

Island Bushwhacker

A photograph of a person in winter mountaineering gear standing on a snowy mountain slope. The person is wearing a teal jacket, red pants, and a large green backpack. They are looking towards a rocky, snow-covered mountain peak in the distance. The sky is blue with some clouds.

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

2024 Annual

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

**ISLAND
BUSHWHACKER
ANNUAL**

VOLUME 52 – 2024



VANCOUVER ISLAND SECTION
OF
THE ALPINE CLUB OF CANADA



**ALPINE CLUB
OF CANADA**
VANCOUVER ISLAND

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I gratefully acknowledge that the land on which I live and prepared this volume of the **Island Bushwhacker Annual** is in Nanaimo, the traditional territory of the Snuneymuxw First Nation. Let us be grateful for opportunities to explore the land known today as Canada and acknowledge Indigenous peoples on the lands, waters, and glaciers we visited this year on Vancouver Island, the mainland, and in distant places.

Many thanks go to all those who shared their inspiring articles and lovely photos of wild alpine places for publication in the 2024 volume of the **Island Bushwhacker Annual**. Special thanks also go to Lindsay Elms and Valerie Wootton for helping to edit the text, to Karly Murphy, David Lemon, and Catrin Brown for reviewing a penultimate draft, and to all contributors who patiently answered my many questions.

This journal celebrates explorations, history, geography, and nature in our Island mountains and further afield. It also reflects the people who make up the ACC Vancouver Island Section and bring a richness of values, community, mentorship, adventure, and a shared joy of mountaineering to our club. The photos on the front and back covers and just after the Table of Contents are tributes to the beauty and diversity of alpine landscapes on Vancouver Island. I am grateful for the opportunities to explore alpine ecosystems on Vancouver Island, the mainland and distant places for the past three decades and to have shared so many alpine adventures with members of our mountaineering community.
~Janelle (she/her | elle/la)

Front Cover Image:

*Barry Hansen and Kaitlyn Prowse
approaching the Canoe Peak summit block.
(Photo by Eryn Tombu-Haigh)*

Image Just After the Table of Contents:

*Surf, summit, and the coastal rainforests
that link the two.
(Photo by Chris Neate)*

Back Cover Image:

*Mount Arrowsmith.
(Photo by Roger Taylor)*

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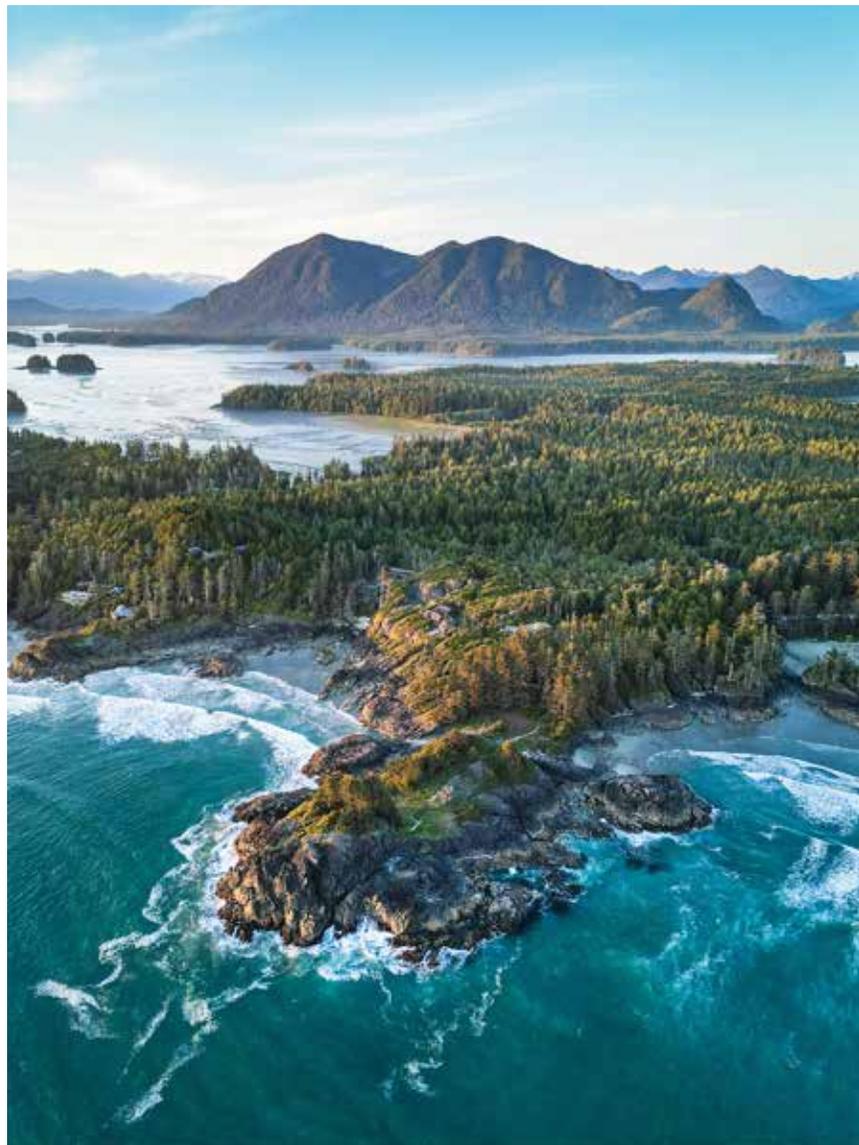
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*Hišimýawił is pronounced Hish-IM-ya-width





REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

David Lemon



2024 was another active year for the section, as the schedule for trips and other club events was filled throughout the season, ranging from a winter ski week at Amiskwi Lodge in the Rockies to summer hut camps at Hišim'awił and the Campbell Icefields. Ongoing problems in obtaining the land-use permit now required for the traditional fly-in camps again prevented one from being held in 2024, but efforts continue to re-instate them in future. Family-oriented activities resumed this past year as well, with ski trips to Mount Cain and a summer trip to the Elizabeth Parker Hut at Lake O'Hara offering great opportunities for young people to get to know and enjoy the mountains. Education courses and sessions covering first aid, rock climbing, ski touring and avalanche safety also took place. You'll find articles about many of these activities in this edition of the *Island Bushwhacker Annual* along with many other interesting features.

Monthly slide shows at Swan Lake took place regularly last year, and culminated in the annual photo contest in December, ably coordinated by Mary Sanseverino. Winners from the many excellent submissions may be seen on the section website and are included on pages 179-185 of this edition.

Four section members, John Ballantyne, Brian Nesbitt, Jeff Cousins and Walter Moar completed the Island Qualifiers in 2024 to earn the Rick Eppler Award from the Section.

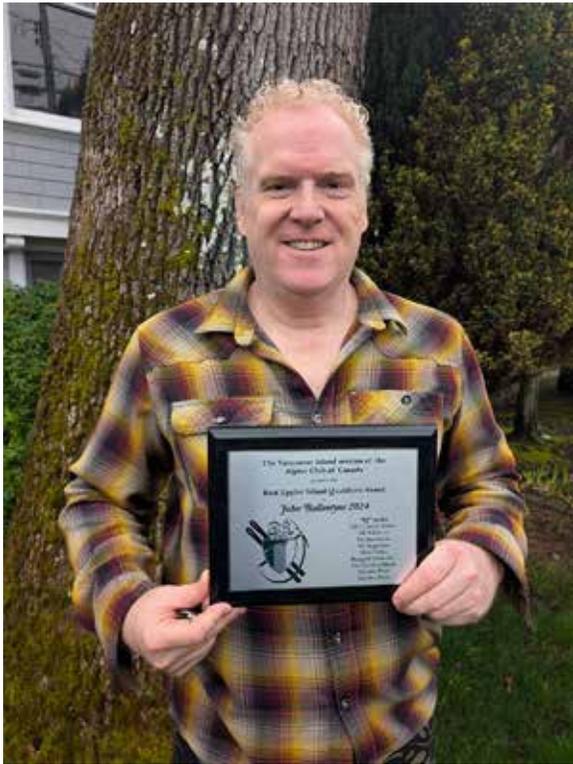


*Brian Nesbitt with his Rick Eppler Award.
(Photo by Brichelle Brucker)*



*Walter Moar with his Rick Eppler Award.
(Photo by Sheila Nykwist)*





John Ballantyne with his Rick Eppler Award.
(Photo by Lisa Spellacy)

work organizing ACCVI's showing of the Banff Centre Mountain Film Festival, the Section's major fundraiser, which was again a sold-out success.



Laura Darling receiving her Don Forest Service Award from David Lemon at the 2024 Summer Solstice Party.
(Photo by Janelle Curtis)



Jeff Cousins with his Rick Eppler Award.
(Photo by Nancy Campbell)



Again, this past year, the National Club recognized a section member for outstanding service: Laura Darling received the Don Forest Service Award for her tireless

The popularity of Hišim'awił continued to increase this past year (see articles on pages 52, 63, 79, and 82), leading to heavy usage of the trail and hut area. Additional signage reminding users of proper wilderness etiquette have been posted to try to alleviate the effects of the increased traffic.

This edition will be the last one produced by our editor, Janelle Curtis, who is stepping down after shepherding four superb annuals into publication. Many thanks for all your work on the *Island Bushwhacker Annuals* and *Island Bushwhacker Newsletters*, Janelle, and you will be leaving very large shoes to fill.

Enjoy looking back on 2024 in this edition of the *Island Bushwhacker Annual*, and let's look forward to 2025 being another year of fellowship and shared enjoyment of the mountains.



VANCOUVER ISLAND



Marble Meadows Powder Stash

Stefan Gessinger

January 6-8, 2024

The 2024 winter season was off to a slow start - our only ski trip had been a New Year's trip to Hišim'awił and we carried our skis all the way to the hut. Apart from this we had very little information on how things were shaping up at higher elevations. Brainstorming for a hopefully good objective for the unseasonably high snow line, Michael

Duncan proposed Marble Meadows. The high snow line could simplify the approach on the steep trail as we could pack our skis up high without having to posthole through deep snow. A shallow snowpack could make access into the Wheaton hut easier as it would require less digging to access the front door.

Huib and I cobbled together a kayak carrier for my roof rack and did some duct tape repairs to the plywood sea kayak I had built 30 years ago. We both live on Salt Spring Island and needed to leave the night before if we want to get an alpine start in Strathcona Park. We would spend the night at Michael's place in Nanaimo, load his gear and canoe and drive to Buttle Lake very early in the morning. Michael has a wall tent complete with a woodstove permanently set up in the forest which serves as his guest house. The fire was lit for our late arrival and made me wish that I was sharing the romantic ambiance and bed with my sweetie and not Huib.

Salt Spring Island is a beautiful place to live and one of the many things I like about it is that we are sheltered from fast food outlets and big box stores. It is with guilty pleasure that I started my morning with a Tim Horton's breakfast for our pre-dawn drive to Buttle Lake and after a calm and cold paddle we arrived at the trailhead.



Paddle, hike, ski. (Photo by Stefan Gessinger)

Usually, I wear my ski boots for the inevitable bootpack, preferring the weight on my feet and not on my back. Thankfully, we chose to wear hiking boots because we ended up ascending a thousand metres before putting the skis on at an elevation of 1300 metres. Conditions quickly changed to a deep skin track as we meandered through the meadows towards the hut which we reached just as it was getting dark. The strenuous approach had been worth it - we had found a huge powder stash. We left the hut before dawn on the second day, ascending the ridge above the hut for a glorious sunrise.



First view of hut in daylight was morning of day 3 - after two tree runs by headlamp. The snow was just that good. (Photo by Stefan Gessinger)

Good weather and very cold temperatures made for amazing touring and skiing conditions. We summited Mount McBride and toured and skied as much as time



Split boarders can do it. (Photo by Stefan Gessinger)



A Stefan in its element. (Photo by Michael Duncan)



Huib and Michael rambling towards Mount McBride. (Photo by Stefan Gessinger)

and energy allowed. We did not see our accommodations in daylight until returning from a second morning lap on day three.

"Aren't we losing precious time?" we asked ourselves, considering the long drive out, the paddle across the lake, loading the boats and gear on the truck, the 300 kilometre drive home and a ferry to catch before making an appearance at work the following day.

"The precious time is now" we concluded and did another lap through the trees.

Participants: Huib De Roo, Michael Duncan, and Stefan Gessinger

Canoe Peak Winter Day

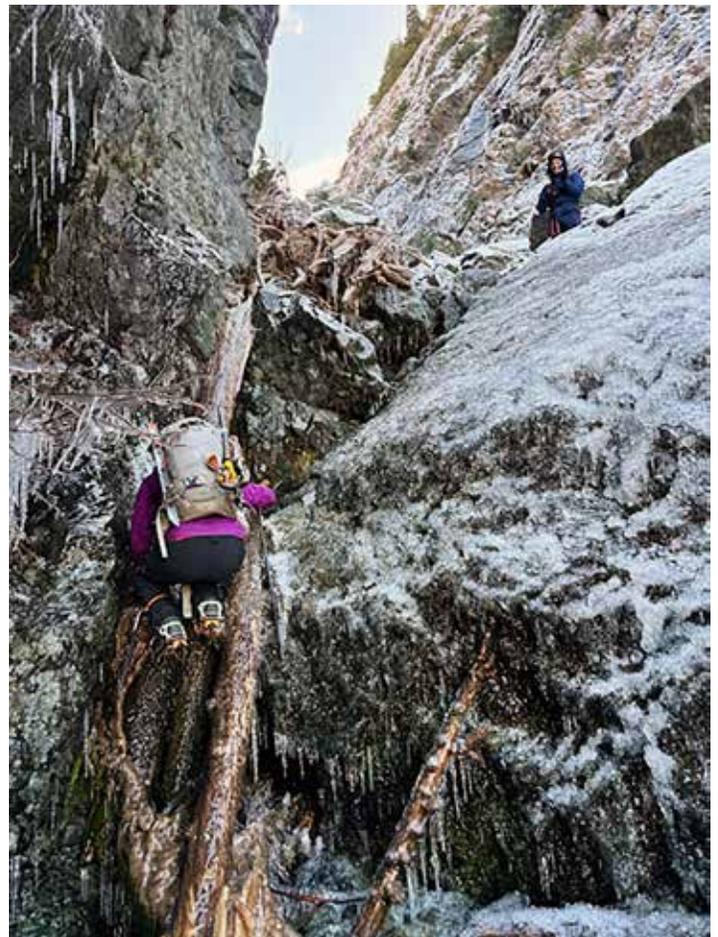
Eryn Tombu-Haigh

February 24, 2024

Winter... ugh. I try so hard to find the joy in the winter, short days, being cold, and being wet. Every year I muster up the courage to suffer with Barry and freeze on a winter climb. I refuse to even attempt anything if the forecast shows any rain or snow. Our desire to do Canoe Peak as a 'fun' winter day would be Barry's second time up the peak in winter. After a few cancelled dates due to weather, February 26th the forecast was great, albeit cold. Given my child's affinity with sneezing in my face and it being winter, I was on day four of some elementary school plague brought home by my son. Operating at an estimated 70% I joined Kaitlyn Prowse and Barry Hansen as we headed off for a mountain adventure.

Departing the car at 8 a.m., directly into the ascent of the service road to the micro dam, I questioned my sanity. Coughing and snotty, but the sun was out, and Barry had "Barrenteed" (a colloquial saying that's pretty

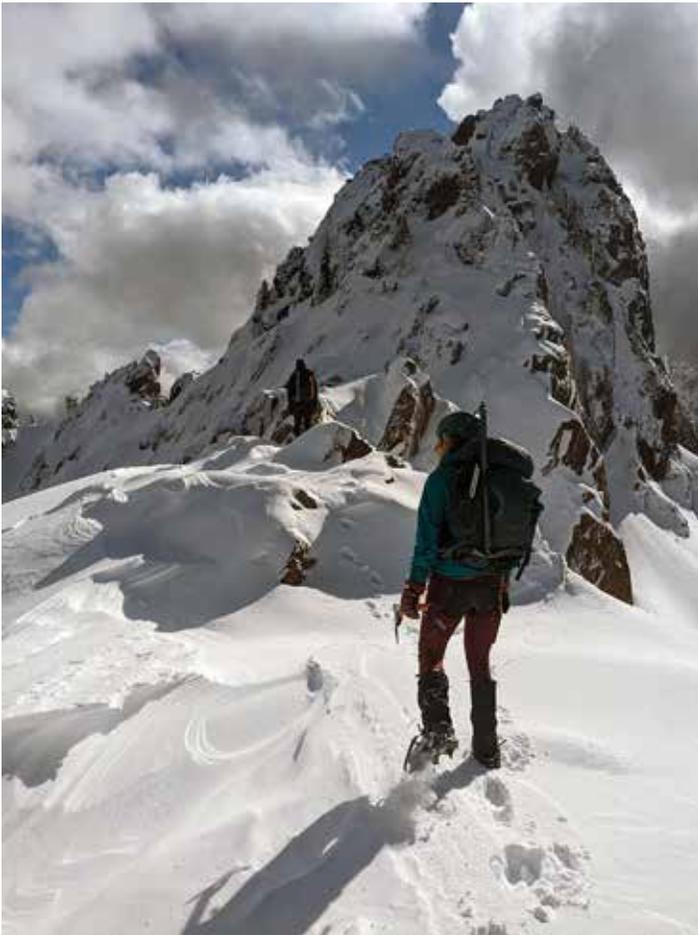
much good for nothing) a great day. As we departed the Mackenzie Express trail towards The Cats Ears/Canoe Peak hanging valley we were excited to see someone had clipped a beautiful path through the slide alder to the base of the gully up. Last winter's snow conditions were unseasonable, but thinking the gully would be an easy ascent was very wrong. Not a snowflake lingered in the deep gash of the gully, only solid sheer ice, in places a foot thick, greeted us. At this point we strapped on our crampons and gingerly kick stepped our way up climbing rocks and logs all coated in the thick, slippery glaze.



*Climbing the ice gully.
(photo by Kaitlyn Prowse)*

Above us menacing icicles, some metres long, threatened to bombard us as we slowly picked our way uphill. As the gully spat us out into a basin, we found Barry's

easy to cross basin, far from it. Some snow, some ice, and some holes crisscrossed a maze of a slightly-buried boulder field in front of us. We gingerly picked our way around the east side of the boulders before crossing over just shy of the saddle. The fresh dusting of snow at that level was just enough to cover the layer of ice below, it made for a challenging ascent of footing roulette. Some wind loaded patches of fluffy light snow surprised us as we picked our way up the east face.



*Kaitlyn and Barry approaching the summit block.
(Photo by Eryn Tombu-Haigh)*

In a sun patch before breaking onto the main ridge, we ate biscotti and layered up as we were starting to get exposed to the biting wind. Once firmly on the ridge the north wind froze us, snow fell and dark clouds formed over the Mackenzie Range, the ominous weather trying to deter us

from a summit. The snow got deeper and more wind-loaded, 30 metres from the top we hit the crux; an exposed rib that may or may not have good footing hiding under the powder. This is when Kaitlyn tapped out. She opted to retrace our steps to the bottom of the summit block and find somewhere to hunker down. If I wasn't so stubborn I would have been hiding out with her. But alas, someone needed to belay Barry, so I tied to a scrubby tree, and belayed Barry up the rib. Communication was basically non-existent, as I tried to scream with no voice above the wind, it was futile, instead relying on the feeling of the rope as it slipped through my hands. Realizing Barry was now secured and ready to belay me, I tied in and hustled up after him. A last step up a large boulder and we were on the summit. The sun graced us for a moment and the views were breathtaking.



*Momentary sunshine on the summit.
(Photo by Barry Hansen)*

Below we could see Kaitlyn now sunning herself on a rock and giving us the thumbs up. Not lingering too long, we headed back down, a quick rappel down to Kaitlyn.

Not wanting to face the route we took up, we foolishly thought conditions may be better on the west face. Even though

Lindsay Elms has described crossing the lower basin as “the worst slide alder and devil’s club bushwhack”, Barry *Barrenteed* that it was actually super easy and we would not have a problem. We easily picked our way towards the Mackenzie Range now in full sun and found the rappel in the forest we were looking for.



*Kaitlyn descends the icy forest rappel.
(Photo by Barry Hansen)*

There was tat on a tree over a cliff covered in icicles in the forest, seeming almost magical descending this winter landscape. Our snow ran out as did our ridge and we headed down the final gully into the lower basin. Thinking we were making great time, we were in fact, terribly wrong. Crossing the slide alder laced with a macrame of devil’s club, salmon berry, and other unpleasant biting vegetation, was one of my most heinous transits. It was as though mother nature was forcibly pushing against us. Quite possibly the slowest kilometre I have ever walked, we gradually

made our way up, over, through, into, under all the unpleasant surprises that basin had to offer. All with failing light. Finally reaching the riverbed in darkness. Barry admitted, yes, the crossing was easy, when it was under two metres of spring snow. Laughing about our day, and surprisingly in good spirits, we made our way back down the service road, arriving at the car 12 hours after leaving it. My token winter ascent done, I could now go back to my mundane winter life.

Participants: Eryn Tombu-Haigh, Barry Hansen, and Kaitlyn Prowse

A Watchtower Spring

Barry Hansen

April 9-10 and June 11-12, 2024

Watchtower Peak in the Sutton Range had been on my long-list for a few years but never quite made the short-list due to other alpine objective priorities. Additionally, most mountaineering enthusiasts have limited availability and opportunity for satisfying their peak-bagging urges. But recently completed shortlists combined with open windows put Watchtower Peak on my radar this year, allowing me to summit it twice, the first time on skis and the second on foot as a party of six - and I do mean ‘party’, as I’ll explain in a bit. But first, the ski trip.

The Ski Trip

April 9-10, 2024

One of my main climbing partners, Rich Priebe, moved to the Okanagan from Vancouver Island in summer 2023, which put a big dent in peak-bagging for both of us with the loss of our previously well-matched

availability schedules. But an opportunity arose in April 2024 when he had a few days of free time during a visit to the island. We considered various ski touring options, including the multi-day Pamela Creek circuit but substandard snow conditions and a sketchy weather forecast kiboshed that idea. We then turned our attention to a possible multiday trip in the Sutton Range, but with favourable weather forecasts narrowing to a single day, we settled on a Watchtower Peak daytrip.



Approaching Harrison Lake with Sutton Peak on the right. (Photo by Rich Priebe)

We drove up the night before and car-camped at the landslide blocking the final portion of Stuart Road. The low cloud we woke to didn't inspire an early start and we (wrongly) estimated it wouldn't be a particularly long day. At 9 a.m. we started boot-packing up the logging road a couple kilometres until a sufficient and consistent snow base allowed us to start skinning. We pressed on in light drizzle which gradually changed to light snowfall, hopeful that the forecast clear skies would eventually materialize. Fortunately, we didn't have to wait long as the clouds parted to reveal the towering north face of Sutton Peak as we skinned through the meadows approaching Harrison Lake. With fresh motivation we

made good time until Lalonde Lake where we expended unnecessary time and energy attempting to bypass higher above the lake. The snow on the sun-warmed southeast open slopes above the lake was deep and heavy and occasionally tried to slide out under our feet. We took a different route on our return, opting to cross the lake instead. As every seasoned mountaineer knows, sometimes trying to save a bit of elevation just isn't worth the effort.



A moody Watchtower summit ridge. (Photo by Barry Hansen)

We continued up the steep forested slope towards Beston Lake, nestled between Watchtower and Auriga Peaks. After a quick lunch and water refill, we worked our way upward on ever changing snow conditions, transitioning from heavy to powder to crust and finally, at the summit ridge, to ice, which is where we switched from skis to crampons

and axes. The moody weather enveloped us, producing an epic atmosphere. The cornices lining the ridgetop appeared to hang over a bottomless abyss. At one point, a thunderous explosion penetrated the stillness, stopping us in our tracks. We looked at each other wide-eyed, certain it was a nearby cornice collapse. After that, we kept even further back from the corniced ridges. The clouds began to disperse at the summit, and after making our way back along the ridge we (mostly) enjoyed a long ski down to Beston Lake in the sunshine. I say mostly because the crusty section was typically unpleasant and contributed to one hard fall in which I momentarily thought my tibia was going to snap before my binding released. Fortunately, the DIN setting was correct, and the only consequence was a sore leg.



*Final pitch to the summit.
(Photo by Rich Priebe)*

The descent from Beston Lake to Laronde Lake was challenging for me because 1) I'm not a strong skier, especially in steep, treed terrain, and 2) my previous snow-crust crash didn't increase my confidence level. I ended up boot-packing down while Rich cruised it like a boss. Ironically, the next section where you climb a short steep step from Laronde Lake up to a smaller nameless lake was the crux of the day. Night was quickly falling as we waded up the narrow 45-degree slope through dense, chest-deep snow where many of the steps set you further back than forward. We were already exhausted, and each step drained what little fuel remained in our tanks. As we crested the slope, darkness fell and out came the headlamps. Skiing the short stretch to Harrison Lake in the dark surrounded by moonlit mountains is firmly imprinted in my mind. It was magical. From there it was a lifeless slog on skis and then boots back to the truck where our food and beds awaited us.

Participants: Barry Hansen and Rich Priebe

The Party

June 11-12, 2024

In June 2023, Eryn Tombu, Jes Garceau, and I climbed Mount Donner and Mount Kent-Urquhart in gorgeous late spring conditions. Returning to camp late afternoon after summiting Donner, Jes surprised us with an impressive charcuterie, which was accompanied by Eryn's deliciously satisfying cocktail concoction. In that divine moment the term Alpine Social was born along with a decision to make it an annual tradition.

In early spring of 2024, Eryn and I began to plan for our second annual Alpine Social. Watchtower Peak was discussed and my recent foray there with Rich provided good reconnaissance for best camp locations. We

set a date based on our mutual availability, sent out invitations, and became a party of six. Plan A was to drive to the trailhead and hike the relatively short distance to Harrison Lake where we'd set base camp, climb the adjacent unnamed 1660 m peak, have the Alpine Social party that evening, climb Watchtower Peak the next day, and then hike out and drive home. But once again, the weather had other plans. Plan B was quickly drafted: drive up late afternoon, have a party, car camp where Rich and I had camped two months earlier, climb Watchtower the next day and then drive home. It was a somewhat disappointing variation but had its upsides: comfy chairs, propane fire, and a lot more food and drink options.



*Party camp.
(Photo by Barry Hansen)*

The anticipated day arrived and our party of six (plus two dogs) reached the gloomy trailhead. It was cloudy, wet, windy, and cold. We quickly arranged the two vehicles chuckwagon-style as a windbreak, erected a tarp, and pitched tents. But we weren't going to let the dour weather dampen our mood for a party. Out came the balloons, cocktails, and an impressive charcuterie spread, which everyone contributed to. And then came the surprise. Unbeknownst to me,

Eryn had planned this to also be a surprise retirement party for me, which I realized when she presented me with a tiara with the word 'retirement' on it and a sash that read, 'Old Lives Matter.' They got me good. And I appreciated it. The evening continued with us huddled around the firepit playing a few rounds of Telestrations After Dark. Laughter echoed off the surrounding mountains of our narrow valley.

We started hiking at 6 a.m. the next morning in good spirits and hopeful the favourable weather forecast would bear out, and it did: pleasant temperatures with a mix of sun and cloud. We covered the nine kilometres of subalpine and alpine terrain at a steady but unhurried pace on bare ground, well-consolidated snow, and rock as we worked our way towards Watchtower's summit, pausing occasionally to snack, rest, and refill our water. And yes, I wore my retirement tiara the whole way. The entire ascent had a festive party vibe. But the fun and surprises weren't over.



*Sutton Peak above Harrison Lake.
(Photo by Barry Hansen)*

We reached the summit ridge and stopped to gear up with helmets, crampons, and axes. I went ahead to scout our route, since it had changed significantly since my last trip there on skis. It was mixed rock and snow now. I waited for the others to catch

up and we continued along, slightly spread out as the terrain dictated. A bit further on I noticed that Eryn was wearing a dress, which I obviously commented on. But it wasn't until we reached the summit that unobservant me realized that they had all changed into fancy clothes; cocktail attire to be specific. This was surprise #2 with the retirement party/alpine social themed celebrations continuing. Jes produced a large cheesecake from his pack and Eryn produced a large retirement banner from hers. There also might have been some flasks of liquid shared.

We remained on the summit for an extended period, eating, drinking, laughing, and posing

for the requisite photographs, eventually deciding it was time to start retracing our steps. We walked, slid, and ran our way down the snow, me in my tiara and they in their cocktail attire. That was followed by more fun photos and sun-basking on the dry ground overlooking Laronde Lake before continuing our trek back to the vehicles, where we arrived 12 hours after we began. It was a perfect Vancouver Island alpine social. And then some.

Participants: Barry Hansen, Eryn Tombu-Haigh, Jes Garceau, Emily Port, Quentin Thomas and Kaitlyn Prowse



*Party on Watchtower.
(Photo by Jes Garceau)*

Mount Albert Edward Ski Tour

Andrew Pape-Salmon

April 13, 2024



Leader Andrew Pape-Salmon with peak in the distance.
(Photo by Lucy Coldwell)

Eight powder-starved souls launched from Raven Lodge after sunrise on the Saturday morning. Despite being a severe drought winter, a scout the weekend before confirmed sufficient base. In fact, we were treated to fresh powder at 1500 metres. This photo essay shows the strong rapport among the backcountry skiers and one snowboarder, the immense jubilation of descending with a couple centimeters of

fresh powder, and the stunning views with clear skies. We travelled 35 kilometres in 11 hours with 1500 metres of elevation gain.



Staying close to the shore of Helen Mackenzie Lake.
(Photo by Lucy Coldwell)



Steep ascent from Circler Lake.
(Photo by Lucy Coldwell)



Mount Albert Edward (left) and Mount Regan (right) before skiing the horseshoe ascent. (Photo by Andrew Pape-Salmon)



At the summit. (Photographer unknown)



Exceptional views from the summit. (Photographer unknown)



Final approach with the Strait of Georgia in the distance. (Photo by Jeremy Ralph)



Telephoto of the Golden Hinde. (Photo by Andrew Pape-Salmon)

Here is the full photo gallery:

View my photos at: <https://papesalmon.smugmug.com/Mountaineering/Ski-Touring/Mt-Albert-Edward-April-2024/n-XtX55N>

Participants: Huib de Roo, Neil Ernst, Jeremy Ralph, Lucy Coldwell, Natasha Cowie, Sarah Roberts, Andrew Pape-Salmon, and Michael Duncan

Mount Arrowsmith via Climber's Route and Main Gully

Peggy Taylor

May 11, 2024

Roger and I were keen to check out the Main Gully on Mount Arrowsmith as it had been a few years since we had been up that snow route. Once we found out from Barb Baker that the Mosaic gate was open longer hours from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. in early May we posted a trip on the ACCVI schedule with a maximum of eight participants, but we ended up being a smaller group of five.

We were a bit concerned about snow conditions in such a low snow year with three nights and days of warm temperatures way above freezing in the forecast leading up to May 11th. However, I figured the shading from the walls and northish aspect of the Main Gully would protect the quality of the snow.

It was a fine sunny, bluebird day when we all met just before 8 a.m. at the Mosaic gate at the Cameron Main Connector. We carried on to the parking area just next to the Climber's Route on Pass Main where we met a nice young couple from Victoria. They were also heading up the steep Climber's Route and we thought surely they would pass us as we were a slightly older demographic! We started up the trail at 8:35 a.m. gradually grunting up the steep trail. Approximately 100 metres before the tree line ends bits of ice and snow were on the trail and we needed to be cautious. Just before we broke out of the trees we met a solo climber named Richard, from Qualicum, who had stopped to put on his crampons just below a small rock wall with a hand line attached. Roger and Doug carried on up, but the rest

of us felt it prudent to don our crampons at this point as well. Richard was happy to see a group as he had set out hoping to join a group if he found one, so we were happy to have him tag along with our Main Gully group.

It took a bit of time to put on our helmets and crampons, but once we were done and ready to proceed, the young couple caught up to us. We figured they would pass us for sure, but I guess we were not as slow as we thought! They waited patiently while Becky, Rachel and I went up this short rock section into the slightly deeper snow and then they followed. We carried on into the open bowl beyond the trees and up a mildly steep snow section where we decided to stop at some bare rocks to sit, eat, hydrate and take in the views towards Port Alberni before carrying on to the upper bowl and the Main Gully.



*How do I put these crampons on again, refresher!
(Photo by Becky Noble)*



*Hikers heading up to upper bowl before Main Gully.
(Photo by Peggy Taylor)*



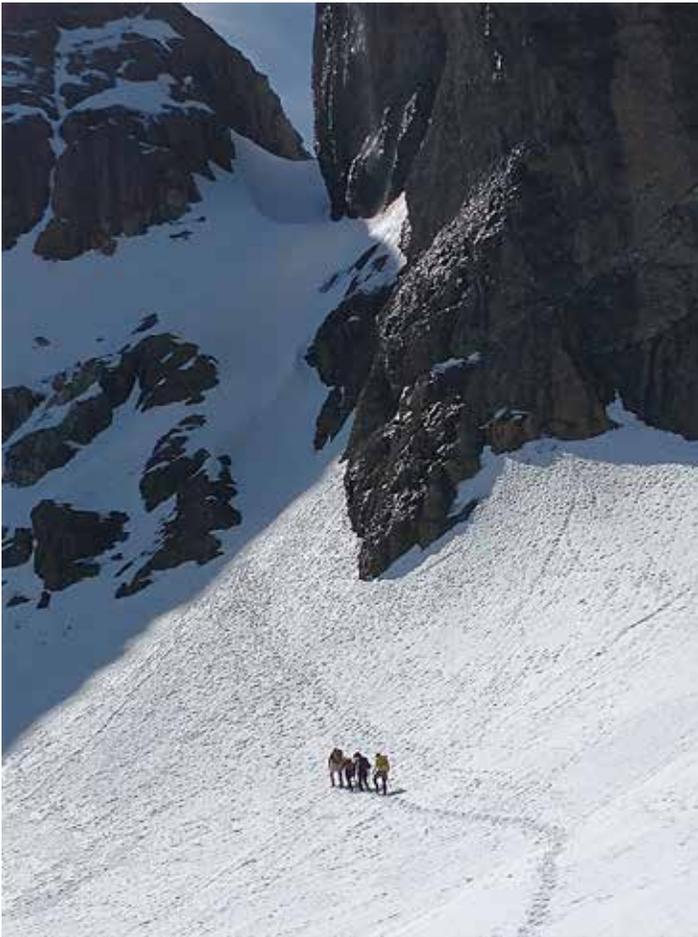
*Roger, Doug and Becky prior to heading up Main Gully.
(Photo by Peggy Taylor)*

The young couple went ahead and started to head up the Brugger's variation/gully. Roger was surprised because at the parking area they had told him they were heading to the

Main Gully also. Roger yelled at them that they were heading the wrong way and to turn left. He pointed in the direction of travel for the Main Gully and I also pointed with my pole. It took them a few minutes to realize what he was indicating, but they eventually understood and headed the correct way. We were just finishing our snacks when they reached us. We told them we were worried that if they climbed Brugger's they might encounter less stable snow (it looked pretty thin at the top) and potentially climb themselves into something they did not like and be unable to continue up or be nervous about down climbing. As it turns out they had taken an ice-axe arrest course and were familiar with crampons, but this was their first time on Mount Arrowsmith (at least in snow). So it was good luck that they ran into us. We then let them know the name of the gully that they had been heading up and told them that the Main Gully was in the next bowl up. They asked if they could join us and we were happy to have them along. Ironically, we were now eight participants with these three mountain 'adoptees.'

Once we arrived below the Main Gully and saw that the snow looked to be in good shape (it had been up to that point) we decided to split into two groups of four. Richard led the young couple (Felix and Kaelan) and Becky up first.

Doug and Roger took the time to don their crampons. Then once we were all ready Doug took the lead up the Main Gully with our group of four as the first group was just over half way up. There was a dip/bowl like feature in the top third of the gully that looked slightly intimidating and we wondered how easy it would be to climb... but it was totally fine. Richard led a great line and we all had great fun following up the gully.



*Group 1, led by Richard, heading up Main Gully.
(Photo by Peggy Taylor)*



*Doug and Rachel in Main Gully.
(Photo by Roger Taylor)*

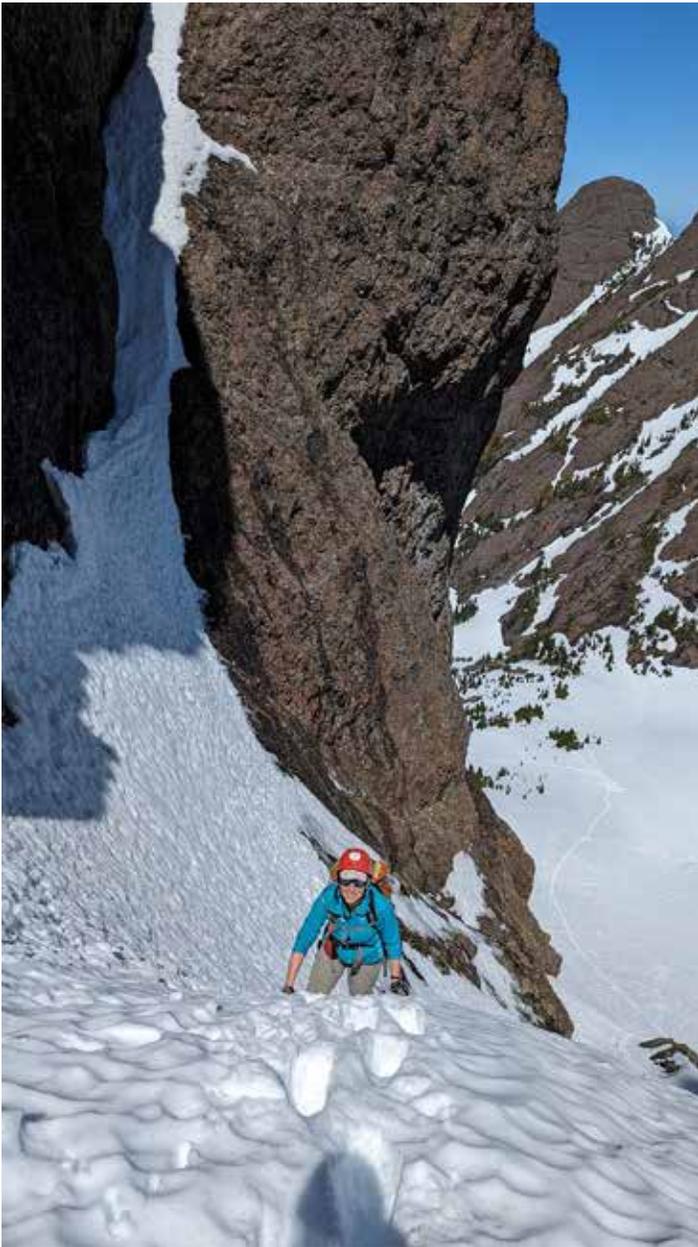


*Becky in Main Gully.
(Photographer unknown)*

Our feet were well supported on the snow and only sunk down anywhere from ankle to mid-calf for the most part. There was a lot of melting at the top of the bump on our

climber's right and this resulted in a nice shower coming off the wall. It was very pretty shining in the sunlight and had a fairy-like quality that all of us enjoyed. At the last rock section before the summit the snow was slightly thinner in spots, so we had to take care. We met two fellows and a dog (!) coming off the summit who climbed the Judges Route. They had carried snowshoes but did not use them at all.

We arrived on the summit at 12:35 p.m. After a good break on the top to eat lunch, take in the views, take the obligatory summit



*Peggy climbing up the Main Gully.
(Photo by Roger Taylor)*



*Group on Mt. Arrowsmith summit (Richard,
Roger, Doug, Peggy, Becky & Rachel).
(Photo by Kaelan)*

photos and enjoy the unseasonably warm weather, we gathered up our gear to begin the descent down the Judge's route. The upper section did prove to be the crux of the day with thinning, slippery snow and we all had to be focused and cautious. Rachel was new to climbing steep snow, so I stuck with her at the back to assist and encourage, but she was solid and in fine form going up the Main Gully. It is so satisfying to see someone tackle something new, learn and practice new skills, and push their comfort zone.

The only unfortunate incidents were when Richard, who was at the head of a group, slipped and his crampon hit Roger's calf. Roger's gaiter cushioned the blow and there was no injury or breaking of skin.... just a sore calf and a small bruise. Richard then slipped again and this time took a tumble and hit his head (no blood or anything broken) but luckily he was fine. Doug assessed him for any signs of concussion and by the time Rachel and I caught up to the group, Richard was good to carry on. He was so apologetic... a strong Swiss climber who had never fallen before. No doubt he was either a bit tired or lost focus talking in this big group. I had intentionally left my helmet on until we were totally off the snow, but most others had taken their helmets off. This small incident was a good reminder to leave helmets on in slippery conditions.

We carried on down the Judge's route leaving the snow behind at approximately 1300 metres. Rachel and I continued to be cautious at the back on the steep, loose trail. Roger, Doug, Richard, Felix and Kaelan reached the one car our group of five had left at the Judge's route at 4:18 p.m. and the four guys drove up the road to get to the three cars left at the Climber's Route pull-out. Becky, Rachel, Kaelan and I hung out in the shade and relaxed. In the end we all exchanged email addresses for photo

exchange and headed out well before the gate locking time. It was a successful tremendous day out in the mountains with some strong ACCVI members and new mountain buddies!

Participants: Roger Taylor, Peggy Taylor, Becky Noble, Rachel Treloar, Doug Scatcherd and three mountain adoptees

Snow Patch Line, Redwall Peak, Mackenzie Range

Hayes Zirnhelt and Mike Hudson

June 7-9, 2024

I write this article from my home located in the territory of the ləkʷəŋən speaking peoples, the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations. I am greatly appreciative of the opportunity I have to live in this beautiful place. The trip described in this article crosses many First Nations territories including Ucluelet, Toquaht, Tla-o-qui-aht, Tseshaht, Hupačasath and Uchucklesaht.

June 7:

Mike Hudson and I took off for a quick trip to climb in the Mackenzie Range. This was our first trip to this range, and we were interested in checking out Redwall Peak. After reviewing recent reports, we opted to try out the new approach trail from Canoe Creek. We drove up from Victoria after work, finding a pullout just big enough for my car right before the locked gate on the Canoe Creek micro hydro road. The road on the other side of the gate made a good camping spot. After sleeping in, we enjoyed the hike up the very steep road thinking it would be fun to drive up in my electric car. The crystal-clear pool formed by the intake of the micro hydro project made an excellent spot

for a coffee break. The approach trail was excellent – in many places showing only the wear of a game trail, a welcomed contrast to the heavily trafficked eroded approaches which unfortunately have become much more common recently. It weaves up through beautiful forests, efficiently navigating around small vegetated bluffs and crossing through beautiful small meadows. We were entertained by numerous grouse along the way. Once up in the subalpine, we caught our first glimpses of the Mackenzie Range and were stunned by its dramatic, rugged nature and prominence of the peaks – a feeling much beyond what we could anticipate from photos.



*Taking in the views on the ridge approaching the Mackenzie Range.
(Photo by Mike Hudson)*

Mike:

People always say it's good to have more talented and experienced people to help push your own abilities. It's true, but that doesn't mean you won't be second guessing yourself in the middle of an exposed move to get out of an overhanging chimney a few pitches up a face that you didn't know you were going to be climbing the day before.

To give a bit of context, Hayes had mentioned he was interested in climbing a route in the Mackenzie Range. We've done a fair amount of alpine and climbing trips together and I always enjoy them even if it pushes my boundaries a bit. His wife Anya

said she had climbed the Redwall Peak route he was planning and said "Oh ya, we barely even needed ropes to climb up and down". After double checking the guidebook, I assumed we were taking the Northwest Ridge (5.6) and was expecting a moderately exposed scramble with great views. Once I was in the car driving up with Hayes, I noticed our description of the route wasn't lining up... Turns out he was planning the Redwall North Face 5.9 route John Waters and Jonathan Hamilton had set back in 2003. A classic sandbag to rope me in once again! As we approached the climb, we were questioning the entrance and corner we were supposed to start at. After some deliberation we both decided to try for a potential first ascent route instead. Hayes had been eager to set one and as long as he was leading, I was game as I looked up at our planned route.

We dropped down from the ridge to the snowfield and found the lowest point of rock below the Redwall, stashing our overnight gear on a ledge, and geared up for the climb. This ledge angled up and left, providing a nice scramble start, but disappeared after ~ 15-metres. At this point we decided to climb straight up - a large pocket with some bushes and cracks gave us a good opportunity to set up a belay station and rope up. We climbed up two pitches of easy low 5th class on excellent quality rock, passing a low angle open book feature, to arrive at the large bench area and the start of the snowpatch.

Pitch 1 (5.8):

We started our climb from the highest point on the snow patch, in a right facing corner. After blocky face climbing up about 12 metres, we crossed over the corner to the left and then went straight up a long runout face section to a thin ledge, formed by an upward horizontal crack perfectly sized for

the 0.4 cam that I had already placed - but with some creative nut placements this made a secure belay (60 metres from Mike's belay spot near the bottom of the snow patch).

Pitch 2 (5.9):

We climbed straight up the face on good holds and more excellent rock, but sparse protection to find a small roof. As I approached the roof, I was at least six metres above my last piece and optimistically slung some tiny deciduous bush. Thinking this would be the only protection from a fall from the roof, I searched for a way around, but after not finding an easy bypass, I reverted to the direct line to the roof. I climbed straight up to a notch forming a small chimney through the roof. Here I found a couple good cam placements which gave me confidence to pull through this crux section. After a couple strenuous moves, I was over the roof and let out some hollers of excitement. Soon after the roof we bushwhacked our way into some large fir trees, which provided a reliable belay just as I maxed out the 60-metre rope again.



Our camp below Redwall, Hayes taking a dip in the tarn.
(Photo by Mike Hudson)



The route we took up Redwall Peak.
(Photo by Hayes Zirnhelt)

Mike:

Hayes and his wife Anya are far better climbers than I am. So, on pitch two when Hayes was double checking, I was ready for a catch. I was a little worried about what was ahead for me. My worry quickly changed to fear when I heard heavy grunting, followed by ecstatic whooping. If Hayes is that fired up, I'm in for a serious challenge! The pitch was on a band of high-quality rock, with solid holds on a sparsely vegetated section before reaching an overhang with a nice body sized chimney. As you approach the top of the chimney it narrows enough that I needed to climb out onto the face in a very exposed move. I let out a whoop of relief of my own and now pumping with adrenaline I was able to belay Hayes on Pitch 3 while getting ravaged by black flies.

Pitch 3 (5.6):

Climbing through mixed vegetation, rock and lichen lead us up and right to a ledge that continues on to the right. We belayed from here, and then explored along the ledge, finding a slightly lower angle ramp that went up to some trees. However, as it was getting later in the day, we decided to rap down from here to get off the rock by dark. We rappelled back to our Pitch 2 station in the small forest area, then straight down and left a 0.4 cam for our last rap. We set up our tent further down the large snowfield below the wall - a truly dramatic and beautiful spot, which we thoroughly enjoyed in the morning, taking in the views of the full span of the Mackenzie Range and jumping into the hole in the mostly snow-covered tarn. With the dramatic rugged peaks, easy access, and high-quality rock, we anticipate returning soon.

Participants: Hayes Zirnhelt and Mike Hudson

Mount Baker Attempt

Neil Ernst

June 14-16, 2024

Three of us headed down to Mount Baker for a weekend summit attempt June 14-16. Weather forecasts the preceding week proved unfortunately accurate and the weekend ended up rainy and cloudy. An earlier plan to take the traditional approach up Coleman-Deming on foot was scuppered with predictions of 8-12 inches of fresh snow. The weather was made more annoying having seen a cloud-free Mount Baker from my office window the day before we were due to leave. But such is mountaineering!

We arrived in the town of Glacier in

Washington at the ranger station on the Friday around noon, and the weather was just beginning to turn. With some time to spare before a Saturday morning start, we decided to head up to the ski resort – on the side of Shuksan – for some leg-stretching. We parked at the top of the road and hiked up to the base of the cinder cone for a few ski laps in the mixed rain and sun. More rain than sun, truth be told.



*Booting up from the road on Shuksan.
(Photo by Neil Ernst)*

That night we drove up the Heliotrope Creek Road to the Heliotrope Ridge parking lot and trailhead to spend the night in the driving rain before a morning start. We were thankful to have cars to sleep in given the conditions, waking up to sleet on our windshields.

Non-plussed by the continuing rain at 6 a.m., we nevertheless pushed ahead with a 7:30 a.m. departure for the trailhead, planning to



*Bootpack up to Hogsback.
(Photo by Neil Ernst)*

go until “it no longer made sense”. That point was not too far in the future!

By 10 a.m. we had made it to the Hogsback Camp. The relative clarity in the forest was quickly becoming a white-out in the alpine. Guided groups were setting up camp and working on glacier skills.

We decided to press on as “you never know” (although we had a good idea it wasn’t getting better). On skis we ascended onto the Coleman Glacier and began the ascent in a driving snow/sleet combo. From what we could tell we were the only people on the glacier, which while peaceful, suggested conditions were not ideal.

We reached the Black Buttes and the high route up the glacier. After pushing a bit further on, until we were at maybe 8000 feet (still at least three hours from the summit),



*This proved to be the last of the clear vis...
(Photo by Michael Duncan)*

we paused to re-assess. At this point, confronted by increasingly poor conditions, we made the decision to pull the plug and retreat.



*At the Black Buttes, route finding.
(Photo by Neil Ernst)*



*Roping up in the slush and sleet.
(Photo by Neil Ernst)*

The upside to this decision was some decent skiing/boarding as we rapidly descended 800 -metres in about 10 minutes, with only the odd face plant as we struggled to make sense of speed and position in our white world. Perhaps others have experienced the strange sensation of feeling like you are standing still, only to make a turn and realize how much speed you are really carrying.

A short walk down the trail and we were back at the trailhead. Naturally, as we drove out the sun re-appeared, although only for a short time. Fortunately, Mount Baker is not going anywhere, and we will be back.

Participants: Neil Ernst, Michael Duncan, and Shawn Hedges

The Island Qualifiers by Bike

Finn Battersby and Brennan Doyle

June 28 - July 20, 2024



All Photos by Finn Battersby or Brennan Doyle

Preface

I'll begin with a statement of gratitude, and appreciation for those who supported us. Trips like this are measured as much in depth as they are in distance, requiring planning and preparation that if added up would overshadow the statistics of the trip itself, so thank you everyone. The actual planning of this trip only began about five months prior to our departure. Our preparation, in some form or another, was more extensive. Our ACCVI application was met with due skepticism, but the committee involved with dispersing funds for the Youth Memorial Grant believed in us. By all accounts (including our own) we were underprepared, but this fuelled our motivation to learn, invest in developing new skills, and reach out to experienced mentors.

1. Introduction (Finn)

The Island Qualifiers are a collection of nine

Day	Date	start (June 28)	end (July 25-29)	bike distance (Km)	bike elevation (m)	hike distance (Km)	hike elevation (m)	route details	re-supply
1	28	cumberland	comox glacier camp	37	550	10	1100		Keith, Josh, Natalie
2	29	comox glacier camp	comox glacier camp			16	1000	summit harmston via argus, SE ridge	Kit #1
3	30	comox glacier camp	cumberland	37	200	10			
4	1	cumberland	strathcona park lodge	98	600				
5	2	strathcona park lodge	cream lake camp	48	500	10	1000		
6	3	cream lake camp	big interior camp			15	1000	summit septimus via x-gully**(condition dependent) or summer route	Kit #2
7	4	big interior camp	big interior camp			20	1800	summit nine peaks via big interior and east snow gully	
8	5	big interior camp	myra mine camp	11	150	15	200		
9	6	myra mine camp	myra mine camp	-	-	-	-		Meet Elise, Bridget w/ restock
10	7	myra mine camp	arnica-philips ridge			10	1000		Kit #3
11	8	arnica-philips ridge	arnica-philips ridge			30	3000	summit golden hinde via SE gullies	
12	9	arnica-philips ridge	strathcona park lodge	48	150	10	400		
13	10	strathcona park lodge	gold river	40	150				
14	11	gold river	elk pass camp	16	250	9	470		Natalie, Savannah
15	12	elk pass camp	elk pass camp			15	1300	summit elkhorn via NW ridge	Meet Mark Whitney
16	13	elk pass camp	South Col Camp			5	900	Move camp to colonel foster south col	Kit #4
17	14	South Col Camp	elk river TH camp			20	1400	summit colonel foster via south summit traverse via south col or great W couloir**(condition dependent)	
18	15	elk river TH camp	gold river	16					
19	16	gold river	gold river	-	-	-	-		
20	17	gold river	victoria tarn camp	38	1570	5	500		Meet keith, Josh & Alex
21	18	victoria tarn camp	victoria tarn camp			15	1100	summit victoria and warden via south ridge, PB route, PG route	Kit #5
22	19	victoria tarn camp	woss	90	1220				
23	20	woss	Rugged N20 spur	65	1887				
24	21	Rugged N20 spur	nathans col			6	950		Kit #6
25	22	nathans col	zeballos	20		9	300	summit rugged via east ridge	
			totals	564	7227	230	17420		pre-packed meals
			avg.	43.4	657.0	12.8	1024.7		17 breakfast
									20 lunch
									17 dinner

Our spreadsheet outlining distances, elevation and routes for each day.

peaks on Vancouver Island which together represent some of Vancouver Island's best mountaineering. As I understand it, the list was compiled especially for ACCVI members. It was the island equivalent of the "graduating peaks" on the mainland. To gain active membership individuals had to climb a graduating peak, a 10,000 foot peak, which we don't have on the island. You can read more about it on the ACCVI website. Traditionally, individuals pursued their Island Qualifiers over a number of years, however, some individuals like Deon Towle did them all in one summer. Each peak offers something unique, but generally the mountains were included for their elevation above the treeline and terrain features, especially various snow and glacial features. From Mount Harmston in the southeast the Island Qualifiers span Strathcona Provincial Park and extend beyond to the northwest where Rugged Mountain towers over the coastal town of Zeballos. Our idea was to link all nine summits under human power, through a combination of foot travel and cycling. Our route would cover 564 kilometres of cycling with over 7000 metres of elevation gain, an average of 43 kilometres with 660 metres of elevation gain a day. Off the bikes we would cover 230 kilometres with over 17,000 metres of elevation gain, an average of 12.8 kilometres with 1000 metres of elevation on foot each day, according to our 25-day plan.

Background

Brennan and I both come from a background in competitive sport, each participating in a range of team and individual sports before eventually focusing on sport climbing where our paths crossed. From 2018 to 2022 we trained together, pursuing National and International events. Eventually Brennan's motivation shifted to outdoor bouldering. This contributed to the development of numerous high-level bouldering problems

on southern Vancouver Island, as well as testing himself against classic test pieces in Squamish. Meanwhile, I transitioned to my post-secondary education in Kinesiology at Camosun College. Brennan joined for his studies two years later. The freedom afforded by retiring from competition allowed us to pursue numerous other stereotypical island outdoor activities including trail-running, backcountry skiing, and mountaineering.

Fuelling

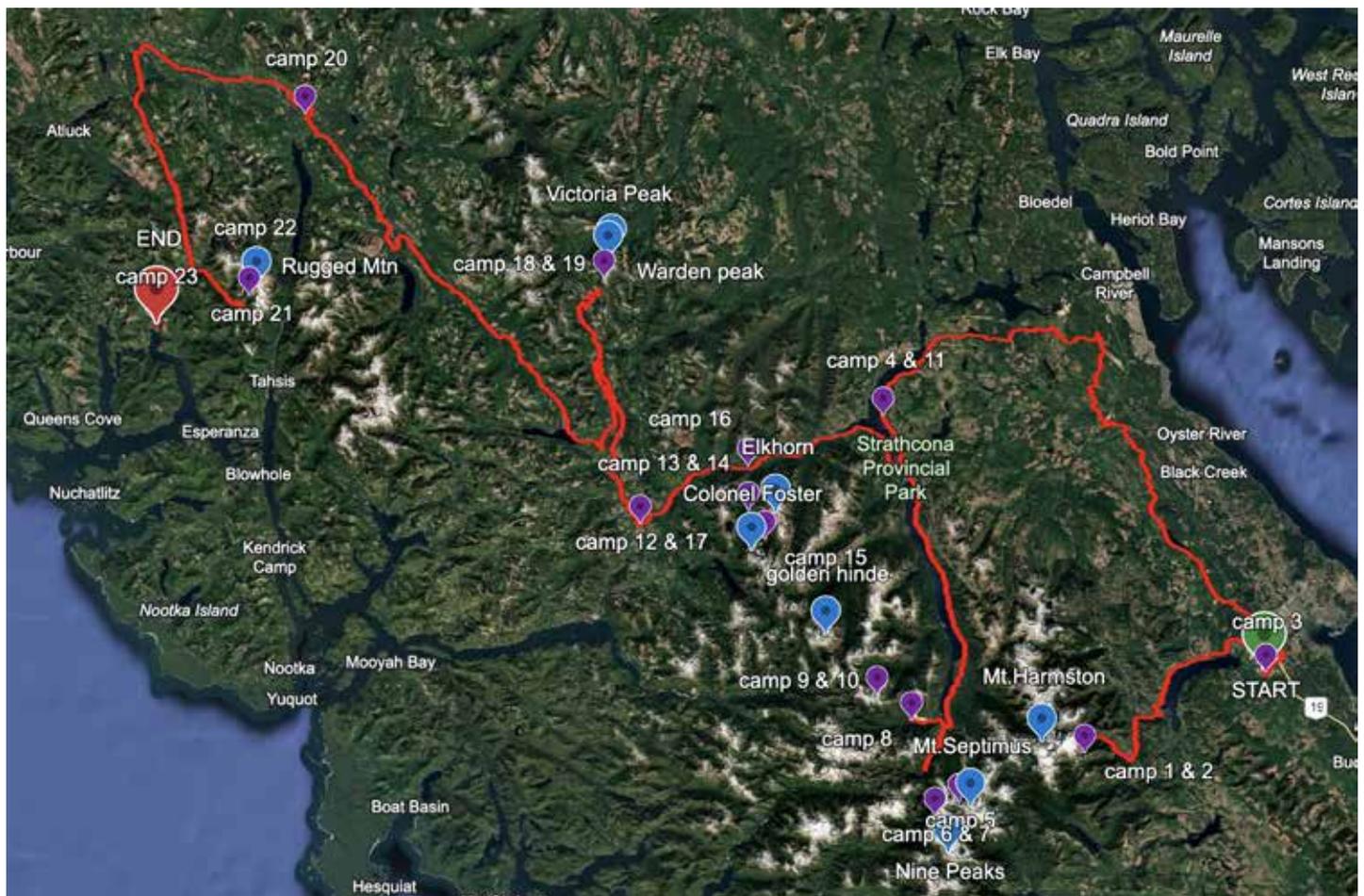
In the time following our successful application we worked on accumulating dehydrated meals, cooking one or two each week and sticking them on trays to fume our homes with a continuous stream of curry and chilli. It seemed a reasonable way to fuel our adventure, and in the end, much more affordable than the pre-packed dinners found at most outdoor stores. Our plan was to use a silicone DIY boil in a bag to serve as a rehydration vessel which replaced our weighty camp bowls. In the end we ate 90% of our meals directly from the pot and the remaining 10% were in towns we passed through on the road. Our dehydrated meals were composed predominantly of legumes and minute rice, and we supplemented our diet with three to five nutritional bars per person per day - you can do the math on how many bars that was over the whole trip. For lunch we relied on bread or wraps with either cheese or peanut butter and jam. For breakfast we had a rotation of oats reinforced with chia seeds and other healthy ingredients, minute rice pudding made with a horchata flavoured protein recovery mix (a surprise favourite in the flavour department), and dehydrated (instant) quinoa which was by far the most satisfactory for sustained energy. Whenever we passed through a town, we loaded up on calorically dense items in the following important food

groups; gummies, pizza, ice cream, potato and egg breakfasts, and pasta dinners.

A multi-stage approach (Finn)

Our planning sessions involved researching route options, lumping objectives together via whatever we deemed to be the most efficient link-ups, and then once grouped detailing the specific requirements for each stage. Our trip was self-supported in nature, which meant we took into account the differing physical and technical demands of each section to create a plan that gave us a manageable amount of gear as well as adequate food and warmth. Unsurprisingly the goal here was to keep things pretty minimal, and so we decided early on in the spring that a SilTarp paired with a bug net would serve as our shelter for the duration of the trip. This presented

its flaws on stage one. We were relegated to the only flat surface at the saddle below the Comox Glacier which was on snow, we were socked in by clouds, and rain blew through the open tarp for some 36 hours. However, after this soggy initiation we had no further regrets and most nights we slept with only the bug net. For those aware of the nine Island Qualifiers you may note that Mount Harmston and Rugged Mountain are more isolated from the rest and therefore each had their own stage (one and six respectively). Stage two involved climbing Mount Septimus, followed by Nine Peaks over a three day and three night period. We allocated just two nights to climb the Golden Hinde in stage three, before moving northwest to Gold River. Stage four was another doubleheader: Elkhorn Mountain followed by Mount Colonel Foster and then retiring to Gold River once again.



Map highlighting our planned route.

Following this we would make the short journey to tackle Victoria Peak and Warden Peak, before pedalling our way to Rugged Mountain to cap it all off. This geographically logical segmentation worked fairly well, allowing us to push for a few days before transitioning to the next zone. These transitions afforded the necessary change of pace and respite we needed to reset. We planned for just two rest days throughout the 25-day trip.

2. Preparation (Brennan)

Planning for the trip started pretty early in the New Year when we had begun to seriously consider the trip. To start, we spent some time on Google Maps, Google Earth and Fat Maps trying to figure out what route would be the most effective in connecting all nine Island Qualifiers. This proved to be difficult for some sections. Not all the maps had the same details on the Forestry Service Roads (FSRs). We agreed that going south to north (in general) would be the best option. Connecting Mount Harmston through to Mount Septimus and Nine Peaks on foot was considered, but we concluded that it would be more challenging logistically, especially for food resupply when compared to biking around through Campbell River. Doing this, we were able to plan out a route with estimates of distance covered and elevations for each day of the trip. Next, we considered all the gear we would need, and what gear would be required for each peak. Having a practical and lightweight setup was important as we were expecting to be carrying a hefty pack with a huge amount of food and lots of climbing gear. Once we had our gear sorted, we had to figure out how we were going to fit all of this equipment on our bikes. We chose old 90s steel frame mountain bikes because we would be stashing them in the forest and if they were stolen they would be an inexpensive loss.

The bikes were easy to strap things to and straightforward to fix. We ended up with a pretty simple setup; rear racks that we could strap our backpacks on, frame bags and rear racks zip-tied on the front of the bike to hold a dry bag of food. It looked a bit ridiculous, but it worked great for our purposes. We then began to tackle the challenge of making food for the entire trip. We planned to prepare all of our breakfasts and dinners but find fresh food along the way for our lunches. Dinners were either curry, chili, dhal, or pasta, all pre-made and dehydrated at home. In terms of physical preparation, we didn't really have to alter much other than adding in a few specific climbing or bikepacking things. We continued with our regularly scheduled training which included



Finn taking a well-deserved rest at Montague campground on Galiano Island.

trail running, biking, and yakking in the gym between sets. Once out of school in May, we ramped up gear testing with a few local trips. First, by taking the bikes over to the Gulf Islands for some bike camping.

To work on our alpine climbing skills (which were marginal at best), we undertook an overnight trip up Mount Cokely and Mount Arrowsmith via the hourglass couloir and the nose route, a short scramble in some fun alpine terrain. A couple of weeks later we took an alpine skills course with Island Alpine Guides (IAG). This was a great way to sharpen our skills and systems for moving quickly in the mountains, and Forest (our instructor) did an excellent job catering the course to our needs.



Dinner on Mount Cokely.

"Permanent Structures" on Triple Peak and then we went up to Sayward for the Kusam Klimb trail race. Finn forgot his sleeping bag and spent a few chilly nights under an emergency blanket, but we had a good time on the route practicing our skills on a bolted alpine climb with plenty of exposure. The race was a good final test for the legs and some quality time with friends Savannah and Matt. They even brought a sleeping bag for Finn. After a couple days at home packing up all of the food into bags and arranging gear, we were finally ready to go.



Approaching Permanent Structures on Triple Peak.

3. The Trip

Section One: Mount Harmston and the bike to Strathcona Park Lodge (Brennan)

Initially, Mount Harmston might appear less physically and technically demanding than



The week before departing we climbed

some of the other Island Qualifiers, but this perspective was in part formed by the lack of info we could find on the peak as the approach was surprisingly difficult. We soon realized that what first appeared as a long but non-technical summit day, was a lot more involved. We started the trip from the Riding Fool Hostel in Cumberland. Finn and I began on bikes while our support crew of Keith, Josh and Natalie were to join us later in the truck. It felt amazing to be finally on the bikes; starting the trip instead of thinking about it. When we got to the Comox Lake gate, the security guard said we couldn't go in on the bikes. We had prior to the trip communicated with Mosaic and were told bikes were in a gray area but should be fine. While we waited for calls to be made we hung out a bit. We eventually were allowed in, but only if we went with our support crew in the truck. In retrospect we were grateful for the lift, biking up that road with all of our gear would have really sucked. The hike up the Comox Glacier trail went smoothly, but recent rains had saturated the forest making for a damp experience. However, the sun shining through the canopy provided beautiful shades of green.

We set up camp on a patch of snow at what Spotwx called "Lone Tree Pass," however, there was definitely more than one tree. The

forecast for the next few days was looking a bit dubious as there was some unfavourable weather rolling in, but we were hopeful the low cloud would burn off and allow for better visibility. The next day we woke up to rain and even more cloud. Heading up the glacier was not an option. We hung out under our damp tarp for the day and planned for a long day tomorrow. The next morning we woke early and still couldn't see anything but clouds. We slept some more and then it cleared up enough to get going. Even though we made good time over the Comox Glacier to the shoulder of Argus Mountain, we were doubtful that we would have enough time to climb Mount Harmston that day. Staying another night wasn't an option since we didn't have food for an extra day. Once on the shoulder we found we had two options; traverse some mega exposed and steep snow, or make a couple rappels down a gully with what looked like minimal protection and lots of loose blocks. We set up a belay to check it out but realized it would be sketchy with the little gear we had brought and very time consuming. We came to the conclusion that standing on top of Mount Harmston was not to be a part of this trip. The descent back down the trail to the bikes was rapid, but we knew we still had a good amount of pedalling to do that day. Packing our bikes took a bit of time (something we would improve on in the future), but soon enough we were bombing the FSRs back to Cumberland on our 100-pound bikes with open toed sandals. We had left the rest of the crew back on the ridge so we could get a head start, and Josh even wagered that if we beat them back to town on the bikes, the pizza was on him. That was all the motivation we needed and we rolled into town just two minutes ahead of the truck. After eating the pizza, we repacked our bags with the next food supply, said our goodbyes, and headed off into the night hoping to make it to a real campsite and cut down some cycling distance for the



Finn staying "dry" at Lone Tree Pass.

next day. Cycling from Cumberland through Comox we made it into Kin Beach campsite around 11 p.m. The operator was super nice (let us put our leftover pizza in the staff fridge) and we just put down the sleeping bags on the open grass for the night. Twenty kilometres of hiking and nearly 60 on the bikes 'twas a pretty solid day. Around 3 a.m. it began to rain. We couldn't be bothered to properly set up the tarp, so we crawled underneath it and passed out again.



Kin Beach Campground.

The morning was still damp. We breakfasted on cold pizza and were on the bikes before the day began to heat up. Following the rolling coastline, we would bike nearly 100 kilometres to reach Strathcona Park Lodge. Notable moments included Nanaimo bars, fruit, questionable gate/property bypassing, gas station water fills (with many odd looks from the locals) before arriving in Campbell River in the midst of Canada Day parades. Fortunately, it wasn't hard to find parking for our two-wheeled steeds, so we propped them up outside and went for a lunchtime coffee and pastry sampling. Overall, we were

moving well on this long bike day, but were still only halfway and we needed to pick up some additional supplies before leaving town (food, sunscreen, aloe and voltaren). The July sun baked directly overhead as we climbed and descended in a westward direction on the bikes. By the time we arrived we must have looked ghostly owing to the layers of mineral sunscreen and dust we'd accumulated, nonetheless the staff at Strathcona Park Lodge welcomed us kindly. We were surprised to find out they'd set a room aside (with a shower!!). We had been expecting to camp in their yard space, so this was a welcome upgrade. We are incredibly grateful for the support and hospitality from Strathcona Park Lodge, the reprieve of meals and accommodation allowed us to rest and replenish our energy before pushing on, and this was a huge morale boost after failing to summit our first objective.

Section Two: Mount Septimus and Nine Peaks (Finn)

At this point we still felt as though we had the whole trip in front of us, and with our scoresheet reading zero we had something to prove. The anticipation urged us on. An early start had us riding 40 kilometres down Highway 28 and Westmin Road, each of us with one airpod blasting Charli XCX's 'BRAT' (2024 was locked-in BRAT summer after all). After reaching the turnoff onto the gravel road heading to the Bedwell Lake trailhead we pedalled up the road to the righthand corner where the road steepens and switch backs. Here we hastily stashed our bikes as we wanted to push on before the day got too hot. We organized our packs so that we had three nights and four days' worth of food, and set off hiking up the road. A short distance along the Bedwell trail we stopped at Thelwood Creek to cool off and have lunch before settling into the switchbacks

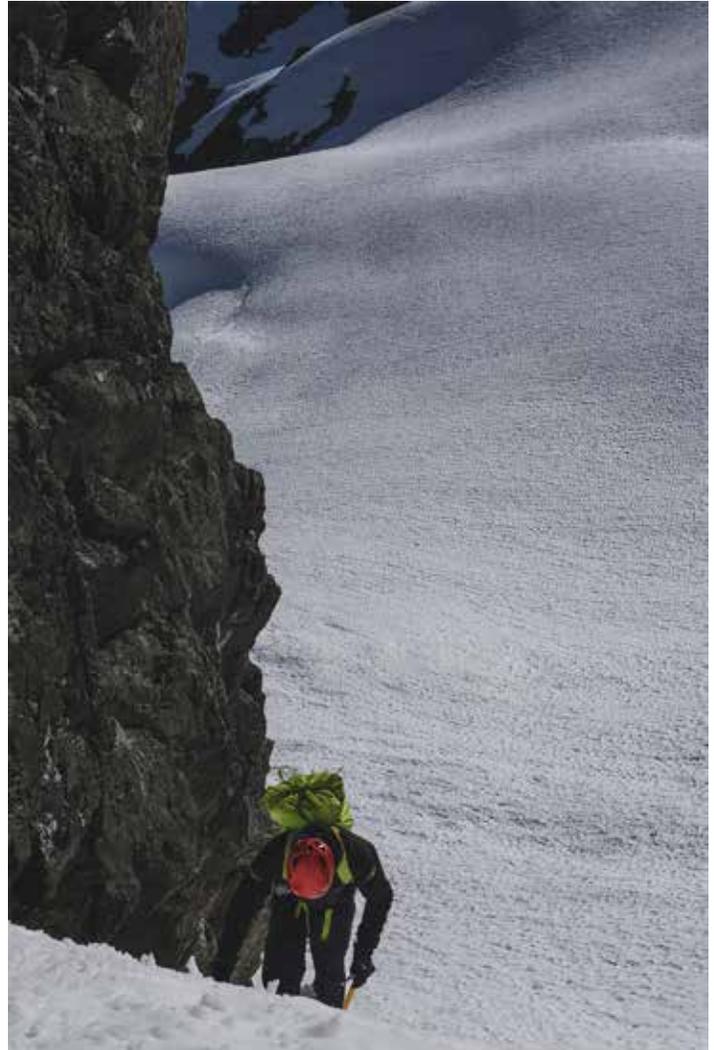
leading to Baby Bedwell and Bedwell Lake and subsequently Little Jim Lake. The stretch past Little Jim Lake dragged on and on and we were appropriately exhausted by the time we set up camp in the boulder-field on the shore of Cream Lake. We had a stellar view up the Septimus neve to the chossy summits above and were relieved to see the X-Gully filled with snow. We hoped this would grant us safe passage as we did not like the idea of climbing via the south facing rock routes.



The X-Gully, from Cream Lake camp.

The reality of the change in weather for the better had begun to set in, and while it afforded confident and safe travel, the relentless sun soon became a critical factor in our planning. After a clear and starry night we picked our way up the bullet-hard snow of the glacier. We both expressed apprehension around our lack of crampons, but we comforted each other with the thought of the warm temperatures softening the snow. Our hopes were quickly confirmed when the sun climbed over the summit block. The X-Gully had one break in the steep snow two thirds of the way up forming a minor crux. It was larger than we anticipated, perhaps two metres across but presenting a four metre overhanging wall of snow on the uphill side. Fortunately, the hole had filled in and we were able to climb into the gap before stemming our way out on the left side

where the snow met the side of the gully. We booted our way up to the notch, descended a short distance onto the glacier, and then traversed across to the 3rd class step onto a ridge and up the final snow pitch to the summit.



Brennan descending the backside of the X-Gully.

It was a fun short climb from Cream Lake, and we were keen to get back down for a swim and siesta before moving camp. We set the tarp up as a sun shield to get some rest under it after cooling off on the lake, but it only acted to trap the heat and form a sort of sauna.

We woke in a bit of a daze. We packed up and slowly retraced yesterday's track back to Little Jim Lake. In the evening light, we crossed the creek at the outflow and



Our sunshade/greenhouse.

descended until we found a campsite on a large flat rock outcrop. That afternoon was a low-point for me. After several long hot days and despite the short hike (seven kilometres), I felt I had a touch of heat stroke. I was suffering.



Looking back towards Big Interior Mountain with heavy packs.

Six days into the trip we were adapting to the stresses: the heat, the fatigue, and the insufferable mosquitos which ruled each day. That same evening a subpar rehydration of our Pad Thai meal made for a rather crunchy affair, but calories are calories when you're hungry and so we reconciled our kitchen performance as "abrasive, but nice" to quote Daniel Woods. And with that we gathered our gear and spirits for the following day; the long march to Nine Peaks

and back. The night thankfully cooled off and we planned to start early to maximize our time in the cooler temps. Setting off around 5 a.m. we immediately lost our way, traversing too low and scrambling through wet brush and negotiating a maze of bluffs before eventually finding the route down to the basin. After this it was a monotonous traverse over Big Interior Mountain (with a beautiful sunrise) and down to Bear Pass. We made sure to stay hydrated, eat, and reapply sunscreen unremittingly, and this would become the pattern for the day. The previous year we had climbed Nine Peaks in late spring conditions, so we knew what to expect. Still the soft snow laboured our steps but afforded easy routing, and with relatively light packs (though we did bring the rope just in case) we made steady progress. Around 11 a.m. we mounted the topmost point of Nine Peaks via the main snow gully. We refueled, re-sunscreened and reconnected with the outside world before making our way back down the glacier (bum sliding most of the way). Just like the previous year the hike back up Big Interior Mountain was a slog. We paused in the shade of trees whenever they offered it. Eventually we came across a bizarre snow feature and spent a good fifteen minutes sliding and generally amusing ourselves, after which we questioned our sanity slightly.



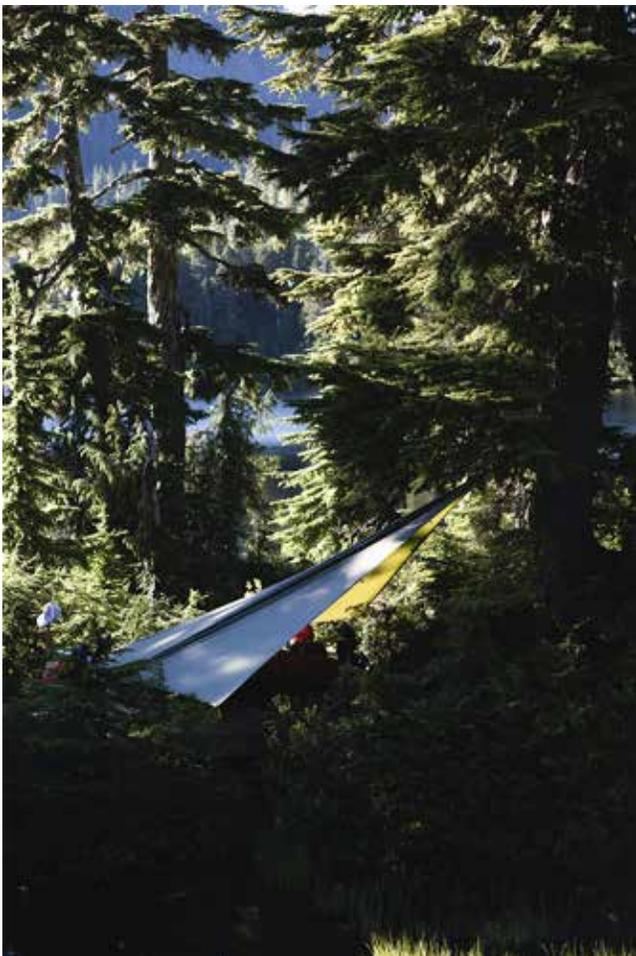
The goal was to slide through the hole without destroying the formation.

I felt surprisingly good in contrast to the previous afternoon and owe it to the systematic fueling and consistent pace.



Endless snow slogging on Big Interior Mountain.

Besides feeling tired I don't recall anything notable from the return to camp, upon which we packed our stashed gear and continued on down to Bedwell Lake campground, arriving at 6 p.m.



The following morning we made our way slowly down the Bedwell trail with swollen feet, but a grand sense of satisfaction. Finding the bikes we had stashed, we packed up for the short ride around to Myra Falls. On this section I felt like we had found our rhythm and was proud of the big efforts we had put in the past days.

Section Three: The Golden Hinde (Brennan)

After getting back from Mount Septimus and Nine Peaks, we were feeling pretty worked. It was one of the longer sections of our trip, and one of the only without anyone else keeping us company. Fired up for a couple mellow rest days at lower Myra Falls, we set up camp just off the main trail and prepared to achieve the elusive gold medal rest day.



Camp setup at Myra Falls. The bug net setup was getting dialed by this point.

We were waiting to meet Elise and Bridget who would be joining us for the Golden Hinde section where we planned to take three days for the round trip; the first day to Carter Lake, second to summit and return to camp, and the third to the trailhead and bike back to Strathcona Park Lodge. Fresh legs and renewed spirits really improved our energy which spurred on our pace. Somewhere along the switchbacks it dawned on Finn that he may have forgotten

to stash his bike. It seemed to him that it might have evaded his attention being tucked off next to our kitchen stump in the parking lot, so when we passed some folks heading down we asked if they would kindly check on it and move it off into the woods if necessary. Both Bridget and Elise were varsity runners so really pushed on the hills while we did our best to keep the caboose on the tracks, in fact they seemed to only have one gear. Inevitably we were fatigued when we made it to the lake and devoted the rest of the day to finding shade, avoiding bugs, and cooling off in the lake (a theme perhaps?).



Skirting Schjelderup Lake.

primed so decided it was best not to join us for the summit. It would just be Finn and I (Bridget hadn't planned on joining us to the summit). Scarfing down our surprisingly tasty rice pudding breakfast, we got on our way, sporting running vests with ice axes either comically poking out the back at odd angles or in our hands. We were feeling pretty spry and nimble when the sunrise greeted us on the Burman Ridge. It was actually a lot of fun while we still felt fresh, unburdened by having to carry our packs. Hiking down the ridge towards Burman Lake with the Golden Hinde directly in front of us and the sun rising quickly to the east, was a memorable moment for me. We took a break at the tarn below where the real climbing began and the bread and jam that Bridget had packed for us was thoroughly enjoyed. We began up the gullies and snow patches that lead towards the peak. It was relatively simple scrambling, however, the main concern was loose rocks and the millions of mosquitos that followed us all the way to the summit. We enjoyed some more bread and jam on the summit and took in the views. It was cool to appreciate just how much distance we had covered, being able to see all of the peaks we had climbed, and to see where we would be going next. It was pretty crazy to think that just four days ago we had been on the summit of Nine Peaks. That the power in our legs and a chronic supply of fig bars got us here.



Rice pudding by headlamp.

We were up at 4 a.m. the next morning and unfortunately for Elise, she wasn't feeling



Brennan descending the Golden Hinde.



Golden Hinde from Phillips Ridge.

The trip down was uneventful, other than our legs feeling quite a bit slower and the onset of some patellar tendinitis. Making it back to camp at Carter Lake around 1 p.m., we decided to take a good rest out of the heat before moving camp to the top of Phillips Ridge later in the day. This would take a good amount of time out of our next day in which we would need to cycle 40 kilometres back to the lodge. Feeling thoroughly worked, we enjoyed another stellar sunset from the safety of our bug nets. The next morning we descended to the trailhead and with great relief found our bikes safely in the woods. We quickly packed while simultaneously downing carb mixes and stray snacks, then set a rapid pace back the lodge on our bikes before their lunch window closed. We averaged just over 30 kilometres per hour, and strava promptly congratulated us on our new 40 kilometre personal records

(PRs). It was made more meaningful by the state of our legs and the weight of our pedal powered rigs.

Section Four: Elkhorn Mountain and Mount Colonel Foster (Brennan)

A shorter and more pleasant ride brought us to Gold River where we took in the scenery and sampled the local fair. The rest day was effective in rejuvenating the body and mind, alongside the prospect of being joined by Natalie and Savannah for Elkhorn Mountain climb. First on our list of “foods to try when in Gold River” was the legendary gas station pizza, made fresh for you while you lounge on the pillowy and shaded lawns of the Municipal Hall.

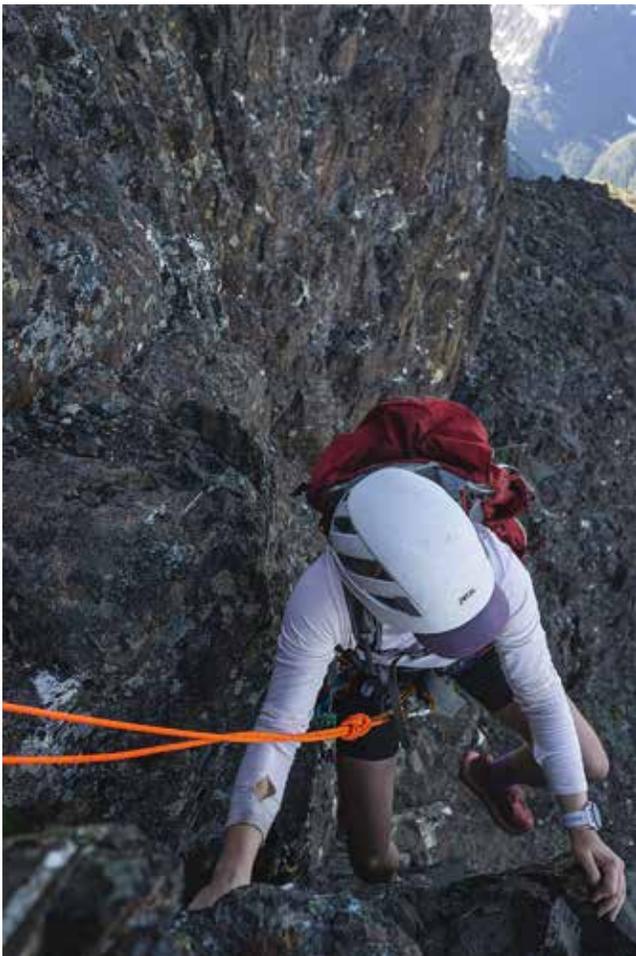


Pristine nap spot.

After a full meal of pasta in our bellies we strapped those pizza boxes on the back of our bikes and pedalled the short uphill section of highway back to the Elk River trailhead. Our plan was to camp in the parking lot where we would meet the rest of our party. A slow, but delicious pancake breakfast fuelled us for the day ahead. The hike up the Elk River Trail (ERT) was enjoyable and it was a nice change of pace to not be gaining 1000 metres of vertical for breakfast (it would be for lunch). After crossing the Elk River, we spent a couple minutes faffing about trying to find the trail. We followed the meandering trail up and

found it a bit of a grind in places but made more fun with good company. Cresting the ridge brought us a picturesque view of Elkhorn Mountain. We hiked a few hundred metres further and found a nice place to set up camp in the late afternoon. With plenty of daylight remaining we practiced anchor building, taught Natalie how to rappel, and did some top roping on the bluffs. The goal for the next day was to head up the Northwest Ridge with Savannah. Natalie was more psyched to hang around camp and take in the scenes. The next day we had an early start. section cast an ominous shadow and looked particularly steep owing to the indistinguishable features in the lee of the morning light. Luckily, it only looked steep, and as we moved on we found it to be pretty mellow and fun scrambling. We took our time, getting out the rope for the 5.4 corner, after Finn soloed up.

We came across a steep snow section which had a hard crust and some serious exposure so we roped up again. It was nice to use the rope and actually build anchors in a real mountain setting instead of it just sitting in the bottom of our packs. We continued up the choss towards the summit. A solid effort for Savannah's first Island Qualifier, and the forth for us in 10 days. It did not really sink in at the time, but we grew to appreciate the days of work after the fact. The trip down went smoothly and we chose to downclimb most of the route thus avoiding some sketchy rappel anchors. We made it to the valley bottom, albeit slowly, feeling pretty mentally taxed. We said goodbye to Natalie and Savannah after fording the river as they were hiking out and we set up camp on a sandbar. We were planning on meeting Mark the next day as he would be accompanying us on Mount Colonel Foster.



Savannah on the crux section of Elkhorn Mountain.



Another pristine nap spot.

It seems nothing really goes according to plan on the Colonel. Mark was scheduled to meet us along the trail, however, we didn't know it at the time that he had hiked in the day before to get a headstart and was waiting for us around the 10 kilometre point. Around 3 p.m. a park ranger walked past and asked us if we were meeting a friend and mentioned that he was further up trail. We hastily packed up and set off up the trail. We found Mark hiking back towards us about five kilometres from Landslide Lake. Because

of our poor communication, we were short on time and worried. Unfortunately for Mark he had caught some sort of bug, but bravely continued. Eventually we gained the south col after a slow navigation of the 4th class terrain. We took in the last rays of light in awe before deliberating on the plan for the following day.



Mark taking in the last rays of light on Foster Col.

Mark still hadn't been able to stomach anything so we planned on heading up and just see how it felt. Scrambling up the southeast peak we were all feeling the stress. Finn and I were mentally fatigued from the length of our trip and Mark wasn't great having not eaten in 24 hours. From the southeast peak we looked towards the main summit and it became clear it was just not the day to be climbed, especially given the exposure and complexity of the terrain. On the hike out we said goodbye to Mark at Berg Lake as he understandably wanted to take a slower pace. Despite feeling like a bit of a zombie, I remember having good conversations with Finn about school and our goals for the future. We also felt very appreciative of the forest we were walking through. Once back at the bikes at the trailhead we headed straight for the Gold River gas station.

Section Five: Victoria and Warden Peaks (Finn)

We spent our rest day in Gold River reflecting on the trip so far, swimming, and deliberating on the future. The physical toll was adding up and while we were enjoying the moments, the thought of cycling a further two days after Victoria Peak and Warden Peak on remote logging roads and in the continuing hot weather, was not so appealing. We were apprehensive because the Liquor and General store in Woss was the only stop along the route. We brainstormed some ideas and adapted our plans while drinking coffee and eating big plates of potatoes and eggs. With the thought of some rain in the forecast, we almost decided to leave a bit early and make a last ditch attempt on Warden Peak ourselves before meeting Keith, Josh and Alex for Victoria Peak. This didn't stick so we eventually agreed to meet the crew at a rec site on route to Victoria Peak. We would climb it together and if conditions and timing worked in our favour, we would follow our original plan to link Victoria Peak and Warden Peak in a day.



More napping.

On day 18, we packed up from our home away from home at the confluence of the Gold and Heber Rivers and cycled a couple hours to a fine rec site at Twaddle Lake. Here we awaited our friends, cooling ourselves



Our camp spot in Gold River, recommended by a local!

in the lake and eating candy. We were grateful for the ride up to the Victoria Peak trailhead in a vehicle as the road gains some 600-metres and was very loose and chunky. We likely would've been pushing our bikes



Alex, Brennan and Keith heading up the ridge.

up the road instead of riding. Keith was able to drive us nice and high up the road with his bold but skilled maneuvering of the old VW transporter, although numerous deep swales in the road tried to harm the bumpers. It was mid-afternoon when we started hiking and the heat was stifling. Our aim was to reach the tarn camp at 1500-metres. We reached the tarn and went through our evening routines, pointing at peaks on the skyline and filling our friends in on the details of the trip to date.

This would be the final day of our trip, and we woke with solemn excitement. Moving out of camp we picked our way up the ridge to the rock outcrop overlooking a partially snow-filled basin where on the other side the impressive South Face of Victoria Peak loomed. Our stubborn pace hadn't agreed with Josh and he decided he didn't want to hold us back if we were trying to move quickly to link the two qualifiers that day. The four of us (Brennan, Keith, Alex and myself) made our way down and across to the base of the standard route, traversing the wide bench up to the two-step corner where we roped up. The short rock pitch was fun and enjoyable.



Finn, Keith and Alex on Victoria Peak's South Face..

Above us the talus slope was interspersed with snow. We were all moving well and eventually arrived on the summit where we

wrote an entry in the logbook. We looked across to Warden Peak, our final destination, still wondering where the route off the southeast ridge began and what it entailed to get over to the peak. We descended down to a point a few hundred metres above the initial rock pitch and traversed over to where we thought we might find the gully to rappel into, but nothing friendly revealed itself. Further investigation still revealed no possible route, at least not with our trail shoes and light alpine rack. We had to accept that like the other summits we hadn't reached, we'd have to come back for this one another time. Once back at camp, Brennan and I took off as we wanted to reach the truck ahead of the others, drop our packs and ride our bikes down the long descent back to Twaddle Lake. We wanted to finish the journey on our own, a sort of celebration. It was a gripping ride down on our rigid steel framed bikes, and when we arrived at the rec site, our forearms were pumped but we had big grins on our faces. Once the crew caught up to us, we took them to the gas station in Gold River, our favourite dining establishment, and had pizza, bringing our trip to a happy close.

Section Six: next time...

4. Reflection

Finn



A trip of this length, despite the incomplete disconnection from the outside world, affords an escape from the routines and habits we face each day. This degree of separation breeds reflection and for that I am grateful. In a world of seemingly endless complexity, where many seek minimalism as a form of escape, these trips offer a more natural solution than “dumb-phones” or screen time limits. The simple nature of living outside and spending most of your day walking reinforces life's necessities and what is meaningful to me, and by addressing my privilege to pursue these activities I wonder how the world would be if more young people had experiences like this. As a student I can't help but contrast and analyze my experience through the lens of my education. The concept of the ‘flow state’ also described as the challenge-competence theory came up throughout the trip, and intuitively states that optimal arousal for a task is influenced by the degree of challenge and the degree of competence of the individual. By setting a large goal such as climbing all nine peaks of the Island Qualifiers under human power, we would undoubtedly come near or surpass certain internal limits; comfort, risk, fatigue, friendship, mental fortitude and so on. But it's the high degree of challenge that allowed me to become fully enveloped in the experience, and I relate this indirectly to the motivation to achieve the goal. Through this understanding of motivation being a function of passion, personal investment, competence and challenge I hope to push myself further through intimidating goals and a healthy curiosity. This experience has deepened my appreciation for Vancouver Island and for the many wonderful communities we passed through. It has also enhanced my interest in mountaineering and alpine skills and I hope to spend much more time learning and expanding my knowledge in these areas. I'd like to thank the many

friends, family and community members who contributed to our adventure in some way, your support was overwhelming. And to the ACC Vancouver Island section a big thank you for your trust in our vision for the trip and for the financial support through the memorial fund. As well, to the team at Arc'teryx Victoria who not only provided gear for this trip but have supported me in many of my athletic, outdoor and creative pursuits. And to Strathcona Park Lodge for their hospitality and for their enduring contributions to the community and their stewardship of the environment.

Brennan



A goal or objective of this magnitude is not something I have ever taken on before, and

the feeling of technically not completing the goal but still being entirely fulfilled in what we have accomplished is pretty special. The uncertainty of the outcome and curiosity as to if it was actually possible is something I haven't really experienced in the past, I never felt this way about any of my goals in competitive climbing. In this sense, the trip helped me realize the direction I want to lean towards for future objectives. Spending so many memorable nights under the bug net gave me a solid appreciation for the landscapes we get to play in, but it also makes me consider the impact we have on the environment. While I haven't come up with any novel solutions to things such as trail erosion, trash or the seemingly ever warmer summers, I am more conscious and aware of them, and doing my best to reduce my impact in ways that are reasonable and/or meaningful to me. In a world where everyone is always looking for the next big challenge or to "level up" it's easy to look towards the mainland for bigger objectives. While this trip did exactly that, it also made me realize how little I have actually explored Vancouver Island and how many more adventures are to be had here. I'm psyched to be in the position to have such easy access to the outdoors (a bike ride away!!) and I will continue to learn and play by getting amongst it. Thank you to everyone who supported the trip, it means a lot to me that people are psyched by our silly trip ideas and are willing to give their time and resources to make them happen.

Leaders: Finn Battersby and Brennan Doyle



A Futile Folly of Fellows

Jes Garceau

July 6-15, 2024

I gratefully acknowledge the land on which this trip took place in Strathcona Provincial Park, is on the traditional territory of the Nuu-chah-nulth people. It's a great honour to explore these lands and my everlasting thanks for them to steward these areas for time long before my ancestors arrived. Planning for this trip started long before the trip took place. Born out of Matthew and Phil's unfathomable project of completing all the peaks in Phil Stone's Island Alpine book, Phil drew a track to bag a large portion of West Strathcona's largely unvisited peaks, in a single unsupported trip. The goal was lofty, as we found out, we weren't quite tall enough...

Day 1:

Shortly after noon, Rick drops the four of us up a spur road off the Ucona Main, around 400 metres up Pamela Creek to the west of Mount Donner. Under the blazing sun, amid a heatwave, we left into the forest. Our 'easy' goal of making camp at 1300 metres in the basin below Mount Donner was quickly at risk, when after a few hundred metres Phil came to a stop. He wasn't healthy. He was trying to fight something off the entire drive from Nanaimo. Because of the heat, the beyond heavy packs, and the daunting duration of the trip, Phil knew he had to pull the pin now and give us the option of continuing without him or jeopardizing the entire trip with an extraction at a later point. He, and we, choose the former and we split his group gear and continued, parting ways. This brought our packs up to a debilitating

55+ pounds. We were expected to carry everything we needed on this trip. Packing the kitchen sink is difficult business. We made camp around 6 p.m. Some of the team wanted to climb Mount Donner so off they went. I was now feeling unwell and had climbed the peak with Barry and Eryn last year so it was an easy decision for me to stay in camp and rest. The fellas made the quick trip to the summit in the cool of the evening.

Day 2:

We were on the move by 7 a.m. and just after 10 a.m. we were standing at the summit of Mount Kent-Urquhart at 1811 metres. It was already hot, our arms were tired from swatting the endless clouds of bugs, and the packs were weighing down our very souls. These items on the agenda would prove to take up most of our bandwidth the entire trip. Doused in sweat, we meandered our way south down to Urquhart Lake [unofficial] at 1300 metres. We quickly dropped our rigs, and three bare bummed boys were submerged in that glorious cold water. It was only day two and we were already having a long, lazy lunch... After lunch it was back up to gain the North Ridge of M.S. Mountain and then climb over the small snowcapped glacier. From here we traversed around the



*Urquhart Lake, below Mount Kent-Urquhart.
(Photo by Jes Garceau)*

east side of the massif, from 1500 metres sweeping around to 1700 metres on the south side. We then struck directly up to the summit at 1754 metres. It was already 6 p.m. so we didn't stay long. We dropped down onto the ridge to 1600 metres and set up camp. We quickly ate dinner and just as quickly sought reprieve from the bugs - so many bugs, "so many. Bugs!"

Day 3:

I awoke around 3 a.m. and thought "these rocks are really uncomfortable." But wait, no, my air mattress was flat, ugh. "Try to sleep more." Try I did, but without success. We were up early and off by 6 a.m. Today was to be a big day. We were off to Popsicle Peak at the head of the Pamela Creek. Trying to ignore the three aforementioned agenda items, I focused on how beautiful the long ridge over to our objective was. It mostly hovered around the 1500 metre level until it dropped to around 1370 metres below the west flank of Popsicle Peak. Somehow it had already taken us four hours to get here. We dropped our packs and plowed forward up to the summit at 1675 metres. We wandered out to the sub-peak and then made a different route back down to our packs. Our plan was to drop down the south ridge all the way to the Burman River which was just outside of the park. There we would find the logging road and use the bridge to cross the mighty Burman River. The bushy traverse around Popsicle Peak at 1350 metres was less than desirable, and it was leading to unknown terrain. As far as we knew, we would be the first to descend this route to the valley bottom. The topo map made it look easy, but it's all we had to go by. The same topo showed some descending plateaus before the vertical drop to river bottom. We found drinking water at around 1150 metres, drank heavily, and continued. It was now after 2 p.m. We had already been on

the go for eight hours, it was at least 1 million degrees out, and we still had over 1000 metres of elevation to lose. We struggled our way down to 850 metres to the last of the plateaus before the "off the face of the earth" drop. We still had over 700 metres to descend in just over one kilometre. It was now 4 p.m. and we were on a delirious crawl. We made the hard decision not to make our goal and therefore fall behind on our trip schedule. Finding water and a camping site was now the goal. The topo wasn't quite forthcoming as there didn't appear to be any flat areas, but more importantly it didn't show any water. Back onto the non-road unknown. We found the toe of the ridge was everything we thought it would be - an endless maze of bluffs. The complex terrain kept pushing us west as we desperately searched for ramps to lead us down. We eventually arriving at the top of a five metre waterfall at around 200 metres. It was 8 p.m., it had been six hours since our last drink of water, and we had been on foot for 14 hours. What a glorious sight. We continued down arriving at the bridge at 20 metres elevation a little after 11 p.m. I was feeling nauseous and couldn't eat. I set up my tent, laid out the ropes and webbing underneath me, and collapsed on them. "I'll look for you another time" I said to the hole in my air mattress. I then closed my eyes.

Day 4:

No alarm, no departure time. We hit the road sometime after noon. Not ideal in this heat wave but we just had nothing in the tank. We only needed to gain the alpine below Splendor Mountain on the other side of the valley and find somewhere to camp. Just 1100 metres of elevation in the forest - nothing to it. We just shut our brains off and went for it. Aside from a wasp throwing what only could have been a javelin through my lip, it was a mostly uneventful day. We hiked

south up through the bush to one of the most beautiful places I've ever camped at 1150 metres. We threw our packs down at 10 p.m. As I unpacked I contemplated: "Maybe I should just shed the weight of this mattress I'm not using and leave it here. I hope my face doesn't continue to swell anymore." I fluffed the ropes and before I came up with an answer, my eyes closed.

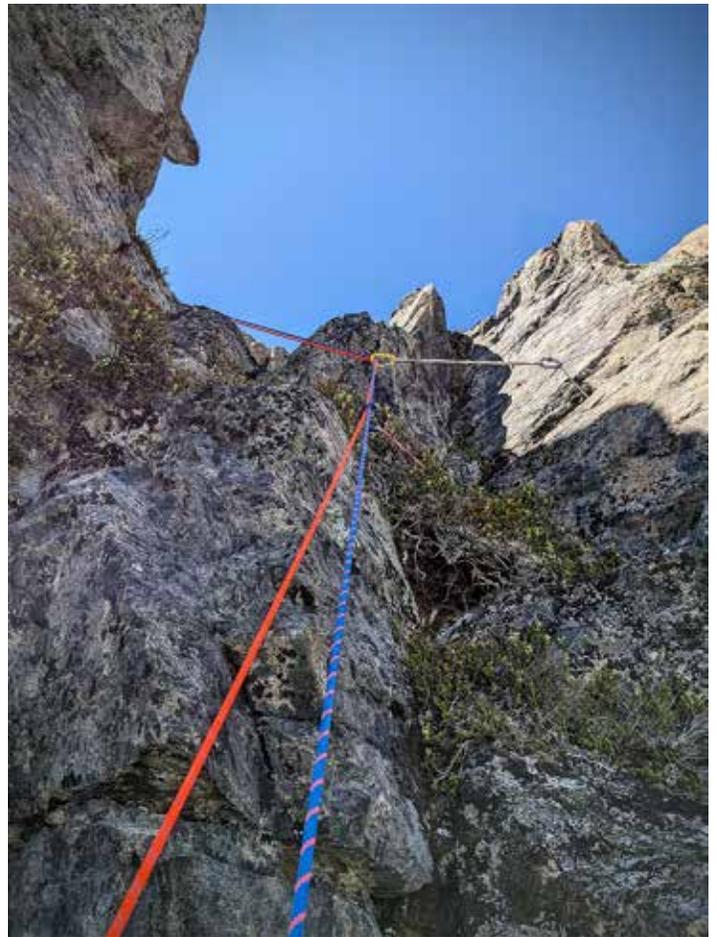


Camp below Splendor Mountain Glacier.
(Photo by Jes Garceau)

Day 5:

I awoke in better spirits today. The swelling was down, and we were ready to make our way to the very seldom visited Splendor Mountain. We made our way up to the Splendor glacier crest at 1650 metres, where we transferred to day packs and climbing gear. We traversed over to the bottom of the route on the south aspect of the summit block. Matthew set up a belay station at a stout bush and Dom led the 40-metre, mid-5th chossy, bushy, exposed pitch using a mix of small cams and slings over rock horns. From there we made our way through large boulders and scrambled to the summit at 1768 metres. After finding, but not liking, Barry and Eryn's rap station from the year previous, we decided to go back down the way we came up. It would appear some folks have more *faith* (Barry, quite literally) in rapping off downward sloping rocks the same size as a human. None of us were

'super climbers.' It was after 6 p.m. by the time we returned to our bags. We were supposed to also climb Hygro Peak today but it wasn't going to happen. We dropped back down to 1650 metres. Today was one of those days where the climbing was fun, the temperature was tolerable, there were no bugs, and it was still light out. We setup camp at decent time and got to enjoy the sun painting one of its masterpieces across the horizon as it fell into eternity behind the Pacific Ocean. It was a glorious evening. I also figured that the outflow plug on my air mattress wasn't quite sealing all the way. Tonight I'm sleeping on air.



Up Splendor Mountain.
(Photo by Jes Garceau)

Day 6:

At 4 a.m. I am sleeping on the rocks again. I sighed, why mattress, *whyyyyyyyy*! Shortly after rising we all sat down for a serious

discussion about the trip. We had been fighting every day to stay on our proposed target, we were exhausted, and the heat was back. We were now well behind schedule. Ahead of us was still a huge part of the trip. We wanted to climb The Scissors, Scimitar Peak, and Mitla Peak and Spire. Then drop down to Moyeha Creek, climb Mariner Mountain and then take the high ridge over to Mount Tom Taylor and out to Matthew's vehicle at the Bedwell trailhead. We decided we would go as far as Scimitar and head back out to the Burman River and arrange passage back to Gold River. Although disappointed we were also elated thinking about getting home. I can't explain how destroyed my body felt though. We dumped several days of food and started the descent to the col under Hygro Peak. We stopped at a beautiful tarn at 1300 metres and then had an enjoyable bushy scramble to the summit of Hygro Peak at 1634 metres. We proceeded south along a sweeping alpine ridge at around 1500 metres before turning west and dropping to 1140 metres. Ahead of us we could peer across to the gully used to gain the Scimitar Glacier. It was half full of rotten snow and the unseasonable heat was melting and draining the glacier at a substantial rate. It was impassable.

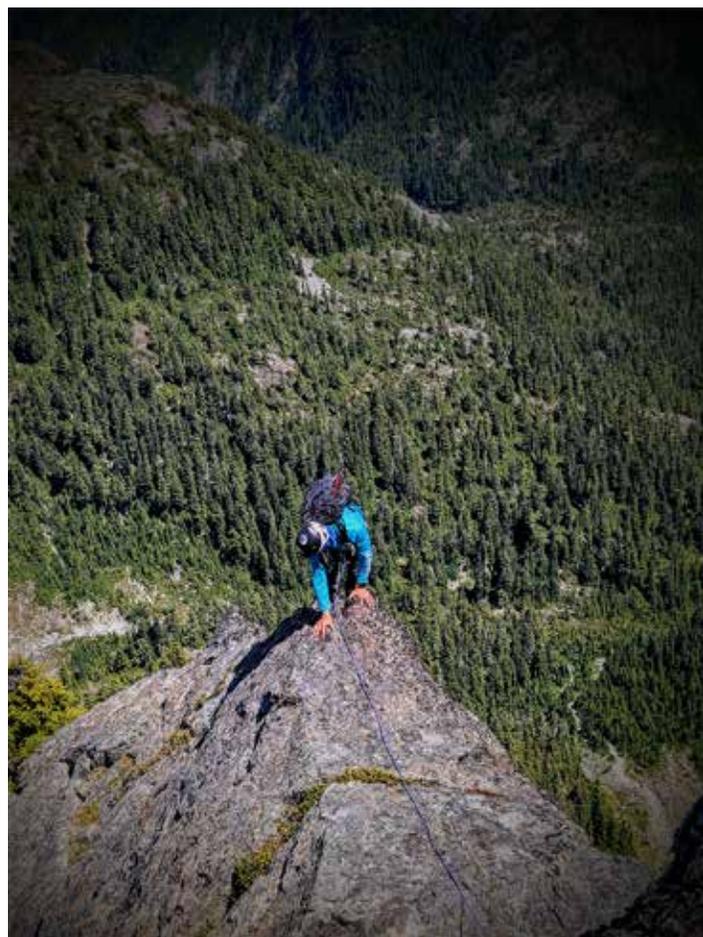


*Camp with The Scissors and Scimitar Mountain Behind.
(Photo by Jes Garceau)*

How disappointing! We set up camp at another incredibly beautiful location. As a consolation prize, we would camp here again the next night. I tinkered with my air mattress again and found a small hole below the exhaust port. I patched it and thought "I'm going to sleep tonight."

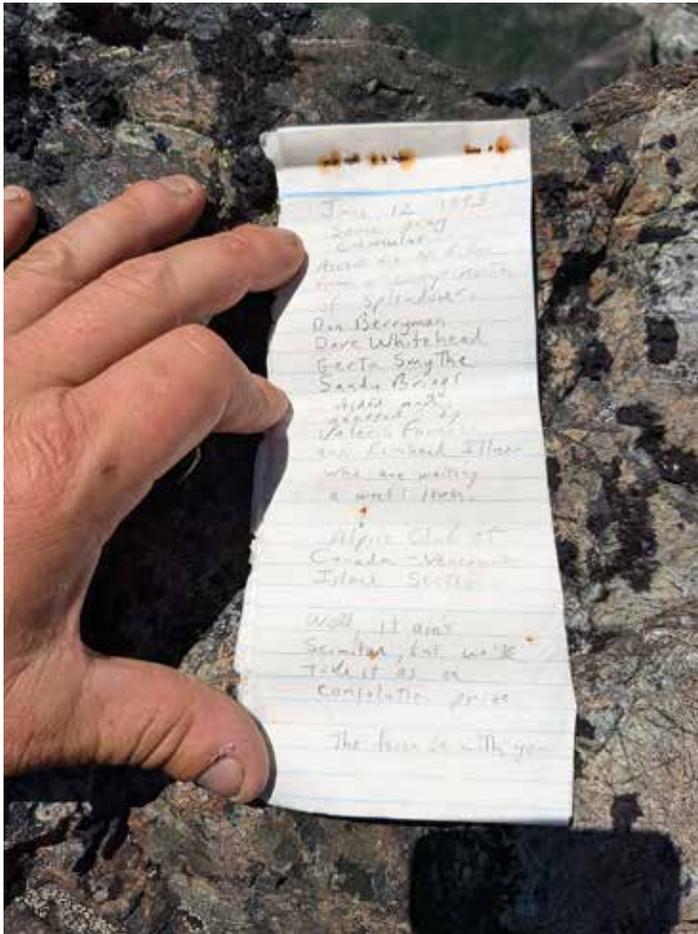
Day 7:

We arose and decided we would first see if we could find a high route below the summit of The Scissors over to the Scimitar Glacier. A deep cleft thwarted us so we went back up to the ridge to climb The Scissors. This would be our last summit of the trip. The climbing was a lot of fun with piles of exposed 4th and low 5th scrambling up to the ultra-exposed slab just below summit. Dom led the razor edge to just shy of the summit. It was



*The Scissors slab.
(Photo by Jes Garceau)*

a lovely treat to find the register still in mint condition from the first recorded ascent by the ACCVI in 1993. We were the sixth party to summit the 1602 metre peak. We made several rappels on the way back down, including a full 60 metre off a cliff directly into camp. I had fun today.



*A bit of Island Alps history.
(Photo by Jes Garceau)*

Day 8:

We got up and were on the move at a time unknown. I didn't take note. We still had a decent day of multiple ups and downs. All we could think about were cheezies and burgers and beer. The plan was to head back over to Hygro Peak, drop again, scramble back up to the Splendor Glacier and then back down to where we camped on day four. We got back there after enjoying some long breaks, including a nice nap at the beautiful tarn at

the Hygro Col. "Soon I will be relieved of this incessant buzzing of bugs in my ear."



*The diminishing Scimitar glacier.
(Photo by Matthew Lettington)*

Day 9:

We made our way back down to the Burman River and all the way to the mouth at Matchlee Bay. We camped that night at the small private dock. It was Sunday and we were hoping a falling crew would arrive for work the next day and we could get a lift with them. All other forms of transport were fully booked for several days. Dock naps and an early bedtime.

Day 10:

The crew arrived in the morning and said they would give us a ride at the end of the day. Around midday another boat arrived. It was Jarrod Douglas from Cypress Creek logging. He had a production crew with him and were scouting a location to shoot a film on the dumping of a log barge to finish the filming for season one of 'The Last Woodsmen'. They gave us a ride to the Gold River docks and then we arranged a ride to the Bedwell trailhead to get our vehicles. Although we didn't attain our complete goal, we accomplished more than I ever thought I could, both as a team and personally. The sum of the obstacles proved to be far too

great to overcome. I suppose that is the nature of this game. Spending 10 days grinding in the backcountry with these guys was incredible, the moments we shared and the deep and/or goofy conversations we had, they are only ours forever.

Till the next one...

Participants: Phil Jackson, Matthew Lettington, Dom Skelcher, and Jes Garceau

Mount Palmerston

Lindsay Elms

July 15, 2024

The years flew by and before I knew it my last ascent of Mount Palmerston was almost thirty years ago (1996). Forsooth, I remember the climb as if it happened only yesterday – racing towards the summit with dark foreboding clouds chasing my friend Nicola and I. Five minutes from the summit it began to drizzle. It wasn't an easy scramble up heather slopes like other surrounding peaks; we had to climb under and over low lying krummholz trees interspersed with rocky steps. The rock had become slippery. On the summit under a large cairn was a survey marker indicating surveyors had been to the top in the 1930s. There was no view because of thick clouds so there was no point in lingering. A couple of hours later we arrived back at the vehicle and drove to Woss where the skies decided to really release their pent-up moisture. I've always wanted to make a return trip to Mount Palmerston, but there was always some other peak to climb. A Facebook post two weeks earlier spurred me into action. Photos of beautiful basins on the north side of the peak from Cederstedt Creek looked inviting.



*Looking down from the summit at the approach valley (note the short hike from the road to the scree slope).
(Photo by Lindsay Elms)*

Mount Palmerston (1763 m) was named by Captain George Richards of the Royal Navy during his hydrographic survey of the coastline of Vancouver Island circa 1860. He named it after Henry John Temple Palmerston, 3rd Viscount Palmerston (1784-1865). He was a British statesman and Liberal prime minister (1855-8, 1859-65). His brusque speed, assertive manner, and robust defences of what he considered to be British interests abroad secured him the name of 'Firebrand Palmerston.' A more comfortable nickname was Pam, and his frequently xenophobic foreign policy won him substantial popular support in Britain. He is associated with 'Gunboat Diplomacy,' whereby Britain employed, or threatened to employ, its unchallenged naval supremacy to resolve overseas differences in its favour. His authority as P.M. in 1859 was unchallenged, and he became Britain's oldest prime minister. He died in office in 1865.

Late Monday afternoon, Val and I drove down the Adam River towards the log sort and then took the E-N Hook-up towards Naka Creek. A few kilometres in we turned up the NK700. The old road was in good shape and only in a few places did the bush rub up against the paint of our new Tacoma. About

one kilometre from the end of the road some trees brought us to a stop. Not robust standing trees, but a few big beasts which had fallen down across the road. In front of us the mountain was glowing orange in the setting sun. We set up the roof-top tent and watched the glow fade into darkness.



*The evening sun highlighting Mount Palmerston.
(Photo by Lindsay Elms)*

The next morning, we started the short hike up the road. From a corner near the end of the logging road we scrambled a few metres through a heather-covered boulder field onto a scree slope which angled up to the ridge west of the summit. It's a rare occurrence but no bushwhacking was required on the approach. This made the fairer sex very happy. There is no need to bore anyone with the details of taking two steps up and sliding back one thus doubling

the distance of the climb, but it made a nice change.



*Val avoiding the scree slope where possible.
(Photo by Lindsay Elms)*

From the summit the views were spectacular. This is what I missed all those years ago. We sat on the summit for an hour basking in the sun. Eventually it was time to descend. We decided to traverse the peak by going down the north ridge. It would, however, probably involve some bushwhacking. Val looked down at the intended ridge, then down the scree slope we had ascended. It was a no-brainer. She would rather suffer the cuts and scratches of a little bush than gingerly descend the potential ankle-twisting scree slope. She had experienced the pleasure of scree running in New Zealand where you can literally run down several thousand feet in a matter of

minutes. Sadly, this wasn't going to happen here so off towards the bush we went.



*Val approaching the summit of Mount Palmerston.
(Photo by Lindsay Elms)*

For the most part we were able to zigzag down heather ramps between the thicker bush, but in one place we had to pull my light-weight 7mm rope out of the bottom of my pack and make a short rappel. There are so many things I carry in my pack and rarely use, but it's nice to know I have them when needed. Rappelling saved wasting time scouting a route around the small bluff. A little lower down we couldn't avoid a section of bush, but hey this is Vancouver Island! Eventually we reached the old growth forest and followed elk trails back down to the road. It's always fun to return to a mountain for a second or third time. The enjoyment of climbing never grows weary, and the nice weather – well that's a given.

Participants: Lindsay Elms and Val Wootton

Days in the Alava/Bate Sanctuary

Eryn Tombu-Haigh

July 16-20, 2024

This summer was different than my normal summer. Normally trying to squish as much climbing into my luxurious days off as possible, this year I took a step back. Although I still enjoyed 30+ nights in a tent and the painful knees of having walked 300+ kilometres with a fully loaded bag in the summer months, 95% of those were in the company of my six-year-old. I have told SO many stories and bribed with SO many gummy bears this year. The only big trip that was for me and only me, without mini me, was a trip with Tiffany Cunha and Barry Hansen to Mount Alava/Bate.



*Tight spot en-route to Mount Grattan.
(Photo by Tiffany Cunha)*

Alava/Bate sanctuary and all the beautiful hidden gems that its remote wilderness offers had been on our "must do" list for ages. Tiffany and I somehow managed to

pull off coordinating five days, four nights, in July and that's when Barry's FOMO got the better of him. Originally, he tried to sell me on a boy's trip to Matchlee Mountain, but I declined to head off with Tiffany instead. I'm not sure what Barry did, I think he faked a bout of smallpox to get out of the boy's trip and join Tiff and I. (Sorry Quentin and Garrett.... he was faking it).

On the 16th, 9 a.m. we were off from Courtenay. A completely reasonable start on a bluebird day. Our trip started with a moderately panicked call from Barry informing me his E-Brake cable had just broken. Tiff's truck was in the shop and my partner had mine so after some discussion we figured we would be able to find enough rocks to block his tires. With beta from Rodney Newcombe, we headed up the new logging road approach up Canton Creek as opposed to the route up Perry Creek (that has nothing but heinous reviews from fellow climbers). We found the road washed out and to our surprise another vehicle about 1.5 kilometres from the start of the route. The man in the other truck was just as surprised to see us and informed us this wasn't the way to Starbucks. He was working for forestry and just another stark reminder that this area is not protected and logging shall continue up hill most likely as we passed much flagging in the lower forest. After heavily blocking all of the truck's tires and stashing beers in a cool stream, we made our way over the washout and up the loose rock road in full sun. It was already scorching and Barry does not like the heat. He had sweated through all his clothes before we even left the logging road.

Dipping into the forest, we were pleasantly surprised to find "devil's club light" and beautiful elk paths. After all the horrible reviews of the bushwhack in, it was steep but manageable and after a couple hours the forest opened up into a beautiful open

basin under the south west side of Mount Alava. We made a B-Line of the "Shangri-Ohh-La-La" tarns, which in the process of stumbling over some manky dirty puddles, finally we found with an all around "Ohh-La-La!" Lounging for an hour or so in and out of the water like seals, we finally agreed to get moving. Having donned our sweaty and sticky clothes again we rounded the saddle between Mount Alava and Malaspina Peak. Glancing up at Malaspina's undulating and rugged many peaks we all agreed that was now on our list for a future trip. We found a perfect ramp up and around the east ridge of Mount Alava before dropping into the basin where we scared a bear who scampered up hill as we dropped downhill before our final approach to Peter Lake.



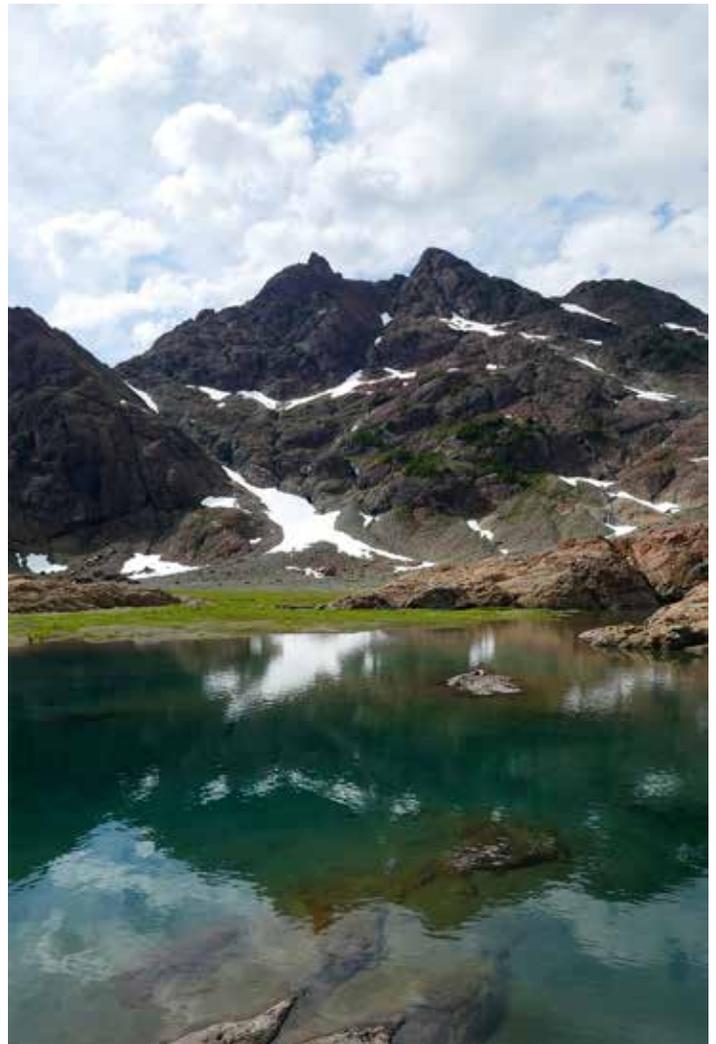
*Approaching Peter Lake.
(Photo by Tiffany Cunha)*

Following a beautiful alpine stream with multiple waterfalls and deep pools, lined with flowers was a lovely way to finish day one. We set up camp at the outflow and had a quick cleansing swim before dinner and bed. We fell asleep to the calming sounds of..... seagulls?!?*

The next morning, we started with crossing the outflow. As we sat down on rocks to don our socks and shoes, I heard an unmistakable

phsssssh. Let's just say I said "Oh darn it" as I quickly unpacked my bag I had just packed up. I pulled out the beer I was carrying for Barry, which was now spraying wildly from the hole that just got punctured. Like a 19-year-old boy, Barry quickly popped the tab and expertly downed his 7:30 a.m. Gose. We had planned a beer 'secret santa' at Shangri-La Lake, I had brought Barry's beer, Tiff mine, and Barry Tiff's. So happily, although I smelled like a brewery as did all my gear, my beer was intact, safely nestled in Tiff's bag. Repacked and slightly buzzed, we headed up the Northwest Ridge of Mount Alava. Our plan was not to summit Mount Alava ... yet and we were hoping we didn't have to climb ALL the way to the Mount Alava/Little Alava col just to drop back down to lake level. We got foiled once by heading climber's left to get cliffed-out, but eventually did find a weakness that went and connected over, having gained only 300 metres that we then dropped down via steep but doable loose 4th class terrain. At the south end of the lake, we had to traverse loose choss and steep ice that threatened to disperse us into the lake, which would have been a relief from the heat, if it wasn't for the 42-lb mountaineering packs attached to us. No wonder the wildlife up here chooses to swim the lake rather than traverse around! To make the south end of the lake even more fun, the herring gulls were dive bombing us as we crossed over where their nests must have been. Thinking our day's ordeals must be coming to an end, we climbed up relatively easy terrain out of Peter Lake and into the Shangri-La basin. Surprisingly Shangri-La was still covered with icebergs and both sides of the lake were surrounded by steep cliffs. We flipped a coin and tried to navigate the steep rock on the west side of the lake. Climbing ourselves into a terrible perch, with no where further to go (although we did discuss a running leap onto the snow over the very high moat we decided

against it) we back tracked and faced the east side. We climbed a 4th class narrow weakness that apparently is the way, given that there was a large bear poop on a dodgy one foot wide "path." The last little bit of lake we skirted, jumping from rock to rock to our beautiful, flat, Shangri-La home for the next two nights. With camp set up, we contemplated an ice plunge but swayed by reviews we heard about the "spa" we crossed the meadows to the warm tarns.



*Tiffany lounging at the spa.
(Photo by Eryn Tombu-Haigh)*

I practised my inner mermaid lounging on sun-warmed rocks that protruded from the temperate waters. It was amazing we could convince ourselves to leave these waters and gear up for an evening summit of Mount Grattan.



*Barry on the summit of Mount Grattan.
(Photo by Eryn Tombu-Haigh)*

Ascending the lifeline couloir to gain the saddle with the Thumb, an ominous gendarme that was in our possible plans that trip, we had incredible views over Peter Lake. Traversing around, we started up the East Ridge of Mount Grattan. A fun, blocky climb of four pitches had us on the summit enjoying the unbelievable vistas, Tahsis and Tlupana Inlets spread out before us and views around the sanctuary, to the big players in Strathcona and up to Rugged Mountain, everything was out in finery! A couple quick rappels and down the couloir and we were back at camp, a cold plunge and cheers of our two remaining beers (we did share with Barry) dinner and bed.

We headed off earlyish the next day, in another gorgeous blue bird day, and Mount Bate, the crown jewel of Alava/Bate, was our goal. The description of the Northeast Ridge really intrigued us so we made our way up a steep icy gully only to get turned around at an impassible moat. Defeated, and having lost an hour and a half we headed around to the much longer, but much simpler East Face. The weather was hot and the snow was sloppy, but in a few hours we were on the col between the summit of Mount Bate and a very imposing gendarme.



*Well-earned refreshments at Shangri-La.
(Photo by Eryn Tombu-Haigh)*



*Tiffany belays Eryn up the Mount Bate summit.
(Photo by Barry Hansen)*

The loose rock was terrible in the saddle and only one boulder was large enough to sling. We all clipped in and tried not to slip or kick rocks. Barry led a very airy pitch that seemed

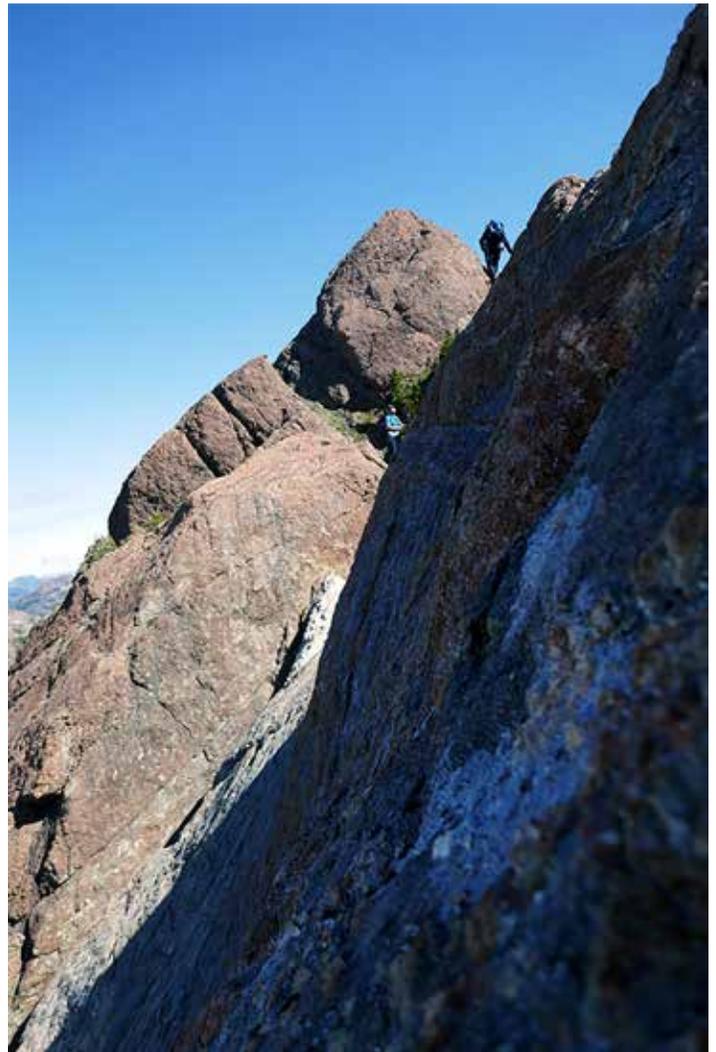
to overhang Peter Lake 700 metres directly below. The rock was surprisingly good and we quickly made our way up to the summit boulder which had two old pitons on it! After some high fives, we rappelled down and made quick work back to the 'spa' and after a lounge, we had dinner and early bed. Our final big climb had us climbing back up the lifeline couloir as the sun rose. A beautiful inversion as Barry led the first pitch up the 'fingers' of the thumb gendarme. It was great rock, the exposure was awesome, and after two pitches a small exposed traverse had us at the bottom of the gully up the thumb. This gully was probably the easiest part of the whole Thumb traverse.



*Eryn on the thumb gendarme.
(Photo by Tiffany Cunha)*

Crazy exposure from the summit and thumbs up all around! Dropping to the 'Thumbnail' part of the climb was an exciting event. After

discussing all options and looking for a better option, Barry set up a body belay and slowly lowered Tiff as she set gear as she down climbed, I went next, then Barry cleaned gear as he went. And there we were, all three of us in a tiny notch with a very exposed Au Cheval upcoming. Some of the most fun sphincter-puckering exposed climbing I have done followed. Thoroughly enjoyable, then when we got to the Au Cheval, we ditched ropes and crawled, shuffled and gingerly walked our way over to Thumb Peak.



*Barry belays Tiffany on the airy Thumb traverse.
(Photo by Eryn Tombu-Haigh)*

Disappointed to be met with a steep and very loose one-at-a-time gully, we descended then made our way up heather ledges to the summit of Thumb Peak! Thumb

traverse complete! We made our way back to camp, Tiff and Barry both jumped in the icy waters while I gingerly splashed my sweatiest regions. We packed up our bags and started to retrace our steps. Bidding goodbye to the beautiful Shangri-La basin, we made it as far at the high west ridges on Mount Alava. I think in part the bugs were the reason we made it so far, for as soon as we hesitated, we were attacked. Finally pitching camp with a beautiful sunset vista and one last night.



*Barry and Tiffany enjoying one last sunset.
(Photo by Eryn Tombu-Haigh)*

One last sweaty slog and we were out at the logging road again, splashing ourselves with ditch water for the illusion of clean. Cold beers, clean clothes, and potato chips at the truck. The trip of the summer complete and smiles all around.

Participants: Eryn Tombu-Haigh, Barry Hansen, and Tiffany Cunha

* After the trip, when we had the internet, we found out that yes, it's not *THAT* unusual to have herring gulls nesting in the alpine. They built nests under the ice and snow on the steep choss at the south end of Peter Lake.

Hišimýawił Hut trip for ACCVI Kids

Sonia Langer

August 3-5, 2024

When I think back to this summer trip, I am still amazed and proud of badass mountain woman Rebecca Abernethy who reminded me of the film I saw years ago entitled "The Motherload." The film about Izzy Lynch and Tessa Treadway who are both navigating motherhood, was referenced in my 2021 *Island Bushwhacker Annual* article about motherhood and mountaineering. Here was Rebecca embodying the sheer powerhouse strength, deep positivity in the face of steep terrain, heat and mosquitos and carrying the motherload with determination. Her husband was working in the field, and she longed to bring her kids into the mountains. I encouraged her to come along up to the Hišimýawił Hut with her two kids. "Let's get our kids outside," I said. I had run into Rebecca at Forbidden Plateau a years ago; she and husband summited Mount Albert Edward with their infant, as I carried my two-year-old to Lake Helen Mackenzie. Skim forward in time to this ACCVI Kids trip: Rebecca carried a huge backpack with provisions for three people on her back AND her 2.5-year-old son on her front all the way up to the hut while at the same time, encouraging and handholding and guiding 5.5-year-old daughter Zoe who was always nearby. What a Mama!

Also, part of the group was Joel and 7-year-old Logan, who were an intrepid and efficient team. Joel, always positive and patient, brought a lighthearted enthusiasm to the trip, which flavoured Logan's calm and strong hiking. What a team they were and are! Logan is a seasoned and strong hiker and had been to the hut before.



*Rebecca carried a huge backpack with provisions for three people on her back **AND** her 2.5-year-old son on her front all the way up to the hut while at the same time, encouraging and handholding and guiding 5.5-year-old daughter Zoe who was always nearby. What a powerhouse Mama!
(Photo by Sonia Langer)*



*In good spirits, Logan, Zoe and Sofia start up the steep trail.
(Photo by Sonia Langer)*

My own daughter, Sofia, age 6.5, had confidence that she would make it to the hut as this was her seventh trip – once per year that she has been alive. She knew that she could do it, and was keen to climb up the ropes and eat more gummies along the way. What fun she had dipping her hat in the waterfall and putting it back on her head.

After meeting up in Port Alberni for one final coffee stop, we drove in three vehicles to the trailhead. Again, we set off from the familiar trailhead for our 2.4 kilometre hike with 700 metres of elevation gain. We were thankful to haven all four kids and three parents in good spirits, and excited to embark on our hike to the Hišimýawił

Hut at 1350 metres near 5040 Peak. With the requisite snacks, gummies, and jokes and laughter that is part of a trip with kids, we were a strong group. Unfortunately, a wasp nest was upset and Logan was stung on the ankle – the kids improvised a little by bushwhacking a section of forest to stay away from the ground hive of those nasty wasps. The kids worked together to solve the problem of the wasp’s nest. The event was added to their collection of resilience building experiences.

Once at the hut, little Max enjoyed playing the guitar, and the older kids enjoyed playing ‘Keepy Uppy’ with balloons: always a favourite lightweight toy for kids. Another highlight for the kids was catching tadpoles in the little puddle in front of the hut. They even watched a frog poop into our drinking



*ACCVI Kids and parents. Happy to hike together!
(Photo by Sonia Langer)*



*Logan age 7, Sofia age 6, Max age 2.5
and Zoe age 5.5 at the col above the hut.
(Photo by Sonia Langer)*

water. No kidding. Imagine the peals of laughter bouncing off the mountain sides as the kids realized what was happening. Good thing that we boil our drinking water!

The next day, the group hiked to the snow at the col above the hut, a goal for my own Sofia N  v   who loves to eat snow. Snow in August, what a treat! Making snow sculptures, and snow angels was fun, and we took our group photo.

Rebecca returned to the hut with her two kiddos and Joel, Logan, Sofia and I continued to the summit of 5040 Peak. The summit experience was uplifted when each kid found an object in the summit register tube. What fun to find a yellow rubber ducky for Logan and a fabric ring with a picture of Olaf from the movie "Frozen" for Sofia.

Two happy kids, which meant two happy parents. After our summit photos, we descended easily and confidently. Joel was a gentle instructor for the steep and technical sections. Climbing and using the little chain near the exposed rock was Sofia's favourite part. I do remember how steep the descent was – but I also remember that Rebecca power-housed those handheld rope sections



*Logan and Sofia enjoy their summit surprises. A rubber ducky for Logan and an Olaf ring for Sofia. So great to be on the summit together again!
(Photo by Sonia Langer)*

with her child in his carrier on the front, and a huge backpack on her back. We all made it

back to the cars in good spirits. A wonderful group and a wonderful trip.



A snack break on the descent. Hiking with kids requires many breaks, and many snacks! Happy kids! (Photo by Sonia Langer)

Let's get our kids outside! Thanks to the ACCVI for your support to get our little groups of kids into the backcountry to experience the natural world – an important part of building resilience in the next generation who are tasked with environmental stewardship.

Participants: Joel Jackson with Logan, Rebecca Abernethy with Zoe and Max and organizer Sonia Langer with Sofia

Caleb and the girls go for a Nootka Island beach walk

Eryn Tombu-Haigh

August 6-10, 2024

Anyone who knows me knows I can talk about mountains all day long. Last summer I tried to give my knees a bit of a break doing coastal shoreline hikes on developed trails. So here it is mountain folk: it's not a break. The rooty coastal "paths" scampering up and down over sloped beaches and cannonball

sized rocks covered in tidal snot is not actually any easier on the knees. It was, however, a fun change and a great way to get out with friends who refuse to join me on my regular "death slogs" (uphill bush bashes lasting 14-21 hours). My six-year-old son Caleb has a list of hikes and Nootka Island was one such hike, so we set aside five days in August. Some of my friends jumped at the opportunity to join us thinking a six-year-old would be a more reasonable pace.



Whale bones on Nootka Island. (Photo by Eryn Tombu-Haigh)

First to commit and ditch her toddler with her partner was my friend Molly, followed by Maria, and then Aida (who was worried having read some less-than-positive trip reports but still giving it her best shot). Now that the five of us were committed we needed a drop off and pick up. Because we are cheap, we opted for the water taxi out of

Tahsis over the seaplane out of Gold River, and because we aren't the best at planning things in advance, we got whatever drop off and pick up scraps of time the company could offer us.

At 12:30 p.m. on a sunny day, we piled into the water taxi and enjoyed the hour ride out Tahsis Inlet to Yuquot. By 1:30 p.m., we were walking down to the dock. Caleb and Maria checked out the fisherman's catch on the wharf while the rest of us fine-tuned our bags, looked for somewhere to pee, and enjoyed the overcast yet mild day. Because of our last-minute, take-what-you-can-get attitude, our drop off and pick up were not conducive to tides (we'd have to cross our first tidal obstacle after two kilometres of hiking and high tide was at 3:00 p.m.). Knowing we had lots of time to kill, we walked up the boardwalks to the old church

and looked at the history and the culture that donned the church's walls, taking in as much as we could. Eventually we headed north, leaving the community of Yuquot behind, and headed down the beach.

Knowing how much time we had, we casually beachcombed finding shells of urchins, scallops, frilled dogwinkles, and abalone among others. We timed our arrival at the lagoon drainage at high tide, basically the worst we could have timed it. Molly, Aida, and Caleb lounged on the beach as Maria and I waded out gingerly testing underwater sand bar leads only to find it completely impassible without swimming. We retreated to the shore. Two hours later and many wades out, Maria and I stripped down, held our bags over our heads, and forded the outflow mid-stomach high now. Molly quickly followed and poor Aida who



*Nootka beachcombing.
(Photo by Eryn Tombu-Haigh)*

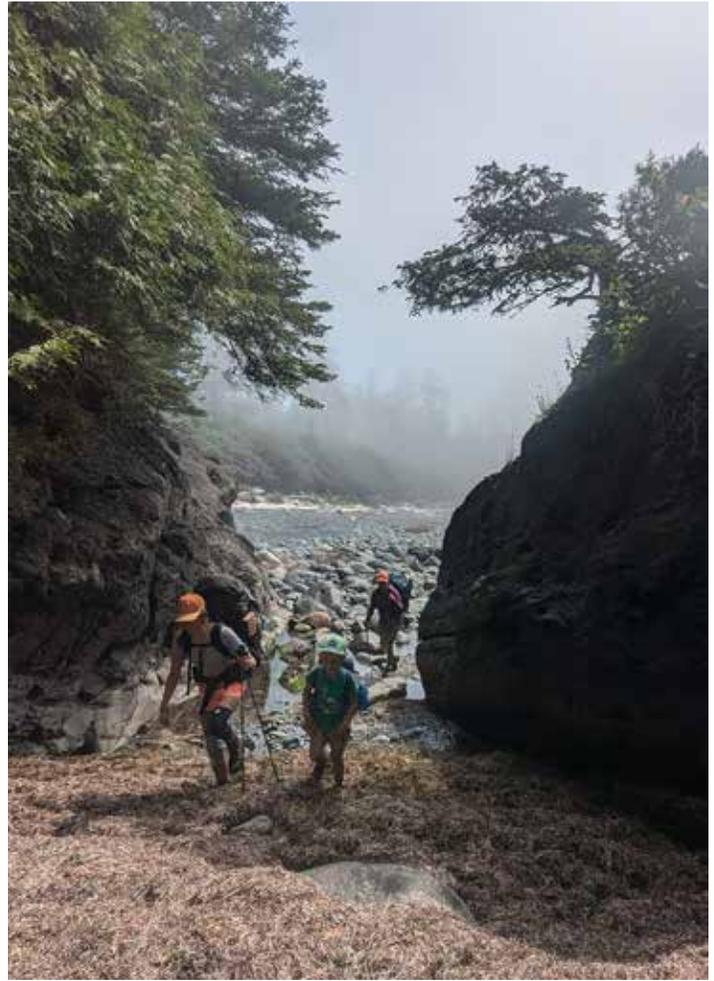


*Maria and Caleb watching the trees.
(Photo by Eryn Tombu-Haigh)*

had just met Molly and Maria, perhaps not quite as experienced in back country nudity, succumbed to our ways. Once we had carried our bags, Caleb, Caleb's bag, and our shoes across, we re-attired and headed the last kilometre down the trail to set up camp at Sunrise Beach. A beautiful east facing gravel and sand beach with very dark tannin-filled fresh water. Even after running it through my Platypus Gravity Filter, the results resembled a bag of urine. Not to mention by the end of four days of Nootka Island Trail water my filter was as fast as someone with prostatic hyperplasia.

The next morning, awaking before my tent-mates Aida and Caleb, I snuck out for a terrible instant coffee and a walk down the beach. Wolf prints were scattered around the beach implying that we humans were not as alone on the beach as we first thought. Back at camp we ate, packed up, and headed off for Maquinna Point and hopefully Beano Creek only nine kilometres away. On the trail that tracked up and down the beach constantly, over roots, under branches, through mud, along slippery washed-up logs, we learned how slow progress was to be made that day. It didn't stop us from exploring incredible sea caves, having a leisurely lunch at Maquinna Point, or soaking in the old growth forest. Navigating the trail energized by almost two kilograms of gummies that Molly brought (I think she was trying to motivate Caleb when really it was Maria she motivated), we made our way at an average speed of one kilometre an hour. Embarrassingly slow and realizing how terrible the overland routes were, we chose instead to use the beach when possible, which included timing waves around points and wading as quickly as we could.

Around this time Caleb found what must have once been a fish bonker. It was a club sized, waterlogged, chunk of wood about a foot long tapered at one end. Although



*Caleb and Eryn.
(Photo by Maria Fitzpatrick)*

it probably weighed close to four pounds, Caleb insisted on carrying it for at least five kilometres. Thus, my scruffy blonde haired, blue eyed, tanned six-year-old got nicknamed Bam Bam after the Flintstones character. The name stuck for trips to come. We arrived at the fog covered Beano Creek camping area around dinner time and were shocked at the number of other campers there. Still, we were able to find a moderately remote camping spot for ourselves and we started the evening chores of setting up camp, getting water, dinner, and a bear hang. A beautiful sunrise greeted us in the morning making for a wonderful start to the day. Packing up quickly and worried our progress would be as slow as the day before, we made an early start down the beach towards Calvin Falls. Although there were lots of



*Sunrise at Beano Creek.
(Photo by Eryn Tombu-Haigh)*

distractions when beach walking with a six-year-old (tide pools, shells, seaweed, rocks, rock formations, whale bones, and crabs), we still made good progress and rounded Bajo Point within two hours. We soaked in



*Lounging at Calvin Falls.
(Photo by Eryn Tombu-Haigh)*

the sunshine as we hiked along the beach, arriving just after noon at the incredible Calvin Falls where we set up camp right next to the falls.

There were no other campers when we arrived and only two groups came in later. Spending the afternoon swimming, exploring, reading, doing yoga, and just plain lounging. The sunset was amazing. All of us felt re-energized and relaxed after the easy day.

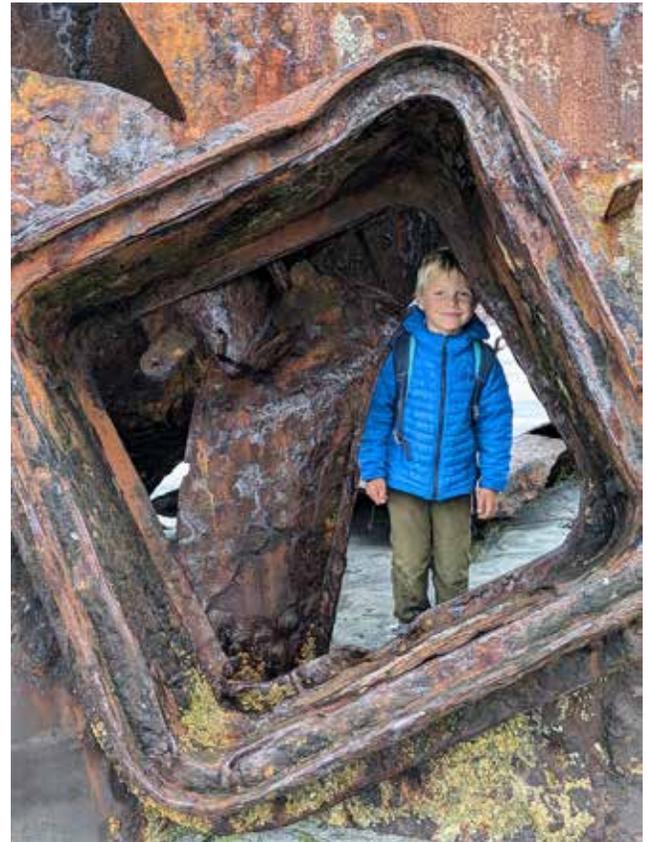


*Maria and Caleb playing in the sunset.
(Photo by Molly Paterson)*

Our last full day on the trail covered 14 kilometres to Second Beach. It was an ever-changing beach walk with wind swept trees, fossils, rocky headlands, and surge channels. The last two kilometres was scrambling on rough trails to Third Beach where we weighed our options upon arrival. As beautiful as it was, because we had taken the floor-scrappings of water taxi pick up times and had to be out at Tongue Point at 8:30 a.m., which was still five and a half kilometres away and at the far end of a muddy tidal flat. We pushed on to Second Beach we found a lovely sand beach with enough of a tickle of fresh water to satisfy our needs. Still thinking of the unknown trek the next morning, alarms were set for 5:15 a.m. and departure planned for 6:00 am.



*Heading towards Third Beach.
(Photo by Aida Soldevila)*



*Caleb exploring the shipwreck.
(Photo by Eryn Tombu-Haigh)*

At 5:15 a.m. the cutest alarm clock went off: Caleb sang out to the other tent “Molly, Maria! It’s time to get up! Ding! Ding! Ding!” and lo and behold we were off by 6:00 a.m. Navigating the trail by headlamp was easy although at one point a flash of yellow glinted back in the night. No reason for alarm, but our lights had caught the golden flash of chanterelles! Panic ensued in a group of foragers, so early in the season, of course the west coast fog zone produces early fungus. Yet we were on a tight timeline and were we on crown land? Molly stuffed a handful in her bag and I put enough for dinner into the lid of Caleb’s, losing only seconds to the quick snatch. Soon the grey hue of dawn broke as we made our way out of the forest. Down on the mud flats our boots sank deep, we had to fight the suction with each disheartening step.

As the tide receded, we found pathways of gravel much easier to walk on and we explored the shipwreck of the Greek freighter *Treis Lerarchi* while waiting for our pickup, which we were surprisingly an hour early for. The ride back was beautiful and sunny with sea otters riding the gentle swell. Back in Tahsis by 10:00 a.m., we went to Coal Creek Roasters for excellent coffee and incredible croissants that we gorged

on for the drive back to Courtenay. Another beautiful hike complete. Caleb and I rested our legs for three days then on a whim headed off to hike Cape Scott, because why not?



*Nootka Island Trail complete!
(Photo by Eryn Tombu-Haigh)*

Participants: Eryn Tombu-Haigh, Caleb Wullum, Maria Fitzpatrick, Molly Paterson, and Aida Soldevila

Lake O'Hara ACCVI Trip for Kids and Youth

Sonia Langer

August 18-21, 2024

As part of the ACCVI Kids and Youth program, a trip to Lake O'Hara was enjoyed by two families. A heartfelt thank you to Christine Fordham for entering the lottery and passing along the six spots to ACCVI trip leaders: I jumped at this chance. What a wonderful opportunity to adventure to this sacred, beautiful place, and show our kids the Rockies. Jules Platt, Ian Emberton with 13-year-old twins Opal and Beckett, and Sonia Langer with 7-year-old daughter Sofia were the lucky crew to journey to this amazing place.

As we schlepped our backpacks the short 500 metre walk from the Parks Canada bus to the Elizabeth Parker Hut, we stepped back into ACC history, and back in time. I have longed to experience the hut, and commemorate the foundation of the Alpine Club of Canada in 1906. Elizabeth Parker, a teacher by training, married in Truro, Nova Scotia, and later moved to Winnipeg and worked at the Manitoba Free Press (now the Winnipeg Free Press). When American Alpine club president Chares Fay moved to create a Canadian chapter, Elizabeth Parker rallied and used her journalistic skills to promote the all-Canadian ACC as co-founder with Arthur Oliver Wheeler. After supporting the idea of the ACC in the newspaper, she organized the first meeting in 1906 and became the club's first secretary.¹ We can credit her for this truly Canadian mountaineering organization that we all participate in today. Our National ACC site states:

*"[Parker's] cultured and forcible style of writing, her keen sense of vision and invariable accuracy of statement was one of the most helpful factors of the Club's foundation. Largely due to the efforts of Elizabeth Parker and the Winnipeg Free Press, the Alpine Club of Canada was formed in Winnipeg on March 27, 1906; Mrs. Parker was one of six original honorary members."*²

Bringing ourselves back to the present, our two families moved into the Wiwaxy Hut, the sleeping cabin adjacent to the larger hut. The Wiwaxy Hut was the original 1912 cabin built by the CPR, and the larger building was added in 1919 by the ACC. Our first goal was to orient ourselves and acclimatize to our new, magnificent surroundings, so our keen group walked around the Lake O'Hara, enthralled by its famous colour, and taking in the smell of the alpine Larch. Magnificent!



*Beckett and Sofia with Lake O'Hara and Opabin Prospect behind them.
(Photo by Sonia Langer)*

Our first day hike was the Opabin Plateau circuit. Living on Hornby and Salt Spring Islands, literally at sea level, the adults noticed the elevation in our first climb to the Opabin Lake to have a view of Mount Shaffer and Yukness Mountain which both towered over the dark lake. We walked slowly, taking many breaks, and were in awe of the beauty around us.



Two families on the Opabin Prospect viewpoint, with Lake O'Hara below right. (Photo by Jules Platt)

Fortunate to register for some of the few voluntarily registered spots for the Odayay Highline trail to the Odayay Grandview, we were eager to see some mountain goats the next day. The kids took turns with the binoculars, looking at several large white rocks that simply didn't move. No goats! Sofia was introduced to her new favourite animal: the pika. The high-pitched calls, and the fluffy fur made for the cutest animal ever. We often stopped to watch these little creatures gather grass for their burrows in the talus slopes at higher elevation. Our group reached the Odayay Plateau outlook, which was our summit for this hike. Grateful for the stunning view of Lake O'Hara and the whole cirque valley with many small lakes with a variety of stunning aqua, teal, and turquoise colours. What an amazing place. What a place to bring these kids. With this



Two families at the Odayay Grandview overlooking the Lake O'Hara cirque valley. (Photo by Jules Platt)



Sofia Langer sits atop Odayay Grandview above Lake O'Hara and has a lesson in map and compass use. (Photo by Sonia Langer)

stunning vista, Sofia was inspired to learn how to use a map and compass, and we had an impromptu lesson. The kids felt strong, alive, and adventurous as they followed Ian down the rocky trail. We observed many plants such as Purple Saxifrage (*Saxifraga oppositifolia*), Sky Pilot (Alpine Phacelia), Moss Campion (*Silene acaulis*) and *Arnica angustifolia* and learned about the alpine ecosystem.

Our final hike was a dream come true for me: to reach Lake Oesa – it's magical basin below Mount Victoria and Mount Lefroy. I was well acquainted with these two monoliths from the east side at Lake Louise during my university summer job at the Lake Agnes Teahouse. It was grand and magnificent to see these two from the other side, with my daughter at my side.



*Stunning Lake Oesa.
(Photo by Sonia Langer)*

Our time in this enchanted place had come to an end, and our two families needed to get back onto the Parks Canada bus to take us away from this magic. Sofia and I quickly slipped into Lake O'Hara to literally bathe in the divine.

What a trip. These three young mountaineers were able to explore and witness the Canadian Rockies as part of the ACCVI Kids and Youth program. Beckett's energetic



*Sofia and Sonia Langer slipped into Lake O'Hara to literally bathe in the magic.
(Photographer unknown)*

keen adventurous spirit carried us forward, Opal's quiet strength bolstered the group, and Sofia's enjoyment of the newness of the landscape brought us refreshed perspectives. Thanks to Jules and Ian for their adventurous spirit and thank you to the ACCVI for their ongoing support in getting our kids outside.

Participants: Jules Platt, Ian Emberton with Opal and Beckett, and Sonia Langer with Sofia

¹<https://www.nelliemcclungfoundation.com/150-trailblazers/elizabeth-parker>

²<https://alpineclubofcanada.ca/hut/elizabeth-parker-hut/>



*Stunning Lake Oesa.
(Photo by Sonia Langer)*

Hišimýawił* Summer Camp

Geoff Bennett

August 19 - 23, 2024

Everyone loves the mountains on a sunny day but how about a cold, windy week of rain?



Arch over Hišimýawił. (photo by Geoff Bennett)

The cardio team (Geoff and Graham) arrived at the Hišimýawił trailhead on Monday morning in the pouring rain. Donning packs and ponchos, they slogged upwards at a deliberate pace, careful not to overstress their fibrillating atria. Five hours later, in cloud, cold and driving rain, Graham arrived at the hut with Geoff an hour behind, one focused Everest step at a time.

By four o'clock the rest of the team arrived in good time, having left the trailhead at 12:30. Colleen, Mike, Cedric, Mel and Ann joined Geoff and Graham for the full four nights. Kirsten (Colleen's daughter) brought four teenagers with her: Naiya, Griffin, Aohdyn and Logan (Cole). Carene came with her son Logan (Quigley). Off came the wet muddy boots, down came the drying racks. Warm clothes, cozy slippers, tea and hot chocolate brightened our spirits as we stared out the grey rain-spattered windows. Thank goodness we weren't in tents!

Cedric, Kirsten and her gang of teenagers served us a very welcome dinner. The old-timers turned in early but the young people stayed up a while. The next morning dawned foggy and silent with the promise of a brief break in the cloud cover. After breakfast, 13 hikers climbed 5040 Peak, leaving Geoff behind to enjoy another serving of bannock, bacon and blueberries. The clouds did indeed part on the summit, offering a brief glimpse of blue sky. Upon the hikers' return, Cedric accompanied Geoff on a brief scramble up to the col. Colleen, Mike and Mel cooked up supper, after which we were rewarded,

finally, with a good view of Triple Peak.



5040 Peak.
(Photo by Carene Quigley)



5040 Peak.
(Photo by Cedric Zala)

Unfortunately, Wednesday morning blew in grey, wet, cold and miserable, worse than ever. Kirsten and the four teens packed up and headed down. They were planning to leave a day later anyway. Then the power went out. Colleen, Mel and others managed to start the backup generator and send an SOS message to the Hut Committee via InReach. Deciding to abandon ship, Carene and Logan left in the afternoon, but not before young Logan beat Geoff at chess three times in quick succession.

Mirabile dictu – a saviour appeared out of the gloom in the form of Rob Kelly. He had seen the InReach emails and had come to fix the problem. He drove from Port Alberni, ran up the trail in one hour, changed out of his soaking wet clothes and repaired the generator. The fix was difficult and took him two hours. Rob declined to join us for dinner but he did enjoy the appies. He ran down before dark in the fog and rain. Apparently, the electric space heater and the induction stovetop had overtaxed the system and crashed the generator along with its attendant computer system.

Geoff and Graham fed the survivors that evening – half of the original contingent – and pleaded with them to eat extra helpings of dal bhat.

Thursday morning dawned cloudy and misty with light rain, but the forecast looked fair. All seven of us hiked over the col into the valley beside Nahmint Mountain. This is a magical bare limestone plateau with many glaciated lumps, bumps and tarns, some purple karst limestone and tiny caves. Lupines, monkey flowers, sorrel and many other flowers brightened the rocky outcrops. Blueberries were especially abundant. We side-stepped bear scat on the Nahmint side of the col. Several cairns highlight the route but there was no sign of anyone. Most people go up 5040 Peak instead.



*Nahmint Valley.
(Photo by Cedric Zala)*



*Watching the sunset.
(Photo by Geoff Bennett)*

On the way back, Cedric, Mel and Ann detoured to the Cobalt Lake Lookout to catch a glimpse of the lake and the hut through the clouds. Four others returned straight to the hut and spotted a Sooty Grouse and three chicks on the trail.

Despite the bad weather, about a hundred hikers walked past the hut during our five-day sojourn. Many were lightly clad and ill-prepared, although none seemed to be in distress. Some carried a purse in one hand and a cellphone in the other. A notable exception stopped by the hut with his son on Thursday afternoon. He was an older gentleman named Kenneth, from Sidney but originally from Scotland. He has climbed all 282 Munros and the 226 Munro Tops or "Deletions". We offered him a cup of tea in honour of his lifetime achievement.

Ann and Graham prepared a last supper of leftover dal bhat, still very welcome and edible. After dinner, the clouds cleared off the mountain tops but fog shrouded the valleys and the distant sea. High clouds formed a "Chinook Arch" over the setting sun. A line of distant thunderclouds framed the scene. All was calm. We stood quietly on the deck and marveled at the beautiful vista.

Cedric gamely led an evening singalong



*Hišimýawił sunset.
(Photo by Ann Ronald)*



*Hišimýawił sunset.
(Photo by Ann Ronald)*



*Hišimýawił sunset.
(Photo by Geoff Bennett)*

on the hut guitar, supported by Mel’s tenor harmonies and not much else. The hut needs a songbook!

Friday morning looked good – mountains visible, high cloud, valley fog and a fair temperature. We cleaned the hut and outhouse thoroughly, removed garbage from the bear caches and arrived at the parking lot in light rain at noon.

So, yes, even a cold, wet, windy week in the mountains is a blessing. Thank you, Colleen, for organizing us. Thanks also to Martin and the Hut Committee for all their time and effort to make Hišimýawił a special place, and for the new outhouse at Cobalt Lake and the two bear caches. And thanks especially to Rob Kelly for hiking up and down on a rainy day to fix the generator.

I would like to acknowledge that the trail to Cobalt Lake, Hišimýawił and 5040 Peak traverses the ancestral lands of the Yuułupit̓at̓h (Ucluelet) and łaʔuukʷit̓at̓h (Tla-o-qui-aht) Nations. Triple Peak lies within the territory of the tukʷaaʔat̓h (Toquaht) Nation. Hišimýawił was constructed with the support of these three Nuu-cha-nulth Nations, as well as the Uchucklesaht, Hupačasath and cišaaʔat̓h (Tseshaht) Nations. The three yellow cedar poles at

the front of the hut were donated by the łaʔuukʷit̓at̓h Nation. Yuułupit̓at̓h, tukʷaaʔat̓h and Uchucklesaht Nations are parties to the Maa-nulth Treaty, signed with Canada and the Province of BC in 2011.

Participants: Geoff Bennett, Logan Cole, Naiya Dowker, Griffin Dowker, Mike Hubbard, Colleen Kasting (organizer), Graham Maddocks, Mel Peters, Aohdyn Porter, Carene Quigley, Logan Quigley, Ann Ronald, Kirsten Young, and Cedric Zala

* Hišimýawił is pronounced Hish-IM-ya-width

Day Trip up Elkhorn Mountain

Anya Reid

August 23, 2024

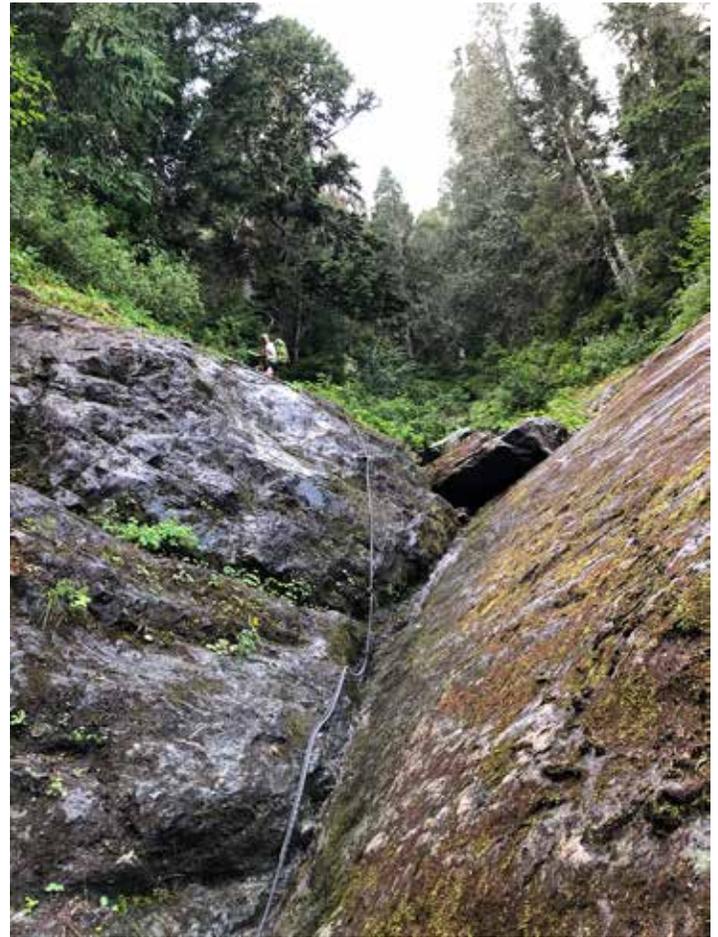
I write this article from my home located in the territory of the łəkʷəŋən speaking peoples, the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations. I deeply appreciate being able to work and live in this beautiful place.

We are at the Buttle Lake Campground. I hear Mike getting out of his tent... He told me last night that we can leave at 5 a.m. but I know it is a lie to make me feel better about the fact that we are actually leaving at 4 a.m. (classic). I sneak out of the tent and hope not to wake up my three- and five-year-old kids who are staying in camp with Dad for the day. Mike and I drive to the trailhead and make coffee and a quick breakfast. Unfortunately, we park right next to someone trying to sleep in their Subaru and likely wake them up... sorry.

The weather has been wet for August, so we are taking advantage of a short weather window of clear skies to summit and get back in a day. Avoiding heavy packs and hopefully the rain.



*Crossing the river in the pre-dawn light.
(Photo by Anya Reid)*



*Slippery rope section of the ridge trail.
(Photo by Anya Reid)*

It is still dark when we cross the Elk River, but starting to feel like dawn is coming. On the other side of the river, we don't do a very good job of finding the trail and end up in a bog. We back track a bit and try again but are still too far right. After some bushwhacking through wet vegetation, we end up finding a more well used trail. The trail up the ridge is steep and slippery but is in better condition than I had expected.

Once we gain the ridge, Elkhorn Mountain looks daunting and far away. At least it isn't steep and there are beautiful views all around. The ridge walk is very pleasant but takes quite a bit of time. We arrive at the steeper ground at 12:30 p.m. and ditch everything but our climbing gear and a bar. Fast and light to the summit is the plan.

Traversing on ledges up and around the main summit of this mountain is very unique and classic old school mountaineering style. We



*Made it up the ridge but Elkhorn is still far away.
(Photo by Mike Hudson)*

rope up and put in some gear on the traverse mainly because it is hard to see what is around the next corner. Also, the exposure is significant, a fall is unlikely but if you did it would be fatal.

The scramble up 'boulders' to the summit was the freakiest part for me. The 'boulders'



*Mike enjoying the views and some caffeine for the rest of the hike.
(Photo by Anya Reid)*



*Looking at the next set of ledges around the corner.
(Photo by Mike Hudson)*

clouds are starting to blow in. Coming back down these boulders was also terrifying for me, but Mike wasn't worried with the rationale that if we started to tumble, we could probably stop ourselves. We only roped up for the main exposed traverse section on the way down with two 30 metre ropes working well to rappel down to the parallel crack section.



*Getting ready to get roped up.
(Photo by Mike Hudson)*



*On the summit block with 'boulders' under foot.
(Photo by Mike Hudson)*



*Exposed traverse around the headwall.
(Photo by Mike Hudson)*



*Summit selfie as the clouds are rolling in.
(Photo by Mike Hudson)*

were soccer ball to microwave sized and loose. No way to protect this section so you hope nothing moves. The views from the summit are amazing. It is about 2 p.m. and

On our way back across the ridge we saw two parties who were planning to camp up there and summit. I hope the weather holds for them. After a break at the top of the ridge we start down the steep part of the trail which was harder to find on the way down. We crossed back over the river as it was getting dark. The easy flat two kilometre hike out on the trail feels much harder on the way out with sore legs. Mike's watch shows the trip was 29 kilometres and 2100 metre elevation gain. We arrive back at Buttle Lake Campground at 11 p.m. and I sneak back into the tent again trying not to wake up the kids. I am so grateful to be able to combine a family camping trip with a mountain adventure. Thanks, Hayes, for looking after the kids and Mike for always being keen to go into the mountains!

Participants: Anya Reid and Mike Hudson

Mount Celeste and Iceberg Peak via Carey Lakes

Catrin Brown

August 27 – 30, 2024

All photos are by Catrin Brown

Back in 2019 when we were discussing the opportunities of a potential access agreement for Comox Lake gate, mention of access to Carey Lakes seemed to come up a lot as a prize that must be included. I wondered why? But then, when reports and photos came in of trips to Rees Ridge via the lakes, I started to understand the appeal. Clearly it had to be done. After waffling on dates waiting for a good weather window, we eventually set off early one morning in late August. The access key provided us flawless entry through the infamous red gate

on Comox Lake, from where we followed a series of logging roads: Comox Lake Main > Cruikshank Road over Comox Creek > North-Fork Main on the west side of the Cruikshank River > West Fork Branch 75, an insanely steep road cutting across the hillside. Happily, there was no logging activity and we were able to drive pretty much to road end at 1000 metres. A great boost to start the hike at this elevation, slightly northeast of Carey Lakes. The border of Strathcona Provincial Park takes a jog to the east to include the entire area of Carey Lakes – and rightly so, for in many ways this area is a worthy destination in itself. Our loosely marked route took us on the south side of the lakes, with views of the upper lakes set in small cirques with dramatic headwalls. We followed the broad forested ridge to treeline and emerged into a wonderfully expansive alpine plateau.



View back of Carey Lakes from a small highpoint at 1550 metres.

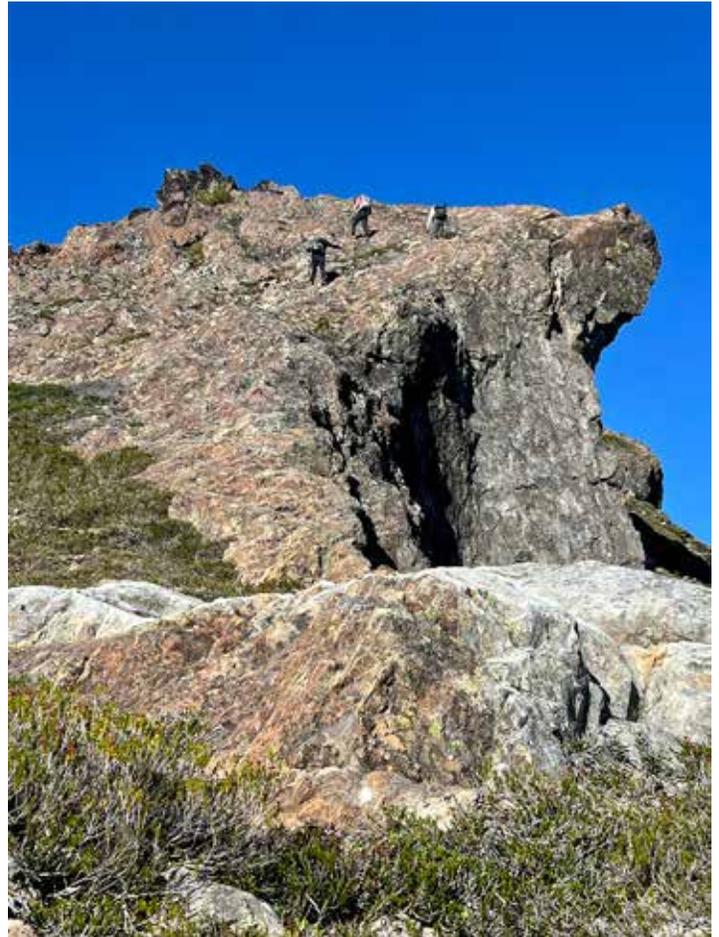
This was now pretty easy-going, and so for the next four or five hours we made our way in a westerly direction through this open and inviting landscape, wandering past small lakes, over little bumps along the way, steadily gaining height. To our north were the familiar peaks of Forbidden Plateau and ahead of us, Rees Ridge beckoned.

The route towards Rees Ridge presented itself relatively easily as we progressed,

and eventually we made camp by a small lake at about 1600 metres. The night turned seriously cold, with crystal clear air and even a show of Northern Lights for those who braved a short exit from the tents.



Josh and Erich making their way through the boulder-strewn alpine plateau with Mount Albert Edward, Mount Frink and Castlecrag Mountain to the north.



Climbing up to Rees Ridge above our camp on Day 2.



Our camp just below Rees Ridge. The tarn was a welcome swimming hole when the temperature hit 30 C on our last day.



Lisa makes her way over Rees Ridge. The rocks are colourful, the lakes vivid, no photoshop needed.

The following day, we were off first thing to gain the ridge, a short climb above our camp. Rees Ridge is best described as a series of bumps, with some scrambly ups and downs along the way, which keeps it interesting. The ridge bends to the south, climbing steadily to the high point known as Mount Celeste at 2045 metres.

The views from Mount Celeste were awesome in every direction. After using up all our superlatives, we dropped down slightly and headed to the south end of the ridge - Iceberg Peak at 1982 metres.



The upper part of the ridge was mostly snow-covered which made for easy going.

For anyone who's counting, that's two of the 53 x Island 6000'ers (confused units notwithstanding) in the last hour.

extra day, cooling off in the tarn and hanging out, identifying peaks – we even spotted Mount Waddington. We set off in the afternoon and spent our last night at a small lake just above Carey Lakes. I think we took five swims on the way out.



Our track across Rees Ridge on Google Earth, with our lower return route from Iceberg Peak.



Josh, Lisa and Erich on the summit of Mount Celeste with Comox Glacier behind.



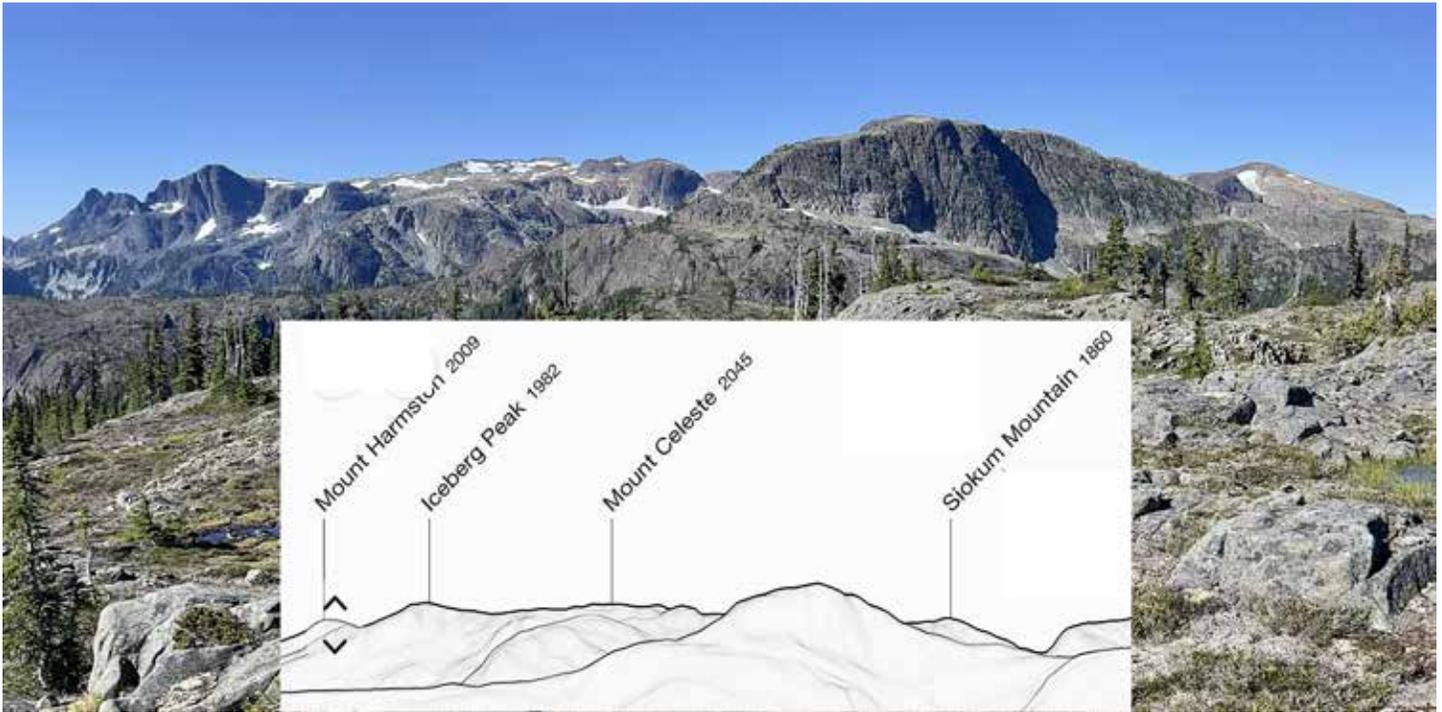
Below Rees Ridge on the way back over the Aureole Icefield.

On the return from Iceberg Peak we took a line below the ridge over the beautiful but much diminished Aureole Icefield. We picked our way over the ridge back to camp, making it comfortably before sunset. We spent another fine evening enjoying the alpenglow over the Comox Glacier and our newly familiar peaks.

On Day 3, Josh and Lisa headed out early to make it back to Victoria. Erich and I took an



Josh heading back to camp with late afternoon light highlighting the Golden Hinde to the west.



Peak finder 101. The app is not really needed when we've just hiked the route.



View south from camp.

Strathcona Park really delivered for this trip. It was one where the entire journey, not just the summits, was to be savoured given the variety of terrain and viewsapes that we passed through. Our sincere thanks to Barb and Val for facilitating the access agreement that made it all possible. Thanks also to Gordon Kyle and Peggy Taylor for their trip reports in the IBA 2021 and IBA 2022 respectively.

Participants: Lisa Mcbain, Josh Slatkoff, Erich Schellhammer, and Catrin Brown

Tlatlos Peak Revisited

Lindsay Elms

September 3, 2024

In my report for the 2008 *Island Bushwhacker Annual* I wrote: "As there are no recorded ascents or attempts on this peak that I know (Rick Eppler has looked at aerial photographs of it in the late 1970s) I have applied to the ministry that is responsible for the geographic naming of features in British Columbia to have the name Tlatlos Peak officially recognized." Sixteen years later – 2024 – I was informed that the name proposal was rejected (along with two others that I had submitted at the same time.) It's unfortunate as the name has been adopted by the climbing community since then and can be found in the guidebooks to the island. The naming process is a lot more involved today than it used to be.

On the afternoon of 1 September, Val and I drove up island to spend a couple of days peak-bagging. Our peak of choice was Mount Romeo, a peak Val hadn't climbed before. Fortunately, I didn't have to suffer the slings and arrows by having to ask: Romeo, Romeo, where for art thou Romeo, as I had climbed it previously - twice. I wasn't averse to another ascent. After three hours we set up the roof-top tent at the end of a logging road under the peak. Below, the fog was shrouding the valleys, but at this elevation we were above it. The next morning it was a short climb to the summit. The fog was still lingering in the valleys, but everything above remained clear. We had a good view over to Peak 5800 and Tlatlos Peak on the north side of the Island Highway. Behind them we could see Mount Palmerston, Mount Russell, and many more peaks which we have climbed over the years. But what was new to us were the fresh logging roads to the southeast of Tlatlos peak. The roads had been punched higher than when we were there in 2008. It was obvious that a logging company was still actively working in the area. The climb of Tlatlos Peak had been a beautiful trip, and we decided to revisit the peak. So that afternoon, we drove around to the South Tlatlos Main and again found the spur road

we had previously driven up. Only this time the road continued much higher and around onto the forested (well that could be argued now) slopes southeast of the peak. We passed logging equipment parked on the side of the road – logging trucks, safety vehicles, and loaders. Being a long weekend, they weren't working that day. However, we didn't want to be in their way when they started work the next day so we found a side spur that went above where they would be working – out of sight.

The next morning was another stellar day, but the mist was still blanketing the bottom of the valleys. We heard the grapple-yarder fire-up about 6 a.m. From the end of the road, we angled up through old growth to a saddle on the ridge. We had reached this saddle on our 2008 climb and knew that it was a fairly straightforward two-and-a-half-kilometre ridge hike to the twin summits of Tlatlos Peak.



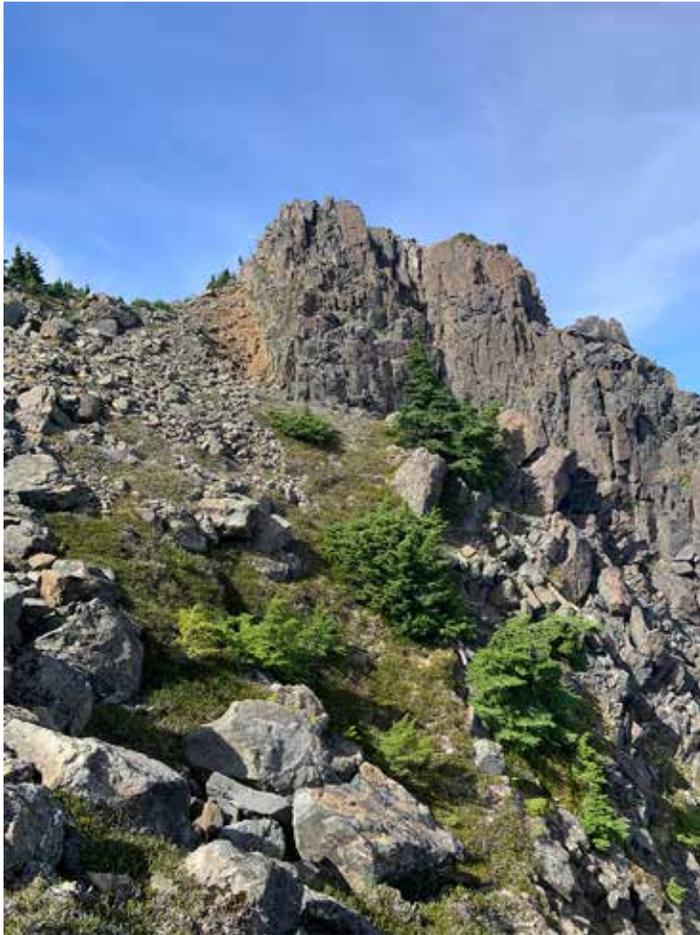
*View of Tlatlos Wall.
(Photo by Lindsay Elms)*

From the saddle we continued climbing up the ridge until we broke out into the alpine where we could see the first summit in the distance. The views of Peak 5800, Mount Russell, and Mount Palmerston, and many other peaks made the return climb worthwhile. Eventually the final ridge rose



*Tlatlos Peak from a distance.
(Photo by Lindsay Elms)*

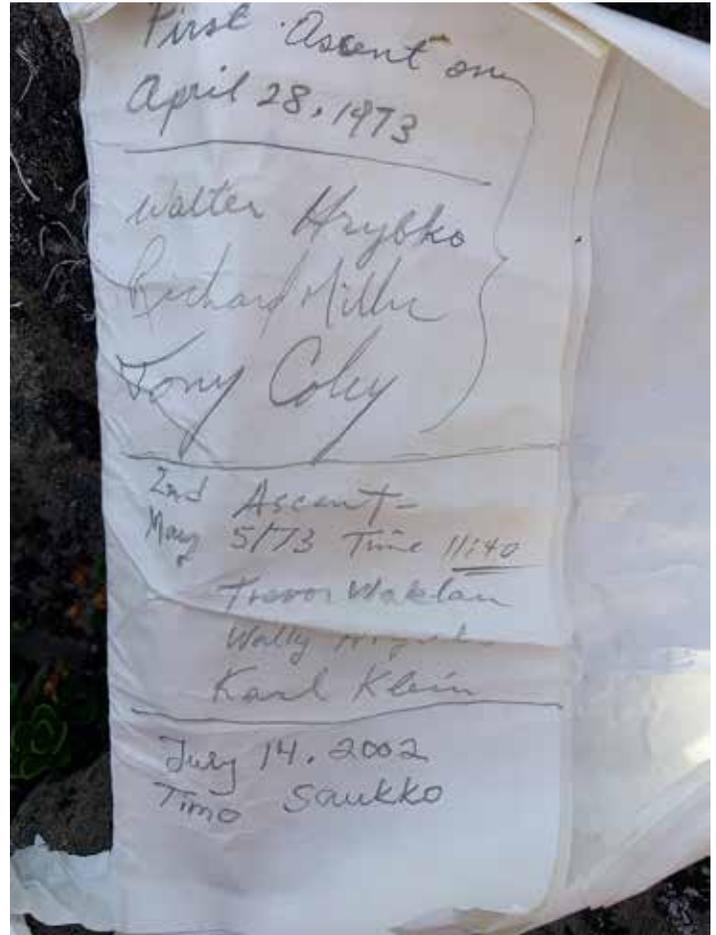
above us to the first and slightly lower of the two summits. Just below this summit we traversed around the peak over to a saddle between the two summits. From here a short scramble brought us onto the main summit. There was still that same excited feeling upon reaching the summit. Wahoo!



*Tlatlos Peak from a distance.
(Photo by Lindsay Elms)*

We both found comfortable places to sit and pulled out our lunches. I can sit for a while, but then I have to get up and wander around, poke my head over the edge, look under rocks, take photos. I saw a 1.5-metre-tall boulder that had a six-centimetre-wide crack down the middle. On top of the crack were three strategically placed rocks that looked a little out of place. I looked into the crack and noticed something yellow wedged in it. I reached in and pulled out a glass jar with paper and a pencil inside. My excitement was

tanking as I hadn't seen this before. I opened the jar and pulled out the tightly wedged notepaper. It was placed there in 1973. I read the three entries.



*Tlatlos Peak summit register.
(Photo by Lindsay Elms)*

On 28 April 1973 Walter Hrybko, Richard Millar and Tony Coley made the first recorded ascent. A week later—5 May—Walter returned with Trevor Wakelin and Karl Klein. The third entry was Timo Saukko on the 14 July 2002. I recognized two names from the second ascent and Timo's name although I didn't know him. Val and I added our names and returned the bottle to the crack, but not before we took a photo of the names.

The walk back to the vehicle was pleasant and there was no need to rush. We couldn't drive down the mountain until the loading crews had finished work for the day as we



*Tlatlos Peak summit register.
(Photo by Lindsay Elms)*

had seen logging trucks grinding up and down the mountain. They wouldn't want to meet us on the road and vice-versa.

That evening when we got home, I emailed my mate Keith Wakelin. I had a gut feeling that the Trevor Wakelin might possibly be Keith's older brother. Keith confirmed my suspicion and told me 1973 was the year after Trevor had moved from New Zealand to Canada, and a year before Keith himself moved out. Keith and I have run toe-to-toe at many running events. Keith was also with me when we day-tripped the Golden Hinde in August 1998. I knew Trevor, although not well, as I had raced against him in several ultra races. The Wakelin's were a running family. The same went for Karl Klein. Karl was a competitive runner and used to come down from Campbell River occasionally to our track work-outs at Vanier School in Courtenay. I would then race against

him in many of the Island series races, also toe-to-toe. Karl, Keith, and myself had that fierce competitive spirit. Sadly, both Trevor and Karl have since passed away. Karl succumbed to a heart attack when he crossed the finish line of a 10-kilometre race down island in 2012. Keith informed me that Walter was still alive and possibly in Sayward. He vaguely knew Richard and Tony, but didn't know where they were. I googled Walter's name and found he was still living in Sayward. The next day I phoned him and told him what I had found. Both he and his wife were so excited. I sent him photos of his note and the bottle. He told me to come up to Sayward sometime and visit. He said he had lots of stories to share with me. How could I not take him up on this offer. They will be another story.

Participants: Val Wootton and Lindsay Elms

Raising a Rope-Gun: Victoria Peak

Eryn Tombu-Haigh

September 11-13, 2024

This is the first year my son has shown the hiking and climbing obsession that I suffer from. I was blown away by his drive and endurance. A weather break in March camping on the Juan de Fuca marine trail, Caleb expressed his desire to climb 'real' mountains, "with ropes and everything." Inside I was full of joy, my dreams of creating a rope-gun to lead me up gnarly routes, perhaps not too outlandish? I played it cool, "yeah? Well that takes a lot of work, and it's very dangerous." Another thing I have in common with my son is his unwavering stubbornness. So, there it was, if he climbed well, listened, worked up his endurance, and I found a friend who was willing to climb with

us at the end of summer I promised Caleb a real peak.

Before his 6th birthday at the end of June we had already warmed up with Mount Cokely, via the CPR trail, all 30 kilometres of the Cowichan River trail and Cream Lake (which was still on post-holy snow). We spent rainy afternoons at our local climbing gym. In July we met up with my sister and her kids in Whistler and hiked the Musical Bumps to camp at Russet Lake, then down the Singing Pass trail. At the end of the month, we climbed up to Morrison Spire via Marble Meadows with them, spending hours looking at fossils.



*Caleb and Eryn "training" on the Nootka Island Trail.
(Photo by Maria Kilpatrick)*

In August, Caleb and I did all of the Nootka Island Trail, Cape Scott and the Comox

Glacier. At this point I was beginning to realize that a real peak was well within Caleb's skill level and it was the end of summer. I chose Victoria Peak via the South Face original route. It was a big enough mountain to be impressive to Caleb. I'd climbed the route and was comfortable with it, and starting at the end of the logging road at 1250m, we would not get burned out on the approach.



*Celina and Caleb on the soggy approach in.
(Photo by Eryn Tombu-Haigh)*

The weather was finicky but September 12th looked good. So that meant hiking in and out might not be as lovely. Celina had just gotten off shift and we headed out of Campbell River at 1 p.m. on the 11th. Hiking by 4 p.m. into the wet blueberry bushes in the cut block, by 4:10 cold and soaked Caleb declared this was "the worst hike ever." Luckily the bush was short lived and views popped in and out of the clouds as we ate gummy bears for motivation and told stories to distract ourselves. Within an hour and a half, we were able to make camp around 1500m where three SARTECs were running exercises on the ridge. They were done for the day and had a lovely fire going where we were able to dry off and warm up. They were very kind and friendly and even helped Caleb spot a Sasquatch that was known to be on the ridge.

The next morning the views were incredible, the sun was out and spirits were high. The SARTECs bid us good luck and told us they were close at hand if we needed them and off we went into what would be an 11-hour day. Once we dropped off the main ridge, I was glad there was barely any snow to cross, and Caleb was able to use my small Petzl Ride ice axe to support himself when he felt he needed it. Donning our helmets, we climb up the basin to the South Face, the rock became looser and steeper and we heard ice calving off the other side in the sun.



*Caleb looking very comfortable climbing the South Face of Victoria Peak.
(Photo by Eryn Tombu-Haigh)*

Alarming to hear it fall with the rocks that were embedded in it, it was a good reminder how loose this mountain was. Relatively safe on our side as the angle steepened towards the start of the face, I got Celina

to toss the rope down so Caleb could tie in for the last little scramble. Light feet and we were all on the bench to the first pitch. I clipped Caleb into a short rope and we made our way up to the belay anchor Celina had built. Reiterating how important it was to be clipped into the mountain or one of us at all times, Caleb clipped into the mountain and I took up position to belay Celina up the first pitch. I hadn't climbed Victoria Peak for five years and I thought a 48-metre rope would be plenty, and it was, but we had to do two pitches, a 60 would have gotten us up the whole step. When Celina was secure, she belayed Caleb and I simul-climbing. This way I was able to help him especially on the first LARGE step. The initial move around a large chock-stone was a bit disheartening to him but quickly over it he got in his groove. As we climbed the SARTEC plane and helicopter flew around making it quite the fun experience! With the two pitches done we short roped up the rest of the summit block finding routes up the loose rock and shelves. The final move to the summit Caleb asked for a rope again and we happily tied him in.



*All smiles on the summit.
(Photo by Eryn Tombu-Haigh)*

Beaming at his success Caleb filled in his own summit registry entry as we ate sandwiches and chocolate. Although the

clouds had moved in, we still had pocket views of Warden Peak and beyond. Heading down, we rappelled off the summit, our first of what ended up being four rappels. I had never tandem rappelled but figured I could lower Caleb if I couldn't figure it out, or Caleb wasn't enjoying it. I'd taken a screenshot of the proper way to tandem, with both of us in the same belay device. Caleb's personal anchor system was shorter than mine so as he basically sat on my lap as I controlled the descent and the prusik. The first rappel took a bit of finessing but by the time we were down the south face the six-year-old review was "super fun." I was proud of how well he listened especially when pulling ropes and other critical moments when rocks could dislodge.

As we made our way back onto the main ridge we took time to bask in the alpine glow, enjoying the amazing sunset views of Sutton Peak, Mount Alston and the whole Haihte Range. An incredible end to an incredible day. Wait, that was not the end.



*Sunset over Sutton Peak.
(Photo by Eryn Tombu-Haigh)*



*Caleb and Celina take a rest in the evening sun.
(Photo by Eryn Tombu-Haigh)*

As the last rays of sun disappeared, we ate our dinner, drank hot chocolate, and had a celebratory dance party before tucking in. The morning brought torrential downpour. We packed up and I put my cell phone playing a *Real Survival Stories* Podcast to distract us from the saturation, in the lid of Caleb's bag. It was a great technique, not only were we all engrossed in the story, but I knew exactly where Caleb was! We were under an hour to the truck, dry clothes and high fives! Already Caleb has his sights on adventures for next summer, he is hopeful to do both the West Coast Trail and the Golden Hinde among others during the summer of 2025, look for our trip report next year!

Participants: Eryn Tombu-Haigh, Caleb Wullum, and Celina Rodzinyak



Kid-friendly hike to Hišimýawił

Anya Reid

September 28-30, 2024

I write this article from my home located in the territory of the lək^wəŋən speaking peoples, the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations. I deeply appreciate being able to work and live in this beautiful place. The trip described in this article crosses many First Nations territories with the area around Hišimýawił connecting at least six First Nations including Ucluelet, Toquaht, Tla-o-qui-aht, Tseshaht, Hupačasath and Uchucklesaht.

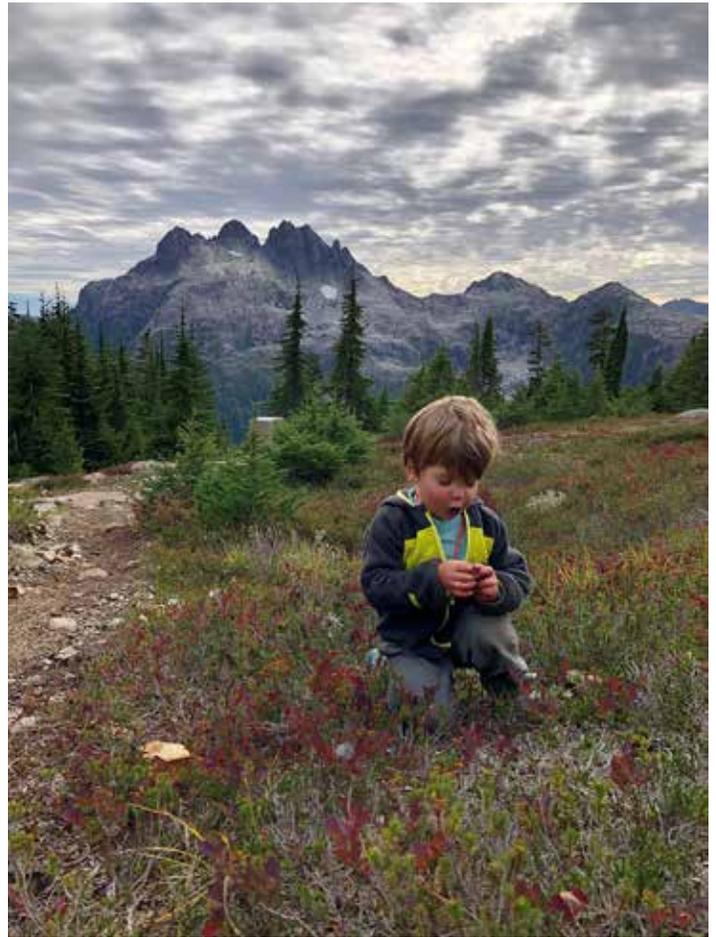
For more information see page 17 of <https://accvi.ca/wp-content/uploads/NewsletterWinter2019-2020.pdf>.

A Memorable Weekend at Hišimýawił

Our recent ACCVI club trip to Hišimýawił was nothing short of a success. With spots filling up quickly and a waitlist forming, the excitement was apparent even before the weekend began. Nine kids, ages 3 to 13, along with seven parents, set off on what would turn out to be a weekend full of adventure, bonding, and beautiful views.

The Journey Up

We gathered at the trailhead parking lot at noon on Saturday, and after a quick round of introductions and last-minute packing, we hit the trail around 1 p.m. The hike up to Hišimýawił took us through thick forests and scenic meadows, with many snack-breaks along the way to fuel the group. The real treat was the abundance of wild blueberries



*Blueberry picking with a beautiful view.
(Photo by Anya Reid)*



*Group snack break in the forest.
(Photo by Anya Reid)*

and huckleberries that kept everyone munching happily as they hiked.

A few brave adventurers even took a dip in the lake to cool off—a refreshing break



*Finding the waterfall.
(Photo by Anya Reid)*

before continuing onward. The hike was a true team effort, with the older kids helping the younger ones up the steeper sections. The rocky sections that are a big step for adults are small boulder problems for the little ones. The rope sections of the trail were fun rock and root climbs for the littler kids with an adult or the teenager spotting them. It took a long time for all the kids to do these climbs, but they all hiked/scrambled



*Enjoying the lake and trying to spot the outhouse on the ridge.
(Photo by Anya Reid)*

the entire way on their own. Smaller groups would form based on pace new friendships. After the final push up the ridge, we reached

the hut at around 5:30 p.m. excited for the days ahead.



*Group photo taken by a friendly hiker.
(Photographer unknown)*

A Day of Exploration and Challenge

Sunday was filled with even more adventure. After a hearty breakfast, everyone set off to explore the rock climb above Hišimýawił, called našuk čistup (from the Barkley Sound dialect meaning Strong Rope). The kids showed their courage and determination, with all of them completing the climb and some even taking on the challenge a few times. The two oldest kids embarked on a hike to the peak with their parents, while others hiked to the saddle, taking in panoramic views of the surrounding landscape. Meanwhile, the youngest explorers found their own adventure, playing by the ponds and small waterfall,



*Climbing našuk čistup (Barkley Sound dialect meaning Strong Rope).
(Photo by Anya Reid)*

The Hike Down

Monday morning brought a sunrise mission, with a few participants making their way towards the peak to catch the first light of the day. As we packed up, it was clear that some of the children had formed such strong attachments to the place that they were already asking if they could stay for another three days. To recognize National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, some of the group remembered to bring their orange shirts and at breakfast we talked with the kids about the importance of the day. After breakfast, we packed and cleaned and began our descent around 11 a.m. The way down took about an hour longer than the hike up, but the time passed quickly as everyone remained in high spirits, distracted by more blueberries and laughter-filled games along the trail.



*Starting down the ridge.
(Photo by Anya Reid)*



*Group photo at the hut.
(Photo by Amber Zirnhelt)*

and helping gather water for the group. It was a great mix of challenge and play, with everyone making the most of the beautiful environment.



*Line up to down climb the first rope section.
(Photo by Anya Reid)*

Gratitude for a Team Effort

This trip was made possible thanks to the incredible efforts of those who maintain Hišimýawił. From the upkeep of the energy systems to the wood pellets, to keeping the outhouse functional and the trail well-marked. We thank everyone who has helped and continues to make this remote location accessible for all to enjoy—we truly appreciate the dedication and hard work. As we wrapped up the weekend, the memories made, new friendships formed, and experiences shared made it even more rewarding. Let's do it again next year!



Participants: Anya Reid, Hayes Zirnhelt, Thoen Reid-Zirnhelt, Teslin Reid-Zirnhelt, Amber Zirnhelt, Bree Fletcher, Kassidy Fletcher, Scott MacKinnon, Jacquie MacKinnon, Tamsin MacKinnon, Finlay MacKinnon, Kathryn Pearson, Frey Pearson, Ollie Pearson, Sarah Falloon, Hannah Falloon, Leah Ballin, and Kestrel Ballin

Hišimýawił for Trip Leaders

Rachel Treloar

November 29 – December 1, 2024

Building on leadership development discussions with National, the executive decided that it was time for a section event to celebrate out volunteer leaders. Hišimýawił was chosen as the ideal location for leaders and prospective leaders to gather, discuss, plan, learn and play together. On Friday mid-day an intrepid group of skiers and snowshoers parked as far as we could along Marion Main and then headed along the road towards the trail.



*Selena is on her way!
(Photo by Becky Noble)*

It had snowed heavily the previous week so progress uphill was challenging, especially when climbing big roots in ski boots!



*Navigating roots on an icy trail.
(Photo by Olive Joy)*

Eventually, we were able to put our snowshoes and skis on and began to move through the deep powdery snow.



*Martin checks the terrain.
(Photo by Olive Joy)*

Still, there were smiles all around.



*This is type A fun!
(Photo by Selena Swets)*

On arriving at the lake, we had to find our way across the outlet and up the bank on the other side - a fun challenge led by Scott. Martin made steps for the rest of us and we carried on uphill.



*Martin kicking steps at the outlet slope.
(Photo by Olive Joy)*

As it was getting dark, it was time to don our headlamps.



Almost there!
(Photo by Olive Joy)

However, much to our dismay, when arriving in the dark and at dinner time, we could not start the stove. We were VERY cold, but still having a good time!



Becky warming us with her smile.
(Photo by Jane Maduke)

For a while, I was worried because Martin had told me I would only need a

summer sleeping bag and I was freezing with everything on but my sleeping bag. Fortunately, after several hours of concerted effort and many references to the manual, Martin and Scott got the stove going. What a relief! It turned out, there was ice high up in the pipe that had frozen solid (apparently a first). Time for appies!

Evenings were spent discussing leadership issues and challenges, as well as brainstorming how we could create a new norm for the club where everyone contributes in some way. Participants shared trips they would like to lead. Experienced leaders offered suggestions and shared experiences and prospective leaders identified areas where they needed additional support. We also did a fun quiz, with group 1 winning the swag. Martin showed us the weather station, gave us an overview of what was involved in being a hut custodian, and was overall a great host to all of us.



Group discussion over appies.
(Photo by Selena Swets)

On Saturday visibility was poor and with a risk fairly high we only went part way to the summit.



*Heading uphill on day 2.
(Photo by Becky Noble)*

The rest of the day was devoted to beacon practice and fun. Several members tried backcountry skiing for the first time.

Sunday was a bluebird day with a beautiful sunrise.



*Glorious sunrise.
(Photo by Becky Noble)*



*Triple Peak and beyond in the morning light.
(Photo by Rachel Treloar)*

Sadly, it was time to pack up and head home.



*Scott and Olive - ready to head home.
(Photo by Selena Swets)*



*The summit is visible at last!
(Photo by Rachel Treloar)*



*Hišimýawiš
(Photo by Jane Maduke)*

We had several very experienced leaders, a number of developing leaders and a few people who haven't yet led an ACCVI trip. What a wonderful weekend, let's do it again soon!



MAINLAND



*The gang.
(Photo by Selena Swets)*

Fire and Ice in the Land of Gog: A Fairy (Meadows) Tale

Jim Everard

August 31-September 5, 2024

All photos are by Jim Everard

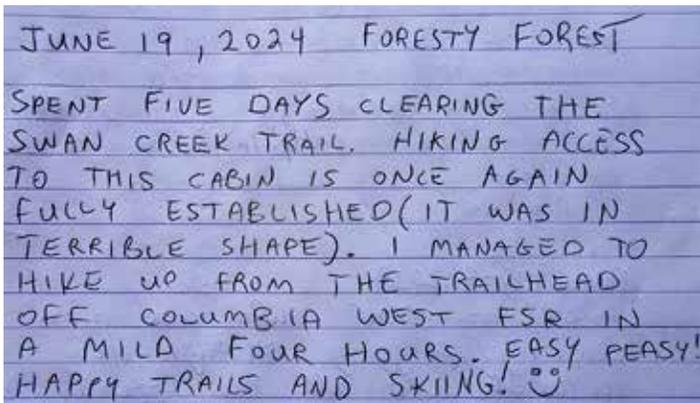
Uncertainty and mountaineering are inseparable. The uncertainty of weather conditions, the potential gap between route descriptions and the in-your-face realities, and the uncertainty of whether your physical and mental state will be where it needs to be when it really counts. If mountaineering outcomes were guaranteed, the allure would be much diminished.

Organizers: Rachel Treloar and Martin Hofmann

Participants: Selena Swets, Olive Joy, Becky Noble, Jane Maduke, Tak Ogasawara, Micaela Yawney, and Scott Bell

Uncertainty often begins well before the mountaineering trip. Such was the case when Blair Piggot, Jeff Dolinsky, and I decided to investigate and possibly tackle the Swan Creek self-propelled approach to the Bill Putnam/Fairy Meadows hut in the Selkirk Mountains. We had read about the 2015 and 2016 Sisyphean efforts of a cadre of Swan Creek trail builders. Our eyes focused on the words: "**Alders are vicious and mean. They ruin trails. They ruin lives!**" (<https://blog.alpineclubofcanada.ca/blog/the-last-alder-fairy-meadow-trail>) Soon after the 2016 efforts were completed, Mother Nature wiped away much of the trail. Since then, the Alpine Club of Canada's description of this approach trail was emphatic: "**Hiking is absolutely not recommended.**"

Simon Lamberts (a.k.a. Foresty Forest) changed much in June 2024 when he completed his remarkable five-day solo effort to chainsaw and brush cut much of the lower elevation of the trail. It felt like a window of opportunity begging to be crawled through.



JUNE 19, 2024 FORESTY FOREST
SPENT FIVE DAYS CLEARING THE SWAN CREEK TRAIL. HIKING ACCESS TO THIS CABIN IS ONCE AGAIN FULLY ESTABLISHED (IT WAS IN TERRIBLE SHAPE). I MANAGED TO HIKE UP FROM THE TRAILHEAD OFF COLUMBIA WEST FSR IN A MILD FOUR HOURS. EASY PEASY! HAPPY TRAILS AND SKIING! 😊

Foresty Forest's written entry into log book, Bill Putnam.

But as if on cue, Mother Nature intervened. The Swan Creek valley took some direct lightning strikes in July. B.C.'s wildfire map lit up with the red outline of an active but relatively small burn. Over the next few weeks, intermittent drizzle slowed the fire. By late August, Blair concluded, "This might be as good a chance as we'll ever get."

We corralled our gear, heaved it into the truck and drove west from Golden to the Columbia West Forest Service Road (FSR) turnoff. Sixty-five kilometres later, after a few dead ends, we located the trailhead. The 4WD was wrapped in chicken wire and away we trudged, weighted down with a week's worth of food, ropes, a generous gear rack, and other climbing accoutrements.

Simon's brushed trail on the overgrown logging road spurs soon gave way to a magnificent grove of old growth hemlock and cedar. The earthy scent of petrichor surrounded us. The forest canopy blocked out the sun, minimizing the underbrush and maximizing our line of sight. We marveled at the chain-sawed passageways that were sliced through a decade's worth of fallen trees lying on their sides, yet still over our heads.

About thirty minutes later we caught the first whiff of smoke. The trail ascended and the smoke thickened. It filled our noses and infiltrated our thoughts. Uncertainty – that prime ingredient to the adventure recipe – increased. Visibility fell. Then the path disappeared. We entered the liminal zone between the familiar world behind us and a chaotic world ahead; a labyrinth of black standing and fallen trees atop a white ash base, cloaked in blue air. The ash was often calf deep, devoid of density and deceptively



Forest fire fury and desolation.

slippery. For 15 minutes we waded through this morass till we reached orange flames where the fallen giants were being transformed to gases.

Body language and facial expressions replaced the spoken word. Scarred and charred cliffs complicated forward movement. Unwanted thoughts of retreat infected our thinking. As far as the eye could see, hundreds of trees blocked the way. The roots connecting them to the earth were no more, and gravity took many of them on their final journey down the mountain. We put our packs down, rehydrated and considered our situation.

We headed off individually to see if anyone could suss a way through nature's dark side.

*You say besooted, I say besotted,
You say timber, I say timbre,
Besooted, besotted; timber, timbre
Let's call the whole thing off.*

(With apologies to Ella Fitzgerald)

Twenty minutes later we regrouped, compared notes, discussed possibilities, set a course, and carried on. Progress was slow and involved shuffling forward and backward through the soot. Eventually, to the west, a world of green became discernable. After more log hopping/detouring, we reached the far side of the burn. No one dared mention the return trip in one week's time.

Relief – however welcome - was temporary. We were still about 950 metres below and nine kilometres away from our hut destination of the day. The world morphed into familiar slide alder, devil's club and cow parsnip, with no visible trail. We skidded down, then floundered and tunneled through

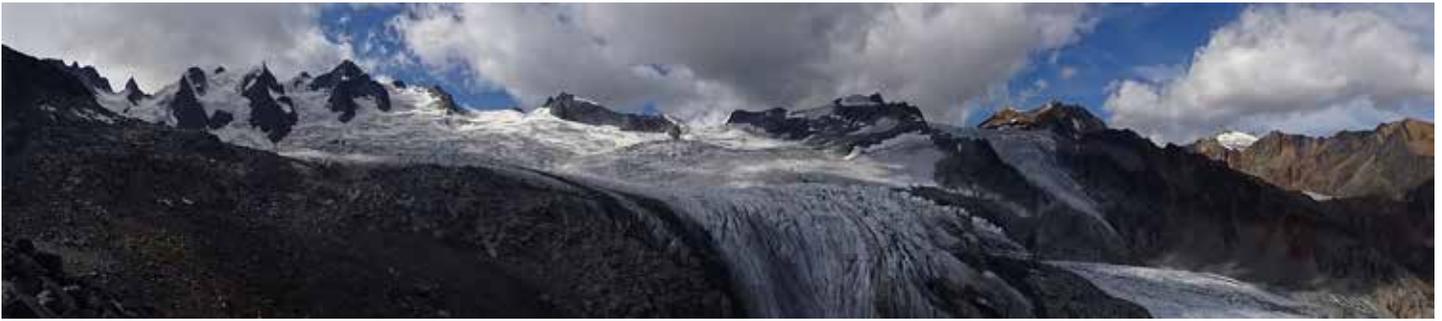
the green, wet, soggy terrain. Jeff's GPS suggested we were sometimes on the 'trail' though we struggled to see where. For the umpteenth time in the mountains, I chuckled thinking that the only certain thing certain was uncertainty.

Eventually we scrambled onto the solid ground of a lateral moraine. About six hours later we dragged ourselves across meadows to the Bill Putnam hut. A week of climbing – in the land of ice and Gog (and hopefully, no fire) - lay ahead.



Blair Piggot and the Gog-Magog incisors.

The approach to the hut put a dent in our enthusiasm, but the next morning we managed a late start hiking on rocks, boulders, and glaciers towards Gog and Magog. Nearer these objectives, we keyed into the effects of glacial recession. Ten to fifteen metres of glacial slumping had rendered the lower east facing flank mostly



Panorama of the Granite Glacier and part of the Adamant Range.

featureless. Having expected a mid-5th class ascent, we had not carried the bespoke gear from the hut for this more challenging terrain. We contoured round the base to the col between Gog/Magog and Damon where I used my ice axe to hoe my way through 25 vertical meters of unpleasant kitty-litter grit and sink-sized boulders to the col. The smart ones watched. From this vantage point, the traditional line of ascent up looked pretty promising. However, enthusiasm for pursuing this line was tepid, so I descended and we headed back to the hut.

The following day, we headed for a different objective and topped out on the southwest and main summits of Mount Quadrant. The hulking black mass of Adamant Mountain - its face lined with a patchwork of recent snow - dominated our view to the west. In the foreground, the incisors of Gog and Magog beckoned.

Two days later, we were back at the base of "kitty-litter col." Blair led the first pitch, a left-trending line on large flakes of lichen-covered rock. A few of the exfoliating wedges of shattered granite moved, but none of them dislodged. A solid belay was reached after 30 metres. Pitch 2 to the summit proved the most difficult, with a bouldering move (unprotectable without a #4 cam) on lichen-covered rock. That section went at about 5.7. The summit was a sloping tabletop with room for two. Blair and Jeff set up a rap anchor around a horn, and tossed our 60 metre ropes and hopes into the wind. We didn't know if the

ends reached the ground, and possibly left dangling 5 metres away from the rock face and above the deck. More uncertainty. Blair disappeared over the edge, fully committed. Eventually he bellowed up "off rappel", near where he touched down. The critical value of rope stretch - beyond its advertised length - proved essential to reaching the ground.



Blair Piggot halfway through Pitch 1 of Gog.

It was a terrific way to spend our last technical day in the mountains.

As this was our last night at the hut, we tried our best to eat as much 'excess' food as possible; an effort complicated by bottles and pans filled with huckleberries. Harsh as it was, we summoned our remaining strength and dispatched those berries to their (almost) final resting place.

The next morning's egress was pleasant. During one of our breaks - and allowing ourselves extra time to look around - we realized we had stumbled upon yet *another*

type of forest. This one was of stone. The petrified pieces of wood were abundant yet camouflaged.



Petrified tree trunk.

Eventually we made it back to the smoldering forest. Even with the help of GPS, we managed to miss our exact ascent path, such was the nature of the maze. More hopping and weaving brought us through the last tunnels of deadfall.

On the other side of the last tunnel, the forest floor was littered with mushrooms, some large enough to sit on.



In the wonderland of giant mushrooms.

“This is like no place on Earth,” I thought. “A land full of wonder, mystery, and danger! Some say to survive it, you need to be as

mad as a hatter.”

There seemed to be much truth in this line from Alice in Wonderland.

It was a fitting end to our Fairy (Meadows) tale.

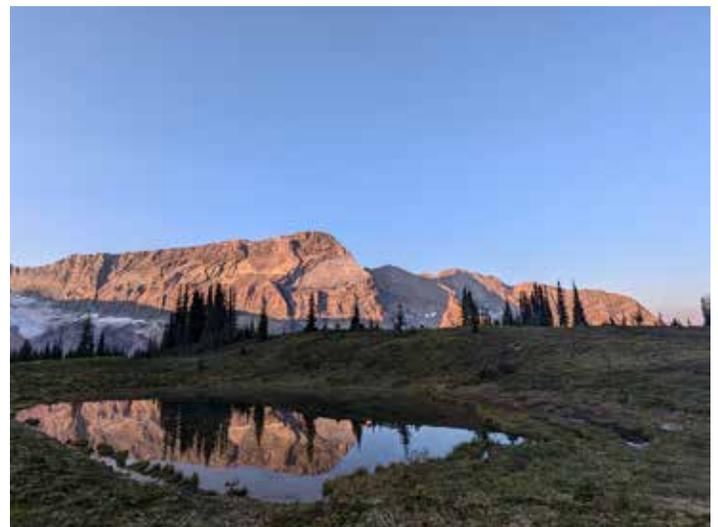
Participants: Jim Everard, Blair Piggot, and Jeff Dolinsky

A Week of Mountaineering at Campbell Icefields Chalet

Eva Gnech and Rachel Treloar
September 5-13, 2024



*The chalet with Thunder Mountain in the background.
(Photo by Carol Doering)*



*Early morning reflection of Thunder Mountain.
(Photo by Eva Gnech)*

Thirteen of us enjoyed an exhilarating week of hiking, scrambling, and mountaineering based out of Campbell Icefields Chalet in the Rockies.

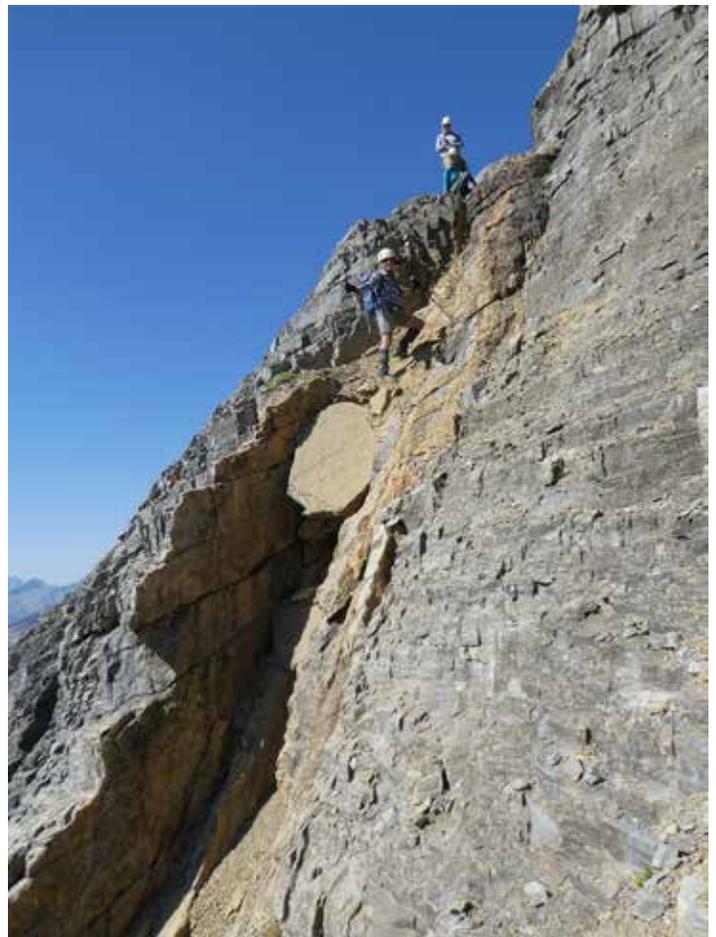
This chalet provided comfortable lodging with a functional kitchen, large social/dining area, and private bedrooms. We met each night to plan the next day's adventures with a few groups going in different directions each day. Our outdoor adventures included hiking, scrambling, climbing, rappelling, glacier travel, swimming in the tarns, and wildflower photography.



The whole gang, at the top of the 'Dome.'
(Photo by Yvonne Blum)



Heading up towards the glacier.
(Photo by Eva Gnech)



Heading down a steep section of Flathead Mountain.
(Photo by Rachel Treloar)



Shenanigans at Lightbulb Mountain.
(Photo by Mike Whitney)

Some other highlights included witnessing a large rockslide off Thunder Mountain, poem recitals, fresh blueberries and huckleberries, enjoying our communal meals together, and watering-can showers. The beautiful location, great company, supportive

atmosphere and perfect weather made for an amazing week in the mountains.



*Heading up Diamond Ridge.
(Photo by Carol Doering)*



*The ridge as seen from the chalet, at first light.
(Photo by Eva Gnech)*



*Looking down onto Campbell Icefield.
(Photo by Yvonne Blum)*



On Campbell Ice Field. (Photographer unknown)

In the Footsteps of Wheeler and Campbell: Adventures in Repeat Photography at the Campbell Icefield

Mary Sanseverino

September 7-10, 2024

On 18 July 1918 surveyors Arthur Oliver Wheeler and Alan John Campbell, along with assistant Lee Grant Cameron rose early and ventured up the northern arm of what would later be called the Campbell Glacier and Icefield. Their goal was a high point midway along the western ridge above the ice. This, along with another point on the south east of the Icefield, afforded them exceptional views of the entire area. The black and white inset photos presented here capture a sense of what it must have been like for them. Although the First World War still raged in Europe, and they were working with a reduced and inexperienced crew, these surveyors were here to map the official inter-provincial boundary between B.C. and Alberta. Using a combination of traditional survey methods (measuring horizontal and vertical angles between specific points) and photography, their goal was to create topographic maps of the border. It was an exciting moment when, on 7 September 2024 I, along with a team of climbers from the Vancouver Island section of the Alpine Club of Canada, was able to stand where Wheeler, Campbell, and Cameron stood 106 years ago and repeat their images.

Looking at the historic/modern photo pairs here I think you'll agree that much has remained the same. But even more has changed in the intervening years, especially with respect to climate-driven ice loss.



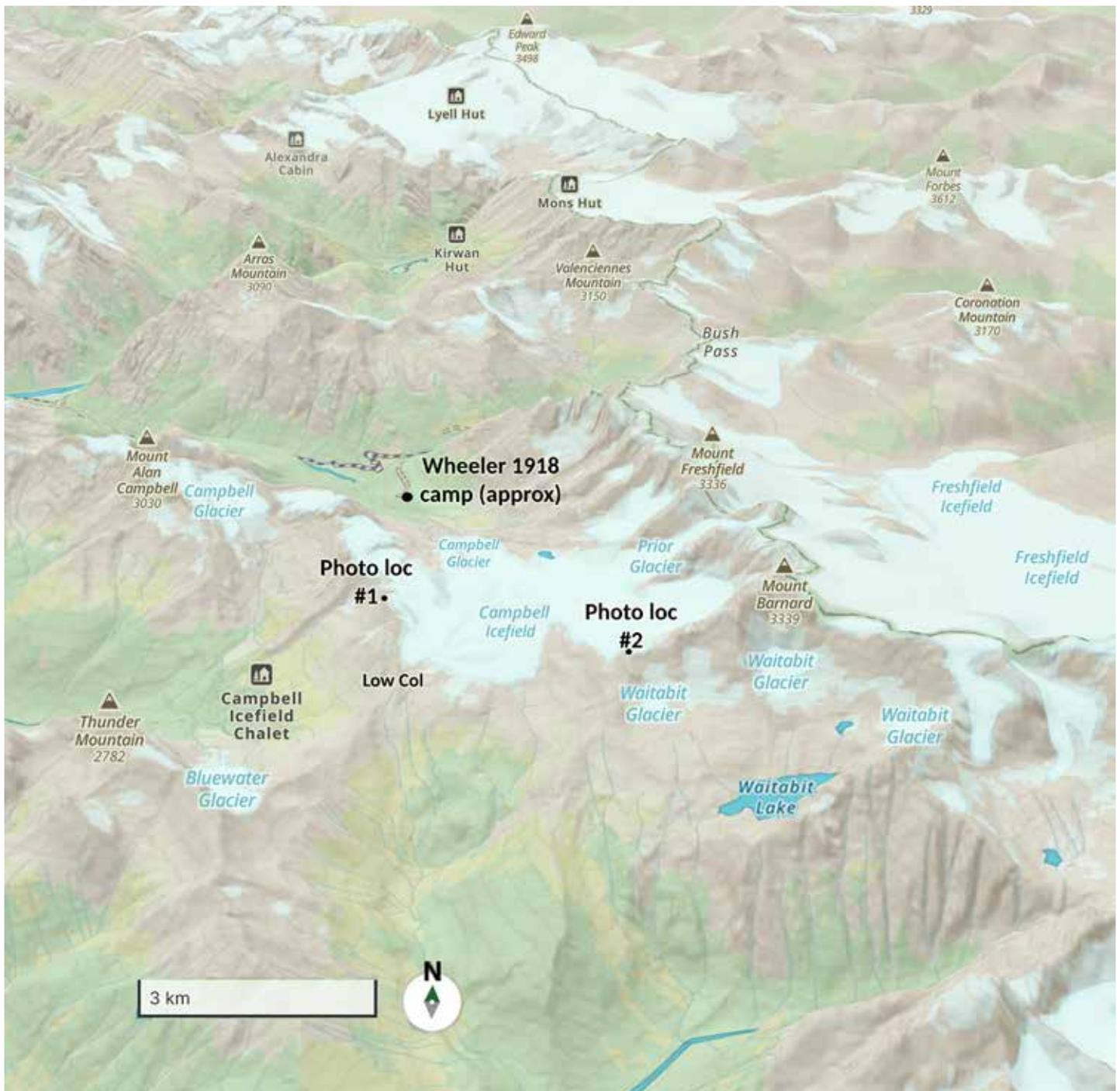
*The whole gang at the chalet.
(Photo by Yvonne Blum)*



The nighttime sky. (Photo by Sandy Stewart)

Trip Organizer: Rachel Treloar

Participants: Carol Doering, Doug Scatcherd, Mike Hubbard, Colleen Kasting, Mary Sanseverino, Mike Whitney, Eva Gnech, Judy Delogne, Yvonne Blum, Sylvia Moser, Laura Darling, and Sandy Stewart



Oblique map view of Campbell Icefield and area. Created with Gaia GPS software, Feb 15, 2025.

Mountain photography has been a passion of mine for many decades. I'm always looking for ways to let the photographs speak. So, I encourage you to spend some time with the images in this essay, perhaps reflecting on the changes so evident here. I struggle with the climate change dichotomy that long distance driving, staging via helicopter, and air travel presents. But at the same time, I feel we mountaineers are in a unique

position to bring the stories these glaciers tell to the world. At the very least, perhaps our words and images can help people better understand what is at stake in our rapidly warming world.

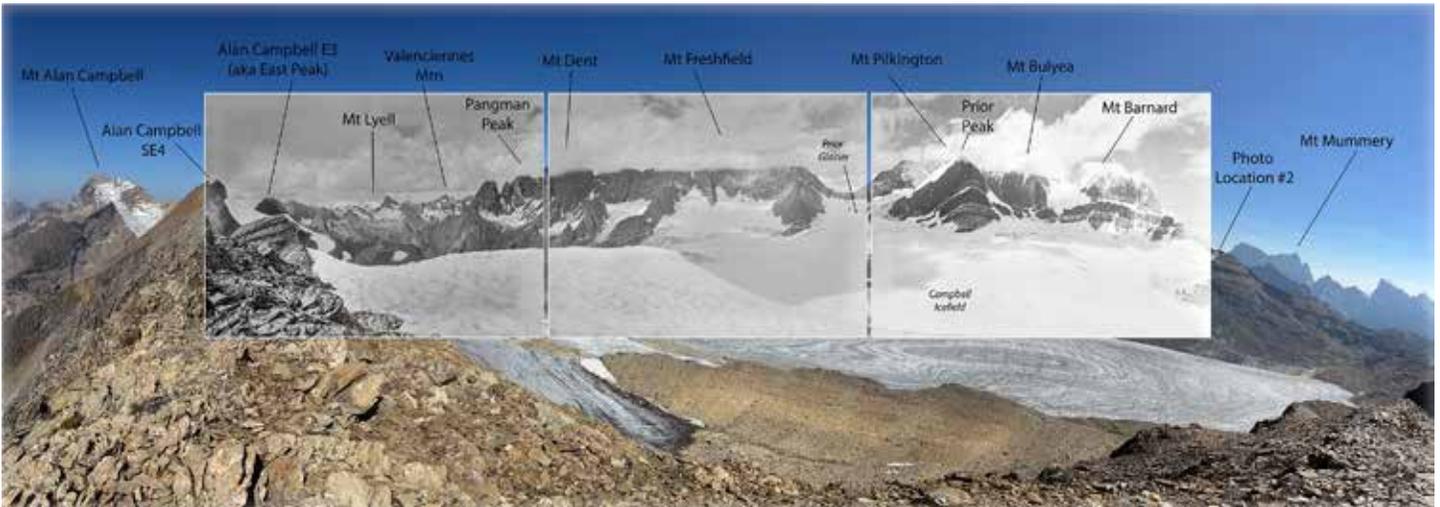
The access to both repeat photo locations – aka the “photo stations” – is via the Low Col. On 7 September I, along with Yvonne Blum, Eva Gnech, Sylvia Moser, Sandy Stewart, Rachel Treloar, and Mike Whitney started out just after 7:00 a.m., made our way over

the col and then headed northward along the ridge to our left. Diamond Peak is the local name of the high point we were making

for. Photo location #1 was on top. The way up was fairly straightforward with some interesting route finding, especially over the last 150 metres (thank you Sylvia!) to gain the summit itself. We were, however, a bit more pressed to find a workable route off the mountain. We didn't want to retrace our steps (the tarn in the bowl below was calling), so we picked our way down the south east face of Diamond Peak. There were a handful of difficult Class 4 scrambling moves, but with everyone working together we made it without incident – although I may have uttered some distinctly un-mountaineer-like phrases at a few of the more crappy rubble-on-slab passages. The tarn was especially refreshing that day!



Heading north along the ridge above the Low Col. Diamond Peak (Photo location #1) in the centre right, Alan Campbell SE4 centre left, Mount Alan Campbell on the left. Our descent route in red.



On Diamond Peak (Photo location #1) looking eastward. Black and white inset images by A.O. Wheeler, July 18, 1918, Inter-provincial Boundary Survey.

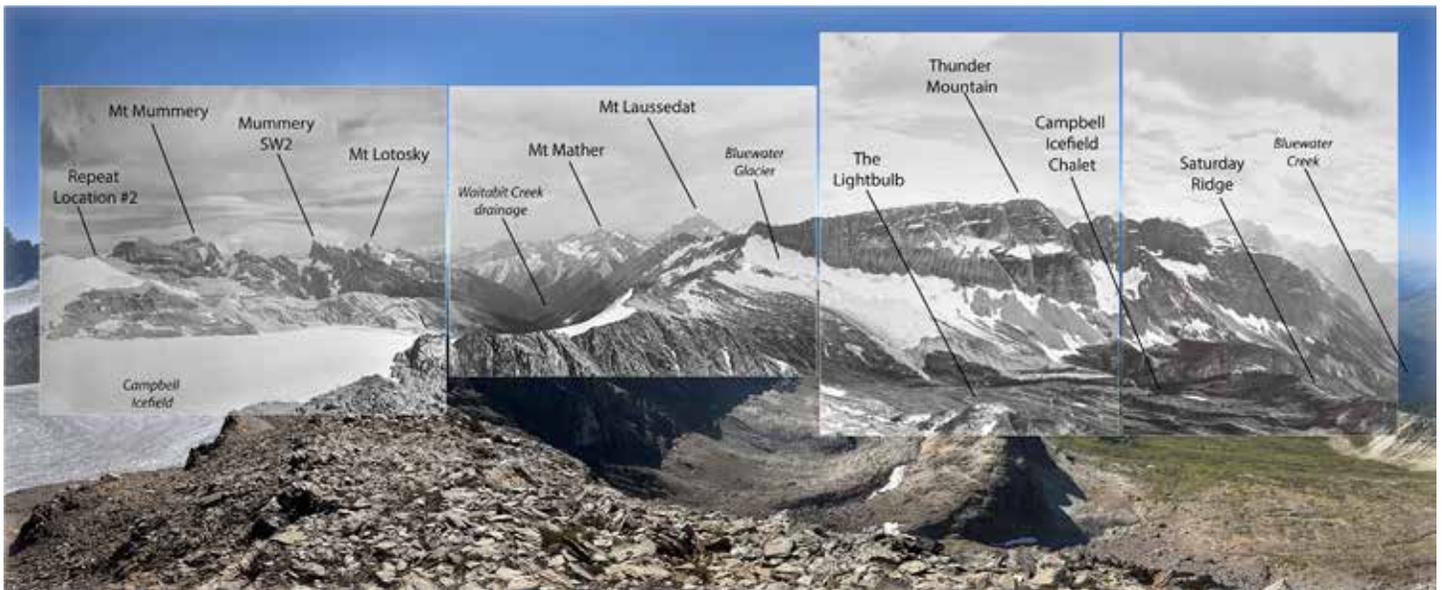


Repeat photography on Diamond Peak (Photo location #1) looking eastward. Image by M.E. Sanseverino, Sept 7, 2024.

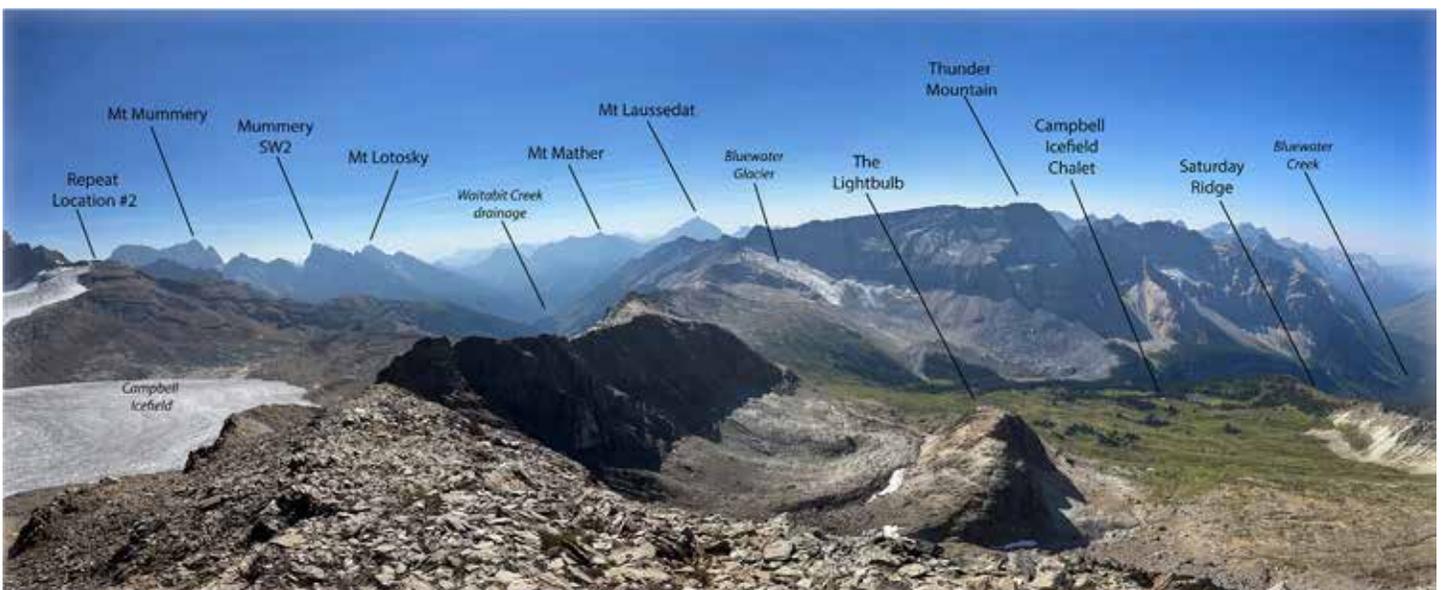
It was easy to find the remnants of Wheeler’s 1918 cairn on the summit and from that vantage point not difficult to line up and repeat the photos. The geology was very much the same, but the glacial differences were astounding. The images say it all – much more effectively than I can.

Wheeler, Campbell, and Cameron probably started their day at about the same time we did, but their camp was below the northern tongue of the Campbell Glacier. I’ve marked the approximate location on the map. They

would have spent much of their day on moraine, ice, and snow as their camp in drainage of the Valenciennes River was just below the toe of the Campbell. Wheeler’s diary for 18 July 1918 says they had a narrow escape from falling ice on the way up. And, once at the camera station, had to wait out two rather fierce lightning storms that lasted several hours¹. We might have had a more arduous climb, but they didn’t get to swim in a tarn. Indeed, Wheeler reports that they were working at taking photos, dodging thunderclaps, measuring bearings, and



*On Diamond Peak (Photo location #1) looking southward.
Black and white inset images by A.O. Wheeler, July 18, 1918, Inter-provincial Boundary Survey.*

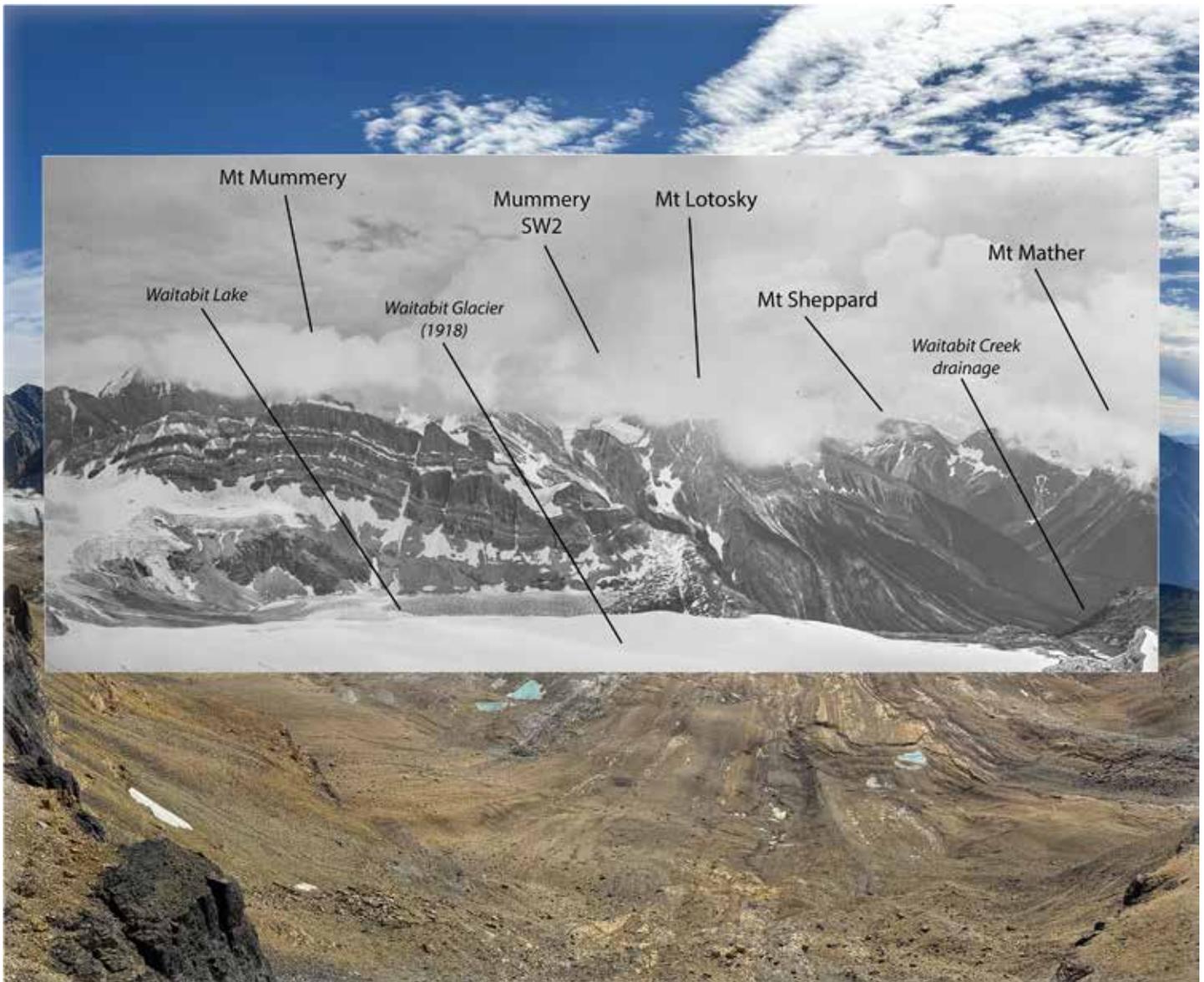


*Repeat photography on Diamond Peak (Photo location #1) looking southward.
Image by M.E. Sanseverino, Sept 7, 2024.*

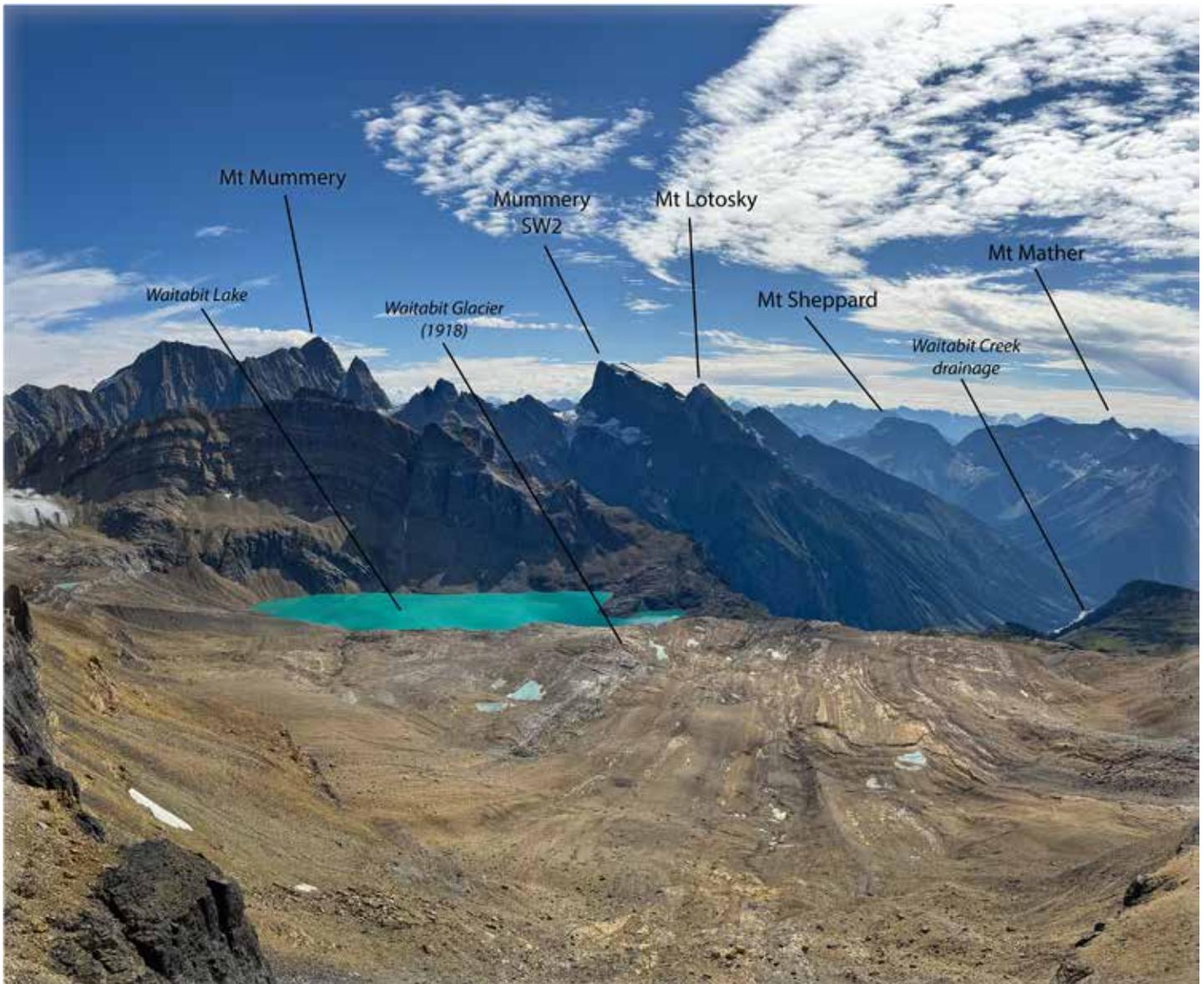
building a cairn until 6:00 p.m. They didn't get back to camp until 8:45 p.m.

On 10 September a dozen of us started off for a day of exploration on the Campbell Icefield. Using the Low Col we accessed the moraine below the southwest lobe of the Icefield. Another 1918 photo station was within striking distance on the lower portion of a shoulder below Mount Barnard and several of our party were keen to try and get more repeat photos. While I did a low-level traverse of the Icefield, others tried to find their way up high enough to get workable repeats. In the end, Sandy Stewart and Sylvia Moser gained the top of the shoulder

via an ever-steepening ice ramp. With only having taken a quick look at the photos Sandy stationed himself on the highest point available and took a series of images much as Campbell and company would have. The location is not quite the same, but the image comparisons still tell a deeply compelling story. By this time back in 1918, it was late July and Campbell was in charge of the field crew. Wheeler had left to attend the ACC's General Mountaineering Camp (GMC) in Paradise Valley near Lake Louise. Fun fact: Wheeler always made it a contract condition that he be allowed to leave field work so he could attend the GMC.



*On Mount Barnard SW shoulder (Photo location #2) looking southward.
Black and white inset images by A.J. Campbell, late July, 1918, Inter-provincial Boundary Survey.*



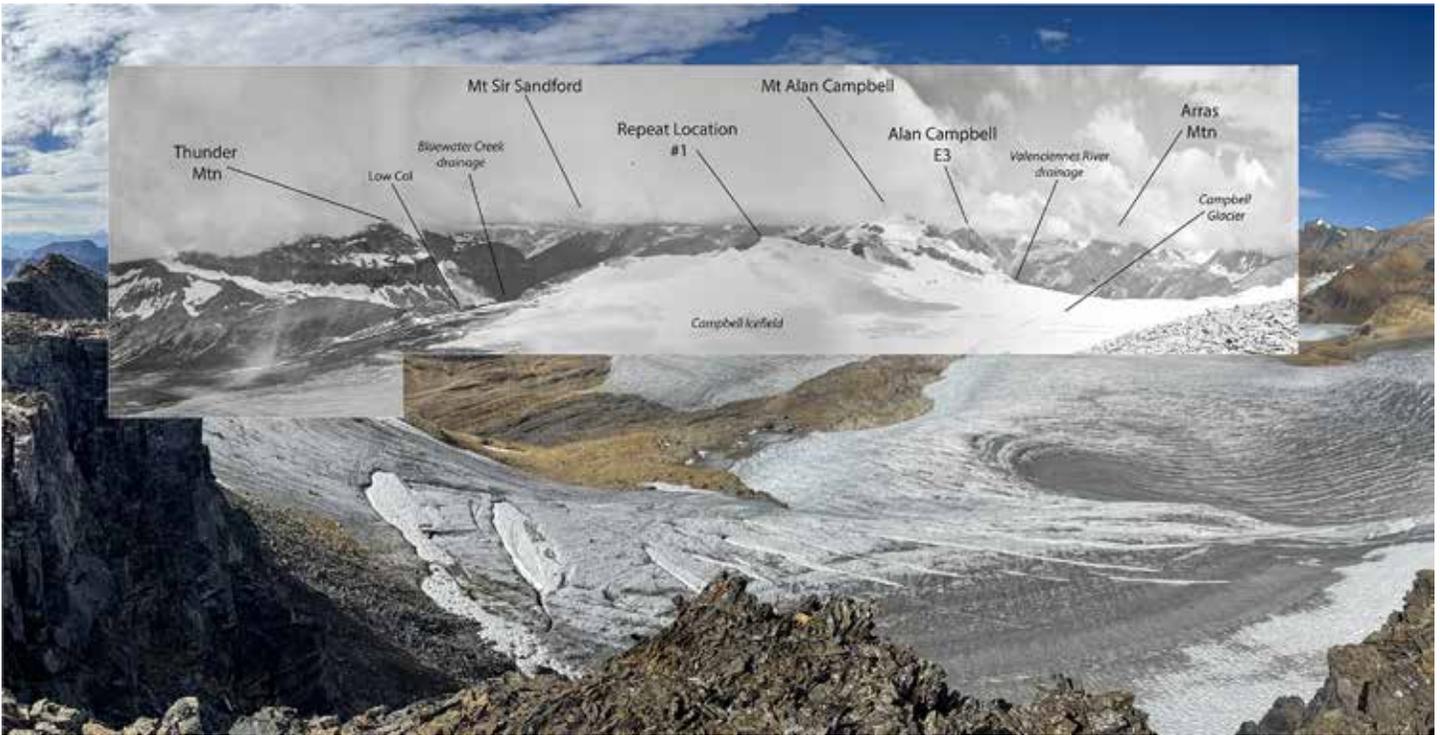
*Repeat photography on Mount Barnard SW shoulder (Photo location #2) looking southward.
Image by S. Stewart, Sept 10, 2024.*

Looking southeast, the historic/modern images from this vantage point show Waitabit Glacier (what remains in 2024) and Waitabit Lake. They form part of the Waitabit Creek drainage, which joins the Columbia River at a shallow angle just outside of Donald, B.C. It's called Waitabit because back before the Mica Dam tamed the mighty Columbia, canoe travellers used to pause here, adjust their loads, and check their craft before travelling on downstream around the turbulent Big Bend². Just another example of how interconnected our alpine environments can be with the lower elevations. The idea that a snow flake can fall up high in a place

like the Campbell Icefield and end up in the Pacific Ocean still never ceases to amaze me.

Thank you to all of the Campbell Icefield ACCVI team: Yvonne Blum, Laura Darling, Judy Delogne, Carol Doering, Eva Gnech, Mike Hubbard, Colleen Kasting, Sylvia Moser, Doug Scatcherd, Sandy Stewart, Rachel Treloar, and Mike Whitney – without your enthusiasm for engaging with repeat photography these images would not have been made.

Thank you to Library and Archives Canada / Bibliothèque et Archives Canada and the Mountain Legacy Project at the University of



On Mount Barnard SW shoulder (Photo location #2) looking westward across the Campbell Icefield. Black and white inset images by A.J. Campbell, late July, 1918, Inter-provincial Boundary Survey.



Repeat photography on Mount Barnard SW shoulder (Photo location #2) looking westward across the Campbell Icefield. Image by S. Stewart, Sept 10, 2024.

Victoria for access to and use of the historic photographs. They provide a rich resource for anyone interested in exploring the Canadian mountain west.

¹J. Sherwood, *Surveying the 120th Meridian and the Great Divide: The Alberta-BC Boundary Survey, 1918-1924*, 1st ed. Halfmoon Bay, BC, Canada: Caitlin Press, 2019, pp. 28-30.

²W. L. Putnam, G. W. Boles, and R. W. Laurilla, *Place Names of the Canadian Alps*, 1st ed. Revelstoke, BC, Canada: Footprint, 1990, pp. 351.



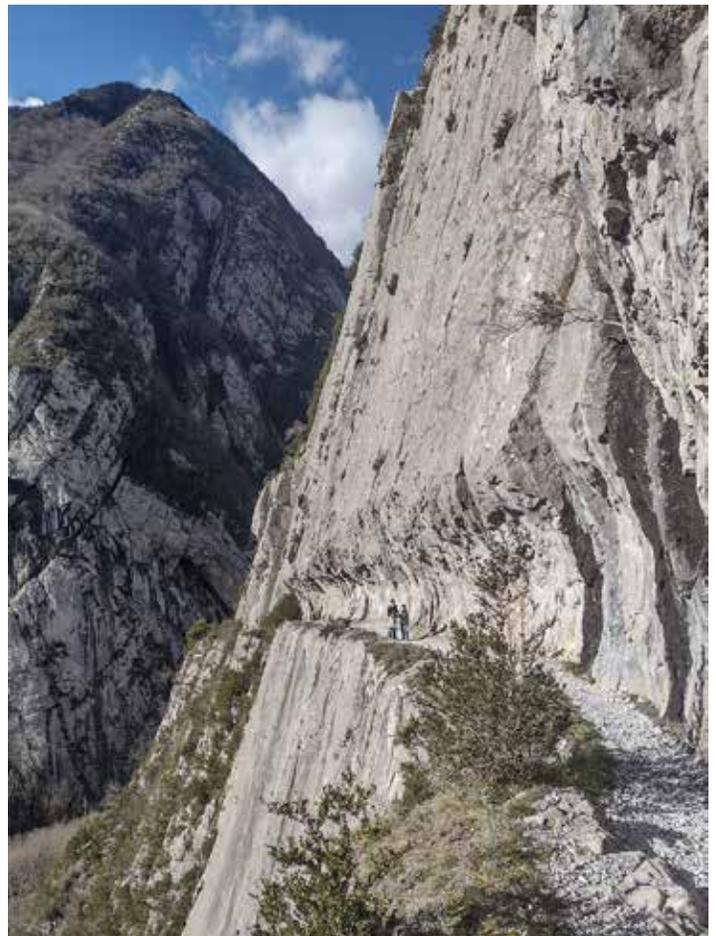
Lescun, in the Vallée d'Aspe.



Stone bridge near Bassies in the Ariège region of the Pyrénées.



Tautavel Gorge, near the Mediterranean end of the Pyrénées.



Chemin de la Mature, a path carved out of a limestone cliff to transport logs for the construction of masts for the French navy in the eighteenth century.

bike. Everything about France is so much more bike friendly than in Canada, there are side roads that go everywhere, designated bike routes and drivers are just more aware of bicycles. Part of that may be due to the fact that Pau has a long history of hosting stages of the Tour de France. During the time we were there we saw the Tour de France pass twice and the Tour de France Femmes pass once. Always a festive atmosphere when the Tour is in town.

We did more hiking in the fall, but we also took advantage of our base in Europe to explore other regions. We spent a couple of weeks in the Balkans doing the Peaks of the Balkans hike through the Accursed

Mountains. After that I spent a couple of weeks hiking in the Swiss canton of Graubünden while Alcina biked through Brittany with a friend.



Cresta de la Cruz, Olvena, Spain.

use of crampons and/or ski crampons on many of the ski trips. However, the spring skiing is very good although their snowpack is generally less than the Island so it doesn't last into July. But I had some good tours and ski mountaineering to some of the 3000 metre peaks in the area in May. There is a good network of huts in the Pyrénées, many of which are open year-round or at least for spring skiing. That makes for easy touring, basically all you need to carry is a day pack.



Skiing in the shadow of the shadow of the Pic du Midi de Bigorre, near the Col du Tourmalet.



Col de Chamoussière, Queyras, Les Alpes. A massive, size 4, avalanche hit that valley a couple of days before we got there.

After a few weeks of more hiking in the early season snow, ski season arrived. It started off fine, I did a nice trip under the Pic du Midi de Bigorre in good snow. Unfortunately, the Pyrénées also suffered from a lack of snow in January and there was not much worth skiing early in the year. Things got better in March when I did a trip to the Queyras region of the French Alps. A super hut to hut trip with excellent snow and great touring. Skiing in the Pyrénées is similar to the Island in that there are wide fluctuations in temperature and powder snow does not last long. Unlike the Island the conditions are often hardpack and icy and we made

As skiing was ending, climbing season was starting, although there was quite a bit of overlap. Within a couple of hours of Pau there are dozens of "grand voies" or multipitch bolted routes, many of which are of a reasonable grade. I climbed quite a few on both the French and the Spanish sides of the Pyrénées. Most of the routes are on limestone which at first was quite unfamiliar to someone who has done most of their recent climbing on the Island, but there is also granite and sandstone in some areas.

Later that spring Catrin and Erich dropped by and we joined them to hike part of the Haute Route Pyrénées (HRP). The route goes from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean straddling the France-Spain border, but we



Pasaia San Juan, Spain.



Cirque de Gavarnie, a major tourist destination in the Pyrenees, with good reason.



Pic de Néouvielle (3091 metres).

only hiked a section through Béarn, Haute-Pyrénées and Aragon. Immediately after that trip we spent a few days in the Néouvielle region which is a stunning granite landscape of mountains and lakes.



Brèche de Roland. We started our section of the Haute Route Pyrénées here.

Our last summer was spent in and around Pau, hiking and climbing. One of the most

iconic peaks around Pau is the Pic du Midi d'Ossau, locally known as Jean-Pierre. The peak is visible from the Boulevard des Pyrénées in downtown Pau. Being one of the taller peaks in the region at 2884 metres, it is also visible from many of the hikes in the Pyrenees close to Pau. The peak itself is the core of an old volcano from about 278 million years ago and there are many climbing routes with a wide range of difficulties. The "voie normale" is the easiest, graded PD, "peu difficile", comparable to Triple Peak's "voie normale." After having seen Jean-Pierre from many different angles over the past year, I got a chance to climb it on a club trip in the heat of August. The first day we hiked in to the Refuge Pombie and made it minutes before a thunderstorm. The next morning was clear and sort of cool

so we headed out as the sun was rising and made it to the start of the climb before the masses. The climb really starts at the bottom of a short gully, our leader set up a rope and we scrambled up. There were two more gullies before reaching a big iron cross which marks the top of the third gully, a useful landmark on the way down. The rest of the climb was just a walk/scramble to the summit. On the way down we met all the late starters on their way up, there may have been a hundred people on the mountain that day. We rappelled down the gullies at the end and headed back to cars, picking up our stuff from the refuge on the way past.

have been re-introduced from Slovenia. They are still endangered and sightings are not common. The more common mammals that are often seen by hikers are marmots, deer, and "isards" (Pyrénéen chamois), a species of chamois distinct from the chamois found in



Pic du Midi d'Ossau.



Pescamou Crag, near Pierre-St Martin.



Isards, Pyrénéen chamois.



*Canyoning, Barranco de Aguaré, Spain.
(Photo by Congduc Pham)*

Although there are few if any native bears left the Pyrénées, there are some bears that



Photo locations for destinations near Pau.

the Alps, and the ubiquitous horses, sheep, and cows.

It was a great way to spend a year and it was hard to leave. I still miss the bread, croissants, and pastries. The easy access to the mountains was great but it comes at a price, there are people everywhere. Even if you don't see people there are traces and one never has the feeling of true wilderness.



Cabane de Caillaous – Arlet.

Hiking on Pitcairn Islands

Graham Maddocks

February 17 – 27, 2024

All Photos are by Graham Maddocks.

I have always had a passion for remote places and Pitcairn Island fits that description. It is the second most isolated island in the world after Rapa Nui (Easter Island). It became a British Overseas Territory after the famous mutiny on the *HMS Bounty* in 1789 led by Fletcher Christian against Captain William Bligh. The island has no airstrip or harbour, making the landing of any

supplies difficult from the supply ship onto small whaleboats. The supply ship operates out of Tahiti, and on a previous visit to Tahiti I had taken a supply ship out to the remote Marquesas Islands and was determined to return one day and take the supply ship down to Pitcairn Island. If it had not been for the famous mutiny Pitcairn Island would probably be unpopulated even now.

Some background is called for. In 1787 the *HMS Bounty* was sent down to Tahiti to bring cuttings of breadfruit trees back to the sugar plantations of the Caribbean as a food source for the plantation slave labourers. The planned route was around the Cape Horn and into the Pacific. The presence of Tahiti was already known after a visit and survey by Captain James Cook with William Bligh in his crew in 1769. However, the weather at the cape was gale force and after a month of trying to round the cape, Captain Bligh gave up and sailed the long way around via the Indian Ocean. This delay meant that the breadfruit season was over when the *HMS Bounty* arrived in Tahiti and the crew were obliged to spend six months on the island. The combination of languid tropical weather, fresh fruit, and the charms of the uninhibited Tahitian women who certainly believed in freedom of expression and who, prior to missionary contact, were unaware they were sinners. This bucolic period and Captain Bligh's lack of people skills probably sowed the seeds of the later mutiny.

After finally leaving Tahiti with a cargo of breadfruit cuttings *HMS Bounty* set sail for the Caribbean. Three weeks later on 28 April 1789 a mutiny led by midshipman Fletcher Christian off the coast of Tonga took place. Captain Bligh and 18 loyal crew members were cast adrift in the ship's launch. It was expected that they would land in Tonga for food and water, which they did. But they were attacked by the inhabitants who were reputed to be cannibals and a crew member

was murdered. This fear of cannibals led Bligh to make a 41-day 5823 kilometre voyage to Timor, a remarkable feat of navigation and seamanship.

The *HMS Bounty* and the mutineers returned to Tahiti where 16 elected to stay, rightly fearing retribution (it did come). Fletcher Christian and the remaining mutineers tried to settle on Tubai one of the remote Austral Islands of now French Polynesia, but resistance from the inhabitants forced them to set sail again. Pitcairn Island was chosen as it was uninhabited and incorrectly marked on the maps - it was 180 miles south of its position on the charts of the day and was thus unlikely to be visited. Fletcher Christian and eight mutineers and their Tahitian wives landed and burnt the *HMS Bounty* and their descendants have remained until today making Pitcairn Island one of the last vestiges of the British Empire. It was not visited again until 1820 when American whalers were astonished to find English speaking inhabitants. By then only one of the original mutineers was left alive. One of the remaining Tahitian wives left and returned to Tahiti after an absence of 31 years.

By 1856 the population had outgrown the resources of the island and Britain moved 194 islanders to Norfolk Island, a former penal colony midway between Australia and New Zealand and home to the indigenous Norfolk Island Pine (*Araucaria heterophylla*). Two families were homesick and returned to Pitcairn Island and their descendants populate the island today.

To prepare for the trip, I read the record of the court martial proceedings on the loss of the *HMS Bounty* (Bligh was exonerated) and the superb historical novel *Mutiny on the Bounty* by Nordhoff and Hall (1932) as well as the 1962 movie (Marlon Brando and Trevor Howard) and the 1984 version of the mutiny (Mel Gibson and Anthony Hopkins).

I started with a visit to Norfolk Island, a green gem of an Australian Overseas Department (passports are required) to visit the Bounty Museum and soak up the atmosphere of the island's grim history as a penal colony prior to the Pitcairners arrival. To explore, I rented a car from a man whose surname was Christian a direct descendant of Fletcher Christian.

In Tahiti I joined the supply ship and left to deliver cargo to some of the remote Tumatu Islands which are low lying atolls. After Anaa and Ananu we docked in Mangareva, the largest island in the Gambier Islands in French Polynesia and the closest island to Pitcairn that has an airstrip.



Kingston, the old penal colony built by convicts in 18th century.

The first sighting of Pitcairn was not what I imagined, I suppose I had an idea of the traditional tropical paradise like Tahiti but Pitcairn is steep and rugged and did not look inviting with no barrier reef, beaches, or harbour. The total surface area is 4.6 square kilometres.



Emily Bay.



Approaching Pitcairn Island from the sea.



Norfolk Island National Park.

But it certainly is remote, 2325 kilometres south of Tahiti in the vast deep blue Pacific Ocean. It is only when travelling by sea one can grasp the immensity of the Pacific. It's akin to driving across Canada as the only way to feel the size of our country. I went ashore by the ship's barge and faced a



Pitcairn Island's rugged coastline with no harbours.



Jonestown, Pitcairn Island's capital and only town.

steep climb uphill to the small settlement of Adamstown. Most of the young people have moved away to jobs in Australia and New Zealand and there are now only 36 permanent residents with the school closed. As Pitcairn Island needs able bodied people to man its whaleboats to land supplies it is hard to be optimistic of its future with an ageing population. I visited the grave of John Adams, the only known grave of the original mutineers and the last to die in 1829 aged 65 years. The ambience was pleasant but a little forlorn with many abandoned gardens and plantations in the rugged interior. Anxious to stretch my legs, several of the passengers and crew from the ship

hiked into the high interior to look for the resident Galapagos tortoise Miss T. She is well over 100 years old, introduced in 1937, and wanders a solitary life. I did later meet her. It had just rained and the muddy trails were very slippery. Some of my company were old (myself included), but a fit 30 something German/Australian woman was the one who slipped on the steep mud and snapped her leg. It was a serious break with the broken bone visible under the skin. The ship's crew organized a spine board for an evacuation, but when they tried to transfer the spine board and the strapped-in victim, it became very difficult as the height between the barge and the ship's hull door changed by about 10 feet every two seconds as both vessels rolled in the ocean swell. Someone on the ship set her leg in plaster until she got to hospital in Tahiti. It was certainly a lesson in what it is like to live on such a remote island where a hospital is days away.

There is archaeological evidence of early Polynesian settlement on Norfolk Island, Pitcairn Island, and Henderson with petroglyphs and stone tools, but all were abandoned long ago around the 15th century probably after exhausting the resources. How the Polynesians found these places will remain one of life's mysteries, but they were undoubtedly great navigators and seafarers and the only real conclusion is that they were found by accident. No more miraculous than the discovery of Hawai'i, New Zealand, and Rapa Nui (Easter Island) which lies 1,900 kilometres east of Pitcairn Island and 3540 kilometres from the coast of South America which they may also have visited to obtain sweet potato or kumara. Kumara is the same word in Polynesian as used in South America. Polynesian stone tools have also been found in Australia, but whether it was by trade or visitation is unknown.

Britain annexed the British Overseas Territory of Pitcairn Island in 1902 and created a

marine reserve of 834,334 square kilometres (322,138 square miles). It includes Pitcairn Island, two uninhabited atolls Ducie (475 kilometre distant) and Oeno, and Henderson Island an uninhabited island larger than Pitcairn Island and 168 kilometres distant. Pitcairners used to visit Henderson Island in the past for fish, seabirds, and timber. Henderson Island also has a place in history.

In 1820 the American whaleship *Essex* 15 months out of Nantucket was rammed and sunk by an enraged sperm whale in the trackless South Pacific. The ordeal of the *Essex* was as well-known in its time as the story of the Titanic is today. The incident is the basis of Herman Melville's novel *Moby Dick*. The 20-man crew took to the boats and landed on Henderson Island where three elected to stay, even after the discovery of eight shipwrecked skeletons in a cave. They were eventually rescued by another Nantucket whaler and made it home via Australia. Fearing cannibals on the islands to the west (Tahiti) the remaining crew set out for South America 3000 miles away, and three months later only five made it ashore in South America. They experienced cannibalism by their own shipmates. As more is known of whale behaviour today, a likely explanation is that the *Essex* was harpooning a pod of female sperm whales when one of their whaleboats was damaged and returned for repairs. Sperm whales communicate by clicks underwater like tapping and it is now thought that the hammering of the whaleboat was interpreted underwater as another male sperm whale. The enraged male (estimated at 85 tons) thought that he was attacking a competitor when he rammed the *Essex*.

While I was on Pitcairn Island another ship came in and anchored. It was called *Plastic Odyssey* and was operated by a French NGO who were experimenting with burning seaborne plastics without oxygen to create

a high yield fuel. They had just come from Henderson Island which they had chosen for its remote location. A sad fact is the island and surrounding ocean is covered in seaborne plastic waste. I had a very interesting conversation with the crew about this encouraging experiment.

Geezer Hiking in Arizona

Pam Olson

February 21 – March 14, 2024

All photos are by Pam Olson.

Our first hiking trip to Arizona was in 2020. We spent three weeks exploring various areas and returned to Canada just as the Covid-19 pandemic hit. When we had left for Arizona in early February 2020, there had been reports of only a few presumptive cases of a novel coronavirus in BC, all involving people returning to Canada from The Peoples' Republic of China. At the same time, only one case of the virus had been reported in the Phoenix area. By the time we got back to Canada three weeks later, the virus was spreading across North America and around the world. By the end of April, some international borders were closed and travel restrictions were in place. A global pandemic was soon declared by the World Health Organization. After a few years of travel restrictions, social distancing, vaccinations, and other procedures, gradually the number of cases worldwide decreased. By 2024, having received multiple vaccinations over the previous four years, we decided it was a bit safer to travel and we headed off to Arizona again.

Arizona is a popular destination for east

coast American retirees. Many of them are hikers and we met a woman on a trail who told us that anyone over sixty was a geezer. She then began to explain geezer hiking to us. Geezers don't mind getting wet feet crossing a stream, she said, but they don't wade across any stream with water deeper than knee level. Geezers don't try to keep up with younger hikers. They take numerous rests, observe wildlife, examine flowers, watch clouds, identify geological features, etc. Geezers don't have to get to the summit; they've lost count of the number peaks they've bagged and they can declare a summit at any time. Nor do geezers worry about permits, their philosophy being that it is better to ask for forgiveness than permission. Apparently, geezers like striking up conversations with other geezers when out hiking. Being over seventy, we fit her definition of geezers.

According to the United States Bureau of Land Management (BLM), of the thirty-six identified species of rattlesnakes in the world, thirteen of them live in Arizona. This information was stated on a trailhead sign cautioning people to watch where they put their hands and feet and not to play with or tease snakes. The sign also advised that most people who were bitten by snakes either accidentally stepped on them or were trying to kill them. Snakes however were still asleep in February and March as, according to one State Park Ranger, they require several days of warm weather to rouse themselves from their cozy dens. Some rattlesnakes hibernate (or, to use the correct term, brumate) in burrows abandoned by small mammals while others use rock crevices. Having bicycle toured and hiked numerous times in Australia, we had learned a few things about venomous snakes. If you leave them alone, usually they will leave you alone.

Several of the guide books to hiking areas in Arizona are authored by Bruce Grubbs. It is

important to keep in mind that whatever the author writes about the trail length should not be believed. Following his instructions on a few hikes, we found that the distances we were recording on our GPS tracker were much longer than the distances in his route descriptions. Since the distances in the guide books were in miles, we changed the units on the GPS to agree with the instructions.

Arizona's geology is diverse featuring low deserts, high plateaus and towering mountains, many over 3500 metres. Some geological features are obviously the results of large areas having been covered by water several millions of years ago while other features indicate ancient volcanic activity. The ecology varies with the regions, cactus in the desert to towering ponderosa pine forests in the mountains and everything in between. What is important to note is that almost every shrub or plant has either spines or thorns that tear at clothes and skin. Water is scarce in the desert regions and hikers are advised to carry extra. The National Parks Rangers recommend carrying one gallon per person per day. We have collapsible containers for carrying extra water and we can carry enough for a two overnight trip as besides drinking water, we like to have afternoon tea and morning coffee. During



Why hikers in Arizona should wear long sleeves.

one hike we managed to camp out three nights because we were fortunate to find snow the second day which we used to extend our water supply. When there was a water filled stream, often there was too much water resulting in submerged stepping stones and wet feet.

The first of our hikes during our three-week trip in 2024 was an easy overnight hike at Lost Dutchman State Park in the Superstition Mountains. This is a popular and busy area partly because of its proximity to Phoenix and partly because there is a campground in the park. Since the Walmart in Mesa where we shopped had only large containers of white gas, that is what we purchased for our MSR stove. Opening it at the trailhead parking lot proved to be a challenge. For an unknown reason, the cap was stuck and would not move. We enlisted the aid of some young, strong looking hikers. None was able to unscrew the cap.

Next, we removed the safety cap and punched a hole in the inner lid using a Swiss Army knife corkscrew. Another hiker produced a Leatherman and he used the pliers end first to widen the hole then to get a grip on the inner cap and finally to twist the reluctant cap. About eight people were involved in the operation to open the can of Coleman fuel. After filling our MSR fuel bottle, we stashed the big container in some bushes to collect later. We walked out on a fairly easy trail that eventually climbed up onto a ridge where we found a pleasant camp site with a view of the valley below. The following day, we took a slightly different route to return to the parking area.

Our next trip, just south of Payson, was to Deer Creek in the Mazatzal Wilderness. The trail started in open country where a few cattle were grazing and within a short distance we came to the creek. Then the trail followed the creek which had a considerable amount of water flowing necessitating many



Lost Dutchman State Park.

crossings. Cairns marked most crossings and there were stepping stones in some. According to the guide book instructions, we should have found the turn to the Davey Gowan Trail at seven miles but, according to the GPS map, we were nowhere near a turn after we had walked almost that distance. Finally, we just camped. By this time our arms and legs were covered in scratches from overgrown thorn bushes that lined the stream. A number of deciduous thorn bushes grow in Arizona and since the ones along the trail were not in leaf, we could not clearly identify them. The evergreen scrub live oaks have prickly leaves.



Looking back along the Gold Ridge Trail.

Continuing on the next day, still following the creek, we reached the turn to Davey Gowan Trail and discovered a lovely camping area with rails for tying up horses. It was too early to camp, and as there was no water further along the trail, we filled all our water containers adding extra weight to our packs. The trail wound around hillside after hillside and, frustratingly, did not seem to be heading for the ridge. We observed deer and elk droppings, but did not see any animals. Finally, we decided that we had to get to the ridge top to find a flat spot to camp because the sun was going to set in a little over an hour. After ten hours and about eight difficult miles, we found a camping spot at about 5700 feet near the ridge top, put up the tent and collapsed inside. It was a nuts and chocolate snack before falling asleep.

About forty-five minutes after we set out the next morning, we reached Forest Road 201 and followed it. After passing the junction with the wandering Davey Gowan Trail, we soon came to the Gold Ridge Trail junction. The elevation was over 6000 feet and there were patches of recent snow. We packed some of it into one of the collapsible containers to top up our water supply. The Gold Ridge Trail was easy walking over hill after hill after hill. We lost count of the bumps and finally we could see the Beeline Highway a long way below us. A flat, tent-sized spot next to the trail worked as a campsite and a small hill between it and the highway blocked the traffic noise. From our campsite the next day, it took only about an hour to reach the trailhead. We stayed overnight in a quiet motel in Camp Verde.

The Blodgett Trail to West Clear Creek in the Coconino National Forest was our next destination. After a long drive on gravel roads, we reached the trailhead. The walk to the creek was mainly downhill through piñon and manzanita while sycamores graced the creek edges. A small stone building was one



Deer Creek Trail, Mazatzal Wilderness.

of the few remnants of the former Bull Pen Ranch. The creek ran through a canyon of red sandstone-like rock and the water level was quite high. We decided to camp next to the creek and think about crossing it in the morning. As we were setting up camp, two hikers with day packs came along, walking downstream. They told us they had walked up stream in the morning and were returning to their vehicle which they had driven in along another access road further downstream. When we asked them about the water depth, they told us that there were four crossings each way, the deepest was waist level and the others were about knee or thigh level. The next day, we decided that we did not want to carry our big packs through waist deep water to complete the loop trip, so we walked back to the car where we car camped.

We were driving north, hoping to get to the Grand Canyon but after a short stop in Flagstaff where we observed piles of old snow in the wind-blown parking lots and a lot of snow in the mountains, we changed our minds. We stopped for the night at Williams which is also at around 7000 feet and had signs of a recent snowfall. The air temperature was cold and the wind made it seem colder. Williams' claim to fame is that it is on the former historic Route 66.



West Clear Creek, an over the knee-deep crossing.

Going south, the next day we stopped at Prescott which is pronounced Preskitt. The garrulous volunteer at the tourist information office sold us a map of hiking trails for one dollar and suggested we ask for more information at the local hiking store. The friendly guys there sent us out along Thumb Butte Road to the White Springs trailhead. In windy weather, we started out on Trail 738 toward Mount Williams and the Parker Valley. The trail wound through a ponderosa pine forest and there was water in the streams running through granite boulders. A big storm had parked itself over northern California and was dumping snow over much of the Sierras. The tail end of the weather system was hitting Arizona. The wind was getting stronger and the sky was becoming cloudy. After a few hours, we found a nice camping area among the ponderosas, but before we settled in, we checked the

weather forecast with our Zoleo. Wind was predicted overnight, gusting up to 52kph. Geezers are concerned about their mortality. We envisioned large tree branches falling in the wind and crushing us in our tent. Turning around, we walked for a couple of hours until we found a camping place near some shorter trees. Overnight, the wind persisted and we were glad we had anchored the extra guy lines on the tent fly. The next day we drove along the very winding and scenic Highway 89 and stopped in Wickenburg for the night.



Along Trail 738, White Springs.

The volunteer at the Wickenburg tourist information office was also a hiker and when we asked her about a hike in the Harquahala Mountains, she was not enthusiastic and suggested we hike along the Hassayampa River. She also described a few other places but her instructions became too complex and we decided to go to the Harquahala Mountains as planned. Because the drive to the trailhead was a fair distance, we had a late start. Once again, Bruce Grubbs' instructions were inaccurate. After walking mainly uphill for well over half the described distance we were no where near the summit, the site of an historic astrophysical observation station. We saw remnants of water lines and tanks and wondered if

they were part of the observatory or were for cattle. About an hour and half before sunset, we found a suitably flat area for the tent. The rocks appeared to be granitic and volcanic and the vegetation was dominated by saguaro and prickly pear. Since we had carried only enough water for one overnight, we had insufficient water to continue on to the summit where there was also no water. We walked back out the next day.



Kofa National Wildlife Refuge.

The next day we headed off to hike the Margie's Cove Trail in the North Maricopa Mountains region of the Sonoran Desert National Monument. Because the east access road to the trailhead was closed, we went to the west trailhead. Again, we wondered what Bruce Grubbs was using to measure distances. The route followed a dry wash, finally reaching an interesting granite canyon. Past the canyon, the trail intersected with the Brittlebush Trail and it was near there in a saguaro forest we found a flat tent area. Rain was starting to spit as we were setting up the tent. Are we the only people who can go to the desert and get rained on? It was a short late afternoon shower and the night was dry. However, there was more



Sunset in the Harquahala Mountains.

Driving west and south along Highway 60, we turned south at Vicksburg and at a service station at New Hope, we got information about the road through Kofa National Wildlife Refuge in the Sonoran Desert. The gravel pipeline access road through the Refuge was in good shape and not very dusty. We met a convoy of ATVs and one of Jeeps. The drivers seemed a bit surprised that we were only one vehicle. Late in the day we found a suitable area to car camp. The landscape was quite desolate and it looked to be a long way to the mountains. This is an area where permits are required to explore and water is scarce. We continued along the pipeline road back to Highway 10 the next day and drove south. Bypassing Yuma, we stopped for the night at Gila Bend which turned out to be a not very interesting place. The Gila River was not very obvious.



Margie's Cove Trail, North Maricopa Mountains, Dry Wash.

rain in the morning. When it stopped, we packed up and walked back to the trailhead. After collecting extra water from the car, we walked away from the parking area to camp.



Margie's Cove Trail, North Maricopa Mountains, Canyon.

In order to avoid the traffic around both Phoenix and Tucson, we drove along Highway 8, then 84, 387 and 87 to Florence. Between Florence and Kelvin, we came to one of the trailheads for the Arizona Trail, an over 800 mile long non-motorized route from the Mexican border to Utah. At the parking area, we met a couple of guys on ATVs who were exploring old mine shafts. Both were wearing sidearms. They cautioned us about snakes, telling us they had seen some. I asked what time of the day snakes were more active and one of them replied during daytime and the other replied that they hunt at night. By that time, it was getting late, and we had only about two and a half hours until sunset. We loaded up our packs with extra water and hustled off up the trail looking for a camping spot. Poppies, lupines, bluedicks, desert primroses, brittlebush and other wild flowers were blooming profusely, brightening the desert landscape.

By this time the weather was beginning to deteriorate quite quickly. Arizona was still



Along the Arizona Trail in Pinal County.

being affected by the storm that had been dumping snow over northern California. We headed north on Highway 60 through the impressive Salt River Canyon. The deep gorge winds through massive sandstone cliffs. At Show Low, a helpful Forest Ranger directed us to a pine forest however the weather was windy and the forest showed a lot of damage from fires. We continued on to Holbrook where we obtained information about the Petrified Forest National Park and Painted Desert.



Salt River Canyon.

There are more rules in a National Park. After paying the park entry fee, we went to the Visitors Center to fill out a form to get a

free permit to camp overnight in a selected sector of the park. It was late in the day when we set off from Park Headquarters at the historic Painted Desert Inn, armed with a map from the Park Ranger along with instructions on where we could camp. The weather was windy. We set out quickly and walked further than we were required before setting up camp in the shelter of a hill and getting settled before sunset. Having been created by water and wind over a couple of hundred million years, the Painted Desert has interesting geology featuring layers of multicoloured sedimentary rocks. The next day, we exploring a wide area. Vegetation was sparse and large lumps of petrified wood dotted the landscape. Noticing horse tracks and droppings, we were on the lookout for the animals and spotted a herd of about a half dozen. Curious as to where the horses would find water, we set out to look for sources, discovering several shallow pools in an otherwise dry wash. We left the water for the horses and other desert animals. The sky was clouding in as we set up camp and we used the Zoleo to get a weather forecast. Rain was predicted. Since we had only enough water for a two overnight camp, we were planning to head back the next day anyway. We arose before sunrise and were on our way by seven o'clock, anticipating it would take us about two hours to reach the Painted Desert Inn. Expecting the rain anytime, we were wearing our Goretex jackets and had pulled the raincovers over our packs. The rain caught us about an hour after we started and by the time we were approaching the three hundred foot climb back up to the Inn, the rain had turned to snow. The herd of mule deer that we startled did not seem to be concerned about the weather. Clay mud clung to our boots and we had to knock off thick blobs against rocks. Before leaving the park, we warmed up with a cup of hot coffee in the cafe. A parks employee told us that the

horses we had seen might have wandered in from the neighbouring Navajo reservation. We weren't the only hikers who had gotten rained and snowed on. In the parking lot, we met a pair from Washington State who had walked out in the same conditions. They had started back later than we had and were wetter.



Petrified Wood in the Petrified Forest National Park.



Horses in the Painted Desert.

The weather forecast for the next three days was bad, rainy, and cold. We were on our way home anyway. On the way back to Phoenix, we made a quick coffee stop in Winslow, but because it was sleeting, we didn't look around for the commemorative



Water Pools in the Painted Desert.

plaque and statue on the corner mentioned in 1972 hit song by the Eagles, Take it Easy. Then, driving along Highway 87 through the Coconino National Forest, we observed a skiff of fresh snow at the side of the highway. A family had parked at the roadside and the kids were having a snowball fight.



Late season snow, Coconino National Forest.

The GPS came in handy driving from the motel in Scottsdale to the Rental Car Center. The freeways that loop around the Phoenix area seem to create and destroy lanes for no particular reason. It was easy to be in the wrong lane and miss an exit which we did. The GPS recalculated a route, directing us to our destination on surface streets,

away from the freeway traffic. It was early morning and the new route gave us the opportunity to observe the sleepy homeless people slumped near their shopping carts of possessions.

Participants: Pam Olson, ACC member since 1981, and DF who wishes to remain anonymous and would not belong to any club that would have him as a member.

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Haute Route Ski Tour

Martin Hofmann

April 19-25, 2024

All photos are by Martin Hofmann.

The Haute Route ski tour is the classic ski tour in the Alps and had been on my bucket list for many years. We had planned to do the Plateau version of the Haute Route ski tour under the Grand Combin, but things don't always go as planned. The ski conditions and especially the weather did not cooperate, so we took the train to Arolla and started our tour from there. We had seven awesome days and experienced some of the best ski touring that the Alps have to offer.

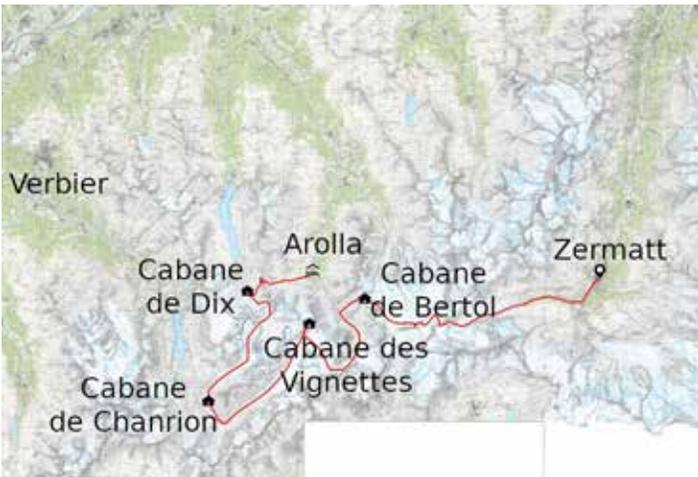
Participants: Martin Hofmann, Keith Battersby, Dave Fishwick and Josh Slatkoff



Mont Blanc as seen from Chamonix. The heat wave had ended, the snow would start soon and change our plans.



Descending from the Pas de Chévres en route to Cabane des Dix.



Haute Route Plan B. We took the train to Arolla and followed much of our planned route to Zermatt.



A day tour from the Cabane des Dix. The weather was still unsettled.



Grand Hôtel and Kurhaus, Arolla. Heading down to the T-bar to start the tour from the Arolla ski station.





A day to explore around the Cabane des Dix. At least we had some fresh snow even if we couldn't see much.



Cabane des Vignettes.



Mont Blanc de Cheilon on the route up to the Pigne d'Arolla. We bypassed the Pigne as the weather was too changeable. We went down the Glacier Serpentine to Cabane de Chanrion instead.



Glacier de Collon below the Col de l'Evêque. The sun is shining but the wind at that altitude is chilling.



Les Portons above the Glacier du Brenay. We had just passed the seracs higher up and it was an easy tour down to the Cabane de Chanrion.



Col de l'Evêque (3379 m). Thankful for the good weather and good snow.



Col de l'Evêque and l'Evêque.



Dent Blanche in the early morning light. The Matterhorn is also visible on the right.



Cabane de Bertol. A tough climb after a long day.



Pigne d'Arolla in the morning. The final day and the weather was perfect. The Cabane des Vignettes, where we stayed the previous night, is located in the red circle.



Full moon over the Pigne d'Arolla.



Leaving the Cabane de Bertol.



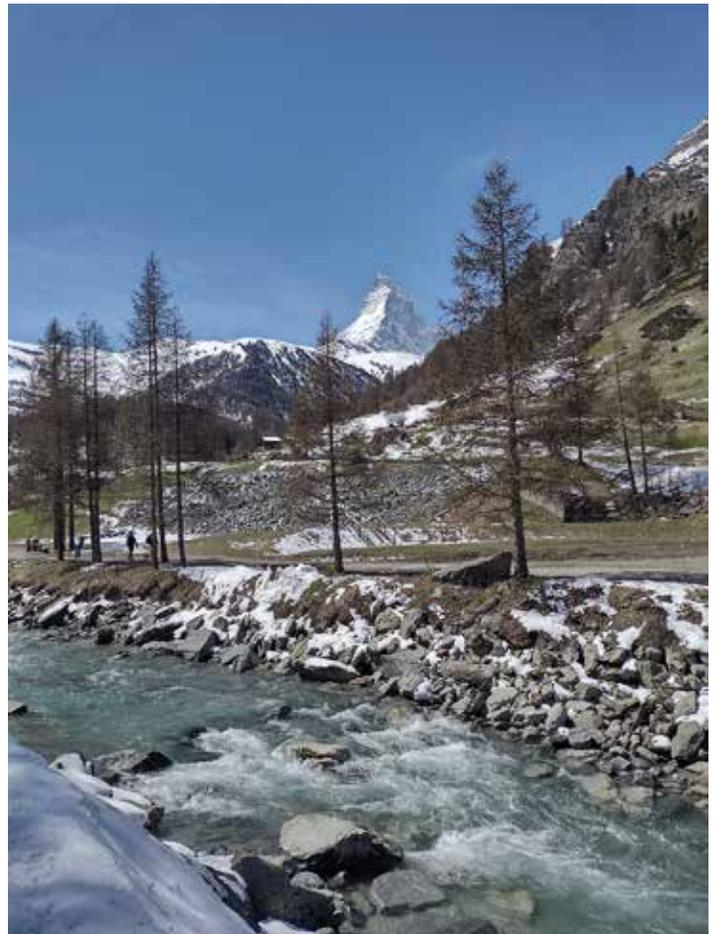
Ready to ski the Glacier du Mont Miné.



View to the west from Tête Blanche. Mont Blanc is just visible behind the other peaks in the centre of the photo. From here we have a 2000 m descent to Zermatt.



Summit of Tête Blanche, with the Matterhorn and Dent d'Hérens in the background. This is the high point of our trip at 3706 m, also the best weather and best views.



The classic view of the Matterhorn from Zermatt and the end of our trip.



A different view of the Matterhorn, passing under the north face.





Photo of the Pennine Alps as seen from Crans Montana.

Haute Re-Route

David Fishwick

April 19-25, 2024

Please see photos by Martin Hofmann in the previous trip report.

The Haute Route is a week-long-ish ski tour starting from Chamonix to Zermatt, or maybe beyond, connecting any number of high alpine huts along the way. There are several variations on the route with some being more popular than others. In 2017, I attempted one of the more popular variations of the route, however, due to weather, there was a small section that I was unable to complete. Apparently, this is not uncommon. Martin Hofmann was going to be in France for an extended period of time in 2024, and Keith Battersby and Josh Slatkoff had planned to connect with Martin near the end of March to give it a go. This seemed like a great excuse to get over there to connect

with them and complete the portion that I had previously missed, and do some sort of variant of the route, so I simply invited myself along. In addition to mountaineering challenges, the ski tour involves other logistical challenges in booking huts and transportation. Most parties hire a guide company to do this, however, we utilized each of our skill sets to divide up tasks to plan and execute the route. Of course, just like in 2017, the weather had other plans. We started off by waiting for a weather window and doing some local climbing and skiing around Chamonix. I don't usually complain about having too much cold dry powder, but in this case, it was making the first couple days of the tour impossible given the altitude, avalanche risk, and terrain we had to navigate. We put our heads together to build a new plan that skipped the initial section that was hammered by snow, and found less dangerous ways to link in some huts and valleys that I hadn't skied the first time around. We rebooked our huts, hopped on a train to Arolla to finally get on the snow. Unbeknownst to us, the 'Patrouille des Glaciers', a massive ski mountaineering race, was going on during our new start day, which

worked both for and against us. In Arolla just about every hotel in the valley was booked due to the race, so we stayed our first night in a funky old hotel that was unchanged since it was built in the 1920s. Fortunately, due to the race, we nabbed a ride up to the alpine on a Poma lift that felt about the same age as the hotel. Once on snow we skinned up to Pas de Chèvres, clambered down the ladders on the pass and skied to Cabane des Dix. The Cabane was jammed full as it was being used by the Swiss Military as a field hospital for the race as well as Haute Route groups waiting out the weather like us. We settled in, joined the frenetic vibe and did some great powder skiing before setting off for the Cabane de Chanrion via the Col de la Serpentine. The descent from the Serpentine to the Chanrion hut was dreamy as it is less often travelled as the more popular routes. We skied silky powder past spectacular glacial icefalls before being spat out onto slopes that had been wind-scoured down to an icy, brown gritty layer of snow. This odd snow layer was left behind by a strong föhn wind that had deposited sand dust from the Sahara a few weeks before turning the normally white landscape into an odd sepia colour. The Cabane de Chanrion had been on my bucket list for some time as it is in one of the most remote locations in Switzerland. The tiny cabin had recently been upgraded and was now larger, super modern on the inside while retaining its classic exterior charm. In contrast to Cabane des Dix, it was very quiet, had hot showers, and was run by the most gracious family. They served us an amazing fondue for dinner and apologized profusely that they didn't serve us something better. Our trek up the Glacier d'Otemma to the Cabane des Vignettes was a long uphill trek through periods of whiteout conditions. Once at the Cabane we treated ourselves to giant plates of Rostis, beer, and Jenepé. We incorporated a catch-up day into our itinerary here

and made the best of it by schralping the amazing powder left by the previous day's storm. Our next destination is one of my all-time favourite places. The Cabane Bertol has been perched precariously high on a bluff for the last hundred years and accessed by what feels like a hundred vertical metres of ladders. The weather was lining up nicely for the final leg of our trip, which was also the most challenging to navigate. The cabin was abuzz with excitement as people felt like they were on the home stretch, and we had some interesting encounters with a French group who had found a bit too much wine and stumbled into our sleeping quarters at an ungodly hour in the morning before their guide politely collected them and apologized for their behaviour. As we set off early the next morning for Zermatt our Francophone friends, now less enthusiastic about the long day ahead, downed a breakfast of Tylenol. The route to Zermatt took us over the summit of the Tête Blanche before zig-zagging through a labyrinth of Ice Falls and wide-open slopes in the shadow of the Matterhorn before depositing us on the resort ski runs in Zermatt. Having a couple days left in our travel window we took the opportunity to go back to Chamonix and take a lift up the Aiguille du Midi and ski the always spectacular Mer de Glace back into town. Our Euro ski tour was quite a contrast to Island adventures, being able to travel relatively fast and light as we took advantage of the local infrastructure. It turns out I still have an excuse to come back to ski the Col du Chardonnet, the Fenêtre du Saleina and down to Lac whatever it's called to complete the missing link in the chain. Thanks to Keith, Martin and Josh for being my companions on this amazing human-powered (mostly) ski tour across the highest passes of the Alps.

Participants: David Fishwick, Martin Hofmann, Keith Battersby, and Josh Slatkoff

The Pyrénéan Haute Route - and Variants

Catrin Brown

June 5-29, 2024

All photos are by Catrin Brown except the one with the donkey, which is by Erich Schellhammer.

The Pyrénéan Haute Route (HRP) has been described as more of an idea than a trail, given its somewhat loose demarcation. Stretching from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean, it aims to follow the main ridge of the Pyrénées, lying between the more travelled GR10 in France to the north and GR11 in Spain to the south. But there is no clear way-marking and many variants exist, so it is a real case of “choose your own adventure.”

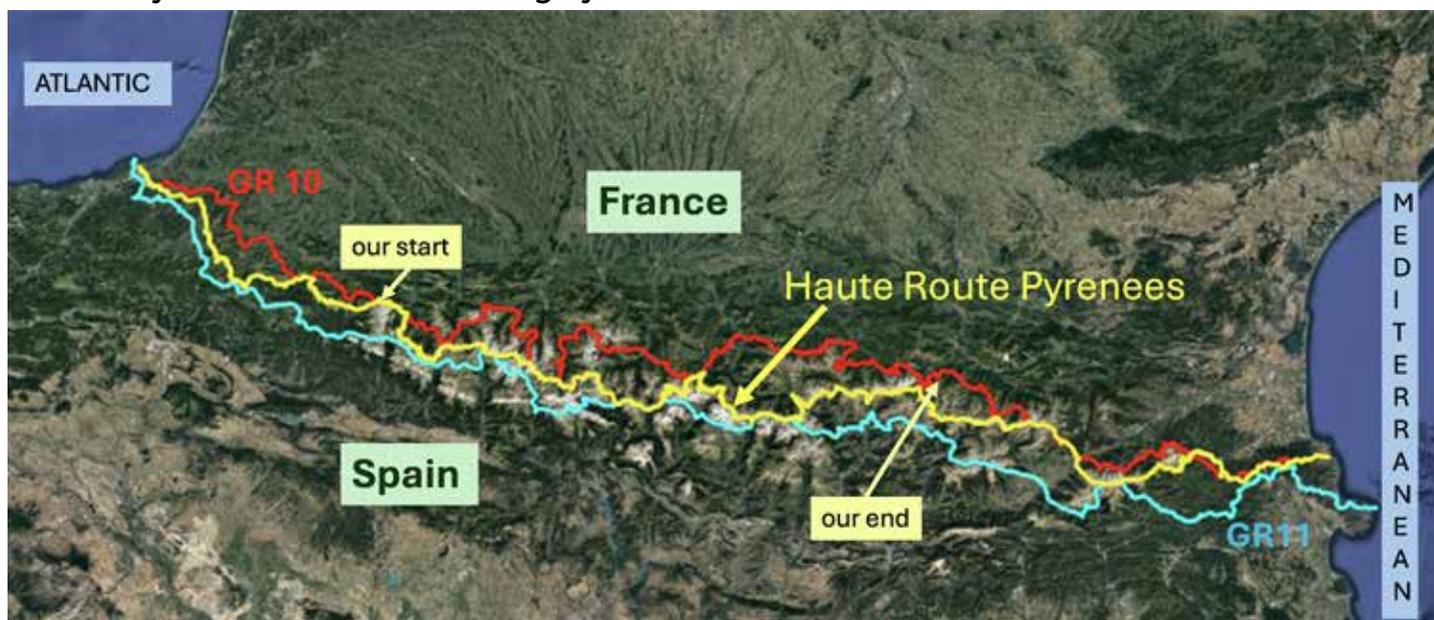
The full 880-kilometre coast-to-coast trek is more than we wanted to invest in this one short lifetime, so we opted to cherry-pick some of the prize sections, the High and Central Pyrénées. This area lies largely within

the Park National des Pyrénées and has huts within a day’s journey apart. By June 2024 it was time to turn the guidebook images of dramatic peaks, canyons, lakes and open ridges into our own memories.

Our adventure began in the beautiful mountain village of Lescun in France, at 900 metres the highest commune in the Pyrénées -Atlantique. A generous local who drove us up the mountain from the rail station set the tone nicely. Hiking through the Aspe Valley the vistas were amazing in all directions, and it felt as if everything was just waking up to early summer. Snow-capped jagged peaks, sleepy villages, abundant flowers - and yet almost no one else on the route. The photos will do a better job than my words of capturing these early scenes.



Straight out of the gate leaving Lescun, we were immersed in glorious mountainscapes.





The flowers were abundant and ever-changing.



Most days we walked on empty trails and passed almost no one. Here Erich looks out at the iconic Pic du Midi d'Ossau. We will cross the col on its shoulder a few days later.



The lowlands are quite intensely used as pasture especially for cows and sheep. Despite our best efforts to deter him, this donkey insisted on quietly following me for several hours. I had to hope he eventually made it back home.

The route had us crossing back and forth between France and Spain many times, not that we were aware of this given the unmarked borders. Usually, we only knew which country we were in by consulting the map, and it helped to know which language to attempt at each hut. From the deserted ski resort of Candanchu we trended eastwards, into the Central Pyrénées over cols of ever-increasing height.

Raging streams in the valleys and sustained passages of snow over the high cols confirmed that we were definitely just at the start of the hiking season – and even then, we had to opt for some lower routes due to



Sometimes it helps to have a European passport!



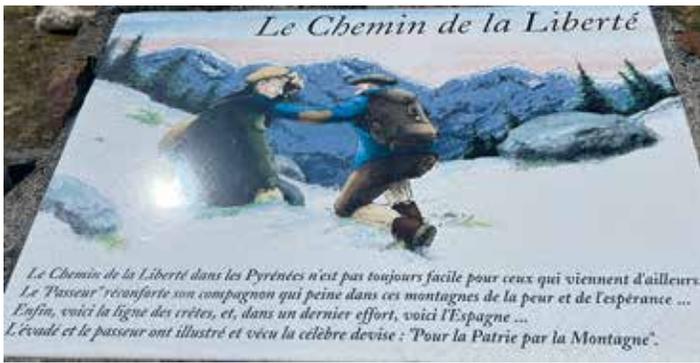
*I was particularly excited by the prolific nature of the insectivorous plant the common butterwort, *Pinguicula vulgaris*, in full bloom. It is considered threatened or endangered in parts of North America but is evidently thriving here. Notice how the leaves secrete a sticky liquid that traps insects, which are then digested by the plant to supplement their nitrogen intake.*



Erich is dwarfed by European beech trees and giant granite blocks as we take one of many descent lines to valley bottoms.

unpassable sections. That's where the choice of variants on the route worked so well.

It was sobering to think that this region in which we wandered freely had been a highly secretive and dangerous escape route during both the Spanish Civil War and WWII. These trails had provided a northwards exit from Spain in 1939, then a southwards flight from Nazi-occupied France in the 1940s, through which many thousands escaped to safety.



Occasional signs along the high passes were reminders of what extraordinary human suffering and determination these mountain routes had witnessed.



Reflective early morning light as we climbed up from Refugio de Respomuso, passing many lakes like this. Later that day we were making our way down from the high Col de la Fache, at 2664 metres, in a white-out.



A section of our trek on Google Earth. A highlight on Day 4 was crossing over the Col de Peyreget, right past Pic du Midi d'Ossau at 2884 metres. This extinct volcano is often considered a classic symbol of the Pyrénées.



Erich making his way up to the border ridge and Horquette d'Ossoue at 2734 metres. Petit Vignemale, 3032m, stayed hidden from view which dashed any hopes of a quick summit ascent from the col.

Given that at this point it was early-season, we managed to get places at the huts without booking. All these "refugios" were staffed and welcoming, with highly organised allocation of numbered bunks in large dormitories. Dinner and breakfast were included, always a set meal and generally pretty basic fare. But no complaints, just being fed at the end of a long day without carrying cooking stuff was good enough. Mountain huts are also a great way to meet fellow travellers and locals. The complexity of the local languages seen and heard is fairly bewildering – aside from the obvious French and Spanish, there is Basque, Catalan and Aragonese. One evening we were entertained by a local school choir, proudly singing old folk songs in Occitan, now spoken only rarely in southern France but enjoying a minor resurgence after being actively suppressed.

As ever, the weather is the boss in the mountains. And on different days we had a bit of everything, from debilitating heat to major storms. Completely soaked in coming over a snowy pass on Day 8, we decided to scuttle past the high hut where we'd intended to stay, and head down to the comfort of the valley below. That was Gavarnie, a famed tourist hot-spot in the Pyrénées, and we awoke the next day to understand why the fuss. The previous day's

storm had cleared completely, and a sharp blue sky illuminated the Cirque de Gavarnie at the head of the valley. What a perfect back-drop for a rest day on Erich's birthday.



It's popular for a reason. The Cirque de Gavarnie is a giant natural amphitheatre with vertical walls that are 1500 metres high, and many waterfalls including the highest in Europe at 422 metres.

The following day in a spectacularly located refuge on a pastoral shelf above the Gavarnie valley, we met Martin and Alcina. Just like that our planned convergence worked perfectly! Moving now as a group of four, we continued bumping along on the border with long days up and over more snowy high cols and alpine pastures. We were glad of axes and crampons especially on some of the descents, though the snow was softening daily. As the season progressed into late June, the hordes were gathering and we could no longer take spaces at the huts for granted. Luckily, the variants built into the HRP meant we just had to get a bit creative with our route planning. Something always worked out.

We took a day's break in the beautiful mountain village of Benasque, indulging ourselves with tapas and late evening dining outdoors. A quick landrover ride the next day saved us a long section of road walking, and tipped us out in the shadow of Pico Aneto, 3404 metres. This is the highest mountain in the Pyrénées, and its summit teased us through the clouds on an otherwise blue



Another day, another cirque. Alcina, Martin and Erich make their way up to Cirque d'Estaube. During the steep descent on the other side, we were distracted by an elaborate long-line helicopter rescue plucking a climber off some remote cliffs.



Alcina descending from Collado de Eriste, 2870 metres.

day. Heading now mostly north and avoiding the busiest sections of the HRP, we crossed back into France for several days before ending our trip at Bagnères-de-Luchon. Our last mountain hut, the Hospice de France, was named for its role in the 1930s as a refuge for so-called "Spanish Republicans" escaping from Spain. A good place for us to reflect gratefully on what we had been able to experience, exploring this glorious mountainous border at will for three weeks without a care for border-crossings or political conflicts.



Refugio Angel Orus, at 2150 metres. Most of the huts (refuge in French, refugio in Spanish) like this along the HRP were large, modern, and perched in spectacular locations.



View from Col de Bastenet at 2500 metres. A typical scene in the Reserve Naturelle Nationale du Néouvielle.

Our bespoke HRP adventure: 21 days, 300 kilometres, 15,000 metre elevation, 23 cols >1900m

Reserve du Néouvielle from 25 – 29 June

After a year of living in the area, Martin was obviously a storehouse of local information. So, for our last five days, when Alcina had to depart for family visits, he suggested that Erich and I join him to explore Néouvielle, an area in the French Pyrénées north of the HRP. Slightly off the main tourist track, he surmised that this would be less busy, and with its own distinct scenery. No difficulty in persuasion there. Néouvielle is a national nature reserve, situated at elevations from 1800 – 3100 metres, with very rich flora and fauna and over 70 lakes. The name Néouvielle derives from nèu vielha in the Occitan language, meaning 'old snow'. It is thought to refer to the many glaciers that used to belong to the region.

Conveniently-placed huts meant that we were able to plan a five-day circuit through some of the highlights of the park, including a few scrambly peaks and countless gorgeous lakes. We loved it. Thanks Martin

for sharing this little gem with us, we won't tell anyone!

Participants: Catrin Brown and Erich Schellhammer, with Martin Hofmann and Alcina De Oliveira

Tajakopf: A Via Ferrata Alpine Adventure in Austria

Barry Hansen

September 24, 2024

This report could have had many different titles, reflecting a rapid succession of changed plans. My original plan was to climb Zugspitze, Germany's highest mountain at 2962 metres in late September while on a European holiday with my wife Linnea. I planned to climb it solo via the 2300 metre elevation gain Hollental route, made possible as a reasonable day trip thanks to a gondola that takes visitors from valley to summit, which I would use for my descent.

Fortune smiled on me a month before the climb when my climbing partner Rich Priebe

contacted me, asking what date I planned to climb Zugspitze because he and his wife would be in the Alps on their own alpine trail running adventure in September and wanted to see if our dates might line up for him to join me, which they did, much to our amazement and delight. We still planned to climb the Hollental route until my sister Nancy Hansen and her husband Ralf Dujmovits (both professional and accomplished mountaineers), whom we were staying with us in Southern Germany, suggested we climb the Jubiläumsgrat (Jubilee Traverse) on Zugspitze instead. It's a six-kilometre-long ridge with constant exposure that takes you up and over six summits. Sounded like our kind of fun. The only downside to our plan was that we only had a one-day window of availability, and the weather had to be perfect, which was a good possibility in September. We were prepared to pivot to a consolation prize at the last minute, if needed.



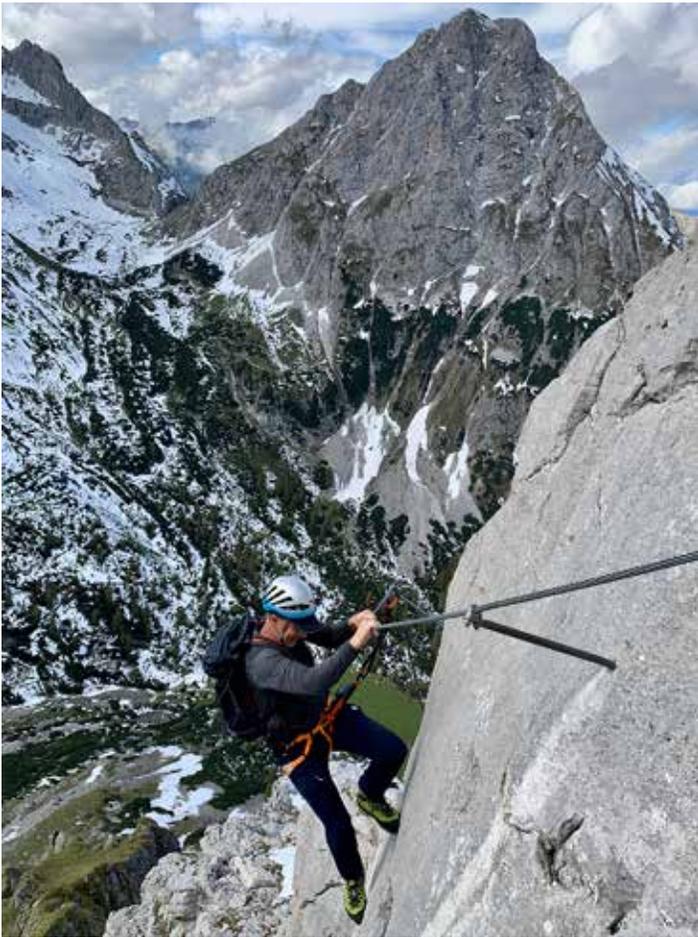
*View from Coburger Hut.
(Photo by Barry Hansen)*

Unfortunately, a worst-case weather scenario arrived a week early when a freak late-summer storm hammered the Eastern Alps, dumping one and a half metres of snow, upending our plans, and reducing our options to low alpine objectives. There

was a glimmer of hope with some forecast warmth and sunshine in the aftermath of the storm, but no amount of either would significantly improve our chances for a high alpine adventure. We turned to my brother-in-law Ralf, a professional mountain guide who knew the alternative options in that region and how to confirm actual conditions through his many connections. His top recommendation was to do a via ferrata, which neither of us had ever done but had always wanted to try. We were intrigued.

His two suggested routes were just across the border in Austria. One was a snowless, low valley, shorter via ferrata route close to Innsbruck that was rated one of the most difficult in Austria. The other was a 600-metre alpine via ferrata climb up the 2450 metre Tajakopf, with stunning views of the Zugspitze massif and often described as one of the most scenic but demanding via ferratas in Austria. We learned that via ferratas have a lettered rating system from A to E, with E being the most difficult. The Tajakopf route is rated D/E, which meant little to us since we'd never done one, but we've always been up for a challenge and were confident we would figure it out. The problem with this option was the possibility of poor route conditions from the recent snowfall. But thanks to the extensive infrastructure systems (cable lifts, huts, webcams, etc.) that exist throughout the European Alps, we were able to track alpine conditions in real time. Monitoring the webcam at the Coburger Hut at the base of Tajakopf gave us a degree of confidence that the via ferrata route on the west facing, blunt arête would be mostly clear of snow. We decided to go for it.

The weather forecast on climbing day was for mostly clear skies until rain in mid-afternoon, which turned out to be accurate. Normally, such a forecast would motivate an early start but the gondola we planned



*Barry on a traverse.
(Photo by Rich Priebe)*

to take advantage of for the first section (saving us 400 metres in elevation and two kilometres in distance) didn't start operating until 8:00 a.m. (there's a ski resort in the valley below Tajakopf). The drive from our accommodation in Garmish-Partenkirchen, Germany to Tajakopf would normally take 30 minutes, but that highway was closed for repairs, which forced a detour that added one hour. We were the first people on the gondola and then hiked up seven kilometres to the start of the via ferrata, passing the Coburger Hut en route. We traversed some deep snow beneath Tajakopf to the start of the climb and were grateful to discover that the via ferrata was clear and dry.

We donned our helmets, harnesses, and via ferrata hardware and began to climb. It took a bit to figure out how to climb this way, uncertain at first whether we were supposed

to use the steel cable and rock-embedded rebar as climbing aids or if they existed solely as fall-arrest protection. Our uncertainty was cleared up at the first difficult vertical section, which was impossible for us to climb without aid (and especially without rock climbing shoes). From that point on, we shamelessly utilized everything we could get our hands and feet on. Some sections were easier and relatively cruisy (rated B/C), but the D and E sections were challenging and slowed us down. There were also spots with some wicked exposure. As we neared the summit, we had to climb through some deep snow. We arrived at the top after three hours of steady climbing. Clouds were rapidly forming and the temperature began to plummet.



*Rich heading up.
(Photo by Barry Hansen)*

After a snack and requisite summit photos, we began descending the summit ridge on easier terrain as cloud enveloped the surrounding peaks, and then us. We quickly arrived at the high saddle separating Vorderes (front) Tajakopf from Hinterer (rear) Tajakopf. From there, we had two descent options: hike down the steep slopes directly to the hut or go up and over Hinterer Tajakopf and then down. The first option was the easiest and fastest, but we opted for the difficult and slower route because we wanted to bag one more peak. We ascended the snowy slope in low visibility to the base of Hinterer's summit block and stared at its imposing vertical wall, on which was attached the short E-rated (very difficult) via ferrata to the top. Rich asked what I thought, knowing that I was somewhat fatigued from climbing at an altitude that I wasn't

acclimatized to. Looking at the towering rock wall in front of us, I reconsidered our decision but decided to give it a go, telling Rich that if I couldn't do it, we'd head down the other way. And so up we went with him in the lead. It was a full body workout, requiring contortions and some tense moments doing laybacks while gripping the steel cable hand-over-hand and walking upwards with feet pressed firmly against the rock. Sometimes adrenaline is your best friend.

We wasted no time at the uneventful summit and quickly descended the easy slopes back to the hut where we had a celebration drink and very late lunch (side note: the European backcountry huts are more like resorts. I could get used to them). It was Rich who noticed the time and remembered that the gondola only ran until 5:30 p.m., which meant we had just over an hour to hike down 400 metres and seven kilometres to the lift station. We started running down the trail just as the heavens opened and the deluge began. We were as wet as one can be but kept running, knowing that missing the gondola would add an extra 400 metres and two kilometres to our descent. We sprinted into the gondola station at 5:29 as the staff were about to shut it down, which they did when we exited at the bottom. It was a fitting nail-biter ending to a fabulous European alpine adventure.

Participants: Barry Hansen and Rich Priebe

Trek in Arunchal Pradesh and Meeting the Headhunters of Tribal Nagaland

Liz Williams

September 29-October 5, 2024



*Tajakopf summit.
(Photo by Rich Priebe)*

All photos are by Liz Williams, except the three photos of tigers, which are by Saurabh Ray.

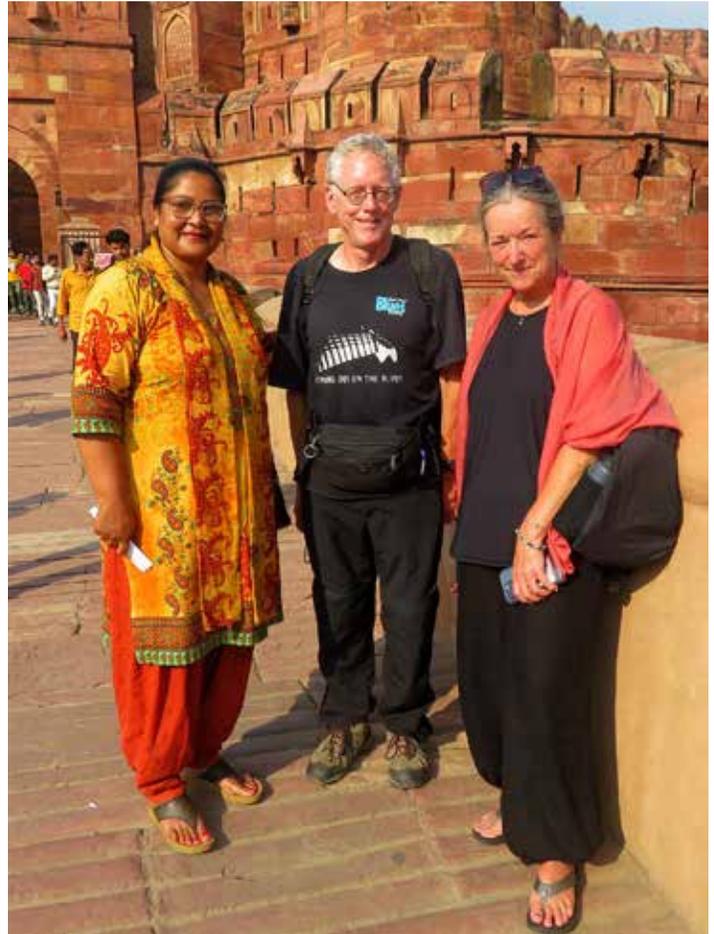


India!

The start of this trip was considerably less than auspicious. The 10 a.m. flight to Delhi was delayed eight hours despite my being unable to change my 6 a.m. flight from Victoria to Vancouver. The plane was falling apart: the tables were falling off the seats in front; there was no entertainment either coming or going (each was a 15-hour flight); and the overhead light didn't work so I couldn't even read. And don't get me started on the cramped washrooms. NEVER fly Air India!

After we landed, everything went smoothly. Rajiv turned up early the next day (he'd been my driver and friend in Rajasthan in 2022). We three (Bob Crane, Susanne Currie, and I) drove to Agra, stopping for breakfast on the way. We each had a delicious potato paratha, a bottle of water, and Chai tea. The bill was less than a dollar each. Once in Agra (a four-hour drive from Delhi), we hired a very knowledgeable guide, Alka. We first went to the Agra Fort, also known as Agra's Red Fort, although it's mostly white marble. It's a UNESCO World Heritage Site because of its importance during the Mughal rule. After the Agra Fort, we went to a waterfront park

and viewed the Taj Mahal at sunset. Surely the Taj Mahal is the most beautiful building in the whole wide world. The next day we visited the Taj Mahal for sunrise.



Our lovely guide Alka with Bob and Susanne.



The Agra Fort.



The Taj Mahal.



Qutab Minar.

We overnighted in Agra, then we returned to Delhi stopping at Qutab Minar, which is a minaret tower at the site of Delhi's oldest fortified city Lal Kot and built between 1199 and 1220, before arriving at our hotel for the night.

The next day we flew from Delhi to Dibrugarh in the state of Assam. We had a couple of days in Dibrugarh which included several walks to the local markets and the Brahmaputra River.



Qutab Minar.



Close to the Brahmaputra River.

From Dibrugarh we set off for Roing, in the state of Arunachal Pradesh, where we had to come up with copies of our passports, Arunachal Pradesh having the border with China. Roing is the administrative headquarters of the Lower Dibang Valley district and is a starting point for travel to Anini and the Upper Dibang Valley. We stayed at the lovely Kesha resort, run by Anung Lego from the Adi tribe and her

husband Lobo Linggi from the Idu tribe, and their little daughter Kesha. It was there we met our guides Piran (who'd done a lot of the trek organizing), Timai, and Maro. They all proved to be excellent guides and helped me a lot. It was a tortuous eight-hour drive to Anini with many switchbacks up, up, up, and down, down, down. Once we arrived in Anini (no hot water at the 'resort' and the power kept going out) but the food was good. And they had Godfather beer. On our free day in Anini, Piran took us to the Dri Valley which is known for its many waterfalls. We saw lots of Mithun (pronounced 'meetun'). I wanted to scoop up their poop in the road for my rhubarb patch. Mithun must be related to the

wild Gaur we saw on safari later on, because both have white stockings, up to their knees, and some white patches.

From Anini we started the Seven Lakes Trek:

Day 1: Piran wasn't kidding when he said it would be a steep start! We climbed very steeply through grasslands dotted with huge pine trees. The sun was blazing hot. When I took off my pant-legs I got covered in red dots all over my legs and feet, apparently from harmless flies. We arrived at Camp 1 about 2 p.m. and had individual tents on platforms to sleep in.



Moon moth.



Porters on Day 1.



Mithun.



Ruth looking at the view.

Day 2: A beautiful forest trail, very steep and muddy in parts. We stayed in a single, big hut, all six of us: Piran, Saurabh, Dipti, Ruth, Sanjara, and I. Sanjara decided not to go on any further, so a porter took her back down. (Later, I wished I'd stayed with her.)



The Day 2 hut.

formed under the firepit; everything was soaking wet. We debated going on to Camp 4 but it was too late. The porters put up two tents, one for Piran and Saurabh, and one for Ruth, Dipti, and me (they were two-person tents). The porters managed to get a fire going and fed us very well. Later in the evening it brightened up and we could see the lake below.



Saurabh and Dipti holding the tarp up on Day 3..



The loo on Day 2.

Day 3: Again, a very steep trail with a brutal rockfall area, we had to haul ourselves up several ropes and jump across several deep chasms. By the time we got to Camp 3 we had a full-blown thunder storm immediately overhead. We huddled under a holey tarp while the porters ran around trying to find bits of string to make it secure. A pool



The first lake.

Day 4: A very steep climb once again, and lots more rockfall. I thought Timai was lost looking for base camp which was quite a long way down in the grasslands. You'll see below the precarious, slippery bridge which



Gentians on Day 3.



The slippery fateful bridge.

both Ruth and I fell off into the creek. We had torrential monsoon rain most of the time.

Day 5: The others went on a hike up the valley, but I decided to have a rest day. I believe they never saw the further lakes due to white-out.



The series of huts on Day 4. Some had leaking roofs..

Day 6: We returned to Camp 2. It was very long day bypassing Camp 3, and extremely muddy and steep with the hideous rockfall areas once again. Back at Camp 2 the boardwalks were quite treacherous. By this time my camera had stopped working due to it getting wet.



Multiple Huts - the hut on Days 4 and 5.



Treacherous boardwalks.

Day 7: We made it back from Camp 2, stopping at Camp 1 for a cup of very welcome tea. By the time we'd made it down to the road my quads were killing

me and my toenails in the gum boots were very bruised. It was a relief for me that the Trek from Hell was over: ***It must be my age talking.*** We hiked every day in gumboots, we had monsoon rains five days out of seven, we'd been told the terrain was moderate, in fact it was incredibly steep and running with liquid mud. Trekkers included Saurabh Ray, Dipti Samant, Ruth Lloyd, Sanjara Omoniyi, and me (Liz Williams). Once back in Anini we set out to a village where we listened to an elder tell stories of shamans.



The trip with Jibi.



Mithun horns.

We then returned to Dibrugarh from Roing and were joined by Bob Crane and Susanne

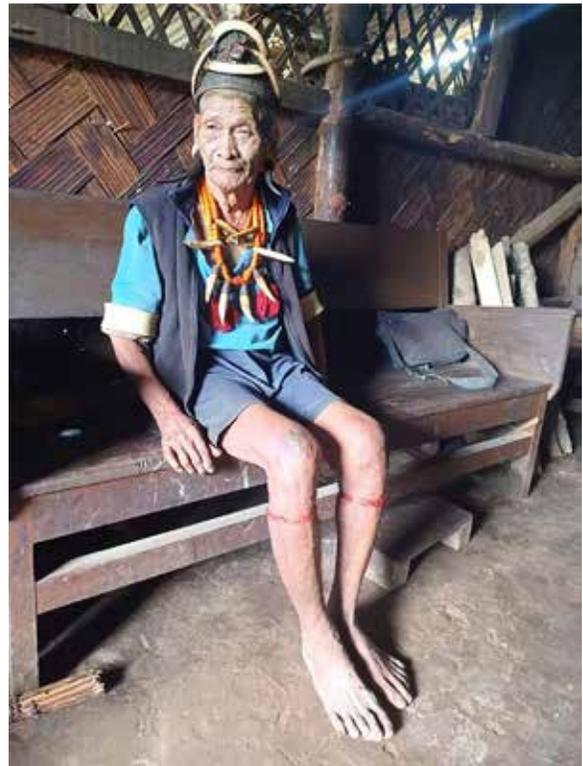
Currie (who'd been on a cultural tour) for our trip in two jeeps to Mon, which is in the state of Nagaland. Mon was very hilly and ramshackle and I was concerned about where we would stay, but we had sweet little cabins with HOT water. Our driver, a Muslim, let us stop to buy beer as Nagaland is a 'dry' state; we had no trouble drinking it later on in the Homestay. That night we met our Nagaland guide Anyam. From Mon we went to the village of Hungphoi (population 1500) about two hours' drive, where we met an ancient headhunter well into his 90s. You are not supposed to ask how many heads he hunted. The Indian Government only banned tribal headhunting in 1960. After Hungphoi we went on to the village of Longwa, where in the chief's kitchen we could stand with one foot in Burma (Myanmar) and one foot in India. The next day we went to the village of Wangla (population 800) and met more ancient headhunters.



Colourful ladies.



Two ladies in a Nagaland village.



A single ancient headhunter.



A single ancient headhunter.



An ancient headhunter.

We drove back to Dibrugarh for a night and then flew to Kolkata the next day. Once in Kolkata we visited the Victoria Memorial, which was built by the British Raj between



Two ancient headhunters.



Ancient headhunters.



Two ancient headhunters.



Susanne on the train.

1906 and 1921. From Kolkata we took an overnight train for 18 hours, I had second class, the others had first class, which is the way to go.

Then we all went on safari to Madhya Pradesh. We stayed in three TIGER reserves. The first day, we started in Kanya National Park, staying at Chitvan Lodge (excellent). We saw eight mammal species that day: wild boar; langur monkeys; jackal; Sambar deer; Spotted deer (aka chital); Gaur; Barasingha deer (aka swamp deer) and Dhole (wild dogs). Plus many birds: A Serpent Eagle;

Red-wattled Lapwing; Crested Hawk Eagle; Cormorant; Brown-headed Barbet (which we heard repeatedly); Rufus-backed Kingfisher; Indian Roller, and Nightjar. Later we saw Nilgai (a large antelope), Barking deer, and mongoose. We went to Nagzira Tiger Reserve for one night. We'd seen a number of tiger paw prints but no tigers yet. The

next day we went to Tadoba National Park, where we saw all the usual mammals and birds, including CHOTI TARA and her two cubs. Tigers of course!

Participants: Liz Williams, Dipti Samant, Saurabh Ray, Sanjara Omoni, Ruth Lloyd, Susanne Currie and Bob Crane

Hawai'i – Another Milestone

Janelle Curtis

October 7-24, 2024

Let me begin this trip report by acknowledging that the places Rowan Laver and I visited in the Hawaiian Islands are part of the larger territory recognized as the ancestral grandmother *Papahānaumoku* of Indigenous Hawaiians, or the *Kānaka Maoli*. Rowan and I are grateful that Hawai'i gifted us with opportunities to breathe her air, eat from her soils, drink from her waters, bathe in her sun, swim in her oceans, be embraced by her winds and rain, and explore her inspiring landscapes both inland and along the coast. Mahalo.

I had a week of work-related meetings in Honolulu during the last week of October. These meetings included the 2024 Annual meeting of the North Pacific Marine Science Organization and the Deep Ocean Stewardship Initiative's Seamount Science Summit. Because I had never been to Hawai'i, Rowan and I decided to spend a bit of time exploring the unique biodiversity and landscapes/seascapes in and around some of the islands. Knowing we would be in Honolulu for the last bit of October, we each picked another island to explore for a week. My pick was Kauai and Rowan picked the Island of Hawai'i, or the Big Island.



Choti Tara. (Photo by Saurabh Ray)



Choti Tara. (Photo by Saurabh Ray)



Choti Tara's cub. (Photo by Saurabh Ray)

Rowan and I were warmly welcomed to Honolulu at the airport by a friend who slipped fragrant leis around our necks before he took us to our hotel at the far end of Waikiki Beach. We spent the next few days reconnecting with friends, enjoying the views from Diamond Head, and touring the dazzling coasts of Oahu.



Shoreline from Makapu'u Lighthouse on the way to the north shore of Oahu (photo by Rowan Laver)

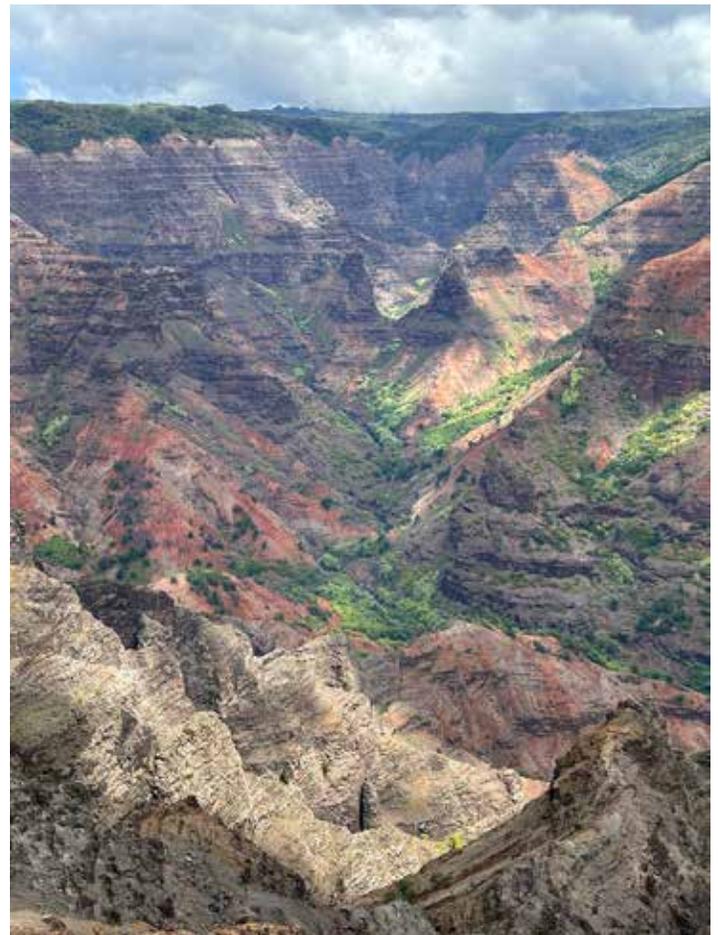
After being in Honolulu for a few days, Rowan and I went to Kauai, or the Garden Island. There we enjoyed spending time by the beach, exploring the coast, and marveling at the landscape.

My expectations of seeing a diversity of unique native birds were dashed; most of the birds we saw were feral chickens and roosters that run wild throughout the Hawaiian Islands. And we were disheartened by the strong winds and murky water that kept us from exploring the diverse local marine ecosystems and spotting sea life while snorkeling. But we did have an unexpected surprise; one of our first mornings in Hawai'i we learned that I now have permanent residency in Australia! This news came at least two-five years sooner than we were anticipating based on what is on the Australian Government's websites. This was the dawn of a new chapter in our lives!



Sunrise from our hotel room near Wailua. (Photo by Janelle Curtis)

The landscapes on Kauai were incredibly beautiful and inspiring. We were particularly struck by Waimea Canyon and the Na Pali coast. It felt like we were driving and walking through a series of scenic postcards.



Waimea Canyon. (Photo by Janelle Curtis)



*Na Pali coast.
(Photo by Janelle Curtis)*

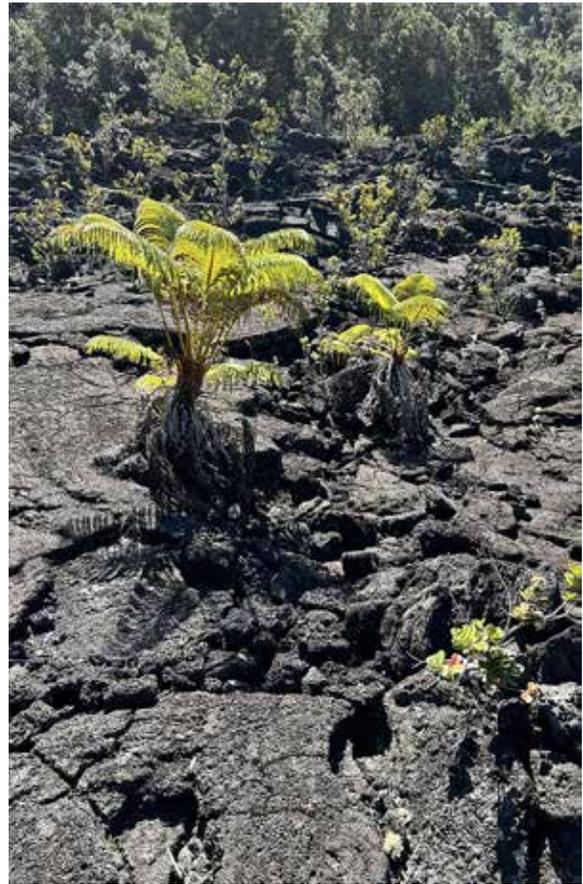
There was also considerable cultural heritage to learn about on Kauai. For example, we visited a fishpond that was built by the *Menehune*, who were a mythological Hawaiian people. We also saw *Pohaku Ho'ohanau*, or royal birthstones, where Hawaiian royalty were born.

After a week on Kauai, Rowan and I spent a lovely week on the Big Island, which is the newest and largest island of Hawai'i. There are six volcanoes on the Big Island, including Kilauea, Mauna Loa, and Mauna Kea.

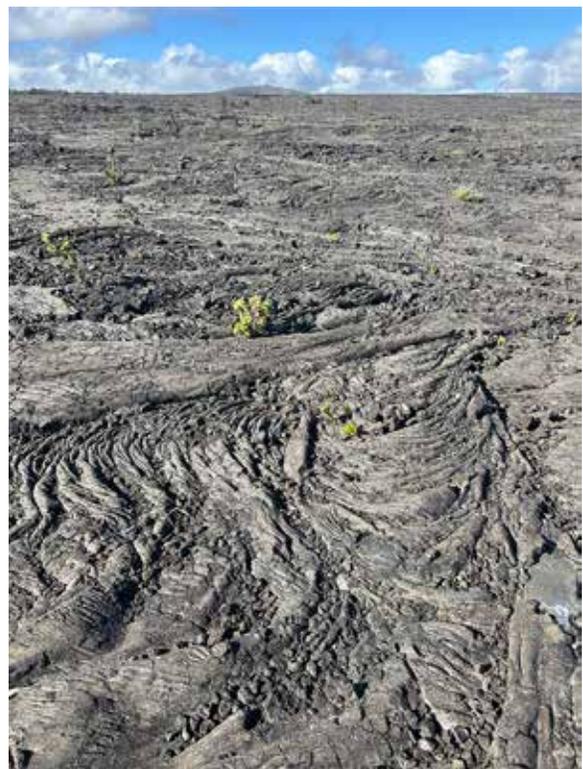
We spent a few nights on the outskirts of Volcano National Park. While we were there, we walked through Kilauea Iki Crater and marvelled at the ability of plants to colonize such desolate landscapes of lava.

We also walked through fields of steam rising from molten lava that is only a few hundred feet beneath the surface. We explored many local waterfalls, marvelled at the tremendous banyan trees, and spent time on peaceful beaches admiring green sea turtles.

As with our time in Kauai, we learned more about ancient Hawaiian culture. We hiked through one of many fields of lava petroglyphs and discovered ancient moorings used by Hawaiians to keep their canoes from drifting out onto the open sea



Some of my favourite plants - fern trees - colonizing the lava in Kilauea Iki Crater. (Photo by Janelle Curtis)



*Lava with one of the volcanoes on the horizon.
(Photo by Janelle Curtis)*

while they were harvesting seafood. While we were on the Big Island, Rowan also stood on the most southern tip of the United States, and we found gold on the top of Mauna Loa.



*Rainbow over Mauna Loa.
(Photo by Janelle Curtis)*

As we explored Hawai'i, we also began to make plans for our move to Australia. There are two international work-related commitments I would like to finish and we will hopefully move in the spring of 2026. Rowan's family owns land in the middle of Morton National Park a few hours south of Sydney where we hope to grow food and explore the local biodiversity. Because moving is a big endeavour, I decided to step down from my roles as editor of the *ACCVI Island Bushwhacker Newsletter* and *Island Bushwhacker Annual* this year. Rowan and I will surely miss our community



*Saying goodbye but not farewell to Mauna Kea from the plane on the way back to Honolulu.
(Photo by Janelle Curtis)*

of mountaineering friends and the alpine adventures on Vancouver Island, but we hope that some of you will visit us in Australia after we move there!

Participants: Rowan Laver and Janelle Curtis



NOTES FROM THE SECTION



The Mountains of the Southern Gulf Islands

Lindsay Elms

The Gulf Islands is a group of islands in the Salish Sea between Vancouver Island and the mainland coast of British Columbia. The name "Gulf Islands" comes from "Gulf of Georgia", the original term used by George Vancouver in his mapping of the southern part of the archipelago and which before the San Juan Island dispute also was taken to include what have since been called the San Juan Islands.

Strictly speaking, the Strait of Georgia is only the wide, open waters of the main strait between the mainland and Vancouver Island, and does not officially refer to the adjoining waters between the islands and Vancouver Island but has become a common misnomer for the entire Gulf, which includes waters such as Active Pass (between Galiano Island and Mayne Island), Trincomali Channel (between Galiano Island and Saltspring Island), Sansum Narrows (between Saltspring Island and Vancouver Island), and Malaspina Strait (between Texada Island and



Map of the Southern Gulf Islands prepared with Google Earth by Janelle Curtis.

the mainland around Powell River). "The Gulf" refers to all such waters collectively, and to those communities and shores surrounding it. Only the term "Strait of Georgia" remains in the provincial gazette although its use as a synonym for the Gulf is unofficial, while the term Gulf of Georgia remains in current use though not in the provincial gazette. The term Salish Sea was adopted in 2010 to refer to the Strait of Georgia, the Strait of Juan de Fuca, Puget Sound, and all connecting and adjoining waters.

The name "Gulf Islands" as originally intended and commonly understood refers

to the archipelago at the southern end of the Strait of Georgia, from Gabriola Island in the north to Saturna Island in the southeast and D'Arcy Island in the southwest. During the 1990s, however, the name began to be applied to all the islands in the Strait of Georgia, resulting in the introduction of the term "Southern Gulf Islands" to distinguish the original "Gulf Islands" from the rest, which are sometimes called the "Northern Gulf Islands". The division of the Gulf Islands into two groups, the Southern and Northern Gulf Islands, is relatively common. The dividing line is approximately that formed

by the city of Nanaimo on Vancouver Island, and the mouth of the Fraser River on the mainland.

In 1843, the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) established Fort Victoria on the southern tip of Vancouver Island. By the 1850s a naval base had been established at Esquimalt (originally called Puerto de Cordova by the Spanish) and Fort Victoria was growing, but they were both small, separate communities. Both had good harbours, but in 1864 Lieutenant Richard Mayne wrote that Esquimalt Harbour was far better than the one at Victoria. "The entrance to Victoria is narrow, shoal [sic] and intricate; and with certain winds a heavy sea sets on the coast, which renders the anchorage outside unsafe, while vessels of burden cannot run inside for shelter unless at or near high water. ... Ships of larger tonnage must always prefer Esquimalt." At the time there was no road between the two communities, merely an Indigenous trail through the forest that took an hour to walk without stopping to admire the view.

Ships were frequenting Victoria and there was a need to survey the coast of Vancouver Island. Ships were running aground in the dangerous waters off the coast. Sir James Douglas, the HBC Chief factor, requested a survey of the waters around the newly establish Colony of Vancouver Island. As a result, the Royal Navy considered Captain George Henry Richards (1820–1896) to be one of the most experienced hydrographic surveyors. In 1857, he sailed from Plymouth on the *HMS Plumper* bound for Esquimalt. He had with him a cadre of officers whose names would become familiar on maps of the B.C. coast: Phillip James Hankin, Edward Parker Bedwell, Richard Charles Mayne and Daniel Pender. Once he arrived in Esquimalt, his first job was to establish the boundary line between the Colony of Vancouver Island and the United States to ascertain

where it touched the coast. The American surveyors made their assessment of the line of the forty-ninth parallel on the ground and Richards proceeded to make his own. When the two teams compared their calculations, they found there was only an eight-foot difference. (Considering modern day GPS can have a variance of a few feet, this was an amazing feat considering the antiquated equipment they were using almost 170 years ago.) However, between 1858 and 1860, Richards was limited to where he could survey as he found the *HMS Plumper* not powerful enough to negotiate the three-mile-long Seymour Narrows on account of the strong current between Vancouver Island and the Mainland. In 1860, the much larger *HMS Hecate* steamed to Esquimalt where Richards took charge to continue his survey for two more years. Richards was to be prominent in naming hundreds of features not only on Vancouver Island, but the Gulf Islands, including islands, mountains, bays, rocks and channels.

George Richards was born in Anthony, a small coastal village in Cornwall, England, a few miles from the Royal Navy dockyard in Plymouth. He was the son of Captain G. S. Richards. Richards joined the navy in 1832 and served in South America, the Falkland Islands, New Zealand, Australia and in the First Opium War in China. He was promoted to captain in 1854. After his 1858 to 1862 survey around Vancouver Island, he was appointed Hydrographer to the Navy in 1863 and held that position until 1874 when he retired. At a time when the merchant navy was expanding rapidly and telegraphic underwater cable laying operations were intensifying, the Admiralty had a great need for more accurate ocean charts. It was in this context that Richards was asked to organise the scientific cruises of the *HMS Porcupine* and the *HMS Lightning* between 1868 and 1870, followed by that of the *HMS*

Challenger. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1866 and a corresponding member of the French Academy of Sciences in the same year. George Richards was knighted in 1877, became a Knight Commander of the Order of Bath in 1881 and was elevated to the rank of admiral in 1884. He passed away in Bath, Somerset in 1896. His eldest son, George Edward Richards also became a Royal Navy officer and hydrographer.

Following is a selection of the most significant Southern Gulf Islands with information about the mountains, peaks and hills found on them. All heights are approximate and may vary. Although much lower than the mountains found to the west on Vancouver Island and the east on the mainland of British Columbia, some of them are frequently ascended for the spectacular views that are obtained from the summit. The B.C. Geographical Names is the board that regulates the naming process and they record the information on their website with the dates the names are officially adopted and any information regarding their origin where known. It must be noted that all the islands (except for Penelakut Island) and the peaks and hills have European nomenclatures. There are very few Indigenous names for mountains in the Gulf Islands, but the B.C. Geographical Names Office accepts new proposals from the First Nations and may be in the process of receiving feedback for proposed changes.

GABRIOLA ISLAND

Five kilometres to the east of Nanaimo and linked by a 20-minute ferry service is Gabriola Island. It has a land area of about 58-square kilometres. The highest point on Gabriola Island is an unnamed hill (182m) on the south coast toward the south end of the island.

GALIANO ISLAND

Galiano Island is the second largest of the Southern Gulf Islands at 60-square kilometres. Located on the west side of the Strait of Georgia, the island is bordered by Mayne Island to the southeast, Saltspring Island to the west and Valdes Island to the northwest. The highest peak on island is **Mount Galiano** (314 m). The name was adopted on 2 March 1950 as submitted by Hydrographic Service in association with Galiano Island. It is named after Commander Dionisio Alcala Galiano of the Spanish navy, who made an examination during the summer of 1792 of the channels between what is now Vancouver Island and the mainland, in company with Commander Caytano Valdes y Flores Bazan. Galiano and Valdes, the former in charge of the expedition, were sent from Mexico by order of the viceroy of Mexico to complete the exploration of Juan de Fuca strait. Mount Galiano provides hikers with views over the Gulf Islands, the San Juan Islands, and the distant mainland mountains. Just west of Mount Galiano is **Sutil Mountain** (299 m). It was adopted on 2 March 1950 as Mount Sutil but changed to Sutil Mountain on 3 June 1954. It was named after Galiano's flagship. On the northern end of the island is **Bodega Hill** (220 m) located within the Bodega Ridge Provincial Park. The park was preserved as a result of a long fund-raising campaign from 1991 to 1995, which eventually gained the support of the Nature Conservancy of Canada. It comprises 233 hectares and the high cliffs are home to bald eagles, peregrine falcons, and turkey vultures. Bodega Hill was adopted on 14 January 1946 but named in 1905 by Admiral Sir John Frankin Parry (1863-1926). He was from a distinguished Royal Navy family. Parry was promoted to lieutenant 1885, then to commander in 1899. In February 1903 he was appointed in command of the survey ship *HMS Egeria*.

Bodega Hill was named in association with nearby Quadra Hill, after Captain Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra, who made exploratory excursions along the coast of British Columbia and Alaska, and was the Spanish naval commander at Nootka when Captain Vancouver arrived there in 1792. **Quadra Hill** (180 m), located a few kilometres to the south of Bodega Hill was adopted on 30 June 1911. It was named circa 1859 by Captain George Henry Richards. East of Montague Harbour is **Stockade Hill** (240 m). It was once the site of an old Indian stockade built as a defense against attacks by Haida Indians from Queen Charlotte Islands. The name was adopted on 22 August 1969 after being submitted by the Gulf Island Branch of the B.C. Historical Association.

MAYNE ISLAND

At 21-square kilometres, Mayne Island is midway between the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island. In the south-central heart of the island is the highest peak **Mount Parke** (255 m). Captain George Richards named this feature in 1858 after Lieutenant John Grubb Parke (1827-1900), a topographical engineer, who was chief astronomer and surveyor for the US and the North American Boundary Commission of 1857.

PENDER ISLAND

Pender Island consists of two islands, North Pender and South Pender, which are separated by a narrow canal originally dredged in 1903. In 1955 the islands were connected by a one lane bridge, as it remains today. The combined area of Pender Island is approximately 34-square kilometres. North Pender Island is the larger of the two islands and the highest peak is **Cramer Hill** (218 m). The name was adopted on 14 January 1946. There is no known origin of the name. Southeast of Hope Bay just

above the coastline is **Bald Cone** (194 m). It was also adopted on 14 January 1946, but it is interesting that Richards gave it a descriptive name. **Mount Menzies** (192 m) was adopted on 22 August 1969 and submitted by the Gulf Island Branch of the B.C. Historical Association. It refers to Albert Menzies, who settled in the Hope Bay area of North Pender Island in 1893. Menzies operated a large farm and owned a herd of registered dairy cattle. On the north end of the island rising prominently above the surrounding land is **George Hill** (163 m). It was adopted on 29 December 1945. Northwest of Port Browning is **Lively Peak** (156 m). It was adopted on 11 February 1936. North of Otter Bay at the northwest end of the island is **Dent Hill** (108 m). It adopted on 14 January 1946. There is no known origin of the names for George, Lively or Dent Hills. The highest peak on South Pender Island is **Mount Norman** (244 m) and it has a spectacular viewpoint that overlooks Bedwell Harbour. The trail to the summit is located on the north end of the island in the Beaumont Gulf Islands National Park Reserve. The name was adopted on 11 February 1936 and named by Captain George Richards in 1859 after William Henry Norman, Royal Navy, paymaster of *HMS Ganges*. East of Greenburn Lake is **Curtis Peak** (170+ m). It was approved on 12 December 1939 and adopted on 14 January 1946. Although there is no information on the origin of the name, knowing Captain George Richard's penchant for naming features it is most likely named for Sir Roger Curtis (1746-1816) who was an officer of the British Royal Navy. He saw action in several battles during an extensive career that was punctuated by a number of highly controversial incidents. Curtis served during both the American and French Revolutionary Wars and was highly praised in the former conflict for his bravery under fire at the Great Siege of Gibraltar, where he saved

several hundred Spanish lives at great risk to his own. His career suffered; however, when he was heavily criticised for conduct during a naval conflict between Britain and France in 1794. His popularity fell further due to his involvement in two highly controversial courts-martial, those of Anthony Molloy in 1795 and James Gambier in 1810. He died in 1816, his baronetcy inherited by his second son Lucius who later became an Admiral of the Fleet. In the middle of the island between Mount Norman and Curtis Peak is **Spalding Hill** (166 m). It was adopted on 22 August 1969 and was designated by the Gulf Islands Branch of the B.C. Historical Association. They reported the name as having been given in 1905 by Captain Parry of the *HMS Egeria*, after Arthur Reed Spalding, who settled on South Pender Island in 1886. However, the name does not appear on Captain Parry's chart.

PREVOST ISLAND

Prevost Island is located midway between the southeastern extremity of Saltspring Island and the southern end of Galiano Island. Most of the island was bought as a farm in the 1920s by Digby de Burgh, an Irishman from County Limerick, who used it to raise sheep, goats and cattle. His descendants still own much of the island, which is still primarily a sheep and cattle farm. A few smaller private homes were built on the northwest side of the island. There are two small unnamed peaks at 105 m and 110 m on the undulating island.

SALTSPRING ISLAND

The Oxford Dictionary of Place Names says it was called Salt Spring Island by the Hudson's Bay Company in the 1840s, but in 1910 the name was changed to Saltspring Island by the Geographic Board of Canada which often fused together multiple-word

place names. So officially it's one word, but local folk prefer the original two-word spelling, although it's not unanimous. Saltspring Island is the largest in area of the Southern Gulf Islands at 183 square kilometres and is reached by a ferry service between Crofton and Vesuvius. South of Burgoyne Bay is **Baynes Peak** (593 m). It was adopted on 12 December 1939 referring to the highest point on Mount Maxwell. Mount Maxwell (not Mount Baynes) was adopted on 2 May 1911, as an established local name, referring to the entire landmass. It was confirmed on 14 February 2002. This feature had been named Mount Baynes circa 1859 by Captain George Richards after Rear Admiral Sir Robert Lambert Baynes (1796-1869), Commander in Chief of the Pacific Station, 1857-60, with his flag aboard *HMS Ganges*. Local residents began calling this Mount Maxwell at about the same time, resulting in the 1911 decision to adopt Mount Maxwell. By correspondence with local authorities on Saltspring Island, it was agreed to designate the highest point on the landmass Baynes Peak (not Mount Baynes), and name the newly-created surrounding park Mount Maxwell Park. Mount Maxwell Provincial Park was established in 1938 for the views afforded from Baynes Peak. It has an area of 231 hectares, but is adjoined by the Mount Maxwell Ecological Reserve to the west, and Burgoyne Bay Provincial Park to the south, creating a contiguous area of over 1100 hectares of protected land. The mountain top can be accessed by gravel road, and by hiking trails from the northeast or Burgoyne Bay Provincial Park to the south. The 1911 decision adopting Mount Maxwell, referring to the entire landmass, was never rescinded. The John Maxwell family were the first settlers on Saltspring Island in 1861. Their property included the area around the mountain. North of Mount Maxwell Provincial Park is **Mount Belcher** (399 m). It was adopted on 30 June 1911. It was

named in 1859 by Captain George Richards after Captain [later Admiral] Sir Edward Belcher (1799-1877), a surveying officer and grandson of William Belcher, governor of the colony of Nova Scotia. In 1835 he published *A Treatise on Nautical Surveying*. In 1839, he was in Nootka Sound where he made the first scientific survey of Friendly Cove and in 1852, he had charge of an ill-fated expedition in search of Sir John Franklin. Northwest of Mount Belcher is **Mount Erskine** (448 m). It is in the 107 hectare Mount Erskine Provincial Park established in 2007. Mount Erskine was adopted on 31 March 1917 and named by Captain George Richards after Admiral John Elphinstone Erskine (1806-1887). His first command was on the gunboat *HMS Arachne* on the Jamaica Station in 1829 and then he served in the Mediterranean, West Indies, Australia, and toured the Pacific Ocean. He became an admiral in 1869. Between 1865 and 1874 he served as a Liberal politician in the House of Commons. Located on the southern half of Saltspring Island, south of Fulford Ganges Road, are four of the islands' peaks. On the western edge of Burgoyne Bay Provincial Park is **Mount Sullivan** (609 m). It first appeared as Sullivan Mountain in error in February 1936, but was adopted on 7 September 1950 in its current form. Like Curtis Peak on South Pender Island, the origin of its name is unknown, but again it is most likely named for Admiral George Lydiard Sullivan (1832-1904). He came from a naval family and had a distinguished career. He was active in suppressing the slave trade, not only on the *HMS Castor*, but also later when he was based in Zanzibar. He was promoted to full admiral in 1897. The next peak to the south and the highest peak on Saltspring Island is **Bruce Peak** (709 m). It was adopted on 11 February 1936. However, the feature was formerly passed in 1917 as Bruce Mountain. It was named by Captain George Richards after Rear-Admiral Henry William Bruce, Commander-in-Chief, Pacific

Station, 1854-57. Southeast of Bruce Peak is **Hope Hill** (625 m). It was adopted on 11 February 1936. It appears the name may refer to Vice Admiral Sir James Hope (1808-1881), who was Commander in Chief of North America and West Indies Station. Finally, at the very southern tip is **Mount Tuam** (606 m). It was adopted on 6 November 1934. The name is a variant of "Chu-an," which is the Indigenous name for this rocky height and means "looking out over the sea."

SATURNA ISLAND

The highest point on the 31-square kilometre island is **Mount Warburton Pike** (401 m) which was also known as Prairie Hill. It is named for Warburton Pike (1861-1915), a pioneer settler who arrived on Saturna in 1886 and purchased properties that included the mountain. Pike was an explorer, sportsman and author, writing a book on his experiences in the Canadian North titled *The Barren Ground of Northern Canada*. Pike's death was untimely and tragic. After returning to Britain to enlist for WWI and, being refused because he was too old, he died by suicide. The summit and a rock in Active Passage were named for him, and a memorial was erected at Porter Landing in the Dease Lake region, where he had ventured in his years in B.C. Nearby, **Mount Fisher** (290 m) was named after Warburton Pike's ranch manager Wassell, also known as Fisher. On the north side of the island is **Mount Elford** (294 m) which was named after William Elford, a settler in Lyall Harbour in 1872, who worked a farm there for many years. Both peaks were adopted on 22 August 1969 after being submitted by the Gulf Island Branch of the B.C. Historical Association. Above Lyall Harbour is **Mount David** (256 m), a peak named in association with Lyall Harbour, in turn named in 1859 after David Lyall (1817-1895). The name was adopted on 14 January

1946. Lyall was born in Scotland and joined the Royal Navy in 1839. He served on boats to Greenland, Antarctica, New Zealand, and on the surveying vessel *HMS Plumper* under Captain George Richards. Richards transferred with his staff to *HMS Hecate* in 1860, which continued the survey, but Lyall was invalided from the survey in 1861 and returned to England with a large and valuable plant collection. William J. Hooker was able to use his influence to enable Lyall to reside at Kew Gardens while he organised the collection. Lyall remained settled in England and had a number of posts with the Navy in England until his retirement in 1873.

THETIS ISLAND

Thetis Island and its neighbour to the south, Penelakut (formerly Kuper) Island, are two of the smaller Southern Gulf Islands. They are separated from Chemainus by Stuart Channel, and the north tip of Galiano Island by Trincomali Channel. Thetis Island is 10 square kilometres in area and has two high points. On the west side Burchell Hill forms the high point and Moore Hill forms the high point ridge on the east side. **Burchell Hill** (162 m) was adopted on 14 January 1946 although it was formerly labelled in 1907 as Birchall Hill. It was named after Henry Burchell, owner of Lot 10 on the island, obtained by Crown Grant in 1899. **Moore Hill** (161 m) was adopted on 29 December 1945 and named in 1852 by Captain Augustus Leopold Kuper (1809-1885) after George Moore (1815-1890), Royal Navy. Moore was educated at the Royal Navy School at Greenwich, England, and joined the *HMS Thetis*, a ship of 8 guns, as Master in 1849. Moore was the Master Attendant (officer-in-charge) of berthing ships in the Esquimalt dockyard for some time. Kuper was commissioned to sail the *HMS Thetis* to the south-east coast of America and then the Pacific Ocean where he surveyed in the

Salish Sea. In 1861 he was promoted to rear-admiral.

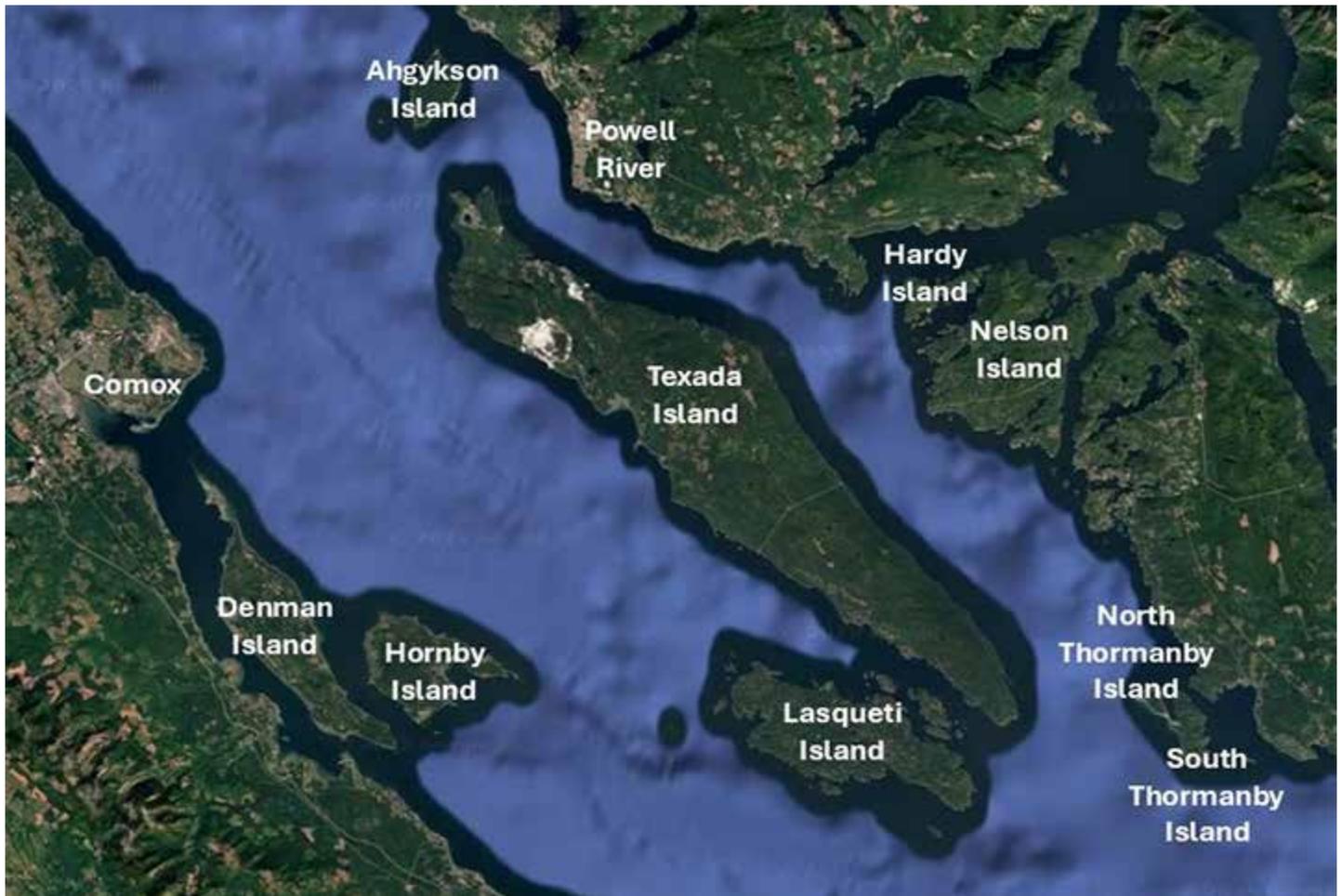
VALDES ISLAND

The only named peak on the 23 square kilometre Valdes Island is called **Mexicana Hill** (210 m). It was adopted on 29 December 1945 and named circa 1859 by Captain George Richards after the Spanish Commander Cayetano Valdes y Flores Bazan's vessel the *Mexicana*.

The Mountains of the Northern Gulf Islands

Lindsay Elms

The Northern Gulf Islands are approximately those north of the city of Nanaimo on Vancouver Island and the mouth of the Fraser River on the mainland. North of the line between Campbell River and Powell River are what are known as the Discovery Islands. Like the Southern Gulf Islands, all the peaks listed are official names by the B.C. Geographic Names. All heights are approximate and may vary. Many of the mountain were named by the Spanish explorers or Captain George Richards during his hydrographic survey of the coast during the late 1850s and early 1860s and found on the Admiralty Charts from that period. The B.C. Geographical Names is the board that regulates the naming process and they record the information on their website with the dates the names are officially adopted and any information regarding their origin, if known.



Map of the Northern Gulf Islands prepared with Google Earth by Janelle Curtis..

AHGYKSON ISLAND

Ahgykson Island, formerly Harwood Island, is a small 9.25 square hectare island off the coast of Powell River. It is an Indian reserve and part of the traditional territory of the Tla'amin First Nation. The name Harwood was found on Captain George Vancouver's 1798 Admiralty Chart and adopted in April 1945. However, the name was changed to Ahgykson as per the provisions of the Tla'amin Treaty of 2016 and translates to "pointed nose" in reference to the island's shape. There is no significant height of land.

DENMAN ISLAND

Located off the east coast of Vancouver Island near Buckley Bay is 51 square kilometre Denman Island. Baynes Sound is the channel separating the two islands

and a ferry serves the island between Buckley Bay and Denman Island West. Captain George Richards named the island after Rear-Admiral the Honourable Joseph Denman, commander-in-chief of the Pacific station 1864-1866. There are no mountains or hills on the island although Fillongley Provincial Park on the east coast is a popular destination for hikers. It was established in January 1954. The property was donated by George Beadnell for parkland, with the request that it be named after his home in England.

HARDY ISLAND

At 7.25 square kilometres, Hardy Island is the smallest of the Northern Gulf Islands. It is located south of Saltery Bay across the Jervis Inlet and northwest of Nelson Island

on the Sunshine Coast. It was named by Captain George Richards for Sir Thomas Hardy, 1st Baronet who was captain of *HMS Victory* at the Battle of Trafalger. There are no named peaks on the island.

HORNBY ISLAND

Hornby Island is 30 square kilometres in area and is separated from Denman Island by the Lambert Channel. The island is reached by a ferry from Gravelly Bay on Denman Island to Shingle Spit on Hornby. It was named after Rear-Admiral Phipps Hornby, RN, Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Station from 1847-51. The only peak on the island is **Mount Geoffrey** (305 m). It is located on the western edge of 187 hectare Mount Geoffrey Escarpment Park established in 2004. There is no origin/significance of its name recorded.

LASQUETI ISLAND

Lasqueti Island is the third largest Northern Gulf Island at 73 square hectares and is located off the east coast of Vancouver Island. A passenger-only ferry connects the island to French Creek near Parksville. It was named by José María Narváez, commander of the *Santa Saturna*, as Isla de Lasqueti in 1791 after Spanish naval officer Juan Maria Lasqueti, but changed to Lasqueti Island in 1906. There are three named peaks on the island and several other high points. The highest point on the island is **Trematon Mountain** (327 m), a dramatic geologic feature with its rounded plateau-like summit and steep cliffs on the north and east sides. It was originally spelled Mount Tremeton on Captain George Richards Admiralty Chart from 1860, but it was changed and adopted as Trematon Mountain in 1924 to reflect the old ruins of Trematon Castle in Cornwall, England where Richards was born and raised. The peak offers a birds-eye view of the

Salish Sea, Mount Baker, Mount Arrowsmith, the Sunshine Coast and mountains on the mainland. Majestic old-growth Douglas firs flank the side of the mountain and provide a natural wildlife corridor between the Lasqueti Island Ecological Reserve (established in 2006) to the south and undeveloped Crown land to the north. A couple of kilometres east of Trematon Mountain is **Mount Cook** (237+ m). It was adopted on 1 November 1995 as proposed by Lasqueti Island Historical Society and endorsed by the Lasqueti Community Association. The Historical Society reported that this feature had no local name, although it had been labelled "Long Bay Mountain" on some early maps. It is named after long-time residents Manfred and Alfred Cook and their families, who purchased property there in 1913. At the south end of the island is **Mount Kurtzhals** (159 m), proposed by historian Elda Mason, author of *Lasqueti Island History and Memory*, and endorsed by the Lasqueti Island Historical Society. The Historical Society confirmed that no particular local name was in use and advised that current residents would recognize and use the name Mount Kurtzhals. It was named for local RCAF Pilot Officer Alan Edward Kurtzhals, who served as Air Bomber with 434 Squadron. His bomber was shot down over Belgium on 18 December 1944. He was buried at Leopoldsburg War Cemetery in Belgium. The name was adopted on 11 November 1995.

NELSON ISLAND

At 103 square hectares, Nelson Island is the second largest of the Northern Gulf Islands. It is separated from the Sunshine Coast by the Agamemnon Passage. The island was named by Captain George Richards after Horatio Nelson, 1st Viscount Nelson. The highest point on the island is on a long north/south ridge north of Mackechnie Lake

at just over 700 m, but it is unnamed.

TEXADA ISLAND

When the Spanish named the island in 1791 it was shown on their charts as Isla de Texada. It was named after the Spanish rear-admiral Felix Ignacio de Tejada (1735-1817). The northern most peak on 300 square kilometre Texada Island, the largest Northern Gulf Island, is **Surprise Mountain** (360+ m). It is on the island's northwest coast southeast of Favada Point. It was adopted on 2 December 1948. It was submitted by the B.C. Geographic Division to the Geographic Board of Canada in 1923, however, the name was not published on the 6 May 1924 list of names approved by the Board. Six kilometres southeast of the town of Van Anda, where the ferry from Powell River docks, is **Comet Mountain** (260+ m). It was adopted on 6 May 1924 as identified on the Geological Survey map by Richard George McConnell in 1912. It had been labelled "Fraser Hill" but McConnell, for unknown reasons, wasn't satisfied with this name, so named it after the mineral claim The Comet. Four kilometres southeast of Comet Mountain is **Mount Pocahontas** (530 m). It was adopted on 6 May 1923 and had been submitted by the B.C. Geographic Division as labelled on R.G. McConnell's Geological Survey map of 1912. It was named in association with Pocahontas Bay which is now officially named *Shehtekwahn* as per the provisions of the Tla'amin Treaty of 2016. **Mount Grant** (740 m) is located 1 kilometre north of Bob's Lake Recreation Site where there is a campground. It was adopted on 2 December 1948, but its origin/significance is not recorded. Two kilometres southwest is **Mount Davies** (760 m). It was adopted 6 May 1924 as labelled on R.G. McConnell's 1912 map. It was named after John Coyne Davies, a millwright in Nanaimo, who was engaged in building a schooner at

Texada Island. He was born in Ontario circa 1842, came to Nanaimo in 1875 and died there 2 May 1924. Further to the south is the highest point on the island **Mount Shepherd** (887 m). It was adopted on 31 March 1924 but its origin/significance is not recorded. Located about 4 kilometres south of Mount Shepherd and just 2 kilometres from the southern end of the island is **Mount Dick** (350+ m). It was adopted 5 February 1924 and presumably named by Captain George Richards who surveyed in the area in 1860 on the *HMS Plumper*. He named it after Archibald Dick, the B.C. mine inspector from 1880-1910. Dick was born in Scotland in 1840, came to Nanaimo in 1866 and died there 1 July 1915.

NORTH and SOUTH THORMANDY ISLANDS

The Thormanby Islands are made up of two islands – North and South Thormanby Island - (together known as *sxwelap* in she shashishalhem, the traditional language spoken by the shíshálh Nation; this language is a Coast Salish dialect) and are located within the shared territories of the Tla'amin Nation and the shíshálh Nation. In total area combined they cover 8.7 square hectares. They are located 17 kilometres west of the town of Sechelt and separated by Welcome Passage from the Sunshine Coast. Simson Provincial Park, established in 1986 and named after pioneer Calvert Simson, occupies the majority of the southern part of South Thormanby Island. There are two peaks on the island: **Spy Glass Hill** (150+ m) in the north and **Mount Seafield** (104 m) in the south. There is currently no information available on the origin/significance of the two names, but Mount Seafield was adopted in 1944. North Thormanby Island is also predominantly private property with a small provincial park at the southern tip. Spanish naval officer José María Narváez was the

first European to visit the islands and named it Isla de San Ignacio in 1791. The name Thormanby was later given to the islands in 1860 by Captain George Richards. This name commemorates the racehorse who won the Epsom Derby that year in England.

The Mountains of the Discovery Islands

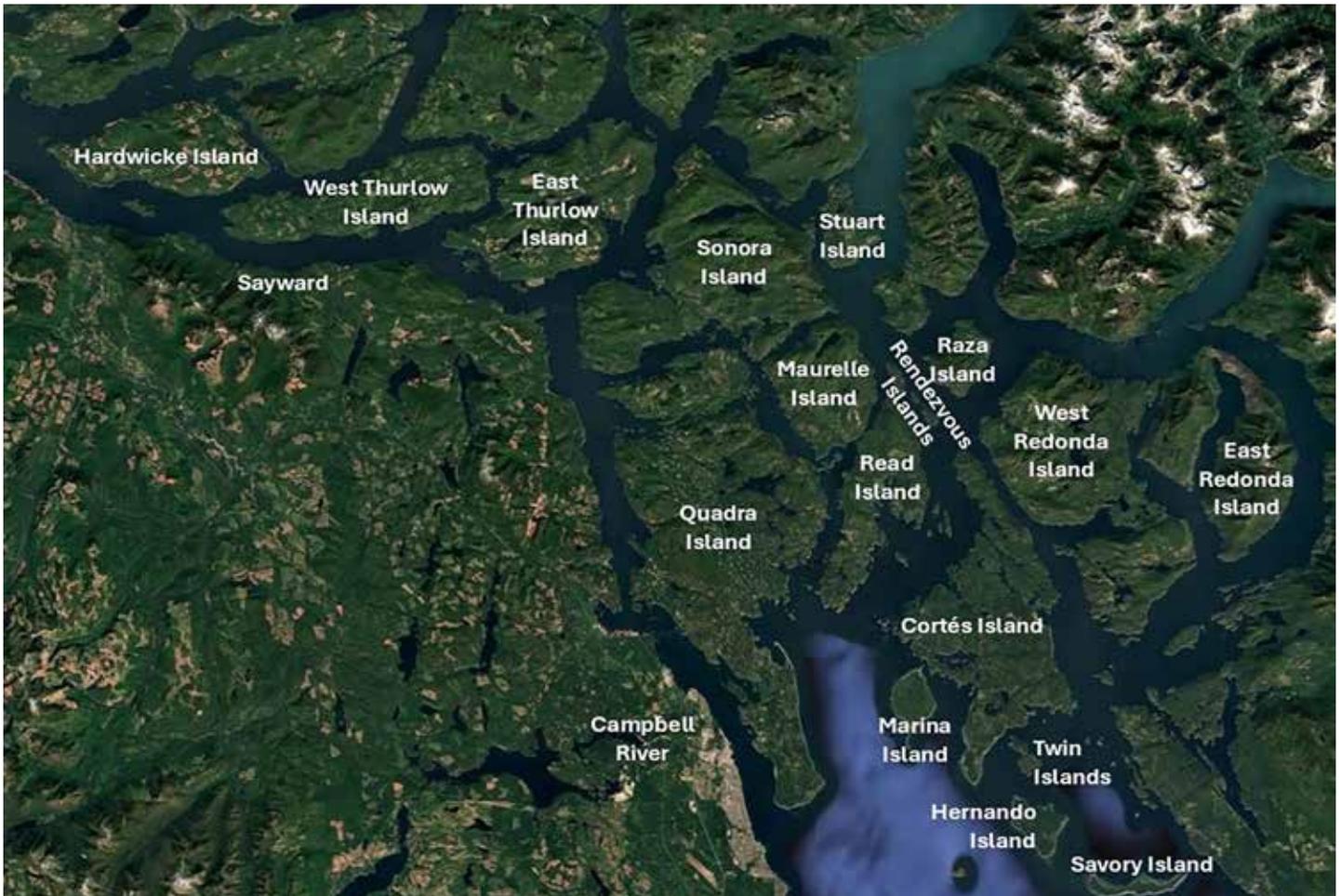
Lindsay Elms

The Discovery Islands are a group of islands located at the northern end of the Salish Sea and the eastern end of Johnstone Strait, between Vancouver Island and the mainland coast of B.C.

Most of these islands have very few

residents. Only Quadra Island and Cortés Island have a ferry service. The remainder are served by private boat or float plane. The area's complex geography can make it difficult to determine when travelling by boat whether a sighted coastline belongs to the mainland, Vancouver Island, or one of the Discovery Islands.

Visitors from around the world are attracted to the Discovery Islands for their scenic beauty and recreational opportunities, including sport fishing and kayaking. Quadra Island has established bolted climbing routes on the bluffs on the central island and Phil Stone has published a guidebook *Quadra Island Rock Climbs*. None of the islands are known as mountaineering destinations, however, views from some of the summits can be spectacular. There are only a few records of ascents of several of the peaks.



Map of the Discovery Islands prepared with Google Earth by Janelle Curtis.

Many of the mountain were named by Captain George Richards during his hydrographic survey of the coast during the late 1850s and early 1860s and found on the Admiralty Charts from that period, or the Spanish explorers. The B.C. Geographical Names is the board that regulates the naming process and they record the information on their website with the dates the names are officially adopted and any information regarding their origin where known.

SAVARY ISLAND

Savary Island or Áyhus is an island located in the northern part of the Strait of Georgia and is the southern most of the Discovery Islands. It is approximately 0.8-1.5 kilometres wide and 7.5 kilometres long. It has a permanent population of about 100, expanding to perhaps 2,000 or more in the summer months. Savary Island lies within the traditional territory of the Tla'amin (Sliammon) Nation.

European ships were in the vicinity of the island in the mid-18th century. Tla'amin First Nation oral history records the destruction and sinking of a "trading" ship (well known for pirating) in their traditional territory in that period. In 1791 José María Narváez commanded a small schooner, the *Santa Saturnina*, on an expedition to chart the Strait of Juan de Fuca and Strait of Georgia. He reached Jervis Inlet and was able to determine that Texada Island was in fact an island. In the distance to the north he saw a couple points of higher land, one probably Cape Mudge on Quadra Island, and another to the east, of unclear identity. In June 1792 the Spanish ships *Sutil* and *Mexicana*, under Galiano, and the British ships *Discovery* and *Chatham*, under Captain George Vancouver sailed by the island on their way to Desolation Sound. On or about June 25,

1792, Vancouver gave the name "Savary's Island." In early July a boat survey team led by Peter Puget and Joseph Whidbey charted Savary Island and spent at least one night on shore, meeting a group of Indigenous people at the island's eastern end. Puget did not refer to the island as Savary, instead simply calling it "Indian Island." There are no hills on the island and the highest piece of land is 68 metres.

CORTÉS ISLAND

At 130-square kilometres, Cortés Island is located at the northern end of the Strait of Georgia sandwiched between Quadra Island and the Redonda Islands. The island was named in 1792 by Spanish explorers Dionisio Alcalá Galiano and Cayetano Valdés. Despite the official Cortés spelling, which appeared on Canadian Hydrographic Service Charts, many of the island's early pioneers anglicized the name and referred to the island as Cortéz. There are two named peaks on Cortés Island: **Cliff Peak** (432m) and **Green Mountain** (288m). Both peaks were labelled on the British Admiralty Chart 580 from 1864 *et seq*, however, Cliff Mountain was adopted in the 1930 B.C. Gazetteer and confirmed on 15 January 1987, while Green Mountain was adopted 31 March 1924. There are no details on the origin/significance of the names.

MARINA ISLAND

This island was named in 1792 by Spanish explorers Dionisio Alcalá Galiano and Cayetano Valdés, in association with nearby Cortés Island. Hernán Cortés acquired Doña Marina (also known as La Malinche) as an Aztec slave and made her his mistress and interpreter. She supposedly bore him a son and played a powerful role in her people's defeat, acting as an advisor to Cortés and an intermediary between vanquishers and

vanquished. Royal Navy surveyors changed Marina Island to Mary Island in 1849, then changed it back again in 1906. (Mary Island continued in use as a local name, though, for many years.) *Shet kah jeh*, meaning "tie rope around tree", was the name of a large Tla'amin village on Marina Island, occupied before 1900. The island's highest elevation is 73 metres and it is separated from Cortés Island by the narrow Uganda Passage.

HARDWICKE ISLAND

Hardwicke Island lies directly off the coast of the village of Sayward and to the west of its neighbour West Thurlow Island. The island is 78-square kilometres in area and was named after Philip Yorke (1757 – 1834), 3rd Earl of Hardwicke, a patron of the master's mate on *HMS Discovery* during Captain George Vancouver's expedition. The highest peak on the island is **Mount Royston** (807 m) and is located almost in the middle. It was officially adopted 3 December 1946. Five kilometres west of Mount Royston is **Craven Hill** (517 m) and it was adopted 5 April 1938. The origin/significance of the names is not recorded, but they were most likely named by Captain George Richards. Three kilometres east of Mount Royston is the only other peak on the island **Mount Yorke** (693 m). It was adopted 3 December 1946. Mount Yorke was named in 1862 by Captain George Richards in association with Hardwicke Island, Philip Yorke being the family name of the House of Hardwicke.

HERNANDO ISLAND

Hernando Island is an 11-square kilometre island north of Savary Island. It was named after Hernán Cortés, the Spanish conqueror of Mexico, by the Spanish commanders Cayetano Valdés and Dionisio Alcalá Galiano in 1791 when they explored the Strait of Georgia. There are no hills on the island and

the maximum elevation is 85 metres with a mean elevation of 51 metres. It is part of the traditional territory of the Tla'amin Nation.

MAURELLE ISLAND

Maurelle Island is located northeast of Quadra Island, southeast of Sonora Island, and north of Read Island. The island is separated from the mainland by Calm Channel, from Quadra Island by Okisollo Channel, from Read Island by Whiterock Passage, and from Sonora Island by a narrow strait called Hole in the Wall. The narrow passage between Quadra Island and Antonio Point, the southern tip of Maurelle Island, is known as Surge Narrows. Tidal currents in the narrows average 7.0 knots (3.6 m/s) at maximum flow. At the southern tip of Maurelle Island is Surge Narrows Provincial Park established in April 1996. Paddling through Hole in the Wall, which can only be done for a few minutes during slack, while circumnavigating Maurelle Island is a popular sea kayaking destination. Maurelle Island was given its name in 1903 by the Geographic Board of Canada to honor of the Spanish naval officer Francisco Antonio Mourelle de la Rúa (1750-1820). Mourelle accompanied Lieutenant Commander Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra in 1775 on the *Sonora* as his lieutenant in his exploring voyage along this coast. The three islands now known as Quadra, Sonora and Maurelle Islands were once thought to be a single landmass, identified as "Valdes Island" on British Admiralty Chart #580, 1862. Okisollo Channel and Hole in the Wall (channel) were located and charted during subsequent surveys, and the label was adjusted to "Valdes Islands", until each island was given its own distinctive name by the Geographic Board. The only officially-name peak on the island is **Elephant Mountain** (402m). It was adopted on 6 January 1949. There is no origin/significance of its name recorded.

However, it is not the highest point on the island. Several locals have dubbed the highest point about one and a half kilometres east of May Lake **Maurelle Peak** (594 m). It can be easily reached by logging roads.

QUADRA ISLAND

The 310-square kilometre island was claimed by the Peruvian Spanish navigator Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra for the Spanish Empire in the 1700s. A settlement was not successfully negotiated, and ownership of the island remained in dispute between Britain and Spain in the early 1790s. The two countries nearly began a war over the issue; the confrontation became known as the Nootka Crisis. That was averted when both agreed to recognize the other's rights to the area in the first Nootka Convention in 1790, a first step to peace. Finally, the two countries signed the second Nootka Convention in 1793 and the third Convention in 1794. As per the final treaty, the Spanish dismantled their fort on Vancouver Island and left the area after both countries agreed that no permanent settlements should be established in the area neither by Spain nor by Britain, while rights of trade and shipping were to be shared by the two powers. In 1846, the Oregon Treaty was signed by the British and the U.S. to settle the question of the U.S. Oregon Territory borders. The Treaty made the 49th parallel latitude north the official border between the two countries. In order to ensure that Britain retained all of Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands, it was agreed that the border would swing south around that area. The Coast Salish inhabited Quadra Island when Captain Vancouver visited the area in 1792. Quadra Island is separated from Vancouver Island by Discovery Passage (Liǵ^witdaǵ^w Passage" is the Lik^wala name for this passage and means "unkillable"), and Cortés Island by

Read Island and the Sutil Channel. There are two popular parks on the island – Main Lake Provincial Park (established April 1996) and Rebecca Spit Marine Provincial Park (established July 1959 and increased in March 1969). East of Deepwater Bay on the west coast of the island is the highest peak **Mount Seymour** (619 m). It was adopted on 23 May. It was probably named after Frederick Seymour (1820-1869), who had succeeded James Douglas as Governor of the Colony of British Columbia 1864-69. **Mount Lolo** (218 m) is a small hill on the west coast of Quadra Island overlooking Discovery Passage (Liǵ^witdaǵ^w Passage). It was named after Jean Baptiste Lolo (1798 - 1868) an Iroquois Indian who came west to New Caledonia (north-central B.C.) with the fur traders. He had a great admiration for Saint Paul and hence, while at Fort Fraser, picked up the nickname of "St. Paul," which stayed with him for the rest of his life. Later he moved to Kamloops where he achieved such influence among the Shuswaps as to be accounted a chief. The name was adopted on 3 July 1952. South of Mount Seymour is a popular hiking area known as Chinese Mountain. There are numerous trails zig-zagging over both North and South Chinese Mountain which overlook Hyacinthe Bay and there are established bolted rock-climbing routes on the many bluffs, but although the signs appear as if the mountains are official, they are not. When the coastal fog swirls around the mountains, the deep green of the forest and their rounded shape are said to be reminiscent of a classic landscape in southern China, hence the name. The land the crags are on is the traditional territory of the We Wai Kai First Nation.

READ ISLAND

Read Island (6.4 square kilometres) was named around 1864 by Daniel Pender,

captain of the *Beaver*, for Captain William Viner Read, who was a naval assistant at the UK Hydrographic Office. Pender was recorded as the second master of the admiralty survey vessel, *HMS Plumper*, in 1857 when he arrived at Esquimalt. He was promoted as the ship's master in 1860. He was, however, transferred to *HMS Hecate* a year later after the *HMS Plumper* was deemed too small and unsuitable for the coast's waters. When the British government commissioned the Hudson's Bay Company to continue the hydraulic survey of the coast, he was given command of the company's *Beaver*. He replaced Captain George Richards, who was recalled to Britain after he was appointed as the Hydrographer of the Royal Navy. Read Island is separated from Quadra Island by Hoskyn Channel, from Maurelle Island by Whiterock Channel, and from Cortés Island by Sutil Channel. Evans Bay forms a large inlet on the east side of Read Island. On the southern end of the island is the 637 hectare Read Island Provincial Park established in 1996. There are two named peaks on the island. **Evening Mountain** (440 m) was adopted on 1 April 1954, while **Mount William** (350 m) was adopted on 6 January 1949. There is no information available on the origin/significance of the names but they were probably named by Captain George Richards.

EAST and WEST REDONDA ISLANDS

The Redonda Islands are two islands: East and West Redonda Islands, They are separated by the narrow Waddington Channel. On West Redonda Island there are five named mountains. The three northern most are **Gloucester Mountain** (1022 m), **Mount Monk** (780+ m) and **Mount Perritt** (1048 m). Both Gloucester Mountain and Mount Monk were adopted on 5 February 1924, while Mount Perritt was adopted on

6 November 1952. To the west of Teakerne Arm Provincial Park is the inappropriately named **Nipple Summit** (867 m). It was adopted on 31 March 1924. Southeast of Teakerne Arm is **Llanover Mountain** (678 m). It was adopted on 5 February 1924. East Redonda Island is shaped like a Fu Manchu moustache with two long north/south peninsulas attached by a narrow neck of land on the north coast. On the western peninsula is **Mount Bunsen** (1265 m). It was adopted on 5 February 1924 and there is no origin/significance of the name recorded. The highest mountain, which is on the eastern peninsula, is **Mount Addenbroke** (1591 m) which is a prominent mountain that was adopted on 7 April 1925. Almost the entirety of the mountain and most of the eastern half of the island are protected as the East Redonda Ecological Reserve. The mountain has had several ascents, notably one by the coast mountain explorer John Clarke when he took his sister and some of her girlfriends up the peak in the early 1980s.



*Mount Addenbroke from Pendrell Sound.
(photo by Coastal Mountaineering)*

RAZA and RENDEZVOUS ISLANDS

Raza Island is the largest of the Rendezvous Islands. The islands are located in Calm Channel, east of the north end of Read Island. The southern of the three Rendezvous Island was established as a

Provincial Marine Park in July 1997 and encompasses 164 hectares. The highest point on Raza Island is locally known as **Raza Peak** (900+ m). It appears it was named for the island.

SONORA ISLAND

Sonora Island took its name from the Spanish schooner that explored the Pacific Northwest in 1775. The expedition consisted of two ships: the *Santiago*, commanded by Bruno de Heceta and the *Sonora* (la Señora), commanded by his second in command Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra. The island includes Thruston Bay Marine Provincial Park on the west side of the island (accessible only by sea) and a resort on the east side of the island. On the western part of the island the Canadian Coast Guard has a communication station on the summit of **Discovery Mountain** (647 m). Mount Discovery was adopted on 9 September, but the name was changed to Discovery Mountain on 2 July 1953. Both **Mount Turnbull** (694 m) and **Mount Tucker** (866 m) were adopted on 2 September 1948. It is not noted the origin /significance of Mount Turnbull, but Mount Tucker was presumably named by Captain George Richards in 1860 for Benjamin Tucker (1762-1829), secretary for many years to the Earl St. Vincent. Or it could have been named after either of Tucker's sons: John Jarvis Tucker or Jedediah Stephens Tucker (who in 1844 wrote a biography of Admiral Earl St. Vincent, compiled from his late-father's notes and papers). The highest point on the island is unnamed but locals call it **Sonora Peak** (893 m).

STUART ISLAND

Stuart Island is located at the entrance to Bute Inlet between Sonora Island and the Downie Peninsula of the mainland to

the east. The fast-flowing Yaculta Rapids separate it from Sonora Island to the west and the mainland by the even narrower Arran Rapids on the north end of the island. The now privately owned island was named for John Stuart, 3rd Earl of Bute, Prime Minister of Great Britain from 1762 to 1763. To climb the only peak on the island, accessed from Big Bay, permission should be obtained from Nanook Lodge. **Mount Muehle** (498 m) was adopted on 7 July 1955 and refers to local residents from the 1940s Will and Bertha Muehle (she was known as "the old gray mare"). It was submitted by the Hydrographic Service.

EAST and WEST THURLOW ISLANDS

The two islands were named for Edward Thurlow, 1st Baron Thurlow, Lord Chancellor of England, by Captain George Vancouver during his voyage through the Johnstone Strait in July 1792. The islands are separated from Vancouver Island by Johnstone Strait, Sonora Island to the southeast by Nodales Channel, and from each other by Mayne Passage with the narrowest part of the waterway known as Blind Channel. West Thurlow Island is separated from Hardwick Island and the B.C. mainland by Chancellor Channel which becomes Cordero Channel north of East Thurlow Island. North of West Thurlow Island the long arm of Loughborough Inlet extends into the mainland. The complex ebbs and flows are a challenge for boaters and kayakers. The islands are the traditional territory of the Kwakwaka'wakw First Nations.

The highest peak on either of the islands is on East Thurlow Island and is **Mount Brougham** (671 m). Pronounced Broom. It was adopted on 2 September 1948. It was noted that elsewhere on the coast, "Brougham" was a temporary Admiralty

mis-spelling where the name "Broughton Peaks" had been the intent (manuscript of Barclay Sound by the Officers of *HMS Hecate*, 1861. The Thurlow Islands and nearby Loughborough Inlet were named in 1792 by Captain George Vancouver, after Lord Chancellors of England, and Captain George Richards named their connecting waterway Chancellor Channel in association. It's likely Richards was continuing the theme with Mount Brougham, as Henry Peter Brougham (1778-1868), jurist and politician, was appointed Chancellor in 1830. Four kilometres to the east of Mount Brougham is **Mount Eldon** (616 m) which was adopted on 2 September 1948. Its origin/significance is not recorded. Both of these peaks are south of Mellin and Hemming Lake on the southern half of the island. There is a peak over 650 m north of Hemming Lake but it is unnamed. The highest peak on West Thurlow Island is **Solitary Mountain** (572 m) and is located in the middle of the island north of Knox Bay. It was adopted on 6 November 1952. There is no origin/significance of its name recorded. The western-most peak on the island, **Mount Vansittart** (425 m), and was adopted on 3 December 1946. It was named in 1864 by Captain George Richards, after Captain Nicholas Vansittart, who served with the Royal Navy during the Chinese war of 1840 and in the Russian war 1854-55. Three kilometres east of Mount Vansittart is **Town Hill** (337 m). It was adopted on 3 December 1946, but there is no origin/significance of its name recorded. **Knox Hill** (435 m) was adopted on 2 July. Knox Hill was named by the Canadian Hydrographic Service in association with adjacent Knox Bay, in turn after Henry Needham Knox, RN, sub-lieutenant aboard *HMS Virago* under commander Admiral James Charles Prevost (1810-1891). Knox surveyed the bay himself, 10-11 June 1853, while the boat was at anchor in the bay.

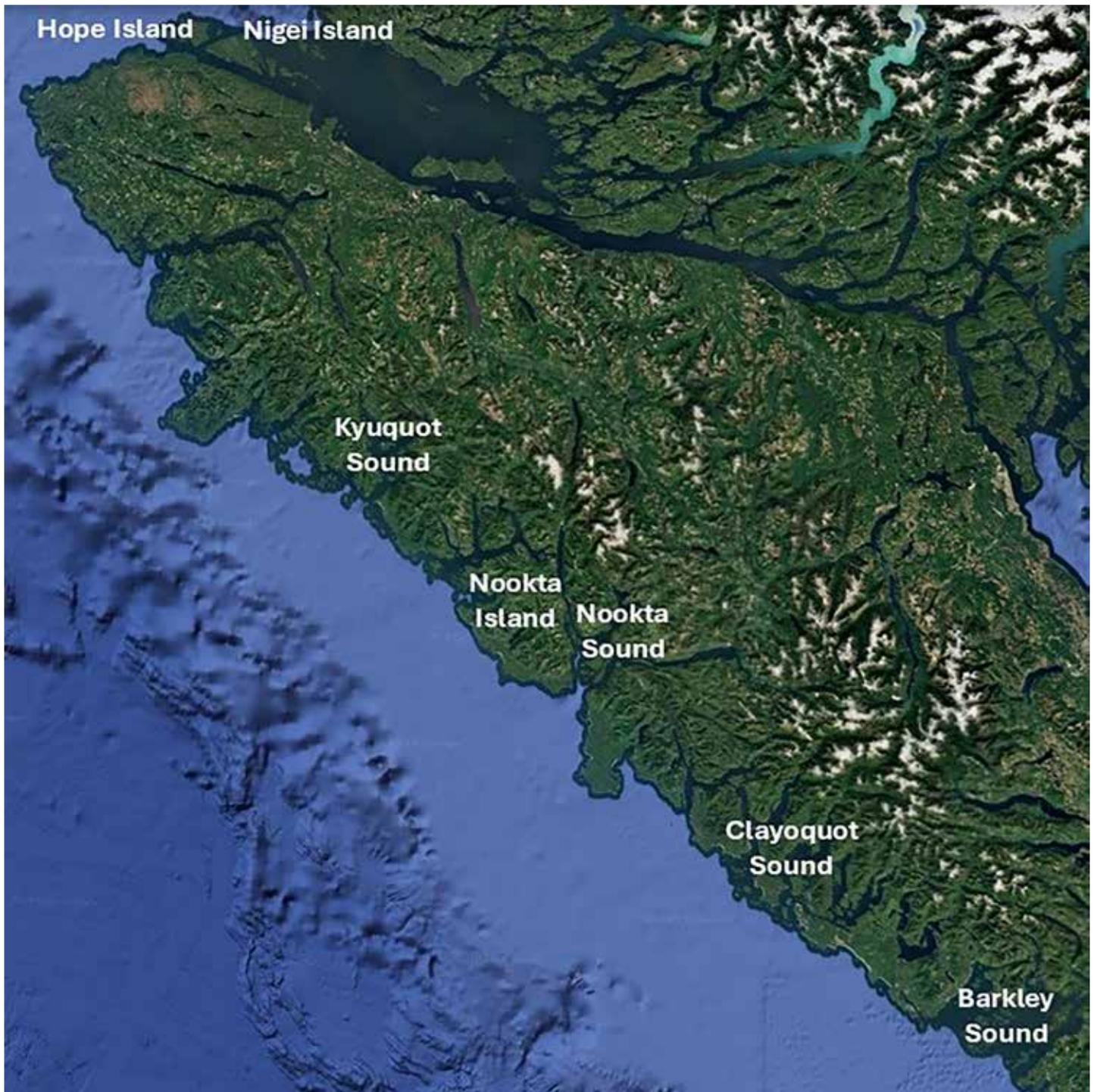
TWIN ISLANDS

Twin Islands, formerly known as the Ulloa Islands (probably named by the Spanish explorers after the cruiser *Don Antonio de Ulloa*), are two small islands southeast of Cortés Island. The southern island is about 1.5 kilometres in diameter and is separated from the slightly smaller northern island by a channel only about 60 metres wide. The north island is somewhat less rocky and more forested than the south island.

Islands and peaks on the north and west coast of Vancouver Island

Lindsay Elms

The following story covers some of the major islands, and mountains on those islands, north of the Discovery Islands on the east coast, around the north end of Vancouver Island and down the west coast passed Kyuquot Sound, Nootka Sound, Clayoquot Sound, and Barkley Sound. There are literally hundreds of islands and islets that guard the coastline of Vancouver Island, some are very small and rocky while the larger islands are covered with a lush verdant forest, some with mountains rising up to almost 1000 metres. Many of the significant hills and mountains have been officially recognized by the B.C. Geographic Names Board, but there are numerous unnamed peaks. Both Spanish and British explorers and mariners in the 18th and 19th centuries had a proclivity for naming features after monarchs, naval personnel, and associates. Rarely did they give them a descriptive name, and even rarer were they referred to by their indigenous name. It must also be noted that many of the largest islands have been named after Spanish and British naval personnel, while only a few of the smaller



Map of islands and sounds on west Vancouver Island prepared with Google Earth by Janelle Curtis.

ones have traditional indigenous names. But with that said, there are significantly more names being changed to their indigenous name or added by the B.C. Geographic Names Board to make it more respectful and inclusive.

Nigei Island (62 square kilometres/6200 hectares) is the second most northerly

island after its western neighbour Hope Island. The entirety of Hope Island is a Tlatlasikwala Indian reserve under federal Canadian law and permission must be obtained before going ashore. Hope Island was named in 1862 by Captain George Richards after Admiral Sir James Hope of the British Royal Navy. Nigei Island was previously called Galiano Island by the

Spanish explorers Dionisio Alcalá Galiano (1760-1805) and Cayetano Valdés (1767-1835). They applied the name to a 1798 chart and it was transferred to an 1864 British Admiralty Chart. The name was changed to Nigei by the Geographic Board of Canada on 30 June 1904 to avoid duplication of names, there being another Galiano Island (named by Captain Richards in 1859) in the Strait of Georgia. Nigei is the hereditary name of the principal chief of the Nahwitti tribe, a tribe which, years ago, held undisputed sway on the northern coast of Vancouver Island. However, it has also been said that Nigei could come from the Kwakwaka'wakw word for 'mountain.' The name is pronounced nee-gee, with a hard 'g'. Both Hope and Nigei Islands are separated from Vancouver Island by the Goletas Channel. Toward the western end of Nigei Island is the highest and only named mountain on the island **Mount Lemon** (370+/-m). There is no information regarding the origin of the name or any recorded ascents, but significant logging has occurred around the mountain. To the east of Nigei Island is Balaklava Island. Named in October 1863 by Captain Daniel Pender to commemorate the 9th anniversary of the Charge of the Light Brigade at Balaklava in the Crimea, on 25 October 1854. To the east of Balaklava Island are Hurst and Bell Islands which are part of God's Pocket Marine Provincial Park, and then Duncan, Heard, Gordon and Doyle Islands. God's Pocket was established in 1995 and provides some of the best underwater scuba diving on the Pacific Coast. The most remote islands off Vancouver Island are Cox, Lanx, Beresford, Sartine and Triangle Islands which are west of Cape Scott Provincial Park and are all Ecological Reserves established to protect special natural ecosystems, and support research and education. A permit is required to access the reserves.

KYUQUOT SOUND

Kyuquot Sound was adopted on 31 March 1924, as identified on an 1863 British Admiralty Chart by Captain Richards and refers to the local tribe. The Nuuchahnulth First Nations inhabitants of Kyuquot Sound originally consisted of four separate tribes, each with its own winter village. Kyuquot has been translated as "different people" or "foreign people." The name has been written many different ways in the old days including Kayuquot, Caiyuquat and Cayuquet. Today the preferred spelling is Ka:'yu:K't'h. The Ka:'yu:K't'h people amalgamated in the 1950s and 1960s with the Checleset (Che:K'tles7et'h'), who originally occupied territory farther northwest, and moved with them in the 1970s to the village of Houpsitas north of Walters Island. **Aktis Island** was initially labelled Village Island on Captain Richards 1860s charts and the village name was spelt "Aktiss" in Walbran's 1909 book *British Columbia Coast Names*. The current preferred spelling of the village name is Ak:tiis. Southwest of Arktis Island, and also part of the Misson Group of islands, is Tle:hoh (Spring) Island and to the east Kamils (the preferred spelling is Ka:milths) and Sobry Islands while northeast is **A:mak:nit Island**. It was originally adopted as Ahmacinnit Island but changed to A:mak:nit on 1 April 2011. The Mission Group guard the entrance to Kyuquot Sound but once inside are the larger islands: Union being the largest, Hohoae, and Moketas; and the smaller Amos Island (west of Union), Whiteley Island (east of Union), and Surprise Island (north of Union). There are numerous historical First Nation villages in Kyuquot Sound including those in Fair Harbour where there is road access from the east coast of Vancouver Island. Off the western extremity of M'Quw'in/Brooks Peninsula is Solander Island. It was named after Daniel

Carlsson Solander (1733-82), a Swedish botanist and student of Carolus Linnaeus who came to England in 1760 and worked at the British Museum as an assistant librarian. He accompanied naturalist Joseph Banks on Captain James Cook's first voyage of discovery, 1768-71, on *HMS Endeavour* and made an important collection of Australian plants. After returning to England, Solander worked for Banks as a secretary and librarian, and travelled with his employer to Iceland and the Faroe and Orkney Islands in 1772.

Solander Island, which is an eight-hectare ecological reserve and important breeding site for seabirds, was originally named Solander Rock in 1860 by Captain Richards. Early fur trader George Dixon called this Split Rock in 1786.

NOOTKA SOUND

Nootka Island (510 square kilometres) is the largest island on Vancouver Island's west coast. The important coastal name Nootka, which arose from a confused incident in the 1770s, is representative of the origins of many so-called First Nations names, which are, in fact, often clumsy misinterpretations, by early white visitors, of indigenous words. Captain James Cook (1728-1779) was the first European to visit Nootka Sound in 1778. He initially called it King George's Sound under the impression that Nootka was the First Nations name. It is not known precisely how this misapprehension came about. However, pioneer missionary Father Augustin Brabant, who lived for many years among these indigenous people, was one of the first to suggest that the Nuu-chah-nulth word "nootka-a," meaning "go around," is what local residents were replying when Cook attempted with a great deal of body language, to find out the name of the place. They may have been directing him

to an anchorage or safe passage, or simply responding to his gestures. And this historic site of first serious cultural exchanges in the Pacific Northwest between Europeans and Americans – a place made additionally famous by the conflict soon to ensue between British and Spanish colonizers – received its name as the result of a blunder. The Nuu-chah-nulth inhabitants of the region were for almost two centuries known officially as the Nootka. The Spanish claim to the Pacific Northwest was based on the fact that Juan Perez, in 1774, had probably been the first to see (but not land) Nootka Sound, which he named Puerto de San Lorenzo. Later Spanish explorers altered the name to Puerto de San Lorenzo de Nuca (also Noca, Nutka and Nutca). Nootka Island they named Isla de Mazarredo, after noted Spanish admiral José María de Mazarredo y Salazar (1745-1812). The main summer village of Chief Maquinna and the Mowachaht (a branch of the Nuu-chah-nulth), located at Friendly Cove on the southeast end of Nootka Island, was called Yuqout, meaning "windy place." Nootka Island was officially adopted on 31 March 1924 in association with Nootka Sound. The highest mountain on Nootka Island is **Santa Cruz du Nuca Mountain** (917 m).



*Santa Cruz du Nuca Mountain from Plumper Harbour.
(Photo by Lindsay Elms)*

It's located three kilometres inland from Plumper Harbour on the east coast. The name was adopted on 10 January 1935 as submitted by H.D. Parizeau of the Canadian Hydrographic Service to recall the name given by the Spaniards to their fort and settlement in Nootka Sound founded in 1789 and abandoned in 1795.

Six kilometres south of Santa Cruz du Nuca Mountain is the **Nootka Cone** (504m), a prominent hill located northeast of Santa Gertrudis-Boca Del Infierno Marine Provincial Park. The name was labelled on old Admiralty Charts from 1862 and proposed by the Canadian Hydrographic Services and officially adopted on 6 May 1946. It was named in association with Nootka Sound.

Although there are several other high peaks on the island over 800 metres, the second highest named peak is **Mount Rosa** (762 m). It is comprised of three summits: north (747m), southeast (744) and the highest being in the middle. The peak is located on the northwest part of the island east of Port Langford and Nuchatlitz Provincial Park. The name was adopted on 29 July 1946 as labelled on Captain Richards British Admiralty Chart from 1862. It appears it was named by Captain Francisco de Eliza who was in this area 1791, however, the origin/significance is not known. From the summit of Mount Rosa, a ridge extends east for ten kilometres that is continuously above 610 metres its whole length to an unnamed peak (856 m). Surveyors set up a triangulation station on the eastern summit in 1946 but oddly never named the peak. The ridge, however, was named the **Sophie Range** and was adopted on 29 July 1946. It was an established name listed in the 1930 Gazetteer and likely on Captain Richards 1862 British Admiralty Chart. Its origin/significance is not known but was possibly named by Captain George Vancouver after Princess Augusta Sophia, the second

daughter of King George III (1738-1820) and his wife Queen Charlotte.

Above Calvin Falls on the island's west coast is **Bight Cone** (172 m). It was adopted 16 June 1946 from Captain Richards 1862 British Admiralty Chart. **Mark Hill** (225+/- m) was adopted 16 May 1946, from the same above information, and is located between Laurie Creek and Inner Basin which are part of the inner Nuchatlitz Inlet. There is no information on the origin of both names. On a small rise on the north side of Owossitsa Lake northeast of Port Langford is the smallest named peak **Newton Hill** (160+/- m). It was originally identified at Christmas Hill on early Admiralty Charts but changed to Newton Hill by the Canadian Hydrographic Service to avoid duplication. The name was adopted on 29 July 1946 and named after the Newton brothers, farmers in this area. A popular hiking trail on the island's west coast is the Nootka Trail. Most parties float plane into Laurie Bay at the north end of the island and then hike down the coastline to Yuquot (Friendly Cove) where the *MV Uchuck III* picks up hikers and takes them back to Gold River.

The lone peak on **Strange Island** is **James Cone** (309m). Strange Island is located between Kendrick Inlet and Tahsis Inlet which separates Nootka Island from Vancouver Island. The name was adopted 10 January 1935 as recommended by H.D. Parizeau of the Canadian Hydrographic Service. It was identified on early British Admiralty Charts as Conspicuous Cone. Strange Island was originally known as Narrow Island, but re-named on 6 November 1934, also by H.D. Parizeau, after James Charles Stuart Strange (1753-1840), the East India Company officer in charge of the fur trading expedition to this coast in 1786. There are two other significant islands in Nootka Sound: **Bligh Island** and **Gore Island** but there are no named peaks on them.

Bligh Island is where Captain Cook anchored for a month in 1778 to refit his vessels the *HMS Resolution* and *HMS Discovery*. Bligh Island was named in 1862 by Captain Richards after Vice-Admiral William Bligh (1754-1817), who was the master of the *HMS Resolution* on Captain Cook's third voyage. The southern half of the island is protected by Bligh Island Marine Provincial Park. It was established in 1995 and contains 4456 hectares. **Gore Island** was also named by Captain Richards after John Gore (1730-1790), a native of Virginia, had joined the Royal Navy as a midshipman. He was a junior officer on Captain Cook's first voyage in 1768, and served again as a 1st Lieutenant on *HMS Resolution* on Cook's third voyage in 1776. He was thus present in Nootka Sound in 1778. Captain Richards also named a peak (Mount Gore) on Vancouver Island south of Gore Island.

CLAYOQUOT SOUND

The name Clayoquot Sound is derived from the tribe residing in the area, but early traders spelt it in various ways: Clioquatt, Clayocuat, Klaoquat and Klahoquaht. In 1787, Captain Charles Barkley named it Wickaninnish's Sound, from the hereditary name of the principal chief residing there. The name Clayoquot is derived from "Tla-o" or "Cla-o" meaning another, or different; "aht" means people or village, hence "Cla-o-quaht" means people different from what they used to be. There is a tradition to the effect that the inhabitants were originally quiet and peaceful, but later they became quarrelsome and treacherous; hence they were called by their neighbours Cla-o-quaht. However, there has been a remarkable range of translations of the name. Gilbert Sproat (a Scottish born Canadian businessman 1834-1913) said that it meant "another people," while Dr. Robert Brown (a Scotsman who led the Vancouver

Island Exploring Expedition in 1864) thought that it meant "other or strange house." John Tl'ishal Thomas, a native speaker of Nitinaht (Ditidaht) who collaborated with several linguists, says that it means "people of the place where it becomes the same even when disturbed." It is another example of the difficulty of interpreting an indigenous name. Clayoquot was officially adopted on 30 June 1911 as labelled on numerous charts from 1791 onwards. The largest island in Clayoquot Sound, and the second largest on the west coast of Vancouver Island after Nootka Island, is **Flores Island** (143 square kilometres). It was named in 1791 by Captain Francisco de Eliza after Don Manuel Antonio Flores (1787-1789), Knight of the Order of Calatrava, and the 51st Viceroy of Mexico. Subsequently, the highest point on Flores Island was named Flores Mountain and adopted on 13 July 1946, but the name was changed to **Mount Flores** (886 m) on 7 April 1949. The peak has seen a few ascents from the west end of Cow Bay, the last bay on the Wild Side Trail. A trapper's line cuts through to another bay to a trailhead on the west side of a creek where a poorly flagged route leads into the forest and swamp towards the peak but is easily lost. An easier objective from the trailhead is a small hill west of Cow Bay called **Rafael Cone** (180+/- m). There



*An oil painting of Cow Bay and Mount Flores
by Mike Knippel.*

is no trail and no information on the origin of the name. The only other named peak on the island is **Steamer Mountain** (790 m). It is one and a half kilometres east of Steamer Cove on the northeast coast of the island. Again, there is no information available on the name or when it was adopted. Most of the west side of the island is protected by the Flores Island Provincial Marine Park. It was established in 1995 and contains approximately 7113 hectares.

Meares Island (85 square kilometres) was named by Captain Richards after Lieutenant John Meares. John Meares (c. 1756–1809) was an English navigator, explorer, and maritime fur trader. In 1788/89, Meares concealed his two ships by illegally flying the Portuguese flag as he sailed into Nootka Sound, as he didn't have a license to trade. At the same time, Lieutenant James Colnett (c. 1753–1806), who had served under Captain James Cook during Cook's second voyage of exploration, was there on his first visit. Colnett had a license for his two ships to trade. Colnett and Meares decided to form a joint venture under the protection of Colnett's license. On Colnett's second visit in 1789, he returned in command of the *Argonaut*, a vessel he had purchased in Macao, and the *Princess Royal*. The goal was not just to send vessels to the Northwest Coast but to also set up a permanent trading post at Nootka Sound. Meares had claimed to purchase land in Nootka Sound from Chief Maquinna so the post could be built on Meares's land. Upon entering Nootka Sound, Colnett saw Esteban José Martínez (1742–1798), a Spanish naval officer and key figure in the Spanish exploration of the Pacific Northwest, perform an elaborate ceremony of possession at Nootka and soon after the two fought a brawl and Colnett and his two vessels were seized by the Spaniard and sent to San Blas in Mexico, thus sparking the Nootka Crisis. Before the crisis, Spain had long held that all foreign sailors in the Pacific

Ocean were to be treated as enemies. Spanish claim came from the extension of Russian fur trading activity from Siberia and Alaska during the middle and later parts of the 18th century. Spain reacted by not only expanding the foothold already gained in Alto California but also by launching a series of exploration and reconnaissance voyages from San Blas, Mexico, to Alaska. The British government resented strongly the action of the Spanish authorities. In 1790, bowing to pressure from the British, Spain capitulated and agreed to sign the Nootka Convention, ending the Nootka Crisis and beginning the Spanish withdrawal from the Pacific Northwest. Three separate Nootka Conventions were signed and it took over five years to resolve the many outstanding problems. Among other things, Spain agreed to restore the captured ships to their owners and pay them an indemnity. Spain finally abandoned its claims to the Pacific Northwest in 1795. Under the Nootka Convention, Britain and Spain agreed not to establish any permanent base at Nootka Sound, but ships from either nation could visit. The two nations also agreed to prevent any other nation from establishing sovereignty. Although Meares Island is nowhere near the land Meares supposedly purchased from Chief Maquinna, it later played a significant role on the west coast. In 1984, the Tla-o-qui-aht and Ahousaht First Nations declared Meares Island as Canada's first 'Tribal Park' in a bid to stop logging plans of its old growth forest. The forests of Clayoquot Sound became world famous as the battlegrounds of the decades-long "war in the woods"— and now, a vast swath of the rich old-growth trees is permanently protected. In the middle of Meares Island is the highest peak **Mount Colnett** (802 m). Captain Richards named it in 1861 and it was officially adopted 3 April 1934. However, the most conspicuous peak on Meares Island is the cone-shaped **Lone Cone** (742 m).

Lone Cone, on the north end of Meares Island, has always been a prominent landmark for inhabitants of Tofino. There is no information available on the B.C. Geographical Names Board website about when the peak was adopted or its origin, but it is obviously a descriptive name. Early pioneers believed that if there were clouds blocking the summit then there would be good weather approaching. Today Lone Cone is a popular hike. The views from the top on a clear day are nothing short of spectacular. However, the hike is strenuous as the trail climbs more than 700 metres in just over 1.5 kilometres. To get to the start of the trail at the small dock at Kakawis on the west side of the island, it is necessary to hire a water taxi. The trip takes about 15 minutes. From the dock, walk up the gravel road and follow it for roughly one kilometre. There is a sign that points left to go to Lone Cone. The path soon begins to narrow into a trail and from here it's all uphill where it becomes more rugged and slippery. At one point there is a rope to pull yourself back up to the trail and a huge fallen cedar to walk under. As there are very few switchbacks the trail feels as though it goes straight up the mountain. Eventually the summit is reached and from a rocky outcrop the vistas unfold below.



Pat Leach and Karen George walking under a fallen cedar on the Lone Cone trail. (Photo by Valerie Wootton)

The only other named peak on Meares Island is **Sea Peak** (386 m). It was adopted on 7 January 1947 as labelled on the 1861 British Admiralty Chart and a Canadian Hydrographic Chart c. 1933. There is no information on the origin of the name. Although there are many other islands in Clayoquot Sound, none of them have any named peaks on them including **Vargas Island** (22.4 square kilometres). Vargas Island is the third largest island in the sound and its highest point is an unnamed knoll on the northeast coast (170 m). The west half of Vargas Island, including **Blunden Island**, is protected by the Vargas Island Provincial Park. It was established in 1995 and encompassed 5788 hectares, but it was changed in 2004 to 5805 hectares. Blunden Island was named 1861 by Captain Richards in 1861, after Edward Raynor Blunden, RN, master's assistant aboard *HMS Hecate*.

BARCKLEY SOUND

Barkley Sound was adopted on 30 June 1904, although mis-spelt on Captain Richards Admiralty Charts in the 1860s as Barclay Sound. The first European to discover the sound was Captain Charles William Barkley (1759-1832) in 1787. Barkley



Lone Cone. (Photo by Valerie Wootton)

was the captain of the British trading ship *Imperial Eagle*. When the *Imperial Eagle* sailed from the Thames in 1786, Barkley's wife Frances courageously accompanied her husband on the voyage to Nootka Sound where they stayed for a month acquiring prime sea otter pelts. Frances was the first white woman to see the Northwest coast of America. In her reminiscences Frances Barkley wrote: "this part of the coast proved a rich harvest of furs. Likewise, another very large sound to which Captain Barkley gave his own name, calling it Barkley's Sound." The sound was shown on Francisco de Eliza's chart of 1791 under the name "Archiepelago de Nitinat o Carrasco". The largest island in Barkley Sound is **Tzartus Island**. It was adopted on 13 August 1945, but various spellings appear on old maps including Tsartoos, Tzartoos and Tzaartoos. The island was known as Copper Island for many years, as indicated on an 1863 British Admiralty Chart based on a survey by Captain Richards. William Banfield, the government agent in the area before 1862, considered a hill on the island to be "one solid mass of copper ore," but early efforts to develop the resource proved disappointing. George Clutesi, a member of the Tseshaht First Nation, translated this Nuuchah-nulth name as "place of seasonal or intermittent waterfall" in 1960. Captain William Spring established a pioneer trading post on Tzartus in the 1860s and 1870s. The Huu-ay-aht First Nation reserve on the island, called Nuchaquis, was once used as a base for harvesting dogfish. Tzartus Island is part of the Deer Group which also consists of Fleming Island, Sandford Island, Helby Island, Diana Island, Seppings Island, Haines Island, Edward King Island, Folger Island, and numerous islets. The highest point on Tzartus Island is almost 300 metres but does not have a designated name. To the west of the Deer Group is a multitude of islands known as the

Broken Group which is designated part of Pacific Rim National Park. It is a popular sea-kayaking destination with marine campsites.

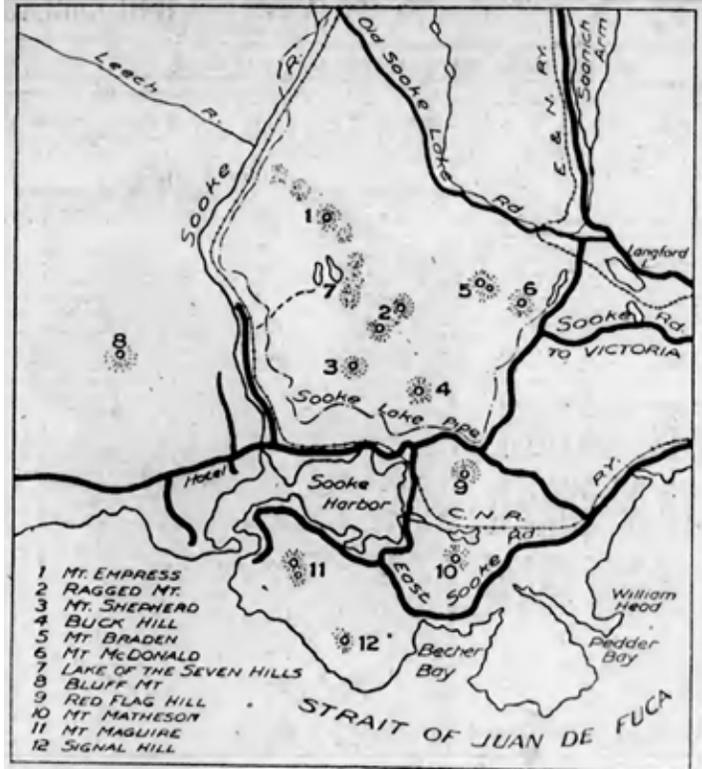
A Brief History of the Sooke Hills

Lindsay Elms

For one hundred years members of the Vancouver Island section of the Alpine Club of Canada (ACCVI) have been visiting the Sooke Hills. There doesn't appear to be a fixed date of their first visit, but prospectors were the first Europeans to enter the wilderness area and Indigenous people have been residing in the region since time immemorial. In 1864, gold was discovered in Leechtown in the hills past the Sooke Potholes and a town quickly sprang up. Placer miners hoping to strike it rich scoured the hills surround the Sooke River and probably climbed the highest mountains to get a view of the surrounding district. There are no recorded first ascents of the mountains, and it is immaterial, but the ACC started recording trips to the mountains in the Victoria newspapers in the 1920s. Their members were the first to bring attention to the public of the beauty the hills had to offer.

The first recorded trip to Mount Braden was a "community climb" under the auspices of the ACC on 5 April 1924. George Winkler was named by the club executive as the trip leader and received assurances that members of the ACC, the Natural History Society, the Teachers Association, and the Vancouver Island Prospector's Association would attend. All the general public needed was the 55 cents for the round trip to Goldstream Station on the railway, a lunch, and old clothes and comfortable boots. Reverend Robert Connell consented to give an address on the summit on geological,

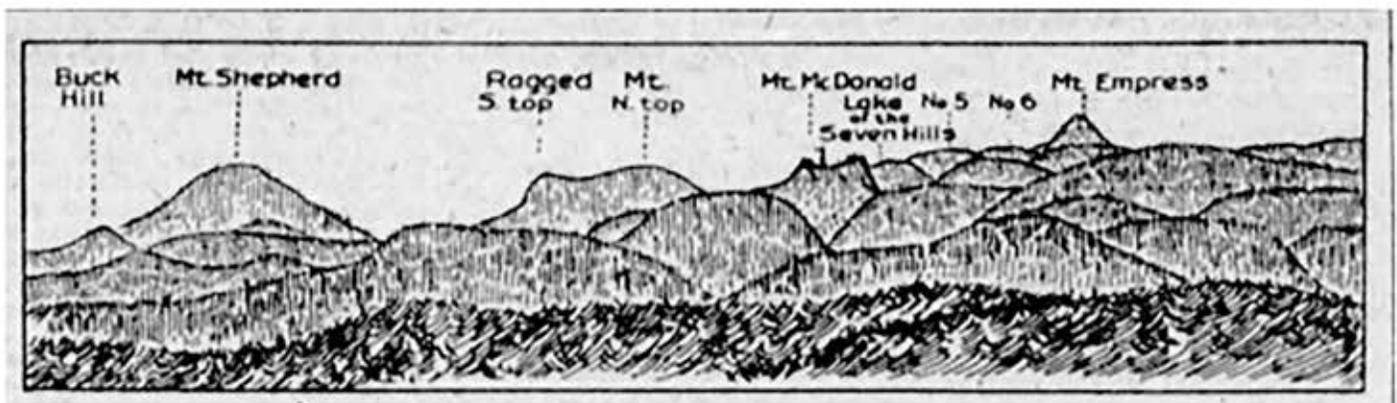
geographical, historical, and other features. At the conclusion of the community climb, the ACC decided to make the outing an annual affair. A month later (3 May) George Winkler led a trip of twenty-five members and guests on a climb to the summit of Mount Finlayson at the head of the Saanich Inlet. In 1927, the club led trips to Cattle Hill (18 June) and Mount Maguire (27 August), and on 8 October there was the first recorded club trip to Mount McDonald. A party of seventeen members and guest scaled the mountain under the guidance of Claude Harrison. Harrison wrote: "The ascent of the mountain was made up the southeast face, which offers some interesting rock work." Although hindered by a few showers of rain before the top was reached: "the weather on the whole was ideal so far as physical exercise was concerned, and even when the summit was attained the clouds and mist had considerably lifted so that an impressive panorama was viewed." Plans were made for the following spring to lead a trip to the highest peak, Empress Mountain. Unfortunately, no account of that trip has been found, but during the ACC summer camp (30 June – 9 July 1930) at the Lake of the Seven Hills, a sub-camp was established on Empress Mountain for members to further explore the district. "On the Monday evening the first party was installed at the Empress Mountain sub-camp. This first night's party included Phyllis Pendray, E.



Hand drawing of the Sooke Hills from the 1930s. (Artist unknown)

Lougheed, Margaret Watson, Kenneth Chadwick and Ludowick Bosch, the leader of the party. On Thursday evening a fourth party went out to Empress Mountain camp including the outings' convenor Claude Harrison. Toward midnight there was a fine display of northern lights, visible for about an hour."

More trips were put on the ACC schedule for 1928, including several day trips and two overnight exploratory trips to Leach River district. Climbs were made of Buck



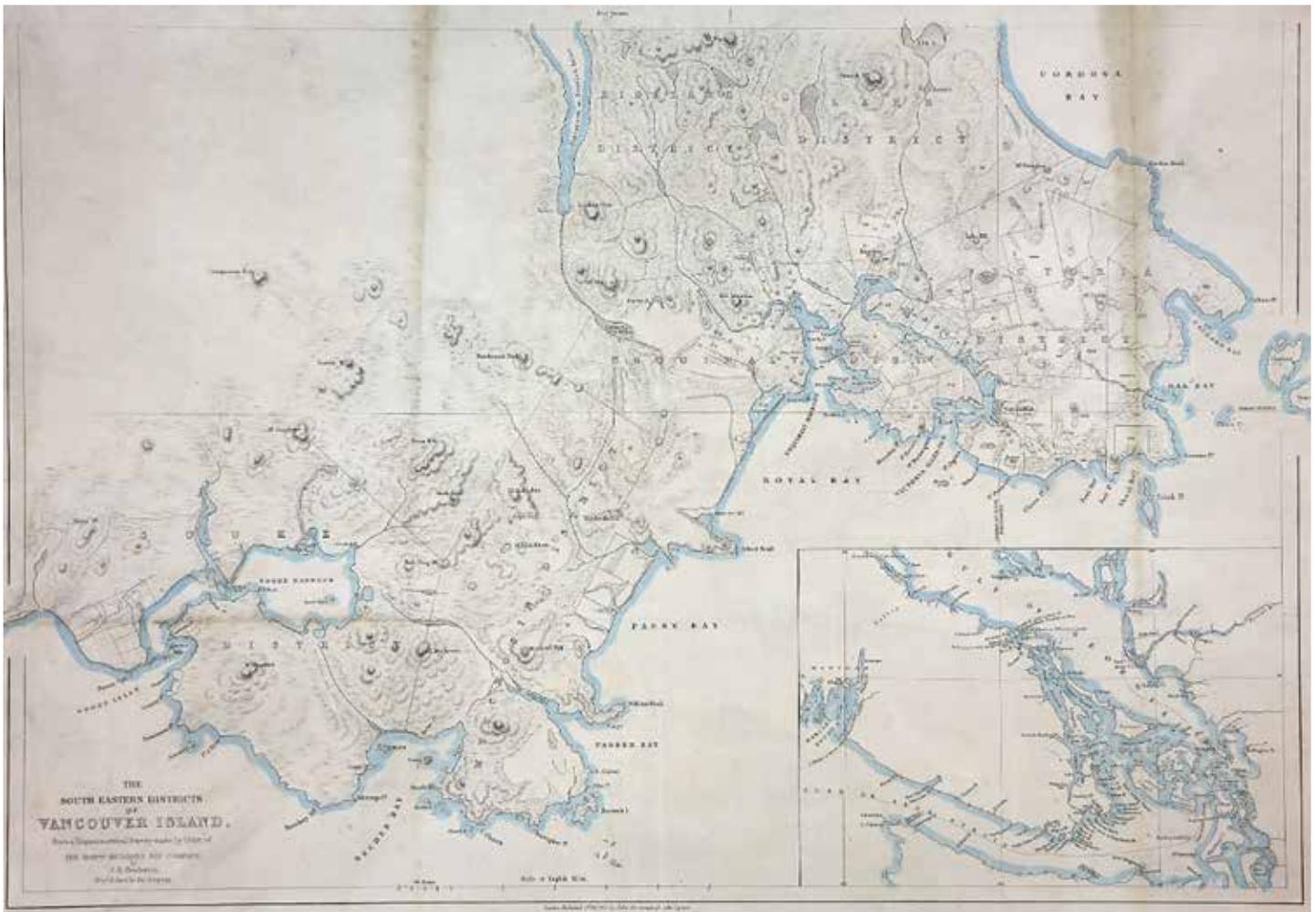
Hand drawing of the Sooke Hills from the 1930s. (Artist unknown)

Hill, Mount Matheson, Mount Braden, Mount Finlayson and Bear Hill. On 9 June the club held a meeting at the Belvedere Hotel to discuss purchasing 149 acres in the Sooke Hills. Claude Harrison joined the ACC in the late 1920's and became active on the section's executive becoming its outings convenor and elected chairman in 1933. He was enthralled with the Sooke Hills leading numerous trips into the wilderness region on Victoria's doorstep. In *The Daily Colonist* 20 November 1928, page 6, there was an announcement by the Victoria City Council to endorse a project, proposed by Claude Harrison and Harry Kinsman after viewing lantern slides, to make the Leech River district a national park. This would expand the already existing Sooke Mountain Provincial Park established on 6 June 1928. "Mr. Harrison explained that the Leech River district was a beautiful and historic district of some 66,000 acres, connecting with the Sooke Lake watershed, which in turn, connected with the Goldstream watershed which ran down to the head of the Saanich Inlet, taking in Malahat Mountain. There was a strip of land between the Leech River district and the West Coast, which was owned by the Crown, and it was proposed to also have this strip set aside as a park which would stretch from the west coast of Vancouver Island to the east coast. There would come a time, Mr. Harrison stated, when the city would find it necessary to increase its water supply. This could be done by diverting water from Leech River district into the Sooke Lake system, without spoiling the scenic beauty of the park." A few days after the meeting Claude Harrison and Gordon Cameron led a club expedition to Sheild's and Grass Lakes in the Sooke Hills, to inspect the site of the proposed club hut. This site became known as the Lake of the Seven Hills.

Construction of the hut commenced in 1931 and it was officially opened in June 1932.

Claude Harrison wrote in *The Canadian Alpine Journal* Vol. 21, 1932: "The section itself being unable to finance such a project, several members decided that they themselves would do so on their own account, as an investment, giving to the section a lease from year to year, the chief terms being that the section should pay the taxes, keep the property, and maintain a membership of a certain strength. A good site was found in the Sooke district. It was selected not only because the district is connected with Victoria by a good road, but because it seemed very suitable for the purpose. A total area of about 180 acres was purchased. The area included practically the whole of the lake now officially known as the "Lake of the Seven Hills" the small remaining portion of the lake being in the Provincial Park known as the Sooke Mountain Park. The hut is a structure of some size, being two storeys in height and having, under the same roof, a kitchen and store-room. It stands within 200 feet of the lake on a solid rock foundation." The hut was razed by fire on New Year's night 1933 and rebuilt in 1934. It survived for a number of years until it was again destroyed by fire in the 1960's and was never rebuilt. But, both with and without the hut, members of the ACC have continued to visit and explore the Sooke Hills right up to the present day.

Prior to 1934, only a couple of dozen mountains or hills were officially named in the Sooke and surrounding district (I have defined the area as lying between the Sooke River, Langford and Metchosin), and only a few have been added since 1980. Following are details of the officially named mountains and hills documented by the B.C. Geographical Names Office. All of these are recognized by the ACC and local hiking enthusiasts, and have been included on many hiking schedules.



Hand drawing of the Sooke Hills from the 1930s. (Artist unknown)

Ragged Mountain – was adopted on 3 February 1911. It was originally labelled as “Saddle Mountain” on Joseph Pemberton’s 1855 map “South Eastern District of Vancouver Island.”

Garibaldi Hill – was adopted in 1911. Named after the Italian patriot and soldier Guiseppe Garibaldi (1807-1882), who had unified Italy by patriating Sicily and Naples in 1860. The reason for this name is unknown.

Metchosin Mountain – was adopted on 14 March 1911 as labelled on Pemberton’s 1855 map. The future Sir James Douglas, when he visited the area in 1842 to choose the site for Fort Victoria, mentioned Metchosin. The origin of the name is said to date back to the time when a dead whale was cast up on a local beach, causing the local First Nations people to refer to the area as

“Smets-Shosin”, meaning “place of stinking fish” or “place smelling of fish oil.” The present spelling of Metchosin is recorded by James Douglas in 1842, but it has been spelt variously over the years as mechonsan, metchoosen, and metchosin.

Mount Braden – was adopted on 2 May 1911 as an established local name. In an article from *The Daily Colonist* Sunday March 30, 1924, page 2, the origin of the name was explained. “It is named after John Braden, a Victoria pioneer and former member of the Provincial Parliament. He was in the habit of going on numerous hunting expeditions into the hills west of Victoria, and as the territory usually covered began to be hunted out, he resolved to go to new fields. So it happened that John Braden made trips alone and without disclosing the route he followed, and invariably came out with a deer. His

friends and others were curious as to this new Eldorado of the hunter, and attempts were made to follow him, but he used to go out from the city during the night and pursue his way into the woods to his chosen spot while the pall of darkness still hung upon the earth, with the result that he kept his secret for some time. At last, however, it was given away when he took a party of friends in and one of them was sighted by a rival aggregation. The mountain, which has yielded up so many fine deer to John Braden's unerring rifle, and which became very popular once its value as a hunting ground was learned, was named Mount Braden after the man who made use of it."

Redflag Mountain – was adopted as Red Flag Mountain on 2 May 1911, as labelled on Pemberton's 1855 map. The form of the name was changed to Redflag Mountain on 30 June 1911.

Mount Matheson – was adopted on 2 May 1911 as labelled on Pemberton's 1855 map. The origin and significance is not known although Captain Henry Kellett named many neighbouring features in 1846 including Roche Cove after his midshipman Richard Roche (Ne-qua'-chausem is the Indigenous name for the cove).

Buck Hill - was adopted on 2 May 1911 as labelled on Pemberton's 1855 map, and on British Admiralty Chart 2689, 1859 *et seq.*

Mount Blinkhorn – was adopted on 2 May 1911, as a long-established local name although mis-spelt "Mount Blinckhorn" on Pemberton's 1855 map. Named for the first settler, Thomas Blinkhorn, the first farmer of Bilston Farm, that would later belong to the Witty family. Thomas Blinkhorn and his wife Anne, came out from England on the barque *Tory*, in 1851, as free and independent settlers (ie. not servants of the Hudson's Bay Company or HBC). In March 1853, Blinkhorn was appointed by Douglas as Magistrate and Justice of the Peace for the "District of

Metchosin and twenty miles around."

Empress Mountain – this mountain had the initial notation on Pemberton's 1855 map as 'Conspicuous Peak' but it was deemed to be a descriptive label, rather than a proper name. Empress Mountain was officially adopted on 26 June 1911.

Mount McDonald – was adopted on 30 June 1911. It was labelled Macdonald Peak on Pemberton's 1855 map. The origin of the name is unknown, but the intended namesake might possibly be William John Macdonald? Macdonald arrived on this coast in 1851, had charge of the local militia, and retired from HBC service in 1858. Macdonald was a member of the Legislative Assembly of Vancouver Island for Sooke, and following the union of the Vancouver Island colony and British Columbia in 1867, was a member of the Legislative Council at New Westminster. The following year he was one of the members instrumental in transferring the capital of the province from the mainland to the island. He was appointed to the Senate in 1871.

Mount Manuel Quimper - this mountain was originally named Mount Shepherd and the name was adopted on 30 July 1911, as labelled on Pemberton's 1855 map. When Sooke Harbour and basin were first surveyed by Captain Henry Kellett in the Royal Navy's *HMS Herald* in 1846, the captain named many geographical features for crew members on his vessel. Billings Spit, for instance was named for a ship's officer, while the 1,800-foot elevation peak seen rising over the northeastern end of the basin was named for a seaman named Shepherd. The name was changed to Mount Manuel Quimper on 12 December 1939. George Aitken, B.C.'s chief geographer, and Claude Harrison, Victoria's city prosecutor and chairman of the ACC, advocated for the name change as they wanted to see the mountain given a Spanish name to

commemorate Spain's time on the coast in 1790. It was named after Sub-lieutenant Manuel Quimper who was in command of the *Princesa Real*. He was instructed by Lieutenant Francisco de Eliza, commandant at Nootka, to explore the Strait of Juan de Fuca. There is a report that the traditional name for Mount Manuel Quimper is Ai'aitch.

Montreal Hill – was adopted as "Montreal Hill" in 1930. The form of name changed to "Montreal Hill" on 6 November 1934 as labelled on Pemberton's 1855 map. The significance of the name is not known.

Iron Mine Hill – was adopted on 1 May 1934. This was an established local name.

Mount Helmcken – was adopted on 12 June 1934, as labelled on Pemberton's 1855 map. Named after Dr. John Helmcken a surgeon for the Hudson's Bay Company. He was a vocal opponent of the province's entry into Confederation but favoured annexation to the United States.

Mary Hill – was adopted on 12 June 1934. Labelled "Mary Peak" on an admiralty map from Captain Henry Kellets' 1846 survey.

South Rise Hill – was adopted on 12 June 1934, as labelled on British Admiralty chart #1906, 1878 *et seq.*

Miles Hill – was adopted on 12 June 1934; not "Mile Mountain" as labelled on British Admiralty Chart #1906, 1878 *et seq.*

Church Hill – was adopted on 12 June 1934, as labelled on British Admiralty Chart #1906, 1878 *et seq.* Named in 1846 by Captain Henry Kellett, after Lieutenant William Harvey Church, Royal Navy, a surveying officer.

Babbington Hill – was initially adopted 12 June 1934 as Signal Hill from the National Defense Sheet 415b, as identified in the reports of the International Boundary Commission 1892 and 1909, and as labelled on Geological Survey maps of Sooke from

1914. The name was applied to the minor summit (230m) where a triangulation station was situated south of the highest point (238m). To avoid confusion with another Signal Hill at Esquimalt, the name was changed to Babbington Hill on 6 November 1934, as recommended by Hydrographic Service and as identified on British Admiralty Chart #1906, 1878 *et seq.* The application was altered on 12 June 1969 and the name applied to the main summit instead of the minor summit. Although there is no information of the origin of the name Babbington in the Geographical Names files, it's possible it could be named after Captain Hume Blackley Babington (1871-1934). Babington came from Liverpool with his family at an early age and like his father he became a master mariner serving the B.C. coast with his tug-boat *Lois*. About 1922 he moved to Brentwood Bay and operated a boathouse and repair shop until he passed away on 22 October 1934 (obituary in *The Province* Tuesday October 23, 1934, p.18.). In *British Columbia Place Names*, G.P.V. and Helen B. Akrigg write that Lois Lake was named for Captain Babbington of the tug *Lois*. After Babbington had obligingly transported some surveyors from Texada Island to Stillwater, they offered to name some geographic feature after him (date unknown). Babbington vehemently refused, so they named the lake after his tug boat.

Centre Mountain – adopted on 6 November 1934 on the Department of National Defense sheet, Victoria, as labelled on the 1858 map "Metchosin District Official Map". Feature is compiled but not named on Pemberton's 1855 map, showing the Hudson Bay Company's first triangulation survey; this feature is about equidistant from HBC triangulation stations established on Skirt Mountain and Redflag Mountain.

Mount Wells – Wells Mountain was adopted on 6 November 1934, but the name changed to "Mount Wells" occurred 2 March 1950

as originally labelled on Metchosin District Official Plan 35T1 in 1858. Its origin is unknown.

Sugarloaf – was adopted on 3 November 1980, as submitted by the Outdoor Club of Victoria. So named earlier in 1980 by one Francis Chisholm.

Mount Ash - was adopted on 3 February 1988. It was named after Dr. John Ash (1821-1886), pioneer settler and original owner of the area now known as Matheson Lake Regional Park (157 hectares). John Ash pre-empted a piece of land in 1863 east of Sooke Harbour and purchased an additional 1000 acres of adjacent lands. Some of which has now become part of the Roche Cove Regional Park and Matheson Lake Regional Park.

https://www.crd.bc.ca/docs/default-source/crd-document-library/maps/parks-trails/rp_ml_website.pdf?sfvrsn=9afe89c9_10

Camas Hill – was adopted on 2 April 1988 as submitted by Arthur Guppy. It was so named because of the abundance of wildflowers including camas.

Single Hill – no date or origin given when the name was adopted but it was labelled on Pemberton's 1855 map. Located north of Mount Blinkhorn and south of Mount Helmcken.

Mount Maguire – unknown adopted date. Named after Lieutenant Rochfort Maguire (1815-1867). He was an Irish Navy Officer who served on the surveying vessel *HMS Herald* 1845-1851 under Captain Henry Kellett, and captain of the *HMS Plover* from 1852-1853 during the Franklin search expedition.

In recent years local hikers and hiking groups have been naming every hill, bump, and boulder in the Sooke Hills. Sometimes naming them for themselves, or their friends or deceased friends. Some are named because of the colour of the rock, its vague

resemblance to an animal, or plants found nearby: White Rock, Elephant Hill, Larkspur North and South, Tony's Triumph, David's Delight, Rick Peak, Mike Hill, John Stick Peak (to further confuse matters this peak is also referred to as John Peak or Stick Bump), Malcolm Mountain, Pleasant Peak, Mary's Peak, West Clapper, East Clapper and many more. Some groups talk about traversing all the 'Amigos.'

In 2020, a local hiker/mountaineer compiled a spreadsheet of every named peak north of Sooke Road and east of the Sooke River from the Gaia GPS mapping software. This app is downloaded onto cell phones and has pre-loaded trails and waypoints used by hikers and outdoor adventurers to navigate. It has simplified navigation by taking out the challenge of understanding maps and compasses, once commonly carried by those in the outdoors. The list includes 47 of the highest peaks in the Sooke Hills and is similar to that of the Munros in Scotland. The Munros contain 282 peaks which when someone climbs or 'bags' all of them they become known by the archaic form as a 'compleater.' This Sooke Hills list has sparked an interest among some outdoor enthusiasts and has become a worthy challenge to complete. The only difference is the Munros have been sanctioned by the Scottish Mountaineering Club (SMC) and they recognize all the names. The SMC records compleaters when they submit notification. Many of the names in the Sooke Hills have become common place on online maps, forums, blogs, and websites. However, there are no references pointing out that these names are not official, or whether the names have been submitted to the B.C. Geographical Names Office using the forms found online that outline their policy and procedures. More concerning is whether those naming the peaks have contacted the T'Sou-ke First Nation whose traditional territory includes the Sooke Hills, to confer

with them before naming the features. Maybe they have historical names for many of the peaks.

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/our-history/historic-places/documents/heritage/geog_naming_policy_2017.pdf

The above pdf file link outlines who is responsible for geographic names, geographic naming principles and general name standards in B.C., approving names for unnamed features, use of personal names, investigation of geographical names proposal, the notice of decision, and finally where to submit the application. A major reason for this is to ensure consistency. Only official place names are used on B.C. Lands maps (topographical maps) and in government publications. Although unofficial names may be annotated in publications, there is no assurance that they will be adopted into the official geographical names record. The person or group submitting an application has to gather comments on the suitability and probable degree of acceptance and usage of the proposed name from persons familiar with the area, and will include comments from some of the following groups: local and regional government personnel, Indian Band Councils, Tribal Chiefs, local historians and historical societies, outdoors club members, park superintendents and staff, forestry recreation officers, conservation officer staff, and local search and rescue personnel. The process has evolved throughout the years and is now more controlled and regulated. It requires more diligence by the person or group seeking to have a geographical feature named or re-named.

Reconciliation with the First Nations of Canada and acknowledging their presence long before Europeans arrived has become increasingly important. Greater Victoria lies within the Capital Regional District (CRD),

a federation comprising the following incorporated areas: the cities of Victoria, Colwood and Langford; the towns of Sidney and View Royal; and the municipalities of Saanich, Oak Bay, Esquimalt, Central Saanich, North Saanich, Sooke, Metchosin and Highlands. Greater Victoria is located on the traditional lands of Indigenous peoples who share a Coast Salish culture and language.

The Sooke Hills are divided into several areas operating independently. In the centre of the district is Sooke Mountain Provincial Park, a Class B provincial park. It was established in 1928 to protect wildlife, wilderness and scenic values close to Victoria. Currently, negotiations between Canada, B.C. and the Te'mexw Treaty Association (TTA) are coming to a close. If concluded, treaties will be implemented on Southern Vancouver Island for Beecher Bay (Scia'new), Malahat, Songhees, Snaw-Naw-As (Nanoose) and T'Sou-ke Nations. Sooke Mountain Provincial Park is being considered to become public Treaty Lands as part of the T'Sou-ke Treaty, subject to a successful conclusion of the treaty negotiations, and ratification by all parties. TTA and B.C. have a shared interest in maintaining public access and continued recreational opportunities to the park while protecting the ecological and conservation values.

<https://engage.gov.bc.ca/govtogetherbc/engagement/temexw-treaty-negotiations>

The T'Sou-ke First Nation is located 36 kilometres west of Victoria, near the municipality of Sooke. In the Nation's dialect, 'T'Sou-ke' is the name of the stickleback fish that lives in the estuary of the river. Contact with Europeans through the Hudson's Bay Company saw the name changed first to 'Soke' and then to 'Sooke.' The anglicized version is now common and is used for many things including the name of the neighbouring town, the river and basin, and the main road.

Surrounding the provincial park are several CRD regional parks. To the east is the Sooke Hills Wilderness Regional Park. At 4090 hectares, it is the largest park in the region and provides a buffer to Greater Victoria Waters Supply Catchment and includes Mount Braden. The Sooke Hills Wilderness trail within the park is part of the Trans Canada Trail route. This park consists of two separate areas located on either side of the Goldstream catchment. The northern section opened in 2017, and the south section in late 2020. The second park area is the Sea to Sea Regional Park which encompasses almost 4000 hectares. This parkland is part of the Sea to Sea Green Blue Belt, a corridor of protected green space linking Saanich Inlet in the east to Juan de Fuca Strait in the west. The highest peak in the lake section (north of Sooke Mountain Provincial Park) is Empress Mountain and within its boundaries are Peden, Crabapple, Grass and Sheild Lakes, while Mount Manuel Quimper is the highest in the southern section (south of Sooke Mountain Provincial Park) and includes the unofficial Mount Brule. Both regional parks have numerous trails for hikers.

https://www.crd.bc.ca/docs/default-source/crd-document-library/maps/parks-trails/rp_shw-south_website.pdf?sfvrsn=5508a3cc_2

https://www.crd.bc.ca/docs/default-source/crd-document-library/maps/parks-trails/rp_shw.pdf?sfvrsn=d0d808ca_9

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https://www.crd.bc.ca/docs/default-source/parks-pdf/rp_ss_mmq_website.pdf?sfvrsn=facfb2cd_0

Beside the Sooke River is Kapoor Regional Park (12.6 hectares). Kapoor is adjacent to the historical mid-19th century gold mining site of Leechtown, and lies at the terminus

of the Galloping Goose Regional Trail. Nearby to the south along the river is Sooke Potholes Regional Park (63.5 hectares). The potholes are unique geological formations – deep pools in the river rock – that offer some of the best freshwater swimming in the region, especially after a hot day hiking in the Sooke Hills.

https://www.crd.bc.ca/docs/default-source/crd-document-library/maps/parks-trails/kapoor-regional-park.pdf?sfvrsn=81a1bbca_4

https://www.crd.bc.ca/docs/default-source/crd-document-library/maps/parks-trails/sooke-potholes-regional-park.pdf?sfvrsn=cab68fc9_34

The Sooke Hills are a wonderful protected recreational area for not only those living in the CRD but for Islanders, visitors from south of the border, and those coming from overseas, or as some say “across the pond.” However, parking at some of the trailheads is becoming problematic with the numbers frequenting the hills. Many of the roads around the hills are narrow and windy and there is limited space for vehicles to pull out. Fortunately, the most popular area, the Sooke Potholes where many trails begin, has ample parking, but on a hot summer day when people want to cool off in the Sooke River finding a spot on the bank to spread their towel can be a challenge. In isolated pockets throughout the hills are rare and red-listed plants. A cadre of ACCVI members regularly check on the flora and monitor their success. The hills and old growth forest are home to many animals and birds, and it is thought that there are potential nesting sites for the marbled murrelet. Summit registers can be found on a few of the more remote peaks and it is interesting how many have referenced the list and wrote that they are also trying to complete the challenge of all the 47 peaks. Despite the proximity to Greater Victoria,

there are times when very few people are seen on some of the trails and it feels like one is truly out there in the wilderness. A place to experience nature and get out of the rat race for a while, but to also reflect on the history of the area and the connection of Indigenous Peoples to this land.

Thank you

Rowan Laver

This has been a long time coming but has not been forgotten by me.

In early July 2016, Janelle fell off Augerpoint Mountain on our way to Mount Mitchell and we found ourselves in Victoria General Hospital for five months. You can read Janelle's article about her accident on page 11 of the spring 2019 *Island Bushwhacker Newsletter* here: <https://accvi.ca/wp-content/uploads/ACCVINewsletterSpring2019.pdf>.

Being from Nanaimo, I had to find somewhere to stay (Janelle had already secured herself a bed). Hotels were mostly booked out for July, and I spent the first ten days at the Embassy Inn Hotel downtown Victoria at full summer rates (They did give me a 50% discount when they learned of the circumstances).

Then Colleen Kasting offered me a place to stay while she was away with Mike. Once back, she then took on the thoughtful and helpful role of finding me places to stay until mid-November. Like a real estate agent, she would ask around, identify several options, make all the arrangements, and then suggest to me which was more suitable. Thank you Colleen and all those who offered me their home to stay.

I stayed at Colleen's twice, and also at Christine Taggart's, Clare and Yves's,

Caitlin's, Brianna and Walter's, and Martin and Alcina's.

These were all places where people who barely knew me or didn't know me at all, opened their doors, gave me the keys, and left me alone in their house for weeks at a time. Most days were spent at the hospital, and it was nice to have a quiet, private place to unwind at the end of the day and process what was going on. Thank you.

I had visits and check-ins from Lenka, Vivian, Lyle, Karun, Sonia, Catrin, Erich, Lindsay, Val, and many others.

Lenka made me go to the ACCVI's summer BBQ with her and I was warmly welcomed by all (so glad I went). Catrin handed me a collage of photos of Janelle's trips which we hung on the hospital room wall (and now hangs in our home as a reminder of the kindness and compassion of our ACCVI family).



It makes me emotional to think about the support I received from people I barely knew at the time. It also opened my eyes to the sense of community we have in our club. I think there must be many people within the club who don't know each other but this type of 'occurrence' can suddenly connect people and lead to lasting friendships.

Thank you all again,

Rowan

2024 PHOTO CONTEST



Mountain Scenery (Winner)

Milky Way meteor over Massif des Cerces.

Photo: Olivier Lardière



Mountain Scenery (Honourable Mention)

Aurora Framing Mount 7, Rocky Mountains.

Photo: Jim Everard



Winter Activity (Co-Winner)

Amiskwi Skiers.

Photo: *Carol Doering*



Winter Activity (Co-Winner)

Dropping in above Campbell Icefield.

Photo: *Chris Neate*



Summer Activity (Co-Winner)

Climbing up the Thumb.

Photo: Barry Hansen



Summer Activity (Co-Winner)

Blair Piggot and the Granite Glacier.

Photo: Jim Everard



Vancouver Island (Co-Winner)

Surf, summit and the rainforest that links the two.

Photo: Chris Neate



Vancouver Island (Co-Winner)

Mount Arrowsmith.

Photo: Roger Taylor



Winter Activity (Honourable Mention)

Climbing The Dome.

Photo: *Catrin Brown*



Summer Activity (Honourable Mention)

Tyrolean traverse, Remillard GMC, Selkirks.

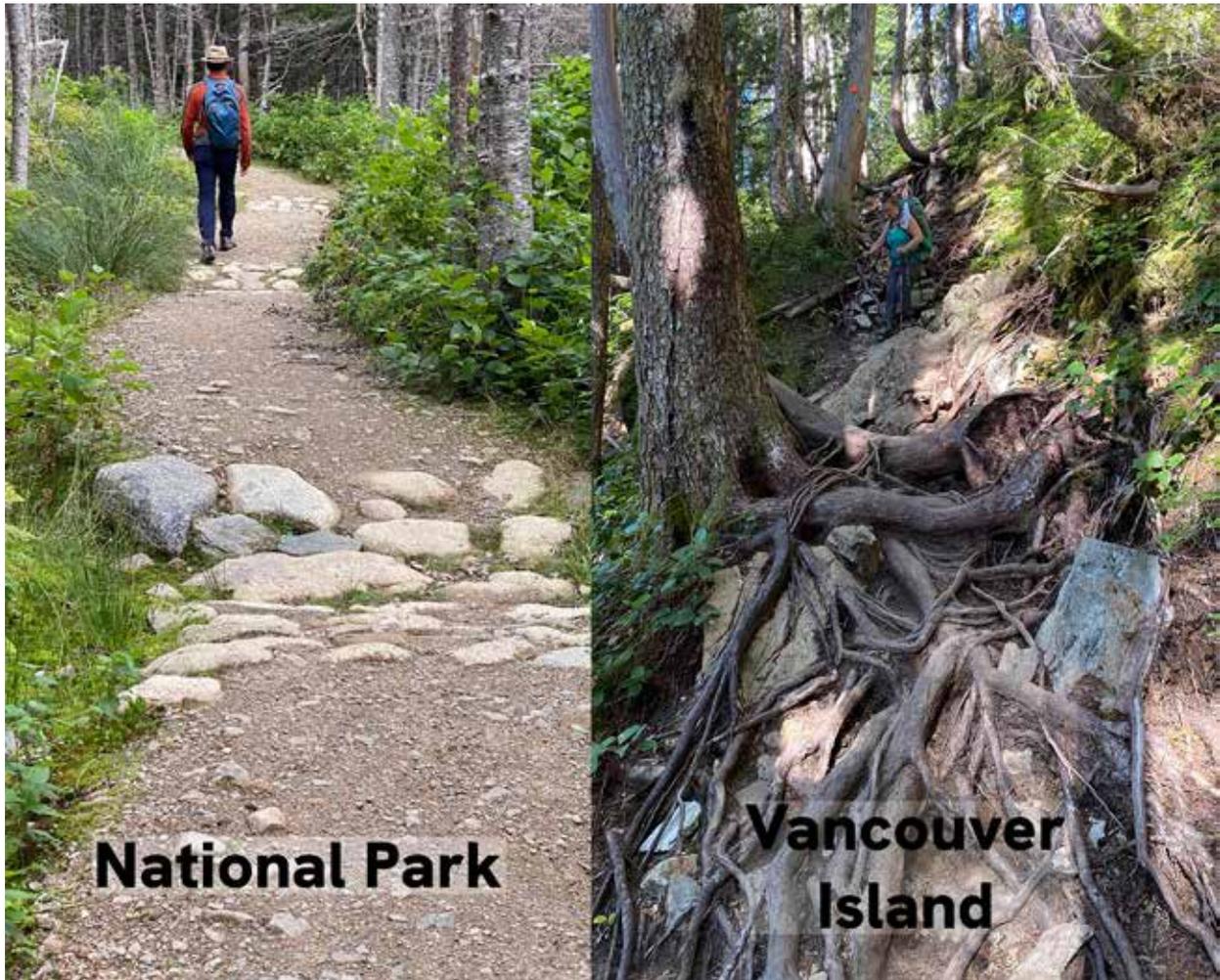
Photo: *John Ballantyne*



Vancouver Island (Honourable Mention)

Cream Lake Hike.

Photo: *Mike Johnston*



Humour (Winner)
Compare.
Photo: Jane Maduke



Humour (Honourable Mention)
Surprise party on Watchtower Peak.
Photo: Barry Hansen



Nature (Winner)
Chorus Frog.
Photo: Rudy Brugger



Nature (Honourable Mention)
Closing this Climb.
Photo: Christine Fordham

