

Island Bushwhacker

Volume 52 | Issue 1 | Spring 2024



Introduction to backcountry skiing. by Nadja Steiner

ACC VANCOUVER ISLAND SECTION

Social Events

The club hosts monthly slide shows at the Swan Lake nature sanctuary in Victoria and offers these as streamed in-person events so that members who cannot attend in person can also be involved.

Web Information

Web site: www.accvi.ca

Webmaster: webmaster@accvi.ca

Executive Meeting Minutes

Available on our meeting archives which are [here](#).

National ACC Office

For new memberships and renewals, changes of address or other details, and booking huts, contact the ACC National office directly at:

www.alpineclubofcanada.ca

Email: info@alpineclubofcanada.ca; Tel: (403)-678-3200; Address: P.O. Box 8040, Canmore, AB, T1W 2T8

Annual Membership Dues

Single \$58 Family \$83 Youth (19 and under) \$41

The Island Bushwhacker Newsletter is published the first week of March, June, September, and December. Other weeks, the **High Points Bulletin** summarizes events and key section announcements.

Newsletter Editor: Janelle Curtis

High Points Editor: Catrin Brown

We encourage submissions of items of interest to our membership, including articles and photos in months when the newsletter is published. Please email your submissions to newsletter@accvi.ca by the 25th day of the previous month.

Advertising shall be accepted at the discretion of the editor. All advertising shall be for products or services of direct interest to our membership.

Our Motto

COME BACK ALIVE
COME BACK FRIENDS
RESPECT THE LAND
HAVE FUN
GET TO THE TOP
(IN THAT ORDER!)

UPCOMING EVENTS

[Slideshow - Mountains in the Sea: Antarctic Peninsula to South Georgia](#) Join us from 6 - 9 p.m. on 13 March to Come hear the first hand stories of a man who did hands-on work and guiding in the Antarctic.

Expect an organized presentation – we'll start just south of the Antarctic Circle and sail north along the peninsula and surrounding islands, head through the South Shetland Islands and end up in South Georgia, stopping for landings all along the way. Bring your questions. **[Come see it before it melts!](#)**

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Reminder to Members:

Keep your membership up-to-date, so to as to be covered by the ACC's liability insurance. Keep your contact information current on ACC National's site, www.alpineclubofcanada.ca, as it's from this master list that we download email addresses for mailouts.

Join or visit the ACCVI's [Facebook group](#). You don't have to be a Facebook member to see this page. And visit ACCVI's Discussion Forum at <https://discourse.accvi.ca/>

Upcoming Trips

Full information for all trips and education events is located online on the ACCVI [Trip Schedule](#). Keep your eye on the [Trip Schedule](#) often!

Event Schedule

Our trip and event schedule depends on members volunteering to lead a trip or organize an event. There are no specific requirements, other than confidence to lead a small group on your chosen route. For extra information please check the 'Information for leaders' section of our website (<https://accvi.ca/trip-leaders/>) or email a question to leadership@accvi.ca.

Dates	Trip/Event
13 March	Slideshow: Mountains in the Sea: Antarctic Peninsula to South Georgia
17-24 March	Amiskwi Lodge backcountry skiing
28 March to 1 April	ACCVI Kids at Blueberry cabin, Mount Cain for Kidsfest.
13 April	Mt. Albert Edward Ski Tour (C3)
17-20 May	Hišimýawił Spring Ski Touring

Thank you for contributing to our community in this important way!

Mountain Education

The ACCVI Education Program exists to facilitate courses and workshops for members that will prepare them to participate in ACCVI trips, assist them in pursuing their outdoor goals, and develop the skills required as ACCVI Trip Leaders.

ACCVI offers a wide variety of workshops and courses aimed at giving our members the technical and safety skills to get out there in the mountains safely.

Courses are open to ACC members in good standing only. You are welcome to join the section if you would like to enroll in one or more of ACCVI's courses.

Education and Courses: <http://accvi.ca/programs/education/>

Is there something you would like to see? Contact education@accvi.ca.

Please see the [trip schedule](#) for information about upcoming education events.

Notes from the Chair

By David Lemon

Welcome to 2024 and the many opportunities it will bring to get out and enjoy the mountain environment. Once again, the year began with a great success, the sold-out Banff Centre Mountain Film Festival (BCMFF) at the Farquhar Auditorium. The event is the section's major fundraiser. Thanks to our very able coordinators, Laura Darling and Joanna Verano, for once again making it such a success.

Winter is not yet over, and there is still time for ski trips if the weather cooperates to produce more snow, but it is also time to start thinking about summer activities. The schedule has plenty of space, so if you have a trip you would like to lead, please consider adding it to the schedule.

Monthly slide shows are continuing at Swan Lake, with the Antarctic coming up in March.

The AGM took place in mid-February and a new executive was elected for the coming year, with some new members and others continuing for another year.

2024 Executive

Chair: David Lemon

Secretary: Becky Noble

Treasurer: Garth Stewart

Access and Environment: Barb Baker

Banff Mountain Film Festival: Joanna Verano

Island Bushwhacker Newsletter and Annual: Janelle Curtis

Communication and Schedule: Karun Thanjuvar

Communication and Membership: Josh Slatkoff

Gear: Mike Hubbard

High Points and Past Chair: Catrin Brown

Hišimýawił: Martin Hofmann

Library and Archives: Tom Hall

National Representative: Christine Fordham

Slideshows and Leadership Points: Gordon Kyle

Summer Camp: Chad Katunar and Rachel Treloar

Members at Large: David Suttill and Shiela Nykwist

There are still important positions vacant for the Education and Kids and Youth program Coordinators, and a coordinator for the Trail Rider Program, so if any of those interest you, please contact any member of the executive.

2023 ACCVI Photo Competition

By Mary Sanseverino

Hi everyone - I've got some great news to report - all the images from the

2023 ACCVI Photo Show and Competition

are now up on the website! Treat yourself to a wonderful look back at what ACCVIers were up to in 2023 - and maybe grab some inspiration for the rest of 2024 and onwards.

Enjoy some amazing visual story telling courtesy of ... well ... us!!

- 25 photos in the [Summer Activity](#) category
- 13 photos in the [Winter Activity](#) category
- 12 photos in the [Vancouver Island](#) category
- 28 photos in the [Mountain Scenery](#) category
- 15 photos in the [Nature](#) category
- 13 photos in the [Humour](#) category

Or - check out an overview of them all here on the main ACCVI Photos page: <https://accvi.ca/about/photos/>

It's never too early to start thinking about the 2024 show. (especially the Humour category!)



*A dirty selfie. (Photo by Mary Sanseverino)
2023 ACCVI Photo Show entry in the Humour category.*

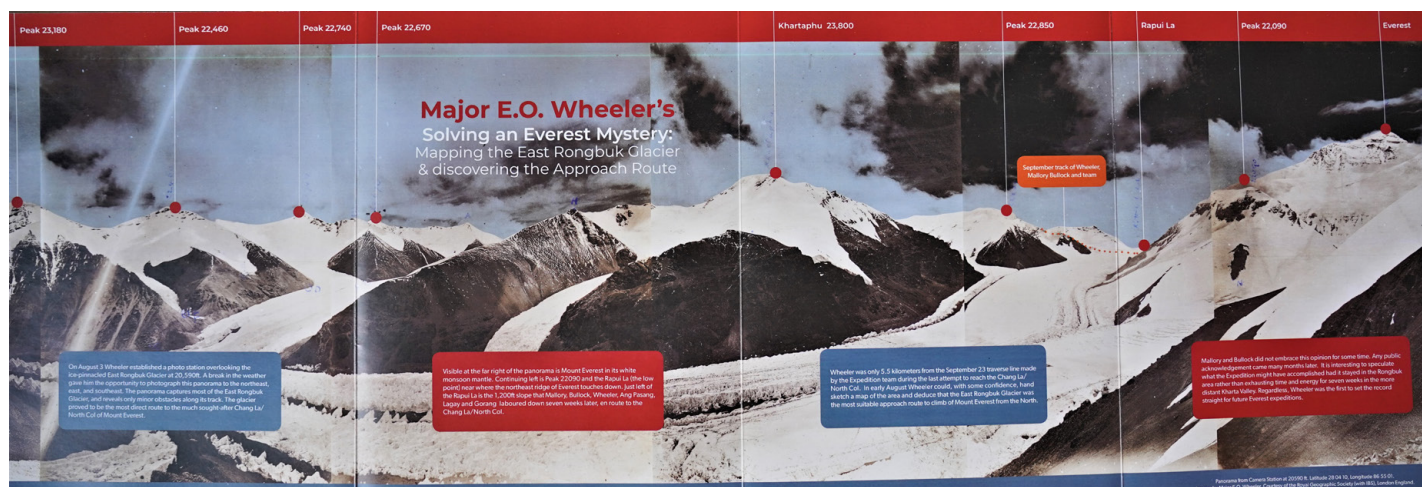
Edward Oliver Wheeler and the Mapping of the East Rongbuk Glacier

By Jim Everard

People are remembered for as long as stories are told about them. One distinguished member of the Alpine Club of Canada was Edward Oliver Wheeler, son of the Club's founder A.O. Wheeler. Oliver Wheeler had a remarkable life. He had firm roots on Vancouver Island, including organizing and leading the first ascent of Elkhorn Mountain in 1912. (A summary of that trip can be found in Lindsay Elms' excellent beyond-nootka.com/articles/elkhorn.html). Another chapter of Oliver Wheeler's life was as a member of the 1921 Everest Reconnaissance Expedition. That story was recently printed in the 2023 Canadian Alpine Journal (CAJ).

The CAJ article could not physically reproduce the print or e-version of 6 merged pictures from that Expedition: Wheeler's panorama of the East Rongbuk Glacier. The panorama allows us to, in a sense, temporarily join Oliver Wheeler and his local survey support team. It reveals how far up the East Rongbuk Glacier the team reached on August 3rd 1921 and how close they were to Mount Everest/Chomolungma/Sagarmatha. It certainly adds gravitas to Wheeler's early assertion that the East Rongbuk Glacier was the best approach to the mountain from the north. But leaders of the 1921 Expedition were more sanguine. They committed to approaching Mount Everest from the East, via the Kharta Valley. In so doing the 1921 Reconnaissance Expedition consumed as many as 7 weeks pursuing Mount Everest from the 'wrong' location. It is interesting to speculate what the Expedition might have accomplished with these additional weeks of mountaineering on the north side of Mount Everest.

Oliver Wheeler mapped the East Rongbuk Glacier using the 'Canadian' photo-topographic survey method. In late July and early August his survey team worked their way to a point about one third the way up the Glacier. Wheeler ascended adjacent western slopes and took a series of photo-topographic images at 20,590 feet. Merging these images produces the panorama below. Click on the image and enlarge for greater detail.



Wheeler's position revealed a broken white world of glacier debris immediately below him, and which gradually smoothed out to gentle glaciated terrain (and good foot travel). The lower part of Mount Everest and the Chang La/North Col lay tantalizingly close behind Peak 22,090. It must have been a remark-

able and rewarding feeling for Wheeler after months of effort. But this could not be immediately or easily communicated to the key expedition members – Howard-Bury, George Mallory and Guy Bullock – who were many days away by runner courier. Wheeler produced a hand sketched map and sent it to them in the Kharta Valley. They decided to continue their pursue of Mount Everest from the Kharta Valley. With the August 3rd photo-topographic station completed, Oliver Wheeler continued his survey work and rejoined the expedition in the Kharta Valley a few weeks later. On September 23 Mallory, Bullock, Wheeler (and Wheeler’s survey support team of Ang Passang, Gorang and Lagay,) made their way from the Kharta Valley up and over the Lhakpa La and down to the head of the East Rongbuk Glacier.



The team was a scant 5-6 kilometres from where Wheeler had been on August 3rd.

They tented overnight and the next day ascended to the Chang La/North Col, the high point for the Expedition. This location revealed the North Ridge as the most attractive line to the summit (from Tibet). Beyond that (the North East Ridge) there was little that could be discerned. The Chang La/North Col was as far as they dared go, and they retraced their steps to the Kharta Valley.

Many people contributed to the success of the Expedition, but in the words of Expedition Member Major H.T. Morshead, “Major Wheeler had probably the hardest time of any member of the Expedition, and his success in achieving single-handed the mapping of 600 square miles of some of the most mountainous country in the world is sufficient proof of his determination and grit.”

A fuller account of E.O. Wheeler and his outsized role in the 1921 Expedition will be reprinted (from the 2023 CAJ) in the **2023 Island Bushwhacker Annual**.

Access and Environment

By Barb Baker

MOSAIC GATES <https://www.mosaicforests.com/access>

Winter hours are short.

Automatic gates: lock may be unlocked but gate not open. Any problems there?

COTTONWOOD ACCESS.... ready to go with the renewed 2024 Mosaic Land Use permits for Comox Lake and Ash Valley gates.

Access is limited to weekend use with fewer requirements: no notification and no radios required. Please go to Cottonwood Gate Info for Leaders on our webpage at <https://accvi.ca/trip-leaders/access-to-cottonwood-gate/>. Recent report is that the road is in good condition to 600 m with extensive logging.

155 Main NW Bay Camp...this gate is newly opened on weekends. Is anyone using it?

Chemainus Main 4 km... any info to report on the 22 km gate?

Oyster Main has been open weekends. Anyone using it?

Other Accesses:

Marion FSR is reportedly in rough shape. South Island Natural Resource District has taken over management of this road from BCTS. Their engineers have assessed and improvements will be coming according to RSTBC. No date.

Mt. Klitsa North approach...new trail head at TA551 has been brushed out to bypass rock slide on the original spur road.

Mt. Adder North rockslide near Sutton Pass will be reassessed in the spring. It is currently not driveable.

Crag X in Victoria is offering a monthly discount night with \$13 climbing (regular \$22) for Alpine Club of Canada Vancouver Island Section (ACCVI) members on the third Wednesday of every month from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. All they ask is that people arrive between 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. and show their membership card. The normal rules about belaying etc would apply. The first ACCVI night will be March 20th.



Thanks to Crag X for this generous offer!

Recommendations: Books and films about nature, wildlife or mountaineering.

Compiled by Janelle Curtis

Members have a list of recommended films, books, and presentations. Here is what they suggested...

Christine Fordham thought this article about electronic interference with transceivers was pretty interesting and may be of interest to our members:

ELECTROMAGNETIC INTERFERENCE AND AVALANCHE TRANSCEIVERS With ski season kicking off, the QA Lab crew dives deep into the world of electromagnetic interference and how it can affect backcountry safety. See: https://www.blackdiamondequipment.com/en_US/stories/qc-lab-beacon-interference/?utm_campaign=20240109-qc-lab-beacon-interference-pro&utm_content&utm_medium=email&utm_source=cordial&mcID=1118%3A659c661e94921aefff089632%3Aot%3A636aa584d4ea1e1de580eb8c%3A1

Below is a summary from this article that is worth reading in full.

Trial	% Reduction from Control
Baseline (No electronics present)	N/A
Heated Gloves (Highest Setting)	-90%
Heated Gloves (Powered-Off)	0%
Smart Watch on transceiver hand	-24%
GPS Watch on transceiver hand	-50%
GPS Watch Non-transceiver hand	-13%
Smart Ring on transceiver hand	-90%
Smartphone in Pants Pocket	-15%
Smartphone in Breast Pocket	-13%
High Lumen Headlamp (Various models)	0% to -30%
Electronic Airbag Packs	-2% to -29%
(Various models and firmwares)	-7%
Two-Way Radio (keyed mic held at mouth)	-4%
Satellite Communicator (shoulder mounted)	-6%
Snowmobile @ 0m	-89%
Snowmobile @ 3m	-27%

From the article:

electromagnetic interference (EMI)

noun  Save Word

e-lec-tro-mag-net-ic in-ter-fer-ence 

Definition of *electromagnetic interference (EMI)*:

Unwanted noise or interference in an electrical path or circuit caused by an outside source which interrupts, obstructs, or otherwise degrades or limits the effective performance of electronics/electrical equipment.

Sarah Cox suggested her book about nature and wild-life coming out on April 16. It's called *Signs of Life*.

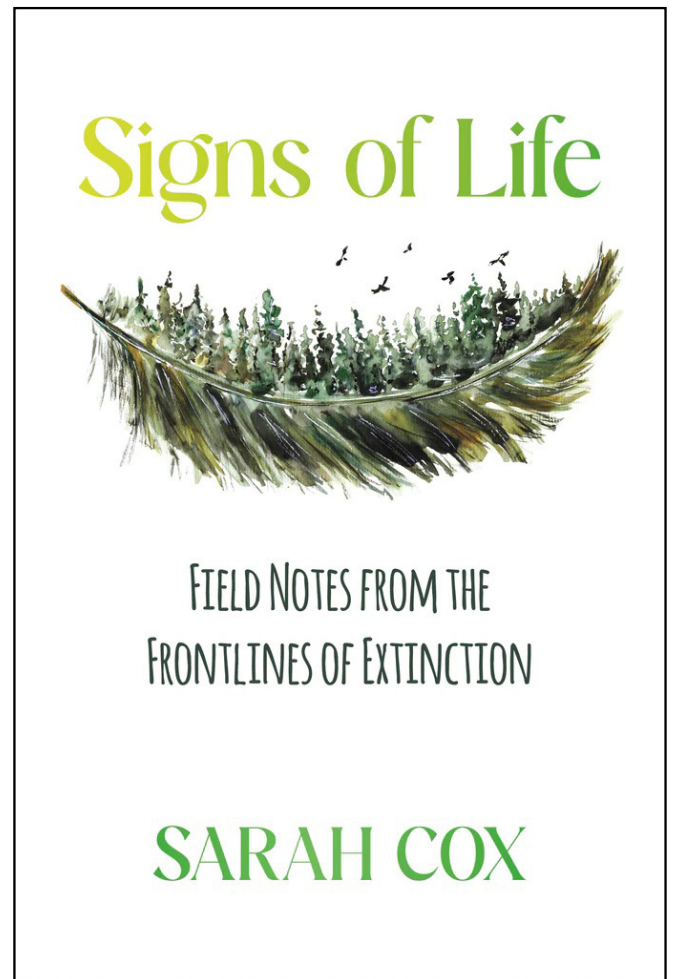
Here's the blurb: <https://gooselane.com/products/signs-of-life>

Here is a quote from Suzanne Simard, author of *Finding the Mother Tree*:

Sarah Cox's reporting on environmental issues has long been essential reading, and Signs of Life is no exception. Detailing everything from efforts to save the old-growth forest-dependent spotted owl in British Columbia to rare lichens in Nova Scotia's disappearing woodlands, Signs of Life combines whip-smart reporting with an in-depth knowledge of conservation science to produce a persuasive call to act before it is too late.

Here is a quote from Ziya Tong, science broadcaster and author of the *Reality Bubble*:

Sarah Cox's reporting on environmental issues has long been essential reading, and *Signs of Life* is no exception. Detailing everything from efforts to save the old-growth forest-dependent spotted owl in British Columbia to rare lichens in Nova Scotia's disappearing woodlands, *Signs of Life* combines whip-smart reporting with an in-depth knowledge of conservation science to produce a persuasive call to act before it is too late.



Poster of the Shackleton movie and his book *South, the Endurance Expedition* at IMAX Victoria.
(Photo by Ken Wong)

Ken Wong says:

I recently saw *Shackleton: The Greatest Story of Survival* twice at IMAX Victoria Museum.

<https://imaxvictoria.com/movies/>

It has fascinating videos and photos from the expedition showing Endurance trapped and crushed by sea ice plus much more. Absolutely fascinating!

I like the documentary so much that i brought this paperback for \$9.99 at IMAX too:

South, the Endurance Expedition by Ernest Shackleton himself, published in 1919.

Two other museum IMAX films are very good too: Deep Sky about NASA's Webb Telescope and Fungi: the Web of Life.

Buy an IMAX annual pass and you can watch documentaries as many times as you like. Best deal in Victoria!

The Banff Centre Mountain Film Festival World Tour: A Night of Adventure and Community Support

By Joanna Verano and Laura Darling



On the evening of January 28th, the Farquhar at the University of Victoria (UVic) was ablaze with excitement as outdoor enthusiasts and community members gathered for a thrilling experience at the Victoria screening of the Banff Centre Mountain Film Festival World Tour. Another sold out show for the second year in a row, this event, hosted by the Alpine Club of Canada Vancouver Island Section, brought together a diverse audience to celebrate the spirit of adventure and support local initiatives.

The auditorium buzzed with anticipation as attendees filled every seat, eager to be captivated by a selection of engaging films showcasing the world of mountain exploration. Beyond the screen, the lobby shined a spotlight on local non-profit groups and local businesses who support the outdoor community and promote outdoor recreation as well as environmental and wildlife conservation, adding a touch of community engagement to the event.



*BCMFF Committee Chair, Laura Darling on stage looking out to a full house of attendees.
(Photo by Joanna Verano)*



*ACCVI Chair David Lemon and BCMFF Committee Chair Laura Darling on stage giving the welcome remarks.
(Photo by Joanna Verano)*

The generosity of local business partners added to the evening's experience. Fjällräven Victoria, Hike Vancouver Island, Island Alpine Guides, Robinson's Outdoor Store, and Valhalla Pure Victoria provided fabulous door prizes, enhancing the overall experience for attendees. We are also grateful to the ACCVI Hut Committee for providing a 2-night stay for up to six people at Hišimȳawił as a prize draw incentive for our early-bird ticket promotion.

The grand total raised from the event exceeded expectations, reaching an impressive \$16,000. These funds will be directed towards supporting ACCVI programs and initiatives for members. From leadership incentives and educational opportunities to social events and acquiring equipment for access behind closed gates, the contributions will have a meaningful impact. Additionally, the funds will be utilized to enhance club mountaineering gear, ensuring members have the tools needed for their adventures.



David Lemon and Laura Darling at the Alpine Club of Canada booth.



The revamped ACCVI photo exhibition, expertly created by Mary Sanseverino from members' photos, provided a focal point for guests to appreciate our Vancouver Island mountains and learn more about the club's activities. (Photo by Catrin Brown)

Save the date – Sunday, January 26, 2025 – for next year's Victoria screening of the Banff Centre Mountain Film Festival World Tour. This beloved event undoubtedly has become a cherished annual tradition,

*An interview with Neil Ernst, creator of our online discussion forum
Discourse
By Catrin Brown*

Editor's note: this article first appeared in the 2021 Summer Issue of the Island Bushwhacker Newsletter.



Neil Ernst

Catrin: Neil, tell us what brought you to Victoria and when you joined the club?

Neil: I moved back to Victoria in 2017 after a decade or so in Vancouver, Toronto and Pittsburgh for work and school. Apart from the job and being closer to family, I greatly missed our mountains and ocean lifestyle (although not the seagulls currently outside my window). I wanted to get back to outdoor living which I feel I kind of lost when in the east and the ACC seemed like - and is! - a great place to experience that with friendly and helpful people.

Catrin: We're glad you found us! What club activities have you enjoyed and what do you look forward to doing when restrictions are lifted?

Neil: I've done a few trips backcountry skiing and really like the club's education program, which I've really missed these past 18 months. We seem to have a nice blend of informal training from highly experienced volunteers, and Jan Neuspiel's Island Alpine Guides outfit. A nice part about being middle-aged is having a bit more money to do formal training and get proper equipment.

Catrin: I understand you have a background in computer technology. What did you notice about the section's online communication channels, and what did you think could be done better?

Neil: Right, I'm a professor at UVic in the computer science department, so hopefully I know a thing or two! I also watch my children use messaging platforms all the time to chat with their peers, mostly to organize video game sessions.

I came of age with bulletin boards systems (remember those?) and then blogs, when we saw the internet as this great equalizing force, open and accessible to all. Recently though, big companies like Facebook

have taken over the open internet. I can't deny Facebook's advantages - they make online interaction very simple - but I am philosophically opposed to their closed approach, not to mention some of the other problems like privacy violations, polarization and misinformation. It seems odd to me that an open and welcoming club like the ACC and its sections should require us to sign over personal privacy to a big company just to chat about stuff like backcountry hazards.

Catrin: You have helped us set up "Discourse" as an online tool. What advantages and potential does this bring to our community?

Neil: Discourse (discourse.accvi.ca) is a fairly stable, open source discussion platform that comes from the folks who created StackExchange (e.g., outdoors.stackexchange.com). It offers most of the features that Facebook does, but no account is necessary to browse the content. Plus, we get to own the content for trip reports, photos, etc. One thing you realize when you read the Bushwhacker is how long the ACC has been around. Keeping our history alive for folks 100+ years from now seems important, especially for this big H historic year we have had.

The downside is that Facebook and similar products are really good at keeping you engaged, supporting new features, etc. Although creating an account is easy on our Discourse, it's one more step. Also, the club has to maintain and host it, back up the data, upgrade the software, and so on. However, these last things are pretty easy, and the data is hosted in Canada, which complies with some of our local laws.

Catrin: Yes, I found I only needed to sign in to Discourse the first time, and then it's a click away from our homepage. I wonder how you might like to see this platform evolve for our section?

Neil: Ideally, we would have tighter integration between the communication channels, add an easy way to link to items for sale, add more mapping abilities for road closures and such. Frankly there are lots of features we could add, but the big question is how much people will use this as a channel for interaction. It's been a bit hard to judge since we haven't been doing much this year! But I've noticed more uptake, and the ability to archive discussions outside personal emails - for things like hut discussions - seems really valuable. For volunteer clubs it's often hard to properly hand over to the next person, since so many documents and knowledge are in personal email.

Catrin: That's a really good point - I like having things shared centrally in this way. I also find Facebook is frustrating with its very short attention span, where messages quickly become superceded. Discourse seems to provide a much better opportunity to archive items like Trip Reports, and the organisation by "categories" helps to access things quickly.

Some of the things you mention above are quite exciting as potential add-ons. If members have queries or suggestions for how to improve our online communication, can they contact you?

Neil: Sure! They could reach out to me on Discourse or via email at discourse@accvi.ca.

Catrin: Many thanks Neil - for your initiative with this, and for taking the time to explain the background to us. I look forward to watching the use and functions of the platform increase. And let's hope we can get out together on some trips soon!

And - dear reader - if you haven't already done so check out <https://discourse.accvi.ca> and sign up.

There is also a great video in the right sidebar of the Events Page at <https://accvi.ca/events/> that shows people how to receive notifications of new trips and events on the schedule.

ACCVI History - Demystifying Septimus and Rosseau

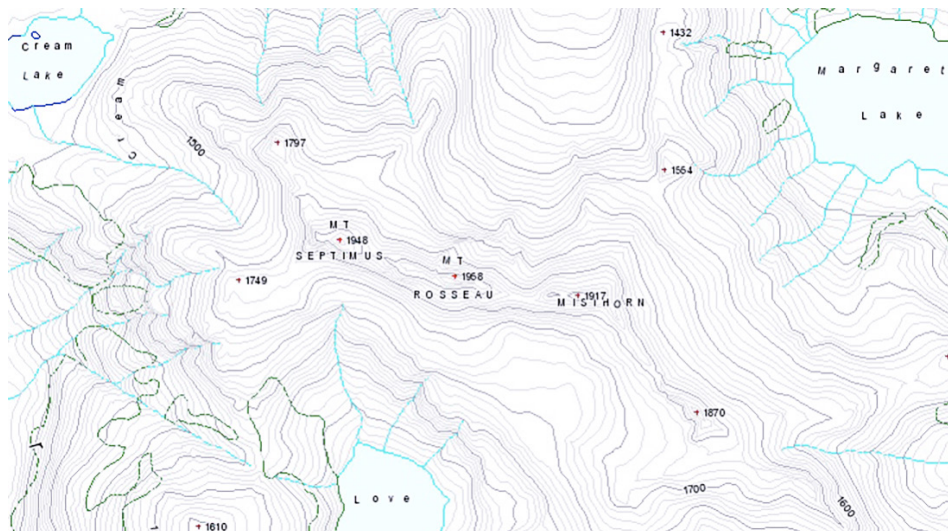
By Lindsay Elms

Ever since I can remember there has been uncertainty over the identity of Mount Septimus and Mount Rosseau, and some continue to perpetuate that confusion today. The name Mount Septimus has been around for at least one hundred years and is given to a peak in the heart of Strathcona Park. The range that encompasses Mount Septimus, Mount Rosseau and the Misthorns was known in 1896 as the Laing Neck Range, so called by William Bolton during his traverse of Vancouver Island in honour of his friend and benefactor John Laing. But the name never came into popular use. The first reference I found to Mount Septimus was an article by E.M. Young in 1924 (see ‘Strathcona Park is Island Paradise of Nature Lover’ *The Daily Colonist* on Sunday September 7, 1924, p.32.) It says: “South of Buttle Lake are Taylor Glacier, Big Interior Mountain, Mount Tyre [Mount Myra] and Mount Septimus, all between 6,000 to 6,500 feet in altitude.” The next article was in September 1929. The mystery has always been why is Mount Septimus not the highest peak on the massif, but the slightly lower peak to the west? The highest point is known as Mount Rosseau and we will see why and when it was named in this account.



*John Gibson on the summit of Mount Rosseau 1974.
(Photo by Syd Watts)*

When I started gathering the mountaineering history for the Island in the early 1990’s, I was asked by Rick Eppler and Rob Macdonald which summit was Mount Septimus? We all know the contribution they made to climbing on the island and the knowledge they accumulated over the years, but they were unsure. They weren’t the only ones. Gil Parker, who edited and revised the *Hiking Trails* series of books in the 2000s, at one point also asked me the same question. He was wondering if the book, *Hiking Trails III: Central and Northern Vancouver Island* had the peaks marked correctly. All the editions of the book beginning in 1975 marked Mount Septimus as the lower west summit and the highest point on the ridge Mount Rosseau.



I knew where Rick and Rob's query was coming from. In Dick Culbert's 1974 book *Alpine Guide to Southwestern British Columbia* there are a few pages covering Vancouver Island. For Mount Septimus, he has credited the first ascent to Ralph Rosseau, but gives no date. However, the most glaring note is that he says Mount Septimus is 6400-feet while Mount Rosseau is the lower peak at 6003-feet.

Mt. Septimus (6400)

A group of 7 rocky peaks at the head of Price Cr.

1st ascent, - R. Rosseau

The SW side of this group may be reached by crossing S from Cream Lake. The peaks are short rock scrambles from this side. The 4th peak from NW is highest, and one on the S has been named Mt. Rosseau (6003). The group may also be approached by crossing from Flower Ridge, presenting slightly steeper defenses on this side. A fairly strenuous weekend trip.

Nowhere in the book does he mention his source of information. Culbert did climb on Vancouver Island a couple of times, but he was primarily a Coast Mountain climber. His guidebook was the first of many that would be built upon and expanded throughout the years by others. They were, and still are, bibles for some climbers. Guidebooks do have erroneous information at times. Culbert's book credits Frank Stapley and Dave Williamson as the first to climb Victoria Peak in 1961, while in *Island Alpine: A Guide to the Mountains of Strathcona Park and Vancouver Island* published in 2003 it says Syd Watts, Otto Winnig et al in the 1950s. Although Culbert had the right climbers, he had the year wrong, it was 1960. Watts, Winnig et al climbed Victoria Peak a few weeks after Stapley and Williamson. All errors can be corrected with later editions, although at the time they do create confusion. Bruce Fairley in his 1986 guide book *A Guide to Climbing & Hiking in Southwestern British Columbia* has a small section on Vancouver Island but has just used Culbert's information with some recent data from Bob Tustin.



When I first arrived and started climbing on the island, my go-to book was *Hiking Trails III* because it had maps indicating trails and climbing routes. The beautiful postcard (remember them) of Cream Lake and Mount Septimus taken by Stuart Lister, inspired many hikers and climbers in the years before Facebook. Cream Lake still is one of the most popular hiking destinations in Strathcona Park and was where the Vancouver Island section of the Alpine Club of Canada wanted to build a hut in the 1970s. I told Rick and Rob that Mount Septimus was the slightly lower summit to the west of the highest peak. I had visited Janet Mason several times, beginning in 1992, at her office with the B.C. Geographic Names department in Victoria, and in the files on the Origin Notes and History for Mount Septimus I found the following which is now on their website:

Adopted by the government on August 5, 1948, as labelled on B.C. map 2A, 1913 et seq, and as identified in the 1930 B.C. Gazetteer.

As for its name there are two sources:

By some, thought to be descriptive - Septimus being a mountain of seven peaks." (List of Place Names in Strathcona Park, compiled by Allan C. Brooks, and reprinted in "Natural & Human History Themes, Strathcona Provincial Park" a special report produced by Betty Brooks for B.C. Parks Branch, 1989.)

And:

Possibly named after Septimus Evans, surgeon aboard S.S. Beaver." (note that this assumption is likely made because of the mountain's proximity to Price Creek and a mistaken assumption that Price Creek was named for Captain John Price, H.M.S. Scout, under whom Septimus Evans was surgeon before joining the hired vessel Beaver under Captain Daniel Pender, 1868.)

All topographical maps are linked with the information from the B.C. Geographic Names office, including the 1:50,000 and 1:20,000 maps that climbers use. Unfortunately, the sources weren't definitive about the origin of the name Septimus. Once the internet was operating (that makes me sound like a dinosaur) I was able to do a google search for Septimus Evans. I found Derek Pethick's book *S.S. Beaver: The Ship That Saved the West Coast* (1970) and James Delgado's *The Beaver: First Steamship on the West Coast Victoria, B.C.* (1993), but there was nothing useful in either. There wasn't much I could find anywhere about Septimus Evans. Eventually I found his name associated with the steam sloop *H.M.S. Doterel*. *The Doterel* was launched in 1880, commissioned in December and left Sheerness Harbour near the mouth of the river Thames on 17 January 1881. Under the command of Commander Richard Evans, she arrived in Punta Arenas (Chile) on 26 April 1881 to take on coal. An hour later an internal explosion destroyed the ship sending her to the bottom in three minutes, killing 147 of her 155 crew, including Staff Surgeon Septimus Evans.

After delving further, I found a relative of Septimus Evans – Christine Clifford. I emailed her and asked if she had any information on Septimus Evans' time on Canada's West Coast and Vancouver Island. She didn't have anything but was intrigued and said she would probe into his history herself. She eventually forwarded the following information to me which wasn't anything startling:

The Canadian Geographical Names Database in Ottawa states that Mount Septimus in Victoria, British Columbia was possibly named after Septimus Evans, surgeon aboard the S.S. *Beaver* and that this assumption is likely made because of the mountain's proximity to Price Creek and a mistaken assumption that Price Creek was named for Captain John Price, *H.M.S. Scout*, under whom Septimus Evans was a surgeon before joining the vessel *Beaver* under Captain Pender, 1868. There is no mention that I could find of who did the naming, or when. Could it possibly have been Captain Pender? See next item.

Evans Arm, Fisher Channel. Named after Septimus Evans, R.N. by Captain Daniel Pender (nav. lieut., R.N., *Beaver*, 1867). The *Beaver* was the first steamship to operate in the Pacific Northwest of North America. She was chartered by the Royal Navy for surveying the coastline of British Columbia.

I [Christine Clifford] feel confident that this is our Septimus Evans. The Navy Lists have him appointed as Acting Assistant Surgeon to the *H.M.S. Scout* (Pacific) under Captain John A. P. Price on 02 November 1867; page 50, no. 268. In *The Canadian Medical Association Journal*, Vol. 61, page 536, it states: "Septimus Evans, R.N. was surgeon on the S.S. *Beaver* 1868-70 and went through many of Her Majesty's ships of war - the list is long and imposing." Unfortunately, I have not been able to access the Navy List for 1868 to see his actual appointment to the *Beaver*, but other sources mentioned above do have him there in 1868. The item about Evans Arm is from John T. Walbran's book *British Columbia Coast Names, 1592-1906* (1909), page 175.

I felt there wasn't much more I could garner about Septimus Evans, but I am always hopeful further information will come to light. The next mystery to solve was why did Culbert credit Ralph Rosseau with the first ascent of Mount Septimus. It was known that Rosseau died when a snow bridge collapsed near Mount Septimus in 1954, but details were lacking until I dug into the old newspapers (see 'Disaster Overtakes Island Climber' *The Victoria Daily Colonist* Monday July 5, 1954, p.1.).



MOUNTAIN DEATH SCENE shows where Mountaineer Ralph Rosseau, 46, was hurled 30 feet when snow where rescuer stands broke off as he was stepping over to rock wall. Pilot Fred Eilertson of Okanagan Helicopters Ltd., took picture before flying body out of Great Central Lake area to Port Alberni.

Scan from The Daily Colonist 7 July 1954, p3.



ULF BITTERLICH, young German immigrant who accompanied Rosseau on ill-fated expedition and hiked out for help. An experienced mountaineer, Bitterlich trained in Austrian Alps.

Scan from The Daily Colonist 13 October 1954, p1.

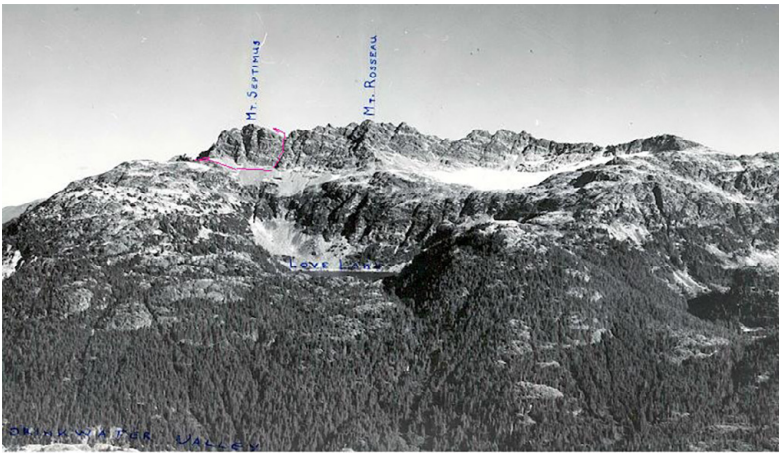


Ralph Rosseau 1947. (Photo courtesy of Louise Eck (née Rosseau))

In July 1954, a large party of hikers made their way up to Della Falls from Great Central Lake. A small party that included Ralph and Lillah Rosseau, Alma Currie and Ulf Bitterlich broke away from the main party and took the trail up to Love Lake and then up onto the glaciers at the east end of the Septimus massif. On 3 July, while crossing a snow bridge, it collapsed plunging Ralph to his death and injuring Alma Currie. Lillah and Ulf were not on the bridge, but watched the accident unfold. After stabilizing Alma and comforting Lillah, Ulf rushed off to get help. The next day a helicopter lifted the climbers back to Port Alberni and then Ralph's body. Ralph was an experienced mountaineer, and his loss was felt in the Alberni community. This didn't answer the question about his ascent of Mount Septimus, but if I kept digging, I felt confident I would solve the riddle.

In 2010, I found out that Ralph Rosseau had a younger sister living in Qualicum Beach. I phoned Louise Eck and arranged to meet her. In her possession were many of Ralph's photos. But what was of significance to me was Ralph's personal diary of his trip from Great Central Lake to the Aureole Snowfield in 1947. The trip began on 24 July when he hiked up the Drinkwater Creek to Della Falls. His diary report for 27 July is brief and ambiguous: "To Camp 1 over Septimus." The next day the weather was mixed so he explored the Sherwood Mine near Love Lake in the morning then went back up to his camp. By the late afternoon the weather had cleared so he decided to make a carry to Camp 2 and return. "Up correct pass on Mount Septimus but could not get down

slide north side. Dangerous. So had to go higher up and down north spur. Reached Camp 2 at 9:15. Wonderful spot. Cached grub and started right back. Lost route in dark. Reached summit in wrong place. Moonlight helped difficult descent. Arrived camp 1:00 a.m.” The next day it appears he went around the east end of Mount Septimus to his Camp 2 to avoid the climb. That night he was kept awake by ice constantly breaking off and falling into “Iceberg Lake” [Green Lake]. He continued his journey north and on 1 August climbed Iceberg Peak and Mount Celeste. On his return journey he climbed Argus Mountain on 2 August and went to the base of The Red Pillar, but there didn’t appear to be a safe route for him to climb. On 4 August he wrote: “up Septimus. Waited on top for sun to break through. No luck, so down Rusty Pass across Septimus Glacier to Camp 1.” The next day he reached the head of Great Central Lake and was picked up by Paddy Burke and his boat. It was a remarkable solo journey and although some of the details are vague, we now know why Culbert credited Rosseau with the first ascent of Mount Septimus. Obviously, there were some climbers who knew about Rosseau’s climb, but we may never know who informed Culbert. In 1946, he took a trip to the Rockies where he climbed Mount Aberdeen, Popes Peak and Mount Victoria, and attempted Mount Lefroy and Mount Edith Cavell. The quality and stability of the rock on the peaks would be similar to that found on Mount Septimus.



Septimus-route. (Photographer unknown)

The question arose again about Septimus/Rosseau so I decided in April 2020 to call Ulf Bitterlich again. I had phoned Ulf in 1995 seeking information on his attempt of the Snowband route on Mount Colonel Foster with his brother Adolf in 1955 for the chapter in my book *Beyond Nootka: A Historical Perspective of Vancouver Island Mountains*. This time I wanted to talk to him about the accident involving Ralph Rosseau, and Mount Septimus and Rosseau. He remembers Ralph talking about climbing Mount Septimus and pointing out which summit it was - the peak to the west of the highest point on the ridge. After the

accident Ulf wanted to name the highest peak after Ralph in his honour but couldn’t remember who he spoke too about it. It was officially adopted on 7 July 1955. Although we have always known why Mount Rosseau was named, this helped clarify the details as there is nothing on B.C. Geographic Names website under Notes and Origins as to who submitted the name. Ulf passed away in May 2021.

There will always be some who call the highest point on the massif Mount Septimus. The facts are the highest peak is officially Mount Rosseau, while the slightly lower peak to the west is Mount Septimus. When Ralph Rosseau says he climbed Mount Septimus, we have to accept his word that he knew what he was climbing. Just as Ulf Bitterlich knew which peak he wanted to name to honour his friend.



Looking at the summit of Mount Septimus from the top of Mount Rosseau. (Photo by Lindsay Elms)

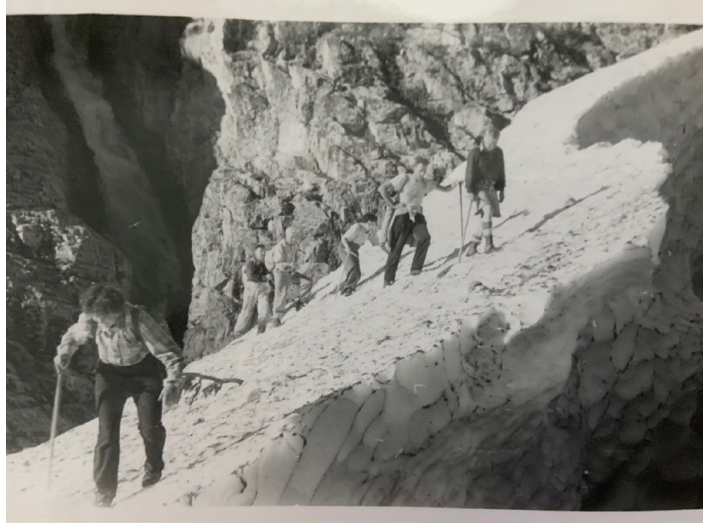
ACCVI History - Update to history on ACCVI's Website

By Lindsay Elms

The years 1950 to 1954 have been posted on the history page of the sections website. With Canadians having more money to travel and pursue leisure activities, interest in outdoor activities increased. In the late 1940's and early 1950's, the Outdoor Club of Victoria (OCV), a breakaway group from the Vancouver Island section, became interested in developing a ski field on Mt. Brenton west of Ladysmith. Members of both the OCV and ACCVI campaigned for the government to purchase the mountain as a Provincial Park. Skiers volunteered their time and energy, and the logged site was developed with rope tows and the construction of a hut. During this time the section also organized ski trips south of the border to Mt. Baker, Shuksam and Hood, and there were summer camps in the Olympic Mountains, to Nine Peaks and Big Interior Mountain, and the Elk River valley. Club events included lectures by leading overseas climbers: Ed Hillary, Charles Evans, George Lowe (Everest), Willi Unsoeld (Makalu) and Pete Schoening (K2). However, it was in 1954 that saw three incidents in the mountains that sparked a lot of interest. Two were tragic with the loss of life, while the third had a successful outcome. Ulf Bitterlich of Port Alberni was involved in the rescue operation of each tragedy. The first incident was the death of Alberni climber Ralph Rosseau on Mt. Septimus in July due to an ice bridge collapsing. The second was an RCAF plane crash on Mt. Arrowsmith on the Thanksgiving weekend with the loss of all four personal. The third was two weeks later when a young Victoria climber, Charles Faulkner, fell and broke his leg on Mt. Arrowsmith. Ulf Bitterlich later received an award from the Humane Association for his contribution in all three accidents. It also led to the formation of the Alberni Mountain Rescue Team. Numerous articles from a number of different newspapers have been transcribed and each gives an interesting insight to the stories as they evolved. It is interesting to see the style and depth of research by the various reporters. In 1952, two female members, Muriel Aylard and Mabel Duggan, visited Switzerland and climbed the Matterhorn and Zinal Rothorn. The GMC's in the Rockies were well-attended by Island climbers who graduated to active membership on the mainland peaks, and world travelers Beryl and Miles Smeeton moved to Salt Spring Island and took members out on their ketch "Tzu Hang" to some of the Gulf Islands rock climbing. Section members who passed away during this period include: William Foster and Fred Helm (the first section chairman and treasurer), Herbert Shade, Charles Whitney-Griffiths and Jean Mollison.



Skiers carrying the rope for the ski tow on Mount Brenton 1950.



ACCVI members during the 1953 section summer camp trip to Nine Peaks and Big Interior Mountain. (Photos by Syd Watts)



ULF BITTERLICH, young German immigrant who accompanied Rosseau on ill-fated expedition and hiked out for help. An experienced mountaineer, Bitterlich trained in Austrian Alps.

Newspaper photo of Ulf Bitterlich in 1954.



Bill Lash and Everest climber Ed Hillary during Hillary's visit to Victoria in 1954.



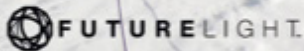
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***From the Front Cover:
Introduction to backcountry skiing.
Photo by Nadja Steiner***

Thank you to this month's contributors:

Barb Baker, Catrin Brown, Sarah Cox, Janelle Curtis, Laura Darling, Lindsay Elms, Neil Ernst, Jim Everard, Christine Fordham, David Lemon, Mary Sanseverino, Nadja Steiner, Joanna Verano, and Ken Wong.

Well done everyone!



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