



THE ALPINE CLUB OF CANADA VANCOUVER ISLAND SECTION

ISLAND BUSHWHACKER

2003



JACQUI HUDSON ON THE CRUX PITCH OF THE BECKEY ROUTE (N RIDGE) ON MT. BAKER
PHOTO: RICK HUDSON

CONTENTS

VANCOUVER ISLAND MOUNTAINS

MOUNT CAIN	6	SANDY BRIGGS
ANOTHER FINE WINTER DAY ON ARROWSMITH	7	EVAN LOVELESS
MT. CAIN A SPECIAL SKI COMMUNITY	8	JUDITH HOLM
ADDER PEAK	9	SANDY BRIGGS
MT. HALL	10	CHRIS WILLE
MT. HALL— AGAIN	11	RANDY CHURCH
WINNING BONANZA	12	MARY ANN MAROUS
REDWALL — THE MACKENZIES	13	JULES THOMSON
MT. TOQUART (EAST RIDGE)	14	QUAGGER (CRAIG WAGNELL)
SEPTIMUS AND BIG INTERIOR	16	MATT POPE
MT. ABEL — TRYING TO PLEASE MOM	18	SASHA KUBICEK
MOUNT PEEL	19	LLINDSAY ELMS
STEAMBOAT MOUNTAIN — FLORA AND EXPLORA	20	PETER ROTHERMEL
EL PIVETO DAY TRIP	21	CHRIS WILLE
COMOX GLACIER/HARMSTON	23	JULES THOMSON
MT ALBERT EDWARD — MY FIRST THREE DAYER	24	MICA STONELY
OUR "TANTALIZING" SUMMER CAMP	25	CHRISTINE MORTON AND CHRISTINE FORDHAM
MT. CARRIE — A GOAT BUT NO CAT	29	TONY VAUGHN
MOUNT DERBY	29	LINDSAY ELMS
NINE PEAKS — ANOTHER FEATHER	31	PETER ROTHERMEL
THE TLUPANA RANGE	34	DON MORTON
MOUNT ASHWOOD AND BONANZA PEAK	35	LINDSAY ELMS
RUGGED MOUNTAIN OUT — CREST ROCKS INSTEAD	37	ANG LOPEZ
TLAKWA MOUNTAIN	37	SANDY BRIGGS
HIKING THROUGH THE WINDOW, INTO THE WORLD BEYOND	38	ELLIAN BELL
KING'S PEAK NORTH RIDGE ROUTE	40	HINRICH SCHAEFER
MACKENZIE RANGE	41	SELENA SWETS
MT. BECHER	41	GERTA SMYTHE

COAST MOUNTAINS AND THE ROCKIES

DIAMOND HEAD AREA, GARIBALDI PROVINCIAL PARK	44	DAPHNE KESSEL
INDULGING VERTICAL INCLINATIONS ON THE CAMPBELL ICEFIELDS	44	CHRISTINE FORDHAM
EDGE MTN. GOLDEN EARS	46	JOHN PRATT
SOME DAYS, WE CALLED IT THE G.D. TRAIL	47	GIL PARKER
WADDINGTON AGAIN AND AGAIN	48	KATY HOLM
A DEVIL OF A GOOD TIME	51	SANDY BRIGGS
BLANSHARD'S NEEDLE	53	JOHN PRATT

SOUTH OF THE BORDER

THE LITTLE MATTER OF MT BAKER	56	RICK HUDSON
MT. OLYMPUS; RACING THE RAIN	58	TONY VAUGHN

DISTANT OBJECTIVES CHINA (TIBET)

LITHANG — MOST SECRET MT. GENYEN TREK	60	ALBERT HESTLER
---------------------------------------	----	----------------

BIOGRAPHY

JOHN S. T. GIBSON	65	JUDITH HOLM
-------------------	----	-------------

NEW CLIMBING ROUTES ON VANCOUVER ISLAND MOUNTAINS

NEW MULTI-PITCH ALPINE ROUTES ON COLONEL FOSTER AND TOM TAYLOR	70	LINDSAY ELMS
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Vancouver Island Mountain Scenery Winner

Tlupana Range, photo looking SW towards Mt Alava in the background – Jules Thomson

BACK COVER

Camp at the base of Waddington's N W Summit, Katy Holm way in the distance – Karen McNeill



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MOUNTAIN SCENERY WINNER

VISTA COL IN THE ESPLANADE RANGE, SELKIRK MOUNTAINS B.C.

PHOTO: HINRICH SCHAEFER

VANCOUVER ISLAND MOUNTAINS

MOUNT CAIN

Sandy Briggs

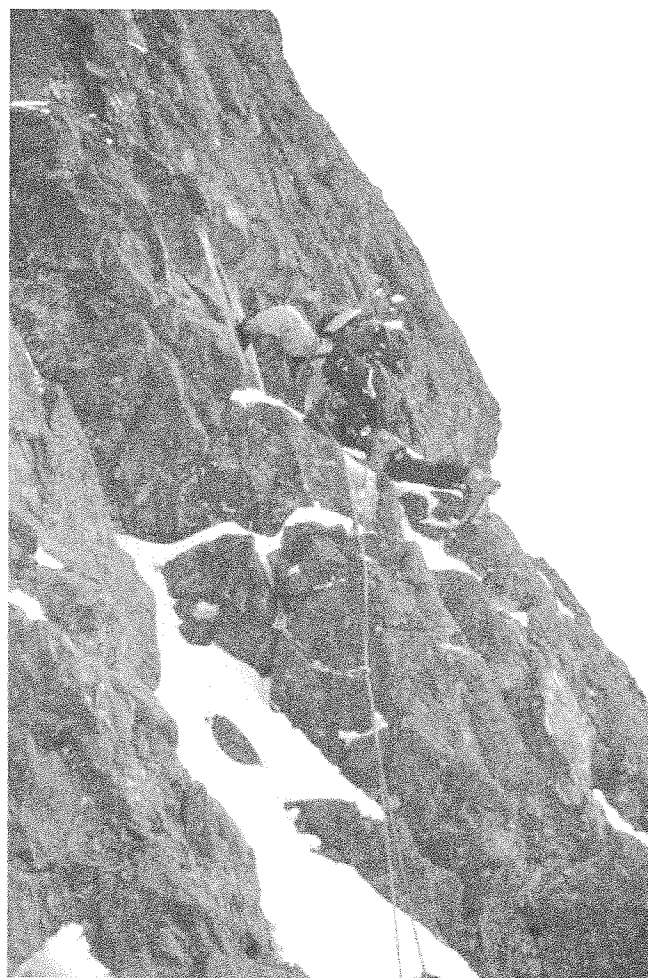
March

I had a cold, but I reckoned that if incipient famous British mountaineers used to be sent off as ailing youth to the Alpine air for relief from their respiratory afflictions then I should certainly profit from the salubrious ambiance of wonderful and welcoming Mt. Cain. Or at least I should not die from going there. The truth is that I had become, over the preceding decade, quaintly and ever-so-slightly rabidly obsessed with climbing the higher east peak of this complex and blocky north-Island giant, attached, as it is, both eponymously and physically, to the community ski-hill that is justly famous for its sheer concentration of fun. Twice (1993 and 2002) I had had very enjoyable ascents of the slightly lower west summit, but these had served to intensify my desire to stand on the tantalizing tippy-top of the eastern tower. If only I could find someone who could lead the hard bits.

I had no trouble convincing the ever-enthusiastic Hinrich Schaefer to join me for the Mt. Cain climb. I think he had only slightly more trouble convincing his recently-arrived friend Torge Schuemann to come along. Now Torge, blissfully, so to speak, unfamiliar with Vancouver Island, winter mountaineering, and alpine ski touring, was therefore at the time somewhat in the dark (ha ha ha) about exactly what he was signing up for.

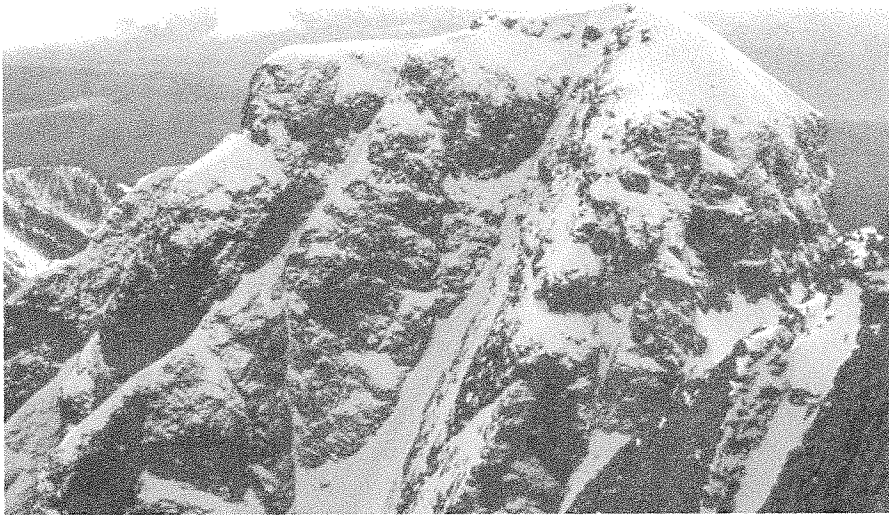
On Saturday morning I dragged my sorry snuffly corpse out of our friends' cabin and the three of us set off for the day's adventure. We traversed the top of the West Bowl, passed through the col, and made our way on (well, more 'in' really) soft fluffy powder to the notch between Mt Cain's two main peaks. Here we roped up.

The route of the first ascent (Rick Eppler and John Simpson) had gone up and left (north) on a snowy bulge over awe-inspiring exposure. I lobbied dictatorially for a different and perhaps new line up a rock wall to a snow



Hinrich leading the rock pitch on Mt Cain, E Peak. Photo: S. Briggs

ledge on the right. Hinrich led this low fifth class iced-up bit of near-verticality in fine style. The desired ledge, once reached, was exceedingly narrow at this spot. Edging along it without much protection and few good handholds served,



Mt. Cain West Peak viewed from East Peak.

Photo: S. Briggs

(borrowing here from Dr. Johnson), like the knowledge that one is to be hanged on the morrow, to concentrate the mind wonderfully. It was during this delicate traverse that I forgot I was ill.

With the crux out of the way we ran out the rope easily a couple of times on good snow in a rightward traverse to the bottom of a broad open gully. Here I led over a little bare rock to a higher snowfield and then slightly left under an overhanging wall. The next pitch, snow-bedecked class three, led up a blocky face to the summit plateau. It was then a short and pleasant stroll to the high point, where we congratulated ourselves and enjoyed the view, grand in all directions.

It took a little exploring to find a suitable rappel anchor midst all the snow, but eventually we rappelled south to snow ledges and moved west to a position closer to the great notch. Here, with Torge's double rope, we were able

to reach the lower snow in one long and airy maneuver. It remained only to avoid falling into the inadequately buried moat at the base of the rappel.

As we removed our harnesses at the great notch the advance of twilight became more than an imagining. Moreover some cloud had formed and the visibility was down to tens of meters. It was no trouble to follow our trench back to the skis and it proved relatively easy to get back to the col at the top of the West Bowl. Thereafter Torge's skiing lesson was not at all aided by the fact that his glasses were constantly fogging up, and I would go so far as to say that it was downright hindered by the onset of full darkness by the time we had

reached the broad slopes below the main chute. Headlamps had by then been deployed. We skied through the forest to the flat meadow, where Hinrich then taught Torge how to use ski skins. A routine and familiar trail led us soon back to our friends' warm cabin where, with very large smiles, we tucked into a welcome dinner. Then I remembered I was sick, and collapsed in a very trashed state on the couch.

But I am being a little disingenuous about Torge's experience. He's a skilled and experienced rock-climber and seemed to have no trouble dealing with the novel snowy medium. Indeed I sense that he has, in the intervening months, even become a little addicted to alpine ski touring. One could hardly have two better companions for a Mt. Cain climb. (Thanks, Hinrich, for leading the hard bit.) Participants: Sandy Briggs, Hinrich Schaefer and Torge Schuemann

ANOTHER FINE WINTER DAY ON ARROWSMITH

Evan Loveless

March 16

The trip started by arriving at the Summit Main (Loon Main) Gate to find that it was locked@#\$%. After some discussion about our options (one of which included trying to break the lock), and of course a lot of cursing of Timber West, the new Working Forest Legislation, future climbing/recreation access and just the

Liberals in general, we decided to go around through Port Alberni and try the Cameron Main. Fortunately the gate was unlocked and we continued on our way up to the Main Gully trailhead. It must have been almost 10:30 by the time we were hiking up the trail. Not exactly an alpine start. However being a fairly small, strong group we made

good time up to the basin.

Due to the ominous avalanche forecasts for the coast we decided to dig a pit to check the stability. I won't go into details but it looked pretty good so we continued on up the Main Gully. Easier said than done. The fresh snow made it difficult to work our way up the gully. It was like swimming in muck. Rick had the first pleasure of leading or should I say wallowing in the stuff. Then it was Russ' turn (the pleasure of being an ACC leader). After about a half hour of this nonsense, and gaining little ground, we decided to use a snow shovel as a climbing aid. Rick would hold the shovel under Russ' foot. This is so Russ could get enough purchase to step up. Then the shovel would go under that foot, step up, and so on. A new snow climbing technique? We decided later that we should enlighten the *Freedom of the Hills* Editors about this new snow climbing aid.

We finally reached the top of the gully. By this time it was really snowing and windy. Because it took so long to get up the gully and the rest of us in the group were letting the leaders (the old farts) do all the work, I for one was quite cold. I had to stop at the top of the gully to put some layers on and boy was it nippy. We reached the summit, me pulling up the rear since I was the only one to stop. It was very cold, snowy and windy at the summit so

needless to say we were soon on our way back down. We decided to drop back down the Judges Route. Rick led the way down. The snow was perfect for glissading. I hung back a bit, letting the bigger guys go, so I could get some good "otter slides". We stopped for a quick lunch and continued on our way, bum sliding and at times launching off the little ledges on the Judges.

We made it out to the road by about 3:30. Fortunately Peter Rothermel was on his way down the road (he and a partner were up on the Saddle doing profiles) and gave two of us a lift back up to fetch the cars. We decided to go to Lefties in Qualicum for a bite to eat before returning to Vic. Now I haven't been on too many club trips so I can't tell whether it was this particular group or Island ACC climbers in general, or maybe I am just maturing (heaven forbid), but we got into some deep philosophical discussions about the state of the world on the way home. This struck me because on most of my climbing trips, many of which have been in the Rockies and the interior, the conversation usually boils down to beer and women. This could make for some interesting research. Looking forward to the next outing.

Participants: Russ Moir, Rick Johnson, Mike Morley, Stacey Dewhurst and Evan Loveless

MT. CAIN, A SPECIAL SKI COMMUNITY

Judith Holm

March 21-23

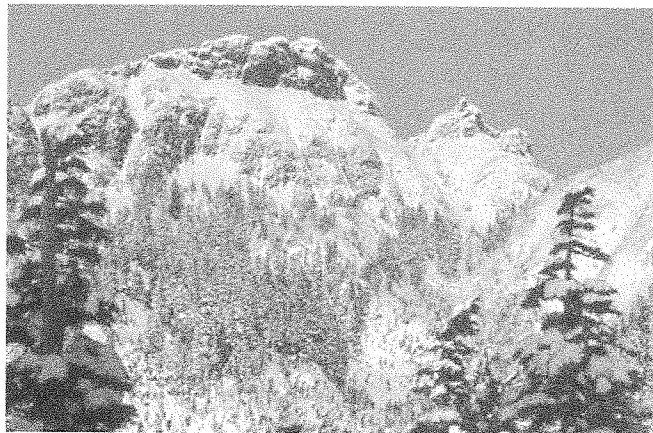
It was in the time of the terrible war in Iraq, that we fled the media's bombardment of dreadful troubles largely beyond our control, and drove north to ski at Mt. Cain.

I'll speak quietly, lest I disturb what we found:

Peace...honesty...amazing hospitality...a community of hard-working volunteers enjoying pulling together and successfully operating a fine ski hill...lots of fresh powder...an avi hazard this weekend making it impractical to climb Hapush, Abel or Cain...people making happy memories...being included in the warmth of a charming musical evening, where the mike stand was made with three unmatched ski poles duct-taped together.

I felt a spirit at Mt. Cain kindred to the sparkle of fun we share in the mountains on VI Section climbs together. This energy is rare, worthy of our taking care when we go there.

Participants: Catrin Brown, Claire Ebendinger, Christine Fordham, Rob Heron, Greg Killops, Russ Moir, Tim Strange, Viggo Holm, Judith Holm and Charles Turner (co-leaders)



Mt Hapush & Hapush Needle from West Bowl of Mt. Cain.
Photo: S. Briggs

ADDER PEAK

Sandy Briggs

March 23 and August 17

Adder Peak, like almost every other peak except perhaps Colonel Foster, can be climbed easily from high logging roads, in this case in the upper Nahmint River Valley, or at least that is what I am led to believe by my friends in Port Alberni. It turns out, though, that even if one can find these legendary roads one finds them dug up with cross-ditches that would do passing well as tank traps. For this reason, and because of the lingering notion that a bit of bushwhacking is no bad thing, I have a tradition of attempting the Highway 4 peaks from what may reasonably be referred to as their front sides.

My ACC scheduled ski trip in March was destined to fail. I know the size of these mountains. I know the forests. Yet I went ahead and scheduled it as a day-trip anyway. In retrospect I really think we'd have had a chance if we had driven the day before and camped part way up, say at the top of the logging road. With a bit of help from Peter's local knowledge we left the highway at Sutton Pass and found a relatively new set of switchbacks leading to about 770 m on the north ridge of our objective. Attempting to avoid going over the unnecessary bump we tended right (west) to traverse slopes toward a pass at GR315592. The snow cover was not too deep, so that travel was a little tricky. A few members of the party decided to turn back early and four of us pressed on to gain a 1240 m side peak at GR314585 where we enjoyed the view of very wintry-looking and beautifully sun-gilded Mts. Klitsa and Nahmint, among others.

Well, that continued my near-perfect record of not having succeeded on a Highway 4 peak on the first attempt. Seeking a key to future success I consulted the new Island Alpine guidebook and found that "The Louise Geotting Lake Trail is another good way to access Adder peak." Perfect!

So it was that Don Berryman and I set off early on July 17th on a, ahemm, day-trip to climb Adder using this trail as our approach. A light rain fell for exactly five minutes

sixteen seconds just as we were passing the end of Sproat Lake in the car. Soon thereafter we parked on the Marion creek main and set off hiking up the disused spur road MC40.

Now it turns out, as we were later to discover, that the Louise Geotting Lake trail does actually exist – or at least it did on July 17th – but the finding of its beginning proved impossible for us. Instead we scrambled over the gravel ridges at the end of the logging road, growled quietly, and began to engage the vegetation. Remember that short rain-shower? It had been just enough to place several drops of water on every leaf and frond in the entire salad from road to tree-line. We got soaked.

We did, however, stumble upon the famous trail somewhere up in the forest. It was very trail-like – more or less – and flagged. I need to tell you that there was a great deal of other flagging there too, in several colours. If the scribblings are to be believed it would seem that this area, almost to the bluff band below the lake, is to be logged very soon. Some of the flagging purported to mark a centre-of-road line. It would be the steepest road I ever saw if it were to be built (and if I were to see it).

Once on the trail we made good progress to the lake and even had an easy time crossing its drought-diminished



Don Berryman on the summit of Adder Peak

Photo: S. Briggs

outlet stream. The forest slope was open and friendly at first as we hiked upward and left (west) to avoid bluffs seen higher up. Later the terrain steepened, leading us, after a couple of easy Tarzan moves, into the beginnings of the alpine meadows. These were at first seriously vegetated and wet, but later became only steep, rocky and wet. In fact there were many patches of beautiful flowers.

Eventually we saw a small antenna-like object and assumed that we would soon be on the summit. Upon reaching this odd and apparently defunct box-on-a stick we were a teensy bit discouraged to discover that the true high point was yet several bumps off to the east. We duly made our way at last to the summit for a long rest, a view frequently interrupted by passing clouds, and a growing appreciation

of the lovely open ridge that leads up from the Nahmint Valley. The ascent had taken five and three-quarter hours. In the vicinity of the summit we saw three ptarmigan. Our attempt to find a better way to deal with the seriously overgrown clear-cut on our descent was not fully successful. It is possible that recent or impending logging will improve this access, but about its July 17th condition one can only say that the subtle charms of this approach will be appreciated only by a true connoisseur. But since we are such connoisseurs we drove home after our 11-hour day-trip with a fine sense of satisfaction.

Participants: (March 23rd), Sandy Briggs, Hinrich Schaefer, Peter Roethermel, Tak Ogasawara, Don Cameron, Jules Thomson, Selena Swets, John Young. (July 17th), Sandy Briggs & Don Berryman.

MT. HALL

Chris Wille
May 18

Mt. Hall; "No recorded ascents". That statement in Bruce Fairley's guidebook to climbing and hiking in Southwestern British Columbia had caught and held the attention of our climbing team for many years. Mt. Hall had been on our "peaks to climb" list for a long time. The fact was, however, that there were just so many peaks to climb in the area, and most were more accessible. Our fleeting chance at fame at claiming the first ascent was thwarted last year by a bridge construction job on the Toquart Bay access road, which shut off all access into the Mt. Hall area, much to our dismay. We were pleased to read that Sandy Briggs and his companions climbed Mt. Hall in June 2002. We used his route description as printed in the Alpine Club Bushwhacker Annual to aid in our ascent in May.

In traditional "A Team" fashion, we left Victoria at 4 am for the long four-hour journey to the start of the route. The drive in on the Toquart Main road basically makes a huge U turn (in relation to Highway 4) and travels up the southern side of the MacKenzie Range. It seemed weird to see the profile of these peaks from this new angle. The access to Mt. Hall basically goes past Toquart Bay, along Toquart Main line, past big & little Toquart Lake and along the pristine looking Toquart River. The road gets quite rough near the end (4x4 only), with several 'truck eating' swales to be negotiated (similar to Marion Main). We drove until the road along the river ended, and an unmarked logging spur road led off to the right (north).

At this point you will see large, distinctive hill directly in front of you. This hill is devoid of any vegetation, and is hard to miss. We parked at the base of the steep, decommissioned spur road, strapped on our packs, and set off. It was our hope that this road would provide us with the best access to Mt. Hall. I say 'hoped' because you could not see Mt. Hall from this valley.

We followed this road to the end, and then made our way up through pleasant old growth forest on the left side of a substantial creek that drained the slopes high above. Within an hour from the end of the road we emerged into a huge old heli-logging site. (What a contrast to the old growth forest!) The northwest ridge of Mt Hall loomed impressively into view. Our route took us to the notch in the ridge just above the highest point of the heli-logging operation. We traversed this ridge, and dropped down into the main northern snowfields that extend all the way up to the summit, with impressive jagged rock rampart ridges on each side. This was the large snowfield that stands out so prominently when you look at Mt. Hall from Triple Peak. It felt great to finally actually be there! Although there had been a recent snowfall, the snow conditions were good. Our 4-man team was in sync, and we enjoyed a good climb to the summit, carefully avoiding the heavily corniced areas near the top. The deep snow obscured the summit tops, so it wasn't readily apparent which snow-covered spire was the actual high point. We climbed several high points, and soon came across Sandy Briggs & company summit

notes from the year before. It was hard to believe that this was only the second *recorded* ascent of this awesome peak, although I can't help but think that one or more of the fallers or timber cruisers had climbed the peak during the height of the logging activity in the area. Luckily it was a clear day, so we feasted on the outstanding views of Barkley Sound, the Broken Islands, Effingham inlet, and the summits of 5040, Triple, and Canoe peaks. I always find it so interesting to see the new and different views of Vancouver Island from a fresh new perspective. That's what it's all about, and we are blessed to have so many peaks to climb! Our team retraced our route on the descent, duly making note of several other peaks to climb in this area, and then settled in for the long drive back to Victoria.

Participants: Frank Wille, his son Jordan, Leo Gillespie and Chris Wille.



Chris Wille on top of Mt Hall

Photo: Frank Wille

MT HALL – AGAIN

Randy Church

May 24-25, 2003

I first heard of the proposed May 2003 Mt Hall hike from my friend Barb Baker while we were on a Mt McQuillan hike. She said that Russ Moir and 3 others had climbed it for the first time in 2002 and that he was going to lead another group in this year. She had been planning to go but had to attend a friend's wedding back east and offered me her spot.

Nine of us met at Peter Rothermel's house in Qualicum on Saturday afternoon (May 24th), left in 2 vehicles; had a pub dinner in Port Alberni and drove for about 1 hour through some heavy rain to the Toquart Bay turnoff at Kennedy Lake. It's about a ½ hour drive along this gravel road to Toquart Bay and our destination was about another hour's drive from here. On the way we passed Little Toquart Lake and Toquart Lake, took the right fork and drove until we reached the first stream crossing where the bridge had been removed. The last mile of road was fairly rough with a number of water bars.

We camped beside the vehicles that night and after a quick breakfast started the hike at 6:00 am with a short walk down to the first creek crossing.

The first portion of the hike is along a 2 mile stretch of deactivated logging road where 3 bridges over creek crossings have been removed. The first creek was swollen with the recent heavy rains and a misstep in wading across could see you swept over a noisy 10 ft waterfall into a deep steep sided pool with no way out but to swim downstream. We elected to straddle a log that spanned the creek and hump our way across its 50 ft length (about 15 ft above the creek).

The second crossing was not as dramatic but the creek was wider, knee deep and cold. The 3rd crossing was a shot wade.

It is interesting to note that 1 month later when I went across again on the Toquart Mt. hike that the creeks were not an obstacle and old runners were not needed for crossing.

At the end of the road is a clearcut. We crossed it in a north-east direction, over a creek and then started a 2-3 hour bushwack staying on the south side of the creek (note: I found the route taken 1 month later on the Toquart hike (see Quagger's report) to be less strenuous

and with fewer obstacles).

We came out of the trees onto a dry creekbed at the bottom of a bowl between Mt. Hall and Toquart Mt. The clouds were filling up the end of the valley as we kicked steps up old avalanche snow on the north face of Hall and halfway up a light rain started. The main peak was bare and about 20 ft above the surrounding snow and crowded with 9 soggy hikers and thick cloud. Peter Rothermel left a new register at the top, replacing the zip lock bag from the previous year. 2 hikers from Victoria had been up the week before and were the first to sign in for 2003. I remember thinking at the time that there was a lot of time and effort

expended to get to the top of a 4700 ft mountain.

The snow was soft on the trip down and the bushwack wet and thick and as we were already wet, the final creek crossings were an issue.

The hike was 12 hours round trip and while a view from the top would have been nice, the trip was challenging, the area rugged and beautiful and the group interesting and committed.

Participants: Jules Thomson, Tony Vaughn, Dale Nicoll, Christine Fordham, Charles Turner, Peter Rothermel, Tom Carter, Russ Moir, Randy Church and Matt Pope.

WINNING BONANZA

Mary Ann Matous

June 28-29

I set out with Tak Ogasawara and Doug Goodman to climb Bonanza Peak, the highest summit in the Bonanza Range on northern Vancouver Island. We met in Woss and from there drove across the highway and up logging roads till we could go no further, catching glimpses along the way of the Peak, its massive black rock turret top stark against clear blue sky. Parking by the clear cut remains of a patch of forest, we loaded up and set off up the 'hill' for the shoulder on the eastern slope of Mt. Ashwood. This 'up the hill' meant a steep climb through fairly thick blueberry undergrowth which came in handy as a means of pulling myself along. Once on the shoulder (beautiful rolling ground, golden in the sunlight, a stream running under patches of snow) we set up camp from whence, early the next morning, we set out for the top of Bonanza. As both Tak, the trip leader, and Doug are very experienced climbers, it was they who determined the route while I, a novice, followed. Skirting Mt. Ashwood, making our way over snow slopes and through heavy brush, crossing a gully, up onto a steep heather slope (again, handy for pulling

oneself along) we ascended the south ridge of the mountain, stopping for lunch 'on the rocks' once we had left vegetation behind.

From there it was a steep climb, first up a (perhaps) 10 m face for which we roped up behind Doug, then a scramble to the top. By this time, clouds and cold had rolled in so after taking a few pictures we headed back to camp, an undertaking at times almost as arduous as heading for the top. The trees and undergrowth were so thick that at times we roped up so as not to lose each other and were actually walking on tangles of branches rather than the ground. Overnight, rain and wind set in and we set off the next morning into it, down through the steep undergrowth again to the cars and into Woss to the general store/restaurant for burgers and beer (or, in my case, hot chocolate), ending a wonderful, challenging weekend.

Participants: Tak Ogasawara, Doug Goodman and Mary Ann Matous

REDWALL—THE MACKENZIES

Jules Thomson

June 26, 27

Torge and I set off from Victoria, 5:30 am, Saturday morning, to meet Christine Fordham at the Whiskey Creek stop on the way to Port Alberni. Approximately 75 km past Port Alberni, past Cat's Ears creek, adjacent to Kennedy Lake, we turned off the highway onto the access road [barely discernable] for the route to the MacKenzies. After the initial false start of missing the turn-off, on the trail to the creek crossing we thought that there might be a new access so we backtracked to the highway to check our distances. But I was right initially, so we backtracked again. On our second attempt to find the creek, Torge, "thank the goddess," noticed a left turn in the trail that led us to the creek crossing. We trudged up and up the steep, steep trail to the alpine where we found lovely alpine flowers and water trickling off the rocks to refill our water supply. The wild flowers were prolific with *Dicentra formosa*, yellow violets, pink & white heather, alpine valleys full of valerian & yellow shastas, harebells, phlox, columbine, paintbrush & *Lilium columbii* with purple penstemon for a dash of extra colour. Climbing on we reached the col after a 6-hour grunt to set up our tents on the heather, very comfy. We rested a bit, and then Torge & Christine scrambled up towards Mt. MacKenzie while I scrambled to the west to photograph an incredible sunset & a ptarmigan against the evening sky.

Early Sunday, 5:30 am, we headed out for Redwall. I tried the 1st rock pitch without rope but I didn't feel comfortable even with my rock shoes so I descended, roped up, and off I went. I set up an anchor and belayed the other two up to me, then onto another short pitch to the crux of the climb that has some exposure and a bit of a gap to reach over. I had Torge reach up and place one piece of pro for me [he being slightly taller], then off I went with one toe perched on a pinnacle of rock while I lunged over "space" to pull myself up, grunting all the way. Torge's very polite positive words of encouragement at this point were very much appreciated. I proceeded up the side of Redwall on loose rotten rock to set up another anchor to belay the other two. After summit photos on a beautiful sunny clear day, we rappelled down from below the summit, an easy rap with 2 ropes tied together that got us down to the "crux" station. We proceeded to down-climb, then set up another rappel to descend to where we had left our mountaineering



Torge raps off Redwall

Photo: Jules Thomson

boots. We rappelled, again, this time off a tree [me first, of course, the leader always gets to go first over the unknown] over a notch in the rock with a wonderful display of wild flowers [a bonus for the amateur botanist].

We were back to base camp in 6 hrs and down to the car in 3 hrs. Torge and I washed our faces in the creek, just before the vehicle, enjoying the water that was so cool and refreshing after a long hot day. Back to the car by 4:00 pm and home by 9:00 pm [traffic jam for 45 min. on the Malahat because of road work!]. Great climb topped off with Christine's husband buzzing us with his homemade plane. Two negatives for this trip are the steep grunt for access and the clouds of mosquitoes that had a particular affinity for Torge which is probably why he bundled up in every piece of clothing that he had. I can only assume that there are no mosquitoes in Germany!?

Participants: Jules [Julie] Thomson (leader), Christine Fordham & Torge Schuemann

MT TOQUART (EAST RIDGE)

Quagger (Craig Wagnell)

June 21

This mountain had grabbed my attention a number of years back due to the light coloured rock which made up most of the mountain. The rock looked a lot like Quatsino Limestone from a distance, so I, being the cave nut I am, have always wanted to check it out. I was surprised to see how easy it was to gain access to the summit from the same alpine valley I just used to solo up Mt Hall a few weeks earlier. Before that I had plans to do a long and steep ridge walk over from Triple Peak to reach the summit. So, the next time the weather system looked like it was going to clear up for a few days I made plans with another cave nut Barry Lewis and a hiking friend Randy Church, who was also the person that pointed me in the right direction.

June 21st was the date and the weather man was calling for sunny and hot. The plan was to meet at the West Bay Hotel at 4:30 am and Randy would follow Barry and me to the trailhead, which was still over a 2 hr drive away. The hike up the logging road was a pleasure as the coastal fog had rolled in. Unfortunately it started to dissipate by the road's end and then the heat started to set in. My last trip in the area, I spent some time and pioneered a route. Starting at the far end of the road, keep an eye out for a large log with the bark off, walk over it and head into the slash trying at all times to stay on the crest of the small ridge which heads towards a large white boulder just on the inside of the timber. Then start off by hiking in semi-open forest on the left side of the creek for 300 m, ford the creek when the cliff on your left forces you to cross, which is just below a set of small waterfalls. Hike 50 m up into timber, walk parallel to the creek until you come across a small stream coming in on the right. Walk up the middle

of the creek for 75 m (slippery rock) and look for a small rock cairn, turn left here and head up the dry creek bed which will take you all the way up to the alpine. From the alpine, head left over towards the large rock slide that comes down from the summit of Mt. Toquart and follow around the base slowly gaining elevation while heading towards the middle of the south slope which separates the two peaks. Hike straight up the slope towards the rock bluffs and climb the steep gully to the left into the trees, pull yourself up through the bush for about 30 m. Once on top of the rock bluff look for a small draw which takes you most of the way up to the Col, beware of a lot of loose rocks. To reach the summit stay on the East Ridge climbing over small boulders up through small trees and hanging off Juniper bushes. The summit was large enough for all of us to enjoy a nice lunch in the hills. We descended the same way we came up, but I noticed one can easily down climb the west ridge without ropes and descend on the west side of the rock slide for a faster descent.

The trip was safe and successful. The only downfall about the trip was that the light-coloured rock I mentioned earlier was not Limestone, so caves were not to be found. "Bummer"!

How to get there? Leaving from Port Alberni, drive West on Hwy #4 towards the West Coast, turn left onto Toquart Bay "Salmon Beach" logging main, roughly 80 km from PA. Drive on gravel for 16 km before reaching Toquart Bay Recreational Area, then follow the "km markers" on the roadside from TO1 all the way to TO19. After that you will be stopped by large logs across the road due to bridge removal. Park Here.

Participants: Craig Wagnell, Randy Church, Barry Lewis



MOUNTAIN ACTIVITY WINNER
SELENA SWETS ON BLACK ORPHEUS, RED ROCKS
PHOTO: MARCELO LACA

SEPTIMUS AND BIG INTERIOR

Matt Pope

June 27-29

On the Canada Day long weekend of 2002, I sat on the shore of Love Lake gazing up at Mt. Septimus and Mt. Rosseau, and my stomach churned at the thought of climbing those jagged peaks. Thus the seed was sown, and over the next few months my interest in mountaineering grew. With the encouragement of Sandy Briggs, I joined the ACC, and began to build up some experience and confidence. To my delight, when I received the summer trip schedule, I saw that Selena planned to lead a trip up Mt. Septimus. Immediately, I phoned her and said, "Sign me up!" And so it happened that after a long drive from Victoria, I found myself setting up camp at the Price Creek trailhead on a Friday evening.

In the morning, under clear skies, we broke camp and drove a short distance to the Bedwell Lake Trail, and began the hike up to the alpine. We had planned on camping at Cream Lake Saturday night and climbing Mt. Septimus on Sunday, but as we passed Bedwell Lake, we started to reconsider our plans. The weather forecast said that things would deteriorate on Sunday, and we realised that we were going to have lots of daylight left when we reached Cream Lake that afternoon.

At Bedwell Lake, we turned onto the Cream Lake Trail and continued to climb. We stopped for a rest above Bedwell Lake, and considered our options. Looking across the lake at Mt. Tom Taylor and Big Interior Mountain, we consulted our map and discussed possible routes up each. Eventually, we decided that instead of camping at Cream Lake and climbing Septimus the next day, we would pitch our tents at Little Jim Lake, climb Septimus that afternoon, and then head over to Big Interior the next morning.

We arrived at Little Jimmy shortly after noon, set up camp, and then relaxed until about 2:00 pm when we headed on with lighter packs towards Cream Lake and Mt. Septimus beyond. With high spirits, we started up Septimus' NW snow basin, and into the left leg of the so-called X Gully. The sun beat down on our backs and reflected off the snow all around us, turning the gully into a solar oven.

As we ascended, the snow steepened, and when we reached the crotch of the X, we stopped to strap on our crampons. Across the basin, we could see two climbers ascending Septimus' west shoulder. They were clearly having trouble route-finding, and we watched them walk back and forth across the slope, trying to decide what to do. From our

vantage point, we could judge the merits of each route, but we were too far away to communicate. Eventually, one of them decided to retreat, and we watched as he did a standing glissade directly towards the only visible crevasse on the entire slope. Fortunately, he saw it in time and changed his course.

There was nothing we could do for the other climbers, so after snapping a few pictures, we climbed on up the right arm of the X Gully. The snow continued to steepen and the gully narrowed until we reached the bergschrund near the top. Snow bridged the gap on both sides of the gully, and Marcelo led across the left bridge, but when I followed, my foot went right through the snow and into air beyond. I stopped and peered into the darkness below. It didn't look particularly deep, but it was farther than I wanted to fall, so I traversed to the thicker bridge on the right.

From the bergschrund it was a short climb to the narrow col at the top of the gully, and from the col we descended steep snow to the North Glacier. Russ led us up the glacier past one or two open crevasses to the north side of the summit block. Leaving our crampons above an exposed ledge, we scrambled up fourth class rock with loose sections, and reached the summit at about 7:00 pm.

We revelled in the beauty of the landscape; across the Drinkwater Valley, Della Falls cascaded down between Nine Peaks and Big Interior Mountain, and to the northwest a sea of peaks stretched as far as we could see. To the south, seven hundred metres below us, lay the frozen waters of Love Lake, where I had sat staring upwards almost exactly one year before. After signing the summit register and taking numerous pictures, we retraced our steps down the mountain. At the bottom of the X Gully, we took advantage of the sloping snow basin and slid down towards Cream Lake.

The sun was setting, and the peaks were bathed in alpenglow as we hurried back to camp. We arrived at the tents at about 10:00 pm and in the gathering darkness we prepared food before crawling into our sleeping bags for some much-needed rest.

Sunday morning greeted us with clear skies, so we laced up our boots and, after crossing the stream at the outlet of Little Jim Lake, we scrambled up and over the rounded ridge that lay between us and Big Interior Mountain. This was bushy and steep in places, but eventually we made our



Selena, Matt, Russ and John on route to Big Interior.

Photo: Marcelo Laca

way to the bottom of Big Interior's basin, where we found some tents had been pitched in an idyllic camp site. Looking up the mountain, we could see some climbers making their way towards the summit. After crossing a snow bridge over a swift stream of melt water, we began the hike up the giant basin. Six hundred vertical metres of moderately sloped snow later, we reached the summit ridge, and then it was only a short scramble up loose rock to the summit. The climbers ahead of us had continued on over the summit of Big Interior Mountain towards Nine Peaks, and I longed to follow in their footsteps.

Alto cumulus clouds were gathering overhead, but they made the views even more spectacular, adding depth to the sky and shadows to the landscape. With a last look at

Nine Peaks, we turned back towards camp. The descent of Big Interior was fast, with long standing glissades, and soon we were back at our tents. Hiking back to the cars, the trail seemed much longer than I remembered. I attribute that to my excitement on the hike in, and my tired legs on the hike out.

A black bear greeted us as we arrived at the parking lot, and then coolly walked off into the bush. Clouds had continued to gather, and the drive home was punctuated by downpours and fork lightning. As sad as I was to be leaving the mountains, I was glad to be warm and dry in Russ' car.

Participants: Selena Swets, Russ Moir, Marcelo Laca, John Young and Matt Pope

MT. ABEL – TRYING TO PLEASE MOM...

Sasha Kubicek

June 29

After celebrating my Dad's Birthday with my family on Mt. Cain, the pressure was on me to have a good day planned for Sunday. My Mom has a 'No-bush-trail only policy', so after enjoying the ski run hiking on Mt. Cain and a cabin the day before, anything bushier was going to put my name in the bad books.

Mt. Abel I thought was my best bet for an 'enjoyAbel' outing; the map showed lots of open alpine, logging roads ran high, what more could I ask for? We woke up early Sunday morning and started our way down the Ski Hill road. A spectacular sunrise on the Haite Range greeted us. We wound our way down the road and kept our eyes open for the left turn we had to make on Abel Main. We drove up as far as the water bars allowed and geared up.



The Kubicek family on the summit of Mt Abel.

Photo; Sasha Kubicek

We could see Mt. Abel's summit and I couldn't wait to get into the alpine. I was happy to see that about half an hour of slash would lead to the old growth and then maybe an hour to the alpine. As we made our way up the road to the slash I prayed it wasn't too bad. With comments of

'Where is the trail?' and 'Are you sure you are in the right place?' coming from my Mom, I was relieved to see that the slash had minor debris and only fireweed to contend with. This was a highway in my books, but Mom wasn't impressed. I assured her the going would get better in the old growth.

When we reached the old growth my popularity with her did not improve. Being a south facing slope, the bush in the old growth was 'a factor' so for an hour I got the negative comments as we thrashed our way up, and then... heather meadows...and then the comments stopped. Half an hour more and we were on the great swooping alpine ridge that leads to Abel's summit. I was getting praise now on 'How

beautiful an area this is!' and 'All the bush was worth it!'. I was a happy camper. Alpine flowers added to the spectacular views of the surrounding peaks as we made our way up. At the summit we had a spectacular 360 degree view. Mt. Cain and the Mt. Cain Ski area, Mt. Waddington and the coast mountains, Mt. Schoen and surrounding peaks, Strathcona in the distance and the mighty Haite Range. We soaked in the views and had lunch. The summit cairn had no summit register but needed some repair so we touched it up. Weather was moving in on the horizon so we started back. Ready for comments from Mom when we got back in the bush but to my surprise none came. The alpine made too good an impression on her. Back at the car,

the clouds were rolling in thick. As we drove into the Campbell River, the rain had started. What timing! What a great weekend!

Participants: Sasha Kubicek, Kai Kubicek, Frank Kubicek, Kathy Kubicek

MOUNT PEEL

Lindsay Elms

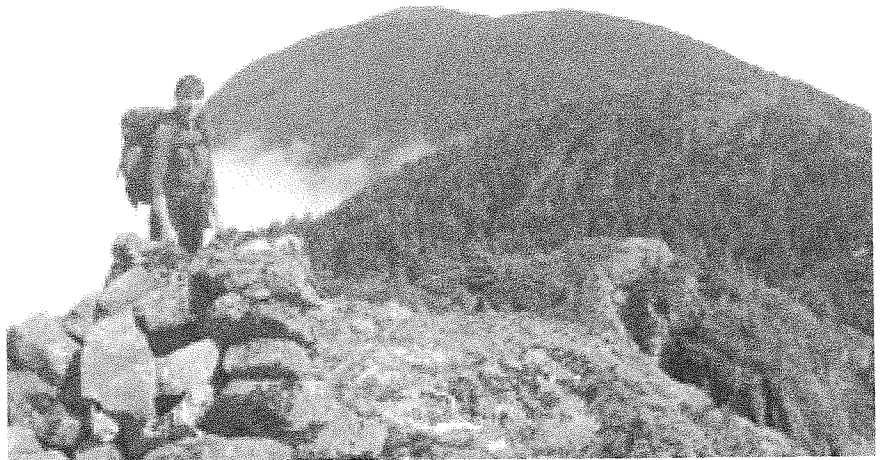
July 6

The weather when we arrived at Naka Creek wasn't looking all that promising. However, as I've learned over the years, the weather can change in a matter of hours on the island. We spent Saturday hiking up the beach watching the Orcas, climbing on some larger beach boulders and hoping for the low clouds to lift. Sunday morning, although it still was low visibility, we decided to head up to the back of Naka Creek and have a go at Mount Peel. From the campsite we drove up the South Main and then turned onto the S100 and continued almost to the end of the spur. The cross ditches were harsh on the trailer hitch unit on the back of the vehicle and some steel was bent out of shape but then what did we have the 4x4 for! From where we parked we headed straight up the slopes to the saddle at the head of Schmidt Creek, which is the valley between Naka Creek and the Tsitika River (Robson Bight). The terrain was steep but not too thick with underbrush and it took the three of us an hour to get to the saddle. From there we turned east along the ridge and gradually ascended towards the South Summit of Mount Peel. Again the bush was easy and after another one hour and ten minutes we were on the South Summit (4,915 ft). The good news was we had broken through the clouds and there was clear blue sky above us. We pulled the map out and looked at the features and then looked at the actual terrain. There were three humps in between the south and the main summit over a distance of about three km as the crow flies. I made an estimate of how long I thought it would take us then put it to Grant and Val. Grant wasn't interested in going any further and was quite happy to stay where he was and enjoy the scenery and snooze. However, Val had the summit bug and wanted to go for it. We sorted the food and water leaving some for Grant and taking the rest with us.

At 11 am Val and I took off for the main summit. Initially the travel was easy but the further along the ridge we got the thicker the bush got. Time was ticking by and we weren't getting to the

summit in the time I anticipated. We looked along the ridge and saw that the summit was probably no more than fifteen minutes away so we decided that we couldn't go this far and miss the summit by such a short distance. After two hours and fifteen minutes from the South Summit we arrived at the main summit of Mount Peel (5,089 ft). The clouds had burned off and we could look down on Johnstone Strait and see the fishing boats catching their quota of salmon. We spent all of two minutes on top then turned around and headed back to Grant, arriving four hours after we had left him. Grant had had a pleasant afternoon but was glad to see us and was ready to head back down to the vehicle. The descent to the saddle was fast but from the saddle down to the logging road was slower. Grant was tired and being extra careful on the steep terrain: a radical change from Grant's normal behaviour. Maybe he knew that the mountains were not a place to act irresponsibly. We arrived back at the vehicle at 6:30 pm having had a full day in a part of the island I hadn't been to before. We knew that we would be back as there looked to be a beautiful ridge walk from the saddle along the ridge towards Mount Derby, another peak on my list of to do's.

Participants: Valerie O'Neill, Grant O'Neill (12) and Lindsay Elms



Valery O'Neill on the summit of Mt. Peel.

Photo: Lindsay Elms

STEAMBOAT MOUNTAIN – FLORA AND EXPLORA

Peter Rothermel

July 12- 13

Steamboat Mountain is the center piece of the Clayoquot Plateau Provincial Park, at 1484 m, and was named by Rick Eppler and company in the 80's, for its profile resembling a steamship. I'd been interested in Steamboat Mountain ever since I saw it's grey limestone massif through broken clouds from Pogo Peak. Rory had been up it the previous year, but not to the summit, so when he announced another planned trip, I said, "I'm in!"

We wanted to go up the mountain's south side, reported to be shorter than the normal "Caver's Route" on the mountain's north side. The person who first explored this route was Craig Wagnell, also known as Quag, from Port Alberni. He's well known for his ability to sniff out new cave systems and the speed he hikes at. The route is locally called Quagger's Route.

Most of this massif consists of karst formations, a type of water-eroded limestone that can form the most wild shapes, which have to be seen to be believed. For more information, look into Craig's web site, www.cave-men.com and follow the links to karst. So unique are the karst formations in BC, that they have special protection under the forest code. On Highway #4 past Sprout Lake and after Sutton Pass, just before Cat's Ears Creek, we crossed Kennedy River on an old logging road bridge. A short way along and past a large washout we went right up a spur as far as we could drive, then walked the road until its end.

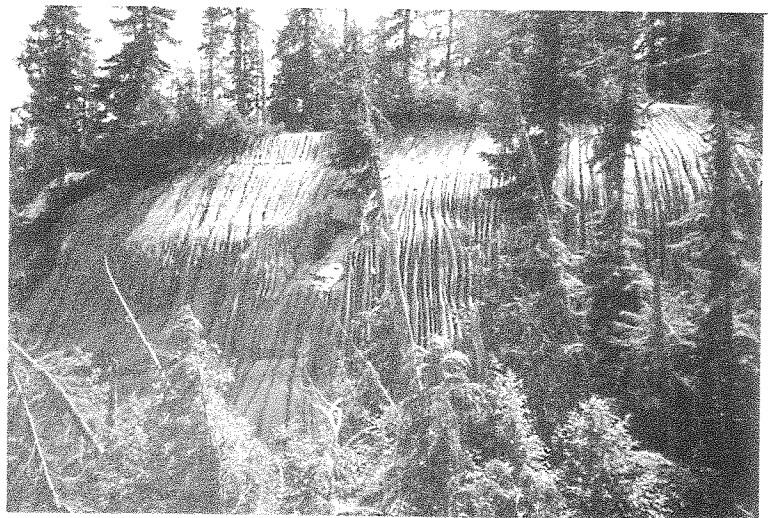
It was a sketchy start in the slash, but we soon gained a dry creek bed and followed it to the first growth. Here the trail is evident although in places it is obliterated by blow-downs. We continued through steep forest until we reached Jules Lake. It took us three hours hiking from the car to the lake. There, we took a lunch break, swam and slept for an hour. After our rest we crossed the lake's outfall and contoured around its east side to its north side, keeping high in the forest to avoid brushy areas and to get above some falls. Above the falls we dropped into the creek draining the gully we wanted to use to gain the alpine. Where we dropped down is marked by the prominent limestone feature across the creek, looking like mother nature had a fit and raked her nails down the wall. On first sight it looks as shocking and out of place as if a flying saucer landed there... or like some alien monster you'd expect to start

pulsating. This is just a taste of things to come.

We found traveling in the creek-bed preferable to the bush and with a bit of slippery scrambling and a couple of small waterfall ascents, we gained the snow. The right side of the gully is the kind of rock we're use to seeing, Vancouver Island Karmutzen choss. On the left is limestone with the wildest features of eroded runnels running down and angled ledge systems running across, which Salvador Dali would have been jealous of. At one place a creek emerged from the wall, running full tilt, dropping about 12 ft and disappeared back into the limestone.

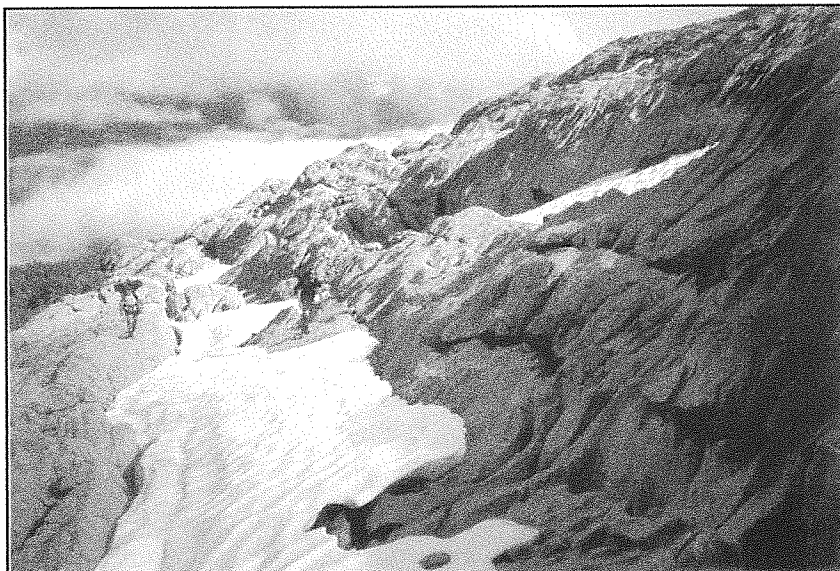
About three quarters of the way up the gully we decided the limestone was too inviting and 4th-classed up to the ridge. The stone is hard, has good tooth and holds aplenty, yet it's very gripped climbing. The stone has eroded into knife edges in places and one slip would mean a serious cut. I got a few minor cuts to my hands, but my boot soles held up surprisingly well. Gloves, long pants with a reinforced seat and maybe kneepads would be the outfit *de rigueur* while climbing the limestone.

Three hours from the lake, at the top of the gully, we made our camp where three ridges converge. Through the shifting clouds we would get cameo views of Klitsa to our northeast, Adder and 5040 to the east and Cat's Ears and Triple Peak to the southwest. The Mackenzie's and Maitland, to the south, were socked in. There's a host of different plants that crop up out of the limestone... yellow wall flowers, alpine willow, arctic willow and many that



Limestone formation on Steamboat Mtn.

Photo: Peter Rothermel



Limestone ridge on Steamboat Mtn

Photo: Peter Rothermel.

I'd never seen before.

The next morning it seemed to be clearing a bit, except for some lenticular looking clouds to our south, harbingers of bad weather soon to arrive. Up we went on a ridge of broken limestone, down into a dip and up the summit ridge. We went straight up for a bit more 4th class, although to the right (east) is easier going.

Camp to summit was about an hour and forty five minutes. Through scudding clouds we got glimpses of Pogo, Red Pillar and Nine Peaks to the northward and Clayoquot Sound to the southwest. Below us on the summit's west side were two lakes and limestone ridges radiating away

from them. We couldn't see the highway from the main summit, therefore one probably can't see the summit from the highway. As the weather was starting to deteriorate we decided to pack up and leave when we got back to camp.

Instead of going back down the ridge and down climbing all the sharp stuff, we went down the gully on snow. I was a bit worried about the unknown runout below and Ron and I heel-stepped our way down, while Rory and Jerry who are confident skiers, glissaded down. Off the snow, we traversed higher on the limestone along a series of ledges as to avoid the falls and down climbed on fluted, razor sharp formations back down to the creek bed. Once out of the creek and into the forest,

it started to drizzle... past the lake, the rain came. The slog through the steep forest descent was wet and slippery. Down in the dry creek bed we got mixed up a bit and maybe exited a bit too soon and found ourselves involved in a class B-4 bushwhack through some second growth and slash. This beginning of the route isn't marked very well, on purpose, so as to discourage looky-lou's. Above this, the route's fairly well marked.

Steamboat is a place worth going back to for further flora and explora. There are caves and sinkholes to be found and maybe even a new type of plant life.

Participants: Rory Ford, Jerry Nelson, Ron Lepine and Peter Rothermel.

EL PIVETO DAY TRIP

Chris Wille

July 27

Inspired by Lindsay Elm's story of a 16-hour 'day trip' to El Piveto Mountain in the 2001 issue of the *Bushwhacker*, my brother Frank and I decided to "give it a go" in 2003. Patiently, we waited for a span of good weather that coincided with a Sunday, (our only day off). The weather seems to get better towards the end of July, and this year was no exception. We traveled north up the Island Highway after work on Saturday. Each of us was full of high hopes and great anticipation of seeing some new country and (hopefully) gaining a new (to us) summit. We managed to enjoy a swim in Drum Lake as the sun set. The stars were magnificent I noted as we gratefully

grabbed a few hours sleep. Our 'campsite' was the gravel parking lot at the beginning of the Elk River Trail (ERT). The ERT is an 11-km long trail that takes hikers and climbers on a remarkable journey from a paved highway on up the Elk River, terminating in some of the highest and most impressive peaks in Strathcona Park. A 2:30 am start was in order, so as to allow sufficient time to get to the El Piveto's summit and return to Victoria that same day. The trail was illuminated by our headlamps as we ticked by the kms, each of us lost in a sea of our own thoughts. The early morning sunlight warmed and highlighted the summits high above us in the upper Elk

River Valley. We turned left at Elk River pass, and were soon feasting our eyes on some of the best scenery in Strathcona Park. The northern slopes of the Golden Hinde and the Behinde were in full view, providing an awesome spectacle. A beautiful ridge runs up the Southern side of Rambler Peak from Elk River pass. We used this ridge to skirt around the main summit of Rambler Peak. At the crest of this ridge, our goal was now visible.

El Piveto looked great from a distance, but we couldn't help but wonder how we were going to negotiate its steep upper snowfields clad only in runners, and no ice axes. "No worries," I said, "we'll deal with it when we get there." Descending off the southeastern flank of Rambler Peak in a careful side contour of some steep heather slopes brought us to the delightful pass between Rambler Peak and Mt. Cervus. Now we could see Cervus Lake and the pristine, untouched Cervus Valley far below us. There are no shortcuts on this route. To get to the summit of El Piveto, you have to do it the old-fashioned way. That is, through 'sweat equity.' Up and over Mt. Cervus we went, spending a few minutes at its summit. Then we had to lose a large amount of altitude to gain the pass between Mt. Cervus and El Piveto. Finally, at ~10:45 am, we were actually expending energy climbing the mountain we had come to climb. It felt good. Inspired by the warm summer sun and the ever-present, awe-inspiring scenery, we made our bid for the summit. Fortunately, we were able to bypass the dreaded snowfields and scramble up El Piveto's west face.

Noon - we're on the summit - high fives all around! What a view! We can't decide which way to look. The Coast Range, Mt. Waddington, Mt. Filberg, Cobb *et al.* to the east, Rambler Peak, Foster, a gollum-like creature scurrying up the snowfield, and all to the west. The impressive northern snowfields of the Golden Hinde and Mt. Mariner to the southwest. Like spokes on a wheel, several rivers



Frank Wille on the summit of El Piveto looking SE to the Golden Hinde. Photo: Chris Wille

have their headwaters near El Piveto's under-rated summit. This is truly one of the most impressive views of any summit in Strathcona Park! We decided that El Piveto must be Spanish for 'beautiful mountain, with great views in the middle of Strathcona Park' because we are lame-asses who never listened in second period Spanish class back in high school. Frank and I were surprised to see how few entries there were in the summit register over the years. It's a bit of a job to get to El Piveto, but very well worth the effort. It was with great reluctance that we tore ourselves away from that most memorable summit, and headed down. Once off El Piveto, it's back up Mt. Cervus, then down that and back up the shoulder of Rambler. We enjoyed a long glissade down and around the base of Rambler, and then it was down to Elk River Bridge, which we reached by 6 pm. We washed up, had a break, fueled up, and the made a concerted effort to 'get out.' We cruised down the trail, maintained a workman-like pace, and arrived at the trailhead at 9 pm. We celebrated our adventure with a refreshing dip in Drum Lake. Back to work Monday morning, just like nothing happened, except there was a silly grin on our faces that you just couldn't wipe off. Special thanks to Lindsay Elms and his inspiring stories. If it weren't for him, we never would have partaken in this most awesome adventure.

Participants: Frank and Chris Wille

COMOX GLACIER/HARMSTON!!

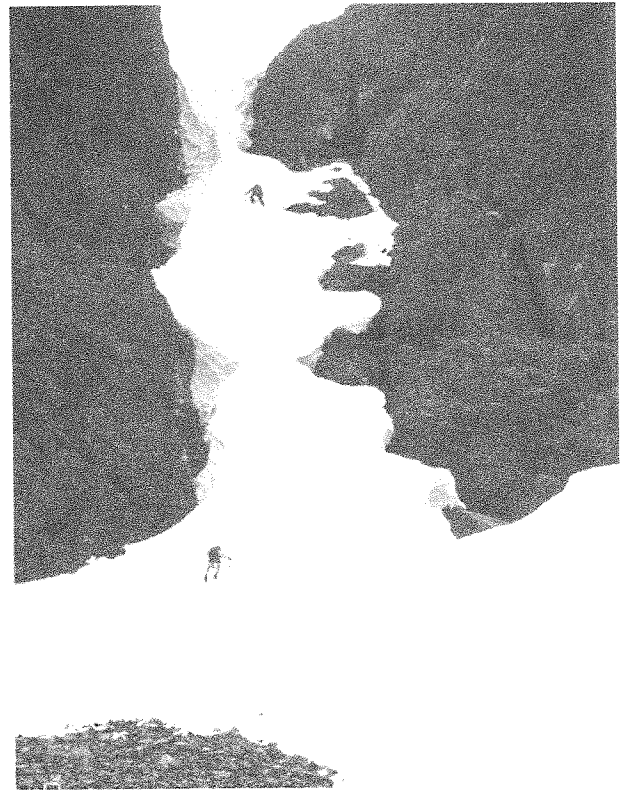
Jules [Julie] Thomson

August 1-3

What an adventure! With many car pool arrangements and changes, Ian [a 19-year old student] and I left Victoria, Friday night, to tent out in Peter's backyard in Qualicum. Actually, I believe Ian slept in the house but I enjoyed the night air in my tent. Early Saturday morning, 6:00-ish we left Peter's in a convoy to the trailhead for Comox Glacier.

Sylvia and I had decided to share a tent, so after much of the usual "how much do the poles weigh versus the fly?" and "how can I pack that in my pack?!", all 14 of us ventured out on our quest for Harmston, trudging up an old logging road, then to a narrow trail to cross a stream, our 1st water stop. We proceeded up a steep switch back through the forest, higher still to a lovely steep slope of hellebore, columbine and valerian, for another "break" just at the onset of the alpine meadows. We made our way along a series of ridges with alpine meadows, bubbling brooks, and a view of mountains and deep valleys on all sides. We rested again at "frog pond" where several locals had set up camp in the alpine meadows [and dozens and dozens of cairns which we discovered on our return trip]. Onward we trudged, scrambling up a rocky prominence and down the other side to a refreshing creek. From there we trudged up rock again with our heavy packs, to the snow of the Comox Glacier where we camped on some rocky outcrops, for a base camp, beside little ponds and trickling streams flowing off the glacier. That evening about 8 of us hiked over the snow to the summit of Comox glacier, which is the rocky point in a sea of snow. We were blessed with an incredible view of the sunset after a day of heat and sunshine.

Next morning at 4:11 am Sylvia and I did our best to ignore the wake-up call but finally succumbed, crawled out of our bags and cooked breakfast of tea/coffee/ oatmeal, whatever. Of course, Mike Hubbard had his usual 4-course meal. We headed across the glacier and climbed a rocky hill, down the other side, across more snow and then up a ridge, eventually up another steep hill then over to Argus. We made our way carefully up a steep snow gully and onto loose rock to summit Argus. We down climbed loose class 4 rock [where we did our best to bean Mike Hubbard, but he is so resilient] and onto the Cliffe Glacier. Here we had to descend a steep snow slope and then traverse the side of the glacier to avoid roping up. Another "refresh" stop, the usual food and all-important water, dropped most of our

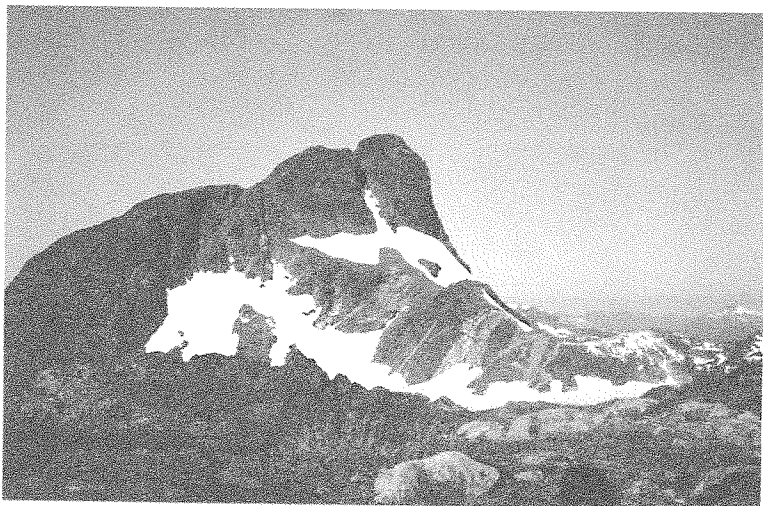


Argus Gully

Photo: Jules Thomson

weight, before a short haul up the loose, very rocky slope of Harmston with rocks crashing down on the team below. The lower group quickly donned helmets and achieved the summit with spectacular views of Mila Lake rimmed with ice. We marveled at another stunning day of cumulus clouds, pleasantly warm air temperatures and a view of mountains in every direction.

After a summit feast we picked our way carefully down Harmston, back across the Cliffe Glacier, up the steep snow slope, rock scrambling up to Argus, where we decided to belay from a moat to access the steep snow gully. This spot was a chilly bottleneck and Lisa entertained us with the difficulties of having a bathroom break in a brisk wind with an audience! Then we scrambled down again over another rocky bump, and across some snow and back up another steep slope. Here I saw a ptarmigan pair with chicks on the heather/rock-strewn slope. In this remote area we hiked past the Harry Winstone memorial [he had died on the Red pillar in the 60's]. Once again we were back on the Comox Glacier to our base camp to finish up our 15 hr. day [a mere, short, day trip for the Mundays] with a sip of whiskey, compliments of Peter.



Argus from Harmston.

Photo: Jules Thomson

penstemon, shasta, saxifrage, columbine, harebells, heather, pasque flowers, phlox, moss campion were all ablaze. Some hard-core members of our group braved the rough waters of Comox Lake to end our 3 days with a very cool dip! Ian and I opted out of a swim, Ian mumbling something about not bringing along a bathing suit—bathing suit???? We did stop at the farmers' market, south of Duncan, to stock up on fresh fruit and their delicious blackberry yogurt cones. Many thanks to Tom Carter, our intrepid leader, who nimbly ran [almost] all the way out to the vehicles to catch his ferry to Lasqueti Island.

Participants: Tom Carter (leader), Jules Thomson, Ian Garber, Peter Rothermel, Denise Hook, Doug Hurrell, George Urban, Lisa McBain [a last minute

add-on—she did quite well with her bicycle helmet and always out in front], Dale Nicoll, Mike Hubbard, Graham Bennett, Graham Maddocks, Sylvia Moser, and John Young.

On our third day we departed our camp around 8:20 am and made our way back down the steep slopes, some rock scrambling, through the alpine meadows and deep forests to our vehicles in about 5 ½ hrs. The wild flowers of

MT ALBERT EDWARD— MY FIRST THREE DAYER

Mica Stonely

July 16–18

One day when I brought up the subject of different hikes and climbs, I told my mom I wanted to go on a long but easy hike. She brought up a mountain called Mt. Albert Edward. We decided that we would go on that hike.

So on the day of the hike we woke up really early and got ready. My mom said that first we would go to Circlet Lake camp and then the second day we would go to the summit of Mt. Albert Edward. But it was the first day still. By the time we got to Circlet Lake campsite I was sure pooped.

The next morning we all woke up early, we got some water from the lake and we would warm it with my mom's pocket rocket. We would put some powdered porridge in the warm water and that would be our breakfast. I didn't really like it but it was all we had so I had to eat it, though the whisky jacks did help me eat it. It's our summit day – today I'm excited. On our way up we had to take some clothes off it was pretty hot. My Camelback helped a bit. When we got about half way up, my brother and I started finding crystals. Then after seeing some really pretty ones we started



Zachary, Denise, Mica and Peter on the summit of Albert Edward.

Photo: Peter Rothermel

filling our pockets with not just one but all of them. Every single one. When we got to the summit I was more than pooped.

On our way down we kind of got lost but we did find our way. We came to a little mountain fresh water stream –

well it kind of was. There was water dripping quite fast off of some nice green moss. We filled our water bottles and tried the water. It was cool and refreshing, it was sweet and you would think it would be muddy but it wasn't. I have always wanted to take my class on a hike so they could see what it really was like. When we got back to camp my feet were wet and soggy. Yuck.

On the third day our fuel canister ran out and I was out exploring when I found a full one. I brought it back and told my mom what I had found. She was so happy because then we could have hot chocolate and hot apple cider. On the third day it was our way out day. I was all stinking and smelling like sweat. When we were almost down we

stopped at another lake to have lunch. When we got there I took my shoes and socks off and dangled my feet in the water and that felt good. When we got to the car I was happier than ever.

I am 9 years old and I like writing stories. I like all animals. I don't have a favourite because I like them all.

Facts about the mountain. Mt. Albert Edward is 6,868 ft/ 2,093 m to the top which is the summit. It is east of Buttle Lake. William Ralph could have possibly been the first one to climb the mountain.

Participants: Mica Stonley, Zachary Stonley, Denise (Mom) Hook and Peter (Porter) Rothermel.

OUR "TANTALIZING" SUMMER CAMP

Christine Morton & Christine Fordham

July 5-12

The big red whirly bird dropped us and our carefully weighed quantities of gear, food and drink, at the ACC hut by Lake Lovely Water in the Tantalus Range. Jutting from the lake were many promises for the week; challenging snow slopes, glaciers and rock peaks that shot upward from the lake. There was Alpha and Omega, the beginning and end of the lake circuit. Pelops and Niobe became our most frequented peaks. According to Greek mythology, they are the son and daughter of Tantalus and Dionne, the two highest peaks in the range. Iota, the peaklet, was nestled beside the siblings. Lydia and Pandareus greeted us each time we looked out the hut windows. Ionia, hidden behind, called our names. Serratus also beckoned, and the call shall be answered on some later trip along with Tantalus and Dionne. Looking over the valley towards Mt. Garibaldi, and Black Tusk, one can understand how the range got its name from early climbers near Garibaldi being "tantalized" by the peaks just westward.

There were 20 of us ranging in age from 20 to 72. It was somewhat of a family affair with 2 father/daughter teams: Don Morton and Christine (C1) and Herbert Harzan and Christy (C2). The experience of the group at the start of the week ranged from those who hadn't put on crampons to those who had bagged more peaks than years. Needless to say those of us who were keen newbies to summer camp, had a great time and learned a lot.

Our home for the week was a lovely red hut fully equipped

with many comforts of home, including wine glasses. The loft was our cozy bedroom, while downstairs were the kitchen and dining room with large windows looking out to the lake and the peaks. The hut featured 3 boats to help us access the start of many routes. Captain Tony became the master of the "tub", with much help from his various coxswains, and Terry was the favourite canoe ferry captain.

The first day was spent taking various recky trips, Lambda Lake hikes, and awe-ing at breathtaking scenery. The second day saw us all doing Snow School 101, as described by Rick on his amusing photo journal website of the trip. Lars, our "sweet young guide" led us through the basics, with a nice little bouldering problem sidetracking us at recess. That afternoon Lars reviewed crevasse rescue techniques for those that wanted them, and a recky up to the Niobe basin. The half a dozen afternoon hooky players who ventured up Pelops and Iota, via different routes, luckily did not fall into any crevasses. During the 5 climbing days that followed, our group did some serious peak bagging.

Alpha (7562'), the highest peak by the lake, was climbed by 5 different parties. A large party of 7 tackled it from the west and the Alpha-Serratus col, resulting in a gruelling 15 hour day, for which Charles, the rope leader, earned his "hero of the day" status. Their only loss was when the bush claimed Herbert's ice axe. Others ticked off the coveted classic East Ridge route using rock shoes for the craggy top. This route is mostly 4th class with several 5th class pitches, the crux being a 5.8 crack with an overhang

finish. Lars led C1 and C2 up to the top the first day for a route "by the book". It was the only day on Alpha without a view clear to the Georgia Strait. Lars went up again with Larry, Martin, Graham, and Gerta, who had dreamed of the route since seeing it in the morning alpenglow many years ago. Charles had his reward for leading the West Ridge by making a zippy East Ridge ascent with Rick.

Omega, (6,335'), affectionately called "the Big O", was climbed from both the north approach and the West Ridge circuit. Both sides are class 3 / 4, with a 30 m headwall and rap. Martin led the first group up the North side with a 50 m rope

and passed on the beta about 60 m ropes to the following parties. The only bad weather day saw the 4 C's (Charles, Catrin, C1 and C2) do the north side on wet rock and fog (OK, rain) carefully watching for the previous day's footprints, and trying not to collapse in laughter from Catrin's whittering. Next day Rick and Don's teams leap-frogged each other up the still drying North Ridge. Rick descended the West Ridge and found the route for the next day when he went up with his lovely wife Phee, Larry and Daphne. Coming down the West Ridge Rick, Christy and Herb found a small pool for a refreshing afternoon swim.

An attempt on Ionia (6,800') was made by a large group led by Rick. As the day grew the crew realised their objective was somewhat further than they desired. Just after deciding to pause before the return home, George was stepping from snow to rock when he found himself unexpectedly in a moat. With the well-learned skills from the previous day at snow school, the others on his rope kept him secure. After a few moments George was able to right himself, and the whole group returned safely home. On the day we expected ugly weather, dawned brilliant sunshine, Ionia called again. After crossing the glacier with a few yawning crevasses, negotiation of the moat, and a bunch of manky 4th class rock, Charles and C2 reached the summit for a brief, 8 minutes on top. Then it



Barb, Tony, Don and Graham climbing on the North ridge of Omega.

Photo: Rick Hudson

was a fast descent to a late supper. Incidentally, the best service at supper happens when coming in late after everyone else has eaten. Thanks.

The photogenic Niobe (6600'), brother Pelops (6500') were climbed by almost everyone. The snow up to the Niobe-Pelops col gave a beautiful view, and from the top one could see the Island and our friend Mt. Arrowsmith. There was a trip up these mountains each day from either the east or the west, often including Iota for some triple peak bagging. Coming up between Niobe and Pelops there is a 50 degree snow ascent to the col - that steep at least for a short while. This is where Snow School 102 happened, aptly named by Rick, when Lars was at the lead of 7 people on 2 parallel ropes. The climb took three pitches because the rope wasn't quite long enough, and it took a while to sort out the tangle of the two ropes at the start of the belays. After a very quick ascent of the siblings, the down climb was easy because Lars lowered the climbers two by two. Climbing down the South side of Pelops, there was some intimate conversation with our sometimes friend, sometimes foe, "Heather". There were three ascents from the west, starting at the far end of the lake. One group tried to climb the ridge but was thwarted by some not so friendly rock and juniper. Graham and Daphne did a quick triple peak traverse on the last day.

Iota (6004'), which was denoted a "peaklet" because it



George, Lars, Gerta and Catrin rowing back to the hut with Niobe and Iota behind.
Photo: Rick Hudson

barely poked out of the snow covered ridges around, was climbed both from the north and the east rock ridge. The moat crossed by the north route claimed the other casualty of the week; Don's camera, which fell from his shirt pocket while leaning over the moat to check on Gerta's progress. On the last day Sylvia and Phee started out for a quick Iota ascent, but were sidetracked by a Rock School given by Martin and Don, where they had a great time learning anchors, lead climbing and rappelling.

As the week wore on, and the sunshine smiled down and turned our sun-screened bodies from crispy weathered skin to the famous Colonel Saunders "extra crispy". Those who took pleasure in time by the lake, were refreshed by many cold, short swims and wonderful paddles. A number of people took a hut day to fully appreciate the beauty of the lake, and to help keep everyone fresh and energetic. When people stayed home for the day they added their personal touches, from housekeeping and ferry service, to Gerta's wild flower centerpieces. George earned the "Cabin Boy of the Week" award by keeping us well watered (how many gallons of water did he carry up from the stream?). On the one rainy

day most groups called it a short day, and there was a cozy feeling in the hut with everyone's gear strung up to dry by the heat of the wood stove.

Many excellent dinners - far more elaborate than most have at home - were consumed. From Tony's signature Potatoes with Cheese, to Phee and Rick's divine chocolate mousse cups, Larry and Terry's dolmades, and the boxes of wine, we were well fed. Who knew that fine dining was part of the mountain climbing camp package? Most evenings Gerta provided recorder music from on the rocky outcropping overlooking the sunset glow on the looming Garibaldi and Black Tusk in the distance. Our last supper had a few surprises including Barb's favourite fat hut mouse, discovered in the cutlery drawer having babies while we dined, much to chefs Larry and Terry's horror, while they fed us a rather boozy and consequently giggly dinner.

The 3 minute 12 second helicopter ride (accurately timed by Herbert) took our weathered faces and bruised, bug bitten bodies, back to the Squamish airport and reality.



Photo: Gerta Smythe

Participants: Gerta Smythe (organizer), Lars Andrews (ACMG), Tony Vaughn (climbing co-ordinator), Terry Lunn (meal co-coordinator), Rick Hudson (rope leader), Charles Turner (rope Leader), Martin Davis (rope leader), Don Morton (rope leader), Barb Baker, Catrin Brown, Larry Borgenson, Phee Hudson, Daphne Kessell, Graham Bennett, Christy Harzan, Herbert Harzan, Sylvia Moser, George Smekal, Christine Morton (C1), and Christine Fordham (C2)



MOUNTAIN HUMOUR WINNER

ON THE WAY UP TO HEATHER MOUNTAIN

PHOTO: CHRIS DAVIS

ISLAND BUSHWHACKER ANNUAL – 2003 –

MT. CARRIE – A GOAT BUT NO CAT

Tony Vaughn

August 9-10

An early start had us at the Solduc ranger station in the Olympics by 9:15 and on the way to climb Cat Peak and Mt Carrie. We tried to persuade the permit-issuing ranger that we needed a campsite a little closer to our objective than Solduc Park, 11 km up the trail, when Mt. Carrie was 23 km. Our persuasion to no avail, we settled for Solduc Park and left the trail head at 9:45 in dry sunny weather with no intention whatsoever of camping that far from our objective.

A pleasant if somewhat hot hike up the trail got us at the High Divide by 2:30 pm and heading in the opposite direction from the busy high divide trail. With not a soul in sight, we concluded that we were safe from the prying eyes of the park rangers and could camp anywhere we liked. No sooner had we decided when around a curve in the trail came not one but two rangers. Their first question was "Where are you headed?" and their second one was "Where are you camping?" When we said Solduc Park they looked somewhat skeptical and asked if we were carrying all our gear; we admitted "Yes we are, in case we have to bivouac." Being obviously realistic one of the rangers promptly changed our permit to Krumholz Camp from Solduc. As we parted company, the second ranger asked if we really intended to climb Cat Peak, return to Solduc and then come back the next day to Carrie. Being unable to lie we just smiled and walked away.

This section of trail was very dry and, without sufficient water, we had to pass the route up Cat Peak and continue on, hoping to find water for that night and the next morning. A few miles further along the trail we found a spring about 50 feet below the trail. By now it was too

late and we were too tired to go back to climb Cat Peak, so we carried on to our campsite at the western end of the catwalk, a narrow ridge joining Cat Peak with the lower slopes of Mt. Carrie.

Next morning at 6:30 we crossed the catwalk and followed a boot track along the lower slopes of Carrie. After about 20 minutes or so we realized we had gone too far and should have gone straight up the ridge after leaving the catwalk. We turned round and angled up grassy slopes to the top of the ridge where we found a well-defined track leading upwards in the direction of what we assumed was Carrie's summit.

Here we met a fine specimen of a mountain goat, of which we took many photos. No matter what we tried we couldn't get him to come up close for a really good picture. Carrying on, we went on up the ridge to a large scree and snow bowl on the south side of Mt. Carrie, which we crossed to reach the summit. To our surprise we found the summit already occupied by a rather ratty looking mountain goat, which rapidly departed on seeing us arrive.

The summit was cold and windy without very good views due to clouds billowing up from the Hoh Valley, so after a brief snack we came leisurely down and back to camp. After a lunch break we made the long trek out to the trail head, then off to Port Angeles for Mexican beer and food and the last ferry home to Victoria.

It was a successful weekend without any rain; maybe next time we'll climb Cat Peak, but we'll make sure to take lots of water.

Participants: Mike Hubbard, Jules Thomson, Tony Vaughn.

MOUNT DERBY

Lindsay Elms

August 12

Arriving back at Naka Creek the weather didn't appear any better than the last time we were up here (see report on Mount Peel) but we weren't intimidated. However, this time instead of camping at the beach we drove up to the end of the S100 spur road and camped where we would be heading into the bush. The next morning we were away by 6 am and again headed up to

the saddle at the head of Schmidt Creek. The bush was dry but visibility was low due to the early morning sea mist but we were confident that it would eventually burn off. From the saddle we turned west and started climbing up through the heather benches that would take us onto the crest of the long ridge that curved towards Mount Derby. Viewing it a month earlier from Mount Peel we

could see that there didn't appear to be any technical difficulties along the ridge but we knew that it was going to be a long day and there was a number of smaller summits along the way to be traversed. We traveled over the first couple of summits in the fog but there was no problem staying on the ridge as there were no side spurs to confuse us. In one place we came across what appeared to be a fault line with huge boulders and deep fissures in the ground. This terrain slowed us down as we had to weave our way through the obstacle but we marveled at the great bouldering that, if we had the time, we could be playing on.



Valerie O'Neill on the ridge leading to the summit.

Photo: Lindsay Elms

After three and a half hours we were on top of a scrubby summit and still the fog hadn't burned off. We sat on top perusing the map and checking directions with the compass. We could see a defined ridge heading off into the mist from the summit but it didn't appear to be going in the right direction. We sat down and had a snack and hoped for the fog to clear enough for us to get a glimpse of the rest of the route. Sure enough ten minutes later there was a brief clearing and we could see the ridge heading across to the next summit. The blue sky wasn't far above us and we knew that shortly we would be in the sunshine. We dropped down onto a wide heather bench that crested the ridge nearly all the way to the next summit. The trees came up to the western side of the ridge and then there was a swath of heather about 4-5 m wide before the trees resumed and dropped onto the eastern side of the ridge. We couldn't think of a more exquisite ridge walk! From the next summit we could see across to the final summit of Mount Derby. It was obviously going to be a bit steeper with more scrambling but again it looked relatively straightforward. We dropped down the ridge and traversed around a couple of false bumps and then got into the final saddle. Some steep scrambling through loose rock and then we

had the final heather slopes to the summit where we arrived at 11:30.

By now the fog had almost completely burned off and the views were unrestricted. Below was Robson Bight and the gravel rubbing beaches of the Orcas, and entering Johnstone Strait from the north were two cruise ships on their way towards Vancouver. To the east we could see Mount Peel and we were able to see the saddle that we had started from which was at least eight or nine kilometers away. We couldn't help but think that if we had of been able to see the route when we began we might have been daunted by the distance, but the fog just kept drawing us along the ridge teasing us with the next summit and the next until we finally reached the top.

We sat on the summit for an hour until it was time to think about heading back. We slowly plugged away at the km eventually arriving back at the vehicle at 5:40 pm almost twelve hours later. It was a beautiful ridge walk and one that I would call a classic hike. The summit of Mount Derby was well worth the drive up island to climb.

Participants: Valerie O'Neill and Lindsay Elms

NINE PEAKS – ANOTHER FEATHER!



Nine Peaks in the morning

Photo: Peter Rothermel

Peter Rothermel

August 19-21

Tom Carter and I had wanted to touch this peak with our feathers and count another coup and this we did in fine style. Typically, when word of our plans circulated among our friends, numbers of people wanting in on the trip began to swell and then, closer to the date, the numbers started to diminish. I had written several people on advice about a short cut off the route between Bedwell Lake and Little Jim Lake leading to a large cirque. I received an overwhelming response describing several shortcuts and even the entire route. After perusing all the info, I was starting to wonder if we were biting off too much, trying to do the trip in three days.

One of the responders to my inquiries was Don Cameron and he wanted in! Tom, Don and I were of a like mind, thinking that if time ran short or the weather didn't cooperate, it would still make for a fine reconnaissance trip.

Three younger, hot rock climbers, Bill Readings, Greg Sorenson and Brian Bell joined us and rounded out our group. They had larger aspirations and were talking of

possibly traversing all nine summits. Tom just rolled his eyes and I groaned thinking of all the weight of extra climbing gear, but the young guys cheerfully said they'd carry it all.

We got an early start from my place in Qualicum and were parked at the trail head in Strathcona Park within a few hours. The Bedwell Lakes trail went fast under our feet, being a highway of a path.

Past Bedwell Lake, we scouted for one of the "shortcuts" we'd been told of, but didn't see anything very inviting. Up the Cream Lake trail we went, looking for a bit of flagging showing the start of another "shortcut", never finding any tape and soon were at the outfall coming from Little Jim Lake. Up we went on the ridge on the south side of the lake. This route, being the more established, is well cairned and is easy to find. Near the top of the ridge, the route drops down along easy ledges and leads to a large cirque. I think this was probably faster, for us, than bushwhacking an unmarked "shortcut", even with the extra elevation gain on the ridge.

How can I describe the cirque...big cirque... giant cirque... grand canyon! It's huge and floored with a great gravel plain, with streams braiding their way through and islands of wild flowers. It feels more like being in the Yukon. It has camping space enough for a couple of large wagon trains to circle up.

As it was still early, we decided to head up, at least to the next pass between Big Interior's upper and lower glaciers. Once to the pass we continued up further, partly on glacier-polished granite and ascended the upper snowfield to a col overlooking the end of Della Lake and a fine view of Nine Peaks. Here after nine hours of carrying full packs, we threw them down and made camp after a five minute hike to the summit of Big Interior. We all carried bivy bags, which was fortunate since there wasn't one tent spot excepting snow.

Nine Peaks was still looking a far ways off and I believe that, if we had stopped to camp at the cirque, we would have had no chance of summiting Nine Peaks. The distance would have been too great and the snow fields would have been rock hard in the morning. Don and I were the only ones with crampons, the lack of them regretted by the others later.

We slept under starry skies and past Nine Peaks could just make out the winking lights of Port Alberni and Mt. Arrowsmith silhouetted above the town in the morning's dawning. We were up and travelling with daypacks by 6:30 and rubbing the sleep out of our eyes.

Most of our route information told us to head down the ridge and pass just under Marjorie's Lode. We opted to drop down a bit lower and traverse along snowy sloped ledges. At first the snow was icy and Don and I scuffed footprints with our crampons for the other fangless folk. Shortly after, the sun warmed up the snow and we were all travelling along at a good clip to where the ridge drops down to Bear (You) Pass. The ridge is a geologist's dream come true, with every few metres steps, another band or outcropping of different rock, mineral or crystal formations.

It soon became evident that we were splitting into two parties...Tom, Don and I, the old guys heading straight for the summit and Bill, Greg and Brian, the young guys wanting to climb some rock. Realizing a short time factor, the young guys decided only part of the traverse would do. As we hiked along our parties would drift apart and then regroup, back and forth.

At the end of the ridge we dropped down a steep heather gully to Bear Pass complaining of all the elevation loss and bemoaning all the ground to regain. As it was, scrambling up the rocks and along patches of snow, it took no time at

all until we were all grouped at the base of Nine Peaks glaciated snow field. Here our two groups parted with a, "See ya on the summit!" and Tom, Don and I trudged up the 35 degree snow slope. The few crevasses we passed were easy to discern and avoid in the August snow melt and at the top of the field it flattened out. The snow gully we'd have to go up was rent with bergschrunds encroaching from moats on both sides. In the gully the snow was hard and Tom was at a disadvantage without crampons. He showed a lot of moxy at continuing on with out them. I would have chickened out long before.

I led up the gully to the right over a bridge with a melting seam across it and a forty-foot deep rent on my left and an undercut moat on my right. Even though the bridge was solid, I was panting with adrenalin running through my system. I traversed up to the left to skirt a bergschrund on my right and kicked in as big steps as I could, up a 45 degree slope, not even looking at the bergschrund to the right. I could only focus on the slope ahead. The snow was so hard, I couldn't get the shaft of my ice axe in more than a few inches and was using my pick in dagger position that didn't feel too secure as a self belay.

The snow flattened out at the top of the gully and we dropped our crampons and ice axes and scrambled up third class rock into the sun and onto the summit. In a cairn we found a small gumball machine, no doubt left by some Heathens, but no summit register... just some pieces of plastic tube and a few bits of paper stuffed under rocks. Ta-Da!...as is my customary habit, I brought along a new tube and waterproof notebook, so we signed in and stuffed the rest of the papers in the new tube.

We lazed in the sun there looking at familiar mountains from an angle we'd never had before, while discussing the virtues of owning a pair of aluminum crampons that are light enough that they're always in one's pack... all the while the nagging thoughts flitting through your mind, of the descent through the bergschrunds. Oh, what bitter sweet experience the summit is!

We were hoping the cavalry (the youth) would come climbing over the summit with their two 60 m, 8 mm ropes so we could rappel the gully. After what seemed a long time we decided they might have turned back and we'd just have to go back down with what we had. Tom and I usually both carry a 30 m chunk of 8 mm static line for lowering or hand line for 60 m, rappelling 30 meters or rescue cords. I didn't bring mine, thinking the young guys had ropes, so here we were with 30 m of 8 mm, three 6-7 mm cordaletts each 5 m long and a piece of 5 mm cord.

Tom had a picket and put in a belay in the moat above. We thought maybe there was a bridge in the middle of the upper bergschrund (the one I was too busy to look in during our ascent). The incline of the slope was better on that other side, at about 35 degrees... as well the sun had risen and the snow was getting a bit softer there.

Tom belayed me down while Don called out a warning when Tom was passing a knot and how much rope was left. The best scenario would be a belay past the bergschrund to a safe stance where I could send my axe and crampons back up with the rope to Tom, since he'd be down climbing without the benefit of a belay. A worse scenario would be running out of rope before the bridge and having to traverse to the steep, hard, shaded snow. The absolute worst scenario would be a fall into the bergschrund and expecting the 5 mm cord tied to my harness to hold a fall... and if it did, what then hanging in space?

I inched my way down kicking in huge bucket steps, real close together, on a slope I'd normally walk down facing out... if there was safe runout. A few meters from the bergschrund I was craning my neck around almost 180 degrees, trying to get a look, while Don hollered, "Five meters left!" I thought to myself, "Oh God, I might run out of rope... what?"... and I shouted out, "Holy Shit you guys, this hole has a bottom!" Sure enough, as Don sang out "Two meters," I was stemming across the meter wide opening in the bergschrund with axe on one side and crampon on the other, while testing the bottom with my other foot... solid! The bottom was a plug of ice. At either end were big holes, and one I could look down showed that there was just air underneath. If we got another heat wave the whole slope would likely collapse... but not now, we're safe. I peeled off my crampons and tied them with my axe to the life line and sent them up.

While Don down climbed on belay and deepened my bucket steps, I sat in the silence of that slot. I used to think climbing above a bergschrund with a raging maelstrom churning underneath was about the grippiest occurrence in the mountains, but the quiet of this bergschrund was its equal, with just a whispered echo of sound as the drip of melt water beckons you to come down into the dark void forever and the cold breath of the mountain caresses your cheek with the kiss of death. Brrr... makes me shudder!

Once Don and Tom were safely down in my icy nest, we set up another belay for getting past the lower bergschrunds which required a kind of Z down climb to avoid the slots on either side of the seamed bridge. Looking down into the depths where the sunlight filters and fades to black, I lightly down climbed the bridge. Past this last problem we at last became animated with fast nervous chatter and pitched laughter until the nap of our nerves finally smoothed down to normal. Then we caught sight of the three young guys crossing the top of the gully, on their way to the summit.

Down the 35 degree slopes that some how didn't seem so threatening now and a scramble on smooth granite slabs, festooned with ball-bearing pebbles, hyphenated by patches of snow, brought us to the pass below, where we regrouped with the other guys. Then the long slog trending upwards back to our col camp, making for an eleven-hour summit day.

Once there, after a cup of hot tea, we packed up and headed down to the big cirque, so as to avoid frozen hard snowfields in the morning. It took us about an hour and a half to descend to the cirque and it was worth the extra effort to be away from all danger and closer to our trailhead. We toasted our success with shots of Bushmill's Irish Whiskey, ate well and drifted off to sleep under the gloaming skies.

The hike out was very pleasant, ambling along the ridge. Tom picked up the pace and we never caught up with him again, as is his custom on the trail out. Don and I were ahead of the young guys and went for a swim in Buttle Lake when we got out... then off to Courtenay for a homemade burger and a beer at Woody's Cafe and to Mountain Meadows, so Don could buy a set of aluminum crampons and a 30 m chunk of rope.

In retrospect, if we had camped the first night at the cirque, we probably wouldn't have had time to summit Nine Peaks. Having bivy bags made for finding a camp on the Big Interior col easier than if we had tents, but if the weather was inclement our bivy bags would have been miserable. It would have been a bit less stressful in the bergschrunds if we had more rope and all had crampons. At any rate, Nine Peaks can be done as a three day trip from Bedwell... if you have good weather and good partners!

Participants: Don Cameron, Tom Carter, Bill Readings, Greg Sorensen, Brian Bell and Peter Rothermel.

THE TLUPANA RANGE

Don Morton

August 26-31

The new Island Alpine guide by Philip Stone extols the wild terrain of the Tlupana Range east of Tahsis. Russ Moir organized a club trip and Charles Turner, Christine Fordham, Jules Thomson, Selena Swets, and Don Morton joined him there for the last five days of August 2003.

From the end of the Conuma Main road, which was drivable in a normal auto, we headed northwest up a valley with a stream and Mt. Bate on our left. Russ, who previously had thrashed his way into Mt. Alava via the Perry River, noted that our route was just as determined to keep us out. At a rocky stream bed we left the lower forest and climbed almost to the vertical rock wall of the ridge on our right. From there we traversed some distance on a hard gravel slope with footing so poor that we had our axes ready for self-arrest. Then, climbing a steep stream course overgrown with alder and forcing our way through more bush, we reached a wide gravel flat on the main stream. Above that the best route appears to be up the scree and through the brush high on the right side to reach the lower lake. This we skirted on our right side and followed the stream higher to an extensive gravel apron and a lake at 1100 m, directly below the north end of Mt. Bate. Sandy Briggs had named this beautiful site Shangri-La. We camped some distance from the lake beside a convenient rock outcrop. We boiled the water from an adjacent pool and drank directly from the lake outflow farther away.

Wildflowers were abundant on both the route to our camp and on higher ledges. We were fortunate to have a botanical expert on our team who identified *Mimulus guttatus* and *Mimulus lewisii*, pink, yellow and white, as well as *Castilleja miniata*, *Gentian glauca*, harebell, valeriana, columbine, and *Epilobium latifolium*. We saw bear scat in the vicinity of our campsite and ptarmigan and crows on our climbing days. Each night an exceptionally bright Mars rose in the southeast in the gap between the mountain ridges.

Our first objective was Mt. Bate (1680 m), the highest in the Range. Rob Macdonald and Paul Erickson made the first ascent in 1982 via a difficult traverse around the southwest side of Peter Lake. From Shangri-La there is a much easier route traversing south with little altitude change for about a km over rock, scree, and snow towards the southeast ridge, where our map had mistakenly placed the summit. However, before reaching the ridge we angled up to our right over third-class rock and snowfields that

brought us to a stony notch immediately north of the summit pyramid. Selena led a long and a short pitch (5.5) to the top where we all gathered on the short knife edge. We rappelled from a piton just below the summit and then from a prominent rock finger directly down to the snow.

The next day we climbed a couloir of mixed snow and rock west of our camp to a col below the Thumb. Traversing farther west took us to the col between the Thumb and Mt. Grattan (1550 m). Selena led the east ridge in four pitches up good rock that the guide book graded 5.6. None of the moves seemed that difficult, but the lack of protection in places did increase the challenge for the leader. We climbed down the top pitch and descended the rest of the way in three long rappels, the first from a rock finger, the next from a rock bollard with the slings wedged in place with chock stones, and the last from a stunted tree. Two 50 m ropes were sufficient.

We spent our third climbing day on Thumb Peak (1615 m). Rather than take the recommended route towards the east ridge, we tried a direct approach farther left over grass and solid rock and into a snow-filled couloir. We had difficulty kicking secure steps and hence tried the moat. Soon we were in a tunnel under the snow from which we escaped by climbing some very loose rock. More easy scrambling brought us to the summit. We do not recommend our alternate route up this treacherous gully.

From the top we could see the thumb of Thumb Peak a little lower to the south, but not easily reachable directly. Instead, we descended the way we should have come up and traversed to our right to reach the first col we had attained the previous day. From there we scrambled up good rock on the east side of the peak. Selena led two exposed traverses to the bottom of a chimney on the south side of the thumb and climbed free to the top. Charles followed with a rope and brought up Christine, but the rest of us skipped the final two pitches when rain fell from the clouds that had been gathering much of the day. Two rappels brought them to base of the chimney and a third from a tree took us down to a lower grassy ledge from which we could scramble off the mountain.

Since we had climbed all the peaks surrounding Shangri-La, we wondered if it would be possible to reach the more distant Mt. Alava (1550 m) from our camp by traversing high on the rocks that drop steeply into the west side of the Shangri-La lake. Before leaving on our final day, Selena,

with Charles belaying, found a route with one 5.8 move. They reached the notch at the far end of the lake and saw an easy descent to Peter Lake and thence along the northeast side to Mt. Alava. Earlier in the season, more snow in a gully just before the difficult move could make the route easier. An alternative possibility, without the need for belaying, might be up to the col below the Thumb and down a ridge of solid rock to the base of Alava.

The return to our vehicles was as much a struggle as our trip up the valley, but the good climbing we found made the effort worthwhile. The Alpine Guide on our Section's web site has some useful route information under Nootka - Mt. Bate.

Participants: Russ Moir (organizer), Charles Turner, Christine Fordham, Jules Thomson, Selena Swets, and Don Morton.

MOUNT ASHWOOD AND BONANZA PEAK

Lindsay Elms

August 30

While writing up the report on climbing on the upper island for the *Bushwhacker Update* I had received information from Peter Rothermel that he had been in with Tak Ogasawara and Tony Vaughn to climb Mount Ashwood. Unfortunately they didn't have time to climb Bonanza Peak; however, Tak returned later with Doug Goodman and one other and climbed the peak. I decided that it was time that I went back to investigate these two mountains after my failed solo attempt a couple of years ago. I emailed Tak and he sent me info on logging road access and the climbing beta. I asked him if he thought it possible to do both peaks in one day and he replied "If you want to do Ashwood and Bonanza on the same day, if I were you I would do Ashwood first then Bonanza because that way the route finding is much easier." So that is what Matt Kidd and I planned to do.

I picked Matt up at 6:30 pm Saturday evening and we drove up island. At the junction on the highway to Woss we turned right onto the Gold Creek Road and followed that up to the Fool's Creek Main. After crossing the Gold Creek we took the right-hand fork and drove to the head of the valley where we set up the tent for the night. Although it was dark and we didn't have a map of this logging road system, we knew we were going the right way because we could see the silhouette of the two peaks in the diminishing light as they gradually gained stature.

The next morning Matt and I were away by 6 am following the route description from Pete and Tak. After an hour of easy bushwhacking we emerged onto the Ashwood Plateau, a beautiful alpine meadow with several idyllic tarns that would be inviting for anyone interested in an early morning dip (not us). From the



Matt rock climbing on Ashwood.

Photo: Lindsay Elms

plateau we climbed up a huge heather and boulder slope that brought us up to the base of the mountain. It was obvious the route to the summit presented no technical difficulties so Matt and I decided to spice the climb up a bit with some rock scrambling. After two and a quarter hours from the car we were on the summit of Mount Ashwood and as usual the views were spectacular but we were particularly interested in neighbouring Bonanza Peak. Bonanza's first recorded ascent was on June 17, 1979 when John Gibson, Syd Watts, Rick Eppler and Ben Peterson climbed the peak from some logging roads three miles to the west of the peak. They had surveyed the route to the peak the day before so knew exactly where to go on summit day. Rick and Ben were on one rope while John and Syd were on the other. They found the climbing easy but exposed at first as they traversed on ledges around the West Face to gain the South Ridge by which they reached the summit. John reported encountering no difficulty as they arrived on the summit at 2:15 pm.

With most of the morning and the rest of the day in front of us, Matt and I left Ashwood's summit and descended to the gully Tak had told me about that gave access to the col between the two peaks. In the e-mail from Tak he said that a short distance from the Ashwood Summit there is a big gully going down to the saddle between Bonanza and Ashwood; however, there was one thing that Tak forgot to mention that we were soon to encounter.

In Bushwhacker 4:4 of November 1976 John Gibson reported a climbing trip with Syd Watts and George Rushworth into Mount Ashwood in the last week of July. They climbed Ashwood from Claude Elliot Lake and stated that it presented no problems. On the summit of Mount Ashwood they found a rock cairn thus making their ascent most likely the second of the mountain, the first recorded ascent was by George J. Jackson, a British Columbia Land Surveyor in 1931. However, looking across at the North Summit [Bonanza Peak] John wrote: "This looked an imposing tower and the route leading to it was broken by cliffs, where the map had suggested a broad shoulder. We searched around, roped and eventually found a way onto the steep connecting ridge and descended towards the col between the peaks, but were stopped by a break in the ridge just before reaching the col. The vertical pitch was little more than 30 feet but the rock was extremely loose. If there had been time for a lot of gardening, while the "gardener" was held on a top rope, I think we could have climbed down, or if we had a spare rope we could have rappelled, but we only had one rope and did not wish to

cut off our retreat." The three turned back and retreated the way they had climbed.

Matt and I found this big gully and scrambled down it but near the bottom we found a steep pitch with lots of loose rock. If only I had read John's report before we left we would have brought along a few gardening tools! We climbed down as far as we could but decided to pull the rope out and rappel this rock garden. As Matt rappelled he weeded as many of the loose rocks out of the way as possible because there was no doubt I would be dislodging just as many rocks during my rappel. The sound of dislodged rocks reverberated off the gully walls as they bounded downward out of sight while the sulfurous smell of colliding rocks wafted up into our nostrils. Once at the bottom we put the rope away and scrambled up and into the saddle.

Looking up at Bonanza it certainly appeared straightforward but Tak had mentioned a 20 m pitch of 5.5 rock about halfway up the ridge. We scrambled up the South Ridge to the base of the pitch and roped up. We found the rock to be solid, presenting us with pleasant climbing. By 10:45 we were on the summit of Bonanza Peak where we shook hands and took a few photos. After half an hour basking in summit euphoria we down climbed to the top of the rock step and pulled the rope out to rappel the pitch. We checked out Tak's anchor and decided that it looked solid; however, the toilet paper rolls used to protect the sling at the rock edges did look a little mushy. After two months out in the open I guess it would be expecting a little too much for the toilet paper to be in good bum-wiping condition. I backed up the anchor just to be safe and then sent Matt down as the scapegoat. Tak's slings appeared solid as Matt arrived safely at the bottom so I took the back-up off and took the plunge.

Once back in the saddle we dropped down the scree slopes angling west for about 100 m and then traversed back out to the east under the rock bluffs below Ashwood and around to the Ashwood Plateau. There were three big gullies/ creeks that we had to cross and the best route was to stay as high as possible under the bluffs. An hour later we were back at the plateau where we continued our descent to the vehicle. However, the drizzle that we weren't expecting for another couple of hours arrived fifteen minutes before reaching the car. This didn't place a damper on our spirits, but finding the Woss Pub and Restaurant closed didn't help quench our thirst. Fortunately, our thirst for north island summits was, for the day, satiated.

Participants: Matt Kidd and Lindsay Elms

RUGGED MOUNTAIN, OUT - CREST ROCKS INSTEAD

Ang Lopez

Labour Day weekend

The back-country travel advisory forced us to cancel the Labour Day weekend Rugged climb and put plan B into effect - and what a Plan B it was! Three days of sport, trad, and top-rope climbing at Crest Creek Crag. The group traded in the alpine gear for rock-climbing kit and explored a variety of crags including the Crow's Nest, Hidden Wall, Morning Glory, and Salamander. Although this was no replacement for our planned Rugged destination - compliance to the advisory was a small sacrifice in avoiding further pain for those fighting BC fires. All the rock we touched was superb - clean, high friction, and typically wonderfully situated with views of Crest Lake or

a Strathcona backdrop. Highly recommended for all levels of climbers, with the exception of those seeking 5.13+ routes. Joseph impressed everyone with his trad climbing mastery gained through his ACC Youth Camp schooling. My favourite route was ArLte Butler 5.10c on Crow's Nest crag - a must do. A mere four hours from Victoria and no ferry line up or waiting on the crags - this will not be the last visit to Crest Creek Crag. Many thanks to the Heathens and all those who contributed to making this area a top-notch climbing destination.

Participants: Mike Dillistone, Ron Gauthier, Joseph Hall, Gus Kramer, and Richard Mathews and Ang Lopez.

TLAKWA MOUNTAIN

Sandy Briggs

September 13-14

When Lindsay Elms, Curtis Lyon and I climbed Karmutzen mountain in 1997 our view to the west was dominated by a stunningly dramatic rock peak scarcely less impressive than the notorious Beaujest peak itself. (I never cease to be amazed by the wonders that are hidden away in the wilds of Vancouver Island!) A careful consultation of the map soon identified the mysterious peak as Tlakwa Mountain and we resolved one day to tread its alluring summit.

Tlakwa is a Kwakwaka'wakw word meaning copper, so we knew that it would be an objective upon which to test our mettle. But the earth span and orbited onward as we got lost in our busy lives, letting the Tlakwa trip fall by the wayside. Then in the late summer of 2003 Lindsay phoned to say that he had been out exploring new roads in his truck and had worked out a great access to our long-sought Tlakwa Mountain. The expedition was soon under way. On Saturday September 13th I drove to Comox by late afternoon. There we loaded the expedition gear into the back of my wonderful new car until it was nearly bursting. Then Lindsay, Val O'Neill and I set off for the long approach drive to the Zeballos turnoff, along Atluck Lake and into the hinterland of the north Island. Finally, well over 40 km from the pavement and not far from Tahsish Lake, we parked in a fresh clear-cut just as the heavy drizzle

was beginning to let up. We barely had time to scope out our proposed northwest ridge ascent route and set up the tent before night fell, with a dull thud, on our car-weary little heads.

The weather the following morning held some promise, though I'll not say of what. At a respectably early hour we plunged into the surprisingly un-wet and user-friendly forest, finding our way upward with relatively little bluff-like impediment. Northwestern Vancouver Island is a place of vigorous meteorology, with the result that we reached open meadows at a lower altitude than one normally would in, say, central Strathcona Park. Our almost frighteningly premature emergence from the bush left us with nothing better to do than hike and scramble casually up the dampish heather and rock into the middle of the unwelcome gray stratus that had parked itself so inconsiderately over our summit. Suddenly, after a not-quite-arduous two hours and ten minutes of travel, we gained the chilly and windswept top of Copper Mountain. There was a sizeable cairn in place but no register to keep track of the traffic. Having little that could be described as an actual view, and much that could be described as wind-driven spray, we were unanimously given to reversing our ascent route with the notion of reaching the car in time for a civilized noon lunch.

In this, I am sorry to say, we failed. It was nearly ten minutes past noon when we reached the car. Without boon companions with which to share the driving it would scarcely be possible to undertake such an expedition, one for which the ratio of driving time to hiking

time cannot have been much lower than the mathematical constant. Such is the burden of those who labour to be connoisseurs of the obscure.

Participants: Sandy Briggs, Lindsay Elms and Val O'Neill

HIKING THROUGH THE WINDOW, INTO THE WORLD BEYOND.

Ellian Bell

September 20 - 21

My attention was first caught when I heard the words "Forbidden Plateau." I looked up to listen closer to the man at the front of the classroom. His name was Sandy Briggs and he was offering to take twelve students on an adventure into the heart of Vancouver Island in the name of the Alpine Club of Canada. Having arrived on the island not one month before hand, I was ever so excited at the prospect of exploring what was going to be my home for the next few years, or however long it was going to take me to reach my dream of teaching biology. I was nearing the end of my first month of my first year at the University of Victoria, a new adventure in itself filled with an overwhelming amount of opportunities. Here was one of them and I was determined to make time for it in my already bursting to the seams student schedule.

And so it was that I awoke one Saturday morning before the rest of residence had even blinked an eyelid. The sun was rapidly burning a hole through the morning mists, and the rabbits that have made campus their permanent home, were one by one emerging from their soft earth burrows, as I crossed ring road and headed down to the bus station. I spotted my fellow adventurers immediately, yawning and laughing on the sidewalk, wrapped up in fleeces and surrounded by an assortment of packs, bursting with individual stories and secrets. Once our thirteenth and final member had arrived, we piled into three cars and began our journey northward, up into the unknown.

My driver was a crazy beautiful lady from Austria with so much love and knowledge to share that I soon began to leave my sleepy state and slip into an intrigued and excited one that had me pouring my attention over the passing art gallery of beauty. We drove through such an incredible mixture of landscapes, from the dark rocky mountain edges of the pass that led us out of Victoria, through the totem pole-lined high street of Duncan, and on into the pasture lands beyond. Three hours later we were climbing a derelict ski-hill road, once valuable cabins lining the view side. When we finally reached the road's bumpy end, the ground

was littered with the burnt remains of what must have once been a grand looking ski lodge. Above, chair lifts were slowly rusting in the ocean air, blind to their spectacular view of the Straits of Georgia. All quite a sad picture that undoubtedly had an even sadder tale to explain it, but not one to tell here, for this particular tale tells of a journey that was anything but sad, and I intend to keep it that way.

It didn't take long before the we had left the sad ski slopes behind and become engulfed by a deep and luscious beauty. Trees of incredible magnitude climbed up towards the hidden sky, and in between, every gap, large and small, was filled with yet more greenery. Having come from the interior of BC, I had never before seen such an abundance of green energy. I think my face must have been one big perma-grin of wonder. That is until an intense sting shot up my leg. Through tears of pain I could just make out the black and yellow colored body of a wasp, stuck in the material of my hiking pants. With some effort I finally flicked it free and then with the heel of my boot, brought its frustration to an abrupt end. It was too wounded to live anyway. Besides, surely something should pay for the pain that trained my patience and pain tolerance through the remainder of the day. Or should it?

Hiking is great for thinking through things, especially when one is trying to find a distraction from pain. I decided I was grateful for the reminder it gave me that we were walking through a world that was not primarily ours, but theirs. Animals large and small, along with all the energetic greenery, had all been here long before any of us, and the fact that we were so welcome to trample through their home was ever so incredible, considering the level of hospitality that I imagine many of them would get doing the same in our homes. I mean I doubt we would so happily let a bear lounge through our front room, or even a wasp fly across our kitchen table. In fact any of the animals and plants here in this forest would most likely be most unwelcome in most homes of most people in most

countries. Next time a plant decides to try and climb in my window, or a bear wants to sleep on my couch, I may just think about letting them. The wasp sting itched through the night and into the next day, a constant reminder to me to appreciate the hospitality I was being shown by the surrounding nature wonderland.

Seven hours and many footsteps and wonderful conversations later we all fell quiet in awe, as we stepped up onto the summit of Mt. Drabble. A view that left me stammering and speechless spread out on all sides. Eastward lay the winding Straits of Georgia, silver in the evening sun, and westward the deep green Forbidden Plateau, behind which hung the island's main glacier, glistening and golden as the sun set upon its slopes. Either side stretched a skyline of ice-tipped peaks, as far as our amazed eyes could see. North stood Mt. Washington, waiting for snow and skiers, south the route we had taken, up through the magnificent forests. We were standing in the very heart of Strathcona Provincial Park and it was incredible. The summit of Mt. Drabble itself was a grand mass of weathered rock and moss, dotted with numerous puddles and fair sized lakes. I had never seen anything quite so enchanting. We snapped out of our awe to make camp in the remaining sunlight, spread out across the summit. We were careful not to disturb the delicate mosses and unique landscape as we made ourselves comfortable. We were all instructed clearly by Sandy on the best ways to do this, and decided also to avoid having a camp fire the damage from which could be somewhat irreparable. Besides, we didn't really need it.

The sun shone its last rays across our view as we sat together, drinking in the sights, sounds and smells. It was a picture worthy of hanging in the grandest of galleries, but, as Gerta, the lady who had so much beauty to share, pointed out, we were in the grandest gallery of all right now. It was hanging in the very place it was most worthy of being. Darkness fell from a perfectly clear sky and soon our heads turned upwards to drink in the sky, strikingly massive, wrapping us in its wonder. We could see every star visible

to the northern hemisphere. Again, we were silenced by our awe, but this time not for long. In a truly high state of being, we all began to sing and dance, accompanied by Gerta on the recorder, her notes flowing graciously into the bright darkness. It was a moment I believe I will remember far into my future, a reminder of how truly beautiful the human race has the potential to be. Perhaps we should stop and learn from nature more often.

Dawn came with as much beauty as night had left. It also brought Sandy with a churn of much welcomed milky tea, a perfect way to pull me out of my fresh-aired dreams and far too comfortable sleeping bag. With some sadness we packed and said farewell to our beautiful night's rest, vowing to return. I think a few of us even considered leaving school for good just to stay here. But then it dawned upon us that it was by living in a contrasting environment that we were able to appreciate this one so very much, and that by returning we would be reminded even more of just why this other world was so wonderful. Besides, the adventurous weekend was not over yet. We still had a magical mountain lake to swim in and shiver and dry on the banks of, and all of the magnificent forest to walk back through. It was just as breathtaking as the journey up, except now our hearts were soaring and singing together.

A matter of a few hours and one night had brought together a group of people in a most beautiful way. I still talk to each and every student that was there that day, sharing and smiling. What's more, many of us have since returned, in some cases several times, to the hospitable nature of the island, hooked, perhaps permanently, by its beauty.

I would like to thank the dear spirit of Sandy that opened up such an incredible new and wonderful window into the world to me, not forgetting the rest of my companions that collectively made it such a unique and uplifting experience. May it be the start of a beautiful relationship with each other and the external wonder of the world we live in.

KING'S PEAK NORTH RIDGE ROUTE

Hinrich Schaefer

September 27-28

After two failed attempts, King's Peak was an easy pick as the objective for a club trip. And I was curious to give the North Ridge variation a try, as it came highly recommended as a scenic climb along a wonderful line. Indeed, driving along Campbell Lake we marveled at the prominent sky line of the ridge that we hoped to ascend the next morning. My previous visits to the mountain were of limited value as guidance, however, as they had been in winter and early spring. Now there was no snow, but a clear trail that we followed in good time. We set camp in the lower bowl, enjoying the stream from the glacier and the sheltering trees around. A reconnaissance trip, following the trail to the main ridge on the west side of the bowl, showed that little tarns would have supplied water there as well, yet we didn't miss carrying the overnight packs up the steep trail. For the short evening outing, however, we were rewarded with wonderful views, warm evening sun and bright fall colours. We also scouted the approach for the next day and got a view of the route. Seen from across the upper bowl, gaining the ridge line and the final ascent of the summit block looked intimidating. Well, of course not to the trip leader. At least not officially. The next day would reveal what we have to cope with.

In the light of headlamps we left camp in the lower bowl in the morning, following the trail again up to the west ridge. Past a huge boulder that partly blocks the trail and just a few meters below the height of the ridge, we followed an obvious bench into the upper bowl. From here on we found our way through boulder fields and over ice-polished rock underneath the impressive face of Queen's Peak. I was very grateful for the good advice to bring crampons and axes to cross the ice field. The ice was completely bare and hard, with minor crevasses. With the right gear it didn't pose an obstacle, but without it the crossing would have been more than a gamble. On the other side we scrambled up the steep slope and then followed a nice ramp, which brought us to the ridge line. The following section, however, offered stiff scrambling. A few meters into it, one member of the group decided that it didn't feel right. Making it back to safer ground, we discussed the options and he volunteered to retrace his steps back to the trail

and there join our "support team", Mike and Stacey. They were taking the trail to meet us at the summit. I want to express my respect for taking the decision to turn around. It is a difficult choice to set oneself apart from the group, accept a personal limit and take the responsibility to manage the situation at hand. While I was pondering this, we noticed a more physical obstacle for turning around. A black bear was foraging the meadow below us. A wonderful sight in his late summer fat and with a shiny coat, he soon wandered off.

The remaining group now followed the ridge. At times steeper, at times easier, but always with spectacular views around and interesting geological formations. We belayed a short down climb into a notch and the few moves to regain the ridge, but that was the only time any rope or gear had to be used. So we made good time and the sections that had looked quite difficult from afar proved to be less steep and more broken up than anticipated. The last part up to the summit was great climbing again. The challenge of the scramble, the exposure to either the North or East snowfield, the choices of line made this an amazing experience. We reached the summit too soon for the support team, who had just got comfortable at their lookout for us. I especially enjoyed the views from the summit, which I had been denied in a white-out at the col between King's and Queen's Peaks, and by avalanches during another visit. The trail brought us down safely. Not without some excitement, though, when a loose boulder the size of a head went smashing down the gully and forced everyone below to dive for shelter.

I would like to end with a thank you to Sandy Briggs and Chris Barner, for offering information and advice on the terrain without which we may not have been able to climb this beautiful route. It is no small asset when people volunteer their experience to support others. And lastly I want to quote Graham, who made a great comment as the most experienced in a group of younger climbers: "I go everywhere you go. Just slower." So he did, and I hope we all will as years go by.

Participants: Mike Hubbard, Mike Miller, Torge Schuehmann, Stacey Dewherst, Graham Maddock, Sonya Langer, Hinrich Schaefer

MACKENZIE RANGE

Selena Swets

October 4-5

We left Victoria Saturday morning and arrived at the trailhead, approximately two and a half hours later. After completely missing the turn off to the main trail (was marked by lots of easily visible flagging, invisible to early morning climbers) we crossed the creek to begin the steep ascent. The trail is well marked, easily visible, at times affording glimpses of Redwall and other bumps. The recent dry weather meant that water for this trip was potentially going to be a problem, so we were prepared with the usual assortment of purification paraphernalia as well as containers. Fortunately we found many tarns along the way, in various states of cleanliness, so water wasn't a problem. We reached the place we decided to camp approximately five hours later.

The next day we traversed down and across some scree, to arrive at the bottom of Redwall, our objective. We roped up to gain access to the col, Marcelo and Josh exploring an interesting chimney/chockstone route (we heard a lot

of grunting) while we headed up a more conservative route. It was an interesting mix of loose rock and bush (does 5.6 include veggie holds?). From the col we climbed past the stem move, along a ledge and up to the main summit for lunch and a wonderful view of surrounding mountains and approaching weather. Surrounding peaks were mystical islands in the clouds. The rappel was straightforward with two 60 m ropes. We met a young couple from Victoria who joined us on the rappel. Traffic in the MacKenzies! Then it was packing up the gear and the descent to the cars, arriving at 7 pm. Sonja had gone ahead with Josh to try to catch her ferry to Saltspring. We arrived back in Victoria about 11 pm. Access: Trail begins 5 km past Cats Ears Creek, a barely visible road if heading west, with a sign and small driveway visible when coming from the other direction.

Participants: Josh Slatkoff, Don Morton, Marcelo Laca, Sonja Langer, Selena Swets

MT. BECHER

Gerta Smythe

December 7

Will there be enough snow to ski? This was the burning question as our car was leaving Victoria in the dark of night and the windshield wipers humming, humming. Oh, no, they have stopped, it is not raining any more, and there is a promise of sunrise over the coast mountains as we approach the freeway and the 'cruise control' to Courtenay.

Yes, Christine was right – she had scouted out the road for us on the day before and the cars started to arrive for this season's opener and maybe also for her trip-leading first. There were plenty of volunteers to break the trail, and I was probably the only one who always declined that honour. I was using all my energy to keep up with this group. Our fearless leader did her fair share of this task and also kept in touch with the group which quickly split into 2 sections. She was cheerful and encouraging, and even the sun cooperated. We knew the sun was just behind some of those foggy clouds and was dipping the whole countryside into a mysterious light that made some of the snow-laden

trees take on stories of their own. Didn't this just look like 3 Indian maidens, praying in front of their tents in the meadows? And higher up, the frozen branches reminded one of witches, forbidding and warning of dangers ahead.

But we were safe. Mike, one of our 60+ members, was out front never breaking his stride until we were on the summit. What a good feeling to have made it to the top in spite of all that snow and our ETA 3 hours behind. Still there was time for a candle lit on a Birthday Cake and a song sung twice – once for me and once for 'Anita in Absentia'.

When I expressed my concerns to our leader about all this snow, she assured me that everybody feels that way at the beginning of the season. Well, not everybody seemed to have trouble. Viggo, our oldest skier, showed his usual grace and elegance and although I only managed a poor replica, it gave me hope and confidence. And, as it turned out, the skiing was not bad. But the falling cost lots of time since there was no purchase in the snow and I finally

gave up trying to ski well and concentrated on 'surviving!'

When we arrived at the open slopes of the old Forbidden Ski Hill, the moon had come up and the skiing presented a new challenge. There was a crust on top of all the tracks that eager day-trippers had created. Tak, always at the rear, now took the lead, took off his skis and walked down a beaten track to the car.

Participants: Tim and Tak from Campbell River, the 5 of us from Victoria, Peter and Denise from Parksville, Denise's pre-teen children, Mica and Zachary, proudly wearing their transceivers on their chests, Lasqueti was represented, Comox and even 2 snowshoers who found trail-breaking strenuous.



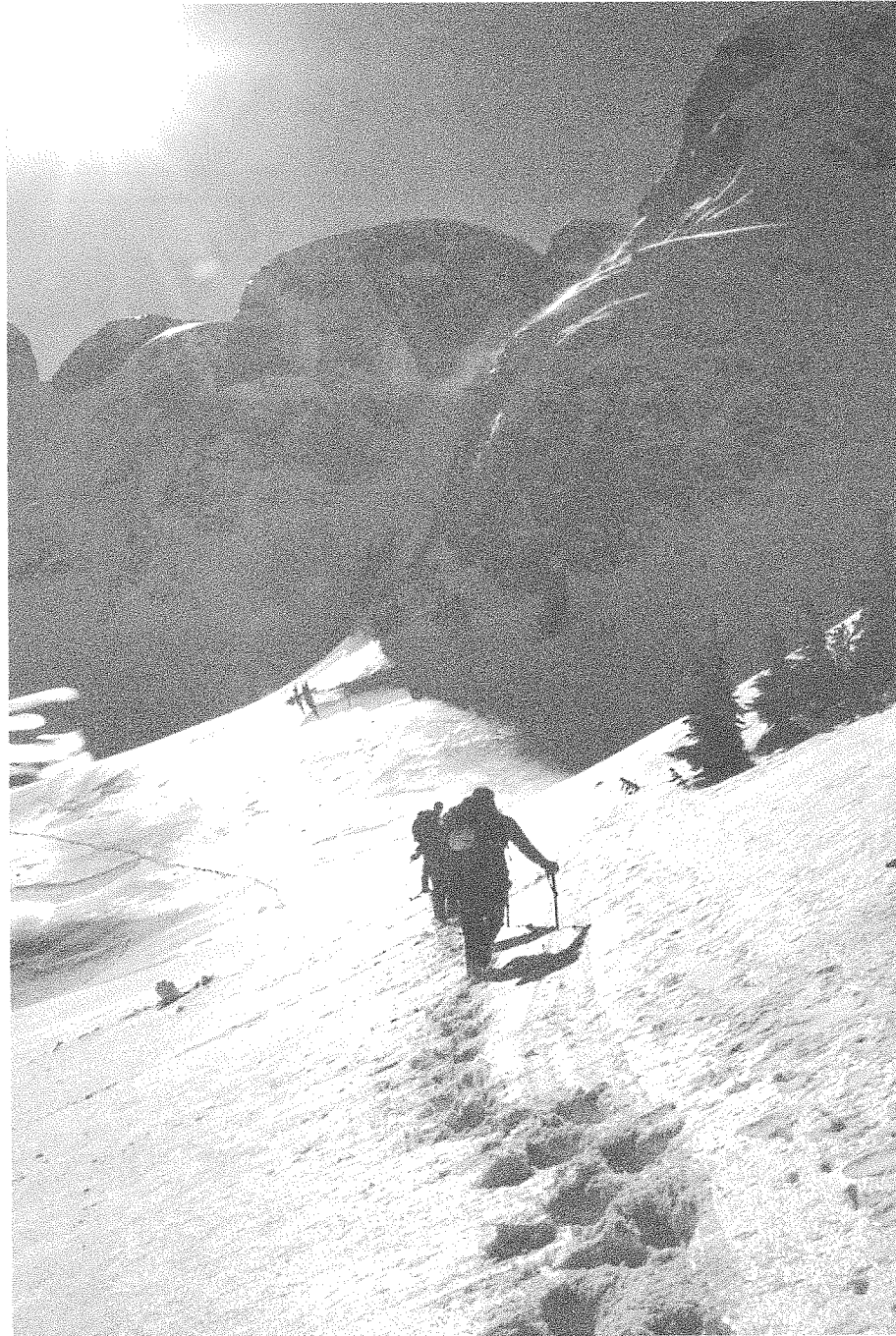
Mt Becher – going up.

Photo: Gerta Smythe



Guess where Mica is ? see page 24.

Photo: Peter Rothermel



MOUNTAIN PRINT WINNER

**MT ARROWSMITH, ON THE ROUTE FROM THE TOP OF THE SADDLE GOING TOWARDS
THE SNOW GULLY**

PHOTO: CHRISTINE FORDHAM

COAST MOUNTAINS & THE ROCKIES

DIAMOND HEAD AREA, GARIBALDI PROVINCIAL PARK

Daphne Kessel

January 18-19

It's a clear, unusually warm evening for January. Every direction I look I see snowy peaks; some with jagged, rocky crags. The skyline behind these gentle giants starts as a rosy hue, and blends into mauve, then indigo. Just above the peaks, a silver globe is emerging to illuminate the snow ridge we are skiing along. This moment is worth all the effort of the past four hours, trudging steadily uphill with pack on back, skins on skis. Even the 6 am start, and ferry trip is a blur. Exhaustion melts away. I'm awe-inspired as we descend to our destination - the Elfin Hut. As we get nearer, the elation turns to alarm as I count 25 pairs of skis, and at least as many pairs of snowshoes stacked outside a cabin that holds 15-20 at best. It's crowded, too warm, with barely enough room to squeeze onto a bench. All the bunks are taken, so it's find a floor space where I won't get stepped on in the night. We share a gourmet pot-luck

supper when a table is vacated. Later that night I wonder if Don, Catrin and Selina didn't make the best decision to bivi under the stars, as a chorus of bass and tenor snorers exchange motets from various corners of the hut.

As we leave the next day, I find someone has wrapped barb-wire around my shins during the night. Upon closer inspection, I'm told it's shin-bash from yesterday's uphill effort in rigid (wrong size), plastic boots. Don comes to the rescue with an application of cushion gossamer to the swollen sites. Fog has settled in overnight obscuring the fantastic views of last evening. However, it's a winter paradise, and we all get lost in a reverie on the return trip. The last stretch is a glorious fast ski down to the parking lot.

Participants: Catrin Brown, Don Cameron, Selena Swets, Linda McDonald, Don ? from Vancouver, Daphne Kessel

INDULGING VERTICAL INCLINATIONS ON THE CAMPBELL ICEFIELDS

Christine Fordham

February 22 – March 1

Snow was flying everywhere, as the big bird whomp-whomped off, and left us at 6,800' to a week of sunshine. The storm the night before had left us 18" of untouched, deep, fluffy Rocky Mountain powder. A moment of silence as we all looked around in admiration at the panorama of peaks (some unclimbed), then it was up the knoll behind the chalet to earn some turns before dark. Wha-hoo!

In the year of horrible avalanche conditions, we cautiously ventured further afield next morning, with Bernie's intimate

knowledge of the area and welcome experience of his many years as a guide. We all felt fortunate in having his years of guiding to call upon that week, while he attended to his ownership duties of the 3-week old chalet and amused us with his stories. Our large group headed off into the sunshine, and knee-deep powder, which made for somewhat hard trail breaking. The competition of the morning was, who "got to" break trail. Bernie pointed out the areas where avalanches occurred in the terrain we traveled. The avalanche danger was brought home to us



Campbell Icefield Chalet from the top of the Lightbulb

Photo: V. Holm

up-tracks were the pine marten, who cleverly avoided Judith's persistent stalking!

As the week moved on and the snow settled, we could access more terrain. A favorite destination was up to the "Lightbulb" to shred up the hill. Amazing how the up-tracks unfolded so there were always fresh tracks, until the end of the week when it looked like a hill of finger painting. It was magical to stand on top of the Lightbulb, (the favorite sun worshipping spot) and

right away as we crossed a large avalanche path, and if that was not enough warning, after our lunch a large basketball court sized slab just sort of happened, right over a spot that Tim had been a few minutes earlier. Ian, who was still eating, decided to end his lunch early, as his backrest almost shifted. Scary how little it took to set it off. I was stomping my feet to get warm, and down it went. Once on top of the ridge, the "Awe Factor" kicked in; as far as the eye could see the sun glistened on ever smaller, ever less blue summits. The Freshfield range above us, the Campbell Icefield before us, the Waitabit Range and Mt. Barnard looming boldly, its shoulder at 9,500' beckoning us all for various trips during the week. Skiing down the Notch at the end of the day, was this powder neophyte's introduction to skiing real (non-Vancouver Island) powder. It just blew me away to see how forgiving and ego gratifying making real S's in that fluff could be.

Where to go today? ...became the day's biggest challenge for small groups setting off each day. Coming from the wet coast, it was always "Get the most of today in case the weather rolls in." Consequently, the tree skiing was low priority, until near the end of the week, when we discovered what delightful skiing awaited in the tree terrain (that most were saving for a foggy day) and the discovery of several secret up-tracks to some awesome runs. Some of these

look down onto the chalet, and the panoramic plethora of peaks, which included the Sir's, Sanford and Donald. Small groups headed down the valley to the west to see what was there, the consequent never-ending up-track was rumored to be the up-track from hell. The Bluewater Glacier, and "the Dome" above became shredded. The Mt. Barnard shoulder with its stunner views and long Campbell Icefields approach saw several visits. The high col overlooking the chalet on one side and Campbell Icefields and the steep, deep stuff on the backside were also frequented. The light-hearted jibes about "tele verses randonnée" abounded. It was interesting to listen in to the secret brotherhood of dedicated tele skiers and their hushed commentary on the



Supper time in the lodge.

Photo: Peter Landres

benefits of parallel turning in these surroundings.

By the end of the week all were thoroughly indulged in their vertical ski inclinations; fit from the long up tracks; spoiled with the luxurious chalet, hot showers and “après ski” sauna; warm from the companionship; and totally feeling fat from the cuisine to die for ... a bunch of rugged,

and tough backcountry skiers, battling the elements???

Participants: George Butcher (organizer), Bernie Schiesser (lodge owner), Diane Bernard, Tim Strange, Russ Moir, Georgina Becker, Patrick Daigle, Ian Brown, Margaret Brown, Viggo Holm, Judith Holm, Charles Turner, Graham Bennett, Selena Swets, Peter Landres, Madeline Mazurski, and Christine Fordham.

EDGE MTN, GOLDEN EARS

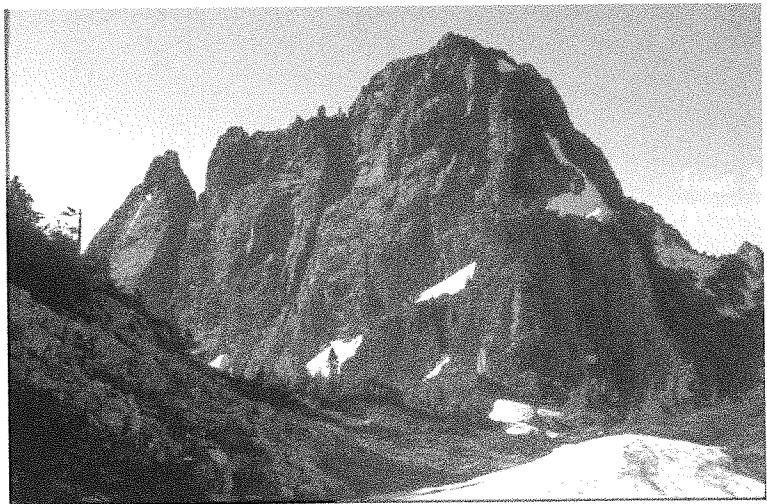
John Pratt

June 28-29

Sandy Briggs and I caught the 8:00 am ferry from Swartz Bay and after a tedious and roundabout trip, set off from the car at the W. Canyon parking lot in Golden Ears Provincial Park at 12:55 pm. Our packs were very heavy (ropes, tent, pitons and hammer, etc., etc.) and it was an extremely hot early afternoon. Fortunately, we had a good deal of shade from the trees for most of the way, but the walk up to our campsite atop Panorama Ridge was hot and tough (6-1/2 hours). The trail up onto that ridge from the old logging grade had been “improved” from a good, direct (if steep) trail to some much longer, meandering affair with a number of counter gradients. I wish some people would leave well alone.

We camped just down from the ridge top and placed the tent on a patch of snow we’d leveled out. I got cooking straight away and as soon as we’d eaten, I bedded down, figuring the remaining daylight would be best spent resting.

The next morning, we set off from the tent, in bright sunshine, at about 7:30 am and headed off along the ridge-top toward the shoulder of Golden Ears Mountain, passing the new emergency shelter on the way (the old one, a rat-infested mess at timberline has, I believe, since been torn down). From the high shoulder, one has to do a dispiriting 150 m drop down to where the NW ridge of Edge begins. I led the way along this for a while, passing over a narrow ‘fin’ of rock before entering a patch of steep krummholz to avoid a cliff; the ridge-top is regained beyond this. The crux of the ascent is an unpleasant gap in the ridge, which has to be negotiated on the left. Sandy led this and used a piton to protect himself. Not actually difficult, but not one of those places where you can afford an unroped tumble. One undignified move involving use of the knees occurs here, as I recall.



Edge Mountain from the col below Golden Ears. Photo: John Pratt

Once out of the gap there was easy access to a snow-slope, steep at the top, on which we were able to do a good portion of the ascent. At the top of this slope, a traverse brings one to the bottom of a small cliff. This cliff has to be climbed until one can traverse right into a steep, narrow gully. Once in the gully, all the real difficulties are over, although we did not know it at the time, of course. The gully is not too pleasant, having a lot of loose dirt, rocks and dead tree-trunks in it, but it is just a scramble, albeit a careful one as a stumble could be difficult to check. This gully terminates about 50 m below the ragged N-S running summit ridge. The true summit is to the S., and we arrived on top at 11:55 am. The weather was threatening to turn on us (we even had a few drops of rain!), so we took our summit pictures hastily and commenced the descent. The crux gap on the NW ridge was disposed of with a rappel, for which we used a piton. Sandy was, however, able to retrieve the piton he had used on the way up, so there was a net sacrifice of only one piton, which will be there for

the next party to rappel off (it is located vertically above the first place you can rappel down onto). Probably only an hour or so after this – although it seemed longer – we were back at our camp.

To cut a long – and very tedious – story short, we packed up our heavy loads and with only two short breaks, made it back to the car in 4 hrs 8 mins., arriving there at about

7:30 pm, having had a really tough 12h-plus day. With a liberal interpretation of the highway speed limits, Sandy managed to catch the 10:00 pm sailing to the Island and we pulled into my driveway at just a few minutes after midnight.

Participants: John Pratt and Sandy Briggs

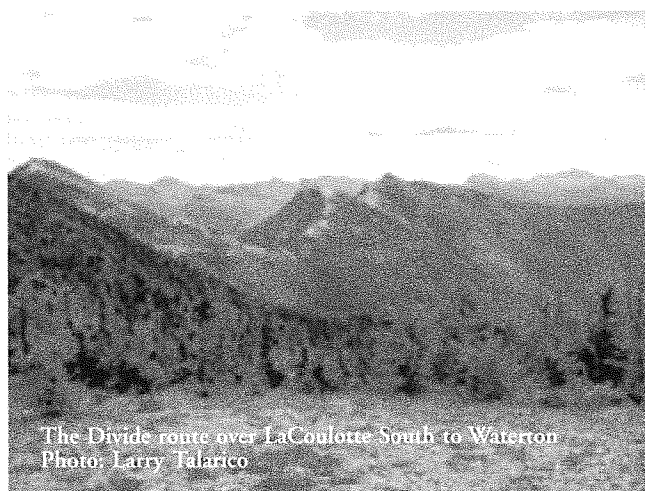
SOMEDAYS, WE CALLED IT THE G.D. TRAIL

Gil Parker

Early July

In early July, before the forest fire season was upon us, Larry Talarico and I walked, climbed and thrashed along the most southerly section of Canada's G.D. Trail. Parts of it are a trail, but I'd have to characterize it a *route!* Following the highest ridge (or near it) that separates west flowing waters from the east and northerly streams, it is truly the Great Divide. But it is not a continuous trail.

Starting at Coleman in the Crowsnest Pass, we walked 127 km (of the 154 km segment) in seven days, aborting to the Akamina Parkway and hitching a ride to Waterton. In the first few days we were in ATV /snowmobile/ranching country. Traversing Willoughby Ridge, we had to bushwhack to reach the ridge, then found a mile or so totally choked with deadfall.



The Divide route over LaCoulotte South to Waterton
Photo: Larry Talarico



Albert in tough going on the Willoughby Ridge.

Photo: Larry Talarico

We followed ATV trails, some roads and hitched a 5 km ride with a rancher to the newly expanded Castle Mountain Ski Resort. Then, two days with no trail as we yo-yoed up and down the bumps (to 2430 m) finally reaching a water source for a camp. After passing two wranglers (with horses tramping around in the stream) we climbed to decent trails through interesting geological formations, then down and through Waterton Park.

The west side of the Park is bracketed by a high ridge and dotted with beautiful lakes. Campsites were nearly vacant, perhaps because hikers from the road have to climb 960 m over a 2565 m pass to get there. It was bad enough going north-to-south. We spotted a dozen sheep

rams near the summit and enjoyed glacial views south across the USA border.

The guide book, *Hiking Canada's Great Divide Trail* by Dustin Lynx, is essential to finding the way, but beware; his maps have no contours or features, except GPS points and distances between. You need a GPS unit or topo maps, and you should have both!

These linear hikes focus the mind on walking, eating, sleeping (and your partner's idiosyncrasies). But reconnecting with the myriad hikers in the last 5 km down the Rowe Creek valley was almost as pleasant as the shower and first restaurant meal at the end.

Participants: Gil Parker and Larry Talarico

WADDINGTON AGAIN AND AGAIN

Katy Holm

August 4–14

1st try

In June 2002, Peter Holloway and I, both filled with consuming desires to climb Mt. Waddington, decided we could wait no longer. The decision was completely spontaneous, made on the Gabriola Island ferry as Pete was transporting me to my summer work base. The only time I could possibly take off work was June, and thus the trip needed to start IMMEDIATELY. We realized this was off-season, but sometimes dreams overshadow reality. A quick turn around and we changed course to head for the Eve River log dump (just south of Port McNeill, Vancouver Island), the most direct port of departure to access Knight Inlet. We loaded up our two small kayaks with ski gear, glacier gear, rock gear, ice gear, three weeks worth of food...too much gear! I felt like a chink in the brickwork of gear that filled my cockpit and was piled high on my deck. Extricating myself from the kayak was a delicate balancing act of shifting wedged pieces of gear without dropping them in the water, while slithering free from bondage.

Our kayaks slid into the ocean and we were off, to Waddington – yippee! ... But two weeks later we returned, sodden, deflated, and having learned many lessons:

1. In June it can rain so hard that oncoming squalls sound like waterfalls, and pelting rain droplets reflect off the ocean to sting you in the chin! Oh, we were so wet. Two weeks feeling tarred and feathered, needles and grit stuck to my damp body, the sleeping bag, the tent...everything!
2. Snow conditions are transitional in June. We knew this before departure, but we were hoping for a late season freeze. Upon reaching the toe of the Franklin Glacier, we received a reality check. We stared through pouring rain at a glacier half covered with soggy snow. Low clouds denied us mountains vistas, and warm temperatures indicated too high freezing levels. All alpine routes would

be out.

3. Too many sports = too much gear. Never again will I carry a 100 lb. backpack. And this time I mean it!

4. The Franklin River floods in June, burying any hope of traveling along gravel beds under a rushing torrent of brown water.

5. Aside from DENSE, full combat bush, the approach to the toe of the Franklin is short and easily done in two days, even with hideously heavy packs and skis to catch on foliage.

6. Knight Inlet is long, has large fetch, and funnels inflow/outflow winds. Eve River to the head of Knight Inlet can be paddled in two to three days with tail winds, but headwinds could easily turn the trip into a seven-day plus grind. We were lucky and managed to sail large portions of the Inlet. We clipped our kayaks together with carabiners, used a paddle for a mast, a nylon tarp for the sail, and jibed our way down the Inlet; what a rush when our kayaks hit hull speed, the bows sometimes submerging while plowing through wind waves.

7. Knight Inlet is bear country. We tried to avoid bears by never camping near salmon bearing rivers, but we were, at times, lax about hanging our food. On one particularly long day of kayaking we landed to make camp at 8:00 pm. All we wanted was to feed ourselves and crawl into bed. We sealed our hatches still containing food, and stretched spray skirts over cockpits to keep out the rain. Early the next morning a rhythmic banging woke us. A funny sight greeted our blurry eyes. A young black bear was bouncing, bouncing, bouncing on the trampoline like surface of my spray-skirt covered cockpit! I guess he smelled something good inside.

Besides grasping that snow conditions would not allow us

to accomplish what we had hoped, the realization that it could be a really LONG paddle home, and I had to be at work on time, forced us to turn around. So, the closest we came to Waddington was the toe of the Franklin, with Mystery Mountain hidden in the mist.

Both Pete and I would like to approach Waddington from the sea again. Knight Inlet is spectacular; it cuts deeply into the Coast Range, waterfalls tumble off towering rock faces crashing directly into the ocean, and snowy peaks beckon from above. The Franklin, a great tongue reaching out from Waddington, is banded with the combined strengths of many glaciers. What a spectacular route to approach the highest peak in British Columbia! Also, the approach up the Franklin is steeped in memories of the Mundays. Inspiration to many mountaineers, the Mundays tried and tried again to climb their Mystery Mountain. Oh well, maybe next time we will make it in from the ocean!

2nd Try

By Fall I was scheming as to how to return to try and climb Waddington. Reading Don Serl's article in "Fifty Favourite Climbs," I was captivated by the Waddington Range Traverse he completed with Peter Croft and Greg Foweraker in 1985. This would be a totally different style of trip than Peter's and my attempt from the sea. We would need to fly into the range in stable weather, and complete the traverse in five or six days. The technical nature of the route and exposure necessitated a light and fast approach.

We would climb as a team of three: Karen McNeill, Cecelia Mortenson, and myself. Traveling as a party of three brought many weight-saving benefits. As relatively small women, we fit snugly, but comfortably, into one four-pound two-person Gortex tent. We brought two sleeping pads, and packed only light weight food: instant oats and cornmeal for breakfast; bars, cliff shots, dried fruit, nuts, and beef jerky during the day; and yummy dehydrated soups and stews for dinner. Our rack was sparse, but safe, and followed the rack used by Don Serl, Peter Croft, and Greg Foweraker during their 1985 traverse of the Range. Mountain Hardwear outfitted us with football sized one pound, zero degree, sleeping bags, and spiffy, oh-so wicky clothes. My pack, containing ten days worth of food, glacier, and rock gear looked like a cragging pack – I was ecstatic. The pack weighed less than half what I had carried on our last attempt on Waddington!



Karen, Katy and Cecelia at Fury Gap.

Photo: Karen McNeill

August 4th, 2003, we flew with Mike King from Bluff Lake to Fury Gap. We hiked up the West Ridge, over Fireworks Peak, Herald Peak, and Men at Arms Peaks, all named by the Mundays during their many trips up the ridge. The quality of the snow was slightly disconcerting. Unconsolidated corn snow topped blue ice on steep slopes of the Men at Arms Peaks, making down climbing tenuous. The fall looked unappealing; a wild luge ride shooting through a gap onto the upper reaches of Regal glacier, and dropping over 200 m before the glacier's angle lessened. Although we knew that Don Serl and party had soloed most of the route in ideal conditions, we slowed to rope up descending the second pinnacle. By late afternoon we reached the base of the Angel Glacier where we set up camp. Bathed in pink evening light, the view of the Angel Glacier, cradled below Waddington's knife edged West Ridge and NW summit, was truly spectacular. We curled up in our sleeping bags, excited for a summit attempt the next day.

Early the next morning I was up and brewing tea. In the early dawn we departed, not the alpine start we had

intended. To drop onto the Angel glacier we crossed a particularly unnerving snow bridge. Crawling so as not to punch through, we sprawled our way across the slushy unconsolidated bridge. The Angel was relatively straightforward to climb and soon we were at the base of the NW summit. The views were spectacular. Sentinels over the Tiedemann Glacier, the strong buttresses of Combatant, Tiedemann, and Asperity beckoned to rock hungry fingers. We caught first glimpses of the summit tower of Waddington. To be so close to a summit that had captured my imagination for years was very exciting. But it was too late in the day to hope to summit the main tower. We had blown our alpine start and voted to return, saving our energy for an alpine start the next day. We were not particularly worried as we had anticipated delays and packed extra food for the Waddington portion of the trip. We counted the day as a *recce* and returned to bathe in the sun at base camp.

Upon reaching base camp Karen decided to lay out her sleeping bag and various other articles on the tent to dry in the sun. While it may have been sunny it wasn't calm, and ... "oh no!" the bag was off skipping across the glacier. I charged in hot pursuit, but always just out of reach, the bag finally lost me as it leapt a crevasse and disappeared down towards the depths of the Scimitar Glacier. Karen slept the night, and every night thereafter, feet tucked into her backpack, sandwiched between CC and I, and covered in down jackets. This loss did make nights a little chilly for down jacket donors and sleeping bag losers, but ah well, our packs were even lighter and we didn't mind cuddling. Karen didn't complain, or bemoan the loss of her brand new sleeping bag even once.

Keen to climb, we were up the next morning at 12:30 am. The weather and snow, however disagreed. An army of clouds was attacking us. Lenticular banners streamed off the tops of Waddington and Combatant, and a commotion of clouds marched up from the valleys, jostling for position amongst the peaks. For the next two days misty fingers swirled around our tent holding us in place. Warm temperatures made the first snow bridge up the Angel even more insecure, and so we stayed fixed, amusing ourselves. We occupied our time hyper-analyzing the weather, testing sizes of snow bollards, scanning the route, and sorting/re-sorting the food. It is amazing how entertaining little bits of wire and surgical gloves can become when tent bound for days. Barometers were an obsession, even if it was only blowing that could force the pressure to rise!

By day three at the base of the Angel, we were desperate to move. Completing the Waddington Range Traverse seemed unlikely given the unstable snow and weather. We knew

that even to climb Waddington we would need to start moving, any chance we got. So we packed up, putting hopes of traversing the Range behind us, and headed up the Angel Glacier to try and complete a traverse of the Waddington massif. Karen and CC took turns leading the way, efficiently setting up systems to safely navigate weak snow bridges, bergschrunds, and steep exposed slopes.

For the next few days our progress was repeatedly detained by low visibility. The bouts of high winds, snow, and constant swirling clouds did, however, serve the positive purpose of reminding us that changing route was the right choice. When the curtains of mist did part, views of a grand and dynamic landscape were revealed: crumbling towers of icefalls, a cavernous 10 m wide crevasse, tendrils of vapor twisting upwards in a thermal, tumbling glaciers, and freshly dusted shimmering peaks. In one break in the weather we scampered up the NW summit, enjoying classic views of the summit tower.

By day seven we were at the base of the summit tower, caught in another snowstorm. Luckily, silliness and positivism prevailed in our cozy yellow home. More food counts revealed diminishing food supplies. How long would we be willing to wait?

Day nine we woke up to perfect sunshine –yippee– but bitter high winds. Most of the fresh snow and rime appeared to have cleared off the route, but the ferocious winds threatened to make rock climbing a dangerously freezing experience. We continued in our preparations and debate. "Just to the notch!" was my motto. It would be easy to retreat from the notch if the winds were too high...and if the climbing was good? Upon getting on the rock we discovered something amazing. Close to the rock we were completely sheltered from the wind, and the rock felt warm under our fingers!

CC led off and Karen and I followed, simul climbing. At the notch I took the lead up the chimney. Stemming up the chimney axe in hand, tapping thin ice, mantling onto the chockstones, it all felt fantastic. Eras of shards of rope decorated the chimney, marking many ascents of Waddington, and a long history of caught rap ropes! After two pitches in the chimney we were on the snow, happy to see that the remaining slopes looked easy. Soon Karen was scampering up the last snow slope leading us to the top. The top of BC! This time I had made it. More accurately, our team had made it, an incredible adventure.

The next day we descended the Bravo Glacier to the Tiedemann Glacier. A quick radio call, the buzz of an approaching helicopter, and Mike whisked us out of the mountains. The swift transition felt strange and

disorienting, but we quickly adjusted to the King's hospitality, warm showers, clean clothes, and a bed.

Participants: Cecelia Mortenson, Karen McNeill and Katy Holm.

Acknowledgements: We are very grateful for generous support provided by the Helly-Hansen Mountain Adventure Award. This grant enabled us to fulfill a dream; without this award our trip would not have been possible. Mountain Hardwear generously provided high performance clothing and equipment, which we appreciated every day of the trip. Thank you Don Serl and Simon Richardson for taking the time to share your knowledge of the Waddington area.



Karen McNeill on the Bravo Glacier

Photo: Katy Holm

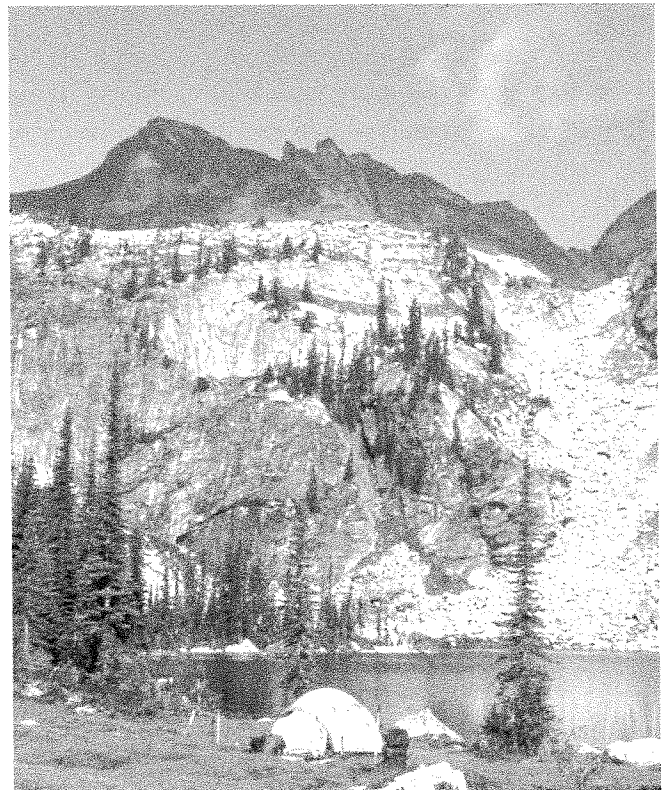
A DEVIL OF A GOOD TIME

Sandy Briggs

August 26-29

In old Norse mythology Valhalla is the name given to the hall assigned to those who have died in battle. In more modern usage the name has come to refer to a place assigned to persons worthy of special honour. It is also the name of a wonderful mountain range and provincial park in southeastern British Columbia. I certainly felt honoured to visit it last August. Only once did I feel slightly dead.

The eastern part of the park contains well-known and shapely peaks such as Gimli and Asgard Peak in the notorious Mulvey group. It seems as though someone was motivated by the in-some-sense heavenly nomenclature there to ensure that the fine sub-range to the immediate north represent the other, darker, side of the religiosity coin. Hence we have the Devils Range, containing such fine, if slightly unimaginative, designations as Mount Diablo, Satan Peak, Mount Mephistopheles and Lucifer Peak. (I don't think there's a Beelzebub yet.) I suppose it is possible that the same set of people who would not rent a room on the thirteenth floor would avoid visiting the Devils Range, but that would be unfortunate for them, for the Devils Range is a fun group of dramatic rocky peaks with much to recommend it.



"Demon Lake." and Trident Peak.

Photo: Sandy Briggs

The best access is from the popular Gwillim Lakes trail at the west end of the range. I went there on August 26th with my friends Martin Carver and Linda Kivi, both from the Nelson area. Just after the second Wigg Lake we descended into the upper Gwillim Creek valley and contoured eastward on vegetated talus, ascending finally to a beautiful tarn at 7100 ft below the highest mountain in the group, Devils Dome (2790m, 9150 ft). This was a fairly mellow five hours from the car. Martin had initially proffered the idea of checking out the Coven Lakes further east, but in the end we succumbed to more modest aspirations and left our visit to Coven Lakes for another time. We also succumbed to the local naming trend and began to refer to our lovely tarn as Demon Lake.

I do not need to tell you that it was a dry summer. British Columbia was practically on fire and some backcountry travel restrictions were already in place. The southern aspect of our range was practically devoid of snow, and the few remnant patches steadily poured their life-giving waters merrily down the rocks.

Our ascent the next morning to the Mephisto/Trident col would have profited from a couple of meters of late-spring snow pack, as the climb took us over a long boulder field



Devils Dome and False Dome, Valhalla Provincial Park.

Photo: Sandy Briggs

which kept us on the alert for traumatically teetering tonnage. After a bit of lunch we scrambled the short class 3+ ridge of Mephistopheles to its 2730 m (8955 ft) summit. We could see the smoke of distant fires, and we could also see the Mulvey group peaks in all their glory, albeit at a distance. Returning to the same col we then hiked and scrambled in the opposite direction to reach Trident Peak (2730 m) and its unofficially named neighbour bumplet Rosemary's Baby (2700m). Our descent route avoided the boulder field on its west side and led us, happy and tired, back to the home meadow where two newly-arrived friends were waiting, as planned, to greet us. We ate and chatted the evening away, long into the darkness. Mars, at its closest to Earth in 65000 years, shone brightly in the southern sky.

Thursday morning we five set off to climb Chariot Peak (2700 m) to the east. The approach involved a fair bit of steep side-hilling, some of which was on steep semi-stable talus, as well as a modicum of devious route-finding across the spur ridges. We hiked up to the broad rocky basin south of Chariot, itself a long sprawling affair, and began our scramble on the southeast ridge of our objective. At first we played hide-and-seek among car-sized boulders. Later we had to ascend a long slabby area that would likely not be fun if wet. In dry conditions it was necessary only to pick a good line and



Diablo Peak, Devils Range.

Photo: Sandy Briggs

scramble onward. After a short lunch stop we tackled the next step, an intimidating wall of loose rock which pretty much qualifies as your scout-leader's nightmare. Upon closer inspection, however, it was clear that an easy and relatively stable route could be followed by tending out to the right. We carefully went on. Finally another much easier step led to the true summit, where we paused a while for the usual photography session. Devils Dome, both the highest and the most difficult (grade II 5.5) in the range, loomed impressively to the west, while the slightly nearer eastern neighbours Mount Diablo and Banshee Peak exuded their own atmosphere of drama. The west ridge proved an easier and pleasant descent route, and we had put in a pretty fine nine hour day by the time we got back to our tents in the early evening.

On Friday Marty and KL and I set off for town while our friends stayed another day to scramble the sun-baked rock of nearby Mephisto. Upon arrival at the car we found a note, left that same morning, from the Park authorities saying that the park was now closed because of the fire hazard. I was happy to have been able to spend some time with my good friends and I was pleased to learn a little more about this province - to have the privilege of once more being able to savour the pleasures of the path less traveled.

Notes: In the official names on the map, neither Devils Range nor Devils Dome has an apostrophe.

Participants: Sandy Briggs, Martin Carver and Linda Kivi.

BLANSHARD'S NEEDLE

John Pratt

October 4-5

Reinhard Illner and I caught the 11:00 am sailing to the Mainland and after braving BC Ferries and the drive through the appalling urban sprawl east of Vancouver, finally parked the car at the start of the "Incline Trail" in Golden Ears Park. We began walking up this easy and well-marked - but very long - trail at about 3:15 pm. It was a grey, cloudy day low down, but at about 600 m or so, we broke through into clear skies. Nonetheless, we had limited daylight, this being October and at 6:20 pm or so, still in the trees, we decided we'd better camp, as at least there was a water-supply of a sort there (it had been a very dry summer). The water was almost brown (from tannin) and we figured it'd best be boiled first. It got dark just as we finished dinner and we then settled down to sleep, as there was nothing else to do. It was a warm, windless night, in fact the last good weekend of that long, hot summer, so it was good that we jammed that trip in before the weather turned and the daylight hours became too short! We left our camp (at the 1070 m level) after breakfast at about 7:35 am and pretty soon broke through the

trees up onto the broad top of Alouette Mountain, from where we got our first good look at Blanshard's Needle: it looked very impressive from this angle! The next bit was rather troublesome, as we lost the trail (if there was one past that point) and had to route-find. I led the way about 100 m down a wooded gully to a col between Alouette and the ridge on which the Needle is mounted. Across the col, we picked up an old climber's trail and with some



Blanshard's Needle from Alouette Mtn. Edge Mtn. at back and right. Photo: John Pratt

scrambling gained the Blanshard ridge, which we followed to the base of the rather abrupt summit tusk. The climbing proper begins with a low class 5 scramble (but exposed), which Reinhard led in a very professional manner and thereafter, it was just steep scrambling up through wooded bluffs and round corners to an exposed gap, which one has to cross on a narrow "gangway" – but it can be safely done unroped. Beyond this, there is another scramble (class 3-4 only) up to the summit, which we reached at 10:45 am. No longer in a hurry, we spent 40 minutes up there, having lunch and admiring the view. Golden Ears and Edge were clearly visible, of course, although the route Sandy and I took on Edge some months earlier was quite invisible, being on the other side of that mountain. Thinking of these two trips, it would be interesting to string them together, along with a quick side-trip up Golden Ears, as a traverse. The only unknown bits are what the N. ridge of Blanshard's



Blanshard's Needle from the summit of Edge Mtn.

Photo: John Pratt

and the S. ridge of Edge are like. The latter didn't look too bad, but much of the former was hidden by the convexity of the mountain.

We returned to our camp, reaching it sometime around 2:15 pm and were back at the car by 5:20 pm and home in Victoria that same night.

Participants: John Pratt and Reinhard Illner



MOUNTAIN NATURE SLIDE WINNER

ROCK PTARMIGAN

PHOTO: CHRIS SHEPHARD

SOUTH OF THE BORDER

THE LITTLE MATTER OF MT BAKER

Rick Hudson

June 7 - 8

For twenty-four years it's been on the 'to do' list, and never been done. And besides, I promised myself in 1968 when I climbed Kilimanjaro that I'd NEVER climb another volcano. It's just plod-plod-plod, and that's not mountaineering. It's barely hiking.

But, seasons pass, and horizons narrow. And still, Mt Baker (3,285 m) stood across the straits. As the kids grew up and left home, the slow urge to stand atop its broad white summit and look at the Saanich Peninsula, rather than the other familiar way around, slowly grew from a gentle nag to an irritating urge.

Christmas 2002 clinched it. I received a voucher from my 23-year old daughter, promising to guide the bearer up Mt. Baker, on the weekend of my choice. A quarter century of procrastination ended.

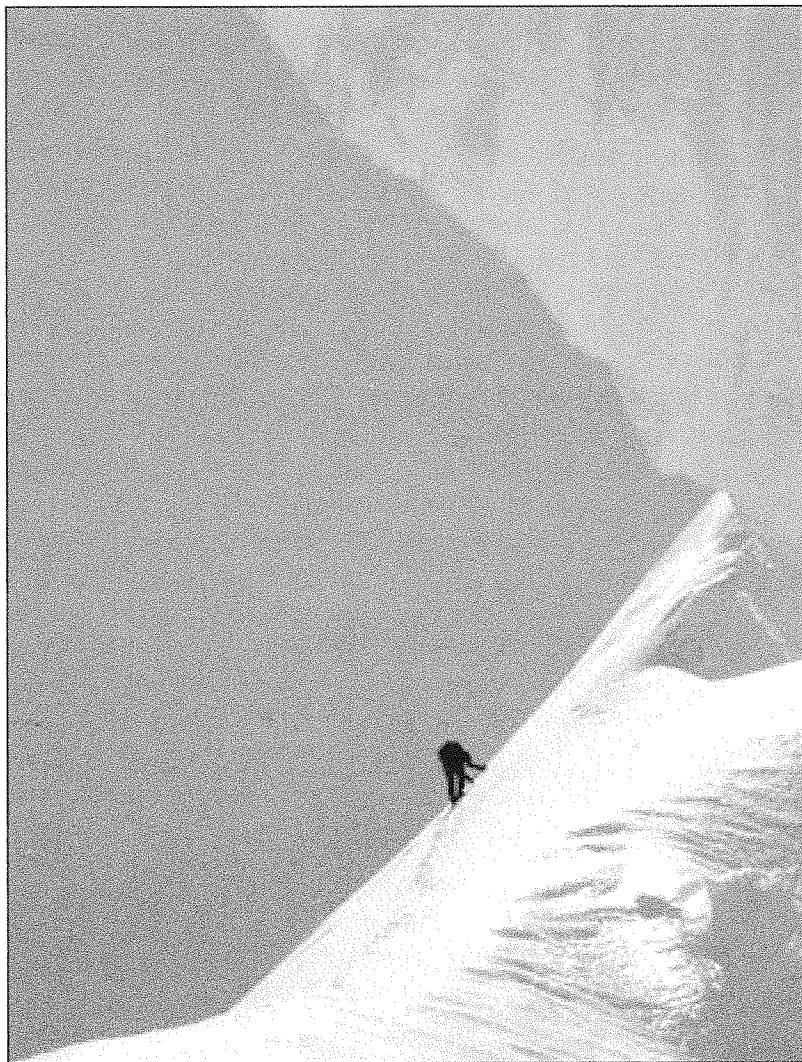
June is a good time. There's still plenty of snow pack, but the days are long and the weather fair. The party had swelled to 4, as Jacqui had invited two UBC bucks to join us, which spread the weight further. Jer was a tiger in tiger's clothing, and something of a legend in the VOC. Tim was a medical student who put himself through school as a summer firefighter. Strong, both of them.

We reached the road head (1,130 m) for the Heliotrope Ridge Trail about noon on Saturday, and a few hours later set up camp on a patch of gravel between the glaciers at Hogsback (2,000m). The air was warm. So warm, in fact, that we were worried it might not freeze that night.



The crux pitch on the North Ridge involves an 80m snow and ice pitch that can be simul-climbed.
Photo: Rick Hudson

Long before dawn the next morning we were off, heading for the North Ridge (the Beckey Route), which involved a 3-hour traverse across the Coleman and Roosevelt Glaciers, weaving in and out of the many and obvious crevasses. The air was still warm, but the snow firm, and we made good time, popping out into the bright sun on the ridge at 8:00.



Threading through the Seracs just before the summit plateau.
Photo: Rick Hudson

The North Ridge is broad and un-crevassed, but half way up, the route is blocked by the rounded snout of the Upper Roosevelt Glacier. Here we turned Jer loose on the ice slope. He led a smooth line, the ice tinkling down the slope past us, the sun coming and going as clouds initially enveloped and then vanished around us. The slope was not too exposed, and the ice in excellent condition. Simul-climbing, we soon had the 80 m section below us, and the full panorama of the upper mountain began to appear.

Above, a long broad (but calf-strainingly steep) snow slope led to a series of massive seracs. Tracks led left and right through them. We chose the more scenic route, and then quite suddenly, we were on top. A broad level area, about the size of several city blocks, stretched away. Off in the distance to the south a 10 m bump (Mt. Sherman) constituted the highest point, its smooth snow trampled and cut by countless boots and skis.

The resemblance to a city block was not inappropriate. It was a glorious Sunday, with little wind and breathtaking vistas in all directions. People ebbed and flowed across the top. Skiers chatted, solemn guides led roped groups in Indian file, yuppies crowed to spouses on their cell-phones. It was just another day in Seattle, and I half expected to see a Starbucks franchise.

Jer had a warning about getting the right descent route. Earlier that spring he had missed the drop-off spot by 100 m, and ended up taking 36 hours to get back to camp. In good visibility, we didn't make that mistake this time, and followed a wide line of pot-holed plunge steps down the tripper route. It took two hours back to the tent for afternoon tea, and the cheerful realization that I had finally tidied up the little matter of Mt Baker on the 'to do' list.

Participants: Jer Frimer, Tim Doty, Jacqui Hudson, and Rick Hudson.

MT. OLYMPUS – RACING THE RAIN

Tony Vaughn

September 5 – 8

Only a week to go to the scheduled four-day trip to Mt. Olympus and we had a group of eight with six on the wait list. Gradually as departure time grew closer, the party began to dwindle and by the time the weekend weather forecast came out we were well into the wait list. The weather called for rain Saturday night, showers and thunderstorms for Sunday. Being the Hoh Valley rainforest this likely meant torrential rain. Soon the wait list was used up and serious consideration was given to postponing the trip. However there were still three

optimists who wanted to go, so the trip was on with one slight modification – we would climb on Saturday instead of Sunday and beat the rain.

Friday September 5th: Shortly after 6.00 am we were rolling across the straits of Juan De Fuca through thick fog aboard the M.V.Coho, bound for Port Angeles and trying to store up rest for the forthcoming grueling trip. Following the 1 ¾ hour drive to the trailhead at 575 ft, we paid our fees and obtained permits. We shouldered our heavy packs and started out at 10:30 am for the 17.5 mile (28 km) hike into base camp at Glacier Meadows (4200'). Knowing we had a long way to go we moved as fast as we could manage with the big packs we were carrying. Slowly the miles passed as did the camp sites, Happy Four, Five mile Island, Olympus Ranger station (where we initially had planned on camping the first night before the threat of rain), and Lewis Meadows. After 12.2 miles of relatively flat travel along a beautifully maintained trail, under a

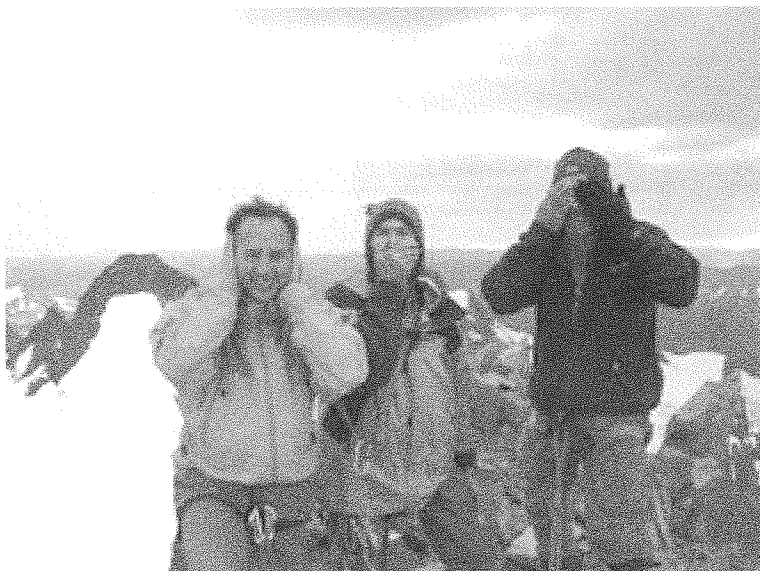


Tony Vaughn approaching Snow Dome (out of sight on the right). In the background (L – R) are Mt. Olympus East Pk. (2,371m), Middle Pk. (2,417m), and False Pk. Photo: Rick Hudson.

canopy of huge trees which kept us protected from the blazing sun, with only an elevation gain of 505' we reached Stove Hill Camp. From here the trail started steeply upwards gaining 3200 ft in 5.3 miles.

On reaching a bridge a couple of hundred feet above a spectacular gorge where the Hoh River and Glacier Creek meet, we decided to go only as far as Elk Lake (15.2 miles 2650 ft) and make an early start for the summit the next morning. Thus at 6 pm with blistered feet, we set up camp and set the alarm for 4.30 am.

Saturday, September 6th: We were up and away by 5.20 am, still tired and sore from the day before, climbing upwards, lost in our own thoughts behind the circular glow of our headlamps. We passed through Glacier Meadows (2.3 miles, 4200 ft) at 7 am. We registered for the climb, giving our return time as 6 pm, then carried along the lateral moraine for a further 0.9 miles. The lower end of the Blue Glacier was 150 ft below, from here looking like



Three wise monkeys atop Mt Olympus (2,427m).
Glenn Raynor, Tony Vaughn and Herbert Harzan. Photo: Rick Hudson

badly broken bare ice. Ahead was a party of two who seemed to be having no trouble crossing the glacier, so we followed finding the going remarkably fast and easy. On the other side we climbed up scree and over rock to the base of the Snow Dome. Here we put on our crampons again and, after a short rest, climbed up the steep snow to the top of the Dome. Here we roped up and followed a well worn boot track in the snow heading south towards Five Fingers Ridge, through a notch on the east end of the ridge, and on to the upper glacier separating West Peak (7965 ft) and Middle Peak (7930 ft). From here we traveled up the glacier on the south-easterly side of the ridge, over the false summit at the west end of the ridge, and down into a notch between the false summit and the West Peak. From here the route went up steep snow to the rock on the east side of the summit block. After dumping our packs, ice axes and crampons, we scrambled up loose rock to a ledge below a steep chimney which Rick neatly climbed

belayed from below. He reached the summit at 1.30 pm and belayed the rest of us up. Here we met the two-man party that was ahead of us, both Americans from Bellevue, Washington.

Most of the trip so far had been under partly sunny skies but now the clouds were building up. After a brief light hail shower, the sky became noticeably ominous with lenticular clouds rushing across the sky in the near distance. It was time for quick photos, handshakes and a fast rappel, then we were back in the snow and down-climbing into the notch. Instead of going over the false summit, we bypassed it by traversing the end of the ridge and down to the upper glacier. Down we plodded at a steady pace, back over Snow Dome and across the bare ice of Blue Glacier, up onto the moraine, and past a family of mountain goats which barely gave us a passing glance. Back at Glacier Meadows we signed out at 6 pm as anticipated, and ran into a

heavy rain shower which drove us into an emergency shelter for a short break. By 7:15 pm we were back in camp at Elk Lake, tired but happy.

Sunday, September 8th: We were up at 7 am and away down the trail by 8.25, once more with heavy packs made even heavier by wet tents and a wet rope. At least the first three miles were downhill and the rest was fairly level. We reached the trailhead at 2.45 pm and were away by 3 pm. By now the rain had started coming down steadily so, once more, we had avoided the worst of it. We reached Port Angeles at 4.45 pm and squeezed onto the 5.15 ferry to Victoria. We arrived home sore all over but happy after a very strenuous trip having covered 52 miles on foot since 10.30 am on Friday morning, reaching an altitude of almost 8,000 ft.

Participants: Tony Vaughn, Rick Hudson, Herbert Harzan, Glenn Raynor.

DISTANT OBJECTIVES

CHINA (TIBET)

LITHANG – MOST SECRET MT. GENYEN TREK

Albert Hestler

July 26 – August 28

Since retiring several years ago, I have been travelling to many parts of the world. I have called it 'filling in spots on the map'. In reality, it has been a long-held interest in foreign countries, their people and cultures. I tend to favour places which for one reason or another are difficult to get to, be it geographic location, physical hardship, lack of infrastructure, etc. As a result, these places are not overrun with tourists (yet); also, one can still enjoy the interaction with local people without the annoying demands for gifts or baksheesh, which inevitably seem to follow prolonged contact with western tourists. I have been lucky in that most of my recent trips have been the result of information which happened to come my way accidentally. This trip too falls in this category.

Last year I travelled with Gil Parker on an ACC trip to Georgia (Caucasus). One of the participants was Sherry Kirkvold who, I discovered, had a remarkable history of travels in foreign places. She had previously been on several sightseeing trips in the provinces of Yunnan and Sichuan in China, which border the TAR (Tibetan Autonomous Republic) i.e. Tibet. Straddling this border is the region of Kham, which covers the eastern third of the Tibetan plateau and is closely connected with central Tibet in culture and history. Those Tibetans who are living within the political boundaries of China's provinces of Yunnan and Sichuan are considered to be an ethnic minority group. (There are 24 such groups in Yunnan province alone, out of over 50 in all of China.) They have a lot more freedom than the Tibetans in Tibet, e.g. pictures of the Dalai Lama are displayed openly in temples and private homes. Also, the one-child policy does not apply to them.

Sherry had fallen in love with the area and thought it would be a great place for trekking, to go beyond the towns and

highways, to visit the remote high valleys with "old growth forest, pristine alpine lakes, hot springs, picturesque Tibetan villages and nomads". Also, she had heard about an annual horse festival in Lithang, which intrigued her very much. She had stayed in touch with a young man, Dakpa Kelden, whom she had met on a previous trip as a guide and who was in the process of establishing his own tour company. The result was a plan whereby Dakpa would organize a trip in Kham, and Sherry would gather a group of about 8 interested people in Canada. The trip itinerary included (a) a visit to the horse festival, (b) a trek on an ancient pilgrimage route to Mt. Genyen, and (c) a trek to the grasslands inhabited by nomads. I signed on as a 'very interested party' – I just found the trip description irresistible:

"Lithang is one of the highest permanent settlements on earth at 4015m/13,173'. Lithang is known for one of the largest horse racing festivals in Tibet. At the horse festival, there will be horse racing, demonstrations of stunts from horseback and dance competitions among troupes arrayed in regional finery. With thousands of tents surrounding the Lithang grassland, the local folks call their place City of Tents."

Mt. Genyen (6204m/20,350'): For many it's a long and arduous journey, but in the heart of pilgrims it is a trek to untouched holy land. Situated in southwest Lithang county, the history of Mt. Genyen dates back to the 12th century.

The founder of the Kagyu sect, Karmap Dusum Khyenpa (1110-93) chose his hermitage cave in the Shambala Valley and later founded Neygong Monastery.

Mt. Genyen and the Shambala Valley is considered to be a sacred pilgrimage site of the Dharma deity, Dangchoup. Each year numerous villagers and nomads trek to this holy region to worship the sacred deities.”

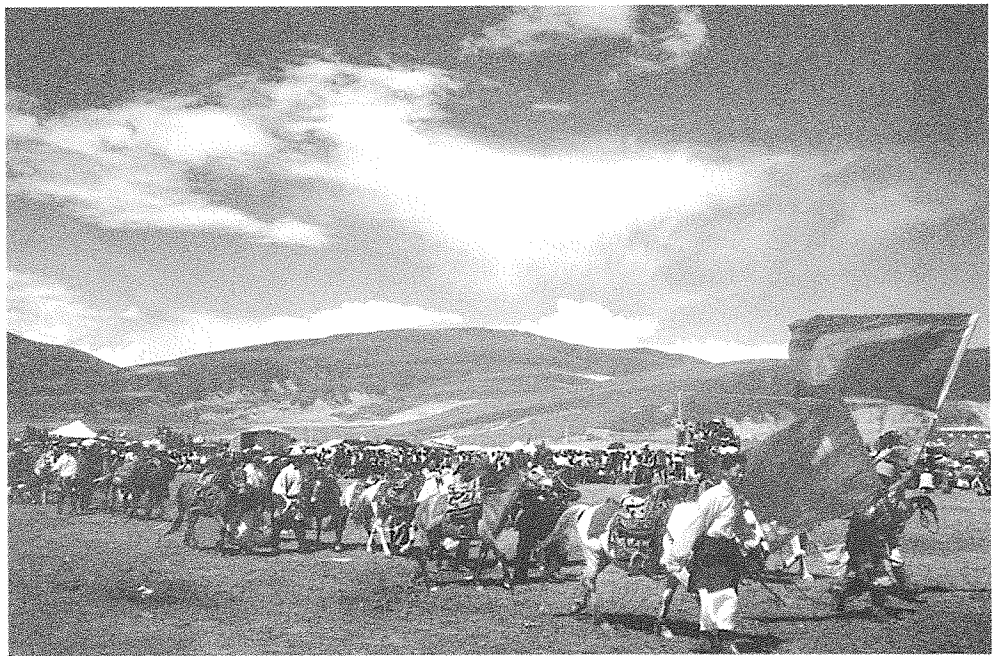
It all came together in the end, though there were some initial difficulties, mainly related to SARS. We weren't too concerned about becoming infected, but didn't fancy the prospect of being quarantined for 10 days upon arrival; or finally getting to Lithang only to find that the horse festival had been cancelled. But none of this happened. Eventually, there were exactly 8 of us from Victoria, Brian and Diane Pinch being the only other ACC members.

On July 26th, at 2:55 in the morning, we flew from Vancouver to HongKong and after a change of planes directly to Kunming, the capital of Yunnan. Next day we were off again to Zhongdian where we were met by our guides Tenzin (Lobsang Tenzin) and TeNor (an acronym of his real name Tenzing Norbu), who welcomed us with white scarves. (By way of explanation: names tend to be very confusing, not the least because of difficulties in the phonetic spelling of names pronounced differently in Chinese, Tibetan or local dialects. Place names are even more difficult; e.g. the town called Zhongdian by the Chinese is known as Gyalthang by the Tibetans, but the airport has been renamed Shangri-La for promotional purposes. Go figure)

We spent 2 days in Zhongdian, in part to get acclimatized as the town is already at 3500m/11,483'. Of course we went sightseeing in the town, visited the market, and outlying areas such as Shudu Lake and Songsentling Monastery. This monastery has practically been rebuilt over the last 20 years as it was pretty much destroyed during the Chinese Cultural Revolution. We found evidence of this destruction throughout our travels. The town showed an uninspiring blend of Chinese/Tibetan architecture, but gave us a good introduction to the available facilities and sanitary conditions, also the local cuisine (i.e. basically Chinese food with lots of rice

and noodles, cooked in a wok, and eaten with chopsticks). The next 2 days we spent travelling over very rugged terrain, ascending and descending a series of 1000+m vertical inclines, along the upper Yangtse River, to Charteng (overnight) and finally Lithang. We travelled in a convoy of 3 jeeps, holding 4 persons each, plus a truck with camping gear and food. Some sections of the road were paved, others were simply gravel or mud, which caused the occasional interruption because of slides or flooding. An ordinary bus or passenger car would have had trouble getting through. The highest point was NaLa pass at something over 4600m/15,100'. Some of us started taking Diamox to ease the relatively quick ascent to the higher altitudes.

Lithang is definitely more Tibetan than Chinese in character, but much larger than I had expected from the description. There are several fine restaurants, also many shops which carry almost everything we had seen in other shops in other towns; however, basic services like banks, telephones or e-mail cafes are rare and mostly non-operative. There is also an old monastery, again largely rebuilt, where we were able to witness a special celebration with many monks chanting and reciting prayers. Inside were many beautiful statues of Buddhas, gods and demons. The smell and smoke of the ever-burning yak-butter lamps permeated the entire complex. Another temple with a forbidding wall around it seemed fairly new; it featured an unusual Burmese-style white stupa, but also contained huge



Horse Festival in Lithang.

Photo: Albert Hestler

galleries of prayer wheels which were turned by devout followers while circumambulating in clockwise direction. The dresses worn by the people were definitely Tibetan in cut, though there were many wonderful designs which I could only guess were the traditional garb of the different tribes who had come to town because of the horse festival. Yes, the horse festival was everything I had hoped for, i.e. a rare opportunity for westerners to see the local people come together in games and celebrations, thus providing a living display of their customs and culture. The huge flat valley outside Lithang was the site of hundreds of tents, where the visitors lived for the week-long festivities. The tents were big and spacious to accommodate whole families, some were decorated with beautiful designs. It was an impressive sight, especially as all the tents were basically white whereas the nomad tents we saw later were black. The tent city provided places to eat, a few stalls to buy trinkets for the children, and a small midway to lose one's money in games of skill and luck. But the heart of the tent city was the arena in front of the grand stand where all the activities took place.

On the morning of Friday, August 1st (I couldn't find out whether the day of the week or the day of the month was the determining factor) we attended the grand opening ceremonies, a colourful spectacle indeed. Dignitaries made speeches in Chinese, Tibetan and a smattering of English, even welcoming the handful of visitors from outside China. (I counted only 6 other westerners apart from our group, one of them a photographer from National Geographic who was shooting a documentary to be aired on TV some time in 2004.) Then there came a cavalcade of horsemen

galloping in a cloud of dust the full length of the arena, led by a man with a large red banner. When returning, they passed on foot in front of the grand stand, and both rider and horse were draped in the traditional white scarves signifying welcome and blessing. This was followed by the entry of different groups of ethnic dancers, who first performed individual dances, finally joined in a spectacular choreography of movement and colour which covered the

whole arena. Wow

That afternoon and all of next day were given over to horse races and displays of horsemanship. There was a long-distance race where the contestants started en masse and, on a given signal, thundered off in the direction of the town of Lithang, several miles away. The winners were announced several hours later. Then there were individual races, though I was unable to find out whether the contestants were judged by speed, their style of riding or control of their horses (some of them were pretty wild and ornery critters). Of course, there were displays of skill. Officials would lay scarves on the ground and riders had to pick them up in full gallop. I figured that the long sleeves on the riders' jackets prevented them from breaking their fingertips and nails, though several riders had their heads knocked on the ground, and a few were thrown when their horses stumbled because of the sudden shift in weight. Another event involved individual riders shooting at targets with bow and arrow. But we saw no team games such as 'buzkashi', the polo-like game played with a headless sheep



Albert in the Shambala Valley with Mt. Genyen upper left.

or goat, popular in parts of Central Asia. Exciting as the races were, I found it equally interesting to simply wander behind the scenes, i.e. in the staging area and among the watching crowd, which provided wonderful opportunities for picture-taking. And that I did in spades.

After three days in Lithang, and having acclimatized a bit more to the altitude, we finally boarded our jeeps again and set off on a 6-hour journey to the starting point of our

trek at the village of Danghla. The road was narrow and rough, and required the occasional repair by the drivers to make it passable. It lead over the GaraLa pass at 4760m/15,612' to the village at 3610m/11,840'. We stopped for lunch in the middle of nowhere along the route, and found there a woman and her young daughter who had spread mats on the ground and had brought bread, cheese and soft drinks. It turned out that Tenzin had asked this woman, a distant cousin of his, to lay on this picnic specifically for us. She lived in a valley nearby and had walked 4 hours that morning to intercept us. The girl had accompanied her because neither of them had ever seen westerners before. One can imagine the difficulties which Tenzin had faced to get the message to them, or indeed to make any of the necessary arrangements, because there is no telephone or radio communication. Maybe there still exists the equivalent of the ancient 'jungle telegraph'.

In Danghla we found a dozen yaks waiting for us, together with two yak herders (Lontso, an uncle of Tenzin, and Sutrum, who had just completed several years of studies at a monastery). Our cook Andhu had come with the supply truck. The camp supplies and personal gear were quickly loaded onto the yaks and off we went that same afternoon, hiking about two hours up the Shambala valley. Words won't do justice to describe the scenery, so all I can say is that it was stunning and that it promised to be a superb experience. We helped set up the tents that night and familiarized ourselves with the camp routine, which came in very handy later in less propitious circumstances, e.g. cold, wind and rain. The next day we continued up the valley and soon had our first glimpse of Mt. Genyen with its snowcapped peak. It is a very beautiful mountain indeed.

Tenzin, who had spent several years in a monastery himself, was very good in explaining all the important features along the way, the stupas, chortens, mani walls and other sacred places such as springs, rocks and caves. We came across many sites of ruins which had been monasteries housing literally thousands of monks, but had all been destroyed during the Chinese Cultural Revolution. We found that only one monastery, the Neygong Jhamchupling Monastery, had been rebuilt and was now occupied by just a handful of monks. The surrounding village was something like a retirement haven for old folks from the surrounding area. We stayed overnight in the village, in a house owned by one of Tenzin's many cousins. As a matter of fact, we found that this large network of Tenzin's family connections would open many a door or tent-flap throughout our trek and allow us entry into the normal daily life of the people living in this part of the world.

Next day we followed the Najur River upstream, through

colourful alpine meadows occupied by grazing yaks. At the Nephu Gompa only one building remained among the ruins of the former monastery. It was bare on the inside and the tin roof had partially collapsed. Tenzin produced a log ladder from somewhere and we climbed up under the roof. There we found a treasure trove of small wooden carvings (a horse's head and many Buddhas) and the charred remains of old manuscripts. Nearby among the ruins and loosely stacked against the remaining walls I discovered some slate tablets which had highly artistic engravings of Buddha, a departure from the more usual mani texts. To me, this was one of the highlights of the trip - but then, give me a set of ruins, anywhere and any kind, and I am in my element. We continued our trek and, after crossing the river barefoot, camped near an area where holy men had lived and meditated in caves. Later in the day we climbed up a moraine to Jampa Latso Lake, which lies underneath a mountain known as 'Future Buddha'. Having slowed down somewhat over the years, I decided to start ahead of the group. Tenzin asked Sutrum to accompany me. Although we didn't speak each others' language, we established a comfortable rapport - Sutrum's serene manner and wide smile made me feel perfectly safe and injected the sense that we were indeed on a pilgrimage together.

On day #4 of the trek we hiked up the valley to the end of the pilgrimage route at Karpuma Rock (4675m/15,334'). Prayer flags were strung everywhere, but most notable of all was a pile of items which the pilgrims had discarded upon arrival at their goal. There were scarves, belts, bangles, bracelets, daggers, etc. but predominantly wooden paddles which were worn by the serious devotees on their hands while they covered the whole length of the route in a series of prostrations (which could take several weeks). We turned around and made our way back down the valley on the other side of the river, overnighiting once near Nephu Gompa, then in the meadows of Tabathang, or the 'tiger's skin'.

Then the rains started. Well, it didn't rain all the time, but when it did, it came down in buckets and the rivers were in full flood. On one occasion we had to ford a river on horseback. For the next two days we followed the Tasanki River to the Rhati area, from where we could almost see the border with Tibet. Then followed five days where each morning we climbed across a high pass (the highest being about 4875m/16,000') and descended down into a valley for our nightly camp. That's where we encountered the nomads, living in their black tents and looking after their yaks, sheep and goats. However, they are not nomads in the sense that they migrate with their animals over a wide area; it's more the lifestyle common to people living in the



Tibetan Nomads

Photo: Albert Hestler

mountains anywhere, i.e. they have permanent settlements in the lower valleys, but move with their herds to higher pastures in the summer. Again, Tenzin's family connections allowed us to visit the people in their own quarters and enjoy their hospitality. We would invariably be offered bread, yogurt, cheese and yak-butter tea (which could best be described as an 'acquired taste'). One end of the tent would be occupied by an open fireplace where kettles with milk were on the boil; the other end usually contained a small altar, not infrequently including a picture of the Dalai Lama. Mats, bedding and other supplies were stashed around the edges under the tent flap; dried meat, cheese and bags of staple foods would hang from the ceiling. More and more we saw instances of modern life, such as radios which were powered by small solar panels placed on the roof. But the friendliness we experienced remained old-fashioned and was overwhelming. I can only hope that we also left a favourable impression of us white folks, an unknown people from outside their world. As Tenzin said, we travelled where no westerners have travelled in living

memory, and where many people have never seen a white face. That is an unforgettable experience – and somewhat of a responsibility, too.

The last two days we hiked down the Kumpa River valley and, after a total of 14 days on the trek, arrived at the village of Donjung Rina where we spent the last night in tents. We said a heartfelt good-bye to Latso whose job it was to return the yaks to the original village. I think that we all had become very fond of Latso, the living embodiment of a Tibetan nomad. Then we travelled 2 days on the same jeeps, with the same drivers, completing our circuit when we rejoined

our initial route in the village of Ado. There we visited the impressive Rothak Monastery, built on a hillside somewhat in the style of the Potala Palace, also in the process of reconstruction. We stayed overnight at Derong, which invariably gave rise to the wisecrack whether we could possibly be going 'de wrong way'. We weren't.

We made it safely back to Gyalthang, our final night in China and last opportunity to spend any left-over yuans. Khampa Caravan, our tour company, arranged a magnificent farewell dinner in the Songtsam Hotel, where we celebrated our departure, toasted the successful completion of our trip, and said good-bye to Andhu, Sutrum and the drivers. We bade a fond farewell to Tenzin and TeNor at the airport the next day. They honoured us with white and yellow scarves which we proudly wore as we finally made our way through the security checkpoint into the drab world of air transportation. It had been a once-in-a-lifetime adventure which I shall not forget. A well-meant thank-you to all the people who made it possible

BIOGRAPHY

JOHN S.T. GIBSON

by Judith Holm

Climbing biography #1 - in celebration and appreciation of our Vancouver Island Section ACC members and the roles mountains play in their lives

An early telephone conversation between John Gibson and myself began somewhat like the following. However, in condensing for brevity it is hard to do justice to John's understatement and modesty in his admirable responses. As you read this, reflect on the fact that John was born in 1915.



Admiring the view from the Gibson's property. John, Judith and Shiloh.
Photo: Leslie Gordon

Judith "You have climbed extensively on the Island and I am interested to learn more about your climbing history, as I'm working on creating biographical files for our Section Archives."

John "If you will email me some requests I'll look up the records in my diary. I have always kept a diary...I also have a typed list of every climb I made on the Island, with the dates and my companions on the climb. I have a scanner.

I'll scan and email this to you if you like...."

At 88 years young, John is our eldest Section member. As of 2003, he has been an ACC member 43 years. He is second only to Syd Watts (1952) as our longest standing Section member. John was also a member of the British Alpine Club from 1939 to 1970.

During his childhood and early teens in Britain, John enjoyed plenty of hill-walking with his mother, younger sister, relatives and friends. John's father climbed, but sadly

he died in WW 1 when John was two years old. Several of his father's family also climbed, and John's Godfather was R.L.G. Irving. In his later teens John began climbing in the English Lake District, Wales and Scotland. He had 3 summer holidays climbing, mostly guideless, in the Alps (1937-39). In 1942 the RAF posted John to Alberta as a flying instructor. He spent all his leaves climbing or skiing in the Rockies, and taught the Army a mountaineering course, headquartered at the Stanley Mitchell hut in Little Yoho.

In 1947 Mary and John Gibson and their infant son Peter, emigrated to Canada, sponsored by Mrs. Wheeler, wife of the late A.O. Wheeler. With an honours degree (Oxford) in zoology and through Ferris Neave, John obtained a position at the Pacific Biological Station in Nanaimo. However, while working up the coast near Bella Bella he observed that fishing seemed to be more profitable than biology! Mary,

too, is adventurous and capable and, following a trial summer of gill-netting, they decided they liked the way of life. In due course, this rather courageous couple bought a salmon troller and learned the necessary skills, came down the west coast of the Island, decided Kyuquot was a good spot to live, located a house and a strongly built chicken house and rafted them across the inlet to the site where they rebuilt their home. From this base they home-schooled Peter for the majority of his school years (this

they did very successfully indeed) and commercially fished from 1948-1967. It was a lifestyle far from their British Public School roots, yet they chose it and adapted, and I think that their backgrounds serve them well.

As they trolled, John observed the Vancouver Island peaks with the eyes of an artist and explorer, noting mountains he would one day climb and paint. In John's home are his oil paintings of Island mountains; with this article we are pleased to be able to include some reproductions of John's beautiful pen and ink drawings (15 in complete set).

Following is one excerpt from John's carefully written diary entries, which include detailed descriptions of each climb. I chose this example because the route description of this mountain has not been published in the *Island Bushwhacker* or *Island Alpine*, yet it is of interest because it is the highest point on the Brooks Peninsula. These diary entries are a rather rare and valued source of archival information, made all the more useful because John is scanning and making a CD of his first ascents and memorable climbs. At the time of writing, I think it is at least as rare - possibly even a form of *First Ascent* - that John not only regularly uses an up-to-date computer but also scans with his *second* scanner and has created an adapter in order to scan the old slides which are larger!

1954

Solo ascent of point 2735 (or 3744) on Brooks Peninsula reached from Pedlar's Cove. The little anchorage behind Jacobsen Point on Brooks Peninsula near entrance to Nesparte Inlet

"Oct. 3, Sun. I got up at 5.45, had breakfast, and then went ashore (Mary nobly got up to come with me, so she could take the dinghy back). I set out at 6.25 to make another attempt on the mountain which I didn't get up in June (see June 28) because of mist. This time it was a fine clear morning, and stayed clear all day. I started by roughly the same route as that taken in June, and took 2 hours to reach the point at which I turned back before. This time I continued along the ridge, which was not good going at all, owing to dense bush wherever one wanted a step - those gnarled little juniper bushes are awful nuisances, with branches at waist height. Every now and again I could look out above them and have a clear

view though I couldn't see my own feet through the foliage. After a while I descended off the ridge to the North, and found considerably better going in the big trees about 100 feet below. I traversed along in this fashion until I had bypassed most of the ups and downs of the narrow part of the ridge and got back onto it where it broadened out to rise towards the main summit (unnamed but marked 2735 on the chart). I at last emerged above the last bush, onto the bare summit at 10.35 - just 4 hours after starting. The view was all that I had hoped for. I could see everything clear from Estevan Point to Triangle Island. The mountains on Vancouver I. prevented me from seeing across to the mainland. The bare ridges on Cape Cook Peninsula looked lovely to walk on, if only one could get at them - they are farther from anchorages than the summit I was on. I saw two large lakes which are not marked on the chart. One was in the hollow to the NW of my mountain, it drained into Brooks Bay, the other was south of it, and drained by the creek which comes out on the beach just west of Pedlar's Cove. I stayed there three quarters of an hour, then started down by same route as ascent. The mountain had been climbed by surveying party in 1948 - I found their plaque on the summit (penalty for removal - 7 yrs imprisonment). It was nicely cemented onto the rock so I did not attempt to qualify for the 7 years. I got back to the beach at Pedlar's Cove at 8.25 - four hours on the way down. It takes just about as long fighting one's way through that bush going down as going up - particularly as I encountered some bad bits which I missed on the way up, and took time off for 2 meals, on the way down. Mary and Peter were rowing around & came & picked me up..."

In 1972 John climbed this peak again with his son Peter. In 1967 John and Mary retired from fishing, moved to their present rural acreage SW of Duncan and built their

home. Also in 1967, Eric Brooks invited John to participate in the Yukon Alpine Centennial Expedition. This year marks the beginning of John's return to active climbing, exploring the mountains of Vancouver Island with Syd Watts and other friends.

Leslie Gordon and I very much enjoyed visiting Mary and John Gibson (29/11/03) at their lovely home (see photo taken on their property). John kindly agreed to our recording the interview for the VI Section Archives. This recording (with a transcript) and all the other material from John will be kept in a biographical file in the ACC Section Archives. Lindsay Elms is also following up this project with John. It is my hope that Syd Watts will next be willing to tell us *his* story of climbing on Vancouver Island

John Gibson - First Recorded Ascents, Vancouver Island Mountains:

Abel (1971/10/10) - John Gibson, Syd Watts, John Clarke
Hapush (1974/07/05) - Syd Watts, John Gibson, Alan

Robinson

Watchtower (1975/07/05) - with Syd Watts, peak named for John's Movado watch lost on upper slopes

Malaspina (1977/08/14) - John Gibson, Syd Watts, Rick Eppler, Alan Robinson, Jim and Geoff Squaroh (main summit). They climbed the south summit the previous year

Bonanza (1979/06/16-17) - Syd Watts, John Gibson, Rick Eppler, Ben Peterson (the north peak of Ashwood. The south peak did have a cairn when they submitted in 1979)

Alston (1984/08/16) - John Gibson, Syd Watts, Alan Robinson and Hank Wilkinson

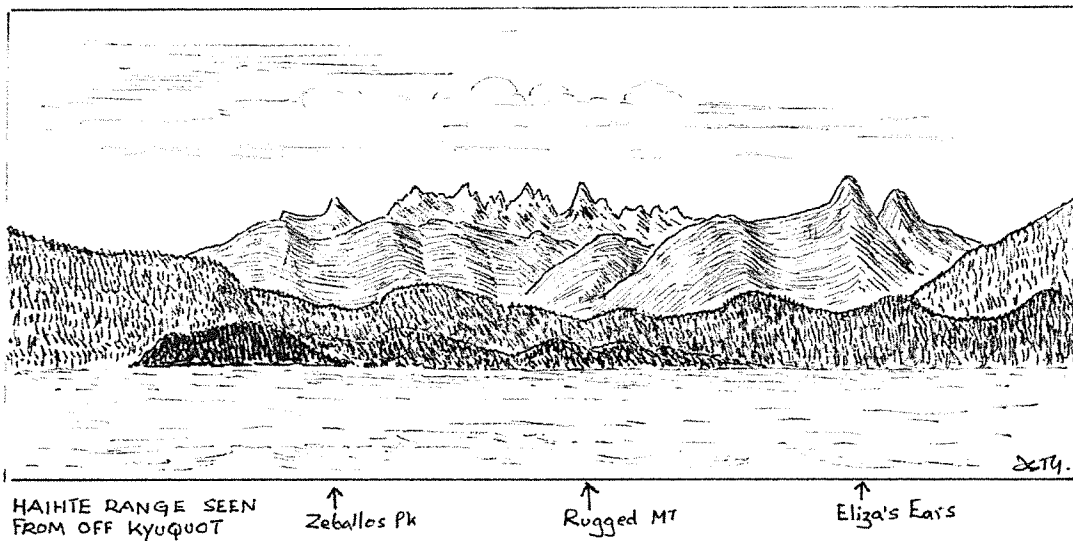
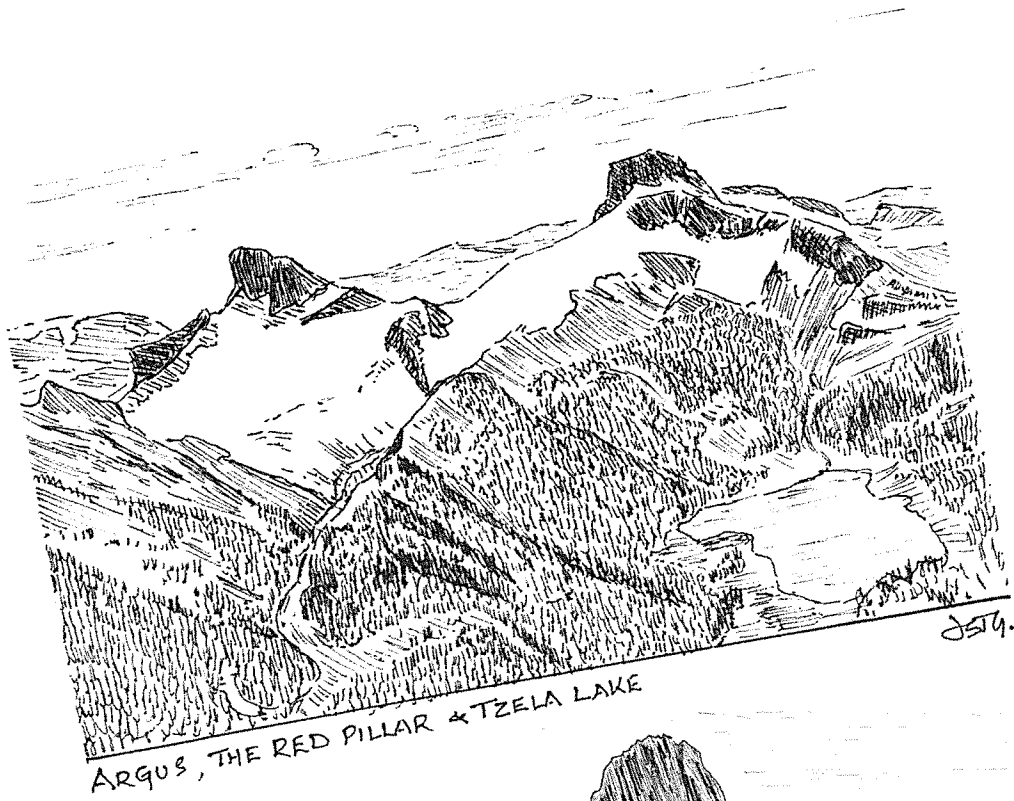
Romeo (1987/07/21) - Syd Watts, John Gibson

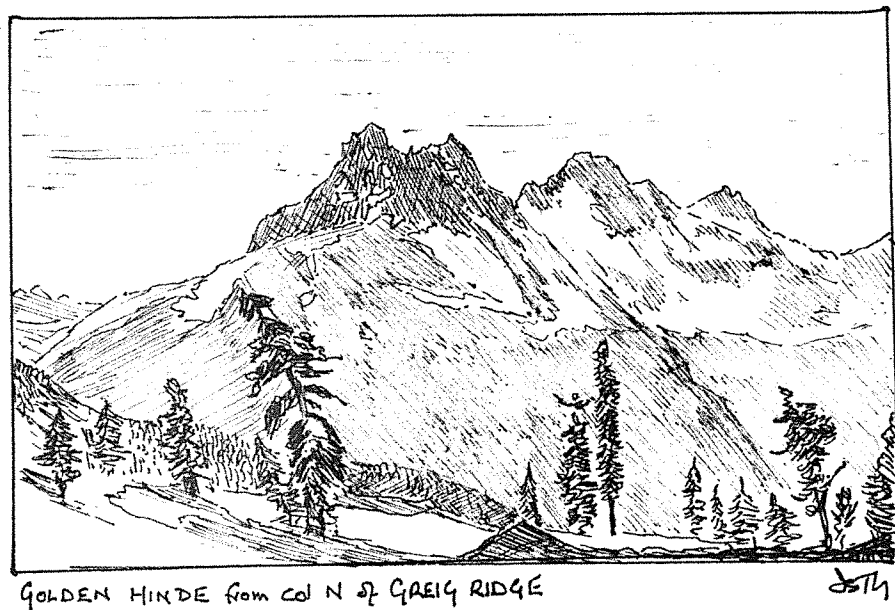
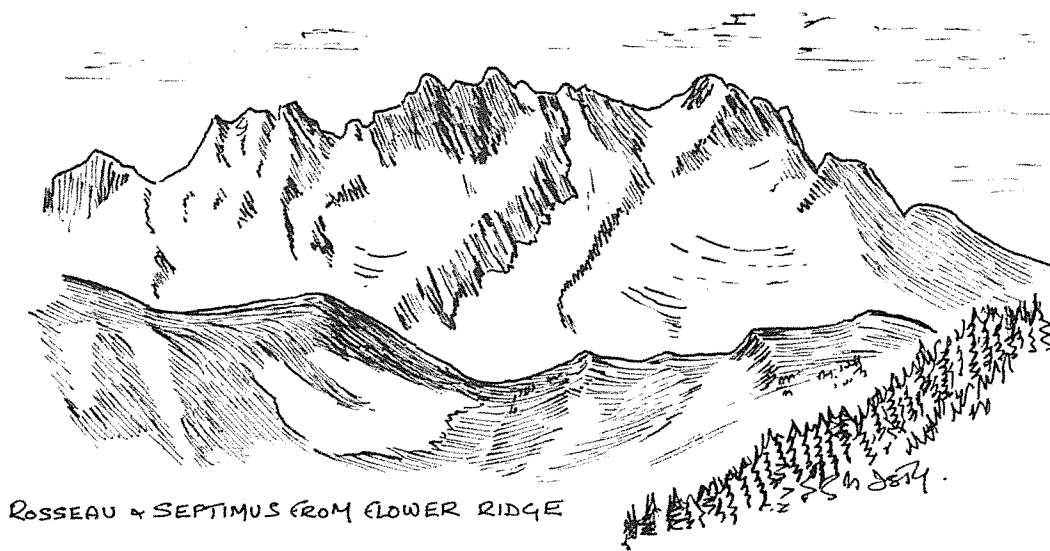
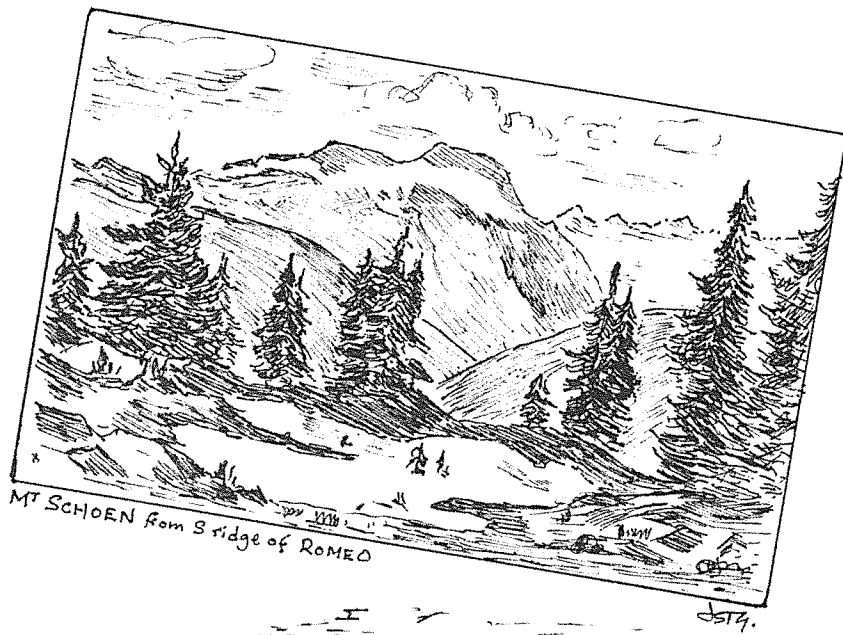
Sebalhall Ridges (1989) - John Gibson & Syd Watts, looking for a route into Alava-Bate

Brooks Peninsula, point 2735 (or 2744) (1954/10/03)
Although John discovered a 1948 survey marker, one wonders if John's two ascents may be the only others.

SEVEN OF JOHN GIBSON'S SET OF FIFTEEN PEN AND INK DRAWINGS







NEW CLIMBING ROUTES ON ISLAND MOUNTAINS

NEW MULTI-PITCH ALPINE ROUTES ON COLONEL FOSTER AND TOM TAYLOR

Lindsay Elms

Mount Colonel Foster continues to attract climbers who are interested in putting up new routes on its 1000 m East Face. This summer Cumberland's John Waters and Renee Monjo established a new route on the Northwest Peak (East Face). John is not a stranger to Mount Colonel Foster as over the last few years he has put up several new routes, as well he has climbed many of the existing face routes. I often compare the East Face to the North face of the Grand Jorasse in the Alps. This large alpine face has numerous routes that have been established over the last seventy to eighty years and continues to see alpinists who eke out harder, more sustained routes between those already well-known classics. The East Face of Mount Colonel Foster has only seen activity in the last forty years and there have been no-where near the number of climbers who visit the Grand Jorasse. Therefore, the potential is there for many more new routes, which, as we are seeing, is gradually taking place. We may not get too many of the international Doug Scott's and Greg Child's visiting our humble mountains but we do have a core of local climbers who are capable of climbing the same standards and in some cases harder.

The other mountain that has been receiving attention due to its good quality of rock is Mount Tom Taylor. The buttresses of the south side of the mountain have seen the likes of Phil Stone and Jan Neuspiel establishing new routes and recently John and Mike Waters have been in the area putting up hard new routes.

The following are first-hand descriptions of new



Mt Colonel Foster, East Face.

Photo: John Waters

routes on these two mountains by John Waters.

Mount Colonel Foster

North West Peak (East Face): (5.8 1000m IV), John Waters & Renee Monjo, Aug 4, 2003. One of the easier routes up the east face of Mount Colonel Foster. Start up the narrow toe of the NW buttress between two snow gullies. Scramble 600 m (4th to low 5th) up the buttress crest to the left side of a large obvious treed ledge. The 50 m long ledge is at an elevation of 1600 m and is easily seen from Foster Lake (Ed: also known as Landslide Lake). Walk to the right end and with a few steep moves trend up and then left back to a small shallow gully. Climb gully walls to ridge crest. Continue up beautiful ridge crest until the rock steepens. Climb left and back up very textured rock to the ridge and to the base of the white pinnacle. The white pinnacle is visible just below the NW Summit. All climbing to here is easier than 5.6. Climb left under the pinnacle and around the corner; traverse the steep slab to a easy comer (5.8, 50 m, crux, good gear). Climb easy corner back to ridge crest. 50 m more of scrambling to Northwest Summit. We used the ropes for about the last 100 m of climbing. The rock was very solid and clean except near the loose NW Summit. The whole route will take pretty good gear.

Mount Tom Taylor

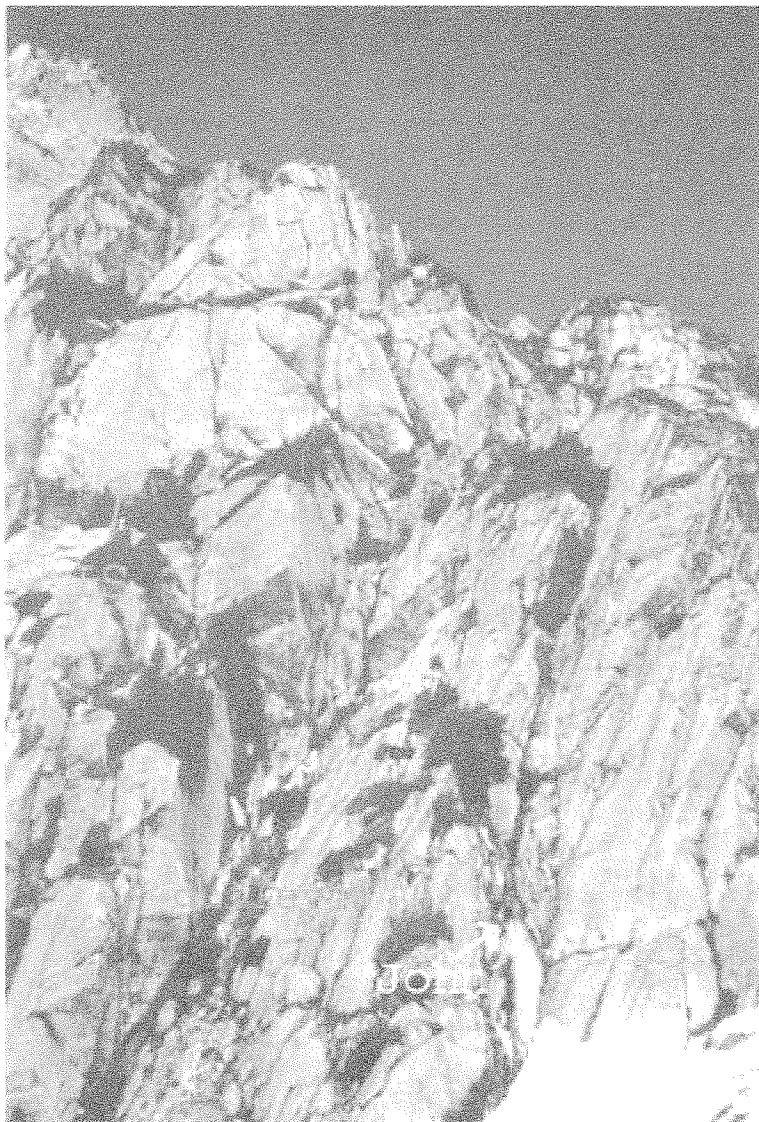
It's some of the best rock we've seen on the Island. The most notable and longest route we did was up the left (westernmost) buttress on the South Face. All the routes had really good solid gear.

Savage Hummingbird: (5.10 140m 1.5 hrs.)
Mike & John Waters, July 11, 2003.

P1, about 60 m, low 5th. Start on the right side of the eastern most buttress. The route starts by climbing the low 5th class slabs right of the steep bushy gully. Trending left near the top, where the gully narrows/steepens and the slabs are blocked by a huge roof.

P2, 20 m, 5.10. Belay from small horn with a blue rap sling. Climb cracks and steep ramp by stemming for 8 m to intimidating blocky overhang. Pull through overhang to alcove and continue up thin crack and face moves to the top. Belay from yellow cedar bush/tree (rap sling).

P3, 20 m, 5.9. Climb over yellow cedar and belay at next steep face. ** Notice to your left about 15 m is the "first pitch" of Indian Summer. Climb up the easy left slanting ramp past some yellow cedar bushes to a steep/deep narrow



John climbing Savage Hummingbird on Mt Tom Taylor.
Photo: Mike Waters

dihedral. Stem and jam the dihedral to a blocky top. Climb past the blocks over a series of small faces to the base of the steep obvious off-width and belay at slung boulder.

P4, 15 m, 5.9. Swing right for 5 m past horn and climb steep cracks on first right facing corner. Climb over boulder that guards the top to a good ledge and belay. This is near the top of the difficulties of Indian Summer. We top roped the off-width at 5.10b. Walk 6 m left around back of boulder to horn with blue sling. Rappel route. Excellent gear and sustained climbing.

Seeing Things: (5.7, 50m + scrambling) Mike & John Waters, July 11, 2003. This route climbs a right facing corner on the eastern slabs (right side). A rock cairn marks the start of the route. Climb 10 m up easy slab to large ledge. Face climb up shallow corner for 7 meters to the

start of right facing corner. Climb the corner for 35 m to a huge intimidating roof. Hand traverse left and mantle to start of finger crack. Climb another 10 m up the finger crack and chicken head face to a crack belay. Continue for another 20 m to easy ground. Rappel route or walk right into gully and climb up and traverse to the east col or walk down gully. Excellent gear and fun climbing like Deidre in Squamish.

Southwest Buttress: (5.10 or 5.9, A1, 350m, 4 hrs), Mike & John Waters, July 10, 2003. The route starts at the base of the western most buttress on the South Face (the unclimbed buttress in Philip Stones book). It climbs beautiful cracks, faces and corners and finishes up the impressive huge white scar at the summit ridge. The white scar is easily visible from the base of the South Face. The start is marked by a small rock cairn at the base of a bushy gully. Scramble 15m up this gully to the first belay.

P1, 5.8. Climb two parallel cracks (1 m apart) for about 10 m and then move left towards a ridge crest. Climb up the awesome cracks and chicken head face to the belay at a right facing block with a small roof.

P2, 5.7. Climb right past the small blocky roof and continue straight up trending slightly left near the top. Belay at the large ledge with yellow cedar bushes.

P3, 5.8. Climb up 10 m and then traverse right 10 m past

cedar bushes to a beautiful right facing corner crack with chicken heads. Climb the corner crack (fist to hand sized) by laybacking or jamming to a good belay off a small horn/pinnacle. The belay is at the start of a brown basalt sill.

P4, 5.7. Traverse right along the brown basalt sill for 7 m and climb the impressive crack above. Climb the crack up to the base of the huge white scar. Continue up the scar for 15 m to an OK ledge and good belay.

P5, 5.7. Climb up the scar over easy blocky ground past several brown sills. Traverse 8 m along the upper sill and climb crack to the base of the impressive white open book. Belay at base of open book.

P6, 5.10 or 5.9, A1. Climb the awesome white open book past small hanging block (at 5 m). Trend left (past the now fixed pin!) at half way to a finger crack on the smooth face. Continue up the steep finger crack to the top. Awesome pitch with exposed climbing. Belay at huge ledge at top.

P7, low 5th. Continue up the white scar for 20 m and then swing left into easy gully. Continue scrambling up the easy gully (4th class) to the ridge crest and the summit of the west buttress. Swing west and walk around to the North Face of the West Summit. Walk along the north glacier and climb up the easy rocky ridge to the main summit of Tom Taylor. Easily walk off the summit (low 5th) to the east col.