

The B. C. Mountaineer

THE BRITISH COLUMBIA MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

Vancouver, B. C.

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MYSTERY MOUNTAIN

By Don Munday

The most important achievement of the 1926 expedition to Mystery Mountain was discovery that Mystery Glacier was the source of the Franklin River, draining to Knight Inlet. The glacier, then estimated to be 80 square miles in area, was found by the 1927 expedition to exceed 100 square miles, and is 25 miles in length. The trail-less Franklin River valley is highly difficult to travel. The glacier snout is 500 feet above sea level and distant six miles. The complex flow of the glacier and intense thawing at low altitudes makes the surface

everywhere rugged and troublesome. Crampons were found essential.

The mountain stands in an area of 400 square miles devoid of even scrub timber, making it impossible to establish a base camp within striking distance of the mountain. Base camp at 4,300 feet was found unsatisfactory owing to poor wood supply. Wind-proof clothing is important, a half-gale practically always rushing down the glacier. The highest temperature recorded at base camp was 63 in the shade.

Climbers acquainted only with the friendly southern portion of the Coast Range will find it hard to imagine the austere character of the region inland from Knight and Bute inlets where glaciers 10 miles in length are commonplace, and the peaks exceed in average difficulty the finest section of the Selkirks, while much of the region equals that range in average elevation—the Mystery Mountain area exceeds in height any equal area in the Selkirks.

All probable routes to the summit of Mystery Mountain are guarded by hanging glaciers, icefalls or rock towers ranging from gendarmes to individual mountains in size. The rock is a hard schistose formation breaking into smooth slabs and overhanging faces. The danger from falling rocks was extreme; one rockfall, amounting to thousands of tons, was seen after the party had decided further advance in that direction was too dangerous. The height reached was 11,000 feet on the first attempt. Some close shaves and painful bruises from rocks were incidents of the second attempt, this time on the east ridge. Collapsing snow bridges in the icefall of Buckler Glacier absolutely barred any further attempt in this direction. This climb took 27 hours, attained 10,500 feet, and the icefall and glacier was descended by night. Masked longitudinal crevasses on the east branch of Mystery Glacier gave much trouble. The bivouac was at 7,000 feet.

The third attempt was from Fury Gap, 8,700 feet, and over three of the 11,000-foot peaks of the formidable west ridge. This is the only practicable route, is somewhat intricate, never obvious for far in

advance, and possible only under the most favorable snow conditions likely to be found at this elevation. It involves passing under impending ice cliffs of the summit ridge. Frequent losses of elevation cost valuable time. At 6.40 p.m. a height of about 13,200 feet was reached close to the bergschrund under the final 200-foot ice slope which presented no difficulties.

However, storm had threatened for hours, and snow now began to fall. Instant retreat was imperative before three serious rock faces became iced up, otherwise the party would have been stormbound indefinitely at over 11,000 feet on the exposed ridge. Fortunately the worst of the storm did not come until midnight, but 1,800 feet of rocks still remained. Rain, hail, snow, terrific wind, and spectacular electrical discharges from the rocks, our ice axes and persons, made that descent unforgettable. Our bivouac was drenched, and we had to wait over two hours till daylight to descend the 1,000-foot icefall below; after seven hours travel down the glacier we had a meal, then went on in renewed storm to base camp, reaching it at 8 p.m., 39 hours from starting the climb.

Mrs. E. M. McCallum had to return to Vancouver, so we started down next day. Mrs. Munday and I returned to base camp an hour ahead of what proved to be 150 hours of rain out of 153 consecutive hours. We made a few short trips, but even the lesser peaks of the region were now unclimbable in their burden of new snow, and we returned to Vancouver September 15. Armed now with a thorough knowledge of the difficult approaches to the mountain, we feel our 1928 attempt will be successful.

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OLD FRIENDS WITH NEW FACES

When is a mountaineer not a mountaineer? Answer—When he is a ravishingly beautiful Spanish senorita, or she is "Felix the Cat," or a six months old "baby" with a rattle and a teething ring. The real story is that on Thursday evening the 24th of November, about forty members of our Club attended a masquerade party at home of Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Morris, Barclay Street, in aid of the new cabin furnishings fund. A spirit of revelry ran riot for over four hours and everyone agreed that the evening was one of the most enjoyable in the history of the Club.

Nearly everyone was dressed in fancy costume and wore a mask or some other disguise. Each person on entering the room had a card pinned on bearing a conspicuous number. Soon after the assembly had gathered they were requested to try and identify as many as possible in the gathering using the card numbers as a key. The contest was for obvious reasons conducted in complete silence and afforded a great deal of amusement. The disguises were so complete that only a comparatively few correct guesses were made.

Choosing the best costume proved to be no light task for the judges, Mrs. White and Mr. and Mrs. Morris, as they were all so distinctive and original. Finally Mrs. Frank Johnson's screamingly funny impersonation of the movie character "Felix the Cat" carried off the first prize.

The remainder of the evening was spent in acting charades and other games, one of which being that the company was asked to interpret what local peaks a series of

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pictures was intended to represent. The party broke up about midnight, after having partaken of refreshments.

Those present included Mr. and Mrs. Morris and Mrs. White who acted as judges, Mrs. F. H. Dobson, Mrs. John Spouse, Mr. and Mrs. M. M. Dodds, Mr. and Mrs. L. G. Gohman, Mr. and Mrs. F. W. Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. W. C. Westal, Misses Evelyn Baynes, Edna Bird, Phoebe Chambers, Charlotte Clayton, Irene Corry, Nancy Coulson, Jean Genier, Cassie Matheson, Grace May, Pansy Morris, Islay Richards, Nance Sandeman, Adele Siddeley, Phyllis Tweedale, Messrs. Jim Barnes, Charlie Dawson, Bill Dobson, Leslie Ford, Kjeld Grimsgaard, Reg Harwood, John Huggard, Jim Irving, Jim Norman, Harold O'Connor, Alf Shipp, Preston Tait, and Thomas Urquhart.

CURRENT EVENTS

Walter Gilbert made a short visit to Vancouver recently, coming here for a few days on leave from Winnipeg, and made his being here an opportunity for visiting the new Cabin and meeting several of his fellow-members.

* * *

A ski club has been organized on Grouse Mountain. This makes one on Hollyburn and one on Grouse—for both there is plenty of open space, they should never clash, except in friendly competition. The Grouse Mountain Ski Club will use the Plateau cabin known as "Mundays". Our member Mr. L. Loutet, phone North. 377, is the secretary-treasurer from whom particulars may be obtained by anyone interested. We wish the Ski Club, our new neighbour, every success.

If you do not know what to buy for yourself or your friends for Christmas read the "Ads." herein. The goods combine beauty with utility.

* * *

Under the recently passed Historic Objects Preservation Act, that well-known landmark Siwash Rock, has been proclaimed by Order-in-Council an "Historic Object" for preservation, and penalties may be imposed on persons damaging it. We are unable to say whether a revival of the craze which possessed a number of our more active members a few years ago to climb the Rock would or would not be held to be damaging it, but if ice-axe and edge-nails were left at home and slippers and gloves worn the climb should be permissible.

* * *

How many of our members continue to use the term "Camera and Arts" forgetful of the fact that about six months ago that business was taken over by "Eastman Kodak Stores Ltd." and is now under the latter name.

GENERAL MEETING REPORT

The General Meeting held on December 7th, with President Johnson in the Chair and about thirty members present received the recommendations from the committee appointed to consider climbing qualifications for membership. Their recommendations, which appear after the List of Climbs herein, were adopted after some discussion.

Mr. Harwood's motion to raise the Entrance fee to \$10 was then considered and discussed, as well as an amendment to \$5 by Mr. Nunn. Mr. Harvey endeavored to have the question laid over for further con-

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sideration, but this was not allowed by way of amendment, and the vote being taken both the amendment and the motion failed to carry, the result being that the entrance fee of \$3 remains unaltered.

The Selkirks was decided on as the locality for the Club's 1928 Summer Camp—therefore, members should at once start reading up on that district. See books in Club's library.

The President reported what had been done at the meeting held on December 6th, called by Chief Hemingway, of the District of North Vancouver, to consider and devise means to prevent as far as possible "hikers" on the North Shore mountains from becoming lost, or of being reported as lost and causing needless search.

Several suggestions were made and considered suitable to submit to the Garibaldi Park Board with a view to the preservation of the scenery and the conservation of the plant and animal life therein. The suggestions are too lengthy to be printed here, but we think they should be printed for the use of our members, perhaps, if accepted by the Park Board they might have them distributed.

1928 Summer Camp in Selkirk Mountains. See reference books in Club's library at Outing's Ltd., and photos by those of our members who have been there before.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP

Adopted at the General Meeting, December 7th, 1927

Clause 1. Prospective graduating members will be required to attend two scheduled club trips before making application.

Clause 2. Prospective graduating members shall make written application to the Secretary; this application must be signed by three active members in good standing.

- Clause 3. Graduating members shall:
- (a) be known as such for a period of not less than eight months.
 - (b) attend two scheduled winter trips and two scheduled summer trips.
 - (c) climb one peak approved by the executive.
 - (d) make an ascent approved also by the executive other than that in section (c).

Clause 4. Applications for active membership must be signed by three of the four leaders of the trips named in Clause 3, Sect. (b).

It might be well to note that sections (c) and (d) of Clause 3 might be fulfilled in section (b).

WINTER SCHEDULE

Dec. 18—Lynn Peaks.

1928

Jan. 7-8—New Year's Dinner, and Social Evening. New Cabin. Cabin Committee.

Note.—The next issue of this paper will not be in your hands until after this event. Therefore, please keep this Festival in mind, and bring your mind and body to the Social Board.

Jan. 14-15—Black Mountain by Hollyburn Ridge. Snowshoes.

Jan. 28-29—Goat Mountain by Larsen's Trail.

Feb. 11-12—North Peak of Crown Mountain by Lynn Valley.

Feb. 18-19—Social Evening at the New Cabin.

Feb. 25-26—Mount Seymour and Runner Peak.

Mar. 3-4—Goat Mountain from Cabin. Moonlight trip.

Mar. 24-25—White Mountain.

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