

GIBRALTAR ROCK

Port Hills Climbing



Gibraltar Rock

Tony Burnell
Rev. A (2021)

Gibraltar Rock

Cover Photo by Kevin Barrett

General

The Port Hills Crag are home to rare species of geckos & native flora & fauna take care not to disturb wildlife or damage native plants. Inclusion of any climbing area or climb in this guidebook does not mean that there is any right of public access.

The land is owned & administered by The Summit Road Society, there are no restrictions on climbing but plants must not be removed on the crag. The crag comprises a fin of high-quality rock with two pyramidal faces at its western which are separated by gullies.

Gibraltar Rock was known to have been climbed on in the 60's but information is scant, undoubtedly the easier routes would have been climbed in that period. In 1979 John Allen climbed two of the hardest climbs at the crag, 'Salisbury Hill' (23) & 'The Wasteland' (22), both are trad classics, bold & audacious for their time. Not to be outdone local climber Dave Fearnely came along to climb 'Private Hell' & 'Wasted Nites'. Little has been climbed at the crag since John Allen & Dave Fearnely's visits. In 1984 John Chambers sent 'Hydrobollocks' then John McCallum & Jamie Vinton-Boot added "Hangman" in 2011

Access & Restriction

Gibraltar Rock is located in Omaha Bush Reserve on the Summit Rd approximately 5.0km east of The Sign of the Kiwi. Park in the Gibraltar Rock Car Park on the west side of the Summit Road. From the car park follow the track downhill through the bush, go through the gate & cross the hillside & go through the new gates, follow the NZAC directional sign & a series of waratahs with orange markers.

Restrictions: Dogs must be on a lead

Permission: None required

GPS: -43.660420, 172.614203

Distance: 600mts

Walk Time: 15mins

Ownership: Summit Rd Society



Climbing Notes

By choosing to climb here you accept must responsibility for your own personal safety & you must make your own decision regarding the condition of any fixed equipment. Neither the first ascensionists nor, the author accept any responsibility for the condition of any fixed equipment.

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.

In this guide routes at each individual buttress (Crag) are described from L to R.

The route identifier at the bottom of each climb shown on the topos is normally that of the earliest recorded route.

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. Some of the original lines have chain link protection.

None of the climbs are longer than 30 mts therefore route lengths are not shown. The route name that appears on the topos at the base of route lines is always that of the earliest recorded climb.

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

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

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

○ - Br location

Sp – Denotes Sport Route.

Mp – Denotes Mixed Protection Route (bolts & trad).

Tr – Denotes Trad Climb.

R & L – Denote Right & Left.

Climbing Notes

The 'Ewbank Grading System' is not the best grading system when applied to mixed pro or 'boldly' bolted routes as it provides 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.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|------|-----|-----|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 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.

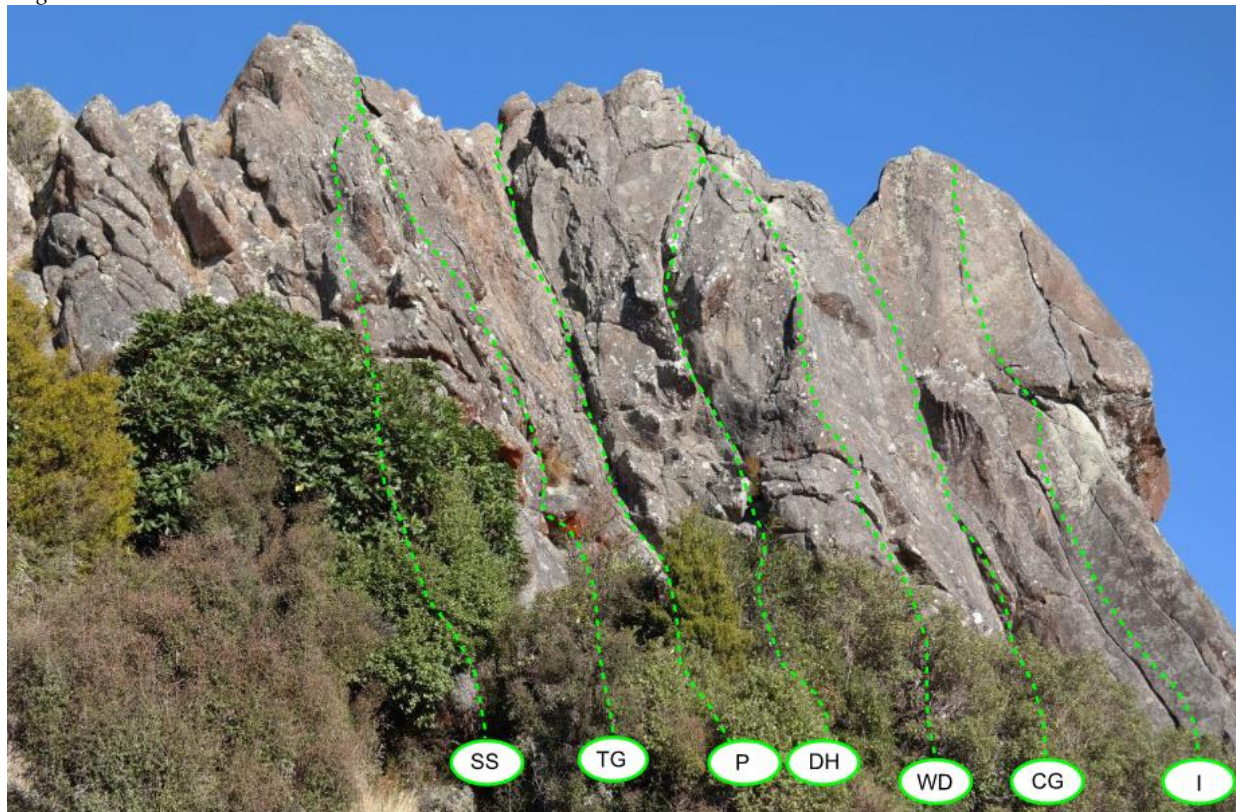
S2 - Reasonable protection, but a fall could result in injury.

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 my opinion & in no way scientific, gear can fail, rock can fail & any fall can result in injury. As far as possible all known routes have been included in this guide. If you want to know where a route actually goes then read the text as well as looking at the topos.

Gully Wall

There are two vegetated gullies on the L side of the main face, one has a jammed chockstone & can be used as access the top of the crag.



Hy Hydrabollocks 23 S3 Tr 0Br John Chambers, 1984

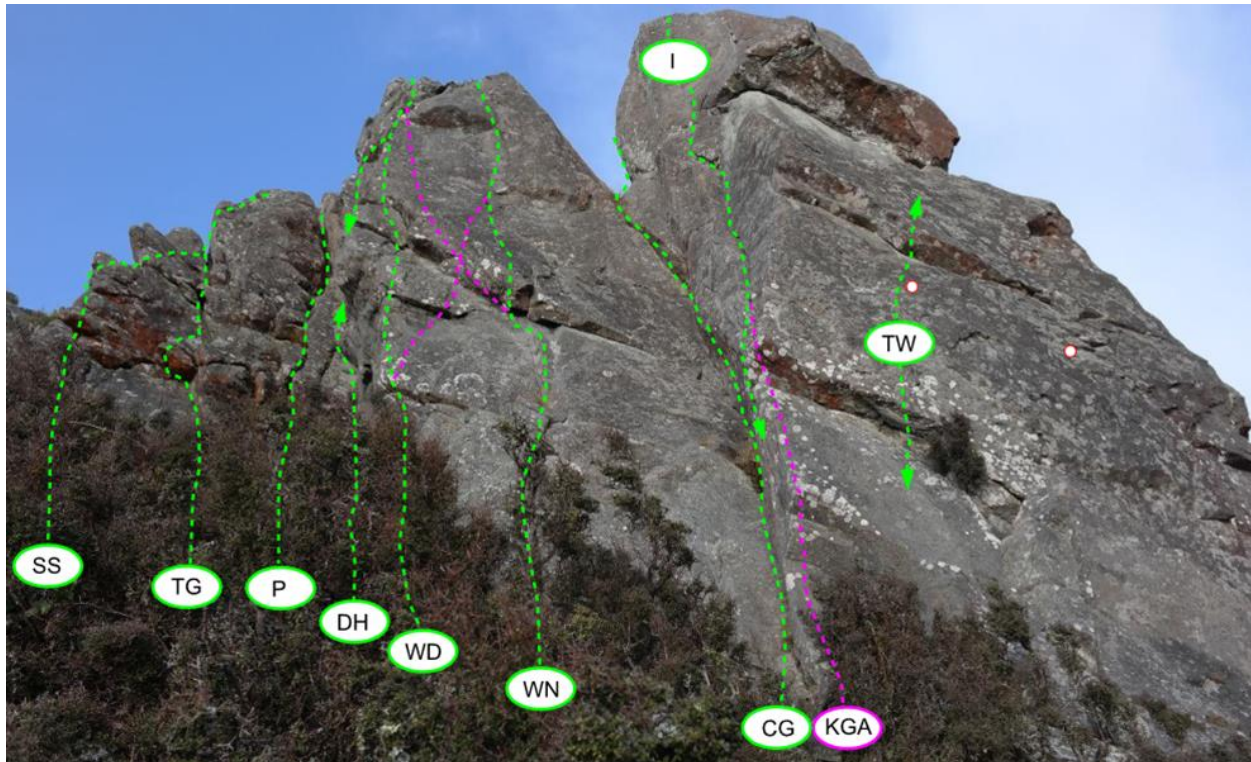
Reportedly & elusively located on a small buttress on the L side of the gully at the L side of the crag. Climb a seam that leads to a rest, move R & climb a corner & up this onto the rib then good holds above then easy to the top

SS Soft Soap 7 S3 Tr 0Br Unknown

Just R is groove with a flax bush, climb the groove & wall

| | | | | | | |
|---|------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|----------------|
| TG | The Gully | 12 | S3 | Tr | 0Br | <i>Unknown</i> |
| The second gully L of the main face is climbed on good holds. Good protection | | | | | | |
| P | Penitence | 12 | S3 | Tr | 0Br | <i>Unknown</i> |
| The second gully L of the main face is climbed on good holds. Good protection | | | | | | |

Main Face – Left Pyramid



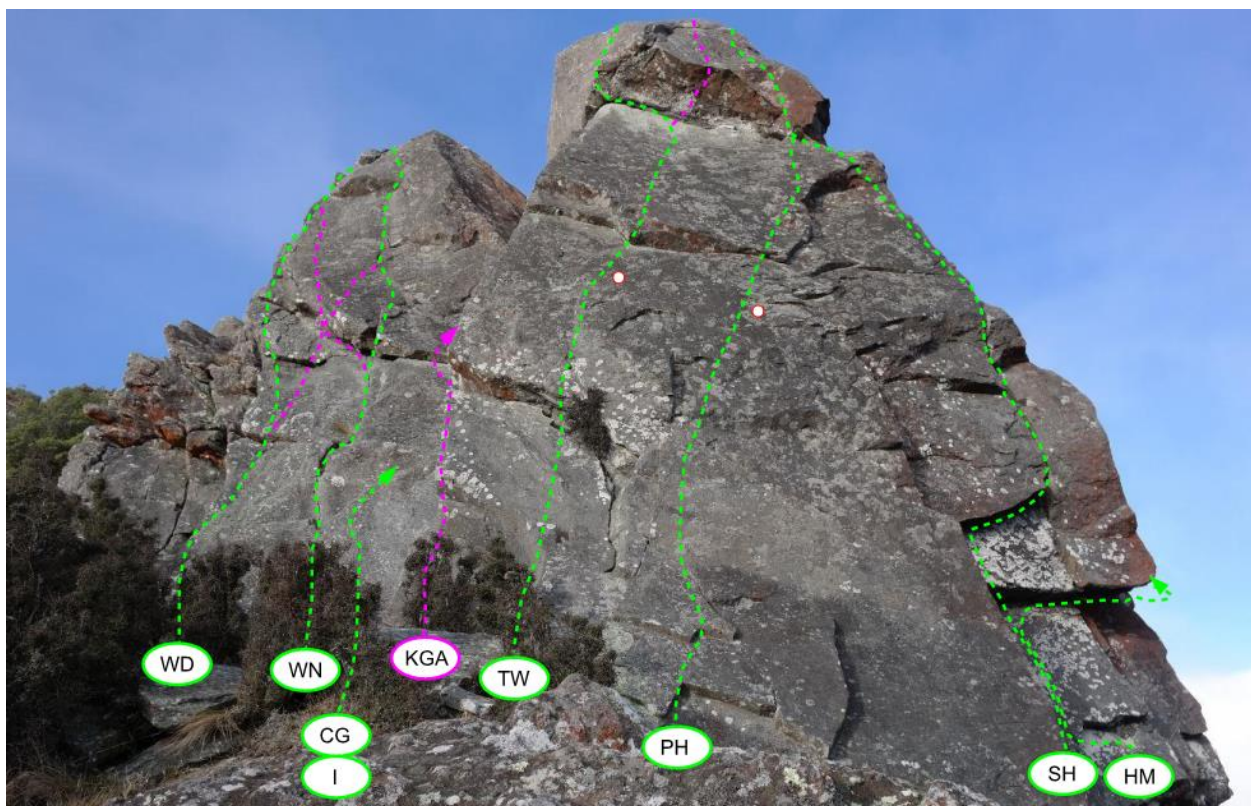
This is the L side of the main face which forms the L pyramid

| | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------------------------|
| DH | Dynamo Hum | 15 | S2 | Tr | 0Br | <i>Unknown</i> |
| Climb the steep wall R of “P”, near the top move R into “WD”. | | | | | | |
| WD | Wasted Daze | 16 | S3 | Tr | 0Br | <i>Unknown</i> |
| Takes the L arête of the slabby wall. Easier if the central line is followed until three-quarters height, before moving L to the arête. Tricky to protect. | | | | | | |
| WN | Wasted Nights | 20 | S3 | Tr | 0Br | <i>Dave Fearnley, 1979</i> |
| Climb the centre of the wall, gear at the curving crack, head R slightly at the top. <i>There are variation linking “WN” & “WD” these are shown in purple.</i> | | | | | | |
| CG | Coup de Grace | 14 | S2 | Tr | 0Br | <i>Unknown</i> |
| The large open groove at the L side of pyramid 1. | | | | | | |
| I | Iconoclast | 15 | S2 | Tr | 0Br | <i>Unknown</i> |
| Great climbing up the L wall, using cracks on the L climb the face L of the arête continuing up through the small headwall. | | | | | | |
| KG | Knob Gnarly Arete | 17 | S3 | Tr | 0Br | <i>Neville Taylor, 1991</i> |
| A direct/variation start up the arete to gain the crack system on ‘I’. | | | | | | |

Main Face - Right Pyramid

The impressive R side of the main face.

| | | | | | | |
|--|----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|---|
| TW | The Wasteland | 22 | S3 | Mp | 1Br | <i>John Allen (both versions), 1979</i> |
| The L side of the main wall. A bolt protects the initial difficult move then go up to gear before heading R into the horizontal break, from here, go either L along the break to finish up the arete, or, from the break finish direct over the roof at Grade 23 | | | | | | |
| PH | Private Hell | 22 | S3 | Mp | 1Br | <i>Dave Fearnley, 1983</i> |
| Climb the wall R of The Wasteland past a bolt, then continue with easier face climbing trending R & finishing up Salisbury Hill. | | | | | | |



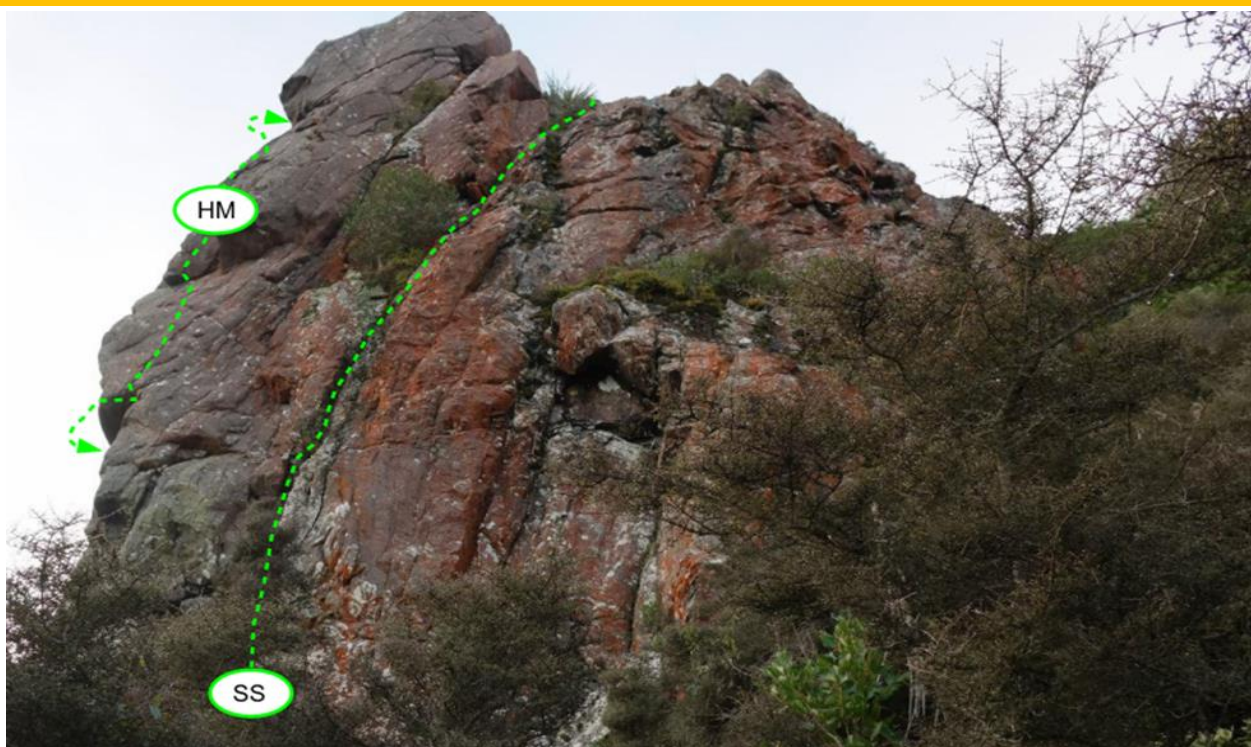
SH **Salisbury Hill** **24** **S3** **Tr** **0Br** *John Allen, 1979*

Climbs R arête of the main face probably the test piece of the crag. From the end of the ledge climb the corner, move R (tricky), then the crack to the break, over the bulge fist L then back R.

HM **Hangman** **22** **S3** **Tr** **0Br** *John McCallum, 2011*

Start as for 'SH' but traverse R under roof & around the arete onto the south face. Follow the wall just R of the arete until you rejoin 'SH' at the traverse line going L, follow out L & finish as for 'SH'

The South Face



The south face is a large wall but somewhat lichenous & vegetated.

SS Salisbury Sewer 17 S3 Tr 0Br

Brent Davis, 1982

Around the corner on the south face, often damp due to the amount of vegetation. The climb takes the vegetated off-width crack.