was heading out on our

last sunny day. By the time we got to Avalanche Creek that afternoon, we felt sprinkles of rain.

Barely five minutes out of camp the next morning, it started to drizzle again. Over and under the blowdowns, the group got separated and soaked. By afternoon we weren't bothering to cross the creeks on logs; our boots were already sopping wet. One by one we staggered into Stein Lake, having to compete with a similarly miserable eastbound group for scarce tent space.

Only later in the evening, when the rain tapered off, did we come out to make a fire, dry (ha!) our clothes and compare notes on the trail. From what we gathered, there was absolutely no water, nor a good place to camp on the ridge from whence they came, so the next day we decided to follow an 'alternate route' marked on the map, along the north shore of Stein Lake and up the creek that runs out of Puppet Lake. We were halfway along the lake in a drizzle when Chris stepped on a hornet's nest. Both he and Diane were stung. Then, about 200m from the end of the lake, the unmarked trail petered out in a tangle of bush covering an old slide. The willpower was tested as we reached the forest on the other side only to find deadfall everywhere. The only way to go was up. After about an hour of sheer misery, the forest thinned out and we could traverse to the creek. There was no trail, just steep, gravelly slope up to treeline and Puppet Lake, where the drizzle turned to snow.

The light snow showers of the next day were pleasant by comparison. We regained the trail along the ridge, enjoying what view there was under the cloud cover. We reached Tundra Lake around 2:15 pm and decided to press on the 2.2 km to Caltha Lake, over the divide. That 2.2 km of boulder-hopping took us nearly four hours, and the rain was moving in again. We decided to gun it out by the logging road below Cherry Pip Pass the next day, which would get us home two days earlier than originally planned.

I thought Paul was kidding when he got up the next morning, day eight, and announced it was sunny outside. Indeed, there was barely a wisp of cloud in the sky and the frost quickly melted away. Our gear was still pretty rancid, however, so we stuck to the plan and boulder-hopped down from the pass, through a short stretch of bush and onto the disused logging road on the opposite side of the valley. Despite a washed-out bridge halfway down, we reached Paul's car around 2 pm.

Back in Lillooet, the people at the Travel Infocentre told us the ferry still wasn't running, so Paul and Chris drove to Lytton, planning to hike over the rail bridge the 8 km up to Chris's car. In fact the ferry was running, but Chris had a flat so Paul had to drive back to Lillooet to pick up Diane and me, by then busy protein-loading at the Old Vic Hotel, expecting the others to come driving up the West Side Road. We got back to the city after midnight. Some things about BCMC trips never change.

Party: Chris Jedrzycki (organizer), Diane L'Heureux, Paul Ng, and Mike McCullough

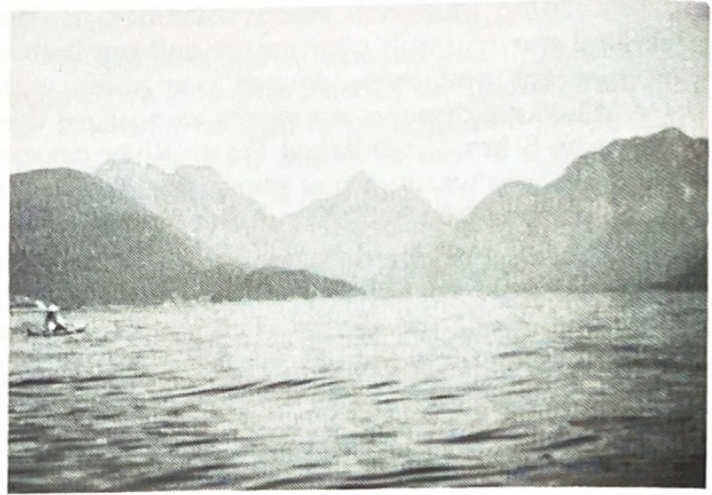
COASTAL MOUNTAINEERING: MT. CHURCHILL, 25-28 August, 1992 - by Denise Hart

I was hanging around Vancouver, waiting to hear about a job, when Dave dropped by our place. "Do you want to come to Mt. Churchill with me?" he suggested. "Where's Mt. Churchill?", I asked. I'd never heard of it. When Dave replied that it was a lovely horn of a mountain up Jervis Inlet, and that he planned to paddle to the area, I was hooked on the idea.

The job fell through, so I got out my map and began checking out the area. The approach was sure to be a good bushwhack, and well, I actually enjoy a good bushwhack now and again. It also looked steep and rugged and was obviously an area that didn't get visited very often. All this made it very appealing.

Dave, already on the Sunshine Coast, picked me up off the first ferry to Langdale on Tuesday. By the time I put my gear in his Honda, it was packed with kayaking and climbing gear.

We drove to Egmont and loaded the boats. By the time we put in, it was about 11 a.m. It was a gorgeous, sunny day and both the wind and tide were with us. We paddled from Secret Bay in Sechelt Inlet, around Egmont Point and up Jervis Inlet to Vancouver Bay. The inlet twists and turns and offers changing views of steep rocky peaks. By the time we got to Vancouver Bay, we had been able to admire both Mt. Churchill and the Marlborough Heights area from our kayaks. There is an Indian reservation at Vancouver Bay, and a fishing lodge. There were some fishermen there, so we asked permission to camp just north of High Creek. They were very amiable and said sure.



The approach with Mt. Churchill in centre of photo. Photo - D. Williams



Mt. Churchill from near Vancouver Bay. Photo - D. Williams



Denise enjoying the bush. Photo - D. Williams



Churchill's summit rock. Photo - D. Williams

We managed to find a strip of non-bushy land to camp on, and a good place to hide the kayaks. On Wednesday morning we set off up the west side of High Creek. As expected, it was a good bushwhack. The lower reaches of the creek were not too bad (except we both found wasps) and we hit an old logging road, with large, widely-spaced alder, at about 350m. We travelled on this alder walkway to about 500m, just below the junction of the creek that drains the large unnamed lake in the cirque in the Marlborough Heights area and the west fork of High Creek. Although we did not gain much elevation on this, we did cover a reasonable distance. From the alder walkway, we headed up the west fork of High Creek, thrashing through slash and a young forest. This was hard work, but we finally found our next creek junction and headed up to the lake west of Mt. Churchill.

We arrived at the lake about 4 p.m., tired but satisfied. We'd left about 7:30 a.m., and figured that we'd made pretty good time, considering we had bushwhacked for 1200m with heavy packs. We ate a leisurely dinner, compared wasp wounds and bruises, and crashed as it got dark.

I was the alarm clock (since we didn't actually have one) and we got up at 6 a.m. the following day. There was still some minor bushwhacking to gain the northwest ridge of Mt. Churchill, but it was worth it. This ridge is a very pleasant scramble, with glacier-scoured granite - the kind of rock that I find very aesthetic. At about 1650m we had a good look at what we were up against. It looked rather daunting to me, vertical and exposed, but armed with the knowledge (from Fairley's guide) that the west face was 2 1/2 pitches of 5.4, we donned rock shoes, helmets and roped up, with Dave leading.

Well, I'm not a very experienced rock climber, but I figured this was tougher than 5.4, at least the route we took. There wasn't an "obvious" route, but the way we went, to the south of the chimney, was more like 5.6 with a few 5.8/5.9 moves. I was certainly glad to be in rock shoes, and glad I wasn't leading. It was 3 pitches, and Dave found that small rocks were very useful for protection. This got us on to less steep ground, and we were able to deke south around the nose and scramble up to the summit. It was a tougher climb than either of us anticipated, and it was enjoyable and satisfying to reach the peak. Unfortunately, the summit register was wet and unreadable, so we didn't know how many others had climbed the peak.

The rappel down was straightforward, although somewhat time consuming, as one of our ropes was only 35m long. I think we were both relieved to be down safely, and I started to notice how hungry I was at this time. It was 4 p.m. and I'd only had a chocolate bar since breakfast.

We got back to camp, packed up and left by 5:30. We had decided to try and get as far as possible before dark. The trip from the lake back down to the



Rapelling down Churchill. Photo - D. Williams

west fork of High Creek went quite quickly - it involved lots of vegetable rappelling and was steeper than we remembered from the day before. So this is why we were tired coming up it!

Dave had spotted another old road that he thought connected to our alder walkway. To get to it involved some thorny, thick bushwacking and a touch of good luck, but we found it. It was another alder route but the alder was small and closely spaced. However, it was much easier than what we'd been travelling through. We camped at 8:30 p.m., at the creek that drains the large unnamed lake. We managed (barely) to squeeze the tent between the alder.

By the next morning, my internal alarm clock had slowed down. It was Dave's turn to wake up at 6 a.m. We were off by 7. We managed to find our first alder walkway, and cruised down it, quite enjoying the relatively easy travelling. We followed the road to about 300m, where it turned back uphill, and, we figured, ended. We then enjoyed a pleasant bushwack through mossy old forest back down to the beach. We knew we were getting close to the ocean. The moss covered everything in a soft green coat - cedars and Douglas-firs, huckleberry bushes, and the granite rocks engulfed in the thick forest floor. And then we could smell ocean. We hit the beach just 100m north of our original campsite, and made it there by 10 a.m.

By the time we rearranged our gear back into the kayaks and had eaten lunch (part 1) the wind had picked up. The tide was with us for part of the return paddle, but the wind was pretty stiff and was against us the entire way back. I was surprised, but we actually made it to Egmont by 3:30, slightly faster than our trip up the inlet. However, my arms were certainly more tired!

For me, this was a classic coastal trip. It was somewhat remote, required water access, was a good thrash in the bush, and had a challenging climb. All this to climb a 2000m peak. And yet, very satisfying.

So, where are you headed next Dave?

Party: Dave Williams, Denise Hart

WEDGE SOUTH FACE - Skiing the Rooftop of Garibaldi Park, 28-29 March, 1992 - by Randy Stoltmann

In the distant spring of 1982, Greg and I visited Wedge Mountain with the intention of skiing the entire 1500-vertical-metre south face, that giant

ramp, tilted like a chalet roof, leading from the 2904m summit all the way down to Wedge Pass in one great sweep -- perhaps the longest uninterrupted fall-line backcountry ski run near Vancouver. But with apparently stable snow conditions and brilliant sunny skies, we had been lured into the "Eclipse Glacier" couloir on the west face, another run we'd been eyeing for some time. "We'll ski the south face tomorrow," we reasoned. But tomorrow was fogged in. We groped our way to the summit and skied only the top six hundred metres of the south face in near-zero visibility before traversing off to follow our ascent tracks back down Wedge Ridge. Over the years, two subsequent attempts were foiled by bad weather. On one late season trip we carried our skis all the way to 2100m, then were too lazy to use them. Instead, we lounged around and watched a couple of deer grazing in a snow-free meadow, then carried our skis back down in a rain storm! We always wanted to go back and finish the run down to Wedge Pass.

Ten years after our first try, a spur of the moment decision saw us thrashing up the alder-covered logging roads south of Rethel Creek on a sunny late March weekend. Things had grown a little since the last time! Once in the forest, we skied efficiently up Rethel Creek and across the high basins west of Wedge. We set up camp at about 2250m on the west ridge.

After a brief rest, something compelled us to continue on to the summit. Perhaps it was the fear of once again waking up to pea soup fog in the morning. Two hours later, just after sunset, and 2233m above our start that morning, we stood on the summit gazing at the alpenglow. The run back to camp was special -- carving turns down the smooth, forty-degree face in twilight, staring down into the darkened depths of Wedge Creek 1500m below our ski tips. During the night, a stiff wind picked up and we were up anchoring all points of the flapping tent down under moonlit skies. In the morning, we quickly packed up camp and moved out across the face to the base of the best ski line -- one of several continuous snow-filled corridors running parallel down the upper face between bare, wind-blown, rubble ridges. We cached the bulk of our gear in the rocks, strapped skis to packs, and started the two-hour climb to the top.

After the previous night's ascent, our mid-day arrival on the summit seemed bland, so we wasted no time getting started on the long-awaited run down. We coasted along the gentle summit ridge for

half a kilometre, then plunged down the slightly icy, six hundred vertical metre corridor, carving precise turns with all of Garibaldi Park at our feet. Below our cache, where we reloaded our packs, the angle eased off to ideal cruising terrain, and the snow softened to perfect corn. We had hit it right! On and on, down the vast face, sweeping left, right, left. Big cruisers, little wiggles, warm spring wind in our faces. Down a little gully, weaving effortlessly through avalanche-battered saplings, in corn snow heaven!

A couple of hundred metres above Wedge Creek, we finally stopped to rest on dry, needle-covered ground under a fragrant whitebark pine – the beauty of spring in the mountains. Then more corn snow, a bit of picking through tight trees and rocks, and a last meadow cruise to the bubbling creek. Fifteen-hundred vertical metres of skiing perfection!

After lunch, we began the 9 km exit, quickly poling and skating down Wedge Creek, a long stretch of which is very flat and open, probably a swamp in summer. After about 6 km, the snow became too patchy to ski, and we followed

fragments of an ancient trapper's trail down the north side of the creek through open, mossy forest. As the sidehill steepened, we maintained elevation above the canyon. At about 7 km, elevation 915m, we emerged in the logging slash on the nose of Wedge Ridge, then walked down the logging road in twilight, satisfied. Ten years and worth the wait!

Party: Greg Stoltmann and Randy Stoltmann

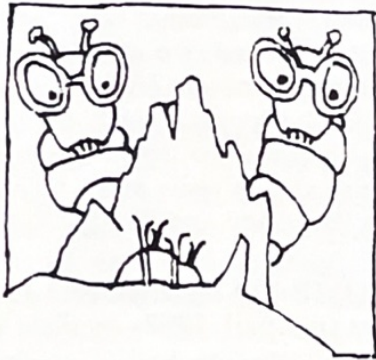
BLACKCOMB TO DIAMOND HEAD ON SKIS, 10 days in April, 1992 - by Blair Mitten

I sit up in the tent. The shadow faces of three men beside me have a tint of yellow to their features in the dawning day, another day of whiteout conditions in the Bookworms col. Another day perched at the top of the long run down to Grey Pass. For a couple of days we squat until common sense breaks through the humours and narrow perspectives and we go home the way we came, the short way, the easy way, the safe way.

Again, we will leave. Seven of us want to trace a route between Blackcomb Mtn. and the Diamond Head parking lot and the first day is fair. I will be a



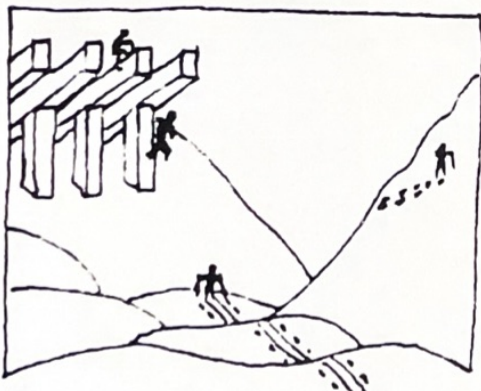
Paul Kubik at the Bookworms, with Garibaldi behind. Photo - R. Stoltmann



HANGING OUT NEAR THE
BOOKWORMS.

pilgrim this trip, I just want to travel through my dreams. I have challenged dreams, I have approached dreams with achievement in mind and I stumble. Today the movement is all that I have, the dream is to put to bed, and awareness is to be exercised. After a shaky start, the rude thrust of skiers into the alpine wilderness with a haste timed around the mechanical revolutions of various 'bull wheels' in the ski area, I settle down to a pleasant afternoon of ski mountaineering as a spectator sport.

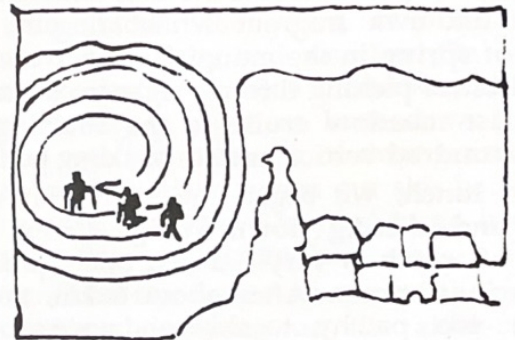
The peaks and glaciers form a wonderful amphitheater for my amusement, the audience of me on the stage with the performers climbing the rafters around me. This first day has taken on the mood of serious pursuit albeit with a joy in the beautiful afternoon, a clearing trend with blue sky and some warmth as we choose a pocket of névé, tucked right under Mt. Pattison, to set our tents. We lounged like lizards except Darlene, who knew better and fortified our position. The storm blew in



CLIMBING THE RAFTERS
AROUND ME.

late at night, got some of out digging, and stayed a while.

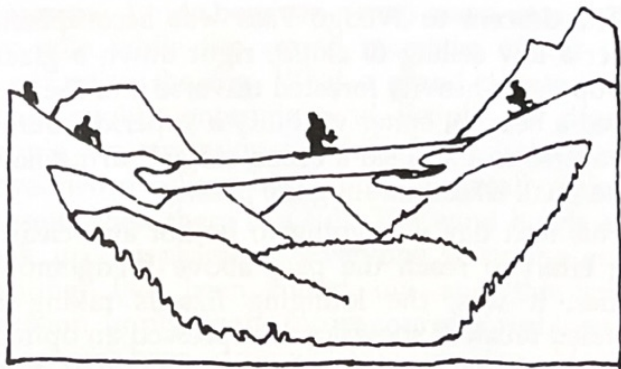
The first of the sucker-holes. I have yet to see a black hole, but those sucker holes pepper our part of the universe and we've all seen them. You'll recall yourself, likely, "white, white, white, blue! Let's go!, white and more white". That country south of the Blackcomb Ski Corral is full of sucker holes and we got sucked into the headwaters of the Cheakamus River, an area somebody flushed - it rained, and rained. This pilgrim was travelling all right, 3 km in three days.



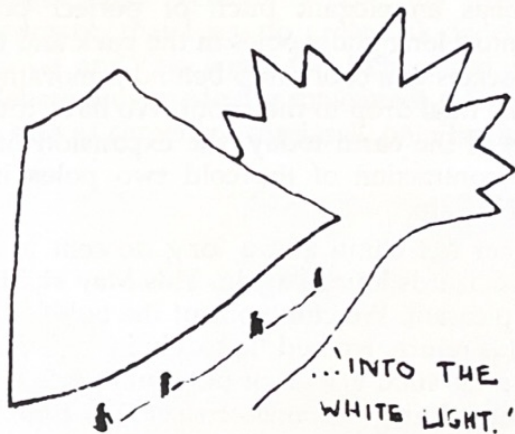
INTO THE SUCKER HOLE.

I lay in my tent, thick in the wood and drifted again out of the mist onto the easy and silent glide along the Platform Glacier, a perfect passage without history and the brief vision of a world untouched by systematic destruction before the cloud settled around me. This was a place of my dream. Later, in the bush camp, Denise taught us that 'Thermophores' dried close to a fire explode into freeform sculptures that demonstrate the thermo-dynamic properties of warming air in enclosed spaces. Silly 'happy hobbit' verses to a persistent tune and adventures in firelighting help pass the time before our new religion, a worship of the veiled Orb (people who witness the lifting of the veil...get suckered) persuades us, as religions will, into behaviour that questions the border-line of good sense. We proceed south.

The McBride Glacier is a gentle ramp to the white light. We are above tree-line climbing up on the best skiing snow of the trip. The wind invigorates attitudes as we all summit at our own pace, luxury in the harsh environment. I am left alone for a moment, absolute solitude my rare jewel in the crown of mountain memory.



DREAMING NO MORE, GLIDING
ALONG THE PLATFORM GLACIER.



A traverse across some pretty expansive slopes leads to the 'Gatekeeper' and a hard turn to the left escapes the tension in the snowpack that we are all sensitive to. This point is a key feature to the route and a delight in its discreet appearance. We cross the spine of the range and work down friendly slopes and vicious snow, before crossing a steep spur into a good camp at Wolverine Pass. We are travelling now, mental ropes stretching beyond taut to a flow of sensation and problem-solving. The debates are more practical and, ironically, less urgent as we navigate novel terrain, translating the art of the map and the history of our cumulative experience into a course of action that we all want to be judged wise.

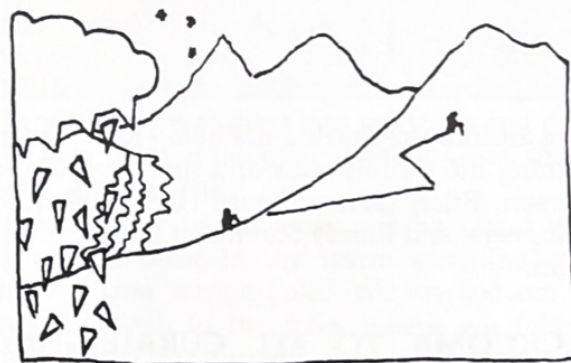
A long, spectacular slope drops north off the Forger Glacier and wraps around the crest into Drop Pass and we select this route, the heights refusing to curtsy below the cover of cloud. Before the drop to

Drop we are treated to views of Mt. Pitt, fluted and abrupt, enthralling and isolate.



GATEKEEPER

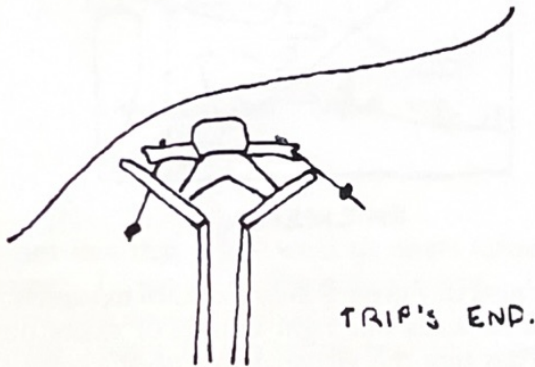
The next day gives Randy a chance to exercise his skill as he leads our tight bundle of skiers out of Drop Pass into the virtual white of our reality. At ridge top we do the nonsensical sensible thing and sit on a rock for an hour and into another, waiting for a hint of vista. Restless, we descend and traverse towards Isosceles and wait again for a vision. It is a hint of known ground that has us defying contours and attempting a traverse of the north and eastern slopes of Isosceles and Parapet right into Grey Pass. That line is steep and a final questionable slope above grinning crevasses veered us west over the top of Parapet. Climbing out of the mist a weather system broke and fell shattering into the valleys below our feet, and we gathered quietly on the top of Parapet as a dark laced with planets and stars entwined us as a group.



'A WEATHER SYSTEM BROKE
AND FELL SHATTERING.'

The rest of the trip, from a camp in Grey Pass, was over the well known ground surrounding

Garibaldi Lake to a camp overlooking a pesky Vancouver incandescence from where we climbed Mt. Garibaldi and surveyed our route. I could see that the west slopes of Isosceles and Parapet are a gentle ramp into Grey Pass and if approached from the Isosceles Glacier present a route that offers an easy climb of Isosceles Pk. and the view of Luxor I remember from a photograph in a journal long ago.



Ski until the skis scrape. The warm sun in the parking lot and Brian's old car, ventilated for us by thieves, punctuates this trip with a big, fat, and mellow exclamation mark!



Skiing around the sharksfin. Photo - R. Stoltmann
 Joining me on this walk-and-slide were Darlene Anderson, Brian Gavin, Denise Hart, Pauk Kubik, Ilse Rupners, and Randy Stoltmann - fine leaders all of them.

BLACKCOMB TO MT CURRIE - NOT QUITE, May 1993 - by Blair Mitten

In May, Brian Gavin initiated a plan to work north from the Blackcomb ski corral to Mt. Currie. We hoped to exit north and east of that mountain to near Lilloet Lake.

The descent to Wedge Pass was accomplished under a low ceiling of cloud, right down a glacier and up into a heavily forested traverse into the pass. Scared a bear. In better visibility a superior route is to traverse east and ski a broad ridge bearing north to the small lakes staddling the pass.

This next day was going to be hot and clear, a long effort to reach the pass above Wedgemount Glacier. It was, the lounging lizards taking an extended break as snowslopes expressed an opinion of our intrusion, coming alive to obliterate as much of our artful track as possible. Our route and its challenge was very plain to see and to do, a very different character from last year. There was less permanent snow and more rubble, the route in broad channels, an ebb to the north. Wedgemount Glacier has an elegant pitch of perfect powder easing into a long glide, poles in the pack and hands in the pockets to a cool camp behind a moraine and before the final drop to the snout. We have touched the ends of the earth today, the expansion of heat and the contraction of the cold two poles in the world of the alp.

Another hot climb and a long descent in good snow, the lizards lounge again. This May skiing can be very pleasant. We climb out of the bowl and the cold winds return, we huddle barely in the lee of the col above the final glacier of our route and stare at the rippling, biting curtains of sleet that remind us of the raw extremes of our chosen environment. The party has reached a point of careful decision and two equally conscientious opinions are stirring conflicting motion.



The Owls, Weart Mtn. Photo - R. Stoltmann

We may choose to hunker down, dig in and stabilize the situation right now, or, we move deliberately into the storm, towards the sheltering forest somewhere below, gaining security of action

tomorrow. I hide between a map and a snowdrift in my hole while the strong members of our party elucidate in the fog. What a grand debate this is! What quality entertainment! People are digging, people are strapping on skis. I conclude that we have two excellent ideas and I am really enjoying myself when there is a lull. The wind howls and I look up, suspiciously. Everyone is staring at me, waiting. I've been found out and this crucial decision, implying the future course of real lives, has somehow been dropped into my lap. Maybe I shouldn't have hidden behind a map. Maybe my free ride is over. I long for both adventures, but I have so much confidence travelling with these people, their experience and careful thought creating a perfect tension that will heighten our awareness and sensitivity in this frightening environment, that I see no great risk dancing with this cloud and this wind and I choose to descend. The debate only made our movement safer, perhaps just a safe as careening carelessly on a hot and clear day.



Above Weart Glacier. Photo - R. Stoltmann

There wasn't much of slow edge turns and snowplow-chasing the sliding shadow ahead before we were digging tips and planting face in the upturn of the moraine. Camp was made, in great comfort, in a level meadow at treeline. The weather stayed close and we turned south traversing through the west slope forests, meeting Highway 99 at Wedgemount Creek. We had travelled through beautiful country on both trips. We met challenges in navigation and at times argued to create our course, but at no time would I call these mountains, ice-fields, and forests inhospitable. Our flexibility and awareness were exercised, strengthening and securing the course of travel and the course of friendship. Worthwhile endeavours.

Joining me were - Darlene Anderson, Brian Gavin, Peter Katsaris, and Randy and Greg Stoltmann.

EXPLORATIONS IN EASTERN GARIBALDI PARK - by Randy Stoltmann

1. Chaos-Kakila divide -- Mount Neal, 1-4 July, 1993

The east side of Garibaldi Park is still a remarkably seldom visited area considering its proximity to the lower mainland. Having made three previous trips on this side of the park, I thought it would be an interesting new area for a scheduled club trip.

We left Vancouver on Thursday morning at 6:30 and soon found ourselves involved in the routine Petro-Can tour through Squamish and Pemberton. Once pried away from the magnet of consumerism, we drove down the east side of Lillooet Lake to the bridge across Little Lillooet Lake at Tenas Narrows. On the west side, we doubled back to the north end of Little Lillooet Lake, and followed a spur road uphill to the west. An unbridged creek soon stopped the cars, so gear was piled into my truck and driven to the high point of the road at about 425m, directly below Gunsight Peak.

The peaks were still obscured by cloud as we prepared our gear in the warm sunshine of the valley - a true "sucker hole." We worked our way across the slash to the trees where we followed animal trails up through dry, open Douglas-fir forest. While the forest became wetter as we climbed, grading into hemlock and amabilis fir, the underbrush remained sparse up to about 1120m. The ridge was steep, however, and our slow grind was soon compounded by wet blueberry bushes and

dense clusters of subalpine trees as we neared treeline.

Since it had begun to rain, I suggested the huge slide alder chute to the north as a sporting alternate route that would add a special dismal character to the trip. But, oddly enough, Michael was the first to decline, turning down the ultimate opportunity for a chunderously dismal, appallingly wet and slimy bush thrash! Just like North Creek one-hundred years ago -- but steeper!

We plodded on up through the misty greenery. At about 1650m we traversed into the bowl to the north, climbing up talus, moraines and snowfields to the 2050m col north of Gunsight Peak. Here we roped up to cross the small glacier, then climbed over a 2130m ridge and started a descending traverse in search of some lakes lost in the fog. Camp was established at the lakes after a long day and 1700 vertical metres of elevation gain.

Friday morning was still cloudy, but the ragged profile of Mount James Turner, across Chaos Creek to the west, appeared through a rift in the clouds. From the lakes, we traversed across talus slopes and gained the Chaos-Kakila divide -- a wonderful, meadowed ridge overlooking Chaos Creek valley. To the northeast, a pretty lake was set in a deep bowl at the head of the south fork of Kakila Creek. Off and on sunshine made for a pleasant day of hiking as we passed several small lakes and wandered across heather meadows.



The Chaos - Kakila divide beyond Chaos Ck. meadows, from the summit of James Turner. Gunsight Pk. above glacier in upper right. Photo - M. Feller

With the unsettled weather, and realizing that camping as planned in the large meadow at the head of Chaos Creek would have meant

considerable additional climbing on the last, long day out, we opted for a pleasant campsite on the heather beside a lake at 1800m, three km southeast of Mount Neal.

Directly across the deep gulf of Chaos Creek valley, the northeast face of James Turner rose in tier upon tier of rock and ice. Occasionally, the rumble of breaking ice alerted us to the waterfall-like cascades of avalanches plunging down onto Chaos Glacier, hundreds of metres below.

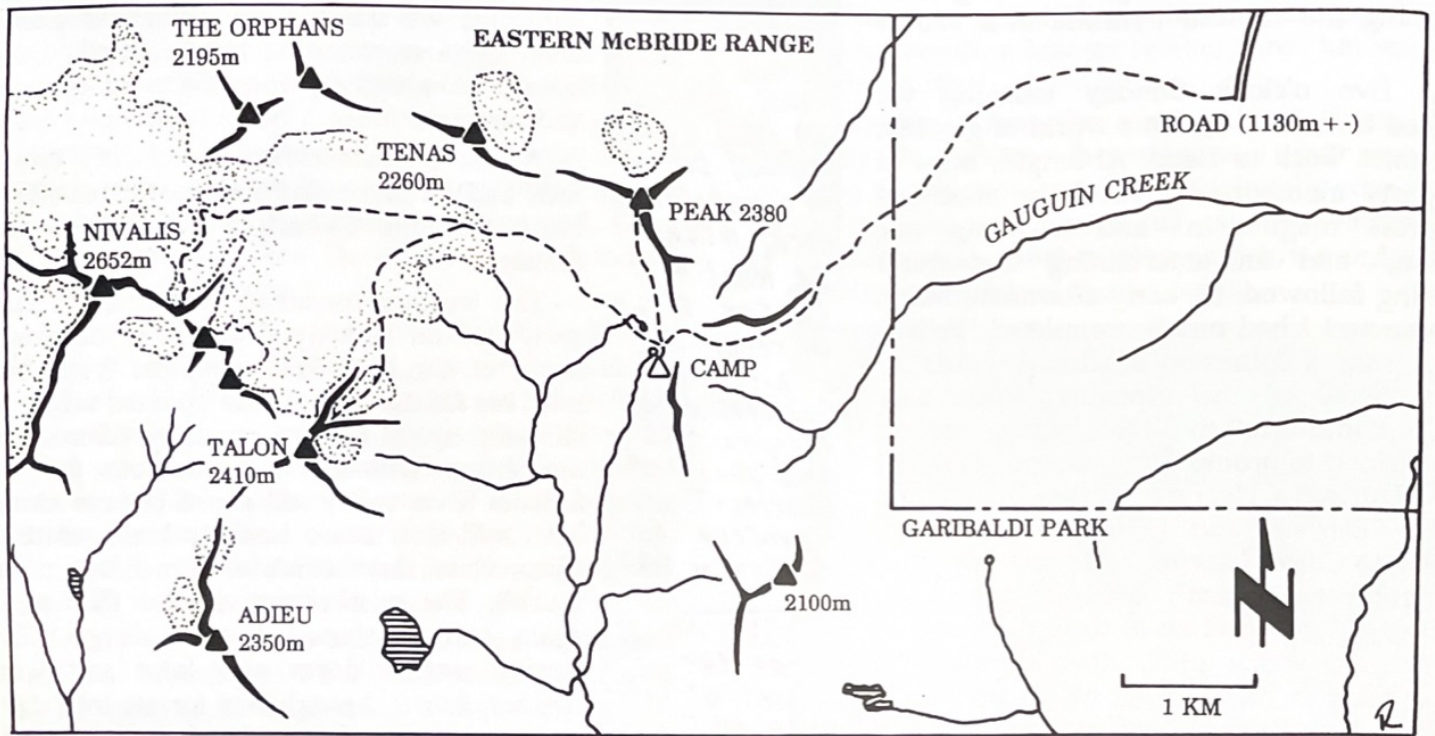


Mt. James Turner from the Chaos - Kakila divide. Photo - R. Stoltmann

There was a strong sense of wildness in this place, as no logging or roads or other human developments were visible. Chaos Creek valley, a verdant fold of old-growth forest and slide alder chutes, ran southeast into the distant, forested cleft of Billygoat Creek, above which rose an attractive unnamed horn. All unspoiled. All protected in Garibaldi Park -- something we can thank early club members for.

It was a lazy afternoon of lounging around in the meadows in the sunshine, preparing for tomorrow's long day up James Turner. As evening fell, fog condensed in the valley, and the moon rose through bands of tattered clouds. I found my eyes constantly being drawn towards James Turner -- The Mountain -- one of those great, fortress-like peaks that commands attention through its rugged domination of the landscape. For those who have reached the summit from the west and do not remember ever seeing a mountain of such description, a trip into this remote country below its northeast side would reveal an entirely different, more imposing, peak.

In the twilight, dark clouds moving in from the west began to envelop the peak, silently gliding



Eastern McBride Range exploration route. Map by R. Stoltmann



Nivalis Mtn. from the east. Photo - R. Stoltmann

criss-crossed the forested ridge. At times, we were able to follow well-trodden paths upward. Scarcely an hour after leaving the road, the trees began to thin out, soon yielding to heather meadows on the ridge crest north of Gauguin Creek. From the first high point at 1830m, the shimmering silver-blue mass of Mount Pitt was visible to the southwest, remote and alluring in the October sunshine. A very pleasant 3.5 km ridge walk through tawny autumn meadows brought us to a junction with a ridge leading north to Peak 2380, a prominent horn overlooking Billygoat Creek. Here we set up camp beside a tiny lake at 1950m – the only water on the ridge this late in the season. To the west, the symmetrical, ice-draped cone of 2652m Nivalis Mountain presided over a glacier-filled basin.

At just after four o'clock, we started up the barren talus bowl towards Peak 2380. Despite the rubbly appearance, we found some pleasant scrambling up ribs of firmer rock. Gaining the SSE ridge, we bypassed a couple of gendarmes and scrambled to the summit. Surprisingly, we made only the second entry into the summit register – twenty-five years after the first ascent!

To the north, the peaks of Garibaldi Park – Wedge, Weart, James Turner, Neal, Gunsight -- took on unfamiliar shapes from this angle. With the sun dropping low over Nivalis, we descended to camp.

Sunday morning we left camp at eight o'clock, headed for Nivalis. The ESE summit ridge (the first ascent route) looked steep and rotten, so we viewed our foray as somewhat exploratory. We sidehilled across rock and heather and dropped 150m down loose moraine slopes to the Nivalis Glacier. Reaching the bottom of the steeper portion of the icefield, we donned crampons, roped up, and worked our way up through a maze of late season crevasses. One large crevasse required a little front-pointing to outflank it. Once above a huge slot which spanned nearly the whole width of the glacier, we traversed south across a bench to gain a snow and ice arete leading up to the ESE ridge. We stopped for lunch on the ridge crest at 2470m, just below the start of the steep rock. From here, there were good views south across the deep valley of Tuwasus Creek and southwest towards icy Mount Sir Richard poking above Nivalis' southwest ridge.

The ridge to the summit was composed of rotten, reddish rock, rising in two steep steps, followed by airy gaps. I made a brief recce, but soon found that the loose rock and substantial exposure would make for very unpleasant and potentially dangerous

climbing (apparently there was considerably more snow on the first ascent in 1968).

We rested a while longer, enjoying views of wild country unmarred by roads and clearcuts and, nearer at hand, the steep pinnacles between us and neighbouring Talon Peak. We then cramponed back down the icy glacier, largely following our ascent route, but making a brief side trip to an ice ridge offering views of Outlier Peak and the back of the Spearhead Range. We arrived back in camp at 6:30.

Monday morning, we left camp at 6:30 to climb Talon Peak before heading out. An hour and a half later we had crossed the Nivalis Glacier and scrambled up a loose gully to a small pocket glacier on Talon's northeast flank. We cramponed directly up the pocket glacier and scrambled over loose rocks to gain the final ridge, reaching the 2410m summit at ten o'clock. Like Peak 2380, the only previously recorded ascents were by John Clarke, who climbed Talon in September 1968 and again in August 1971.

From Talon, we had more views into the rugged heartland of Garibaldi Park, with the Snowcap Icefield to the south beyond Greenmantle Mountain, and a jade-green cirque lake set in a bowl of talus eight hundred metres directly below us.



On the Nivalis Glacier with Talon Pk. behind Greg. Photo - R. Stoltmann

We were back in camp by 1:45, leaving enough time to pack up at a leisurely pace before embarking on the very pleasant two and a half hour hike back to the truck. In retrospect, this was one of the best off-trail approaches into Garibaldi Park I've done. If the summit registers are any indication, this area receives amazingly few visitors considering the ease of access. Discovery of places such as this is truly the beauty of a little exploration!

Party: Randy Stoltmann and Greg Stoltmann

RECONNOITERING JUDGE HOWAY (SNOW PEAKS) in 1948 - by Russ Yard

[Ed's note - this article, apparently never published by the club, was discovered by your editor when sorting through the club archives. It seems an appropriate prelude to the article that follows.]

After many weeks of cancelling the trip because of unfavourable weather, we finally decided this was the week to try to find a route to the Snow Peaks. Howard Rode and I left town Friday, June 25th, about 6:30 pm in my brother's car, with which he was so kind as to solve our transportation problem. We arrived at Stave Falls at 7:30 pm.

After some minor repairs to the boat we finally got underway about 8:45 pm. We travelled up the lake a short distance, dodging snags, until the boat struck a submerged stump, and after getting back on our course, we noticed the engine racing with the boat travelling slowly. After stopping the engine we found that the set screw on the propellor shaft coupling had sheared. With the use of a pair of pliers we were soon underway again, but by the time we had navigated to the main body of the lake it had become quite dark.

Upon nearing our destination, we came upon some more snags, and at reduced throttle and with the use of light, Howard was picking the way through the snags, making for shore, when he noticed something reflecting his light. Changing course, we found a boat house with living quarters attached, but with nobody home, and as it was midnight by this time, and we were not very certain where we were, we decided to sleep on the hard floor of the boathouse.

On Saturday morning, we arose from our hard beds at 4:20 am. The sky was still overcast but didn't look too bad. The boathouse was located about 100 yards offshore, but there was no beach, and the cliffs rose practically straight up from this point. We commented on our luck and after breakfast cruised up the shore to find a suitable place to land the boat, and at 7:45 commenced bushwhacking.

The ridge we had decided to climb was about a 45 degree slope with a good share of underbrush. After climbing a short distance, we crossed a small creek and followed the ridge west of the creek. Howard had a machete with which we took turns at cutting the worst of the underbrush and blazing the top side of the tree trunks so that we could find our way back without getting into difficulties. After crawling, heaving, and climbing up numerous short

rocky bluffs, with a few short rest periods thrown in, we finally arrived at the first ridge top at an elevation of around 3000 ft at 1:30 pm, feeling rather beat.

The ridge we intended to follow - rising gradually ahead of us veering slightly west of north, was broken with two small bluffs that were easily passed. After staggering through snow, we came to a fairly large bluff, or mountain, of about 5000 ft, which, instead of climbing, we traversed by the quite steep south slope. Coming to the ridge on the south-east side, about 4500 ft, we sighted a small lake some 500 ft. below us measuring about half a mile long by a quarter of a mile wide, and covered with snow and ice even at this late in the season. (We named it Snow lake). This lake was surrounded by cliffs on three sides, and opened over the valley of the Stave River on the east end. By this time it was 3 pm, and with visibility being poor, we decided to make camp on a fairly large rock ledge overgrown with heather, and overlooking the lake from the west side.

After pitching camp at about 5000 ft, and eating some much needed vitamins, we decided to have a short trip to a low saddle that could be seen across the lake from the campsite. Leaving camp at 5:30 pm, we travelled along a series of ridges, upon which we saw many goat tracks, and traversed between a fairly large peak (about 6000 ft elevation) and the lake, on a sloping snow field, making the saddle at 6:45 pm. From the saddle we could see to where the Snow Peaks should be, but we saw nothing but mist rolling by and a fairly large valley between us and our destination. Being rather discouraged by the weather, we wandered back to camp and hit the hay about 9:30 pm. Some time in the night, when it was quite dark, I awoke and saw stars shining. I sat up and looked toward the saddle and there the peaks stood in silhouette. My, did they look steep!

The next morning, Sunday, we found the weather beautiful, and after getting up rather late (6:30) we rushed breakfast and were back above the saddle at 7:45 am. admiring the Snow Peaks. They were across the valley about three miles from us and somewhat higher. In between there was a fairly deep valley covered mostly with snow, with a small open lake at the base of the peaks. We named this Blue Lake. On the west side of the valley was a ridge we decided to follow to get to the west side of the peaks.

After taking pictures we climbed a snow slope to some rock that was easily crossed, skirted a peak, and started down the other side. Coming to a steep 200ft cliff, we stopped at 8 am to look the situation over. After estimating the distance and time, we figured we had gone far enough if we were to get back that night.

Turning back we made, to our knowledge, the first ascent of a 6000 ft. peak, which we named Thunderbolt as we had discovered a hole on the peak that had been blasted by a bolt of lightning.

After taking more pictures, building a rock cairn, and having some good glissading, we arrived back at camp at 10:15 am. At 10:45 we broke camp and beat our way back down to Stave Lake in about three hours. A leisurely boat trip brought us back to Stave Falls at about 6:45 pm.

MOUNT JUDGE HOWAY - NEAR THE FOOTSTEPS OF TOM FYLES

Two Trips to the "Snow Peaks" 1992 and 1993 - by Robin Tivy

1. Introducing the Mountain

Mountains become great because of the human qualities they demand. Mount Judge Howay has earned its place in a list of great peaks because of the approach and route finding it requires. It demands that the climber put together a fairly ambitious plan, and probably fail several times before succeeding.

This has changed very little since the legendary postman, Tom Fyles, finally succeeded after several attempts 72 years ago.

"From the early days of the Mountaineering Club, a double headed mountain seen to the north of Golden Ears had roused MANY AN AMBITIOUS PLAN."

The reason you^{*} still need an ambitious plan today is because it still has an approach. Unlike Waddington or McKinley, there is no convenient way to higrade the mountain. There's no point in trying to use a helicopter to just climb the last 500m or something. No amount of fancy equipment makes the bush and the bluffs any easier. Its just man against mountain, somewhere out there in the bluffs and deep bush. To all those who have come before him, the "Judge" commands some respect. In a world where other peaks are diminished by mechanized access, the Judge is visited only infrequently, considering his proximity to almost 2 million people.

The Judge Howay approach is a "multi-media" approach: first a lake, then a road, and then a river, and then some bush. One has to somehow get up to the head of Stave Lake, and from there get up an old logging road 14 km, cross the raging Stave river, and then thrash straight upwards from sea level to over 2200m. The bush is filled with cliff bands and rock outcroppings, and tales of disaster and failure are easy to obtain:

"We lost all our gear in the Stave river when the raft broke loose".

"All the big names from the Alpine Club were in there for a week, but eventually they all gave up and came home".

"We tried, but the bush was horrible, and its probably not worth it anyway."

Several years ago I started to make plans to somehow "get up the Judge". The only person I could find in today's BCMC who had actually climbed the Judge was Reinhard Fabische. He had climbed the Judge three times, once even in winter.

When I called Reinhard on the phone, he described his routes on the map, but mere lines on the map don't really tell you what you have to do. The most useful thing about my call was his final words of advice:

"Remember: if you're doing anything hard you're off route."

And then he hung up.

So we are not talking about technical difficulty, risk taking, or any other barrier: all you need is to find the right route. That sounded like my kind of peak and, like many climbers, I put it onto my "list" of things that need to be done.

Around the same time in 1988, Judge Howay appeared on an Alpine Club trip schedule. I immediately expressed my interest, thinking that this was an easy way to accomplish one of the items on my climbing list. However, I soon discovered that scheduled trips to the Judge are like a mirage: they vanish about a week before departure date due to logistics problems. This trip, like many others, was cancelled, so I was on my own again.

During the next few years, I had several discussions about access technology to get to the river crossing. One plan was to build a set of bicycle wheels which could be strapped onto the side of a canoe to take it up the road. However these plans were never implemented. I was interested in the Judge, but it was on the back burner.

2. The First Attempt - 1992

In the summer of 1992 my Judge Howay intentions were suddenly activated by the appearance of a scheduled BCMC trip led by Tom Zarzecki for the Aug 1 long weekend. Tom had done a reconnaissance on foot the week before. On the way back they had met some shake cutters who had two old trucks. Tom talked them into leaving the trucks ready to go at the landing spot the following weekend.

With the trucks, the party and at least one canoe could be transported to the river crossing, thus overcoming the traditional problem. Thus it came to pass that we paddled up the lake, and then were transported 14 km to the side of the mighty Stave river.

We quickly crossed the swift green waters in the canoes, and then prepared for the bush and cliffs. I noticed the other climbers assembling large "racks" of climbing hardware. We had 3 or 4 full length 11 mm climbing ropes, various rappeling devices, and dozens of slings. I hopefully stated Reinhart's famous advice: "If you are doing anything hard, you are off route", and hoped it was true.

Right from the river we started climbing straight up the shoulder of the Judge. The trees were covered with moss and hanging vines. There were frequent huckleberry bushes, covered with tasty red berries. As we climbed upward we trended to the left. At about 300m, we hit our first unclimbable bluff. This we tried to overcome by using various specialized techniques. The first technique used was to climb hand over hand up a series of roots projecting out from a crack in the bluff. This feature was quickly named a "bush ladder". A related feature which was also exploited was the "bush gully". The way to distinguish between a "bush gully" and a "bush ladder" is by whether or not the trees project out beyond the surface of the bluff.

Another useful feature was the "sky hook", which was a hooked root or tree which can be used as both a hand hold and a foot hold. These were usually cedar. The difference between a sky hook and a bush ladder is that the skyhook is much thicker and you can stand on it. Skyhooks proved very useful to surmount small sections of the bluff, and allowed a secure resting place.

While our enthusiasm lasted, we quickly agreed upon an entire "Bush Glossary" which had precise definitions for many other common bush features:

moss slab, polished slab, slimy slab, ball bearing slab, etc.

But as we applied all of our new found techniques, we just got into more and more trouble. The Judge kept upping the stakes, until we came to our senses and remembered Reinhart's last words: "If you're doing anything hard, you are off route."

And his advice proved true. We were indeed off-route. So eventually we were forced to call a general retreat down the bush ladders, and instead traverse south about 300m toward the waterfall. From here we climbed up on the top edge of a deep, dry gully and gained about 200m. At somewhere between 500 and 600m, the cliff momentarily melted away, and it became just barely possible to contour into the gully itself, coming out onto a 15m wide platform of smooth, level slab perched on the edge of a cliff.

For all who have been up this route, this platform is an immediately recognizable landmark. Off the edge of the cliff is an almost vertical drop into the Stave river valley, and a big view of the river all the way to the lake. Running down from a big gully above was a trickle of water, which filled several small pools sufficient to fill your water bottles and dunk your head. Most people poured water all over



Some of the legendary bush on Judge Howay.
Photo - R. Tivy

themselves, glad to have a break from the big thrash below. Thus it got the name the "water platform".

There are only two ways to leave the water platform: either climb right back into the bush on the other side, or climb up the inviting looking open gully going straight up the mountain. It is here we chose the wrong route, and went for what will subsequently be referred to as the "dry gully".

The dry gully goes right up to the ridge. It goes steadily upward, punctuated by several big chockstones about 4m in diameter. Here I split from the rest of the party. The rest of the team used the ropes to go through the chockstones, and I climbed out of the gully.

Once I was out of the gully there was no way to rejoin the gully route, so I continued in the scrubby trees parallel to the gully. This was the last I saw of the party until several hours later when we gained the ridge.

My climb had lots of tough bush, and in several places I had to reverse direction, but it always managed to go. After about an hour I started to get into thick, tasty blueberries. The tougher the climbing, the more blueberries appeared. I ate huge quantities which was a pleasant break from the climbing.

In spite of the berries, I got to the top of the gully about 1/2 hour ahead of the first members of the main party. At the top of the gully was a beautiful meadow, with several small tarns. Strange that no successful climber had ever mentioned this beautiful meadow! That evening, we had a clear view of the Judge, above us to the south. We could see no easy route on the glaciers, but were anxious to give it a try the following day. Our camp was at 1100m.



The inaccessible "Judge" from camp.
Photo - R. Tivy

The next day, 1992 Aug 2, was completely socked in, but we headed toward the summit ridge anyway, waiting for it to clear. After an hour, we gained the crest of the north ridge, and from there went toward the peak itself. Several formidable subpeaks were between us and the main summit. These subpeaks were named the "Prosecutor" and the "Witness Stand".

As we proceeded along the ridge in the fog, Tom was repeatedly quoting from Bruce Fairley's guide: "Difficulties are largely avoidable by climbing to the left...". Eventually, he went so far left he was going due east, back down a subsidiary ridge toward camp.

As far as I was concerned, the description in the guide would match anything from Golden Ears to Grainger. The compass said there MUST be a route somewhere along the top of the ridge. So we climbed back up to the main ridge and sure enough the others had already found the missing connection in the fog. After another 15 minutes of fast travel, the "Prosecutor" suddenly loomed out of the fog, separated from us by a deep narrow notch, 70m deep and only 5-10m wide. I climbed down into some trees to hang out over the notch. There was some absurd chatter about rappelling down but Reinhard's last words came back to us: "If you're doing anything hard, you are off route."

And we turned around.

Since we were not able to continue on the main ridge, the only possible route must be back down the subsidiary east rib we had been on. The south side of this rib was a continuous cliff, always a bit too steep to continue in the direction of the peak.

In the fog, it wasn't obvious that the cliffs were impossible: there was always the possibility that if you climbed down and got into the wet, foggy trees, and did a little rappelling here and there, you might be able to get into even more trouble. Fortunately there was a shortage of volunteers, so we continued down.

The general enthusiasm of the party was down. Once people sensed that we were not going to make the summit, they lost interest in checking out the cliffs. Over the next hour, small groups of deserters headed back to camp, leaving only Tom and myself on the ridge. Although I knew we were not going to make it, I wanted to gather as much information as possible, so we continued investigating the ridge. From time to time it cleared up enough for us to see into the true "hanging valley" to our south. Our

belief was that if you could get down into this valley, you could then go on to the summit.

At one point Tom and I found a promising looking place where we could attempt a descent into the hanging valley. By working our way back and forth across rock ledges, and using a few bush ladders, we got down over half way to the bottom of the valley. But always we were stopped by some little 5m drop which kept tempting Tom to rappel. Eventually, we too gave up and climbed back out, and back to camp. From camp, various parties went up to the Judge's deep dark "Drowning Pool" for a swim.

The next day was blue sky and bright sunshine and time to evacuate the mountain. We decided to all go down my solo route of two days earlier and avoid the chockstones in the dry gully. All we had to do was find the exact route. After about 1/2 hour of easy hiking in the same general area, the trouble started. The slabs got steeper and steeper, cliffs started appearing here and there, and the bush prevented us from finding the exact route I had taken on the way up. It was harder to assess whether certain things would go from above than it had been from below. People went in every direction. Most eventually went further to the right across some slimy slabs. I didn't like the slabs, so I tried to climb back up and cut a bit further over to the north, looking for those magic sky hooks of the first day.

Once I was alone in the bush and cliffs, the Judge sentenced me to a savage beating for over an hour. I received both mental and physical punishment. Time and again, I lowered myself down a likely looking tongue of trees, only to find my way blocked with an invisible cliff band. The day was hot. The trees were thick. I got more and more desperate. Ignoring Reinhard's last words, I tried to overcome route finding problems by doing some desperate sliding through the thick cedar trees. But these moves never seemed to work, and then I would have to climb back up, and then remember that that particular part of the jungle didn't go.

Finally, I thought the Judge had me trapped. I had lowered myself down through a thick growth of sky hooks to a little ledge, but then I couldn't reverse the move because the hooks repulsed me. Whenever I tried to pull myself back up, they jammed into my pack, ice axe, and foamy and overpowered me. I wasn't strong enough to push my way through.

I sat down and considered throwing away my ice axe, all extra equipment, and then try and escape with my life. One thing certain: I would never go on the Judge again with a full length ice axe or a foamy. However by putting my ice axe on upside down, and stuffing my foamy inside my pack, I was finally able to worm my way back up. Once free again, I decided to climb a long way back up, almost to the top and come at it again, closer to the creek. This time I was able to map out a general route from above, and then stuck to it once I got into the jungle. This time it worked, and I was soon below the whole system of bluffs. Shortly after, I regained contact with the tail end of the main party, just at the edge of a bushy cliff overlooking the gully.

An ominous double rope hung over the edge. People were referring to this spot as the "bush rappel". No-one was in a mood to hear Reinhard's advice, and I wasn't in the mood for more independent action. It was time to deploy all the equipment. So I borrowed some rappel gear, and over the edge I went, down through the bush and moss growing on the walls of the gully. From the end of the rappel we were able to climb down into the bottom of the "dry gully". I went ahead, and after 10 or 15 minutes arrived at a shorter rappel over one of the chockstones. It was a complete overhang, and slippery, but by now no big deal. From here, a little more down climbing and we were back at the familiar "water platform". Upon my return, I now knew that one must go south immediately from this point, since there existed no other easy opportunity all the way to the top.

From the water platform, it was an easy descent and we were back to the river. While waiting for the others, I investigated fording the river. I went in up to my waist, but the current was pretty strong. Soon the others arrived and I joined them in using the two canoes to cross the swift green waters.

Once in the trucks, we went down the road about 8 km to the big, clear pool at Winslow creek. Here various underwater swimming contests were held, and also "rapids swimming" above the pool. After swimming, it was back to the lake and back in the canoes. Cypress point was reached at sunset.

The next week I was at the Co-op to get a short ice axe and more rappelling gear. The new axe was short enough to fit inside my pack. Then I waited a year.

3. The Second Attempt - 1993

A trip again appeared on the BCMC schedule for the Labor day weekend. I left numerous phone messages for the organizer. On Friday, my answering machine told me that, once again, the trip had been cancelled. So I resigned myself to a trip to explore the Powell river mountains. To get some information, I called my old friend John Baldwin.

It turned out he was planning another attempt on the Judge! As you can imagine, I quickly begged for a slot on their trip. The team was John Baldwin and two crack rock climbers unknown to me: Don McPherson and Richard Suddady. Their plan was to go up the lake with 3 people in the canoe, walk the 14 km road, and ford the river. For equipment, they just planned to wear running shoes, carry a light 7mm static rope, and take no tents.

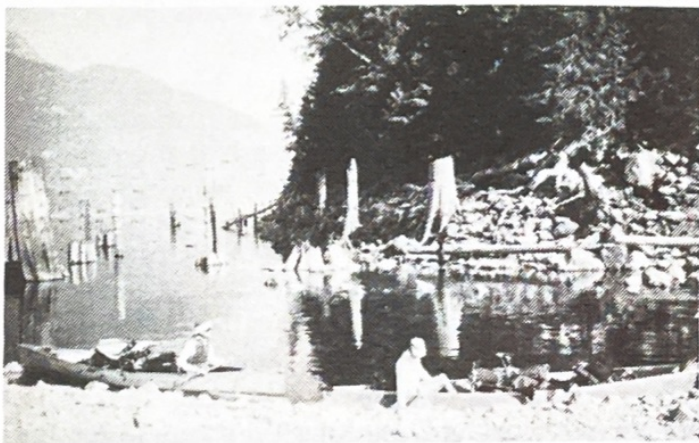
The part that interested me immediately was the part about fording the river. John and his crew had forded it the previous September. The key was to do it in September, especially after a long dry spell.

Things fell into place quickly once that fact registered in my brain. If you could ford the river, that eliminated the vehicle problem, because you could carry bicycles in the canoe to get up the road. It was all so simple and elegant. I quickly talked John into the bicycle solution. No one had a mountain bike, but we were able to round up 4 ten speeds.

On Saturday morning, we headed toward Cypress point with bikes and canoes strapped to the outside of two small cars. Don and I had lengthy conversations about our previous experiences on the Judge. He was convinced their route of the previous year would have worked except for the weather. The big question in his mind was whether or not some "chockstones" they encountered could be avoided by climbing out to the left. Don was fairly sure this was worth trying. I described my experience of the previous year climbing out to the left to avoid the chockstones. Later in the day, we found out we were talking about two completely different parts of the mountain, and his chockstones were somewhere downstream of the waterfall! However, when you are talking about the Judge, everybody's route sounds the same.

When we got to Stave Lake, we launched the canoes and loaded up the bikes. I had my relatively narrow 6m Clipper Whitewater II, and John had one to match. Putting two bikes in each of these narrow canoes turned out to be no problem.

At the head of the lake, we mounted the bikes. I loaded my pack sideways onto the carrier, while the others wore their packs on their back. While I was still packing, they started off up the logging road at a fantastic pace. I soon caught up with Richard less than 1 km ahead with a flat tire. I dished out one of the spare tubes I was carrying and we were on our way again, but we decided to slow down since I did not have 14 spare tubes for the 14 km trip. From then on we averaged about 13 km/hr including stops, according to my bicycle computer. Everyone agreed this was considerably better than hiking!



Loading up canoes at Cypress Point. Photo - R. Tivy

At the crossing place on the river we found that our previous trips had had the same crossing place but different routes. The other's previous route had been about 300m downstream, and that was where they had encountered all the chockstones Don and I had discussed. As soon as John found out that I had succeeded at the direct route, the decision was to use my route for the first 500m, and their route higher up. This allowed us to avoid the class 4 gully talked about in Fairley's Guide. This made me feel as if I was making a real contribution: first the bikes, and now a substantial route improvement!

This year, I was determined to accurately record our route. So I set my altimeter to 100m for the river, and noted the elevation of every significant feature all the way up.

Don led the team up through the trees at an exhausting pace. There were no berries this year, and no time to eat them either. We followed the 1992 route more or less, although very little of it was immediately recognizable. Sweat poured off my face as I scrawled notes into my black book, with my altimeter around my neck.

At around 180m above the river we went to the left, then straight up through steep open trees on an animal trail. At 260m the waterfall was visible off to the left. At this point, I thought we were on some different route, but at 600m we contoured left into the gully and soon were standing sweating on the famous "water platform" of the previous trip.

After dumping water all over ourselves at the platform, John led confidently into the trees to the left, exactly where I had deduced we should have gone the previous year. From here, we contoured around the mountain, heading for the true "hanging valley". It seemed fitting that the words "Judge" and "hanging" should be closely associated.

The route was mostly through big open forest, much easier than below the water platform. There were no tricky cliff bands, although at one point we had to reverse ourselves because we got too high. Our highest point on the proper route was just below open cliffs at around 780m. Once around the bluffs, we had to descend 50m through thick slide alder to get to the floor of the hanging valley.

At the bottom, we crossed into a side gully, and then we were out in the open rock slabs. From there on, we were on rock almost all the way to the top, with the last part on the glacier.

Things were quite different in 1921 according to Tom Fyles: *"The basin still held a large amount of the previous winter's snow and from 2500 feet elevation, offered a continuous route to the peak."*

After a quick drink from the clear "hanging stream", we then headed up the valley toward the peak. The next trick was at 840m. Instead of continuing up the obvious main gully, we turned into a less likely looking side gully and climbed up an easy slab chimney about 50m. From the top of the chimney the route swung back up the mountain on a bench above the bottom of the main valley. Eventually the bench became its own little gully, and ended with a slimy slab. I avoided this by climbing onto the small ridge on my right, where there were several 3m high trees.

Finally at 1200m, and about 8 pm, we reached a spot to camp, on some open flat rocks overlooking a tree-covered ridge. About 30m lower was a basin of drinking water. Above us loomed the rocky summit of the legendary Judge.

John and his team don't carry tents when the weather is good. For sleeping, all they had was beekeepers hats. They are into a style of equipment minimalism, and artificial poverty, left over from

VOC days. I crawled into my brand new lightweight tent, and my 700g sleeping bag, and felt decadent and overweight, like some gentleman explorer of yesteryear.

The next morning, Don was off again at breakneck speed. I soon fell behind, stopping periodically to scrawl some hasty notes in my black book at each place one could get confused. Earlier on John and I had a conversation about his new ski touring guide, and guide book writing in general, which inspired me to try and improve the usefulness of my notes. It always helps to have something else to think about when you are putting one step in front of the other on some long uneventful part of a climb.

My thoughts for the day were on techniques to improve the route descriptions by always having an "as opposed" clause at every reference point. This would help to make sure the person had the right point. So I wrote down notes like the following:

At 1750m bear right toward the highest visible peak. (As opposed to trying to gain the ridge to the left).

At 1930m, go straight up big slot (as opposed to going left). There is water running down the gully.

At 2020m, hit the bottom of the snowfield, continue straight up toward the visible bare ice.

At 2085m, climb out of gully and go to the right, across the snow.

At this point we were on the glacier which was covered in most places with a thin layer of snow. When on the snow, John and I could kick steps, whereas Don and Richard had only running shoes. When on the ice we sometimes cut shallow steps, or gingerly worked our way across icy sections on all fours, gripping the surface with the picks of our ice



Heading up to the snow col between the 2 peaks.
Photo - R. Tivy



The final 2 pitches beyond the snow col. Photo - R. Tivy



Richard traversing the snow col. Photo - R. Tivy

axes as we leaned into the slope. The main concern was to keep one's balance and not lose one's grip, because it was a long slide to the rocks below.

Finally the glacier ended with a long steep snow climb up to a col between two parts of the main peak. Our route was just a few meters from the rock wall on our north side. These two parts are not the distinctive peaks one sees from a distance, they are just two parts of the north peak. The elevation on my altimeter showed 2150m at the col.

At the col we could look over the other side for the first time. From the col I couldn't immediately tell which of the two parts was the highest, and they both looked hard. Fortunately John was sure the one on the south was the highest.

From the north side of the col where our route came up, the main peak looked formidable. It looked like steep, unclimbable rock for at least two rope lengths. Had we been lied to? No-one had ever mentioned this!

However, we quickly deployed the expert rock climbers by belaying Don over the snow bridge and onto the rock. Once on the actual rock it didn't look so bad and he soon announced that there was an excellent crack going a whole rope length over the steepest part. In general, the rock was rough and there were lots of hand holds, so it was quite enjoyable for all of us. Although the 7 mm rope was used, the lack of a rope wouldn't have stopped us. This was the first time we used the rope.

And according to Tom Fyles in 1921: "*Near the summit a steep arete of snow called for step cutting and at 5:30 p.m. the top of the highest peak was reached.*"

And Leonard Taylor in 1950: "*This was the most interesting part of this climb but it was not particularly difficult since there were enough handholds and the rock itself was very rough. ... Our stay on the peak was short, and we rappelled down the 125 foot wall in two stages and reached the snow slopes at noon.*"

And for us, what a glorious summit! Judge Howay in the bag! Although the valley was filled with cloud, the sky was brilliant blue above. Thus, we settled down for a long stay in the warm summer air.

After calibrating my altimeter I had lunch. (Eds. note - Robin found his altimeter read about 150m too low. All elevations given in this article have been corrected for this, and are consequently only estimates.) Reading the summit register, we had a treat, finding the famous first ascent record, written

by the legendary postman, Tom Fyles, on the back of a train ticket:

*Tom Fyles, E.A. Fuller, H. O'Conner
9th September, 1921.*

*Ticket 2330 Western Power Company of
Canada, George Kidd General Manager.*

Fare: 25 cents



The north summit of Judge Howay beyond the snow col, seen from near the main summit. Photo - R. Tivy

The ticket was punched for Ruskin and Stave Falls. 1921 was the same year my father was born. A long time ago in the real world, but as if it were yesterday in the mountains. Across the great gulf of time, Tom Fyles let us know he walked up there one September day not long ago at all.

I declared that this was the most important peak of my season.

4. Footnote

Tom Fyles description of his 1921 climb was reprinted in the 1957 BC Mountaineer, which is available in the club library. The second ascent of the "Snow Peaks" in 1950 was described in the Canadian Alpine Club journal.

COQUIHALLA AREA - by Karl Ricker

1. Coquihalla Coterie, 3 - 4 October, 1992

The phones were humming all week. Five full car loads of re-assembled peak baggers left the toll gate on a blustery Saturday afternoon. The 20th annual autumn trip to the Coquihalla was fittingly focused on Coquihalla Mtn. itself, with a throw-in of another adjacent bump to round our sweep in this meadow-endowed area. This year almost everyone had their own 4WD, and all wanted to see if they really worked on a rough road. With persuasion, 2 of the owners abandoned their ships at the toll gate and the cavalcade of five followed our Merrit forestry scout over the ridge top into the upper Tulameen valley by way of the British Creek forestry road, and thus effected an eastern approach to the mountain.

In 1977 our trip to the mountain began on the west side, in Coquihalla valley at the base of a forest covered mega-rock slide, between the mouth of Unknown and Hidden Creeks. The rock pile provides a quick and easy ascent to a very pleasant but lone ridge, above treeline, which leads into a north-facing bowl lying at the base of the southwest summit ridge. Its an easy climb on rock and intermittent scree. This has been the route of most ascents, but may not have been used by two Coalmont based parties who left cairn records in the early 1930's. On the east side, there are four possible approach routes, which from north to south are: Upper Brittan, Illal, McGee, and Jim Kelly Creek valleys, or their intervening ridges. Last year's trip in the lattermost was on an old mining road, leading to a trail that ascended a spur valley into the headwaters of McGee Creek. However, a logged-out valley on the southwest tributary of Illal Creek was spotted from the summit of "Jim Kelly" Peak.

If the Illal road was still drivable, this appeared to be the shortest route to the expansive meadows between Coquihalla and "Jim Kelly" on the south and "Illal" Mtn. to the north. Unknown to this organizer our Merrit scout (Norm) had perfect inside knowledge of a new road in McGee Creek valley, and the perplexed followers thundered by Illal to stop and regroup near the entrance to the



The Coquihalla Mtn. massif. Map by K. Ricker.

McGee Creek road. A second look at the map suggested that the new road would be along way from "Illal" Mtn. as well as being an iffy source for water. The presence of weekend loggers also registered a gut negative reaction. However, if the Illal road was no go McGee would be a fall back.

So, while Bert's and Ilse's jeeps checked out the new road, the other three vehicles retreated to Illal for much needed 4wd work! The deteriorating road did not let us down, but we made it up to the very end at 1340m elev. where an unofficial campsite was already in place, with the convenience of water, both underfoot and out of the sky, and a promising procession of ribbons which lead into the woods. Moreover, rapidly moving cloud yielded a quick decision to camp on the spot, although Ed, Skoki, Cam, and the Mortons elected to carry out a recce of the trail. Presently the others on McGee Creek showed up, claiming a road terminus elevation victory of 1540m at a very windy spot. They conceded that a sheltered lower retreat was the

better spot for the night. There were second thoughts when a truckload of hunters appeared soon after, but 10 of us with our fierce guard dog persuaded them to leave when we swore that all the game had been scared off by our noisy arrival. Bark Skoki, God dammit Bark!! or at least growl. In the late afternoon the trail explorers returned with reports of a well used man-made trail (by whom?) leading to our target meadows, bears enroute, and a conclusion that it was much too windy above for a restful night. With a second confirmation of our camp site choice, the mushrooming tent city settled in for a long bonfire discussion in the darkening drizzle. It must have been a tough week - virtually all hit the sack at 8-9 pm except Jack who disappeared at 6.

The clouds blew-off over night and at 7:30 am all were in gear on the trail which climbed quickly to the alpine meadows and its bear. The party split up. Illal Mtn. was the immediate focus of 10 plus the dog; four others elected for a cold head start on the

east ridge of Coquihalla, using a 200m high northeast facing buttress to gain access to the crest. Norm and Dan opted for a contour hike around the south side of Coquihalla to chase a second bear and to find an easier route; the Mortons decided to watch the proceedings at the 3 way saddle separating Coquihalla, "Jim Kelly" and "Illal" Mtns.

The latter was approached from the southeast passing an ancient cedar site enroute at about 1900m. Very old rusty tools, a collapsed tin roof and stove had been placed over a neat cleft in the rocks. From the lake immediately south of the peak, "Illal" was ascended on hoar frost-covered scree and overhead rock ribs and rubble chutes, to reach a flat summit with an old cairn (prospectors?). A brisk chilling wind with rapidly enveloping clouds quickly dispersed the party after a few glimpses to the south to Coquihalla Mtn. Two small glacierets still cling to its northern cirque walls, marking the northern-most presence of ice on the east side of the



Coquihalla Mtn. with Carry Mtn. in distance to left, from "Jim Kelly" Mtn. Photo - K. Ricker

Cascades. Descent by the routes of rubble led back to the 3-way saddle.

By this time the party on Coquihalla had surmounted the NE buttress with a more or less non-roped but steep head-on route. It looked like a very long cold haul along the ridge to the summit. The twelve of us at its base were now looking for warmth and opted for Norm's hiking route around to the south. A horsetrail lead the way but it swung to the east under "Jim Kelly" Peak while we hopped talus and sloping heather westerly to a south rib. Its indistinct crest lead directly up through rock bands and Krummholz on ledges to Coquihalla Mtn. from the summit. Surprise, the gang of four were already there! To their dismay the sporty grade 3 to 4 effort, which featured a couple of seat straddle moves and some gendarme dodging, had a line of cairns on it (UBC geologists?) which appears to nullify claim to a new route. The crux appeared on the final summit block, being nearly vertical, but with good holds to allow an unroped ascent. In the murkiness of the summit cloud cover it looked fearsome. all descended the south rib route and traversed back to the 3-way col to pick up Sandy with his sore feet. The skies again cleared.

Three of the four east ridgers promptly seized the opportunity to pick up non-authorized points for their ascent of "Illal". Everyone knows that autumn Coquihalla trips are pointless fun and, with a chide that they may be hitchhiking home, everyone else then descended through the meadows, which yielded a rusted out single lens reflex camera, a Ski Doo drive belt and the discovery of more horse trails. Slowly, it began to sink in that this was not the seldom visited mountain area that was envisioned. Some local alpine recreationists as well as hunters are on the heels of its departing prospectors. The final tree descent to the valley floor lead us to realize that the Illal corridor has been a prime access route to the Coquihalla volcanic massif for quite some time.

Camp was dismantled quickly and all were "outta there" in the mid to late afternoon, arriving at Vedder Crossing for a nonexistent free meal at a pub by 6-6:30 pm. The turnout was a record crowd, thanks to some holes in the BCMC schedule and the perennial return of some participants: Bert Parke, Sev Heiberg, Norm Hansen and Ed Zenger. Others were: Skoki, Greg Stoltmann, Dave Hughes, Erich Hinze, Aki Nagai, Blaine Bickell, Dan O'Hanley, Sandy and Riitta Morton, Ilse Rupners, Darlene

Anderson, Cam Molder, Shirley Rempell, Jack Bryceland and Karl Ricker.

2. Coquihalla Cyclethon, October, 1993

The schedule hinted at a revolutionary concept - not the invention of the wheel, but actually using such to approach our otherwise distant fictitiously named objective which does not have one scrap of a written record of ascent (on foot). It caught Sev's eyes two years ago as we stood in a brisk wind on "Jim Kelly Peak" in the Coquihalla massif. We had hiked many K's on an obviously "level" abandoned mining road to reach its base. The new destination was a long way off but was on the same approach, using all of the road in this case to reach treeline. The peak also towers abruptly above the old Iago whistlestop on the Coquihalla railroad, exposing a next to ridiculously shaky and very steep northwest face. From the Jim Kelly Creek access to the east, however, it's a horseless carriage of a different colour. A long heather-clad alpine ridge and meadow leads one from the old mine road that neatly sidesteps an avalanche slope with hundreds of downed trees. The only problem is that the mine road is over 10 K's long and it's another 6 K from its end to the summit.

When the trip organizer's phone began to ring, the following three questions were fielded with predictable regularity:

1) the whereabouts of the peak and the source of the name "Carry Mtn." (UTM 636663 E by S485716 N, above Carry Creek - naturally);

2) difficulty or challenge factor (Grade 2-3?, might be a scramble); and

3) is a bike really necessary? (no, but you are way behind if you don't bring one) "Oh, will a ten speed do", (yes, in a pinch, but let's have some fun!).

The stunned response to the answers was deafening, but I pleaded with the "trust me" rebuttal. Some did, while others gradually slunk out, thereby seeing a reasonably confirmed list of 12 participants dwindle to seven by 10 pm on Friday. To avoid further defection the leader refused to answer the phone! and that avoided any more whining about bicycle problems. Sev maintained to the end, however, that he was doing it on foot, citing a really flimsy excuse: he hadn't been on a bicycle for 40 years, and that one had only one gear and only a foot pedal brake.

Amazingly, at the highway toll gate spare bikes appeared for the "have nots". The trip was becoming

more political by the hour; but Sev and Ed did test spins after various readjustments. Bert pulled out high level aerial photos which showed the route and roads. This re-enforced the bike necessity as well as fully exaggerating the vertical relief of the area. By 4 pm the cavalcade of 3 cars (2 left at the toll booth) reached the same old washout near the exit of the Jim Kelly Creek road (about 1.5 km off the Tulameen River road). To cheer up Sev it was noted that one gear (the lowest or next to it) was all that was needed from here on in, and we would worry about the brakes tomorrow! The maps indicated a steady 3% grade for 7 K's to reach campsite by the creek crossing, which was not the end of the road.

Those with frame packs weaved at off balance angles up the road which was built to the miner's whims of alternating flats (welcomed) and 10%+ grades on hills (no printable comment). The body pack types sped off leaving them to alternately ride and push. Ed was too enthusiastic on a hill and demolished the de Railleur and so he walked and pushed for the last 3 K. Bike time for the front runners was about an hour and the others arrived to a campfire with a little daylight to spare. The aging crew hit the sack early to prepare for the next day's marathon. Those who slept on the road (literally) were up at 6 and ready to go at 7, and the others who slept on forest moss had to hurry up. Ed left early because it was shank's pony for him, while Sev said: "you mean we are still going to ride bikes!" and Dave retorted: "Welcome to the 21st century!"

The road climbed gently into a stupendous avalanche basin where a spur quickly veered right and up the hill at a ridiculous grade. The bikes were quickly cached out of view and the road was followed to a steep gully on the east edge of the avalanche swath. At 1600m it ended in open subalpine woodland with an indistinct trail leading into the nearby heather for a start of a magnificent ramble.

The alpine traverse was hardly new; an old campfire was found above a pocket lake (el. 1725m) that marks the real head of Jim Kelly Creek. We stayed on the rim above it veering northwest, but Sev shortcutted low and fouled out in tight Krummholz. Meanwhile the rest of us had spooked a large stag which blitzed past him. He swears it was not the same mighty buck that flew over him two years ago, but it was pushing our luck. A false summit 1.5 K shy of the real summit provided a stunning view down to a nameless creek, south of Unknown Creek, and draining into the Coquihalla



Coquihalla Mtn. (to left) and Jim Kelly Mtn. (right of centre), as seen on the approach to Carry Mtn. Photo - K. Ricker



Illal (centre) and Coquihalla Mtn. (right), as seen from the summit of Carry Mtn. Photo - K. Ricker

River. Beyond it, we stopped for a breather at the base of the final ascent.

Sev finally reappeared at that point. A bit of a rock scramble, that was well used by goats, initiated the final hike, giving way to broad rocky shelves and a final small summit with just enough room to lie around a cairn and adjacent B.C. Survey Monument (#80H273), with tattered remains of an enclosing air photo target. (A later check on the monument # posted on the summit revealed an official elevation of 1999.03m. - the cairn makes it a two thousander!). It was high noon, unusually warm, and views were brilliant. Towards Needle and Yak peaks it had all the appearances of a Yosemite, with Alpaca Mountain bearing a distinctive white promenade. Coquihalla mountain was a next door volcanic plug, quite ragged in

appearance at this angle, but surrounded by steep meadows. Surprisingly, Mt. Urquhart has lost its distinctive "horn" appearance from this direction, resembling an elongate trapezoidal block. To the south of Tulameen Mountain, but north of Mt. Outram, an offending needle poked through with a no-name 2220m contour on most maps. However, Dave saw a mysterious Mt. Hatfield on his 1:250,000 map which prompted further inspection; the Fairley guide shows it unnamed at 2220m, with "FRA" by that dynamic BCMC duo: Joe Hutton and Roy Mason in 1956. Sev was quickly commissioned to check out the Eight Mile Creek logging road as the access to a potential next year trip. One solid hour of photography later, including a few shots down that gruesome northwest face, the gang finally left the summit. It was certainly one of the finest summit hours in our twenty odd years of Coquihalla trips.

The intervening false summit was contour bypassed on the south side to reach a col on the ridge just northwest of Jim Kelly Creek's headwater lake. while some retraced their steps up and around the lake, others cut directly to its southwest shoreline to regain the ridge to the south saving 10-15 minutes and earning a snooze in the shade. The air temperature was well over 20, and with little breeze at that. Regrouping, a quick descent of the steep heather to the road beside the avalanche swath put us back to the bikes at 3 pm, and camp a few minutes later! The ride was a gas. Demobilization was a bit slower as lassitude hit all but Ed. He left camp pushing his bike up the first hill, looking forward to the long coasting beyond. By 4 pm all others were underway - a short puff uphill and a relatively smooth road all to ourselves for 7 K's back to the cars. Travel time varied from a brash 20 minutes to a cautious one hour. Neither the environment nor the body was the worse for wear by the bikes and there was the rare opportunity for some compatibility of two different sports (and attitudes)! So for the political month of October we concluded with the following message: Although conservative we may be, let's be progressive and liberal minded and try to reform our ideas in a democratic manner about where mountain bikes might be useful in our green national outdoor heritage.

Carry Mtn. - FA likely CPR surveyors, or the geologist C.E. Cairnes and party - early 1920's, and FPBAA (first pedal bike assisted ascent): Dave Hughes, Bert Parke, Ed Zenger, John Sapac, Jenny Faulkner, Sev Heiberg and Karl Ricker (organizer).

ATHELNEY PASS - FROST FIEND SKI TRAVERSE, 1 - 8 May, 1993

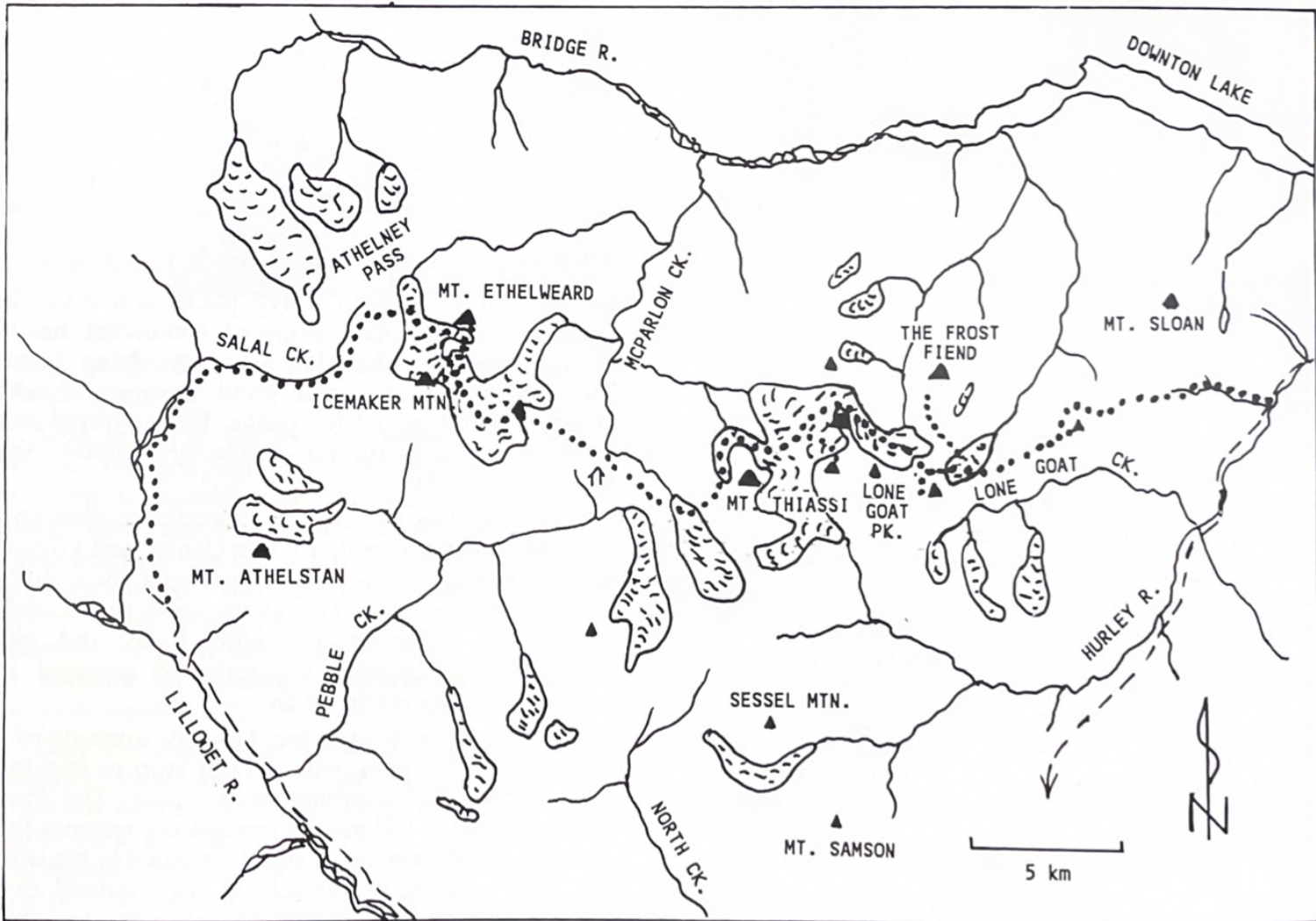
- by Brian Waddington

The attraction of the country bounded by the Lillooet River, Hurley River, and Bridge River is the fact that it is so close, yet relatively untravelled. The area receives only sketchy coverage in Fairley's guidebook, and many of the peaks in the area are still unnamed. John Baldwin wrote in his 1983 book "Exploring the Coast Mountains on Skis"; "Little is known about skiing NE of Mt. Thiassi, though it is infrequently used by helicopter skiers." And yet the area is getting more and more traffic as access improves. For example Mt. Thiassi has been climbed in a two-day weekend, and the club has cleared a trail to the cabin in North Creek. It seems inevitable that this trend will continue as roads are extended further up the valleys. Hence the attraction of traversing the area while it is still in a wilderness

state. And, of course, it promised lots of peaks and good skiing.

The plan for our trip was to start from the Lillooet valley, ski up Salal Creek to Athelney Pass, travel south and east, around the north side of Mt. Thiassi, to exit down to the Hurley River valley near Mt. Sloan. Since the trip was only eight days, no food cache was required. We hoped to climb a number of peaks, including Icemaker Mtn. and The Frost Fiend. Mt. Thiassi, which is the highest mountain in the area, was not on the list as it requires climbing gear which we were unwilling to carry.

The trip lived up to its promise. The weather was good; there were a couple of stormy days, but none so bad that we couldn't move. The peaks proved as accessible as we hoped (with one exception). And the skiing proved to be excellent, exceeding all expectations.



The route from the Lillooet R. to the Hurley R. via Athelney Pass and the Frost Fiend. Map by Betsy Fletcher



Denise on Ethelweart. Photo - B. Waddington

The trip began, somewhat inauspiciously, with a long drive in the rain to place Sue's car on the Hurley River road near Gold Bridge. The road over Railroad Pass had been ploughed, so we drove that way. The night was spent on the upper Lillooet valley road, at Pebble Creek.

Next morning the weather cleared up as we skied up Salal Creek towards Athelney Pass. Plinth Peak of the Meager Group dominated the view back down the valley. Oppressively heavy packs (and perhaps less than fit bodies) encouraged us to make camp early, in the last patch of trees before the pass. We awoke next day to grey skies, which fortunately never amounted to much. The long climb to Athelney Pass continued, followed by more climbing up the glacier towards Ethelweart and Icemaker. The novelty of climbing began to wear off, especially when the snow began sticking to our skins. Finally the col between Peak 2590 and Peak 2620 was reached and we gratefully removed our skins before descending 300m to a flat spot on the other side. This was the first of many good runs



Ethelweart from the west. Photo - B. Waddington

on the trip. Even with heavy packs and minimal energy, the wide-open slope of somewhat heavy spring snow provided dozens of satisfying turns. The campsite too was a good one, as it was surrounded by jagged icy peaks. We savoured our soup as the peaks turned orange, and plotted the next day's activity.

The idea was to divide and conquer. Sue and Betsy headed for Icemaker while Denise and I opted for Ethelweart, which we climbed via a snow gully on its southwest side. The views were predictably spectacular, including Downton Lake and the Shulaps Range beyond. We returned satisfied to camp for a sunny warm lunch.

Camp was broken and we headed towards the Pebble-McParlon pass, with a brief stop to bag the minor Peak 2560 overlooking the pass. The long 1000m descent to the pass unfortunately was not the classic it could have been, due to breakable crust in the late afternoon. It was a tired crew indeed that finally stumbled into Underhill's cabin at eight that evening.



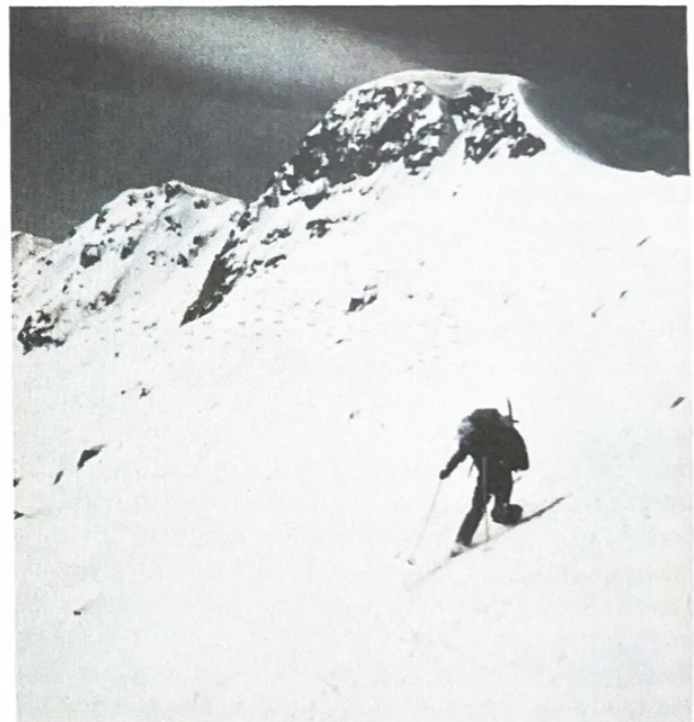
Betsy with Pk 2350m beyond. Photo - B. Waddington

Next morning we awoke to low overcast and drizzle. We adapted to this by hanging out and drinking tea until noon. An afternoon spurt of energy lasted just long enough to get us to our next campspot near the McParlon Glacier. This less cozy spot encouraged vestibule cooking and a notable lack of socialization. Next day the weather was no better, as we made our way around the north side of the invisible Mt. Thiassi. We even had a good run on invisible snow.

That evening the weather cleared. Betsy and I couldn't resist, and went for an after-dinner ski. From the nearby Peak 2500 we gazed down into the north fork of the Hurley River, where the 1990 Christmas Ski Camp was held. Mt. Thiassi dominated the southern skyline. The north face looks like it would be a good snow climb. We also got our first look at The Frost Fiend that evening.

Next day we continued on under sunny skies. A small 2560m peak was bagged, and the Surfusion Glacier traversed. A better name for it might be the "Surfision Glacier", considering how much it has shrunk since the topo map was made. The glacier has retreated at least 500m and one of its three branches no longer connects with the rest of the glacier. All the Coast Mountain glaciers have retreated of late, but it was much more noticeable here than most places. After crossing the Surfusion Glacier we nipped up one more 2530m peak before yet another good run. Camp was made on the glacier just north of the head of Lone Goat Creek, not far from The Frost Fiend.

The Frost Fiend beckoned, so off we went next morning. We investigated the south ridge, but soon reached a 50m step. A gully cut through the step, and looked like it might go. It proved, however, to be a little too rude so we backed off. As it turns out there is really a very easy way around the step (on the left), although we didn't see it at the time. It was not until a trip in June that I discovered the easy route. Part of the problem on the ski trip is that we didn't have all day to look around. We had to return to camp, pack up, and put another several kilometres (fairly slow ones at that) behind us. If not, we wouldn't get down to the road the next day as we planned.



Skiing N of Lone Goat Ck. Photo - B. Waddington



Frost Fiend from the W. Photo - B. Waddington



On the S. ridge of the Frost Fiend. Photo - B. Waddington

The afternoon's ski was exceedingly aesthetic. The route led along the top of the ridge just north of Lone Goat Creek, affording spectacular vistas. Not to mention a couple of dynamite runs down glaciated north-facing bowls. It was like the Spearheads would be if the glaciers wasted away. This was definitely one of the highlights of the trip.

The last morning we enjoyed more of the same - silky smooth corn snow runs under blue skies. It was not until we were climbing towards our last col that the wind came up and the clouds closed in. It definitely felt like time to leave the mountains. One last run on good (but invisible) snow took us to a lake at treeline. We contemplated the freezing stream (shouldn't it be melting out this time of year?) and the prospect of a 900m descent through the trees. Of course it worked out fine. A big rockslide on the south side of the creek provided an easy (and occasionally entertaining) route for a while. Then into the trees for a little more skiing,

then walking to the car. The trip then finished off as it began, with a long drive in the pouring rain.

Overall, it was a dandy little traverse. There were lots of peaks, great skiing (more than on many longer trips I've been on), and not bad weather. And, needless to say, we met no one else during the trip. The wilderness was still there. (Ed's comment - during 1993, snowmobilers built a shack near the head of Lone Goat Creek. During Christmas 1993 they were observed trashing the slopes all over the Lone Goat Ck. valley, and as far afield as the Thiassi Glacier and the slopes near Mt. Thiassi in the Upper Hurley River. Goodbye wilderness).

Party : Susan Anstett, Betsy Fletcher, Denise Hart, and Brian Waddington

ALTHELNEY PASS - B.C.M.C. Summer Camp, August 1993 - by John Halliday

The summer of 93 was as wet as a three hankie wedding. It rained most of July and on into August. However this did not dampen the enthusiasm of the seven campers who showed up at the church parking lot at 5:30am on August 7th. How could it with such high expectations set by the camp organizer. A newsletter from Tom Zarzecki detailed the 8 hour hike in (with light overnight packs), exciting climbing possibilities in an awesome natural setting and culminating with a 2-day high elevation glacier traverse and ascent of Mt. Athelstan on the way out (this time with not-so-light overnight packs). As well, the camp was to have some attractive amenities: a cool alpine lake for bathing, a camp log book, a communal first aid kit and a disposable toilet seat.

Despite unpredictable weather in the preceding days, Saturday was a classic August day in the Pemberton valley - cloudless with the promise of high temperatures. After learning that the additional cost to fly our bodies to camp as well as our equipment was within everyone's budgets, we abandoned the plan to hike in favour of the helicopter approach (altogether \$120 each). In part this decision may have had something to do with the experience level of the group and the fact that the strongest proponent of the hike - Tom Z. bailed out in the week leading up to the camp to go off on extended travels in the mountains of Europe.

Three vehicles were strategically stationed on a spur road under Athelstan in anticipation of our planned exit route from the camp. By mid-day, all campers had arrived at the site of the Camp at the



Mt. Athelstan as seen from the flight in. Photo - J. Halliday



View from the summit of Ochre Mtn. to the SW. The snow peak to the far left is Icemaker Mtn., Mt. Guthrum is left of centre, Mt. Athelstan is on right skyline. Athelney Pass is between Guthrum and the photographer. Photo - J. Halliday

1800m summit of Athelney Pass, the headwaters of Salal Creek. The classic start to a high-energy BCMC camp unfolded as the tents were hastily erected and the campers headed for the peaks in three different directions.

On this first day in camp, Tricia and Randy attempted Mt. Ethelweart (or "Ethel" as we thereafter referred to it) and succeeded in route-finding to within 150m of the top before being lured off route by a false summit. This exploration of the west face of Ethel proved critical in defining the approach route for our later successful ascent. Mt. Ethelweart rises to 2800m directly from the pass and is the highest peak in the area. It is characterized by a multi-towered summit crest running south east to north west with the highest tower being at the north west end. The view from camp was spectacular - the upper 300m or so being black in colour (when up close the rock was found to be covered in black lichens) with the lower approaches varying from lacklustre gray through to burnt orange as the sun delta'd its daily trajectory. The last known ascent was by John Clarke when he soloed it for a first ascent in June 1972 via the southeast ridge (ref. ACC Journal 1973).

Another group that first day, consisting of Geoff, Jackie and Alec, solved the glacier route to a gap just west of Peak 2620m about 1km south of Ethel. This route and its natural variants were subsequently employed several times for ascents and descents. Picture a broad bare-ice highway within 15 minutes hike up the moraine from the camp that provided straight-forward access to the upper snow fields and peaks south of the pass, such as Icemaker and Guthrum.

Finally, I headed for the trees and bush to ascend the north side of the pass and climb Ochre Mountain. This peak is aptly named for the unusual orange-brown colour of the summit rock, reflecting the volcanically-oriented geology of the area. Most approaches not on snow or ice included traversing dunes of pumice sand in this pumiced land.

That first warm bright day we all agreed the campsite was ideally situated. The extensive moraine sand outwashes provided wonderfully soft tent platforms, the promised alpine lake was only steps away and other than a few horse flies there were no bugs! The moraine wall on one side prevented the mineral exploration hut from visually reminding us of the recent human history of the pass while the moraine on the other provided a stimulating climb as preparation for performing the

daily basics (alas, without the aid of the disposable seat).

Sunday - our first full day in camp - dawned gray with low clouds obscuring all peaks. We quickly became acquainted with the predominant weather pattern of the pass - a persistent wind blowing coastal weather up Salal Creek and through to the interior. Determined the day should not be spent idling in camp, we all set off towards Ochre. The climb through the bush was uneventful and we soon reached the meadows. The red, blue and yellow blooms of the alpine flowers and heather provided the first opportunity for most of us to begin the process of unwinding from the rigours of city life. The view looking south east across the pass was awesome. Even with the summits of Ethel, Icemaker and Guthrum obscured by cloud, the aerial view of the glacier flowing down into the pass gave us the measure of the natural forces at work in this area. Despite the low clouds, we were able to find a route across the pumice flats in the general direction of the peak and thereafter to the summit.

After a brief stay in the wind and the fog, the descent began. One group headed back to camp with a brief detour to inspect a collection of twelve fuel drums on the pumice flats. The others kept to the high country while traversing toward the red and black-coloured volcanic plug north west of Ochre. While on this traverse we were able to view three more fuel drums on the flats below Ochre's NW face.

Monday dawned gloomy with the clouds again moving up Salal Cr. Definitely a no climb day, so all campers headed off down the valley to the NE of the pass. The creek was followed through the moraine terminus into the meadows, willows and open forest. It was a pretty walk. We were able to observe the lower north faces of Ethel and gather firewood. No wildlife other than some birds was encountered.

We knew the weather had to improve - after all it was only the second week of August. And so it did. On Tuesday morning the summit of Ethel was visible and large breaks in the clouds appeared. It was decided to go for Ethel via the original ascent route which started at the SE end of the summit ridge. The approach involved traversing and ascending the glacier keeping close under the west face of Ethel. The icefall was bypassed on the rock of Ethel's flank. By the time we neared the 2500m level the clouds had descended to obscure Ethel's summit and no sooner had we arrived at the point where the actual beginning of the intended route could be

observed, then whamo a snowstorm! Large wet flakes set everyone scrambling for their rain gear - from the latest in Gore-tex hi-tech to ancient 3-Vets ponchos.

With the ascent of Ethel out of the question we descended. Then as our view of the surroundings and the weather improved, we decided to explore an alternate route back to camp. We once more ascended and then traversed to reach the rocks below Peak 2620m. The weather continued to improve and while several stretched out in the warm sun, others climbed the peak. By descending and traversing on snow, the SE ridge was gained followed by a scramble to the summit. The clearing clouds enabled us to see all the way to Athelstan as we attempted to scope our intended route out for the end of the camp.

To descend back to camp we traversed under the south face of Peak 2600m to reach the notch gained on Saturday afternoon's outing. From this point we followed the tracks through the icefall down to the lower glacier and back to camp, to complete 9 hours of fun and exercise.

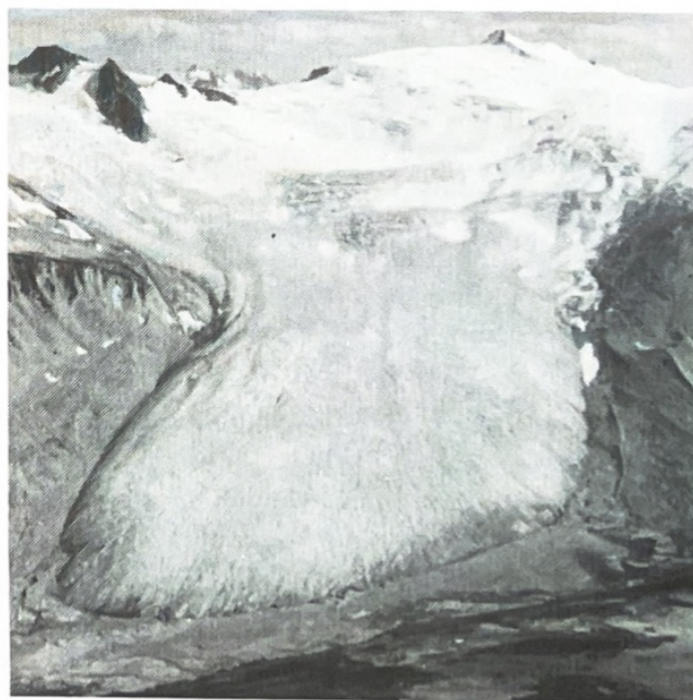
As we collected about the campfire that night, the discussion turned at one point to the possibilities for the next day. Ethel was still on our minds but were our bodies willing? Should tomorrow be a non-climbing day? One of the benefits of camping at 1800m in close proximity to the peaks was that you could leave camp at say 8 or 9 o'clock and with cooperative weather still reach the objective. Thus, experience told us to wait this decision until daylight.

As luck would have it, Wednesday arrived with impeccable weather and the corresponding dilemma. Eventually by 9 am five of us were away bound for Ethel with the intention of completing the route Randy and Tricia had marked on Saturday. After crossing the glacier much the same as the previous day, we worked our way onto the shoulder of Ethel and crossed a section of pumice dunes to arrive at the base of the west face. From here we followed a class 3 route of gullies, ridge crests and slabs to a steep narrow gully which lead directly to the west ridge of the summit towers. A class 4 roped traverse got us into the gully and a class 5 slab climb was our exit. Now we had gained the west ridge and were en route to the summit. By keeping to the ridge with occasional diversions into gullies to bypass gendarmes we reached the summit.

The second rope of three arrived at the summit some time after the leaders. They had verified that we were indeed on the higher summit. As well we found in the summit cairn the record of John Clarke's original June 1972 ascent. There were no other recorded ascents.

The descent retraced the route up including several pitches of roped downclimbing but no rappels. Once out of the final gully and unroped, cautious route finding and the numerous cairns strategically placed by Tricia, enabled us to descend, knees screaming, to the pumice dunes below. As usual, we roped to cross the glacier and arrived back in camp at dusk. Just another awesome day in the mountains! The weather had remained flawless all day, the view from the top included Downton Lake to the east, Bridge peak and the vast surrounding icefields to the northwest, and most of our intended route out with the forbidding north side of Athelstan clearly detailed.

As a bonus the night sky remained clear and for the first time the three bright stars of the summer triangle, Vega, Deneb and Altair, as well as billions of others, were visible. We allowed the campfire to burn out and the full glory of the night sky to prevail as we discussed the alternatives to find our way back to civilization. For as long as we could



Icemaker (right) with Pks 2620 and 2600 to far left. Photo - J. Halliday



The walk down Salal Ck. begins. Photo - J. Halliday

stay awake we were entertained and enthralled by numerous sightings of meteors from the annual Perseid shower.

Our last day in camp arrived as its predecessor. Two teams set out for Icemaker. Alec lead Jackie and Larry on a route that involved one pitch of ice to gain the NE ridge. This party continued over Icemaker to the Icemaker-Guthrum col and soon thereafter to the top of Guthrum. Tricia and Geoff identified a more direct route via the glacier to the same col before climbing Icemaker.

As we gathered around that final evening campfire to share again the abundance of Randy's dinner leftovers and to burn boxes and other garbage, the time had come to decide which way out. Our choices were two and both unknown. The original plan A was the high route via Athelstan with plan B being to descend the 16 kilometers of Salal Cr. to the Lillooet mainline road. In the end it was unanimously agreed to follow plan B with three

reasons against plan A: unsettled weather, unknown route through glaciers and ridges, and heavy packs. We concluded that the gear required and the planning for such a traverse was at odds with preparations for seven days of base camp-oriented climbing. In short we had too much stuff and not enough information about the route. On the other hand plan B looked straight forward on the map and Tricia had skied out that way and survived. As well, Tom would not have suggested it as an approach into camp if it was not straight forward. Probably a long slog but it would not depend on the weather. That our vehicles were many kilometers out of position was our main concern.

Next morning at about 10 am after the appropriate camp-breaking ceremonies we started off. The clear skies and warm air helped to offset the initial shock of shouldering our "25 kg" packs. At first the wide valley floor made for pleasant walking amid flowers and hoof marks of beasts we never did see. Only the ever present marmots watched us

depart. After about two kilometers the going got serious, bouldering through creek outwash and slide debris. Several side creeks were crossed by leaps and bounds.

We reached the first forest early in the afternoon. Mostly we were able to avoid it by walking the rounded stones of the creek bed, but otherwise excursions into the alder and swamp were necessary when the creek channel cut off our progress. By late afternoon the weather had deteriorated to intermittent showers. We could see them coming as the clouds flowed up the valley. At about 6 pm Tricia determined we should stop and camp - with 7 km to go, the road could not be reached before dark. By timing it just right we started to erect the tents exactly as the next rain squall hit.

The last day at last! It was about four more hours to the road. Most of the travel was through open forest with pine, hemlock and fir. All but one of us were stung by wasps in several confrontations, luckily without any serious reactions. We were trudging through the endless bush muttering about where it would end and whamo we stumbled onto the road. Dump the pack, we were out!

The car problem solved itself nicely when two women in a sporty 4X4 agreed to go explore the spur roads where our vehicles were located. By late afternoon we were in Pemberton and the adventure was over.

Party: Tricia Daum, Randy Enomoto, John Halliday, Geoff Mumford, Jackie Snodgrass, Larry Stark and Alec Schalinsky

A TRAVERSE OF THE CLENDENNING AND ELAHO RANGES - Twenty-two Days in the Coast Mountains, 31 July - 22 August, 1993 - by Randy Stoltmann

July 31 seemed like the first day of the summer of 1993. Most of July had been miserable on the coast, so the clear skies and warm temperature in the Pemberton Valley were a real treat. They also brought an end to speculation about how long we would have to wait to put in three airdrops of food and fuel along our planned route from Meager Creek, through the Elaho and Clendenning ranges, to Princess Louisa Inlet.

The drops went smoothly, but our rendezvous at Devastator Creek was messed up by CRB Logging's failure to leave the gate open as promised. So much for sharing the forest. Somewhat delayed, Mary, Peter and Doug came trudging up the hot, dusty

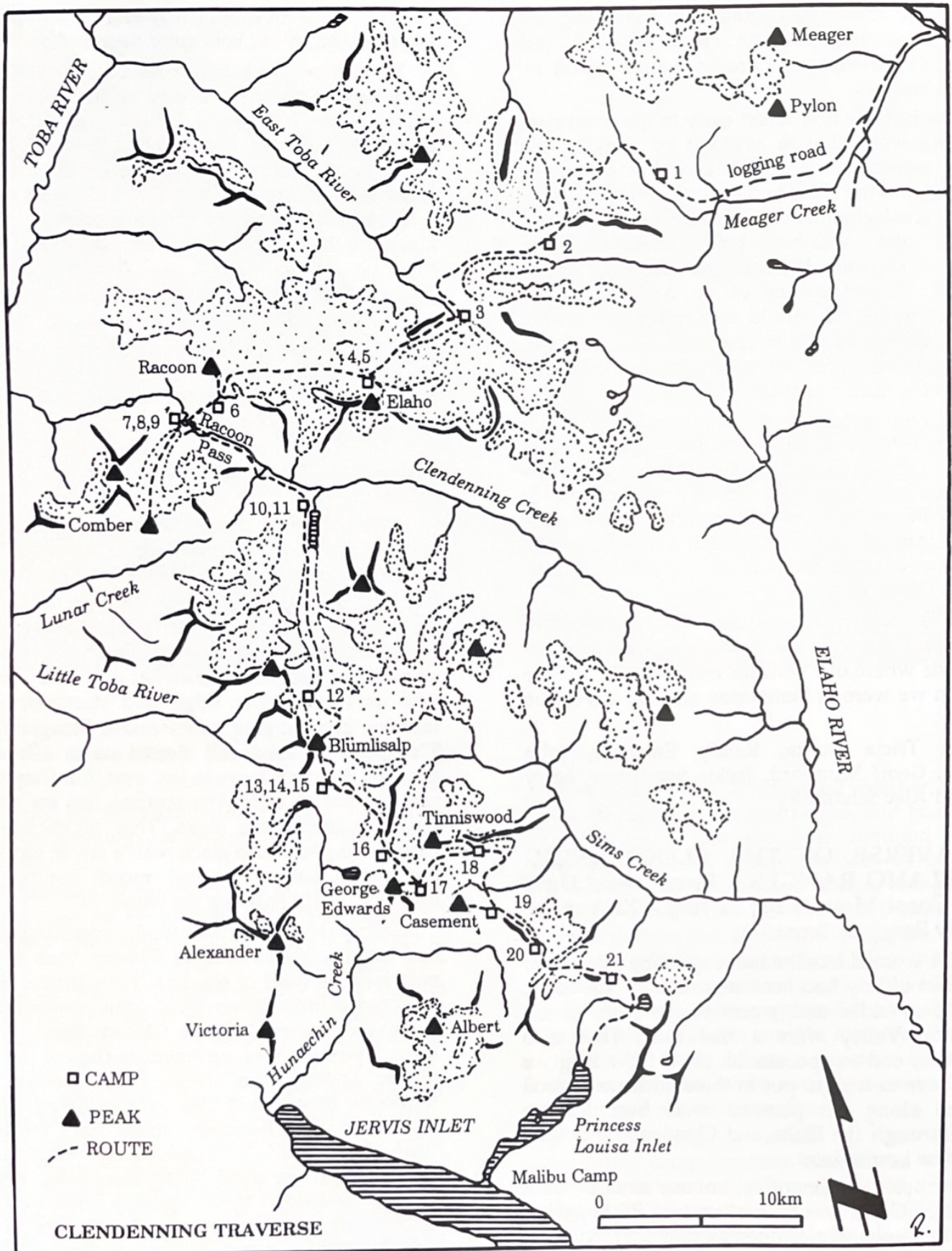
road to join Shirley and I who had been deposited at the road end by the helicopter over an hour before.

We crossed Devastator Creek without difficulties on a log and ground our way up the steep, forested ridge beyond, accosted by mosquitos and flies, sweating profusely, but enjoying the excellent crop of big, juicy blueberries. On the gentle, meadowed ridge overlooking Manatee Glacier, we set up camp one and settled in for a relaxing evening, thinking about the three weeks of wilderness that lay ahead.

A lazy morning saw us off by one o'clock, rambling the flowering meadows west towards the glacier. On a ridge near a small lake, we encountered two Whistler types with dogs who were working on a stone cabin, presumably without a permit (a request by the ACC to build a cabin in the Manatee area was turned down because of goat habitat). So that one and all may use this illegal intrusion into a pristine area, I noted the grid reference -- 555044 on map 92 J/12.

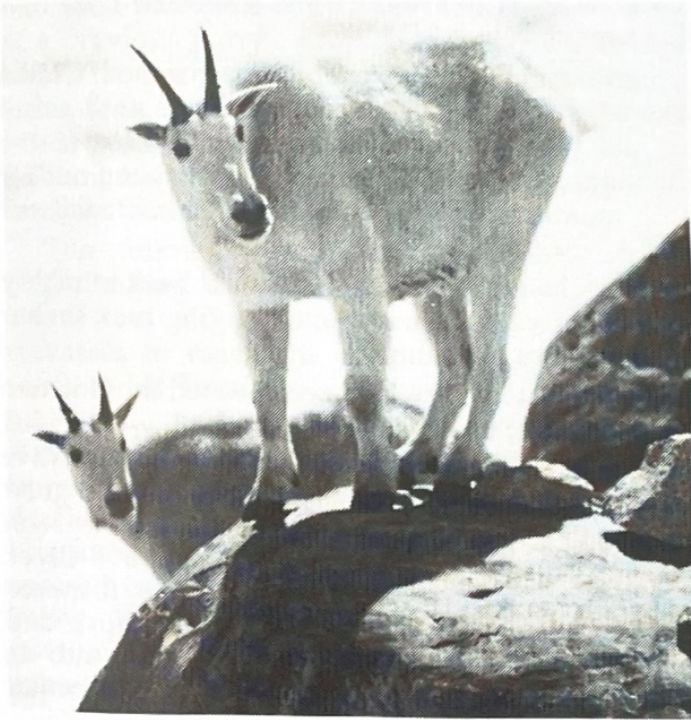
Once on the Manatee Glacier, we crunched our way up the bare ice, then roped up at a heavily crevassed section near the snow-ice transition zone. In the lead, I plunged my foot through more hidden crevasses in ten minutes than in the last eight years of wandering around on glaciers! Big sun cups slowed our progress somewhat and late afternoon saw us cresting the ridge and descending to a moraine in a hanging valley above Meager Glacier. The clatter of stone fall alerted us to a couple of goats on the steep rocks to the west, but they quickly scurried out of sight. We scraped out an adequate campsite among the rocks. That night, the moon bathed the peaks and glaciers in a silver glow while the strong katabatic wind raced down off the icefields, madly flapping the tents.

On day three, we hiked west, traversing sidehills and benches above Meager Glacier, then crested a pass into the head of the East Toba River. Here we followed a little flower-filled (and mosquito-filled) valley south towards Elaho Glacier. Battling vicious bugs, I pushed hard up towards the col beside the glacier, hoping for a breeze. I was greeted by my hoped-for breeze, and also by a stunning little lake surrounded by boulders, moss and white sand "camping pads." I immediately stripped and plunged into the scenic swimming hole. When the others arrived, they quickly followed. We established camp on the sand near the tarn and enjoyed another warm, mellow evening, gazing out across the expanse of Elaho Glacier to the line of ice-draped peaks beyond.

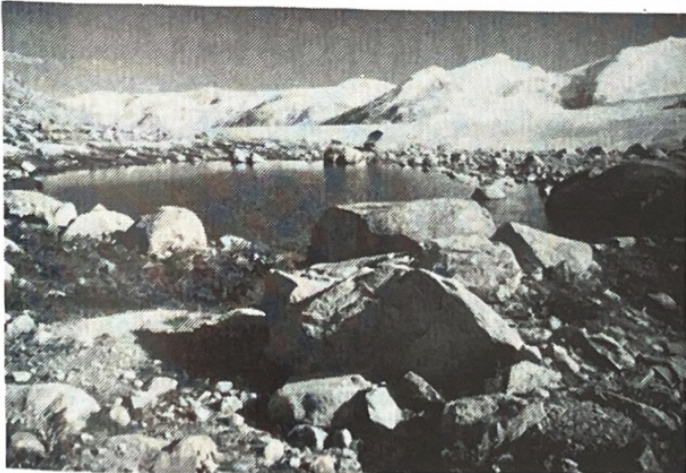


The route of the traverse. Map by R. Stoltmann.

On August 3 we packed up the bluffy ridge to the west, bypassing the Elaho Range Pinnacles to the south. Here we were captivated by two goats which just stood on a boulder, heads cocked, and stared. Shirely, Peter and I got within 20m with telephoto lenses. We then ascended the edge of Elaho Glacier



Elaho Range residents eyeing the visitors. Photo - R. Stoltmann



At the edge of the Elaho glacier. Photo - R. Stoltmann

onto the icefield. Our first food drop, a little black speck on the horizon, didn't look like the white buckets we had placed, leading us to wonder if it had been raided by animals. After some anxiety, we reached the 2500m col, 1.3 km north of Elaho Mtn, to

find the drop intact. We had actually been looking at the black tip of a distant peak poking above the crest of the saddle. The following morning, fresh wolverine tracks skirted our camp on the edge of a huge wind cirque.

Day five was declared a rest day -- a lazy morning followed by an afternoon ascent of Elaho Mountain via the north ridge. From the 2823m summit, we could see down the long unlogged valley of Clendenning Creek, and across the valley to Clendenning Lake and glacier -- our route south next week. This is truly a special area -- the largest remaining tract of wilderness within two-hundred kilometres of Vancouver -- wild and remote and big enough to stay that way if we have the sense to protect its valleys from encroaching logging.



On Elaho Mtn. Photo - R. Stoltmann

The snow on the descent to camp was mushy, as was the dinner in the Mary/Peter/Randy food group! A gross miscalculation in the rice/lentil formula, combined with the slow high altitude cooking, resulted in a disastrous dinner. A hungry crevasse nearby gobbled up the leftovers without complaint.

The following morning, we packed up gear and plastic airdrop buckets and trugged west across the vast Plateau Icefield to the 2400m col southeast of Racoon Mtn. Here we lounged on the warm rocks and made a short side trip to Racoon's 2469m summit. We then dropped down the right-hand edge of the glacier to the west, bypassing an icefall on bouldery slabs. Camp was set up at 1980m on a bluffy promontory jutting out above Racoon Pass, overlooking the great gulf of Wave Creek valley. We spent the late afternoon bathing in the tarns and wandering around the slabs and heather patches.

In the morning, we enjoyed a lazy session of pancake making on the breezy bluffs. South of Clendenning and Wave creeks rose a line of big peaks with tops smothered in ice like giant sundaes. Afternoon brought the inevitable descent down steep moraine slopes and bluffs to the bugs in Racoon Pass, a true Coast Mountains beauty spot of rounded granitic ridges, lakes and heather patches. We set up camp on solid rock near a fine selection of tarns, then set about swimming in the architect-designed triangle pool, in heaven after seven days of continuous sunshine.

The following day, Shirley, Peter and I ascended Wave Glacier, where I broke through into a completely hidden crevasse and dangled from the rope in a crystal palace alive with the tinkling sound of falling ice. Just a reminder of why we always rope up on glaciers. We climbed Comber Peak, a minor 2225m summit at the head of the glacier with a major view of the remarkable Terrific Glacier icefall, which spears down 1200m into the green hell of Lunar Creek valley. A rock pushed off the summit fell silently for several seconds before bouncing and clattering down an appalling slide gully, finally coming to rest 1300m below. Fifteen minutes later, a dust cloud rose out of the depths to obscure my view as I was about to take a photo.

That evening we dug a pit in a dried up pond, built a hot fire, and cut up and burned the plastic airdrop buckets, having been told by two knowledgeable people that this would release minimal toxins (we later buried the ashes and fire pit, leaving no trace of our passing).

Day nine saw the end of the perfect weather, with low cloud, fog and drizzle filling Racoon Pass. We passed the time reading, playing word games, eating and making occasional forays out into the gloom between showers. On one of my bolder ventures, I wandered a half-hour from camp, reaching the rim of the 250m-high Racoon Creek headwall which stopped explorer Stanley Smith exactly one-hundred years before. In July 1893, Smith and his partner Mr. Doolittle set out from Squamish through unknown country in search of two lost surveyors. Later, as they traversed north, presumably into the East Toba River valley, Smith remarked,

"We made the stream crossing on a tree that rested across the canyon, at an angle of about 30 degrees with the horizontal, and about 200 feet above the bottom of the canyon.... At one point in this valley a precipice rises from the river to a height of about 2,000 feet. Halfway up

the precipice is a narrow ledge with some brush here and there... It varied from a few inches to about four feet in width. In some places we had no footing and hung on by the brush. My rifle troubled me very much where the hanging work had to be done... the ledge ran out and it was necessary to climb to a higher ledge and all depended on a small cedar root about the size of one's finger, for there was not footing." (1)

Smith and Doolittle eventually reached Chilko Lake where they carved a dugout canoe with a dull axe and then took the "shortest way out" via the Klinaklini River to Knight Inlet, having been out for three months! As Smith put it, "One suit will not stand a trip like this."

When the rain resumed, I snapped back to reality and leap-frogged from one overhanging rock shelter to another, back to camp.

After a wet night, which necessitated moving one of the tents out of a rapidly filling pond, we decided to use the poor weather day to pack down Wave Creek to Clendenning Lake, putting us in a good position to move back into the high country as soon as the weather cleared. We crossed icy Wave Creek at a gravel flat where fields of alpine fireweed bloomed pink, then hiked through wet bush and meadows to Doolittle Creek. I was forced into an impromptu crossing of deep and turbulent water when I stepped on a wasp nest on the creek bank. The others found a good crossing where the valley flattens out upstream. Opposite Havoc Glacier, a good dose of slimy rock slides and wet slide alder thrashing (where Stanley Smith walked over the ice of a much longer Havoc Glacier) brought us to an ancient moraine of the Clendenning Glacier. A half-hour later, we reached the austere iceberg-studded lake at the glacier snout and immediately built a roaring driftwood fire to dry us out.

August 10 was a cool, cloudy day. We passed the time exploring along the lake shore, photographing wildflowers and watching icebergs drifting across Clendenning Lake. The morning of the 11th dawned clear and cool. The lake mirrored the glacier and peaks in a perfect reflection. The hike along the west side of the lake was slow and tedious, with loose rocks and some ice patches. The only serious problem was near the south end where we had to pass beneath a section of ice-cored moraine which regularly dumped rocks down as the sun melted them out of the ice. An earlier start would have been safer.

Once on the Clendenning Glacier, we made fast progress up the great highway into the mountains, passing beneath wildly tumbling tributary icefalls and high precipices shining with silver threads of waterfalls. Near our own second airdrop, I was disappointed to find metal bucket lids, rusty cans and food packages strewn on the ice – the remains of a previous party's drop. Upon reaching our drop at 1740m, we set up camp on the ice, drilling peg holes with ice screws. That night we lay with our heads poking out of the tent door, staring up at the brilliant night sky, watching meteor showers as if from the window of a spaceship.

The following day had been planned as a rest/climbing day, but building clouds chased us out of the cold glacier basin. We negotiated large crevasses to reach the divide and our first views south to Mt Tinniswood, then crossed a saddle and hiked west and south over the 2142m summit of Blumlisalp Mtn in swirling mist. As we emerged from the fog, the ground ahead fell away into the depths of Hunaechin Creek valley. Iceberg-studded Hunaechin Lake, glacier hanging into one end, sat encased in a granite cauldron one-thousand metres below. We set up camp near a pool on a level granitic slab overlooking the valley and watched the sun set into the pass towards Little Toba River.

The next two days seemed to merge into one, with drifting mist enveloping camp, casting a muted sense of timelessness over our world. I even forgot what day of the week it was. We took turns walking over to the Little Toba divide and bathing in the little pool. Peter baked a pizza in his outback oven and we lunched on pizza and jello.

On the fifteenth we were greeted by a crisp, clear morning. We packed southeast along the divide with stunning views of Mt. Alexander and Hunaechin Peak to the west across the jungled depths of Hunaechin Creek valley. From a 2225m summit, we had excellent views of Mt. Tinniswood and its glacier. Frequent rumbling alerted us to tumbling seracs in the icefall, and slow motion ice avalanches regularly streaked down the adjacent black cliffs. Then we dropped steeply over snow, rock and heather into the col at the head of Tinniswood Glacier. Looking west, a remarkable lake lay almost completely walled-in by high cliffs streaked with waterfalls.

That evening Peter and I checked out two routes up from the col to the glacier hanging off Mt. George Edwards to the south. The following morning, we climbed the steep, bluff staircase with full packs

and airdrop buckets, then roped up and cramponed up the ice, Peter placing screws for protection until we reached the snow line. At length, we reached the glacier plateau between George Edwards and Tinniswood, crossed the neve, and found our final drop in good shape. After dinner, we all tramped over to the easy summit of George Edwards, where the declining sun shone gold over a sea of cotton batten valley clouds, and the pointed peaks of Alexander and Hunaechin poked through like silhouetted arrowheads. To the south, the great fortress of Mt. Albert floated on the clouds. At twilight, the low clouds rose around the perimeter of the plateau, encircling but never engulfing camp on the high neve, leaving us in a doughnut hole staring up at the never ending stars.

On August 17 we hiked east through the glacier pass south of Mt. Tinniswood and set up camp early at 2050m on the mountain's east ridge. Shirley, Peter and I then climbed Tinniswood via the southeast ridge, an aesthetic arete of snow and smooth rock slabs which sweeps up to the pyramidal 2591m summit. Out along the west ridge from the summit, a small cairn stood against a backdrop of billowing silver clouds, a memorial for Dan Culver erected by two friends only a few days before our visit. Although I did not know him, I felt compelled to select a pretty rock, deeply veined with white, and added it to the cairn, a silent tribute to a person who loved the wilderness and worked for its protection.

Sunshine and valley clouds the next day saw us off by mid-morning, rambling east along the ridge and dropping down a small glacier. A descent over slabs and moraine brought us to a level, meadowed bench strewn with wildflower gardens, streams, tarns and mossy flats resembling golf greens. Below Mt. Casement, we crossed a brawling glacial creek and traversed loose moraine slopes and avalanche snow to gain the 1400m pass leading into the east fork of Hunaechin Creek. Here we climbed out of the pass onto the ridge to the east and set up camp on a tiny sedge patch amid the uneven heather, with expansive views over the east Hunaechin valley to the massive walls of Mt. Albert. Late that evening, in the illumination of our candle lanterns, we celebrated Doug's birthday with a cake baked in the outback oven.

On the nineteenth, Shirley and Peter took off early for Mt. Casement, while Mary, Doug and I lounged around camp, occasionally checking their progress with binoculars. On their return, Peter baked another pizza, and we were off to an "alpine

start" by 4:30 pm (we were in the alpine, and we started...thus an alpine start).

The afternoon ridge walk was one of the most wonderful of the trip, with shimmering tarns set in clean, sloping, granitic slabs. At one point, a water spout issued from a vertical wall like a natural shower. Farther along, we saw big grizzly tracks in the snow. After only two hours, just beyond a 2087m peak, we found the perfect campsite – a dead-level slab, edged by heather, pools, tiny streams and weirdly sculptured rocks, hanging on the edge of the world above the head of east Hunaechin valley. For me, that afternoon will long be remembered as one of the loveliest I have spent in the Coast Mountains.

August 20 was another glorious morning, with the distant rumbling of ice sounding from the hanging glaciers of Mt. Albert. We packed south across a rocky basin to the ice-capped ridge separating the head of the east fork of Hunaechin Creek from the two thousand-metre-deep valley containing Princess Louisa Inlet, then dropped down huge, tilted slabs to "Bon Bon Glacier" (as named by Malibu Camp people). Crossing the glacier, we walked among polished rock domes recently exposed by the retreating ice and gained a bluffy ridge where the first vestiges of a trail began to appear in the heather. Ahead, the mountains finally fell away to the sea – far below, a tiny boat cut a white arc into the black waters of Princess Louisa Inlet.

For me, the last two days had been marked by feelings of an ending, the inevitable conclusion of a carefree time I wished could have gone on and on. We had become physically and emotionally distanced from civilization, living in quiet harmony with the natural world. Each new ridge brought scenes of astounding beauty and I often drifted into a feeling of quiet serenity, absorbed by the landscape and my growing sense of place in it. A day from now, the purity and simplicity of that existence would be left behind.

Our last camp was set among white granitic domes and ridges, their flanks sculptured and polished by water and ice into remarkable, fluid forms resembling windblown snow. Dozens of exquisite tarns dotted the ridge, and we enjoyed our final swims as building clouds gradually obscured the sun.

On August 21, day twenty-two, we groped our way through pea soup fog and drizzle, trying to

follow the off-and-on path across the rock and heather ridges to the lake at the head of Loquilt Creek. A few hours later, after slithering down the steep, muddy trail, five wet, filthy, bedraggled wanderers, carrying strange metal and plastic buckets that looked like astronauts' air tanks, emerged from the rainforest to a "civilized" world of luxury yachts and Coleman coolers. Minutes after arriving on the beach at Chatterbox Falls, a small crowd had gathered, we shared cold pop and had an offer of a ride home in the morning on the fourteen metre motor yacht *Crystal Tiger*.

Our journey was over – it was time to leave the mountains. Behind us, the sun and rain of passing days erased our footprints, the only signs of our passing across the wild landscape. Glancing up at the gloomy, mist shrouded cliffs, I knew that I would soon return, to continue the never ending search for the spirit of the wild.

"Like those before us, we had not found the northwest passage. But it is the looking for it that matters. It is only when you are looking that the goats and tarns, the glaciers and meadows, and the mist and fog can seep into your bones. And only then can you realize just how deeply you are connected to these endless miles of nameless mountains in the rain." (2)

Party: Doug Carter, Peter Katsaris, Mary Potyrala, Shirley Rempel and Randy Stoltmann

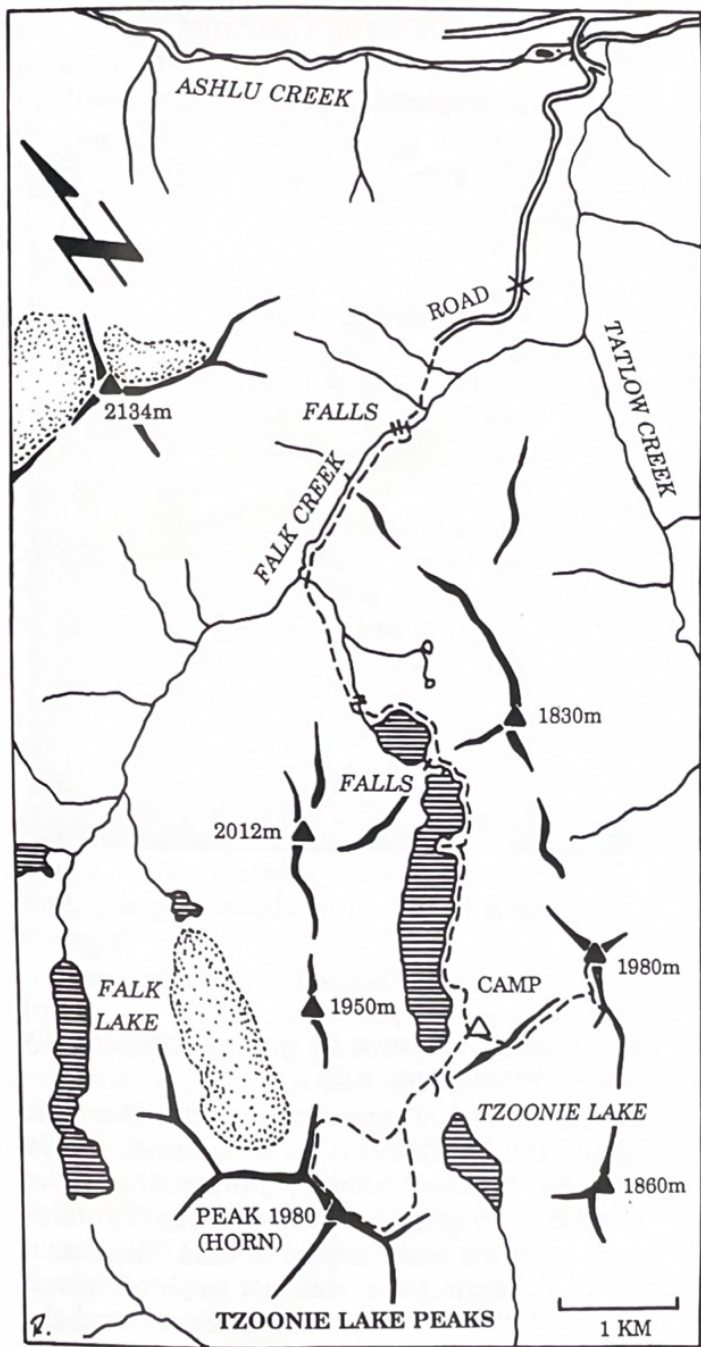
(1) Munday, W.A. Don. 1940 "Stanley Smith's Travels" in the Coast Mountains, 1893., Can. Alp. J. 27 (2)

(2) Baldwin, John. 1991 The Northwest passage. Can. Alp. J. 74.

TZOONIE LAKE PEAKS, 2 - 3 October, 1993 - by Randy Stoltmann

After spotting the barren, granitic ridges of the Tzoonie area from the Caren Range on the Sechelt Peninsula on a sunny September day, I became intrigued by this seemingly remote cluster of peaks near the headwaters of the Clowhom and Tzoonie rivers. Checking the maps, it seemed that the northern section around Tzoonie Lake might be accessible from the Ashlu Creek roads in a weekend.

So, I drove up the Ashlu valley, intent on making an exploratory foray into the area. I followed a spur road, marked A1100 on the Weldwood map, which climbs above the west side of Tatlow Creek into the Falk Creek valley. This road was in four-wheel-drive condition, but boulders blocked further driving at about 825m. Twenty minutes walking brought me to



The route from the Ashlu to Tzoonie Lake Peaks. Map by R. Stoltmann

the end of the road at about 900m in a steep, overgrown clearcut that, with cracks in the road bed, looked about ready to slide into Falk Creek.

I thrashed across the slash and through a thicket of tough yellow-cedar scrub to a washed-out creek

gully. Beyond the gully, I entered a glorious forest of ancient hemlocks. With new flagging tapes present, these trees are presumably enjoying their last few years of life before Weldwood comes back, unknown to the public, like a thief in the night.

A large slide alder chute lay ahead, so I descended to cross at a narrow point, then re-entered the big forest. After a messy creek gully, overgrown with devil's club and salmonberry, the sidehill steepened, and I descended to Falk Creek, crossing to the south side just below an attractive waterfall. Below, the falls were clear, green pools lined by mossy rock slabs. The forest on the south side was less steep and better for travelling, with an incredible crop of huge, juicy blueberries.

After twenty minutes of climbing, including foraging stops, I reached a flat part of the valley where boulders along the creek bed made for fast travel. Occasionally, I was forced into the dew-dampened bush. Even at noon, part of this narrow valley remained in shade. In the forest again, I found excellent travel, partly on a very distinct animal trail. Just beyond the tributary stream cascading down from the lakes to the south, I began to climb through dense blueberries and scrubby trees towards the hanging valley cradling the lakes.

There was that feeling of elation when, finally, patches of heather began to replace the dense, leg-scratching shrubs. After a few bluffs and a ledge roofed-over by tree branches, I came to a rocky gully where the creek pours off the lip of the hanging valley in a waterfall. A short scramble up to the lip, aggravated by uncooperative hemlocks, and a five minute walk over slabs and heather, brought me to the first lake at 1370m, only 2.5 hours from the road.

Cresting the ridge, I was stunned by the translucent turquoise water, almost unreal in its brilliance. The far shore was walled in by bluffs, and a sloping cascade poured down the slabs from the second, larger lake above.

After lunch on the rocks by the shore, I traversed heather slopes around the east side of the lake, then climbed over a low granite ridge to the upper lake. On a patch of white sand were the remains of a campfire -- probably from a floatplane party.

The upper lake is also very pretty, long and bordered by pale talus slopes below bluffs. An unusual peninsula jutting out from the east side looked like a spectacular campsite, but unfortunately turned out to have no really good flat spots. I continued along the lake shore, hopping



Rock in the Tzoonie Lake area. Photo - R. Stoltmann

across loose boulders. The sun was remarkably warm for the time of year, so I stopped for a swim at a huge granite tablet tilted into the water. Swimming on October 2 at 1400m! Is this global warming?

Near the south end of the lake, I encountered a problematic bluff which forced me to climb about 50m above the water up a grimy little gully. In retrospect, the west shore may have been a better route. I found a campsite on a bench at 1465m, near a small stream. After setting up camp, and a quick snack, I started for the 1980m peak east of the lake. From its west ridge, I looked down on Tzoonie Lake, headwaters of the Tzoonie River which flows into Narrows Inlet. Barren rock ridges and peaks with gray, snowless, pocket glaciers formed the view to the south. Near the summit ridge were numerous

dirt patches trampled down by goats -- presumably some sort of sleeping area with a view.

From the summit, I gazed down into the slide alder filled cleft of Tatlow Creek. Beyond, to the east, stood Mt. Jimmy Jimmy and, projecting above the intervening ridges, the peaks of the Tantalus Range and even the white top of distant Mt. Baker. A corner of Phantom Lake was just visible beyond the meadowed pass between Tatlow Creek and the headwaters of Clowhom River. Here is a remarkably secluded little wilderness area, speckled with lakes and featuring a network of ridges and meadows well suited to rambling.

I made only the fourth entry into the register, first signed by Roy Mason and Dick Chambers of the BCMC on September 10, 1961. An interesting entry by Glenn Woodsworth, dated September 2, 1974, noted that all the lakes were still frozen over

that year. Here I was, barely a month later in the year, with no snow remaining in the entire basin, swimming where nineteen years ago was solid ice!

The rocks turned golden as the sun plummeted toward the horizon. I quickly scrambled up a sub-peak for a better view, then descended into the shadows, back to camp. One by one the stars filled the sky. Then the full moon rose and bathed the peaks and valley in a silver glow.

Sunday morning I left camp at 9 am, bound for Peak 1980, a prominent horn west of Tzoonie Lake. From the pass, I contoured across a heather ramp towards the southeast ridge, then angled up big granitic slabs polished by a one-time glacier. I gained the ridge crest at an 1860m col near a minor sub-peak. To the west, great cliffs dropped over 1000m into a horrendously bushy tributary canyon of the Tzoonie River.

From this angle, the summit appeared steep and imposing, a dark horn with high, vertical cliffs on its west face. The rock and heather ridge narrowed as it rose, but only one short section was exposed. The summit block turned out to be an enjoyable class 3 scramble on good rock. Oddly, the summit cairn was covered in termites. I poked around and found the tell-tale aluminum film canister. Only one entry:

"John Clarke 1974 Get in touch with me thru BCMC"

If it took nineteen years for someone to see this note, this guy needs to re-think his communication strategy!

I registered my second ascent, then continued down the north ridge towards a second slightly lower peak, bypassing a few exposed notches on the east side. As I had hoped, this peak offered a good view of the glacier to the north and a green moraine lake at its snout. Way, way beyond, I could see Mts. Alfred, Albert and Tinniswood poking above the seemingly endless jumble of gray and white.

It was 11:30 - time to head down. I scrambled down a bowl beside a remnant icefield, then followed a scree and heather gully down to the vicinity of the pass above Tzoonie Lake, arriving back at camp at 12:45.

When I reached the logging road at just after five o'clock, my shins were raw and blood-stained from the bush, and I shook leaves and needles out of my sweaty clothes -- a satisfying end to another exploratory hike in the Coast Mountains.

Central Coast Mountains area

GOOD HOPE MOUNTAIN AREA, July 1992

- by Brian Gavin

How: By boat from Nemiah Valley to the mouth of Good Hope Creek.

By land to the head of Good Hope Glacier, down to the pass between Farrow and Boulanger Cks., up to the Goddard Glacier through Wednesday col, thence east to brush past the snout of the Norrington Glacier, crossing the low point in the ridge above, and then striking N towards the pass just N of Chilko Mtn., descending the broad ridge descending NE to the mouth of Norrington Ck. to Chilko Lake.

By boat from S end of Chilko Lake to Nemiah Valley.

Peaks ascended:

Peak at grid ref 160672 by all - no cairn, from camp on medial moraine of Good Hope Glacier. Nontechnical ascent via S ridge from col.

Good Hope Mtn. by all via "standard" route up S slopes/gully to col E of objective, thence to summit.

Good Hope Mtn. via new route by B. Gavin & P. Katsaris via prominent S-facing snow gully, then eastwards up solid class 3+ rock to negotiate a couple of short loose class 4 gullies, then move to N side for one full lead of 50-55 deg. ice. Finish directly on summit with one more half-lead of easy rock. Route name - "Confetti".

Good Hope Mtn. attempted on north side by M. Force, B. Gavin, E. Hinze, D. Hughes and P. Katsaris. Party turned back at approx 2900m by serious rockfall and severe crevasses.

Glasgow Mtn. by P. Celliers, E. Hinze, D. Hughes, and P. de Visser by same route as in 1974.

Mt. Durham and ridge to peak at grid ref 164658 by M. Force, B. Gavin, P. Katsaris, and R. Stoltmann.

Mt. Marston S ridge attempted by full party except Stanges. Party reached col S of objective to discover easy snow route ascended in 1974 was gone and replaced with class 5 rock and exposed. Not being equipped for this, the group descended the W side to contour back to camp at the swimming hole in the pass.

Mt. Marston N ridge direct from pass by P. Celliers, M. Force, P. Katsaris, R. Stoltmann.



Descending to the Goddard Glacier with Mt. Marston to the right and Chimney Pot and Coronel Mtns. to the left of the glacier. Photo - B. Gavin



Panoramic view from the ridge camp at 2350m. From left to right - Mt. Farrow, Admiral Ridge (above tent in centre), Chimney Pot Mtn. and Coronel Mtn. between the two glaciers on the right. Photo - B. Gavin



Good Hope Mtn. from Pk 2770 to west. Photo - B. Gavin



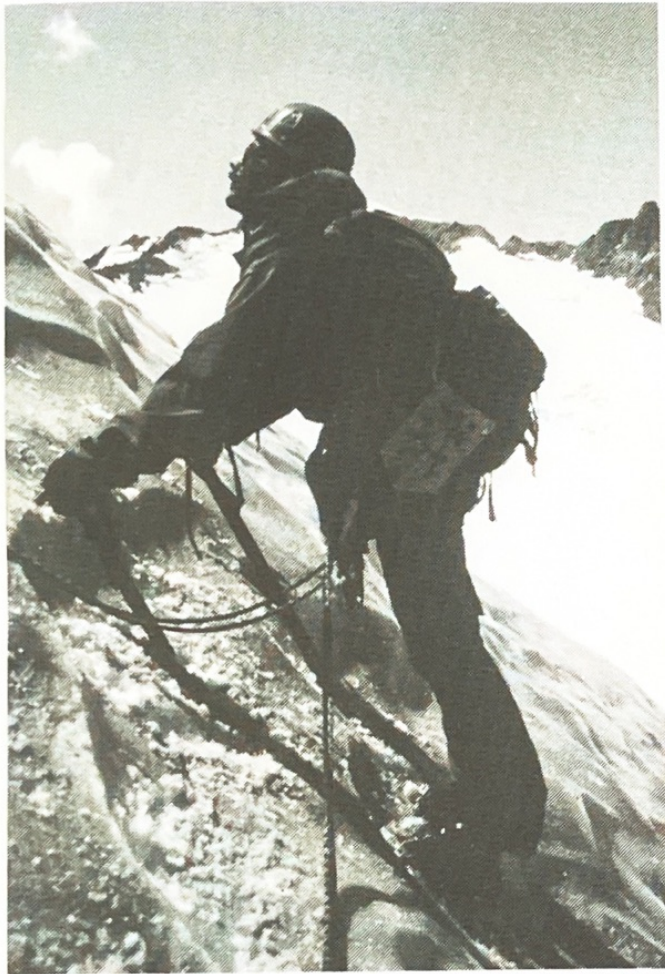
N ridge of Mt Craddock from Canopus Mtn. Photo - B. Gavin



On the upper Goddard Glacier with Wednesday Mtn. to left and Scharnhorst Mtn. to right of climbers. Photo - B. Gavin



Descending the Goddard Glacier with Chimney Pot Mtn. left of centre. Photo - B. Gavin



Mark on the NW face of Coronel Mtn. with Canopus Mtn. beyond. Photo - B. Gavin



On the summit of Coronel Mtn. with Mt. Farrow on skyline above climbers, and Mt. Merriam to left. Photo - B. Gavin



Mark and Brian on the summit of Chilko Mtn. B. Gavin collection.



Crossing Boulanger Ck. Photo - B. Gavin

Mt. Craddock from the col with Canopus by P. Celliers, M. Force, B. Gavin, E. Hinze, P. Katsaris, and R. Stoltmann.

Canopus Mtn. from the col with Craddock by M. Force, B. Gavin, P. Katsaris, and R. Stoltmann.

Coronel Mtn. via new route by M. Force, B. Gavin, and P. Katsaris from Goddard Glacier up steep glacier on NW aspect, then up rock ridge on S margin directly to summit. Descent down S ridge requiring one rappel, then around E side of Dresden on shelf glacier to retrieve equipment left at Wednesday col. Route name "Mousetrap".

Wednesday Mtn. by P. Celliers, E. Hinze, and R. Stoltmann from Wednesday col.

Chilko Mtn. via N ridge from camp in saddle 1 km north of summit by P. Celliers, M. Force, B. Gavin, E. Hinze, P. Katsaris, and R. Stoltmann.

Logistics: The party drove from Vancouver to Nemiah Valley in one day and stayed at the Longhorn Wilderness Ranch operated by Larry and Carol Rudd. Larry also operates a boat on Chilko Lake and provided the party with water transportation, both in and out. Whitesaddle Air Services at Bluff Lake was used to place two caches; one high on the ridge rising out of the Farrow - Boulanger pass, the second on the W side of the Goddard Glacier W of the summit of Chimney Pot peak. Independently, D. Hughes with P. de Visser and later the Stanges left the main party to descend Farrow Creek and be picked up there by boat. From all accounts, this was accomplished in one long day of hell.

Perhaps worth noting, the weather was near perfect. Our departure into the area was delayed one day by wind and rain. Once in the area, we endured about two hours of rain in the following two weeks, and that while we walked up the Goddard from the "swimming hole" camp in the pass.

It seems remarkable that this was the first club trip into the area since the BCMC summer camp in 1974. It would appear that there is much potential for new routes remaining in the area, and it is worthy of more attention by our members.

Chilko Mtn. is probably one of the ultimate vantage points for all of the major peaks of this portion of the Coast Range from the Meager group to the Waddington group.

Party: Peter Celliers, Mark Force, Erich Hinze, David Hughes, Peter Katsaris, Peter and David Stange, Randy Stoltmann, Peter de Visser, and Brian Gavin (organizer).

CHILCOTIN TRAVERSE (Taseko Lake to Gun Creek) 6 - 22 August, 1993 - by Brian Gavin

Logistics: Drove from Vancouver to Goldbridge on Friday evening, then on to Tyaughton Lake on Saturday AM. From the south end, chartered with Cariboo - Chilcotin Helicopters to place two caches; one at N edge of Vic Lake, one at N end of Lorna Lake. Meanwhile, shuttled vehicles to leave one at head of trail up Gun Creek, then returned to deliver all persons to N end of Tyaughton Lake. From here, chartered with Tyax Lodge to fly by Beaver to south end of Upper Taseko Lake.

Trip Plan: To leave Upper Taseko Lake with 4 days provisions in which to reach Vic Lake. With 5 days supplies here, this would allow 3 days for day trips and 2 days for travel to Lorna Lake. Same scenario at Lorna Lake for day trips and then 2 or 3 days out to cars. Note that this year we opted for plastic olive containers for caches and were successful in carrying everything out.

The Trip: We left Upper Taseko Lake under clear skies about mid-day, following an old road 4 km N before striking E through an old burn area and heading into the Chita Creek valley. In spite of the burn, the travel was surprisingly easy, even the couple of slide paths had no obstacles. By supper time we had reached the junction of Chita Creek with the main creek draining the south face of Taseko Mtn.

The following day dawned overcast, but the entire party headed off to attempt Taseko Mtn via the prominent ridge just W of the junction. On the broad W shoulder, rain began, which sent Ernie scurrying downward to put the fly on his tent. Soon after, Brian, Susan and Jennifer called it quits as they were engulfed in a white out and rain. Mark blundered onward in his brand new Gore-tex suit, eventually found the summit by Braille, and nearly descended off the wrong side of the mountain - rescuing himself with a compass.

Next morning, more clouds and drizzle. We packed camp under sullen skies, crossed to the north side of Chita Creek and headed upstream. Crossing tributaries was quite easy. Eventually, the valley began to both broaden and flatten - and the rain intensified. We were impressed by the rock

ramparts, buttresses and remnant glaciers south of the creek. Finally we opted for a campsite behind one of the last clumps of trees on the flats. The pass above was whited out.

Next day was not pretty. We were out of tents in time to pack them up before a rain squall hit. Cowering under Ernie's and Susans' ponchos strung up like tarps, we watched incredulously as the rain turned to snow! Gradually, it eased to intermittent sprinkles and we headed off up the slope. The clouds lifted as we neared the pass and we passed through unscathed. Continuing down the other side past "Chita" Lake, we picked up a horse trail. At a vantage point providing good views of the Powell Creek valley, we stopped for lunch. The descent brought us into verdant meadows filled with white rein orchid and many other types of wildflowers. Based on memory of a trip of 10 years ago, we opted for a short detour to "Battlement Lake".

This magnificent spot had changed little. Next morning, under cloudless skies, alpine squalor reigned supreme, while the humans swam (some of them). Finally, with everything dried out, and packs light, we headed N, swinging somewhat E past the end of the ridge, and crossed Powell Creek. Continuing along an old moraine, we struck up a side valley and scrambled up a scree slope to cross a gentle ridge and descend to the glacier leading to Vic Lake. Descending the other side, we came across the skull and antlers of an elk. Walking down the blue ice, we passed numerous bones of the animal's skeleton. Walking along the E shore, we were astounded to see a beaver following our progress from a respectable distance offshore!

At Vic Lake, we set up camp near the outflow and recovered the first cache, which was intact. This spot was cold, windy, and desolate. However, the surrounding country seemed interesting enough to warrant a few days exploration.

Our first day was somewhat cool and cloudy. Ernie, Jennifer and Brian headed off to the NW. Passing by a few ponds, Ernie watched the others play polar bear. This group continued up to the crest of a broad ridge W of Nadila Creek. The moraines in the next valley west were extensive and looked like unpleasant travel. Meanwhile Mark had explored approaches towards Mount Vic. Susan spent her time near camp reading and resting.

The second day Jennifer elected to rest up and was curious about the beaver. Exploring the lake shore, she found him, sleeping on his tail! The rest of

the group ascended the NE ridge of Mount Vic. The ridge crest was gained by scrambling NW directly up scree slopes to the high point at grid ref 793734. After a brief pause, we continued along the rather broad ridge until a gap provided shelter for lunch. The N face was void of attractive features. From this point, the ridge became rather more entertaining, and class 3+ if one stayed to the crest. All entertainment was entirely avoidable to the S, except for the final short snowy arete which led to a short, loose gully onto the broader sidewalk trending W to the summit. Clouds had descended on us and snow had begun. However, the wind blew ragged holes in the clouds, affording a few views into upper Beece Creek. As we lingered on the W shoulder of the summit, views improved somewhat, but we didn't dally long. Descent was straightforward down the loose SE ridge, and we made our way onto a ridge on the N side of the remaining remnants of glaciers. Eventually, a route was found down a gully into the basin west of Vic Lake, then camp.



Vic Lake camp. Photo - B. Gavin

Our last day in the Vic Lake area was spent exploring the Nadila Creek valley. The attraction was the beautiful perspective of Nadila Lake lying just in front of Elbow Mtn. However, the valley was not as easy to travel as appeared. Knee-high buckbrush made for slow going. We watched a marmot family for a while; the two offspring were boxers. We eventually reached a large rockslide which provided good views of the lake and of various ducks enjoying the quiet creek water. During the return to camp, we saw several mule deer on a couple of occasions. Nadila Lake would be easier approached from the Dil-Dil Plateau.

With the allotted two days of provisions and all the olive barrels of our cache, we departed to

explore the Dil-Dil Plateau. East of camp, we were disgusted to discover a few ATV tracks, probably flown in by hunters or rock-bangers. A short, easy climb brought us to the yellow brick road (a decaying dyke) onto the Dil-Dil. This was by far the easiest travel so far. The plateau seems barren and featureless at first glance, but is a remarkable study in transition. Conjecture was that the peak at the SW corner of the plateau was the source of a series of lava flows which met the edges of glaciers in Tosh Creek and Big Creek. The result is eroding cliffs of columnar basalt along the S and E edges of the plateau. Out towards the E, we came across much pillow lava rocks scattered about the landscape amongst the numerous small ponds. Camp was set beside a small pond on the S edge of the plateau.

Next day, we were up to take a short stroll along the cliff edge and admire the picturesque Tosh Creek valley. Returning to camp, we packed up and found a descent to the valley below about 0.5 km west. The valley floor was indeed wonderful, and better than any scenes from Bonanza of Big Valley. We came across a horse trail and followed it for a few km before crossing to the S side and up a hill for lunch. After lunch, we swung through light forest, heading for the E end of Cluckata Ridge. Another trail was found, and it was followed slightly uphill and S through a small pass with a pond. We had been looking forward to a swim here, but it turned out to be a miserable mosquito infested bog, so on we went.



W up Tosh Ck. Photo - B. Gavin

Shortly after crossing Grant Creek, we were disappointed to discover a large camp under construction with six or seven Boy Scouts of America canvas tents providing shelter for a crew intending to build a large log structure. The

surrounding forest showed the price. There was no one around, but no camp of this nature is complete without racks of antlers, and this one was no exception. Pressing on, we had an exciting crossing of Sluice Creek, and were relieved to arrive at Lorna Lake soon after. The second cache was successfully retrieved intact, and no one turned down a dip in the lake.



Looking S up Big Ck. to Lorna Lake. Photo - B. Gavin

We decided to reduce the planned number of day trips here to avoid a forced march out. The first day was a trip to the summit of Dorrie Peak via the loose NTD S ridge. Susan rested up in camp. Mark and Ernie elected a direct assault on the S facing scree slopes - gad! The water level in Sluice Creek is very dependent on the time of day, and rises quickly in the late morning. The ridge between Sluice Creek and Lorna Lake is covered with a beautifully open mature pine forest. There were signs of some fires and lightning strikes, but nothing too serious.

The following day, we walked up Sluice Creek again, but on approaching the moraine, struck S up the blue ice of the glacier. We paused about halfway up on a nunatak for some lunch, and then carried on to its highest point. A brief detour to the left brought us to the summit of the peak at grid ref 861594. The good weather afforded views to Waddington, and all the major peaks of the Coast Range down to Dickson. The great disappointment was that the approach to Mt. Warner from here was not going to go in the time we had available. After more lunch, we descended the N ridge of our summit to swing past the glacier on its E side, and then descended straight down to the creek leading to Lorna Lake. This was not entirely pleasant, owing to the loose footing. However, descent of the creek itself, and subsequently along the lake, was pleasant and qualified for one more dip.

Following a major burn up by Mr. Pyrotechnik himself, we successfully packed up all remaining supplies and cache barrels next morning. We crossed Big Creek just below Lorna Lake and headed N along the E side of the valley. Travel was remarkably easy in the pine forests with lupine understory, and the open meadows. We opted for Elbow pass. Just over the east side, a breezy spot was a welcome stop for lunch. We descended to just above the bottom of the main Tyaughton Creek valley, before striking NE up a tributary. Another ranch-like grassy meadow provided our campsite.

The following morning dawned clear, and we were away early to make our ascent to the divide while in the shade. The ridge crest was gained just before noon. We marvelled at the remarkably diverse terrain we had been travelling through, and looked forward to the broad ridges with their constant panoramas that lay ahead. A couple of kms



On the divide. Photo - B. Gavin

later, we had lunch at the junction with the ridge leading to Relay Mtn. Our goal that day was to attempt Castle Peak, and perhaps Cardtable. Proceeding along, we began to discover an increasing number of fossils - old seabed creatures. Distractons abounded, with most folks collecting one or two souvenirs. Shortly after this, Susan began to feel increasing abdominal discomfort and fatigue. Within an hour her lunch was history. Within 3 hours, she was sufficiently run down that the rest of the group was carrying her pack and two of us helping her walk. Our thoughts were of a suitable rescue site, water, and one from which help could be dispatched. One was reached at the junction of the two creeks draining the S side of Castle Peak. We set up rotating shifts to watch over her, and turned in.

At first light, Mark and Ernie began preparations to leave for Spruce Lake and sunnon help.

Miraculously, Susan woke at this time, after resting since 1 am and decided she felt fine. We were rained on for an hour or so. After packing up we made our way onto and down the ridge crest to Tyaughton Creek and crossed on a log. A bite of lunch and on to Spruce Lake. The swim was wonderful, and the best yet. You could stay in as long as you wanted. With several kms to go, no time to dally. We moved on to the Gun Creek trail - a virtual highway. We finished at dusk. The drive was mercifully short; a detour to collect the one at Tyax and then into Goldbridge for showers and beer. Happiness.



Heading towards Castle Pk. Photo - B. Gavin

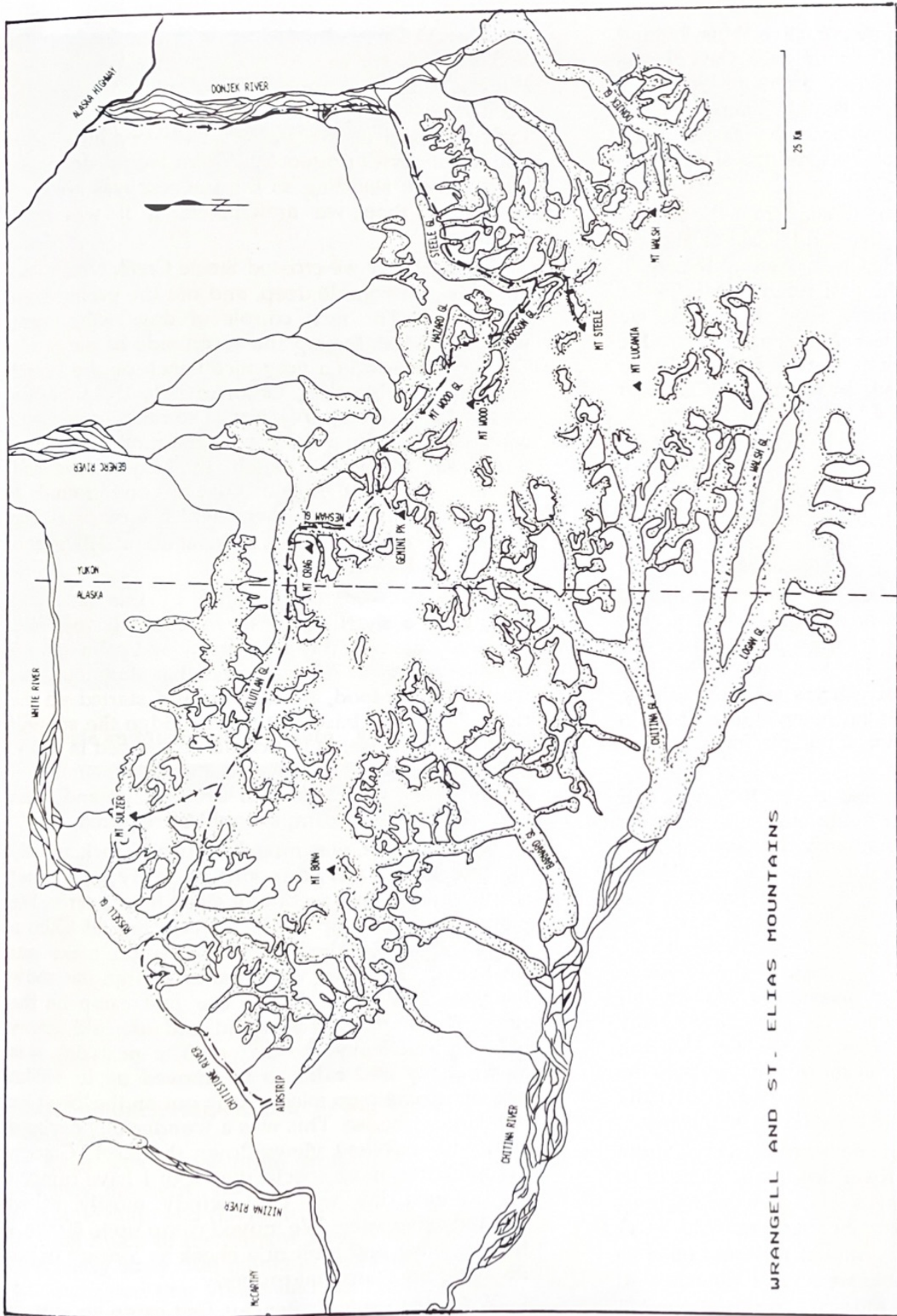
The greatest disappointment of the trip was to see the litter, intended and otherwise, of the bloody rock-bangers. The south Chilcotin Mountains have been controversial for some time. Every resource agency around has been out there doing their prospecting and claimstaking. Sluice Creek has been surveyed for a road. The head of Grant Creek over to Iron Pass is similiarly staked, flagged, and surveyed. It should be law that if nothing is done, then these people should be required to go back and remove everything that has been left behind. The area is nicer in the memory of ten years ago.

Party: Ernie Carson, Mark Force, Brian Gavin, Jennifer Nener, Susan Nesbit

Northern Coast Mountains area

DONJEK RIVER TO GLACIER CREEK VIA MT. STEELE: A Traverse in the Wrangell and St. Elias Mountains, 9 May to 12 June, 1992
- by Betsy Fletcher

With the arrival of April and the end of classes, it became time to think about summer plans. My idea had been to work all summer but by mid April I still had nothing lined up before July. Dave's annual ski



The route from the Donjek to the Chitistone. Map by Betsy Fletcher

traverse began to look more attractive. After looking at maps and discussing the route with Dave, I was convinced and by the end of April there were four of us committed to the trip; Dave Williams, Markus Kellerhals, Peter Stone and myself - basically the same group as for the previous spring's ski traverse in the Mt. Fairweather area.

The plan this year was to start from the Alaska Highway at the Donjek River bridge, ski or hike up the Donjek River to Steele Creek, then up the Steele glacier to the base of the east ridge of Mt. Steele, which we wanted to climb. From Mt. Steele we planned to ski roughly west along the northern edge of the St. Elias Mountains out to an airstrip on Glacier Creek, not far from the town of McCarthy in Alaska. A total distance of 270 km.

The four of us plus Lil Alessa, who was going up for a holiday and who would drop us off at the Donjek River and pick us up in McCarthy at the end of the traverse, left Vancouver on May 1 in two small trucks both filled to the roof with gear and food. We arrived at Kluane Lake on May 5, where we talked to Andy Williams and discovered that he could not land at any of our proposed food caches due to "chaucy" glaciers. This should have been our first clue that this was not going to be the easy sledding traverse on flat glaciers we were hoping for. We ignored this hint, however, and went off to talk to Doug Mackonnen about placing our food caches by helicopter.

We spent the next few days sitting around Kluane Lake waiting for flying weather. Finally on May 9 we decided to start even though our food caches had not been placed. Dave and Markus drove our food to Doug's place in Haines Junction and arranged with Doug to come and pick up Markus as soon as the weather improved. We then drove to the Donjek River bridge on the Alaska highway where Lil dropped us off under miserable cold, wet and snowy conditions. This was, in fact, the most stormy day of the trip. That afternoon as we started skiing along the road in heavy wet snow which stuck to the skins and carrying a pack which I could not actually lift, I was wondering what I was doing on this trip.

The next couple of days were very tough slogging up the Donjek River floodplain. None of us were used to carrying packs this heavy and for most of the distance there was not enough snow to ski. A few frozen side channels offered welcome relief as these were often sleddable for several kilometres at a time. With the pack on the sled and skis on the feet I felt like I was getting a rest while still travelling.

On May 11 Doug showed up with our food and he and Markus set out to place our caches. Markus returned fairly bummed out and not terribly positive about our chances of completing the traverse. Most of the glaciers had very little snow and were very hummocky. There would definitely not be much sledding so the traverse was going to be harder than we anticipated, if it was even possible.

The next day we crossed Steele Creek which was very low, only ankle deep, and not the problem we anticipated. The next couple of days were spent walking and skiing up the south side of the Steele Glacier. There was a very nice bench on the lateral moraines on this side. Unfortunately the snow on much of it was very soft; it was sometimes easier to carry the skis along the top of the moraine than to break trail along the bench. By May 15 we had moved onto the Steele Glacier and found a convenient moraine highway which took us all the way to the base of the east ridge at about 2100m and our first food cache.

All of us were pretty tired by this time and hoping for a short storm so we could have a rest. However, the next day was sunny and calm and far too nice to waste. After a somewhat slow morning, we sorted the food, packed up and started up the ridge. From the base of the east ridge the summit looked quite close, as if it could be climbed in a day, but the scale of the area was quite overwhelming. In reality the east ridge is over 2700m high and 6 km long. At least three camps would be required.

The first 450m was mixed snow and rock, mostly not too steep. I put crampons on fairly early, after scaring myself on a section of steep frozen scree. We planned to move up the ridge at a rate of 600m a day to about 4,000m where we would make our final camp. So when we came to a large flat snow bench at 2800m, we set up our first camp on the ridge. That night was clear and cold, too cold for my old bag and leaky thermarest. The next day was again sunny and calm so we moved up to 3400m and set up camp on a ledge dug out on the lower lip of a large crevasse. This was a wonderfully exposed spot with excellent views down the Steele Glacier, definitely the most spectacular spot I have camped in. The next day, was cold, windy, mostly whited out and exhausting. We moved camp up to 4000m. I froze one ear and a bit of a cheek as a result of not doing up my warm hat properly.

We roped up just after our first camp because of the crevasse danger, but in the conditions we had



Mt. Steele and its E ridge. Photo - Betsy Waddington



Camp 1 on the E ridge of Mt. Steele. Photo - Betsy Waddington

the ridge was really quite straight forward and extremely aesthetic. Most of the steeper sections were quite wide and the narrow sections were fairly flat - not much of the narrow steep stuff that I find particularly scary. Remnants of fixed line along the route indicated that others had not found the ridge with as much snow as we did - with blue ice this climb would be much more difficult.



View from the E ridge of Mt. Steele, with the Steele Glacier below. Photo - Betsy Waddington

The next day was windy and whited out so we stayed put - a well timed rest day as I was definitely feeling the altitude and I'm not sure I could have moved even if the weather has been good. The following day we made an attempt on the summit in not very good weather. We moved up 300m then ran into a pitch and a half of blue ice on a fairly exposed section. We played around long enough to

scare ourselves and also get cold, then retreated back to camp.

May 21 dawned sunny, calm, and almost warm so we set off for another try at the summit. We used a slightly different route, put in ice screws and belayed across the ice section and even I didn't find it too difficult. Once above this section it was simply a long slog to the summit. A fantastic panorama greeted us at the top, Logan dominating the southern view, Lucania right next to us, the vast expanse of the Walsh and Logan Glaciers to the south and the Chitina Glacier off to the west. We lingered only long enough for the obligatory summit shots before a cold wind chased us back down to camp.

The next day we descended to our base camp and unpacked the treats from the food cache: canned fruit, juice, wine and cookies. The following day was spent lounging around the camp in the sun and recovering from the last two weeks of strenuous activity.

On May 24 we started the third leg of our trip. The next seven days were spent skiing to our next food cache on the Nesham Glacier. We started by backtracking down the Steele Glacier to its junction with the Hodgson Glacier. The upper part of this glacier was flat and snowy so we had a morning of sledding before climbing to a pass and descending to the Trapridge Glacier. From the Trapridge we were forced to descend to the Hazard Glacier after a recently surged and heavily crevassed glacier defeated our attempts at a higher traverse to the Mt. Wood Glacier. We stuck to the lateral moraine for the lower part of the Hazard as the glacier was rather hummocky and rock covered. The upper part of the Hazard and then the Mount Wood glacier were again flat so we had almost an entire day of sledding before joining the Brabazon Glacier. We

attempted roped sledding for a short stretch of ice fall near the base of the Mt. Wood Glacier. This technique is recommended for comic relief only, as the sleds would roll over and stop, causing wipeouts all along the rope.

May 28 was whited out so we had our second storm day and third rest day of the trip. From the Brabazon Glacier, we avoided a steep ice fall with little snow cover by climbing a snow gully, then skied over to the Gemini Glacier. By lunch time on May 29 we were camped at a flat col below the Gemini peaks. After lunch the other three headed off to climb these peaks while I lay around in the sun recovering from the last steepish hill before camp. The next day was an easy ski down to the Nesham Glacier and our second food cache. We had a great feast at lunch, then spent a relaxing afternoon around camp.

The lower Hodgson, Mt. Wood, and Brabazon glaciers were generally hummocky and largely blue ice with a bit of snow in the hollows. They looked rather difficult to travel on. However, they tended to have relatively flat snowy moraines that made travel easy.

The next leg of the trip was to be short, only two to three days of skiing, as the final food cache was not placed quite where we wanted it. We had planned to have our last cache several kilometres over the Alaska border, but customs regulations prohibit this sort of thing. As a result we had only to ski down the Nesham glacier, then a few kilometres up the Klutlan Glacier. The Nesham had a pleasant trough next to a medial moraine and we easily descended it in half a day. The Klutlan glacier, on the other hand, was the roughest we encountered. It was incredibly hummocky, - a bit like the ocean with 10-15m seas, but with scattered large lakes, rivers and ice cliffs, and almost no snow - very



The Klutlan Glacier. Photo - Betsy Waddington



The Klutlan Glacier. Photo - Betsy Waddington



Camp at the head of the Klutlan Glacier. Photo - Betsy Waddington

spectacular but extremely tedious to travel through. We spent a lot of time going sideways and backwards around various obstacles.

On June 1 after a snowy start the weather cleared up enough to entice us to ski up Mt. Crag, which promised a good view up the Klutlan Glacier. Unfortunately by the time we reached the summit the clouds had closed in again and it was snowing heavily, so we had only a couple of tantalizing glimpses of the surrounding summits.

We continued skiing up the Klutlan Glacier to our final food cache, which we reached just in time for lunch. Because of the location of this food cache we had to carry food for ten days at the start of the final leg of the traverse, so we started off with very heavy packs. Still not as bad as the first couple of days though - I must have been getting in shape. After half a day of skiing up the Klutlan Glacier from this cache we got onto a medial moraine which made travelling much easier. There were still a few detours around lakes but at least it was mostly flat and snow covered. By the next day we were up into enough snow to use the sleds for the entire day. This took us to a branch of the Klutlan leading over to the Russell Glacier and the final leg of our trip. The slopes up to the col looked fairly steep on the map so we had been concerned about them. With the small amount of snow everywhere else we thought this was likely to be crevassed. Fortunately this is a wetter part of the range so the slope was an easy ski. At the col between the Klutlan and Russell Glaciers the other three dropped their packs and headed off into the clouds to climb peak 3195m in a whiteout. I needed a rest so dug myself a comfy snow couch and sat down to wait. After this diversion we skied



Camp on the Russell Glacier. Photo - Betsy Waddington

down the Russell and set up camp at the junction with the route to Mt. Sulzer.

Mt. Sulzer is a 3300m peak located at the very north edge of the range overlooking the White River. It promised to give spectacular views and Dave and Markus had been hoping to climb it for the entire trip. Thus, when June 6 dawned bright and sunny, we set off for Sulzer, climbing a 3350m bump along the way. As promised, the views from the summit made the long ski worthwhile; the huge floodplain of the White River was quite amazing.

The next day was stormy in the morning and we were all tired, so no one was out of bed very early. After lunch, however, it cleared up and the other three, being unable to sit through a sunny day, once again headed off for summits. I was too tired to contemplate extra peaks so I spent the afternoon lying in the sun and reading.

The next day, June 8, was delightfully easy sledding down the Russell Glacier to a snowfree campspot on a medial moraine. The next day we skied down the Russell Glacier until it became time to climb the lateral moraine and head over to Chitistone Pass. That evening we set up camp in the pass next to a meadow patch. It was delightful to be back to vegetation after almost five weeks of snow, ice and rock. The first flowers were just starting to come out and one could walk around in bare feet.

June 10 was bright and sunny yet again, and as we had an extra day it was an obvious opportunity for one last peak before descending into the Chitistone Valley. Even I was convinced to ski up to a couple of 2400m summits south of the pass. From the top we were treated to great views back up the



Heading towards Mt. Sulzer, on the Russell Glacier, Photo - Betsy Waddington

Russell Glacier and our route of the last few days. It was even a pretty nice run back down to camp for a late lunch.

The next two days were spent hiking down the Chitstone valley. The colourful rocks and flowery meadows providing a welcome change from snow and rock. Most of the hike out was an easy walk down the "Goat Trail". However, some sections of the trail could likely only be appreciated by a goat. I found some hard steep scree sections above cliffs to be particularly unpleasant. There were also a couple of (for me) difficult and terrifying creek crossings, but with help from Dave and Markus I made it across with minimal fuss. We were at the airstrip by 4pm on June 12, five hours before we had arranged to be picked up. The pilot showed up four hours early and we were soon out in McCarthy where we were met by Lil.

STICKING IT OUT ON THE STIKINE, May, 1993 - by Brian Wood

"What have I got myself into?" I thought as I watched the jet boat disappear downstream. I

looked around at my five young virile and fit looking companions, and our motley collection of gear and food strewn about on the gravelly bank of the Stikine River. "It's too late to change my mind. No piking out at this stage," I told myself.

This was the beginning of my big "Five O" trip which was late by only a year or two, so the timing was not too bad. But my apprehensions about the trip had been increasing as I had never been on a long trip with this group and I was concerned about my obvious "maturity" compared to the rest of the party. My hope was to survive the next month without letting down my trusting companions who had allowed me to gate crash on their trip when my own proposed trip fell through.

The trip was another epic ski traverse, masterminded by Dave Williams and Markus Kellerhals as part of their plan to ski across most of B.C.'s wilderness sometime in their lives.

Apart from the two brand name founding members, there were two other survivors of previous D.W./M.K. ski traverses, namely Craig Hollinger and Peter Stone. These four hardy veterans knew the ropes of such trips and were fully equipped with well-tested equipment. The fifth member was Steve Sheffield, a veteran of a John Clarke trip, and thus well used to long trips.

I had not been on a month's mountain trip for more than 10 years, and was a little dubious about spending one month on snow, especially wearing my early 20th century style baggy woollen pants and long woollen socks which contrasted with the high fashion poly-pro underwear worn by the rest of the party. It's not that I'm against poly-pro underwear, it's just that it takes a long time to wear out the woollen gear when you wear them only a few days each year.

Still, even I had succumbed to the excuse of an expedition to buy some new gear: a modern pack and jacket in the latest of fashion colours, and a new fully integrated and hopefully releasable Voile three-pin and cable binding. It seemed that my new bindings were viewed with quiet suspicion by the rest of the party, especially when I said that I had used them sparingly for only three weekend trips as I had not wanted them to wear out, or find that they really didn't work, because I was concerned about my knees and these were my last hope before I would give up or retire from telemarking for good. I was also trying out short (180cm) downhill skis (used of course) in a last attempt to improve my

dismal telemarking technique. I had even hung up my old dowdy black clip-on skins and bought some fancy hot pink stick-ons.

No one in the party had been very receptive to my suggestion of using rigid polypropylene children's sleds for hauling gear because they were bulky when not in use and thus would be difficult in the bush and when skiing downhill. Instead they had persuaded me to use the well-proven, lightweight, roll-up "Krazy Karpets". Unfortunately it was about March when I finally confirmed my place in the trip and that was a bad time for buying a K.K. in Vancouver. I was forced to "borrow" my grandson's K.K. and looked forward to testing my new toy.

The start of our trip was delayed because of bad weather on the Stikine ice cap. Eventually the weather cleared sufficiently for our pilot Ron, accompanied by Craig, to fly in one of the food caches. As there seemed to be a drying trend in the weather, we confirmed our boat trip for the next day. Luckily that day dawned clear. Ron and Craig flew in the second food cache that morning and met us downstream near the confluence with the Iskut River. The jet boat dropped us off on the gravelly beach near the frozen lake at the snout of the Great Glacier and we were left to contemplate the silence and our fate.

The plan was beautiful in its simplicity. We were to gain access to the Great Glacier somehow and head generally north across the ice cap by travelling along and across the US/Canada border up to an operating gold mine at Muddy Lake, also called Bear Skin Lake. We planned a 28 to 30 day trip with two food caches, so there would be some heavy carries or sledding with 9 to 10 days of food.

Meanwhile, back on the bank of the great grey gravelly Stikine River, we hefted our packs and skis and contemplated the seemingly impenetrable wall of B.C. bush between us and the Great Glacier. We followed and/or crossed several muddy sloughs to gain the main rim of the frozen lake. We were occasionally seduced into putting on skis to follow promising treeless bands of snow into the bush, but these bands were often over ice covered sloughs and gave way under our skis. Within an hour of leaving the boat we all had such soaked feet that we may as well have just waded from the boat.

After another hour or so of jousting with the bush, we reached the edge of the frozen lake. A lot of sweaty effort for zero elevation gain as we were

still at the river level. The view across the lake was spectacular as the lake contained locked-in icebergs that had calved from the glacier snout. Apart from melted margins near the land, the frozen lake looked solid enough for ski travel which was clearly preferable to thrashing through the bush.

It was not too difficult to cross the melted margins of the lake and soon we were gliding across the ice towards the steep ice cliffs at the snout about 500m away. There were many long and continuous cracks and many surface melt pools and we realized the lake ice was going to break up soon. We became widely scattered and would have been of no use if someone had broken though the ice.

I, for one, was relieved when the icefall route was abandoned. Now we would have to head for the ridge on the east of the icefall, which was in shadow as it was late afternoon.

Getting off the ice proved to be more difficult than getting on, as we all used the same place for crossing the melted margin. The wear and tear of skis crossing the ice edge made it progressively more difficult for the later members to cross. We attacked the steep bushy slope above the lake and found a reasonable campsite a hundred metres or so higher up. Our first evening meal was almost in view of where we had started that afternoon. Not a prestigious beginning.

There was light rain the next morning which increased "sleeping bag suction and mattress magnetism" which delayed our start. We finally left around noon and by now the "frozen" lake looked very wet indeed. The lake appeared to have melted in many places, confirming our suspicions that the previous day was the last possible day for a crossing. What good fortune! Would it last for the duration of the trip?

We were soon scrambling through classically wet and dripping west coast bush. I asked myself a few times "Why have we driven 2000 km to tangle with the same type of bush that grows on our doorstep?"

At one stage I fell into a hole and when I had extricated myself I was alone and disoriented. Steamed up, wet glasses and short term memory loss (not caused by concussion) compounded the problem that the terrain headed upwards in all directions and I did not know which to choose. Craig heard my plaintive shouts and came to my rescue. We eventually joined the others who had taken advantage of the delay for a rest. Some of the party were generating so much body heat that they

had developed their own high humidity micro climate and were enveloped in a column of personal steam. This reminded me of the special effects used in Star Trek for characters about to be "beamed up" to a waiting USS Enterprise. (If only that were true!)

Eventually our prayers were answered and we reached the elevation of continuous snow in a mature open forest, and so, on with skis! (At this stage, anything was better than carrying them.)

When we left the forest behind, we reached a high snow covered ridge, and I could see how much elevation we had gained above the lake - most of which we would have to lose quickly to get on the Great Glacier. This was not a happy thought, especially with heavy packs and wet fresh snow!

Thinking it was getting too late to descend, we set up camp on an open hillside in wet falling snow. Perhaps this was an indication of the weather we could expect. Would my woolly pants ever dry out? Perhaps I should have opted for polypro after all.

Next morning was coldish, with a clear blue sky. We traversed the ridge in breakable crust, and my suspicions about the descent were confirmed - it was a long way down. We skied into our gully as the crust was mostly melting. Soon most of us were reduced to kick turns and traverses through sloppy avalanche debris. Luckily it seemed that most of the previous week's snow had sloughed off and so it was probably safe.

After a challenging descent of the gully, the group finally met up on the Great Glacier. I was relieved to drop my pack for a much needed rest, and a chance to view our "Death gully" descent route. Craig had noticed when he flew out after placing the food cache that there were very few skiable access gullies onto the Great Glacier. We must have chosen one of them. At last our traverse proper had started. The dismal weather of yesterday had transformed into clear blue skies and a light breeze. Ski conditions were perfect! Maybe this was not going to be an impossible epic for this old codger after all!

We skied a short distance up the glacier and settled down for the first of many lunches, basking in the hot sunshine and gazing at the surrounding peaks, especially those striding north into the distance.

We skied for a short time after lunch, still carrying our packs and Crazy Karpets as the snow was too steep and soft for sledging. Soon the weight of the heavy packs was telling on us, so we agreed

to call it a day, even though it would still be light for many hours yet.

On the days that we travelled, the routine of setting up camp was quickly established. One or two people would set up the stoves to cook and the others would set up the tents, close to each other for communication. Most of us would hang up our boots in a futile attempt to dry them.

Following modern trends, almost all dinners were vegetarian, often with home dried veggies, (a great success). Sometimes we even had custard for dessert.

The second day on the glacier dawned cold and clear with a hard crust. This crust allowed us to use our K.K.s for the first time. Steve and I were new to K.K. and had great fun tying our packs to the springy rolls of plastic with long lengths of string. There was a technique to ensure that load from the tow rope was applied to the pack itself to relieve load from the K.K. Craig, ever an engineer, assured us K.K. neophytes that more string was not the answer.

We traversed along the sloping edge of the glacier, with the K.K.'s hanging down the fall line tugging us towards the open crevasses. Because of the hard crust, there was little friction from the KK, and so the main extra effort we needed to progress was to edge our skis more strongly to counteract the sideways forces from the tow rope pulling on the side of our harnesses. In spite of this discomfort, we all agreed that KKs were the way to go, especially on a hard crust on gentle gradients. We neophytes soon learnt that water bottles, snacks and food should be made accessible without having to undo the spider's web of string that tied the pack to the KK. Next time, and there will be a next time, I will try Fastex buckles and light tape instead of string.

The next three weeks became a blur of hot windless days under broad clear blue skies where the hardest thing was protecting ourselves from the relentless sun, not from the cold as I had expected. Our chores for each day were reduced to the bare essentials and the rest of the time was lost in gazing at range after range of rugged white peaks extending to the horizon in all directions. Sure, in retrospect, we did have a couple of white-out days, a bit of wind, and even some light rain, but mostly the weather was magnificent. In contrast back in Vancouver, the month of May was generally cold and overcast.



Kate's Needle from the SW. Photo - B. Wood



Kate's Needle from the W. Photo - B. Wood



Peaks on the N side of Great Glacier near Kate's Needle. Photo - B. Wood

Most of the time we were alone on the glacier, but we did meet two Calgary climbers skiing back from a successful climb of Kate's Needle. We had launched a half hearted attempt to climb Kate's Needle from the first food cache but we turned back because of a late start, high avalanche risk and general lassitude due to the heat of the day.

The trip could be divided into moving days, i.e. travelling with heavy packs, side trip days with light packs, and rest days, usually due to inclement weather.

The moving days were often easy if we were travelling on glaciers which were almost level terrain, because we were able to use those KK's. However, if we were crossing from one glacier to the next over a col, we had to carry the packs up then down. If we camped high and moved early the next day, we started the day with an icy run down to the next glacier. I found these runs particularly exciting and exhausting as my blunt edges scraped



Sheppard Pk. and the second food cache camp. Photo - B. Wood

the hard crust in a futile attempt to control my speed. Alternatively, if we had camped low and reached the col in the afternoon, we skied down in the soft snow with a heavy pack, which was more controllable, but most of us didn't make many fancy turns.

We all felt the side trip days with the light packs were the best as we had a chance to enjoy the downhill runs, especially if we were skiing down in the small window of opportunity which occurred shortly after mid-day between the hard crust of the morning and the deep slop of the warm late afternoon.

The rest days were enjoyable as well, when we huddled in a tent, reading, writing, eating, drinking (tea) and sometimes even crowding all six of us, smelly socks and underwear, into one of our three-person tents for a communal lunch. These cramped communal lunches were entertaining and would provide good material for a psychological study

which could be the grist for future Ph. D. theses. Perhaps being surrounded by seemingly unlimited open space, one craves a crowded tent to fend off latent agoraphobia. Or perhaps it was just another example of old fashioned "all the lads together", or as they say in modern parlance "a healthy indulgence in male bonding."

Some campsites located on view lots were really memorable, particularly as they contrasted with the usual below treeline "wimpish" campsites of weekend ski trips where we huddle in the trees and choke in wood smoke as we attempt to satiate our primitive needs for fires.

All good things must come to an end, and a few days after picking up the second food cache it became evident that we were leaving behind the big snow covered peaks of the ice cap, and entering a transition area of lower peaks of greys and browns. We could even see patches of bush at the ends of deep valleys where the glaciers had receded. This was first noticeable when we viewed the massive bulk of Chutine Peak rising far above Chutine Lake.

We realized that the trip had been expertly planned and executed on our last evening as we lay around talking after dinner, camped in the long shadows of a nearby snow covered bump. Although the next day should see us in the last valley leading back to civilization, our intrepid leaders were still enthusiastic enough to suggest one last foray to "bag" that nearby bump. However, the troops were lying back with bloated bellies, having pigged out on the remnants of the supplies, and so the leaders' suggestions were met with miscellaneous, non-committal grunts, belches and mumbling about a possible, (but highly unlikely) change in the weather. Nevertheless, 7 am the next morning found four of us on skis under an immaculate blue sky, skinning up the hard crust, determined to knock off that last bump. After a short scramble we were rewarded with a narrow snow covered ridge leading to the summit. The views from this bump on the northern edge of the ice cap were magnificent but quite different from the views near the centre of the ice cap. To the south stretched a tangle of peaks through which we had managed to find our way. To the north we could see dirty glacier snouts leading into silty braided rivers meandering through ever widening valleys streaked with various shades of green.

Suddenly it seemed that it was all over, although we still had to find our way back to civilization. A fast crusty run brought us back to camp at 9 am and

an hour later, we were packed up and on our way. The last ski out was on softening snow, past tall brown rubbly-looking peaks. Apart from a short scramble over narrow bands of boulders, we could ski nearly all the way to the main creek draining the valley and leading into Muddy Lake.

Markus could barely wait to check out the creek which was about five meters wide. With great gusto and two ski poles, he leapt into it only to find it came just up to his mid thighs, thus demonstrating that it was passable for the more timid, chronologically challenged, member of the party.

We tried to dry our socks while eating the last of the food. I was amazed at the confidence that we would actually be out that day. Should we be saving a few morsels just in case?

Following the creek down the valley was easy at first as we could avoid the heavy bush, but eventually we were forced into the bush. Grunting up a small bushy rise, we were finally rewarded with a view of the air strip of the mine, and behind that, Muddy Lake. We would definitely be out that afternoon, after all! We walked along the air strip, which was long enough for a C-130 Hercules. A pick-up truck drove past us without stopping - which really surprised us. Perhaps, the nonchalant driver was used to encountering a bunch of hairy bearded guys in dirty long underwear, carrying packs and skis, with no snow around for miles.

We finally got a ride to the mine site from another truck and there we phoned our pilot who arrived within half an hour of our call! What service! Within another half hour, we landed at Telegraph Creek wondering what had hit us. As usual, the transition from wilderness to civilization was too much. In spite of a month on the ice we could still remember our favourite junk foods which we guzzled, while anticipating our turn in the hot shower at the local grocery store. Somehow a fitting end for a memorable trip.

Appendix - Torture Test Report On Gear

And what about the new fancy gear? How did it stand up?

Well, the Gortex was barely tested because it hardly rained.

After my new ski bindings released when I broke through an ice-covered slough at the beginning of the trip, I tightened the release and they did not release for the rest of the trip.

A mid-length section of steel edges of my new skis was damaged (probably descending Death Gully) and water penetrated the ski, causing partial delamination of the base plastic and top plate after a few days. The doom and gloom prophecies of our party's ski experts prompted us to try a make-shift repair. We screwed the top plate down and forced epoxy glue into every available opening and then clamped the ski edge together with Vise grips and duct tape. To cure the glue I slept with the ski in my sleeping bag which resulted in an uncomfortable night for everyone in the tent.

My shocking pink skins had lost most of their glue and the pile itself seemed to be infected with creeping alopecia as the skins became covered in bald patches.

Other members had problems with their ski bindings becoming loose, ski bindings cracking, and signs of early ski delamination even on brand new , brand name skis.

Five of the six packs were designed and manufactured by a local, well-known mountaineer. These terrific packs showed no sign of wear in spite of being dragged across hundreds of kilometers of snow and ice.

The worn and holey polypro will bear the scars of the bush forever, but my woolly pants are good for many more trips. Unfortunately their owner may not be.

COAST RANGE 1993 - "THE OAT ROUTE"

- by John Clarke

One of the great things about climbing in the Coast Range is you can look at a destination on the map, discover there's been two others parties there in the last 25 years, decide that's too much traffic for you and go somewhere else!

We started the '93 season off with a ski trip to the Tsaytis River headwaters in the Kitimat Ranges between Bella Coola and Prince Rupert. Sandy Briggs, Janet Lohmann, Jackie Backhouse and I drove to Kitimat, took a boat down to Kemano and headed up the road in South Seekwyakin Creek. We left the road at a point due south of Sandifer Peak and went south into the bush which was already subalpine at only 800m. The fairy tale forest only lasted about 5 hours and we came out on a broad windswept pass at 1200m where we built a circular snow wall large enough to enclose both tents. The wind shrieked across the pass, and we were glad to finally get some dinner and crawl into the bags.

Next day we skied up the glacier that forms the extreme source of the Tsaytis River and on up to an 1800m col just east of Peak 2059. After another trip the next day down to the lower pass for more food, we were firmly established here to do our side trips to the peaks. After a few days of storm, we were hit by a heat wave which, combined with wind, reduced our snow walls to pathetic little mounds around the tents. Furious wall building ensued (we were born to do this), but they melted as fast as we built them. Then the perfect morning – we skied west and spent the day frolicking around the ridges and climbed the two lovely peaks 2097 and 2152. A few days later we climbed the 2246m pyramid southeast of our base camp. We were getting along together very well -- in fact, the first giggling started around 7 am and didn't end until after dark!



Jackie returning to camp after climbing Pk. 2246 (behind). Photo - J. Clarke

While up on these peaks we admired a prominent peak far off to the SW and, upon returning to Kemano, were offered a boat ride up Gardner Canal to it's base at the mouth of Icy Creek. We were put ashore in the evening, so we put up the tents, had supper and went to sleep in this magic place. Next day we bushwhacked up Icy Creek – classic Coast Range stuff -- a little bit of everything, including the odd clump of BIG spruce. We reached 350m in the valley after managing less than 4 km. Valley travel is always slow. Well, this became our "high camp", as the next morning we charged off into the bush, reaching the 1800m summit in the early afternoon. The peak is just southeast of the col at the head of Icy Creek, and we had grand views north down into Gardner Canal, and south into the Kalitan country where we hope to ski in the spring of '94. We were a happy little group and felt privileged to look down into so many valleys and

see no scars of logging. The boat ride back to Kitimat is highly recommended as Gardner Canal is one of the prettiest of coastal fiords, and of course is the entranceway into the Kitlope River -- the largest unlogged temperate rainforest valley remaining in the world.

Back in Vancouver, I convalesced for a while, even worked for a week, and prepared for a 41 day traverse through the headwaters of the Ecstall, Gitnadoix, Giltoyes and Wedeene Rivers west of Kitimat. In early July, Craig Hollinger, Dave Sarkany, Maria Cundy and I drove to Terrace Airport, placed six airdrops along the intended route, then drove out to Prince Rupert, and flew from there by Beaver into Johnston Lake in the lower Ecstall River. This whole range had fascinated me for a few years because of its wild appearance on Map 103H14 and views I'd had from Mt. Valpy in 1992. I recommend buying this map sheet and hanging it on a wall -- this is quality map gazing material, and well worth the scandalous prices these days. Glaciers are marked to as low as 350m on 1800m peaks and the valleys are steep-sided, bush-choked trenches that cut the mountain groups up into a wild labyrinth.

We camped on the shore of Johnston Lake where Dave set off to gather wild plants to eat -- he did this throughout the trip. We had great wild salads made of plants that only Dave knew about, and we ate them regularly -- and not just to be nice to Dave either! In the morning, we ate our bloatmeal, saw a moose swimming across the lake and crashed off into the bush. On the way up the sidehill, we saw a BIG black bear who just stared at us until we banged our ice axes together. We had a problem. It was late and we were on steep slopes with nowhere to put the tents. We dropped down and found two pathetic spots with some water nearby. We were soaked and chilled, but managed supper by 10:30 pm. Well, that was day one -- only 40 more days to get to the Wedeene!

In the morning everything was wet -- wet boots through wet berry bushes. The water runs up your sleeves when you pull up on the berry bushes on steep slopes. This builds character! We had a lot of character. Then we broke into the alpine and got on to a lovely ridge crest, which we groped along in cloud. We were on the ridge east of Johnston Lake, and camped right on the crest in drizzle.

The next day was 'fart wars' in the tent all day, as it was rainy and windy. The next day (July 6th) we moved along the narrow ridge in fog, negotiated

two awkward gaps and stopped for lunch where the ridge ends in a big névé. We needed visibility. We were just getting ready to compass across to the first food cache when the fog lifted. The cache was on a lovely heather - cloaked granite shoulder at 1200m on the long SW ridge of the big 1900m peak beyond. We called it Ecstall Peak, as the river of the same name almost encircles the whole massif. I dreamed about this peak all winter, and here we were camped on its shoulder.

Lazy morning. Starting up for the peak at noon, it was an easy climb and there was no cairn on the summit which fell away in great cliffs to the NW. We posed for hero shots, gawked in all directions, built a small cairn and dropped a metre or so to a sheltered nook for lunch. Then we glissaded down to camp and idleness.

Next morning (July 8th) we were faced with the first of four big steep descents that we had to do with packs on this traverse. We had 50m of 7 mil rope and lots of slings. Two sections we hand-lined after sending the packs down on the rope, and the whole thing was a big adventure as we didn't know how it was going to go. We were worried half way down, as it was looking very steep below, but the route held together. At the bottom, we hiked over to the gorgeous heathery col between the heads of Johnston Creek and the Ecstall River. At only 850m the col was completely alpine, with stunted trees framing lovely views. Dave produced a bagful of leaves which he'd collected on the steep descent, and he cooked them to go with our dinner.

Another lazy morning. Then Craig and I ran off and climbed the 1750m horn NNW of camp, finding two goats fast asleep on the way up. There was an old cairn on top, but no register inside. We wondered who might have made it as it was the only cairn we saw in the whole 41 days.

On the morning of July 10th, we had rain in the morning so, of course, had to stay in bed. Rules are rules. Then the sun came out, but we didn't get outside until it got too hot in the tent. Throughout the traverse we spent a lot of time in these gorgeous heathery campsites just hanging around, gawking at the scenery and taking a lot of time to do the simplest chores. At noon we packed up and hiked down to Ecstall River. Rain, thunder and lightning drove us under a boulder for hot chocolate until it was over. Fog banks floated around our sand bar campsite that evening at 350m in the Ecstall Valley. Supper that night was both my introduction to, and firm resolve never to eat again -- Couscous.

In the morning, after a pleasant crossing of the river, we angled up through bush and slabs and more bush and slabs. We were heading up the small Ecstall tributary to the north to regain our high-level ridge system. From higher up we saw a big ice avalanche pour down 900m of granite. Once on the little glacier above, it was an easy hike to the 1200m heather col beyond. The mosquitoes today had been unusual for the coast -- they were small and in clouds, and had a big attitude!

On the 12th we did a side trip to the two 1700m peaklets south of camp, meeting a ptarmigan who stayed on her nest despite the troupe of tourists taking pictures. Back in camp, Maria cooked a very respectable turkey rice preparation garnished with "Dave's special wild steamed greens". We were very happy with the way the weather and our progress was going. It seemed slow, but on long trips it's better not to push too hard. There is an almost unbelievable supply and variety of excuses for taking days off and "stopping here for a while", etc.

On July 13th (day 11) we packed over the 1850m and 1800m peaks to the NE, slithered down to the second food cache, and nosed around for tent sites. Dave and Maria levelled off a bouldery area, while Craig and I put my dome tent on a slab. The food containers were in perfect shape, even though we knew there were wolverines around. We had watched one earlier come down a snow ridge and rest at the lip of a crevasse. The tents were perched on a rocky platform a 1000m or so over a deep valley glacier that squeezed through a canyon, and curved out of sight at only 600m. I tried to make normal tuna and macaroni, but when I added the cheese, it fused to the fish resulting in rubbery fish balls that tasted like marine flavoured chewing gum!



Looking SE across the Giltoeyes valley from the main divide SW of Kadeen Mtn. Photo - J. Clarke

The next day we didn't sleep in -- we just never got up. Raindrops. We listened to them for a while and went back to our books. Our neighbours were about 15m away in the fog.

Over the next three days we followed the scenic ridge system that runs east and forms the divide between the headwaters of the Giltoeyes and Kadeen Valleys. In great weather we climbed peaks, swam in tarns, swatted horseflies, said hello to ptarmigan, and one day a nanny and a kid ran past me on the way up to a ridge. On the 1700m summit 5 1/2 km SW of the south end of Alastair Lake, we waited for clouds to clear to see one of the most superb views of the whole traverse. We were looking at a 1750m granite horn with a 600m well-featured north buttress, rising from a glacier which entered an iceberg-choked lake at only 500m. A hidden remote gem that someone will climb some day! Whoever does will be overwhelmed by the powerful setting as much as the climb.

After spending a day resting on the ridge crest at cache No. 3 we dropped 1000m down to the Giltoeyes River and camped on a sandbar beside it. This fabulous valley is enclosed with waterfall-streamed cliffs dropping into the forests, bogs and meadows of the valley bottom, and through it all flows the turquoise river. Despite the many things we did that day, I would have to say that the day was completely concerned with flies. I'd never seen horseflies so numerous and aggressive. While putting the tent up, Craig put his complete goretex suit on with the hood up. He said, "it's pretty hot under here but I can actually do things"! Once inside, we had the first moment's peace all day!

On July 21 (day 19) we crossed meadows at only



A wild Giltoeyes tributary. Looking SW from the sharp peak SW of Peetchugh Lake. Photo - J. Clarke

400m and climbed 1350m up to the ridge northwest of Peechugh Lake. On the way up we saw bear droppings from animals with very large sphincters! On the ridge crest, the wind and cold got ridiculous. We set the tents up on the glacier on the east side of the ridge, and rain pounded down all night. The next day we were all reading our books and whiling the storm away, when the wind increased and came in terrible gusts. The worst of it only lasted an hour, and when it was over it was nice not to have to use our bodies to brace up the tent any more. We had bent poles and some ripped fabric to repair, so for the rest of the trip we built storm walls and 16 guy lines to stabilize the tent!

Next morning we had heavy cloud and no wind - just sitting it out in a quiet void. In the afternoon we broke camp and groped east down to a col and put the tents up (very securely) with high stone walls on the windward side. On day 22 we raced off to climb the beautiful 1800m horn SW of Peechugh Lake. From the peak we looked down on the backs of four eagles floating by below us, and below them, the impossibly steep and complex Giltoyees Valley. We built a nice little cairn, and wrote in the register for the next people to be sure and get in touch.

In the morning I poked my nose out at 6 am -- clear and cold. Yahoo -- we travel. But first we had a morning in slow motion, of course. When it warmed up, the horseflies arrived and stayed with us all day. We followed the ridge NW of Peechugh Lake, climbed a little 1700m horn on a long diagonal heather ramp and roped down a steep slope into the Magar Valley, 4 km SSW of Mt. Davidson. At 750m we found the flattest spot and picked boulders to make tent sites. Dave spotted a small black bear on an avalanche cone nearby. Flowers, boulders and creeks surrounded the tents and beyond that, granite cliffs, buttresses, glaciers and clouds. The food situation meant we had to go up to the 1650m col to the east the morning after next. We were well protected from wind down there, but it is nice to have something to eat. We had a small campfire that we enjoyed very much.

July 26th was day 24, and we spent it in bed. It was cloudy and drizzly all day, and we were camped in the bottom of what felt like a huge granite crater -- a very scenic one. We had the last of the porridge for breakfast and then just enjoyed lying motionless, letting the muscles hang off the bones for a day. Supper was couscous and refritos. I felt like shoving a piece of toilet paper into it, and putting a rock over it.

Day 25 was an amazing day. We got away early under high clouds, cold, and a sky that looked like it could do anything. We ate raw oats, dried fruit and bread, then took off up the slabs toward the glacier. Beautiful flower-strewn mossy ledges with tiny waterfalls and pools appeared in front of us on the slabby climb to the glacier. Rain started on the ice edge. We got soaked on the long climb to the col, but were happy about getting to the food cache.

We found only one good tent site, and were concerned about how it would drain. Well, we sure found out. When it turned into a tarn we moved the sopping camp 50m to a rocky site where we built a stone wall enclosing the tent. Dave and Maria's old A-frame crestline actually performed well in wind. Dave came by and said he and Maria had to move too, as they were having a "water-bed problem". When they moved, their tent was perched on a somewhat flat rectangular pedestal with cracks in it for drainage. Views came and went as the rain ended, and loose clouds blew through the col.

Next morning was still cold and windy, so we had granola, binged on our new snack bags from the cache and went back to our books. At noon we wandered up the 1900m peak just N of camp. Craig climbed in his sandals since he was trying to dry his boots. After building a cairn, we were chased back to the tents by the heaviest rain I've ever seen. Once inside, the incredible deluge continued for another half-an-hour, and then stopped. Craig gave me all the stuff out of his new snack bag that he didn't like and in return I gave him all my prunes which he especially likes. Over the next few days of storm, we invented the patented Coast Range storm modifier. The subject remains unconscious throughout the storm with an I.V. dripping nutrients into his arm, a catheter to collect waste and an electrode taped to



Maria on the 1900m peak 3 km ENE of Mt. Carthew, looking south. Photo - J. Clarke

his head that will sound an alarm when a pre-set atmospheric pressure is reached.

On day 29 we had a single 30 second burst of sun in the morning and then murk again. We ate lunch, more for something to do than because we were really hungry. Craig said he was getting bedsores. I promised to roll him over every two hours! We had orangey-yellow mashed potatoes that night.

On the morning of August 1st we had calm fog with the sun barely filtering through. We finally got to go to Mt. Davidson and spent two hours on the summit of this fabulously located peak. Next day we broke camp and packed east along the high divide, and reached airdrop No. 5 in two days. This food cache was on the ridge just southwest of Mount Madden. Dave had had a very painful tooth for a few days, and it was from there that he and Maria reluctantly left us to go to the dentist in Kitimat.

Craig and I continued north, sidehilling on the western slopes of Mts. Holt and Temple. When we reached the ridge-crest south of the big névé at the source of the Wedeene, we looked nervously at our

exit route to civilization. We reached the last food cache at 6:30 pm on day 34 and spent four hours excavating our bouldery perch to get the tent up. We built a big stone wall and guyed the tent with the patented Clarke-Hollinger system. Using the continuous 50m rope from anchor to loop to anchor, the tent was as rigid as a box. At 11:30 pm we were finally inside, exhausted and looking forward to our day off tomorrow. We were camped on the little rocky 2050m knoll, 1.5 km S of Mt. Light. After climbs of Mt. Light, the 2050m peak NW and the 2150m peak N of Mount Temple, we dropped 1600m down to the glacier lake at the source of the Wedeene River. Icebergs at 450m.

On the way down, we saw a black bear routefinding through crevasses. At the lake's edge we camped among flowers and moose prints, and watched small icebergs float past the tent.

Well, the next day we had our big bushwhack down the Wedeene Valley. A good way to celebrate day 40! In some parts we paid our dues and in others, open bogs speeded things up. We got out to



The well anchored tent on the 2050m knoll, S of Mt. Light. Photo - J. Clarke



Craig at the start of the descent to the glacier lake at the source of the Wedeene R. Photo - J. Clarke

Terrace just in time as my shirt literally rotted off my body, and was given a dignified burial beside the logging road.

At the the end of August, I drove out to Bella Coola and climbed Desire Mtn. from the Smitley River. This turned out to be very adventurous, as this rugged peak had taken a lot of fresh snow and the craggy upper part of the mountain kept me guessing all the way. At 1400m I met a very large, very cheeky grizzly who never rushed me, but kept slowly moving closer in a most annoying way. He only moved off when I lit a fire right in front of him. I spent a wonderful hour on the summit of Desire trying to identify a bewildering array of peaks in all directions. Many thanks to Glenn Woodsworth who suggested I make a trip to this great peak.

Back down in the Smitley, I rested for a day on the big sandbar near the mouth of Brynildsen Creek before the two day bushwhack up the valley to

another day off in the glacial valley E of Big Snow Mtn. Then I packed over Big Snow and the 2200m peak NW of it, and hiked over to the headwaters of Clayton Falls Creek. From here, I made two side trips. The first was to the 2100m peaklet at the head of Tastsquan Creek, from which a tiny corner of the village of Bella Coola could be seen. The second was to a lovely isolated 2050m peak W of the middle section of Brynildsen Creek. The meadows and lakes en route to this peak make it probably the prettiest alpine destination accessible directly from the village. The hike down Clayton Falls Creek went through some grand yellow cedar forests before getting to the logging roads and a ride into town.

The traverse had been 13 days so I needed a rest for a few days before flying in to the mouth of Jump Across Creek on the east side of Dean Channel, to climb the big 2400m peak east of this valley. When the plane flew away, and I was dragging my belongings up to the high tide line, I started noticing



Looking SE from the summit of Big Snow Mtn. With Desire Mtn. on right. Photo - J. Clarke

the most wonderful ancient petroglyphs carved into the smooth granite.

When I was ready, I walked into the bush and hit a wasps' nest and discovered that you can run pretty fast in thick bush with a pack on! The climb took five days return from the beach in perfect weather, and a lot of classic scenery. On the peak, seven ravens showed up and dive-bombed me for 15 minutes. They must have thought I was an injured goat. I had admired this lovely peak from a 1992 ski traverse on the other side of Dean Channel.

Back at the beach, I hadn't made any arrangement to be picked up, so I lit a fire and hailed Jim Kaislas' prawn boat. He dropped me off at the logging camp at the mouth of the Kimsquit River. This was a boon for me as this was where I wanted to be for the next and last trip of the season. He had saved me a charter back to Bella Coola and a scheduled flight from there into the logging camp.

I got on the radio and invited Scott Whittemore to take the sched in the next day and join me for a climb of the very pretty 2150m horn directly across Dean Channel from the mouth of the Dean River. Scott had just finished writing a guidebook to the Bella Coola area, and we both enjoyed sitting on this summit surveying the whole panorama before the onset of winter.

Columbia and Rocky Mountains

SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARVES DO THE DORE RIVER, April, 1992 - by Gavin Thurston

This is the story of Snow White and the Seven Dwarves, and their spring ski trip to the East Dore

River, near McBride, B.C. Some of the dwarves had been to another fork of the Dore drainage the previous year (see B.C. Mountaineer, 1992), and had raved about peaks and points galore. So one fine April Morning, the group set off from Vancouver, and drove to McBride to be choppered some 30 km up the Dore River, and in fact over the divide, and into a lovely campsite just at treeline. Everyone pitched in to make a fine campsite, so the work went fast. Everyone of course except Whistler, who merrily whistled and sang, and kept the other dwarves entertained and content. And of course Thrifty didn't actually help, but he was off looking for wreckage from a plane crash, which would be of enormous benefit to the whole group, so nobody minded. And Grumpy didn't actually help too much, and neither did Dismal, because they knew that they could be of more use by offering expert advice and encouragement. And Snow White, well she couldn't help because it would've soiled her lily white hands. So in fact it took quite a while to set up the camp and the outdoor kitchen. But when it was done, it was a splendid sight, and everyone had praises galore for each other. Except of course Dismal....



Snow White and 5 of the dwarves at meal time in camp. From left to right - Grumpy, Snow White, Piner, Whistler, Thrifty, and Dismal. Photo - Bunny

But the real point of the trip was to ski, and ski they did! Up hill and down dale, leaving beautiful S-shaped turns in the magnificent snow. Except of course Munchy, who occasionally fell and left an ugly scar in the otherwise expert tracks. And well, perhaps Dismal's tracks were a little funny looking, rather more like uphill zig-zags made by someone with skins, than actual downhill tracks. But the others more than made up for them with their graceful swoops in the virgin powder. Well, in places it was powder, although there were patches



Snow White skiing above camp. Photo - Dismal



Snow White and 6 of the dwarves resting prior to ascending Pk. 2800m, 4km SW of the Cariboo R. - Castle Ck. pass (camp). Photo - Dismal



A dwarf on the ski trip. Photo - Dismal



Dwarves ascending the NW ridge of PK 2800m. Photo - Dismal



Dwarves ascending a ridge to Pk. 2450m. South Dore valley to left and Castle Ck. headwaters above the dwarves to the right. Photo - Dismal



A dwarf skiing down Pk. 2800m. Photo - Dismal

where the snow wasn't quite perfect. OK, there may have been a spot or two where the snow was a bit heavy, and crusty, and there was one day when it was slightly less than sensational...

But the peaks! What stupendous summits and awesome ridges were to be found up the South Dore River! And the views! What views there would have been, what awesome vistas they would have beheld, had it not been for the clouds! One could probably have seen all the way to Mount Robson, or beyond, had the clouds been a bit higher. But what clouds! Seldom had they seen a more splendid and uniform grey than was seen in those clouds. Even on "Official Rest Day", Bunny and Piner went out and enjoyed the view of the clouds from another fine summit, and later retold the tale to their admiring comrades around the campfire.



Piner basking in sun and glory on summit of "Rest Day Mtn." (2800m, 6.5 km SSW of camp).
Photo - Bunny

But never mind, it's the socializing that really makes a trip. And the dwarves love to catch up on each other's news each spring. The learned dwarves also love to discuss the complexities of the modern world, and such issues as multiculturalism, and Provincial Government leadership, were dissected with wisdom and compassion. Occasionally an off-colour remark from Grumpy or Thrifty might creep into the conversation, but never enough to influence the actual tone of the discussion. And sometimes the dwarves recounted a tale from the days of old, when the earth was young and the mountains were bigger and the men were tougher and the women were fairer. Some of the dwarves had heard some of the tales before, so it was only considerate for the stories to be 'modified' or 'enlarged' for each fresh telling. In fact, many of the dwarves failed to recognize some of the tales recounted by Piner, even when they had taken part in them, which is a tribute to his imagination and eloquency.

But it's the food that can really make a trip like this. And it was delicious! Even Whistler brought real food. And each night was a veritable feast, with each dwarf barely able to stagger to the dunny the next morning. And had the marten not raided the snow-hole and eaten so much food, the meals would have been even better...

But alas, all good things must come to an end, and finally the chopper came to collect Snow White and her cheery band of dwarves. Despite all the trials and tribulations, none was glad to leave the nest in the East Dore River. And if it is a merciful and forgiving God, then They Will Live Happily Ever After.

Participants: Snow White (Mary), Whistler (Colin), Dismal (Michael), Munchy (Ross), Thrifty (Peter), Bunny (Gavin), Piner (Brian), and Grumpy (Erich).

KITCHI - KAKWA MOUNTAINEERING FROM 1875 TO THE BCMC SUMMER CAMP - OVINGTON CK. AREA, 1-8 August, 1992

- by Michael Feller

Mountain climbers are attracted to the mountains in different ways. While I can get great enjoyment visiting areas I have visited many times before, as each trip differs from each previous one, the lure of the unknown is, perhaps, the greatest attraction the mountains offer me. The "unknown" implies land undisturbed by people, no guidebooks, animals living as they are supposed to, etc. Above all, it means that if you are to get to a summit, you must depend entirely on yourself and your party. There is no guidebook or published work to tell you the way. The "unknown", to me, is synonymous with wilderness.

In my mind, it is indeed unfortunate that so many people, including mountain climbers, seek ~~out~~ and demand everywhere trails, roads, guidebooks, sign posts, etc. - all those trappings of "civilization" that destroy the unknown. Parks used to be the saviour of the unknown. That is no longer the case in B.C. where arrogant federal politicians and indolent bureaucrats lounging in their eastern ivory towers devise further ways of commercializing national parks and of deceiving people into believing that they will be listened to. Their provincial counterparts are little better, devising ever increasing "marketing strategies" for our parks, which will open them up to more people from more different groups. The overall objective of parks

management seems to be to make the parks "known".

Purists will argue that one should not visit, nor give any publicity to the unknown. While this has some merit it, at least, only delays the inevitable. Someone someday will find the unknown. It is better that those who wish to protect the unknown be made aware of where the valuable unknowns are, so that they can assist in their protection. In describing the unknown, one does not have to give a detailed step by step description - a very generalized account will suffice.

Purists will also argue that one should access the unknown on foot, avoiding mechanized means. The ultimate manifestation of this might be Tim McCartney - Snape's ascent of Mt. Everest a few years ago, travelling on foot all the way from the sea in India. There is merit in this but, unfortunately, many of us lovers of the unknown have jobs and other commitments which prevent us from taking the large amounts of time required to visit the unknown entirely on foot. Helicopters, if judiciously used in ways which do not cause ecological damage or disturbance to other people, can provide suitable access to the unknown.

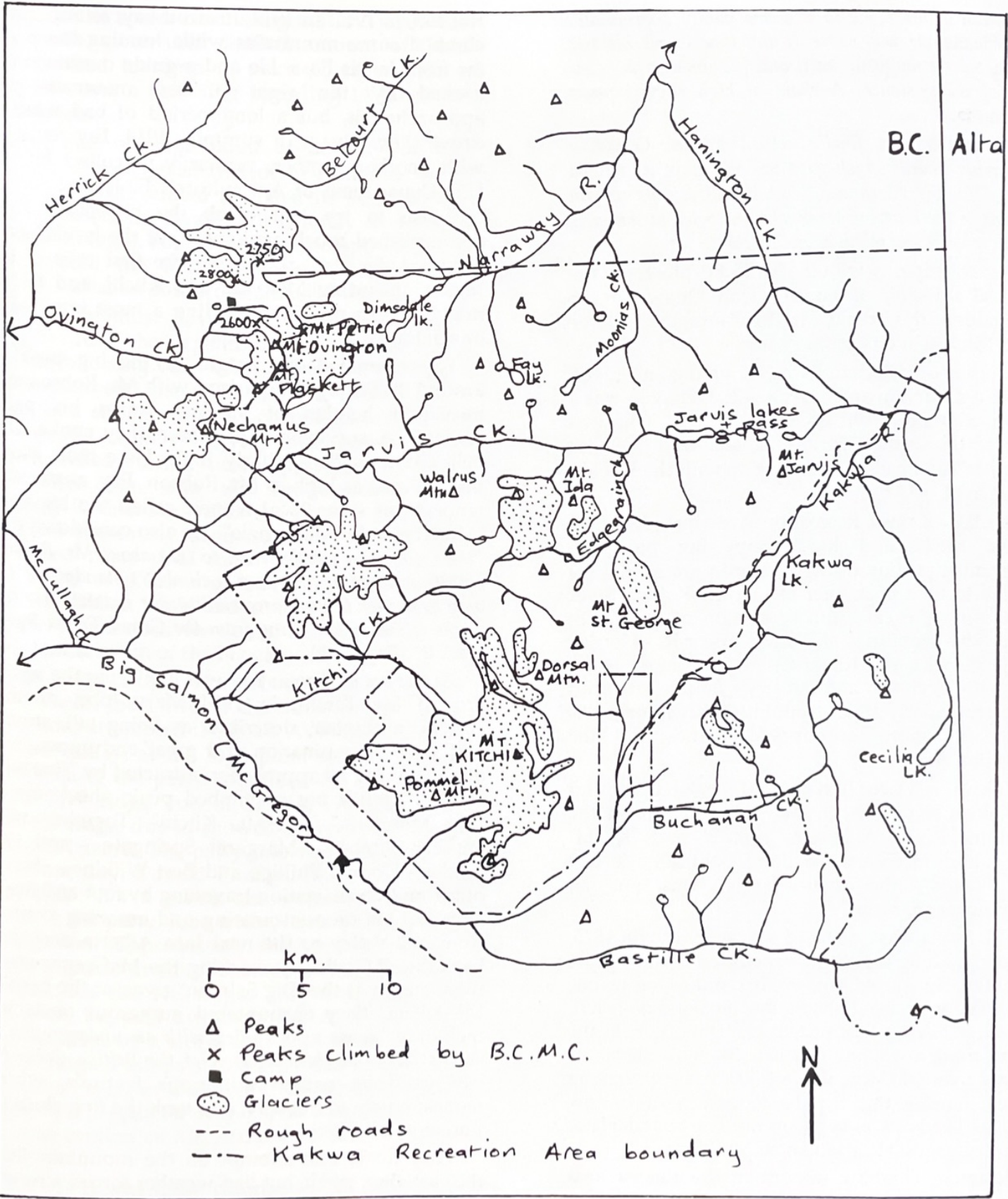
The preceding comments explain why the 1992 B.C.M.C. summer camp happened and why this account of the camp has been prepared.

Guidebooks, by their omissions, together with maps, both topographic and Forest Service, allow one to delineate the unknown. Some guidebooks, like older editions for the B.C. Interior (Columbia) Mountains, are often so vague as to make the known appear unknown. They complicate the task of delineating the true unknown. The Rocky Mountain guidebooks, while better than earlier editions of those of the Interior Mountains, are still sometimes deceptive in that more is known about routes and mountains than indicated. However, all published information did suggest that the northern Kakwa area in B.C.'s northern Rockies was a true unknown. This area, near the headwaters of the McGregor River between Prince George and McBride, consists of three major groups of high glaciated peaks. The easternmost group, and the highest, is dominated by Mt. Kitchi (Sir Alexander) (3277m). This group lies between the upper McGregor River and Kakwa River valleys on the east and south, and the Kitchi Ck. - Edgegrain Ck. - Jarvis Ck. valleys on the west and north. The second group, dominated by Mt. Ida, lies between the Kitchi Ck. - Edgegrain Ck. valleys to the south and east, and the Jarvis Ck. valley to the

north and west. The third group, dominated by Mt. Ovington, lies between the McCullagh Ck. and Herrick Ck. valleys to the northwest, the Belcourt Ck. valley to the northeast, the Narraway R. headwaters to the east and the Jarvis Ck. valley to the south. Ovington Ck., a tributary of Herrick Ck., cuts into the latter group from the west. The mountains of the group form a rough horseshoe around Ovington Ck., the upper valley of which was to be the site of our camp.

A discerning reader may wonder why I stated that the highest peak was Mt. Kitchi with Sir Alexander in brackets, when Kitchi Mtn. is actually a minor 2850m peak 4 km N of Mt. Sir Alexander. Well, it is perhaps too late to correct some of the unfortunate names that have been bestowed, apparently without too much thought, on B.C.'s geography, but people should be aware of the significance of names and what they represent. Many pure and fine mountains and other geographic features have been defiled by being given names of either very impure people, or of people who had nothing to do with the mountain or feature in question, or even mountains or the features in general. The names of early surveyors, their friends, and bosses are quite common - Mt. Everest probably being the worst example of this. The Kitchi-Kakwa region boasts more than its fair share of surveyor's names. Thus, the McGregor river, and its tributaries - Captain, James, and Herrick Cks. - were named after Captain James Herrick McGregor, the first president of the Corporation of B.C. Land Surveyors; the Narraway R. was named after A.M. Narraway, the controller of Surveys in Ottawa, and the Morkill R. - after D.B. Morkill, a surveyor who worked in the area.

The most unfortunate name in the region, however, is that of Mt. Sir Alexander. The reason for this is best stated by F. Vreeland, who was the first person to locate the most feasible route to its summit. He wrote (Vreeland 1930) - "*This unfortunate mountain has laboured under several aliases in its brief public career. Ever since its first discovery it has been known locally as Mt. Kitchi. This is a Cree Indian name meaning "big" or "great". The linguistic root is the same as that in "Gitche Manitou", the Great Spirit. The peak is very appropriately called the "Great Mountain", for it is a noble mass of rock and ice, towering above the lower mountains which surround it. Later a traveler who saw, but did not set foot on it, proposed the name "Mt. Alexander MacKenzie."* The mountain is certainly worthy of the name of this great pioneer explorer, but the



The Kitchi - Kakwa area. Map by M. Feller

application of his name to it seems hardly appropriate, since MacKenzie was never at any time of his historic journey near enough to see it and presumably he never knew of its existence. A chain of high rugged peaks intervene.⁵

The matter was finally settled by the Canadian Geographic Board, which gave the mountain its official name, "Mt. Sir Alexander," but it will always remain recorded in the hearts of those who struggled in the early days to reach it and climb it, as "Kitchi".

Having an empathy with the earliest explorers of the area and a disdain of parasites from Ottawa, in the remainder of this article, Mt. "Sir Alexander" will be called Mt. Kitchi - its proper name.

Another unfortunate name is "Ovington", given to both a mountain and a creek. R.E. Ovington was a soldier, a private from Alenza Lake, B.C., who was killed in the second world war, and who does not appear to have had any connection with the Kitchi - Kakwa area.

The B.C. Kakwa Recreation Area includes most of the Kitchi and Ida groups but only the easternmost portion of the Ovington group. Kakwa appears to be a misnomer in that the Kakwa River drains only the easternmost portion of the Kitchi group. The tributaries of the McGregor R. - Herrick Ck., Jarvis Ck., and Kitchi Ck., - drain most of the area, with Jarvis Ck. and the Jarvis Lakes at its head being particularly significant. Either Kitchi or Jarvis would be more appropriate names for the Recreation Area.

"Kakwa" is a Cree Indian word for porcupine and the Kakwa river was, in fact, originally called the Porcupine River. Although "Kakwa" and "Kitchi" may sound nicer and be more politically correct than "Jarvis", the man "Jarvis" was not an insignificant character.

E.W. Jarvis was a railroad surveyor who, in 1875, set out on a long surveying expedition in the middle of winter. He started with 8 men and 6 dog teams, but by late winter only had a few men and dogs left, the others having returned to civilization or, in the case of some dogs, having died. On snow shoes, he covered over 1400 km, the last 500 of these carrying a pack. During this trip he located what is now known as Jarvis Pass, between the Fraser and Peace River drainages. He also named Mt. Ida.

Mountain climbing interest in the Kakwa area first centred on the highest peak - Mt. Kitchi. The presence of this high peak was noted by early surveyors and finally by climbers around Mt.

Robson, in 1911. In 1912, Prescott Fay, an American, climbed some mountains while hunting sheep not far from Jarvis Pass. He and a guide outfitter were excited by the sight of the mountain and approached it, but a long period of bad weather drove them away. In summer, 1914, Fay returned with another climber, primarily to collect for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Biological Survey but also to try and climb the big peak. They accomplished much exploration of the Jarvis Pass - Kakwa Lake area, producing the first map of the region, including Mts. Ida and Kitchi, and taking many superb photos, including a most impressive one of the knife - like Mt. Ida.

Fay estimated the height of the big peak as around 3800m by comparison with Mt. Robson and measured heights of various points his party reached. A surveyor with whom they spoke, also believed it to be similarly high. Here then was a peak almost as high as Mt. Robson. Fay, apparently ignorant of some local names, called the big peak "Mt. Alexander Mackenzie". He also considered that *"the region is a worthy rival to that about Mt. Robson, both from a scenic and from a climber's standpoint. The only drawback is its inaccessibility, for it takes over two weeks of steady travelling from the Grand Trunk Ry. to reach it"* (Fay 1915).

At the same time as Fay was exploring the region around Mt. Kitchi, in 1914 Mary Jobe, another American climber, described as being tall, strong, and with determination and great endurance, was also exploring its approaches, attracted by "fine wild country" and a big unclimbed peak, she knew as "Big Mountain", or "Mt. Kitchi". Together with another climber - Margaret Springate - and two guides - Donald Phillips and Bert Wilkins - she set out from Robson station travelling by foot and horse over 300 km on a fascinating and amazing journey from one valley to the next into Alberta and then back into B.C., finally reaching the McGregor river, then known as the "Big Salmon" river, at the base of Mt. Kitchi. They encountered numerous obstacles, including *"dense woods filled with an undergrowth of devil's club and rhododendron of the British Columbia variety"*. They named numerous features, whose names remain to this day, and took the first close up photos of Mt. Kitchi.

They made one attempt on the mountain from the east, then north, but bad weather forced a retreat from an elevation around 2100m. Jobe and Phillips made a second attempt a few days later, fortified from the meat of a caribou they had killed. They

reached 2400m before concluding that the peak was too difficult, given their limited amount of time. They returned to camp (a piece of canvas for a windbreak, and a fire) after spending 14 hours on the mountain.

From their vantage point of actually on the mountain they believed that other estimates of its height were exaggerated and that its summit was less than 3350m in elevation (it is today considered to be 3277m high). Following this attempt, the party then retraced the 300 km back to the railway reaching it after an absence of almost 6 weeks.

Mary Jobe must have been captivated by the region because she organized another expedition there the following year. With 2 guides, a cook, and 3 other climbers, she again set out from Robson station on a similar odyssey, covering much of the same ground as in 1914. This time, however, her party travelled further north, past Mt. Kitchi to Jarvis Pass then into the headwaters of the Narraway R. then known as the Wapiti. This latter route had previously been explored by Fay. This time Jobe's party used more old Indian trails to avoid some of B.C.'s dreaded brush. They found many old Indian trails and camps but considered the lack of recent activity due to the Indians having exterminated much of the big game in the area.

After 3 weeks they established camp at the base of Mt. Kitchi. Jobe, two of the other climbers, and the 2 guides attempted the peak. At 9 am they had a second breakfast at the high point of the previous year. Three of the party continued on, deciding to try the NW ridge but, at 2700m, retreated from below the ridge, due to snowed-up rock and a high avalanche hazard. The party returned to camp after an 18 hour day. Donald Phillips, the lead climber, stated that "*It's a man's size mountain*" and the women in the party, Jobe wrote, "*were not disposed to contradict him.*" Consequently, the 3 male climbers in the party made another attempt a few days later, this time via the NE ridge. They struggled with loose rock, ice, and awe-inspiring cornices, before being defeated by a storm only 60m or so from the summit ridge. Phillips stated after this attempt that "*Mt. Robson is higher and more spectacular, but I found nothing on it to equal the danger of the treacherous snows and rotten cornices on Mt. Alexander MacKenzie*" (Jobe 1916).

Perhaps it was these comments that resulted in no further attempts on the peak until 1929. However, a statement by H.F. Lambart might also have had an effect. Describing an aerial

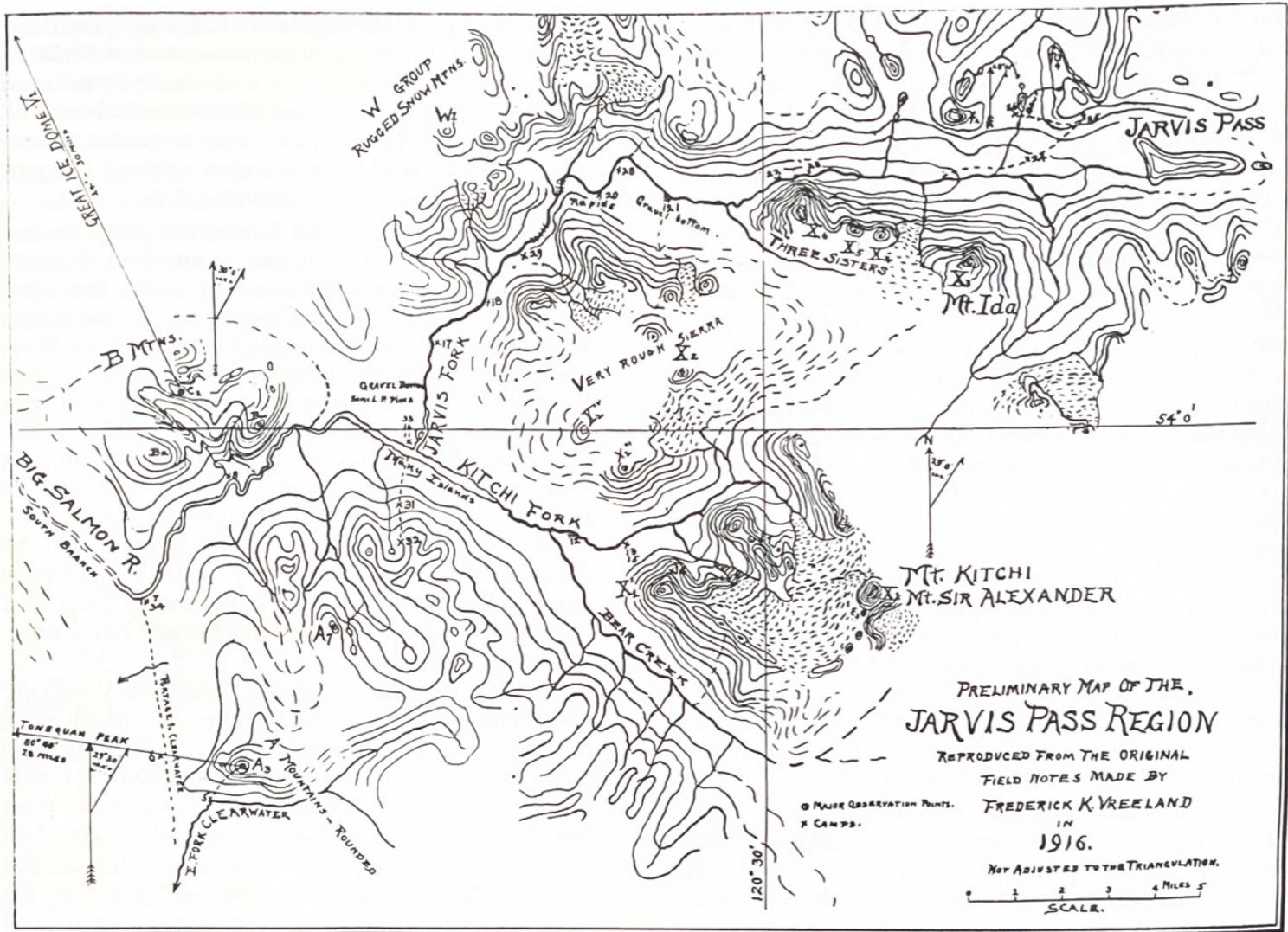
reconnaissance of the region in 1922, which included the first aircraft landing at the settlement of McBride - which had been chosen for a townsite by railroad surveyors only in 1911 - Lambart stated about Mt. Kitchi - "*Mt. Sir Alexander will never be climbed. It is an absolute knife-edge of snow, not even corniced, along its full length.*" (Wheeler and Lambart 1923).

After their defeat on Mt. Kitchi, the party headed north to Jarvis pass, climbing a few minor peaks near Mt. Ida. On one of these they had a fine view down the Big Salmon (McGregor) and to the north. The view to the north towards the Peace gave them "*the conviction that we did not want to go further. Across the watershed the mountains grow perceptibly lower and the country has a desolate appearance*" (Jobe 1916). Consequently, they returned to Robson station, this time reaching it after an absence of 9 weeks. One result of this expedition was another map of the Kakwa area published under the auspices of the American Geographical Society in 1915. This map contained more detail than Fay's earlier map, but did not use some of the names from Fay's map, which are now in use.

In 1916, another American, Frederick Vreeland, was following the original Alexander MacKenzie route, travelling by canoe. He decided to leave the route and travelled up the Big Salmon river towards Mt. Kitchi. He then climbed up the foot of the west face of the mountain taking notes and photos. Not equipped for climbing, he proceeded no further, but his expedition was notable in that he discovered the easiest (western) approach to the summit and suggested the route to members of the party that ultimately made the first ascent.

Vreeland had been exploring this country between the Fraser and the Peace rivers for 4 years. On his first trip in 1912, he covered almost 2000 km. He "*travelled light, just two of us in a canoe, which we worked up the rapid mountain streams as far as it would float and then "siwashed" with back-packs*" (Vreeland 1930). Following his fourth trip in 1916, which provided the key to the ascent of Mt. Kitchi, he also produced a map of the Jarvis Pass region. This map was more detailed than the previous maps of Fay and Jobe, although its scale appeared less accurate. It was the first map showing all three major groups of mountains in the area. Only the southeastern edge of the Ovington group, however, was shown. This group is referred to as "W group - rugged snowy Mtns."

It is also interesting that Vreeland's approach to the region is the one that is in use today. Vreeland



The map produced by Vreeland based on his field observations. Published in the American Alpine Journal. Vol. 1 No. 2. (1930) and reprinted with the permission of the American Alpine Club.

paddled up the Clearwater R. (now Torpy R. and its tributary - Goodson Ck.) then portaged 11 km through relatively flat country to the Big Salmon R. then up that river. A logging road today parallels precisely the same route, probably crossing and remaining very close to the portage route.

Mary Jobe returned to the Kitchi - Kakwa area again during the 1917 winter, travelling again with Donald Phillips as guide, and an assistant. By horse and foot they repeated the long and arduous trip from Robson station to Kakwa lake, through snow storm, knee-deep snow, and below freezing temperatures, sleeping at times only beneath spruce trees. Finally they reached a small lake north of Mt.

Kitchi where Jobe had hoped to get a view of the peak. She was not disappointed. "To my keen joy, the great snow mass was easily distinguishable. The clouds hung about the peak, as they usually do, even in fair weather, but its icy bulk shone roseate above a dark blue cloud bank, as this lone sentinel of the North caught the rays of a slowly sinking sun. Everywhere about us the winter's snow reflected the splendor of the mountain itself. For a brief moment the whole landscape was flooded with celestial colour and the heart of at least one mortal who stood and gazed was athrill at the beauty of the scene. In half an hour the sun had vanished. Fortunately, indeed, had we been to have "Kitchi the Great" reveal

himself to us. It was worth travelling to the ends of the earth to see" (Jobe 1918).

They then continued on to Jarvis Pass and into the Narraway R. valley, down which they travelled to a camp that Phillips established, leaving supplies for a future scientific expedition. They then returned to the railway through Alberta, reaching it about 100 km east of Jasper, and just before Christmas.

This was to be Jobe's last visit to the western mountains of Canada. Donald Phillips visited her a few years later in New York leading to speculation about a romance, but she later married an explorer and natural scientist who died while with her on a visit to the Congo. She became interested in Africa and died in 1966 at the age of 80. Her name is now given to a mountain north of McBride and south of the Morkill R.

Climbing activity in the Kitchi area appeared to cease until 1929 when a party of 7 Americans, organized by Dr. Mary Goddard Potter, ventured into the area. Of the seven, "*some were there to extend their trail riding record, some to climb Sir Alexander, and some were like that famous bear that "went over the mountain to see what he could see"*" (Waffl 1930). The outfitter for the party was once again Donald Phillips.

Phillips, originally from Ontario, was the only Canadian who featured in the early exploration of the Kitchi - Kakwa area. He was a Jasper guide and outfitter who almost made the first ascent of Mt. Robson in 1909, stopping 20m short of the summit. He had no climbing experience prior to his attempt on Robson with George Kinney, but was considered to be a "natural". He became the most renowned tourist guide in the Jasper area during the 1920's and 30's, but was killed in an avalanche while skiing near Jasper. However, when it came to exploratory mountaineering, it was the Americans who had the drive and inspiration. Despite having so many unclimbed mountains essentially at his doorstep, Phillips displayed little interest in climbing them himself. He may be considered a true Canadian - a hewer of wood and drawer of water for Americans. Today, his name is given to a mountain lying 10 km NW of Robson on his packtrain route to Kitchi.

Potter's party headed up the Stony River, some 30 km east of Jasper, travelling 240 km in 12 days to reach Kitchi. After 10 days of bad weather, 3 of the party - Helen Buck, Andrew Gilmour, and Newman Waffl tackled Kitchi from the west, reaching the summit after 12 hours, after much step cutting by

Waffl, the party's leader. The descent involved several rappels using wooden sticks as pitons, and 4 hours of travel in darkness. Camp was reached at 2:45 am, 9 1/2 hours after leaving the summit. While in the area, the party also climbed a mountain north of Kitchi, now known as St. George. The party then packed out to Robson station, reaching it after 9 days. Two other ascents were made on the way out by the 3 who climbed Kitchi. Waffl was killed the next year in an avalanche on Mt. Robson, while attempting a solo ascent. His name is given to a peak on the northeast ridge of Mt. Robson.

The Potter - Waffl trip represented the end of an era - the end of the "golden age" of Kitchi mountaineering. The highest peak in the area had been climbed. It was the last mountaineering trip employing packhorses and foot access. All future trips would use aircraft or vehicles to facilitate access. The depression and the second world war intervened. It would be another 25 years before the next mountaineers arrived - in an entirely new era.

They arrived by float plane in 1954, landing at Jarvis lake. Mt. Ida, was their main objective. This spire-like peak had impressed all who had seen it. It has been speculated that its relationship to Jarvis pass is similar to that of the mountain known as Ida and the ancient city of Troy (Ida flanked and protected Troy) (Dunn and Dunn 1955).

The 1954 party was a Harvard Mountaineering Club expedition of 4 people. They first climbed St. George to get a view of the southern side of Mt. Ida - their intended route. After shifting their camp to just beneath Ida, they ascended it uneventfully, cautiously climbing up wet melting snow over downsloping rubbly rock before reaching the more aesthetic summit ridge.

After climbing Mt. Ida, the party split, with two heading off towards Mt. Kitchi, where bad weather prevented any further climbing. The other two were more fortunate, being able to climb two peaks. One, they called "Arch Mtn.," is today called Mt. St. David, while the other, which appears today to be an unnamed peak just southeast of St. George, they called "Mt. Dragon". Their descriptions of these peaks do not match the topo map details very well and the climber's guide to the Rocky Mountains - North provides no information, so there is a little uncertainty over these 2 peaks. However, after 23 days in the area, they flew out again.

The next climbing party to visit the area - 13 years later in 1967 - also used a float plane, but they

landed on Dimsdale lake near the head of the Narraway R. This was yet another party of Americans. This time astronomers from across the U.S. The day after arriving, they climbed their first peak - the westernmost peak in the Ovington group, which they called Mt. Petrie after the Director of the Dominion Astrophysical Observatory near Victoria. They crossed the Peace - Fraser divide and optimistically set off south for Mt. Kitchi with 4 days food. However, the 5 km downhill to Jarvis Ck. took them five hours. They had not counted on the "*tangled forest, slippery dead falls, and bloodthirsty devil's club*" (Morton 1968). They doubted that their supplies would let them attempt the nearest peak, let alone Kitchi, which was still 18 km away. Just south across Jarvis Ck., however, was Walrus Mtn. in the northern section of the Mt. Ida group. This became their objective. A log provided a route across Jarvis Ck. They then had some fun traversing through bush to the west of Walrus. "*Some fine alder groves added interest to the route*". Reaching a streambed, their situation "*was thoroughly discouraging; alder thickets and heavy bush barred our escape in every direction*." But they persevered, camping at treeline and climbing the peak the following day. In heavy rain, they returned to their base camp trying a different route with "*the added attraction of some thick alder on one steep section*."

After a short rest, they traversed a glacier to the south of Petrie, encountering a small herd of caribou there. Their objective was Mt. Ovington, about 2 km west of Petrie. The map suggested a route onto and up the NW ridge of Ovington. However, upon reaching the Ovington - Petrie col they found the route from the glacier to the NW ridge barred by smooth steep rock walls, so they retreated to camp.

After some stormy weather, on their last climbing day, they set out for Ovington, this time approaching it from the south. In cloud they reached a high point on the ridge and built a cairn. Just as they started to descend, they noticed another high point further north on their ridge, which might be (and in fact was) the highest point. They named their peak Mt. Plaskett, after the first director of the Dominion Astrophysical Observatory. They were unaware that the higher peak was called Mt. Ovington. The next day, after more rain, they were flown away, after 17 days in the area. Mt. Plaskett was to be the last peak climbed in the Ovington group for 25 years.

The next climbing party to visit the area flew in by helicopter in 1978. They established a base camp

by a small lake at 1700m, 3 km N of Dorsal Mtn. In 14 days they managed to climb Nilah Pk. just south of Kitchi, the unfortunately named Kitchi Mtn., Pommel Mtn., Mt. Ida, and an unnamed peak 2 km NNE of Dorsal. The last of these peaks was climbed after the party lost interest in Dorsal because of its poor rock (Boles 1979). The party also attempted the first ascent route on Kitchi, but retreated from the summit ridge due to unstable avalanching snow.

Despite their disappointment on Kitchi, the party agreed that it would be nice to return to the area. However, another decade passed before climbers returned. This time it was "local" climbers from Prince George.

In February, 1988, Craig Evanoff and Bonnie Hooge, utilizing the logging road into the upper McGregor, skied up Kitchi Ck. to attempt Kitchi. They reached an elevation of 2100m before being forced back by bad weather. They returned 2 years later with Craig's father, George, this time using a snowmobile for the 13 km trip up the Kitchi Ck. valley. Leaving the snowmobile they skied to a camp at 2500m in -30 °C temperatures. Next day they skied to the base of the rock, climbed to the summit following a similar route to that of the first and only previous ascent, then descended back to their camp, arriving there at nightfall, around the same time as a front arrived. The next day they returned to Prince George. Mt. Kitchi, once requiring 3 weeks of overland travel to reach, is now a 3 day return trip overland from Prince George (in winter only, however - rivers and bush complicate summer travel).

In February, 1992, Craig and Bonnie returned to the area, this time skiing up McCullagh Ck. to the SW corner of the Ovington group. They skied up towards Nechamus Mtn., approaching from the west. However, bad weather prevented them from climbing anything.

The B.C.M.C. 1992 summer camp group, then, was only the third climbing party to visit the Ovington group. Members of the group met in McBride on Saturday, August 1st, having come from various parts of the province in a variety of vehicles, one of which was deemed not sufficiently robust to proceed beyond McBride. The plan had been to drive up the McGregor river logging road to a point near the confluence of the McGregor and Jarvis Ck., then helicopter in that afternoon. However, our helicopter was fighting forest fires so our departure was rescheduled for the following morning. Three members elected to spend the night in McBride,

while the rest of us camped on the banks of the McGregor near an old logging camp.

Early next morning, we were off, up McCullagh Ck. into Ovington Ck. valley, noting an impressive cliff band across the valley just below our proposed camp site. This band would hinder travel down valley to access the Nechamus Mtn. area. After dropping us off, our pilot, Ron Eland, kindly took back a punctured tire to McBride (He subsequently had it repaired and flew it back for us on the way out, despite not being asked to do so - this was the pilot who didn't like mountain climbers, according to an article in the Vancouver Sun!).

Camp was established beside some boulders at the edge of the upper valley flats, at an elevation of 1700m. As the weather seemed reasonable (unlike the thunderstorms of the previous day) and we were anxious to make up for a lost day, we set out to explore our surroundings. Marilyn, Joe, Paddy, Rafe, and Tom set out for the slopes immediately north of our camp, while the rest of us headed up the valley. We were soon to discover that the area was one of great beauty. The views from camp, across carpets of green, to the white glaciers and rock towers of the Nechamus area were truly awe inspiring. The flowers were in their prime. The Dryas had already flowered, but masses of yellow, white, blue, purple and red festooned the lower slopes. Of great beauty to me was a purple coloured Indian paint brush - a colour which I had never seen it exhibit before. A few of the common red individuals were present, but purple ones were dominant. Some willow and stunted conifers were present but travel was generally easy through treeless leads in the valley bottom. Shortly after leaving the valley the trees disappeared and no vegetation impeded progress, except for flowers, which one tried to avoid crushing.

Both parties set off at leisurely paces, seemingly content to explore. But that urge to get to the summit became a dominant force. So, late in the afternoon, two peaks were ascended, both apparently unclimbed, and both involving nothing more than a small amount of class 2-3 scrambling. The first, Pk. 2800m, approximately 2 km N of our camp, via the SW then S ridge, by Marilyn and party, and the second, Pk. 2750m, approximately 3 km NE of our camp, via the S ridge by the rest of the party.

Unfortunately, thunder clouds and incipient thunder clouds, boiling on the mountains around us, and smoke in the air from several forest fires,

limited our views somewhat, but Mt. Ovington, to the S of us, looked like a worthy objective for the following day.



The first 2 peaks ascended - Pk 2800 (left) and 2750 (right), as seen from the slopes of Mt. Petrie. Photo - M. Feller

Next morning we all found ourselves clambering around a verdant paradise after an icy ford of Ovington Ck. Masses of bus-sized boulders covered with grass and flowers and full of secret passageways and nooks and crannies, littered the base of the ridge leading from Mt. Ovington, NW over another peak and down to our camp. The boulders gave way to extensive lush meadows covered with myriads of alpine flowers, including particularly attractive displays of blue Monkshoods, yellow *Arnica*, and white *Parnassia*. In the midst of this paradise was movement, and not from the ubiquitous marmots or pikas. It was a Kakwa, a rather shy but very healthy looking individual, quite a distance from the nearest tree, but perhaps people aren't the only animals with a sense of aesthetics.

Our plan had been to ascend the slopes until we could traverse onto a glacier west of Ovington, then ascend this glacier to the Ovington - Plaskett col. However, smooth steep slabs prevented dropping onto the glacier. These forced us up the W. ridge of the peak NW of Ovington. The ridge narrowed and steepened and airy class 3, surprisingly sound, rock was climbed to the summit (Pk 2600m). We had hoped to be able to traverse this peak to the col between it and Ovington, reaching the glacier from the col. However, some spectacular gendarmes and almost vertical drops on both sides of the ridge indicated that it would be a much more serious undertaking than we were prepared for. This was not to be the route to Ovington. We contented ourselves with a leisurely rest on our summit.



From the summit of Pk 2600, looking SW. Ovington Ck. is to the right, unnamed peaks W of Nechamus Mtn. are in the centre. Photo - M. Feller



Looking E from the summit of Pk 2600 to the NW side of Mt. Petrie. Photo - M. Feller

The next day dawned clear again, so we were all off again to try Mt. Petrie, and get a close up view of the eastern approaches to Ovington. Brian and Margaret led a fine route up the glacier north of Ovington, with minimal weaving through crevasses, and a few not overly steep ice pitches. From near the Ovington - Petrie col, where Morton's party had



Marilyn on the glacier on the NW side of Mt. Petrie with Pk 2600 above and to the right. Photo - M. Feller

stood 25 years earlier, we also observed the formidable rock walls on the northern and eastern flanks of the peak. The ridge running down to the col looked "interesting" to us, as well. Joe classed it a 5.shit. The 1:50,000 map is quite deceptive in this

area as many formidable walls appear where none are indicated. Again we had to make do with the consolation prize - Mt. Petrie. The second recorded ascent via a new route - the NW glacier. Another very leisurely rest and lunch on the summit rewarded us with probably the best views of the trip. Most of the clouds and smoke had dissipated and the air was clear. To the SE rose the Mt. Ida group, with dark black pyramids rising above white glaciers. To the south rose Mt. Kitchi, dominant over all. Far to the SE we thought we saw Mt. Robson, with untold mountains between. It was through all these mountains, valleys, and passes, that the first mountaineers had come. To the NE the Rockies continued but with much less glaciation and much more rock. One glaciated area, some 50 km away, was probably Ice Mtn, first climbed by Vreeland in 1915. Beyond was probably Mt. Vreeland itself at the edge of Monkman park. To the north the mountains

did indeed "grow perceptibly lower" and the country did take on a "desolate appearance". It became browner and not as lush or green as it was to the south. Still, it looked interesting, and a hike over a pass to the north of Mt. Petrie into the head of the Narraway River, looked interesting for a rest day.

Mt. Petrie lies on the western boundary of Kakwa Recreation Area (R.A.). During the last years of Social Credit, a Recreation Area was as close as we could get to a provincial park. A Recreation Area is, of course, not a park, as it can be logged and mined. The boundaries of Kakwa R.A. carefully exclude any low elevation areas with timber values and bisect the Ovington group. They show neither ecological, nor historical, nor geographical integrity. That, of course, is the story of reserve boundaries throughout B.C. More logical boundaries would include the entire Ovington group plus the nearby



Mt. Ovington above climbers with Pk 2600 to right, as seen from near the summit of Mt. Petrie.
Photo - M. Feller

valley bottoms. The area is too magnificent to be accorded only Recreation Area status. It should be protected from commercial exploration and resource extraction.

By mutual and almost tacit agreement, the next day was declared a rest day, despite the good weather. This was spent exploring around camp - bouldering and scrambling around the large house-size boulders above the valley headwall and a beautiful turquoise - coloured lake with no surface outlet, a few hundred metres from camp. A route up to the Plaskett - Ovington col was worked out, but it meant descending the headwall, down 400m, before climbing up again. It was easily a 2 day trip from our camp.

A small herd of 14 goats grazed the meadows on the cliffs above our camp. They, marmots, pikas, and some large mice (rats) kept us entertained around camp - all of us except Brian, who was itching to climb. That afternoon he climbed Pk. 2800 alone. He knew something we didn't, as this proved to be the last ascent for the trip.

The next day dawned somewhat cloudy with an obvious front coming in, but we set off anyway, intending to climb the glacier between Pks. 2800 and 2750 to explore the country beyond. We could see the front coming. It overran us, about half way up the glacier. In the clouds and sleet, we retreated.

Back in camp it got colder. An occasional break in the clouds indicated snow higher up. By the morning the snow was only 100m or so above our camp and it continued to fall all day. The next day the clouds lifted somewhat, revealing a wintery scene, but our time was up. The helicopter took us back to the relative warmth and dryness of our cars.

That night we were back in Vancouver - What would Mary Jobe or Frederick Vreeland have thought?

Party: Joe Bajan, Marilyn Cram, Margaret and Brian Ellis, John Halliday, Rafe Hutchinson, Brian Rostek, Paddy Sherman, Tom Volkers, Evelyn and Michael Feller.

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THE BUGABOOS - AN EPIC, 30 JUNE - 8 JULY, 1993 - by Rod MacLeod

We arrived at the Bugaboo park parking lot Saturday afternoon around 1:30 and packed up all our stuff. We were actually quite surprised to see all the chicken wire around the lot. We were told that porcupines were a problem because they eat hoses on your car, which could be a problem! So off we started hiking, the packs feeling like 20 kg when in fact we were quite sure they were heavier than that, and got heavier as we hiked. I know that we got a kick out of teasing each other about putting rocks in one another's packs, but we weren't quite sure whether we were kidding or not. After three hours of steep hiking and ladder climbing at one point, we arrived at the cabin, somewhat tired and wet, but glad to be there.

At the cabin, we unloaded all our stuff, hung out wet gear, and made plans for the next day. This was to be our warm-up day and we decided on East Post Spire, East Ridge, as our warm-up climb. However, Adam had to go back to his car to get some gear that he had forgotten, so there would be three of us climbing.

We awoke early, kicking around, and never really got started until 10:30, a banker's hours kind

of start. Because we were told it was 4th class, and feeling a bit full of bravado, we decided not to bring any gear, just food and water. After scaling 60m up a 5th class slab, it seemed pretty obvious that we were off route. Paul put it best, "I don't mind climbing up, as long as I don't have to climb down." So we thought, if he climbs up but can't climb down, it would be stupid to on. So back down we went. After some bushwhacking, we finally found the 4th class that we had been told about. It was good climbing to the summit, but just short of the summit, it became 5.6. This became our introduction to climbing in Koflachs on mid-5th. After we returned, we told the ranger about the mid-5th climbing on the route and he matter of factly said, "Oh yeah," as if we should have known that.

The following day, inspired by our brave and talented climbing, we figured we would try something harder. We decided to climb the Wolves' Way! (Just kidding - I know it's called The Lion's Way). So off we marched, another early start - 10:30. We brought our harnesses, pro, and a couple of ropes, for the route was described as 5.6. When we got there Adam, being concerned about the weather, decided not to join us. So Paul, James, and I climbed together. The climbing was good, but it is the only climb I know that you can climb in rock shoes with it snowing while the rock remains dry because of the heat from the rock. Whenever Paul had to climb, it would snow, and whenever James or I were climbing, it would clear, but we all made it to the summit. We took some nice photos and returned.

Emboldened by our previous two days, we decided to try the Kain Route on Bugaboo Spire. We knew from our experience so far, that we could climb in the snow, rain, hail or sun. So we got up really early and left the cabin by 5 am. After 45 minutes, we were at the bottom of the snow slope between Snowpatch Spire and Bugaboo Spire. We kicked steps about 120m up the snow slope and arrived at the col.

There was snow everywhere from the previous night's snowfall, so we had to lead 4th class in snow with our Koflachs on. Off and on all morning we climbed on snowy rock which eventually melted to make for nice dry climbing. At the half-way point we came up against a gendarme. I thought the right side was fine. As it turned out, it was 5.7. It was really hard with delicate moves, especially with big mountaineering boots, but I made it and set up a station. Adam came up and told me that I must have been off route, and after much discussion and

disagreement I relented and downclimbed, cursing my Koflachs and backpack. By this time James and Paul had caught up to us and we had a short lunch break. During the lunch break, I took my shoes off and everyone lay around soaking up the sun. It was such a beautiful day. After a half hour, we decided to climb again, this time taking Adam's route, which was on the left side of the gendarme. After two pitches of greasy 7 and 8 climbing, we made it to the place the book had described as the gendarme - not the one we had argued about earlier. At this point, we were unsure of whether to continue or to retreat because it was getting late. We were 120m from the summit. After much discussion and disagreement, democracy won out and we decided to go back. But before we left, James had said, "Boy, those clouds south of here are sure dark." And I added, "Don't worry. If it's windy when they arrive, then we'll worry."

After two rappels, the clouds arrived and boy, was it windy. After two hours of descent we were in the middle of a major snowstorm. As we climbed down the ridge, Paul was complaining vigorously that he had to get off it. Being last, I was not sure what all the fuss was all about. When I caught up to the others, Paul was in a huge hurry to get off the ridge and I immediately found out why as soon as I stood where he was. My ice axes on my pack started to buzz with electricity arcing between them. When I stepped off the ridge, the buzzing noise went down. So then I too was in a big hurry to get off the ridge. We decided to climb down across the snow, but as soon as James stepped on it, the whole slope beneath his feet avalanched. He looked around and said, "No way! We have to wait out the storm. This snow slope is really unstable." So in fear we waited on the slope, and then I had an idea. I asked Paul to throw some friends in the rock and belay me across the slope as I triggered the slope with my ice axe. Thus, I swept the top layer of snow with my ice axe and it immediately avalanched. All the while, it continued to snow heavily. Finally, we were across the slope, and continued on down.

Above the col, we decided to rap the last 50m. It was then 10:30 and beginning to get dark. We were quite apprehensive about the snow slope we climbed earlier in the day up to the col, and whether it would hold to downclimb it. After an overhanging rappel, we reached the top of the col. But before we did, and after we set up the rope, James asked, "Rod, do you have my ice axe?" I said, "No," and then he told me how he placed it down on the ground as he

was putting in a piece of protection, and had left it behind. So then we had to think of a way of getting the four of us down the snowslope with three ice axes. After this conversation, Paul picked up the rope to throw it over the overhang, and much to everyone's surprise, the rope caught his iceaxe and flung it over the edge of the cliff. Now we had two ice axes to get four people down the snowslope. If it was as bad as it could get, how could we get down with two ice axes?

At any rate, down we went. At the bottom of the rappel, we went to pull in the rope and it got stuck on the overhang. We just looked at each other in disbelief. But after some work, we did get it down. Our plan was to send one person down the slope under belay. If he triggered an avalanche, we would have a belay set up for him and keep him from sliding down with the avalanche. We found Paul's ice axe, at the bottom of the slope. So James downclimbed with Adam belaying. After 50m, we thought, "Ah, its OK." So off Adam went behind him. Paul was to go next, and I would go last. After a few minutes, Paul looked like he was glissading - he had fallen but I kept him from going down the slope. But when he fell, he triggered an avalanche on the slope, I still remember Adam's words; "Hey, what are you guys...." and before he could say "...doing?" he was swept off his feet and at great speed disappeared down the slope out of sight with the avalanche. Worried, we downclimbed and I kept asking Paul, "Are they OK?" Finally after some tense moments, he said, "I think they are moving... Yeah, they are moving." So, as we downclimbed, I climbed over the top of the bergschrund that we had agreed to bypass, and I still remember Paul's footsteps above and below the bergschrund. Incredibly, we had climbed over the top of the bergschrund and by a stroke of luck had stepped on either side of it. For when I planted my ice axe in the snow to downclimb, it was all dark underneath the snow. Quite a scary thought that the four of us should follow each other's footsteps and all step over the bergschrund and not know it until afterwards.

I talked to James and he had told me that the avalanche was so heavy that the whole slope moved under his feet, and that all he could remember was snowballs hitting the back of his leg before he sat down and rode the top of the avalanche on his bum. And that he was never covered by the snow. Adam, however, was hit by the snow and knocked off his feet and barely missed a rock with his head. For Adam, it was definitely an adrenalin rush!

Earlier in the day, at the bottom of the snowslope, and being quite optimistic about the day, we felt that even our slowest climbing would not take us any more than 15 hours. But now it was 11:30, 17 1/2 hours later, and dark. Of course, we agreed to only take one headlamp, in case of an emergency. I guess you could say it was an emergency, since it was quite dark and we couldn't see without one. When we turned on the headlamp, we heard Adam call out, "Over here, over here. Come over here!" When Paul and I arrived we found the avalanche and the foul weather had made James hypothermic. Adam said that he was wandering around, complaining that he couldn't keep warm and his speech was slurred. So I gave him my jacket and had to put his mitts on for him, for he was quite hypothermic at this point.

With one light, we stumbled back to the cabin and arrived at 1 am. An incredible 21 hour trip. We got some hot soup in James and put him to bed, and crashed ourselves around 2. The next day James had trouble staying warm and spent most of the day in bed with his clothes on in his sleeping bag. The final tally: a 21 hour epic, a case of hypothermia, an avalanche, a pair of sunglasses and an ice axe missing, an ice axe which was thrown over a cliff but later retrieved, and a snowstorm which dropped 12 cm of snow in two hours, stepping over a bergschrund, walking in the dark with one headlamp. After such an event, we decided that from then on, we would do short routes, but every day we were stormed off all our routes. In the end, we decided to leave because of endless amounts of never-ending bad weather. But one thing is for certain, we will always remember the Bugaboos.

Party: Adam Becalski, James Madeley, Paul Miller, and Rod MacLeod (organizer)

MONKMAN PARK EXPLORATIONS

1 - 8 August, 1993 - by Michael Feller

The long drive from Vancouver through Prince George and Tumbler Ridge finally ended at B.C. Parks' Kinuseo Falls campground, too late to visit the falls, however. Somehow everyone had made it.

After an early breakfast we left our cars in the B.C. Parks compound, shouldered our heavy loads, and commenced the long walk in to Monkman Park. A new, well constructed trail led us upstream along the Murray River until, after several rest stops, we reached a superb suspension bridge across the river. Our route had been through mossy sub-boreal

spruce-fir forests, sometimes right beside the river, at other times deep in the forest short cutting bends of the river. The clouds were dissipating and the sun threatened to shine fully, heating the air.

Leaving the bridge, the trail climbed up to a long relatively flat ridge, along which it traversed for another 3 km. It was here that the sun did come out and overheating began in earnest, as the open lodgepole pine forest provided relatively little shade. The openings did provide superb views of Monkman Ck. 150m below, with its many lakes, rapids, and picturesque rock formations. Glimpses of the upper Monkman Ck. valley with its surrounding rocky peaks were also obtained. This was the area we planned to reach.



Hiking on the flat ridge above Monkman Ck., to left. Photo - M. Feller

The trail abruptly left the ridge, descending to a gully where we encountered our first water in the 6 - 7 km since the Murray River. From here the hours seemed to pass increasingly slowly as the heat and the heavy packs took their toll. The trail wound its way up Monkman Ck. valley, some distance above the Creek. Two side trails to waterfalls on Monkman Ck. were passed, but the troops lacked the energy and/or enthusiasm to visit the falls. A proposed campsite area was passed. The plan had been to cross the creek below its outlet from Monkman lake, but the dense and shrubby forest did not entice us to leave the trail, so on and on we went. The campsite at Monkman lake had become our new destination.

This we reached with the sun not far above the skyline. Twenty five km with a heavy pack and a hot sun had taken its toll. The beautiful campsite with its soft ground, open forest, and superb views across the lake to the mountains beyond - our destination - welcomed us, even seduced us, although we, at least some of us, were unaware of

the seduction at the time. After a relatively bug-free evening, eating as much as we dared - to cut down on weight - we drifted off to sleep listening to the loons.

The next day dawned cloudless and we were up early exploring possible routes around the lake to reach the mountains beyond. A couple of rowboats at the campsite offered a route across the lake, but the ethics of taking someone else's boats away for a week, their questionable seaworthiness, and Steve's declaration that he had found a trail around the lake, ended our nautical plans.

After half an hour or so on Steve's trail, it became clear that it was not going around the lake. It wasn't clear where it was going except that it wasn't going where we wanted to go. So it was back to the campsite where the troops rested while a more concerted attempt was made to find a trail. Steve and I did manage to find such a trail, or pieces thereof, but that was enough, so we hurried back to get the troops.

Again we set off, at first along a well defined trail. The trail became less well defined but still well ribboned. The ribbons started to appear in wild places, particularly in patches of dense slide alder. The Rhododendron bushes got thicker and the sun got hotter. The trail disappeared but the ribbons kept us thrashing painfully onwards not quite sure if we were on a trail or route or anything. The height of the ribbons above ground (4m) and their apparent preference for slide alder suggested a winter route, but the occasional cut slide alder suggested otherwise.

Finally, in a mutinous mood, the troops headed towards the lake to find out where they were. Upon arriving there we found that we had indeed reached the end of the lake, but the last km of bush had taken over an hour. We still had another 8 km of bush to reach the mountains near Monkman Pass, and the map indicated much swampy terrain en route. The heavy packs, bush, and heat dictated a retreat back to the lake campsite where we would reassess things again. Evelyn and Michael, in runners, decided to follow the lake edge back while the others, in boots, chose the bush. The lake edge won as the side of it that we were on (eastern) was incredibly shallow, allowing us to take many shortcuts right across small bays.

Back at camp we licked our wounds and lunch and listened to talk of further mutiny - total retreat. But the beauty of the campsite, its beaches,



Camp at Monkman Lake. Photo - S. Grant



View from camp across Monkman Lake to the peaks we had intended to climb. Photo - M. Feller



Theo near the summit of Pk. 2050 looking E. Photo - M. Feller

chipmunks, blueberries, and the setting sun across the water, completed the seduction. We would stay there for the week going out on day trips. No more heavy loads!

The next day we set off by boat across the lake to its western edge at the base of a mountain we intended to climb. We found that shovels made passable oars but progress was slowed as one of the

boats slowly filled with water. After stepping ashore we came across an amazing trail beside the lake. Either it was an incredibly well used animal trail or it was of human origin. It did not go where we wanted, however, so we left it and bashed up through mixed open and dense forest, climbing rapidly.

We reached the subalpine a few hundred metres above the lake, and the alpine at around 1600m. Extensive grassy meadows with some scree and snow patches dominated the scenery. A small lake made a superb lunch spot for all of us except for Steve, who could smell a summit, and Jayne, searching for her lunch that Steve was carrying. After another 2 km of easy open ridge walking we were on the 2050m summit, probably a first ascent as suggested by the absence of a cairn.

The summit provided excellent views of essentially the entire Monkman park - the watershed of Monkman Ck. Particularly impressive were the western faces of the nearby Mt. Gauthier and adjacent peaks - 300m almost vertical rock walls. These peaks were surrounded by extensive meadows on high ridges. To the southwest was our original destination - Monkman glacier and its surrounding peaks, and to the south was Monkman Pass with its impressive bush. Below us to the east were several chains of lakes in and around Monkman Ck.

A leisurely rest and stroll around the summit was followed by a slightly less leisurely descent to the boats and a short paddle back to camp. Dinner was again eaten while the loons sang the sun to rest behind the mountains. A warm evening fire completed this idyllic scene.

The next day our plan was to head into the mountains SE of the lake. As the bush had proven inhospitable and as Steve's trail seemed to head vaguely in the right direction - i.e. toward the alpine, we decided to follow it. Within the last 60 years a forest fire had travelled from the lake up slopes to the east. The area had regenerated to shrubs (many good berries) and herbs with relatively few trees. The trail made use of this open area taking us exactly where we wanted to go - to extensive alpine meadow country which offered incredible hiking and scrambling opportunities. The scale of these meadows had to be seen to be believed - 50 km traverses almost entirely in alpine meadows.

B.C. Parks literature suggested that these meadows were grizzly habitat. However, we did not

even see fresh traces of bears. Later we were informed that a local guide had poached 6 grizzlies in the area the year before. His punishment had been to only lose his licence for 5 years. The B.C. Ministry of Environment, however, states that this did not happen. This is wildlife management in the boondocks of B.C.

We did come across an amazing little lake with a narrow sandy beach on one side and an outlet stream which flowed up valley towards a ridge. This we explored, only to find it disappeared into the rocky ground some 30m from the lake. Limestone terrain is fascinating.

Not far from the lake we encountered an animal, probably a goat, highway, which was of a comparable standard to the Black Tusk trail. The sun shone fully, seedheads of the shrub willows formed large white soft cottony blankets over the plants, and we climbed joyfully upward through meadow and talus to a 2000m peak with a cairn on it. Jack and Ellen had elected to return to the lake with the disappearing stream, while the rest of us headed on to an adjacent 2100m peak on the same rocky ridge, also sporting a cairn. The views from these peaks were outstanding - from the green - brown hills of the Peace to the north through to the main spine of the Rockies. To the southeast we could see the Ovington group of the previous years' BCMC summer camp, and closer to the west lay the mountains that we were not destined to visit this year. Everything was warm and peaceful and quiet. Thoughts of attempting Paxton Pk, 2 km to the south, were abandoned as it was too far for the day.



From below Pk 2000, looking N across Monkman Lake to Pk 2050 and surrounding peaks. Photo - T. Mosterman.

Rather than descending directly to the lake with the disappearing stream, we chose to descend the opposite side of the ridge and circumnavigate

around our first peak. This route offered more exhilarating meadows, bush, and cliffs, all of which added interest to the day.

Upon reuniting with Jack and Ellen, they told us how they sighted several people on our route. Thinking they were us, an amusing long distance conversation ensued until they realized it was, indeed, another party. This other party, from Tumbler Ridge, had just climbed Paxton Pk. and were camping that night at the lake with the disappearing stream.

Back at our camp we watched the chipmunks play, browsed on the local Grouse berries and, after the sun's rays left the sparkling waters, again sat around our cheery fire.

Next day was declared a waterfall day so we headed back down the Monkman Ck. trail to the side trails to the waterfalls. These led us down to the creek where it flowed over a series of rock bands so characteristic of the Rockies. After leaving Monkman lake, the "creek" actually becomes a series of lakes separated by rapids or waterfalls - a place of spectacular beauty. The open pine forests on rocky cliffs and ridges provided many superb view points. The hot sun encouraged Marilyn and Evelyn to shower under one of the falls and generally become aquatic nymphs. Judging by droppings and tracks on sandy beaches, the local bears enjoyed this area as much as we did.

Back at camp we met the Tumbler Ridge party who entertained us with local tales around the campfire. They left the next day, as did Jayne and Steve, while the rest of us launched the boats and paddled to the end of the lake, intent on paddling up Monkman Ck. above the lake.

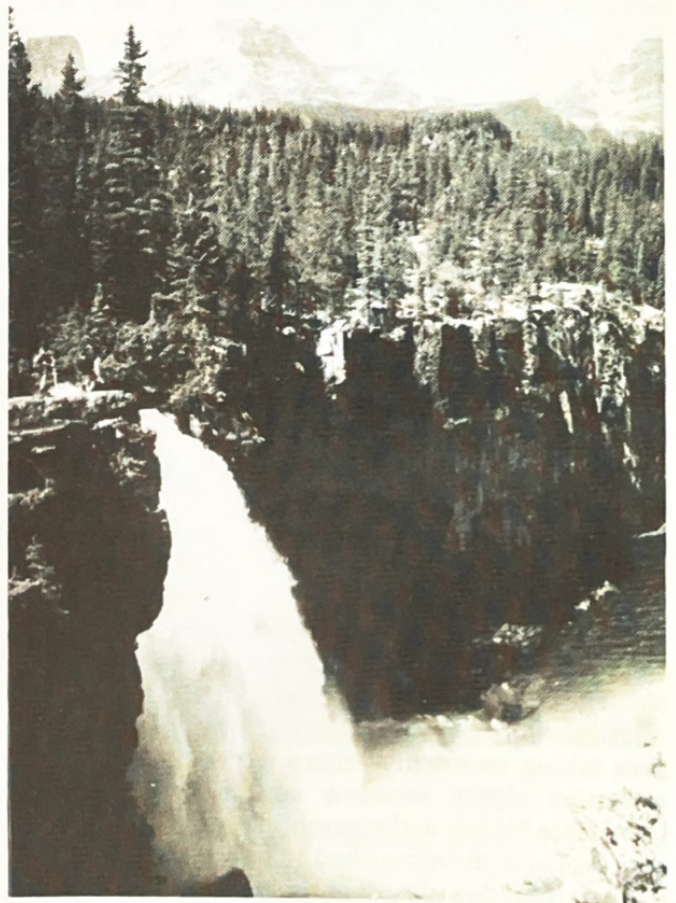


Falls on Monkman Ck. Photo - M. Feller

Here the creek meanders for over 18 km without crossing a contour, so it should not be flowing too swiftly, we reasoned. It wasn't, but it still required some effort to paddle against the current. Tiny brown frogs swam across the river while numerous birds flitted through the nearby spruce forests. Our upstream progress was thwarted by a log jam, after only a few hundred metres, so we went to a sandy beach for lunch.

After exploring a small lake beside Monkman lake we paddled back to the campsite beneath a sky looking ominous for the first time of the trip. During dinner and around the fire we watched rain and lightning along the crest of the Rockies to the southwest, but always the sky above us remained relatively clear.

But lightning storms often seem to remain stationary for a long time before heading in your direction. This one was no exception. Shortly after retiring to the tents, it swept down the valley, over



A waterfall on Monkman Ck. Photo - S. Grant

us, then off to the east, leaving in its wake the glorious smell of fresh rain on warm vegetation. It was another easy night's sleep.

The following day we, too, were off, back down the long trail to the cars. With substantially lighter packs than we had on the way in, the trip was less of an ordeal than on the first day. The only event of note was an unpleasant encounter with a mountain bike party half way to the lake. No matter where you go in B.C., expect an encounter with these wretched machines wherever there is a trail. Apart from being buzzed closely by a helicopter on one day, we had no other encounters with machines for the entire trip. Without a ban on mountain bikes such a machine-free trip will become less likely as the park becomes more popular. But it is still a long way to Vancouver.

Party: Jack Bryceland, Marilyn Cram, Steve Grant, Jayne Hardy, Chris Lunenberg, Theo Mosterman, Evelyn and Michael Feller.

MOUNTAIN SCIENCE

GLACIER WATCH '93 - N GARIBALDI PARK - by Karl Ricker

In the '92 Mountaineer the health of Wedgemount and Overlord glaciers was evaluated in quantitative terms of snout position and in qualitative generalities of volumetric change. The conclusion reached was that the former was approaching dire straits, while the latter was more than holding its own - up to 1990. A 1991 trip to Tibet cancelled any local glaciological tinkering for that year; unfortunately it was the year of the catastrophe unrecorded - Wedgemount had "backed out" of the lake and has since entered the ranks of another ho-hum glacier (compare 1988 and 1993 photos). Over the two years the retreat had been 55-60 metres, but we have still to make the exact measurements. However, the warm summers had left their mark.

In 1993 the surveys were repeated (as shown by the photos) during a summer of much cloud and drizzle. The heavens let loose after the sunny Wedgemount survey in September. So, as expected, the glaciers responded with a more positive outlook. Overlord, one year later, had squeaked forward by less than a metre, and within the error of measurement, but that was for the nearside of the bilobed snout. Up to 1992 this side was always furthest down valley, but in 1993 the dark toed portion on the farside had "shot" ahead by another



Overlord Glacier - 25 Aug., 1990. Photo - K. Ricker



Overlord Glacier - 8 Aug., 1993. The black lobe is slightly more advanced relative to the front lobe, while the far lobe is retreating. Photo - K. Ricker

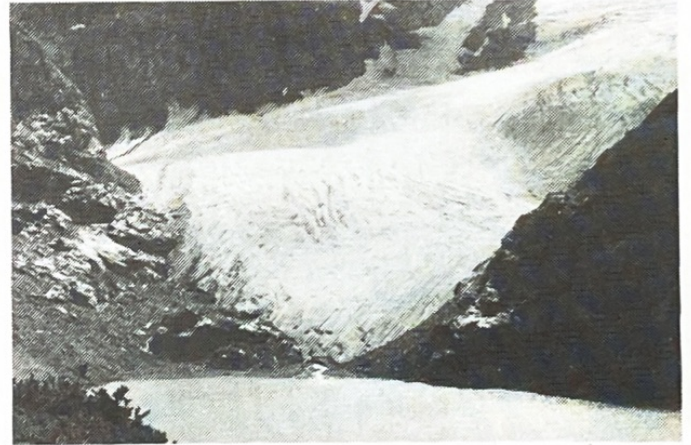
1.9 metres (see photos), thereby making up an aggregate overall advance of 2.7 metres for the main snout. The other snout which is on an elevated bench above a waterfall still lags behind (roughly 80 metres). A visit to the toe of the main snout showed a winter position in the etched out mud of another 4-5m down valley - a less than modest advance. The resurgence of the secondary lobe is a mystery, but because there has been excessive crevassing near the equilibrium line on the glacier in recent years it is yet another response to the disequilibrium in the accumulation zone. Perhaps some portions of the ablation zone are sliding at different (and jerky) rates during the overall advance cycle.

As for Wedgemount, the snout is now even sloped on a steep incline plane beginning at base



Wedgemount Glacier snout - 30 Oct., 1988. Ice cliff still calving into lake. Photo - K. Ricker

level on the gravel outwash (see photo for 1993). The retreat over the year is 9m, or a new position of 59m from the lakeshore. Its true left hand margin, however, still benefits by much shade during the day as well as a better supply of névé ice, and is only 35m from the shoreline although the volumetric loss of ice in the area is very noticeable over the intervening year. The exact losses will be measured once photos are setup in the plotting equipment. If anyone has photos for the August to October, 1991 time frame, it would help define the time of exact "emergence" of glacier from the lake. Meanwhile, make use of the easily ascended ice highway while it lasts. Wedgemount is not another stubborn Overlord.



Wedgemount Glacier snout - 18 Sep., 1993. 50m long outwash apron between snout and lake. Photo - K. Ricker



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to Ted 1994 Aug 30

