



## AAC Publications

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### **Adelaide Island, Mt. Gwendolyn, Northeast Ridge; The Legend, West Ridge, Attempt**

Antarctica, Antarctic Peninsula

Sam Hunt on the first ascent of the northeast ridge of Mt. Gwendolyn. Photo by Rob Taylor

**Sam Hunt and I work as field guides at Rothera research station on Adelaide Island. On November 27, we left the base at 6 a.m., and with two sledges of emergency equipment, traveled by linked snowmobiles to McCallum Pass.** We left one sledge and our skis at the base of the standard route (south ridge, normally a ski ascent) on Mt. Gwendolyn (1,230m, 67°24.0' S, 68°20.2' W), an outlying peak to the east-northeast of Mt. Mangin (2,040m), then continued on the snow machines with the other sledge, around the east side of the mountain to the bottom of the northeast ridge.

We began climbing on a north-facing snow slope to gain the northeast ridge at a notch above a shattered outcrop. We continued along the crest or the left flank, on rock of variable quality, to mixed ground and eventually a large, north-facing snowfield. (It would be straightforward to escape from this point by descending the snowfield.) We climbed the snowfield past one prominent snow gully to reach the next, which we ascended via a short section of thin Scottish 4 ice (some objective danger). Another gully led to increasingly mixed terrain featuring rimed rock. Above this, a sharp, horizontal snow crest led us back to the main ridge by a large rime mushroom.

We continued on easy ground up and left to shattered mixed terrain that proved difficult to protect. Another narrow ridge and more mixed ground took us to the final cluster of mushrooms/seracs. The way through these will vary from year to year, but we generally trended right and eventually reached easy-angled slopes leading to the summit.

The 900m-high route had taken 10 hours; we graded it D- Scottish IV,4. In a further two hours we had descended the south ridge, collected our equipment, and skied back to our snow machines.

The top of the impressive and unclimbed west face of The Legend. Photo by Rob Taylor  
Previously, on September 26, we attempted the west ridge of The Legend (1,840m, 67°34'S, 68°41'W), about 3.5km southwest of Mt. Gaudry (2,315m), the highest peak on Adelaide. This involved reaching the col between The Myth and The Legend, and to do that we climbed the standard northwest ridge of The Myth (1,235m, a relatively popular route first climbed in April 1968 by Alistair "Bugs" McKeith and Dave Rinning). We then descended The Myth's east ridge, which we believed was previously unclimbed. [In September 1972, two climbers (surnames Carrol and Dark) ascended a new route on Myth they named Pinnacle Ridge. The east ridge has a prominent rock pinnacle, but the southwest ridge, recorded in the "Rothera guidebook" as being climbed in 1976 by Rob Davies and Trevor Phillips, also sports a large rock gendarme at its base.] We continued up the west ridge of Legend, reaching the far side of the jagged, relatively-level section conspicuous in photographs. At this point we ran out of time and retreated.

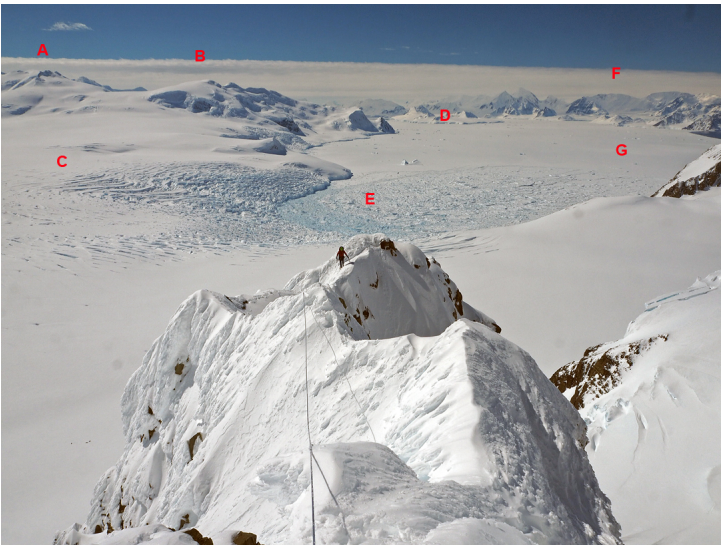
The first known ascent of The Legend was in August 2009 via the south ridge, by Adam Clark and James Wake, but is likely to have been climbed earlier. The impressive west face understandably remains unclimbed.

— Rob Taylor, U.K., with additional information from Damien Gildea, Australia

## Images



The northeast ridge of Mt. Gwendolyn, Adelaide Island.



On the northeast ridge of Mt. Gwendolyn. (A) Buchia Buttress. (B) Hunt Peak. (C) Shambles Glacier. (D) Day Island. (E) Stonehouse Bay. (F) Tyndall Mountains on the Arrowsmith Peninsula (part of the Antarctic mainland). (G) Laubeuf Fjord.





Sam Hunt on the first ascent of the northeast ridge of Mt. Gwendolyn.



Rob Taylor on the upper northeast ridge of Mt. Gwendolyn during the first ascent.



Sam Hunt on the east ridge of The Myth.



The top of the impressive and unclimbed west face of The Legend.



Looking down the east ridge of The Myth, past a large gendarme, to the start of the west ridge of The Legend. The high point of the attempt in late 2020 was at the start of the final rise to the summit, just above the end of the rocky section.

## Article Details

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