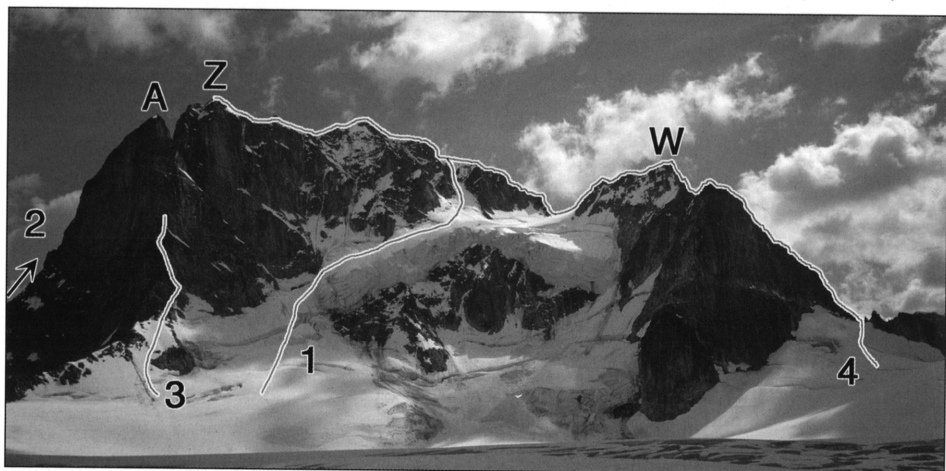


Chilliwick Lake. One much talked about face that did finally get climbed was the north face of Grant Peak, which gave Tyler Linn and Nick Elson a long 5.7 (AD+/D- III) on good rock. Climbers had been eyeing the face for years, but it took a local—Linn from the nearby town of Hope—to work out the best approach to the relatively remote face, which is guarded by massive thickets of slide alder in the valley below.

DREW BRAYSHAW, *Canada, AAC*



Athena Tower (A) and the main (Z) and west (W) summits of Mt. Zeus: (1) Northwest Face (de Saussure-Firey-Knudson-Renz-Rose-Schurr, 1980) of Zeus. (2) East Buttress of Athena (Collum-Pilling, 1983). (3) 2005 attempt on Athena. (4) Northwest Ridge of Zeus (Richardson-Robson, 2005). *Simon Richardson*

*Mt. Zeus, Northwest Ridge.* The many rock towers and pinnacles in the Pantheon Range often get overlooked in favor of the better-known peaks around Mt. Waddington, just south. The Pantheons have seen only a handful of visits from technical climbers. Mt. Zeus (2,959m) is the second highest peak in the group. It comprises solid granite and dominates the central part of the range.

Mark Robson and I visited Zeus to attempt the striking 500m-high northwest pillar of Athena Tower on the north side of the mountain. Athena Tower was first climbed by Bill Pilling and Greg Collum via the East Buttress in 1983, but had seen no further ascents. Unfortunately, our attempt ground to a halt at one-third height, when we encountered an almost featureless 50m-high wall. With no cracks for aid or protection, we were forced to retreat.

Instead, we turned our attention to the 2km-long northwest ridge of Zeus. We left base camp on the Zeus-Pegasus col early on the morning of August 7, crossed the glacier, and front-pointed up a short snow slope to the foot of the ridge. The route followed corners and chimneys, interspersed by smoother slabs (5.7 to 5.8), and although the climbing was technically not too testing, the rock was loose in places and covered in black lichen. Once we reached the narrow ridge leading up to the West Summit, the quality of the rock improved, and the climbing became increasingly exposed. The crest was clear of snow, and we were able to continue in our rock shoes, even though steep, mixed icy faces fell away just below. When we reached the unclimbed West Summit, we saw the Waddington group for the first time, gleaming white with fresh snow.

The character of the ridge changed abruptly at this point, as it widened to a 1m-wide gangway of perfectly flat rock, which led over a series of subsummits toward a snowy col. The continuation ridge above the col was deceptively difficult, narrowing to a series of steep towers. Fortunately they were bathed in the setting sun, and we climbed a series of absorbing pitches, some up to 5.9, to reach the summit slopes just as night fell. We bivouacked in a hollow of boulders approximately where the Northwest Face route (de Saussure-Firey-Knudson-Renz-Rose-Schurr, 1980) reaches the summit slopes.

We talked, dozed, joked and shivered our way through the night, and were away at first light up boulder fields and snow. We arrived on the summit at 6 a.m. on August 8. It was a magical morning with the surrounding peaks tinged by the red of dawn. We plunged down the southern slopes that narrowed into a hanging glacial valley, below Kali Peak, that led down to the glacier leading up to the Zeus-Manitou col, and made a long abseil down a cliff onto the Zeus Glacier. What we saw descending from the col was evidence of rapid glacial recession in the area. The first party to climb Zeus in 1966 commented on snow slopes reaching to the col but made no mention of the rock wall below.

From the Zeus Glacier it was a long slog back up moraines to our base camp. We arrived tired but happy late in the afternoon, having completed a satisfying alpine route (550m, TD 5.9) and traverse of the peak. The weather stayed settled, so a few days later we crossed the Ragnarok Glacier and made the second ascent of the superb Northwest Ridge of Mt. Fenris (450m, AD, de Saussure-Schurr, 1981).

SIMON RICHARDSON, *Scotland, AAC*

*Eldred Valley, West Main Wall, Call of the Granite.* Due west from Squamish, the Eldred Valley is the backyard of the small coastal mill town of Powell River. Large mountains, deep valleys, and inlets prevent direct road access to the peninsula, but government ferries shuttle cars for easy access. The Eldred Valley is home to five granite walls, the biggest of which is the West Main, whose east face rises 3,000' above the valley floor.

In 1993 two Powell River locals, Colin Dionne and Rob Richards, claimed the first ascent of the West Main Wall. They worked on their route for a couple of summers before committing and climbing the 18-pitch Mainline (VI 5.11 A4) capsule-style in seven days, using only 18 bolts. Mainline was likely the biggest and proudest route to go up in Canada that year, but it saw little press; Colin and Rob wanted to keep the Eldred Valley a secret.

It wasn't until 1999, when Matt Maddaloni and the late John Millar made the short two-ferry journey, that other climbers began to take notice. Matt and John spent three weeks in the Eldred and established a hard aid line on Carag Dur, the valley's second biggest wall. Upon his return to Squamish, Matt beguiled me with wild tales of untapped big walls easily accessed by a two-wheel-drive vehicle.

In October 1999 I was fortunate enough to climb with Colin during the first ascent of Amon Rudh. Although not as big as the valley's other walls, Amon Rudh was the last unclimbed wall in the Eldred. It was on this trip that Colin opened my eyes to the process of large-scale new routing. I watched Colin, shod in blown-out Boreal Ballets, take off on lead, climbing at least 20' before swinging a power drill from his hip to place a bolt, then climbing another 20' or 30' and repeating the process. In three days Colin and I, along with Chris Wild and Victor Ting, established ten new pitches.