

# Gazette

The Alpine Club of Canada

le club alpin du Canada

## Small but mighty

The ACC's Newfoundland and Labrador Section keeps busy despite COVID.



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# Gazette

The Alpine Club of Canada

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## Contributor Profiles



### Patti Dymant

Canmore artist Patti Dymant was already obsessed with painting when she moved to Banff in 1985. Hiking and painting the Rockies has been an adventure, an education and endless inspiration ever since. She studied painting in college and university, in books, classes, workshops and especially the great outdoors, eventually becoming a popular painting instructor herself. Patti has enjoyed several artist's residencies focused on plein air painting, and many excursions with friends painting from alpine huts. She has been exhibiting in galleries in Western Canada since 1988, and once in Japan. Her work is represented by the Fallen Leaf Gallery in Canmore, AB, and the Mortar and Brick Gallery in Lethbridge, AB.



### Will Hotopf

Will is the Membership Coordinator for ACC Montreal and works as an adventure guide across Canada. A lover of mountains from a young age, he now tries to get out as much as possible exploring the Laurentians, Adirondacks and beyond, and is working on a part-time MSc in sustainable mountain development in his spare time.



### Gwen Nguyen

Gwen's love affair with the mountains started at a rock climbing gym in Toronto. Her passion led her to eventually move from Ontario to interior British Columbia. She spends most of her time doting on her two cats or skiing, climbing, and hiking in the mountains with her partner, Johnny.



### Greg Locke

Greg Locke is a professional photographer and filmmaker in St John's, Newfoundland. He has been a member of The Alpine Club of Canada for six years and has spent two years as the chair of the Newfoundland and Labrador Section and another three as the section rep. He also acted as the ACC rep on the board of Climbing Escalade Canada for five years, one of those as its chair. He is currently working to get the NL Section rebooted after two years of COVID restrictions.



### Lindsay Elms

Lindsay Elms took up climbing with the Canterbury Mountaineering Club in New Zealand as a teenager and has never looked back. This passion has taken him to seven continents and hundreds of summits. For the last thirty years he has been a member of the Vancouver Island Section of the ACC sharing his love of the mountains with others on the trail and in writing.



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Cover photo: Jacqui Bodwell on Richard Parker, Tiger Wall. Swift Current, NL.

Photo de couverture : Jacqui Bodwell à « Richard Parker, le Mur du tigre ». Swift Current, T.-N.-L.

Photo Greg Locke



Chris Winsor on Right Side Up. Stiles Cove, NL. Photo by Greg Locke





Watercolour and ink sketch by Patti Dymont. Mummery GMC Artists Week, 2021. Esquisse à l'aquarelle et à l'encre par Patti Dymont. Semaine des artistes du Camp général, Mummery, 2021.

The Gazette is the ACC members' magazine and we try to use these pages to include all of the activities that our members do and to represent all of the areas of the country where our members live and recreate.

But it's a big country and the ACC is a big club. We don't aim to include everything in each issue, but we love it when we're able to represent as much diversity as we do here.

Our features and stories take us from the big mountains of Vancouver Island with a view of the Pacific Ocean to the "Eye of Quebec" in winter, to the rock and ice of Newfoundland that literally hang over the Atlantic Ocean.

Camp Journal recounts our first BIPOC Women's Climbing Camp and a new department, Heritage, will remind us of our history. We think it's vitally important to remember where we've come from as we visualize where we, as a club, want to go.

Beginning this year, the annual spring issue of the Gazette will also include a pullout guide to ACC huts. This can serve as a handy reference or as inspiration for your adventures in the mountains. We're particularly excited about the addition of Twin Falls Tea House to our hut network. Yes, it's 100 years old, but it's new to us.

We love that Canada is a big and inclusive country and as the ACC members' magazine we'll keep trying to tell the whole story. With this issue, we hope our readers will learn something about our club and about Canada's wild areas that they didn't know before — we certainly did.

~Keith Haberl



The drying tent, by Patti Dymont. Watercolour and ink sketch. Westfalls GMC Artists Week, 2019. La tente de séchage : croquis à l'aquarelle et à l'encre par Patti Dymont. Semaine des artistes du Camp général, Westfalls, 2019.

La Gazette est le magazine des membres du CAC et nous essayons d'employer ses pages pour inclure toutes les activités de nos membres et toutes les régions du pays où ils habitent et se divertissent.

Mais ce pays est grand et notre club l'est aussi. Nous ne cherchons pas à tout inclure dans chaque numéro, mais nous aimons pouvoir y inclure le plus de diversité possible, comme c'est le cas ici.

Nos articles et nos récits nous emportent depuis les grands sommets de Vancouver Island, avec vue sur l'océan Pacifique, jusqu'au « cœur du Québec » en hiver, en passant par la roche et la glace de Terre-Neuve, qui sont littéralement suspendues au-dessus de l'océan Atlantique.

Le Camp Journal relate notre premier Camp d'escalade PANDC féminin et un nouveau département de l'héritage, qui rappellera notre histoire. Il est d'une importance vitale de se rappeler d'où nous venons pour imaginer, en tant que club, où nous voulons aller.

Dès cette année, l'édition annuelle printanière de la Gazette inclura un guide détachable sur les refuges du CAC qui sera un outil de référence pratique et une source d'inspiration pour vos aventures en montagne. Nous sommes particulièrement enthousiasmés par l'ajout de Twin Falls Tea House à notre réseau. Elle a beau être centenaire, elle est toute neuve pour nous.

Nous aimons que le Canada soit un pays à la fois grand et inclusif, et dans le magazine des membres du CAC, nous continuerons d'essayer de raconter toute l'histoire. Dans le présent numéro, nous espérons que nos lecteurs apprendront quelque chose qu'ils ignoraient sur notre club et les régions sauvages du Canada, tout comme nous.

~Keith Haberl



## Nominations de 2022 au conseil d'administration du CAC

Les règlements du Club requièrent que le comité de nomination du CAC conçoive et recommande au conseil d'administration du CAC et aux membres du club une liste de candidats à élire pour chacun de ses postes. Le comité a la responsabilité de désigner des personnes qualifiées ayant les compétences requises pour chaque poste, et de recommander aux membres votants un candidat qui, selon l'opinion du comité de nomination, répond actuellement le mieux aux critères et aux besoins du conseil.

Chaque année, trois des neuf postes du comité du CAC sont ouverts aux nominations. Quand il n'y a aucune nomination pour un poste, le titulaire est élu par acclamation et exerce un nouveau mandat de trois ans.

Pour 2022, un poste a été pourvu par acclamation. Une élection aura lieu pour ceux de président et de secrétaire.

Pour plus d'informations, consultez la page [www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/elections](http://www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/elections), qui comprend une courte présentation vidéo (3 min) par chacun des candidats ayant accepté de soumettre une vidéo à la demande du comité.

Au nom des membres du comité de nomination : Peter Muir (président, Winnipeg, Man.), Cam Roe (Salt Lake City, É.-U.), Josée Desjardins (Chelsea, QC), David Roe (Calgary, Alb.), Zac Robinson (Edmonton, Alb.) et Mary Sanseverino (Victoria, C.-B.).

Poste Position	Mandat Term	Titulaire/candidat (et section du CAC) Incumbent/Candidate (ACC Section)
VP Activities V.-P. Activités	3 ans 3 years	Frank Spear (Prince George) Acclaimed / Élu
President Président	3 ans 3 years	Eric Hoogstraten (Calgary)
	3 ans 3 years	Isabelle Daigneault (Montréal) Recommended / Recommandé
Secretary Secrétaire	3 ans 3 years	Emilie Grenier
	3 ans 3 years	Richard Campbell (Calgary) Recommended / Recommandé

## ACC Board of Directors – 2022 Nominations

Club bylaws require the ACC Nomination Committee to develop and recommend to the ACC board of directors and club members a slate of candidates for each board position to be elected. The committee is responsible for identifying qualified individuals with the requisite competences for each position and for recommending to the voting members an applicant who, in the opinion of the Nomination Committee, best meets the criteria and needs of the position and the board at this time.

Each year, three of the nine positions on the ACC board are open for nominations. When there are no nominations for a position, the incumbent is acclaimed and serves another three-year term.

For 2022 one position has been acclaimed. There will be an election for President and Secretary.

You can learn more at [www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/elections](http://www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/elections), including including a short video presentation (3 min.) by each of the candidates that accepted the committee's request to submit a video.

On behalf of the Nomination Committee members Peter Muir (Chair, Winnipeg, Man.), Cam Roe (Salt Lake City, USA), Josée Desjardins (Chelsea, Que.), David Roe (Calgary, Alta.), Zac Robinson (Edmonton, Alta.) and Mary Sanseverino (Victoria, BC).

# Alpine Club of Canada Spring Adventures

It's spring, which means we have a mix of winter and summer adventures to choose from! Perhaps you want to take advantage of the longer days to undertake bigger ski objectives. Or maybe the warmer temperatures remind you of the joys of hitting the crag, summiting peaks or camping in high places. Whatever gets you psyched right now, we have the opportunities to get you out there.

### Ski Mountaineering

- Intro to Ski Mountaineering (2 offerings)
- Bow Yoho Traverse
- Columbia Icefield Ski Mountaineering
- Winter Crevasse Rescue Skills

### Rock Climbing

- Intro to Sport Climbing
- Intro to Multi-pitch Climbing
- Intro to Trad Climbing
- Rock Rescue

*\*Note: You can get \$25 off each course if you sign up for multiple rock courses*

### Summer Mountaineering

- Bow Hut Glacier Discovery (3 offerings)
- Intro to Mountaineering (options at Bow Hut, Conrad Kain Hut, or Asulkan Cabin)
- Women and Non-Binary Climbing Camp (Columbia Icefields)
- Intermediate Mountaineering (Neil Colgan Hut)
- 55+ Camps (options at Campbell Icefields Chalet or Stanley Mitchell Hut)

### Art and Photography

- Plein Air Artist Retreat at Shadow Lake Lodge
- Climbing Photography Course with Peter Hoang
- Artist Week at the General Mountaineering Camp

### Safe Spaces

- Body Inclusive Glacier Discovery
- BIWOC Intro to Mountaineering (Asulkan Cabin)

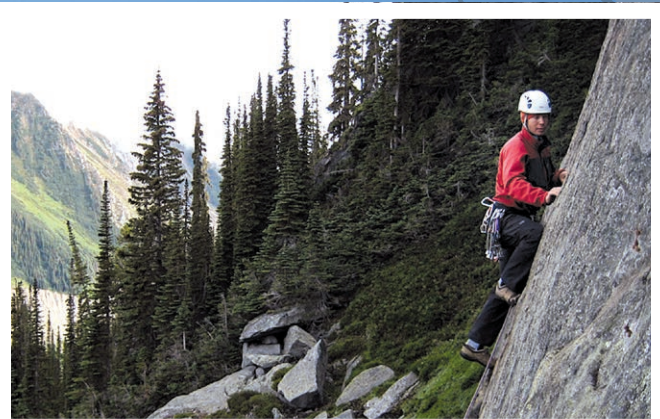
*\*Please note that these camps are population-specific booking only*

*\*BIWOC stands for Black, Indigenous, and Women of Colour*

### Trekking and Trail Running

- Dogtooth Traverse
- Silent Lake to Caribou Pass
- Run the Rockwall

Check out [adventures.alpineclubofcanada.ca](http://adventures.alpineclubofcanada.ca) for more information on courses including dates, prices, COVID protocols, cancellation policies, etc.





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# Jay MacArthur

Recipient of the ACC Distinguished Service Award and the Silver Rope for Leadership Award

By Paul Geddes

Jay MacArthur joined The Alpine Club of Canada in 1973 while he was still in high school. A few years later he joined the UBC Varsity Outdoor Club while studying electrical engineering. He soon found the opportunity to share his mountaineering skills with other members.

In 1979 he started his decades-long service as a member of the executives of the ACC Vancouver Section as well as the Federation of Mountain Clubs of British Columbia. In 1980 he served his first term as FMCBC president and took on the position of ACC Vancouver Assistant Chair.

In the early 1980s Jay became a founding member and served as president of the Southern Chilcotin Wilderness Society. The society's work eventually led to the establishment of South Chilcotin and Big Creek Provincial Parks. In 2001, Jay was awarded the ACC's Distinguished Service Award for his environmental work after being nominated by the Vancouver Section.



During his decades in the mountains, Jay has practised safe climbing and backcountry skiing while participating in the leadership of ACC section camps to many Coast Mountain locations. In 2021 the Vancouver Section nominated Jay for the ACC's coveted Silver Rope for Leadership Award. In support of his nomination Bruce Fairley wrote, "Personally, I feel very fortunate to have encountered such a steady and capable climber early in my climbing career. Jay was a great inspiration to me and a stellar role model in terms of his enthusiasm, knowledge and high level of competence."

Due to a serious cancer diagnosis his award pin was presented to him in the lobby of the Lions Gate Hospital on December 17, 2021 in front of a gathering of family and friends.

So how's Jay doing now? He's still volunteering his time with the ACC and FMCBC. ~ACC



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## Contribute to the ACC Gazette



Our club's story told by our members, for our members.

If you have a story of climbing, hiking, skiing, exploring or otherwise recreating in the great outdoors, as a member of the ACC, on an ACC trip, or inspired by our club, we'd love to hear from you!

We work closely with our authors. Reach out if you have an idea or a story you'd like to build with us.

See past issues and download contributor guidelines at:

[www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/gazette](http://www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/gazette)






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# 2022 International Basin GMC

The GMC has been running since 1906, touring different regions of the Canadian Rocky Mountains. After many years, we are excited to return to International Basin for the 2022 GMC! Northern Purcells offers a variety of different objectives to satisfy your adventurous needs. Join us for another summer of mountain-made memories, tasty meals, and endless joy.

Sign-up for our new e-newsletter the **GMC Outpost** to stay up to date on announcements, stories, and all other GMC-related happenings.







*Rich Priebe (top) and Eryn Tombu-Haigh climb Syd Watts Peak with Sid Williams Peak behind. Tracks can be seen on Sid Williams Peak up to the final 30m.*

# THE ISLAND 6000

## PEAK BAGGING VANCOUVER ISLAND'S 6,000-FOOT PEAKS

by Lindsay Elms // Photos by Barry Hansen

When surveyors began mapping mountains and recording their heights, I wonder if they had any idea where their work would lead. Today, climbers bring their personal GPS devices with them to summits to get their own, accurate readings. It's not that we climbers don't trust the surveyors' data, it's just that we're curious and we sometimes have our own reasons for knowing if published measurements are accurate. Why do climbers do this? It's because of a phenomenon known as "peak bagging."

### Lots of peaks, lots of bags

The origins of peak bagging go back to Scotland in 1891 when Sir Hugh Munro produced a list of Scottish mountains over 3,000 feet. To climb all the listed Munros is referred to today as "Munro bagging." This pursuit of climbing a set of peaks that exceed a certain height has caught on around the world and today there are climbers (peak baggers) working their way through all of the 14 8,000 metre peaks in the Himalayas; the 53 14,000 foot peaks in Colorado; the 34 3,000 metre peaks of New Zealand's Southern Alps; the 58 11,000 foot peaks of the Canadian Rockies, and many more.







*Eryn Tombu-Haigh nearing summit of Sid Williams Peak above Buttle Lake. The Golden Hinde, the tallest mountain on Vancouver Island, and other 6,000 foot peaks can be seen on the horizon.*

No one is saying that these lists are comprised of the most difficult, significant or “best” summits, it’s just a fun game of collecting experiences. Each of these goals takes years, sometimes a lifetime, but it’s the process that is important – the highs of being outdoors with like-minded friends.

In an article first published in these pages of the *ACC Gazette*, Bill Corbett, the author of the guidebook *The 11,000ers of the Canadian Rockies* wrote: “The nice thing about pursuing a goal others have attained is you can do so at your own pace.” This is true, but for those pursuing the goal, there can be a pressure on them to get it finished, especially when there are just a couple left. It’s not pressure from others, but pressure imposed by the climber on themselves. That last peak dangles in front of them like the proverbial carrot on a stick...

## The Island 6,000ers – what’s in, what’s out

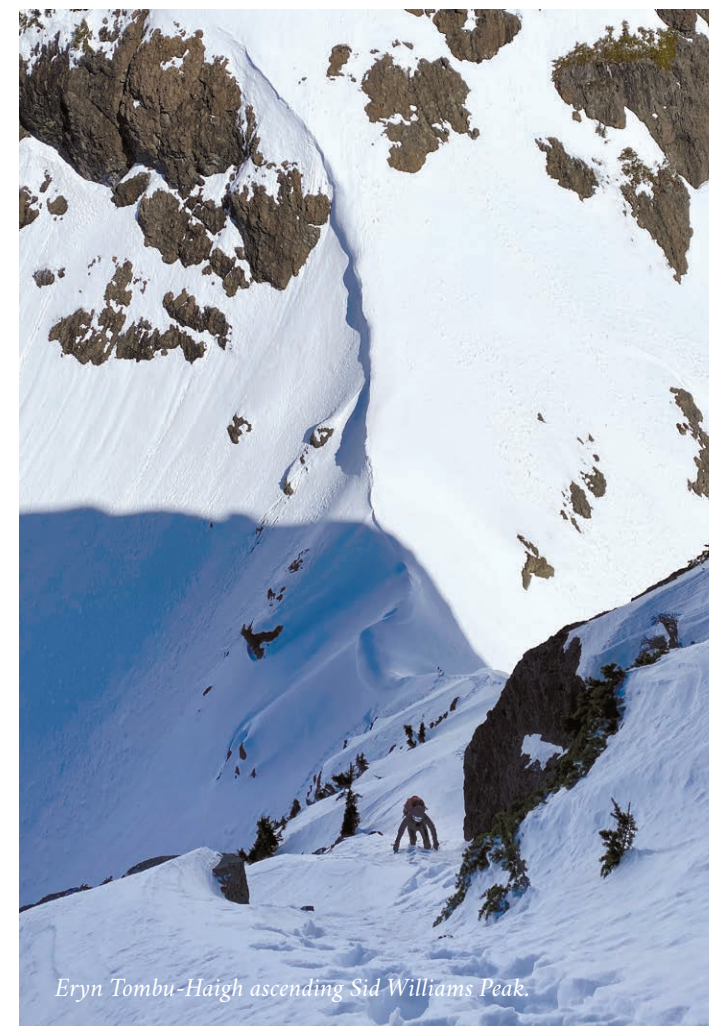
On the front page of the ACC Vancouver Island (ACCVI) Section’s November 2004 Island Bushwhacker newsletter, it was announced that Charles Turner had completed his quest to climb the “46 Island Peaks over 6,000 feet.” The list of peaks and the goal of climbing them wasn’t widely known at the time and the story sparked an interest among climbers over the next several years to examine the list and the precise heights of the peaks with personal GPS devices.

The list was eventually revised to include 53 rather than the original 46 peaks. There is going to be discussions about what should or shouldn’t be included on any list and the Island 6,000 is no exception.

For example, the accepted Island 6,000 list does not include the five sub-peaks on Mount Colonel Foster, which are all over 6,000 feet, because they’re seen as all being a part of one mountain (only those who complete the summit traverse of Colonel Foster climb all six summits). The slightly lower west peak of Crown Mountain is another example, however, most people who climb Crown Mountain usually do climb both summits anyway.

Nine Peaks, which as its name suggests has nine summits (or bumps) on its summit ridge, is typically only climbed to its main summit and the other eight peaks are only climbed during a traverse of the mountain, which is very rare. Only the highest summit has been included in Island 6,000 because some of the bumps have a prominence of only a few feet.

Others have argued over the inclusion of Rambler Junior, a striking spire beside Rambler Peak that is not its own peak, but is included on the list. Since its first ascent in the 1970’s, climbers have hiked to the head of the Elk River specifically to climb this spire. Why? Because it’s a stunning natural feature and because it is a challenging climb in its own right. Rambler Junior could be compared to The Helmet on Mount Robson.



*Eryn Tombu-Haigh ascending Sid Williams Peak.*

# The Where and the How

*All but seven of the peaks over 6,000 feet are in Strathcona Provincial Park, the first provincial park in BC, located in the centre of Vancouver Island. Most of the peaks can be climbed directly from highways and on a three-to-five-day trip, multiple summits can often be bagged. The remaining seven peaks are found in Tree Farm Licences in the north of the Island. Access to peaks in the southern and southeast portion of the Strathcona Park is through private land owned by logging companies. Although logging roads go to the park boundaries access can be problematic due to locked gates. The ACCVI is currently in negotiation with these logging companies to allow access for members to certain areas, especially the iconic Comox Glacier and its surrounding 6,000-foot peaks.*

*So how long does it take to complete the Island 6,000? Most people don’t start out with the goal in mind, but over time they take a look at the list and often see they have completed a large number of the peaks. This is when they decide to focus on the remaining peaks and plan on a couple more years.*





There are two other peaks that have been under scrutiny: the Comb and the Golden Hinde NW. The Comb is one kilometre away from the Golden Hinde, and the Golden Hinde NW is one kilometre away from The Comb. Some consider them both to be sub-peaks of the Golden Hinde; however, both have significant prominences, enough to be considered individual peaks.

These are only a few examples of peaks under discussion. Of the 53 peaks, only 39 have official names, the others all having local names. So, after much discussion over the years, the current list of 53 peaks is generally accepted by the Island's climbing community and by the Vancouver Island Section.

## Successful ascents

Inspired by my completing the updated Island 6,000 at the end of the summer of 2014, my partner Valerie Wootton took a look at where she stood with the list. At the beginning of summer 2015, she had twelve peaks remaining and figured it would take another three years. She completed six of the peaks in 2015 and in the spring of 2016 she was determined to climb the rest of them. By the end of August 2016 the only peak remaining was Mount Filberg and being so close to finishing she didn't want to leave one peak for another year.

Although not a technical climb, Filberg is remote and is typically a three-day trip. It is one of the least climbed of the high peaks because of its inaccessibility. All she needed was a few days of clear weather, which was not an unreasonable proposition in September, but the weather wasn't being particularly agreeable that summer. By the middle of September, it looked like she wasn't going to get the break. However, as chance would have it, there was a sudden shift in the weather and for the last few days of September the forecast looked promising. On September 28, she finally stood on the summit of Mount Filberg. She'd done it!

Over the next week Valerie received a steady stream of congratulatory emails from the local mountaineering community. As Bill Corbett stated after completing his last 11,000er, "It's gratifying to be in the company of those who appreciate such a peak bagging quest." Afterwards, Valerie chatted with Nancy Hansen as Nancy had had a similar experience with the 11,000ers of the Rockies. In 2003, with one peak to go and despite weekend after weekend of perfect weather, Nancy thought the project was going to head into another year due to a Parks Canada backcountry closure due to the risk of wildfire. However, two days before the September long weekend, Parks Canada announced they were reopening the backcountry. Nancy jumped at the opportunity and climbed Mount Forbes, completing the project.

*Here: Tracks can be seen on Sid Williams Peak up to the final 30m. (Full image on title page).*

*Opposite: Eryn Tombu-Haigh on the summit of Syd Watts Peak with Sid Williams Peak immediately behind. Other 6,000-ft peaks are visible in the background in the southern part of Strathcona Provincial Park.*

## Recognition

In 2018, the ACCVI executive launched the Charles Turner Vancouver Island 6,000ers Award. The section presents the award and a plaque to members who have successfully climbed all of the 53 peaks. The award honours the memory of Charles Turner, a very well respected member who climbed the initial list of 46 peaks and brought the idea to our attention, and who tragically lost his life in a floatplane crash in August 2013. At the 2018 AGM, the award was presented retroactively to myself, Valerie and Tak Ogasawara who completed the Island 6,000 in 2017. Ken Wong and George Butcher completed the 53 peaks in 2019.

## In Progress

We know that several climbers are closing in. In February of this year, Rich Priebe and Barry Hansen climbed Elkhorn South Mountain and then teamed up Eryn Tombu-Haigh in March to climb Syd Watts and Sid Williams Peaks. Bushwhacking from Karst Creek, they reached the snowline at 900 metres and found firm snow for cramponing, which turned to post-holing at 1,300 metres. From the saddle, several steep pitches brought them up to the final pitch on the northeast ridge of Sid Williams Peak, but the difficulties were harder than expected, and without mixed climbing gear they couldn't get up the blue ice of the final thirty metres (see tracks on photo, opposite). The call to bail and return another day was made with Rich hanging upside down on the rope. The team down-climbed and rappelled to the saddle and successfully climbed Syd Watts Peak.

With 2022's climbs mapped out, Rich has five peaks left to climb while Barry and Eryn have around fifteen. The three of them plan to complete the last climb together in August. Another contender Matthew Lettington has eleven remaining and has his eye on 2023 for completion. ~ACC

*\*Portions of this article were published in the Spring 2017 Gazette. All of the photos were taken by Barry Hansen on a trip to Sid Williams and Syd Watts Peaks in central Strathcona Provincial Park in Central Vancouver Island on March 9, 2022.*



## Is the Island 6,000 for you?

*A challenge such as Island 6,000 can be daunting for some. Although they like the idea have having goals some of the peaks are intimidating. Mount Colonel Foster has a unique aura. Although the southeast summit is relatively easy to climb, the main summit requires technical skills and an innate ability to micro-navigate the complex terrain that often leads to unplanned bivouacs. Very few Island peaks are known for quality rock and in some cases being on the mountain with too many others can be dangerous. The Island's highest peak the Golden Hinde (7,208 feet) has been day-tripped, but for most parties the return trip is anywhere from three days to one week. Other peaks such as Mount Albert Edward, the sixth highest peak, have seen babies in backpacks carried to the summit, someone with cerebral palsy pulled in a specially designed sled, and in 1995 an 88-year-old scrambled to the summit.*

*In general, expect a wide variety of difficulties, Island weather, much bushwhacking and a many-years timeline.*



# La traversée des Monts Groulx en ski

Récit et photos par Will Hotopf  
*Coordonnateur des membres de la section Montreal*



*Dan et Édouard luttent contre les éléments près du sommet du mont Jauffret.  
Dan and Édouard toil against the elements near the Mont Jauffret summit.  
Photo: Will Hotopf.*

Durant la pandémie, ma vie professionnelle de guide de randonnée a été mise sur pause. J’en ai profité pour me perfectionner et me suis inscrit à un programme de guide en tourisme d’aventure de neuf mois à Montréal.

En janvier 2021, le retour en classe après le congé des fêtes a été reporté d’un mois par le gouvernement pour briser une énième vague du coronavirus. Je venais de passer les quatre derniers mois à dormir dans une tente aux quatre coins du Québec, apprenant au passage comment guider toute une panoplie d’activités, et il n’était pas question que je reste enfermé pendant quatre semaines dans une colocation à Montréal. C’est donc avec trois bons amis du programme de guide – Daniel (lui aussi membre de la section Montréal du CAC), Alexandre et Édouard – que j’ai décidé de mettre en pratique mes nouvelles compétences.

On se cherchait un défi, et on en a trouvé un! À un peu moins de 1 000 kilomètres en voiture de Montréal, les monts Uapishka (aussi connus sous le nom des monts Groulx) sont isolés et rarement visités, particulièrement au milieu de l’hiver. Il s’agit d’un endroit souvent utilisé par les explorateurs de l’Arctique pour s’entraîner étant donné les plateaux de toundra avoisinant les 1000 mètres d’altitude qui sont régulièrement sujets à des froids extrêmes. La traversée des monts Groulx est un itinéraire principalement hors-piste d’environ 50 kilomètres, exceptées les deux extrémités du trajet qui possèdent quelques kilomètres entretenus à travers la forêt boréale. Ceux deux entrées ont en fait deux sentiers chacun : un sentier d’été, abrupt et sinueux, ainsi qu’un sentier d’hiver qui utilise et suit le principal ruisseau descendant des plateaux à chaque endroit.

Avec notre contrainte d’un mois, nous nous sommes rapidement lancés dans la préparation de l’expédition : trouver un itinéraire, préparer la nourriture, mettre sur pieds un plan quotidien et un plan d’urgence, créer des cartes et dénicher une assurance appropriée. Moins de deux semaines après avoir décidé de se rendre dans les monts Uapishka, nous prenions le volant, excités mais nerveux, pour la longue route qui nous attendait. Nerveux, parce que nous

avons reçu des nouvelles plutôt décourageantes du guide local qui habitait la région : Guy Boudreau. Guy doutait de l’état des sentiers d’hiver à cause des fontes inusitées en décembre et janvier qui avaient transformé la glace des ruisseaux en passoire géante.

Il ne connaissait pas non plus l’état du manteau neigeux en hauteur et ne savait pas s’il serait préférable pour nous de traverser en ski nordique ou en raquette, alors qu’il ne s’était pas encore rendu sur les sommets cette année.

Après deux jours de route, nous sommes arrivés à la maison de Guy aux pieds des montagnes. Nos craintes se sont réalisées : plutôt que de pouvoir partir le lendemain sur le sentier d’hiver, nous allions devoir emprunter le sentier d’été sur 2,5 kilomètres, une ascension de 500 mètres qui n’est pas fréquentée en hiver. Guy nous a suggéré d’ajouter un jour à notre aventure pour monter une première fois en raquette avec la moitié de notre matériel (nos sacs à dos pesaient en moyenne 27 kg). Nous pourrions ainsi dégager le sentier, cacher du matériel sous la neige à la fin du sentier et redescendre avec nos skis, que nous avons attachés sur nos sacs. La journée a été difficile et froide, mais hilarante : redescendre un sentier aussi abrupt en ski nordique a donné lieu à plusieurs moments cocasses et nous nous sommes souvent retrouvés les quatre fers en l’air.

En arrivant au camp de Guy, nous avons découvert qu’une martre avait visité la tente prospecteur où nous dormions. Heureusement pour nous, rien n’avait été laissé derrière qui l’aurait intéressé. Elle avait tout de même pris le temps de laisser sa signature sur quelques-uns de nos sacs de couchage. Dans la forêt boréale, la nature règne...







Le lendemain matin, c'était le vrai départ, en skis. On avait six jours de carburant et de nourriture (4 800 calories par jour chacun) alors qu'on espérait traverser le plateau en cinq jours. En arrivant à notre cachette de la veille après une longue et exigeante montée, nous avons rempli nos sacs avec la deuxième moitié de notre matériel et pris la direction des plateaux. Quelques heures plus tard, il était clair que notre avancée hors-piste dans la neige folle avec nos sacs bien pleins se déroulait plus lentement que prévu. Il faisait -25 °C et le vent ne nous laissait aucun repos, alors que nous avançons à un kilomètre à l'heure. À cette vitesse, il était impensable d'atteindre l'emplacement prévu pour camper ce soir-là. Mère Nature parlait plus fort que nous. Nous avons donc établi un campement parmi quelques arbres, 100 mètres en dessous du sommet du mont Jauffret, et après un bon repas de nouilles, d'aliments lyophilisés et de morceaux de fromage, nous sommes allés nous réfugier dans nos énormes sacs de couchage -40 °C.

Au réveil, par un beau matin à -30 °C avant le lever du soleil, nous avions tous eu la chance d'évaluer nos options. Il était clair que le vent serait un obstacle constant sur les plateaux et que nous ne pourrions faire la traversée dans ces conditions en suivant notre route établie. Nous avons décidé de gravir le mont Jauffret, avant de descendre sur le lac Boissinot, un endroit protégé des grands vents. Étiré sur un axe nord-sud, le lac nous semblait la seule option pour rattraper le temps perdu la veille, même s'il mettait fin à notre idée de traverser en n'utilisant que les plateaux. Il faudrait ensuite suivre un réseau de lacs pour atteindre le mont Provencher et le monter avant de pouvoir rejoindre le sentier d'été et terminer notre traversée.

Avant de redescendre du mont Jauffret, la vue s'est éclaircie et tout le plateau s'est dévoilé devant nous. Entre les monts Uapishka et l'Arctique, à vol d'oiseau, on ne trouve que la petite ville minière de Fermont. Au-delà de celle-ci, vers le nord, il n'y a que la forêt boréale qui cède sa place à la toundra jusqu'aux villages Inuit situés aux abords du détroit d'Hudson. Ayant grandi en Angleterre, la vaste étendue de ce territoire sauvage me laisse sans mots.

Rendus sur le lac Boissinot, le vent s'était calmé et même si le mercure avoisinait toujours les -20 °C, le ciel bleu et le soleil étaient bien suffisants pour nous réchauffer le corps et l'esprit. La neige était profonde, mais légère, et la glace du lac assez solide pour nous permettre de le traverser. Avec une alternance de 15 minutes à l'avant pour « ouvrir le sentier » tour à tour, nous avons augmenté notre vitesse et trouvé notre rythme, nous permettant de croire à nouveau que nous pourrions compléter la traversée. Accompagnés par les traces de lièvres et de castors, protégés des grands vents, le silence nous enveloppait.

Première nuit au mont Jauffret. The first night by Mont Jauffret. Photo Édouard Borel.

“Mère Nature parlait plus fort que nous.”







Notre amie la martre. Our friend the marten.  
Photo Guy Boudreau.

*“Au-delà de celle-ci, vers  
le nord, il n’y a que la  
forêt boréale qui cède  
sa place à la toundra  
jusqu’aux villages  
Inuit situés aux abords  
du détroit d’Hudson.”*

En arrivant au camp ce soir-là, nous nous sommes entendus sur une routine : réveil à 5 h 30, départ à 7 h 30, ski jusqu’à 15 h 30 et au lit vers les 20 h 00. Les deux jours suivants se sont déroulés sans rencontrer âme qui vive, outre l’occasionnel geai gris qui nous tenait compagnie. Nous sommes arrivés aux pieds du mont Provencher en après-midi du quatrième jour en pleine forme, mais tout de même un peu inquiets pour la quantité de carburant qui nous restait : étant donné le froid, nous n’avions pu trouver de source d’eau et devions constamment faire fondre la neige, un procédé énergivore.

Le jour suivant, le mont Provencher nous attendait. Quelle différence ces quelques jours avaient faite! Sans vent ni nuage, le thermomètre affichant un surprenant -5 °C, c’est un soleil généreux qui nous accueillait au sommet. Arrivés en haut, nous avons profité de la vue à 360° sur les montagnes environnantes et le réservoir Manicouagan, l’œil du Québec (jetez un coup d’œil à une carte de la province, vous verrez !).

Après une descente aussi maladroite qu’euphorique, nous avons établi notre campement près d’un marais gelé, le lac des Castors. Et malgré une nuit à grelotter dans le duvet de nos sacs de couchage de plus en plus humides, le lendemain matin nous a menés au sentier d’été au côté sud du massif. C’est à mi-chemin sur le sentier que les choses ont pris une tournure pour le moins... inattendue. Les fixations des skis NNN-BC d’Édouard étaient complètement gelées et en arrivant au premier passage trop abrupt à skier, il lui

était impossible d’enlever ses bottes de ses skis! Par un heureux hasard (et un peu de prévention), nous avons apporté une paire de raquettes pour nous aider à compacter la neige avant d’installer nos campements – ce que je recommande fortement. Édouard a donc pu terminer le sentier avec deux heures de trek en mouflons et en raquettes.

Le sentier prend fin au camp du guide local Jacques. Belge et octogénaire, il vit depuis une vingtaine d’années dans la région. Alors que nous traversons son terrain, il est sorti pour nous accueillir en arborant un large sourire : nous étions les premiers à traverser les monts Groulx en 2021 et il était bien surpris de nous voir !

Nous avons terminé notre aventure avec en poche des leçons inestimables sur le travail d’équipe et les expéditions hivernales, déterminés à retourner dans ce vaste paradis sauvage – avec le Club alpin du Canada de Montréal si possible!

Plusieurs randonneurs aguerris parlent de la « fièvre des monts Groulx ». Lorsqu’on y a mis les pieds, on ne peut que rêver d’y retourner le plus tôt possible. Je ne fais pas exception. ~ACC

*Will Hotopf est le coordonnateur des adhésions au Club alpin du Canada de Montréal et guide de randonnée de l’ACMG. Lorsqu’il ne travaille pas, il organise des sorties pour le club au Québec et dans les Adirondacks et rêve d’organiser un camp du CAC dans l’Ouest.*



On top of Mont Provencher. Au sommet du mont Provencher. Photo Will Hotopf.

## Crossing the Monts Groulx on ski

Story and photos by Will Hotopf

*Membership coordinator of the Montreal Section*

During the pandemic my working life as a hiking guide was put on hold. I decided to make the most of my time learning some new skills and signed up for an eight-month adventure guide program in Montreal.

In January 2021, the course was put on hiatus for a month when the government decided to shut schools as a circuit-breaker lockdown. I had spent the last four months living in a tent across

Quebec, learning how to guide a multitude of activities, and I was darned if I was about to spend the next month cooped up in a shared apartment in Montreal. So instead, along with three good friends from the program — Daniel (also an ACC Montreal member), Alexandre and Édouard — I decided to spend the time putting my new learned skillsets into practice.





We were looking for a challenge and we found one! Located just under 1,000 kilometres by car from Montreal, the Monts Groulx mountain chain (also known by its Innu name, Uapishka) is remote and seldom traveled, especially during mid-winter. It is often used for training by arctic explorers because the plateau is a treeless tundra around 1000-metres in elevation and is commonly subject to extreme cold (hitting -40C consistently). The crossing, known as the Traversée des Monts Groulx is a roughly 50-kilometre passage that is completely off-trail for most of the trek, with the exception of the entry point trails through the low-lying boreal forest that are signposted and maintained. Both entry points have two trails: the summer trail, which is steep and sinuous and the winter trail, which follows the frozen principal stream coming off the plateau at both entry points.

Given the brevity of the one-month timeframe, we set about planning the trip: working out the route, food planning, creating a daily plan and an emergency plan, locating maps and working out insurance. Just under two weeks after making the decision to go, we set off on the long drive north. We were excited and nervous. Nervous mainly because we'd received some uninspiring news from the local guide who lives there, Guy Boudreau. Guy was unsure about whether the winter trail would be in working order since there had been an unseasonable melt in December which had made the ice sporadic with holes. He was also unsure about whether we would be better off crossing on snowshoes or nordic back-country skis as he had yet to go up onto the plateau himself that year.

After two days on the road, we arrived at Guy's cabin at the foot of the mountain range. Upon arrival, our fears were realised – rather than being able to leave the next day on the winter trail, we would have to climb the forested summer trail, a very steep 500-metre ascent over roughly 2.5 kilometres of trail that is never used in winter. Guy suggested we add a day to our trip where we would climb with our skis attached to our backpack and our snowshoes on in order to break the trail, and take up only half of our pack contents (each backpack roughly weighed 27 kgs) to store under a tree before skiing down. The day was cold, difficult, but hilarious: skiing down a steep trail on nordic skis led to several predictable yard sales. Upon arrival at Guy's camp, we discovered that the local marten had decided to investigate the prospector's tent where we slept. Luckily, we hadn't left anything of interest, but we did find to our horror that several of our sleeping bags had been sprayed. In the Boreal Forest, nature reigns.



*“Mother Nature  
had spoken and  
there was little we  
could do about it.”*

*Cruising along Lac Boissinot. En longeant le lac Boissinot.  
Photo Daniel Savouyaud.*







A typical winter camp setup. Une installation typique de camp d'hiver. Photo Will Hotopf.

The next morning, we set off on our skis: we had six days' worth of white gas and food (4,800 calories/day) with us and hoped to cross the plateau within four or five days. Upon arrival at our cache after a morning's hard climb, we filled up our backpacks and headed out onto the plateau. After several hours of slow trudging, it became apparent that we would not make good time up there. It was -25C, with a freezing wind that buffeted us about. With our fully-weighted packs we were managing barely one kilometre per hour: at this rate we would not make it to the planned camp point for that evening. Mother Nature had spoken and there was little we could do about it. We ended up camping in a small patch of trees 100 metres down from the summit of Mont Jauffret and after a heavy meal of freeze-dried food, noodles, and cheese chunks we adjourned to bed, huddling in our massive -40C sleeping bags and planning our next steps.

Come the chilly -30C morning we had all had a chance to ponder our options. It was clear that the wind would be a constant issue on the plateau, and that we wouldn't make the crossing if we continued by our planned route. We decided to continue on to Mont Jauffret, but then descend 200 metres onto the sheltered and wooded Lac Boissinot which contours the plateau on a north-south axis. This plan put an end to our dream of a plateau-only crossing but it seemed the logical way to go and the only option to make up lost time. Following a network of lakes south from Boissinot would take us to the foot of Mont Provencher, which we would attempt to climb before going out on the exit trail.

Before descending to Lac Boissinot from Mont Jauffret the view cleared and we had the full sight of the plateau before us. Between the Monts Groulx and the Arctic as the crow flies there is only the small mining town of Fermont. Beyond the town, heading straight north there is not much but untouched boreal forest and tundra all the way to the Inuit villages that lie on the banks of the Hudson Strait – roughly 1,300 kilometres distant. Originally from England, I find the emptiness of this country astounding.

After floundering down the flank of Mont Jauffret we arrived at Lac Boissinot. The wind had completely died down and although roughly still -20C, the bluebird sunny sky warmed our souls. The snow was thick but light and the lake ice was sufficiently thick to hold our weight.

We got into a rhythm of trail breaking, taking 15-minute turns in the lead. Our speed accelerated and for the first time we started to believe that we could make the crossing. The lake, much like the plateau tundra above, was devoid of life although we often saw beaver and snowshoe hare tracks. Sheltered out of the wind, the silence was overpowering.

Arriving at camp that night, we agreed to settle into a routine: wake up at 5:30am, set out at 8:30am, make camp at 3:30pm and be in bed by 8pm at the latest. The next two days flew by with no signs of human presence and only the occasional curious grey jay to keep us company. We arrived

*“[Jacques] emerged to welcome us with a beaming smile – we were the first to cross the plateau in 2021 and he was astonished to see us.”*

at the base of Mont Provencher on the evening of day four of our crossing in fine form, though starting to worry about our supply of white gas: because it was so cold, we found no sources of running water and had to melt snow, which consumes a lot more fuel.

The next day we ascended Mont Provencher. What a difference a few days can make: no wind, no clouds, balmy -5C weather and a whole lot of sun! Arriving up top, we took in the incredible 360° view over the mountain range and the Manicouagan Reservoir, also known as the Eye of Quebec (look it up, you will understand why).

Skiing euphorically but awkwardly back down, we became lost in the brush and set camp for the night by a frozen swamp, the Lac des Castors. After a night of shivering in increasingly humid down sleeping bags, we set off in the morning down the steep summer trail to the south. Halfway down disaster struck as Édouard's NNN BC ski bindings had completely jammed with ice. Serendipitously, we had taken a pair of snowshoes to compact snow at camp (I wholeheartedly recommend this) and Édouard unceremoniously completed the final two hours of the trek in his camp booties and snowshoes.

At the end of the trail, we arrived at the camp of a local former guide and hermit, Jacques. Jacques is Belgian, in his early 80s and has passed some 20 years living in the area. As we passed through his settlement, he emerged to welcome us with a beaming smile – we were the first to cross the plateau in 2021 and he was astonished to see us.

We ended our trip having learned invaluable lessons on winter travel and teamwork, and we are determined to come back to this far-flung, empty area, hopefully with the Montreal ACC section some day. Many experienced hikers talk of the “Mont Groulx fever” – once you have been there you spend your days dreaming of the next trip and this has certainly been my experience. ~ACC

*Will Hotopf is the membership coordinator of ACC Montreal and an ACMG Hiking Guide. He runs outings for the club in Quebec and the Adirondacks when not working and dreams of organising an ACC section camp out West.*



Dan admires the view of the Réservoir Manicouagan. Dan admire la vue du réservoir Manicouagan. Photo Alexandre Bilodeau-Desbiens.





# Investing in our legacy

The ACC enlists celebrated mountain writer Chic Scott to capture the club's story

## The ACC's history is a bit of a mystery

When ACC members and Canadians think about the history of our club, they probably think of old-time camps, huts and hobnail boots in black and white photos. They may be vaguely aware of Elizabeth Parker and A.O. Wheeler rejecting the idea of Canada being a chapter of the American Alpine Club and forming the ACC in Winnipeg. It is certainly true that as the ACC has evolved over the years it has done a poor job of telling the story of where it's come from and what it's done along the way.

But why does the ACC's history even matter? In a world where climbers have gone from relying on rough maps to carrying GPS devices and from mail delivered by horses to Instagram and online guidebooks, what do the before times have to teach us?

One reason this history matters is the obvious pride in accomplishments and the inspiration that comes with it. But there are also the lessons that can be learned and incorporated into future decisions.

Any organization that wants to chart an intentional path forward should recognize the patterns in its past – the good and the bad – and factor those into where it's going. In short, to move forward with purpose, we need to have a clear picture of where we've been.

## The man for the moment

The good news is that the club's history hasn't been lost to the mists of time, it just hasn't been sifted through and compiled into a coherent story. Club logbooks, executive papers, letters, photos, Gazettes, journals and other original documents are all archived in the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies in Banff. And what's more, the club now has a plan to bring that history to life.

Chic Scott is a name that many club members will immediately recognize as one of Canada's most accomplished skiers, mountaineers and mountain authors. Chic has written a dozen books from ski guides to biographies to comprehensive large-format histories

of mountaineering in Canada, of Banff's Whyte family, and of Mt. Assiniboine. Last June, after seeing Chic's latest book, the beautiful *Mount Assiniboine – The Story*, the ACC commissioned him to write the ACC's history.

Chic has been around the mountains for the past 60 years and a member of the ACC since 1973. His resume includes an impressive list of ascents and long ski traverses in Canada, the European Alps and the Himalaya.

When asked about his motivation for this project he's very quick to describe it as a "fabulous story" and one that should be properly told.

He's aware of other writings that have brought parts of the ACC story to the page in other books (as well as a Gazette story during the club's centennial in 2006), but he describes those as "playing around the edges." The full story of our club's history is only now starting to come together.

## Preview of the ACC's history

The ACC Gazette caught up with Chic recently to discuss the project, his progress and his early view of what his book will look like.

Early in the process, Chic says that he realized that there were three distinct periods of ACC history, periods that will make up three main sections of his book. The first began with the formation of the club and continued to the end of the Second World War. The second period coincided with the post-war time in Canada to the mid-1980s, and the third is what we see as the modern ACC.

The first of these periods included an early boom after the club was formed, followed by decades of struggles. From 1906 to 1914 saw the establishment of many of the things that would become associated with the club to this day, including the Canadian Alpine Journal, an annual camp (today the GMC), a Clubhouse and a library. But from 1914 to 1945 with two World Wars, a flu epidemic and the Great Depression, club growth largely stopped.







Captions

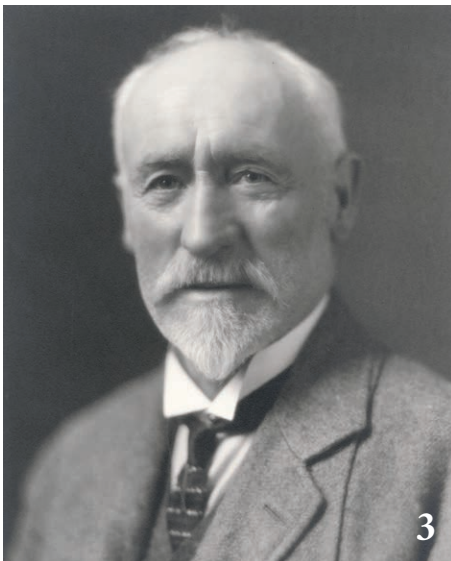
1. The founding members of The Alpine Club of Canada in Winnipeg on March 28, 1906, Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, V14\_acOp\_77.

2. Elizabeth Parker, co-founder of The Alpine Club of Canada, from CAJ 1938 Vol. 26 p. 92, Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies.

3. A. O. Wheeler, co-founder of The Alpine Club of Canada, Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, V14\_acOp\_805.

4. The dining tent at the first ACC camp in July 1906 at Yoho Pass. Elizabeth Parker and A.O. Wheeler at front right. Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, V14\_acOp\_409.

5. Group photo at the 2015 GMC. Photo Zoltan Kenwell.



The club's second historical period began after World War II and continued into the 1980s. The post-war period was one in which Canada grew rapidly, both economically and socially. It was a time of baby boomers, universal health care, the Canadian flag, Lester Pearson and Pierre Trudeau. Among other things, Canada adopted official bilingualism and multiculturalism and convened a Royal Commission on the Status of Women. During this time Canada started to become the country that we recognize today.

During this period the ACC grew modestly. In 1946 the Victory Camp in the Bugaboos accommodated 200 people and turned a significant profit but in the big picture, the club did not stabilize financially. By the end of this second period, the club was on the verge of bankruptcy and considered selling the Clubhouse in Canmore and cancelling the GMC as it continued to lose money.

Through this time the club remained overwhelmingly British-influenced, white and male. From 1945 to 1985, the club had 13 presidents, nine of whom were either English- or Scottish-born and who had grown up in the UK. To the time of this writing, the ACC has never elected a woman president.

This post-war period coincided with a renaissance in Canadian climbing led by members of the Calgary Mountain Club, Squamish climbers on the west coast and Francophone climbers in Quebec. The climbs evolved from Grillmair Chimneys in 1952 to the north face of North Twin in 1985.



By the mid-eighties, Canadian climbers were amongst the best in the world. Unfortunately, the ACC had almost nothing to do with this renaissance. The ACC remained stuck in their conservative ways.

Chic marks the beginning of the third distinct period of ACC history as the mid-1980s, coinciding with a modernization of the ACC's hut system. During this time the club recognized the potential of operating alpine huts in a business-like way and of using the revenue that they generated to support other club services.

By the mid-eighties, the club had a terrific huts system, including Elizabeth Parker, Stanley Mitchell, Wates-Gibson, Wheeler and others, but had not yet figured out how to manage it and profit from it. During the late eighties, the club began to run the huts in a much more business-like manner – payment for overnights ensured there was lots of firewood when guests arrived, and that the hut was clean. This period also saw the building or otherwise acquiring of huts across western Canada's mountain ranges.

The ACC also took on the projects of building the Alpine Centre in Lake Louise and hosting the 1988 UIAA conference in Banff. The club forged ahead with new ideas and new energy in this time, much of which was led by Peter Fuhrmann as president and a dedicated executive. It was a team that saved the club.

The research and writing

As for his process, Chic paces himself as you would expect from someone who's been down the road of large research and writing projects before. He works most days, researching at the Whyte Museum in Banff where he lives, and writing a few hours at a time. He finds time to hike or ski a couple days a week.

His plan is to research and write each of the periods separately – each should take about a year – weaving quotes, notes and facts together with photos selected from the thousands available in the ACC collection. He expects there will be a full year of his

polishing the final manuscripts to make the writing flow into a captivating story, followed by a final year of copy editing, photo processing, layout and design with his team. He's visualizing appendices that will include camps, presidents, award winners, huts and sections. He's planning on a short history of each of the local chapters highlighting important people and their contributions across the country.

Chic pictures the book, when finished, as having a similar impact for the ACC as his *Pushing the Limits* did for Canadian mountaineering at home and internationally: it will tell a relatively unknown and uniquely Canadian story about the history of Canadians in our mountains. And it will put the club on the map for other alpine organizations around the world. It will be something that we can be proud of.

He and the Alpine Club are eyeing a release date coinciding with the 2026 Mountain Guides Ball. ~ACC





# ACC BIWOC Intro to Mountaineering Camp, Summer 2021: Bow Hut

by Gwen Nguyen

Gwen Nguyen was one of six women to attend our 2021 BIWOC Intro to Mountaineering camp in the summer of 2021 at Bow Hut. Read on for her impressions of the camp and exploration on the Wapta Glacier.

*I wish to acknowledge that the land our camp took place on is within the present-day territories of the Treaty 7 Territory, comprised of Stoney Nakoda Nations of Wesley, Chiniki and Bearspaw; three Nations of the Blackfoot Confederacy: the Piikani, Kainai and Siksika, and the Tsuu T'ina of the Dene people.*

## Day 1 - Meet and greet, hike to the Bow Hut

As I pulled into the parking lot at Bow Lake, I felt a nervous jitter: I was finally participating in an intro to mountaineering course — almost exclusively with women of colour and guided by a female ACMG guide! Plus, we would have the entire Bow Hut to ourselves. I felt like I had won the lottery.

Including myself, our group of six consisted of Emma, the ACC program coordinator; Rebecca, the founder of Darken the Mountains; Hanan, an engineering student; Renee, a communications professional; Rochelle, a diversity consultant. While everyone was busy double-checking their gear, our guide, Sylvia “Syl” Forest sauntered over and introduced herself.

After waivers were signed, everyone shared their goal for the camp. The overwhelming theme was to have the chance to try something new. A few of the girls had never stayed in an ACC hut or been on a glacier. Excitement was high as we started on the trail towards the historical Bow Hut.

The smoke was thick as we ambled our way around the lake towards the first challenge on the trail, something Syl diplomatically mentioned would be an “interesting move.” It turns out “the move” was a short scramble up and over a chock stone that was lodged within a canyon. Everyone maneuvered around this obstacle in great form, with a spotter below and Syl helping to guide each person across. This first test already proved that this group of women would be one I could count on and trust in the mountains.

We quickly made ourselves at home when we arrived at the hut. It felt strange to be the only group there but it didn’t take us long to spread out and take up the entire space. While we ogled at the amount of food that the porters had brought up for us (including

Top: Rebecca, Emma, Hanan, and Gwen on the shoulder of Mt. Rhonda. Photo Sylvia Forest.

Middle: Emma and Rebecca practicing rope skills. Photo Gwen Nguyen.

Bottom: Hanan enjoying a charcuterie board appetizer supplied by PeakEats. Photo Emma Chong.

Left: Sylvia and Rebecca crossing the glacier. Photo by Emma Chong.



whole cantaloupes!), Syl suggested we go over some maps. She taught us, a captive audience, how to estimate the length of a trail, how to determine UTM coordinates, how to read topographic lines, and more.

Over a dinner of beef rotini, we got to know one another better by sharing our experiences in the mountains.

## Day 2 - Skills day

The morning was gray and dreary, rain pelting the windows. But with the alarming amount of wildfire smoke that hung in the air we welcomed the rain wholeheartedly. Today we would stay inside the hut for a skills practice day.

After a hearty breakfast and a few cups of coffee, the team was ready to start learning. We put on our climbing harnesses and Syl went over basic climbing knots and quizzed us on the difference between a knot and a hitch. We talked about gear and went over the basics of glacier travel as a roped team. It was the first time that most of the group would be on a glacier, and everyone was eager and open to learning.

The sky cleared up after lunch so we took the opportunity to hike to the toe of the Bow Glacier to get some practice walking with crampons and being roped up as a team. The air felt noticeably cleaner.

At the toe of the glacier by Iceberg Lake, we geared up with our harnesses again but this time added crampons to the mix. First, we all tried making ice anchors with our





ice screws. Then Syl taught us how to walk with crampons on the glacier uphill and most importantly, downhill.

My crampons turned out to be too big, which can be very dangerous on the glacier by increasing the chances of the crampons falling off and causing a slip and fall. Renee, who has larger feet than me, generously traded her crampons with mine. She had a different brand of crampon that happened to fit my feet better. This was an important lesson to make sure your crampons fit before going on a trip!

On our way back, we hiked around a rocky platform to get a better view of the peaks to the east. To cap off an already great day, we went into an ice cave. After an impromptu photo session, we walked back to the hut and finished the day with a charcuterie and cheese board. Yes, you read that right.

That evening, we had some interesting discussions around representation and diversity in the mountains and the barriers to access racialized groups face. We talked about the importance of creating a safe space for racialized groups, especially among the leading organizations within the outdoor industry like the ACC. Syl described her experience training to be one of the first female ACMG guides and we all revealed our own experiences as minorities in the outdoor space. The topic of conservation and environmentalism also came up.

### Day 3 - Exploring the Bow Glacier, crevasse rescue practice, and a birthday celebration

On the third day we had the chance to apply our skills in the field. Everyone was nervous but keen to get out on the glacier again. We quickly ate our breakfast of smoky carrot soup, then packed our lunches and started out. As if the universe knew that this day would be our field day, the weather cleared to reveal bluebird skies.

Crevasse rescue was on the agenda so we were on the lookout for a suitable crevasse

to apply our skills. We settled on a rocky outcrop at the foot of Mount Rhonda instead. Syl demonstrated how to set up a pulley system in the snow, using the rock outcrop as our “crevasse” lip.

Then we divided into two groups to practice. Shenanigans ensued when one team realized that the system they set up was too short to rescue their “victim” and our team did some creative problem solving trying to rescue another. I’m happy to report that all our victims made it out of the crevasse safely.

To conclude our time on Mount Rhonda, we celebrated Hanan’s birthday. Emma brought some one-bite brownies and we serenaded the birthday girl. A pretty good birthday, if you ask me!

On the way back, Syl asked me to lead the group down the glacier. I have been on a glacier before but this would be my first time leading such a large group. I made my way down, mindful of each step. We all made it back to Iceberg Lake in record time and cheered as we completed our first full day in the field.

After settling in back at the hut, we debriefed the day, discussing the riskiest part of the day (we all agreed it was descending the glacier at the end of the day) and the day’s highlights (walking on the glacier with clear blue skies).

### Day 4 - Review and packing up

Our final day at the Bow Hut consisted of readying the hut for the next group and packing up. I was sad that my time with this amazing group of women was coming to an end, but I felt grateful to have had the opportunity to share this experience with them and to Syl for guiding us. It was truly invigorating being in the mountains with such a supportive and enthusiastic team and I can’t wait for the next one. ~ACC



#### Captions

1. Rebecca exploring an ice cave. Photo Emma Chong
2. The group transitioning after a day on the Wapta Icefield. Photo Emma Chong.
3. Classic view of St. Nicholas Peak from the toe of the glacier near Bow Hut. Photo Emma Chong.
4. Silhouettes of most of the group after a successful day out. Photo Sylvia Forest.
5. Group photo at the entrance of the ice cave. Photo Sylvia Forest.





# Small but mighty

The ACC’s Newfoundland and Labrador Section keeps busy despite COVID.

by Greg Locke  
*Chair, Newfoundland and Labrador Section*

St John’s, NL – The smallest Alpine Club of Canada section has been pretty dormant since the onslaught of COVID-19 two years ago. Public, organized events and trips all ceased but because we are a small section we tend to be pretty close even outside of the Alpine Club. This meant small groups of climbers and hikers formed bubbles and carried on with outdoor activities. It also helped that in Newfoundland and Labrador we did not get hit as hard as other provinces and had a lot more freedom of movement particularly in the summer months of 2020 and 2021.

We climbed rock, we climbed ice and hit the coastal trails but one of the more interesting things that happened is that there was a boom in exploring and putting up new routes by some dedicated individuals and teams.

Most people know about the ocean-side crags at Flatrock just 20 km north of St John’s. It was first developed a little over twenty years ago and consists of well over 200 routes and boulder problems across four separate crags and a boulder field. There are also beautiful ice routes a little further north at Stiles Cove and Red Head Cove.

A spectacular rockfall in 2020 collapsed the Flaccid Ledge at Main Face in Flatrock, taking out the starts for five bolted routes. The plus side is that with some additional bolts those routes can now be extended higher.

Lewis Loader and Ryan Pierce have been doing maintenance at Flatrock, updating, adding and replacing bolts on some routes. A new crag at Swift Current, a two-hour drive west of St John’s, has gotten a lot of attention in the past couple of years. It’s set back from the ocean in a forested area on a series of granite bluffs above the town and the first routes went up about five years ago. There is overhanging, vertical, and slab climbing all within a small area with huge potential for further development.

Danial Alacoque, David Bruneau, Ryan Pierce and Lewis Loader have all spent a lot of time building routes and access trails here and it is a great location for full-day trips or even overnights since there is camping located nearby. Currently there are 30 routes on seven separate walls. Geometry Wall, Tiger Wall, No-where Wall, Halfway Wall, Weather Wall and the Tiger Slabs. Trad, sport and top rope are available ranging from 5.7 to 12a.

Details of Swift Current are up on Mountain Project and are updated regularly:

>>> <https://new.mountainproject.com/area/108197386/swift-current>

In 2022 we hope to get things reactivated and organize some events at these new climbing routes and crags. If you are coming to Newfoundland for work or holidays this summer, please look us up. We’re always happy to take people out climbing in our playground. ~ACC

*Photos are by Greg Locke: (1) Ryan Pierce on No Secant Thoughts, The Geometry Wall. Swift Current, NL. (2) Aaron Casey on Shadow of The Sun, the Weather Wall. Swift Current, NL. (3) Erinn Locke climbing on the remains of the Flaccid Ledge after a major rockfall at Main Face, Flatrock, NL. (4) Lewis Loader on High Anxiety in Red Head Cove, NL. (5) Jacqui Bodwell on Astro Kitty, Tiger Wall. Swift Current, NL.*





# Avalanche Transceiver Interference

by Doug Latimer, ACC Lead Winter Guide

*This article assumes knowledge of avalanche transceiver search techniques and is not a substitute for proper training.*

The issue of interference with avalanche transceivers during a search seems to be one of those problems that everyone knows exists but few can explain. Turn your phone off. Keep granola bar wrappers away from the transmitter. Beware of metal dental fillings. Over the years I've heard many different stories about what can impact a proper search.

Last spring I had the great gift of being able to explore this issue with ACC member Ivars Finvers. Ivars has a PhD in electrical engineering and he shares my concern over the lack of understanding about how potential interference may impact a transceiver search. We met at the Banff airfield in May to record potential interference and test possible solutions to the problem. Our results were surprisingly different than what many in the industry had assumed.

## Our methods

Our testing involved placing two avalanche transceivers – one transmitting and the other receiving – 20 metres apart and then introducing potential sources of interference to each unit. For the receiving unit, we tested with each potential source of interference placed at 30cm away, then 20cm, 10cm and finally in contact with the unit. Any deviation in the distance on the registered by the receiver and/or a change in the direction of the search arrow were interpreted as signal interference.

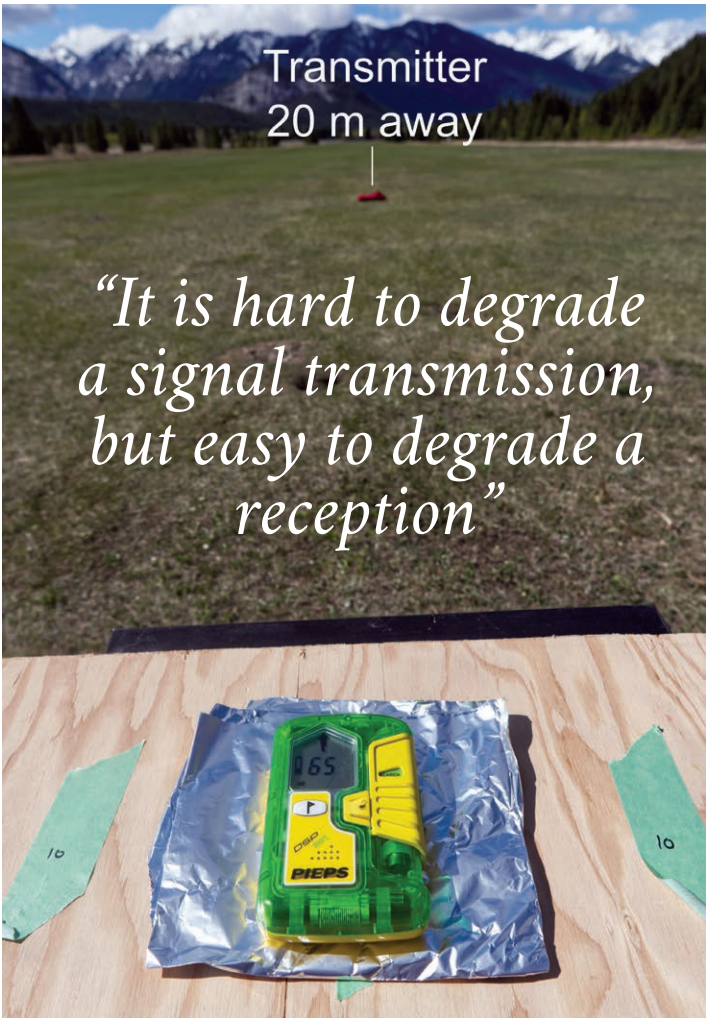
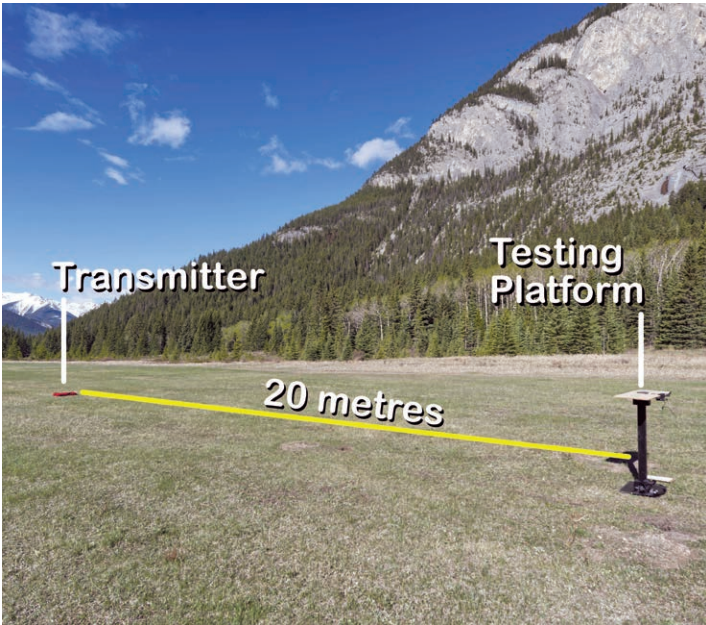
Each source of interference was tested twice. The first test was done with the antennae of the transmitter and receiver aligned (parallel). For the second test the antennae were positioned perpendicular to each other.



## Results: receiver interference

We tested a wide range of electronic devices that could potentially interfere with a transceiver search. Here is a summary of the greatest threats that we discovered:

- ▶ **1. Electric motors** are the most powerful source of interference we tested. We used a running cordless electric drill 50cm from the receiver that rendered the unit useless. While not many of us are likely carry a drill skiing, the magneto on a running snowmobile may have a very similar effect.
- ▶ **2. Display screens** were also found to be a major source of interference and the bigger the screen, the greater the interference. The reason for this is likely the flicker or refresh rate of screens. The greatest source of interference from a display occurred with a 10-inch tablet, but smaller screens like a camera, GPS, inReach devices and cell phones also had an impact. Cell phones can interfere with a search, but only if the screen is on. We found no significant issues with a cellphone's transmission, WIFI or Bluetooth functions, as long as the screen was off and the cellphone was more than 10cm from the transceiver. The bottom line: keep display screens off and well away from the receiver.
- ▶ **3. LED lighting.** This would most often apply to a headlamp and the source of this interference is the circuitry responsible for the flicker or refresh rate of the light. We found that LED lights are a major source of interference and should not be used close to a receiving unit in a search. If it is necessary for a rescuer to have a headlamp on during the signal search, keep the light more than 30cm from the transceiver and keep in mind that some interference may be occurring.
- ▶ **4. Electrically heated gloves** were another major source of interference. Holding a transceiver with heated gloves (turned on) produced a complete loss of signal from 20 metres distance (there was no significant interference if the gloves were turned off). For a real world avalanche rescue, keep your heated gloves turned off for a search.
- ▶ **5. Aluminum foil** was another issue. The receiver was affected by aluminum foil if it was in direct contact with the material. Placing a receiver on a sheet of foil greatly reduced its sensitivity.



## Results: transmission interference

We were pleasantly surprised when testing the sending unit as we found only two scenarios where we could interfere with signal transmission. The first was when the cordless electric drill was left running next to the transceiver and the second was when the transceiver itself was wrapped in aluminum foil like a baked potato. The transmitting signal was significantly degraded in both situations.

Placing a cellphone with the screen turned on next to a transmitter had no impact. Three foil wrapped granola bars in contact the transmitter had no impact. LED headlamps and the 10-inch tablet also had no significant impact on a signal search.

We also found that the “group check” function that is available on some models is by no means a reliable method to identify potential sources of transceiver interference.

## Summary and suggestions

It is very hard to degrade the transmission signal of an avalanche transceiver, but it is fairly easy to degrade the effectiveness of a receiving unit.

So, keep electric motors, display screens, LED lights and electrically heated gloves more than 30cm from the searcher's transceiver. Foil-lined gloves may also be a potential source of interference.

If you suspect that you may have some signal interference, but are unable to locate the source, tighten the search grid. We found that by reducing the coarse search grid from 40 metres to 20 metres greatly improved the chances of picking up an initial signal.

In my mind, the issue of transceiver interference is similar to the challenges I indicated in the last edition of the Gazette regarding crevasse rescue: we tend to assume too much and question too little. I have started teaching for the Canadian Avalanche Association within their Industry Training Program and so far I'm probably learning more from the students and other instructors than I'm actually teaching. The process of questioning and challenging information is essential to learning. When no one has a good answer we need to investigate for ourselves and share the results.

Our full research paper was printed in the Avalanche Journal (winter 2012-22). Anyone who would like a free pdf copy of the paper may contact me at [douglatimer@gmail.com](mailto:douglatimer@gmail.com).

*As the ACC's Lead Winter Guide, Doug Latimer teaches our instructional courses on Avalanche Safety and Crevasse Rescue, and guides our back-country ski camps. Doug runs a video and multimedia company and is the author of Avalanche! The Guide's Guide to Safer Travels in the Mountains. ~ACC*





Mount Mummery. Artists Week, 2021.



An artist friend at Patti's first plein air trip.

## Patti Dymment

### GMC Artist in Residence

I had already been painting for 30 years when my friends began coaxing me to paint plein air. We were at my second artist residency at the Columbia Icefield, and I was spending my time painting indoors. “Your packs are how heavy?” I asked, and “you’re going to hump them up where!?”

They convinced me, though, when I saw what the experience could offer. The challenge of plein air painting is a whole new education for artists. Painting outdoors builds a stronger skillset, something I definitely wanted. It makes you slow down. Instead of admiring a scene as you trek past it, you take in all the elements, immerse yourself fully in the grand gestalt. On the other hand, you also speed up: rapidly shifting light and weather train you to design and execute more quickly, improving your visual memory and ability to boil it all down to the essentials.

To render the colors and values of light, shadow and atmosphere accurately, you have to paint directly from them. Even the best cameras can’t record these values perfectly. They can’t show you the landscape the way your eyes and brain do, dancing over the scene; ignoring this, delighting over that. The painting you create standing in those moments is composed of your reactions and interests, balanced with urgency.







*Plein air oil at Assiniboine.*



*The dining tent. Artists Week, Mount Mummery GMC, 2021.*



*Painting plein air high in Kananaskis Country.*



*Watercolour and ink sketch of Albert Glacier.*

Plein air painting draws you out to explore and photograph new vistas, inspiring and informing studio paintings, which in turn inspires more adventures in a very positive feedback loop. And it's so fun! Yes, art can be a deeply felt struggle, mining one's very soul, eternally striving for excellence. I feel that. But we keep coming back for the most excellent fun. Each moment you feel your painting coming together is an exciting one. Painting with friends from an alpine hut is always a great time. I have tremendously enjoyed several heli-painting trips in the best of company.

Among the most thrilling adventures have been at the Artists Week at The Alpine Club of Canada's General Mountaineer Camp. I attended as a participant, then twice in the role of Artist in Residence. Participants who choose painting from the adventure menu have joined me in plein air demos, discussions and mini-workshops. I have brought my oils and watercolor sketching kits for painters to try, which they've really taken to and gotten fine results, including participants (and guides) who had never picked up a brush. Guides,

I found, will cheerfully tackle a mountain painting as long as they can clearly indicate yesterday's climbing route.

Imagine a sloping meadow, high above a tiny camp below, lush with mosses and streams, riotous with wildflowers. Painters perch in a sweep of great boulders. Brilliant sunlight glints on surrounding glaciers and sharp peaks, some of which our campmates are ascending. To assist/encourage/instruct each artist, I have to clamour up one boulder and clatter down another - and I love it. I feel like a pioneer mountain painter, like John Singer Sargent teaching plein air at Lake O'Hara!

These experiences have been exceptionally rewarding and are memories I'll enjoy for a lifetime. I am very much looking forward to returning for GMC Artists Week 2022. *-ACC*

Artists Week at the 2022 GMC will be held from August 13-18 at International Basin.  
**Sign up at [adventures.alpineclubofcanada.ca](https://adventures.alpineclubofcanada.ca)**





*Abbot Pass Hut was built in 1922. 100 years later, with the ground beneath it warming, eroding and sliding off the mountain, it will be removed.*

The hut has meant a lot to all of us at the ACC, and to so many more. Ever since the decision for the hut to be removed was made official earlier this spring, we've been thinking about those who've shared, contributed and been a part of this story over the past century.

We're grateful for the enormous efforts of the Parks Canada geotechnical teams that spent much of the past four years working against time trying to save the hut.

Countless hikers, mountaineers and perhaps ghosts have taken shelter at Abbot Pass and each one of them has a story and a memory. Countless more have loved or been inspired by the hut from a distance and perhaps had plans or a thought to make the trek one day.

We're remembering the tradespeople and the staff and the volunteers who've given their best to the hut over the years. As a worksite, Abbot Pass was as challenging as any, but the pride they took in their craft was clear.

And we remember the artisans who, a century ago with horses and hands, built a sturdy stone hut that would last longer than the ground that it sat on.

Abbot Pass Hut has been a home for climbers, trekkers, wardens, guides, authors, artists, dreamers, and so many more.

Goodbye old friend, we will all miss you. ~ACC

Send us your stories about adventures at Abbot Pass Hut. Stories may appear in future issues of the Gazette and on the Aspects ACC Blog.

Email: [gazette@alpineclubofcanada.ca](mailto:gazette@alpineclubofcanada.ca)

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