

New Zealand

AUTUMN 2005-AUTUMN 2006

The Darran Mountains, summary. Despite their isolation and high rainfall, Fiordland's Darran Mountains are New Zealand's current forcing ground for rock climbing—both alpine and crag. The rock quality and virtually unlimited quantity of future lines provides an ample venue for those looking to push their own and New Zealand's standards. A driven few made last season a productive one, and now there are even more quality routes to tempt the motivated.

One area of notable activity has been the rock massif of Mt. Moir (2,072m) and its outlier peaks, the Mate's Little Brother and Moir's Mate. Already the site of the number of high-quality lines, the Mate's Little Brother saw some outstanding ascents over the summer. Jonathon Clearwater and Derek Thatcher returned to a project started the previous summer and, between bursts of rain, established another pitch on a project that cuts straight through the prominent overlaps of an existing line, Second Coming. Still unnamed, the new route has a pitch of 28 (freed by Thatcher), and is so far the hardest free pitch "up high" in the Darrans. Farther right on the same wall Kester Brown and Craig Jefferies added the five-pitch New Jersey Drifter (24, 21, 21, 21, 17). The line was rap-bolted, requires some natural pro, and is apparently of the highest quality. Brown also climbed new pitches leading to the prominent roofs on the right side of the north face of Mt. Moir. Richard Thomson, Richard Turner, and Dave Vass climbed a new rock route on the superb red wall that runs between Te Wera and Karetai. Statue Bro? is six pitches long with the crux at 19; it finishes just south of Karetai Col.

Also in late March, Tom Riley and Mark Watson fired up their petrol drill and initiated development of the northeast face of Barrier Knob (1,829m), which lies around the corner from the Labyrinth Wall. They spent six days establishing single- and multi-pitch routes, most notably: Quiet Earth (100m, 21), Sleeping Dogs (50m, 22), Goodbye Pork Pie (50m, 23), and with Allan Uren, the six-pitch route The Navigator (18).

Winter was typically quiet, but a keen few ventured out. Matt Quirke and Allan Uren made the fifth ascent, in thin conditions, of White as a Sheet (300m) in Cirque Creek.

British climber James Edwards teamed up with Gary Kinsey and Andrew Young to climb a new line on the southeast face of Mt. Talbot (Psychopath Wall). Actions Speak Loudest (400m; 4+) tackles a mix of turf, rock, and snow.

MARK WATSON, *New Zealand Alpine Club*

Queenstown region, summary. Queenstown's Wye Creek became New Zealand's focal point for sport-mixed climbing over the past winter. A number of climbers based themselves in the Wye valley cirque and developed mixed climbs up to grade M11. First to fall was an already bolted project, Greypower (M8), by Kester Brown. More bolting provided three more routes: The Rebirth of Cool (M7) by Brown, Pippi's Polish Circus (M8) by Johnny Davison, and the area test-piece, Northern Exposure (M11), again by Brown. These routes point towards a shift in attitude and the opening of horizons in New Zealand mixed climbing. Hopefully the development will continue.

Reminding us that the mixed climbing scene isn't all about bolts, Kester Brown and