
Area Notes

COMPILED AND EDITED BY PAUL KNOTT

Alps 2005

Russia & Central Asia 2005

Greenland 2005

Scottish Winters 2004-2005 & 2005-2006

Oman & United Arab Emirates 2004-2006

India 2005

Afghanistan & Pakistan 2005

Nepal 2005

China & Tibet 2005

North America 2005

Cordilleras Blanca & Huayhuash 2005

New Zealand 2005-2006

Lindsay Griffin

Paul Knott

Derek Fordham

Simon Richardson

Geoff Hornby

Harish Kapadia

Lindsay Griffin

Dick Isherwood

John Town

Ade Miller

Antonio Gomez Bohorquez

Mark Watson

LINDSAY GRIFFIN

Alps 2005

Mont Blanc

In January on the **Mont de la Brenva** above Entrèves local residents Rudi Buccella and Matteo Pellin climbed the 320m *Les Enfants de Pays* (M4 and WI 4+).

On 11 June Christophe Dumarest and Patrick Gabarrou climbed a new route on the NNW Spur (400m: TD) of the **Tour Ronde**. This is a pure rock climb right of the 1978 *Decorps-Perroux route*, Gabarrou once again using his great knowledge of the range to add a surprising new line to a popular venue.

On 17 July, in a much-publicized ascent, Alex Huber made the first completely free ascent of the *Voie Petit* on the east face of the **Grand Capucin**. Petit, with various partners (including his dad), completed the route in 1997. It follows a tenuous line on the right side of the face, finishing up the hanging pillar right of the classic *Bonatti-Ghigo*. Though he managed to make every move free, he was unable to link them together on the roof and gave the route an overall grade of 8a+. Huber thought the crux to be 8b, making it arguably the hardest high-altitude, multi-pitch free route in the Western Alps, and one of the hardest of that genre in the world.

On the remote east face of the **Grandes Jorasses** Patrice Glairon-Rappaz, Patrick Pessi and Paul Robach made a rare winter ascent of the original *Gagliardone-Gervasutti route* over five days.

One of the biggest new routes of the winter fell to Philippe Batoux, Christophe Dumarest and Patrick Gabarrou, when they added a really hard line up the steep rock wall of the Pointe Marguerite (4208m); *Heidi* (850m: 5+, WI 4, M5+, A3). The team reached the summit on 21 March after an arduous ascent. Close to the top Gabarrou was resoundingly hit in the back by a rock and opted to be lifted from the summit ridge by helicopter.

During the summer Mauro 'Bubu' Bole and Mario Cortese put up *Le Nez* on the left flank – the Monolith – of the Croz Spur. The route lies just right of Slavko Sveticic's *Manitua* and featured a crux section of 7c to gain the crest of the spur. Fixed ropes were used while the team worked the route and hand drilled 8mm bolts. Bubu felt the line was as sheltered from rock fall as any on the Jorasses, and with a start up the pillar avoided by the 1935 *Classic route* on the Croz and a finish up a similar line to *Manitua*, *Le Nez* gives 38 free pitches to the summit of Pt Croz.

Nick Bullock and Stu McAleese made the first free and third overall ascent of *Omega* on the west face of the **Petites Jorasses**. The route is the obvious curving couloir left of the classic rock routes and was put up by Gabarrou and Ferran Latorre in 1994. Bullock attempted it in 2004 but a fall from the

10th pitch left him with a broken ankle and a difficult helicopter rescue. This time he climbed the pitch at Scottish VII, 8 then continued on to free the A2/3 pitch above at VIII, 8. The second ascent had been made less than a month earlier by Philippe Batoux and Benoît Peyronnard.

In early June Christophe Dumarest and the insatiable Patrick Gabarrou climbed the north spur of Pt 3607m (just left of the west face of the Petites Jorasses) to create *Éperon Tchoua*. This is the rock pillar immediately right of the Beaumont Couloir and Tchoua was the nickname of François Duperty, one of the three young and talented French alpinists killed in 2003 by a sérac fall on the Grand Mulets. The c600m route had pitches of 6c and WI 4.

On 13 April Sebastien Moatti and François Savary climbed a new goulotte on the Nant Blanc face of the **Aiguille Carrée** to the left of the 1963 *Desmaison-Martin-Masino-Payot route* (west face). The 500m route had difficulties of M4 and WI 4 (the couloir to the right of the Carrée was climbed by Fontaine in 1899).

The pair returned shortly afterwards to climb another line they spotted during the Carrée ascent, this time a little to the left on the west face of the **Petite Aiguille Verte**. *Imassacre* is 500m and III WI 5+ M4.

One of the most notable events of the summer was the passing away of the Bonatti Pillar (as well as other less well-known routes extending leftwards to the Harlin-Robbins Direttissima) on the **Petit Dru**. A feature on this by Victor Saunders appears on page 172 (see *'The Bonatti Pillar 1955-2005'*).

Bernese Oberland

On the 1100m north face of the Scheidegg Wetterhorn (3361m), Toni Arbones, Denis Burdet, Sebastien Guera, Julien and Nicolas Zambetti made the first continuous free ascent of *Bastion la Baffe*. This is an impressive route first begun by the Zambetti brothers in 1996 and finally completed in 2004 with Burdet. However, the three were unable to free climb all the pitches, especially the difficult 21st and 25th pitches. Over three days' climbing in July the team managed to free all the pitches, Burdet needing a few tries at the hardest, which went at 7b+ and 7c. A one-day ascent of this 34-pitch route, all free, by the same climber, remains for the future.

Gran Paradiso

On the south side of the **Gran Paradiso**, above the Orco valley and on the superb Becca di Valsoera (sometimes dubbed the Grand Capucin of the Paradiso), Andrea Giorda and Sabrina Marsili put up *La Rossa di Sera* (230m: 6c+ but the crux is avoidable by taking a 6b+ variant). The route climbs to a small top on a spur of the Becca and the ascensionists would like to name this *Punta Raffa* after the late Raffella Steni. The line follows compact slabs and walls of excellent gneiss throughout and was climbed from the ground up, placing bolt protection on lead.

Valais

On the Grandes Murailles in the Val Tournanche local guide Hervé Barmasse with Marco and Massimo Farina climbed the 500m *Ammazzageko* at V/5. Completed in January, the route has a long approach in winter and was rappelled. This route is probably on the lower east face of Les Jumeaux, an area of impressive icefalls first developed in 1986 by Gian Carlo Grassi with his ascent of Cascatone Couloir. Shortly afterwards, Farina, one of the most promising young alpinists in Italy (8b/c, WI 7, M10), died while ice climbing in the Aosta valley. He had pioneered new routes in the Mont Blanc range with the likes of Gabarrou and Marlier and had taken part in expeditions to K2 and Annapurna.

A fine new route on the south-west face of the Täschhorn (4490m) was climbed in July to the left of the legendary 1906 Geoffrey Winthrop Young route by the evergreen Patrick Gabarrou with Aymeric Clouet and Christophe Dumarest. *Misérconde* is 900m, at least ED3, and was given a modern rating of V M7 6a+X. Gabarrou had had his eyes on this one for 15 years and had made several attempts but only on this occasion was there enough ice to negotiate the entry pitches to the large couloir that characterises the first two-thirds of the route. The climb was dedicated to Patrick Bérhault: it was his last summit before his untimely death during an attempt at a continuous round of the 4000m peaks in the Alps.

Bregaglia-Bernina

On the Italian side of the **Bregaglia**, above the Val Masino, local activists added a selection of interesting routes. Over 17-18 March Giuliano Bordoni, Luca Maspes and Fabio Salini climbed a new route on the Punta Ferrario (3258m) in the Val Torrone. The line is more of a variation to existing routes but climbs a considerable amount of new ground. Starting up *Ceki 80*, the three then climbed a new two-pitch link (6b) to reach *Mozesi*, continued for six new pitches with a run-out section of 6b and rejoined *Mozesi* for the last section to the summit. This combination gives a total of 13 pitches.

In June Giorgio Chittaro, Antonio Gomba, Andrea Marzorati and Martino Morelli climbed a new route on the little known but very accessible Monte Boris, a small summit close to the Sentiero di Roma about half an hour's walk north from the Omio Hut. *Patras* climbs compact slabs and was completely bolted from the ground up. The face is not imposing but gave 580m of climbing up to 6c, 6a obl and a useful low-altitude addition to the Porcellizzo valley. On the relatively remote south-east face of Pizzo Torrone Occidentale, Manuele Panzeri and Fabio Valseschini climbed a new 400m line during the summer at 6b and A2.

A notable enchainment took place during one day in August when local activists Simone Pedefferri and Lorenzo Lanfranchi linked the famous *Elettroshock* on the south-east face of Picco Luigi Amedeo and *La Spada nella Roccia* on the east face of the Qualido. This involves quite a lot of

footwork between the two along the Sentiero di Roma. The pair free climbed up to 7a+ and then used aid for the more difficult sections. From start to finish the time was 18 hours.

On 3 September Luca Maspes and Mario Scarpa climbed a new route on the Punta Torelli in the Val Porcellizzo. *Il Male* is 300m and VII-. The following day Maspes joined Emanuel Panizza and Martino Quintavalla for an ascent of *La Lena* (VII), a new 250m line on the Pizzo Porcellizzo.

In June on the north face of **Monte Disgrazia** Benigno Balatti and Alessandra Casiraghi climbed *Via degli Amici* between the Valsecchi couloir and the big central sérac. The pair followed the left flank of the prominent rock buttress at VI and A0, 85°.

On the Italian side of the **Bernina**, Giovanni Ongaro and Manuel Panizza made the first winter ascent of the *Miotti-Salveti Direct* (500m: TD+, 6b) on the Gemelli East Peak (3497m).

Ortler

Marco Confortola completed a fine enchainment in the **Ortler Group**, when in one day, 19 May, he linked the four great North Faces; Ortler (3905m), Königspitze (aka Gran Zebrü; 3854m), Monte Zebrü (3740m) and, in the southern part of the massif, the Pizzo Tresero (3595m). A remarkable achievement.

Dolomites

There was plenty of innovative activity in the Dolomites and the reports below try to follow the nomenclature of the new AC guide, Dolomites West and East.

In the **Catinaccio Group** Nicola Sartori and Nicola Tondini made the first winter ascent of *Moulin Rouge* (Oswald Celva/Christophe Hainz, 2002) on the famous west face of the Roda di Vael (2806m). The 450m route has 11 pitches of traditionally protected climbing up to 7b, and the Italian pair completed it in seven and a half hours on 17 March.

In the **Sassolungo Group** on the south-east face of the Dente del Sassolungo (2750m), guidebook author Ivo Rabanser with Giuseppe Ballico and Stefano Michelazzi climbed a new 220m line they named *Andrea Andreotti*. The difficulties were VII+ and A3.

On the Pilastro Silvia, accessed from the Toni Dimetz Hut in the Sassolungo Group, Bettotti and Stefano Michelazzi put up the 400m *Ispirazione Subitanea* (seven pitches: VI+). From the top follow the Fassani Ledges easily down towards the Forcella del Sassolungo.

On the 3098m Torre Innerkofler, Comploi and Rabanser climbed *Annetto Stenico* on the 450m south-east face at VII+ and A3/A3+. The route was left fully equipped (four protection bolts apart from those on belays) but the gear is often dubious.

In the popular **Sella Group** on 11 January, Albin Markart and local guru Ivo Rabanser made possibly the first winter ascent of the 1971 *Schrott-Abram*

route (Abram/Schrott, 1971: VI+ and A2) on the north-west ridge of the Torre Campidel.

On 31 August Dario Segato and Nicola Tondini put up *Il Piccolo Principe* to the left of the 1973 *Leviti-Nemela* route on the south face of Punta dei Larsei. The eight-pitch route is 250m in height with maximum difficulties of 7a+ (crux perfectly positioned right at the top). A week later the same pair climbed a new line *La Mia Preghiera* (7b+) on the north face of the Sass da Putia.

Rather out of character for today's Dolomite ethics was the ascent of *Giuliani* on the Fourth Sella Tower, a little to the left of the *Malsiner-Moroder* route. Two Greeks were the culprits and they completely sieged the 350m line at 6c and A4.

In late September on the south face of the Piz Ciavazes, Giuseppe Ballico and Stefano Michelazzi added *Dulcis in Fundo* (350m: 7a+ or 6c+ and A1 obl) to the left of the classic 1953 *Abram-Gombocz* route on the south-east ridge. This is a partially bolted climb and took the ascensionists four days to open during a spell of unsettled weather.

On 17 July Bruno Pederiva and Mario Prinoth made the second ascent of the *Larcher-Vigiani* route on the south face of the **Marmolada**. In an impressive effort both climbers redpointed every pitch, completing this demanding route, probably the first true 8a on the face, in 12 hours. Larcher's routes, though bolt protected, are known to be bold undertakings and on a previous attempt Prinoth sustained injuries after a big fall.

In July two great names of Dolomite climbing were active on the Marmolada, achieving the second and third free ascents of *Spirit* on the south face of Cime di Auta east peak, which lies directly opposite the Marmolada's south face. The route was put up in 2003 by Massimo Da Pozzo and Danillo Serafini and later freed by Da Pozzo at 7c+/8a, 7b obl. Riccardo Scarian made the first on-sight repeat and was followed a few days later by Maurizio 'Manolo' Zanolta.

Between 27 and 31 July the accomplished Czech climbers Dusan Janak, Pavel Jonak and Vasek Satava climbed an independent finish to *Fram*, Igor Koller's 1991 route on the south face. *Fram* climbs the smooth walls just right of *The Fish*, joining it and *Via Italia* at the fish-shaped niche high on the face. The three Czechs climbed *Fram* completely free except for pitches 12 and 13 on which they used rest points. They didn't bother trying to eliminate these but pressed on to *The Fish* niche, where they climbed out right for five new pitches to complete *Fram – End of Mystery*. Two of these new pitches were IX+ (7c+) with rests and thought to be X- (8a+) for a redpoint. Another was redpointed at IX/IX+. The hardest pitch was a pocketed wall on rock similar to Buoux and one hole less would have made it impossible. Above, much easier ground (following the line of *The Fish*) leads to the summit.

In September Rolando Larcher and Roberto Vigiani made the second ascent of *Sur le fil des Apparences* (Rémy Duhoux/Philippe Mussatto, 2003:

350m: 7c, 7b obl). This route, on the same steep smooth wall as the bold Giordani route, *Specchio di Sara*, was climbed on-sight despite some of the sections being wet.

In the extensive **Pala di San Lucano** on the south-west face of the Second Pala, Lecco climbers Ivo Ferrara and Fabio Valseschini put up *Sorriso* (850m: 21 pitches: VI+ and A2) left of *Via degli Antichi*.

Towards the end of May Marco Anghileri and Raffaele Cargasacchi thought they were repeating an existing line on the west face of the Third Pala. In fact they soon realized they were mistakenly on new ground and went on to complete a new nine-pitch route VI+. The ascent took two days, finishing on 30 April.

On the south face of Monte San Lucana, Ferrera and Valseschini added *Albatros* (385m: VII+) to the right of *Farfalle* (the Butterfly), one of Ferrera's own routes dating from 1999. The climb was completed on 28 May.

In the **Monte Agner Group** on 18 June, Ivo Ferrari made the first solo ascent of the *Fiori route* (800m: VI) on the Spitz dell'Agner (2545m).

Back on great form again was the Italian icon of the 1980s Maurizio 'Manolo' Zanolla. In the company of Walter Bellotto, Daniele Lira and Diego dalla Rosa he put up *Bisogna essere veloci per descrivere le nuvole*, quite a mouthful for a route name and almost longer than the climb, which was five pitches. The new route is remotely situated on the south face of an unnamed 2000m summit in the little-frequented **Feltre Group**. It was graded 8a+, 7b/c obl. It was climbed from the ground up in August using drilled protection and climbed free on 14 September. While completely bolted, protection is very well-spaced and the route not for the faint hearted. Not long after, Rolando Larcher popped in to make the second ascent, found a different sequence on the crux and thought the difficulties more like 8a.

On 1 October Manfred Stoffer linked *Good bye 99* (7b) and *Da Pozzo Vecchio Pazzo* (7c) on the **Tofana di Rozas**, a total of 20 pitches climbed on-sight in one day. Earlier in the summer he had made a ropeless solo enchainment of the classic *Constantini-Apollonio* (6c+), the *Constantini-Ghedina* and the *Spigolo Alvera* to the right in just five and a half hours. That is a total of 2180m of climbing, not including the descents. On the way back down he made a ropeless solo of *Ciapa e Tira*, a 25m, 7c+ sport route on the Pian Schiavaneis. Not long after, having already climbed two routes with a client on the Ciavazes, he made a ropeless solo of *Ottovolante* (360m) on the Brunico Tower, Gardena Pass; 11 pitches from 6a to 7a+ in just one hour and 20 minutes.

In the **Civetta Group** there were several ascents of *Rondo Veneziano* on the Torre Venezia. The 500m, 12-pitch route was first climbed in 2001 by well-known activists Kurt Astner and Christoph Hainz at 7b+, 7a obl. 2005 ascensionists commented on the fantastic quality of this route and felt it could become a real modern classic for those operating at the standard. The route uses a combination of bolt and traditionally-placed protection.