

KARABINER '91

THE JOURNAL OF THE KOOTENAY MOUNTAINEERING CLUB
Volume 34, 1991



**Dedicated to all the club members
who make our club so active
and successful**

KARABINER '91

The Journal of the Kootenay Mountaineering Club

KMC EXECUTIVE

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Vice-President.....Susan Knoerr
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Cabins & Trails.....George Apel
Conservation.....Ric Bivar
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Karabiner.....Susan Knoerr, Lee Schaeffer

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Presidential Perspective

Peter McIver

Over the twenty-five years of the club existence, mountain matters have become much more organized. From an era of difficult access, unexplored mountains, haphazard protection and not much public attention to landscape, we have moved to one of systematic categorizing of all lands. Areas of scenic beauty or with other natural values are placed into "protected" and "unprotected" areas. Protection ranges through Wilderness Areas, National and Provincial Parks to Recreation Areas.

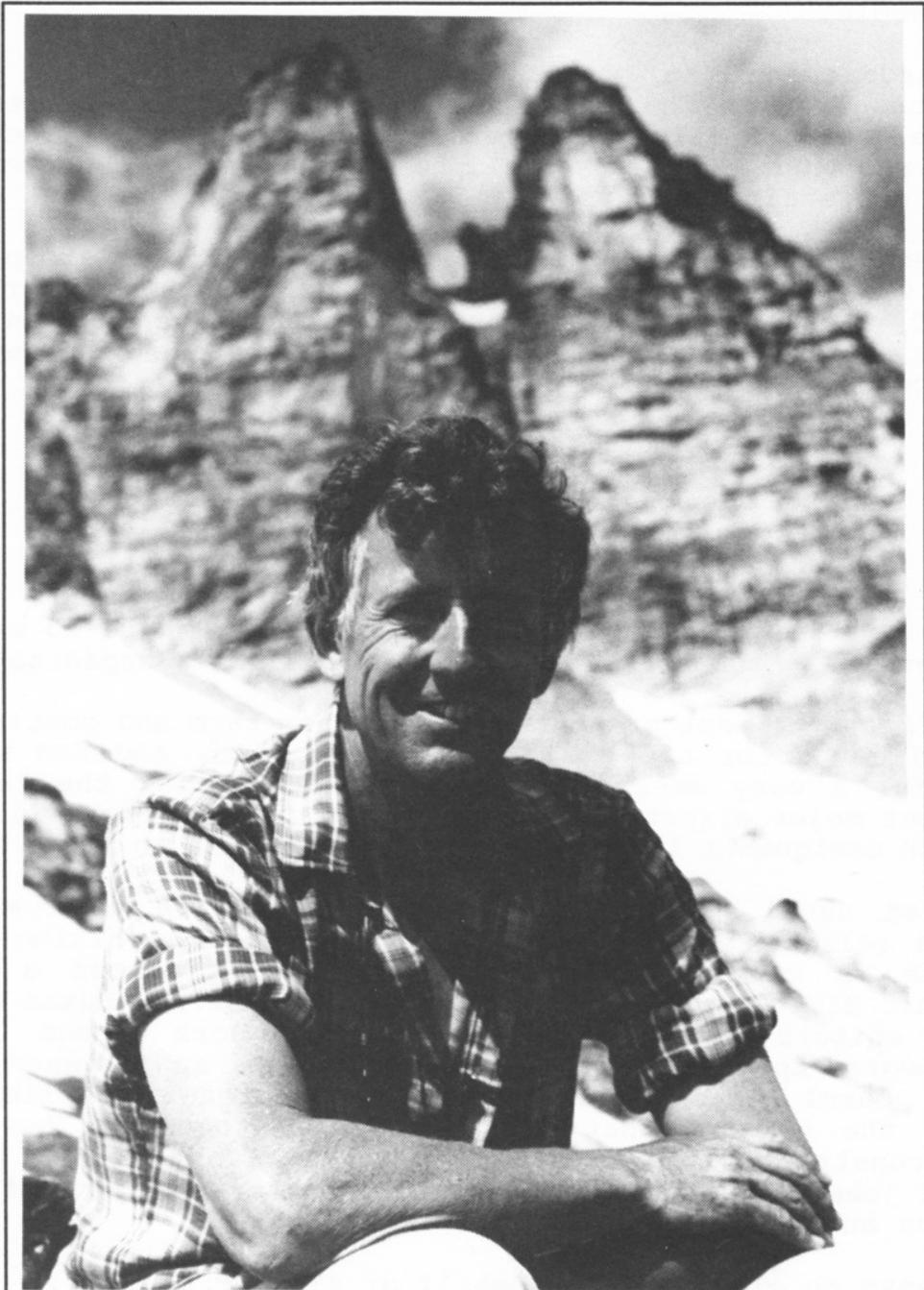
In the early part of the century the areas around Rossland, Nelson and the Slocan Valley/Goat Range were extensively explored for mineral values - logging occurred in conjunction with this, and many areas were clearcut or burned. Trails and cabins were developed to service the small high-grade copper/gold and lead/silver mines, and 50 years later we were using the trails and cabins for mountaineering access. Twenty-five years after this we are now concerned about re-logging and large clearcutting of virgin forests. Roads are being placed into almost all valleys and watersheds; mountaineering access is so much easier but we deplore the devastation which sometimes accompanies this improved access.

Our Parks have become sanctuaries, but they are not problem free as we struggle to maintain a balance between accessibility and preservation. In Kokanee Park, accessibility has won out, hands down. Five or six roads give entrance from all sides; every valley has a trail, the centrally located Slocan Chief cabin is now virtually unavailable to local residents in winter as it is competed for, continent wide.

There is a danger that we may, by inaction or indifference, allow our jewel, the Valhallas, to go the same way. The Master Plan envisages networks of trails and cabins. A balance is needed - the Drinnan-Gwillim drainage is already relatively heavily used - the more rugged central areas of the park remain pristine, the Mulvey Basin is still protected by a 2000' scramble in and out. Fortunately a lack of funds has delayed implementation by Parks of their long-term plans - maybe as a club we need to think through what we want for this wild and beautiful but compact park.

At the northern boundaries of our mountains lie the Goat Range and Purcells. Concerns in the unprotected Goat Range - great for hiking and ski touring - include helicopter skiing, and potentially much more harmful, snowcat skiing with Retallack as the base.

The Purcells, with the only large glaciers in our area is currently partly protected by a "Wilderness Area". The protection



Peter relaxing where he likes to be, in the mountains

given is very good; the problem is that the status is very precarious, and subject to change with little formality. A wilderness park would be far more secure. In order to avoid conflict with significant logging activities the "Wilderness Area" excludes several major mountaineering destinations, the MacBeth group, and Truce-Cauldron areas for example.

The largest current potential threat to destruction of our mountain values lies in the proposed mega-resort at Jumbo Pass. The club has made representation on several occasions, but not received a satisfactory response. I urge you all to be aware of this proposal and be active in expressing your views.

Your executive puts conservation items at the top of its priority list - this is behind our recommendation to continue our membership of the FMC of BC; a group of 4000 members has more influence than one of 250, but most effective are individuals making separate representation on items of concern - please be active.

See you in the hills in '92

A Thank You

During 1991 many executive members worked very hard to make the club so successful - and this is an excellent, active organization.

Rita Holmes, our past present completed her term and continued as a Regional Director for the FMC of BC. Both Rita, and Ken who was responsible for a very well organized rock school for the last two years, have put major efforts into the club. I'm sure they will enjoy their 18 month assignment in Chile and we look forward to their return.

Camps, as usual, were excellent - due to the hard work of Fred Thiessen (climbing camp) and Joan Harvey for the hiking camps. Reports occur in this journal. Vivien Bowers produced a lively newsletter, Ric Bivar coordinated conservation concerns, Susan and Lee (this year's editors) are thanked for the hard work needed for the Karabiner. George Apel built cabins and outhouses, and cleaned trails for members, Carol Potasnyk and Janice Issac organized climbs and meetings and the network that binds the club together, our trips program was constructed by Peter Tchir, Bob Dean and Roland Perrin. The important jobs of treasurer and secretary were ably carried out by Garth Thompson and Janet Cameron.

Many thanks to all of you on behalf of all our members.

PEAK BAGGERS GUIDE TO THE KOOTENAYS
Part II High Line Traverse Of Gwillim Lakes Basin

by Steve Horvath

Start at Hoder Creek road parking lot and follow the Gwillim Lakes Trail to the height of land between the lower and upper Drinnon Lakes. Turn left and head towards the objective, Mt. Gregorio.

The summit can be attained either by a series of gullies on the east face or via the east ridge. The latter provides ample opportunity for pleasant class 4 bouldering. The lower part is literally covered with blueberries, late August or early September are the best time to sample them.

The gullies and the ridge converge below a short steep wall of the summit ridge. Scramble up this or rope up (low class 5 exposure) and then walk up the long ridge to the summit. (3 hours from parking lot). Down climb the NW ridge with some nice route finding problems and then follow the long pleasant ridge up and down with grassy hollows, white granite and expansive views, to the next unnamed summit, identified by a large cairn.

From here, the best way is to drop down the slabs towards the Gwillim Basin until it's possible to traverse left and rejoin the ridge in the saddle between this summit and the long shoulder of Black Prince. If one chooses to follow the ridge proper, there's some rather interesting down climbing or an opportunity for a rappel just below the saddle.

The shoulder leading towards Black Prince is much longer than it appears. It has several small buttresses that can be bypassed easily on the right, but then one gives up the views and the fresh breeze on the ridge. There are several false alarms, "it's just past the next one, just 10 more minutes", before one finally reaches the real summit. The views are second to none and one can spend quite a long time contemplating future trips and new lines. Then it's time to make a choice, the more ambitious ones can continue on the ridge towards the Black Prince - Lucifer saddle and then climb the west ridge of Lucifer. A few pitches of low class 5, time to rope up. From the summit down climb the south ridge (one short roped up part) then drop down to Gwillim Lakes and the trail back.

A more conservative choice is to forgo the Lucifer trip and descend pretty much straight down to Gwillim Lakes. The route is quite straightforward. I prefer to go only to the lakes below Lucifer, then traverse that little basin to its south end where one can easily walk down to the Lakes and the trail.

A lovely day, I think. The round trip takes some 10 hours for the shorter version and some 13 to 14 hours when one climbs Lucifer as well. A rope and a small rack are necessary for Lucifer, but optional otherwise. But beware a longer day if the weather threatens.

THE DEVILLE MADE US DO IT

by Hamish Mutch

Doug Hogg and I spent 3 1/2 days on the west arm of the Deville and another 3 days hiking out over the Grand Glacier. We left our vehicle at the north end of the Duncan River Road, which now ends at the park boundary and helicoptered in to the col between Wheeler and Kirkpatrick. We camped on the glacier about one kilometre north of here, approximately half way between Augustine and Wheeler. I had persuaded Doug (and myself) that since we were camped at over 9000 feet, the next few days would be quite leisurely-almost decadent, with any luck....

The plan for day two was to wander down the Deville, and up and over the crest of Bishop's Glacier to reach the unclimbed north face of Cyprian, climb it, traverse over to Augustine and then descend either the east or south ridge back to camp. While all of these objectives were ultimately accomplished, it was not the lazy day which we had anticipated. Our descent of the south ridge of Augustine was not something which we would choose to repeat in either direction.

The next day we climbed Wheeler from the west and then Kirkpatrick from the east. The summit record on Wheeler still contained the entry which Dick Culbert and I had left 27 years earlier (1964). On day four we headed back down the Deville again, this time to climb Selwyn and Hasler. We did a new route on the south ridge of Selwyn, across to Hasler in deep soft snow, and back over Selwyn again. The final slog up the Deville that evening went very slowly. A roller coaster day. Six big peaks and two new routes in six days.

The next day we started out following the ski route south. We attempted Grand on the way by, but fatigue, lateness and a never ending crevasse rebuffed us. We descended the south slopes and joined a guided party (going north) for the night. Another day took us slowly to the top of Sugarloaf, where we camped at 10,000 feet, just below the summit. Doug chose this spot to demonstrate one of his magic tricks - he made an \$80 tent pole disappear down a crevasse. Unfortunately he could not bring it back.

On the seventh day we too should have rested, but instead slowly descended the Duncan Glacier in worsening weather. Beaver and Duncan beckoned in a dank, distant and disdainful manner. We walked on by...

BELIEVE IT OR NOT!

by Hamish Mutch

Last summer, Paul Allen and I spent an enjoyable day climbing Mt. Findlay. (No that's not it). While relaxing on the top we noticed a green plastic lunch box about 10 feet from the cairn. Inside the lunch box was a new notebook, with no entries. Attached to the handle of the lunch box was approximately 12 feet of old rope, with a knot at the loose end.

By combining our meagre brain-power we concluded that the Parks Branch is now using helicopters to drop summit records on remote mountain peaks. Sure do make a fella wonder!!

P.S. Dear Parks: If you plan to continue this innovative scheme of dropping lunch boxes on mountain tops, please fill on with candy bars (or better still, with Kokanee) and leave it on Mt. Lees.

P.P.S. Paul has promised to provide a full account of these wanderings, but at a later date.....

MOUNTAINS

The high peaks of Mount Everest and Mount Blanc.
The Low peaks of Mount Sentinel and Mount Bonnington.
As I climb small mountains like Sentinel I
think of Mount Everest.
As I walk and hike I'm determined to get
to the top, to the snow, to the glacier.
In summer I take my time,
the mountains are covered by beautiful flowers
and wild animals-
This is where nature lives.
In the winter I have just as much fun.
I ski to wonderful places.
I leave the town and find my heart, my soul,
my life.
I enjoy myself.
I climb with determination,
I climb for the beauty and wilderness,
I climb for love of the mountains.

Amy Tchir (Age 10)

CLIMBING HELMET ON GLADSHIEM

by PETER TCHIR

The road up Bannock Creek had continued to deteriorate so the water drains across the road in the upper regions made Mark abandon his car. He and Paul climbed into the back of Larry's truck for the last section of road which took us to the trailhead south of Gimli peak. Following the trail took us far enough south to explore Wolf Ears/Dag col as an access to Mulvey Basin but found no easy way of descending the ridge to Dag. We returned to our original plan, the Gimli/Jones col after passing around the west side of Gimli. The descent into Mulvey Basin was easy with some nice glissading. We camped at the Upper lake. That night it rained and blew requiring us to sleep in an extra 1/2 hour to recover. When we finally got going, the lower basin was still filled with fog but as we proceeded upward the weather brightened.

We climbed Gladshiem by the gully that leads to the West ridge from the old cabin site. Here we saw six goats and Mark found a slightly rodent gnawn white climbing helmet among the boulders. This was great as I had forgotten my helmet and the gully has its share of loose rock. The first part of the ridge is wide and a pleasant scramble, but the second part ("the first step") required some tough moves. With exposure, two ropes and three people, we were slow. After the "first step" the ridge is easy and wide, leading to the "second step" which provides a nice scramble to the summit. It took us six hours to get to the top, but the weather was great and we were comfortable with our rate.

On the summit we were sitting around and I decided to check the summit recorder for the most recent climbs and who may have lost a helmet. No luck. It then struck me to look inside the helmet for a name. Sure enough, there it was in big black letters, KMC. Well after a good laugh and lots of speculation about whom owed the club for a new helmet, we headed down.

The descent took a couple of rappels. We were slow and did not return to camp until almost seven o'clock, a twelve hour day. What a surprise to walk into camp and find Bert Port there visiting. he and his son had packed in via the Midgard/Jones col that day. We agreed that with a little bit of work (a KMC Work party) this would be the preferred route into Mulvey Basin.

The second night was glorious, clear and very cold. Thus the next morning we struggled a bit on the very hard snow leading up to Gimli/Jones col for we had not brought crampons. Norm gave us a lesson in step chopping. All this time I was carrying home the lost KMC helmet and wondering how long it had been on the slopes of Mt. Gladshiem. When we reached the southside of Gimli we abandoned packs and scrambled to its summit. This was a lot of fun as it is such a beautiful summit. From Gimli we took the low route through the valley below us to an obvious rockslide in the woods, and an easy trip through meadows and forest until we intercepted the trail back to the clearcut and our cars. This lower route is more direct, involves less side-hill walking

and is quite nice. It is recommended over the marked trail that we had used on the way in.

Its now six months later. I wrote this little report for the newsletter but it never made it in, so word of the helmets discovery has never reached the proper authorities. In fact, the helmet is still lost, but now on a shelf in my home. I would be glad to return it to the person whom lost it, just give me a call.

We were: Norm Thyer, Larry Smith, Mark Ritchie, Peter Tchir, Paul Hunter.



Teacher and student in intense
consultation at Climbing School

HIKING CAMP 91 - WEEK 1

Vivien Bowers

This being my first hiking camp, I wondered what I was in for. I felt as if I was heading off to Girl Guide Camp again, with all my prescribed supplies including the mesh bag for my dishes and cutlery. Climbing Camp was never this tickety-boo, nor do they have little stools to sit on and a campfire every night. I scoffed, and still do, but have to secretly admit that the stools beat sitting on the wet ground, and that the fire is kind of nice on a chilly night.



Sue and Janice smiling in spite of the fog

prepared my pack and went to bed early every night, ready for the next day's outings. This cut down on the evening socializing around the "approved fire burning device", listening to Mari Earthy's great stories ("Tell us another story, Mari. C'mon, just one more!"). I figured I could either party or go hiking, and was there really a choice?

We set up camp in the rain and wind, and spent the first night in a typhoon. Soon learned which way to orient the tent, and found out whether we had appropriate clothing along. One tent fly was retrieved from the lake. The outhouse gaily ripped itself to shreds.

As clouds lifted the next day we went off exploring, discovering what a gorgeous area the camp was in. Lots of easily accessible meadows, lakes and bathtubs that warmed up nicely. Ridges to ramble on, and enticing mountains. We started in on them the next day.

For some of us women, hiking camp was a great opportunity to do some mountaineering without our usual male climbing companions. The pace was slower, and we could make all our own decisions, set up our own belays, and celebrate our own achievements. I found it exhilarating, and eagerly



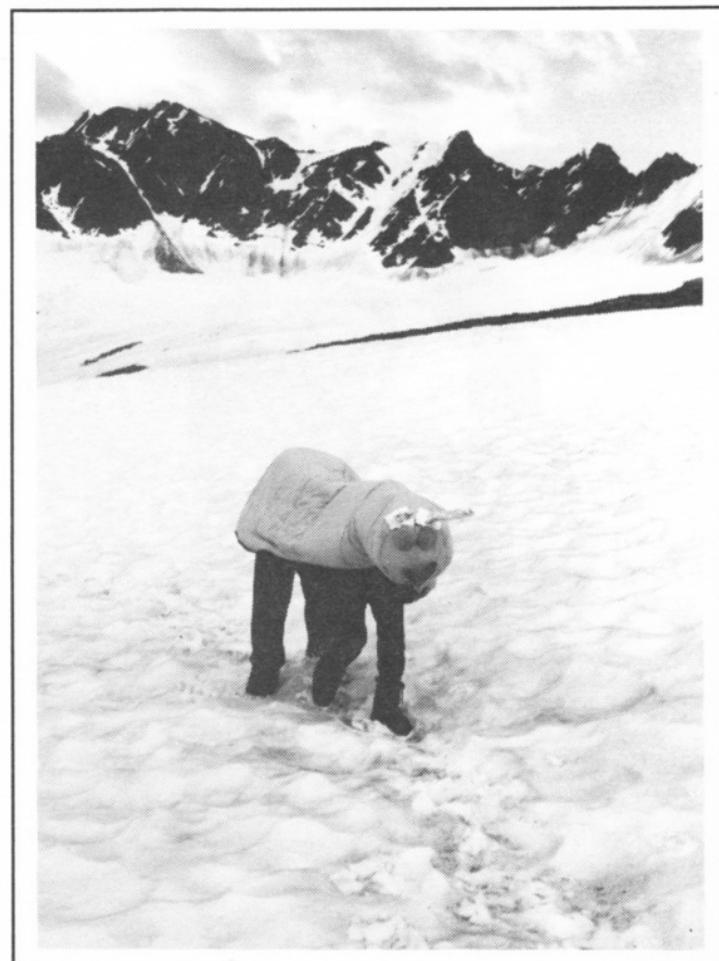
Audrey and Deborah looking their best
our route, during Camp 3.

Another treat was not having to cook for a week. Layton Carefoot ran a friendly kitchen, and had the most incredible soup pot of accumulated leftovers that tasted better every night. That's the advantage of having a pharmacist do the cooking. I wondered aloud whether I could make a soup like that at home, but Audrey Doell told me she tried that, and it tasted like boiled compost.

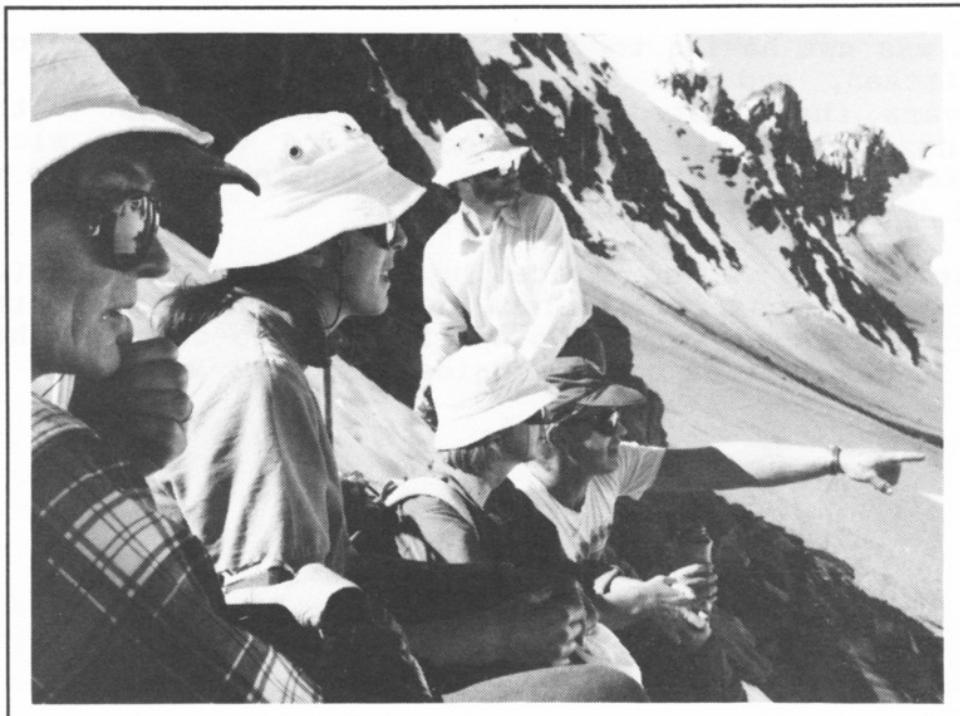
The last night at camp we were graced by ladies of the night (or perhaps from outer space) sporting aluminum foil pie plates in bizarre places, plus an ice worm that crawled over the snow to camp. We had skits and songs - it was just as good as Guide camp ever was.

Towards the middle of the week we realized that many camp members had dutifully brought ice axes to camp (there was lots of snow) but didn't know what to do with them. Sue Port and I gave a lesson in ice axe arrests to camp members so who braved the pouring rain and enthusiastically threw themselves down a snow pitch close to camp.

All week long, as we climbed other peaks, Sue had been eyeing Mt. International, the highest peak in the area. She had a route picked out, but was deterred by other camp members who pointed out the ice falls and crevasses. Finally, on the last day, Sue, Janice and I set out. Got most of the way up, and certainly far enough to know that the route was quite feasible and we could have done it, when we were totally fogged in and unable to continue. We felt vindicated, and tried to be philosophical about having to turn back. The mountain was climbed without difficulty, by



One of the interesting wild things one encounters in the mountains

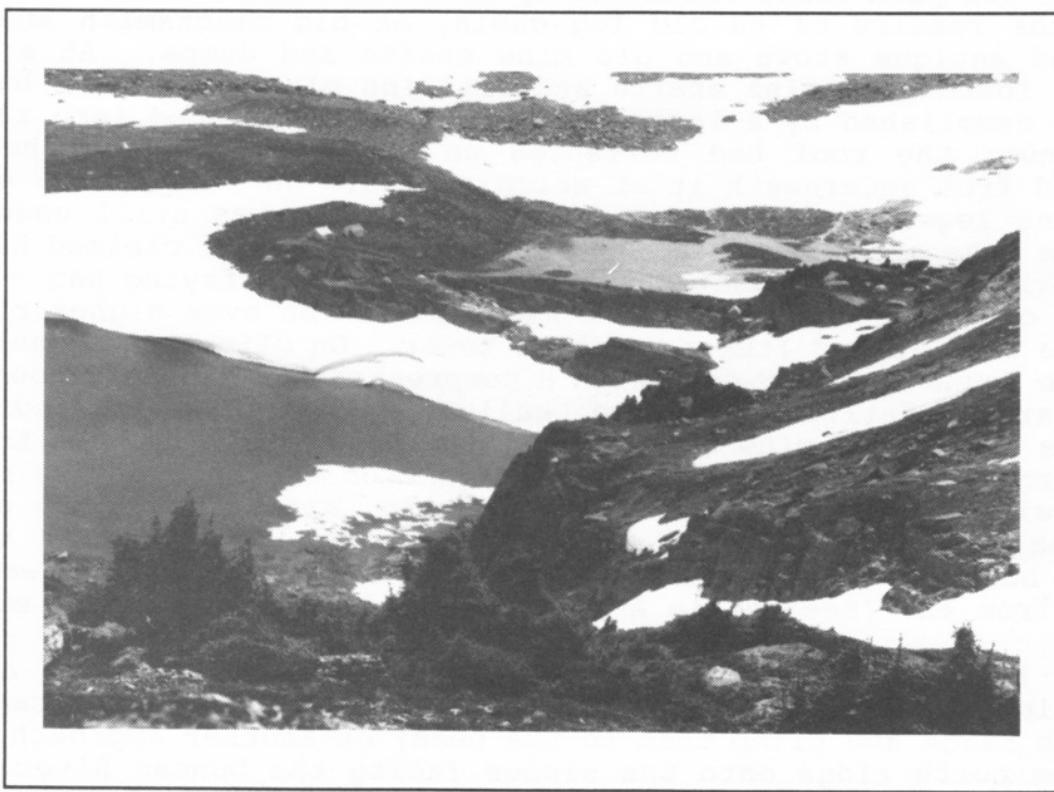


Everyone enjoying the view on a sunny day

THE KMC HIKING CAMP AT
INTERNATIONAL BASIN
WEEK II
by Garth Thomson

The camp at International Basin was another winner. With marvellous scenery, a fabulous show of wild flowers, an intriguing expose of early mining in the mountains, great weather, the usual gourmet food and a most congenial group of colleagues to share the experiences with; it was the "best camp ever" for some of us.

The site was a particularly good choice. Perched on the spine of the Purcell range, it offered enticing scrambles on the peaks and ridges and fine meadow hikes up ramps leading to the high cols in between. There were spectacular views in all directions. To the south the campsite had the sweeping panorama of the peaks and glaciers of the Carbonate range; to the east there was the view down the Bobbie Burns Creek valley to the Rockies with Mt. Temple visible in the distance and over the ridge to the west, we could see the Selkirks across the Duncan/Beaver Valley, from Mt. Sir Donald in the north, down to the Battle Range, with Mt. Moby Dick and the Schooner Ridge directly opposite and the Nemo Glacier off to the south. A small lake added to the setting close to camp and drinking water was close at hand. On our arrival, it seemed a rather bleak place and the campers from the previous week seemed to find it cold, but our weather picked up immediately and we warmed to the situation and gained a very favourable impression of the area.



Looking down on camp

The weather started pretty miserably but picked up on Sunday and for the balance of the week we had fine weather with lots of sunshine and great views. One violent thunderstorm put in an appearance to remind us we were serious campers but no harm was done. The biffy shelter had to be revived after the storm, but it was in an incurable condition before the week started and only brilliant innovation kept it functioning as a shelter storm or no storm. It's got to go.

The ramps were a major feature of the area running to the northeast from the north side of Bobbie Burns valley. These ramps approached the level of camp or by dropping down the valley to start on the lower ones led to a number of good hikes. On our first day some of us climbed Mt. David following the ramps to the snowfield above the headwaters of Dennison Creek and then climbing on the snow to the col between Cony Peak and David and then up the long ridge to the summit. This offered superb views in all directions - in particular the broad sweep of the Selkirks off to the west. Practically all of us did this route some time during the week. Another version used a higher ramp to gain a col closer to camp from which there is a good scramble up a peak we dubbed Bobbie Burns Tam. John Stewart and Garth tried to go beyond Mt. David to Beverly Peak, but were stopped by a 75 ft rampart which effectively blocked any routes along the north side of the Bobbie Burns Creek. The ramps were not only the access to climbs, but also were the meadows for gorgeous wildflower displays and on the ramps we found much evidence of the mining endeavors of times past.

All of us at one time or another explored the evidence of early mining activities. Under the guidance of our resident geologist, Leslie, we checked out the old buildings and mineshafts, examined drill cores and collected rock samples and crystals. At the lowest level we found the old pack trail which led up from the Bobbie Burns Valley. It led to the remains of an old log cabin, an old blacksmith shop with anvil and antique stove and old mine shafts and dumps. At a higher level we found more mine shafts and drilling platforms and a hut that had been demolished by a large boulder. It had crashed into the side of the hut; the roof had collapsed on top of it and crushed logs protruded from underneath it at weird angles. We immediately started concocting legends of the poor Chinese cook who was still underneath the whole mess with dinner on the stove. John Stewart claimed his hand was sticking out from under the wreckage holding a frying pan - or was it a pot of tea? Anyway I didn't see him. On an even higher ridge we could see what looked like a tramline tower. On climbing to that level later, we found a sturdy deck with a compressed air manifold mounted on it and large quantities of cable, railway spikes and rails indicating there was probably a mine tunnel under the snow. However, the tramline tower turned out to be a biffy built right on the edge of the cliff - theloo with the view. According to Leslie, all this was the site of the Alpha mine first worked in 1888 and later revisited at various times - but her subsequent research has indicated no ore was ever shipped from it. (See Leslie Anderton's article also in this edition)

Mt. Sibbald was very prominent south-west of our camp and was destination for many of us. We could climb straight west of camp onto the north ridge and climb that to the peak; or another approach was to cross the north ridge onto the slopes facing the Duncan River valley and climb up to the south-west ridge. It was a delightful long ridge walk with spectacular views of the Selkirks to the west.

The whole area to the west of camp on the upper slopes of the Duncan River Valley was great hiking country with a series of ledges working down to the treeline. The lake on top of the ridge west of camp and the creek flowing from it down the valley to the west in a series of waterfalls were particularly popular. At one point the water dropping in four inch steps down the stratified rock and mirrored in the small tarn below made an exquisite little haven to rival any man made fountain in a park - a true candidate for the overworked name Bridal Veil Falls.

The vast panorama of the Carbonate Range to the south was just a view for most of us, but for a few venturesome souls it was another place to explore. Lee and Norman roped up and climbed the glacier to the col between Strut Peak and Sandilands Peak and then climbed both peaks. In his

excitement at the views Lee left his binoculars on top of one of the peaks but the next camp could not find them. One of the many marmots is probably using them to watch for bears. John Stewart traversed the southern side of International Basin at the edge of the glacier to see if he could cross the ridge that would give views of the large glacier further to the east, but was stopped by rock bands and the glacier edge. We found that the south side of the basin offered ample scope for adequately equipped glacier travel, but not much for the hiker.

One excursion was made down the valley to search for an old stamp mill which was reported in early mining records. Several had hopes of climbing up out of the valley from lower down to get to areas which were inaccessible by the more direct routes from camp. The old trail was found and followed but progress became increasingly difficult due to alder and deadfall - so no more relics of the past were found.

No large animals were spotted during the week. Pat, Kay and Gloria reported the sighting of a wolverine and we saw marmots quite frequently close to camp. The lake by the camp had a resident gull that spent its time swimming or rambling around on the ice. Our increasing concern for his condition was finally relieved when he took



Loo with a view

to the air for some high speed dive trials; proving that he really hadn't forgotten how to fly. There was also a cowbird spotted walking around the helipad trying to figure out that strange beast that could fly straight up. Also, a mother ptarmigan was spotted right in front of us on the rocky scree putting on a distracting act while its lone chick froze in the rocks beside us.

The camp provided a feast for the eyes of flower lovers. The ramps were covered with a wide variety of alpine flowers. Even though the moraines appeared desolate at a distance, they were rich in flora such as four varieties of fleabane, saxifrages, paintbrush, chickweed and willow herbs. Two unique plants that were abundant were the roseroot and the butterwort. Hikers were happy to see the pretty little blue flower along the creek doing its part in ridding the area of insects which get stuck on their sticky yellow leaves and are eventually digested. We were able to list 100 varieties during the week.

To sum it up, it was a very successful hiking camp in all respects. Special thanks should go to Joan, our leader, Laurie Charlton, who did a lot of organizing before he switched camps with Joan and Terry, our cook for making it such an enjoyable week.

We were: Leader: Joan Harvey; Cook: Terry McLean; Anna, Norman and Linda Thyer; John and Kay Stewart; John and Muriel Walton; Ron and Janet Cameron; Roy and Gloria Hopland; Pat and Garth Thomson; Lee Schaeffer and Susan Knoerr, Frits and Marieka Swinkels.

"UP THE DUNCAN"

by Paul Allen

It always conjures up images and memories, a wonderful phrase, like Stanley and Livingstone, remote and far away. Like going on a Hobbit type adventure into the land of the unknown, the realm of the seldom climbed peaks with the names all their own. Of far away Battles and Beavers and Templemans with sea captains named Ahab and all kinds of Bugaboos. With no trails and tourists and almost "blank spots on the map". Going "Up The Duncan" always seems to be a magical adventure and a favourite place to be.

So its off again to Sugarplum Spire and maybe Hatteras too, typical Duncan type names. The adventure starts like all good adventures, Steve is late and then forgets his boots as well just for good measure. So we arrive at the Balfour ferry a half hour late to find Hamish sleeping on the hood of his car in the early morning sun.

We speed of up the valley towards our appointed rendezvous with the helicopter and as we drop off Hamish's car at the creek crossing

point where we hope to walk out, we realize the helicopter is already waiting for us at the very end of the road. So into the back of Steve's truck I go, only to have a sauna every time he splashes through a puddle as we fly up the valley at 60 mph, drifting sideways on the corners and right past a startled hiking camp group busily flying sling loads into their first camp.

Don, our pilot loads our gear as we hastily throw off our city clothes, jump into our boots and head off into the Hatteras group. A short flight lifts us onto a rock outcrop on the edge of the Hatteras glacier, were we leisurely pick out a flat spot, then hastily fling up the tent and dive in just in time to beat the downpour. Just were did that good weather go?

We lie in the tent for 24 hours regaled with conversation from the ever gregarious Hamish,

How long have you been in Creston Hamish?	years Paul,
How long have you been climbing Hamish?	years Paul,
Did you ever climb with Kryshna?	yup,
did you ever climb with Putnam?	nope,
Were have you done most of your climbing Hamish?	in the mountains Paul,

Hamish, Hamish, are you awake? Nope!

At noon of the next day we crawl out of our tent and look over at the hiking camp area were the storm still lingers, and snicker, for we are dry now. So we set off to assault the monstrous Squab, actually a bump on the ridge between Sugarplum and Hatteras. Some exercise anyways and a small chance to salvage part of the day. On the way back from Squab we spot an unclimbed ridge on Krinkletop and so the plot is set for the next days adventure.

The next morning up the ridge we scramble, on to new discoveries, boy is it ever nice to be " Up The Duncan" where new routes are still available. As to the summit, we read the register to find out that us three supposedly intelligent explorers equipped with map and compass have just repeated Kryshna's first ascent route up Snowman Peak and Krinkletop is a half mile away along the ridge on the way to Mt. Hatteras.

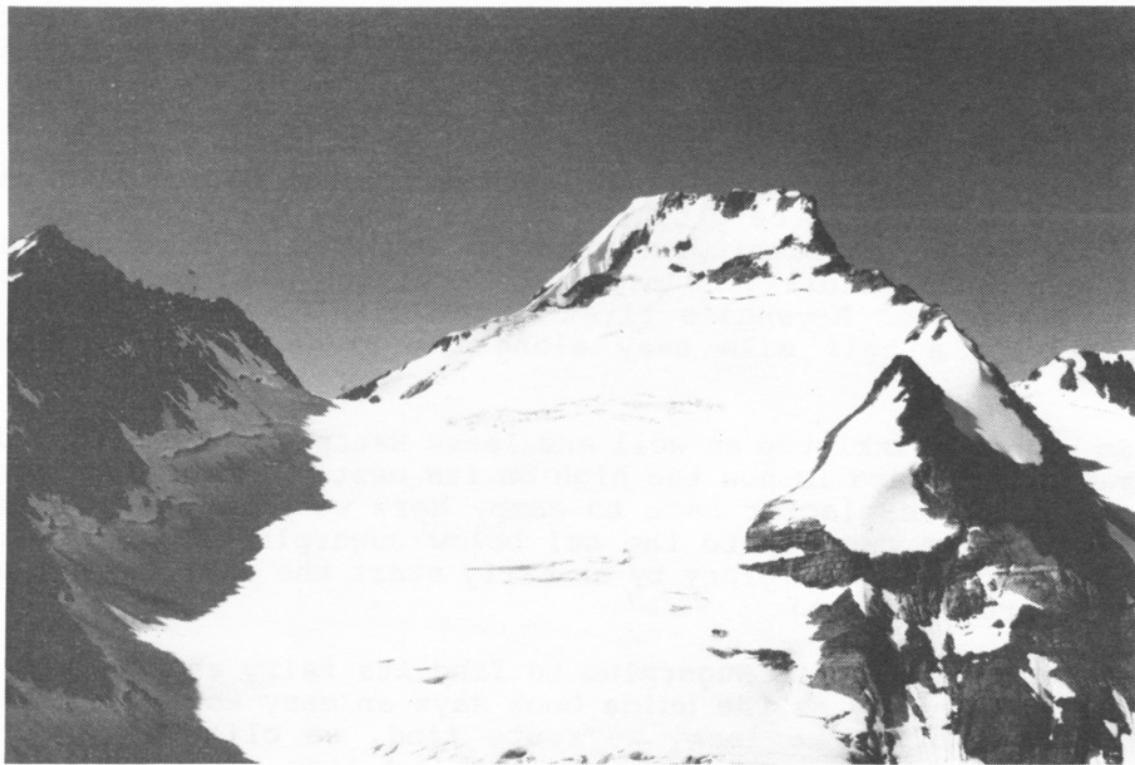
So we bag Krinkletop as well and leave Hatteras for another day as the avalanche hazard is now too high on its west ridge, and we romp off down the hatteras glacier back to camp. Here we come up with another great idea, move camp up to the col below Sugarplum and Hatteras and then cover ourselves in glory by an early start the next day and bag em both. Boy are we smart!

Up early and off to Sugarplum to find its fairy and the summit as well. Should be easy as the guide book says an easy scramble in 3 or 4 hours. We climb up, we look, we route find, we climb some more, we route find some more, we climb some more, we stop for lunch, and then do it all over again. Glancing at our watches as we surmount gargoyles and gendarmes, rappel, climb up again, traverse around, climb over and under ridge crest boulders, eventually to use discretion and at 4 o'clock we turn around.

Hopefully, if we hurry we will get back to camp before dark and



Steve looking at Sugarplum Spire



Mt. Hatteras in centre with Krinkletop on left

avoid a bivy above 9,000 ft. So what happens? An easy traverse is located around the second summit of the three and within the hour were off the summit ridge and rappelling back down the west face and stroll

leisurely into camp for a late supper.

From one of the Purcell's premier campsites, the best ever says Steve, we watch the darkness descend and await the next days walk out. Sure to be easy as its all down hill, we set off through huge alpine meadows dotted with still frozen lakes and mark this spot in memory for future campsite area to come back to. After all we will have to come back as nothing was climbed that was planned for.

Ah, but we have to remember where we are, "Up The Duncan", and now the fun begins on this simple walk out. The middle plateau of meadows are spectacular and very reminiscent of the Valhallas but then its straight downhill for 3 thousand feet to the valley floor and the car. Mike Brewster walked up here one year but several years later the fire burn we have to walk down is ten feet high in alder and we loose track of our feet for a couple of hours as we wade first uphill and then downhill through the jungle.

Seven hours later after breaking camp we sight the road and slide down to it. Scrapped, battered, bruised and thirsted right out in the full blast of the afternoon sun, we literally jump into the ice cold creek, get out and then minutes later jump in again to try and cool off. Its a harsh walk out and Hamish was heard to say, "Were's the helicopter? more than once. But its been a wonderful trip for we have been "Up The Duncan" once again and we will be back.

Paul Allen, Steve Horvath, Hamish Mutch



"Freeze, Earl! Freezel... Something rattled!"



Snowman Peak to the right of Hatteras
Glacier

CLIMBING CAMP 1991
July 28th to August 5th
THE PREMIERS

by Kim Kratky

Camp Participants

Ross Breakwell, Diana Geller, Ken Holmes, Kim Kratky, Dave Lemon, Rhonda Netzel, Maureen, Pam Olsen, Andrew Port, Bert Port, Jeff Roberts, Delia Roberts, Larry Smith, Peter Tchir, Ossa Thatcher (cook), Toby Thatcher, Fred Thiessen, Gary Stapes, Eric White

Camp Location:

In the Premier Range of the Cariboo Mountains, about 18 miles ESE of Valemount, at the headwaters of the Canoe river, on a bench E of the North Canoe Glacier, at about 6,600 ft. (co-ordinates about 196493 on Azure River topo map 83d/12.

This years camp was located in a little meadow tucked into a rock buttress looking down upon the Canoe Glacier and the Canoe River valley to the east. Once again, we had spectacular scenery as we could look across the Canoe Glacier to Sir John Thompson and the Little Matterhorn. Farther south lay Trigon Mt. and the Chilkst Peaks. Our soggy campsite, initially resembling a Venetian lagoon, dried out as the week progressed. After stormy weather Sunday and Monday things brightened up considerably, enough so that we had unusually good weather for the Premiers== or so we gathered from reading earlier accounts.

One of the more interesting elements of the camp centred on our flight arrangements. We arrived early on Sunday morning at CMH's Cariboo Lodge, knowing only that our Yellowhead Helicopters pilot was



supposed to meet us somewhere nearby. Lodge manager Ernst Buehler graciously made his heli pad available to us and for a half an hour we got to mingle with the elderly heli hikers from New York before we were all whisked away to our separate alpine destinations.

For eight days we climbed not quite everything you could see to the North, South, and West. For the closer peaks to the North along the Tete Glacier, starts after 6:00am were fashionable. For the big peaks such as Mt. Mackenzie King, Sir Wilfred Laurier, and Sir John Thompson 4:30 starts were the order of the day. Snow conditions were surprisingly good, although some of us did sink in to the mid-calf on parts of the David Glacier. Some of us sunk considerably deeper as the human crevasse detectors were at work. The skis that were brought along turned out to be not so useful for climbing purposes but for fun and recreation. In general the combination of excellent weather and good snow made climbing the big peaks much easier than it had been for the preceding parties that we read about. Thus, we able to leave Sir Wilfred Laurier just before 6:00am and be home by 3:30pm for a swim in the rock pools below the Penny Glacier and a mountain sized Kokanee.

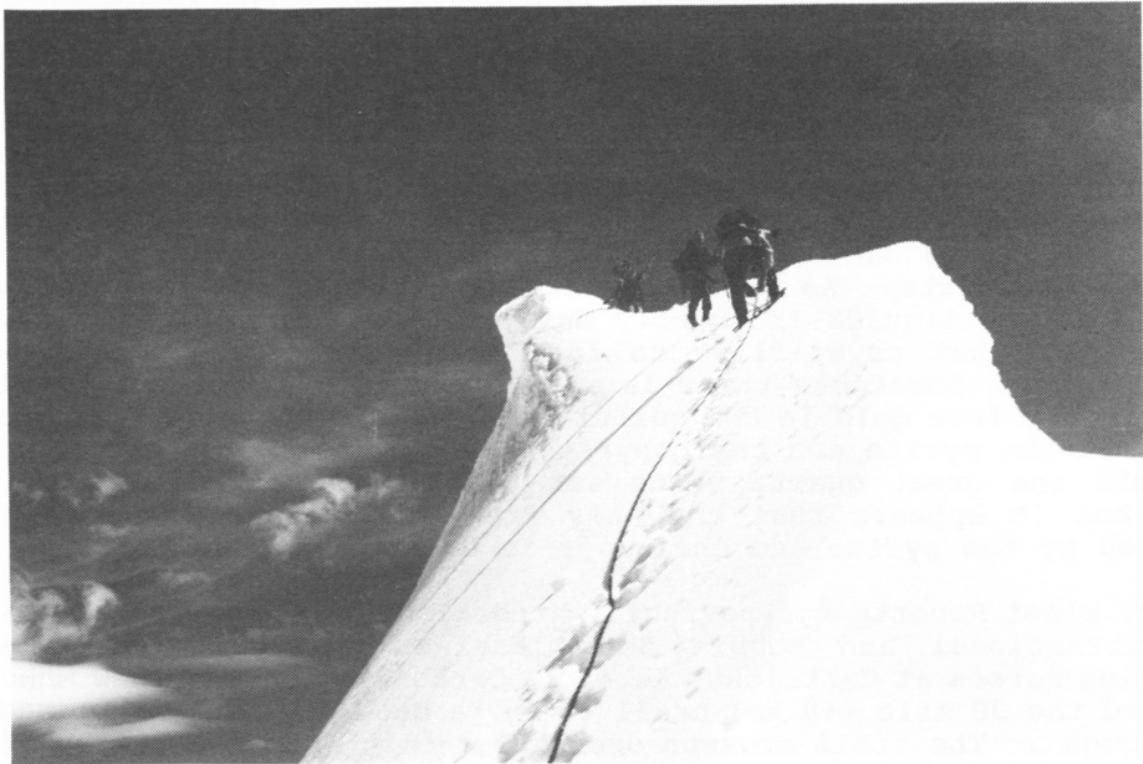
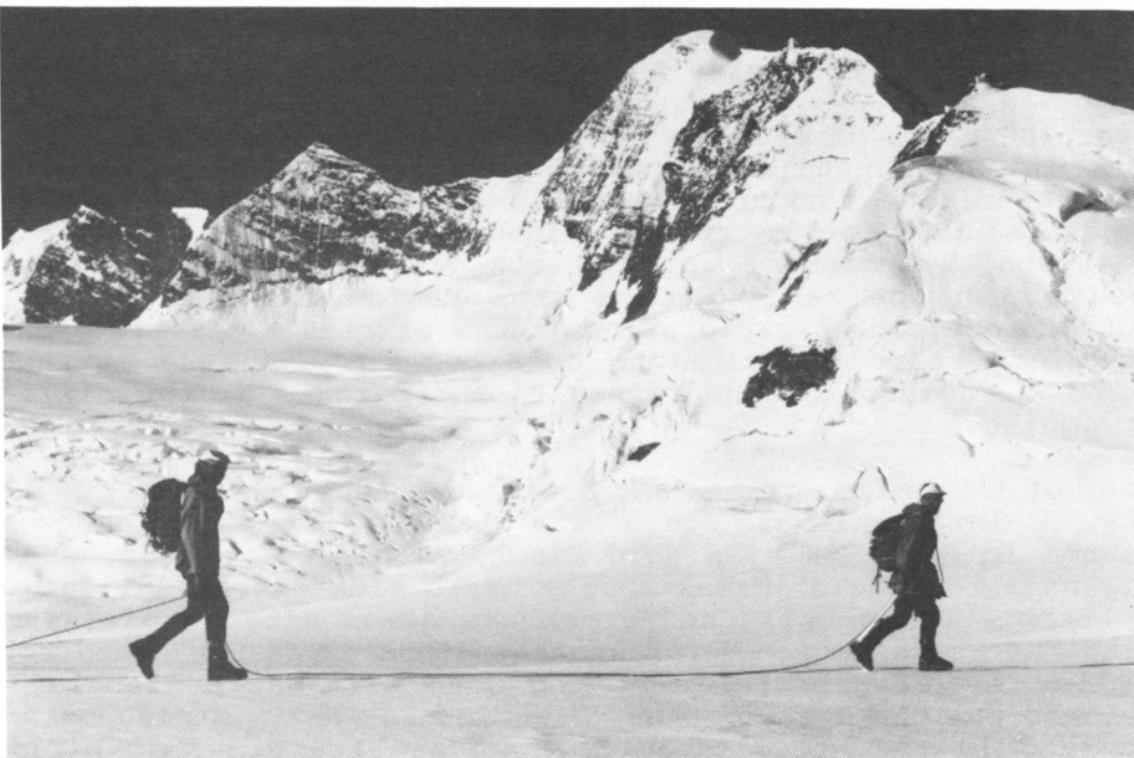
Other camp memories follow. Sir John Thompson played host to the AB and CD teams ---that's able bodied and crippled and diseased. Tents, boots, and even books were attacked by the voracious, or perhaps indignant since it was their turf, ground squirrels. Dave and Eric drew on a wealth of experience to teach grandfather-to-be Ken a feast of children's songs. Nothing like "the Wheel on the Bus" to enliven a boring plod across the Tete Glacier. On Monday people in two parties kilometres apart were hit by lightning discharges during violent thunderstorms. As far as we know, no damage was done, although Ross did say he felt something go in one ear and out the other.

Camp was also notable for feats of courage and strength. Jeff and Delia pioneered the route on Sir John Thompson, turning back just below the summit as the hot afternoon sun had turned the last hundred feet of steep snow into a hazardous mush. Ken climbed regularly despite undergoing arthroscopic knee surgery only two weeks prior to camp. Garry Staples slogged up Sir Wilfred Laurier twice, the second time in much less pleasant snow conditions. Our cook Ossa Thyer managed to get away from the cook tent enough to climb four peaks and her thirteen year old son Toby climbed three, two of which were over 10,000ft.

Heli picnickers, who made fairly regular visits to camp, were treated to climbers in their natural habitat. In addition, Ken told a story about a very large lady whom glissaded down the snow tongue into camp and then couldn't get back up to the helicopter, but this may be apocryphal.

A fitting end to climbing camp 91 was provided by CMH guide Dave Cochrane and staff who opened the Lodge to us for hot showers and complimentary scones and hot coffee after our flight out Monday morning. Just the right start for that twelve hour drive home.

Climbing camp photos



GOLD EXPLORATION IN INTERNATIONAL
AND BOBBIE BURNS BASINS, MIDDLE
FORK OF THE SPILLAMACHEEN

by Lesley Anderton (Killough)

Over 100 years of mining exploration, beginning in 1881, has left its mark in the mountains of the headwaters of Bobbie Burns Creek formerly the middle fork of the Spillamacheen. It was intriguing at hiking camp in 1991 to come across ruined cabins, drills, wheelbarrows, trenches, shafts, piles of white quartz glittering with iron pyrite, and even a tin cup hanging in a tree beside the old trail. The detritus of more recent exploration in the sixties - plastic pipe, oil drums, a large tire and aluminum core boxes - was less attractive, although the location of the ruined "john" perched at the cliff edge was intriguing.

Many of the peaks, creeks and basins owe their names to the mining activity. International Basin was named after a mining claim established in May 1888 by a gold miner, Archibald McMurdo, who also gave his name to McMurdo Creek on the north side of the Spillamacheen Range. Bobbie Burns basin and creek was named after a mining claim honouring the Scots bard. Unfortunately Sibbald was not named for the tiny yellow flower Sibbaldia but for John Drinkwater Sibbald, Gold Commissioner for the West Kootenay District in 1897. Mining recorders are recorded in the names of peaks such as Strutt, after William A Strutt, Mining Recorder at Burton, and Sandilands, after Evelyn Montague Sandilands, who ended his days as Mining Recorder at Wilmer, after earlier working for Baillie Grohman on the ill fated canal at Canal Flats. The Carbonate Range was named for the Carbonate Mining Co. (1892-3), whose ore bodies were formed by alteration of carbonate (lime) rich country rock. Malachite Spire is named for the green copper carbonate formed from weathering of copper rich minerals such as chalcopyrite (copper iron sulphide), some of which was found above the 1991 camp. David Peak was named for David Hope-Simpson, although his colleagues back at the Beverly Mine (hence Beverly Peak) on McMurdo Creek labelled it David's folly.

What draws the mines to the area were the prominent white quartz veins cutting through the green schists and quartzites. Quartz veins are formed when hot liquids, left over from cooling molten rock within the crust, force their way into cracks in the overlying rock and deposit the quartz. As well as containing the silica that forms the quartz the hot liquids frequently carry elements such as iron, copper and sulphur that crystallize to form gold coloured iron pyrite and chalcopyrite. Sometimes there is sufficient gold in the hot liquid to form visible free gold in the quartz vein, but if there is less gold it occurs in the pyrite and chalcopyrite and only shows up in the assay. No doubt the great quartz veins set the miners to dreaming of free gold, but it appears that the only free gold occurred where it was released by the pyrite and chalcopyrite by extensive weathering.

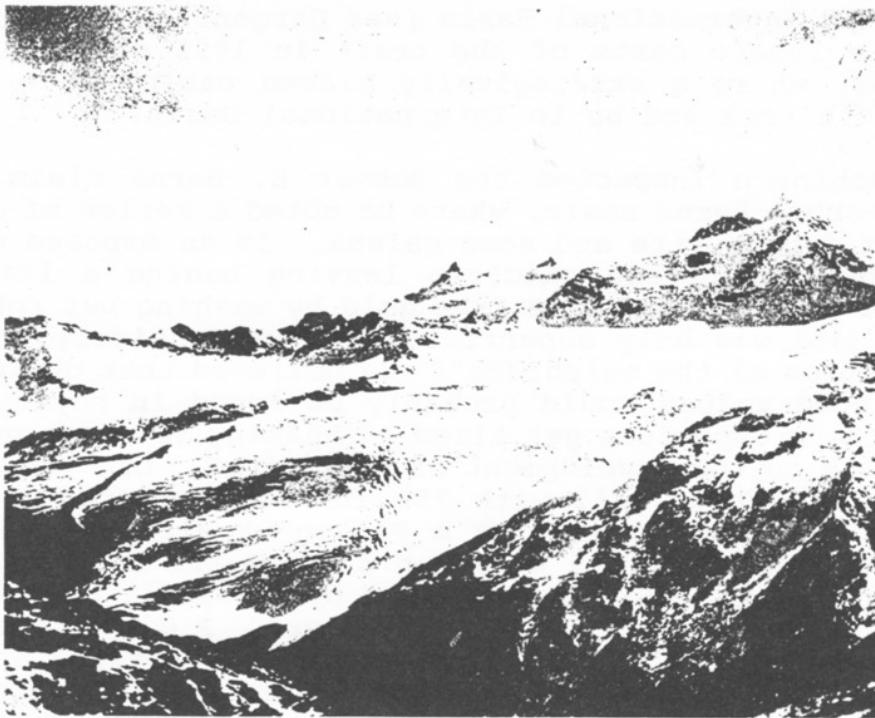
W. Fleet Robertson, Provincial Mineralogist, inspected the claims in International and Bobbie Burns Basins in Sept. 1888. After obtaining horses at Cartrights hotel in Carbonate Landing (now McMurdo) he found the 30 mile (48 km) trail to be "a good one, well kept and not very rough". The trail crossed over the summit into the valley of the North Fork below Loon Lake and then over another summit into the valley

of the Middle Fork and then continued up the Middle Fork (now Bobbie Burns Creek) to International Basin (see Sargent's 1936 map). We were still able to locate parts of the trail in 1991 particularly in the upper reaches, where a strategically placed cabin had a superb view down the Middle Fork and up to International Basin.

First Robinson inspected the Robert E. Burns claim at 7650 ft (2318 m) in Bobbie Burns Basin, where he noted a series of quartz veins with cubes of iron pyrite and some galena. In an exposed open cut the iron sulphides had become oxidized leaving behind a little visible gold. Miners had obtained some free gold by washing but Robertson felt "that such gold was only superficial and was entirely the result of surface oxidation of the sulphides". He believed that chalcopyrite and pyrite with gold values could probably be found in paying quantities "as soon as the prospectors get tired of hunting for free gold and turn their attention to the development of the veins". Ore from the cut was processed at a 5 stamp mill with 750 lb heads erected by the Bobbie Burns Co. in 1891 and powered by a Pelton wheel. A mining engineer reported that 70 tons of ore were run through the mill and that 2 dwt 3 grs of fine gold per ton was recovered by the mill, while the average of the tailings in the pits was 12 dwt 23 grs. A dwt or pennyweight is one twentieth of a troy ounce and is equal to 24 grains and there are 7000 grains in a pound, and thus 12 dwt 23 grs would be about 0.71 ozs of gold per ton. Enroute to International Basin Robertson inspected the Lincoln and Flying Dutchman claims at 6000 ft (1818 m) and 6100 ft (1848 m), respectively on the Middle Fork. At the Flying Dutchman he sampled the iron sulphides and found them to contain \$20 per ton in gold, which was probably 1 oz gold per ton.

Robertson reached International Basin on Sept. 23, rather late for mine inspection at 8000 ft (2424 m) and lamented that "I was unfortunate in that a heavy fall of snow, on the previous day lay on the ground, filling up all the open cuts and covering all the dumps, so I was not able to make as minute an observation as I should have liked." He noted that "the trail passes over the foot of one glacier which extends down into the valley to an elevation as low as 6200 ft." (1879 m) The topographic map of 1977 indicates this same glacier ending at 7400 ft (2242 m), but judging from the lack of vegetation it could have been at 6400 ft not 6200 ft in 1898 and certainly Robertson has a picture of the glaciers showing them extending much lower than in 1991 as shown in Robertson's 1898 photo and Anderton's 1991 photo.

The International Mineral Claim, owned by J.L. Spink et al. of Toronto, was located in the upper right hand corner of the basin at 8400 ft. As in Bobbie Burns basin the chief source of mineralization was iron sulphides within the quartz veins, which had been explored by open cuts and a 50 ft deep shaft as well as some smaller pits. Other claims included the Favourite, Standby with a 90 ft tunnel and 40 ft shaft, and the Maud S with a 250 ft tunnel cutting a quartz vein 10 ft wide, as well as the Luchinvar and Picton. Maud S must have been quite a lady as she gave her name to another gold claim on Aaron Hill, above Castlegar. The Maud S tunnel was probably headed to go through the ridge to the Duncan side where the Bennison claims were. Robertson bemoaned the fact that he was unable to reach the "much-talked-of Bennison Group" as the "trail led over a dangerous glacier and with fresh snow on the ground such an attempt was considered too dangerous to be risked, leaving as an alternative a trip of over 50 miles around to reach the group."



Robertson's 1898 photo of the glacier



Anderton's 1991 picture of same glacier

Despite the miners' and Robertson's high hopes no gold of sufficient quantity to be shipped was found in International Basin in the eighteen nineties and the ground remained idle until 1922, when the claims on both sides of the divide between the Duncan River and the Spillamacheen were consolidated as the Alpha Group. Exploration was financed by the Alpha Mines syndicate with English capital. Work was begun in the fall on "extending a long tunnel driven some years ago", presumably the old 250 ft tunnel on the Maud S and was to be continued through out the winter by a crew of 7 or 8 men. It was hoped that the tunnel would "crosscut at depth a sheared zone in which strong surface showings are exposed on the Duncan slope". A. G. Langley, Resident Mining Engineer for eastern B.C., commented hopefully that "should ore be developed in quantity it will do a lot towards helping to revive mining and prospecting in this part of the country."

Evidently there was insufficient ore and the International Basin was left in peace until 1966, although the workings on the old Flying Dutchman were cleaned out in 1934. In the summer of 1966 the mountains once again rang to the noise of drills when Bonanza Exploration of Vancouver did trenching and drilling on the Alpha, Maud S and Standby. This time the miners were looking for silver, lead, zinc and copper as they realized they were unlikely to find much gold, and good showings of galena (silver-lead ore) had been mentioned in Robertson's 1898 report. Access was by helicopter, which accounts for the use of lightweight aluminum core boxes. Five men spent the summer in a camp on the property, but left at the end of September when operations were suspended. That same summer a cat-road was pushed up Bobbie Burns valley to Carbonate Creek and in 1967 a cat-road was constructed to 8500 ft on Carbonate Mountain in the search for gold, silver, lead and copper. This road could still be clearly seen in 1991 from the ramp below "Tam O'Shanter" winding its way up Carbonate Mountain.

Despite all the time and effort expended in looking for minerals in International and Bobbie Burns basins, it seems that little or nothing was shipped. Hopefully the miners and prospectors enjoyed the beauty of the alpine scenery and sometimes the quest is more interesting than the actual find.

Sources:

Reports of the Minister of Mines, 1898, 1922, 1936, 1966 and 1967.
W.L. Putnam, G.W. Boles and R.W. Laurilla, "Place Names of the Canadian Alps", 1990, Footprint Press.

First Ascent of the South Face
of Macbeth

June 16, 1991
by Larry Smith

I stopped the truck in front of the large log impeding any further progress up the north fork of the Glacier Creek road. A quick look around the corner showed that it was only a quarter of a mile to our starting point. Diana walked over to a stump at the edge of the road and said "There's a beer can here". There was a movement in the brush and out popped a bear, followed by her cub. "I could have peed on her head.", said Diana. The bear hung around and grunted at us for fifteen minutes and then took off. Thus began the assault on the south face of Macbeth.

Hamish had phoned several weeks earlier to see if I wanted to try the south face and east ridge with him. He had been on the east ridge several time previous but was turned back by a bit of rotten rock. This time he wanted to try to gain the ridge from the south face above the rotten section. Diana was to go to the KMC Glacier School but couldn't as there wasn't enough instructors. So, she came along with us. We packed our sacks, walked down the road and over the new bridge which had replaced the log Hamish had used several years earlier. After thrashing our way up the overgrown logging road we turned into the trees. Ah, Kootenay bush has never been easier. Instead of ten foot high slide alder, a series of linked snow slopes guided our way up. We camped after a couple of hours at the base of the east ridge. There was lots of fresh snow and more was starting to fall. It was obvious that with all of the fresh snow, the rock on the east ridge would not go. We would concentrate on the south face. The weather was very unsettled with storms blowing through every hour. This was to be the pattern for the entire weekend.

Early Sunday morning we set off towards the glacier on the south face. The fresh snow was starting to slough off the walls of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. When we gained the flat part of the glacier and the sun broke through, the display began. Avalanche after avalanche, three or four a minute, billowed off the walls on three sides of us. Luckily our route looked stable and we went on. As the slopes steepened, the foot deep fresh snow became two feet deep, even three feet deep. At times progress was measured in inches per foot-step and then only after each step was packed four or five times. At each of these points we almost turned back but tried a little bit further in case it got better. It always did. When I reached the base of the bergshrun I asked Hamish to come up and pointed to the holes on three sides of me. Hamish asked for a belay and swam across. The rest of the south face was straight forward and the final few feet actually windswept and icy. We could walk normally for the first time in the nine hours it took to climb the 3000 feet from camp.

Hamish Mutch, Diana Geller and Larry Smith

Ski Touring in the Swiss Alps

by Fred Thiessen

After the arduousness of last years ski tour (See Karabiner 1990, Rogers Pass to the Bugaboos), some of us vowed that next springs tour would be less arduous and more luxurious. So after some discussion, some of us thought that since Europe had good ski touring and a lot of huts, we could achieve our objectives of light packs, spectacular scenery and a more luxurious ski tour. The following account describes the three tours we undertook, and the peaks we climbed in two weeks of ski-touring in the Alps in April of 1991. Who were we? We were Jeff and Delia Roberts and Fred Thiessen. The credit for planning our itinerary and making it all work was a gentleman by the name of Kari Weber, a friend of Jeff and Delia's in Davos.

Pitz Kesch, 3950m. April 7-8, 1991

Our first tour was a two day traverse from a small village south of Davos in Eastern Switzerland to Samedan in the Inn valley, one valley over, which involved climbing Pitz Kesch on the way.

So, early Sunday morning we convened at Kari Webers place for breakfast, then drove to the small village whose name I have forgotten. Here at road end we skinned up for the long journey to Pass. We reached the pass for lunch, then skied down the other side to below the Kesch Hut. It wasn't that long to the Kesch Hut but it was a warm sunny day so we took our time. Once at the hut (2632 m.) we made arrangements with the custodian who interestingly enough had worked at the CMH Bobbie Burns Lodge a few years back.

The next morning it was totally whited out, we hoped it might lift in the afternoon, but even if it didn't we figured we could still climb Pitz Ketch and navigate our way to Samedan. Well it never completely lifted, but it did improve a bit as we toured our way to the base of Pitz Kesch, 1000 meters above the hut. At the base of the mountain, we removed our skies and followed the tracks to the summit. The climb was an exposed class 3 scramble involving crampons and ice axes up the east face. At the top we were joined by two Austrians who were well beyond their ability and not equipped. Our good turn for the day was to rescue them. This involved talking them down the face, setting up a rappel and then showing them how to rappel. Once down they were so grateful they wanted our address's to send us a formal thank-you note. And they did, see the photocopy of the letter they sent.

Our good deed done we then skied down a bit, then headed through a narrow col complete with chain, to start down the valley leading to Samedan. The descent was in deteriorating snow which convinced us that our decision to use alpine touring gear was a valid one. Once down a bit we hit a series of roads which lead us down to the valley and the train station at Samedan where we spent the night.

Pitz Palu 3905m and Pitz Morteratsch 3900m.
April 9 & 10, 1991

Pitz Palu is considered a classic ski-mountaineering peak and Kari had recommended that we give it a go. He had also suggested that if the weather was good we should stay at the Boval Hut and try Pitz Morteratsch the next day. Since the weather had cleared overnight, we made plans for these two peaks.

After a restful nights sleep we caught the train to Bernina Pass, then the Diavolletta tram to the top. It was a warm, clear, busy day so Pitz Palu was a popular summit. From the top of the lift, we skied down the piste for about 300 m. then put our skins on for the long warm trip to the summit. The route has very straightforward, follow the track to just below the summit with a stop for lunch. We weren't lonely, I'm sure that about 300 people climbed the peak that day. The views were spectacular, it was a lovely day and it looked like it was going to be a good run down. Near the top we took our skies off, put on our crampons and climbed the ridge to the summit which is on the Swiss-Italian border. Being Canadians we were real novelties, (with all those mountains in Canada, why are you coming to crowded Europe to go climbing?) As part of our introduction to European ski-touring we were also introduced to the summit greeting in this part of Europe. This being a hearty "Berg Heil", then a round of handshakes if you were the same gender or a round of hugs and kisses if you were of the opposite gender. They do appear to be rather civilized over there.

In the late afternoon sun we had an enjoyable ski run down the glacier, rejoined the piste, traversed around the icefall, had a pop at the pop/beer stand in the middle of nowhere (honest, serviced by helicopter), then traversed over to the Boval Hut (2495 m) for the night. This hut was wardened by a retired guide who had worked for Parks Canada as a guide, so again the language barrier was not a problem.

The next morning the lights came on at 0500 , which gave us an early start for Pitz Morteratsch. It was a round about route which involved going north, then west, then south, over two passes, then up the final steep slopes of the summit. It was straightforward enough, but we ended up behind a very slow party on slopes leading up to the first pass which frustrated and delayed us, especially when we thought their appreciation of the avalanche hazard was a bit more casual than ours. We ended up passing them and going up next to some rocks which made us feel better. We were able to ski right to the summit, on quite steep snow, which was rather exposed. Our appreciation of what was labelled an "easy ski tour, you'll enjoy it", was sobering. Admittedly, it was a straightforward tour, but the exposure and commitment was considerable, I wonder what their hard ski-touring peaks are like.

The run down was great, the snow was mostly north facing so we had powder snow most of the way down to the hut. Once at the hut we packed up the balance of our gear, skied down to the Morteratsch Glacier (the piste), which lead us to the train station at Morteratsch.

It was a long day, we had climbed 1800 m. and skied down 2000 m. The mountains are big over there and our observation was that the ski-touring on the big peaks such as we were skiing is serious

business in terms of vertical, experience, and steep terrain.

From here we took the next day off and trained our way to Interlaken to meet Kari, his family and a group of there friends for an 8 day tour in the Bernese Oberland.

Bernese Oberland Tour
April 12-19, 1991
Monch 4099 m.
Ebnefluh 3962 m.
Rinderhorn 3454 m.

Early in the morning of the 12, we were up and off to the train station at Interlaken to catch the train to the Jungfraujoch station, this station being in the col between the Monch and the Jungfrau at 4158m. It was a spectacular train ride with several transfers as we worked our way up the Jungfraubahn, which is the train through the Eiger and the Monch to the Jungfraujoch station. At this station we gathered ourselves all up, had a coffee then toured up to the Monchjoch Hut (3629m.), 2 km. away at the base of the south ridge of the Monch. Here we had our lunch and since it was early in the day, there appeared to be group consensus to climb the Munch. So we did, it was quite straightforward, took about 2 hours and rather exposed on the top. We had ropes, crampons and ice-axes, all of which were needed. Once on top with my group I was ready to turn around and immediately head back to avoid congestion at the top. Kari's son, Christian said, "no, no, we have to wait for everyone to be on top." I couldn't quite follow the rationale, but it turned out the local custom, once everyone was on top, was to pass around the plastic cups, open the champagne, and have a toast. Nice custom, but given where we were, imbibing was in moderation. These Europeans do appear to have different customs than us North Americans. Our descent went smoothly and we were back at the hut by 1800 for dinner.

The next day we skied down to the Jungfraujoch station in a complete whiteout, waited a bit for some others to join us, then broke into two groups, with a plan to meet the following day at the Hollandia Hut for an ascent of the Ebnefluh. The group we Canadians ended up with, was the Jungfrau attempt group. Our plan was to climb the Jungfrau, then ski down to the Konkordia Hut, then leave early the following morning and catch up with the others who were already at the Hollandia Hut. Our plans to climb the Jungfrau were squelched at about 4000 m due to heavy snow and a whiteout. So, we retreated and skied down to the Konkordia hut. The Konkordia Hut is notable for its steel staircase which is bolted into the rock and leads some 300 steps to the hut above. Apparently about a 100 years ago when the hut was built the glacier passed in front of the hut, however with glacial recession, it is now some 100 meters lower. The exposure on this staircase is not for the faint of heart. Maybe the staircase did one older gentleman in, since there was a helicopter evacuation for someone who has some heart problems as we arrived. Being a weekend this hut was very busy with well over 100 people, to accommodate the crowd there were two sittings for dinner.

The next morning was a classic spring ski touring morning, it was clear and cold, with the sun hitting the peaks as we toured up the Grosser Aletschfirn to the Hollandia Hut. It was a wonderful morning,

it was also a long way to the Hollandia Hut, it took us some 2 1/2 hours to ski the 8 km. to the hut. By then the others were well on their way to the Ebnefluh, so we had a quick lunch then continued after them. The Ebnefluh is an easy ski touring peak, it is 3963 m. high, 700 m. higher than the Hollandia Hut and about 6 km. away. We meet the others at the base of the mountain, on their way down from the peak. A rearrangement of plans had us all meeting at the town of Wiler that night, so we continued up and the others continued down. We made the top at around 1300 hrs, had a snack and skied back to the hut (1/2 hr.) to pick up our packs. By now we were in a bit of a rush, since we had to catch a bus at 1600 hrs. from Blatten to Wiler. Our descent to Blatten was a phenomenal 13 km. long run, losing some 1700 m. in the process. We caught the bus with a few minutes to spare and meet the others at the Hotel in Wiler, a small village in the Lotschental. This was another long day, we had covered 28 km. and climbed 1100 meters, the showers in our hotel were much appreciated.

The next day we set course for the town of Leukerbad, one valley over, with the goal for the day being a pass south of Leukerbad where there was a hotel called the Hotel Schwarenbach, where we were going to spend the next 3 nights.

For our morning tram ride we caught the Lauchernalp tram, skinned up and toured to the base of the Hockenhorn, northwest of Wiler and skied down to Lotschenpass, then up the Gitzifurgge to the top of the Dala Glacier. It was a wonderful clear day and the snow was still frozen, so we had lunch while it thawed a bit, then had a fabulous ski run down to Leukerbad. It would be nice to say we skied right into town, but we didn't. After a while the snow ran out and we had to ski through bush and slide debris before we met the road that we could walk to town. It was during this rather unpleasant process that Jeff fell and bruised his shoulder rather badly.

Once at Leukerbad, we found out that the tram we were counting on was closed for the season, which was a real downer, since there wasn't any feasible way to get over the cliff bands leading to the hotel. Ever resourceful, our Swiss companions secured permission from the Canton to use a helicopter to ferry us up the tram line. Once permission was granted, we rented the Air Zermatt Bell 212, to get us up. So without any substantial fuss, and for about 50 franc per person we were at the top of the tram line. From here it was a short ski down to the Hotel Schwarenbach.

The three days at the hotel were very pleasant, we weren't covering big distances, and we could go skiing in the morning, have lunch at the hotel then go out for more turns in the afternoon. Our group represented about half the clients at the hotel, so we pretty much had it to ourselves and we had a great time, except for Jeff. Jeff had impacted his arm into the shoulder socket and done some muscle damage. This gave ample opportunity for the 3 doctors in our group to diagnose the injury, then inject cortisone and pain killers. While Jeff read the limited English library the rest of us skied. On the first day we climbed the Rinderhorn, which gave great views of the Pennine Alps and had a great ski down. But the weather changed after that first day, an unseasonable cold front and its storm dumped about a meter of snow on us. It gave great skiing, cold temperatures (-14 C.) and limited visibility. It didn't stop us from skiing, but there was the occasional run by the feel and grope method of skiing.

After 3 days our time was up, so we had a mad dash to catch the daily 0800 tram to Kanderstag. The tram was about 4 km. north of the hotel and we appeared to be racing the other party from the hotel to the tram for some reason. We beat them in this crazy race, at the expensive of our bases, since the snow cover was thin. Don't ask me why we were racing them, I wasn't the leader. Then again maybe we weren't racing, since we made the tram with about 2 seconds to spare, and were off to Kanderstag and the train back to Interlaken. A good fun tour with a great group, highly recommended.

The KMC in its library has a book which describes two of our tours, This book is Salute the Skier, 100 Ski Runs in the Alps; by Pause, W. The information in this 1963 book is still accurate, and the photo's do describe the tours. There are also newer books which describe some of the tours, especially the Bernese Oberland one, since it is a classic. The ski-touring maps for this part of the world are at 1:20,000 or 1:50,000 scale (your preference), and show all the routes, hut descriptions and give some route decryptions, although one does need to read German.



*"Do you know dear, I've worked out that we are on the edge
of a swamp . . ."*

8th May 1991

Hello my good (best) friends!

You can believe me, the 8th of April will be in remembrance for a long time. Today I still believe, that without your help, I never came down this mountain. I know, it also was careless to climb up the summit without tool. Once again, thank you very much for your comradeship.

The downhillrun was funny - if the view would have been better. From the Sertigpass on, it was a little bit better.

The next days were considerable strenuous for me, because on the 14th of April I was an competitor at the marathon in Vienna. It was the first time in my life, when I ran through 42 kilometers, but it was an fantastic experience.

I passed the winning-post after 3 hour 50 seconds an I was very satisfied about this time.

Besides I could connect it with a few wonderful spring-days in vienna, which I spent with some friends.

Maybe one time we will meet each other again. This defenitly would be very funny - we could speed it up.....

Urgent! If you are somewhere around here, call me in any case.

Maybe once I really will enjoy the heliskiing in Canada - I will tell you bevor.

Now, once again, thank's a lot for your help and give my regards to Fred.

My telephonenumber at home is: 0043/5574/36394



SIR DONALD

by Bert Port

Bang! What was that? Rain sheeting out of a black cloud at our elevation. On the Northwest ridge of Mount Sir Donald we were still dry and continued to the Uto col. The storm moved up the Beaver Valley. Late afternoon light returned, and we began to relax, eat the last of our food and change into trail shoes and shorts, relieved and chuffed that we had snatched the climb from the unsettling weather.

Only the night before in the dark Illecillewaet campground we spoke to friends awaiting the return of their climbers. Chased, we later learned, off the ridge by an earlier storm. In the morning as we approached the col we met two other parties who were able to reach the valley the day before.

The mountain had suffered heavy use since I was there 25 years ago- Tent platforms below the S.W. face, every North facing ledge looked like it was part of the trail and the ridge was bandaged with rotting fluorescent rappel slings. But, the climbing was as exhilarating as I remembered, the pleasure heightened by being with my son, climbing unroped, enjoying his introduction to this classic route that soars endlessly the first time.

We were returning from the KMC Premiere Range camp where we had wandered over the vast snowfields surrounding the highest peaks. After that, the oppressive heat of the highway seemed another world. Now we were high again, overlooking the feast of glaciers and peaks laid out below us, remembering other trips and friends.

After reaching the summit we descended a few hundred feet and squirmed our way into comfortable lunch spots. Probably not a good idea as the ridge looked steeper than ever after our horizontal respite. Descending with the care required, we rappelled a few times to avoid the messy bits, trying not to loose our concentration and become a statistic. Although not a defence, that is why we were surprised not far above the col, by a clap of thunder.

Scampering down the moraine trail toward the forest we met a party of wardens weighted down, carrying big boots, big packs, big ropes and heading for an exercise on the ridge the next day. With our day packs and bare knees we probably didn't look like we had been to the summit. Unfortunately for the wardens, they were a day late. We learned in the fall that one of them suffered a lightning strike and had to evacuated.

Mingling with the hikers on the valley trail we noticed the time and by using our ski poles we picked up the pace so that we would reach the Wheeler hut 15 hours after leaving it. Later, at home, reflecting on our good luck, we checked the guide book and were humbled to find that in making the 1910 first ascent, with the equipment of the day, Mr. and Mrs. MacCarthy had taken a mere 12 minutes longer.

RUTSCHBLOCK TECHNIQUE AND INTERPRETATION

Bruce Jamieson and Colin Johnston

taken from Avalanche News No. 37 February 1992

The rutschblock (or glide-block) test is a slope test which gives useful information regarding the stability of many snow slabs. The test method was developed in Switzerland in the 1970's. This short article, which is based on Paul Fohn's analysis of rutschblocks (Fohn 1987) and on our experience with the Blue River Avalanche Research Project, describes the test technique, summarizes the interpretation of results, and comments on the limitations of the test.

Site Selection

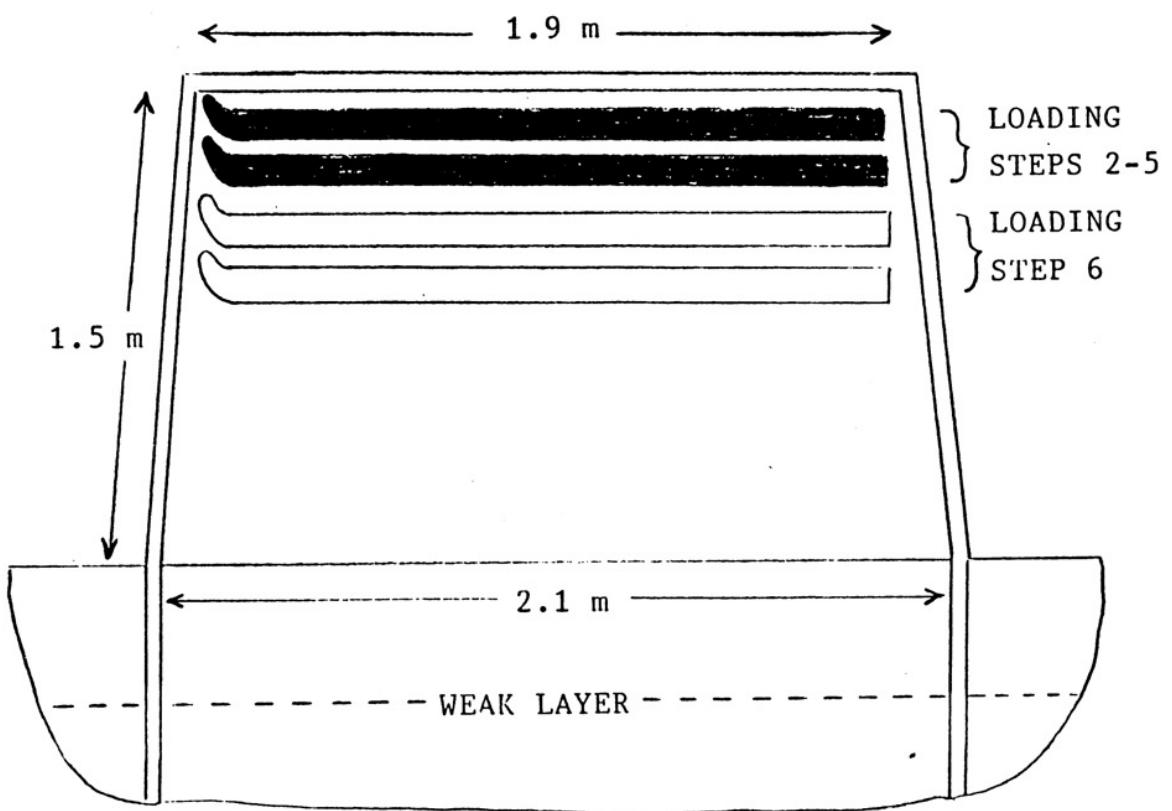
Test sites should be safe, representative of the avalanche terrain under consideration and undisturbed. For example, to gain information about a wind loaded slope, you need to find a safe part of a similarly loaded slope for the test. Be aware that rutschblocks done on the upper less-steep part of a slope may not be representative of the steeper slope below. The site should not contain buried ski tracks, debris, etc. or be within about 5 m of trees where the buried layers may be disturbed by wind action or by clumps of snow which have fallen from nearby trees.

Fohn recommends slope angles of at least 30 degrees. Our experience shows that rutschblocks on 25-29 degree slopes also give useful information (discussed below).

Technique

After identifying weak layers (and potential slabs) in a snow profile, extend the pit wall until it is at least 2 m across the slope. (Don't skip the profile unless you already know the layering). Mark the width of the block and the length of the side cuts on the surface of the snow with a ski. The block should be 2 m wide throughout if you are going to cut the side walls with a ski, pole, cord or saw, the lower wall should be about 2.1 m across, and the top of the side cuts should be about 1.9 m apart (see diagram). This flaring of the block ensures it is free to slide without binding at the sides.

The lower wall should be a smooth vertical surface cut with a shovel. Dig or cut the side walls and the upper wall deeper than any weak layers that may be active. If the side walls are exposed by shovelling, then one rutschblock test may require 20 or more minutes for two people. However, if the weak layers of interest are within 50 cm of the surface, you can save time by cutting both the sides and the upper wall of the block with a ski pole (basket removed) or with the tail of a ski. If the weak layers are deeper than 50 cm and the overlying snow does not contain any knife-hard crusts, both the sides and upper wall of the block can be sawed with cord which travels up one side, around ski poles or probes placed at both upper corners of the block, and down the other side.



Loading Steps and Rutschblock Scores

Load the rutschblock in the following sequence and note which loading step produces a clean shear failure:

1. The block slides during digging or cutting.
2. The skier approaches the block from above and gently steps down onto the upper part of the block (within 35 cm of the upper wall - see diagram).
3. Without lifting the heels, the skier drops from a straight leg to a bent knee position, pushing downwards (and compacting surface layers).
4. The skier jumps and lands in the same compacted spot.
5. The skier jumps again onto the same compacted spot.
6. Either remove the skis and jump on the same spot (as recommended by Fohn) or keep the skis on and step down another 35 cm - almost to the mid-block and push once, then jump once. (We prefer the latter method since our experience of jumping without skis has been unsatisfactory).
7. None of the loading steps produced a smooth slope-parallel failure.

Interpretation of Rutschblock Scores

1, 2 or 3 The block fails before the first jump. Slopes with similar conditions may be released by a skier.

4 or 5 The block fails on first or second jump. It is possible for a skier to release slab avalanches on slopes with similar snow conditions. Other observations or tests must be used to assess the slab stability.

6 or 7 The block does not fail on first or second jump. There is a low (but not negligible) risk of skiers triggering avalanches on slopes with similar snow conditions. Other field observations and tests as well as safety measures remain appropriate.

Rutschblock results can be recorded in the "Comments" section of a profile or in a field book along with other field observations and tests, e.g. 1992-01-31 1420 Back Bowl, N asp, 1900 m, R-block 4 down 35 on / \ 1.5.

Limitations

The rutschblock is good slope test but it is not a one-step stability evaluation! Although for many conditions we prefer the information from one rutschblock to that from a few shovel test, the rutschblock test does not make profiles or careful field observations unnecessary. Nor does it, in general, replace other slope tests such as ski cutting and explosive tests.

The rutschblock only tests those layers deeper than ski penetration. For example, a weak layer 20 cm below the surface is not tested by skis which penetrate 20 cm or more.

Rutschblock Cords and Saws

Eight metres of 4 mm or 5 mm cord with overhand knots tied every 20 or 30 cm can be used to cut the upper wall and both sides of the block at the same time (provided no knife-hard crusts need to be cut). Such cords can also be used to cut off carefully selected cornices.

Two-part saws with an assembled length of 125 cm make possible

very fast rutschblock test but weigh 1.2-1.8 kg. Such saws are also useful for cutting cornices. For ideas on rutschblock saws, contact Bruce Jamieson at (403) 220-7479 or (604) 673-8381.

Slopes below 30 degrees

Fohn (1987) recommends that rutschblocks be done on slopes of 30 degrees or steeper. At the Blue River Avalanche Research Project (Jamieson and Johnston 1991) we have found that rutschblocks on slopes of 25-29 degrees give approximately the same score as rutschblocks on nearby 30-35 degree slopes. However, rutschblocks done on slopes of less than 30 degrees require a smooth lower wall and a second person standing in or near the pit to observe the small displacements (less than 1 cm) that indicate a shear failure. We are studying the effects of slope angles below 25 degrees on rutschblock scores.

Acknowledgements

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(available on request)

Pond Inlet, Baffin Island

by Earl Jorgensen

It wasn't until I returned homeward 8 days later, that I realized that when I left Toronto on the morning of June 5 that I was beginning an 8 day interval of continuous daylight, mostly in the sunshine. This is not a novelty for those who live above the Arctic Circle, but for visitors it is indeed a unique experience.

Pond Inlet at the north end of Baffin Island is a community of 1000 people over 400 miles north of the arctic Circle. From mid May until the 3rd week of July, the sun never sets. Before going to bed "one day" at 2 am, I look out the front door to see at least 6 small children at play. I guess they sleep when it suits them. Stores, offices, airlines etc. do keep their regular hours, so a watch is necessary. The town consists of many frame buildings. The newer ones are well insulated and efficient. I was there at the invitation of our son, Carl, who is a teacher. He has an apartment in a new fourplex, each apartment occupying one corner of a one story building. This structure is 2 feet above the ground on steel pilings driven into the perma frost. The apartments have carpeted floors, water and sewer hookup, electrical stove, fridge, washer, dryer and freezer even. He has TV, telephone and his computer has a modem. Only his mail service is worse than ours (if you can imagine).

The Arctic is basically dry. It is cold in winter (-42C Feb. 92) with some wind but little snow. The caribou and arctic hare survive on the tundra on the exposed ridges. Even the crows remain all year long. The terrain is mountainous with rugged walls of rock that rise sheer from the water's edge. No trees anywhere but vast glaciers on the mountain tops with some coming down to the shore. The winter ice on the ocean forms to a depth of 6 to 8 ft. A crack will open from a few inches to several feet and standing at the edge of the crack produces a mixture of apprehension and curiosity. Looking into the black depths, one sees the ice has a sheer vertical edge as if cut by a knife and you note the great thickness. You are convinced it is safe, especially if the crack is only 12 inches wide.

A ride with a dog team was arranged. The dogs are hitched separately to the sled, each with a single tether and so the dogs fan out as we move over the ice. (In the Western Arctic the dogs are hitched in a line for 2 reasons: deeper snow requires the dogs break trail and secondly the dogs can steer through the trees.) The driver has a big 3 prong ice anchor, like a garden cultivator. When he wants to stop he puts the anchor down on the ice and leans on it. The dogs are not peaceful, they just want to run, or fight if not rigidly controlled.

Two 3 day snowmobile trips were the highlights of my visit. Departure was scheduled as when ready. We left under bright sunshine but please note the time was 9 pm. Four machines in the party and each snowmobile but mine towed a big sled. The sleds are 12 to 16 ft. long with a big plywood box to hold all the gear and "gerry cans" of gas. The gear is the usual plus 4 in foamies, coleman camp stove. (lights, flashlights, tent heaters are not needed now) We arrived at the pebble beach at 4 am, set up camp, ate and then slept. I got up at noon because the tent was too warm under all that sun. I roamed the rolling tundra observing the vegetation and even came across a scattered rockpile that contained a bleached human skull. At one time this may

have been a whaling area for bleached whale bones were seen. I also came to a high bank overlooking a small river flowing down from the uplands. The water was very clear and fairly deep but the bottom could be seen and the entire bottom was a sheet of ice from shore to shore. The river was flowing over perma frost.

When the others were up and ready, we set off on the 2nd leg of our journey. But this was different for we left the ice and headed for the interior up over the tundra. Some areas were very rocky and steep. Most of us would hesitate to ever head our 4 wheel drive vehicles up this terrain over the ridges and down the other side and fording two rushing streams of 100 ft width. Yet we tortured those machines for three hours to reach a 10 mile long lake where we were to do some fishing at the far end. The ice on the lake was solid and smooth. It was a drag race to the end! This end was shallow and the ice had melted away from the shore. There the arctic char had gathered in the hundreds, all looked to be 5 to 10 pounds. The Inuit family who guided us must have taken in 150 lbs of fish in a short while (half of them by the aid of a net). Carl and I had no need for such a harvest, but each of us caught two fish and watched the excitement in the Inuit family. They assured us they would have no difficulty in sharing this bounty with the many elders in the community, an Inuit custom. The return journey to our camp began at 8 pm, down the lake and over the ridges arriving at midnight, under a bright sun.

After some food and sleep, we packed up for the trip to Pond. With the unending sunshine the snow on the ice has rapidly turned to water. The trip back was very much a sea going expedition. We travelled over endless distances of 2 to 6 inches of water on the ice. it was miles to the nearest shore and we were on snowmobiles completely surrounded by water. You kept your fingers crossed that the motor wouldn't quit. It was good to get back.

The second trip was on the floe edge. This is the outer edge of the ice and the ocean. It is a days journey and here seals and whales can be harvested, so it is a favourite destination for Inuit hunters and their families.

On this trip, with even more water on the ice, one out of the six snowmobiles did stop working. (water in the wiring?) Carl was the driver who stopped to help his stranded friend while the rest of the party had carried on across the sound to a dry spot near the shore. Two Inuit climbed the rocks above the shore to look back over the water with a telescope. They could see two people on one machine pulling two sleds. One sled had a snowmobile lashed on. In about 30 minutes Carl came in to our lunch stop with the driver and 2 sleds. Up to this time I only drove a snowmobile. Suddenly I graduated to towing a sled with a snowmobile lashed to it. The novelty of all this was I had never driven a snowmobile before I visited Pond. Suffice to say that I survived all these new experiences and indeed thoroughly enjoyed them.

On the shore near the floe edge, we had an excellent camping area. It was the site of a well established whaling operation. Bits of iron, whale bones and stone foundations were to be found. Carl's tent is an 8 man dome tent with a vestibule. A section of plywood was placed inside along the side to become the kitchen holding the coleman stove, food and dishes. (also the tent heater in winter) Four people can easily share the remaining space.

We did not see whales on this trip but plenty of seals were spotted. Nearby on the cliffs, thousands of nesting murres and kittiwakes congregated. Being on the ice we could drive over to the base of the cliffs and have a marvellous view of all the activity. This trip also provided us with an opportunity to explore a cave in a glacier and to get a close look on all sides of icebergs locked in the ice. Climbing to the top of an iceberg is one of the fun things that is attractive to children and others with similar exuberance. Icebergs are also the frequent destination on many locals to bring back ice for drinking. This is the water of choice. On this trip we also visited a grave site marked with two weathered oak crosses. The inscriptions in lead noted they were sailors from two different whaling ships before World War I.

One final note, the return fare from Toronto to Pond is more than three times the cost of the fare to Europe. Thankfully Carl's accumulated "frequent flyer points" absorbed that expense. Nonetheless Pond Inlet receives many tourists each year. The week before or after June 1 is the best time as the sunshine is there but no melt water on the ice.

Editors' note:

This Karabiner has a wide variety of articles in it reflecting the varied activities of our club members and how busy everyone is. We would like to thank all those who contributed and hope that more people will write about their trips in 1992 for the next issue. We requested a picture from Peter for this issue so everyone knew who the President is. We also think it would be nice to have a picture of the executive who spend many hours making this club great to be a part of.

Hope you enjoy this issue.

Lee Schaeffer and Susan Knoerr

