

C R A G X

Port Hills Climbing



Crag X
Rev C

Tony Burnell (2021)

Crag X

General

Inclusion of any climbing area or climb in this guidebook does not mean that there is public access. The Port Hills Crag are home to rare species of geckos & native flora & fauna take care not to disturb wildlife or damage native plants. The crag has a westerly orientation so has good shelter from the easterly & north easterly winds, it gets good afternoon sun in summer & winter. The crag dries quickly & if there is little or no wind you can climb there year-round. The crag gets up to a height of around 20mts, but post-earthquake most routes no longer top out. There are about 40 climbs at Crag X of which around 20 are sport climbs.

History

The original history states "The initial climbing by Brian Fish & Joe Arts in 1981 of five routes on the southfacing right-hand end was an odd quirk in the development of Christchurch climbing", however quirky it may have been, from a quick look through the guidebooks it's apparent that Brian Fish & Joe Arts actually climbed six routes & that was in 1980, so not 100% sure which is right & which is wrong. In 1983 Murray Ball visited the crag but was only able to add an indirect start to "Crash Cow Machine", presumably to avoid the potential 7.0mt fall into the abyss. In 1991/92 Joe returned & with Adrianne added another five routes, the best of these was "Gripping Scales". Joe returned again in 1997 this time with Lindsay Main, although they climbed 8 lines the only route really worth climbing was "Modern World". From here on in there were visits by Marcus Thomas & Alan Hill, the best of the rest is Marcus's, "Space Junk", though bolted, the line is tricky to find & to follow at its given grade. In 2018, the Canterbury & Westland Section of the NZAC carried out the replacement of some fixed equipment. Late the following year (2019) Simon Courtois & Tony Burnell visited the crag & were surprised to find there was still scope for some good new lines. At the end of 2019 Tony Burnell climbed "Secret Santa" quickly followed by "Crossbones", "Three Strikes" & "Altered State" in early 2020, these are probably some the best climbs at the crag. Simon Courtois didn't miss out on the action adding a further four routes including, "KJ's Way" & "The Stylistics".

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.

Crag - X stood up reasonably well to the 2010/2011 earthquakes although it sustained some damage at its north & southern ends, on top of the crag & in the corner originally climbed by Marcus Thomas, "Defence Lawyer". The majority of rock is coarse grained, similar in parts to The Black Wall, it's rough to the touch & can bite. Currently you should treat all blocks, flakes & holds as suspect.

Tracks are marked in

YELLOW

Sport routes are marked in

RED

Trad or mixed protection climbs are marked in

GREEN

Earthquake damaged route

PURPLE

The following Abbreviations / Definitions have been used:

Br - Denotes bolt runner, # denotes number.

STP - Denotes Staple.

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

A solid circle at the top of route line indicates a belay station

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.

NZ	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.

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 the writer's opinion & in no way scientific, gear can fail, rock can fail & any fall can result in injury.

Location & Access

Distance: 1200 mts Time: 15 minutes GPS: -43.591378, 172.733846 The best approach is to park at the Summit Road car park or at the end of the 4WD track that heads up through Green Wood Park by a stand of Macrocarpa Trees. Cross the stile & follow the vehicle track south & uphill to the ridge line, there is a gate, normally open, just before the gun turrets that overlook Lyttelton Harbour, turn west until you come to a fence line after 80mts or so, there is a sign that says track closed. Cross the fence & continue along & head down zig-zags, Crag W is visible on the R during the decent, at the final bend before turning directly towards Crag W duck off the track on the L side into the bush & contour along to the crag



Seismic Damage

Areas of seismic damage from the 2010/2011 Canterbury earthquakes are shown below, the majority are minor in nature, but some are not, there is also a significant amount of damage at the very end of the crag past 'Crash Cow Machine'; some clearing of debris has taken place above ripping scales however there should be little or no reason to head into this area.



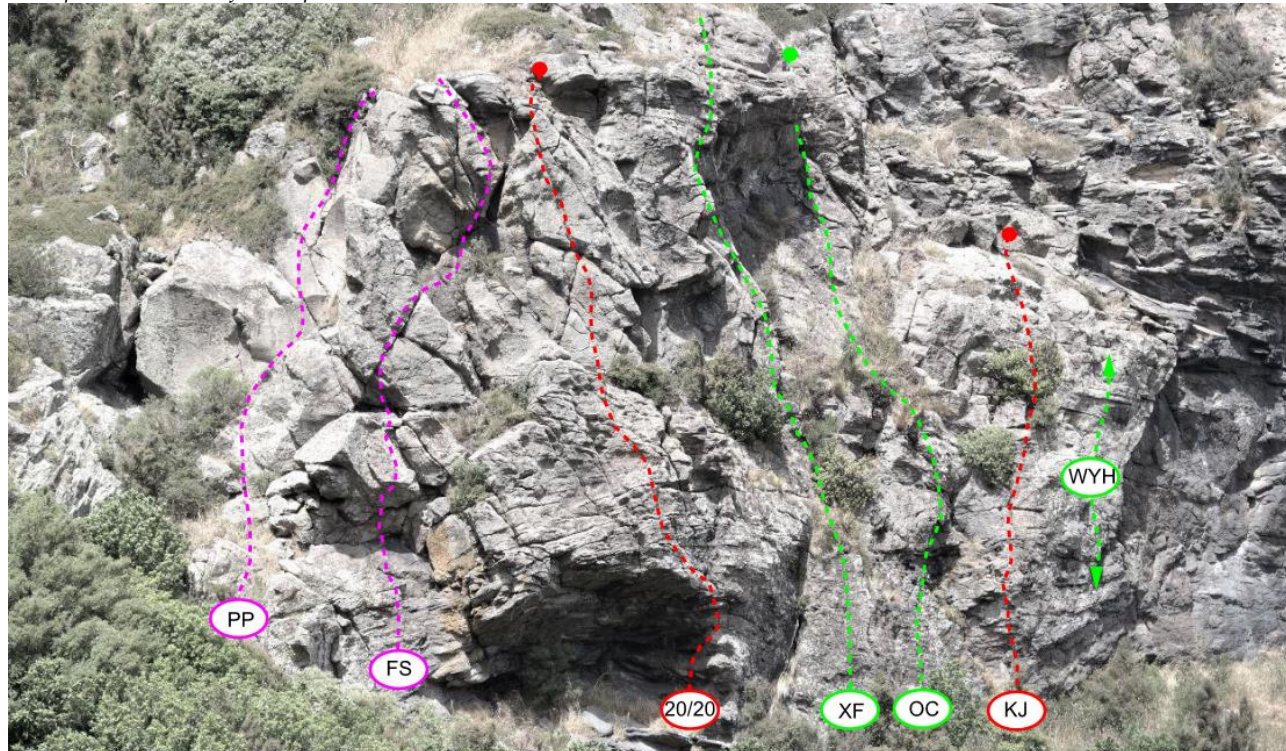
Crag Orientation

The main area of the crag has a westerly aspect, the crag is sheltered from any easterly winds & if its sunny you can climb here in winter.



20/20 Area

The first 2 climbs at Crag X were Pig in a Poke & Fun in the Sun, both were extensively damaged in the 2010 earthquake, the original description is included for completeness



PP Pig in a Poke 16 Lindsay Main, 1997

Start at the very left of the crag & seek out the difficulties (quite contrived). Move up & right, then up over a bulge into a crack. Carry on up the arête with good pro, exiting just to the left.

FS Fun in the Sun 14 Lindsay Main, 1997

Start up a steep short wall just left of the low-level 45-degree roof, moving right three metres up. Continue up & right to exit in the steep crack.

20/20 20/20 Foresight 21 S1 Sp 6Br ★ Tony Burnell, 2020

Start in the cave, below the R arête of the large roof, from the pocket move up into the groove above, delicately foot traverse the lip to reach a spike. Move easily up the face then bridge up the parallel to the top of the pyramid.

Just to the R of the roof there is a large boulder embedded in the track at the base of an easy angled groove, on the steep slab to the R is thin crack, this is 'XF'.

XF X-Foliate 17 S2 Tr 0Br Alan Hill, 1999

A poor line, dirty & overgrown. Climb the slab just R of hairline crack. Move left & up through bushes to sharp low angled arête. Climb up the left side of this to an overhang down & left of skyline V notch. Move up & left to good position on prominent prow, & up. Two ropes & slings handy.

OC Out of Control 14 S2 Tr 0Br Lindsay Main, 1997

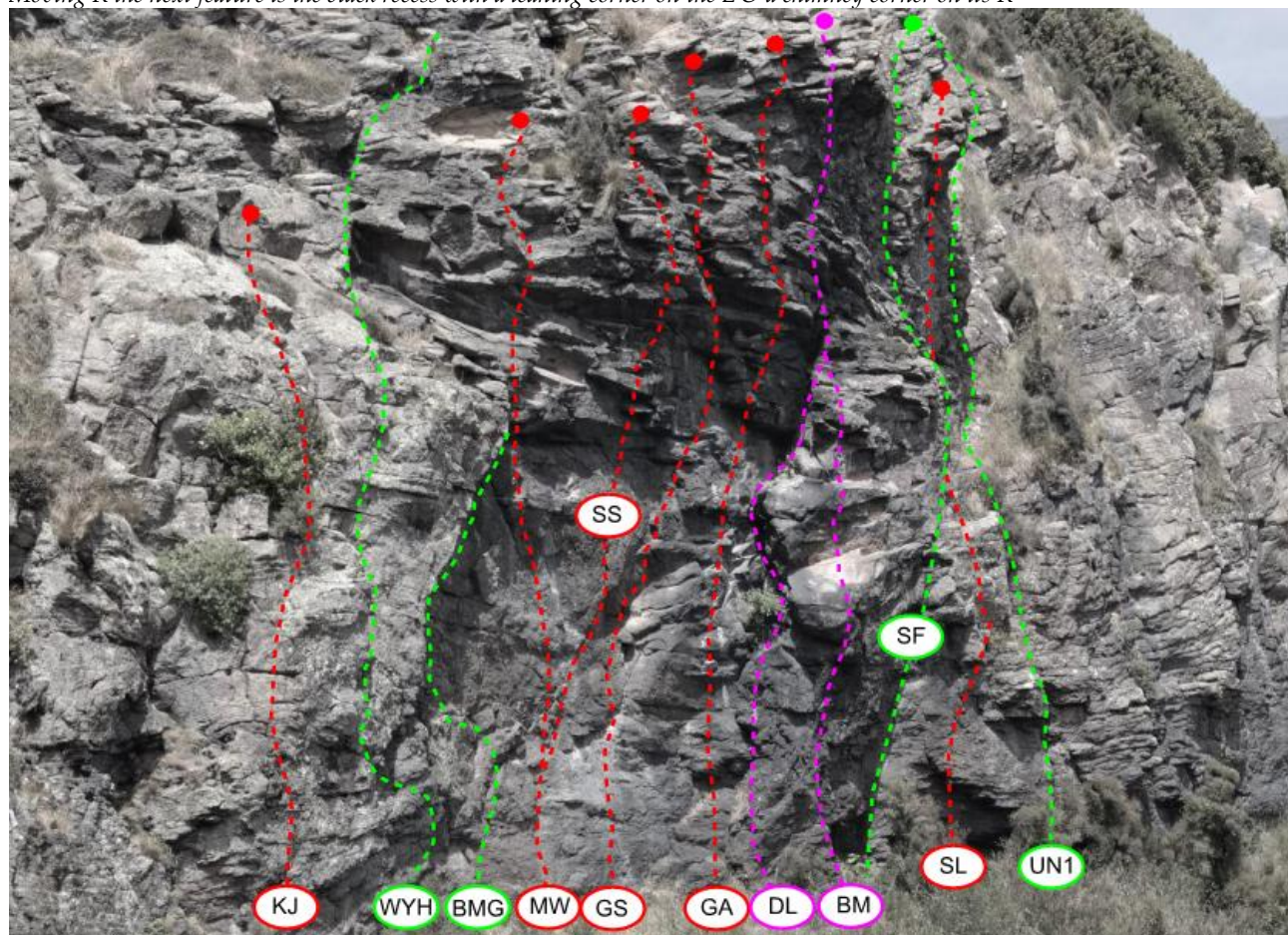
If this were clean it may be worth climbing but over 20 years of accumulated vegetation, make it an unpleasant experience. Start in a shallow L facing corner, go up to a ledge just R of a small roof, move up past the Hebe by veering L up a ramp then easy ground before exiting up a short groove to a belay station. Originally soloed.

KJ KJ's Way 19 S1 Sp 6Br Simon Courtois, 2020

On the face just R of OOC is a detached, stepped pillar, climb this then straight up the wall to the top of pinnacle, go R around the shrubbery to finish at a belay station in the back of the bay.

Gripping Scales Area

Moving R the next feature is the black recess with a leaning corner on the L & a chimney corner on its R



WYH **When you're Hot you're Hot** 20 S2 Mp 2Br ★ *Lindsay Main, 1997*

Starts below the L side of the recess, two thin cracks form an inverted 'Y', climb up & move out L into the small black recess cam placement, Br above in the green lichen, head up the green wall into the R facing corner (Br), break out R through the horns, then go slightly R & up to the highest point of the crag. There is no belay station on top.

BMG **Be My Guest** 18 S2 Mp 2Br *Lindsay Main, 1997*

The most L route in the black recess. Start up two thin cracks that form the inverted 'Y', small wires & cam, step L to the base of the leaning corner, follow this to a high Stp before going up steep rock past another Stp to the anchor of 'MW' on the R.

MW **Modern World** 18 S1 Sp 5Br ★ *Joe Arts, 1997*

A good route, but escapable after Br3 which downgrades it to 18. On the L side of the black recess, climb to the foot of the white streak before veering off L up the vague crack & finishing as for 'BMG'. Be careful on the upper section as there are possibly loose holds.

SS **Secret Santa** 22 S1 Sp 6Br ★★ *Tony Burnell, 2019*

Steep technical climbing straight up the centre of the wall through the white streak, then over the middle of the roof to steeper climbing to an anchor.

GS **Gripping Scales** 21 S1 Sp 5Br ★★ *Joe Arts, 1991*

A great climb up the ramp on right side of the black recess finishing diagonally back L through the overhangs above, originally climbed with 3 chain-links.

GA **Guilty as Charged** 20 S1 Sp 6Br ★ *Simon Courtois, 2020*

Climbs the black wall between 'GS' & the corner of 'DL' to a stance on a large ledge, step up & clip a Br before swinging out L onto the head wall, a couple of steep pulls & go up to the anchor. *Simon Courtois,*

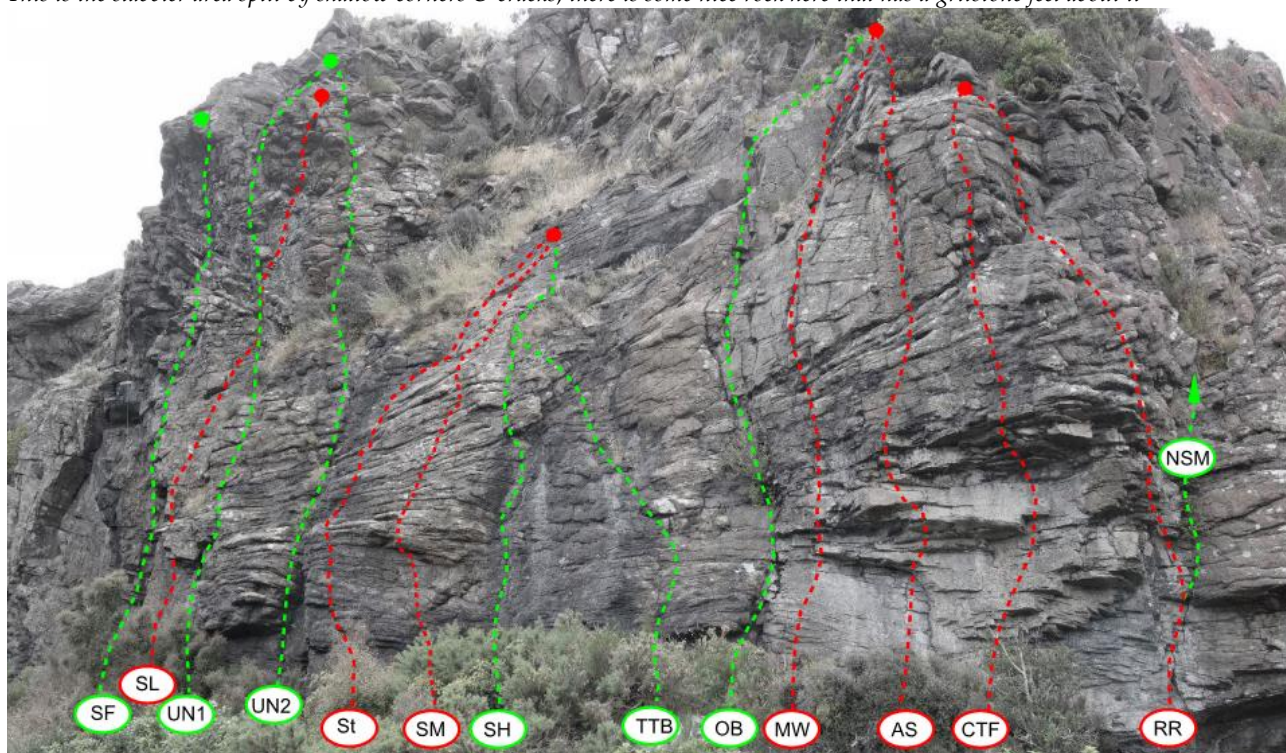
The next 2 routes are in a poor state following the 2010/11 earthquakes, also 'BM' is pointlessly bold on poor quality rock.

DL Defence Lawyer 17 2Br Marcus Thomas, 1995
Probably should be renamed *Defunct Lawyer* post-earthquakes, lots of rock has been removed but the climb is still dangerous, shown here for completeness. Climbs the obvious large corner R of 'GS' at the halfway ledge move R before climbing the steep finishing head wall.

BM Black Magic 20 4Br Lindsay Main, 1999
The black arête at the right of the recess, the mid-section as sustained quite a bit of earthquake damage. Up on crumbly footholds to the Br1, with a reach to good holds at the Br2 just above. At the ledge move slightly R & climb up past the Br4 to a belay Station on top.

Stylemaster Slabs

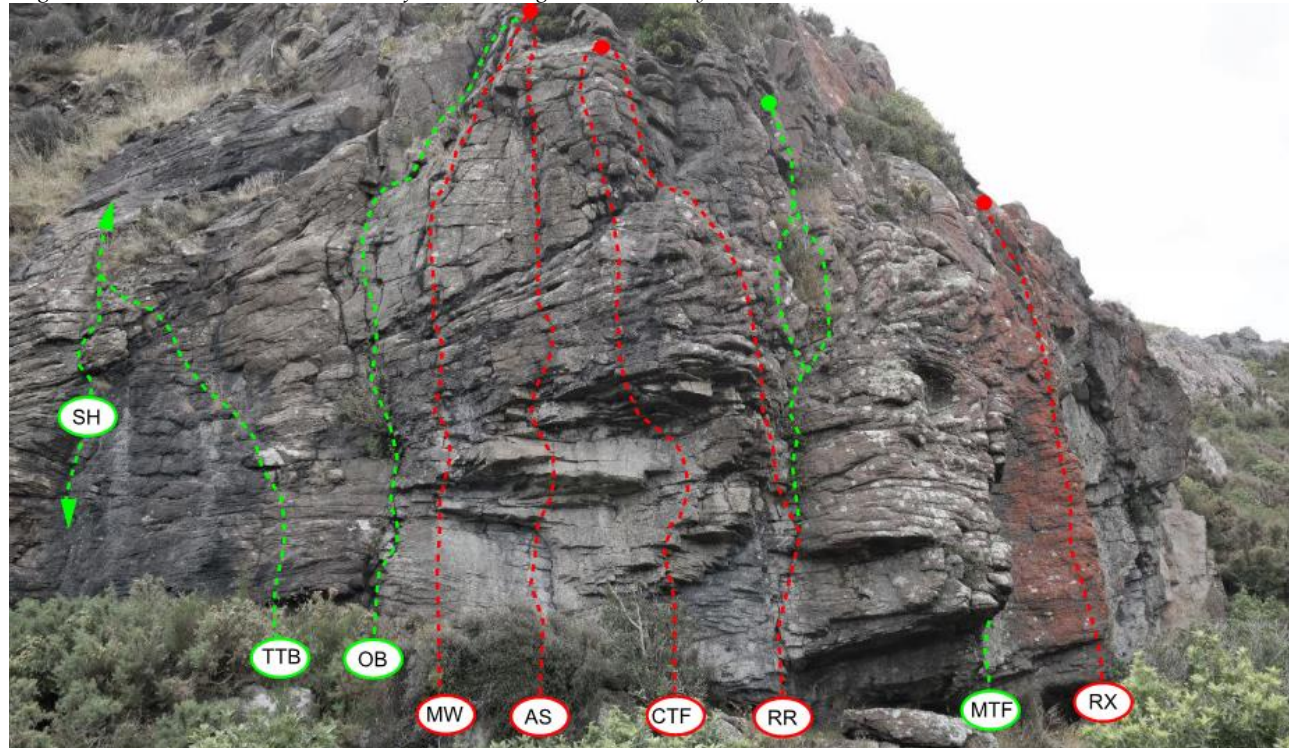
This is the slabbier area split by shallow corners & cracks, there is some nice rock here that has a gritstone feel about it



SF	Something Fishy	20	S2	Mp	3Br	Joe Arts, 1992
A steep groove R of 'BM' climbs up to the ledge before moving R & finishing up the groove R of the finish of 'BM'						
SL	Simons Line	20	S1	Sp	6Br	Simon Courtois, 2020
Start at a left facing flake below a Br, move up onto the face & continue up past a protruding block which forms a short corner, up again onto a ledge. Follow 'UN1' for a couple of moves before climbing the steep arête R of 'UN1' & 'SF'.						
U1	Unnamed 1	18	S2	Mp	2Br	Joe Arts, 2018
Climbs the steep vaguely 'S' crack to a ledge, move up & L to another ledge to top out as for 'SF'.						
U2	Unnamed 2	15	S3	Tr	0Br	Joe Arts, 2018
An inverted V groove with a crack above, straight up to the grassy ledge, move up & slightly R to finish up good rock on the headwall.						
St	Stylistics	19	S1	Sp	3Br ★	Simon Courtois, 2020
Short wall just R of the inverted V groove, a steep undercut start to gets you over the bulge & onto the black wall, there is a common chain a lower off.						
SM	The Style Master	21	S2	Sp	2Br ★★	Joe Arts, 1997
Initially the climb wandered across the face diagonally but was straightened out to allow for Simons route ('S').						
An undercut start leads over a bulge to a tricky step up, finish direct to the common lower off						
SH	Sheep on the Hoof	15	S2	Tr	0Br	Joe Arts, 1992
Pleasant climbing up a vague crack with reasonable pro.						
TTB	Tiny Tim Blows a Fuse	12	S3	So	0Br	Joe Arts, 1992
Vague line a metre right. Rather lichenous & completely lacking in pro, start at a vague seam on the R & drift across the slabby face till you get to the belay of 'SH'.						

Oily Bullah Areas

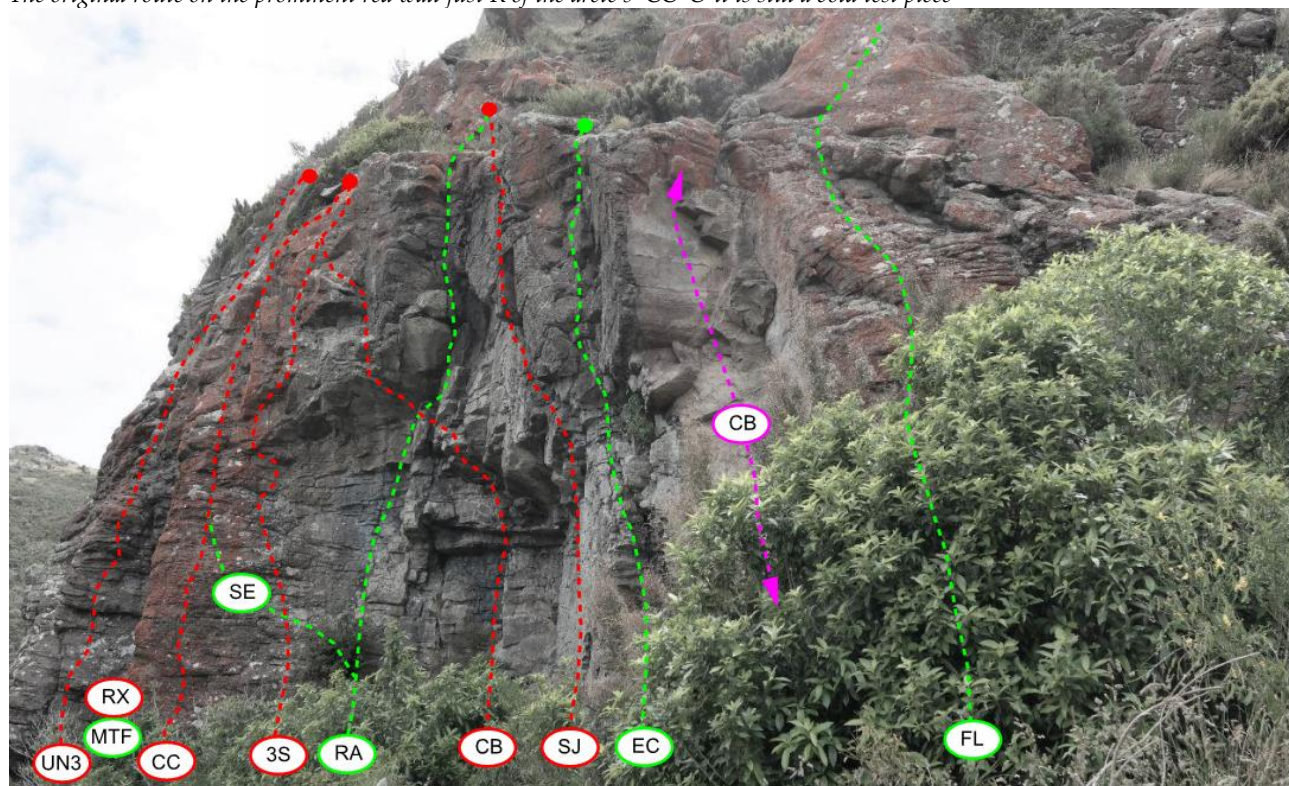
To the R of the Stylemaster Slabs the crag is undercut and becomes steeper, there is a ledge system that leads around the end of the crag to the Crash Cow Area. At the end of the slab is a groove & crack system, this is 'OB'.



- OB Oily Bullah** 15 S2 Tr 0Br *Adrienne McCleod, 1992*
Follows the R side crack past the bush, then up steeper rock before veering R to a common anchor below the jungle.
- MW Mysterious Ways** 18 S1 Sp 5Br ★ *Joe Arts, 1997*
A steep wall route through a small roof (crux) then follow the L edge of the slabbier wall, this climb also wandered around quite a lot & was straightened to create 'AS'.
- AS Altered State** 21 S1 Sp 5Br ★ *Tony Burnell, 2020*
The line of Br's just R of 'M', using an undercut go over the roof & straight up the face to an open corner, follow the corner before going direct over small roof at the top then easy climbing to the anchor.
- CTF Calling the Flock** 21 S2 Sp 3Br *Joe Arts, 1992*
Starts just before the hanging groove of 'RR'. Pull through the largest part of the roof, 2Br low down then a long run out to another that protects the finish.
- RR The Rubbish Run** 18 S1 Sp 4Br ★ *Joe Arts, 1997*
Start below the hanging groove, up to undercuts then swing out to the arete, follow thos to easier climbing.
- NSM No Scrap Metal** 18 S2 Mp 2Br *Alan Hill, 2000*
A particularly dirty climb. Start as for 'RR' clipping at least the first 2Br on 'RR', move into the dirty groove & go either L or R around the bushes, an anchor station has been installed although the first ascensionist preferred the bushes.
Moving around the arete to the next line, the undercut face L of the corner of 'MTF'
- UN3 Unnamed 3** 22 S1 Sp 5Br *Tony Burnell, 2020*
Another, tricky, undercut start. Move up just L of Br1 then swing back R of Br2 & up to Br3, exit onto the slab & head up to the anchor on the red wall.
- MTF Mind the Fuchsia** 18 S2 Tr 0Br ★ *Joe Arts, 1997*
The obvious open corner after the crag turns, start off the shelf & climb the corner which no longer contains a fuchsia bush. The route pretty much ends when you exit L at the top of the crack, best to move R to the anchor of 'RX'.
- RX Red X** 21 S2 Sp 4Br ★★ *Tony Burnell, 2020*
Just R of the corner is a prominent red wall, start on the good hold at the base of the hanging arête, powerful move up then swing L to Br2, continue straight up the red wall to a belay station. Going R on the arête into 'CC' would lower grade to 19/20.

Crash Cow Area

The original route on the prominent red wall just R of the arete s 'CC' & it is still a bold test piece



CC Crash Cow Machine 20 S3 Sp 2Br ★ Joe Arts, 1980

The prominent red arête is climbed on its L side. Although not hard there are only 2Br & a fall before the first would result in a nasty fall & rescue situation.

SE Salvaged Ego 16 S3 Mp 2Br Murray Ball, 1983

An indirect start to 'CC' from the crack on the R before heading out L to join 'CC'. Murray Ball '83.

3S Three Strikes 23 S1 Sp 5Br ★★ Tony Burnell, 2020

Climb the wall straight up to the roof between 'CC' & 'RA', at the roof move R & head up the steep prow using some poor holds & handy pockets.

The next feature are series cracks & corners rising to the roof

RA Repressed Anxieties 21 S1 Mp 2Br ★ Brian Fish, 1980

A strong line right through the overhangs in the centre of the red wall. There are paired bolts, then natural pro & another bolt.

CB Crossbones 21 S1 Sp 6Br ★★ Tony Burnell, 2020

Start to the R of a tree in a corner, step off the block & go up the wall past 2Br, using massive jugs continue up & swing L to Br 1 of 'RA'. Continue L across 'RA' going leftwards over the roof to join "3S" at its final Br then up to the anchor.

SJ Space junk 24 S3 Sp 4Br Marcus Thomas, 1999

A direct line up the steep green wall & the roof above, slightly odd if you climb as per the description & the true line of the bolts its harder than 24, but if you move R or L it is much easier.

EC Existential Climber 20 S3 Mp 1Br Brian Fish, 1980

Start on the right of the wall up a broken corner, & then up past a bolt on the steep wall above.

The next climb was extensively damaged in the 2010 earthquake, the original description is included for completeness

CB Champagne Breakfast 19 S3 So 0Br Brian Fish, 1980

A solo route on the arête to the right of Existential Climber, possibly protectable. Brian Fish, 1980

FL Frogs Legs 17 S3 So 0Br Joe Arts, 1980

Another obscure short solo route, that may or may not exist anymore, R of 'CB'. No anchor station.