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## 1993 Photo Contest



*Humour*

*Claire Ebendinger*



*Mountain Activity*

*Rob Wilson*



Nature

Gary Greenspoon

Best Print

Margaret Brown

*see front cover*

Mountain Scenery

Carol Stewart



## **1993-94 EXECUTIVE**

<b>Chair:</b> ..... Ian Brown (727-2480) <b>Secretary:</b> .... Reinhard Illner (271-3783) <b>Treasurer:</b> ... Julie Thomson (652-1397) <b>Editors:</b> ..... Carol Stewart (656-3124) Russ Moir (477-0070) Martin Davis (361-9622) <b>Membership:</b> Judy Holm (477-8596) <b>FMCBC:</b> ..... Sandy Briggs (592-4979)	<b>Main Club:</b> .. Claire Ebendinger (652-1509) <b>Climbing:</b> .... Dave Tansley (382-8574)  <b>Members at Large:</b> Margaret Brown Gerta Smythe Maija Finvers Anne Webster Dennis Manke	
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**Editorial:** 570 Lands End Rd., Sidney, B.C. V8L 5K9

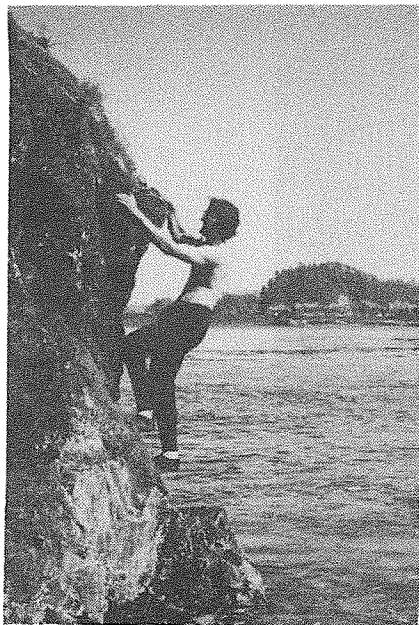
**ISSN 0822-9473**

### **Editors' message**

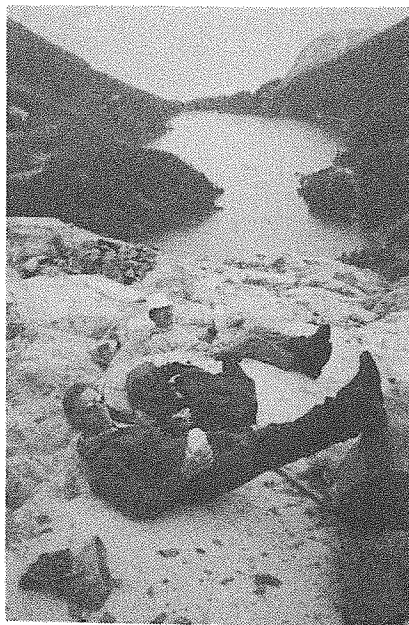
We hope you have as much fun reading this year's offering as we did in putting it together. Many thanks to all of you who sent us your reports and entrusted us with your slides and prints; and to Judy Holm for her enthusiasm in compiling the Island Bushwhacker Index appearing at the end of this volume.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,  
 But I have promises to keep,  
 And miles to go before I sleep,  
 And miles to go before I sleep.

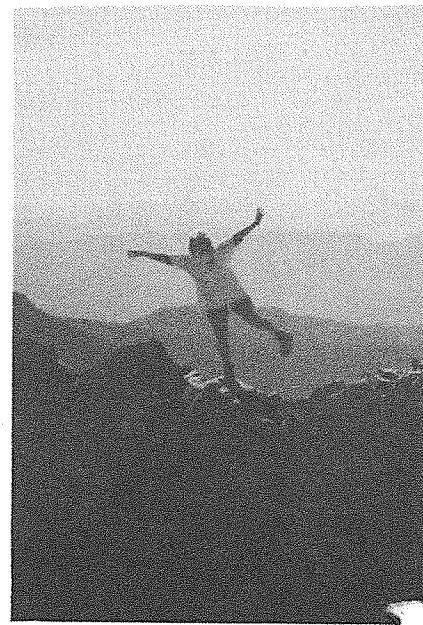
And we hope you have too.



Martin



Russ



Carol



# 1993 Trip Reports

## **Mt Albert Edward**

February 6-7

*Mike Hubbard*

A small party of 6 expanded between Monday and Thursday to 14 and, after much scurrying, sufficient Pieps were found to arm almost all of us against the anticipated danger of powder avalanches.

We met at 7:00 a.m. Saturday at Helmcken on a grey, warm but only partially cloudy morning. As we approached Courtenay the grey became greyer and after a carbohydrate binge and toilet stop we headed up the Mount Washington road through mud and intensifying rain. At the Nordic Day Lodge we managed to borrow a pair of skis for one member (who will be spared the embarrassment of being named) who had left her skis in the Helmcken parking lot! Your leader rather self-righteously purchased the \$4.50 backcountry pass (which was mandatory according to the phone conversation with management), only to be told by the bemused clerk at the cross-country desk that it was the first one that she had ever sold. After sorting out who was going to sleep with whom we left the parking area at around 11:45 in a damp misty drizzle.

Your leader's idea of the route to Sid's cabin, remembered from a glorious late August ascent in crystal clear weather, was to turn left, head to Lake Helen MacKenzie, then turn right until the Strata Mountain sign and soon thereafter turn up a steep hill into the bush and home sweet home! Fortunately, we had members of infinitely more experience to lead us into the soggy gloom, and your leader was content to lead from the rear and handle the emergency trailside repair department. However, after three to four hours of plodding, he came upon Sandy looking hard at his compass and declaring that he "thought" we were at Mariwood Lake and that we should really be heading west rather than the present east. After completing what felt like a circumnavigation we met some rather familiar ski tracks.

Sandy was heard to exclaim "this is a bit embarrassing, Mike" and we were once again on track. As dark caught up with us, we one by one stumbled into Sid's welcome cabin and after pitching the tents under the dripping

trees, soon had the stove going and commenced steam-cleaning our malodorous selves.

As one by one - or two by two - we stumbled off to our damp beds, little thought was given to the morrow as it appeared obvious that a plod out would be the only reasonable option.

Sometime around 6:00 a.m. a solitary wolf - or was it a rooster - howled or crowed and we stirred only to turn and return to dreams of Aegean beaches. A little later we were again roused from our dreams by a Shakespearean call to arms and to the lofty peaks of Strathcona. It seemed to come from the direction of Sandy's tent and was sufficient to have changed the course of Battle of Agincourt. It even caused one or two of us to peer out of our tents and find to our surprise that the sun was already shining on the ridge of Albert Edward.

After a hurried breakfast we set off in dribs and drabs along the trail already broken by Sandy and Valerio. The going was on breakable crust until we hit the wind-packed ridge, but the sun, cloudless sky and views up towards Waddington and south to Nine Peaks made it all worthwhile. We had intended to turn around at 11:00 but by then, with Sandy in the lead, the faster members of the group had the bit in their teeth and the summit in their sights. Sandy, Valerio, Chris, Judy and Anne made the summit and enjoyed a hastily-dug but marvellously effective wind shelter around 12:00 whilst the remainder of us enjoyed the views and sun at various intermediate locations. The ski down was tricky at times as that powder never materialized and any avalanche would have been more like a load of ready-mix, but we were all safely back at the cabin by 2:30.

We managed to avoid another visit to Mariwood Lake and returned via Kwai, Croteau, Lady and Battleship Lakes to the parking lot just as darkness enveloped us. A great weekend with a wonderful and varied group of people.

*Participants: Mike Hubbard, telephone contact and tail-end charlie, Terry Baum, Murrough O'Brien, Sandy Briggs, Catrin Brown, Martin Davis, Valerio Faraoni, Lesley Gordon, Heidi Guest, Judy Holm, Chris and Lynne Pepler, Carol Stewart and Anne Webster.*

## **Saint Valentine's Day on Mt. Whymper**

February 14

Irene Ronalds

A party of 12 Alpine Club mountain lovers headed out for the annual Mt. Whymper ridge walk this year. We were especially honoured by the presence of the lovely *Diana*, Goddess of the Wilds, who brought the spirit of Saint Valentine to the Cowichan Valley along with her blond curly locks and gorgeous pink pink PINK attire!

We were able to drive up the Chemainus River road to within 7 km of the start of our ascent. At this point, perhaps a little bedazzled by Diana's rosy presence (maybe it was the heart-shaped sunglasses), Frank Wille's friend Joe offered to load us up in the back of his white Dodge *chariot* to get us a little closer to our destination. Even more bewilderingly, we all accepted! As you might imagine, the love *chariot* did not have wings and we did not travel more than 5 meters down the snowy road before becoming totally stuck! This was a job for the latest in high-tech snow removal devices : yes, ice-axes to the rescue! Actually, I think Russ Moir and Joe managed to dig the chariot out just about on their own with the one shovel somebody neglected to leave at home!

A little later, having extricated the wingless *chariot* from the snow, we commenced our more mortal march to the object of our day's adventure. Our intrepid guide Sandy Briggs led us up the west ridge of Mt. Whymper. Yes, we hiked past the mountain, and then up. This route provides a very aesthetic ridge walk along the rocky subalpine before gaining the actual summit. Well, the ridge itself is very aesthetic; the view will improve in time, as the extensive clearcuts are healed.

Meanwhile, John Clarke and Steven Sheffield opted for a more direct route up the southeast slopes of the mountain - a no-nonsense approach, in keeping with their fine characters.

I must share with you that I experienced my first *glory* up on the ridge of Mt. Whymper. No, this was not a religious experience, although I do take my recreation pretty seriously at times. This image occurs when shadows are cast upon fog layers below when you are standing in clear skies above. So, you see mysterious shadows waving at you from the fog, get the picture?

Arriving at the summit, the contumacious *Diana* made her appearance once again. I have never seen so

much PINK on a mountain top so far away from *Caffe d'Amore* in my life! Frank Wille was so unnerved by her mere presence that he ate his lunch on the opposite side of the radio tower. Valerio Faraoni was equally struck by her and proceeded to run down the other side of the mountain (I've never seen him actually walk). Judy Holm and I were feeling pretty inspired as well, but this did nothing to hasten our pace. I think this had something to do with Judy's full shank boots that were several sizes too big. Mine fit fine, I just could not walk in them.

Sandy maintained his composure admirably, but we did get a bit off-route on the way down the southeast flanks of the mountain. There is supposed to be some flagging tape to follow, which we did, but then it disappears and it gets very steep ... something to straighten out one of those weekends when you feel like being honourable.

Travelling a little off-route on a clear, mild Valentine's evening was actually quite a pleasant experience. The sky was clear and the stars came out, one by one. The air was calm. The earth was pungent where it was exposed by our groping ice-axes. Once we reached the road, we were able to turn off our headlamps and walk (and walk and walk ...) the 3 or 4 km back to the vehicle by moonlight. We rejoined John and Steven there at about 9:00 pm.

Participants: Sandy Briggs, John Clarke, Claire Ebendinger, Valerio Faraoni, Judy Holm, Russ Moir, Chris Odgers, Alan Robinson, Rick Roe, Irene Ronalds, Steven Sheffield, Frank Wille and his friend Joe the chariot driver, and Diana

## **Mount Brenton**

February 14

Mike Hubbard

Three of us met at Helmcken at the civilized hour of 9:00 a.m. on a grey brisk morning. The temperature suggested snow at higher elevations but did not warn us of what awaited us on this annual ritual. In fact, one of the party did not even bring sunglasses! Stuart joined us at the Chemainus logging road turnoff, which incidentally, is no longer a mere flashing amber but a fully fledged tricolour light. Alan Robinson was also to have joined us here but unfortunately was unable to do so because of a cold. We managed to drive to just before the bridge on the Holyoak Lake road and by 10:45 were on the trail.

We started off hiking as the snow was hard and

patchy but, within a mile were skinned up and skiing on gear which spanned the whole range from your leader's skinny racers to Catrin's ski mountaineering equipment.

As we gained elevation the weather brightened and soon we were in brilliant sun under a clear blue sky with the morning frost still sparkling on the trees and hard packed snow. Following a leisurely lunch at the lake, disturbed only by some high speed exuberant skidoos and Rob Wilson and some other skiers from the Outdoor Club, we took the short cut through the trees to the summit road and on to the top. Here we lay in the sun admiring the view of Landale and El Capitan. Your reporter thought that this former peak (from a similarity of silhouette) may have been named after the Landale Pikes in the English Lake District, by some homesick Brit (does anyone know if this is so?)

After a somewhat chattery ski down to the lake we discovered a new shelter built by a Nanaimo Skidoo Club just to the south-west of the lake which is open and well equipped with three rooms, two beds, electric light (pack in your own generator) and an airtight stove which is worth knowing about if caught out in an emergency or bad weather. We skied on down to the end of the snow in survival mode, as the surface was almost all still frozen hard, and by 5:00 were all safely at the car.

An enjoyable trip in brilliant weather was capped by a gourmet feast of hash browns, corned beef and eggs sunnyside up by candlelight at Kendra's roadside cafe at Chemainus, which I am sure stayed with most of us at least until breakfast. Next time we will try "The Erie"!

*Participants: Mike Hubbard (leader), Albert Hestler, Catrin Brown and Stuart Nicholls*

## **Rainbow Mountain**

**February 27-28**

**Don Newman**

I would like to propose a contest. Not a contest for the most exciting trip or the most interesting report, which this would undoubtedly not win, but a competition for the most unusual place to write and submit a trip report. This trip report was written on a Department of Fisheries and Oceans research boat in the middle of the Atlantic (N26, W31). It was faxed back to Victoria via IMARSAT satellite. The trip may also break some records for having the most participants. It was certainly the largest group that I had gone into the mountains with. I think the large number was due to Sandy's

reputation or perhaps despite it. He is a busy chap but his answering machine made it possible to make connections for Rainbow.

Rainbow Mountain is in the range of hills directly across the valley from the Whistler and Blackcomb ski areas. The easiest way to find the trailhead in winter is to start at the Whistler cemetery. The small cemetery parking lot was covered with ice like a skating rink and sloped away from the entrance. This diabolical trap snared Claire's car but with a bit of work we moved it to safer ground. We soon found that the snow was just as hard and slick as the ice-covered parking lot. From the cemetery we skied up a switchback road which leads to the pump house for the watershed. After the pump house we followed an alder-strewn access road up the watershed valley for several miles. The steep slopes on either side are clear cut as seems to be the fashion with civil planners. The road petered out and a trail switched back up through small bushy firs and then into a forest of mature trees. Our trail contoured along steep slopes with some switchbacks but mostly up a gently rising grade which made for good skiing. After several hours we broke into more open sub-alpine terrain with views of mountains above and tranquil beauty all around. By midafternoon we were at Rainbow Lake.

We made camp on a bench above the lake and the tent city grew to mammoth proportions as the rest of the party continued to arrive. Meanwhile, a network of pits were excavated with spots for cooking, for eating, for sitting, for standing, for talking ... Some of us decided to go for a ski and headed up a subsidiary peak to look at tomorrow's route. We were still well below our summit when the light started to fade so we stopped and took our skins off. The view of the top half of Rainbow Mountain was obscured by cloud and we only saw the first part of the route up. When everyone had reached our high point we started down. After working hard to climb up we had hoped to glide gracefully down, this was not to be. The snow was very changeable going from icy to breakable crust to soft in just a few feet. Obviously, getting up had been the easy part. The technique was to link a few turns in the soft stuff which would then deviously change to breakable crust and flip you on your face. We soon all had snow in our ears which mercifully deadened the cries of those crashing all around us. Irene gets the prize for the most linked turns, I think it was three. It was quite dark when we got back down to the lake.

Back at camp everyone else had arrived. We

brewed up and stood around talking in our cosy snow pits for several hours. Dave and Maria, friends of Sandy's from Whistler, had each carried up 20 pounds of paragliding gear. They answered lots of questions and tried to convert us to the sport. If the skies were clear and the winds low they hoped to fly off the summit of Rainbow and down to Rainbow Lake. The weather unfortunately was not cooperating. It was snowing lightly and we still had not seen the summit.

Next morning the keeners were up at first light and found it still foggy and not particularly nice out. We got up and ate but the consensus was reached that we had not much chance of reaching the summit of Rainbow due to snow conditions, route finding in the fog, and the instinct to make the last ferry. Plan B was to climb up the peak we had skied on the day before. We used a different route around the back which led up more gentle ground onto the summit. We had a good view of Rainbow Mountain which had cleared a bit and saw other Coast Range peaks. Below us we could see Whistler and Blackcomb ski areas. We took silly photos of people pretending to ski off the precipitous summit block. We dug a pit for lunch and lounged around for an hour or so. Then we started back down towards the lake. We joined up with our tracks from the night before quite quickly and continued down by the same route and skiing style as the night before.

Once back at the lake we quickly packed up and headed down. The weather had been quite warm all weekend and as we descended the snow became more enjoyable with a soft surface and hard snow underneath. Mike Hubbard broke a binding and skied on one ski for a bit and later decided to walk. With the better snow we all made good time back down the valley and arrived back at the car in time to aim for the 7 p.m. ferry from Tsawwassen. On the ferry there was the traditional eating contest at the buffet followed by lethargy and sleepy faces. Sandy gets the prize for the most trips to the trough and for eating so fast that he could not identify what the yellow stuff on the rice had been (it was chicken curry, Sandy). Cheers for a great group that made a weekend of mediocre weather and snow into a enjoyable trip.

*Participants: Sandy Briggs (leader), Gerta Smythe, Mike Hubbard, Albert Hestler, Judy Holm, Viggo Holm, Irene Ronalds, Claire Ebendinger, Valerio Faraoni, Todd Polinski, Lynne Pepler, Chris Pepler, Catrin Grant, Don Newman, Dave and Maria from Whistler*

## **Mount Brunswick**

*February 27-28*

*Russ Moir*

The chance of a trip to the Mainland peaks in winter, without the need to test my abysmal skiing skills, was tempting enough. So when John added his comments on the airy, corniced ridge-climb and the panoramic views from this accessible but unfashionable destination, I plunked it down on my trip calendar. Postponements due to John's geriatric condition made it eventually a late February event but the delay allowed for a more relaxed, almost lethargic gambol on excellent, crusted snow going up above the logging road from Lion's Bay.

Although I had been on the North Shore mountains before, I had rarely thought of them as being so convenient. We had taken full packs up from the car, intending to camp high on the ridge before nightfall. We had not left the car until 1:30 yet were at the start of the trail proper by 3:30. Decisions loomed. We were standing on one of those ugly scars, a side-hill road cut with slide material eroding away below us, but the view was sorely tempting. Howe Sound had opened out before us and from here we had a panorama of hills, islands and water stretching from the distant bulk of Mount Olympus, bathed in evening sunlight, around through Gambier Island up to the lower levels of the Tantalus Range, one of my favourite vistas.

John, recovering from a bad back, was finally slowing down - I have often felt like tying on with a bunji cord to his pack bobbing out ahead! I was truly impressed with his thoughtful agreement that we should camp early at this glorious site. Spend a leisurely time enjoying our position and save the scramble up through the bush until the early morning. Mind you, we had been reminiscing about the times we had both been at the same university (though never meeting) a hundred years ago. Maybe 'feeling' old can be transferred to the body.

The move paid off. We had a delectable camp meal followed by an early night, interrupted by moonlight bathroom calls made pleasant by the sparkling scene in the mild still night air. By 8:30 we were barrelling up through the trees on easy crusted snow. I mildly scoffed at the deep chasms made by some recent party who had obviously gone up in softer condition and paid the price with snow steps up to their proverbial crotches. We, lucky louts, breezed along on top and were soon cramponing up steep stable slopes above the



tree line. Some exhilarating moves above steep bluffs brought us out onto a small col between Brunswick and Mat Peak, from where Mamquam, Garibaldi and all the ranges to the north were suddenly in view. My mind raced along, planning trips into these tempting areas for the summer. John headed quickly off along the corniced ridge towards the distant final summit.

Halfway along the exposed and narrow ridge, John was astonished, then disgusted, by the appearance since his last visit here of an electronic phallus, replete with solar cells and large adjacent platform. Presumably some realtors down below in Surrey were busy making there deals via this most unwelcome monstrosity. So while John scratched a vitriolic comment on its green paint, I visualized reaching up with my ice-axe to an intricate electronic panel on its side with the thought of bringing several cellular calls to an abrupt end...

Why is it that some utility operations seem to have *carte blanche* on plumping their hardware on such majestic locations? A pox on telecommunications. I suppose that those ugly beacon fire-posts stuck on pristine Celtic headlands might have raised a few early environmentalists' eyebrows, but they did at least provide an escape from pillage, rape and looting. I still shudder at their existence but without their presence, invaders intent on mayhem would have had even easier pickings. So should I still grumble at this sign of twentieth century "progress"? [editor : yes !]

The summit view was worthy of a top twice Brunswick's height. John lapsed into an encyclopaedic recitation of the peaks all around, including his cherished Judge Howie, seen clearly in profile. It did indeed look an alluring target, one which we hope to accomplish this summer. Having paid our homage to the hills, we descended rapidly back to the tent for a quick brew and pack-up, and set off down the trail in good spirits. It had been an exhilarating weekend for me, but I would not have relished this snow route without ice-axe and crampons as two intrepid youths we passed had done. I do not know whether their act was one of bravado or naivety; I guess nobody bothered to ask their dog for his opinion. We saw his paw marks gouged into the crust on some very exposed locations on the summit ridge.

For ourselves, the only objective danger came from the repeated and rapid downhill slides I took on my thermarest, whenever I turned over, on the far-from-level tent floor. When will some techno-boffin come up with a non-skid surface for these modern day godsenders? I love my thermarest dearly, but the visions I had of

plunging over the road-cut, clutching a suitable obituary, tempted me to revert to cold, hard nights with rocks permanently disfiguring my anatomy. Such is progress or sophistication. I am not moaning, honestly! That campsite was a place of solace, to be savoured for a long time to come.

*Participants: John Pratt and Russ Moir*

## **Mount Cokely**

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**March 14**

**Judith Holm**

It is a peaceful, delightful trip back in time to hike up Mount Cokely following an old ski trail which predates the T-bar. Park at the ski area gate, remembering that the gate will be locked in the evening. The clearing is evident after a few minutes ski/hike along the road. It is slightly overgrown only at the bottom.

Although a warmish rain had kept the windshield wipers beating all the way from Victoria, large snowflakes welcomed us as we fastened on our skiis. Thanks from Katy for Rudi's Rad Ski Service!

In the quiet beauty of softly falling snow we hiked up and over Cokely and headed toward the saddle, imagining the view. By the time we returned, four or five inches of wet snow had accumulated over a slightly icy, smooth base. This added an element of interest to one section where it was remarkably easy to set off a slide by the weight of a ski. The ski out was one of the most gratifying of the season because of the surprisingly excellent conditions. I also felt I gained a deeper understanding of my father's description of happy times skiing in the Laurentians in the 1930s.

*Participants: Rudi Brugger (guide), Katy & Judy Holm*

## **Rockies Ski Camp**

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**March 20-28**

**Sandy Briggs**

### **THE SONG OF THE ISLAND BUMS**

*with apologies to Robert Service*

This is the song of the Island Bums  
As they sip on their Cutty Sark  
On the wild weird nights when the lycra tights  
Are all over the bloody park  
And it's seven degrees and down through the trees



For the first two days the skies were just greys  
 And the temperature warm like Victoria  
 The snow was so deep - if you fell in a heap  
 It'd take half an hour to restore ya  
 The bottomless hoar just kept settling more  
 As we gingerly tested its layers  
 As the hillsides went WHUMP! - in our throats rose a  
 lump  
 And we earnestly turned into pray-ers

In pursuit of slopes stable we finally were able  
 To stomp a run wooded and steepish  
 We decided to "give it", replacing all divots  
 Ascending a little bit sheepish  
 Sphincters were tightened and passers-by frightened  
 About seven yoyo runs later  
 We retreat to the tent, not broken - just bent  
 Leaving only a couple of craters

*...and passers-by frightened*

*Wendy Richardson*

The troops lurch home in the dark  
 We're some of the Island mountaineers  
 We're used to the slush and the rain  
 We ski wet cement - that's the way it was meant  
 Then go back and do it again  
 Light feathery dust and breakable crust  
 Are part of an Island day  
 In a wet sea breeze we thrash through the trees  
 'Cause the Good Lord meant it that way

At last on Day Four we looked out of the door  
 To find the sky clear and cerulean  
 But nevertheless to get up and get dressed  
 Required an effort Herculean  
 We thought we would go to Opabin Plateau  
 In search of the powder elusive  
 And there in the open we found a nice slope'n  
 It's the best skiing so far - conclusive

Look at my eyes - been snowblind twice  
 The ski gear is bent and busted  
 Here comes the Alpine Club up from the sea  
 Ancient Mariners rime-encrusted  
 Trench foot is common, wetness a given  
 Hypothermia normal for skiing  
 But we press on undaunted always claiming we wanted  
 Alternative methods of being

This skiing is only a gamble  
 The worst is as good as the best  
 So I came with a bunch to the Rockies  
 To give the deep powder a test  
 We stayed with Elizabeth Parker  
 And God it'd be hell to show  
 The thousands and thousands we've squandered  
 While searching for powdery snow



*...and popped up from under for photos*

*Julie Henderson*

After some fun we ate lunch in the sun  
 Surrounded by slopes white and beckoning  
 But sadly, alas, we gave them a pass  
 "Unstable as hell" was our reckoning  
 We tunnelled in snow (that was sugar below)  
 And popped up from under for photos  
 We wished to test slopes that were high in our hopes  
 But were lacking in poodles and Totos

We sat around sunning 'midst peaks that were stunning  
 We lay back a-drying our sockies  
 But we're from the Coast and we like it there most  
 But still, here's not bad - for the Rockies

With our penchant for sleeping nobody was leaping  
 Around in the hut before seven  
 But with plans in the making we thought we would take  
 in  
 Some more powder slopes to call heaven  
 A full day of casin' the Duchesnay Basin  
 Put smiles on all skiers' faces  
 The slopes we had dreaded soon were totally shredded  
 We all were transformed into aces

Two lads and a lass went for Odayar Pass  
 Turning back in the face of conditions  
 They rejoined us below for a bit of yo-yo  
 And a few more face-planting renditions  
 The return on the trail turned the onlookers pale  
 As we crashed and we thrashed and we cursed the trees  
 There were twigs down our backs and dirt on the packs  
 Snow filled the remaining interstices



Meanwhile, in the Tonquin Valley...

Maija Finvers

These were the days of the Island Bums  
 New folk will soon be arriving  
 It's the end of the week and the joints start to squeak  
 And we're getting psyched up for the driving !

Participants : Rob Macdonald, Julie Henderson, Wendy  
 Richardson, Don Berryman, Sandy Briggs, Anne Webster,  
 Dave Routledge, Carol Stewart, Richard Heyward, Bob  
 Enagonio from Canmore

## **Mt. Munday**

April 24-May 1

Rob Macdonald

## *Marg on Munday*

5 Decades à Dendragapus

*Humph* is the song that will always belong  
 To the grouse who climb up from the valley.  
 As they shoulder their loads,  
 They go *humph* through their nose -  
 It's the sound around which they rally.

In devil's club thicket, it dies to a snicket  
 Until the queen of them sails through the air.  
 Without much aplomb  
 She goes *humph* on her bum -  
 It's a noise that sounds close to despair.

But this grouse is queen, and her grouching is seen  
 As a sign to the others nearby  
 To begin their *snivells*  
 And *rivedy-rivells*  
 While water attacks from on high.

At last there's a site to hunker all night  
 Where large boulders go *snickidy-smack-clump*.  
 The grouse set their tents  
 Where they'll likely get dents  
 And they *humph* and they *humph* and they *humph*.

Next day they're away over ground that's OK -  
 It passed with a *moan*, *snort* and *grunt*.

The grouses are off  
 With their skis tied aloft  
 "Humph, Humph, Humph" is heard from the front.



...they find their way through fog thick as clay

J. Holm

But they find their way through fog thick as clay  
And they camp where the ptarmigans go.  
Even their tents  
Describe the events -  
Hump, Hump, Hump in the snow.

At last there is sun and it does everyone  
A great deal, at least in spirit.  
They *twitter*, they *chirp*,  
They grunt and they burp  
But they head for the slope and don't fear it.

They get to a hill and, as it will,  
The sun beats on wings and backs.  
*Humph, ugh and guff*,  
As if rain weren't enough,  
They wish they were back in their sacks.

Marg isn't mean, 'cause she's really a queen  
And she offers an armpit of water.  
At the thought we all *quail*  
Or *Virginia rail*,  
"Twerk, wak - we don't think we ought-ter."

It's the vertigo that makes us all slow,  
And we wish the whiteout would clear.  
With Rob's aneroid,  
There's no "touching the void,"  
We just camp with it damnably near.

Now, grouse can be had when the weather is bad,  
By a "sucker hole" temptingly mellow.  
It was something like this  
That led us amiss  
And lost coming home from Martello.

Tentbound in a storm, and we'd lost all our form,  
When two kinglets came out of the weather.  
They wanted to hide  
And they liked it inside.  
They *cheeped* and we *humphed* together.

But if, as they say, every dog has his day,  
Every grouse gets an hour or two.  
We saw peaks close to God  
Yes - even "THE WAD,"  
And IRRESISTIBLE was almost a coup.





"Humph, damn and #%\$, can't we wait just a bit,  
To follow the footsteps of Phyllis?"

The queen couldn't hack  
That the whiteout was back -  
But it was, and it probably still is.

Now it is true, the queen *humphs* till she's blue  
And the rest of think she's quite regal.

God made her to wail  
Not quite like a quail,  
But in spirit she's really an eagle.

\* *Humph*, usually followed by several other *humphs* is the sound made by blue grouse in spring. Early in the trip, shortly after an upsidedown foray in devil's club, Marg made the connection that this sound is the origin for the term grouching -- as in "*stop your grouching!*" Interestingly, the Oxford Dictionary says this -- "*grouse, grumble [orig. unkn.]*". Perhaps the Oxford types have never experienced our West Coast...

*Happy 50th Birthday, Marg!*

Participants : Ian and Margaret Brown, Rudi Brugger, Rob Macdonald, Judy and Kris Holm, Gerta Smythe and Barb Brooks

## **The Colour Purple or How I learned to Stop Worrying and Love Mount Arrowsmith**

May 15

Loreen Pratt

I have always like the colour purple, but not in large patches located on my person. For one thing, it makes descending a steep slope rather painful, and for another, it makes sitting at my desk at work the following day a rather unpleasant prospect.

The weather forecast for the targeted weekend up Arrowsmith was mixed - some rain, some sun, some cloud. True to form on these infrequent yet sought-after forays into the hills, the cloud was predominant. As a new inductee into the ranks of the Alpine Club, though an (and I use the term loosely) experienced hiker, I felt my first trip should be a prominent and respectable island peak; namely, Mount Arrowsmith.

John and I selected the Judge's route, which we reached in the cloud and drizzle and a burst of rusty water from the car radiator. John's Pontiac, also known as *the Tank*, has seen better years but nonetheless this was an inauspicious beginning. After some guesswork

as to the start of the trail, we were rewarded with the sight of "Big Joe", a rock at the start of the route, duly photographed a month before to permit easy recognition of the trail entry point. The "route" ascended a boulder-filled creek bed and then angled right. We hiked, pushing aside pine trees, vicious little thorn bushes and alder until the trail markings began. John was ahead of me and kept shouting "just grovel your way up here." *Grovel* ? An act of obeisance? Mr. Squeers wringing his hands obsequiously? Or a basic hands and knees approach to a superior? All three, I assessed.

The trail continued, snow began, fog and mist descended and visibility was almost zero. When it began to seem rather futile and pointless, not to mention disappointing and cold, John said "I almost hate to tell you this, but ..." *What? Three more hours to the summit? We're off route? You're standing on a cornice?* "...we are almost there!" Soon the attractive summit microwave towers came into view. After a swig of whisky and a brief moment of excitement when the cloud parted and we caught a glimpse of adjacent rock and snow, only to have the window close a moment later, we began to descend.

Now we get to the interesting part. Plunging down the snow, glad to have the summit behind me, I slid suddenly downhill and made rapid contact with an outcropping of rock, smashing my elbow and some other, more cushioned surfaces in a rather nasty way. Somewhat shaken but ever-practical, I called to John to retrieve my ice-axe. At that moment, I could have used another dose of medicinal spirits, but had to settle for a lecture on the necessity of attending Sandy Briggs' next instructional course on how to avoid what I had just done.

The remaining two hour descent was straightforward if painful. The sunset that evening, predictably over a clear sky, illuminated the slopes of Mount Arrowsmith and my various shades of purple.

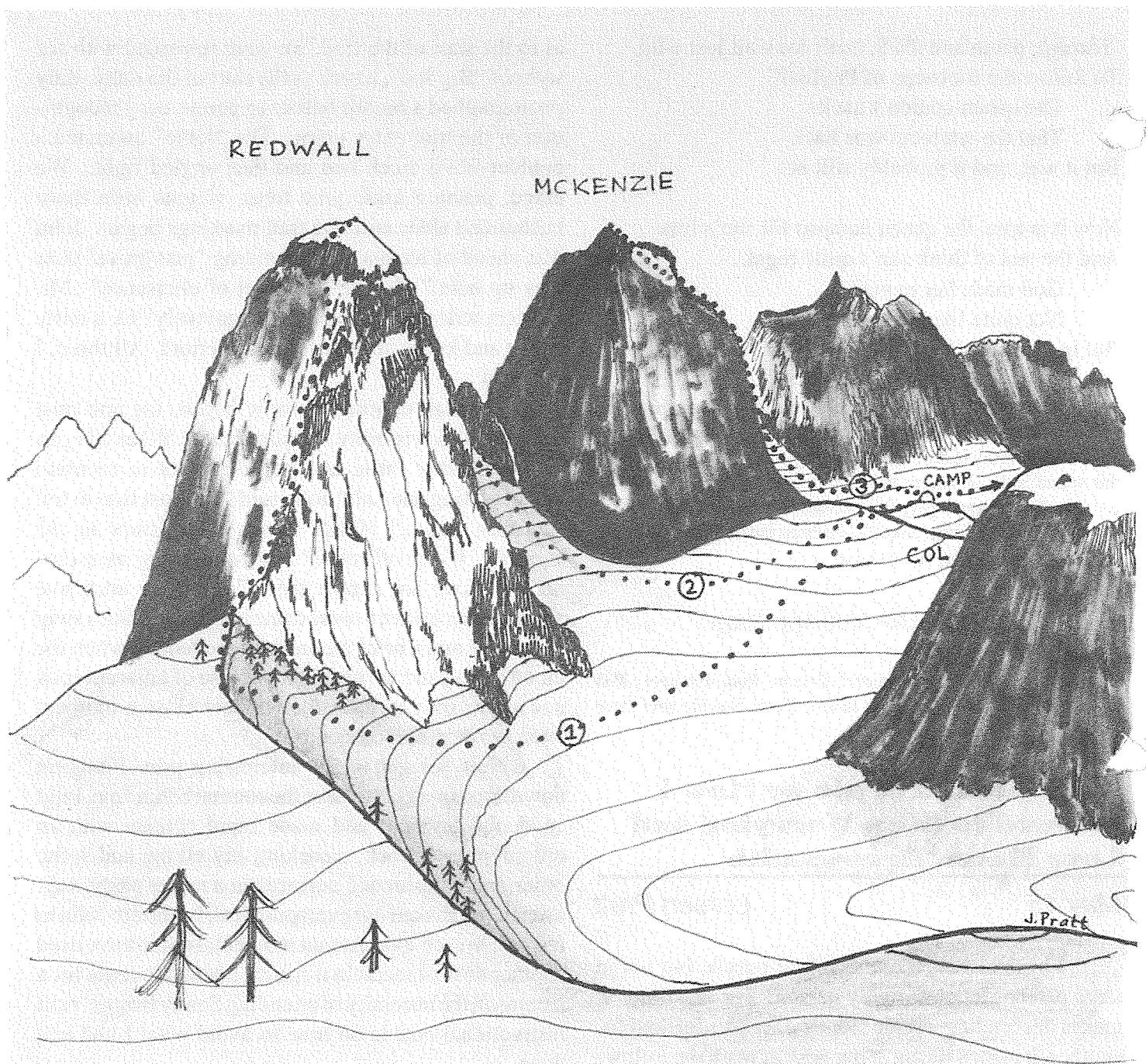
Participants: Loreen Pratt, John Pratt

## **Redwall N.W. Ridge : King of the McKenzie Lines**

May 23-24

John Pratt

I must confess to feeling somewhat depressed at the sight of the long, forested slope stretching up



SCHEMATIC VIEW OF REDWALL - MCKENZIE AREA FROM N.W.

① REDWALL N.W. RIDGE ; ② REDWALL 'VOIE NORMAL' ; ③ MCKENZIE SUMMIT ;

④ ..... → = TO CAR

toward the peaks of the McKenzie range. It was just before noon as we left Rick's van and the sun blazed forth from a clear, blue sky. After only 100 meters walk on the track, the packs already seemed far too heavy and it promised to be a hot afternoon's work indeed. For those who have struggled up this beastly and ill-marked "trail" no explanation is necessary and for those who have not, none is possible. Suffice it to say that only on Judge Howay (and perhaps off-trail in the Tantalus Range) have I been in rougher country.

Determined to place camp as high as possible, we struggled up the snow-fields to a gigantic boulder near the col approximately equidistant from Redwall, McKenzie's summit and a low, nameless bump to the west and erected the tent on the snow right by this huge rock. There was a good supply of running water from the fast-melting snow and we had a brewup and well deserved rest. Still, it was by now 6 p.m. or so and we decided to make a quick ascent of the McKenzie summit. Since I had done it before, I led the way and found it only marginally less unpleasant than last time, for although it holds tons of loose and treacherous rock, it is simply far too bushy to be enjoyable. Rick was, shall we say, not terribly impressed by the "route" but, there was no denying the splendour of the view, for although the typical Island summit needs a great amount of snow to show it to its best advantage (much as some peoples' cooking is at its best when drowned in ketchup), the near peaks, particularly Triple and Maitland, were well-plastered and with the evening sun glinting off the wide Pacific made a fine panorama.

The sight of Redwall, however, was quite intimidating. The route up from the notch looked almost suicidally difficult with horrific exposure, but that, we agreed, could be something to worry about on the morrow: it was already 8 p.m. and we decided we ought to be getting back to camp. That night, the wind howled through the col with almost gale force and the continual flapping of the tent made any real sleep impossible. Take 50% of the oxygen away and lower the temperature about 40°C and it could have been the South Col on Everest!

The next morning we made a rather late start: we had to wait for the wind to die down before we dared remove our weight from the tent and when we did, I promptly loaded the inside with four or five large rocks. I cooked some breakfast and we set off around 10 a.m. for Redwall via the *voie normale*. Let me say no more than that it was a mistake costing us time and we adopted

- rather late in the day - my original suggestion of the NW ridge. Hidden from our view, it was a complete unknown but certainly could not be worse than what we had seen from up in the McKenzie-Redwall notch.

A snow slope got us swiftly to the base of the actual climb - well below the level of our tent - and Rick led off on the first pitch; a steep, exposed ramp plastered with scrappy cedars. We swapped leads and as the hot afternoon raced by, surmounted short, class 4-5 walls with grim exposure, grateful for whatever cedars or rock-horns we could use to protect the numerous unpleasant run-outs. After five leads, we came to what turned out to be the crux, a 15m high rock wall (one 5.6 move) just below the summit. Rick got to lead this and inserted a strategically placed nut (which we were unable to remove, so the next party up has this advantage!). We unroped for the last 10m or so and scrambled up an easy-angled, broken and loose rock-ridge arriving on the summit around 5 p.m. having achieved a possible first ascent: there was absolutely no sign of any rappel slings on our route and one would have to be crazy to downclimb it.

In view of the lateness of the hour, our stay on this spectacular summit was a brief one and we began our descent a mere 15 minutes later. We were a little worried to begin with, but it soon became apparent that on this day the rope was not going to snag or jam and that it would always reach some convenient spot with a further rappel anchor. Even two karabiners which Rick accidentally dropped were conveniently stopped by a suitable bush and promptly recovered ..

for fortune is merry  
and in this mood will give us anything.

True to form, the sixth and final rappel reached our ice-axes and boots cached in the snow and with the last retrieval of the rope, the "dry mouth" part of the adventure was over. All we had to do now was to retreat to our camp, pack it up and descend through the forest back to the highway, which we reached at 9:40 p.m. in the failing light.

And you know how much fun that was, I am sure.

*Participants: Rick Johnson and John Pratt*

## **El Capitan**

*May 30*

*Reinhard Illner*

I think El Capitan does not like me. I have climbed all the mountains around it - Landale, Whympier,

Service -, but whenever I plan to climb Capitan, the weather turns bad. A desperate attempt to climb it in a howling blizzard a few years ago ended up as a very wet walk in very deep snow around Lomas Lake.

As I get up at 5:45 on this Sunday, my Nemesis calls. It is pouring outside. My first instinct is to go back to bed, but I can't. I am the group leader. I go into the kitchen and make coffee.

6:15: The telephone rings. The first pair of climbers bails out. Since trip leaders only have to mention those who actually participate in the climb, I can leave out the names of the "cowards" in this report. I envy them.

6:35: I have opened the garage, and Sandy the Reliable arrives by bicycle in the pouring rain. He is early enough for a fresh cup of coffee, which he already richly deserves.

6:40: Viggo drops Judy off by car. He has spent most of the night at sea, in the Swiftsure race, coming back to shore at 2 a.m. Seeing the commitment of my fellow climbers, I feel ashamed of my earlier temptation to crawl back into bed. Fortunately, as if a friendly goddess wants to put a damper on my shame, the phone rings and the next two climbers call it off.

7:00: We meet the rest of the diehards at Helmcken road. One more person is missing, but the remaining bunch of nine is off to Capitan. The rain has almost stopped.

After the standard coffee break in Duncan we reach the upper Cottonwood Valley without further complications. The rain has subsided to a drizzle, but the mountains are nowhere to be seen. After a short walk along the rocky logging road, we enter the rainforest.

It does not take long to get soaked; the rainforest is wet like - well, like rainforest. But we make good time, and the good company compensates for the bad weather and the wet shirts. A little higher up the rain starts to get strong again, and we abandon the original plan of going up the west ridge in favour of the less bushy and slightly longer normal route.

Above Lomas Lake, the rain ends, and we get into

lots of snow. The conditions are good - much better than the views, anyway. The latter reach only up to the next few trees, and after we get to the Capitan ridge, we even have to use a compass at one time to find the direction leading to the summit. On the summit, I question Sandy whether we are really there, but he has no other proof than his reassuring words. I am not quite convinced - first, why should nasty El Cap really let us get to the top? Second, there could be a much higher summit just a little behind the fog. We will never know.

Ironically, the sun breaks through on the way down, and our spirits lift ever more. To Judy's amazement, Sandy and I light a couple of cigars during a break and celebrate the day with a smoke (I have to explain here that Judy never takes me seriously; she refused to believe that I would take an umbrella or cigars on a climb, and I had to prove to her that I do both. I am now working on my surprise for the next trip). In the end, we sit on the balcony of the Youbou Pub, basking in the sun, looking at the lake. I think of Goethe's words "*Es lachelt der See, er ladet zum Bade*" (now here's your language challenge for the day), but unfortunately it is still too cold for a swim.

It was a good day.

*Participants: Rob Eldred, Barbara Burnside, Paul Gartside, Judy Holm, Richard Eaton, Jack Fisher, Tom Hall, Sandy Briggs and Reinhard Illner (leader)*

## **Maitland Range - Limestone Twins**

*June 5-6*

*Rick Eppler*

The Mackenzie and Maitland Ranges have got to be two of my favourite places. Big forests, steep terrain, wild bush, craggy summits, good views, lots of animals, and no overcrowding. I have yet to meet another group in there. Logging is progressing up the valleys, which does detract from the wilderness experience somewhat, but the tradeoff is better access.

The middle section of the Maitland Range is characterized by areas of massive limestone belonging to the Quatsino Formation, laid down during the Upper Triassic period, which has weathered to form the sharp summits of the Limestone Twins and surrounding grey ridges of Steamboat Mountain. A caver's heaven. So much so, that they have cut a very nice trail into this area. This trail dumps you into the sub-alpine on the north end of the Twins massif, right beside a little alpine pond.





### *Limestone formations*

*Rick Eppler*

Sure beats the old way of grovelling up through the bush and devils club.

In what had so far been spotty spring climbing weather, this weekend was shaping up to be more of the same. Seven of us from the various Island points met up in the pub/restaurant in Port Alberni to discuss strategy. After a lengthy session we drove Highway 4 to Sutton Pass and turned west onto the logging road in fading light. The road parallels the highway on the opposite side of Kennedy River and ends in logging slash low on the north slopes of Steamboat Mountain. Camp was set up at the end of this spur road under a starry sky.

After swatting black flies and no-see-ums all night, we were up and away at first light with fog and cloud swirling around the ridges above us. The trick here is to walk through the overgrown slash and pick up a flagged trail at the edge of the timber. Several frustrating false starts later we were in the timber on the well-booted-in cavers' trail. It was a treat to enjoy the grandeur of the river valley without having to fight the very features that made it so. Most of the morning was spent working through to the upper ridge in the fog. The uniqueness of this place soon becomes apparent with limestone outcrops becoming ridges and benches deeply serrated by the action of water. As Sandy had mentioned about a previous sortie, we had to proceed with

some caution as seasonal snow was still bridging a lot of these slopes and was soft in places. We crossed this expansive area without incident - surprising, considering that each one of us took a different line, each thinking theirs better than the others.

The weather was not improving, and visibility was down to 30 metres or so. Murky dark walls rose to our left and featureless snow slopes dropped away to the right. We hunkered down on a little rock and heather promontory hoping for a glimpse of something to warrant continuing on.

The drizzle was beginning to bother me, so I moved off around the next corner for a look-see. It was more of the same featureless murk, so I went around the next corner. More of the same, except for a shallow break in the wall filled by a snow slope angling up to - who knows where. By now Doug had taken up the challenge and had plodded up to join me. We decided to ascend this slope, hopefully to the ridge top as we



*Steamboat Mtn.*

*Margaret Brown*

agreed this was probably our last kick at it. It ended nicely at a surprisingly narrow ridge top. A lone figure approached from below - it was Rob, who announced the others were not following. So now we were three, staring mystified into the mist. We had no idea where the highest point of our "consolation ridge" was so we carried on south along the top until confronted by a substantial drop. A faint grey shape rose up through the mist ahead. Could this be one of the elusive Limestone Twins we were seeking? Recollection of the air photos placed a substantial bump between our perceived position and the peaks, so off we headed to find what we could not see. At least the weather was not getting any worse.

This bump proved to be an entertaining scramble on rock that was new to all of us - limestone. Soon we were sitting on top with an even steeper, nastier-looking drop below our feet. So somewhere over there, as indicated by the compass, should be the Twins. We had figured that this little limestone bump we had just come up was the absolute last kick at it, as the others obviously were not following... and the weather was not good... and it was getting on... and we probably should catch up with the others ... and then... you knowwww what happened ..there was this little break in the mist...

A couple of quick knowing glances and without a word we were off down a grotty, steep, slimy, loose class 3 gully into the gap, chasing that almighty elusive glimpse. With equal zeal we kicked up the steep snow to the base of the first tower. Traversing out onto the north face away from the imposing east face proved to be the key to a couple of easy class 3-4 grooves to the summit.

Hah! Who says blind ignorance does not pay off? A faint view of the other Twin showed it to be lower, with an intricate-looking and time-gobbling gap to get there, so leaving nothing but our names in a film canister and a pile of rocks, we disappeared into the mist from where we had come.

Using Rob's new and expensive-looking wrist altimeter we had taken readings on all the high spots along the way. The main (NE) Twin turned out to be the highest piece of grey rock in the group by about 20 meters. That was a surprise, as all along we had thought the highest was the big, broad, bulky one whose walls we had traversed under on the way up, and upon which we now sat munching the last of lunch.

With fleet feet (and squishy toes for me as my boots leaked) we bolted back to where we had left the

others to discover a pebble message laid out in the snow. They had headed off down - I guess they had a few hours with nothing to do.

So - the chase was on. They had an hour and half on us, but we figured they were probably feeling miserable and dejected, while we were leaping amongst the clouds, elated at having summited. There must have been something to that, as we met up at the edge of the forest about 200 meters from the cars. Good timing!

It was off to the restaurant in Port Alberni to gas up before dispersing to our respective Island points.

*Participants: Rob Eldred, Derreck Fletcher, Doug Goodman, Rob Macdonald, Rick Eppler, Dave Routledge, Charles Turner*

## **Mt Splendour**

*June 8 -15*

*Reinhard Illner*

What though the radiance which was once so bright  
Be now forever taken from my sight,  
Though nothing can bring back the hour  
Of splendour in the grass, of beauty in the flower;  
We will grieve not, rather find  
Strength in what remains behind ..

*from Intimations of Immortality from Recollections  
of Early Childhood, by William Wordsworth*

Sandy Briggs had organized this trip, and it sounded just truly adventurous. Little did we know that we would get more than we had bargained for. We drove to Gold River on Tuesday the 8th of June, where Sandy had arranged a rendezvous with the friendly owner of a powerboat at 5 p.m. at the pier. It took almost no time whatsoever in this powerboat to get to the end of Matchlee Bay and leave civilization as we know it behind. Indeed, when we were dropped off at the desolate remains of an old pier with a promise to be picked up at the same place exactly one week later, I felt like I had just parachuted into the most remote part of the Amazon jungle, with no radio and no restaurant in sight.

We shouldered our heavy backpacks, loaded with food for a week, camping gear and all kinds of climbing gear, and began to walk along the old, overgrown road which is left from logging operations long ago. In the distance, the beautiful snowcovered pyramid of Mt.



*Gerta on Scimitar*

*Sandy Briggs*

Splendour beckoned, and we fully appreciated the name. The road turned out to be an easy walk, probably because it is heavily used by bears who head for the mouth of the Burman river. We walked about 8 km on the remnants of the road in two hours, and then we waded the Burman river to the south bank. The crossing was not difficult at this time, and we found a good, somewhat elevated camping spot on a sandbank on the other side.

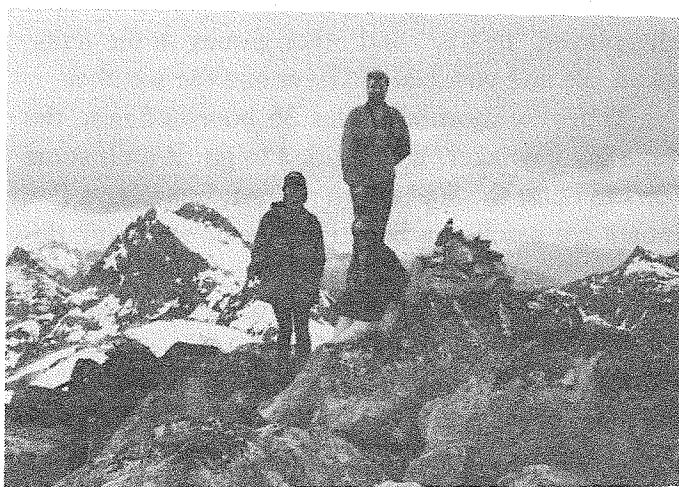
No sooner had we pitched the tents when it started to rain heavily. The forecast had been bad, but who wants to listen to it anyway? We decided to stay optimistic, cooked in the tent, and went to bed early. All night long the rain kept pouring down. In the morning the river had risen by almost two feet, and we could not have crossed it if we had wanted to; of course, our rendezvous with the boat was still almost a week away.

We stayed on that sandbank for the day and the next night, played "hearts" and other games in the tents, cooked, ate and watched the river and the weather.

Thursday morning, after 36 hours of rain, the deluge grew weaker. We decided to go. It took some efforts to enter the soaking rainforest, but after a few minutes we reached a beautiful meadow, which deluded us into the illusion that the going would get easier. Minutes later we were faced with the crossing of a densely overgrown swamp. It couldn't stop us; in desperation we waded through hip-deep creeks, balanced on logs floating in the swamp and finally reached the steep northwest spur dropping down from the shoulder of the mountain.

For the next 6 hours, we fought our way upward through the wettest and densest bush I have ever seen. It rained on us occasionally, but we hardly noticed. Late in the afternoon, tired and dirty, we came to a plateau where only shrubs grew, and made camp. For the first time we had a view of the spectacular mountain scenery, which reached from the Golden Hinde to Matchlee Bay. The weather gave us another reminder that we were at its mercy by forcing us to eat in the tents again; after that, it cleared, and we spent an evening of oohs and aahs as the sun went down. The mountain was much closer, and for the first time on this trip we began to feel optimistic that we might actually get something done.

The next day brought sunshine, and we continued the tough going for about 3 hours, until we reached a saddle somewhat below the edge of the big snowfield on the northeast side of Mt. Splendor. This turned out to be a good spot for a base camp, and we pitched the tents there for the next few days. At 1 p.m. we started up the snow field towards the south shoulder of the mountain. Clouds were moving in from the Pacific, and a huge black front came from the south. Higher up, we moved in dense fog, but for a while we could still anticipate the sun. The final ascent turned out to be interesting. We climbed, on steep snow, a ramp in the southeast flank of the mountain, belaying the upper part and finally reaching the south ridge. At some time during this ascent the deteriorating weather made me nervous, and I asked Sandy about the risk of thunderstorms on the island. "We hardly ever have thunderstorms here," was his reassuring answer, and that calmed me down. After all, I was not afraid of a little water, but I was afraid of a lightning storm on the exposed ridge above us. We reached the summit after easy scrambling on the ridge, and rested peacefully on the top. It began to hail a little.



*Hygro Peak with Scimitar behind*

*Sandy Briggs*

We knew, and the summit register confirmed this, that we were the third party to reach this point, after an exploration group in the thirties and one party in 1992.

On the way down I felt an electric discharge from my hat, but, Sandy's words on my mind, I decided that it had to be a figment of my imagination. Except that seconds later it happened again, much stronger, and we all felt it. And then we heard the thunder rolling across Strathcona! We moved swiftly but carefully down to the lowest point on the ridge, from where a fifty meter rappel leads all the way down to the snowfield. The rappelling was painfully slow, especially for the poor souls who had to lie and wait on the exposed ridge, by now in a roaring hailstorm, exposed to repeated thunder and lightning. Gerta got an extra scare when her prussik knot got stuck in the middle of the rappel; she fought for 15 minutes until it came loose. Suffice it to say that we all got down safely, in howling hail, to the snowfield. We did feel at that time that the Gods were insulted by our insolence in attempting these remote peaks; as we lost altitude, the thunderstorm moved on, and the light drew incredible patterns in the clouds and on the ocean. It did not last, however, and we had to settle again for the almost daily routine of eating in the tent.

Saturday promised a better routine, and we set out for the major prize of this trip- namely to climb the unclimbed Mt. Scimitar, which rises in the remote corner of Strathcona south of Mt. Splendor. We left early, because the approach meant going over the south shoulder of Splendor again, down into an untouched valley, and from there over or around a spectacular twin peak, sometimes referred to as Cat's Ears Two, to the base of Mt. Scimitar. From the shoulder of Splendor we

looked over a sea of clouds, penetrated only by the pillar of Scimitar. Fortunately the clouds soon began to disperse, and we could start the approach to our target.

The descent led us down into a valley as remote and wild as I have ever seen. There were no traces that humans had ever been there. After we reached the northern foot of Cat's Ears Two, we decided that our best chance was probably to climb right over them, because no easy or short way seemed to lead around. Indeed, as time progressed and as the clouds were building again, we ascended the steep northern snow ridge leading up to a prominent little balcony, from where we hoped to be able to traverse to Scimitar. A rockclimbing step required class 5 climbing and the rope. Unfortunately, the balcony offered no shortcut, and it was already afternoon when we got there. Valerio and I, concerned about the large size of our group and the renewed risk of an electrical storm, decided to stay on the balcony, while the rest of the group completed the two-pitch scramble to the top of Cat's Ears Two. This was a first ascent, and we renamed the peaks *The Scissors*. Unfortunately, it turned out to be impossible to descend the other side, and so Mt. Scimitar remained untouched on this trip. Sandy and Dave returned later in the season, walking a full four days from the south end of Buttle Lake to reach the peak, and climbed it. We had a long way back to the tents, and it was after 8 p.m. when we got there. The weather had held all day, and we celebrated this by eating outside.

Sunday looked unreliable. The sun came up, but it was clear that it wasn't going to last long. Again we traversed the south ridge of Splendor and descended towards Scimitar, but our target was a smaller, closer peak which we had passed the day before (point 5343 on the map). It offered some bushy rockclimbing over its southwest ridge, and when we reached the summit, we found no traces of a previous ascent. We decided to name this peak *Hygro Peak* in memory of the wet weather on our expedition. I guess this name is not official yet, but it was well chosen, because it started to rain again on the way down. Later that night, as we cooked again in the tent, the rain turned into yet another deluge, and our thoughts turned with apprehension to the river crossing waiting for us down below.

The next morning, we broke camp in pouring rain and descended the route which had us brought up here. We hardly cared any more about being wet, so when we got off route and had to cross a roaring tributary of the Burman river above a waterfall, we walked right through



in full clothing. Further down, the rain stopped, and when we reached the river it looked crossable without risk. We did not even stop, but walked right through it full mountain gear. Using a combination of walking on the bottom and swimming with the current, we all safely reached the other side and made our last camp. That night, it did not rain.

On the last morning, we took our time. The sun came out, and we dried our gear and ate the last of our food. We talked about our trip and were amazed how the rain had not stopped us. We had climbed three peaks, two of them first ascents, in a part of the island visited only twice before. After lunch we walked along the mosquito-infested old logging road down to the mouth of the river, scared a bear that was fishing there, and were punctually met by our boat. It was an unforgettable trip.

Participants : Don Berryman, Gerta Smythe, Valerio Faraoni, Dave Whitehead, Sandy Briggs and Reinhard Illner

## ***Pass the Pasta, Please on Gentian Pass, Garibaldi Park***

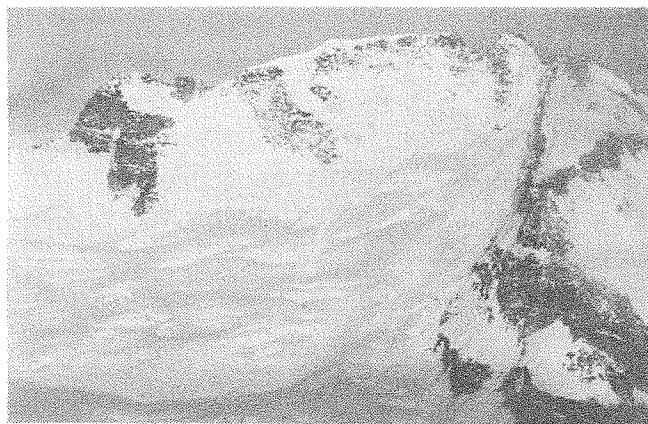
June 12-13

Julie Thomson

A gourmet delight with curried almond rice, FRESH tomatoes, green pepper, pine nuts, and a Mexican bean concoction (Lisa's surprise) with a backdrop of Castle Towers to the east and a panorama of Gentian peak, the Black Tusk, Cinder Cone, good company - what else could a mountaineer ask for? Well ! Getting up at 4:00 a.m. on the cold, wind-swept col amidst sunrise peaks to conquer that beckoning Castle. Carol, Claire, Judy and Tom set out (even before the marmots started to call) to challenge Castle Towers with a time constraint in mind, while our intrepid leader Dave, Julie, our other Dave and Lisa snored on.

Our faithful shovel packer, Judy, insisted that we camp on the crest of the col, snow all around. The ulterior motive, I am sure, (forgive me Judy) was to use that darn shovel that she had packed all the way up to Gentian ridge. Nevertheless, we decided on a snow AND rock site to please all (Carol wanted to see some grass). Judy dove in, snow flying, clearing 2-3' deep tent spaces *tout suite*. Thank you, Judy!

Combine thin air at approximately 2,200m, frigid temperatures and very wet feet = a mountaineer on her back, with mitten-clad feet kicking in the air, accompa-



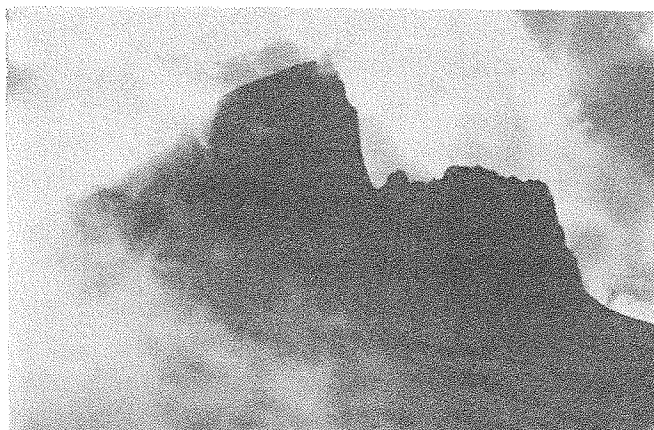
*Castle Towers*

*Carol Stewart*

nied by crazed laughter. Our yeti Claire the abominable snow bunny was the entertainment on Gentian Pass, and all of us with equally wet feet really appreciated the antics. And of course there was the melodious flute of Carol the Pied Piper, not to mention Mad Hatter in her new green felt hat.

Our adventures had started, after a very comfortable night at Judy's Whistler chalet, with a cable car crossing and a snow-covered trail up the Cheakamus River and Helm Creek. Judy spotted Indian helebore with its leaves still encased in a sheath, poking up through a small snow patch. On to alpine meadows, soggy snow, trickling rivulets, and glorious views of the Black Tusk and Cinder Cone. We zigzagged up to Gentian col (on the NE side of Helm Glacier) to camp the night. Sunday morning brought Castle Towers for some and Gentian Peak for others. Judy recounts the Castle Towers approach of our fearless four... "The snow was frozen hard at 5 a.m. when four of us headed down to Gentian Pass, then up Carol's Pandemonium (Polemonium) Ridge. We were on a high! - blue sky, peaks everywhere, Tom rubbing on his Factor 25 mayonnaise and Ali with her new gaiters. Dave's route clues enabled us to go further than we could have done without his help. The view from our highest point, an hour short of the summit, made it a worthwhile destination."

Travelling back down rewarded us with a vista of Garibaldi Lake, The Sphinx, The Bookworms, Phyllis' engine (or a cows udder, depending on your perspective). Skirting up and along Panorama ridge, we saw hoary marmots, ptarmigan, and semi-palmated plover aplenty. We searched for the trail amidst snow and more



*Black Tusk from Gentian Peak*

*Carol Stewart*

snow, with a slight diversion down Mimulus creek to the lake for some who can not resist an off-trail experience! Next time special directions : large arrows preferably, ACC trail this way. Meanwhile, after a leisurely sun-drenched lunch by Mimulus Creek, Dave and Julie headed down past the Barrier to complete the traverse at the Rubble Creek entrance, and wait faithfully (barefoot at this point) for our hardy 5:00 a.m. Castle Towers/trail blazing wanderers. We still made the 11:00 p.m. ferry to Nanaimo, to arrive home at 4:00 a.m. Sound familiar? It was worth it!

Thank you, Dave Tansley, for your orienteering, your explanation of how to approach Castle Towers and what to expect on the backside, your naming of the peaks, and most importantly, for sharing your granola bars!

*Participants: Dave Tansley (leader), Claire Ebendinger, Tom Hall, Judy Holm, Carol Stewart, David Speirs and Lisa Shemko, Julie Thomson*

## **Glacier Travel Workshop**

*June 26-27*

*Sandy Briggs*

The annual glacier travel and crevasse rescue workshop was held (again) at Joffre Lakes on June 26-27. We camped at the parking lot on the Friday night and hiked in to the usual campsite Saturday morning. We were disgusted to see the way some earlier campers have treated this popular and beautiful area. The campfire ring was full of discarded plastic and other garbage, and some axe-wielding "pioneer" had cut live trees to bridge the easily-fordable Tszil Creek.

We were out weeks earlier than last year, but still there was less snow, so that we had greater difficulty finding a suitable slope for ice-axe self-arrests and crevasse rescue simulation.

In the night it rained. It rained hard. A couple of tents got flooded pretty badly as the braids of Tszil Creek began to overflow. There was a brief pause in the rain as we ate breakfast and packed up, but rain followed us out through the forest. We were prevented by the weather from valuable anchor-setting, crevasse rescue and prussiking practice, but the weekend was still worthwhile. For next year, I would like to find volunteers to organise and run both an ice-axe workshop and the Glacier Travel workshop as I expect to be away all summer '94.

*Participants: Sandy Briggs, Richard Eaton, Nevin Eggum, Greg Gordon, Murrough O'Brien, Chris and Lynne Peppler, Ian Muirhead, Trudy Rey, Rob Wilson. (Participation was down a little this year. I guess we couldn't compete with the Dalai Lama..)*

## **Mount Spooner**

*June 32-31*

*Prohn Jatt*

**Spoonerism** (n) Accidental transposition of initial letters, etc, of two or more words.

*- Concise Oxford Dictionary*

**Mount Spooner** 9340 ft/2847 m. Highest of the peaks S of Bogus Mountain and an impressive sight from the Malaprop R. Valley

*- Guide to Hiking and Climbing in Southwestern BC, by B Fairley*

Mount Spooner is named after an English clergyman, the Reverend W.A. Spooner (d. 1930) of New College, Oxford. This delightful man of the cloth is reputed to have told his congregation that "the Lord is a shoving leopard" and to have upbraided a lazy undergraduate with the words: "Sir, you have tasted an entire worm and have hissed all my mystery lectures!". In this spirit, we felt that Mount Spooner was a fine choice for the first sip of this treason.

We did not get a very early start, for the previous night, Sandy had been laying in state in his laboratory; I had been lurking in wait myself. Nonetheless, we stung our fluff into Sandy's old van; he drove, I had a fried-up runt and Dave had a bit in the sack with Claire. We

arrived at the trailhead in the dark but, as these were nine starry nights we decided not to erect the tent but merely to stamp out under the cars. The night was one of dozy, cream-filled sleep and we began in earnest next morning after meeting a tasty eel.

We had been fairly concerned about beating mares on the trail, but saw none; however, to deny we were concerned would be pimple surgery. Unhappily, the weather began to change: it was soon roaring with pain and the trail degenerated into bush. It would be nice to have the trail built all the way through to the alpine but these days it is impossible to wet the necessary Gurkhas. It seemed as if our hopes had been dealt a blushing crow, but we had no intention of behaving like boiled sprats on this account, but pressed on, at one point crossing a roaring creek on a couple of leatherbeaten wogs. Higher up, we passed into a limestone area with some interesting caverns, but as serious climbers, we had no time for this shaving kit and continued on up. I was concerned about losing our way in the dense undergrowth and so Sandy quite tightly raped it, although to be here in the first place, I figured, we must be nightly sluts!

It had been a sad bummer and true to form it actually began to snow - we had clearly hit the bleeding edge of a violent lizard, but on reaching the alpine, the late afternoon sun appeared and with the promise of better weather on the morrow we speared four clots for a bivouac. Our gear was somewhat damp, so I put the pope on the rack and we passed the remainder of the daylight pleasantly, banging our hags in the warm sunshine. We had a warm night, all having brought large sweaters with shaggy boulders.

The next morning we had to consult my topo, for unfortunately, in his haste to pack, Sandy had munched his crap beyond recognition. However, the clouds continued to clear, blots of spew appeared in the sky and from thereon, the ascent went as smoothly as a well-boiled icicle. Soon, we came to the glacier where we stopped to cry on our tampons. We were making fast progress and had toads of lime which was good, for before us rose the crux, 150m or so of rice-covered ox. It had by now become quite hot and our heavy perspiration told us to keep drinking and guard against any flop in our intake of druids. I felt so thirsty, I could drink an entire dragonfly! It was so hot by now that I decided to share my warts. The others felt as though they could boff three or four queers, too, and I had to agree, we had all burned our ears!

We climbed carefully, nipping several sluts in the various cracks and it soon became evident that we were going to suck off this knocker. Sandy had bumped his elbow down in the forest, but courageously led the pitch climbing in such a manner as to savour his forearm. At the summit we whistled and whooped and generally behaved like lazy krauts; Claire even sang a song, which I could not understand, however, as my wench is a little freak.

And there my account ends. I had intended to sling a few brides here tonight, but I hope this conveys to you the excitement of a fine climb which, because of its strenuousness, you should do before there are too many stray Greeks running through your hair. I may add that for those of you with extensive pastes in mountaineering it provides a fine warm-up for the pig beaks of the Himalaya.

## **An Evening With Heber**

*July 9*

*Lindsay Elms*

After sitting on top of Strathcona Park Lodges' rock bluffs for the day teaching a rock rescue course and staring out over Strathcona Park, the mountains finally got the better of Brian Collen and myself. At 4:30 p.m. we drove out to the Crest Mountain trailhead at Drum Lakes and with daypacks containing two cookies each, a fleece jacket, light pants, and a headlamp, started up the trail at 5:10 p.m. Our aim was to do the horseshoe ridge from Crest Mountain towards Mount Idsardi and around to Mount Heber and back down to the highway. After completing the Crest Mountain to Big Den Mountain traverse last year I felt that we could complete this traverse in 6 1/2 half hours therefore, having us back to the highway by about 11:40 p.m.

Being familiar with the trail up Crest Mountain, we got to the waterlogged summit register in 1 hr 45 minutes. The weather for the excursion was just right, clear skies and not too hot and we knew that we would not have to use our headlamps until 11'ish with these long July days. We took a final look at the ridge and then decided to commit ourselves to the traverse. A short descent off Crest and down onto the ridge towards Idsardi Mountain and into the saddle at the head of Crest creek. The forest was nice and open and we were able to make quick time along it to the saddle. From here was the last major up hill section to the top of Mount Heber and our legs were beginning to feel the push but, we

were able to watch the sun set behind Rugged Mountain from Mount Hebers' football-pitch-sized, flat summit at 9:25.

We were able to afford ourselves a ten minute break on the summit to eat our cookies and quench our thirst before pursuing on. I was not able to find any evidence of anybody having visited the summit since 1947 when the surveyor Alf Slocombe used the summit as a photo-topographical station. The only other person known to have been to its summit prior to Slocombe was the surveyor Norman Stewart in 1936.

The route to the end of the ridge, before dropping down to the highway, had a number of unexpected ups and downs to contend with but at 11:15 we were finished with the ups. We now had to use our headlamps to negotiate the way down off the mountain. By this time it was obvious that it was going to take a little longer than anticipated but the full moon came up around midnight to aid our descent. Two thirds of the way down we entered the logging slash which we had to fight our way through but eventually got onto the old logging road which took us down to the highway. It was 1:25 a.m; 8 hours and 15 tired minutes after we started.

### **3 IQs are better than one**

*July 10-13*

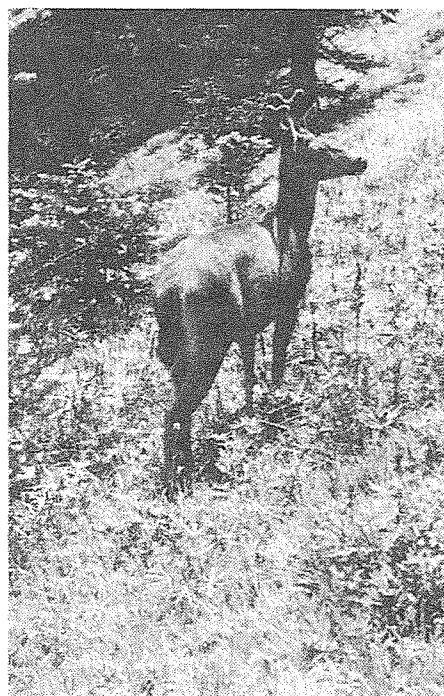
*Rob Macdonald*

I mentioned "Colonel Foster" and now here we are on July 10th: Julie Henderson, Charles Turner, Dave Routledge, Derek Fletcher and I, trudging up the Elk River trail. At dawn the next morning we look out towards the boulders which, before 1946, used to be the NE peak on Foster: they're obscured in mist. An hour and a half later we are blocked by the great 'schrund and Charles samples a few feet of the dripping rocks on the right hand side. We retreat to the tents, wet, disappointed and relieved. "We could try again tomorrow.." offers Julie. I agree; after all, this is our third attempt. Derek cannot stay and he heads down toward Landslide Lake through dripping bush.

Another dawn but this one is dry. We surmount the rocks beside the 'schrund and get into the couloir - it goes fine to the top. A lead by Charles and we are onto the ridge - "nothing but time between us and the peak", I say. Several hours later we crouch in a hailstorm about 400' below the summit; thunder rumbles somewhere up there. We press on and finally, at 3 pm, we reach the summit. Pictures are snapped; hair stands on end; and

with lightning-angst, I scribble hastily in the summit register. But this is a special moment to be remembered by each of us: 3 IQs are won. Surely we are a quorum - our first decision, a wise one, is to get out of here.

Scooping hail out of the holds, we retreat - but Foster is not finished with us. On the second rappel in a downpour I play hacky-sack with a head-sized boulder and watch the bloodstain spread quickly on my knee. I'm lucky; I'm not seriously hurt. The next rappel converts my 50m rope into two 25s so now the rappel down to the top of the couloir requires passing a knot. We descend the couloir in darkness relieved only by distant flashes of lightning. Just above the 'schrund ice whizzes out of nowhere and hits my shin - now I have two marks and two ropes by which to remember this climb. Charles rappels uncertainly into darkness on a half rope, just making it to the snow - up comes a "whoop", and we are off the mountain. We bivy in the heather and stagger back to camp exactly 24 hours after leaving it. There is mud splattered on the tents and pools of water inside them, "Good thing we didn't stay here with it raining like this!" I say inanely.



*Hurricane Ridge fauna*

*Brian Schofield*



*Hurricane Ridge flora*

*Brian Schofield*

## **Hurricane Ridge Cycle Trip**

*July 11*

*David Spear*

July 11th dawned dark and dreary, and group leader Paul Erickson went down early to the Coho ferry terminal to tell everyone that he was calling the trip off because the forecast was dreadful. Carol Stewart, however, having heard tales of *margaritas as big as your head* bullied him into continuing, against his better judgment, as planned. The ferry ride across was a little rough, but when we arrived in Port Angeles, it was sunny and warm and everyone was glad Carol, whatever her motive, had been so enthusiastic.

We cycled up to the Park Headquarters, where we filled our water bottles, and Paul briefed everyone on the plan of attack. We were each to make our own way up to the Hurricane Ridge Interpretive Centre, and those who were there by 1 p.m. could then climb Mt. Angeles. In order to catch the 5:15 ferry back to Victoria, we would have to start cycling down at 3:45.

We left the Park Headquarters at 9 a.m. and quickly spread out as everyone settled down to their own pace. The first 5 miles to the park entrance are typical of the whole 17 miles in that it is a steady climb nearly the entire way. It is never particularly steep, but there is almost nowhere where you can just sit back and

relax. At the gate, I still felt quite fresh, but at just past the halfway point I started to fade quickly. As a cold breeze sprang up, and a heavy drizzle started to fall, I began to think of numerous other ways to spend a Sunday. The drizzle only lasted a short time, however, and a brief rummage in my panniers for some hidden food greatly improved my outlook on life.

Paul was the first to arrive at the top, at 11:10, and by 12:30 everyone had arrived. Everyone made a mad dash for the cafeteria (an option that should be made available on all mountaineering trips) and ordered hot drinks and food. In our enthusiasm for lunch, we tarried too long and didn't set off for Mt. Angeles until 1:15. Most of the group thought that enough was enough and hiked around the numerous trails close to the centre.

Paul, Carol, and I headed off for Mt. Angeles, our legs howling in protest at the further indignities we were subjecting them to. The hike along the ridge towards Mt. Angeles was wonderful. The flowers were beautiful, there were deer, coyotes and marmots, and Brian was lucky enough to spot a bear. As Paul had an engagement back in Victoria that evening and *had* to catch the 5:15 ferry, we had an eye on the time the whole way as we scrambled onward and upward. We set a time at which we would turn back and then ignored it, but at about 2:45, although we seemed very near the top, Paul turned back and Carol and I continued. We



reached the summit a few minutes later and sat there briefly to admire the view, limited as it was by the clouds.

We quickly scrambled back down, and got back on the bikes, the now familiar feeling of our saddles none too welcome. The downhill leg was a lot of fun, taking only 45 minutes. We arrived in Port Angeles at 4:40, leaving enough time for margaritas (remember the margaritas?). At 45 oz, no-one could face the *margarita as big as their head*, but the 16 oz ones were just what the doctor ordered.

Paul's Hurricane Ridge cycle trip is certainly not for the faint of heart, but I think everyone who went was certainly glad that they did. By next year, I might have even recovered enough to do it again.

*Participants : Paul Erickson, Carol Stewart, Brian Schofield, Chris Prince, Ian Granlin, Anna-Lea Rantalainen, David Spear.*

## **Bugabooed in the Bugaboos**

16-30 July

Kris Holm

Two whole weeks in the Bugaboos! I have wanted to go to the Bugaboos for years, and when my boss James finally let me have a longish holiday in the summer, this was the obvious destination. Nobody from the Island section signed up, but two Vancouverites, Guy and Kaj (pronounced "Kye") were very keen.

Friday the 16th, 8 pm. Kaj is on a week-long yoga retreat, due back on the night of the 17th. I am packing. The phone rings and I pick it up. "Kris, it's Guy. Kaj is back. Get over here NOW". Click. My carefully-planned packing job goes out the window, and I furiously throw every bit of gear I own into the back of my car, hoping to catch the next ferry that leaves in less than an hour.

We're off ! Two weeks ! The weather forecast isn't good, but we have *two weeks* ! This is July, and bad weather won't last long.

First stop, the classic NW ridge of Sir Donald. The weather still isn't looking so good. We spend the night of the 17th in a highway rest stop, and next morning decide to do something a little less committing : Brewer Buttress on Castle Tower (5.6). We hike up to the base, put on our rock shoes, and decide to third-class until anybody feels they want the rope. As we ascend, the unlogged Bow Valley stretches out before us, and the weather even starts to break up a little. Exposed, beautiful climbing on relatively good rock (for the

Rockies) lets us continue unroped until we top out on the summit plateau of Castle Tower. Beautiful !

That afternoon we check the forecast, convince ourselves that a high is building and set off for the Bugaboos. The Bugaboo parking lot is notorious for its resident porcupines who are fond of chewing car tires. Ignorant of the fact that the Parks service provides protective chicken wire, and unable to buy any (being a Sunday, all shops are closed) we resort to asking people on the street. Kaj, being the least self-conscious, hops out of the car "Excuse me, do you happen to have any chicken wire you'd like to donate ? We need to protect our car from porcupines.". Amazingly, one elderly lady rounds up a short section, but not enough. Luckily, there is lots in the Bugaboo parking lot, where we camp for the night.

The weather is unsettled but sunny as we stagger up the trail with 12 days worth of supplies. Upon reaching Applebee Dome campsite, we drop our packs, set the tent up and decide that McTech Arete (10a) and the SW ridge of Crescent Spire are a good afternoon objective.

The views around us are absolutely staggering. Bugaboo and Snow patch soar upwards with the most impeccable granite I have ever seen, and McTech Arete provides a good view of the both. Storm clouds build as we near the top, and by the last two pitches it is hailing fiercely. Cold hands are difficult in jamcracks ! It clears up shortly, however, and the sun nears the horizon as we climb Crescent spire and sets as we arrive back at camp.

We awake to pouring rain. Hmm, we think, and hike down to Kain Hut for breakfast and the forecast. Bad news. This is Tuesday. Chance of precipitation : Tues 100%; Wed 100%; Thurs 100%; Fri 100%. Far too impatient to wait for the sun, out we stagger with 11 days of supplies, convincing ourselves that it is sunny in the nearby Rockies.

In Canmore, it feels like Vancouver in November : dank, cold and raining. Fresh snow plasters the nearby peaks. OK, perhaps it isn't sunny. Maybe the Interior is sunny. We set out for the Interior, stopping for a couple of warm cragging days on Skaha Bluffs, Penticton. Kaj's cousin owns a cottage on Skaha Lake and we stay there, drying out our clothes and the car, which is by now starting to smell like the inside of my rock shoes. Guy knows Skaha Bluffs very well, and we put up three first ascents, including a first free ascent, before leaving for Cathedral Park.

It is actually quite a nice day when we hike in,

detracted from only by the roar of Crew-cabs giving \$50 rides up a private road to a resort and campsite. Camping is restricted to either of the latter; the cost is a reasonable \$2/night to camp.

The next day we hike down the Goat Lake trail and elect to try a new route up Macabre Tower, an attractively steep buttress on the south side. It is my turn to lead the first pitch, and I start up an obvious weakness. It soon becomes obvious why it is a weakness: bad rock, and the climbing degenerates into some of the most serious I have ever done: 5.10- climbing on terrible rock, bad protection and long runouts. A fall is out of the question, and after about 35 metres I elect to down-climb. A second attempt leads through steeper, more difficult (5.11-) terrain, and although still fairly serious is much more reasonable. One pitch is as far as we get; clouds move in and it starts hailing and sleeting, persuading us to hike out the following day.

Penticton beckons once again, so we return to Kaj's cousin's place to find them there and a water-ski boat, tailboard, Hobie Cat on the beach. We spend the remainder of our trip here; 5 good days of climbing, waterskiing and sailing, and do four more first-ascents, including Guy's ascent of the hardest crack in Skaha so far, a heinous overhanging 12a layback. Not the best of weather, but a very, very fun trip.

## **Stein Alpine**

July 17-19

Viggo and Judith Holm

After bivouacking Friday night at Whistler cabin, we set off at 7:30 a.m. to the trail head at Lizzie Lake (about a 2-hour drive). After the Mount Currie turn-off and just before the start of the Duffey Lake Road, turn right on the forestry road that parallels the east side of Lillooet Lake. At 16.7 km from the start of this road, turn left on Lizzie Creek logging road. Only the last section of the road is steep, with water bars; we had a 45 minute walk on the road, but high clearance 4-wheel drives go all the way to Lizzie Lake.

A two-hour hike on a rough, somewhat muddy trail led to a cabin at the start of the sub-alpine. Most people camp near the cabin. We headed for the prominent waterfall at the end of the meadow, turning left at the junction of the Long Lake trail. The Stein Lake trail follows up the right side of the creek to the waterfall, and immediately crosses Arrowhead Lake outflow. A short distance further, in early afternoon, we camped by Heart Lake.

On Saturday afternoon, Ryan and Kilian checked out Anemone Peak, while Frances, Gerta and Judy - and later Julie - climbed Arrowhead Mountain. On Sunday, we had a full day to explore the open alpine to Caltha



*Could Gerta be nearby?*

*Julie Thomson*

Lake and Tundra peak. There were sweeping vistas that came and mainly went in the highly variable weather, many kinds of spring flowers in bloom (gentians, western anemone) and sightings of marmots, pika and ptarmigan.

The faster group of Julie, Gerta and Judy accompanied the three young (ages 14, 15, 16) mountain goats up Tundra Peak. As Frances said, "Gerta is awesome!" - (Frances is pretty awesome himself.) Oh, Sandy, that you would have seen Gerta kicking steps up a steep snow gully, Gerta leading the climb up the rock face of Tundra peak.

The slower group reached the col above Tundra Lake and enjoyed the view of lakes and meadows. The colour of Tundra Lake is dramatic blue, quite unlike most glacial lakes.

After dinner, Gerta organized a dance up on a wide, flat-topped little hill overlooking alpine lakes and surrounded by peaks. We danced and sang until the sun went down. Shortly after climbing into bed, the rain began to fall.

Monday was sunny. Half the group returned on the regular trail. The other half climbed Anemone Peak, and followed along White Lupine Ridge. At the first glimpse of Whiskey Lake, we bushwacked off the ridge. Gerta, with her shoulder to the bush, held her bearing (120 degrees) and we rejoined the trail halfway between the cabin and trailhead. The swim in Lizzie Lake, with sunshine for drying out, gave a refreshing end to the hike.

Behind the gas station at the Highway 99/ Pemberton/Mount Currie road junction, we found a special cafe with cappuccino and tasty treats worth trying. This kept us going until the 7:00 p.m. ferry buffet.

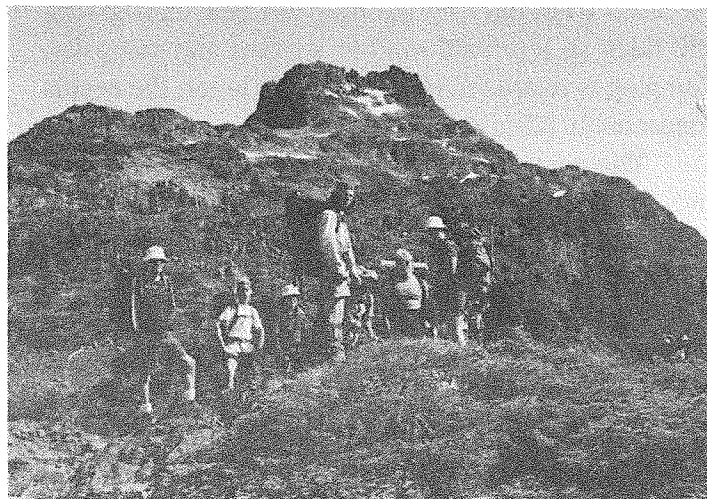
*Participants: Frances Vitek, Ryan and Julie Thomson, Kilian and Ise Henin, Leslie Gordon, Irene Mitri, Albert Hestler, Gerta Smythe, Viggo and Judy Holm (leaders)*

## **Victoria Peak**

**July 23-25**

**Reinhard Illner**

Is it true that trips which take much thought and effort in the making, and have a hard time getting going at all, turn out well? This one did. The weather had been terrible all week, and even on Thursday night it took many telephone calls and weather reports until we



*Victorians...*

*Reinhard Illner*

finally decided to go. We met on Friday afternoon at 1:00 p.m. and drove up island, with a couple of stops for coffee and dinner. The logging road leading north from Gold River towards Victoria Peak was in good condition. At 8:00 p.m. we made camp in the first switchback of the final part of the road leading up towards the peak.

The weather was obviously clearing; spirits were good and we prepared to sit for a couple of hours at a small campfire, when - God forbid! - somebody locked my car keys in my car's trunk (I drive a Ford Taurus station wagon). The climb of the next day seemed in jeopardy, because the gear of several participants was locked in, and in any case, it would take the better part of the next day to get a mechanic up here. Fortunately, the trunk had not closed completely, and the persistent efforts of Francis and Valerio (Italians know how to open cars, don't they?) led to the retrieval of the keys through a little gap after almost 2 hours of attempts.

Early Saturday we all began to walk up the last part of the logging road, when suddenly Dennis and Chris showed up in Dennis's truck. With two four-wheel drive vehicles available, all of us reached the end of the logging road quickly. We traversed the last clearcut left towards a gentle ridge leading up towards the south ridge. Following this ridge over some very scenic bumps, we reached a beautiful campsite near several small lakes by 11:00 a.m. and made camp.

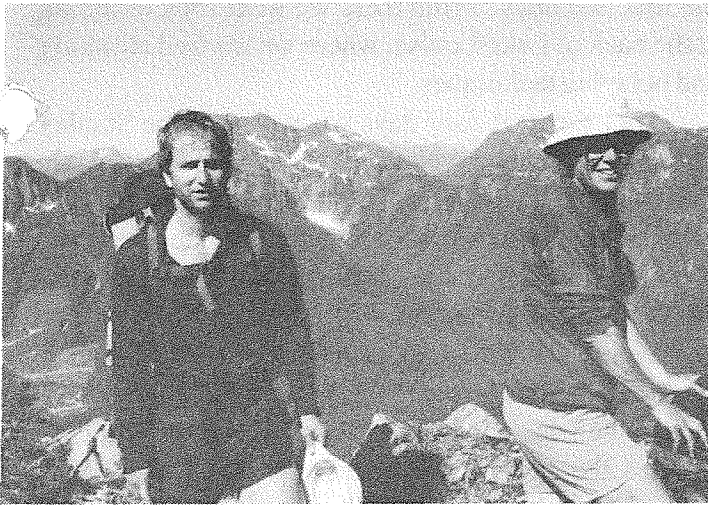
The weather looked better and better, and even though the peak was hidden in fog, we set out for the summit after lunch. Our objective was the South face. Eagerly, we went way too high on the South ridge, until there was no way to descend to the big snowfield south of the peak and east of the South ridge. However, we

*Roe, Francis Vitek, Chris Wyckham and Reinhard Illner  
(leader)*

## **Rainbow Mountain**

*July 24-25*

*Mike Hubbard*



*... on Victoria Peak*

*Reinhard Illner*

had plenty of time, backtracked to where the South ridge forms a big balcony towards the east, and descended from there onto the snowfield. Crossing the snowfield, we headed rather towards the left of the forbidding headwall, until a steep ramp, which looks like a gigantic staircase, leads up to the right. We roped up to climb this ramp; in particular, the largest step turned out to be slightly overhanging and required some short serious rock-climbing. This was clearly not the usual way, but a piton on top proved that it had been done before. Anyway, everybody got up in due time, and it was fun.

Above the headwall, we found ourselves in scree, easy rock and snow and continued steadily towards the summit. So high were the spirits that we spurned the easiest way in many a place and opted instead for the pleasant and firm rock. By 4:30 p.m. all twelve of us were on the summit, which unfortunately was still enshrouded in this fog. We stayed until 5:00 p.m., then began the descent.

The rappel over the steep ramp took a full hour (no wonder, with twelve!), but by 7:30 everybody was back at the tents and marvelled at the cloudless skies and the spectacular views of central Strathcona, the open Pacific and Rugged Mountain. We enjoyed the starry night and the "sweet taste of success" at a little campfire and had all of the beautiful Sunday to do the rest of the descent with lots of stops to take pictures, to drive leisurely back home and stop on the way for gourmet seafood and Piper's Ale.

*Participants: Reg Carter, Ken and Ann Denman, Valerio Faraoni,  
Greg Gordon, Judy Holm, Brian Jones, Dennis Manke, Rick*

After a somewhat blurry 5 a.m. start from Victoria, four of us stumbled onto the 7 a.m. ferry from Nanaimo to Horseshoe Bay. Breakfast, a snooze and some bracing sea air revived us and by 10:15 we left the trailhead just beyond the cemetery on the West side of Alta Lake.

The weather had improved as we drove into the mountains and the trail was in excellent condition; by 2:00 p.m. we were all at Rainbow Lake, the easterly end of which we found to be showing signs of overuse with bare earth tent sites, numerous fire circles and the usual remains of freeze-dry packaging. Disappointed by this, we decided to go on past the lake and head in towards Beverley Lake on the west side of the mountain. We were well rewarded for by the time we were little more than 1km beyond Rainbow Lake we were in pristine alpine meadows with a good creek and a resilient mattress of heather for our night's rest.

As the day was yet young, three of us decided to do a recce of the route up the mountain and of Beverley Lake. There was one solitary tent down at the lower lake and we looked down at it only from the saddle between the two lakes. We met one of the occupants of the tent the next day and learned that they were on the ridge above the lake to avoid the extreme mosquito situation by the water. Having located the obvious route to the mountain through a notch on the west side we returned to camp via a most enjoyable and relaxed meander along the ridges and through the meadows.

The next morning dawned clear and we were up at 5:30 a.m. to find a most delightful mountain nymph in a long white gown wandering through the meadow. Albert and I thought back to dinner - no, we had not eaten any mushrooms, just the usual salami sandwiches. As the dream turned towards Chris's tent, we realized that it was Irene in her usual mountain attire!

Leaving Irene to relax in camp, the three of us were on the trail by 6:15 a.m. and headed up through the notch we had seen the night before. Once in the notch the mountain opened up and after crossing the edge of the steepish icefield and a band of recently glaciated rock, we were on a large snowfield. A remarkably

aesthetic yet gentle ridge of snow led us to the south east summit of shattered rock which we reached at 10:15 a.m.

Whilst sitting there a helicopter flew twice onto the slightly higher northwest summit and disgorged a large number of heli-hikers. They proceeded, after the second flight, to rope up and then, after a short self-arrest practice, descend the quite substantial glacier on the northeast side of the mountain. The sight of so many people on the mountain led us to decide to drop down onto the glacier ourselves, despite your leader's innate reluctance to go on a glacier unroped which dates back to a swing some 40 feet down a crevasse on Mount Garibaldi some 30 years ago. In 20 minutes, after crossing below the obvious bergschrund, we too were on the main summit.

After checking out several steep and loose gullies Chris descended one amongst much crashing of rocks and smell of flint whilst Albert and I decided that discretion was the better part of valour and returned via the upper part of the northeast glacier.

By 1:30 p.m. we were all back in camp where we were visited by a supercharged mosquito in the shape of a Microlite on floats which wisely decided not to land on Rainbow Lake. It took us three hours down the trail to a refreshing wash in the creek by the car and a not-so-refreshing drive to catch the 9:00 p.m. ferry from Tsawwassen.

This is a trip to repeat on the summer schedule. It is only moderately strenuous, requires the minimum of gear (ice-axes only were carried), crosses a variety of interesting terrain and, in good weather, provides great views.

*Participants: Mike Hubbard (leader), Albert Hestler, Chris and Irene Schreiber*

## **ACC Youth Climbing Camp**

*July 24-31*

*Morag Wilmut*

This summer I attended a Youth Climbing Camp in Canmore, Alberta which was sponsored by the Vancouver Island section of the ACC.

The camp was eight days long with four days of rock climbing and four days of mountaineering. Including myself there were twelve participants at the camp, eight boys and four girls, with three leaders.

We stayed at the Alpine Club Hut in Canmore for

the first two days. From there we went rock climbing at the back of Lake Louise, where we learned climbing and belaying techniques.

For the next four days we stayed at the Stanley Mitchell Hut in Yoho National Park. The first day we spent hiking in, which took us three hours. On the second day, we hiked up to an icefield and learned how to use crampons, ice-axes, rope up, ice climb and cross glaciers. Finally, on the third day, we climbed "The President", which was 10,200 feet high. It took us five hours to get to the summit from the hut, and we had to rope up and use our crampons and ice axes. After we reached the summit we returned to the icefield and learned a number of different crevasse rescues. On the fourth day we hiked out and returned to the Clubhouse in Canmore.

During the last two days, we did some more rock climbing, where we learned some different belaying techniques, and we used some new belaying devices.

The camp was great. I made a lot of friends and I had a wonderful time. I hope one day to have the chance to go climbing again with some of these friends.

## **Mount Stuart, North Ridge**

*July 27-29*

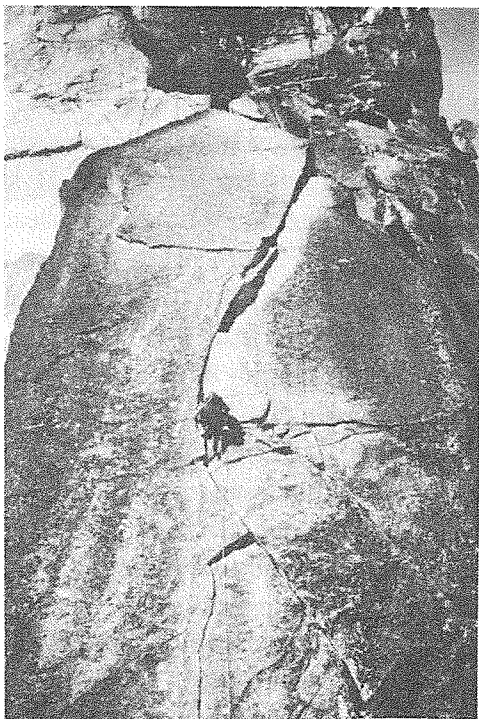
*John Pratt*

After a not-more-than-usually-frustrating drive down to Leavenworth (BC Ferries, snotty US border officials and Parks Service bureaucracy) we had a night on that kitschy, pseudo-Bavarian town, complete with *lederhosen*-clad wannabes. Of course, I could not resist the *schweinhund mit sauerkraut* (or whatever) or the local home-brewed ale (which is quite a cut above the usual liquor store brands) and we bedded down at a local campground quite replete.

Next morning, we drove round to the Teanaway River approach and after some uncertainty found the trailhead. Like most US trails, it is more of a highway than a mountain path and we arrived at Ingalls Lake in the late afternoon. The lake has to be bypassed and here you take your choice: to pass on the left is longer but technically easier; vice-versa to pass on the right. We set up camp on some handy ledges some 200m or so beyond the lake. We retired early, as we had to make a fast start on the morrow, to beat a party (camped 100m away) onto the route.

We set off at 5:00 a.m. in the half light, no one feeling much like the long, rambling hike over heather





*It was very obvious where to go...*

*John Pratt*

and talus to Goat Pass, west of the Massive Peak. Eventually, however, we made it and dropped onto the glacier, the route appearing in profile to the east. After reading the account in "50 Crowded Climbs", it was very obvious where to go. Across the glacier (easy) and up a grotty, unpleasant gully to a rope-up notch on the ridge crest - lots of room to move about. Rick Eppler and Rob MacDonald led off, Rick Johnson and I followed on our own rope. Apart from one pitch near the bottom (which I did not think I'd yet gotten the juices flowing enough to want to lead), the climbing was by no means desperate, although of course extremely exposed, and I thereafter led all the pitches in my rock-shoes, apart from the gully pitch below the gendarme rappel which had snow-ice on it, and which therefore went best with Rick's mountain boots.

By now, the summit was being clouded in and a sense of urgency began to take hold. We scrambled up about 150m of tedious Class 4, reaching the summit at about 3:00 p.m. and entering our names in the Mazama's register there. After some ritual summit photography and gear reorganization, we commenced our descent via the boring Ulrich's Couloir route on the SW side of the peak. Straightforward but tedious, it got us back down out of the clouds. Cutting out right from the couloir just above where it stops being user-friendly, we descended to the trail leading up the Ingalls Creek

Valley and hiked back (uphill) to camp, reaching that welcome spot at 8:00 p.m.

We had just gotten this one under the wire, for that night there was a spectacular thunderstorm and we began to be concerned for the safety of the party behind us. This concern deepened at 10:00 a.m. the following day by which time they were still absent from their camp. What exactly happened I do not know, but we reported our concern to the Rangers, which was, I suppose, all we could really do.

Well - an interesting climb, yes, but hardly a classic as becomes instantly apparent when one realizes that if situated in the wilds north of Pemberton, or indeed south of Mexico City, there would be scant chance of its inclusion in "Fifty Classic Climbs".

*Participants: Rick Eppler, Rick Johnson, Rob MacDonald and John Pratt*

## **Mount Pelion, Northern Tantalus Range**

**August 4-6**

*John Pratt*

This promised to be a very tough trip with a 2,300m elevation gain, lots of bush and no trail and indeed it started out just that way. We accidentally blundered across a fairly well marked trail, however, and since it leads up to (or at any rate towards) an interesting alpine area, I shall describe the access.

On the early (but already hot) morning of August 4, we parked the car between two closely spaced bridges near the start of the Ashlu R Road (92 G/4 ref 772285) and set off up said road branching L in about 50m or so up road A220. About 1 km up this road, which switchbacks somewhat, there is a sharp R turn and here an overgrown road meets A200 from the L. This point is marked with a piece of white plastic piping slipped over an alder branch. The overgrown road runs roughly horizontally for about 1 km in a southerly direction about 150m or so above the valley floor. This road terminates abruptly and the trail is picked up here. It is fairly well marked up until around the 1,000m level in Sigurd Creek valley, from which point on one must be careful to follow the markers which, having a roll of marker tape, I was able to augment. As far as we could determine, the aim of this trail seemed to be the open bouldery area (centred on ref 735247) N of Ossa and Pelion Mountains. Here, some way up the boulder

field, is a vast rock with an overhanging lower face. This was our bivouac site, a pleasant place marred only by the voracious mosquitoes which invaded us in clouds!

It had taken us 10 hours to reach this spot, but with knowledge of the trail, 5-7 hours would not be at all unreasonable. It took us exactly 4 hours to return from the bivvy site to the car.

The next morning, we laboured up the rockslide via talus and steep stream slabs (awkward and at times treacherous) to the glacier. This proved more difficult than anticipated, being steep, crevassed and very icy. The summit, which we nonetheless reached in 3 hours 30 minutes from the bivvy site, was then gained by a 15 minute Class 3 scramble. The view from the summit is superb and in view of the existence of this previously unknown access, I highly recommend the trip.

God help - er, I mean, Good Luck!

*Participants: Sandy Briggs, John Pratt*

## **Wedge Mountain**

*August 7-9*

*Albert Hestler*

When driving up the Squamish Highway to Pemberton, one is often struck by an impressive, wedge-shaped mountain on the right hand side just after the Blackcomb ski area. This is Wedge Mountain, aptly named and at 2,904m/9,527' the highest mountain in Garibaldi Park. On its southwestern flank it features a steep gigantic slope which stretches unbroken for 5,500' from Wedge Creek to the very summit. While impressive from afar, a closeup view reveals this slope to be



*West Ridge of Wedge*

*Albert Hestler*

all talus, horrible and unappealing. The upper 2,500' of the mountain are climbed on this stuff, after gaining access to the slope at about midpoint.

But we didn't know this when we started out Saturday noon, slogging up the 4,000' of steep but excellent trail to Wedgemount Lake (well described in "103 Hikes in South-Western BC"). According to the various age levels, ranging from 15-60 years, we reached the lake at times varying from 3 to 5 hours.

What a view, though - what a jewel of an alpine setting when one finally reaches the crest of that unrelenting incline. There is the turquoise water of Wedgemount Lake glistening in the late afternoon sun; to the right are the steep cliffs of Rethel Mountain (2,560m/8,370'), stark and foreboding, with the occasional rumble of cascading rocks, to the left are the green meadows of Mount Cook, continuing in a cirque around to Mount Weart (2,870m/9,385'), with a pocket glacier nestling near the top; and in the centre of this picture is the grey-white Wedgemount Glacier, its snout in the lake, and tongues of snow leading via aretes and gullies to high ridges and finally the very summit of Wedge Mountain barely visible beyond.

We set up our tents next to the small cabin built by the BC Mountaineering Club, its coat of surrealistic red seeming somewhat incongruous. The outhouse proved to be a smaller, colour-coordinated version. By the time I finally arrived, most of the group had already gone to the glacier where Mike Hubbard reviewed the rudimentary skills of glacier travel (self-arrest, equipment check, lacing of crampons, tying into the rope, etc). By 9:00 p.m. we were pretty well in our sleeping bags, Francis and James opting for the dubious comfort of the cabin (dubious because of the inevitable conflict whether to keep the door open for air circulation or closed because of the mosquitoes).

A quick check at 5:30 a.m. on Sunday revealed white-out conditions, so we rolled over for an extra hour's sleep. We finally headed out around 8:00 a.m. and, after circling the lake (1,925m/6,295'), started up Wedgemount Glacier in two rope teams of four each. The snow conditions were fairly easy to read, the ice and last year's well-consolidated snow being grey in contrast to the white new snow which still filled the crevasses. The visibility remained restricted because of the fog hanging low over the glacier, but every so often we caught a tantalizing glimpse of the surrounding mountains. We reached the end of the glacier at the col (2,290m/7,500') between Wedge and Parkheast Moun-



### *Testing for lightning on Wedge*

*Albert Hestler*

tains around 11:00 a.m.

Unfortunately, from there one has to drop 500' to reach a second col which provides access to Wedge Mountain on the other side of a pass, full of unstable boulders and taking another good hour to cross. From this point (2,125m/6,950') it was everybody for himself, scrabbling up the remaining 2,500' of the steep talus slope noted earlier, negotiating a route over sharp, loosely balanced, ankle-twisting rocks. Turnaround time was set for 3:00 p.m.

Everybody made it successfully to the summit or at least the summit ridge by the appointed hour, except Jack and I. We concluded that would not cover the last 1,800' in the remaining time and opted instead for a leisurely lunch-cum-snooze among the rocks. From there we enjoyed the view up Wedge Creek valley and across to the glaciers of the Spearhead Range. The peaks we still in cloud - as was the top of the Wedge Mountain.

On the return, again, everybody descended at his own speed, though via different routes. Greg, Francis and Marc came down an elegant snow ridge which, they reported, looked more difficult from afar than it actually was. We all converged within twenty minutes of each other around 6:00 p.m. at the col near the glacier's edge. The fog had settled in again by then. It was an eerie feeling to cross the glacier without any visible landmarks for guidance, and being unable to see the end of a crevasse, therefore having to make a decision whether to go right or left by following instinct, rolling dice or consulting chicken entrails. It is definitely not recommended to pay too much attention to the comments and suggestions of one's rope partners. Still, we managed

to find our way back and stepped off the ice around 8:00 p.m. We got to the camp just before dark.

We started Monday in a very casual fashion, leaving about 10:00 a.m. in rain. Just as on the way up, certain members covered the distance to the trailhead faster than others, some in less than 2 hours, while I brought up the rear with a personal best of 3 hours. The drive to the ferry was ho-hum, somewhat enlivened by a lunch stop in Squamish.

I believe that everybody had a good time and achieved some personal satisfaction, especially those who had never travelled on a glacier before or who scaled new heights, such as our youngest members. Francis has been collecting peaks this year like a man on a mission, and James had never climbed anything higher than the maximum 3,500' available in his native England. Seeing such enthusiasm and pride makes leading a trip a pleasure.

*Participants: Marc Elrick, Jack Fisher, Greg Gordon, Mike Kuzyk, Francis Vitek, Mike Hubbard (co-leader), his nephew James Hubbard from England, and Albert Hestler (leader)*

## **Remains of Viking Settlement Discovered in Haihte Range**

*August 10-13*

*Sandy Briggs*

We returned to the "Chamonix of Vancouver Island" this summer with two objectives. The first was to climb Peak 5600 by a new route, the second to photograph the range from its eastern "rim" and, in particular, to photograph the unmapped lake in its liquid state. We reached the second glacier with heavy packs



*A Viking remains*

*Sandy Briggs*



*A Vikette in Chamonix*

*Sandy Briggs*

by the now familiar descent and re-ascent from the north col of Rugged Mountain. Camp was established on the bare rock summit of the 4600 ft. rounded lump that sits between the two main tongues of the said glacier.

Just below this rocky promontory on the flat part of the glacier we had, much to our surprise, discovered the various remains of an earlier settlement. These included shovels, tarps, PVC tubing, a plate, and various more immediately organic residues, not to mention a horned helmet, clearly of Viking origin (see photo). I have never studied archaeology, but it seems to me that these artifacts permit some fairly obvious conclusions. Firstly, it is clear that the ocean must once have been at least 4000 ft. higher than at present, else how would the Vikings have got to this spot? Further, an ocean at that level would have made navigation to this site from Norway much easier, as North America would have been then considerably narrower and a much lesser barrier. Crowded conditions in the homeland, which itself would have been quite small in such circum-

stances, were clearly the motivation for the Norse to be such determined navigators. It is probably worth raising another expedition soon to search for their ship(s), and I shall forthwith be applying for funds to support a search of the remaining summits for tools, swords, and hammers with magical properties.

Our surprise was the greater in consideration of the obvious skill of the former inhabitants in the working of aluminum and plastics, and we have probably herewith pushed the dates of discovery of these materials some hundreds of years into the past. Regrettably little of our findings could be removed for the Provincial Museum but, although much will be covered by snow in winter and spring, some items will remain for recovery by future visitors.

Our somnolescent archaeological musings were punctuated by the flashing sky-commas of a meteor shower.

The ice-wall in which the second glacier meets the unmapped lake is at once impressive and depressing; depressing because it marks the line of retreat of the ice as our climate warms : a troubling thought for those of us who like snow.

A scramble over interesting rock brought us, via the lake outlet, to the third glacier, the true right margin of which we ascended to the base of the east ridge of Peak 5600. We donned crampons and roped for the ascent to the notch on the divide just north of said peak. Here we ate lunch and scrambled the right-hand outcrop for a better view.

From this notch the ascent of the NW (ish) ridge was straightforward, the final summit ridge being a pleasant class 4.

Oddly we did not find the summit note we'd left last year in March, but we left another. For some, the return to camp was by way of a loop out over the most northerly ridge of the main Haihte group, with splendid views down to Zeballos Lake and its forested shores. We also scrambled up the 4700 ft. "Half Dome" before returning to camp at twilight. Dawn painted our mountain a stunning orange before the sun slipped behind a bank of cloud and was, in a manner of speaking, gone.

*Participants: Claire Ebendinger, Dennis Manke, Chris Odgers, Sandy Briggs*





*Morning in the Valhallas*

*Carol Stewart*

## **In the Halls of the Valhalla**

*Aug 14-22*

*Rob Macdonald*

In Christian tradition, one is rewarded for leading a "good life" (i.e., not following Sandy around too much) by passing through the pearly gates to spend eternity on billowing clouds playing a harp. Not so for Nordics. They knew the value of stark austerity punctuated, of course, by the occasional tankard of ale or pillage of a village. Well, the Valhallas live up to their namesake, I'm glad to report.

*Sonntag:* Slocan and steady rain - we cowered in the restaurant until noon, finally bullying ourselves and our cars up into the Bannockburn watershed. Having been warned about porcupines, to whom gourmet means eating disgusting rubber things, we "chicken-wired" our cars before setting off at about 1:30 pm. After wet bush and a shower or two we ended up camping on rocks about 300' short of the col leading into Mulvey Basin. The next morning the col was easily gained and we angled our way down on grass benches and granitic slabs into a spectacular alpine cirque complete with high angle walls, old moraines, meadowy benches and gem-coloured lakes. Hard to believe this place was empty and, except for us, it stayed that way the whole week.

The weather did not much improve on the first day but at least it did not rain. After setting the tents in onehelluva nice place, we trudged back up to the col and did the northwest ridge on Niselheim. There, we learned

about the slippery-when-wet black lichen. Had we been able to see through the fog, we would have had spectacular views - but it was a nice scramble, and even Claire's teddy had a good, if frightening, time.

*Tuesday:* After a night of rain and a rather slothful lie in, we set off for Asgard minus Francis who was down with a virus. We scrambled this peak by its class 3, east ridge not seeing much due to the continuous fog. Nevertheless, it was a pleasant climb rewarded by breaks in the cloud when we reached the summit. Looking down the wildly exposed south face, we got glimpses of our tents, the lakes and lots of peaks still to do.

*Wednesday:* Ahh, the weather is starting to look pretty good but the virus grimly grips gruesome Francis (forgive me, Francis, but I had to include some token Beowulf). We set out a bowl of water and some crackers for Francis, and off we went up to the daunting col between Niselheim and Gimli. There is a spectacular overhung walk that leads out and up to the col; you would not believe the place unless you have been there. We passed the col, Richard warning us of the danger and suggesting we go back (apparently he always does this, except when it actually is advisable to turn back). Then we dropped down and crossed on a goat path under the steep, overhanging west wall of Gimli to pass beneath a spectacular prow on the south side (reputedly a 4-star, 6-pitch, 5.8 climb that can be day tripped). After circumnavigating the peak, we climbed it from the class 4 east ridge which was indeed pleasant. The summit is truly unusual - looks like a football field or two - definitely a refuge for the gods. More scrambles and a glissade get us back to camp but another rewarding day



*Two ratbags on Dagg*

*Rob Macdonald*



is behind and the weather was, for the first time, splendid.

*Thorstag:* Richard and Carol decide to have a look at this South arete on Gimli; the rest of us, including the much-improved Francis, head over to new territory at the end of the Gimli Ridge - Wolf's Ears and Dagg if we can do it. We set off by dropping down to the lower lake in Mulvey Basin and walking along its glacially polished northwest side; this place is great. The passage up to the col between Nott and Wolf's East Ear is a bit messy but enjoyable none the less. A few 5th class moves get us onto the NE ridge and from there it's a cruise to the top of the Ear; Francis gets his first peak. We are back to the col in short time, and after a bit of lolly-gagging, we decide to bite the bullet and cross the mile-long boulder field between us and the south ridge of Dagg. The sun was fairly beating down by this time, and we were tired and thirsty when we finally reached the top of Dagg shortly after 4 pm. *One day to bag Dagg makes a hard man humble*, I can tell you. "Dag," according to Carol's Kiwi dictionary, is the term given to nasty green lumps that stick to the wool at the hind end of sheep - thus the expression "rattle your dags" meaning, in standard English, to "get the lead out." This charming name made us all aspire to Dagg except, that is, the Kiwis who have direct knowledge of dags. They were by this time grinding around the south side of Gimli and bagging Nott. I now understood the cryptic response of Carol and Richard when I asked them if they wanted to do Dagg - they said "Nott." After returning across the "boulder field from Hell," we passed through the Wolf's Ear-Nott col and retraced our steps to camp. We arrived back there at about 7:30 to compare notes with Carol and Richard over dinner. These two reported the South Ridge of Gimli to live up to its 5.8 rating, if not its 4-star reputation. They enjoyed two aesthetic, solid and fairly well-protected pitches before arriving at a much-rappelled-from pinnacle and deciding to take the hint.

*Freyjatag (not to be confused with Eastwood's well-abused partner on the Eiger):* I could get used to waking up in the Valhallas, looking out over an alpine lake with soaring peaks on all sides and watching the morning valley mist swirl up and across the lake. Carol and Richard head out for Canmore, but the rest of us want to extract the last drop of juice from this place. Off we go to Midgard where the east ridge turns out to be one of the nicer climbs we've done; the weather is still cooperating and we get views in all directions. We

cruise over the top and down the north ridge finding interesting rock crystals, and for me a first - I saw a real, honest-to-goodness ermine (honey, I shrunk the weasel...) As we descend to camp, the sky darkens much as you might expect it to in Valhalla. From the safety of our tents we watch towering clouds build and then lightning repeatedly hit the recently vacated ridges. Three times this storm passed over us; eventually after dark it drifted off toward Nelson and we could see it in the distance as orange backlit clouds looking rather like nuclear strikes.

*Saturn's tag:* Sad, but 5 days have flown and it's time to go. We pack and make it over the col before the serious rain sets in. Soaked, we finally make it to the cars and pull off our porcupine fences; I'm glad they haven't been tested because I don't see how they would have kept out a porcupine with a serious case of break-line fever.

Unless your religion involves shopping malls, it's hard to imagine a better place to spend eternity than the Valhallas.

*Participants; Rob Macdonald, Julie Henderson, Anne Webster, Clair Ebendinger, Francis Vitek, two hard-case Kiwis (Carol Stewart and Richard Heyward) and Doug Thorburn to guide us in.*

## **The Conquest of Lydia**

**August 25-27**

**Claire Ebendinger**

There are often two sides to a mountain (some may argue that number), one gentle and easy, the other more difficult and challenging. Lydia was no exception.

The first day of our trip in the Tantalus range saw us cruising across the Squamish river, hiking up the trail along the torrentuous [editor : what a great word !] Lovelywater Creek, and setting up camp on a private sandy beach on Lake Lovelywater. We had great views straight across to Lydia's high ridges and glaciers, and to Alpha.

The second day, with the Weather Goddess favouring us, we set off at dawn (6:30) and climbed up along the creek behind our camp, to an open meadow below Mount Omega, then up another creek bed onto the glacier below Mount Peleops. We crossed the glacier and descended to the col at the foot of the long ridge leading to the summit of Lydia. Route finding was fairly easy and straightforward as we had good visibility. The fog was moving swiftly but seemed to prefer the other peaks nearby. We reached the summit by 11:00,

pleased with our good time. We had views of Sedgewick, Serratus, Omega and Alpha off and on as they played hide-and-seek in the fog.

Peak-greedy John and I thought we would attempt the Red Tusk, described by Fairley as a one-day trip from the lake! Russ agreed to try it and we rappelled down from the summit into the gap between Lydia and the Red Tusk. "Great fun", I called as I headed down first, unsure if the rope reached the bottom ... it almost did. A small jump at the end landed me at the top of a steep gully which I am glad I was able to avoid.

The way leading towards the Red Tusk was a mix of steep, loose gravelly dirt and breakable class 4+ rock. An attempt to find a way up convinced us that this was not the most desirable route, nor did we have enough time to do it. Looking up at Lydia we decided not to climb back up but to do a circle route, and descend the Crescent Glacier and head around to the col we had started from in the morning. This is when the trip became more of an adventure. Getting onto the glacier proved to be much more difficult than it looked. As we checked the gully leading down to the glacier, John was showered by small rocks, constantly rolling down on him from under Russ's feet. Even when we were not moving the rocks kept on attacking him. This rather silly and somewhat dangerous situation had a touch of humour in it as well - Laurel & Hardy? However, when Russ joined me on "solid" rock, John climbed back up safely and we decided not to pursue that way onto the glacier because the moat was large and overhanging. Russ spotted a narrow snowbridge further down the face and volunteered to test it. John belayed him down. As Russ slowly crawled backwards on the bridge to the glacier the snow collapsed below him. Swinging on the rope, a few feet lower than he expected to be, he called up to say that he was fine. He then proceeded to climb along side of the rock face, into the moat and struggled up the overhang of snow to reach the glacier.

I climbed down the rocks as well and set up a rope to slide the packs across to him. Not too keen to do the moat route onto the glacier, I looked for an alternative and noticed a small rock ledge which I could use as a jumping platform to reach the glacier. A loose belay from John and a catch from Russ on the other side would guarantee a safe landing. After a minute of hesitation (step 1) and a dose of positive thinking (step 2), I jumped (step 3) ... and landed perfectly (step 4). John successfully followed my act (steps 1 to 4) with a scream of bravery à la Tarzan. We had spent approximately three

hours on this challenging section and felt relieved and proud of our team accomplishment. John lead us through a beautiful maze of crevasses down the glacier. We reached a friendly rock terrace overlooking Lake Lovelywater and rested a while. This is when I discovered a small creature swimming in my water bottle. Was this the first aquatic ascent of Mount Lydia? We returned to camp by dusk (8:00) having retraced the route we knew from the col.

The next day John and I, keen to bag another summit, went up Omega. We started up again behind camp, across the meadow and straight up a rocky gully onto the ridge. The way to the summit from there was easy to find for John as he had done it the previous year and remembered almost every move. There is a tricky spot going up a steep "cedar tunnel". We arrived at the top in 2 hours and 39 minutes (sorry we did not record the seconds), and returned in time for tea.

We packed up and loaded the *Queen of Tantalus*, which Russ had paddled across from the ACC hut. We chatted with the Ranger who offered us a beer and thanked John for picking up a bag of garbage at the beach.

On the way down John and Russ managed to get minor injuries, one walking headon into a log, the other slashing his wrist with his ice-axe. We arrived at the river in the later afternoon and managed to miss the 10:00 p.m. ferry by two minutes!

John promised to return to the area next year for more adventure and "is looking for victims, I mean volunteers". I highly recommend it.

## **Big Interior Mountain**

*August 27-29*

*Margaret Brown*

An energetic group gathered at the start of the Bedwell Lake Trail about noon on Saturday. After a rainy summer we were blessed with warm sun and clear days. The Bedwell Lake Trail makes access to this area a breeze. After an abortive foray in the bush to find an easy route over to the foot of Big Interior, we chose to camp just above Little Jim Lake. It was a lovely spot, shared with millions of mosquitoes. The next day most of us headed for the peak, and at a relaxed pace, reached the summit at about 11 a.m. We looked longingly at Nine Peaks, but it seemed a bit too far; so some of the group settled for a little scramble up an outlying peak to the west. We turned back about 3 p.m., stopping at a tarn

for a quick dip (it had to be quick as the mosquitoes were hovering waiting to gobble their pound of flesh).

On Monday, some of us ambled over towards Cream Lake, and others up to the lake below Sugar Ridge, before heading out. The trip was concluded by a delicious meal at the Old House in Courtenay.

*Participants: Margaret and Ian Brown; Faye, Doug and Christie Horrell from Campbell River; Barb Brooks from Comox; Morag and Mike Wilmot; Judy Holm; Gerta Smythe and Rudi Brugger.*

## **Scimitar and the Greensward**

**Aug 28 - Sep 5**

**Sandy Briggs**

The beach rocks at this Black Creek are coated with thick green slime. The low vegetation is hung with a mysterious off-white substance which might be shredded plastic, but which might be something worse. An oil drum and other lesser containers litter the little delta. In short, this is not a beach one would visit for a picnic. The damp fibrous beach-grass was well-suited to turning our driftwood fire into a smoke-signal, but it gave off a nauseating smell as it was pulled, so that breakfast didn't have its usual appeal that Sunday morning. It was a morning for hitch-hiking, coastal style. The food, except for some snacks, was gone.

On Tuesday afternoon we romped [I almost said sweated, but really it was close to a romp] up from a wooded pass to the tiny lake at 4100 ft. on the south shoulder of Peak 5343. I complained to Dave that every time I wanted to go bushwhacking he would find a rock scramble which avoided it. We scanned the shores of the lake for the best tent site and I commented that really there were not very many good rocks to serve as tables and chairs. "Yeah", he agreed, feigning despondency, "and not an ottoman in sight."

We were in position for an attempt on Mt. Scimitar (Peak 5500, GR 899902, south of Splendor Mountain) and we were happy. Dinner consumed the long evening and we consumed dinner. The sun painted our cloud-strewn sky in stunning shades of pink and orange, while to the east the full moon arose from a gray-green jumble of Island summits to confront us with the mind-numbing quandary of which direction to face in order best to wonder at our world. In the end we just became dizzy and fell down, knocking ourselves unconscious.

The first day of September dawned sunny and clear. We set off at nine o'clock, early for us, carefully

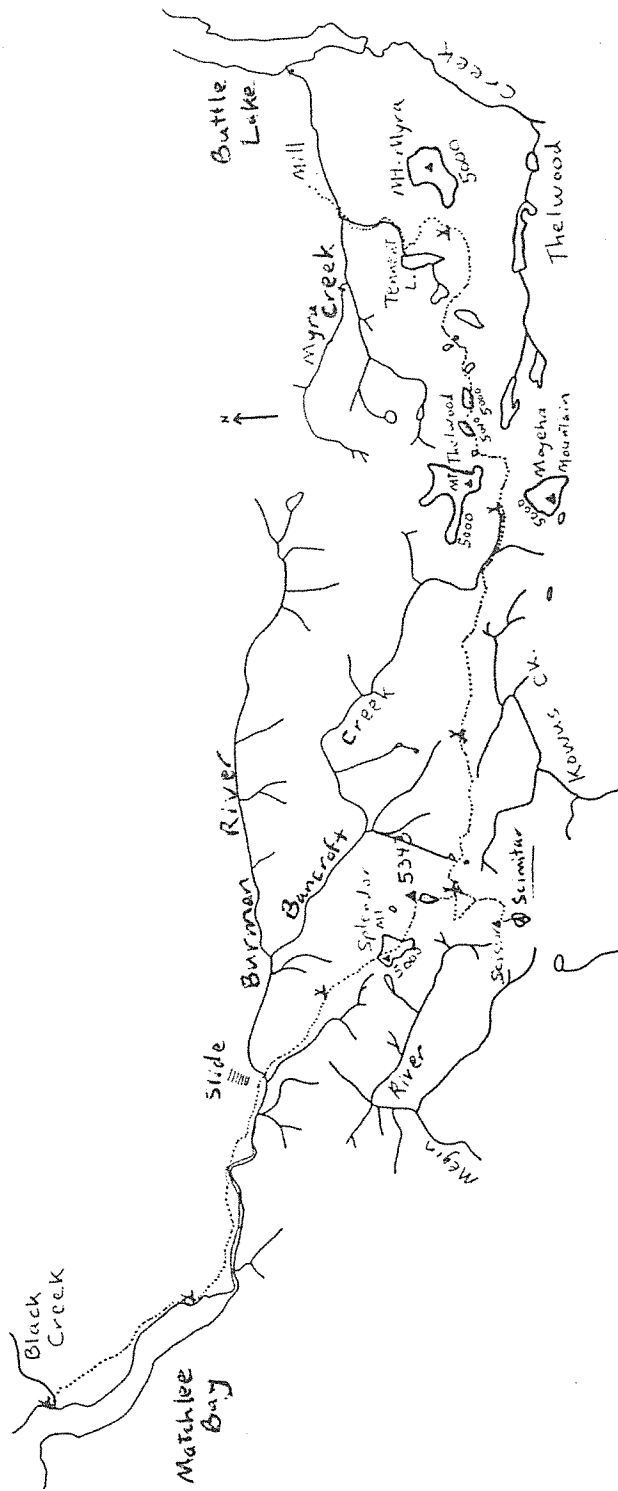
picking the poorest of several descent options leading to the creek to our southwest. Nevertheless, in less than an hour we were down, across the creek, and contouring toward the scree gully which descends from the Scimitar-Scissor col. The ascent of this gully was actually pleasant and only 4th class in a couple of spots. The description is to just go up till it looks hard, then swing left into the next gully. Don't mind the narrow bit with the slime - just do it - and you'll soon be popping up through a notch, unlikely-looking from above, to exactly where you want to be.

The remnant glacier has many outcrops bulging through. We ascended to the lower east peak by a route best described as a reversed Z. First over to the rocks on the right side of the ice, back and upward to the left, then right and up a short scramble to the top. From here we were able to scout for possible routes on the higher west peak. We were not encouraged. Time and weather were, however, on our side, so we decided to go over and, figuratively speaking, rub our noses in it.

Not having crampons, we roped to traverse the upper glacier to the notch between the two summits. Here two troublesome routes offered themselves, but Dave dropped twenty feet south to peek around a corner just in case. To our pleasant surprise an easy slab led to an attractive gully, and as soon as I saw it I knew we would reach the top. A good natural thread provided a belay for (most of) a 30m pitch of 4th and low 5th class climbing to a secure perch on a small shoulder. From there a zig of 4th class and a zag of scampering brought us to the cairn-free summit of the Scimitar. I do believe we so far forgot ourselves as to shake hands upon it.

So it was that we found ourselves perched on this isolated sentinel on the eastern rim of the Clayoquot, gazing into splendid valleys which have not yet been ravaged by corporate greed and the unexamined wieldings of that very modern two-edged sword, the chain-saw. Far below in the dim distance, I mused, people are getting arrested for trying to stop actions which, though legal are nevertheless wrong, so that while standing on this wonderful place with its grand view of much of what they are trying to defend, I felt elated and yet a little selfish, a little guilty that I was not on the blockade too.

We rappelled the gully, careful not to dislodge loose rocks, and descended uneventfully to the creek at 3100 ft. Our intent to ascend easy rock slopes to our camp from its southern aspect was dealt a blow by the sudden appearance of an unexpected canyon. Dave pointed to some steeper but perhaps scramblable bluffs



Burman River Route to Scimitar

upstream and I was won over to the new plan. "I'm swayed," I said. "I'm pleased," Dave commented dryly, "that age hasn't turned you to some tougher and less pliable form of leather." In the end we balked at the bluffs and merely hiked upstream to the 3700 ft. col we had passed through in June on our way to Scissor Peak (Peak 5240, south of Splendor Mountain). The 'dots' had been officially connected. We arrived at camp having bashed hardly a single bush on the re-ascent and we felt so fine about it that a plunge in the lake seemed just the thing to top off a splendid day.

Our trek had begun four days earlier at the Mt. Myra parking lot where, in a brief fit of optimism, we had cut the food to a nominal six days and more or less decided to come out the way we were going in. There was no need, therefore, to arrange for a boat pick-up in Matchlee Bay.

We found Tennent Lake full to overflowing; a result, no doubt, of the long labour dispute at the mine. This forced us high onto the shoulder of Mt. Myra to win a longer but bush-free access to the 'granite lakes'. Descending to the headwaters of Thelwood Creek seems as though it should be simple - I've been there three times - but it was not. The meadows are separated by a steep gully system containing the outlet stream from the 'square lake' so that, even omitting consideration of the large wasp nest we nearly crashed into, I am developing a dislike of this slope. We rappelled once from an alder. Our second camp was just east of the Thelwood-Moyeha saddle.

With our route plan changing almost every hundred meters we skipped our way down the upper reaches of Bancroft Creek, taking to meadows on the left where the stream bed became too wet or too steep. We passed a large pond and the resident bear, and bushwhacked up to a col at the head of Kowus Creek. The route over the next bump looked bushy and steep, so we elected to traverse a bench at about 4100 ft. which we thought we remembered from last year's visit. The use of the term 'bench traverse' to describe what we actually did would be charitable indeed, but ultimately we emerged in the next saddle, a narrow one with a couple of significant ponds. Looking back on our route we saw a long vertical stripe of cliff with one small wooded weakness, which we had somehow managed to blunder through.

This saddle is a really awful place. You should never come here, you would hate it. By sheer effort of will we overcame our temptation to stop in this terrible

spot, but within an hour our westward ramble along the ridge was halted by the sight of an imposing cliff barring access, as it seemed, to the remainder of our route. In order the better to contemplate and be depressed about this obstacle we camped in full view of it beside a fine clear tarn. There seemed to be a, ummm, bench leading around to the left. We would try it in the morning.

The bench turned into a steep wooded descent, a traverse, a rappel, bush, meadow and scrambling. Then, almost suddenly, we were in the next col. Gaining the next bump looked tedious in comparison to a traverse of the lower meadows to its north, so we skirted this bump on the right and emerged into a 3600 ft. col just in time to greet another bear who also was not interested in our company.

I recalled that on the June trip to Mt. Splendor somebody suggested that soon one of the 'last great challenges' would be traversing Strathcona Park on the 3500 ft. contour. We had laughed at this absurdity. Such a traverse now seemed uncannily close to what we were actually doing. We did not laugh at this absurdity. We had pretty much decided by now, without belabouring the point, that we really didn't want to reverse this route. Matchlee Bay here we come! Hmmm?

We traversed the south side of the final bump on a bench at 3600 ft., resting finally near a prominent granite prow above the 2800 ft. pass of the lakes. Ignoring the map, which indicated a gentler descent to the SW, we plunged into a vegetated gully to the right of the prow and descended to the said pass in a manner which certainly brought to mind - but was not - free-fall. My troubled dreams that night were, however, of boat-building.

On Thursday, having climbed Scimitar the previous day, we packed over the 5100 ft. summit to our north, descending the other end and thereby quickly reaching terrain familiar from our June visit. The Splendor glacier has a few crevasses. We roped up, and even chopped a few steps before gaining the jumbled bosses of rock which compose the NW descent ridge. We camped beside a puddle on the park boundary, the site of June's camp 2.

During Friday's descent to the Burman River we tried very hard to avoid repeating the June descent, not that it hadn't worked, but we thought we could do better. When it became clear that we were in fact very likely to repeat it exactly, we decided to bail off to the right by a short rappel. This led to bush both thick and steep, so that a few times I lost sight of Dave though he



was only meters away. There were occasional doubts about the location of the ground.

The Burman River, when reached, was very low. I skipped across on protruding rocks and managed to keep my boots dry, though I would have to confess having used a couple of rocks which didn't quite protrude. The now familiar road-walk to the sea after lunch was almost an afterthought. Our unheralded arrival at the innermost recess of Muchalat Inlet confirmed our worst fears, namely that the Norwegian Women's Olympic Kayak Team was not, in fact, on training exercises in the bay.

Matchlee Bay is quiet. Dave expressed it aptly when he commented that a person particular about privacy would do well here. The bay, as we later learned, is closed to fishing. Certain songs begin to disturb one's thoughts. For Dave it was the Gilligan's Island theme, for me a certain Otis Redding tune. We had not sat too many hours listening to the frenzied jumping of fish before we decided that it would be really nice to have line-of-sight contact with the dock and mill at Gold River. In three nights of dreams I had designed some rather interesting boats, canoes and rafts, but fortunately we did not have to build any of them. Our situation was not as desperate as that of Nansen and Sverdrup, who in 1888, after the first crossing of the Greenland ice-cap, had to paddle out Ameralik Fiord to Godthaab in a craft made from a tarp and ski-sticks. They had not even the luxury of a forest in which to gather materials. Having read of their adventure permitted the casting of our predicament in a somewhat mellower light.

Saturday morning we set off to bushwhack around the side of our own fiord. Several protruding ribs of rock posed questions which we now occupied ourselves in answering. Dave had cut his foot in the night on a piece of aluminum roofing which had been left lying outside the tent. Later that day when I expressed some compunction about letting him do all the work of route-finding, he replied that I should not concern myself about it, as it kept his mind off the ache in his foot. Somehow he found us a way, though on one mossy ledge I requested a rope, and although we were forced to wander hundreds of feet above the water, we never had to do a backtrack worth mentioning. We rambled through the old growth behind an 800 ft. hill and in the evening, eight hours after leaving the Burman road, walked out onto the delta of Black Creek. It was something of a relief to see signs of civilization, even a

mill, across 4 km of water. We built a big fire and made lots of smoke in an attempt to attract the few boats we saw in the distance. There was no sign that we had been observed. We ate a tasty dinner of rice pudding in the dark.

Sunday, about mid-morning, a tug came across to collect a log boom from near Guaquina Point and we attracted some attention with our smoke. Fortunately this tug picks up hitch-hikers - but then, we are the only hitch-hikers the operator has seen in over twenty years of tugging booms. Dave writes: "As I walked across the log boom, amazed at the traction provided by sea-drenched socks, I laughed to myself; of all the trips I have ever been on this one was the strangest. The concept of strolling across ridge tops had become a standing joke between Sandy and me. Yet for all the work everything had gone well; we managed to traverse from mine to mill and at each fork in the road we had chosen the correct path. The trip had been a gamble from the word go and our dice had fallen consistently well. So here we were on our lucky tug at our lucky beach at the end of our lucky trip - what a way to end the summer." It was with happiness and relief that we boarded the boat; happiness at having completed the traverse and the climb, relief at having got a ride and being able to leave that smelly meadow of coarse beach-grass behind. Good-bye to the lawn!

*Participants : Sandy Briggs and Dave Whitehead*

**Postscript:** (a) It's adventure if it works. If it doesn't, things can get more serious; at least embarrassing, maybe expensive, probably traumatic for friends and searchers. Plan ahead. We had excellent weather and, ultimately, we could have hacked our way over the final hills to Gold River. Nevertheless, I lost some sleep thinking about various things, such as fog. In future I would arrange some kind of boat pick-up. As it was, our arrival at the mill seemed almost to make the sorting foreman's day, and the boomsman from the tug used part of his lunch break to drive us up to the village. Thanks a million guys! Other friends in Gold River and at the Lodge helped us get back to our car at Westmin. Thanks to them too.

(b) Apart from the lack of a boat pick-up, this trip was actually quite carefully planned, though it began on rather short notice once the weather stabilized. The explorations preceding the present traverse occupied

three expeditions, twenty-one days, and seven other mountain companions. Six other mountains were climbed, of which two were probably first ascents, and all these trips are a part of what we did.

## **A paddler in the mountains**

*August 30-September 1 Jamie Gamble.*

Having spent most of my wilderness experiences comfortable in the cockpit of a kayak or the seat of a canoe, the idea of walking was new: sure, I've hiked before but there were trails and routes. It's like portaging without the boat, right? Wrong. My hike this fall with Lindsay Elms and Matthew Kirby up in the mountains of North Vancouver Island was an entirely fresh experience.

So where is the parking lot? The signs reminding you of the bears, or hypothermia? The logging road brought us up to a comfortable 3500 feet but the heinous switchbacks were nearly too much for the Volkswagon van. From where we parked, Lindsay looks around at the maze of roads covering the ridge, smiles, and assures us we'll have no trouble finding this road again. Amazing.

In my limited experience I was under the impression that cairns marked the route for alpine trails. It seems that beer bottles were a replacement here for navigation as they were left in a variety of places along the trail. In my uneducated sphere they're much harder to spot; and I'd have preferred them to be full.

Our portage continued until early afternoon when we summited on Mt. Alston. Wow, what a place for lunch! I've had weird food on rivers before but nothing can beat peanut butter, jelly, salami, cheese and sardines on pita sandwiches. There must have been some chemical transformation due to the elevation because it tasted fine.

We dropped a short distance to a saddle just below the northwest peak and set up camp for the night. Time to relax and enjoy the remaining sun. We had a great view of Sutton Peak. It stood very tall, majestic - the top seemed so far away. That's probably because it was. Mountaineers tell great stories, some taller than others and Matthew and Lindsay were no exception. They were able to keep me entertained until the full moon rising behind the summit of Alston stole the show. The illumination of the peak, then the moonshadow cast when it rose was very powerful. It was unbeliev-

ably alien; to experience it once more we moved back into the shadow and watched it all over again. It was just as breathtaking.

An early start the next morning and we could look across to where we wanted to be. And as we looked across we looked at how far down we had to go before we could get up to where we wanted to be. The climb up was a steep ascent, lots of good solid rock; gruelling climbing in my opinion. Matthew decided to enjoy the grassy knoll beside a mountain tarn and take in some sunshine and a book.

The rest of the route is what I would call my introduction to technical mountaineering. If I were a mountaineer I would say something like: "We ascended a long, narrowing, left-trending ramp which finally culminated in a short descent into a steep gully. The exposure became such that the rope was indispensable. After three pitches and a quick introduction to belaying and the placement of anchors, we emerged on the summit ridge one hundred metres from the top."

I am not a mountaineer, so my description is: "It got steeper and steeper until we got to a spot where Lindsay said, careful, there's lots of exposure here..... what's that?.....oh!.....the rocks don't make a sound for a long time if you kick them down". I guess I must have been slow because Lindsay hitched me into a harness then tied a rope to me so I would keep up. "Wow, look at the view! Hey...take a picture of me with all this gear on will you ... for Mum!"

The view from the summit was remarkable. I could see the Pacific Ocean, Rugged Mountain, Victoria Peak, the Strathcona peaks and across the straits, Mt. Waddington. There were two lakes that looked only feet apart way down off the northeast side of the mountain. One had a creamy, milky colour, the other clear blue. How can two lakes be so close together and yet be so different in colour? After flying our kite (we felt as high as a kite now) and some ceremonial photos we started back down the south ridge. Going down is worse - you get to see how far it really is below all the time. We kept up the belays for a few more rope lengths until we were past some of the more technical rock.

The adrenalin of learning about "exposure" was wearing off. My legs were getting tired and I was getting thirsty. We went back down into the valley again then back up and up. After supper the call of a warm sleeping bag echoed loud well before the setting of the sun.

The next morning we slept in somewhat then made a quick trip down to our van. Thirsty for more

adventure Lindsay and I decided to do a quick day hike up Waring Peak. Matthew, needing to return to Victoria, departed and started hitch-hiking on the road.

Day hiking through the bush and up into the alpine is more like scouting a river. You don't have much weight and you can take a great look around. We made quick time from our parking spot, up more logging roads, through some clearcut and a quick scramble up through the trees and into the alpine. Our route up didn't give us any hint of the dropoff on the side opposite to our ascent. It was quite unnerving peering over the edge, but exciting. It gave us a great vantage point for our previous climbs, amazing to imagine us atop that summit off in the distance only yesterday.

On the summit was a cairn and under that was a brass plate (no, not a beer bottle) cemented into the rock by the Geological Survey Department of Canada in 1947. Lindsay informed me that it was the surveyor Alf Slocombe. Stamped on the brass plate was a message to the effect that you would get seven years imprisonment for its removal. I thought of Arlo Guthrie and his song 'Alice's Restaurant' and the section where he was being drafted for Vietnam. As he was sitting on the Group W bench surrounded by mother rapists and father stabbers, the meanist father-raper of 'em all sat down next to him and said: "Kid, what did you get?" "I had to pay \$50 for..." and as they started moving away he continued: "...and seven years for stealing a brass plate from the summit of a mountain."

The experience of this mountain journey is one I'll never forget. There is an immense feeling of solitude that I've never experienced before on more populated routes. These mountains are filled with beauty and my adventuresome companions made it a magical event.

## **Bedwell Lake - Cream Lake Loop**

*Labour Day Week-end, 4 - 6 September*

*Judith Holm*

HOT and SUNNY - my main memories of this long week-end. It is a cold and rainy January contrast as I scramble to submit something, the original write-up having gone astray. I remember that those iron stairways on the Bedwell Lake Highway (trail) almost vibrated in empathy with the drone of the copper mine generator. The trail and campsites make quite an impact on the environs, although they are certainly well



*Judy and Viggo at Bedwell Lake*

*Larisa Searle*

designed to handle large volumes of campers. We and quite a few mosquitoes camped together above Little Jim Lake on Saturday night.

On Sunday morning we moved camp over to the south end of Cream Lake. After some swims and a lunch break we spread out. Albert, Viggo and Ise headed over Sugar Ridge, Don and Daniella tried out various large boulders around camp searching for the softest, most mosquito free rock on which to sunbathe. The rest of us went for a play on the snowfield. We had all brought ice axes and spent the hot afternoon flinging ourselves down the snow field from every position imaginable. Hot days just have to be the ideal time to really enjoy playing in the snow and getting thoroughly wet. Afterwards Brett, Kilian and Judy climbed up to the col for a marvellous view and a tempting look at Septimus. Julie, Alan and group had a sunset hike and run along Sugar Ridge - it was such a beautiful, warm evening - while the rest chatted with Niko and Kate, the two park rangers whom we had met earlier on the col. How many dinner courses were served? Certainly enough to rival the Guides' Ball.

Sunday we headed out via the Price Creek Trail. Someone couldn't wait for the swim at the end and made a spectacular jump into the Creek while crossing the log - so the extra pair of wool socks did come in handy after all. Stopping for dinner in Campbell River once again proved a successful strategy to let most of the holiday traffic go by.

*Participants: Larisa Searle (her first backpacking trip), Julie & Ryan Thomson, Brett Jackson, Ise and Kilian Henin, Albert Hestler, Don Newman, Daniella Dilorio, Alan Danesh, Viggo & Judy Holm (leaders)*

## **Elkhorn in a Day (Almost)**

*11-12 September*

*Martin Davis*

Having failed to read John Pratt's account of his trip to the Old Settler last year, I lightly dismissed the mention of the word "bivouac" in connection with his plan of climbing Elkhorn in a day. As it turned out, it is a mistake to do this when the words "new route" are mentioned in the same conversation. But dispensing with weighty things like sleeping bags sounded like a fine idea back in Victoria, so we set off up the Elk River Trail with pleasantly light packs and a naive feeling of logistical cunning.

Sandy had proposed trying a different route than the usual, a longer climb directly up the Northwest ridge. The trail was well flagged and we made good time to the alpine boulder garden, our pace having been improved by the discovery of several active wasp's nests en route. After a brief skirmish with a cliff on the ridge (from which all but one of us retreated in disarray) we arrived at the base of the summit rockpile.

Here we left Rob, who had been savouring his foreknee (Dr Pratt's diagnosis) all morning and now decided to turn back. We continued to follow Sandy's route, which involved climbing partway up a gendarme and around it on a promised "bicycle ramp". After scampering up some loose chimneys and belaying up a short dihedral, we found a steep ramp. I looked in vain for tire tracks. Had there been any they would have ended abruptly at an airy traverse around a couple of buttresses. Progress then ground to a halt while Sandy prospected around an unlikely looking corner for a way down to the base of the main summit tower. Amazingly the route went and we grovelled our way up onto the pile of burnished rubble forming the summit. We celebrated our arrival with an alcoholic array worthy of the Fort St. liquor store!

The descent was uneventful but time-consuming, and night overtook us well down in the forest. At this point there was a division of opinion within the group. Some preferred to continue bumping into trees and tripping over logs under headlamp, while others liked the idea of shivering through a cold bivouac. The two factions decided to split up so that each could indulge in its own peculiar pleasure. I opted to join the bivviers and secured a comfortable four foot long ledge of duff with a large hole in the middle and a spiky stump for a

pillow. I then wrapped myself in a sheet of reflective cellophane and settled in for a night of "dozy, cream-filled sleep". Surprisingly the morning came quickly and we all agreed that it was the best sleep we had had in the last 24 hours.

After loping down the rest of the trail, we found Robert waiting at the trailhead. He looked suspiciously sleek, and confessed that he had spent the night at his parents in Campbell River! The others had bumped into him bivvying only 200 metres from us, and he decided to join them in their nocturnal mission rather than risk a night of possibly wet dreams.

A reviving dip in Drum lake, a large brunch at Patti-Jo's and another fine Alpine Club day-trip was over!

*Participants: John Pratt (leader), Sandy Briggs, Valerio Faraoni, Reinhard Illner, Martin Davis, Claire Ebendinger, Mark Elrick, Robert Eldred*

## **Albert Edward**

*September 11-12*

*Mike Hubbard*

Four of us left Victoria at 7:00 a.m. on the Saturday morning contemplating possibly doing the mountain on the same day and spending a relaxed Sunday morning in camp before a leisurely return to Victoria. It was not to be.

Just north of Victoria an ominous clickety-click came from the left rear wheel of our car and after it ceased we stopped, out of an abundance of caution as there were no apparent ill effects, and found that we had a flat tire. After a quick change to one of those ridiculous undersize modern spares, we stopped in Qualicum to have it repaired and decided on a second breakfast at the A & W.

By the time we hit the Mount Washington road, your leader was feeling that the greasy bacon and eggs were a big mistake and soon after Lake Helen McKenzie, he knew that they were! By the time he caught up with the others by the ranger cabin, his energy and everything else was at full ebb and the most that the rest of the party could do was to coax him as far as Sid's cabin where we camped.

Incidentally, we met up with the Ranger on the trail and he advised that they are now enforcing the camping restrictions requiring one to camp in designated camp sites only in the heavy use area of the park which extends to the ridge between Jutland and Albert

Edward. This restricts one to the sites at Circlet and Kwai Lakes although he did say that they are not enforcing them with regard to the area around the small ponds where we had originally intended to camp about 800 feet above Circlet. We were ready to plead the defence of necessity if discovered at Sid's cabin as our leader was incapable of any further self propelled movement! The Ranger also said that he is attempting to enforce the dog leash regulation although we saw several dogs running free. After moving on we then met Barb Brooks; she was looking tremendously fit and was on her way down to do some kayaking after a warm up day hike!

Despite our leader's abysmal condition and Albert's contemplation of evacuating him by helicopter the next morning, by dawn he was somewhat recovered and we were all on the trail to the summit by 7:00 a.m. Tom and Ward were up there by 10:30 a.m. and Albert and yours truly (in that order) joined them soon after 11:00 a.m.

What a magnificent day - there was not a cloud in the sky apart from a few fluffy ones way to the south and we could see clearly all the way up to Mount Waddington and not quite so clearly, because of urban haze, down to Mount Baker. After a photo opportunity session and, for the other members, some relaxing waiting for "the Leader", we descended meeting only one other party of four who were on the way up having slept in at Circlet Lake.

By 3:00 p.m. we were at the cabin and after a snack went on down to the parking lot by way of Lake Helen McKenzie, arriving at the car just as the sun set. Although it was after mid-night by the time we reached Victoria, the trip was well worth while and made the more interesting by the company of Ward Trotter, a potential new member, who has recently joined the Ministry of Forests following a career with Alberta Parks. He entertained us with stories of his summer trip to Baffin Island which apparently is fast losing its wilderness character in the more accessible areas.

*Participants: Mike Hubbard (leader), Albert Hestler, Tom Hall and Ward Trotter*

## THE BALLAD OF SANDY BRIGGS

September 16

Reinhard Illner

If you want to climb a mountain  
But you haven't got a clue  
There's a man here in our city  
Who can show you what to do

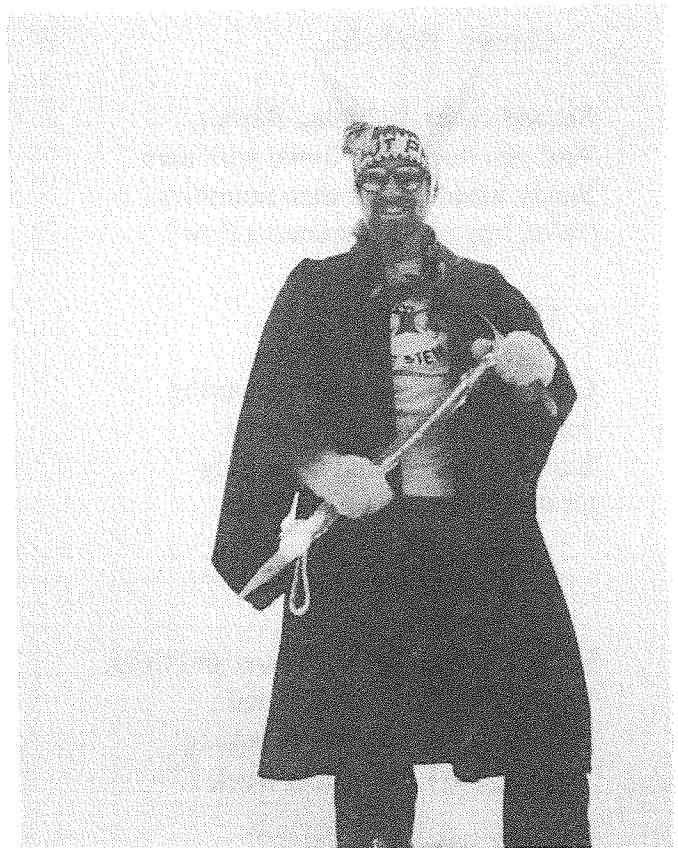
Chorus : Holla-hi, Holla-ho, Sandy Briggs  
please take us climbing, holla-ho !

He's a chemist, he's a climber  
He is tough and he is strong  
And when you climb in his presence  
Almost nothing can go wrong

Chorus : Holla-hi,...

When you're out then at the trailhead  
With a pack of heavy weight  
Yes you may begin to wonder  
But at that point it's too late

Chorus : Holla-hi,...



Claire Ebendinger



And you see him moving uphill  
And you give yourself a push  
Then you realise with amazement  
That he's heading into bush

Chorus : Holla-hi,...

Bears and eagles leave the hillside  
When they hear him crashing through  
Rain or shine, it makes no difference  
Nothing stops him but the 'flu

Chorus : Holla-hi,...

On the shoulder of the mountain  
You can see him pitch his tent  
By the time you know his route  
Is a line of steep ascent

Chorus : Holla-hi,...

On the ridge then, near the summit  
As your ice axe sings aloud  
He assures you there's no danger  
Of a thunderstorm-like cloud

Chorus : Holla-hi,...

Seconds later, lightning flashes  
And you duck deep down with awe  
Sandy wonders and then mumbles  
"Well, my plan contained a flaw"

Chorus : Holla-hi,...

On the way down, rain is pouring  
And you feel yourself a mess  
But beside you Sandy's talking  
Of the sweet taste of success

Chorus : Holla-hi,...

Homeward bound, quite wet and tired,  
You feel dirty, sore and weak  
But then suddenly you're asking  
"Sandy, can I come next week?"

Chorus : Holla-hi,...

*The melody for this, for those of you who speak German, is "Eine Seefahrt, die ist lustig...". I am sure that other tunes will also work.*

## **Mount Donner**

**September 18-19**

**Charles Turner**

We arranged to meet at Beno's Restaurant in Courtenay. Three of us were inside the restaurant while the rest waited outside in the parking lot. We came out after 45 minutes wondering where everyone was. There they were. Next meeting place Chemere Restaurant Gold River. No problem there. We leave the restaurant to head for the trailhead. The last car in the line somehow turned left when the rest of us turned right. We noticed his mistake so stopped to wait (for 1 1/2 hours). We finally gave up and headed out of Gold River on the Vcona main; then turned off on V21 which follows north side of Pamela Creek. We found the missing people camped at the end of the road. They had snuck by us in town on back roads and had been given directions by hunters.

After spending a chilly night on the logging road, we followed the creek up from the logging road and the into the forest, which was beautiful old growth with many large trees and plenty of good-looking mushrooms. The trail stays on the north side of creek. We came across an elk trail which we followed for a while, until it became obvious the elk were not heading for Mount Donner. Then it was into the slide alder and blueberry bushes, until we came out into the alpine with a fine view of our route up. But do not be fooled, the real summit is hidden behind somewhere.

Once again we lost the same vehicle on the way home.

We arranged to meet at Strathcona Park Lodge for dinner. They never did show up. Perhaps Big Foot got 'em ..

*Participants: Doug Goodman, Julie Thomson, Brian Ross, Andrew Simpson, Richard Gage, Barb Brooks, Frank Wille, Dennis Vacha, Charles Turner*

## **Squamish Rock School**

**September 25-26**

**Andy Prett**

The weekend of September 25-26 marked the date of Martin Conder's annual rock school at Squamish.



### *Burgers and Fries*

*Claire Ebendinger*

Master Martin would have appreciated an assistant to instruct his class of seven pupils but he still managed to devote his attention equally and to share his experience and knowledge. After an enjoyable ride to Squamish in the Master's new "power everything" car, the lessons began with basic knot tying and equipment at ground level. We learned about safety and techniques as we received helpful hints during our trial climbs.

For Day Two, the class split into two groups with the more advanced participating in a multi-pitch climb with Martin. The less experienced group, under the watchful eye of Don, practiced placing and removing protection on "Burgers and Fries" in the morning. With this site becoming increasingly claustrophobic as the morning progressed, the Martinless group sought the less crowded flanks of "Neat and Cool". By the day's end, the two groups had met up to sort equipment and to compare interesting twinges and pains.

Brian and Charles were pleased with their climb with Martin on Diedre even though they had to wait for some time as other parties ahead of them were advancing slowly.

Class continued during the ferry ride home as Claire and I took notes on purchasing equipment.

Thanks to rock school I learned that a "rack" is not only a torture device and that witches are not the only ones who uses "hexes". Many thanks to Martin for his

patience and for giving me such a great introduction to climbing and to the club itself.

*Participants: Martin Conder (guru), Andy Preto, Barbara Brooks, Brian Collen, Charles Turner, Claire Ebendinger, Don the astronomer from Ottawa.*

## **Sutton Peak**

*October 2-3*

*Sandy Briggs*

Sutton Peak is contoured at 6000 ft. on the topographical map, and altimeter readings taken during our trip tend to support the map in this respect. This places Sutton Peak near the bottom (with its northern neighbor Maquilla Peak) of a list of some forty-odd Island peaks of height greater than or equal to 6000 ft. (1829 m): a significant bit of trivia if ever there was one. The number depends critically, of course, on how one counts.

Sutton Peak (not Mt. Sutton) occupies a place of prominence on the Nimpkish - White River divide about 10 km west and a little south of Victoria Peak (not Mt. Victoria) and gives its name to the range which extends from Schoen Lake to Muchalat Lake (approximately). The mountain is seen and admired by all who climb Victoria Peak (in good weather) and yet until recently it was difficult to find someone who would actually admit to having climbed it (I managed to find only one). This fall, however, at least 16 people in three separate parties have attained the summit. The peak may nevertheless be awaiting it's "first British Women's ascent" or some such. Sutton Peak has been climbed by an eastern approach (not recommended) and northish ascent in the late 1970's by Chris Barner & Co. This year it was climbed from the south (via Mt. Alston) by Lindsay Elms and a friend, then again a month or so later by our large ACC party from the west. Finally, on Thanksgiving weekend the dynamic party of Rick E., Rob M. and Julie H. day-tripped the summit, also from the western approach. Reminded, as one is, of the famous quotation concerning France's Legion of Honour, one is moved to remark that a woollen toque thrown from the top of the Fleming Beach crag would now, with no inconsiderable probability, alight on someone who has climbed Sutton Peak.

The map's close contours for the approach ridge promise a tedious and undulating ascent, but the promise is not fulfilled. Open forest leads quickly to gentle

alpine terrain dotted with tiny pools and substantially free of obstacles. We slept under the stars near the top of the 5700 ft. bump just NW of our mountain and enjoyed the brilliant orange backlighting of Victoria Peak as the earth's rotation swung us once again into the solar flux. A class 3 and 4 scramble toward the left (N) side of the west face put us on the middle (and highest) summit only just over an hour from leaving our bivvy site. We soaked up the sun on top for over an hour before returning almost uneventfully to Victoria.

*Participants: Doug Goodman, Pedro Montoya, Derek Fletcher, Barb Brooks, Valerio Faraoni, Henrik Vedel, Frank Wille Jr., Ian Granlin, Dennis Manke, Greg Gordon, Sandy Briggs*

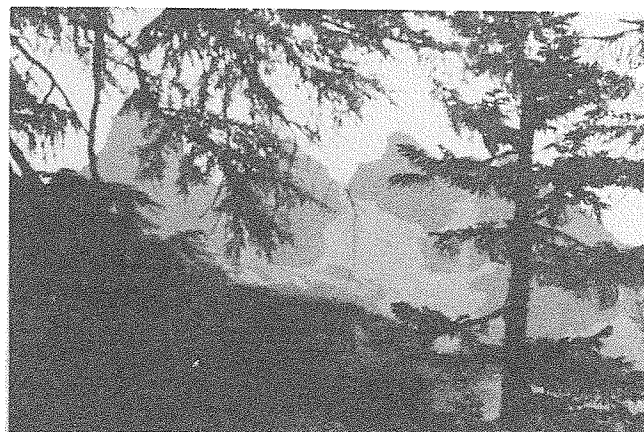
**Access:** From the Gold River Tourist Information Centre follow the Nimpkish Rd. north approximately 50 km until you cross the tracks of the logging railroad. Bear right and drive under the log-loading A-frame and past a small building to the start of the Stuart Road (sign) (km = 0). Follow the Stuart Road main, which means bear right at 2.1 km. At 2.7 km pass a weather observation post on your left. At 6.1 km the Fiona Rd. forks right (sign) and there is a large gravel pit at km 6.8. The road climbs into west-facing bench-land through an area unlogged ATP. At km 12.0 the road was cross-ditched and we had to park. Continue on foot along the Fiona road taking the highest spur (L) which switchbacks twice to reach about 3800 ft. A NE course (someone left a few bits of flagging) leads to the ridge crest, from which the small hanging lakes are visible to the north. The 5200 culmination of this ridge is easily avoided en route to Sutton Peak, but its top is cairned and a couple of notes, several years old, are to be found there. Enjoy!

## **Three Fingers Peak**

*October 9 - 1*

*Catrin Brown*

Thanksgiving Weekend - and our 'Group of Seven' was headed Stateswards for a long weekend in the North Cascades. Although our destination marked a distinct change from the scheduled trip to Steamboat, this hardly warrants its classification as a Plan B trip - for no connotations of mediocrity or second choice apply here. Oh no, definitely a Plan A1 trip this. For those who remained sentient during the 7 a.m. crossing from Swartz Bay, the first sight of the destination was



## **Three Fingers Mountain**

*Carol Stewart*

apparently a glorious sunrise behind the peak. I believe them.

The journey south on the I5 was uneventful, unless the absence of border delays on this holiday weekend be considered an event. From Granite Falls a superior quality logging road for about 30km leads to the trail head at 860m. The hike from here to the alpine meadows at Goat Flats was a leisurely afternoon stroll via Saddle Lake. The rate-limiting factor was the loads, bushes of blueberries and huckleberries proffering themselves at exactly the right height for grazing hikers. At Goat Flats at 1450m the view opened up in all directions and a tough decision had to be faced: Should the tent be pitched to face tomorrow's peak? Or would it be preferable to watch the alpenglow over Mount Rainier? But Mount Baker was looking quite enticing too ..... ? Was it Mike who said "I'm going to have to pitch my tent very carefully as I think I may stay here for the rest of my life" ?

The evening scene was certainly a spectacle. As the rich colours of sunset faded, pinpoints of light appeared in the valley below, coalescing to reveal the positions of Everett, Seattle and Vancouver Island. The lamp lighter of the skies soon followed and city spotting was replaced by star gazing.

The morning hike up to Three Fingers Peak on the Sunday was a straightforward two hours on a clear trail. It is true that at any other time of the year and in different conditions an ice axe may have been more than an ornament, but we encountered only clear gullies. From Tin Can Gap a beautiful ridge walk, a short snow field and a set of 3 ladders to ascend the final 30m, brought us to the summit lookout shelter at 2100m. Built in the

1930s the lookout shelter apparently - and quite credibly given the dimensions - necessitated dynamiting off the top 50m of the mountain, so that this south Peak is now no longer the highest of the trio. Whilst considered a remarkable feat in its day, I speculate on the likely outcry to such destruction today, and the thought of our increased collective awareness of wilderness preservation issues pleases me.

From the summit the 360° panorama of the Cascades is spectacular. The many-layered texture of the mountains, somehow reminiscent of a Japanese painting on silk, inspired a winning entry for this year's slide competition - but did not prevent our leader from staging a knit-in amidst the clicking shutters. Our leisurely descent afforded us time for a prolonged delay at Tin Can Gap where the indefatigable Carol served us margaritas on ice. High spirits all round. And so back to our favourite campsite, to Albert's sandwiches and the ubiquitous blueberries. There's a rumour around that this trip will appear on next year's schedule: don't miss it!

*Participants: Carol Stewart (leader), Albert Hestler, Mike Hubbard, Julie Thomson, Chris Prince, Maija Finvers, Catrin Brown*

## **Elfin Hut Season-Opener**

**November 20-21**

**Doug Goodman**

This ski-season opener was at first abandoned in favour of a hike up Klitsa, but in the week before the trip the snow gods awoke from their long summer nap. A change back to plan A sent most of us scrambling to get our ski-gear together, our interest in municipal elections quickly fading. Relaxing in the BCFC buffet, we recounted Garibaldi adventures, discussed Garibaldi peaks, became acquainted and reacquainted, and planned our shopping spree at the Co-op. But the ferry was relaxed too, cruising at 3/4 speed, necessitating a dash to the co-op, arriving 2 minutes after closing. The guard at the out door had no chance against this group. To his chagrin and our amusement, Claire and Judy dashed about grabbing axes, skins, bindings etc., blithely ignoring pleas, announcements and complaints from the cashiers that they were closing and wanted to leave. In 15 minutes we were fully provisioned for the next day's skiing.

The night's camp was to be at the base of the Chief, by Squamish, to avoid negotiating the road up to

the trail-head in the dark. But as the rain continued to pour, we lingered in McDonalds, warming ourselves by the fire. Some of us wondered if we could sleep there, or if we should go find a motel room and see how many people we could sneak into it. However, most of the party, who shall go unnamed, being somewhat less hardy than the rest of us, had no intention (or fear) of tenting in the rain, as they owned free-standing Volvo station-wagons and a Fargo van. Oblivious to the downpour and the wind, the intrepid ones, Claire, Catrin, Valerio, and myself, erected our tents beside the dark puddles, and were lulled to sleep by the weather. We awoke eager and refreshed at 5:30. For those who prefer to judge the difficulty of a trip by its leader, rather than by the official difficulty code, Claire was later to comment that on her trips the softies sleep in cars, on Sandy's trips the softies sleep in tents, and on John's trips the softies stay at home.

The rest of the trip was uneventful. The night's rain was 40 cm of soft snow on the ridge to Elfin Hut, and the snow continued to gently fall. Accessing the ridge was little problem for this gang of keen trail-breakers. The route on the ridge is on easy terrain, but was not easy to follow due to poor visibility. We were fortunate to have the company of some mainland skiers who were better acquainted with the route, and who shared the trail-breaking. About half of our group reached the large and luxurious Elfin Hut (now \$10/night, payable within 30 minutes of arrival!), 11 km from the trail-head, the others preferring to relax in the smaller hut at the start of the sub-alpine.

The cloud lifted slightly for the ski back, revealing good views of valleys and mountainsides, the peaks keeping their grey shroud. The most challenging skiing was saved for last--a mad snowplow, or rather an iceplow, down the bumpy, crusty, rutted fire-road, forcing most of us to adopt the fall-on-one's-ass technique of speed-control. My new telemark gear, that was annoyingly slow for most of the day, at last proved its worth. Despite the crowded destination, and a few muscle pulls, we all seemed pleased with the outing, and cheerily shared another ferry supper. The final and unexpected pleasure was to arrive home well before midnight. Rumour has it that this may become an annual season opener.

*Participants: Claire Ebendinger (leader), Catrin Brown, Valerio Faraoni, Doug Goodman, Ise Henin, Kilian Henin, Judy Holm, Viggo Holm, Mike Hubbard, Andy Preto*

## **Season-Opener II: Christmas sing-along and other winter tales**

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*Dec 4-6*

*Albert Hestler*

The printed schedule called for a ski trip to Sid's cabin in the Forbidden Plateau area of Strathcona Park, together with a pre-Christmas sing and a possible ascent of Albert Edward. That sounded too good to miss. Unfortunately, the freezing level was too high and the weather forecast predicted rain. So Ian and Margaret decided to shift the excursion to the Elfin Lakes shelter in the Diamond Head area of Garibaldi Park.

We met bleary-eyed and with the usual expression of "why are we doing this" on Saturday morning in Nanaimo for the 7 a.m. ferry crossing to Horseshoe Bay. This was a wise choice because high winds forced cancellation of the ferries from Swartz Bay to Tsawwassen that day. The only ill effect we suffered was a degree of difficulty in maintaining one's balance in the cafeteria line-up and, later on, to stop the breakfast from staging a second appearance.

By the time we reached the trailhead around 10:30 a.m., the wind had died down and the skies cleared. There was just enough snow to start skiing directly from the car. The snow was surprisingly dry, light and fluffy and improved with every mile up the logging road and along the ridge. After a brief stop at the Red Heather shelter for lunch and the inevitable adjustments, we reached our destination at about 3 p.m., still early enough for a few enthusiasts to try some telemark turns on the slopes beyond the hut. Speaking of the hut, it has undergone "improvements" in that the old wood-burning stove has been replaced with a propane heater, for which a service fee of \$10 per person-night is being exacted by our friendly Parks Department.

Still, it was nice to have the hut available for the carol-singing which took place with much enthusiasm. As the weather forecast had been so bad, there was only one other couple (from Vancouver) sharing the space - and they became part of the group when it was established that they also knew Sandy Briggs (what have you been up to, Sandy ?) Viggo, who realised that he didn't have to carry a tent, instead carried an 8-litre container of red wine which was skilfully converted to mulled wine and contributed greatly to the season's good cheer.

Also, somebody decided that it was a good time and place to celebrate Gerta's birthday (she seems to have been born some time in December many winters

ago). Ian brought a wonderful chocolate cheesecake concoction for this occasion. He was very successful in carrying the cake carefully in an upright position in the top of his pack, but less successful in hiding this fact from Gerta. She was a good sport, though, and didn't let on. Congratulations, Gerta ! So with feasting, drinking, singing and the usual inane banter that passes as conversation in the fellowship of good friends, the evening passed all too quickly.

On Sunday, after a casual breakfast, we all climbed to the col below the Gargoyles. Contrary to forecasts, the weather was sunny and clear, and the snow just perfect for telemarking. On the col we separated - Ian, Margaret, Doug and Albert continued up to Little Diamond Head (having decided beforehand to stay an extra day) whereas the rest of the group skied down to the hut and back out for a return to Victoria the same day. The lucky foursome enjoyed the remainder of a beautiful day - sunshine, excellent snow, fantastic views, good skiing, scarcity of people, empty hut, sunset - in short, all the good things in life. There was still time for more skiing on Monday morning before heading back to the car and the ferry. I find these impromptu long weekends highly commendable and a very civilised way of spending time in the country.

*Participants : Ian and Margaret Brown (leaders); Viggo and Judy Holm; Chris and Lynne Peppler; Gerhard and Joanne Draper; Barbara Brooks; Claire Ebendinger; Gerta Smythe; Julie Thomson; Doug Goodman; Albert Hestler*

## **Vintage Vantage**

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*December 30*

*Judith Holm*

Claire and Gerta had just finished breakfast at the Cerise Creek cabin when Viggo and I arrived. After cups of Gerta's good coffee we set off to try the ski slopes on the side of Vantage Peak. As we climbed, the clouds swirled around us. It was a windy, rather stormy winter's day, with the low light of December. The snow level was lower than I had experienced before and it appeared to be relatively stable. We were tempted to go higher and higher, just a little bit further, to where it was too steep for skis but all right for walking. After a quick traverse under a whopper of a cornice, we were within sight of the summit. A look at each other and at our watches and we were off! Because of the long hoar frost crystals on the black rock, the grey, fast moving clouds, the glimpses down both sides of the snowy ridge, the



need for care scrambling up the snow and slippery rocks, we felt like a party ascending a Himalayan giant - it was almost a surprise that we could still breathe easily without extra oxygen! By 3 p.m. we had reached the summit, (all 2365 m. of it!) and our last climb for 1993. Judy's cable broke near the start of the ski out and had to be replaced, with daylight disappearing fast. Gerta and Claire skied back for a second night at the Cerise Creek cabin. Viggo and Judy had a lively ski-out in the dark amongst the trees and creek crossings, eventually arriving back at Whistler at 7 p.m., in time to join the other ten just sitting down to dinner at our cabin.

*Participants: Claire Ebendinger, Gerta Smythe, Judy and Viggo Holm*

## **Nature Calls**

**(not to be confused with *Sounds of Algonquin*)**

*Albert Hestler*

There is something that's been bothering me for some time and I wish to confess. While the subject is very personal in nature, it is also very natural in persons. But I may as well stop beating around the bush, both figuratively and subjectively, and admit it up front. I do have to go to the bathroom at night! Not every night, mind you but sometimes.

That's usually no problem at home. I have learned to simply roll out of bed, barefoot and pyjama-clad, and to feel my way groggily in the dark to the appropriate spot in the house. But it is not quite that simple when sleeping in a tent. And the hope that one can 'last' until morning seems especially futile in winter when descending darkness and dropping temperatures make it advisable to crawl into one's sleeping bag practically right after supper.

Getting up in the middle of the night to go to the bushes (this time not for beating around, as noted earlier) is definitely a nuisance. To do so in bare feet is to court disaster, whether it be because of snow (cold feet), rocks (stubbed toes), rubble (bruises), or even seemingly benign meadows (cut soles). Also, to wander around in the dark by feeling one's way has its dangerous aspects, such as overhanging cornices, unsuspected cliffs, prickly bushes, or holes where nasty critters may lurk. And venturing unclad from the warm comfort of one's sleeping bag into the cold, dark world outside can

be a downright chilling experience.

Yet, I could never bring myself to do what I have seen others do (who shall remain mercifully unnamed) : that is, to keep one foot in the doorway of the tent, to swing the other foot around the corner, and to relieve oneself in the manner of that famous fountain in Brussels. (Of course, I am speaking here strictly of the male members of the human species and trust that the notion of gender equality is not invoked in this context.) I simply do not appreciate 'yellow' snow right next to the tent, or hut for that matter - not only for aesthetic reasons, but because of the resulting uncertainty where to find clean snow for cooking purposes. So what to do?

In the not too distant past, indoor facilities were relatively rare except for two items : the commode and the chamber pot. Using my intellectual powers of reasoning, I studied these two for possible clues to my dilemma. I quickly discounted the commode as being impractical - at 54" average, most tents simply do not have the necessary height. They are also awkward to carry. The pot, however, had definite potential. (I flashed back to the orator in London's Hyde Park during the sixties who argued that all the problems in this world are the result of barbaric toilet training. He felt that the sudden shock of a cold potty rim on the warm posterior of a child, together with a stern admonition to produce or else, must have caused a lasting psychological trauma in all of us. He called this concept the 'potty-body-problem'.)

More brilliant still than this insight into human nature, I noticed almost instantly that the prime function of any pot has remained unchanged in being one of containing mostly liquid substances; however, the materials for their construction have broadened wondrously from traditional earthenware, china, glass, pewter, etc. to include the latest technological developments in rubber, plastics, metal cloth, and other space-age inventions. Thus the problem was reduced to a search for the right material and the right form. I shall spare you my experience, somewhat less than successful, with condoms as recommended in a guide book on winter travel in the Canadian Rockies.

No, the ideal vessel turned out to be the aluminum foil pouches which are used to contain certain brands of wine, mostly manufactured in British Columbia. I wished I could say that emptying such a pouch is the best part of the process, but I would be stretching the truth a tad. Inviting people who are not connoisseurs of wine helps. The practicality of this pouch hinges entirely on

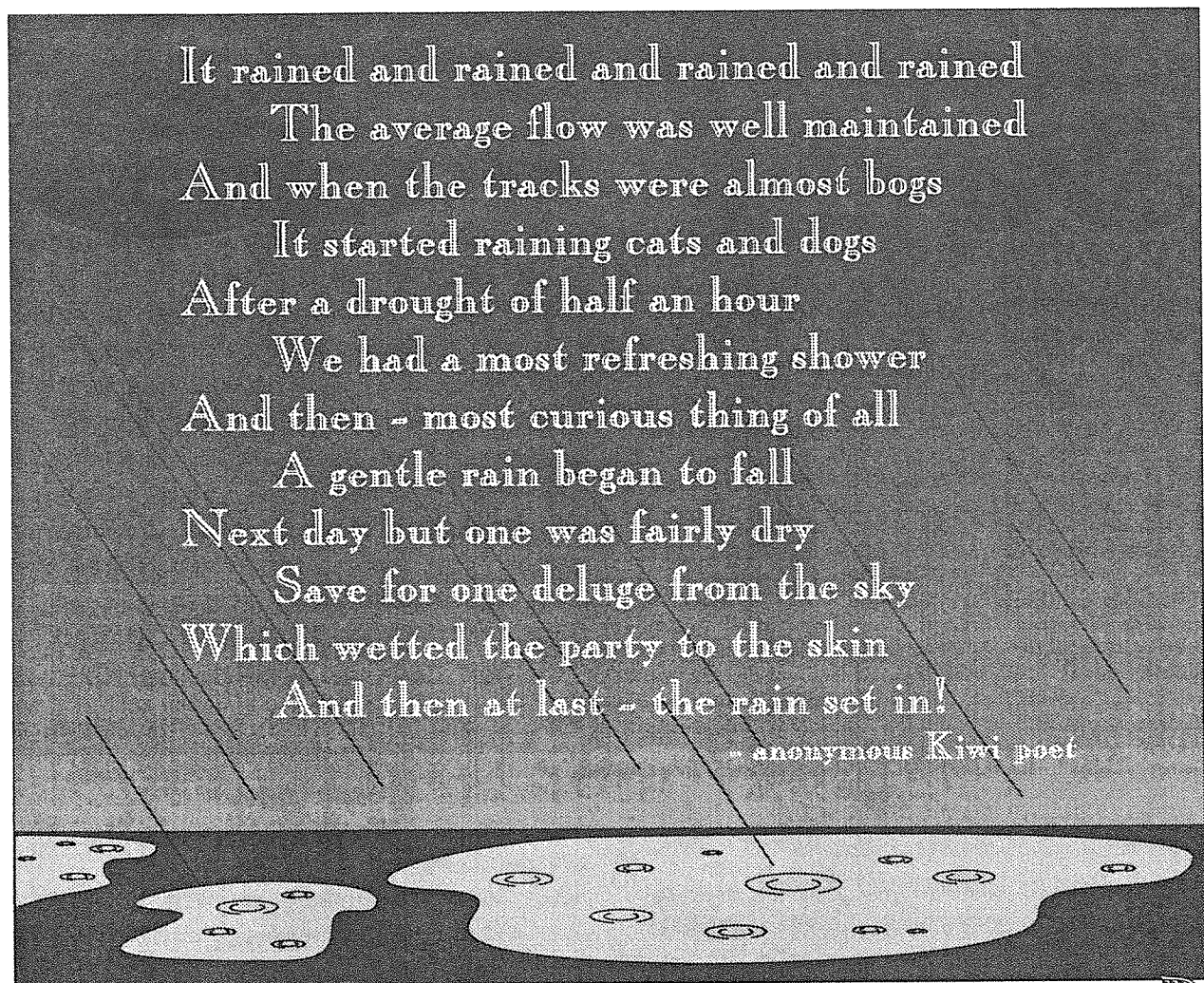
the fact that it is collapsible, hence easily portable, and comes in sizes which makes it suitable for single or multiple use or users. Personally, I find the 4-litre size ample.

Whenever I mention this 'porta-potty' to my friends and acquaintances, the first reaction is one of disbelief. I have come to understand by now that they are invariably trying to visualize how I manage to get the contents of my bladder through that tricky spout into the pouch. I assure you that I am not kinky nor masochistic, neither do I have mysterious powers to circumvent this obstacle.

The solution is simple: I purchased a small one-half pint plastic jar of fruit juice (orange, I believe). I could not find the same brand of fruit juice anymore, but other product containers might do equally well, such as the 1-litre bottle of Super Soy non-dairy beverage from Sooke Soy Foods. Just treat this search as an adventure. This jar has a screw lid and, more importantly, a neck

which matches the spout of the wine pouch in diameter. I then used a hacksaw to cut the spout as well as the jar at their respective necks, which left me with the essential parts (pouch and lid) fitting together neatly, and inside the other. A little dab of epoxy, to glue the two parts together and render the finished product waterproof, completed the operation.

Now I can face the fiercest winter storm, snug in the knowledge that I do not have to go outside until I choose to. I should also like to add that this 'potty' is very quiet. Some souls, who might easily be embarrassed, need not fear that they will waken their tent companions with the sudden noise of Niagara Falls in springtime when suddenly released from its icy grip. But I have become somewhat paranoid about other people storing drinking water in the same kind of containers, especially when carrying one nonchalantly through the campground in the morning. Whither goest thou, oh brother?



## April 1973 - December 1993

Twenty years ago the first A.C.C. Vancouver Island Section Newsletter was printed. At the 1975 Annual Dinner, the name "The Island Bushwhacker" was chosen. In June 1975, Cynthia Tansley, Editor, published the first issue of "The Island Bushwhacker". The following is primarily an index of trip reports, from the first publication in April 1973 until November 1993. Many thanks to Judy Holm for her painstaking compilation of this index.

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**lanche Safety, Rock**  
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