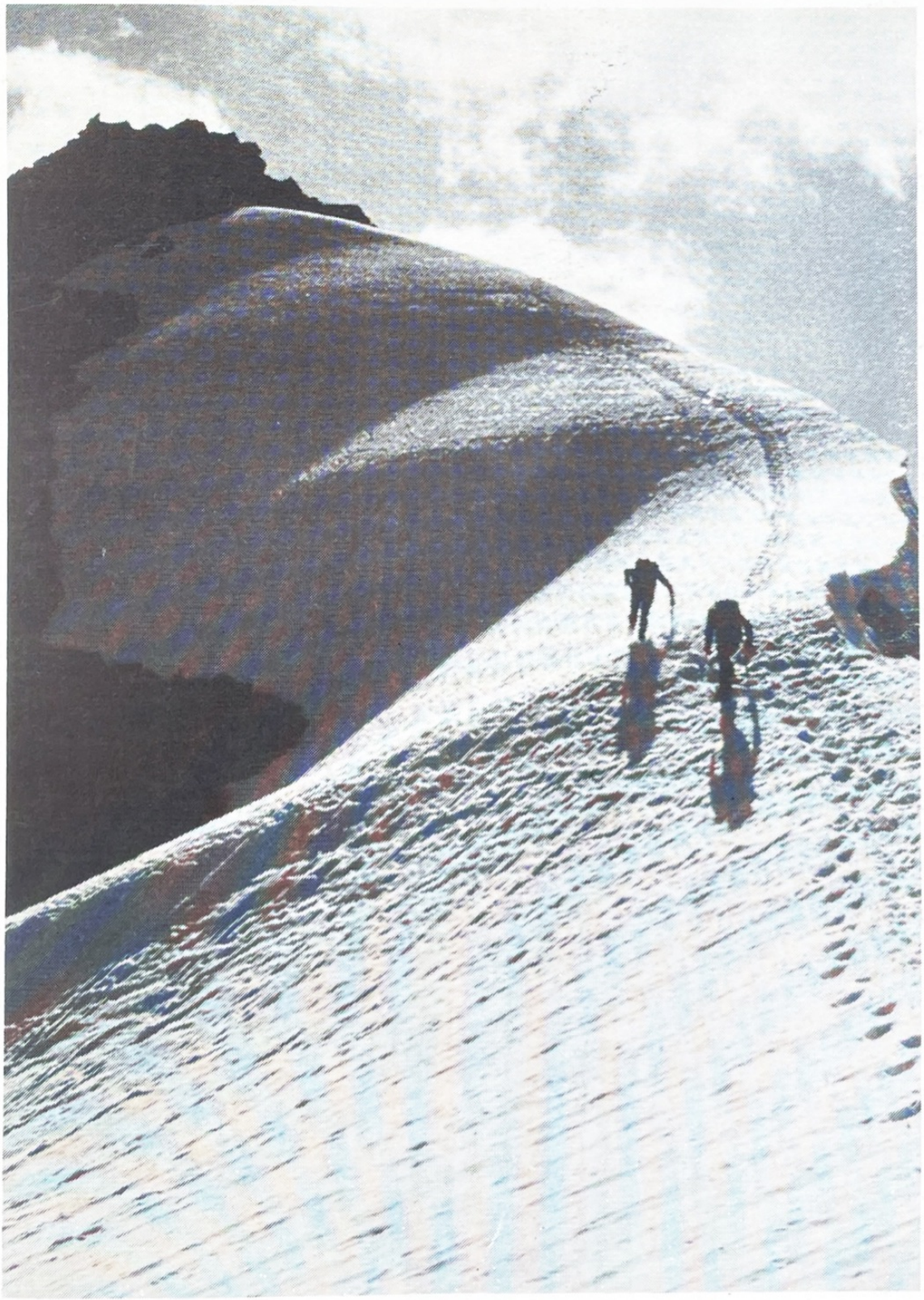
THE B.C. MOUNTAINEER



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Cover Photos: Front Cover: Ascending the summit ridge of "Leda", Pantheons. Photo by L. Killough.
Inside Front Cover: Skiing towards Mt. Fairweather. Photo by B. Fletcher.
Inside Back Cover: Tiedemann, Combatant, and Waddington from the southern Pantheons. Photo by M. Feller.
Back Cover: Mt. Alecto, Bishop glacier area. Photo by E. Hinze.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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 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, and A Guide to Climbing & Hiking in Southwestern British Columbia. 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 existance 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. 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.

The Club organizes 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 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). Ocasionally, expeditions are organized by the Club to more remote areas e.g. to Mount McKinley, Mount Logan, the Andes, and arctic Alaska.

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.

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 membeship: active, associate, junior, life, senior, and honorary. Persons interested in joining the Club can obtain further information by phoning the Membership Chairman 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 maps, 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

The 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, Brittania Beach
NORTH CREEK	: North Creek, Lillooet Valley
PLUMMER	: Claw Ridge, Mt. Waddington
WEDGEMOUNT	: Wedgemount Lake, Garibaldi Park

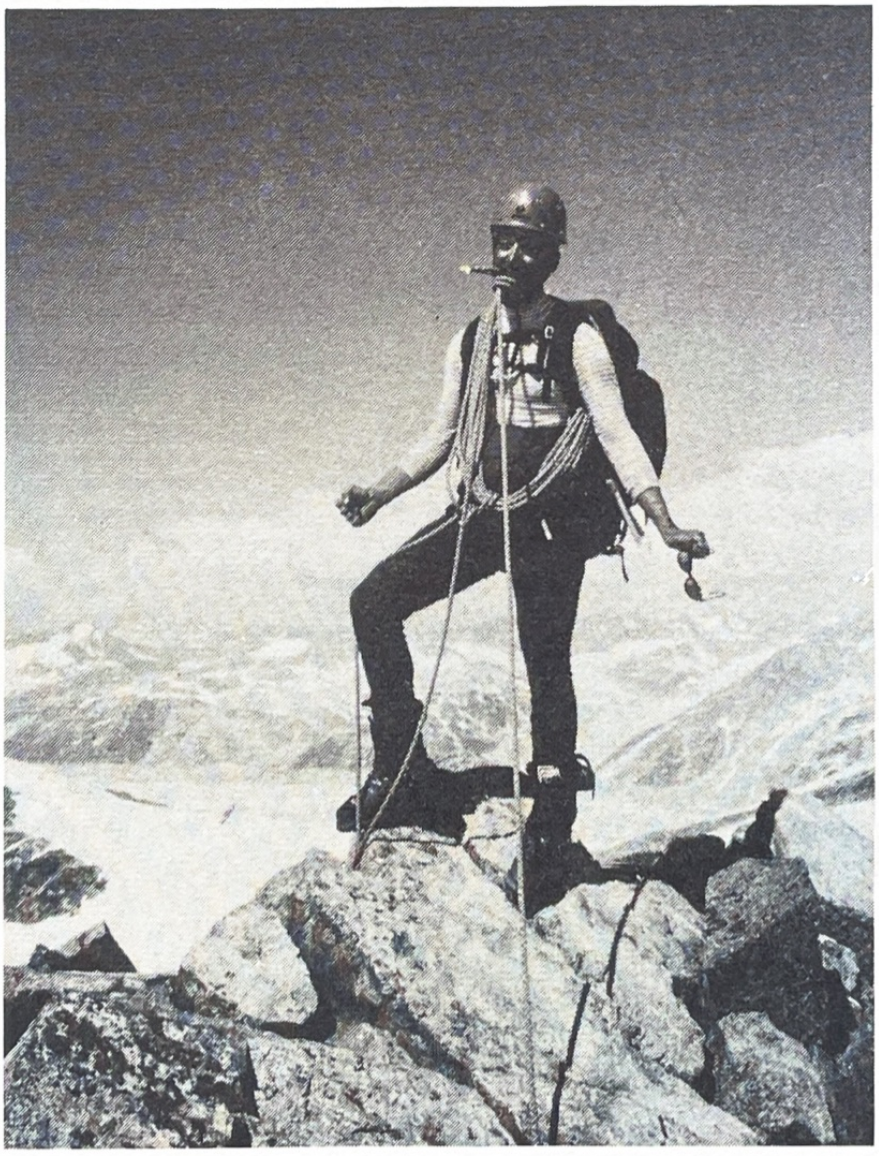
Use charges for the Plummer Memorial Hut, North Creek Cabin and Mountain Lake Cabin are requested from non-members and are applied towards cabin maintenance. The North Creek Cabin is locked, the key being kept with the Cabin Chairman.

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.



Members of the B.C.M.C. aim to enjoy the mountains and reach summits, safely of course, as this climber is doing on the summit of Mt. Magaera. Photo by B. Gavin.

MOUNTAINEERING RAMBLINGS

"HAS-BEENS" WHO NEVER WERE

by **Brian Wood**

Perhaps it is my age, or the company I keep, but I find the term "has-been" being used more frequently than it used to be, and, in my opinion, more frequently than it should be. My premise is that the term "has-been", is used indiscriminately to refer to persons who have not earned it, because it is used without consideration of its real meaning. It should be reserved for a special person who, at one time at least, could be referred to as a "someone", and then has deteriorated into a "has-been". Therefore, to be a "has-been", first you must be a "someone". Based on this premise, neither myself, nor many of my contemporaries, could truely qualify for the coveted term "has-been", as they never were a "someone" in the first place. As you can see, I feel this term is really a compliment, and not an insult as it is frequently intended.

It would seem that the first question to be asked is how does one become a "someone", so that at some later date one may become a "has-been"? To become a someone, an old fashioned unpredictable "Adventure", nowadays often called an "epic", must be encountered and survived. This Adventure would probably take place on a "Big Trip" (whatever that means!) and should require a modicum of technical competence and daring. However, assuming the trip is actually planned, there should be an element of recklessness or wishful thinking so that something important could go wrong, and then initiative would be required to save the day. This requirement would rule out the professionally organized, so-called "Adventure Holidays" because these cannot provide a true Adventure. This is because most days are predictable and there is no interruption in the smooth running itinerary, which often takes years to perfect.

In other words, first you must earn your laurels as a "someone" by performing some high standard, reasonably unpredictable activity, preferably in a remote exotic place. Then, for the rest of your career, you can rest on your laurels because you have finally earned the exulted status of a "has-been".

How is one to recognize this Adventure which allows one to attain the minimum threshold of competence of daring and thus attain the "someone" status? Is it sufficient to be published in an esoteric publication which specializes in the activity in question? Probably not, because some publications are so short of articles to publish that they will publish anything (this publication included!). In all likelihood we will have to rely on personal judgement so when the Adventure is over and adrenalin levels have returned to normal, one can sit back in the cold light of day and realize it was a worthwhile Adventure. Perhaps it is necessary to be taken to the limit of one's tolerance for adrenalin overdose, but not to go beyond that. Probably, a trip that is somewhere between being marooned on Antarctic iceflows like Shackleton, and getting lost on a Stanley Park Trail in the dark and rain would qualify.

How does this sort of thing come to pass, and what can one do about it? When one is young, one assumes that, with maturity, automatic improvement in one's various outdoor activities will take place, and thus enable one to take part in that "big trip". However, some young people have no problem finding reasons for not taking the plunge and going on a real Adventure. Often, it is felt that physical skills and conditioning are lacking and more time is needed to perfect them. Sometimes it seems that all that is needed is a little more practice to improve one's skiing, climbing, or whatever, skills, and then one will be ready for that "big trip". Also, when one is young, one is usually working for a low salary and there is insufficient cash available for equipment or gear which seems necessary for these sorts of things. Sometimes, there is barely enough cash for a single length of rope, never mind the hundreds of lengths that are used on expeditions these days. Also, young people cannot usually afford to travel to exotic places where the Big Trips tend to take place. Somehow it seems harder to have an adventure on a "Mickey Mouse" trip on Mt. Seymour with one length of rope, than living off the land in Outer Mongolia with a team of

yaks where it might be necessary to fend of a horde of bandits using only ice axes and crampons as weapons. The essence of a real "Big Trip" has something to do with remoteness, risk, unpredictability, loss of some creature comforts and duration of the trip. This is because when one is young, one is too inexperienced to imagine what disasters could happen on a real adventure. Anyway, we all know that young people think they are invincible. This stage of life could be called the "primary or hopefully optimistic stage", where the future holds promises of Adventure yet to come.

Some years later, after determination, practice, and lots of minor trips, one's physical skills and conditioning usually improve, and the original excuses of poor physical skills and poor conditioning become less convincing. After all, even the most physically uncoordinated and faint-hearted can, after sufficient practice, stagger up a reasonably impressive peak and, at the right time of year, ski down in reasonable style. However, these peaks are not the Matterhorns and Everests of one's dreams and the climbing style is not that of Gaston Rebuffat, and the skiing style is not that of Jean-Claude Killy (is this dating me?). Nevertheless, in spite of oneself, one's skills do improve and the original excuses for not going on trips become less convincing. However, a fresh list of new excuses is substituted for the old obsolete excuses for avoiding the Big Trip. For example, now one is probably accumulating business and family responsiblities, with mortgages, spouse and children etc. etc. and these can serve as good excuses. Also, another reason for avoiding Adventure would be that one's imagination has been heightened by a few near misses to oneself, or devastating injuries to acquaintances or distant heroes. After a few near misses, even the most unimaginative become aware of their vulnerability, thus quickly discouraging the faint-hearted. Perhaps the reluctance to go on the ultimate Big Trip is something other than the risk to life and limb that Adventures usually incur. Perhaps it is the realization that even simple creature comforts, such as a soft pillow or dry feet, have become more important that one used to think. Or, maybe it seems somewhat ridiculous to spend a lot of hard earned cash going a very long way in order to spend one's only holiday that year sitting in a small dripping tent listening to howling winds outside and wondering whether one would ever see the mountain that one has come to climb. This stage could be called "intermediate illusionary stage" where the possiblity of a real Adventure still exists, but it always seems to be postponed until next year. This is sometimes called the "mañana syndrome" and is very prevalent with terminal procrastinators.

Many years later, harsh reality definitely sets in, and the stark truth is slowly being revealed behind curtains of self-deception and illusion of earlier years. Usually, the problems of time and money have faded into insignificance, and now the problems relating to equipment are more likely to be too much equipment rather than too little. At this stage, many of us have so much equipment that we could not carry it all if we had to, or if we did, it would be definitely against our chiropractor's advice. At this stage, one might find when preparing for even a simple short trip, the hardest decision is deciding which gear to take. Not only that, some of us may have forgotten how to use some of the equipment, especially the more complex modern equipment which fills our basements. At this stage, one cannot use the old excuses of lack of money, equipment or skills. Neither can we use the old excuse of the mortgage, spouse or children, as these factors tend to become less demanding and one can see one's role as a parent and a mortgagee becoming less significant in the overall unfolding of the universe. So why not go on one last "Real Expedition" for the last chance to achieve the elusive status of a "someone"? What are the excuses now? Needless to say, many new excuses replace the old excuses. At this stage, there is a fear that a lengthy expedition would interfere with the regular appointments to the physiotherapist, the chiropractor, the psychiatrist and/or other health specialists that have become vitally important to one's life. Also, some of us may have been warned by these very health specialists about carrying heavy backpacks, climbing steep slopes or risking heavy falls on our brittle bones and weakended joints. Not only that, at this stage of one's life, one's eyesight can deteriorate so quickly that it might be necessary to visit an optometrist halfway through the expedition to get a new eyeglass prescription. Other factors to be considered relate to crouching and crawling around on delicate knees in a small tent pitched on snow, which can not only be painful, but can also aggravate varicose veins, rheumatism etc. And while we can thank technology for improved camping mattresses, even advanced mattress technology has its limits because some old over-used backs cannot tolerate long periods of lying on an uneven icy

floor of the tent waiting for the weather to clear. And the nights seem longer than they used to be -- which makes a sore back even worse.

But it is not just deteriorating bodily conditions that become one of the main factors preventing participating in a Real Trip - the whole name of the game has changed in the last few years. For example, a brief review of the impressive photographs in climbing magazines clearly shows rock faces are much steeper than they ever used to be, and the holes are smaller, it they are there at all! Nowadays it seems that foot holds on the rock are not necessary because one wears special, sticky soled, bunion-squeezing, brightly-coloured modern climbing shoes which would be more at home in a disco or fashion show than in the bush. Even novice climbers use these soles to climb these high angle climbs, and no one seem to bother climbing the climbs that I used to climb wearing hard rubber "Vibram" soles. It is doubtful if my battered, worn-out, old feet with blue toenails and sunken arches could fit into these uncomfortable looking shoes. While still on the subject of modern climbing or skiing gear, a brief review of the glossy advertisements in magazines is even more discouraging. Each piece of modern equipment is provided with pages of disclaimers, test reports, minimum standards and instructions, which seem to be written in print that becomes smaller and fainter with each subsequent issue of the magazine. In order to fully understand the technical descriptions of modern pairs of skis, boots, bindings, crampons, ice axes, anchors, etc., it is helpful to have a university degree in composite materials technology, polymer chemistry, and engineering physics with a speciality in intricately connected mechanical mechanisms. And what about the modern tent, that at one time resembled a simple dog kennel and now seems to resemble a large slug! How on earth can such a tent be set up from a huge bundle of poles and strange shapes of fabric sleeves and zippers, when the manufacturer does not even supply guy lines?

So even if the physical deterioration of body parts is not a problem, there are many other factors to consider. Thus, once again, old excuses can be replaced with new excuses and the Big Trip fades further into the hazy distance, and with it, the chance of becoming a "someone". This stage of giving in and accepting mediocracy is probably best called "the resigned or terminal stage". It is probably the final developmental stage of the person who will never become a "someone" and thus will never qualify as a true "has-been".

For those who feel they might have reached the terminal third stage, the above description of a Rake's progress towards mediocracy must be discouraging. Perhaps it was secretly suspected for a long time that this was the inevitable outcome, and subconscious preparations may have been underway for several years before one is prepared to face the harsh truth. The ability of the human mind to protect itself against harsh truths is probably equal to its ability to generate excuses which makes the protection from the harsh truths necessary. For those at the terminal stage, there is very little that can be done, and a quiet resignation and acceptance of reality is the best approach. Those at this stage should probably resist any tendency to bask in the false glory of the term "has-been" when it is used ignorantly and without knowledge of its true meaning.

However, what about other younger people out there who have not yet reached the third terminal stage? The purpose of this article is to alert them to the dangers of self-deception. They must realize that time is running out and decisions cannot be put off forever. Are they going to seize what might be the last opportunity for that "Big Trip" which requires some "daring do" and risking of life and limb? If they do, and if they survive the trip, they attain the coveted status of a "someone". Once that exalted status is attained, it can, with age, mature into the presently misunderstood status of "has-been".

I beseech those of you who have followed the forgoing convoluted rationalizations and now understand the true meaning of the term "has-been", to spread the word to the great unwashed masses. It is a distinguished title that should be gladly accepted and worn proudly because, once bestowed, it cannot be taken away.

TRIPS OVERSEAS

MONT PELÉ (ESCALADE VÉGÉTALE)

by **Alfred Menninga**

This dark green monolith, which is not quite as high as Mt. Seymour, is located on the tropical Island of Martinique. It attracted worldwide attention when the long dormant volcano exploded in 1911, burying the capital under a thick blanket of ashes and asphyxiating the entire population. The scars have long since healed and are again overgrown with lush vegetation. Despite it's notoriety the urge to climb the again dormant volcano was irresistible to me. But since I was travelling solo I wondered where in a seaside resort would I find some like-minded people who would be willing to brave the daily tropical rainstorms in order to climb that mountain.

Well, as fate would have it, everything fell into place in short order when I observed a travelling trio lugging packs onto the ferry boat connecting the resort of Anse Mitan to the capital of Fort de France across the Bay. Coast Mountain Sports - read the label on the pack. That was reason enough to strike up conversation and having established that the wanderers spoke English I was utterly suprised to find they were from Vancouver and stunned when they informed me they belonged to the BCMC. In the ensuing excitement we discovered we had a lot of mutual friends and acquaintances in the club. With enthusiasm we planned the ascent, grid maps, and car rental.

Mt. Pelé only has seventeen clear days a year on the average and the summit is seldom seen from below. However, the morning dawned clear and promising. We soon found the trail located above a native village. Following the trail for a few hours we gained altitude steadily until we came to a high ridge where an emergency stone shelter was located. Thank god we didn't have to make use of it, as it was in an appalling state. Other than that there was no sign of any human encroachment. We climbed down into something resembling a moat and from there up to the summit of the Volcano cone which we reached early in the afternoon. The weather held. The view was magnificent overlooking the sugar cane fields and the vast plantations and Caribbean Sea all around the Island. Although in the equatorial sun, we soon donned our parkas in the chilly howling wind that prevailed. We soon became aware of the deception of this pristine looking mountain when wandering off the trail through the thick carpet of tropical vegetation we would frequently step into deep holes. It was only later we found out that numerous lives have been lost when people having lost their way in the perennial fog vanish without a trace by falling into these concealed fissures. After a lengthy summit rest we descended rapidly and reentered the tropical zone.

Back on the beach we finished the day gorging ourselves on exotic fruit and wallowing in the warm waters of the Caribbean Sea. That was a week before Christmas.

Party: Maria & Erna Burda, Tom Moskven, and Alfred Menninga.

CUILLIN RIDGE, ISLE OF SKYE, May 1990

by **Gavin Thurston**

The guidebook description of the Thearlach Dubh kept running through my mind; "Diabolical when wet". The "T-D" gap was the key notch of the famed traverse of the Cuillin Ridge on the Isle of Skye, Scotland. It was 7 am, a light drizzle had started, we had been up since 3 am, and on the ridge since 5:30. The shadowy light at 3 am at this latitude had allowed us to scramble up the steep hillside to the south end of the ridge without headlights, and as we reached the ridge we were greeted

Ascending Mt. Pelé. Photo by A. Menninga.

Looking N along the Cuillin ridge. Photo by G. Thurston.

with breath taking views across Loch Scavaig to Sleat, and further to the hills of the Scottish mainland. Off to the west glistened the islands of Eigg, Rum, and Soay. The weather had looked very promising. This had been our second morning up at 3 am. The previous morning we had poked our heads out of the tent to find the ridge completely socked in, as was the case when we checked again at 5 am, so it had been back into the sack with a clean conscience. We awoke at 7 am as the sun beat down on the tent from a cloudless sky, too late to start the traverse of the ridge. Such is climbing in Britain.

This was to be our last climbing/hiking trip in Britain, at the tail end of a two year posting in London. Skye has a hallowed place in British mountaineering, and the traverse of the serrated and narrow 13 km Cuillin Ridge is thought to be the finest mountaineering outing in the British Isles. The traverse involves ascending 11 Munroes (Scottish peaks over 900 m) between Gars Bhein in the south and Sgurr nan Gillean in the north, with several sections of up to "Diff" standard (low 5th class climbing) and one section of "V Diff" (say mid-5th) - the Thearlach-Dubh gap. There are occasional escape gullies down to the valley. All in all it makes a very long day.

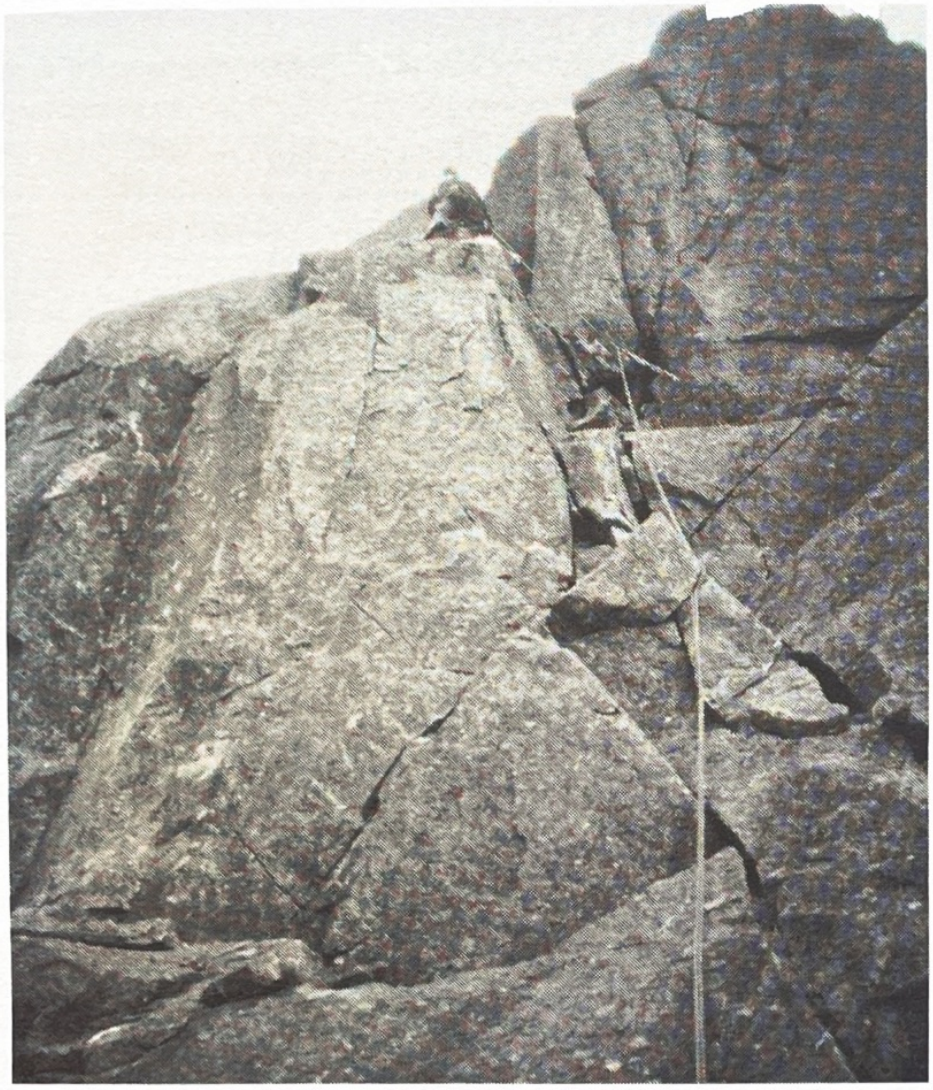
So there we were, approaching the T-D gap as the cloud descended, having done about a third of the total length. The swirling mist became wetter, and as we arrived at the gap the rock was thoroughly wet. The T-D gap is a notch in the ridge about 10 m down a vertical wall, then 20 m up a near-vertical groove on the other side. "It is polished and slippery, and diabolical when wet". Gloomily, I set up the rappel and dangled over the lip of the notch. The wind caused me to gently pendulum as I watched the water drip off the rocks. Mary followed, and we then turned to face the ascent - 20 m up a narrow, polished, wet chimney. "Diabolical when wet". I had minimal gear with me, large wet boots, and a deep breath as I started up. There was an old sling at about half height hanging from a rusty peg, so I stuffed my arm and leg into the recesses of the wet chimney, and began to inch up towards it.

The previous days in Skye had not been at all like this. We had enjoyed a great day of elegant hiking on the Cioch face (Cioch = the nose), and fascinating hiking in the Quiraing (= coire of the stolen cattle). That was all water off a duck's back, however, as my right foot slithered off a greasy nubbin. I struggled to hold myself in the chimney with the left half of my body. Another slippery handhold, and I thought of the delicate face climbing up the White slab in Coire Ghrunda we had enjoyed 3 days previously. I reached the sling, my first dry handhold. Halfway. A bit further up the chimney, an awkward mantle to the left, then I prepared to cross to the shelf on the left. Sloping holds. Polished like a dining room table. Diabolical. I stuffed my hands in the crack, thrashed with my feet, and eventually grovelled onto the ledge. Put in a piece. The worst was over. I moved up easily and set up a belay station. Mary came up with some effort, and the T-D gap was done. I had not noticed, but the drizzle was heavier than ever now (it would have been called rain in many countries).

We scrambled up the ridge to Sgurr Thearlach 15 minutes beyond. It was now 9 am, still good time, but we were in a full Scottish mist - swirling cloud, no visibility, substantial drizzle and a stiff wind. From here we had a choice; an easy and direct descent via the Great Stone Shoot, or continue in the whiteout for another 6 hrs. After 2 years of climbing in Britain, I made the obvious choice. Continue. Fortunately, common sense via the voice of Mary stated its obvious case, and we plunged down the Stone Shoot towards our tent, water cascading over the rock walls around us. At 11:30, having been up and moving for 8 hrs and the weather worse than ever, we arrived at the campsite to find another group of hikers just heading out. Mad dogs and Englishmen ...

So that was it. We left Skye, and soon left Britain. The trip to Skye was perhaps a fitting end because we had accomplished some superb climbing and hiking, and had a glimpse of numerous fine routes still to do. But we were left with that niggling feeling of indescribable fulfillment just beyond us.

Party: Mary Prendergast and Gavin Thurston.



Top - Climbing on the Cioch. Photo by G. Thurston.

Bottom - Mary on the summit of Reka, Norway. Photo by G. Thurston.

MISDOINGS IN THE LOFOTEN ISLANDS, Norway,1990

by **Gavin Thurston**

I love maps. I always have. When I first took up hiking I collected maps like they were going out of print, so I have the complete set of SW BC maps, plus maps of a lot of areas I've never visited. And the Times Atlas of the World. So the following incidents seem particularly curious in retrospect because both would have been avoided by purchasing the right map.

The problem was, they both occurred in Norway, where the price of most commodities necessitates cutting a great many corners. And they both occurred in the Lofoten Islands, where the Norwegian cartographers have gone to considerable effort to have as little land area and as much water as possible on any given map . At $15 to $20 dollars per map, even I think twice about owning a piece of paper with the ocean surface mapped out at 1:50,000.

The first incident happened on the island of Langoy, climbing a peak called Reka. Langoy is one of the first of the chain of Lofoten Islands, which stretch some 200 km SW from the mainland of Norway into the Atlantic. The islands are extremely rugged, becoming progressively more inhospitable towards the outer islands until the last (inhabited) island, Moskensoy, which is a kind of vertical claustrophobic nightmare. Reka itself is only 600 m high, but rises directly from the ocean and from almost any aspect it presents at least 400 m of near vertical rock. We had a fine view of Reka as we approached by car from the east. However, we lost sight of it as we drove around to the west side of it for the approach hike. From where we parked we could see an impressive rock face that we deemed, from appearance and location on the 1:250,000 map, to be Reka. We thrashed our way towards it for a couple of hours through some clinging birch trees and the worst horseflies that I have ever encountered, and arrived at the base of the climbing. A rock wall presented about 6 pitches of pleasant climbing (up to maybe 5.7) whereupon we arrived at the summit of peak X and saw Reka a kilometer distant. Right where it should be, of course, but it is very hard to pinpoint these rock pinnacles on a 1:250. Amid some disparaging accusations, we decided it was too late to try Reka, so we headed back to the car and endured those miserable horseflies again.

At the camp that night, we steeled ourselves to go back to the real peak. The next day we again waded through those dastardly horseflies, which were if anything worse, and climbed the real Reka. A nice climb, too. But I would gladly have spent the money on the 1:50 map to avoid having to face those cursed demons a second time.

A few days later, having learned our lesson about cutting corners with maps, we were on the island of Austvagoy, further out along the Lofoten chain. Austvagoy was somewhat oriented towards climbing in that we were able to obtain a set of climbing topos of the island's "classic" routes from the local tourist information centre. All description was in Norwegian, but a topo is a topo. That was the good news. The bad was that although Austvagoy is only about 20 sq km, the mapmakers had managed to scatter it over five 1:50 maps. Five of them! At $17 each! So, there we were with our trusty 1:250 again.

We had been there about a week doing various rock routes and basking languidly in the magnificent midnight sun (Austvagoy is well above the Arctic Circle), when we decided to check out the north ridge of Vagekallen. Vagekallen is a striking peak; only about 950 m high, it is very steep on all sides and has an array of ridges and buttresses generally only associated with much bigger peaks. The north ridge was visible and impressive from the road, and according to the leaflet offered some 500 m of climbing up to 5.9. We set out rather late in the morning (why hurry when the sun won't go down for another 6 weeks?) for a closer look at the ridge. We kept wandering higher and higher up the ridge, mostly on steep grassy ledges, until it steepened sufficiently to warrant a rope. Then I guess we made a decision to go on despite slightly dubious looking weather (you know how these decisions just happen sometimes). We climbed a few pitches, one of which I remember as being quite exceptional, and arrived at what was depicted as the crux pitch. This one I would rather forget. Amidst a worsening drizzle I struggled up a steep, loose, unprotected, slippery 5.9 runout. Mary followed, with a lot of tight rope, and I remember that she was shaking

Buchaille Etive Mor in Glencoe, Scotland. Photo by G. Thurston.

En route to Reka, Norway. Photo by G. Thurston.

from nerves when she made it to the belay point. However, from there it was straightforward to the summit. A full-blown storm was arriving at the summit about the same time we were, so we picked up the faint track down the other side of the mountain.

This is where the map would have been useful. We had basically done a North-South traverse of the peak, and now we had to return by skirting either the East or West flank. On the 1:250, there was a track of some kind shown on the East side, so that's where we headed. MISTAKE. I have several indelible memories of the subsequent 6 hours. One of them is downclimbing 5th class rock right to the edge of the ocean while the surf and the rain conspired to pull me off. Another was the realization that the "track" on the map was in fact a string of old power poles, bringing dead wire to the middle of nowhere. We had to cross a boulder field between the ocean and the cliffs with boulders as big as houses. We squirmed over and under and around these blocks, covering 2 km in 3 hrs. We just kept pressing on through the rain, thinking about the trail on the west side of the peak. It was, of course, still daylight, so we couldn't look forward to a good bivvy and a fresh start once the sun came up again.

We got back to the campsite on the beach some time after 4 in the morning, only to find that the squall had played havoc with our tent. It had been blown across the beach into the water, and apparently only some fast footwork by a German couple saved it from sailing off into the Atlantic. The sleeping bags and other contents were soaked, and the tent itself was pretty beat-up. Eventually we managed to sort things out and grumpily crash around 6:30 am.

Is there a moral to this story? I'm tempted to suggest "don't go out without an afternoon map", but perhaps more useful would be "if you are seeking a full blown Brian Wood-style epic then throw away the 1:50's".. (all unwanted maps may be sent to the author).

Party: Mary Prendergast and Gavin Thurston

CHANGTSE, September - October, 1991

by **Evelyn Feller**

'Don't be suprised if you see me back on Monday' were my less than optimistic words of farewell to Michael as I arrived at the airport. It had been a summer of euphoria and frustration. First there had been the excitement of being accepted on a trip to climb Changtse, the North Peak of Everest, and then also being given leave from work. However, right through the summer it did not seem the trip would happen inspite of having been given the permit for the climb. Faxes would come from Beijing with demands for additional money and for a number of us there was a definite financial limit. It appeared that this limit would well and truly be exceeded. However due to heroic efforts by our leader, Rob Brusse, the trip appeared to be within budget.

Team "Middle-aged Climbers with Women" actually boarded the Air China jet to Beijing. We gave ourselves this name after another expedition (to remain nameless!) told us they didn't have any female climbers because women were too emotional! Our group consisted of ten men and three women ranging in age from 28 to 58.

We were welcomed in Beijing by our interpreter, Ms. Zhang. She was to be one of two obligatory companions. She had actually accompanied expeditions to Everest and Mustagh Ata. Our liaison officer, Mr. Li, was a former sailor who found the month at base camp a continuous headache since he never quite acclimatised. While the group spent the day visiting the Temple of Heaven, The Forbidden City and Tianamen Square, Rob was involved in continuing heavy negotiations. For some-one who had visited China during the Cultural Revolution, the social changes in China were astonishing. Gone were Mao's

blue ants. Most people were in Western dress and watching very western T.V. programs. The one child policy was dramatically visible as we watched family groups also visiting Beijing landmarks.

After a flight to Chengdu, overnight there, and many hours of waiting in Chengdu airport, we finally arrived in Lhasa. We were under the impression that our accommodation would be rather spartan and had made all kinds of preparations to combat potential terrors of the Tibetan wash-rooms as described in the Lonely Planet guide to Tibet. We were not disappointed we found we were staying in the Lhasa Holiday Inn complete with Germanic chefs, fresh bread and tables groaning with amazing deserts.

On arriving in Lhasa at 3700 metres, the visitor is advised to do nothing more ambitious than to climb up one's dining room steps. This is sage advice which we were rather forced to ignore since our Chinese hosts seemed keen to get us to base camp as quickly as possible. We didn't really want to miss the Potala and spent a rather shaky morning clambering up and down the ladders of this wonderful monastery, the former home of the Dali Lama. We were jet lagged, suffering from various intestinal aliments and in varying stages of AMS. I wondered how we were going to cope as we gained altitude, since climbing up four flights of stairs was proving very demanding. After an afternoon of further negotiations, this time with members of the Tibetan Mountaineering Association, we were able to load our truck with the food, oxygen and fuel which we had sent in advance. Most of us managed to visit the incredible Barkhor market, a sensory feast of colour, scents and sounds.

The next two days were extremely arduous, twelve to fourteen hour days on roads that would make the worst B.C. logging roads, Coquihalla-standard by comparison. These roads had been washed out by flash floods during the monsoons and there were gangs of Tibetans, both men and women, repairing them. An unexpected bonus of travelling at this time were the wildflowers, beautiful blue flowers growing in clumps on the dry mountain ridges. The roads are definitely often the most hazardous aspects for many expeditions and on numerous occasions I plotted my escape tactics in case of a capsize. The view was never dull; walled white-washed housing compounds surrounded by ripening crops; high glaciated peaks and gorges; prayer flags on high mountain passes where nomads would mysteriously appear with their mixed herds of sheep and goats. We stayed overnight in Shigatse and then after another long day arrived at the nadir of hotel accommodation, the Chomolungma Hotel. Here that mighty household invention, the vacuum cleaner, had clearly not been heard of. Water of any temperature was only available between six and eight in the evening and one had to time one's visits to the bath-room during that time. A bucket of brown water in the bath tub was the flushing mechanism. The teenage staff seemed to be up to continual high jinks that involved launching of various flying objects, such as plates, in kitchens and corridors.

After a morning's rest and an afternoon of mild ridge climbing where we gazed across to the fort of Xegar which snaked its way up the red, precipitous ridges, and the legendary Shining Crystal Monastery, we had recovered sufficiently to make the trip to base camp.

We could no longer use the bus and climbed, huddled in down jackets, into the back of a covered truck. After a four hour ride over the 5200 m Pang La pass with the first glimpses of the Himalayas, we were passing the Rongbuk Monastery with Everest dominating the skyline in front. From this side the mountain is not diminished by its companions like Lhotse, and is definitely worthy of its Tibetan name Jolmo Lungma - Goddess Mother of the World. For most of us it was the realization of a mountain lover's dream. We thought of the triumphs of Messner, the Canadian Everest Light Expedition, and the Australian White Limbo Expedition as well as the tragedies of Marty Hoey, Tasker and Boardman, Roger Marshall and Mallory and Irvine.

Our euphoria was rapidly diminished by the realities of base camp. Base camp was a slum. It was hard to find a clean tent site where there was no yak or human dung or litter. At least we could see the money we paid in conservation fees being used, for the Chinese were busy constructing two toilet blocks and a pit for garbage incineration. Not surprisingly, policies on garbage

Fresh snow at base camp. Photo by E. Feller.

The N side of Everest from near base camp. Photo by E. Feller

management i.e. 'Carry in, carry out and recycle where possible', had not been established. We heard that, inspite of numerous international clean-ups at the Nepalese base camp, this route to Everest might be closed to allow the area to recover from the trekker and climber impacts. The future managers of this area have a huge challenge ahead of them to maintain its grandeur and not diminish it with massive tourist developments nor allow it to deteriorate due to human carelessness.

Three other expeditions shared the site, an Indian, a Belgian, and the Canadian 'Climb for Hope' Expedition. This expedition had gained an impressive amount of sponsorship and had an incredible telecommunications network established. It was possible not only to phone home from base-camp but also from the North Col, as one of our members did!

We began the task of ferrying loads to our first camp at 5600m. Vertically this was not much above base camp at 5200m. It involved a fairly flat walk along a gully between the steep valley sides and the rearing rubble of the lower Rongbuk Glacier. At the end there was a steep climb to the camp. This was a major challenge for our still unacclimatised bodies, but the effort was rewarded by wonderful views of Pumori, Lingtren, and Khumbutse, and of course the western buttresses and ridges of Everest. After a couple of days when the gear pile was not getting much smaller at base camp, we decided to attempt to negotiate to get yaks. This was a rather dispiriting task. In Canada the charge for yaks seemed to stretch the budget too far at over $1000 per person. We had decided to be the yaks. In Beijing it appeared that the Chinese Mountaineering Association was willing to allow us to renegotiate this item should we change our minds. It appeared that at base camp the actual cost was going to be more like $200. Problem solved? No way! Four days of long negotiations followed. Just when we thought an agreement had been made, the price would suddenly be increased or Bob would be required to make a long drive out to Tingri to negotiate further with the yak herders. It is not a simple matter of back-loading onto someone else's yaks when they descend the mountain. It appears that because mountaineering expeditions are such a lucrative source of funds for the drivers, the jobs must be shared fairly amongst them. We were not successful and my advice to other expeditions is unfortunately to bite the bullet and pay before you go or have the time to complete the negotiations.

It was at this point that the infamous illegal porter incident occurred! Three Tibetans suddenly appeared and offered to be porters, for a price. Apparently the Rongbuk Valley and the CMA is not really ready for private enterprise. Our liaison officer tried to discourage us from hiring these characters but we felt fairly desperate given the description we had of the long and demanding carry to Camp two. An advance party of five had already begun establishing this camp and were making eight hour round trips. At over 6000 m this is hard work! The porters were at least valuable in transporting fuel and other heavy items to the first camp but at this point things fell apart. The porters had claimed they would be self sufficient with respect to food, equipment and tents. The reality was that they were not and they began to demand such things. A couple of them were clearly not acclimatised. The following day they did not make it to the second camp because they were reluctant to cross a small stream and climb up the moraine wall onto the glacier. Inspite of Ian's demonstrations that the manoeuvre was perfectly safe, they turned back. In the meantime the most senior Chinese liaison officer at base camp had insisted that Ms. Zhang and Mr. Li accompany him to our Camp One to curb this infamous porter hiring. Whatever was said to the porters ensured their very speedy exit from the mountain.

Another gruelling week was spent stocking Camp Two. Our advance team had established a higher camp at the foot of a couloir on Changtse. Up to this point the weather had been extremely predictable - late afternoon rain or heavy snow. The snow had flattened our cooking shelter at base camp and was making the Indian and Belgian climbs very dangerous. The Canadian fixed ropes to the North Col were being avalanched away.

From camp two we made a day excursion up the 'Miracle Highway' an incredible gap up the Rongbuk Glacier to the Canadian Advance Base Camp. The reality is that once the dry weather starts it would be possible to walk in running shoes to this point.

Closer to the N side of Everest. Changtse blocks the N face of Everest and is separated from it by the N col (hidden). Photo by E. Feller.

The eastern side of Cho Oyu. Photo by E. Feller.

It was a magical day, just to be standing about 300m below the North Col and to see the pinnacles of Everest as well as other interesting 7000m peaks. Makalu was just visible. We were invited to supper at the Canadian Camp. Eating cherry pie, fresh bread and then hiking back down to our camp in the moonlight was unforgettable!

The next morning our advance party make an attempt on Changtse. Unfortunately the cold wind and altitude drove them back. Our route no longer appeared feasible. Other options were discussed. For those of us at the lower camp, Changzheng at 6975m appeared an inviting possibility, while Murray planned to join Andrew at the higher camp to go to the North Col. Juri and Brian settled for a 7000m peak above the Lhagba La pass. That afternoon Peter and Roland established a route up the icefall of the Beifeng Glacier. Our route looked straight forward.

Early morning mountaineering starts are painful in any part of the world. Getting water at Camp Two was a precarious activity. One had to slide down the moraine to a pond under an ominous teetering serac and smash the ice to draw up a billy of yak dung contaminated water. Fortunately, one's feet were painfully chilled, necessitating a brief retreat into the sleeping bag. Our party of six moved in two teams through the lower seracs then up to the glacier. The major challenge was a deep crevasse with a vertical rim to negotiate. I was not particularly thrilled to be voted the crevasse prober since it was hard to tell whether the floor of the crevasse would collapse. Even climbing a short steep vertical section was a major physical challenge at this altitude. We continued up a skiable slope to the shoulder on the peak. Changtse loomed above us and there were fluted ridges reminiscent of the Andes. To one side there was a steep col that Shipton and Tilman had crossed on their expedition. It was late in the afternoon and Ellen and Roland decided they had given the peak their best shot. Bob, Grant, Peter and I continued on for another couple of rope lengths. The peak was only about 300m above us and was tantalisingly close - becoming steeper but apparently straight forward. However at this point we hit the wall physically. We were breaking through the snow crust up to our calves and the freezing winds of the jet stream were buffeting us around. Breathing was becoming a problem. Retreat seemed a prudent decision and this was substantiated by the exhausted state in which we arrived back at camp. Meanwhile Juri and Brian were successful on their peak and Murray and Brian were preparing themselves for their successful climb to the North Col.

It was at this point we made the decision to return to base camp even though we had had only one real day of climbing. Even Juri, our strongest climber, appeared haggard and complained of feeling that he was physically deteriorating. None of us were sleeping very much, in fact we spent most nights rolling around like chickens on a spit. It had become a chore to eat and no-one was really drinking the required four litres a day of liquid. It was almost impossible to choke it down! After clearing and cleaning up our camps we returned to an enthusiastic welcome by Ms. Zhang and Mr. Li. They demonstrated their enthusiasm by cooking some wonderful tasty Chinese food for us. Unfortunately their enthusiasm turned to bewilderment the next morning when Rob, Shelley and Ian felt that the opportunity to get to the North Col might not occur again for them and they headed back up. The rest of us recuperated. Juri and I decided to climb up an easy peak to the west of camp. This was a wonderful day where we were rewarded by imposing views of Cho Oyo and Everest as well as the dry Tibetan Plateau. The winds were still and we lunched in tee-shirt weather on the summit. On our descent we learned that Ian had become ill and that Rob had accompanied him down from Camp Two. Shelley eventually reappeared, extremely disappointed. She had continued on alone but had been discouraged from continuing to the North Col by the Canadian Expedition who were in the process of retreating from the mountain due to the high winds. The remainder of the time at base camp was spent cleaning up, with individuals making excursions towards the Lho La and to the Rongbuk monastery.

This account cannot be made without mention of the behaviour of the yak herders. I had been told Tibetans love trading! That was an understatement. One could not retreat to one's tent for peace as there would always be a hand opening up the zip and often three faces peering in trying to sell jewellery, knives, or yak bells! A meal could not be cooked without having an audience of six or seven herders. They decided that our large block of parmesan cheese had a greater value in their meals

and it disappeared one evening. When I attempted to burn some garbage I was jostled by a number of them trying to grab our containers and their contents.

We left Base Camp farewelled by the first Brazilian expedition to Everest (which was also unsucessful). The journey across the Tibetan plateau, while bone shaking in the truck, was pleasant. In Xegar it suddenly became possible to visit the fortress and monastery. On the way we were quoted a price of $500 for this sight-seeing tour. Now it seemed there was no extra charge and it was a wonderful afternoon, probably the cultural highlight for us all. Although ruined, the remains of the fort were impressive. The monastery, destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, had been rebuilt. A humorous touch was an old oxygen cylinder that had been festively painted and served as a gong. The monks were friendly and the place seemed to be a living monastery, whereas others, like the Potala, were empty of their former splendor. We continued on to Shigatse where we visited the impressive Tashilhunpo Monastery, the home of the Panchen Lama and the Yellow Sect. We then had one of the culinary highlights of the trip - a meal at the Yak Burger and Fries Restaurant.

The trip back to Lhasa was via a different route. We soon found ourselves bogged along with many other vehicles in semi-desert country. An enterprising farmer extricated our truck and bus. We spent the afternoon traveling along a gorge of the Tsang-po River. This was very similar to the Canyon of the Thompson River in terms of its appearance and the grading of the rapids. In Lhasa's Bokhara market we embarked on a massive carpet buying frenzy and feasted on the smorgasbord of the Lhasa Holiday Inn.

From Lhasa, things became tense because it appeared that we would not get on the plane. There was some difference of opinion as to whether we should pay the excess baggage charges that were being imposed on us. All of a sudden it seemed impossible to have gear shipped back to Canada as we had on the way in, although we believed we had met these costs as part of our budget. Only at the last minute did we board the plane to Chengdu. Here our itinerary became even less certain. We were no longer booked on flights to Beijing. We possibly had to draw up a priority list of those whose work demanded arrival in Canada on October the 10th so they could go on whatever bookings Zhang could get. After a day of exploring Chengdu, we suddenly found ourselves on a morning flight to Beijing. From there we were whisked to the Great Wall where we made our last climbing forays to various watch towers on the wall.

Some thoughts for others wanting to climb in this area:
1) The negotiations with the Chinese Mountaineering Association took nearly two years and required much tact and patience. For those wanting further details it would be best to talk with Rob Brusse.
2) If one is not obsessed with Everest or other brand-name peaks, there are many other lower summits and passes to explore. It may be possible now to do these through the Tibetan Mountaineering Association and via a trekking permit which is less expensive and easier to organise than a climbing permit.
3) We learned a lot about acclimatising on this trip. If possible it is best to get hold of yaks to prevent early burnout.

Party: Rob Brusse (Leader), Shelley Ballard, Roland Burton, Evelyn Feller, Peter Ford, Murray Hainer, Grant McCormack, Andrew McKinley, Ian Marsh, Barry Narod, Juri Peepre, Brian Schack and Ellen Woodd.

TRIPS IN AND AROUND B.C.

CHIPMUNK PK. AREA CHRISTMAS SKI CAMP, December 1989

by **Steve Grant**

The start of our trip was greatly facilitated by the discovery that, thanks to some snowplowing by the locals, we could drive to the top of Railroad Pass on the Hurley Road. Since we didn't want to leave cars at the top of the pass, we hired someone from the local Outward Bound School to transport the drivers back to the pass. From here we skied to the east of the road, and 500m vertical to a place known as `Far Out Lakes', at the top of the north-south ridge to the east of the road. This climb was too steep for the sleds, but short enough that most of us made two trips from the road to the campsite.

Camp sprouted in a small meadow, with excellent views to the east and toward Goat Peak. After a frosty dawn, we began breaking the first version of the "Jet Road": our main route to the more interesting areas several km. east of us. As the camp progressed, this trail was steadily improved and became faster every day. It incorporated a large number of surprises, each one requiring more prompt action and skill since one's approach was at a higher speed every day. In fact, travel on this trail was one of the highlights of the trip. The features most talked about during the evenings were the stream jump, the turnstile, and the blind corner.

As the days went by, we made excursions all over the hills between our meadow and Goat Peak, to the real Chipmunk Peak via the pass to the Birkenhead, up Grouty Peak, and even a trip through Mowat Meadows down to the newest Tenquille Lake Trail. Foul weather days saw us fooling around getting air time on the bumps near camp, and exploring a precipitous spur ridge from the Birkenhead Pass in a whiteout. The most memorable day was a climb of Goat Peak via its north glacier. This provided enough danger near the top to keep people awake, and from the summit we looked out over one of those classic days with the valleys full of cloud and only the peaks showing.

We wound up the camp in heavy snowfall, and finally used the sleds to skid our loads down the Railroad Pass road. About 1km beyond the bridge over Railroad Creek there was too much gravel for skiing, so we concluded the trip with a lot of walking and car shuttling. We were back in the area the following summer for a delightful meadow ramble, during which we did a detailed cleanup of the Christmas campsite.

Party: Simon Coates, Harold Rydell, Georgia Newsome, Karin Rolfes, Dave Robertson, Sandrine Humbert-Droz, Paul Kubik, Darlene Anderson, Audrey Pearson, Helen Roe, Brian Waddington, Betsy Fletcher, Jos van der Burg, David Ross. and Steve Grant

- THE JOFFRE - MATIER AREA
1. MT MATIER, NE FACE - A NEW ROUTE, 23-24 June, 1990

by **Brian Gavin**

Armed with a suitable weather forecast and a team of stalwart companions, we left Vancouver for the Duffey Lake road. Just beyond the Joffre Lakes parking area, we opted for the "south side" road, leaving the car near the bridge over Cerise Creek. Signing the register, we noted a significant number of visitors are using this area: We were reminded of the weekend in January which saw over 40 people in this particular valley.

The trail to the hut is reasonably clean of deadfall and brush but is very wet with extensive muddy stretches . Nearly 50% of the trail to the first creek crossing needs to be board walked. There is one swampy section near the creek / valley draining the north side of Joffre. Arriving at the hut, we paused for a bit of lunch. We noted the cabin is showing signs of structural failure associated with snow creep. Two windows had stress fractures already.

We struck off towards the Anniversary Glacier, crossed it and the far (east) moraine and headed for Vantage col. All travel above the cabin was on firm snow. My memory served us well as we camped beside a large meltwater pond behind the moraine which at one time was the north side of the Twin One Glacier. The day was sunny and warm - almost summer, and here we were in a grand spot. The steep glaciated faces of Mts. Matier and Howard soared above us; to the east the Twin One Creek valley ran down to a beautiful lake at treeline with Snowspider rising as a backdrop beyond. Having arrived in camp early, Erich took a siesta while Dave and I used the moraine as our highway to ramble down to the lake. On the way we watched nine goats (including three kids and one huge billy) cross the Twin One Glacier and wander up the sheer rock towards Mt Howard.

Back in camp, we contemplated the photocopied route descriptions from Fairley's guide. On Matier, the NE face / rock rib routes credited to Roger Griffiths at al. were plainly visible, as was the described access from the Joffre - Matier col. To reach the Cover - Gavin route from the col would involve a 100 -150m descent of steep heavily crevassed glacier and then a further considerable traverse south across 60 degree ice - not very likely. There was a consensus conclusion that maps don't show all the local geography very well.

Next morning we woke at 5 am to the sound of rain. A glance outside through blurry eyes saw complete white - out. Darn. Back to sleep. I started into sudden wakefulness at 7. Quiet and bright, sun and a nearly clear sky. Silently we moved into action. Leaving camp just after 8 we gained the very broad NE ridge rising out of the Vantage col. We hiked steadily up hill, with the route becoming gradually steeper and narrower. Soon it was possible to look down onto the Anniversary Glacier where we were shocked to see a group of about six day hikers who were not roped up, at least one of whom didn't have an ice axe!

Continuing on, we reached the rocky section which has the appearance of steep gendarmes from below. The rock was surprisingly firm and grainy, and we enjoyed very pleasant class 3-4 scrambling. The notch between the two was slightly interesting but not too bad. Reaching the end of the rock, we stopped for a bite, to rope up, and survey the route. Off on the right skyline and a bit behind was the usual route climbed by ski parties. Directly ahead the northeast face - steep snow with a series of bergshrunds. Off to the left skyline lay the means to outflank the bergshrunds, climb a steep snow ridge and gain the rock ridge beyond. We opted for the latter as this would then be the complete Northeast Ridge.

The warmth of the day was apparent. Dave led off, plowing trail in sometimes knee-deep wet snow. Having reached the ridge, and being worn out by the heavy going, Erich now led the second bit in firmer but still soft snow. One lead was enough for him and I took over in plastic boots as the snow became firmer. Gaining the rock was a relief. It was loose but large enough to be reasonably stable, and we were soon onto the crest leading to the summit. We fell in behind a party on the standard route who hadn't even been aware of our presence. The summit was a pleasant pause but a bit breezy so our stay was brief. Clouds were building up, and threatening to lower.

We headed down the southwest ridge. Before long, this became more face - like and definitely stiff class 3. The rock was quite firm and grainy. At the bottom of this, we climbed onto the snow and headed down the ridge to the prominent gendarme. This feature is quite tall - almost reminiscent of the Tooth beside Mt Waddington. We made our way around the base of it on the

On the N ridge of Joffre.
Photos by B.Gavin.

east side in quite rotten snow - knocking off a couple of sizeable avalanches in the process. Beyond it the ridge was regained and followed towards the col with Mt Howard until we could swing left and descend the Twin One Glacier.

We seemed to descend a very steep line straight down the glacier. Camp was reached, struck and we were soon at the cabin. We failed to find the real start of the right trail so followed our noses down to the swamp. At this point, the trail was discovered and travel was near trivial. However, the mosquitoes at the car were voracious.

Party: Erich Hinze, David Hughes and Brain Gavin.

2. JOFFRE LAKES ALPINE CIRCUIT, 3-5 August, 1991

by **Keith Cover and Brian Gavin**

Brian and I had been discussing a new traverse of the peaks around Joffre Lake for many years. The six peaks we were contemplating wrapped around the upper Joffre Glacier and provided many convenient escape routes if required. The overall objective was to connect some of the more aesthetic routes on the various peaks into one alpine traverse. On the B.C. Day weekend everything finally came together, including a long waited break in the weather after a dismal summer. Together with Mark Force we drove from Vancouver to the Joffre Lakes via the newly paved Duffey Lake Road.

The hike in found Brian and Mark "back in '77" as they reminisced about the Alpine Crafts climbing course where they had first met in this very area. Brian managed to get stung by a wasp in spite of a warning from other hikers about a nest beside the trail. From the small campsite near the upper lake, we continued south up a rough trail following the creek leading to the Tszil-Taylor col.

The first peak on the agenda was Tszil. From the alpine basin we struck off directly for the 240m North couloir. This 45-50 degree slope can provide excellent ice but this year's late snow turned it into a straight forward snow slope. From the top of the couloir, a short scramble over rock led to gentle snow and the summit. We descended to the East and found a comfortable bivy on some flat rocks near the Tszil-Slalok col.

Following a blazing sunset, thanks to those erupting Pacific volcanoes, we drifted off under a moonless but brilliant sky. But Mark was dreaming. The dream became too intense and he stirred. "Oh wow! Hey, wake up you guys! The Northern Lights!" Out of a deep sleep we too awoke to witness a magical display of the Aurora Borealis across the northern sky. It was almost as impressive as last year's late-July event.

The next morning found us scrambling up the pleasantly firm class 3-4 rock of the West ridge of Slalok. The views to northern Garibaldi Park across Lillooet Lake were particularly clear. From Slalok's summit, we descended the East face down snow and rock to the col with Mount Spetch.

From this col, a sufficiently impressive bergschrund on Spetch was bypassed to the right by scrambling up a few tens of meters of rock to gain a snow slope which we ascended to the summit. From here we had a good look at the southwest gulley on Joffre Peak. From this angle it appeared darn steep and there was a nasty looking discontinuity one third of the way up. The north ridge of Hartzell also looked a bit intimidating but we decided to go put our noses on it. After some tricky route finding down the SE buttress of Hartzell we arrived at the Hartzell-Spetch col.

From the col we headed up Spetch and found the route to be no more than stiff 4th class on reasonably good rock, as long as you stayed to the left. We were starting to feel tired but we wanted to be a in good position for Joffre the next day so we decided to continue on up the NE face of Matier, even though it was late in the afternoon. We reached the summit in good time and descended the ski route to a comfortable bivy ledge above the Anniversary col.

As we were settling down for the evening, we looked down towards the empty tent of two friends on the Joffre Glacier. They were late returning from a climb on Joffre. As the clouds thickened, we joked about leaving our site and occupying their tent. What comedy that would provide!

We woke up the next morning in bright sunshine as the light just grazed the North ridge of Matier and struck our ledge. We took about 2 hours to get moving, but on leaving, we chuckled over the idea of future parties on Matier wondering what geeks had to bivy here?!

Our route up Joffre was the SW gulley. It looked steep from our bivy spot but once we reached its base we realized that it was much easier than we feared. It turned out to be a straight forward, although hot, snow slog. Fortunately some high clouds moved in cooling things down a bit. The line proved to lead directly to the summit, and we enjoyed the view for a while.

At Brian's recommendation we headed down the NW ridge of Joffre towards Duffey Lake Road. After 3 short free-hanging rappels, we were scrambling and then hiking along enjoying the views. The route down had an incredible 250m glissade and could be considered a very pleasant descent if you ignored the last 600m of bush thrashing. Duffey Lake Road was reached a little after sunset.

In spite of carrying full packs for the whole trip we only needed a rope for glacier travel as none of the rock was harder than stiff class 4. Although all of the routes have been climbed before, we believe this to be the first major traverse in the area. All in all, it was one of the most enjoyable routes any of us has ever done, and it is highly recommended.

Party: Mark Force, Brian Gavin and Keith Cover

MT. ROBSON August, 1990

by **Paul Kubik**

"**Mount Robson**, not the highest, but the biggest peak in the entire Rockies, Canadian and American. With the summit at 3954 m above sea level and the base at 853 m, Robson presents 3100 m of mountain mass - 800 m more than Pikes Peak, biggest of the Colorado Rockies peaks (although again not the highest)."
- Ben Gadd, "Handbook of the Canadian Rockies"

"On every side the snowy heads of mighty hills crowded round, whilst, immediately behind us, a giant among giants, and immeasurably supreme, rose Robson's peak ... We saw its upper portion dimmed by a necklace of light, feathery clouds, beyond which its pointed apex of ice, glittering in the morning sun, shot up far into the blue heaven above."
- adventurer W.B. Cheadle passing down the Fraser River in 1863

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In the summer of 1990, Uli Hausman and I hatched a plan to climb Mount Robson. Uli claimed that he was getting "too old" and it was now or never. I am not sure what motivated me to attempt Robson. I suppose that the germ of the idea started sometime after my brother Philip climbed Mount Robson with Len Soet some years back and bivouacked on the summit under

flawless skies. I had never seen Mount Robson's summit but knew people occasionally died there and I had read somewhere that this was a serious climb from any approach.

Two weeks prior to mid-August departure found me late after work in the Northwest Room of the main branch of the Vancouver Public Library. I was reading two accounts of the first ascent of the peak in 1913. Robson had repulsed six earlier attempts. Swiss guide Conrad Kain led two clients up the snow face on the northeast side now bearing his name and thence up the Roof to the summit. Kain in his account described the route as the hardest climb he had ever attempted and this was from a seasoned, mature professional guide. A climbing guidebook described Robson as "not only one of the greatest peaks of North America but one of the great peaks of the world."

Uli and I decided to attempt Kain's route. The northeast face is one of the two popular routes, the hut route, on the S.S.W. ridge being the other. The latter route has considerable objective danger from ice and stone fall whereas the former is more susceptible to avalanches. By leaving when we did we counted on the avalanche danger being much lower than the combined danger of the ice and stone fall.

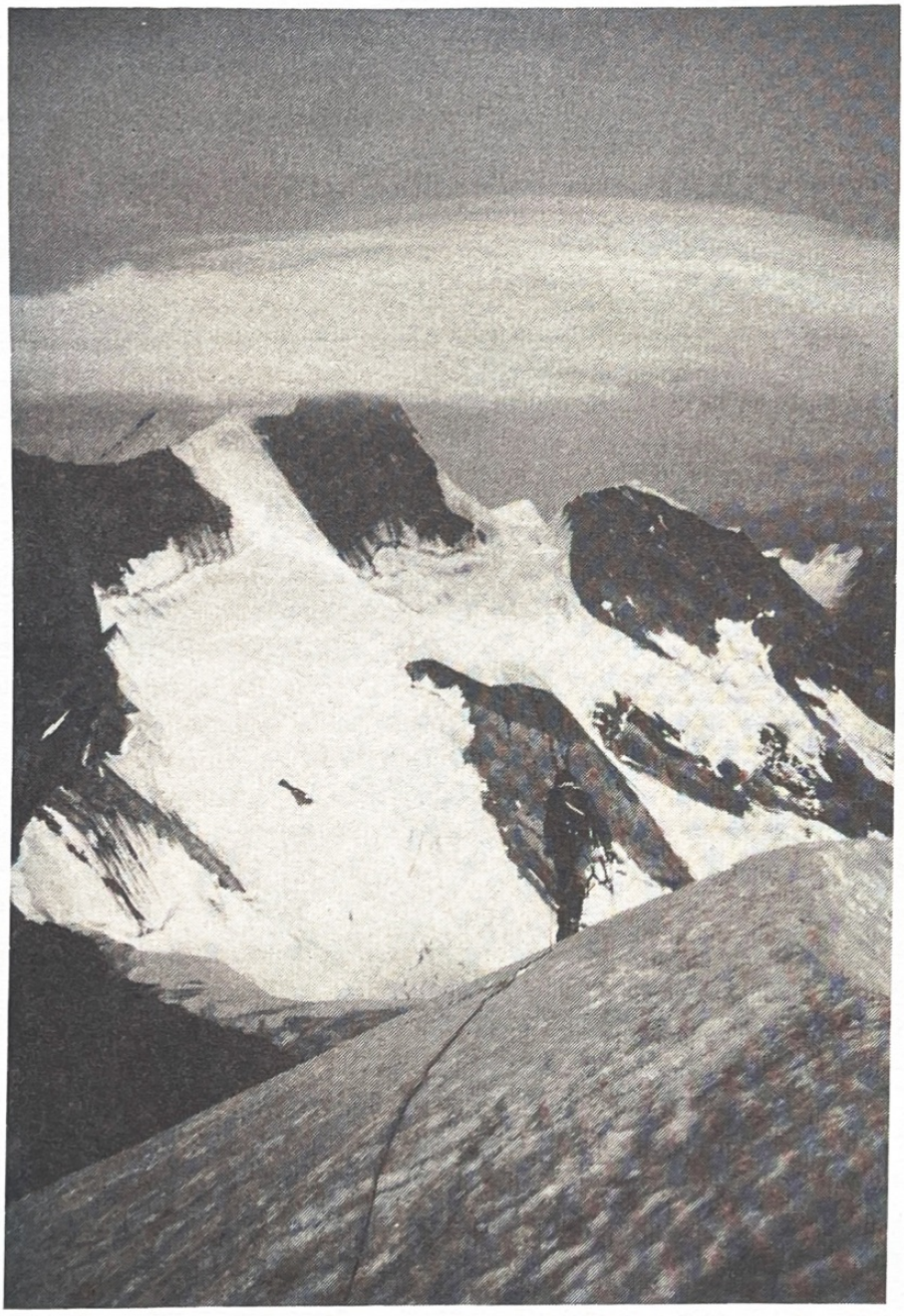
The weekend before departure found me doing some "too little, too late" training for the Kain face in the Lake Lovely water area. I cannot deny most of my expertise is with rock and snow routes. I have never considered myself an ice climber of anywhere near the same calibre. In the case of Robson we were looking at 250 m and 50 degrees for the Kain Face part of the route and a further 500 m and 45 degrees average for the Roof. Not bad for an initiation into the art.

The usual time to complete the route from a high camp at 3000 m is 13 hours. But consider the following: ideal conditions usually do not last more than a week or two; some years Robson may not be safe to climb at all; it seems that every year recently climbers are killed or seriously injured; evacuation may be next to impossible; whiteout and violent storms are to be expected; rotten snow on the Kain face may make a bivouac essential before descending; neither Uli or I had ever attempted anything quite this big before. That was the kind of mental dialogue going through my head every time I paused long enough to allow negative thought processes to gain the upper hand.

A nagging disquietude was to remain with me for the next two weeks. My gesture at Lake Lovely Water was inadequate to deal with it. I found myself on two occasions inventing half-hearted excuses such as "The weather crapped out," "The condition's weren't right," or "I'm satisfied just to have been there," to spout on my return, all the while realizing I was going to give it my best shot. You see, it all comes down to "feeding the rat."

I suspect all mountaineers have a rat. When it gets really hungry you have to go off and do something either stupid or great, depending on the outcome. "Feeding" your rat is all about breaking down the barriers to success and dealing with the disquietude that won't let you take the safe and easy street through life and the fear if you take the risks. The physical obstacles don't stack up much compared to the mental barriers we put in the way of ourselves. For me, to run from such a challenge is to lose and to lose big.

Uli and I rendezvoused in the locality of Mount Robson. It felt good to shoulder the heavy pack and get under way. Undertaking the physical work gave a temporary respite from the hen-pecking mental demons. We had a week of food socked away on our backs. We were allowing plenty of time if we needed it. It was to take us two days to nearly circumnavigate Mount Robson just to get to the north side where the route lay. Even so, the packs took a tool and we camped 500 meters below the optimal campground for the Kain route.



The Kain Face of Robson, as seen from Mt. Resplendent. Photo by P. Kubik.

The next day saw us doing a reconnaissance up to the Dome at 3050 m which is the normal campground. Our route took us up an active icefall rather than a longer and safer way around the head of the cirque. Given the grotty condition of the ice (there was a lot of it falling), upon our return we decided it would be desirable to move our camp higher rather than face the icefall a second time.

Before moving camp we took a jaunt up nearby Mount Resplendent for a day. We now got our first complete glimpse of the Kain Route and more interestingly, the Roof above. An ominous cloud cap was building under high winds. The weather and conditions were certainly less than optimal. It wasn't freezing at night and a party had been chased off Robson's north face which was streaming with running water. We had concerns since the snow was not consolidating and the Kain Face might not be safe for climbing. One party of two had climbed it recently, but on their third attempt. Other small parties were backing off due to the conditions.

Uli and I moved camp up to the Dome directly below the route. We went the long way around at the head of the cirque, via the col between Resplendent and Robson. A drop of perhaps 2000 meters to the south and we would have circumnavigated Robson in its entirety. I was nicely acclimatized and building confidence. A large guided party had come up the icefall approach and got the best campground on the Dome. We opted for one further out on the snowfield and staked out a perimeter. A group of three Californians set up camp nearby and proceeded to roam around unroped between the three encampments.

The weather followed its unstable pattern and deteriorated. Rather than spend the day tent-bound we strolled over to have a look at the Fuhrer Ridge route and the north face, but didn't climb The Helmet nearby, not wanting to soak our gear. Neither the conditions not our attitude portended favourably for us to summit the next day. In fact, we were running out of time as we effectively had only one climbing day left.

Our summit attempt day turned out to be one of those "Zen and the Art of Mountaineering" sort of days. I didn't sleep well what with all sorts of irrational thoughts filling my brain. Around 2:30 am we watched the guided party setting off by headlamp into a whiteout. One of the guides had summited on Robson five times and could probably have done it blindfolded. We slept for three more hours hoping the weather would break. It didn't. All of a sudden my weak excuses, already prepared by my traitorous subconscious, came flooding forward. Neither of us was quite prepared for these conditions to say the least. At this point the little Zen twist arose which was to make this day memorable for things other than mountaineering.

I distinctly remember going back to sleep for quite a while - one and a half hours - no thoughts of going up disturbing my slumber. I woke up feeling tremendously refreshed. My noxious little trembling was now replaced by a quiet self-confidence. By letting it go, the summit no longer mattered to me in the same way as before. We had actually given up our attempt some ninety minutes ago, intending to head down. I could have easily dragged out one of my "canned" excuses. But now a new game was afoot. The act of giving up had put things in an entirely new perspective. It occurred to me that it no longer mattered whether we went up or down, so since we were there we may as well go up. In some small way I had triumphed over ego, the mental demons were at bay. I could go home or I could go on.

We went on. We realized we were short on time now. We set off into the cloud, following the highway to the face. My mind was simply a regulator now - pick in, foot up, crampon in, a steady regular progress being realized up the face. Way, way up, the clouds parted momentarily below us. I looked out awestruck into the vastness of crevassed ice fields and laughed inwardly at the quixotic detachment I was feeling. I was enjoying this.

The inside of a cloud has never been more beautiful. I know I'll head back to Robson some day to do the Fuhrer Ridge just to see what I missed. We summited eventually, the fear of a bivouac adding impetus to our descent. The guides had an interesting technique for getting their clients down the Kain Face. Three ropes were tied together to provide a long belay rope. Two clients were tied together at the end and lowered down. Two long belays in this fashion were enough to bring them close to the bottom.

Now from the vantage point of over a year I can think back and reflect upon the challenge of Mount Robson and the Little twist that got me to the summit. No doubt our training permits us to aspire to such a challenge but sometimes now I think it is more ourselves that are the obstacle and not the mountain. We constantly erect mental barriers in the guise of this or that pretence that the wonder is we ever leave the trailhead. So the next time you are beset on every side by the hordes of mental demons, stand back a little and listen. It might have been nothing at all.

AROUND THE STEIN

1. RUTLEDGE GLACIER RAMBLINGS, 30 June - 2 July, 1990

by **Brian Gavin**

A_5 we parked at the very end of the Kwoiek Creek main road. It was trying to rain - somewhat successfully. Panic struck when my boots were discovered missing! My mind raced through the various options which included an Australian trick of fitting crampons to runners. After hurriedly explaining details of the route up the creek to the others - and assuring them it was only three hours in - I left to retrieve the boots.

My calculations projected an arrival time at the early morning rendezvous, a return to trail head, then three hours in. Seemed feasible but not much to spare. Sunset near 10 pm. The major bonus of this disaster was the ultimate 1990 Toyota 4 Runner test drive of all time - Dave seemed to wince as he offered the keys to the Machine. The Machine was still very young. With the greatest respect for the tachometer, I arrived back and successfully retrieved those damn boots from the safety of my trunk! Ten minutes of frustration in the Superstore equipped me with garbage bags - in case of a bivy. What seemed an eternity brought me back to the end of the road only fifteen minutes behind estimations. Fairly throwing my pack on, I plunged into the slash, heading uphill to the cut line. It wasn't raining at the moment but looked as if it could. I kept pushing, fast, steady. Use every game trail possible - critters aren't dumb about navigating. Keeping against the base of the slope on my right, a very distinctive game trail took me to and through a brief stretch of slide alder. A little more forest, then the rockslide along the beaver swamp. My God it still looks a long way. Past the rockslide, the hillside became quite steep and plunged right into the swamp. Serious sidehilling. Lots of Tarzan moves to go along out of the wet. This was abandoned for the straight up approach. Ross would have loved it. The tanglefoot assumed serious proportions - and was wet. In moments I was soaked. The rhodo's and willows clawed at my glasses, as I tried to see through the water covered lenses. More Tarzan moves, heading upward like a four wheel drive, pulling over deadfall, fending off branches snagging my pack. The terrain began to ease a little. A vague ridge appeared and I used it since the brush was a bit higher. Darkness was coming. Pressing on, a meadow or clearing seemed to be off to the left. Soon I was there, but the meadow was damp. However, now free of the bush, the pace picked up. Must start to think about where to crash. Continuing up the moraine, I discovered footsteps in a snowpatch! Hello's were unanswered. Where would you camp if it was your choice? Man, it's dark. Well, top of this rise is it. Coming over the top the ground seemed to level a bit. One more hello and then its time for the garbage bag bivy, I guess. I yelled and someone else yelled in fright! I was 5 meters from the tents but couldn't see them - it was so black. The others had all gone to sleep but were now peeling themselves off the ceiling. A head - a light - it's Mark. "Wow Brian, how long did it take you?" A look at my watch said exactly three hours. "Three hours! It took us six!" And so to sleep.

Sunday dawned reasonably fair, but not cloudless. The troops were pressed into an early departure. Above camp, we kicked step up the firm snow of the gully heading to the glacier. From this point a 300 m 40 degree coulouir brought us directly to a 2450 m break in the ridge running north from Kwoiek Peak. How the first part of my hidden agenda was shared with the gang as I recommended a dash across the Kwoiek Glacier to ascend Haynon Peak. This should provide excellent views of "the beautiful Haynon Lake valley" (Culbert) and Tzequa Lakes. - location of the 1971 BCMC summer camp. The participants were

readily sold on the prospect. Haynon Peak was easily ascended from the col to its southwest, and the valley was indeed, beautiful. Views to the Chochiwa Glacier and peaks beyond suggested possibilities for the future. Looking northwest down into Stuholait Lake, we observed an interesting morainal feature at the south end. Unfortunately, both sides of the lake are steep and guarded by non-trivial slide alder.

After enjoying lunch and some sun on the summit of Haynon, we packed up descending back to our packs in the col. The weather seemed to be deteriorating, albeit slowly. Striking towards the southwest, we headed towards the head of the Kwoiek Glacier. Ascending steeper slopes presently brought us into low cloud and onto the summit of Kumkan Peak. A cool breeze sprang up. A brief snack and we were moving again.

Retracing our steps down the north side we dropped out of the clouds very quickly and swung left to start northwest towards home. Nearing the broad col below, we were impressed by the size and extent of a huge wind drift - a ridge some 20 m high and well over half a kilometer in length! Once past this feature, we headed toward the top of our couloir. However, the clouds parted. We could accumulate still more points! Thusly, were the troops pressed up Kwoiek Peak itself - highest in the area. The views were peak - a - boo of the valley to the south. Mehatl was invisible.

Since this was only a C trip - we had a curfew to meet. Being downhill all the way - motivation wasn't hard to come by. Nearing the ridge to which the couloir had provided access, we noticed that the bench glacier across the north wall might provide an even easier descent. Having one very tired Gordon Grant on my rope, and Mark recovering from a serious burn to his hand (and so not looking for arrest practice) my rope opted for this route over the couloir. It proved very staightforward and we descended to camp within moments of each other. Thusly, the curfew was observed - and we avoided converting this C - trip to a D - trip by 30 minutes.

Next day, we woke to the sound of rain on the tent. A check outside noted that the clouds were low and solid. Following breakfast, and having stalled as long as possible, we packed and walked out in steady rain. The descent was no better than the route in although I showed the others "the right route". Four hours brought us to the cars and the drive home.

Party: Randy Stoltmann, Dave Robertson, Kim Langager, Gordon Grant, Mark Force, and Brian Gavin.

2. MEHATL PK. , 1-3 September, 1990

by **Brian Gavin**

Ensuring my boots were in place, a totally new crew was pressed into an early morning departure. Leaving Boston Bar, we travelled north from Big Bend and were presently assessed $5 / vehicle by the Boothroyd Indian Band. Somewhat soured, we continued on and soon reached the end of the Kwoiek Creek road. How calm it all seemed with everything organized as it should be. In spite of quite a bit of cloud, it seemed as if better weather would come.

Well briefed on the features of the approach, the group plunged into the slash and forest beyond. The lack of bugs and wet bush made for pleasant travel. Near the end of the forest, with judicious use of game trails, the alder was cunningly avoided altogether. The rockslide beside the beaver swamps was easily travelled past - again with no sign of beaver. At the end of the rockslide, a brainstorming session produced an alternative with nothing to lose. We decided to use the rockslide to gain 150m and then contour across easier ground. This worked quite well. The rhodo's and willows weren't any thinner but easier than fighting them straight uphill. Presently, the moraine was reached and shortly thereafter - the campsite used two months earlier. Above this, all the snow had melted but we had a meltwater stream. The approach had required only four hours with a group

intent on sticking together. Over supper, the clouds began to dissipate. We left, climbing the short gully south of camp to face a completely exposed, blue - ice glacier. The couloir used in July was full of ice. We roped up then cramponed south up the bare ice towards a notch. Just before the notch was an airy crevasse crossing which found some folks moving slowly with a belay. Pressing on, we descended a loose rock gully down the other side to the bare Rutledge Glacier 150 m below. We had lunch sitting in the sun on a huge, flat erratic. At this point the group split into four bound for the west ridge with the other five intent on the north face. Paul and Albert extolled the virtues of an aesthetic line east of centre. What about the huge crevasse? We'll sneak by it via the rock! Hmm. O.K.

Approaching the base, I found myself in the lead, kicking steps up a very pleasant ridge. Minor zig - zags brought us to the bottom of a short steep slope leading to the monster crevasse. "Paul - why don't you have a look?" "OK" So up he goes with axe and hammer and says "Wow". I asked how it looked and he said "Does Khumbu icefall mean anything?" Great. Here we are halfway up with two relatively inexperienced people, time is running out, the route's a disaster and the alternative is down. "What do you think?" And Paul said - "I think we can do it." Really! OK by me. So up we all went the top of a crevasse requiring a 15 - 20 m climb down steep ice, 40 m travel along ice cubes in the bottom to a possible exit left. Well, we had lots of screws and three hammers for five people. "Lets get to it then". Paul did a beautiful job leading this. Andrew was short on experience but long on enthusiasm. Good listening and application saw him through. Darlene wished she'd been out more this summer.

Hours later saw us over and front pointing up the final 200 m of 50 degree ice to the rock above. This went quickly, the moat was crossed and we were on top. Lunch was very late. Thank goodness for a clear sky because we're in deep now. We hurried down the west ridge toward the col.

At the col we roped quickly for the glacier and set off north. We noticed the notch from which we had descended at lunch was considerably higher than a lower pass half a kilometer west. The map suggested this might save some time. At mid-point on the glacier, the sun set and a full moon rose. Wow! We avoided use of headlights all the way to this pass. But over the north side was a steep drop and an icy slope. This wasn't on the map. Paul wondered if we'd be better to retrace our steps - at least we knew the way. My concern was descending a steep, blue - ice glacier in the dark and dodging crevasses with tired, relatively inexperienced people in the party. We chose to keep going. We descended to the lowest point in the pass and found the snow slope much easier. A few steps proved it to be a glacier. Rope up - crampons and we were able to follow foot prints of the Mehatl west ridge party. Nearing the bottom, we determined there was a good sized lake - also not on the map. We struck right over the moraine and followed benches to yet another unmarked lake. Now using headlights we sought a way down but seemed trapped above some bluffs. I suggested crossing the outlet of this second lake toward benches I thought I saw beyond. However, concern was expressed we were close to waterfalls and that meant trouble. The consensus was to bivy where we were - only minutes from the tents and bags. Andrew won instant favour by producing a stove and pot from his pack. At least we would have hot drinks. Unfortunately, he was so tired, his body couldn't keep any food or liquid down for some time.

We spent a restless night, changing positions and huddling to stay just beyond the comfort zone. It was a beautiful night. Six hours later we were stomping warmth back into numb feet and legs before moving on. My imagined route of the previous night turned out to be right, but did have a loose descent at the end. We passed the bare snout of the glacier just above camp and met Doug, Shirley and Dan heading up to Kwoiek Peak. I recommended the bench glacier we had descended in July and they later reported it perfect. We descended to camp and opted for a few hours sack time.We got up at 11 and had a leisurely walk out.

The drive out was uneventful until we reached the Boothroyd roadblock - or the Nintendo video arcade operated by a Honda generator. After some discussion and exchange of literature, we refused to pay a second toll to leave, and were quietly permitted to do so.

Party: West Ridge: Dan McAuliffe, Shirley Rempel, Doug Carter, Phyllis Malette
North Face: (and bivy team) Albert Souza, Paul Hannig, Andrew Wilkinson, Darlene Anderson and Brian Gavin

3. KWOIEK NEEDLE AND TACHEWANA PK, 29 June - 1 July, 1991

by **Brian Gavin**

A line from Dick Culbert's Alpine Guide refers to "the beautiful Haynon Lake valley," even though Fairley's guide suggests "the approach to Haynon Lake via roads in Log Creek makes more sense. "Well, nothing like another adventure.

I knew one person who had approached the Chochiwa Glacier from Log Creek, so called up to inquire. "Oh yeah, just three hours of light bush" he reported. Good. The folks should be able to handle that. The objective was also more glacier travel experience for people who had recently completed the club's introduction to mountaineering course.

We all managed to gain the end of the road near 1200 m in the South fork of Log Creek. A mere 5 km horizontally and 500 m vertically was a tongue of ice from the Chochiwa Glacier. No problem! Just an abrupt looking headwall.

After a discussion about keeping the party together, we plunged into the slash, some alder, the forest. A short break at the first stream provided an opportunity to adjust clothes, water up and peruse the map. At this point began the lengthy "stay high vs. go low" discussion between Greg and Mark. The flats looked wet. In brief, we did stay remarkably together. Remarkably? Oh yes, the unreported part of the approach was an additional two to three hours of slide alder. This consisted of about half a dozen slide paths of various widths. Sometimes we found animals trails, but animals don't wear packs. Sometimes we found small meadows which included prickly currants and stinging nettle. But mostly we found alder well over our heads. Sometimes we didn't touch the ground. Occasionally we "vegetable rappelled" down steep banks into streams.

Beyond the second major crossing from the north, we came upon what proved to be a moraine. Big rocks. We tried crossing it to cross the creek, but it was unpleasant. On different occasions, both Hilton and Roman executed head - plants on rock - without hard hats. The rocks won, but were lenient, thankfully. Crossing back over the moraine, we stayed on its north side and eventually crashed out of the willow onto the snow. The avalanche debris was considerable.

Now the magic began, as the normal creek route down the headwall was a beautiful snow-filled couloir. Kicking steps, we were soon at the top. The troops were looking tired and suggested we call it a day. We were a kilometer short of the planned camp at the col. Lots of flat spots, water ... why not? And so here we were - the 5 km and 500 m had required a mere 6 hours.

Next day, I woke early to find us whited out. I dozed off again. But shortly, the warmth of the sun was apparent. Looking outside, I realized we were basically at cloud level, and the peaks above use were in the sun. The others were roused to action and we were underway before 9 am. Roping up at the col, having chosen Kwoiek Needle as our destination, we headed down the east edge of the Chochiwa Glacier past Longslog Mountain. Gaining the col on the north side of this latter peak, we saw half a dozen goats including kids.

We paused at the col for lunch, seeking shelter from the strong breeze. The peaks S and W of the Chochiwa were shrouded in cloud. Visibility was improving on our objective. We rambled steadily up the long but easy west ridge. All were sucked in by the "false summit" - one of those high points that must be the top, but when you get there, the real summit is further along. This took its toll as Paul and Muriel decided to enjoy the sun.

At the summit of Kwoiek Needle, we were treated to excellent views to the north of Skihist and Petlushkwohap. To the south below us were the roads of Log Creek, the cars, and the green hell. "It's a long way home", so we headed back. The weather trend suggested tomorrow would be a fine day. Passing by Longslog Mt. we were observed by three motionless billy goats.

Canada Day saw us up early again, this time not being fooled by the wisps of valley cloud passing around us. Some elected to stay in camp while others retraced our steps of the previous day back to the col. Roping up, Roman and Maria led us up the ridge towards Tachewana Peak. It was a clear day, but with a stronger, cooler breeze. The route was mainly snow with some rock scrambling. During lunch, we enjoyed views of Urquhart, Breakenridge, The Old Settler and Mt. Baker. For an added thrill, we directly descended the north face glacier on our return to camp.

Arriving there, we found some rather excited people, who gestured wildly at the slopes south of camp. Seems some crashing cornices had disturbed their lazy day. So we packed up and departed. From the bottom of the couloir we stayed south of the creek to a large snowbridge we had spotted. This worked well, but the green hell awaited.

Party: Michelle Edwards, Georgia Newsome, Paul Hannig, Mark Force, Roman Bernegger, Mike McCullough, Greg Stoltmann, Cheryl Leskiw, Hilton Poidevin, Muriel Hemmes, Maria Gunkel, Jos van der Burg, Dave Robinson, and Brian Gavin.

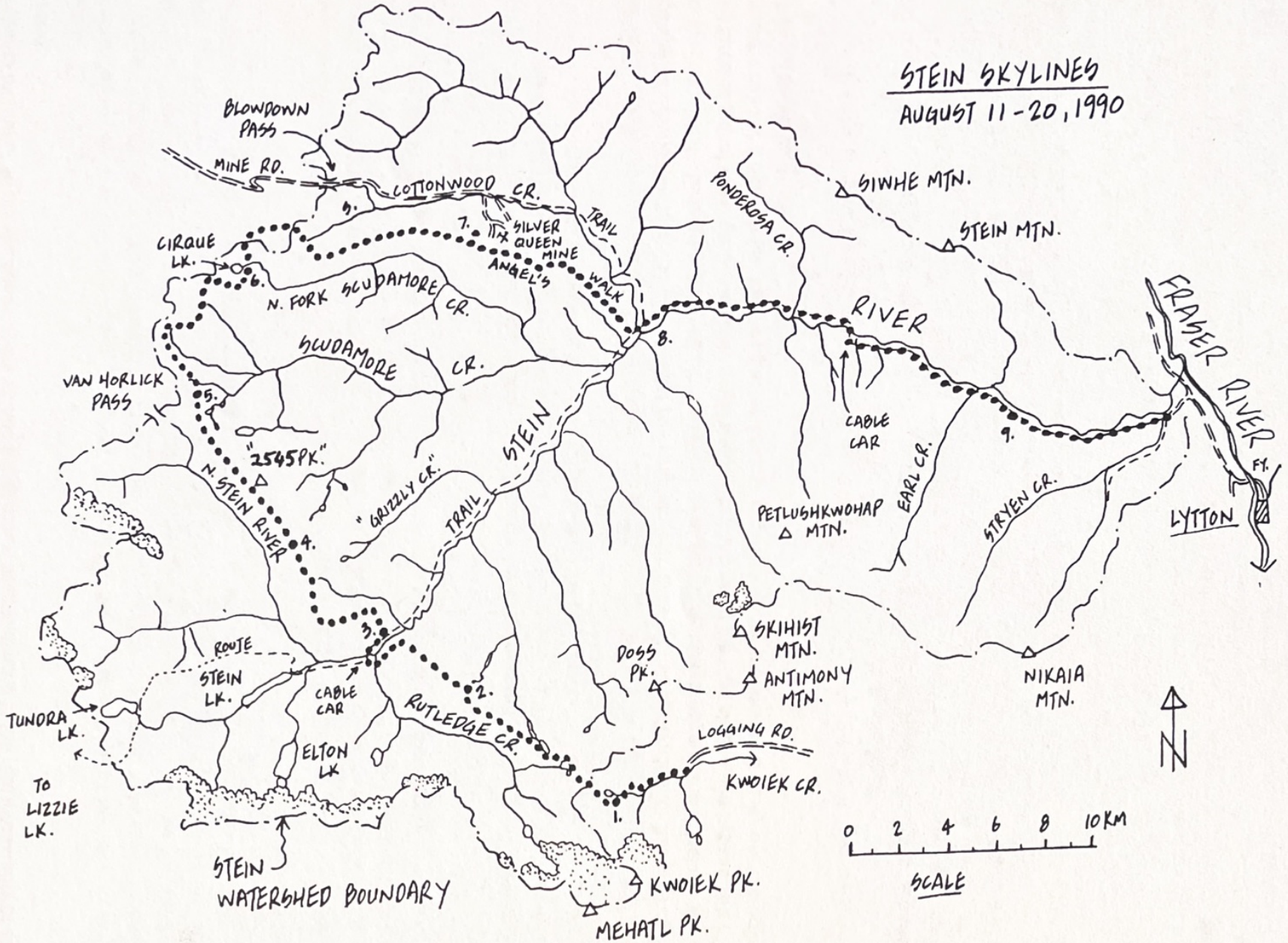
4.STEIN SKYLINES, 11-20 August, 1990

by **Randy Stoltmann**

The dusty logging road rambles on past jade green lakes and decimated forests. Green sweeps of marshland seem out of place amid the fresh brown logging slash. High on a mountain shoulder, a yellow spar sits poised to yard in yet another clearcut's timber.

This all too familiar portrait of B.C. "wilderness" is the valley of Kwoiek Creek, one of the western tributaries of the Fraser River which drains the leeward slopes of the Coast Mountains into the Fraser Canyon. One valley north of Kwoiek is the Stein. Unlike its neighbouring valleys, the Stein is still real wilderness; only a primitive trail penetrates its heart, and the tributaries Cottonwood, Scudamore, Rutledge and dozens more flow from the glaciers through wild forests that are home to grizzly bear, wolverine, mountain lion and other children of the wilderness.

At the road end, amid logging debris and burned slopes, Leo DeGroot, my brother Greg and I unload our gear and make final preparations. We plod up the slash and into the forest. The going is good through open woods of Engelmann spruce and amabilis fir. Occasional rock bluffs are shaded by lodgepole pine, the ground beneath them covered by chipmunk cracked cone scales and thick needle duff. We soon pick up a vague trail, where the remains of a lean-to suggest that this route originated from trappers many years ago. Avalanche chutes penetrate the dense forest from the steep slopes above to the north. The forest then gives way to a massive slide path, a patchwork of talus, slide alder and battered mountain hemlocks. We work our way diagonally down the talus and along the margin of the beaver swamp which covers the valley floor. On the



The route around the Stein followed by the party. Map by R. Stoltmann.

grass covered mound of an ancient beaver lodge stands a fully grown tree, testimony to the real inhabitants of this little corner of the world.

For an hour beyond the swamp, we penetrate dense rhododendron thickets in steep sidehill hemlock forest. Rain squalls pass, followed by periods of sunshine. Leo and I discuss route options, deciding to head up to treeline immediately. Heather meadows and rock bluffs are a welcome change from the bush. We pass an isolated little meadow basin with a view of the glacier-hung wall of Kwoiek Peak at the head of the valley to the south. We follow draws and bluffs to a high cirque containing an unnamed alpine lake. Above the lake, talus and steep heather slopes rise up to a pass. Beyond, still hidden from our view, is the Stein.

In the clear morning sunlight, the three of us follow an ascending traverse across the talus above the sparkling waters of the unnamed lake. From the talus, bluffs, krummholz and meadow patches lead steeply up to a bench and the final easy scree below the pass. From the divide, we have our first view northward across the imaginary line into the Stein watershed. Directly below, the indigo disk of another unnamed lake forms the foreground to a scene of meadowed ridges, steep forested valleys and subalpine lakes.

We angle to the right, dropping across a huge rock slab to a remnant snowfield among the talus. A short glissade, followed by a long scramble down the rocks brings us to the shore of the lake. Leo braves the frigid waters for a swim as Greg and I lounge around on the big rocks at the water's edge, eating and drinking the pure water.

The lake shore is steep, so we ascend to a bench above, soon finding easy walking through pleasant meadows and subalpine forest groves. We round the west side of the first of two long, shallow lakes. We fill our bottles for the dry ridge ahead, then climb to the crest. Wind - battered spruce and pine trees line up along the windward edge of the ridgeline, while to the west the great forested gulf of Rutledge Creek valley drops away. Rambling along the high skyline, we bypass two minor summits and round the head of a deep cirque, traversing steep heather slopes to a spur overlooking a rocky basin cradling a chain of lakes. This will be our campsite.

August 13 begins as a pleasant bright cloudy day. After a leisurely breakfast, we climb slowly to the ridge separating us from the Stein. From the top we can nearly see the valley bottom, but the river remains elusive below the final steeper slope. Dropping down over boulders and granite slabs, we keep right, heading for a picturesque meadow and pond.A series of heather filled gullies leads down in a great staircase towards the main creek. Soon, stands of subalpine fir and Engelmann spruce begin to close in, and we crash through thickets of willow beneath the conifers. We make fast progress down the mountainside, which steepens as we leave the hanging valley of our tributary creek. Scrambling down bluffs and talus slopes, I notice the forest becoming drier, with Douglas-fir appearing among the spruce and true fir. Windfall patches and seepage areas thick with devil's club slow our progress somewhat, but the pull of the river, now roaring from below, keeps us eagerly moving downward.

From a bluff, we finally glimpse the milky green waters of the Stein River coursing through tall stands of spire-shaped Engelmann spruce on the flat valley bottom. Another twenty minutes through windfall-punctuated forest brings us to the valley floor. Backwaters and dense willow thickets make for slow going. We push through the undergrowth towards the light of the river opening. A few minutes later, crowded into a little open space on the clay bank, we observe the river at close range for the first time, noting its depth and swiftness. No logs span the channel. Leo leads upstream towards Rutledge Creek, through the tangle of brush past big fire - scarred Douglas-firs and one notable white pine. Rutledge Ck. is also running high, but its glacial waters are spread out into the willow and alder thickets by a log jam. Leo and I check the crossing without our packs, finding a series of slender but walkable logs leading across. A short walk through the forest brings us to the Stein trail at the

Overlooking the N Stein valley. Photo by R. Stoltmann.

On the N. Stein ridge. Photo by R. Stoltmann.

upper cable crossing. One by one, we cross the river, gratefully accepting this little piece of technology in an otherwise primitive land.

For the first time in several days, I can walk with even strides down the thin ribbon of civilization. The trail edges the base of the mountainside and enters a pretty little cedar grove. Not far beyond, a side trail leads us over a log bridged slough to Island Camp, a small sandbar on a bend of the Stein. In the cool of evening we cook beside the gently swirling river as the line of shadow creeps up the steep mountainside above to the north. Tomorrow, we too will creep ever so slowly up that mountainside en route to the North Stein Ridge.

The valley floor still lies in shadow as we pack our camp and walk the forest trail to the base of the mountain. Our slow, steady climb begins through open stands of lodgepole pine and Douglas-fir. The sandy ground is littered with needles, cones and crackling dry sticks and small windfalls. Easy bluffs offer views out towards Rutledge Creek, flowing from the south, across the Stein. The forest thickens, and windfalls become frequent. Every now and then, large fire-scarred Douglas-firs stand among the slender, younger trees. We plod on, content that we are making good progress up towards the high country.

Scrambling up the dry, dusty bluffs under the sparse canopy of fir and pine, I am thoroughly enjoying the warmth of the mid-day sun. Sweat runs down my brow, dust clouds rise from each footprint. Gradually the firs are left behind, and gnarled whitebark pines punctuate the ridgeline. Here a long ago lightning strike ignited the pine forest, burning the trees all across the face of the ridge. Finally we reach the narrow spine of heather meadow punctuated with the silver sculptures of fire-killed pines. The north slope drops at a high angle to a brushy tributary valley. Long avalanche chutes streak the opposite side, originating from a remarkably uniform ridgeline.

Our own ridge runs westward, broken by dips and knolls, but rising steadily to meet the North Stein Ridge some two kilometres away. After lunch, we wander this high rooftop of the wilderness, with views all around, dipping and meandering around thickets of krummholz and up the final rock and meadow slopes to the high point. For the first time, the vastness of the North Stein valley adds to the growing panorama, now encompassing the magnificent sweep of forest and peaks from the upper canyon of the Stein, past Elton and Stein lakes and unnamed tributary valleys to the distant saddle of Van Horlick pass away to the north.

Leo breaks the silence. Forest industry people had talked about putting a road through Van Horlick Pass as an alternate way to haul timber out of the Stein, should the proposed road through the lower canyon from Lytton be rejected because of cultural sites. For us, no calculations or economic arguments can justify any roads in this valley. It simply must remain for its own sake; for the simple purpose of no purpose at all; just wilderness for the sake of wilderness. And I wondered if those who would see the Stein logged from their distant pedestals of political power, were they standing beside us now, would still be blind.

We now turn north, beginning our long journey on the eastern divide of the North Stein. Below to the east is a gentle meadowed bowl with several lakes. We contour down past the highest lake to refill our water bottles and stop for something to eat.The last climb out of the bowl to the 2,100 metre peak above passes quickly. From the boulder - jumbled summit, I gaze eastward into the valley of a tributary Leo calls Grizzly Creek. When he worked on upgrading the Stein trail near where it crosses this creek, some of the crew had had a feeling that they would encounter a grizzly. Although the bear was never seen, the name commemorates the unexplained feeling.

Afternoon sun slants across the tree tops; the cluster of little indigo lakes lies just ahead of the advancing line of shadow cast by the peak on which we stand. The distant high ridges of Stein, Siwhe, Petlushkwohap and Skihist mountains rise from the

buff - coloured rainshadow ranges. Petlushkwohap, with its curious darker rock, seems in perpetual shadow, even as the sun blazes unobstructed out of a flawless sky. Away to the north, the `2545 peak', an unnamed horn of broken rock, keeps watch over the ridge. I wonder about how we will pass this sinister obstacle.

The high ridge of our peak is broken by towers and gullies, and an obvious line of passage is not readily discernable. I scramble on without my pack to make a reconnaissance of the route ahead. A series of broken ledges bypasses the first peak and gully. Leo and I leapfrog ahead, assessing the route. Greg follows when we confirm that the route will go, as he is less comfortable on the steep, exposed terrain. The final peak is broader, and we cross over the summit and down its northeast ridge. From a saddle in the ridge, we drop down talus in the amber light of evening to a small glacier. The little remnant icefield is strewn with rocks and dirt on its lower reaches. Water flows among bedrock outcroppings and moraines, and we set up camp on a heather patch beside a meltwater trickle. The sun has dropped below the ridgeline, strange lens - shaped clouds have developed and a fitful breeze ruffles the tent fly. Crowded around my candle lantern, we cook dinner, then retreat to our sleeping bags. At the end of this 13 hour day, I quickly fall into the deep sleep that follows physical exertion in the high country.

With last night's wind and curious clouds, I am expecting to wake up to low cloud. But the weather is still fine - a cool clear morning more reminiscent of fall. Today we will encounter the`2545 peak', an uncertainty which has been in the back of our minds since first sighting the distant dark horn from the divide at the head of Kwoiek Creek. We traverse across steep talus and heather slopes, then climb to gain the ridge crest. The walking is easy, and the ever present view down into the North Stein draws my eye into its beauty and wildness. A little scrambling bypasses a minor summit. Beyond, the gentle heather - covered ridgeline sweeps towards the eroding spire of the `2545 peak'. As we near the peak, it looks less imposing, with detail showing on its flanks, and perceived steepness diminishing. A few cairns lead us on across a little notch and up scree slopes on the shoulder of the peak. From a bluff we finally have a view north along the west side of the peak. The rugged slope is all gullies and ridges, with steep loose rock, scree and heather. As we suspected, we must drop down below the steep terrain, traversing at roughly treeline, to bypass this peak.

Leo leads down a talus and around a nose of rock to the head of a steep dirt gully peppered with loose rocks. As Leo and I work our way across the top of the gully, Greg decides to drop lower and cross where it is narrower. After regrouping on the ridge beyond, we descend easy heather and soft sandy scree, then begin traversing boulder slopes with krummholz bands. The sidehill traverse brings us to steep meadows full of marmot and pika burrows, and thickets of tough krummholz. A long ascending traverse returns us to the ridge crest some distance north of the`2545 peak'. We celebrate passing this obstacle with lunch on the ridge.

Overhead, the sky is now a bright even gray overcast. Below to the east, in the headwaters of one of the many tributaries of Scudamore Creek, lies an aquamarine oval of a lake ringed by tan coloured scree and olive heather meadows. Two more little lakes, these jade green in a bowl of granite talus, occupy the next valley. The ridge now narrows, with the east face dropping 300 metres to another lake in a deep glacier-scoured cirque. In a saddle on the ridge between knolls, I find the leg of a fawn otherwise devoured by a predator, perhaps a wolverine.

Here we leave the North Stein Ridge, glissading down a short snowpatch, traversing scree slopes around the cirque and climbing over a second saddle on the opposite side. The country changes abruptly to expansive meadows, big rolling basins filled with wildflowers and clumps of spire-like subalpine fir. Directly below us we can see our campsite for tonight, a meadowed basin bisected by a clear stream looping around to the east towards the Scudamore. We drop down the rock and heather to the basin floor and set up camp on a level sedge patch. While Leo cooks, I string the food cache rope in a clump of trees nearby. It is a pleasant evening, and with easy walking ahead, relaxing.

A curious marmot is standing upright on a giant mound, perhaps the centuries old home of his ancestors. The piercing whistle echoes across the basin, flooded by morning sunshine. I walk gingerly toward the mound, camera in hand, but the marmot detects my presence, pops down in a twist and disappears into his subterranean dwelling.

This morning is a long walk through the meadows, over a low ridge and across the valley side to the pass at its head. Angling back up the next ridge, we pass a series of little lakes on our way to the crest. The long scramble down begins with a loose talus. I bypass part of the tedious walking with a fast glissade down a snow finger. More rock and heather brings us to the pass leading down to a fork of Van Horlick Creek, where we rest in preparation for the long climb up to the rim of the cirque. A cool wind blows through the pass, and clouds are beginning to drag their tails across the high peaks. The cool air is welcome, though, as we climb the ridge rising east out of the pass. Once high enough, I decide to traverse the mountainside to a low notch in the crest. One of the frequent loose boulders flips loose under my boot and rockets off down the mountain. Bounding and ricocheting down a gully and singing through the air, it shrinks until the only evidence of its continued travel is the echoing cracking and booming 500 metres below. Thousands, millions of years of slow erosion have shaped these peaks. My boots, like the hoof of a mountain goat or paw of a grizzly, have moved a little piece of earth as part of the process. Perhaps that is how insignificant humans are as part of the larger picture.

From the windy little notch I gaze straight down on the blue of Cirque Lake. Beyond, through a pass in the Stein divide, I can see the twin incisions of the mining road to Blowdown Pass. This is the first significant mark of human exploitation, for since Kwoiek Creek we have seen only a few stone cairns and the trail and cable car in the Stein. From the notch, we traverse east to the top of a snowfield which provides a route down to the lake. For the first time on the trip, we use our ice axes, first to chop steps down the initial headwall, then to safeguard against a potential long slide to the rocks below. I glissade down, then turn to watch Greg and Leo. At that moment Leo slips and goes down, accelerating rapidly. He rolls over, digging the pick of his axe into the snow and grinds to a stop. Apart from a somewhat abraded hip, he is OK. The remaining descent to Cirque Lake is over easy meadow and scree.

Light drizzle hangs like a veil from the dark clouds scudding overhead. On the last steep drop to the lake, veins of white quartz in the rock outcrops catch our attention. As I amble down the -gentle meadow towards the lake shore, I am disappointed to find two fire pits - not that I didn't expect them here, only a day's travel from the Blowdown Pass road. When our camp is set up near a little clump of subalpine fir, and the food cache strung in a grove way across the meadow,I return to the fire pits with my ice axe and bury them, scattering the blackened stones and charred wood out of sight in the fir groves.

Some twenty minutes above Cirque Lake, we crest the pass leading into a fork of Blowdown Creek. Here, for the first time in nearly a week, we leave the Stein drainage, contouring across loose dinner plate talus. The hollow sound of shifting stones echoes through the valley as we traverse towards the far ridge crest which marks the Cottonwood - Scudamore divide.

On the divide, beside a toppled over mineral claim post, we stop for lunch. The ridge ahead to the east looks like a series of narrow rock peaks, despite the complete absence of appropriate contours on the topo map. The next hour is spent scrambling up and down over the ridge crest, straddling wedge - shaped rock spines and following ledges and gullies through a maze of krummholz. Each peak that seems like the last is followed by another, but the joy of high scrambling in this airy place compensates for the drudgery of the climbs. After the final peak, the ridge drops in a long gentle curve to a wooded saddle, then rises again to the high peaks above Silver Queen Mine. Meadows along the crest become increasingly dotted with conical Engelmann spruce and rounded whitebark pines. The ground cover is sparser, with clumps of grasses replacing the heather as the climate becomes drier. To the north, the unfortunate scar of the mine road slashes diagonally across the otherwise pristine forested wall of Cottonwood Creek valley. But to the south there are no scars to be seen; the long sweeping curve of forest - carpeted Scudamore Creek valley emerges from the rocks, scintillating under shafts of sunlight piercing the

brooding thunder clouds. Near the saddle, we settle down on the dry ground beneath a grove of trees, having a snack while waiting out a passing squall.

Low sun slants through the thunderheads at the head of Scudamore, illuminating the off and on rain squalls on our ridge. Higher up, the last squall passes, and the crisp shadows define the ridges, trees, and glacier - sculptured basins. We are reluctant to leave this high and lovely ridge, where perfect tent sites nestle behind a wall of wind - whipped pine trees. But there is no water,so we must drop 200 metres down the north side of the ridge to a small lake. Throughout the two basins, bulldozer tracks and diggings mark the mining activity. For all the mess in this beautiful high country; for the roads slashed across Cottonwood and Blowdown valleys; this is only a hobby mine for a few prospectors. It has never provided steady employment, or real wealth; it has only succeeded in diminishing the wildness of this special place.From our camp in the woods near the little lake, we can see none of the mess. Darkness falls quickly over the shady basin under leaden skies. Tomorrow we will follow the Angel's Walk to the Stein River.

Our steady 200 metre climb up the steep bowl to the crest had gone quickly, and now we ramble along the ridge among stunted pines and spruce krummholz. Every now and then, we see ancient pines hacked and squared into mineral claim posts, not so subtle reminders of the fragility of this wilderness. The fascinatingly twisted ridge dips and rises in a series of saddles and knolls. In a few places we must scramble across the sidehills to avoid crags and bluffs. After reaching a highpoint and stopping for a bite to eat near the bleached skull of a goat, we begin a steady descent to a deep saddle. Vestiges of a trail lead up the next knoll, and along a series of dry meadows lined by fire-killed whitebark pines. Now the ridge drops off towards the Stein, which meanders over a thousand metres below. Leo traces the river's course into the hazy distance towards Lytton. Glades soon close into dry forest. Far below to the east, Cottonwood Creek roars through its deepening canyon. As we emerge onto the nose of the ridge, overlooking the Stein valley, I can feel the dryness in the air.

A long talus slope leads us down into dry belt forest crisscrossed with animal trails. As we descend, ponderosa pines become more common, and evidence of past forest fires is frequent. There is that peculiar yellow light and faint presence of electric energy that precedes a thunder storm. As the heavy drops begin to fall, we take shelter in a dense lodgepole pine stand to put on rain gear. The thunder shower soon passes, though, and a fine lunch spot is found on a dry, open rock scattered with pines.

Just below the lunch rocks, I observe several ponderosa pines that have been badly burned on the uphill side. In this hillside location debris tend to pile up against the uphill side of tree trunks. During forest fires this debris burns long and hot, sometimes consuming half the width of the trunk. But the hardy trees respond by beginning a slow healing process, covering the scar with lobes of accelerated growth.

A final steeper section brings us to the open forest of the valley bottom where pleasant Douglas-fir and pine stands are interspersed with rocky clearings covered by moss and lichen. Only a few minutes after reaching the flats, we encounter the Stein trail with its fluorescent orange markers. Leo suggests visiting the nearby rediscovery camp, where he worked one summer. We are welcomed warmly by the staff and native elders in the camp, and invited to stay for tonight's feast. David Lertzman, who Leo and I know from trail work in the Carmanah Valley, tells us of his encounter with a big grizzly bear in the dark forest below Cottonwood Creek. David's immense respect for the great animal is evident in his eyes as he describes the feeling of the encounter, and perhaps that is why the bear left him alone. Down by the river, beside a big fire, one of the elders points out the salmon in the river, and describes how they are caught with a long barbed pole, its tip hand fashioned from metal and hardwood.

After days of simple backpacking foods, the great feast is an unusual pleasure. When we reluctantly leave and walk down the twilight trail to Cottonwood Creek, we are pleasantly filled with good food and good memories of a short time spent with a culture that respects nature as it deserves to be respected. Leo and I wander up to Cottonwood Falls, climbing a bluff above the cascades, and gaze out over the Stein valley. Far to the west, snowy peaks near Elton Lake hold on to the last colour of the sun streaming through broken clouds.

This morning begins with the unusual pleasure of a well worn trail winding among boulders and pine trees. The dry woods gradually merge into thickets of aspen and then into dense coniferous forest puctuated by large fire-blackened Douglas-firs. Claw marks of bears can be seen on some of the aspen trunks. This is the place where David encountered the big grizzly bear.

We walk on through the ever changing forest to Burnt Creek, then on towards Ponderosa Creek. Groves of cedars form cool, damp interludes in the dry forest, and thickets of aspen, cottonwood and birch line the edges of beaver ponds on the river bottomlands. Where the trail passes close to the banks of the Stein there is the strong smell of dead fish; bears have been feeding here. We pass quickly in case the animals are still in the area, noting the fresh carcass of a large steelhead lying in the rushes.

At Ponderosa Creek shelter we stop for lunch beside the river. Leo, who has more food left, bargains with Greg who has little. Desirable items such as trail mix and granola bars demand high trade prices; "your entire supply of crackers for one handfull of trail mix" is a typical demand. Little comes of this bartering.

We have all walked this trail before, and our familiarity with its features makes it like an old friend. The damp cottonwood flats along the river, the dry rocks of Snake Bluffs, the big firs, the aspen groves; all are pleasant landmarks along the trail. Near the cable car Leo points out a cedar tree stripped of bark by natives nearly 100 years ago. On the face of the scar are primitive paintings of animals and humans.

A short way beyond we meet a group of friends heading the other way. I arrange to drive one of their vehicles back to Vancouver. Across the Stein stands Klein's Cabin, built many years ago by Adam Klein, a trapper who envisioned a road and tourist resort in the heart of the valley. The native spiritual values not withstanding, Klein's vision was ahead of its time, seeing the values of wilderness scenery as a commodity to be sustainably used.

We cross the river in the little aluminum basket of the cable car. Downstream we pass Earl's Cabin, built by another early trapper, and Teaspoon Creek where natives long ago stripped bark from cedar trees to weave clothes and baskets. I am saddened to see some of the historic scars vandalized by initial carvers.

The Stein roars through the narrowing valley among big boulders. We press on another twenty minutes past the `teepee' to a pleasant campsite beside the river. This will be our last night in the Stein. Off in the shadows beside the steep wall of the valley an elusive animal darts across our field of view. Its low-slung shape suggests a marten or fisher, but it seemed larger. We discuss what it might have been as twilight falls over the river.

The following morning we eat breakfast at a relaxed pace. Leo sits by the river with the maps, calculating the distance we have travelled. By the end of this day, we will have walked 92 km in 10 days, climbed 6,860 m, and descended 7,960 m.

The dusty trail winds on into the lower canyon of the Stein; below the river races urgently, just as it has for thousands of years. In the heart of the canyon is a rock bluff adorned with native pictographs, mysterious ochre paintings depicting animals and

people in primitive style. They are one more signature of the native culture that has held a presence in the Stein for over 7000 years.In the dry woods above the bluff, where lichen-crusted pines and a solitary juniper cling to the boulders, fading survey ribbons mark the route of the proposed Fletcher Challenge logging road.I can visualize the destruction of blasting this road through the sacred canyon; the booming would echo off the walls as boulders tumbled down upon the ancient paintings. The writing on the walls of this natural shrine would vanish in the splitting of stone and cordite-scented air. Another valley would be forever changed. The wildness and the history would be severed.

The Stein flows only a few more kilometres to where its milky blue-green waters merge with the chocolate-coloured Fraser. We slowly climb the last rise to the trailhead. As always at the end of a long trip, there is a mix of excitement and sadness, for while our goal has been reached, we are also leaving the purity of the wilderness to return to the faster pace of civilization. It is all brought into clear perspective a half-hour later. A house trailer has become jammed on the highway bridge over the Thompson River in Lytton. Local people heading for work wait, some impatiently. An overweight woman tests the temper of a man hard at work trying to free the trailer from the bridge railing. It is hot. There is anger. The patience of the wilderness is not here. I glance back at the Stein River valley across the Fraser, and the view takes me back into the aspen groves and needle-carpeted glens along the swirling river.

Party: Leo DeGroot, Greg Stoltmann, and Randy Stoltmann

5. LIZZIE LAKE TO LOG CK., 14-22 September, 1991

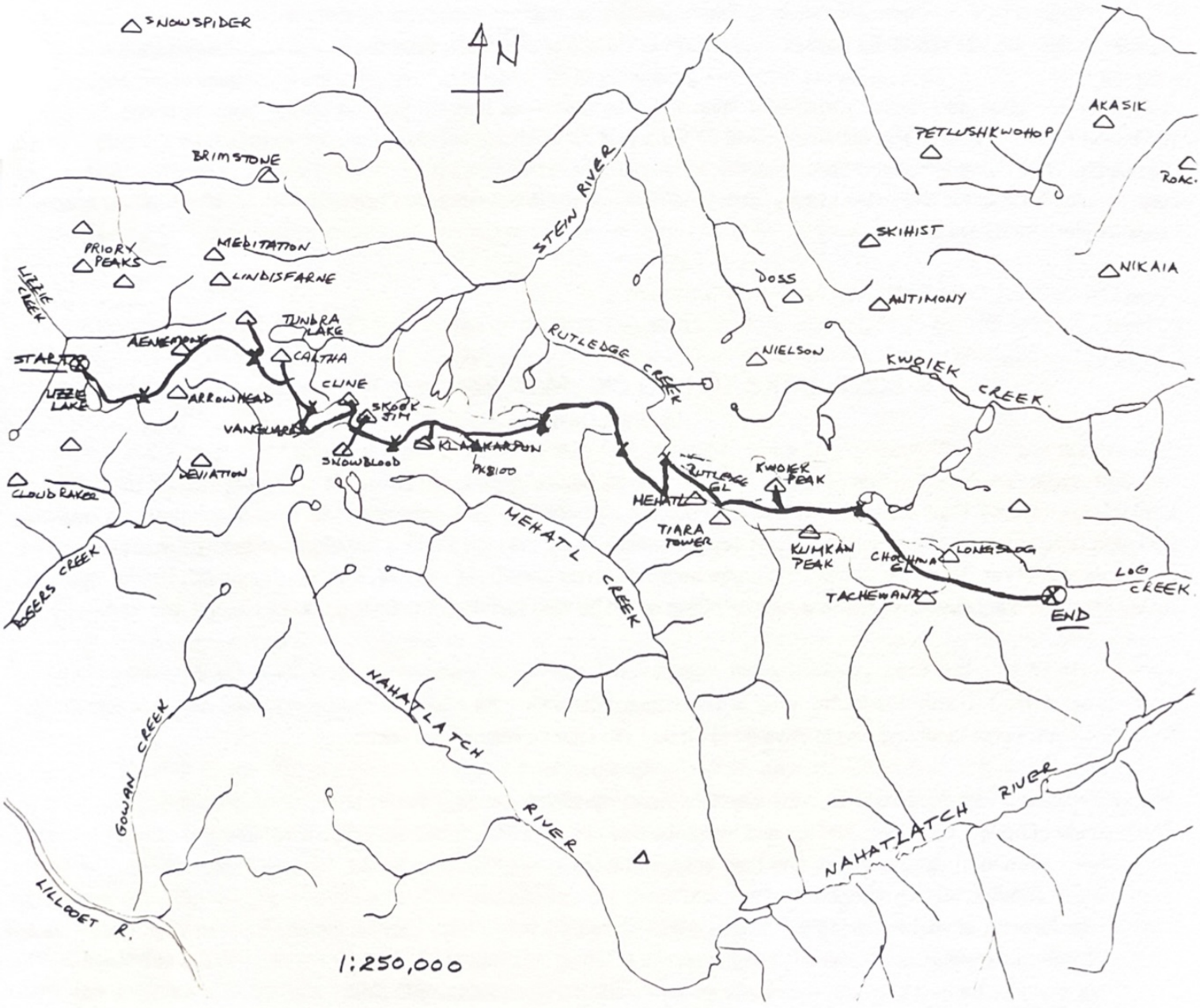
by **Brian Gavin**

Sometimes referred to as "the Stein Divide", the route actually begins in the Lizzie Lake area on the east side of Lillooet Lake. Most of the traverse East of Vanguard Peak follows the high divide between the Stein River and Mehatl Creek until the Rutledge Glacier is reached. Continuing East beyond Kwoiek Peak, the high divide is actually bounded by Kwoiek Creek and the Nahatlatch River. Thus, the appropriate name becomes Lizzie Lake,Stein - Mehatl, Kwoiek - Nahatlatch Divide. However, for lay people in Vancouver, we said our holiday hiking would be from Pemberton to Boston Bar, just for the reaction!

These "A to B" trips are accompanied by a transportation problem which was solved as follows: On the Friday afternoon evening we drove two vehicles to the head of Log Creek, where Cheryl's truck was then abandoned for the week: On the Saturday, Mark Force kindly agreed to drive us to Lizzie Lake after he finished work at noon.

So our trip on foot began, rather late in the day. Our packs contained nine days of food and fuel along with glacier travel gear. The balance of house, bedroom , kitchen and wardrobe was strapped on in rather non-elegant fashion. Attempting to raise the hulk, Cheryl gasped in astonishment, and then collapsed more in laughter. Glad for the humour, I hoped it would last. With packs finally shouldered, we trudged up the road, found the trail without much difficulty and enjoyed glimpses of the lake through the forest. Somewhere along the hillside, I was stung by a yellow fuzzy - for not the first time this year. Cheryl bush - thrashed around the mean scene. Nearly two hours later in fading light we passed through the fabled Gates of Shangri-la. The darkening sky was framed between rock walls as we scrambled along listening to clear water tumbling along the creek bed below. On the edge of the trees we found the cabin. Thoughts of staying the night vanished as we explored the musty interior. Following a dinner by headlight, food was hung on the bear rope and we turned in.

Next day we woke to clear skies and a dew-laden tent. Yesterday's finish meant a lazy start, but we were soon hiking up the flowered heather slopes toward Arrowhead Lake. The dew and shade brought cool travel, but it was welcome with these loads. On reaching the lake, we regretted not starting earlier yesterday. What a beautiful spot, with clear views to the whole



The route taken from Lizzie Lake to Log Ck. Map by B.Gavin.

Caltha Pk. Photo by B. Gavin

Figure Eight Lake. Photo by B. Gavin

Northern half of Garibaldi Park - actually views that we would watch fade away over the next several days. We walked past pretty Heart Lake on the high shoulder that would allow us to cross to Cherry Pip Pass, and dropped the packs for a bit. We took time to scramble up Anemone Peak and Tabletop Mountain - the moguls as they were later called by Andrea back in town. From their summits we marvelled at the sheer beauty of this compact alpine area. Lakes and tarns sparkled everywhere in the sun, each a different shade in the blue green spectrum. I wondered how it was that this was my first time in the area. Hoisting the packs again, we made our way along the ridge to Cherry Pip Pass and followed a sketchy trail / route down to camp at Caltha Lake.

Waking early, my peak - bagging mentality began to kick in as I scrambled up the south slopes of Tundra Peak. From the saddle between the two peaks, the east and true summit was easily gained. From this vantage point, one can readily verify the rumours that Tundra Lake is indeed purple. The country to the north was surprisingly rugged, glaciated and attracted my attention. Returning to camp, sporadic rock cairns were followed to the magical Figure Eight Lake. A rest from the pack provided the opportunity to scramble up the south slopes of Caltha Peak - which afforded the first glimpse of Stein Lake some 1500 m below. Back at the packs, we ambled up the rock to the ridge crest, forced west by an unmarked glacier on the NE flank of the slope above the lake. Some 2 km later we called it a day above the Stein. A direct descent to the glacier below us didn't seem possible, and route descriptions suggested a traverse of Vanguard.

For the first time we woke to no dew on the fly. Wonderful. We would also be using our glacier travel gear for the next two days. This lightening of the loads was a joy and morale booster. Traversing Vanguard Mountain, we zigzagged down rock ledges, some moraine, and onto the snout of the glacier on the west face of Mt. Skook Jim. Blue ice gave way to snow just in time for the climb as we headed for the Cline - Skook Jim col. With a pattern now well established, we paused at the pond there, and while Cheryl rested and dined, I went off to collect points. The ridge on Mt. Cline rising out of the col is quite steep, but has the most wonderful rock with holds everywhere. The exposure and views were exhilarating. This summit affords the absolute best views of Tundra Lake.

Back to Cheryl, and onwards. The col between Mt. Skook - Jim and Snowblood is more a ridge with a minor dip in it. Both summits were easily gained but Snowblood is worth the visit for its superb views of the very rugged headwaters of Mehatl Creek and the Nahatlatch River. The divide between the two looked rugged with several steep icefalls. To the east, two "bump on the ridge" features interrupted the ascent to Mount Klackarpun. One of them - the higher but least interesting - was supposed to be Crevasse Crag, but was more a rubble heap than even a nunatak. With cloud moving in, we needed a camp quickly, and one we could navigate from if necessary. To avoid the need for crampons to traverse moderate blue ice, we opted to climb through a notch in the North ridge of Crevasse Crag. The rotten, mobile rock was 10 m of the worst scree slope I've ever encountered: our assessment was downgraded from rubble head to dung heap. We camped on the glacier right beside the rock, and anchored the tent with ice screws, bracing for wind and whatever.

Remarkably, the next day was clear and calm. In the early light we traversed around the north side of Mount Klackarpun to stare down awestruck at the jewel of Elton Lake, set between two decaying ridges of colourful rock - oranges, yellows and rusts. Packs were lowered as we ascended the north ridge of Klackarpun. On the summit, over - zealous persons had left a cairn taller than people. Travelling on, we paused 2 km east where fresh goat tracks left the glacier, heading for the ridge to the north. Oddly, this spot was infested with flies so we descended to the nearby gap in the divide, where I was inflicted with peak fever again. While I climbed the small but interesting Peak 2450 m (grid ref.611510) Cheryl soaked up some sun. On the summit - No cairn! Wow - can this be? Only a goat track and some hair. On my return, nurse Leskiw informed me that I was cured of peak fever for the rest of the day as we had kilometers to do. Oh well, 3 km later, we left the glacier and began the long rock ridge. Descent to the first gap was a little nasty but offered a wonderful camp on a narrow heather balcony overlooking the valley.

The next day was completely different and truly fun. The rock ridge was at times broad, at times narrow, but always firm. Little meltwater ponds were everywhere. One slope provided a 150 m glissade. All along, the views were superb. Remarkably, they were of familiar peaks - Northern Garibaldi Park, the Joffre area, Skihist and Petlushkwohap, Judge Howay and Robie Reid, Breakenridge and Urquhart, even Mount Baker. And yet, when we thought about it, we were four days travel from any car. There was virtually no air traffic. Wonderfully wild and remote. By 4 pm we had arrived at a broad saddle just above three sizable lakes to the west of us. We decided to stop just because it was so beautiful. It was a logical decision point for either dropping in a descending traverse to the Rutledge Glacier or continuing along the divide. Some cloud was building and the wind strengthening too. With camp set, I went off to take some photos. Observing the countryside through binoculars, I suddenly found myself staring at a large wolverine, which was unquestionably staring at me! Thankfully the wind was to him so he hadn't been suprised. Satisfied, he gave us a wide berth and just crossed over the divide to descend into Mehatl Creek.

This past leg of our trip had truly been wild and pristine. Both the Stein and Mehatl have no logging at this point - what a good feeling. And in country seemingly close to Vancouver, yet remote.

Friday, we woke to quite a bit of cloud amid many blue holes. Some peaks were obscured, some were not. It seemed better than yesterday had ended, so we opted for the divide. The climbing was on mostly clear granite blocks and slabs - very enjoyable. On the first summit about 1 km from camp, we ducked out of a cold wind for a bite. The SE ridge was a bit steep and quite narrow, and the frictioning on black lichen was OK. Cheryl called for a belay, and it began to snow - from flurries to intense storm in minutes. Down at the saddle, we roped for glacier and thrashed down some loose gravel to the snow, descending north. The end of the glacier found us sliming down polished slabs covered with several centimeters of white grease. It was a trial, but we reached the traverse we had seen and on the rocky promontory came upon some ponds. Perfect. We quit! After a while the clouds lifted to reveal a transformed landscape. Winter had breathed it first blast. We dined out a little, got more comfortable and rested up for big kilometers to come.

Travel to the snout of the Rutledge Glacier was a little tedious - much of the moraine was large, unstable rock. Some dirt was bullet proof. A series of lateral moraines had to be negotiated, while the objective hazard of occasional collapsing seracs was real. Once on the glacier, travel improved immensely. We were soon passing the north side of Mehatl Peak. We stopped at the col for lunch for views of Tiara Tower - a series of soaring granite spires. The day warmed to a comfortable travel temperature as we climbed to pass the south side of Kwoiek Pk. The day was so clear I couldn't resist scrambling up its south ridge, although it proved a little longer than it appeared. The summit cairn is gigantic - almost requiring climbing itself. The travel east from Kwoiek Pk is tedious. Strong prevailing southerly winds have left a series of long wind ridges extending at least a km north from the crest of the divide. Melting of their east faces leaves steep blue ice. Finally, passing Kumkan Peak, we trudged 2 km NE to a peak overlooking Haynon Lake. Into a darkening sky rose a near full moon and a huge volcano - like plume from the Fraser canyon - presumably from a beehive burner in Boston Bar.

Peak baggers suffer from insomnia, so I was up early to climb the peak beside us. A pleasant but cold climb lead to the summit - another one that the military has chosen to trash with the garbage left over from a triangulation station.

The whole of the flat Chochiwa Glacier was up and down blue ice. It felt like two and a half hours on a treadmill, but we finally reached the col south of Longslog Mountain. The blue ice steepened as we dropped down the ice finger towards our Canada Day campsite. At the top of the couloir we ducked under some rocks for a bite. The couloir was far from easy as there wasn't a trace of snow. At some point we rapelled in a short waterfall. Tedious downclimbing eventually brought us to the bottom, and we walked in the creek bed as long as it was practical. We eventually crossed the moraine and succumbed to the green hell we knew was waiting. However, by staying lower than our early summer route, we took two hours off our exit time.

Party: Cheryl Leskiw and Brian Gavin

Cheryl in front of the NW side of Mehatl Pk. Photo by B.Gavin

Brian on the summit of Stein Mtn. with Siwhe Mtn. in the background. Photo by M. Force

6. STEIN AND SIWHE MTNS, 12-14 October, 1991

by **Mark Force**

On the map the Stein/Siwhe locality looks to be a really interesting spot, especially the valley extending to the north of Stein with a large depression in it. A trip I was on a few years previously had tried to climb Stein Mtn. from the Fraser Canyon. We almost made it to the ridge before being washed away by a storm. We were really keen to get into the area again. So, after several months of talking about it we got the trip off the ground. There were only three of us so it made for easy car pooling and group food preparation. The weather even looked like it was going to cooperate for the duration of the weekend. The weather up to that point in time had been gorgeous. The record wet month of August turned into a bomber September and we had prayed it would last into October. So here I was, at the Coquitlam park and ride, watching Jupiter and Venus play peek-a-boo with the scattered clouds, while waiting for Brian and Peter to arrive. Would the weather hold long enough to get two elusive peaks in the bag?

Brian and Peter arrived in due course and woke me from my auto slumbers. Peter apologized for being tardy, but it took him longer to cycle from the West End to Brian's (near Coquitlam Centre) than he thought it would. Nevertheless, we proceeded to make good time up the Fraser Canyon to the usual carb - loading spot in Boston Bar, The Charles Hotel. We had just got our coffees but before we had a chance to take out the map to discuss some more contour contortions, the lights went out in the café. The waitress came out to announce that the breakfast specials were, more or less, coffee, coffee, or coffee. Swell. The service speed is not one of the Charles Hotel's better known qualities. We exchanged a few worried glances and decided we had better head up to the next café. An hour or so found us in the Lytton Hotel, which didn't have any power as well. Swell. We did get coffee here and some decent pancakes, but that was after an hour or so. The rafting group that came in after us didn't fare so well. All they got was a chance to watch us eat.

Realizing time was a wasting, we zipped down to the ferry for the laid back ride on what has got to be BC's quietest ferry in the fleet. We finally made it to the turn off up to the farm from where the cattle trail goes up Siwhe Creek. Peter had been into the valley back in June and said he had talked to the owners of the farm the access road crossed. We found the lady of the house and she provided us with a note to leave on the dashboard of our parked car. This note would provide us "fee-free" passage through her relative's property above her farm. The road is quite thin in places as it rises up out of the dry Fraser Canyon's benchlands, and into the mouth of the canyon through which Siwhe Creek flows. We were careful to make sure all the gates were closed and locked. We found a good parking spot for the car, rearranged our packs and took off about one in the afternoon. Getting up this road must cut off at least 2 to 3 km and is a real time saver.

After a half hour or so, the road dropped down to the creek and crossed over to the south side, where the cattle trail proper started. It was nice to have such a wide trail, but it was quite slippery and rough travelling due to all the wet fall leaves and all the loose rocks kicked up by all the horse traffic. It was like a coastal logging road, except on them there aren't as many road apples to spar with. This lower end of the trail was by far the prettiest that our group travelled on. There was a good mixture of deciduous and coniferous trees to make for a colourful fall: the creek was right nearby and the trail traveled through one heck of a steep gorge. The slopes on the north side of the creek extend practically straight upwards for two to three hundred meters before disappearing behind the lower part of the ridge. Very pretty spot.

Further on the trail crossed back to the north side and it eventually switch backed out of the valley bottom. We had a snack on the trail opposite where the first side creek flows in from the south. This was one of the optional routes into one of the possible camp spots, but was excluded due to the length of the approach and what appeared to be a headwall just below the lake. We pushed on to where the next valley flows in from the south, took one look at our watches (it was after 4!), and plunged into the forest hoping for good going in the open trees. Well, it was open going to Siwhe Creek, which we crossed without any

problem. And the trees were quite open as we headed upwards to the gentle upper valley. Unfortunately, there was one heck of a lot of windfall which made for tiresome going. Within an hour, the bush on the east side of the valley opened up to reveal a rock slide and more open country almost all the way to the lake at the head of the valley. Bonus! We made great time until the last half hour before the lake. Here we were treated to waltzing in the dusk with the rhododendron family.

It took us about two hours to reach this primo campsite near the lake outlet. There was a light breeze which helped set up the tent while Brian fired up the stove. More than two thirds of the southern sky was dominated by the huge north wall of the North Peak of Siwhe. In the dim light of dusk, the hanging glaciers made for splashes of white on what seemed to be a classic Ansel Adams picture. That made the trip in here worthwhile.

Early next morning we got up to a thick frost and clear sky. We made our way around the lake and up the slopes to the col SE of the lake. Good travel through the trees became better as the forest opened up to alpine meadows alive with marmots and pikas. At the col we stopped to catch our breath and soak up some rays in an out-of-the-wind spot. It was here that we found out that there are a lot of pocket glaciers missing from the map. In fact, the planned route would take us over a lot of steep bare ice. Very embarrassing because the crampons were not with us. Ah well, we had light packs! Besides that, Stein was one heck of a long way away! It looked to be a 22 km day! There was a way around this, but it involved dropping down 250 meters or so and then heading SE up the long glacial trench to the base of the north ridge of Stein. We headed down through a very pretty pocket valley equipped with a picturesque tarn, to the edge of the lower valley, or more accurately, the abyss. The last 50 or 60 meters sure looked steep, but we found a necessary scree slope and thundered down into the lower valley.

On the map this spot is shown as having a depression, which led to a few discussions in camp and in the café the previous day as to what caused it. When we got to the mud flats it appeared that it was a lake bottom, but the lake had it's cork pulled. Whatever it was, it made for quick moving. Of course there was a lot of morainal till to saunter over as well, but we came to the crux of the climb, even before we got to the mountain. Over lunch we discussed what to do next. We had a couple of routes to get to the summit, which was just SE of us. The North ridge was out - it looked like a rubble heap. The two glacial tongues that came down to our lunch spot looked great if you had crampons, but we were travelling nice and light. That left the rubble heap right in front of us that also doubled as a buttress leading up to the west ridge of Stein.

So we thrashed up that buttress and over onto the hard snow for a "shortcut" to walk up the loose west ridge. The second lunch was grand. The vista is quite impressive from that far east. You can still see Mt. Baker, Weart and Wedge. There are of course the nearby peaks like Kumkan, Kwoiek Pk and Needle, Joffre and Matier. The nicest looking area was right at our feet. The whole basin to the south of Stein is littered with lakes and tarns, all glinting like diamonds in the late afternoon sun. We turned the afterburners on for the long walk back to camp which we just made by the skin of our teeth before darkness set in.

The next morning we awoke extra early as it appeared to be a very long day. We retraced our steps around the lake with the help of our headlights and thence back up the col. Instead of dropping all the way down to the lower creek valley as we did the day before, we stayed higher this time. After we passed the lake, we picked our way up a gully and onto a bench. This bench turned into a moraine, which we gingerly picked our way through. This went on until we were below the east ridge of Siwhe. We could see the summit from here. Unfortunately, there was another one of those dastardly glaciers in our way. One with a lot of bare ice, but we didn't have crampons. However, our packs were light... To gain the ridge from where we were, meant heading straight up a steep slope, resplendent with downward sloping slabs sprinkled with ball bearing gravel. This led up and into a near vertical channel full of cement mixer type mud. After finishing that off, and a late second breakfast, we scooted up the ridge.

The goat trail at the top of the ridge afforded good views to the south, where the pocket glacier ends in an ice cliff from whence it drops icebergs in the little lake at its end. A high morainal dam keeps everything in place, just like a wine cork. Further up the ridge, a minor bump was traversed before we came to the final walk to the summit. A few wispy clouds tried their best to spoil the views, but were unsuccessful. Time was a-wasting, so we got off the summit before noon and retraced our steps back to camp.

We reached camp just before 4 pm. The late hour was very good incentive to play the "See how fast we can break camp and have a cup of tea before we go" game. We were out of there by 4:30, and headed down into the brush. We made good time in the open areas on the way out and actually found some rock slides that took us even farther down the valley, which was a bonus. We even found some decent animal trails and bypassed most of the windfall to boot. We arrived at the main trail just as darkness was settling in, but we headed down the trail with headlights and had an extra late lunch, around 8 pm, by the side of Siwhe Creek. The trail was a bit tedious to hike on, what with all those loose, leaf-covered rocks and only two headlights. Below the gorge the route heads into open trees and we could see all the stars.

We realized that we had missed the last ferry as we pulled away from our parking spot. It was already 10 pm. That meant we would have to go up through Lillooet and then back down the canyon. After doing some quick arithmetic, I realized that we would be getting home quite late. An article by Brian Wood in a past BC Mountaineer came to mind. His article describes the prerequisites for an epic. I knew we didn't have epic material here, but real long drives after even longer weekends must qualify somewhere. Twelve km the first day, 18 clicks the next and 27 on the last day plus five and a half hours driving does have some epic material in it. We finally arrived aback at the park and ride at 3 am. Good trip into a very nice area.

Epilogue: It seems that Peter really wanted to redefine Epics. After Brian and Peter made it back to Brian's place, Peter started to reload his panniers with his gear. He then noticed he had a flat. However, he didn't have his pump with him. So they had to run around Coquitlam at 4:30 in the morning trying to find a gas station that was open. Which they did, got the tire pumped and Peter headed off down the Barnet Highway. When most people were getting their first cup of coffee, Peter was finally heading through his front door. I'm glad Peter has been on other club trips and realizes that is not quite the norm for a club trip-or was it?

Party: Brain Gavin, Peter Katsaris, and Mark Force.

BCMC SUMMER CAMP - RACOON LAKES, CLENDENNING CK, 28 July - 5 August, 1990

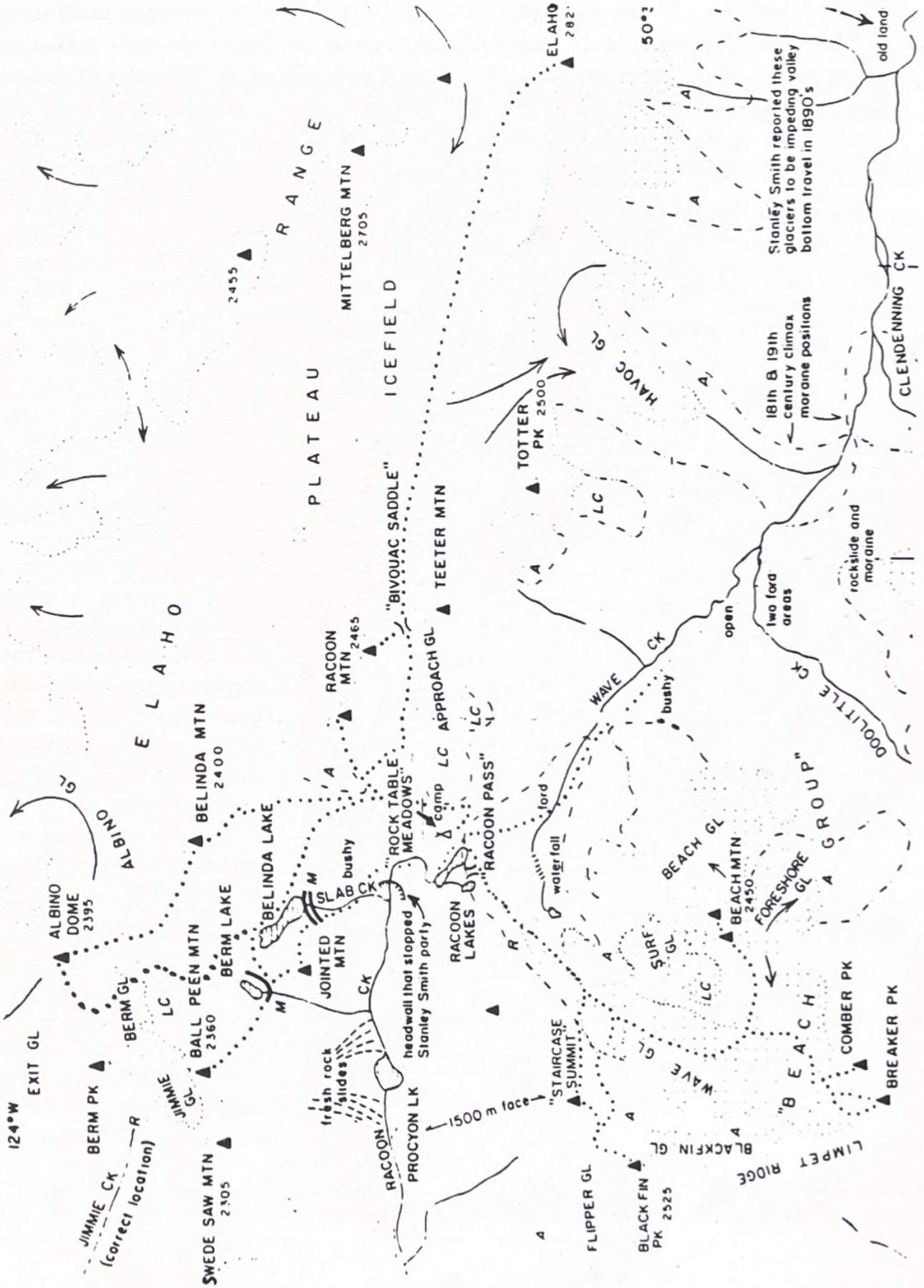
by **Peter Paré**

"I knew there were some lakes there (Racoon Lakes) but I wasn't ready for the incredible beauty of the place. The broad pass is composed of very erosion - resistant rock which was heavily scrubbed by ice age glaciers, leaving waves of polished whaleback ridges interspersed with royal blue lakes, heather, and clumps of stunted trees... I spent the evening tramping around the pass, swimming in the lakes, and getting to feel at home in this little Shangri-la." -John Clark, C.A.J. - 66:23 (1983)

It has taken me over a year to start writing this report on the 1990 B.C.M.C. summer camp at the headwaters at Clendenning Creek, so this account may have a historical rather than journalistic quality. However, I think the passage of time has allowed some memories of our week around Racoon lakes to mature, similar to a bottle of good wine - but it's time to let this vintage breathe! It's hard to improve on John Clark's enraptured description on first coming across Racoon Lakes and it's certainly hard to imagine more idyllic surroundings for a summer camp - but before describing the camp's location, a few recollections of the less than perfect process of reaching it.

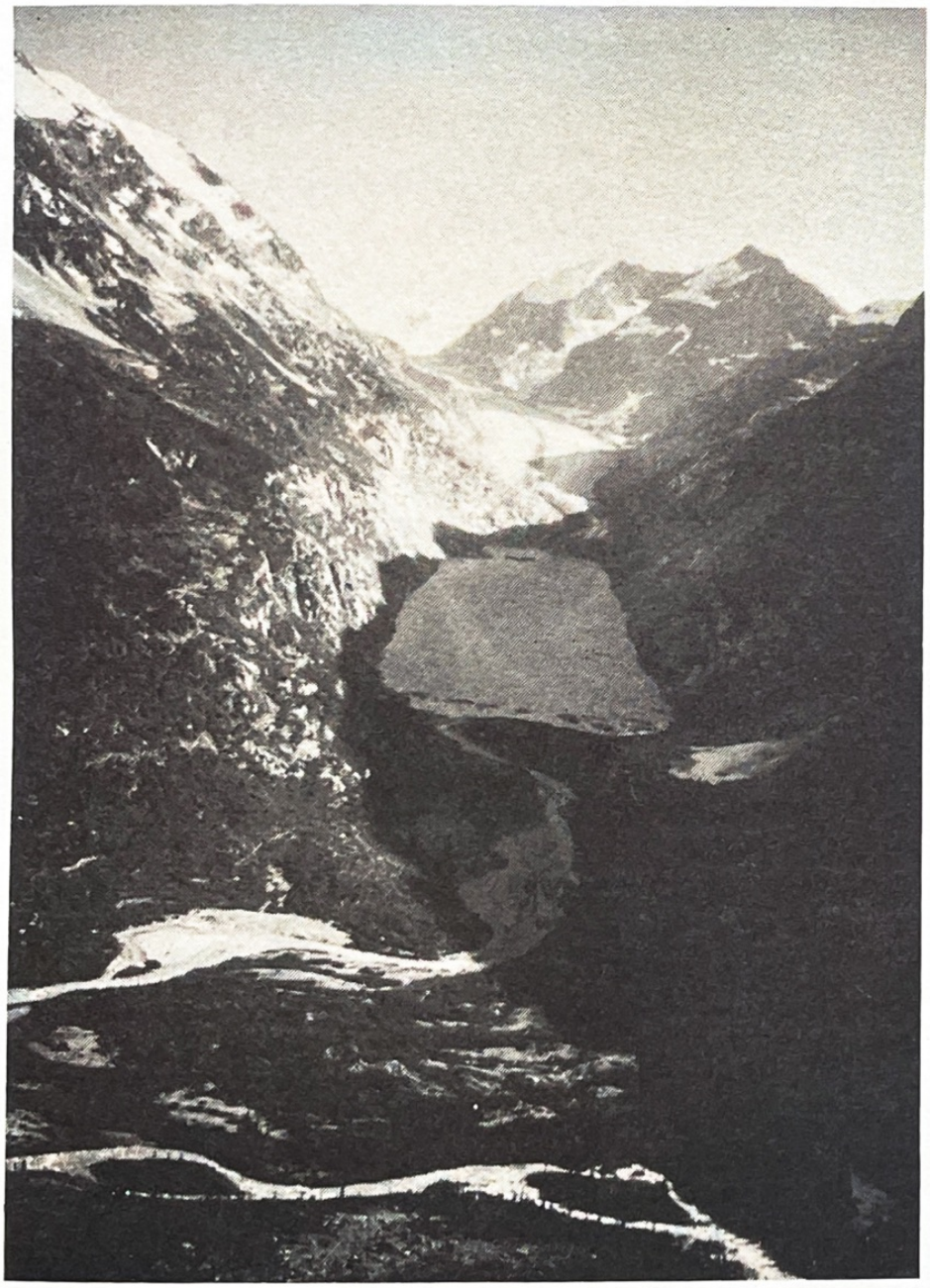
The trouble started when Mark Haden, our leader and organizer, fractured his ankle in a fall on The Chief, one week prior to departure date. Despite his disabled state, Mark organized until the end, and on July 28th at 7 am we assembled in his front room for last minute instructions and loaded the staggering amount of food and toilet paper into a variety of vehicles, mainly Yuri's truck. Noon found us 61 km up the Squamish River Road at (presumably) the junction of Elaho River and Sims Creek. We found an open area at the junction of two logging roads, surrounded by recent clear-cut carnage, parked the vehicles and scattered in search of shade in the blistering heat to await the arrival of Whistler Helicopters Bell 206 Jet Ranger. And we waited, and it got hotter, and we waited some more, and it got hotter, etc. The chopper was due at 1 pm and by 3 pm after failed attempts to call out on the radio, we sent a runner (driver, actually). Randy headed for the nearest phone, 40+ km along the logging road, while the majority of the milling troops got as close as they could to the spray from a creek. It was late afternoon before the chop-chop roused the would-be mountaineers and we rapidly got the transport underway. The answer was that we were situated at the junction of the Elaho River and Clendenning Creek, some 3+ km north of the junction with Sims Creek and the chopper, not finding us at the appointed time and place, had assumed we had cancelled the trip or melted in the heat. It was 6 pm before the first load was off. I went in the second load of people, a most memorable chopper ride.

Racoon Lakes base camp. Photo by M. Feller.



Routes followed by climbers at the Racoon Lakes camp. Based on the map by K. Ricker and M. Irvine from the Canadian Alpine Journal, Vol 63 (1980).

Clendenning Creek runs 35+ km N.W. from its junction with the Elaho. A variable wall of ice-covered peaks flanks the south-west border of the creek and every few kilometers there was another creek cascading down and sparkling like braided strands of silver ribbon below us. At about 25 km we got a good view of Clendenning Lake with the highway-like Clendenning Glacier emptying into its southern end. Clendenning Creek finally turns into Wave Creek which originates at the very head of the long valley from Wave Glacier, which was situated immediately to the south of our camp, and which was to provide our main access to the peaks southwest of the camp. Abruptly, as we reached the head of the valley, the chopper wheeled to the right, and I got views of the Racoon Lakes and the meadow, slightly to the east of the lake that was to be home. The Racoon Lakes are three 200-300 m diameter lakes situated on the small 0.5 sq. km. plateau between the headwaters of Wave-Clendenning Creek and Racoon Creek which falls steeply to the west to empty into the Toba River. The lakes are surrounded by small patches of sand and meadow and cradled in outcrops of solid, smooth granite out of which has been scooped numerous small 5-30 m diameter pools filled with melt water. The lakes themselves are joined by short channels and have only one small inflow creek, so they are quite warm - certainly swimable - Evelyn swam around all three, using the Australian crawl of course, and the pools and the outcrops around the lake are absolutely warm and provided at least once daily dips for everyone. The camp itself was situated in what can only be described as a "pocket meadow" to the east of the lakes beside a creek and bordered by granite cliffs which were split by a narrow gully which provided easy access to the peaks north and east of the camp. The area is certainly a few hectares of heaven!



Clendenning Lake. Photo by L. Baile.

Randy and Debbie with the Wave glacier and Black Fin Pk. (right) in background. Photo by M. Feller.

Belinda Lake with Beach Mtn (left) and Black Fin Pk. (right) in background. Photo M. Feller.

Climbing to the summit of Black Fin Pk. Photo by M. Feller.

Descending Black Fin Pk. Photo by R. Enomoto.

The chopper kept bringing in loads of people and slings of gear and soon the meadow was dotted with multi-coloured tents around an enormous perfectly flat table-like hunk of rock which served as a resting place for just about anything. The last group of three were benighted on the logging road but the chopper was back early next morning and we were finally all there.

Camp then settled into a comfortable routine. The weather was virtually perfect for the whole time we were there - it was partially cloudy one day and sprinkled for three minutes. Olga Coltman was the camp cook and there was porridge, fruit, eggs and tea every morning between 6 and 7 am and hearty dinners from 7 pm until the last of the climbers returned. Since we were only there for one week, no one established a high camp or a satellite camp and except for one day to Elaho, most groups did fairly relaxed ascents of the peaks in the immediate vicinity, south, east, and north of camp. Most climbed Breaker and Comber and Beach to the south and Blackfin to the southwest, as well as Racoon and Belinda to the east. Yuri, Norbert, and Adam climbed Ball Peen to the northwest and Evelyn, Lisa, Mike and I did a high traverse from Belinda to Albino and back to camp by Belinda Lake.

On the icefield below, and west of ,Elaho Mtn. Photo by L. Baile.

Elaho was memorable. We rose early, knowing it would be a long day and by 5 am we were away up the gully to a series of slanting grass - and heather - covered benches which took us, pursued by wisps of mist, to the barren and boulder-strewn col between Racoon and Totter peaks at 2350 m. From the col we had an uninterrupted view of the sun rising beyond Elaho (2820 m) 7-8 km across a gently upsloping expanse of snow-covered glacier. Across we slogged in the blistering sun - the sun cups were enormous and never properly spaced to allow an easy and regular stride. Slowly, the castle-like summit block rising 300 m from the flat expanse of snow and ice got closer and closer and we stopped periodically to discuss, 15 m apart along the rope, the best line of ascent. In the end we went right past the north face and curved around to crampon up the mainly snow - and ice - covered NE ridge. We had excellent views of the Manatee Range and Clendenning Lake across the valley. We slipped and slopped back across the sun cups and were back in camp for dinner. As always, the green moss and bright wildflowers looked startlingly vivid after 10 hours of snow and ice.

Other pleasant recollections are:

- The nightly "bath" in the warm pools above camp.
  The stark beauty and surprising warmth of Belinda Lake (1680 m).
- The Cambozola cheese for lunch on Blackfin, courtesy of Randy.
- The amazing sight, from the top of Breaker, of the Terrific Glacier, plunging 1200 m into the valley between Doolittle and Clendenning Peaks.
  Wading between islands of brilliant fireweed in the braided upper reaches of Wave Creek.
- Adam's dinner time rapelling demonstration from the cliffs above camp.
- Marilyn's vivid account of the directissimo ascent of the bush-covered headwall, led by Roger Neave. Roger, 84 years young, was as active as any member of the group.
- The slow circumnavigation, by foot and water, of the Racoon Lakes on a rest day.

It was difficult to leave this truly magic spot and especially shocking to hear from the helicopter pilot, as he deposited us in the dusty and desolate clear-cut, that Iraq had invaded Kuwait while we were in Wonderland.

Party: Lisa Baile, Adam Becalski, Yuri Borsky, Debbie Caldwell, Gerard Clement, Olga Coltman, Marilyn Cram, Graeme Davey, Leslie Duthie, Norbert Eckert, Randy Enomoto, Evelyn Feller, Michael Feller, Kent Haden, Ralph Hutchinson, Paul Miller, Theo Mosterman, Roger Neave, John Oleson, and Peter Paré.

For additional accounts of climbing in the Clendenning - Racoon Lake area and geology and glaciology of the area, see North of Jervis Inlet - John Clark, C.A.J. 66:21 (1983), Elaho and Clendenning Range ACC Camp - G. Barford, C.A.J. 63:74 (1980), Earth Science Features and Glacial Regimen of the Clendenning and Elaho Ranges - K. Ricker, C.A.J. 63: 57 (1980).

GUANACO PK, NE RIDGE - FIRST ASCENT, 26 August, 1990

by **Brian Gavin**

Turning west up the road system in the Coldwater valley, we found all the peaks shrouded in low clouds - but it wasn't raining. Much of the Coldwater is a slow moving, meandering stream moving between sections of beaver swamp. Thankfully, the flies were non-existant. We found the trailhead of the route to "Little Douglas Lake" in the valley between Zoa and Zum. It begins in a miserable little Forest Recreation site beside the bridge over the creek draining the same valley.

At 6 pm, having explored the few other roads, we camped on the landing at the very end of the road in the south western corner of the valley. In front of this slash-burned mess, a Ministry of Forests sign proudly announces "New Forest Planted

1989". Late that evening, the clouds began to dissipate, and we were treated to the silhouette of spectacular Vicuña against a backdrop of stars. That night was very cool as we woke at dawn to frozen water bottles and frost. The sky was clear, but during breakfast, the sun began driving all moisture into a layer of low valley fog.

We packed up and headed to a point on the road just north and west of Zoa. From here we descended into the slash and then the dense bush of the beaver swamps guarding the Coldwater. We wore rainpants against the drenched vegetation. Fresh moose and deer tracks were seen. A fallen tree testified to the presence of beaver. Once across the river we headed uphill and gained a minor ridge to the east of the creek draining the pass leading to East Anderson River. The pass was gained fairly readily, alternating between animal trails, steep sidehills and moderate bush. From here, gaining the slopes to the north east ridge of Guanaco was straight forward. Somewhere, negotiating the bush, I stirred up a wasp nest. Being in front, I emerged unscathed; unfortunately, my partner suffered retaliation from three of the beasts.

Up and up these forested slopes we went, cleverly avoiding almost all bush on the way. The forest gradually gave way to steep heather meadows - so steep we usually hung on to the heather! Eventually we found some rock, and used it as much as possible to make the climbing easier. Rather suddenly we "topped out" on a rocky knoll and all vegetation ended. However, only a rather slack 200 m of rock remained - and this was a stroll to the broad dome of the summit.

The descent was worth some thought - but not too much. Guanaco had been previously climbed from the col with Vicuña, so a descent this way might be less bushy. The col was reached quickly but the route down the slabs/bush was not entirely straight forward. We headed for the largest trees and the clearcut we could see below. The descent took about a hour and appeared even bushier than the ascent.

Party: Cheryl Leskiw and Brian Gavin

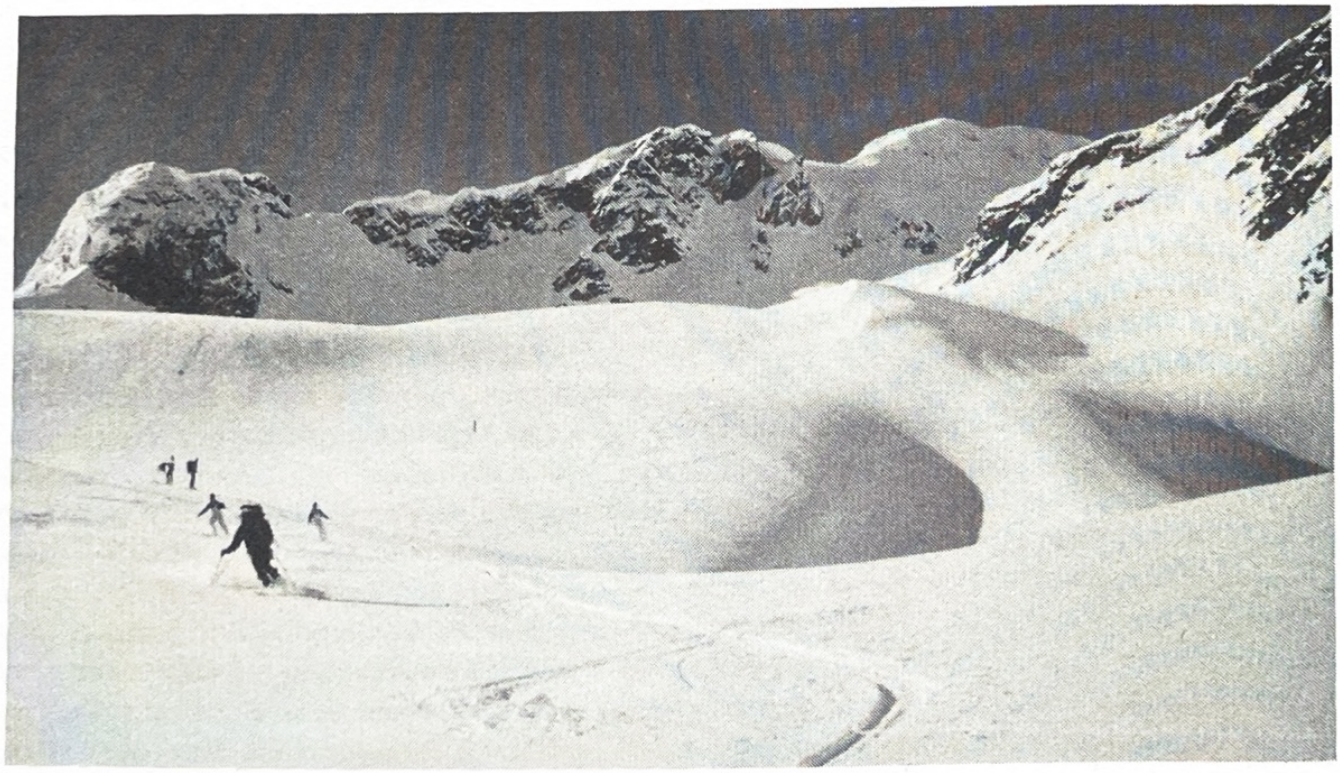
CAYOOSH MTN, 23-24 February, 1991

by **Kathrin Gumplinger**

We were night-skiing at Grouse Mtn. on the Friday. The snow wasn't all that great for skiing but we skied until closing time at 11 pm anyhow. Early next morning we drove to Pemberton. There we waited for friends of Papa - Miguel, Brian, and Ross. After a light breakfast we continued through an Indian reservation. We drove up a road. We then drove to a parking area where the adventure began.

The weather was first rate. The sun was shining like heated faces during a race. Everything was white, except the road. It was very beautiful. We didn't even need three hours to reach camp. There a small squabble commenced over where to pitch the tents exactly. Miguel wanted to go some place other than Ross, while Ross didn't want to go any further. So eventually, everybody was looking for a suitable spot for themselves. We found a nice one. Brian helped us trample down the snow since he was going to share the tent with us. Besides, Brian had also carried our tent to camp. Karolin and I wanted to help Miguel with trampling down the snow but he thought we were going to make pot-holes and to fend us off, he was about to throw a big chunk of snow on Karolin's head when my Mama said: "they only want to help!" Finally, the tents were pitched. Once we were all finished, we collected firewood. Mama and Papa built a kitchen. Then a big fire was lit and we had supper - a bowl of thick chicken-noodle soup. At 8 pm Karolin and I had to go to bed. The moon and the stars were out. Miguel said that we have to get up at 4 am. I said it would be better if everybody got up at 6:30. Brian agreed with me completely. Mama said: "We should put an alarm clock in front of Miguel's tent.

Ascending Cayoosh Mtn. Photo by M. Feller.



Skiing down from Cayoosh Mtn. Photo by M. Feller.

Karolin (left) and Kathrin (right) on the summit. Photo by M. Feller.

The next morning we woke up at 6:30 am precisely. It took a while before we were wide awake. Once we were out of our tent we found Miguel still sleeping in the other tent. We prepared breakfast - hot chocolate. Then, we got going. Karolin and I could leave our rucksacks at the tents. This was good because, after all, this was only our first ski-trip with a backpack. Miguel left camp at least half an hour later. He only caught up to us slowly and when he did he passed us immediately. We had to carry the skis about 50 m below the summit since it was simply too steep to reach on skis. Ten meters from the summit Karolin and I dashed for the high-point since Miguel always said he would be first on the summit. But that was only wishful thinking! I came first. Karolin barely managed to come second because she slipped but Brian helped her quickly in that he pushed her up onto the summit. Thus, Miguel only came in third. Suddenly we saw two other people coming up the mountain. As it turned out they were two good friends of everybody - Mary Prendergast and Gavin Thurston. They climbed the peak in a day from Vancouver.

The ski-descent was super. We had powder snow. Karolin fell on the steep bit because loose snow fell on top of her skis causing the slip. I didn't fall but later on the flat part I couldn't stop and "bang" there I was in the snow. Then I skied on screaming " I am the snow-woman!". I had a few smaller problems in the trees but nevertheless arrived in one piece at camp. Miguel boasted that he was first back at camp but I said: "I don't care!" Then when everybody had arrived at camp we started to pack up. Papa gave Karolin and I permission to leave ahead of the group back to the cars. Mama came with us. We had a few problems. At one point, Karolin fell out of the track down the tree slope but when she fell again I saw Ross closing in and I rushed ahead to lose no more time! I traveled well even though I had to be careful not to fall. Soon I would leave Ross behind. I arrived 5 min ahead of him at the car. After another 15 min Karolin arrived together with Brian and only after 5 more minutes did Miguel finally show up.

We drove to Squamish where we had supper. We had a lot of fun. Late that evening we returned to Vancouver. We went to bed at once. - It was a wonderful weekend!

Party: Michael Feller, Brian Gavin, Ross Wyborn, Peter, Andrea, Karolin (age 9) and Kathrin (age 12) Gumplinger.

CLEANING UP THE THIASI AREA
1. UPPER HURLEY R. CHRISTMAS SKI CAMP, December, 1990

by **Steve Grant**

The plan this year was to locate a base camp somewhere in the upper Hurley, and to have as the main objective the first known winter climb of Mt. Thiassi. Driving up Railroad Pass was out of the question as the snows came early to the high country. We had heard of a snow cat operating over the Hurley the previous year, and made contact with the operators. They assured us that they would be able to deposit us within 1km of our camp, and the machine could carry 17 of us, with gear. Fine.

The daily journey by the articulated, red "Prinot" over the pass made it easy to arrange for groups to come in at three different times, and the first group would not have far to lug the main camp equipment. The first indication that things were not to go as planned came on the eve of departure when the cat operator told us he would be doing the first run at 11:00. This was rather late for us, but we would be driven almost to the campsite, right? At the Pemberton Outdoor School the next morning, it turned out that there were 8 patrons of Tyax Lodge who would be sharing the cat with our six, (Brian, Betsy, Simon, Georgia, Harold and myself) plus our gear, plus two other passengers. A major glitch was that the cat lacked the promised roof rack, so all the stuff had to go inside - and on us - since the Tyax patrons could not be inconvenienced. The two extra passengers looked at the mountain of people and stuff crammed to the ceiling in the cat, and decided to make alternate travel arrangements. We were also informed that the cat would not be making a side trip off the main Hurley road. This meant we would have a much greater distance to lug the camp gear than was planned.

The Hurley was deep in wind drifted snow. It seemed impossible that we had driven up there last year. The overloaded cat ground its way slowly up and 5km over the pass to where we were dropped off at the turnoff to the road on the south side of the upper Hurley. We were ready to start hauling at 2 pm. Faced with the longer carry, and with six people to transport the camp gear for nineteen, we stashed one of the big tents, and had made arrangements for the driver to so inform the second group. We mushed off, straining against overloaded sleds like slaves. Whenever we ran into wind crust on uphills, we would actually lurch to a halt. One would then have to back up one's skis just the right distance, and fall forward against the harness with enough force to get the sled moving, but not so much as to land on one's face. One's calculations weren't always perfect.

After a couple of hours, we negotiated a substantial stream crossing on an ice bridge, and since darkness comes early at Christmas, made camp on the other side. We had spent the whole day accomplishing 4 km from the vehicle. However, the second day was much worse. It took us until darkness to cover another 4 km to the chosen site below a grove of trees near the bottom of an avalanche clearing at the forks of the west and north tributaries of the Hurley. The day had included team hauling the heavy sleds, and finally abandoning half the gear to make a desperate bid for a suitable campsite before dark. With it located, some of us returned to ferry the rest of the stuff in the dark, with Brian doing a third load. Every time we did the shuttle, I noticed a huge moose wallowing in the deep snow near camp, browsing on willows and being invisible to everyone else. The big tent got put up, more or less, and we piled inside for some rest and supper. Before calling it quits for the day, we still had to put up our own tents,in the dark of course. This is what we do on vacation.

Over several days it gradually came to light that Harold had managed to organize the purchase and transportation to camp of about 15 kg of pies and cheesecakes, undetected until it was too late. This had, of course, exacerbated the load problem. In addition, since we had all brought our own desserts anyway, there was an enormous surplus of personal food that had to be carried back out, plus Harold got to consume VAST quantities of treats after we normal people had stuffed ourselves into insensibility. Yet more pies cached at the Railroad Pass road supplied passers-by, without depriving us of anything we wanted.

Skiing in to the Christmas Camp. Photo by B.Waddington.

Skiing towards the head of the Hurley R. Photo by B. Fletcher.

Skiing towards Thiassi.
Top Photo by S. Grant.
Bottom Photo by B.
Waddington.

Fortunately, we were intending to have 11 days for the camp, because we spent most of the third day finishing the tent, getting wood and water and so on. Toward the end of the day we made an excursion up the north fork and made it up a 2500m bump up there. The following day we came back, and in a windstorm climbed a 2800m peak near Lone Goat Summit. The next outing was up an obvious gully across from camp to the south, which led us up onto a glacier at the NE end of the Mt. Sessel massif.

Upon our return to camp, we met the second group. The message to bring in the second wall tent had gone astray, and although they had looked at the tent, they had not brought it in. So it was a little crowded in the big tent that night and people got to display their various levels of concern for others' needs. Also, Anders arrived, having skied all the way in by himself over two days of very enjoyable solo travel.

The next morning dawned clear and cold. Janet and John headed back out on the broken trail to retrieve the second big tent from the road. Others from the second group declared they were there to ski, not work, and immediately left on trips. Anders and Paul made an earnest attempt on Thiassi, but were stopped by clouds that suddenly enveloped the area. Brian and Betsy led some of the rest of us up one of the unnamed peaks south of Thiassi. By that evening, the second tent was added to the first, and the thermometer started plunging.

By morning the thermometer was reading -31 degrees C. Life became difficult. People hadn't slept well in the frosty tents and some lacked sufficiently warm clothing and sleeping bags. The stove gobbled wood and was kept going all day, requiring only that Anders make woodcutting a full time job. Everything was frozen solid, and trees split as their sap froze. Even so, a large contingent started to the pass to North Creek, trying to stay in the trees to keep out of the piercing wind. But within an hour most had turned back. Brian and Betsy, seemingly comfortable in this appalling cold, pushed a trail up to the pass. Harold and I plodded after them. It was very beautiful up there, in the crystalline afternoon light, and there was no trace of the group staying at the North Creek cabin. A few seconds of exposure to the icy breeze froze the end of my nose. After a very quick bite to eat, we fled back below treeline.

On our arrival back at camp we discovered a full scale mutiny in progress - ten people had had enough of the cold and were leaving in the morning. Continual exhausting exertion in such frigid conditions didn't seem to be improving my cold, so I decided to escape with them before I got critically ill. Of course, there were complications to this new plan. Given the weather, we didn't know if the next group, due the following day, would be arriving, so we didn't know how much of the camp to dismantle and carry out. The mutineers weren't willing to stay another day to find out, though new sleeping arrangements such as igloos and sleeping in the big tent seemed to have allowed them a comfortable night.

Our exit was a classic. We had 30 km to go, fortunately averaging downhill. First of all, I saw the moose again, and Anders verified it. Then we met six people: the third group heading into the camp. There was no time and it was too cold to stop and chat. Once on the road, we spent a lot of time stopped together, hunched over on our ski poles under the stupefying loads, shielding our faces from the -30 degree C wind. I arranged a mitten across my face to keep it from freezing, and my glasses promptly iced up. The slide down the pass was torture. I snow plowed all the way because I was afraid I'd destroy my knees or be unable to lift my pack on again if I fell. Darkness arrived just as we made it to the bottom of the pass. The snow cat came down the pass in the dark and we made arrangements for it to come back and pick us up. It didn'tcome back. We waited in the dark and cold, then started walking out, eventually ending the epic with the inevitable car shuttle.

Back at camp, the finalists roamed up the mountains north of the camp, and were visited by Peter Stone, rambling by himself through the mountains.

Party: Brian Waddington, Betsy Fletcher, Anders Ourom, Paul Kubik, Harold Rydell, Georgia Newsome, Karin Rolfes, Shirley Rempel, John and Janet Pearson, Paul Hunter, Tom Zarzecki, Simon Coates, Brian Crowe, Ilze Rupners, Robert, Randy Enomoto, Dave Robinson, and Steve Grant,

2. MT. THIASSI, 18-20 May, 1991

by **Steve Grant**

With a forecast of good weather to the north and poor weather to the south, the underground trip schedule sent five of us off to revisit the site of the last Christmas camp.

In the Pemberton Hotel for breakfast, someone asked the RCMP officers present about Railroad Pass road. They replied the snow was 2 meters deep at the top. Good thing we threw the chains in the car...

As we climbed to the pass, it became apparent they meant the snowbanks beside the road, which was plowed through to Gold Bridge. It was like driving up the bottom of a crevasse. More astonishingly, the turnoff to the upper Hurley was also plowed. Although it was flooded and muddy (the road), the Chev made it as far as the ford. (That's a joke from the trip we thought you might enjoy.) We stuffed our packs, skied 200 m to the river, and crossed it where we did at Christmas. This involved a bit of bridge building and a moderately threatening balancing act on a narrow log, but nobody fell in. However, when Steve threw one of his poles across, it bounced off a ski, gracefully sprang a meter up, and landed in the torrent. This is a damn poor way to loose a pole. Fortunately its journey could be observed since it floated, and was coloured safety orange. It hung up in a sweeper just downstream, from which it was retrieved by Gavin.

We then had a pleasant stroll through a burnt wasteland to the end of the logging. Slash fires had escaped and torched the hillsides to the treeline a few years ago. Fortunately the unlogged woods were still full of snow, and we were able to thread our way through swamps on our skis. After a couple of hours of this, Brian led us to the site of the Christmas camp. A bit of tidying up was rewarded by the discovery of a small bottle of rum, by gum. Just 5 m from where the big tents had sat, a 2 m deep avalanche had parked itself. Every avalanche track in the valley was littered with a destroyed crop of hundreds of 25 cm diameter trees, indicating an approximate 20 year climax avalanche event.

We continued up the north fork of the upper Hurley, finally stopping on a snow-covered rockslide at the 1560 m level. Here we found the perfect campsite: flat snow, great views, protection from the wind, a clear stream nearby, and dry ground and rocks to sit on under a huge conifer. The alpenglow and repartee of the evening were further enhanced by various intoxicants brought or found along the way.

In the morning we toured easily up the valley on frozen snow, and climbed west to cross Thiassi's south ridge at the 2590 m level. While carrying our skis to scramble across some bare rock, small wet snow avalanches crossed our route every few minutes. One of these slides resulted in Brian transcending even his normal rapid pace.

The southwest glacier led to a col between the southeast and northwest summits. Leaving our skis, we scrambled westward along the ridge toward the summit. Ridge connoisseurs will love the exposure of this one, but it is loose inplaces. Before long the ropes were needed to cross an awkward section, then later were deployed again. This second bit, expertly led by Gavin, involved downclimbing a steep gully of rotten snow on the north face, an awkward traverse and climb to another notch on the ridge, out onto exposed low class 5 stuff on the south face, up over the top of a horn, then down to a wider, flatter, kinder section of ridge. Like the previous belay, all this was in just over 15 m, so we shuttled the rope back and forth to belay from

Camp in May in the upper Hurley R. Photo by S.Grant.

both ends and speed the process. Near the top of the horn was a loose boulder. We discussed whether to knock it off, and decided to leave it as it might bounce and cut the rope.

In summer - without the rotten snow we encountered, some of the difficulties can be avoided by continuing to traverse on the north face. A pleasant class 4 scramble put us on top for spectacular views, and time to munch cookies in the sun. There was no summit record in the cairn, and there were recent foot tracks in the snow. For scorekeepers, Darlene's ascent marked the second climb of this peak by this particular Canadian woman, both times wearing the same shirt!

On the way down, Steve was making the move below the horn when he heard a weird groaning noise that sounded like: "I've got your number." Then swish, and a very forceful impact on his pack and shoulder blade. The rope had dislodged the loose rock, which began to free fall toward the centre of the earth until finding him in the way. Steve was basically undamaged, but was concerned about his new camera in the top pocket of the pack. However, the camera, well protected in a stuffsack, was on the other side and wasn't even scratched. Steve was the only one to take a pack to the summit, and without it the block

Top - Darlene skiing (!) in to camp in May. Photo by S.Grant.

Bottom - Skiing from the peaks SE of Thiassi. Photo by S.Grant.

would have landed on his lower back. After that fascinating event, we continued down and had a wonderful slushy ski run back to camp as the sun set.

The last morning, while Mary and Gavin stood watch in case the earth moved and started more rockslides, Brian, Darlene and Steve skied up the 2670 m summit southeast of Thiassi. Brian and Steve continued on to scramble up 2690 m just farther southeast. To the south was a blanket of cloud up to 1900 m, spilling through, but dissipating at Railroad Pass and the pass from North Creek. This was all we saw of the abundant bad weather that plagued Vancouver and points south.

Another fun ski run with lots of slushy avalanches, a leisurely packup at camp, and some heavily laden skiing saw us back at the Christmas site. We cleaned up everything that had melted out and pressed on. The swamp wading was far more extensive after three days of hot sun, but was more enjoyable as we no longer cared about soaked boots. The skiing ended with a highly amusing session of using the skis as portable bridges to negotiate a slide alder patch containing almost no snow whatever.

As we walked back to the ford, it seemed that the river looked rather swollen. We found about three times as much water roaring past as when we had come in. Islands had disappeared and the water was running over the top of the bridge we'd built. It looked too dangerous. An exploration downstream revealed no better crossing, and we faced a walk out the north side, back on the main road, then up the south Hurley road - a mere 16 km to accomplish 200 m.

Then we got the idea to use crampons to walk on the wet, slippery logs with water rushing over them, aided by a handline for psychological support. This worked so well we could hardly believe it - it was the only time we used crampons on the entire trip. We gleefully splashed through flooded woods back to the car, where homemade cookies and cold beer provided by Mary awaited.

Party: Gavin Thurston, Mary Prendergast, Darlene Anderson, Brian Waddington, and Steve Grant.

3. MT. THIASSI AREA, 3-5 August, 1991

by **Steve Grant**

The result of wide-eyed tales about the headwaters of the Hurley River from the Christmas and spring ski trips was a "heavily subscribed" trip. All but one of the various rendezvous along the way succeeded, resulting in a final total of 18.

Bumper to bumper traffic up the Railroad Pass road created a dust tunnel further churned up by our convoy. The deteriorating side road to the west up the north side of the upper Hurley was located and negotiated to a point about 1 km farther west than the ford used on the previous trips. Finally, the Chev made it further than the ford.

We piled out into oppressive heat and the company of familiar faces among a group of six headed to the same area. As we walked to the end of the road, two fast folk went ahead to amble in the verdant forest. Everyone else doubled back at the end of the road to continue on a track higher on the hillside. About an hour later the two woods strollers caught up again. The track turns into a rough trail, courtesy of a commercial operation using a cabin in an adjacent drainage. It's not an easy trail, but a luxury compared to not having it, and the passage of our hordes improved the route considerably. Light, waterproof plastic boots, not available from local merchants, are a distinct advantage in the many swamps. A quick visit to the Christmas campsite revealed only dense weeds and no litter other than a couple of candle stubs.

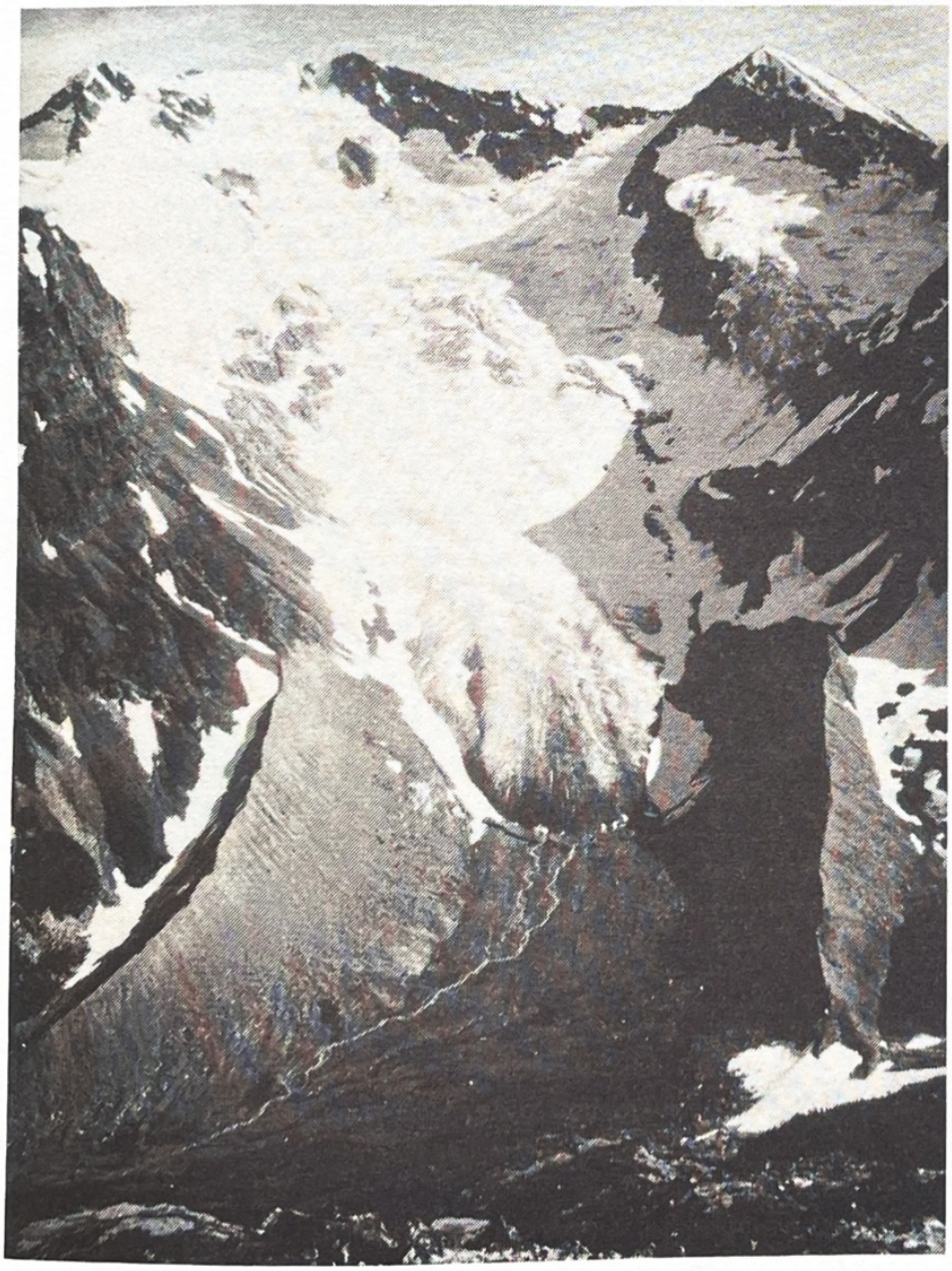
The stretch beneath Mt. Sessel's magnificent hanging glacier was only a taped route, but it soon broke out into the deglaciated flats beneath Sessel's western glacier. Five hours after starting we rounded a large moraine and reached the

The summit of Thiassi in May. Photo by S. Grant.

The summit of Thiassi in August. Photo by M. Feller.

beautiful subalpine lake created by it. What an exceptional place this is, with flat meadows for the tents, cold rushing streams, mountains to the sides, the glacier above, and a lake with sand beaches. In fact, the club had a summer camp at this lake in 1982.

That night I was privileged to observe a three hour display of stars, meteors, satellites and northern lights, all without pollution or cigarette sponsorship. Those jaded by recent fireworks displays in Vancouver dozed through it all, even the ones I woke up. Of interest is that on the trip on the other side of RR Pass a year earlier, there had been a different but even more awesome presentation by the solar wind sweeping past the planet.



The N side of Mt. Sessel. Photo by M. Feller.

On Sunday, Erich, Sev, and Gerard explored the 2660 m summits south of Thiassi; Peter W., the two Johns, Barb and I headed up Sessel from the pass into North Creek; and everyone else went for Thiassi by routes of varying directness. It was another perfect day. Those who went up Sessel had a fun scramble up the long NW ridge, enjoyed two hours of eating, gaping and sleeping on the summit, and explored inadvisable route options on the descent. Over on the normal route on Thiassi, ropes were fixed across the difficult bits and everyone paid at least a brief visit to the top. They returned to camp in time to prove that base camp was close enough after all.

With everyone charged up from the day's adventures, a talkative evening was enjoyed by all. Unfortunately for those who had arranged wake-up calls, rapidly developing clouds concealed the northern lights. Fortunately the clouds and slight rain shaped wildly divergent intentions for Monday morning into a reasonably coherent exit. It was hot and sunny again by the time we reached the cars four hours later.

Party: Peter Winninger, Shirley Rempel, Doug Carter, John Sapac, Robin Tivy, Sev Heiberg, Margaret and Brian Ellis, Barbara Borsutzky, John Lawrence, Evelyn and Michael Feller, Klaus Haring, Peter Katsaris, Randy Stoltmann, Erich Hinze and Gerard Clement.

CARIBOO MOUNTAINS SKI MOUNTAINEERING, Easter 1991

by **Michael Feller**

The Dore river flows out of the Cariboo mountains, joining the upper Fraser close to the town of McBride. The valley of the Dore had fascinated me for a couple of reasons. Firstly, the surrounding mountains were attractive, particularly from a ski-mountainering perspective. This had become apparent from a helicopter reconnaissance looking for research work-related sites and subsequent three years of work in the Dore. Secondly, some of the higher elevation Engelmann spruce - subalpine fir forests of the Dore did not appear to have suffered any major disturbance for many centuries. We had come across several stands that exhibited no evidence of fire or landslides and contained trees of all ages and sizes. Such forests are rare in B.C. as most have originated following some major disturbance. They are now even rarer as our forests in the Dore have since mostly been clearcut.

Forest management in the McBride Forest District, in which the Dore lies, is amongst the worst in the province. Massive clearcuts and escaped slashburns are rampant and little concern has sometimes been shown for regenerating forests. The farmer-foresters who managed the area appeared to be more concerned about their cattle than regenerating trees. Needless to say, often not even lip-service has been given to the non-timber resources of the forests. The valleys closer to McBride have almost all been cut out and the loggers are wanting to move into the more remote valleys, such as Betty Wendle Ck. and the upper Cariboo river, which drain into Bowron Lakes Park. Locally and in Prince George concerns are being expressed about the extent and quality of logging and a proposal has been put forward to link Wells Gray and Bowron Lakes provincial parks. The expanded parks/wilderness area would include the upper Cariboo and Betty Wendle Ck. areas as well as several other major valleys and much magnificent glaciated alpine country.

With the above in mind I was rather amused when Ross rang one evening to say he had found what appeared to be a good spring ski trip destination - a glaciated group of peaks at the head of the Dore River, Between the Dore, Milk, and upper Cariboo rivers. His proposed campsite was only 4 km from one of my research sites.

The helicopter dropped us off in moderate snowfall and limited visibility right beside a cache of fuel drums used by heliskiers from CMH's Cariboo lodge. It is essentially impossible to escape heliskiing in the Interior Mountains! The inclement weather for the duration of our stay, however, was sufficient to keep the heliskiers at bay and we had the area to ourselves. Camp was made in forest on the side of the valley, partly to escape the strong wind which swept down the open valley bottom, and partly to provide us with ample firewood.

We spent lots of time cutting wood, standing by our campfires, arguing and debating about all and sundry and generally running down everyone's group dinners - the weather saw to that. During the week we were there a metre or so of snow fell and the sun and blue sky were in short supply. Sunnier conditions arrived the day before we flew out, which was to be expected. Despite the weather, however, we managed to get out every day for a ski, and knocked off 5 peaks, mostly around 2600m in elevation (camp was at 1600m).

The skiing was often in superb fresh powder down a variety of slopes, mostly not too extreme, but steep enough to please our best skiers. Most of the peaks invloved final climbs on foot up summit ridges, often rocky. Our finest ski descent was from the lowest peak we climbed - an aesthetic 2400m pyramid near the very head of the middle fork of the Dore - 2 km of blissful powder on steady moderate slopes. The furthest peak from our camp we climbed (about 5 km), was ascended via its steep and dubious (avalanche-wise) northern slopes to a narrow rocky summit ridge. Descent involved downclimbing some of this ridge, carrying skis, until we could ski off its southern slopes - a complete circumnavigation. This peak, and another we

Above the largest glacier in the area with the upper Cariboo R. valley in the background. Photo by M. Feller.

Not quite a "has been" trying to avoid an epic in the Cariboo Mtns. Photo by M. Feller.

Looking down to the upper Dore and camp (in trees) on the finest ski descent. Photo by M. Feller.

From just above camp looking towards the finest 2400m ski peak (right of centre). Photo by M. Feller.

climbed about 2.5 km away on the other side of the largest glacier in the area, offered superb views (when the clouds lifted and the sun came out) of the upper Cariboo river valley and mountains to the immediate south, all unnamed. In view of the configuration of this valley - north facing so cooler and less prone to fire, and containing stands of conifer forest separated by fire-resistant slide alder swaths - it seems likely that it could contain long - undisturbed Engelmann spruce - subalpine fir forests, as the Dore once did.

The dismal weather finally took its toll, and the return to "civilization" was not without its benefits, as it meant that no longer did one need to clear one's roof of snow every few hours or try to get warm beside a fire while snow poured onto one's back, both cooling and wetting it. The area, minus heliskiers, lived up to early expectations as a fine one for ski mountaineering, however, and convinced us that it would be an excellent addition to our parks/wilderness system.

Party: Ross Wyborn, Brian Wood, Erich Hinze, Peter de Visser, Brian Thompson, and Michael Feller.

ALSEK RIVER TO CHILKAT INLET VIA MT. FAIRWEATHER, 5 May - 9 June, 1991

by **Betsy Fletcher**

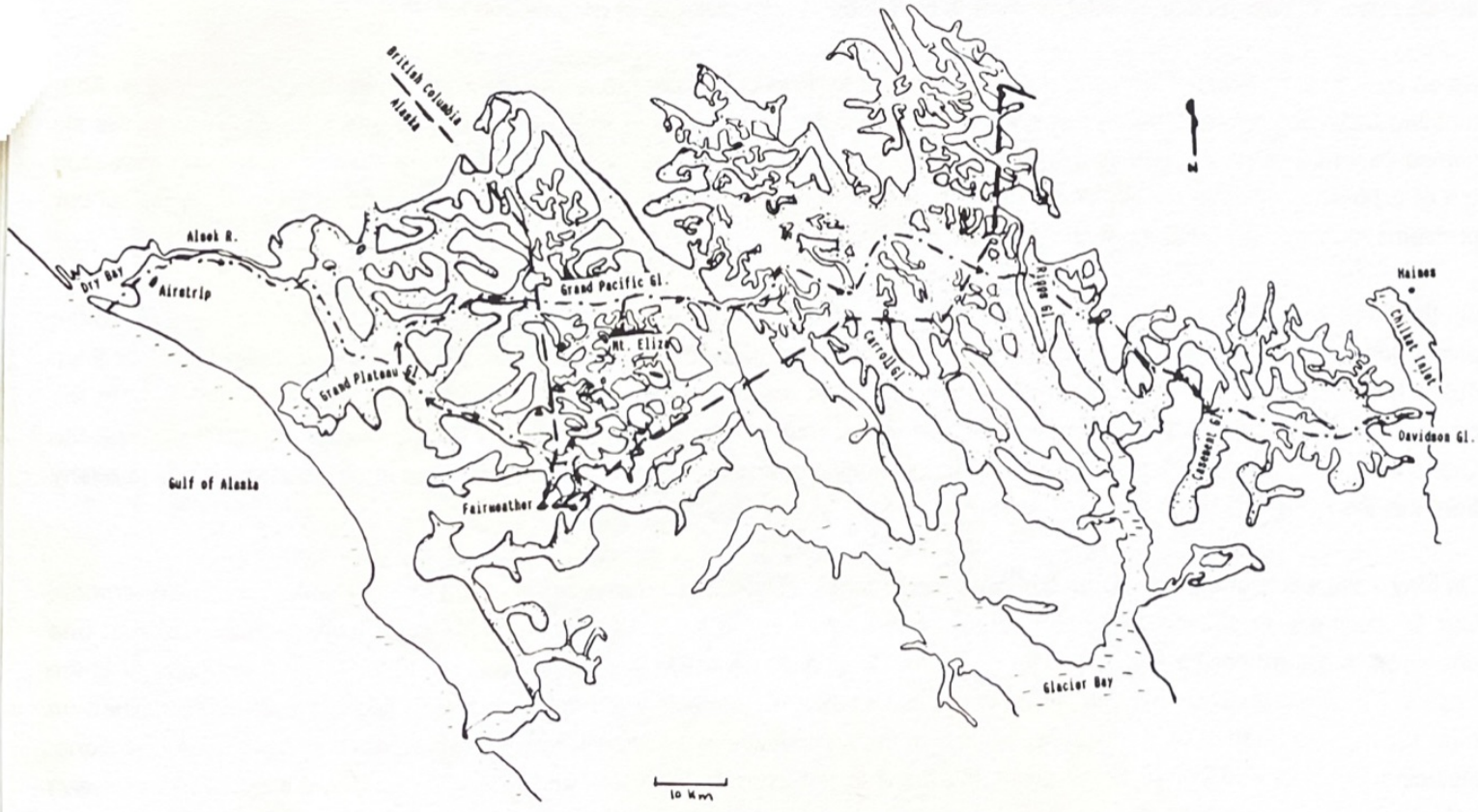
After spending a couple of summers working in the Kluane Ranges and looking at Mts. Steele and Wood every clear day, I decided I wanted to do some ski touring in that area. So when Dave started planning a five week ski tour to Fairweather it seemed like a good opportunity to get into the big peaks in the St Elias Mountains. The plan was to drive to Haines, fly to the toe of the Grand Plateau glacier on the Gulf of Alaska, ski up to the plateau below Fairweather, climb the peak, then ski out to the Davidson Glacier on Chilkat Inlet, just south of Haines- a total distance of roughly 350 km.

So on May 1 Craig, Marcus, Peter and I left Vancouver to drive to Whitehorse where we were to pick up Dave on May 4. After meeting Dave we drove to Haines where we found that the company with which we had arranged to fly didn't have the ski planes they had promised, and so could not place our required food drops. As we were not very keen about throwing our food out of a plane we had to quickly come up with plan B. Fortunately, a call to Mike Ivers of Gulf Air in Yakutat solved all our problems, and we agreed to meet him the next morning.

On the 5th the weather was not amazing so plans were altered again. We flew all our stuff to an airstrip near Dry Bay, on the same side of the range as Yakutat, to wait for good weather to place the food caches. In the evening we walked the 5 or 6 km out to the coast with a beautiful long sandy beach and an occasional glimpse of snowy peaks rising over 3000 m from the ocean. After talking to the Park Ranger stationed at Dry Bay we decided to start hiking from there instead of flying over the Grand Plateau glacier as originally planned. The distances looked similar and the hike sounded more pleasant and less bushy from this side.

On May 7 the weather improved and our three food caches were put in, so we started hiking up the Alsek River that afternoon. Our first camp was outside a hunting lodge a few kilometres up the river. The next six days were sparkling except one afternoon rainstorm on the 9th. After four and a half long days we made it to our food cache at 2900 m on the plateau at the base of Fairweather. The next day we moved camp to 3800 m just below the col on the west ridge of Fairweather. Then on May 13 we were headed up the easy west ridge to the summit where we were rewarded with wonderful views in all directions, including St. Elias and Logan to the north and the Pacific Ocean to the south and west. The cold and wind forced us down before long. By the time we got to our high camp all of us were too tired to think about moving back down to the food cache, so we decided to spend another night there. These first days were among the hardest I have done. I spent the previous three

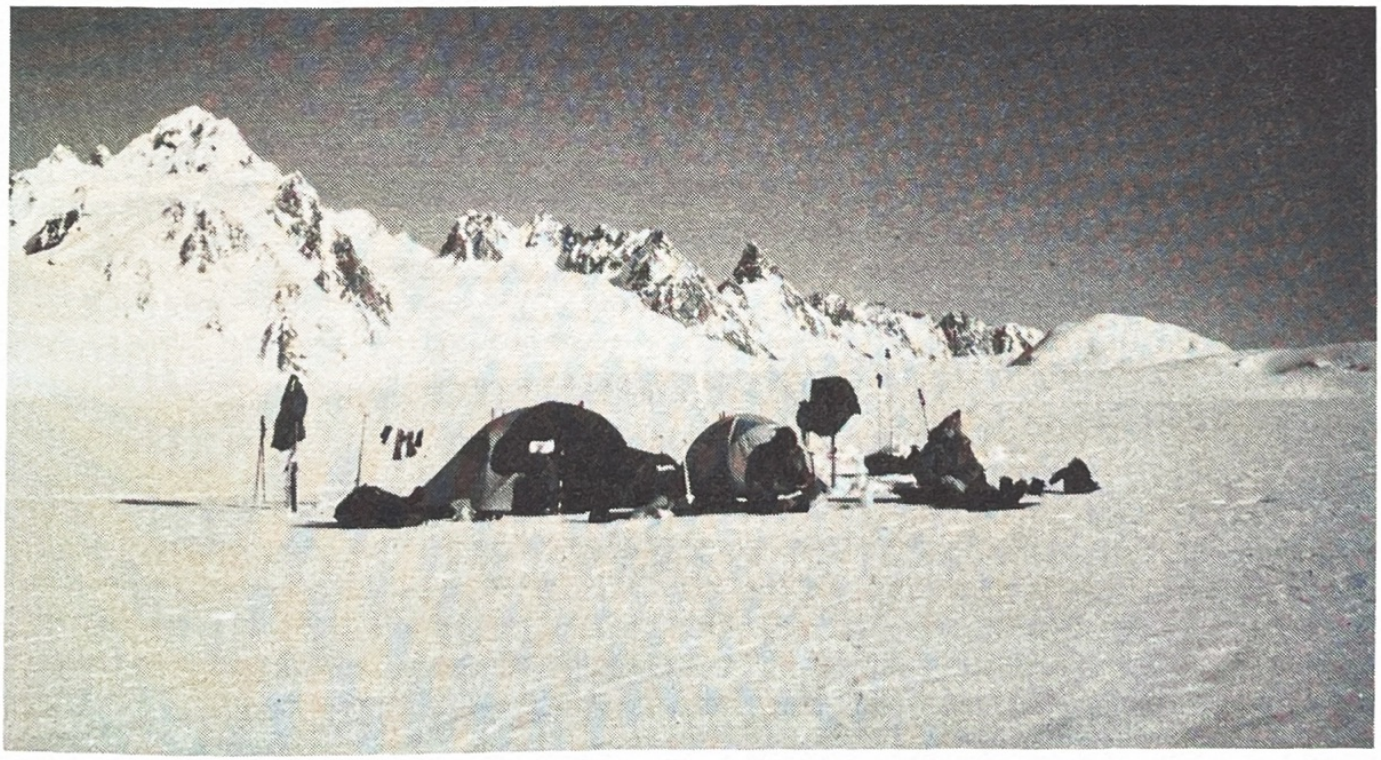
On the Grand Plateau glacier. Photo by B. Fletcher.



Map of Fairweather Area

The route taken from the mouth of the Alsek R to Chilkat Inlet. Map by B. Fletcher.

On the Grand Pacific glacier. Photo by B. Fletcher.



Camp at the final food cache on the Riggs glacier. Photo by B. Fletcher.

hoping for a short storm so that I could have a rest. It was definitely worth it though - it was a great feeling to make it to the top of Fairweather.

The next morning our good weather ended and we woke up to strong winds and a whiteout. So we were finally forced to have a rest day, not quite where we wanted it however. We spent the day listening to avalanches come down over our route back to base camp. By 3:30 it cleared up a bit so we decided to pack up quickly and ski down. The visibility remained adequate long enough for us to find our way back to the food cache. It was a bit scary skiing through all the fresh debris from the icefalls on either side of the bowl we had skied up. The next few days the weather was a bit unstable so we didn't do very much. We had allowed two weeks to climb Fairweather but we had only taken seven days. So we had a week of extra food on the plateau and thought we should ski around a bit and maybe climb something else. We spent one long day skiing around the plateau below Fairweather and up the col between Fairweather and Quincy Adams. The next day Dave, Marcus and Craig climbed a 3350 m peak near camp while Peter toured around and I lounged in camp.

On May 19, the start of our third week, we moved off the Plateau and started retracing our steps back to the junction of the Grand Plateau and Grand Pacific glaciers. We then followed the Grand Pacific glacier for a couple of days to a side glacier which afforded access to Mt. Eliza. Most of this was delightfully easy sledding, the final 13 km down the Grand Pacific was an easy morning ski down a nicely frozen glacier. We spent the next three days camped on a small ridge offering views of the heavily crevassed glaciers to the east of Mt. Eliza. The next day I spent lying in the sun due to total exhaustion, while the others attempted the south ridge of Mt. Eliza. This attempt was not successful, due to "moderately slimy snow on moderately steep rock", to quote Marcus. On the 24th, Dave and Marcus headed off to try the north ridge while Peter and I headed for a somewhat smaller and easier summit north of Eliza. We had excellent views back up to Fairweather from our summit and were also able to watch Dave and Marcus ascend the spectacular knife edged ridge to their summit.

May 25 being the last day of week three, it was time to move down into the valley fog, which had been hanging around for a couple of days, and look for our second food cache. With some good compass work by Dave, and lots of luck, we managed to find the cache with only 50 m visibility. The next day was still foggy with limited visibility, but we figured that if we could gain a few hundred metres or so it would probably be sunny, so we set off and by lunch time the clouds had broken up. The next 5 days were generally white with wind and snow. We managed to move a few kilometres on two days, but most of the time was spent sitting in the tents dreaming of all the food we wanted but didn't have and trying not to finish all of our gorp before we really wanted it.

On June 1 we had a slight amount of visibility so Dave and Peter went to try to figure out where we were and to find a route down to the Carrol glacier. They were successful, so we left camp around noon and skied until 8 pm without seeing much of anything. The next day cleared up so we put in a very long day and made it to our final food cache on the top of Riggs Glacier, only one day behind schedule.

June 3 dawned bright and sunny but unfortunately Peter was suffering from snow blindness as a result of not wearing sun glasses 2 days previously in the fog. He wanted to continue on so we packed up and started down the glacier. By lunch it was obvious that he was in a lot of pain and really could not see anything, so we decided to camp and give his eyes time to recover. The next two days were rest days, Dave had a flight to Vancouver from Whitehorse booked for the afternoon of June 9th so this last delay caused him some concern. By June 6, Peter's eyes had recovered and the weather was not too bad, so we started off on a fairly long day over to the Casement glacier. The next day we skied to the snow line on the Davidson glacier and made our last camp on the ice.

The 8th was spent walking down through the heavily crevassed lower part of the Davidson, Then out to Chilkat Inlet and the airstrip on Glacier Point. We had arranged to be picked up here by Haines Airways at noon on the 8th. As it was rather late we set up camp on the Airstrip and hoped that someone would notice us. Later Dave flagged down a fishing boat and asked them to call Haines Airways for us. The next morning we were picked up and flown back to Haines. After grabbing some junk food for breakfast we drove back to Whitehorse where we dropped Dave off at the Airport just as his flight was being announced.

Party: Craig Hollinger, Marcus Kellerhals, Peter Stone, Dave Williams, and Betsy Fletcher.

HOMATHKO ICEFIELD SKI CAMP, May 1991

by **Pat Crean**

It never fails to amaze me that skiers and mountaineers will spend large amounts of time and money trundling off to Nepal, Peru, and Europe, having to take shots for countless dire diseases, and drinking and eating at their peril, when we have right here in our own backyard some of the greatest, cleanest, most un-visited alpine wilderness in the world. I believe that it's only a matter of time before this is discoved by the "other people". Until then these almost virgin areas offer, usually, complete isolation, often out of sight and sound of the omni-present airplane. The Homathko is an awe-inspiring plateau of ice, with interesting peaks protruding randomly from the vast, flat surface. This is predominantly an area for those who like to range widely, exploring and trekking over long distances. However, the north-west section, where we spent our time, proved to have some very worth-while ski-mountaineering.

Our plans called for flying in from Bluff Lake on Sunday May 12th but the weather wasn't good enough, so we decided to do our tourist trip to Bella Coola at the beginning of the holiday. Monday afternoon it started to clear so we headed back from the coast and camped overnight between Tatla and Bluff Lake, lulled to sleep by the cry of the loons. By noon on Tuesday the sky was bright blue and we mustered our gear at the King's and waited for Mike to show up. By 12:40 we were away. My original intention had been to make camp on the south side of the base of Mt. Howard, but as we flew by on the east side and turned west there did not appear to be a suitable flat area and it also seemed too exposed in case of high winds. We moved westerly and south of some prominent rock cliffs, a good land-mark in case of bad visiblity. Dropping close to the surface the light was uncertain. Mike didn't like the idea of landing with the full load so he off-loaded me and some of the gear and carried on down a little further, unloaded Gerard, Juri and the baggage, then shuttled me down to them. After lugging everthing over closer to the side of the moraine, near a large wall for digging a storm-cave, we set up camp. By then it was fogged in and late afternoon. We started digging into the side of the wind cirque to make an ice-cave in case of severe winds, but fortunately never had to complete it. "This is another mini front" we reasoned, and tomorrow we'll be back in the sun. We learned all over again that large ice fields create their own weather and, when the sun, as in late Spring, is generating a fair amount of heat, this usually results in heavy layers of fog until the barometric pressure rises.

Wednesday dawned dark and gloomy, with a layer of grey cloud hanging a hundred metres or so above the ground, although the glare of the sun could be seen above the sombre mass. After fretting around until lunch-time, Gerard and I just had to move, and took a reconnaissance trip up the glacier to Sasquatch Pass. Occasionally the clouds drifted apart to give us glimpses of peaks to the north - Howard Pk., then east to Burghley, Walsingham, with brief looks at Mist Peak on the other side of the Pass.

Thursday was somewhat better, partly cloudy and improved visiblity. About noon Gerard and I headed up the slope above camp onto "Camp Glacier", passing "Camp Peak" on our right (east) and around and up the north side of "Pk. 2600 m", the west summit of a group of three - "The Triad"? The snow was soft and sticky, the temperature being a few degrees above

zero, but the slope above camp was tilted enough to get a few wiggles in. Juri, meantime, had been exploring the potential of the main glacier to the west and down from the camp.

On our third full day we all joined forces, across the flat glacier south-west, skirting the crevasses on our right, swinging west to the south side of Pk. 2320m (Stadia Pk.), 1.25km NE of Pelorus Pk., the final few metres on foot on rock. Saturday we were across the icefield to the south and easterly for about 5 km and up Pk. 2400 m by its south side, then up Pk. 2482 m (Cloudcap Pk.) one km to the south (See note A).

Sunday was one of the best days for weather - sunny with a high overcast - shirt-sleeve and sun-screen time. So after breakfast away we went in good spirits up "Camp Glacier" pointing north. Ahead and on the left was an attractive ski peak of 2520m (Pk. Five). A good route was seen up a snow-slope on the south and west side. However we were a little late and the slope was already showing signs of avalanching in the hot, sultry sun. We decided to try the north side instead and skied past the sheer east face to the sharp ridge on the north side. This got progressively narrower until we eventually were skiing with one ski on either side of the ridge - a lot of fun on a nice day, but too tricky to get to the peak. So we turned around and went "au cheval" to the other end of the ridge. Here we had to take off skis, scramble across and down some bare rocks to a steep west-facing slope leading to Pk. 2520m ("Au Cheval Pk."). This we ascended by moving north-easterly and up the north side. We were rewarded with great views of the Doran Creek valley and Mt. Queen Bess to the north. Far off to the west the peaks in the Waddington area could be seen.

On Monday the visibility was variable as we re-traced our tracks of a few days previous to the south-west, approaching Pk. 2392m (Iceworm Pk.) on the snow-slope to the west and from there to the summit.

Tuesday was the day to go down the glacier, around a large sink-hole developing down from camp and ponder the crevasses on the west side of Nunatak Pk. We were hemmed in but, staying close to the rock face, picked our way up on to the wide expanse of "Doran Glacier". Whilst Juri and I slogged west to Pk. 2207m, Gerard turned east up to the col between Peak Five and Nunatak. After lunch the two of us plodded over to join up with Gerard's tracks and swung south-east up to the col. It was getting colder and looking blacker. From the col a good ski down to meet with our morning's tracks and trudge back to camp. Although the weather was decidedly "iffey", the next day we were keen to get a look at the mountains around Sasquatch Pass. The big face of Pembroke was especially interesting. In slowly deteriorating conditions we reached the pass. Since this was ostensibly our last day, we wanted to make the most of it. Gerard went over to explore the possibilities of Mist Peak, while Juri and I climbed Cloister Pk. from the south. The visibility was getting worse and it was snowing. The trip down the glacier back to camp was in steady snow and white-out conditions. To prove its unpredictability the weather cleared and became sunny by supper time. Variations in the barometer were never sufficient to give any indication of the trend in the weather.

Thursday we had tentatively reserved for some up-and-down skiing on our local "Camp Pk". This turned out to be the best skiing of the trip, with a layer of unaltered powder snow on a hard base on the north side of the mountain. Later in the evening we tried to contact the pilot for pick-up but could get nowhere on the radio. By sunset the sky was an ominous black, moving in steadily from the west. It started snowing and by morning there was at least 30 cm. of heavy wet snow on the tents.

Friday morning at 10 am was scheduled to be our pick-up time, but as we shovelled ourselves out, it continued to snow on and off and we knew we were going nowhere. The glare of the sun through the white mass of fog was dazzling and even during flurries the temperature was still between +5 and +8 degrees C , really strange. The barometer was dismally low. Definitely a tent day.

As soon as it was daylight the following morning, about 6:30 am, I stuck my head out of the tent flap. There was a low mist over the glacier but the sky above was clear and beautifully blue. By the time the stove had boiled up the first tea water it was already starting to sock in again. Loud groans of despair came from all concerned, some pessimistic soul even vowing that we might wait days and days, nay even weeks, before it cleared. We weren't too badly off for food and were not recycling tea-bags, so things were by no means critical. It was noticeably colder this morning, about -8 degrees C. Significantly there had been no birds in the vicinity for the last two days. Was this an omen? As we lolled around camp we made all kinds of interesting speculations. Juri comdemned the club radio, stating that when he was in the army he would have been shot if he'd not been able to function electronically. I was glad the B.C.M.C. didn't have such strict regulations or I'd still be out there, with nothing but my crossed skis to mark my final resting place. The conversations are always a major part of the fun of these camps, I find.

Later in the afternoon the sky was making efforts to improve, with the sun trying to poke out from behind varigated dark nimbus and puffy white cumulus clouds. The barometer was even picking up a bit, but it still did not look good enough for flying. I was lying on top of my sleeping bag after supper, just thinking about getting ready to go through the fianal motions of going to bed when Gerard's voice broke the silence.

"He's coming, the helicopter's coming." I shoved my head outside. "The sound of wind coming up from the valley, blowing around the rocks," I thought. Then we heard him, coming from the opposite direction to the way we'd come in. It was 8 pm. In an incredible burst of activity the tents came down, all the gear was stuffed away and we were in the air by 8:30 pm. In the last of the daylight remaining we flew back, over the awesome Tiedemann glacier, a more westerly route via the "window" of clearing back to Bluff Lake. And so back to the rustic comforts of a hot shower, a huge supper and clean sheets in a big, old fashioned brass bed at Tatla Lake. What a great way to finish the trip.

Party: Gerard Clement, Juri Borski, and Pat Crean

Natural history notes A: On our first trip across the glacier south of camp there was a proliferation of ice worms wriggling along just below the uppermost crystals of snow. These had the appearance of black, thin, wire-like creatures, 1.5 to 2 cm long. They are very probably one of the species of *Mesenchytraeus* (class Oligochaeta). Very little seems to be known about them and the Handbook of the Canadian Rockies states that they gain their nutrition from watermelon (red) snow. However, this was not the case on the Homathko, no red snow being seen anywhere. The greatest concentration was toward the centre of the flat part of the glacier, which at this point was 3-4 km wide. An average of 8-12 per square metre were counted, with as high as 25 per square metre at their most populous. Since they were readily observable over at least one square kilometre, they existed in significant numbers. The ice at this part of the glacier has to be scores if not hundreds of metres thick, so it seemed unlikely that the iceworms had come up from a layer of soil beneath the surface. The nearest soil was in a large mud hole next to our camp, where the snow was melting away from the rock-face, but very few of these mysterious little oddities were seen near camp. At the time of observation they were all wriggling easterly, toward the sun and the widest part of the glacier. Three days later, crossing the ice at the same place, the iceworms had disappeared. Whether they were still crawling eastward over the glacier we did not know. The questions of where they came from, where they were going and what sustained them remain unanswered.

Note B: Some birds were seen and heard during our camp. Among these was a well preserved frozen pine siskin, lying on top of the snow in the middle of the glacier south of camp. The closest trees were about 10 km west of camp, on the north slope above the Jewakwa glacier, which leads down into the drainage of the Jewakwa River valley. Presumably these small forest birds could not wander too far over the glacier and for some reason could not find their way back.

Melted out tracks a few days old were also seen heading east to west, in the same location south of camp. The size and spacing indicated that they were probably wolverine tracks, also taking into consideration the ability of the animal to traverse such terrain. During periods of better weather, a single raven flapped by, investigating the cliffs above camp for possible nesting sites. During the night on two occasions when it was actually not clouded in we were also visited by two of those indomitable mountain birds, a pair of ptarmigan, cluck-clucking and ka-taawing above the tents. What a delight to hear from these amazing tough spirits of the icefields, even though they do wake you up in the wee small hours.

In daylight on the better days, one or two pairs of medium sized greyish birds were seen, flying past and occasionally landing on the snow and walking around. Although they were never too close, by their slim profile, undulating flight and habit of picking up insects off the snow, they were tentatively identified as Water Pipits.

Note C: All of the peaks visited were of medium grade granitic rock, quartz monzonite or granodiorite in composition, heavily fractured both vertically and horizontally. One minor peak on the south side of the snow-field from camp had noticeable amounts of green epidote on the fracture planes. The west face of Nunatak Pk. was notable for swarms of pinkish-white feldspathic dikes from top to bottom. Close examination was not possible due to a wide bergshrund at the bottom of the face and loose, avalanchey snow. Almost without exception the peaks in the area gave the impression of great individual blocks of rock piled one on top of the other. In the event of an earth tremor of any significance there would more than likely be substantial rock falls from many of the peaks.

THE CHATSQUOT - SMABY ICEFIELDS, 11-23 May, 1991

by **Peter Parrotta**

Our original plan was to ski and explore the Foresight Mountain ridge on the south side of the Kimsquit River, but as I peered out of the chopper window I saw more rock than snow. Our nervous (substitute) pilot, who had never been this far north of Bella Coola before, was even more apprehensive when I told him to cross the valley to a more remote glaciation - the Chatsquot - Smaby icefields. This turned out to be as good a ski mountaineering area as one could ask for.

We established a base camp on a scenic ridge 110 km NNW of Bella Coola beside a beautiful snow-ice dome called Mt. Crawford. This mountain provided us with a glorious and challenging run, part 40 degree, 600 m vertical (900 m in winter) above the treeline, down a ridge into a large bowl and ending in a couloir. All this you could do before lunch at basecamp. Mt. Crawford was our initial first ascent -descent. The spectacular views from its summit offered a contrast between the ugly clearcuts in the Kimsquit Valley to the south and the untouched Gamsby - Kitlope wastershed to the northwest. This watershed has been recently identified as the largest temperate unlogged watershed in B.C.; and is presently being proposed as a future wilderness park. Doman Industries eventually plans to log close to the Gamsby, via Chatsquot Creek.

The mountains in this general area range from about 2000 to 2300 m but because of the low glaciation and treeline they compare to much bigger and higher mountains further south. You can easily do 1200 m vertical without trees on the higher peaks. Our most productive day was a gruelling, hot fourteen hours of climbing and skiing three unnamed peaks up to 2200 m. All were first ascents located 5 - 6 km (10 -12 on skis) NE of Mt. Crawford. The highest offered a 1200 m vertical above the treeline.

Weather was about half sunshine, two tent bound days and three partly usable days, some rain, fog and even fresh snow - typical Coast Mountain May weather. Snow conditions ranged from excellent "spring" to crust, slush and even powder. Crampons and ice axes were essential equipment on some mornings when the snow was hard.

Looking E from camp to unnamed peaks. The highest peak (2210m) is on the right. Photo by P. Wallbridge.

Peter W. on the summit of Pk. 2210m looking to the north. Photo by P. Parrotta.

The thrill of seeing only our tracks on these vast expanses of virgin snow was interrupted one day when we observed a line along a steep avalanche slope about 2 km away. Through the binoculars it turned out to be a large grizzly lumbering along with two cubs. Our eyes followed the tracks back to a nearby pass where she had transferred from the Smaby Valley to the Chatsquot drainage. When we crossed that pass the next day we saw some more grizzly tracks. From then on 1440 m benchmark was referred to as Grizzly Pass.

Party: Peter Wallbridge and Peter Parrotta

SOUTHERN PANTHEON AND NORTHERN WADDINGTON RANGES BCMC SUMMER CAMP
11 - 25 August, 1991

by **Lyle Killough**

This year's summer camp was centered around a base camp at the headwaters of the south fork of Twist Creek, between the Pantheon and Waddington ranges. Access to base camp was by helicopter from Bluff Lake.

Attending during the first week only were: Lisa Baile, Peter Paré, Dennis Sims, Pam Jenkins, Norbert Eckert, Randy Enomoto, Tricia Daum, Evelyn Feller, Michael Feller, Ralph Hutchinson, John Olesen and Debbie Caldwell. Tom Zarzecki flew in at the start of the second week to join Lyle Killough, Jack Bryceland, Marilyn Cram, Peter Levine, Hilton Poidevin and Geoff Mumford who stayed for both weeks.

Base camp was on a shrubby flat tucked up against the bouldery remnants of a terminal moraine at an elevation of about 1600m in a typical glaciated valley. To the south were very steep, high walls of a northern ridge of the Waddingtons. The less vertical slopes to the north allowed access from camp to Hephaestus Peak, routes to the higher Pantheon peaks and a number of unnamed peaks in the Pantheon Range. The col to the west of camp was a popular two hour wander as a place to escape the bugs and also the easiest place from which to view Mt. Waddington. Bugs were very abundant, as were a multitude of alpine flowers. The no-cook camp ran well. Prior to flying in, most people organized cooking groups of two to four people.

The weather was fine for the fly-in day and still looked good on the morning of the 12th, the first full day of climbing. Pam and Dennis headed for a high camp at the Twist-Frontier col. Lyle and Peter L. went to reconnoitre a route to Manitou and all the rest went for a scramble up an unnamed peak northwest of camp. Lyle and Peter L. found that their route to Manitou was not very likely and attempted the main summit of the same peak the main group was on via a steep snow gully on the SE face. The main group climbed a sub-peak on the SW ridge (GR 438138, elev. approx. 2720m.) Lyle and Peter L. reached the top of the snow and scrambled part of the ridge before turning back due to deteriorating weather. This mountain became known as "Mt. Huia", for a New Zealand weather god.

The next day, inclement weather did not keep Lisa, Geoff, Peter P., Norbert, Hilton, Tricia, Evelyn and Michael from wandering down Twist Creek to climb a glaciated peak in the Waddingtons, visible to the east from camp. Their ascent route went up the SW edge of the glacier to the NE ridge. This ridge was followed to the summit. The final approach to the summit was a fairly steep snow climb to a short exposed shoulder and on to rock for the last few metres (see front cover photo). No summit cairn was found so one was built and the mountain was dubbed "Leda" (GR 485127 elev. approx. 2680m.) Descent was via the NE ridge and the NE side of the glacier. This lead to a beautiful park-like stream gully coming from the lowest notch on the ridge.

Some happy trios - Tricia, Geoff, and Lisa on Huia (left). Photo by P. Paré.
Peter, Geoff, and Lisa on Manitou (right). Photo by P. Paré.

Tricia enjoying Hephaestus. Photo by R. Enomoto.

Norbert, Geoff, Peter P., Debbie, Lisa, and Tricia warding off bugs. Photo by R. Enomoto.

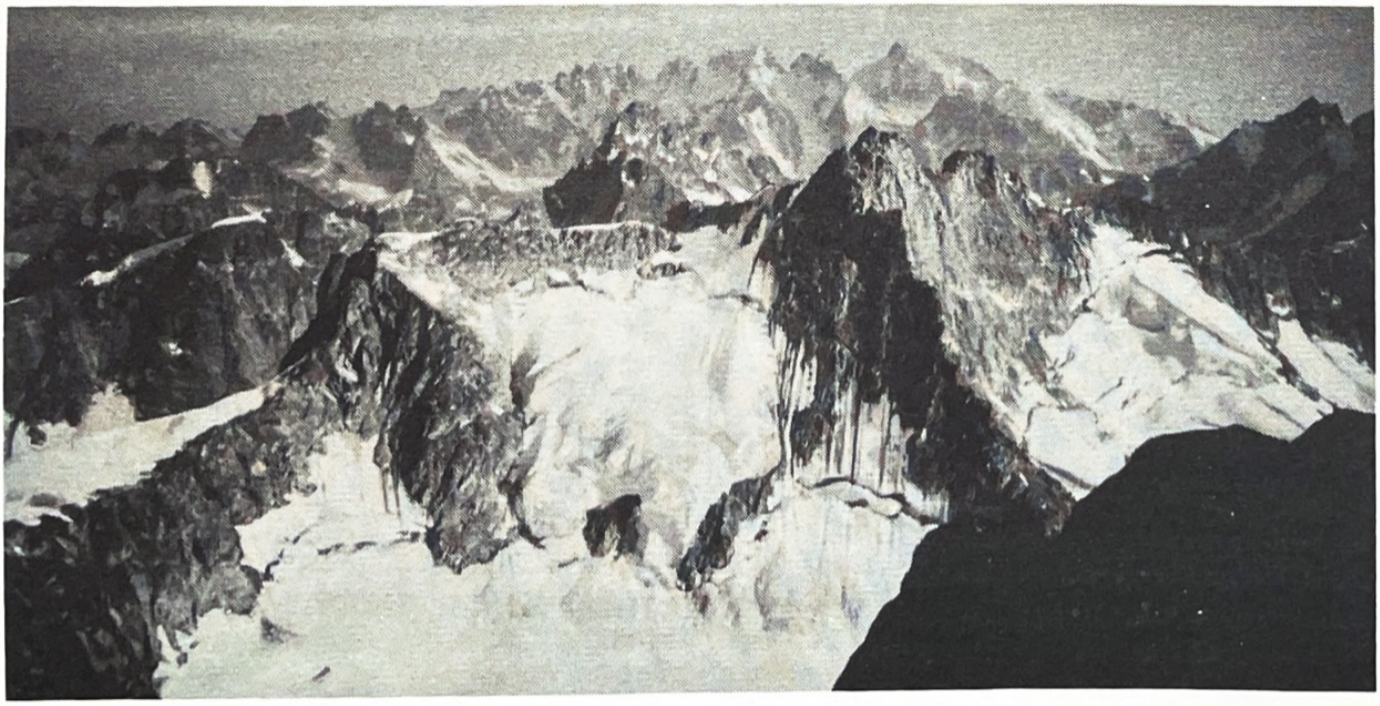
Hilton, Jack, Ralph, John, Peter L., and Marilyn dress for a formal dinner in base camp. Photo by L. Killough.

Base camp in the willow swamps. Photo by M. Feller.

Guardians on Zeus. Photo by M. Feller.

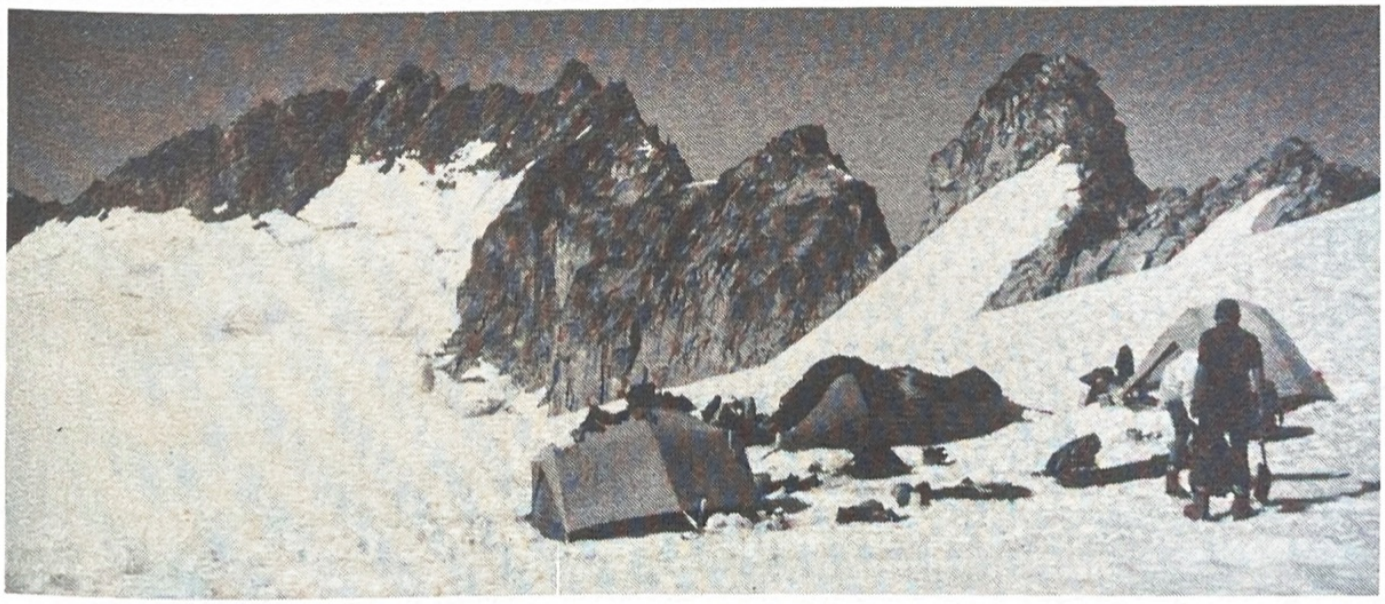
Top - "Mt. Leda". Photo by P. Paré.

Bottom - "Mt Huia" in the foreground, beneath Mt. Waddington on the horizon. Photo by P. Paré.



Top - Norbert and Michael on the S ridge of Hepaestus Pk. Photo by T. Daum.

Bottom - Mt. Hephaestus above and to the left of the high camp near "Huia". The S ridge is the ridge to the left of the peak. Photo by M. Feller.



The following day, Jack, Peter L. and Lyle went to repeat the ascent of Mt "Leda". This party used the descent route of the previous day. The lower glacier was bypassed using the pleasant, broad ridge east of the glacier which lead to the northern-most extent of the ice on Leda. The mostly bare glacier was ascended to the NE ridge. The steep summit snow climb of the previous day was now a thin layer of slushy snow over ice. It was front-points and excitement to the top.

By the 14th of August, the large group began to break up. Randy, Tricia, Debbie, Norbert, Michael and Evelyn set out to establish a high camp in the Zeus-Manitou col from which to climb Manitou, Zeus, Kali, and Thor. They intended to follow the route the Kafers established in 1966 when the first ascent of Hephaestus was done from the Zeus-Manitou col. (ref. CAJ 1967). The top of the icefall on the Frontier Creek drainage side of the route had to be reached by a dangerous climb down over 80 metres of steep class 3-4 dirt, gravel and detached boulders. In light of this, a high camp was established in a pleasant wind cirque at the top of the glacier near the "Huia"-Hephaestus ridge. From this camp, only day packs were carried down and up the nasty side. Hephaestus was climbed from this camp and Norbert, Evelyn, and Michael also climbed Zeus.

John, Ralph, Hilton, Marilyn and Lyle climbed Hephaestus from base camp. This gave them an opportunity to try out their headlights and to have a late dinner. Ralph and John climbed the summit on the south side of the col at the head of Twist Creek (GR 436108 elev. approx. 2420m.) They had tried from the north side 4 days before their successful ascent from the east of what appeared to be an unclimbed summit.

Peter P, Geoff and Lisa went to a high camp toward Manitou by descending from camp and then traversing the glacier to the SE of Manitou. Their camp was at the top of the glacier and they climbed over the unnamed peak immediately SE of Manitou (GR 444152 elev. approx. 2640m) to reach the col below. From this camp they climbed Zeus and Manitou in a day.

Jack, Hilton, Peter L., Marilyn and Lyle also set out for the Zeus-Manitou col through the gap NE of Hephaestus, discovered by the Kafers. They rappelled to the top of the icefall from the gap. From their camp in the col, Jack, Marilyn, Lyle and Hilton climbed Zeus by ascending the eastern edge of the glacier to the south of the summit, then contouring west to a steep snow tongue on the south ridge. The ridge was climbed (some class 4) to the flat summit.

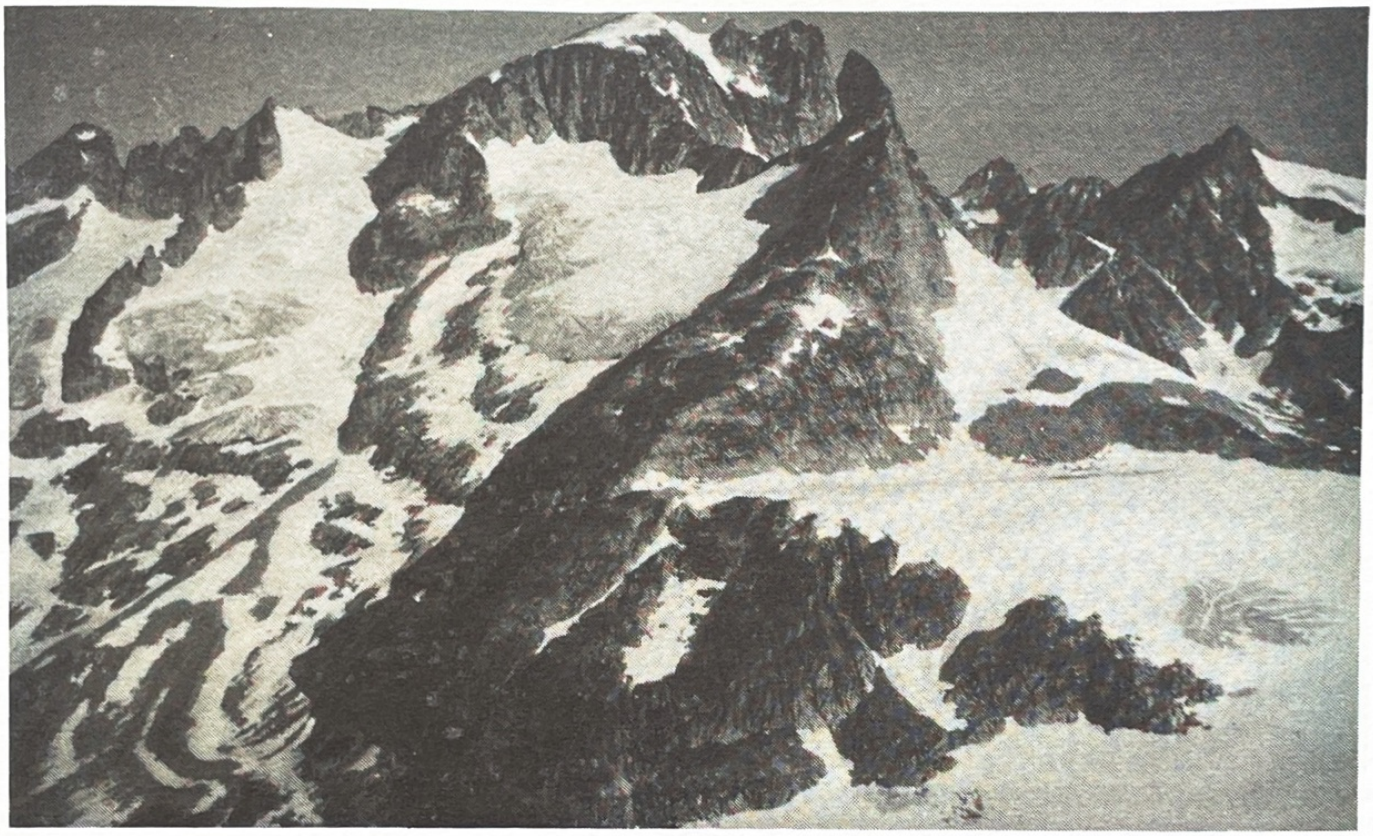
While most of the group was climbing Manitou the next day, Geoff and Tom hiked across from base camp and joined the camp just as the clouds rolled in. The next morning Geoff, Tom, Lyle, Hilton, and Marilyn started the long hike over to Mt. Thor in clouds and light drizzle. After much wandering around on the glaciers of Thor, they gained the summit in brisk winds and poor visibility. On the descent, Tom and Geoff stayed high and traversed onto the southern buttress of Mt Kali while Lyle and HIlton circled low around the buttress of Kali to drop Marilyn off and then to ascend the very crevassed Kali glacier and attempt the peak via a snow ramp on the east side. There was some vital snow missing from this route.

Marilyn, Jack, Hilton, and Lyle returned to base camp the next day, stopping to climb the SE peak of Mt "Huia" and to investigate a ledge on the peak's NW face which leads to a ridge to the main summit. The rock climbing gear needed to finish this route was far below in base camp. Tom, Geoff and Peter climbed Manitou and returned to base camp. Geoff is probably the only person to have climbed Manitou twice.

Tom and Geoff proceeded to another high camp in Bifrost Pass and climbed Frontier Mountain. The others had a last attempt at Mt"Huia" on the E ridge but became discouraged by the refridgerator-sized blocks falling off. Compensation for this was a pleasant climb of the two pinnacles south of Mt. Hephaestus. Lyle, Jack, Marilyn and Peter L. climbed the N ridge (minor class 4-5). No cairn was found and the very exposed middle finger pinnacle was then climbed as it looked higher (class 3-4). A cairn was found on the middle finger but no record. A cairn was built on the pyramid and the peak was named "Bacchus" for Hephaestus' half brother, the god of wine and fertility. There were ice feathers in the cracks. It was time to go home.

Debbie surveys the squalor of high camp with Frontier Mtn to right, Delusion Pk. to the left, and the Waddington - Tiedemann group behind. Photo by T. Daum.

Manitou Pk. seen from below "Mt. Huia". Photo by M. Feller.



Mt. Zeus seen from below "Mt. Huia". Photo M. Feller.

The Thor (left) to Zeus (right) ridge seen from Hephaestus Pk. Photo by M. Feller.

BISHOP GLACIER AREA, 13-28 August, 1991

by **Brian Gavin**

We flew to a camp at 2640m on the S edge of the Stanley Smith glacier just N of Mt Magaera. Erich and David planned to stay a week, while Mark and I had become enthusiastic about the prospect of walking out and, on the flight in, had placed a cache of food and fuel for a week on the Bishop glacier about 500 m above Magaera Creek.

We found the maps (92 J/12 and 13) lacking somewhat as Mount Chloe is actually labelled Mt Daphnis with the former consequently also misplaced. As well, the label of Mount Tisiphone is placed one kilometre E of the actual summit. The ridge running from Tisiphone S and E to Pk. 2640 does not seem to be contoured very well: Pk. 2710m in reality seems further E than shown. However, given the mess left behind on Lillooet Mtn. and Mt Dalgleish by surveyors, I'd rather live with some map deficiencies if that is the price of accuracy.

The one mystery of the trip was the description of the Kafers' and Eigenmanns' ascent of Mt Magaera. We determined that the directions in the previous record of the ascent were reversed. In fact, they started up the W ridge, not the E, and dropped to the glacier on the south side to gain the W peak via the S ridge, subsequently crossing to the higher E peak which is the true summit.

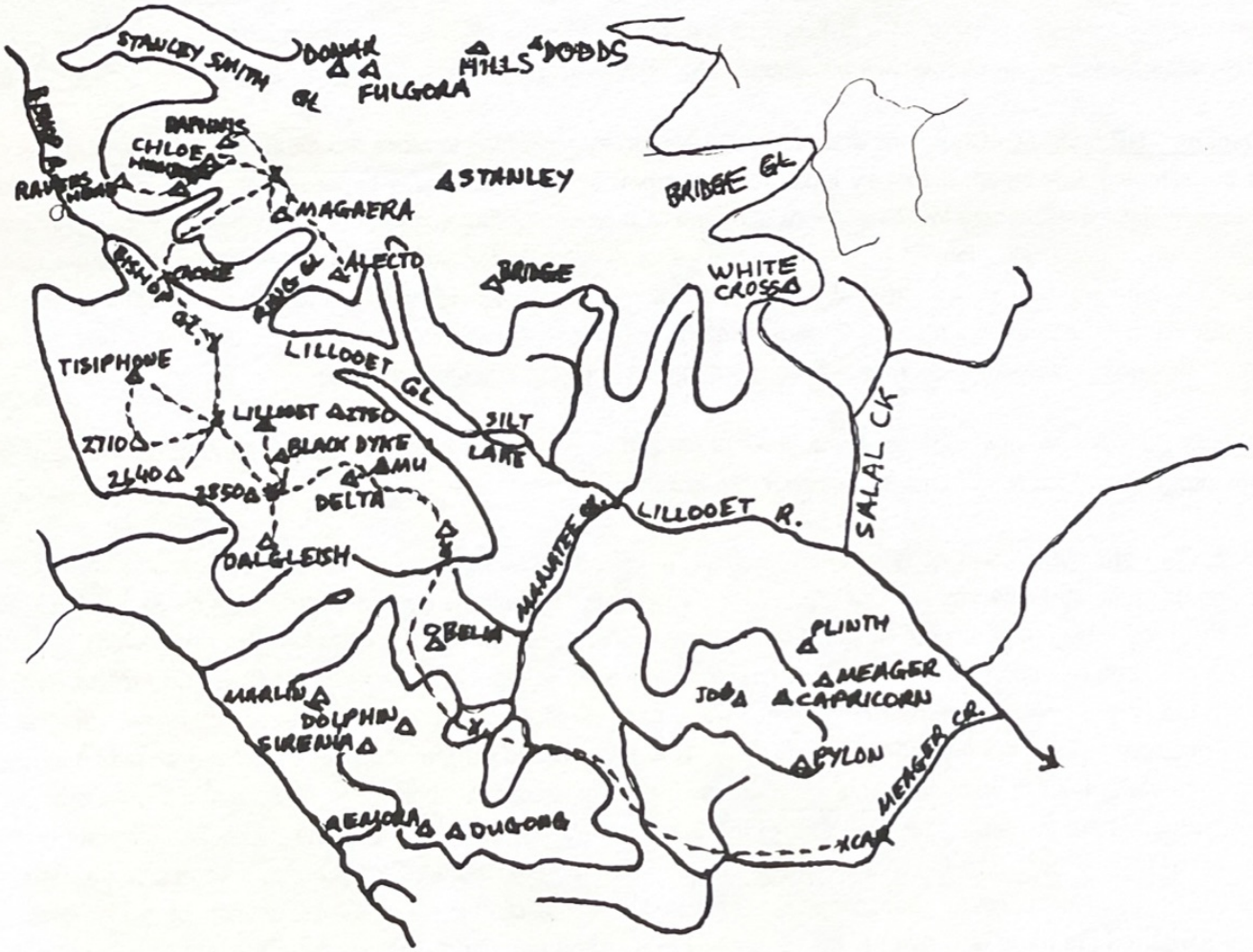
Mount Alecto - N ridge - We kicked steps up the crest. Overall the ridge is somewhat gentle although there are a couple of steep bits, and it becomes narrower as it climbs. The exit off the top provides half a lead of steep, firm 3-4 rock. From the summit we scrambled down loose rock to the E, then S until snow was reached.

Mount Daphnis - NE buttress - Crampons and hammer were brought into play to cross the moat and gain the buttress proper. Much of the climbing was steep, hideously loose rock. A prominent gendarme was bypassed on the E side, but after nine leads of mostly class 4 with some low 5, we were stumped. A momentary flattening ended in a very steep step. Although the rock looked more solid, it also looked harder than any of us was ready for. A traverse to the NW ridge would be across downsloping ledges with much loose gravel. Going left looked as if we would have to cross the first couloir into the one beyond - that we couldn't see. So at 5 pm 2 leads from the summit, we retreated. We rappelled off the top of the previously mentioned gendarme. The final rappel past the moat brought us to the snow before darkness.

Mount Chloe - E Face - We plugged up the soft snow of the E face and onto the loose rubble of the broad summit. Much time was spent lounging and studying Magaera before return to camp.

Mount Magaera - NE glacier and ridge - Mount Magaera is undoubtably the most photogenic peak in the area, with the N glacier being its most attractive feature. Our trip to Mount Alecto had revealed a gem of a route up a steep, hidden glacier not shown on the map. This was our goal. A quick descent from camp brought us to the base of the ridge which is the left (E) boundary of the N glacier seen from camp. Our route was tucked in just behind (east of) that ridge. Crampons were put on, and much route finding was required through complicated, gaping crevasses. Above this, the route finding was easier up to one major crevasse across the full width of the glacier. This was passed on the right, walking gingerly across debris in the moat. Above this was a full pitch of moderate ice. Running belays of ice screws, belay plates and a few chocks brought us into the upper cirque. At the extreme right (W) end of the bergschrund we found debris in the moat, and gingerly managed to cross blocks, snow and air to gain the rock and ridge crest. A pitch of steep snow over ice brought us to a comfortable belay in the moat above. One pitch of very loose class 4+ finished the real climbing. On the next pitch of easier ground, Mark unwittingly gardened the route directly onto his rope. Only one strand remained - just 3m from the mid-point. Half a pitch later we were on the summit, shedding boots, socks, etc.

Mt. Daphnis with the SE ridge on the left and NE buttress on the right. Photo by D. Hughes.



Routes followed by members of the Bishop Glacier area climbing party. Map by B. Gavin.

Mt. Magaera from the E slopes of Chloe. Photo by B. Gavin.

Mt. Tisiphone (top right) from the S. Photo by B. Gavin.

We decided to call our route "Better Than Blue Jean" - a story in itself. We found the original summit register from the Kafers and Eigenmanns left in Aug 1963 - nearly 28 years to the day. With no other entries, could it be that this was only the second ascent?! (Editor's comment - a party of Peter de Visser, Brian Thompson, Malcolm McFadgen, Ron Andrews, Ross Wyborn and Michael Feller climbed the peak, mainly on skis in May, 1981)

We planned to descend the west ridge and headed off. A complete descent of this ridge would be an easy stroll and very pleasant if it weren't for a 150m stretch of picket-fence gendarmes. We angled south across snow and gravel ramps to drop onto the glacier.

Mount Daphnis - SE ridge - From camp, we headed W towards the glacier dropping from the Daphnis - Chloe col until we were able to gain the lowest point on the SE ridge. The warm weather continued and this ridge provided the nicest rock route of the trip. Four hours of continuous scrambling on mostly firm rock with increasing exposure - especially on the N side, brings one to the S Peak. Traversing along looser gendarmes gains the N and true summit. From here, we descended via the loose south ridge and face.

Virgin Territory! - Some peaks to the W and S of Mount Daphnis and Chloe - while Erich rested, the rest of us headed for Peak 2710m at grid reference 386322. Beyond an impressive wind cirque, the snow steepened into a ridge and then steep, good quality rock. A short chimney brought us near the top, and we traversed a marbled ridge of black and orange rock to the summit. The colouring led Mark to dub this one "Humbug Peak" - like the candy.

The N side of Mt. Magaera from camp. Photo by B. Gavin.

Dave on the SE ridge of Mt. Daphnis. Photo by B. Gavin.

After a brief lunch we pressed on to Pk. 2610 m. This had very white granite - like rock with black crystal - like inclusions. Wonderfully solid stuff with a coarseness that reminded me of climbing at Joshua Tree.

Off again to an attractive nunatak less than 500m to the southwest. The same sort of rock but interesting, because the route led up to the space between two huge halves, then out to the right.

Our final objective was Pk. 2586m about 2.5 kilometres to the west. Although it would be the lowest, it was the prettiest and, according to the map, had the potential for superb views of the Bishop glacier and river. Packs were left at the bottom of the E ridge and we climbed the snow ramp beside its junction with the rock. Arriving on top at 4 pm we were not disappointed with the views.They were the most spectacular of all - Toba and Compton - plus the route out. The valley below was a geologist's or physical geographer's fantasy. The Bishop glacier, which has receded about 2 km from the position shown on the 1:50,000 map, was calving huge floes into a lake trapped behind a recessional moraine. Glaciers dropping north from the Toba-Compton area have left huge lateral moraines and lakes. And the muddy Bishop River just rushes through all the green towards the sea. We suggested various names for our summit and settled on "Ravenshead Peak" - to do with the views being as if we were soaring birds.

Moving On - The morning greeted us with a few wind and rain squalls. As Erich prepared breakfast, we packed up camp. Brian took time to go over to the Kafers' old camp - complete with stone wall. It was amazing how much biodegradable stuff was still lying around somewhat intact after 28 years. We collected fuel cans, pot scrubbers, food cans (with still ledgible labels!) rolls of TP, match sticks, cardboard and at least launched it into a bottomless crevasse. Later we descended Magaera glacier and creek down to the Bishop glacier, then ascended the Bishop to our food and fuel cache. Mark and I traded hardware and such for a week of food and gas. Canned fruit was devoured with enthusiasm. A few photos, handshakes, and we were on our own. Mark and I shouldered substantial loads and began our crawl up the exposed ice of the Bishop. David and Erich later flew past. We eventually camped 100 m below the névé just north of the ridge that rises and curves west to become Mount Tisiphone.

Next day, we headed S and 6 km later, set up camp. That afternoon we headed SW of camp to Pk. 2640, some 3 km away. Finding no cairn we established one. The views into Dalgleish Creek revealed logging - something we hadn't seen for a week. Across the valley, waterfalls cascaded down the cliffs towards the Toba River. The W face of Mt. Dalgleish was impressive.

Mount Tisiphone -E ridge - Mark led the way, kicking steps up the glacier as we gained the E ridge of Tisiphone at about 2380m. We were only aware of a route on the S side with some 5th class rock, so we were carrying a small rack. We followed the ridge crest for a while, then on snow, then on rock - all quite easy. The prominent gendarmes were bypassed on snow to the south with the rock being regained by a ledge near the largest gendarme. From its left end, one lead on wonderfully firm rock (one chock) and we continued on, using snow across the final dip before the summit rocks. Loose in places, but mostly large blocks, this was really enjoyable class 3-4+.

Descent of the south gully was easy on snow. We decided to follow the divide south and climbed 4 high points including Pk 2710 between Tisiphone and Pk. 2640 of the previous day. No cairns were found on any of them, but will be now.

To Lillooet - Next day we woke to limited visibility. We used compass and altimeter as we felt our way up the southeast - trending ramp towards the névé between Peaks 2750 and 2850. Four hours and four km later we camped near a crevasse whose uphill wall was five metres higher than the lower - affording good wind protection.

By 10:30 next morning, we summited on Peak 2850. Moist Pacific air from the Toba River formed clouds as it rose over the southern edge of the icefield, but these were dissipating as they moved north. Our enthusiasm gained momentum. We headed N towards Lillooet Mountain. Passing Peak 2750, we noticed a long gradually ascending black dyke in its broad, vertical SW face. From its N end we dropped through the col and ascended the rather steep E face glacier. Negotiating a couple of interesting snowbridges we gained the summit of Lillooet only to find it fouled with the disgusting remains of a triangular station: decaying batteries, twisted aluminum tripod, and long cloth ribbons.

We descended the S ridge and then the glacier beside it, and were soon engulfed in a snowstorm. This passed as we reached the col. A few more points were in order - a traverse of Peak 2750. We crossed a snow bridge to gain the rock and found no cairn. Perhaps odd since the peak seems reasonably near a ski route, but maybe it was insignificant compared with its neighbours. We dubbed it "The Black Dyke" in view of that prominent feature we had noticed.

Mount Dalgleish and Don Munday - the way home - Next day, 65 minutes on frozen snow brought us to the crystal clear summit of Mount Dalgleish, first climbed in 1933 from the Toba River. Looking over 2000 m down the precipitous south side, we can only imagine what that must have been like. The views all round were absolutely superb.

We fairly flew across the ski terrain back to camp, then carried loads up round Delta to the Delta - Mu col. (A party led by Esther Kafer first climbed these two peaks from the Lillooet glacier by the glacier east of Mu to its E ridge and summit. They chose Delta and Mu as the Greek symbols for the initials of Don Munday.) Dropping packs at the col we walked up the easy E face of Delta. We returned and moved to the shoulder SW of Mu. Again leaving packs we chose to scramble along the ridge traversing the intervening peaks en route to the summit.

From the shoulder, a short but miserable little down climb dropped us onto the glacier on the S side of Mu. Once there, the pace improved and soon we were making our way along the broad back of the divide heading to Manatee. For a moment, through ragged storm clouds, the sunlight on the Meager Group was a magical yellow glow. We camped on a sandy bench amongst rocks, looking for wind shelter.

Mt. Dalgleish. Photo by M. Force.

Mu Pk. (left) and Pk. 2750m (right) with Mt. Dalgleish in the background, above the Lillooet glacier. Photo by E. Hinze.

The Finale - Not grand, but an adventure - In the night it began to rain, and then snow - really wet sloppy white stuff. By morning we were covered in several centimetres of coastal cement, in a complete whiteout. Occasional gusts buffeted the tent in spite of our sheltered location.

The following day, the cement continued to fall, but visibility was better. At one point, we were encouraged by an almost sucker window and packed up. Staggering over treacherous terrain we finally reached the col below Obelia, where things improved. Gradually, the precipitation stopped and we dropped below the cloud. Down in the meadows we camped, dried out over dinner, and took great delight in lying in grass and heather for the first time in two weeks.

The next day, 10 hours of slipping and sliding through sleet and rain, took us through glacier, meadows and forest, and a ford of upper Meager Ck. to the logging road. We finally stumbled on the car - with a dead battery. At the last possible opportunity to clutch start at the bottom of a dip, it caught.

New routes - Mt. Alecto, N ridge; Mt. Magaera, NE glacier and Ridge "Better Than Blue Jean"; Mt. Daphnis, NE buttress, incomplete; Mt Tisiphone, E ridge

First Ascents - Peaks 2710m ("Humbug Peak"); 2610m; 2530m; 2586m ("Ravenshead Peak"); 2640m; 2710m plus three minor summits; and 2750m ("Black Dyke")

Party: David Hughes, Erich Hinze, Mark Force, and Brian Gavin

MOUNTAIN SCIENCE

LIFE ON THE EDGE

by **Randy Stoltmann**

I've always found that knowing a little about the forest and alpine environments in which I hike and ski adds to my enjoyment and appreciation of these areas. My curiosity about life and natural processes in the mountains has found a particular focus in the ancient trees that inhabit subalpine forests, and the adaptations that allow these trees to withstand often harsh conditions.

SNOW FOREST HOME TO CANADA'S OLDEST TREES

"Age argues hardihood, and even the lowly flowers of the mountain heights are remarkable for the number of perennials in their ranks. Amid such brave adventurers one does not seek in vain for Canada's oldest trees, the Yellow Cypress, (*Chamaecyparis nootkatensis*)."

-- Don Munday (Ancients of the Skylines)

Rambling the peaks of the Coast Range, Don Munday was one of the first to recognize the incredible longevity of the yellow cedar trees which grow on the windward side of the range, generally above 600 metres in elevation. On Vancouver's North Shore mountains, he documented a two-metre-diameter yellow cedar stump with 1,040 annual rings in the outer 30 centimetres of trunk. The average growth rate was 130 rings in less than 2 cm. The centre of the trunk was hollow, but Munday speculated that the tree could have been 2,500 years old.

My own investigations have shown that yellow cedars over 1,000 years old are common in the wet coastal mountains of SW British Columbia. Living trees sampled by increment borer in Cypress Provincial Park are over 1,200 years old. On the Tetrahedron Plateau, a yellow cedar stump was found to have 1,170 annual rings. In the Caren Range near Mount Halowell on the Sechelt Peninsula, stump samples were taken recently with 1,350, 1,398, 1,495, 1,513 and 1,636 annual rings. Previously, the oldest documented yellow cedar in Canada for which a countable sample exists was one felled near Menzies Bay on Vancouver Island by MacMillan Bloedel which was 1,600 years old.

Heavy snowpack and a short growing season results in very slow growth. Trees only 3m tall may be 200 years old. It often takes several hundred years for a tree to grow sufficiently tall to stand above the winter snowpack.

The great age of these high-elevation trees is the result of a number of factors. In the cool, wet coastal climate, forest fires are infrequent, so forests remain undisturbed for very long periods of time. Often, the only significant disturbances are windthrow or the toppling or breakage of individual trees under heavy wet snowloads. Yellow cedar is quite resistant to such disturbances, being adapted to withstanding heavy snow loads. Its drooping branches are very flexible and the foliage sheds snow readily. Looking at a forested mountainside after a snow storm, yellow cedar often stands out as a dark shape among the other snow-laden trees. Yellow cedar also has very rot-resistant wood which is highly resistant to insect attack.

Other subalpine tree species also attain very great ages. Figures of over 1,900 years, based on extrapolation from partial samples, have been suggested for subalpine larch trees such as those on the slopes of Mount Frosty in Manning Provincial Park. (see J.G. Worrall. 1990. Forestry Chronicle 66:478) A complete core sample which I took recently from one of the larger of the Mount Frosty larch trees showed it to be only 360 years old, but partial samples from some of the more stressed trees isolated on talus slopes or rock bluffs indicate that they may be much older. Worrall found solid subalpine larches up to 470 years old, but all older trees were decayed inside.

Ancient whitebark pine *(Pinus albicaulis)* in the southern Chilcotin mountains. Photo by R. Stoltmann.

WHERE THE TREES END

Treeline occurs at the point where the growing season becomes too short for trees to survive. This is influenced by temperature and duration of snowpack. Cool north slopes, valleys and basins, which hold their snowpack longer, generally have a lower treeline than warmer south slopes. In high meadows, clusters of trees are found on ridges and knolls where the air is warmer and snowpack is thinner and of shorter duration due to sun and wind exposure.

Tree clusters often start with a single tree taking advantage of a sheltered spot, perhaps in the lee of a boulder. Other trees take advantage of the shelter of the first, and so on.

ISOLATION FROM DESTRUCTIVE FORCES

High elevation trees often attain great ages because of their isolation from destructive forces. Engelmann spruce near the Columbia Icefield were dated at up to 680 years old. This stand is surrounded by old moraines of the Athabasca Glacier and the Sunwapta River outwash, and thus isolated from the forest fires common to the Rocky Mountain forests.

Clusters of mountain hemlock in the Diamond Head meadows of Garibaldi Provincial Park contain weather-beaten trees up to 800 years old. Whitebark pine, the twisted timberline tree found on dry cliff faces and bluffs near the upper limit of tree growth, attains similar ages. A whitebark pine in the Bennington valley of Mount Robson Provincial Park was found to be at least 713 years old. These are typical situations where very old trees have grown in areas isolated from the usual natural destructive events such as fire.

ANCIENT TREES RECORD PAST CLIMATE AND EVENTS

These ancient trees can be used to date climate changes, past geological events such as glacial advance and retreat, ice damming and flooding of rivers. Scars on trunks resulting from events such as flooding, ice damming or landslides can be quite precisely dated by taking core samples of the injured tree trunks. The age of trees on old glacier moraines allows dating of these landforms.

Variations in annual rings record temperature and rainfall patterns over the centuries. The factor limiting tree growth in a given area - temperature or precipitation - will be most notably recorded in the ring patterns. For example, trees growing at high elevations or near the arctic treeline, where the limiting factor for tree growth is temperature, will record changes in temperature most noticeably.

SOME THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

The seemingly durable old trees of the high country are sometimes abused by careless hikers and climbers seeking firewood. Many very old trees are partly dead and therefore obvious targets for fuel-gathering mountaineers. There is much evidence of this in popular alpine areas such as near trails and huts. Trees growing near treeline are already under a considerable amount of stress from the harsh environment. Damage to roots on trails, or breaking off limbs, only adds to this stress. The treeline environment is fragile. Life here is truly on the edge.

GLACIER VARIATIONS IN NORTHERN GARIBALDI PARK - 1991 Update

by **Karl Ricker and William Tupper**

The last two volumes of the Mountaineer have reported the status of glacier snout fluctuations, and the ages of moraines, for the Overlord glacier. Considering what else is being monitored in the southern Coast Mountains on a more formal and sophisticated basis, it would appear that Overlord is a more typical example, and monitoring efforts should be upgraded to the standards used at the others (Sentinel, Place, Helm and Bridge River glaciers). The surge in the development of Whistler which uses Fitzsimmons Creek as a water supply and its glaciers as an alpine recreational area also point to the need to accurately study the system vigorously, and the Overlord glacier is the key hydrologic feature in this basin on which to focus.

In this note, however, we will also report on one of the other key recreational sites in the area - the atypical Wedgemount Glacier. Up to 1985, various aspects of its glaciology were reported annually in the Canadian Alpine Journal, although snout positional data was last indicated for the 1981 year - the year of minor advance at its lake-edged snout. As of lately, however, there is now only a small portion of the snout immersed in water and the frontal ice cliff has all but disappeared.

In the 1989 journal it was noted that Overlord Glacier's snout had been in a slight retreat phase, averaging 1.5 metres per year between 1986 and 1989. Happily this picture was reversed by the August 1990 survey which recorded 1.0 metres of advance from the previous year. For Wedgemount Glacier the determination of advance or retreat is a more complicated process because of its irregular lake-frontal ice margin. In fact the true left side of the snout is shaded by a high rock bluff for much of the day and so it behaves rather independently of the rest of the snout which has some source areas exposed to the sun's radiation throughout the day. In recent years, for example, the supply of ice from Mt. Weart's cirque to the true right margin of the glacier has been totally cut off by melting at the former junction of these two arms of glacier. Hence this side of the glacier margin has been retreating rapidly, allowing mountaineers easier access onto the ice itself. All snout positions up to 1977 (for which there are photographic records in prior years) are shown on a map in the 1978 Canadian Alpine Journal. From 1977 to 1985 the average retreat was 2.6 metres per year, although there was a re-advance in 1981. The overall year by year picture since 1977 to 1990 is as follows:

1977 - 1978: (-) 2.0 metres	1984 - 1985: (-) 5.7 metres
1978 - 1979: (-) 2.0 metres	1985 - 1986: (-) 8.7 metres
1979 - 1980: (-) 0.3 metres	1986 - 1987: (-) 7.0 metres
1980 - 1981: (+) 0.7 metres	1987 - 1988: (-) 7.9 metres
1981 - 1982: (-) 5.0 metres	1988 - 1989: (-) 1.6 metres
1982 - 1983: (-) 4.0 metres	1989 - 1990: (-) 16.8 metres
1983 - 1984: ( ) 0.0 metres	1990 - 1991: no survey

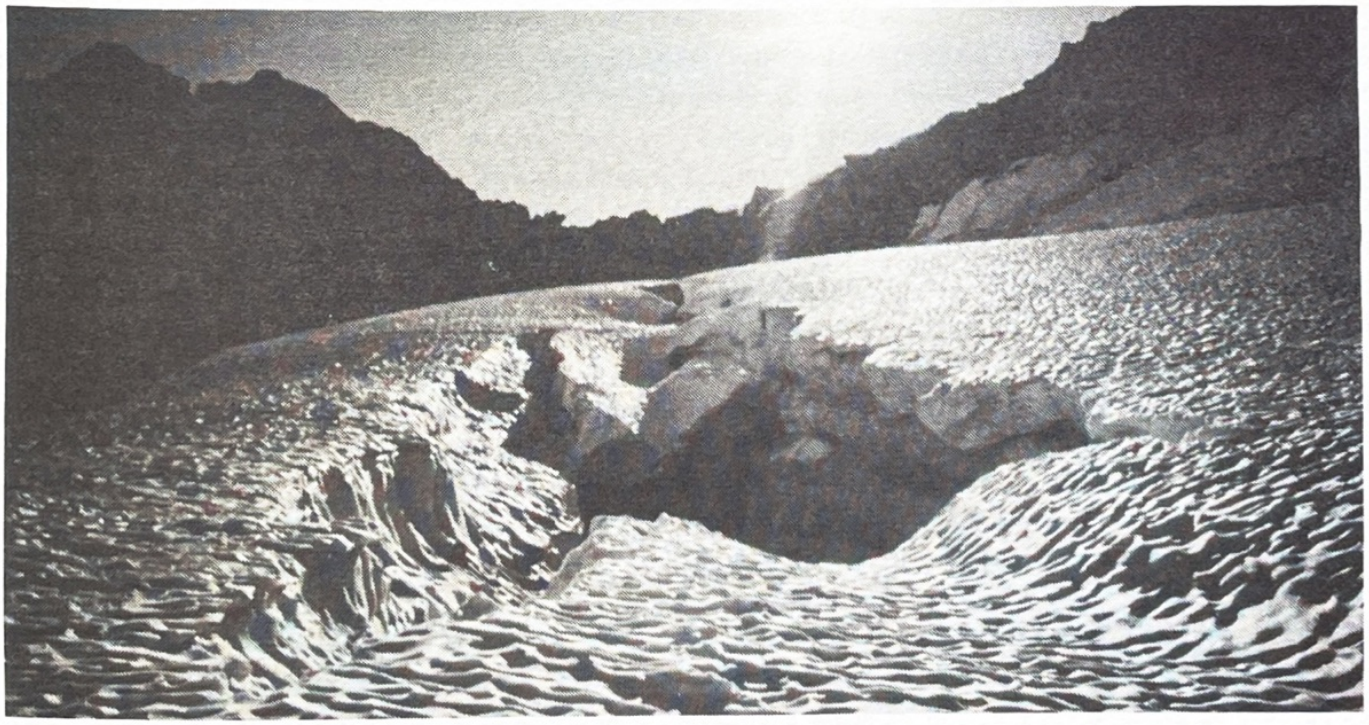
Because of a change in methodology of calculation of snout position beginning in 1985, we have re-checked the positions for all of the earlier years. Nothing significant showed up in the above data, but for the older positions we found that the right margin's accelerated retreat of recent years has upset the overall geometry of measurements. So, 1949 to 1957 saw 68 metres of retreat (34 m/yr) and not 93; 1951 to 1964 is a revised 260 metres of retreat (20 m/yr) instead of 274; 1964 to 1972 is as shown on the map (CAJ, 1978); 1972 to 1973 is reset at 27 metres (instead of 32) of retreat; while 1973 - 1977 did not require any revision. The total retreat from 1949 to 1973 remains unchanged, however, as shown on the map.

Throughout the period of all observations (1928 is the first camera survey) the ice surface has also been thinning down - even during the advance year of 1980 - 1981. When time permits we will calculate the volumetric loss of ice for each observation interval. In the meantime the snout position data is being submitted (with revisions) in five year blocks to the UNESCO - sponsored World Glacier Monitoring Service, based in Zürich, Switzerland. Our next submission will be in 1995, and along

with the data of other glaciers on the network, which includes all continents, scientists will perhaps be in a better position to determine whether the "greenhouse effect" is imagined or real. For that purpose the data for Overlord is more critical because it is probably the most typical of a Coast Mountain glacier with the following attributes:

- accumulation (névé) zone above 2000 metres;
- accumulation area much greater than ablation area;
- favourable aspect (faces northwest) with long headwall scarp (Mt. Overlord) providing shaded relief;
- no abnormal thermal influences at snout (lake, volcanic hot spots, etc.);
- located on transition of maritime to continental climate.

Wedgemount Glacier defies most of the above, as do Sentinel and Helm Glaciers, while Place Glacier is typical of an increasingly continental climatic aspect.



Crevasse. Photo by R. Enomoto

BOOK REVIEWS

High Asia - An Illustrated History of the 7,000 Metre Peaks. By Jill Neate, 1989; Unwin-Hyman; 1st ed. 213 pp.

This is a long overdue topic which would have certainly been very useful to everyone thirty years ago. A bit of a historical perspective of the writer's attempts to search out 7000 metre targets is perhaps appropriate.

In the early 1960's I, along with Sev Heiberg and R. Don Lyon, had the interesting but frustrating task of finding a peak in the Himalayas of preferably 7500-8000 metres in height which could be a prime objective for a "First Canadian Himalayan Expedition". With the exception of Shisha Pangma, by that time all fourteen 8000 metre peaks had been climbed. The big mountaineering nations were already lining up to climb the eleven lesser subsidiary 8000 metre summits of these giants, and had begun knocking off others above 7300 metres. Using the glossy textbook authorities of the time, the elite Swiss journal "Mountain World" (published in four languages) and Ken Mason's "Abode of Snow", and the best maps we could muster from a variety of sources, it was soon realized that high targets in Nepal would not fit the expedition's abilities to overcome diplomatic protocol and monsoon timetable problems. There was no Canadian embassy in Nepal to pave the way, at a time when this small nation was treating expedition applications very cautiously. So we cast our attention to the high 7000 metre peaks of India and Pakistan, where there was a strong diplomatic presence, and where it would be possible to climb during our summer holiday periods. Many 7500 metre peaks were looked at, but a complete listing was not then available; and because of border confrontations with China, several of the other known peaks were caught up in the bureaucracy of indecision as to whether climbing applications would be accepted or not. As the expedition deadline neared in 1962 it was decided to focus on Pakistan's high peaks because the leader, Dr. Fred Roots, had connections with their government and a source to U.S. "Intelligence" maps which covered the Karakorams (the maps proved to be very inaccurate). However, a target remained elusive; Saltoro Kangri (7742m) and sister peaks were sought, partly because of known prior attempts by the Workmans at the turn of the century, and by Sir John Hunt and party in the 1930's, but the Pakistanis had their own party slated for it and wouldn't budge on a permit for this or its lesser peak (still unclimbed), or for any peak in the Saltoro Range. Sev had a pair of even harder peaks under scrutiny, in the Hispar Range, Disteghil Sar (7825m) and Khunyang Chhish (7852m), but there were similar politics - the former had already been ascended in 1960 (unknown to us), and the latter was in the "control" of a British-Pakistani group which failed in 1962. The Japanese then took over on the latter.

Slowly the group had to look elsewhere and, after a cancellation in 1963, they departed for Pakistan in 1964 with no agreed upon objective, but at least a commitment for something in the Hunza area. After a week of dithering at Islamabad the authorities decided that the very attractive Batura (7795m) was too close to China for comfort and the team would have to set their sights on lower 7000 metre peaks to the south of it, in an area which was not backlogged with requests by other nations. And so, they explored the south side of the Batura Mustagh using the unmapped Muchichul glacier as the base of their operations. The prime peak in the basin, Hachinder Chhish (7163m), was quickly renamed "Coke Bottle" because of its precipitous shape. Realizing that it was technically beyond their means they switched the effort to a peak remotely attached to the Pasu massif, which they named Sangemar Mur (7050m). Two serious summit bids were stymied by bottomless snow and the Canadian contribution to the ascent list of 7000 metre peaks thus came to a halt.

In 1971 the writer spent 45 days on the high trails of Nepal and upon return to Canada was asked by the ACC to find a 7000 metre objective for a second Canadian Himalayan Expedition. This time I had more maps and an on-site perspective of what could possibly be available in the face of incredible international competition to climb 7000'ders. The Japanese, particularly, were bagging peak after peak in Nepal, and nearly all mountains 7500 metres and higher were under siege. By now there was more information to work with; the "Mountain World" (1968/69) had published a list of all known peaks 7300 metres and higher

and the writer simply weighed the merits of the access and the local politics of each, including what was gleaned beforehand on the previous endeavour. As it was to be a club expedition organized by subscription method, it was apparent that the group should steer clear of all 7500 metre or higher peaks, and politics dictated the exclusion of those in Pakistan, Bhutan and Sikkim. A possible consideration was China which was in the process of opening its doors to outside expeditions. However, objectives 7000 metres or higher which appeared to be logistically easy to negotiate were reduced to the Nun Kun massif near Sringar (Kashmir, India) , Hardeol (7151m) or other lower peaks of the Garwhal Himalayas (India proper), and the Annapurna-Dhaulagiri massifs (Nepal). There were adequate maps of all these areas and some literature available on the previous attempts and successes. At a late hour, however, a New Zealand ladies expedition (ill fated as it turned out) had made it known that Hardeol was their prime target, and so uneasily the writer recommended to the club to focus on Tilicho Peak in the Annapurna district because it was unclimbed, and he had studied a route on it first hand which looked like a go. Nun Kun (both peaks) had already been ascended decades ago, but would be the back up should the Nepalese resist a Tilicho application.

Initial overtures to the membership to take on a Tilicho expedition failed, however, because of internal politics. Some of the lead climbers snubbed their noses at such a low (7134m) objective, and in the meantime the French eventually climbed it via the author's picked route, which turned out to be difficult. In the 1980's the club finally sponsored an expedition to the mountain, using the same route, but failed to reach the summit.

In 1991 the writer returned to Nepal to find an ever increasing local business geared to mountaineering in the Nepalese Himalayas. Equipment shops and guiding groups were prolific. The pioneer to the business, "Mountain Travel", is now almost inconspicuous in the blossoming of outfitters and tour expedition organizers, which now number in excess of 100. Guidebooks and new maps are now abundant; postcards of the mountains are prolific, showing diversity and high quality colour reproduction; and for the armchair mountaineer there are many bookshops featuring new glossy titles and treatises on mountaineering and natural history of the Himalayas. The literature on the Coast Mountains of British Columbia is a bleak desert by contrast! I could easily have spent $5,000 on books alone, which could have included the classic three volume treatise on the Trans - Himalayas of Tibet by Sven Hedin. However, one very modest title, noted at the start of this article, saw a quick shell out of $50 Canadian, because it was a rigorous update of where mountaineering stood on terms of ascents and attempts on the 7000'ders of the world.

During monsoon season, when overflying eastern Asian, it doesn't take long to realize that most of the Himalayas and peaks of Tibet are in fact lower than 7000 metres. Only a few peaks poke above the cloud deck which hangs in at 6000 to 7000 metres elevation. While all 7000'ders are in Asia, the majority are in the Himalayas and Greater Karakoram, with only a handful in the Lesser Karakoram to the south, the Trans-Himalaya of southern Tibet to the north, the Kun Lun of northern Tibet, and the Hindu Kush of Afganistan-Pakistan-Russia. There are also a very few in the Pamirs of Russia, the Tien Shan of NW China - Russia and there is only one massif (Gongga Shan) in western China, east of the Tibetan province, which reaches this threshold elevation. The jury is out on whether such a high peak exists in Burma (Myamar).

The statistics on the 7000'ders can easily be extracted from Neate's book, noting that those in the Bhutan Himalayas may be less higher than advertised, and not all peaks of this elevation are yet recognized in especially central Tibet. (However, the Chinese have some good maps and know where all are located and indeed do show some potential candidates on maps that I saw during my own recent travels). So the book will certainly be revised, once new elevation data and ascent records are of significant magnitude to warrant the changes to the current excellent compendium.

On an opening twelve and a half page table in the introduction of her book is a list of all the peaks of 7000m or higher - about 447 in total. This includes all foresummits, subsidiary peaks, pinnacles along the ridge on route to a higher summit, and the 25

points on the earth that are 8000 metres or higher (on 14 mountains). Only one of the latter is unclimbed, the middle peak of Lhotse, leaving about 169 peaks of 7000-8000 metres which have yet to be ascended, as of 1988. However, looking at the detailed ridge and peak maps which are liberally scattered throughout the book, the 169 unclimbed reduces to only about 50 legitimate mountains or massifs that stand alone. This is an astonishingly low figure considering that the siege has been on for only thirty years. Where are these 50 located? Interestingly enough they are well distributed: about 16 (some dubious) in Bhutan, 11 or so on Pakistan (disputed border position causes uncertainty), about 11 well scattered across Tibet, 5 in Nepal, 6 in Sikkim, 2 in India, and perhaps one in Burma.

The highest unclimbed mountain in the world is Namcha Barwa (7782m), located in southeastern Tibet at the "knot", or big turn, of the Yarlang Tsangpo - Brahmaputra River in its final descent to the Bay of Bengal. All attempts are reserved for the Chinese until they bag it! The second highest unclimbed appears to lie in well-secluded Bhutan (7541m) high Gangkar Puenzum) but its elevation may be overstated, and after four recent attempts the government has ruled it out of bounds. So it will be safe for awhile. Believe it or not all other unclimbed mountains are less than 7500 metres high, and rounding out the top ten are the following: Pasu Sar (7476m) which the Mir of Hunza had asked the 1964 Canadian expedition to attempt on a proposed return visit, Peak 7451 (Janak Himal) and Kabru (7395m) in the Sikkim Himalaya, Chongtar (7370m) on the Tibetan side of the Baltoro Glacier area, an unnamed peak 7353m located about 300 km NE of Lhasa in central Tibet, Gimmigela (7350m) in Sikkim, "Segwang" (7308m) to the north of Cho Oyu in Tibet, possibly Jeje Kangphu (7300m - 200m too high?) in Bhutan and Crown Mtn (7265m) in the Tibetan Karakoram which has seen four attempts to date. There is more uncertainty to the list because Pasu Sar is one of several high unclimbed points on the Batura "Wall" except that it rises a full 600m above the highest adjacent cols and so sticks out on its own. There is also a northwest peak to Gang Benchman (north of Ganesh Himal, in Tibet), for which some maps show elevation of 7416m. Neate questions the authenticity of the measurement, but if valid it would be the fourth or fifth highest. Whatever the final ranking works down to, it is apparent that three of them are on the north end of the Kangchenjunga trend and coupled with those in Bhutan where the weather is equally poor, these will be the resistant holdouts for years to come. Within Nepal the conspicuous and highest distinctive unclimbed "plum" is Meluntse (7181), which is about 20th on the list of unclimbed in elevation; it has had several attempts. Shipton and Tilman in 1951, and Bonnington in 1984, were defeated on the main peak. The latter returned in 1988 with a successful ascent of its lower west peak (7023m), but the lengthy traverse to the main peak fizzled out due to darkness.

Following the compendium of peaks there is a remarkable chapter after chapter, arranged geographically, of brief descriptions of the history of attempts on each peak, including some 6000 metre peaks lying in the path of assault on the larger ones. The research effort to track each party's moves is very diligently done and Neate has listed by name the personnel who reached the summits in most cases. The largest first ascent party is an unbelievable 29 summiters to Muztagata (7546m) by a joint Sino-Soviet team in 1956, and its second ascent by the entire 33 member Chinese party. It has since been ascended several times on skis, including one by Banff climbers in 1981. Compiling the stats on national activity, the first ascent parade to the 7000'ders is lead by the Japanese (67, plus 9 in joint expeditions) which is of no surprise. They are followed by the Austrians (29+1), Brits (23+3), Germans (13+3), Italians (11), Polish (8+2), French (8+1), Indians (6), Swiss (5), Russians (4+3), N.Z.'ers (4), Americans (4+2), Spaniards (4), Czechs (3), South Koreans (3), Chinese (2), Norwegians (2), Dutch (1), and a shutout to the Canucks. So much for our efforts to join the international scene on new enterprises. Added to the above are nine first ascents accorded to an "International" party, including those of the Dyrenfurth era in the 1930's, and altogether 33 of the first ascents are by parties of more than one nationality.

Not only is the book a treasure-trove of this sort of data but also it is complete with tidy maps of almost all major massifs or glacier basins. It is filled with usually well reproduced photographs of each area, although a few of the black and whites appear to be poor copies taken from other publications. To add a final touch, some of the old expedition artistic drawings of the mountain scene are also reproduced. The author dug into a diverse source of literature when necessary (eg. newspapers)

to find the records and analyze the routes and geography, but her basic sources are the classic international journals of the Alpine Club, Himalayan Club, American Alpine Club and Swiss Alpine Foundation for Research. All of these are in English, available in the U.K. where she did much of the work. The reference to other alpine journals is much too sparse and I did not see any mention of the very important New Zealand Alpine Journal, and there is no reference to the Canadian Alpine Journal which accounts for the lack of credit to the Canadians for their attempts on Sangmar Mur, later climbed by the Japanese in 1984. Because of this apparent lack of checking into the "lesser" journals, including those of university clubs, it is inevitable that there are small errors and omissions which hopefully will be rectified when a second edition is produced. Moreover, a list of map titles would be a welcome addition to the book (as an Appendix), and a location map showing the position of all the massif sketch maps that are liberally scattered throughout the book would help reduce geographic uncertainty for the keen reader. However, the book is more than just the first baseline of reference or catalogue; it is a beauty of pleasant description, with a potential monotony eliminated with interspersed photo and map. Every aspiring high altitude mountain wanderer will want it in their library.

The book certainly leads to the conclusion that pioneering mountaineering in the highest mountains of the earth is nearing an end, and indeed it indicates that many routes have already been established on some of the 7000 metre peaks (eg. Pik Pobeda - 6 routes); and the wall climbers are already moving in.

Karl Ricker

The Trekking Peaks of Nepal. By Bill O'Connor, 1989; The Crowood Press; Ramsbury, Marlborough, U.K. 224 pp.

This is one of many new slick books on the Nepalese Himalayas which abound in the bookshops of Kathmandu. However, while it may be a trekking guide in part, it should be treated as an upper elevation companion to S. Bezruchka's comprehensive trail guide which is now in its fifth edition and available in several languages. The author of Trekking Peaks is very familiar with the topic, running an adventure travel company which has visited several of the areas that Nepal now permits low level climbing upon with a minimum of bureaucratic hassle. As of 1988 the Nepalese allow foreign climbing parties on 104 expedition sized mountains which are usually higher than 6500 metres in altitude. Those peaks require big fee payments, the accompanying liaison officer and sirdar, set wage scales to all employed, and the all important application being processed by the national alpine club of the country which the expedition is representing. Before 1978 many of the lower peaks of Nepal were being climbed by sortees from unofficial parties while on a trek, when a blind eye was turned to the protocol of applying for permission.

In 1979 the Nepalese finally cracked down on this widespread practice and drew up a list of so called "trekking peaks" that could be climbed, which required formal permission, but with the waiving of the rules and expense that governed the big peaks. The author points out that "trekking" is a misnomer, and a flick through the various routes described for each does indeed indicate that serious climbing is involved in nearly all. The 18 peaks selected by the authorities are mini-expedition alpine objectives that are not to be sneered at, although they have broken them down into an "A" and a "B" group. With one exception all 12 of the "A" group peaks are above 6000 metres, the highest is Mera Peak (6654m) in the Khumbu, while the six in "B" group are lower than 5900 metres, the lowest is Mardi (5587m) in the Annapurna Himal. The difference between an "A" and a "B" is also reflected in fees: $300 U.S. for the "A" and $150 U.S. for the "B", plus supplementary charges for running overtime (A basic month is allotted) and exceeding the normal 10 person party limit. While the liaison officer requirement is waived, the sirdar who controls the porters is handed his responsibilities, and thus the mini-expedition will accrue some extra expense because he has the financial privileges which go with the job; and each porter above base camp still requires

personal accident insurance with a payable benefit of $2,000. Finally, the group must have a liaison representative to the Nepal Mountaineering Association at Kathmandu.

The book spells out the regulations in an Appendix, and in the final chapters the author gives very valuable hints on the various ways to organize a lightweight expedition, from a do-it-all-yourself approach to the hiring of one of many commercial trekking/climbing organizations in Kathmandu who will do everything for you except obtain the passport to leave your home country! Equipment lists, map sources (all are now covered by contour maps of 1:25,000 to 1:100,000 in scale) - and he warns of the vagaries of using trekking maps - health problems, emergency and rescue procedures (don't even consider a helicopter evacuation if there is another way), hints on the weather, lists of accommodation and trekking agencies and all important "additional suggested reading" round out the back end of the book.

As for the real meat in the book, the description of the ascent routes on each peak, along with their approach treks, leaves nothing to your imagination. The reviewer ponders whether the title should have been "The Trekking Peaks, and Their Approaches, of Nepal". For example, there is a 12 page description of the trek into the Khumbu beginning at the new trailhead at Jiri. The author laments about the new road cutting out the longer route from Lamosangu or Dhologhat, but there is no map in the book which shows either the longer or the now shortened approach. The first objective on this route is Mera Peak. He describes how to find it (without a map) - it is a six day trek off the main Khumbu trail - and gives a brief summary of its climbing history. The climbs (with a local map of the main massif and surrounding glaciers) are described in one and a half pages of text, and an alternate "return trek" is described (five days) to complete the chapter on Mera Peak. This chapter is fortified by nine black and white photographs which are obviously fairly good reprints taken from colour slides. After reading the text, analyzing map and photographs, there is little left that would surprise the climber on this trip.

The next chapters deal with other peaks reached from the Khumbu trail. Kusun Kangri (6369m) is obviously a very exposed and technical venture; the photos of the various routes (six in all) are enough to make everyone clinch their fists. Kwangde Ri (6187m) is another oh so spectacular peak seen from the Thyangboche-Pangboche-Khunde trail network. The close up photos do reduce its fearsome look, but its still no toy and certainly no place to be when the weather is temperamental. For Lobuje, which sits near the outer margin of the Khumbu Glacier, the author admits that the final east summit (6119m) is difficult to climb and most parties have to call it a day on a lower false summit. However, as for all peaks, there are suggestions of other routes to try which have (as of 1988) not been completed. For nearby Kongma Tse (5820m), across the glacier, the author knows of only one route and has had troubles finding any literature on the peak. A more popular Island Peak (6189m, also known as Imja Tse), which sits in the shadow of Lhotse, is the prime advertised target of many trekking companies, and there are two routes described for its ascent. Finally there are two Class "A" peaks described for the Tesi Lapsha Pass area which marks the border between the Khumbu and the now out of bounds Rowalling Valley area. Nonetheless, the Rowalling trek approach is described, in case authorities back pedal on their stance. So the approaches are longer via Namche Bazar, unless the party flies into Lukhla.

The other districts covered in the book are confined to central Nepal: Annapurna and adjacent Manang Himal (4 and 3 peaks respectively), Ganesh Himal (one main peak and several lower peaks) and Langtang Himal (one peak).

Several chapters deal with the peaks of the Annapurna area, and the setup is as described for the Khumba district with both easy and difficult peaks to consider. All are located in the Annapurna Sanctuary and two of them, Tharpu Chuli (5800m) and Singu Chuli (6501m), are known as "Tent" and "Fluted" peaks respectively on older maps.

After closures in the 1970's the Marysyangdi Khola valley has been re-opened to trekking with parties usually going over a high pass (Thorong La) north of Tilicho Lake to reach the main thoroughfare of the Kali Gandaki valley which splits between

the Annapurna and Dhaulagiri massifs. A new 1:100,000 scale detailed contour map slated for a 1991 release by the Austrian Alpine Club should solve the cartographic problems which have plagued this fine area. Again there is a chapter on approach routes and a final chapter on the peaks, Pisang (6091m) and the Chulis (6484m). both massifs can be reached by using the STOL airstrip at Ongre but I defy anyone to match the borders of the maps of each massif which have this village in common!

For the Ganesh Himal only one official peak (Paldor, 5828m) is described, but there are also six lesser peaks, which do not require a permit, that are also described in the text. However, the approach to the area is marred by a new mine access road and the author seems to be unsure of how to handle it in his description, leaving this reviewer somewhat in the dark because he has been on part of the route himself. Because the approach routes are also common to the infinitely more popular Langtang area to the east, perhaps we should look at it in this light. O'Connor suggests that the approach should begin at Sundarijal just outside of Kathmandu. Well, this long approach is still used, and it does go by scenic Gosainkunda Lakes (el 4000m+), but most people opt for the half day bus or taxi ride to Trisuli Bazar and then shift onto a local bus which climbs all afternoon on an unrelenting grade to the hillside village of Dhunche at elevation 1900m. Next day they either ascend a rebuilt trail towards Gosainkunda or else proceed directly to Syabru with its neat line of small hotels. Along the way the Ganesh trekkers split off to Syabrulensi which is a different nearby village but not so indicated in O'Connor's book.

The author rightfully notes that the direct trail to the upper Langtang valley from Syabru is not marked on any map (except the latest 1:50,000 scale ÖAV series which he had not yet seen) and I can assure everyone that it is a beauty. Not noted in his account of Naya Kanga (5846m), the only permissible mini-expedition peak that one is allowed to ascend in the incredibly beautiful Langtang area, is that the approach trail is not easy to find. We eventually had to bribe an errant yak herder into revealing the trail head. The trail is more or less distinct once on it, but it fades out in the colossal piles of morainal rubble on the north approach to Ganja La (5122m), and when there is new snow this is a place to avoid. The route to the summit begins just short of this pass and does not appear to be difficult. However, from the south side of the pass its a much easier ascent of a debris - free glacier to what could be a more direct route to the summit, but the guide sidesteps on this lack of final direction, by raising the more nebulous suggestion of looking at other unspecified peaks once encamped on this side. The "return trek" to civilization (via the Helumbu) is noted as three days of self sufficiency passing through abandoned villages, and little available water, before reaching the major Sherpa centre of Tarkeghyang. Well he is probably right, but we did do it in two days, had a very hard time staying on the route in foggy weather, and had to rely on a few local trail users to provide directions on the final two hour descent through a confusing maze to reach Tarkeghyang. Without their help we could have dead ended at a valley bottom.

For some reason not evident in the book the author suggests that upon leaving this village the best route is to continue the descent into the Melamchi valley, then reascend the opposite valley wall at Talamarang to then regain the route to Sundarijal. Locally this is not done. Rather, from "Tarke" people contour out on a well built trail with a steady grade to the south to reach the beautiful village of Ganjwall, and thence to Shermathang on the ridge crest and follow this trend slowly down its spine to the final abrupt descent of its nose to the meeting of the Indrawati and Melamchi Kholas. A pair of suspension bridge crossings puts one very quickly at the road head and hub village of Melamchi Bazar, from which several local busses go each day into Kathmandu. Why this obvious and very aesthetic return route is left out of the guide is unclear, and in fact if the objective is mountaineering, this writer would avoid any approach trek, to either the Ganesh or the Langtang, which goes by way of Kathmandu to Gosainkunda. The time is better spent acclimatizing at each destination and taking advantage of the breaks in weather.

The book is not what one would carry in one's packsack. My copy is a glossy dust jacket-hard cover model and it is weighty. Over and above the abundant black and white photographs which illustrate quite well, there are also two eight page insert sections of well reproduced colour photographs. They are not arranged in any particular order and several deal with local

people rather than the mountains themselves. Only one photo plate has done the unforgivable (masking off the summit!), and the frontispiece is unfortunately a large black and white with an out of focus mountain in the background. This initially discouraged me to look further into the book when I picked it off the store shelf. One of the other small annoyances is the elevations of the peaks. An introductory table and text shows one set of elevations for the 18 peaks. Invariably the maps which follow show another set of values, and in Appendix I there is yet a third set of elevations which rarely agree with either text or maps. Only four peaks have a universally agreed elevation, although the author admits that there are several different elevations for the summits of the Chulis. Undoubtedly there will be constant revisions on this score because the Himalayas are still growing, and being surveyed and mapped in greater detail.

Despite these few inconsistencies and other minor bugbears with the author's route choices, and his opinion on the state of the Nepali countryside, this book for a paltry $14 Canadian (Kathmandu price) is more than just full value. It is a beautifully illustrated reference book which will be around for quite awhile, until such time that the authorities open the doors of far east and west Nepal to a similar style of mountaineering. By this time there will be many newer completed routes on the original 18, and so the book will have to undergo wholesale revision, perhaps in less detail and smaller type set, and maybe even with a flexible cover so that it will find its way into a packsack. As it stands, its a home library showpiece, and the photo-copy will have to suffice on the trail. Certainly one wouldn't set out for one of the 18 official mountains (and their adjacent peaks) without this information in his or her pocket.

Karl Ricker.