



## AAC Publications

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### **Mt. Proboscis, At Dawn We Ride; Women at Work, one-day free ascent**

Canada, Logan Mountains

**After much research and discussion in spring 2012, Ben Ditto, Mason Earle, Bronson Hovnanian, and I combined efforts for an expedition to Mt. Proboscis.** Our primary goal was to establish a new free route on the southeast face and, hopefully, free the Original Route (Kor-McCarthy-McCracken-Robbins, 1963). In 2010, a team of three women also tried to free the Original Route and instead climbed a variation that ended on Costa Brava (Women at Work, VI 5.12 R, Sorkin-Illingworth-Stifler; AAJ 2002, AAJ 2011). The final pitches of the Original Route are untouched since 1963.

On August 19, the four of us arrived at the base via helicopter. We found the wall impressively wide and with much uncovered ground. The next day, we all attempted the Original Route in a free push. The first five pitches were wet, with the last two being “waterfall pitches.” At 4 p.m., at the base of pitch nine, halfway up the route, we decided to bail. The next day, as Ben and I rested, Mason and Bronson checked out our potential project, which partially followed the Grendel (VI 5.10 A4, Righter-Epperson-Kalous-Daniels; AAJ 1997). From the ground, it looked like a thin crack system snaked its way to the upper headwall. The first ascent team had told us the cracks weren’t free-climbable, but we had also been informed that the face next to the route was highly featured and could possibly go free. Kevin Daniels had even supplied us with more than 50 bolts for our attempt. Mason and Bronson made it up three pitches, following some of the Grendel initially, but soon diverted into new territory. They fixed a rope and rappelled to the ground.

For the next eight days we had bouts of rain and snow, but we made progress on the route during most of that time. We found incipient, closed-off seams that would take nothing larger than heads and beaks. However, the face did turn out to be highly featured with knobs and edges on perfect rock, and some gear could be placed behind flakes. We often hand-drilled bolts from stances or off hooks, sometimes with exciting 20’ to 30’ runouts right off the belay. Most of the pitches were climbed on sight, with only a few being done on aid at first.

On August 30, Ben and I went for the Original Route once again while Mason and Bronson returned to the new route. Ben and I climbed past our previous high point and into the headwall of the Original Route but agreed the dirty upper part would probably require a lot of work and effort to free-climb; we opted for the Women at Work variation. The rock on the upper wall was extremely loose—a lot like climbing through organ pipes. But after 13 hours of climbing, Ben and I reached the summit. After re-leading a 100’ traverse, we made our way back down the wall and staggered back to camp, relieved to have made the first one-day, all-free ascent of Women at Work (VI 5.12 R). [The first one-day, all-free ascent of Proboscis was completed by Josh Wharton and Jonathan Copp via Costa Brava in 2001; that route shares terrain with Women at Work.]

The next day, Bronson and Mason jugged 1,000’ to the high point on our project and led from there to the summit via two pitches near the upper headwall of Costa Brava. Mason then spent two more days redpointing three pitches that had been done on aid. On September 3, he redpointed the final and hardest pitch in a snowstorm. Our team had finally freed all the pitches on our new route, At Dawn We Ride (15 pitches, VI 5.12c R).

Via Costa Brava - Blue

Original Route - Red

Women at Work

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