

Island Bushwhacker



**The Alpine Club of Canada
Vancouver Island Section**

2022 Annual



**THE ALPINE CLUB OF CANADA
VANCOUVER ISLAND SECTION**

**ISLAND
BUSHWHACKER
ANNUAL**

VOLUME 50 – 2022

**VANCOUVER ISLAND SECTION
OF
THE ALPINE CLUB OF CANADA**



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ISSN 0822 - 9473

Acknowledgements:

*A heartfelt thanks to all those who shared their inspiring articles and lovely photos of wild alpine places for publication in the 2022 volume of the **Island Bushwhacker Annual**. Special thanks also go to Lindsay Elms for helping to edit the text, to Catrin Brown and Lindsay Elms for reviewing a penultimate draft, and to all contributors who patiently answered my many questions.*

This journal is a celebration of explorations, history, geography and people in our mountaineering community. And this year, we are celebrating the publication of our 50th volume! The front and back cover photos are tributes to the generations of people who are learning and growing in the mountains and supporting each other in achieving their objectives.

The photo just after the Table of Contents is a tribute to Albert Hestler who enjoyed many trips to Lake O'Hara and inspired ACCVI members to organize a summer camp to the Elizabeth Parker Hut.

~Janelle

Front Cover Image:

*Eryn Tombu-Haigh coming up Rambler Junior's knife-edge summit ridge in July.
(Photo by Barry Hansen)*

Opening Page:

*50 year graphic.
(Created by Catrin Brown)*

Image Just After the Table of Contents:

*Descending from the summit of Mount Victoria.
(Photo by Chris Neate)*

Back Cover Image:

*Last run of the day at Mount Cain.
(Photo by Nadja Steiner)*

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REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

David Lemon

The year just past has continued the re-opening from pandemic restrictions that began the previous summer. Membership remained steady at just under 700. The trip schedule started filling up again, and we were able to hold the Banff Centre Mountain Film Festival live again as well as virtually, which was a welcome restoration of a major source of the section's finances.



Approximately 70 outdoor trips took place last year. As well as the usual weekend outings on Vancouver Island, members undertook a number of more extensive expeditions and camps.

There were four week-long ski camps:

- ◆ Valkyr Lodge in the Southern Selkirks
- ◆ Amiskwi Lodge in Yoho Park
- ◆ Esplanades in the Northern Selkirks (see page 87)
- ◆ Kluane Icefields in the Yukon (see page 89)

Two major camps were also held in the summer: the 4 week fly-in camp at Soprano Peak in the Coast Range (see page 111) with the third week being Family Week, and a week camp at the Elizabeth Parker Hut at Lake O'Hara (see page 115).

All camps were well subscribed and greatly enjoyed by the participants.

Janelle Curtis ably took over production of the *Island Bushwhacker Annual*, and the spectacular 2021 edition came out in the spring.



*Soprano Peak Summer camp Week 4.
(Photo by Mary Sanseverino)*



*The group at the 2022 Lake O'Hara Summer Camp, standing in front of the Elizabeth Parker Hut with Wiwaxy Peaks, Mt. Huber and Mt. Victoria in the background.
(Photo by George Lum)*

It was a busy year for Hišim'yaŋiŋ as well, which was 2/3 booked over the summer and had ~50% occupancy over the full year. Work parties over the summer made significant improvements to the trail and added a new generator housing at the hut.

It was also a year of achievement and recognition for Section members:

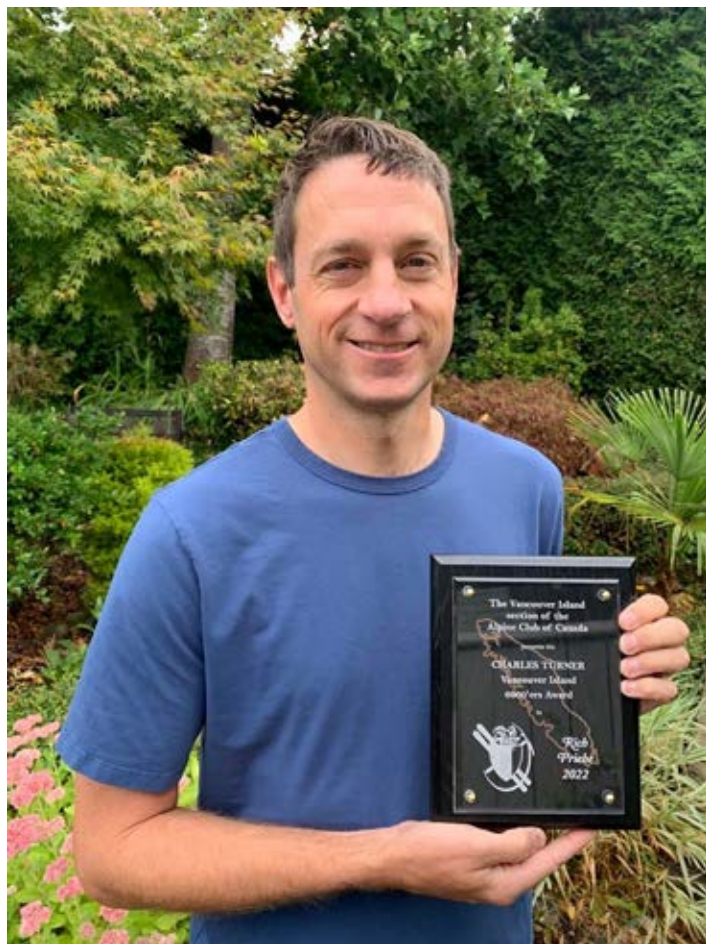
- ◆ Catrin Brown was recognized with the ACC's Distinguished Service Award for her dedicated service.
- ◆ Eryn Tombu, Casey Matsuda, Tiffany Cunha and Darryl Anderson earned the Rick Eppler Award for completing the Island Qualifiers.



*New Generator enclosure at Hišim'awił.
(Photo by Martin Hofmann)*



*Improving the trail to Hišim'awił.
(Photo by Martin Hofmann)*



Rich Priebe



Eryn Tombu

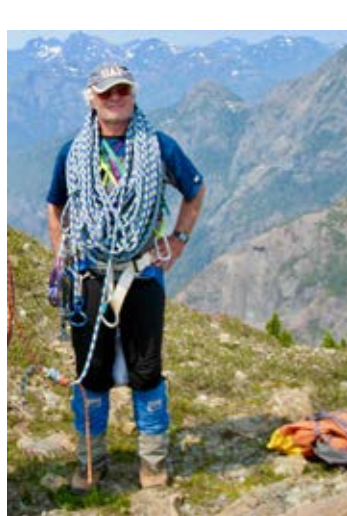


Barry Hansen

◆ Rich Priebe, Eryn Tombu, and Barry Hansen earned the Charles Turner Award for completing the Island 6000'ers (see page 133).

Congratulations to all!

It was also a year of loss, with the deaths of two long-term members, Robie Macdonald (1947-2022, see page 136) and Albert Hestler (1933-2022, see page 138).



Robie Macdonald at the Alava-Bate summer camp in August 2010 (left) and in the Arctic. (Photographers unknown)



Albert Hestler on Poachers Peak. (Photo by Shaun Peck)

They will both be greatly missed but present in spirit with us in the mountains.

The year finished with the photo contest (see pages 139-145), which attracted a record number of high quality entries.

We also had welcome news that two Section members, Josh Slatkoff and Dave Fishwick, had been accepted to the ACC's winter North Face leadership course.

I look forward to another year of fellowship and shared enjoyment of the mountains.

A Brief History of the *Island Bushwhacker*

Catrin Brown



Welcome to the 50th Edition of the *Island Bushwhacker*!

Just think about that for a moment. It means that *every* year since 1973, this journal - written, produced, and distributed entirely by volunteer effort - has been in continuous production. Needless to say, over those 50 years the format has evolved almost beyond recognition, from early editions which were a few typed pages all the way to the professional full-colour magazine quality you are enjoying today. Yet the role of the journal as a record of the explorations of ACC Vancouver Island's members and the splendour of our Vancouver Island mountains, is a constant thread through these 50 years of production. This continuity is a remarkable achievement and has left us with a rich legacy.

The complete set of *Island Bushwhackers* - Annuals and Updates - is available in our club library (just email our librarian at librarian@accvi.ca) and most editions are also available on our website. Below is a brief summary of some milestones in the 50-year production cycle.

April 1973 Volume 1 No. 1

The first newsletter is typeset and mailed to the membership. In an era when privacy concerns had not surfaced, the back page is a full list of members, just 50 of them, all with addresses and phone numbers.


<u>The Alpine Club of Canada</u>			
<u>Vancouver Island Section</u>			
<u>District Representatives</u>			
Nanaimo, North	Roger Neave	President	754-6707
Duncan	Syd Watts	Climbing Committee	746-5768
Victoria	Gil Parker	Secretary Treasurer	386-9132
<u>Vol.1 No. 1</u>	<u>Newsletter</u>	<u>April 1973</u>	

This is the first of the newsletters, which we hope to issue eventually on a monthly basis. The purpose, primarily, is to acquaint members with the activities of the section, including descriptions of coming trips and reports of trips completed. We also hope the newsletter will become a medium through which anyone can publish material of interest to the membership.

There is enough news to give a fine start with the first letter. The more contributions we receive, the more successful others will be. Would trip leaders please send their reports promptly to the newsletter editor Cynthia Tansley Apt. 201 - 1172 Yates Street, Victoria.

June 1975 Volume 3 No. 2

Ever wonder when and how the 'Bushwhacker' name first appeared? Read the opening paragraph here and wonder no longer.



THE ISLAND BUSHWHACKER

EXECUTIVE

Chairman	Gil Parker	386-9132	Victoria Rep.
Past Chairman	John Gibson	743-2867	
Secretary	Doug Wylie	383-3253	
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Programme	Sharon Harshaw	592-6394	
	Roger Neave	754-6707	Nanaimo, North Rep.
Editor	Cynthia Tansley	382-8574	

Vol. 3 No. 2


JUNE, 1975

For those of you who have recovered your senses after seeing the new title, I would like to point out that it was arrived at by democratic process at the annual dinner. I cannot quite remember who proposed the name, but a lot of people voted for it, and we were having such a good time and it seemed to be such a good idea Rumours to the effect that the Chairman and Editor thought it up in a post-prandial alcoholic haze are completely unfounded.


Sakal

March 1976 Volume 4 No.1

The cover page becomes adorned with sketch drawings of mountains from recent trips, mostly created by John Gibson.



ALPINE CLUB OF CANADA



THE ISLAND BUSHWHACKER

Vancouver Island Section

May 1976 Volume 4:2

APPROACHING RUGGED MOUNTAIN FROM THE NOMPASH VALLEY

John


The journal is now produced by offset-printing, which allows the first inclusion of photographs. Editions commonly contain reports of first recorded ascents of Vancouver Island peaks.

ISLAND BUSHWHACKER

THE ALPINE CLUB OF CANADA

Vancouver Island Section

Chairman: Walt Latter, 746-7284/5495 Members at Large: Rick Eppler, 383-6910/387-3169
Past Chairman: Gil Parker, 386-9132 Doug Wylie, 383-3253; Mike Sampson, 598-7741
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EDITOR: MIKE SAMPSON, 2464 Hazel St., Victoria, B.C. V8S 2X5 (598-7741) Copyright © ACC



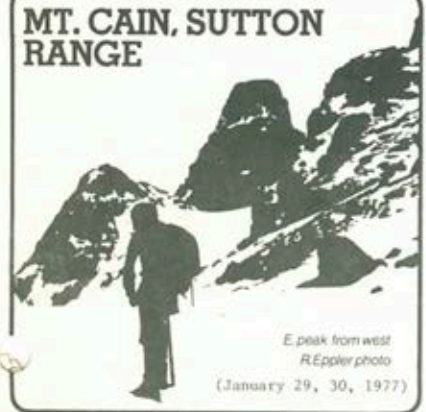
AUGUST 1977, VOLUME 5:5

NEXT GENERAL MEETING

Sept. 15th, Thur. CHAPEL RM, at the Y
7:30 PM, 880 COURTENAY ST. VICTORIA WITH A
SLIDE FEATURE, 'MT NOEL & THE STIKINE,' by GIL PARKER, and/or JOHN
SIMPSON'S 'ROCKIES' TRIP


Trip Reports:

MT. CAIN, SUTTON RANGE



The scheduled ACC Green Mt. trip didn't go; two of us decided to take advantage of the lack of snow and promising weather, and headed for some climbing in the Sutton Range.

We left Victoria, Saturday morning; arrived at the Mt. Cain ski area at 2 p.m. As the weather was perfect we made a rush for Mt. Hapush via the



coulloir to the col between Hapush and its satellite, traversed easy rock to the central gully on the south face, and did a class 3 scramble up the gully to the summit at 4 p.m. From there good views of Cain and all the surrounding peaks were had, including Waddington far to the east. Retraced our route, and were back at camp by 5:30 p.m.

Left camp at 8 a.m. Sunday, with good weather, and waded through knee deep snow across the ski bowl to the couloir between Cain and a 5600' bump. From the col at the top of the gully we gained the west ridge and were on the west summit of Cain around 11 a.m. Did a quick reconnaissance of the east peak (which is slightly higher), and could see no cairn. We ate lunch and then tried to downclimb into the notch between the two, but gave it up in favour of dropping north down a snow slope to the west and contouring into the notch. After ascending the steep couloir to the col between east and west Cain by 2 p.m., we roped up, and after 3 rope lengths of mixed steep snow and class 3-4 scrambling, with 20' of exposed, but easy class 5 at the top, we reached the summit at 3:30 p.m.

Spring/Summer 1984 Volume 12 No. 2

The journal is assigned a unique ISSN number (International Standard Serial Number), confirming its status as a serial publication. You will see this identifier, 0822-9473, on every edition since.



ISLAND BUSHWHACKER

THE ALPINE CLUB OF CANADA

Vancouver Island Section

ISSN 0822-9473 12:2

Spring/Summer '84

Editorial: 402-710 Vancouver St, Victoria, BC V8V 4P9

Of special note, this edition also makes the first mention of 'Fifty Forty Peak' and its first recorded climb. Who could have imagined what a big part of our section's life this name and peak would become?

'Fifty Forty' Peak

by ROB MACDONALD

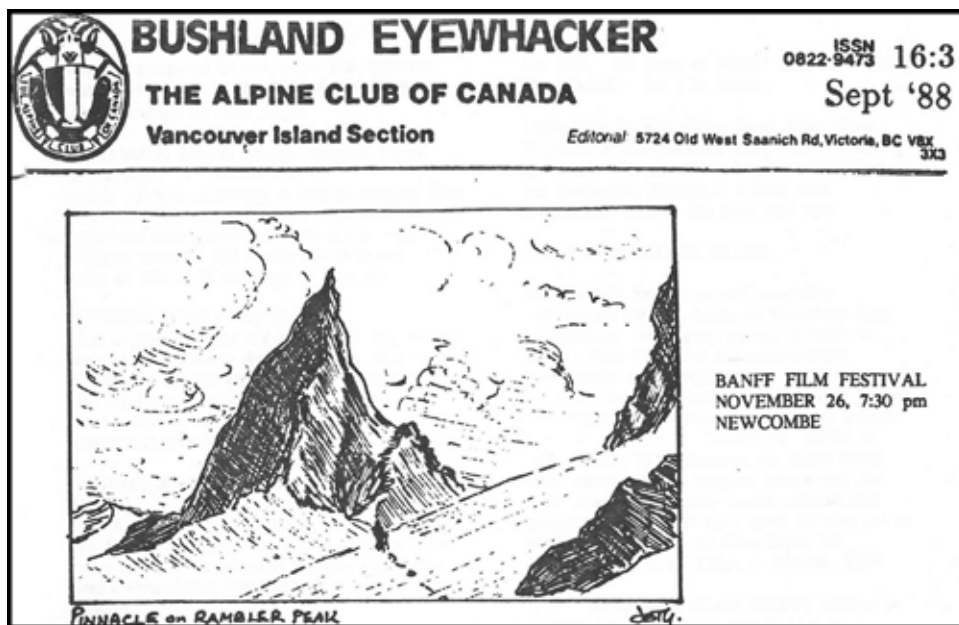
On June 10, 1984 Rick Eppler and I made an ascent of a peak 2 miles (3.2 km) north of tiny Effingham Lake, just east of the MacKenzie Range which lies east of Highway 4 where it approaches Kennedy Lake. The peak is seen at grid 338511 on 'Effingham River 92 F/3 Edition 3' topo map. It's a large snow-covered dome as seen from the highway. We parked just south of a bend, past bridge with a new span being added about a mile beyond Pogo Peak, on the Ucluelet/Tofino highway. This is in TL 10588, at about 284567, on the map, which shows the logging road we walked. Using this road, on the east side of the highway, we went along the east side of the unnamed creek, trending SSE for about 3.5 miles (5.6 km). At its end we kept going east about 200 yds, across a small stream, then went left straight up east ridge all the way to the summit on a magnetic bearing of 110-105°. It took us about 11 hours including the return, with no particular difficulties so no rope was needed just ice axes. We reached typical spring snow at about 2500' (762 m) and reversed our route to descend.

The logging road is overgrown but the bushwhacking is not bad.

The mountain appears to be unclimbed, except perhaps by surveyors (?), and Rick and I submitted the name "Fifty-forty".

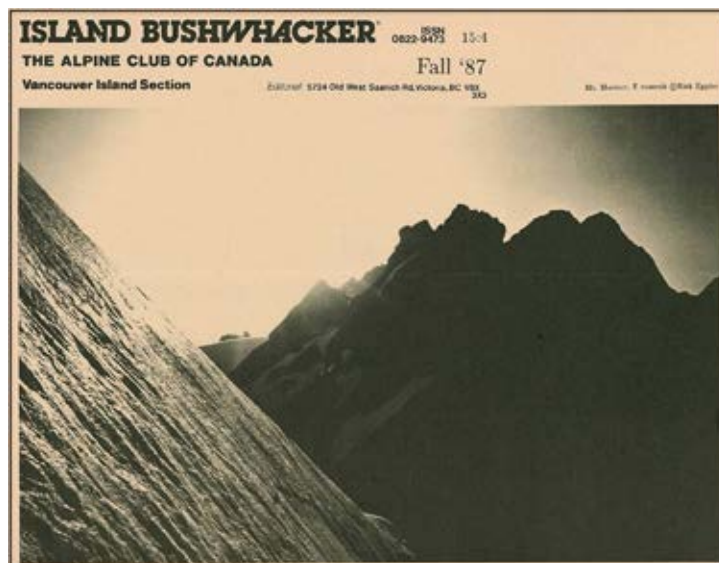
September 1988 Volume 16 No. 3 special edition

Sandy Briggs writes: "Back long ago, when some of us were going through perhaps the peak of our affliction with spoonerisms, and in Rob and Julie's first round as Editors of the *Island Bushwhacker*, they picked up on my all-too-frequent 'misnaming' of the newsletter and made up a special edition to mail to me."



1987 Volume 15 No 4

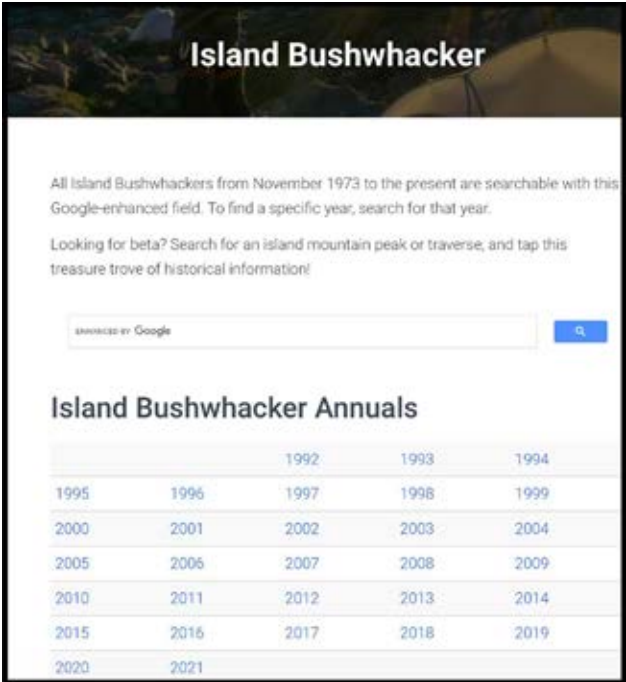
The journal is published for the first time as an annual, recording the activities over the whole year. Additional 'Updates' are mailed out at intervals through the year.



2006 - 2013 The transition to online

The centenary of the national club in 2006 is celebrated in various ways. To mark the occasion, Judith Holm completes an ambitious project to index all the journals to date, making it possible to search online by author, mountain name etc.

Over the next few years, the annuals are posted online as PDFs, in addition to being mailed to the membership as hard copies. Martin Hofmann scans all earlier copies and enables search engine function. The legacy is preserved.

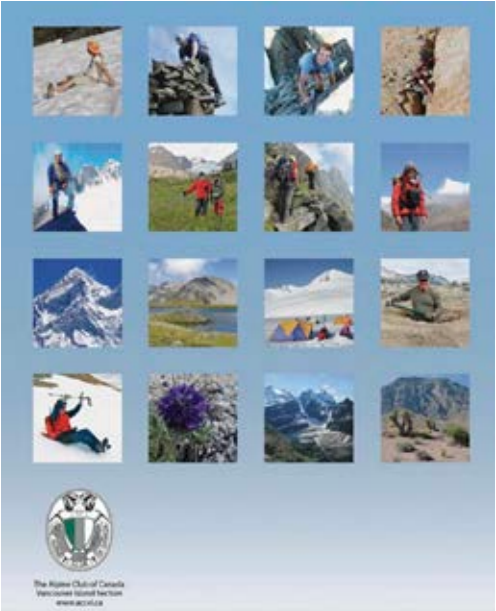
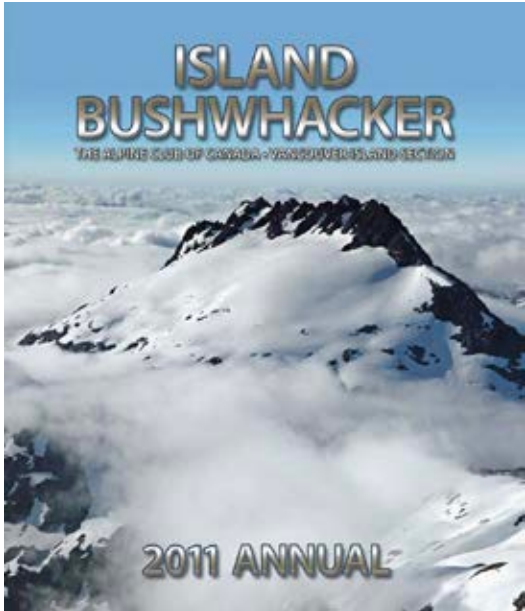


2008 - 2023 Monthly newsletters supplement the Bushwhacker Annual

Cedric Zala creates the digital newsletter distributed to the membership at the start of each month. This role subsequently passes to Mary Sanseverino and later to Janelle Curtis, while the newsletter evolves into a substantial seasonal publication.

2004 - 2019 The transition to full colour

The 2004 Annual is distinguished by having the first full colour covers.



More colour creeps into the production in subsequent years until in 2019 the leap is made to a full colour publication. And here we are today!

The production of the *Island Bushwhacker* has always been a collaborative project. Each edition involves a team of authors, artists, photographers and even poets who contribute articles, as well as those who work “back stage” to compile it all into a coherent volume. The role of editor is a particularly exacting and time-sensitive task which from 1973 to 2023 has been passed on between the following people: Cynthia Tansley, Mike Sampson, Jim Weston, Robie Macdonald and Julie Henderson, Nick Krischanowsky, Michael Kuzyk, Viggo Holm, Sandy Stewart, Martin Smith, Cedric Zala, Sean McIntyre, Robie Macdonald and Janelle Curtis.

The name Robie Macdonald features more than once in the above list. Rob and his life partner Julie Henderson were the editors of the journal from 1986 until 1990, and Rob never strayed far from his involvement in the production. He was back on the editing committee from 2000 until the end of his life in 2022, and for the last several years was in charge of the entire production including editing, layout and design. This was a labour of love for Rob, reflecting his own joy of being in the mountains and his respect for truly wild places. He shared his extensive knowledge of the Vancouver Island mountains with contributing authors, delighting in the opportunity to connect and inspire a newer generation.

Perhaps this is best expressed in Rob’s own words, written in 2021:

“One of the benefits of being the editor of our ‘august’ historical record is that I get to read people’s tales of adventure first and see their pictures in full detail. The latter have immensely improved in the digital age. I frequently see trips where images are similar to ones I’ve taken on trips years ago. This is not merely a bin-there-done-that kind of thing. It is a rather pleasant combination of memories, nostalgia and continuity. As you get older it seems to become even more precious to preserve these places so that in each new decade a new cohort can wander out and enjoy these places just as if it was the first time they’ve been trod upon by a boot.”

In recent years, Rob spoke often of the upcoming 50th Anniversary of the *Island Bushwhacker*, and was keen that it should be celebrated as a significant milestone. Inspired at least in part by the work of Mary Sanseverino on the Mountain Legacy Project, he suggested that we develop a section of repeat photographs for the anniversary edition. Rob’s vision was that paired photographs of mountains with or without people would offer many points of comparison reflecting the passage of time in our Vancouver Island alpine landscape.

This idea was developed as the “*Vancouver Island Mountains Now and Then*” project and ran through 2022. We took a very flexible view of “then” and “now” so that different spans of time could be featured. Mary helped motivate the membership by sharing some tips and tricks for achieving quality repeat photographs. Several groups were spurred on to schedule trips with a “Now and Then” repeat photography theme - for example, see page 73 for Mary’s report on a trip featuring repeat images from the Comox Glacier.

In honour of Rob’s memory, we are delighted to share the results of our anniversary project here.



Vancouver Island Mountains Now and Then

Catrin Brown

Veitch Creek bridge - Sooke hills 2012 and 2022



Dave Suttill: "First photo was taken 19 November 2012 during a rainy spell not long after the log bridge was put in. The second photo was taken 13 March 2022 about a year after the new bridge went in." (Photos by Dave Suttill)

Elkhorn Mountain summiteers -21 August 1912 and 21 August 2012



Alpine Club of Canada party on the summit of Elkhorn 1912
Photo: Division of the Canadian Rockies (Top, 100 years before Dave Suttill)



Dave Suttill: "On 21 August 2012 Lindsay Elms led a group of 8 ACCVI members on a centenary expedition to the summit of Elkhorn Mountain, 100 years to the day after the original first ascent. We tried to duplicate the view in the original photo but were never quite sure if things still matched up. 2012 group left to right: Dave Suttill, Val Wootton, Mike Morris, Tak Ogasawara, Lenka Visnovska, Janelle Curtis, Lindsay Elms, Roxy Ahmed." (2012 Photo by Dave Suttill)

Tom Taylor - Mariner Traverse 1985 and 2021



Rob Macdonald: “Rick Eppler ascending the Tom Taylor ridge en route to Mariner 1985.” (Photo by Rob Macdonald)



Barry Hansen: “Tom Taylor to Mariner traverse. This is the west end of Tom Taylor, just exiting Tom Taylor’s glacier (Mariner and Moyeha in the background).” (Photo by Barry Hansen)

Comox Glacier / Mount Harmston - 1986, 2018, and 2019



Rob Macdonald: “Rick Eppler just about to complete his last IQ - Harmston, 1986. We went in close to the Fall equinox and in one long day out of Lone Tree Gap we traversed Argus, crossed the Cliffe Glacier, trudged back over the Cliffe to climb the Red Pillar and then back across the summit of the Comox Glacier. It was a glorious day on styrofoam snow meant for crampons.” (Photo by Rob Macdonald)



Barry Hansen: “July 2018 - looking over the Cliffe Glacier with The Red Pillar and Argus Mountain in the background.” (Photo by Barry Hansen)

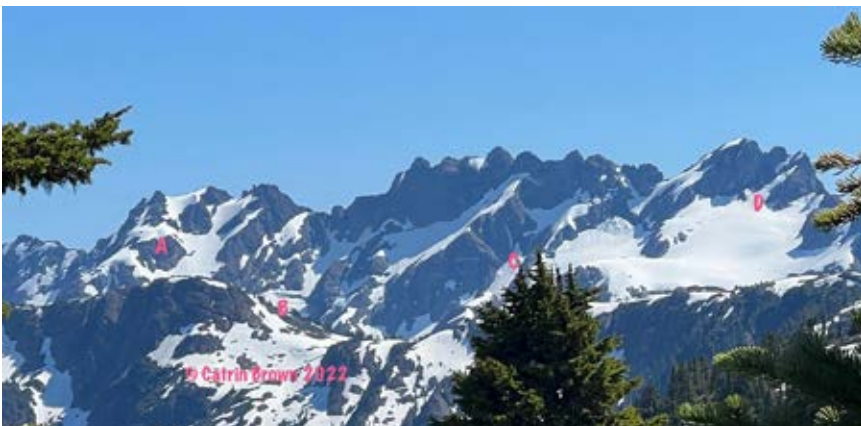


Laurence Philippsen (from IBA 2019): “Late June 2019 - view back from my last IQ, solo climb of Mount Harmston. A gloriously sunny day and what a great walk over the Cliffe Glacier to the col below the peak.” (Photo by Laurence Philippsen)

Flower Ridge - 1986 and 2022



Sandy Briggs: “I have visited the south end of Flower Ridge at least a couple of times: In 1986 Don, Wendy Richardson and I reached Flower Ridge as a finish to our mostly-clouded-in traverse from Paradise Meadows. From those trips I have photos of the north side of the Rosseau-Septimus massif, and both trips were early-mid July. Recently, Catrin Brown and others visited Flower Ridge and took some photos of the same, though perhaps not from the very south end of Flower Ridge.



At location A in Catrin’s 2022 photo (lower), there is much less snow over the bluffs below the Mithorns. There’s a whole extra crevasse/moat at B. Location C has less ice/snow. And the snow cover above D looks like a snow finger in 2022 and a bit more like a glacier in 1986. Also, the D area looks like a crevassed glacier in 1986 and seems smooth in 2022. Unfortunately the glacier face E isn’t visible from Catrin’s viewpoint.”

Mount Service - 1988 and 2022



View from Mount Service, 21 May 1988
(Photo by Rob Macdonald)



Catrin Brown: "I hadn't seen Rob's picture when I took mine on 26 June 2022 - but by chance later realized we'd been standing in almost the same spot looking down the SE ridge to El Capitan Mountain and Mount Landale. Knut von Salzen is in the foreground of my photo. A change not obvious in the photos is the difference in access. "Back then" you could drive up Cottonwood and even East Cottonwood to get close to the mountain. Now with locked gates, the trip starts from Cowichan Lake, adding approximately 8 km to the start of the climb."

Mount Colonel Foster South-East summit - 1936 and 2022

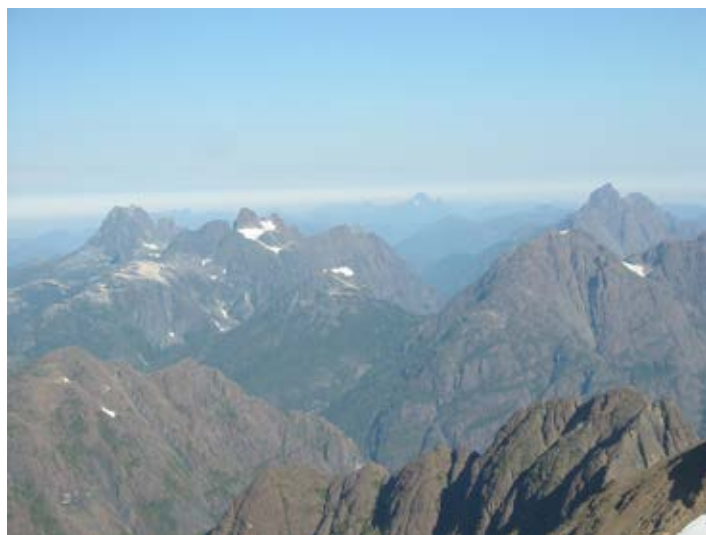


Lindsay Elms: "Alfred Slocomb (surveyor) on the Southeast summit of Mount Colonel Foster in 1936 while they were surveying Strathcona Park. Jason Addy on the same summit at the end of July 2022 when he and Jesse Colin Jackson summited the peak." (2022 photo by Jesse Colin Jackson)



Lindsay Elms: “Jack Horbury (survey assistant) on the Southeast summit of Mount Colonel Foster in 1936 while they were surveying Strathcona Park and Jason Addy, on the same summit at the end of July 2022 when he and Jesse Colin Jackson summited the peak.” (2022 photo by Jesse Colin Jackson)

Mount Colonel Foster South-East summit - 1936 and 2022



Lindsay Elms: “The view from the summit of Golden Hinde taken on 21 July 1937 when Norman Stewart (surveyor) and Dan Harris (survey assistant) reached the summit. They thought theirs was the first ascent of what was then known as The Rooster’s Comb but was actually the second ascent, the first being completed in either 1913 or 1914 by Einar Anderson (assistant packer), W.R. Kent (photographer) and W.W. Urquhart (surveyor). Norman Stewart was responsible for officially naming the peak Golden Hinde in 1939. The photographer was probably Norman Stewart. The view is looking towards Mount Colonel Foster and Rambler Peak (left), Victoria and Warden Peaks in the middle distance and Elkhorn Mountain to the extreme right. The similar photo was taken on 3 September 2006, when Lindsay Elms, Valerie Wootton and John Crouch summited Golden Hinde via the West Ridge/South Face on day two of a three day trip.” (2006 photo by Lindsay Elms)

Mount Cobb - 1936 and 2021



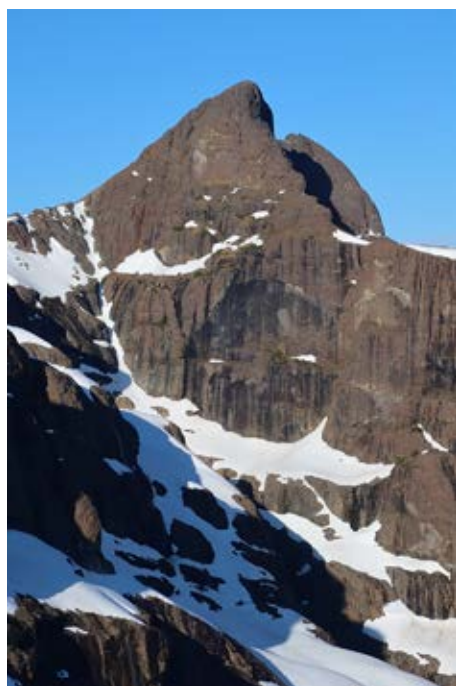
Lindsay Elms: "From the summit of Mount Filberg looking across to Mount Cobb during the survey of Strathcona Park in 1936. That photo was taken by Bill Bell (survey assistant). In the background Rambler Peak, Mount Colonel Foster, Elkhorn South Mountain and Elkhorn Mountain can be seen. The similar photo was from a trip Barry Hansen and Rich Priebe did to Mount Filberg via Elk Mountain and Mount Laing in June 2021. The weather was fine and snow conditions were perfect for fast travel. Rich continued on to Mount Cobb and Mount Haig-Brown then the two hiked out the following day. This was the time when the two were just getting serious about completing their 53 x 6000 foot peaks (Vancouver Island 6000'ers)." (2021 photo by Barry Hansen)

Mount Filberg - 1936 and 2021



Lindsay Elms: "From the summit of Mount Filberg looking down onto a small lake to the northwest during the survey of Strathcona Park in 1936. Photo by Bill Bell (survey assistant). The similar photo was taken by Rich Priebe during his June 2021 trip with Barry Hansen."

Mount Cobb - 1936 and 2021



Lindsay Elms: "Looking towards Mount Cobb from Mount Filberg's south shoulder during the survey of Strathcona Park in 1936. (Photo by Bill Bell, survey assistant). The right photo was taken by Barry Hansen in June 2021. Rich Priebe is barely visible on the summit."

North side of Golden Hinde - 1937 and 2014



Lindsay Elms: "Surveyors were on the north side of Golden Hinde in 1937 during the survey of Strathcona Park. The photo is of Golden Hinde (left) and The Comb (right). They accessed the limestone plateau via the Wolf River. In August 2014 Valerie Wootton and I did a trip up the Wolf River to the limestone plateau north of Golden Hinde where we set up camp on day two. The next day we summited The Comb and the Golden Hinde Northwest which were the last two peaks on Lindsay's quest to complete the 53 summits over 6000 feet on the island." (2014 photo by Lindsay Elms)

Golden Hinde west face - 1937 and 2016



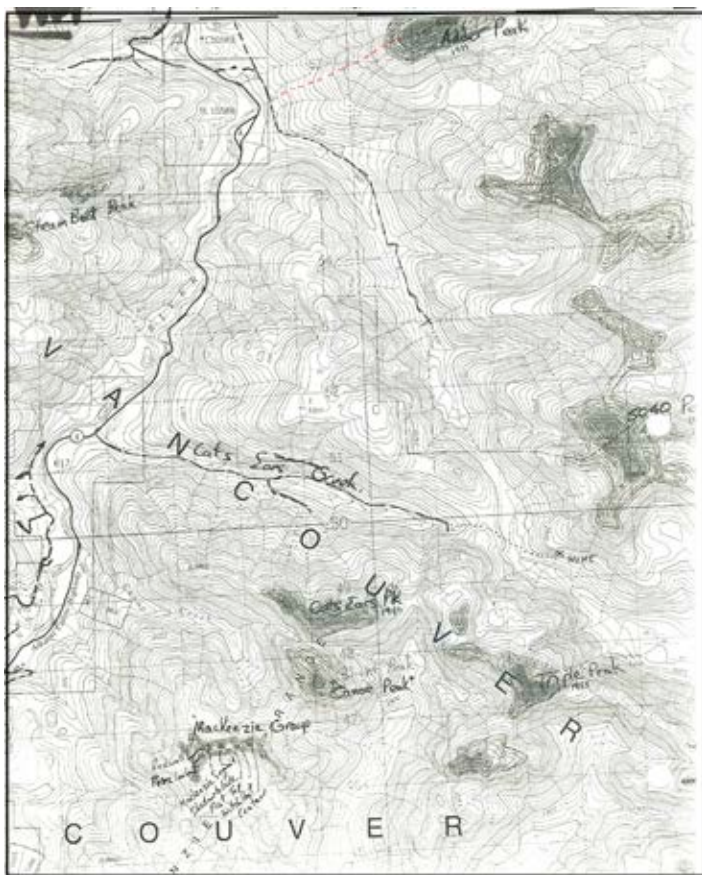
Lindsay Elms: ‘The West Face of Golden Hinde taken during the survey of Strathcona Park in 1937 (unknown photographer). The West Face was first climbed in 1976 by Steve Smith, Tony Hunter and Jim Rutter. The similar photo was taken in 2016 when Lindsay Elms, Valerie Wootton and her daughter Caitlin O’Neill made a four-day trip (July 31 – August 3) in via Phillips Ridge to climb Golden Hinde via the West Ridge/South Face and The Behinde.’ (2016 photo by Lindsay Elms)

Golden Hinde west face - 1937 and 2016



Lindsay Elms: “The view from the summit of Golden Hinde on 21 July 1937 when Norman Stewart (surveyor) and Dan Harris (survey assistant) reached the summit during the survey of Strathcona Park. The view is looking down onto The Comb (also known as The Pimple in 1963 when Syd Watts, John and Doreen Cowlin, Joyce Clearihue, Jane Waddell and John Richardson climbed it). The photographer was probably Norman Stewart. The similar photo was taken on 3 September 2006, when Lindsay Elms, Valerie Wootton and John Crouch summited Golden Hinde via the West Ridge/ South Face on day two of a three day trip.” (2006 photo by Lindsay Elms)

Adder Mountain - 1979 and 2022



Catrin Brown: "A variation on the 'Now and Then' theme. It's not just the landscape and the people that have changed - the way we plan and record our mountain explorations has also changed profoundly. The annotated map to the left is Rick Eppler's record of his explorations in the area of the 'Highway 4 peaks' from the 1970s and early 1980s, including the suggested names hand-written in for many of the peaks for which he and Rob Macdonald first made records of ascents. Note his red dotted track to 'Adder Peak' in the top, climbed on 13 May 1979. The screen shot above is the Google Earth track of my ski trip to Adder Mountain with Erich Schellhammer on 1 July 2022. The BC Geographical names website shows that 'Adder Mountain' was officially adopted on 29 May 1979, just 2 weeks after their climb. It is named for the rare adder's-tongue fern found in the local ecosystem."

Mount Albert Edward glacier - 1980 and 2015

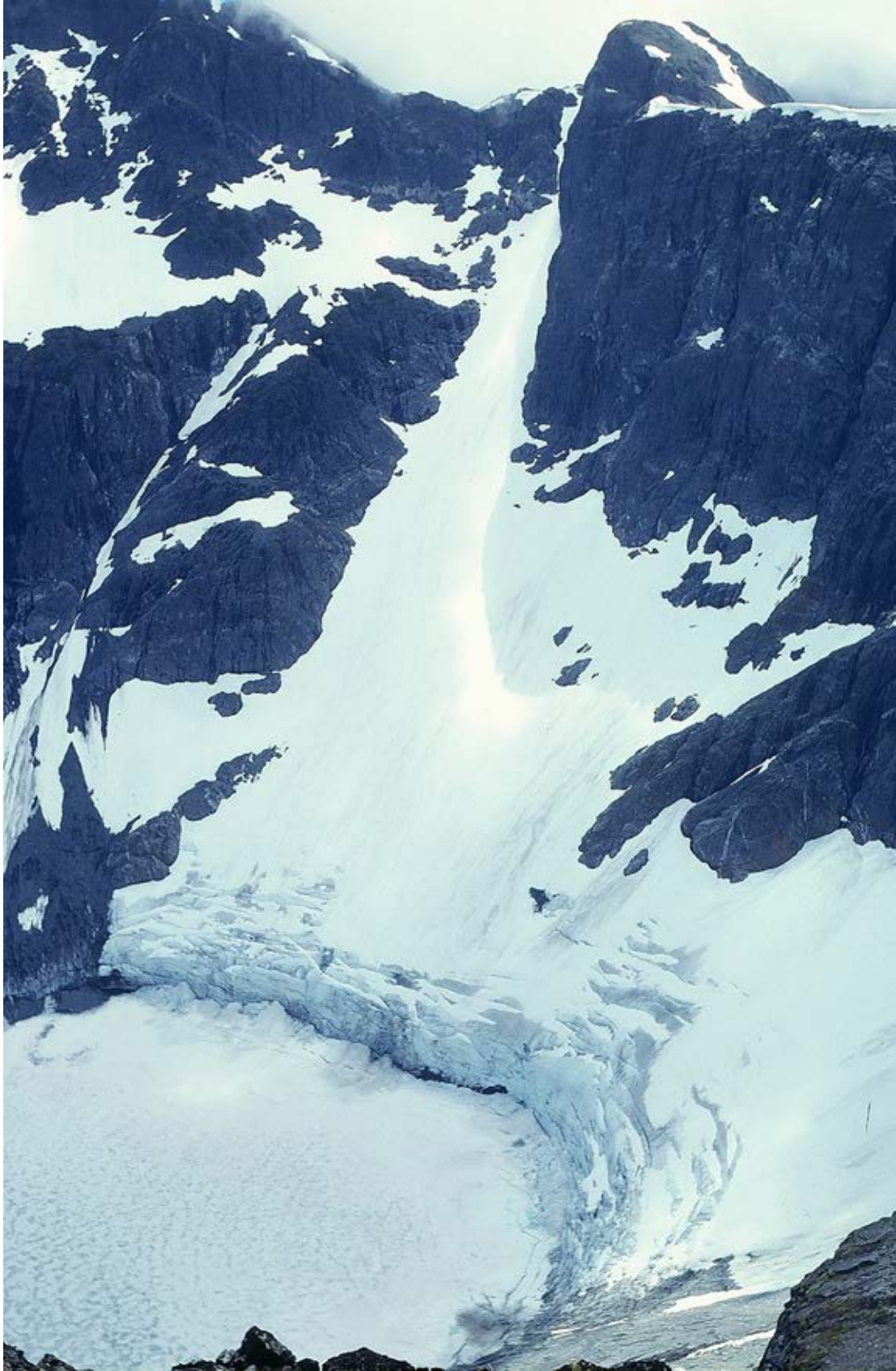




Sandy Briggs: “The upper photo by Jim Weston is the cover of the May-June 1980 *Island Bushwhacker*. It shows the significant glaciation that used to exist on the east side of Mt Albert Edward. My photo below was taken in the summer of 2015, so already almost eight years ago. It shows how much the glacier has melted away even then.”

Milla Lake and Moving Glacier - 1981, 1990 and 2022







Sandy Briggs: “The upper photo of the view south from Rees Ridge from the Autumn 1981 *Island Bushwhacker* is by John Gibson. The rocky wall on the left is the north side of the Comox Glacier massif, while Argus Mountain is partially superposed on the Red Pillar at the right. We see the broad extent of the Moving Glacier with its ice wall extending into the water of Milla Lake. The middle photo was taken by Sandy Briggs from Mt Harmston in 1990. It shows the same rock wall that is part of the Comox Glacier massif in the upper left. The lower photo was taken by Barry Hansen in 2022 and shows Milla Lake and the three small remnants of the Moving Glacier. Again, the rock wall in the upper left is the north side of the Comox Glacier, while Argus Mountain is on the right. This photo is from Mt Harmston, so a similar perspective to my photo, but mine is zoomed in. The dramatic change in the glacier through these photos spanning 41 years is starkly evident.”

Each edition of the journal is in a sense a snap-shot of time. We hope that this set of repeat photographs has helped to give a more dynamic view of the changes occurring in our alpine landscape and in the generations of mountaineers. Let the next half-century begin!



VANCOUVER ISLAND

Turns All Year – Vancouver Island Edition

Rodney and Jess Newcombe

November 2021 – October 2022

Turns All Year (TAY) is a challenge where one must ski on snow at least once every month, for twelve consecutive months. Rodney first heard about the challenge while surfing the web for ski videos and came across a YouTube video (<https://youtu.be/G6oW3M4kwao>) about Carl Zimmer in his 32nd year of TAY back in 2020. Carl's story is pretty inspiring, and it got us thinking about the feasibility of the project on Vancouver Island.



August – Jess searching for snow.
(Photo by Rodney Newcombe)

In the fall of 2020, the island received a decent amount of snow by mid November and we were able to ski Green Mountain in the Nanaimo Lakes area. We continued skiing multiple times each month until March 2021 when we found out Rodney would be returning to sea with the Navy and the TAY project would have to come to an end. While the project was put on the backburner, the dream continued to simmer.

Fast forward to the fall of 2021. Rodney was back on the island and we were ready to start over.

Month 1 – November 2021

While November turns weren't looking promising, we managed to squeeze in a quick day trip on the backside of Mount Washington on the last weekend of the month. With only a 50 cm base it made for some spicy skiing, but we completed our turns and made it out unscathed.

Month 2 – December 2021

We wanted to take advantage of the high snowline and explore a new mountain. Mosaic's Buckley Bay Main gate was open, so we took a drive up to Mount Cameron. Nestled in the center of the Beaufort Range, it doesn't get a lot of visitors or trip reports aside from through-hikers doing the full traverse. The snowline allowed us to drive above 1100 metres and ski up into the alpine. The terrain lends itself well to skiing and we enjoyed a few laps.

As custodians at the ACCVI's Hišim'yawił hut on 5040 Peak, we also spent a few days mid-December doing some maintenance and enjoying a big dump of snow. More snow fell than expected and we narrowly missed getting snowed in on Marion Main.

Month 3 – January 2022

Following a couple weeks in Ontario over the holidays, we were back on the island and eager to get out on skis, just in time for an 85 cm dump over 48 hours. We drove up from Victoria to ski Mount Becher with the intention of day tripping, but the snow was so good that we booked the cheapest motel we could in Courtenay and skied Mount Elma the following day. Highlights of that trip include helping a lady dig her car out on Forbidden Plateau Road (she only had a windshield scraper), catching some big air in the hero snow, and battling some serious leg burn breaking trail up Mount Elma.

Unfortunately, that was the last of the powder for the next forty some days. An unusual dry spell hit the island in the dead of the winter and fresh snow wouldn't return until February. However, that didn't stop the fun. We managed a 24 kilometer day trip up Landale from Cowichan Lake, a 'learn to tour' trip with our new touring pals Jason and



*January – Jess skiing steep powder on Mount Elma.
(Photo by Rodney Newcombe)*

Bethany up Mount Becher, and a failed attempt at Mount Porter. Jason enthusiastically joined us on Mount Porter for his second day of touring; we found plenty of snow on the logging road, but nothing in the alpine – go figure. Although we were sorely defeated by the slash and spent most of the day on logging road, Jason still declared his new love for touring, proclaiming Mount Porter as “the best day ever.”

Month 4 – February 2022

February included various ski outings, including a return trip to Mount Elma and a visit to Mount Cain. With an elevated avalanche forecast we were forced to dial the send-o-meter back but still managed to poke around the East and West bowls.

Month 5 – March 2022

We kicked March off with a custodian work weekend at Hišimýawił to replace three solar panels that were damaged in a previous storm. After a long day of work, we did a couple summit laps before sunset. Rodney’s final turn culminated in a massive wipeout in full view of the other custodians outside the hut. After coming to, he looked down and realized that while the binding toe piece was still attached to his boot, the ski was missing! The following day involved a ski from the hut to the truck on Marion Main (a 10 kilometer ski) on one ski. Boy did that make for sore legs! New skis were ordered upon returning to Victoria.

We also returned to Mount Cain later in the month and were able to enjoy more challenging terrain such as Death Chute and Dream Chute due to a lower avalanche risk.



*March – Rodney’s single ski descent of 5040 Peak.
(Photo by Jess Newcombe)*

Month 6 – April 2022

One of the highlights of the year was a north island ski trip, where we stayed in Woss with our touring buddies Jason and Bethany. Four days of consecutive skiing were done on Mount Alston, Mount Russell, Hapush Mountain, and Mount Washington gaining more than 4400 metres in elevation and touring more than 44 kilometers. The tour up Mount Russell was second to none, and we were



April – Touring Mount Russell. (Photo by Jess Newcombe)



*April – Touring Mount Russell.
(Photo by Jess Newcombe)*

treated to a sunny spring day, a beautiful summit, and lovely ski conditions. We all decided that although Woss was perhaps a bit too small, we would move to Sayward in a heartbeat.

Month 7 – May 2022

We only made it out twice in May - a trip to 5040 for Rodney's birthday and the Augerpoint Traverse over the May long weekend. With the snowpack holding up well above 1000 metres and a promising weather window, we decided to spend two nights traversing from Paradise Meadows to Buttle lake. Luckily, we were able to con Bethany into coming along, and ensured her pack was loaded up with all the heavy things including a dozen no-bake cookies. Following a very early departure from Victoria and a vehicle shuttle, we were on skis by 10 a.m. With temperatures in the low teens and the sun beating down on us, it was a slog in the wet snow with multiday packs. We set up camp on the

south shoulder of Jutland Mountain and took in an unforgettable sunset over Mount Albert Edward, which included a cornice fall triggered avalanche just below its peak. While it was an incredible sight, we were left with an unnerving feeling knowing we were headed that way the following day. Luckily the temperature dropped overnight and the snowpack firmed up, allowing for quick travel up and over Mount Albert Edward. By the time we transitioned to ski down its southwest ridge the snow began to soften up, allowing for some awesome turns. At the low point between Mount Albert Edward and Ruth Masters Lake, we had to deviate slightly north of the summer route due to snow melt. As temperatures peaked, so did our stress levels as we traversed through the avalanche shooting gallery one by one. After traversing



*May – Camp on the south shoulder of Jutland Mountain.
(Photo by Bethany Ricker)*



May – Touring across Mount Albert Edward with views of Rees Ridge. (Photo by Jess Newcombe)

the lake, ascending the ridge and skiing down slopes above the head of the Oyster River, we called it a day and setup camp. We were sunburnt, tired, and hungry, but happy and feeling accomplished. That night we enjoyed a delicious dinner, Bethany's cookies, and views of Strathcona Park and Buttle Lake before packing into our single tent. The next morning consisted of the dreaded descent; we skied down to 1000 metres and booted the remainder to the Buttle Lake. The boot pack down wasn't as bad as expected and the trip made for one of the most memorable of the project.

Month 8 – June 2022

June featured a few outings. While we had fun returning to 5040 Peak and then simultaneously both destroying our Pomoca skins during a rainy weekend at Mount Cain, the highlight was a paddle and ski weekend near Sutton Pass. Packing the truck was interesting – it was filled with everything from paddles, SUPs and lifejackets, to skis, poles and skins. Following a quick vehicle shuttle, we inflated our SUPs and put in at the Taylor River rest stop. With temps in the high 20s, snow melt was at an all time high and the river was pumping. While initially seen as a fun bonus while trip planning, it resulted in a near drowning / rescue episode in addition to a \$2000 SUP replacement; but aside from a couple bruises and some newly acquired debt, we arrived at Sproat Lake. All in all, it was a fun day of SUP-ing 11 kilometers on the Taylor River.

The following day we ascended Adder Mountain and skied several laps off the 1260 metre false summit including tarn skimming a perfect little tarn at 1200 metres on the north aspect.



June – Rodney tarn skimming on Adder Mountain. (Photo by Jess Newcombe)

Month 9 – July 2022

We ventured up Mount Apps with Jason and Bethany in tow. The day was one of those pure Type 1 fun days with slushy spring skiing and a fair bit of time spent tarn skimming. Many walked away with soaked underwear, but no one was lost to the tarn.

Month 10 – August 2022

Rodney tried to convince Jess that our August turns were going to be in the Haihte Range. A preliminary google search highlighted an online blog by Matthew Lettington titled "The hike through hell to get to heaven." Rodney also planned a route which was not the traditional one. This involved departing from logging roads around Zeballos Lake, travelling through some (thick and uncharted) bush, and making our way to Haihte Glacier,



August – Rodney searching for snow in Mount Cain's East Bowl. (Photo by Jess Newcombe)

all the while having to carry our skis and overnight bags. Having been tricked by Rodney before, Jess vetoed the idea and we instead decided on Mount Cain. The hike up the ski hill was quick, and we soon arrived to the East Bowl where there was not a single patch of snow in sight. Rodney scouted a bit with his drone and we decided to instead head to the upper north bowl, where we found plenty of snow, albeit with gnarly sun cupping. The skiing was incredibly bumpy and the most treacherous turns of the year, but we made it.

PS - We did end up in the Haihte Range for a couple of days after Mount Cain, and for once, were very grateful the skis were left behind after a B4 whack.



August – Jess in Mount Cain's upper North Bowl. (Photo by Rodney Newcombe)

Month 11 – September 2022

The ACCVI scheduled a custodian work weekend at Hišim̓awīł over Labour Day so we returned once more with skis on our backs. Given it has become such a popular hiking destination, we passed many hikers who were perplexed as to why we were carrying skis with no snow in sight. While many tasks were completed including work on the generator, outhouse and trail, we also managed to squeeze in an early morning ski in a gulley on the backside. The gulley run (affectionally known as Type 1 fun) skis much different in September than in February, but our turns were completed and month 11 was checked off.

Month 12 – October 2022

Following a long hot summer which extended into the fall, the snowpack was anything but thriving. Rodney spent many hours scouring recent satellite imagery in search of an accessible peak with the best chance of holding skiable snow. We settled on the island's third tallest – Victoria Peak. We decided to make it an overnighter and camped out on the south ridge. We made our way to the south face of the intimidating summit block and skied two laps of the remaining snow. To our surprise, the snow skied better than the previous 4 months! While it made for a long approach with skis on our backs, it was a great way to finish the project.

Rodney documented the whole project by drone and GoPro, resulting in a video breaking it down month-by-month. Feel free to check it out on his YouTube Channel (<https://youtu.be/2XD4dmS1t6w>).



*October – Jess hiking below Victoria Peak’s south face.
(Photo by Rodney Newcombe)*

While we vowed not to repeat the project, we do look back on it with fond memories and think maybe, just maybe, never say never...

Special thanks to all who joined us along the way, including Jason Basaur, Bethany Ricker, Aaron Remisch, Brooke Eidsvik and our fellow hut custodians.

Participants: Rodney Newcombe and Jess Newcombe

Ski Tour on Mount Albert Edward and Mount Frink

John Relyea-Voss

February 11-13 2022

Day 1

Friday the 11th I picked up Casey in Courtenay and we drove up to Raven Lodge arriving shortly after 4:00 p.m. Geared up with overnight supplies and ice climbing equipment we slowly made our way out to our destination of Moat Lake. Moving slow, we crossed Helen Mackenzie Lake shortly after 6:30 p.m. and making our way up to the ridge between Mount Elma and Mount Allan Brooks we took a nice hour break at 7:00 p.m. With

the ACCVI AGM happening at 7:00, we found service and joined the call for the first hour! It was pretty funny huddling up in the dark listening/watching the call. Knowing we had another 1.5 hours approach minimum as well as camp setup, when the financials section started we ducked out and continued our slog!

After another 30 minutes of skinning, we realized we were not making the progress we were hoping for. The long flats were taking a toll on our feet and we both were developing painful blisters. We decided to switch plans and head to Circlet Lake. Arriving after 9:30 p.m., we set up our tent, unpacked, dug out a cooking and hangout area, then melted some drinking water for the following day. We ate and went to bed shortly after.

Day 2



*Camping spot at Circlet Lake.
(Photo by John Relyea-Voss)*

We woke up at first light and geared up for a big day to Mount Albert Edward, Mount Frink and hopefully Moat Lake. The snowpack was hard and with a skin track all the way to the ridge we made it to the summit ridge of Albert Edward in a couple hours. Skinning up began to get difficult in the icy conditions and without ski crampons we decided to A-frame our skis and hike the ridge to the

summit. After a nice long summit break, we skied down to the ridge connecting Mount Albert Edward and Mount Frink, then A-framed our skis again and climbed to the Frink summit. With sore feet, we took another nice break before skiing out.



*Casey on the Summit Ridge of Mount Albert Edward.
(Photo by John Relyea-Voss)*

The skiing was challenging with many icy sections, however, once off the ridge we made our way back to our tent without a single transition! The lower ridge turned to punch-crust shortly before Circler Lake making turns difficult. Once we got back to camp, we cooked food, melted more snow for water and debated moving camps. Day two worsened our foot situation and we decided to stay another night without moving camp and then head out in the morning. So much for the ice climbing fun...

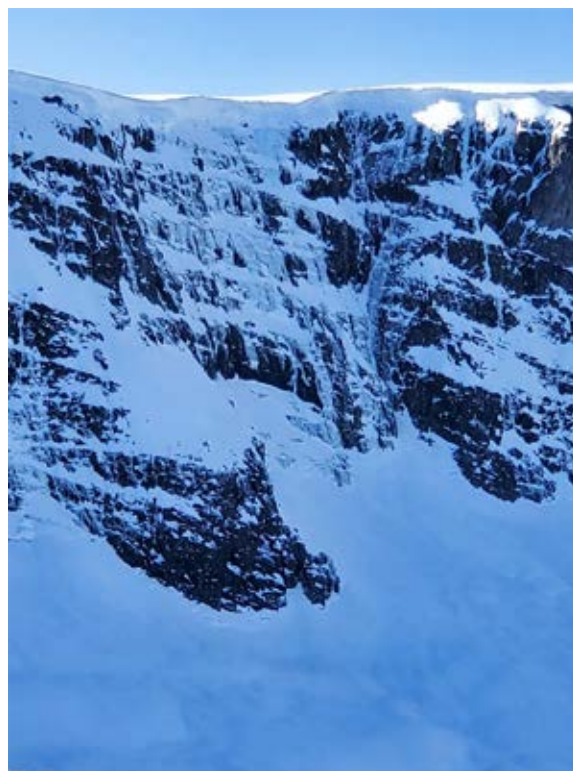
Day Three

Waking up we took our time packing up and made the king slog back from Circler Lake! Passing the Ranger's Cabin Casey decided to climb through the window of the outhouse making for an entertaining sight. At least we looked cool touring with ice axes and rope!

Participants: John Relyea-Voss and Casey Matsuda



*Casey on his way up to the summit ridge of Mount Albert Edward.
(Photo by John Relyea-Voss)*



*Ice lines below the Mount Albert Edward summit ridge.
(Photo by John Relyea-Voss)*

Three Bears

Knut van Salzen

March 5, 2022



*On top of one of the bears.
(Photo by Knut von Salzen)*

This hike near Sooke Potholes takes you to one of those wondrous places that I find bewildering at the same time. And perhaps it is not just me because my fellow hikers on this trip kept asking questions like “Is this bump one of the bears?” or “Where are we going?” or “Why is there a lighthouse up here?”... but let’s start at the beginning: seven of us met in the Sooke Potholes parking lot at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday. We decided to do the most challenging part of the trail first, which I believe is the start of the ridge at the base of the bears (a series of bumps), after leaving the Sooke flowline (the old pipeline that supplied water to Victoria years ago). It was mossy, wet, and steeper than I remembered it. Anyway, everything went well and nobody stayed behind. I think the trick is to stay high on the ridge and avoid following mossy ledges and slopes - they tend to get steeper further on, as we experienced. But the good thing is that there are plenty of alternate route options. Along the way Dave pointed out a little lighthouse hidden behind a tree (of the kind you may see in a garden) that he thought was meant to warn ships in the distance if I recall correctly. There are many great viewpoints from this bumpy ridge and the slow and scenic ascent toward the summit of the bluffs makes this a very attractive route, in my mind. Our lunch break on top was a bit rushed, given the less than favourable timing of a shower. Anyway, spirits were still high and so we also decided to traverse the summit toward the outflow of

Peden lake. There was quite a bit of water in the creek. This made for a somewhat exciting crossing but all was good, thanks to the fixed rope that was available. The lake itself was completely quiet - a very beautiful spot, for sure! We did this 10 kilometre hike in about five hours, with about 400 metres in elevation gain from the parking area to the top of Peden bluffs.

Participants: Knut van Salzen, Rachele DeGagné, Joanna Verano, Lily Huang, Christine Baghdassarian, Nicole Harris, and Dave Suttill

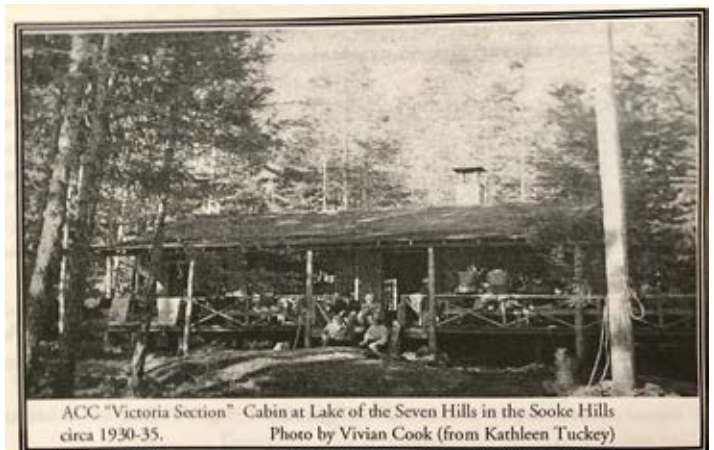
Rediscovering the Lake of the Seven Hills

Catrin Brown

March 13, 2022

The fact that the club had a hut in the Sooke Hills in the 1930s has long felt somewhat mysterious, to me at least. Its former existence raises questions about its construction and demise that seem largely unanswered. So, in the year of the *Vancouver Island Mountains Now and Then* project, it seemed a good time to try some repeat photography of the area and see what we could learn.

Our main knowledge of the hut came from this single photograph posted on our website, with a link to an article in the 1932 *Canadian Alpine Journal* by C.L. Harrison “The Vancouver Island section hut at the Lake of the Seven Hills, Sooke District.” That was pretty much all we had to go on, plus we knew that the Lake of the Seven Hills is now known as Sheilds Lake.



The first part of our mission was easy. Nine of us assembled at Charters parking and quickly made our way

over to Shields Lake, skirting to the east of Grass Lake, and dropping down to the lakeshore from the summit of 'Pleasant Peak'.



*Roger, Peggy, Judi, Catrin, KT, and Mike on Pleasant Peak with Shields Lake in the background.
(Photo by Mary Sanseverino)*

On the west side of Shields Lake, we located various building footings and the remains of the bridge to the small island, as described in Harrison's article.



*Remaining footings of a bridge to the island on the lake, which was used as a social centre for the hut visitors.
(Photo by Catrin Brown)*

Sitting there, we read aloud the full text of the *Canadian Alpine Journal* article, which helped us to grasp the remarkable scale of this project. The hut was apparently 30 feet long, with a large covered verandah and an outdoor seating area capable of seating 50 people. It had both a full kitchen and a large outside cookhouse, and a staircase to a large upper storey. Red cedar was used for the main part construction, walls were lined with fir and "substantial cedar logs" were used for the ceiling.

Harrison also highlights the diverse flora and fauna of the surroundings: "Almost every type of tree growth that is known in Vancouver Island is to be found, also the bird and animal life of the island (with the exception of the wapiti) is to be found in the vicinity, including the timber wolf..... the cougar is plentiful." In addition, about 300 different varieties of mosses and hepatics were apparently documented in the area by section member, Mrs Hugh Mackenzie. The article describes the trail from the road to the hut, concluding: "The true mountaineer who revels in the mountains be they of high or low altitude and in the Great Outdoors, will find the location of the Vancouver Island section Hut a charming place to visit."

Indeed. It was fun to sit on that island, apparently the scene of "the nightly bonfire", and debate some of the questions prompted in part by Harrison's descriptions. For example:

- Club members purchased the 180 acres of land that includes the site of the hut and almost the whole of the lake back in 1928. What happened to that ownership? Could this be a dormant treasure still in the section's name?!
- When was the name 'Lake of the Seven Hills' changed to Shields Lake, presumably in recognition of the pioneer family in the Sooke community?
- What are the seven hills of the original name? We had first thought they may be the small hills surrounding the lake, such as 'Pleasant Peak'. However, the extensive history section on our website compiled by Lindsay Elms has reports of trips and camps to the hut during the 1930s, and includes this map. Does this suggest that the seven hills were actually the higher and more distant peaks shown in the map key? Or are they the hills represented by the arc of small black dots mostly north and east of Shields Lake?
- What happened to the hut? Was it demolished, burned down or simply left to decay slowly? In contrast to some of the collapsed homesteads found in the Sooke Hills, seemingly of a similar era, virtually no trace of the building remains.
- When was the area last logged?

There followed lots of creative interpretation of how much the landscape would have changed in 90 years as we tried to re-imagine the site for a repeat photograph.

Our return trip took us via Sooke Mountain and then heading mostly south-west steeply down to cross the North Charter River and rejoin the main trail. Depending on who you listen to, it was approximately 16 kilometers with about 800 metres in elevation total.



Reported in The Daily Colonist Sunday 20 April 1930



British Columbia Forest Service. "Try to achieve the above bdy [boundary] for Sooke Mtn Park." Scale 1:25,000. In: Ahrens, R.H. "Sooke Mtn Park, Recommended Revision of Boundary". British Columbia Forest Service, 1953. Map clarifications added by M.E. Sanseverino, Feb 28, 2023.



Our best effort. KT, Liz, Catrin, Peggy, Judi, Roger, Mary, and Mike standing on the remaining hut footings - needs imagination to superimpose a hut here to match the upper photo. (Photo by Ken Wong)

But that's not all she wrote. The next day our tenacious researcher Mary found answers to some of our questions about land ownership, etc. from a 1953 document detailing revision of boundaries to Sooke Mountain Park. It includes the following map, annotated to help decipher the markings.

Mary's analysis: "It shows Sheilds and Grass Lakes. Notice that the Alpine Club is denoted on the map. That's because the ACC-VI section was instrumental in forming Sooke Mountain Provincial Park (1928). The Club specifically asked for the land around Sheilds where the cabin sits to be reserved, but not put in the park - this was bought by C.F. Harrison and Miss Sarah Spencer on behalf of the ACC-VI. This was so the hut could be built in the area. In 1949 Harrison offered to donate the lands around the hut and Sheilds to the province for inclusion into the park, but apparently couldn't come to an agreement. The land (L 62 and a very indistinctly marked L 170 covering

most of Sheilds Lake) was sold sometime in 1949 or 1950 to the G. E. Bernard family - it was logged in the early 1950s. I think the map shows a point on the western side of the lake that represents the Hut."

Great sleuthing on land ownership changes Mary - even if it did scupper our short-lived hopes of club ownership of this land! If you would like links to any of the references here, I would be happy to send them to you. So whether or not our day culminated in more questions than answers about this history, it definitely made for a fun intrigue on another glorious day in the Sooke hills.

Participants: Judi Lee, Mary Sanseverino, KT Shum, Peggy Taylor, Roger Taylor, Mike Whitney, Liz Williams, Ken Wong, and Catrin Brown

Mount Septimus: Via the X-Gully

Alex Nemethy

May 21 – 23, 2022

A few years ago, after spending my first weekend in Strathcona Park my friend Mitch told me about a list of nine notable and challenging peaks on Vancouver Island called the IQs, which he wanted to summit. At the time

I brushed it off thinking they would be something we could climb far in the future, but not yet. Two years later on May 21st we began our trek towards our 4th IQ, Mount Septimus.

Our team of six included the usual four - Mitch Basher, Derrick Evans, Shoayb Bascal and myself Alex - along with a couple new additions: Leah Hudson and Jacob Thom. We began hiking up the Bedwell Lake trail at 7:30 a.m. in hopes of reaching base camp before too much melting occurred under the warm spring sun. To do so, we somewhat democratically voted to skip breakfast; I was not pleased with the decision but given I was not one of the drivers my vote was apparently worth slightly less.

The snowpack began at the four wooden bridges and quickly deepened beyond two metres thick. Upon reaching Baby Bedwell Lake we were delighted to see the crust was still firm and promptly hiked across it. Likewise with Bedwell Lake we safely crossed, although the late morning sun provided a sense of urgency to get off before it got soft. The type one fun ended here.

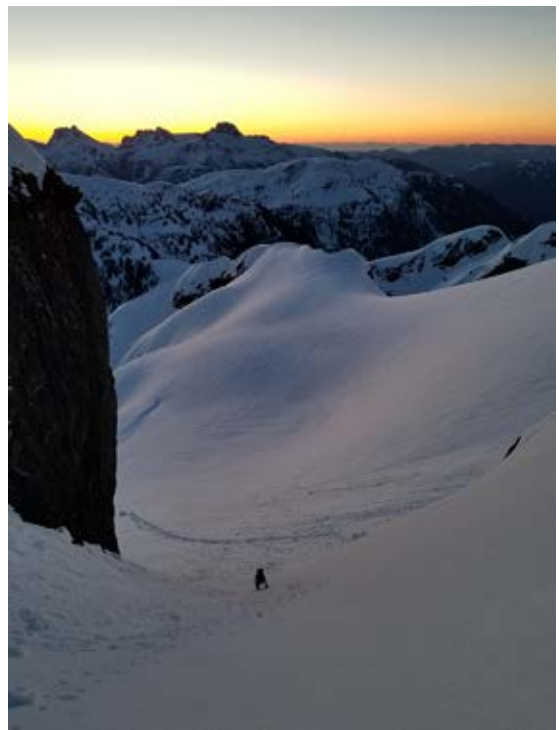
We decided that pushing through shin to knee deep snow was easy enough and there were two factors behind us deciding to leave our snowshoes in the car: we were young and our previous spring's experience. This turned out to be our worst mountaineering decision yet. The slog from Bedwell to our camp above Cream Lake was brutal. We spent over three hours pushing uphill in thigh deep snow and slush, our feet soaked from the relentless amounts of slush somehow getting under our gaiters. At times we post-holed up to our waist, needing an ice axe to free our feet from the quickly consolidating mush.

When we finally stopped at our desired camp location we were relieved; the others for being done with post-holing and myself for finally getting to have my oatmeal. To keep the afternoon exciting I decided to dig a hole to the ground which I expected to be about four metres down. When the late evening sun slipped behind the ridge casting a shadow over our camp I gave up, having dug over five metres down with no sign of rock.

Early the next morning at 1:49 a.m. we were up. Shortly after 2:30 a.m. under the clear, calm skies we began walking towards the north bowl of Septimus atop a thick icy crust from the cool night. By 3:30 a.m. we reached the base of the X-gully. Given the hard, icy snow conditions, half of our group decided to head back to camp while the other three of us pushed on meticulously up the gully. The long steep slope of the gully was relentless. Much of the way up only the front two to four spikes of our crampons pierced the firm icy crust making it near impossible to sit and rest. By 5 a.m. we reached the top of the X-gully. With the horizon beginning to glow orange and red we stopped for a brief minute to snack and take in the view.



*Alex in the snowpit.
(Photo by Mitch Basher)*



*Mitch descending to the glacier.
(Photo by Alex Nemethy)*

After crossing the snow-covered glacier, we reached the crux. A short steep pitch of dense powdery snow, the only powdery snow on the entire route. Ascending the slope was slow and nerve-racking, though I quickly regained comfort when my axe struck the more familiar icy crust above. From there on we only stopped once to watch the sunrise over the Comox Glacier to the east.

To our surprise the moon too was up, glowing above Mount Rosseau.



*Sunrise over Comox glacier.
(Photo by Alex Nemethy)*



*Moon over Rosseau.
(Photo by Alex Nemethy)*

Mitch, wary of the rising sun decided to go no farther.

By 6:00 a.m. Jacob and I had reached the summit.

Finally, a moment of calm.

Our peace was short lived, however as we were concerned of the ice melting. Our descent was no quicker than our ascent.



*Alex on summit.
(Photo by Jacob Thom)*

Back at camp four of our team decided they wanted to spend their Monday in Victoria and so they quickly packed and hurried out of camp before 10 a.m. to beat the afternoon melt. Derrick and I chose to stay another day to enjoy the mountains. By the time we had recovered from the early morning and began our trek down to Bedwell Lake for camp two we were once again waist deep in slush. With our energy zapped we opted to camp halfway around Bedwell Lake and resume the agonizing hike out the next day. Reaching the car on Monday was relieving, though I am happy to have spent the weekend as we did, for a weekend in the mountains is always better than a weekend not.

Participants: Alex Nemethy, Derrick Evans, Jacob Thom, Mitch Basher, Leah Hudson and Shoayb Bascal

Belaying the Soloist

Stefan Gessinger

June, 2022

A fence running along the edge of Salt Spring Island's distinctive viewing point forms a safe barrier from the dramatic 120 metre high conglomerate cliff band. Tucked away are numerous fun 1 - 2 pitch rock climbs. At 5 pitches the mysterious 5.11a MBGF is the only established route from the base to the top and it has not seen any known second ascents since it was first climbed in 2000. I had hoped to climb it for years, a plan easily postponed for less intimidating objectives.



*Rope solo explorations by Andy Cairns. MBFG is shown in blue, and no other established climbs are shown here.
(Photo by Andy Cairns)*

Seeing a fixed static line draped over the edge during an afternoon hike piqued my curiosity. Hanging from the last bolt was a haul bag - someone must be down there on the route. Who? Locals? Visiting climbers? The specialized gear?

Clinking gear indicated that a climber was nearing the top and a short time later he emerged from a groove feature and stepped his way across the final mossy slab. I was surprised to see a thin senior citizen who despite the warm summer day was dressed in a wool sweater with elbow patches and wore a toque under his helmet - his climbing partner describes him as a desert toad.

A recent resident to the island, Andy Cairns had been busy exploring the existing routes and everything in between as well as the local climbing history (with Captain Horace Westmoreland's 1922 ascent dating back 100 years), meticulously documenting his outings with high resolution photos marked with routes and comments - all neatly filed in organized folders on his computer.

Contacts were exchanged and plans made to get out climbing together. During our first outing cragging he led a new direct start version onsite, moves I was unable to hangdog on top rope.

In June, 2019 we attempted to climb MBFG from the ground up with Evan DeVault. Nesting falcons told us to go climb something else and we ended up climbing a three-pitch splitter crack route - very unusual in the conglomerate rock formation. Uncomfortably huddled at an intimidating hanging belay we watched Andy climb on what turned out to be the crux. His weight firmly on his feet, his grip appeared light as he bantered and chuckled his way up and away out of sight. When my turn

came around, I was caught off guard by the overhanging, difficult crack and had to take a rest in the rope - it had appeared so easy. Between approaches, retreating from the first objective and climbing another we were out for 8 hours on the south facing rock during a very hot summer day. During this time Andy did not eat or drink anything, declining offers of water. He described slowing his kidneys down for the day and cruised all the leads, running out gear placements on easier terrain up to 10 metres.



*MBFG rope solo, 5th pitch above crux.
(Photo by Andy Cairns)*

June 2022 Andy and I teamed up for another day of multipitch adventuring - I hoped he would propose MBFG as I was not in the climbing shape to propose to do so. Leaving the house at 6 a.m. to beat the heat we set off on the first pitch, a great 5.7 splitter crack leading up a wall of moss.

Andy took all the leads without breaking a sweat, whereas I would arrive at the belays huffing and puffing and overheated. Having climbed off route a bit on the second pitch, he finessed his way back on track, padding his way across a thickly covered moss slab without clearing the footholds or handholds. The steepness and difficulties increased with the subsequent pitches. Captain Horace Westmoreland describes the conglomerate on Mt. Maxwell (Baynes peak) as treacherous and insecure and the cliff as excessively steep and forbidding. He concludes that he can not recommend it as a rock climb in the future. The crux is on the 5th pitch, an exposed overhang right of the anchor. Andy commits to the moves as if climbing an athletic gym route, unfazed by falling into the rope well over 100 metres off the deck. Hanging in the exposed belay station I tried to enjoy the view over the Sansum Narrows between Salt Spring Island and Vancouver Island. A light breeze made for great sailing conditions, and I had to ask myself why I was not out there on my boat which I had just launched for the season.

However, up was the only way I was going to get out of this situation. After giving the crux a quick go I resorted to pulling on the quick draw, only to wonder how I could hang on to the rock long enough to unclip and how I was going to make it to the next quick draw.

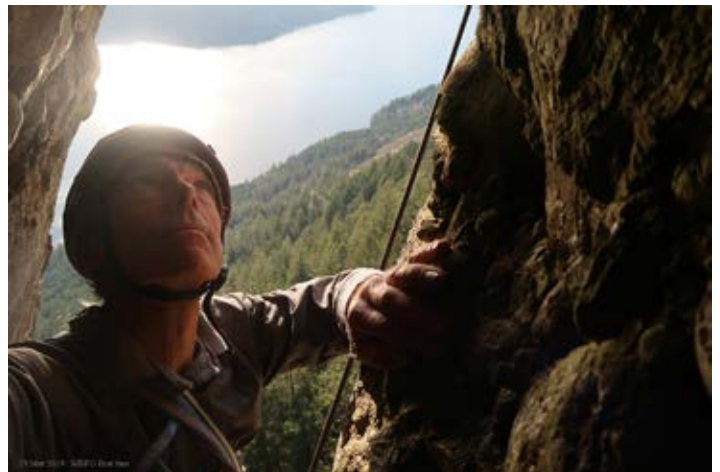
Born in Austin, Texas in 1949 - a hot and dry place Andy likes to tell people that he is not human, he is Texan. Early childhood years were spent in Oklahoma City, a time for collecting black widows and scorpions, shooting rubber bands into wasp nests and yearning to encounter rattlesnakes. He was introduced to climbing after signing up for a rock climbing trip with the Brown-Pembroke Outing Club and assumed they would climb something he would now call talus - he was wrong.

In Andy's words: "Climbing had the feel of danger without the sting. However, careless habits developed, in which danger could hide for years like a monster in a closet. Habits such as trusting the guidebook and setting off to climb the north face of North Early Winter Spire in Washington Pass. Ignoring signs of the detailed description not adding up the first pitch was climbed. Ground fall potential on thin steps without reassuring handholds - concluding that this should only be done early season with lots of snow to land on. Later - indications that the route had never been climbed, indications that they sent spinning down the east face."

The answer was, as it later turned out, that the first ascent had been made in poor visibility and that the route described in the guidebook was actually on a different spire.

The time he felt most at home climbing was at the Shawangunks from September 1972 to spring 1973. Climbing then was not something he did, it was who/what he was. He remembers especially well: first ascents in the Cascades and a visit to Blouberg in South Africa with Oscar Wolfhart.

I fight my way past the overhanging crux into the back of a V-shaped groove which offers some respite from the exposure. I grovel my way up the constriction until I must leave the perceived safety and step out on to the exposed arête. The final pitch is long and tops out on the mossy slab I first saw Andy on a few years ago. Relieved I arrive at the top, I climb over the safety fence to the side I am supposed to be on - it sure can be great to get off these things. Sweaty and disheveled from the struggle I am glad to have experienced this mysterious climb.



*1st pitch of MBFG.
(Photo by Stefan Gessinger)*

In my profession as a woodworker there are not many older master craftsmen as most veer into different directions throughout their career.

Andy has stuck with rock climbing for over 55 years, with a climbing career spanning back to a time when the generation of the stonemasters pushed back against current norms, styles and ethics. A formative time for our current climbing culture.

My favorite part of our outing was witnessing his finesse, style and mastery of climbing a long route, on the sharp end, in wild and adventurous conditions and gaining some insight into the routes he quietly climbs on his own with his long static rope draped over the edge.

Go climb a rock.

Participants: Stefan Gessinger and Andy Cairns

Glaciers Traverse: Comox, Cliffe, and Shepherds

Barry Hansen

June 12-15, 2022

I set a goal at the start of 2022 to complete the ACCVI 6000'ers project (Vancouver Island's 53 peaks higher than 6000 feet). I had 22 remaining and to complete them all would require a combination of favourable conditions, available partners, and scheduling. Fortunately, all three fell into place, allowing me to complete the project by mid-August. Some were day trips but the majority were overnight trips, ranging from 2-5 days, such as the Glaciers Traverse, which was a four-day trip during which I climbed six 6000'ers: Comox Glacier, The Red Pillar, Argus Mountain, Tzela Mountain, Shepherds Horn, and the high point on Shepherds Ridge.

Over the winter, Rich Priebe and I discussed the trip options for me to get these six peaks. Initially, I thought I'd do them in two trips: one to climb Shepherds Horn, the high point on Shepherds Ridge, and Tzela Mountain; and the other to climb Comox Glacier, Argus Mountain, and The Red Pillar. Rich still needed The Red Pillar and so we planned to do that trip together. However, at one point in the discussion, Rich suggested doing all six together as a traverse starting at Comox Glacier trailhead and exiting via Shepherds Ridge to Buttle Lake. I embraced the idea immediately and we began the planning process. Partway into it, a conversation with Matthew Lettington about my alpine plans led to inviting him and Phil Jackson to join us, since they still needed a few of these peaks.

The biggest challenge was logistics since the logging road to the Comox trailhead was only accessible Saturdays and Sundays. But we figured out a plan and set a date, hoping the typically unpredictable June weather would show us mercy. Rich dropped off his car at the Flower Ridge trailhead a couple days before our trip and then early afternoon on Sunday, June 12, the four of us met up in Courtenay and Rich's son dropped us off at the trailhead. We hiked upward in the cloud, wind, and rain, leaving the forest behind and entering the land of ice, snow, and rock, which would be our home for the next 3 days. We pitched our tents on the snow around a turquoise tarn and settled in for the night.

We woke early and watched the morning sun illuminate the impressive east flank of Comox Glacier while eating breakfast and packing up. And then it was upward and



*Comox Glacier en route to The Red Pillar and Argus Mountain.
(Photo by Barry Hansen)*

onward as we worked our way towards camp two at the high point of the Upper Cliffe Glacier at the base of Argus Mountain. As we approached the flat summit of Comox Glacier with The Red Pillar and Argus Mountain beckoning us beyond, the sky began changing from blue to white as cloud enveloped the landscape, gradually obscuring everything in a sea of white. We navigated the steep and tricky terrain around the southeast flank of Argus Mountain before arriving at camp two as the weather continued to deteriorate. We initially planned to climb both Argus Mountain and The Red Pillar that day but it took longer than expected to get there, which, combined with the worsening weather, forced us to adjust our plans. And so, we prioritized The Red Pillar since it was on all of our lists.

We dropped our overnight gear and made our way up to the west shoulder of The Red Pillar as the wind picked up and the temperature dropped. Not great climbing conditions but we were motivated. Well, three of us were anyways. Looking at the start of the route, which was covered with steep hard snow, Matt opted out, happy to return another day in better conditions, which was totally fine. I belayed Rich as he worked his way up the first tricky section and then he belayed Phil and I up. From there, it was unprotected mixed climbing up to the summit plateau, which was shrouded in dense cloud. With visibility limited to 10 metres, we arrived at the true summit via GPS. We didn't bother looking for the summit cairn or register, since both were likely buried anyways. We quickly downclimbed and rappelled back to the base, rejoined Matt at our camp spot, set up tents, made dinner, and discussed the next day's plan before settling down for the night. The temperature continued to plummet as I put on all my clothing and wrapped my down blanket tightly around me. I was pushing the limits of its comfort range. But I was better off than Rich, whose sleeping pad was leaking badly and not responding to his repairs. He used our ropes and sit pads to moderately improve his discomfort.

We awoke early to a gorgeous bluebird day. It was going to be a long and full day with a goal to climb four peaks,

starting with Argus Mountain. The first obstacle was my solidly frozen boots, which took great effort to pry open and slip onto my feet. We geared up for the climb, left camp, and began our ascent on rock hard snow. Arriving at the base of Argus Mountain's west ridge, a moderately exposed initial step of steep hard snow caused Matt and Phil to decide to head back to camp, assuming the rest of the ridge would have similar sections with increased exposure. And besides, they had to return another time anyways since Matt still needed The Red Pillar and Phil needed Mount Harmston. We had initially hoped to climb Mount Harmston on this trip for his sake but had to abandon its inclusion since the previous day didn't go as planned. Rich and I continued upwards unobstructed, arriving at the summit in short time. We took in the stunning early morning panoramic views, grabbed a few pics, headed back down to rejoin the others, packed up, and began working our way down the Upper and Lower Cliffe Glaciers *en route* to Tzela Mountain.



Rich on the summit of Argus Mountain with The Red Pillar behind. (Photo by Barry Hansen)

As we approached Tzela Mountain, we discussed route options and decided to traverse its southwest slopes and then summit via the less complex terrain from the northwest rather than the more direct, technical southeast face. In short time, we were standing on Tzela Mountain's summit, eyeing up the next objectives: Shepherds Horn and the high point on Shepherds Ridge, which we planned to camp at the base of. A significant amount of elevation is lost and regained between them and so, off we went. It was mid-afternoon at this point and the sun relentlessly beat down upon us, reflecting off the increasingly isothermal snow and sapping our energy, especially as we began ascending the slopes towards Shepherds Ridge. We slogged upwards, taking short rotations kicking steps and leading the way, eventually arriving at the upper slopes of the northeast aspect of Shepherds Ridge, halfway between its horn and main peak. I was the only person in the group who still needed

both peaks. Rich wanted to join me for both, Matt for Shepherds Horn, and Phil for neither, which was totally fine with me. I was just happy I didn't have to do them solo, which I was willing to do but preferred not to.

Rich, Matt and I left our packs and began tracking our way to Shepherds Horn while Phil enjoyed an early dinner and held vigil at our packs. We passed alongside a large, spring avalanche debris field, which was triggered by collapsing cornices from the ridgeline above. I walked up to one of the larger pieces of debris, curious about its size: it was over two metres tall. We kept a close eye on the cornices that were still intact as we passed beneath them at a safe distance. Their threatening presence passed as we gained the ridge. We arrived at the summit and were immediately enveloped by a blanket of cool and humid cloud, which had snuck up on us from the south, obscured from view until that moment. Time to head down. We quickly rejoined Phil, grabbed our packs, and continued traversing to the base of the high point on Shepherds Ridge, where we found a rock shelf with enough level space for our four tents.



Shepherds Glacier en route to Shepherds Horn. (Photo by Barry Hansen)

We set up camp and ate dinner before Rich and I headed off at 7:00 p.m. to climb the high point on Shepherds Ridge. I was running on fumes at this point and questioned if I had the stamina for one more peak. But I knew I'd kick myself if I didn't get it done because there wouldn't be time the next day since Rich had to be home by a set time for a prior commitment. And so, I mustered up all of my mental energy with a no-holds-barred determination to achieve my final objective of this trip. After traversing the steep snow bowl and kicking our way up more steep snow to the ridge, we scrambled up the rocky third class south face and onto the summit just as the sun was setting. A couple of quick pics and some woohoos later we were on our way back down, arriving at camp at dusk. The conclusion of a long and exhausting but invigorating and successful day.

We woke up to a beautiful sunrise, packed up, and began the long traverse up and over Shepherd's Ridge's undulating features before the long, forested descent to Buttle Lake. Snow gradually gave way to bare forest floor and the obstacle-less open terrain of the previous couple days in the high alpine was replaced with navigating the obstacle-laden reality of old growth forest, exacerbated by the massive blown-down that happened that winter. We arrived at the road along Buttle Lake bushwhack-weary and relieved. Since I was the only person left with dry feet, I volunteered to walk the one kilometer to pick up the car at the Flower Ridge parking area. I drove back to the gang and we jammed our gear and ourselves into Rich's compact and headed home, tired but grateful for another awesome island alpine adventure.

Participants: Barry Hansen, Rich Priebe, Matthew Lettington, and Phil Jackson

Matchlee Mountain Climb

John Relyea-Voss

June 18-19, 2022

Day One

A couple evenings before posting this trip to ACCVI we had several people reach out, one of which ended up joining us named Joe Dale. We were excited to add him to our crew and take off early Saturday morning.

Joe joined us, kindly offering use of an awesome Ford Expedition he had use of through the Soul Edge Leadership Training Program. We loaded up all our group and gear and left shortly after 6:00 a.m. We went to Timmies first and then hit the road arriving to the trailhead shortly before 9:00 a.m. The access to Matchlee Mountain was great with one cross ditch required to get to the trailhead about a half kilometer before the parking area.

Leaving the vehicle, the weather was foggy with light rain. We made our way up through a small cut-block and entered a dense forest. From here the bushwhacking got pretty heinous. The next four hours were spent hauling heavy packs through steep, slippery blowdown - sometimes we were navigating over fallen trees without the ability to touch the ground.

As we gained elevation, we eventually hit a snow gully where we stopped for lunch. From here, a bit more bushwhacking, wet blueberry bushes and crawling through Devil's Club got us in sight of the snow basin



*Casey and Kaya navigating around a wet tree.
(Photo by John Relyea-Voss)*

leading up to the ridge where we would make camp. As this was Kaya and Joe's first mountain adventure on the island, we joked about a fitting initiation and prepared for the climb up the basin.

Due to the warmer temps and rain, the snow was very soft. Luckily, we all brought snowshoes and this helped greatly climbing out of the basin to the ridge. After a few sketchy snow bridges, the route up was very straightforward and we slowly made our way to the top

in another couple hours. We were all surprised by the intensity of the bushwhack in and were happy to make camp.

The fog and rain did not let up much that evening. We received a brief five-minute glimpse of the following days' objective that evening and went to sleep pretty early with plans on an early start.

Day 2



*Joe Dale scrambling the summit ridge of Matchlee Mountain.
(Photo by John Relyea-Voss)*



Kaya Leslie and Casey Matsuda on the summit of Matchlee Mountain. (Photo by John Relyea-Voss)

Starting at 6:00 a.m. we geared up with crampons and ice axes and started up towards the Northwest Ridge. Making the ridge quickly we had a great time hiking up close to the summit where we briefly split off choosing some more exciting terrain to navigate. Casey, Kaya and Joe opted to stay high on the snow while Steph and I chose a lower route which included a few small sections of fourth class scrambling around some rocky ledges. Meeting up for the final summit push, we all made it up top for well deserved lunch and pictures!



*Group climbing towards Matchlee Mountain's summit ridge.
(Photo by John Relyea-Voss)*

On the way down we decided to head straight to the glacier, practise some self arrests, and meet up with a second group we saw approaching from afar. The group turned out to be the Island Alpine Guides (IAG) mountain fly-in course and we briefly chatted with a guide who had lost her phone on the way up. We followed her tracks all the way back to camp, but we did not find the phone.



Stephanie Leblanc scrambling on Matchlee Mountain's summit ridge. (Photo by John Relyea-Voss)

Once back at camp, we hung out for a while drying gear and took off down into the fog. The descent was very fast and aside from a couple falls (luckily no injuries) we made quick time back to the vehicle. We went down the first gully instead of repeating the bushwhack which turned into an exciting third-class scramble down a river/waterfall all the way down to the meadows. Eight hours up, under four hours down.

Participants: John Relyea-Voss, Casey Matsuda, Stephanie Leblanc, Joe Dale and Kaya Leslie



*View of the hike out.
(Photo by John Relyea-Voss)*

Climbing the Colonel: First All Women's Ascent

Eryn Tombu

25-27 June, 2022

Mount Colonel Foster. All Vancouver Island mountaineers know this mountain. It was remaining on my list of 6000 foot peaks and looming in my mind, and two of my female climbing partners had it left on their list of Island Qualifiers. We'd tossed around the idea of climbing it as a women's team and had three days lined up at the end of June, although we thought with all the snowfall in late spring it might be too early to line up the trip.

The weekend before our proposed date I was climbing Nine Peaks as a day trip with another friend. I had burned the inside of my nostrils on the snow and we had kicked steps for most of our 21-hour day. I was totally done and in my mind was cancelling whatever hiking venture was on for the next weekend. My text message to Tiffany the next day was comical: "21 hours, barf. First 13 were amazing then, cloud, hail, thunder, freezing rain and total exhaustion.... I just about puked.... please give me two

days to recover before we start talking about mountains." I lasted about 20 minutes before I was sending pictures of our proposed route up the Colonel.

We'd decided on the Great West Couloir approach as it was too early in the season for a full summit traverse. Then, a stellar forecast for the weekend, we figured at least it'll be a reconnaissance mission if not a summit attempt. There was a lot of varied opinions on how conditions would be and no information from any groups recently in the area. We thought we might very well be the first ones up this year. A team who'd done the same route in early season 2021 had had to kick snow off the summit traverse ledges as they made their way along, something that slightly terrified us... We were hoping it would be clear, trying to be optimistic. One little mishap saw all of Tiffany's expensive mountaineering gear accidentally end up in Nanaimo, but she managed to get it returned the day before departure. I spent that day celebrating my son's 4th birthday while texting back and forth trying to firm up group gear with Tiffany and her wife Darryl. We opted for two alpine 60 metre ropes and a light 30 metre, a full rack, two pickets, more webbing than we'd need and all the basics: crampons, ice axes, helmets, camp gear. My bag was not light. Now this is why I think women's only groups are amazing. We have to carry all the same gear and generally are much smaller. At 42 lbs my bag was nowhere near the recommended one fifth of your body weight. Women are also empowering to hike with; having hiked with many men and women, the dynamic just slightly changes with women. It's not that men are crass and vulgar, I mean we make just as many, if not more, crude jokes. (Seriously, it was only on a trip where I was the only female that we talked about our favourite alpine flowers). It's just that we are bad-ass and driven and we know it.



*Eryn Tombu, Darryl Andersen and Tiffany Cunha.
(Photographer unknown)*

We left the Elk River Trailhead at a reasonable time, 8:30 a.m.-ish, and grumbled and groaned about the slog through the forest ahead of us. We were all too familiar with the trail and could name all the points on the trail and what they looked like in the dark returning from climbs late at night/early in the morning. We were happy to find BC parks had put a lot of effort into clearing all the winter deadfall we'd heard the trail was littered with and we pleasantly cruised along. Darryl did take a slip at one point on some fresh sawdust and her reoccurring injury flared up. We took a breather then she struggled through and seemed to be able to keep pace without too much pain. (Later this turned out to be a stress fracture she'd had for a while, so she is probably the only person to climb Colonel Foster with a broken foot.)

Taking a lunch break at Landslide Lake we looked ahead to our route. We were happy to see a solid snow route to the South Col and headed out to a not-so-fun bush whack/post hole/ on and off snow/ bash around the lake and were eventually on solid snow by Foster Lake. Kicking steps up to the South Col in the hot afternoon sun navigating around streams, moats, massive cracks in the snow, and endless waterfalls made for a hot, tiring and mildly exciting slow slog up soppy snow, all the while with the south summit of Colonel Foster looming over us. Having been able to pick out our line from further down we found it easy route finding and crested the shoulder in decent, but not amazing time. We wrapped around the backside and traversed on easy snow on the southwest side over to the West Ridge, of which only the last 15 minutes gave any strife, with us having to clamber over and under low bushy snow-covered trees. We found three lovely bivy spots that gazed up on the Great West Couloir so we spent the evening and the moon-filled night looking out at the steep morning climb.

Our alarms went off at 4:30 a.m. and by 5:00 a.m. we were working our way off the ridge onto the snow. Because it was near the solstice we had plenty of light and were very happy to find the snow was not a sheet of ice. We kicked steps and gained the 300 metres in the Great West Couloir quickly and connected up with the summit traverse route at the upper glacier next to the 'Corporal' gendarme. Looking up towards the south summit we realized immediately we made the right call to ditch any idea of doing the full traverse this early. The steep north facing slopes were still snow covered and littered with moats. We roped up and did a quick climb up to the small flat area on the ridge where we looked ahead on the route. Almost all of it was clear of snow and ice, although we couldn't see into the final gully or the backside of the 'Utopian Fin' we were happy the ridge line and the exposed narrow ledge were definitely clear. It was easy to be giddy with being high in the mountains and the fact it looked like we might actually pull it off. We flaked the

ropes, and had a snack and headed off down the ridge which narrowed as we traversed from one side to the other of a set of pinnacles hanging directly over Foster Lake, 1000 metres below. At the end of the short traverse, we all clipped into a tight exposed chunk of rock we set an anchor on and got ready to rappel down into a notch that dropped away on either side and was still choked with snow.... and a yawning moat opening on either side next to the rock. We stayed on rappel until we made our way over to a boulder in the middle of the snow as we found most of the snow was uncomfortably under cut.



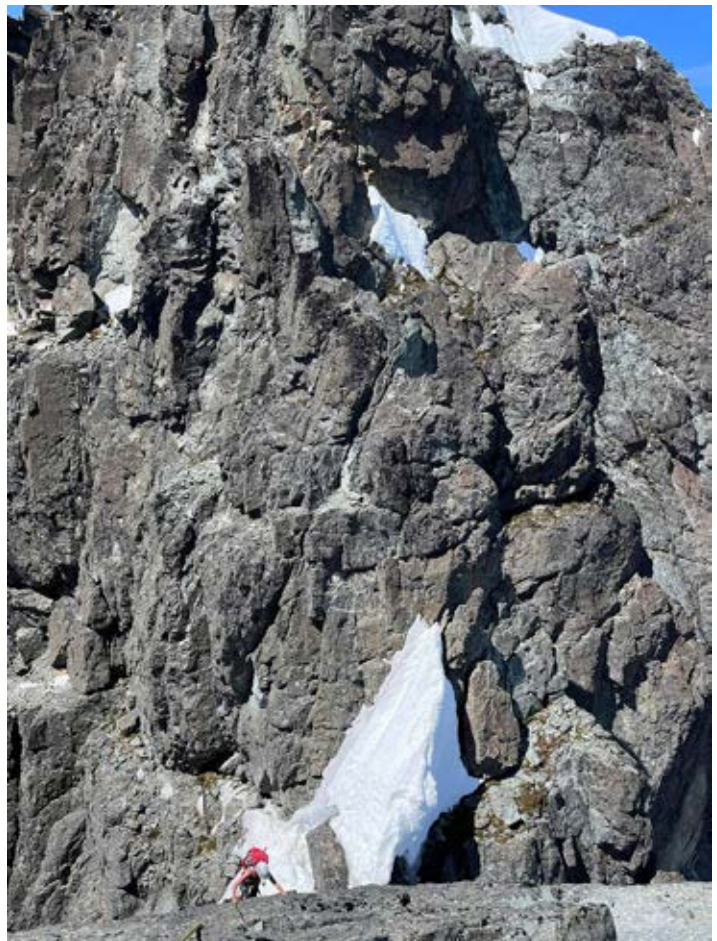
*Darryl squeezes along the ledge
while Tiffany rappels the Utopian Fin.
(Photo by Eryn Tombu)*

With all of us perched on our boulder in the notch and the rope flaked yet again, Tiffany started up the 'Utopian Fin'. As we had nothing to make a solid anchor out of for Darryl to belay off of, we fastened a picket in the icy snow, the first placement gave way with a gentle tug, so we set it in a firmer and deeper section of snow and that seemed to make a solid anchor... or at least the best we could do with what we had. Tiffany gently stepped across the snow with a few profanities as she broke through some snow

by the rock. She was quickly climbing up the small but spicy feature and route finding with a few exclamations of “nope, not this way” “Oh %#@ definitely not here” “oh, maybe this goes” and soon enough I was clambering up to yet another tight rappel station. Soon all three of us were clipped into the webbing anchor and we flaked the rope again. We had been told to leave our 30 metre rope set up on the back of the ‘Utopian Fin’ which we fully planned to do so we tossed the 30, and I rappelled quickly and easily down and onto the ledge. The ledge was big enough for a bivy in a few places and we noticed someone had done just that, but you definitely would not want to roll over in your sleep. I’d seen a few pictures of people traversing this ledge while researching and had noticed people squeezing by the outside of a large boulder. I was happy to find that you could easily duck between the boulder and the mountain. I saw no reason for more unnecessary exposed moves as this mountain certainly has no shortage of them! Quickly we found out we could just walk right into the last gully up to the summit block and it was also free of snow and even a comfy rock perch to belay off of. This gully was a non event and we left a 60 metre rope at the top, choosing not to carry the extra weight. The summit block was my least favourite part. There was snow. And it was steep, icy, and gave way to a thin, sloped, section of scree balanced on the edge of the rock, that gave way to... what could be a long and horrifying fall off the mountain. I dug my ice axe hard into the icy snow to balance as we went gingerly along the edge. We knew we had to follow the ledge around quite a ways, so as not to head up too early to a false summit. Eventually we headed up and ascended a loose and crappy gully in a choose-your-own-not-great-route way but it went and shortly we were on the summit! In the sun, warmth and glowing with success! It was an awesome feeling, not even on the success on the summit, but the fact that now having done Mount Colonel Foster I

might actually pull off the 6000 foot summits. It was a truly awesome, fun, exciting climb and we were high on the achievement and the glorious exposed climbing. Plus, we later found that ours was the first all female ascent.

Leaving the summit, we found a decent rappel station to avoid the loose gullies; we did however land on steep icy snow that slopped precariously down to the cliff edge, which meant scrambling into crampons and awkwardly pulling and flaking rope in an uncomfortable balancing act. We gingerly followed the sloped scree and snow along to the edge of the gully where we’d left a rope for an easy climb down. Retracing our steps was for the most part not challenging, other than the climb back up to the ridge after the ‘Utopian Fin’. It was made extra gross by having to start with navigating over the moat and undercut snow to reach the smooth rock, but Darryl led it brilliantly after punching through the snow a few times. As soon as she made the rock she cruised up the exposed rock face and then belayed us up.



*Eryn climbing the slab back up to the ridge.
(Photo Tiffany Cunha)*



*Tiffany, Eryn and Darryl on the
summit of Mount Colonel Foster.
(Photo by Tiffany Cunha)*

Back at the West Ridge we quickly packed up camp and made the traverse to the South Col. We decided we would rather camp up high with a view watching the sunset than continue down. Also, in part because after a day of warm temperatures we figured we would find better snow

conditions first thing. So, we watched an epic sunset and talked happily about our freaking amazing day and how well everything worked in our favour. From our bivy spot we watched the last of the colour fade from the sky as we fell into sleep.

The next morning, we descended towards Foster Lake, the snow still soft enough to heel step easily and we made good time. It was shocking to see in the 40 hours since we climbed this section how much snow had melted. Areas that we had crossed the snow on the climb up now were thin little bridges with roaring streams far down below them. Thinking back to how carefree we were on the climb up chilled us; how undercut it must have been on the way up as well. We saw fresh footprints at Foster Lake, and followed them easily to the now clear path around Landslide Lake. Lower down at one river crossing, still glowing at our achievement, we were taking our shoes off to cross as we came alongside a large group. They strode on and nine out of ten of them balanced perfectly on the small log across the water. That log had managed to throw all three of us on the hike in. We were impressed with their ability to balance. We just had done the first all female ascent of Mount Colonel Foster, but this group had just humbled us on a basic river crossing. Anyone who's hiked with me is well aware of my irrational fear of log crossings and we had to laugh about how ridiculous it was that we were worried about falling into four inches of water. We made quick work of the rest of the Elk River trail, homing beacon engaged, and in no time were back in the Valley drinking beers and eating dinner. This climb was so enjoyable it will stay with all three of us. With Mount Colonel Foster climbed, Tiffany and Darryl made quick work of the rest of their Island Qualifier peaks, and on August 27th I was able to climb the last of my Island 6000'ers.

Participants: Eryn Tombu, Tiffany Cunha and Darryl Andersen

Mount Service

Knut von Salzen

June 25-26, 2022

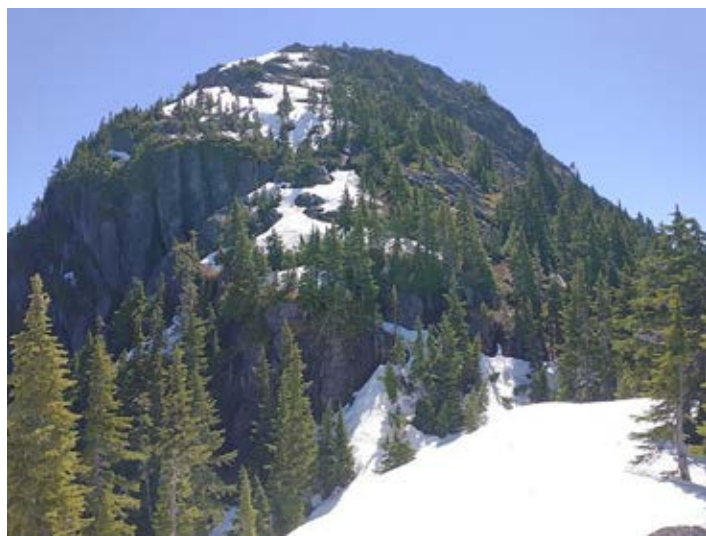
On a previous ACCVI trip with the same objective, we only made it to the start of the route at the low point of the ridge just to the northwest of Mount Service. This was on May 1st and large amounts of deep and soft snow covered much of the trail, which made for challenging conditions and slow progress on snowshoes.

On this second trip, conditions were dramatically

different, with summer well underway. Although we carried snowshoes, we never actually used them. We started the two-day trip on Saturday afternoon by hiking from the trailhead to the Cottonwood Creek crossing, about six kilometers from the trailhead. This was followed by a creek-side dinner conversation and a quiet night. We were back in our boots at 7:00 a.m. on Sunday, looking forward to the summit, despite the fact that we all started the day with somewhat low energy levels. Only Adriana had remembered to bring coffee for breakfast, enough for about one cup, which she kindly shared with everyone else.

The trail from the camp quickly changed from a steady and easy gravel road hike to a moderate slide alder whack higher up. This was then followed by a more pleasant hike in the old growth forest closer to the top of the ridge.

We reached the first high point on the ridge about 3.5 hours after leaving camp. Once on the ridge, we took plenty of time to enjoy the great views. The weather was pleasantly warm, sunny, and calm - ideal weather conditions for hiking and lounging on the ridge. We were not in a rush when we approached the base of Mount Service from the northwest at about 12:30 pm. A plan was made to follow a line on the climbers' right to try to avoid much of the rotten-looking snow, but still staying as close as possible to the ridgeline.



Mount Service, with our route approximately in the centre of the photo. (Photo by Knut von Salzen)

It took us considerable patience and focus to frequently switch between steep snow, ice, rock, and vegetation. But this still seemed preferable to the wide swaths of steep and icy snow further to the left. Things got exciting when we climbed to the base of a small cliff, with steep snow and a bergschrund right below, blocking our upward progress. Fortunately, a stunted tree at the top of the cliff was within reach and provided a green belay, once the branches were vigorously pushed out of the way. After we

all found slightly different ways up, through or around the tree, none of them aesthetically too pleasing, the hike to the summit was straightforward. Much of the route from hereon was on flat and firm snow, which was welcome at this point of the trip.



*Back on the snow.
(Photo by Catrin Brown)*

However, the wide and open ridge traverse eventually leads to a nameless bump that is almost as steep and challenging as Mount Service. We were forced to repeat the same strategy that we previously used to climb Mount Service, frequently switching between snow, ice, rock, and vegetation along the way, but avoiding the bergschrunds on what would have been the direct route. With the last bump of the ridge finally behind us, the descent through the steep forest to the col between Mount Service and El Capitan Mountain went without a glitch, despite the challenges posed by small cliffs which seemed to appear out of nowhere on the way to the col.



*The ridge somewhere near the summit of Mount Service.
(Photo by Catrin Brown)*

After the hike back from the col on the Lomas Lake trail back to the Cottonwood Creek camp, and collecting the camping gear, we eventually arrived back at the trailhead, just when it got dark, after 15 hours and 21 kilometers of hiking, exhausted and thankful for a safe and adventurous trip.

Trip participants: Knut von Salzen, Catrin Brown, and Adriana Szymbara

From Rambler Junior to Mount Cobb (and Everything in-Between)

Barry Hansen

July 16-20, 2022

My first foray onto the Filberg Range was with Rich Priebe in June 2021, when he was chasing the Vancouver Island 6000'ers and still needed Mount Filberg, Mount Cobb, and Mount Haig-Brown. I was more than happy to join him, even though I hadn't yet embraced that objective for myself. After climbing Elk Mountain, Mount Laing, and Mount Filberg, we camped on the south shoulder of Mount Filberg with the intention of climbing Mount Cobb and Mount Haig-Brown the next day and hike back to camp on Mount Laing. A combination of factors resulted in me staying at camp while Rich soloed Mount Cobb and Mount Haig-Brown. Fast forward a few months to when I also decided to pursue the 6000'ers objective, which made me think back on the decision not to climb those two peaks with Rich that day: two peaks that are very difficult to access and which I could have checked off my list with eight hours of effort. One would think I'd have deep regret but I didn't. The same peace I had when I decided not to climb them was still there when I reflected back on the decision. But the fact remained that I needed to plan a trip that included those two remote peaks.

Fast forward to the fall of 2021, when I met Eryn Tombu-Haigh. We hadn't yet met in person but had been sharing beta back-and-forth, had some common acquaintances, and were both aware of each other's goals and abilities. We also both had irregular schedules and so decided to try a climb together and picked K2 (okay, Kitchener 2 to be precise). We thought we should try something short and easy in case we hated each other. But we clicked, and one trip became two and two became many more. We discussed our common goal to chase the 6000'ers and when I told her I planned to complete my remaining 22 in 2022, she figured she might as well go for her remaining 17. A plan quickly formulated along with a commitment to help each other get it done. One of those plans was a

multi-day trip for us to get Slocomb Peak, Mount Haig-Brown, and Mount Cobb. But also grab Rambler Junior and El Piveto Mountain along the way, which I'd climbed the previous year with Rich but was very willing to repeat since Eryn still needed them. A subsequent conversation with Matt Lettington brought him and Phil Jackson on board since they also needed Rambler Junior, El Piveto Mountain, and Ptarmigan Pinnacles. The team was rounded out with Quentin Thomas, a good friend I've had many alpine adventures with. But this trip likely wouldn't have happened if I'd decided to climb Mount Cobb and Mount Haig-Brown that day with Rich. Call it fate, serendipity, or whatever—I and my four companions were very happy things worked out the way they did.



*Eryn (happy) and Barry (miserable)
on the summit of Slocomb Peak.
(Photo by: Eryn Tombu-Haigh)*

Our original plan was to traverse from the Elk River Trail (ERT) trailhead to Elk Mountain, leaving a vehicle at either end. We felt the crux section would be navigating the deep notch between Mount Cobb and Mount Filberg. A couple weeks before the trip, while gathering beta from Phil Stone and Lindsay Elms, an alternate plan was formed at their recommendation: exiting via Cervus Creek from Mount Cobb rather than traversing the entire ridge to Elk Mountain. Besides avoiding the Cobb/Filberg notch and a lot of extra elevation gain/loss, another benefit was it only required one vehicle. I volunteered to hitchhike or jog the six kilometers between our Cervus Creek exit at Hwy 28 and the ERT trailhead. In preparation for this, I left a garbage bag hidden beside the road at this location with my runners, a Gatorade, and a cardboard sign requesting a short ride to the ERT. We were very grateful we'd changed our exit plan as we drove past the Elk Mountain access road and saw that the gate was closed. We took it as a sign that everything was going to work out well!

We parked Quentin's truck in the ERT parking lot, threw on our packs, and headed up the trail towards Elk Pass. It

was a cloudy, cool, and humid day and we assumed once we left the main trail at gravel flats, the overgrown trail from there to Elk Pass would be a soaker. And we were right. It was like taking a shower as the endless blueberry bushes, false azaleas, and other Vancouver Island shrubbery shed their water-laden leaves onto us. We took turns taking the lead and getting drenched. We emerged from the forest into the open barren cirque of Elk Pass, wet and chilled. The valley was still filled with late season snow, which made for quick and direct travel to the upper section of the cirque, where Eryn and I temporarily parted ways with the other three. They headed up to the south shoulder of Rambler Peak, where we'd camp for the night, while Eryn and I headed the other way to climb Slocomb Peak before joining them at camp later.

We ditched our overnight packs under the shelter of a large boulder and began ascending the slopes of Slocomb Peak in the cold, driving rain, kicking our way upward on snow almost the entire way and navigating by GPS in the low, dense cloud. The views from the summit were non-existent but we happily congratulated each other for checking one more peak off our list. It took one hour to reach the summit and 30 minutes to descend as we slid our way back down to our packs. (*Reflecting back upon our Slocomb Peak experience, I've referred to it as pure alpine misery whereas Eryn expresses loving fondness. And although I think we both have a mild case of alpine-amnesia, our summit selfie suggests her memory better reflects the truth.) The trek from there up the steep, hard snow to Rambler's south shoulder was a true slog in the unabating bone-chilling conditions. We were grateful to find the switch-backing steps of our team members, which we slowly followed upward until we reached the plateau and their three tents, which they were comfortably nestled within. We raised our voices above the howling wind and shouted greetings before seeking level and sheltered ground to pitch our own tents, which we clambered into as quickly as possible to shed our wet clothing and warm up. I laid shivering in my down blanket for a while before boiling some water in my vestibule to bring my dehydrated dinner to life. The next day would be shorter, which meant we could have a more leisurely start. I slept restlessly as the storm raged throughout the night.

The rain and wind had stopped by dawn and the low morning sun illuminated our tents and our spirits. Rambler Junior, which we were camped at the base of, was enshrouded in misty cloud. We hung our wet clothing to dry, ate breakfast, packed up, geared up, and waited for the sun to evaporate the cloud that was still obscuring Rambler Junior's summit, our next objective, and dry its wet surface. It was a tug-of-war that the sun seemed to be losing and we eventually resigned to the conditions and headed up the loose, open south slope to the summit ridge. The first part of the ridge



*Coming up Rambler Junior.
(Photo by Barry Hansen)*

is blocky, level, and easy to navigate. Partway along, we squeezed through a narrow notch in the rock, crossing from east to west, and then traversed a short, level, rocky section before climbing upward to gain the airy summit ridge. Once on the ridge, I led the way, setting traverse lines in the most exposed sections. The rock was solid and dry. And the exposure was breathtaking as the cloud began to burn off. We worked our way to the far end of the ridge and each took a turn to touch its highest point, which only had room for one. Photos were taken and congratulations were exchanged before we retraced our steps back along the ridge and down to our waiting packs.

Our next destination was El Piveto Mountain, which we planned to camp on the summit of. We made our way down to the base of Rambler Peak, climbed up and over Cervus Mountain, and ascended El Piveto Mountain's west flank to its cold and windy summit. We were on snow the entire way, which made for fast travel on level ground and descents. After signing the rarely visited summit register, we hunted for a level spot large enough for all five tents and preferably somewhat sheltered on dry ground, which was a tall order on the wide and barren snow-covered summit. Fortuitously, we quickly found just the spot, which even had a water source close by. We set up our tents and constructed windbreaks in front of them before settling down to eat and discuss the next day's objective, which was to descend El Piveto Mountain's Conquistador Ridge and traverse part way along Ptarmigan Ridge, where we'd camp for the night.

We awoke to a bluebird day and watched the early morning sunlight shine golden on the east face of Rambler Peak from our perch overlooking it. I can't recall how the others slept that night, but I know I slept soundly because the morning chatter was all about my snoring. Apparently loud? As everyone was readying for the day ahead, I ventured off to scout for a route down from the summit to the expansive glacier on El Piveto Mountain's

west face. I returned with good news and off we went. A short rappel took us down to the top of the glacier where we navigated our first of many moats that day, gained its snowy surface, and crossed its breadth before arriving at the start of the long and uneven Conquistador Ridge. I initially estimated it would take us 2-3 hours to descend but it ended up taking five hours due to the challenges of moving a large group down very complex and technical terrain, which there is very limited beta for. It was challenging but so much fun. And we burned though a good amount of webbing for the numerous rappels required at different points along the way. We arrived at the low point between El Piveto Mountain and Ptarmigan Ridge late afternoon, mentally fatigued and dehydrated but feeling accomplished. We located a water source, drank deeply, ate some food, swatted at bugs, and then headed up Ptarmigan Ridge. We hiked further along the ridge in order to shorten the next day's distance and eventually arrived at a reasonably level spot where we pitched our tents and settled down for the night as darkness descended.



*Camp Nemo on El Piveto Mountain
with Rambler Peak in the background.
(Photo by Barry Hansen)*

Once again, the morning chatter was all about my snoring, which I began suspecting was hyperbole, but they insisted otherwise. Oh well, at least someone was getting a good night's rest. We packed up and began our journey, cresting the high point of the ridge, which is considered Ptarmigan Peak, before arriving at our first serious objective for the day: Ptarmigan Pinnacles. Phil and Matt had attempted it the year before but weren't able to reach its summit. We dropped our packs a short distance before the highest pinnacle since it was slightly off-route. Arriving at the Pinnacle's base, we eyed it up and took two different lines. Matt and Phil opted for the line they tried the previous year, which they said was in better condition now. Quentin following them. Eryn and I opted to climb straight up the arete with its big, blocky

holds. We met together on top of that first feature and then carefully climbed around and up an exposed step, which led to an easy scramble up to the summit. Congratulations were expressed, photos were taken, and then we rappelled back down and returned to our packs.

We traversed a short distance to a notch in the ridge where we donned our crampons, grabbed our ice axes, and carefully front-kicked steps down a steep couloir to the snowfield below, which led us to a wide shelf that separates Ptarmigan Pinnacles and Mount Haig-Brown. Small streams of water slowly cascaded down the smooth bare rock as the sun came out, warming us inside and out. We decided it was a great spot to take a break, eat lunch, and discuss the next objective: Mount Haig-Brown. Since Matt and Phil had climbed it the previous summer, they decided to bypass it and head to the saddle between Mount Haig-Brown and Mount Cobb, which would be our final campsite. Eryn, Quentin and I made a direct line for Mount Haig-Brown and ascended a long, scree and talus strewn slope to the narrow gap on its ridgeline, which we would descend from to join the others after summiting Mount Haig-Brown. We dropped our packs at the gap, crossed a short, steep, exposed snowpatch beneath Mount Haig-Brown's large prominent pinnacle, and then wound our way up the wide, easy slopes to the summit where we took an obligatory selfie before heading back to our packs. I really wanted to climb the majestic pinnacle but time wasn't on our side.

We descended from the ridgeline gap down the steep snowy slopes into the wide basin below Mount Haig-Brown and Mount Cobb before slowly kicking our way up the wide couloir to join Matt and Phil at the saddle, which had everything one could hope for in a high alpine camp: plenty of perfectly flat spots for tents, running water, wind breaks, and epic views. And since it was only late afternoon, we took our time setting up camp in the warm sunshine. We ate a leisurely dinner and then Matt, Eryn, Quentin, and I meandered up Mount Cobb's open and chossy south flank for a sunset summit, completing our peak objectives for this trip. We hung out for a while to enjoy the panoramic views of mountains near and far as the sun crept towards the horizon. Once back at camp, we watched the sun set over Elkhorn Mountain while nibbling treats and watching Quentin spill his coffee everywhere, just like he did with his dinner. The darkness eventually chased us into our tents, which we settled into with full hearts, grateful for days like this.

Morning came and the glory of the previous day faded to dread as we readied ourselves for the descent into the Cervus Valley and the long, hot bushwhack out. As we navigated our way downward, subalpine glades gradually transitioned into open forests, which eventually gave way to the dense, bushy terrain Vancouver Island is infamous



*Eryn on the summit of Mount Cobb with most of our route visible in the background.
(Photo by Barry Hansen)*

for. We arrived at Cervus Creek, which could more accurately be described as a raging river as the alpine snow rapidly melting from the towering peaks above converged into this lone watershed, racing towards Elk River and then out to the Salish Sea.

We bushwhacked our way along the shoreline, searching for a tree that had fallen across the fast-moving water because crossing by foot was both undesirable and dangerous. As fortune had it, we didn't have to search for long as we came across a tree that spanned the creek. Well, barely. We would have preferred a larger tree but this one would have to do. Phil went first, carefully and methodically working his way across. I started crossing when he was halfway. As I neared the middle, Phil yelled something, took a couple bounding steps, and launched himself onto the far shoreline. The tree shook beneath me as I panicked to retain my balance. Apparently, I was having the same affect upon the fallen tree, which is what made Phil exclaim and leap. I somehow managed not to fall and followed Phil's final bounding technique, landing on dry ground with adrenaline pumping. Matt followed like a tree-crossing expert. And then it was Eryn's turn. Crossing any fallen log strikes panic into her heart, but crossing a bouncy tree across a raging river was almost too much. She mustered every ounce of courage available and slowly worked her way across, a look of sheer terror on her face. But she made it. As Quentin did after her.

We worked our way down the valley, occasionally following well-trodden elk paths that would suddenly disappear only to reappear further along. It was hot and muggy and we were thoroughly spent. But the worst was yet to come. The final three kilometres were a disaster zone of blowdown from the previous winter's storms. Trees up to five feet diameter crisscrossed the forest floor, blocking our passage. Sometimes they were layered three deep, forcing us to clamber under, over, around,

and along them. Occasionally, we'd stand in front of a pile of trees, trying to figure out how to get past them. We eventually spilled out of the forest onto highway 28. Sudden encounters with civilization always feel so foreign and unnatural after being in the wilderness for an extended period. We exited right where I hid the garbage bag, which I removed my Gatorade from and quickly guzzled it before following the others a half kilometer down the highway to a pullout where Elk River comes alongside it.



*Our team of five on Ptarmigan Ridge
with El Piveto Mountain behind.
(Photo by Barry Hansen)*

The reality of a six-kilometer jog from there to the ERT parking lot suddenly felt impossible in my present state of weariness and the mid-afternoon heat. What seemed like a good initial idea suddenly wasn't. I hoped and prayed that a passerby would mercifully pick me up once I pulled out my cardboard sign. Fortunately, I didn't have to wait because a truck and trailer pulled into the pullout just as we arrived. I ran up to them, quickly explained our predicament, and practically begged for a ride. The two women kindly agreed to accommodate me and next thing I knew, I was barreling down the road in their truck. I apologized for my presumably rancid body odour and they made no effort to dispute my claim. It must have been bad. They dropped me off at the ERT parking lot and I drove Quentin's truck back to rejoin my companions, who were now bathing in the Elk River. And soon I was too. We drove home tired and happy. Another memorable and satisfying island alpine adventure.

Participants: Barry Hansen, Eryn Tombu-Haigh, Quentin Thomas, Matthew Lettington, and Phil Jackson

Klitsa Mountain

Nicole Harris

July 16-17, 2022

Distance: - 12 km return trip

Elevation Gain: - 1000 m

Although our original destination was the Comox Glacier, we shifted objectives a few days out as weather was moving in throughout the Comox Valley. After a few suggestions, we all agreed our new focus was Klitsa Mountain via the Brooks George trail.

Day 1

We departed Victoria around 12:30 p.m. Davis offered to drive and was kind enough to pop into a few park and rides to pick us all up. None of us had met before, but that didn't stop the chatter in the truck on the drive up. We got so into the conversations that we missed a few turns, but we realized it pretty quick, so not much time was lost.



*Nicole, Megan, Enda, Knut and Davis leaving the parking lot.
(Photo by Megan Walter)*

We arrived at the parking area around 5 p.m. To access the trail we had to hike up an old overgrown logging road (even with a high clearance 4wd, we still had to hike). Once on the trail, the forest closed in on us and the hiking became more technical as we negotiated rocks, creeks, fallen trees, and the (more than occasional) muddy section. About an hour into the hike up we started to cross a few snowy sections of trail. Soon after we crossed the river, and after a few more snowy sections we were at the lake. The hike up took about 1 hour and 45 minutes.



*Nicole on ascent trail to the lake.
(Photo by Knut von Salzen)*



*Megan and Davis just below the lake.
(Photo by Enda Craven)*

The recent rain and snow made finding a dry place to camp a little challenging, but we managed, although we had to sacrifice flat in favour of dry. Once the tents were up, and everyone had eaten, it was time to hang the food. Conversation was on what a “suitable tree” looked like, and how high we should try to hang the food. Hanging the food quickly turned into a spectator sport; a lesson in

teamwork; and utilizing the resources available. I won’t comment on how long it took us to get the rope over the branch, but I will mention the idea to tie the rope to a coffee cup was a great idea.



*Dinner time.
(Photo by Knut von Salzen)*



*How many people does it take to hang food?
(Photo by Knut von Salzen)*

By the time the food was secured, daylight was fading and the temperature was dropping. It was an early night to

bed as we aimed to be up at 6 a.m. in order to reach the summit in the morning. Not long after we were all in bed, did we realize just how many frogs were in the area. We all drifted off to sleep listening to the crescendo of croaks.

Day 2

The chorus of croaking creatures continued throughout the night. And many of us heard the rain start around 5 a.m., and wondered if this was an ominous sign. But the rain only lasted for about an hour, and just as it was letting up, Knut, as promised the night before, sounded the wakeup call at 6 a.m. Most of us were up and prepping breakfast by 6:15 a.m., and over our breakfast conversations, it didn't take long to realize that the fortissimo frogs had kept us awake for most of the night.



*Knut and Enda on the bushwhack start to Day 2.
(Photo by Megan Walter)*

We hit the summit trail around 7:15 a.m., and after about one kilometer of fairly steep forest, we reached the sub alpine. The sub alpine was a mix of hiking over (mostly) firm snow patches, and vegetated rocky bluffs.

Eventually the vegetation gave way to more and more snow, and as we climbed, the clouds began to lift. The pitch significantly kicked up in grade about 500 metres from the summit. We stopped here to put on crampons and dig out our ice axes.



*Knut, Enda, and Davis in the sub alpine.
(Photo credit Megan Walter)*



*Davis nearing the top of the last
steep section before the summit.
(Photo by Megan Walter)*

Around 10:30 a.m., we hit the final rock bluff and scrambled our way to the summit. Unfortunately, the clouds had come back by this time, but we ate some snacks and snapped a few photos anyway. Davis found the summit register, and added our names to it (it was looking rather full).



*Summit Smiles.
(Photo by Megan Walter)*

From the summit, we scoped out a slightly less steep descent, and carefully started the climb down. Once we were out of the steep section, it was time for boot skiing and bum sliding (and the occasional mix of both)!



*Making our way down.
(Photo by Nicole Harris)*

Needless to say, we may good time on the descent, with lots of laughs. We regrouped on a rocky bluff just before the steeper forest section that would lead us back to camp. From here we got a good sense for the acoustics of the area as the tumultuous toads could be heard from up here.

We arrived back at camp around 12:30 p.m., which gave us time for some quick lunch - did someone say frog legs?!

By 1:30 p.m. we were all packed up and started our descent back to the truck. The hike down was rather uneventful, with just a few slips, slides. An hour and a half later we were all safely back at the truck discussing where to stop for the post hike beer.

Participants: Davis Griggs, Enda Creaven, Megan Walter, Nicole Harris, and Knut Von Salzen (leader)

The Campbell River Divide

Kyle Bourquin

July 27 - August 10, 2022

The Campbell River Divide; A 225 kilometer, 22,000 m+/- alpine route following the height of land over no less than 33 peaks (up to 45) surrounding the upper Campbell River Watershed.

The following report details our trip over 14 days and 26 summits, completed by Kyle Bourquin, Casey Matsuda and in part by John Relyea-Voss



*Sunset from Mount Adrian.
(Photo by Casey Matsuda)*

The Boundary Range

Two days, 30 kilometers, 3050 m+ /2750 m-

Summits: Lupin Mountain, Mount Beadnell, Mount Adrian, Alexandra Peak.

Day 1

Our trip started at the Lupin Mountain trailhead and continued following the Vancouver Island Trail for a day and a half. The route finding over Lupin Mountain and Mount Beadnell to the Beadnell Headwall was quite straightforward and aside from the sweltering heat and armada of mosquitos, it went well. We traversed under the steep rock walls and buttresses until we located a boulder gully on the lower west end of the headwall. Ascending that went smoother than expected with a few 4th class moves. Finally arriving to camp on Mount Adrian's west shoulder after 14 hours, we quickly hit the summit as the sun set. The newly smoky skies made for a seemingly over-edited array of colours.

Day 2

The next day we descended the southeast gully towards Alexandra Peak on broken snow and avalanche debris. At only 8 a.m., the inclement heat was already showing itself, so we quickly crossed the logging roads and began up the shaded West Gully of Alexandra Peak. Although not described as part of the CR Divide, Alexandra Peak seems to be part of the upper watershed so far as we could tell. The climb was a straightforward 3rd class scramble and quite fun, but VERY hot! After descending the route, we beelined for the high logging roads on the southwest aspect and lethargically made our way down the stifling dusty roads to our respite at Pearl Lake.

Comox Range

Four days, 43 kilometers, 4900 m+ /3850 m-

Summits: Peak 1760, Syd Watts Peak, Augerpoint Mountain, Mount Albert Edward, Mount Frink, Mount George V, Peak 1931, Peak 1909, Siokum Mountain, Mount Celeste, Iceberg Peak, Comox Glacier.

Day 3

After an early start, we chose a prominent forested gully directly above Pearl Lake to gain the Augerpoint Traverse. It had some tricky route finding with several small cliffs and ravines but went well. After collecting our first food cache, we hopped on the Augerpoint Trail and quickly found ourselves on Peak 1760. From there, we made a fast and light ascent of Syd Watts Peak, then Augerpoint Mountain before descending to the exquisite Ruth Masters Lake for the night.

Day 4

Getting up to Mount Albert Edward and over to Mount Frink was the uneventful slog you might imagine it was. However, the route down from Mount Frink posed a bit of a route-finding challenge with us losing the way and setting a short rappel. When the rope became stuck, Casey had to ascend and re-route it. Although we planned

to sleep in the pass, high energy and the allure of a summit camp coaxed us on. Three hours later, we were on top of Mount George V. After setting the tents, I dug a three foot hole in the snow to find some ice for our well-earned Old-Fashioned's. What could be more bougie than a summit cocktail with actual ice during a heat wave?!



*The Celestial show over our camp on Mount Celeste.
(Photo by John Relyea-Voss)*

Day 5

The goal for the next day was Mount Celeste and what a beautiful area that is! Walking along the ridge from Siokum Mountain towards Mount Celeste is quite incredible! Standing atop those 350 metre sheer cliffs was spectacular. As were the views of many ink blue lakes, such as...well... Ink Lake. The two route finding challenges between Mount George V and Mount Celeste went better than expected thanks to the excellent information in Exploring Strathcona!

Day 6

Our last day with John started at the crack of dawn. As a group we were a little unsure how the route up the Comox-Argus Col would go in the current conditions. We



*John heads out to give scale to the massive Eric Creek Headwall.
(Photo by Kyle Bourquin)*

wanted to leave enough time for a plan B route around Milla Lake and up to Argus Mountain. In the end, the route went surprisingly well with short 4th class sections and decent rock quality. Meeting up with Stephanie, Kaya and Melissa later that day was a great morale boost and I can't thank them enough for bringing our food caches up from the Frog Ponds! We spent the afternoon rambling around the summit block before being blessed with another truly incredible sunset!



*Sunsets from the Comox Glacier never disappoint!
(Photo by Casey Matsuda)*

Comox Glacier to Baby Bedwell Lake

Five days, 36 kilometers, 3750 m+ /4750 m-

Summits: Tzela Mountain, Shepherds Horn, Mount Henshaw, Margaret Peak, The Misthorns, Mount Rosseau, Mount Septimus

Day 7

After a very relaxed morning, Casey and I parted ways from the others and headed on to Tzela Mountain. Reversing the Southwest Ridge of Mount Harmston gave us our first pitch of actual climbing. After a short 5.7 pitch we wondered why exactly we had carried six cams, and two 35 metre ropes up to this point. Better safe than sorry I suppose, but also a lesson learned for next time!

Days 8 and 9

The next day was sideways rain with zero vis. Drenched but successful, we summited Tzela Mountain and Shepherds Horn. The following morning started out the same but got better as the day went on. The route-finding issues weren't bad, with a small section into Price Pass requiring some thought. The true divide ascends The Misthorns from Price Pass but we wanted to do the full summit traverse, so we headed up under the East Face and along to the south shoulder.



*Casey scrambling up to The Misthorns.
(Photo by Kyle Bourquin)*

Day 10

We started up Margaret Peak around 8 a.m., leaving our unnecessary weight in camp and planning to back track

in the afternoon. The summit traverse from Margaret Peak to Mount Rosseau is quite awesome, if it were separated from the Mount Septimus section, it would surely earn more stars in the guidebook! The route is a knife-edge ridge with great rock, tons of exposure and glaciers on both sides hundreds of metres below. Honestly, it's such a great route! The rock quality nearing Mount Rosseau gets a little suspect at times, but once you pass it and venture towards Mount Septimus, it becomes absolute choss, almost comically so! After reaching the summit of Mount Septimus, we rappelled the "2V" route and hustled back to collect our stuff. Knowing this would be the last bit of service we would have for several days I checked the forecast. Much to our dismay, the following week was filled with heavy rain, lightening and high winds. With the day light fading, we put the pedal down and arrived to Cream Lake just as the alpenglow illuminated the feature on the ridge called The Citadel behind us. A few more friends had hiked out to meet us here and the cold beer and cinnamon buns were quite the treat!

Day 11

The plan for this day was to gain the height of land above Baby Bedwell Lake. Once we arrived at the lake and waved our friends goodbye, we knew we had to make a decision regarding the weather.

I had previously organized for a few friends to meet us near the Carter Drop on Phillips Ridge for the Golden Hinde Traverse, and to bring in our food caches for that section. In hindsight, that was a mistake on our part. We both felt it wouldn't be fair to ask my friends to hike in a thunderstorm to bring us our food, and then to continue hiking in poor weather for the next five days. We considered hiking out Phillips Ridge and getting the food ourselves. But with a tight schedule and the deteriorating state of my aching knees, the addition of two days to the remaining 14 seemed unwise. After a long conversation we made the difficult decision to pull the plug on our mission. We spent the night at Baby Bedwell Lake and celebrated our effort with perhaps a bit too much wine...

The Consolation Prize

Three days, 35 kilometers, 3050 m+ /3750m-

Summits: Big Interior Mountain, Nine Peaks.

Day 12

With two good days left before the storm's arrival, Casey suggested embarking on the bushwhack to Mount Moyeha and Mount Thelwood might be a wasted opportunity. Nine Peaks after all, was "just over there!" Having oogled the postcard peaks for the previous weeks it appeared a proper plan. We turned around and for what seemed like the 10th time this summer, hiked up the Bedwell Lake trail. After setting camp in the Northeast

Cirque of Big Interior Mountain we gorged on our new found abundance of food.

Day 13

Just before sunrise, we started up Big Interior Mountain and summited around 9 a.m. Getting to the Beauty Glacier from here was more straightforward than I had imagined. We roped up for the glacier and before we knew it, we were on the summit of Nine Peaks! We used our summit service to confirm our ride and began the long slog back to Baby Bedwell Lake. At this point in the trip, we were anything but spry and it took us a long 16 hours in total.



Casey proclaims victory after a successful summit of his favourite mountain: Nine Peaks.

(Photo by Kyle Bourquin)

Day 14

Was simple; hike to the trail head, then seven kilometers to the highway (our ride had a small car and didn't want to head up the gravel road). A bittersweet end to a long and amazing trip!

After some convincing, I view our mission largely as a success. Even though we didn't succeed in our original goal, we both completed our longest and most ambitious trip to date, injury free and in good spirits!

If that's not a success, I don't know what is!

Trip total:

Fourteen days, 26 summits

144 kilometers, 14,700 m+ /15,000 m-

Six epic sunsets and three epic sunrises (that we were awake for)

And of course, a bazillian bug bites

Post trip, trip.

Four days later, we came back out with Laurel Mitchell and did a three-day hike mostly along the divide route.

We started on the Bedwell Lake trail (yes, again), gaining the height of land above Baby Bedwell Lake and dropping to Moyeha Lake. After several slips, trips and falls combined with a whole lot of soaking wet bush, we decided we would rather go for Chinese food. We pointed the compass at Jim Mitchell Lake and hiked out to the road. Here we were confronted by a bear that was a little too interested in us. We slowly walked backwards for about 30 feet as it followed us before heading off into the bush. This was the 2nd unsettling bear encounter in the

Bedwell area for us that week. I would advise everyone in the area to carry bear spray, they seem to be getting a little too brazen around there these days.

Acknowledgements

I want to say thank you to the ACCVI for supporting us. It was an honour to receive part of this year's Memorial Fund.

I also want to thank Hornby Organic for the tasty bars, we never once got sick of them!!

Participants: Kyle Bourquin, Casey Matsuda, John Relyea-Voss, and Laurel Frost-Mitchell

Comox Glacier

Stephanie Leblanc

August 1-2, 2022

Kaya Leslie, Melissa Freeman and myself started our day at 4:45 a.m. The drive in went well as we were able to make it through the cross ditches with no issues. We arrived at the trailhead for 7 a.m. and began our hike. The weather was great and we were able to get to the Frog Ponds in three hours.

Our friends were embarking on the Campbell River Divide trip and placed a food cache at the Frog Ponds for us to retrieve. We took a nice break there and divided the cache amongst ourselves and continued on our way. We hiked the scramble up the ridge, and joined our friends at Lone Tree Pass. We reached the glacier in the early



*Sunset over Moyeha Lake and Mountain.
(Photo by Kyle Bourquin)*



*Milla lake.
(Photo by Stephanie Leblanc)*



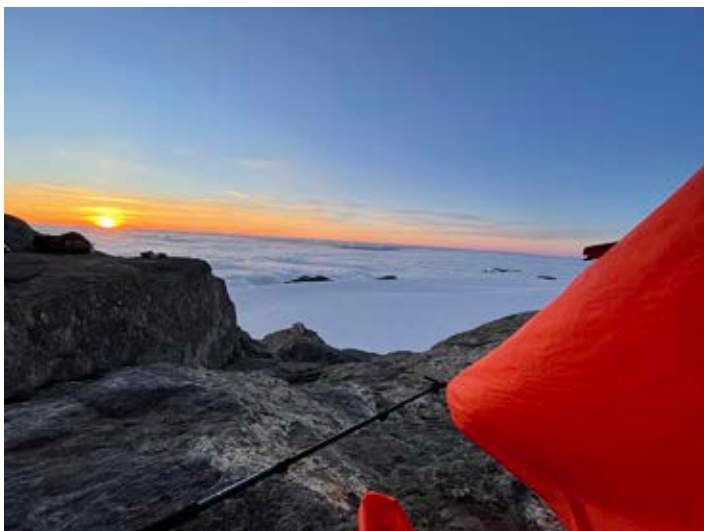
*John crossing the glacier.
(Photo by Stephanie Leblanc)*



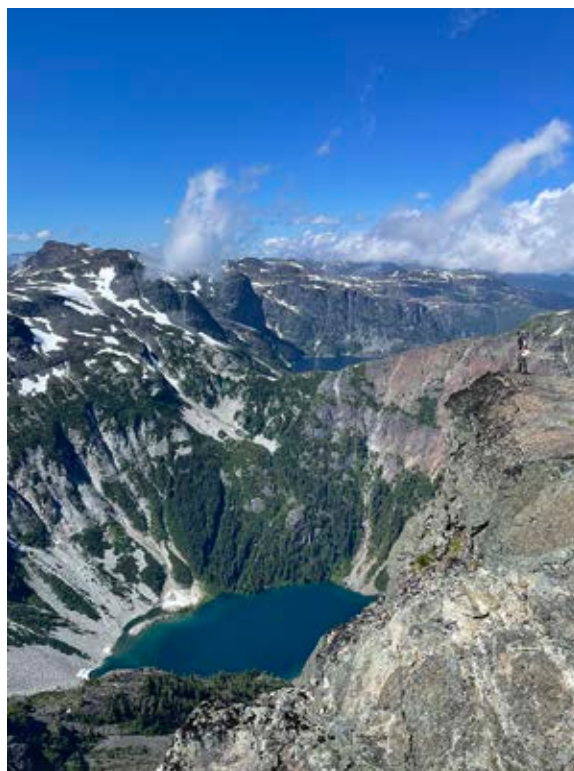
*John and Kyle scrambling on the east face.
(Photo by Stephanie Leblanc)*

afternoon and found the snow was soft and easy to cross. We had a quick break to take a few pictures and enjoy the surrounding views.

In total our day took 7.5 hours. We explored around camp and did a short scramble to the East Face of the glacier to view the climbing lines that John Relyea-Voss, Casey Matsuda, and Kyle Bourquin put up on a previous ACCVI trip. The surrounding views were beautiful.



Early morning. (Photo by Stephanie Leblanc)



*Beautiful Vancouver Island.
(Photo by Stephanie Leblanc)*



*John watching the best sunset of the year.
(Photo by Stephanie Leblanc)*



*John and Steph enjoying the view.
(photo by Kyle Bourquin)*

That night our group made dinner together, relishing in each-other's company. The sunset that night rewarded our earlier efforts up the mountain.

The following morning the sunrise greeted us with a beautiful inversion. We packed up camp and said goodbyes to our friends Casey and Kyle as they continued on their Campbell River divide journey. John hiked out with us girls and we started our descent at 10 a.m. We made it back to our car in 4.5 hours.

Participants: Stephanie Leblanc, Kaya Leslie, Melissa Freeman, John Relyea-Voss, Kyle Bourquin and Casey Matsuda

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The Citadel – A Remote Peak

Lindsay Elms

August 6-8, 2022

Designating a peak or destination “remote” is an individual’s prerogative. No one should say “no it isn’t!” We all know what “remote” means, but there is no “written in stone” rule for it. Dictionaries have many examples of use for the adjective: *Separated by an interval or space greater than usual* (I like this one). *They live in a remote corner of Scotland. A remote cabin in the hills.* For those living in Victoria some would say the mountains on the north island are “remote,” however, for those living in Port McNeill they’re not. Others might say Golden Hinde is “remote” because it is a multi-day trip. For those who run it in under 24 hours it is just a day-trip following a trail all day and a bit of scrambling. The drive to the trailhead just takes a little longer (an interval greater than usual). When I use the term “remote” in relation to a mountain there are several factors that I consider: The length of the drive and the distance from the nearest easy access. In most situations I say a peak is “remote” when I have to drive more than three hours (that can vary by several hours) and it takes more than one day to reach my destination from the end of the nearest road access or beyond the end of a trail. So here is my trip report to a peak I consider one of the remotest on the island.



*The Citadel from Megin Peak (2019).
(Photo by Lindsay Elms)*

To reach this remote peak, catch a float plane out of Gold River to Megin Lake. Although the Megin/Talbot addition

is in Strathcona Provincial Park float planes are allowed to fly into the lake with park use permits. After setting up camp on the ridge to the east of what Rod chose to call The Citadel (unofficial), we set off to tackle the peak. For some reason James Ramsey Ullman's novel *Banner in the Sky* came to his mind. It was also adapted into a movie. It's the story of Rudi Matt whose father fifteen years earlier, had died trying to climb the Citadel, the last unconquered summit in the Alps. Now, at sixteen, Rudi wants to place his banner on the top to prove that it can be done. For Rod, Val and I, this was our last unconquered peak in the Pierce Range southwest of Muchalat Inlet. It was an area that saw us visiting some beautiful mountains, over several summers, that very few have been to. In front of us the peak soared up as a vertical rock wall. This direct ridge to the summit was beyond our abilities, but we were sure others with better skills might find it fun.



*Val and Rod gearing up while taking a break in the shade.
(Photo by Lindsay Elms)*



*The Fortress at the far left, The Keep just to the right and the imposing Citadel from our camp.
(Photo by Lindsay Elms)*

We decided to check out routes up the South Face so started traversing across, but it is never straightforward. A series of bluffs had us scrambling down to get under one, up and over another and then several more to circumvent. None of the routes above us looked all that promising. At the end of the traverse we ran out of options, but we found a promising chink in its armour so geared up.

I led the first pitched which involved some airy climbing, but very quickly I was into steep bush where I had no problem finding an anchor to belay Rod and Val up.

Two more scrambly pitches saw us on the western end of the summit ridge. The main summit was about 200 metres away and although doable it looked like we would encounter some narrow ridge walking. In a couple of places the ridge was a knife-edge, but the rock was



*Lindsay starting out on the first pitch.
(Photo by Rod Szasz)*

solid and enjoyable to climb. It wasn't long before we were on the summit taking in the incredible views. Even the heat of the day and the bugs didn't detract from our excitement.

After forty-five minutes on the summit we traversed back along the ridge and rappelled down to the bush. That evening we were all on a high as we watched the sun drop



*The airy first pitch.
(Photo by Rod Szasz)*



*Looking back along the narrow summit ridge.
(Photo by Val Wootton)*



*Rod on the summit of the Citadel.
(Photo by Val Wootton)*

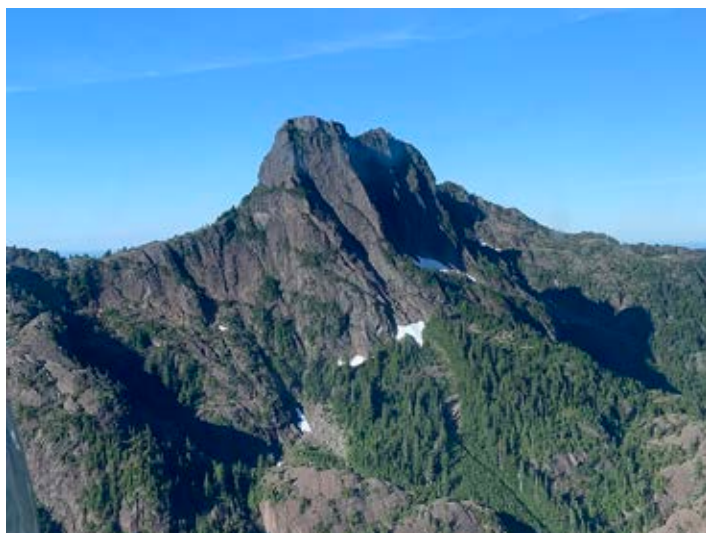


*Lindsay and Val mellowing out on the summit.
(Photo by Rod Szasz)*

behind the horizon in a fiery glow of reds and oranges. The next day saw us traversing back under the South Face of The Citadel. Our goal was one, if not both, of the sub peaks to the west. The first one we called The Keep and the far peak The Fortress. Again, the traverse was

hot, buggy and convoluted, but we found our way to the South Ridge of The Keep. At first we weren't sure the route would go, but after a bit of scrambling we found a way through the bluffs and came out near the summit. One final chunk of rock tried to block our way, but we overcame the obstacle and reached the summit. From this point we realized the route across to The Fortress was out of the question. However, if there was more time

we could see an easy route around the north side of The Keep through some scree basins. Unfortunately, we didn't have time for that. Back at camp we enjoyed another evening and another stunning sunset. Our time on this



*Soaring buttresses on the North Face of The Citadel.
(Photo by Lindsay Elms)*

remote peak was over and the next day we returned for our pick up. Flying by we bid adieu to the peak but hoped that others would visit this remote peak and find some challenging routes on the north buttresses of The Citadel.

Participants: Lindsay Elms, Valerie Wootton, and Rod Szasz

Climbing the Four Peaks of the Golden Hinde Massif

Barry Hansen

August 13-17, 2022

My goal to complete the ACCVI 6000'ers project (53 peaks) in 2022 was going well. I started the year with 22 remaining and by mid-August had whittled it down to five. My peak buddy and not-so-fierce competitor, Eryn Tombu, also had five remaining (she began the year with 17 remaining, 15 of which we'd end up climbing together). We'd been back and forth over the year, occasionally changing leads as we peak-bagged our way down the list. And our trip to the Golden Hinde massif would be no different since completing all four of its peaks would put her one ahead of me (since I'd previously climbed Golden Hinde). As I said, not-so-fierce competitors who

helped each other achieve our common goal and had a ridiculously fun time doing it.

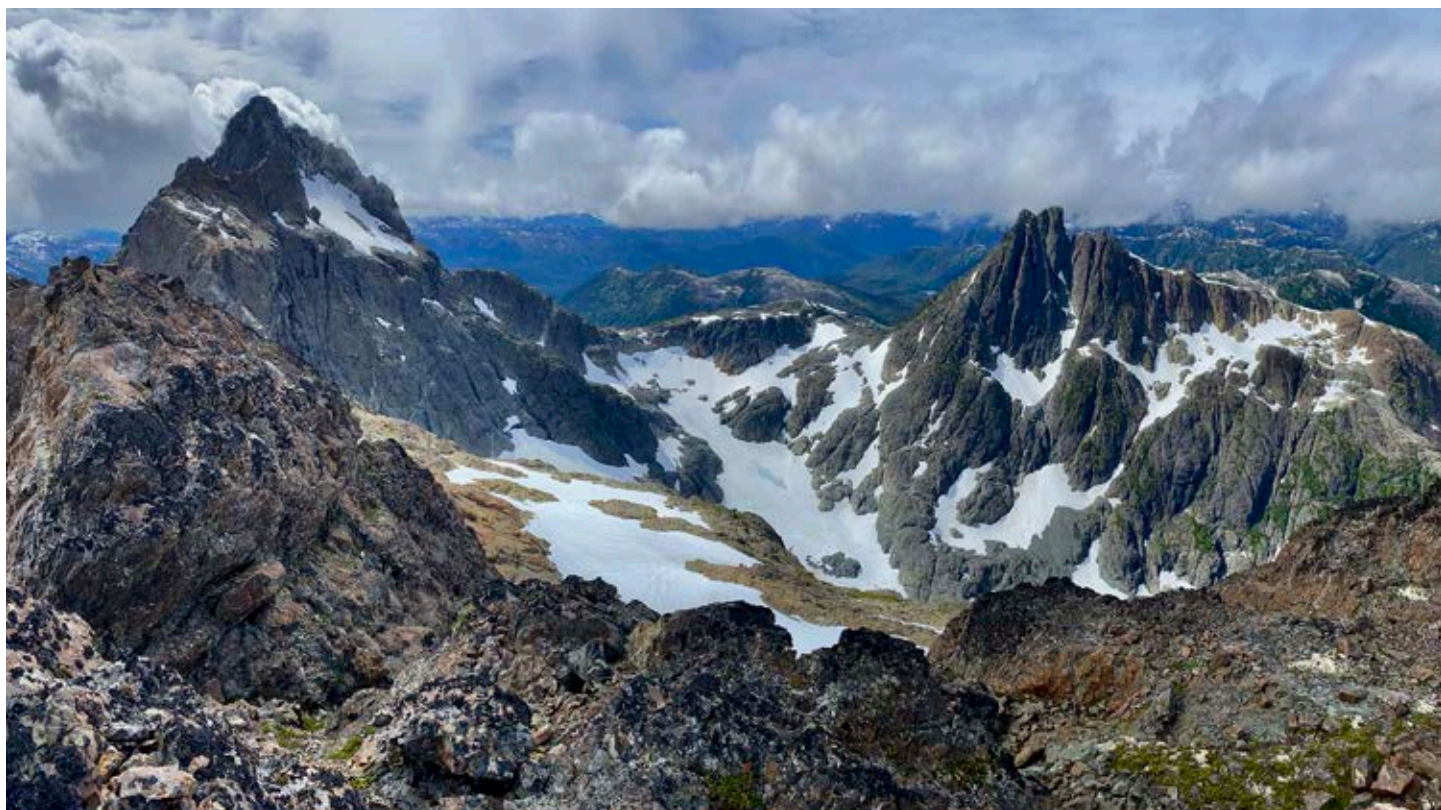
The original plan for this trip was a crew of five, including my most prolific climbing partner, Rich Priebe, who only needed Golden Hinde's Comb and Northwest summits to complete his 6000'ers journey. We wanted to finish together but I wasn't able to catch up to him in time. Additionally, we couldn't make our schedules coincide for this trip. And so, he made a solo journey up the more direct route via Wolf Creek a week before us and tagged both summits, thus completing his list. This left four of us: me, Eryn, Matt, and Phil. However, a week before our planned departure, I tested positive for COVID and couldn't commit to a start date. Eryn had scheduling flexibility but Matt and Phil didn't and so we told them to proceed on the planned start date without us. And as it



*Barry ascending The Behinde as
the sun rises over Golden Hinde.
(Photo by Eryn Tombu)*

turned out, Eryn's 4-year-old son came down with a viral infection that same week, which would have prevented her from leaving on the original departure date anyways. A symphony of five suddenly became a solo and two duets.

Fortunately, my COVID symptoms were fairly mild and within a week I tested negative, which, fortuitously, was the same time Eryn became available. I didn't know how COVID might affect my endurance but there was only one way to find out. We began our trip on August 13, two days after Matt and Phil began theirs. With a mixed weather forecast for the first two days, we decided to leave early afternoon and hike to somewhere along Philips Ridge where we'd camp the first night. We knew there was a possibility we'd encounter Matt and Phil along the trail that first day if they had to pull the plug due to weather, but we really hoped we'd meet at Golden Hinde's climber's tarn (our intended base camp) so



*Golden Hinde and The Behinde from the summit of the Comb.
(Photo by Barry Hansen)*

we could get beta from them about the Comb and NW routes. We didn't have to wait long for an answer because shortly after gaining the ridge, there they were, walking towards us. Shoot. We were disappointed for them and for the absence of beta for us. However, they did offer one very valuable suggestion: camp at the base of The Behinde rather than Golden Hinde's climber's tarn, which was better for a variety of reasons. We parted ways and continued along the ridge before stopping to set camp early evening with stormy skies brewing around us.

Day two took us along Philips Ridge and then down to traverse the shorelines of Carter and Schjelderup Lakes, with low cloud obscuring the surrounding summits and ridges. At the end of Schjelderup Lake we noticed a small plume of smoke rising across the misty valley on the lower forested slopes of Golden Hinde. We sent GPS coordinates to Rich via inReach and asked him to report the fire (we later received a reply that BC Parks policy is to let naturally caused fires burn themselves out. As it turned out, this tiny plume rapidly grew into a fire that burned for months, consuming a large swath of forest). As we continued on towards Mount Burman's north ridge, drizzle became light rain as we trudged along, gained the ridge, descended into trench, and then upwards past the Golden Hinde climber's tarn towards the Golden Hinde/The Behinde saddle. Increasingly dense cloud obscured all visible features, forcing us to navigate via GPS to the base of The Behinde, where we set up camp in the cold, wind, and rain. But as we were eating dinner

under the cover of a small grove of subalpine trees, the clouds began to disperse, slowly revealing a dramatic alpine vista. Confusion gave way to thrill as we realized we were looking at the west aspect of Golden Hinde and The Comb. We'd obviously lost our bearings in the dense cloud. The cloud ceiling continued to rise, providing a panoramic view of mountains near and far. We went to bed, stoked for the next day of peak-bagging.

We woke early and worked our way up the southeast ridge of The Behinde as the sun rose. Within an hour we were standing on the summit with adrenaline still pumping from climbing the spicy, exposed upper summit block. We signed the register, took a few pics, scanned the route to the Comb and Northwest summits, and descended back to camp. After a quick breakfast, we geared up and headed off, crossing the west glacier as the imposing northwest face of Golden Hinde loomed overhead. The section from the glacier to the base of the Comb was the big unknown for us since the only beta we had was a sentence in *Island Alpine Select*: "Hike along an exposed ledge on seasonal snow/scree." Fortunately, it was a cakewalk and we were soon at the base of the Comb's south ridge, just beneath the Golden Hinde/Comb saddle. From there, a couple of easy scramble sections and some wide snow fields brought us to the summit. High cloud had moved in, motivating us to press on since we still had lots of terrain to cover and didn't want to get caught in rain.

We worked our way down the north slopes of the Comb towards its crux section, which Rich provided beta for from his trip the previous week. He had approached the Comb from the opposite direction. He climbed the steep step at the crux but decided to descend via a different route, not confident downclimbing it. He described his alternate descent route as steep, loose, and wickedly exposed, which had zero appeal to me and Eryn. Instead, we used one of our two 30 metre ropes to rappel the short step and continued downward to the glacier that connects the Comb and Northwest summit. We crossed the glacier to the base of the Northwest, intending to climb the line Rich described ascending (a chockstone gully around to the left/west). But we ended up climbing some nice rock before reaching the gully. Well, it was nice until a short, steep chimney where one of my foot placements came loose and careened downward, just missing a terrified looking Eryn. As I hung on with my solid handholds and searched for another foot placement, I dislodged another loose rock, which followed the same path, just missing her again. She said a few words I won't bother writing. We agreed it would be best for her to step aside while I finished climbing the chimney, after which I offered to toss her a rope and belay her up. She gladly accepted under the condition I don't kick any more rocks down on her. We continued on, passing above Rich's chockstone gully, which we decided would be our descent route.



*Happy on the Northwest summit.
(Photo by Eryn Tombu)*

Easy scrambling brought us quickly to the summit where we snapped a few pics before heading back down. We did two 30 metre rappels in the chockstone gully, traversed the ledges back around to the glacier, crossed the glacier, retraced our route back up the Comb (free-climbing the steep step we rappelled down), and traversed the Comb's

west slopes to connect with our ascent line, which we retraced back to our camp at the base of The Behinde. We arrived at camp tired but elated, having just checked three big peaks off our list, leaving us each with two more. We celebrated our accomplishment with an after-dinner tea spiked with some Baileys supplied by Eryn before crawling into our tents, knowing we had another big day ahead of us.

We woke to low cloud, which wasn't ideal for our next objective: Golden Hinde's West Ridge. Regardless, we packed up camp and crossed the wide saddle to the base of Golden Hinde's West Ridge, where we ditched our overnight gear and worked our way up the lower slopes of the misty mountain with its intimidating ghostly pinnacles drawing ever nearer. We followed the route description in *Island Alpine Select*, but as most climbers know, one person's description of a route's features aren't necessarily how another person would describe them. In other words, we went off route a couple of times but quickly recognized our mistakes, backtracked, and found the right (and best) routes. And I'll confess that there was another falling rock incident, but this time involving a large, flat piece of granite precariously perched on a smooth sloping ledge during one of our off-route moments. I lightly brushed the boulder as I carefully stepped past it, but enough to send it sliding slow-motion in Eryn's general direction, allowing her time to stay clear of its path. It landed with a crash a safe enough distance from her before picking up speed and thunderously exploding its way down the south face of Golden Hinde.



*Eryn looking back at the Golden Hinde
massif from our final camp on Phillips Ridge.
(Photo by Barry Hansen)*

We loudly yelled 'rock', which really wasn't necessary considering its raucous descent. Once again, Eryn had a few well-deserved choice words for me. And she paid me back a few months later when we were climbing Mount Maitland (inside story, for those familiar with it).

Golden Hinde's west ridge is a fun route with interesting

geological features, exposed ledges, and a couple short fifth class sections. The only thing missing were the views from the summit, which was enveloped in cloud. Eryn was now one peak ahead of me, only needing Mount Harmston to complete her 6000'ers journey. We retraced our route back down to our packs and encountered a couple of climbers at the saddle who'd just arrived via the Elk River Trail. After sharing some route beta with them, we packed up and began the long trek back towards Westmin mine just as the forecasted heatwave arrived, which Eryn was thrilled about and I was dreading because heat is my kryptonite, exponentially depleting my energy, as Eryn would soon observe. By the time we reached the Burman Trench, my clothing had absorbed the maximum amount of sweat in the intense heat and high humidity. But we pressed on, eventually cresting the Burman ridge and dropping back down to Schjelderup Lake. It's painful boulder-strewn shoreline sapped my remaining strength. By the time we reached Carter Lake around 6:00 p.m., my tank was empty. Eryn was raring to go and we discussed the benefit of continuing on to Phillips Ridge, which would make for a much shorter and more pleasant final day. I concurred with the logic but needed to convince my body, which, after some food and water, reluctantly submitted. We continued on, eventually reaching some lovely tarns on a karst-laden shelf partway up Phillips Ridge in the fading light of a gorgeous summer evening. We quickly set up camp, ate, and retreated to our tents to escape the ravenous mosquitoes, the first we'd encountered on the trip. I guess the heat brought them out.

We woke to a bluebird day and began the final trek back to where it all began. The heat intensified with each passing hour and we both felt its effect, uttering frequent complaints along the endless ridge as we anticipated the coolness of Arnica Lake, which we stopped at for a short rest, refuel, and dip. The relief was only temporary and as we wound our way down the never-ending switchbacked trail to Westmin Mine, our feet and knees protesting loudly. We arrived at the vehicle dehydrated, hot, and thoroughly worn out. Another typical ending to an epic island alpine adventure!

Participants: Barry Hansen and Eryn Tombu-Haigh

Munchkin Madness Trip to Hišim'yawił Hut

Sonia Langer

August 22-24, 2022

On this trip, four intrepid young hikers aged four to six year olds set off with enthusiasm and their five adults -- the kids were excited and the adults proud. In the group were: Logan with Dad Joel, Lilly with Papi Martin, Alec with Mom Tamara and Dad Adrian and Sofia with Mama Sonia. This trail was familiar for all the adults, and all four children were experienced hikers, so we were well-equipped for the hike. Each kiddo had solid hiking footwear, good sunhat, and carried their own backpack, with the adults carrying most of the weight. With numerous well-timed stops along the way up the steep and challenging trail, two very fun rope climbs, many gummy bears, and even a swim in Cobalt Lake, (even the kids -- several of whom could not yet swim!) the group



*Here are the four aspiring mountaineers starting their journey following Martin Hofmann up the trail.
(Photo by Sonia Langer)*

made it to the hut in great spirits. The kids were even more excited and the adults were even more proud.

The next morning, we all set off for the col to play in the snow. Lily and Snowfia loved building little snowmen at the col. Tamara and Adrian raced up after their speedster son Alec to reach the summit, followed by the rest of the group. All children made it to the summit -- how great!

Joel's proud smile at the summit made little Logan's face light up too! A million prehistoric dinosaur flies swarmed at the summit, so after checking out the junk in the cache, we quickly snapped a few photos, and began the decent.



*The four munchkins with Triple Peak in the background.
(Photo by Sonia Langer)*

Lilly and Sofia keen to keep climbing, continued up the large knoll to the south. When the hiking got a bit boring, the ski poles became horseys, and the two friends rode up the mountain on their ponies galloping and singing away! In all the mountaineering I've done, this was a first! Hilarious!

After all that exercise, the kids still had energy left for some high-octane munchkin madness balloon play in the hut after dinner. This rowdy game did finish with some quiet time with the children enjoying audio stories together, and drawing with coloured pencils and crayons. The early birds went to bed early, and the late birds went to bed later. One of our kiddos was away from his mother for the first night ever – what a challenge! A reminder of how young our troop was!

The early birds woke up early and the late birds woke up later. Once packed up, the children had one last boot-ski session on the snow patch below the hut. Giggles and laughter echoed down the valley. The hot hike



*Summit snacks on 5040 Peak with Joel!
(Photo by Sonia Langer)*



*Joel and Martin accompany the kids as they begin their descent from the Hišimýawił Hut.
(Photo by Sonia Langer)*

down hurt our feet and made us sweat, but the swim in Cobalt Lake was refreshing! The kids felt so ‘hard core’ swimming in a cold mountain lake -- twice! The descent required many snacks, many breaks and much singing! There is something so joyful about bringing the kids into the mountains: the goals simplify to pure enjoyment. Summit speed goals are replaced with careful consideration and planning to ensure the kids feel great. How to prepare their expectations, and how to overcome adversity with gentle and enthusiastic positivity become part of the planning and part of the event. The kids teach us how live in the moment, focus on the now, and



The sense of pride is evident in these great kids! They have band aids on the knees, sweaty dirty clothes, and content smiles. Children deepen their sense of who they are when they overcome physical challenges like this: building resilience and confidence through healthy adversity.
(Photo by Sonia Langer)

eat more gummies! The trip ended with kids still excited about mountaineering, and the adults even more proud of these fantastic kids. Stay tuned for more adventures in the Munchkin Madness series!

Trip participants: Lily Hinds, Martin Hofmann, Sofia and Sonia Langer (Trip Leader), Alec, Tamara and Adrian Lister, Logan and Joel Jackson.

Snowsaddle Mountain

Lindsay Elms

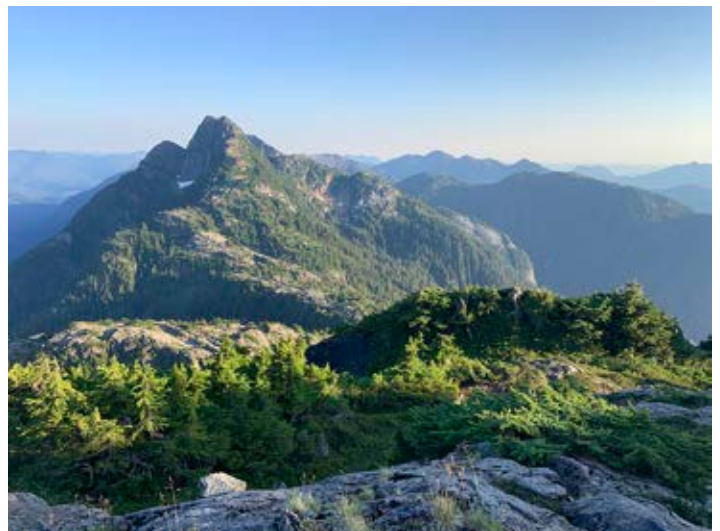
August 23-26, 2022

On 24 July 1894 Reverend William Bolton wrote in his diary the following account of his ascent of Snowsaddle Mountain. *“A day not easily to be forgotten by any of us three [William Bolton, James Magee, Jephther Skinner]. At 5 a.m. we were about and thought we saw evidences of a clearing sky. Hasting over breakfast and packing we were early ready to reach the top of the spur of Snow-Saddle, up which we had climbed all the day previous, from the top of which to gain the coveted views, and plan our future movements. But the rain got ahead of us, and as if rebelling our intrusion upon parts of which nature had heretofore held monopoly, came down in sheets and torrents. We took an East course and climbed 700 more feet, drenched to the skin, and very much chilled. There was snow everywhere now, and we found it easier walking than over rocks and pushing through the short bush. But had we slipped we would have shot down to the depths unknown and deadly. Just as we gained the summit we had a glimpse of what lay to our left. It was well we had not attempted to reach Snowsaddle by any valley that way, for perpendicular cliffs of rock would have faced us which would have been impossible to climb. I believe that we came up the only possible way. To our right was just the same. Pushing on over a huge bank of snow so as to see what lay the other side of the range we were now on, we were permitted just a peep and then all was gone for the day. But such a view! Down at a great depth below us lay the inevitable valley, and in it a beautiful lake, its water still and like a mirror, surrounded completely by heavy timber. The drop into the lake looked anything but inviting, a series of short precipices, seemingly being the only ladder of escape; and across the valley there rose another range of mountains, by far the grandest of all I met. They rose up sheer rock from the valley, to tower as high as the mountains we were on, yes, and higher still, peak vying with peak to break off in fantastic shape. I could think of nothing these resembled more closely than the noble El Capitan of Yosemite. Indeed the entire valley put me strongly in mind of that world-famed and exquisite spot. There are few more noble mountains of rock on the Island, and I venture to say on the Mainland of British Columbia, than this superb range, which in commemoration of one who was so instrumental in making it known to the public, I named the “Bostock”. Now the rain came down upon us in pitiless style, and a mist swept up from the valley so that we could not see ten yards ahead. The wind, too, increased in force till it blew a very hurricane. Do what we would, we could not get warm, nor could we find decent shelter. We were determined to get another view, and a good one, and prepared to stand the storm as long as we could. But should the storm not cease by afternoon it seemed our only course to try to get down to the valley for shelter and re-climb to take the observations. By dint of perseverance we made a fire between a huge saddle*

formed by the rocks, and there cooked our lunch, taking it standing with the rain running down our very skin, and the side nearest the fire frizzling whilst the other side of our poor bodies was freezing. For over three hours we waited, stretching our limbs by taking a run over snow banks and an unpremeditated toboggan slide, but neither rain nor wind ceased a jot. Then we went forth to seek a camp, so as to avoid a descent down the precipitous mountainside under the existing conditions, but none even pretending to decency could be found. Then we felt we should have to descend; so shouldering our packs we set out by selecting the ridge that seemed to run down furthest into the fog. Creeping down by rock and crevice and cañons filled with snow, we descended some 1,000 feet to find our way blocked effectively by sheer falls of hundreds of feet. We were surrounded now by grave dangers; ahead we could not go; back we should have to climb up snow banks, to right and left was no whit better. We could see, at best, but a few yards ahead. The afternoon waning, feet were so chilled that we could scarce grip rock and bush for footing. Three times I shot away from the others, and but for a reserve force of harlequin agility would have shot over the precipice to land in the lake below, ahead of scheduled time. There was nothing for it, however, but to get back to the summit, and there put the night in as best we could. It was with the utmost difficulty we regained the height, Magee with the axe having for many yards to cut steps in the well nigh perpendicular snow banks. Despite the freezing welcome of the summit we were uncommonly glad to see it once again. We got back to almost precisely the same spot we started from. It did not take us long selecting a campsite. There could be no thought of decent shelter. The timber was of the most miserable description, and exceedingly stunted and twisted; we could not find a ridge pole for the tent, hunt where we would. We tied a piece of cord from one small tree to another and hung our tent thereon. This made it hard work for tall men to get in and out; and standing inside was an impossibility. The wind soon showed that it meant severe work with us, for it blew in every direction, lifting the tent until we thought it would fly off the mountain, and driving rain through the canvas. Slowly we conquered over wood and wind with our fire and made supper. Realizing the necessity of keeping a fire going all night, Skinner, all soaked as he was, kindly volunteered to stay up and bravely keep watch till 4 a.m., when Magee took turn. The heaviness of the storm passed away at 2 a.m., but with morning there was still a blustering wind, a fine rain, and an impenetrable mist. So ended our ascent of Snowsaddle, and it is not likely to be forgotten by us whilst memory lasts."

I have thought about this account ever since I first read it nearly thirty years ago and as the years went by I became more determined to visit the area and climb Snowsaddle and see for myself the spectacular terrain that Bolton

wrote about. It's an area very few have visited other than loggers who have/are working in the Kauwinch valley to the west. After Bolton the surveyor George Jackson was in the area in 1934 taking triangulations from the summit of Peak 1271, a peak a few kilometres north of Snowsaddle, and then Peak 1288 about two kilometres east of Peak 1271. The surveyor Alfred Slocomb was in the area in 1948, but it doesn't appear as if either surveyor climbed Snowsaddle Mountain. An expanse of time passed before Peter Curtis and Stu Crabbe, climbers and cavers from Port McNeill, climbed Snowsaddle in the 90's. It appears that many years drifted by again before Trevor Harder (Port Hardy) attempted Snowsaddle in 2020, but he only managed to summit Peak 1271. On Facebook he posted photos of the trip which piqued my interest. Then in July 2021, Phil Jackson, Matt Lettington, Jes Garceau and Dustin Hirschfeld climbed Snowsaddle Mountain from the Benson Main. In nearly 130 years this was not a lot of people. Rod Szasz, Val Wootton and I tried to get in there in September 2021, but it was a wet fall. We would have to wait another year.



Looking towards Snowsaddle Mountain from Peak 1271.
(Photo by Lindsay Elms)

The summer of 2022 was hot and dry. Rain just didn't appear to be in the forecast. After several trips to other remote west coast peaks on the island Snowsaddle was beckoning. The north end of the island is known for fickle weather - it usually rains a lot and coastal fog can linger for days. As we drove into Port McNeill, we found ourselves entering thick fog and began feeling despondent, but by the time we arrived at the head of the Benson Main logging road we were in clear blue skies. Our mood changed. High on the ridge we established a camp half a kilometre north of the summit of Peak 1271.

The next day we traversed the rolling peak passing the survey pin (George Jackson 1934) and then began the long descent to the saddle on the North Ridge of

Snowsaddle. It was hot and the bugs were bad, but that didn't matter. Snowsaddle looked stunning and we were finally at grips with the mountain. I knew from Matt's report that there were several bluffs on the way down and one had to be rappelled. Eventually we reached the saddle and found a nice pond to stop and have lunch. Here we stashed some gear we felt we didn't need (our rain jackets and some superfluous climbing equipment) and started up the mountain travelling as light as possible. The heat was taking its toll and we took frequent breaks in the shade to take on water and stay hydrated. The ascent was straightforward and it wasn't until we were just below the summit that we had some route



*Rod and Val standing in the saddle between the two summits of Snowsaddle Mountain.
(Photo by Lindsay Elms)*

finding to do. Matt had climbed a steep heather gully using his ice axe, but we found a route around to the right which had us crawling under small trees and bushes. This



*Some of the rock walls Bolton called the "Yosemite of Vancouver Island."
(Photo by Lindsay Elms)*

brought us out onto the heather slopes which we strolled up to the first summit. The views were stunning. I couldn't help but think about Bolton and his party struggling in torrential rain over slippery rock and heather then trying to find a flat spot to camp. At least he didn't have to worry about finding water!

We walked the one hundred metres over to the highest summit where we looked down into the Tashish River and out to the west coast. There were more mountains to climb in the future. Northwest of us we could see the rock walls that Bolton talked about which reminded him of El Capitan in the Yosemite Valley. Bolton called them the Bostock Range after Hewitt Bostock, one of his supporters.

After half an hour on the summit we began the descent only this time we rappelled the heather gully which Matt had ice-axed up. The rest of the descent and ascent to camp was long as we took our time. There was no need to rush as the weather had not changed all day. We were

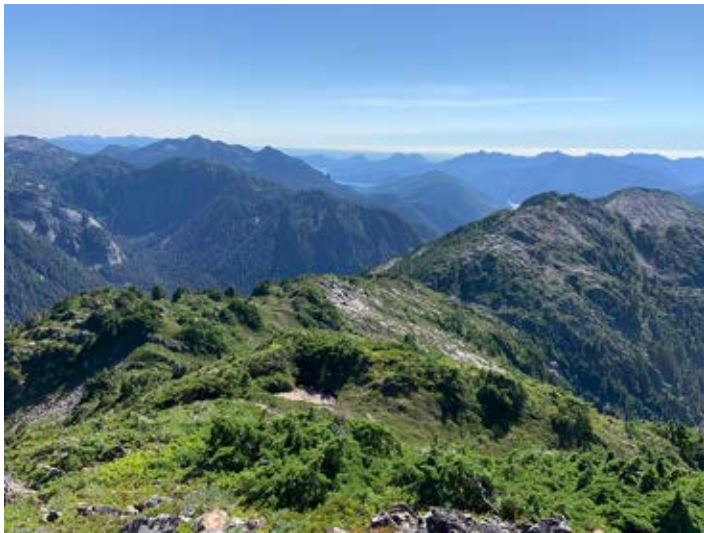


*The myriad of tarns between Peak 1271 and Peak 1288.
(Photo by Lindsay Elms)*

able to avoid the rock wall that we rappelled and around 8 p.m. we stumbled into camp. I have to admit that although I love every mountain that I climb, Snowsaddle

did hold a special attraction. Bolton's ascent in 1894 was possibly the first major mountain on Vancouver Island climbed and it was a hard-won summit. It was part of a journey that started near Shushartie on the north coast and eventually finished in Victoria. As we ate supper, we couldn't take our eyes off Snowsaddle and we watched until the setting sun changed its colours in a beautiful alpenglow.

The next morning, we packed up and descended towards a tarn-studded saddle to the west. Near the saddle we found a nice camping site with water and set-up our tents. A quick bite and we were off to climb Peak 1288 to the west. It was easy getting to the saddle, but to get to the tarns and across to the gully that we wanted to climb to get to the summit ridge of the peak was trying. The bush consisted of Krumholtz standing no more than a metre or two in height and so tightly packed that climbing under them was impossible and climbing over them was almost as bad, but we had to persevere. Eventually we reached the tarns, hiked around them over to the gully, climbed it to the end of the north end of the ridge then traversed a series of easy peaks to the summit. Again, to our west were the spectacular rock walls that if there was easy access would be crawling with big-wall climbers. Rod lamented about how much logging had taken place in the valley below from his days as a youth when he worked in the Kauwinch valley.



*The view from the summit of Peak 1288.
(Photo by Lindsay Elms)*

During the night we heard light drizzle pitter-pater on the tent and in the morning the mist had rolled in and visibility was poor. We had planned on staying another night to climb another peak to the northwest but we dismissed the thought. It's okay to climb peaks closer to home in the mist and drizzle, peaks we've climbed numerous times, but here we wanted good weather so as to have the views. We would save that trip for another time. Instead, we packed up, traversed across the face of Peak 1271 and descended back down the ridge to the

logging road and hiked the two kilometres back to the vehicle. Although the drive to the North Island is long and the peaks challenging to reach, if the weather is in your favour once you get there, it is a beautiful place to climb and explore.

Participants: Lindsay Elms, Rod Szasz, and Valerie Wootton.

Happy Birthday at Hišim'yawił

Barb Baker

September 4-6, 2022

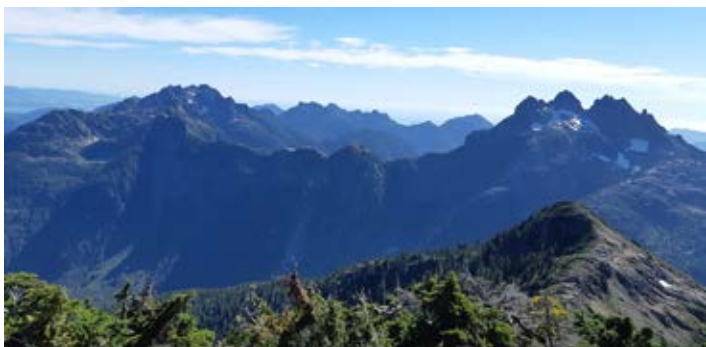
Approaching a milestone birthday, I began fantasizing about a party on 5040 Peak. On consult with Martin, dates for the Hut were penciled in even though unforeseen factors could affect the outcome, which they did. The hot summer came to an end with travel, my daughter visiting, sea level party with balloons & lots of other attractions for everyone resulting in the cancellation of a Hišim'yawił Hut party. But Martin had already organized a small work party and the annual helicopter lift for those dates.

The helicopter was scheduled, and the lift guys needed traffic control! I drove out, got into a hard hat and hi viz vest to handle that traffic: a pair of backpackers hiking down from the lake on Triple Peak! Labour Day hordes were gone.

At the site, Jim and Matt introduced themselves and commenced getting the weight sorted, piling bags of fuel, big yellow cedar posts, propane tanks, two bear caches and assorted supplies onto the nets during the turnaround time of a few minutes and managing signals with the pilot. About seven lifts went up, bringing down loads of garbage/discards to be trucked out.

As there was an empty seat on the flight taking the guys up to the hut, I jumped in for a three minute trip that would have been close to impossible on my own.

By 10 a.m. Keith, Gary and Rodney were wishing me happy birthday, then getting organized for the numerous serious tasks needing their skills. I had my lunch some distance from the sound of tools etc., but all the time eying those ridges. My companions had already offered me a private bunk room! And now got out the radios to keep me monitored up high. Keith had the snow door on sawhorses for a paint job and was tooling the yellow cedar posts as anchor for wire rope railing on the deck.



*Triple Peak to Mount Hall with Mount Toquart in front.
(Photo by Barb Baker)*



*Limestone plateau to Nahmint Mountain.
(Photo by Barb Baker)*

The fragrance of yellow cedar is divine in my estimation, better than any Chanel No. 5.

I spent the afternoon supervising from the south ridge with occasional radio checks from my minders. Also hearing vocal accompaniment to the distant sound of tools. Matt and Jim were facing the new outhouse porch with metal siding, and someone was duetting with the angle grinder.

When I got back to my bunk there was a bucket of yellow cedar waiting for me. What could be better? Maybe a biblical sunset over the West Coast.



*Another fine sunset.
(Photo by Barb Baker)*

Keith is a quiet spoken guy but the next morning when I stepped out on the deck, he was examining his work and swearing audibly. Some kind of miscalculation that no one would have noticed but had to be corrected. So he

worked for the second day – his last day - redoing a lot of what he'd done the day before.



*Assorted September Botany.
(Photo by Barb Baker)*

I spent that second day supervising with the radio from the peak and the col, sketching, trying to identify far distant bodies of water and snoozing. The meadows were thick with lupin, mimulus, DYCs, asters, paintbrush and the col was full of snow. One man/dog duo at the peak and several bare-chested young men at the hut taking selfies were the only strangers all day.

Jim and Matt took a break to get up on the ridges that afternoon. I photographed the weather station, checked the First Aid kit which needed no checking, and started thinking about housework. Before the day was dark, the moon was out over the ridge.

Thursday morning the three of us commenced washing, bleaching, and mopping early, and were on the new trail mid-morning. Only then and on questioning did Jim and Matt reveal their instructions from Martin had been to accompany me down. Mountain guardians watched me negotiate all those gravelly precarious steps, long rocky descents, rooted green belays; 700 metres down.

At the road, they rapidly organized their truck and drove off. At noon, I sat in the sun on the tailgate, alone in the Marion Valley with a beautiful view of Triple Peak, savouring one of the best birthdays of my long life.

Thank you to Martin Hofmann, Matt Hornsby, Jim Hilliers, Keith Battersby, Rodney Newcombe, Gary Croome and ACCVI.

Comox Glacier - Repeat Photography and More

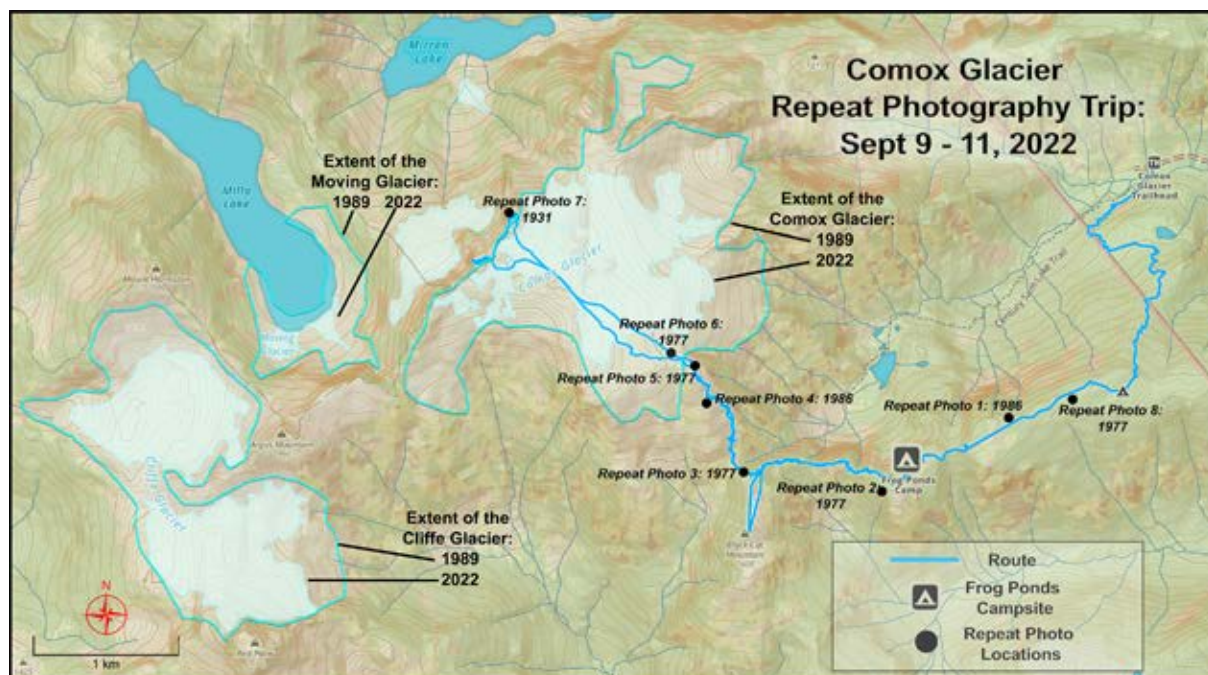
Mary Sanseverino

September 9-11, 2022

In late spring of 2022 while out hiking with Peggy in the Sooke Hills I mentioned an interest in getting up the Comox Glacier. Spurred on by the ACCVI Vancouver Island Now and Then repeat photo project in honour of Rob Macdonald and in particular a 1931 photo of Mt Harmston and the Moving Glacier, I was keen to go. Peggy was also interested, telling the story of how the Comox Glacier was one of the first trips she and Roger ever did with the ACCVI. Although ably led by Mike Hubbard the group never made the summit – weather moved in and the Frog Ponds (see the map) was as far as they got. Both she and Roger were keen to finish what they started all those years ago. So Peggy and I laid plans to post a club trip.

We decided on early September – usually the temperature is a bit cooler, the bugs are down, and the fire season is over. As it turned out, only one of those things truly came to pass – the bugs were pretty much done for the year (lucky us)! When September 9 rolled around, the fire hazard in the area was still high with the backcountry closed to the general public. Were it not for the ACCVI agreement with forest management company Mosaic, which gave us access to gate keys for the Comox Main, the trip would have been scrubbed.

Everyone met up on Friday morning at the Riding Fool Hostel in downtown Cumberland. From there we divided up into the two high clearance 4WD vehicles making the



Map of our Comox Glacier route including repeat photo locations and outlines of the 1989 extent of the Comox, Cliffe, and Moving Glaciers. Scale 1:20,000. Data layers: ©NRCAN (Published in 2000, topographic features as of 1989); Gaia Overland (meters): ©Gaia GPS; OpenstreetMap. Generated by Mary Sanseverino, Jan 20, 2023. Using: Gaia GPS, Trailbehind Inc.; Adobe Photoshop 24.1.0.)

trip over the Comox Lake and South Fork Mains to the Comox Glacier trailhead. We tested our radios, confirmed the call-in procedure for travelling on active logging roads, and headed out. It took us a little under two hours to travel the 40 kilometers from Cumberland, get our gear on, and head out on the trail.



About halfway up the steep part on the first day. Left to right: Dave, Rachel, Roger, Su, Peggy, Christine, and Sarah. (Photo by Mary Sanseverino)

Day 1 – Friday, September 9: six kilometers / 900 m elevation: Trailhead to the Frog Ponds

We left the trailhead at 10:45 a.m. and travelled about six kilometers to our campsite at the Frog Ponds. The day was very warm and the going steep – almost all of the 900 metres of elevation for the day is gained in the first 3.5 kilometers. A few hand lines helped us up. We took our time, enjoying the day and one another's company. We gained the ridge-top by about 1:30 p.m. and the views – especially westwards toward the Comox Glacier – started to open out.

The first repeat photo opportunity of the trip came into play here. On October 11, 1986 Rob Macdonald and Rick Eppler were headed the same way as us. Rob caught a lovely image of the Comox Glacier from the plateau above the Frog Ponds. It is inset into one of our views looking the same way. The repeat shows significant loss of mass on the eastern edge of the glacier. We are not at exactly the same spot as Rob, so it's hard to say anything about the close vegetation. But we had a far more detailed photographic surprise in store – courtesy of one of the team!

Back in 1977, while still dating, Terri and Dave Suttill were on this exact trip over the October Thanksgiving Day long weekend. They were up with the University of Victoria Outdoors Club which organized the trip. Dave took photos back then – and brought digital copies along with him on this outing. What a treasure trove!



Repeat Photo 1. Inset photo is Rob Macdonald's October 11, 1986 shot of the Comox Glacier's eastern edge



We were very close to Rob's 1986 location for this shot from Sept 9, 2022. (Photo by Mary Sanseverino)

Dave managed to find every one of the spots he took photos from 45 years earlier. He successfully repeated all of them. One of the repeats of interest was from our camping spot at the Frog Ponds. It features a particularly good view of the eastern edge of the Comox Glacier.



Repeat Photo 2. The Comox Glacier from the Frog Ponds, October 9, 1977. (Photo by David Suttill)



The Comox Glacier from the Frog Ponds, September 9, 2022. Dave has drawn a line on the horizon indicating the extent of the glacier in 1977. (Photo by David Suttill)



The Frog Ponds, September 9, 2022. (Photo by David Suttill)

Zooming out it is fascinating to note that the rocks in the mid-ground above the pond are still in the same place. But, perhaps more important for us as travellers in the alpine: note how little the trees have grown in 45 years. It's not an easy life for these trees – growing conditions here in the sub-alpine are harsh and every bit of biomass is important to keep nutrients flowing through these thin soils. Yet another reason why we should, whenever possible, forego campfires in areas like this.

We had two beautiful evenings here at the Frog Ponds – both nights were very temperate. I used my lightest bag and only pulled a space blanket over me during the coolest parts of the night.

Day 2 – Saturday, September 10: 11 kilometers / ~1000 m elevation: Frog Ponds to Comox Glacier high points (northwest ridge) and Black Cat Mountain

Saturday dawned clear and warm. We were away by 8:00 a.m. with a beautiful day stretching ahead of us. The route took us westward along the top of Frog Pond Ridge – lots of up and down, including some precipitous stretches where many of us (okay – me) were only too happy to use the hand lines in place. When we reached the col below Black Cat Mountain we turned north and headed up onto the lower slopes of the Comox Glacier proper.

Stopping for a break we took in the view below Black Cat Mountain. Once again Dave had an outstanding “then and now” shot to repeat. These slopes provide fine views of The Red Pillar and the Cliffe Glacier. Obviously the Outdoors Club, back in 1977, thought so too.

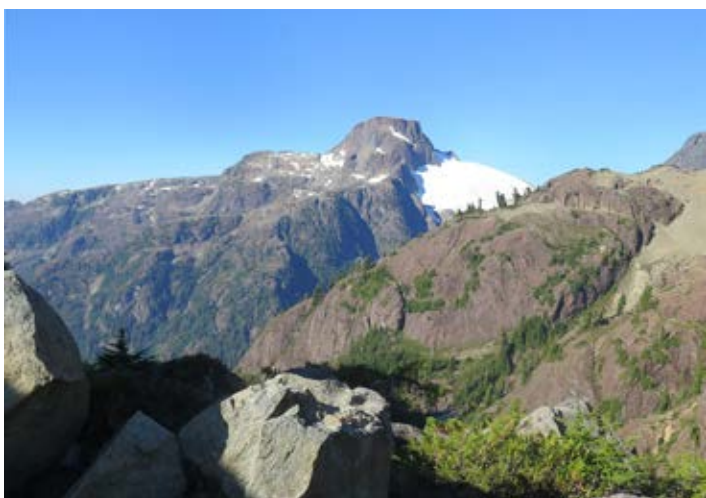
We travelled up the steeply graded southeast ridge of the Comox Glacier, gaining the broad plateau by about 11:30 a.m. This is where most of the actual glacier is found. We spent almost four hours up here making our way across the glacier from southeast to northwest and back. The plateau area proper is not particularly huge – maybe two square kilometers or less – so when I say we took our time



The Frog Ponds, October 9, 1977. (Photo by David Suttill)



Repeat Photo 3. October 9, 1977: Members of the UVic Outdoors Club take in the scene westward from below Black Cat Mountain – excellent views of The Red Pillar and the Cliffe Glacier. A shoulder of Argus Mountain can be seen on the right. (Photo by David Suttill)



The Red Pillar and Cliffe Glacier from below Black Cat Mountain, September 10, 2022. (Photo by David Suttill)



Repeat Photo 4. Fine views of the Cliffe Glacier and The Red Pillar appear on the way up the southeast ridge of the Comox Glacier. (Photo by Rob Macdonald, October 12, 1986)



September 11, 2022: The same location as Rob's 1986 shot – the Cliffe Glacier is less massive, but still impressive. (Photo by Mary Sanseverino)



Repeat Photo 5. October 9, 1977: Terri – in the yellow toque – walks toward the southeast highpoint of the Comox Glacier plateau. (Photo by David Suttill)

and thoroughly enjoyed the experience, I'm not kidding. There was so much to explore on this, a perfect bluebird day in the alpine.

Dave repeated a number of 1977 images and I managed to repeat another Rob Macdonald shot. Truly, the photos are worth a thousand words!

One of the main reasons I wanted to get up on the Comox Glacier was to repeat a 1931 image taken by Comox Valley resident William "Bill" Bell from his days with the Strathcona Park survey. Lindsay Elms put me on to the image which Bill took from the northwest corner of the glacier. It looks across Milla Lake to Mount Harmston and features the Moving Glacier which covers about half of Milla Lake. Back then this glacier measured well over one square kilometer in area. Today it is about 0.08 square kilometers [1].



September 10, 2022: Mary stands in approximately the same place as Terri while Dave repeats the photo from the southeast highpoint on the plateau. (Photo by David Suttill)



Repeat Photo 6. Out on the Comox Glacier, Thanksgiving weekend, 1977. (Photo by David Suttill)



A bit difficult to repeat the exact 1977 shot as Dave would have to be hanging many metres up in the air! However, this is a good approximation. (Photo by David Suttill, assisted by Mary)



Repeat Photo 7. Bill Bell's 1931 image of the Moving Glacier, Milla Lake, and Mount Harmston is inset into a modern photo. We are not sure of the exact date Bill took this image, but it would have been in the summer/early fall as this was the normal field work time period for survey crews using photography to help with map-making. (Inset image by William Bell, Strathcona Park Survey, 1931; Modern backing photo by Mary Sanseverino)

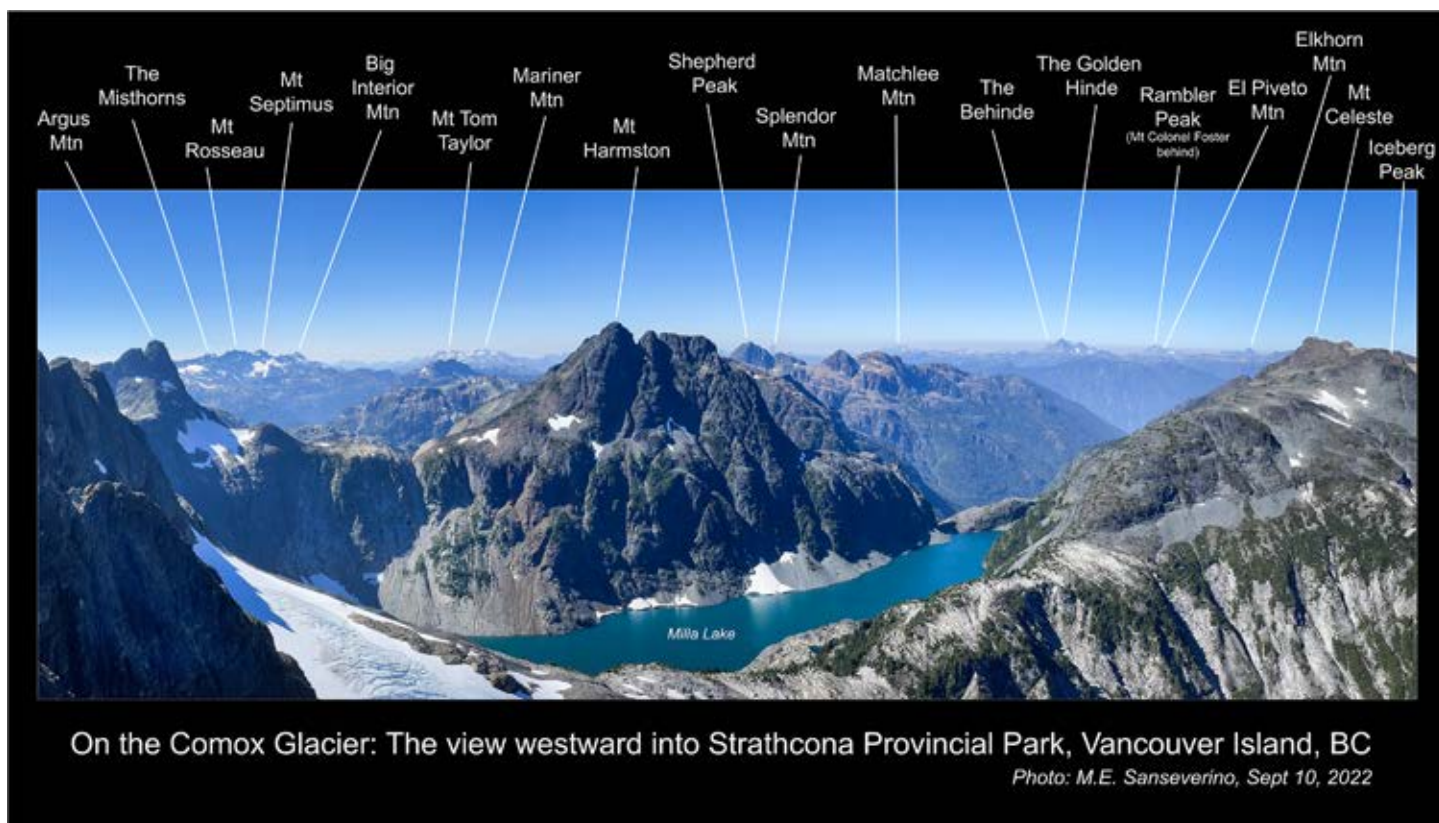
The views from the top of the glacier were absolutely stunning – especially westward into Strathcona Park – we could clearly see the Rosseau/Septimus massif, Mount Tom Taylor, Golden Hinde, Elkhorn Mountain, and all the way to Mount Albert Edward. Mirren and Memory Lakes were easily seen – as was Iceberg Peak and Mount Celeste (where Peggy and Roger Taylor would be leading a trip the week after this one).

No one was really in a hurry to return, but Black Cat Mountain wasn't going to climb itself, and, as autumn moves along, the days do get shorter. At about 2:15 p.m. we started back after visiting the 1963 metre high point on the west side of the plateau. Dips in several icy tarns (that would be Roger and Peggy!) and a visit to Black Cat Mountain's summit for several of the team (Christine, Dave, Roger, and Su) rounded out the day. We were back at camp just before 7:00 p.m. *Carpe diem* indeed!

Day 3 – Sunday, September 11: six kilometers: Frog Ponds back to the trailhead

Forest fire smoke and cloud, which had held off for the previous two glorious days, moved in over night and we awoke to a smoky morning. We decided to make an early(ish) start and were packed up and gone before 8:00 a.m.

Dave still had one photo that he had not yet found – the camping location from his 1977 trip. Retracing our steps across the top of the ridge it became very clear as to where the UVic Outdoors Club set up. They were at a spot



about one kilometer east along the trail from the Frog Ponds. The photo montage shows why it was very easy to place the 1977 camping site – the trees, especially the triplet close to the trail – have not increased in girth significantly in the intervening 45 years! Once again the photos help tell the tale that it's not easy for conifers to grow large in this environment.



Note the similarities in girth size for the triplet of trees beside the trail in both the 1977 image (inset) and the 2022 shot. Conifers are slow growing in environments like this. (Both photos are by David Suttill)

The hike down was a faster affair than the trip up. As much as we would have enjoyed more time in this fascinating place, we all had commitments on Monday. We exited the trail just after 11:30 a.m. and were back on the logging

roads around noon. Everyone was home in plenty of time for dinner!

All in all, an excellent trip with a fine group of mountaineers. Repeating photos from 1931, 1977, and 1986 gave an added layer of interest and reflection to the adventure. Much about mountains seems to be changing at an ever-accelerating rate. Even here on Vancouver Island many of the trips we make in the coming decades will take on something of a “*Last Chance to See*” aesthetic, especially with respect to glaciation. Researchers studying the Comox, and other ice sheets on Vancouver Island, say they will mostly all be gone by mid-century.

As mountaineers, not only will we have to continue reducing our carbon footprint, we will also have to adapt: routes will change and we will no doubt have places where we simply cannot go. But, our beloved mountain environments and creatures that depend upon things like glaciers to maintain both water levels and water temperatures will not be able to adapt so quickly. However, this is not the time to lose heart – we who love the mountains can help to inform and inspire change before it is truly too late: mountains matter, now more than ever before!

More photos of this trip (including a map) from Mary Sanseverino are at <https://flic.kr/s/aHBqjA7k93>

More of David Suttill's 1977 / 2022 repeat photos from this trip are at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/accvi/permalink/5755625031149136/>

Participants: Mary Sanseverino (co-leader), Peggy Taylor (co-leader), Christine Baghdassarian, Su Castle, Sarah Duncan, Dave Suttill, Roger Taylor, and Rachel Treloar

Reference

[1] D. Brendle-Moczuk. "Milla Lake Glacier on Vancouver Island, BC: 1931 – today." University of Victoria. <https://maps.library.uvic.ca/MillaLakeMovingGlacier.html> (accessed October 19, 2023).

Backpacking to Siokum Mountain, Mount Celeste and Iceberg Peak

Peggy Taylor
September 17-19, 2022

One of our Alpine Club friends, Jim, had been asking if we wanted to head out to summit Mount Celeste and Iceberg Peak for at least five years and timing had never worked out. Alas we are all getting older and backpacking off trail in the mountains is getting harder. I had not done much backpacking in the last five years, so we decided to take the leap and give this area a go.

Since neither Roger nor I had hiked to this area we contacted three club members for intel. Thanks to Matt Lettington, Walter Moar and Dave Suttill for providing GPS tracks of trips they had been on in the area. On June 20, 2021 we decided to do a recce day trip (on a Saturday when there was an unlocked gate on Comox Lake Main) to Carey Lakes with friend and club member Ulrike, mainly to check out the logging road access, to find a "trail" or route starting point and gain a high point to get eyes on the area. That was an extremely successful day out on all points and we enjoyed touring around many of the Carey Lakes, which of course Roger had to dip in several of. This in and of itself is a worthy trip and a lovely area!! With this combined information we felt ready to explore the area. However, fall was fast approaching, schedules did not mesh, a few health issues conspired to waylay things, and we were not able to do the trip with Jim in 2021. So the trip was tabled to 2022.

Roger and I had the pleasure of being on Mary Sanseverino's Comox Glacier trip only the weekend before our scheduled trip to Mount Celeste and Iceberg Peak. So we learned how the logging road access worked and I was able to practice using the radio to call out our location to any logging trucks coming down the road. While at the top of the north end of Comox Glacier we had a nice view over to Iceberg Peak and Mount Celeste and were able to

get a really nice sense of the terrain.

About a month ahead of the trip, Roger emailed the Mosiac representative to obtain the necessary permission to access the area, which was kindly granted. We contacted Val Wootton to arrange to pick up the gate access card, radios and instructions. Then we posted the trip to the accvi.ca website. We found it odd that we had no responses/interest in the weeks leading up to the trip, perhaps because it was a four day trip that was not so accessible for working folk. Luckily while attending the ACCVI 2022 Summer BBQ at Mike Hubbard's home we ran into three members who were interested. So we quickly filled the trip. Sadly one participant had to drop out at very short notice due to an old injury acting up, so there only ended up being four of us (Roger, Peggy, Jim and Anna).

On September 16th we met in Cumberland, went over plans and all piled into our vehicle to drive to Carey Lakes, leaving around 9:10 a.m. We were easily able to open the Mosiac gate and drive down Comox Lake Main and the other logging roads. Luckily there was no logging traffic on the day we went in! The drive to Carey Lakes area was about one hour and 20 minutes.

We decided to start off a spur road just before the lakes we had parked at the previous year and follow the route that Gordon Kyle's group took on a previous trip. We encountered a bear crossing the road on our drive in, which added a bit of excitement. We drove as far as we could on the spur road and parked just before a nasty ditch. We started hiking around 11 a.m., first down the logging road and then following Dave's GPS track through a bushwhacky section of an old logged out area. There was a lot of side hilling, and negotiating up and over downed logs for about 45 minutes or so until the terrain leveled out and opened up whereupon we hit one of the Carey Lakes.

Those of you who know Roger, may also know that there is no body of water that he will not jump into for a dip. This lake was no exception, so as Roger did his quick 'swim' the rest of us had snacks and enjoyed the view. We set off about 15 minutes later through the gentle hills, meadows and sub-alpine forest.

We slowly gained elevation, trees thinning out, wandering through nice plateaus leading to rises up and down to other plateaus, rocks, tarns and lovely views, generally following Dave's GPS track. There were many spots along the way where a camp could be set up with small tarns. We chose to go further than Gord's group did in order to camp at their second day camp spot, very near Siokum Mountain, as this would put us much closer to our main objectives. We arrived at our lovely camp at around 5:50 p.m. which had two small tarns to use for a water source.



*Day 1 Hiking on ridge from Carey Lakes to camp.
(Photo by Roger Taylor)*

There was a nice hill next to camp that we could walk up onto in five minutes, which provided excellent views north to Golden Hinde, Rambler Peak, Elkhorn Mountain and east to Mount Washington and the Salish Sea.

Being as it was later in the day, we quickly set up camp and ate dinner just as it was starting to get dark. We had noticed clouds starting to come in, so we did not set a specific time to wake up and leave, but left that open to see what the weather would do. We arose on Saturday, September 17th to low fog, and on and off light showers or misting. Roger let the others know to not worry about getting up yet and we could rest more and wait a bit to see if the weather would improve or not. Around 10 a.m. we rolled out of our tents, and in a break in the showers, cooked breakfast. As the weather was not improving, we decided to use the day to walk over to Siokum Mountain as it was not far. After putting our packs together we left camp around 11:30 a.m. and headed north to Siokum Mountain relying a great deal on Dave's GPS track, since our visibility was obscured most of the time. It is an easy walk and despite the weather we enjoyed some interesting rock formations along the way and we had the odd glimpse of hills around us now and then.

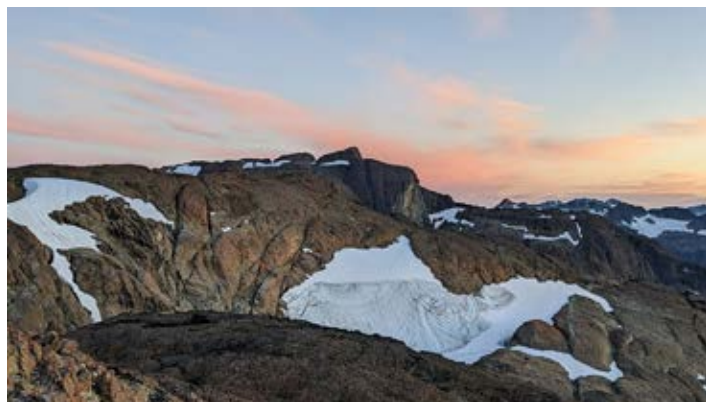
We arrived at the summit of Siokum Mountain (1840 m) at 12:35 p.m., but sadly there was only a 360 view of clag, so we did not stick around too long and headed back to camp. Once back at camp we dove into our tents again for resting and reading. This was all quite welcome after our long backpack on the way in. But by around 3 p.m. the sun was starting to peak out and the fog burn off.... oh this looks positive as this was the predicted weather for the next two days! While others chose to continue resting, I got out to explore the surrounds of our camping area, take photos of some local ptarmigans, and search out a route down from our camp over to the next ridge

that leads south to our objectives. Later the others arose just in time for dinner to a lovely blue sky and a chance to dry out clothes from our morning hike.



*Day 2 Ptarmigan at camp.
(Photo by Roger Taylor)*

After dinner we took in the sunset from the rise above camp, enjoyed figuring out peak names in the distance and chatting before we retired for the night. It was decided that we should get a somewhat early start as the next day would be a double summit day and we would be covering a large distance.



*Dusk view from camp to Rees Ridge
and Mount Celeste and Iceberg Peak.
(Photo by Roger Taylor)*

We awoke around 7:00 a.m. on Day 3 (September 18th), sorted out our packs, had our breakfast and set out at 8:40 a.m. My exploration the day before helped to expedite a route down off the camp plateau to a big dip in the terrain and then we continued up the other side onto Rees Ridge. At this point we could play around a bit with the route. We used Matt and Dave's GPS routes but made some variations in our route based on what we saw on the ground. It was a warm and pleasant day and we were pretty blown away by the wonderful views and excellent travel – this is truly a gem of an area! We were mostly on rock with a few fun scrambly bits, but had a couple of nice snow slope sections to wander up as well and we were able to navigate and figure out the micro details of

the route very nicely. We basically followed the height of Rees Ridge up and down with lovely views down to some alpine lakes down below on the east side, some with partial ice and snow coverage. Both Roger and I were scoping this out and later thought we could find a nice loop route down lower to save time on the return and, of course, fit in a swim for Roger!



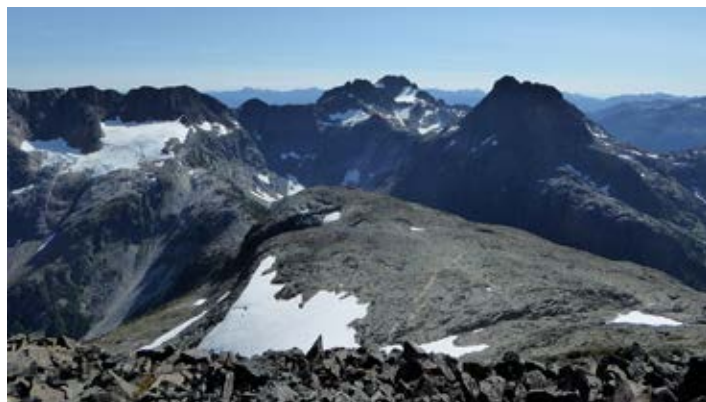
*Day 3 Spying out loop route via lower plateau to unnamed lake off Iceberg Peak.
(Photo by Roger Taylor)*



*Crossing some snow on Rees Ridge leading up to summit of Mount Celeste.
(Photo by Roger Taylor)*

We summited Mount Celeste (2041 metres) at around 12:30 p.m., had about a 20-minute rest and snacks and soaked in the views.

After our break we continued down and along Rees Ridge to the next major bump which is Iceberg Peak (1977 metres), arriving there around 2:30 p.m. for about another 30 minutes to eat lunch and flake out briefly. The views south to Comox Glacier, southeast over to Milla Lake, Argus Mountain, The Red Pillar and Mount Harmston and west over to Mirren Lake were stunning. This was a place to behold, and it was hard to leave! If we had more time and energy there would have been a nice exploration



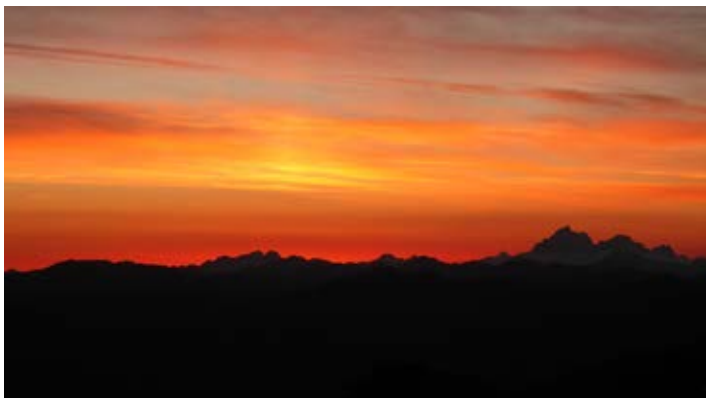
*View from Mount Celeste to Comox Glacier (left), Red Pillar & Argus Mountain. (right).
(Photo by Roger Taylor)*

going down the summit ridge south to Milla Lake, but there was certainly not enough time to do that and get back to camp before dark at our casual pace! As per our previous observations we headed east down a snow slope from Iceberg Peak and along a rocky area to a good sized tarn/small lake below the col between Mount Celeste and Iceberg Peak. It was a great place to refill water, and Roger had his swim. Unfortunately Anna's phone fell out of her side waistbelt pocket just before the lake.... but phew.....after she, Jim and I looked around a bit, Jim found it. Moral of that story, always have your camera in a zipped compartment, on a lanyard or affixed to your pack in some way!

After the lake we carried on along on this exploratory route on rock and it went so well. At some point we looped back into our route from the morning just before a spot where we went up a big scrambly rock section on the ridge and we found a nicer way up than we had come down. We carried on back on the same route to camp and arrived back around 6:15 p.m. We were all pretty tired as there was a lot of elevation gain and loss, but thrilled at the success of the day and the gorgeous places we had the pleasure to travel through. As the light was going to fade fast we cooked dinner quickly, bundled up as the temperature was dropping with a wee wind, and headed up our wee hill above camp to take in one of the most spectacular sunsets I have ever seen.

We all took lots of photos of the gorgeous colours and regaled one another with memories of a truly stunning day out in the mountains and hatching ideas for other potential trips. I often find after long hikes or climbs in the mountains that I am feeling pretty hyper and unable to turn into bed early, so as is my habit, I did some outdoor yoga on a flat area under the fading light and as the stars came out. The sky was clear and the stars bright and well worth staying up to see. After a good yoga session I retired to my sleeping bag.

Day Four, Monday September 19th we rolled out of



Sunset from hill above camp looking north to Golden Hinde. (Photo by Roger Taylor)
(Photo by Roger Taylor)

bed at about 6:30 a.m. so that we could get an early start on our hike out. After eating breakfast and taking down camp we headed out around 8 a.m. and returned via the same route we came in, on the ridge heading southwest from Carey Lakes. Roger, being the mountain goat that he is, was often in the front and did some superb navigation on the way out. He found some variations on our day one route that took better advantage of the terrain, cut some time off the day and even found some bits of marked trail and/or cairns along the way.

We had several snack breaks and forced our tired bodies to carry on! We had decided during the day that we would not repeat the bushwhack/logging road start, but instead finish off on a part of the route we had found through the Carey Lakes with our exploration the year previous. It would be a bit longer, but far more pleasant and provide us with another opportunity for a swim. This time after all the heat, sweat and exertion we all dove into the lake and enjoyed a good 40-minute break at one of the lakes....sweet indeed! This was so refreshing and gave us the needed energy to carry on to the last Carey Lake arriving there at 3.30 p.m. This is the lake that Roger, Ulrike and I had started at on our recce trip. Roger had agreed to walk up the road to the car on the spur road. We guesstimated that this might take him anywhere from 15 to 30 minutes. So Jim, Anna and I lounged by the lake and in due course shouldered our packs for the brief 10 minute walk/bush crash over to the logging road where Roger had left his backpack and where he was going to come back with our car.

It seemed to be taking a bit longer than we expected, but we waited and chatted in the nice weather. Unbeknownst to us Roger had another adventure walking back to and retrieving the car. Roger decided to bring his GPS, a knife and a snack and walked along the logging road next to the lake. Along the way, a bear walked across the road in front of him, fairly close. It paused to check him out, so Roger talked to the bear saying, "Hi Bear, you are a lovely bear....just walk on up that rise as there are lots of berries

for you to feast on".....and after a short minute the bear decided to do just that! Phew...so there was the glitch in the trip done and over with! Well, or so you think!! When Roger got to the car he noticed that something looked odd in its leveling. Well you guessed it, we had a flat tire...ugh! So the question became does he walk back and bring us back to help change the tire, or just get on with doing it himself and leave us waiting longer. He decided to just get into changing the tire, so out came the tire iron and spare tire. But as some of you may know Toyota Forerunners have their spare tire stored under the back carriage of the car. With it being a back tire that was flat, there was not enough room for Roger to lower and get the tire out! So he used a rock to start digging out the gravel on the road below the spare tire. He was laying on the ground under the car when he heard rustling in the bushes. Roger said "Hey, you guys got tired of waiting and decided to walk up" thinking we had joined him. Oh but NO, it was another bear! His voice alerted the bear to this human laying on the ground and he turned and took one step towards Roger to see what was going on. This bear was about five to six feet away from him and he was in a pretty vulnerable position. Thinking quickly and remaining calm Roger slowly got his knife out of his pants pocket and repeated the similar words to this bear...."Hi Bear, aren't you a gorgeous bear. You know there are wonderful blueberries just over up the hill over there. You should go and have a snack". Well the Carey Lakes bears are very obedient and amenable, and this one after a brief moment, decided Roger was of no interest and headed off to find those berries!! WOW crazy and intense.

So Roger carried on with getting the spare tire out successfully from under the car, jacked up the car and low and behold the car was still too low to get the tire on, due to our short jack, big tire and sloping of the road. (Lesson learned to bring a spade and maybe a piece of 2 by 4 wood to put under the jack in the car.) So once again he had to do some digging in the road to remove some gravel in order to make enough space for the tire to fit onto the wheel hub. He then drove back to us arriving around 4:40 PM (pretty fast considering all that went on) and relayed this amazing story! We then drove back along the logging roads arriving at the Comox Lake Main gate at 5:45 p.m. and back to Cumberland at around 6:05 p.m.

Jim was staying up in Courtenay, so we parted ways there and drove back down to Victoria, thankfully having an uneventful drive back home.

For anyone who would like a relatively easy mountain backpack, hiking/scrambling trip, I would highly recommend Siokum Mountain, Mount Celeste and Iceberg Peak as a great trip. In order to gain access to Comox Lake Main and the other logging roads off of this main, you must arrange with Mosaic to do so and post the

trip as an ACCVI trip in order to gain this access, according to our club's agreement with Mosiac. Please check out "[Info for Trip Leaders/Access to Comox Lake Main and Ash Valley](#)" on the [accvi.ca](#) website for further details.

Participants: Roger and Peggy Taylor (co-leaders), Jim Raper and Anna Pham



MAINLAND



Canmore Climbing Trip

John Relyea-Voss

January 13 to February 5

After crashing the night at Casey's place, we were up at around 2:30 a.m. to pack and prep for the first ferry over from Nanaimo to Vancouver. We packed up the Jeep, and took off making the ferry with plenty of time. We even had a small nap during the crossing before the long drive to Lillooet. We arrived late that evening at our rental, unpacked, and prepped for our first exploration day and hopeful warmup climbing day.

January 15 – Cherry Ice

Waking up we were still tired from our first day of driving, however, we were also equally excited to get on our first climb of the trip, and warmup on our tools. We picked Cherry Ice, a short and easy climb close to the rental and it was a successful warmup route to our trip!

January 17 – Marble Canyon, Deeping Wall

After a day of scoping out more climbs and driving around Lillooet, we decided to make the drive to Marble Canyon to check out a few of the climbs in that area. After a nice morning drive, we arrived to the pullout parking area and were pleasantly surprised by a short approach across a lake to an awesome series of climbs we wasted no time gearing up for. Casey took the sharp end on the first pitch of Deeping Wall, and I swapped to an easier second pitch topping out above the first tier of the falls. From here, we traversed the top of the falls, setting a top rope on the

thinner and much more wet, right side, where we burnt some energy lapping out various long single pitch lines on the right side of the canyon. Another awesome day!



*Casey Matsuda on Deeping Wall.
(Photo by John Relyea-Voss)*

January 17 – Slurpee Center

Our next objective was Slurpee Center which had a slightly longer approach into a more sub alpine feeling environment where our three-pitch climb went up through the trees around some very cool rock features and equally cool featured ice. Most of the ice was not fully formed, however, there was a good line we followed which had a couple short steep steps and a fun top-out which was very enjoyable. We double rope rappelled the route in two sections making our way back to the car by mid-afternoon, and back to the rental to prep for our drive to Canmore the following day.

Jan 20 – Bear Spirit

Our first climbing day in Canmore we met up with the Pro Ice-climber Stas Beskin who took us out to Bear Spirit as an intro the Canmore climbing scene. This crag with a forty-minute approach had four or five ice lines on the main climbing section with a couple mixed lines directly to the right we tested our fitness on over the course of the

day. We had the pleasure of seeing Stas solo some steep ice and our party afterwards set a variety of top-ropes to have fun on the lines Bear Spirit had to offer as well as get our first taste of Canmore mixed climbing. Saying our arms were tired after Bear Spirit was an understatement. Making our way home that evening we must have been in bed before 10 p.m. and we could barely muster the energy to pre-pack our bags for the following day before crashing in the small studio rental we had for our first five days in Canmore.

Jan 21 – Marble Canyon, Canmore

Marble Canyon in Canmore is a pretty special place! The forty-minute approach follows a nice trail and winds into steep canyons that lead to a series of incredible ice climbs. We stopped at a popular cragging area where we once again set a bunch of top-ropes with Stas Beskin along with a few of his friends, and practised some steep ice climbing technique, some more mix climbing and also used some strong V-threads for anchors which was a first for us. We were truly feeling spoiled by the volume of ice and the ease of access.

Jan 23 – Weeping Wall Center

Weeping wall is about 2.5 hours drive one way from Canmore following the long Icefields Parkway out to a massive waterfall about a five-minute walk from the parking lot. Once parked we immediately saw the huge falls we were going to climb and realized we were going to be in for an adventure. At the recommendation of Stas, who was there climbing the upper more difficult falls we took a bathroom break before heading over to the first pitch. Upon opening the outhouse door we found a mountain of frozen poop towering above the wooden seat which was both fascinating and disgusting at the same time. I found myself pondering how the last person managed to top off the pile, as they would have had to stand three feet above the outhouse seat to finish off the top of the poop pyramid/peak we found.

We decided it was best to take chances and climb that day without use of the outhouse. Watching Stas take off on pitch one was truly incredible. Stas climbed the entire first pitch placing only a single screw and before we were a third of the way up both him and his partner were topping the second pitch out of sight. Isaiah Jacobson joined Casey and I for this trip and we were starting pitch one climbing as a group of three. The three of us made it to the cave above pitch one at which point I took the sharp end and made my way around the side of the cave to try and get up the second pitch. Some chandeliered and fragile ice made me second guess the ascent which Stas had made look so easy. I retreated back into the cave and after some discussion amongst the group we decided to call it a day and rappel down. There were multiple climbing parties waiting to come up after us and we were

not feeling like holding up the other groups who were out there.



*Stas Beskin climbing at Bear Spirit.
(Photo by John Relyea-Voss)*



John on Weeping Wall. (Photo by Isaiah Jacobson)

We made the long drive back to Canmore and rested up after the long day.

January 24 – Grotto Canyon – His/Hers – Grotto Falls

Grotto Canyon is a small local climbing area very popular with the tourists as there is a nice icy canyon with a trail many people walk along to admire the ice and rock the canyon has to offer. Upon arrival we saw a ton of people climbing and we had to wait in line before jumping on both His/Her lines which were short single pitch climbs. We made quick work of these and then headed right to the Grotto Falls which is a cruisy WI3 climb with a couple very short steep steps to a set of bolted anchors you can to a single rappel down from with a pair of twin 70 metre ropes. We enjoyed these climbs however left with distaste for the heavy traffic.

January 25 – Lake Louise Falls



*Lousie Falls Climb.
(Photo by John Relyea-Voss)*

Isaiah came back out to join in with us at Lake Louise Falls after our rest day the day before. We left early from Canmore, heading towards Banff, arriving at Lake Louise in the dark and crossing with headlamps towards the falls. We geared up and were very excited to jump on this three-pitch climb. The first pitch of the falls was a long moderate WI3-ish pitch with some great feel and

nice blue sticky ice. We topped out pitch one at some rappel anchors where Casey took the sharp end to lead the second steeper pitch. Casey made his way up to the cave above pitch two where we took a nice break and prepped for the last vertical curtain. It was my turn on lead, and I was both nervous and excited for the vertical curtain to top out the climb. The pitch went well. Our party made it to the top and we rappled down via slings off a tree followed by a V-thread we made above the first pitch which we backed-up with ice screws. Our first true V-thread rappel. Awesome!



*Casey Matsuda on Lake Louise Falls.
(Photo by John Relyea-Voss)*

Jan 26 – Green Monster/Moonlight (Cold Day)

After our first trip to this area earlier in the week, we saw a glimpse of Moonlight and knew this was the next climb on our bucket list. We left early trying to make it to the trailhead first and although we arrived in the dark, there were two parties ahead of us so Moonlight was no longer an option. We decided to walk further up to Green Monster, another cragging type area with no top access. I led a vertical single pitch ice line on the left side of Green Monster and set a top rope for Isaiah and Casey so we could lap out the few lines in the area.



*John on Green Monster.
(Photo by Isaiah Jacobson)*

The wind was gusting down the canyon and before long we were all freezing, and had some bad screaming barfies after each lap we took. We had been blessed by warm weather for the trip thus far and this -15 degree-day in Canmore was our first taste of real cold weather climbing. I couldn't imagine being out there climbing in -35 degree temperatures.

Another great day and we decided for a rest day up next.

Jan 28 – Move to ACC Hostel in Canmore

After our rest day we had to check out of our Airbnb rental and move to the hostel for a night before our last Airbnb check-in where we would stay for the remainder of the trip. We had an interesting night of trying to be cheap, finding a place to crash in our vehicle before giving in due to the cold and inability to sleep. We decided to head for the ACC hostel. We were apprehensive about paying for the hostel due to COVID. We had to book an entire room which was more than we wanted to spend, but it ended up being about 60 bucks each which wasn't the end of the world.

January 29 – Weeping Wall Right

Another trip to Weeping Wall right the next morning, we picked up Isaiah from his hostel downtown Canmore and went to climb the right-side line on Weeping Wall. We made quick work of the first pitch, and after several difficulties and a couple traded attempts we decided to bail mid-way off pitch two using a V-thread and Ice screw, retreating back to the ground and heading home. Can't top out them all!

Jan 31 – Marble Canyon

After a tiring day at Weeping Wall, we decided to wind down the trip with a couple more days around Marble Canyon. We went in to climb a really nice WI3 part way



*Casey on Weeping Wall.
(Photo by John Relyea-Voss)*

up the canyon, enjoying some easy climbing over one or two steeping bumps to a nice bolted belay on pitch two and top-out. We rapped down, went back into town early afternoon and enjoyed some time at the rental.

Feb 2 – Moonlight

Our last climb of the trip was Moonlight. An awesome WI4 climb with a cool belay cave after topping out the first pitch, transitioning into a short steep harder section to finish off the climb. I led the long first pitch reaching the cave with a big mantle move and belayed Isaiah and Casey up where we enjoyed a nice long break. After investigating the next pitch, we decided to back off and rappel down allowing a group behind us to make the climb shortly after and enjoyed a nice early evening again before the long journey home! An awesome time and a ton of ice climbing.

Participants: Isaiah Jacobson, John Relyea-Voss and Casey Matsuda





*Casey climbing at Marble Canyon.
(Photo by John Relyea-Voss)*



*Casey on Moonlight Climb.
(Photo by John Relyea-Voss)*

Esplanades Ski Traverse - A Midwinter Ski Traverse in the Spring

David Fishwick

April 9-16, 2022

When Catrin Brown told me of her idea to do a hut to hut ski traverse of the Esplanade Range, I was intrigued and wanted in on the adventure. Not only was it like a mini Haute Route but it allowed a taste of the terrain around four different Golden Alpine Holidays Huts in the Selkirks. It also sounded like a good way to round off the season with some spring skiing. After a couple years of having hut-based ski trips scuttled by COVID, it was exciting to have the opportunity to get back out there.

The Esplanade Range is located in the Selkirks, northeast of Rogers Pass, lying west of Kinbasket Lake and southeast of Mount Sir Sanford. It is punctuated by Sentry Mountain (2500 m) at the north end and Cupola Mountain (2600 m) at the south end.

Our plan was to travel from Sentry Lodge southward to Sunrise Lodge staying at Vista and Meadow Lodges along the way, while bagging some summits and getting in some turns. Our total distance each day would be very civilized giving us ample opportunities to explore skiing options as we went.

Catrin's brilliant plan was that we would arrive at the huts just as they were closing the shutters for the season, and then move on to the next one.



*Photo of Moonlight Climb.
(Photo by John Relyea-Voss)*

It was a bit of a logistical challenge organizing food and supplies for a dozen people to four different huts via helicopter, utilizing empty space on flights that were simultaneously emptying lodges of their occupants. We scrambled at the staging area in the hour before our flight to pull it off using multiple colour coded ribbons, piles of boxes and a lot of duct tape. In the end there were only a few items that ended up in unintended surprise locations. But it wouldn't be an adventure without any surprises, would it?



*Endless terrain in the Esplanades.
(Photo by Dave Fishwick)*

As it was April, we expected spring skiing and showed up with ski crampons and ice axes for re-frozen conditions, but to our surprise we arrived to full-on -17 °C winter temperatures and fresh powder snow.

We made good use of the pow as we explored and skied in the area around Sentry Lodge for a couple days before we needed to head south. This was a skier's playground, with a variety of terrain for all skiers and snow conditions. Fortunately, the wind that accompanied the snowfall before our arrival subsided and the sun came out, and the conditions became more and more stable as time went on. We split into smaller groups and some of us attempted to bag Sentry Mountain while others sought out the best powder lines. We found big open slopes, steep chutes and pillow drops, and never even scratched the surface of the options available.

Sentry lodge is quite large and luxurious for a back-country lodge, with fully equipped cooking facilities, running water and toilets, and even boasting a ping-pong table which led to a high stakes ACCVI ping pong tournament one evening.

These few days at Sentry also gave us time to bond as a group and get a feel for the terrain and stability in the region. We planned and debated the route options for our traverse and generally came to consensus over how we



*Amazing ski terrain west of Sentry Lodge.
(Photo by Dave Fishwick)*

would get there.

After four days we had to say goodbye to Sentry Lodge and began our journey south. Blue bird skies made route finding relatively simple and we had no major dramas along the way. The crux of the trip - ascending the long and steep "Col of the Wild" - was quickly put behind us, relieving any fears that we wouldn't make it to subsequent huts where we trusted the rest of our food was waiting for us.



*Col of the Wild (between Sentry and Vista).
(Photo by Catrin Brown)*

Moving into a new hut every day and figuring out each one's idiosyncrasies made every evening a bit new. The other huts were more simple affairs than Sentry, and were all very similar to each other, but just different enough that it threw you for a loop when you tried to do or find something. For example, finding the outhouse in the middle of the night...

After we arrived at each day's destination we were able to drop any extra gear we were carrying and get out to



*In between laps of Col of the Wild.
(Photo by Dave Fishwick)*

explore and crank some turns in the area around each hut. The conditions were pretty bomber with a bit of left over pow on top and we were able to drop into some pretty interesting terrain.

After dropping our excess gear at Meadow Hut, a bunch of us were able to tag the summit of Cupola Mountain, and skied a direct line back to the cabin. I was lucky the conditions allowed us to take that direct line as I had cooking responsibilities that day, and returning back the way we came would have pushed our meal late into the evening!



*Vista Hut below Diamond Couloir on Mount Cupola.
(Photo by Dave Fishwick)*

The leg from Meadow to Sunrise cabins brought us to the south end of the Esplanade Range where we had views of Highway 1 weaving its way through Rogers Pass, as well as the dramatic north side of Mount Sir Donald on the horizon. As we dropped down to the cabin, the warmth of the season began to return, and we enjoyed a final day of powder before it quickly transitioned to spring snow.

Everyone ended the trip tired, with full bellies and with happy, if not a bit sunburnt, faces. I have to admit it was a bit sad to close the door behind us on Sunrise Lodge for the season knowing there was still so much good skiing left.

Trip Participants: Catrin Brown, Erich Schellhammer, Margaret Brown, Ian Brown, Keith Battersby, Josh Slatkoff, Martin Hofmann, Tak Ogasawara, Barb Brooks, Davis Griggs, and David Fishwick

Skiing On Top of the World

Martin Hofmann

May 30 – June 11, 2022

I have always loved northern Canada, it has a wildness I have not found anywhere else. A few years ago (2016) I joined a ski camp put on by the Yukon section of the ACC. The camp was located in Kluane National Park at the Icefield Discovery Glacier Camp at the top of the Kaskawulsh, Hubbard and Logan Glaciers. It serves as base to explore the glacier and the surrounding nunataks and peaks, with incredible views of Mount Logan. The main downside from a skier's perspective is that many of the ski lines are a long way from camp and quite short or consisting of crevassed glaciers and seracs. Nevertheless, the scenery is stunning and the views from the high points are fantastic. It was from these high points that I saw a mountain (Mount Badham) that looked like it would have skiing potential and I thought that maybe one day I would come back and check that area out.

Three years later I started seriously looking into the possibility of ski touring in the Mount Badham area. A bit of research led me to some trips organized by the Toronto section of the Alpine Club of Canada in 2006. I looked up the leader for those trips and contacted him. As luck would have it, I was in Toronto soon after, visiting my parents and we could arrange a face to face meeting. A few weeks later, I also met with an ACC member who was on those camps and now lives in Vancouver. I got so much useful information from those meetings about the logistics of a camp on a remote glacier. Although the focus of the Toronto section camps was more on climbing than skiing, the equipment and the camp set ups were basically the same.

I also started studying maps and satellite images of the area. Topographic maps are great for showing where the glaciers are (or they were when the maps were made) and

slope angles but they don't show the surface. Are there crevasses, seracs, rocks? The satellite images of the area are better for that information, but the Kluane images tend to show a lot of cloud or are saturated because everything is white except for rocky ridges and outcrops. Nevertheless, I managed to find some images that showed where the crevasse fields and parts of the glaciers with seracs were for much of the area. As a general rule the north and east slopes were more glaciated with more seracs than the south and west slopes which had fewer glaciers but were still snow covered for most of the year. Combining the map information with my previous experience in the area, I felt that there would be more than enough to ski for a couple of weeks. In addition to local ski lines there was also the possibility of doing a two to three day excursion across the glaciers to other peaks and ski lines.

With a location in mind, it was time to check on other requirements. An email to Icefields Discovery ascertained that flying into the area at the end of May should not be a problem. The Kluane National Park website had the information on obtaining mountaineering permits; proof of experience and proof of insurance were the main requirements. The spring of 2020 was looking good, I put the trip on the schedule and over the course of a few weeks got inquiries from people who were interested and experienced. Early in 2020 we had a meeting of the group and we started making plans. By mid-March we were buying airplane tickets to Whitehorse, getting rescue insurance and applying for the Park permits. I'm sure you can guess what happened next - COVID! - all of a sudden the trip was off and that was that.

Things improved slightly in 2021 and I considered resurrecting the trip, but the quarantine requirements quickly killed that idea. But 2022 looked more promising, vaccination rates were good, restrictions were easing and it looked like it could be done. A lot of the ground work had already been done but we still had flights, insurance, permits and other logistics to finalize. We had another meeting of the participants who were still in, unfortunately we lost some to injury, work, and life changes. But we still had a strong group with a couple of new faces. There was a bit of confusion with the Parks permit they initially thought that we were a professional group with a guide. That got sorted out and we got the permit before we left Whitehorse.

Tak and I drove up to Whitehorse in his truck full of our equipment. We had a big dome tent, tarps, camp stove, propane tanks ... everything for a comfortable stay on a glacier no matter what the weather. The rest of the group flew up a few days later. Sunday May 29 we took Tak's truck and a shuttle bus to Silver City where the Icefields Discovery air strip is located. We camped nearby, and

in the morning, we assembled to weigh all our gear and ourselves.

It required four flights to get everybody and all our gear onto the glacier. The first flight brought Keith, me, and camp essentials. After landing on the glacier and unloading, we moved our gear up to the camp spot and started setting up camp. We marked out where the dome tent would go and where the "furniture" would be inside the tent. We then excavated the passages between the furniture and waited for more people. Meanwhile we sculpted the snow and laid down black tarps to collect drinking water from the snow. Finally the rest of the crew showed up and we could set up the tent. It was a relief to be able to get out of the sun for a break! The rest of the day was spent setting up personal tents, finishing the furniture, setting up the kitchen and digging the biffy trench and walls. Fortunately, we were allowed by Parks Canada to leave human waste, as long as it was buried deep in the glacier.



*Setting up camp on the Eclipse Glacier.
(Photo by Martin Hofmann)*



*Black tarp to collect drinking water.
(Photo by Martin Hofmann)*

May 31 dawned just as clear and crisp as the first day and we were keen to get out and ski. Our first objective was to a slope named the “Ski Hill” by the Toronto ACC group. We could see the slope from camp and it looked like an easy tour over the glacier to get to. However, distance can be deceiving up there and it was actually over four kilometers to the base of the slope. Before we started our ascent, we dug a pit to get a feel for the snowpack, but we did not like the way the newer snow was bonding to the lower snowpack. So we didn’t continue up that south-southeast facing slope. Instead, we toured around and up the valley towards the north col on Mount Badham as a reccy for a possible ascent. We then toured around the base of Mount Badham and back to camp. We didn’t get a lot of turns that day, but we had a nice tour and got a feel for the area and the snow.

June 1 was another beautiful day, so we headed out to explore a different area. We crossed the glacier to get on the southeast ridge of Island Peak to ski some southwest slopes that we hoped would have more stable snow. Most of the peaks in that area do not have official names and we use the informal names that have been used by various groups since the 1960s. A pit on the slopes looked good and we headed up. We followed the ridge up then skied down. The skiing was good, so we did it again, this time we went further up on the ridge and skied a longer line down to the glacier. Some fun skiing that day and stunning views of Mount Logan the whole time.

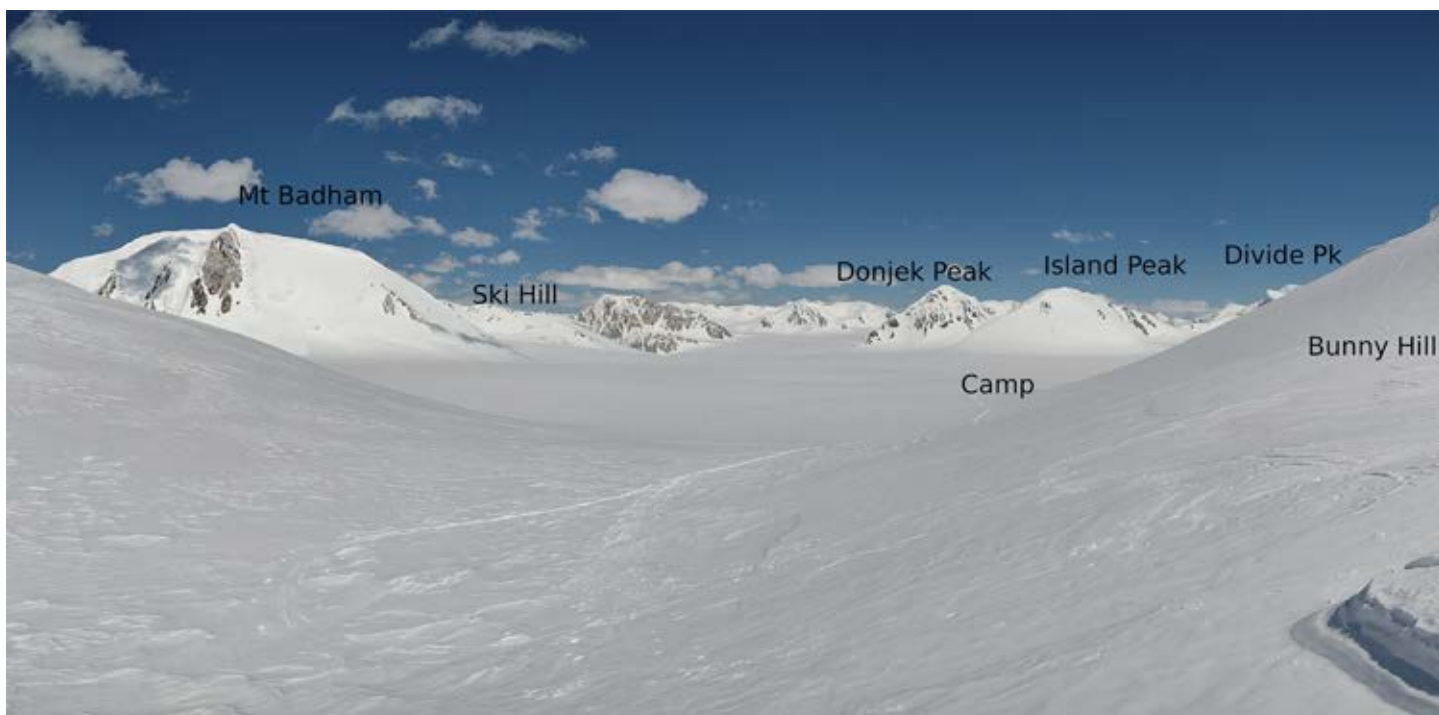
June 2 was time to explore a new different area, so we headed toward Eclipse Peak and some north facing slopes. There we found some slopes that weren’t as steep

but the snow more than made up for it because it was less sun-affected and more powdery. So we did a couple of laps on the “Bunny Run” and explored up on to the ridge of Eclipse Peak then some more powdery descents.



*Crevasses on the glacier, Mount Logan in the background.
(Photo by Martin Hofmann)*

June 3 was yet another fine day so with some more confidence in the snow and conditions that seemed to be stabilizing we headed back to the “Ski Hill.” We took a different approach this time and made our way up the more westerly slopes for the first lap. Then, with the help of ski crampons, we went further up to the peak of “Ski Hill” for a nice long run down the southwest slopes off the ridge in beautiful spring corn snow.



View from Eclipse ridge over Eclipse Glacier. (Photo by Martin Hofmann)



*Seracs in the evening light.
(Photo by Martin Hofmann)*



*Evening light on Mount Badham.
(Photo by Martin Hofmann)*

June 4 and the weather was still good so we have to go out skiing again. We had seen a very nice slope coming off the summit of “Island Peak,” all we have to do was find a way to the top. The ridge we took on June 1 looked like it would get more challenging further up, but from our camp we could see the whole northwest ridge or at least one side of it. We knew that there might be some crevasses that wrapped around from the north slopes but the ridge had a nice angle and we decided to give it a go. Once again ski crampons came to the rescue as some aspects had been hammered by the wind and had a solid crust on top. We angled up from camp and gained the ridge above the steeper lower section and started our way up the ridge. We crossed back and forth following better snow and less steep slopes and we were approaching the point where the glacier on the northeast side came up on to the ridge. Keith was in the lead, as usual, when suddenly the snow moved and there was a small crevasse under his skis. We could see a larger crevasse up above that was covered by snow, but we had no idea how thick or how strong the snow bridges were. We decided to play it safe and dropped off the ridge onto the safer southwest slopes and traversed across looking for another way up.

After traversing under a couple of rock outcroppings we bootpacked up a steep slope to the summit of “Island Peak.” After lunch and some time savouring the 360° views, it was time to ski! We had a glorious 300+ metre descent down to the glacier.



*Sunny evening in camp, “Island Peak” in the background.
(Photo by Martin Hofmann)*

June 5 and the weather changed, which was perfect timing as we were all ready for a rest day. So, we had a leisurely breakfast, then second breakfast a couple of hours later, and a bit later it was time for lunch. After that, it was nap time before dinner.

June 6 brought a bit of fresh snow and half decent weather. We headed off in a new direction around the back of “Island Peak” to the East Ridge of Divide Peak. We followed the ridge up to a high point, from where we looked down towards the Icefields Discovery Camp. Although we couldn’t quite see it, it brought back memories for Tak and me. We had lunch and then skied down. There was some nice fresh snow although it was a little wind-affected in places. Then back across the glacier towards home as it looked like the weather was changing.

June 7 and the weather certainly changed; we woke to the tents mostly buried in snow. There was a complete whiteout most of the day. Another day of eating, reading, and napping.

June 8 dawned cold and clear with 20 centimetres of fresh snow. We saw some natural sloughs on the slopes around the glacier so we decided to keep it mellow and headed back to the “Bunny Hill.” We were rewarded with fresh powder on a north facing slope. We farmed that slope until we got a message from Icefields Discovery warning that the weather might change and that if anyone wanted to get out early they could send a plane. Derek and Tak took Sian up on her offer so they headed back to camp to pack up. The rest of us did a couple more laps and headed back as well. Later that evening, the plane came in and took them away.



Snow day.
(Photo by Martin Hofmann)



Snowy morning.
(Photo by Martin Hofmann)



Sunrise on Mount Logan.
(Photo by Martin Hofmann)



Farming the "Bunny Hill."
(Photo by Martin Hofmann)

June 9 and the weather forecast was still not looking good for the next few days. So we made the decision to try and get out while we could. We started taking down camp and

packing everything up. We then had to decide which two would go out first and which two would stay. We carefully sorted the gear into three piles, one with Josh and Keith's personal gear, one with general camp gear and one with Iain and Martin's personal gear. The plane came in to take Josh and Keith away with their personal gear. The plane was having trouble taking off because of problems with the turbo, but Iain and Martin rocked the wings to get the skis unstuck and the plane took off, leaving Iain and Martin and a pile of stuff. Because of the mechanical issues with the plane we were told that we might have to leave some gear behind but they would try to get the last two of us off the glacier. We separated our gear into stuff that could be left (e.g. propane, stoves, table tops etc.) and stuff that we needed. We put the first pile into an abandoned tent pit, took a GPS reading of the location and waited for the plane to come back. It came back around 22:00 that evening and we got in with our gear and said goodbye to the gear in the pit. Unfortunately, the turbo was still not working properly and with no one to rock the wings we didn't move. We got out of the plane, lent the pilot some baling wire with which he tried to fix the turbo. We had duct tape too but that wasn't enough. So we loaded some of the gear from the pit into the plane, keeping just enough for Iain and Martin to survive for a

couple of days if necessary and the plane took off into the setting sun without us (actually it flew away east). We set up our tent, had dinner and watched the last of the midnight sunset.



*Bush mechanic.
(Photo by Martin Hofmann)*



*All packed up and nowhere to go.
(Photo by Martin Hofmann)*

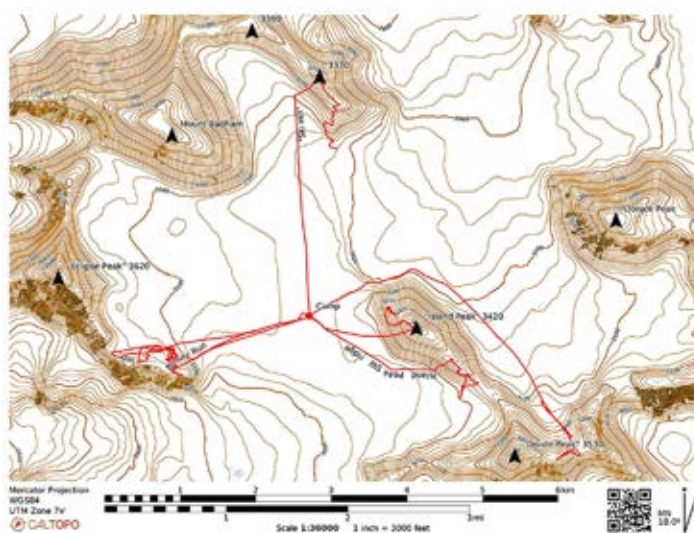
June 10 and the weather was OK, but the turbo wasn't fixed so we hung around and waited. Early afternoon we got the news that the turbo had been fixed and the plane was ready to fly, however by that time the clouds had dropped and it was no longer good to land on the glacier. So we sat around watching and waiting for the clouds to lift. That didn't happen so we got to enjoy another night on the glacier with the promise that we would check in in the morning at 5:00 a.m. and make the call then.

June 11 the clouds had moved on and the glacier was clear so we packed up as fast as we could while the plane flew up from the base. We finished packing just as the plane landed and we loaded up and had a beautiful flight over the eastern peaks of Kluane and back down to mosquito-ville. Derek had already flown home for his daughter's graduation, but the others were waiting for us

in Silver City. We called the shuttle to come and bring us back to Whitehorse. Even though we didn't do any first ascents or summit many of the peaks or even achieve some of the original goals, we all felt that it was one of the best ski trips, if not the best ski trip ever. The incredible scenery, the isolation, the good skiing and good company made for an unforgettable trip. Would I go back? In a heartbeat, if someone else organized it, or maybe once the memories have started to fade.



*Flying out, Kaskawulsh Glacier in the background.
(Photo by Martin Hofmann)*



Map of Eclipse Glacier area, showing some of our tracks.

I made a video, you can see it here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1M5I3bBzGpp8p-vwpTtmdXkgEGrywXnl1/view?usp=sharing>

And you can see more photos here:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/6JNNVNxmm1mePdy9>

Participants: Martin Hofmann (leader), Keith Battersby, Tak Ogasawara, Josh Slatkoff, Derek Sou, and Iain Sou

My Reflections on Kluane National Park and Reserve

by Tak Ogasawara

The trip went exactly as I expected. Five younger strong men went skiing everyday, but being the eldest in the group, I stayed half the time at the base camp. I knew my limits and I listened to my body telling me what to do. The huge lifeless snowfield we were at and Canada's highest mountain, Mount Logan, dominated our view in the western horizon. I was quite content in the mountains. Yes, the snowfield is a lifeless place with just snow and ice there. Scientists occasionally visit those snowfields to do something. I don't know exactly what they do there.

Others venture out to a jagged ridge line and a steep headwall toward the summit. Some succeed and some lose their lives in the process.

For scientists' eyes, it might not be lifeless in the deep snow. For me, as a mountaineer, looking toward high mountains is so peaceful and a happy place. When you close your eyes and listen to your inner voice, there is something which I cannot explain, I cannot hear or see, but you feel its spirits. It is so magical and mysterious.



*Heavy rain in the afternoon.
(Photo by Jordie Allen-Newman)*

Indie enjoyed a few swims in the lake and walking the trails - though he is unaware of the poison ivy and rattle snake risk. I kept him on a leash and on the trail 100 percent of the time to protect this sensitive ecosystem.

I spent some time giving the two climbers a review of

Skaha Bluffs Provincial Park

Jordie Allen-Newman

June 2-5, 2022

A passing low pressure system out of the Pacific dropped a ton of rain on this normally semi arid landscape - in the interior plateau - the traditional territory of the Syilx speaking people.

We had waterfalls literally pouring off the walls. One of the original mountain goats to Skaha - Russ Turner - said he had never seen so much rain in June.

My friends Abdullah from Iraq and Harpreet from the Punjab were the only ones out of a group of eight Alpine Club members to make it to the crag.

We enjoyed the smells and wildlife in this pristine ponderosa pine forest and vibrant grasslands. The sage in particular was very prominent and I couldn't help but rub some on my clothes and body as did the guys. The smell is very soothing and brings me back to my childhood growing up in Penticton and times visiting my Ukrainian grandmother talking late into the warm evenings on her veranda - the sage sweetening the memories even more.

Lots of climbing opportunities at Red Tail and Doctors Wall despite the rain. Abdullah and Harpreet were really keen on leading routes.



Indiana the therapy dog. (Photo by Jordie Allen-Newman)

rappelling technique, sport anchors, and other climbing skills - they are both positive and delightful to train and in no time will be well beyond my level. I only asked that they remember to invite me along on one of their future Himalayan climbs.



Harpeet Singh at Red Tail Wall.
(Photo by Jordie Allen-Newman)

At the end of one of the climbing days, Indie and I took the Red Electra for a long ride along the Okanagan Lake promenade and down the canal trail to Skaha Lake and back. I enjoyed a Hazy IPA from the Neighborhood Brewery along the way.

The guys brought their stand up paddle boards and spent an afternoon exploring Skaha Lake.

Our camp neighbors at Banbury Green were a group of youth from St Michael's University School in Victoria. We also climbed near them at Red Tail. They loved Indie and it was fun talking with them about their school and outdoor program as I had guided and instructed for St. Mike's for many years on their surf kayaking, sea kayaking and climbing programs.

I am definitely interested in organizing more Alpine Club climbing trips and will be coming back to Skaha again soon.

"In this life our actions are the ink and mind of the paper"

- Gobind Singh Ji

#fjallraven

<http://www.banburygreen.com/>

<https://www.skaharockclimbing.com/>

<https://neighbourhoodbrewing.com/>

<https://accvi.ca/>

Trip Participants: Jordie Allen-Newman (Leader), Abdullah Al-Saudi, Harpeet Singh and Indiana Jones

Where the Wild Things Go. Still.

Jim Everard

July 11-14, 2022

There are surprising nooks in British Columbia. Especially ones that bear few physical marks of human passage. One such area is the Waitabit Valley in the Rocky Mountains. It was an 'untouched' quality that caught the attention of Blair Piggot and me during a review of climbing options early in the summer of 2022. Also influencing our decision was a deep and recalcitrant snowpack on higher Rockies alpine rock objectives. An exploratory foray at slightly lower elevations seemed to fit the bill.

The Waitabit Valley is a 300+ square kilometer watershed that sits about 25 kilometers north-northeast of Golden. It is immediately north of the Blaeberry Valley which, unlike the Waitabit Valley, has extensive forestry roads etched and incised most everywhere. The Waitabit Valley is separated from the outside world by Mount Laussedat, Mount Mather, Mount Sheppard, Mount Poland, Mount Mummery, Nanga Parbat Mountain, Trutch Mountain, Mount Bernard, Mount Bulyea, Conner Peak and The Robinson Peaks, to name a few mountains and peaks. It has no formal protections such as Wilderness Reserve, Conservancy, or Provincial/National Park. It's a bit of a mystery how the Waitabit Valley seems immunized from BC mange (forestry), mining and associated road transport networks or commercial outdoor sport development.

We set our sights on Mount Mather and Mount Laussedat. This meant setting up a base camp between the two in the Mather valley. It also meant hours of bushwhacking through the 'wurst' of slide alder, devil's club and bear cubs.

According to Ken Jones the "Waitabit River got its name because it was such a temperamental river to cross years ago. When they had pack outfits they would go there to cross it and the water would be too high, so they would have to stay overnight and wait until morning when the water went down. So they started to call it Waitabit."

Ken Jones, Mountain Man, Lorne and Kim Tetarenko, p. 76.

A fine weather window was forecasted to open mid-July; planning turned at action. We drove a few kilometers



Jim Everard emerges from the Waitabit Valley, which is ringed to the North East (center right of photo) by Mounts Bulyea and Barnard. Mount Pangman and Mount Freshfield are left of center in the photo, part of the Bluewater Valley watershed. (Photo by Blair Piggot)

from the bottom of the Blaeberry Valley, parking at a decommissioned culvert and deep washout and shouldered our achingly heavy packs to plunge into (for us) the unknown. At the head of the Mather valley and down the other side lay the Waitabit Valley.

The first steps were up an old overgrown logging road. Mount Laussedat began to fill the western vista. 2000 foot long streaks of fresh green slide alder descended into the valley bottom. We would need to force our way through this and other avalanche shrubbery. Two hours of slide alder calisthenics and stumbling through over-our-head cow parsnip and stinging nettle delivered us to scoured avalanche run-outs. In another hour we reached the less vegetated alluvial part of the valley and the lower reaches of the snow pack. The temperature dropped 8 °C as we set up camp, ate, rehydrated, and reflected on the price of entry to this area.

Day Two

The day's objective was Mount Mather. We had no beta on the route (there's no record of an ascent from this direction). A light overnight freeze made one snow gully attractive as a shortcut to the ridge. Once on the ridge, we headed towards the summit but progress was blocked by teetering towers of shale, which we skirted. This proved unsatisfying as the ridge became increasingly distant, and cliffs emerged. Equally improbable to the vertical disintegrating rock was a herd of mountain goats that was slowly scrabbling its way up, trying to get away from us. The goats dislodged debris as they ascended, and two kids seemed to have particular difficulty following.

That sight was enough for us. We did not want to precipitate any falls, as infrequent as falls might be for mountain goats. We quickly retraced our steps hoping the goats would safely retrace theirs, too.

Mount Mather was named after William Mather. William was a Corporal with the Fourth Canadian Armored Division when he was killed in action in 1945.

Mount Mather is one of nine mountains named after soldiers from the Golden area who were killed in action in WW2. Most of these mountains crown the Waitabit watershed, with a few more jewels, like Mount Lotosky, rising within the valley.

With the northwest ridge now out of the picture, we headed down the length of that ridge to a col. In the process, we noticed the mountain rising up from the other side of the col; 'Laussedat N2'. Maybe we were not done for the day.

Sure enough, about 3 hours later we were on the uncaired summit. To the east, the upper Waitabit Valley – with its half dozen tributaries and sub valleys – radiated out. To the north, the Waitabit River carved the start of a channel down to the Columbia River. It was breathtaking and profound. I ruminated on the seeming impossibility of the land below. No formal protections? No designations? No visible evidence of human passage? Then a wave of worry struck: what about its future? One



*Jim Everard on a low 5th class pitch of Laussedat N2, with questionable protection in the exfoliating 75° slate.
(Photo by Blair Piggot)*

learned reaction to deal with worry was to be present and tell myself: “It’s here today, it’s been like this for hundreds of years; acknowledge the optimism that represents.” Make this moment... here...now...good enough”

We rapped off the peak and glissaded into the Mather Valley arriving at camp in waning light, about 13 hours after setting off. While we were chuffed by this first recorded ascent, that likelihood was completely outsized by the beauty that had fused with the optimism of the day.

Day Three

Our objective remained the same, except this time we had a much better idea of the terrain around Mount Mather. We chose to return to the Mather – ‘Laussedat N2’ col, descend into the Waitabit Valley then ascend Mount Mather along its north ridge. As the day progressed, it dawned on us why this route remained undone. First off, it made ‘Rockies choss’ feel like Selkirk granite: it was a world of table top shale shards hanging in Jenga like towers.

Unfriendly/dangerous terrain turned us around twice. First it was unconsolidated/isothermal waist-deep snow and then it was gravity-defying rock towers. Eventually a feasible 4th and low 5th - class route was pursued and the summit gained. Again, I searched for evidence of cutblocks or a thread of differentiated trees marking some old road in the Waitabit Valley. No such evidence revealed itself.

From the summit we scratched partway down the west ridge then stepped onto Mount Mathers’ north glacier. Easy (but careful) plunge steps got us to the still frozen lake at the glacier’s terminus.



*Blair Piggot picks his way through the Jenga Towers.
(Photo by Jim Everard)*

We were the only ‘old goats’ in the area and plodded back up to the rim of the Waitabit. Below, the Mather Valley was gathering darkness. By the time we arrived at our basecamp the first stars were twinkling.

Day Four

The day dawned bright, windy and welcoming. But with little food, the thought of ascending Mount Laussedat was discarded. We packed up and faced the downhill. We were NOT looking forward to the final bill that had to be paid for the stellar last few days; that non-trivial bushwhack out.



*Free from avalanche chutes, navigating across “open terrain” becomes easier for Blair Piggot.
(Photo by Jim Everard)*

No matter how much I repeated the mantra of our good fortunes during this de-approach, there were occasions when the “is this really worth it” question bubbled up. I questioned our sanity, the weight on our backs, and our balancing act two to three feet off the ground across slide alder trunks (think poor person’s Cirque de Soleil).

Eventually we intersected the overgrown logging road and a lunch of cheese, salami and relief. A few more hours in the hot sun got us to the truck and a thirst-quenching stream.

Thus concluded four days of hard path finding work. And we 'only' summited half of our original objectives. But what we experienced was so much more than that. We felt like kings.

Participants: Jim Everard and Blair Piggot

Bugaboos

**John Relyea-Voss, Stephanie Leblanc,
and Laurel Frost-Mitchell**

July 12-18, 2022

Day 1

Waking up at 2:30 a.m. in Courtenay, Casey, Steph and I prepped our gear and loaded it into Casey's vehicle which we would be driving down. Laurel showed up shortly after and we were on the road for 3:15 a.m. We took the first ferry to Vancouver and drove over 11 hours straight arriving at the trailhead around 9:00 p.m.

We wrapped the vehicle in chicken wire and took off to Applebee campground. The trail in was well maintained with no bushwhacking, a few ladders, fixed chains and bridges. We got up to the Conrad Kain hut around 1:00 a.m. Our heavy packs slowed us down a lot. Another 1.5 hours took us to the Applebee dome which was busy with minimal to no camp spots. Not wanting to disturb people we pitched our tents in the snow near the perimeter of the camp area and went to bed. Our group was exhausted after over a full 24-hour day.

Day 2 - Eastpost Spire

After sleeping in we got up and took some time to admire the area around Applebee dome. The sun had set in for what would be a five-day period and we knew right away we were going to have a blast. Looking for a warmup objective, Casey, Laurel and I went to climb the West Face of Eastpost Spire. We had fun on the route and picked out a few of our own adventures, climbing some hard single pitch cracks midway up route. Laurel had a great first lead of the trip and after summiting we felt excited for jumping on some exciting new routes.

We made it back to camp and all hung out, regained our energy and set alarms for 5:30 a.m. the following morning after moving our tents to a better dry location.

Day 3 - Pigeon Spire

Planning this trip, Pigeon Spire was our number one objective. However, while speaking to guides who had

been in the park a few days before we were told the upper sections of the spire were still too snowy to safely summit. To our surprise, a party made the summit the day before and with some beta we decided to give it a go.

We all took off at 6:00 a.m. and started the approach towards the Bugaboo-Snowpatch Col, a common area for injuries due to the rockfall risk. The snow conditions in the park made for a great approach with minimal to no rockfall on the way in. Hard snow made for a quick ascent. At the top of the col, the four of us roped on for a glacier crossing to make our way to Pigeon Spire. We made quick time and were at the base of the climb by 10:00 a.m.



*John after the Bugaboo Snowpatch Col.
(Photo by John Relyea-Voss)*

Apart from one pair of crampons and one ice axe we dropped all our gear at the base of the climb. Our group was planning on having whoever led on snowy pitches to use this gear and then belay the followers over with boots. We racked up and started the up the first summit.

Shortly after we began there was a short and exposed fifth class move that required us to scramble up on a mini knife edge. As we began this section, we had some heavy winds pick up which made the move very risky. After Laurel, Casey and I made it up, Steph decided that it would be best to head down. We set an anchor, tossed down some



*Casey and Laurel climbing Pigeon Spire.
(Photo by John Relyea-Voss)*

rope and had Steph tie in so we could lower her a full rope length to the base of the climb. The remainder of our group continued on.

The rest of the climb went well. Our inexperience on the route had us constantly switching between pitching out sections and scrambling. The exposure and perspective of the climb made the route appear very steep, however,



*Pigeon Spire Summit.
(Photo by John Relyea-Voss)*

in reality most of the route was very manageable scrambling.

We did hit a sketchy snow section before the final summit and used the crampons and ice axe to complete. After reaching the summit we had some well-deserved snacks and made two rappels back down to the snow section before scrambling down the route to one final rappel where we left Stephanie.

An amazing route and by far our highlight of the trip.



*Casey and Laurel on Pigeon Spire Summit.
(Photo by John Relyea-Voss)*



*Casey on Pigeon Spire.
(Photo by John Relyea-Voss)*



*Pigeon Spire Descent.
(Photo by John Relyea-Voss)*

Day 4 (John and Steph) - Rope Skills, Rest, East Post

After a tiring day three Steph and I began our day a few hours after Casey and Laurel left on a climbing mission. We had decided early in the trip that any climbs requiring multipitch belaying would best and most safely be done in two-person groups. From this point on in the trip we split up tackling more appropriate individual objectives for our party.

Steph and I decided to take our day packs and head up to the summit of Eastpost Spire climbing a variation of the West Face route we did earlier on day two of the trip. Upon reaching a very cool featured wall I racked up and started

leading what looked like very cool horns and ledges. About 20 feet off the ground was what looked like a great horn to sling, so with this in mind I climbed up to this section looking to use this for my first protection. Upon making it I realized the quality of the rock was not what I thought, and I was not confident a sling would have the ability to hold a lead fall should one happen. Not finding any other confidence inspiring protection, we decided to bail and try another line to the right.



*Steph on Eastpost Spire.
(Photo by John Relyea-Voss)*

This one went much smoother taking good cams in a right facing corner. Steph followed up quickly after swapping leads to a tricky exposed traverse taking one cam and requiring a reverse mantle to a boulder filled gully which we would follow to the main scrambling route of Eastpost. An exciting first trad lead for Steph! She set up a good belay and belayed me over where we took our time to the final summit pitch enjoying some good views!



*Steph on Eastpost Spire summit.
(Photo by John Relyea-Voss)*

Upon getting the summit pitch I tagged a rope up to a set of rap rings and belayed Steph up where we had lunch and then rapped down to the lower scramble section.

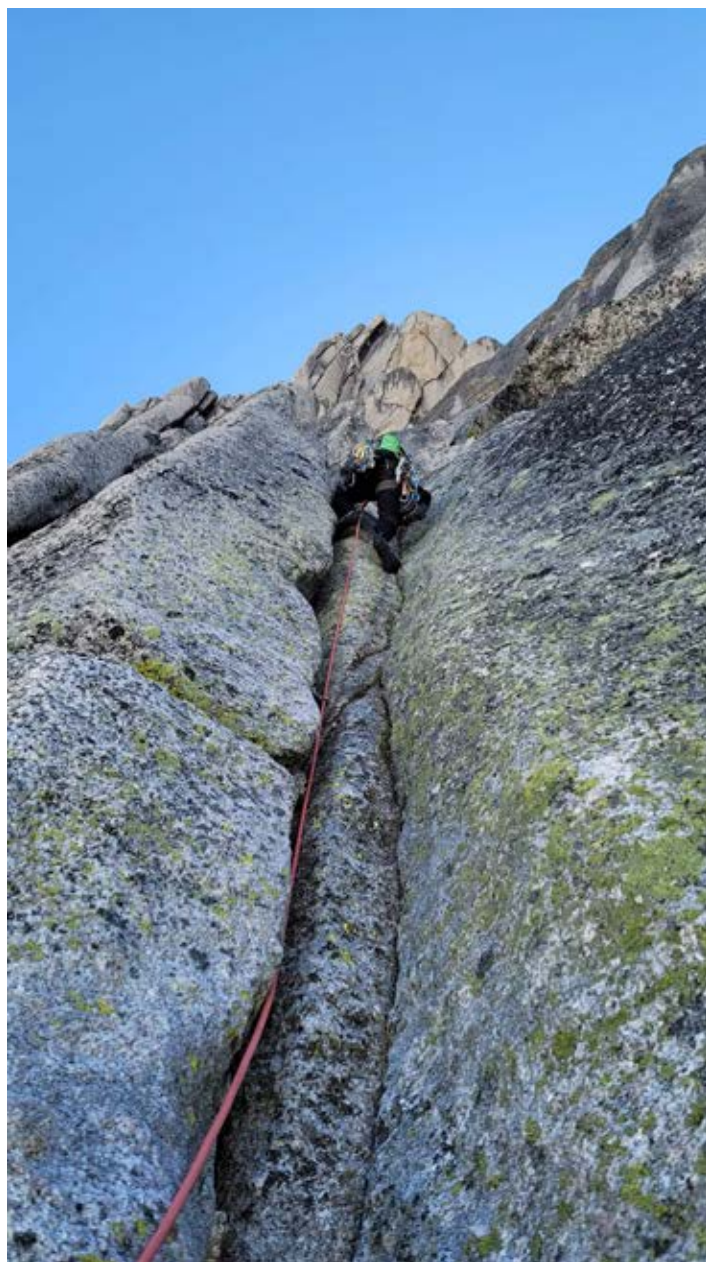


*Steph at Applebee Boulders.
(Photo by John Relyea-Voss)*

On the way back to camp we stopped to climb some very cool boulders above Applebee and checked out the Applebee 5.8 hand crack which was still holding too much snow to properly climb.

Day 4 (Casey & Laurel) by Laurel Frost-Mitchell

Looking through the guidebook there was one route that immediately stuck out to me as a gumby trad climber; "Buckingham: the enjoyable way". Described as a fun 5.8 with mostly 5.6 - 5.7 cracks. Upon convincing Casey to give it a go with me, we set off at 7 a.m. to a beautiful bluebird sky. And after being completely roasted the day before it worked out quite nice it being on a west facing wall with no sun for the next five hours. After getting up the Bugaboo-Snowpatch Col, the climb was immediately on our left.



*Laurel on Buckingham Route.
(Photo by Casey Matsuda)*

We asked a group of three at the top of the col what their plans were and it just so coincided that they had the same plans as us. So, we hustled off to get a good head start. After around five pitches of mixed 5.6-5.7 really fun cracks

with some rambling between we started getting into the more vertical part of the climb with more amazing easy cracks and large hollow flakes.



*Laurel on Buckingham Route.
(Photo by Laurel Frost Mitchell)*

The final pitch consisted of a short friction slab with two bolts putting us on the summit of the West Tower of Snowpatch. A fairly straightforward descent with one caught rope which the party above us was able to free.

Day 5 (Steph & Laurel) by Stephanie Leblanc

Laurel and I both had our attention captured by Brenta Spire. It's a less travelled spire, but we had a neighbour at camp that climbed it the day before us who said it was worth the journey. We started our day around 9:30 a.m., leaving the Applebee camp and making our way to the Eastpost Spire ridge. We ascended the ridge and went



*Casey on the summit.
(Photo by Laurel Frost Mitchell)*

straight down the col on the other side. We made our way into the valley and crossed over to the pond. We turned left at the pond and continued on to the base of Brenta. We did some tricky snow travel up the scramble part of the approach, which was entirely snow packed and a vertical ascent. We traversed avoiding some large moats and got onto the rock.



*Laurel.
(Photo by Stephanie Leblanc)*

Laurel began the climb by leading a slightly exposed corner, and I followed up. We had fun doing a range of 3rd and 4th class scrambling, and a few 5th class moves. We roped up for sections that felt tricky and enjoyed the experience of practicing rope skills in a new area. We

felt at one point we had gone slightly off route but felt confident we could continue on by doing another trad line up a crack. Laurel did great leading this climb; it was challenging but really fun.



*Stephanie on way to Brenta Spire.
(Photo by Laurel Frost Mitchel)*

I followed up and we had made it to the last part of the climb. Laurel traversed across a large snow patch on the ridge to gain a better view of the surrounding mountains. The view from the ridge was well worth our efforts.

From our spot we could see the summit but decided it was better to start our descent as we were leaving to the Cain hut that same evening and needed time to get back to camp and pack. We did a total of 6 rappels down the mountain including a snow bollard rappel for the snowed in scramble section.

We made it back to camp in good time making our total time for our day nine hours. Overall the climbing on Brenta spire felt mountaineering style and provided a great view of the area.

Day 5 (John & Casey)

For our last climbing day Casey and I had our sights on a climb called “Ears Between” on the Crescent Towers. We could see this climb directly from camp and the line



*Laurel on the way to Brenta Spire.
(Photo by Stephanie Leblanc)*



*Laurel on the way to Brenta Spire.
(Photo by Stephanie Leblanc)*

followed a long chimney between the two prominent crescent towers. The upper pitch was a long easy crack and the lower had a cool direct crack start we were eager to try.

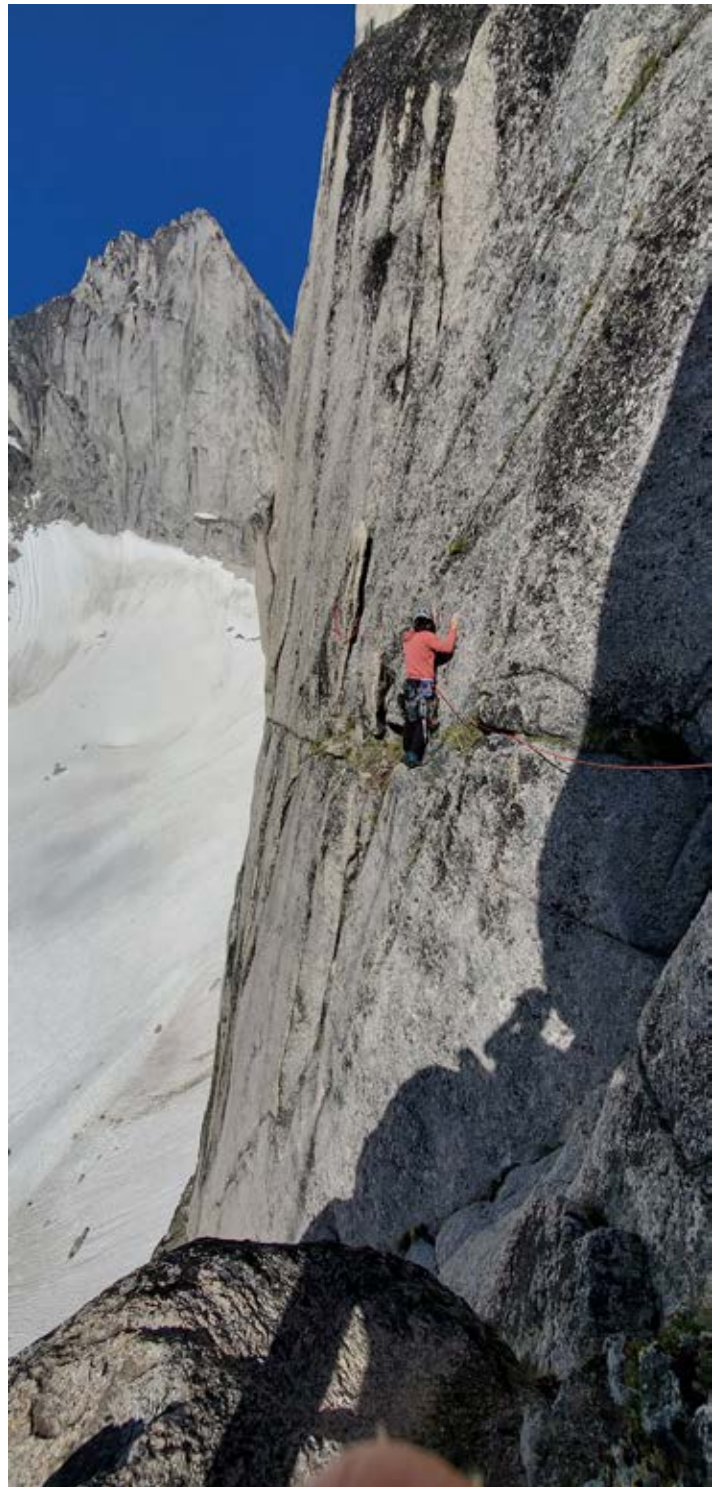


*View of Crescent Spire.
(Photo by John Relyea-Voss)*

A short 30-minute approach from camp put us at the base of the climb. We quickly geared up and I took off leading a short crack to what looked like a belay or bail station. Casey followed up and swapped leads for a very cool face

climb with an incredibly exposed first few moves which I found pretty intimidating. Once up, Casey belayed me up, and after the first couple moves, the pitch was very cool and enjoyable!

Swapping leads, Casey and I made our way up to the lower headwall climbing a range of easy scrambling, a tricky steep squeeze around a huge flake, and a super exposed traverse around a corner with what seemed like a thousand-foot drop. We made pretty quick work of the



*Casey climbing a route on Crescent Spire.
(Photo by John Relyea-Voss))*

lower pitches apart from a slight route-finding mistake which had us down climbing and re-climbing a different section.

Approaching the upper crack, I was excited to be on the sharp end for what was a long rope stretching pitch. I took over a full double rack with nuts and started up a long vertical chimney climbing easy flakes down low, progressing into a steeper chimney crack with good feet. The protection was awesome and very confidence inspiring! Sixty metres up I ran out of rope and ended up belaying Casey forward 15 metres so we could reclaim some additional rope to finish the pitch.



*Looking down the crack on Crescent Spire.
(Photo by John Relyea-Voss)*

We scrambled to the summit and found an awesome route down the back side following a couple rap stations and numerous slings/webbing stations to get down to

the snowfields below. Making quick work of the climb we made it back to camp well before Laurel and Steph and packed up all our gear in prep for the walk down to the hut.



*View from the summit of Crescent Spire.
(Photo by John Relyea-Voss)*

When everyone arrived back at camp we went down to the hut and enjoyed a nice ramen dinner. Laurel and Casey decided to hike out in the dark reversing the long day in as they could crash in Casey's vehicle and get some extra sleep before the drive out.



*View of Conrad Kain Hut.
(Photo by John Relyea-Voss)*

Steph and I stayed in the hut so we didn't have to pitch and break down a tent in the parking lot in the early hours of the morning.

Day 6 – Out Day!

Steph and I got up at the hut around 3:15 a.m. and left for a 2.5-hour hike out reaching the vehicle at daybreak. It's funny to think of how we didn't see much of the hike in or out as both trips were done in the dark!



*Stephanie Leblanc before heading home.
(Photo by John Relyea-Voss)*

Arriving at the car wide awake after a two-hour hike, I burst into the driver's door scaring Casey and Laurel out of a deep sleep. They immediately started tearing down chicken wire surrounding the car and getting ready for the long drive home.

Twelve hundred kilometers later we arrived at home tired and ready for a good sleep. Until next year!

Participants: John Relyea-Voss, Casey Matsuda, Stephanie Leblanc and Laurel Frost-Mitchell

Mount Edziza, Spectrum Range Traverse in Tahltan Territory

George Butcher

August 13-23, 2022



*Mount Edziza with Coffee Crater in the foreground.
(Photo by George Butcher)*

The Tahltan people of Northwest BC have lived for millennia with a spectacular volcanic complex high in their mountainous backyard. With black cinder cones, glacier-clad craters, naked lava flows and near-recent eruptions, it is a remarkable wild area unlike and unmatched anywhere in BC or Canada.

How did this come about?

The science of plate tectonics explains that the Pacific plate, on its way to dive into the Aleutian Trench, has been grinding against the continent for millions of years fracturing the crust and allowing hot magma to rise up and erupt into these lava landscapes. The last eruption was 1000 years ago (950 AD) witnessed by the Tahltan. Though it is dormant now, it will light up again in the future.

Named Edziza by the Tahltan (meaning “volcanic ash”) this area became a provincial park in 1972 following efforts by Jack Souther of the Geological Survey of Canada to protect it from being torn apart for rail bed ballast in constructing the nearby and soon-abandoned boondoggle BC Rail line.

Over the years, we had driven past Edziza many times on

work trips and Yukon explorations. It was time to tread the tuff.

In August 2020, we made a Covid-cautious trip, planning a five-day hike of Mount Edziza Provincial Park the usual way from Buckley Lake south to exit at Mowdade Lake. Float plane in and out. There’s no road access which guarantees low visitor numbers and low impact. You will see access trails on maps but these are over-grown, not maintained and would be multi-day epics whether by foot or packhorse. How much food and fuel can you carry?

That summer was warm and dry in southern BC but Northwest BC was having an inclement, cold and rainy summer. Heading north on Highway 37 we hit continual heavy rain. Windy.com was showing no improvement over the long range. At Dease Lake we learned that it was snowing up on the Edziza. Following the old bush pilot’s adage -“when in doubt, just back out”- we decided to head up to the drier Yukon and canoe down the Ts’ekinyak Chu.

Lesson #1 (for future hikers)

Wait for a good weather window cause you’re up high (1800-2000 metres) and you don’t want to miss the views.

In August 2022, we headed back (motivated in tiny part by the deposit we had left with BC Yukon Air two years earlier). This time our plan was based on better intel from our friend and notable Yukon adventurer, Arno Springer. His advice forms **Lesson #2**. Take the time, go south-to-north, to see the magnificent Spectrum Range, to have the wind at your back (or at least your side), and to end up in the forested shelter of Buckley Lake should you need to wait out the weather for a ride back to Dease Lake.



*In the Spectrum Range.
(Photo by George Butcher)*

We arrived in Dease Lake in a hot spell when it was 25 °C. What! no air conditioning in our base which was the

Northway Motel. The forecast was for overcast, but no rain, then clearing to blue skies. Good to go. Next day at the float plane base, we found that we were 3rd in line and would depart in the afternoon. **Lesson #3:** Phone ahead dammit, so you leave first and have a full day to hike.

Our DHC-Beaver took us south over the stupendous depth of the Stikine canyon, and then down the length of Edziza's complex mountainous terrain, revealing an intimidating distance to backpack. Our destination, Little Ball Lake, sitting at a 1500 metre elevation, looked shockingly small for landing, and once down you are committed because it's too short for float planes to take off when fully loaded.

We set off across alpine tundra under the massive lava dome of the Spectrum Range, well named as bright swashes of yellow, red and violet rock delighted us for the next few days. Landscape painters have yet to discover and capture the colour-saturated Spectrum Range.

At a couple hours in, we sighted a grizzly bear about 250 metres off to the side of our route. We saw him/her first. He/she stood to look then ran off in the opposite direction. Good thing as we had opted not to carry bear spray. That was the first and only sighting of a large mammal on the hike. No Osborn caribou or Stone sheep, but we did see goats on the flight in. There was plenty of evidence of bear diggings at marmot and ground squirrel habitat. Our timing was good for the wildflower bloom – larkspur, louseworts, asters, lupines and bear grass. Bird sightings included merlin, ptarmigan, golden eagles, ravens, chickadees and snow buntings.

The southern Spectrum Range section is without trails and little sign of other visitors. On day 2 we dropped into the Arctic Lake Plateau, the first of three broad lava plateaus, large open expanses of broken rock interspersed with sedge and grassland. It's well named, being reminiscent of High Arctic terrain. As we headed north, we had continuous views of the sunlit Boundary Range to the west.

On Day 3 we tackled the steep Yagi Ridge, which from a distance showed no obvious route up, and the lack of old footfall sign added to the adventure. This 500 metre scramble up a scree slope of broken rock and boulders was the only nose-to-rock mountaineering we encountered. The windy ridge top at 2040 metres was the highest elevation we attained on our traverse.

The route crosses many small, fast flowing, frigid streams and on Day 4 we crossed Nahga Creek which was the most challenging. We searched maybe a kilometer stretch to find the safest, waist-deep crossing point – happily no mishaps.

Lesson #4 (long learned)

Bring creek sandals or wetsuit booties, hiking poles and a hand line.

Day 5 took us across the vast alpine Kitsu Plateau, at the north end of the Spectrum Range. Black obsidian boulders were scattered everywhere along our route. Countless generations of Tahltan had quarried obsidian here to make razor-sharp tools and weapon points for their use and extensive trade. We passed putative ancient flaking stations with broken remnants embedded in moss and lichen. The Spectrum Range ends with a relentless 320 metre drop down steep scree to the tarns in Raspberry Pass where you pass rusted wire and poles from the 1899 never-completed telegraph line to gold-rush Yukon. A good place to camp.

The Mount Edziza section for us began at Chakima Pass where we found cairns marking a well worn trail leading north across the Big Raven Plateau to Buckley Lake. This is the most visited part of the park. And deservedly so, what with the vast extent of Mount Edziza dominating the skyline with its many glaciers and breathtaking views of the symmetrical cinder cones looking as fresh as when they were formed.



*Hiking the pumice on Big Raven Plateau.
(Photo by George Butcher)*

Our conversations on the trek often revolved about our feelings of being transported to exotic terrains. Geology has a characteristic way of repeating itself across the world and down through time. We compared the views to what we think of as Tibetan plateau, or Mongolian steppe, perhaps some Hawaiian lava fields or Middle Eastern wadis. It was easy to visualize deep time in this volcanic expanse.

It led us to ponder many things geological – questions still unresolved.

Lesson#5

Tune up your knowledge of vulcanism and geological time.

On Day 10, we left this exotic volcanic terrain with a gradual descent, increasingly forested, to our final destination, Buckley Lake. The trail was lined with fresh mushroom fruitings, some of which were added to the evening meal at the lakeside campsite.

We had been out 10 days without encountering anyone else – until three horsemen with extra horses came galloping in. It was rugged Robby Williams, a Tahltan cowboy/outfitter from Iskut, and two friends. They had spent three exhausting days hacking through the blow-down along the Klastline River trail from the highway. We were suddenly busy fetching water, leading hobbled horses to pasture on nearby marsh grass and learning about Tahltan history.

They had come to refresh a cross on top of Williams Cone (named after his family) to memorialize two uncles that had perished with their sled dogs in an avalanche on the mountain circa 1950. The sole survivor, his aunt Eve (for which Eve Cone was named) managed to walk back to their community of Telegraph Creek. Robby and his party were heading up the next day to meet his mother, father and daughter who would be choppering in for the remembrance ceremony.

We departed Edziza the next morning with a deeper appreciation for the close connection between the Tahltan people and their unceded mountain homeland.

Participants: George Butcher, Diane Bernard, and George Urban

Soprano Peak Summer Camp

Liz Williams, Carol Doering, Derek Sou, and Peggy Taylor

July 17 to August 14, 2022

Summer camp 2022 was held over four weeks in what turned out to be a truly gorgeous location, suggested by Peggy Taylor. Week 1 had 15 people; Week 2 had only nine due to some health-based drop-outs; Week 3 (Family week) had nine; and Week 4 had 14 people. No-one cried (as far as I know), no-one died, there were no critical incidents, and I believe everyone had a really great time!



Soprano Peak Summer Camp Week 1 participants. (Photo by Ken Wong)

Week 1

The thought of camping on snow due to the very high snow pack and cold spring left me, well...cold. We flew in a day late due to the low ceiling and rain but made up for it with an early start on the Monday which allowed us a full afternoon of adventure once we were there.

I'd given instructions to Ian Brown (senior – we had two Ian Browns) to find a site that met the following criteria:

- Flat, dry heather to camp on;
- A rushing creek close by for our water source;
- Fabulous scenery and mountain objectives;
- Snow pack for refrigeration;
- Shallow, warm tarns for the end of the day;
- And NO BUGS!

Well! Ian delivered on all counts! He'd arranged a time warp to an alternate universe (unfortunately the bugs cottoned on to us by the end of the week, but hey,

that's why we have bug tents!). Every possible peak was climbed, the ridges were marvellous, the emerging flowers beautiful, the marmots fat and curious (we even had a 'greeter' at the biffies), and the fledgling ptarmigans so cute. We had no evidence of bear in Week 1, and bluebird skies all week. A really great group, super food, camaraderie, the lot!

Liz Williams (summer camp committee)

Week 2

Week 2 was somewhat unusual this year, with a much different vibe. Because of last minute dropouts due to illness, injury and COVID protocols, we were a relatively small group of nine women and we had a blast! Since eight of us hiked/scrambled together every day and the 9th was happy doing her own thing closer to camp, we enjoyed the luxury of an entirely flexible daily schedule.

Everyone pitched in and helped out every day so we were able to stay out as long as we wanted, given that no food prep would happen until we all returned. We scrambled



Soprano Peak Summer Camp Week 2 participants. (Photo by Carol Doering)

up every ridge we could technically manage, summited several peaks, visited "The Far Side," swam in almost every lake and ran a couple of "snow school" sessions.

The lessons, relaxed pace and mutual support resulted in a huge increase in skill levels, on both snow and rock, over the week. It was wonderful to see many women achieve heights (literally) that they didn't think they were capable of! The weather was perfect, the mosquitos horrendous and the laughs limitless. We arrived as a group of friends and acquaintances and left a tight group of close friends. Overall it was an awesome week with an amazing group of supportive women. Well done ladies!

Carol Doering (camp manager)

Week 3

It was very hot when we arrived and after an orientation during which we were impressed and thankful for how Week 2 left the camp, we hiked around the valley ending up at a waterfall where we all dunked our heads. The next

two days we climbed Soprano and Linus.

Then the rain came and we sang "rain, rain go away" and hail came, then "hail, hail" and then snow came! In early August, we had snow on the ground outside the tents and tent zippers were frozen. Fortunately, Tina had brought a project for us all and we all knitted toques. We also played cards and hiked the ridge.

The nice weather returned, so we went up Contralto and Schroeder and then it was time to fly out. We missed giving Faulty Tower and Soprano East a shot, but we'll have to go back one day. Thanks to all the organizers for a great week.

Derek Sou (camp manager)

Week 4

Week 4 of the ACCVI Summer Camp, Soprano Peak edition, was fully subscribed as we gained one member from Week 2 who had recovered fully from Covid, but unfortunately we lost one member as a last minute



Soprano Peak Summer Camp Week 3 participants. (Photo by Bianca Parcher)

dropout on the travel day! We had excellent weather with only a small blip on Friday evening when a short, but fierce wind, rain, thunder and lightning storm blew through. Luckily I had repaired the multiple tears in the windows with tear-aid that afternoon from the storms of Week 3, so we did not leak like a sieve! All campers had to beat a hasty retreat from the bug tents to the drying tent as the system approached quickly. Luckily no one's tent blew away - this was a memorable cooking evening for Roger and me to be sure. There were hoards of bugs on our week, so everyone was happy for the two bug tents to retreat to when needed! Sightings of a bear passing through the area on day one, many marmots, chipmunks, ptarmigan moms and chicks, and the occasional pika and even some goats (or sheep?) in the distance were a thrill to see.

Many objectives were met on the week including two groups summiting Soprano Peak, one group on Contralto, one group tackling Linus and Schroeder in a double summit day with loads of boulder scrambling, one group

hitting just Linus via a different route, one group heading up the two peaks to the north-east of camp, one large group joined by two later headed up the North Ridge above camp, and two groups went to the next ridge and peak over (there is debate as to whether this summit was named Goat Peak or Modal Peak?) with all enjoying the meadows, streams and multitudes of stunning flowers along the way, in addition to a few tarn tours, which of course had to include dips, and wanderings on the "golf course", the rise to the north of camp. Sadly there was one member who took a significant tumble mid-week and suffered multiple bumps and scrapes on his head, a small but deep laceration on one hand and a severely twisted knee. First aid was rendered on site, anti-inflammatories and pain meds given and he was able to make it back to camp where he had to sit out the rest of the week. We hope he heals quickly after the fact!

Our group was a fun and ambitious bunch of ACCers and I was thrilled to see some of them learn new skills, meet some terrain challenges head on with great success and



Soprano Peak Summer Camp Week 3 participants. (Photo by Bianca Parcher)

push some comfort boundaries, learn to navigate in the wilderness without signs or trails, and indeed even lead a trip on one's own in tougher territory than one might be used to! It was a joy to see growth in many of our week's hikers and to share the area with so many great folks. I must add that Week 4 participants cooked amazing meals and were the most efficient at take down that I have ever seen! This will remain a most memorable camp for this manager and I must agree that this is one of the loveliest areas that our section has had a chance to explore at summer camp over the years. We are indeed blessed to be able to have the time, energy and where-with-all to engage in these outdoor activities in such crazy times.

Peggy and Roger Taylor (camp managers)

Lake O'Hara Summer Camp – Vancouver Island Section

Tara Sharpe

July 31 to August 8, 2022

Just one month after the last pieces of Abbot Pass Hut were dismantled on June 30, the Lake O'Hara Summer Camp crew of 2022 took its first steps into Yoho National Park. It required two weeks to deconstruct the iconic 100-year-old alpine shelter but only seven days for two dozen of us to build a very special sense of connection in



The 24 members of Lake O'Hara Summer Camp 2022 from left to right: Chad, Caroline, Geoff, Serena, Shaun, Lisa S. (front), Lisa B. (middle), Michael (rear), Jay, Wade, Chris, Liz, Fred, Roger (front), Dotter (middle), Abe (rear), Cedric, Joisan, Josh, Tara, Roxanne (front), Cheri (rear), Sandy. (Photo by George Lum)

the shadow of Abbot Pass.

And now we even have a fabric patch (pictured here) to mark what became a close group stitched together against a backdrop of bristly spruce, turquoise tarns, three grizzly bears, a family of porcupines and multiple stunning peaks.

It was the first summer camp at the hut (named after



*The patch for Lake O'Hara summer camp of 2022.
(Patch and photo by Lisa Simpson)*

Canadian journalist and ACC co-founder Elizabeth Parker) since the pandemic. And we arrived with a range of skills, interests and ages, from twenty somethings to senior long-time members of the Alpine Club of Canada. One of these, Roger, began our first evening by solemnly acknowledging a dearly loved participant of past Lake O'Hara camps: Albert Hestler, who had asked Cedric to organize the 2022 camp but also (unbeknownst to us) passed away Aug. 5 while we were beyond cell range. This moment of reflection on August 1 was poignant and set a tone of respect for the rest of the week. Albert was in our thoughts.

Check-in was 3 p.m. that day. Having arrived before noon after a 700 metre walk from the bus drop-off at Le Relais Day Shelter, we left our packs and duffels in a

multi-coloured heap against one side of Elizabeth Parker Hut and set off to explore, with one group taking a first scramble up Mount Schaffer. Nearly all of us saw bear scat, an initial sign of the three grizzlies who were also visiting the area that week—one male plus a mother and her cub, grazing on grass while waiting for the delayed berry crop.

After dinner on the 1st, Cedric along with co-leader Geoff laid out the evening pattern: each night we'd talk about triumphs and insights from that day's adventures, as well as plans for the following day. This formalized ritual not only handily brought us into companionable discussions, it reflected Cedric's unassuming yet gently directive leadership style that strung together the group activities. And that first meeting is also where we got an early peek at the mountaineering ambitions unspooling around us. The peaks would come fast and furious this week.



*Cedric (left) and Geoff, leaning against
Wiwaxy Cabin, the second of two historic
huts on the site where we stayed that week.
(Photo by Roxanne Stedman)*

On August 2, Chad successfully summited Mt. Hungabee via the west ridge, solo, after approaching Lake Opabin with his father Fred. Chad arrived back at the hut at 8 p.m., a miraculously scant 5 ½ hours after reaching the summit. That same day, Chris, Joisan, Serena and Roxanne summited Yukness Mountain.

Michael, George, Abe and Shaun surmounted the High-Level Circuit Trail to Lake McArthur with views of Mt. Biddle while Caroline, Jay, Lisa S., Lisa B., Josh and Tara hiked up to Lake Oesa. The rest of the group enjoyed other exploits including valley hikes to Morning Glory, Linda and Cathedral Lakes.

Seven mountain goats, several porcupines and two marmots were sighted—and that was just on the first day.

On August 3, Chad and Cheri headed to Abbot Pass, with Chad summiting Mount Lefroy. Five other members of our group flexed slightly different muscles of the more creative kind, approaching a morning at Lake O'Hara with paper palettes instead of rope: with Liz and Serena at the paintbrushes, Geoff, Cedric and Wade helped recreate the same setting where J.E.H. Macdonald of the Group of Seven spent his summers painting in the 1920s. Meanwhile, George was busy capturing spectacular photographic art—it's thanks to him that we have a group photo.



*Liz (left) and Serena during the “art tour” at Lake O’Hara.
(Photo by Serena Polt)*

On August 4, Consummation Peak was reached by Serena, Roxanne, Joisan and Chris, with thunder and lightning to greet the four mountaineers at the top. And in the evening, we were treated to a rope demo by Geoff, with a dash of his usual humour and adroit guidance. But it wasn't all knots—musical notes were constant all week, with three guitars on hand and nightly singalongs, not to mention the extensive knowledge of birdsong from our very own warbler (Geoff) dressed on occasion in old-time alpine-guide finery.

Early on, another sound intruded on the evening tunes. It sounded like a very determined woodpecker, but soon became clear it was a family of porcupines steadily gnawing away at the underpinnings of the outhouse timbers—an unimaginably disgusting collapse, should it have occurred. Instead, a trio from Parks Canada showed up with cages to relocate the spikey mammals. And that's why we've got a porcupine on our patch.

On August 5, half our group headed through the kiosk at McArthur Pass and up to Oday Highline, while Roger and Dotter headed into flower-dotted meadows; some reached Oday Prospect, while 10 climbers summited Walter Feuz Peak (Little Oday), with Josh helping provide support and advice on the snowy scramble. And nearly everyone saw the sow and her cub at Schaffer Lake, the same pair spotted at Cathedral Lakes the day before.

The wildflowers got a second viewing at Le Relais during a well-attended evening slideshow by Mike Potter, an author and photographer who worked for more than 10 years as a Parks Canada interpretive naturalist and wrote a definitive guidebook on the wildflowers of the Central Rockies.

On August 6, Joisan, Chris and Chad, led by Serena, left the hut at 3:30 a.m. for Mount Victoria via the Huber Glacier; they reported scrambling the ridge for a long stretch, with amazing views of all the peaks in the area. It was *au cheval* and ice axes by the end. A very long day—from dark till dark—wrapped up with a well-earned meal upon their return.



*On the way to the summit of Mt. Victoria, from left to right: Chad, Joisan, and Serena, with Chris behind the camera.
(Photo by Chris Neate)*

Also on August 6, a trip to Opabin Pass didn't quite go as planned, and issues such as everyone having the right gear and staying together were reviewed at the evening gathering. According to the leaders, it's “experiences like these that provide valuable learning opportunities in these camps. Lessons learned—even by old-timers!”

On the last day, Chris, Cheri, Joisan and Serena went on a hunt for the elusive Crystal Cave on an old trail off to the side of Lake O'Hara. They found the mouth of the cave, admired the rock crystals and even discovered a few bolted sport climbing routes further along the trail.

On the last night, the leaders said they "hogged the stage" but in fact the entire group (except for Abe, Caroline, Tara and Josh, who had to leave early) joined in for recitations, skits, songs, "20 questions" and limericks, knowing something special had been created that week.

And finally, Sandy and Roxanne ended the trip with a last entry in the logbook: a visit to Abbot Pass, which brings this report full circle.

The stories shared over all the many years of sheltering in Abbot Pass Hut, as well as our own week at Elizabeth Parker Hut in 2022, are the building blocks of this community and they are more long-lasting than any piece of mortar.

Participants: Lisa Bacon, Geoff Bennett, Joisan Fairwell, Dorothy ("Dotter") Field, Abe Johnson, Chad Katunar, Fred Katunar, George Lum, Elizabeth ("Liz") Martinson, Wade Martinson, Michael McIlvaney, Chris Neate, Roger Painter, Shaun Peck, Serena Polt, Caroline Shannon, Tara Sharpe, Jay Simpson, Lisa Simpson, Josh Slatkoff, Roxanne Stedman, Sandy Stedman, Cheri Van Patten, and Cedric Zala

Leaf-Peeping in the Rockies

Scott Collins

September 24 to October 4, 2022

A trip event was posted on the ACCVI Discourse website in mid-September but as this was off the books (i.e., never posted to the ACCVI schedule, nor was any ACC waiver ever involved) and was posted by yours truly, savvy members probably knew no climbing would be involved. And as few details were provided, no one ever signed up. So, last fall, your erstwhile trip leader led this event solo.

The outward journey involved a motel stop in Salmon Arm, then Mount Revelstoke National Park (ostensibly to pick up a park's pass) before arriving at the Ribbon Creek Youth Hostel in the Kananaskis (where one now must purchase a conservation pass for each day or part-day spent in the provincial parks; it is even more expensive than a national park's pass).

For those of you who don't know, Mount Revelstoke is accessible by car such that the roughly 1300 metre elevation gain over 26 kilometers between the start

and the parking lot below the summit does not have to be gained on foot. Having said that, I am told that the summit is also accessible to those with about 1.5 hours of free time, and a suitable bicycle, from Revelstoke. Also, there is a more direct trail from base to summit for those with nothing to do for the entire day...as yours truly was in transit, I opted for using my car, while my inexpensive CCM hybrid bicycle weighs a ton and is suitable for nothing...

There was no leaf-peeping involved at least as far as alpine larch were concerned, while most of the renowned, sub-alpine flowers had gone by when I visited (September 25th). Here blueberries and huckleberries were reasonably abundant, but no evidence of brer' bruin was seen. Apparently, they are too busy raiding orchards and fruit trees in the valley below this time of year. I enclose a distant shot of Mount Begbie only to prove I walked to the summit (and perhaps an additional two to three kilometers towards Miller Lake trending on contour and then downhill) before returning to my vehicle and navigating the roads ahead.



*Mount Begbie from near the summit of Mount Revelstoke.
(Photo by Scott Collins)*

I arrived in the Kananaskis Sunday evening around 5:00 p.m. and was blithely informed by parks staff that I had to pay for Sunday as well as the following five days and so was required to purchase an annual pass at the cost of \$90.00 + GST. Ouch!

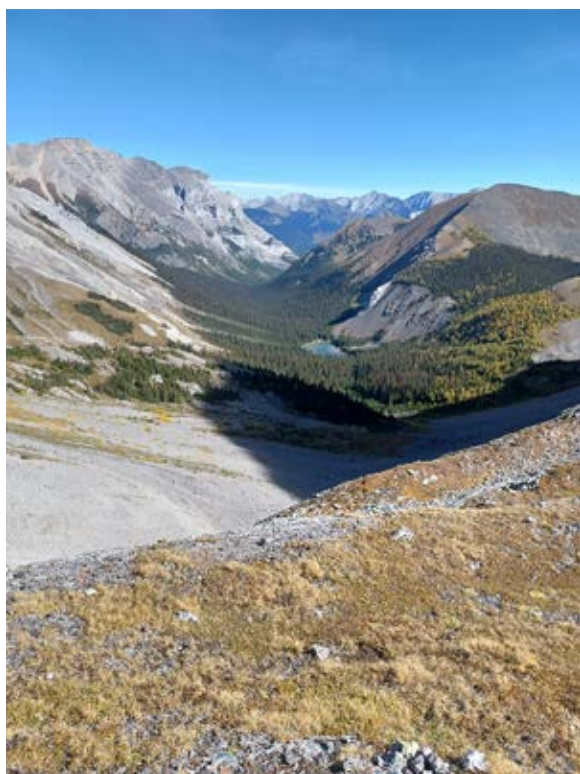
The following day involved a hike with my brother (who lives in Calgary) up to Rummel Lake off the Smith Dorrien Road that neither of us had done when we were much younger. This is a nice hike reminiscent of the much more popular Chester Lake trail where in both cases, there is an upper valley to explore, dotted with seasonal tarns. However, at this late date one of the tarns was just a puddle, while the other had dried up completely, though a residual trickle of water was sighted below both lakes and the last of a summer snow patch remained just below the col between this valley and the next. Photos typical of the area are enclosed.



*Above Rummel Lake.
(Photo by Scott Collins)*



*Hiking back to Rummel Lake.
(Photo by Scott Collins)*



*View over col towards Lost Lake.
(Photo by Scott Collins)*

The following day was originally set aside for a boot fitting in Canmore (of which more later), but since the weather was nice and scheduled to change on Thursday this was rescheduled and yours truly went on two half-day hikes instead.

Apparently, an aficionado had been recently interviewed by the local press in Calgary at some point about where to



*Arethusa Cirque.
(Photo by Scott Collins)*

go view larches – other than the Lake Louise and Moraine Lake area which are usually over-run with leaf peepers. I heard about this second- or third hand but apparently when pressed on this point, the interviewee mentioned Highwood Pass and Chester Lake. Obviously, our choice of Rummel Lake, in hindsight, was fortunate.



*Troll Falls.
(Photo by Scott Collins)*

As for the Highwood Pass area, I opted for nearby Arethusa Cirque just past the pass on the south side, but it was clear that everyone in Calgary had received the above message as the parking lots for both, especially at Highwood Pass proper, were overflowing - on a weekday!

I can highly recommend this short circuit (and nearby Little Arethusa Peak) for those with a half day or so to spend in the area. It is a larger cirque and more interesting than its more famous neighbour to the north (Ptarmigan Cirque).

After this I opted for a short hike near the hostel to nearby Marmot and Troll falls to round out the day. On the way back I took an alternate route to discover some folks with telescopes, and big cameras etc., set up along the Kananaskis River involved with the migrating raptor count.

The third day was spent on a significantly longer hike (circa 22 kilometers return) in Banff National Park to Taylor Lake and the most southern, sub-summit of Panorama Ridge. Though this is a popular hike, it is far less visited than its more famous neighbors immediately to the north. Taylor Lake is reminiscent of Lake Louise but without the famous Mounts Victoria and Lefroy as backdrops. The valley below Panorama Ridge features two small lakes and loads of larches, much larger in area than the famous Larch Valley above Moraine Lake. An unmaintained but good trail leads up to the first lake, while the second is accessible by open country travel above the first.



*Taylor Lake and Mount Bell (NW Peak).
(Photo by Scott Collins)*



*The other Larch Valley.
(Photo by Scott Collins)*



*First Lake (+ lens flare).
(Photo by Scott Collins)*

Panorama Ridge itself is accessed on the eastern side of this valley – we crossed the drainage at the lowest, open point following someone else's GPS track (I was hiking up with a Japanese couple to Taylor Lake and then a Japanese mother and her son to the top of the ridge as I was solo). Evidently, that is all we were doing as only the faintest of treads was evident.

Higher up on the ridge I located an old but well graded trail that went by an abandoned cabin site. I am certain this is the old high level, warden/packer's trail that used to circumnavigate Panorama Ridge from the Coronation Valley to the northwest all the way to Boom Lake and was marked on older National Topographic System maps. Anyhow, the sub-summit is easily accessible by game trail up the open east ridge from this trail near the cabin site. We descended steep, heather/grassy slopes from the sub-summit to reach the second lake and took the valley route back down to Taylor Lake.

The next day dawned cloudy and eventually it rained, rather heavily, at least in the front ranges. I spent Thursday morning with ski boot fitters in Canmore, eventually locating a lighter set of touring boots. I also stopped by the ACC national office beforehand, asking about renewing my membership given my uncertain

future. Rather than backtrack to the Kananaskis to stay at the hostel again, I continued to my next destination Invermere – a possible part of my uncertain future. On the way I played tourist and briefly toured Marble Canyon and visited the Paint Pots in Kootenay National Park (KNP); the trail through the ochre fields was in poor shape; I got ochre all over my hiking shoes before reaching the pots/spring proper.

On arriving in Invermere I tried to arrange for some hiking in the Purcells for the next two days but to no avail. Instead, on Friday I drove up Toby Creek, past Panorama as far as my Civic would allow (the Earl Grey Pass trailhead with Argenta, BC only 70 kilometers away by foot/cable car crossings) and then visited with a property manager in the Fairmont Hot Springs area to try and line up a vacation/short-term rental for this winter – uncertain future still pending.

On Saturday, I went to the Kindersley Pass/Sinclair Creek trailheads above Radium Hot Springs hoping to hook-up with at least three other individuals for this circuit – as required by KNP bear-friendly regulations. After waiting until 10 a.m. I encountered no one of like mind and thus set-off for distant Floe Lake further inside KNP. When I arrived at the parking lot it was overflowing and so I



*Floe Lake at (local) sunset.
(Photo by Scott Collins)*

headed up to the lake, about 11 kilometers and circa 1000 metres away.

I reflected that the last time I had visited this valley was in 1977 (i.e., 45 years ago!) as part of a hike from Floe Lake to Lake O'Hara on the Great Divide trail, which I completed along with some friends from Palliser Pass at the southern tip of Banff National Park to Jasper townsite that summer. The character of this trail has completely changed due to forest fires which swept much of the Vermillion valley, as recently as 2018. The entire approach is quite open now, with the trail climbing far above Floe creek for the duration of the hike. Only upon reaching the final headwall and climbing most of the way up to Floe Lake does one leave the open slopes behind.

I arrived at Floe Lake after 3.5 hours with the sun just dipping behind the Rockwall and so had to basically turn around and hike back out. The return trip (circa three hours) was not without incident but that is a tale best left for only the morbidly curious. I arrived back in Invermere in time for a late dinner at the local A&W as the sun finally set for real.



*Last larches seen.
(Photo by Scott Collins)*



*Buttercups in September!
(Photo by Scott Collins)*

in Osoyoos before returning to the island on Monday October 3. This was strategically planned to avoid any weekend/holiday traffic into Vancouver. The plan was spectacularly successful, to the point where our members may wish to consider the timing of trips to the mainland with this in mind? Of course, it does help that I am retired. The only downside to this approach was dense smoke heading up from near Princeton to Manning Park which had blown in from northern Washington State. Not only was it unpleasant to breathe it was also quite difficult to see oncoming traffic etc.

Mont Albert – Parc National De La Gaspésie

Mike Hubbard

September 28, 2022

For the denouement, I drove south to Cranbrook on Sunday and picked up Highway 3, with an overnight stop

This past fall Colleen and I took a road trip in Quebec to explore the Gaspésie area and to enjoy the colours of the

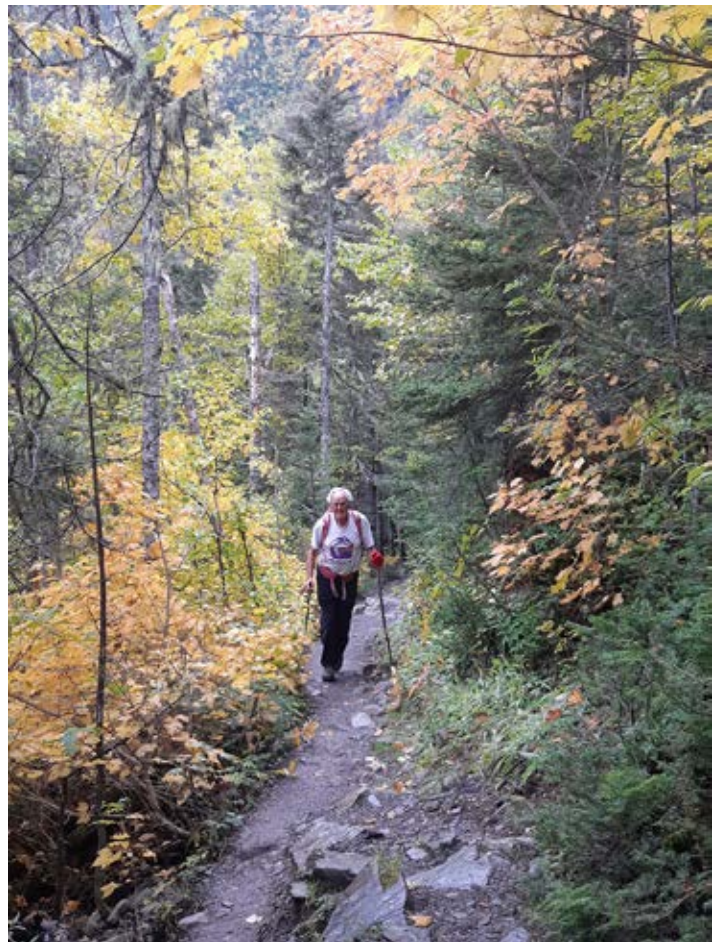
season. After four days of sight seeing and museum tours in Quebec City, followed by a long drive, we were ready for some exercise. On the 28th after a brisk swim in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and a comfortable night in Motel Manoir sur Mer, Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, we headed into the Chic-Choc Mountains thinking of climbing Mount Jacques-Cartier which at 1,268 metres is the tallest mountain in the Canadian Appalachians. However, Hurricane Fiona had just gone through and although we had missed it, the forecast for the 28th was for showers. The ground was well soaked and the forest somewhat battered. Looking at the map we saw a lesser summit, the north summit of Mount Albert, 1088 metres, with an easily accessible trail of 12.6 kilometers round trip from the park headquarters and the rather luxurious looking Gîte du Mont Albert. What better way, we thought, to celebrate the life of our old friend and section member, Albert Hestler, who died on August 5th 2022 than to climb his namesake mountain.



The Mountain.
(Photo by Colleen Casting)

Whilst purchasing our National Park pass the ranger told us the trail was difficult and that with the forecast a gentler hike up the Saint Anne River to Mount Olivine would be his recommended trip. I was not to be deterred, however, and knew Albert too would have wanted to go for his namesake. I managed to persuade Colleen to, at least, attempt it. The trail was well marked and after about an hour we came to a view point with a splendid view of the Gîte and surrounding hills. It was to be our last view for soon we were into the cloud with intermittent rain. Plodding on we were hoping to see some of the woodland caribou which frequent the area but apart from a family of grouse and one unidentifiable pile of scat which we thought might be from a moose with loose bowels there was no sign of wildlife and few other hikers.

After three moist hours we reached the summit and were pleasantly surprised to find a modest hut where a young couple from Montreal were already enjoying



The Mont Albert trail.
(Photo by Colleen Casting)



The view of Gîte du Mont Albert.
(Photo by Mike Hubbard).

lunch. The shelter and company were both very welcome. The summit is well signed with placards showing the wonderful views that can be seen on a good day, but it was not to be.

Whilst one could continue on with a round tour of 17.8 kilometers joining up and returning on the Appalachian International Trail, the weather was deteriorating so we elected to return the way we had come. The way down took the same three hours as the way up but, as usual, seemed longer and was hard on the knees. We were relieved to be back at the car and even more relieved to be back at the Motel Manoir for a hot shower, beer and



*On the summit.
(Photo by Colleen Casting)*



*The view there could have been.
(Photo by Colleen Casting)*

steak. Not the most spectacular hike of our trip but one on which we thought a lot of our old friend, Albert, and his many travels and adventures. It would have been good to have him along and I know he would have enjoyed it – especially the shower, beer and steak part!

Participants: Mike Hubbard and Colleen Kasting



DISTANT PLACES



Hiking on La Gomera, Canary Islands

Liz Williams

January, 2022

La Gomera has a strange and quiet soul. It lies mid-Atlantic, a chunk of corrugated volcanic rock five degrees north of the Tropic of Cancer, rising vertically to just short of 5000 feet. This may not sound much but the sheer walls of rock belie the figure of a mere 376 square kilometers for the entire island. How are these many knife-back ridges, ravines, clefts, barrancos, and terraces measured in terrain mapping? Apparently, they're not: it's island length by width. Yet it takes hours of driving to get from one valley to another along precipitous hairpin bend roads with extreme drop-offs.



*San Sebastian (the capital, pop. <10,000) from the ferry.
(Photo by Liz Williams)*

The earliest inhabitants came from North Africa, likely 1000-500 BC, possibly from the Ghomara tribe of the Rif region. The 'Guanches', akin to the Berbers, were herders of cattle and goats, prior to the arrival of the Spanish in the 15th century who developed terraced agriculture. Today there's barely a slope anywhere without signs of terracing, very few being maintained or productive. How they ever had enough water to grow food is a mystery.

Now, the island is strangely quiet. Hamlets appear shuttered and small towns almost abandoned. No-one walks the narrow streets except for German tourists. Occasionally there's a bar open or a panaderia. Yet everywhere is tidy, the roads are superbly maintained, long tunnels run through the mountains, the

infrastructure of the ‘miradors’ or viewpoints, of which there are many, is astounding. Is this the day after the bomb? Or the day after the Covid?

The island is dominated centrally by the Garajonay National Park, 40 square kilometers of magical forested wilderness intertwined with numerous walking trails. The ravines and wetter north slopes have laurisilva trees; the drier ridges have tree heathers and wax myrtle, plus many sub-tropical cacti and succulents. From the miradors one sees gigantic volcanic plugs, viscous lava that never made it out of the vents. I’ve seen a few birds – the Canarian chiffchaff, Falcon, Chaffinch, the European Robin, the Laurel Pigeon, and the Barbary Partridge to name a few.



Laurisilva forest.
(Photo by Liz Williams)



Roque de Agando (1250m).
(Photo by Liz Williams)

A whistling language (Silbo) was developed on La Gomera for people to communicate across the steep valleys and barrancos. Originally brought by the Guanches from North Africa, the piercing whistles can be heard up to four

kilometers away. Today Silbo is taught in primary schools and contains four consonants and two vowels. I was lucky enough to attend a Silbo demonstration!

An increasingly popular sport is the salto del pastor canario, the Shepherd’s Leap. In the mountainous terrain, herders used tall poles with metal tips and literally pole-vaulted down the steep slopes.



Silbo whistling.
(Photo by Liz Williams)

Today there are over twenty makers of goat cheese on this tiny island, a prime Gomeran delicacy being Almogrote, a kind of dip made with over-cured goat cheese. Very drinkable Gomeran vinos blancos or vinos tintos are a few euros a bottle. Gomera also produces bananas, palm honey, and excellent Canarian spuds.



Glass Mirador.
(Photo by Liz Williams)

Tourism is clearly the economic highlight and many Gomerans have left the island for more lucrative pastures. I was told by a park official that perhaps there are 10,000 people left now, from its heyday of 50-60,000 early last century. I can vouch for the beauty of La Gomera, despite its heart-stopping roads and vertiginous trails!

Participants: Liz Williams and Graham Maddocks

The Land of the Snow Leopard: An Aborted Adventure

Liz Williams

October-November, 2022

The trip had been planned months ahead with a stellar Kathmandu company, Adventure Glacier, used many times before. Four of us ACCVI folk arrived at various times in Kathmandu – Ken, Liz, Michael, and Diane – and were joined by two experienced others, Dave from Alberta and Kaz from Poland. We'd heard bad news about the weather, but the last gasp of the monsoon had finally abated: we had clear skies and a lot of hope.

It takes five days to reach the start of the Upper Dolpa region, at Shey Phoksundo Lake. First, we flew to Nepalgunj, close to the Indian border for an overnighter. The next flight had to be done very early morning before cloud or wind got up. We took an 18-seater Czech aircraft, which wended its way through mountain valleys up to Juphal at 2500 metres. The L410 requires only 445 metres to take off, and half that to land, which was just as well given the drop off at each end of the runway.



*Arrival at Juphal.
(Photo by Liz Williams)*

After a hearty breakfast in Juphal we all got our foreheads anointed with the red tika between the eyebrows, said to retain energy in the human body. We then set off downhill to the Thuli Bheri river and the village of Dunai, a three hour walk to our first camp. By this time our entourage included two guides, two cooks, two dishwashers, three 'pony' handlers and 11 ponies.



*Applying the Tika.
(Photo by Liz Williams)*



*Our ponies.
(Photo by Liz Williams)*

From Dunai we followed the Shey Phoksundo river north for three days, stopping at the villages of Chhepka and Chunuwar. We hiked on rocky trails through pine and cedar forests, crossed heart-stopping landslides that fell directly into the torrent below, and climbed steep hill trails with drop-offs into oblivion. One day we saw a herd of wild yaks, and a few days later many Gray Langur monkeys on the far side of the river.

We climbed eventually to 3600 metres at Shey Phoksundo Lake. Shey Phoksundo park is the largest conservation region in Nepal, and reputedly has the highest density



*Gray Langur monkey.
(Photo by Liz Williams)*

of Snow Leopards. As we arrived at the wide valley before the lake, we saw many lammergeiers, or bearded vultures, so called because they have lightly feathered heads, unlike other vultures. While the days were warm and sunny the nights became bitterly cold. We heard stories that the passes were 'unpassable' for porters (some were coming back with severe frostbite), let alone for the ponies we relied on to carry all the gear.



*Dave and Diane above Shey Phoksundo Lake.
(Photo by Liz Williams)*

On arrival at the lake itself we visited the Thasang Tsholing Monastery, a Bon religion monastery dating from the 15th century. We saw Blue Sheep, so called because of their sometimes slate-blue colour, on a nearby hillside. Blue Sheep are the primary prey of Snow Leopards, but



*Chorten and prayer flag.
(Photo by Liz Williams)*

we saw no action in that regard! We spent two full days at the lake, exploring the route further north, and hoping for good news, but we learnt that we could not make it over the first pass, Nangda La, at 5250 metres. The realistic option was to head back to Dunai and take an alternate route to Dho Tarap to maximize the days of the trek.



*Chortens at Shey Phoksundo Lake.
(Photo by Liz Williams)*

On the second day at Shey Phoksundo Lake I came down with a nauseous stomach and zero energy. We set off the next day back to Chepka and it was all I could do to drag myself behind my companions, with one of our guides looking after me. Reluctantly, I knew I should end my participation in the trek once we were back in Dunai, where there was road access back to Juphal. The two days it took to return to Dunai were challenging to say the least, but arrangements were made for me to get back to Kathmandu.

That was another adventure, with a crazy jeep ride up the road from Hell. First, the driver fiddled with his phone

to set high-volume Nepali rock music blaring from the dashboard. Then he drove the precipitous hairpins while alternating clapping both hands to the music (no hands on the wheel) and searching on his phone. Huge rocks littered the road. At one point he had to reverse to get round a hairpin with a sheer drop-off behind. My life flashed before my eyes. My only consolation was that he'd done this before, and survived. It took three days to get back to Kathmandu, waiting for a seat on the one-flight-per-day bush plane.

Two weeks later I met up with the rest of the gang back in Kathmandu. They'd successfully made it to Dho Tarap and made a loop back. I'm looking forward to seeing their photos!



Shaggy yak.
(Photo by Liz Williams)

Participants: Liz Williams, Ken Wong, Michael McIlvaney, Diane Bernard, Dave Hobson (Alberta), and Kaz Ber (Poland)

Walking in the Western Ghats

Liz Williams

December, 2022

The Western Ghats were probably formed 150 million years ago with the break-up of Gondwana, when India broke away from Madagascar. The mountain range runs down the west side of the Indian sub-continent for about 1600 kilometers, from the state of Gujarat down to Kerala in the southwest, forming the western edge of the Deccan Plateau. Covering 160,000 square kilometers, the area is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and is one of the world's

biodiversity hotspots. The range intercepts the monsoon rains that sweep in from the west in late summer, and forms a catchment area that drains almost 40% of India into the Bay of Bengal. The area includes about forty national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, and forest reserves which contain many endemic species as well as at least 325 globally threatened species.



Map of the Western Ghats. From naturedocumentaries.org

I had six days hiking in the Western Ghats, four from Munnar, the tea-growing centre of the universe it would seem, and two out of Periyar National Park, all in the state of Kerala. TATA, a huge conglomerate Indian company



Tea Plantation.
(Photo by Liz Williams)

holds 56,000 hectares of picturesque tea estates around Munnar. My guide spoke highly of the company that pays 400 rupees a day to pickers (about \$6.50 CAD) but provides free housing, schools, creches, and medical coverage. While the tea plantations have displaced much of the original 'Shola' forest/grassland ecosystem, I gathered that the tea plantations are low on pesticide use and provide habitat for birds and reptiles, as well as for Sambar and Barking deer – food for tigers in the forest.



Spiny Lizard.
(Photo by Liz Williams)

'Shola' means 'a dark, damp grove of stunted montane forest' in the local tribal language. From vantage points across the landscape one sees these groves, large and small in the valleys between the undulating montane grassland. One day I hiked solely in the Shola forest, and saw Grey-headed Canary fly-catchers, Oriental White-eyes, Pied Bushchats, not to mention the endangered, endemic Nilgiri Palm Squirrel - one of the world's smallest squirrels at a mere 40 grams, as well as the Malabar Shield-tailed snake! Most of the day was in white-out with low hot humid cloud cover.



Shola forest. (Photo by Liz Williams)

Originally, I'd hoped to hike up Anamudi, 2,695 metres, the highest point in South India. Anamudi has been off limits for some years now, so I had to take second best, a hike up Meesapulimala at 2640 metres. Meesa means moustache, puli means leopard, mala means hill, hence the mountain looks like a whiskered leopard from the southwest! Soon after leaving the top camp we saw a large herd of Nilgiri Tahr, akin to the sheep family, but with the agility of goats, again an endemic species. This was a small group hike and included a young woman from Mumbai. She and our guide could only communicate in English because she spoke Marathi, an Indo-Aryan language whereas he spoke Malayalam, a Dravidian language. India has close to 400 distinct languages, 22 of which are designated 'official' in the constitution.



Meesapulimala grassland.
(Photo by Liz Williams)

The two hikes I did in Periyar were in moist evergreen and deciduous montane forest with occasional grassland openings. True hot steamy tropical jungle with tons of leeches! We heard wild elephants, saw many recent tiger prints, viewed the Malabar Giant Squirrel (about three



Malabar Giant Squirrel. (Photo by Liz Williams)

feet long) and saw many birds including the Great Indian Hornbill (about three feet high!).



Great Indian Hornbill.
(Photo by Liz Williams)

All the hiking was hot, sweaty, and steep but not challenging. It's always fascinating to be in a different environment and ecosystem, and the Western Ghats were especially rewarding for being biologically diverse and holding many endemic species.

Participant: Liz Williams (solo)



NOTES FROM THE SECTION



ACCVI History from 1935 to 1939

Lindsay Elms

The history of the ACCVI has been updated on the website to cover the years 1935 to 1939.

Each year the ACCVI started off with a winter meeting to discuss trips for the coming spring and summer and plan the annual banquet in March often celebrated at the Empress Hotel.

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There was also a meeting at the end of the year to elect the new chair and the executive. The ACCVI offered monthly trips to the local mountains around Victoria throughout the year as well as overnight trips to Mount Maxwell on Saltspring Island, Mount Tzouhalem near Duncan and Mount Arrowsmith and Cokely. Unfortunately, Mount Finlayson was the scene of a fatal accident in 1937 when a Victoria teenager fell to his death. The club's hut at the Lake of the Seven Hills in Sooke was well frequented throughout the year



with regular camps at Easter and a larger one in the summer. There was often a camp over the New Year's. Members also attended the ACC general summer camps in the Rockies where some of them graduated to active membership on the designated mountains. Claude Harrison was the section chair during this period and was supported by Gordon Cameron followed by Fred Maurice as treasurer. They were ably assisted by an executive committee of men and women. Throughout these summers the surveyors Norman Stewart, Alfred Slocomb

and William Moffat surveyed Strathcona Park and were duly assisted by many local men from the Courtenay region to pack supplies to the camps and help carry equipment to the summits.

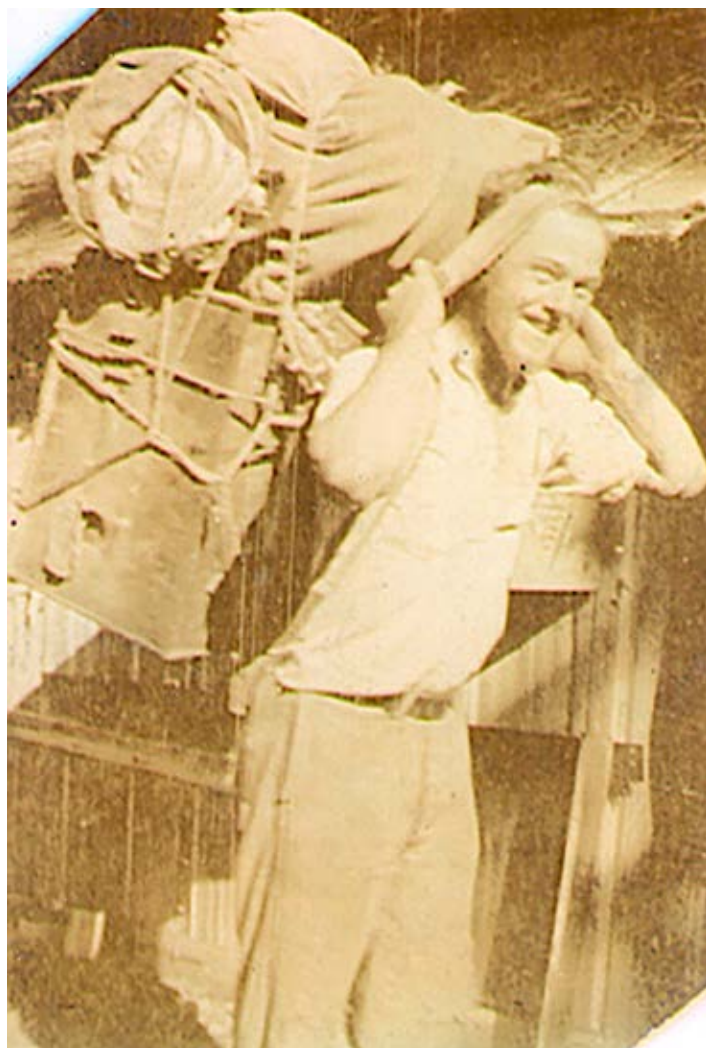


William Moffat surveying on the summit of Elkhorn South Mountain 1937. (Photographer unknown)

The results were the 1:50,000 topographical maps we use today. There is a photographic record of their trips in the park recorded within. In 1936, Stewart met with members of the Comox District Mountaineering Club and came up with a list of names for features on the Forbidden Plateau and the glacier region and submitted them to the Geographic Board of Canada of which 109 were accepted. Unfortunately, indigenous names were not included. Also in 1936, Adrian Paul and Geoffrey Capes attempted the



William Moffat and George Colwell on the summit of Kings Peak 1936. (Photographer unknown)



Dan Harris heading out with camp supplies 1937. (Photographer unknown)

Rooster's Comb but were rebuffed, however, Capes, Sid Williams and Roger Schjelderup succeeded in reaching the summit in 1937 a day after Norman Stewart and Dan Harris.



*The surveyors base camp on the Rooster's Comb 1937.
(Photographer unknown)*



*Jack Horbury of the southeast
summit of Mount Colonel Foster 1936.
(Photographer unknown)*

Neither party knew that the mountain was first ascended in 1913/14. The Rooster's Comb was officially renamed Golden Hinde in 1939 due to the effort of Norman Stewart. Alfred Slocomb and Jack Horbury climbed to the Southeast summit of Mount Colonel Foster also in 1936.

The congenial Eugene Croteau had a camp at Croteau Lake every summer on the Forbidden Plateau where he offered bed and food and a guide for those who wanted to climb the mountains including Mount Albert Edward. It was a popular destination for club members as well as overseas guests. A bus service from Victoria to Courtenay offered a cheap and quick way for people to reach the base of the Dove Creek trail where pack horses were ready to carry them and supplies up to the camp. Guests often stayed up to ten days. With the Forbidden Plateau Lodge at the base of Mount Becher, skiing became a popular winter pastime. Club member came up and stayed at the lodge as well as the Comox District Mountaineering Club (CDMC) cabin near the top of Mount Becher and took advantage of the ski-slopes carved through the trees.



*Skiers ascending Breakneck Hill
on their way to the Becher Cabin.
(Photographer unknown)*

In 1938, the inaugural island ski race was run on the mountain and Canadian champions and Olympic representatives Gertie Wepsala and Peter Vajda set the pace. In January 1938, Don and Phyliss Munday came to the island and with local climbers Rex Gibson, Ethne Gale, Dick Idiens and Len Rossiter made the first winter ascent of Mount Albert Edward via Croteau's camp on the plateau.

*First it rained
And then it blew
And then it friz
And then it snow
And then it fogged
And then it thew
And very shortly after then
It blew and friz and snow again!*

~ Anonymous

The Charles Turner Award: Chasing the Vancouver Island 6000'ers

**Barry Hansen, Rich Priebe, and Eryn
Tombu Haigh**

2022 was a big year for the three of us finishing our 53 peaks over 6000 feet. The Alpine Club of Canada Vancouver Island Section recognizes this achievement with the Charles Turner Vancouver Island 6000'ers Award (<https://accvi.ca/programs/vancouver-island-6000/>). Charles Turner was the first to complete what he thought were all of the 6000-foot peaks on Vancouver Island. Originally there were 46, but with better GPS and surveying, the list was expanded to 53 6000'er peaks.

All three of us completed them in August. With the best intentions to finish on the Comb together, we didn't make it happen. Weather, illness, and scheduling hindered our best laid plans. And although we were a little bit competitive, it wasn't a cut-throat game of mountaineering. In fact, we all repeated a peak or two (or seven in Barry's case) to help each other across the finish line. Rich completed his 53rd mid-August with a solo trip to the Comb and Golden Hinde's Northwest summit, becoming the 6th person to complete the list. Barry was a



*Eryn, Barry and Rich on top of Syd Watts
Peak, the First Known Winter Ascent.
(Photo by Barry Hansen)*

week later with Augerpoint Mountain and Mount Mitchell. And Eryn was four days afterwards on Mount Harmston.

We tried to think of the best way to write about our 6000'ers all together and figured answering the same questions but from our own perspective would work well. So here goes:

First of the 53 climbed:

(B) Mount Albert Edward. Isn't that everyone's first?? The last time I climbed it I hadn't even heard of the 6000'ers project but five years later I climbed my final peak, Mount Mitchell, which, ironically, is right beside Mount Albert Edward.

(E) Mount Albert Edward as a Grade 10 winter camping trip on snow in rain and mist. It was a five-day slog. Hard to imagine doing Mount Albert Edward as anything more than a day trip now!

(R) Mount Albert Edward. My son was eight months old when my wife and I took him out. I quickly realized his pack didn't have any mosquito net, which proved disastrous. I spent more time brushing those pests off him than enjoying the hike.

Best multi-day trip:

(E) Probably the Filberg Range Traverse where we climbed Slocomb Peak (okay Slocomb Peak was wet and gross with no view), Rambler Junior (amazing), El Piveto Mountain's Conquistador Ridge, Ptarmigan Peak and Ptarmigan Pinnacles, Mount Haig-Brown, and a sunset climb up Mount Cobb. We finished with a long bushwhack out the Cervus Valley. As the only girl in a group of five, I was cut no slack, as expected. We were gone 4.5 days. It was purely enjoyable, the company was amazing, and the weather (other than the Slocomb Peak day) was fantastic. We camped on the shoulder of Rambler Peak, on top of El Piveto Mountain, on Ptarmigan Ridge, and at the base of Mount Cobb. I think our lowest camp was about 1600 metres.

(B) That's a tough one. So many amazing multi-day trips. But I'd have to go with my first, which was an eight-day trip starting at Mount Washington and ending at the Flower Ridge trailhead. What made it especially epic was that we really didn't know what we were doing but we did it anyways. I learned a lot on that trip and a lot more since. We climbed eight 6000'ers along the way, including my first Island Qualifier (Mount Harmston).

(R) Probably Septimus/Rosseau/Misthorns/Margaret. We did this in two trips and just loved being on the high ridges with lots of exposures and fun scrambling.

Most dreaded and/or anticipated peak:

(R) Warden Peak. I was primarily a solo hiker, which put



*Barry standing on one of the Misthorns
with Margaret Glacier behind.
(Photo by Richard Priebe)*

a cap on pushing into harder terrain. Then I met Barry, which opened up the option for ropes. Warden Peak was our first trip together and I spent a lot of time staring at photos of the summit block and getting psyched for some climbing. Turns out we hardly used the ropes on that trip, but it was the start of good things to come.

(E) I **SHOULD** have dreaded Warden Peak ... if only I knew. Weather was garbage and we got off route a lot. It was my first hike 10 weeks after having my son via cesarian and I was anything but in prime hiking/climbing condition. Naively, we made many poor decisions that day, but we did get our summit.

(B) Most dreaded was Crown Mountain because of all the negative reports I'd heard about it (mostly about it being an endless slog). But other than some road access issues that briefly delayed the trip, it was actually a fun day trip (minus the mosquito horde and pollen). But no, I wouldn't do it again.

Most anticipated trip was Mount Colonel Foster because, well, it's Mount Colonel Foster: imposing, intimidating, and iconic. Rich and I decided to traverse its five summits



*Rich and Barry all smiles after a successful Mount Colonel
Foster traverse. (Photo by Barry Hansen)*

from south to north, which was an exhausting but exhilarating 16-hour day.

Favourite alpine season and why:

(B) I love them all in unique ways, but I'd have to go with early summer for its long days, abundant water, and pleasant temps. The only thing I don't like about summer are the bugs and when it's too hot. Heat melts me!!

(E) Summer, HOT summer! I love the heat, swimming in tarns, long days, and watching Barry suffer.

(R) I love late fall. "It's the last sunny warm day of the year," we say while hiking in a t-shirt. Only for the next week to do the same, it seems like each trip is a bonus trip.

Most amazing view:

(R) Elkhorn South is pretty nondescript but two thirds of the way up the views looking up at Elkhorn Mountain and across at Mount Colonel Foster are amazing. I love standing under any tower peak, looking way up. Those are the best views.

(B) It's hard to beat the view looking north from the summit of Golden Hinde on a clear day. But I've had so many breathtaking views from so many of the 53 peaks. How does one pick??

(E) Anything with an inversion, moody clouds, a sunrise or a sunset, provided I'm where I want to be... Two of my friends and I enjoyed sunset and the alpenglow on the ridge of Elkhorn Mountain on a day trip, which was so stunning, except that we still had another 4 hours out to the parking lot.

Least favourite terrain:

(E) Logs. Either river crossings, or on the route, clambering over them like a beached seal. They're awful.

(B) It's a toss-up between descending steep, exposed, unprotected snow slopes and battling dense bush along creeks or through slide paths. PS – I love crossing logs. But not as much as I love watching Eryn cross logs.

(R) Cut blocks! They are full of obstacles: slippery logs, prickly bushes, and bushy new growth.

Term most used in the alpine:

(B) "Does it go?" "Where are you?!"

(R) "Look at that!"

(E) ... probably a profanity, knowing me.

Favourite thing about hiking with each other:

(B) Experiencing everything together: the agony, the ecstasy, the laughs, the stories, the conversations, the teasing, the sunrises and sunsets, and the starry nights (to name a few). A very unique and deep bond is forged between people who spend a lot of time in the alpine together.

(E) The fact there seems to be no judgment in the alpine. Your most intimate life problems are never an issue or a hindrance. I love the ease in which we get along and can make jokes. And the fact Barry will re-do peaks with me and is just as happy the second, and the third time on a mountain. Rich is great to hike with because he's patient. I was lucky enough to do a winter trip with him up Sid Williams (okay not quite to the summit) and Syd Watts, where his confidence on steep snow really helped me realize my abilities with winter mountaineering.

(R) I kick the steps and Barry carries the rope. That's a pretty sweet gig. Also, I like hiking with others so I can borrow their stuff that I forgot or was too cheap to buy. Being in the mountains with others and you spend a lot of time together, the conversation revolves around the most used terms (see previous question) but often leads to real-life conversations, which are always great. Note on hiking solo: I did 34 of the 6000'ers solo, which is a whole different experience: setting my own pace, taking responsibility for decisions, and digging into the internal motivation to keep going.



*Barry and Eryn relaxing in the sun after climbing the Ptarmigan Pinnacles.
Photo by Eryn Tombu Haigh)*

Most annoying thing about hiking with each other:

(E) Barry's snoring. Hands down, the best place to camp is as far away from his tent as you can get.

(B) Eryn complaining about my snoring. Rich's ability to pack up camp so fast.

(R) At the end of the hike, we open the back of the truck. I get changed into clean clothes, put on dry shoes, dump my stuff in the back and take a seat to get ready for the drive home only to see Barry hasn't even taken off his pack yet. I don't get what he's doing all that time??

Worst bushwhack:

(E) When Tiffany Cunha and I did Matchlee Mountain as a daytrip from the north basin. We timed it perfectly for the spring growth after the snow melt and had False Hellebore and Devils Club up to our tits, as we bashed our way over and under downfall. We didn't see our feet for ages as we trundled up the steep slope. We found a slightly better route down but still ended with Tiffany impaling herself with a branch. Best day ever.

(B) Soooooo many options but I'll have to go with Matchlee Mountain's north basin approach. Short but definitely not sweet.

(R) Shepherds Ridge. It was hot and I was in shorts. Somehow, I kept losing the ridge on my descent and going into the thickest bush. Oh, the scratches on the legs after that!!

Final peak and how it felt to be done:

(R) The Comb. Ok, this was the worst bushwhack as I went up the Wolf River. I got that route stuck in my head as a shortcut (not necessarily true). The karst was great and the views of the Comb and Golden Hinde's Northwest summit were amazing once I got up there. I remember sitting on top sending a quick message that I accomplished all 53! But I still had the huge bushwhack back out Wolf Creek ahead of me. Instead of accomplishment, I could hardly walk for weeks as I got terrible blisters on the heels. Not much of a victory lap.

(B) Mount Mitchell via its south ridge, which thankfully was more challenging than I anticipated. I climbed it with Quentin and we camped on the summit of Augerpoint Mountain. I brought some celebration wine and chocolate. It was a lovely ending to the project, but it also felt surreal. All the effort that went into completing the project had come to a conclusion. I was done. I felt satisfied, grateful, humbled, and was wondering what was next.

(E) Mount Harmston was my final peak. I hadn't planned for it to be my last one, but the fact it was made it not only my last 53, but also my last Island Qualifier. I had planned to climb it many times and as such a predominant peak on the Comox Valley skyline, it taunted me almost daily. With logging roads being closed in August, I had to rely on the kindness of a ranger

I knew to help me get access. Barry and I had a beautiful blue bird day from the Comox Glacier trailhead and we were on the summit in 7.5 hours (over the Glacier and almost over Mount Argus). We had a bit of creative route finding around the side of Argus Mountain where we down climbed these gorgeous slabs hanging over Milla Lake. Other than that, Mount Harmston is just a very large unremarkable pile of choss. But on the summit basking in the sun, the accomplishment felt pretty great. There was no wine or chocolate for me, but a cold beer when we got back to the truck.



*Barry overlooking Milla Lake and Mount Harmston.
(Photo by Eryn Tombu Haigh)*

And the question we always get asked: What's Next?

(B) More technical routes up specific peaks I've already climbed. And, of course, a number of peaks I haven't gotten to yet, including in western Strathcona Park, Alava Bates, Haihte Range, and other north island peaks. More lists are in the works!

(R) The nine peaks of Nine Peaks. Traverse the jagged peaks of Mackenzie Range. Kings Peak to Rambler Peak. Play around the Rugged Mountain area and hit up Alava Bates. I'd better stop listing peaks as there is so much more to go.

(E) Well, there's a few plans for the summer in the works. I've compiled my own list of things I want to climb on the island, lots of overlap with Rich and Barry. I also really want to get out with my son more. I'm hoping to get him up his first 6000'er this summer.



Robie Macdonald (1947-2022)

Paul Erickson



Robie (Rob) Macdonald, a long-time member of the section and one of the most accomplished Vancouver Island mountaineers, passed away peacefully at home on February 13.

It is hard to imagine a conversation about mountains and climbing on Vancouver Island that doesn't include his name.

His first climbing trip was to Elkhorn in 1974, and I still remember the look on Rob's face as we sat on the summit. He loved it all, the adventure, the challenge of finding a route, struggling through the bush and the obstacles in the way, all necessary for the goal of breaking into the alpine and climbing the peak. This was the beginning of a lifelong love affair that saw him climb all the major peaks on the Island. Many were first ascents.

One of these was Mt Bate in what is now referred to as the Alava-Bate Sanctuary. I had the good fortune to be with him when we first discovered this area. We had climbed Mount Alava from the west after a horrendous bushwhack

and difficult scrambling to get out of the Perry River Valley. After pulling to the top of Alava we were both awestruck (or gobsmacked Rob would have said) by our first view of Mt Bate and the stunningly beautiful Peter Lake surrounded by Mt Grattan and what looked like an obvious stone thumb. That sight pulled us back again and again and we eventually climbed all the peaks in the area including an ascent of Mt Bate from the outlet of Peter Lake.

There were many other first ascents on the Island for Rob. With his long-time climbing partner and friend, Rick Eppler, he explored and climbed mountains all over the island, but his name and Rick's are perhaps most associated with the mountains along Highway 4 past Sproat Lake. Adder Mtn, Cats Ears, Triple peak, Hidden Peak, Steamboat, Limestone twins and Fifty Forty and many more were all climbed, many for the first time, during Rob's exploratory efforts in this area.

Rob continued to hone his climbing skills through the 80s and 90s, and in addition to the many challenging climbs on the Island, he added many more on the mainland. He also set about climbing as many peaks as he could easily access in Roper and Steck's *Fifty Classic Climbs of North America*. He ticked off ascents of the Grand Teton, Forbidden Peak, Wolf's Head, Slesse northeast buttress, Mount Sir Donald, Bugaboo Spire, and Mount Waddington during this period.

As he got older, Rob never lost his love and joy of being in the mountains. In his later years he did more hiking than climbing but still loved the challenge of a difficult scramble preferably with a bit of exposure. He would always rate a trip or objective based on "time in the alpine". He travelled to Scotland many times to scramble the Highlands and Isle of Skye, and to Switzerland where he discovered the joys of Via Ferratas. During the last decade of his life, he spent a week each summer in Canmore working his way through Alan Kane's *Scrambles in the Canadian Rockies*.

He took up photography and spent more time on his outings recording the beauty he saw in the mountains and its wildlife and flora. Like everything else he did, he excelled, and his photos were eagerly awaited after a trip, with many making it into the Bushwhacker annuals. With all that he had going on in his life he still found time to edit and produce the ACCVI's *Island Bushwhacker Annuals* that are such an important part of the Section.

But mountains were not his only passion. Robie came to the Island in 1973 after completing his PhD at Dalhousie University, not to climb but for a Post Doctoral Fellowship position at the newly formed Ocean Chemistry section of the Institute of Ocean Sciences. Oil exploration in the Beaufort Sea had just started and there was a rush by the

Federal Government to obtain chemical, physical, and biological information on the continental shelf where exploratory drilling was taking place. This introduced Rob to arctic oceanography and ocean contaminants which became a central theme for much of his future research work. Over his 39-year career with Ocean Sciences as a research scientist, Rob became, to quote from the Federal Government website "*one of the world's leading marine geochemists. He won international respect and numerous medals and awards for his innovative and ground-breaking research using geochemistry to understand earth and ocean processes.*" His work has been published in over 180 peer-reviewed journal articles, numerous book chapters and reports, and one co-edited book on the organic carbon cycle in the Arctic Ocean. He also became an adjunct faculty member of the University of Manitoba where he took on graduate students of his own.

Rob officially retired from IOS in 2013 but he continued to publish and, through collaborations with scientists from all over the world, continued to follow his research interests. He derived a great deal of pleasure and satisfaction through his mentoring of graduate students at the University of Manitoba.

In 2019, in a fitting culmination to his stellar and productive scientific career, he was awarded the Order of Canada for having identified the effects contaminants have on northern marine ecosystems and on nearby Indigenous communities.

Family was important to Rob and no one more so than Julie, his life partner and frequent climbing and adventure companion.

With all that Rob accomplished in the mountains, in his research, and the awards and recognition he received, it was Rob the person that I admire the most. His insight, humour, companionship, compassion, and leadership were apparent and cherished by all who knew him. Rob could always be counted on to lighten any situation with one of what seemed like his endless supply of jokes. What gave him the most satisfaction and comfort was knowing that he had made a positive difference in the lives of those he knew. This recognition gave real meaning to his life. And though he always seemed a little surprised when being told that he had really helped or influenced someone's life or life choices, it was no surprise to those who knew him. He always put the well being of others above his own, whether with family, on an outing in the mountains or in his collaborations and joint publications with other scientists. This was true even towards the end when he would comfort his friends and family in their grief and sadness.

We had many discussions and musings on the important

things in life. One of these musings really resonated with me and is a good summary of how Rob viewed life:

“The universe makes the atoms of life only in supernovae. We are all stardust, billions of years old, living with borrowed materials. The universe loans these materials to us but will sooner or later take them all back. The gift you get to keep is the interest you make while using these atoms during your life. Invest wisely because that is all that will remain of you and even then, only for a while.”

Rob did invest wisely and the memories of all he accomplished and of the exceptional person he was are the gifts he left to all who knew him. He left the world with a smile.

His truly was a life well lived.

Albert Hestler (1933-2022)

Russ Moir



An early memory of my many times alongside Albert, has always etched a picture of him which holds him as a

hidden entertainer/ performer, as opposed to the more cerebral, serious minded Alpine adventurer seen by many (as he undoubtedly was).

On an ACCVI ski trip to the BC Interior, mid 1990s, our group settled into the lodge on the first evening with thoughts of what to spend long winter nights doing. Albert had his food stashed in a plywood box, along with a mysterious stick (emergency ski-pole ??). Quietly, in front of me he turned his box up, took out some string and assembled a ‘contraption’.

In seconds he was plucking away on his makeshift bass and suddenly, with Brian Money pumping up his squeeze box, we had ... our very own band in full view! It was good, no Bach preludes, but for a fun singalong of well know ditties it was unadulterated fun.

The following days of skiing were not too bad either.

Albert gave impressions of a more serious-minded chronicler of travels and observations on world cultures, as well as of his many widespread mountain exploits. His travels fill up several evenings of indulgent reading.

I learned to accept his quirky takes on situations and projects. None more than during his time along with myself, Rudy Brugger and Charles Turner, bashing away at renovating a collapsing hospital in Kampala, Uganda, to which all three of my ACC friends had foolishly volunteered to bend their elbows with. In our time there completing the project, Albert joyfully relished heading out to paddle his toes in Lake Albert on the distant DRC borders, to venture off with his mountain friends into Kenya to climb Mount Elgon (1600+ feet) with little pre-knowledge of what to expect, and then ... to disappear alone away to coastal Zanzibar. Somehow he returned safely to his dear family here in Victoria.

He was perpetually looking for adventure, for what was on the other side of the mountain, and as well to immerse himself in the cultures of the people he came across. So, Albert was, to all appearances, one of history’s rovers, a species becoming scarcer as travel becomes more fraught with violence and bureaucracy.

There is a large and varied record of his writings in ACCVI journals over the years, some going back to youthful tramps of long gone days. His litany of escapades speaks volumes of his adventurous spirit, of his urge to find out more of what makes the world tick.

We learned much from him on the joys of being interested in the world beyond our borders as well as of the simple pleasures of plodding around our own fair shores.

Namaste Albert, thanks for sharing your passions with us all.

2022 PHOTO CONTEST



Winter Activity (Winner)

Bunny Hill Uptrack. Photo: Martin Hofmann



Winter Activity (Honourable Mention)

Winter's peace. Photo: Rachael Treloar



Summer Activity (Winner)
Coming up Rambler Junior ridge.
 Photo: Barry Hansen



Summer Activity (Honourable Mention)
Descending from the summit of Mount Victoria.
 Photo: Chris Neate



Vancouver Island (Winner)

Mount Cain at sunrise.

Photo: Liz Cox



Vancouver Island (Honourable Mention)

5040 at dawn.

Photo: Josh Slatkoff



Nature (Winner)
Columbian ground squirrel compressed.
Photo: Jim Everard



Nature (Honourable Mention)
Rockies spring.
Photo: Christine Fordham



Mountain Scenery (Winner)

Reese Ridge views.

Photo: John Relyea-Voss



Mountain Scenery (Honourable Mention)

Mount Logan sunset.

Photo: Martin Hofmann



Humour (Winner)
Mountain Sheep.
 Photo: David Fishwick



Humour (Honourable Mention)
This is not the wood nymph I was expecting.
 Photo: Mary Sanseverino



Youth (Winner)
Siblings summer camp.
Photo: Bianca Parcher



Youth (Honourable Mention)
Night summer camp.
Photo: Bianca Parcher

