

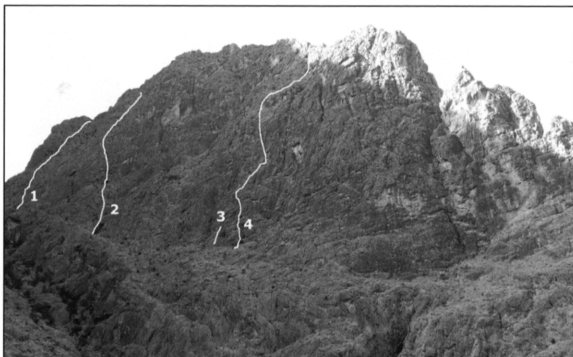
Oman

Western Hajar, various first ascents. Following our visit to Oman reported in *AAJ* 2006, pp. 295-296, Geoff Hornby and I returned to the Western Hajar in January 2007. As before, our aim was to climb new alpine-style routes on the textured limestone faces of Jabal Kawr and Jabal Misht. First we returned to the shaded north face of Jabal M'Seeb that we had enjoyed in 2005. Black Gold made an excellent start to the trip and a second route on the face (400m, D+ UIAA V). Following this, we scrambled through a boulder choke to the hidden cirque of Nadan village—one of the few in Oman still inaccessible by road—hoping to climb above the cirque. However, we turned back the next morning in threatening weather.

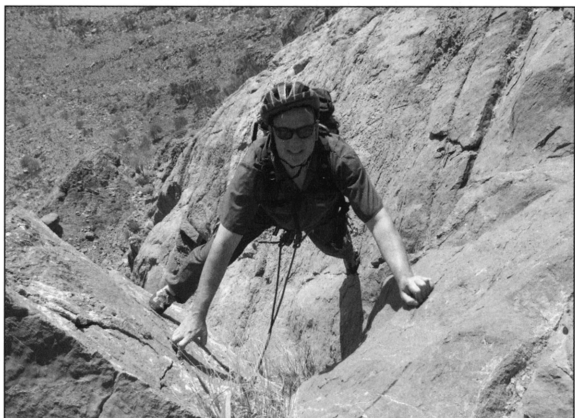
Moving to the north side of the Kawr massif, we scrambled to the left end of Jabal Asait's northeast face and climbed Nora Batty (335m, TD- V), which was named after a bat cave we judiciously avoided. As we became happier about the weather, we turned our attention to the more committing Jabal Misht, where we had in mind a line up the gray walls left of our 2005 route Palestine (800m TD- V+) on the southeast pillar. Jerusalem turned out to be another good line, also TD- and 800m.

Geoff left for the U.K., and

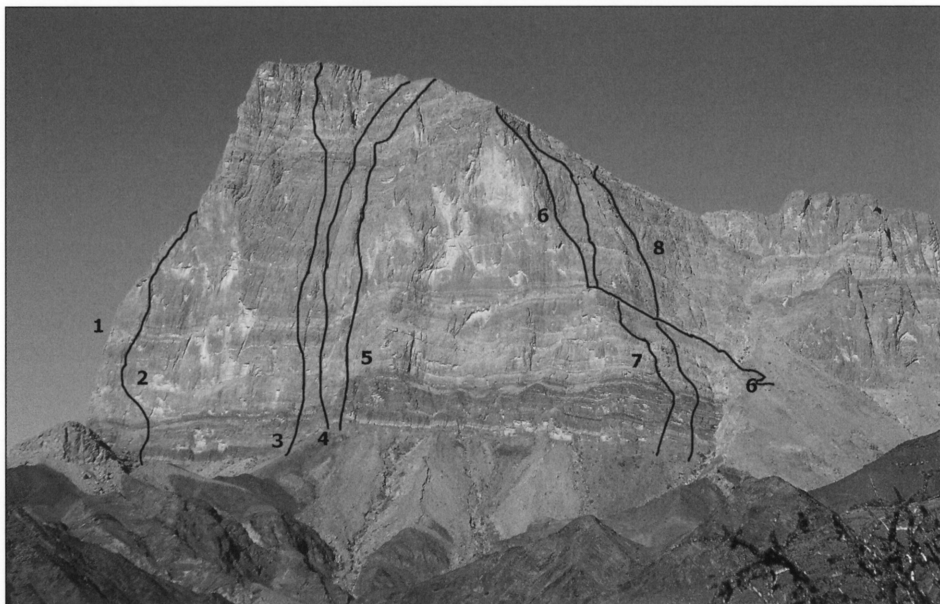
I returned to Jabal M'Seeb with John Walsh. We found a sustained line that follows the dark walls right of Black Gold; we named it Black Magic (510m, TD- V+). The next day we moved to Jabal Asait, where we climbed a line left of Nora Batty, finding several excellent pitches on some of the best rock of the trip to make Sunshine Pillar (245m, D V).



The northeast face of Jabal Asait in Oman's Western Hajar. Marked are just a few of the recent additions. (1) Sunshine Pillar (245m, D V, Knott-Walsh, 2007). (2) Nora Batty (335m, TD- V, Hornby-Knott, 2007). (3) Shamsa (445m, D+ V, Hornby-Sammut-Turnbull, 2004) takes a more or less parallel line to 4. (4) Arch Wall (385m, TD- V+, Hornby-Knott, 2004). Between 2 and 3 lie routes such as Alone in Space (450m, TD- V+/VI-, Davison, solo, 2002), Two's Company (470m, D+ V/V+, Hornby-Sammut) and Three's a Crowd (475m, D V+, Hornby-Sammut, 2002). Right of 4 lie Sackgasse (350m, TD- VI-, Mayr-Oberhauser-Reischauer-Zinner, 2004) and the Albert Precht solo, Straight Up (500m, D V+, Precht, 2001). The right arête is taken by Internationale (500m, TD+, Brachmayer-Hafner-Hornby-Oelz-Precht, 2001). *Paul Knott*



Oman guru Geoff Hornby on pitch three of Jerusalem (800m, TD-), southeast pillar of Jabal Misht. *Paul Knott*



The east face of Jabal Misht (2,090m), one of Oman's finest high mountain rock climbing venues. The face has a strong British history and a selection of routes are marked. British grades are used throughout. (1) English Arête (1,200m, E4 6a, Davison-Oberhauser, 2002). (2) Icarus (1,100m, E4 5c, Littlejohn-Sustad, 2001). (3) The Empty Quarter (1,000m, E2 5a, Chaudhry-Eastwood-Ramsden, 2000). (4) Eastern Promise (1,000m, E2 5c, Nonis-Ramsden, 1999). (5) Intifada (1,000m, E1/E2 5b, Hornby-Wallis, 2001). (6) Southeast Pillar (800m, HVS 5a/5b, Howard-McDonald, 1988). (7) Jerusalem (800m, VS 4c, Hornby-Knott, 2005). (8) Palestine (800m, VS 4c, Hornby-Knott, 2007). *Paul Knott*

It was a pleasure to climb these long mountain routes without having to deal with mountain weather and access (boulder chokes, long talus slopes, and possible flash floods aside). As always the people in the mountains were hospitable, and we found the country safe. In the city the passions we witnessed were due to Oman reaching the semi-final of the Gulf Cup soccer. We met no other climbers during the trip, though during the season, parties from Russia, France, and the U.K. made ascents on Jabal Misht. Oman-based climbers are also developing the potential for shorter, often bolted routes in various wadis. In the mountains almost all climbing to date has adhered to traditional ethics, using natural gear.

PAUL KNOTT, *New Zealand*

Jordan

WADI RUM

April 2006-April 2007, summary. In April 2006 regulars Walter Haupolter and Albert Precht visited the west side of Jebel Rum and with friends put up three routes: Silver Fox (6a), Pensionier's Tango (6a+), and Jordan Express (6b). These routes were 250-300m high, were climbed in traditional style, and finish on the shoulder of Frustration Dome, north of Sheikh