

overseas trends, whilst being a staunch reminder as to how far behind New Zealand is in the development of sport mixed-climbing.

*Hopkins Valley region summary.* Exceeding the Aoraki Mt. Cook area for new routes, this accessible area continues to receive attention from a handful of motivated climbers. In the 2004 *New Zealand Alpine Journal (NZAJ)* Ross Cullen (guidebook author, and one of the area's leading first ascensionists) reported 20-plus new climbs in 12 months.

In May Paul Hersey and Mat Woods climbed the 500-meter rock route Tenderfoot, Grade 3, rock crux 13 (5.6), on Mt. Glen Lyon (2,050m) at the toe of the Neumann Range. The wall features some nice climbing with sections of good rock broken by ledges.

Later in the year a second route was added. Late Bloomer, by Mat Woods and Dave Morgan tackles more difficult ground, with a crux of 17 (5.9) and an overall grade of 4-.

In the Dobson Valley, Kynan Bazley and Yew-jin Tan made the first ascent of the east face of Mt. Glencairn (2,499m) via Hidden Treasures, Grade 15 (5.8), overall 3-. The route started from Sutherland Stream.

Ross Cullen and Bill McLeod once again teamed up for some new route exploration and after fishing around in the South Branch of the South Temple Valley the duo discovered and named the Salmon Slabs. This salmon-hued stretch of greywacke now has four multi-pitch routes up to grade 17.

The most notable first ascent of the winter was a new line on the southeast face of Mt. Ward (2,645m), North Elcho Valley, climbed in late August by Kynan Bazely and Paul Hersey. The route, named Great Dane, is a 12-pitch ice climb with an overall grade of 5-. Prior to this ascent the face had not seen a pair of ice tools for 23 years!

A handful of new ice routes were climbed at Bush Stream and a few other areas were explored for ice climbing potential.

This summer saw the Cullen-McLeod team active again on the Grasshopper Wall, Peak 2,070m, with the first ascent of Knees Up—grade 16 (5.8/5.9), nine pitches.

In the North Branch of the Huxley River James Edwards and Oliver Metherell made the first recorded ascent of Peak 2,072m, the 500-meter route is called Matinee.

A number of other climbers were active, completing new routes and repeating existing climbs.

*Aoraki Mount Cook and Westland summary.* There were a number of standout climbs at Aoraki Mt. Cook during the last year, with Allan Uren and Craig Jefferies' ascent of the northeast face of Torres Peak (3,160m) being the most significant. Climbed in early July, Godzone (14 pitches, grade 6+) tackles consistently technical terrain as it negotiates a more or less plumb line up the face. The 500-meter route was climbed with two bivouacs and is a definite contender for the badge of "hardest route in the country."

A few days later Glenn Pennycook and Tshering Pande Bhote tackled Mt. Haidinger's east face headwall via a prominent ice lead high above the Tasman Glacier. In a committing effort the pair climbed the route from Pioneer Hut by crossing the South Ridge of Haidinger and abseiling and traversing steep slopes to access the direttissima. White Steel tackles 200 meters of ice from 65-90 degrees and is graded 5+.

Continuing with his penchant for soloing Southern Alps classics, Guy McKinnon upped the ante last winter with solos of the remote and difficult to access Hidden and Balfour Faces of Mt. Tasman (3,497m), both grade 6. The Balfour has been soloed in winter before, but not often and the Hidden (climbed via the Direct) was a first winter ascent.

In January this year Guy attempted a solo of the north ridge of Aoraki Mt. Cook (3,754m). Tackling the crux, the Beare Step, still shod in his big boots, Guy slipped, but his would-be fatal plunge was cut short after five meters by a small ledge that he was lucky enough to strike and remain on. The landing broke his left fibula and he remained on the ledge for 13 hours before being rescued by the Aoraki Mt. Cook SAR team.

Australian climber Gren Hinton also made some very impressive winter solos. On the south face of Mt. Hicks (3,198m) he made an ascent of the Yankee Kiwi Couloir (6+) and a mixed free- and rope-solo of Logans Run (6+).

Other winter highlights included a first winter ascent of The Balcony Line (4+) on the south face of Mt. Mallory (2,756m) by Tsering Pande Bhote, Johnny Davidson, and Glenn Pennycook. Pennycook also made the first winter ascent of Albino Merino (4) on the southwest headwall of Mt. Haidinger. Pete Camell and Nick Monteith climbed a three-pitch variation to the Valentine Gully on the Marcel Face of Mt. Haast and a new route on the south face of Mt. Barnicoat (2,800m).

Glenn Pennycook and Andrew Young also made the first winter ascent of the Gray-Williamson Couloir on the southwest face of Conway Peak (2,899m).

The readily accessible Murchison Face of My Aylmer (2,699m) was climbed in September by Paul Knott and Adrian Camm. Archbishop Of Canterbury is sustained 400-meters of ice with occasional rock steps, with an overall grade of 4/5.

Summer saw the usual throng of activity in the park, though few significant ascents were made. Early in the season Tim Billington and Paul Stephanus climbed a new line on the east face of Mt. Nazomi (2,925m).

In January Mike Madden made a solo ascent of the Direct (4+) on the east face of Mt. Sefton (3,151m). Vaughn Thomas and Thomas Evans made a quick ascent of the Central Buttress on the north face of Mt. Hicks—12 hours hut to hut.

The end of the season was marred by tragedy with the death of accomplished climber and guide Erica Beuzenberg. Beuzenberg was short-roping two clients on Ball Pass, just south of Aoraki Mt. Cook, when one slipped, dragging the trio over a 200-meter bluff.

SEASON SUMMARIES FROM MARK WATSON, *New Zealand Alpine Club*