
ADE MILLER

North America 2005

The Area Notes for North America would not have been possible without the help of Kelly Cordes and the American Alpine Journal (AAJ), which provided the original background material upon which these notes are based. They cover the highlights and major ascents. For a complete report of all activity in North America, the reader is referred to the current editions of the AAJ and Canadian Alpine Journal.

ALASKA

As usual, the Denali National Park and its surrounds saw significant activity despite unseasonably warm temperatures in early May and evidence of significant glacial meltout and a rising firn line. Activity on **Mount Denali** itself was somewhat limited. Valerie Babanov and Raphael Slawinski added *Infinity Direct* (AK 5) to the south-west face. Their route ends where it joins the *Upper West Rib* (Sinclair-Breitenbach-Corbet-Buckingham, 1959) at 4700m, with poor weather ending their summit bid. On the south face, the third ascent of the *Denali Diamond* (Becker-Graage, 1983) was completed by Katsutaka Yokoyama and Fumitaka Ichimura.

On **Mount Hunter** the *Diamond Arête* (Donini-Tackle, 1985) saw its second ascent by Freddie Wilkinson and Samuel Johnson over a period of several days in April-May. The pair declared the route to be of high quality encountering difficulties of WI4, AI5 and M5.

On the north face of **Peak 11,520ft**, a sub-summit on Mount Hunter's east ridge, Coley Gentzel and Seth Hobby climbed *The Flame* (IV AI3). The route is to the right of the Keeling-McNeill (2002) and ascends a gully and ice face to the summit ridge. This may be the first ascent of Peak 11,520ft to the actual summit.

Several parties completed lines on **Mount Huntingdon**. Katsutaka Yokoyama and Fumitaka Ichimura, as their 'warm up' for Denali, climbed *SHI-SHI* (1800m, AK 4 M5 AI5), a new variation of *The Phantom Wall* (Smith-Teare, 1991). Jack Tackle and Fabrizio Zangrilli climbed *The Imperfect Apparition*, another independent line left of *The Phantom Wall*. Their route joined the *Harvard Route* (Roberts-Jensen-Bernd-Hale, 1965) several pitches below the summit where the pair started their descent due to poor weather.

Will Mayo and Chris Thomas climbed **Peak 11,520ft**, a sub-summit south of Mount Huntingdon's south ridge. They called the route *The Mini-Intellectual* (WI4+ R/X 5.8), while dubbing the summit itself 'Idiot Peak'. Their reasoning was as follows, 'We named it for ourselves for climbing such an insignificant peak with such significant objective hazards, and to continue the longstanding tradition of naming mountains after Presidents.'

In the Ruth Gorge, Louis-Philippe Ménard and Maxime Turgeon established an incredible new route on the north face of **Mount Bradley**. *Spice Factory* (1350m, 5.10R M7 WI5) is the first complete line on Bradley's north face. The pair also completed second ascents of *The Escalator* (Shaw-Wagner, 2000) on **Mount Johnson** and *On the Frozen Roads of Our Incertitudes* (Constant-Mercader, 2003) on **London Tower**.

On **The Moose's Tooth** a large Russian-Ukrainian team, comprising Aleksey Shuruyev, Dmitriy Shirokov, Katya Vorotnikova and Sergei Matusevich, climbed the south face to establish *The Tooth Obsession* (850m, V 5.10+ A0 WI4).

On **Mount Grosvenor's** north-east face Eamonn Walsh and Mark Westman made the first ascent of *Once Were Warriors* (17 pitches, V WI6 mixed). The route climbs a deep cleft on the upper part of the NE face.

On the Kichatna Spires area two significant new lines were established. On **Kichatna Spire** Sean Isaac, Rob Owens and Roger Strong finally found success with *The Voice of Unreason* (700m, ED2 M7 WI5 A1). The line follows a steep chimney system on the far-left side of the north-west face. This success made up for several failed attempts earlier in their visit. Chad Kellogg and Joe Puryear also visited the Spires and added the *Black Crystal Arête* (900m, 5.10 A2), again on **Kichatna Spire**. Their route climbs the spire's south ridge and was established in a single round-trip push of 25 hours.

In the Chugach Mountains a lucky break in the weather gave Alasdair Turner and Gordon Smith *The Sanctuary Ridge* on **Mount Marcus Baker**, the range's highest peak. The **Devil's Thumb** also saw its first and much publicised winter ascent by Zac Hoyt. Hoyt soloed the *Krakauer Route* (Krakauer, 1977) but fell into a crevasse on the descent and was eventually rescued by helicopter.

CANADA

Several British parties were active in the Wrangell St Elias range this year. Simon Yates and Paul Schweizer climbed a new line on **Mount Alverstone's** west face (TD+). Their route is an impressive couloir line right of the main gully system (Blanchard-Wilford, 1998). (See article 'Short and Sweet', p109.) On the nearby **Mount Vancouver** massif, Simeon Warner and Ade Miller completed the first British ascent of the *South Rib* (Pilling-Diedrich, 1993) of **Good Neighbor Peak**. (See article 'Good Times on Good Neighbor', p115.) Glenn Wilks and Jonathon Wakefield visited the Donjek glacier region and climbed several previously unclimbed peaks including **Donjek 3, 4 and 5**.

Other notable ascents from the 2005 season included Joe Josephson and David Dornian's new route on the north face of **Mount McArthur**, *Some Kind of Monster*, and *Flowers for Bläise* (1200m) on **Dak Tower**. Tobey Carman, Peter Linn, Andrew McGarry and Kiajsa Krieger completed the first ski descent and probable third ascent of **Mount Cook** via the second ascensionists' descent route (Hubbard et al, 1999).

On Baffin Island Drew Wilson, Kyle Dempster, Grover Shipman, Ross Cowan and Pete Dronkers established *Grin and Barret* (IV 5.11 A4-) on the previously unnamed **Wilson Wall** south-west of **Great Sail Peak**. Tragically their ascent was marred by Drew Wilson's fatal fall while descending.

In the Coast Mountains Craig McGee, Sean Easton and Eamonn Walsh visited the south side of **Mount Waddington** and climbed a major new ice route, *Uber Groove* (600m, ED1 90°), to the left of the *Haberl-Reid* (Haberl-Reid, 1998). Though sérac threatened, it was deemed to be relatively safe. The same party also completed the first ascent of the **Grand Cappuccino** via its south-west buttress yielding *Morgenlatte* (450m, ED1 5.11).

Elsewhere in the Coast Mountains Bruce Fairley and Harold Redekop completed the *East Face* (750m, D+ 5.8) on **Mount Queen Bess**. The ubiquitous Don Serl, accompanied by Andrew Rennie, visited the northern Waddington range, which yielded *Miles from the Ordinary* (300m, D 5.10+) on the east tower of **Frontier Peak** and the *West Ridge* (400m, AD 5.10) on **Mount Delusion**. In the Pantheon Range, **Mount Zeus' Northwest Ridge** (550m, TD 5.9) saw its first ascent by Simon Richardson and Mark Robson.

In the Powell River area Aaron Black and several partners finally completed *Call of the Granite* (23 pitches, V 5.12 C1) on the **West Main Wall** in Eldred Valley. This was the culmination of a project started in 2002 and spanned several summers. This area has some of the most impressive granite in Canada, most of which is largely unclimbed.

In the Selkirk Mountains, Bruce Kay and Jon Walsh completed the *North Pillar* (1000m, 5.11- A0) on **Mount McDonald**. This feature has seen several attempts. Kay and Walsh removed some of the unnecessary bolts added by previous suitors.

In the Bugaboos **Pigeon Spire** received its first winter ascent when Sean Isaac and Marc Piché climbed the *North Face* (Beckey et al, 1948) rating it M6 A0. Bruce Miller and Chris Weidner sensibly waited for summer before putting up *Hey Kool-Aid!* (20 pitches, VI 5.11+) on **North Howser Tower**, which follows a line right of *Young Men on Fire* (Hollinger-Gore, 1994).

The Canadian Rockies were quiet in terms of winter alpine climbs although Yan Mongrain and Maxime Turgeon managed a winter ascent of *Andromeda Strain* (Blanchard-Cheesmond-Friesen, 1983). In early April Jon Walsh and Carolyn Ware added *The Shadow* (220m, M6 W16+ R), the obvious corner left of *Riptide* (Ostrander-Marshall, 1987).

Numerous new ice and mixed routes were added during the winter season, a wet autumn making up for the unseasonably dry summer of '04. The **Stanley Headwall** saw significant activity. Jon Walsh, Chris Brazeau and Jon Simms added *Drama Queen* (140m, W16 M7) and Sean Isaac and Dave Thomson finished off *Dawn of the Dead* (M8+), a direct start to the upper ice of *The Day After Les Vacances de Mr Hulot* (Damilano-Josephson, 1994). Elsewhere in the Rockies, the long-standing and oft attempted ice line between the summer rock routes *Belzac* and *Dropout* on the east face of the **East End of Mount Rundel** was finally completed by Eamonn Walsh and

Dana Ruddy, who climbed it as *Belzout Direct* (500m, M6 A0 W15). This was subsequently freed by Raphael Slawinski and Ian Walsted at M8. Slawinski returned later that winter with Ben Firth and Walsh to climb another line to the left naming it *Great White Fright* (500m, M6). While easier than *Belzout Direct*, the route is threatened by a huge cornice.

CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES

A great deal of activity occurred in the North Cascades during '05. Several long-standing objectives were completed by Mike Layton and partners, including the east face of **Southeast Mox Peak**, *The Devil's Club* (730m, V+ 5.11-) and *The Washington Pass Traverse* (VI 5.9+). Wayne Wallace and Josh Kaplan also completed another long-standing traverse project, this time of the Northern Pickets, *The Northern Pickets Traverse* (VI 5.7). Several other major faces also saw new routes. On **Johannesburg Mountain** Lorne Campbell and Jens Klubberud established *The CK Route* (V 5.10b AI3) while Ade Miller and Stuart Taylor added a new winter line, *Murphy's Law* (V 80° mixed), to the elusive west face of **Mount Index**.

El Capitan saw Tommy Caldwell and Beth Rodden free both *The Nose* (5.14a) and *Free Rider* (5.12d) in a single push. Caldwell had previously freed *The Nose*, becoming only the second person to do so. Dave Turner added a rare new solo route to El Cap, *Block Party* (VI 5.9 A4), over three days in June. The line is semi-independent, sharing pitches with *Tempest* and *Pacific Ocean Wall*. This was Turner's 11th El Cap solo.

In Utah several previously unclimbed desert towers saw first ascents: *Tchalkovsky Overture* (130m, IV 5.11 A3) and *Odyssey* (150m, IV 5.11 A3) by Dave Mealey and partners, and *Chimney Rock* (150m, 5.11 A3) by Layne Potter and Sheridan Potter. There was also significant new route activity in the San Rafael Swell area, including the first ascent of **Dreamcatcher Tower** by Paul and Andy Ross, who named their route *Broken Dreams* (IV 5.9 C2).

In The Zion National Park, Michael Anderson and partners freed several existing lines, including *Spaceshot* (9 pitches, 5.13a), *Golden Years* (8 pitches, 5.12d) and *Angel Hair* (11 pitches, 5.13a R/X), and also established *Freeloader* (12 pitches, 5.12d R) on **Isaac**. Elsewhere in the Park, Brian Smoot, Chris Rowins and Dave Jones put up a new line on **Mount Moroni**, *The Road to Cumorah* (IV 5.11 C1). The same team also added *Locksmith Dihedral* (IV 5.11d C1) to the **Gatekeeper Wall**, while Joe Nolte and Simon Ahlgren climbed *Perfect Day for Bananafish* (V A3) in the **Kolob Canyons**.

In Colorado's **Black Canyon**, Kent Wheeler and Jim Howe climbed *Atlantis* (16 pitches, 5.11) next to Wheeler's existing route *Lost Cities*. The canyon's *Hallucinogen Wall* (VI 5.10 A3) was the scene of several speed ascents, finally culminating in Jared Ogden and Ryan Nelson's blistering time of 8'59". In Wyoming's Wind River mountains, Andy Neuman and Chris Barlow climbed *The Neu Low* (IV 5.11- R) on **Warbonnet Peak**.