



The Silver Ice Axe

The Newsletter of the Jasper/Hinton Section of the Alpine Club of Canada

Winter 2019

Jasper Hinton Section Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Jasper-Hinton-Alpine-Club-of-Canada/164972823530538>

You can use this link to follow the section, post “short notice” trips that may not be on the schedule, post pictures and stories of trips you have done, and to follow the section.

We have a new website! Check it out. <http://accjasperhinton.ca/>

Message from the President

It feels funny talking about winter just arriving. It’s more like second winter this year as I recall a September that provided a sharp change of the seasons! Somehow October and September got all mixed up, and I ended up climbing at the icefields in late September when I should have been skiing.

Time to sharpen the ice tools and wax up the boards and start the hunt for good backcountry ice-skating, one of my new favorite seasonal sports. The scary part is always “testing out the frozen waters”. It’s become a habit for me to bring my trusted ice screw to quickly check for the minimum depth of 7cm for a single person and 10cm for a group. Every year I look for a new gem, hoping for a rare repeat of that incredible year when Talbot Lake froze. The thing I like best about the ice skating season is that if it’s really short, than that means life is good with lots of snow.

I hope you all have a fantastic winter with lots of adventure accompanied with great people and awesome food... The Alpine Club of Canada has a long and incredible history. Let’s keep adding to that history and get out there!

Sincerely,

Matt Reynolds

History of the “Silver Ice Axe”

An ice axe, left by a Japanese climbing party on the summit of Mount Alberta, in 1925, would be a source of local mountaineering “myths” and mysteries for many years.

In 1925, a Japanese climbing party consisting of six Japanese climbers and three Swiss guides, would attempt and be the first expedition to successfully summit the formidable Mount Alberta, the sixth highest peak in the Canadian Rockies at 3,619 metres. Located in the upper Athabasca River Valley of Jasper National Park, Mount Alberta was named after Princess Louise Caroline Alberta in 1898.

The party, led by Yuko Maki left the ice axe as proof of their “accomplishment”. For years, the legend circulated that it was made of silver and belonged to the Emperor of Japan. It was not until 1948 (twenty three years later) when an American party successfully reached the summit, that it was discovered that the axe was not silver, but a Swiss design, made with a wooden shaft and steel head. On the tip of the axe, the initials M.T.H. were engraved on a gold leaf standing for one of the sponsors of the original climbing team (Marquie) Mori Tatsu Hosokawa. This would dispel the myth that it belonged to the Emperor of Japan. In a cairn on the summit, they found a note and summit registration, tucked in a tin can. The note read “*We came from Japan so far called by this charming great mountain.*” In trying to break the axe free from the ice and snow, they broke it off. They took this piece back with them and placed it in the American Alpine Club Museum in New York.

In 1965, a second Alpine Club climbing party, found the other piece of the axe and took it back to Japan. For the ensuing years, the ice axe related to this amazing mountaineering story would remain separated.

During a research trip to the American Alpine Club Museum in New York City in 1992, Greg Horne, Park Warden and executive member of the Jasper/Hinton section of the Alpine Club of Canada, came upon a bundle of ice axes, and in that pile he found one with only three quarters of the handle, no spike or ferrule, labeled Mount Alberta! Could this be the part of the ice axe from the first summit of Mt. Alberta by the Japanese team? This began a process of working with the Jasper museum to have this artifact transferred to the local museum. In 1995, part of the infamous “silver” axe returned to Alberta.

In December of 1997, at the invitation of the Japanese Alpine Club, Mike Mortimer (President of the Alpine Club of Canada) Bob Sandford (VP for Publications) and Lori Ann Perlin, Director of the Jasper Yellowhead Museum, travelled to Japan to attend the Annual General Meeting of JAC, taking with them the piece of ice axe from the Jasper Museum. There the two pieces of the ice axe were fitted.

In 2000, the Alpine Club of Canada and the Japanese Alpine club came together to celebrate the 75th anniversary since the first ascent of Mount Alberta. A group of climbers from both Canada and Japan attempted to climb Mt. Alberta, but the weather turned them back. The Jasper Recreation Complex was the setting for a formal ceremony at which the two pieces of ice axe were joined in a final reunification. The Japanese Alpine Club President was quoted as saying: “It is said that an ice axe is the soul of a climber. This ice axe symbolizes the history and tradition of the climbing of Mount Alberta and is going to be exhibited here forever”. (Taken from Peaks and People, official blog of the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies).

The axe remains on permanent display at the Jasper-Yellowhead Museum, a lasting testimony to the relationships inspired by the challenge and love of mountains by Japanese, American and Canadian climbing “communities”.

This story continues to inspire people. Robert William Sandford wrote a book “Called by This Mountain” which covers the history of the climbing on Mount Alberta. In 2013, Junko Haga, daughter of Yuko Maki, team leader of the 1925 first ascent, wrote a children’s book called “The Story of Mount Alberta”. It is written from the perspective of the ice axe. A copy was sent to the Alpine Club of Canada.

The local Jasper/Hinton section of the Alpine Club of Canada has a newsletter, named the “Silver Ice Axe” inspired by this story and named by founding members.



Jasper Yellowhead Museum and Archives

----- Marilyn Campbell

Local Historian and Member of Jasper/Hinton Section of ACC

November 2018

Executive members of the Jasper/Hinton section of the Alpine Club of Canada attend a ceremony at Jasper-Yellowhead Museum and Archives on August 13, where Sachiro Masuda, representative of the Japanese Alpine Club, presented a replica of the original ice axe left by Japanese climbers on the summit of Mt. Alberta in 1925, during the inaugural first ascent. This replica was a gift to the Japanese Alpine Club by the American Alpine Club, to commemorate their 1925 first ascent of Mt. Alberta. It joins the original ice axe on permanent display at the Jasper-Museum and Archives.

Standing left to right are: Estelle Stewart, Wayne Campbell, Claire Levesque, Matt Reynolds, Jennifer Russell and Peter Amann (back row).



(Photo Courtesy Claire Levesque 2018)

2019 Winter Schedule

The following trips are filled on a first call first in basis. **Please contact leaders one to two weeks before the trip.** Volunteers lead all trips. **The exact date for the trip may change due to the leader's commitments.** For liability protection, each participant must sign a waiver.

Be sure to ask section leaders what other equipment may be necessary. Some section equipment is available on loan for club outings.

Dec. 15, 2018

Kinney Lake

Easy cross country ski or snowshoe, relaxed and scenic.

Wayne Campbell

htcmaint@yahoo.ca

December 18th

Weeknight Beacon Practice and social

6 pm, location to be determined

Planning to head out somewhere where the snow is decent close to Jasper to do some beacon practice! After breaking a sweat digging in the snow, we'll head to the pub to quench our thirst! You will need your own gear.

Contact:

Ian Goodge iangoodge@gmail.com

780-913-8396

December 19th

Companion Rescue practice

Afternoon or evening.

Date can vary depending on interest. Where? Tete Jaune or Valemount area. (We have a huge field, just need some snow!) Good time to practice skills, look at new technology, and talk about shoveling techniques. Bring your own transceivers, shovels and probes. We will test your older units with a hammer!

Peter Amann

pamann@incentre.net

Jan. 12, 2019

Gorby Canyon

Easy and scenic ice climb through the canyon. Beginners welcome on this tour.

Wayne Campbell

htcmaint@yahoo.ca

Jan. 15th 2019

Surprise Valley

Explore a unique place local's call Surprise Valley near Medicine Lake. We can look for elusive turns off of Fossil Ridge, or go for a casual tour out to Surprise Lake to soak in the views behind Opal Hills.

Sean Prockter

sprockter@gmail.com

Feb 11th 2019

Wilcox pass

Ski tour to Wilcox pass and enjoy the great views and lunch around area.

Contact Midori Bakonyi

greenmdr@hotmail.com

Feb. 18, 2019

William Switzer park

Easy snowshoe on one of the trails near Kellys Bathtub. Snowshoes supplied by the Park.

Wayne Campbell

htcmaint@yahoo.ca

February 21, 2019

Heli snowshoe on Drinnan Ridge

12 minute Heli ride to the ridge. A truly amazing snowshoe experience

Contact: Claire Levesque

claire.levesque@telus.net

780 223 4498

Mar. 9, 2019

Fossil Ridge

Difficult ski tour circuit in steep terrain. Experience Necessary.

Wayne Campbell

htcmaint@yahoo.ca

March 11th

Indian Pass

Ski tour to Whistler creek and towards to Indian Pass (behind of Indian ridge). We will spend time to enjoy the spectacular views.

Contact Midori Bakonyi

greenmdr@hotmail.com

Mar. 11-14 (Mon.-Thur.)

Peyto Hut Ski Trip

We will spend 3 nights based out of ACC's Peter and Catharine Whyte (Peyto) Hut on the Wapta Icefield in Banff. Possible ski ascents are Mistaya Mountain, Mount Baker and Mount Rhondda. Expect fun, laughter and great memories but be aware that there will be some long days traveling on glaciers and in avalanche terrain during this trip too.

Sean Prockter

sprockter@gmail.com

March 16th

Ski Tour (backside of Indian Ridge)

We will head up Whistler creek to the South slopes of Indian ridge.

Contact:

Ian Goodge iangoodge@gmail.com

780-913-8396

Apr. 6, 2019

Winston Churchill

Difficult ski tour. Good moderate skiing ability required.

Wayne Campbell

htcmaint@yahoo.ca

GUIDELINES FOR TRIP PARTICIPANTS

Amateur volunteer hikers, skiers and climbers coordinate all trips listed in the Jasper-Hinton Section's trip schedule. When on a trip, participants must act in a manner that is safe and responsible and participants are expected to bring the equipment requested by the trip leader. Participants should find out the requirements and demands of the trip well in advance by asking the leader and researching the trip in guidebooks and other literature. Further guidelines for participants are listed below.

1. Be prepared to complete an insurance waiver form.
2. You must be a member of the Alpine Club of Canada to join a trip.
3. Sign up for trips that will challenge you, but are not beyond your abilities. If unsure, ask the trip leader and tell them your experience and fitness level – **be honest**. People inexperienced in the mountains should start with easier trips.
4. Learn about the trip before you attend (which route, number of kilometers, amount of vertical gain/loss, type of terrain, length of day, etc.).
5. Give as much notice as possible to the Trip Leader if you are unable to go on the trip. There are often waiting lists of other members who would like to go.
6. Ensure that you have the right equipment and that it is in good repair.
7. For winter trips, make sure that you are using a digital avalanche transceiver and that it is in good working order. Single antenna (analog) transceivers are not acceptable.
8. Bring your helmet on all moderate and difficult scrambles, alpine, rock and ice climbs. Leaders may ask you to bring your helmet on certain ski trips as well.
9. Offer to drive, share expenses and be prepared to carry a part of the "group gear" (ropes, etc). The trip leader has often invested considerable time prior to the trip, investigating the route, reviewing the avalanche hazard, etc. and is often supplying his/her own equipment. Show your appreciation for this effort.

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