

THE B.C. MOUNTAINEER

1976





Founded 1907

Incorporated 1912

THE B.C. MOUNTAINEER

Annual Publication of the British Columbia Mountaineering Club
P.O. Box 2674, Vancouver, B.C., Canada

VOLUME 54, 1976

ISSN 0045-2998

EXECUTIVE 1975-76

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EXECUTIVE 1976-77

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Message from the outgoing President

I must confess that I have had a difficult time writing this president's report because of some of my feelings towards the BCMC. I am, however, happy to acknowledge and be thankful for the work and support that I have received from my executive and from a small core of dedicated members who keep this club running. I commend all those who led a trip in the past year because, without them, this club would be a mere skeleton. I am especially pleased with the success of our summer camp and expedition. However, in spite of these obvious good feelings, I also have feelings of unease. I sense a de-escalation of involvement, both within and without the club by our members and potential members. Our club is certainly not growing, and I am afraid that I see a lot of familiar faces on the executive. This is good for continuity, but I would also like to see more new members involved. I sense a feeling of complacency among the membership with the way things currently exist, while I feel that our club should break new ground and reach out into the general mountaineering community in response to changing needs.

I am primarily thinking of the Federation of Mountain Clubs and its involvement on a province-wide level in matters of recreation and conservation and outdoor education. It is time that we, as users of B.C.'s wild-lands, stop moaning about the loss of wilderness and the poor planning of our province's recreational lands. Through the efforts of the FMCBC, we have developed meaningful contacts with government, industry, and allied groups interested in similar goals. I think the FMCBC is making a good name for all hikers and climbers, but this is through the efforts of a dedicated few. It seems the FMCBC also suffers from a lack of involvement from its member groups, leaving it open to various charges of being the personal sounding board for a favoured few. If you are interested in conservation or outdoor education, I invite you to work for the Federation in the name of the BCMC. The Federation especially needs a newsletter editor, a difficult, but vitally necessary job. The BCMC has had a prominent role in the formation and running of the Federation, and I hope that this involvement will not fade away. This is particularly important as I feel that we are not far away from the time where user groups will be consulted by the government on recreational land planning, and we should be involved at that time.

Another part of the BCMC complacency that worries me is the whole issue of the Cabin and Literary Fund. While I certainly don't advocate a willy-nilly spending of that money, I feel that the terms of reference for the fund are unnecessarily limited and that it is wrong to allow such a large amount of money to sit unused collecting interest. If we cannot all agree on a good use for the money, perhaps it should be turned over to a worthy charity like the United Appeal. However, I think the money should be used to further the aims of our club, either directly by funding equipment, camps, or expeditions, or indirectly by funding guidebooks, conservation issues, or even a public mountaineering course. I think the time has come for us to stop being so conservative with our funds (we are the wealthiest outdoor club in BC for its size and the money is not helping us in the bank), but to be creative and use the money for our common good. Again, I must emphasize that I favour constructive spending for the good of the BCMC. I challenge the incoming executive to consider this problem seriously because I feel that the future of our club's vitality is involved.

Again, I would like to thank my outgoing executive members for their service to the club, several of whom have served for more years than I (or they) would care to admit. I wish the incoming executive and the new president all the good will possible, and trust that they will not find their jobs too burdensome. I urge all you members who have not yet done any work for the club to consider serving in some capacity. We have several committees which always need volunteers and next year's executive will undoubtedly need help. Finally, it has been my pleasure to serve on the BCMC executive and as president. I have found the job rewarding and it has been a growing experience for me. I thank you all for your support.

Paul Starr

WHY?

Sweatsoaked, with burning feet, the pack straps cutting deep into your shoulders, you trudge up a boring logging road. Why?

Up on a steep pitch, protected only by a nut in a crack which hardly deserves the name, you scan the rock beside and above you, while your knees start to get hot. Why?

Lying in your tent, holding on to the pole and side, trying to keep the canvas from shaking to pieces, dog tired and yet wide awake, you ask yourself over and over; Why?

Take solace in the words of St. Augustine (354-430), "Confessions":

"The price which we pay for those very pleasures of life are the difficulties which we must overcome, difficulties which are neither unsought nor unwelcome, but intended and desiredthe greater joys are always ushered in by greater suffering."

* * *

"HEADWATERS"

Mostly, the rocky watersheds of Alberta - - Poetry by Sid Marty
McClelland & Stewart Limited, 1973. 110 pages.

Sid Marty was born in England in 1944 and since 1966 has worked mainly as a park warden in British Columbia and Alberta. Daily experiences have given him a profound knowledge of this wild country and its creatures. Easy to read, his poetry provides lively descriptions of the park workers' activities and it should be of particular interest to outdoor people who wish to learn more about Canada.

He has a sympathy for animals and their struggle for survival, a warmth for them as individuals too, so he brings them to life in his poems, each one with its own special personality:

"Grin coyote you trickster
lean dog, all teeth and pecker
your fake limp don't fool me..."

Dog fled from the manger
star gazing coyote
in the long grass of dawn
bouncing up to see me..."

Then, speaking gratefully to an old horse:

"...Carried me down the dark mountain's head
the river a snake, hissing at your heart
iron shoes scraping on stone
in the sparkling darkness
and you're tired of saving my skin..."

and in a thoughtful mood:

"Each mountain
in its own country
in the way a country
must be
A state of mind..."

In his poem "My Own Country," Sid Marty knows that peace has been betrayed many times. He feels constricted by an invisible "wave", a "savage parabola homing from southward" which alienates him from people. As he struggles against this "wave" he becomes aware of new values, and accepts solitude. Now, the mountains are his country.

Book review by Roger Prentice

Crevasse

We sit at the foot of the big slope, where it meets the glacier. The sun in the southwest backlights the thin black band of rock debris that rides down toward the snout.

Way over on the other side five tiny specks move in unison like ants on a supply trail. Our excitement from the long and beautiful descent, a hooting, hollering, whooping combination of glissades and short traverse runs, slowly gives way to a feeling of almost total peace and contentment. And we feel very close. Then Peter's voice stirs us into action once more. Frank and I throw the ropes into our packs - it is our turn to carry them - and the seven of us are off on the home stretch. Sticking close to our morning tracks we skirt around a big dip in the glacier, staying rather on the flat, snowcovered expanse of it, to avoid possible cracks. We walk three abreast and talk about all kind of things that are on our mind, and the day is gloriously perfect. Then a thud! Frank is gone, and before I can stop myself I'm in too. The sound of an ice axe bouncing down into the black depth is the only noise that breaks the silence, while everybody freezes in his tracks. I'm hanging by my armpits with my left foot on a little ice nose, but Frank is down three feet over his head. "You allright Frank?" "Yes, I think so." Then the other Frank moves. He flops on his stomach, sticks his ice axe across the hole and I'm able to lift my right leg up and over it. "Come on! Gimme your hand!" Somebody yanks me up and out. Off comes my pack. Frantically I grab rope and ice screw, clean the snow off the ice and wind the screw in, while Peter puts two loops down, dangling them around Frank's feet. Easing one foot into the stirrup, Frank takes his weight off the other with a sigh of relief. A few heaves and he is out and we stand there, looking at each other silently, thinking probably the same thing: what, if?! Sleep doesn't come easy that night. I still hear the clang of the ice axe going down, down, down.

After yesterday's close shave I'm listless today and feel really down. Peter and Frank urge me on to go climbing with them, but it takes a long time before I get my gear together and follow behind. Is that what an aftershock is like? Or am I just plain mad at myself for being so stupid to lollygag unroped across a snowcovered glacier? I wish I knew.

Slowly we work our way up the side of the footslope, until we reach the south buttress, which rises, rotten and full of unstable looking boulders, steeply up to the top plateau. I don't like it at all. A small tongue of rock branches off from the buttress to the left, ending in a steep snow gully leading to a partly broken off cornice, which guards the snow field that leads to the top. Howard, who has been leading on the rock, steps aside to look at a possible route. Without much thought I start kicking the first steps, one- two- ice axe, one- two- ice axe, and before I realize it I'm halfways up the gully feeling just great. When I turn around while taking a breather, Peter and Frank are grinning from ear to ear, and with restored confidence I finish the route. *Bill Hobeck*

*Amanda joined the mountaineers
high in the hills to frisk.
Now, isn't she a plucky girl
Her little * ?*

The Anderson Lake Spelaeology Society

This is the story of how two, then three and finally four brave and pure minded men and a dog overcame fearsome obstacles and put to rest the demon of the Anderson Lake Cave.

There is the usual start to a tale such as this.

Legend has it that long ago two braves from Seton climbed up to investigate the cave - and never came back. Tra la!!!

We knew of no one who had been up to or into the cave. It is just visible from the power line road above Swanson's old orchard but is most noticeable from the northern end of the lake. From there the cave appears as a dark irregular hole in a gray banded limestone bluff. The bluff itself is about three hundred feet high with the cave halfway up. A dark streak runs down the rock face from the mouth of the cave, caused by a small flow of water. At the foot of the bluff a gully commences which further down enlarges into a creek bed. In the summer months there is water only in the lower section, spring water that is cool and sweet and befits the founding members of the Anderson Lake Spelaeology Society.

To begin with, it was Bernard and Albert who had tried to reach the cave one scorching July day. They had forgotten to bring water and in the shadeless noon sunshine they had sat at the base of the bluff and gone soft in the head. At first, as they clambered up the gully, they had conjectured that they would find a dragon at the entrance to the cave, guarding the demure virgins waiting in the recesses. Bernard had thought secretly through a plan whereby Albert would be appointed to deal with the dragon while he, Bernard, would rescue the virgins. "This way, ladies", he would sing to them in his soft baritone, encircling as many as he could with his arms, "this way for the rescue". Later Albert was to confide in me that he also had prepared a plan of action whereby he would risk his all in the hazardous job of saving the virgins, giving Bernard the easier task of quelling the dragon.

They had scrambled up the steep dry streambed to find that it was beyond their ability to climb the bluff. The lake shimmered far below and a haze softened the outline of the mountains that rose up beyond the lake. The vision of the dragon and virgins faded. Somehow the cave instead took on a personality of its own, a female personality. It had become SHE. The allegory fitted in the most carnal way: The Virgin Cave, unviolated, intacto, to be penetrated only by men of the noblest character, men of derring-do, agile, unblemished, pure of mind and clear eyed!

That was how I came in. But I also had a rope and a few pins. This time the three of us worked our way up the gully. Another hot day promised and we kicked up little puffs of dust from the creek bed. There was the rich smell of sage in the air. We rested below the bluff and examined the alternative routes. There appeared to be several choices, all leading eventually to the same small notch in the face from where we assumed we could get into our cave. We couldn't see that bit, mind you, but the general direction was right. Well, I led off, got detoured, chickened out and came down. Bernard went up, fixed a pin in the wrong place and came down. Albert tried the diretissima and became stuck in a Royal Stretch on his second move. The rock was really rotten; we were throwing down the handholds and kicking out the footholds. After a short rest and singing a song or two to our Virgin, we tried each others variants. I became stuck on Albert's overhang, as did Bernard. It was Albert who made it up, but the rock was so grungy that he too retreated. We were stymied.

It was now very hot. The walls beat back the heat. The lake's surface had that matt finish which comes when a small breeze disturbs the water. 'Beaten silver' is the standard simile. Nothing stirred up at the Virgin's thighs. We looked down at the lake, we looked at each other, then back at the lake. Those moments of empathy! We scrambled down the gully and hurried along the road to the truck. A careening drive down to the lake, our ears popping, then we doffed our clothes and ran into the clear cool life giving water. Aahh!!

Unconnected perhaps to the actual business of the Society, we picked apples for the remainder of the day. Filling a dozen or so boxes, garbage cans and laundry baskets, then drove back to Bernard's to crush and press the lot in one long session which lasted well into the night. I remember the three of us, looking for all the world like a bunch of hillbillies, dancing around the press in the moonlight while apple juice gushed and overflowed from the spout. Occasionally we paused to fill an enamel jug with the delicious sweet murky juice and share its taste and express our satisfaction. We were sticky with juice, our boots sodden with the spilt nectar. The pressed pulp we put in a wheelbarrow and ferried to the salivating pigs who had been watching the goings-on with anxious eyes, concerned for their share of the fruit. The following day we were all stricken with runny tummies, well deserved for our excesses. Time passed. We went our several ways, busy with our day to day chores. The next meeting of the Society was not until late September when Ed Zenger and his sister dropped by for a visit. I summoned the founding members and told them about Ed: here was our secret weapon, our key to the Virgin's chastity belt. We agreed to assemble the following day for another assault on the Maiden. As before, we climbed up the gully to the foot of the bluff. Fall colours were now evident over all the hillsides. The stands of birch and alder which grew in the steep gullies across the lake were stained a soft gold as though someone had overturned huge vats of honey on the ridge tops. The conifers had taken on that intense deep green that is only seen in the autumn. We tied Ed onto the rope and pointed him up the cliff. This was going to be a piece of cake. Like a gecko, Ed moved up to the previous high spot. He stopped there and commenced mining operations. No, it was too rotten for him as well. Down he came and we conferred. The only remaining way into our chaste little cave was to rappel from above. So be it! A bushwhack up one side of the bluff brought us out at the top. There is not much more to tell. Ed rappelled down, disappearing beneath the overhang. A yodel or two drifted up, then shouted instructions to move the rope and a cry of "climbing". Ed reappeared to tell us - that the cave does not exist! There is a shallow recess in the rock face, deep enough that the back is always in shadow. But the floor slopes up to meet the roof sloping down. There is space only for a thin packrat to build its nest. No virgins, no dragons, no maiden cave to violate.

This is the first trip report for the Society.

Ian Turnbull

"There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society where none intrudes,
By the deep sea, and music in its roar:
I love not Man the less, but Nature more ...

...Are not the mountains, waves, and skies a part
Of me and of my soul, as I of them?
Is not the love of these deep in my heart
With a pure passion? ..."

Lord Byron: "Childe Harold."

The following report was written on my request by Jan Slakov, a 16 year old student, inexperienced but keen and enthusiastic. The trip was advertised as an exploratory trip to examine possible hut sites. Well, we never got far enough to do that. But we certainly explored the approach. In 5½ hours of bushwhacking we covered half the distance to the head of North Creek. The first 2 hours were not too bad, mostly sidehill gouging through open timber a couple of hundred feet above the creek bed, which forms a canyon in that area. Once the valley widened out a bit we came to the edge of the timber. We found a most horrendous sight: As far as the eye could reach we saw a sea of unbroken green, acres and acres of slide alder. I almost decided to call the trip off then and there. But basically I like bushwhacking, so we went on. Fortunately it was only the end of June and therefore the leaves were just forming and we could at least see through the branches. Also the devil's club was only man high and had just a few cute leaves on top, the stinging nettle reached only halfway up ones leg and the mosquitoes weren't too fierce yet either. So as an approach route I would recommend that the Club just forget it! Building and maintaining a trail would be beyond the resources of the Club. Sure, in winter all this misery is covered by snow, but we know what slide alder means: most of the time the route would be too dangerous.

Climbingwise we did better than just "some local humps", making the second ascent of the highest peak in the group of three peaks just west of Mt. Samson. From this vantage point we could see some fine ski-touring country at the head of North Creek and in summer probably some fine meadows are to be found. It would be worthwhile to investigate the east branch of North Creek which leads to alpine country much faster.

Esther Kafer

North Creek Trip

We started out at about 11.00 Saturday on a logging road which soon ended in a tangle of logs. From there we began to traverse the steep hillside of North Creek. For the first while I was expecting that we would soon encounter a trail. However, this notion was soon gone as we spent the next 5 hours clinging to the hillside or dodging branches. Eventually we crossed North Creek and Mr. Kafer decided we had worked hard enough to justify the "C" trip label, so Mrs. Kafer found us a lovely camp spot.

On Sunday morning we started for the peak at about 5.30, following a creek, much of the way on ice-crusting snow. It was very rewarding going, with the rising sun highlighting ever expanding views. I got some on the spot instructions in doing an ice-axe arrest when I slid down some of the crusted snow. Even this rather traumatic experience failed to keep me from getting into another predicament. I found myself separated from the main group by a steep, icy snow slope that was treacherous to cross. I ended up following Wayne up a route that I was glad my mother couldn't see. I think we were both relieved to join the rest of the group in a snack at the top of the ridge. The continued ascent provided views such as I had never seen except in slides. Peaks surrounded us. The tap of ice-axes and the crunch of our footsteps sounded puny in this immense sea of mountains, silent except for the odd bird and the rumbling of avalanches.

We reached the peak for lunch. Pat offered anyone who dared to stand on the very tip of the peak \$200, an offer which Mr. Kafer quickly accepted (very quickly). Pat later tried to figure out just how much of a drop it was. He counted 8 seconds for a rock to hit the bottom. Martin was able to translate this into feet with an infallible formula involving "a" and "t" and a few other things. Before leaving our idyllic lunch spot a new cairn had to be built as I had unwittingly cleared

the first in an effort to make more room to sit. Mr. Kafer wrote a note inside John Clarke's film container and proposed that the peak be named "Delilah" (as a companion to Samson). John Clarke was the first to climb the peak, from which we slid down all the way to the bottom.

Then we took about an hour to pack and have tea before charging into the bush where we spent the next six hours, getting steadily more tired and hungry. We looked forward to each rest, but even these were grueling as the mosquitoes decided to keep us busy whenever we stopped. I knew we had to get out, but I began to wonder how I would make it. However, I was encouraged by Mrs. Kafer, who still had enough compassion to periodically ask how I was doing, despite her sore knee and the fatigue we were all experiencing. When the first half of the group finally reached the road there wasn't much fanfare. We were just too tired. However Paul still had enough energy to offer to help the rest of us with our packs on the last steep stretch.

At about 10.30 p.m. we started for home. It was a lucky thing that Pat, who was to start a new job the next morning, wasn't in Wayne's car because we ran out of gas in Squamish and didn't leave until 7.30 Monday morning.

When we were walking out I wasn't sure if I could endure another "C" trip, but looking back I realize it was a great trip and I wouldn't have missed it for anything.

I would like to take this space to thank all of the B.C.M.C. members who have been on trips with me; I have met some of the finest people I know. Love *Jan Slakov*

On the trip were: Carolyn Ashley, Pat Farley, Paul Morton, Steve Meester, Martin Mosley, Wayne Saunders, Howard Scotney, Martin and Esther Kafer.

Once Lucky

It is a beautiful morning in February, cool and sunny. Two feet of new snow fell during the week and it is a delight to snowshoe up to Brockton Point. Being on my way to Elsay I turn east before I reach the Face and head for Gopher Pass. It is quiet here in the hollow and the trackless glitter in the morning sun gives me a feeling of floating. From the Pass I start to traverse down but have to take off the snowshoes because of the steepening slope. The trees around me set my mind at ease and without a second thought I begin to kick steps through the powder into the hard crust underneath, until I get to a small open area. Suddenly a swishing sound ---- and a strong force sweeps me down head first. I immediately curl up into a ball (a procedure used widely in France). Rolling down with the snow I notice trees passing by and think of grabbing one to stop myself. Then a feeling of lightness and shortly after a heavy crash, when I shoot over a small cliff, still curled up. With a sudden jerk that wrenches my shoulder I come to a stop, hanging there by the wristloop of my ice axe which got stuck in the hard crusted slope. Ouff.....! After recovering a bit I survey the situation. My breathing is short and very painful, my left knee hurts but doesn't seem to be broken. The pack with snowshoes is still on my back and slowly I put some warm clothing on. Carefully and with difficulty I move across the slope to gain easier ground. Once there I try to put my snowshoes on but can hardly make it. Realizing that this is a seldom travelled area I concentrate on the task to get back up to the pass. When two cross-country Skiers pick up my feeble whistling -(I can hardly breathe)- and come to help me, I am relieved. The Ski patrol with the aid of some mountaineers sledge me down to a waiting ambulance and I am really grateful to them. I got away with torn ligaments and a collapsed lung, but most of all with a severe warning by the mountain.

Gabriel Mazoret

Kiwa Glacier - Premier Range

August 5 - 7, 1976

The main problem in getting from here to there was a large lump in between. We were camped on the north side of the Canoe Glacier and had decided to climb Richard Bennett. Unfortunately the only feasible approach (and return) was over the summit of Sir Wilfred Laurier, at 11,550' the second highest peak in the Interior Ranges, and a good reason for travelling light.

We made an early start in typically unsettled weather, taking our down jackets, a two-man tent, and very little else. The slog up the south side of Laurier was routine and the summit was reached in a whiteout. Unable to locate our intended descent route to the Kiwa Glacier, we sat on our day-packs and dozed off and on for several hours. Eventually a small hole appeared in the clouds and we thrashed down the west ridge in some of the worst snow seen in years. That night we "camped" on the Kiwa Glacier at the base of Abbot, dividing one freeze-dried meal three ways and sleeping fitfully on the snow. After a rather cold night we were eager to get started the next morning - so eager that we skipped breakfast. This was particularly easy to do as we hadn't brought any!

We had decided to climb Abbot before traversing over to Bennett. The ascent of the northeast face was straightforward, although poor snow conditions on the summit ridge made for slow progress. This was probably the third ascent of this very attractive peak. Descent to the Abbot-Bennett col was by the previously unclimbed north ridge.

Bennett, our main objective, turned out to be easier than it had looked from some angles, although as usual, the summit was at the far end of the final ridge, requiring a long traverse there and back. We built a small cairn and headed as rapidly as possible for the Kiwa Glacier.

By now it was obvious that our two day trip was going to require three days, as we still had to climb Laurier again to get back to camp. Having had enough of sleeping on the snow we headed for the nearest rocks, several miles to the east at the col between Bivouac Peak and Laurier. Here, at 9700' on the crest of the ridge we enjoyed a spectacular setting, a package of soup and the rocks which were a luxury compared to the snow of the night before.

The third day started with an ascent of Bivouac Peak by the south ridge. The rock windbreak built by the first ascent party was still standing but some rapid repairs had to be made after I nudged one corner with my knee. The summit register included the names of Don and Phyllis Munday from their 1925 ascent.

A short traverse, back to our campsite, and we turned our attention to the north ridge of Laurier. We were a little apprehensive as this ridge had not been climbed before, and it was now our only reasonable way of returning to base camp. Fortunately it turned out to be easy trucking and we were back in camp by the early afternoon. It had been a good trip. (Note: the 1976 Interior-North guidebook contains several errors about this area. Bennett had not been climbed before. Many heights are also misstated.)

Party: Art Maki, Bob Kruszyna, Hamish Mutch (reporter).



MT. MONMOUTH

Summer Camp '75

Remember the Tchaikazan? I do.

The meeting at Williams Lake and the last milkshake. The dusty road to White Water Bridge and the uneasy decision to gamble and take the cars over the last 14 miles to Murdoch's Ranch. Then the chopper flight next morning, with a pilot a la Redford, packed like sardines, and a door that didn't close. Peak after peak appearing ahead, snow patched at first, then glacier on glacier stretching out from the river flat like fingers of a giant hand keeping a tight grip on the mountains. I couldn't be blasé about it and felt quite small.

The weather closed in and there were some anxious moments when the copter didn't show up with all the food in a sling load. Some stomachs started to voice their opinion. But it turned out alright and by evening all tents were pitched and with full bellies and the rain easing off life looked good again. Slowly we got to know each other and in spite of different levels of drive and ability grew into a cohesive group. The weather throughout was ambidextrous; on one hand the sun was shining in the morning and it clouded over in the afternoon with rain or drizzle following close behind, while on the other hand rain or drizzle came first followed by clearing in the late afternoon with frost during the night. Some snow flurries helped to round out the picture. And yes! there was the climbing too. New routes were put up Monmouth by young and ambitious types but one of the people who impressed me most was a small tiger, fuelled only by vegetables, who in other

circumstances would be on the downhill side of life. He was constantly on the go and even the younger set had to hustle to keep up with him. The cooks and their male chaperone stuffed our bellies with wholesome food and the kidding around the fire kept everybody relaxed. The son of Europe's oldest democracy was challenged and answered with his knife - carving a cuckoo clock out of wood. Some tested the depth of a crevasse with more or less success and an expecting father rattled his way home through the bush by various methods of transportation, to be with his wife in her hour of need.

One of the focal points of returning parties was the meat cache, a good mile from camp, where our protein was stored in the belly of the glacier and provided us with an added incentive for exercise if we wanted to eat. In the evening we huddled around the fire under the big tarp, solving the problems of the world or singing in as many tongues as our varied backgrounds would allow. After a week we all felt fit - no, not to be tied but as in: fit as a fiddle - and we were ready to go almost anywhere. The weather was taken with a shrug as it swept over the pass and down the valley. But the closer we came to the end of camp the more it occupied our thoughts because of the 14 miles of gumbo we dreaded. Then the first group departed, to walk out to the cars and we who were left behind started to take down camp. It was a let down and the weather matched our mood. But when the last day dawned there was Monmouth and Friendly and Rock Island in all their glory with gleaming glaciers running between them and the Tchaikazan River reflecting a brilliant sun as the no-nonsense pilot lifted us over the rim. And however great our anticipation of home and family was, a small piece of each of us stayed back there at the little wooded knoll that was Summer Camp '75. Remember? I do!

Bill Hobeck

* * *

"I WISH I'D SAID THAT." or, Everybody's Un-Familiar Quotations.

One of the most tiring things about Mountaineering (other than the actual climbing) is the person who is always quoting. Here, let me sketch a familiar scene ...

The party has halted, as often as not because there isn't anywhere else to go, i.e. the summit. The normal people are sitting or lying around engaged in various pursuits - such as trying to breathe and attempting to recall the symptoms of cardiac arrest. One person remains standing; he speaks: "Just look at that view! It reminds me of what old Hermann Buhl said when he was ascending the ... (Fade-out.)"

The point is that the uttermost benighted heathen in the deepest darkest of jungles knows what Hermann Buhl said about This, and what Alf Mummery said about That, and what the great Dan Weatherby said about something else ... that's what famous quotations are - they're famous! It's high time we had something new to consider in the form of UN-familiar quotations, less well-known but interesting thoughts by climbers and non-climbers alike, on the subject of mountaineering.

(For the benefit of the uneducated, *Mary Shelley* was a poet and the author of "Frankenstein." Her husband was also a poet.)

Oasis Peak Expedition 1976

I first saw the two peaks at the head of the Oasis Glacier in the Stikine when Dick, Fred and I climbed the Devil's Thumb in 1970 (CAJ, 1971). We looked north and there they were, very impressive and where we least expected them. Because we had very poor maps, we couldn't even pinpoint their location.

When we returned in '72 to climb the Cat's Ears (CAJ, 1973), we paid careful attention to these peaks and even considered climbing Peak 7925 which we named 'Oasis Peak', but it was quite far and therefore not too hard to abandon the idea. Later I learned from Bob Tustin of the Island Mountain Ramblers that a party of Americans had camped out underneath the peak for almost three weeks, and I felt sure all was lost. But when the AAJ 1975 came out, they admitted failure on both of the major peaks. Maybe the peaks were even harder than I thought?

So I decreed that 1976 would be the Year of the "OASIS" and I blithely volunteered to lead a BCMC Expedition to storm up both peaks.

Because this was to be the fourth trip that the BCMC climbers were to make to this part of the Alaska Panhandle, preparations went smoothly with everyone performing his assigned task, especially Woodward's, which packs the best airdrop.

When we boarded the Alaska Ferry in Seattle on the usual Friday evening, I got the feeling that climbers had worn their welcome a little thin. It seems that 35 boxes of food and equipment are considered Freight, not hand luggage and the longshoremen were objecting. Still, we got away with it once more, but it could be the last time.

The trip up the inside passage was very pleasant, as usual, but has become ridiculously popular. Finding a place to stretch out at night in the solarium was a real challenge, especially when it rained on the second night out, driving in all the sleepers from the open deck and revealing to all how leaky the roof was. The added crowds had another effect. The mountaineers were no longer the premier side show, what with Yoga freaks in trances and overt displays of affection, that made even Dave Hughes blush, people hardly gave us more than a passing glance. But we showed them! In a masterstroke conceived by Fred Douglas and brought to fruition by the whole group we convinced the entire boat of our insanity when we debarked at Ketchikan in shorts and T-shirts (time: 7 a.m.; temperature: 7-8 Centigrade) and proceeded to run for 7 to 8 miles. This might have gone relatively unnoticed except for the fact that the boat had organized a sight-seeing tour of the town for a mere \$4 - and had managed to fill 3 school buses which passed us at least four times during the hour. Our spies, Nancy Ricker and Adrienne Hughes, who took the tour, assured us that we were noticed, especially the 'good looking blond fellow in the lead'. After that display our space on the solarium deck was unchallenged and we were repairing skins, mounting bindings, laying out climbing hardware and generally making a nuisance of ourselves. All our rivals seemed to disappear under our onslaught.

We had settled down by the time we reached Petersburg. The Wrangell Narrows are particularly impressive and the mountains began to clear, the Devil's Thumb showing itself just before we docked. Even though it was very late Sunday afternoon, Alaska Island Air was in full swing and we soon established ourselves in an empty hangar. We found out that there were two other parties in the area, one under the northface of the Devil's thumb, and the other was Bob Tustin's near Mt. Noel. We also were told that the weather, which had just broken, had been very poor up to that time. Fortunately our good weather held long enough to make a perfect airdrop and to fly in everybody to tidewater at the snout of the Baird Glacier.



"PALM PEAK" from the summit of Oasis Peak. Ridge climbed is on centre between sun and shadow. West face is on sun side.



"OASIS PEAK" from Coconut Peak, showing upper route of ascent (west face). Ascent gully begins at lower right hand corner and ends at prominent snow saddle in upper centre. Rock band was breached on left side to upper snowfield, which was followed to high col. Summit ridge was gained just below skyline ridge.



"OASIS PEAK" from South. South ridge extends from centre left to summit. Ridge was gained in sunlit gully to small notch in ridge on left. Palm Peak is on extreme right.



Looking down ascent gully on Oasis Peak

So the first day of the expedition (Monday, July 19) went ahead in a straightforward fashion. We started hiking about 2:00 p.m. and did a full days march before making camp at 9.30 p.m. The only problem other than heavy packs and carrying skis was a crevasse maze on the North Baird Glacier which cost us at least an hour of sleep. We found out later that the whole ice fall could be bypassed on snow on the west side. Camp was set up at the firn line, elevation app. 2000' and about 8 - 9 miles from where the plane dropped us off.

The second day was one long grind on skis in deteriorating weather. A cold steady headwind blew onto us continuously and it took us about eleven hours to cover the remaining 11 miles to our airdrop. The boxes were in good shape and not too far spread out and the clouds, which were right down to the glacier, lifted before we got there. Then the weather settled in, seemingly for good.

The next seven days are a tale of woe. It was bad for all those days except on the fifth day of the expedition (Friday) when it cleared around 9:00 and we all hustled to get climbing. Four of us, Paul, Neil, Ray and Phil, went up to the col immediately to the west of Oasis for a recce. The ice fall was not difficult but the view of Oasis was obscured by clouds. We became quite enamoured with the south ridge which had a good looking steep section and generally seemed like a reasonable and aesthetic route as far as we could see. I had already picked this route from the air during the airdrop. We then proceeded to climb the two 6600' bumps on the ridge to the west of the col. These two peaks had been nicknamed "Coconut" and "Newton" in keeping with the tropical theme of the area. They were both 3rd-4th class and pleasant scrambles. Our descent from the notch between the two peaks scared us a great deal due to the quantity and size of the surface avalanches we started. We never got used to them. The others went across the valley to Peak 7446 which turned out to be 3rd class and whose main features were an abundance of lichen, green plants and an occasional swimming hole. We all returned to camp for another four days of bridge, chess and bickering over "Shogun", our camp book.

The only event of interest during this period (other than the depth of the pee hole) was the rumbling through of Bob Tustin's homebound party. They seemed cheerful enough in spite of the weather. They had climbed a few smaller peaks but had missed out on their main objective, 10,000 foot Mt. Noel. Bob claimed their weather had been better than ours but we were very sceptical as they had only been 15 miles away and not all of it inland. Nevertheless they were pleased with their expedition and eager for the amenities of Petersburg.

I almost forgot to mention the many ascents in the fog of Peak 6570 across the valley (named "Turkey Peak" by some of the party). I believe Fred, Peter, Ray, Wayne and Dave all managed to get up this stunning peak which did provide a nice ski run down.

On Wednesday (Day 10) the weather changed to the better but unfortunately, everybody got a late start. Fred and Peter set out for Peak 7500, the major satellite peak north of Oasis. It had been named "Palm" or "North Peak Oasis", depending on the individual. Wayne, John and Dave set off for Peak 7676, a peak with a big diagonal snow gully across its face and an impressive distance away. Ray, Neil, Phil and I went to have a look at the south ridge of Oasis. We still weren't sure of its feasibility because there was a part of the route we hadn't seen properly on our previous day out. So we went over the 6000' col between Oasis and Peak 6600, then dropped to the glacier on the other side (about 4700'), from where we climbed an ice fall under the south ridge to about 6500'.

By this time two things had become apparent to us. The first was an impressive, direct snow gully without any major discontinuity, which was fully visible and seemed to breach most of the defences of the west side of the main peak. The second thing was that our favoured south ridge was blocked by a vertical wall between the top of the glacier and the crest of the ridge. It became clear to us that our peak was exceptionally complicated, with sharp disconnected ridges and gullies and few continuous faces to go up on. A 5.4 lead from the top of the ice fall led into a 3rd class gully mixed with a bit of 5 and onto the main ridge. However, Phil, who was leading at this point, thought that the south ridge looked very steep and crackless. He also didn't realize that he had actually made it to the ridge (this only became apparent on our return). As it was getting late, even for Alaska, we decided to retreat and come back the next day to climb the direct snow gully. We didn't reach camp until 10 p.m. There we found out that Dave, Wayne and John had been successful on Peak 7676, but found it disappointingly easy. The most memorable part had been the distance involved in getting to the base of it. Fred and Peter had not returned from "Palm" and were clearly in for a bivouac.

Because of our late dinner no one was prepared for a 3 a.m. start to Oasis Peak. So on day 11 (Thursday) we all went after Peak 7118, an exciting rock peak we had nicknamed "Fig". It had been climbed by the Americans in 1974, as had Peaks 7446 and 6570. The weather by this time had become almost stable and very warm and lunch breaks were in danger of becoming siestas. We left Ray scandalously sunbathing on a rock while the rest of us scrambled up a satellite peak of "Fig". A badly corniced col separated us from the final rock tower which was about 150' high. Two short leads of the most difficult rock climbing of the expedition (about 5.6) were necessary to finish the route. Quite satisfied we skied back to camp to be ready for an early start on Oasis the next morning.

Fred and Peter also had returned from "Palm". They had climbed to the main col between the two peaks and then bypassed the first gendarme on the ridge on the east side. After regaining the ridge they had to traverse way out onto the west face (about 5 rope lengths) until they passed the major notch, formed by a minor summit, then climbed up a crack system to the ridge, gaining it about half a rope length above the notch. The crack system had started out as easy aid (about 20', overhanging), but Fred thought this could be avoided with some good route finding. It then became an easy 5th class chimney and they ended up bivouacing about 30' below the ridge crest. The next day they climbed up short steps in the ridge and walked the horizontal parts. 150' below the summit they were again forced out onto the west face, where they finished the climb. Then they retreated by reversing the ascent until they reached the long traverse, from where they just continued down to the snow, which was steep and fluted, and rappelled the final schrund from a snow bollard. We were all pleased to see them down safely and that one of our major objectives had been climbed.

At about 4:00 the next morning Neil and I set off for Oasis Peak while Wayne, Ray and Phil went to Peak 8526 (Boundary Peak 73). Dave and Peter did Peak 6363 above base camp later in the day. We started up the cold and forbidding gully about 1½ hours after leaving camp. A few high flying rocks passed over our heads as we negotiated the first obstacle - a little vertical chute bypassing a schrund. The snow turned out to be moderately soft and good for step kicking, but we wore our crampons most of the way up the gully. It was steep enough to be worrisome but not desperate. We belayed from rock pitons in the gully wall, usually travelling simultaneously with running belays. Progress was slow (about 5-6 hours for 2200 feet), but there were no major difficulties other than the danger of rock fall.

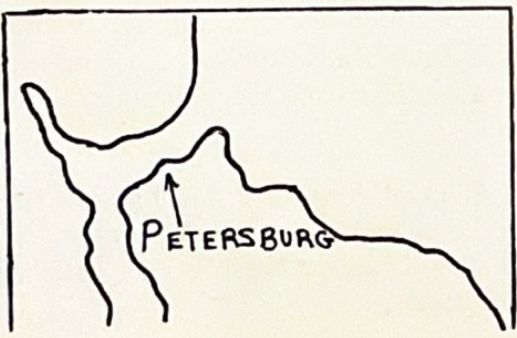
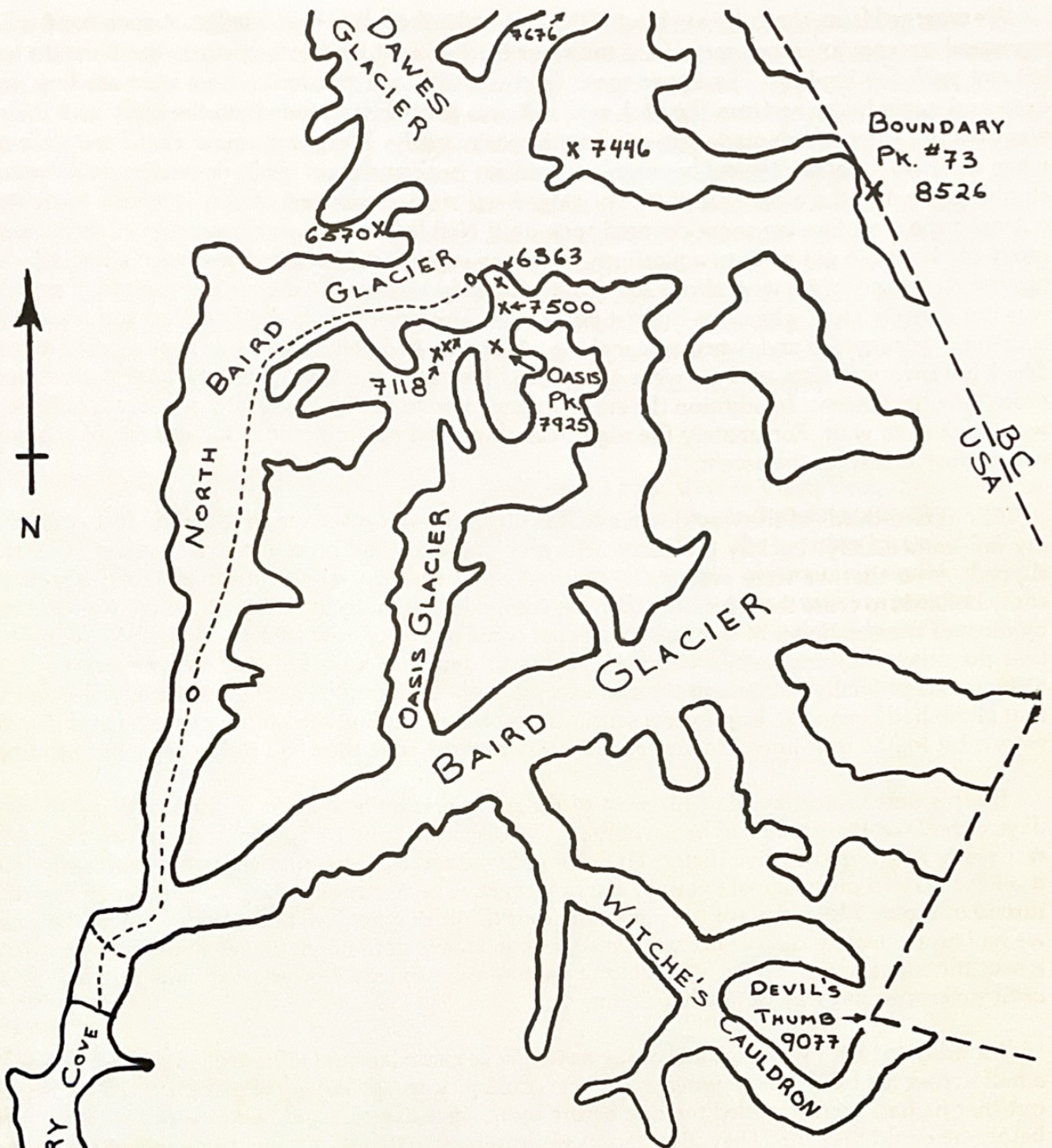
We emerged from the gully at about 7000' and had a short lunch on a ledge. A rock band which separated us from an upper snow field took one lead of 5.5 to 5.6 to negotiate, but I should have left my pack for hauling. The upper snow field was soft and mushy and we were wading thigh deep and again belaying from the rock walls. It was probably steeper than the gully and the sun was on it full force which made it to avalanche continuously. The going was difficult and slow and when we finally reached the col between a subsidiary peak and main peak, we had to do some rock climbing to get to the other side of it. The ridge itself seemed too steep and we decided to traverse out onto the west face on snow covered rock until Neil led up to a wet corner from where a nice move of about 5.6 got us onto a platform. Then the summit ridge was gained with a few 4th class moves. At this point we were about 200' from what might have been the highest mound of snow. It was not entirely clear where the highest point was. The ridge was badly corniced and the side to traverse was sunward and hence avalanching. As it was also getting late, we beat a hasty retreat. The trip down was slow and we were obliged to bivouac at our lunch spot because there was no more time for descent. In addition the entire upper snow field disgorged into our ascent gully so it was prudent to wait. Fortunately the night was short and not too cold. Our descent of the gully was almost as slow as the ascent.

About two-thirds of the way down a balled up crampon caused me to slip and I lost control of my fall immediately. Luckily the piton held even though I had been about 100' above it when I slipped. After that we were even more cautious and hence slower. It took two short rappels off snow bollards to cross the schrunds, then we climbed back up to the 6000' col where we were met by most of the remainder of our party who had come up to see how we were doing. We found out that the other climbing parties had been successful but that Ray, Phil and Wayne classed Peak 8526 as exceptionally rotten and the trip exceptionally long and dull. The most exciting event of that climb had been a 20' leap over a schrund which Ray had initiated but which Phil and Wayne were a bit loathe to follow. However, since Ray had the rope they had little choice but to jump.

By this time (Saturday, day 13) most of the party was quite anxious to leave. During the last days of bad weather there had been rumblings of discontent and by Saturday about half the party was ready to go. In fact, five (Peter, Fred, John, Dave and Ray) left that very afternoon and made it all the way to our original camp of the first night. The rest took it easy at base camp. Sunday turned out to be a long day for the remaining four (Phil, Wayne, Neil and myself), mainly because we had more cleanup than anticipated and we didn't leave until noon. Eleven hours later found us lost at the snout of the glacier. We couldn't see properly, so we followed false leads and dead ends until we groped our way out by headlamp.

Monday (day 15) was a leisurely day as we broke camp late and then strolled the last mile and a half across the tidal flats to where the plane could pick us up. When the plane arrived we found out that he had been stranded the day before by the receding tide and had to wait for two hours before he could take off. They also had to wade at least 100' out into the chuck just to get to the plane. That would teach them to hurry! We were met by John and Dave on our return to Petersburg. They had failed to get on the Sunday evening flight to Seattle and had to spend the extra day in Petersburg. They certainly didn't look as if they had suffered and surely had found lots of ways to spend money.

To round out the day, who should phone me at Alaska Island Air just as I got off the plane? If you guessed: Fred Beckey, you were right. Not only did he know we were climbing in the area, but he knew where the key snow gully on Oasis Peak was. I suspect there is very little of value to climbers that Fred doesn't know about the Coast Mountains.



0 SCALE IN MILES 5

B.C.M.C. OASIS PEAK EXPEDITION

Our flight home was uneventful except that we startled the stewardess by eating three meals each of whatever passed for dinner on that plane. It wasn't very satisfying. *Paul Starr*

Summary:

Personnel: Dave Hughes, Fred Douglas, Peter Stange, John Bates, Phil Kubik, Ray Hilborn, Neil Humphrey, Wayne Saunders, Paul Starr (Leader).

First Ascents: (Sumdum B-2, Alaska. 1:63, 360)
Pk. 8526 (Boundary Pk. 73) Hilborn, Kubik.
Pk. 7925 (Oasis Pk.) Humphrey, Starr.
Pk. 7676 Hughes, Bates, Saunders.
Pk. 7500 (Palm, Oasis N.) Douglas, Stange.
Pk. 6600 (next to 7118) Humphrey, Hilborn, Kubik, Starr.
Pk. 6600 (between 7118 & 6600/1) same as above.
Pk. 6363 (direct above camp) Hughes, Stange.

Second Ascents:

Pk. 7446 Bates, Stange, Douglas, Hughes, Saunders.
Pk. 7118 Hughes, Humphrey, Kubik, Stange.
Pk. 6570 Douglas, Hilborn, Hughes, Saunders, Stange.

General Summer Camp 1976

This year's Camp was held during the period July 25 to August 7. It was located on Farnham Creek opposite the Commander Glacier in the Purcell Range about 40 miles west of Radium.

The campsite is in an ideal location for a large party, being situated on gravel bars of the creek in the only large flat, open area in the entire valley. We had the benefit of a bridge, built by the A.C.C. for their previous camps, and a large supply of poles, which enabled us to set up our large tents and flies in good time. There is road access right into camp suitable for high ground clearance vehicles. The party consisted of 35 people in the first week and 32 in the second, including 2 cooks and a helper.

The weather was quite variable between sunshine, showers, low cloud, fog and a distant thunderstorm. Climbing was suspended for three days including the Thursday in each week by low cloud and drizzle. Ironically the high camps coincided with these days and were washed out as a consequence. The Gluehwein parties which happened on both Thursday evenings were roaring successes however. The absence of any quantity of insects was much appreciated by all.

The area is populated by wood ticks and travellers are advised to take precautions. No cold temperatures were experienced. In all there were 9 trip days during which successful climbs were made to the following peaks: Mount Maye, Black Diamond, Cleaver, Jumbo, Commander, McCoubrey, Mount Michael and Mount Peter. In addition attempts were made on: Delphine, Farnham and Hammond but were unsuccessful due to either choice of route, inclement weather or other conditions. No new routes or ascents were established. In addition there were hiking trips to Peter Pass area, Phoenix Mine and the Lake of the Hanging Glacier as well as numerous shorter side trips. The proximity of the hot springs at Radium was also too much for some people to withstand on two rainy days.



MT. COMMANDER

Generally the rock on the Hammond/Farnham side of the valley was found to be rotten, thus confirming previous reports. An enjoyable exception proved to be the west ridge of Peter, which is the normal route. The condition of the Commander Glacier, which provides access to the Cleaver, Commander, Jumbo and all subsidiary peaks was never good and very rapidly deteriorated during the duration of the camp. The rain and lack of cold nights caused the remaining snow bridges to become hazardous and picking a route through the crevasses was virtually impossible in the second week. It would appear to be advantageous to schedule climbs on this glacier earlier in the season.

In addition to the expected climbing and hiking activity various other pastimes were indulged in to burn off excess energy during lost days: The marked trail up to Mt. Peter was completely cleared of windfalls; a new bridge over Farnham Creek improved access to Commander Glacier; a kayak was built and successfully used by some daring people; the construction of a sauna pleased some but not all; bird watching and flower photography added depth to the activities at camp.

The tradition of outstanding camp cuisine was fully maintained by our two cooks. The menu even included barbecued steak and wine. By some miracle of logistics most of the food had been used by the end of the camp and a few left over items were auctioned off after we had packed up.

The Camp Committee extends a very grateful thanks to all those who came to Camp, especially to those who assisted in setting up and dismantling the facilities, to the climbing and trip leaders, to the people who picked up supplies, and generally to everybody who unselfishly contributed to the success of the camp and enjoyment of all. We are all richer by the experience and have gained new friends.

Michael Strudwick (Vice-Chairman of Camp-Committee)

UP and DOWN and OUT

Chamonix '53. The summer was nearly over. Four young men came swinging down the path into Chamonix, bronzed and fit, after a successful two week high-level tour of the Dauphiné and Mt. Blanc massif, culminating in the traverse of Mt. Blanc itself from the south via the famous Bionnassay Arête.

Whilst checking at the Railway Station however, they discovered — horrors of horrors — that “French Railways” were on strike — again! Two of the four lads decided to make a break for the Channel Ports by hitch-hiking, as they had to be back in Ireland on the Monday morning at their jobs. Comrade Butler and myself, on the other hand, saw it as a heaven-sent excuse for another climb. Our problem was, we were broke! Our climbing holiday had been financed by bringing 4 lengths of 200ft. Viking Nylon Line with us from the U.K. and selling it to Snell Sports of Chamonix. Nylon, in those days after the war, was difficult to get and very expensive but the Guides loved its lightness for carrying and abseiling, so we got a good price. However we still needed our 100 ft length, which we climbed on doubled, so we couldn't sell that, but it left our food supply in poor shape and we had to be satisfied with a packet of Seminola mixed with milk powder.

Next morning we set off up the valley to the village of Le Tour and from there onto the agonizing glacier moraines to head for the Albert Premier Hut. When we reached it, it was filled with a guided party of fashionably dressed French students, clad and equipped with the latest gear. We felt positively dowdy in our war surplus anoraks (camouflaged) with mismatching wind proofs over our baggy corduroy pants, topped off (or should I say: bottomed out?) by almost smooth Vibrams. Soon after we arrived the guides returned from preparing the route for the morrows onslaught. The objective they had picked was the same as ours: the Forbes Arête of the Aiguille de Chardonnet, an airy ridge climb, mixing rock gendarmes with narrow snow or ice arêtes which guard the approach with some delightful difficulties.

The aroma of the guided party's evening meal of meat and other goodies drove us silently mad as we scoffed our mush of Seminola and Seminola with Seminola for dessert. At about 3:30 next morning Frank and I got up and made the round of the wire food baskets sitting on a high shelf. Shielded by darkness we silently cut one slice of sausage, one slice of bread and one snippet of cheese from each basket, wrapped the lot in our spare socks and went back to bed. At first light the French group arose, breakfasted and left and half an hour later we followed, munching our purloined repast.

The route on the Chardonnet climbs the glacier on its true right hand edge, avoiding a badly crevassed area, then swings over, climbing through a shattered block zone between two 'rognons' to a small level bay from which springs the famous ice 'Bosse' - a 150 foot pitch of really steep curving ice ridge, merging into steep snow slopes heading towards the ridge and the long arête to the peak. The Vallot Guide mentions a 55 degree incline on the steep section!

Frank and I moved fast and caught up with the French party seated in the bay. Actually squatting would be the proper expression, all 17 of them, roped together, all facing inward and chatting excitedly. What do you do in a situation like this, especially when they are in the only level area and there are crevasses all around? Say 'good morning' or 'Bon appetite', or just effect an air of nonchalance and ignore the bunch? That's what we did and moved carefully through the group onto the first steep slope. Fortunately the previous season in Austria we had been able to invest in some new 12 point crampons, financed by the sale of 6 lbs. of coffee just outside the Innsbruck Bahnhof, which paid for 3 weeks in the Stubai and Oetztal and the crampons plus a pair of Vibram-soled boots.



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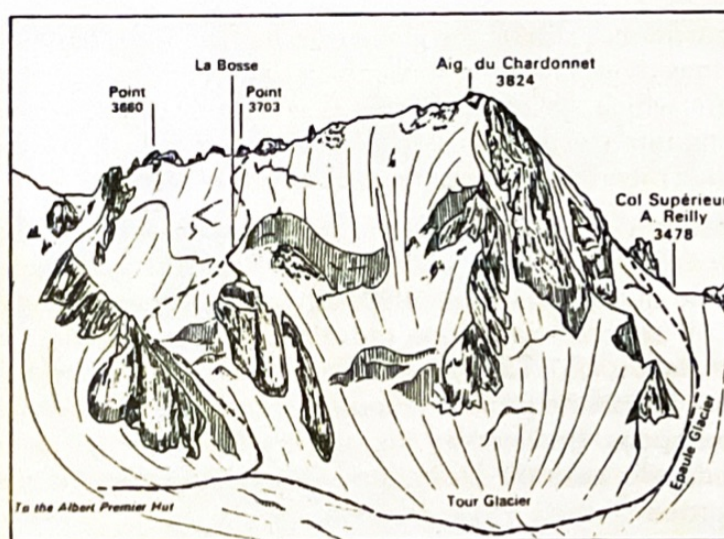
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As our noses neared the ice and we scanned the steepness ahead we now saw that the guides had put 5 large Simond Ice Pitons into the 150 ft pitch to facilitate the large group they were leading. Purists that we were we considered 2 as sufficient and, as Frank scurried ahead on his front points, I came up and silently cleaned the route of the unnecessary pitons. We were working on the third and steepest section when a bellow from below signalled that the guides had spotted what we were up to and moved uphill towards us, yelling vile Gallic imprecations while dragging their bewildered charges after them. With a final convulsive heave we got the last piton out and swarmed up the steep snow slope to a notch in the ridge. By now we were a bit scared as there had been quite a number of 'punch-ups' in both Zermatt and Chamonix between local guides and climbers from the U.K. and Ireland. Evidently some of the 'Hard men' were soliciting clients and offering to take them up classic routes on the Matterhorn and Mt. Blanc, etc., which led to 'differences of opinions'.

Although we hadn't planned to, it was now evident that we had to traverse the peak rather than meet our 'friends' on the way down. If nothing else did, at least the weather smiled on us, as we enjoyed the sunlit snow arêtes and the beautiful granite pinnacles right to the peak. We didn't linger long on the summit as the guides weren't too far behind, and after a quick snack and a view of not only the Mt. Blanc summits all around us but in the distance the Matterhorn and Dent Blanche in Switzerland, we started dropping down the 'voie normale' to the Col Superior Adams Reilly. The upper section of this route consisted of iced couloirs in the shade, not a pleasant spot at all, which opened out onto steep icy slopes. In our haste Butler caught a crampon in his baggy pants and slid down the last 50 ft to the col on his nose, which didn't improve his already sunburned red skin. More steep snow slopes led down to the 'rimaye' below. It was a tricky one with an overhanging upper edge and clear air for 8 to 10 ft to the lower lip. The guides had fashioned an ice capstan around which they had put a new Nylon sling from whence they had abseiled down over the bergschrund. Their passage over the edge had created a chimney of sorts through the lip and, quickly pocketing the new loop, we straddled the gap and chimneyed down, dropping out of the end to the lower rim. Chortling at our last 'stumbling block' we shot down and across the glacier to the moraine, picked up our heavy packs at the hut and whooped our way down the path to the valley and Chamonix.

The Railway strike was over, we discovered, so, after selling 3 new ice pitons and 1 new Nylon loop to Snell Sports, we had enough for food and booze for the trip back to the 'Auld Sod', a grand finale to another successful Alpine Season. And we still got into Dublin before our hitch-hiking friends.

Bren Moss



Trail Work Report 1976

The Federation of Mountain Clubs of B.C. has many subcommittees. One of them has the fancy title "Trail Subcommittee". There is never any controversy in said subcommittee. It consists of one single member only: yours truly. There seems to be not much controversy about this subject in the B.C.M.C. either: Nobody seems to give a damn. However since the "Trail Subcommittee" is of the opinion that trail work is necessary, not building new trails but rather maintaining the existing ones, it did some writing and phoning. Lo and Behold! How wonderful to discover people of sympathising views!

First the Simon Fraser Outdoor Club volunteered with 14 members and selected the Wedge Mount Trail, since it is close to their cabin on Whistler. On Sept. 11-12 we cleared all the windfalls from the start of the trail to the meadows. We also cut off one of the steep sections inside the high timber by building switchbacks up an easier slope. We just managed to creep under our plastics Saturday night before the rain hit us. Otherwise we had a very good time together. By the way, did you know, that the first little hill you climb up right after having crossed Wedgemount Cr. at the start of the trail is actually one of the side-moraines of ancient Wedge Glacier? (Read the article in this year's Alpine Club Journal.)

Next in line were "the Outsetters", who together with some 40 members of the Varsity Outdoor Club, some members of the Fraser Valley Outdoor Association and even a few hardy souls of the B.C.M.C. set out on Sept. 24-25 to do some work on the Singing Pass Trail.

Remember way back in 68 we pushed the trail up to the meadows after the V.O.C. had finished the first 1½ mile? How we had to run across the mine-tailings of the Jersey Zinc (copper) Mine, dumping rocks on us? We were informed by the Parks Branch then to wait till they had flagged a route through the meadows. Nothing happened. Except the "trail" through the meadows deteriorated very badly, the Mine has quit, leaving their ugly tailings behind and the approach road to the mercy of the elements.

Now with the understanding of the Parks Branch and their cooperation (they are lending us the power saws and other tools) we are building footbridges and cordwood patches over the muddy parts. We are also improving the flow of the waters by digging shallow ditches and removing some of the old windfalls. Hopefully this will help to bring vegetation back in reasonable time.

Then came the B.C.M.C.'s Trail clearing weekend Oct. 2-3. The leader received about 35 phone calls, most of them Friday evening. The majority of callers were undecided about what day they were able to come, about the number of days they could spare, etc, etc. We may yet organize a course in psychology in this club "How to make up your mind before calling the leader" for prospective participants and "How to kick vacillating souls in their sweet behinds convincingly and without hurting too much" for the leaders. Eventually there were about 11 of us. Fortunately our modest numbers were fortified by the V.O.C. again which showed up with 25 volunteers. Still there is more to be done. So we shall be up there again this coming long weekend Oct. 9-11. The West Vancouver Outdoor Club (West Vancouver Secondary School) has promised to be there with 25 members on the first day and more to come the next two days. Hopefully we will be able to clean most of the trail up for this season. Only time can tell how successful our work will be in the Singing Pass Meadows.

In May we did some clearing on the back trail of the Chief. In June we worked on the Lions Trail, among other things building a footbridge over Harvey Creek.

I have just heard of an avalanche on the 3600 ft elevation of the Baby Munday Trail. Care to help in 1977? Well make up your bl. mind and phone the Trail Subcommittee in time.

Lovingly yours Paul Binkert, chairman and staff.

Whympers on Equipment

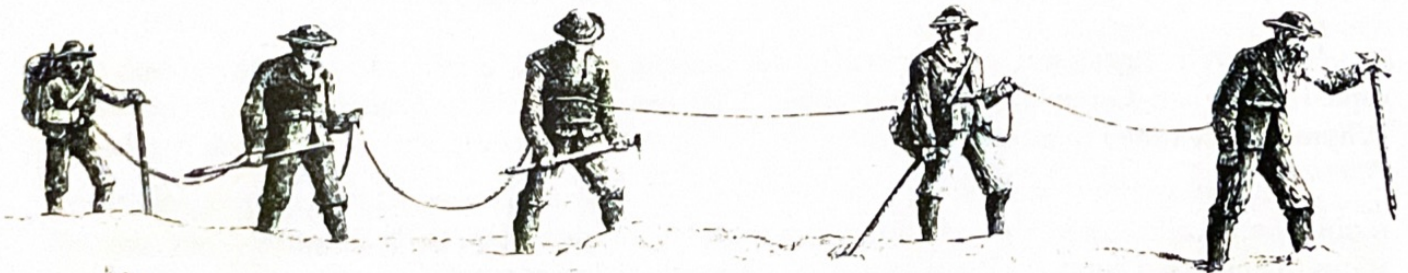
"It is scarcely necessary to observe, that it is my invariable practice to employ a rope when traversing a snow-covered glacier. Many guides, even the best ones, object to be roped, more especially early in the morning when the snow is hard. They object, sometimes, because they think it is unnecessary. Crevasses that are bridged by snow are always more or less perceptible by undulations in the surface; the snow droops down, and hollows mark the courses of the chasms beneath. An experienced guide usually notices these almost imperceptible wrinkles, steps to one side or the other, as the case may require, and rarely breaks through unawares. Guides think there is no occasion to employ a rope because they think that they will not be taken by surprise. Michel Croz¹ was of this opinion, and used to say that only imbeciles and children required to be tied up in the morning ... The sharper one's eyes get by use, the less is a rope required as a protective against these hidden pitfalls; but according to my experience, the sight never becomes so keen that they can be avoided with unvarying certainty ...

I well remember my first passage of the Col Theodule -- the easiest of the higher Alpine glacier passes². We had a rope, and my guide said it was not necessary to use it, as he knew all the Crevasses. "!" However, we did not go a quarter of a mile before he dropped through the snow into a crevasse up to his neck. He was a heavy man, and would scarcely have extricated himself alone; anyhow, he was glad of my assistance. When he got on to his legs again, he said, 'Well, I had no idea that there was a crevasse there!' He no longer objected to use the rope, and we proceeded; upon my part, with greater peace of mind than before. I have crossed the pass eighteen times since then, and have invariably insisted upon being tied together.

The Point of it All.

I believe that the unwillingness to use a rope upon snow-covered glacier which born mountaineers not unfrequently exhibit, arises -- First, on the part of expert men, from the consciousness that they themselves incur little risk; secondly, on the part of inferior men, from fear of ridicule, and from aping the ways of their superiors; and thirdly, from pure ignorance or laziness. Whatever may be the reason, I raise up my voice against the neglect of a precaution so simple and so effectual. In my opinion, the very first thing a glacier traveller requires is plenty of good rope."

1. Killed whilst descending after first ascent of the Matterhorn July 14th., 1865.
2. 10,899 feet.



THE RIGHT WAY TO USE THE ROPE.



Phacelia sericea by Rosemary Burnham

To all of you who have so willingly spent time and energy
to make the first issue of the new "Mountaineer" a reality,
I am very grateful.

Any rumor that you only yielded to coercion or blackmail
is totally unfounded and a blatant lie.

Whether there will be another issue
depends on the acceptance of this one by the membership
and the willingness to contribute more material.

Thanks again to all who helped.

Bill Hobeck

