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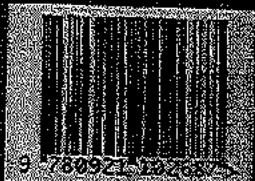
Barry Blomfield

WATERFALL ICE

CLIMBS in the CANADIAN ICE



FISH CREEK BRANCH



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fourth edition

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A quality climbing guide from Rocky Mountain Books

Joe Josephson

Cover: Steve House on Virtual Reality. Photo: Joe Josephson
Title Page: Alex Lowe on Weeping Wall. Photo: Chris Noble



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Love and a special appreciation to my wife Nichole, without whom this work would not be possible.

I'd like to thank everyone who helped make my original edition of *Waterfall Ice* such a quality volume. In bringing out this new edition, a very generous thanks goes out to Margo Talbot for all her help in getting this project finished as soon as it has been, digging up information, photos, getting a wide range of personalities to submit their routes and quality proofreading. For those of you that worked directly with Margo, see her acknowledgements below.

Sean Isaac deserves much appreciation and free beer for his endless enthusiasm, advocacy and excellent work on *Mixed Climbs*. A bottle of single malt goes to Larry Stanier for once again writing the Avalanche Section and making it interesting and relevant to this book. Barry Blanchard deserves more respect than I can possibly give for his friendship, the Foreword and his continued commitment to hard routes here and elsewhere.

Considering the size of the Range, I value Eric Hoogstraten who finally agreed to provide information from years of exploration in the far reaches of the Rockies. And, even more thanks to Eric for his information on the Bull River Canyon.

No guidebook would be the same without photos. A handful of individuals have provided more than their share of photos for this volume. Their artistic skill and generosity is greatly appreciated. They are: Barry Blanchard, Alan Kerr, Chris Noble, Rob Owens, Godefroy Perroux, Dave Thomson and Brad Wroblewski.

I must thank a few people from whom I continue to find inspiration for their dedication and great routes—most I've climbed with, some I've not, and one I've not even met. These people are: Serge Angelluni, Barry Blanchard, Jeff Everett, Will Gadd, Steve House, Sean Isaac, Guy Lacelle, David Marra, Glenn Reisenhofer, Raphael Slawinski, Larry Stanier, Grant Statham and Dave Thomson.

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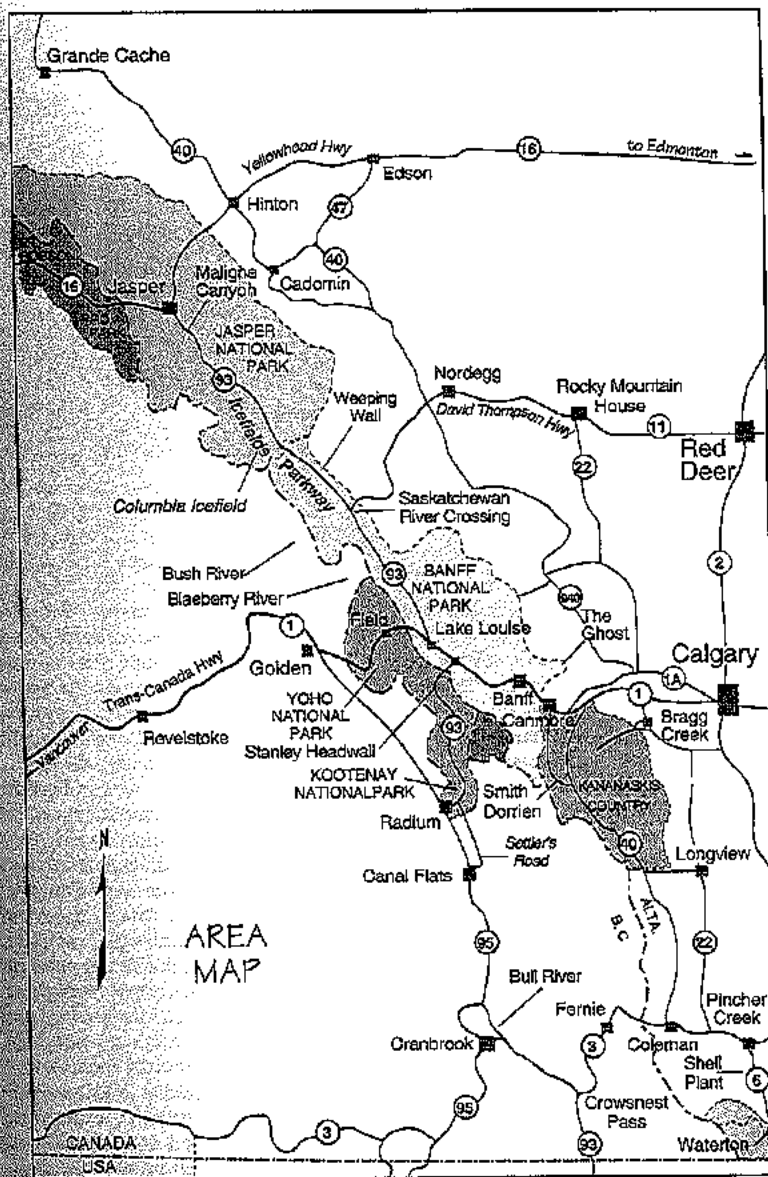
Thanks to everyone who sent new route information, corrections, and updates, no matter how obscure. And, even more thanks for the patience of those who sent me this information years ago and have wondered ever since if it would see the light of day. I save every scrap and have re-checked and cross-referenced as much as possible. It all helps!

Acknowledgements by contributor Margo Talbot

Thanks and appreciation go out to the Canadian Rockies climbing community for their ongoing cooperation and support in the making of this guide. My thanks go out to Sean Elliott, Jim Gudjonson, Eric Hoogstraten, David Marra and Bill Noble for their volume of new route information; to Barry Blanchard, Darcy Chilton, Guy Chouinard, Eric Dumerac, Shawn Huisman, Karen McNeill, Pat Morrow, Inka Nagy, Rob Owens, Tim Pochay, Andrew Querner, Grant Statham and Dave Thomson for their photographic images; to Scott Semple for his technical support, Will Gadd for the Red Bull, Barry Blanchard for his incomparable introduction, Larry Stanier for his avid savvy, Bammon Walsh for verification of facts, John Gaffney and the folks at Canadian Pacific Railway for their ongoing cooperation, Karla Talbot for her courier services, Catherine Mulvihill for keeping me on track and my psychologist for helping me tie it all together.

Photos on previous pages:

- p.6 Ice formations on French Creek. Photo: Joe Josephson
- p.7 Jeff Nazarchuk on Whiteman Falls. Photo: Brad Wroblewski
- p.8 Maya Swannle on Gibraltar Wall. Photo: Brad Wroblewski
- p.9 Mark Twilight on Pilsner Pillar. Photo: Joe Josephson



FOREWORD

High time that Waterfall Ice had its next edition, I mean the first edition, that was published in 1980, listed 90 climbs and this collection is pushing 800! For crying in the sink! There has been one hell of a lot of adventuring and exploration going on out there and that's very cool.

You'd think that the range would be "climbed out" as some have said. Well, it is one heck of a big range. I suspect that we'd all be a little dumbfounded if we got in a helicopter and took a birds-eye-view of some of the really big ones that are lying virgin out there a week's ski back into the mountains.

I'm amazed by what the Rockies still offer up roadside. Take *Nemesis* this last season. It was in the leanest form that I've seen given my dozen plus ascents of the route over the last twenty years. Yet the first pitch was brilliant, enough ice to climb—just—but not enough to protect (only three ice screws in 60 m.), long runouts between hard won rock sections. Serious concentrated climbing with loads of risk to focus the leader into the moment of performance (kind of sounds like an 17th century Japanese discourse on the martial arts... maybe traditional mixed/ice climbing is that, a martial art). A couple of "sport mixed climbers" told me that they'd skied to *Nemesis*, declared it "unformed" then skied away. I suggested that they think outside of the box that the bolt had created for them. Boxed in by the bolt, old ethical stuff, risk versus performance, the samurai versus the gymnast, apples versus oranges...

Ok, I'm grinding an axe here, but hey! I've worn weary listening to folks declare that ice climbing is too easy, stale.

Never did see any of them out on the real ones anyway; ones like *Sea of Vapours* in 93 (too real for me—deep, deep play), *Nemesis* last season, *Les Miserables* whenever it does come in. Risky ice climbing is plenty hard enough, most can't stomach it—it's not for everyone—that's why so few do it.

Stepping down off of my soapbox now. God I've had a lot of good times ice climbing in the majestic Canadian Rockies. We've got it here: acres of wonderful azure and chrome ice, so many routes to do and have a good day in the mountains. Banff and Canmore are now a "destination" for ice climbers worldwide. As one British regular put it to me, "It doesn't seem to matter how desperate the rest of the world is for ice, it is always happening here!" Given that Waterfall Ice describes climbing venues dispersed over a geographical area equal to a large European country, many routes become "destination" outings even for locals. And that is cool because it is big fun to road trip down to Waterton, or up to Valemount and jump onto their ice.

Add to all the ice the one hundred and sixtyish routes in Sean Isaac's *Mixed Climbs in the Canadian Rockies* and there is a whole bundle of ways to pass your days in our mountains. Don't get me wrong, I like the "new" (read bolt protected) mixed climbing. Reminds me of sport climbing in that I often get absolutely and pathetically pumped trying, yet it is safe, I don't have to worry about getting hurt, at least on the rock anyway, the ice sections are still plenty risky. And like sport climbing there are super cool routes, and there are ones that suck.

Having witnessed and participated in the evolution of ice climbing over



Barry Blanchard doing what he does best: eating and alpine climbing on the first ascent of Silver Lining.

the past 25 years I've concluded that climbing ice is a fine way to pass a winter's day and that the new edition of "Waterfall Ice" can be part of what guides you out there. My multitudinous thanks to Jo-Jo for his passion and partnership over the years; Raphael Slawinski for his vision, unbridled enthusiastic courage and for heating my sorry ass with the fire of competition on *Sans Blitz* last season (wish we could have all been there brother); and to Margo Talbot for her dedication and calling of **bull-shit!** whenever the air fills up with too much testosterone and I forget that it is all really about spending good days in the mountains. Many a good day to us all.

Barry Blanchard, Canmore, Sept. 2001

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to a new edition of *Waterfall Ice*. In the time since the last edition of this book 1994, many things have changed. Most significantly, ice climbing has gone through a popularity explosion and style revolution.

Despite the changes, revisiting the 1994 edition made it clear much of the information is still valid and perhaps the best service of the guide has always been the organization of such a vast array of routes and geography. Indeed, over ten months of full-time research and writing went into that volume. Considering the effort and framework already laid down, I thought it would be a simple matter to "plug and play" new routes as they appeared and produce a new volume in no time.

Updating my original work has been an ongoing project since 1997. Finishing *Ghost Rock* and *Bow Valley Rock*, moving away from the Rockies in Octo-

ber 1998, a new route explosion difficult to keep pace with, and the publishing of Sean Isaac's *Mixed Climbs* delayed the final push on this book until 2001 when Margo Talbot and Raphael Slawinski started to help in the collection of information.

In the last six or seven years there have been more than 350 new and previously unreported ice and mixed routes. This number is significant when you consider the total number in the 1994 edition, cataloguing over 20 years of activity, was just shy of 500. Aside from a couple of record breaking years in terms of ice formation and snow stability, a big part of that explosion is owing to the number of winter climbers now active in the Canadian Rockies and elsewhere. Large and frequent numbers have become the norm on once obscure and remote routes. Donkey trails now get established to once im-

possible approaches, new anchors appear and volumes of information gets passed around as more and more people climb the routes. In the earlier edition I indicated 70 routes that had not been repeated at the time of publishing in 1994. Today, with only a few exceptions, there is not a single major route that has not been repeated.

It has been clear to me for years that many routes go unclimbed by the simple thought they've been done before. So, as can be expected, this volume will generate an explosion of new routes. Despite what Will Gadd wrote in the foreword to *Mixed Climbs* I do believe the new route potential in the Canadian Rockies to be virtually unlimited on both mixed ground and on pure waterfalls. I made those comments in 1995 after running into Will at the parking lot of Neptune's Mountaineering in Boulder, Colorado. Knowing of Will's ability and motivation, it was a desperate and purely selfish attempt to persuade Will from moving back to the Rockies. There were far too many projects and secret smears I wanted for myself.

I think the most exciting and open-ended number of new routes is found in the realm of alpine mixed routes. While climbs like *The Reality Bath*, *Striving for the Moon*, *Sans Blitz*, *M16*, *The Drip at the Centre of the Universe* and *The Silver Lining* are significant alpine routes in their own right, there is an entire collection of longer routes that blur the line between pure waterfall and bigger alpine climbs. The range is full of alpine-waterfall routes like those on the Stanley Glacier, Goat Glacier, Mount Warspite, Storm Mountain, Mount Aberdeen and to even some degree on The Three Sisters. Perhaps the funniest-looking alpins, mixed photo I've ever seen was one Karl Nagy showed me after an Octo-

ber trip he and Jeff Everett took to the Mount Robson area.

At the outset of updating the book you now hold, I was committed to offering up my ideas and hard-earned knowledge of unclimbed routes. One of the biggest joys has been to write a passage describing a potential new route only to later sift through the pile of information and find a report of someone having climbed it. Also of interest are a number of obscure mentions already published in 1994 that have not yet been picked up on and explored. Nevertheless, I've tried to purge the memory banks, however vague, as much as possible. Happy hunting.

This book covers one of the greatest geographic areas of any climbing guide in the world. As a result it is a monumental task making sense of over 30,000 square kilometres—not a problem when talking to locals or those intimate with the range, but desperate for those new to the area.

Providing you can follow a road map and understand the basics of a topographic map, this book will give you the necessary landmarks and information to find your desired routes.

As with any project of this size, inaccuracies are inevitable. Years of experience, effort and rewriting were required to get all the details correct. Every attempt has been made to give information that represents the usual or typical conditions you will find on the ice climbs and approaches. Remote and obscure routes are conjecture and require that a liberal translation of the description be applied. Corrections, updates and clearer descriptions are gladly welcomed and should be sent to the author. See page 38-39 for information.

Joe Josephson

THE CANADIAN ROCKIES

The introduction to each area includes a brief description of the flavour of the climbing, how to get there and what to expect. Following the introduction is a description of roads and access into the area, any useful facilities and the most convenient way to reach the closest emergency personnel. Emergency phone numbers are listed on page 400.

The route descriptions run in a south to north fashion. Other areas that branch off the main spine of the Rockies are included as they are encountered. The key to understanding the layout and geography of the range is to determine where the major highways are. Then, everything else falls into place.

Every effort was made to make each chapter and major climbing area stand alone and make it possible to find them with minimal reference to other locally-known landmarks. In the early 1990s, climbers from France told me about their first visit to the Rockies. They were so overwhelmed by the vastness of the range that it was all they could do just to find the most obvious routes. After several weeks of battling warm Chinook conditions and 'hidden' climbs, they cut their trip short and returned to France, depressed. Indeed, as you drive west from Calgary on a clear day, an endless sea of peaks stretches on the horizon. Thankfully, these same climbers returned and have since added their own routes to the climbs presented here.

Maps

A number of sketch maps based on 1:50000 and 1:250000 topographic maps are used. Dots indicating the location of the climb(s) are placed onto the map. Combined with the detailed verbal description you should be able to gain a better understanding of the Rocky Mountain geography and hopefully spend a minimal amount of time looking for your chosen route.

A list of the relevant topographic map sheets to the area is included with each section. The six digit grid references given in the route descriptions are all taken from the 1:50 000 National Topographical Series. These maps can be obtained from private sources such as climbing shops, book stores or the ACC Clubhouse in Canmore, or by writing:

Canada Map Office
130 Bentley Avenue
Nepean, Ontario
Canada, K1A 0E9
US and Canada 1-800-465-6277
613-952-7000

The grid reference for a climb is the approximate location of the base of the route. Occasionally the grid reference of a prominent landmark or other object is also included. On the right-hand border of each National Topographic Map you will find instructions on how to use the Universal Transverse Mercator Grid System to locate the specific position on the map. It is wise to buy and learn how to use a compass or a GPS receiver.

Distances and Signs

Every attempt was made to give accurate road distances as measured by an automobile odometer. The distances are measured from a prominent intersection or other landmark. Various road and trail signs make good indicators but can be knocked down or changed.

Directions

Left and right descriptions apply as if the climber is facing inwards, toward the route on the approach, the ascent and the descent.

Star Ratings

Quality or star ratings is a difficult and very subjective endeavour. In reality few ice routes would not be recommended given good ('good' being another subjective description) conditions. As a result, the star system as well as any listing of "All-time classics" or "selected" routes is removed from this volume. Read on and figure it out for yourself. Have fun!

Mixed Climbs in the Canadian Rockies by Sean Isaac

In the year 2000, local mixed pioneer and advocate Sean Isaac and Rocky Mountain Books published an excellent guide of 158 routes. Most of these were established as part of the ongoing explosion of bolted mixed climbing. Twenty of the routes in Sean's book were listed in the 3rd edition of *Waterfall Ice* published in 1994. Close to 50 routes in Sean's book are listed in the volume you now hold. As well, there are a handful of routes in the 1994 edition not included here as they are generally located alone, strictly mixed routes and thus well-described in *Mixed Climbs*.

When appropriate I make reference or defer descriptions to that book. On the

other hand, since many new mixed routes are found next to or even a part of existing waterfall ice routes, it is necessary to include some for no other reason than to avoid confusion for those not familiar with the area. Other routes in Sean's book are included as they may provide traditional, alpine type adventures for those transferring from waterfall ice to mixed routes or toward bigger alpine climbs.

Every effort was made to complement Sean's book. As a result, in future editions you may see some switching around of routes as the authors work together under the primary objective of providing the most complete, updated information while maintaining some integrity to the respective volumes. Please let both of us know what you think of the results! If you are mono-maniacally focused on one style of winter climbing or the other, both books were each written to stand alone and suffice for all your climbing pleasures.

Travel Information

Arriving By Air

Calgary, Alberta is the primary destination when arriving by air. There are direct flights from many major US and European cities.

Car Rentals

All the usual car rental companies are at the Calgary airport. You may want to rent a four-wheel drive in case you want to go to an area like the Ghost River, but don't tell the rental agent that! Car rentals from the major international chains (Hertz, Avis, Tilden, etc.) are also available in Canmore, Banff, Jasper, Golden and Invermere.

Bus

If needing a ride to the mountains or back to the airport, there is regularly scheduled bus service between Calgary, Canmore, Banff, Lake Louise, Field and Golden. Scheduled buses also travel Highway 16 between Edmonton and Jasper. Phone Greyhound Bus Lines, or Brewster Transport (403-762-6767) in Banff for further information.

Winter parking along major highways and roads

Highways described in this book are all in excellent condition and are usually well-maintained in winter. Recorded winter weather driving conditions are available out of Banff, Jasper and B.C. Highways. See page 390. If climbing near a main highway, try to find a parking place off the road as high-speed snowploughs regularly maintain most highways. If a pull-out is not available, park in a straightaway so oncoming snowploughs will have ample time to see your vehicle.

Driving to the Canadian Rockies East of the Continental Divide

The best route is via US Interstate 15 north of Great Falls, Montana. The Sweetgrass/Coutts border crossing, open 24 hours, is about three hours drive from Calgary. The Carway/Peigan border crossing on US Highway 89 near Glacier/Waterton Parks is open in winter for limited hours. Highway 89 is very scenic but the driving can be slow.

West of Continental Divide

Several highways lead north out of western Montana and Idaho. US Highway 93 comes from Kalispell, Montana. Access from the Spokane, Washington or Couer

d'Alene, Idaho area is via US Highway 95. Both Highways 93 and 95 lead to the Columbia Valley and Radium, B.C.. With good travelling conditions, Radium is five hours from Spokane.

From the West Coast, B.C.

If driving from the west coast, get on the Trans-Canada Highway (#1) near Vancouver, B.C. and take that all the way to Banff in nine to ten hours.

Where to Stay

Calgary and Edmonton are large metropolitan cities with a countless variety of hotels, hostels, restaurants, galleries, bars, high and low life. The major Alberta mountain towns mentioned in this guide are Pincher Creek, Bragg Creek, Sundre, Nordegg, Canmore, Banff, Lake Louise, Jasper and Grand Cache; and in British Columbia: Field, Golden, Radium, Invermere, Fernie, Cranbrook and Valemount.

Most climbers base out of the towns of Canmore, Banff and Lake Louise, or one of the hostels along the Icefields Parkway. These three towns all have hotels, bed and breakfasts, restaurants and pubs. They offer a number of dynamic alternative activities ranging from nightlife, low life, hot pools, movies, galleries, festivals, downhill and cross-country skiing to excellent coffee shops.

Fernie, Pincher Creek, Golden, Invermere and Valemount are also large full service towns. Many other communities mentioned in the guide can accommodate you as you stop over while climbing or travelling through the nearby areas. Relevant specifics are given in the Facilities section in the introduction to each area.

A wide range of amenities geared toward the tourist industry such as bookshops which sell maps and guide-books. So support the local economy and make sure you buy several copies of this book for all your friends and family back home.

Gear Stores
 Climbing gear can be purchased in Calgary at Mountain Equipment Co-op (403-269-2420), in Cammore at Vallalla Pure (403-678-5610), in Banff at Mountain Magic (403-762-2591) and Monods (403-762-4571), and in Jasper at Gravity Gear (780-852-3155). Gear can be rented at Gear Up Sports in Cammore (404-678-1636) or at the University of Calgary Outdoor Program (403-220-5036). The other communities have outdoor/camping stores mostly suitable for hunters, anglers and snowmobilers. So, if you need some extra climbing gear, "don't expect to find much in these parts partner."

Guides
 Climbing guides and/or instruction can be obtained from the Association of Canadian Mountain Guides, Box 1537, Banff, Alberta, Canada T0L 0C0. Aside from several well-respected climbing schools, there are numerous options to hire private guides who are often available, and more importantly, qualified and capable to guide any route in this book. There are perhaps more qualified mountain guides in the Banff/Cammore region than in any area outside of Canada, France. The following list is by no means the final word on guiding options in the Rockies. These are schools and individuals that I've gotten to climb with and respect during my 11-year tenure of living in the Cammore region.

Backcountry Huts
 The ACC also owns and maintains several backcountry huts that make ideal base camps when climbing in certain areas. They are completely equipped with food, cooking utensils, stoves and lanterns. Normally no custodian is present and the huts are locked with a combination lock. Booking at the main ACC office is a simple matter of exchanging a Visa or Mastercard number for the combination lock number. Huts in areas described in this book are: Elizabeth Parker Hut (Lake O'Hara), Stanley Mitchell Hut (Yoho Valley), Sydney Vallance Hut (Fryatt Creek).

Picnic Shelters
 There are a number of picnic shelters throughout the four national parks and provincial parks. They are located near most parking lots and campgrounds and are not listed here as they have been known to be removed without notice. Consider this a warning: "User Beware". These covered shelters generally have a wood stove (although don't count on wood), picnic tables (make great places to sleep on) and a roof. To some degree, most are open to the elements and some have a wallow or sink of several hundred metres to reach them from the road. Visiting dirtbags have been known to stage long and successful trips out of these shelters.

Obtaining Supplies
 Food, gear and other life-maintenance supplies required while in the mountain region can be obtained at all the main communities, France. The following list is by no means the final word on guiding options in the Rockies. These are schools and individuals that I've gotten to climb with and respect during my 11-year tenure of living in the Cammore region.

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Hostels
 The Southern Alberta Hostel Association (SAHA) and the Alberta Hostel Association (AHA) operate a number of moderately priced hostels that are extensively used by ice-climbers. Many are conveniently located in the heart of popular ice climbing areas. Most have saunas that are the perfect remedy for cold, aching bodies after a long climb. One- and two-year memberships are normally available at the hostels.

The Banff International Hostel has over 150 beds and more facilities than most and offers bunks for \$20 for non-members and \$24 for non-members. Phone 403-762-4122 for reservations.

Reservations for all other SAHA hostels can be made by phoning the Banff number or at www.hostellingint.ca/ Follow the 1A Highway east from Cammore to Indian Flats Road, 1.2 km east of the Trans-Canada Highway. Turn north and follow the signs to the clubhouse. Alpine Club members receive a discount (International members \$15 for members or \$21 for non-members. Memberships are available at the office. Bookings can be made through the main ACC office by writing or calling: Box 2040, Cammore, Alberta, Canada T0L 0M0, phone 403-678-3200.

Canadian Alpine Centre and International Hostel at Lake Louise
 This attractive facility is owned and operated by the ACC and the Southern Alberta Hostel Association. This modern facility has over 100 beds, a restaurant, library, lounge and self-service kitchen. For reservations phone 403-522-2200.

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Hostels
 The Southern Alberta Hostel Association (SAHA) and the Alberta Hostel Association (AHA) operate a number of moderately priced hostels that are extensively used by ice-climbers. Many are conveniently located in the heart of popular ice climbing areas. Most have saunas that are the perfect remedy for cold, aching bodies after a long climb. One- and two-year memberships are normally available at the hostels.

The Banff International Hostel has over 150 beds and more facilities than most and offers bunks for \$20 for non-members and \$24 for non-members. Phone 403-762-4122 for reservations.

Reservations for all other SAHA hostels can be made by phoning the Banff number or at www.hostellingint.ca/ Follow the 1A Highway east from Cammore to Indian Flats Road, 1.2 km east of the Trans-Canada Highway. Turn north and follow the signs to the clubhouse. Alpine Club members receive a discount (International members \$15 for members or \$21 for non-members. Memberships are available at the office. Bookings can be made through the main ACC office by writing or calling: Box 2040, Cammore, Alberta, Canada T0L 0M0, phone 403-678-3200.

Canadian Alpine Centre and International Hostel at Lake Louise
 This attractive facility is owned and operated by the ACC and the Southern Alberta Hostel Association. This modern facility has over 100 beds, a restaurant, library, lounge and self-service kitchen. For reservations phone 403-522-2200.

School with larger group sizes and scheduled courses:
Yamnaska Mountain School in
Canmore 403-678-4164.

Individual, small group or private
guiding:
Larry Starnes UACM 403-678-6628.
Grant Statham UACM - Alpine Special-
ists 403-678-1496.
Barty Blanchard UACM 403-678-6773.

GST Tax Rebate for Visitors

If you are a travelling climber from outside of Canada, you can claim a refund for some of the tax you pay on accommodation, as long as you stay less than one month in that accommodation. You can also claim a refund for GST paid on most goods you take home. In order to qualify for a tax refund, the goods must be taken outside Canada within 60 days after you buy them. When entering Canada at the border or airport ask for the "Tax Refund for Visitors" brochure containing information and the refund form.

Regulations

Most routes in this book are located in areas where backcountry use is controlled to some degree. Many climbs are within the boundaries of one of five national parks in the Rockies: Waterton, Banff, Jasper, Kootenay and Yoho, or are located within either a British Columbia provincial park (Elk Lakes and Mount Robson) or Alberta's Kamnasids County. Each area has similar backcountry regulations and are summarized here. Areas outside of these parks have few controlling regulations, but any peculiar to such areas are mentioned in their introduction.

Backcountry Use Permits

Backcountry use permits are required in the five national parks when spending at least one night in the backcountry and can be obtained at park information centres for around \$6 per night. Permits are not required for day trips.

Climber Registration

There is a voluntary registration system provided by the Park Service for climbers climbing in the national parks. For years dirtbag climbers have shunned the use of such a system. However, you are strongly advised to do so especially if travelling in remote or alpine areas. It is necessary to register in person during regular office hours at either park information centres or warden offices. Registering out is a contractual agreement requiring a signature. All overdue registrations are checked out. When registering:

- You must provide a reasonable estimate of your trip time to avoid unnecessary use of costly rescue helicopter flight.
- You must notify the Park Service upon completion of your trip by telephone at your earliest convenience, or by telephone. If you are late, failure to notify the Park Service of your return or cancellation of a trip is grounds for prosecution.

Rescue personnel exercise some discretion before commencing a search. Factors such as weather conditions, length of time overdue, assessment of the individual's ability, number in the party, etc. are considered. Therefore, you must be prepared to spend at least one night out before expecting help.

which can be obtained at park information centres, or at the east entrance to Banff Park (Canmore), the west entrance to Kootenay Park (Radium), east and west gates of Jasper Park—Highway 16, at the north end of the Icefields Parkway (Jasper) and at the entrance to Waterton Park. One and four day or annual permits are available. If staying longer than a week, the \$70 (2001 price) annual permit is usually your best bet.

CLIMBING IN THE CANADIAN ROCKIES

Winter climbing in the Canadian Rockies can be an intensely rewarding experience. Combine the immense beauty and wildness with the quantity and quality of the climbing, and you have a place few can match. Climbing in the Rockies can also be very sobering—the mountains are big, the hazards and challenges are many. Patience is the greatest skill you can bring to (or learn from) the range. Weather and conditions don't care who you are or how far you have travelled to get here and both can stay bad for weeks at a time. This is not meant to scare you but rather to educate and make you think. There are so many routes here. With prudence and appropriate route selection, you can safely climb on a different route just about every day the entire winter.

Season

Much to the chagrin of local rock climbers, the ice climbing season often lasts seven months! Depending on the year, some routes are doable in early October and may continue to be climbable into late April. *Shipstewman* has been climbed in July and the low altitude *The Professor Falls* in May. Realistically, the season is in full swing by early November and lasts until the first week of April with many south-facing routes falling apart in late March. One of the best times for Rockies' ice is in November to mid-December, particularly in the Front Range areas like Kamnasids, The Ghost, The David Thompson and parts of The Bow Valley. Early season also finds a higher concentration of first ascents as people get out to climb those newly-formed snows before getting scooped. Some south-facing or low elevation routes may not come into shape grade for a reason. Either know or

Choosing Routes

For routes of all difficulties, an understanding of the full grade is crucial. Attempts were made to create a consistent grading system. Don't get caught up in the numbers game—remember that each route has been given a particular grade for a reason. Either know or

until mid-season or after a cold snap. March is the most friendly month. Longer days mean warmer temperatures, softer ice and donkey trails leading to the popular routes, but there really is no perfect time to come to the Rockies. Arctic fronts and big snowfalls are the two biggest factors that dampen an ice climbing trip and these can occur at any time.

Unseasonably warm temperatures can occur in any month. If you have particular routes in mind, especially difficult and more alpine-style ones, plan your trip for at least a month. Even then, there is no guarantee that conditions will come into shape. Melt-freeze conditions are not common in the Rockies and a majority of routes will either form or not form at the beginning of the season. If they don't form you are usually out of luck for the remainder of the season, although a few significant climbs like *The Replicant* and *Sea of Vapours* regularly appear out of nowhere in the middle of February or March. Go figure...

Condition Reports

After snow stability information, ice or route conditions are perhaps the most valuable reports you can attain. I remember getting more than one call in Canmore at 11 pm by people as far away as New England (I got an unlisted number after that) asking me what the conditions would be like on the Icefields Parkway six weeks from now. The first thing to remember about the Rockies is there will always be something to climb and it is impossible to say what is going to happen. What, when and exactly where will vary greatly depending on the conditions. The saying goes "Pay your nickel and take your chances."

There are several ways to find out current route conditions. In no particular order they are:

- Go climbing yourself. Unless you know someone personally it is not recommended to call individuals or guide services for route information.
- Phone the climbing shops. Most of these gear stores also maintain a log book at the climbing counter where you and others can list your experiences.
- Check at any open warden station or visitor centre. The Field Visitor Centre in particular maintains an excellent log book and encourages climber feedback.
- Check the following web sites:

www.rmbooks.com

Look for new route updates as well as information on ordering copies of *Waterfall Ice* or any of the other guide books in the Canadian Rockies series. Return to this page often as we will be adding new information frequently.

www.compsmart.ab.ca/resqdyn

This home page for mountain guide Cyril Shokoples and his business Rescue Dynamics, often contains route information and condition reports for the rarely visited areas around Jasper and the David Thompson Highway.

www.gravsports.com

This is the home and rant page for the incomparable Will Gadd. Although often travelling the world in search of new mixed routes, Will does a fine job of keeping his site up-to-date on the latest and greatest routes and conditions by the Canmore "House of Youth" and many other of the Rockies best climbers.

www.rockandice.com

They usually maintain an ice conditions report with useful information on the Canadian Rockies and elsewhere.

Additional information on new routes and conditions can be found on a number of personal home pages and other magazine articles. A brief Internet search under "waterfall ice" or "ice climbing" will turn up several sites.

Canmore Ice Climbing Festival

A three-day ice climbing festival is held in Canmore in late February or early

March. Started in 1999, this great event features slide shows, instructional clinics, gear manufacturer representatives, and climbing competition on a 20-metre man-made ice wall. For information contact their web site at: www.canmoreiceclimbingfestival.com, or call "Gear Up Rentals" 403-678-1636 or email the organizers at canmoreicefest@gearupsport.com.



Spectators at speed competition.

Avalanche Awareness by Larry Stanier

Avalanches are the single greatest hazard to ice climbers in the Canadian Rockies. The majority of climbs in this book are at least partially threatened by avalanches. However, by applying good terrain and snow stability evaluation skills, and by exercising a little judgment and patience, you can greatly reduce the risk of being involved in an avalanche and still get in lots of great climbing.

This section is intended as an introduction to avalanche hazard awareness as it applies to waterfall ice climbing in the Canadian Rockies. It is not, however, a substitute for experience. I recommend that all winter backcountry travellers participate in a recognized avalanche course and develop their own terrain and snow stability evaluation skills. Read *Avalanche Safety for Skiers, Climbers and Snowboarders* by Tony Daffern at the start of each season and make full use of the excellent information available through the Canadian Avalanche Centre.

Avalanche hazard evaluation in the Canadian Rockies can be a tricky business. Winters here are characterized by scattered, sometimes localized snowfalls and extended periods of dry, cold and often windy weather. This leads to the formation of a snowpack that is generally weak and shallow, but most significantly, is widely variable across the terrain and across the range. Adding to the problem is the shape of the mountains themselves. These are sedimentary mountains with a pronounced dip slope to them. This provides all that fabulous ice climbing terrain but also some fabu-

lous avalanche terrain. Driving through Banff, take a good look at Mount Rundle. All the classic ice routes there like *The Professor Falls* and *The Terminator* form on the steep and complicated northeast face. In the fall line of these routes are cliffs, bowls, gully systems and very well defined avalanche paths. The southwest aspect of the peak is a giant scree slope facing into the prevailing winds. Almost all of the snow that falls here over the winter will eventually be transported by the wind up and over the peak and will land in a very altered state somewhere on that avalanche terrain, perhaps during the storm, perhaps long afterward. The old adage of letting snow settle for 24 hours after a storm is rushing things in the Canadian Rockies.

So, how do we get a safe day of climbing in with all that hazard around?

Public avalanche bulletins

Use the public avalanche bulletins and talk to local climbers. There is a huge amount of great information available to help you get an idea of the general conditions in an area. Be aware of the fact that these forecasts are for huge geographic areas and local variation is often significant. Use the forecasts to help you choose reasonable objectives given the forecasted conditions and keep evaluating conditions as you travel. Be especially aware of rapidly changing conditions and areas that defy the public forecasts.

Terrain evaluation

Are you going to be in avalanche terrain? Haffner Creek—No. *Oh Le Tabernac*—Yes. Consider the nature of the approach, the route, the descent and the terrain above all this. What are the characteristics of the terrain? What is the slope angle, aspect to the wind and sun,

ground cover, tree cover etc.? These and many other things are characteristics that must be considered in conjunction with your snow stability evaluation.

Snow stability evaluation

Is there sufficient snow to create a hazard? Many areas such as the Ghost River have miles of avalanche terrain but usually have insufficient snowcover for avalanches to occur. Think about the possibility of natural avalanches running down your route and of you triggering an avalanche on the route. Natural avalanches require a trigger. This trigger is always some sort of stress owing to a change in the weather. The big signs to watch for are:

Natural avalanche activity

This is the most significant indicator of unstable snow. Note the aspect, elevation and terrain characteristics. Assume similar terrain will have similar characteristics but remember that the instability may be widespread.

Snowpack conditions

What does the snow feel like? Is it just bottomless sugar or is there a significant slab layer sitting on top of unconsolidated snow. If you observe any suspicious whoomphing noises or cracks running through the snow as you travel, don't ignore it. Perhaps the terrain you are on is not sufficiently steep to slide, but what is it like for the rest of your route?

Precipitation

Obviously the more snow or rain that falls and the faster it falls the more significant the stress. In combination with moderate winds, and a pre-existing weak snowpack, as little as 10 cm could be significant if it falls in a short time.

Wind

Winds greater than 20 km/hr. can move significant amounts of snow onto lee slopes. These often build wind slabs and can do so in a big hurry. Remember that the significance of the wind depends on the size of the windward area and the amount of snow cover there available for wind transport.

Temperatures

Climbers everywhere like to climb on warm days in the sun. However, if the sun is causing you to shed layers it may be doing the same for your local snowpack. As winter progresses to spring the effects of the sun increase dramatically. The greater and faster a rise in temperature is, the more significant it is, especially on a snowpack that is relatively warm to begin with. Imagine a cold clear night in early April. The first sun hits a steep southeast-facing slope well above your intended route. The snow starts to warm rapidly, especially in areas with lots of rock exposed as the dark areas absorb even more radiation. Perhaps rockfall is the first hazard but given enough heating wet snow avalanches will happen and possibly the heat could trigger slab avalanches given the right conditions.

The nature of ice climbing presents some special problems.

Even the easiest routes feel steep if you fall off. Sounds obvious, but keep in mind that even a small slide that could be insignificant to a skier could be enough to push a climber off. Approaches and routes often involve low angle sections above cliffs where, again, a small slide could have serious consequences. The snowpack on these slopes is unsupported from below and therefore can avalanche more easily than



Guy Chouhcard

Avalanche over Borgeau Right-Hand.

slopes that have support given similar conditions. Consider belaying across these areas or climbing around them if you are unsure of the stability. Most ice routes follow gully systems for all or part of their length. These gullies often have large bowls above them and sometimes act as lee slopes. Just as the water that forms the routes is channelled down the gullies so are avalanches. There is often nowhere to hide in gullies, they become terrain traps and are certainly rough places to go for a ride.

Cornice

As more waterfalls are climbed in the alpine arena, cornices become a bigger issue. Cornice falls are notoriously difficult to predict. They are very dense objects and even if a falling cornice does not strike you directly you can bet it will create a very significant stress on the lee slope that is almost surely below it. This is one of the big hazards of the multiple-hazard route *Slipstream*.

Serac

There are definitely some very "sporty" routes around with varying degrees of serac hazard. *Ginune Shelter* and *The Reality Bath* are two examples of routes formed by serac runoff. These serac bands are a very dynamic environment. Some years these routes may be quite reasonable and others they may be "Death on a Stick." Forecasting serac fall makes snow avalanche forecasting look easy. Basically, the scarier a serac band looks the scarier it is. Large serac avalanches are the result of gravity overcoming the drag of friction and the thermoplastic properties of ice. Tempera-

ture plays a very small part in the equation. Think very carefully before climbing a route under seracs. If you do, move very fast—and don't be too surprised if something awful happens.

The Bottom Line

Finally, in the event of an avalanche involvement, the victim's best hope for survival lies with themselves and his or her companions. If outside help must be called in to search it is usually too late. Think about what you will do if you are caught or other members of your party are caught. If there is dogma anywhere in the mountains it is that we carry a beacon, probe and shovel while skiing in avalanche terrain. How many people carry this gear while ice climbing in avalanche terrain? While I don't advocate this dogmatic approach, I strongly recommend wearing a beacon on avalanche threatened routes. Carry a shovel blade that will fit securely on your axe shaft. The rope may be used to help find a buried climber if it is being worn but a beacon, probe and shovel used by a practised hand are the proven tools for a consistently fast recovery.

Avalanches, rockfall, icefall, glacier travel, cold, wind and snow all combine to make the experience on many of the climbs in this book more akin to Grand Alpinism than Sport Climbing. Never forget this and you will have a safer and richer experience. Use your common sense, intuition and best judgment then let the most conservative vote win. Take pride in your decisions to come back and climb another day. The routes will always be there another day; the trick is for you to be there too.

Other Hazards

Aside from avalanche there are a number of other hazards, large and small that when overcome, are part of what makes ice climbing such a rewarding if not sometimes miserable sport. They include, but are not limited to the following:

Cold

The Rockies are legendary for extended Arctic fronts. Temperatures can plunge within a few hours to -30°C and stay there for weeks. Insulated jackets are standard equipment most of the season as are additional pile layers and extra mitts in case you drop one or they get soaked. Carry a Balaclava in your pocket to put on at the belay. Be familiar with cold injuries and guard against the onset of frostbite and hypothermia. Eat and drink well the night before and during the climb and take a thermos with something hot to take the big chill off at belays.

Sun

The sun can turn a low avalanche hazard into extreme in just a few hours (see avalanche section). Particularly later in the season, the sun can warm a climb drastically to increase the amount of running water and melt screw placements. Icicles may fall and even whole climbs can collapse.

Darkness

Headlamps are standard gear for most every route. The few times I haven't taken one, as luck would have it, I've needed it. You can't start a climb too early, but so often do too late.

Running Water

Many climbs have copious amounts of surface water. Surface water has its advantages in that it usually makes the ice fairly soft with good tool placements. Too much water is very uncomfortable and can make you feel like you're getting a body enema. Some routes can be wet in temperatures of -30°C or below and this is especially dangerous as a soaked climber stands a high chance of hypothermia and gear can get dangerously frozen. It is advisable to avoid soaking climbs in cold temperatures.

No matter what the glove manufacturers say, your hands will get wet. I sometimes put a plastic bag like a bread sack between my mitt liners and shell or better yet, put on a dry pair of mitts part way through a climb; it does wonders for your comfort level.

Another factor is running water underneath the climb. It is common on steep pillars, to have a hollow straw with water gushing through it. This can form spooky transparent plates through which the water is visible. Be careful of these, for if they collapse you will be in big trouble. Try to spread your body weight out by stemming across these sections and climb gently. When rappelling, be certain to pull the ropes immediately after the last person is down. Ropes can freeze surprisingly fast particularly when the ice and the ropes are wet, even on warm days.

Fixed Rock Anchors

The repeated freeze/thaw cycles of the Rockies and the dubious nature of local limestone can and will loosen fixed pitons and corrode bolts and hangers. Be suspect of any fixed anchor you come

across and check pitons to ensure they are still well driven and the rock around them is not loose. Do not pound on bolts for this weakens them; rather, visually inspect the placement and the hanger. Rappel slings should be beefed up or better yet replaced if they are at all faded, frayed or just look old and weak.

Replacing Rappel Slings

Cut off the old slings and take them with you. One 50 m pull of a rope through a rappel sling weakens that sling by up to 25%. It is wise to never rappel or belay from a single anchor piece. This also goes for single rappel rings that can be common. Make sure the slings to each piece are equalized in the direction of pull. Each sling should be independently connected to each piece so that if one section of sling or anchor should fail, the integrity of the entire anchor is not compromised. A frightfully common sight is the 'death triangle' where one sling is tied between two pieces and the rope fed through this one sling—an all-or-none proposition. Just because there is a fixed anchor doesn't mean it is solid or that the person who put it in knew what they were doing.

Falling Ice and Wearing Helmets

It was once said that you don't need to ice climb with helmets because if you have good style, you won't expose yourself to icefall from your partner. Even though it is a good practice to find sheltered belays in caves or under overhangs etc., all climbers should use helmets to protect from icefall generated by your partner leading above you, from your own ice tools and from naturally occurring icefall. With improved technique and experience, you will knock off less ice than the neophyte, but even the best climbers will clean a reasonable

amount especially on difficult or early season ascents.

When placing your tools beware of dinner plates and icicles falling onto your face. If your placement looks like it will knock off a sizeable chunk, duck your head and let the helmet take the brunt of it. When you arrive at the base of the climb or cliff, put your helmet on right away; ice and rock can fall before you start the climb. The use of helmets is not a style issue (contrary to recent trends); it is an issue of safety. Some routes have large icicles hanging off the sides or above your intended line so be wary of these potential skewers, especially if it gets the sun. I once saw a major portion of *Transparent Fool* fall off shortly after we ran away. It still gives me the willies.

Rockfall

A hazard not usually considered while ice climbing is rockfall. The Rockies are loaded with piles of loose junky rock that need no more than a whisper to set them off. Sun, melting snow and ice and wind can start a trundle, and it occurs surprisingly often.

Remoteness

Remoteness is a serious factor in the Rockies. One hour approaches are considered normal and two to three hours are not uncommon. Even the easiest routes take on major proportions in case of an accident. What are you prepared for and capable of in case of complications or even a rescue? Getting lost is a real possibility for darkness, heavy snowfall and/or thick bush can disorient you in no time at all. Carry a compass.

Other Climbers

Other climbers are potentially the biggest danger on an ice climb. On a crowded climb the standard joke is,

"Lets leave before we have to rescue someone." Other climbers will knock off ice, invariably be slower than you (remember they are saying the same thing about you) and generally slow things down for the day. If there is lots of time and room for several parties and you are not too concerned with looking at the watch, it can be an enjoyable and social time; otherwise, there are lots of other routes to do.

Cascade Waterfall, The Weeping Wall, Louise Falls and The Professor Falls are notorious for big crowds so get there early and don't let others get on your case to hurry up, or get out of the way, as this may compromise your safety. Tell them to relax, try another climb or to get out of bed earlier. Stand your ground; absolutely no one has the right to put you in danger.

With good trails to previously remote routes and rising standards, many of the climbs that were once all-day affairs have become an outing of only a few hours car-to-car. This opens up a lot of flexibility for when you can start a route to avoid crowds. Provided late day sun is not a problem for snow stability, a good way to avoid crowds is to hit the second or third wave. That is, start mid-day and generally most of the parties that started the climb early will have cycled through.

At any time when rappelling, do so safely in consideration of others who may be below you.

Abalakov Sandwich

Also known as a V-thread or ice hourglass, this is the anchor of choice when requiring a rappel station directly on the ice. Having said that, however, it seems in

some cases to have gotten out of control. For example, the route *Sea of Vapours* was frequently called *Sea of Anchors* in 1996/97 when it formed up fat, saw hundreds of ascents and virtually every other party added their own V-thread.

When running across established threads or adding your own to a rappel station, please consider cutting off suspect or unused slings and taking them with you. This will help minimize the litter these slings ultimately become and will maintain some aesthetic integrity to the route you've so much just enjoyed.

When rapping off existing Abalakovs, always weight test them with an ice screw in as a backup. The last person to rappel can remove the screw.

Construction

The Abalakov Sandwich can be constructed on just about any ice surface, whether horizontal or vertical. Create a small starter hole and turn the first

screw in roughly at 60° off the perpendicular. The closer to perpendicular, the more ice you will displace and generally the stronger the anchor, however, don't make the angle too great, as this will create problems in intersecting the second hole. The game is to make the holes as widely and deeply spaced as possible. Many folks partially extract the first screw as an alignment sight for the second screw. Start the second hole 15-20 cm (6-8 inches) angled back across the first at about the same angle. Once done, the resulting V-shaped hole is threaded with a 40-100 cm length of rappel sling by using a length of bailing wire or coat hanger to snare the end. This is then tied into a sling with a fisherman's knot. With 7 mm cord, these anchors have been field tested to over 909 kg (2000 pounds) force making it a strong, multi-directional and easy to make anchor that can be placed almost anywhere.

ACCESS, ENVIRONMENT AND STYLE

The Rockies are historically a place of ambivalence. Climbers have been able to perform and behave just about however they like, and have taken pride in the fact that there are few 'ethical' debates that plague many other areas. In the past this has created few problems because of the relatively low numbers of climbers. But increasing pressure from many fronts including the number of climbers, increasing land development, wildlife impact and national and provincial park regulations is creating a situation that requires some foresight and discussion.

Environment

A heavy mantle of snow seems to protect the land from the travelling ice climber.

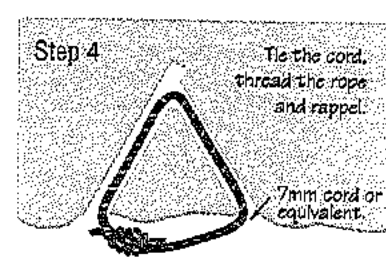
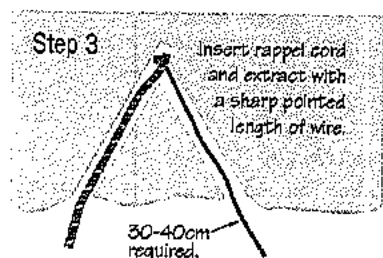
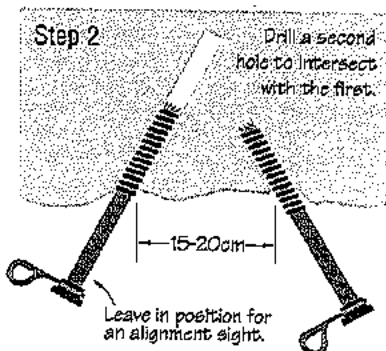
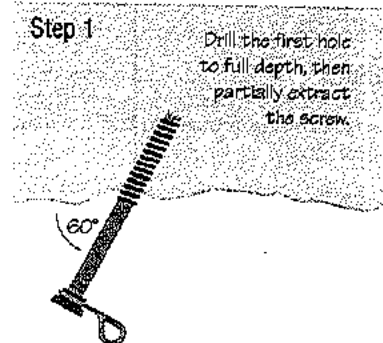
But as the number of climbers escalates every year, some areas are seeing the effects of increased use.

Trees

An increasingly common sight is an uprooted tree at the bottom of a climb. Crampons have a large impact on the shallow soil and fragile vegetation around trees so please remain sensitive when scampering around on tree roots or in places where there is little snow; you could be killing your anchor.

Nature's Call

I doubt many of us would defecate in a stream during the summer months. When you respond to a call of nature in



the middle of an ice climb or at the base, think about what you are doing. Even though everything is frozen, it still means that you are dumping into a flowing stream. On popular climbs this can add up to quite a cesspool. Try to use out of the way places in the surrounding forest. If the next pitch is particularly scary and you absolutely must go, look for a ledge to traverse out on and get away from the main avenue of travel. The rest of us really don't want to belay on a ledge next to a big pile. Remember to carry a lighter and burn your toilet paper.

The ground around popular climbs and practice areas can look like gardens littered with countless 'snow flowers'. When urinating, don't be lazy. Walk a little farther from the base and try using a tree well or some place where you are not going to leave a trail of yellow stain. As any one who climbed at The Trophy Wall in 1996/97 will attest, it is really offensive.

"Butts"

More than once I have come to a ledge only to find numerous cigarette butts. I even once found a filter purposely stuffed into a small air pocket halfway up a pitch. This is another offensive act that should not be tolerated. If you just cannot be bothered to put those butts away into a pocket, be a real man or woman; use filterless.

Access

Most of the climbs in the Canadian Rockies are within national or provincial parks or in public (Crown) lands that have already been used for mining, water diversion or logging. As a result, the Rockies have few of the access problems that are continually escalating in the US.

Private Land

Parts of the Columbia Valley and the Front Range areas on the eastern slope are privately owned or have approaches through private land. Of particular note, the land east of Banff National Park is under increasing residential and industrial development. Approaches to many of the climbs will change over the next few years. If in doubt, inquire with local climbing shops or the Town of Canmore Administration Office.

Road Closures

In the Rockies, perhaps the biggest issue affecting ice climbers, mountaineers and skiers is the closure of highways. Some closures are important to protect wildlife corridors but most are because of park service budget cuts. Waterton National Park has had several road closures over the years and at least one of those roads will not be reopened in the foreseeable future. Other areas in the southern Rockies have been closed as part of ongoing land and wildlife management despite extensive natural gas extraction.

Canadian Pacific Railroad

Numerous climbs in Field and the Kicking Horse Canyon area near Golden are along railroad tracks. Canadian Pacific Railways (CPR) maintains a number of avalanche trigger wires along the tracks that can and have been set off by careless climbers but even more importantly, by falling ice. When this happens, alarms go off as far as Calgary and the entire system is closed with the assumption of avalanches across the tracks. If climbing in this area please be aware of the triggers and if approached by CPR personnel, please respect their position.

Style

Now that you are environmentally and politically correct in your thinking about ice climbing, how about your style?

Free versus Falling

In my earlier edition of this book I had a lengthy discussion entitled "Free versus Aid" ice climbing. This was applicable then as there was still the occasional climber resting or hanging from their tools. This is the advice I gave in 1994 and which remains valid:

Standards in the Rockies have risen to a point where using artificial aid or 'hanging' is not considered an option, but then neither is falling. You must know or quickly learn your limits and what you are capable of. If you must hang to divert disaster, that is considered better style (and a lot smarter) than falling. Forget the ethics police and style; falling on ice climbs is a serious

business and avoid it with all the powers of your being.

Control

The final issue regarding style is one of control. One of the most frequent ways in which ideas of style are evaded is by completing a climb at the expense of safety. How safely an ascent is made is a very subjective matter. Unlike the use of direct aid, for example, this sort of evasion is easily concealed. Tools popping out of the ice, dropping gear, needlessly bombarding your belayer with ice, poorly placing protection or generally shaking your way up a climb are all regarded as very poor style. Regarding a safe and in-control climb as a more stylish ascent is a much more honest approach than glorifying the addition of another tick to the 'Fit List.' Obviously, this approach to style has a strong value of promoting safety.

GRADING ROUTES

Grading ice and mixed climbs has a long history of confusion, frustration, changes and rose-coloured glasses. This section is primarily written to instruct you how the grading systems are applied to routes in this book.

Shortly after the publication of the 1994 edition of this guide, the ice climbing world wide went through a major popularity and style explosion. As a result a second grading scheme, the "M grade", emerged and was quickly applied to the expanding number of new mixed climbs. Appropriately, Sean Isaac's Mixed Climbs uses the M grade extensively. Although traditional rock grades and M grades can be loosely separated by whether or

not you use your hands or your tools to climb the rock, the jury is still out on which system is more descriptive. Many climbers have fully embraced the M system while some of the best climbers in the range still prefer a combination of WI and the recognized YDS rock climbing grades. The author of this book fully accepts both and has made no attempt to translate given grades into one or the other system. The grades given are either a consensus of repeat ascents or simply the grade given by the first ascent. As a result you may see several grading schemes in this book. Fortunately, this is primarily a "waterfall ice" guide and most climbs are rated under the "WI system".

For all routes regardless of an "M" or "WI" designation, there is an overall Commitment Grade that is the combination of length, location, complexity, hazards, technical difficulty and seriousness. Most people focus solely on technical WI or M grade although ice climbing in the Rockies involves many variables, many of which are unique to the area. Few areas can match the combined factors of remoteness, sustained cold, poor snowpack and the size and quantity of ice.

All grades are strictly a comparison to other routes in the range. As a result, no comparison is made of other routes anywhere else in the world. Having said that, the author has climbed in every major area in North America and it is fair to say average ratings in the Canadian Rockies are on the stiff end of their respective grade.

Length (in metres)

Understanding the length of climb is important in estimating its overall difficulty and your ability to safely complete the route. In this book, length is usually estimated by the culmination of how much rope is payed out on each pitch. For longer routes such as *Polar Circus* and *Slipstream* it is difficult to assess because they have long easy sections. In this case, length means the total vertical gain from the bottom of the route to the top. Specific details will be found in the route description.

Commitment Grade

(Roman Numerals I to VII)

The key factors here are the length and difficulty of approach and descent, length of the climb itself, the sustained nature of the climbing and the objective hazard. Modern routes are progressively thinner and on more fragile features. In

some climbing areas, these qualities are included in the overall Commitment Grade. However, because of the added factor of severe remoteness of many Rockies routes, this notion is hard to include in a Rockies Commitment Grade. Thus, this book adds a Seriousness Grade to be discussed later.

Please note that the Commitment Grades stated in this guide in no way compare to those given to rock routes or alpine mountain routes as found in *Selected Alpine Climbs in the Canadian Rockies* by Sean Dougherty. Commitment Grades are specific for frozen waterfalls and alpine routes that are considered as waterfall ice routes.

I. A very short and easy climb within minutes of the car. No avalanche hazard and easy descent by fixed anchors or walking off. Very little commitment.

II. A route of one or two pitches within easy reach of a vehicle or emergency facilities, little or no objective hazard. A quick descent by rappel or walk off.

III. A multi-pitch route at low elevation or a one-pitch route with an involved approach (one hour or more and/or no trail) on foot or ski demanding good winter travel skills. The route may take from several hours to most of a day to complete. The approach and/or the climb are subject to occasional winter hazards including avalanche. Descent usually by rappelling and may require you to make your own anchors.

IV. A multi-pitch route at higher elevations or remote regions, more subject to weather patterns and objective hazards, primarily avalanche. May require several hours of approach on foot or ski requiring a greater knowledge of moun-

tain travel and hazards. Descents may be on hazardous terrain and/or require construction of your own anchors.

V. A long climb that requires a competent party and all day to complete. Usually on a high mountain face or gully ending above treeline. Subject to sustained climbing and/or avalanche hazards with a long involved approach on foot or ski. A high level of climbing experience and winter travel skills are needed to climb safely. Descent involves multiple rappels from your own anchors.

VI. A long waterfall with all the characteristics of a large alpine route. The climbing will be very sustained for its given Technical Grade. Only the best climbers will complete it in a day. Often requires a ski and/or glacier approach with a difficult and tiring descent. Objective hazards will be high, which may include avalanche, falling seracs, high altitude, whiteout, crevasses and/or remoteness. An extraordinary degree of fitness and experience is required.

VII. A route that has every characteristic of a Grade VI but is considerably longer and harder, both physically and emotionally. The climbing will be technically very difficult for many pitches and may take days to approach and climb. Objective hazards will be very high such as large avalanche bowls and/or active seracs. A 50-50 chance of getting the chop.

Technical Water Ice Grade

This part accounts for the pure nature of the climbing on the single most sustained technical ice feature of a route. The predominate features accounting for this Technical Grade are length of a pitch, its overall steepness and the

usual characteristics of the ice which may include blue plastic ice, chandelier mushrooms, thin plate and/or overhanging bulges. In this guide, it is designated by the acronym WI, which stands for 'Water Ice'.

WI 1 A frozen lake or stream bed. No one has had the audacity to claim a first ascent of a WI 1 in the Rockies.

WI 2 A pitch with short sections up to 80°. Good possibilities for protection and anchors.

WI 3 Sustained ice up to 80°. Requires adeptness at placing protection and belays. May have short sections of steeper ice but will have good resting places. The ice is usually good.

WI 4 A sustained full pitch of off-vertical or a shorter length (10-25 m) of vertical ice. The ice may have some technical features like chandeliers and may have long runouts between resting places.

WI 5 A long strenuous pitch. May be a full ropelength of 88°-90° on good ice with few, if any, resting places or a shorter (20-40 m) pitch on bad featureless ice. Adequate protection requires excellent technique.

WI 6 A full 50 m pitch of dead vertical ice or a shorter length of nasty proportions. Few, if any, resting sites. Protection is put in while standing on front points or in awkward situations. Ice quality is variable and climbing technical. Technique and efficiency are at a premium.

WI 7 A full pitch of vertical ice that is very thin or a long overhanging technical column of dubious adhesion. Both require diverse and creative techniques

to climb and hopefully find protection. A very physically and emotionally draining pitch.

WI 8 Worldwide, no one has yet to claim a route at this grade. We should never say the pinnacle of technical possibility of pure ice climbing has been reached. However, the line begins to blur between pure technical difficulty and seriousness grade in terms of fragile features and/or run out thin ice. Having said that, I have seen routes that if climbed would undoubtedly be pure WI 8.

Mixed Grades

M grades were introduced in the mid-1990s by Jeff Lowe as an attempt to create an open-ended system that reflects an increase in athletic difficulty of many drytooling mixed routes. Perhaps more to the point, it gives one easy number to remember (or to spew) that defines the hardest overall section of the climb. All grading systems have their drawbacks and M Grades are no exception. However, as the number of routes applied with the M grade increases, the easier it becomes to compare them against one another and create a self-perpetuating system that works reasonably well. Hence, a new rating system is born! M Grades are here to stay.

In theory the M system starts at M1 but like the WI system you see few if any routes listed under M3. As of 2001, world wide top grades are M10 or M11 depending on whom you talk to. Following is a comparison chart of M Grades to Yosemite Decimal System (YDS) grades. This is solely to give you an idea of how strenuous a route should feel regardless of the quality or quantity of protection. The techniques required for each M grade may be considerably different than their YDS counterpart.

M4	5.8
M5	5.9
M6	5.10
M7	5.11
M8	5.11+/5.12
M9	5.12+/5.13
M10	5.13

Rock Grades

When a mixed pitch is given the YDS rock grading (5.0 to 5.11 and up), this means major portions are on rock and usually climbed with hands as opposed to ice tools. However, pitches in this book almost always involve crampons so direct translation is very sticky indeed. The rock grade is generally how difficult the pitch 'feels'. With rock shoes and a chalk bag in the sun it will undoubtedly be easier, but it still means you must be competent at the stated grade.

Aid climbing grades, A1-A3, would be the same as they are found anywhere else. But remember local limestone usually requires a bit more gumption and nailing than a straight-in granite crack. Most aid moves in this book are situations where the climber grabbed a sling or stood in one in the pursuit of saving time. Almost without exception, "free" dry tooling or "drooling" moves can be figured out.

Seriousness Grade

Waterfall ice climbs can be as run out as the individual wants it to be. Depending on experience, ability and style of ascent almost any route can be sewn up or desperately run out.

Some routes can be seriously thin and unprotected owing to underlying rock or air. Others are incredibly small and fragile. These latter routes are generally freestanding pencils and require a great amount of care and ability to climb

safely. Similar to these fragile 'cigars' are thin shields of ice that often form over high volume waterfalls. To my knowledge, no accidents have happened to date on such a climb; (i.e. 2nd pitch of *Takakkaw Falls*), however, it is my opinion that these fragile plates of ice pose huge hazards for the uninitiated. Obviously not all climbs will be found with these designations.

R. Reserved for very thin routes. This is similar to the runout designation given in many rock climbing areas. Depending on the season and the time of year, particularly early season, many routes may fall into this category and then fill out to a safer thickness later in the year. The R designation should be reserved for those routes that are traditionally very thin even in the best of years. On these routes a party will be faced with long runouts with difficulty and/or creativity required to find adequate protection from the ice and/or the rock.

X. These are very fragile routes that stand a possible chance of collapse while climbing them. By definition these routes are usually runout as well. Therefore, all the caution reserved for an R climb should be noted here. Again, an early season ascent can place a steep pillar into this category and then later in the year it may fill out to be quite solid.

Alpine Routes

The following routes are generally considered to be 'alpine' owing to their length, position and/or objective hazard. A reminder, the commitment grades given any of these routes are relative to waterfall ice climbs. If they were to be compared against any of the established "alpine" routes, a rule of thumb would be to notch the commitment down at least one full grade.

1. Aggressive Treatment
2. Ambivalence Falls
3. Arctic Dream
4. Borderline
5. Cabrio
6. Centaur
7. Chinook Mtn., North Face
8. Coire Dubh Intégrale
9. Conveyor Belt
10. Drip at the Centre of the Universe, The
11. Elderly Man's Day Out, An
12. Extended Mix
13. Flavour of the Month
14. French Connection, The
15. Gentleman's Day Out, A
16. Gimme Shelter
17. Going to the Sun Highway
18. Imaginary Goat
19. Life By the Drop
20. Living in Paradise
21. M-16
22. Reality Bath, The
23. Riptide
24. Sans Blitz
25. Senior Project
26. Silver Lining, The
27. Slipstream
28. Spite
29. Striving for the Moon
30. Sunton
31. Valour Falls to the Hierophant
32. Wild Bunch, The
33. Wreck of the Glen Fitzgerald, The



Guy Lacelle on the first solo ascent of *The Terminator*.

NEW ROUTES

If you find and climb a significant or worthwhile new route please follow the below guidelines below for reporting it:

- Know the exact location. Most of the time spent in compiling this book went into trying to discover where the routes are. Learn how to read a map and please give the map sheet number and the six-digit military grid reference for the base of the route. This is very crucial. And if appropriate, it is important to describe the route in relation to existing climbs.
- Perhaps most importantly; on what page and between which existing routes in this volume would you insert your new route.
- Name of the climb.
- Length from the bottom of the first pitch to the top of the last pitch (be realistic); if unsure, indicate the number of pitches you climbed.
- Grade; Commitment, Technical and Seriousness. Compare it with well-established climbs that you've done.
- Date and names of first ascent party.
- Detailed approach description, including where to park, is it visible from the road, time for an average party, terrain features, etc.
- Potential hazards, such as avalanche, seracs, rockfall, river crossings, etc.
- Character of the climb; include any outstanding (or poor) features, good stories involved with the ascent and other miscellaneous information. Blow-by-blow accounts are not needed, just an idea of what to expect.

- Exact descent details.
- If possible please include a well-exposed and focused 35 mm slide or high-quality digital image of the route and/or the surrounding location. Magazine quality action photos or photos looking up at someone's butt leading, are not required or even wanted. The photo should give someone an idea of what to expect, where to find it on a particular cliff or perhaps inspire someone to repeat the climb. If you want the slide returned be sure to say so and label it clearly with the appropriate mailing information.

Send information and photos to:
waterfalllice@hotmail.com

or,

Joe Josephson
c/o Rocky Mountain Books
4 Spruce Centre S.W.
Calgary, Alberta T3C 3B3
CANADA

All forms of correction, clarification, praise and criticism are encouraged and should be forwarded to my attention at the above email or mailing addresses.

Thank you in advance.

CANADIAN ROCKIES ICE CLIMBING

Since the sport of waterfall ice climbing took hold in the Canadian Rockies in the early '70s, it has progressed from an obscure diversion for a few fanatics to a common and popular winter pastime. The first waterfall to be climbed was *Cascade Waterfall* overlooking the east entrance into the Banff townsite. No one seems to know who made the first ascent but Lloyd McKay and partner certainly got close to the top in the winter of 1965. Despite this prodigious effort with primitive gear and the already firm establishment of waterfall climbing in the US, it seems that few people ventured onto the vast number of frozen waterfalls until the winter of 1972-73.

That season, the terodactyl ice tool arrived in Calgary. Armed with the 'terrors' drooped pick, the assault was on and the accessible, easier climbs began to fall. Standards rose quickly, culminating in the first ascent of *Bourgeau Right-Hand* over two days.

In the winter of 1973-74, charged with the success of the previous year, climbers began to look at the bigger waterfalls. After several attempts, the *Lower Weeping Wall* was climbed on Christmas Day by expatriates Bugs McKeith and Rob Wood. It was here that Bugs discovered his infamous aid technique, "through my own lack of boldness."

"On two previous occasions faced by pillars of brittle vertical ice, and lacking the guts to frontpoint up them, I had attached aid slings to the shafts of both terodactyls and found that, even on vertical ice, I could relax and spend as much time as I wished clearing rotten ice and placing each axe alternately to my complete satisfaction."

It is with this technique that McKeith and Wood, along with Jack Firth and Canadians Tim Auger and teenager John Lauchlan pushed onto longer multi-day climbs like *Bourgeau Left-Hand* and *Takakkaw Falls*.

Having climbed these classics, climbers looked to find routes that offered a new level of difficulty. Firth and Lauchlan concentrated on the short nasty icicles around Field like *Pilsner Pillar*. Meanwhile, McKeith looked toward a route he called *Nemesis*. Success on this long, exceptionally steep, unusually thin climb came after several months and a variety of partners.

Unaware that they were at the forefront of ice climbing development, the Canadians were criticized for their use of aid techniques. However, the big Rockies routes of the early '70s were of a length, steepness and remoteness unparalleled anywhere in the world. Even today with modern gear, techniques and attitudes these routes have remained serious challenges.

Owing to its size and uncertainty about the nature of the climbing, *Polar Circus* was attempted only once before December 1975. That month saw two teams head up only days apart. The Burgess twins, Bugs McKeith and Charlie Porter reached the top after eight days employing many fixed lines and aid techniques. As they were descending Eckhard Grassman, Mike Lailey and Laurie Skreslet completed the climb in five days with aid limited to one 5-m section on the final pitch. For several years *Polar Circus* remained the pinnacle of achievement for it was 700 m, nearly three times the overall length of any other waterfall yet completed.

It was during the remainder of the decade that the Rockies waterfall scene really came into its own as a mecca for winter climbing. Publication in magazines, mostly by Bugs McKeith, put the word out and visiting Americans spurred activity as the old aid lines were cleaned up and skills were honed. Practices like the use of umbilical cords and carrying a third tool became standard. In 1977, Duncan Ferguson and Dave Wright freed the *Lower Weeping Wall*, *Takakkaw Falls* and *Carlsberg Column*. Things really heated up the following year when John Koskely freed *Pilsner Pillar*, at the time the single hardest lead yet accomplished in Canada. The locals were also active that season with new free routes like *Teardrop* by Trevor Jones, Raymond Jotterand and Greg Spohr, a one and half day free ascent of *Polar Circus* by Jotterand and Lauchlan and speed ascents of *Takakkaw* which was climbed in a day from the road by Alan Burgess and Jim Logan. Then, only a week later, boldly soloed by Lauchlan.

With the end of the '70s came the end of an era that was marked by several strong achievements during the 1979-80 season. Jim Elzinga and John Lauchlan climbed *Slipstream* on the east face of Snowdome. Involving glaciers, avalanche slopes, seracs and altitude, this route opened a new genre of alpine ice climbs. Later that season, James Blench and Albi Sole incorporated the steepest lines on the Lower and Upper Weeping Walls to create the *Weeping Pillar* that was easily the most difficult and sustained route in Canada. That same duo, teamed up with Lauchlan, and later made the second ascent and an all-free climb of *Nemesis*.

In 1980, Albi Sole put out the first guidebook to Canadian Rockies ice called, *Waterfall Ice*. But it wasn't just

first-ascent glory that accounted for the following explosion in activity. In the boom years of the early '80s more people could afford the time and expenses of winter climbing. Gear and clothing technologies made large bounds and one could now stay warm, place gear quicker and more easily find partners.

In the new route frenzy of the early '80s, some major venues were almost single-handedly developed. Noted examples are the Ghost River which produced over 40 climbs, mostly by Frank Campbell, and The David Thompson Highway, the stomping grounds for Cyril Shokoples.

It took several years for the technical standards to catch up to the quickly rising skill levels with one exception—*Gimme Shelter*. Completed in April 1983 by Kevin Doyle and Tim Friesen, this route has never been repeated in the original conditions and was years ahead of its time, when it was probably the hardest ice climb in the world.

It is important to note that aid climbing was virtually abolished by 1977. Few first ascents reported since have used aid techniques. This includes the act of hanging on your tools to place gear. Originally employed to prevent a dropped tool, umbilicals (cords attached from the ice tool to the waist) were sometimes used to support the climbers weight (i.e., hang) while they placed protection. By the end of 1980s, Rockies standards rose to the point where the top climbers no longer put umbilical cords on either tool and all placements and protection were supported by the strength and ability of the climber.

Although overall technical standards were slow to follow, activity was far from lackadaisical. The art of soloing became a more common endeavour. *Central* and *Right-Hand Weeping Wall*,

Pilsner Pillar, Polar Circus, Bourgeau Left-Hand and Slipstream had all been quietly soloed by the mid-'80s. One of the landmark events of this era came in March 1986 with the same day solo of *Polar Circus* and the *Weeping Pillar* (first solo ascent) by Jeff Marshall. For training he earlier soloed the remote *Twin Falls* and climbed *Takakkaw Falls* with a partner in a single day.

Also in the mid-'80s came the apex of the three genres of hard waterfalls that were established in the '70s. *Pilsner* was the first, but *The Terminator* became the ultimate in freestanding vertical pencils. For the first time in recorded history, *The Terminator* formed completely in the winter of 1984-1985. After months of speculation and talk from the local climbers, the first ascent of this prize was claimed by visiting Americans Craig Reason and Jay Smith.

The standards in long, steep and thin routes like the classic *Nemesis* was taken to a new level with *Gimme Shelter* and firmly established with the ascent of *Riptide* in April, 1987 by Jeff Marshall and Larry Ostrander. These are outstanding climbs in alpine environments that require large amounts of skill and experience to find protection and belays. In the condition of the first ascent both *Gimme Shelter* and *Riptide* were solid WI Grade 7.

The 1980s era came to a quick close in February 1988, with *The Reality Bath* by Randy Rackliff and Marc Twight. This treacherous alpine waterfall on a large north face combined sustained difficulties guarded by active seracs and avalanche slopes. It is unrepeated and remains the only Commitment Grade VII in the range.

The second edition of Albi Sole's *Waterfall Ice* in 1988, proclaimed that routes fed (and threatened) by seracs are

part of the future of ice climbing in the Rockies. Indeed, quite a few such lines remain unclimbed. Several routes like *Borderline, Arctic Dream* and *Ambivalence Falls* were climbed under seracs, but fortunately, this style of route did not become popular. Instead, ice climbers of the 1990s have become entranced by a genre of mixed waterfalls that offer a new level of difficulty and redefine the limits of possibility.

The first significant mixed waterfall in the Rockies was the ultra-classic *Mixed Master* by Joe Buszowski and Troy Kirwan in December 1991. The following season Joe set the standard again with Peter Arbic on *Shampoo Planet*. As *The Terminator* comes within 10 m of touching almost every year several people audaciously attacked it with the new attitude that, "it doesn't have to be formed to be formed". Over two days in January 1993, Jeff Everett, with a variety of partners was the first to climb up behind *The Terminator* to the initial pillar which was aid climbed onto thicker ice above. Later that season Serge Angelucci and partner made the top in one push. Led by Barry Blanchard and Joe Josephson, over a dozen new mixed routes were completed by the end of the 1993-94 season.

Not all the activity centred around these 'futuristic' routes. Many gaps were filled as smears and drips across the range were systematically climbed. An unprecedented number of climbs (over 150) were reported in the early '90s with most being visible from the road. Many have become moderate classics while the number of desperates has grown from only 18 WI 6 or harder routes in 1988, to well over 50 in 2001. This is stark proof of the increased number of active climbers and the higher level of climbing ability.

Striving for the Moon by Barry Blanchard and Ward Robinson and *The Drip* at the *Centre of the Universe* by Keith Haberl and Larry Stamier were two major routes completed in the 1992-93 season. They were unique among alpine waterfall routes as they were taken to or near the summit of major mountains, not just to the top of a gully or an ice cliff.

In attempts to up the ante on the solo front, Richard Quairy soloed *Ice Nine* (in WI 5 conditions), *Polar Circus* and all but the last pitch of the *Weeping Pillar* in 1992. Another significant solo enchainment occurred in January 1992 with the linking of the remote Ghost River climbs, *Hydrophobia* and *The Sorcerer* by Joe Josephson. *Nemesis* finally received this ultimate expression of climbing by Jeff Lakes in March 1991. The prolific Guy Lacelle made many difficult solos in the '80s and into the '90s including *Iron Curtain* and the first ascent of *Betty's Pillar, Polar Circus*, which has become a popular solo was climbed intégrale when Enzo Marlier soloed the rarely formed *Pencil* and continued to the top.

Perhaps the most impressive solo of the early '90s was Bruce Hendricks solo first ascent of *Blessed Rage*, an audacious line involving hard mixed climbing and sustained ice with large objective hazards. Along with *Fearful Symmetry* and *Sea of Vapours, Blessed Rage* is part of the 'Hendricks Trilogy'. All three routes represented a new level of vision and boldness. Sporting exceedingly thin ice on a bulging, near-vertical wall, on its first ascent, *Sea of Vapours* was technically the hardest and one of the most serious pure waterfall routes in the Rockies.

Activity since November 1994

The sheer volume of new and previously unreported waterfall routes is perhaps the biggest news in the post-1994 history of Canadian Rockies ice climbing. Indeed, the 1994-95 season alone left us with the greatest single season new route count in history with over 60 waterfalls.

In the years since and rightly so, much of the attention and media exposure has been given to the incredible range of bolted mixed routes on Mount Rundle, and along the Radium Highway and the Icefields Parkway. This "mixed" history remains an integral part of waterfall ice development, but is outside the scope of treatment here. Refer to Sean Isaac's *Mixed Climbs in The Canadian Rockies* for complete details. Also, since 1994, unprecedented numbers of climbers have cleaned up on lines of all grades and have continued to explore farther away from the road. And then, there are seasons like 1996-97 when The Trophy Wall formed fat, and 1998-99 when snow stability was the best in memory, creating an interesting chronicle of achievement on waterfall ice in the Canadian Rockies.

Led by Calgary climber Al Dunham, over 20 routes of all grades have been found in the Malamute Valley of the North Ghost. Returning from a miserable attempt to solo *Takakkaw Falls*, Scott Backes spotted some ice through the trees and dubbed this concentrated area The Far Side. Farther north, various Jasper locals have been active developing North Ranger Creek and WAD Valley.

Virtually every venue has seen renewed action creating many "mini-Meccas" of Canadian ice. These areas include Waterton Park, Ribbon Creek, Elk Lakes, Smith-Dorrien Spray Trail,

Mount Murchison, Beauty Creek, Protection Valley, Icefall Brook, Bull River Canyon, Mount Hunter and the Yoho Valley Road.

Despite the considerable competition to repeat testpieces, find new routes and make notable ascents by an almost countless cast; virtually every historic achievement since 1994, can be attributed to five inspiring climbers: Dave Thomson, Barry Blanchard, Guy Lacelle, David Marra and Steve House.

Since the mid-'90s Dave Thomson has almost single-handedly developed some of the best winter climbing venues in the world. Climbing pure waterfalls in-between establishing long and hard bolted mixed routes, Thomson has to his credit waterfalls in the remote Icefall Brook, Storm Creek Headwall, direct ice starts to *Sea of Vapours* and *Suffer Machine* both with Tom Wolfe and their impressive *Living in Paradise*.

When *Living in Paradise* appeared 1,000m up the massive Mount Wilson in 1994-95, it became a sign of attitudes and competition to come. Early in the season, it seemed that every dedicated local was trying to hide their knowledge of the route from their friends. The problem was, however, it was so obvious and so incredible that everyone between Jasper and Salt Lake City soon knew about it. Several determined attempts by various climbers nearly ended in disaster by setting off slab avalanches. Thomson and Wolfe smartly waited for a stormy day in early April to minimize the effects of sun on the south-facing slopes to complete this outrageous route.

That same season, Barry Blanchard and Alex Lowe climbed the *Going to the Sun Highway* in the Ghost River. Started in typical Lowe-style by climbing rock behind the massive free-hanging first pitch to find protection, lower-

ing off then climbing the fragile pillar direct, it was finished Blanchard-style as the pair continued the route for over 1,000m to the summit. More than any one else in North America Blanchard has steadily been at the forefront of waterfall ice and alpine ice development. Since the early '80s Blanchard has continued to survive, stay motivated and pluck off world-class routes.

Way back in 1990, Guy Lacelle and Blanchard attempted the then un-repeated *Riptide* and declined owing to a lack of ice. After both repeated the route in 1994, they returned in 1995 to climb an additional pitch to the top of the cliff. Lacelle lead *The Continuing Saga* that is one of the single hardest ice pitches in the range.

Undoubtedly, the world's most widely travelled ice climber, Guy Lacelle is perhaps the most prolific soloist and first ascensionist in ice climbing history and he's continued to push the scene in the Rockies with solos of *Curtain Call* and the Trophy Wall. Surprisingly, however, his biggest contribution in recent years has been *La Vraie Nature de Bernardette* near Blue River with Mark Aubrey. This obscure route contains perhaps the single longest vertical ice pillar in the range (100m), led by Lacelle in one pitch with a long rope.

By the fall of 1996, bolted mixed climbing was in full swing. By late October *The Terminator* formed for the first time since 1986. Added to the mix, *Troubled Dreams* formed easy. And if that wasn't enough, by mid-December the ephemeral *Sea of Vapours* came into being with fat, solid ice and thus became the easiest line on the wall. An early report in *Climbing Magazine* and endless raving on the Internet brought the visiting climbers by the busload as they came to tick the once-in-a-lifetime

routes. By early February all three of the major routes had line-ups virtually every day of the week for the rest of the winter. The carnage was so great, that by mid-March climbers were leaving the car by 1:00 am only to shiver in the pre-dawn dark for three hours just to lay claim on their route of choice.

Realizing all three Trophy Wall routes were for easy picking, the obvious challenge became, climbing all three in a day. First in line were Ken Wylie and Keith Haberl. While they ascended *Troubled Dreams* via head lamp, they had friends get onto *Sea of Vapours*. So, while they made their way up *The Terminator*, their friends kept the ensuing hoards off "The Sea" until they were ready to complete the triumvirate.

In March, Francois Damilano and Lacelle repeated the effort while the weather kept all other suitors away. The temperature in Banff that morning was -27°C! A week later, Lacelle soloed all three routes in five hours. It's fascinating to note that Lacelle has done the first solo ascent and also the first, one-day and overall second ascent of *The Terminator* with Alain Chassie back in 1986. That ascent still remains the only time anyone has climbed the entire *Terminator* including the five challenging approach pitches. A few weeks after Lacelle's solo, Bruce Hendricks repeated the effort on all three.

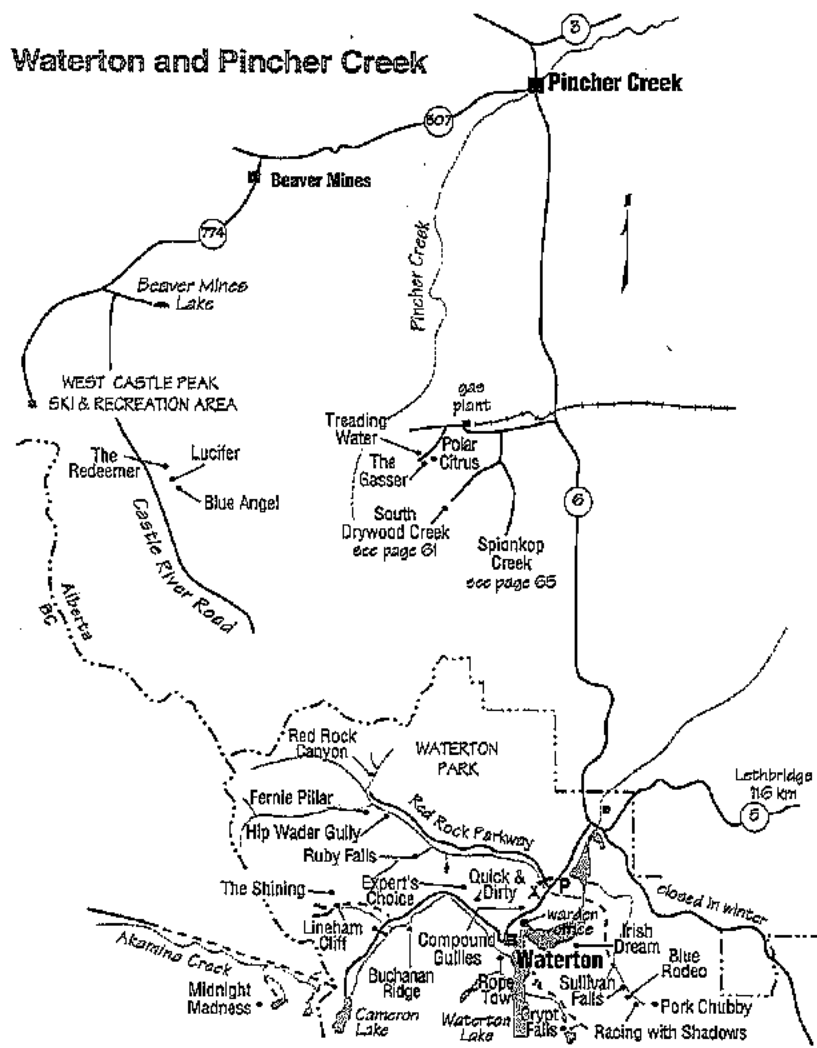
In November 1996, Haberl and Tim Pochay, who the previous season had made an audacious solo of *Acid Howl*, found the very difficult *Vapour Trail*, an even more ephemeral route than its neighbours *Sky Pilot* and *Co Pilot*.

Cutting his teeth in relative obscurity in Jasper, Dave Marra plucked the long-looked-at plums on Fluted Peak

before moving south and finally climbing *Life by the Drop* on Howse Peak in March 1999. Countless attempts over 20 years had been repulsed by dangerous snow conditions and general fear making this arguably the most watched chunk of ice in the range. Other Icefield gems have been *Squirt* with Shane Jensen, *Blood Brother* with the prolific Ken Wallator and his Mount Wilson alpine masterpieces and *Suntori* and *Valour Falls to the Hierophant* with Cory Balano and Dave Edgar. The parallel line left of *Living in Paradise*, *Suntori* was climbed over three days in which they continued to the summit ridge and climbed three of the four major quartzite towers.

Steve House began to make his mark on the range in 1996, when he established *Two-Piece Yanks* with Stan Price. Although considered one of the hardest traditional mixed routes anywhere, it also contains a true WI 7 pitch to finish as well as climbing the mixed route *Ten Years After* in WI 7 conditions. The next season Steve House soloed *Whiteman Falls*, *Red Man Sours* and the mixed route *Green Man Gronks*. In 1998, he climbed a WI 6+X pitch to unlock the rarely formed *Silver Lining* with Blanchard and Josephson. In 1999, Backes joined the Blanchard-House duo to climb the impressive *M-16* on Howse Peak. On this long and serious alpine climb, House led a solid WI 7 X pitch only to be surpassed in overall difficulty by *Sans Blitz* on Mount Fay (House led the crux WI 7) which Blanchard and House climbed with Rolando Garibotti in April 2001. Blanchard calls the later route easily the hardest waterfall climb he's done in 25 years of pioneering local waterfall ice.

Waterton and Pincher Creek



WATERTON NATIONAL PARK

Waterton National Park is the southernmost area covered in this guide. For years this almost forgotten venue has been hiding numerous gems of world-class calibre. Yet it remains the least visited of all Canadian Rockies major ice climbing areas.

The area has seen a real renaissance of new route activity and exploration. As late as the early '90s the hardest routes consisted of a couple of technical grade Vs. Now there are at least half a dozen routes grade V+ or harder including several mixed lines. A number of more moderate lines have been cleaned up as well.

The Park and surrounding area are seasonably about 5-10°C warmer than the Banff region and are influenced by frequent Chinooks. As a result, there is often little or no snow, and often lower than normal avalanche hazard. The flip side finds a shorter ice climbing season beginning in mid to late December, running till early to mid March. Call ahead to enquire about conditions.

Waterton is an ideal location for a weekend ice climbing trip. Several routes near the townsite and on Akamina Road can be done in a short day after travelling. A more involved route can then be done the following day. Undoubtedly many new, quality routes are hidden in the front and backcountry.

Go with the expectation of gnarly Chinook weather. This includes pelting rain, blinding spindrift, massive windburn and dissolving ice climbs. Endure these tribulations and you'll be rewarded with beautiful scenery, a good epic tale or two and the best routes between Banff and Hyalite Canyon, MT.

Getting There from Canada

The quickest route from Calgary is via Highway 2 south, but a more scenic drive from Calgary is via Highway 22 south from Bragg Creek to Lundbreck and east to Pincher Creek. From Pincher Creek, drive Highway 6 for 50 km south to Waterton Park. Plan for about 3 hours on either route. Highway 3 travels east-west from Lethbridge through Pincher Creek to Crowsnest Pass and Fernie, B.C.

Getting There from eastern Montana

The nicest access is to get to Cardston, Alberta via US Highway 89 on the east side of Glacier Park. However, the port of entry at Carway/Peigan is only open 9 am to 6 pm and the driving along Glacier Park is slow. The Chief Mountain Port of Entry between MT Highway 17 to Alberta Highway 6 is closed in winter. The other eastern route is via Interstate 15 north of Great Falls. The Sweetgrass/Coutts border crossing is open 24 hours. From Coutts continue north on Highway 4 to Highway 502 where you turn left (west) to Cardston. From Cardston take Highway 5 for 31 miles (50 km) west to Waterton Park.

Getting there from the US west of the Continental Divide

US Highway 93 comes from Kalispell, Montana. Once in Canada, Highway 93 intersects Highway 3 at Elko, B.C. From Elko go east on Highway 3 over Crowsnest Pass to Pincher Creek. Access from the Spokane/Couer d'Alene area is via Highway 95. Follow Highway 95 north to Cranbrook where you'll take Highway 93/95 back south to Elko. The 93 and 95 border crossings are open 24 hours.

Facilities

Waterton townsite is largely boarded up in winter, but there are usually up to four hotel/lodges open year-round. The Kilmorey Lodge 403-859-2334 has a café open for breakfast and coffee before heading out for the day. The grocery store is open three days a week. In November of 1998 a 24 bed International Hostel opened in "The Lodge at Waterton Lakes." There is a swimming pool, jacuzzi and weight room in the same building as the Hostel 403-859-2151. The town of Pincher Creek, 50 km north, offers many options for motels and food. Westcastle Peak Ski Area, near Pincher Creek, is an almost secret destination for great powder skiing. A picnic shelter and campground with toilets and garbage bins is located 3.4 km east of the Waterton townsite near Red Rock Parkway. The shelter is enclosed and has a supplied wood stove. Bring a lantern, a bucket for water (from the creek behind the shelter) and an axe (not essential) along with your camping gear. If a Teepee is present at this location refrain from entering it as it is used for native ceremonial purposes.

Emergency

The warden office, 1.3 km east of town, is open Monday to Friday and has a voluntary registration form posted outside. If you sign out, remember to return your card at the end of the trip to prevent a needless and expensive rescue (at your cost!). Wardens are available during office hours for information on routes and approaches. Stop by for a chat before and after your climb; they are always interested in new condition reports and meeting park users. See page 390.

Maps

82 G/1 Sage Creek
82 H/4 Waterton Lake

Red Rock Parkway

This road begins just north of the bridge over Blakiston Creek on Highway 5. Red Rock Parkway is about 3.6 km east of the townsite near the campground. The road has not been plowed in winter for many years. Don't write it off, however. High winds and warmer temperatures often leave the road clean of snow. Take a mountain bike for quick and easy access to reach the end of the road (15 km) near Red Rock Canyon in about 45 minutes. Very little information has been unearthed about the area in close to 10 years.

Ruby Falls 60 m III, WI 3

Approach Approximately 8 km up Red Rock Parkway from Highway 5, Ruby Creek comes down from the southwest (82 H/4 819426). About 1 km above the road, the valley forks. Exactly at the crotch of this fork, lies this pretty curtain. *Ruby Falls* may also be approached from Cameron Lake Road over Crandell Lake. This approach is 3 km to the Red Rock Parkway and gains only 100 m in elevation. The falls is another 1 km north of the Crandell Lake trailhead.

Approximately 1.5 km west of Ruby Creek, two similar smears have been climbed. These are dubbed *Leaky Lacy* and *Drip Dry* owing to their wet nature.

Hip Wader Gully 70 m II, WI 2

Approach Located about 12 km up the road and 500 m past Lost Horse Creek (picnic site), it is visible across the valley to the left and is the right-hand of two minor drainages. The first ascent party used hip waders to cross the creek and then up 70 m of snow and a short ice step with more snow to the climb itself (82 G/1 183444).

Climb three short pitches with the third being the hardest and sometimes thin to start.

Descent Downclimb to the left.

Fernie Pillar 40 m III, WI 5

Approach Continue along the Parkway 15 km to the end of the road. Look south to the lower slopes of Mount Blakiston in an area of blowdown to where this north-facing route should be visible. Cross the creek and walk up to the route in 30-45 minutes (82 G/1 169449).

Little is known about this climb, but the first lead is a full pitch of vertical ice ending on a tree belay to the right. A second, more moderate pitch rises up in three steps with some steep variations possible.

Descent Downclimb either side or rappel the route.

Red Rock Canyon 25 m III, WI 4+

Approach From the end of the road to the north is a popular summer hiking trail up Red Rock Canyon. The top of the canyon is a short walk from the parking lot and at the last bridge, there is usually at least one very steep pillar pouring into the canyon. This makes a great top roping and arm-pumping playground. There is likely potential for numerous mixed lines in this canyon.

Waterton Townsite

As you enter the townsite, one of the first things you'll notice is a blue flow of ice directly above the warden compound on the right. This is the right-hand and best of three separate gully climbs collectively called *Compound Gullies*. They face southeast and are subject to Chinook conditions. These gusty, warm winds

can create sunny, plastic ice, high avalanche hazard (when there is enough snow), rock and icefall. The entire climb can disappear and form again several times a season.

Right Gully 300 m II, WI 3

Approach Park at the Warden compound 1.3 km east of town and walk up the slope to the base in 15-30 minutes.

The route starts with several short pitches up a nice curtain of varied ice. Continue up several rope lengths of snow to a final steep column of ice.

Descent Rappel and downclimb route. A downclimb in the trees left of the gully is also possible.

Centre Gully 200 m II, WI 2

Approach Park as for the *Right Gully*, but walk left to the next gully.

A short pitch of ice leads to snow and minor ice steps to where the gully forks. Either side offers good WI 2 ice for several pitches.

Descent Walk off left or rappel and downclimb route.

Left Gully 300 m II, WI 2

Approach Continue past the warden station and park at the Information Centre (closed in winter), 0.7 km west.

Left Gully is similar to *Centre Gully*, with a single pitch of stepped ice at the top.

Descent Walk off left or rappel and downclimb route.

Discotheque 80 m II, WI 3

Approach This is located 100 m right of *Left-Hand Compound Gully* and should be obvious from the Warden's Compound. The bottom of the route may melt in strong sunshine.

Start on the right edge of the smear and proceed up and left on ramp to more solid ice. Good rock gear. Belay from trees.

Descent Rappel 50 m from trees to the left of climb and then downclimb small slabs to base.

Kill Keisha ...Kill, Kill 30 m III, 5.7 WI 4

This climb can be seen from the road and seems to form every year.

Approach Park at the Warden's compound and follow a gravel road east to the first drainage. Take a smaller, non-drivable road north directly up the drainage and then up scree to the base (82 H/4 877396). 1 hour.

Climb a skinny pillar to a bit of rock followed by more sections of ice.

Descent Rappel the route.

The Slab 50 m II, WI 2+

Halfway up Mount Crandell toward the Bears Hump lies an east-facing slab of ice.

Approach Starting from the warden station, head up the Bears Hump Trail until the switchbacks start. Take either the first or second and head uphill.

Climb a full rope length of continuous 65-70° ice. It is thin at times, but very enjoyable for its grade.

Descent You can walk off left if you really want to, although it is safer to rappel from trees on the left side of the slab where a half rappel will just get you down. From the top of the climb you may be able to find two separate single bolt rappel anchors taking you down the low-angle rock to the trees.

Waist Transfer 80 m II, WI 2

This route on Black Bear Ridge is above the waste transfer station beyond the government compound. It is not as steep as it looks. It is the right-hand and thicker of two ice smears and is similar in character to the Compound Gullies.

Rope Tow 20 m I, WI 3

This short but steepish flow in a gully by the old ski hill on Bertha Mountain just to the right of the Bertha Lake parking lot and trailhead. Easy to get to and sunny early in the morning it makes for a fun warm up or partial day. Head up the right side of the gully and cut across left to the base halfway through a snowed up rockband. The climb is best during repeated Chinooks. Watch for avalanches.

Cameron Lake Road

This area offers some of the most accessible and highest quality ice climbing in all the Rockies. For now, this road will remain open in winter. As you enter the townsite take the first right (north) turn onto the Cameron Lake Road, previously known as the Akamina Highway.

The *Quick and Dirty* and *Expert's Choice* areas are very close to the road and get lots of sun. Avalanche hazard is usually not a problem owing to minimal accumulations of snow as most of it gets melted away during Chinooks. But remember, these large slide paths are there for a reason; beware of big avalanche cycles. Many routes in this area have a short season and start falling apart during Chinook conditions, creating a hazard with falling ice and copious amounts of running water. On the other hand, routes with a southern exposure can remain quite manageable even during cold Arctic fronts.

Photos: Brad Wroblecki



The Devil.

The Rock Cut 25 m I, 5.5, WI 4

This nice short mixed route with good protection and good rock occasionally forms in a corner on the rock cut just before the switchback turn near the start of the Cameron Lake Road.

Approach Find a parking pull-out just before the corner and walk up to the base in 5-10 minutes.

Climb ice for 7 m to a rock traverse to a small icicle followed by stemming up some ice and rock. Small pitons and a mid-size cam should compliment a few ice screws.

Descent Rappel from trees.

French Kiss 45 m II, WI 3

This varied one pitch route is the farthest on the left, some 8-10 m from *Quick and Dirty*.

Descent Walk left off the ledge or rappel from a large tree.



Le Piller des Putains with Pearl Necklace in the shade behind

Le Piller des Putains 45 m II, WI 6

This is a stiff variation to *French Kiss*. It forms over the buttress just right of the normal way. When formed, it is normally a hideously small and technically rotten free-standing column. From easier ground above the icicles make a mixed traverse left onto *French Kiss* and continue to the top.

Pearl Necklace 50 m II, WI 5+

This pretty variation lies in the alcove between *French Kiss* and *Quick and Dirty*. It climbs a vertical and sometimes thin pillar that is topped with overhanging icicles. After 30 m it is possible to traverse onto *Quick and Dirty* or *French Kiss*.

Quick and Dirty 80 m II, WI 3+

Quick and Dirty is the biggest, widest and most obvious of several variations in this compact amphitheatre. This is an excellent climb that is hard for its grade and is enjoyable even when it is thin.

Approach Drive up the Cameron Lake Road for 3.9 km and look for the first obvious route on the right side (north) through a short gap in the trees. Park in a wide section of road just past the creek bed and walk through the trees on the left side of the creek for no more than 20 minutes (82 H/4 854391).

The first pitch has ice up to 90° leading to a sloping ledge. An easier pitch leads to the top.

Descent From the top of the route walk right up the creek bed until it is possible to traverse left through the trees. Continue through the trees, staying away from the cliff edge until it is obvious that you can go down and traverse easily back to the base of the route.

The Deviant 35 m II, 5.6, WI 5

Five metres right and at half height of *Quick and Dirty* is a broad icicle that hangs off a small ledge. *The Deviant* climbs ice on the far right side of *Quick and Dirty* and traverses to the hanging icicles. It looks as though the direct route would make an excellent bolted excursion.

Climb up a very steep and thin smear just to the left of the hanging icicle. The smear ends below a roof (fixed pin) at which point there is an awesome rock traverse onto the icicle. The rock is excellent with large incut holds and good natural gear.

Descent Rappel from Abalakov.



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French Kiss on the left. Climbers starting on *Quick and Dirty*. The *Deviant* follows the thin line on the right and traverses to the obvious hanging icicle.

Huxomatic 80 m III, WI 3

From the top of *Quick and Dirty* another blue pillar of WI 3 can be seen above through the trees. This has been climbed, but isn't this route. To the left of the blue pillar is another route that often looks unformed, but can have thin ice making a pure ice route.

Climb a small shield of ice to get to the bottom of the route. Continue up thin and sometimes hollow ice to the main flow. Also, there is a nice mixed variation that is yet unclimbed to the right.

Descent Rappel the route.

The Slow and the Clean 30 m I, WI 2-3

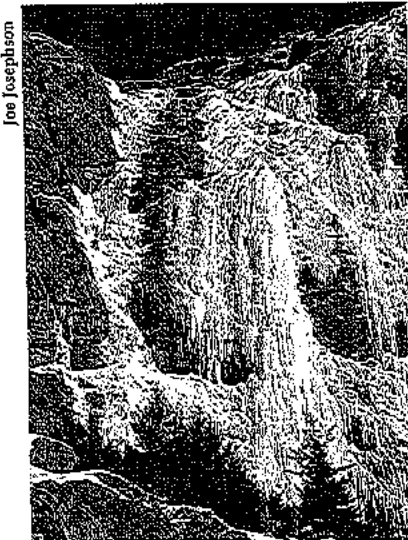
Approach Park as for *Quick and Dirty*. Look for where the outflow for *Quick and Dirty* crosses under the road and follow it easily to the top of the canyon, 5 minutes.

Find a tongue of ice that stretches from the top of the canyon and ends on a small bench by the river. Rappel in and climb out. It forms every year, but can be thin in Chinook conditions.

Daytime Curfew 120 m II, WI 3

During good freeze/thaw cycles two smears have been known to form up on the cliffs between *Quick and Dirty* and *Expert's Choice*. *Daytime Curfew* is the left-hand of the two.

Approach When formed, the routes are easily visible from the Cameron Lake Road on the blocky cliffs just before *Expert's Choice*. Park in the pull-out as per that route and if a trail is broken, walk to that route and then traverse right. If there



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is no trail, walk back down the road and then straight up the talus to the base.

Climb the first little curtain and walk left 5 m on a large ledge to reach 2 more pitches of fun, sunny ice-thin at times—to the top. Some pitons and small nuts are recommended for protection. If things are in condition, a series of short but thin bulges can be climbed directly.

Descent If the ice is good, rappel from Abalakov threads or else use rock horns or the occasional tree.

Martial Law 120 m II, WI 3+

This is the right-hand of the two smears and was first climbed by unknown persons the week before *Daytime Curfew*. It is said to be "a bit harder, and more fun, but the same grade."

Expert's Choice

If this climb was farther north and closer to a higher population of climbers, it would be a world famous ice route, right up there with the *Weeping Wall*. Aside from being only 30-45 minutes from the road and south-facing, what more needs to be said! The *Left Side* forms every year as well one or both of the *Middle Route* and *Right Side*. Each line offers a classic route for its grade.

Approach The climb is unmistakable on the right side 4.8 km up the Cameron Lake Road. Walk up the left side of the drainage. At the start of the walk, if in doubt, head up a steeper slope to the left instead of staying in the drainage bottom. It is easier in the long run.

Descent Rappel route from fixed stations on the left side.

Expert's Choice with Scott Backes halfway up the *Left Side*.

Left Side 125 m III, WI 4

The *Left Side* can form spectacular scoops and caves of ice as a result of the Chinook winds blowing the drips about.

The first pitch is crux and ends after 40 m at a bolt belay on a ledge to the left. Another long pitch leads out and past an old bolt station (two rusted 1/4-inch bolts) and climbs up to another ledge and a new beefy bolt station. The final easiest pitch turns right and climbs past huge caverns to the top, and an interesting piton belay.

Middle Route 130 m III, WI 6

A beautiful line right up the middle of the falls, *Middle Route* probably forms more often than the *Right Side*.

The first 40 m pitch is sustained, technical and "just keeps coming at ya." Belay in a large cave on the left. The second beautiful pitch starts out vertical (WI 5) then kicks back to a more reasonable angle and better ice. A final WI 2 pitch leads to the top. Traverse easily to the fixed station atop the *Left Side*.

Right Side 130 m III, WI 5

This is the far right side of the waterfall. When formed up well, the *Right Side* is similar to the *Middle Route*, but the first pitch is considerably easier. Often, it will be very thin with narrow pillars and icicles. Under these conditions the technical grade and seriousness level are definitely increased. Traverse to the *Left Side* and rappel that route. This may require a short fourth pitch to reach the fixed piton station.

Side Swipe City 30 m II, WI 3

A short smear 10 m left of *Expert's Choice* and slightly up hill. It was named for the large piece of ice that fell off the route and nearly killed a belayer at the base of *Expert's Choice*.

Mrs. Brown Chooses the Dagger 30 m II, WI 4

Monty Python fans will love this one. This route is found 50 m left of *Side Swipe City* on the left side of a scree cone. A few moves of rock leads to thin ice that steepens near the top.

Buffalo with an Aqualung 25 m II, WI 3

Another quick smear 10 m left of *Mrs. Brown Chooses the Dagger*.

Buchanan Ridge

A few kilometres past *Expert's Choice*, the Cameron Lake Road makes a major turn to the south. Just past the Crandell Lake trailhead and across Cameron Creek lie a number of ice smears on the north face of Buchanan Ridge. These climbs typically form best in freeze/thaw cycles and get little to no sun.

Trapper Neilson 100 m, II WI 3

The climb takes the right-most of the obvious climbs. It is unknown if any of the others have been climbed.

Approach Park at the Crandell Lake pull-out and cross Cameron Creek (you should be able to find a shallow spot) and pick your way up avalanche slopes to the base.

A scrambling first pitch leads to a steeper second pitch then to a fun third pitch. A thin piton or two might be useful for belays in solid rock along the ice flow.

Descent Rappel the route from trees. You can walk off after the first pitch.

Lineham Creek

Lineham Cliff Waterfall 125 m IV, WI 4

Lineham Cliff Waterfall is actually two parallel lines pouring off an impressive headwall and both have been climbed. The route faces north and is less affected by Chinooks. As a result, there is usually more snow accumulation and a higher chance of avalanche. Check with the wardens for conditions.

Approach Drive up the Cameron Lake Road for 9.3 km and look for the Lineham Creek Trail sign on the right (north) side. Ski the trail for 4.2 km (2 hours) to the base of the climb (82 G/1 151401).

The left-hand route climbs 50 m with steep steps into a narrow section and more moderate ice to the top. The right-hand starts wide, finishes narrow and is easier than the left. Given an early start, they are both easily climbed in a day.

Descent Rappel the routes. A complicated descent is possible down the summer trail that traverses the cliff, but it is exposed and loose; not recommended.

Juste Nous Deux 125 m IV, WI 4+

This narrow line starts just right of the left-hand side of *Lineham Cliff Waterfall*.

Climb generally thin ice past several loose ledges to the upper pillar pouring from a large crack/chimney. From the top of the ice a delicate traverse can be made to the ice atop Lineham Cliff. A direct finish up the loose rock/mixed chimney could be made but would require rock protection.

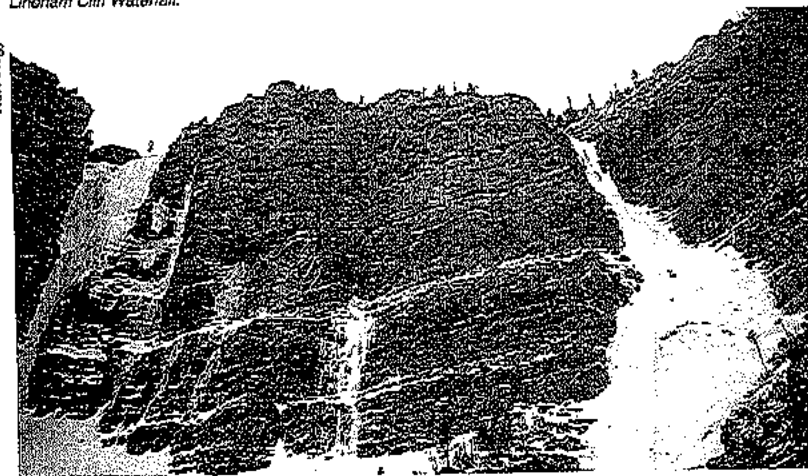
The Shining 190 m IV, WI 4+

This route is in a spectacular position, high above treeline, on the southwest face of Mount Blakiston.

Approach Drive up the Cameron Lake Road for 9.3 km and look for the Lineham Creek Trail sign on the right (north) side. Ski the trail for 4.2 km (2 hours) to the base of *Lineham Cliff*

Lineham Cliff Waterfall.

Karl Nagy



Waterton National Park 55

Waterfall (82 G/1 151401), then head right up an open slope (potential avalanche hazard) for another hour. The route is obvious as a pillar ending in the middle of a colourful, overhung rock wall up and right from Lineham Cliff.

From the top of the snow slope, head up 100 m of easy ice and snow to the base of a broad section of WI 3. Climb up to a sloping snow ledge followed by more WI 3 to a sheltered cave on the left. A deceptively steep pitch leads to the top. **Descent** Rappel and downclimb the route.

Midnight Madness 110 m IV, WI 3

This remote climb is located in British Columbia, outside Waterton Park.

Approach Drive up the Cameron Lake Road to the end of the plowed section, 13.5 km west of the townsite. Ski 1.5 km up the road to the Akamina Pass trailhead. Follow the wide trail for 1.6 km to the Park boundary and the Continental Divide. Follow the trail down past the Forum Lake Trail to the Wall Lake Trail (sign) and turn left to Wall Lake. It is about a 2 hour ski from the trailhead to Wall Lake.

The route is climbed in three good pitches. Because it is located west of the divide, there is a lot more snow and a higher avalanche hazard. This route is subject to large cornices.

Descent A walk off 150 m right is possible, but it is recommended to rappel the route.

East Side-Waterton Lake

Irish Dream 80 m III, WI 3

This climb is clearly visible from the townsite and warden office. It is located across Middle Waterton Lake on the slopes of Mount Vimy. The climb forms in a left-leaning crack running through loose, blocky cliffs.

Approach Turn into Marquis Hole 1.4 km east of the Warden Office and stay right (east) toward the summer horse stables until drifts block the road. Snowshoe or ski across the frozen Middle Waterton Lake to the base of the scree cone leading to the climb (1 hour). Hike up the slope for an hour or more to the base.

A 40 m pitch leads through steep steps to easier ground near the top. Finish on easier, but thinner ice ending where the crack exits onto a ridge.

Descent Rappel the route.

Crypt Falls 155 m V, WI 4

This is a very remote climb near the US Border on the headwall below Crypt Lake (82 H/4 921318). *Crypt Falls* is actually three separate flows. The first ascensionists climbed the central and longest of the three.

Approach From Highway 5 near the townsite, cross the lake at the Bosphorous and ski up the Crypt Lake Trail. Beware of avalanche hazard. It is recommended to check with the wardens for updated conditions and exact approach details. The falls is 11.5 km from Waterton Lake and 700 m of vertical gain so it is generally an overnight trip in a very beautiful valley.

Climbed in three long or four shorter pitches. The first pitch is the steepest, a

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Sullivan Falls.

classic WI 4. The rest of the climb is less steep, but sustained.

Descent Rappel from the trees right of the route.

Sofa Creek

Excellent climbing in a most beautiful basin makes this area worth the long approach. In a heavy snow year, skis are required but walking is common. *Sullivan Falls* is simply one of the best routes in the range. Several quality routes have also been climbed to the left and in a good year there may be others. At least one unclimbed route can sometimes be seen hanging to the right and some distance above *Sullivan Falls*. The routes are described from right to left.

Approach Turn into Marquis Hole 1.4 km east of the Warden Office and drive down to the campground near the Waterton River. Cross the river (hopefully frozen) and follow open areas to the left that lead to an obvious trail. Follow this trail right (west) to the Vimy Ridge Trail sign where the trail turns sharply uphill. Follow the trail left and continue up onto the treed ridge on the west side of Sofa Creek. Leave the trail where it turns southwest toward Vimy Peak and traverse across the slope, eventually angling into the creek. Stay out of the drainage bottom as long as possible; it is a horrible bushwack. Once you get into the creek, continue up to the routes. Allow 4-5 hours to the base of *Sullivan Falls*.

Sullivan Falls 230 m V, WI 5

The top of this climb is just visible with binoculars from Highway 5 near the park gates. The route is most frequently done in a long day car-to-car. Check with the wardens regarding snow and river conditions.



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Sofa Creek climbs. From left to right: Racing with Shadows, Blue Rodeo, Sullivan Falls.

The first pitch leads up a massive and usually cracked free-standing curtain for 25 m to easier ice. A second narrower pitch on sustained 70-80° ice ends on a snow ledge. The wide tier of ice above is climbed in two excellent pitches.

Descent Rappel the route. From the half way ledge it is possible to walk out left and descend snow slopes below *Blue Rodeo*.

Blue Rodeo 120 m IV, WI 3

This good route is found just left of *Sullivan Falls*. In the dazed and exhausted state in which you reach the route, *Blue Rodeo* vaguely resembles a cowboy straddling a saddle horn.

The left-hand chap is slightly harder than the right; they both converge on a broad section of rolling ice leading to the top in one and a half pitches. Sev-

eral harder pillar or mixed variations are possible.

Descent Rappel the route.

Racing with Shadows 90 m IV, WI 5

This spectacular looking pillar ends in a rock wall just left of *Blue Rodeo*.

Dripping to the ground may be three smears that begin mixed and join at a ledge. The second pitch climbs a deceptively steep pillar to easier ground and the top.

Descent Rappel the route.

Pork Chubby 100 m IV, WI 3+

This small curtain lies isolated in a gully about 1 km left of the *Sullivan Falls* amphitheatre.

PINCHER CREEK AREA

Drywood Creek

From Pincher Creek drive south on Highway 6 for 20 km and just south of the railroad bridge over the Highway is the paved Shell Plant Road. Turn west and follow the road for 9.1 km to the Shell gas plant. Look for the bizarre stacks of yellow sulphur cakes. Continue past the plant to where the road descends to a little lake (82 G/3 137652). Turn left and follow the main road to the second of two pumping stations and a locked gate. Most often the road beyond will be plowed, but not accessible by car. Mountain bikes are useful. Before 1998, one could drive the road all the way to *The Gasser*, obvious on the southeast side of the valley.

Drywood Creek climbs. The Gasser is the widest flow on the right and Fluffy is the prominent formed pillar in the centre.

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The Gasser 75 m II, WI 3

This is the main climb in the area.

Approach From the road, wade across the creek and hike up to the climb.

Start on a short undulating pitch to a ledge below the upper wall. Finish with a long and sustained rope length on usually good ice.

Descent Locate a bolt belay just right of centre to rappel the route.

Note: that the approach slope of *The Gasser* and surrounding climbs can be an extreme terrain trap in periods of heavy or blowing snow.

Fluffy Saves the Day 80 m II, WI 5

This challenging route seems to form every year with imaginative climbing in a windy place.

Approach To the left of *The Gasser* are several lines. *Fluffy Saves the Day* is the prominent line. Cross the creek and approach as for *The Gasser*. Head directly up thin ice steps to a convenient belay on a large ledge. Alternatively, wander up the bottom of *The Gasser* and traverse over to the belay.

Climb a wide pillar that may be guarded with a series of wind sculpted overhangs that may necessitate crawling through holes to gain vertical ice that is often wet and doesn't take gear well.

Descent Rappel the route or walk off to the left to flank the cliffband and then easily back to the bottom of the climb.

The Land of the Sandbaggers II, 50 m of ice WI 4

Approach Between *The Gasser* and *Fluffy Saves the Day* is a line that forms up partially every year. On occasion it touches down completely. Wander up small steps to the left of *The Gasser* line. Gain a belay below a tongue of ice that cascades over an overhang.

Climb a free-standing curtain of poor ice for 5 m to gain easier ground and better ice. Continue on up to a large belay ledge. Alternatively, the first pitch can be done as follows; climb up to a large ledge below the overhang and to the right of the curtain. Pins might be useful for the belay here. With difficulty gain the front side of the curtain and hence the second pitch.

Treading Water 40 m III, WI 3

This route gets lots of sun and you don't need to cross the creek.

Approach The route is located 1 km past *The Gasser* on the northwest side of the road.

Climb one pitch of moderate ice that can be thin over running water. Beware of cornice build-up along the ridgeline.

Descent Rappel the route.

Polar Citrus 140 m III, WI 3-4

A fun route with an alpine feel. There can be significant avalanche hazard from the gully above in heavy snow conditions or Chinook conditions.

Approach The climb is located just before *The Gasser* and just short of a small hill where a fenced wellhead is located. The climb is on the cliff directly above the wellhead and can easily be seen from the road from many vantage points,

as a narrow tongue of ice in the back of a shallow gully on the north side of the valley. Ascend through small brush and scree to a small bay at the base of the cliff, to the left of the climb.

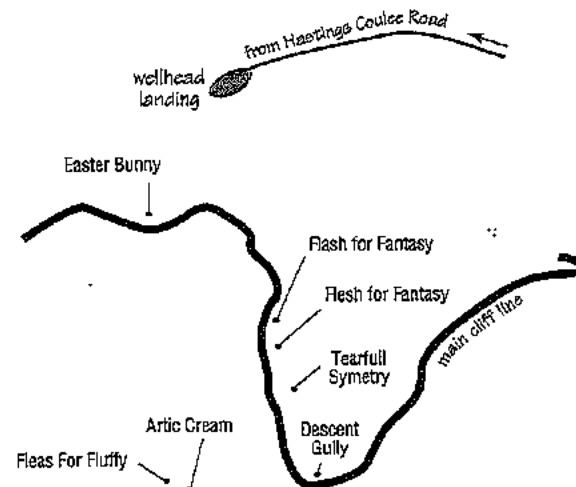
Climb a right-slanting rock ramp to gain the base of the gully and the ice, 40 m. Pins will be useful. Establish an excellent belay with camming units on good rock on the right. Climb easy ice up the gully for 40-50 m. Step left of the ice and establish a belay on a good ledge with rock gear. Climb 10-15 m of steepening ice to avalanche scoured slopes. Run out the rest of the rope to a tree belay on the left. Cross the gully to a safer haven on the right and an obvious walk off. On occasion the ice will spill directly out of the gully and down the first cliffband. Climb thin ice to start that gets better as you near the first belay (WI 4).

Descent Rappel the route.

South Drywood Creek

The following routes are a little more complicated to get at than *The Gasser*. Turn onto the Shell Plant Road as for the Drywood Creek climbs, 6 km west of Highway 6 turn left on Hastings Coulee Road. Follow the main road around and take the first right into South Drywood Creek. Follow the road for 10 km to a gas pumping station. The climbs are located across the creek on the south side of the valley. The road may be closed well before the pumping station.

South Drywood Creek



Easter Bunny 100 m II, WI 2

Approach The first climb to come into view, *Easter Bunny* has a long season owing to its northern aspect and high winds in the area making for interesting climbing. There is some avalanche hazard, but there is rarely enough snow around.

This climb has many variations on stepped bulges and good plastic ice.

Descent Walk off to the right.

Easter Bunny Intégralé 20 m III, WI 4

Approach Often another pitch of ice will form above the *Easter Bunny*. It can form as two separate lines or merge more or less into one. It seems to form completely on average of every other year and almost always makes it within 10 m of the ground. Perhaps there could be good mixed climbs.

Climb the route to its regular endpoint. Establish a belay on the headwall; rock gear useful. Climb thin and mixed ice that is pleasantly secure and fun if not somewhat wet, but it's a total horror if it's at all desiccated.

Descent Rappel from the top of the ice and walk down the *Easter Bunny* descent (right).

Flash for Fantasy 100 m III, WI 3

In the bowl to the immediate south of *Easter Bunny* are numerous entertaining one and two pitch climbs. The climbs are obvious from the wellhead and the end of the road proper. An obvious landmark, *Easter Bunny* is around the buttress to the right. From the wellhead step down on a game trail and easily cross the creek, open slopes lead into the bowl and a cliffband on the right that is home to up to 3 routes. The routes form intermittently.

Approach From the creek bed in the bottom of the bowl walk up a snow slope to the base of the route. It's the first ice that flows over the cliffband to the right once you have rounded the buttress that separates the bowl from *Easter Bunny*. Walk up snow and scree to the base of the route.

Climb 10-15 m of moderate ice and establish a belay. Climb steepening and thin ice that ends after 20 m. With difficulty gain mixed ground and run the rope out to a belay next to a large block, pins useful. Exit on easy mixed ground (snow, rock, ice, dirt) onto the bowl (flat ground).

Descent Walk left to flank the cliffband and scramble back down.

Flesh for Fantasy 100 m III, WI 3

Approach As for *Flash for Fantasy* above except it is located about 100 m to the left on the same cliffband.

Climb 30 m of moderate ice ending in an awkward bulge that squeezes through a small rock step. Belay on ice at the top of the bulge. Step up on more moderate ice and quickly gain mixed ground very similar in nature to *Flash for Fantasy*. Pins are useful in bad conditions. Exit onto the bowl above.

Descent Walk left to flank the cliffband and scramble back down.

Tearful Symmetry 100 m III, WI 4

Approach 50 m to the left of *Flesh for Fantasy*. This fun route is the largest flow on the cliff and forms every year.

Climb a wide curtain of ice approximately 15-20 m in length to gain easier rolling ground. Belay here or run out the rope to a belay under a small overhang, using pins or alternatively, belaying from screws. Ascend a shallow gully on



Photo: Eric Hoogstraten

Arctic Cream.

moderate mixed ground that can be all ice in some years. Rock gear useful. Exit onto the bowl and walk down to the left. A WI 3 line on occasion forms up on the first pitch.

Descent Rappel the route.

Arctic Cream 50 m III, WI 3

Approach Above *Tearful Symmetry* and near the walk off is a broad band of rolling ice.

Climb short steps interspersed by ledges.

Descent Rappel the route. A walk off is possible up and to the right.

Fleas for Fluffy 15 m III, WI 4

Approach To the right of *Arctic Cream* a WI 4 pillar sometimes forms.

Climb often-brittle ice to the top of the pillar. An old self-drive bolt might be found at the top.

Descent Rappel the route.

Sunshine Corner 90 m III, WI 3

Approach Walk, ride or ski past the pumping station to the second drainage on the south side of the creek. Cross the creek and continue up the drainage past a small seepage until the waterfall comes into view to the west. It seems to form variably.

Climb two rope lengths of ice and then traverse right to another pitch and a half of easier ice.

Descent Rappel the route or hike up and traverse right into a snow gully that is followed down onto rock ledges. Traverse right from the rock ledges until finding a suitable place to climb down.

Windy Corner 45 m II, WI 3

Approach Continue past the *Sunshine Corner* drainage for 1 km. *Windy Corner* is easily seen on the north side of the valley.

Follow a gully up to the base and climb one pitch of undulating ice 75-90°. Continue up the gully for 150 m to a half pitch of similar ice known as *Slim Pikins*.

Descent Rappel the top pitch then traverse right across scree to a snow gully that is followed to the trail.

Spionkop Creek

These climbs are in the southernmost east-west valley that has been developed by the gas plant. It is one drainage south of the valley that contains *Easter Bunny* and home to at least one large processor plant. Yarrow Creek is the unexplored valley to the south.

Opaque Genius (AKA Not a Transparent Foot) 20 m III, WI 3

This area has fun ice that can easily fill up an afternoon. It is the closest climb to the newly erected gate across the road.

Approach From the *Easter Bunny* access road head south along a road that skirts the edge of the range. Turn right (sharply) onto the main road that heads into the valley. Drive about 3 km to where a second road heads down and crosses the creek. Stay on the main road and park just past the first gully coming down from the right. The climb is visible up the creek bed. Unless the snow is well compacted, avoid the creek bed and head upward through open slopes to the right of the creek, traversing back to the fall along the base of the cliff.

Two sets of bolted anchors can be found at the top of the climb. The top can be thin early season. Once led, this climb can easily be set up as a top rope area.

Descent Rappel the route.

Mini Mixed Master 60 m II, WI 2

Approach From the *Easter Bunny* access road head south along a road that skirts the edge of the range. Turn right (sharply) onto the main road that heads into the valley. A large processor station is located approximately halfway along the road. Take the first side road leading up and right just past the processor station. This leads to a wellhead and is just past an

obvious gully system on the hillside. Walk into the creek bed and head upstream for approximately 10 minutes. Alternatively, if the snow is deep, cross the creek and head along open slopes dropping back down to the base of the fall.

The creek develops a nice fall that starts off on steeper ice easing after 5 m. To the left three or four short mixed lines (WI 3) can be climbed. Rock gear can be useful. For more low-angle ice, head up the main gully until you get bored.

Descent Rappel the routes.

The TNC Shooter Girl 80 m III, WI 3

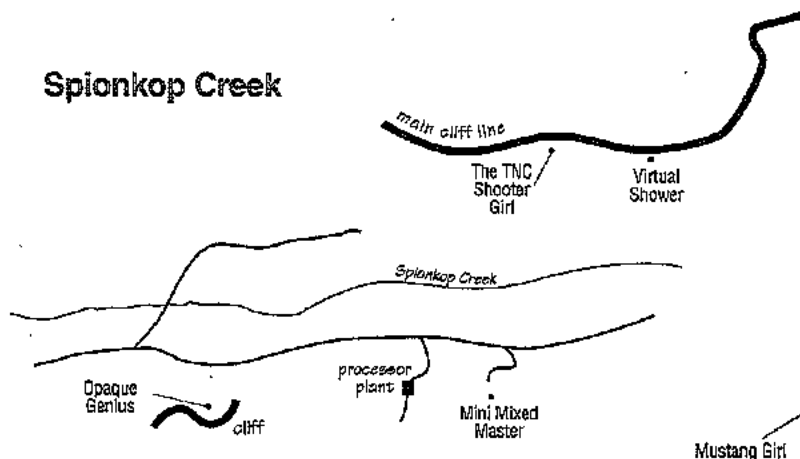
Just past *Mini Mixed Master* on the south side of the valley are two traditional mixed lines. They form up early then are usually gone by December, having sublimed off owing to the wind. They seem to form on a regular basis.

Approach From the head of the valley take the road that trends down and crosses the creek. Follow this for as long as possible along the south side of the valley. Both climbs are past the processor station. The road ends at, you guessed it, a wellhead. From the wellhead *The TNC Shooter Girl* is a 20 minute walk through obvious open terrain. A basic rock rack will prove useful.

The climb never seems to touch the ground. Climb a pitch of easy rock to the right of the first smear of ice. Belay from the rock, pins useful. Step left to gain the ice, climb moderate ice to a screw belay, about 20 m. Traverse a good ledge system approximately 20 m left to a second patch of ice, belay from rock (pins). Ascend the ice smear for 30 m to a screw belay.

Descent The first ascent team rappelled from a thread then traversed the ledge back to the first ice patch and rappelled to the ground from there.

Spionkop Creek



Virtual Shower (AKA Not a Reality Bath) 90 m III, 5.8, WI 4

A route with fun climbing, first done in typically difficult meteorological conditions—wind and lots of spindrift. A basic rock rack with some camming units is useful.

Approach About 500 m farther west from *The TNC Shooter Girl*. It is easier to stay low until under the climb then head up snow and scree. Set a belay on rock just left of the first pitch.

Climb a rock step (10-15 m) with good holds but poor protection, trending to the right. Run out the rope on snow and verglas covered scree and rock to a belay on the ice proper. Climb 50 m of bulgy ice that can be difficult to protect in places.

Descent Rappel the route.

Mustang Girl 30 m III, WI 2

This moderate ice climb is a classic WI 2 pitch with nice climbing and an alpine feel especially if the wind is strong and moving a lot of spindrift around.

Approach From the end of the road past the gas plant head west on an old 4X4 road to the first large gully on the north side of the valley. About one half hour from the wellhead at the end of the maintained road.

Climb 20 m of moderate bulgy ice to an alcove.

Descent Walk off to the left.

Naked Dances are Cheaper than Cuddle Dances 10-15 m III, WI 4

Above *Mustang Girl* are 3 pillars that form every year. They can be extremely brittle but otherwise provide an enjoyable experience if wet.

Descent Rappel or if conditions permit, exit with difficulty via a rock step. A bolt or two would be useful. Walk down on the left or scramble down on good rock on the right.

Oldman River

The following novelty routes are found along the Oldman River. They are hardly exotic, but perfect for bored skiers and fledgling ice climbers.

Summer Wages 20 m I, WI 2

It lies at the southwest corner of the intersection of the Oldman River and the Highway 22 Bridge.

Approach To reach the route, park along the barbed-wire fence and walk across a flat field to the sloping bank leading into the Oldman River. The climb is less than half a rope length of easy ice on several separate flows.

Wheating Wall 15-20 m I, WI 3

This is perhaps the easternmost Rockies ice climb. It can be a surreal experience to be ice climbing in the prairies. Located below, but not on, the Old Man River Dam. The sandstone, being what it is, has sprung a leak on the southern sidewall below the dam.

Approach Drive down to the lower fishing area and walk upstream until above the outflow station. Cross frozen, shallow ponds to the base of the route, bulgy plastic ice that ends halfway up a crumbling cliff.

Descent Downclimb the route.

Castle River

Driving up the valley, there appears to be no suitable terrain for waterfall ice anywhere. Then, just as you come around a corner, you will see three routes high on a southwest-facing cliffband. These spectacular routes are three of the best routes in the Rockies and well worth the long approach.

Approach From Pincher Creek, follow Highway 507 west for 17.4 km toward Westcastle Peak Ski Area. Turn left on Secondary Road 774 and follow it for 15.1 km past the hamlet of Beaver Mines, to a road leading to Beaver Mines Lake and campground. Turn left. Drive for 3.7 km and take the first junction on the right onto Castle River logging road. Follow this for 16 km until the climbs come into view on the left-hand side. Unfortunately, the road is now closed some 8-10 km from the climbs. Once below the routes, hike or ski uphill several hundred metres to the climbs (up to 3 hours in poor snow conditions).

Blue Angel 125 m V, WI 5

Blue Angel is the right-most of the three climbs and forms every year, sometimes by early November. The position of the route and the surrounding scenery make this a must visit. This climb was immortalized on the front cover of the second edition of Albi Sole's book, *Waterfall Ice* and also with beautiful colour photos in Yvon Chouinard's book, *Climbing Ice*.

Approach Start up an apron to reach steeper ice. Climb a harder-than-it-looks pitch with some steep sections and find a comfortable belay off to the side of the final pillar. Traverse out and climb the vertical pillar to the top.

Descent Rappel the route.

Lucifer 100 m V, WI 4+

This is another well-formed route found 50 m left (west) of *Blue Angel* and is easily climbed the same day. This challenging route was originally graded WI 3!

Climb two long, sustained pitches on interesting and varied ice. As the climb is narrow in places there may be some entertaining stemming off the rock. The second pitch is slightly harder than the first. This is a beautiful route.

Descent Rappel the route.

The Redeemer 55 m V, WI 6

This classic is left of *Lucifer*. The first ascent was in January when the team drove in, barely managing, on snow machine-packed roads followed by a 3 hour slog uphill to the base. Shortly after the ascent, several other parties went into the area and the "getting seriously stuck then walk .15 miles" rate was about 50 percent. The first ascent team

climbed the route in two pitches. The second ascent party climbed the route in one pitch and was reported to be "pumped for a week."

Climb 35 m of very steep, featured, lacey ice to a good ledge below the upper icicle. Stem up between the pillar and the rock until you need to swing out onto the face of the climb. Continue up 10 m of steep ice to the top.

Descent Rappel the route.

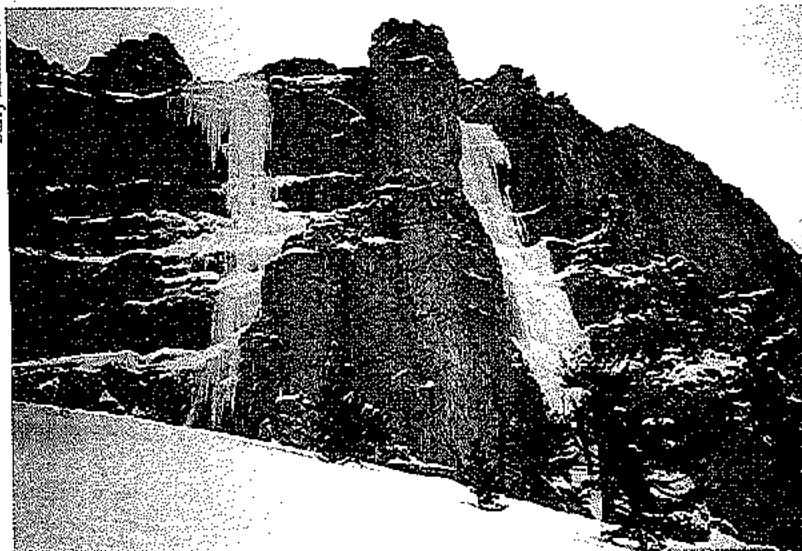
Fools and Small Children 210 m IV, 5.6, WI 2

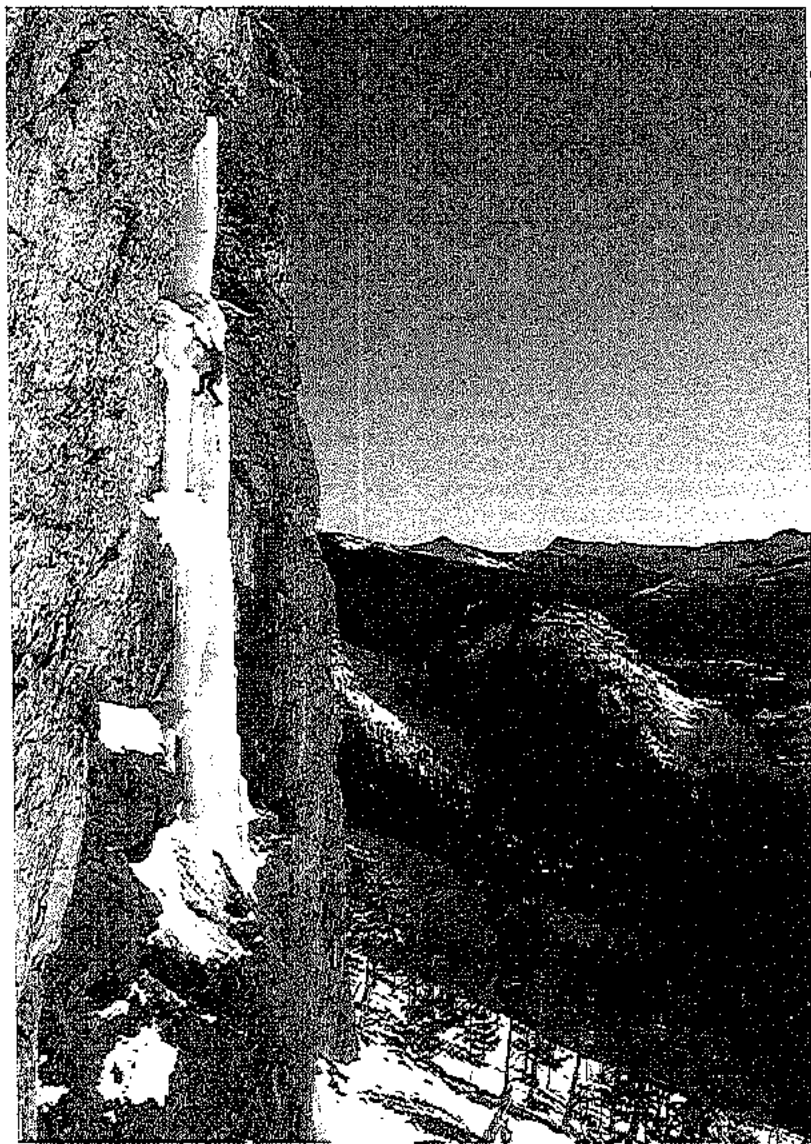
Little is known about this route except, it is located on the northwest corner of Southfork Mountain in the West Castle Valley (82 G/8 897698). The route begins at the base of a large ice smear and takes a direct route to the top of ridge.

Descent Descend ridge.

Lucifer and Blue Angel.

Barry Blanchard





Margo Tallon

Joe Josaphson on the first ascent of The Redeemer.

Crowsnest Pass

The Crowsnest Pass is located on the Continental Divide and is transected by Highway 3 between Sparwood, B.C. and Pincher Creek, AB. It is becoming a popular area for people seeking to escape the crowds farther north as well as having a long history of natural resource extraction. As such, it is steeped in mining history and tragedy such as the Frank Slide of 1903, that buried the town of Frank along with 70 persons. The area was named after the nearby Crowsnest Mountain that in translation from the Cree word "kah-ka-iou-wut-tshis" means "where the crow's nest." The area is frequented by warm Chinook winds giving the bonus of little or no snow much of the time, however, it has a much shorter season running from mid December to early March. The climbs are listed in geographical order from east to west along Highway 3.

Several communities in the valley along Highway 3 offer complete services ranging from restaurants, gas, hotels and an International Hostel located in the town of Blairmore. The best source for information, maps and current conditions and restrictions is the Alberta Lands and Forest Service Office also located in Blairmore 403-562-3210.

Pee Wee's Playhouse 10-25 m I, WI 2

These are several low-angle seeps of various lengths presenting a beginner/instructional area on a south-facing slab. They form every year, but may melt out early or several times a season.

Approach Heading west on Highway 3 park along the highway half a kilometre from the East Bellevue access sign. Walk south to the railway tracks and follow them east for several minutes to the base of the climbs (5 minutes). Watch for trains.

Gold Creek Canyon 10-15 m II, WI 2-5

Although short, this canyon offers a variety of steep curtains and free-standing pillars. Up to six or more climbs generally form each season although their quality may vary considerably.

Approach From near the Frank Townsite on Highway 3 turn right (north) onto the signed Frank Slide Interpretive Centre access road. Drive 1 km north and park at the switchback in the road. Walk west 60 m following a barbed wire fence line to a locked gate. Follow this summer-only road north for several minutes to a small man-made dam. The climbs are visible another 60 m south on the west canyon wall.

Descent Most routes have tree anchors.

Star Creek Falls 20 m II, WI 2

This forms every year offering a variety of lines on usually good plastic ice. Occasionally the middle of the falls forms up as a technical hollow shell above a plunge pool. Caution is advised as it has been known to collapse under a climber. Overall, it is a good beginners area.

Approach Driving west on Highway 3, turn left (south) at the West Coleman access sign onto 18th Avenue. At the bottom of the hill, turn right onto 70th Street. At the stop sign turn right again onto 17th Avenue. From here drive 2.2 km first crossing railway tracks, then over the river, then over Star Creek and finally park on the left at the "No Camping—No Tenting" sign. Follow this summer-only road south for about 5 minutes to the signed Star Creek Falls trailhead. Follow this trail south into a canyon and climb several small ice flows to the base of the main falls—a 10 minute walk from the trailhead.

Various options are available, but the steepest left side has 15 m of 70-80° ice followed by 10 m of easier ice.

Descent Rappel route from tree.

Brian Bell Sized 25 m II, WI 2

This is a moderate ice climb that promises much, but leads nowhere. It has been described as a "stab you in the back" kind of adventure. This climb is located down low on the northeast side of Sentinel Mountain.

Approach From the Alberta Information Centre on Highway 3 just west of Coleman, take the gravel road heading west (the old highway) to its end about 3 km from the Information Centre. The climb is visible at the far left end of the cliffband that meets the road. Walk up the scree picking up a trail along the base of the cliff, being wary of several terrain traps that load with snow just before and below the climb. 15 minutes to the base.

Climb several metres or rock (easy) to gain the ice.

Descent Rappel from the trees.

Monkey See-Monkey Do 25 m of climbing II, WI 2

Approach Drive exactly 5 km west on Highway 3 from the West Coleman access sign. Turn left (south) at the signed Sentinel Industrial Park. Follow the gravel road and park at a 30 m high cement water tower. The top of the route can be seen 2 km south on the obvious north-facing cliffband. Cross Crowsnest River (seldom frozen) and bushwack south through trees to the base of the climb (30 minutes from the tower).

Walk up 75 m of snow and small ice steps to a final 25 m step of thick, plastic 70° ice.

Descent Rappel from tree.

Chinook Mountain, North Face 500 m of climbing IV, WI 3-4

Also known as Vacation Property, this is an excellent early season climb that rarely forms up as thick as the first ascent found it. A party who climbed the route later found difficult conditions that included mixed sections up to 5.8. In an excellent year up to 4 lines of water ice will form. The route has a memorable finish near the summit of the peak.

Approach Park at the Alberta Information Centre just west of Coleman on Highway 3. The climb is easily visible on Chinook Peak (82G/10 727953) with the large blocky face on its uppermost half. Find the creek on the east side of the parking lot. Head along an old road, then trail on the right-hand side of the creek. Follow the creek several hundred metres farther before exiting the creekbed on the right bank at a fence line and a 4X4 road coming in from the right. Cross the fence line and follow quad roads along the creek almost to the base of the route. From treeline, where the track ends, trend right and pick up the gully as low down as possible. 2 to 3 hours.

Climb a steep 6 m ribbon of ice to a snow slope. Continue up the slope to the base of the next ice step. Climb a WI 2/3 step and ramble on low-angle ice to a rock or ice belay (thin). A fixed station (pin & bolt) is located 53 m up on the left before a 50 m snow slope over slabby rock. Climb the snow slope to an ice or rock belay at the base of the next ice step (1 bolt at right). A classic 45 m WI 3-4 pitch leads to a rock or ice belay. This is the first pitch, easily identified from the road. 30 m of WI 2 leads to a short Scottish-style gully. Fun moves with good gear lead to a pin/bolt belay in a shallow bowl. Trend up the right-hand side of the bowl to gain the ridge.

Descent It is possible to rappel the route starting at the pin/bolt belay in the bowl below the ridge. Otherwise, scramble down to the col between Chinook and Sentry mountains. A short section of easy downclimbing leads to the scree slopes.

Crowsnest Mountain

From Coleman head west, look for a sign indicating Chinook Lake recreation area and fish hatchery. Turn right (north) onto this road. At the end of the pavement, just past a cattle guard, continue straight on a gravel road. In winter this road will end shortly at a snowmobile staging area. Generally, it is possible to drive farther. This is the only road that heads up the Allison Creek drainage.

Approach From the parking lot head up the trail making note of when you cross a small stream after about 20 minutes. Continue past this point and watch for an avalanche slope that intersects the trail from the left. Head up the slope—avalanche hazard only exists in heavy or spring snow conditions. The climbs are located at the top of the slope just above a convenient island of trees. Because of Chinook winds these climbs can be extremely brittle and much more challenging than the grade indicates. If they are wet, they are very enjoyable.

Descent A walk off to the right exists, but rapping the route is preferred.

Furball-Hillbilly Valley 35 m III, WI 2 The left-hand route.

Approach Climb a small ramp of ice that leads to steeper ice before easing off again. Establishing a screw belay might be problematic as the ice thins at the top.

The Land that Time Forgot 40 m III, WI 4
About 50 m to the right of above.

Approach Climb a fun pillar that quickly eases off to bulgy ice leading into a small gully.

And Where Your Sister is Your Wife 25 m III, WI 4

The right-hand route identifiable by a big tree at the top.

Approach Climb a wide curtain of ice and belay from the tree. The exit onto the shelf can be awkward if the ice is thin or non-existent on the top.

Atlas Forest Road

Wolf Falls 20-30 m III, WI 2-4

Named for the wolf pack that frequents the area. Approach as you would for the Crowsnest Mountain Climbs.

Approach Continue up the road past the signed trailhead for Crowsnest Mountain. Trend up and over a pass and look for the signed turn off for Window Mountain Lake. Turn west here—approximately 20 km from the pavement. Drive up the approach road, as far as your vehicle can go. Park about 1 km before the Window Mountain trailhead. From the road head north (right) and into a cutblock trending toward Racehorse Pass via the base of a cliffband. Follow the cliff around and down to the base of the falls.

The area consists of 3 separate flows, the leftmost one forming up the earliest. Bolt anchors exist on top on each climb. Forms every year.

Descent Rappel the route. This climb was discovered when the first ascensionist almost skied over it one day.

FERNIE AREA

Always home to great ski terrain, Fernie has recently turned into a major resort with all the amenities you would require for an extended stay. Also, recommended is dinner at the historic Michel Hotel and Pub just east of Sparwood and easily recognizable by its pink façade.

Being on the wet side of the Divide, the area generally necessitates either early season exploration or the use of a snowmobile. Having seen things from a helicopter, it is certain the Elk River area north of Sparwood is home to many new routes.

Mount Hosmer

The climbs on Mount Hosmer are worthwhile, but lie in avalanche gullies and are therefore recommended only as early season ascents.

Parking From Fernie, drive East on highway 3. Before Hosmer turn right onto the last paved road before the bridge. Easily identified by the "Canada, Love It or Leave It" sign. Follow the road for several hundred metres to a signed sideroad (right-hand side) indicating the Mount Hosmer Trail and Hartley Pass. Follow this road past White Spruce Farms and cross a concrete decked bridge. Just past here park by an old corral.

Mount Hosmer Right-Hand 150 m of climbing III, WI 4+

Approach From the old corral, a quad track heads into the bush alongside the left-hand side of the wash. Follow this track to the large and obvious gully system that drops down from Mount Hosmer. Follow the gully for 10 minutes to the first ice.

Climb 30 to 35m of WI 4 ice that steepens near the top. The top may be freehanging and not well attached or supported. A bolt station can be found above this pitch in good rock in the centre of the gully. Climb several moderate steps to a final and longer step of ice.

Descent Walk off to the left or regain the gully and downclimb the short steps and easily bypassing the crux pitch on the right.

Mount Hosmer Left-Hand 70 m of climbing III, WI 4

Approach As for *Hosmer Right-Hand* except before the first pitch cross over the bank on the left and gain the next gully system over.



Mount Hosmer Right-Hand.

Eric Hoogstraten

Climb a short pitch of WI 4 ice between steep walls. Steps lead to a second pitch similar in nature. The first ascend party rapped from here in worsening conditions then gained the bank between the gully systems and walked down. More ice including a freestanding pillar can be found above.



Fernie

Echo Sadness 25 m II, WI 3+

A fun practice area that gets lots of sun. The climb is a curtain of ice of increasing height on the left and a nice pillar on the right. There is some avalanche hazard from the gully above.

Approach From Fernie locate the FasGas station on the wrong side of the tracks. Drive up the hill and turn at the first right, continue by the cemetery and onto Coal Creek Road. Follow this to its terminus at a snowmobile staging area by the "Iron Bridge." Walk or ski along good sled tracks along the left-hand side of the creek. Just past the pistol range (not the rifle range) head off the main track and trend left toward a small quarry at the base of the hillside, next to an obvious drainage. Walk past the quarry and into the drainage. About an hour from the parking lot. The climb is easily located at the base of the drainage. Alternatively, sled right from FasGas to near the base of the route in 15 minutes. Not really worth the walk, but a good sled-accessible play area.

If sled equipped, several other smears can be located on the sled track toward the microwave towers, before and after *Echo Sadness*. The obvious ones have been climbed and have little to recommend them other than lots of bushwhacking. You will also pass a falls proper on the creek sporting excellent drowning potential unless it has been -40°C for weeks on end.

Eric Hoogstraten on Echo Sadness.
Photo: Eric Hoogstraten Collection.

Morrissey

From Fernie drive west along Highway 3 to the Morrissey Provincial Park sign. Turn left and cross the Elk River bypassing the "park" on the right. Cross the tracks and turn right onto the main log road. Follow this for about 10 km to a second junction; continue straight ignoring roads coming sharply from the left and gently from the right. Drive past old coke ovens and park at a snowmobile staging area. Unload the sled and continue on. In early season, it is possible to continue driving. Whatever your mode of transport, cross the bridge over the creek and head up a short hill to a clearing under the hydro lines. Looking left across the valley you will see one route. Looking along the path of the transmission lines will locate others.



Eric Hoogstraten on Morrissey Ice.
Photo: Eric Hoogstraten Collection

Coal Miner's Slut 25 m III, WI 3

A sunny climb with surprisingly easy access. There is also lots of coal mining paraphernalia including a small hand dug cave at the base of the route. There is avalanche danger late season and in periods of heavy snowfall.

Approach From the powerlines head along the road past the climb. Park at the first sharp right-hand corner. Locate a side road heading down to your left. It is advisable to park on this side road to avoid metallic interaction with the numerous sleds that use the main roadway. Walk down the road to Morrissey Creek and old bridge footings. Easily cross the creek and regain the road. Head downstream until a rising traverse can be made through open trees to the base of a broad band of ice with lots of variations.

Descent Rappel from trees.

MAST is a Pussy Version of the MSLT 25-30 m III, WI 3-4+

Good early season ice with lots of variation, including thin ice to a hanging pillar or two. Some avalanche hazard on the approach and on route.

Approach From the corner mentioned for *Coal Miner's Slut*, continue along the main road for another 500 m and park along a blocked side road just before a bridge on the main roadway. Walk, ski or sled up the side road and into a cutblock. From the most obvious landing (the first ascensionists were able to drive to this point when the area was winter logged), trend up through thin tree cover to the base of the area. If you own a sled, the route can also be accessed from above by sledding up the main road and taking the groomed snowmobile road that trends back to the powerlines and heads along the top of the cliffbands.

Lots of lines (full ice and mixed) with a nice pillar that can be somewhat nasty early season. The climb fills out appreciably later in the season.

Descent Rappel from trees or walk down on the left.

Coal Miner's Daughter is Metis 15-20 m III, WI 3-4

Approach From the bridge for *MAST is a Pussy Version of the MSLT* continue along the main road and up a long hill. As the hill starts to flatten look for the climb in the trees above you and to the right approximately 70 m above the road. Park off the roadway—a snow cat must be able to move past your vehicle. Pick a line through unpleasant avalanche alder and trash up to the base of the area. 5 minutes.

Lots of ice forms over a small roofed cliffband. A main pillar always forms to the left with mixed curtains around it. More thin and mixed lines to the right.

5 minutes uphill and right of *Coal Miner's Daughter is Metis* a nice band of ice forms called *Coal Miner's Minor*. Sometimes a mixed variation forms in the corner to the left.

Descent Rappel from trees or downclimb to the right.

William Fernie was a Dick 45 m III, WI 3

Approach From the road that leads to *Coal Miner's Daughter is Metis* stop about halfway up the hill along the top of a cutblock. Lock down and across the valley and locate a line of ice low down in the trees and across the creekbed. Park in a convenient landing. Walk or ski down through the cutblock and cross the creek without difficulty. Trend through open ground and alder patches to the base of the route. Rappel from trees. Avalanche hazard in heavy snow conditions.

Aboriginal Princess 60 m III, WI 4+

Approach As for *William Fernie was a Dick*, except after crossing the creek make for a small side creek in the back of a shallow canyon. The climb can be seen as a free-standing pillar spilling over a rockband at the head of the defile. Trend up the creek climbing numerous small and annoying steps and open water to the base. Alternate approach: sled along the main road past *Coal Miner's Daughter is Metis* and follow the snow cat road left where it crosses the creek (Morrissey Creek). Head downstream along the road and easily locate the top of the climb.

Establish a belay up and behind the base. Steep climbing leads to a tree belay. Can be very thin early season or has been known to fatten out into a wide curtain.

Descent Rappel from trees to the base of the pillar.

Rock that Burns 35 m III, WI 3-4

Approach As for *Aboriginal Princess* above. Just after crossing Morrissey Creek trend off the snow cat road and into the first cutblock. Carefully locate the climb from the top. Rappel from trees directly above the route or walk down with difficulty to the climber's right.

The route forms every year and early season as a straw so it can be thin at the top. It thickens considerably throughout the season.

Water That Freezes 25 m III, WI 3

Approach Approximately 200 m farther along the cliffband from *Rock That Burns*. Rappel down conveniently from trees near the route.

Climb thin rightward trending ice that follows a break in the cliff. Rock rack useful.

KANANASKIS COUNTRY

Kananaskis Country describes a vast area covering the entire front ranges south of the Trans-Canada Highway to Turner Valley. The four main ice climbing areas include Bragg Creek, Kananaskis Trail (Highway 40), The Smith-Dorrien Spray Trail, and Elk Lakes. Considering the size of the area, there are a surprisingly small number of routes, but many are above average in quality. Much of the area is dry and very windy, yet it still seems to produce a few new routes every year and is a great place to find early season (October-November) climbs. Frequent Chinooks and poor travelling conditions tend to destroy many of the climbs later in the season. Avalanche forecasts and stability reports are available from the Peter Lougheed Park Ranger Office. They are also posted at the Burstall Pass parking lot and Kananaskis Visitor Centres.

Getting There

Kananaskis Country is the closest climbing area to Calgary. The Bragg Creek area is reached via Highway 22 South from the Trans-Canada Highway turn-off 35 km west of Calgary. Kananaskis Trail is reached from the Trans-Canada 65 km west of Calgary or 45 km east of Canmore. The Smith-Dorrien Spray Trail can be reached from the Kananaskis Trail 54 km south of the Trans-Canada or by driving south from the town of Canmore past the Nordic Centre.

Facilities

Kananaskis Village, near Highway 40, has a high-class hotel with restaurants and pubs. Ribbon Creek Hostel is just up the road from the village. However, all the routes are one-day climbs if you are based out of Banff/Canmore or Calgary.

Emergency

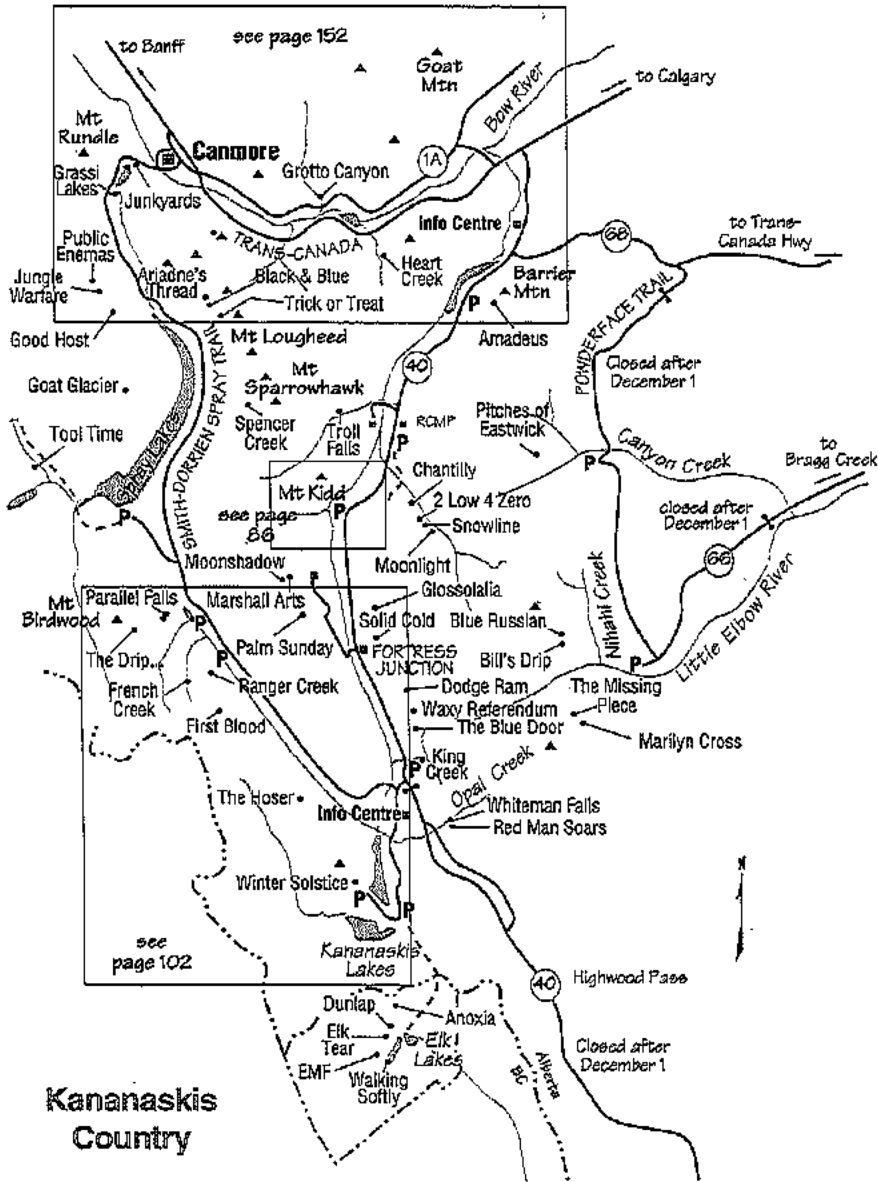
The area is administered by Kananaskis Country. In an emergency, contact Kananaskis Emergency Services by dialling 911. Ambulance and RCMP services are located 0.5 km south of the Kananaskis Village/Nakiska Ski Area turn-off, on Highway 40, 24 km from the Trans-Canada Highway. See page 400. The Spray Lake Ranger Station on the Smith-Dorrien is not manned in winter, but has a pay phone.

Maps

82 J/11 Kananaskis Lakes
82 J/14 Spray Lakes
82 J/15 Bragg Creek
82 J/7 Mount Head
82 O/3 Canmore

Bragg Creek Area

In the forested foothills west of Calgary lies the bedroom community of Bragg Creek. The 2,500 to 2,700 m high mountains here and to the south are generally large munge piles of scree that hide disappointingly few waterfalls. The farther south you go, the more suitable the terrain becomes for good waterfall climbs. For those willing to walk and explore, you may be rewarded with a hidden pillar or smear or more likely a mixed route. But then again, you may find nothing more than blisters and windburn. After November 30 many roads are closed for the winter. In a dry year mountain bikes could be used. Be ready for cobble-strewn riverbeds, high winds and little snow. Food, drinks, gas and other amenities are available in Bragg Creek, Turner Valley, Black Diamond and Longview.



Kananaskis Country

Canyon Creek

The following routes are found in the upper reaches of Canyon Creek west of the Powderface Trail. Because of road closures they are not recommended after December 1.

Parking From the four way stop in Bragg Creek, take Highway 22 south for 3.5 km to the junction with SR 66. Turn right (west) and follow this 16 km to Canyon Creek. Continue on SR 66 to the Powderface Trail. Turn right and follow the one-lane dirt road north for 14 km and park at a sharp bend at the bottom of a steep hill. If coming from Canmore, turn off the Trans-Canada onto Highway 40, 1 km south of Barrier Lake Information Centre turn east on Sibbald Creek Trail (SR 68). Continue 14 km to the north end of the Powderface Trail and follow this south for 20.5 km to the same big bend.

Pitches of Eastwick 140 m III, 3 R

Approach Hike an hour up Canyon Creek to where an unformed smear can be seen in the first small cirque to the north. This is the mixed route *Pipimenchen* and has never come close to forming as a pure waterfall route. See, *Mixed Climbs*. Walk another 20 minutes past and around the corner from *Pipimenchen* to find *Pitches of Eastwick*.

The route consists of thin smears up east-facing slabs with scant protection considered to be "very alpine."

Descent Rappel the route.

PCP (Pipimenchen Consolation Priza) 20 m II, WI 4

This is another route claimed to be near *Pipimenchen*. No other information exists.

Blue Russian.

Little Elbow River

Like the Canyon Creek climbs and most other drainages in the area, road closures on December 1, effectively end the season. For the quick, there are undoubtedly many more new routes.

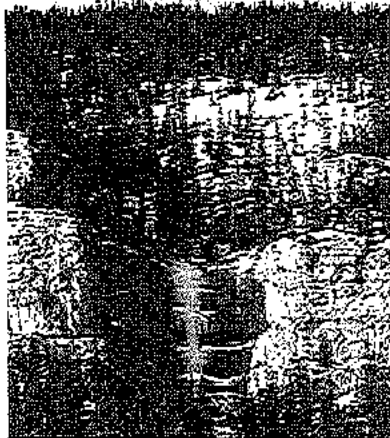
Parking From the four-way stop in Bragg Creek, take Highway 22 south for 3.5 km to the junction with SR 66. Turn right (west) and follow the paved road to its end at Little Elbow Campground.

Bill's Drip 35 m III, WI 3

This climb was named in honour of the late Bill March.

Approach Walk along the Little Elbow River to the Nihahi Creek trail (just east of the bridge) then walk about 2.5 km north up the dry creek bed. *Bill's Drip* and *Blue Russian* are located on the left on Mount Fullerton (82 J/15 462310). 1.5 hours.

Start with a 12 m pillar followed by easier steps to a tree belay on the left. More ice may form 30 m up slope.



Phil Hollett

Descent Rappel the route. It is possible to easily traverse to the top of *Blue Russian*.

Blue Russian 45 m III, WI 4

Approach 100 m right of *Bill's Drip* is *Blue Russian* (82 J/15 460312).

Climb thin steps of steep ice to the base of a 12 m free-standing pillar followed by two short steps.

Descent Rappel from trees.

Marilyn Cross 25 m II, WI 3 R

Approach Follow the Little Elbow River due west to the bridge. The climb is visible in the cirque to the south. Follow the road for 1 km and then head up to the base (82 J/15 458269). Nothing more is known about the route.

The Missing Piece 30 m III, WI 4

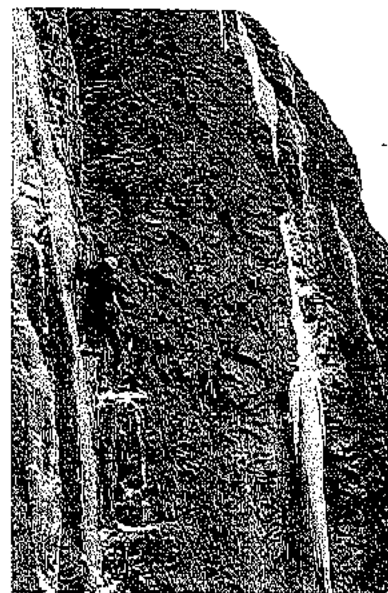
Located about 15 m right of *Marilyn Cross*. Apparently this climb was not completely formed on the first ascent and some ice or rock of unknown character still awaits above the main flow.

Sheep River

From Bragg Creek follow Highway 22 to Turner Valley or take Highway 2 south of Calgary to Okotoks, then turn west on Highway 7 to Turner Valley. Follow the Sheep River Trail (SR 546) to Sheep River Visitor Information Centre. Continue on SR 546 to the junction with the Gorge Creek Trail (road is closed at Sandy McNabb Campground after November 30).

Brewer's Droop 75 m III, WI 4

Unfortunately this good route is rather remote. It was climbed in the early '80s and has likely seen little activity since.



The first ascent of *The Missing Piece*.
Photo: www.rogerchayn.com

Perhaps some new eyes will find a drool or two.

Approach Drop down into the Sheep River and walk upstream for 40 minutes to the route on the left (82 O/15 655119).

This climb offers a pleasant two pitch route with a steep pillar to finish.

Descent Walk off to the right.

Betty Davis' Sneeze 75 m III, WI 3+

Approach The climb is located in the Sheep River Gorge as for *Brewer's Droop* and about 300 m to the right.

The first tier is a short 8 m step of WI 2 and then a bench. The second tier is longer (about 12-15 m) with a steep section. The third tier is thin but short and constitutes the crux.

Descent Rappel from trees.

Longview

From Bragg Creek follow Highway 22 to the hamlet of Black Diamond or take Highway 2 south of Calgary to Okotoks, then turn west on Highway 7. From Black Diamond follow Highway 22 south for 10 km to Longview where you take Highway 541 west toward Highwood Pass. Park at the ranger station about 1 km east of the Highwood Junction that is the triple intersection between Highway 541, Highway 940 (the Forestry Trunk Road) and Highway 40 (which is closed north of here after November 30).

A Wizard Prang 50 m III, WI 4

Morbidly meaning "a good show" by RAF bomber pilots over Berlin, *A Wizard Prang* is a good route within a relatively quick drive from Calgary. It was first climbed in December, but was discovered on a late May hike the season before and has been formed as early as late October.



This general area can be the scene of some tremendously annoying, if not dangerous, Chinook winds. The plus side of this means minimal avalanche hazard most of the time. The route also offers nice views of the prairies to the east.

Approach The route lies on Mount Head near Highwood Junction adjacent to Stoney Creek. From the ranger station traverse northeast through forest on game trails until you intersect an unnamed creek (one drainage east of Stoney Creek). Ascend the creek through a series of rock steps (up to 5.3) and ice seeps to the base of the climb (82 J/7 688871). 1.5 hours.

Climb one pitch of sustained vertical ice comprised of two pillars each about 25 m long. The ice is usually the normal front range consistency; hard, brittle and partially desiccated from the evaporative Chinook winds.

Descent Rappel the route.

Left: A Wizard Prang. Jeff Everett attempting to rappel under hurricane force updrafts on A Wizard Prang.

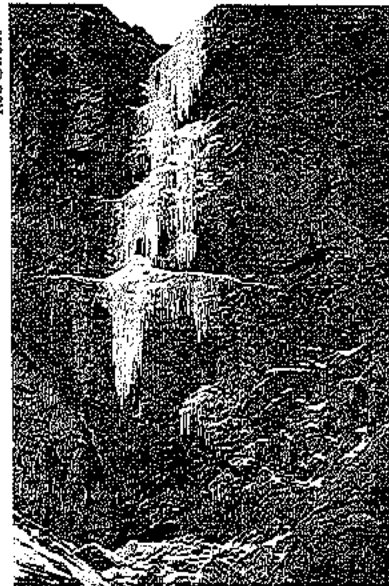


Photos: Tom O'Sullivan

Kananaskis Trail—Highway 40

Owing to its proximity to Calgary, this area is a popular playground. After November 30, the road is closed 54 km south of the Trans-Canada Highway affecting the Opal Creek climbs and others farther south in the Highwood Range. At the end of the road, you can turn right onto Kananaskis Lakes Road that passes the park office and connects with the Smith-Dorrien Spray Trail. Gas and limited grocery supplies are available at Fortress Junction. Barrier Lake Visitor Centre, 11.7 km south of the Trans-Canada, is open in winter for limited hours. It has a pay phone near the entrance. The routes along Highway 40 are described from north to south.

Rob Owens



Amadeus in typical conditions.

Barrier Mountain

Amadeus 55 m III, WI 4+ or M5

This classic, testy climb sits high above Barrier Lake and rarely forms completely. After years of frustration waiting for it to form, local climbers have started to climb it anyway, and it now regularly sees ascents every season. In its "mixed" nature, there is a sketchy direct start or a more reasonable traverse in from an upper ledge on the right side. When formed, *Amadeus* usually doesn't last beyond the first Chinook and in all but the fattest years (one in the last ten) be ready for variable and thin ice conditions.

Approach Park next to a "Barrier Lake" sign 4 km south of the Barrier Lake Visitor Centre. Follow trails past the popular Yellow Wall rock climbing area and continue upwards staying in the trees to the right of the main gully and up to the base (82 O/3 364551).

If the ice touches the ground, climb straight up. If the bottom 10 m pillar is unformed, it is possible to reach the sloping ledge below the upper pillar by climbing a number of lines on rock, getting easier to the right (5.8 at the easiest). Bring a small rock rack including pins. Steep and often thin ice leads to a good belay on the left. 40 m of continued sustained ice leads to the top and a bolt belay on the left.

Descent Rappel the route.

Ribbon Creek

Several routes have been explored up this pretty valley just south of the Olympic Nakiska Ski Area. All the routes to date are in the main valley running southerly behind the dominant Mount Kidd. Undoubtedly there are likely a few more pieces of ice hidden amongst the complexities of Mount Bogart and Mount Kidd. Some of the most potentially exciting smears in the range can sometimes be seen from Highway 40 on the east side of Mount Sparrowhawk almost directly behind Nakiska.

Approach Drive 23.4 km south of the Trans-Canada Highway along Highway 40. Turn west on the Nakiska/Kananaskis Village Road and follow the signs to the Ribbon Creek parking lot. Groomed ski trails continue some distance up Ribbon Creek. All the routes are beyond the end of the controlled ski trails. The entire area offers considerable avalanche terrain and is subject to frequent wind, Chinooks and snow loading. Conditions can change rapidly.

Troll Falls

This is an obscure route located at the end of a designated ski trail from Ribbon Creek near Nakiska and consists of a 20 m steep step to trees.

Wherefore and Why 200 m III, WI 2

This is perhaps the easiest to reach of the climbs in Ribbon Creek although it too is highly avalanche prone.

Approach The route is found 5 km up Ribbon Creek on the right side of the valley on the east side of Mount Bogart about a kilometre past where the creek turns south (82 J/14 262419).

Take several small steps to the main falls and climb a 40 m pitch. Take the

farthest left of three gullies to a 20 m pitch. Walk up the gully for 10 minutes to a final 20 m wall.

Descent Walk left through the trees or rappel route.

Ribbon of Darkness 50 m III, 5.7, WI 5

This was the first of the routes currently explored on the avalanche prone north-west face of Mount Kidd.

Approach When the ski trails end, continue up the valley until the route is visible high on the left side at the top of a 300 m slope (82 J/14 263398). 2.5 hours.

The route is best done in two pitches with the first being an untouched dagger. Climb a rising traverse on the rotten rock behind ("pins, pins, pins") and stem wildly to the ice and continue up a runnel to the top.

Descent Rappel the route.

The Wreck of the Glen Fitzgerald (sic) 300 m IV, WI 4+

This is an excellent alpine adventure with high avalanche hazard, spindrift and a long day. This is a recommended early season route.

Approach This climb lies 8 km up Ribbon Creek on the left in a big bowl about a half hour past *Ribbon of Darkness* (82 J/14 254388). 2.5 hours total.

Lots of easy ice and snow leads to an unformed dagger. Traverse left to a thin pillar (a few mixed moves) to the top.

Descent Rappel the route.

Upper Level Skyway 330 m IV, WI 3

The route lies 8 km up Ribbon Creek directly across from *The Wreck of the Glen Fitzgerald*. This is the second drainage coming down on the north side of the valley. No details are available.

Evan-Thomas Creek

The following six climbs located up the wide drainage opposite Mount Kidd offer excellent climbing with an easy approach and little avalanche hazard. Several low-angle smears have been climbed farther up the valley past *Moonlight*.

Approach Park at the Evan-Thomas Creek parking lot 16 km south of the Barrier Lake Visitor Centre on the east side of Highway 40. Nowadays, it seems enough people walk along the cross-country ski trail to negate the need for skis. Follow the ski trails to a fork and take the sharp bend right and down the hill to the creek and a small bridge. Some years people punch the trail on the left side of the creek all the way to Chantilly Falls or else follow the easiest route back and forth directly up the creek.

Brad Wroblewski on Moonlight Falls with Snowline to the right. Both are in thin conditions.



Brad Wroblewski Collection

Chantilly Falls 100 m II, WI 2

A nice beginner route or en route to climbs up the valley. The falls are named for the often lacy appearance of the ice.

Approach Follow the creek upstream for a total of 2.5 km from the car to the climb on the right side in a small cleft (82 J/14 327374). 1 hour.

This route is an easy climb with a ledge about halfway.

Descent Rappel from trees and downclimb (1 rope adequate).

Moonlight 110 m III, WI 4

This is one of the best routes in the area and is easily combined with one or more variations to the right. Justifiably, there can be crowds here.

Approach As for *Chantilly*, but continue upstream for 1 km and then hike 200 m uphill on the right (82 J/14 331365). Three routes are located just 10 m apart. Some years none form, other years two or

three independent lines form and rarely, one huge curtain forms. *Moonlight* is the left-hand line.

The first pitch climbs a long, often thin ice hose to a sometimes sheltered belay behind the crux curtain. Launch up the steep pillar 10 m to easier ice. Another short wall leads to the top.

Descent Rappel the route. You can walk left to a large chute in the cliff and make two rappals from trees, but it is not recommended unless the climb is too thin for proper ice anchors.

Snowline 100 m III, WI 4

Approach as for *Moonlight*, a few metres to the right. *Snowline* is probably the most common line to form, but it can be only several inches thick. It is highly recommended in such conditions, presenting exciting mixed climbing. When it's fat, it's a steal at WI 4.



Similar to its neighbour, start with a steepening slab (a bolt may be visible about 10 m up) and continue to a shallow corner where a protected belay is hard to engineer. Two old bolts may be found on the right after 30 m. Continue up a steeper pitch to a ledge and finish up a short step to the top.

In very fat seasons, a difficult narrow icicle forms over the steep wall just right of *Snowline*. *The Pipeline* variation (WI 5) gives exciting technical climbing and is an alternative if the other routes are busy.

Descent Rappel off a tree to a second tree on the left of the climb just above an overhanging section (slings). A long 50 m rappel and a tiny bit of down-climbing brings you to the ground, or make an intermediate rappel. Be careful of rappel trees. In 1993, a 20-cm round tree with a bunch of rappel slings around it was found at the bottom of the climb. If there is enough ice, it's best to construct your own ice anchors.

2 Low 4 Zero 90 m III, WI 3 R

Approach The right most of the three routes, 10 m from *Snowline* in a wide groove. Most often *2 Low 4 Zero* is an iced-up rock route, but it occasionally forms up fat. It can offer some cool climbing.

Climb two full pitches. Belays are generally where and when you can find a comfortable, safe spot. When in lean condition, a healthy rack of knife blades is recommended.

Descent Rappel as for *Moonlight* or *Snowline*.

Moonlight, Snowline, and 2 Low 4 Zero
in typical conditions.
Photo: Godefroy Parroux

Mount Kidd

Across from Evan-Thomas Creek, a beautiful complex peak known as Mount Kidd rises high above the west side of Highway 40. The below routes all lie along its east and south sides and offer excellent climbing relatively close to the road. A countless number of small smears and steps have been explored farther up Galatea Creek. All routes in this area are threatened by avalanche hazard. The following routes are described from south to north (left to right) and are best accessed from the Galatea Creek parking lot, 21.5 km south of the Barrier Lake Visitor Centre. See map page 87.

Mountain Dew 20 m III, WI 4

Not named for a popular soft drink, this free-standing pillar is usually soaked.

Approach Found one drainage left (west) of *A Bridge Too Far* (82 J/1 246365).

Descent Rappel the route.

Tasting Fear 35 m III, WI 5

Approach This climb is a short vertical pillar located 50 minutes past *A Bridge Too Far* in a small canyon of Galatea Creek (82 J/14 242362). Because of open water below the climb, the first ascent party rappelled into the canyon from above. In colder times, you may be able to approach directly up the creekbed.

Climb a vertical pillar for 25 m easing slightly near the top.

Descent Walk left above the cliff to slopes leading back to the creek. Cross it and head up to the trail.



Photo: Natalie Martin-Jarrand *A Bridge Too Far*

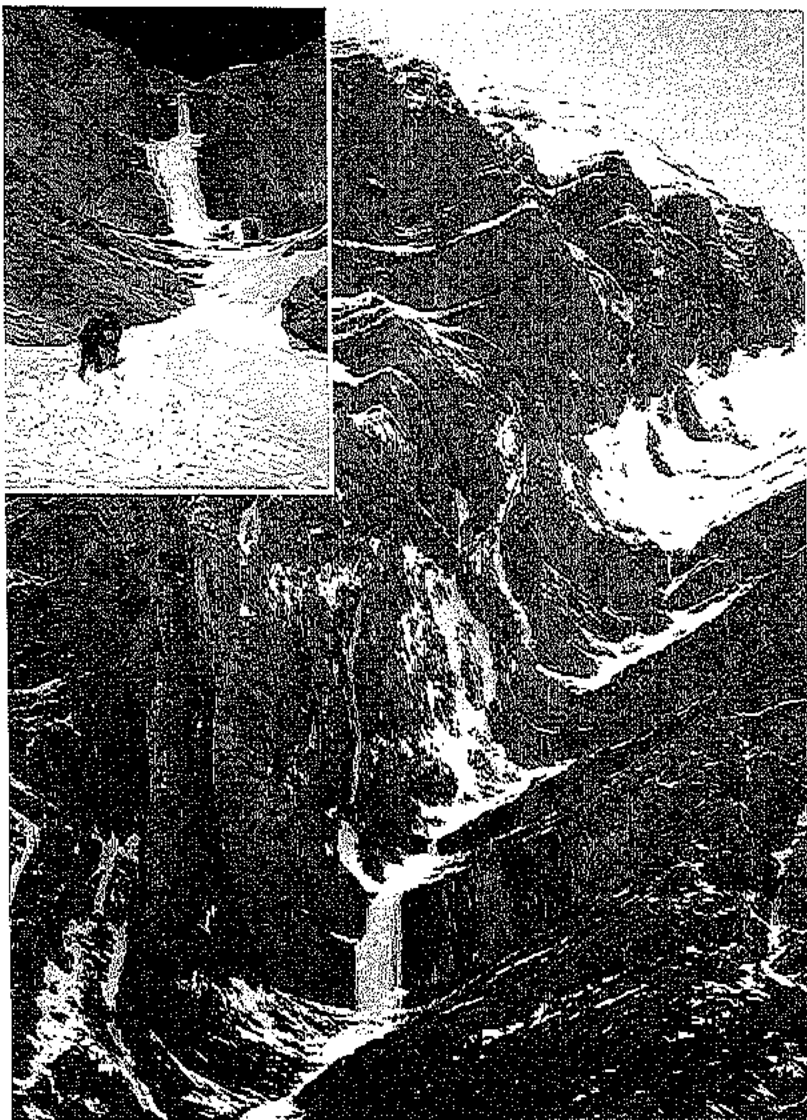
A Bridge Too Far 300 m IV, WI 4+

This is a true one pitch wonder followed by several rope lengths of easy ice. It doesn't always form (not visible from the road) although you can scramble around on the right or climb one of the direct mixed lines.

Approach Follow the Galatea Trail west about 2 km. The climb is visible up the slope to the right at the fifth footbridge (82 J/14 266364). Slog up through steep trees to the base. 1.5-2 hours.

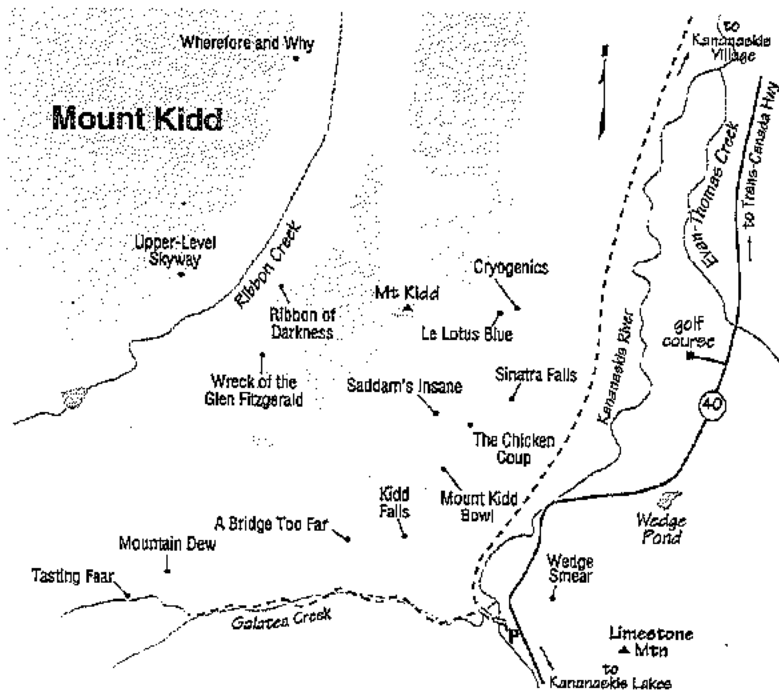
Start with a 25 m free-standing pillar that often bulks out to be quite moderate. Continue upon increasingly easier ice.

Descent Rappel and downclimb route. Some fixed anchors and trees may be found.



Cordell Peroux

Mount Kidd with Kidd Falls inset.
Inset photo: Tim Pochay



Kidd Falls 55 m IV, WI 4

Kidd Falls is the obvious falls above the Galatea Creek parking lot. It is a compelling route with great views in an impressive location. A dramatic Z-fold in the bedding planes creates a huge bowl above the route. Several groups have had avalanche incidents here. One pair had an avalanche launch over the leaders head and bury the belayer up to his neck.

Approach From the parking lot, cross the suspension bridge and continue to Galatea Creek. Continue to the Galatea/Terrace trail junction and head up open slopes on the ridge to the right of the drainage (82 J/14 274366). 1-1.5 hours.

The first pitch is long on sustained ice leading to a small ledge. A shorter, steeper pillar leads to the top. Traverse left to a fixed station.

Descent Rappel the route. From the top station, a single 55 m (and likely even 50 m) reaches the ground.

Mount Kidd Bowl 150 to 200 m III, WI 2-4

This is the broad avalanche bowl facing the road. Ice in the bottom of the drainage has been climbed numerous times en route to the summit of Mount Kidd. On the slabs to the left are numerous smears of varying quality. Some years they are fat others they are thin and sometimes not

there at all. They are always extremely avalanche prone. At least four lines have been climbed near the bottom of the slabs (35 m each WI 3 to 4). There may also be a number of significant runnels and mixed ground above leading to the ridge.

Saddam's Insane 100 m IV, WI 5

On the south-facing wall of the Mount Kidd Bowl is an obvious ice fall that rarely forms and has the same aspect as *Kidd Falls*.

Approach From the Galatea parking lot, follow the Terrace Trail to the rocky, open streambed coming out of the gully. Continue up the gully to the ice/snow system on the right leading up to the route (82 J/14 277360). Both the approach and climb have extreme avalanche potential.

Several hundred metres of steepening terrain lead to the route. An easy pitch leads to a second pitch of steep, chandelier and technical climbing.

Descent Rappel the route.

The Chicken Coup

Visible from Highway 40, this new area is at tree line down and right of *Saddam's Insane* (82 J/14 277379). There are currently two established routes.

Huhn auf dem Weg 20 m II, M4

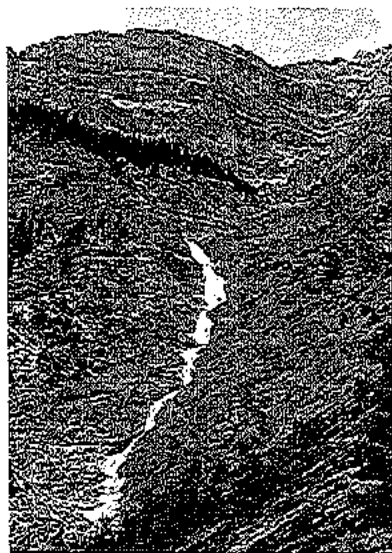
This fun and easy route on the left side has three bolts and some thin ice.

Fritters 20 m II, WI 4

A short stiff route near the middle of the wall.

Sinatra Falls 350 m III, WI 2

Sinatra Falls, the undisputed Rockies champion for the title of 'Most First Ascents', was probably climbed in the late



Sinatra Falls.

'70s. It is located in the first gully north (right) of the wide drainage containing *Saddam's Insane*, but to the left of the large cliffbands below the east face. There are miles of avalanche terrain above the route. Most of the ice is covered in debris later in the season.

Approach From the Galatea Creek parking lot follow Terrace Trail for 40 minutes until below the route, then hike another 30 minutes to the base (82 J/14 285382).

A long, easy route with ice pitches to 80°. Follow the obvious gully system (may have up to seven pitches of ice depending on the amount of snow). A great ramble!

Descent Traverse left (south) from the top of the gully through bush and trees to a broad open ridge; follow it back to the Terrace Trail.

Le Lotus Bleu 150 m V, WI 5

Le Lotus Bleu is located in the deep gully that splits the lower cliffbands on the east face directly below the summit and straight across from the Evan-Thomas Creek pull-out.

Approach Walk from Kananaskis Village south 3 km or from the Galatea Creek parking lot north the same distance. Depending on the water level and your constitution, it may be possible to ford the Kananaskis River from the golf course. Take the trail until you are directly under the route or just south of it. Go up a bare shoulder until at the base of the mountain (2 hours). Go up an ice gully if the conditions permit or as on the first ascent scramble up the buttress to the left, then traverse avalanche prone slopes to the base of the ice (82 J/14 284393). 4 hours total. Several parties have used this route as an approach to reach a prominent rib on winter attempts of the face. Beware of avalanche conditions; there is over 700 m of slopes above.

Several narrow steps up to 80° brings you to the main fall. The first 50 m pitch is vertical and finish with 25 m of rolling ice.

Descent Rappel the route.

Cryogenics 100 m IV, WI 5 R

This thin climb located down and right (north) of *Le Lotus Bleu* (82 J/14 284394) would make a challenging approach to *Le Lotus Bleu*. It rarely forms and should be avoided during times of high avalanche hazard. *Cryogenics* is best visible from Highway 40 at the turn-off to the RV Park. It may not have formed since its first ascent.

Two short steps of WI 3 ice lead to the foot of the main fall. Climb a narrow curtain of thin and chandelier ice, that rears to vertical in the upper half (55 m). A short walk leads to a 10 m pitch of thin ice in a narrow, water-worn groove.

Descent Rappel the route.

Wedge Smear 30 m II, WI 3

On the south side of the highway is a small bowl on Limestone Mountain above Wedge Pond. A short flow can be seen at approximately (82 J/14 294356). Park at the Galatea Creek parking lot and walk 500 m north along the highway and follow an old road traversing across a slope to the northeast toward the climb. It has been used as a practice area for years.

Fortress Road

The road leading up to Fortress winds up below the impressive east face of Mount Inflexible. Any climbs here would be considered a desperate act with any amount of snow.

Palm Sunday 45 m IV, WI 4

This climb is located above the Fortress Ski Resort Road in an east-facing bowl between Mounts Inflexible and Lawson. The route itself faces north (82 J/14 272266). This is a one pitch pillar that doesn't always form.



Bring Out The Gimp.

Photo: Barry Blanchard

Bring Out the Gimp 70 m IV, WI 5+

It is unclear where this route is or if it may be *Palm Sunday*. At least we have a picture.

Fortress Ski Resort

Several good routes are found on the north-facing bowl above the backside ski runs at Fortress Mountain Resort. They are out-of-bounds of the ski area and can be highly avalanche prone. Early season is often the best time as the approach can be easy walking up the ski slopes or else use skis. All routes here should be avoided at any time of significant snow fall or avalanche conditions.

Approach From the base of the Ski Resort, follow the T-bar to the top of the ridge, cross to the left and descend a maintenance road into the back bowl. Cross out of the ski area to the obvious gully (82 J/14 255306).

Marshall Arts and assorted ice lines.

Moonshadow Gully 80 m IV, WI 4

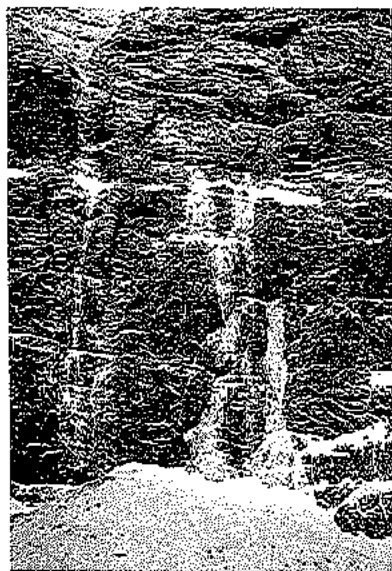
Approach This route climbs the obvious chimney on the right side of the bowl.

A short moderate pitch leads to 50 m of classic WI 4 ice.

Descent Rappel the route.

Marshall Arts 125 m III, WI 3-5+

Above and left of *Moonshadow Gully* is a large bowl. Numerous thin smears and variations often form on the steeper terrain at the bottom of this bowl. The climbing can be excellent ranging from WI 3 to thin WI 5 to mixed overhangs. It is unclear where the route goes so take your pick depending on what's formed and your own 'head-space'. In respect to the difficult first ascent, the described lines below might not be anywhere near the actual line of the original ascent. The same avalanche warnings for *Moonshadow* apply here.



Joe Josephson

Two main lines seem to form consistently. The right-hand line (75 m, WI 3+) is climbed in 2 pitches. The left-hand line (125 m, 5.9 mixed, WI 4) is climbed in 3 pitches and is described here. Climb a 40 m WI 3 pitch immediately left of the middle smear to a fixed belay. Make a traverse left on rock around the arête and into the big arching corner. Follow the corner all the way to the end, on rock at first, then link rock and very thin ice for a total of 40 m. Full set of cams to #3 Camalot, 2 KB, 2 angles, half-set nuts. Traverse left from the belay on rock to gain a short WI 4 pitch to the top.

Descent One 60 m rappel brings you back to the fixed station, and another to the ground.

Opal Ridge

The following routes are generally found high above the east side of the road. They make good training climbs as the approaches are usually longer than the climbs. But, the scenery makes it worthwhile.

Glossolalia 100 m III, WI 3

Located high on the Opal Ridge at (82 J/14 308289). The route can be seen 1.5 km north of the Fortress Junction in the next drainage north of *Solid Cold*. Heading to the ridge is recommended for extra training.

Solid Cold 25 m III, WI 3

Approach Park at the small pull-out north of the Fortress Junction gas station. The route is visible in the gully above (82 J/11 304297). Climb up the north side of the gully and traverse in at the last moment or rappel from trees at the top of the falls.

An apron leads to a wide curtain of good ice.

Descent Walk left over the rise and walk down the north side of the gully.

Dodge Ram 100 m III, WI 3+

Ripple Rock Creek comes down on the east side of the highway between Mount Evan-Thomas and Mount Pakenham about 4 km past the Fortress Junction.

Approach Park by the "90 km/hr." sign and head straight up the hillside to the route.

Starting in a cave, scramble up to thin ice and rock in a short corner to a comfortable ledge. Thin runnels lead up to fatter ice above.

Descent Rappel the route.

Waxy Referendum 110 m III, WI 3

Approach Park at the culvert 6 km south of Fortress Junction. The top of the climb can be seen from here to the east. Hike up the north side of the drainage (Hood Creek) for 90 minutes until below the route (82 J/11 348237 unconfirmed).

The climb starts with intermittent 5-10 m steps of WI 2 for 50 m to the base of the main falls. Belay off the rock to the left. Begin with 10 m of steep ice resembling dripping candle wax. Continue up 10-15 m steps of ice. Climb easy ice and snow to a large block that you can sling for a belay.

Descent Rappel the route.

The Blue Door 100 m III, WI 3

This is located in the first drainage north of Grizzly Creek and can be seen from the highway. Walk about 40 minutes to the base.

King Creek

There are up to three seeps that give low-angle ice bouldering and top-roping opportunities as well as several established mixed pitches up to 5.7 WI 4.

Opal Creek

This unique canyon has two of the best routes in the range. There are three other mixed routes and variations established in the canyon, but since they are either infrequently formed or at a much harder level they are left for Sean Isaac's, *Mixed Climbs*.

Approach Drive 54 km south on Highway 40 to the Kananaskis Lakes Trail junction. After December 1, Highway 40 is closed beyond here. Drive, ski, or mountain bike for 5 km to the junction with Valley View Road. Pass a gate and follow this road left for 200 m to the creek. Continue upstream past two small WI 3 steps (may be unformed early in the year) and continue up the canyon to the base (30 minutes from Highway 40). The top pitch of *Whiteman* is visible from the Opal Creek Bridge on Highway 40.

Whiteman Falls 95 m IV, WI 6

This is a brilliant line with incredible ambiance. Wild mushrooms, a spectacular hanging tube and steeply tilted bedding planes create an exposure that you wouldn't expect on such a short route. The last pitch can occasionally form as one of the hardest pure ice pitches anywhere sporting over thirty metres of rotten, overhanging ice. Fortunately, it is not always so hard and should not be missed.

Most parties climb the route on the left side, but the right side can also be



Brad Wroblewski
Jeff Nazarchuk on Whiteman Falls.

climbed and is usually harder because of wet and unconsolidated icicles.

A deceptively hard and technical first pitch (WI 4) takes you to a comfortable cave on the left. Step out onto the pillar and find the best line to the top and a fixed anchor. It is often a clear, hollow straw near the top, and may have small overhangs to exit through.

Descent Rappel the route.

Red Man Soars 55 m IV, 5.10, WI 4+

Red Man Soars is found in the deep corner a few metres right of *Whiteman Falls*. It is a fun and challenging mixed climb with excellent protection that has become one of the classics in the area. The FA party left behind only one fixed nut and a broken piton. It has since become home to tons of fixed gear although a small rack of wide-ranging pieces is still recommended.

Climb a mixed right-facing corner just as you enter the gash. A thin ice smear may exist to the right of the corner. At the top of the corner climb very steep rock onto the arête and continue up a steep groove to gain steep ice pouring out of a cave. The difficulty of this crux section may lie in how far you need to climb to reach ice. A short, fun second pitch stems out of the cave between an ice smear on the left and a rock fin and continues up ice into a second cave.

Descent Rappel the route (50 m ropes adequate).

Joe Josephson



Classic mixed terrain on Red man Soars.

Highwood Pass

This scenic area roughly describes the entire area from the popular Opal Creek south along Highway 40 to Highwood Junction near Longview. Most of the exploration to date has focused on obvious routes noticeable from the road, but it is likely home to numerous hidden routes. Karl Nagy is known to have climbed at least three. However, it is generally limited to early season exploration before avalanche conditions increase and before the road closes at midnight on December 1.

Kindergarten 125 m of climbing IV, 5.6, AO WI 3

This route is found high on the west face of Mount Elpoca and has stellar views in an alpine environment. Owing to its location, exposure to avalanches and lengthy approach, it is recommended as an early season ascent before the road closes on December 1.

Approach It is visible about 350 m above the highway with a 100 m rockband in the gully a third of the way up. Park off the highway 1.8 km north of the Elbow Lake parking lot (or just 200 m past the south junction of Valley View Road). Scramble up the side of the creekbed to the rockband. Move right to the second gully through the rockband that is identified by a rock arch 20 m up the gully (82 J/11 397124).

Start up the gully with a tricky start (aid step off a piton) and continue bridging up the corner and through the rock arch (5.6 AO, 50 m). Scramble up to trees and traverse left into the main drainage. Plod upwards for 300 m encountering a few small ice steps to the base of the main ice fall. Climb two thin sheets of ice separated by some snow to where the ice thickens up and angles up to a belay

ledge. Climb a short pillar at the left end of the ledge that eases into a narrow groove of thinning ice leading to the top. Belay with rock anchors.

Descent Retrace and rappel the entire ascent route using a combination of rock and ice anchors, trees and downclimbing.

Tatonka 125 m III, WI 4

Approach Drive east over Highwood Pass for about 6 km and park on the side of the road 0.7 km east of the Mount Lipsett parking lot. On the south side of the highway are two large drainages leading up into steep cliffs above. *Tatonka* is visible in the left-hand basin as the waterfall on the left side. Several lower angled seeps are visible to the right. Approach up through the forest into the basin, then up scree slopes to the base of the route, about 2 hours. This approach is very threatened by avalanche hazard, so only go here if there is not enough snow to avalanche.

Climb a pitch of WI 3 to belay on a good ledge. The second pitch is a long and very good WI 4 pitch. Lower angled ice leads to the top.

Descent Rappel the route.

Buffalo Head 150 m III, 5.7, WI 4

Little is known about this route, but it may be high quality.

Approach The climb is located somewhere near *Tatonka* on an east aspect and is said to be the left one of two multi-pitch lines. The right-hand route is *Tatonka*.

Climb an initial mixed pitch at 5.7. The second pitch is 30 m of WI 3 that is typically thin. A snow plod and short WI 2 pitch leads to a final 50 m curtain of WI 4.

Descent Rappel the route.



Grant Staham

Tatonka is seen on the left.
An unknown climb is to the right.

Smith-Dorrien Spray Trail

This gravel road leads south from Canmore past the Nordic Centre to Kananaskis Lakes and Highway 40 (64 km). Because it is one valley west and closer to the Divide than Highway 40 it receives much more snow, thus the avalanche potential is correspondingly higher. If you run into too much snow, the area offers some top-notch cross country ski trails and popular ski touring in the Burstall Pass and Black Prince areas. A warming hut is maintained at Pocaterra at the junction on the Smith-Dorrien and Kananaskis Lakes roads. Mostly used by skiers, it has a wood stove and is a cozy place to warm up and dry out. The Kananaskis Lakes Visitor Centre 3.5 km south toward Kananaskis Lakes is open all winter for limited hours. The ranger station and park administration office can be found on the Kananaskis Lakes Trail, 500 m west of Highway 40. The routes are described from north to south.

Goat Range

Despite reasonably clear descriptions, the exact locations of the following routes are somewhat confusing. In this area smears come and go from season to season and even week to week. Also, the same smear may form differently each time making references difficult.

Public Enemas of the State 150 m III, WI 3 5.5 mixed

Two routes can be found "high in a bowl past the Goat Creek parking lot" on the Smith-Dorrien Spray Trail. This is the right-hand route and is described as an "easy but fun flow of ice with good rock." Bring screws and pins.

Approach Drive 3.7 km past Goat Creek parking lot and park by a gate before the first bridge near a pump station (82 O/3 115545). The mountain is not marked on the map, but the climbs are obvious on the right-hand side of the road. Cross the river 100 m south of an old power house and aim for the drainage through an old cutblock. Follow the right side of the drainage past a small waterfall and continue easily into the bowl. 1.5 hours.

Climb thin smears to an iced up corner and move up right to easier ice and a belay. Continue on mellow ice for 50 m to a snow ledge. Move the belay 20 m left on the snow ledge. Traverse another 5 m on spotty ice and continue up a steep curtain.

Descent Rappel the route.

Jungle Warfare 40 m III, WI 4+ X

This is the left-hand line in the bowl next to *Public Enemas of the State*. A short mixed start leads to a very thin and narrow vein (30 cm in sections) of shattered ice that thickens near the top. Bring stubbies and a few token pins.

Descent Rappel from a bolt and pin anchor.

Good Host 230 m IV, WI 3 R

This route forms early and like most climbs in the area is best done before there is too much snow. When formed it should be very visible from the road approximately (82 O/3 105526).

Approach From the Goat Creek trailhead, drive the Smith-Dorrien Spray Trail south and just before crossing the first bridge at Goat Pond turn right and follow a gravel road to a blockade. The route can be seen halfway up the peak (Goat Range) directly in line with the road. Follow the road then hike right into a short treed avalanche path beneath a cliff. A few hundred metres left are a line of trees best exited through the cliff. Interesting scrambling puts you into the trees and a short easy rock ramp gives access to the final trees. Hike up to a huge upper wall then drop down easily to the right and the base. 1.5 hours.

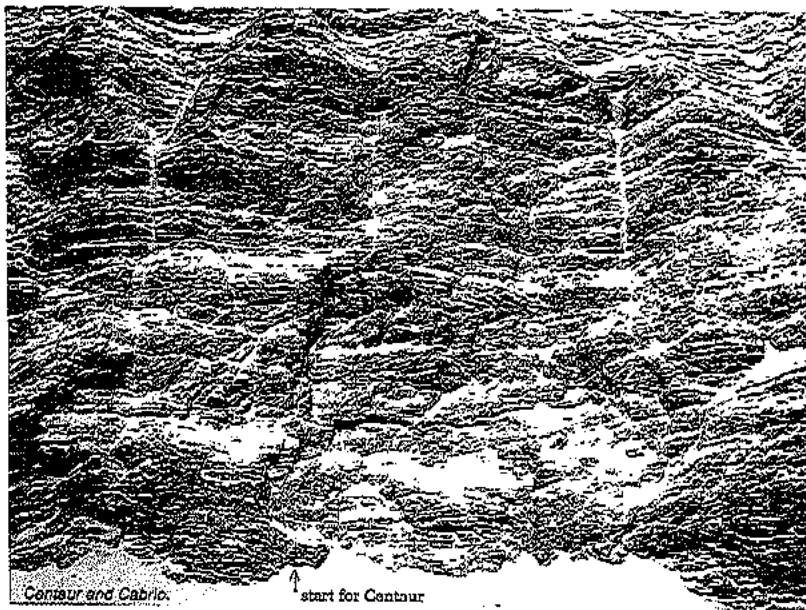
Climb 90 m of thin ice over slabs with interspersed ledges to the base of the main pitch. Start on steep and fat ice that may turn thin when the angle kicks back into a narrow gully. Move through the gully and up more steep steps to the upper bowl. The route ends at a large boulder.

Descent Rappel and downclimb route.

Goat Glacier

Two parallel smears have been known to form on the wall above the Goat Glacier approximately (82 J/14 140460). These excellent routes are close to Canmore and worthy of an early season ascent. With any significant snowfall they both have a healthy avalanche hazard. Only the upper half of *Gentaur* is visible from the road just past the dam. Get these plums when you can!

Approach Follow the Smith-Dorrien Spray Trail out of Canmore until just past the Spray Lakes Ranger Station, then cross the dam and drive 1 km down the west shore of the lake. Park at a campsite (82 J/14 149493) and head up the obvious drainage for 2 hours to the toe of the glacier, although the map does not show a glacier.



Goat Stiehan

Centaur and Cabrio start for Centaur

Cabrio 400 m, III, WI 5

This is the right-hand route. It is 9 pitches with the last 5 being quite easy.

The climbing down low is very thin so take 7-8 pins and a few wires in addition to some screws.

Descent Rappel the route.

Centaur 350 m, III, 5.9, WI 4

This is the left-hand runnel that did not touch down on the first ascent.

60 m right of the main drain of the route, is a 50 m corner system that gets you to a ledge and across to the ice and a bolt anchor. Take a healthy rock rack for this pitch only. Once onto the ice, screws will suffice.

Descent Rappel the route. From the bolt anchor continue straight down the drainage to a rock anchor (nuts and hexes) on the right of the ice. A final rappel will reach the ground.

Mount Lougheed

For years only a few people would make the long trek to climb *Trick or Treat*. In efforts to escape crowds or simply changing attitudes in recent years have made these deserving routes more popular. There are now two areas holding routes. First is the *Trick or Treat* collection, and then numerous lower-angled routes in the main bowl to the left.

Approach Drive down the Smith-Dorrien Spray Trail from Canmore to the Spurling Creek gully 5 km south of the Spray River Ranger Station. Park at the next gully south from Spurling Creek. Walk up the edge of the gully for about 2 hours to a fork. Take the right-hand gully and follow it until it is possible to head up the hill to the left. Then traverse toward the route. (82 J/14 212470). 2.5 hours.

Trick or Treat 70 m IV, WI 4+

Trick or Treat is the middle of the three major falls in this area (82 J/14 212471). It forms regularly and usually by late October. It can be up to a full grade harder depending on conditions.



Ariadne's Thread



Trick or Treat on the right and an unclimbed column on the left.

Climb 30 m of difficult, unconsolidated ice easing off to a good belay. Easier terrain leads to thinner ice and a rock belay on the left.

There is a shorter, easier climb right of *Trick or Treat* and an impressive, much harder column to the left. It is unknown if either are climbed.

Descent Rappel from the rock and then off ice.

Ariadne's Thread 200 m IV, WI 3

Approach Walk up to *Trick or Treat* and head up and left into the main bowl. This is the farthest left of several potential routes. No other information is given.

Black & Blue 100 m IV, WI 4

This route is located one drainage right of *Ariadne's Thread*. Climb 40 m of thin WI 4 to a snow ledge. Walk up and right to an ice curtain. Climb the curtain and continue up low-angled ice. Farther up the slope is an unclimbed free-standing pillar.

Photos: Barry Blanchard

Spencer Creek

The major drainage south of Mount Loughheed and the *Trick or Treat* bowl is known as Spencer Creek and separates Mount Loughheed from Mount Sparrowhawk. In some years, very intriguing smears and drips can be seen on the north face of Mount Sparrowhawk. The routes below are not that. There is a lot of water ice in this valley and it seems to vary from season to season and the descriptions are equally vague.

Early Pillar 1 25 m III, WI 4

This is the first visible ice on the left-hand side.

Early Pillar 2 25 m III, WI 5

This is the second ice formation on the left-hand side of the valley.

Far Away 25 m III, WI 3+

This route is visible from the road high up, as an ice sheet drooping over a slab. 2 hours.

Golden Showers 50 m III, WI 6

Far up the drainage on the right-hand side is a beautiful waterfall. Climb 15 m of WI 2 to the base of a thin and chandelier curtain.

Bryant Creek

Tool Time 55 m IV, WI 4

Bryant Creek is the classic approach to the famous Mount Assiniboine. *Tool Time* and a second parallel smear (WI 5) lie about halfway along this tour above the Bryant Creek Shelter. These north-facing routes drain a huge avalanche



Golden Showers.

bowl near the bottom of a large cliff called Gibraltar Rock. It seems likely that both were climbed as early as the late '70s, but only the one known for sure to have been climbed is described here. In the past, the nearby Bryant Creek Shelter operated by Parks Canada, made for a pleasant base camp, but because of government budget cuts the shelter has been closed.

Approach The trail up Bryant Creek starts from a large parking lot at the Shark Mountain Cross-Country Ski Trail. Follow the Smith-Dorrien Spray Trail south from Canmore for 38 km to Engadine Lodge. Turn right and drive past the Lodge and continue down for 5 km to the parking lot. Follow the ski trail down and across the Spray River and continue up Bryant Creek for about 13 km to a park warden cabin. The climbs are obvious to the northwest, a short ways up the valley.

Eric Durrant

Burstall Pass

Parallel Falls 150 m IV, WI 4

There are two obvious smears on the east-facing ridge above Mud Lake. Both lines offer three long pitches of varied climbing. They start to form early, thus many parties have had an epic time on thin ice as they push the season.

Approach Park at a gate 1 km north of the Burstall Pass parking lot. Ski west across the flats to Hogarth Lake and connect old logging roads and gullies to the base of the slope below the climbs. Continue up very avalanche-prone slopes to the base. (82 J/14 176280). 2 hours.

The left-hand line is a little harder with a steep 10 m wall to finish. The right-hand is hardest at the bottom.

Descent Rappel the routes.

The Drip at the Centre of the Universe 600 m VI, WI 5+

On the east face of Mount Birdwood is an obvious line (visible from the road) that runs to the summit ridge approximately (82 J/14 157263). *The Drip* had been looked at for years and it took several efforts before it succumbed. In thin conditions, as on the first ascent, this is a full-on alpine endeavour with 400 m of very technical climbing. With 60 m ropes the lower route goes in 4 pitches to the upper snow gully. It can also form as easy WI5.

Approach From the Burstall Pass parking lot, 45 km from Canmore, ski up the popular trail past Burstall Lakes to a steeper section called 'the headwall'. Turn right up a drainage gully. After 200 m, turn right again up the obvious avalanche path to the base of the couloir. A less obvious snow couloir is found to the left and is not to

be confused with this route. Bewary of avalanche conditions on the long approach slope. 2.5-3 hours.

Start up 95 m of snow and ice up to 90°. From a snow ledge continue up steep and narrow ice for 12 m to a small alcove. A sometimes difficult 35 m double smear ahead leads to a ledge. Climb an ice ramp to the right and pendulum left to the top of some icicles and continue up on steep ice, or climb the icicles directly. Very narrow (30 cm) and thin ice leads to more moderate ground and the snow gully in 50 m. 200 m of snow and easy mixed, leads to the summit ridge. It is possible to continue to the top (30-40 minutes), but most parties find that it is getting dark at this point.

Descent Rappel the route.

Saki 100 m IV, WI 3

This obscure route is located about halfway up the Rae Glacier on the east side. No other details are available.



The Drip at the Centre of the Universe.
Photo: Larry Stanier

French Creek

In the last five years this has become a popular area because of several good routes that seem to form regularly. In a good year there are up to five major lines, all in various degrees of formation. Currently, there are three full-length routes and one variation at the top of one. There are also a number of potential routes on the opposite side of the valley. This area will undoubtedly continue to see new route activity. The routes are described from right to left.

Approach Park at the Burstall Pass parking area 4.5 km from Canmore. Hike or ski across the flats and up the first hill as per Burstall Pass, but take the left-hand fork when the road splits. Follow this up French Creek with the routes appearing on the right just past a large avalanche path on the second set of cliffs. 1.5 hours.



French Creek. A) Burning Man. B) Coffee Suckin' Do Nothings. C) No Doughnut. D) Auto de Feu.

Troll's Route 100 m III, WI 3

This route is actually located in French Creek on the east slope of Mount Burstall before the *Auto De Feu* area. The route lies in an avalanche area and is probably best in early season before much snow accumulation.

Approach Follow the trail up French Creek to a creek crossing. Cross and continue up an old logging road. Recross the stream above the first waterfall. Continue in a northwest direction reaching open slopes with the ice line clearly visible on the steep slopes above (82 J/14 187257). 2 hours.

Up to three pitches of rolling WI 2-3 can be found with a short, interesting step on the second pitch.

Descent Rappel the route from ice and/or trees.

Karl Nagy



Auto de Feu.

Long Enough 25 m IV, WI 5+

It is unsure if you need to climb a route to reach this climb, high in the bowl to the right of *Auto de Feu*.

Climb overhanging consolidated chandeliers for the whole pitch.

Descent Rappel the route.

Auto De Feu 300 m IV, WI 5+ R M6

A difficult and unique route, the name describes the act of setting oneself on fire. This is the first route you encounter on the cliff and perhaps the most consistently formed. About halfway between here and *Coffee Suckin' Do Nothin's* is another unclimbed smear that would likely be the longest route on the cliff. The bottom is very steep and looks like it may never form thus requiring involved mixed climbing to reach the ice.

The first pitch climbs up short, nasty pillars plastered to the cliff. Several pitches of easy terrain lead to a seemingly impassable rock wall with a snow patch in the middle. Start tunnelling through a snow-choked hole in the rock wall—be careful, it is large and steep enough to fall out of. It is possible to climb over the top. This bizarre feature puts you on a snow slope below an unconnected smear for the last pitch. Climb up to a belay in the cave below the final crux. Climb up splattered mushrooms, rock and moss to reach an "anaemic hanging curtain." Snag the ice and stem to the maximum to reach the top of the climb and a fixed pin belay on the right. Depending on the quality of the curtain this can be a serious pitch.

Descent Rappel the route.

Coffee Suckin' Do Nothings 200 m III, WI 4

At the time of the first ascent, this route was described as the "discontinuous WI 4ish route 200 m west of *Auto de Feu*." In fact, the first pitch was 50 m of 5.7 mixed climbing. Subsequent years have found completely formed ice. This route was first climbed by Peter Lougheed Park Rangers and is considered revolutionary in the fact that "more than two rangers went climbing at the same time" and is considered a fun project "especially if you're getting paid for it."

The first pitch is a fun 50 m 5.7 mixed pitch with good gear if you work for it. A short WI 3 pitch gains a snow slope and a short snow climb to a 25 m WI 4 pillar. Another short snow hike leads to the last pitch. This is a 50 m WI 4 with good varied climbing in a pretty gully.

Descent Rappel the route.

Joe Josephson

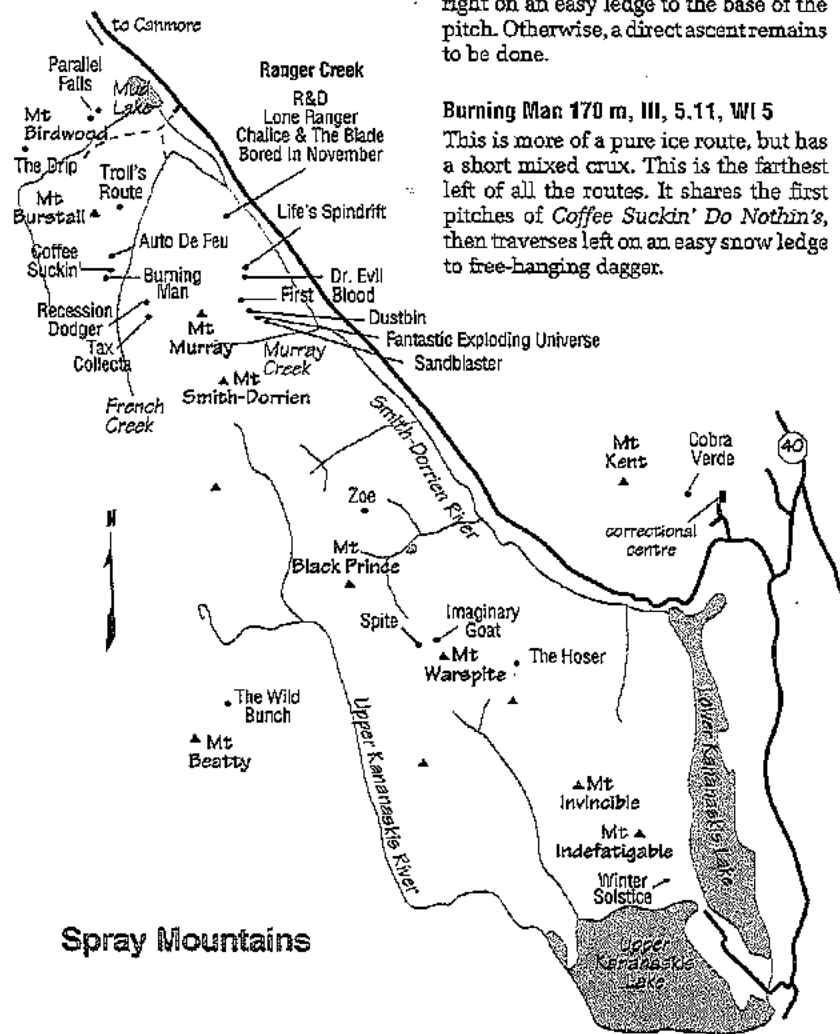
No Doughnut 50 m III, WI 4

Less than a rope length right of *Coffee Suckin' Do Nothin'* is a parallel smear that rarely, if ever, hits the ground. The

top half, however, is usually quite fat. A nice WI 4 pitch at the top makes a nice additional pitch after climbing the route to the left. From the base of the last pitch on *Coffee Suckin' Do Nothin's* traverse right on an easy ledge to the base of the pitch. Otherwise, a direct ascent remains to be done.

Burning Man 170 m, III, 5.11, WI 5

This is more of a pure ice route, but has a short mixed crux. This is the farthest left of all the routes. It shares the first pitches of *Coffee Suckin' Do Nothin's*, then traverses left on an easy snow ledge to free-hanging dagger.



A few steep drytooling moves past a bolt reach the dagger. Once on the ice, move around the front and gain easier ice above. The bolt protects the technical crux, but wouldn't help higher up if the icicle collapsed. There is a lot of good ice climbing higher up. From the ledge climb a 30 m WI 4+ pitch to an ice runnel and a stance. 20 m of WI 3 leads to the top. The second ascent finished up a WI 4 smear.

Descent Rappel the route from ice anchors then reverse the traverse back to *Coffee Suckin' Do Nothin's*.

Recession Dodgers 80 m IV, WI 4 R

This route and the ones around it are some of the first to form. The routes are visible partially from the road and completely from a high point near *Auto De Feu*. *Recession Dodgers* was first climbed by two people avoiding their own financial crisis and too broke to do anything but climb. It is the left-hand route of the two on the left side of the bowl. Some years this is the thicker route and other years the unclimbed longer route, a few metres to the right, is thicker.

Approach Walk past *Auto De Feu*, staying on the left side of French creek. Take the first major drainage that descends from the left. Follow this drainage up and into a bowl, with a small pocket glacier. There are two prominent lines on the left side of the bowl and one on the right. There is also potential for nice mixed routes throughout.

Climb thin ice that gradually becomes fat near the top. Discontinuous smears may be climbable above.

Descent Rappel the route.

Tax Collecta 40 m IV, WI 4 R

Approach Located on the right side of the bowl 75 m right of *Recession Dodgers*.

The route begins below the glacier ice. Either lower down into the moat or stem to the ice from the edge of the glacier. Climb thin ice gradually thickening near the top. A nice looking mixed pitch above is presently unclimbed.

Descent Rappel the route.

Ranger Creek

Every season Ranger creek is home to some of the earliest formed ice. Thus, it sees a lot of traffic before the snow flies. During the Banff Film Festival in early November it is not uncommon to see over a dozen people lined up at the base of *R & D*. Owing to the easy access and consistent conditions, climbers have pursued every conceivable smear and variation. There are now several mixed climbs and variations to spread the climbers out. Only the primary waterfall routes are listed here. Consult, *Mixed Climbs* for more information. Ranger Creek should be avoided after the heavy snows of winter set in because of surrounding avalanche terrain.

Approach Park at the gated road 2.5 km south of Burstall Pass. *R & D* is the obvious pillar on the left side of the Ranger Creek bowl. Drop down the embankment and bushwhack through alders into the drainage and then across avalanche-prone slopes to the base of *R & D* (82 J/14 208248) in 45 minutes or continue another 30 minutes up avalanche slopes to the base of *Lone Ranger* (82 J/14 205247).



Eric Hoogstraten on R & D. Photo: Alan Korr

R & D 50 m III, WI 4+

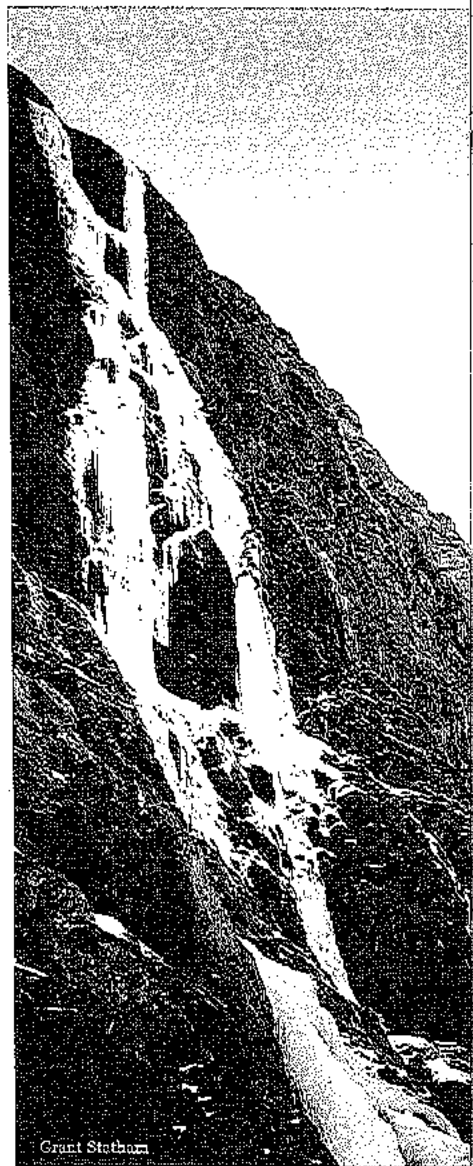
This is a true one pitch wonder. At times it can be super brittle, smooth and featureless giving a great early-season pump. Other times it might be unconsolidated and dripping making the protection dubious at best. Most often, it lies somewhere in between and will undoubtedly be full of pick holes.

This is a classic WI 4 pitch on sometimes varied, but usually good ice. There is a two-bolt belay on the back wall at the top of the pillar. Few people climb the easy ice that continues above for 40 m.

An occasional mixed route traverses in from the right. Also, some 20 m left a very thin line called *Shurpy* (WI 4 R) has been known to form.

Descent Rappel the route.

Climber on *Chalice and the Blade*.
The *Spoon* takes the line to on the left.



Grant Statham

Lone Ranger 120 m IV, WI 3

At the back of the cirque, past *R & D*, is a short steep wall. Up to four routes can form. Almost all are good. *Lone Ranger* is the main route left of centre. When formed, it is one of the better WI 3 routes around.

Two pitches of technical, bulgy ice lead onto easy ice and the snow slope.

Descent Walk off right and traverse back to the base. The route and walk off both have the potential for extreme avalanche hazard.

The Chalice and The Blade 70 m IV, WI 5

This rarely formed route is in the middle of the cliff, 30 m right of *Lone Ranger* (82 J/14 206247). Half way up, the climb splits into two prominent lines to the top. The slightly easier, left-hand line is referred to as *The Chalice and The Spoon*.

The first 10 m ascends thin, technical ice and moss to a steep WI 4 pillar to a ledge where two lines diverge to the top. Belay at a cramped stance behind a narrow pillar. *The Chalice and The Blade* takes the 30 cm wide, free-hanging cigar on the right. Climb next to the rock for 15 m then traverse around the pillar to thin ice and easier-angled ice leading to the top.

Descent Walk off right and traverse back to the base.

Bored in November 55 m IV, WI 3

On the far right side of the cliff, 70 m from *The Chalice and The Blade* is a short pillar followed by easy ice and snow (82 J/14 208247).

Spray Mountains

In general, there are fewer established climbs south of Ranger Creek, or at the very least they are less concentrated. The intriguing walls and bowls of Mounts Murray, Smith-Dorrien, Black Prince, Warspite, Invincible and Indefatigable are home to numerous smears, drips and the occasional spectacular pillar—and this is just what you see from the road. Future explorations will certainly yield more waterfall and mixed lines. All routes in this area should be considered early season when the approaches are easier and safer. Once the snow starts to accumulate, all of these routes would border on suicidal.

Life's Spindrift 50 m IV, WI 4

This climb is in the next bowl south from Ranger Creek. In a good year numerous smears can appear. In general two parallel smears are on the far right side of the bowl and this is the left-hand of the two. Approach as per *Dr. Evil* and there are no other details yet available.

Dr. Evil 75 m IV, 5.6, WI 5 R

This is in the same bowl *Life's Spindrift* but farther left. It is on the same rockhand as *First Blood*. A number of lines are easily visible from the road with *Dr. Evil* being the left-most route identified by a series of discontinuous smears leading up to an ice hose.

Approach Park along the Smith-Dorrien Spray Trail some 5 km south of Burstall Pass. Bushwack through alders into the drainage below the route and follow open slopes to the base. 2.5 hours.

Begin at a single bolt anchor on a sloping snow ledge accessed by traversing in from the right. Move left to a short



Dr. Evil takes the left-hand series of icicles.

curtain. Climb it, then move right and up over easy but loose rock to the base of a short, free-standing icicle (bolt). Climb the icicle to a belay behind the upper pillar (piton). Climb a short free-standing pillar and the ice hose above to a two bolt belay on the right.

Descent Rappel the route with double 60 m ropes to reach the ground.

First Blood 135 m V, WI 5

First Blood has been known to form as early as September, and is recommended early in the year before any snow accumulation. The first ascent team named this climb *First Blood* because it was their first climb of the season and they got pretty beat up on this long, demanding route. The route is the most striking pillar high on the east face of Mount Murray.



First Blood.

Approach Park 6 km south of Burstall Pass parking lot, the climb is visible above the west side of the road. Cross the creek and bushwhack into the large bowl left of the route. On the right side of the bowl climb a gully to a snow ramp. Follow this up and right to the base (82 J/11 211232). 2.5 hours.

Climb easy slabs and a 15 m ice pillar to a ledge, 50 m. Traverse right 40 m to the base of a 70 m pillar. Climb 30 m of steep technical ice to a single bolt belay on the right. Another slightly easier 40 m pitch brings you to the top (single bolt on the right).

Descent Rappel the route. The first ascent team rappelled off a long piton driven into the scree at the top. A party in 1993, added several single bolt anchors to the route.

Photos Raphael Slawinski

Dustbin 30 m IV, WI 5

This is about 50 m left of *First Blood* and the first of three smears.

Climb thin ice leading to a hanging icicle.

Descent Rappel the route.

The Fantastic Exploding Alternative 50 m IV, WI 4

This route is the second smear left of *First Blood* and about 50 m left of *Dustbin*.

Climb one pitch of thin WI 4.

Descent Rappel the route.

Sandblaster 100 m IV, WI 5

Approach 100 m left of *The F.E.A.* is another good early season climb easily recognized by the narrow free-standing pillar forming in the middle of the climb.

Start by climbing thin ice (WI 4 R) for 55 m to a rock belay on the right. Pitons

useful. Move the belay up a short 10 m pitch to behind the pillar in order to protect the belayer on the crux. The final pitch starts with a 20 m strenuous pillar then easier ice and snow lead to a smear thick enough to belay from.

Descent Rappel the route.

Zoe 240 m IV, WI 4

This is a recent early season route with an obscure description.

Approach Hike up Black Prince trail, then gain a large avalanche bowl via a short pitch of WI 2. The climb is located high up and is the left-most route. The last pitch can be seen from the road.

Climb 60 m of thin and fun WI 3 to easier ice and snow for several pitches and finish with long WI 4 pitch.

Descent Rappel the route.

Raphael Slawinski



The *First Blood* drainage. *Sandblaster* is the pillar on the right. All others are unclimbed.



Raphael Slavinski

Imaginary Goat takes the line farthest left as indicated by the arrow.

Imaginary Goat 150 m IV, 5.7, WI 5 R

This is a fun early-season climb. It is found in the centre of the northeast face of Mount Warspite along the Smith-Dorrien Spray Trail and is easily seen from the road (up and right of *The Hoser*). There are a number of smears on the face: *Imaginary Goat* is directly below a slight col immediately left (south) of the summit of Mount Warspite. Take a rack of pins (especially KBs), small cams and screws including stubbies.

Approach Park along the Smith-Dorrien Spray Trail 7 km north of the junction with the Kananaskis Lakes Road. Wade the creek, and hike up the left margin of the drainage to the route. 2 hours.

Start up a thin ice vein (WI 3) 30 m left of a deep chimney. Traverse right on a large snow ledge into the upper part of the chimney and climb more WI 3 to another large snow ledge (single-bolt belay). Climb yet more WI 3 to below a

steep wall, where a traverse right leads to a bolt-and-piton belay. Step up onto a small slab and traverse left to a fragile pillar. Try to bash some pins into the compact rock and climb the pillar to easier ice and a two-bolt belay at the top.

Descent Rappel the route from fixed anchors and an abalakov.

Spite 80 m of climbing IV, WI4 M4

This is the obvious pillar high up on the northeast face of Mount Warspite along the Smith-Dorrien Spray Trail. Take a few pins, a medium cam or two, screws and Spectres. Given an early start, this line could be taken all the way to the summit of the mountain.

Approach As for *Imaginary Goat* into the bowl below that route, then hike up and right to the base of the obvious line directly below the summit of Mount Warspite. 2-2.5 hours.



Raphael Slavinski

Spite.

Start up easy ice to a narrow ledge. Move right and improvise a belay at a poor bolt that needs another as backup. Step up onto a thinly iced slab and follow the left-leaning corner above to a snow gully. Spectres in frozen turf protect the crux (M4). Wander up the gully past a WI 2 step to the base of a pretty pillar. Climb it past some technical sections (WI 4) to easier ground. Easy ice leads to a snow slope that could be taken to the summit.

Descent: Rappel the route.

The Hoser 90 m III, WI 3

Details on this climb are somewhat lacking. This climb is found in the southern bowl of Mount Warspite on the left side of the drainage (82 J/11 273158 unconfirmed, another route can be seen at 282148). Park 7 km north of the Smith-Dorrien and Kananaskis Lakes Road junction and hike up the

drainage for about 1.5 hours. Beware of avalanche. The climb consists of two rolling pitches with steep steps.

Descent Rappel the route on bolts.

Cobra Verde 250 m II, WI 3

Approach Located on the east face of Mount Kent (the peak at the end of the Kananaskis Range between the Smith-Dorrien and Highway 40) at 82 J/11 313196. The easiest approach is from the correctional centre near the Kananaskis Lakes on the Smith-Dorrien Spray Trail. The route can be seen from Highway 40 near King Creek.

A long WI 3 pitch and a ramble leads to a short fat pillar or a thinner variation to the left. Low-angled ice through trees leads to the last bit of ice.

Descent Rappel the route off trees.

Kananaskis Lakes

Found at the end of the Smith-Dorrien and Highway 40 this area has seen little waterfall ice exploration, but is certainly home to lots of ice.

Winter Solstice 25 m II, WI 3

Winter Solstice is located on a cliffband on the east face of Mount Indefatigable. Potential avalanche hazard is encountered crossing to the base and from above.

Approach Follow the Kananaskis Lakes Trail 15.3 km to the North Interlake parking lot and ski the Mount Indefatigable trail for about 1 km. The climb is visible on the west side of the drainage (82 J/11 308115).

You'll find one pitch of moderate ice leading to the base of a 12 m pillar of 70-85° ice.

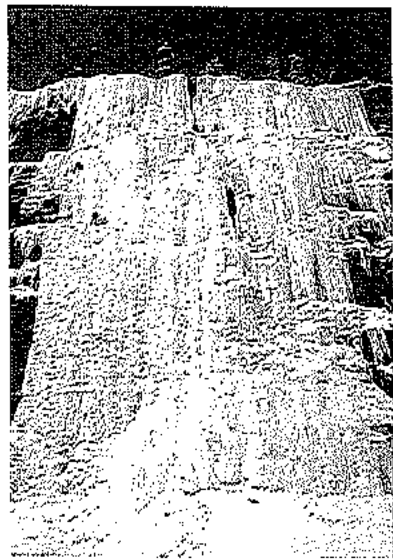
Descent Belay and rappel on trees.

The Wild Bunch 400 m V, 5.7, WI 6 X

The following route formed on the north-east face of Mount Beatty (82 J/11 209114) during a short cold snap that had evening lows of -17°C . The route was climbed 6 days later in temperatures well above freezing. 60 m ropes are useful.

Approach Mount Beatty lies just south of North Kananaskis Pass and is approached by a long walk up the Upper Kananaskis River. Park at the end of the Kananaskis Lake Trail. The line goes directly up the centre of the northeast face straight to the summit of the mountain. The landmark feature was an ice vein that started at the base and lead up to an ice rib that split the upper snow/ice face.

Start on very thin and poorly adhered ice that ranges from $70-90^{\circ}$ (WI 6 X). Rock pro is useful for the first 25 m and then vanishes (55 m pitch). Classy mixed climbing (5.7) continues up a gully/chimney with good gear and rock



for 50 m. Another 60 m of thin, quality ice and poor rock leads to the upper snow slope. Snow and ice filled gullies lead to the upper snow face (35°) and to the summit. Beautiful views of the Royal group!

Descent The descent follows the east ridge and then goes down a gully on the west side of the mountain.

Elk Lakes

Located south of Kananaskis Lakes, Elk Lakes is rarely visited by ice climbers despite having some of the best routes in Kananaskis. Remember, it is west of the Divide in the 'snow zone' and the routes are situated in large avalanche bowls.

Approach From Highway 40 drive the Kananaskis Lakes Trail for 12 km to Elk Pass parking. Ski south up Fox Creek on the wide cross country ski trail to Elk Pass. Follow the power line south to the junction with the summer hiking trail where there is the remains of a burned-out hut (82 J/11 368015). Take the trail to the Upper Elk Lake. Directly across the Upper Lake on the south wall of Mount Fox are a number of obvious flows. Generally, this is an overnight trip.

Dunlap 100 m V, WI 5+

Approach This is the largest climb in the area.

Look for two full pitches of strenuous, steep and chandelier ice with a hanging belay in the middle.

Descent Rappel the route.

Tim Pochay and Jay Smith soak up the UV on the remote Dunlap.
Photo: Brad Wroblecki

Brad Wroblecki



Elk Tear and Dunlap.

Ian Campbell



EMF.

Anoxia 50 m V, WI 5

Approach The only description available for this route is a one pitch hanging pillar right of Dunlap.

It is likely this route does not always form as it is a hollow straw with a stream running through it. It is a challenging, if not somewhat fragile, route.

Descent Rappel the route.

Elk Tear 140 m V, WI 5

Approach Elk Tear is the distinctive column left (south) of Dunlap.

Easy ice leads to the crux second pitch with beautiful climbing on vertical, bulgy ice. More easy ice leads to the top.

Descent Rappel the route, or go some distance back from the lip and traverse right through trees to the top of Dunlap.

EMF 120 m, V, A0, WI 6

Approach Left of Elk Tear is a discontinuous smear that on the first ascent contained a short rock section in the middle. It has also been seen as a completely formed ice route.

An easy ice gully leads to a short pillar of challenging chandelier ice and is protected by two bolts and ends at a ledge with a two bolt anchor. Either climb a short bit of rock (two bolts) or perhaps climb continuous, difficult ice to the top in a full pitch.

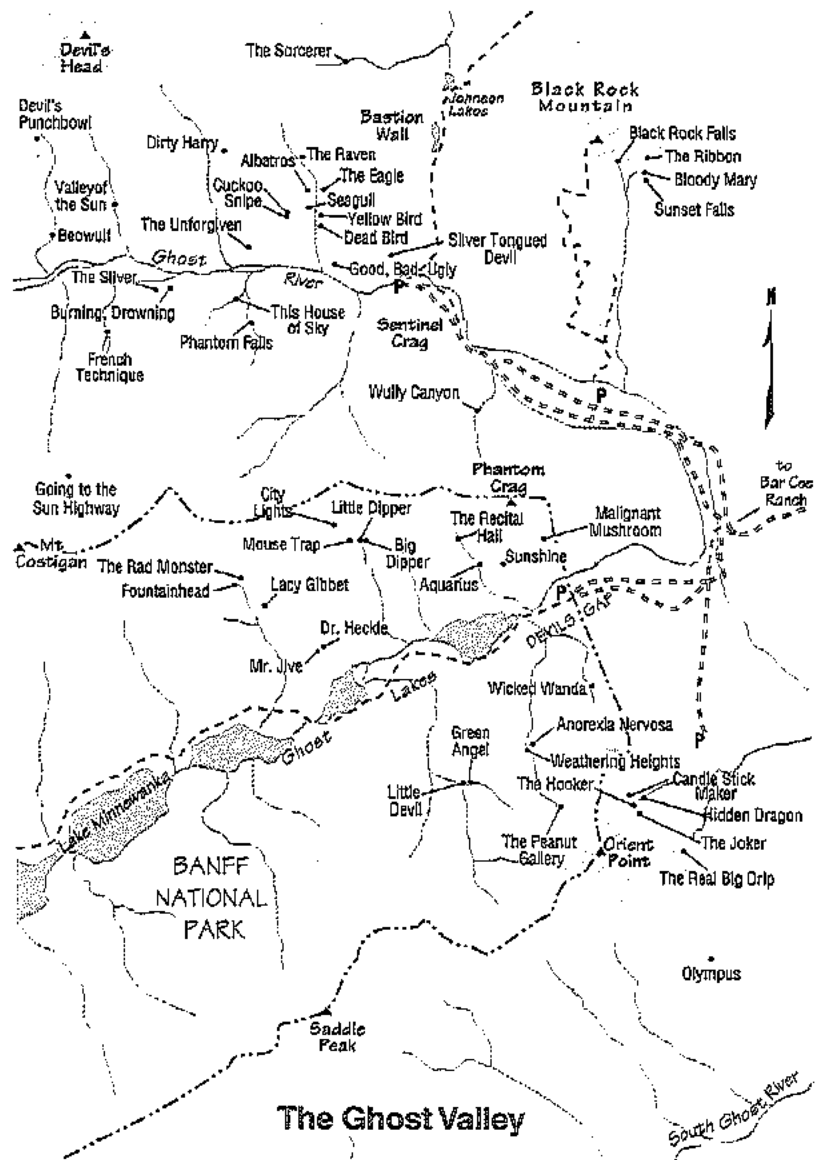
Descent Rappel the route.

Walking Softly 120 m V, WI 3

Approach At the southwest end of the Upper Lake beneath a huge avalanche bowl (82 J/11 330008) is a large flow seen from the northern end of the lake.

Two pitches of rambling ice lead to a 10 m pillar.

Descent Rappel the route.



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THE GHOST VALLEY

The Ghost River is a name that conjures up images of adventure. That's exactly what climbing in The Ghost is all about—quality adventure. This area contains a high concentration of some of the finest ice routes the Rockies has to offer. In general there is little avalanche hazard except during the worst of cycles. There are some isolated pockets of wind slab that are usually avoidable. Good campsites and firewood are found throughout the Ghost. Situated on the eastern slope, the area is plagued by high winds and subject to frequent Chinooks. As a result there is usually very little snow to deal with, but there can be car-eating drifts. Enjoy and savour your adventures here; it is a most unique and inspiring experience.

Getting There

The area is situated along the east slope of the Rockies north of the Trans-Canada Highway. It is near the prominent landmark called The Devil's Head, a large obelisk rock peak. From Calgary, head west on the 1A Highway to the town of Cochrane, 13.4 km west of the junction (4-way stop) with Highway 22, turn north onto Secondary Route 940 (Forestry Trunk Road), also known as Highway 40. From Banff/Canmore, follow the 1A Highway to just east of the Ghost Reservoir and SR 940. Follow the 940 north for 22.7 km to a gated gravel road on your left about 100 m beyond Richards Road. Be sure to close the gate behind you. Follow the rough potholed road for 16.6 km to the infamous Big Hill (82 O/6 295832) overlooking the Ghost River Valley and Devil's Gap. Beware of the glacier-sized drift at the top of the Big Hill, a hidden track on the left often bypasses it. The Big Hill itself is blown free of snow, but is littered with large stones.

High clearance is helpful, but not absolutely necessary. A 4 x 4 vehicle adds peace of mind. However, many people get by with tire chains and a prayer. A sturdy shovel is essential. 1.5 hours from Calgary. 2 hours from Canmore.

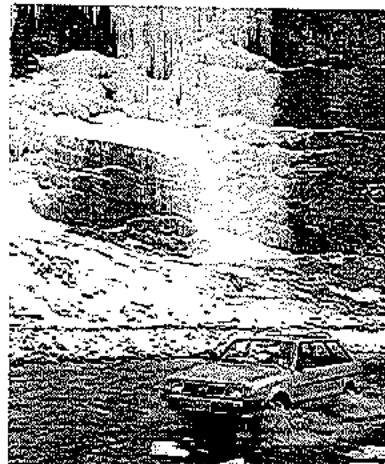


Photo: Jeff Nazarchuk

Facilities

The nearest gas or food is in Cochrane.

Emergency

You're on your own pal! The nearest phone is at the Bar Cee Ranch on SR 940, but there may be no one around. The Ghost Forest Service Station, 4.3 km north of the ranch, has a phone. Cellular phones may work from the top of some of the higher cliffs. For emergency help contact Kananaskis Country or Banff warden offices. See page 400.

Maps

82 O/6 Lake Minnewanka
82 O/3 Canmore

Orient Point

As you enter the Ghost River Valley near the Big Hill you can see two bowls on the east face of Orient Point. To the south is the immense curtain of ice called *The Big Drip*. In the bowl to the north are four possible lines. Usually only *The Joker* is visible from the top of the Big Hill.

Approach Turn left at the bottom of the Big Hill. Follow the road crossing the rocky streambed and travel 200 m to an intersection. Take the first obvious left atop a small windblown dike heading south. Follow a good track for just over 1 km until below a cutline that traverses down across a steep hillside. Park here to access all the routes. Follow the cutline until it ends. Move left up through the trees toward the drainage. Stay high on the ridge above until you can easily drop into the creek bottom. Follow the creek and climb past 130 m of WI 2 ice flows to the bowl (82 O/6 281797). 1.5 hours in good snow conditions.

Hidden Dragon 50 m III, WI 4

At the bottom of the bowl below *The Joker* is a nice pillar. It can be used to access all three routes above. If not, easily bypass the pitch to the left up scree and across low-angle slabs.

The Joker 50 m III, WI 2-3

Though it may be thin in places, this is an excellent, easy route forming every year.

Approach The obvious low-angle route on the left side of the bowl.

Climb 50 m of ice up to 75°.

Descent Rappel the route.

The Hooker 200 m III, WI 5

Approach This is the rarely formed pillar right of *The Joker*. Another 20 m right of *The Hooker* is an icicle that has never formed or been climbed.

Begin with 55 m of rambling ice to a sheltered belay on the left of a chandelier pillar. The next crux pitch hooks its way through a short section of overhanging icicles to a needed rest before you gain 25 m up vertical ice to where it eases off. Another two-and-a-half pitches of rambling ice and snow lead to a pleasant 10 m, 85° step.

Descent Rappel the route. Many of the middle pitches can be bypassed on scree ledges.

Candle Stick Maker 140 m IV, WI 5

The falls are tucked into a tight canyon on the right side of the bowl and are not visible until you are directly below. *Candle Stick Maker* is a beautiful line that offers some of the finest technical climbing in *The Ghost*, but doesn't always form.

Approach From the top of *Hidden Dragon*, head up 100 m through a narrow slot of snow and ice to a huge cave behind the initial pillar.

Climb the difficult 10 m free-standing pillar to easier ground. The final pitch offers 40 m of vertical and overhanging ice with numerous mushrooms and caves that provide very entertaining climbing.

Descent Rappel the route. Pins are in place on the east wall, but may be hard to find.

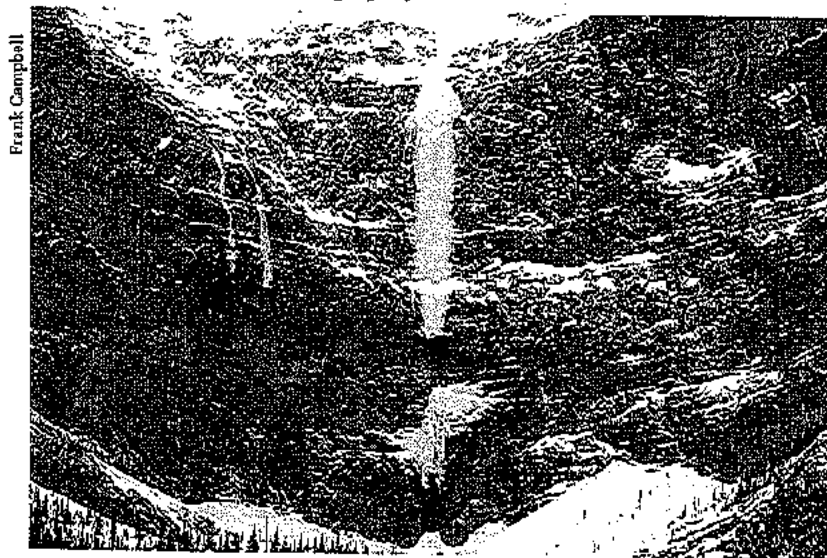
The Real Big Drip 200 m V, M7+ WI 7

This is the tantalizing piece of ice that everyone sees when they enter *The Ghost* (82 O/6 287792). It usually forms only halfway down the cliff face and is known as *The Big Drip*. It formed once to the ground, but only for a few days before it fell off. Several keen climbers walked up for a look, but some sort of sanity prevailed before they started up. One experienced hopeful described it as "the wildest piece of ice I've ever seen!" If it does form again, it will become one of the hardest ice routes in the Rockies.

Nevertheless, the top half always forms up big and fat. Feeling its presence for too long, the first ascent team in 1985, traversed from *The Joker* and rappelled from the top to the bottom of the ice and climbed back out.

In 1998, a dedicated group of climbers established an oft-thought about direct route up the rock. In *Mixed Climbs* one of those ascensionists, Sean Isaac, properly

describes *The Real Big Drip*, "This is the full, from the ground, in-your-face, straight-up-the-guts version. An incredible line in an even more incredible setting."



Opposite: Climbers on the *Real Big Drip*.
Photo: Richard Wheeler
Below: *The Real Big Drip*.

South Ghost

Only a handful of routes have been explored in this vast region. It remains perhaps, the least developed and most promising area in the front ranges. Very few details are known or even remembered about the existing routes, but all are good quality.

Olympus 50 m III, WI 5

This climb is located on the south side of Orient Point above the South Ghost River Valley (82 O/3 290777). On a good day, it is just visible from the Trans-Canada Highway.

Approach Drive as for *The Joker*, but continue along the road past *The Big Drip* and take the next right fork. The ice is visible from the valley at this point. Follow the track to where it climbs out of the valley, hike around a hill on the south side and up scree to the climb.

It is a one pitch testpiece starting with a free-standing pillar of good ice easing off toward the top.

Descent Rappel the route or walk off to the right.

Polaris 150 m IV, 5.10, WI 4+

Very little is remembered about this route, but it is of very high quality. Access is via the true South Ghost River. It is on the south side and said to be about 2 km from the Park Boundary.

Bonnywind four pitch WI 4

Eastward three pitch WI 3

These routes are in each of the drainages that flow into the South Ghost from the north side and west of *Polaris*. Both are on the west side of their respective drainages. Approach was via a Quad, so no information is known about time for a standard walking approach.

Polaris.

Giant Staghorn



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Devil's Gap

Devil's Gap is the most accessible area of the Ghost. Many of the routes are within easy walking distance of the Big Hill if your vehicle or conditions aren't up to snuff.

Getting There

From the bottom of the Big Hill turn left and follow a faint track across the rocky streambed to the dike on the west side of the streambed. Turn left at the inobvious road just past the dike and cross the flats into the trees taking you to the well-marked Banff National Park boundary. Park here—it's illegal to drive farther. If the road through the trees is drifted over, continue straight (instead of turning left) past the dike and work your way onto the main streambed. heading west and following faint track, it's the easiest line to the same parking spot at the park boundary. A short path leads to the first Ghost Lake that in winter is a dry, frozen mud flat.

Orient Point

Wicked Wanda II, WI 4+

Approach Easily visible from the parking area on the north side of Orient Point (82 O/6 275812). Walk several hundred metres west of the parking area, then south through trees and past a short step of ice to the base. 30-40 minutes.

A 70-80° pitch leads to a ledge on the left. The next 35 m pitch can be very technical as the high winds in the area often blow the drips about, creating unique caves and overhangs. When in this condition, the route can be demanding on your technique and head space. In fatter years it is straightforward.



Brad Wroblewski



Photo: Rob Owens

Wicked Wanda.

Descent Rappel the route. From the top station a 55 m rope easily reaches the ground.



Weathering Heights. Photo: Godofroy Perronx

Planter's Valley

Weathering Heights 100 m III, WI 4

This excellent and highly recommended climb is found in Planter's Valley, the valley immediately west of *Wicked Wanda*.

Approach From the parking area follow the path toward the first Ghost Lake. Continue into the canyon on the left. The route is the first obvious line about half-way up the canyon on the right wall (82 O/6 266803). 1 hour.

The route follows two pitches of green and yellow ice that is narrow, varied and sunny.

Descent Rappel the route.

Anorexia Nervosa 130 m III, WI 4 R

The route is a little run-out and, as the name implies, very thin. A good day when combined with *Weathering Heights*.

Approach It is directly across the valley from *Weathering Heights* in a narrow slot.

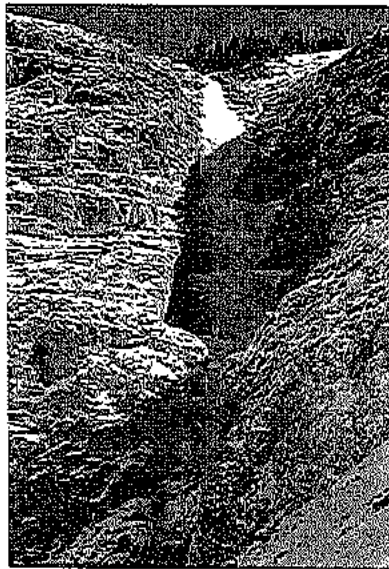
A thin, moderately-hard route with ice up to 85°. The rock near the top goes at 5.6.

Descent Walk off right.

The Peanut Gallery III, WI 4

Continue up the valley past *Weathering Heights* (82 O/6 271797). Up to four short pitches can be found including some vertical pillars with long snow slopes between pitches.

Descent Rappel steps or walk around them on the left.



Anorexia Nervosa.

Godofroy Perronx

Hoodoo Hall

This is the next drainage west of Planter's Valley, its name inspired by the interesting hoodoos along the valley floor. Hike across the first Ghost Lake (dry) to the southwest end and angle into the drainage. Follow the frozen creek past the hoodoos until a narrow fork is seen to the left (82 O/6 254800). 1.5-2 hours.

Little Devil 20 m III, WI 3

Approach Fifteen minutes from the mouth of the canyon, just where it turns south (right), *Little Devil* is found on the left wall pouring out of a frost pocket (82 O/6 256799). It doesn't always form.

Thin ice leads to steeper ground near the top.

Descent Rappel the route from two fixed (be sure to double check them).

Green Angel 50 m III, WI 4

Approach *Green Angel* is one of the nicer one pitch routes around in the obvious water worn groove to the right of *Little Devil* (82 O/6 259799).

Climb up a short step to a well-protected belay behind a pillar. A full rope-length on sustained beautiful green ice leads to the top, bolt belay. Two interesting flows can be explored just above.

Descent Rappel the route.

Phantom Crag

Malignant Mushroom 55 m II, WI 5

Situated on the north side below the huge walls of Phantom Crag is this popular, sunny route (82 O/6 269830). It is easily visible from the parking area.

Approach Hike up through the trees to the right of the route. 30-40 minutes.

Climb one long pitch of mostly vertical and excellent ice. On the first ascent it sported many large mushrooms; however, they don't seem to be an annual occurrence. A bolt belay (often covered) is on a small ledge on the left side.

Descent Rappel the route. 50 m ropes are adequate. It is possible to easily walk off to the right.



Photo: Alan Kerr

Malignant Mushroom.

Frozen Fungi 50 m II, WI 3

Approach About 150 m west (left) of *Malignant Mushroom*. It is unclear if it forms regularly or just thinly although it formed fat in the winter of 1996/97.

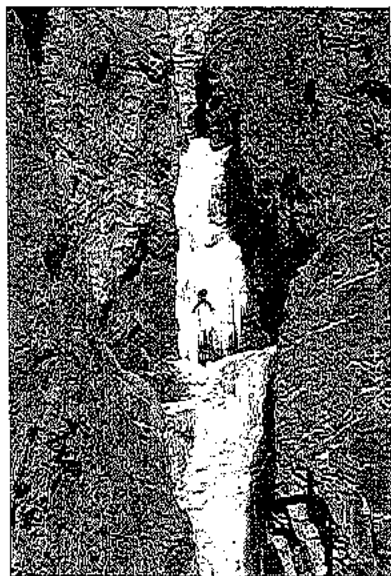
Sunshine 45 m II, WI 3

This climb is a low-angled route found on the same cliffband 500 m west of *Malignant Mushroom* (82 O/6 264827).

Approach Follow the riverbed from the parking area and angle up through trees to the base. A thin, dirty, mixed step near the base can be avoided on the left.

Climb up good ice with short steps past several trees frozen into the climb. If using this climb as an approach to *Aquarius*, continue up the slope to the base of the cliff and traverse left.

Descent To descend *Sunshine*, rappel from trees.



Aquarius. Photo: www.rogerchayer.com

Aquarius 60 m III, WI 4

Aquarius is located in the narrow drainage west of Phantom Crag above and left of *Sunshine*. The falls are not visible from Ghost Lake and form every year.

Approach Either climb *Sunshine* and traverse left, or from the first Ghost Lake hike up slopes left of the drainage to the base of a large rock wall (Spectre Crag), then traverse right into the gully (82 O/6 261827). The drainage direct occasionally forms low-angle thin ice steps that can be fun to climb, but are not recommended to descend.

Climb 50 m of interesting ice with good rests to a fixed belay on the left. A short groove leads to a fixed belay on the right and The Recital Hall.

Descent Rappel the route.

The Recital Hall

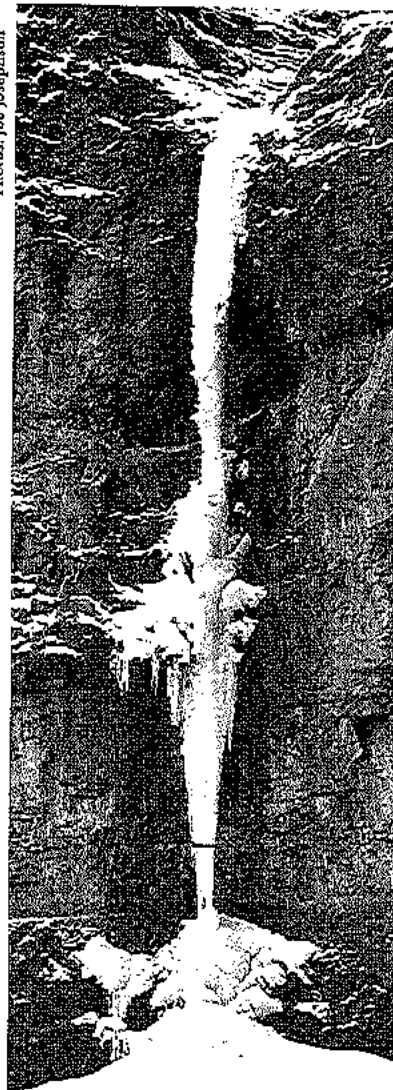
This spectacular bowl is reached only by climbing *Aquarius*. Perfectly oval and barely 100 m in diameter, The Recital Hall is one of the most interesting areas in the Ghost. It offers two difficult and technical climbs that rarely form.

Fearful Symmetry 60 m III, WI 6 X

Approach On the left side of The Recital Hall, *Fearful Symmetry* is a unique climb. Visible from the first Ghost Lake, this bold lead sports two narrow, free-standing pillars separated by several 1-2 m overhangs formed by the intense winds of the area. This is not a route for the faint-hearted.

Easy ground is climbed to a bolt belay behind the pillar. The next pitch is primarily overhanging with a good rest above the overhangs. On the first ascent, the bottom pillar had a 30-cm crack, creating a hanging dagger.

Photo: Joe Josephson



Fearful Symmetry.

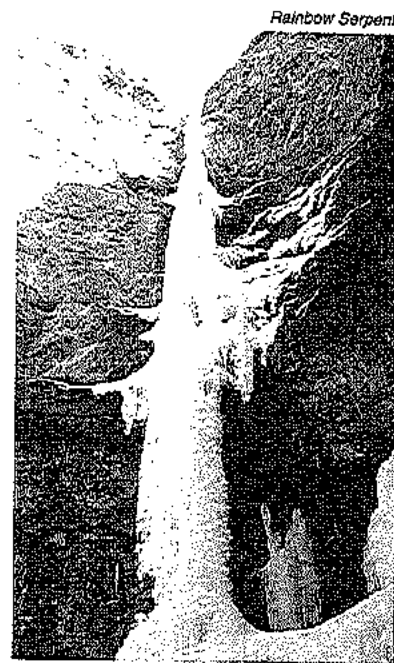
Descent Rappel the route. 35 m of climbing leaves you 7 m out from the base of this incredible column.

Rainbow Serpent 75 m III, WI 6

Tucked into the far right corner of the Hall, *Rainbow Serpent* is only visible when directly below it. It is a spectacularly aesthetic pillar that is climbed in two pitches. The top pitch always forms, but the bottom pillar is often broken off.

From a belay on the large ledge 15 m up, the first pitch climbs a cracked, free-standing pillar on lacy chandelier ice to a comfortable belay on the right. The second, harder pitch works its way around overhangs and caves to a narrow pillar and a unique ice arête near the top.

Descent Rappel the route.



The Ghost Valley 121

Constellation Valley

The next four climbs lie in the drainage west of *Aquarius*. This drainage, particularly *City Lights*, has the highest avalanche potential in the Ghost Area, so look out for wind-loaded slabs. Riding a mountain bike to the end of the first Ghost Lake can save up to 45 minutes of travel time and can be a saviour on the inevitably wet death march back to the car.

Approach Hike across the first Ghost Lake (dry) and continue 500 m to a point about halfway to the second Ghost Lake. Move north into the major drainage. Bypass the first canyon on slopes to the right (the chest-deep pools of water here are not fun to fall into). Some tedious walking leads to another interesting canyon. At the end of this canyon are the first three routes. 2 hours. One of these routes must be climbed to reach the fourth, *City Lights*.

Big Dipper 100 m III, WI 4

Despite the long walk to this climb, it is a recommended destination.

Approach This is the obvious two-tiered falls located on the right side of the valley (82 O/6 246831).

Climb two excellent pitches, each with steep sections, the first being the crux.

Descent Rappel the route or rappel *Little Dipper*.

Little Dipper 100 m III, WI 3

Both Dipper routes offer excellent climbing in the hard WI 3 to easy WI 4 range.

Approach The first route visible from lower down in the canyon, *Little Dipper* starts at the same point as *Big Dipper* then goes up left.



Grant Siatham on *Little Dipper*.

Easy ice and snow is climbed to 35 m of sunny, good ice to 85°.

Descent Rappel the route.

Mouse Trap 25 m III, WI 3

Approach When you first see *Big Dipper* to the right, head 100 m up the left-hand fork to the falls that are tucked around at the back (82 O/6 244831). A short step leads to the route.

This route is steep for the first half and can be thin and narrow, making it a challenging climb.

Descent Rappel the route from a bolt station on the left.

City Lights 40 m IV, WI 5

The approach to this route is long, but the climbing commands an outstanding position and is recommended if you're not terribly concerned with the number of pitches. Expect a very long day with a

Joe Hoehlin

700 m elevation gain from the car over many kilometres. The city of Calgary is visible from the climb.

Approach Either climb the drainage directly above *Mouse Trap* or from the top of *Little Dipper* climb left up through the trees until you eventually come into the *City Lights/Mouse Trap* drainage. *City Lights* always forms and is an obvious curtain below a blocky peak, fittingly called Costigan's Boil (82 O/6 241833). 1.5 hours above the *Dippers*.

A challenging pitch of mostly vertical, often brittle ice. Considered a classic "Frank 4" as the first ascensionist is infamous for calling everything "grade IV."

Descent Rappel the route. If avalanche conditions permit, continue straight down the drainage below the route. This gully turns into a tight canyon with several short steps of ice. These steps are easily downclimbed, but would be dangerous in the dark. Keep going down until at the bolt station atop *Mouse Trap*. Otherwise, head right (remember, climber's right) into the trees before you enter the canyon and traverse to the top of *Little Dipper* and rappel that route.

Second Ghost Lake

Mr. Jive 45 m III, WI 3

A wide curtain of good ice in the trees west of Constellation Valley (82 O/6 239816) is visible from the parking area.

Approach Walk across the first Ghost Lake and down the streambed to the second Ghost Lake. 45 minutes. Cross the frozen lake (don't worry; it's less than a metre deep) and beat north up a steep slope to the base.

Justin Tartaryn on the start of *Lacy Gibbet*.
Photo: Rob Owens

Mr. Jive starts easily leading to 15 m of 80° ice. A second, similar route called *Dr. Heckle* (45 m III, 3) can be climbed in the trees (82 O/6 241817) to the right and is not visible until you're almost on it.

Descent Rappel the route.

Lacy Gibbet 300 m IV, WI 5

This is an aesthetic line with good ice in a wild position with a southern exposure—well worth the long approach. *Lacy Gibbet* is the left-hand of two possible lines and seems to form early every year. During the first attempt, while placing a screw on the final crux pitch, the leader had his axe blow out, leaving him dangling by one tool hooked through a half driven ice screw. A gibbet is a type of gallows used for displaying the bodies of executed criminals.

Approach Walk across the first Ghost Lake and down the streambed to the



second Ghost Lake in 45 minutes. Bushwhack to the northwest into the open streambed. The bottom pitches are visible from here, as well as a large unformed and unclimbed curtain to the right of *Lacy Gibbet*. Continue up the canyon, passing the second tight spot on scree to the right and taking the right fork whenever there is a choice (82 O/6 233823).

The first 45 m is technical ice up to 80° and is followed by two and a half ropelengths of rolling terrain to another 45 m pitch of steeper ice (WI 3-4). After topping out on this pitch you'll be presented with an amazing free-standing pillar a short distance up the gully. This is a technical 30 m vertical column. Easy ice leads to the top.

Descent Rappel the route.



Fountainhead and Rad Monster.
Photos: Joe Josephson

Fountainhead 50 m V, WI 6

Fountainhead and the top half of *The Rad Monster* are visible within the first couple hundred metres of entering the left fork; be sure to check for the routes here and save yourself the walk if they're not there. These routes are very remote (they start almost as high as the top of *Lacy Gibbet*), but are worth it if this is your kind of climbing. When it is well-formed, it can be like *Pilsner Pillar*; when it is not, be ready for something much, much harder.

Approach As for *Lacy Gibbet*, but at the final fork 300 m before that route, head left (north) for another tedious hour (82 O/6 226823).

Fountainhead is the left-hand of two free-standing pillars. Prepare yourself for one nasty pitch with very technical and strenuous ice. Several pitches of rolling steps can be climbed above.

Descent Rappel the route.

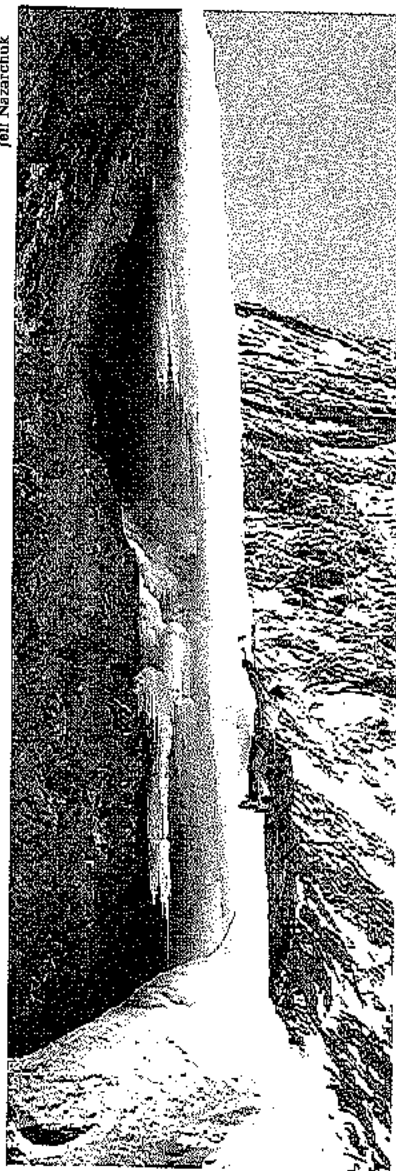
The Rad Monster 50 m V, WI 6

This route is on the right-hand pillar, 30 m from *Fountainhead*. This is yet another gnarly route that is usually a little easier than its neighbour.

Black Rock Falls in the sun on the right.
An unclimbed icicle to the left.



Jeff Nazaruk



Steep and scenic climbing on Black Rock Falls.

Black Rock Mountain

A beautiful peak of large complex cliffbands poised on the eastern edge of the North Ghost River, Black Rock Mountain is easily visible as you drive north from the Big Hill. *Black Rock Falls* is the obvious pillar high in the south-facing cirque.

Getting There

Drive as for the North Ghost, but turn right at the Black Rock hiking trail sign, 2.5 km past the Big Hill. Drive a short distance and park near the river. Find a sign and a gate on the opposite bank of the river which indicates the start of the trail and walk into the trees to an information board. Turn right into the stream and follow it 1.5-2 hours up to an obscured fork in the stream underneath some impressive gold and black rock walls. There are several one pitch routes that are fun and in a spectacular setting, a place worthy of The Ghost.

Black Rock Falls 35 m III, WI 4+

Obvious from the Ghost River, this climb is not as big as it looks from the valley floor. Worthwhile and in a great location *Black Rock Falls* should be climbed before the sun and Chinooks destroy the ice.

Approach Follow the streambed from the information board and stay left up the most obvious drainage and climb snow and scree to the base of the falls (82 O/6 278880).

Climb one pitch of technical, lacy ice.

Descent Rappel the route.

Bloody Mary 20 m III, WI 4

Approach As for *Black Rock Falls* to the point where the creek divides. Follow the creek right 200 m to an impassable rock wall. Climb scree to the right and up past a unique gendarme into an obvious gap above, then contour back into the creek bed and follow it until *Bloody Mary* emerges from a deep cleft between impressive walls (82 O/6 282878).

A 15 m free-standing pillar that doesn't always form.

Descent Rappel the route (one bolt in place).

Sunset Falls 70 m III, WI 3

Sunset Falls forms every year and is easily combined with *Black Rock Falls* for a good long day. Approach as for *Bloody Mary*, but 300 m to the right in a shallow gully (82 O/6 283876).

Climb 20 m of easy ground to a snow ledge (one bolt). Continue for one pitch of undulating ice up to 80°. Above is a pretty miniature hanging valley with meadows and good lunch spots atop rock promontories. Here you have a good chance of seeing bighorn sheep.

Descent Rappel the route. An orange bolt and piton are in situ at the lip of the climb on the left.

The Ribbon 50 m III, WI 2

Climb *Bloody Mary* and follow the drainage to the foot of the climb (82 O/6 2811881). You can also traverse left across the drainage from the top of *Sunset Falls*.

This could also be called "The Curtain" as that is how it sometimes forms. A little more interesting are several mixed smears to the right, up to 5.4 rock. **Descent** Rappel the route.



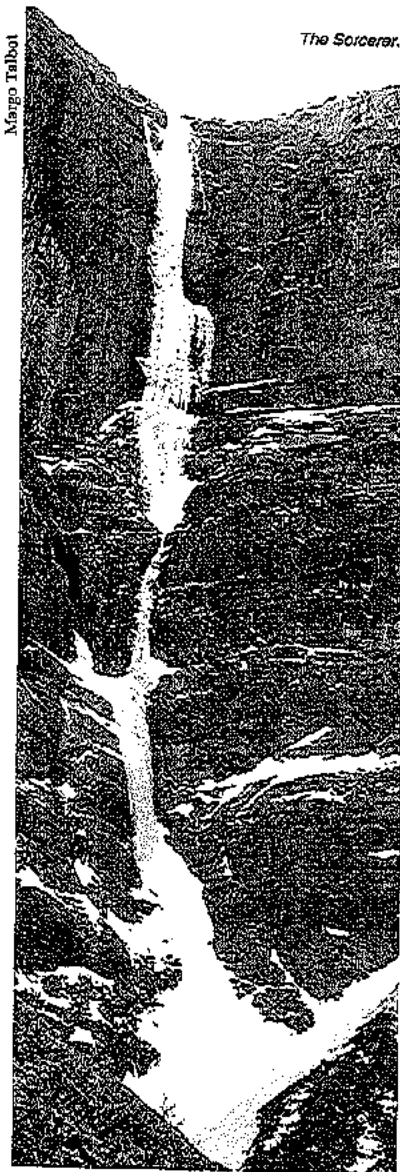
Sunset Falls.

Wully Canyon

Immediately north of the canal diversion bridge walk or drive south along the west side of the canal below Wully Wall (the large cliff on the right, identified by a tree island in the middle of the crag).

Approach Turn into the canyon between the south end of Wully Wall and the north end of North Phantom Crag (82 O/6 262849). Several short WI 2 flows have been explored in this aesthetic canyon.

Jon Josephson



Margo Talbot

The Sorcerer.

Johnson Creek

The famous route *The Sorcerer* is located north of the main Ghost Valley in Johnson Creek, but is best approached from the North Ghost.

The Sorcerer 210 m IV, WI 5

This stunning route is set in the back of a steep amphitheatre with Dolomite-like walls on all sides. If you are to do just one route in the Ghost River area *The Sorcerer* would be it.

Approach Drive to the North Ghost and park near Sentinel Crag near where the river turns due west. Cross the river north (sometimes a log bridge) to a small meadow. Head northeast on a narrow road along a steep hill between Black Rock Mountain and a large rock wall (Bastion Wall) on the left. Follow this for 45-60 minutes, to the first of two Johnson Lakes. At the north end of the first lake head left up an open slope into the trees and continue up and right and over the small ridge into the creek bed draining *The Sorcerer* (82 O/6 243893). 1.5-2 hours. You can also reach the route via Waiparous Creek (see page 141).

Climb a shield of ice to a sloping ledge. Continue up a short 85° pillar to where the climb narrows (two bolts). Snow and easy ice lead to the upper column climbed in two full pitches. The column starts on near-vertical ice, easier on the right, leading to a large cave. The final pitch makes an outrageous traverse left then up sustained technical ground. Most parties ignore the short pitch and cornice to the top.

Descent Rappel the route. Do not attempt to descend any nearby gullies.

North Ghost

This part of the Ghost is less frequented owing to the slightly longer drive and the greater possibility of getting stuck before you arrive at the climbs. The North Ghost includes all the routes along the main Ghost River and *The Sorcerer* (technically in Waiparous Creek, but best accessed from the Ghost). The routes are described on both the right and left as you'll encounter them walking up the main Ghost River valley.

Getting There

Once at the bottom of the Big Hill several options exist to reach the North Ghost. The best way is to stay on the obvious road on the east side of the riverbed. Detours into the riverbed may be needed to avoid drifts. Cross the riverbed (hopefully dry) near a cable crossing and continue along a good road past the Black Rock hiking trail to the canal diversion and a bridge. In years with deep drifts, an adventurous route is to gain the gravel dike on the west side of the river just past the cable crossing and follow this to near the bridge. From the bridge either con-

tinue through the trees (drifts) or cut out right and follow a difficult path near the river. These options converge at the end of Sentinel Crag (6.4 km from the top of the Big Hill) on a rocky plain where the river turns west. Park here.

If you have a monster truck and are feeling particularly macho, you may try to cross the river to get closer to routes such as *The GBU* and *The Valley of the Birds*. But don't say I didn't warn you; I'm not the only one who has ruined a climbing rope while pulling my car (with 60 cm of water inside) out of the river!

The Good, The Bad and The Ugly (The GBU) 45 m II, WI 4-5+

Approach From the parking area, walk 10 minutes along the south side of the river to a wide curtain of ice directly above the river on the north side (82 O/6 242866). Be creative to get across the river with dry feet. It is possible to drive right to the base of *The GBU* if you have a big enough vehicle.

Climb any number of lines on good ice, generally harder on the right. The central

The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly.
Angel Eyes to the far left.



Joe Josephson



Alan Kane

pillar offers exciting free-standing pillars and overhangs that are rarely climbed. There are also bolted mixed climbs that may or may not be exposed.

In the small alcove just left of *The GBU* is a flow called *The Indifferent* (40 m II WI 3). Another 60 m upstream, a short route called *Angel Eyes*, a WI 3-4 depending upon ice conditions, falls directly into the river.

Descent Rappel the route.

Silver Tongue Devil 45 m II, 5 R

Approach Directly across the river from the parking area is a steep crag with a prominent cave on the left side (82 O/6 249869).

This route is a spectacular sliver pouring from the cave with shadowy overhangs leering above. Cross the river and hike up a steep slope for 30 minutes to the base. Unfortunately, it's only been known to form twice and it doesn't last long with its southern exposure. Coincidentally, the climb appears devilish with leering eyes and wet tongue, but the name originated when Frank Campbell was called a silver-tongued devil after he sandbagged his partner on the first ascent by rating the route "oh... about grade IV." A very challenging and superb pitch!

Thin, narrow and unprotectable ice for 20 m leads to a brief rest before the final 25 m of thicker dead vertical ice pouring from the cave.

Descent Rappel the route from a bolt belay in cave.

Frank Campbell on the first ascent of Silver Tongue Devil.

Valley of The Birds

The Valley of The Birds is one of the more popular areas in the Ghost. It offers fascinating climbing up narrow ice flows, reaching a number of short climbs close together that allow you to bag several routes in a day.

Getting There

In the next drainage to the north, five minutes past *The GBU* you will see the Valley of the Birds as a mysterious blue flow appearing from a narrow slot (82 O/6 240887). If your vehicle can't get across the river, tight boots and good gaiters are recommended for the river crossing; "run fast and step high!"

Dead Bird 45 m III, WI 3

This classic narrow ribbon is not as bad as the name implies. It was once shunned in the search for the hollow glory of 'hard' routes.

Approach Situated on the east side (right) and does not always form and is the first fall you'll encounter in The Valley (82 O/6 240870).

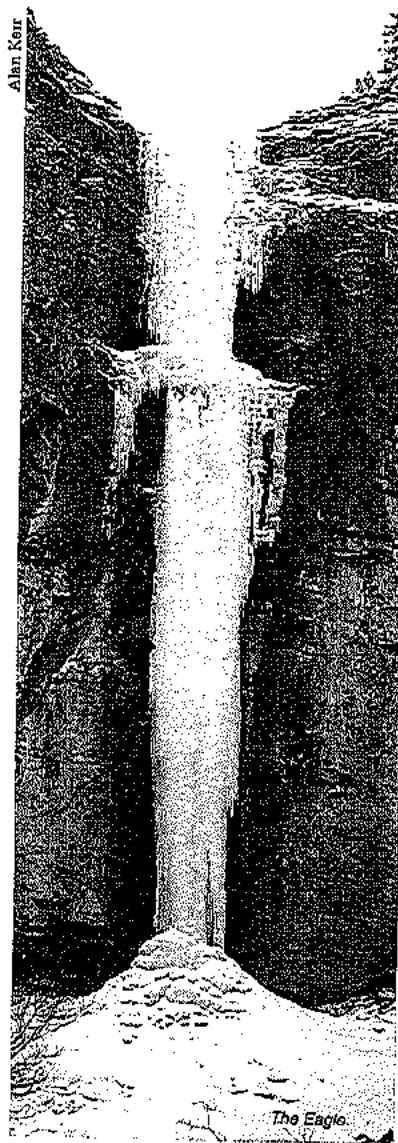
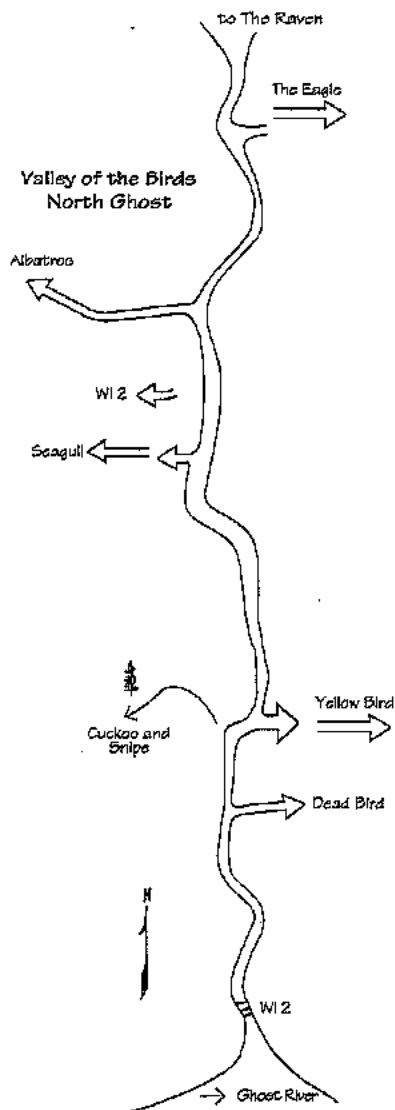
One long, narrow pitch to a tree belay is a good approach to *Yellow Bird*.

Descent Rappel the route or traverse left toward *Yellow Bird*.

Yellow Bird 30 m III, WI 4

This climb is probably the best route in The Valley.

Approach 30 minutes from the entrance to the valley and just past *Dead Bird* is a 20 m wall of ice on the right (east) wall. Climb up this wall and walk to the base of a wet pillar of green/yellowish ice (82 O/6 240873).



Climb a beautiful, sunny pitch of 80-90° ice. A belay is possible behind the pillar part way.

Descent Rappel the route.

Seagull 30 m III, WI 4

Approach Across The Valley (west wall) and 15 minutes beyond *Yellow Bird* (82 O/6 238873), *Seagull* forms early in the year. When well formed, it is a steal at WI 4. A short step (may be thin or bad ice) leads out of the canyon to scree below the route.

A narrow pillar of excellent wet ice leads to a tree belay. Occasionally, it will form up thin and technical. A fun mixed route called *Snowbird* (M6+) can be contrived immediately left.

Descent Rappel the route.

Albatross 100 m III, WI 3

Approach Named for the bird that flies alone on high winds, *Albatross* starts in a small cleft on the left wall where the canyon narrows, 200 m upstream from *Seagull* (82 O/6 239874). The right fork is a narrow step leading toward *The Eagle*.

This excellent, varied route makes for a fine day when combined with other Valley classics.

Descent Rappel from trees.

The Eagle 35 m III, WI 5

Originally given a WI 4, this was a very underrated one pitch route. *The Eagle* rarely gets climbed and has given even the best of climbers a serious workout. "Harder than *Pilsner*" claimed one very talented climber. Another Frank Campbell testpiece.

Approach Climb up the creek to the right of *Seagull* and *Albatross*. This spectacular falls is found on the right wall in a small amphitheatre (82 O/6 241875) that

collects a lot of sun and accounts for much of the difficulty of the route by creating rotten ice. High winds also throw the drips about creating overhangs and the distinctive wings that branch off at mid-height.

Climb a strenuous free-standing pillar to the overhang below the wings. Be creative to ascend the overhang and onto easier ice above the wings. Occasionally it will form as a more 'normal', yet still difficult, free-standing pillar.

Descent Rappel the route.

The Raven 20 m III, WI 4+

Approach Walk upstream past *The Eagle* to a fork in the drainage. Take the right fork up some easy steps (82 O/6 241881). The climb is visible from the top of *Seagull*.

10 m of easy ice brings you to a ledge at the base of a steep 10 m pillar that can be rather fragile.

Descent Rappel or walk off to the left.

Cuckoo Falls 40 m III, WI 2

Approach This route is one of two short climbs found above *The Valley* to the east (82 O/6 237870). It is visible from the *Ghost River* and has three possible approaches. You can climb directly from the *Ghost River* through steep trees. Another way is to head up *The Valley* and, just before the canyon narrows between *Dead Bird* and *Yellow Bird*, climb a gully to the left and up a steep hill. Contour left for 500 m to the falls on the cliff face above. The best approach is to climb *Albatross*, then traverse left around the ridge and slightly down to the routes.

Cuckoo Falls is the left-hand route and is a low-angle pitch with several steep steps.

Descent Rappel from trees.

Snipe Falls 10 m III, WI 3

The right-hand route forms every year as a short pillar of steep ice.

Descent Rappel the route with old bolt in situ.

The Unforgiven 40 m III, WI 3

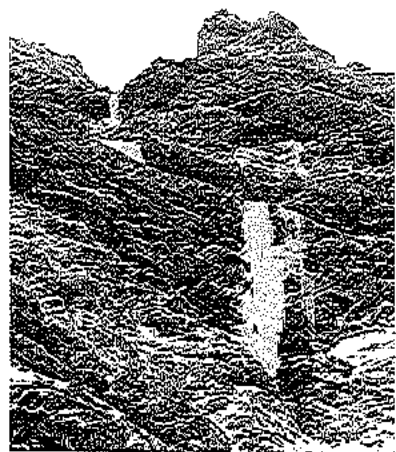
Approach Continue west past *Valley of the Birds* for 800 m (20 minutes) to where spectacular bedding planes rise steeply above the north side of the river (location of the famous rock route, *Alberta Jam*). This seep lies on the right side of these cliffs (82 O/6 232868).

The crux is getting up the 150 m of loose scree to the base of this nice route (not to mention the river crossing). This climb is best done early in the season before Chinooks turn it to mush.

Descent Rappel the route.

This House of Sky 500 m III, WI 3-4+

Within one season of publishing the previous guide in 1994, this went from having two or three ascents ever to one of the most popular routes in the entire range.



Brad Wroblewski

Approach From the parking at *Sentinel Crag*, walk west following roads in the trees on the south side of the river past *The GBU*. Pass the first major drainage on the left and hike up the second smaller drainage to the south, 1 km past the *Valley of the Birds* (*The Unforgiven* is across the river to the north). *This House of Sky* starts 300 m up the drainage in a tight canyon branching right (west) (82 O/6 231863). How does that classic rock and roll song go? "I can see for miles and miles..." Well here, you can climb for miles and miles. It's hard to think of a realistic length for this route. Just enter the canyon and continue upwards until it's obvious you can't go any farther. I won't say any more about this classic waterfall. Go explore it for yourself.

Descent Rappel and downclimb route, one 50-m rope is adequate or walk off right negotiating some steep terrain.

Phantom Falls 40 m III, WI 4 R

A testpiece that deserves more attention; unfortunately, it seems to rarely form, depending upon your definition of 'being formed'. The first ascent team found challenging mixed climbing.

Approach From the branch of *This House of Sky* continue up the left (south) fork 400 m to a large impassable rock wall and *Phantom Falls* (82 O/6 231859). The climb is visible from the main valley near the *Ghost River*, an easy walk from the car. Check it out; if it's not 'formed', easily retreat back to the *Valley of the Birds* or head up *This House of Sky*.

40 m of thin, narrow and intermittent ice up to 90°. Rock/mixed climbing may be required.

Descent Rappel the route.

Opposite: *The final pitches of This House of Sky.*



The first ascent of Burning in Water, Drowning in Flame.
Photo: Pat Morrow

Dirty Harry 60 m III, WI 5

This is a remote, difficult climb up the large drainage to the north and just west of *The Unforgiven*. The fall is on the east cliff face before the creek forks (82 O/6 227882) and doesn't always form. 2.5 hours. It is unclear if it is the usually unformed hanging dagger in a right-hand fork or something else farther up the left fork.

20 m of moderate ice leads to a pillar followed by an 8 m column of overhanging mushrooms leading to easier ice.

Descent Rappel the last two pitches, then walk off left.

Burning in Water, Drowning by Flame 30 m III, WI 6+

On the south side of the river, just past *Phantom Falls*, is an impressive overhanging rockwall. There are two routes on the lower reaches of this cliff, about 1 km beyond *Phantom Falls* (82 O/6 220864). Unfortunately they rarely form. *Burning, Drowning* is the left-hand route.

Approach Walk along the river until the routes are visible. Hike up a steep slope to reach them (Several river crossings may be required. A log bridge may be near the mouth of *Phantom Falls*). 40 minutes from the car.

Climb a 10 m smear underneath a 2 m overhang. The first ascent team climbed it as an ice route with the 5'8" leader grabbing a sling to reach out and snag a tool into a large free-hanging dagger. The 5'11" second was able to reach the ice directly. Free ascents in 1999, found less ice and more difficult dry tooling to reach ice at the lip.

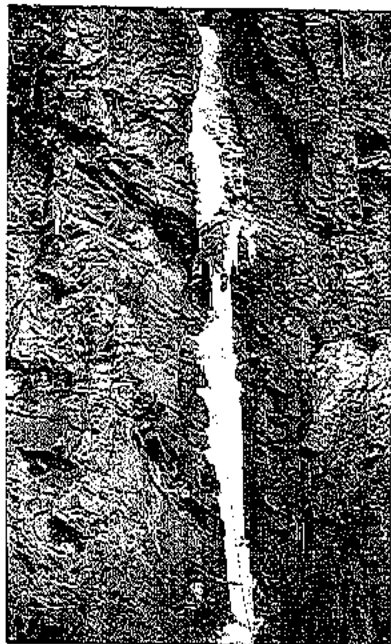
Descent Rappel the route from a tree.

The Sliver 40 m III, WI 6

A good early season route that can form by early October. It is a choice route with varied and sustained technical climbing. A variety of Bugaboos to fat Lost Arrows and ice screws are needed for protection. The longer days and spells of warm weather that are common by mid-season will destroy what little ice is needed for this route.

Approach *The Sliver* is located 100 m right of *Burning, Drowning* and easily recognized by its slender shape.

No more than 1 m wide, the crux of this partially free-standing pillar is 30 m long. Rock moves, heel-hooks, lie-backing off icicles and full body hugs are among the creative techniques used on this outstanding testpiece.



Pat Morrow

The first ascent of *The Sliver*.

Descent Rappel the route or rappel from trees to the right or walk off 300 m right.

Valley of the Sun 300 m III, WI 3+

This is a beautiful narrow canyon with lots of rambling steps and great views of Devils Head. Called *Valley of the Sun* because the climbing is almost always in the sun.

Approach This is the next valley on the north side of the Ghost River and west of the *Dirty Harry* drainage. It is almost directly across from *French Technique* (82 O/6 215871).

Lots of WI 2 leads to one 50 m pitch of WI 3+ or WI 4 depending on the line. The climb becomes a snow slog as it exits the canyon.

Descent Downclimb and rappel off v-threads and trees as necessary.

French Technique 700 m III, WI 2

This route covers a half a kilometre of horizontal and a quarter kilometre of vertical with lots of low-angle ice.

Approach Walk (or drive) past *This House of Sky* and *The Sliver* to the next drainage on the left (82 O/6 212859). Note that there is a bigger and broader valley just right (west) of this one, it contains the route *Going to the Sun Highway*.

The ice begins near the mouth of the valley and climbs to above treeline. Near the top, the gully splits, go left.

Descent Use combinations of downclimbing, rappelling and walking, depending upon your ability and the conditions.

Going to the Sun Highway 1,000 m V, 5.2, WI 6

Yes, this route is 1,000 m long. However, there are only four pitches of real climbing. It is unknown how often it forms. There is potential for a number of ice and mixed routes in this valley as well the smaller drainage to the west.

Approach It is located in the broad valley just west of *French Technique* and can be complicated to find. It was originally seen from the ridge line atop *This House of Sky*.

The first pitch is a radical 50 m free-standing pillar that only marginally touched down on the first ascent. The team climbed up rock behind the pillar to get rock gear up high (fixed pin in place), they then came down and sent the pillar. Lots of walking above leads to several pitches of alpine-style ice climbing that tops out on a subsidiary summit of *Costigan's Boil*.



Photo: Barry Blanchard *Going to the Sun Highway*.

Descent Rappel and downclimb route.

Beowulf 670 m III, WI 4

This route should help ease some of the overpopulation on *This House of Sky*. The length of *Beowulf* is calculated from a vertical distance of 250 m and a horizontal distance of 625 m. On the north side of the Ghost River directly across from the route *Going to the Sun Highway* is a narrow hidden valley containing the route (82 O/6 205871).

Approach The approach time depends upon how far up the Ghost River you can drive. Either way, start a couple hundred metres east of the mouth of Malamute Valley and head through the trees into the valley intersecting the outlet stream. Walk up to a small step and continue to the first real pitch.

A 10 m step leads to a platform below 25 m of steep ice. Continue walking past three good steps until an icefall appears on the left side. Climb 50 m of ice to a low-angled area below another steep 10 m section.

Descent Rappel and downclimb the route. There is a 2-bolt station at the top of the first steep pitch.

Devil's Punchbowl 30 m IV, WI 2-4

Approach Climb *Beowulf*, but do not climb the exit pitch. Walk upstream for 10 minutes going left at a fork. Two side by side curtains create a playground of ice varying from steep pillars to rolling terrain (82 O/6 204884).

Descent Rappel or downclimb and descend as per *Beowulf*.

Malamute Valley

One drainage west of *Beowulf*, Claw Creek branches to the north from the Ghost River and has been dubbed Malamute Valley. This valley contains over a dozen ice climbs of all grades.

Approach The mouth of the valley (82 O/6 196870) lies 4.5 km upstream from The Valley of the Birds and the first routes begin another 1 km into the valley. It is possible to drive to, and even slightly into the valley with a four-wheel drive monster truck, but walking guarantees that you'll do more than digging the car out of drifts for the day. If you do get to the climbs, there are some excellent routes in a beautiful remote setting typical of the Ghost. Claw Creek is a huge plain of frozen water and forks 2 km into the valley (82 O/6 189888).

Claw Creek

The first two climbs are found in the main Malamute Valley on the left (west) side.

Wee Wolf 30 m III, WI 2

Approach This is visible from only one spot on Claw Creek (82 O/6 187880). Located several hundred metres above the creek. Do not approach up the gully directly below the route, the trees to the left are better.

Climb a moderate pitch that is steeper on the left.

Descent Rappel the route or walk off left through the trees.

Fur Face 50 m III, WI 2

Approach Located in the next gully right of *Wee Wolf* (82 O/6 185884). It is not visible from the valley, but it is the last

gully before Claw Creek forks. Approach directly up the gully for several hundred metres to the base.

Several short steps near the top of the route provide the entertainment.

Descent Rappel the route or traverse left and downclimb two rock steps into a small side gully that drops back to the approach gully.

West Fork of Claw Creek

The next three climbs are found in the left-hand fork of Claw Creek all on the left (west) side.

Sitka's Slide 100 m III, WI 3+

Approach Found in the next gully north of *Fur Face* which is also the first gully into the West Fork (82 O/6 182887). The bottom half of the approach can be done

with or without crampons depending upon the conditions.

The route begins with a nice 10 m spill leading to a wide ledge. The "slide" is next with 20 m nearing vertical at the top. A poor single bolt anchor is found at the top.

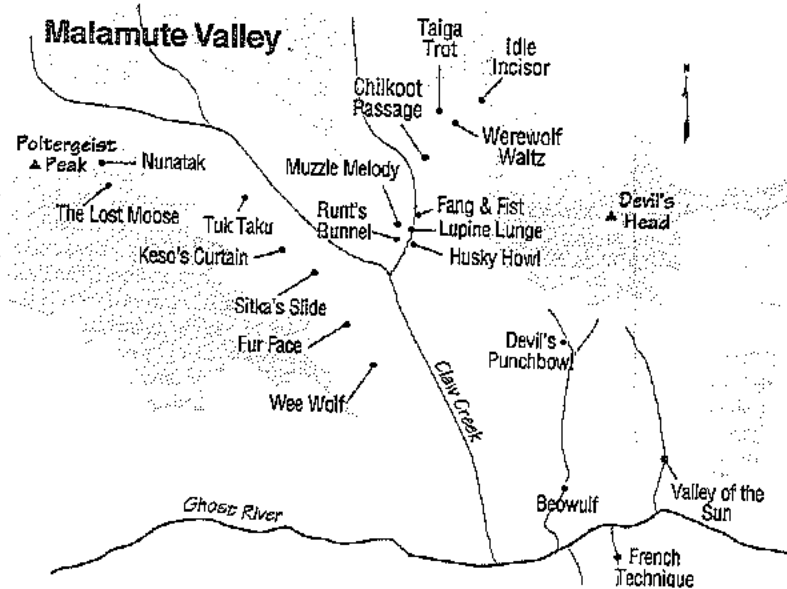
Descent Rappel the slide then walk off to the left, curving back into the gully.

Keso's Curtain 300 m III, WI 4

Location The next gully north of *Sitka's Slide* (82 O/6 180890). This is a rambling climb with two sporting sections.

Starting near the bottom of the gully, climb a moderately angled funnel that narrows at the top. Ramble up to a 10 m vertical curtain that may have poor ice. Continue up several more easy steps.

Descent Walk off left and down to the trees. Stay in the trees all the way down.



Tuk Taku 300 m IV, WI 3+

Approach Taku means dog in Inuvik. *Tuk Taku* is the next gully north of *Keso's Curtain* (82 O/6 176894).

The ice starts as a moderate step near the creek. Walk up to steep section, followed by several easy steps.

Descent Rappel the route or use the following walk off. Traverse right and downclimb a rock step via a tiny gully (or traverse far right for an all snow descent). Cross the climb and continue left to the trees. Stay in the trees until a sand ridge at the bottom leads back to the gully.

The Lost Moose 100m IV, WI 3

Approach This route is in the middle of the east face of Poltergeist Peak (82 O/6 165894) with a 3 hour approach. Beware of thin ice covering waist deep pools and high avalanche hazard on the final slopes. Very early season is probably the safest time, however Claw Creek may not be frozen, presenting difficulties upstream of the *Tuk Taku* turnoff. An alternative approach is to climb *Tuk Taku* (or walk up to its left) and cross over the ridge at an obvious knob. An elevation loss of 100m puts you at the bottom of the final approach slope.

The climb itself is moderate, with 5 m of vertical ice at the top. Calgary can be seen from mid-route on a clear day.

Descent Rappel the route.

Nunatak 45m IV, WI 3

Approach Right of *The Lost Moose* (82 O/6 164896).

Begin with 5 m of vertical ice. The upper 10 m was very thin and run-out during the early season first ascent.

Descent Rappel the route.

East Fork Claw Creek

The next nine climbs are in the right-fork of Claw Creek. These climbs are located on the west side of Devils Head. Indeed, a remote and potentially serious place.

Husky Howl 65 m III, WI 4

Approach *Husky Howl* is the first route on the right a short ways up the fork (82 O/6 191891).

Start with an unimpressive 5 m step followed by a 200 m haul to a half pitch pillar coming out of a cliff face.

Two short WI 2 routes are found just upstream from *Husky Howl*. They are: *Runt's Runnel*, 15 m (82 O/6 190891) and *Muzzle Melody*, 25 m (82 O/6 190892).

Descent Rappel the route.

Lupine Lunge 40 m IV, A2, WI 3+

Approach Between *Muzzle Melody* and *Fang and Fist* is *Lupine Lunge*.

The ice did not touch the ground and the first ascent aid climbed up rock on the left. It may go free (around 5.8), but good protection is hard to find.

Descent Rappel from a tree or walk to the top of *Muzzle Melody* and make a half-rope rappel.

Fang & Fist 400 m V, WI 5

The pick of the litter and one of the finest routes in the Ghost. *Fang & Fist* consists of three steep pillars followed by two easier pitches. An occasionally ephemeral climb; the second pitch fell off shortly after the first ascent. Other ascents have found fat and plastic ice.

Approach Just past *Lupine Lunge*, the climb should be obvious from the east fork of Claw Creek (82 O/6 193894).

If the first pillar is too small to tackle head-on, splattered ice may be climbed on the left. After a vertical, tenuous pillar reach easier ground leading to the second pitch. Another thin and technical pillar leads to a fat third pitch. Climb this technical, mushroomed pitch to easy ground and snow. The next half-pitch is a breather on pleasant ice. The final ice cone may have some rotten ice with a tree belay on the right.

Descent Rappel the route or take the long and scenic walk off. To walk off, go up and right to flat ground. Traverse right past a gully and wind your way downhill and downstream heading for some trees staying above the drop-off. Once in the trees, drop straight down until there is a ridge on climber's left. Go up and over this ridge and descend a small snow slope to a point about 100 m below the start of the climb.

Chilkoot Passage 300 m IV WI 4

Approach Several hundred metres past *Fang & Fist* the west fork branches again. *Chilkoot Passage* is the first climb in the drainage and must be climbed to reach three other routes. This neat little area offers great climbing in spectacular surroundings. This point is 3 km from the mouth of Malamute Valley and the Ghost River.

Climb a WI 2 step and continue up a tight canyon, past another step to a 30 m classic WI 4 pitch topped by a thin runnel. Two bolts are found on the right. Continuing past several small steps leads to an easy ice corridor called "Haines Junction."

Descent Rappel the route or continue climbing and descend as for *Werewolf Waltz*.

Taiga Trot 100 m IV, WI 2

Approach Climb *Chilkoot Passage* and from "Haines Junction" turn left to the climb (82 O/6 194902).

The climb is a couple of ice steps, only one of them steep. There is some extra ice off to the left.

Descent Rappel the route or walk down until above the steepest step. Traverse left to a notch and then down to the climb. Walk to the top of "Haines Junction" and either downclimb or rappel from a tree.

Werewolf Waltz 150 m IV, WI 3

Approach In the same place as *Taiga Trot*, but to the right from "Haines Junction."

Climb a couple of nice steps up to a two-tiered finish.

Descent Rappel the route or walk to the right a down through two small rockbands to the top of a snow slope. Descending the snow slope puts you back at the base of the climb. To bypass "Haines Junction" and *Chilkoot Passage* and return to the east fork of Claw Creek directly, traverse in from the right for 500 m to the gully above *Fang & Fist*. Cross it (above rockbands) and head down to the top of *Fang & Fist* and descend as per that route.

Idle Incisor 60 m IV, WI 4+

Approach Two short pillars just left of the last pitch of *Werewolf Waltz*.

The first pitch is short and steep to a tree belay. Walk over to the base of the final pitch; two parallel free-hanging pillars. This pitch may have overhangs at the top, or may require climbing on the back of the pillar. If both incisors are present, it may make for interesting bridging. Above the steep stuff are interesting ice and wind formations.

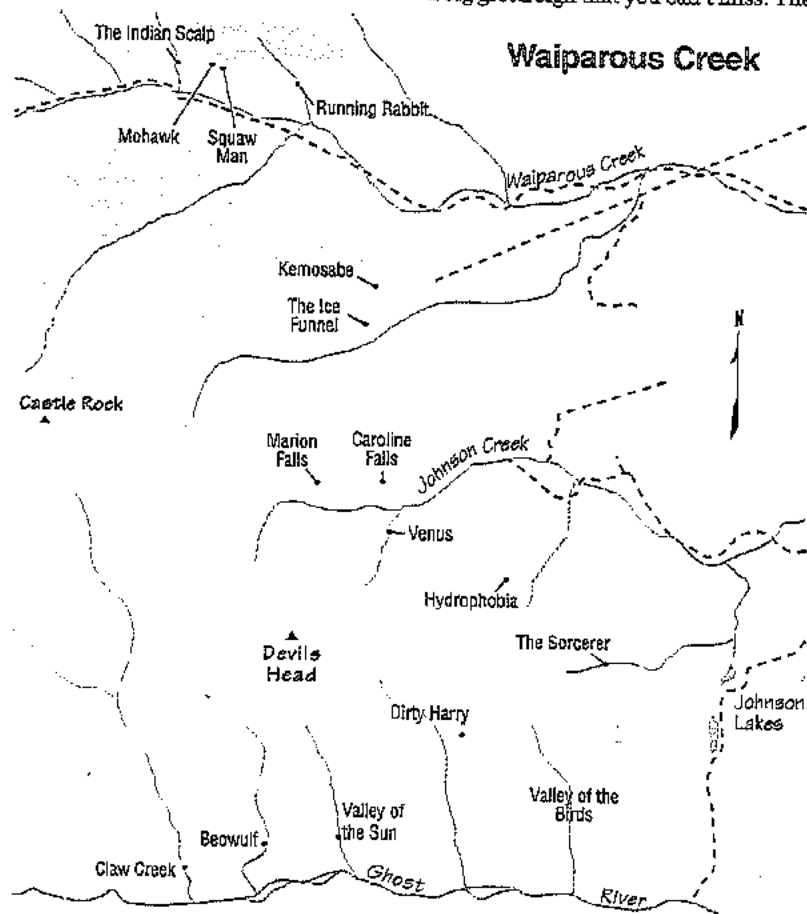
Descent Traverse to the top of *Werewolf Waltz* to descend.

WAIPAROUS CREEK

Accessing Waiparous Creek makes getting to the Ghost River seem easy, but spectacular limestone walls and high quality ice make it worth the journey. Choose a spell of nice Chinook weather and make a weekend of it. In three days you can climb every route in the area.

Getting There

Access requires a 4x4 vehicle and a good driver or an ATV. Continue past the Bar Cee Ranch on SR 940 for about 16.5 km (20 minutes) and turn left onto the "Waiparous Creek Road" as indicated by a big green sign that you can't miss. The



140 Waiparous Creek

"North Ghost Recreation Area" sign is not far enough. After five minutes the road forks with the right-hand fork going up a hill. Take the left-hand fork down towards the creek and ford the first small creek; if this is a problem don't keep going. Shortly, you'll pass Camp Chamisall and some other buildings on a pretty good but rocky road. Follow the road keeping the creek on your left and the camps on your right. This is important. Follow this road for about 12 km, to a major creek crossing. At one point you will climb up a hill for a couple of hundred metres, but the creek is still immediately below you on the left. If you get more than 0.5 km from the creek, turn around. Cross the creek (difficult if not totally frozen) just after the small yellow sign on the left. Within a couple hundred metres take a cutline south (left). At the next fork go left to a big rutted hill (chains recommended) that leads over a hill to a huge meadow/bog. Stay on the right side of the bog and if this crossing is successful follow ruts for a few more kms to the top of a small hill where you can just see *Hydrophobia* in the big drainage to the left. If you go up the valley to the right, you end up at *Marion Falls*. Good luck!

Facilities

Ha-Ha! You must be dreaming. The Ghost Forest Service Station is located 4.3 km north of Bar Cee Ranch and about 7 km south of Waiparous Creek. Staffing is very limited in winter, but there is a pay phone.

Emergency

If and when you reach a phone, call Kananaskis Country Emergency Services for assistance. See page 400.

Map

82 O/6 Lake Minnewanka

South Fork Johnson Creek

Both *The Sorcerer* and *Hydrophobia* are located in the South Fork of Johnson Creek near the Johnson Lakes. The top of *The Sorcerer*, *Hydrophobia* and the main Johnson Creek drainage are visible from SR 940 from a spectacular viewpoint 18 km north of the Bar Cee Ranch. *The Sorcerer* is best approached from The Ghost River and is described in that section.

Hydrophobia 150 m V, WI 5+

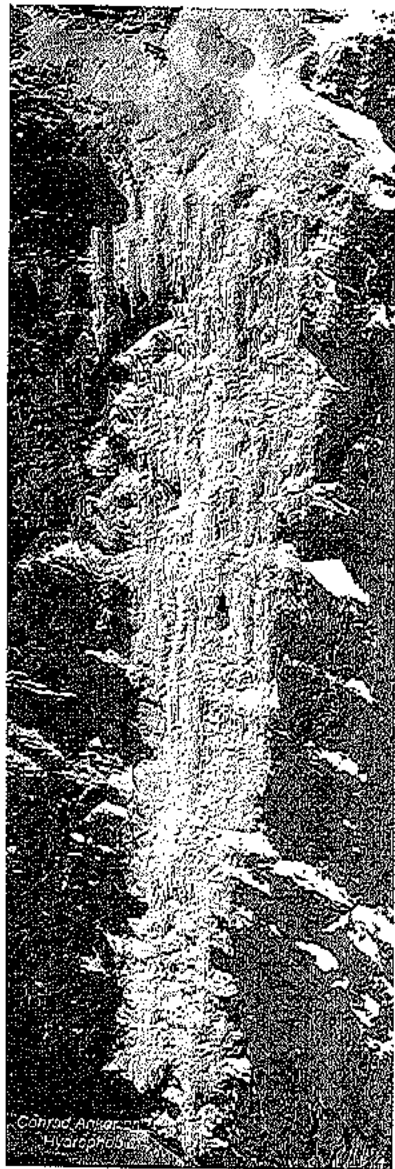
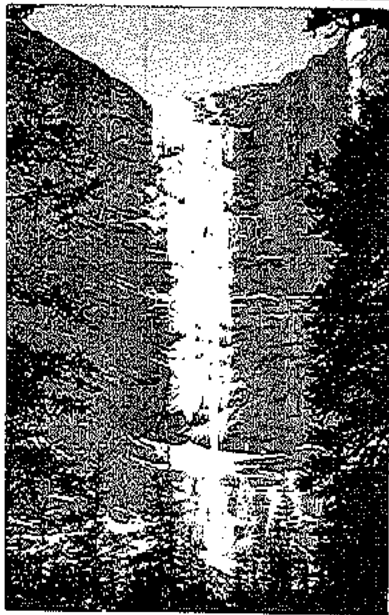
This spectacular and continuous waterfall is plastered at the back of a cirque amongst massive rock walls. As the first attempt party neared the top they were hit by a massive water release lasting 30 minutes. Soaked to the skin and with frozen gear they managed to retreat, leaving most of their gear in place. Staggering back through the bush they reached their car after dark, very wet and hypothermic. They returned and completed the route the next weekend. Such is climbing in The Ghost and Waiparous.

Approach If you have the proper vehicle the best approach is up Waiparous Creek (see "Getting There"). About 45 minutes walk from the final parking spot. However, few of us have a 'monster truck' so many parties approach the climb from The Ghost River by hiking past *The Sorcerer*. Follow the trail as for *The Sorcerer*, but continue on the trail to the second Johnson Lake where the trail makes a sharp bend to the east. Break left and hike across the lake. Then bushwhack northwest into the next drainage north of *The Sorcerer*. Follow your nose or take a compass, especially if there is no snow to leave tracks. *Hydrophobia* is obvious (82 O/6 232902). Allow 3 hours.

Climb a 25 m apron to a cave belay behind the first pitch. The pillar out of the cave is the crux and the difficulty is dictated by how the long chandelier and technical ice lasts, most often 10-15 m worth. The ice is sustained WI 5, but only gets sweeter and sweeter the higher you go, finishing with a deceptively steep 'sting in the tail'.

Descent Rappel the route. If you have time, it is highly recommended to continue up scree to the ridge line where the views of Devil's Head and the upper Ghost River are unbeatable. Once on the ridge, traverse southeast and over a small summit. From here either go east and rappel off *The Sorcerer* or continue due south and walk down the Valley of The Birds. Both have been done in a reasonable day.

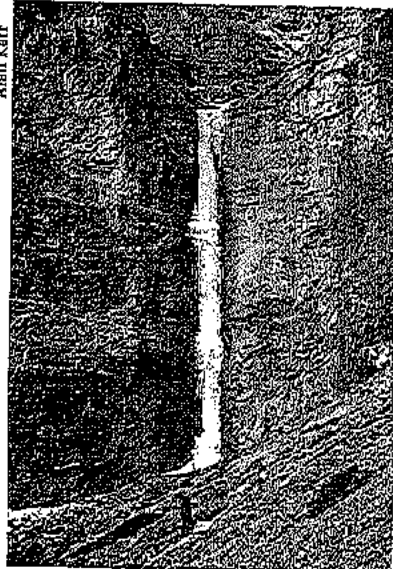
Hydrophobia.
Photo: Grant Statham



Brad Vachelski

Conrad Anagnostis
Hydrophobia

Alan Kerr



Shawn Eitman



Johnson Creek

The following three climbs are in the main Johnson Creek drainage just north of *Hydrophobia*. *Caroline Falls* can be seen from the mouth of the *Hydrophobia* cirque, but all routes are best approached via Waiparous Creek unless you like long bushwhacks.

Venus 50 m III, WI 3

Approach A nice, easy climb located 500 m from the valley entrance in the main drainage on the south side (82 O/6 219907), directly across from *Caroline Falls*. Several short steps of WI 2 followed by a large ice platform and then 25 m of WI 3.

Descent Rappel the route.

Caroline Falls 50 m III, WI 4

Approach The first main waterfall on the north side of the valley (82 O/6 218912), *Caroline Falls* is a classic pitch on excellent ice.

Descent Rappel the route.

Marion Falls 100 m III WI 5

Approach This climb is located in the next break past *Caroline Falls* on the north side of the valley (82 O/6 211912). This is one of the best routes in the Ghost River area.

Climb easy ice to a beautiful, technical pillar. Overhanging mushrooms and lacy ice makes for great climbing and leads into a more featureless pillar of good ice. Belay is possible in a cave on the right above the mushrooms.

Descent Rappel the route.

Top: *Caroline Falls*.
Bottom *Marion Falls*.

Waiparous Creek

One valley north of Johnson Creek is a south fork of Waiparous Creek containing two excellent climbs, both on the north side.

Kemosabe 100 m III, WI 4

Approach This route is located in a tight cleft immediately left of a huge rock wall that forms the end of a ridge dropping into the valley (82 O/6 218934). *Kemosabe*, the first route in the drainage, is obvious from the creek bed.

45 m of WI 3 with some steep sections leads to a long second pitch that is sustained 85-90° ice to the top.

Descent Rappel the route.

The Ice Funnel 150 m III, WI 4

Approach Ten minutes past *Kemosabe* in the next gully (82 O/6 217930) is an aesthetic, varied climb snaking up an impressive rockwall.

Start with a short vertical pillar to an undulating narrow section. A steeper section leads to the top. Rappel the route.

Descent It is recommended to traverse right on scree ledges to the top of *Kemosabe* and rappel, then climb that route.

The Indian Scalp 50 m IV, WI 3

Approach This is a remote climb in the main Waiparous Creek drainage even farther north of *Kemosabe*. *Indian Scalp* is located on the right (north side) in the second major tributary after passing an impressive 300 m high prow of rock on the right (82 O/6 185963).

A short steep pillar followed by undulating ice.

Descent Rappel the route.



Shawn Huisman

Kemosabe.



Grant Statham

The Ice Funnel.

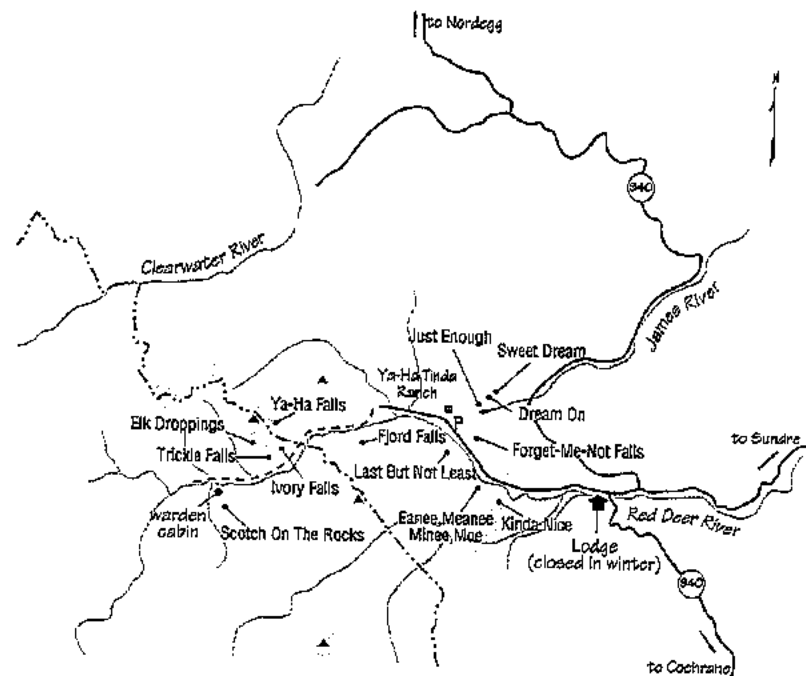
Three small WI 2 routes named *Running Rabbit* (20 m), *Squaw Man* (50 m) and *Mohawk* (50 m) have been done past *The Indian Scalp*. See map page 140.

THE DRY RANGES

The Dry Ranges include all routes from Waiparous Creek north to the Saskatchewan River and the David Thompson Highway. Climbing in this area offers a typical front range experience—high winds, relatively little snow (but large drifts) and warmer temperatures. Most of the climbs are accessed off the Secondary Road 940 and the Ya-Ha-Tinda Ranch Road in the vicinity of the Red Deer River. They have relatively quick approaches, provided you find the right parking spot.

The total number of routes seem to rise any time someone makes a visit and

most seem to form regularly. There are many unexplored river valleys undoubtedly yielding some ice climbs, if and when someone makes the journey. Beware—access to some valleys is strictly limited. Check with the Banff warden office. Much of the front range land on the eastern slopes of Banff National Park is located in Forest Land Use (FLU) Zones. Administered by the Alberta Forest Service, FLU Zones prohibit the use of any vehicles including snowmobiles and ATVs. Only foot, ski, horse and mountain bike travel is allowed in these zones.



Getting There

From Calgary drive west on Highway 1A past Cochrans. 13.4 km past the Highway 22 junction, turn north onto SR 940 (Forestry Trunk Road) and continue 82 km to the Red Deer River. This route is faster and about half the distance of taking Highway 22 from Cochrane to Sundre. If coming from north of the Bow Valley, drive 10 km on SR 584 west from Sundre, then turn south on a secondary road (Coalcamp sign) leading 48 km to SR 940. Turn left for 3 km to the Ya-Ha-Tinda Road which heads west from a junction 100 m north of the bridge over the Red Deer River. The road is marked with an "Alpine Outfitting" sign. In warm weather, it can have sections of heavy mud with deep ruts.

Facilities

The best place to obtain information on the surrounding area and location of FLU Zones is at the Alberta Forest Service District Office located on Main Street in Sundre. The office is open from 8:15 am to 4:30 pm, Monday to Friday and has maps for sale of the surrounding area. The nearest gas and food is in Sundre. Primitive camping sites are abundant.

Emergency

The Mountain Aire Lodge on the south side of the Red Deer River is closed most of the winter, but there is a pay phone outside the lodge. The best bet for emergency rescue assistance is from the nearest RCMP detachment in either Nordegg or Sundre. The ranch hands at the Ya-Ha-Tinda Ranch are very informative and helpful and would likely be available to assist in an emergency. The Burnt Timber Shell Field Office located 2 km east of SR 940 also has an emergency phone. See page 400.

Maps

82 O/11 Burnt Timber Creek
82 O/12 Barrier Mountain
82 O/13 Forbidden Creek

Ya-Ha-Tinda Ranch Road

The following climbs are all located west of SR 940 somewhere along the road leading to the Ya-Ha-Tinda Ranch.

Kinda-Nice 55 m III, WI 4

Approach Drive west toward Ya-Ha-Tinda Ranch 7 km and park in an obvious clearing on the south side of the road near a bend in the river. *Kinda-Nice* can be seen as the first major route to the southwest (82 O/11 107224). Proceed across the Red Deer River (hip waders or running shoes would be helpful). Bushwhack in a direct line for 45 to 60 minutes.

Climb one pitch up undulating ice to the base of the upper pillar. Two lines offer themselves, a small pillar on the left side broken by a snow ledge, or a sustained curtain to the right.

Descent Rappel the route or walk off to the right.

Eanee, Meanee, Minee, Moe 20-45 m III, WI 2-4

Approach Drive 12 km west on the Ya-Ha-Tinda Road. The climb or rather four distinct flows 50 m apart, is visible to the south (there is an old fire burn some 400 m above the climb). A knee-deep crossing of the Red Deer River is required to reach these climbs (hip waders or running shoes recommended). Once across the river, bushwhack for about an hour to the route.

The left-hand route *Eanee* is the longest, but the middle two are the hardest *Meanee* and *Minee*. These three routes are very close together, while the fourth *Moe* is 50 m to the right. All offer great ice with excellent views.

Descent Rappel from trees.

Last But Not Least 25 m III, WI 4

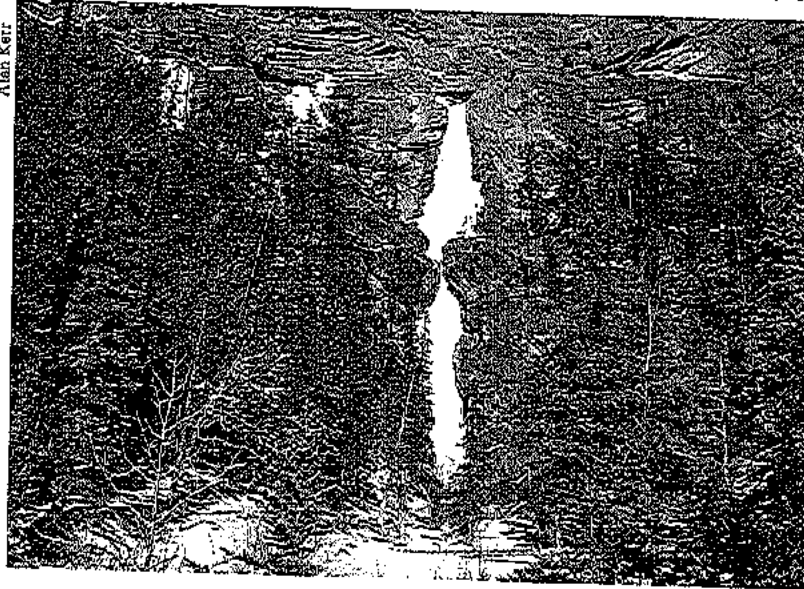
Approach Drive 17 km west along the Ya-Ha-Tinda Road. The climb should be visible on the left (south) high up on the cliffs of the facing mountain, locally known as Goat Mountain. The base is reached in about 45 minutes from the road. This is another route that requires a fording of the Red Deer River.

There is a steep pitch on good ice ending in a small cave.

Descent Rappel the route.

Dream On.

Alan Kerr



James Pass

The following three routes are found in the Eagle Lake/James Pass vicinity.

Parking Drive westbound along the Ya-Ha-Tinda Ranch Road for exactly 20 km from SR 940 and turn north at the Frontier Outfitter sign. Drive another 250 m to the Eagle Lake Trailhead parking lot.

Dream On 90 m III, WI 4

Approach Walk east along the road for 2.5 km and around Eagle Lake for another 1 km to a road which is followed for 1.5 km to the north side of James Pass. *Dream On* is easily visible to your left. Although the approach is 5 km, there is only 100 m of elevation gain.

The climb starts with a pitch of easy ice leading to ledge followed by a nice long pitch of steepening ice to a tree belay (rockfall hazard from cliffs above).

About 150 m farther up the drainage from *Dream On* is an obvious fork with both options leading to a 40 m of WI 3+. The right-hand is called *This Dream is Over* and the left-hand *Another Dream*. Right of *Another Dream* is an obvious 40 m WI 3 called *Sunny Dream*. Climbed with *Dream On* they make the drive up to James Pass worthwhile.

Descent Rappel and downclimb route.

Sweet Dream 50 m III, WI 3

Sweet Dream is a series of seepages with a variety of different lines of varying steepness. It is located 50 m right of *Dream On*, and makes an excellent combo with that route. Rappel from a large tree.

Just Enough 50 m III, WI 3

Approach as for *Dream On*, but walk only about two-thirds of the way around Eagle Lake on the south shore. Once the climb is visible, about 250 m above the lake to the north, cross the lake and bushwhack up to the route.

A number of smears and seeps present themselves and get lots of sun. An early season ascent is recommended before the climbs turn to mush.

Descent Rappel the route (beware of loose scree atop the climbs).

Ya-Ha-Tinda Ranch

The next six routes are all found west of the Ya-Ha-Tinda Ranch.

Parking All climbs are accessed by parking at the pole gate at the entrance to the Ranch some 24 km west of SR 940. The area west of the ranch is now a FLU Zone so you cannot drive past the ranch buildings that are about 1.5 km from the Banff National Park boundary.

Fjord Falls 45 m III, WI 3

Approach From the parking lot a large grassy meadow is visible on the south side of the river about 4 km to the west. To get to *Fjord Falls* you must reach this meadow. Head down the road to where it starts to elevate. Head south across the Red Deer River and continue west to the meadow. Cross in a southwest direction until the first creek bed, and follow the east side of this to a well-cut trail. Continue 1 km to the climb (82 O/12 958294). Below a set of hitching rails, a path will take you to the base. 2-3 hours.

In a narrow, almost enclosed canyon is 45 m of 65-80° ice.

Descent Rappel from a tree or walk off back to trail.

Ya-Ha Falls 40 m III, WI 4

There are two one-pitch pillars in the south-facing cirque on Wapiti Mountain between Ya-Ha Tinda Ranch and the park boundary.

Approach Walk or bike west to a bridge over the stream coming from the cirque. Follow the stream north, taking the first branch to the left. Climb easy rock on the left side to the base (82 J/12 885298).

There is good climbing on each pillar with the left-hand being the most difficult.

Descent Rappel or walk off.

Banff National Park

Ivory Falls 140 m III, WI 5

Approach From the ranch continue west on the road to the Banff Park boundary. *Ivory Falls* is found about another km into the park in the first drainage to the right and can be seen from the road (82 O/12 885276).

Two excellent pitches start the climb. The first is 50 m of WI 3 with a tree belay. Pitch 2 is a sustained curtain for 45 m on 85° ice. The final crux pitch is a long walk up the gully (up to an hour) and is a steep 45 m pillar of good ice.

Descent Rappel the route.

Trickle Falls 80 m III, WI 3

Approach This route is found in the next gully west of *Ivory Falls*. Walk or ride 1 km past that route. *Trickle Falls* is visible from the road in the smaller drainage to the north (82 O/12 879271). It can be combined with *Ya-Ha* and/or *Ivory Falls* for a good day.

Climb 50 m of undulating ice followed by a 30 m pitch with some steep sections.

Descent Rappel the route.

Elk Droppings 70 m of ice III, WI 3

Approach Four km west of the park boundary is a large drainage coming out of the north (Tyrrell Creek). *Elk Droppings* is located up a pretty canyon that branches east near the mouth of Tyrrell Creek. The first pitch can be seen from the road.

Enter the canyon on a pitch of excellent ice and then walk another 1.5 km upstream to a 25 m pillar of steeper ice.

Descent Rappel and downclimb route.

Scotch on the Rocks 90 m III, WI 4

This is a pretty route that is visible from the warden cabin about 10 km west of the park boundary. The route faces north so it will be good early and late into the season. If the road is clear of snow it makes a worthwhile trip by combining ice climbing with mountain biking.

Approach Cross the Red Deer River just before the warden cabin and continue past the turn-off to the cabin to a gully on the northwest side of Mount White. A short scramble leads to the base.

Two moderate and enjoyable pitches lead to a large cave behind the upper curtain. Make a typically hard move out of the cave and proceed up steep ice to the top.

Descent Scramble up from the belay until it is possible to access slopes to the right on which to walk off.

South of Nordegg

This is the general area south of Highway 11 and north of the Red Deer River. It is a huge area that seems ripe for waterfall exploration. The Ram River is famous among paddlers for its drops and steep cliffs along the canyon. I've heard from several early season boaters about frozen waterfall remnants. The front ranges that run from Abraham Lake south east to the Ya Ha Tinda Ranch are also known for their numerous cliffs.

Crack of Doom 75 m IV, WI 4

Approach This route is accessed from SR 940 near the town of Nordegg. You can drive up SR 940 from the Red Deer River, but it is 174 km of rough, unmaintained road. The best access is from Highway 11 (David Thompson Highway). Just west of Nordegg turn south onto SR 940 and drive 9 km to the Saskatchewan River Bridge. Immediately south of the bridge is a parking area. Follow the Almer Trail west until the trail meets a wide beaver dam. Cross the dam to the north and pick up a trail leading west through a narrow grove of trees. Follow the trail west through a series of meadows until you reach the first creek bed. Follow the creek bed up 2 km to the climb, a total of 15 km from the bridge. Were these guys dedicated or what!

A pretty pillar is located in a large amphitheatre with three or four other potential climbs ranging from WI 3-5. *Crack of Doom* takes the main falls up a fan of ice to an upper pillar which sported a 30 cm crack on the first ascent.

Descent Walk off either left or right.

Clearwater River

Martin Creek Falls 100 m V, WI 4

This remote waterfall is buried deep in the Clearwater River drainage.

Approach The first ascent team approached the route via the Icefields Parkway by skiing up Mosquito Creek and over Quartzite Col to Clearwater Pass. They followed the Clearwater River east to Martin Lake and skied west up Martin Creek and the lake at the end of the valley—a five-day trip. The route is found above the lake on the classic headwall below a hanging valley. A suggested approach might come from the east via the wide valley of the Clearwater River. Make it a 'mini-expedition' and look for new routes all the way up the Clearwater. Enquire in Sundre about access to the park boundary from the east. It is about 15 km from the boundary to Martin Lake and another 8-10 km to *Martin Creek Falls*. The view of the north face of Mount Willingdon, 3,373 m, is awesome.

The first 25 m of the climb ends at the entrance to a deep canyon. Walk to the head of the canyon to 70 m of steep and tricky climbing. The climb is topped by a cornice.

Descent Rappel the route from below the cornice.

THE BOW VALLEY

Being close to population centres and with a selection of well over 100 routes, the Bow Valley can be considered the core of waterfall ice climbing in the Rockies. It includes routes from the mountain front near Mount Yamnuska all the way to the Lake Louise area. There is a great range of routes in terms of difficulty, length, approach, season, pure ice and mixed. There truly is something for everyone.

The Bow Valley is divided into three sections—Canmore Corridor, Banff Region and the Lake Louise Group. As it traverses such a large area, the Bow Valley has a wide variety of routes and prevailing conditions. Climbs on the eastern slopes tend to have less snow and are affected by Chinooks. The Lake Louise Group generally has more snow with winter conditions throughout the season.

Getting There

Several highways converge on the Bow Valley. The Trans-Canada Highway (1) passes through the south side of the valley from Calgary to Canmore (110 km), past Banff (20 km from Canmore) and continues 50 km to Lake Louise and beyond. A secondary road, the 1A Highway, parallels much of the Trans-Canada Highway on the north side of the valley. From the west, Highway 93 south from Radium, B.C. enters the Bow Valley at Castle Junction, 28 km northwest of Banff. The Icefields Parkway (Highway 93 North) from Jasper joins the Trans-Canada Highway 2 km north of Lake Louise.

Facilities

The major Bow Valley communities of Canmore, Banff and Lake Louise have a selection of hotels, motels, bed and break-

fasts, pubs and shops to suit any pocket book. In Canmore, a popular hang for climbers is the Alpine Club of Canada Clubhouse. Banff, Castle Junction and Lake Louise all have international hostels with electricity and running water. As a warning, there may not be 24 hour gas in Canmore, Banff or Lake Louise. The only year-round, 24-hour gas station is at Dead Man's Flats just east of Canmore.

Emergency

When climbing east of the Banff Park gates (Canmore Corridor) emergency personnel can be reached through Kananaskis Country Emergency Services by dialling 911. Banff and Lake Louise areas fall under the respective Park Warden Service. See page 400.

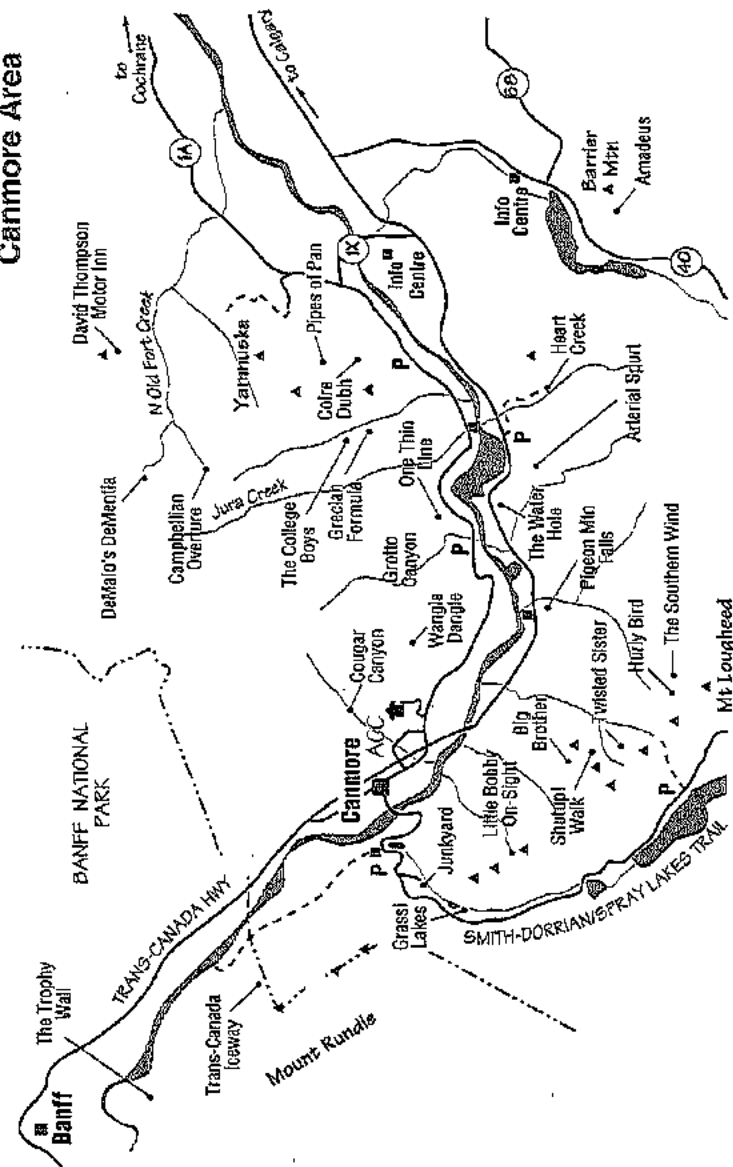
Canmore Corridor

As there are a variety of moderate routes with relatively little avalanche danger, expect to see lots of people tramping about, especially on weekends and early season before the snow falls and frothing locals are desperate for new routes. Frequent Chinooks often make the climbing enjoyable. Beware of increasing avalanche hazard and falling ice during warm weather.

All routes in Old Fort Creek, Goat Mountain, Jura Creek and Grotto Mountain are accessed from the 1A Highway east of Canmore. Lac Des Arcs and the Three Sisters areas are accessed via the Trans-Canada Highway. The east end of Rundle is presently reached from Canmore. See map, page 152.

Map

82 O/3 Canmore



Old Fort Creek

These four routes, located in a remote drainage north of the CMC Valley, offer a great escape from the crowds on other Bow Valley standards. Excellent camping spots abound. Near the mouth of the valley on the south side is a potential route as good as anything in the region.

Getting There

From the 1A Highway, 2.2 km east of the Seebe exit (Highway 1X) turn north into the Yammuska parking lot. Follow the obvious trail over the ridge to the right (east) of Yammuska and into CMC Valley. Follow the old road downstream to the east about 1 km and cross the creek before a clay cliff. Head northwest through forest into North Old Fort Creek. Continue north up the flat cobblestone-strewn valley. Be sure to look left.

David Thompson Motor Inn 150 m III, WI 3

This route forms early and is very thick. About 100 m down the canyon on the right is a thick detached dagger hanging off the wall. It would be about 25 m of rock and 25 m of dagger ice and has not been climbed.

Approach Hike up North Old Fort Creek only a few hundred metres then turn right into the first rocky creek northbound that enters a beautiful canyon after about 15 minutes. The ice is obvious above a tiny scree slope on the right.

Climb many beautiful blue, steep ice steps to a final short curtain which ends on a scree slope. Above is Association Peak.

Descent Rappel and downclimb.



Photo: Joe Josephson

DeMaio's DeMentia

DeMaio's DeMentia 200 m IV, WI 3

DeMaio's DeMentia can be seen from the 1A Highway while travelling west toward the mountains. Look two valleys north of Yammuska and quite high in the back of a bowl for a narrow line snaking up the steepest part. It may be difficult to see after a snowfall.

Approach At the head of the valley are two forks. This route is easily seen in the right-hand fork (82 O/3 276705). Allow 5 hours from the car.

Some very steep mixed pillars (unclimbed) can be found at the bottom of the bowl but are turned easily on the right. Continue up 200 m of easy mixed climbing to the base of the route. Three pitches of excellent ice leads to a curtain of 85° ice. This is a superb line with an unfortunate approach.

Descent Rappel and downclimb.

Campbellian Overture 180 m IV, WI 2

Approach This line is in the back of the valley at the head of the left-hand fork (82 O/3 269693). It is dedicated to Frank Campbell for his constant, year-round exploration of the front ranges.

Similar to *DeMaio's DeMentia* but the 'hard' pitch is first, followed by cruiser slab ice to the top.

There is a soaking wet free-standing pillar down and left of the route called *Tristan's Pillar* (10 m III, 4).

Descent Descend the route. It is possible to walk off the first pitch to the right.

Goat Mountain

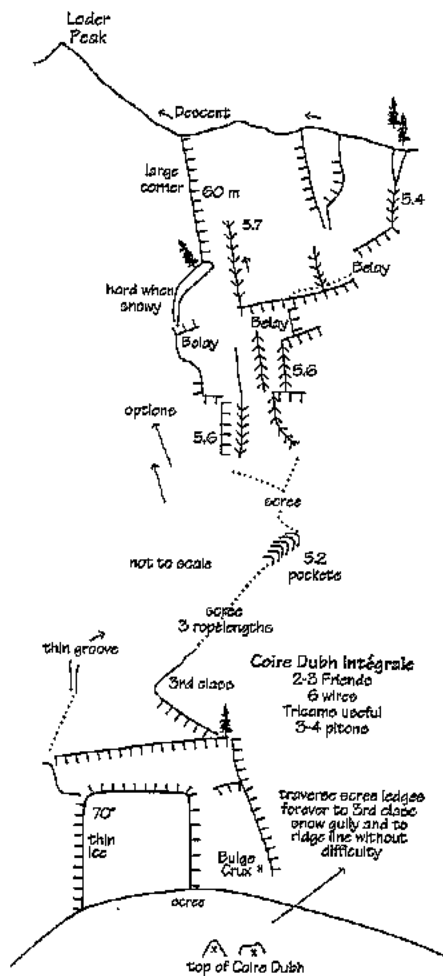
Goat Mountain is the long and obvious peak left of Yamnuska. Three gullies split the southeast face into several distinct, large (200-500 m) rock slabs. The two largest of these gullies contain routes. Both are good, alpine-style climbs.

Parking Park in a paved lot on the south side of the 1A Highway, 1.7 km east of the Continental Lime Plant. Cross the highway to a gated gravel road that accesses a dump. Do not drive up the road even if the gate is open; you will likely get towed or have the gate closed behind you.

Coire Dubh 250 m II, WI 3

Welcome to a long climb with little real climbing. *Coire Dubh* is recommended for beginners who want to get a feel for moving across lots of terrain.

Approach Hike past the dump and through light trees, staying parallel with Goat Mountain to your left. Continue past the first drainage to the second, larger drainage with an obvious ice flow (82 O/3 307616). 1 hour of nice walking.



The first flow is usually soaking wet and leads to a narrow gully of snow and low-angle ice. Turn the corner and climb a final pitch of good ice. A two-bolt belay is on a large block(s) near the right side.

Descent Rappel and downclimb route.

Coire Dubh Intégrale 550 m III, 5.7 WI 3

This mini-alpine route gives a great taste of mixed climbing for intermediate and experienced climbers alike. The route climbs the ice of *Coire Dubh* and continues up rock and mixed ground to the ridge line (very scenic). Be prepared for extreme winds on the ridge. This is one of the few winter mixed routes that is also climbed in the summer and is rated 5.4. But in winter, a 5.4 climber would find it pretty 'out there'. The rock is above average and the climbing is intricate with good gear. The rock was formed from a large coral reef, thus there are a large number of pockets and tri-cams work well in these. The climbing can be desperate after a snowfall; wait for the winds to blow the rock clean.

Climb *Coire Dubh Intégrale* into an amphitheatre where the ice ends. Above, a number of variations have been done. Pick whatever looks most enticing and enjoy (see topo opposite).

Descent Continue easily along the ridge to the left. Climb over the top of Loder Peak then down the main southwest ridge for another 2 hours to the road. An alternative descent is straight down the back of the ridge into Jura Creek. Some route finding is required to avoid small cliffbands and it can be a nice option if the ridge is stormy.

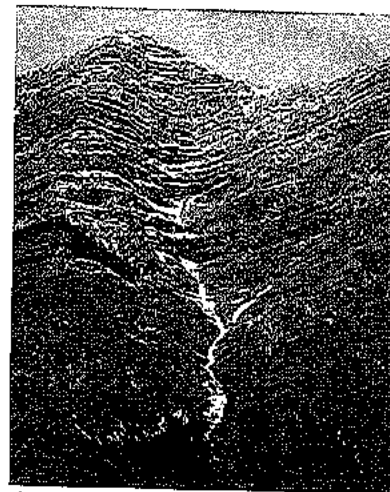


Photo: Joe Josephson

Coire Dubh Intégrale.

Pipes of Pan 300 m V, WI 5

In the large gully right of *Coire Dubh Intégrale* and left of a large rock prow called *Goat Buttress* lies *Pipes of Pan*. The last pitch is visible from the Trans-Canada Highway but doesn't always form. To see the final crux pillar, look on the steep cliff due left of the top of *Goat Buttress* and right of the main snow gully going up to the ridge.

Approach Walk past *Coire Dubh Intégrale* and a large rock slab to the gully (82 O/3 307635). 2 hours.

Up to six pitches can be found culminating in a difficult WI 5 pillar very high up the mountain.

Descent Rappel from ice and pitons. The adventurous may continue to the ridge and follow an exposed traverse left to the road or right toward Yamnuska, either of which would make for a long day out.

Jura Creek

Jura Creek is a deep valley west of Goat Mountain. There are two completed routes about an hour up the canyon. A number of other small smears, once climbed in a failed quest for bigger things, are located 3-4 hours up the creek.

Parking Park on the 1A Highway across from the Continental Lime Plant, 2 km northeast of Exshaw. Walk easily through trees and into the canyon.

Grecian Formula 100 m III, WI 3 R

Grecian Formula rarely forms but offers some fun mixed climbing when it does.

Approach 1 hour up Jura Creek on the left just past a narrow section (82 O/3 615287). Small to medium Friends are useful.

Descent Rappel the route.

The College Boys 40 m III WI, 4+

Approach Walk up Jura Creek for about 2 hours until you see an obvious pillar to the left. Hike another 45 minutes up to the base (82 O/3 635279). The pillar is visible from the top of *Coire Dubh Intégraile*. It seems to form every year.

Climb a one pitch, near-vertical pillar. The first ascent on Boxing Day required several aid moves owing to a belly full of turkey.

Descent Rappel the route.

Grotto Mountain

The following eight routes all lie somewhere on Grotto Mountain. All but two are in Grotto Canyon, a popular summer hiking and rock climbing venue.

One Thin Line 45 m III, 3 WI R

This rarely climbed route in Steve's Canyon is in a narrow and steeply sided drainage east of Grotto Canyon. It is not known if the route forms regularly.

Approach Park at Grotto Mountain near Grotto Pond, 10.8 km east of the Trans-Canada overpass or 3.5 km west of Exshaw. Follow the summer trail west to the first creek bed and then take the creek upstream past a 5-10 m step of ice and then another 20 minutes to the route.

Climb one pitch up a steep slab of thin ice.

Descent Rappel the route.

Grotto Canyon

A popular beginners area for years, recent bolted routes alongside classic ice routes have made it a popular destination for all sorts.

Approach Park at the unsigned parking lot 9.7 km east of the Trans-Canada overpass or 4.6 km west of Exshaw. From a trail on the west end of the lot, hike through trees past the #2 Baymag plant into the canyon. Continue on the frozen streambed past pretty rock walls to where the canyon forks. 30 minutes. *His* and *Hers* are the obvious pillars pouring out of the rock wall (82 O/3 248588). *His* is on the left and *Hers* on the right.

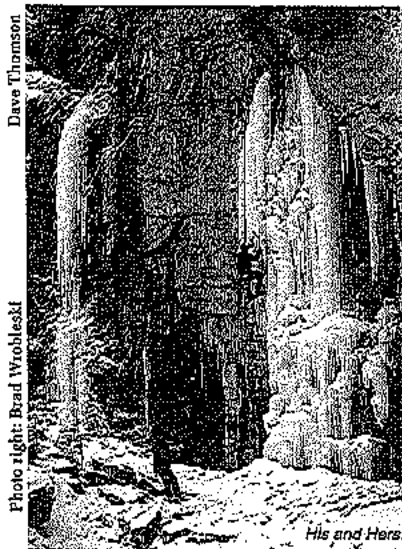
Descent Little imagination is needed on how to get off any of these pillars.

1005 13 III III, WI 4

Although *His* is a short route it is not to be underestimated. It is vertical throughout and can sport poor ice. As a result, many people have hit the deck here. Early in the season it is thin and very chandelieri. As the season progresses, constant traffic creates large overhangs and pitted ice. The bottom of the pillar is often chopped away, seriously undermining the base of support and it has been known to collapse under the weight of a climber. Once the rope is up it is a top rope heaven. *Mental Jewelry* (M6+) ascends the right side past five bolts to the ice.

Hers 15 m II, WI 3-4

Hers is the right-hand pillar and a little easier than its neighbour, for it usually bulks out near the bottom and provides more rests. Once the scene of many a top rope, the mixed, icicley left side now has three bolts for leading.



Dave Thimmon

Photo right: Brad Wroblewski

1005 13 III III, WI 4

A third slender, free-standing pillar once formed in the corner right of *Hers*. It must have been a freak water flow as the pillar has never even remotely come down before or since.

Grotto Falls 55 m II, WI 3

A classic short route. It is a popular weekend route—as many as 20 people have been seen on the route at one time. Without a bunch of people, *Grotto Falls* can be fun—a good warm up for *His* and *Hers*.

Approach From the T-junction at *His* and *Hers*, hike 100 m up the narrow drainage to the right.

It is usually climbed in two pitches with two bolt belays on the ledge about halfway up. Another bolt belay is found on the rock step to the left a few metres back from the top of the climb.

Descent Rappel the route.



Climb the first step of *Grotto Falls* to the ledge and the bolt belay on the left wall. Traverse right across the ledge, under the upper ice pitch and continue around a rock bulge to a fixed piton. Climb the crack above then move right to an excellent crack near an exposed prow which is climbed over a small bulge to a good tree. Descent Rappel from tree.

Crystal Tear 200 m III, WI 3

Approach From the T-junction at *His* and *Hers*, follow the left-hand fork for about 1 km. *Crystal Tear* is on the south-facing slopes opposite a high cliff called *Armadillo Butress* (the first cliff past the gravel cave). This rarely formed route is another 300 m up the hillside approximately (82 O/3 243594).

Scramble up for 150 m where the gully narrows. Snow and two short steps lead to 45 m of steeper ice.

Descent Rappel and downclimb.

Elie and Lui IV, WI 3-4

These parallel climbs, located between the two highest peaks of *Grotto Mountain*, are reached by a long 2-3 hour hike past *Crystal Tear*. There is over 600 m elevation gain from the road to the base of the routes.

Approach Little is known about them and they are said to be "situated on the left in a gully farthest to the right" approximately (82 O/3 221611).

Climb a 20 m step, then continue up the gully for another hour (say it isn't so!) to a fork. The left-hand contains an easy 30 m flow, while the right-hand contains a pillar similar to *His* and *Hers*.

Descent Rappel and downclimb.

Rat's Nest Area

Several short but difficult routes of unknown character have been climbed near the head of the canyon above *Rat's Nest Cave*.

Wangle Dangle 40 m III, 5.7, WI 4

On the rockband way above the west end of the *Burnco* strip mine on the south face of *Grotto Mountain* is a wide section of green icicles which are easily seen from the *Trans-Canada* or *1A Highway*. There is some amount of ice here most seasons and it can form differently from year to year.

Approach Park at a small turn-off on the north side of *1A Highway*, 2.6 km east of the *Trans-Canada* overpass. March through steep trees and scree past the mining scar toward the route; approximately 2.5 hours (82 O/3 207595). Be wary of trespassing on *Burnco* property.

Wangle Dangle climbs WI 2 ice to the right of the largest icicle for 10 m then traverses left on downward sloping ledges and shattered rock for 15 m to the ice. Traverse onto the free-hanging dagger and continue to the top.

Wangle Dangle has been known to touch the ground in many separate places. Several 'complete' ice routes have been claimed and it is uncertain who has climbed what. The complete ice route often starts only 30 cm in diameter, as a heavily mushroomed pillar that gradually builds into a huge curtain. One ascent called *Propain* (WI 5) offers "plenty of gymnastics and features some classic rests enjoyed while sitting atop huge mushrooms."

Descent Rappel from trees.

Lac Des Arcs

Along the *Trans-Canada Highway* 16 km east of *Canmore* is a wide lake called *Lac Des Arcs*, formed by overflow from the *Bow River*. There is an interchange at the east end of the lake that leads to a signed parking lot for *Heart Creek* trailhead, a popular summer hiking trail. The following routes are found in *Heart Creek* or on nearby *Mount McGillivray*, the rocky peak above the highway. The large drainage behind *Mount McGillivray* is home to at least one tremendous unformed dagger, often visible from the mouth of *Grotto Canyon*.

Heart Creek Falls 45 m II, WI 2-3

Approach About 45 minutes up *Heart Creek* are a series of seeps. From *Heart Creek* trailhead follow the trail east paralleling the highway. At the creek, continue upstream to the falls (82 O/3 297557).

Two or three smears situated close to one another are great for teaching and practice with small groups. A short way up the canyon, the creek pours over a small cliff. When formed, it offers another nice WI 3 pitch.

Descent Rappel and downclimb route.

Arterial Spurt 150 m III, WI 3 R

Arterial Spurt is an obvious route that vies with *Sinatra Falls* for the most 'first ascents'. Forming on a smooth slab in the back of a bowl, it is often one of the first routes to form and provides a fine thin-ice diversion. Beware of small loaded snow pockets.

Approach Park at *Heart Creek* trailhead. Behind (southeast) the parking lot, follow the left side of an obvious deep canyon. Once above the canyon stay left on high ground and traverse into the large bowl. 650 m of elevation gain (82 O/3 286552).

Climb up to four pitches of usually thin and low-angle ice.

Descent Rappel the route. Pitons or wires may be useful.

The Water Hole 45 m II, WI 3

Two small smears occasionally appear at the right end of *McGillivray* slabs above *Lac Des Arcs*. It is another classic among the *Bow Valley* store of moderate routes.

Approach 2 km west of the *Heart Creek/Lac Des Arcs* interchange, park along the *Trans-Canada* in the pull-out next to the lake. Scramble up the far right side of the road cut and walk easily through trees (82 O/3 268565).

Parallel smears of 70-85° ice. The left-hand is longer, better and more often formed.

Descent Rappel from trees.

Irish Mist 65 m II, WI 3

Irish Mist, located at the west end of *McGillivray* Slabs (82 O/3 267565), is very obscure and rarely forms.

Approach Park as for *The Water Hole* but breach the road cut at the low spot near the middle, then continue past a cabin to the cliff.

Climbed in three short pitches the route may include some rock or mixed moves.

Descent Rappel the route.

Pigeon Mountain Falls 10 m I, WI 2-3

This small waterfall lies on land leased by the Thunderstone Quarry.

Approach To reach the climb, drive south from the overpass at Dead Man's Flats toward Three Sisters Resort. Thunderstone Quarry is on your right. Park at the end of the quarry just up the hill from the entrance. In the past it has been recommended to avoid the buildings and to walk downhill from the upper end of the quarry. However, in recent years there has been an issue of unexploded charges in the area around the quarry and the owner has recommended to climbers they approach via the building areas. If in doubt, stop and ask permission and directions.

Mount Lougheed

Two obvious routes visible from the Trans-Canada near Dead Man's Flats sometimes form below the north face of Mount Lougheed. It seems logical to trudge up the valley from the highway directly to the routes. This has been described as grade VI+ bushwhacking and is not recommended. Best approached from the Smith-Dorrien Spray Trail, they are placed in this chapter as it is from Dead Man's Flats where you'll see them and hopefully be inspired.

On the right side of nearby Rimwall, a potential mixed route of world-class nature tries to form once in a blue moon. A number of determined efforts in the mid '90s came close to finishing the route and if it ever does come in again, the fixed gear may be accessible making it ready for a quick ascent. Indeed, with the number of talented climbers snooping around Canmore these days, if you sleep in an extra hour, you'll miss it.

Hurly Bird 50 m IV, WI 4

Hurly Bird is the steep right-hand route (82 J/14 208494) and makes a fine early season adventure. The name commemorates one of the airsick first ascensionists that lost his bacon and eggs on the col after a windy helicopter ride. The joke is on the rest of them, however, as that person now makes a living flying helicopters. Go figure....

Approach Drive down the Smith-Dorrien Spray Trail from Canmore and park at Spurling Creek 5 km south of the Spray River Ranger Station. Follow a trail (look for a cairn next to the road) along the north side of the creek to Wind Pass, then traverse right to the Wind Tower/Lougheed col. 2-3 hours depending on conditions. The most enjoyable way to approach is by helicopter from Canmore into the col in about six minutes. From the col, scramble down a gully on the northeast side and into the basin. Hike down 1 km past some anaemic unclimbed smears to the routes on



Hurly Bird.

Grant Stahen

the right. Beware of lee-loaded slopes below the col.

Mellow ice leads to a pleasant free-standing pillar of excellent ice.

Descent Rappel the route. It may be possible to continue to the ridge as mentioned below for *Southern Wind*.

The Southern Wind 250 m IV, WI 3

Despite its long approach *The Southern Wind* is one of the best WI 3 routes around. It is the second of two smears on the north face of Mount Lougheed.

Approach Next to *Hurly Bird*, 200 m to the left (82 J/14 207494). Some very steep stringers of ice can sometimes be seen in a crack system down and left of the route.

The first crux pitch can be rather thin and technical. The next pitch climbs a short pillar on narrow ice. Continue up easier-angled ice for 100 m to a snowgully.

Descent Either rappel the route and walk out 5 hours to Dead Man's Flats or continue up snow to the ridge and traverse easily right below the north face of Mount Lougheed back to the col.

Raphael Stavinski



Twisted Sister takes the ice farthest left. All other ice is unclimbed.

The Three Sisters

The land along the south side of the Trans-Canada from Dead Man's Flats to Canmore is presently under considerable development. This will undoubtedly change the approach tactics for all routes in the area. Approaches described here are valid for the 2000/01 season but could change overnight. Be careful not to trespass and if in doubt enquire with the Town of Canmore (403-678-5593). On another note, this same area has old hidden mine shafts and large overgrown open pits. They can be very dangerous especially if descending in the dark.

Twisted Sister 300 m IV, 5.7, R WI 4

An obvious north-facing pillar, *Twisted Sister* is situated below a prominent sub-peak up Stewart Creek between the Three Sisters Mountain and Wind Ridge. It is a long early-season climb. Chinooks melt it away later in the season.

and snow buildup makes the approach harder than it already is.

Approach Park along the Trans-Canada Highway, 2 km north of Dead Man's Flats and bushwhack into Stewart Creek. Follow old roads upstream and continue on faint paths to scree below the route. 3 hours (82 O/3 170519).

Trudge up scree to a right-trending weakness in the rock slab below a conspicuous crescent-shaped overhang. Climb up right in a shallow groove to a steeper corner (bolt). Continue up the corner (crux) running it out to a pin station on the right. Get onto the ice and climb four long pitches of winding WI 2. The final 50 m pitch is a classic WI 4.

Psycho Mama 300 m III, WI 3

Approach This is a rare ice and snow line about 50 m left of *Twisted Sister*.

Climb a snow and rock gully to a nice second pitch of thin ice and rock. Continue over a rock step and go left to more thin ice and rock.

Descent Traverse right and rappel *Twisted Sister*.

Shut Up and Walk 100 m IV, WI 5+ R

A fun route with good views of the valley. It can form in September or whenever the first significant Arctic front blows through.

Approach Hike up Stewart Creek to *Twisted Sister*, and continue for another hour. The route is on the back of Big Sister near the top of the wall. The route is visible from the 1A Highway about 5 km east of Canmore. You can't see it on the approach until you're on the scree slope. When the trail starts a long traverse back north toward the Middle Sister head straight up on fourth class terrain traversing a bit until you're at the base. You can reach the route via a nice

left-to-right slanting ledge with some 5.2 scrambling. The route name pretty much sums up the approach.

The first pitch is the crux, thin detached ice to a larger detached pillar. Pitons for protection are useful. The first ascent team kicked it on rappel and it fell down. The second pitch is nice WI 4-5. You can do a short third pitch as well and then up the snow to the summit of Big Sister.

Descent Traverse west along the start ledge until it ends, rappel 30 m from a thread with tat, traverse a bit more to the ridge that connects Big and Middle Sister, scramble down this to the trail and walk out in the dark.

Big Brother 200 m V, 5.7, WI 5+ X

Located on the north face of Little Sister, *Big Brother* sports thin ice mixed climbing in an alpine environment with all the attendant hazards and rock gear battles. This aesthetic line is visible from almost anywhere in Canmore and may come and go several times a season and may form thinner or fatter than the description.

Approach The climb is reached via Three Sisters Creek but the access is constantly changing. From the road out of Canmore toward the Smith-Dorrien Spray Trail, turn into the Marriott Hotel and follow dirt roads along the power line to the creek. Hike up the creek avoiding a waterfall on the left. Continue up the drainage until below the First Sister, then head up steep trees to the scree below the face. Slog up snow gullies and scramble easy rock to the base. 3 hours.

A short step of ice leads to a gully and a rock belay. The next step can have little or no ice. From a fixed anchor, move the belay up the snow gully to the next steep section. A narrow ribbon of snowy ice

ends at a one bolt anchor on the right. Move left and climb a long pitch past a thin smear and a detached pillar (crux) to a fixed anchor on the left.

Descent Rappel the route from fixed rock anchors.

Little Bobby On-Sight 150 m IV, WI 4+ R

Numerous variations of this climb exist. The first ascent team finished out to the right on a narrow runnel that ended in an overhang. The left-hand version up the main gully ends at about the same height but deposits you at the top of the cliff. This surprisingly good climb provides intricate thin and mixed climbing.

Approach It is located on the right side of the Ship's Prow, a large prominent cliff just west of the Three Sisters Mountain and is easily visible from the Cougar Canyon area in Canmore. Two totally different approaches are available. One is a quick flight in a helicopter or else a long 2-3 hour slog up steep timbered slopes. If you are walking park as close as you can legally get somewhere along the Three Sisters Resorts. Walk until you are below the gully running down from the wall then put your head down and give 'er.

A pretty pillar pours out of the main gully and then fans into several separate smears. The right-side leads directly to the pillar and has several protection bolts placed on an earlier attempt. The left-side, dubbed the *Elvis has Left the Building* variation, climbs a thin pitch to an even thinner traverse right into the pillar. Climb the steep technical pillar for 30 m. Then climb the aesthetic runnel to the right or make mixed moves into the main gully. Continue up to the top of the cliff.

Descent If you climb to the top of the cliff, walk off to the right (beware of avalanche slopes). Otherwise, rappel the right side.

Cougar Canyon

Cougar Canyon is a popular sport climbing area easily accessible from the Canmore suburbs. There is some confusion if the two ice routes reported here might not actually be the same one. At least one person has seen a significant multi-pitch mixed route somewhere on the north side of Grotto Mountain.

The Gong Show 30 m III, WI 3

Approach Walk up Cougar Canyon for 30-45 minutes to a major fork known as Canadian Forks. Go right and continue past an unclimbed, partially formed pillar into a narrow canyon followed by a small cirque where a nice short pitch presents itself.

Explodamatic 30 m III, WI 3-4

Approach Walk up Cougar Canyon to the Canadian Forks and take the right fork. The creek forks again about 150 m farther up and take the right fork again. The climb is another 35 minutes up the drainage in the main creek (82 O/3 2006624).

East End of Rundle

Canmore Junkyard 20-60 m I, WI 2-4

Considered the ultimate practice area, it offers a wide and varied expanse of ice.

Approach 1.1 km past the Canmore Nordic Centre turn left at the marked Grassi Lakes turn-off. Park at the first parking lot on the right. Hike along the road for about 500 m, past houses, and up to the ice.

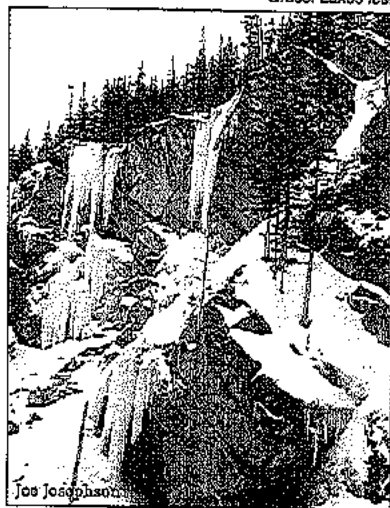
The far left side contains low-angle ice for several pitches. The middle, *Scottish Gully*, is a fun narrow pitch. The right has tons of rolling terrain with a steep curtain.

Descent Rappel from trees or down-climb.

Grassi Lakes

Up until the early '80s this area was known to have several nice, fat flows of good ice and was used frequently by instructors and beginners. Some years the entire south wall would turn into one giant mini Weeping Wall. However, work on the dam directly above affected the water table and the cliff essentially went dry for over 15 years. In 1996-97 the utility company shored up the dam and presto—the ice came back! What a difference time will make. The area had become a very popular sport climbing destination and the ice now comes in sporadically and more mixed. The routes can form differently every year but most seasons there are at least four established mixed climbs (See *Mixed Climbs*), one or two short ice routes up to WI 4 and the occasional steep pillar (WI 5 to 6) pouring off the middle of Hermit Wall, a popular sport climbing area.

Grassi Lakes ice.



Joe Josephson



WI 11 Gully

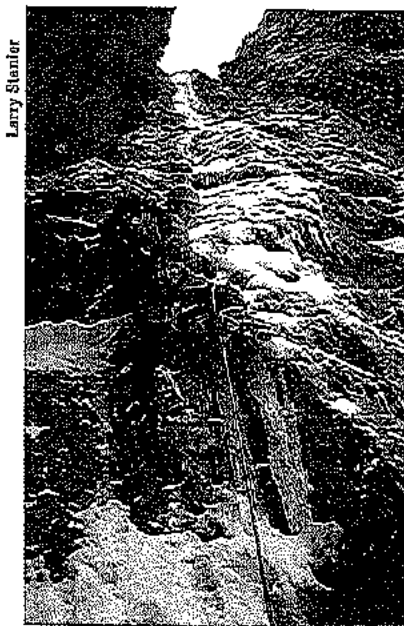
Trans-Canada Iceway.

Trans-Canada Iceway 200 m IV, WI 4

High on Mount Rundle above the park boundary is an almost hidden gully. Look into the bowl to the right of a huge buttress above the boundary outline. *Trans-Canada Iceway* is on the shorter wall on the left side of the bowl and appears as a thin white line.

A helpful way to find the proper basin is to count the gullies in a westerly direction starting from the large cliff at the east end of Mount Rundle. *Trans-Canada Iceway* lies in the eighth main gully toward Banff. There are also some completed ice routes of unknown character in gully three or four.

Approach Follow the Smith-Dornier Spray Trail south from Canmore to the Nordic Centre. Check the Nordic Centre trail map to locate the trail along the Bow River toward Banff. Mountain bike or hike along this trail to the boundary outline, then hike up to the base of the buttress. Traverse right into the bowl and the base of the route. 4 hours (82 O/3



Larry Stanier

Joe Josephson on Trans-Canada Iceway.

079648). Another approach that has been used is to carry a canoe from the park entrance and then float back to the Canmore bridge at the end of the day.

This is a fine climb offering four sustained pitches of narrow, Scottish-style ice. It is possible to climb it in 3 pitches with 60 m ropes.

Descent It is possible to rappel the route. The best descent is to walk off into the huge bowl to the right. This route would be certain death in high avalanche conditions and is best done early in the season. Look for the wild unclimbed pillar that can occasionally form across the bowl. There may also be thin routes directly above the descent.

Banff Region

The Banff Region includes Cascade Mountain, Mount Rundle, routes above Lake Minnewanka, Mount Cory, Pilot Mountain and farther west toward Castle Mountain.

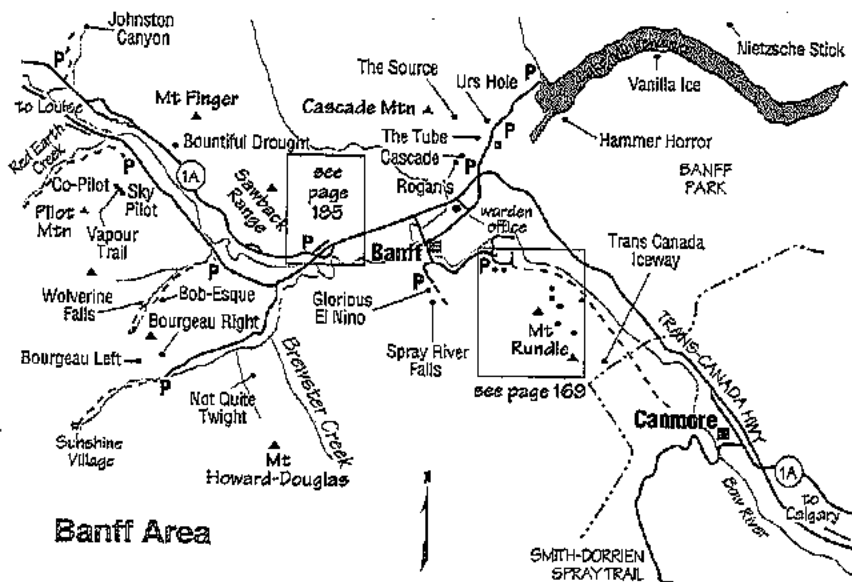
Mount Rundle is the massive peak that dominates the skyline for 20 km between Canmore and Banff. On its brooding northeast face is a concentration of some of the most challenging ice climbs in the world. Cascade Mountain is the peak above the airfield at the east exit into Banff.

The climbs on Cascade are moderate in nature and very popular owing to the short approach. Unfortunately, they have a sunny exposure and lee snow-loaded bowls above the routes leave them open to high avalanche potential. In terms of the number of accidents, *Cascade* is undoubtedly the most dangerous waterfall in the Rockies. On one telling day in 1993, 18 persons were involved in a single avalanche!

Lake Minnewanka and the other areas west have a smaller concentration of routes but they are generally high quality and have recently been explored for new routes. Check with the warden service and the weather office for updated avalanche conditions. See map page 166.

Maps

- 82 O/3 Canmore
- 82 O/4 Banff
- 82 O/6 Lake Minnewanka
- 82 O/5 Castle Mountain



Banff Area

Cascade Mountain

Four avalanche-prone gullies are found along the south face of Cascade Mountain. *Cascade Waterfall* is the obvious line above the airfield east of Banff. *Rogan's* and *Cascade* always form but often melt away during warm spells, then reform several times throughout the season.

Approaches From the Banff east exit on the Trans-Canada, turn north and drive along the Lake Minnewanka Road and park in a small pull-out on the left, 200 m past the cattle guard. Walk through light trees to the base of *Rogan's* or *Cascade* in 15-20 minutes. *The Tube* and *The Urs Hole* are approached from farther along the Lake Minnewanka Road.

Rogan's Gully 300 m II, WI 2

In the deep gully left of *Cascade Waterfall* is a moderate snow and ice climb. If formed the bottom pitch should be obvious as a nice blue flow out of the gully.

An 18 m step leads into *The Narrows*. Continue past small steps to a fork, both with ice. The left is easier.

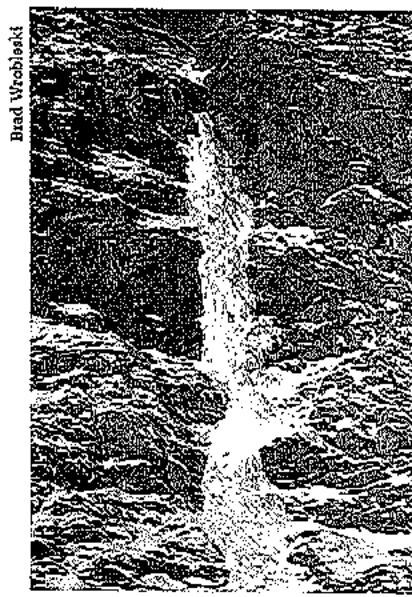
Descent Rappel and downclimb route. Beware of manky fixed stations. Another common descent is to walk down to the right of *Rogan's Gully*. This is the descent used for summer rock climbs and requires one rappel off a tree as you get cliffed out about five minutes into the descent.

Cascade Waterfall 300 m III, WI 3

This route is considered by some to be the best grade III ice climb anywhere. The bowl above is very avalanche-prone especially on warm sunny days. Falling ice and rock, both natural and man-made, can be a serious problem as well. If conditions are doubtful or there are parties above you, an alternative route is recommended.

It is a long route but only the final 75 m are steep. The bottom pitches are commonly soloed or avoided to the right. The final two pitches offer occasionally thin ice to 80°. There are bolt belays on the left or right.

Descent Make three rappels then downclimb or bypass the rest. Alternatively, climb another pitch at the back of the bowl and traverse left to the top of *Rogan's Gully*.



Cascade Waterfall.

The Tube 30 m II WI 2

Immediately right of *Cascade Waterfall* is a deep gash, *The Tube*, that doesn't always form.

Approach Continue along the Lake Minnewanka Road for 300 m and park at the far end of the Cadet Camp.

Some exposed rock scrambling to the right may be required to bypass the initial rock step. Higher up are two short tubes of ice formed behind large chockstones. Another WI 4 pitch can be found a short walk up the canyon.

Descent Rappel the route.

The Urs Hole 95 m II WI 2

The right-most Cascade climb is below a bowl that drains a majority of the south face. Don't even look at this route after the first significant snowfall of the year.

Approach Drive along the Lake Minnewanka Road for 1 km and park at the road closure. Hike 300 m to an open streambed near the landfill. Walk easily to the climb.

Climb a series of short steps up to 8 m long to where the gully narrows. Several more widely-spaced steps lead to a pocket glacier of avalanche debris that has turned into ice. This requires some squeezing, tunnelling, spelunking-type manoeuvres to negotiate.

Descent Rappel and downclimb.

The Urs Hole Direct Finish 45 m III WI 5

A short way beyond the collapsed pocket glacier is a series of beautiful icicles and chandeliers that form in a smooth water chute. It makes a good early-season testpiece as it becomes 'lost' under avalanche debris as the season progresses.

Descent Rappel the pitch or walk left (west) to gain the top of another fork of *The Urs Hole*.

The Source 100 m IV, 5.7, WI 5

Located way above *The Urs Hole* almost halfway up Cascade Mountain is *The Source*.

Approach Climb *The Urs Hole* to its end. At the junction above the pocket glacier, take the left fork and climb one pitch of WI 3. Continue up the gully until you reach open slopes. *The Source* is now in view. Climb a gully or the ridge below to reach the climb. 3-4 hours. A definite early season route!

Climb 25 m of 5.7 rock to a belay. Traverse right and up snow slopes to the base. Climb steep ice to a final 50 m chandelier pillar.

Descent Rappel 50 m from a large boulder. Use a tree to rappel the lower rock buttress, then retrace the rest of route.

Lake Minnewanka

Although obscure, these routes make for an easy outing from Banff or Canmore. The routes lie to the east along the shores of Lake Minnewanka. Ice skates have been used to access the routes in early season when the ice is relatively smooth. As the season progresses, the ice gets rougher and makes for good mountain biking.

Hammer Horror 30 m II, WI 4+

Approach From the Banff east exit, turn north. Drive past Cascade Mountain 5 km to the end of Lake Minnewanka Road to a large parking lot. Park at the south end of the dam and travel 2 km east across the lake to a small outwash fan below the gully. Ascend the left side through the trees and bypass a lower cliff for about 150 m. The climb is visible from just off shore or from the picnic area on the north side of the lake (82 O/3 071773).

168 *The Bow Valley*

Climb a narrow pillar that is free-standing for half its length. For an easier ascent try stemming off the rock. The route rarely forms but now has two bolted mixed alternatives.

Descent Rappel the route.

Vanilla Ice 70 m III, WI 2

Approach From the parking lot, ice skate for 40 minutes or mountain bike for 20 minutes to the major turn in the lake. The climb is on the south side only minutes from shore (82 O/6 109805).

This climb is a wide flow of ice with no avalanche hazard that gives good climbing away from the maddening crowds in the Bow Valley.

Descent Walk off.

Nietzsche Stick 80 m III, WI 3

The first ascent team, finding the lake in exceptionally smooth condition, used hockey skates and a sail to reach this climb—an innovative approach taking 45 minutes! It is located 360 m above the lake on the north side just east of the warden cabin. Climb up through the trees avoiding small rockbands, to the base approximately (82 O/6 080819).

Climb two pitches of sunny, moderate ice.

Descent Rappel the route and skate 1.5 hours (3 hours with a strong headwind) back to Banff.

Ghost Lake

A number of other ice flows have been explored around Lake Minnewanka as far east as the inlet near Ghost Lakes. Many side canyons and cliffbands along the lake await exploration and I leave them for your own discovery.

Mount Rundle

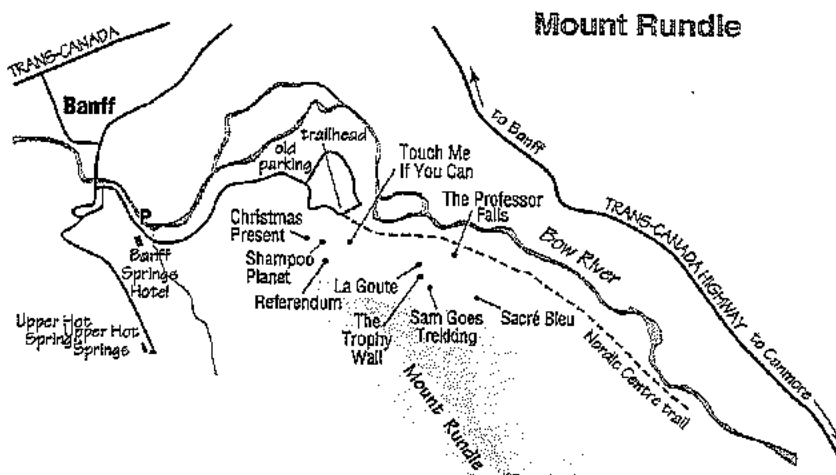
All things considered, Mount Rundle may well have the greatest collection of hard ice routes in the world. At the time of their first ascents, both *The Terminator* and *Sea of Vapours* were arguably the hardest ice routes yet completed. In addition to all the top-heavy stuff, Rundle is home to *The Professor Falls* and *Christmas Present*, two of the top moderate routes anywhere. What more needs to be said?

Mixed Climbing on Mount Rundle

Owing to the ephemeral nature of most routes on Mount Rundle, many have mixed climbing variations although a few were established from the start as mixed climbs. The routes *Two Piece Yanks* and *Troubled Dreams* are still considered at the top of the scale in their genre of traditionally protected mixed

climbs. Most recently Mount Rundle has been home to a hard core bolted venue called *The Gulag*. The current high end mixed routes are well covered in *Mixed Climbs* and will be left for that volume. For clarity and where appropriate, mention will be made of the routes omitting the approach and climbing details.

Getting There Drive through Banff following signs for the Banff Springs Golf Course. Park at the Bow Falls view point lot near Banff Springs Hotel. Walk or mountain bike across Goat Creek Bridge and continue along the golf course road for 3 km to a fork (the old parking area). Take the right-hand road for another 1.5 km to a hiking trail branching right (the original parking area). Follow the trail through the forest and along the river to where you branch off for your route of choice. More detailed information is under each description.



Christmas Present 200 m III, WI 3 R

This underrated route doesn't often form.

Approach Continue about 400 m past the old parking area to a sharp double bend to the left and look on the cliffbands above in a shallow gully. Hike up through the trees for 30 minutes to the base (82 O/4 032693).

Rarely is the initial slab frozen so either sketch directly up the rocks or traverse around from the left via exposed treed ledges into a small scree bowl. Low-angle ice and rock lead to a short right-facing corner. Either climb the corner and continue up slabs to a large ledge or traverse left across rock ledges for 25 m to a long right-facing corner. Climb up the corner, about 5.5, to where it arches severely to the right. You can escape left into the trees and down at this point. To continue up the route, make a difficult step right across a very smooth slab or jump to a small tree on the end of the large ledge. Continue up generally thin but low-angle ice for another two pitches nearing 80° at the top.

Descent Walk off right. However, some diligence is required to weave through the steep trees amongst scattered rock slabs. If you pass the next open avalanche path (scree) right of the route, you have gone too far. If in doubt, several short rappels should suffice.

Shampoo Planet 190 m III, 5.9+, WI 3 R

This devious route is found in the next gully left of *Christmas Present*. It is best done early in the season before the thin sections disappear and while temperatures are conducive to rock climbing. The bottom pillar has never been known to form and one attempt resulted in a spectacular fall when the dagger peeled away from the baby-smooth slab. The



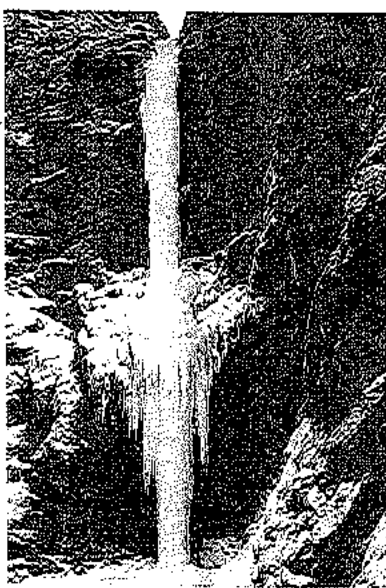
Rob Orvig, Larry Stanier and James Blenck on Shampoo Planet.

direct start remains unclimbed. 10 m to the left a run-out rock corner has also been climbed (5.9 R) that was originally called *Poo Planet* owing to what your pants are full of after the first shitty pitch.

Approach Walk 200 m past the double bend in the road and look up an avalanche path to the route. *Shampoo Planet* can be seen as a low-angle smear of ice that ends over a steep wall 20 m off the ground (82 O/4 035892). Hike up to the route past some tricky slabs. About 1 hour.

Start up a corner of thin ice and through mushrooms to a right-trending corner. The next 30 m may have little or no ice requiring rock climbing and dry tooling (M5). Some frozen moss adds welcome purchase to the baby-smooth slab. Belay on a small stance where the

cosquides of ref



Darren Tremaine

La Gourne.

corner arches to the right. Step left under a loose block and sketch up a groove to the right end of a horizontal moss seam. Handrail across the seam using ice tools and slinging moss horns to the ice smear. Cruise happily up thinish but easy ice for three pitches with a fun 30 cm wide seam and a WI 3 pitch near the top.

Descent Walk off as for *Christmas Present*.

Referendum 25 m IV, WI 6

Approach This short nasty is located one cliffband above *Shampoo Planet*. Climb either that route or *Christmas Present* and move one gully left.

Some rolling WI 2/3 ice leads to a wide pillar.

Descent Rappel the route.

Touch Me If You Can 95 m III, WI 4

This climb formed once or twice about 300 m past the Nordic Centre trailhead and to the left of the above routes. It has been known to form suddenly in early April. There are two pitches of thin ice in a left-facing corner steepening to 90° with a small pillar. A rack of wires and cams are required.

Welcome to Canada 650 m IV, WI 4

Welcome to Canada is located in the deep gully that splits the large headwall to the right of *The Terminator*. Beware of travelling over significant avalanche slopes as well as being threatened from above.

Approach About 2 km past the trailhead and shortly before the trail drops down to the river, there is usually a small cairn and a well-travelled trail on the right-hand side. Follow this as it trends gradually up and left toward the main gully. If you miss the trail and end up below the first large open gully with *The Terminator* hanging high above, continue directly up the gully to the first rockband (82 O/3 049689). On the right side of the gully, a short dirty corner places you above the cliff.

Continue straight up the drainage where you will encounter a number of thin runnels and short pillars up to WI 4 in difficulty. If unformed you can usually traverse past the steps on exposed ledges. Alternatively, bypass the entire bottom by following *The Terminator* approach and traversing right into the drainage below the lower cliffbands. Climb the deep gash in the headwall on moderate ice and snow for a 650 m training adventure.

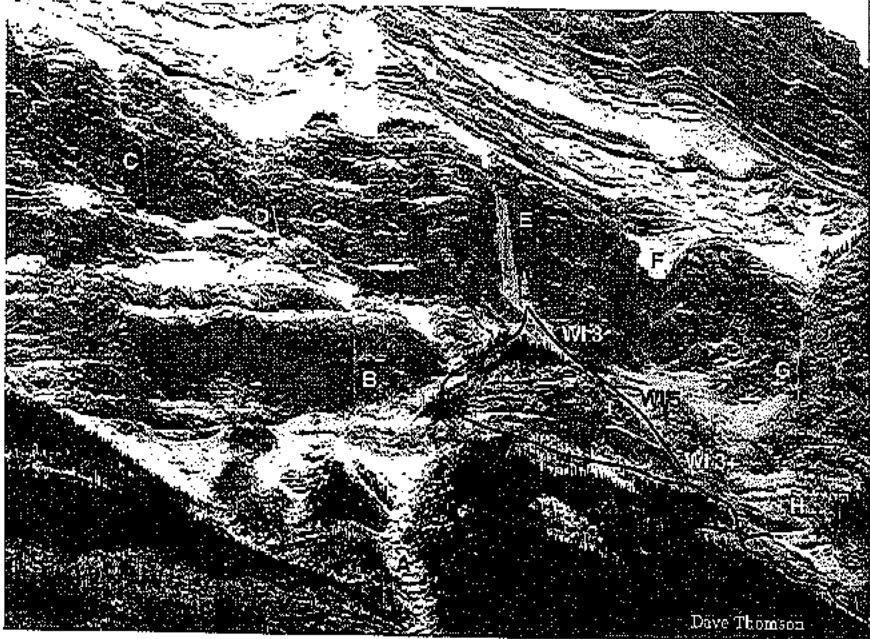
Descent Rappel and downclimb route. Some rock anchors may be in place but be prepared to leave your own. It is

possible to traverse off to the right on down sloping ledges all the way back to the Golf Course near *Christmas Present*.

La Goutte 50 m IV, WI 6+

This awesome testpiece rarely forms completely and has a very long approach for one pitch. Nevertheless it is worthwhile and will give your biceps a run for the money. There is avalanche hazard from above.

Approach If conditions allow, follow *Welcome to Canada* until below the main gash in the upper headwall. *La Goutte* is obvious to the right pouring out of a shallow gully. You can also approach as per *The Terminator* area, then from the snowfield below the WI 3 pitch traverse into the route. This cuts out some of the avalanche exposure.



Dave Thomson

Climb one pitch of steep, chandelier ice. The first half is usually very technical and steep climbing through hanging icicles leading to a sustained, smooth pillar in the top half.

Descent Rappel the route.

The Terminator Approach Ice III, WI 4+

A line to the left of *Welcome to Canada* has been described as an approach to *The Terminator* area. When formed, the climbing is worthwhile, offering good views and magnificent ambiance. A variety of approaches will reach the ice (see photo below). Pitch one begins at 80° then eases off to a snow slope. Another pitch offering a sustained section of vertical (WI 4+) is found above. 50 m of WI 3 ice puts you on the ledge below *The Terminator*.

The Trophy Wall

Originally home to one rare route and referred to as "The Terminator Wall," this spectacular venue has become home to a collection of the most sought-after routes in the range. During the 1996-97 season when all of the routes formed completely, the race to climb them all became so great the area's current name became obvious. The three main ice lines don't always form completely. And although each has its own challenging mixed variation climbable most seasons, it is likely none of them have been repeated in the same difficult WI grade as the first ascents.

Approach Most parties attempting routes near *The Terminator* bypass the approach ice. Approach as per *Welcome to Canada* to the main gully above the lowest cliffband. Gain high ground left of the gully and continue through trees past a short rock slab (avalanche hazard here) until you reach a scree slope below a large rock buttress. Traverse to the left side of the buttress and climb up short rock steps into the upper right margin of the *Professor Falls* drainage. Slog up through deep snow to a rib



Photo: Dave Thomson The Trophy Wall in mixed conditions.

just left of *The Terminator*. Traverse down and across an avalanche prone slope into a small east-facing Cul-de-Sac in the rockband. In the back of the Cul-de-Sac at its lowest point, make a few rock climbing moves and finally you'll arrive at the 50 m WI 3 pitch below *The Terminator*. A minimum of 3 hours when breaking trail and about 2 hours with a good trail. Beware of isolated pockets of bad snow. All descents from *The Terminator* area should reverse this route.

Mount Rundle from the Trans-Canada Highway. The routes: A. *The Professor Falls*. B. *Ten years After*. C. *Two Piece Yanks*. D. *Sam Goes Trekkin*. E. *The Trophy Wall*. F. *Welcome to Canada*. G. *La Goutte*. H. *The Gulag*. I. *Terminator Approach Ice* (climbing).



Bruce Hendicks

Joe Josephson on pitch two of Sea of Vapours.

The Terminator 150 m V, WI 5+ 6+

This is undoubtedly the most watched chunk of ice in the Rockies. Having formed completely only twice, *The Terminator* is an awesome, pure line. After the first ascent, which took two days, the route was given a controversial grade VII. After three additional one-day ascents that same winter it was downgraded even though the few people that did manage to climb it called it "the hardest thing (they'd) ever done." In 1996-97 the route formed again in WI 5+/6 conditions and received hundreds of ascents including at least two solo ascents.

The route consists of three vertical, sustained and very full pitches. Pitch one is the crux as it free-hangs for over 30 m and runs a full pitch to a cave on the right. A second pitch of featureless ice leads to a second, shorter, free-hanging curtain. A final pitch on improving ice hits the top.

Alan Kerr



Descent Rappel the route. Bolt belay/ rappel stations were added in 1993, but will probably be covered in ice.

The Replicant 145 m V, WI 5-6+

The Replicant is a great route immediately right (10 m) of *The Terminator*. Sometimes the two routes join together in places. It was named after the genetic clones in the science fiction film *Blade Runner*. The clones are reported to have lived their lives so intensely that they burned out after only a short while.

The first crux pitch climbs an apron of thin ice to a technical, vertical pillar capped by a fierce overhanging section—50 m with a belay on 87° ice. Some years an easier alternative first pitch forms to the right. The second slightly easier (WI 6) 50 m pitch traverses right and then up a detached curtain pouring off a roof, followed by vertical ice to a stance. Finish with a 45 m WI 5 pitch on excellent ice pouring from a large crack.

Descent Rappel the route.

Postscriptum 45 m III, WI 5+

Two parallel pillars seeping from the rock are often found 25 m right of *The Terminator*. *Postscriptum* is the right-hand column. It is a great but often cold location that is a good alternative to its nasty neighbours. Add *Postscriptum* to the *Terminator Approach Ice* to create a long and challenging route (grade IV WI 5). The left-hand column has also been climbed as part of the mixed route *Troubled Dreams* but makes a good pure ice pitch in its own right (WI 5+/6+).

Descent Rappel the route.

The Trophy Wall during the 1996/97 season. From left to right: *The Terminator*, *The Replicant* (the skinny pillar), *Troubled Dreams* (as fat ice joining *The Replicant*), *Postscriptum* and *Sea of Vapours* (formed to the ground).

Sea of Vapours 165 m V, WI 5-7

During a tropical Chinook in February 1993 this amazing line appeared, streaming down a broad corner 30 m right of *The Terminator*. The route was extremely thin throughout and was climbed after two attempts and no bolts were used. At the time, several well-travelled climbers considered it a candidate for the hardest pure ice route in the world. It has since appeared in just about every conceivable condition including a complete ice route to the ground. The original ascent is described below followed by a popular variation.

Climb *Postscriptum* to a hanging bolt belay. From just below the belay, the second pitch traverses right on spotty ice and up sustained and very thin ice. Find a hanging belay on the left (wires and #3 Friend) after 40 m. A third 50 m pitch of slightly thicker ice leads to a hanging belay below an overhang. The final 30 m goes over a mushroomed overhang and vertical ice to end in the corner/overlap from which the route emanates. Protection is scarce throughout, yet the belays are solid. The name comes from a landmark on the moon. The route was likened to "climbing frozen mist up an alien landscape."

Descent Rappel the route.

The Whipper Traverse 165 m IV, 5.9, WI 5+

In 1995-96 *Sea of Vapours* came close to forming but didn't quite reach the traverse line of the first ascent team. This didn't stop people from finding a way to reach the ice higher up. Directly above the *Postscriptum* belay is a shallow right-facing, right-leaning corner. Climb the corner past several fixed pitons to an obvious traverse leading to the ice.

Glenn Reisenhofer high on *Sea of Vapours* in Feb 1997.



Sam Goes Trekking 40 m IV, WI 4

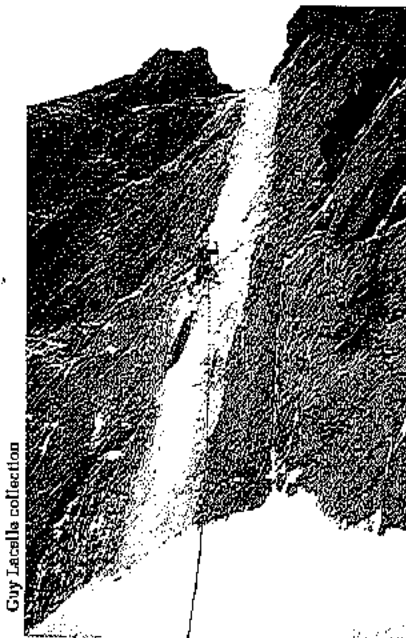
High on Mount Rundle about 500 m left of *The Terminator* is one pitch that almost always forms.

Approach As for *The Terminator* up to the prominent rib above the *Professor Falls* drainage. Rather than drop over the rib toward *The Terminator*, cross left until below a hidden gully. Easily climb the gully and a snow slope to the base. 3-4 hours (approximately 82 O/3 051884).

Climb an enjoyable 80° pitch. The first ascensionists were accompanied to the base by Sam the dog.

Descent Rappel off a rock anchor on the left, then off a boulder right of the gully to come off the lower rockband.

Below: Guy Lacelle on the first ascent of *Sam Goes Trekking*. Right: *The Professor Falls*.



Guy Lacelle collection

The Professor Falls 280 m III, WI 4

The Professor Falls ranks with *Cascade* as one of the most popular waterfalls in the Rockies. It was named after the eccentric Eckhard Grassman took a fall on the first ascent. Buried under the deep shadow of Mount Rundle with a constant water supply, *The Professor Falls* is one of the first routes to form and the last to melt. Its tiered nature and usually good ice make it an introduction for many people to steeper multi-pitched ice climbs. Despite popular conviction this route DOES have some avalanche hazard. At least one party has been three-quarters buried at the base of the last pitch. Other avalanches have been seen to clear the Bow River. Beware.

Approach From the trailhead, follow the trail for about 3 km until you see the obvious blue pillars of *The Professor Falls* gully about 400 m up a relatively clear streambed. 45-60 minutes from the trailhead (82 O/3 056688). Usually there is a well-defined donkey trail to the base.



Photo: Dave Thomson

More steep than the other wet but good climbing. A number of bolt/chain anchors have been added to the first three pitches although you can walk off any pitch. Several shorter steps and 150 m of snow lead to the final crux pitch. A full 40 m in excess of 85°, sometimes quite thin and technical. Get there early or go later—slow crowds and falling ice are a real drag in this narrow gully.

Several descent options From the top of the route traverse out left and descend through steep trees avoiding any rock slabs. It is possible to traverse back to the gully below the final pitch and downclimb the intermediate steps to the top of the third pitch.

Otherwise, continue down steeper terrain just left of the gully with two half rope rappels or a full rope rappel to near the top of the third pitch. Be suspect of loose rappel trees. If you traverse too far left before rappelling, it gets quite ugly and steep with numerous 10 m rappels.

Once atop the third pitch you can either rappel from a bolt anchor on the right or from below the large rock in the gully. Otherwise traverse left 20 m and lower from branches down a 3 m slabby corner to an easy traverse right to the base of the pitch. From here traverse out of the gully and follow easy ledges down, using several lengths of fixed rope to lower off the steeper sections.

Sacré Bleu 100 m IV, WI 5+

Unaware of a previous ascent, a party climbed the route and called it *Under the Volcano*; thus many locals refer to it by that name. This fine route is situated below one of the largest avalanche bowls imaginable—most ascents occur early in the season before any amount of snow accumulates. *Sacré Bleu* is located in the bowl left (east) of *The Professor Falls*.

Approach The best but longest approach is to climb *The Professor Falls* and traverse left from the top. Otherwise, continue along the trail past that route for 15 minutes until directly under the volcano (82 O/3 053679) then bushwhack up the right side of the gully. Traverse snow slopes below the upper headwall into the gully proper. Continue up 150 m of easy ice and snow to the base. In the likely event the intermediate steps in the approach gully are unformed, the approach bypasses the first rockband by scrambling to the left then crosses the gully to the right and scrambles up ledges below large walls to the base (some class 4). 2.5 hours with no snow.

A classic 55 m pitch up to 80° leads to a fixed belay on a ledge to the left. The second pitch continues up 15 m to the base of a long, steep 40 m pillar. Grunt your way up to a bolt belay in a small gash that makes the climb look unformed from the road.

Descent Rappel the route and reverse the approach march.

Razor Blade 125 m IV, WI 4+ R

Approach This climb is located 200 m left of *Sacré Bleu*. Stay on the left side of the gully in the forest until it opens up to a scree slope or avalanche slope depending on the month of travel.

The climb starts with a decent broken pillar followed by thin ice. The second pitch is thicker with another short pillar to a final WI 4 pitch. Rock pro is required.

Descent Rappel the route.

Sulphur Mountain

Spray River Falls 170 m IV, WI 5

Known since the mid '70s as *Spray River Falls*, this climb has also been called *Selenium Falls*. Located on the east side of Sulphur Mountain, it is good in early season. The approach gets very difficult in deep snow. Late season may also find good travelling as the snow pack sets up.

Approach From Banff townsite follow signs to the Upper Hot Springs. From the east end of the parking lot follow the summer trail past a small switchback to a large gully. *Spray River Falls* can be seen in the second main drainage with a striking pillar halfway up the climb (82 O/4 006654). The slope from the trail to the base is longer than it looks—300 m, and is desperate in bad snow conditions. 1.5-2.5 hours.

Start with a 5 m steep step followed by 60-70 m of snow and ice. A full rope of WI 3 ice leads to the crux pillar. Continue up 30 m of vertical ice to a ledge. Another more moderate pitch leads to a large snow bowl.

Descent Walking off to the right is possible, but it is recommended to rappel the route.

Glorious El Nino 60 m III, WI 3

This obscure route was climbed several times during a low snow year and is uncertain how frequently it forms, and if it does may even get covered in snow during deeper years. The amount of avalanche terrain is significant. It is one gully northwest of *Spray River Falls*.

Approach Park at the Sulphur Mountain Gondola. From the base of the terminal head straight up directly below the lift line to a broad road. Follow the road southeast (left) for 15 m to a fork in the road. Go straight up a rarely used trail for about 25 minutes and then bushwhack up the slope still continuing in a southeast direction. Cross several avalanche gullies looking for a black cliffband above. Continue parallel to the cliffband to the climb (82 O/4 008657). 2 hours.

Climb a full 60 m of WI 3 to a ledge. The climb fizzles at this point but in low snow years may continue with 160 m of very easy ice.

Descent Rappel the route.



Photo: Barry Blanchard

Spray River Falls.

Sunshine

The following routes are on the south side of the Bow Valley near the Sunshine Ski Resort. They are reached from the Trans-Canada Highway by turning onto the Sunshine Ski Resort road, 9 km west of Banff.

Not Quite Twilight 90 m III, WI 4

Approach Park at a pull-out on the left, 6.4 km up the Sunshine Village Ski Area road. Drop down to Healy Creek and cross it. Turn south and hike for about 1 hour up the obvious valley leading toward Mount Howard Douglas. Look up and left, there is an avalanche path leading straight up to the base of the route, about 1 hour. (82 O/4 895624).

A full rope length of approach ice leads to a good rock ledge on the left. A bolt belay would be useful here. From here the route steepens into a vertical pillar.

Descent Rappel the route.

Bourgeau Right-Hand 310 m IV, WI 4 R

A classic route, 500 m right of the *Bourgeau Left-Hand* route, *Bourgeau Right-Hand* is many people's favourite WI 4 route. First climbed in 1973, *Right-Hand* represented a huge leap in local standards. Aid techniques were not developed until the following season and the route was climbed free. It is often very thin on the first two pitches and difficult to protect. The route and descent are subject to high avalanche hazard. Check with the warden service for updated conditions.

Approach From the east side of the Sunshine Village parking lot hike up through the trees to the right side of the avalanche gully below the route. 60-90 minutes to the base.



Sharon Wood on Bourgeau Right-Hand.

In thin conditions the start can be very hard. Normally you climb 30 m of sustained ice up to 90° leading to the crux second pitch. Climb a short steep pillar that is often thin with poor ice. More broken terrain with several short steps on good ice leads to a final 45 m wall of 75° ice.

Descent Rappel the route. Some fixed rappel anchors may be found, otherwise walk off across scree to the right. Do not traverse straight across the shallow lee-loaded gullies usually avoided by walking several hundred metres above. If in doubt, belay across them. The run-out below is uncompromising as it drops 500 m to the parking lot. Continue across the scree to a ridge separating a large back bowl. Pick your way down to the base of the bowl/ridge, then turn right back to the trees and the parking lot.

Pat Morrow

No Breaks 45 m III, WI 4+

Pouring from a crack/chimney 100 m right of *Bourgeau Left-Hand* is a fun technical pillar that is very narrow in places. A worthwhile climb if you're in the area and have the time. If not totally formed it can be rock climbed with good gear (5.9).

Bourgeau Left-Hand 185 m IV, WI 5

One of the finer climbs in the Rockies, it was the first climb to be given a grade VI rating in 1974. Modern grades put it at a solid WI 5. Unfortunately it does not always form and is threatened by large avalanche slopes from above and below. It is regularly bombed for avalanche control, and it is imperative to contact the Banff Warden Service for the latest conditions. Despite popular conviction, the Sunshine Ski Patrol does not perform any avalanche control above this route.

Approach Nine kilometres west of Banff follow signs and the morning ski crowds to Sunshine Village. Walk past the gondola and from the far end of the parking lot follow the creek a short way to some orange flagging tape. Continue up steep slopes to the right and either climb WI 3 steps in the gully direct or work up through ledges around rock slabs to the right. Allow about an hour.

The first two pitches are rather legendary as they are often very thin overlying smooth slabs. Occasionally they detach from the rock and give off an eerie 'bonging' noise when climbed. Protection can be difficult. From a large snow ledge a short third pitch leads to the final crux. Climb a curtain with a long vertical section to the top. From a cave on the right 10 m above the snow ledge, a 55 m pitch will reach the top anchor.

Descent Rappel the route.



Bourgeau Left-Hand. Fixed anchors are marked.

Faux Pas 60 m IV, WI 4

This remote climb is located in a high drainage on the right side as you ski toward Healy Pass from the Sunshine parking lot (82 O/4 825619).

Approach Park as for *Bourgeau Left-Hand* and ski up Healy Creek for about 3 km and the route is found 300 m above the creek. 1.5 hours. See Chic Scott's, *Ski Trails in the Canadian Rockies*, for detailed information. The route is in large avalanche country and an early season ascent is recommended.

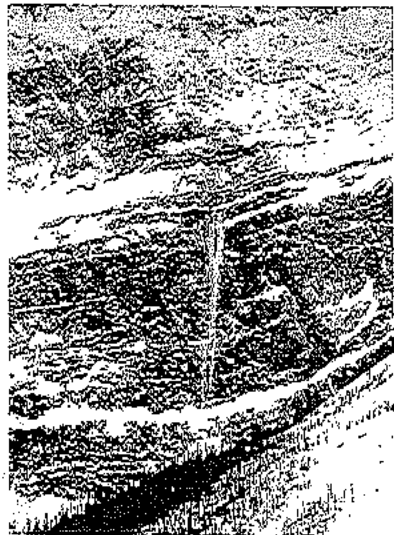
Climb WI 2 approach ice until it steepens. Continue up 80° ice to a WI 4 pillar and the top. Rappel the route.

The Auger Sanction 250 m V, WI 6

Named after a favourite park warden and his animated method of telling stories at late night parties, this is a spectacular route. That same warden also sandbagged the first ascent party by declaring that this route would be a casual rolling sort of thing. The first ascent team skied in and climbed the route in a long day and skied out the second day. It would be possible as a huge day trip but would require strong climbers, strong skiers and a strong snowpack. The route is visible from 82 O/4 882540 on the approach and the upper part is visible from the top of the Great Divide lift at Sunshine Ski Area.

Approach From Sunshine Village ski across the meadows to Citadel Pass. Descend from the pass to the Simpson River. Good ski terrain but threatened by large avalanche slopes on a variety of aspects. Head northwest from the base of the pass through bush or on horse trail for approximately 1 km, and then ski through rolling forest more or less directly to the basin below the route. There are good camping sites in the forest at the edge of the basin. Ski and walk up the 150 m slope to the base of the route. This slope reaches 45° near the top and is threatened at the bottom by a big bowl above and right. The route itself is on a faint buttress and is only threatened by steep pockets on the cliff above and possibly by a large cornice far above the route. Approximately 4-7 hours with decent snow conditions.

The route was done as four 55 m pitches and one 25 m pitch. The first pitch was thin and had two difficult-to-protect WI 6 sections and ended at a fixed two pin belay on the right. This was followed by a thin WI 4 pitch and two sustained WI 5 pitches on good ice. The last pitch was 25 m of WI 3.



Grant Siskham

The Auger Sanction.

Descent Rappel the route off ice anchors except the last rappel is off of the two pins. Ski home the way you came in or slog over Simpson Pass and out Healy Creek to the Sunshine parking lot.

Cleopatra's Asp 35 m III, WI 4

This climb possesses several features of interest, not the least of which is the warmth of the wood-burning stove at the Egypt Lake Shelter. The climb is located at the southwest end of Egypt Lake. It is formed at the lower part of the drainage flowing from Scarab to Egypt Lakes (82 O/4 767711). It is clearly visible from any point on the lake as well as Healy Pass.

Other features include nice steep climbing, no avalanche hazard (except on the approach), potential mixed routes and a very long season. It has been seen in good condition in late March. It probably forms before any significant snows making an early walking approach a possibility.

Approach There are two distinct approaches to the Egypt Lake Shelter; via the Sunshine parking lot and Healy Pass, and via Red Earth Creek along the Trans-Canada Highway. Detailed descriptions can be found in Chic Scott's, *Ski Trails in the Canadian Rockies*. From the shelter, a 10 minute ski to the lake and a ski across puts you at the route directly at the lakeshore.

The climb begins with a choice of several sustained 20 m pillars followed by steps of ice with reasonable resting spots. At the top, a couple of metres of steep and bottomless snow leads to anchor trees.

Descent Rappel from trees.

Bourgeau Creek

The following obscure routes are located along the trail to Bourgeau Lake. It is another area suitable for early season walks although *Wolverine Falls* does not seem to form regularly. If it's not there, check out the potential unclimbed route above the trail on the left side.

Wolverine Falls 200 m IV, WI 3

Approach Park at the Bourgeau Lake trailhead, 2.9 km west of the Sunshine overpass on the Trans-Canada Highway. Walk or ski to Bourgeau Lake. Cross the outlet stream coming from the lake to the first switchback in the trail. 10 minutes of bushwhacking above the switchback leads to the climb (82 O/4 850668). The fall does not always form and has major avalanche hazard. It is recommended as an early-season climb, before any snow accumulates.

The first ascent team found a rambling, broken climb of short steps with great views of neighbouring Mounts Bourgeau and Brett.

Descent Walk off to the left.

Bob-Esque 10 m III, WI 3

On the left as you walk toward *Wolverine Falls* (82 O/4 854665), there is a short pillar located on the right side of an avalanche chute. It makes a good consolation prize if there are no other routes to be found.

Pilot Mountain

Sky Pilot 100 m IV, WI 6

This is a stellar route on the northeast side of Pilot Mountain that has fully formed a couple of times. It is seen easily for a short distance along the Trans-Canada Highway at a point 8 km west of the Sunshine Village overpass.

Approach Park at Red Earth Creek trailhead 11.3 km west of the overpass. Ski up the trail (a popular ski tour) for 1.5 km until the trees thin out on the left, then head southeast through the woods to a gully leading to the climb (82 O/4 824721). 2.5-4 hours depending on conditions.

Climb three pitches with a very steep and serious free-standing pillar for starters.

Descent Rappel the route.

Vapour Trail 130 m V, WI 6+ R

An appropriately named route between *Sky Pilot* and *Co Pilot*. This is a fine, yet very rare route with two long, difficult and thin ice pitches.

Rack short screws, load limiters, pitons, Spectres and a small rock rack is useful. #1.5 Tricam (first belay) #1 Tricam (or other piece of rock gear) for the second belay.

Approach The following description is that given by the first ascent party. Park at the Red Earth Creek parking lot and follow the trail/road up the hill past two small bridges, around a corner to the left

and then around another long sweeping corner to the right. At the end of the long right-trending corner leave the trail to the left and bushwhack toward the drainage; approximately 25 minutes from the parking lot to the turn-off into the trees (in reasonable snow conditions). Gain and follow the drainage up toward *Sky Pilot*. Either take a direct line up to the route or follow the drainage farther toward *Sky Pilot* and cut back through nasty trees to the smaller drainage leading up to *Vapour Trail*. 3 hours.

The first pillar is steep, thin and near impossible to protect. Getting off the ground is one of the cruxes. Head up on the second pillar which is not attached at the base. The line continues on very steep and thin ice for 30-35 m to where the angle eases off but the ice stays very thin. The pitch ends in "the middle of nowhere" just past a short vertical pillar. The second pitch is thin but quite a bit easier than the first. There is a final 20 m of WI 2 to the top.

Descent Rappel the route. The top was fine on ice, the second station took the first ascent team almost an hour to rig a double Abalakov in very thin ice.

Co-Pilot 100 m IV, WI 5

Co-Pilot is a steep route located about 300 m right of *Sky Pilot* around the large rock buttress (82 O/4 819727).

It had two difficult pitches that have never been seen after the first ascent.

Descent Rappel the route.



Sky Pilot.

Sawback Range

The 1A Highway joins the Trans-Canada 5.5 km west of Banff, and travels along the north side of the valley to Lake Louise. The beautiful peaks northeast of the road are appropriately known as the Sawback Range. All routes are accessed off the 1A Highway and almost all are not visible from either the Trans-Canada or the 1A Highway. Undoubtedly there are more to be found.

Bearspirit 25 m II, WI 3-4+

This is the first of several routes found in the drainage on the east side of Mount Cory. The first ascent team believed there must have been a bear watching them from a cave near the base.

Approach Park at the Fireside Road 400 m from the Trans-Canada Highway. Walk along the road to the drainage between Mount Cory and Mount Edith.

Walk up the drainage for 30 minutes and ascend left up a gully for 10 minutes to the base (approximately 82 O/4 935709).

After a wide curtain pitch climb farther on snow then rock to the main curtain. Climb on a variety of difficulties from WI 3-WI 4 on thick ice.

Descent Rappel and downclimb route.

The Little Gem 75 m III, WI 4

This pretty route makes a great early-season outing. I've also seen the pillar still formed as late as early June after the snow was all gone. There is a large bowl above the route.

Approach Park at the Fireside Road 400 m from the Trans-Canada Highway. Walk along the road to the drainage between Mount Cory and Mount Edith. Walk directly up the drainage for 1.5 hours until the climb can be seen on the left (82 O/4 931722).

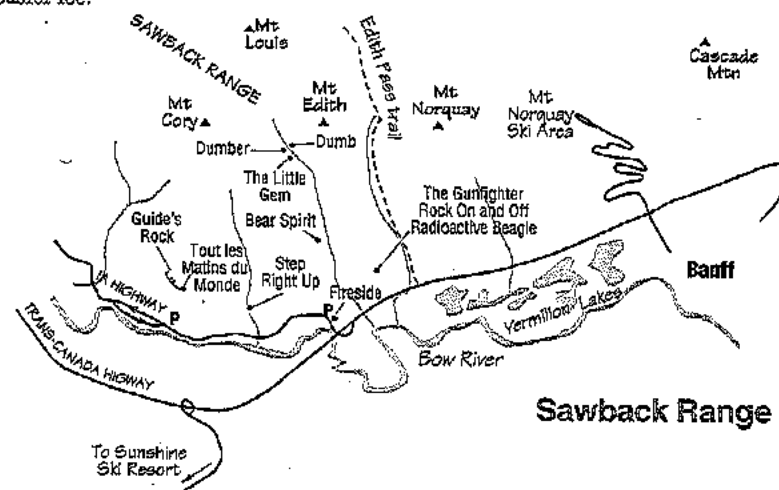
Scramble up a pitch of low-angle ice to the base of a large "Professor" type pillar. Climb the driest line for 25 m on steep, chandelier ice to another 25 m of easier ice.



Photo: Sean Maurice

The Little Gem.

Descent Rappel or walk off to the right through trees to the base of the pillar. Downclimb the low-angle ice to the streambed.



Dumb 100 m III, WI 2

Approach 100 m past *The Little Gem* on the right side of the drainage.

Ascend low-angle ice to a steep narrow 4 m column. Continue on low-angle ice until it runs out.

Descent Downclimb and rappel the pillar.

Dumber 50 m III, WI 2

Approach 100 m past *The Little Gem* on the left side of the drainage.

Climb thick ice either in a tight chimney on the right or over steeper bulges on the left. The climb eases and tapers severely near the top as it heads into a large gully.

Descent Rappel and downclimb route.

Rock On and Off 50 m II, 5.8, WI 3

4.5 km west of Banff and 1 km before the 1A turn-off is a scrappy cliff above the road on the north side. *Rock On and Off* lies near the middle of this cliff. It is a sunny location with typically low avalanche hazard.

Approach Park at the Fireside Road 400 m from the Trans-Canada Highway. Walk along the road to the Edith/Cory Pass trailhead. Continue along the trail until below the route. Ascend through trees to the climb (approximately 82 O/4 945703). 1 hour.

Climb low-angle ice to rock. Move right and ascend a chimney to a treed ledge. Climb 15 m of ice above.

Descent Rappel the route.

The Gunfighter 50 m II, 5.10+, WI 3

Start immediately left of *Rock On and Off*. Climb 10 m of ice to a ledge (piton). Traverse right to a bulge and climb it (six bolts) into a gully to a thin smear of ice and a two bolt anchor.

Descent Rappel the route.



Rock On and Off. Photo: Glom Reisenhoffer

Radioactive Beagle 50 m II, WI 3

A nice WI 3 pitch is located 50 m right of *Rock On and Off* and has an old self drive bolt on top.

Descent Rappel the route.

Step Right Up 25 m II, WI 3

This is a good route for its size and catches a few hours of sun even in December, maintaining generally good ice throughout the season.

Approach Turn onto the 1A Highway and follow it about 1.5 km to an interpretive pull-out. 100 m west of this is a small stream that crosses the road. Follow this gully for about 1 km to the route (82 O/4 925688). It may be faster to reach the route by bushwacking from the road up a gentle slope several hundred metres past the stream then intersecting the gully 200 m below the route. 30 minutes.

10 m of easy ice leads to steeper terrain near the top.

Descent Rappel the route.

Tous les Matins du Monde 90 m II, WI 3

This fun route is found on Mount Cory in the deep cleft on Guides Rock between the rock routes *Paper Chase* and *Take it for Granite*. It is unclear if it forms regularly.

Approach Park on the 1A Highway at the pull-out just before the road splits and hike a good trail uphill for about 45 minutes.

The first pitch in a right-facing corner is 30 cm wide and of varying thickness. Rock protection with pitons and nuts is recommended. Belay on fixed pins at the top of the corner. The second pitch climbs moderate ice to 70°.

Descent Rappel the route.

Bountiful Drought 70 m II, WI 3 R

A fun climb and a good introduction to thinner ice climbing at a moderate angle. When formed, *Bountiful Drought* is visible from the 1A Highway but may be best visible from the Trans-Canada. The climb lies in the lower reaches of the major drainage below *The Finger*.

Approach Follow the 1A Highway west for 10 km to a roadside pull-out. Hike up through the trees staying left of the climb (82 O/4 883744). 30-60 minutes depending on snow conditions.

The first 20 m consists of three short WI 2 steps. The final section provides delicate but not strenuous climbing on thin ice for a full 50 m to a tree belay. The angle varies between 70-75°.

Descent Walk off to the left.

Johnston Canyon 10-40 m II, WI 2-5

At the Upper Falls, a wall of ice 60 m wide is dissected into spectacular free-

standing pillars easing off to low-angle slabs to the right. The rarely climbed Lower Falls consists of technical hollow ice above open water.

Note: The steep, mossy wall behind the pillars at the Upper Falls is famous as a home to almost 30 endemic species of algae. Do not attempt any mixed climbs on the back wall. Besides destroying an unique ecosystem, it may very well jeopardize our access to this great playground.

Approach Park at Johnston Canyon Bungalows Camp (closed in winter) 3 km east of Castle Junction or 18 km west of Fireside. Hike up the developed walkway 2.5 km to the end. Turn right at Paint Pots junction. 45 minutes.

Climb on your choice of low-angle ice gradually getting steeper to the left all the way to a variety of free hanging pillars.

Descent Rappel the route or walk right and downclimb.



Tim Pochay negotiating the pillars in Johnston Canyon. Photo: Brad Wroblewski

Protection Valley

Protection Valley is the remote drainage between Castle Mountain and Protection Mountain to the west. It is home to five top-notch routes. The only visible route from the Trans-Canada is the impressive mixed route *Superlight* to the left on the south east face of Protection. See *Mixed Climbs*. All others are found hidden up the right fork with only the top of *Mon Ami* sometimes visible from the road. *Arian P'tit Grimlin* was climbed in a single day using snowshoes while the others were originally done as overnight trips.

Approach In early season, without snow, you can walk to the valley in about 3 hours. Later, depending on the depth and quality of the snow, it can take up to 5 hours on skis or snowshoes. From Castle Junction, drive north along the 1A Highway for 10.5 km to a pullout on the south side of the road. Walk another 300 m west before taking to the trees where an unobvious drainage crosses the road. Walk up the east (right) side of the drainage through generally open forest. The deadfall may be minimized closer to the creek. When the drainage begins to tighten, ascend treed slopes further right, then angle back left to intersect a treed ridge. Walk easily up this into the gap under the west face of Castle Mtn. A scree slope on the right leads into the hanging valley. A large boulder offers a decent bivi site amongst significant avalanche terrain. The routes are another 30-60 minutes away.

Arian P'tit Grimlin 250 m V, 5.3, WI 6

The first ascent of this route started on *Mon Ami* and traversed to the ice. In a fat year two or three more pitches could be climbed directly below the main fall and would make an outstanding route.

Approach Hidden in the back of the bowl are at least two lines. *Arian P'tit Grimlin* is on the left. Climb the first pitch of *Mon Ami* which can be a 5.6 chockstone or in better years a pure ice pitch at WI 4. Traverse left below the upper pitches of *Mon Ami* (5.3). 60 m ropes are useful.

The first pitch on the main fall is steep with brittle ice, funky and hard to protect (WI 6). A second easy pitch brings you to the base of a steep pillar. Climb a 40 m pillar of WI 5+.

Descent Rappel the main fall on ice anchors. Backtrack the traverse and use a rock anchor on the left of *Mon Ami*.

Mon Ami 150 m IV, WI 4+

Approach *Mon Ami* is the right-hand line and generally thicker than its neighbour (82 O/5 717860).

Reach the ice via a traverse on a wide snow ledge from the right. Climb past a 5.6 chockstone that can form as WI 4. Two more pitches of ice trend up to the right.

Descent Rappel the route.

Smothered Hope 120 m IV, WI 5

Location 200 m right of *Mon Ami* is a deep gash with ice. It is not visible until you are right across from it.

Walk into the gash to a steep curtain. Climb the curtain to easy snow and ice leading to a shield of good ice. Continue on moderate ice for another ropelength passing under a two chockstones.

Descent Rappel the route.

Guinevere 160 m V, WI 5R M4+

Location 2-300 m right of *Smothered Hope* is another climb offering a great line with varied climbing. The bottom and top are visible from lower in the valley but the middle will look un-

formed. 60 m ropes, stubbies and a small rock rack is recommended.

Climb a mixed gully to a steep curtain of thin ice (crux) to a ledge on the right with a bolt and fixed pin. Continue up thin but easy ice, over a mixed step to more thin ice barely reaching the base of thicker ice. Rolling ice continues to a final curtain.

Lake Louise Group

World famous for its stunning mountain scenery, the Lake Louise Group offers an idyllic setting for waterfall climbing. More importantly, all approaches begin in The Village at Laggan's Mountain Bakery and Deli offering delicious bread, pastries, pies and sandwiches. The Village is home to some of the best restaurants in the valley. Of particular note are the Post Hotel and the Train Depot. Apart from a few routes around the lake, most climbs require a ski approach to the base. Recent snow stability reports, weather forecasts and park information are available at the Visitor Centre, located at the north end of the main shopping centre (Samson Mall). You can also register here for climbs. See map page 190.

Map

82 N/8 Lake Louise

Lake Louise Ski Resort

Purple Bowl Falls 60 m II, WI 3

The route is located at the bottom of Ski Louise Purple Bowl on the northwest corner of Lipalian Mountain. Interestingly, the route only forms in extremely poor snow years and the gully is one of the exits after skiing Purple Bowl. During El Nino it formed up fat and blue.

Approach The easiest access is to ride the lifts and ski the Purple Bowl. An alternate but longer approach would be to ski in from Fish Creek parking lot and up the Marmot run on the Larch area of Skiing Louise. The route is located at the saddle between Wolverine Ridge and the Northeast Ridge of Lipalian Mountain. Another bit of ice may be visible but the climb is located on the right-hand side of a tree island in a rock-walled gully.

The first pitch is an enjoyable, but sometimes unusual, WI 2 to a belay on a large bench. From this point it is possible to walk off the climb to the top or to climb a second pitch offering a variety of lines of up to 15 m on WI 3 with a tree belay at the top.

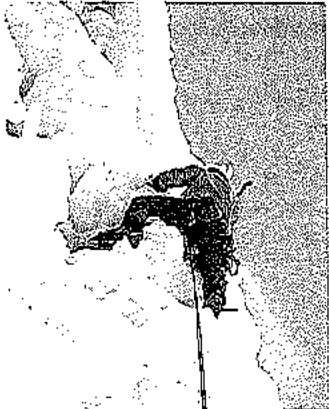
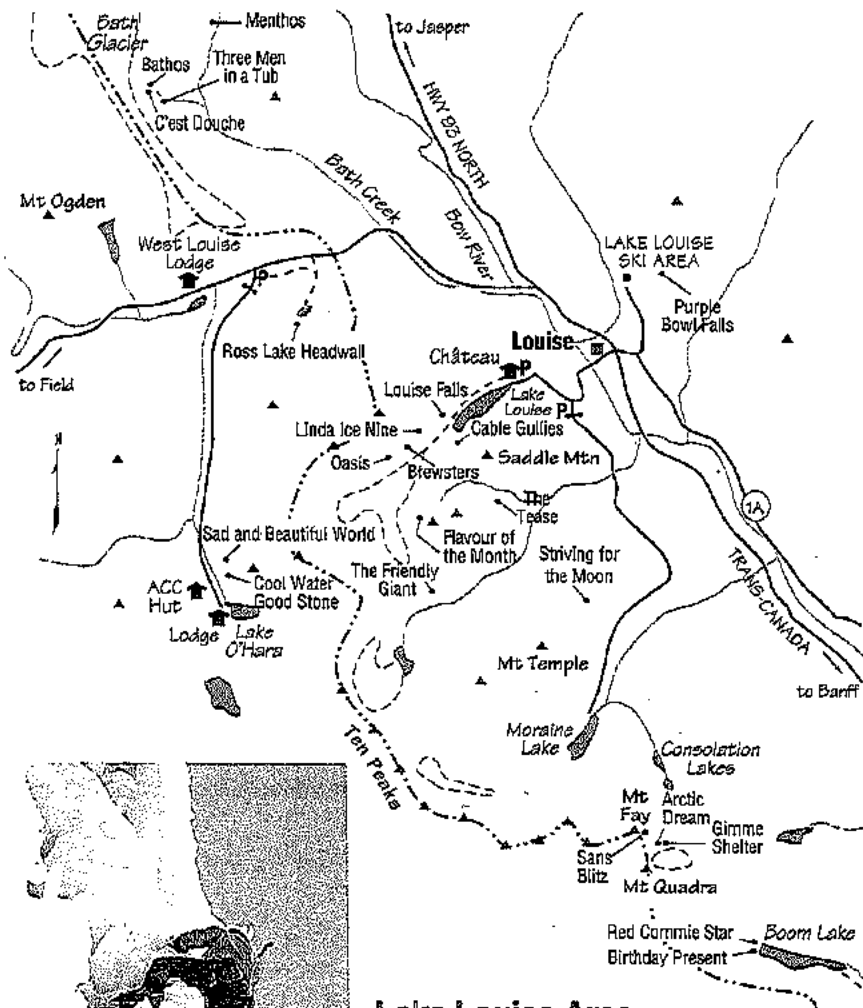
Descent Walk down through the trees on climbers right to a large tree near the first belay and a single 50 m rappel brings you back to the base.

Lake Louise

From the townsite of Lake Louise, drive west through the 4-way stop and continue up the hill for 3 km to the Château Lake Louise and a large parking lot. The following routes are found near the far end of the lake or beyond, in the Plain of Six Glaciers.

Louise Falls 110 m II, WI 4-5

With close access and little avalanche hazard this is guaranteed to be one of the most popular routes in the range. Get there early. Despite it being a fairly wide climb it is hard to hide from exploding ice fragments pouring down from climbers above. *Louise Falls* was originally climbed free in 1974, due to the determined efforts of Jack Firth. The intimidating crux pillar looming over the route



Lake Louise Area

Karl Nagy on the 2nd ascent of Arctic Dream.
Photo: Joff Everett

Alan Kear



Louise Falls in very fat conditions.

is many a climbers' first hard pitch and still turns back parties.

Approach Follow the path in front of the Château and along the northwest side of the lake. Louise Falls is the first and obvious climb above the trail at the end of the lake.

Two varied pitches lead to a big cave behind the pillar. On these pitches it is possible to sneak an easy gully on the right, climb a steeper curtain on the right of centre, or ramble up bulges on the left side of the climb. Most parties seek the security of the cave but it is an intimidating (and often wet) step out onto the pillar. Alternatively, try climbing directly from the left side (this way, two

itches will take you to the top of the pillar). Quite often a spectacular free-standing pillar forms on the right side (WI 5). A nice rest ledge exists before the final 15 m of steep ice to the top. From the cave you can make it to the top in one pitch. Thin ice and some moss/tree moves make exit manoeuvres exciting.

Descent From the top, a walk off to the right is possible. Beware of a couple of small avalanche-prone gullies and make sure you go far enough right to avoid the cliffbands. If you don't make it up the pillar, traverse right to the treed rock rib just below the cave where a 50 m rappel will take you to the ground. There are also several rappel trees on the left side of the waterfall but they are awkward to reach.

Thelma Falls 30 m II, WI 5 X

This thin pillar once formed over the large overhang at the right-hand base of Louise Falls, barely touching down close to where people often leave their packs. More often than not, it is nothing more than a collection of icicles hanging off the lip. See *Mixed Climbs*.

Cable Gullies 15 m III, WI 2

Opposite the valley from Louise Falls lies a large cliffband topped by even larger avalanche slopes. Cable Gullies lie in deep clefts along the right side of the cliff.

Approach Walk past Louise Falls and cross the creek near the inlet of the lake. Because these routes usually last well into June this is not a bad time to climb them when you don't usually have to worry about avalanche hazard. Combine it with some cragging at the Back of the Lake for a full sports action day.

Linda Ice Nine 310 m III, WI 4

Somehow locals have thought the real name for this route was *Linda Nice Ice* but the first ascensionist has assured me the name is correct. This is a long gully climb that only gets good near the top. This is in severe avalanche terrain so be sure to check with the Lake Louise wardens for the conditions in the area.

Approach Continue past *Louise Falls* along the Plain of Six Glaciers trail (the track is not set past the lake, but trail is often broken) for 1.6 km. *Linda Ice Nine* is above the trail at this point and a plod up the slope is required to reach it.

Some short steps lead to a long snow gully leading to two or three more pitches of undulating ice. This route is not recommended after a snowfall. Not only will the avalanche hazard go up, but this section gets covered in snow making for poor (and wet) climbing. A steeper pitch at the top of this section leads to another snow slope and then the final crux curtain of vertical ice. Right of the second-to-last pitch a difficult free-standing pillar may sometimes form.

Descent Rappel and walk down either side of the route. A single rope is sufficient for rappels.

Brewsters 200 m III, WI 4

Located 200 m left of *Linda Ice Nine* and featuring an obvious pillar in a gully. Nothing more is known about this route.

Oasis 50 m III, WI 3

Approach 800 m beyond *Linda Ice Nine* to the right of the toe of the Victoria Glacier is a wall of ice up to 60 m wide. As with *Linda Ice Nine* this route is located in tremendous avalanche terrain. Be certain of prevailing snow conditions before considering an attempt.

This climb offers a variety of different lines ranging from 75° to sections in excess of 85°. Overall it's an enjoyable climb in an impressive alpine setting.

Descent Rappel from trees.

Mount Aberdeen

The following route is an example of the wide number of possibilities the range holds for alpine waterfall climbs. These are fun variations to otherwise standard and overlooked areas.

Flavour of the Month 100 m IV, WI 4

This is an alpine ice route following mixed and snow gullies on the west side of the Aberdeen Glacier Route, a popular and moderate glacier ice route.

Approach From the Lake Louise parking lot, hike past *Louise Falls* and up the Plain of Six Glaciers and ascend moraine to the base of snow gullies to the south. 4 hours. The route may also be accessible from the Fairview-Saddle col followed by a hike west under the north side of Haddo Peak and Mount Aberdeen.

Follow snow gullies on the west side of the Aberdeen Glacier to a 2 pitch WI 4 with some intricate mixed climbing on the second pitch. Follow a snow slope to the summit.

Descent Descend the southwest slopes into Paradise Valley.

Paradise Valley

Moraine Lake Road is located 1 km before you reach the Château Lake Louise. Turn left and park a short distance ahead. Ski up the road (track set) 2 km to Paradise Creek. Turn right onto the Paradise Valley Trail. Follow the Paradise Valley signs—it is easy to get lost on the many trails leading north toward Lake Louise and Fairview Mountain. Refer to Chic Scott's, *Ski Trails in the Canadian Rockies* for more detailed information.

The Tease 85 m III, WI 5

This route has been known to form very early but can also have access limited due to grizzly bear closures. There is also rumour of a WI 5 route to the right.

Approach Continue up Paradise Valley and turn right (north) into the first drainage coming down between Sheol and Saddle Mountains. *The Tease* is located on a quartzite cliff on the northeast face of Mount Sheol, about 2 hours from the car (82 N/8 546928). The top is visible from the 1A Highway as you drive north toward Lake Louise. It is called *The Tease*, because you'll get to the top of this short route and yell "I want more!"

The first ascensionists climbed up difficult rock from the left (5.9, tied-off blocks for protection) to an unformed icicle then continued up steep ice for another pitch. In good years the pillar forms completely. Expect awesome views of the north face of Mount Temple.

Descent Rappel the route.

*Above: Jeff Everett approaching the first ascent of The Tease.
Photo: Karl Nagy.*



The Friendly Giant 85 m III, WI 4

Approach As for *The Tease* but ski southwest up Paradise Valley for another 4 km to the Giant Steps. The route is located left of the large gully on the south face of Mount Aberdeen; allow up to 3 hours. (82 N/8 526900). There is only a small avalanche slope above the route but the ski approach has exceptionally large mountainsides rearing above it. Save this route for a clear day; you'll reward yourself with good views.

Climb the short initial pillar and continue up 50 m to a nice cave below the upper pillar. This short pitch leads to a snow slope and a tree on the right.

An easier one-pitch route called *The Friendlier Giant* (WI 3) is located 50 m to the right of this route.

Descent Rappel from the belay tree for 35 m to another tree and then another 45 m to the ground.

Mount Temple

Begin the approach as for Paradise Valley but continue up Moraine Lake Road (track set) for 8 km to the viewpoint overlooking Moraine Lake and Consolation Valley. It is another 3 km downhill to Moraine Lake. Note: the road crosses under avalanche paths toward the lake. Just before the lake on the south side are some picnic shelters if you want to camp out. In an emergency, there is a pay phone at the lodge (closed in winter) next to the lake.

Striving for the Moon 1,000 m VI, WI 5+

Striving for the Moon makes a significant alpine addition to the east face of Mount Temple. Found between the big step on the east ridge and the Aemmer Couloir, this route 'strives' up the largest gully system to the base of the Black Towers. Think about climbing this route only in times of reasonable avalanche conditions.

Approach Ski to the viewpoint where the road turns right and goes down to Moraine Lake. About 2 km toward Moraine Lake from the viewpoint, move right up through trees past a small lake to the gully (82 N/8 570895). 2 hours.

Several pitches of moderately hard ice lead to a very steep and strenuous pillar about halfway up the gully. Several pitches higher take a right-hand fork in the gully and up some thin ice. Take the obvious traverse line around the buttress back into the left-hand gully. Bivi sites can be found by traversing along quartzite ledges to the left. Continue up deep and usually horrible snow conditions to the east ridge.

Descent A descent down the Aemmer Couloir to Paradise Valley may be possible. In good style the first ascent team



Striving for the Moon follows the prominent line in the centre.

continued up the standard east ridge and climbed to the summit in high winds and under a full moon—very Himalayan. They descended the normal route on the southwest side and then slogged back across Moraine Lake a full 24 hours after they left their bivi below the Black Towers.

Sans Blitz 600 m VI, 5.5, WI 7

This serious undertaking on the east face of Mount Fay certainly blurs the line between waterfall ice and alpine climbs. Descriptions are generally useless for a route of this magnitude so I leave it to the story reported below by Steve House.

Rack Full set of cams, full set of stoppers, 8-10 pitons including 5 knifeblades, 12-14 ice screws of all lengths including stubbies, and "no bolts!"

Approach Park at the Moraine Lake roadhead and ski for 13 km to Moraine Lake. Sleds are an asset. Continue skiing

into the Consolation Lakes Valley and to the South end of the Lakes (4 km). 4-5 hours. The route is visible on the left side of the east face of Mount Fay another 1.5 km above Consolation Lakes.

Barry Blanchard, Rolando Garibotti and I skied 17 km into Consolation Lakes on April 13, hauling our packs on sleds, and fretting over the two sets of ski tracks in front of us. There had been much talk about climbing this route on the local scene, as it had been a well-known objective. This year it was touching down and visibly blue-tinted from the Lake Louise Ski Area lodge. At mid day we rounded into Consolation Valley and made out two climbers on *Gimme Shelter*, YIPPEE! We set up a base camp at the upper lake and skied up to climb and fix the first pitch.

This was the crux, WI 7, and complicated to protect (over half the gear was in rock). The ice was steep smallish mushrooms attached to a 1-2 inch thick veneer of ice that was 2-5 feet wide. Thankfully there was an excellent rest at halfway under a small roof. I fixed both ropes at the top of this pitch and we enjoyed a little powder skiing back to Consolation Lakes.

At 4 am the next morning we skied from camp. Toward the base of the route Rolando became aware of other headlamps being turned on intermittently. It was Eamonn Walsh and Raphael Slawinski. Unbeknownst to Barry and I, Rollo put his head down and raced them to the base, beating them out by several minutes.

It was awfully crowded in the pre-dawn gloom at the base of such a serious route. Recognizing this, Raphael and Eamonn bowed out gracefully. We ascended our fixed rope and Barry led the second pitch and belayed after just 35 m because the serious climbing had taken its toll on him. I took over for the next 3 pitches (all WI 6ish) and Rollo and

Barry seconded with our two 20 lb. packs. (We carried a titanium stove, two gas canisters, cup-o-soup, a shovel blade and a lightweight guide's tarp for survival gear.... We used it all.)

The climbing was sustained, technical and traditional—building anchors usually took me over an hour. We carried no bolts. Rollo and Barry took to seconding in alpine mode: hooking biners whenever they could. Rollo got bicep cramps from trying to follow quickly.

Barry led the 6th pitch, it was WI 5+/6, and he sat on a screw when he felt too pumped to continue without falling. Rolando linked us to our exit gully via a 5.5 traverse. I led 2 more stunning WI 5 pitches into the night. This put us in the snow gully where Rollo took over by headlamp. By midnight Barry belayed while Rollo cooked soup and I used the shovel blade to dig a 60 m, 3-6 foot deep trench along the rockwall through the faceted snow that topped the gully.

At 4 am Rollo dug us a small cave at the top of the east face. We alternated brewing and dozing for a couple of hours until it started to get light.

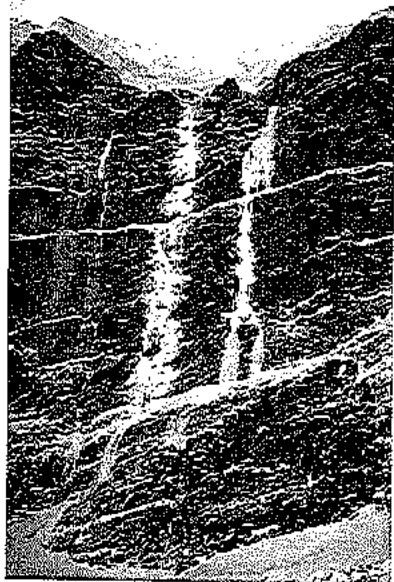
Feeling pretty good, Barry led off up the ridge that separates the east face from the south face at 7 am. But he floundered in waist deep faceted snow 3 rope lengths higher. We bailed from 3000 m, rappelling a gully on the south face that we would have downclimbed in a normal snow year.

Descent was by traversing the Quadra Glacier and rappelling the large gully left of *Gimme Shelter*. 36 hours after leaving our camp we were back. Barry believes that *Sans Blitz* is the hardest ice climb that he has ever done. The name is for our friend, Jonny Blitz, who had climbed with us for the week prior and would have been with us had he not had to go back to work landing jets.

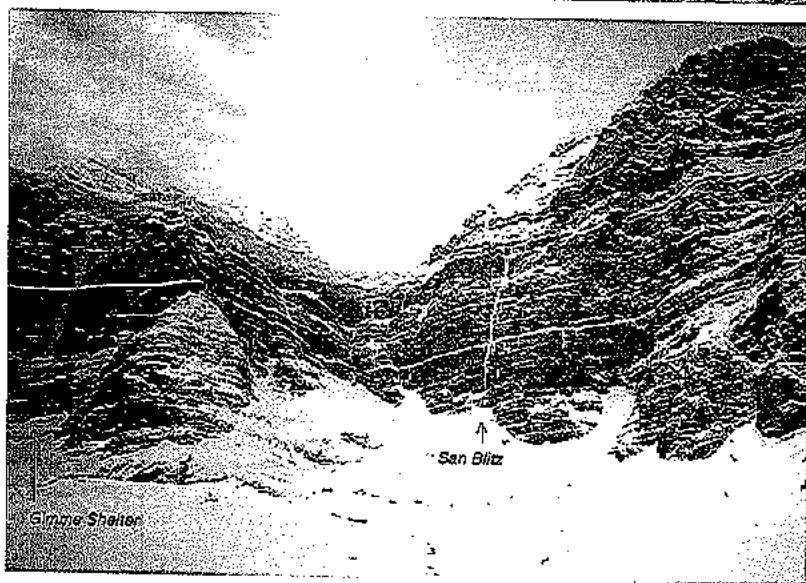
Mount Quadra

Two legendary waterfalls are located on the lower north face of Mount Quadra. Both are serious alpine routes featuring active seracs. In recent years it seems the ice cliffs are more relaxed than usual and combined with an increased need to tick big name routes the cliff is seeing more climber activity. But user beware, the ice cliffs are seracs and can become active at any moment. Between the first and second ascents of *Arctic Dream* in April 1992 something major came over the route as indicated by the large craters found at the base. In 1997, after retreating from the first solo attempt at the route, Guy Lacelle and Sam the dog were nearly wiped out on the approach slopes by seracs that spilled over *Gimme Shelter*.

Gimme Shelter and Arctic Dream.



Joe Josephson



Barry Blanchard

Gimme Shelter 300 m VI, WI 5+-7 R

Climbed far ahead of its time in April 1983, this beautiful but desperate route was for almost 10 years the hardest waterfall route in the world. *Gimme Shelter* was originally attempted by Alex and Jeff Lowe but they backed off, claiming it was too thin, only days before the 'local' first ascent.

Quotes Kevin Doyle after the first ascent, "Not really very reassuring climbing, this one-half to one-inch business but fortunately I could breathe a little easier when it gave way to some really thick two-inch ice after about 20 m, which was also rotten and accepted a perfectly useless ice screw. Some worrying moments later, I reached one of the plates of ice, 3 to 10 inches thick and usually a couple of feet square, which presented themselves every 160 feet along the route on these thin pitches. The ice had steepened considerably." The first ascent team rappelled from conduit and used no bolts.

Approach On a clear day the climb is visible from the upper (#3) parking lot of the Lake Louise Ski Area, 2.5 km north-east of the townsite.

Ski to Moraine Lake and then continue south on to Consolation Valley. If formed, the route is obvious in the centre of the northeast face of Mount Quadra, right of the snow couloir and left of a large buttress (82 N/8 597826). 5-6 hours for the approach.

Gimme Shelter has been climbed in as few as five pitches, but the first ascensionists climbed seven. On the first ascent a cramped bivouac was improvised on the prominent ledge about two-thirds of the way up the route. After the first ascent the route went unformed for almost 10 years when it barely formed

again in 1992. It did not form again for another six years when it started to come in almost every as a fat, predictable ice climb. It has now seen too many ascents to count but none have been even remotely close to the difficult conditions found on the first ascent. In March 2000 a team added four pitches of ice through the serac barrier calling the direct finish *Helter Shelter* (WI 6).

Descent Rappel the route.

Arctic Dream 300 m VI, WI 6

Approach The winter of 1991-92 was the only time this route was known to have formed completely and it saw three or four ascents. In 1997 the crux pillar formed as a series of unconnected ice blobs and went unclimbed. Located 20 m to the right of *Gimme Shelter*, *Arctic Dream* offers incredible climbing in an audacious alpine position.

Climb two pitches of moderate ice to the base of a long sustained pillar. Climb technical ice up the pillar for three fall rope lengths. Another 55 m of WI 4 ice leads to a snow gully below the seracs.

On the third ascent of *Arctic Dream*, the team continued on past the serac barrier to reach the glacier above. This added four difficult pitches on some very poor glacier ice. Total length of the climb including the *Direct Finish* (WI 6+) is 500 m. To descend, walk down the obvious snow couloir to the left with one short rappel (also an alternative descent for *Helter Shelter*).

Descent Rappel the route.

Bath Creek

The following climbs are located up Bath Creek in an alpine setting with an alpine approach. There are one or two other completed routes in the area but information is not currently available.

Approach Park on the right (north) side of the Trans-Canada Highway, 9 km west of Lake Louise. Park in the first of two plowed lots just before the highway crosses the bridge over Bath Creek. From the parking lot, head north to the railroad tracks, cross the tracks and continue up Bath Creek 8 km to the routes. 2-3 hours. See Chic Scott's, *Ski Trails in the Canadian Rockies*. Visible from the Trans-Canada as you drive north past Lake Louise, *Bathos* and *C'est Douche* are the two most prominent parallel smears.

C'est Douche 90 m III, WI 3

Spindrifts and thin ice on the first pitch give this route an alpine feeling and it is easily done the same day as *Bathos*. This is a beautiful setting that few climbers ever explore.

Descent Traverse to the top of *Bathos* and rappel that route.

Bathos 100 m III, WI 4

A pretty route in the gully right of *C'est Douche*, *Bathos* is defined in Webster's Dictionary as "dramatic contrast or humour in the midst of drama; a ludicrous descent from the elevated to the mean." The route climbs up good ice for 50 m, then rambles to the top.

Descent Rappel the route.

This climb is located 200 m left of *Bathos*. Climb three pitches of ice.

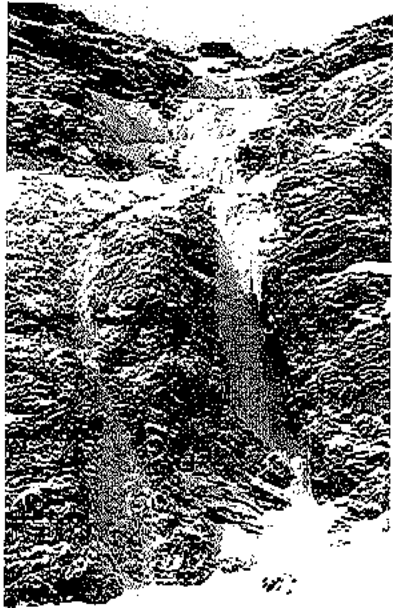
Descent Rappel the route.

Menthos.230 m IV, WI 5

Approach Little is known about this route except it is 3 solid hours along Bath Creek and is climbed in four long pitches.

The first pitch is easy but thin in spots, and is followed by a mushroomed and chandelier WI 5 pillar. Another easy pitch leads to a vertical and unfeared pillar of WI 5.

Descent Rappel the route.



Frank Campbell

Bath Creek. C'est Douche (left) and Bathos (right).

RADIUM HIGHWAY

Also known as the Banff-Radium Parkway, this road runs from Castle Junction on the Trans-Canada Highway to Radium, British Columbia. Whatever this area may lack in quantity of climbs it makes up for in quality and difficulty. Large cliffs loom over cold, fog-infested valleys adding a certain oppressiveness that is unique to the region. Except for Boom Lake and Storm Mountain, all the routes lie west of the Continental Divide (Vermilion Pass). The area is subject to deep snow conditions. Routes are best approached on skis and most have a significant degree of avalanche hazard. Virtually endless possibilities lie to the south on both sides of the road and as far south as Sinclair Canyon.

Getting There

The Radium Highway begins at the Trans-Canada and 1A Highways at Castle Junction 28 km northwest of Banff or 22 km southeast of Lake Louise. The Radium Highway travels 105 km east and south to intersect with Highway 95 at Radium in The Columbia Valley. All the routes are concentrated near Vermilion Pass on the Continental Divide. Vermilion Pass is easy to miss, therefore road distances are measured from the Trans-Canada overpass.

Mixed Climbing along the Radium Highway

The Haffner Creek and Marble Canyon venues have become overrun with people tackling a concentration of short bolted mixed climbs. The Stanley Headwall is another story altogether as it now represents one of the longer and greatest ice and mixed climbing cliffs anywhere in the world. Both here and the similar Storm Creek Headwall con-

tain pure ice and mixed routes next to one another in several places. Other sections contain only sustained and difficult dry tooling mixed routes. Sean Isaac has done a considerable job describing these routes in *Mixed Climbs* creating a dilemma on how much information to repeat here. This book omits a number of the significant mixed routes that were originally in the 1994 edition of *Waterfall Ice*. On the other hand, some new mixed routes in Sean's book *Mixed Climbs* are included here either to minimize confusion or provide more "traditional" mixed climbs for those using this book. When appropriate, mention will be made of the omitted routes.

Facilities

Castle Mountain Hostel, located on the east side of the Trans-Canada Highway at the junction of the 1A and Radium Highways, is a comfortable spot with running water and showers. Gas and basic foods, at inflated prices, are sold at Castle Mountain Village Store near the hostel. Native land claims around Castle Junction may some day change access and facilities. Marble Canyon warden station is closed in winter.

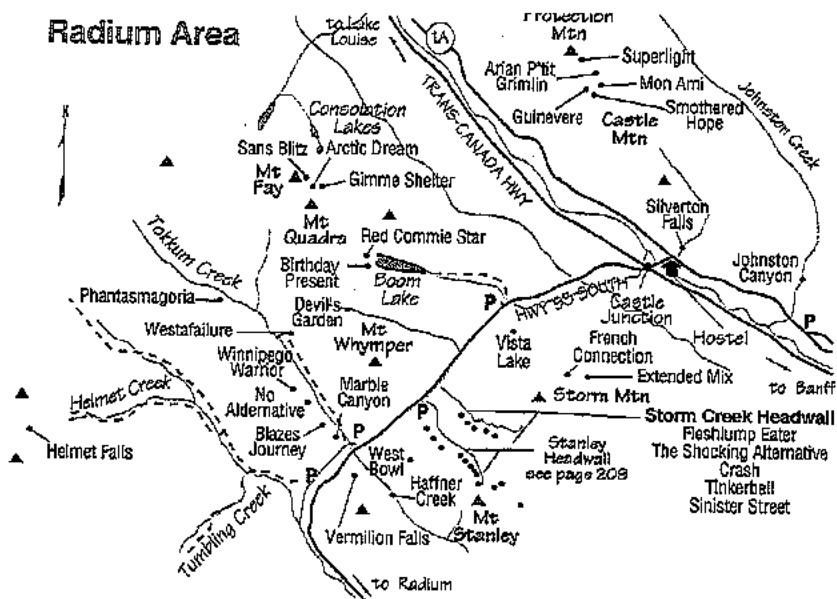
Emergency

Contact the Kootenay or the Banff Warden offices. Pay phones are located at Storm Mountain Lodge (closed in winter) 8.2 km west of the Trans-Canada Highway, and at the Marble Canyon Warden Station (17.3 km from the Trans-Canada). See page 400.

Maps

82 N/8 Lake Louise
82 N/1 Mount Goodsir

Radium Area



Storm Mountain

Storm Mountain is the peak dominating the west side of Castle Junction and home to some interesting hard water ice. Two very separate areas have been explored and the information on both is incomplete. The two routes on the north-east side above Twin Lakes are technically part of The Bow Valley, but are included here for convenience and hopefully a little inspiration. They are in prominent left-facing corner systems on the north side of the lower east ridge of the peak. Both lines offer interesting mixed ice with an alpine character. The Vista Lake climbs are short with a quick approach off the Radium Highway.

Extended Mix 400 m V, M5, WI 4+

Approach From Castle Junction, ski up the marked trail to the Twin Lakes. Shortly before reaching the lower lake, leave the trail and follow a faint drainage to the upper lake toward the large north-east face of Storm Mountain. Cross the lake and head up a snow slope to the base. 3 hours. This is the left-hand of two mixed gully systems.

The first pitch climbs a ribbon of thin ice. All protection is from rock. Belay below a short, steep curtain. Climb the curtain to below a roof, trend left and finish up a beautiful narrow stream of thicker ice. The remainder of the route negotiates small snowfields interspersed with steeper sections (WI 3+) and can be simu-climbed. At the top of

the gully a number of exits are possible, all of them involving a short section of mixed ground and/or a cornice.

Descent Walk down the lower east ridge to a small saddle at treeline, then down-climb a snow gully on the north side of the ridge. No rappels necessary. Contour back to the Upper Twin Lake and your skis. 1 hour from the top of the route.

The French Connection 400 m V, M4+, WI 4

The right corner system next to *Extended Mix* was the scene of a solo first ascent. As it has not yet been repeated specific information is not available, but since it's an alpine route the details aren't necessarily important.

Climb a thin WI 4 pillar and continue past a couple of bulges to a 30 cm wide ribbon. This leads to a snow basin and a bit more ice. Trend left over sketchy, snow-covered slabs to avoid the roofs overhead and continue left across snow ribs. At the final roof move backright and break through it via a short side crack then punch through the cornice.

Descent As for *Extended Mix*.

Vista Lake Smears

As you drive up the Radium Highway toward Vermilion Pass numerous interesting and ephemeral smears can be seen on the quartzite cliffs to the south. A short distance west of the Boom Lake trailhead there is a summer hiking trail on the south leading to Vista Lake. Some smears of unknown character were climbed above the lake in 1995.

Little Hands 40 m II, 3.0, WI 4+

Approximately 200 m right and slightly down from the Vista Lake Smears are two lines. *Little Hands* is the left-hand route. A short steep pillar leads to mixed ground and a couple of chockstones.

Geezers 40 m II, WI 3

10 m right of *Little Hands*. Easy ice leads past an alcove to steeper narrow ice in a right-facing corner.

Boom Lake

The area around Boom Lake has a number of moderate routes. The 50 m snow slope to reach the routes (and a gully feeding into it from the left) is avalanche-prone. However, there is little hazard from above while on the routes themselves. Some WI 4/5 routes may be found farther to the right of the described routes but it is unknown if they are climbed.

Approach Park at Boom Lake trailhead east of Vermilion Pass, 6.4 km west of the overpass. The trail is usually packed or broken, as it is a common ski tour. The routes are easily seen close together on the left side at the far end of the lake (82 N/8 791625). 1.5-2 hours depending on snow conditions.

Birthday Present 150 m III, WI 4

Approach This two-tiered climb with a pitch of snow in the middle is the most obvious route on the left side of the lake. It starts on the right side of the avalanche cone coming out of a snow gully to the left.

Climb two pitches of ice with the top being the crux. An easier variation called *Waterworks* (WI 3) banks out left from the snowband.

Descent Rappel from trees on the right.

Red Commie Star 50 m III, WI 4

Approach Look in the gully just right of *Birthday Present*. *Red Commie Star* can be identified by a broken, hanging pillar above. A mixed climb of uncertain character has been claimed somewhere between *Birthday* and *Red Commie*.

This is a narrow climb with two steep steps and a break in the middle. The pillar above has formed completely and is known as *Zucharschlack* (WI 5) which translates "sugar lick" and is Swiss slang for a sweet treat. Since the pillar does not form frequently, the rock behind has also been bolted. See *Mixed Climbs*.

Descent Rappel the route.

Chickadee Valley

This is the prominent valley on the north side of the highway running up and behind the prominent Mount Whymper. A mid-'80s Rockies ice pioneer, Iain Stewart-Patterson, told once of a potential big ice route in this valley. To date only one climb has been recorded and it is unclear if it is the route of legend.

Devil's Garden 90 m III, WI 4

Approach The route is approximately 4 km up the Valley. Park at the Continental Divide parking area on the Radium highway, cross the road and ski up the valley for 1 hour until the route is visible high on the left (west) side of the valley. Climb up the large avalanche cone and steep gully to the base of the route. Be careful of approach slope and cornices above the second pitch (82 N/1 619763).

Climb two pitches of WI 4 to the top.
Descent Rappel the route.



Red Commie Star.

Photo: Rob Owens

Storm Creek Headwall

A smaller version of the Stanley Headwall, Storm Creek Headwall is one valley east and has the same aspect. Because of the dedicated exploration of Dave Thomson, this interesting valley is currently home to six high quality routes. The potential for new routes, especially of the mixed genre, is considerable. In the past, access to this drainage has been frustrated by poor snow conditions and excessive deadfall from the Vermilion Fire of 1968. It is often best to go early before it snows or wait until February when the snowpack is sufficient to cover the deadfall. To help avoid confusion, all known routes are listed here.

Approach Park 11.5 km west of the overpass. Do not park in the avalanche zone threatening the road. Be sure to park east of the "No Stopping" sign. Some smears and pillars are just visible at the top of a

cliff on the right side of the drainage. The described routes lie farther along and are not visible until quite far up the valley. When leaving the road pick just about any line on either side of the drainage avoiding the creek bottom itself. A small cliff is turned on the right. The routes will be visible on the right. 2-3 hours. There is serious avalanche terrain below and above the routes.

Fleshlumpeater 90 m IV, M6, WI 5+

Approach This rarely formed line is found shortly after entering the valley about 100 m right of *The Shocking Alternative*. It is a distinctive drip with a pasty looking free-hanging dagger half way up.

Climb steepening, often thin ice to a final steep section below the drip and three bolts leading to a bolt belay slightly right and under the roof. Climb past two bolts and onto the dagger leading to straightforward ice and the top.

Descent Rappel the route.

The Shocking Alternative 100 m IV, WI 4

Approach About 3 km up the ravine are several parallel drips. This is the middle and the most substantial and continuous of three (82 N/1 677718). The right is *Fleshlumpeater* and the left is the *Crash* complex.

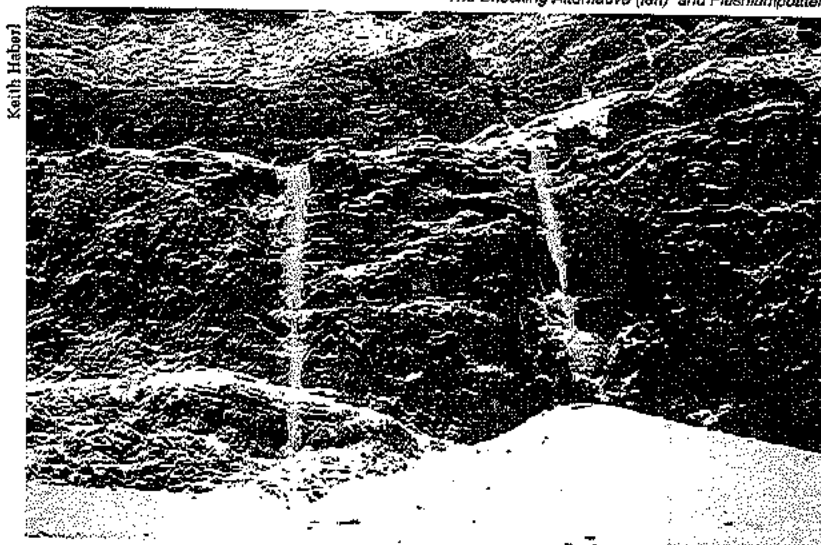
Begin with a 10 m step to a steep snow ledge. Climb more WI 3 to a cone of ice beneath an overhanging block under which you can get a good sheltered hanging belay. Climb the 30 cm wide cone above to gain steep ice for 20 m after which the ice eases off. Climbed in three pitches.

Descent Two rappels down the route.

Crash 90 m IV, WI 5+

Approach About 350 m left of *The Shocking Alternative*. It is easily recognized with three possible and closely spaced lines of ascent and a free-hang-

The Shocking Alternative (left) and Fleshlumpeater.



Keith Habor

ing drip just to the left. It doesn't form consistently, sometimes being noticeably thinner and undoubtedly more difficult. One season a distinct line formed just right of the central line. Called *I was a Teenage Yachty* (M5+), it can be one of the better mixed/ice routes around. Unfortunately it's never formed again. See, *Mixed Climbs*.

Climb the obvious weakness at the centre of the smear, first on sloping thin ice, then up a thicker hose on gradually more difficult ice. Stop below an overhanging block of rock making a safe belay spot. The next pitch continues on WI 5+ on a narrow hose and then left onto a much wider and easier flow. A WI 6 variation is possible a few metres to the left.

Descent Rappel the route.

Tinkerbell 150 m IV, WI 4

Approach Look for a climb similar in character to *The Shocking Alternative* several hundred metres to the left (82 N/1 675719). A 4 hour approach in good conditions.

Tinkerbell offers some interesting thin ice problems on brittle ice. Pitons may be useful for the first belay. The second hanging belay is off a natural rock thread and the third belay off ice.

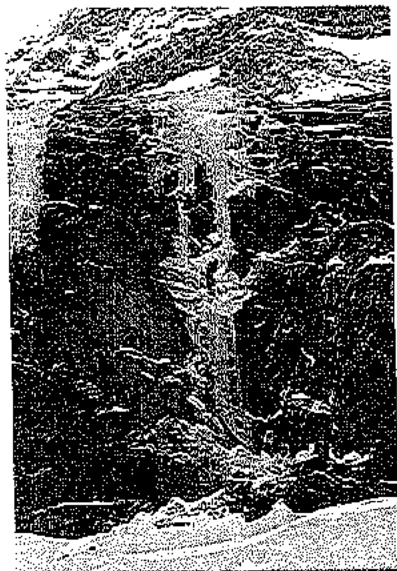
Descent Rappel the route or traverse left and descend *Sinister Street*.

Sinister Street 65 m IV, WI 4+

Approach This 50 m flow left of *Tinkerbell* (82 N/1 676719) was the scene of a bold solo first ascent.

This fine, sustained climb begins with an 8 m free-standing pillar and ends around beautiful, overhanging scoops that form near the top.

Descent Rappel the route; a single bolt anchor is on the left.



Dave Thomson

Crash.



Dave Thomson

Sinister Street.

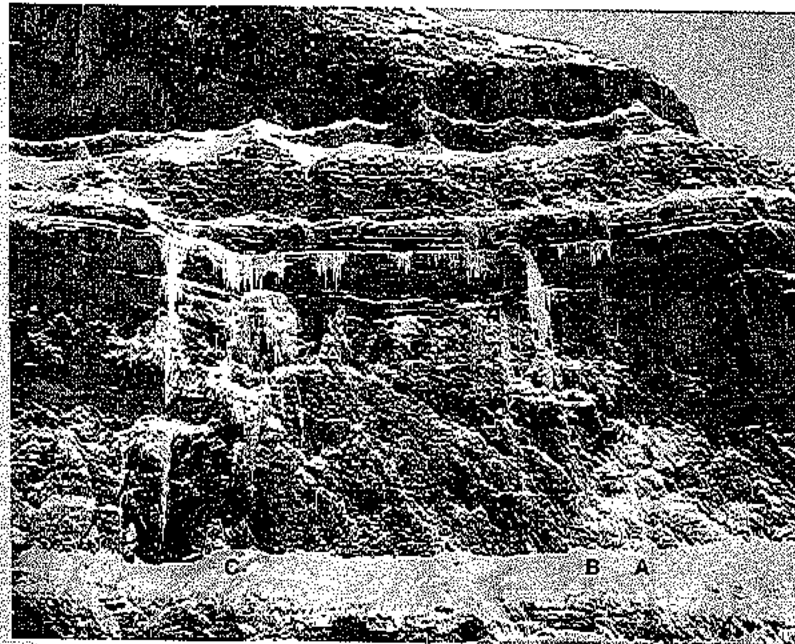
Stanley Glacier Headwall

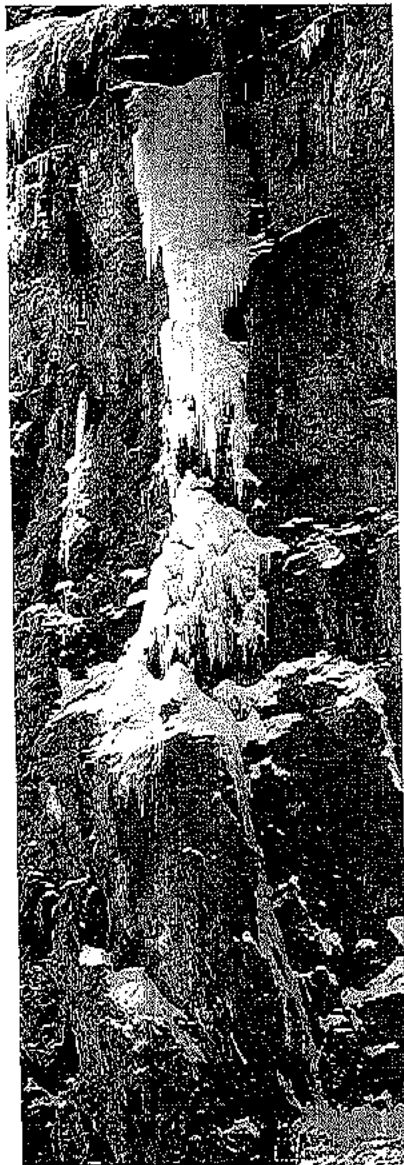
It is hard to say enough about this spectacular venue. Beginning with the first ascent of *Nemesis* in 1974, this area has been at the forefront of ice and mixed climbing development. The all free ascent of *Nemesis* in 1980 created the hardest ice route in the world. The next 15 years saw limited new route activity as climbers concentrated on ticking the now legendary *Nemesis* culminating in Jeff Lakes' exciting solo of the route in 1991. During the last 10 years the headwall has been back at the forefront with the development of numerous long, hard ice and mixed routes. Every major route on the wall is sustained, technically difficult and contains sections of serious climbing.

Getting There

From the Trans-Canada Highway drive 13.5 km on Highway 93 South to the Stanley Glacier trailhead. A good, switchback ski trail carries you to the valley above. The trail emerges in the main valley in sparse trees underneath the huge, menacing headwall (600 m) looming on the right. Specific approaches under each route are described from here. Large avalanche slopes exist below all the routes, above routes farther up the valley and at times on the approach trail from the left. Extreme caution and care is required anywhere in this valley. Routes are described from right to left as you ski up the valley.

Stanley Headwall. A) French Fries
B) French Reality C) Monsieur Huiot Area.





French Reality 145 m V, WI 6+

Approach This wild route is the first obvious pillar that spills out of a hole near the mouth of the valley. *French Reality* does form regularly, although not every year and can most often be rock climbed (up to 5.8) if not.

Approach From the top of the switchbacks trend right through the forest and continue up the wooded shoulder on the far right of the headwall. Stay near an area of burned trees because the forest to the left hides several cliffbands. From the highest point in the trees another 50-60 m puts you at the base of the headwall. The wide snow ledge traversing across the face above a second 50 m cliff is subject to extreme avalanche conditions. You can find a series of bolts to work as running belays from just as you exit the trees all the way to *French Reality* and on to the *Monsieur Hulot* area.

The first short pitch sketches up a narrow and thin vein to a fixed belay on pitons. The next pitch up a steep narrow corner is often very thin with vertical sections to a single bolt anchor at the top near the base of some large splattered mushrooms (there is an older bolt in a cave another 5 m higher). Find your way past the mushrooms on vertical and often brittle ice to a 2 bolt anchor. The final spectacular tongue (crux) takes 90°+ ice to an aesthetic cave just below the prominent ledge that runs across the entire face.

Descent Rappel the route on fixed bolts and ice.

French Reality.
Photo: Godsfroy Ferooux

French Fries 75 m IV, WI 5

Approach Immediately right of *French Reality* a number of interesting smears and mushrooms can form up along the bottom of the cliff. One route has been done, but in some years there may be room for more. *French Fries* starts 15 m right of *French Reality*.

Climb thin and brittle ice (WI 4) to a short steep snowslope and then up to a steep wall. The base of the wall would be the best belay spot for protection but may have limited ice and difficulty in finding a solid belay/rappel. Good ice might be found 15 m up the route on the right side. The final pitch tackles the steep wall above with devious and technical climbing on a variety of large mushroom and chandelier formations. Some of the difficulties can be avoided by traversing back and forth to find a weakness in the overhanging ice. Belay at the top on a fixed rock station to the right.

Descent Rappel the route.

The Monsieur Hulot Area

Found amongst the collection of smears and pillars 150 m left of *French Reality* are a number of impressive routes. All are serious and difficult mixed climbs. The routes are: *Extreme Comfort* 5.11 R WI 6+, *Nightmare on Wolfe Street* M7, WI 6+ and *The Day After les Vacances de Monsieur Hulot* M7, WI 6. In addition to their technical merit they all have a historical significance to the development of Rockies climbing and are well described in *Mixed Climbs*.

Acid Howl 320 m V, WI 6+

400 m past *French Reality* a third ice vein originates with two to three separate lines halfway up the Headwall. These smears pour onto the prominent ledge and then fall into two huge parallel free-standing pillars. Another free-standing column is found near the bottom and is not visible from the highway unless you hike up a road cut on the north side of the road. This very physically demanding route was first climbed in -30°C. Occasionally the route forms relatively fat and plastic. In January 2001 a challenging drytooling version was added to the unformed pillars.

Approach Continue up the ski trail in the main drainage until across from the route. Find your way up a very large and exposed avalanche slope to the base. 2-3 hours depending on conditions. See photo next page.

Climb a short step of bad ice and snow to the base of the first pencil. The first ascent team found unconsolidated overhanging ice for 30 m that required major amounts of cleaning to find hook placements and psychological protection. Another two pitches of WI 3 and snow arrive at two parallel pillars. The left-hand pillar will form more regularly but both have been climbed. Both offer tremendously sustained and technical climbing for a full ropelength. Continue up steep ice to a ledge below a WI 5 pitch on the right that leads to the prominent ledge. Another WI 6 section could be found straight up the left pillar. From a short bowl a choice of three steep smears lead to the top.

Descent Rappel the route. Up to three rappels may be made directly off free-standing pillars.



The Marijuana Meander 320 m V, WI 5+

This is a significant variation to *Acid Howl*. Basically, it finds a way up easier smears on the far left side of the route and can often be climbed when the pillars are unformed. Although it has been climbed at least twice little is known about the exact nature of the ice but it can be thin. The title is a combination between a word play on *Acid Howl* (which actually has zero drug reference as it was named after a "Far Side" cartoon) and the frequent indulgences of the first ascensionists.

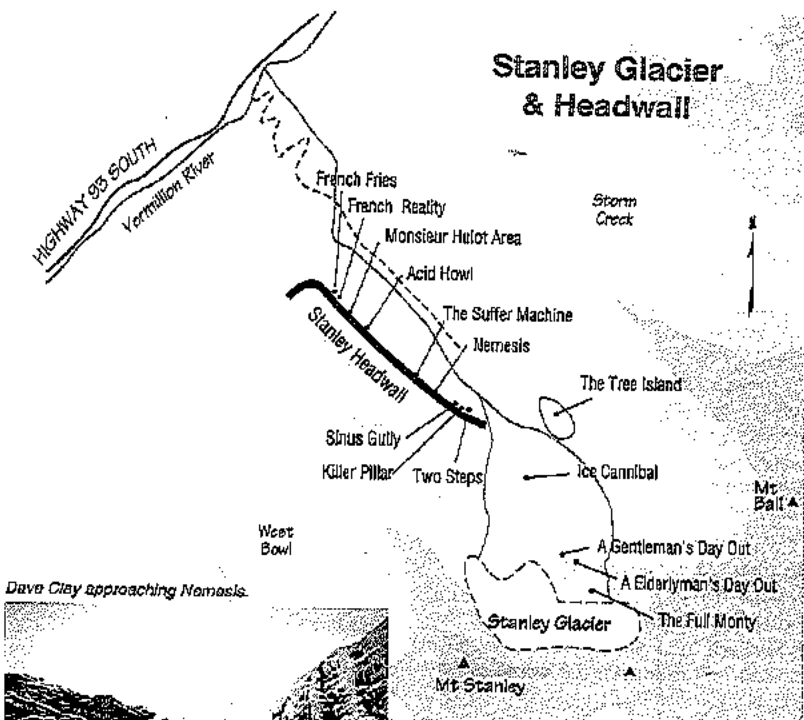
Suffer Machine Area

Farther up the valley the headwall becomes slightly lower with large avalanche slopes above. Two major and obvious routes are found 250 m apart, *Suffer Machine* on the right and *Nemesis* on the left. Although *Suffer Machine* has formed once to the ground and was climbed as a pure ice route (WI 6+), this is extremely rare. Most of the time it is a compelling broken icicle below several pitches of beautiful ice (WI 5). A direct mixed route now compliments the original aid line. A narrower unformed smear is often seen 20 m left of *Suffer Machine* and is called *Fiasco*, and in 1997 a route formed 50 m to the right of *Suffer Machine*. This route, *Uniform Queen*, is simply one of the best routes in the range. A shorter two pitch mixed route called *General Malaise* is located 30 m left of *Suffer Machine*. All of these routes are described in *Mixed Climbs*.



Top: *Acid Howl*. The Meander takes the lower angled smear on the left. Bottom: The *Suffer Machine* rarely formed to the ground.

Photos: Alan Kerr



Dave Clay approaching *Nemesis*.



Alan Kerr

Nemesis 160 m V WI 6

Today *Nemesis* remains a challenge to even the best climbers and is one of the few early climbs that has not been downgraded or lost its reputation. The route forms every year but with varying quality and with several possible lines. It is usually climbed in four pitches but has been done in three. Guy Lacelle, with an extra long rope, once did the route in one and a quarter pitches.

Approach Ski up the valley and emerge from the trees slightly down hill from *Nemesis* and across from *Suffer Machine*. Follow a slight rib below *Nemesis* that makes the approach slope a little

less threatening. Beware of invisible, huge avalanche slopes above. Expect a 2 hour approach in average conditions.

Expect the ice to be thin and occasionally rotten on the first two pitches leading to a sloping ledge. The crux is usually the third pitch off the ledge, gradually improving closer to the top. A short pitch is needed to finish.

Descent Rappel the route. Some fixed stations exist on the rock to the right but be prepared to leave up to 4 rappel anchors.

Sinus Gully 75 m IV, 5.6, WI 3

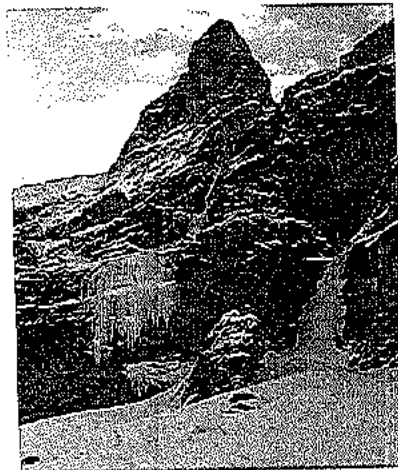
Approach This is a nice route about 200 m left of *Nemesis*.

A long pitch leads to a cave. Climb easy rock on the left-hand wall to a traverse line widening onto the snow ledge above *Killer Pillar*. Continue left for 60 m to a short exit pitch of ice.

Descent Rappel *Killer Pillar*.

Killer Pillar 50 m IV, WI 6

Approach This steep testpiece pours off the front of the buttress left of *Sinus Gully*.



Killer Pillar (left, unformed), *Sinus Gully*. *Two Steps* is off the photo to the left. Photo: Joe Josephson

Look for the obvious pillar that always form. It can also be climbed as a mixed route on the rock behind.

Work your way up one pitch of technical mushrooms and featureless ice.

Descent Rappel the route.

Two Steps 45 m III, WI 2

Approach The left-most gully before the Headwall flattens out into a large avalanche slope.

Good ice with several steeper sections.

Descent Rappel the route or walk off left across avalanche slopes.

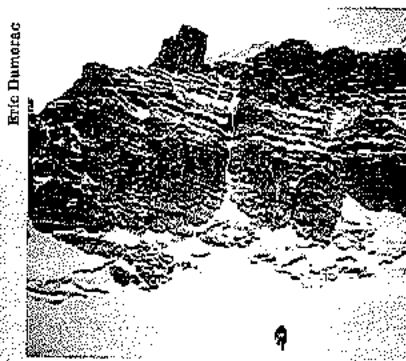
Mount Stanley

Farther up the valley past *Nemesis* and roughly perpendicular to the headwall is the north face of Stanley Peak. The left side of the face has numerous walls and gullies that hide an amazing amount of water ice usually climbable by early October.

Ice Cannibal 480 m V, 5.7, WI 5

Just past the Headwall are two prominent towers on the right side of the valley with the right-hand peak being larger. On the serac barrier between the two, there are two obvious ice gullies. This route climbs the left-hand gully.

Start 30 m left of the prominent gully and climb two pitches of 5.7 to a large ledge system. Traverse right for 70 m into a couloir at the base of the right-hand ice gully. Climb up to the base of the ice (the first ascent team found this very wet and unclimbable) and traverse left for 25 m to a thin WI 3 gully. Climb 45 m to a piton anchor on the right wall. Continue up a



Ice Cannibal.

vertical ice pitch to the base of the serac. Exit on the left to the top of the glacier.

Descent Walk down the glacier.

A Gentleman's Day Out IV, 5.8 mixed

As you ski up the valley look above the obvious tree covered rock bench just past *Killer Pillar*. The route is found hidden in a tight gully on the front of a buttress above the bench on the lower left side of the north face of Mount Stanley. It begins at map reference 82 N/1 666692 and runs up and left for four or five pitches. This and the other *Day Out* climb were done after a freak mid-September Arctic front and are chimney climbs in true Scottish fashion with fun mixed climbing. The first ascent party traversed into the *Y-couloir*, continued across the summit of Mount Stanley and descended the standard North Ridge.

An Elderly Man's Day Out IV, 5.7 mixed

Starts around the buttress to the left of Gentleman's Route at 82 N/1 669692. After four to five pitches it ends on the same slope as *A Gentleman's Day Out*. Another alpine route, *The Outlander Couloir*, begins about 400 m left of

here (82 N/1 672692) and goes to the summit of an unnamed peak between Mounts Stanley and Ball. On the first ascent of *Elderly Man's Route* the team traversed over this summit and descended to the east.

The Full Monty 50 m IV, WI 6

When formed, this pillar is obvious on a short cliffband high above the *Day Out* climbs. I leave the approach details to your own route finding and expect about 4.5 hours. Climb a skinny, technical pillar in one pitch.

Stanley Peak West Bowl

The following routes are found in the drainage between Haffner Creek and the Stanley Headwall.

Bok Choy 35 m III, WI 4

Approach Park at Marble Canyon parking lot and walk up the road for 1.3 km to where the drainage meets the Vermilion River. Cross the river and ski 20 minutes up the shallow drainage to the route. (82 N/1 632711).

The first pitch is a short free-hanging pillar and is found at the head of a small canyon. The second pitch, found 10 minutes farther upstream, is also free-hanging and is longer and steeper.

Descent Rappel the route.

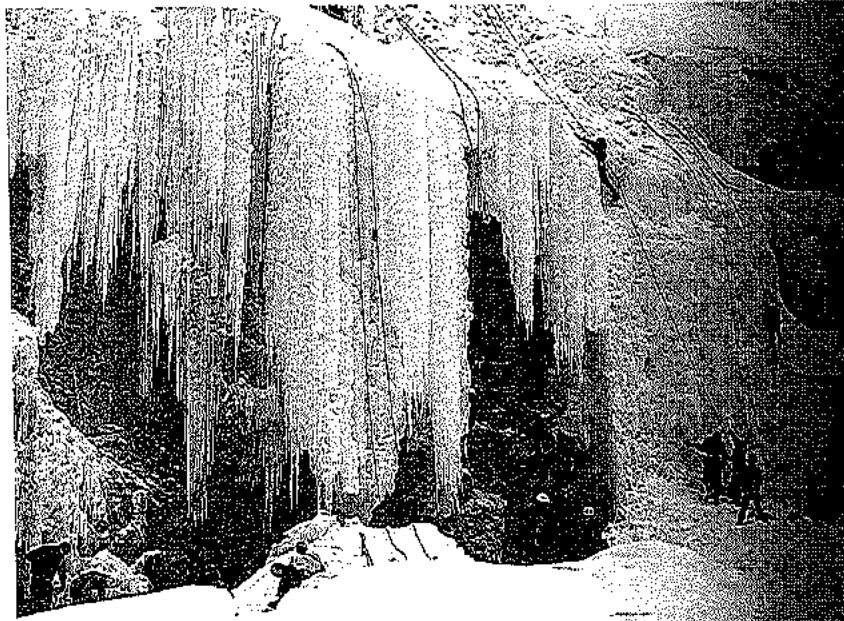
Insane in the Membrane 30 m IV, WI 6

Approach Park at the Marble Canyon parking lot and walk up the road 1.3 km and bushwack up the forest to gain a large bowl at the base of the mountain to the right. 2 hours. The route is a beautiful slender pillar appearing on a large yellow wall. There is a large unclimbed, iced-up gully 70 m to the left. Some years no ice whatsoever appears in either place.

Haffner Creek

I remember when I first climbed in Haffner Creek in the early '90s. It was January, and we broke trail with skis for over an hour. The third edition of this guide in 1994 certainly made it a more popular place and a packed trail became common. Yet even since then, Haffner Creek has gone through a radical transformation. Once home to beginners and people escaping avalanche hazards, it is now a bustling centre for bolted mixed climbing and sees significant traffic virtually every day of the week. *Mixed Climbs* lists up to 16 routes in the two main areas. In addition, most years show three or four completely formed ice routes from WI 3 to WI 4+ depending

Haffner Creek on a slow day.



212 Radium Highway

on conditions. I've seen a total of 16 routes completely formed at one time up to WI 5+, but don't expect this ever again as mixed climbers will be whacking the daggers long before they get a chance to touch down. A great benefit of this new found focus is that Haffner remains a good place for novice mixed climbers as the routes are short, protection is good and people of all abilities can climb next to one another.

Approach Park at the Marble Canyon parking lot and warden station (closed in winter) 17.5 km from Castle Junction. Cross the highway and follow a well-packed trail through a campground and into the canyon. 20 minutes. Refer to *Mixed Climbs* for route details.

Photo: Dave Thompson

Tokumm Creek - Marble Canyon

This is the main valley running north on the west side of the famous Ten Peaks area and can be a popular ski tour. Sporadic exploration over the years has produced three recorded routes and there is likely to be more, although avalanche conditions put severe limitations on what you can go. On the other hand, Marble Canyon has zero avalanche hazard and perhaps the easiest approach in the range. That is the good news. The bad news is there are few routes.

When climbing in Marble Canyon some respect is required for the fragile vegetation around the top of the canyon. This popular summer tourist attraction has some slope degradation, toilet paper and other climbing trash that is largely unremoved. In winter will be readily visible when the cloak of snow is gone. Let's not give park wardens a reason to limit access. Another advisory applies to walking around the bottom of the canyon where the creek ice can be very thin over deep pools below. It is possible to break through the flowing water, never to be seen again.

Approach Park at the large parking lot and warden station at Marble Canyon as per Haffner Creek. All the routes are to the north starting at the Marble Canyon name trail.

Tokumm Pole 40 m II, WI 5+

Starts at Haffner Creek, Marble Canyon. Shows one or two mediocre ice routes that have been sporadically climbed for years, but now it sports three top notch and popular mixed climbs. *Tokumm Pole* is the name applied to the only consistently formed pillar between the third and sixth bridges. Another WI 3/4



Marble Canyon. Tokumm Pole.

pillar can sometimes form a short ways upstream above a deep pool and as part of the mixed route *Throttler*.

Blazes Journey 210 m III, WI 3-4

This route is visible from the Marble Canyon parking lot on the steep wall on the right from the parking lot. Avalanche hazard on the approach and the climb make this a recommended early season route.

Approach Take the Marble Canyon trail to the last bridge then continue up left through trees and avalanche slopes to the base (82 N/1 604713). 2 hours.

Climb two short ice pitches with lots of snow in between. Another third pitch leads into a cave. Several lines of differing difficulty lead from the cave to the top.

Descent Rappel the route.

Radium Highway 213

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No Alderative (sic) 150 m III, WI 4

A classic route named after the sea of alders that had to be crossed to access the route.

Approach Park at the Marble Canyon parking lot and hike 40 minutes up Tokumm Creek and on the left is an obvious blue flow. Bushwhack down to Tokumm Creek then find the exact spot where the stream from the route flows into Tokumm Creek. Hike directly up this streambed to the base of the route (82 N/1 593723). 40 minutes. There is avalanche hazard from above and just about any variation on this approach is likely to be "alder hell"!

Climb three long, beautiful pitches with an option to go right (harder) or left on the last pitch.

Descent Rappel the route.

Winnipeg Warrior (sic) 375 m IV, WI 4

Approach Ski up the nature trail past the Marble Canyon and up Tokumm Creek for 1 hour. The climb is visible on the left (82 N/1 581748). This long, early-season climb should not be attempted when there is any sort of avalanche hazard. Seeps funnel down from over 1000 m.

Look for the route identified by a short pillar in the bottom of a gully. Continue up lots of WI 3 ice with a crux curtain higher up. Named in honour of a friend who chose graduate school in Manitoba over ice climbing. Imagine!

Descent Rappel and downclimb route.

Westataillure 60 m III, WI 4+

Approach This is found just past Winnipeg Warrior. Ski past that route for 15 minutes and look for the route in a huge avalanche bowl on the right side of the valley. Continue 45 minutes up the slope.

Climb a steep fun curtain.

Descent Rappel the route.

Phantasmagoria 170 m V, WI 5

Approach Ski up Tokumm Creek for an hour past Winnipeg Warrior to a huge, fat waterfall high up on the unnamed peak to the west (82 N/1 564760). 3 hours. Go early in the day and early in the year.

Few details are known about the route except it is a great route with awesome exposure and at least one hanging belay. It forms every year.

Descent Rappel the route.

Vermilion Peak

Vermilion Falls 200 m III, WI 4+

The first pitch is visible on the south side of the road several hundred metres west of the Marble Canyon Warden Station. It is located in the middle of a large avalanche path.

Approach Park 1.0 km west of the warden station. Cross the river and then walk through the runoff zone to the base (82 N/1 616692). 2 hours.

The first 40 m pitch climbs a steep curtain to a pillar. The 150 m of rolling WI 2 above is often covered in snow.

Descent Rappel the pillar or from the top of the climb descend through trees to the left.



Helmet Falls.

Helmet Creek

Helmet Falls 300 m V, WI 4

"How to go to jail in one easy step." This is what two Calgary climbers learned after breaking into the Park Service Cabin near the base of this remote waterfall. Although they got by with community service they still haven't lived down this notorious incident. Considering their primitive ski gear, and after skiing 16 km into this waterfall, you'll understand why they looked for more comfortable lodging. The trail is rarely broken and you can expect a long day to simply reach the fall. On a more inspiring note, *Helmet Falls* has been climbed several times in a day car-to-car! It certainly deserves to be climbed more often. There is at least one major new route to do in the vicinity.

Approach Park at the Paint Pots trailhead, 20 km from the Trans-Canada overpass at Castle Junction. Ski up Ochre Creek. Several kilometres along the Tumbling Glacier Trail comes down from the left. Keep going straight and turn left at the Helmet Creek Trail. This leads to near the base of the climb (82 N/1 475707). 5 hours total.

The climb is a spectacular, massive wall of ice. The first two pitches are the crux, then continue up for three or four more pitches.

Descent Rappel the route.

Vermilion Crossing

Who Wants To Be A Vermilionaire? 340 m IV, WI 4

This route is visible due east from the Vermilion River Crossing. It is the largest ice flow in the right-hand of two drainages (82 O/4 749536). Impressive avalanche hazard exist at all points of the climb and in the final part of the approach.

Approach It is possible to start from the road about 1 km south of the lodge at Vermilion Crossing but this necessitates crossing the river ice. The FA team parked at the pull-off immediately north of the Vermilion River bridge on the west side of the highway to avoid the river crossing. Allow 3 hours for the approach (done on snowshoes on first ascent).

There are four main pitches of ice, broken only by a 150 m snow gully with ice bulges between the first and second pitches.

Descent Rappel the route. 60 m ropes are useful.

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COLUMBIA-KOOTENAY VALLEY

A broad valley otherwise known as the Rocky Mountain Trench forms the western boundary of the range and parallels the west slope for hundreds of kilometres. Life in the valley is a slow-paced, relaxed affair, symptomatic of the mild winter weather experienced here. As a result of these warmer temperatures the climbs don't form until late December and fall apart by early March. There is a lot of private property along the main highway (93 and 95). Permission may be required to get to some climbs but most are accessed via active logging roads. Access is often a matter of finding the right road that leads to the route(s). The Trench doesn't have tons of water ice but the selection offers some good easy to moderate routes and a couple of difficult testpieces. Most routes have absolutely no avalanche hazard which is a huge bonus when compared to the rest of the Rockies. Horsethief Creek due west of Radium is home to numerous completed ice routes and is known to hold many more. The routes are described from the north near Golden to the south near Fernie.

Getting There

From the Trans-Canada Highway at Castle Junction take Highway 93 South (Radium Highway) to Radium Hot Springs. At the 4-way stop (Radium Crossroads) turn north on Highway 95 to pass through the small communities of Edgewater, Brisco (Bugaboos turn-off), Spillimacheen, Harrogate and Parson to Golden to re-intersect the Trans-Canada. From the Radium Crossroads south, follow Highway 93/95 past Invermere, Fairmont Hot Springs, Canal Flats and Cranbrook, and, if you wish clear to

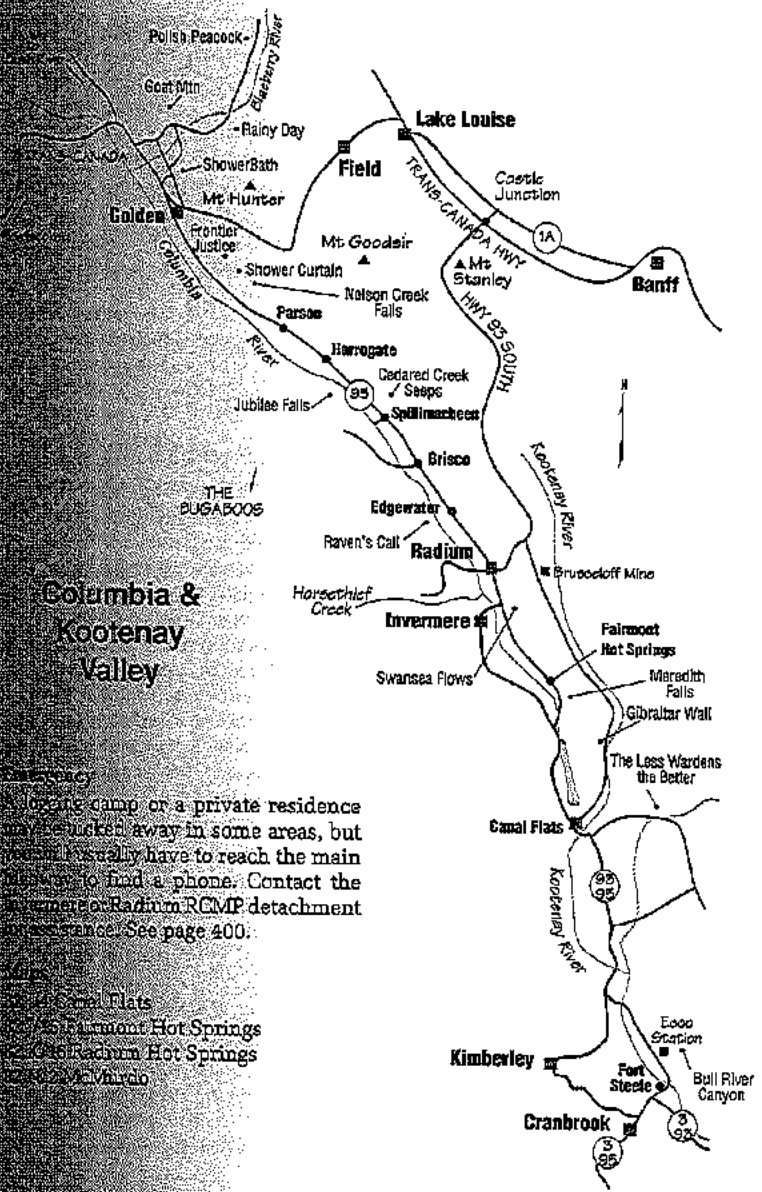
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho (Highway 55) or Kalispell, Montana (Highway 93).

Logging Roads

It is important to remember that many of the access roads in the area are active logging roads. Generally they are open to public travel, but if they are being actively logged (which is common in the winter) blindly heading up them can be hazardous to everyone's health. Road closures are recommended, if not required, and many of the active logging roads need parking out of the way of the industrial traffic is imperative. No matter how much you may or may not like it if you own the road. Call the B.C. Forest Office for information on road closures, how they are to be used and truck activity or restrictions. See page 389.

Facilities

Along Highway 93/95 between Radium and Fairmont are numerous resorts, motels and other tourist attractions. There are no hostels or other budget winter camping areas but primitive camping can be accomplished on logging roads scattered along the west side of the valley. The mild weather makes this a real option in winter but be sure you find a private location off the beaten track. Commercial hot springs at Radium and Fairmont provide an interesting diversion but save your money and check out the Lussier Hot Springs on the White Swan Lake Road south of Canal Flats. Refer to the *Less Wonders the Better* route description for details. There are no 24-hour gas stations or convenience stores in the south end of the valley. Fernie is a full-service 24 hour resort town.



Columbia & Kootenay Valley

Columbia-Kootenay Valley 217

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Highway 95 Between Golden and Radium

The following routes are found on both sides of Highway 95 between Radium Hot Springs and Golden. They are described from north to south.

Frontier Justice 55 m IV, 5.7, WI 6

Located high on the southwest face of Capistro Mountain this is one of the nicest routes in the valley and if it should not be missed.

Approach Drive south of Golden on highway 95 for 12 km. Turn left onto Austin Road and follow this for 0.6 km and turn left on to Campbell Road. Follow Campbell Road for 2.7 km until you come to a cross road. Just before the cross road the climb is visible up and left on the southwest side of Capistro Mountain. To have a better look turn left at the cross road on to Pagliaro Road and follow it for 0.5 km. Once you have had a look continue on Campbell Road past the cross road for 2 km until you come to a multiple driveway that climbs steeply to the left—house #'s 1571, 1573, 1577. As this is private property you should park here and walk up the driveway. From the top of the hill turn right and walk along the power line through a field. At the end of the field start to angle up and left staying on the left of the draw. Skis or snowshoes are recommended unless it's a very dry year 1.5 hours.

A few rock moves gains the thin 20 m unprotectable first pitch. Climb through spectacular daggers and overhanging ice to gain the last 15 m of vertical ice.

Descent Rappel the route.

Shower Curtain 12 m II, WI 3

2 km north of Nelson Creek Falls are three climbs found in a gully. This curtain is 30 m wide and the lowest route on the left side.

Backyard 70 m III, WI 3

This is the most obvious route on the right side of the gully above *Shower Curtain*. Climb 2 pitches to a tree belay on the left.

Rotini 20 m III, WI 4

This is the highest route in the gully and is a nice pillar.

Nelson Creek Falls 300 m IV, WI 4

This is a spectacular climb visible high above Highway 95 and is subject to avalanche.

Approach 5 km north of the Parson General Store on Highway 95 or 32 km south of Golden, turn east on Madden Road and intersect Campbell Road after 3 km. Follow Campbell Road north and turn east on Allen Road which leads to a private residence bordering the small drainage (Nelson Creek) coming from the climb. Walk or ski up the drainage for 2 hours to the base.

Note: It is important to obtain permission from landowners before crossing private property.

The climb starts with rolling ice (often snow covered) up to a WI 3 pitch in an open book. Climb a steep pillar to a curtain of ice and into the upper basin. Finish on 100 m of steep and sustained ice.

Descent Rappel the route.

Jubilee Falls 35 to 70 m III, WI 2-4

This is a group of climbs which form on the east face of Jubilee Mountain and are visible west across the Columbia River 8.5 km north of Spillimacheen or 2 km south of the Harrogate General Store.

Approach Park on Highway 95 across from the climbs. Cross the Columbia River and hike up through dense forest to the gully draining the climbs. 2 hours. The river is quite shallow and may be frozen, but if not you can cross the river on a bridge (Westside Road) that heads west out of Spillimacheen. After 2 km turn right (north) onto Giant Mascot Mine Road for about 1 km, then turn right (north) onto Jubilee Mountain Forest Service Road. Drive as far as possible, then ski or mountain bike down the road until it turns uphill and then traverse into the base of the climbs. A long approach.

Up to four separate climbs are possible. The left-hand line (35 m) is the most obvious and has the largest open slope leading to it. It gives good ice with a variety of lines (WI 3-4). The two smears to the right are 60-70 m of WI 2. A final 60 m WI 4 route forms as a pillar 20 m right (north) of the above smears.

Descent All descents are rappels from trees.

Cedared Creek Seeps 30 m II, WI 3

This climb features north-facing ice and stays formed later into the season than most climbs in the valley.

Approach From Radium drive 4.5 km north from Spillimacheen on Highway 95 or 6 km south of Harrogate General Store. Park where small logging roads head east through an area of recent logging (1994) and ski or snowmobile up the road. After approximately 2 km, head right (south) into Cedared Creek and fol-

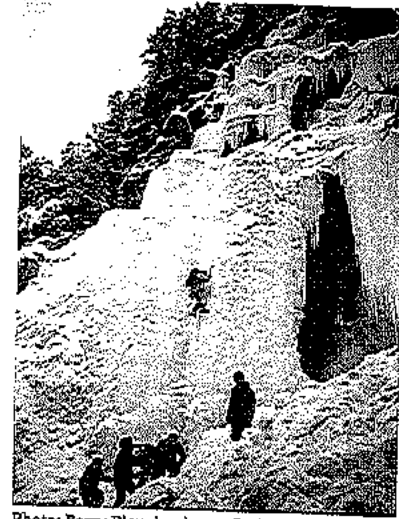


Photo: Barry Blanchard. Cedared Creek Seeps.

low a deteriorating road to where the drainage narrows. The climb is found on the south wall of the canyon.

This moderate route can be climbed on various lines. 5 minutes farther upstream on the south side is another route called *The Tumor* (70 m II WI 3).

Descent Rappel off ice or an incipient bush.

Raven's Call 45 m II, WI 5

Clearly visible from Highway 95 just north of Edgewater above the west side of the Columbia River, *Raven's Call* is an excellent challenging climb in a pleasant setting with a nice approach. It usually doesn't form until late December, but seems to come in regularly.

Approach From the 4-way stop at the Radium Crossroads drive 4 km west on Horsethief Road and turn right (north) onto Steamboat Mountain Forest Serv-

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ice Road/Red Rock Road. Drive north paralleling the Columbia River and stay left on the main road. At the 14 km marker Steamboat Mountain Road heads left but you stay right for another 1 km (road may not be maintained at this point) until you see a livestock pen on your right. Park and walk due east toward the river valley and intersect a small stream. Follow it down on the north side to the top of the falls, 10 minutes from car. Rappel the route or walk down on steep rock and snow to the north to reach the base.

This beautiful pillar forms in two parts. The bottom part is a mushrooming pedestal usually climbed on either side to avoid the mushrooms. The climb finishes up a round free-standing pillar. Belay off trees at the top.

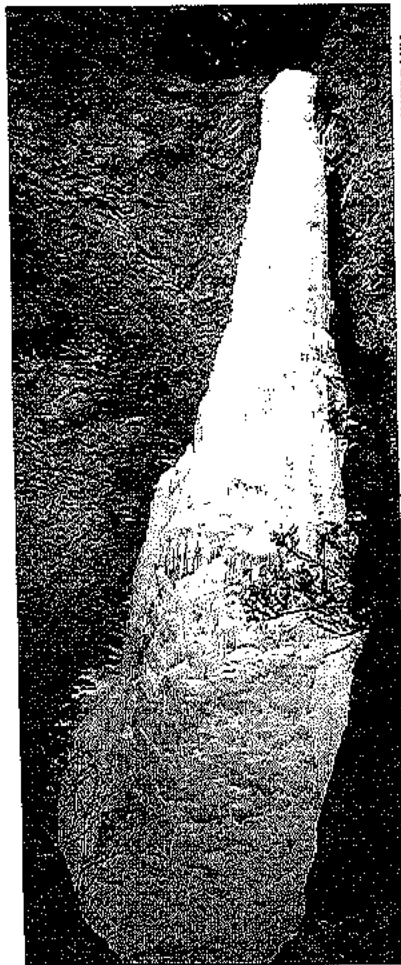
Horsethief Creek Falls 150 m IV, WI 4

This beautiful remote falls is worth doing if a lack of snow permits you to drive up the Horsethief Creek forest service road late in the season. The other option of course is to use a snowmobile.

Approach From Radium cross the Columbia River and stay on the main Road avoiding all "spur" roads. This is a well-travelled and signed road. The climb can be seen from 41 km up the road as a huge blue curtain of ice on the right-hand side of the valley. Drive another 1 km until you cross the creek and park here. Walk up and left through an old cutblock then more easily through open forest to the gully below the climb. 45-60 minutes.

Walk up the gully with small steps of grade II ice to the base of the curtain. Climb the curtain in two long pitches.

Descent Rappel the route.



Raven's Call

Kit Sellers

Settler's Road

The following routes are found along the northern section of Settler's Road which follows the Kootenay River from inside Kootenay National Park to Canal Flats. It is open all winter but can be slow travelling because of poor road conditions and heavy commercial truck traffic. The trucks use pull-outs with radio controlled hauling 7 days a week. Be careful, they will not give way on the road. Recent logging (2001) up to the park boundary has improved access and at least 3 new quality routes up to WI 6 have been completed near *Al Kantera Falls*. *Gibraltar Wall* is close to Canal Flats where the roads are wider and it's recommended to reach this popular falls via Canal Flats and not try to "short-cut" down Settler's Road from the Park.

Al Kantera Falls 100 m IV, WI 5

This is an excellent climb for a snowmobile assisted ascent. It can easily be climbed in one day from Radium with good sledding conditions.

Approach From within Kootenay National Park turn south onto Settler's Road. Cross the river thereby leaving the park and head toward the Bruesseloff Mine. Park just before the mine, 50 m before a bridge that leads to the mine property. Unload a sled here and head up the obvious logging road—not plowed—that parallels the creek that you have parked by. Follow the road through several blocks crossing the main creek only once. Just past this point park the sleds and ski upstream, keeping to the left of the creek or, if conditions are good, break a sled trail through scrub trees and along the creek tending to the flats of the valley bottom. Look for the climb on the right-hand side of the valley as a two pitch pillar exiting

from a cave midway up a large cliffband. It is very obvious. Park the machines and ski up to the base. A very avalanche prone slope must be ascended to the base of route (and others traversed if you are skiing). The first ascent team turned back on one attempt at this point after skiing for 4 hours. The route is not threatened once you have reached the base.

Establish a belay in a protected alcove on the right and watch for very large dinnerplates. Climb a steepening ice ramp that leads to a belay behind the main pillar. The second pitch is sustained and brittle. Climb a third very short pitch of easy ice to the cave entrance.

Descent Rappel the route.

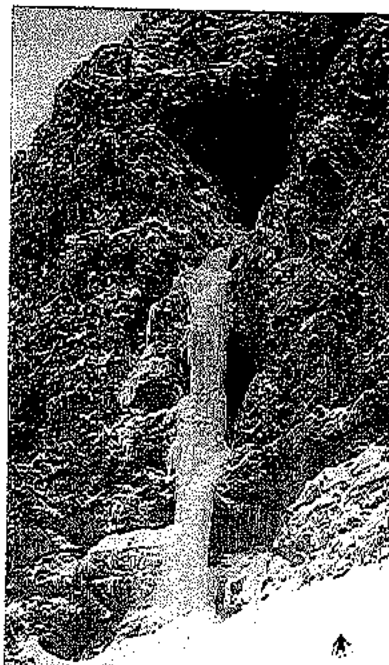


Photo: Eric Hoogstraaten

Al Kantera Falls

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Hunters Don't Like Us but They Suck So I Don't Care 100 m III, WI 2

This route is located in a large avalanche path and is recommended only as an early season climb.

Approach From within Kootenay National Park turn south onto Settler's Road. Cross the river thereby leaving the park and head toward the Bruesseloff Mine. Just before the road degrades to single lane and just past the "No Vehicle Supported Hunting" sign look for an ice filled gully through the trees on the right. Easily seen from the small cutblock 100 m past the route. Head up through open trees to the base.

Climb thin steps to a large ledge that leads to some steeper ice on a 20 m pitch. Descent Exit the gully and walk down on the climbers right.

Highway 93/95 South of Radium

The following routes are found in the Upper Columbia Valley and Kootenay River Valley south of Radium Hot Springs. The routes are described from north to south and are accessed from the east side of Highway 93/95.

Swansea Flows 30 m I, WI 2

Approach Located almost directly east of Invermere. From the turn-off into Invermere (13 km south of Radium) head south on Highway 93/95 another 500 m. Turn left (east) on Cooper Road and follow it for 1 km to the Westroc Mining Road and turn right (south). Drive approximately 2 km and park at an old farming road that leads toward the climb. Walk 15 minutes to the base of an easy practice seep low down on a cliffband.

Meredith Falls 25 m II, WI 3

A straightforward climb located in a small wooded gully approximately 1 km south of Fairmont Ski Area. Meredith is best located from near the Hoodoo Resort 3.5 km south of Fairmont.

Approach Takes the main turn-off into Fairmont Hot Springs Resort (36 km south of Radium) and head south from the Mountain Side Golf Course until you are below the waterfall which is not obvious from the road. Hike uphill and then into the streambed near the base of the climb.

Climb directly up the flow coming over a steep rockband.

Descent Rappel from trees.

CANAL FLATS AREA

The following routes are along the southern portion of Settler's Road or on the Whiteswan Lake road near Canal Flats.

Gibraltar Wall 145 m II, WI 4

The western Rockies equivalent of the Weeping Wall, Gibraltar Wall forms every year and is a sunny route with three distinct lines of equal difficulty. There is a potential steep ice or mixed route to the left. It is not known if it has been climbed.

Approach From Highway 93/95 about 60 km south of Radium, turn into Canal Flats. From the stop sign on the main drag go straight for about 100 m to where the road turns north onto a logging road. Follow this road as it turns east and continues up the Kootenay River. Drive for 27.2 km from Canal Flats to where Gibraltar is visible on the west side, 5-10 minutes away.

Berry Blanchard



Gibraltar Wall

The route is a wide expanse of ice in three steep tiers separated by good belay ledges.

Descent Rappel the route or walk left until you can easily descend.

The Art of Being 60 m III, WI 4+

A good option for when the main falls is crammed with weekend warriors. Located in a narrow obscure gully it can be difficult to see and thus goes overlooked when climbing in the Gibraltar Wall area. It provides a couloir-like setting with interesting climbing ranging from a free-standing pillar to an unprotected 15 m rock slab and a final pitch reminiscent of *The Professor Falls*.

Approach Park as for Gibraltar Falls. Walk to the back of the clearing toward the river. Look up and right of Gibraltar Wall and locate the climb as a pillar spilling over a cliffband in the trees.

What looks like the farthest smear to the right is actually the top pitch. Walk approximately 150 m north on the road. Angle gently left into the trees before the road bends east to avoid the obvious cliffbands. Follow a shallow and dry creek bed up to the base of the route by passing a rockstep on the right. 15 minutes.

Start up a slender 15 m pillar that quickly lays back to a practically horizontal gully. If unformed it may be possible to scramble around on the right. From a large pine tree on the right climb a moderate unprotected rock slab to gain purchase in the ice and the top of the first pitch. A short walk leads to a second pitch of enjoyable 75-80° ice.

Descent Rappel the route.

The Less Wardens the Better 45 m I, WI 3-4

This nice south-facing climb doesn't always form, but has the added benefit of a nearby rustic hot springs.

Approach Drive south from the Radium Crossroads 65.7 km (4.6 km south of the Kootenay River Bridge) to White Swan Lake Provincial Park Road. Turn left and drive the good gravel road for about 17 km to the hot springs (look for an outhouse and a small brown building on the right side). Continue 1 km farther along the road until the falls are visible on the left (north) side only 5 minutes from the road.

The climb is a seep of 80-85° ice that is recommended solely because of the added bonus of free natural hot springs to recover in.

Descent Rappel off trees.

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Bull River Canyon

This area has been climbed for years, but went unrecorded for two reasons: first, there weren't many locals who ice climbed and second, it was a guarded secret by those that did.

Climbing in Bull River Canyon

Flow in the canyon is regulated by a dam upstream and is owned by a power corporation. The land in and around the canyon is also privately owned by Co-Op. While there has never been an access issue, one can wager that actions by inexperienced or careless climbers may well bring the issue to the forefront. Climbing on the dam itself should not be considered at any time. It is private property. Besides, once you attain the top of the dam you are now standing over 15-20 m of moving water with no opportunity to build anchors. If that is not enough to dissuade you, the water flow is regulated remotely by the power corporation to meet demands and the river flow will vary quickly and drastically. This effects all climbs downstream as well and more than once a party has been caught on the wrong side of the river by rising waters.

Getting There

From Cranbrook drive north along Highway 93 toward Fort Steele. At the Esso Station turn right onto the Norbury Lake Road. If coming from the north, turn left at the Highway 93-95A junction and drive 23.5 km to the Esso Station and turn left. Follow the road past Norbury Lake Provincial Park and almost to the Bull River Inn. Look for the Bull River Forest Road (signed) just after a sharp right-hand turn on the main road. Turn left onto the road. Follow this for another 10 minutes until the top of the canyon is reached. With

caution, head down the hill to the bridge spanning the canyon. The usual parking spot is the wide area just before the bridge. Climbs in the Canyon are listed from the dam and thence downstream.

Note: In icy conditions if you don't have chains you may not get out of here even with a 4X4. If you have any doubt about the condition of the road surface park at the top of the canyon and walk down. Also watch for industrial traffic as the road is very narrow.

Bull River Bouldering Area 10 m II, WI 2 and up

This area is almost always accessible. Walk to the dam and enter the canyon. Even in high water conditions numerous small bulgy WI 2 practice areas can be reached on the western side of the canyon.

Belay and rappel from trees.

Whatever 5 m II, WI 3

Back in the dark ages this was considered the local top rope test piece. Just before the bridge a short WI 3 pillar forms. In low or no water conditions you may walk to the base from the dam. If the river is running rappel in from above to a small ice shelf or consider climbing something else with less drowning potential.

Note: Under the bridge and just downstream from this climb water is almost always flowing. There is a large deep pool directly under the bridge that is extremely hazardous.

A Bridge Not So Far 30 m II, WI 3-4

Stand on the bridge and look over the downstream side. There is a seep on the right-hand. Caution—this flow stops right on the large pool below the bridge.

Thin ice plates over moving water make the base extremely dangerous. Either rappel from a separate rope and top rope on a second line from tree anchors or in good conditions establish a belay above water line. Climb one of several interesting lines. End on a treed ledge just before the lip of the canyon followed by a scramble out. Thin and mushy ice can often be found on the left. The route offers fun climbing as long as nobody drowns.

Once in a While 25 m II, WI 3

Directly opposite *A Bridge Not So Far* a line occasionally forms about two thirds of the way up the canyon. In good ice conditions (much cold weather) when the pool is well frozen, cross the 5 m wide river, climb thin ice to thicker rolling ice and on up to a screw belay. Rappel the route.

It Doesn't Really Matter 20 m II, WI 3

50 m downstream from the bridge a bay exists on the right-hand side of the canyon. Walk from the bridge to a point of rock that defines the upstream edge of the bay. Rappel in from the top and climb out on stepped ice. A steeper line can be found on the right. The base is on ground and seems to be always above the waterline although the climb is often very wet.

Mixed Bull 15 m II, WI 4 M4

10 m downstream from *It Doesn't Really Matter* a mixed line exists and it always forms. If the pool is well-frozen, rappel *A Bridge Not So Far* and walk carefully to the base. Otherwise rappel from the top of *It Doesn't Really Matter*. The route may also be approached by scrambling

into the canyon downstream and then traversing an ice shelf back to the base. Climb the rock to the left to gain the ice dagger. Knifeblades are useful with a bolt station on top. The rock above the route is choss, so-rappel the route.

Horns of the Bull 15 m II, WI 4

20 m downstream from *Mixed Bull* and on the far edge of the aforementioned bay a pillar always forms. Access *Horns* by scrambling in from just downstream of the route. Climb surprisingly rotten ice to a bolt belay in an alcove. It may be detached or very thin at the top.

The Columns 10 m II, WI 3-4

Three short pillars form just around the corner from the above route, all of which are fun when wet but can be seriously brittle and detached if dry or cold. Rappel from threads, which can be hard to organize.



Eammon Walsh on Horns of the Bull.
Photo: Eric Hoogstraten

Columbia-Kootenay Valley 225

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The Water Pipe

Access to the next portion of the Bull River is via the water pipe. From the hill that leads down to the bridge park just before where the road crosses the 2 m diameter wooden water flume that comes from the dam. Find the gated road that leads downstream and along the pipe. Just past an outflow pipe and WI 2 that flows to the river find an easy trail that leads down through the trees. The ice is readily visible from the road.

There's a Skeleton Buried in My Driveway 30 m II, 5.4, WI 2

From the base of the trail cross the gully and walk upstream to a seep of low-angle ice in an obvious corner. Gain the bottom of the ice by scrambling awkwardly over loose terrain. Climb low-angle ice to a recently bolted belay. Climb good rock directly to gain the corner above the belay or alternatively, step right on good edges then back to the corner, which is loose near the top. Belay from trees. A standard clean rock rack is useful. Variable ice exists to the left, some of which has been climbed to thread belays or can be top roped. Watch for rope induced rock fall.

The Practice Pillars Area 20 m II, WI 2-3

You can reach this area from the trail by crossing the river, bearing in mind the caveat about the water levels in the canyon. Trend to the base of ramping ice that leads to several pillars ending two thirds of the way up the canyon wall. Rappel from recently installed bolts behind the middle pillar. There is lots of ice with good bouldering potential.

Zzzzebra 25 m II, WI 3

An often thin route can be found the obvious corner to the right of the Practice Pillars Area. Climb stepped ice that steepens near the top to recently installed bolts. Rappel the route. The rock above is extremely loose.

Cedarside 20 m II, WI 4 M4

10 m to the right of Zzzzebra an ice dagger spills over a scooped overhang. 4 bolts lead to thin ice, followed by a shallow groove with good stemming to a bolt belay.

Genocide 25 m II, WI 2

This is the right most line on this section of the canyon. From the river climb a short step to low-angle ice that leads to steepening bulgy ice that also ends before the top of the canyon. Rappel the route.



The Bull River Practice Pillars.

Sunnyside 15 m II, WI 2

Sunnyside is located about 50 m downstream from the down trail. Cross the river just below the seep. Good ice leads to a tree belay, rappel from slings or downclimb the right-hand side. Watch the river levels, parties have become trapped through inattention. Exiting from the top of the climb to the canyon rim is difficult.

Albertans and Eugenics 30 m II, WI 4

From the down trail continue downstream for several hundred metres with some easy scrambling unless the riverbed is dry. Cross on a build up of thick river ice that forms more or less consistently. Caution is advised as falling though the ice could not be considered an invitation to longevity. Climb a curtain of sustained ice to a ledge and moderating ice. Either belay on low-angle ice on the left or traverse right to a leaning tree belay. Rappel or exit to the rim of the canyon. Occasionally some nice mixed climbing can be had on the right-hand side of the route. In high water an ominous open pool in the river directly below the pitch adds a touch of incentive.

The Tower Area (AKA The Catwalker) 20-50 m II, WI 2-3+

From the parking area by the water pipe, cross the road as for Albertans and Eugenics and follow the pipe to where it meets the water tower. From the catwalk—caution: private property and rotting timbers—look down over the routes. In warm years there will be no ice at all, while in a good spell numerous lines of plastic ice cascading over small steps and through gullies will form. Just before the catwalk, a trail heads down to the base of the climbs.

Do not rappel from the catwalk. Exiting can be bushy. There is lots of beginner ice similar to the *Canmore Junkyard*. This is the last ice in the canyon.

Not Worth The Effort 15 m II, WI 2-3

Approach From the Bull River bridge (that crosses the canyon) drive up and out the other side. Turn left at the first opportunity, about 1 km from the bridge. Head upstream past the dam and along the lake. About halfway along and just above lake level a seep of pillars can be seen. Drive to the end of the lake and park at the bridge. Find an old washed out access road leading back to the top of the climb. This road crosses a major slide path and is therefore only an early season option.

It is a good top rope area if you don't mind walking.

Kimberley

St. Mary's Lake Road 10 m III, WI 2-3

Approach From Kimberley take the St. Mary's Lake Road to the lake. Continue on past the lake to the far end and locate a small farm on your left. The seepage is located on the treed cliffband to the right and is easily visible from the road. Park as far off the road as possible. Be advised that this road sees log truck activity, and park accordingly. Approach through what can be deep snow. 5-10 minutes uphill to the base. Even though the area is treed there is significant avalanche hazard in times of heavy snowfall or late season climbing.

The area is a series of short seeps in the trees. A good practice area that is close to the road.

Descent Rappel the route.

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YOHO NATIONAL PARK

Roadside waterfalls abound, making Yoho National Park one of the main ice climbing venues in the Rockies. Yoho was in the thick of it during the early years of ice climbing in the Rockies and typifies the ebb and flow that makes up the local ice history. This passage by Bugs McKeith in 1974 is classically Canadian;

But the climb upon which the focus was now centred was Takakkaw Falls. The panic which occurred when it was rumoured that two Colorado climbers were in the area with Takakkaw as their objective, was typical. For a while it seemed as though we had really lost our prize marrow.

After two miserable attempts Bugs, along with Jack Firth, John Lauchlan and Rob Wood, did manage to bag the first ascent of *Takakkaw* in -30°C temperatures and heavy snow. It was then considered the hardest and longest route in the Rockies. But *Takakkaw* and other Yoho testpieces were done with fixed ropes and aid techniques that were heavily chastised south of the border. Fortunately, the Americans came through and liberated the first free ascents of *Takakkaw* and *Carlsberg* in 1977, and *Pilsner* in 1978. Yoho was back in the fray in 1985 when Jeff Marshall enchainned both *Twin Falls* and *Takakkaw* in a day from the car. Bruce Hendricks blew up the standards again with the first ascent solo of the difficult and serious *Blessed Rage* in 1992. In the decade following, Yoho has settled into the same routine found in most areas; systematic ascents of every smear, drip and mixed thing, people can find. But rest assured, the ice of Yoho continues to put up a good fight and not every thing has been done—yet.

228 Yoho National Park

Ice Climbing in Yoho

Many climbs face north but they usually don't offer good climbing until late December. Seepages take longer to form as they are located deep in the mountains at a lower elevation than Banff. The flip side is that consistently cold temperatures into March creates a long season that is not affected by Chinooks. Being in a region of heavy snowfall there can be severe avalanche hazard throughout the valley. Avalanche accidents are common. The Parks Information Centre located next to the Trans-Canada Highway in Field maintains an excellent route log and ice climbing conditions report. The Centre is usually open 9 am to 4 pm everyday in winter and they highly encourage the reporting of route information in person, shoved under the closed door or else phoned in at 250-343-6783. Weather and avalanche reports are posted outside the front door in case the offices aren't open when you come by.

Mixed Climbing in Yoho

Sean Isaac's *Mixed Climbs* guide presents almost two dozen routes in Yoho National Park. Only three are featured in this volume in order to avoid confusion with existing waterfall ice climbs. The remainder lie in separate areas or as bolted variations.

Getting There from the east

From Calgary get on the Trans-Canada Highway and follow it west past the tourist traps of Banff and Lake Louise to Field. Expect it to take about 2 hours from Calgary or 1 hour from Banff—more if the roads are bad. The big hill that descends from Lake Louise to Field (22 km) is notorious for bad road condi-

tions and if the traffic is heavy with 18-wheelers it can be as stressful as any climb you'll find in Yoho.

From the west

Get on the Trans-Canada Highway anywhere between Golden and Vancouver and it'll lead east to the ice of Yoho. Highways 93 & 95 come from the USA border near Cranbrook, and run north past Radium Hot Springs to intersect the Trans-Canada at Golden. The Trans-Canada between Golden and Field (55 km) is similar to that going toward Lake Louise. It winds its way up Kicking Horse Canyon on a steep and narrow road that is often closed because of avalanche conditions or vehicle accidents. This being the only major highway across Canada it will not be closed for too long.

Facilities

The area offers some fine accommodations that tend to be slightly cheaper, less crowded and more relaxed than the extravagant lodgings that attract the big tourist crowds in Banff and Lake Louise. These include Kicking Horse Lodge (250-343-6303) in Field on the west end of town, West Louise Lodge (250-343-6311) about halfway between Field and Lake Louise and the luxurious Emerald Lake Lodge (250-343-6321) on the beautiful shores of Emerald Lake. The Alpine Club of Canada (ACC) has two backcountry huts that can be used as a base for some of the more remote climbs: the Elizabeth Parker Hut at Lake O'Hara and the Stanley Mitchell Hut in the Yoho Valley. Both require a day's ski to reach them. Call 403-678-3200 for reservations. There is also a very comfortable (and expensive) lodge at Lake O'Hara (250-343-6418). For the cheap and brave there is an enclosed picnic shelter near the Takakkaw Falls parking lot. Don't expect much in the way of shopping in

Field. Groceries, booze and basic supplies are available at The Truffle Pigs Cafe on Stephen Avenue. They also serve an excellent breakfast.

Emergency

24-hour numbers are available for the Yoho Park Wardens, 250-343-6100, and the Golden detachment of the RCMP, 250-344-2221. Pay phones are available at Field Visitor Centre or Emerald Lake Lodge. Lake O'Hara Lodge has access to a radio phone. There is a pay phone 0.5 km up the Yoho Valley. See Page 400.

Maps

82 N/8 Lake Louise
82 N/7 Golden

1A Highway

Ross Lake Headwall 50 m III, WI 3

Just west of the Continental Divide (Kicking Horse Pass) look south on a headwall of rock below a long hanging valley underneath the north face of Popes Peak. Often there is a smear of ice just right of centre on the headwall.

Approach Continue west on the Highway to the Lake O'Hara parking lot 12.6 km west of Lake Louise. From the parking lot ski east on the 1A Highway 2 km to the Ross Lake trailhead, then follow the trail south to Ross Lake. The climb is on the cliffband across the lake and up a slope. 1-1.5 hours (82 N/8 483978). See map on page 190.

One pitch of occasionally thin ice ends in a snow patch. Rappel the route or traverse left and climb up to the hanging valley.

Descent From here it is possible to walk off across a flat bench to the right (west) then down through the trees back to the lake.

Yoho National Park 229

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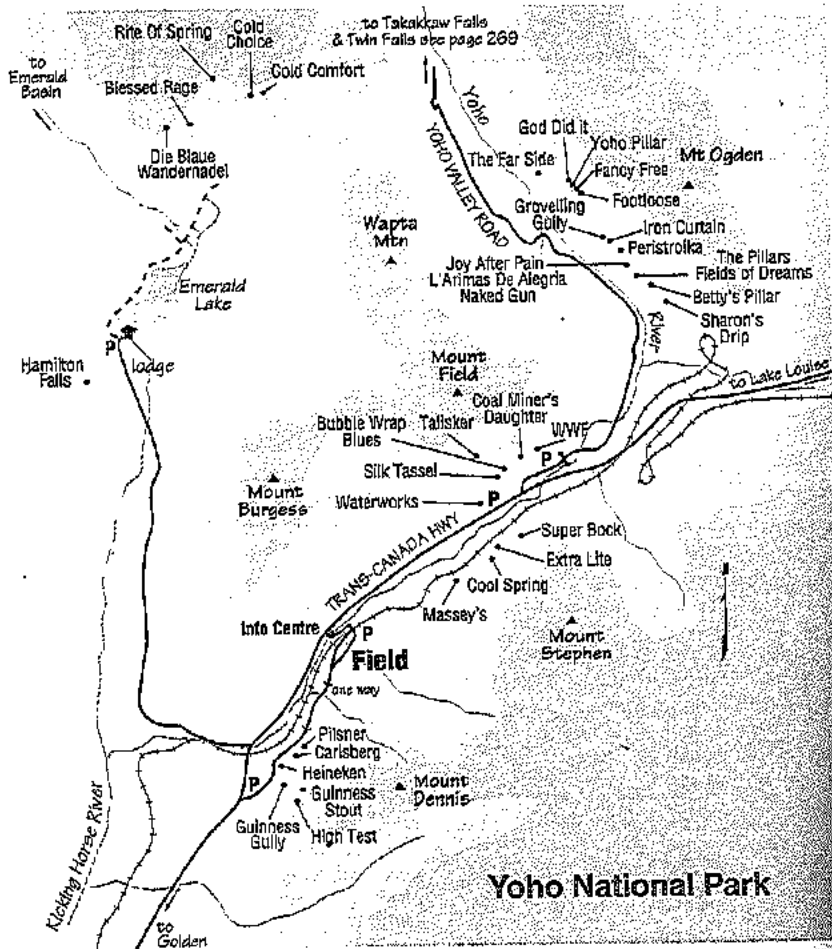
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Lake O'Hara

This beautiful area has a magical ambience. You are in for a treat while climbing in this seldom visited winter area. Plus you won't have to deal with the bureaucratic restrictions that fall on summertime visitors. Only two routes have been done but undoubtedly there are many more, especially near Odaray Mountain.

Parking From Lake Louise drive west 12.6 km on the Trans-Canada to the Lake O'Hara parking lot. Ski up the fire road for 11 km to the lake. Accommodation is available at the ACC Elizabeth Parker Hut. Call the Alpine Club in Canmore for reservations. Lake O'Hara Lodge offers more upscale service and has a radio phone that may be used in case of an emergency.

Sad and Beautiful World 160 m IV, WI 4

This fine climb is located on Wiwaxy Peak left of the popular rock route Grassi Ridge.

Approach As you near Lake O'Hara the route is plainly visible from the road up to the left (east). Climb up through the trees to the left or right of a 150 m avalanche-prone slope to the base (82 N/8 451905). 3 hours.

Startup 60-70 m of easy ice to the base of a major curtain of steep ice. A varied 50 m pitch of WI 3/4 leads to the base of a snow slope. Climb the snow slope to the best feature on the route, a 75 m narrow ice stream up to 80°, in an iron-hard quartzite gully. Climb the gully, then walk a long ways up and right to a steep 15 m pillar. A light rock rack including pitons is recommended.

Descent Rappel the route. Some rock anchors exist but may be covered.



Photo: Rob Owens Sad and Beautiful World

Note: Several of the rappel stations were placed on the descent and therefore may be difficult to reach while climbing up the route. Near the bottom of the climb some trees may be used out to the left, but then it will require some downclimbing through tricky ledges to reach the base.

Cool Water, Good Stone 120 m IV, 5.6, WI4

Approach 100 m right of Sad and Beautiful World. Climb up through trees and then avalanche prone slopes to the base.

The first pitch is a clean 5.6 groove-crack with good gear for 25 m to a belay on a ledge to the left. Climb a 50 m WI 3 pitch to another ledge. The last pitch is fairly sustained 45 m WI 4.

Descent Rappel the route.

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From left to right: *The Pillars*, *Field of Dreams*, and far right *Betty's Pillar*.
Photo: Joe Josephson

Yoho Valley Road - Mount Ogden

The Yoho Valley Road offers the most concentrated area of water ice in Yoho National Park. The log book at the Information Centre in Field outlines 27 different smears (numbered Ogden 1-27) up to 10.5 km from the parking lot. In the past this area has been neglected because of confusion over route names, lengths and difficulties. It's doubtful they have all been climbed, or are even worthwhile, and some lie in huge avalanche paths. Others get covered in snow and/or sport bad ice. Recent exploration has rediscovered a number of routes and created some excellent new climbs that are easily accessed. This all adds up to yet another Rockies mini-Mecca of ice climbing.

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All routes have varying degrees of avalanche hazard, either from the huge slopes above or in isolated pockets near the climbs. Most routes in this guide are detailed from left to right but here they are described from right to left. This is the order in which you will encounter them as you ski up the road. It also is consistent with the order they are given in the Field log book.

Approach Park at the Yoho Valley Road parking lot 3.5 km east of Field. Ski along the road and find the route(s) that interest you, then cross the Yoho River to the base. Skis are recommended to approach all routes.

Sharon's Drip 45 m III, WI 3

An early route description for this climb was the cause of much confusion regarding this area. It called for a "single pitch of moderate V-shaped ice in a gully right of *The Pillars*." There is a prominent V-shaped route but it is by no means "moderate" (see *Betty's Pillar*). It remains unsure exactly where this route lies. Either the first ascensionists grossly underestimated their abilities, or *Sharon's Drip* is one of the easier flows farther right. My guess it's Ogden 2.

Approach As you ski up the road you'll come to the Meeting of the Waters Viewpoint. Just past here the road makes a sharp turn to the northeast. Just before the corner a moderate flow can be seen on the left side of a cliffband that hides a huge avalanche path above it (82-N/8 406994). This may be *Sharon's Drip*. Another similar flow exists farther to the right out of sight.

Betty's Pillar (Ogden 6) 45 m III, WI 5

Betty's Pillar was a bold solo first ascent named in memory of a friend who died of cancer.

Location Visible from the second curve beyond The Meeting of the Waters is a deep gully with ice (Ogden 5). On the steep cliff face 100 m left of this gully and above a small avalanche slope is a prominent V-shaped climb (82-N/8 400998). *Betty's Pillar* goes straight up. A second easier line follows the groove to the left which may be *Sharon's Drip*.

Climb steep ice to a small ledge followed by a 30 m vertical pillar.

Descent Rappel the route (beware of dubious trees near the top).

Field of Dreams (Ogden 7) 75 m III, WI 5

This is the most obvious pillar seen from the Trans-Canada Highway as you come down the hill into Field. It is just around the corner left of *Betty's Pillar*. *Field of Dreams* is the right-hand and best of three densely situated pillars. This cluster was once called *The Pillars* (Ogden 7). Since the routes vary in difficulty and



Yoho Valley Road. Joy After Pain is the wide flow on the left. *L'Armas de Alegria* & *Naked Gun* to the right. Photo: Joe Josephson

length they are now described separately as two routes.

Approach Ski up the road until directly across from the routes. Cross the river, through some trees and up a short avalanche slope to the base (82 N/8 399997).

Start in a narrow slot. Climb up an easy, stepped pitch to a belay platform to the right of the main pillar. Climb a steep 50 m pitch on often excellent ice to the top.

Descent Rappel the route

The Pillars (Ogden 7) 50 m III, WI 4

Approach This route starts at the narrow slot as for *Field of Dreams*. Another wide, stubby curtain of steep ice (25 m WI 3/4) is found just left of the narrow slot.

Rather than climb up right to the belay platform, continue straight up a varied pillar that pours from the rock wall. Depending upon the nature of the ice and the exact line this route can be a good arm-pumping top rope.

Descent Rappel the route

Naked Gun 25 m III, WI 5 M6

First climbed as a mixed climb to reach hanging ice, this route has been seen as a complete pillar of ice. Some natural gear up to 1" complements ice screws.

Location *Naked Gun* is the right-hand route some 10 m from the main climb on the wall *L'Armas de Alegria*. The route starts at a two bolt belay on a ledge that is accessed from the left.

From the belay, a few gear placements in a flake leads to three bolts, then more natural gear before stepping onto the ice. A fourth bolt may be clipped from the ice.

Yoho National Park 233

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Will Kahler on L'Arimas de Alegria.

Descent Rappel the route from a two bolt anchor.

L'Arimas de Alegria (Ogden 8)
60 m III, WI 5+

Location 300 m past *The Pillars* several narrow smears flow off a steep rock wall. "*Tears of Joy*" (82 N/8 398000) takes the middle icicle.

Climb up a short rannel to a prominent ledge. Beautiful climbing can be found on the technical and surprisingly steep pillar that leads to wide, rolling terrain near the top.

Descent Rappel the route.

Joy After Pain (Ogden 8) 50 m III, WI 4
Several metres left of *L'Arimas de Alegria* is this wider, stepped climb.

Approach Climb a steep step off the ground and then more rolling terrain to the top.

Descent Rappel the route.

Popsicle Stand (Ogden 11) 15 m III, WI 3

Location Between the routes *Joy After Pain* and the obvious *Iron Curtain* is a large avalanche gully with some ice in it (Ogden 12). *Popsicle Stand* is the small pillar on the right hand side near the mouth of the gully. It might be worth doing if you're in the area and the snow stability is adequate.

Descent Rappel the route from a tree.

Peristroika (Ogden 13) 50 m IV, WI 4

Approach This is the narrow strip of ice right of *Iron Curtain*.

Climb one uniform pitch of perfect WI 4.

Descent Rappel the route.

Iron Sliver 85 m IV, WI 6

It is unconfirmed if this is a variation of *Iron Curtain* or a thin version of *Peristroika*. 20 m right of *Iron Curtain* is a thin line of ice followed by a thicker second pitch.

Iron Curtain (Ogden 14) 85 m IV, WI 6

Iron Curtain presents a stunning section of ice that deserves much more attention. Past *The Pillars* is a prominent avalanche path with a blue flow of ice at its narrowest part. *Iron Curtain* is the obvious wall of ice to the left. This challenging route was soloed in 1990.

Approach From the Yoho Valley Road ski through the trees to the left of the large avalanche path for 30-40 minutes (82 N/8 394005).

The first 50 m is on sustained technical ice. It is followed by more reasonable 70° ice.

Descent Rappel from trees to the right of the route.

Groveling Gully (Ogden 15) 95 m III, WI 3

This climb was named after the groveling creatures that whimpered up the hidden gully bordering the left side of *Iron Curtain*. At least one of these creatures redeemed himself by returning and climbing the challenge to the right. Anyway, it's still a nice WI 3 route.

The gully is climbed in two stepped pitches.

Descent Rappel as for *Iron Curtain*.

God Did It (Ogden 16) 60 m III, WI 3

Yoho Pillar (Ogden 17) 30 m III, WI 3

Fancy Free (Ogden 18) 60 m III, WI 2

Footloose (Ogden 19) 60 m III, WI 2

These four routes are nothing spectacular by themselves. However, they are situated very close to each other and offer an opportunity to bag all four in an easy day (82-N/8 392006).

Approach They are located in an open area (avalanche-prone) left of the *Iron Curtain* and all of them start with sections of wide easy climbing leading to nice blue ice near the top. Check the excellent photo in the Field log book. Continue past *Iron Curtain* to where the road starts to climb up the switchbacks. Turn off the road and ski along the banks of the river for several hundred metres to the base of the large open area below the routes (82 N/8 391006).

Footloose and *Fancy Free* are the left and right variations of a wide band of ice on the left side of the open area. These are usually climbed first. Find a convenient rappel tree to the right that you can use after each route to put you in good position to head up *Yoho Pillar* and *God Did It*. *Yoho Pillar* is the blue pillar in the centre of the open area. *God Did It* heads out right from below *Yoho Pillar* with a number of variations that round out a good day with lots of moving over ice.

Descent All routes are descended by rappel off trees and ice.

**Yoho Valley Road
The Far Side (Ogden 21)**

The following climbs are located in a single area past the *Footloose* and *Fancy Free* area. This unique place, dubbed *The Far Side*, is one of the best "discoveries" in recent years. The main icefall is a broad shield that is delineated into several spectacular pillars. A number of lesser climbs can be found along the outlining sections. Only the very tops of the routes are visible from the Yoho Valley Road from above the switch backs.

Approach They can be approached from two places. The most common way is to continue directly up the river past the *Footloose* and *Fancy Free* area for about 1 km (20 minutes). Just before the main area you will pass under a WI 3 flow that is not yet climbed (Ogden 20) and there may be another nice WI 3 pitch some 300 m right, but it is unsure if this is actually part of *Footloose* and *Fancy Free*.

A second approach option is to continue on the road past the switch backs to where a small stream passes under the road. Somewhere in this area turn right

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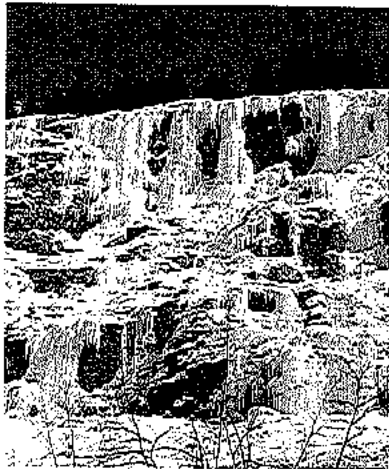
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The Far Side

Photo: Joe Josephson

off the road and travel down steep timbered slopes to the river and the climbs on the far side (82 N/8 389007).

Note: The main area is guarded by a good-sized avalanche slope just above the river.

Four climbs have been done on the main icefall. All start with two pitches of moderate ice and end in a fierce pillar. The lower pitches can suffer from bad ice that in places is covered with large amounts of snow. These areas can also avalanche in times of high hazard. *The Far Side* gets lots of sun and is prone to ice fall in warm temperatures. Some challenging mixed lines could be found between the ice pillars.

Descent All routes descended by rappel.

James Blench on the first ascent of *Les Vieux Compagnons*.

Fifi Brins D'Aciers 150 m III, WI 5+

Approach Named after a character in a French cartoon, this is the main pillar on the far left.

Start with a 25 m step followed by 75 m of low-angled rambling to the base of the steep stuff. Climb any one of a number of variations on the pillar. An easier escape can be made up the ramped, corner system to the left.

Les Vieux Compagnons 150 m III, WI 5

Approach As for *Fifi Brins D'Aciers* but "Old Friends" finishes up an independent pillar just to the right.

Start out with a 25 m step and wander up the low-angled ice and climb the second major pillar from the left.

Snowy's Revenge 150 m III, WI 5

Approach Named after a popular cartoon dog, this is the pillar third from the left.

Wander up easy snow and ice for 100 m to a stance to the left of the final 50 m pillar. Climb steep ice to the top.



Guy Lacelle

Hell's Cafeteria 150 m III, WI 5

This was the first route completed here and named after a *Far Side* cartoon that inspired the name for the entire area.

Approach On the far right side, *Hell's Cafeteria* offers a number of lines that gradually get easier the farther right you go.

The first pitch climbs a steep step then heads for the gully-like flow just left of a rock buttress. Climb the flow to a ledge at the base of the upper pillar. Finish up the pillar and belay on trees to the right.

Descent Rappel the route or traverse slightly right and down and rappel the easier WI 3 flow to the right of the rock buttress mentioned above.

It Ain't Ouray (Ogden 22) 50 m, III, WI 6 R

This is the most obvious route left of the main *Far Side* and highly recommended. It is unknown if it forms regularly.

Approach Several hundred metres left of the main area is a thin strip of ice on a black slab or rock.

Follow an exceedingly thin and narrow (15 cm) ice strip for 30 m to an easier break. Continue up thicker yet steep to overhanging ice features to the top. One of the cruxes on the first ascent was cleaning away large snow mushrooms built up on the upper half.

Descent Rappel the route.

Côte à Côte (Ogden 23) 45 m III, WI 3+

Approach 100 m to the left of the *It Ain't Ouray* area.

Côte à Côte ascends a moderate flow and ends in a broad snow gully.

Descent Rappel the route.

The Upper Yoho Valley

Ski up the Yoho Valley Road for 14 km (beware of several large avalanche slopes threatening the road). *Takakkaw Falls* is obvious on the east side of the valley. There is a picnic shelter with a stocked wood stove another half km past the summer parking lot making for a good bivouac site, although *Takakkaw* is commonly done in a long day from the road. Approach time is dependent upon the quality of the ski track along the road. It can take up to 4 hours if you are breaking trail. See map on page 289.

Takakkaw Falls 250 m V, WI 4

Takakkaw Falls is the second highest waterfall in all of Canada and a major tourist attraction in summer. In winter it is a remote undertaking and thus has dropped in popularity in recent years. Regardless, it is requisite for all dedicated Rockies ice climbers. Historically *Takakkaw Falls* is the classic waterfall of the range. It was the second big waterfall to be climbed (in -30°C temperatures) after the ascent of *Bourgeau Left-Hand*. During the mid '70s it was the testing ground as abilities advanced. It was then climbed in a day and later soloed by John Lauchlan.

Approach After your 14 km ski in, cross the Yoho River on a bridge at the south end of the parking lot and work up the slopes to the base.

The first pitch may have a large hole of open water and the crux second pitch is usually quite thin because of the high volume of water flowing underneath. This shield can on occasion be very fragile and requires a careful technique; if it collapsed there would be little chance of survival. The first pitch usually belays on the right side, the second pitch

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Takakkaw Falls

Photo: Godfrey Perroux

traverses across the shield to steeper, more solid ice on the left and continues to a broad snow ledge (avalanche prone). The remainder of the climb is more straightforward on good ice with an interesting exit behind a large rock at the top.

Descent Rappel the route. A fixed station may be found at the top, but be prepared to leave up to five anchors.

Twin Falls 100 m V, WI 4-5

Twin Falls is actually a pair of waterfalls with a 22 km (one-way) ski approach. Few people have actually made the journey into these climbs that was once combined with an ascent of *Takakkaw Falls* round trip from the car in a single day! My feet hurt just thinking about it. The climb is best combined with a ski touring trip based out of the ACC Stanley Mitchell Hut. See map page 269.

238 Yoho National Park

Approach Continue past *Takakkaw Falls* to the end of the road and follow the Yoho Valley Trunk Trail to Laughing Falls campground. Continue up the trail to Twin Falls Campground and then to the Twin Falls Chalet (closed) below the routes.

Climb either or both of the two parallel falls. The right-hand is a full grade harder than the left.

Descent Rappel the routes.

MOUNT FIELD

The following routes are on the north side of the Trans-Canada on Mount Field. *Silk Tassel* and *Talisker* have miles of avalanche chutes feeding into them. Be sure of the conditions and avoid them after a snowfall or on warm, sunny days. Check the avalanche report for an update on conditions and exercise extreme caution if in doubt. All the routes to the right have limited hazard from above but have some on the approach.

Parking Park at the Yoho Valley Road, 3.5 km east of Field. Be sure to park in the east end of the parking lot to avoid the large avalanche run out zone threatening the road.

Silk Tassel 55 m III, WI 4

This classic is the obvious tiered curtain above the junction of the Trans-Canada and the Yoho Valley Road and forms regularly but not always.

Approach Head up the steep avalanche-prone slope through alders to the base. The walk is gentler on the legs if it has already avalanched and you can walk up on debris.

Climb up an ice apron and find a sheltered belay as high as possible on the

left. The rest of the climb can be done as one long, challenging pitch.

Descent Rappel the route.

Talisker 350 m IV, WI 3-4

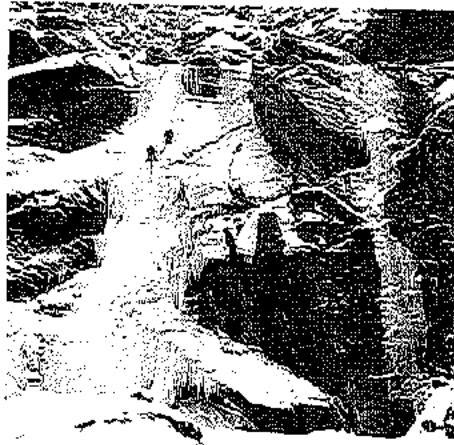
This climb takes the route on the ice found far above *Silk Tassel*. The quantity and quality of the climbing hardly justifies heading up this dangerous gully.

Climb *Silk Tassel* and continue up lots of snow. Up to three significant steps of ice can be found with the last being the hardest.

Descent Rappel and downclimb the route as quickly as possible.

Bubble Wrap Blues 45 m III, WI 4+

This is an occasional narrow line of thin ice running parallel and 10 m right of *Silk Tassel*. The first ascent team found thin and hollow ice, then later in the season it started flowing again and bulked out with wet yet still technical ice. Belay on the right where you are protected by an overhang.



Silk Tassel and the rare Bubble Wrap Blues

Climb 20 m of potentially thin and steep ice to an easier section. Continue up a short left-facing corner with some interesting mushrooms before easing back near the top.

Descent Rappel the route.

Coal Miner's Daughter 50 m III, WI 4

Labelled incorrectly in the Field log book, *Coal Miner's Daughter* lies farther right of the indicated line. It sometimes forms out of an abandoned mine shaft some 300 m right of *Silk Tassel*.

Descent Rappel the route. Take precautions with unstable mine rails and shafts.

WWF 100 m III, M6 WI 4+

This obvious line is located 20 m right of *Coal Miner's Daughter*.

Climb a 5 m slab of ice then move right into a left-facing corner/flake to a rock overhang with a hanging ice dagger. Traverse left on thin ice (crux, good cams) and pull into another left-facing corner system. Climb the corner then



Alan Kerr

Silk Tassel in more typical conditions

Yoho National Park 239

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traverse back right on poor choss and dirt to gain solid ice. Belay off ice. Another full pitch of ice starting with thin WI 3 leads to a dubious 10 m pillar near the top.

Descent Rappel the route.

Waterworks 10-20 m II, WI 3

Approach 1.2 km east of Field is an unmarked service road on the north side of the Trans-Canada. Pull in and park out of the way near a sand pile. Walk along the left-hand road until you see a pipe coming out from a creek. Turn right up the creek to the falls. 15-45 minutes depending upon the amount of snow.

This is a wide section of rolling ice that offers a number of lines with some steeper sections. The top of the ice is easily reached making a good top roping and practice area with zero avalanche hazard.

MOUNT STEPHEN

The following routes are found on Mount Stephen along the south side of the Trans-Canada and east of Field. All the routes here are threatened by large avalanche slopes. The climbs listed here are the traditional ice climbs and listed from left to right (east to west). In recent years the area west of *Super Bock* has become one of the better mixed areas with at least eight quality routes. See *Mixed Climbs*.

Approach Most routes can be approached by parking at the Yoho Valley Road then crossing the highway and following the crest of the obvious man made "lateral moraine" to the train tracks under the north ridge of Mount Stephen. You can also walk along the tracks from Field. From the bridge in "downtown" Field take the main road

left and cross the railroad tracks, then take the first left and drive a quarter mile to a parking area at the outskirts of town.

Note: It is very important that climbers do not touch any of the avalanche detection wiring or trigger gates found just above the train tracks. If you see any kind of snow fence or other suspicious wiring—stay away. Using the tracks to approach the routes is technically trespassing on CPR property but historically they have looked the other way. The current rise in activity, however, is leading to a change of heart. Some nearby areas are already closed and actively enforced. Please, in a joint effort to keep this important area open, extreme caution and sensitivity is requested when travelling to and from these routes.

Another warning applies for using the tracks along Mount Stephen. The train engines are generally on idle as they coast down the long Field hill. More than one unsuspecting climber has looked up to suddenly find a raging train some 20 metres away.

Super Bock 180 m III, WI 5

This is an excellent route with a lot of character. It seems to form every year. A newer route has been climbed in the mixed terrain to the left of the route although the dramatic free-hanging dagger to the left remains unclimbed as does the ice far above.

Approach Getting to the route is a 3 km walk from Field along the tracks. You can also approach from the Trans-Canada to the east side of the Kicking Horse River Bridge then walk west along the tracks through a tunnel to the route. The bottom of the route always looks unformed owing to a rock arch. Climb up an open snow gully to the base. 1.5 hours.

Tim Pochay



Approaching the upper ice on *Super Bock*.

The first pitch climbs under a rock arch. Continue up a snow ramp to a long WI 3 pitch leading to the final pillar. Climb two steep pitches to the top, with the second being a little harder. Another short step can be found above.

Descent Rappel the route. Depending on conditions it is possible to traverse right from atop the pillar and make a long rappel into the trees, then continue down into a steep snow gully and downclimb to the top of the snow ramp. Pitons are on the left just above the arch.

Extra Lite 245 m III, WI 3 to WI 4

Extra Lite is an understandably popular climb that offers easy ice for a long way. However, the sizeable chunk of real estate found above the gully makes it one of the more avalanche-prone routes in the area. Check with the wardens and be sure

of the conditions before venturing onto this route.

Approach It is found about 200 m east of *Super Bock*. The route lies above a weakly defined streambed that is barely visible from the tracks. The start of the approach up from the tracks is about 150 m west of a small line shack. Hike up through trees to a rock buttress that divides two deep clefts. *Extra Lite* is the left-hand gully.

Climb a series of short ice steps separated by snow slopes. A 50 m WI 4 pitch is located 150 m farther up the gully and makes for a long day.

Descent Rappel and downclimb route.

Cool Spring 35 m III, WI 5+

A climber who was going to climb Aconcagua shortly after doing this testpiece was heard saying "I thought I'd never live to see Argentina!" Indeed, it can sport very technical and chandeliered ice and is not often climbed.

Approach as for *Extra Lite*, but is found in the deep right-hand cleft.

Expect a steep ice pillar that can be very demanding. There is another wall of ice above, visible from the road, that gives another short pitch of steep ice on a variety of lines.

Descent Rappel the route from a station on the left.

Massey's 140 m III, WI 4

This is probably the most commonly climbed route in Yoho. It's a one pitch wonder with a nice first pitch followed by several pitches of rolling steps. Two mixed variations have been established just to the right. See *Mixed Climbs*.

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Cool Spring

Photo: Alan Kerr

Approach Walk along the tracks 1.6 km east of Field to the gully found just beyond a large boulder.

Climb 20-25 m of steep ice, often chandeliers, to where it eases off. Easy ice continues to the top.

Descent Walk off left through the trees. No rappels should be needed.

Mount Dennis.

(A) Pilsner Pillar (B) Carlsberg Column
(C) Cascade Kronenbourg (D) Heineken Hall
(E) Labatt's Lane (F) Wild Cougar (G) Top pitch of Guinness Gully (H) Guinness Stout (I) High Test

Photo: Karl Nagy



MOUNT DENNIS

The "beer" routes west of Field are some of the most famous and frequently climbed routes in the Rockies.

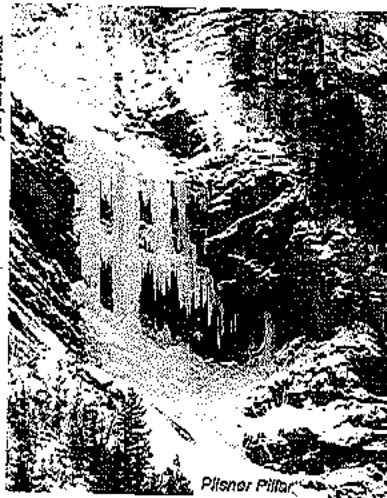
Parking All climbs are reached by the back service road leading south. Cross the bridge past the Information Centre and follow streets to the west end of town where you'll find the watertower and The Kicking Horse Lodge (Field is really small, so don't worry about getting lost). On the south side of the Lodge follow the one-way, westbound road. Do not try to approach from the Trans-Canada. Parking is allowed at a pull-out with an information board 2 km west of the Power Station just before joining the Trans-Canada. All the routes can be accessed from here so don't try parking anywhere else. The snow plows won't appreciate it. The back road is occasionally closed when the avalanche hazard is high. Avalanche warning signs are clearly posted at the road entrance and it is illegal to enter when closed. Under such circumstances you probably shouldn't be climbing anyway.

The routes are described from left to right. If you want to check the routes out before hand take the Emerald Lake turn-off 1.6 km west of Field on the Trans-Canada and drive another km to where the road turns north. All the routes are easily visible from here.

Pilsner Pillar 215 m III, WI 6

One of the routes the Rockies is famous for, *Pilsner* is the epitome of a free-standing icicle. On the first free ascent in 1978, it was the hardest lead yet accomplished in Canada and one of the hardest in the world. Still a much-feared route, it can be very chandeliered with technical and scary hooking. Once in a blue moon it will get big and fat and drop down a notch in difficulty. It constantly forms differently; either on the left or the right, sometimes on both sides and rarely as one huge curtain. Unfortunately, it doesn't always form, although there is now a hard bolted route on the rock behind and various mixed options to the right of that. See *Mixed Climbs*.

Joe Josephson



Pilsner Pillar



François Damilano on Pilsner Pillar.

Approach The route is visible from the road 0.8 km west of the parking. Hike up an avalanche path to the base in 40-60 minutes depending on conditions.

From the ledge behind the pillar launch up 40 m of dead vertical ice. Try to pick a dry line as it can truly rain down on this route. Belay on good ice at the lip or continue 10 m through snow to a rock belay on the right. Up to four pitches of moderate ice can be found above.

Descent Rappel the route.

Juste Pour Rire 20 m II, WI 4 R

15 m right of *Pilsner Pillar* is a thin 80° smear that ends in a cave chimney. A second pitch on rotten rock above is not worth doing. There is an old piton up high on that pitch.

Descent Rappel off your own anchor.

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Carlsberg Column 60 m III, WI 5

The classic WI 5 route in the range! *Carlsberg* forms without fail every year in the next gully right of *Pilsner*. This beautiful line offers several variations depending on what's dry, how 'hard' you're feeling and if anyone else is there. It is possible to accommodate two parties on the route depending upon where people are willing to climb. There is usually an easier line with other variations that are noticeably harder.

Approach Hike up through the trees 0.6 km east of the parking. A short steep section can sometimes be climbed below the main falls but it doesn't always form and the ice is usually bad. Most people traverse the base of a cliff up right to below a steep headwall and make an exposed traverse left into the base of the falls. 30-60 minutes depending on conditions.

The first half is usually the crux and ends on a ledge. There is a fixed belay on



Joe Josephson

Carlsberg Column. Kronenbourg to the right.

the right. A second shorter pitch leads to the top. In a fat year it is possible to do the route in one long 60 m pitch. There are a few little steps above.

Descent Rappel the route (from the lip one 55 m rappel will do) or traverse left to a short rappel off a tree. Make a second, memorable rappel from another tree (two 50 m ropes required).

Cascade Kronenbourg 90 m III, WI 6

A series of steep icicles that rarely form entirely are located on the wall to the right of *Carlsberg*. *Kronenbourg* spills over the headwall directly above the approach traverse and is an excellent modern route. It is a thin route, climbed by thin Frenchmen, named after a thin French beer. For years the main pitch had been climbed in various conditions and provided a fine, if not occasionally bold, excursion on mostly natural gear (except for one bolt from the first ascent). In March 2000 a party needlessly added



Godwin P...

Cascade Kronenbourg in first ascent conditions.

two bolts to the lower half of pitch two, three bolts to the upper section as well as bolt anchors.

The first 30 m pitch starts on the approach ledge and is on thin ice leading to a good ledge. It is possible to bypass this pitch by traversing all the way to *Carlsberg* and then scrambling a short corner to the ledge. The second main pitch starts in right-leaning corner. The first ascent team climbed up to a bolt placement and then made a bold traverse left to a steep and thin dribble of ice to a ledge (possible belay). Other ascents have continued up the steepening corner to an excellent mixed traverse back left onto the ledge. From the ledge a steep and strenuous pillar leads to the top.

Descent Rappel the route. With double 50 m ropes it is possible to rappel the main pitch and the short scramble.

Heineken Hall 100 m III, WI 3+

This route can be difficult to see as the ice can be very thin and/or covered in snow. If you find *Heineken* in relatively fat shape it is an interesting, worthwhile climb. If it is thin with bad looking ice, go climb *Guinness*.

Approach The route is found 300 m right of *Carlsberg Column* in a large avalanche gully. *Heineken* is in this gully on the left of a small rib. The best approach is to walk up to *Carlsberg* and continue upward along the base of the cliff until the trees run out at the edge of the large avalanche slope. Traverse a short distance into the climb.

The route is climbed in two pitches, the first one starts low-angle and steepens slightly to the main falls. This pitch can be thin and technical with a covering of snow. When in good shape the second pitch gives good challenging climbing.

Descent Rappel the route or traverse into the next gully right (*Labatt's Lane*). Descend that route and near the bottom move right again into the next larger avalanche gully.

Labatt's Lane 185 m III, WI 3

Some confusion exists as to which gully this climb lies in. There are two major avalanche tracks right of *Heineken Hall*. The left-hand one which is narrower with more ice, is probably *Labatt's Lane*. The Field log book describes the larger gully to the right as the route. It doesn't really matter; both are mostly snow with little if any ice over small rock steps. Furthermore they both lie in huge avalanche paths.

Wild Cougar 15 m II, WI 4 X

Named after a short-lived but stout beer once brewed in Calgary, this route is visible from the Emerald Lake road. When formed it offers an exciting diversion to the crowds on *Guinness*.

Approach It is located at the bottom of a small, indistinct gully about half way between *Guinness Gully* and *Labatt's Lane*. Cougar tracks in the snow, and the climb, were found while wallowing through the trees from *Guinness* to *Carlsberg*.

The climb is free-hanging for 10 m and extremely thin. Only 10-15 cm wide at the bottom it can be strenuous requiring heel hooks behind the pillar.

Descent Walk off to the right.

Guinness Gully 245 m II, WI 4

Considering its easy approach, long season and quality climbing there is no wonder this is one of the best and most popular WI 4 routes in the range.

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Approach Climb up through the trees directly from the parking area heading slightly left.

A short step leads to the first pitch. This is the crux and varies year to year from a wide green curtain to a thin unprotectable veneer. It is fun under either condition depending on which kind of climbing you prefer. A second pitch offers a short steep pillar. A snow walk leads to a 60 m tier of undulating ice with a short steep section.

Descent Tree rappels are possible down the route. A more popular descent is to traverse right into the next snow gully and descend that (a great otter slide) back to the car.

Guinness Stout 80 m III, WI 4+

There are two obvious falls found 150 vertical metres above the main Guinness climb. These offer the best sections of ice in the whole gully and are worth the long trek to reach them.

Approach From the top of Guinness continue up the gully until you reach the climbs. It may be easier to go up through the trees to the left. Expect about 45-60 minutes from the top of Guinness. Later in the season you can expect someone else to have already made the journey and there will be a trail. The sun hits the route starting in mid-February which can also lead to higher avalanche hazard.

Stout is the left-hand of the two falls and always forms. A shield of ice leads to a long steep pitch on beautiful ice.

Descent Rappel the route or traverse right and make one rappel from trees to the left of High Test.

High Test 60 m III, WI 4+

High Test, a little easier than Stout, is the right-hand of the two falls above Guinness Gully and always forms.

Belay a short way up on a small ledge, then run one long pitch to the top.

Descent Rappel from ice or off trees to the left.

EMERALD LAKE

This scenic area has several high quality routes along with high avalanche potential. 1.6 km west of Field turn right (north) onto the signed Emerald Lake Road. Follow this 8 km to the lake. All routes are approached by following the set ski trail from the parking lot around the north side of the lake. The Emerald Lake Lodge is open in winter and tradition has it to stop in for a drink of scotch after a good day of climbing.

Hamilton Falls 40 m II, WI 3+

This is a popular summer attraction a short distance from the Emerald Lake parking lot on a very gentle trail. It's been called a "fun little climb" in a "cool spot."

Approach From the south end of the Emerald Lake parking lot ski 0.7 km west to the point where the trail turns uphill to Hamilton Lake. The falls is almost in front of your nose at this point but it's tucked into a gully and you can't see the ice till you are almost on top of it.

About 25 m of moderate WI 3 leads to unconsolidated, vertical snow. Tunnel/wallow/grovel up the snow (a lot harder and serious than the ice below—some pitons may help protect) until you reach level ground and a belay to the back of a cave.

Descent Rappel the route.

Blessed Rage 230 m V, 5.7, WI 6

Easily visible from Emerald Lake is a huge curtain pouring over the impressive cliff-bands right of the Emerald Basin drainage. This was an extremely bold solo first ascent in a very big and very stunning location. Subsequent attempts have largely failed owing to very difficult conditions on the upper pillar. It has been repeated at least once as a pure ice route with great ice on the crux pillar.

Approach Ski around the lake and continue on ski trails through the trees until below the route. Thrash through steep cedar trees and then up large avalanche-prone slopes to the base. 3 hours. Skis, avalanche beacons and shovels are highly recommended.

Start with 55 m of WI 3 leading into a snow couloir. At the top of the couloir climb a right-facing corner with sustained mixed terrain. At the top of the corner cut out left across snow covered slabs (beware of rockfall during warmer temperatures) to a fixed belay. Rotten ice-covered snow leads to a narrow pillar (two bolts on the right side and a single bolt on the left). Continue up tremendously sustained but often good ice for 55 m.

Descent Rappel straight down the route (double ropes recommended).

Die Blaue Wandernadel 250 m V, WI 5

Approach As for Blessed Rage, this climb is located 50 m left and is not visible until you are just below it. It is unsure if it forms regularly. All the avalanche warnings for Blessed Rage apply here.

Starting with a WI 4+ pitch the route continues up a blue stream of ice which ends in a steep pillar.

Descent Rappel the route.



Grant Statham Blessed Rage In fat conditions

Rite of Spring 250 m IV, WI 4+

There is a large bowl between Blessed Rage and Cold Choice that contains volumes of ice at all grades of difficulty. To date only the most aesthetic line has been climbed. Beware of acres of heart-stopping avalanche terrain. The first ascent came in late spring after much of the bowl already avalanched and mornings were still cold.

Approach Located in the cirque that empties between Blessed Rage and Cold Choice. This is the left most of the ice in the cirque. 2 hours should put you at the base of the first pitch. The first ascentionists did not take skis as the trails around the lake were fine, as were the avalanche pounded slopes leading to the route.

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Start with WI 4 ice leading into a narrow section before a 60 m snow slope. A WI 3 pitch leads to more snow and another WI 3 pitch on tricky ice. A final beautiful pillar of steep ice finishes the route.

Descent Rappel the route.

Cold Choice 110 m IV, WI 5

This is one of the best routes in Yoho. It forms every year and is visible from Emerald Lake, about 200 m right of the Rite of Spring drainage.

Approach Continue along the ski trail outline below *Blessed Rage* until you get near the end of the valley. Head up through the trees to the right around a small treed buttress and pick up a summer hiking trail. This takes you to a flat bench above the buttress and directly below the route. By following a protected rib up the slope directly to the climb you can minimize the avalanche hazard. There are still dangerous slopes above the route.

Climb two steep pitches. The second one is a little harder.



Descent Rappel the route. You can walk off to the left but it is not recommended because of large avalanche slopes.

Cold Comfort 110 m IV, WI 5

This bold solo first ascent, located 10 m right of *Cold Choice*, doesn't form every year. *Cold Choice* was named for one of the ascensionists who had to decide between two girls in Banff. Along a similar vein, the first ascensionist of *Cold Comfort* was having bad women problems. *Cold Comfort* is similar to its neighbour but a little easier. Descend as for *Cold Choice*.

Emerald Basin

Follow the ski trail past the end of the Lake to the first big drainage to the north called Emerald Basin. The following two routes are located at the back of this basin somewhere left of the seracs near Emerald Pass below The President and The Vice President Mountains. 2 hours from Emerald Lake. The first ascensionists warn to "ski fast," for the area is sickening with big avalanche terrain, including seracs.

Mr. Misty 50 m IV, WI 4

One pitch of steep ice that can be rotten late in the year. Walk off.

The Royal Treat 250 m V, WI 5

Right of *Mr. Misty*, start with a curtain of steep ice followed by a short snow pitch. Continue up a pitch and a half of steep ice to the top. To descend, make two rappels and then walk off.

Cold Choice
Photo: Joe Josephson

GOLDEN AREA

The northwest side of the Rockies exemplifies what ice climbing was on the Icefields Parkway nearly 20 years ago. It is one of the new frontiers for waterfall ice in Canada. Technically part of the Rockies, but situated west of the Continental Divide, this area experiences entirely different weather patterns. Deeper but sometimes more stable snow conditions are found on the west slope of the Rockies. With lots of water running over big cliffs, the potential for an ice climbing Mecca is created. Only routes in the accessible Blaeberry and remote Valenciennes River valleys have been explored. This leaves many significant drainages open for discovery including Iyell Creek, Rice Brook, Bryce Creek, Eush River and the Sullivan River to name a few. See maps on pages 250, 257, 263, 269 and 292.

Logging Roads

Some valleys can be reached via logging roads. As winter logging is carried out in many areas, 4WD access is a possibility. Check with the Golden Forestry Office for information and updated logging road maps. Logging trucks assume they are the only ones on the roads so do not blindly head up an active logging road without notifying the forestry office. Helicopter access is the most time-efficient means of approach as the entire area lies outside of the national parks, but for those with a more modest budget snow machines are the best compromise. Snow machine rentals may be available through outfitters in Golden.

Getting There

The town of Golden, 75 km west of Lake Louise, is situated next to the Trans-Canada Highway and is the hub of the Columbia Valley. To the west of Golden the Trans-Canada passes over Roger's Pass and on to Revelstoke. To the east it passes through the tight and winding Kicking Horse Canyon. As a result of these geographical features the highway is occasionally closed on either side of town because of avalanche or weather conditions. Highway 95 joins Highway 93 at Radium and heads up the Columbia Valley south of Golden.

Facilities

Along the Trans-Canada Highway near Golden is a shopping strip with a variety of gas stations, restaurants, fast food and motels. Most of your needs can be met here without having to go into the town itself. Pubs, groceries, more restaurants and full tourist and medical services are available in town.

Emergency

Your best bet in an emergency is the Golden RCMP detachment who can contact the appropriate emergency personnel. When exploring the remote drainages northeast of Golden you will likely be very isolated. Logging trucks or even a logging camp may be in the vicinity but don't count on it. See page 400.

Maps

82 N/7 Golden
82 N/14 Rostrum Peak
82 N/11 Bluewater Creek
82 N/10 Blaeberry River

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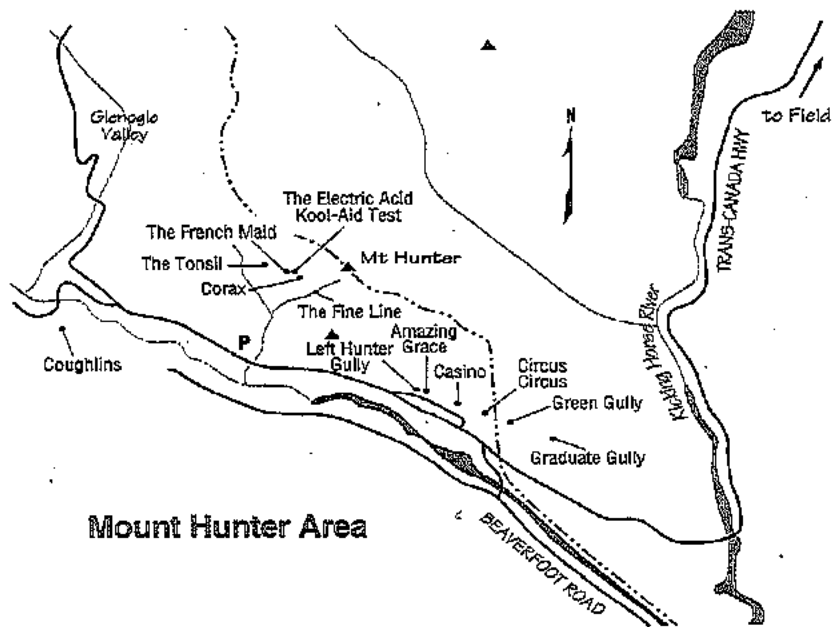
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Mount Hunter - East

The 1994 edition certainly led to a renaissance of attention on this area. This once obscure area now sees frequent traffic and is home to several classics, that can be difficult to find and are subject to tremendous avalanche hazard. An increase in ascents will help in finding routes by establishing trails to the routes. As for as snow stability, don't let the trails lead you into complacency. The hazard here is not to be taken lightly.

Getting There

Driving distances are marked from the Beaverhead Road intersection (on the south side of the highway) 1.8 km west of the Yoho Park sign (Park Boundary). The following routes lie somewhere above on the south slopes of Mount Hunter.



Mount Hunter Area

250 Golden Area

Graduate Gully 200 m III, WI 3

Approach Graduate Gully and Green Gully lie just east (inside) of the park boundary marked by a cutline. It is recommended to drive south down Beaverfoot Road to a bridge for a quick look. The cutline runs up and left while Green Gully snakes up just to the right. The first pitch of Graduate Gully is seen as a blue flow in the third faint gully to the right of Green Gully.

Approach Park along the main highway at a likely place to the east of the park boundary. Walk up 500 m to where the first ice flow crosses a rockband.

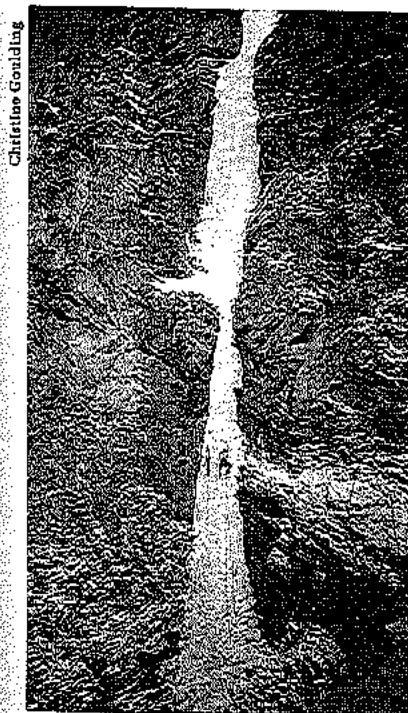
This is a four pitch route with the second being hardest.

Descent Rappel the route.

Green Gully 350 m III, WI 4

Finding lots of running water and inspired by the name of a rock climb in the USA called *Harder than Your Husband*, one of the first ascensionists named this climb *Wetter Than Your Wife*. However, his partner, the late Bill March, felt the need to be respectable and changed it to the present name.

Location As per Graduate Gully it is recommended to drive down Beaverhead Road to the river for a quick orientating look. Green Gully begins just right of the cutline and snakes up back left across the cutline and then back



Christine Gouding

Luther McLain on the first ascent of Circus Circus.

right. It is a beautiful narrow gully sporting excellent ice despite long snow sections.

Approach Park along the main highway near the park boundary and walk about 1 km to the route. There is avalanche hazard in the upper part.

The climb is seven pitches long on varied, entertaining ice. A long steep pitch leads to a series of shorter steps. The third pitch is lower angled with a bolt belay. Another short seep is followed by a snow gully leading to a tighter gully "reminiscent of classic Scottish gullies at their best."

Descent Rappel the route.

Circus Circus 150 m III, WI 4

This route is one drainage left of Green Gully (400 m) and when formed is a classic WI 4. Some years it doesn't form at all.

Approach Park at the west end of Wapta Road where it rejoins the highway. Hike up the obvious drainage, veering slightly left after 300 m or so, into an indistinct drainage. Posthole through forest, trending left through mixed forest to a slide alder grove. Weave through this to a 150 m wide rock alcove with a small avalanche slope on right side. Allow 1.5 hours.

The first 35 m pitch is the crux with funky sun affected ice on a detached, hollow pillar to a sloping ice ledge. Another 35-40 m of WI 4 leads to another sloping ice ledge. Climb a short 10 m step to a snow ledge leading to a fat curtain. A classic WI 4 pitch finishes on a treed bowl-like ledge. Walk 30 m up to the final pitch, a very funky and extremely fun 10 m WI 3 pitch.

Descent Rappel the route.

Golden Area 251

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Casino Waterfall 310 m IV, WI 5

Despite efforts over the years few climbers, if any, have ever rediscovered this route. Perhaps it rarely forms. After several seasons of increased activity in the area it seems likely *Casino Waterfall* is the steep narrow direct ribbon that streaks the rock 20 minutes walk west from *Green Gully*.

Approach *Casino Waterfall* is the longest and most direct line on the cliff. Park 200 m west of the Beaverhead Road and walk 20 minutes through low brush and forest to the base.

Traverse in from the right side to gain the ice. A steep narrow ribbon leads to a bowl. A third pitch gives 40 m of good steep ice followed by 45 m of more moderate ice. Finish on three easier pitches sporting occasional steep sections.

Descent Scramble down the left side with one short rappel.

Amazing Grace 550 m IV, 5.6, WI 3

Left of *Casino Waterfall* are twin gullies that empty into a single creek crossing the Trans-Canada Highway near a gated road to a private residence 1.5 km west of the turn off to the Beaverfoot Road. This is the right-hand of the two (82 N/7 215794). In good conditions (read: low snow and/or good stability) this offers classic moderate climbing with excellent position and a stone grotto ambiance.

Approach Park along the main highway and walk up the drainage on the east side (staying out of the private residence on the west bank) to a fork some 1.5 km from the highway.

Bypass unformed ice on the first pitch by climbing two pitches of scrubby rock (5.6) on the left. Traverse in for two pitches of WI 2/3. Ramble up the gully 200 m to a fine 50 m WI 3. The pitch narrows at the top and opens into

a small bowl and a short WI 3 pillar and 100 m of easier ice. Further hiking leads to 90 m of WI 3 followed by another rambling pitch into a sizable bowl where the gully splits.

Descent Rappel the route.

Left Hunter Gully 70 m III, WI 4

Approach As for *Amazing Grace*. At the first fork in the gully go left. It is also possible to traverse in from the snow section some 100-200 m up *Amazing Grace*.

Thin ice leads to a two pitch waterfall.

Descent Rappel the route.

Mount Hunter - West

The following routes lie close together in a complex gully system. Most are considered top notch and, if formed and conditions allow, not to be missed. The routes are all found 650 vertical metres above the highway and there is at least twice that amount of open avalanche terrain above. If in doubt about the snow conditions don't bother with any of these routes. Don't be fooled into thinking there are good conditions just because there is not much snow near the road. It often rains on the road decreasing the snow pack but several hundred metres above it is usually snowing copiously.

Approach Park 3.5 km west of the Beaverhead Road where a narrow drainage crosses the road. Several hundred metres above the road this single drainage branches into four or five separate gullies that snake up separately. Two tactics are available to approach the climbs. You can travel directly up the drainage to where the gullies split or you can hike up the rib on the left to where it turns into a side hill and continue along



The Fine Line. Ice on The Fine Line Direct is the obvious column at the top.
Dave Thomson

the treed slope into the upper gullies near *The Tonsil*. This line minimizes the hazard but you must still traverse into your proposed climb. People have walked to the climbs, but snowshoes are often an asset. 2 hours.

The Fine Line 180 m IV, WI 4

Approach On the right side of the drainage in the largest gully is a good varied route best reached by following the main drainage all the way from the road. From the main gully several hundred metres of steep snow reaches the base of the ice (82 N/7 197805). From the approach gully only parts of *The Fine Line* are visible at any given time and it is rumoured that it doesn't always form.

Climb steep ice to a snow bay below a huge chockstone (piton belay). Climb the chimney, surmount the chockstone

and continue up the snow to an open gully. Climb a screen of ice to gain a huge avalanche-prone upper bay. A large cascade to the right is climbed in two pitches.

Descent Rappel the route.

The Fine Line Direct 135 m IV, WI 5

This is an impressive 70 m drip, steep in places but with many ledges and rests ending with easier ice.

Approach Climb the first three pitches of *The Fine Line* past the chockstone then continue straight up a snow slope. *The Direct Finish* is 30-40 m left of the regular route.

Climb the drip on the right for WI 5 climbing or solid WI 6 on the left. After 40 m belay in a small cave to the right. Another 30 m of WI 5 accesses a sloping ledge. Climb a 20 m snow slope to two short tiers of good quality ice.

Descent Rappel the route.

Left of *The Fine Line* is a small bowl below a steep headwall on which there are three routes, *The French Maid*, *Corax* and *Electric Kool Aid Acid Test* (82 N/7 192808). See below.



Carlos Buhler

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Approach They can be approached directly up the drainage past *The Fine Line* or by traversing over the rib that separates these climbs from *The Tonsil* gully.

The French Maid 100 m IV, WI 6+

By 1995 this wild climb had only two ascents but now has become something of a trade route. It seems to form every year but in varying quantity. It is visible from one small spot on the highway exactly where the stream crosses the road (and even a few metres to the east). You should be able to pick out the route through a narrow spot in the trees. It had been looked at for years but was considered too 'bad' by most. This outstanding feature is one of the plums of the range.

Climb two full rope lengths. 55 m ropes are nice but not required. The first pitch sports chandelier, technical climbing up an incredible collection of icicles and pillars. Finish on a ledge with a bolt belay on the left behind the upper pillar. The upper pillar starts 10 m out from the wall and runs on relentlessly vertical but often superb ice to the top.

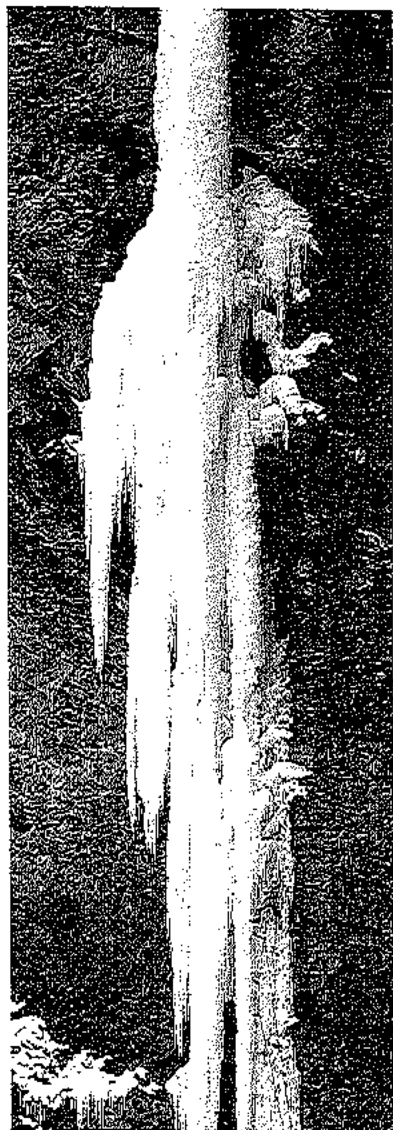
Descent Rappel the route.

Corax 100 m IV, WI 4+

Corax is a tantalizing but rarely formed group of smears 50 m right of *The Maid*.

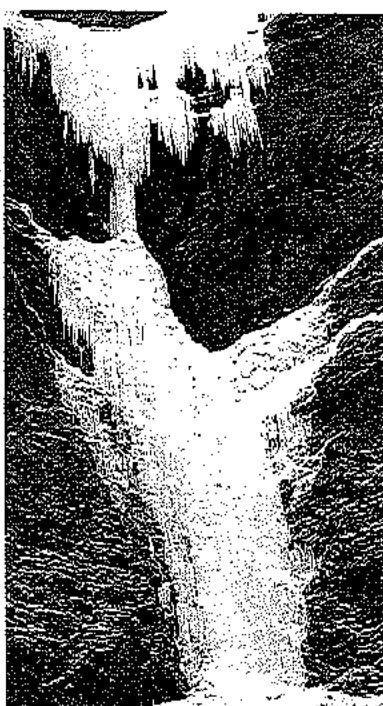
The first ascent team found one pitch of mixed climbing to the right in order to bypass an unformed pillar, then climbed up two pitches of moderate ice to a cave followed by a short steep pillar to the top. This route is similar in character to *Louise Falls*.

Descent Rappel the route.



Ben Firth running it out on *The French Maid*

Andrew Quenert



Dave Thomson

The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test

The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test 85 m IV, WI 5+

This rarely formed route is the second route to the right of *The French Maid*.

Climb a fun WI 3 pitch into a recessed platform. On the first ascent the crux pillar formed from a seepage out of cave, well inside and behind the lip of the upper curtain. Climb up and around the pillar until one has circled the pillar and is tucked between the pillar and the inside wall of the curtain. Chop a hole in

the curtain and climb out onto the very exposed vertical ice. Continue to the top and up easier ice to the base of the final steep step. Climb this last step and belay above or continue up a series of wide, lower angle ice ramps that ramble up and to the right."

Descent Rappel the route.

The Tonsil 90 m III, WI 3

Around the corner to the left of *The French Maid* (82 N/7 191812) is *The Tonsil*.

Approach The best approach is up the rib to the left of the main drainage and then traverse through the trees to the upper gully. Head up the farthest gully on the left and look for an "obvious big fat climb with big fat avalanche hazard." A second, bigger avalanche gully feeds into this one 200-300 m below the route.

Climb the moderate wide flow that can have a mantle of snow over parts of it.

Descent Rappel the route.

Glenogle Valley

Five long ice climbs are found situated on the western flanks of Porcupine Ridge in the Glenogle Valley east of Golden (82 N/7 167807).

Getting There

Access is gained via the Glenogle Creek forest service road which is found 17.3 km east of Golden off the Trans-Canada Highway. The pull-out is on the north side of the highway directly behind a major truck brake-check pull-out. Use caution. Vehicle access to the climbs varies depending on the road conditions and snowpack. Skis may be necessary as the road is not usually plowed in mid-season.

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Driscoll's Drip 40 m III, WI 3

Approach This short blue line is found by turning off the Glenogle Creek forest service road 1.5 km from the brake-check. Ascend a steep road north to a switchback at approximately 2 km and park here. Head into the forest northward and traverse two minor gullies. Ascend a steep wooded shoulder and drop into a small bowl below the climb (82 N/7 167805). 1 hour. Beware of avalanches.

WI II slabs lead to a short WI III section.

Descent Rappel off a tree to the right.

Fin du Monde 150 m III, WI 4

Approach Just a short way farther along the Glenogle Creek forest service road is another spur road that breaks off sharply to the right just where the main road begins to drop northward down into the valley. This spur road takes you to a large clearing where *Fin du Monde* is plainly visible above and to the east. The approach to this route involves a short jaunt from the clearing northward into the drainage leading up to the climb. A short cliff and large chockstone must be passed en route. 1.5 hours.

Two steep curtain pitches characterize the start of this climb. The upper third pitch is gained after a short gully walk. Beware of avalanche danger from steep slopes above the third pitch.

Descent Rappel the route.

Water Wings 600 m III, WI 3

Approach The approach to *Water Wings* is gained at the Glenogle Creek bridge 4.8 km from the brake check pull-out. From the bridge walk north on the east side of the creek for 1 km. The drainage leading to *Water Wings* is the first major drainage on your right. 1 hour.

This is a varied and meandering ice route with lots of character. The initial two pitches are somewhat hidden. A gully at the top of pitch two leads to another cleft that reveals two more pitches. A fat fifth pitch leads to more walking until the gully forks. The left fork leads to a thin dry pitch while the right offers a shorter bulge. Seven pitches of climbing in all.

Descent Rappel the route.

Balls On Ice 225 m III, WI 3

Approach The approach for *Balls On Ice*, *Hydroponica* and *Shambhala* is the same. During low snowpack or early in the season drive 7 km from the brake-check pull-out to a prominent switchback where *Hydroponica* and *Shambhala* are visible high and to the east. Park at the switchback and head east to an old, short skidder trail. Contour slightly northward while descending into the Glenogle Creek drainage. Alternately, during high snowpack ski to the Glenogle Creek bridge as for *Water Wings* and proceed upstream for 2 km to a constriction in the drainage that is bypassed steeply on the left. Descend back into the drainage directly to the start of *Balls On Ice* (82 N/7 161858).

Begin this five pitch climb directly from the Glenogle creekbed. Follow a narrow low-angle ribbon of steps to several WI 3 sections.

Descent Descend forested slopes to the south or continue upward to *Hydroponica* and/or *Shambhala*.

Shambhala 90 m IV, WI 4

Approach From the exit pitch of *Balls On Ice* continue up forested slopes for 1 hour to the base of two climbs. *Shambhala* is the right-hand ice pillar directly above.

Climb 20 m up a WI 3 tongue to a bowl below 70 m of steep quality ice.

Descent Rappel the route.

Hydroponica 250 m IV, WI 4

Approach The same as for *Shambhala* except take the left-hand gully where a short stiff WI 4 pillar leads to 200 m of beautiful rolling WI 3 ice.

Descent Rappel the route.



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Kicking Horse Canyon

As the Trans-Canada Highway heads west from Yoho Park and descends into Golden it cuts through a deep spectacular canyon named for the river that rages through it. There are a number of classic moderate lines very close to the road with southern exposure. Except for *Lady Killer* and *I Scream* they have little avalanche hazard. There are two main bridges over the river. The western-most bridge is dubbed the Five Mile Bridge and the eastern bridge, the Ten Mile Bridge, indicating their approximate distance from Golden. The downside to climbing in the canyon is the industrial noise emanating from the highway and railroad.

Coughlins 100 m III WI 3

Just west of the Ten Mile Bridge on the south side of the highway is *Coughlins*. It is high up in the trees and visible when approaching the bridge from the east heading west, and characterized by a pillar of ice 300 m above the road.

Approach Park on the west side of the Ten Mile Bridge and start up a gully on the south side of the Highway about 100 m west of the bridge. Some WI 2 and hiking leads to the base and on the approach make sure you don't trend left into another gully.

Start the climb with a 25 m step of WI 3 that leads to more snow plodding and a final 30 m pitch.

Descent Rappel off trees and downclimb.

Access note Access to the following four waterfall routes, as well as the mixed routes; *Halfway House*, *Dead Men Tell No Tales*, *Kids and Trains*, *The Asylum*, *Cookoo's Nest* and *Electric Shock Treatment* is technically illegal. Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) main-

tains a number of avalanche trigger wires along the tracks that can and have been set off by careless climbers but even more importantly, by falling ice. When this happens alarms go off as far as Calgary and the entire system is closed with the assumption of avalanches across the tracks. If climbing in this area, please be aware of the triggers and if approached by CPR personnel, please respect their position.

Riverview 100 m II, WI 3-4+

Riverview is the first of a number of climbs that form on the north side of the highway east of the Five Mile Bridge, 8 km east of Golden. Plentiful low to moderate angle ice makes *Riverview* a popular beginner practice area.

Approach Park at the west end of the Five Mile Bridge and drop down under the bridge to the train tracks and continue east for 200 m. *Riverview* is on the left about 50 m up the slope (82 N/7 106824).

The climb is in three tiers with a variety of lines. The first long pitch of steppy ice to a snow ledge is followed by more moderate ice to a smaller ledge. Finish with a 15 m steeper section to the top.

Descent Rappel off trees on the left or walk off right.

Essondale Left 140 m III, WI 3

Look for the next climb east of *Riverview*. It shares a common start with *Essondale Right* but the upper pitches don't always form.

Approach Continue along the tracks past *Riverview* and up a gully for 200 m to a steep curtain of ice.

Climb the 10 m curtain to a basin then head into the left-hand gully following WI 3 to the top.

Descent Rappel off trees.

Jeff Palumbo



Jim Dodich on Essondale Right.

Essondale Right 120 m III, WI 4+

An obvious climb with a steep crux pillar and an aesthetic finish.

Approach Start the route as for *Essondale Left* but head right from the basin to the base of a pillar.

Climb the initial pillar to a belay and finish on a pitch of good ice in a great position. The climb ends in the forest.

Descent Rappel off trees and downclimb the right side.

Lobotomy 12 m II, WI 4

About 600 m right (east) of *Essondale* is a free-hanging fang of ice that slowly forms at the far east end of the cliff.

Approach along the tracks until below the climb and hike up to the base. 40 minutes.

Descent Belay and rappel off trees.



Pretty Nuts

Photo: Joe Josephson

Pretty Nuts 180 m II, WI 4

This popular climb has the quickest approach of all the canyon climbs.

Approach Park at the west end of the Five Mile Bridge and cross to the north side of the highway. Walk west 50 m and lock up.

The initial 60 m curtain gives a choice of lines and makes for a convenient practice area. Above the curtain, go straight up a shallow corner for 45 m. Alternatively, go into a left gully with a short vertical pillar (crux) followed by easy ice, then traverse up and right over a treed rib back into the right gully. After either alternative, traverse east 50 m into another gully hiding a steep 60 m line.

Descent Rappel and retrace steps down the route. All rappels are from trees.

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Waterworks 90 m III, WI 3

Well away from the brutal noise of the main canyon *Waterworks* offers some classic climbing between rock walls despite a tricky approach.

Approach *Waterworks* is partially visible while heading east on the highway before you get to the route *I Scream*. Continue east along the highway and park approximately 500 m past a very sharp bend where the road negotiates a deep gravel gully. The climb is located above a steep band of trees and rock and is not visible from below. Scramble through the band of trees staying to the right then angle left into the gully and the base of the climb (approximately 82 N/7 093833).

The climb offers two straightforward pitches with a belay stance separating the two. Another three steps of ice can be found far above and are referred to as the *Waterworks Integral* (250 m WI 3).

Descent Rappel the route.

Lady Killer 80 m III, WI 3

The top of *Lady Killer* is visible from the road. This good quality climb always forms and has comfortable belay ledges.

Approach Park as for *Waterworks* in a plowed pull-out. Hike up the drainage (subject to avalanche) past a couple of ice steps to the base. 15 minutes.

The first pitch of 75-85° ice leads to a small basin with fixed rock anchors but climb past them and belay on the ice. The crux second pitch ascends 40 m of ice to snow slopes and a small tree to the right. The gully above offers a few hundred metres of snow and ice.

Descent Rappel and downclimb route.

I Scream 70 m III, WI 4+

Approach Park as for *Lady Killer* and hike up toward that route (avalanche hazard) and take a left-forking gully to the prominent pillar. The climb is visible about 1 km west of the pull-out.

Start with a 15 m slab of thin ice to a snow ramp leading to a 15 m vertical pillar that is rarely formed. If this pitch is gone, start directly below the pillar and follow a gully up and left until even with the upper pillar. From here, a ledge system on easy class 5 rock is the ticket to reach the ice. The final crux pillar is 25 m of spectacular ice. A short step above leads to the forest.

Descent The rappel route lies just left of a huge right-facing corner in the rock wall 60 m left of the climb itself. One short rappel takes you to a lone big pine on a ledge. From the lone pine rappel 40 m to another tree and make a short rappel to the base. With a 55 m rope the last rappel is not needed.

Beastiality 100 m II, WI 3 mixed

This obscure route is located on the right side of the second gully west of *I Scream*. It has only been known to form twice, although few people ever see it to really know for sure. During the winter of 1997-98 it formed with a thin and mixed first pitch followed by a WI 3 pitch.

Blaeberry River

The Blaeberry is the first major river valley north of Golden. With considerable logging and increasing housing development in the region, access is easier and people are becoming more knowledgeable about the area. More routes will undoubtedly be discovered in this valley for years to come.

Getting There

Access to the Blaeberry Road is via the public back road system that accesses the residences in the area. Turn right (north) on a number of roads from the Trans-Canada Highway, 10-15 km west of Golden. The best road into the main river valley is via the Blaeberry School Road 15 km west of Golden. See map page 257.

Shower Bath Falls 60 m III, WI 4+

The approach and the climb are both threatened by large avalanche slopes. Nigel Helliwell, one of the Rockies climbing pioneers of the '70s, was fatally buried here.

Approach Drive west on the Trans-Canada Highway for approximately 6 km to Hartley Road. Turn right (north) and drive 2 km past the Moberly Pub and park at the intersection with the Golden Upper Donald Road. The climb is visible directly ahead in a cleft of the mountain.

Note Obtain permission from the landowner and cross into the drainage below the climb. 1 hour.

The climb is two steep pitches.

Descent Rappel the route.

Goat Mountain Falls 25 m III, WI 2 & WI 4

Approximately 10 km from the Trans-Canada up the Blaeberry School Road is the Goat Mountain Lodge. Two parallel climbs of uncertain character are found directly above the lodge. They are about half a pitch high and are said to be a WI 2 and a WI 4.

Redburn Falls 30 m III, WI 2 to 4

Approach 20 km from Golden up the Blaeberry River Road turn right on to the Redburn forest service road. If there is active logging up the creek it may be possible to drive close to the Falls. If not it is a bit of a slog. 9 km from the turn-off head left off a switch back for 15-20 minutes of bushwacking to the base of a number of seeps. Up to six different lines may be in. There is avalanche hazard on the approach.

Rainy Day 110 m III, WI 3

The climbing is good but requires a 2 hour pound up the avalanche-prone gully to the base.

Approach Continue up the Blaeberry River Road and park at the 28 km marker. Look for the route on the mountainside to the right (south) high above the river in a shale gully.

Climb 50 m of easy ice to reach two lines. Left is up a thin, slightly longer pitch or the right on a shorter but steeper line.

Descent Walk off to the right and back around into the approach gully.

Wing Night 50 m III, WI 4

Approach 44 km up the Blaeberry Valley a number of smears can be seen up and left of the road. *Wing Night* is the "fattest" of the smears. Park at the 44 km spot and thrash up through the forest. 1.5-2 hours. The only reason to go is to do some of the other lines.

Golden Area 261

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ambo, First ascent of Polish Peacock.
Photo: Jim Dodich Jr.

Polish Peacock 80 m III, WI 4

This is a pretty climb located on the toe of Mount Poland. Beware of avalanche hazard around and above the route.

Approach Drive up the Blaeberry as for *Rainy Day* and park at the 50 km marker. Look to the left (north). The climb is several hundred metres above the road (on the left). About 150 m farther up the road from the 50 km marker an old logging trail takes you up to the slopes below the climb.

Climb 30 m of moderate ice to a snow ledge leading to a cave behind a pillar. A 80-90° pillar for 20 m leads to the trees. A small seep finishes the route.

Descent Rappel the route.

Grey Cup 150 m III, WI 3+

Approach 58 km up the Blaeberry valley just past the Mummery Glacier the valley gets quite narrow and is referred to as "the Mummery Gap." Up and left of the river a number of routes are visible. The *Grey Cup* is the first route right of the

prominent gully. This fun route was done during the dry fall of 1998 when there was no snow in the valley and driving up this far was possible until Christmas. Approach by crossing the river 1 km farther up and climbing up through a spectacular old growth cedar forest 45 minutes.

Rough Rider 100 m III, WI 4

This rambling route goes up either side of a tree patch.

Approach At about 59 km the Blaeberry Road enters "the Mummery Gap." The route goes up just right of a gully on the east side (GR 182222).

Climb two pitches up the left side of the tree patch with several short, steep steps.

Descent Rappel the route.

Generation X 25 m II, WI 5

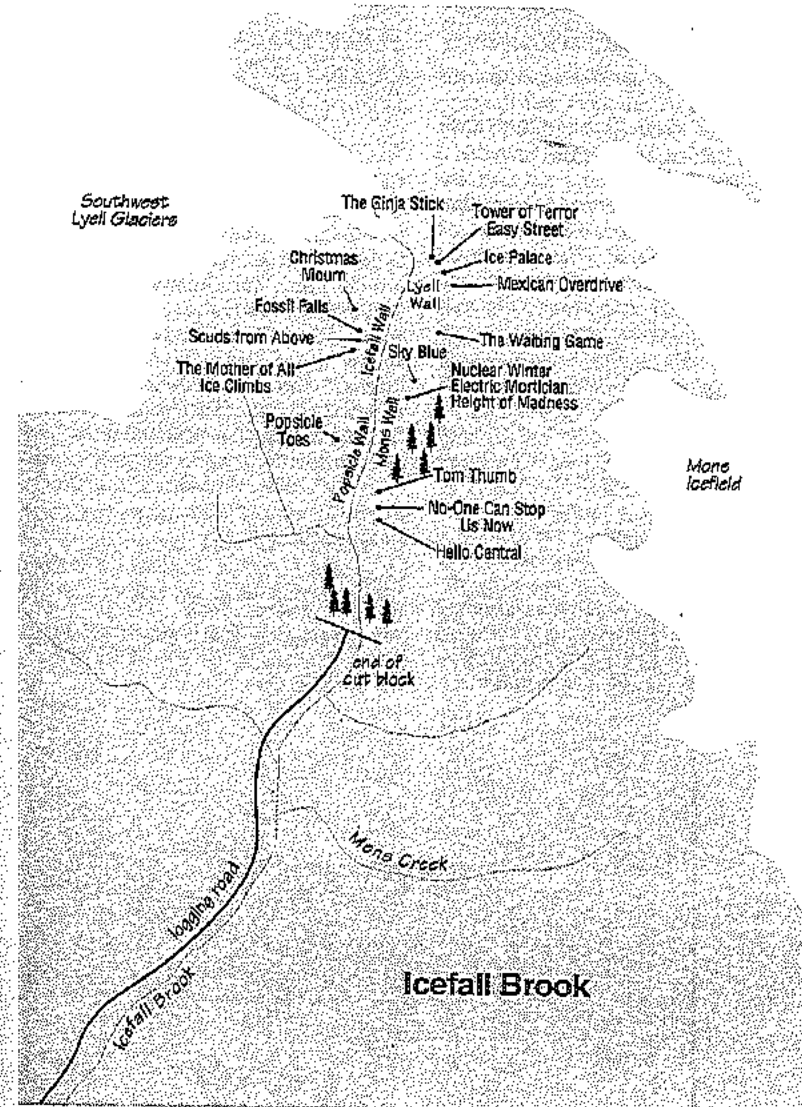
At the narrows on the Blaeberry Road (Kilometre 59) there is a northeast-facing wall above the bridge that leaves the Blaeberry Road for Mistaya Lodge. It is known as *Cyberspace Wall* and has several small routes with potential unclimbed mushrooms and mixed ground. On the left side of the wall is this short route with a 15 m pillar.

Junkhouse 25 m II, WI 3 5.6 A1

At the right side of *Cyberspace Wall* easy ice leads to a short steep rock wall and two short pillars behind a fir tree.

Dirt Town 40 m III, WI 4

This is the right-hand route on the wall. This route contains a bit of ice, rock and moss. Approach by driving just north of "the Mummery Gap" where it is possible to cross the Blaeberry River on a bridge. Park at the bridge and hike up and right of an avalanche path through the forest. 45 minutes.



Next page: Lyell Wall. From left to right: A) the Ginja Stick B) Easy Street C) Tower of Terror D) The Ice Palace E) Mexican Overdrive. All others are unclimbed.

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Icefall Brook

This is one of the most exciting areas to be discovered in recent years and the concentration of routes is staggering. Over 100 potential routes ranging from 10 m steps to 300 m+ giants and virtually unlimited mixed terrain are found within two square kilometres. However, don't expect to go in and start pillaging routes at your leisure. The area is very remote and best reached by an expensive helicopter ride out of Golden. Logging roads extend quite far up Icefall Brook allowing approach on snow machine, followed by several kilometres of skiing. Reluctant to leak out information, the main activists in the area sadly reported that Icefall Brook "sees rainfall every day of the year, especially in winter, has year-round grizzlies and winter mosquitoes six feet tall!"

Owing to limited visitation, little is known about the routes and only the very top of the barrel has been skimmed and many of the biggest (and hardest) plums still await attempts. Nevertheless, *Electric Mortician*, *Height of Madness*,

Popsicle Toes, *Mexican Overdrive* and *Nuclear Winter* are undoubtedly excellent climbs. Beware, the avalanche hazard in the area can be extreme. All the climbs in this remote area are rated a grade IV commitment or higher.

Getting There

To reach Bush River logging roads take the Trans-Canada Highway west of Golden 23.5 km to Donald Station where a right (north) turn puts you on the Big Band Highway which eventually merges into the Bush River logging road. This is followed past Bush Landing and Bush Arm to where the Valenciennes River enters the Bush near kilometre marker 96. The road up the Valenciennes is on the north side of the river and marked with "V" kilometre markers while the Bush River has "B" markers. See maps pages 257 & 263.

Map

82 N/14 Rostrum Peak.

The logging road ends at grid reference 950465. Grid references for routes are approximate.



Dave Thomson

264 Golden Area

Popsicle Wall

Popsicle Wall is the first main wall on the left side of the valley past the cutblock and has one completed route.

Popsicle Toes 190 m V, WI 5

Approach Found near the middle of the Popsicle Wall is a prominent climb resembling a tuning fork near the top (82 N/14 949476).

Climb 75 m on rolling WI 3 past an obvious boulder and across a snow ledge to the main pillar. The next pitch climbs 40 m of WI 5 followed by 35 m of WI 4 to a bolt belay below the fork. The first ascent team took the left-hand fork for 40 m up a steep pillar (crux) that ended in a tiny flat pedestal.

Descent Rappel the route. The obvious boulder conceals bare ice that can be used to thread a sling. From the boulder 50 m ropes just reach the bottom.

Mons Wall

On the east side of the canyon directly opposite the Popsicle Wall is another major cliff with a large clump of trees above. The routes are described from south to north as you would encounter them travelling up the valley.

Hello Central 25 m IV, WI 3-4

Approach Found on the south end of Mons Wall (82 N/14 951473).

Climb the small gully or the steeper wall to the left.

Descent Rappel the route.

No-One Can Stop Us Now 25 m IV, WI 3

Approach On the south end of Mons Wall (82 N/14 951475) are several possibilities on short tiered cliffs.

This route takes a wide expanse of ice on a steep cliff face above *Tom Thumb*.

Descent Rappel the route.

Tom Thumb 10 m IV, WI 3

The route that started it all! This short pillar coming from a small gully is significant only in the fact that it was the first route done in the canyon (82 N/14 951474).

Nuclear Winter 140 m IV, WI 6

Approach A difficult, attractive climb in the middle of the Mons Wall (82 N/14 954480). *Nuclear Winter* begins in a gully beneath a series of sword-like chandeliers. It is the right-hand of several impressive lines and is climbed in three or four pitches.

Start up a ramp with a short column and climb 75 m of moderate terrain to the upper pillar. An intimidating pitch up



Dave Thomson

From left to right: *Height of Madness*, *Electric Mortician*, *Nuclear Winter*.

Golden Area 265

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steep ice leads to a cave on the right, 25 m. The final pitch starts up 20 m of vertical chandelier ice easing to a gentle gully. A two bolt station is on the cliff face at the top.

Descent Rappel the route.

Electric Mortician 50 m IV, WI 6

This steep and exciting climb encounters plastered mushrooms and a variety of fragile pillars.

Approach Two routes are found to the left of *Nuclear Winter* and are approached by climbing the first WI 3 pitch of that climb. *Electric Mortician* begins on a steep, avalanche-prone ledge 15 m left of *Nuclear Winter*.

The climb can be done in one pitch, but the first ascent team used two because of rope drag. The first third of the route consists of two parallel pillars. The first ascent team started on the right and then traversed onto the left pillar after 10 m. They then traversed right again 20 m from the top to avoid a group of thin pillars.

Descent Rappel the route. Three 50 m rappels are required to reach the canyon floor.

Height of Madness 55 m IV, WI 5+

Approach As for *Electric Mortician*. Continue to the left by dropping down steep snow and turning a corner. A rappel from the base of *Electric Mortician* may be recommended. *Height of Madness* takes the most-formed pillar on the right side of a larger smear of icicles.

A steep step is climbed to the base of fragile daggers that stick down into the snow. Ascend these delicate features for a few metres to where the ice becomes more solid and plastic. A belay ledge can be found at 40 m on the right-hand side.

If you have the guns and a 55 m rope the route could be climbed in one pitch.

Descent Rappel the route. A 50 m rope just reaches the bottom of the route. Another 50 m rappel straight down will reach the canyon floor.

Sky Blue 80 m IV, WI 3

Approach This route starts on the floor of the canyon a couple of hundred metres left (north) of *Nuclear Winter*. The bottom of the climb gets partially covered by a large cone of snow without which the route is likely WI 4. The climb is beneath a left-trending roof and has a distinctive curving hogback formed from the drips off the roof. A difficult variation may be possible on the steep icicles to the left and above the route.

Climb 40 m of solid ice to a rib of snow-ice that leads to the top.

Descent Rappel the route. On the first ascent adequate ice for rappel anchors was found only above the initial 40 m and the climbers had to downclimb the second pitch. They recommend the placement of a bolt belay at the top.

Icefall Wall

Separated from Popsicle Wall by a steep gully, this is the next wall upstream. The next three climbs lie on the bottom cliff-band. A much larger and more serious cliff with a few waterfalls seeping from seracs is found above.

The Mother of All Ice Climbs 60 m IV, WI 3

Approach A massive curtain with three tiers (82 N/14 951481).

This climb is done in two pitches.

Descent Rappel the route.

Scuds From Above 60 m IV, WI 4

Approach 100 m right (north) of *The Mother of All Ice Climbs* (82 N/14 951482).

Climb a short shield to 20 m of steep ice, followed by another 30 m of easier ice.

Descent Rappel 50 m to the top of the shield, then easily downclimb.

Fossil Falls 80 m IV, WI 4

Approach 100 m right of *Scuds From Above* (82 N/14 951483).

Pitch one climbs a 15 m column then goes up and left to a small rock face; pitons for belay. Pitch two continues up easy ice to a large snow and ice ledge and a bolt belay (may be covered).

Descent Rappel the route.

Christmas Mourn 30 m IV, WI 5

Approach This climb is located in the first gully past *Fossil Falls* (82 N/14 952486) and is accessed by a short WI 2 pitch. Some trudging (swimming actually) up the gully and another very short step is required. The route is visible from almost anywhere in the back end of the canyon.

The climb is a nice, fat, steep pillar presenting few technical difficulties except sometimes brittle ice.

Descent Rappel the route.

Lyell Wall

Lyell Wall contains some of the bigger routes in the area. It is the main wall on the back right-hand side (northeast corner) of the valley. Access to this and all other routes in this area can be tricky considering the size of the avalanche slopes below them. In February 1995, a small shallow gully below *Tower of Terror* had been scoured down to some small steps of WI 2. A horizontal knob below the climb makes a good place to gear up. The completed routes are described from right to left (south to north).

The Waiting Game 110 m IV, WI 3

Approach Directly across the canyon from *Fossil Falls* on the south end of the wall (82 N/14 957483).

This wide, gentle climb has short steeper sections that can easily be avoided. Climb two full pitches followed by a final short tier.

Descent Rappel the route.

Mexican Overdrive 200 m V, WI 5

Approach This narrow climb is the left-hand of three prominent, parallel smears that are 20 m apart on the right side of Lyell Wall (82 N/14 958488).

Climb rolling ice to a ledge. From the ledge a crux pitch or two leads into a shallow gully and the top.

Descent Rappel the route or traverse south then scramble down through trees to a short rappel at the south end of Mons Wall.

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The Ice Palace 50 m IV, WI 4

Approach On the north end of the Lyell Wall and 50 m immediately left of *Mexican Overdrive* is a climb ending halfway up the crag (82 N/14 957489).

Climb up easy snow and ice slopes to a steep curtain pouring from a huge horizontal roof.

Descent Rappel the route.



Dave Thomson

From left to right: *Ginja Stick*, *Easy Street*, *Tower of Terror*.

Tower of Terror 75 m IV, WI 4

Approach This climb is the right-hand of the twin drips just left of *Ice Palace*. Though not apparent, it is actually three drips with several different possibilities.

Tower of Terror is the easiest line here, keeping as far right as possible and proceeding up under a roof. After 45 m move right into a narrow fissure for a protected belay. Continue up 30 m of WI 3 to the top.

Descent Rappel the route.

Easy Street 75 m IV, WI 5+

Approach This takes the steep pillar left of *Tower of Terror* and ends at the same place as that route.

A steep 40 m pitch reaches the base of the upper free-standing pillar. The second pitch starts very steeply then eases onto WI 3 near the top.

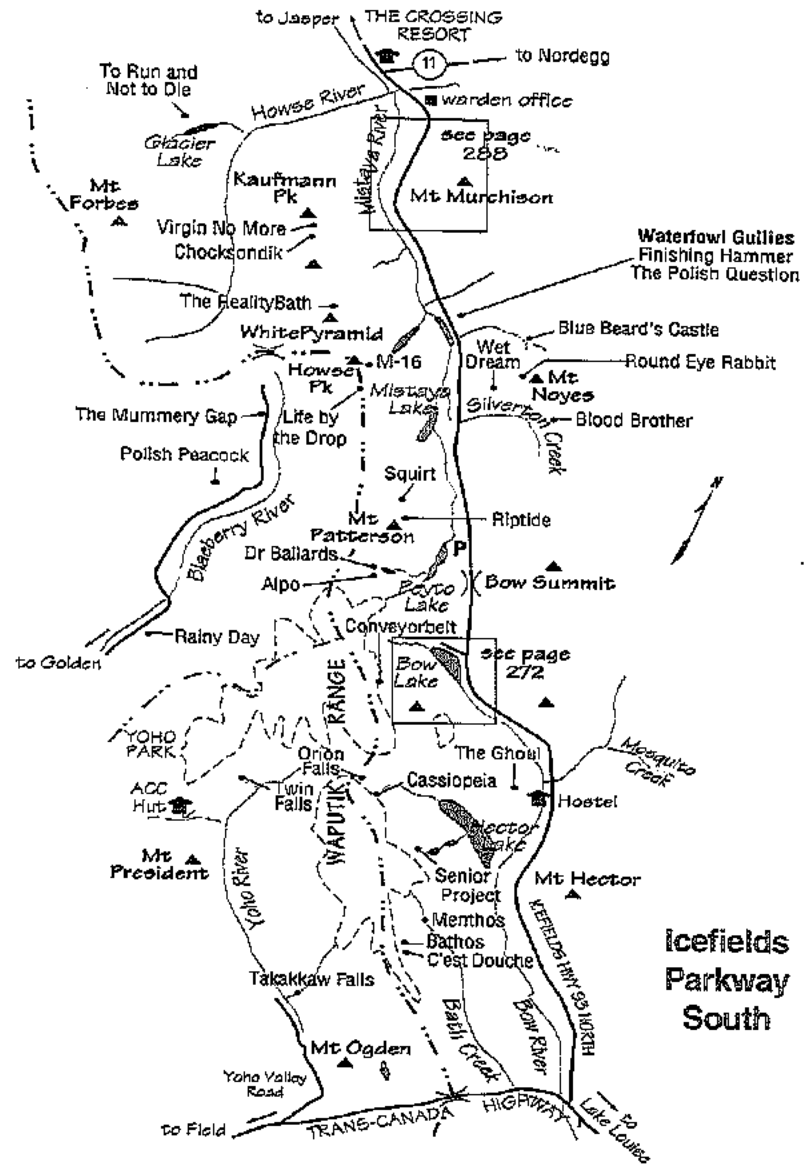
Descent Rappel the route.

The Ginja Stick 80 m IV, WI 5

Approach A third, more independent route left of *Easy Street*.

Climb 45 m to either side of the upper pillar; there are sheltered caves on either side. Radical icicles and pillars form the right side of the second pitch while the left side is better. On the left, climb 12 m of vertical ice before easing back to the top. The route ends at a small cave with a pretty trickling spring. It's wise to stop below the spring to find good ice for anchors.

Descent Rappel the route.



Icefields Parkway 269

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ICEFIELDS PARKWAY

Geographically, this is the largest area described in this book. Known as the Banff-Jasper Highway or simply "The BJ," it is 230 kilometres long and the epicentre of ice climbing in the Rockies. The Icefield Parkway features ease of access, reliability of formation and ultraclassic routes. Travelling through two national parks and covering such a grand area, the parkway is described here in four sections. The first area (Waputik Range) extends from the Trans-Canada Highway to Saskatchewan River Crossing. North of the crossing, each subsequent area covers a smaller area owing to the higher volume of routes including the legendary venues of Mount Wilson, The Weeping Wall and The Columbia Icefields.

Getting There

Your journey onto this avenue of winter paradise begins 2 km north of Lake Louise when you exit the Trans-Canada Highway onto the Icefields Parkway and head north toward Jasper. From the north end of the parkway, follow the main road in Jasper (Connaught Drive) south and continue through the Highway 16 intersection. The parkway can also be accessed at Saskatchewan River Crossing (110 km north of Lake Louise) via the David Thompson Highway (#11), 98 km from Nordegg. Specific details about facilities and emergency assistance are listed under each section.

Waputik Range

Technically the Waputik Range describes the mountains along the west side of the Icefields Parkway from the Trans-Canada Highway north to the Howse River. For ease of description the routes along the east side of the road are included here as well. They vary tremendously in character. Bow Lake and Mount Murchison offer a number of classic, more moderate lines. The peaks northwest of Bow Summit are unique in that they contain only a few routes, but they are some of the biggest and hardest ever completed.

Facilities

Because this region is geographically so close to Lake Louise few people stay overnight in the area. Mosquito Creek Hostel, located between Hector and Bow Lakes, is popular with skiers and often crowded. Most climbers eschew Mosquito Creek in favour of the Rampart Creek Hostel farther north near Mount Wilson and the Weeping Wall.

Maps

82 N/9 Hector Lake
82 N/15 Mistaya Lake
82 N/10 Blaeberry River

Emergency

Contact the Lake Louise Warden Office. Pay phones are located north of Bow Summit just south of the Saskatchewan River Bridge at the warden station and at Mosquito Creek Hostel, south of Bow Summit. Assistance may also be available at Num-ti-jah Lodge on Bow Lake. See page 400.

Hector Lake

Orion Falls 150 m IV, WI 5+

The long ski approach to this remote climb is definitely worth the effort.

Approach Park at the Hector Lake viewpoint 19 km north of the Trans-Canada. Ski along the trail onto Hector Lake (light ski gear recommended). Head into the narrow canyon at the inlet. The climb is right of centre, below the Waputik Icefield (82 N/9 388145). The climb itself is safe from avalanche hazard, but the slopes leading to it are threatened.

The crux first pitch can form with a nice groove, or as a fierce featureless pillar. Easier ice leads to the top. Another steep pitch may form above.

Descent Rappel the route.

Cassiopia 35 m III, WI 4+

Climbed alone, this route would hardly be worth the effort to get here, but it can make a nice additional route when combined with *Orion Falls*. It is located about 500 m to the left.

Start with 10 m of easy ice to a wide snow ledge. Climb another 20-25 m up a wide curtain.

Descent Rappel the route.

Senior Project 120 m V, WI 5+

Complicated and obscure is the best way to describe this route. *Senior Project* was climbed initially as part of a special course in an outdoor education program. It is a serious venture owing to its long approach and avalanche and serac hazard. If you're looking for adventure, you might think about a second ascent of this line. It's probably better than most people would care to think.

Approach Park at the Hector Lake viewpoint 19 km north of the junction with the Trans-Canada. Ski down onto Hector Lake. Cross the lake and up the east side of the drainage to Lake Margaret. Continue up the prominent snow gully at the south end of the lake. From the top of the gully is the first clear view of the first pitch (82 N/9 430136). 4 hours.

Low-angle ice leads to a 50 m pitch which tops out in a basin east of Turquoise Lake. The next three pitches are 0.5 km away at grid reference 82 N/9 425132. The traverse to these pitches is exposed to serac fall. A 20 m steep pitch leads to a vertical (crux) third pitch. The top of this funnels you into a snow slope below a rock wall with two pitons. The route finishes with a 20 m vertical pillar.

Descent Rappel the top three pitches and traverse back to the top of the first pitch. There is a rock bulge to the right. Walk around to the right of the bulge into a little recess and the final rappel anchor.



Approaching Orion Falls.
Photo: Carlos Buhler

Icefields Parkway 271

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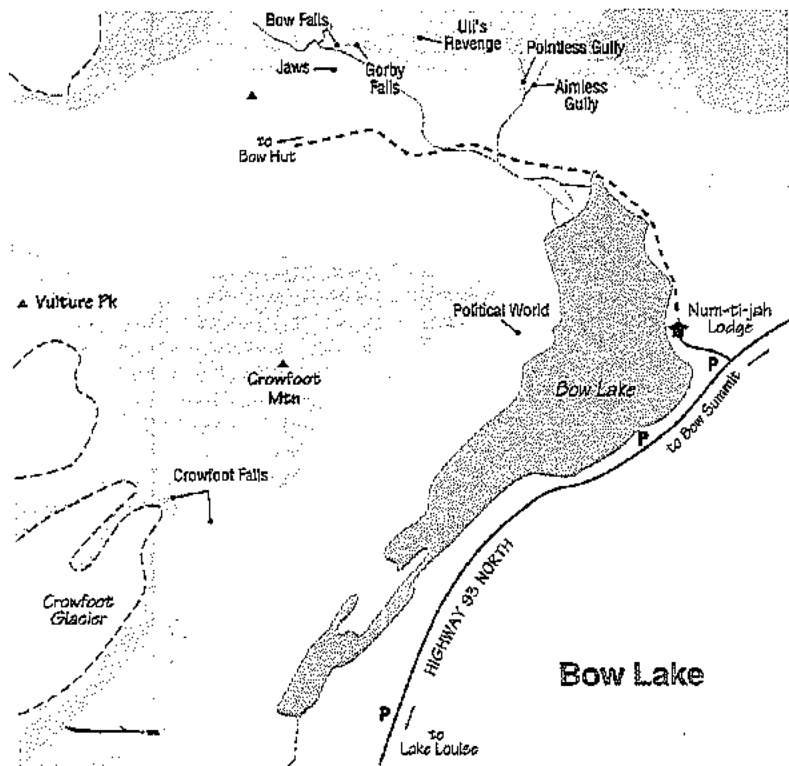
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Mosquito Creek

There is rumour of a large wall of ice somewhere up Mosquito Creek. It has been described as being "as large as the lower Weeping Wall," but it seems unlikely a feature that size would go undetected for so long. Nevertheless, there must certainly be something up there.

The Ghoul 110 m IV, WI 4+

Located opposite Mosquito Creek in a deep, quartzite cleft on the west side of the Bow River (82 N/9 471252).

Approach Found at the top of a steep slope some 150-200 m above the valley. 1-1.5 hours from the Mosquito Creek Hostel. The approach and route are subject to extreme avalanche hazard.

20 m on a vertical sheet leads to a pencil-like formation after which a few easy steps north lead to another large and perpendicular column. A short section of easier snow covered ice leads to another steep and exciting pitch.

Descent Rappel the route.

Crowfoot Mountain

Crowfoot Mountain is the pretty peak rising above the southwest shores of Bow Lake. It is mostly known for the Crowfoot Glacier. Visible from the highway, the glacier sports spectacular seracs making it a major tourist attraction. To the right of the seracs are a number of complex gullies and faces that hold any number of seeps and smears. The north-facing wall to the right of the glacier has a number of established, yet obscure, alpine routes that quickly come in and out of varying degrees of frozen iciness. In the right conditions there is likely to be new routes.

Crowfoot Falls 150 m V, WI 5

This climb takes the obvious flow of water ice in a deep recess right of the glacier. The route seems to form every year and is the most obvious thick ice line in the area. It's a good route in a serious place with acres of avalanche slopes on the approach and on the climb. You should probably wait for a season in which it forms early before any snow accumulates, otherwise it would be quite nerve-wracking, and is not recommended if snow conditions are doubtful.

Approach Park at the Crowfoot Glacier viewpoint 33.2 km north of the Trans-Canada and 2.8 km south of the Bow Glacier/Num-ti-jah Lodge parking lot. Walk down to the river and cross the swamps at the end of Bow Lake. Work your way over toward the glacier, keeping well right to minimize serac hazard, and staying high on moraines whenever possible. The climb starts in a deep gash cutting the lower rockband below the obvious flow above. 2 hours.

This first pitch up the gash is a full 50 m of very steep ice. Continue up and left along several hundred metres of snow to the base of the obvious flow which is two pitches of beautiful ice to 80°. Some very seasonal mixed routes may be found on the rock faces above the route in the late fall and/or spring.

Descent Rappel and downclimb route.

Political World 170 m III, WI 5+ R

This rarely formed route is worth doing, but is guarded by a significant avalanche slope at the base. On occasion two lines appear on the upper half. The first ascent climbed the steeper and thinner right-hand version (described below). The left-hand is easier (WI 4) and more reliably formed.

Approach Located on Crowfoot Mountain directly across from the Bow Lake Viewpoint about 1.4 km south of the Bow Glacier/Num-ti-jah Lodge parking lot. Walk or ski across the lake and up the large avalanche slope to the base of the cliff. Follow a slight windblown rib in the slope to the left of the climb.

Start with a narrow pillar for 30 m leading into a gully (old bolt). Continue up snow to the right-hand of two falls (bolt). Traverse across steep snow covered rock to vertical, thin ice and up to the crux pillar. Continue up steep to overhanging ice for 15 m until it eases off. Continue to a bolt station on the right.

Descent Rappel the route.

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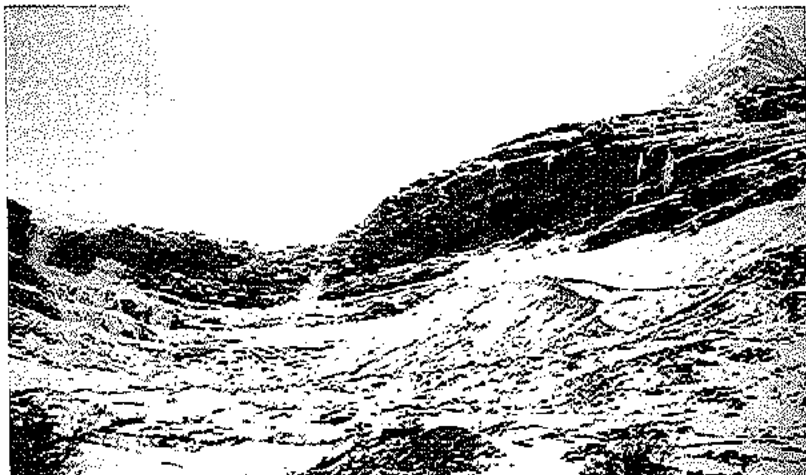
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Bow Lake

The following routes are all on the approach to Bow Glacier and Bow Hut, a popular ski touring destination. This can make for a quick ski approach as the trail is usually broken. Most of the routes here are located in the Bow Falls amphitheatre. Owing to the northern aspect and altitude, this can be one of the best places for early ice. Over the years, pretty much every conceivable smear and drip has been climbed in pretty much every conceivable condition. As a result, what is listed here may be nothing more than a vain attempt to catalogue everything. In the howls to the northwest of the lake are a number of unclimbed smears that might make good early season (read: before any snow) routes.

Parking Near the north end of Bow Lake pull into the large Bow Glacier parking lot and Num-ti-jah Lodge, 36 km north of the Trans-Canada. Park in the lot nearest the highway. Do not drive down the road



Bow Lake Headwall. Bow Falls on the far left, Gorby Falls just left of centre, Ull's Revenge (unformed) on the far right.

274 Icefields Parkway

toward the lodge. The following routes can be walked to, but are best approached on skis. See map page 272.

Pointless Gully 95 m III, WI 4

Approach Ski across the north end of the lake (or stick to the trail in the trees if it is not frozen) and continue up the valley for about 1 km. *Pointless Gully* is the left-hand and most obvious of two routes in the trees on the south-facing slope to the right (82 N/9 352238) about 200 m before you get to a narrow canyon. Lots of terrain above the route makes for bad avalanche hazard.

A steep pillar for starters is followed by an easy snow and ice gully to a final wide curtain.

Descent Rappel the route or if conditions permit walk off right.

Aimless Gully 100 m III, WI 4

Located next to *Pointless Gully*, *Aimless Gully* forms in the obvious break to the right (82 N/9 353239). Watch for this break as you approach the route.

The first pitch is a technical pillar followed by a nice final curtain similar to the last pitch of *Professors*.

Descent Rappel the route or if conditions permit, walk off right.

More Human than Human 30 m III, WI 4 R

Approach It is located just right of the scramble gully descent from *Bow Falls*.

Make mixed moves on rock and ice smears to reach the ice of the hanging curtain.

Descent Rappel from ice in a cave.

Jaws 75 m III, WI 4+

Approach An aesthetic pillar that rarely forms, *Jaws* may be found on the cliff 200 m left of *Bow Falls*.

This thin, narrow, ephemeral testpiece is climbed in two challenging pitches, each with a cave belay.

Descent Downclimb the steep gully to the left.

Bow Falls 95 m III, WI 3-4

At the headwaters of the Bow River is an obvious large flow pouring over the headwall below Bow Glacier (82 N/9 348224). This route forms early (albeit poorly at first), has little avalanche hazard, is in a beautiful location and presents a number of lines—a classic!

Approach Ski across the north end of the lake (or stick to the trail in the trees if it is not frozen) and continue up the valley for about 1 km toward a narrow canyon. Do not enter the canyon. Instead, turn to the left and follow the Bow Hut winter trail (usually broken) into the trees. Leave the trail where it enters the valley bottom again (avalanche hazard here) and contour right into the amphitheatre.

The falls begin with a broad shield of low-angle ice that can be very thin. It is

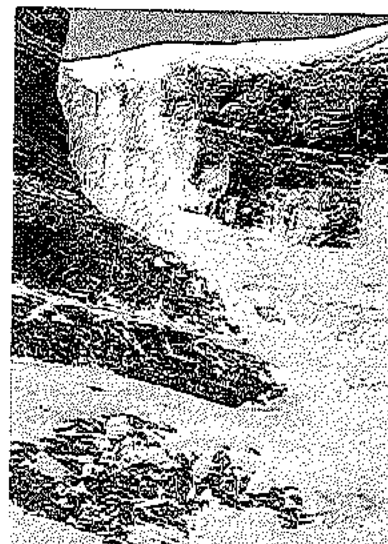


Photo: Godfrey Perroux

Bow Falls.

a high volume waterfall and creates a large cavern (would you believe up to 10 m high!) below the ice which has been known to collapse. Be careful. The main falls can be climbed on a number of lines with the left side offering gully type climbing known as *Photographer's Gully*. The right side gives a steep line up varied and interesting ice. The climb ends on flat ground at a pretty lake below the Bow Glacier.

Descent Traverse left to the second gully and downclimb back to the base of the route. If snow conditions are poor, it is best to rappel the route.

Gorby Falls 30-40 m III, WI 3

Approach Several small icefalls known as *Gorby Falls* sometimes form on the rock about 100 m right of *Bow Falls*. They are a good alternative if there are crowds to the left.

Icefields Parkway 275

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Three different lines are located in the vicinity, each with variable amounts and quality of ice.

Descent Rappel the route.

Uli's Revenge 65 m III, WI 5

The top half of *Uli's Revenge* always seems to form, but the bottom pillar has only been known to touch once. It is the right-hand of two lines some 500 m up and right of *Bow Falls* on the upper cliffband. Both routes have been equipped as bolted mixed routes and are found in *Mixed Climbs*.

Approach as for *Bow Falls*, cross the amphitheatre below that route and hike up windblown moraines left of the route. Traverse back right on a ledge to the base. 2 hours.

The climb is in an awesome position up a narrow, hanging icicle. Start out behind the pillar, wind to the front and continue up steep ice for another pitch.

Descent Rappel the route. 60 m ropes will reach the base.

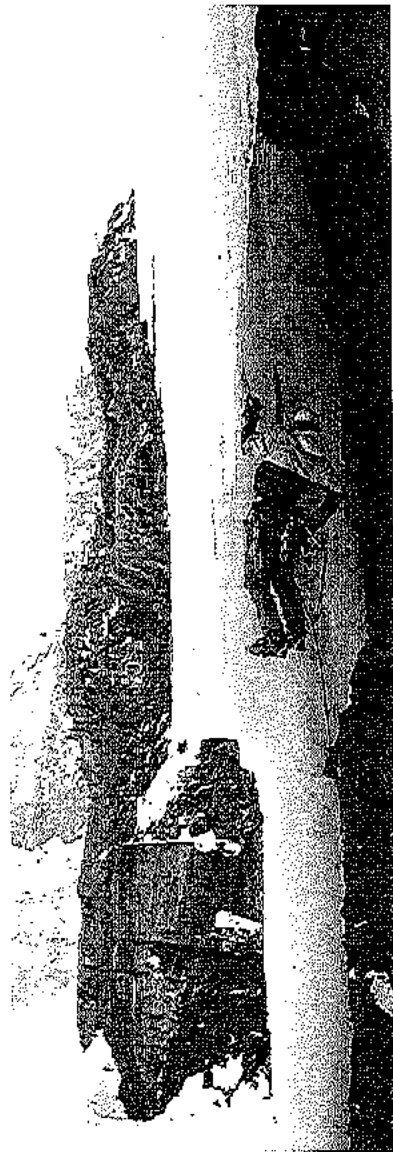
Bow Hut

As a great early season adventure, there is the following alpine route above Bow Hut. Since it is an early season route, rock fall is the main hazard.

Conveyorbelt 460 m IV, 5.7, WI 3

The route is off the northeast ridge of Vulture Peak near Bow Hut (82 N/9 369195). It starts in a corner that almost goes to the ridge, then heads up right into a large chimney feature.

Karl Nagy on the first ascent of Uli's Revenge.



Chris Caldwell

Approach Park as for *Bow Falls* and hike up the trail toward Bow Hut. Just past the creek follow the moraine on the left and give a wide berth to avoid some seracs. Trend left around the moraine and gain a small glacier to the base.

Start up a couloir with four long pitches up to 5.4 and WI 2. Trend right into a large chimney that gets a little harder at 5.7 and WI 3. Follow the chimney for five more pitches to the summit.

Descent Walk toward the Mount Olive - St. Nicholas col and descend to Bow Hut.

Peyto Lake

To date, only a couple of easier smears have been climbed in the Peyto Lake - Delta Creek region. Undoubtedly there are more.

Dr. Ballards 90 m III, WI 3

Approach Park at Peyto Lake pull-out (no sign) on the west side of the road, 2.6 km north of Bow Summit. Ski down to the lake. Continue across Peyto Lake and up the drainage beyond. The route is the right-hand of two flows on the headwall below Cauldron Lake (82 N/10 312268). The similar left-hand flow is known as *Alpo*.

Climb two moderate narrow pitches.

Descent Rappel the route.

Mount Patterson

Patterson is the first major peak north of Bow Summit on the west side of the highway. While the summit has been a moderately popular alpine objective for years, the imposing north bowl is home to two impressive hard routes. The first, *Riptide*, is climbed as a waterfall ice climb while the second, *Rocket Man*, is considered the longest (and perhaps the overall hardest) bolted mixed route in the Rockies. See *Mixed Climbs*. In their respective genres of climbing, both can be considered among the best in the world.

Riptide 225 m VI, WI 6-7

This unique and challenging route is not quite the "horror" it previously was, although all subsequent ascents have encountered considerably more ice than did the first ascent.

In general, the route is more difficult psychologically than technically. Long sections of snow covered, hollow and/or thin ice is normal. It is best described as sustained weirdness. The longest vertical sections are at most 15 m, yet tool placements can be difficult and screws are often in bad or plate ice. At no place can you really just go for it, and the climbing demands a delicate and thoughtful technique to the very finish. Overall, it offers all the features of a very modern ice route and is quickly becoming a classic among the harder climbs. Occasionally it will form relatively fat and plastic.

Approach Park at a pull-out (no sign) on the west side of the highway 7.2 km north of Bow Summit. Cross the river and up through steep trees left of the drainage coming off the north face of Mount Patterson. Skis are recom-

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Godfrey Pascoe



Barry Blanchard

mended. Once in the open below the bowl, ski up the drainage (threatened by avalanches from above) staying left. A long (300 m) avalanche-prone gully must be climbed to reach the base of the route. Allow at least 3 hours. (82 N/15 299337).

The climb is often done in five pitches, although it has been climbed in four using a 55 m rope. Bolt belays were added on the first ascent, but most are difficult to find. They are located as follows: first left, second right, third centre, fourth left and fifth at the top on the left. The third pitch normally avoids some steep pillars (may be unformed) by climbing a slight gully to the right (bolt) then making a technical and exciting traverse left on thin ice back to the main falls. There are no easy sections. Each pitch is sustained with no distinct crux, although the first and the fourth pitches are a bit harder.

Descent Rappel the route. Expect to find only the second and fifth bolt anchors. Good ice for Abalakov anchors is often hard to find; pitons and/or ice screws are recommended. The last rappel from the second bolt belay may reach the bottom if you have 60 m ropes.

The Continuing Saga 285 m VI, 5.8, WI 7
A rare final pitch has been climbed above the usual end to *Riptide*. Alone, it would be one of the hardest single pitches in the range. When climbed on top of *Riptide* it becomes legendary. Lead by Guy Lacelle in continuous spindrift and alpine conditions, this pitch traverses right on mixed rock and continues up a full pitch on an overhanging, delicate and icicled pillar.

Opposite: *Riptide*.
Inset: Guy Lacelle on an early repeat attempt.

Le Lézard D'Or 200 m VI, WI 6+
The reptilian reference to this frequently formed variation on *Riptide* was made because the first ascensionists believed the *Riptide* was some sort of reptile. Climb the first two and a half pitches of *Riptide*. Instead of traversing to the left above the bolt, follow the obvious line straight up to reach the bottom of a vertical pillar.

Squirt 120 m V, WI 6+ R
Directly across the bowl from *Riptide* is a large wall with a number of impressive smears and drips. The biggest and longest collection of unformed icicles on the left side, is the impressive *Rocket Man*. At the base of the wall on the right side are a couple of parallel drips. *Squirt* is the right-hand one. The route is named in honour of the first ascensionist's younger brother Damian Jensen who was killed while ice climbing at a young age.

Approach As for *Riptide*, once you gain the upper bowl go right and up a large avalanche slope right of the Snowbird Glacier (serac hazard here). Ski or post hole up to the base of the route.
The climb is three very hard and technical ice pitches with creative protection on ice and rock. After climbing a WI 2 approach, belay at the base of a steep, connected pillar. Climb the pillar into a steep gully leading to difficult ice that bottlenecks and a one bolt belay. Traverse thin ice and rock underhanging daggers to reasonable ice and a final pitch of good ice.

Descent Rappel the route.

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Mount Noyes

This is the relatively nondescript peak on the right side of the highway (driving north) almost due east of the obvious Mount Howse. Several routes can now be found on the broad lower slopes, as well as hidden up the large drainages on either side of the peak.

Blood Brother 300 m IV, 5.9, WI 5+

This route is visible from the middle of Mistaya Lake up Silverhorn Creek, the major drainage south of Mount Noyes. There may also be limited glimpses from the highway. This five pitch route is surprisingly excellent, offering reasonable protection throughout and can be a one-day, early-season climb. Pitons, a rock rack up to 3" and 60 m ropes are recommended.

Approach Park on the northeast side of Silverhorn Creek. Follow the creek into a V-shaped drainage gaining a sub-alpine bowl where the creek splits. Take the left fork leading up to snow slopes at the base of a large gully, 1.5-2 hours. It should be noted that once out of the valley the approach is exposed to avalanche hazard most of the way. The climb begins in a gully in the middle of the face. Scramble for 350 m up the gully past a short steep step and continue up to an alcove on the left of the mixed line.

Climb thin ice (WI 5+) and a slab to a steep corner. Move up an awkward (5.9), small chimney trending right into a corner. 5 m up the corner, traverse left on a steep snow ledge and belay. Climb a pillar (WI 4) onto easier ground moving over short mixed steps and belay on the left of the obvious chimney above. Climb the chimney on mixed terrain (WI 4+,

5.8) to a belay on a ledge. Climb WI 3 to a snow slope and belay below the next ice section. Climb mostly WI 3 ice with a steep start and a steeper finish (WI 4+).

Descent Rappel route using rock and ice anchors.

Round Eye Rabbit 160 m IV, WI 4+

The original description for this route was, "On Mount Noyes, up the main drainage see the climb at the base of the mountain to the right, 2 hour approach. Excellent early season route." And people wonder why it's so hard to write guidebooks. Fortunately, a little more information has surfaced.

Approach Just north of the major valley of Silverhorn Creek are three drainages off the west face of Mount Noyes. Park below the middle one and head up the creek eventually angling north and around the corner into a bowl at the top of the northern most drainage. The route is at approximately 82 N/15 305413.

Several pitches of moderate ice lead to a steeper free-standing pillar.

Descent Rappel the route.

Blue Beard's Castle 210 m IV, WI 5

There is little information about this route, although it is very similar to *The Professor Falls*, but harder and with a longer approach. Once, while descending from an early spring ascent of Mount Chephren, I saw a major waterfall somewhere above the fork (82 N/15 290448). This might be it. Might not.

Approach Located 3 hours up Noyes Creek which is due east of Mount Howse. This creek has been closed in the past because of bear activity.

There is an exciting second pitch with a 2 m wide, 1 m thick pillar some 3-4 m away from the wall. It is a bit rambly after that with a WI 3 pitch to finish. There may be some additional thin ice far above.

Descent Rappel the route.

Wet Dream 60 m III, WI 3

This is actually up to three different ice flows. About 12 km north of Bow Summit several large drainages (Silverhorn Creek) come down from the east. These flows lie on the smaller cliffbands to the north of the main creek and have little avalanche hazard.

Approach Drive slowly and look closely—they are barely visible from the road and are most easily seen if driving south toward Bow Summit. They can be reached easily on skis (recommended). 20-30 minutes.

The gully-like, left-hand falls is the most commonly climbed, although the centre falls is often bigger. The sometimes formed right-hand is in another gully about 200 m from the centre.

Descent Rappel and downclimb routes.

Waterfowl Gullies

Directly above the road at the northern Waterfowl Lake is a cliffband broken by three gullies. In recent years each gully has become a popular playground with almost a dozen bolted and difficult mixed routes. Refer to *Mixed Climbs*. The views across the lake to Howse Peak and Mount Chephren are unbeatable. Approaches are fairly short with minimal avalanche danger as there are no slopes to load above the gullies, and the sun generally melts the snow in the gullies shortly after it falls.

Approach Park at the Waterfowl Lakes Viewpoint about 1 km north of Waterfowl Lake Campground. The farthest right (south) gully is directly above the Waterfowl Lakes viewpoint and is called *One Ring Circus*. The next major gully left is the *Finishing Hammer Gully*, and the final major cleft north is the *Polish Gully*. Between these gullies is a bewildering array of high-quality smears and smaller gullies.

Finishing Hammer Gully 200 m II, WI 3

Hike up to the start of the ice in 15 minutes and follow the aesthetic gully past occasional steps of WI3 (a great ramble) to where it ends in a steep rockband with some icicles pouring off of it. This gully would be quite fun for those seeking a WI3 outing in a great setting.

Descent Rappel the gully, there is a rap-sling on a tree at the steepest step, look south on a small but good ledge. Be careful to clear the gully (easy to do) before someone else starts the rappel, there are some loose flakes on the rappel. It's also possible to scramble down, just to the south of the ice.

The Polish Question 25 m II, WI 4+

The Polish Question is the free-standing pillar found at the top of the Polish Gully. Like its neighbour *Finishing Hammer Gully*, this gully offers a fun ramble with a pretty pitch to finish. The final curtain is partially visible high above the highway. Hike up to the start of the gully in 30 minutes and follow it past WI2-3 steps to the final pillar. Belay from trees.

Descent Either rappel and downclimb the gully, or traverse 200 m right across the top of the cliff to the top of *Finishing Hammer Gully* and descend that route.

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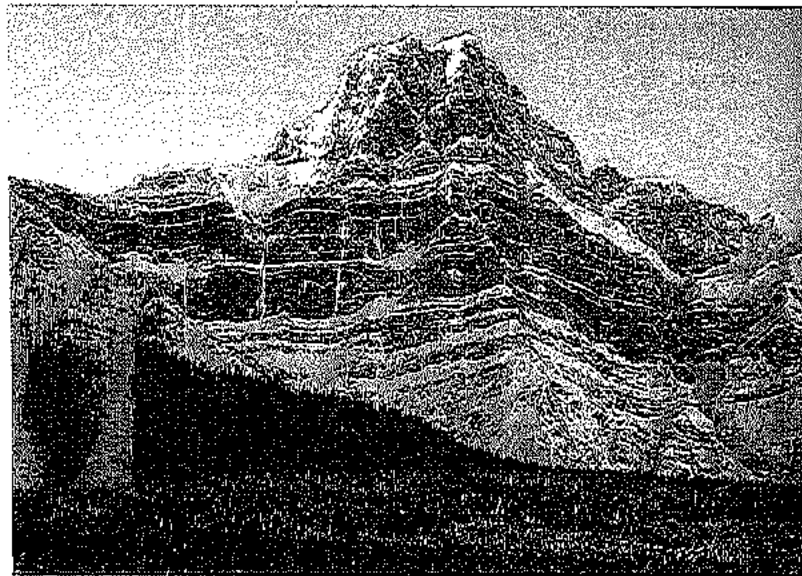
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Howse Peak

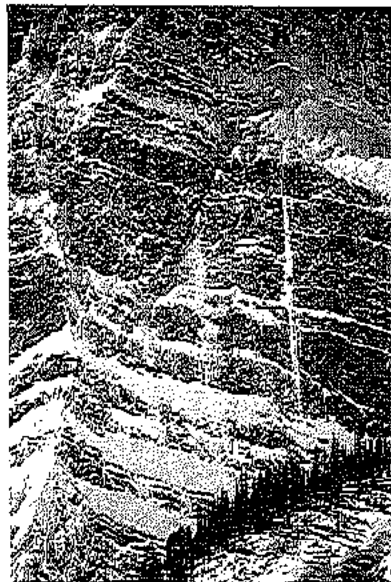
This is perhaps the most watched mountain in the range. In a good year, numerous strings of ice can be seen on the east and north faces of this stunning peak. For years they have been looked at and even attempted occasionally. Poor snow pack and dangerous conditions have deterred most efforts. The winter of 1998-99 saw heretofore unseen snow stability and two routes were completed. The primary water ice objective has been *Life by the Drop* at the base of the large bowl on the left side of the east face. Other smears to the right are significant alpine endeavours, and one has been climbed as a multi-day adventure.

Unclimbed ice on the north face Howse Peak.

Howse Peak.



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Grant Sabin

Life by the Drop 200 m VI, WI 5+ R

Although this route is only 200 m long the approach is 600 m long and may involve some significant climbing. The first ascent team were able to avoid most, if not all difficulties by staying on snow ledges all the way to the base. Most years you won't find that sort of confidence in the snow stability. The following approach description outlines an approach that has been used in an effort to minimize exposure to big snow slopes.

Approach From the end of Chephren Lake head up and left across avalanche slopes to a large, right-facing cleft on the first cliffband and left of the main waterfall above. Climb a WI 4 pitch to a broad snow ledge. Traverse right under an unclimbed WI 6 pitch, past a large snow mushroom (possible bivi) to a lower-angled mixed corner. Climb the corner (5.7) or else do an end run to the right around the cliff to the final snow slope below the route.



Life by the Drop.

The climb itself will almost always look fatter than it is. A broken pillar at the bottom is not uncommon. Owing to constant pounding by spindrift, it seems the ice is more like snow in many places. Rarely will the ice get more than 30 cm thick and the first ascent team put in bolt anchors, which may be hard to find.

Descent Rappel the route.

M-161,000 m VI, WI 7+

This is clearly a full-on alpine climb and was the first ascent of the much-coveted east face of Mount Howse. The route follows the right-hand of two parallel ice formations that occasionally spill from the upper gullies onto the steep cliffbands below. The route consisted of about 15 "pitches" and ended at the top of the striking couloir, some distance below and to the south of the summit.

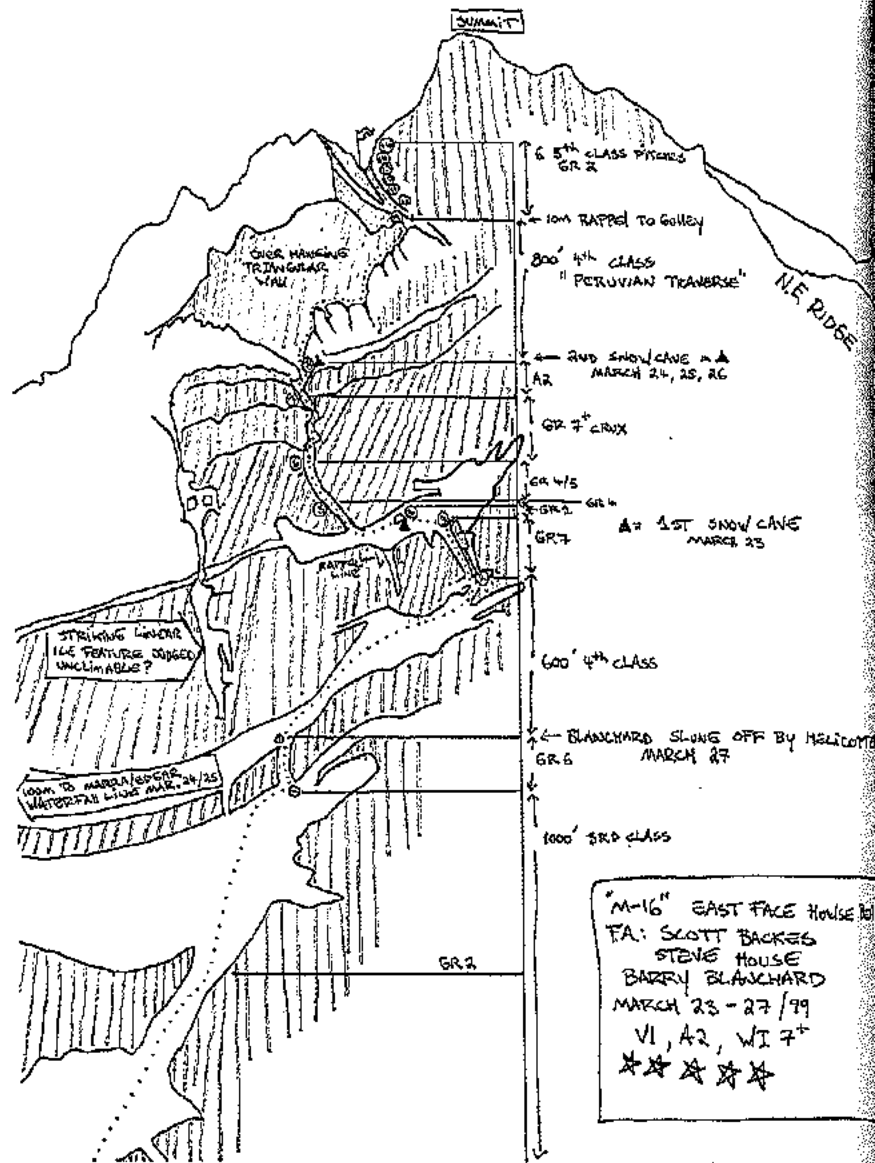
Rack: Full set of cams, full set of stoppers, 10-14 pitons including 6 knifeblades, 10-12 ice screws of all lengths including stubbies, jumars, étriers and "No bolts!"

Approach Park at the lookout at the northwest end of Waterfowl Lakes. Ski across Waterfall Lake through the trees and gain Chephren Lake. From the end of Chephren Lake ski steeply to gain the glaciated basin footing the east face. Serious avalanche hazard.

Day 1: Follow a right slanting snow ramp for 300 m, passing a step of WI 2, to the first WI 6 pitch. Above this pitch traverse right on a prominent horizontal snow band for 200 m to gain a WI 7 pitch. Above this pitch and 60 m up and left in the middle of triangular snowslope the first ascent team made their first snowcave.

Day 2: Traverse left to a WI 4 pitch, a WI 5 pitch and the WI 7+ crux which is gained by traversing right on 5.5 rock

Icefields Parkway 283



Barry Blanchard
East Face of Howse Peak. Life by the Drop
on the left and M-16 on the right.

below an overlapping roof. The crux is a long (65 m) and very serious pitch. Climb a snow gully above past a rock step to the second snow cave on right side of the gully.

Day 3: Ascend the gully to below a massive overhanging black wall and traverse right below this for 250 m of challenging Peruvian type snow climbing. Rappel 10 m into the summit ice gully and follow this for 6 rope lengths of WI 2/3 to summit ridgeline which is likely to be blocked by a large cornice. A traverse beneath it may allow you to more easily reach the summit ridge after which a traverse of the mountain would be recommended.

Descent The first ascent team rappelled the route from the cornice requiring them to lead the "Peruvian Traverse" in reverse as well a third bivi in the second snowcave.

White Pyramid

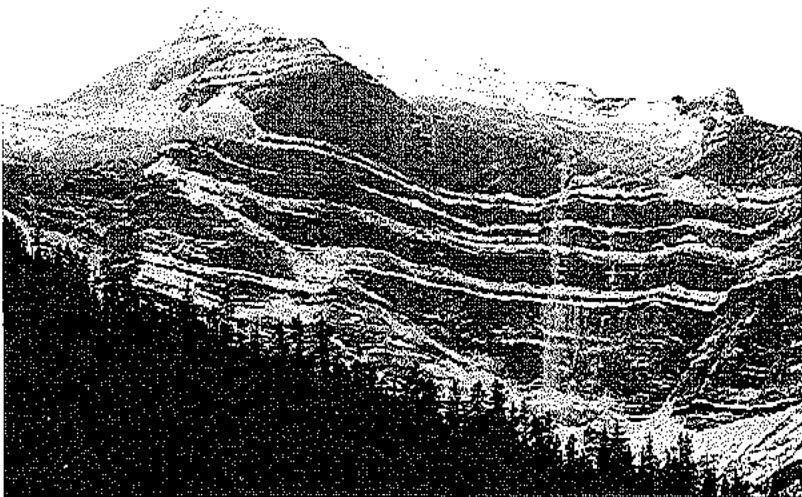
The Reality Bath 600 m VII, WI 6+

Located on the northeast face of White Pyramid (82 N/15 202435), *The Reality Bath* is undoubtedly the most dangerous ice route in the range. Two smears are often visible on this face. *The Reality Bath* is the left-hand line. On the first attempt during a very warm spell the seracs above the route calved twice, narrowly missing the climbers. The ascent, completed on the second attempt, was done in one day, perhaps one of the single most impressive feats in modern Rockies ice climbing. It has not been repeated.

Descent Park at a pull-out (no sign) 5.8 km north of Waterfowl Lakes viewpoint. Cross the Mistaya River and ski south up the drainage and across Epaulette Lake to the face; the route should be obvious.

The route is 11 pitches long. The first ascensionists soloed most of the route, probably the only safe way of actually getting up it. Five increasingly difficult pitches lead to a free-standing pillar followed by fragile "eggshell like" mushrooms with little opportunity for protection. Another three steep pitches lead to a fat snow ledge and a final hard pitch feeding from the seracs. They attempted the seracs directly, but a small degree of sanity returned and they rappelled back to the snow ledge on which they traversed right to escape. A short insecure mixed pitch is required to reach the exit slopes.

Descent Continue on snow up the northeast face above the seracs to the east ridge which leads down to a col. Then follow the valley north, back to Epaulette Lake.



The Reality Bath.

Virgin No More 130 m IV, WI 6 R

This quality route is similar in character to the classic *Curtain Call*. It is the long-looked-at pillar sometimes hanging on the right side of the bowl between Kauffman and Epaulette Peaks. Over the years two independent pillars occasionally form, but usually there is just this one.

Approach Park approximately where you would for *Murchison Falls*. Look for a faint stream drainage on the west side of the parkway. Head down the drainage, cross the river, thrash up beside the creek draining the bowl and eventually into some moraines, and then into small cliffbands. Avoid the cliffs where possible and climb small ice steps where you can not. 3-4 hours to base of route.

On the early season first ascent the first 40 m was thin, hollow, very technical and hard to protect. Belay from fixed rock anchor on right at base of pillar. The next full pitch climbs a pillar to a smooth

shield of WI 5. Beware of hanging icicles above the belayer. A final WI 4 pitch leads to the top.

Descent Rappel the route.

Choksondik 225 m VI, WI 5

This route is located on the headwall of Epaulette Mtn, to the left of *Virgin No More*.

Approach Access the climb from the Epaulette/Kauffman Peak col and traverse left on the uppermost snow bench through extreme avalanche terrain. There is a nice big cave at the bottom that was used as a bivy.

The climb consists of two main curtains separated by a dangerous avalanche bowl. The climbing is said to be "very engaging on very thin, rotten and air filled ice."

Descent Rappel the route.

Mount Murchison

North of Waterfowl Lakes is a multifaceted peak with three large cirques, each containing quality ice. All routes but two are located in one of the cirques that line the peak on the northeast side of the road. Most of the big routes are easily visible and identifiable from the road. Only the last pitch of *Murchison Falls* and *Virtual Reality* can be seen through the trees. The areas around *Transparent Fool* and *Murchison Falls* have been seeing an explosion of routes on smaller pillars and smears that may not form regularly thus making it confusing to figure out exactly what is what. The routes are described as you travel north from Bow Summit on the Icefields Parkway. See map page 288.

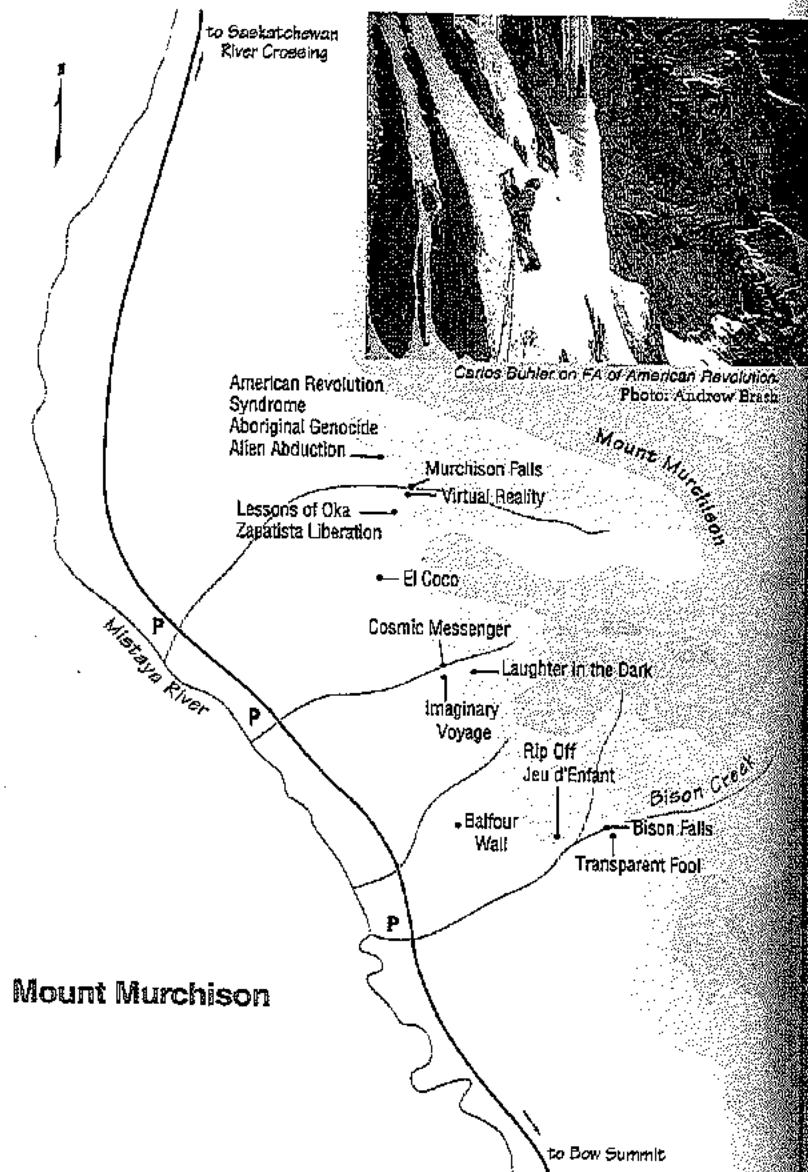
Transparent Fool 45 m IV, WI 5

This popular, spectacular route forms as a clear straw leaving running water visible underneath the ice. It is the most obvious route on the steep headwall just right of a large gully. Although the route itself is safe from avalanche, slopes on both sides of the approach canyon, and the large sun-baked gully feeding into it, make the approach particularly dangerous during times of high hazard.

Approach Park at the Bison Creek streambed (no sign) 7.2 km north of Waterfowl Lake Campground and 11.7 km south of the David Thompson Highway. Walk back (south) along the road and hike up the creek to where it turns into a tighter canyon. Head up the ridge to the left staying on high ground above the canyon. Follow this as high as possible and find a safe line down the slope into the creek. Continue up the creek and turn right to the base of *Bison Falls* and *The Fool*. 1.5-2 hours.

Transparent Fool is the obvious pillar on the right. Bison Falls on the left.





Mount Murchison

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A 15 m curtain leads to the pillar. Continue up the vertical and often featureless pillar for 30 m to the top. Beware of falling icicles on either side of the main pillar.

Descent Rappel the route.

Bison Falls 80 m III, WI 3

Approach A wide curtain starts 30 m to the left and below *Transparent Fool*. There are bolted mixed routes on either side of the main flow. See *Mixed Climbs*.

Start well below *Transparent Fool* and climb 25 m of 80-90° ice to a tree belay. Some snow is followed by 18 metres of vertical ice that leads to easier ground.

Descent Rappel the route or walk off.

Rip Off 30 m IV, WI 4 R

Approach Just left of *The Transparent Fool/Bison Falls* complex is a large avalanche chute. And left again is a smaller gully that is home to *Rip Off*.

Climb the gully with little WI 2 steps and some rocky sections, but mostly snow plodding for 30 minutes to a rock wall at the very top of the gully. *Rip Off* climbs thin ice over the wall.

Descent Rappel the route.

Jeu d'Enfant 120 m V, WI 6

The exact nature of the route is unknown, but obscure pictures in a European climbing magazine show several overhangs of unformed icicles. The main protagonist on the first ascent, Serge Angelluci is known to be one of the best, and one of the more reclusive, climbers in Canada. Undoubtedly, this is an extreme modern route. *Jeu d'Enfant* is thought to be the wild-looking icicle that can sometimes be seen on

the left side of the gully near *Rip Off*. There are also two short mixed routes of unknown character on the wall just right of the start of this gully.

The Balfour Wall 20 m II, WI 2-4 to M7

A variety of steep curtains and pillars can be seen through the trees on the lowest cliff 500 m down and left of *Bison Creek Falls*. Hike up through the trees in about 30 minutes with no avalanche hazard. This is a nice place for top roping and working technique as an alternative to more crowded areas. The amount and quality of ice are better later in the season. There are also at least two bolted mixed routes. See *Mixed Climbs*.

Cosmic Messenger 60 m III, WI 5

Spectacular views of Kauffman Peak are the main attraction for this route in the next major cirque north of *Bison Creek*. The route is easily visible from the road.

Approach Park in an unsigned pull-out 9.3 km north of Waterfowl Lake Campground. The route is best early in the year before deep snow increases avalanche hazard and lengthens the approach. 1.5 hours in good conditions.

Climb the first pitch 40 m up a steep pillar to a hanging belay. This is followed by an easier curtain to a pin belay on the right.

Descent Rappel the route.

Imaginary Voyage 55 m III, WI 3

This shallow gully 20 m right of *Cosmic Messenger* is prone to spindrift, thus creating an interesting time up less than perfect ice.

Descent Rappel and downclimb.

Icefields Parkway 289

Laughter in the Dark 45 m IV, WI 4

Climb *Imaginary Voyage* and continue upwards for 1.5 hours to several smears of ice. *Laughter* takes the right most of these on a one pitch shield of ice.

Descent Rappel the route.

El Coco 45 m III, WI 4

Previously mistaken for *Syndrome*, it is located on the flat rock buttress between *Cosmic Messenger* and *Murchison Falls*. It is a rarely formed route that faces the road.

Approach Park as for *Cosmic Messenger* and hike up through steep trees to the base in about an hour.

A worthwhile route that sports interesting, technical climbing on occasionally thinner ice.

Descent A single bolt belay/rappel on top.

American Revolution 50 m III, WI 5+

Approach From the base of *Murchison Falls* hike down and around to the left for

200 m. There are several pieces of ice that appear along the bottom of the cliff.

American Revolution has a wide curtain at the top and a wide base. Usually it's only a thin 10 m pillar on the left connecting the two.

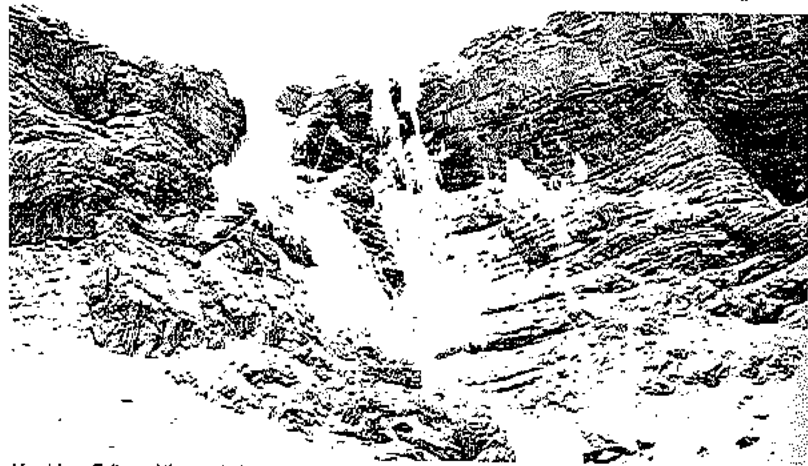
Descent Rappel the route.

Syndrome 100 m III, WI 6

This is a free-standing column about 150 m left of *American Revolution*. It is unclear if this was fully formed on the first ascent. The length might be suspect as well. Either way, expect a very hard route. This has potential to be a worthwhile climb and deserves a look by a motivated party.

Aboriginal Genocide 90 m III, 5

Another "obvious" narrow pillar reported somewhere left of *Murchison Falls*. It might be a route that sometimes appears in the cliffs just left of *Murchison* or it may be in the vicinity of *Syndrome* or in fact may be that route, but the descriptions don't quite match up. Start



Murchison Falls and the rarely formed *Virtual Reality* to the right.

290 Icefields Parkway

on thin ice for 12 m to the base of a free-standing pillar. Pump up the pillar which eases off after 10 m. Walk for 30 m to a second 25 m WI 3 pitch that leads to the top.

Alien Abduction 30 m III, WI 5

This route is reported to be "up and left" of *Aboriginal Genocide* and visible from the road. It is a short pitch the ends below a huge roof.

Murchison Falls 180 m III, WI 4+

This classic waterfall is located in the most northerly cirque just before the road starts to descend to the Saskatchewan River Crossing. It has a considerably longer season than most routes in the area.

Parking Park where the obvious drainage crosses the road 10.3 km north of Waterfowl Lake Campground and 8.6 km south of the Saskatchewan River Crossing. Only the top of the route is visible from the road a few hundred metres north of the parking. Beware, this approach can be very easy or very hard depending on snow conditions and route finding; snowshoes may help. Because of dead fall skies are not recommended.

Approach Start by hiking directly up the creek bed. When the creek steepens into short ice steps, move left (north) onto high ground above the creek. Continue up to the base of the route. A moonscaped hanging valley is found above the route, so there is little avalanche hazard (possible cornice); however, the open slope below the route can be dangerous.

Solo up easy ice and snow to the base of the main falls. Steep steps interspersed with easier terrain lead to the final crux pillar, a long lead on just off-

vertical ice. An easy 20 m step leads to the top.

From the base of the main falls it is possible to climb a narrow gully to the left. This variation called *But, My Daddy's a Psycho!* (WI 5+) climbs one steep and sometimes bad ice pitch. Above, you traverse back right to the final crux pitch of *Murchison*.

Descent Rappel the route. Below the final 20 m step is a fixed rappel anchor out to the right. Be careful of stuck ropes here. Continue descent on ice.

Virtual Reality 160 m IV, WI 6

A late bloomer, sometimes taking until mid-March to form completely, *Virtual Reality* is an awesome route. Keep an eye out for this one. If formed, it is not one to miss. There are some very interesting mixed corners on the upper half between



Kim Csizmazia alone on Murchison Falls.
Photo: Brad Wroblecki

Icefields Parkway 291



Carlos Buhler on Maori Wedding.

Mark Price

Icefields Parkway North

where the big pillars form and *Murchison Falls*.

Climb up easy ice and snow to the base of *Murchison Falls*. Head out right up another 30 m of snow to the base of the falls. There may be any number of lines presenting themselves; pick the driest and least threatened by falling icicles. Most times, climb two or three pitches up a series of three free-standing icicles with technical hooking and mushroom sections.

Descent Rappel the route. Owing to the large number of free-hanging icicles it is not advisable to rappel this route.

Lessons of Oka 70 m III, 5.7, WI 4

This is the first of two good routes found about 200 m right of *Murchison Falls*.

Approach Look for a wide, teardrop shaped curtain pouring from the rock

wall. A few years ago, a party was nearly killed at the base of *Murchison* when a house-sized rockfall came from the large rotten overhangs way above these routes.

This routes starts in left-facing corner and climbs 10 m of mixed ground to another 10 m of 5.7 rock leading to more mixed climbing. The final 35 m pitch climbs the left side of the ice curtain.

Descent Rappel the route.

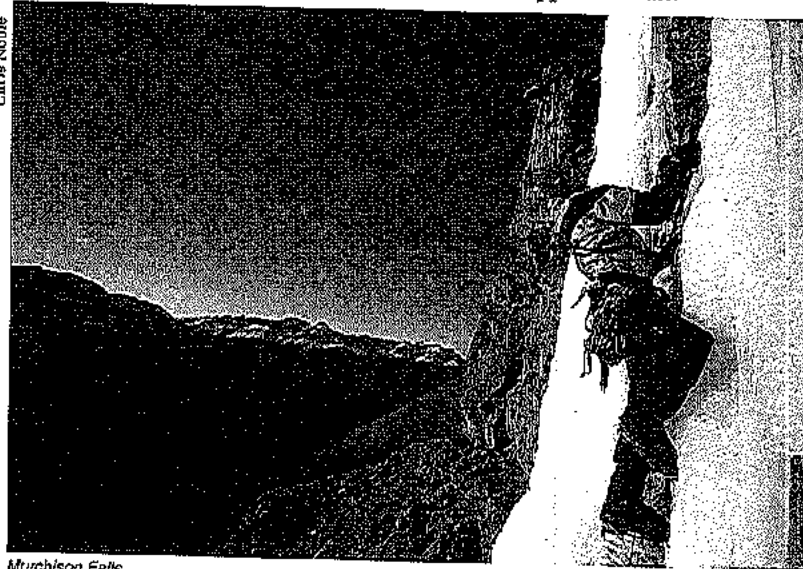
Zapatista Liberation 90 m III, WI 5

Approach Just right of *Lessons of Oka*, this route climbs up to the right side of the teardrop curtain.

Pitch one climbs steep mixed ground over several overlaps for 15 m to a small ledge. Continue up a short pillar that leads to fatter, easier ice on the right side of the teardrop. The route ends in the same place as *Lessons of Oka*.

Descent Rappel the route.

Chris Noble



Murchison Falls.

Howse River

The Howse River is a wide, meandering river flowing east from the Continental Divide at Howse Pass (the Blaeberry River drains Howse Pass to the west). Northwest of Howse River are the Lyell Icefield and Mount Forbes, the highest peak in Banff Park at 3,612 m. Howse River joins the North Saskatchewan and the Mistaya Rivers near the Saskatchewan River Crossing. So far, only one route has been explored in this massive drainage system. There is a lot of unclimbed ice in the area, but the approach seems to mitigate further activity.

To Run and Not to Die 80 m IV, WI 3

This is the first of many potential routes in the Glacier Lake region. The approach to Glacier Lake is almost 12 km one way, requiring the better part of a day.

Approach Park 3 km south of the Saskatchewan River at the Mistaya Canyon trailhead. This trail is rarely skied, but is an improved access over the normal summer trail (starts near The Crossing Resort) that leads to Glacier Lake. Refer to *Ski Trails in the Canadian Rockies*, for exact details. At Glacier Lake, ski across to its west end to where the climb is visible up a 300 m avalanche-prone slope on the north side of the lake (82 N/15 075525).

Once you survive the horrible bushwhack from the lake to the base of the route, climb 40 m of 70-80° ice to a good ledge. Continue up lower-angled ice for 30 m to a rock pinnacle on the right. Another 10 m with some mixed climbing leads to the top and a tree belay.

Descent Rappel the route.

Mount Wilson

Towering 1,800 metres above the highway, the south face of Mount Wilson presents a stunning sight as you approach the Saskatchewan River Crossing from the south. Fed by a large icecap, it contains over two dozen ice and mixed routes presenting one of the greatest concentrations of easily accessible, hard waterfall and mixed climbing anywhere in the world.

Because of the sheer size and multitude of gullies, finding your designated route can be trying at best. In bad snow conditions, snowshoes offer a great advantage on the somewhat steep and timbered approaches. Skis are not usually needed or recommended because of deadfall. Most obvious lines have been opened, but occasionally the right conditions prevail to form up another freestanding classic. And most recently, motivated climbers have been making the efforts to tackle the numerous perpetually unformed hanging daggers that pepper virtually every gully. See *Mixed Climbs*. Most of the routes are found along the 12.3 km stretch between Rampart Creek Hostel and Saskatchewan River Crossing. The rest are situated in a small area just north of Rampart Creek. All highway distances given here are measured from the junction of the Icefields Parkway and the David Thompson Highway (DTH) as you travel north toward the hostel. See map page 296.

Facilities

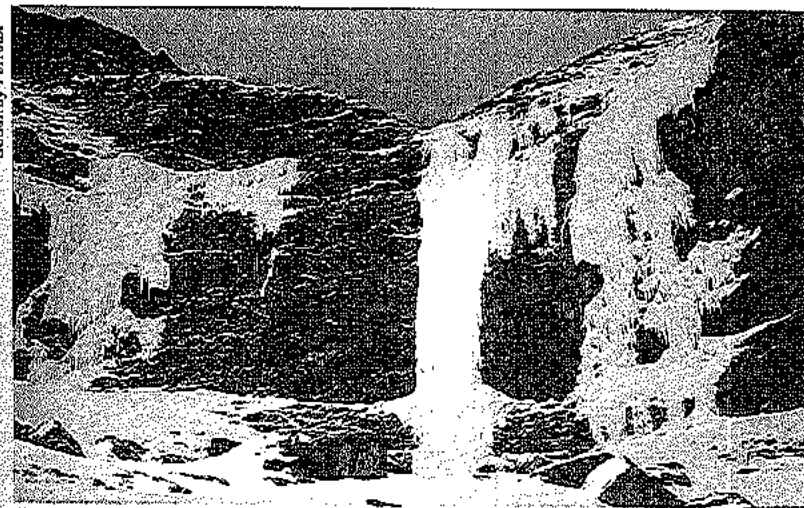
Besides the climbing, perhaps the best feature about Mount Wilson is the nearby Rampart Creek Hostel offering a great base camp to dry out, drink stout beer and inquire about local conditions.

An updated logbook of routes in the area is usually kept with the caretaker.

The Crossing Resort, just north of the junction with the David Thompson Highway, is closed from mid-November to early March. Early and late season climbers may find lodging, gas, a cafeteria and pub (with a big screen TV for the Stanley Cup play-offs). The Crossing Resort usually has cheap early season rates making it a comfortable and worthwhile destination for some long-day, late-season ice or alpine climbing on Mount Murchison, Mount Wilson, the Weeping Wall, Columbia Icefields or the David Thompson Highway. For reservations call 1-800-387-6103.

Emergency

Call the Lake Louise Warden Office. A pay phone is located at the warden station on the east side of the road just south of the Saskatchewan River Bridge. A warden may be on duty, but the station has been closed recently. See page 400.



Tabernac Bowl. From left to right: Mooch Lake Memorial, N'ice Baby, Whoa Whoa Capitaine, Les Misérables.

Maps

82 N/15 Mistaya Lake
83 C/2 Cline River

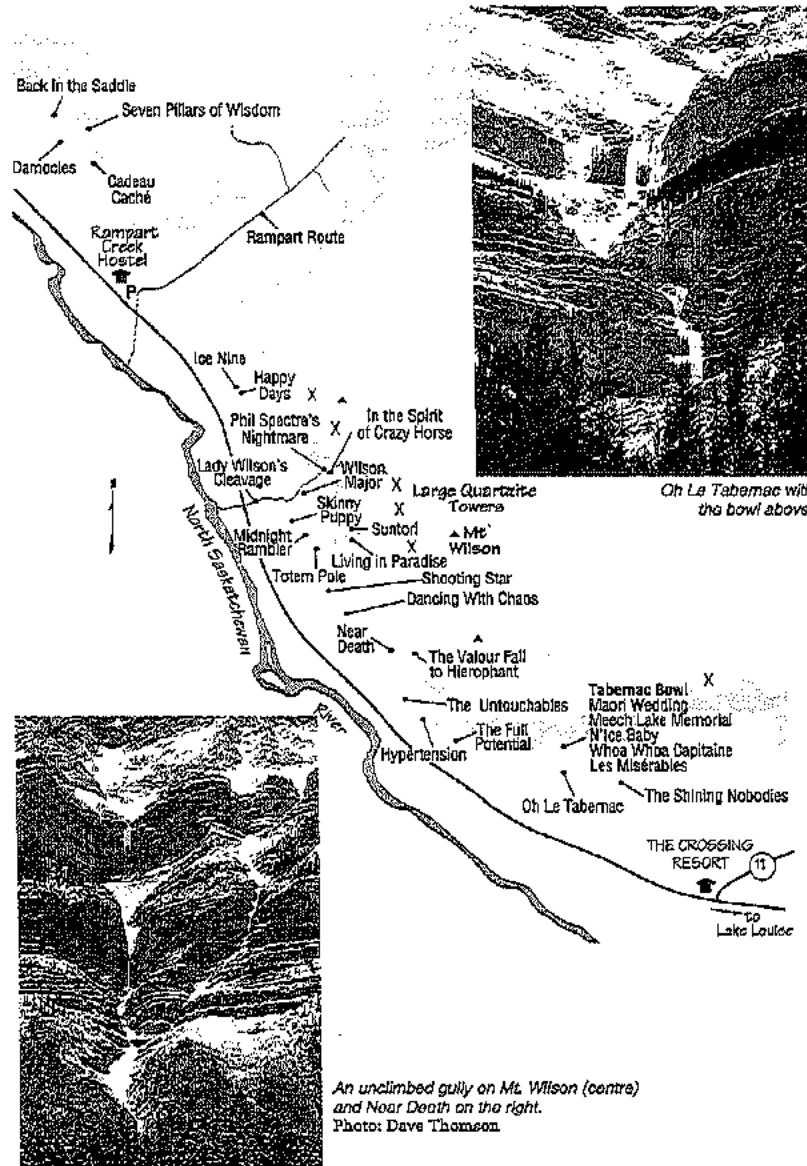
The Shining Nobodies 40 m III, WI 3

As you descend the hill from the south toward the Saskatchewan River Crossing, *The Shining Nobodies* is visible in the gully directly above The Crossing Resort. It is a short sunny climb located one drainage right of *Oh Le Tabernac*. There is also a newer mixed climb on the wall well left of this route. See *Mixed Climbs*.

Approach If there is a good trail to *Oh Le Tabernac*, it is best to follow it to the base of the cliff and traverse right to the climb; otherwise, you can pick your way more directly (82 N/15 163593).

Climb one pitch of good ice underneath a large avalanche path.

Descent Rappel the route.



An unclimbed gully on Mt. Wilson (centra) and Noar Death on the right. Photo: Dave Thomson.

Oh Le Tabernac 55 m III, WI 5+

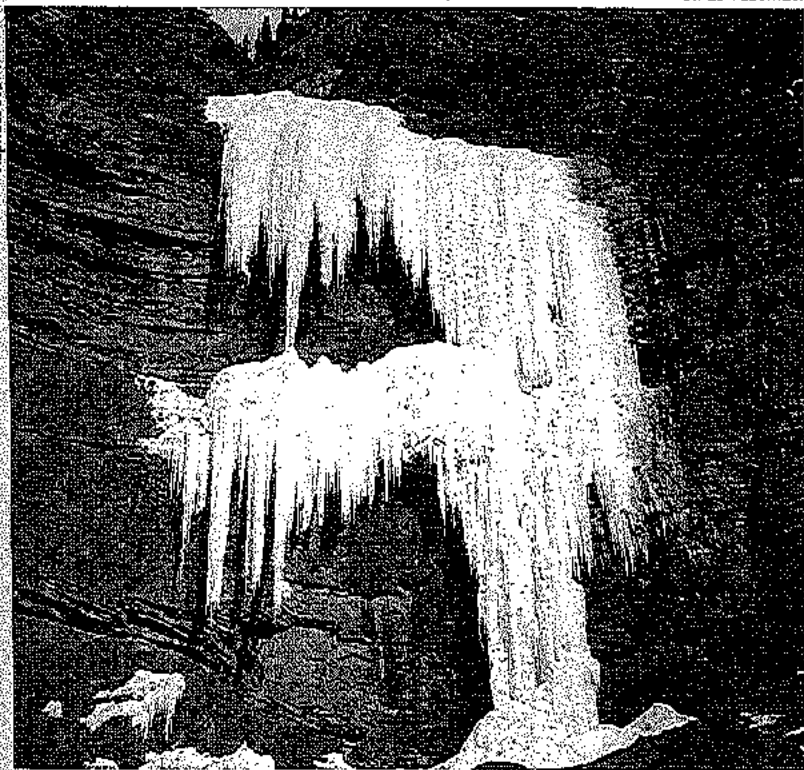
Known for years as "Wilson Falls" the present name, a French expletive, aptly describes your thoughts when ascending this testpiece. It is the first major route found 2.1 km past the David Thompson Highway. It is the very steep, sunny waterfall below a huge bowl. Higher in the bowl are four other quality lines.

Approach Park along the highway 2.5 km north of the Saskatchewan River Crossing. Hike or ski through open forests and then directly up the drainage, picking your way through some gnarly alders (82 N/15 156595). 1 hour.

The climbing is usually best (and driest) on the right side of the falls. A small ledge with a station is found halfway up. However, the pillar can be done in a full 50 m, creating a much more challenging ascent. A fixed belay is found in the rocks on the right side.

Descent If continuing to the upper climbs, traverse left and up small steps to the top. If not, rappel the route.

Oh Le Tabernac.



Tabernac Bowl

In the spectacular bowl above *Oh Le Tabernac*, up to five separate climbs can be found (82 N/15 155600). From left to right they are *Maori Wedding* (far left in a deep gully), *Meech Lake Memorial*, *N'ice Baby*, *Whoa Whoa Capitaine* and *Les Misérables*. The quality of climbing here is worth the effort, but beware of severe avalanche potential in this sun-baked bowl and also from above. The sun and reflective heat also have quite an effect on the ice. It can go from great plastic to melted garbage in no time. During an early ascent of *Whoa Whoa Capitaine* a climber had his tools rip through the slush. His hands came out of the leashes and, after falling 8 m, his tool caught in the ice with an umbilical cord saving a further plummet. After 20 minutes of hyperventilating and throwing up, he went on to finish the lead!

Approach To reach them you must either climb *Oh Le Tabernac*, then pound for 60-75 minutes to the base of the routes. Alternatively, avoid *Oh Le Tabernac* by following the lower cliffband left from the base and then scrambling up small gullies to a narrow ledge traversed right into the main drainage. This latter approach is exposed and requires some route finding, taking about 2.5 hours to reach the routes.

Descent All routes are descended by rappel.

Maori Wedding 35 m IV, WI 5

Approach Located at the far left and upper end of the bowl.

This short but varied route is split in half by two pillars. The quantity and quality of the ice varies greatly from year

to year. The second section is harder offering steep, sometimes hollow, often plastic ice.

Meech Lake Memorial 60 m IV, WI 4+

Approach A wide flow of good sunny ice at the back of the bowl that doesn't always form.

Meech Lake Memorial is the easiest route offering moderate to steep climbing on a number of different lines. Great views of the nasties to the right!

N'ice Baby 110 m IV, WI 5

Approach This rarely formed route 50 m right of *Meech Lake Memorial* is an excellent route offering a good compromise of excellent ice with difficult, but not unrelenting steepness.

30 m of low-angle ice to the base of the pillar. Climb 80-90° ice for a full rope length to where the climb eases off toward the top.

Whoa Whoa Capitaine 80 m IV, WI 6

Approach Two long, vertical, narrow and scary-looking columns are located on the far right side of the bowl, 20 m right of *N'ice Baby*. *Whoa Whoa Capitaine* takes the left-hand pillar and is probably the most commonly formed route in the upper bowl.

Climb a short shield of lower-angled thin ice. The next 60 m finds dead vertical and technical, but usually good ice. Either use a semi-hanging belay atop the initial shield and then do all of the hard climbing in one pitch, or start at the bottom and belay on ledges or caves about halfway up the waterfall.



Bill Delander
Bill Trill on an early ascent of *Whoa Whoa Capitaine*.

Les Misérables 80 m IV, WI 6+

Approach This testpiece is the right-hand of two narrow pillars. Even though only a few metres from *Whoa Whoa Capitaine*, this route is quite different in character and considerably harder. Unfortunately, it doesn't often form and when it does, is usually cracked or broken.

Climbed in two pitches, *Les Mis* offers sustained climbing throughout on extremely technical and overhanging ice. Unlike *Whoa Whoa Capitaine*, you can't sneak the route with one hard pitch, it's gnarly to the bitter end.

The Full Potential 50 m III, WI 4+

The Full Potential is two gullies north (left) of *Oh Le Tabernac*. It can be identified by a spectacular hanging icicle above the route. This route rarely forms, but the hanging icicle seems to appear regularly.

Approach Park 4.4 km from the David Thompson Highway. Approach on the right side of the gully until above some small cliffbands. Then drop into the drainage proper (82 N/15 142597). 1 hour.

This route is varied, sporting a free-standing pencil, 'Bourgeau-like' thin detached plate over rock and vertical plastic.

Descent Rappel the route.

Hypertension 280 m IV, WI 5+

Hypertension, located in a large gully north of *The Full Potential*, is a very aesthetic and excellent climb. However, the bottom free-standing pillar has only been known to form once. The upper pitches become visible at 4.7 km. An impressive 100 m pillar and several hanging daggers can at times be seen on the wide wall above the main drainage.

Approach Park 6 km from the Saskatchewan River Crossing where the bottom pillar is visible. Hike up through the trees to the right until it is easy to drop into the gully. Continue past a small ice step to the base (82 N/15 137601). 1.5 hours.

After climbing a 2 m wide pencil and thin ice for 50 m continue up snow and easy ice to a cave between two free-standing pillars. Climb a long vertical pitch above on good ice. Continue up the gully on more moderate ice for two pitches.

Descent Rappel the route.



Joe Josephson

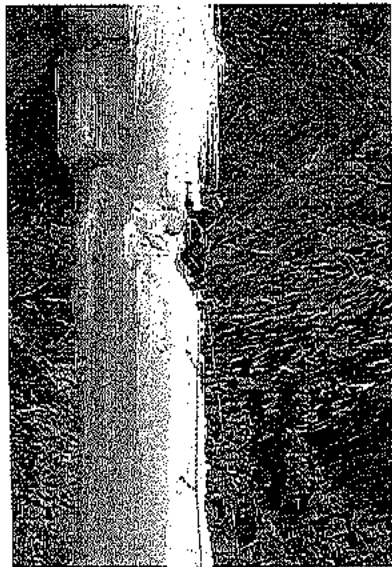
The rarely formed Hypertension.

The Untouchables

These are the three separate drips facing the road that sometimes hang down the large cliff left of the *Hypertension* gully (82 N/15 135605). They have never come close to reaching the ground and seem to come and go several times a season depending on the amount of sun and temperature. They have been seen to come about half way down the cliff and might someday provide challenging mixed climbs. The line on the far left is characterized by large overhangs at half height.

Near Death 100 m IV, WI 5

Left of *The Untouchables* wall is a deep gully that appears to hold ice. Far above is at least one hanging dagger. Up and right of the this gully is a shallower, yet broad and obvious gully holding a route that is believed to be *Near Death*.



Bill Peander

Bill Troll on the first ascent of *Near Death*.

Approach Walk up the first drainage north of the *Untouchables*. Continue into the narrow avalanche gully and take the right fork when it splits. Traverse under a small rock for 150 m to a 15 m 5.6 corner. Traverse back and continue up 20 m of WI 2 to the base of a free-standing pillar.

Climb two 40 m pitches with the top being a grade harder.

Descent Rappel the route.

Valour Falls to the Hierophant 70 m VI, WI 6+

This route is found some 1,100 m above the highway and should be considered a recommended alpine route in an spectacular setting.

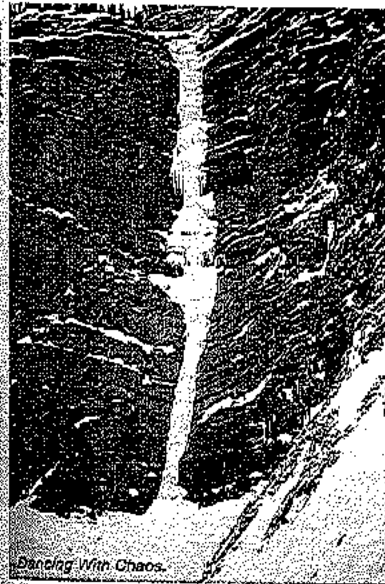
Approach The first ascent team climbed *Near Death* and continued up the mountain. It is unclear if the deeper gully just left of *Near Death* would allow access to this route.

From the top of *Near Death* start walking for an hour to a short WI 3 pitch that leads to another hour long snow slope. Take the first couloir for 160 m to a very gothic, hourglass feature of ice pinched between two rock buttresses. The first ascent team continued up the right-hand couloir for another 150 m on WI 2, 5.6 hoping to find more ice.

Descent Rappel and downclimb route.

Dancing With Chaos 105 m IV, WI 6

This rarely formed climb is barely visible through the trees on the bottom rockband. The route is about half way along a long rockband stretching from a deep gully toward the gully of *Shooting*



Joe Josephson

Dancing With Chaos.

Star. It usually has a huge broken icicle on the rock cliff above.

Approach Park 6.8 km from the David Thompson Highway. Ski or snowshoe for 2.5 hours up a timbered ridge to the right of the route then traverse left across rock slabs to the base (83 C/2 128616).

The first pitch is on poor ice up a steepening slab to a sheltered cave. The next 55 m pitch offers consistently vertical to overhanging technical climbing on "funky ice." With better ice it would be a more reasonable day out.

Descent Rappel the route.

Shooting Star 350 m V, WI 6

Once thought to be the *Totem Pole* farther left, *Shooting Star* has been the scene of many "first ascents". An impressive climb characterized by two narrow pillars each cutting 100 m rockbands and topped with a large chockstone. The upper part forms regularly and is obvious from the road. The lower part does not form every year and is difficult to evaluate from the road. The route is 150 m left of *Dancing with Chaos* and fed from the huge gully coming off the upper face of the peak just right of the four obvious white quartzite towers looming high above.

Approach Either follow the approach for *Dancing with Chaos* and then traverse over to the route, or park 7 km from the David Thompson Highway and ascend avalanche-prone slopes directly to the base (83 C/15 126620).

The first crux pitch is on a long vertical wall of poor ice. The next 50 m is on better ice 75-90°. Gain 150 m of snow to a free-standing pillar. Climb the pillar and ice gully to a belay on the left. Finish above on 85° ice to an extraordinary exit under the chockstone.



Shooting Star.

Photo: Philippe Pibarot

Descent Rappel the route or walk left through woods 250 m to a small gully where a short rappel can be made to the snow slopes below the upper tier. Rappel the lower tier in two rappels with a bolt set for the last rappel.

Totem Pole 200 m IV, WI 5

It is unknown if this route forms regularly because it is practically hidden from the road. If you don't blink you should be able to catch a glimpse of an indistinct pencil of ice seeping from the rock in the gully up and left of *Midnight Rambler*. It has only been climbed a handful of times, but should become a popular route.

Approach Left of *Shooting Star* the cliff face forms a broad buttress and to the left of that are two narrow parallel gullies about 100 m apart. The right-hand gully

is *Totem Pole* (83 C/15 123624). Park 8 km past the David Thompson Highway and bushwhack through trees and cut into the drainage descending from the two gullies. 1 hour.

The first pitch can be rambly thick ice or in thin conditions a 10 m verglass slab ending with 10 m of steep, thin, hollow ice. A belay can be at the base of the next ice or off trees. Climb a short step and continue up a long snow slope to the virtually hidden *totem*.

What isn't obvious from the road is that the pillar spills from a small Scottish style gully. A very narrow free-standing pillar usually sports lacy, chandelier ice for 25 m where it chokes through the mouth of the gully. It is possible to stem between the rock wall and the pillar for about 10 m before the ice attaches to the rock. Above the pillar, the route winds 40 m through an extremely narrow canyon, only 1.5 m at its widest. The route ends with another pitch of stepped WI 3 ending at a large snow bowl.

Descent Rappel off trees on the left, then off the ice. Walk down the middle snow slope and rappel from trees on the left to finish.

Midnight Rambler 240 m III, WI 3

This is a good, if not overlooked, moderate route.

Approach Left of *Shooting Star* is a prominent rock buttress and to the left of that are two narrow parallel gullies about 100 m apart. The left-hand gully is *Midnight Rambler* (83 C/15 122625). The climb is visible near the bottom of the cliffband as a narrow flow of good-looking ice about 800 m south (right) of the obvious cleft containing *Lady Wilson's Cleavage*. Park 8 km past the David Thompson Highway and bushwhack through trees and cut into

the drainage descending from the two gullies. 1 hour. The large icicle looming above is home to *Stairway to Heaven* (M 7+). See *Mixed Climbs*.

Climb a 50 m pitch of 80° to a snow gully and up a short vertical pillar followed by 50 m of easy snow and ice. There is a 2 bolt anchor on the right at the top of the longest fall.

Descent Downclimb and rappel route.

In the winter of 1994-95, two amazing lines formed high on Mount Wilson just below the obvious white towers. In the early '80s *Totem Pole* was climbed as an attempt on one of these lines. From the road the main ice sections appear to be many hundreds of metres long, but are only 160-200 m. The right-hand line, *Living in Paradise*, starts in a large bowl-like gully. It continues up in three winding tiers ending at a large avalanche-prone slope below the white towers. The left-hand route, *Suntorzi* ascends a rectilinear gully that ends near the left side of the great white towers. This line was attempted the same year *Living in Paradise* was completed, but the party retreated when faced with an attenuated free-hanging icicle on the first pitch. It was later climbed as a multi-day alpine route to the top of the peak where they summited three of the four big quartzite towers. On the first ascent of each, they were approached differently and each is described below although either approach works for both. The ultimate route would be to combine *Totem Pole*, *Stairway to Heaven* (95 m M7+, WI 5) and *Suntorzi*.

Living in Paradise.
Photo: Joe Josephson

Living in Paradise 160 m VI, WI 6+

The first ascent team climbed in April, after most of the bad snow pack already avalanched and also wisely waited for a cloudy day to minimize sun effect on the remaining snow conditions.

Approach The first ascent saw so much avalanche debris covering *Lady Wilson's Cleavage* they were able to ski directly up the drainage. Once above the cliffband, they skied south through the forest crossing two avalanche gullies before turning into the much larger one that contains the climb. 3.5 hours in good conditions, more than 5 hours in bad.

Living in Paradise is the right-hand line. The initial pillar totals 80 m and was first climbed in three pitches. Although not as long as it looks from the road, it is very technical and sustained with several crux bulges (WI 6). Another 30 m of WI 3 leads into the snow gully above. The



second drip above is 35 m of nice solid WI 4. Small steps of ice continue above to more snow and the final tier. If the bottom half of the direct pillar is snapped off (as on the first ascent) start on a 20 m pillar to the left (WI 5+) that can be dangerously detached and precarious near the top. A long traverse with rock gear would be possible at this point. Not having rock gear, the first ascent team lowered down 9 m to a much shorter traverse with excellent holds (5.7) and the occasional blob of ice for screws. A belay was made on the left side of the pillar after about 35 m of climbing (not including the rappel). Another 15 m of steep ice leads to the top. The rappel straight down the third tier was 30 m. Total time from the car was about 8.5 hours.

Descent Rappel the route.

Suntori 1,900 m VI, M6 A2 WI 6

Approach Park 8 km past the David Thompson Highway and bushwack through trees and cut into the drainage descending from two gullies. Before the start of *Totem Pole* move right up a snow gully. At the top is a short 5.6 wall with a tree belay. Continue up an avalanche prone snow gully moving left until you're able to climb up on snow and rock on easy ground. The first ascent team bivied at the last stand of trees below the two parallel routes of *Living in Paradise* and *Suntori*. Move up and traverse left to the start of WI 2 ice that leads 40 m to the harder climbing.

Start on WI 4 and onto M6 ground with good protection. Traverse left on a broken ledge into a corner A2 then swing over to a hanging WI 4 dagger. Snow leads to the next tier. Run-out WI 4 on good ice leads to another snow gully. An awesome WI 6 corner with an M5 start leads to more snow and a WI 5+ pitch on



The bottom pitches of Suntori.

good ice. Two easier pitches with variable ice lead to a snow bowl below the grand quartzite towers and another bivi. The first ascent team climbed between the two northern most towers for 160 m on 5.6 WI 3 to the top.

Descent Walk down the back side staying beside the glacier and then down *Lady Wilson's Cleavage*.

Skinny Puppy 50 m II, WI 5

Skinny Puppy is a rarely formed pillar which spills over a short cliff just 200 m right of *Lady Wilson's Cleavage* (83 C/15 119629).

Approach Walk through generally open avalanche terrain to the base.

The climbing is usually up a technical and difficult tube. However, it may fill out into a wider curtain.

Descent Rappel the route.

Lady Wilson's Cleavage 300 m III, WI 3

This is the biggest, most obvious cleft. Ice usually extends to the road, and barring deep snow you can put your crampons on at the car. The downside is the extreme terrain trap. Be observant of conditions.

Approach Park where the drainage crosses the road at 8.9 km from the David Thompson Highway. 200 m from the road is the first substantial step of ice.

Continue up countless steps with interesting climbing. 250 m up, the gully necks down. A steeper 30 m crux pitch is found deep within the cleft and deposits you below *Wilson Major* where the cleavage widens.

Descent Rappel and downclimb route. It is possible to get off by descending much of the route through steep bush to the right.

Lady Wilson's Right Tit 60 m III, WI 4

Approach In the deep cleft near the top of *Lady Wilson's Cleavage*, ice often forms on both sides. This route is on the right side. It is unknown if it forms regularly. Another steep discontinuous pillar is often seen facing the road on the left side.

Climb a 30 m WI 3 pitch to the base of a pillar. Climb about 10 m of vertical ice easing off to 85°.

Descent Rappel the route.

Wilson Major 50 m III, WI 3-6

This route is visible from the road as the wide curtain of blue ice just above *Lady Wilson's Cleavage*. The climb is up to 150 m wide offering lines with a wide variety of difficulty (83 C/15 121634). 1 hour from the car including a climb of *Lady Wilson's Cleavage*.

The ice ranges from excellent blue plastic to wild mushrooms on the steeper sections.

Descent Rappel the route. Some trees may present themselves for anchors; otherwise, use the ice.

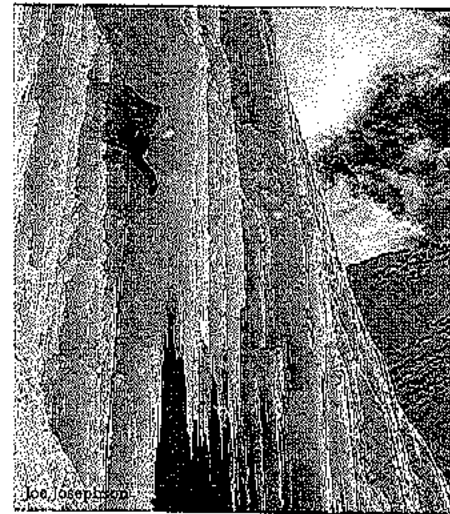
Phil Spectre's Nightmare 80 m V, WI 6

Approach Climb *Lady Wilson's Cleavage* and continue up the gully past *Wilson Major* (1 hour) to a broad curtain of icicles 1,000 m above the road (83 C/15 123636). This route takes the left-hand pillar.

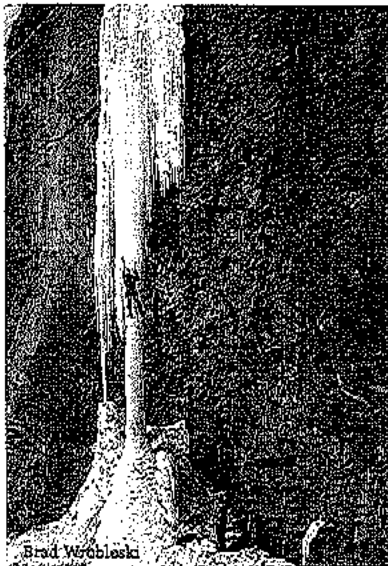
Climb up technical mushrooms to a cave behind the upper pencil. From the cave, launch up 40 m of steep technical ice. The name refers to the noises made by the pillar on the first attempt.

A second, slightly harder line called *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse* (60 m WI 6) was taken on a chandeliered cigar to the right. It offers similar acrobatic and strenuous climbing.

Descent Descend the obvious gully to the left or rappel the route. Once again, these routes can be very dangerous in poor snow conditions.



Scott Buckles on Wilson Major.



Brad Webleski



Guy Lacelle Collection.

308 Icefields Parkway

Happy Days 70 m IV, WI 6+ X

This climb was called *Nine* in the 1994 edition, as one of the first ascensionists claimed it as the original name. Previously not knowing this, the editors of the 1988 edition had called the route *Happy Days*, and it has never seemed to live down that name. It is a radical testpiece that has only been known three times to form long enough to be climbed. Its twin route *Ice Nine* is found just a few metres to the left (83 C/2 112647).

Approach Park 11.2 km past the David Thompson Highway (1.1 km south of the hostel) and hike up a fairly steep but short slope to the left, 40-60 minutes depending upon snow conditions. A huge avalanche bowl from above threatens these routes.

When formed, this route is very thin with several free-standing pillars and it often lasts only a few days before it falls away.

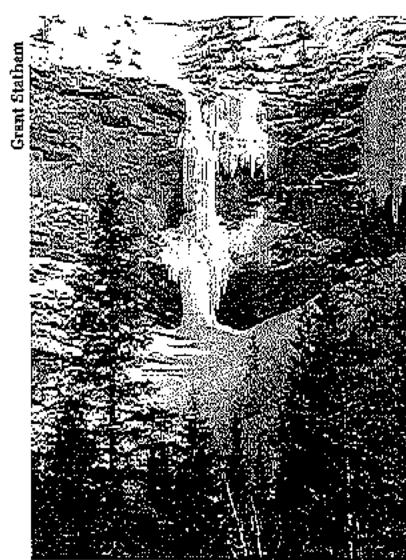
Descent Rappel off tree to the right.

Ice Nine 95 m IV, WI 6

A very aesthetic and difficult route, *Ice Nine* unfortunately forms only about every other year. Expect chandelier and technical climbing; however, it can form thick and plastic. 1991, was such a year and it received several solo ascents. A popular mixed route called *Slaughterhouse (M8+)* is established behind the initial pillar as well as an ephemeral route on thin ice far, far above.

Approach Park 11.2 km past the David Thompson Highway (1.1 km south of the hostel) and hike up a fairly steep but short slope to the left, 40-60 minutes depending upon snow conditions. A huge avalanche bowl from above threatens these routes.

Top: Tim Pochey on a rare ascent of *Happy Days*.
Guy Lacelle on the second ascent of *Happy Days*.



Grant Statham

Ice Nine in fat conditions.

The first pitch climbs a free-standing pillar easing after 15 m. Depending on the exact line taken, you may find a ledge to the side for the first belay. Most parties use a semi-hanging stance below the upper crux. The second 50 m partially free-standing pitch climbs steeply, but the ice improves to the top.

Descent Rappel the route.

Rampart Route 70 m III, WI 3

Approach From the hostel, hike up Rampart Creek for 2 hours to the route (83 C/2 106667). The creek above the hostel is an impassable canyon. Follow the orange ribbons starting near the #3 cabin to reach the creek above the canyon. Be careful about straying toward the canyon—it's a long, nasty way down.

This pleasant two pitch route is similar to *Panther Falls*, but much more scenic.

Descent Rappel the route or walk off.

North of Rampart Creek

The next four routes are visible up an open gully 2.9 km north of the Rampart Creek Hostel.

Cadeau Caché 50 m IV, WI 5

Both the climbing and the approach to this climb look intimidating from the road, but it's worth the effort. The route forms a beautiful pillar of green ice, hence the name roughly translating as "Hidden Jewel." It pours over a cliff to the right of *Damocles*.

Approach The best approach is to climb the first pitch of *Damocles* (WI 3), and then traverse up and right to the base. To get more climbing out of the day, it is also possible to climb the crux pillar (WI 5) and the next little step on *Damocles* and then traverse right to *Cadeau Caché*. Otherwise, thrash your way through small cliffbands and bush directly to the route (83 C/2 085682).

The route begins with interesting mushrooms, then up the pillar on steep, excellent ice.

Descent Rappel the route.

Damocles 300 m III, WI 5+

This is an innocuous-looking route, but don't be fooled, it will give you everything you need. The most obvious feature of the route is the crux pillar, a 20 m free-standing tube of hard climbing (83 C/2 081686).

Approach Park in the open area below the route. As you hike or ski up the drainage toward the climb, it will be easy to get pulled into a left-hand gully. This way has more alders and scrubby bushes and you'll need to cross back right to reach the *Damocles* gully. Get into the main gully right away for slightly easier

Icefields Parkway 307



Alan Kerr

Damocles takes the main pillar on the right to the upper ice. All other smears are unclimbed.

travelling. Allow 1.5 hours if breaking trail. Remember that this gully is open and avalanche-prone.

Climb up a 40 m seepage in the gully (not visible from the road) followed by some snow. Avoid a rock step on the left and continue to the base of the pillar. Struggle up this deceptively hard pitch to a tree belay and continue up a short step to a snow gully and several more pitches of excellent ice. The route forms differently every year. Often the pillar is missing, but sometimes it is there and the small step above it is gone, barring access to the upper pitches.

Descent Rappel the route.

Seven Pillars of Wisdom 550 m IV, WI 5 R

Some years, excellent climbing may be formed above *Damocles*. If it's there it will be obvious. This beautiful route is at least as long as *Polar Circus* and more sustained and highly recommended.

Approach Climb *Damocles*.

Continue upward amongst spectacular quartzite cliffs for a total of seven pitches, including another very thin WI 5 pitch at the top.

Descent Rappel the route (pitons advisable).

Back in the Saddle 90 m III, WI 4

The top pitch is visible above the trees only as you drive south on the parkway and as you come up the hill, before reaching the open area, before *Damocles* and *Cadeau Caché*.

Approach Park as for those routes, walk or ski into the hidden left-hand gully as mentioned for *Damocles*. Continue up the gully (a very large funnel for avalanches). The route lies in another narrow gully that branches up and right from the main gully and is not visible until below it (83 C/2 080687). The route itself is relatively safe from avalanche, however, big ones in the main gully can spill over the route. The name comes from the fact it was the first climb after big ground falls (on separate occasions) for both first ascensionists.

Climb a steepening apron to a full 50 m pitch of excellent 85° ice.

Descent Rappel or walk off right (avalanche-prone).

Opposite: The Lower Weeping Wall. Left side rappel stations are marked.

The Weeping Wall Area

Two routes alone make this a destination for ice climbers around the world—*Polar Circus* and *The Weeping Wall*. Legendary in status, they offer unparalleled quality, length, formation reliability and easy access. Almost all of the routes in the area have a sunny southern exposure and are found within half a kilometre of the road.

Facilities

Rampart Creek Hostel is a quick 30 minutes down the road. There once was a

popular cook shelter and parking area near the base of *Polar Circus*, but it was quietly removed by the Park Service in the summer of 1994.

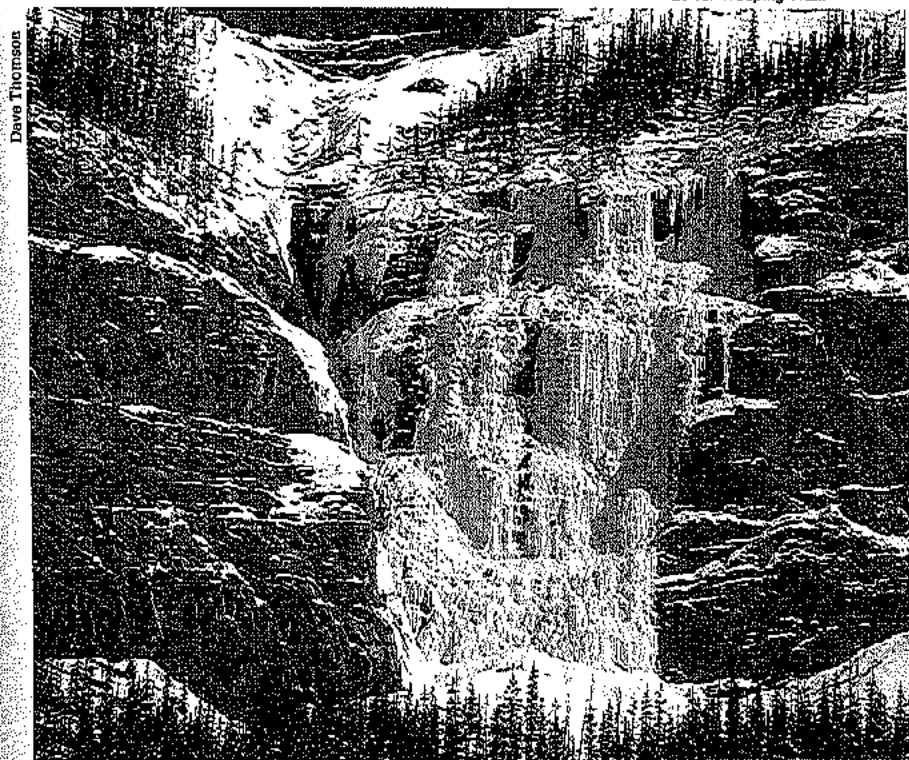
Emergency

Call the Lake Louise Warden Office. There is a pay phone at the warden station on the east side of the road just south of the Saskatchewan River Bridge. There may be a warden on duty. See page 400.

Maps

83 C/2 Cline River
83 C/3 Columbia Icefield

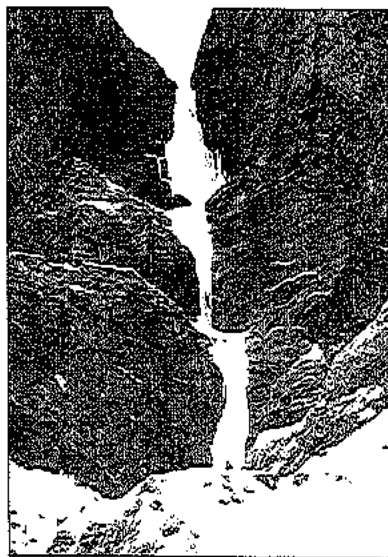
Lower Weeping Wall.



Polar Circus 700 m (500 m of ice) V, WI 5

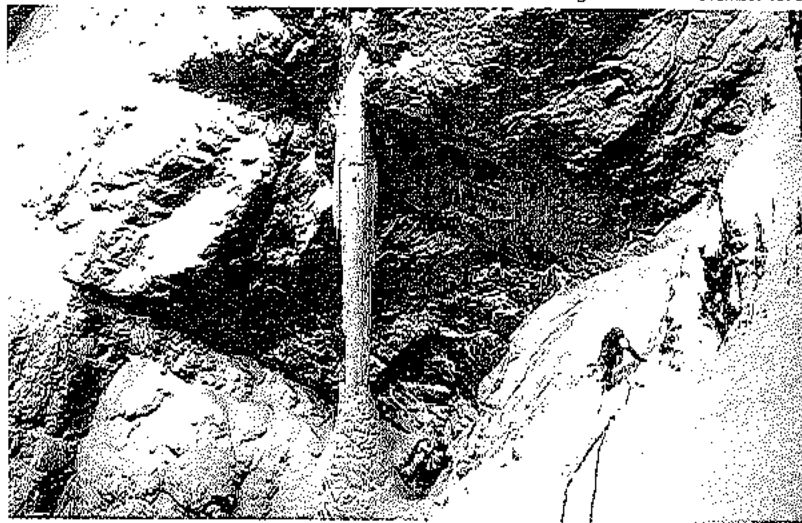
The showpiece of the Canadian Rockies and a must for all climbers! The name originated from Charlie Porter who, on the first ascent, when messing with tangled equipment on a scary pitch, complained "this is nothing more than a Polish Circus!" Uncertain of the implications, Bugs McKeith later adapted this statement to the present name.

The route has lost much of its fearsome reputation and is routinely done in 8-10 hours car-to-car. It has been soloed in less than 4 hours. Beware of serious avalanche slopes, both from above and when turning *The Pencil*. Several pitches may appear unforned from the road, but the route forms without fail every year. It offers nine pitches of generally moderate ice gradually steepening to the final crux pitch. It is recommended as a must tick and also as good ground for intermediate climbers looking to cover alpine, multi-pitch terrain. Since the descent is down the way you came, it is



The upper tiers of Polar Circus.

John Lauchlan turning the Pencil in December 1978.



310 Icefields Parkway

easy to opt out if the climbing gets too desperate. Enjoy!

Approach It is found in an obvious cleft 27 km north of the David Thompson Highway (15 km from Rampart Creek Hostel). Walk through light trees into the drainage. At the base of the first piece of ice, most parties climb up a steep slope to the left for several hundred metres. Then, make an exposed traverse (avalanche-prone) right into the climb. Alternatively, ascend the gully direct on short ice steps and snow. Climb a final 70° ice step followed by 150 m of snow to round the corner and the base of the first steep pitch.

Bottom pitches The first 50 m begins in an apron steepening into a classic WI 4 pitch. Continue on to the second WI 3 pitch. Walk 100 m up to *The Pencil* (WI 5). Most often you will see a broken icicle looming above. As described by Bugs McKeith, "It is the most impressive single ice feature on the route, a 150 foot-long, 6 foot-diameter, totally free hanging icicle precariously suspended above a multiple mushrooming, ice pedestal." It was first quietly climbed in the late '70s and then in 1991. This dynamic feature touched down for perhaps only the third or fourth time in recorded memory. Even with the telltale crack near the top, it was quite solid and had numerous ascents throughout the season, including a solo.

Turning *The Pencil* Climb a short step to the right of the large ice pedestal onto easier slopes above. A fixed belay/rappel station is found approximately 20 m right of *The Pencil* in the rockband. Directly above some low-angle thin ice occasionally forms to create an interesting two pitch variation. Otherwise, continue up right 200 m through some small trees (running belays) and then left to a

small notch. Traverse left across a very exposed snow basin for 150 m back to the gully and the main falls. Again, beware of avalanche hazard.

Upper Tiers The upper section consists of three separate tiers, each climbed in two pitches. The first tier is 65 m of 70-80° ice to a small ledge. *The Ribbon Pitch* starts the next tier and begins vertical then kicks back to a curving gully and a fixed belay on the left. A shorter pitch above leads to a snow ledge. The final 100 m is usually climbed on the right side. A beautiful pitch up a series of grooves (WI 4) leads to a small ledge and a bolt belay. Getting off this belay usually constitutes the crux with 15-20 m of vertical ice then easing toward the top and a belay on the right. Heavy traffic often creates a pitted overhanging hook-fest on this crux section. The vast curtain to the left offers more sustained climbing on usually excellent ice.

Descent Begin the descent immediately; up to nine 50 m rappels. Most stations are fixed, but may be covered. Be prepared to make several stations off the ice. When rappelling *The Ribbon Pitch*, continue past the ledge and make the next rappel off the ice. From there, 50 m takes you to a snow ledge, bypassing one short rappel.

The Bald, Bespectacled Ones 80 m, III, WI 4

On the wall left of *Polar Circus* a number of fun drips can sometimes form. The slopes below the route have avalanche potential, and rock fall from above on warm days is another concern. About 200 m left of *Polar Circus* a rare splattering of ice called *The Blender* can form in the long, snaking, left-facing corner. See *Mixed Climbs*. The first ascent of this route was believed to be climbing that route.

Icefields Parkway 311

Approach The route lies against the main cliff about 400 m left of *The Blender* and just above the far right side of the lower cliffband known as *Bob-Sized*. Park along the highway at a likely looking spot. Hike through open terrain to the base in 30-60 minutes depending on conditions.

The first pitch climbs a thin, fragile pillar to a ledge below a left-leaning chimney. Good ice leads up the chimney to a large chock stone.

Descent Rappel the route.

Bob-Sized 10 to 40 m II, WI 2-4

On the slopes 600-700 m left of *Polar Circus* are four or five smears. Often snow-covered, they may have high avalanche hazard. At times they are clear of snow and offer good introductory ice.

Cold Shower With a View 45 m III, WI 4

Located southwest and across the river from the Weeping Wall is a blue/green pillar high up on the ridge just left of a tremendous avalanche chute.

Approach From *The Weeping Wall* pull-out, cross the river and hike for 3 hours depending on snow conditions. Stay to the left in the trees to avoid the avalanche gully. This route gets the sun first thing in the day so an early start may make it more enjoyable. There are commanding views of the *Weeping Wall* complex.

Climb a pleasant but often wet one pitch pillar.

Descent You can walk off to the right, but to rappel the route would be the safest alternative.

Whimper Wall

Whimper Wall 110 m III, WI 4

A dogleg smear appears out of a blank rock wall 200 m right of *The Weeping Wall*. This route often forms relatively thin and 60 m ropes are recommended in order to reach better belays and maximize rappel options. Some fixed anchors may have been added to the rock, but this is unconfirmed. A selection of pitons is recommended.

Approach Walk up to *The Weeping Wall*, then traverse right to the base. Skis may be helpful.

Climb 75-80° for 60 m to a snow ledge. Because of difficult belay options on the snow ledge, some parties choose to belay at the last of the good ice. A second easy, but sometimes hard to protect pitch leads right to the base of the final crux pitch: A full 50 m leads to the top. Occasionally another pitch forms above.

Descent Rappel the route.



Gateway Pitons

Lower Weeping Wall

Undoubtedly, *The Weeping Wall* is the most famous climb in Canada. It is an impressive south-facing curtain, as wide as it is high, only 10 minutes from the road offering all levels of difficulty. Avalanche hazard is almost nonexistent here. Snow on a prominent ledge two-thirds up the wall and snow buildup along the top of the wall have been known to release.

Parking Park at the plowed pull-out 28.6 km north of the David Thompson Highway, or 16.9 km north of Rampart Creek Hostel. The climbs are obvious across the road.

Snivelling Gully Descent

Snivelling Gully on the far left side of the Lower Weeping Wall is the most common descent for all routes. Furthermore, there is an option of either the right side or the left side of the gully.

At the top on the left side of the gully is a large obvious tree. Rappel from here onto a ledge below an overhang. Walk left to another tree and rappel onto the large halfway ledge with a two-bolt, chain anchor just right of the rappel line. From here, rappel straight down off the ledge (left of the main gully) for 50 m to a three-bolt station normally visible from the base of *The Weeping Wall*. Make a 40 m rappel to the ground.

The second descent option starts from a tree on the right side of the gully near the top of the *Left-Hand* route. Rappel 50 m to the prominent ledge that runs across the entire Wall. In the past, parties have used a small tree on the left side of this ledge as a rappel anchor. The area around the tree has become very eroded and may no longer be considered safe. A bolt station can be found on the rock

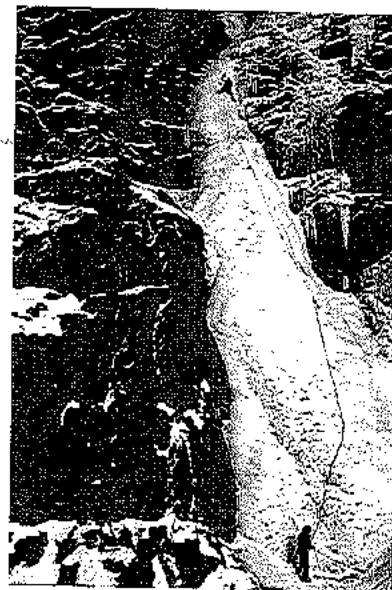


Photo: Brad Wroblewski

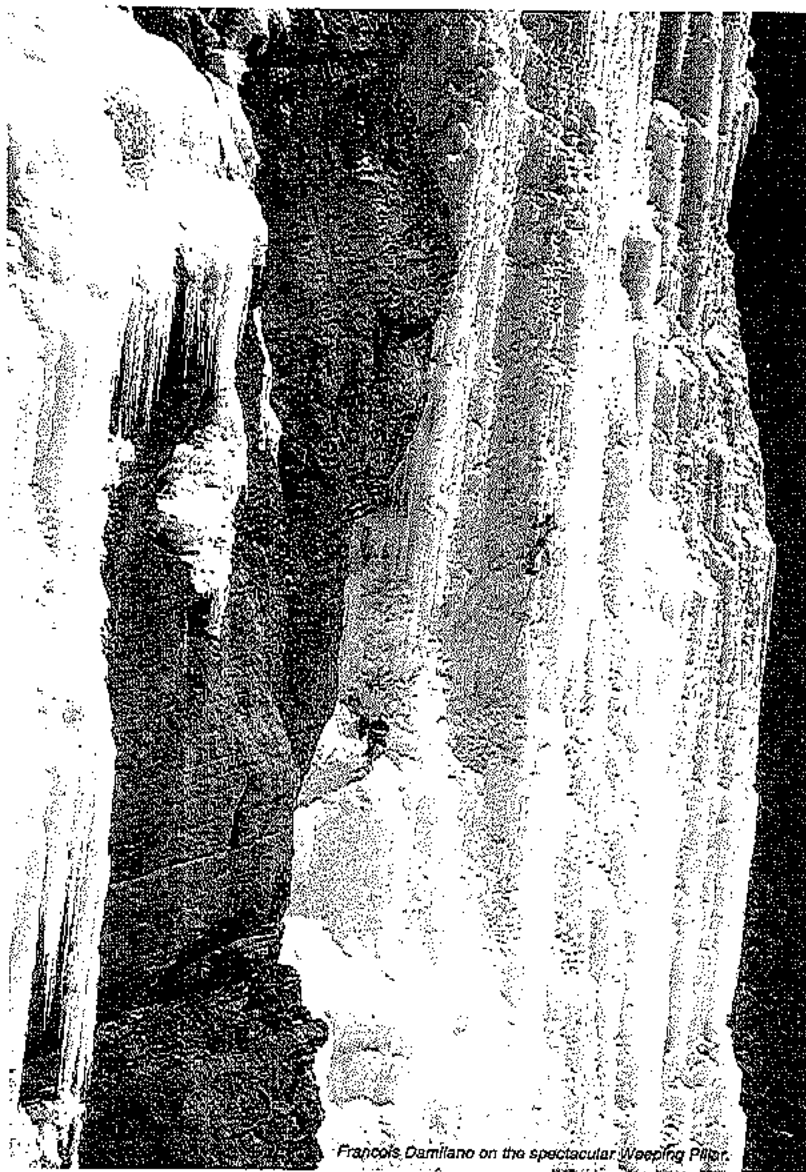
Snivelling Gully

outcrop 5 m behind the tree. Make a steep 45 m rappel into the gully. From this point, it is possible to walk left on the halfway ledge to the two-bolt chain anchor described in the first descent option. This provides a clean, safe rappel line, away from open water, falling ice and crowds in *Snivelling Gully*.

To continue straight down *Snivelling Gully*, there is a two-bolt chain anchor on the left side below the halfway ledge where the gully narrows. From this anchor a 55 m rappel will reach the ground; otherwise, use a second chain anchor also found on the left side.

Right-Hand Descent

In 1992, a bolted rappel line was added on the rockwall to the right of the *Right-Hand* route. The first rappel is off a big tree with a chain near the top of the *Right-*



François Damilano on the spectacular Weeping Pillar.

Francois Damilano Collection

Hand. Three more bolt stations are in a right-trending diagonal line making for a good descent from the *Right-Hand* route and the *Upper Weeping Wall*.

Snivelling Gully 180 m II, WI 3

Named in commemoration of climbers' boyfriends and girlfriends appreciation of winter camping. The quick approach and easy climbing ensure its popularity. In spring conditions, it can occasionally get wet avalanches oozing down it.

Approach *Snivelling* is a low-angle trough on the left side of *The Weeping Wall*.

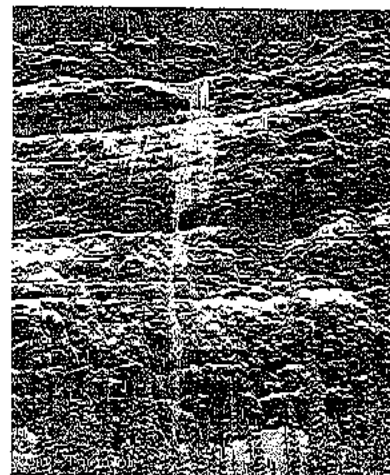
The first 30 m is often plagued by open water. The best variation is to climb one pitch up the *Left-Hand* and traverse in on top of a large rock. The next rope length has some 60° ice followed by snow (and open water). The final pitch offers a classic WI 3 pitch of 75-80° sometimes thin ice. Streaking up to the right are a number of steep and difficult pillars. They give quite an ambience when climbing this narrow gully. *Snivelling Direct* (125 m WI 5) offers very challenging climbing on a number of chandelier columns.

Dead-Eye Dick 155 m III, WI 5+

About 200 m north of *Snivelling Gully* a thin smear can often be seen well off the ground. Occasionally it forms most of the way down, and can be climbed as a very serious and difficult mixed route. See *Mixed Climbs* for details. Once in a blue moon, it formed to the ground and was climbed as a pure ice route.

Left-Hand 180 m II, WI 4

Approach The easiest and most popular line, the *Left-Hand* has several variations. Pick one with the best ice and the least people.



The rarely formed Dead Eye Dick.

The second pitch is the crux with ice up to 85°. The third pitch up to the prominent ledge can be very thin with open water and little recommends the route in these conditions. A final step of 80-85° leads into the trees.

Central Pillar 180 m III, WI 5+

Approach A large cave is usually found in the very middle of the Wall. The *Central Pillar* climbs up either side of the cave.

Climb the initial apron, then a short second pitch to below your proposed line. A sheltered belay may be difficult to find. Pick whichever side suits your fancy. These pillars can be very chandeliered and vertical. A full pitch puts you on the prominent ledge. An easier step leads to the top.

Right-Hand 180 m III, WI 5

Approach Like all climbs here, this route has several variations ranging from the wide ice just right of the *Central Pillar* to a comfortable corner to WI 6 and mixed

lines that occasionally form over the outside edge of the corner.

The first 60 m has ice up to 75° and leads to the prominent corner on the right side. A fixed belay may be found on a small rock ledge on the right. Climb a long pitch up the corner or on the curtain to the left on steep exposed ice to the ledge. Finish up 20-30 m to the trees.

Aerial Boundaries 170 m IV, III 5+

Approach About 100 m right of the Lower Weeping Wall is a shallow gully topped by several large overhangs. The route rarely forms completely, but is a classic.

Pitch one climbs into a small alcove on WI 4. Lead out of the gully and up a strenuous pillar to a hanging belay below the overhangs. A short rambling pitch leads to a big ledge. The next pitch can be any one of a number of pillars that may form off the overhang. The first ascent team climbed a double free-hanging cigar for 40 m to the second overhang. Two short WI 4 pillars lead to the top.



316 Icefields Parkway

Upper Weeping Wall

Up to six independent lines of varying thickness and quality can form on the *Upper Weeping Wall*. From left to right they are *Teardrop*, *Weeping Pillar* (both form every year), *Unclimbed* (very ephemeral and anaemic), *Mare in Winter*, *Nasty Habits*, *Ice T* and *Tales of Ordinary Madness*. *Snivelling Gully*, *Lower Weeping Wall*, *Mixed Master* or *Aerial Boundaries* must be climbed to reach them, making for a long day. Bring a head lamp—many parties end up rappelling *Snivelling Gully* in the dark. Early season can be an endless wallow up the snow ledge between tiers, and snowshoes can make the hike easier. Later in the year a good donkey trail usually becomes established from near the top of the *Right-Hand* route. An ascent of the *Upper Weeping Wall* is a feather in any ice-climber's hat.

Descent Rappelling the *Upper Weeping Wall* can be arduous, and is not to be taken lightly. A number of different rappel routes have been used down the rock walls. They can be difficult to find and have caused more than one epic because of manky anchors and stuck ropes. It is recommended to rappel your route or use the following description. A bolt belay is sometimes found uncovered on the rocks near the top of *Teardrop* on the left; otherwise, use the ice or a tree back from the lip. A single bolt station is on the left in a small alcove directly below some large icicles. Another rappel can be made from a cave just above the ledge. Then downclimb or make a short rappel off a rock anchor to the ground. This descent is dependent upon the quantity and quality of ice. Be prepared to make or leave up to four ice and/or rock anchors. Good luck!

Teardrop 170 m IV, WI 6

Approach *Teardrop* is essentially the line of least resistance up the left side of the waterfall.

Reach a prominent snow ledge in two short pitches. Sometimes an interesting variation pours over the buttress just left of the main falls. From the ledge the top is a full 100 m away containing two long vertical sections, one just off the ledge and another near the top. Watch for huge icicles hanging off an overhang and threatening the lower pitches.

Weeping Pillar 170 m V, WI 6

Approach A truly awesome line! The first ascent team included the *Central Pillar* route on the Lower Weeping Wall, but many parties today cheat a little bit and use the *Right-Hand* route. *Weeping Pillar* follows the steep, prow-like pillars that form in the middle to right side.

Climb good ice up to 85° to the ledge. Above, climb two 50 m pitches that are dead vertical. The crux is usually wherever you encounter the worst ice. It can be horrendously bad, going from overhanging mushrooms to sun-leached slush. However, don't despair—it isn't always in such rough shape and the *Weeping Pillar* can offer some of the most difficult plastic ice you'll ever climb.

Opposite: Another rare classic, *Aerial Boundaries*.
Photo: Godfrey Perroux

Upper Weeping Wall Right Side.

Aside from the usually massive *Teardrop/Weeping Pillar* complex, the five remaining routes only reach the prominent snow ledge one-third of the way up the wall and only form in the best of years. To reach the snow ledge, there is a WI 4+ pillar followed by easy ice directly below *Mare in Winter* and *Nasty Habits*. The first ascent team of *Tales of Ordinary Madness* climbed this pillar and it has become the standard approach pitch. A wider, usually thin flow may be located 50 m to the right (80 m WI 4) ending in a small island of trees. This was used on the first ascent of *Nasty Habits*. The following routes are described from the snow ledge only. Note that the lengths of the routes are given starting from below the approach pitches.

Mare in Winter 200 m IV, WI 4+

Approach This route is a wide flow considered part of *Nasty Habits*, but is considerably easier, offering three short pitches of good ice. Combine it with *Left-Hand* on the Lower Weeping Wall to create a poor man's *Weeping Pillar* with seven pitches of sustained WI 4 climbing. When formed, this route receives numerous ascents and even a few solos.

The crux of the route is found on the pillar reaching the snow ledge.

Nasty Habits 200 m IV, WI 6

Approach *Nasty Habits* plasters the steep buttress several metres right of *Mare in Winter*.

The first pitch above the snow ledge starts up a narrow smear and continues up steepening terrain to the final pillar. The second pitch may leave you wonder-

ing why you ice climb; an 85-90° pillar of scary technical ice. A third pitch of low-angle ice and snow takes you to the trees at the top.

Ice T 180 m IV, WI 6

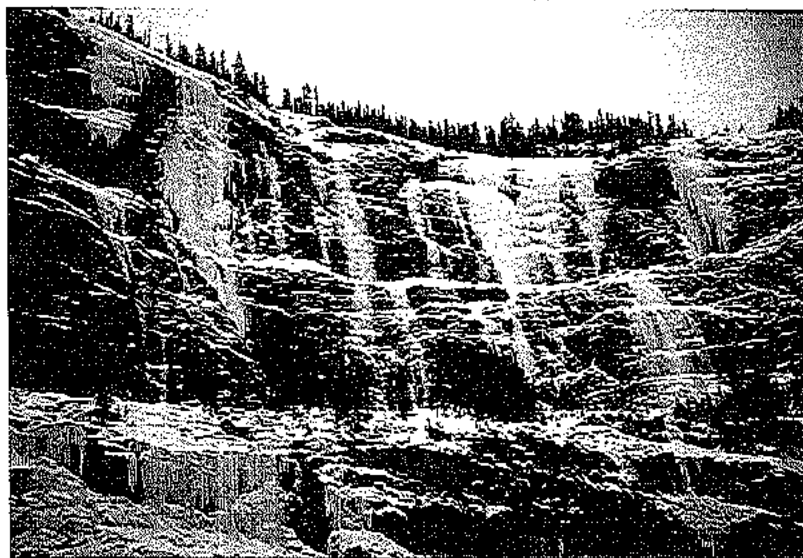
Approach This long, narrow smear joins *Nasty Habits* near the top of the wall.

The route is climbed in two long pitches and is often very thin near the bottom. The first ascensionists found it as thick as it's ever been. Nonetheless, both pitches offer steep, strenuous pillars separated by bad ice.

Tales of Ordinary Madness

180 m IV, WI 5+

Approach This route is located on the far right side of *Upper Weeping Wall*. Traverse under *Nasty Habits* 50 m to a narrow, blue pillar that spills over a left-



The Upper Weeping Wall. From left to right: Teardrop/Weeping Pillar, unclimbed, *Mara in Winter* (the wide flow), *Ice T*, *Tales of Ordinary Madness* (in the far right corner).

318 Icefields Parkway

facing corner. Spectacular icicles spiral off the corner to create a cavelike ambience. The route faces more west than the rest of the wall and thus stays in shape longer.

The first 30 m technical pitch is up splattered mushrooms. The final pitch goes left onto a very steep and sustained pillar of good ice. 50 m just makes it to a big tree at the top.

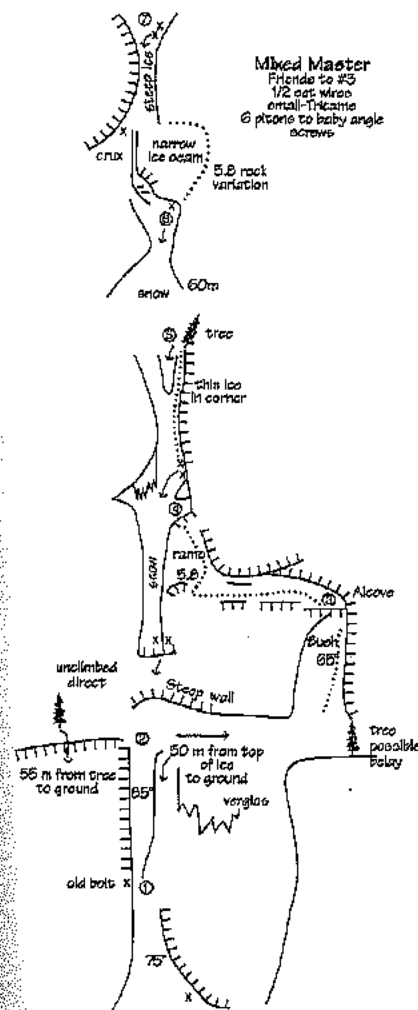
Lower Weeping Wall -- Far Left

Mini Master 40 m II, 5.6, WI 3

Approach 20 m right of *Mixed Master* is a large left-leaning, left-facing corner.

Climb splotches of ice on mixed ground to a hanging station. With more rock gear, it would be possible to continue higher.

Descent Rappel the route.



Mixed Master.
Photo: Grant Statnam



Icefields Parkway 319

Mixed Master 300 m IV, 5.8, WI 5

This route is located in the first significant gully 200 m left of *The Weeping Wall* and is only 15 minutes from the road. This highly recommended route is one of the finest mixed ice routes in the Rockies.

Approach Park at *The Weeping Wall* pull-out, walk down the road and hike up easy slopes to the base. New anchors have been added in different places than the early ascents, but are logical.

The first two pitches ascend a Scottish-style narrow ice gully into a small amphitheatre. Traverse right past a tree and up a short 70° water ice pitch to a good belay in an alcove. Traverse left on rock and up a short steep wall (5.8) onto a snow-covered ramp. Continue into the main gully and a bolt belay. Climb a low-angle thin ice pitch up a corner and some snow. The final rope length ascends a vertical 10 inch wide ice vein followed by a thicker flow of steep ice. If this rarely formed crux vein isn't formed a 5.8 rock variation can be climbed to the right.

Descent Rappel the gully direct on fixed anchors and trees.

Tears of a Clown 30 m II, WI 3

Approach From the Weeping Wall pull-out go north for 600 m. On the right side of a large recess away from the road, the route forms in a right-facing corner capped by several overhangs (83 C/3 989787). This route and several other smears in this alcove don't always form, but would likely make good mixed routes.

The crux is 4-5 m of 80° ice.

Descent Rappel the route.

Grant Statham on *Mixed Master* pitch 7.
Photo: Tim Bahoy

Team Effort 40 m III, WI 4

Approach 200 m left of *Tears of a Clown* in the back of the recess, *Team Effort* is found in a huge right-facing corner offering a matrix for the ice to bond to.

The crux is 10-12 m of vertical ice often quite rotten because of the southern exposure.

Descent Rappel the route.



Saskatchewan Glacier

Although technically part of the Columbia Icefields, these routes are approached from *The Big Bend* closer to *The Weeping Wall* than the main Icefields. Development of routes in this area has been sporadic and poorly documented. It is unclear how often routes form or if there is much potential for new ones.

Parking 5.6 km north of the Weeping Wall, park in the parking lot (no sign) exactly at the corner of *The Big Bend*, an obvious 180° curve in the road where it starts ascending toward Sunwapta Pass. Ski up the drainage and bypass a deep canyon via the trail to the left. The ski trail is often broken.

The Silver Lining 700 m V, 5.9, WI 6 R

For years this line was one of the biggest prizes in the region, but it forms very sporadically. On the first ascent, ice of questionable quality came within 15 m of the ground. Other years the entire first pitch is bare. Often the entire gully is free of ice. In reality, this route might be better suited in Sean Dougherty's, *Selected Alpine Climbs*, but it is a winter waterfall-mixed route and when formed deserves to be climbed often. The third pitch is one of the best traditional mixed pitches anywhere.

Approach The route is found on the north face of Unnamed Peak 8200 (83 C/3 920787). The top of the wall is visible from the highway although the route is not visible from anywhere on the Icefields Parkway. If the trail is broken, a quick 45-60 minute ski should get you close enough to check. From the valley floor about 1.5 km east of the glacier, approach on a wind blown slope to the base. 2 hours from the car.



Steve House on pitch 4 of *The Silver Lining*.

The climb is the first steep chimney cutting through the lone 700 m wall on the left side of the valley. The route starts on the left side of a large obvious roof at the base of the gully. Difficult dry tooling leads up and right (crux) to spotty ice above the roof. Because of unprotectable, detached ice the second pitch follows a tricky rock corner to the left of thin smears and belays in a cave-like alcove. Pitch three follows an exposed mixed traverse back to the ice and continues up a classic ice choked chimney to a belay on a snow mushroom below a big roof. The next seven pitches follow classic alpine mixed and ice terrain up the gully. Highlights include beautiful WI 4 on pitch 4, a wild mixed section coming out of a large cave on pitch 8 and a difficult overhang on pitch 10. Pitch 11 avoids the obvious, overhanging chimney to the top

by traversing left to reach an easy gully leading to the summit slopes. The route is 14 rope lengths and was climbed in 12 belayed pitches. 19 hours car-to-car.

Descent The descent is a walk off, but through significant avalanche slopes. Walk left into the bowl to the west picking the safest line. You'll arrive at the valley floor about 1 km east of the base of the route.

Waxing Soulful 50 m III, WI 3-5

Approach Ski for about an hour toward the glacier and the climb is located 40 minutes up the slope on the right side (83 C/3 928804). The slope up to the climb can be horrible in deep snow. The climb lies on the south side of Parker's Ridge just before tree line, and a recommended approach is to ski tour over Parker's Ridge from near the Hilda Creek Hostel. This approach is much shorter, quicker and more enjoyable provided the avalanche hazard is favourable. Use a map to locate the climb and the best ski approach over Parker's Ridge.

The climb is a wide curtain with a variety of lines that start easier on the left and end in large overhanging icicles on the right. The first ascent team climbed a steep central groove.

Descent Rappel the route or continue your ski tour over Parker's Ridge.

Pine Crest 150 m III, WI 4+

Approach Ski just past *The Silver Lining* to about 1 km short of the toe of the Saskatchewan Glacier. The climb is on the north side of the valley (83 C/3 914796).

Two short pitches of easy angle ice lead to an avalanche-prone gully avoided by a rock rib to the right. Climb a 50 m vertical pillar ending in the rock face above.

Descent Rappel the pillar then walk off to the right through trees.

Liquid Suspension 150 m III, WI 4

Approach Located just right of *Pine Crest*.

Climb the first two pitches of that route and traverse right. Climb 50 m of 80° ice to the top.

Descent As for *Pine Crest*.

Tax Evasion 80 m IV, WI 5

Approach as for *Pine Crest*. The climb is located on the south-facing cliffs just past the toe of the glacier (83 C/3 901793).

Climb very steep ice for 25 m before it eases off for another 25 m. A second pitch of WI 3 ice follows.

Descent Rappel the route.

Nigel Creek

Parking Continue 4.5 km past The Big Bend and park at the Cirrus Mountain and *Bridal Veil Falls* viewpoint overlooking Nigel Creek.

Bridal Veil Falls 110 m III, WI 3

The top of the falls is visible across the creek from the edge of the parking lot. An interesting pillar forms in a fissure to the left of the route, and usually ends after 15 m, but it may form to create a wild mixed climb.

Approach At the far south (right) end of the lot descend through steep trees to the creek and continue about 200 m downstream to the falls. There is large avalanche hazard from above.

This fun route consists of two 30 m pillars broken by a 50 m snow slope. Expect good climbing on steep sunny ice.

Descent Make a 50 m rappel from trees on the left then walk off.



Panther Falls

Panther Falls 60 m II, WI 3-4

This climb is hidden and ends 10 m from the north end of Cirrus Mountain viewpoint.

Approach At the far south (right) end of the lot descend through steep trees to the creek then walk upstream 400 m. If you head down from near the north end of the parking lot you will run into several steep cliffs that require a rappel or two. This can be a bit of a hassle, but if snow conditions are bad it avoids the pound up the creek.

The first 30 m is of moderate angle, but technical with large mushrooms and plate ice. The second pitch holds two variations, a steep chandeliered pillar on the right or an easier flow on the left. Continue up easier steps past open water to large snow covered boulders.

Descent Walk out left to the parking lot.

Columbia Icefields

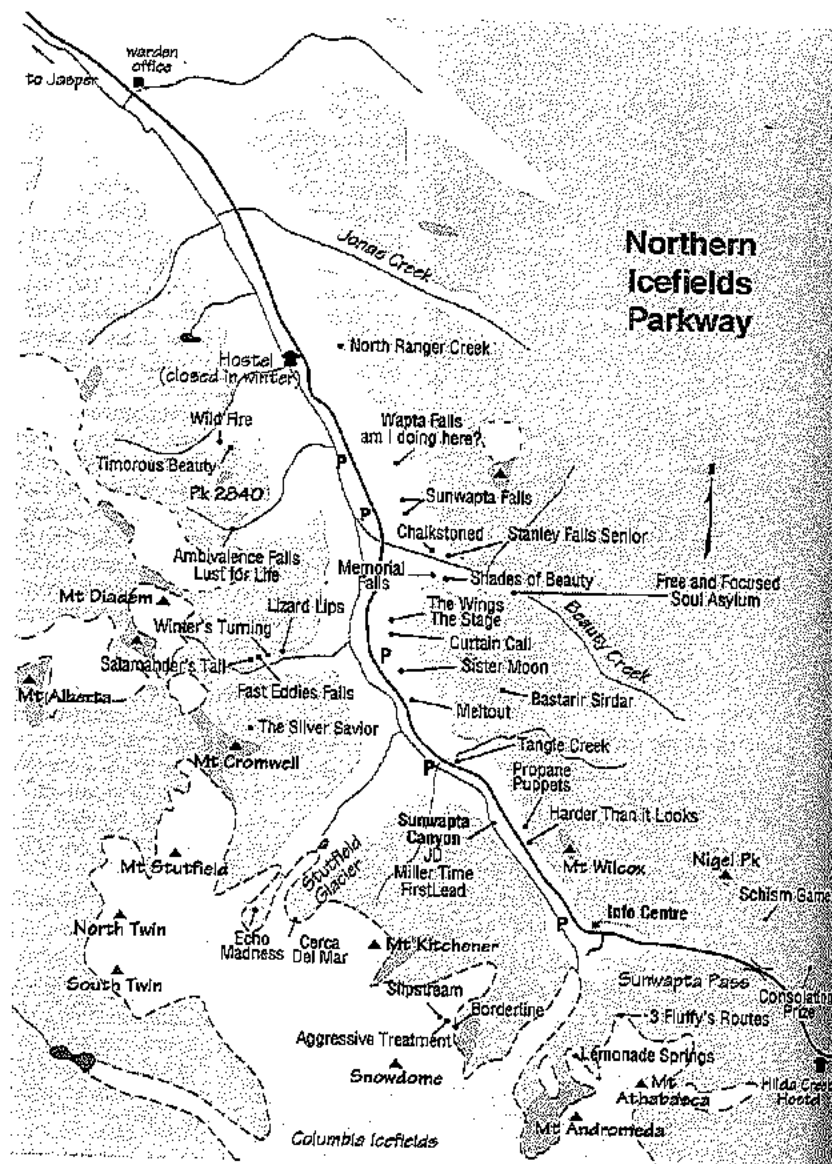
Considering the cold, icy alpine nature of the Columbia Icefields area, it is surprising there is not more waterfall ice climbs. Most attention is centred around the infamous *Slipstream* as it presents an almost unparalleled amount of moderate water ice climbing with an outrageous position. For the first time ever in the winter of 1993-94, the route did not form. Hopefully the icecap feeding the route will not change course and the route will continue as one of the greatest and most sought-after water ice routes in the world.

Climbing in the Columbia Icefields

The weather can be atrocious at the Icefields. Always cold and often windy, many of the peaks are not visible for days on end because of all too common white-out conditions. As an alternative to water ice, there are a number of classic alpine ice and mixed routes that have become popular winter objectives. Consult *Selected Alpine Climbs in the Canadian Rockies* for more information. In case you make the long journey to the Icefields and the longer routes on the west side of the road are in poor condition, there are a number of short ice routes that offer good diversions for your energy. And of course, there is the legendary *Curtain Call* just up the road.

Facilities

Hilda Creek Hostel is just south of the Icefields near Parker's Ridge. Indicative of where people's priorities lie, this cozy spot has no phone, running water or electricity, but has an excellent sauna. The hotel and associated buildings at the Icefields are closed in winter.



324 Icefields Parkway

Northern Icefields Parkway

Emergency

Pay phones are located on the north side of the Icefields Information Centre on the east side of the road across from the Athabasca Glacier, and 17.7 km north at Beauty Creek Hostel (closed in winter). Sunwapta Warden Station (Poboktan Creek), 14.2 km north of the Beauty Creek Hostel, usually has a warden on duty and there is a pay phone in the parking lot. In a pinch try the Tangle Creek Maintenance Compound on the west side of the road, 0.5 km north of Tangle Creek. Someone from the road crew is usually there. See page 389.

Maps

83 C/3 Columbia Icefields
83 C/6 Sunwapta Peak

Sunwapta Pass

The pass on the Continental Divide is barely noticeable aside from the Jasper National Park sign. Between the pass and the Wilcox Campground on the lower slopes of Nigel Peak are up to seven parallel gullies. It is unsure if they all contain ice.

Consolation Prize 30 m III, WI 3

This climb is on the east side of the road directly above Sunwapta Pass and the Banff/Jasper Park boundary (83 C/3 898851). This is the second major gully. It is best visible from 300 m south of the actual pass.

Approach Park in a likely looking spot along the highway and ski through trees and brush to the gully. 1 hour in poor conditions.

Climb a short steep pillar that is worthwhile only as the name implies.

Descent Rappel the route.

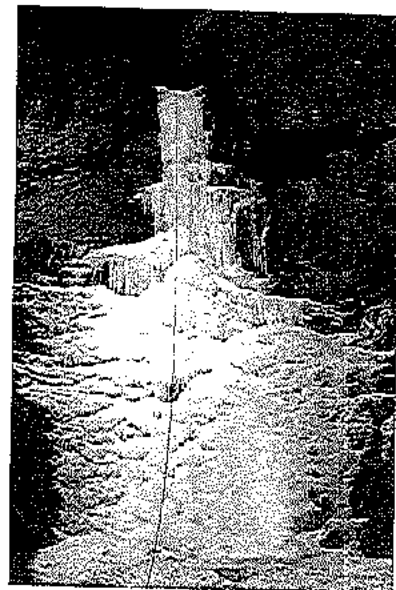


Photo: Rob Owens

Schism Game.

Schism Game 180 m III, WI 4

This is left of *Consolation Prize*. It is the deepest of the parallel gullies. *Schism Game* is an obvious narrow pillar. A WI 3 pitch is found just to the right in a neighbouring gully.

Approach Park at the campground entrance 2 km north of Sunwapta Pass and ski through trees to the base.

Easy ice leads to a snow slope, then a short steep pitch topped by more easy ice.

Descent Walk off to the north or descend the route.

Icefields Parkway 325

Athabasca Glacier

Owing to the meltback of the glacier that flows down from the north face of Mount Athabasca, up to three lines have started to form on a consistent basis.

Approach Across from the Icefields Visitor Centre, turn left into the Athabasca Glacier parking lot. If the gate on the left is open follow the snow coach road until stopped by a snow drift or another gate. If it is early enough in the season while the snowcoaches are still operating, do not drive past the second gate even if open. Park on the left in the Mount Athabasca parking lot. Walk about 10 minutes along the main trail toward the Athabasca north face and look for the cut-off trail that leads down and off the moraine to the outflow creek from the glacier. These routes form early then seem to desiccate away as the season advances. There is some avalanche hazard.

Fluffy's Big Adventure 50 m III, WI 3

Follow the cut-off trail to the flats below the toe of the glacier. To the right on a recently exposed cliffband two lines now form. *Fluffy's Big Adventure* is the right-hand line.

Fluffy's Homeward Bound 70 m III, WI 3

The route is to the left of *Fluffy's Big Adventure*. Stepped ice is separated by thin slabby sections. It tends to form as a variable band of ice spilling over the cliff.

Descent Rappel the route or walk up and off the glacier to the climber's left.

Fluffy's Got a Hairball 55 m III, WI 4+

Approach From the flats, head to the terminal moraine and onto the toe of the glacier. The route is located on a cliffband to the left of the small ice fall directly ahead, obvious from this vantage point. Cross the glacier to the base of the route.

Climb a ramp of ice that leads to a sustained pillar of thin ice. Belay from glacial ice on a wide ledge.

Descent Rappel the route or walk off, circumnavigating the icefall.

AA Buttress

The AA Glacier spills from the bowl between the northwest ridge of Mount Athabasca and Mount Andromeda. There is a lot of water ice that forms around the ice fall area which is the approach for various alpine routes like *Andromeda Strain*, *The Practice Gullies*, or other mountaineering objectives, via the AA col. There are numerous potential ice and mixed routes in this easily accessible area including a stepped gully followed by an aesthetic, smooth groove paralleling the approach steps.

Lemonade Springs 80 m III, M6 WI 3

This excellent route can come in very early. However, because of a relatively high volume of water, it may come and go some before consistent cold weather sets in. It can be a great mixed route with good gear and likely fills into a pure ice route later in the season. It was probably climbed back in the dark ages before such short things were considered real routes. The area is generally very windy and often of low avalanche hazard although there may be a few lee pockets on the approach and above the climb.

Hi. J. Schmidt



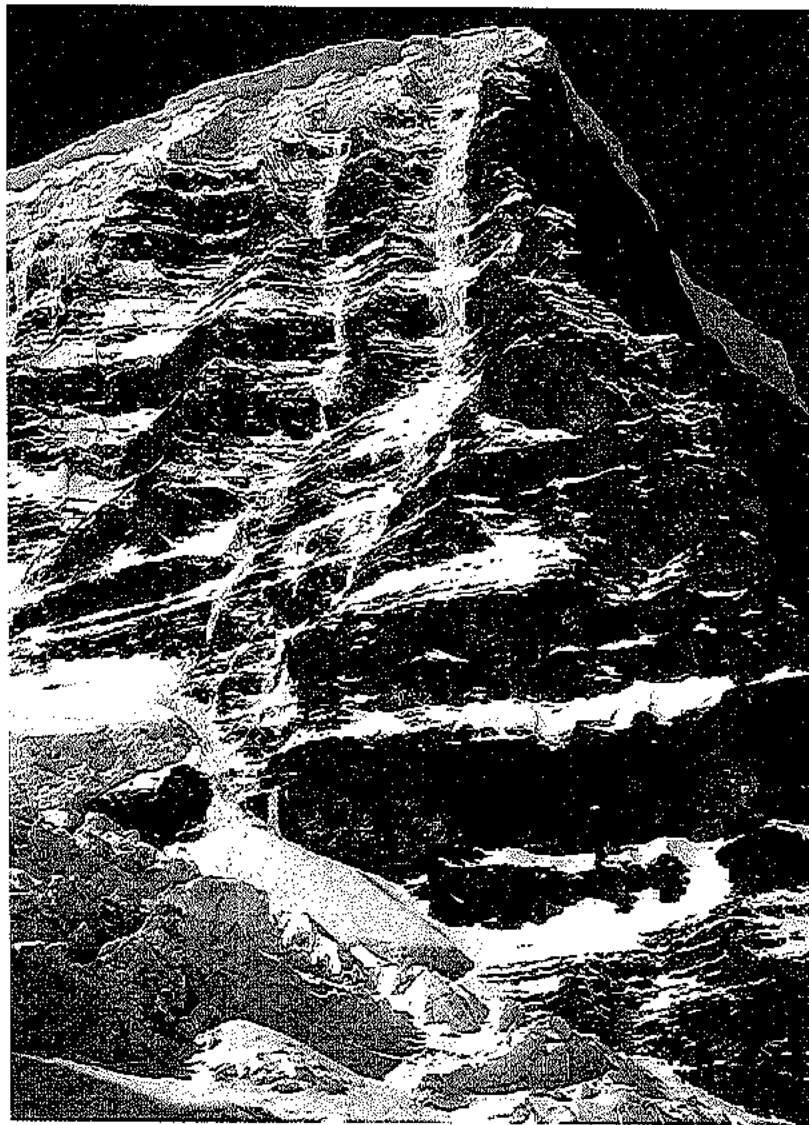
Lemonade Springs on the left and an unclimbed smear on the right.

Approach Across from the Icefields Visitor Centre turn left into the Athabasca Glacier parking lot. If the gate on the left is open, follow the snow coach road until stopped by a snow drift or another gate. If it is early enough in the season while the snowcoaches are still operating, do not drive past the second gate even if open. Park on the left in the Mount Athabasca parking lot. Walk up the road to the snow coach staging area and go left onto the moraine following various trails and cairns. Once on top of the first large moraine piles, continue up and right to the rocky steps left of the AA ice fall. If you go onto the glacier itself, you've gone too far right. Follow easy steps up a couple hundred metres to a flat spot at the mouth of the upper bowl. Look up to

the left and the route. There is a deep, dry gully on the far left and *Lemonade Springs* is the shallower gully 15 m to the right. Hike up scree to the base (83 C/3 845819). 1.5 hours.

If there is running water in the initial crack, scramble up left to a ledge and climb a rock corner with excellent dry-tooling (M5) just left of the main gully. Easier ground leads up the main gully to a small but sheltered stance on the left with fixed wires. Continue up the gully to a steep step that can be awkward (up to M6) depending on the amount of ice and mixed climbing required. Easier ground leads to the top and a piton belay. In the upper half, another aesthetic runnel may sometimes form to the right.

Descent Rappel the route.



Mark Twight

East Face of Snowdome. Slipstream is the largest flow. Aggressive Treatment is in very fat conditions to the left and just the top of Borderline can be seen far left.

328 Icefields Parkway

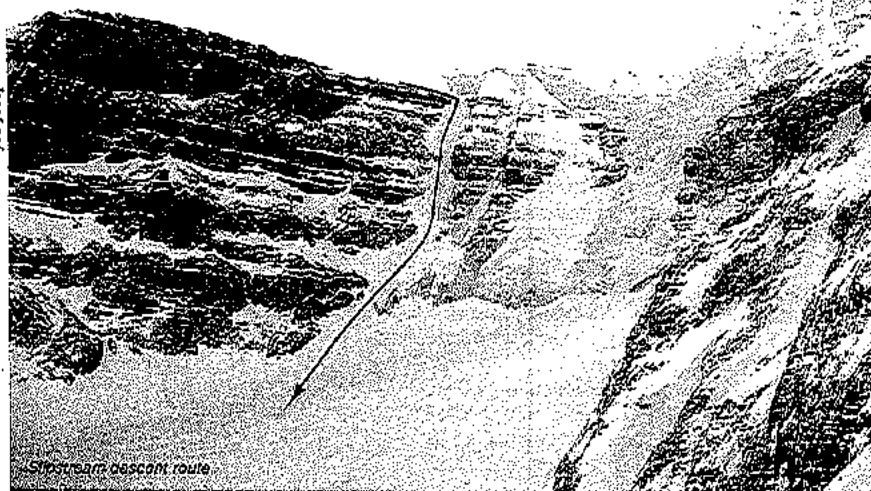
Mount Snowdome

Mount Snowdome is famous for several reasons. It is most commonly known as the hydrological apex of North America. Water draining from its summit reaches three oceans; the Pacific, the Atlantic (via Hudson's Bay) and the Arctic. Covered by the Columbia Icefield it is nothing more than a gentle ski tour on its south and west sides. The east and north sides are a different ball of wax all together. Each of these sheer faces drop off the edge of the icecap for 1,000 metres. They present a stunning sight from the Icefields Parkway. Climbers know the peak for its east face where there are three routes including the infamous *Slipstream*. The north face has been attempted and the aspirants barely escaped with their lives. Their gully was swept by seracs only minutes after they retreated. All of the completed routes top out onto the icecap. Whiteout conditions are very common and it is recommended

you carry a map and compass for whiteout navigation. The top of Mount Snowdome is not a place to be fumbling around as the number of grievous accidents show.

To descend from *Slipstream* and the other Snowdome routes, walk left along the icecap. Stay far right and away from the corniced edge. Rope up for glacier travel—the seemingly uncrevassed terrain is notorious for hiding big holes. Traverse around to the head of the Dome Glacier and a couloir leading down from the edge of the ice cap between Snowdome and its east ridge (Little Snowdome). Check out this gully while climbing the route. When in doubt while looking for the descent (remember the cornices are bigger than you think), keep traversing left, as the cornices get smaller. Traverse from the left back right directly into the couloir. A rock station is located just left of the couloir at the top of a rotten cliffband, but may be difficult to find. From there

Joe Josephson



Slipstream descent route

Icefields Parkway 329

a 50 m rappel over steep rock deposits you in the gully. Several ice rappels lead to easier downclimbing. Once on the glacier, hastily get out from underneath the seracs. Follow the glacier out (staying right) to your skis and breathe a sigh of relief and satisfaction.

Slipstream 925 m VI, WI 4+

For many waterfall ice climbers, this is the pinnacle of achievement. *Slipstream* commands an outrageous position with large amounts of relatively moderate terrain. Don't underestimate this route—it is a very serious undertaking—as the number of lives lost on this route testifies. Not to be taken lightly, *Slipstream* offers all hazards and problems of the biggest winter alpine routes. It has the commitment grade VI for legitimate reasons. Be patient, wait for the right conditions and you'll be rewarded with one of the finest alpine climbs in North America. John Lauchlan described it as the "classiest route" he had ever completed.

Situated on the right side of the east face, *Slipstream* weeps from the serac edge of the Columbia Icefields. The upper section is visible from the Information Centre near the Athabasca Glacier parking lot.

Approach Access (and the full view) is gained by driving about 1 km north of the Information Centre and parking on the flats at the bottom of a small hill. Ski up gravel flats and onto the moraines leading to the route. Park the skis near the bottom of the face and climb right of a small icefall to the prominent snow cone at the base. 2-2.5 hours.

The initial 500 m consists of rolling terrain that is often covered in snow. The first pitch encountered is the crux, a full 50 m of classic WI 4 climbing. Then

climb a snow slope (avalanche-prone) to the upper pitches. Three rope lengths of varied and sustained climbing leaves you at the final snow slope. This is one of the most dangerous features on the route, a perfect bowl in the fetch of spindrift blowing off the icecap. It is 80-90 m long and leads up to the right-hand margin of the ice cap. Once you safely make it to the edge of the glacier ice, it's almost in the bag and you're soon to be rewarded for all the toil of getting to this point. The exit pitch climbs onto the edge of the serac between the east and north faces. The view down either side will leave your mind spinning! Either climb the ice arête or boldly traverse onto the north face proper and climb steep water ice to the cornice and then the top. The position near the top of the route is unbeatable.

Lauchlan Original Finish VI, WI 6

On the first ascent of *Slipstream*, Jim Elzinga and John Lauchlan climbed directly over the serac barrier via a long, ferocious pillar of water ice that only occasionally forms. It is likely no one has repeated this original finish, as everyone heads right up the snow slope.

Aggressive Treatment 925 m VI, 5.8, WI 4

In the gully immediately left of *Slipstream* is *Aggressive Treatment*. It is less a waterfall and more a difficult and serious winter alpine route. It is included here for completeness and in tribute to the exceptional climbers that completed it. The route starts at the same snow cone as *Slipstream* then heads into the gully system to the left. A bivouac was required at about two-thirds height. See the *Canadian Alpine Journal*, Vol. 65, pp. 37-8, 1982.

Borderline 800 m VI, WI 5

An immense piece of ice under house-sized seracs, *Borderline* hardly ever forms. "Thank God," claim the first ascensionists, as if it should compel people to climb it when it does form. The name more than adequately describes the level of risk you are taking on this adventure. *Borderline* is found two gullies left of *Aggressive Treatment*.

Approach To reach the route, climb up the snow cone below *Slipstream* and then traverse the crevassed glacier below the face. In recent years, the gully left of *Borderline* is more common to form and on occasion has remained formed year round. This unclimbed line is swept by seracs virtually daily.

The first half of the route climbs WI 3 ice to a steep headwall. Continue up four pitches of steeper ice to the serac barrier. The first ascensionists found a complicated but easy exit through crevasses to reach the top.

Sunwapta Canyon

The following three routes are found in Sunwapta Canyon. The climbs are visible from a viewpoint another 1.5 km up the Tangle Hill. The canyon is a severe terrain trap for rockfall and avalanches; even the smallest slide could bury you in this restricted canyon. It is likely these routes form every year, but this canyon still receives very little traffic so it is unknown if there are new water ice or mixed routes to be done.

Parking Park 4.5 km past the Icefields Information Centre just outside the "No Stopping-Avalanche Area" sign and before the road starts going up Tangle Hill. Walk north along the river bed for about 1 km into the canyon.

JD 85 m III, WI 2

Approach The first waterfall on the right extending from the bottom of the canyon toward the highway (83 C/6 813894) is JD. It is usually best done last as an exit to the highway.

It is very low-angle ice with a couple of steeper sections.

Descent Rappel the route and continue to others, or continue to the highway and a point about 300 m south of the viewpoint.

Miller Time 45 m III, WI 2

Approach Continue past JD and just past a left-hand bend is a large keystone wedged into the canyon. *Miller Time* flows over either side of the keystone (83 C/6 809897).

The chockstone is most commonly climbed on the left side finding a nice pitch up to 80° to a tree belay.

Descent Rappel to the canyon floor and climb two short icefalls on the east side to exit the canyon.

First Lead 55 m III, WI 2

Approach This is the large falls downstream from *Miller Time* (83 C/6 808897). Remarkably it can form across the entire width of the canyon.

Climb 30 m to a nice ledge belay followed by a short steep step which leads to the top and a tree belay.

Descent Rappel from trees to canyon floor and exit as for *Miller Time*.

Tangle Hill

The following routes are all found on and around Tangle Hill. This is a large hill that the road climbs over to avoid Sunwapta Canyon.

Harder Than it Looks 75 m II, WI 4

This is a short route with an even shorter approach.

Approach Drive 3.8 km north of the Icefields Information Centre and park a short ways before the road starts climbing over Tangle Hill. Walk back (south) to the route. It faces Mount Snowdome and is in a shallow gully system above an "It is unlawful to feed wildlife" sign (83 C/3 823880). The route lies in a signed avalanche area so don't stop (or climb for that matter) here in 'iffy' conditions.

The first WI 2 pitch runs onto the scree slope and may be up to 45 m. The second 30 m crux offers an often anaemic vertical pillar.

Descent Double rope rappel off large blocks at the top.

Propane Puppets 40 m II, 5.7, WI 4

Approach This is a short distance left of *Harder Than it Looks*. Another potential smear can sometimes be seen in a left-facing corner right of *Harder Than it Looks*.

Climb easy ice to a corner with mixed climbing past a large chockstone at the top.

Descent Rappel the route.



Tina Pooley

Tangle Creek

Tangle Creek 60 m I, WI 2

This is a classic practice and beginner's area located on the north side of Tangle Hill on the east side of the road. Good bulgy ice with lots of variety and a number of different lines that always form.

Approach Park in the plowed signed parking lot on the west side of the road 7.4 km north of the Icefields Information Centre or 10.3 km south of the Beauty Creek Hostel (83 C/6 805906). Walk across the road and start climbing in less than 5 minutes.

Descent Rappel from trees.

Stutfield Glacier

The Stutfield Glacier cirque is one of the most beautifully tortured valleys within the Icefields. A flat, open plain leads to complex moraines and a multitude of hanging glaciers pouring (literally) off the icecap. In winter, the valley has a number of impressive waterfalls that stream upwards for hundreds of metres and it's disappointing that there are few safe routes in the area as most are threatened by active serac fall. Someday, someone will attempt one of the several unclimbed lines in this valley. Good luck; you'll need it.

Echo Madness 250 m V, WI 4

This fine route is located on a truncated spur in the middle of the headwall at the back of the cirque. The route is obvious on the middle of this spur, but doesn't always form.

Approach To reach Stutfield Glacier cirque and *Echo Madness*, park at the Mount Kitchener viewpoint 1.7 km north of Tangle Creek. Head down the slope to the river. Continue up the broad valley to the route.

Climb four increasingly difficult pitches. Several unclimbed WI 5 pitches may be found above, but are usually rather thin.

Descent Rappel the route.

Cerca Del Mar 160 m V, WI 5+

"Near the Ocean" is located "mostly out of harms way of serac fall" as the route itself parallels the seracs. The first ascent team watched several large avalanches from the "relatively safe vantage of the climb." Marine fossils abound in the rock. Understandably, the name denotes the "feel" of the place with a constant crashing of "water" and a feeling of insignificance in a vast place. It is unclear if



Cerca Del Mar



Echo Madness.

Photo: Brad Wroblecki

the route is visible from the highway, if it forms regularly, or if the approach is threatened by seracs. Hazards aside, it is certainly a great route.

Approach As for *Echo Madness* on the far left side of the cirque.

Pitch one climbs 50 m of WI 4 to a large snow ledge. Another WI 3 pitch leads to a cave belay on the right side of the route. A final WI 5+ pitch leads to lower angled ice which can be climbed for a couple more pitches if desired.

Descent Rappel the route.

Tangle Ridge

Melt Out 100 m III, WI 3

Approach Park 3.6 km north of Tangle Creek or 6.7 km south of Beauty Creek Hostel near the "Approaching Columbia Icefields Area" and "Yield to Snowplows and Sanders" signs. The top of *Melt Out* is barely visible about 300 m south of here and it forms regularly. Walk or ski up the road cut and head up a faint drainage on the east side of the road, through trees to the base (83 C/6 784932).

Two short pitches of undulating ice lead to a low-angle final pitch. Protectable rock belays are available on the left as you climb up.

Descent Scramble down the left side or rappel the route.

Bastarir Sirdar 110 m IV, WI 5

Approach This piece of ice was long-known way above *Melt Out*, but it took years for someone to gather enough gumption to make the 4-5 hour trudge to find out what it's all about. There are several smears in the area and it is unsure which is *Bastarir Sirdar*.

The route starts with 60 m of thin, hard to protect ice. This is followed with a 50 m WI 4+ pillar that eases off after 20 m.

Descent Rappel the route.

Sister Moon 140 m III, WI 4+

This route, capped by a large overhanging wall, spills out of a hole on the right side of a cliff. It rarely forms completely, but will be obvious when it does.

Approach Park along the road 4.8 km north of Tangle Creek, or at the unmarked Woolley Creek pull-out, 0.5 km north. Approach through sparse trees to the right of the route, about 45 minutes.

The climb is three pitches high and narrow near the top.

Descent Rappel the route.

Curtain Call 125 m IV, WI 6

A very experienced climber once described this climb, "On the first pitch you have to climb up these 'psycho' bobbles of unconsolidated ice two feet deep and then sacrifice an arm to put in any protection." Indeed, this is an awesome route that can be one of the scariest-looking routes around. Not long ago, it could go several seasons without an ascent even though it forms every year. Rising standards and several years of fat ice have somewhat diminished its fearsome reputation. The crux, aside from dead vertical ice most of the way, is often the funky overhanging mushrooms that form near the middle of the route. Depending upon the season, they can be at the end of the first pitch or at the start of the second. The steep pillars at the bottom and at the top are often excellent ice.

Approach Park directly below the route at a lone gate along the east side of the highway, 6.4 km north of Tangle Creek. Walk or ski across the open meadow and into the trees. Continue up steep trees and an open area below the route.

Climb up an initial apron to a large ledge below two serious and sustained pitches leading to the top.

Descent To descend, there are two options. From the top of the route traverse right into a large avalanche-prone gully descended easily to the base of the cliff. If the avalanche hazard is unacceptable, rappel the route.

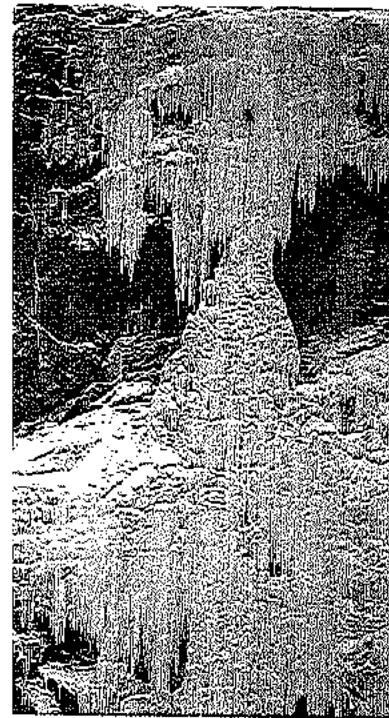


Photo: Chris Noble

Curtain Call.

The Wings and The Stage 50 m III, WI 3

Two wide smears are found about 200 m left of *Curtain Call* in broad concave section of the cliff (83 C/6 783955).

Approach Ski or walk through trees between these routes and *Curtain Call*. Allow at least 1.5 hours. There is avalanche hazard from above.

The Wings are the right-hand smear with *The Stage* to the left. Both offer a number of different lines that are each a full rope length.

Descent Rappel the routes. A fixed rock anchor may be found left of centre on *The Stage*.

Woolley Creek

The best time for these routes is early in the season (November) when you can walk to them and before the avalanche hazard rises. They probably fill out later in the year, but the climbing is most interesting when it's thin. It is unknown if they form regularly. Pitons are advisable for all routes and descents.

Approach Park at a pull-out (no sign) on the east side of the road 5.2 km north of Tangle Creek. Cross to the west side of the Sunwapta River and head up a steep trail on the left side of the canyon until it drops you into Woolley Creek above the canyon. Continue up near tree line and below the large north face of Mount Cromwell. 2 hours. The following four routes are on the cliffband above the creek on the right side.

Lizard Lips 120 m IV, WI 4 R

Approach *Lizard Lips* is the first route you come to (83 C/6 746934) and is the biggest, most obvious line.

Climb a chandeliered, stepped curtain in three pitches.

Descent Rappel the route or the lower-angled gully just to the right.

Winter's Turning 100 m IV, WI 3 R

Approach 100 m left of *Lizard Lips* is a break in the rockband that rises from left to right. *Winter's Turning* pours straight off this break at about half height and hits the bottom of the cliff just left of a couple of large trees. It doesn't reach the top of the cliff.

It is a stepped, thin climb with a short pillar two-thirds of the way up. Another thin smear may exist in a cleft just right of the trees.

Descent Rappel the route.

336 Icefields Parkway

Fast Eddies Falls 100 m IV, WI 3 R

Approach On the left side of the right-trending break from which *Winter's Turning* starts is another aesthetic smear.

Climb up and left on thin icicles and smears for several pitches. In some years the route may reach the top of the cliff.

Descent Rappel the route.

Salamander's Tail 120 m IV, WI 4+

Approach This route is in a deep gully and is the farthest left of the possible routes on this cliffband. It is impossible to see until you go slightly past it and look back into the gash about 500 m left of *Lizard Lips* (83 C/6 743933).

A steep initial pitch leads to two more pitches of WI 3 ice.

Descent Rappel the route or traverse under avalanche-prone slopes to the *Lizard Lips* descent.

The Silver Saviour 60 m IV, WI 5+

Approach From the other Woolley creek climbs continue up the creek and up and left onto the glacier below the north face of Mount Cromwell. Beware of normal glacier hazards. The route is situated on the left side of the face about 500 m left of a deep gully that marks the start of the *Arbic/Robinson* alpine route (83 C/6 738912). 3 hours. Other ice lines may be present.

The route begins below the glacier ice in a moat. Climb 15 m of classic overhanging mushrooms which lead to 30 m of very steep, fragile ice followed by 15 m of WI 4. A light rock rack may be useful for the belays.

Descent Rappel the route.

Beauty Creek

This, the major drainage north of *Curtain Call*, has for years been home to one classic, oft-climbed route. During the last decade numerous new routes have been completed upstream from *Shades of Beauty*. Because of inconsistent formation, poor memories and stubborn personalities it is confusing to make sense of the established routes. A few are known definitively, but the rest are left up to your own rediscovery.

Parking Park in a plowed pull-out 7.9 km north of Tangle Creek or 2.4 km south of Beauty Creek Hostel. From the parking lot take the signed hiking trail next to the creek, cross an old road and continue up the drainage on the left side of the creek. Skis may be helpful for the first km, but once you start gaining elevation up Beauty Creek it's easier to walk.

Rick Blak Memorial Route 50 m III, WI 5
Named in memory of Jasper resident Rick Blak who died in a caving accident.

Approach 100 m right of *Shades of Beauty*. This pillar rarely forms and is often seen only as a 5-10 m smear of ice at the bottom of the cliff. When formed it is easily visible from the Parkway.

50 m of steep ice leads to a scree ledge and a natural chockstone belay.

Descent Rappel from the chockstone.

Shades of Beauty 120 m III, WI 4

A classic climb—easy for its grade. The top of *Shades of Beauty* is visible from the Parkway.

Approach Keep going until below the obvious route. Hike up the slope (avalanche-prone) to the base (83 C/6 795962). 1.5 hours or less if the trail is good.



Shades of Beauty.

The first tier leads to a nice ledge below a 12-15 m curtain of steep ice. Climb this to a larger ledge. The final pitch climbs a long sustained section to a broad ledge below a rock overhang.

Descent Traverse left 50 m and rappel off a tree. There are also 2 bolts on the rock above. Scramble back to the base.

Stanley Falls Senior 45 m III, WI 4

Approach Directly across the valley from *Shades of Beauty* is a pretty one pitch route that gets lots of sun, and is easily combined-climbed in the same day (83 C/6 794967).

Rambling ice leads to a steep pillar and the top. Don't try to go back from the edge of the climb; water leaches from the scree and ice doesn't usually extend past the top of the climb. Good belay ledges and bulges of ice are found near the top.

Descent Rappel the route from the ice.

Chalkstoned 60 m III, 5.8, WI 3

Approach Just left of *Stanley Falls* is a gully with a mixed line of character.

Climb a narrow flow of plate ice to a huge chockstone. Climb past the chockstone to an old bolt, then a rock corner to easy ice.

Descent Rappel the route.

Free and Focused 30 m IV, WI 5 R

About an hour past *Shades of Beauty* is a limestone cliffband about half a kilometre long. Two obvious 45-50 m blue pillars are the obvious lines and it is unclear if they have been climbed. Lying between these two pillars are three beautiful, short mixed climbs.

Approach This route is located 5 m right of the obvious left-hand pillar.



Sunwapta Falls.

Climb a very narrow vein for 5 m then hook a free-hanging pillar 1 m away. Continue up the pillar on 3-5 cm ice for 20 m to the top.

Descent Rappel the route from fixed pitons.

Soul Asylum 25 m IV, 5.7, WI 4+

Approach This route is 200 m right of *Free and Focused*.

Climb a rock chimney with a smear of ice on one side for 6 m to a chockstone. Hook around this to a steep and delicate pillar to the top.

Descent Rappel the route

Unnamed 25 m IV, WI 4

Approach This is the short thin pillar farthest right along the wall.

Sunwapta Falls 65 m III, WI 3

Directly above the parking lot for the *Beauty Creek* climbs are two narrow canyons tucked into the trees.

Approach Follow the trail as for *Shades of Beauty*. Then bushwhack more directly to the route(s).

The canyons lie several hundred metres apart and both contain several short pitches of rolling ice.

Descent Rappel the routes or climb out of the gully and descend through trees.

Wapta Falls am I Doing Here?

30 m, III, WI 3

Approach On the west face of Sunwapta Peak, ski or snowshoe 45 minutes to the first gully left (north) of *Sunwapta Falls*.

WI 2 rambling ice leads to the main climb.

Descent Rappel the route.

North Ranger Creek

Ranger Creek is located on the Banff-Jasper Highway 6 km north of *Sunwapta Falls*. The climbs are located in and on a series of gullies and cliffs that split a large rockband on an unnamed mountain east of the highway. It is difficult to see any ice from the road except when driving north and looking north. This area has good sun exposure, amazing views of peaks to the west and great potential for mixed climbing. There is avalanche hazard on the final approach and slopes above. Note: the climbs are not found up the proper Ranger Creek drainage, but the next drainage north.

Approach Park along the highway at the signed Ranger Creek campsite. Walk or ski up the bank into a large open area. Look for flagging tape to lead you north-

east through trees and eventually across Ranger Creek. The trail takes you through generally open forest, across a gully and into a swampy meadow where you can finally see where you are going. Continue in the trees until you enter an obvious drainage and start gaining more elevation. After a short while you will be forced into the creek bed and up open slopes to the climbs. 2 hours.

Two Times a Loser 25 m III, WI 4

There are two obvious pillars a few metres apart that seep out of the cliff on the left. The route is appropriately named after one person twice forgot their climbing skins and other gear. The right-hand pillar is longer than its neighbour and has a bolt station. The left pillar doesn't always form.

Alpine Gully

If you continue walking along the cliff from the base of *Two Times a Loser* you will enter a gully that leads to the top of the cliff and over small ice steps. This is called Alpine Gully and the next climbs are found atop it.

Trojan Curfew 35 m III, WI 4

This big flow of blue ice is hidden from view until you are in Alpine Gully and look left. The right side is shorter and vertical and the left is easier with a short steep pillar to finish.

Fluff and Jays Wild Ride 25 m III, WI 3

Near the top of Alpine Gully there is a flow of ice on the right-hand side. Climb it to the top of the cliffband with amazing views.

Hard Charger 100 m IV, WI 5+

This infrequently formed route is found in the second gully from the right. Climb a thin stretch of ice to a short steep pillar. The pillar leads to a ledge and a tree on the right. Continue to the crux pillar above and then easier ice.

Descent Rappel the route from trees.

Winston Churchill Range -- Northern Icefields

Ambivalence Falls 300 m V, WI 3

Albeit threatened by seracs throughout, this is a beautiful, classically-narrow line snaking through the headwall of Diadem Creek.

Approach Park 1.6 km north of the Beauty Creek Hostel at the Mushroom Peak/Tangle Ridge viewpoint. Cross the Sunwapta River and ski up Diadem Creek to its headwall. 2.5 hours.

Climb the obvious line through the headwall to the serac barrier. Traverse left to where a few metres of mixed climbing puts you onto the glacier above.

Descent Travel north across the glacier (away from the obvious north face of Mount Diadem) until you can enter an avalanche-prone gully that brings you down to the valley floor. A large ridge line north of the gully may be a safer descent.

Lust for Life 200 m, V, WI 4

Approach As for *Ambivalence Falls*, but 50-80 m to the left.

Climb generally good, fat WI 3 with the final pitch being WI 4 owing to its thinner and sustained, near-vertical nature.

Descent Rappel the route.

Wild Fire 180 m V, WI 6

A modern ice route offering difficult and sustained climbing. It is unknown if it forms regularly, but if it does, should become a classic.

Approach Park 4 km north of the Mushroom Peak/Tangle Ridge pull-out. Ski up the first drainage north of Diadem Creek. *Wildfire* is located on the north face of Peak 2840 m (83 C/6 725000). 2-3 hours.

45 m of vertical, thin and intricate ice leads to a hanging belay. 20 m of easier ice leads to a vertical pillar and a piton belay on the right. Climb the pillar and two easier pitches to the top.

Descent Rappel the route from pitons and ice. On the first ascent, no anchor was found at the top of the route so they rappelled off two large equalized rocks buried into the snow.

Timorous Beauty 100 m IV, WI 3

Location 300 m left of *Wildfire*.

This broad curtain ends in a cliff face. Nothing more is known about the route.

DAVID THOMPSON HIGHWAY

The key word found in early descriptions of the David Thompson area is "bushwhack." Under heavy snow conditions a lot of gumption is required to reach some of these climbs. However, the area generally receives less snow than routes closer to the Continental Divide and travel is usually easy. Some approaches are longer than average, but the climbing is usually worth it and you are likely to be alone. This is the east leg of a 'Golden Triangle' (with Mounts Wilson and Murchison) formed around the Saskatchewan River Crossing. This area contains over one-tenth of the routes in the entire range. *Kitty Hawk* and *Nothing but the Breast* are as good as they come and should not be missed.

Getting There

From the south or north Follow the Icefields Parkway (Highway 93) north from near Lake Louise for 110 km to the Saskatchewan River. The David Thompson Highway junction is 300 m north of the crossing. This same intersection is 120 km south of Jasper.

From the east Highway 11 can be reached from Red Deer by driving west to Nordegg, about 50 km from the main climbing area and 98 km from the Icefields Parkway.

Finding the routes

The climbs are described from west to east. Distances given in the descriptions are measured from the junction of the David Thompson Highway and the Icefields Parkway and indicate roughly where to park and begin the approach. Most are visible from the highway.

Facilities

The Crossing Resort at Saskatchewan River Crossing is closed from mid-November to March 1. When open, there are rooms available, gas, a cafeteria and bar. The David Thompson Resort near the Cline River is closed in winter. Climbers from the Banff area usually stay at the Rampart Creek Hostel 12.3 km north of Saskatchewan River Crossing on the Icefields Parkway. If approaching from Edmonton or Red Deer, the Shunda Creek Hostel is a short distance west from Nordegg on Highway 11 and only 30-60 minutes from the climbs. An updated log book on David Thompson climbs is usually maintained at the hostel. Nearest gas or supplies are in Nordegg to the east, Lake Louise to the south or Jasper to the north.

Emergency

Contact the Lake Louise Warden Office. From west to east, pay phones are at the following locations: warden office on the south side of the Saskatchewan River, at the Crossing Resort, along the east side of the highway 28.4 km east of the Icefields Parkway, across from Cavalcade Campground (*Two O'Clock Falls*), at the David Thompson Resort 43.5 km east of the Parkway and in Nordegg. See page 400.

Maps

82 N/15 Mistaya Lake
83 C/2 Cline River
83 C/1 Whiterabbit Creek

Owen Creek

Ceramic Engineer 70 m III, WI 3

This climb is found in Owen Creek just east of Mount Wilson (83 C/2 227643).

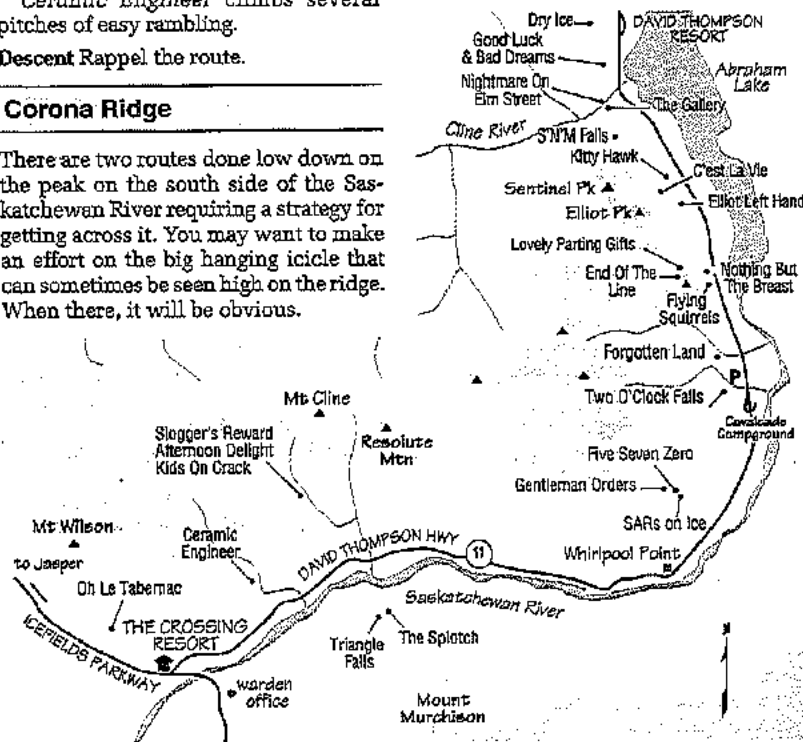
Approach Park 5.9 km from the Parkway. Hike just over 1 km northwest into the creek drainage, continue upstream for another kilometre. Several routes can be seen on the west wall 150 m above the creek. In fact, there may be up to half a dozen routes here.

Ceramic Engineer climbs several pitches of easy rambling.

Descent Rappel the route.

Corona Ridge

There are two routes done low down on the peak on the south side of the Saskatchewan River requiring a strategy for getting across it. You may want to make an effort on the big hanging icicle that can sometimes be seen high on the ridge. When there, it will be obvious.



David Thompson Highway

342 David Thompson Highway

The Splotch 60 m III, WI 3

Approach Drive down Highway 11, 8.5 km from the Parkway. Two climbs are across the river on a lower buttress between Murchison Creek and Corona Creek (82 N/15 258595). Ford the river (knee-deep, and possibly frozen) and follow old logging roads. Bushwhack 1.5 hours to the base.

The Splotch is the left-hand falls of good sustained climbing at 70-75°.

Descent Rappel the route.

Triangle Falls 60 m III, WI 3

Approach 200 m to the right of *The Splotch*. Do both the same day so you never have to go back.

Similar climbing to, but not as sustained as *The Splotch*.

Descent Rappel the route.

Thompson Creek

The routes in this area were discovered during a failed winter ascent on Mount Cline. Located roughly 3 hours up Thompson Creek, there are no crowds here! The snow gets quite deep as you get close to the routes, so skis or snowshoes are recommended. Up to 10 routes may form along a 500 m section of the rockband. As far as we know, only 4 of the routes have been climbed. There is serious avalanche danger from above all of the routes, as well as on the final approach slope to the base of the routes.

Approach Park near the Thompson Creek Bridge, 3 km east of the park boundary. Proceed up the creek for about 1 km until you reach a fork in the creek. Take the left fork and follow the creekbed for another 3 km to the climbs, which come into view on your left. About 2 hours (83 C/2 227644). The routes are described from left to right.

Descent All routes, descend by rappel.

Slogger's Reward 35 m IV, WI 4

Approach This is the left-most of four high quality routes found at the right end of the wall. There are a collection of routes on the left half of the wall that are unclimbed.

Climb a steepening pillar of good ice.

Afternoon Delight 45 m IV, WI 4

Approach 10 m right of *Slogger's Reward*.

A big free-standing pillar of good ice.

Men In Black 30 m IV, WI 3

Approach Found in the middle of the wall 30 m left of *Kids On Crack*.

A fat, wide flow of WI 3.

Kids On Crack 25 m IV, WI 4

Approach This is the farthest right of the established routes, there may be 2 more routes farther right.

Start with a 10 m vertical curtain followed by easier ice to the top.

Whirlpool Point

SARs on Ice 30 m III, WI 3-4

From Whirlpool Point itself, a series of seepages can be seen high on the ridge to the north. SARs is the lowest (83 C/1 369635). This small step makes an ideal approach for several other smears.

Approach Park at a large clearing just east of Whirlpool Point 22.5 km from the Parkway. Bushwhack to the base. 1 hour.

Climb a near vertical pillar on the right with easier ice to the left.

Descent Continue on to other routes or rappel the route.

Five Seven Zero 100 m III, WI 4

A fine climb with good views.

Approach It is highly recommended to climb SARs on Ice, then keep right to avoid the cliffband between the two climbs. Otherwise, from Whirlpool Point intercept the lower (eastern) of two parallel ridges which is followed to the base in 1 hour. The first crux pitch cannot be seen until you are very near the start of the climb.

David Thompson Highway 343

Peskett Creek

This creek is named in memory of Les Peskett who was killed by rockfall here. It is the obvious long and winding drainage between Ernest Ross and Elliot Peaks. It is home to at least one significant unformed dagger as well as the following ice routes. Happy hunting.

Lovely Parting Gifts 65 m III, WI 3

Approach Park 35.4 km from the Parkway. Follow the right-hand stream bank coming from the canyon and drop into the streambed at the last possible moment. Clamber up some short ice steps and a boulder field to a fork where the canyon opens slightly. To reach *Lovely Parting Gifts*, take the left-hand canyon and look for this climb on the right-hand wall of the canyon just before you reach *End of the Line* (83 C/1 376733).

The climb fills out later in the season, getting easier. As a result it can be as difficult as WI 4 or only WI 2. A single bolt is located up and left at the top of the main ice flow. A second single bolt station is found 40 m down on a thin slanting rock ledge to the left. It is advisable to bring additional bolts for these anchors.

Descent Rappel the route.

End of the Line 100 m III, WI 3

This route is the obvious waterfall at the end of the left-hand canyon (83 C/1 375733). When approaching the route, beware of an avalanche path on the left. Allow 2 hours in deep snow.

The first pitch sports a bolt belay and begins at 80° then eases off. Near the top of the pitch is an interesting rock/ice chimney problem followed by a jammed log belay (this may not be a permanent feature, so be prepared). Another less

steep pitch goes up for a full rope length and two bolts on the right.

Descent Rappel the route.

Mount Elliot

This large peak has an impressive east aspect with three prominent gullies splitting the face. All three have been climbed and all three are subject to extreme avalanche hazard. For better or worse, the snow conditions here can change rapidly as this area tends to go from one weather extreme to the next more rapidly than areas farther west.

Elliot Left-Hand Gully 200 m III, WI 4

This is the left-hand of three prominent gullies on Elliot Peak. Interesting and varied climbing leads to a hidden, sustained pitch.



Dion Bretziol on Elliot Left-Hand Gully.

Approach Park 36.3 km from the Parkway where the blue ice on the first pitch is easily visible. Bushwhack for 1 hour to the base (83 C/1 371755).

50 m of 70-80° wet ice leads into the narrow slot. Wind upwards on more moderate ice and snow to the final curtain. A wide and long pitch of steep ice eases toward the top.

Descent Rappel the last pitch from a tree to the left. Rappel and downclimb the rest of the route. Some fixed anchors may be present.

C'est La Vie 35 m IV, WI 4+

Many avalanches have been seen roaring down this gully, hence the original name of *The Grand Central Gully*. *C'est la Vie* was first climbed only after finding a team on every other route between there and *The Weeping Wall*. It is the middle and largest of the three prominent avalanche gullies on Elliot Peak. It is important to venture onto the route only after the upper bowls have avalanched. The climb is located in a right-hand branch very high up and is seen from the road as a nice blue pillar (83 C/1 355757). Lots of small steps and snow climbing is required to reach the main pillar.

Approach Park below the gully and walk through the trees. Follow the rib to the left of the drainage to the base of the cliffband in about an hour.

A short ice step leads into the narrow gully that winds up to a final mixed step where the gully opens up. Continue past an ice step to a right-forking gully, climb past another ice step to the final pitch, a very pretty free-standing curtain of good ice.

Descent Rappel and downclimb the route. The mixed step can be rappelled (double ropes required) off a small but very sturdy tree on the left.



Photo: Eric Dumontac Unicorn and Kitty Hawk.

Kitty Hawk 200 m IV, WI 5

Simply the best David Thompson route, *Kitty Hawk* is a classic with an ambience similar to *Polar Circus* or *The Sorcerer*. It forms every year and is a true sandbag at its original rating of WI 4. The name originated from the first attempt in 1980 that ended with a leader fall on the penultimate pitch, "a real whipper" requiring an improvised rescue and several stitches. After several false starts and partner epics, the first ascensionist finally succeeded in a rope solo of the upper pitches. Later on the descent, he broke through a snow crust and lacerated his thigh with an ice tool, requiring 26 stitches. A quality, high end mixed route called *Unicorn (M7)* has been established on the drips commonly gracing the left wall at the start of the route. See *Mixed Climbs*.

Approach Kitty Hawk is the farthest right of the three prominent gullies on Elliot Peak and is obvious from the road (83 C/1 366763). Park below the route 38.5 km from the Parkway and approach for an hour.

Climb two easy pitches into the narrow slot and the base of steeper ice. Start with a WI 3 to an unsheltered belay. A long pitch of good technical WI 4 leads to the base of the crux pillar. The next difficult pitch climbs over large overhanging mushrooms onto a vertical pillar. From a platform above, an easier pitch leads to the top.

Descent Rappel the route. As of 1993-94 the route is littered with some very frightening single bolt anchors. Do not trust them. Adequate ice anchors can be found.

Sentinel Mountain

S'N'M Falls 150 m III, WI 3

This route on Sentinel Mountain, is visible from the Cline River Bridge, 42 km from the Parkway. It is found low down in the right-most indistinct gully, below which is a prominent avalanche swath.

Approach From the parking lot on the south side of the bridge, hike or ski along Pinto Lake Trail. Eventually take to the trees and work your way along scree and boulders to the base; allow 2-3 hours (83 C/1 343774).

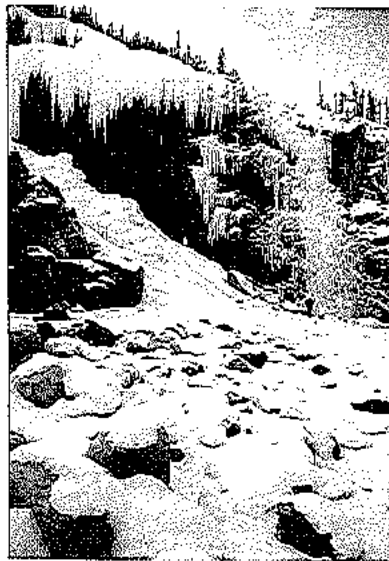
Climb three pitches of undulating ice ending in a long snow gully.

Descent Cross into the trees to the right. Work your way down without difficulty.

Cline River Gallery

This is a series of curtains, pillars and short nasties that spread along the south side of the Cline River Canyon offering many lines up to a rope length (WI 2-5+ to M6). In the past the climbs have been hard to locate. Increased traffic will likely make a trail easier to find. There are also a number of unreported, completed routes far up the Cline River Valley.

Approach Park at the Pinto Creek trailhead 42.5 km from the Icefields Parkway. From the back of the old gravel quarry, pick up the popular summer hiking trail. Follow this for 15 minutes to a grove of poplar trees. A few hundred metres into the grove the trail heads up a hill. As it does so a small hill rises on the left behind which is a faint draw. Either follow the draw through bush or hike



The Hoogstraten

Pure Energy.

along its upper left shoulder to a broad open hillside descending to the river. At the bottom of the hill locate a dry gully through the cliffs that will deposit you at the edge of the river and the climbs (83 C/1 345789). 30 minutes.

Pure Energy 30 m II, WI 4+

Pure Energy forms consistently and usually quite well. It is the right-hand massive pillar that descends to the waters edge. A WI 3 ramp can be found to the left.

Are You Afraid of the Dark? 30 m III, WI 5

Just left of *Pure Energy* is a large rock overhang separating that route from the rolling terrain and ice ramps to the left. In 1990, a thin sheet formed off the overhang and made for an exciting climb called *Are You Afraid of the Dark?* Most years it vainly attempts to reach the ground. I suggested in the 1994 edition, "don't let that stop you." It hasn't. Two mixed routes are now on the wall. See *Mixed Climbs*.

Splashdown A & B 30 m III, WI 4+

Upstream from *Pure Energy* are two steep ice flows going right into the water. The water is rarely frozen so don't try to approach the climbs up the canyon. You will likely need no encouragement in this regard.

Approach Snow covered ice near the lip of the canyon can make it tricky getting to the top of the climbs. Be careful. Rappel to the base and claw your way out. These climbs are usually top roped from the rim.

The ice is occasionally not well attached to the wall. They form often, but in varying quality.

Nightmare on Elm Street 45 m III, WI 3

This route lies on the north side of the Cline River Canyon and is separate from the main Gallery climbs.

Approach Follow the major trail that starts just north of the Cline River bridge until the first reasonably-sized grove of poplar trees on the left and the trail begins to descend. Bushwhack directly toward the river and search for a clearing along the edge of the canyon. Two large trees at the edge of the canyon are marked with flagging tape above the climbs (83 C/1 347791). The Gallery ice climbs should be visible across the river at this point. 1 hour or less depending on conditions. A 50 m rappel takes you into the canyon (beware of open water).

The climb is one pitch of moderate ice, steeper at the bottom.

Mount Stelfox

Good Luck & Bad Dreams 150 m III, WI 4

A David Thompson classic! This climb is located above the heli-pad between the Cline River bridge and the David Thompson Resort. It rarely forms completely and may not see any ice whatsoever in the bowl. Since it rarely forms it may make a fine mixed route. A mixed route called *MacBeath* (M6, WI5) can sometimes form in the fourth main gully to the north. Beware of rockfall in warm temperatures.

Approach Park as for *Nightmare on Elm Street* and hike for 45 minutes (83 C/1 347805).

The first crux pitch begins as a pillar for 25 m. Continue up 50 m of rolling ice. The third 50 m pitch rears to 80° ending at a nice belay ledge. The final

pitch starts steep then eases off to the open area at the apex of the great funnel above. Another ribbon of ice may be present above.

Descent A walk off is possible through the trees and off the backside toward the Cline River. Otherwise, rappel the route.

Dry Ice 400 m IV, WI 3

45.3 km from the Icefields Parkway is a fine route that forms almost every year. It is in the left-most of two obvious gullies which are subject to extreme avalanche hazard.

Approach From the swamps near the David Thompson Resort, bushwhack through open forest and then poplar trees to the creekbed near the bottom of the climb (83 C/1 346835). 1.5 hours

Climb six steps of ice with the second being the longest. Farther up is a classic WI 3 pitch followed by the crux pitch. Climb two more steps then finish with a 20 m pitch. Further exploration will not reveal any ice farther up the gully.

Descent Rappel the route.

Mount Abraham

Captain's Log 110 m III, WI 3

Approach Located across Abraham Lake south of Mount Abraham. Wait until the lake freezes, then cross the lake (objective hazards of ice-fishermen) into the streambed to the base of the climb on the left sidewall (83 C/1 402854). 2 hours.

Climb two undulating pitches in a wild position with lots of fossils in the area.

Descent Rappel the route.

Nordegg

Crescent Falls 25 m II, WI 3

The falls are formed on the Big Horn River pouring over large rock ledges. Only the upper fall has been climbed.

Approach 17.7 km west of Nordegg on Highway 11 turn north onto a difficult road. At a junction, keep left and continue to the falls. Walk down or rappel to the base.

The climb is near the road and is one pitch with tree belays at the top.

Isaac's Wet Dream 35 m II, WI 3+

Approach From the top of *Crescent Falls* find the wooden bridge 75 m upstream on the east bank. Follow the small, non-descript creek to an amphitheatre with ice on the left (83 C/8 431047). The amount of brush and deadfall across the creek can make travel difficult.

The climb is about 20 m wide with a variety of lines. The centre line is usually the driest.

Descent Rappel the route.

JASPER AREA

Although the town of Jasper is the northern Rockies equivalent of Banff, the scene here is much more quiet both in terms of the number of tourists and the amount of waterfall ice. The topography features wider valleys of a less alpine nature than those farther south. As a result, there are few climbs in the vicinity of Jasper. Access is also a problem. Many routes require a walk or ski of two or more hours. This is a perfect area for those willing to go exploring in their quest for new ice routes. This chapter includes all of the routes from the confluence of the Athabasca and Sunwapta Rivers north to the town of Jasper, and from Jasper west to the Continental Divide and east until you run out of mountains.

Getting There

Jasper is reached by a 342 km drive from Edmonton via Highway 16 in about 4 hours or via The Icefields Parkway (Highway 93) from Lake Louise in 2.5 hours. Jasper is served by VIA Rail if you fancy this romantic mode of travel.

Facilities

Jasper has all amenities, including groceries, showers in the coin laundromats and 24-hour gas stations. There are many hotels, but the most reasonably priced lodging is at Whistlers Youth Hostel, 7 km from town. Drive the Icefields Parkway south 2 km to the first road on the right, Whistlers Road, and follow it 3 km to the hostel. A park information centre is located across from the VIA Rail Train Station in the centre of town (Connaught Drive) and the warden office a short distance along Maligne Lake Road, 5 km east of town. Fork left shortly after crossing the Athabasca River Bridge.

Emergency

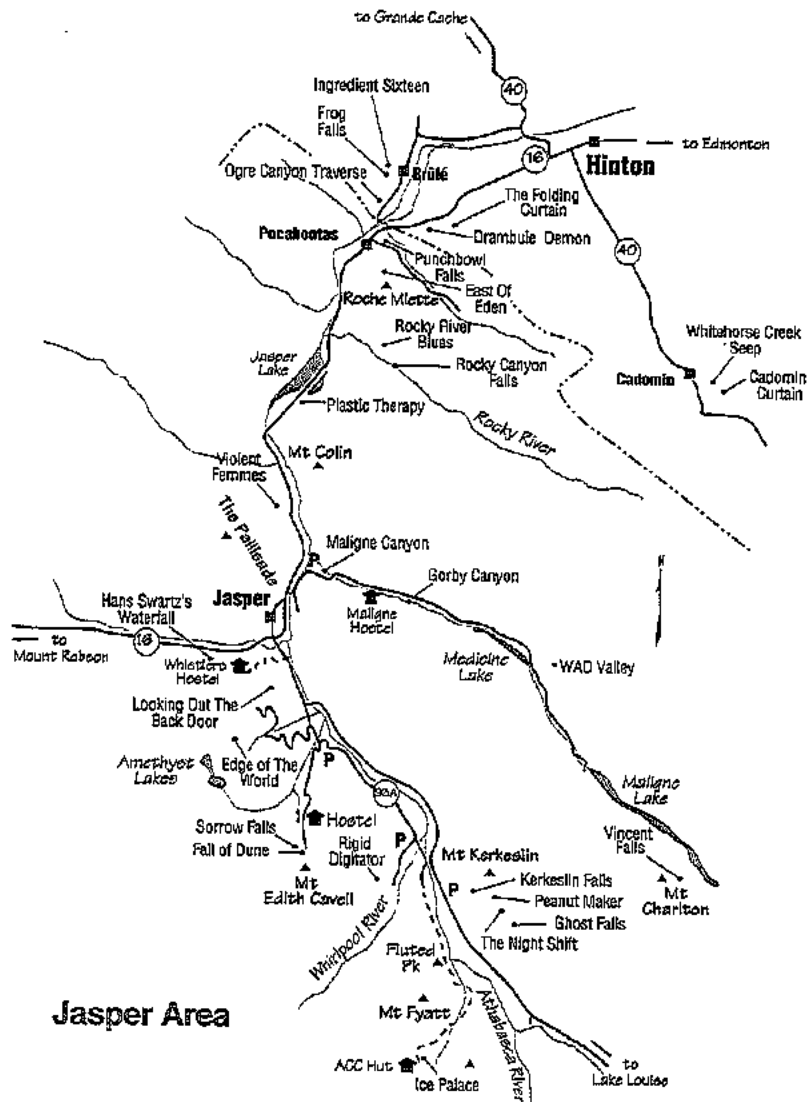
Call the Jasper Park Warden office or the local RCMP detachment. See page 400.

Highway 93

This includes the climbs accessed off the Icefields Parkway (Highway 93) south of town. Jasper is only a one hour drive north of the Columbia Icefields, but the nature of the terrain changes drastically so that there are few roadside waterfalls on this stretch of highway. Major drainages like the Chaba River, Athabasca River, Lick Creek, Divergence Creek and Simon Creek undoubtedly hold new routes, but again they require long ski tour approaches.

Maps

83 C/12 Athabasca Falls



Jasper Area

Fluted Peak

To the south of Mount Geraldine (Unnamed 2910 at 83 C/12 353288) is another unnamed peak, what Jasper locals call Fluted Peak. This is the beautiful peak facing the Icefields Parkway with numerous parallel gullies on the northeast face. In winter they contain obvious and long-looked-at ice lines. Generally fearing a long approach and avalanche hazard, they stayed unclimbed until 1997. There are up to six ice routes visible and only the middle, super thin line (Mirth 4) remains unclimbed.

Slivers of Mirth (5 climbs) 90-120 m V, WI 4-4+

There are many objective hazards on these climbs, primarily avalanche hazard. The routes are all within 0.5 km of each other allowing the option to climb some or all in a day.

Approach Park at the Athabasca Falls parking lot 31 km south of the Jasper townsite. Take the cross country ski trail north on Highway 93A and turn off to the Geraldine Lake Road (before the parking lot) and follow the ski trail for another 5 km. Turn south and bushwhack for 15 minutes into Geraldine Creek. Staying about 60-100 m above the creek, continue traversing south for 3.5 km. At this point, climb about 150 m on steep slopes for 0.5 km to the northeast bowl. Camp at tree line before a huge avalanche run out zone. From tree line all the routes are visible, 30 minutes away. Cross the run out zone to gain the moraine. Snow conditions and desired route will dictate the final approach up the steep slopes to the climbs.

The ice is generally thick and of excellent quality becoming progressively more brutal and weaker near the tops. Generally, the safest line is *Mirth 5*.

Descent Rappel all routes on ice anchors.

Fryatt Creek

Ice Palace 1 & 2 100 m III, WI 2-3

Ice Palace sits in a superb location near the headwaters of Fryatt Creek. From here you can enjoy great views of Brussels Peak. Owing to the long approach from the highway, *Ice Palace* is best climbed from the ACC Sydney Vallance Hut (83 C/12 403174). See page 19.

Approach The tour begins from the Icefields Parkway 7.5 km south of the Athabasca Falls parking lot and tourist centre (closed in winter). Exercise extreme care crossing the Athabasca River—it is fast and deep. If the river is not frozen, cross the bridge at the summer trail beginning at Athabasca Falls. The hut, 13 km from the river crossing, may take most of a day to reach. Refer to *Ski Trail in the Canadian Rockies*.

The climb is two parallel smears on the headwall below the Hut (83 C/12 404177). The approach to the Hut climbs up the hill to the right of the falls. The left-hand line is longer and steeper and gives two good pitches that reach 70° near the top. Both lines exit up snow to the top of the headwall.

Descent Rappel the route.

Mount Kerkeslin

Mount Kerkeslin is the large quartzite peak on the east side of the highway across from the Fryatt Group. Its relatively easy approach and sunny exposure make it a popular destination. There are four major drainages along the south-west side of the peak. All contain ice.

Ghost Falls 175 m III, WI 4

Ghost Falls was the last of the four gullies to be ascended. Two unsuccessful attempts preceded the first ascent. Tricky route finding up forking creekbeds led to its name and reason for at least one failed attempt.

Approach Begin from the entrance of Mount Kerkeslin Campground just south of Athabasca Falls. The top pitch of the climb can be viewed if one drives about 0.5 km south of the campground entrance. A 1 hour hike up the dry creekbed leads to the huge chockstone lodged between the canyon walls. The first ascensionists propped up a log and front pointed over this obstacle. It can also be bypassed by delicate climbing on the left wall of the canyon.

The ice climbing begins with a short 10 m pitch. A normally dry second pitch can be bypassed in the forest to the left. More creekbed walking leads to the first fork, turn right toward the next pitch of ice. Continue walking to the next fork and turn left which leads to the base of the final two pitches of WI 4.

Descent Rappel and downclimb route.

The Night Shift 100 m IV, WI 4

The Night Shift is found in the next drainage north of *Ghost Falls* or two south of *Kerkeslin Falls*.

Approach Park 3.3 km south of the Goat Lookout and just north of the Mount Christie picnic area. Bushwhack to the creekbed and gain about 500 m of vertical to reach the base of the climb (83 C/12 452295) 3 hours.

The climb consists of two 50 m pitches, the first of which is moderately angled on the left side and steeper to the right. The second is a full runout at 80°.

Descent Rappel the route.

Peanut Maker 100 m of ice III, WI 3

One drainage south of *Kerkeslin Falls* you will find five short pitches with lots of walking.

Approach Park 1.5 km south of Goat Lookout where the creekbed of this climb crosses the Highway near the old Fryatt Creek cable crossing. Continue up the drainage for 1.5 hours to the base of the first cliffband.

The first pitch climbs rolling steps of WI 2 in a narrow smooth-walled chute. After 5 minutes of walking, climb a second 20 m pitch in a canyon. Above is the crux third pitch offering 25 m twin columns of ice on either side of a chockstone. Walk another 30 minutes to find the 20 m fourth pitch of easy ice. The fifth and final 25 m pitch is another 10 minutes upstream.

Descent Rappel and downclimb route.

Kerkeslin Falls 310 m III, WI 3

One of the best routes in the Jasper area, *Kerkeslin Falls* is visible from the Parkway in a significant avalanche chute.

Approach Park at Goat Lookout and walk or ski up mixed ground to the base. 30-60 minutes.

The climb consists of good ice steps separated by sections of snow. The best pitches are at the beginning and are up to 40 m high.

About 8 m to the right of the third (last) pitch is a very thin line of mixed climbing. *Kerk's Finger* (27 m 5.8, WI 5) follows a hollow, thin line that periodically forms into a broken pillar a couple of metres wide. A small rock rack is recommended. Traverse left to the top of the waterfall to descend.

Descent Rappel and downclimb the gully.

Highway 93A

Also called the Athabasca Parkway this is a side road on the west side of the Athabasca River that gives access to Whirlpool River, the Mount Edith Cavell Road and Marmot Basin Ski Resort. Winter access onto Highway 93A is off the Icefields Parkway, 7 km south of the Highway 16 intersection.

Maps

83 D/9 Amethyst Lake
83 D/16 Jasper

Looking Out the Back Door 210 m IV, WI 4

Also known as *Peveil Falls*, this route has a large avalanche-prone bowl above the climb. An early season ascent is recommended. It may be possible to check with the Marmot Basin Avalanche team for an update on conditions.

Approach From Highway 93A turn right up the Marmot Basin Ski Area Road and follow it and park at a big bend around Portal Creek. Ski up Portal Creek 7 km and the climb is above the Portal Creek campsite outhouse and is the only obvious climb in the area (83 D/9 223446).

Climb 60 m of moderate ice followed by 20 m of WI 2. Walk 200 m to a third pitch of steep WI 4.

Descent Rappel the top pitch and continue rappelling or downclimb to the right on avalanche prone slopes.

Edge of the World 60 m II, WI 2

This climb makes a good early season warm-up and practice area.

Approach Drive up the Marmot Basin Ski Road and park at the corner of the second last switchback before the entry gate. Walk along an overgrown cutline and follow it north 0.5 km to its end at the lip of a canyon. Rappel to the bottom of the climb (83 D/16 273510).

This is a wide tier that is climbed in two short pitches that increase in difficulty as you move left.

Fall of Dune 50 m IV, WI 4+

This is the obvious flow about 50 m right of the middle portion of the Angel Glacier tongue below Mount Edith Cavell (83 D/9 288367).

Approach Follow Highway 93A for 5 km to a large parking lot for the Mount Edith Cavell Road (pay phone). This is not plowed in winter necessitating a long ski up the road to reach the mountain. It is recommended to stay at the Edith Cavell Hostel, 11 km from Highway 93A. Often there is no house parent, so check at the Whistler Hostel near Jasper for a key. It takes 4-5 hours to ski to the hostel. From the hostel, ski an-

other 3 km up the road to the route which, contrary to a previous description, does not have serac hazard. The views are simply majestic.

The route is one pitch of sustained ice which is usually smooth, thick and hard. Descent Rappel the route.

Sorrow Falls 55 m IV, WI 4

Sorrow Falls is another route to the right of *Fall of Dune* that offers a good way to reach the upper Angel Glacier in winter. There is a tree at the top of the climb and it is easily done the same day as *Fall of Dune*.

Rigid Digitator 120 m III, WI 3

A beautiful climb, *Rigid Digitator* offers expansive views.

Approach Follow Highway 93A to the Meeting of the Waters parking lot which is as far south as the road is plowed. Ski south on Highway 93A for 2 km then turn right up the Whirlpool River Fire Road for another 6.5 km to a summer trail head. Another 0.5 km beyond is the Moab Lake turn-off to the right. The lake is just a short distance down the hill and the climb is located to the right above the lake. Although the approach covers 9 km it gains only 110 m in elevation and takes 2-3 hours.

Climb a sustained 30 m pitch up and slightly right with ice to 85°. Move back left and continue straight up for three more pitches.

Descent Walk off left through trees.

Highway 16 West

This section describes all the routes between Jasper and the B.C. border. Obviously there are more routes than the ones listed. Undoubtedly, many have been climbed over the years, but to date this is the only one offered up.

Swartz's Falls

50 m of climbing II, WI 2

Hans used to water the first pitch to widen it out for teaching purposes and was zealous about guarding its location from the local ice climbing hordes—which amounted to about 3 climbers at the time.

Approach From Jasper head west on Highway 16 toward Prince George. About 12 km along locate a Parks trash bin on the right-hand side of the road apparently situated for no apparent purpose. Park here. Look for the drainage that comes off Whistler's just west of the Gondola station. This is the drainage that the climb is located in. Head along the highway for 50 m and pick up a trail on its left-hand side. Follow the trail to the base, 5 minutes from the car.

Climb 15-20 m of moderate but fun ice with small steps leading to more rolling ice above.

Descent Rappel or downclimb the route.

Maligne Lake Road

Maligne Lake Road branches from Highway 16, five km east of Jasper. The scenic drive and the magnificent Maligne Canyon make this area one of the premier and most popular tourist destinations in Jasper Park. Areas farther up the valley have more recently been explored for rock and ice climbing. The result so far is WAD Valley and there is certainly more to come.

Maps

83 C/11 Southesk Lake
83 C/13 Medicine Lake

Maligne Canyon

Parking Maligne Canyon parking lot is located 3.2 km from the turn-off. Stop at the back of the lot to access the following five routes. The *Maligne Canyon Original Route* follows the floor of the canyon while the other four are found up the canyon walls. From the back of the parking lot follow the main trail to just past the second bridge, hop the fence then walk down into the canyon.

Maligne Canyon Original Route II, WI 3

Approach Follow the trail to the lower end of the canyon. The route is largely horizontal with five short steps of ice, the longest being 35 m in the deepest part of the canyon. It is a beautiful journey up this impressive canyon. The horizontal sections can be very dangerous and require great caution. Water levels will drop leaving ice plates suspended 3 m or more above the river. The climb exits into the parking lot.

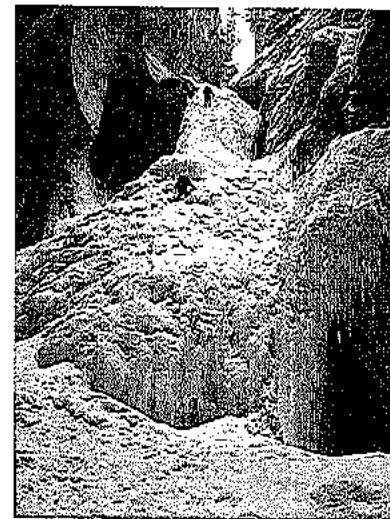


Photo: Dave Thomson

Maligne Canyon.

Fall of Knight 25 m II, WI 2

Approach Found close to the second bridge, this climb is named after the demise of a certain gentleman of that name. Several body lengths of vertical ice ease off to 50°.

Solo Out 15 m II, WI 2

Several lines near *Fall of Knight* can be found on this short climb.

The Queen 35 m II, WI 4

Approach Located just before the fourth bridge on the left-hand wall, *The Queen* is the best route in the canyon and is a classic top rope challenge. It offers steep ice that gets more difficult as it succumbs to the blows of countless climbers.

The Last Wall 30 m II, WI 2

Approach The lowest climb in the canyon, *The Last Wall* has a variety of lines that can be climbed anywhere.

Gorby Canyon

Continue along Maligne Lake Road for 3.2 km to where the road bridges a canyon. Seepages from the canyon walls give nice WI 2 flows that are good for practice and instruction.

The Nutritious Delicious Little Fishes 30 m III, WI 3

Approach Climb Gorby Canyon then walk past the last pitch trending left up the watercourse. After approximately 15 minutes locate the climb issuing from a small cave on a cliffband on the left-hand canyon wall.

WAD Valley

WAD is an acronym for the names of the climbers that first developed this canyon (Wes, Andrew and Dave). It boasts a warm, sunny exposure with several ice and mixed routes. It is also a quality rock climbing destination.

Approach Park 3 km past the Summit/Jacques Lakes parking lot. WAD Valley is the third drainage past the trailhead. Follow the creekbed for 300 m and look for a treeless ridge coming down to the creek from your left. Gain the ridge, moving upward until it enters the trees. Look for a trail that contours around a steep hill until it gradually takes you into the creekbed. Follow it to the climbs. 30-60 minutes.

Descent Some climbs have trees to rappel from, otherwise rappel from ice anchors.

Softly, Softly, Cagey Monkey 40 m II, WI 5+

Approach This is the first climb you get to when approaching. It is a steep, chandelier, often fragile free-standing pillar. Excellent mixed opportunities exist behind.

Boss Hog 40 m II, WI 3-4

Approach This is the wide flow to the right of *Softly, Softly*. You can traverse from the base of that route or head in more directly from lower down on the approach trail. Low-angle ice leads to 15 m of steeper ice.

Spanish Fly 30 m II, 5.9, WI 4+

Location Climb up the low-angled ice on the far right of *Boss Hog*. Launch up a steep, chandeliered pillar to a rock roof. Three bolts protect the moves out the roof to a chain anchor.



Eric Hoogstraaten

Boss Hog.

Fire Drake 35 m II, M6 WI 5+

Approach 30 m right of *Boss Hog*. 10 m of mixed rock and ice lead to a roof and the steep pillar above. Three bolts protect the mixed section, but depending on the amount of ice, bring pitons to supplement them.

The B-Man 15 m II WI 3+

Approach This is the small but steep flow another 50 m right of *Fire Drake*. Various overhanging mixed opportunities present themselves on either side.

GoofsRus 30 m II, WI 2-3

This is a good top roping and play area. There is avalanche hazard from above and from the sidewalls in heavy snow conditions. One anonymous climber once cracked off a slab on the approach and buried his partner.

Approach Drive along the Maligne Lake road to the far end of Medicine Lake. Past the Jacques Lake parking area look for an obvious, wide and treeless drainage about 5 km farther along the road. Park here. Walk up the drainage passing some annoying steps to the base of a south-facing curtain of ice. 5 minutes. Some ice forms occasionally farther up the gully adding a second albeit thin pitch.

Maligne Lake

To date only one route has been explored in the vast mountains around and beyond Maligne Lake.

Vincent Falls 90 m IV, WI 3

If snow conditions are slow, this trip usually requires at least one night out and possibly two. It is located in a remote area at the north end of a group of five seeps on the lower slopes of Mount Charlton just beyond Spirit Island and the narrows of Maligne Lake.

Approach Ski down the lake for 16 km through the narrows and around a sharp peninsula on the west side of the lake. The climb is easily visible on the right as you ski down the lake. Ski or walk through brush and up a creek to the climb; 30 minutes (83 C/11 868308).

Climb a broad ice sheet to a tree followed by another pitch to a tree belay.

Descent Rappel from trees.

Highway 16 East

The following routes are found northeast of Jasper along the Yellowhead Highway (Highway 16) that follows the Athabasca River. It is the largest of the major river valleys in the mountain national parks. This valley is influenced by warmer and windier front range conditions with subsequently little snow on the approaches, which are longer than average. The stark beauty of the area and good quality climbs make up for the length of the approaches. Pay phones are available at Pocahontas, 41 km from Jasper and a small cafe at Folding Mountain Campground, just east of the park gate. The Overlander Lodge, several kilometres farther east, offers a larger restaurant and lodging.

Maps

83 D/16 Jasper
83 F/4 Miette
83 F/5 Entrance

Violent Femmes 50 m III, WI 4+

Violent Femmes is an obscure and ephemeral climb found on The Palisade about 8 km east of Jasper above the Parks Canada gravel pit. If formed, the route is obvious and offers a steep one pitch workout.

Plastic Therapy 100 m II, WI 3

This ice climb is located above the southwest corner of Talbot Lake (Jasper end) on Cinquefoil Mountain. This is a beautiful climb to do in the spring, watching wind surfers on Talbot Lake while climbing plastic ice.

Approach The ice is visible from the road. Make sure you identify which drainage the route is in before heading off. Park on the highway between the south end of Talbot Lake and the smaller Edna Lake. It is a 45 minute approach through large clearings and then fairly open bush until reaching the creekbed draining the climb.

The route begins with short steps that lead to a full 50 m pitch. Above, there is a 10 m, 85° step that leads to other shorter steps.

Descent Walk off to the left following a faint sheep trail, or rappel using trees.

Rocky River Blues 230 m III, WI 4

One of the best routes in the Jasper area, *Rocky River Blues* seems to form regularly. It can be seen from Highway 16 on the southwest side of the obvious obelisk rock peak called Roche Miette about 3 km east of the Rocky River.

Approach Park at the first pull-out northeast of Rocky River and walk up the gravel flats for about an hour. Turn left and head northeast toward the first major drainage where the falls are situated for about another hour (83 F/4



Rocky River Blues.

389887). Be sure to sight the climb from the road and count which drainage it lies in you cannot see the route from the valley below.

Climb 40 m of steep chandelier ice ending in a narrow gorge. Follow snow uphill for two rope lengths to a final 100 m of thick, plastic and rolling ice.

Descent Rappel the route.

Rocky Canyon Falls 85 m III, WI 3

Rocky Canyon Falls is an interesting canyon to climb in. Although the approach is 2-3 hours, the pretty scenery compensates for it.

Approach Park as for *Rocky River Blues* and continue up the Rocky River for 7 km to a canyon. The falls are located on the left (south) side near the end of the can-

yon. Beware of open water in narrow spots; ice shelves on the sides may allow passage.

Climb two easy WI 3 pitches of tiered ice separated by 20 m of snow.

Descent Rappel from trees.

East of Eden 190 m IV, WI 4

This classic climb in wild surroundings is an obscure route that likely has not been repeated.

Approach Park near Mountain Creek just west of Pocatontas where a ridge comes down from the north side of Roche Miette. Hike to the top of the open rib, then to the obvious saddle. 2 hours. Traverse southeast over scree slopes and across the starting zones of several avalanche-prone slopes to the climb in another hour. It is not known for sure if it forms regularly.

Climb an icy apron to a 10 m free-hanging pencil and a rock belay. A second 40 m pitch of 70° with some steep sections ends in a snow gully and a bolt belay. The third pitch starts with a vertical 10 m step followed by pleasant, more rambling ice. Climb a 40 m pitch with short steep sections to a ledge and a bolt belay on the left. The final pitch begins with low-angle ice rising to a 15 m wall ending under a rock overhang with a piton belay.

Descent Rappel the route.

Punchbowl Falls 25 m I, WI 2

Approach At Pocatontas, 41 km east of Jasper and 7 km west of the Jasper Park Gate, turn south onto Miette Hot Springs Road. This beautifully sculpted waterfall is 0.8 km from the junction and offers up to half a rope length of good practice ice.

Drambuie Deamon 95 m III, WI 3

Because of its northerly aspect, this climb forms regularly and has a longer season than most climbs in the region. It often forms by mid-November and sees better ice earlier in the season.

Approach Park near the Overlander Lodge just east of the Jasper Park Gate on Highway 16. The waterfall is obvious from the road and is located in the trees on the left-hand side of the north face of Roche à Perdix. Walk for 1.5 hours to the base.

Climb a steep 8 m wall to 60 m of undulating ice between 45-60° to the base of the upper wall. A right-hand finish gives 15 m of 70° ice while the harder left-hand shows half a pitch of sustained 80° ice.

Descent Rappel the route.

The Folding Curtain 55 m II, WI 2

Approach A short distance east of the Jasper Park Gate on Highway 16 is Folding Mountain Campground. The climb can be seen to the southeast on a north-east spur of Folding Mountain and is only 30 minutes away.

Undulating ice and steep steps lead to a short vertical curtain at the top. The first ascent team climbed behind the curtain and exited through a hole onto the ice.

Descent Walk off left through trees.

Brûlé

In the flats outside Jasper Park is a large lake called Brûlé Lake. A number of climbs are found on the west side of the lake and are reached by heading north on the Forestry Trunk Road (Hwy. 40) from Highway 16 west of Hinton.

Access Cross the Athabasca River and turn left toward the hamlet of Brûlé. Bear left at the last house onto a poor dirt road that is rarely plowed, but often blown free of snow. The next four climbs are all accessed from this road. It is about a 30 minute drive with the nearest facilities in Hinton.

Map

83 F/5 Entrance

Ingredient Sixteen 100 m II, WI 3

Approach Follow the access road past three cattle guards (Texas gates) for 3.8 km to just before the road makes a sharp left-hand turn. Hike through open timber and up the creekbed to ice seeping over rotten rock. The climb is visible through the trees.

The first pitch is classic WI 3 with a near vertical pillar. The second pitch has several variations which lead to undulating ice and a basin at the top.

Note: this route is prone to rockfall during warmer temperatures.

Descent With careful routefinding, the descent can be made without rappelling through trees on the left side.

Frog Falls 45 m II, WI 2

Approach A nice practice area, *Frog Falls* is found up through the trees 6.5 km along the road from Brûlé.

The climb has many steps with an overall angle of 55°.

Descent Rappel the route.

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Ogre Canyon Traverse 800 m II, WI 2

Approach Follow the road past *Ingredient Sixteen* and *Frog Falls* 7.5 km to a wide streambed. Just past the streambed turn right, then right again and drive as close to the canyon as you can, roughly 8.1 km from Brûlé.

Follow the canyon throughout and eventually exit from the canyon where you find a trail on the left.

Ogre Canyon Sidewall 40 m II, WI 3

Approach As for the traverse, this climb flows over the left side wall a short distance from the entrance to the canyon. The route is usually brittle and covered with many icicles and small overhangs ending in trees above the canyon.

Descent Rappel from trees.

Cadomin

The tiny town of Cadomin is reached either via Secondary Road 47, which branches southwest from Highway 16 a little west of Edson, or via Highway 40 which leaves Highway 16 at Hinton. Several easy climbs in the area have been popular with local climbing schools. With a little more exploring, more climbs may be found in the area.

Map

Mountain Park 83 C/14

Whitehorse Creek Seep 35 m II, WI 3

This is the best of the two Cadomin climbs.

Approach Drive as far south of the town toward Whitehorse Creek Campground as possible (varies with road conditions). The climb, visible 100 m before the campground, falls into McLeod River from the left-hand side of the road be-

yond the bridge over Whitehorse Creek. Rappel falls from above or walk along the road 0.5 km beyond the waterfall and descend through trees to gain the railroad tracks and follow them back to the base (83 C/14 775699).

A straightforward and challenging WI 3 pitch, it can easily be top roped. A variety of thinner, more difficult lines form on either side of the main pillar. Finish near the road.

Cadomin Curtain 30 m II, WI 3

Cadomin Curtain, visible from the road, is a vertical curtain of ice which spills over a rock wall on Mount Cadomin, east of the Whitehorse Creek campground entrance.

Approach Cross the river about 0.7 km before the campground entrance and bushwhack to the base of the climb (83 C/14 780705).

The climb is 30 m of 75-80° ice.

Descent Rappel the route.

GRAND CACHE

Grande Cache, Alberta is located at the northeastern end of the main Rockies chain. This somewhat isolated town sits at the northern end of the Chinook belt and experiences a winter climate similar to Calgary. Only two routes are reported here and they both sound to be very good. Little else is known about climbing in the area and not many climbers have made the journey. South of Grande Cache is the Willmore Wilderness Area, which is the largest provincial park in the Rockies. There is an expansive amount of wilderness and unexplored terrain in the region in which you could spend a lifetime.

Getting There

The only way into Grande Cache from the south is via Highway 40 (Forestry Trunk Road). Just west of the town of Hinton (east of Jasper) on Highway 16 turn north and follow Highway 40 on a good paved road for 145 km (80 minutes) to Grande Cache.

Facilities

There are a number of motels, cafés and stores to fill most of your needs. The

Grand Mountain Resort offers comfortable bed and breakfast-style accommodation (with baby sitting services!). Good primitive camping areas are located outside town near Willmore Provincial Park.

Emergency

For assistance call the Grande Cache RCMP detachment. See page 400.

Map

83 E/14 Grande Cache

Knuckle Gnasher 245 m III, WI 3

Approach Start from the Gun Firing Range parking lot just south of the railway bridge. Cross the Smoky River via the railway bridge and walk upstream along an old road to a shallow, side valley. Follow the side valley toward the climb, located at the back of an overhanging amphitheatre.

Climb a vertical wall for 14 m followed by three and a half pitches of moderate ice.

Descent Rappel and downclimb the route to the top of the vertical wall. Traverse south out of this gully.

Jasper Area 363

Evergreen Gully 465 m III, WI 4

Evergreen is a long gully with short steep steps separated by long easy sections.

Approach Start from the parking lot of the Gun Firing Range just south of the railway bridge. Cross a road to the gully then walk or solo up minor steps to the foot of the first pitch in a deep gorge.

MOUNT ROBSON AREA

The overwhelming feature of the area is Mount Robson. Clearly the highest peak in the Rockies (3,954 m), it is an impressive sight from any direction. The potential for frozen waterfalls on and around Robson is very high. If you are fortunate to climb here on a clear day, you'll be treated to some of the best scenery the Rockies has to offer. It is an area with high snowfalls, and avalanche hazard must be considered for every route. Waterfall climbing around Mount Robson is combined with alpine ski touring and requires the appropriate skills and experience necessary to be safe and enjoyable. If you don't worry about long ski approaches, go with an exploratory attitude, and are patient with the conditions, you will be grandly rewarded.

Getting There

Mount Robson Provincial Park is located 82 km west of Jasper along Highway 16. Turn right at the Information Centre and follow a short access road (2 km) to the Kinney Lake/Berg Lake trailhead. The area is open to limited helicopter transport that should be considered especially if planning a trip to the north side of the mountain. Helicopter flights are available in Valemount, B.C. from Yellowhead Helicopter Service.

After the initial 9 m pitch at 70°, easy ice leads to the second and third pitches with vertical sections. Climb up to a fourth pitch sporting a narrow 6 m free-standing column. More easy ice leads to a final vertical 25 m column that was not climbed on the first ascent.

Descent Walk off the right side.

Facilities

The Information Centre and Robson Services gas station along Highway 16 are closed in winter and there are no other facilities available. The nearest 'civilized' services with everything you need are in Jasper (82 km) or Valemount (44 km) on Highway 5, south of Tête Jaune Cache. There are camp shelters along the northeast shore of Kinney Lake and at the Whitehorn Campground, located on the east side of the Robson River just after the first suspension bridge, near the start of The Valley of a Thousand Falls. There is an enclosed cabin called the Hargreaves Shelter at Berg Lake on the north side of Mount Robson along the northwest shore of the lake, 17 km from the car.

Emergency

Valemount RCMP is probably your best bet for assistance. Otherwise try the Jasper Park wardens. There are pay phones at the Information Centre and at the Robson Services Gas Station along Highway 16. See page 400.

Map

83 E/3 Mount Robson

Mount Klapperhorn

Two prominent smears on the avalanche-prone north face seem to form every year and both are great lines and worth the long drive to get to. They are directly above the Information Centre on the south side of the Highway on Mount Klapperhorn. With good conditions they are both climbable in a day.

Approach Opposite the Kinney Lake Road turn south, cross the Fraser River and continue up a winding road. Park at the railroad tracks and walk west down the tracks to the routes. Be careful and stay clear of any avalanche detection wires or other gates. If avalanche conditions permit, walk directly up the drainage to your prospective climb(s); otherwise, follow the trees to either side. Skis may be useful depending on snow con-

ditions. Occasionally there will be hard avalanche debris to easily walk upon. On a clear day you'll be treated with a massive view of the south face and the Wishbone Arête of Mount Robson.

Harder Than It Looks 200 m IV, WI 4

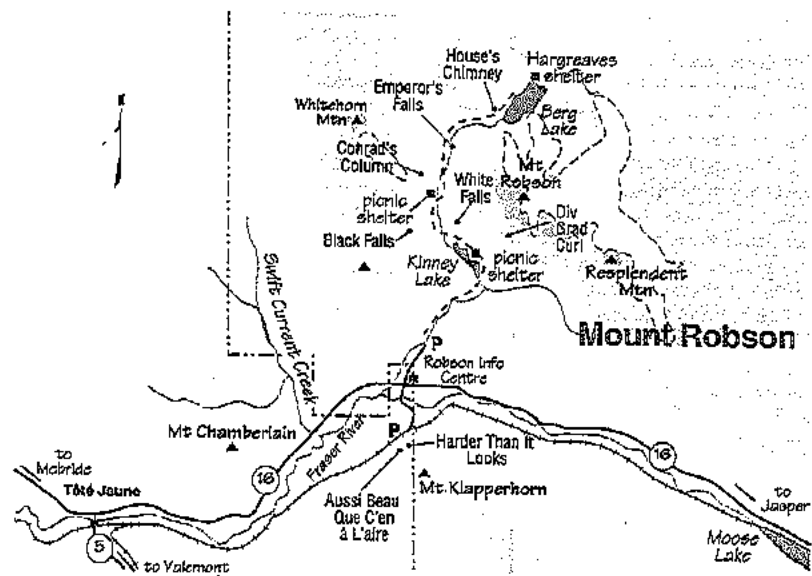
This is the left-hand line that offers four pitches of steep sustained climbing.

Aussi Beau Que C'en a L'aire

150 m IV, WI 5+

This is the right-hand line. The name translates to "As Beautiful As it Looks." Climb 45 m of 85-90° ice into a small cave. This is followed by 35 m of the same quality and steepness. A short snow slope brings you to the last 15 m of moderate ice.

Descent Rappel either route to descend.



Kinney Lake

Kinney Lake is located more than 3,000 m below the summit of Mount Robson and 4 km from the road. A number of ice climbs are located in the area and some are rumoured to be quite big. Above Kinney Lake several lines of ice form up on a consistent basis and while they can be done in a day from the parking lot a better option is to camp at the lake.

Approach From Mount Robson Viewpoint junction, follow the road running north beyond the service station for 2 km to the Berg Lake trailhead. Continue another 4 km to Kinney Lake.

Div 150 m of climbing IV, WI 4

This route is in an avalanche path, but is not threatened by slides coming down the Great Coulior.

Note: The single pitch of WI 4+ ice in the Great Coulior itself is not this route—that ice is raked by seracs and avalanches daily.

Approach From the Kinney Lake Shelter head back along the trail for 50 m to the water source. Head up through the brush, crossing the horse trail in the process aiming for a deep cleft and gully in the trees just left of the Great Coulior on the south face of Robson.

Climb moderate ice to the cleft where a nice little WI 4 pitch is hiding. More moderate ice and steeper steps continue up for several hundred metres above.

Descent Downclimb, rappel and walk off to the left where possible.

Grad 100 m of climbing IV, WI 4

This climb exhibits extremes in ice build up—either it's really fat and plastic or it is extremely thin and dry.



Ric Hoogstraaten

The first ascent of Div.

Approach From the Kinney Lake Shelter head up the trail to the bridge crossing a dry creekbed, 5 minutes. Head up the creek to the obvious gully. Climb 2 pitches of ice in the back of the gully to a ledge. Some steps and smears may exist above.

Descent Rappel the route.

Curl 100 m of climbing IV, WI 3

Between *Div* and *Grad* a line forms fairly regularly. In good conditions more ice will form above making the route as long as *Div*.

Approach Locate *Grad* and look right approximately 300 m for *Curl*.

Climb 2 pitches of WI 3.

Descent Rappel the route.

Black Falls 100 m III, WI 3-4

Black Falls is the prominent climb that forms on the cliffband to the left and above the trail, on an outlier of Mount Whitehorn. The route is very obvious from the Kinney Lake viewpoint, just past the out-flow bridge. This route has been the object of several solo attempts by several different climbers over the years all of whom were turned back by spooky snow and or bad ice. The route gets lots of sun.

From the Kinney Lake flats at the far end of the lake, approach up treed slopes and into avalanche slopes that exist below the route.

The climb is 100 m of WI 3/4 ice. It is about 20 m wide with three distinct lines. The climb is usually formed well into April, but the surface can get eaten by the sun.

Descent One rappel from a tree at the top, then rappel off ice.

Robson River

All of the falls along the Robson River can be thin and dangerous due to a high volume of water underneath. At least one climber has collapsed *White Falls*, fortunately receiving nothing more than an extreme soaking.

White Falls 200 m III, WI 3

Approach Continue around Kinney Lake and head easily across the gravel flats at the end of the lake for another 4 to 5 km. Instead of following the Berg Lake Trail to the left, go up to the right and follow the main Robson River drainage for about 2.5 km. The falls should be obvious.

The climb is done in three main pitches with ice up to 80 degrees, the second of which is hardest. If the river is well-frozen, it may be possible to con-

tinue up the canyon to the base of another step called *Falls of the Pool*. This offers 40 to 50 m of moderate ice steeping before easing off near the top. From here it is possible to snow plod to *Emperor Falls*.
Descent Exit to the left.

Emperor's Falls 85 m IV, WI 3

Emperor's Falls is a high volume cascade that forms with large holes of running water and often sprinkles out over the ice.

Approach From the second suspension bridge, continue for 3.5 km to the top of Emperor Hill. Take the Emperor's Falls side trail to the natural clearing with a view of the falls. Descend an obvious gully on the right to reach low-angle ice on the left.

Climb an easy 35 m pitch out of the gully and walk to the base proper. Move left onto deteriorating chandelier ice and continue up and finish on easier ice above. The scenery from the top of the falls is awesome.

Descent Rappel from trees.

Valley of a Thousand Falls

Between Kinney Lake and Berg Lake is a beautiful valley known as the Valley of a Thousand Falls. This area is loaded with really big frozen waterfalls. Only one is completed with at least a dozen major routes primarily on the Silverhorn side, but also on the flanks of Robson, awaiting so much as an attempt. Beware of significant avalanche terrain above and below all routes.

Approach The recommended approach is to hire Yellowhead Helicopters, grab a bunch of firewood and fly into the Hargreaves Shelter on the shores of Berg Lake (about \$150-200

each for three people). From here you can ski out to the highway taking your pick of the routes. If skiing up the old-fashioned way, continue past Kinney Lake to where the valley narrows. Climb up the trail on the left flank of the valley to gain the higher Valley of a Thousand Falls. There is a picnic shelter at Whitehorn Campground, located on the east side of the Robson River, just after the first suspension bridge (11 km from the highway). Carry on for just over 1 km to a second suspension bridge. An avalanche-prone slope (Emperor Hill) must then be ascended for about 3.5 km to reach more reasonable terrain leading to Berg Lake. Refer to *Ski Trails in the Canadian Rockies*.

Conrad's Column 200 m V, WI 5

A sustained route through a large cliff-band, *Conrad's Column* is visible to the north of the Whitehorn Shelter on the left (west) side of the valley. It features a free-standing column and spectacular views of the Emperor Ridge on Mount Robson.

Approach Continue up the valley for 2 km from the Whitehorn Shelter to the base of the route. It is located in a right-facing corner, 100 m left of a prominent overhang and rock arch (83 E/3 882517).

Climb 45 m of thin ice to a snow ledge. Cross the ledge and climb to an ice cave on the left. The third pitch leads to a spacious belay behind the column, 40 m. Climb the free-standing column onto a good ledge, 35 m. Easier rolling ice now leads to the base of a large snow slope. Steps of unclimbed ice exist higher up the face.

Descent Rappel the route.

Barry Blanchard on the mixed finish to House's Chimney.

368 David Thompson Highway

Berg Lake

House's Chimney 120 m IV, 5.7, WI 5+

This quality route near the outlet of Berg Lake was completed during a winter attempt on Mount Robson. It is a fine route that is worth doing if you ever find your self in the area. Barry Blanchard is the only person in the world to date to have climbed both *House's Chimneys*, and unequivocally states that "the one at Berg Lake is much better than the one on K2."

Approach From the outlet of Berg Lake ski down valley about 1 km and the route is obvious on the right side in a gash near the right side of a cliff (83 E/3 538897). A 30 minute ski from Hargreaves Shelter.

Climb a long, steep and thin pitch to below a steeper pillar. A second pitch climbs a steep pillar on fatter ice and finishes up a fun mixed corner to a flat area on top.

Descent Rappel the route.



Joe Josephson

Eric Hoogstraten



Bonnie is a Babe.

HIGHWAY 16

The small village of Tête Jaune Cache, B.C. is located west of Mount Robson at the junction of Highways 5 and 16. The areas northeast of Tête Jaune are vast and relatively unexplored. Swiftcurrent Creek, west of Mount Robson, has alot of potential for waterfall climbs. Many of the easy WI 2 and WI 3 routes that have been climbed along Highway 16 toward McBride and Prince George, B.C. were outlined in a now out-of-print guidebook by Eric Hoogstraten called *Climbs of Passion: Rock and Ice Climbs in the Prince George District*. Thanks to Eric, they are available on the Rocky Mountain Books web site at www.rmbooks.com. Updated and new information is encouraged. See pages 38-39.

Valemount

25 km south of Tête Jaune Cache along Highway 5 is the town of Valemount. There are a few recorded routes in the general vicinity and undoubtedly there are more.

Bonnie is a Babe 100 m II, WI 2

Visible from the road near the intersection with Highway 16E.

Approach From the weigh scales on Highway 16E find the Little Lost Lake trailhead. Follow the trail to the lake, 15 minutes. Trend up and into the gully that contains the obvious waterfall.

Two pitches of rambling ice.

Descent Walk down easily through trees on the western side of the climb. There can be significant avalanche hazard from the open bowl above the climb.

Canoe Mountain Forestry Road

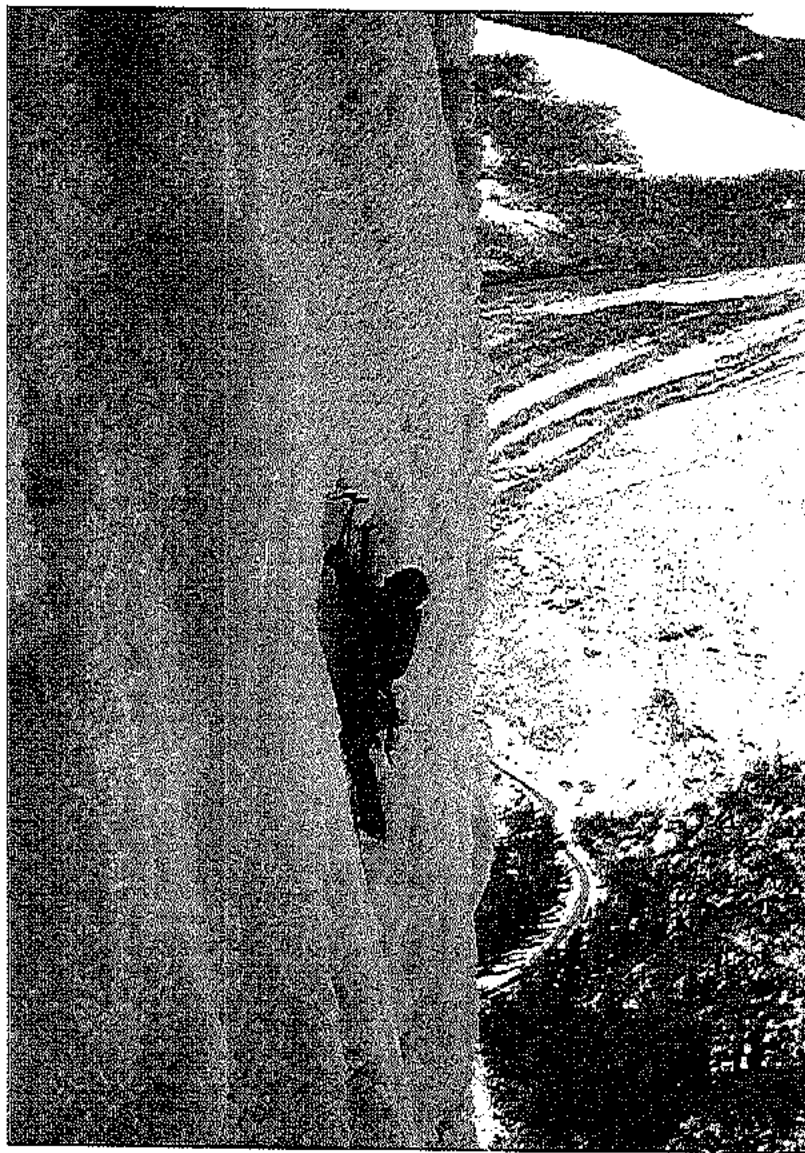
The following three climbs are south of Valemount on the Canoe Mountain Forestry Road that starts on the east side of town and goes south along the east bank of Kinbasket Lake. It is also known as Kinbasket Road. They have no avalanche hazard. This is an active logging road so a radio is imperative (including weekends).

Hidden Deception 40 m II, WI 3 to 4

This is a good top rope area as there are many variations to the main falls and lots of trees for setting up belays. Also there are many other seeps around the main falls.

Approach This climb is located at km 29 on the Canoe Mountain Road. Park at the side of the road. The climb is just visible

David Thompson Highway 369



Guy Lacelle collection

Guy Lacelle on the first ascent of *La Vraie Nature de Bernadette*.

370 David Thompson Highway

through the trees above a small steep cut-block. Walk up 20-30 minutes on the right-hand side of block. There are many variations on the main falls with some steep sections.

Descent Rappel from tree.

End of the Rope 100 m II, WI 3

Approach Drive up the Canoe Mountain Road to km 60.5. The climb is located above a large cut block (southeast corner). The approach is a steep climb up the cut block 30-40 minutes.

25 m of ice leads to a wide ledge. The first pitch is 20 m up to a large ledge. The second pitch is 40 m to a small ledge below a vertical section. The third pitch climbs up to a large tree.

Descent Rappel the route.

Around the Corner 70 m II, WI 3

Approach This climb is located "around the corner" from *End of the Rope*, about 400 m south and down the road. Walk 20 minutes up a steep slope to the bottom of the apron.

Climb 25 m to the base of the main falls. The main climb is 50 m and can be climbed in one or two pitches with a nice belay ledge on the left about 5 m from the top.

Descent Rappel the route.

Blue River

The area around Blue River, B.C. is technically in the Columbia Mountains and not the Rockies. However, it is home to some incredible ice climbs. Unfortunately, little is known about most of them and all but one have gone unreported or stubbornly protected by the pioneers. Any information given here is not intended to be accurate or complete, but

will hopefully make sense of what is known and perhaps inspire new exploration in what is one of North America's last remaining frontiers of waterfall ice.

La Vraie Nature de Bernadette

350 m of ice V, WI 6+

This deceiving route lies a few kilometres up a logging road in Bone Creek, a few drainages north of the town of Blue River. This 600 m route is capped by one of the longest sustained pillars anywhere in the range. The logging road is active in winter and may be open to the public only on weekends or after the logging stops for the season.

Approach Park along the logging road below the route on the right side of the valley. 300 m of avalanche slopes are climbed to reach about 500 m of snow and ice leading to the final 100 m pillar. On the first ascent Guy Lacelle climbed the pillar in one 100 m rope length.

Descent Rappel and downclimb route.

Kinbasket Lake - Revelstoke Area

Numerous routes have been completed in the Rocky Mountain Trench along the shores of Kinbasket Lake. Most of these have involved helicopter-assisted approaches from Revelstoke or Valemount.

Weird Scenes inside the Goldstream

50 m III, WI 5

From Revelstoke, drive 80 km north on Highway 23. Turn right onto a logging road and drive to km 30.5 staying to the right where the road divides. The climb is a one pitch pillar directly across from the Adamant Lodge.

David Thompson Highway 371

FIRST ASCENT LIST

2 Low 4 Zero, FA: Rusty Ballie, Iain Stewart-Patterson. Nov 84.
 A Bridge Not So Far, FRA: Eric Hoogstraten, Cindy Oliver. 1991.
 A Bridge Too Far, FA: Mike Blenkarn, Iain Stewart-Patterson, Murray Toft. Jan 82.
 A Wizard Frang, FA: Jeff Everett, Duane Gillis, Tom O'Sullivan. Dec 94.
 Aboriginal Genocide, FA: Chris Pooley, Ken Wallator. Dec 94.
 Aboriginal Princess, FA: Larry Farmer, Eric Hoogstraten.
 Acid Howl Right Side, FA: Christophe Moulin, Richard Ouairy, April 94
 Acid Howl, FA: Scott Backes, Joe Josephson. Jan 93
 Aerial Boundaries, FA: Joe Josephson, Bill Pelander, Nancy Prichard. Feb 93.
 Afternoon Delight, FA: Doug Fulford, Doug Nelson. Feb 00.
 Aggressive Treatment, FA: Dwayne Congdon, James Blench, John Lauchlan. Winter 80-81.
 Aimless Gully, FRA: Troy Kirwan and party. Nov 93.
 Al Kantera Falls, FA: Larry Farmer, Eric Hoogstraten, Sean Staplin, Eamonn Walsh. 1997.
 Albatross, FRA: Joe Josephson, Brian Spear (both solo). Jan 89.
 Albertans and Eugenics, FA: Larry Farmer, Eric Hoogstraten. 1994.
 Alien Abduction, FA: Steve Pratt, Rupert Wedgwood.
 Alpo, FA: Unknown.
 Amadeus, FA: Dave Clay, Karl Nagy, Ray Friesen. Oct 84.
 Amazing Grace, FRA: Peter Oxtoby, T. Styles. Oct 97.
 Ambivalence Falls, FA: Martin Garcia, Brian Webster. Mar 90.
 American Revolution, FA: Andrew Brash, Carlos Buhler, Steve Mascioli. Mar 95.
 And Where Your Sister is Your Wife, FA: Larry Farmer, Eric Hoogstraten, Cindy Oliver. 1991.
 Angel Eyes, FA: Unknown.
 Anorexia Nervosa, FA: Mike Blenkarn, Bill Stark. Feb 83.
 Another Dream, FA: Allan Derbyshire, Steve Normandin. Mar 95.
 Anoxia, FA: Dave Campbell, Jeff Everett. Jan 96.
 Aquarius, FA: Frank Campbell, Robert Corbeil, Steve Langley, Kris Thorsteinsson. Dec 84.
 Arctic Cream, FA: Eric Hoogstraten.
 Arctic Dream Direct Finish FA: Serge Angelluci, François Damilano. April 92.
 Arctic Dream, FA: Joe Josephson, Joe McKay. Mar 92.
 Are You Afraid of the Dark?, FA: Cyril and Sandra Shokoples. Mar 90.
 Ariadne's Thread, FA: Barry Blanchard, Catherine Mulvihill. Oct 95.
 Arian P'tit Grimlin, FA: Guy Lacelle, Godefroy Perroux. Mar 97.
 Around the Corner, FA: Brad Jones, Rick McDonald. Dec 96.
 Art of Being, The, FA: Larry Farmer, Eric Hoogstraten, Sean Staplin. Early 90's.
 Arterial Spurt, FA: Unknown. Early '80s.
 Auger Sanction, The, FA: Larry Stanier, Grant Statham. Apr 95.
 Aussi Beau Que C'en a L'aire, FA: Mark Aubrey, Guy Lacelle. Mar 90.
 Auto de Feu, FA: Barry Blanchard, Karl Nagy. Dec 93. FFA: Raphael Slawinski, Farley Klotz. Nov 97.
 Back in the Saddle, FA: Troy Kirwan, Grant Statham. Dec 93.
 Backyard, FA: Yasmin Kassam, Jeff Palumbo. Feb 96.
 Bald, Bespectacled Ones, The, FRA: Bill Belcourt, Joe Josephson. Mar 95.
 Balfour Wall, The, FA: Unknown.
 Balls On Ice, FA: Tim McAllister, Bill Noble, Kirt Sellers. Nov 97.
 Bastarr Sirdar, FA: Harvey Struss, Ken Wallator. Oct 94.
 Bathos, FA: Frank Campbell, Bob Wills. Jan 84.

Bearsprit, FA: Cory Ogle. Dec 95.
 Beastiality, FA: Steve Beaulieu, Petar Corbett. 1981.
 Beowulf, FA: Al Dunham, Dave Hough. Feb 95.
 Betty Davis' Sneeze, FA: Stephan Seller, Chris Schubert, Iain Sherrington. Nov 96.
 Betty's Pillar, FA: Guy Lacelle. March 90.
 Big Brother, FA: Will Gadd, Sean Isaac. Nov 99.
 Big Dipper, FA: Frank Campbell, Alan Kane. Dec 85.
 Big Drip, The, FA: Frank Campbell, J.A. Owen. Mar 85.
 Bill's Drip, FA: John Irvine, Chris Robinson. Oct 90.
 Birthday Present, FA: Glenn Reisenhofer, Neil Winder. Apr 85.
 Bisexual Piton, FA: Greg Cornell, Gavin Macrae. 2000.
 Bison Falls, FA: Rusty Ballie, John Perdue. 1979.
 Black & Blue, FA: Margo Talbot, Ken Wallator. Nov 97.
 Black Falls, FA: Unknown.
 Black Rock Falls, FA: Unknown.
 Blazes Journey, FA: Myles Dickinson, Tracy Elliot. Mar 00.
 Blessed Rage, FA: Bruce Hendricks. Feb 92.
 Blue Door, The, FA: Kevin Blades, M. Stuart. Jan 00.
 Blood Brother, FA: David Marra, Ken Wallator. Nov 98.
 Bloodline, FA: Sheina Hughes, Morgan Neff, Cyril and Sandra Shokoples. Mar 87.
 Bloody Mary, FA: Frank Campbell, Dave Clay, Karl Nagy. Dec 84.
 Blue Angel, FA: Yvon Chouinard, Juris Krisjansons, Rob Taylor. Feb 77.
 Blue Beard's Castle, FA: Jeff Everett, Jim Gott, Glenn Reisenhofer. Dec 96.
 Blue Rodeo, FA: Joe Josephson, Brad Wroblewski. Jan 95.
 Blue Russian, FA: John Irvine, Chris Robinson. Oct 90
 B-Man, The, FA: Andrew McLeod, Dave Robinson.
 Bob-Esque, First On-Sight Simu-Solo: James Blench, Joe Josephson, Nov 93.
 Bob Sized, FA: Unknown.
 Bok Choy, FA: Doug Fulford, Greg Heide. Mar 00.
 Bonnie is a Babe, FA: Eric Hoogstraten. 1986.
 Bonnywind, FA: Nancy Geismar, Ken Wylie.
 Borderline, FA: Barry Blanchard, Jeff Marshall, Karl Nagy. Jan 87.
 Bored in November, FA: Mike Kietzman, Chris Robertson, Mark Stanley. Nov 93.
 Boss Hog, FA: Wes Armitage, Andrew McLeod, Dave Robinson.
 Bountiful Drought, FA: Adam Ferris, Mark Miller. Mar 93.
 Bourgeau Left-Hand, FA: Tim Auger, George Homer, Rob Wood. Jan 74.
 FFA: John Roskelly, Jim States.
 Bourgeau Right-Hand, FA: Tim Auger, Brian Greenwood, George Homer, Rob Wood. Feb 73.
 Bow Falls, FA: Brian Greenwood, Bugs McKeith. Mar 73.
 Brewer's Droop, FA: Jeff Marshall, Steve Stahl. Jan 83.
 Brewsters, FRA: S. Brewster, I. Hunt. Nov 97.
 Brian Bell Sized, FA: Eric Hoogstraten. 1993.
 Bridal Veil Falls, FA: Beun Gadd, Martin Lesperance. Feb 80
 Bring Out the Gimp, FA: Barry Blanchard, Catherine Mulvihill. Oct 95.
 Bubble Wrap Blues, FA: Karen McNeill, Dave Thomson. Feb 96.
 Buffalo Head, FA: Frank Campbell, Ken Stengler, Ken Wylie. Nov 97.
 Buffalo with an Aqualung, FA: Unknown.
 Bull River Bouldering Area, FA: Unknown.
 Burning in Water, Drowning by Flame, FA: Barry Blanchard, Joe Josephson. Dec 93.
 FFA: Ben Firth, Rob Owens. Dec 99.
 Burning Man, FA: Keith Haberl, Ken Wylie. Nov 97.

Wee Wolf, FA: Al Dunham, Bill Stark. Feb 95.
 Weeping Pillar, FA: James Blench, Albi Sole. 1980.
 Weeping Wall Left-Hand, FA: Bugs McKeith, Rob Wood. Dec 73.
 FFA: Duncan Ferguson, Dave Wright. Feb 77.
 Weeping Wall Right-Hand, FA: John Lauchlan, Raymond Jotterand. 1979.
 Weeping Wall Central Pillar, FA: James Blench, Albi Sole. 1980.
 Weird Scenes Inside the Goldstream FA: Andrew Bowers, Kerry Jaegger.
 Brandon Thomas. Feb 94.
 Welcome to Canada, FA: before 1985.
 Werewolf Waltz, FA: Al Dunham, Wayne Shakleton. Feb 95.
 Westafailure, FA: Howie Hall, Richard Jagger. Nov 94.
 Wet Dream, FA: Diana Knaak, Bugs McKeith. Dec 75.
 Whatever, FA: Unknown.
 Wheating Wall, FA: Unknown.
 Wherefore and Why, FA: Glen Reisenhofer. Jan 95.
 Whimper Wall Left, FA: Left, Tim Auger, James Blench.
 Whimper Wall Right, FA: James Blench, Dave McNab. Nov 84.
 Whipper Traverse, The, FA: Grant Statham and partner. Winter 95/96
 White Falls, FA: Peter Austin, Bob Knight. Jan 81.
 Whitehorse Creek, FA: Cyril Shokoples and party. 1977.
 Whiteman Falls, FA: Laurie Skreslet, Dave Wright. 1979.
 Who Wants To Be A Vermilionaire?, FA: Allan Derbyshire, Scott Garvin. Mar 01.
 Whoa Whoa Capitaine, FA: Alain Chassie, Guy Lacelle. Feb 85.
 Wicked Wanda, FA: Kevin Doyle, Geoff Powter. Winter 82/83.
 Wild Bunch, The, FA: Rob Owens, Eamonn Walsh. Sept 00.
 Wild Cougar, FRA: Darren Dunbar, Joe Josephson. Jan 90.
 Wild Fire, FA: Ken Wallator, Brian Webster. Jan 92.
 William Fernie was a Dick, FA: Larry Farmer, Eric Hoogstraten.
 Wilson Major, FA: Unknown.
 Windy Corner, FA: Rob Nichols, Don Peters. Mar 83.
 Wing Night, FA: Jim Gudjonson, Brian Webster. Dec 00.
 Wings, The, FA: Cyril Shokoples and party. 1981.
 Winnipeg Warrior, FA: Dave Campbell, Glenn Reisenhofer. Nov 93.
 Winter Solstice, FA: Dave Clay, Mike Walsh. Dec 88.
 Winter's Turning, FA: Barry Blanchard, Bob Bott, Dixon Thompson. Dec 82.
 Wolf Falls, FA: Eric Hoogstraten, Cindy Oliver. 1993.
 Wolverine Falls, FA: Alan Kane, Kris Thorsteinsson. Nov 87.
 Wreck of the Glen Fitzgerald, The, FA: Kevin Blades, Glenn Reisenhofer. Jan 95.
 Wully Canyon, FA: Carmie Callanan, Frank Campbell. Jan 85.
 WWF, FRA: Allan Massin, Steve Pratt. Feb 98. FFA: Rob Owens, Eamonn Walsh. Nov 99.
 Ya-Ha Falls, FA: Barney Brown, Frank Campbell, Karl Nagy, Chic Scott. Nov 87.
 Yellow Bird, FA: Frank Campbell, Alan Kane. Feb 85.
 Yoho Pillar, FA: Scott Flavalle, Phil Hein. Jan 79.
 Zapatista Liberation, FA: Ken Wallator. Dec 94.
 Zoe, FA: Sean Easton, David Marra. Nov 00.
 Zuckarschlack, FA: Sami Speck. Apr 00.
 Zzzzebra, FRA: Eric Hoogstraten, Cindy Oliver. 1992.

USEFUL PHONE NUMBERS

Banff National Park
 Banff Info Office/hut reservations (403) 762-1550
 Banff (french language information) (403) 762-4834
 Lake Louise Info Centre (403) 522 3883
 Banff Warden's Office (403) 762-4506
 Lake Louise Warden's Office (403) 522-3866
 Banff Park Admin Office (403) 762-4256
 Saskatchewan River Crossing Warden Station (403) 761-7077

Jasper National Park
 Jasper Info Office (780) 852-6176
 Jasper Warden's Office (780) 852-6156
 Columbia Icefields Info (early season only) (780)761-7030
 Sunwapta (mile 45) warden's (780) 852-5383
 Jasper Park Admin Office (780) 852-6161

Kootenay National Park
 Kootenay Park warden's (250) 347-9361
 Kootenay Park West Gate (250) 347-9551
 Kootenay Admin Office (403) 347-9615

Yoho National Park
 Field Warden Office (250) 343-6324

Waterton National Park
 Waterton Park Warden's (403) 859-2224
 Waterton Park Admin Office (403) 859-2261

Alberta Provincial Parks
 Bow Valley Provincial Park Info (403) 673-3663
 Barrier Lakes Info Centre (403) 673-3985
 Elbow District Ranger Station (403) 949-3754
 Peter Lougheed Provincial Park (403) 591-7226
 Peter Lougheed Park Rangers (403) 591-7222
 K-Country Emergency Dispatch (403) 591-7767
 Kananaskis Admin (Calgary) (403) 297-3362
 Kananaskis Office (Canmore) (403) 678-5508

BC Provincial Parks
 Mount Robson Provincial Park (25) 566-4325

Alberta Forest Service

Ghost Ranger Station (403) 932-5668
 Nordegg Office (403) 721-3965

BC Forest Service

Golden District Office (250) 344-7500
 Invermere District Office (250) 342-4200

Travel Information

Waterton Park Chamber of Commerce (403) 859-2303
 Pincher Creek Chamber of Commerce (403) 627-5199
 Canmore/Kananaskis Chamber of Commerce (403) 678-4094
 Banff/Lake Louise Chamber of Commerce (403) 762-3777
 Jasper Park Chamber of Commerce (780) 852-3858
 Grande Cache Chamber of Commerce (780) 827-3790
 Golden Chamber of Commerce (250) 344-7125
 BC Rocky Mountain Visitor Association (250) 427-4838

Travel Alberta

Field, BC Office (250) 343-6446
 Canada and USA 1-800-661-8888
 Within Alberta 1-800-222-6501

Road Reports

Banff Road Report (403) 762-1450
 Jasper Road Report (780) 852-6161
 BC Highway Conditions 1-800-683-4997

Helicopters and Snow Machines

Challenge Enterprises, Golden (250) 344-6012
 Canmore Helicopters, Canmore (403) 678-4802
 Canadian Helicopters, Canmore (403) 678-2207
 Canadian Helicopters, Golden (250) 344-5311
 Yellowhead Helicopters, Valemount, BC (250) 566-4401
 Reservations

Hostels

Alpine Club of Canada Clubhouse and Huts (403) 678-3200
 Shunda Creek Hostel (Norgegg) (403) 721-2140
 Jasper Park Hostels (780) 852-3215
 Banff International Hostel and South AB (403) 762-4122
 Alpine Centre and Hostel at Lake Louise (403) 522-2200

Online reservations www.hostellingintl.ca/alberta

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