



Kester Brown on the first ascent of Northern Exposure (M11), Wye Creek. *Kester Brown collection*

Jono Clarke ticked off an old two-pitch project with shaky protection on the Telecom Tower (Remarkables), naming it The Fastest Indian (rock crux 20). Also on the Telecom Tower Rupert Gardiner and Andrew Mills climbed a new five-pitch line at a grade of about 3+.

In the summer Dave Bolger, Rupert Gardiner, and Cris Prudden ventured into the Stoneburn, climbing a five-pitch rock route on an outlier to Stoney Peak: The Sentinel (17).

MARK WATSON, *New Zealand Alpine Club*

*Barron Saddle-Mt. Brewster Region, summary.* It's tempting to call the North Buttress of Mt. Hopkins (2,678m) a "last great problem" of the Barron Saddle-Mt. Brewster Region. However, that would be misleading, as it's more the buttress being isolated and long, rather than technically hard, that has kept climbers off its heights for so long. However you look at it, the buttress is an obvious and compelling rock ridge, and it was great to see it finally climbed, in January. Kynan Bazley and Paul Hersey took the honors.

They helicoptered to the base of Watkins, took 10 hours to reach the summit from the valley floor and then spent another two days to walk all the way out. Due to the remote and rugged terrain, they commented that in many ways the walk-out was as challenging as the climb. They graded the route 5+, with a rock crux of 17.

The twist to this story is that a month later Steven Fortune and Guy McKinnon also climbed the route and returned to Christchurch believing they had made the first ascent. Disappointment came when McKinnon opened the latest issue of *The Climber* a week after their return.

Winter saw a couple of prominent new lines established. On Mt. Huxley (2,505m) Sam Barron and James Edwards climbed an 800m route on the west face, spending the night in a hole near the summit. Edwards also teamed up with Steven Fortune and Paul Warnock for an 1,100m route on the southeast face of Mt. McKerrow (2,650m): *Fortune Favours the Bold*. In July Paul Hersey and Mat Woods climbed a grade 3 gully on the south face of Peak 2,200m.

MARK WATSON, *New Zealand Alpine Club*

*Aoraki Mount Cook and Westland, summary.* The west side of the Divide was relatively quiet this past year, with only two new routes reported. In the summer Craig Cardie and Allan Uren climbed an obvious and reportedly good-quality route to the right of Moonshine Buttress on Conway Peak (2,899m). Sunshine Buttress follows a direct line up a rock buttress, with a crux of 16.

In March 2006, Andrew Rennie and Graham Zimmerman climbed a new route on the southwest face of Mt. Matenga (2,665m) in the Franz Josef N ev . *Mixed Blood* is a four-pitch

mixed route at 4 M5 WI3. The route is apparently “short and sweet” and provided “some very good, hard, and interesting climbing.”

The other side of the Divide has seen little more new route activity. In March 2005 Michael Madden and Tshering Pande Bhote (Nepal) climbed a direct and obvious new line on the south face of Aoraki Mt. Cook (3,754m). Sherpa-Kiwi is graded 5. In late October Marty Beare and Johnny Davison climbed the prominent right-hand ice fang on 3,070m Mt. Haidinger’s east face headwall, high above the Tasman Valley. Stealing White Boys is graded 5. A parallel left-hand line was climbed during winter 2004.

Just down the road from Mt. Cook, Nina Conradi, Thomas Evans, Mal Haskins, and Jason Tweedie climbed three new ice routes up the Bush Stream Valley. January 2006 saw Nico Hudak and Mark Watson head into the Reay Valley, east of Tasman Valley, in search of quality red rock. The pair climbed a prominent stepped buttress dubbed Max Johnson (seven pitches, 17) on a 2,235m outlier of Mt. Johnson. Later the same day the pair climbed a classic, sharp arête, Tim Fin (15, pitched and simul-climbed).

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*Canterbury region, summary.* Showing that there are still plenty of new things to do in the Southern Alps, if you are motivated, Guy McKinnon ventured alone onto the northwest face of Malcolm Peak (2,512m) to make the first ascent of this 500m greywacke face, at 14. Malcolm Peak is on the Main Divide between the Lyell Glacier and the Heim Plateau.

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*Rock climbing, brief summary.* Working from south to north, this report mentions only sample highlights of New Zealand crag climbing. Starting with the Darrans, where a lot of activity focused on Babylon and Chasm Crag, Derek Thatcher made the first ascent of Hammurabi (32) at Babylon, while Mayan Smith-Gobat made the first ascent Akathesia (28), a line previously bolted by Paul Rogers at Chasm Crag.

The Queenstown area has seen a lot of activity, both up high on the Remarkables and at Wye Creek, with the most notable event being Derek Thatcher’s ascent of a long-time project named Homage (32) at Wye Creek.

In Wanaka, Guy Cotter and Ed Nepia finished a long-time project, to produce Taniwha (220m, 9 pitches, 24/25), a great-looking route that has already seen one onsite repeat, by Bruce Dowrick and Jon Sedon. There has been lots of other local cragging activity in Wanaka, as well as the release of a new, larger edition of the local guidebook

In Christchurch, Derek Thatcher ticked off a project linking terrain between Hung Like Elvis (26) and Bogus Machismo (29). This currently unnamed line weighs in at around 32. Kaz Pucia made the prestigious second ascent of Ivan Vostinar’s testpiece, Centrifuge (32), while Mayan Smith-Gobat has been impressing everyone with some staunch sends, most notably Troglodyte (30), the hardest grade yet climbed by a Kiwi woman.

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