

then climbed a line up a buttress they named the Chicane Buttress via a 3-pitch route graded E6 6a, undoubtedly the hardest free climb in the region. The route is entitled *The Exile of Peshawar*.

In November 2005 Geoff Hornby organised a dhow to explore the coast of Musandam, to the North of Dibba, with a view to climbing new routes and exploring the scuba diving potential. They began by climbing the twin pillars in the bay of Dawhat Adas, probably the first piece of climbable rock N of Dibba. The L pillar gave Jon Lincoln and Nigel Murphy a 115m route at TD inf V+ called *Renate Anne*, whilst Hornby and David Barlow climbed the 210m pillar to the R at D sup V and called it *Mary Rose*. They then sailed N to explore the area around Dawhat Qabal and found many interesting pillars and walls. The prominent peak on the S coast of the bay is marked Jabal Khatamah (or Hatmah). On its N side there is a bay known as Osprey Bay. Above this bay, Lincoln and Murphy climbed a new route on a feature they named Torre Meghan. The 325m route followed wide grooves then corners and was named *The HB Snobs*, TD. In the next bay to the W, Barlow and Hornby climbed the left edge of a tower they named Torre Hurndall. The 300m climb followed a whitewater streak up a system of grooves on excellent rock at TD inf V and was named *Captain Sensible*.

In the Wadi Bih area of Musandam and the UAE, the big news is the production of the area's first guidebook by Alan Stark. The guide covers the areas spanning the Omani/UAE border of Wadis Bih, Louab and Ghalilah and the gorge above Dibba as well as other areas within the UAE. The guidebook is currently on a CD format and is available through [alstark@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:alstark@blueyonder.co.uk). Later it will become a published document.

The big new route climbed in this area has always been admired from the UAE-accessible side of the range. Overlooking the machine gun posts of the old interior border post lies a huge N facing limestone pillar. The Swiss climbers Claude Redard and Pascal Sprungli finally solved the difficult logistics of accessing this pillar. Their route *Longue Vie Au Quatre*, loosely translated as *long life to 4th grade climbing*, is 830m long and TD inf. The route is sustained at grade 4 but with odd sections of 5 and a crux of 5+. They approached through Musandam via Khasab and left their vehicle 1km short of the border post. They climbed the pillar in nine hours. The long descent down the W ridge required a pair of abseils and then a nervy sneaking past the machine gun posts and spotlights in the dark. Elsewhere, Hornby with Barlow and Lincoln added another 200m route to the Shadow Wall area. *Shadow of the Wind*, TD VI, takes the smooth looking wall left of the Hornby / Sammut route *Shadow Boxing*.

Recent developments have potentially altered the positions of the Omani border posts, bringing the Omani post further down Wadi Bih and closer to the actual UAE border post. The UAE post is also now closed to non-nationals. It seems unlikely that UAE-based climbers will be able to access the upper reaches of Wadi Bih in the near future. However, it makes the Swiss route *Longue Vie Au Quatre* fully accessible from the Musandam side.