

The summer season at Aoraki Mt. Cook was sadly marred by a number of deaths, including a high profile tragedy involving the deaths of guides Paul Scaife, David Hiddleston, and David Gardner in an avalanche and resulting fall on Mt. Tasman.

*Alpine rock in the Darran Mountains summary.* After a quiet winter, some sustained periods of fine weather and a group of motivated climbers brought a surge of activity to the Darrans this summer.

Craig Jefferies and Martin Wightman made the most notable ascent of the season by getting off the beaten track and exploring the Llawrenny Peaks, situated in a seldom-visited tract of wilderness north of the Milford Track and southwest of Mitre Peak. The pair made the first ascent of the east ridge of the North Llawrenny Peak (1,925m). The route offered approximately 300-meters of quality rock climbing on a sharp ridge, with near vertical sections where the ridge merges with the north face.

Immediately north of the Llawrenny Peaks sits Sinbad Gully, where this summer Kester Brown and Sebastian Lowenstein attempted to free The Original Line (mentioned earlier) on the upper cirque of Sinbad Gully. Established by Craig Jefferies and Paul Rogers in 2002, The Original Line has difficulties of 23/A2+ and was considered a viable free route—that is until Kester and Sebastian were shut down on the seventh pitch of the ten-pitch route, having freed pitches up to grade 27 (5.12d).

Another route to have its free pitches eliminated, this time entirely, was Ram Paddock Road (23/A4) on the Little North Face of Mt. Sabre (2,167m). Derek Thatcher and Jonathon Clearwater gave the route an overall grade of 24 (11d) and added a grade 25 (5.12) pitch called Rock Candy near the start of Ball And Chain.

On the south face of Tairoa Jonathon Clearwater and Thomas Evans climbed eight new pitches to create Liquid Toasted Sandwich (21).



Torres Peak, northeast face. (1) God's Zone (Jefferies-Uren, 2004). (2) Denz-Gabites-Perry (1977). These are the only routes on the face. *Craig Jefferies*

*Mt. Aspiring region summary.* In terms of new route activity it has been a relatively quiet year for the Aspiring region. However, the fact that new route potential still exists was clearly illustrated when on the same day this summer two parties climbed new terrain on the south face of the classic "Matterhorn of the South": Mt. Aspiring (3,033m).

Howie McGhie and Chris Fox, believing they were on an entirely new line due to