

AMPHITHEATER WALL

PORT HILLS CLIMBING



Amphitheater Wall
Revision D

Tony Burnell (2020)

Amphitheatre Wall

Amendments

Climbing Notes – amended

Rear Wall – Topo Amended

New Climb – Flounder added

General

Inclusion of any climbing area or climb in this guidebook does not mean that there is any right of public access.

The Port Hills Craggs are home to rare species of geckos & native flora & fauna take care not to disturb wildlife or damage native plants.

Amphitheatre Wall is located in Livingstone Bay just to the east of Evans Pass, the crag is quite impressive having a couple of buttresses that are 30 metres high, it has a long drop off below giving it quite an exposed, isolated feeling. The crag is quite sheltered from all winds except the southerly. The rear wall tends to seep after rain, if the weather is dry you can climb there year-round.

Access to the crag is via a 30mt abseil down to the foot of the crag.

History

Amphitheatre Wall was first discovered by Tony Burnell whilst out sailing in 2005. All original development was by Grant Piper & Tony Burnell.

In 2019 Simon Courtois & Tony Burnell returned to the crag to clean up any seismic damage & at the same time they added a couple of lines. They followed this up in 2020 by adding a further

Climbing Notes

By choosing to climb here you accept responsibility for your own personal safety & must make your own decision regarding the condition of any fixed equipment.

Neither the first ascensionists or the author accept any responsibility for the condition of any fixed equipment.

There are some fixed lines at the start of the traverse line below the rear wall, these lines are constantly exposed to the environment & should not be considered load bearing. When belaying on the traverse line use the bolts.

Amphitheatre Wall is seldom climbed on even though it is one of the tallest crags on the Port Hills & has some great climbs.

There are currently 27 climbs in the 16/24 grade, quite a lot of the climbs are around 30mts high, all the climbs are bolted but some small cams & medium wires are handy.

All anchor setups were upgraded or replaced in 2020.

Climb with care, test all holds before you pull on them, check your placements & wear a helmet. It's always a good idea to take a brush & clean the routes, it will be appreciated by the next visitor to the crag.

Tracks are marked in

YELLOW

Sport routes are marked in

RED

Trad or mixed protection climbs are marked in

GREEN

Variations are marked in

PURPLE

The following Abbreviations / Definitions have been used:

#Br - Denotes the number of bolt runners

Sp - Denotes Sport Route

Tr - Denotes Trad Route

Mp - Denotes Mixed Protection Route (bolts & trad)

So - Denotes solo route unprotectable

R & L - Denote Right & Left

Replacement of fixed gear is a costly & time-consuming exercise so please do your bit; lower or top rope off your own quick draws. Only use fixed gear for abseiling, by doing this you will extend the life of the equipment considerably.

	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
American	5.8-	5.8	5.9	5.10a	5.10b	5.10b	5.10c	5.11a	5.11b	5.11c	5.12a	5.12b
Euro	4c	5a	5b	5c	6a	6a+	6b	6b+	6c	7a	7a+	7b

The above grading systems provide little in the way of information & are normally accepted as just the technical difficulty of a particular climb; it can be tricky to use these grading systems when trying to assess the actual seriousness of any climb. Grades are given for on-sight ascents placing the gear.

As far as possible all known routes have been included in this guide. If you want to know where a route goes read the text as well as looking at the topos.

If you are familiar with the period when the first ascent was done & the person who did it then you will have some knowledge of their ability & their style of climbing (bold, hard grading, soft grading, etc).

In this guide you will see a suffix to the grades (S1 – S3) this is to provide the climber with additional information on the overall seriousness of the climb.

S1 - A straight forward climb with good protection & a low risk of injury from a fall

S2 - Reasonable protection, but a fall could result in injury

S3 - Protection is marginal or non-existent & a fall could result in serious injury

Climbers should remember that this additional suffix to the grade is my opinion & in no way scientific, gear can fail, rock can fail & any fall can result in injury.

Seismic

Amphitheatre Wall stood up well to the 2010/2011 earthquakes sustaining only minor damage, in a gully to true R of the crag are some signs of earthquake damage.

The rock is compact & relatively undamaged by the 2010/2011 earthquakes

All blocks should be treated as suspect.

Location & Access

1300 mts

20 minutes

GPS -43.595915. 172.758527



Option 1 – Park at the junction of the Summit Road & Evans Pass. Cross the cattle-stop & go R take the walking track uphill following the fence line, at the top of hill turn R through a gate still following the fence line go over a stile heading downhill till the track veers L at a hairpin bend & the fence goes to the R. From the bend in the track go R along a vague track out to the ridge line & a large block.

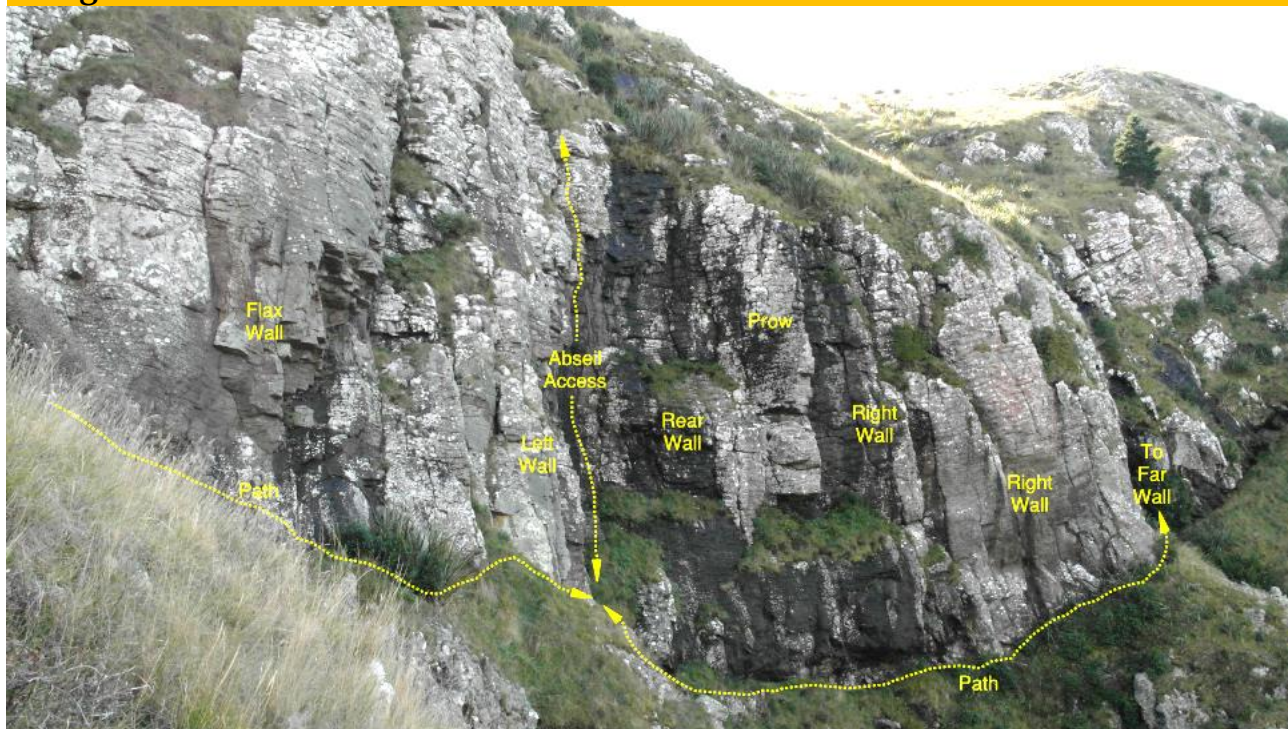
Option 2 - Drive along the Summit Road from Evans Pass & park at the old quarry on the R (approximately 500mts before the parking spot for Jane Fonda), there is a power pole with a cone on top by an old quarry. Go through the gate & around the quarry, turn left & follow the fence line till you pick up a well-defined sheep track which bisects the MTB track at a marker post, go straight on aiming for the L end of some small bluffs with a water tank. At the fence line cross the stile & follow the track towards Evans Pass until you come to a hairpin bend where the track starts to go up hill, follow a vague track onto the ridge line until you come to a large block

From the block head downhill on the ridge until you can see another fence line & a native broadleaf, at this point there is a cairn on the L. Traverse east across the hill side through a large patch of flax before going down past some slabby rock, continue slightly down & round to a small rock buttress.



There is a small flat grassy area below a roof where you can gear up (aprox GPS -43.595915, 172.758527). There is an anchor bolt in the corner where you gear up, tie off the abseil rope then traverse out & down to reach an anchor setup set up on a small slab, abseiling straight down from this point will take you down the long corner of 'Night Moves'. If you look to your R when descending you will see the belay of 'Night Moves' & 'Rising Damp', to your L is the vaguely yellow wall of 'Gas Guzzler' & 'Stanley Street'. It is best to leave a rope in place & ascend back to the grassy ledge to exit (aprox 5mts vertical).

Crag Orientation & Track



Flax Wall

Flax-Wall is located at the very left side of the crag & is accessed from the abseil line by going downhill & around the arete by traversing around to the west past a flax bush to a narrow ledge. The routes start just beyond the flax, there are 2 chain set ups here to belay from & the climbs are described from L to R

CE **Close to the Edge** **20** **S1** **Sp** **4Br** Tony Burnell, 2005

Start at the chain set up directly below the Br1 & just L of the start of 'FR' go straight up into the shallow corner & L under a small roof before heading up the groove that peters out, go L to an anchor station.

FR **Fragile** **20** **S1** **Sp** **5Br** **★** Tony Burnell, 2005

Start directly below the first bolt. Climb up to the shallow niche, climb the groove using the flake feature on the R then exit the groove first to the L then to the R at the top. Continue straight up to an anchor station.



Ra Roundabout 20 S1 Sp 6Br ★ Simon Courtois, 2020

Start just L of the 1st chain set up in a shallow groove, climb the groove keeping L at the roof & work your way up onto the prominent flake feature, climb this stepping R above the steepest section, finish straight up the wall to the anchor station of 'TO'.

TO Topographic Ocean 21 S1 Sp 6Br ★ Tony Burnell, 2020

Start directly just R of the 1st chain set up & directly below first protection bolt. Climb the initial wall and speckled slab above into the capped corner. Move up to the roof & clip Br4, strenuous moves up & L onto the face then climb the horizontal bands to the anchor station. Tony Burnell, 10/06/2020

Left Wall

This is the wall on the (climbers) left at the foot of the abseil access line, from the abseil the yellow wall has a couple of routes "SS" & "GG", these are about 18mts long, the remaining routes around to "GM" are 30mts long. Routes are described from L to R.

GM Grey Matter 19 S1 Sp 59Br ★ Simon Courtois, 2108

Start at a low Br to the L of 'RD', climb up past Br1 moving up & leftwards past 3Br to a grassy pedestal. From here climb over or around the right of a small roof (Br) & onto the upper face, continue more easily up the wall to an anchor station.

RD Rain Dancer 19 S1 Sp 8Br ★ Grant Piper, 2005

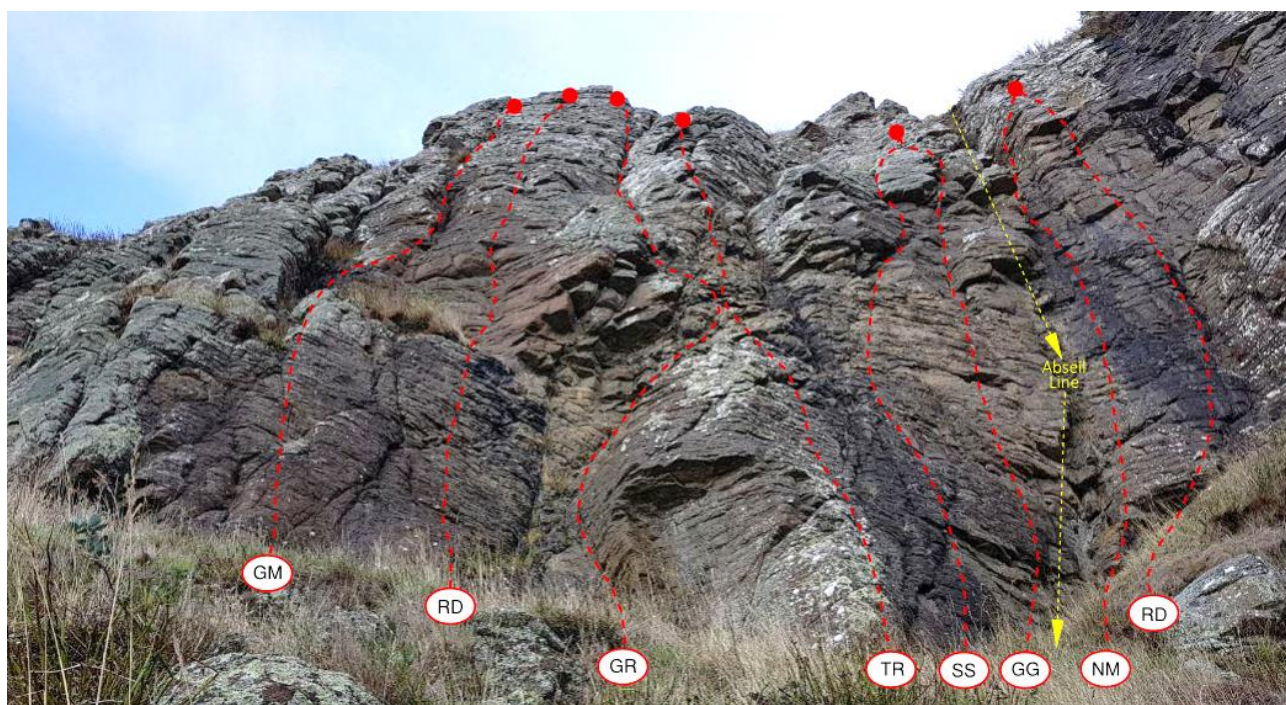
Starts just round L of the yellow-coloured wall. Climb a slabby wall to a shrubbery at 12m, go up onto a rest ledge. Move up & R onto the whiter lichenous wall, go up the centre to an anchor station.

GR Gravel Road 17 S1 Sp 9Br ★ Tony Burnell, 2018

Start up a lower slab to a corner, move up onto the upper slab heading R to a short vertical wall with a small roof, up the wall before heading diagonally L to a series of corners, climb these to the anchor station.

TR Thunder Road 17 S1 Sp 9Br Simon Courtois, 2020

There is a short belay chain at the base of the arete. Start just R of the toe of the buttress where a weakness in the rock reaches the ground. Climb the wall L of the weakness to join "GR" at a staple, from here head up the open corner system to the foot of the final wall, up this to an anchor station.



SS Stanley Street 19 S2 Sp 5Br ★★ Tony Burnell, 2005

Start down & left of the belay chain at the foot of 'GG' & just L of a vague crack/groove system. Climb the black wall R of the groove system on good holds. An awkward move at half height gets you to the hourglass groove. Climb the L side of the groove to the roof, exit around the L side of the roof to an anchor station on the R. You could clip the first bolt on 'GG'.

GG Gas Guzzler 19 S2 Sp 5Br ★★ Tony Burnell, 2005

Start just R of the belay chain. Climb the yellow tinted wall on good holds to a large hole; continue straight up to the groove, climb the right side of the hour glass groove to the roof, exit around the R side of the roof to an anchor station on the L shared with 'SS'

The next two climbs start from the bottom of the abseil line

NM Night Moves 16 S2 Sp 6Br ★ Tony Burnell, 2005

The large central corner initially climbed in the dark. A route that has everything; start up an easy slabby wall & continue up the ever-steepening corner till it becomes a chimney. Carry on up the chimney till you reach vegetation & a Br on the right wall, move up & swing out onto the R wall & move up to a belay on a ledge.

RD Rising Damp 20 S2 Sp 6Br Tony Burnell, 2005

Starts as for 'NM', after the first bolt move R into the obvious open groove. Climb the steepening groove till it gives out continue up the upper wall to the anchor station of 'NM'.

Rear Wall

The rear wall is the stepped face on the climbers R when abseiling, the climbs start off the grassy terrace that links the Left Wall to the Far Side. At the R side of the wall is the large prow of "LC".

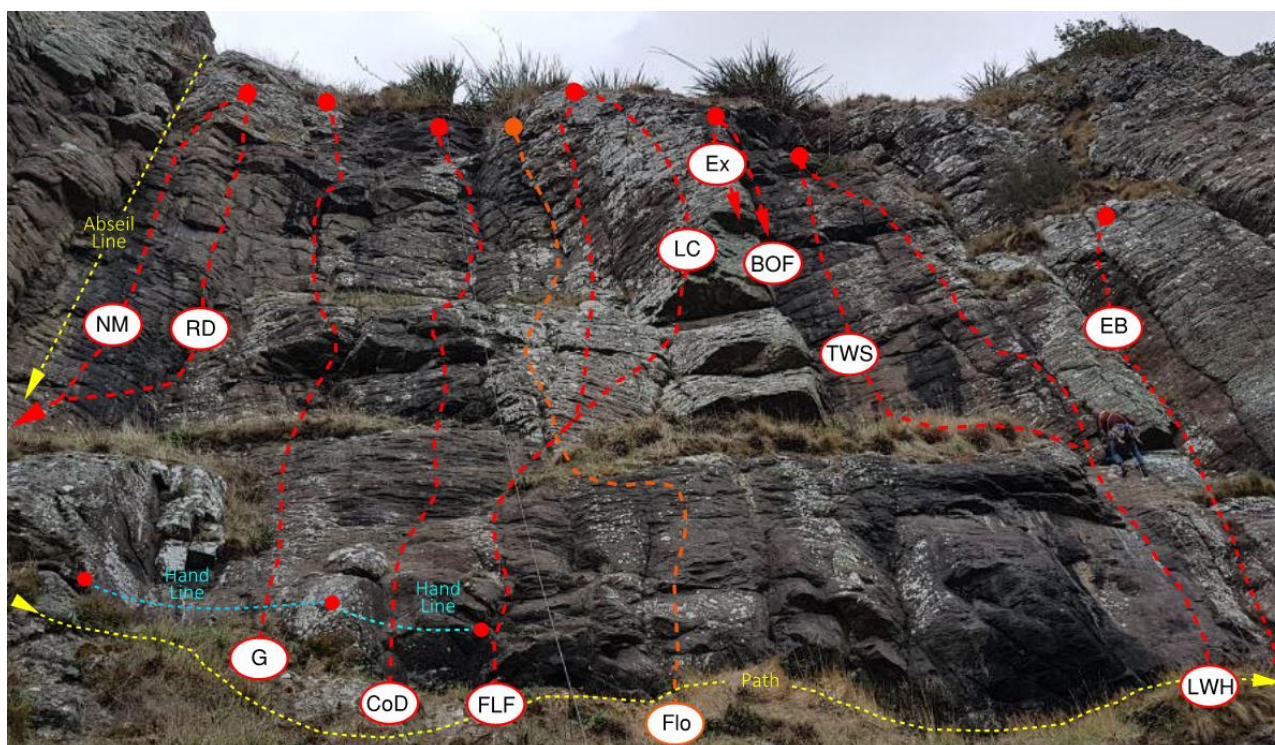
From the base of the abseil line go down & R (east) to the start of the grassy terrace, chain links & a hand line get you across the initial steep section. The 2nd chain link on a prow marks the start of the first 2 climbs, moving R from here a low-down Br marks the start of the 'FLF' & "LC". Routes are described from L to R & are approximately 30mts long.

G Groper 19 S1 Sp 10Br ★★★ Tony Burnell, 2020

At the start of the terrace is a set of chain links on an arete, go up the slab on the L side of the chain to the foot of a steeper wall. Go up the weakness but exit to the L onto the slab then go up to the final wall. Climb a shallow corner to the roof, turn this on the R before the final easy wall to the anchor station.

Cod Catch of the Day 18 S1 Sp 9Br ★★ Tony Burnell, 2020

From the chain links on the arete, go up the groove on the R & up the slab to the foot of a steeper wall. Step L & go up through the centre of the wall & slab above to the final corner. Climb the corner to the capped roof, swing out L past the last Br & head up to the anchor station.



Flo Flounder 19 S1 Sp 10Br ★★ Tony Burnell, 2020

Start directly below 2Br's on a blank looking wall about 2mts R of the anchor bolt at the start of 'FLF'. Climb the steep wall past 2Br, move L onto a ledge passing Br3, go up to the ring bolt then step L & go up the wall onto the upper slab, move R & go onto the pedestal then up the steepening crack system above to the anchor station.

FLF Full Length Feature 18 S1 Sp 9Br ★ Grant Piper, 2005

Go along the terrace to a low Br in an open groove, climb up & diagonally across the slabby wall to a ring at the foot of vertical wall below & L of the large prow. Continue up to the foot of the weakness just R of a corner system follow the weakness to a common anchor station with 'LC'.

LC Looser Cruiser 17 S2 Sp 10Br Grant Piper, 2005

Start as for FLF but at the ring go up & L to a roof at the foot of the prow, step up onto the wall & go straight up about a meter or so in from the R arete, finish at the 'FLF' anchor station.

Right Wall

The Right Wall starts to lower in height, it extends from the corner systems up on the grassy ledge on the R side of the prow to the spur where the crag turns a corner, the smooth R face is deceptively un-slabby & contains some really good crimpy test pieces. Routes are described from L to R.

The first routes on the R wall start up on the grassy ledge to the R of the large prow, they were originally accessed by climbing "FLF" to the ring & traversing R under the prow into the corner. It is better to start up "LWH" & move L along the ledge.

EX Excursion 19 S2 Sp 5Br Tony Burnell, 2005

Start as for "BOF" from the ledge, at the first bolt move L onto the arête & follow this to a common anchor station with "BOF".

BOF Bridging Over Flora 17 S1 Sp 5Br Tony Burnell, 2005

Get to the grassy ledge by climbing "LWH". Bridge up the corner to Br5, then move out on to the L wall & up to a common anchor station with "EX".

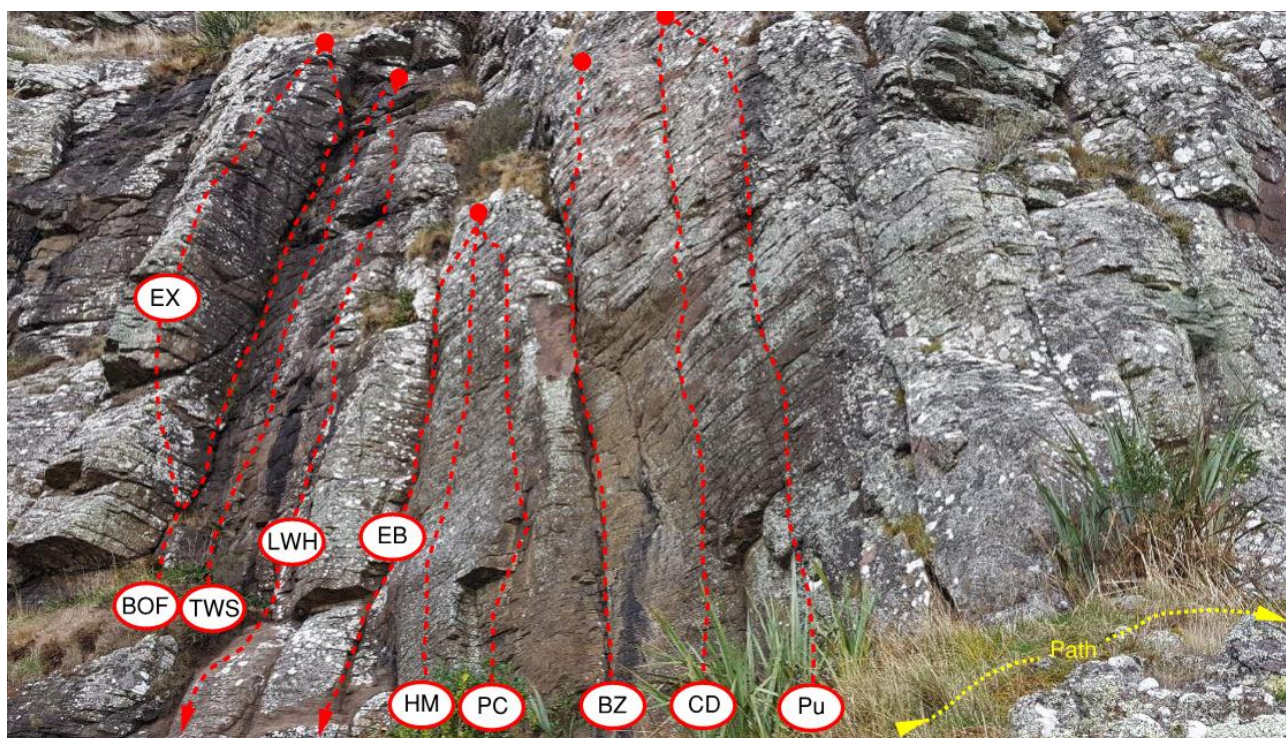
TWS Thin Wall Special 20 S1 Sp 5Br ★ Tony Burnell, 2005

Start on the ledge just R of 'BOF', climb the wall technically until you get to the shared anchor station of "LWH".

The next climb "LWH" starts at the R side of the grassy terrace before the ground rises to a flax bush & an old fence, it starts in the clean open groove.

LWH The Long Way Home 19 S1 Sp 9Br ★★ Simon Courtois, 2020

Climb the open groove past a couple of Br to a grassy ledge, from here go up the wall L of the arete, before your forced further L & up the final black sections of rock to the anchor station.



EB Easterly Breeze 18 S1 Sp 5Br ★★ Tony Burnell, 2005

Start just R of "LWH", climb the initial groove to the base of the shallow corner system, bridge up the corner system at Br5 move out R on good holds & up to the anchor station on 'HM', A wire can be placed low down in the corner. The new start was added by TB in 2020

HM Hall Mark 24 S2 Sp 6Br ★ Tony Burnell, 2005

Start 2.0mt down & L of the fence line at a short R facing capped corner. Climb the corner & go L onto the steep slabby wall, climb the centre of the wall to an anchor station on small holds.

PC Prickly Cold 23 S2 Sp 6Br Tony Burnell, 2005

Start R of 'HM', below a capped corner go up to Br1 then R around the roof on small holds. Follow the R edge of the wall in from the arete at Br3 head up & out L to the last bolt of 'HM', go up to the common anchor station.

There is an old wire fence in the bush just in front of the crag at this point.

BZ Boyzone 21 S2 Sp 5Br ★★ Tony Burnell, 2005

Start just L of the fence directly below the first bolt. Climb the wall to the base of the groove which is climbed awkwardly, at the top of the groove (Br3) move out R onto the steep face & continue up to Br4 before an awkward move R leads to better holds & easier climbing to the belay of 'CD'. A wire & a couple of cams can be used to supplement the bolts if needed.

CD Conundrum 24 S2 Sp 6Br ★ Tony Burnell, 2005

Start at the old fence directly below the Br1. Climb the shallow corner & go L onto the steep wall. Climb the wall first slightly L between second & third bolts, move R at the third then up & back L to the last bolt, continue up the pink tinged wall on improving holds.

Pu Purgatory 23 S1 Sp 7Br ★ Tony Burnell, 2020

Start up a vague slab & L leaning corner to a small roof, tricky moves up the wall to gain the base of the blind crack system, climbing eases now to the top, shares an anchor station with 'CD'.

The Far Wall

The Far Wall is a shorter slabbier wall around the spur from Fence Buttress, to access this area from the foot of the abseil descent, contour eastwards along the narrow grassy ledge system before going uphill past the old fence line. Once on the spur go around the corner & cross a small overgrown slip go up to the foot of the Far Wall.

Routes are described from L to R

VA Viagra 22 S1 Sp 6Br ★ Tony Burnell, 2018

Thin climbing that starts in the centre of the lower slab between 2 flax bushes, straight up the upper slab, at Br3 make a tricky move up & L then back R to Br4 then straight up to the anchors.



TBS The Bit on the Side 21 S1 Sp 6Br ★ Tony Burnell, 2020

Start in the centre of the lower slab between 2 flax bushes as for "VA". Go diagonally R to the arete, at Br3 move around of the arete to climb the black wall, at the roof, go L initially then back R above the roof to an anchor station on the arete.