



## AAC Publications

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### **New Routes On Taulliraju and Other Ascents**

Peru, Cordillera Blanca

**At the end of May, the Expedition Climbers Club set out from New Zealand for a five-week trip to the Cordillera Blanca.** The team was comprised of Steven Fortune, Pete Harris, Daniel Joll, Alastair McDowell, Reg Measures, Claire Measures, Jaz Morris, Rose Pearson, Lincoln Quilliam, Matthew Scholes (Australia), Stephen Skelton, and me. We split our time between two areas, the Parón Valley and Santa Cruz Valley.

On June 1, our group established a base camp at the head of Laguna Parón and divided into separate climbing teams. On June 3, McDowell, Quilliam, Skelton, and I set out to attempt the southeast face of Peak 5,610m. Splitting into teams of two, we tackled the 400m face via two independent lines. McDowell and Quilliam started up a gully just right of the center of the face, where they encountered moderate snow and ice to WI2 and mixed ground to M4. Skelton and I climbed directly toward the summit following a steep, névé-filled gully broken by a series of thinly iced rock slabs. Both teams climbed the face to the underside of the menacing cornices lining the ridge crest (approximately 30m below the summit), one of which collapsed on Skelton and I as we neared the top, fortunately without serious damage other than a smashed helmet. [Editor's note: The 2016 team believed this face was unclimbed and called the peak Caraz IV in their reports. However, this peak is Caraz III and the face was climbed in 1997 by a U.S. trio who also stopped below the cornice (Erickson-Knoll-Wolf, AAJ 1998). Dare and Skelton repeated the 1997 route; the McDowell-Quilliam line to the cornice is new.]

On June 6, I attempted a new route on the southwest face of Pirámide (5,885m). Starting up a small avalanche cone to the left of the Wolf-Clarke Route, I followed a thin ice smear and mixed step (WI4 M4) through the lower rock band. The terrain then opened into a broad snow and ice slope. After more vertical gain on this slope, I traversed right to gain a steep ice gully, with sustained and often thin WI4. This led me to a point on the west ridge about 500m higher than where I started (approximately two-thirds height on the peak). Confronted with the daunting and unstable ice mushrooms of the upper west ridge, I rappelled the line without continuing to the summit.

Following our time in the Parón Valley, we returned to Huaraz and then ventured into the Santa Cruz Valley on June 15, where we focused our attention on the primary objective of the expedition, the majestic Taulliraju (5,830m). Without delay, Fortune, Joll, and Scholes set out to climb the south-southeast ridge (a.k.a. Guides' Route (1978) on June 16. They intended to start on the GMHM Route (1988) up the third buttress, to the right of the main southwest face, but found the entire buttress devoid of ice. This forced them out left onto the crest of the buttress, where they climbed nine new pitches of sustained and often run-out mixed ground (M6) to reach the south-southeast ridge. Here, ice conditions improved and they were able to follow the upper section of the Guides' Route to the summit. They encountered overhanging ice steps to AI6 on the final pitches. They dubbed their variation on the third buttress ANZAC.

Two other teams also launched climbs on June 16: Harris, Measures, Morris, and Pearson made an attempt on the unclimbed west ridge, reaching a point approximately one-third along its length before being forced to descend the north face toward Nevado Pucajirca. (This ridge is sometimes described as the northwest ridge, its orientation low on the ridgeline.) Meanwhile, Skelton and I set out for the far side of the peak to attempt a new route on the east aspect. Initially, we climbed the first five pitches of the Guides' Route to reach a campsite on the flat crest of the lower southeast ridge. From that point we fully committed ourselves by rappelling an overhanging serac down into the lower

glacier basin on the eastern aspect. Here, we climbed a prominent rock rib—which we called the East Rib—for 12 pitches up typically immaculate granite (5.10b), leading us directly to a junction with the upper northeast ridge. [This route is 100m to 200m to the right of the 2006 Slovenian route El Centelleo (see AAJ 2007).] We spent the night huddled on a small ledge below the ridge crest. The following morning we moved onto the upper north face, climbing another four ice and mixed pitches (AI5 M5) directly to the summit.

On June 21, Quilliam and I made an unsuccessful attempt at a new route on the south face of Pucajirca Sur (6,040m). At the same time, Fortune, McDowell, and Pearson made the first ascent of the 450m south ridge of Taulliraju Sur (ca 5,400m), the highest summit along the lower southern ridge crest. [Taulliraju Sur was first climbed by Topher and Patience Donahue in 2001 via an ice/mixed route on its northwest flank they called Middle Earth (see AAJ 2002)]. The trio encountered sustained mixed climbing on the lower ridge (M5). After a short diversion onto the northwest face, they regained the ridge, climbing moderate, blocky ground to the summit.

The last climb of the expedition was also one of the most noteworthy, as Pearson teamed up with McDowell and returned for a second attempt at the west ridge. Setting out from base camp early on June 23, the pair soon reached the Taulliraju-Ririjirca col and made good progress up the lower ridge, surpassing their previous high point early on the second day. That day, June 24, Fortune and Measures also started an attempt on the ridge. Soon, both teams were weaving their way along the ridge crest, often in full view of the watching climbers at base camp. They were confronted with a multitude of difficulties, ranging from vertical unconsolidated snow and overhanging ice to thin mixed climbing and compact dry granite (5.8 AI5 M4). On the afternoon of the fourth day (day three for Fortune-Measures) all four climbers reached the summit. They briefly celebrated in the dwindling light before Fortune led the familiar descent down the south side.

[More information on this expedition can be viewed at <http://alpineteam.co.nz/2016/peru-expedition-27-may-30-june-2016>.]

– Ben Dare, New Zealand

## Images



Mixed climbing on the start of the GMHM route on the third buttress of Taulliraju's southwest face, before the team branched left onto new and mostly ice-free terrain.



Dry-tooling on the ANZAC variation on the third buttress of Taulliraju's southwest face.



Climbing ice on the upper north face of Taulliraju after beginning on the East Rib.

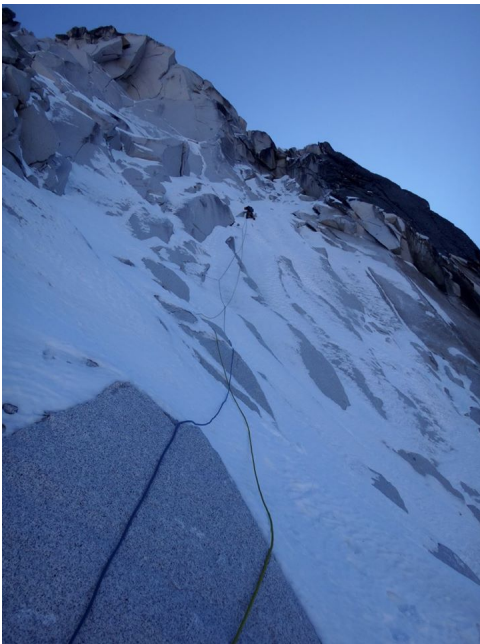


Climbing clean granite on the first ascent of the East Rib of Taulliraju.





On the first ascent of the south ridge of Taulliraju Sur.



On the first ascent of the south ridge of Taulliraju Sur. Here, on a brief diversion to the northwest face.



Traversing the upper knife-edged south ridge of Taulliraju Sur.



Bivouacking on the west ridge of Taulliraju.



Climbing complex alpine terrain on the west ridge of Taulliraju.



The west ridge of Taulliraju in full view. A feature the team referred to as the “nipple” can be seen two-thirds way along its length.





Traversing icy cornices on the west ridge of Taulliraju.



Traversing icy cornices on the west ridge of Taulliraju.



Climbing a steep ice step on the west ridge of Taulliraju.





Climbing a short section of dry rock on the west ridge, on the good granite Taulliraju is known for.



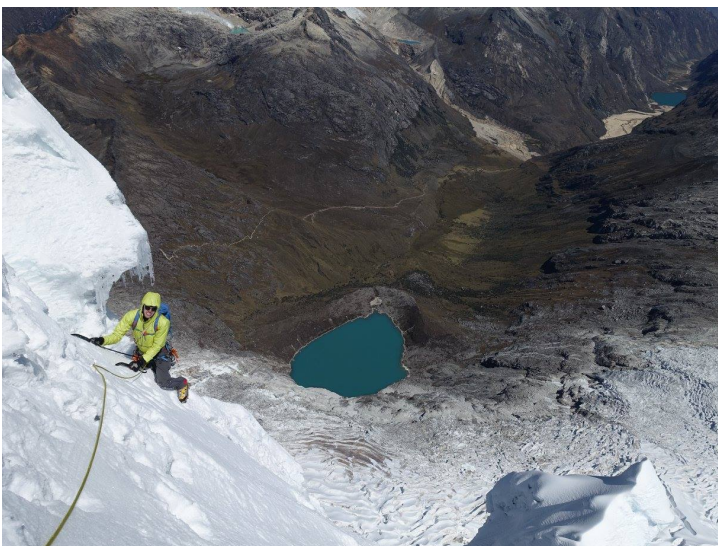
The aptly named “nipple” feature high on the west ridge of Taulliraju.



Steve Fortune and Matthew Scholes just below the foresummit of Taulliraju after descending from the true summit.



Steve Fortune at the base of the southeast ridge with the main summit of Taulliraju behind.



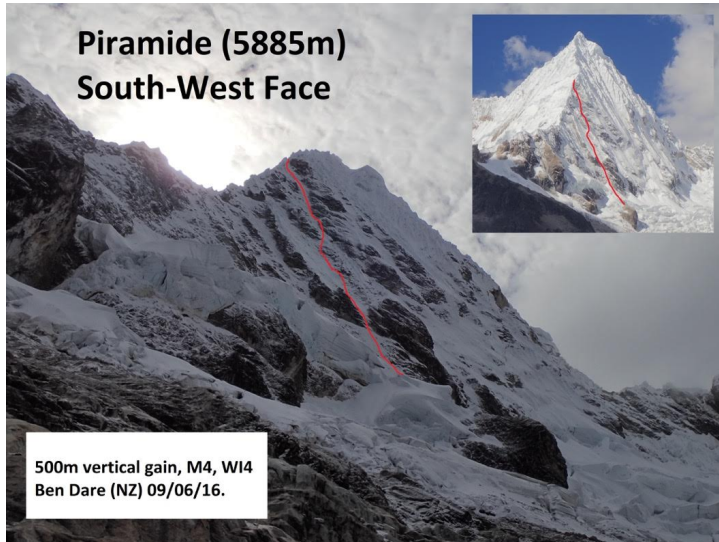
Matthew Scholes climbing high on the southeast ridge of Taulliraju with the upper Santa Cruz valley below.



Steve Fortune and Daniel Joll descending the upper southeast ridge of Taulliraju.



## Piramide (5885m) South-West Face



500m vertical gain, M4, WI4  
Ben Dare (NZ) 09/06/16.

## Taulliraju (5830m) East Face



"East Rib" - Ben Dare (NZ), Steve Skelton (USA) 17-20/06/16  
12 x pitches (5.10b) to reach the upper North-East Ridge  
4 x pitches (M5, WI4) on the upper North Face to the summit  
Access via the lower "Guides" route and descent via the SSE Ridge



## Taulliraju (5830m)

"ANZAC" - variation on the GMHM buttress.  
400m, M5, Daniel Joll (NZ), Steve Fortune (NZ), Matthew Scholes (AUS), 16/06/16.  
Joined the Guides Route to the summit.



## Taulliraju (5830m) - West Ridge

"West Ridge" - Rose Pearson (NZ), Alastair McDowell (NZ), Steve Fortune (NZ), Reg Messers (UK)  
5.8, M4, AIS. 23-27/06/16.



## Taulliraju South (5400m)

South Ridge - 450m, M5.  
Steve Fortune (NZ), Rose Pearson (NZ), Alastair McDowell (NZ).  
21/06/16.

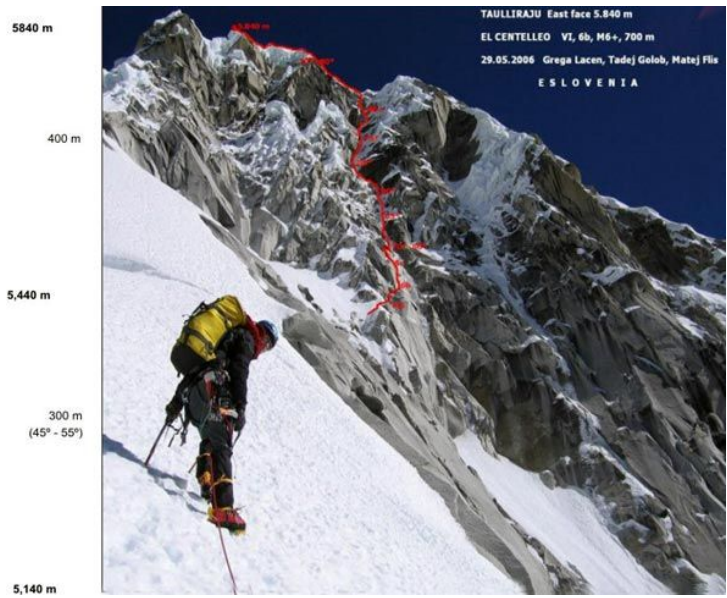


## Caraz IV (5610m) South-East Face

— "Paco Lazo" 400m, W13 R.  
Ben Dore (NZ), Steve Fortune (NZ) 02/06/16.  
— "Quilliam - McDowell" 400m, M4, W12.  
Lincoln Quilliam (Aus), Alastair McDowell  
(NZ) 03/06/16.







The 2006 Slovenian route El Centelleo (see AAJ 2007).

## Article Details

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