

C R A G X A R E A

Port Hills Climbing

Crags V, W & X
Rev D

Tony Burnell (2021)



General

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

These three crags that have either a southerly or westerly orientation and have good shelter from the easterly & northerly winds, *Crag X* gets good afternoon sun in summer & winter. The crags dry quickly & if there is little or no wind you can climb there year-round. The crags get up to a height of around 30mts. Of the three crags *Crag X* is probably the best.

Access & Restrictions

These crags are located in Tauhinu-Korokio Scenic Reserve overlooking Whakaropa (Lyttelton Harbour).

Restrictions: Dogs must be on a lead during lambing

Permission: None required

Crag W

GPS: -43.591397, 172.733799 **Distance:** 1200mts **Walk Time:** 15mins **Ownership:** Christchurch City Council

Crag X

GPS: -43.593190, 172.734512 **Distance:** 1200mts **Walk Time:** 15mins **Ownership:** Christchurch City Council



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 Crag X.

History (Crag V & W)

Crag W is the large orange lichen-covered cliff above the track as you head into Crag X. There is band of poor-quality rock low down, however the red rock is reasonably solid rock with adventurous climbing, the crag is up to 20mts in height. The original trad lines (*Quail, Quack, Scorpion & Orange Peel*) are shown still as trad even though you can, on most of them, clip up to 6Br & the sport routes that have over bolted the existing are in reality variations.

Some of the early climbs disappeared in the earthquakes they are shown in WHITE on the topos & in PURPLE in the text, although their exact location is unclear. Some of the newer climbs have mixed pro which will probably limit their appeal.

History (Crag X)

The original history states "The initial climbing by Brian Fish & Joe Arts in 1981 of five routes on the south facing 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 Adrienne 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 of 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

Climbing is inherently dangerous, 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". Most of the 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

Sport routes are marked in

Trad or mixed protection climbs are marked in

Earthquake damaged route

YELLOW

RED

GREEN

WHITE

The following Abbreviations / Definitions have been used:

Br – Denotes Bolt Runner or Staple

Sp – Denotes Sports Climb

MP – Denotes Mixed Protection

R - Denotes 'Right'

Denotes number of Br

Tr – Denotes Trad Climb

So – Denotes Solo Climb

L - Denotes 'Left'

A circle denotes a known fixed anchor point

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

The Ewebank grading system used here provides little in the way of information & is 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. The grades given here assume no prior knowledge & gear placed on lead & 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.

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

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.

Crag X

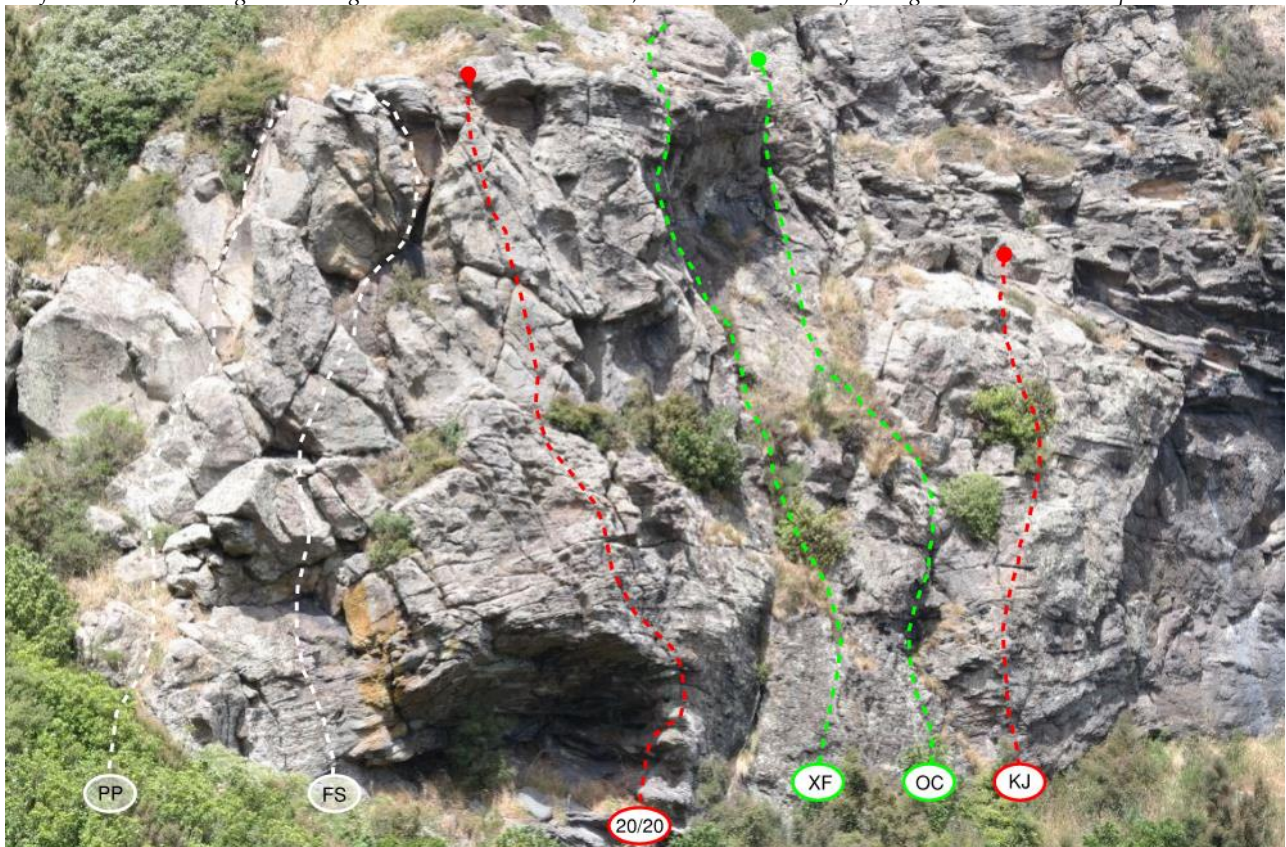
Seismic Damage

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.



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.



PP

Pig in a Poke

16

Lindsay Main, 1997

FS Fun in the Sun

20/20 20/20 Foresight

14 21 S1 Sp 6Br ★

Lindsay Main, 1997

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 a large boulder embedded in the track marks the start of 'XF' up 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.

WYH When you're Hot you're Hot

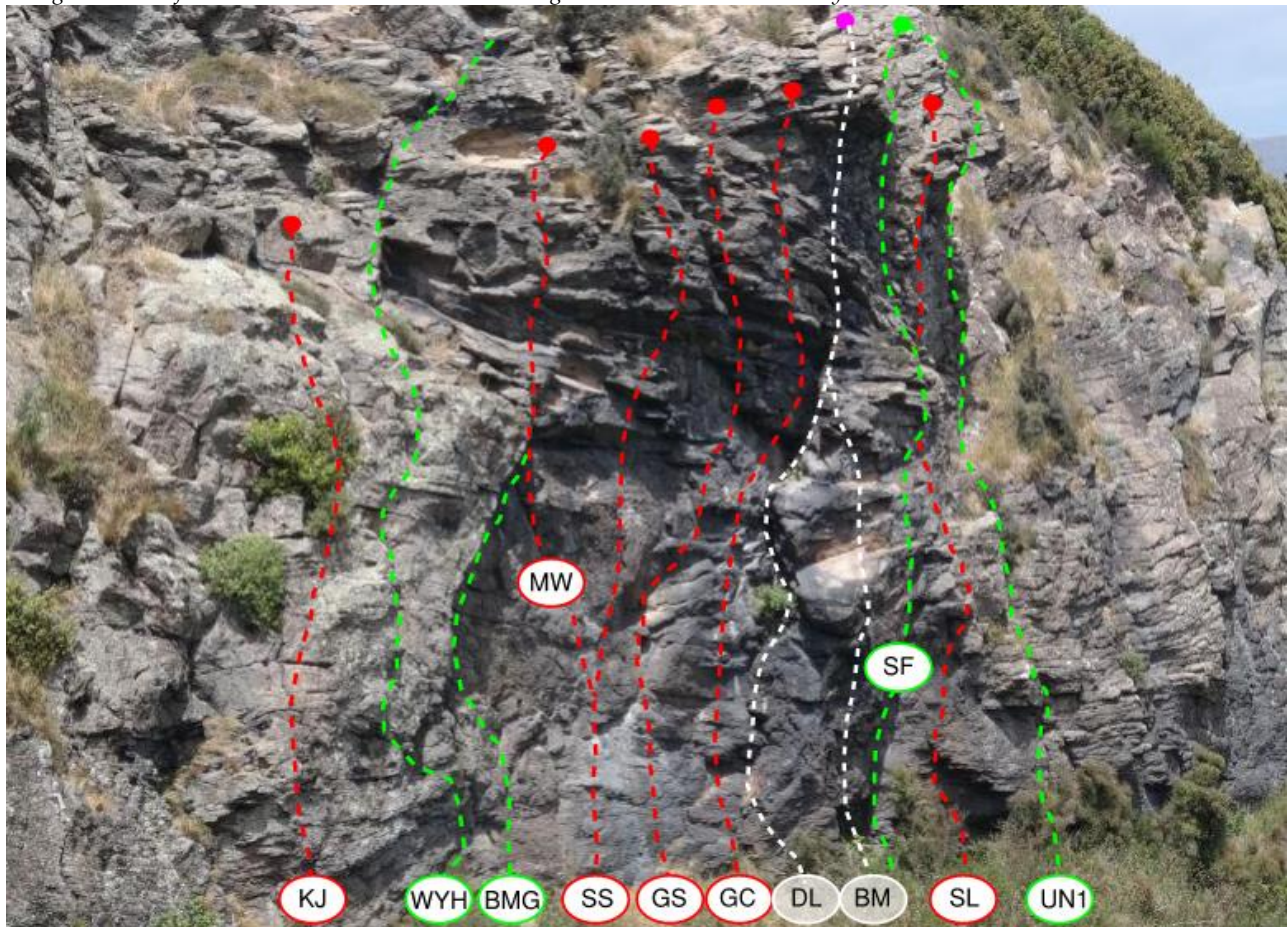
20 S2 Mp 2Br ★

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.

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



BMG Be My Guest

18 S2 Mp 2Br

Lindsay Main, 1997

The 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 Br before going up steep rock past another Br 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.

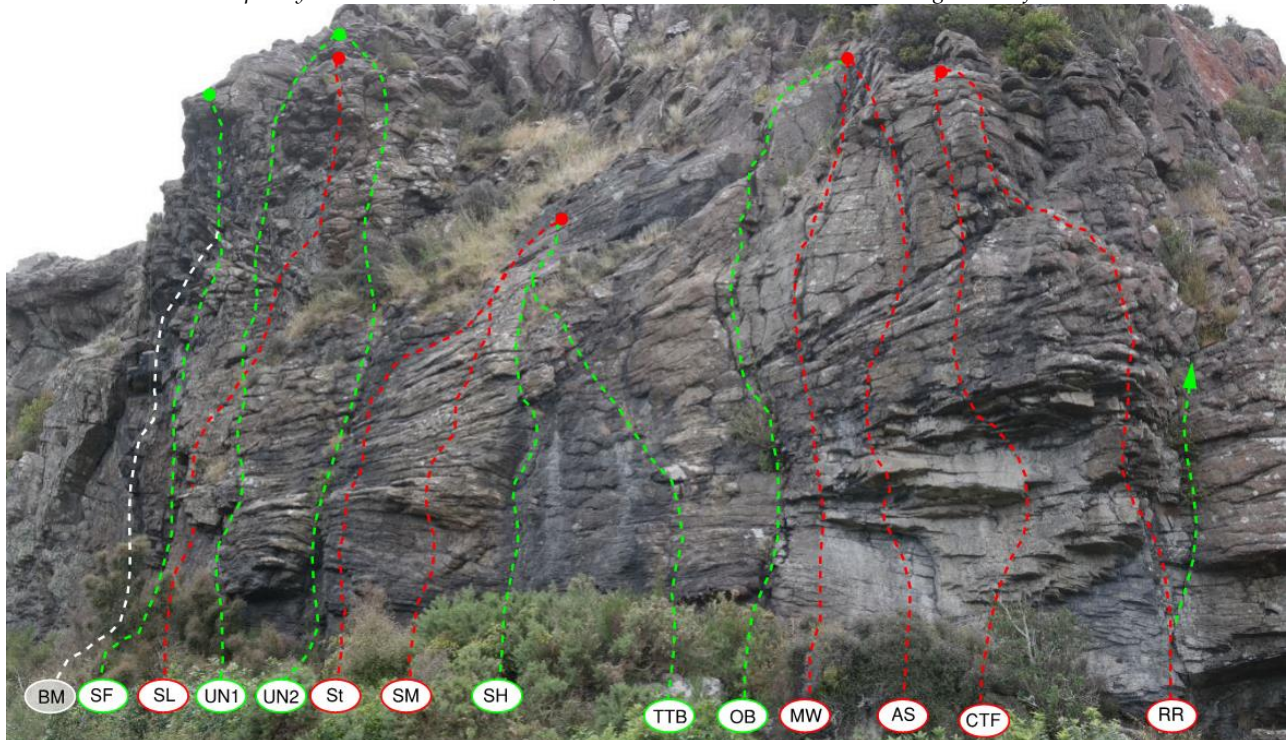
GA Guilty as Charged 20 S1 Sp 6Br ★ *Simon Courtois, 2020*
Climbs the black wall between 'GS' & the corner of 'DL' to a stance on a large ledge, step up & clip a Br before swinging out L onto the head wall, a couple of steep pulls & go up to the anchor. *Simon Courtois,*
The next 2 routes are in a poor 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'

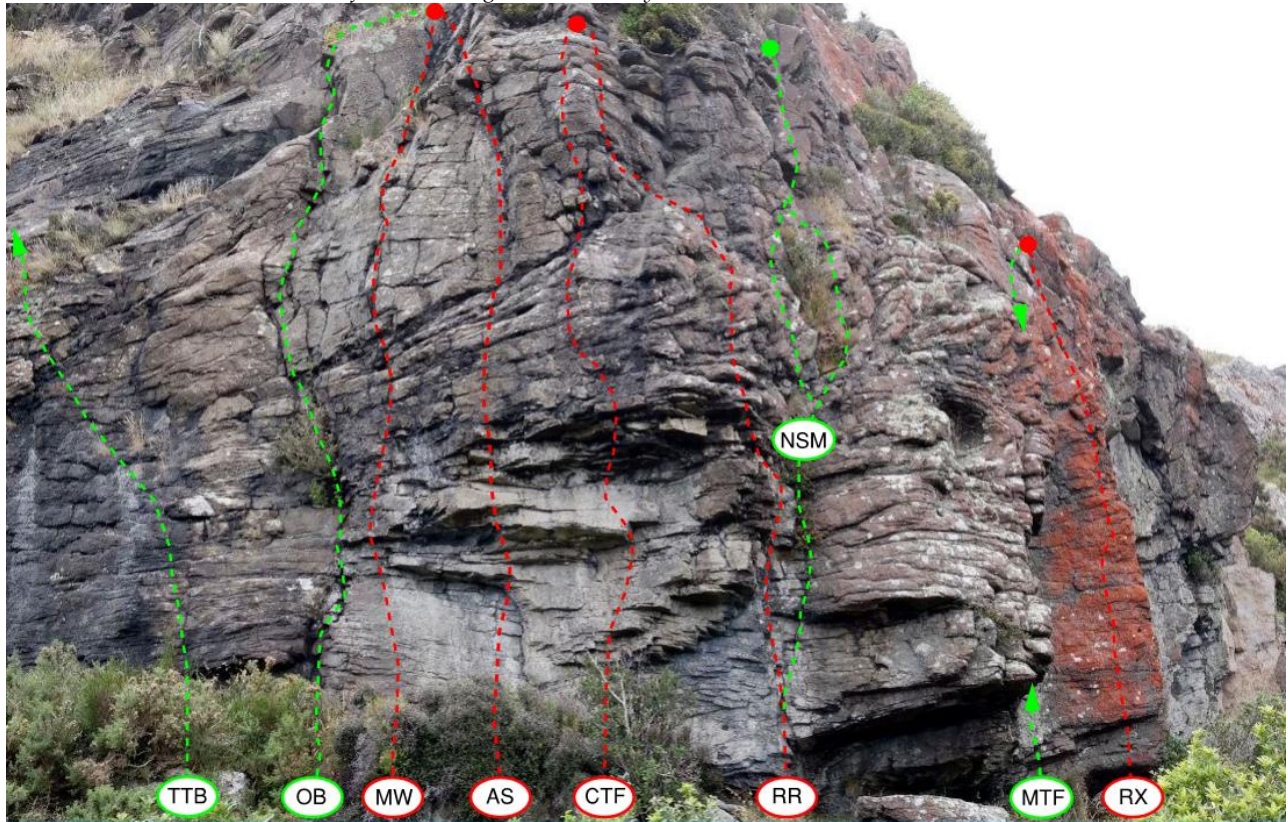
SL Simons Line 20 S1 Sp 6Br *Simon Courtois, 2020*
Start at a left facing flake below a Br, move up onto the face & continue up past a protruding block which forms a short corner, up again onto a ledge. Follow 'UN1' for a couple of moves before climbing the steep arête R of 'UN1' & 'SF'.

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	<i>Joe Arts, 2018</i>
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	★ <i>Simon Courtois, 2020</i>
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	★★ <i>Joe Arts, 1997</i>
<i>Initially the climb wandered across the face diagonally but was straightened out to allow for Simons route ('S').</i>						
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	<i>Joe Arts, 1992</i>
Pleasant climbing up a vague crack with reasonable pro.						
TTB	Tiny Tim Blows a Fuse	12	S3	So	0Br	<i>Joe Arts, 1992</i>
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	<i>Adrienne McCleod, 1992</i>
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	★ <i>Joe Arts, 1997</i>
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	★ <i>Tony Burnell, 2020</i>
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	<i>Joe Arts, 1992</i>
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	★ <i>Joe Arts, 1997</i>
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 is a 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.

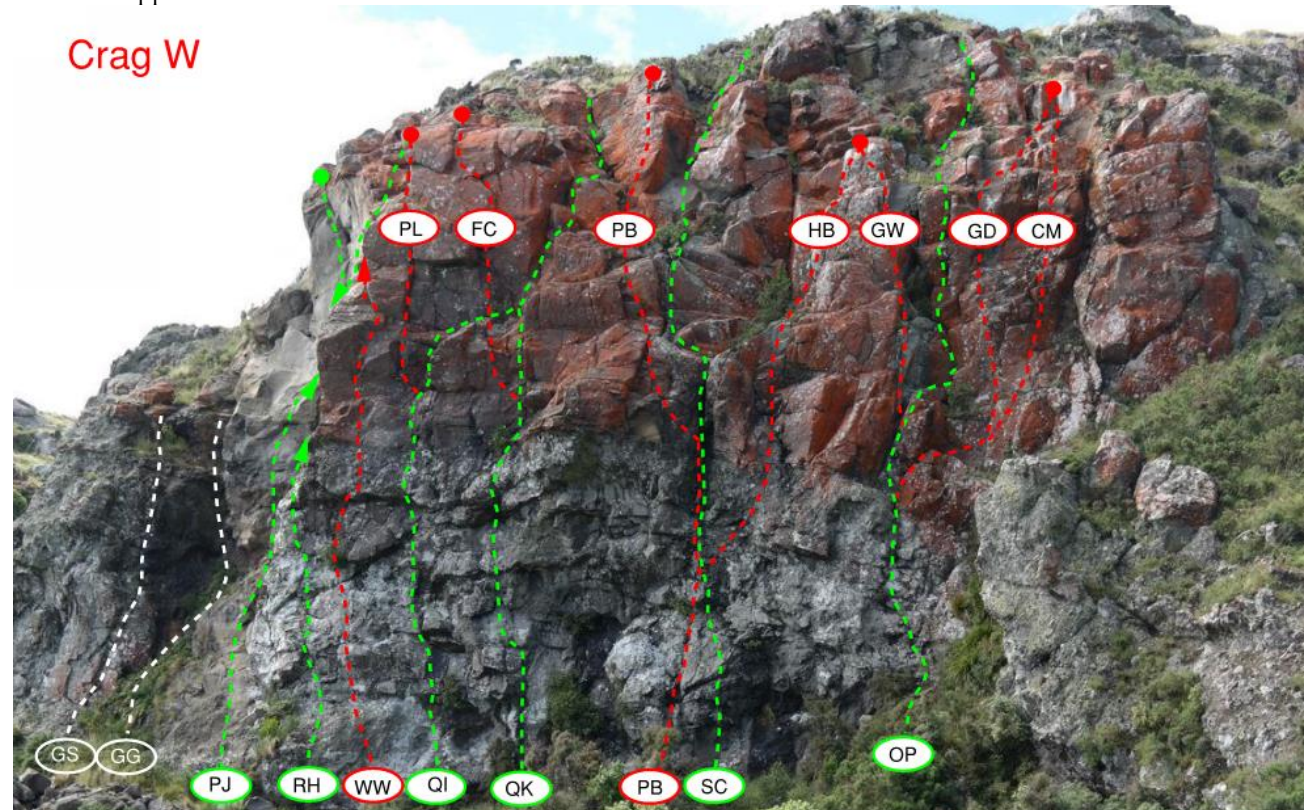
Crag W

Crag W is the large orange lichen-covered cliff above the track as you head into Crag X.

There is band of poor quality rock low down, however the red rock is reasonably solid rock with adventurous climbing, the crag is up to 20mts in height.

The original trad lines (Quail, Quack, Scorpion & Orange Peel) are shown still as trad even though you can, on most of them, clip up to 6Br & the sport routes that have over bolted the existing are in reality variations.

A number of the early climbs disappeared in the earthquakes they are shown in WHITE on the topos & in PURPLE in the text, although their exact location is no longer evident. Some of the newer climbs have mixed pro which will probably limit their appeal.



The following climbs appear to have been victims of the quakes & were probably located in the area of the collapse where 'PJ' now goes'

Gnarly Stools 16 Norman Ragg, 1999

Three Blind Mice 19 Hamish Reid 2000

Gorgeous Groove 6 Phil Stuart-Jones '95

Sroreman Norman	20				<i>Alan Hill, 1999</i>
No Future	16				<i>Phil Stuart-Jones '95</i>
Death by Apathy					<i>Alan Hill 2000</i>
PJ Peanut Butter & Jam	19	S2	Mp	6Br	<i>Bernie Frankpitt, 2018</i>
On the quake scar at the L side, head up the ramp of softer rock, follow the corner & then the crack on trad gear.					
RH Right Hexit	19	S3	Mp	3Br	<i>Bernie Frankpitt, 2018</i>
Head up 'WW' past the 2Br (or direct on the L) at Br3 go L to the arete follow the L side past an overhanging pocket to finish up the crack system.					
WW Welease Woderick	22	S2	Sp	8Br	<i>Dave Van der Krabben, 2018</i>
Start at the L side of the face & follow the first line of Br's that goes almost full height before heading out to the arete to finish.					
PL Plum Line	21	S2	Mp	8Br	<i>Dave Van der Krabben, 2018</i>
Climb 'QL' to where it heads R up the exit ramp, from here head up steeper ground on the L to finish.					
QL Quail	19	S3	Mp	3Br	<i>Alan Hill, 1999</i>
Several Br installed for 'PL' can now be clipped on this line. Start following a weakness that breeches the band of poorer rock past a tree onto the red wall (clip the Br's installed to access 'PL'), once up the initial red corner move R following easier ground to join the same exit as 'QK'.					
FC Flying Circus	22	S2	Mp	7Br	<i>Grant Piper, 2018</i>
Follow 'QK' until it crosses 'QL', step L cross the slab & head up steep ground & the roof above.					
QK Quaker	22	S3	Mp	6Br	<i>Alan Hill, 1999</i>
At least 6Br installed for 'FC' can now be clipped on this line. Great climbing on good rock, start just R of 'QL' up blocks to a bush then an overhang at 4mts, move R into a corner & go up steep ground to a bush, a few moves up the inverted staircase on the red rock before finishing up the slabbier open groove.					
PB Peakly Blinders Orders	18	S2	Sp	8Br	<i>Jonathon Tyne, 2018</i>
Start up the grey wall & join 'SC' & go into the cleft, exit out the L side of the cleft exit up the staircase.					
SC Scorpion	18	S3	Tr	0Br	<i>Phil Stuart-Jones, 1995</i>
The obvious central trad line (now with 6Br). Start on the huge chicken-head/bulbous growth, go up the slab above & into the cleft.					
HB Heavy Boson	20	S3	Mp	5Br	<i>Steve Moore, 2019</i>
Start as for 'SC' but at the top of the slab move R to a crack then the steeper face to finish.					
<i>The next few climbs all appear to start up what was 'OP' to the red rock.</i>					
GB Gwabingo	18	S2	Mp	4Br	<i>Grant Piper, 2018</i>
Once you get to the red rock, move L & go up a series of slightly steep steps to the common anchor with 'HB'.					
OP Orange Peel	16	S3	Mp	?Br	<i>Matt Bennet, 2000</i>
Several Br's can now be clipped on this line. Start low down & L of vegetated gully. Head up the green, grey rock (now with Br's) & up through a small notch to the base of wide slanting crack, avoid this by moving R then exiting to top					
GD I Fart in your General Direction	15	S1	Sp	7Br	<i>Robin Jodon, 2018</i>
Start as for 'OP' & 'GB' at the red rock move R going up steeper ground to finish on the prow.					
CM Coconuts Migwation	16	S1	Sp	7Br	<i>Robin Jodon, 2018</i>
Start as for 'OP', 'GB' & 'GD' at the red rock move further R than 'GD' to climb the wall on the L of the groove finishing through a steep scoop to a common anchor with 'GD'.					
?? Flamin Glory	15				<i>Hamish Reid 1999</i>
<u>Location Unknown.</u> The separate buttress some 15m to the R and lower down. Undercut start below the in-cut square hole, trending up and leftwards to finish left of pointed block. Large sling for block, and wires.					

Crag V

This is a large crag with some earthquake damage in the upper part the wall is located approximately 20mts west of Crag W & has a large open gully on its west side. A not very worthwhile piece of rock but included for completeness & to reveal its future potential.

RBB Routebags & Boot Bags

Phil Stuart-Jones, 1995

Shown in white on the topo is what I believe to be the original (& only line).

