

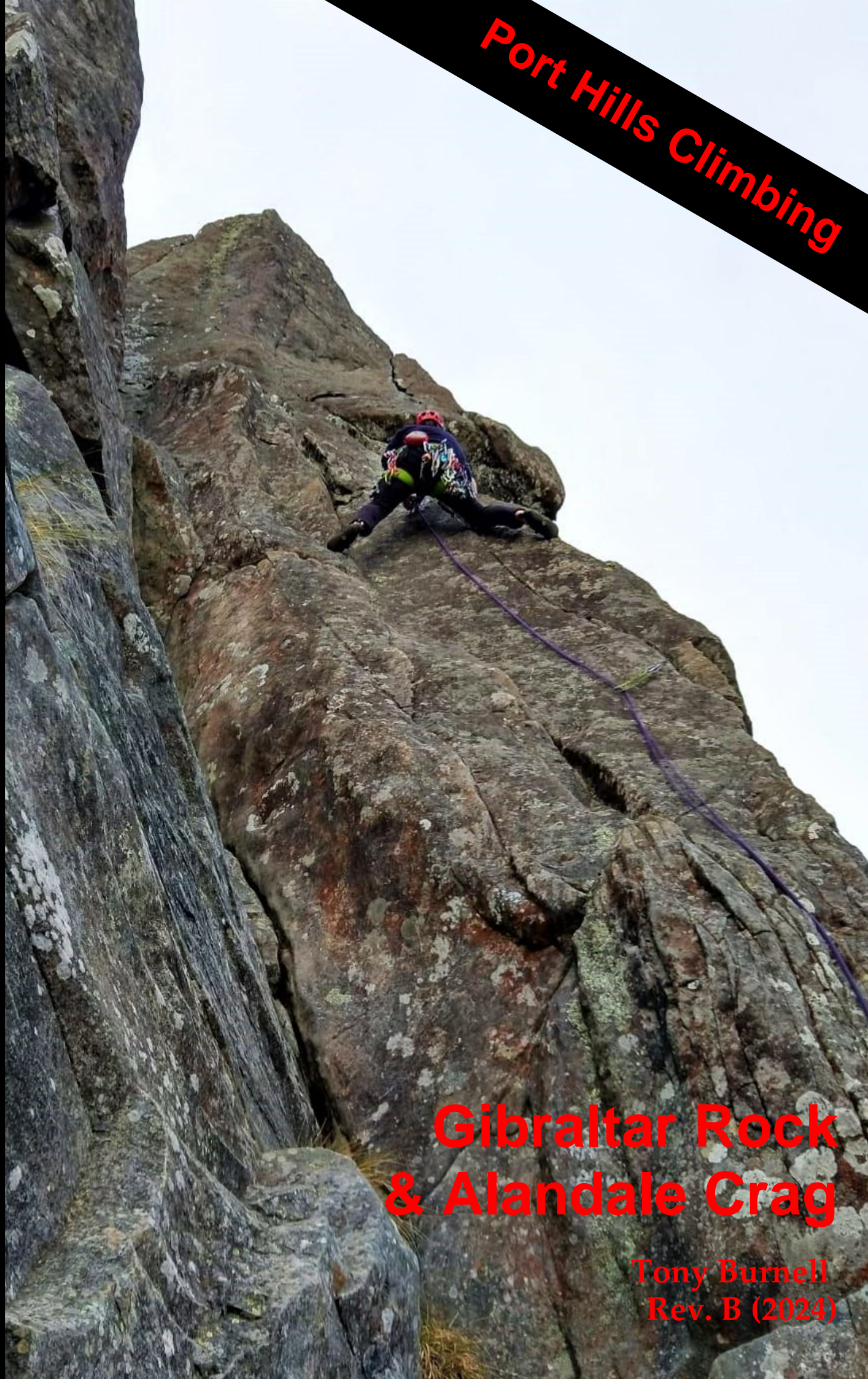
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Port Hills Climbing

**Gibraltar Rock
& Alandale Crag**

**Tony Burnell
Rev. B (2024)**





Thanks to **Conor Boyd IT** for creating and hosting the website (www.porthillscimbing.nz).

Thanks also to **Aspiring Safety Limited** for all their support, see them for all your climbing needs

General *The Port Hills Craggs are home to rare species of geckos and native flora and 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 and 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) and 'The Wasteland' (22), both are trad classics, bold and audacious for their time. Not to be outdone local climber Dave Fearnely came along to climb 'Private Hell' and 'Wasted Nites'. Little has been climbed at the crag since John Allen and Dave Fearnely's visits. In 1984 John Chambers sent 'Hydrobollocks' then John McCallum and Jamie Vinton-Boot added 'Hangman' in 2011.

In 2023 a group of Christchurch climbers decided unilaterally that the climbs at Gibraltar Rock should be sport climbs, thankfully the bolts were removed thus preserving some of the best trad-lines on some of our best rock.

Climbing Notes - Rock Climbing is Dangerous. *By choosing to climb here you accept must responsibility for your own personal safety and 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 and 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 climbs are listed from left to right as you use the access described from the carpark.*

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. The route identifier at the bottom of each climb shown on the topos is usually that of the earliest recorded route. None of the climbs are longer than 30 m 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.

Gibraltar Rock is not the most popular crag on the Port Hills due in part to the trad nature of the climbing here. Climb with care, test all holds before you pull on them, check your placements and wear a helmet. It's always a good idea to take a brush and clean the routes, it will be appreciated by the next visitor to the crag.

Tracks are marked in

Sport routes are marked in

Trad or mixed protection climbs are marked in

Variations are marked in

YELLOW

RED

GREEN

PINK

The following Abbreviations / Definitions have been used:

#Br – Denotes the number of bolt runners

○ - Original bolt locations

Sp – Denotes Sport Route.

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

Tr – Denotes Trad Climb.

Grading 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 and are normally accepted as just the technical difficulty

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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 and a low risk of injury from a fall.

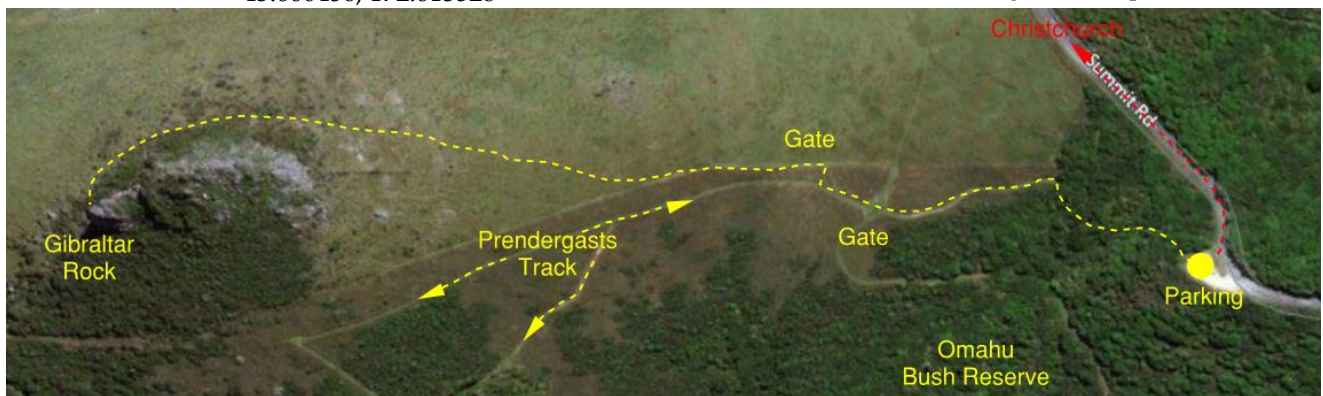
S2 - Reasonable protection, but a fall could result in injury.

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

Climbers should remember that this additional suffix to the grade is my opinion and in no way scientific, gear can fail, rock can fail and 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.

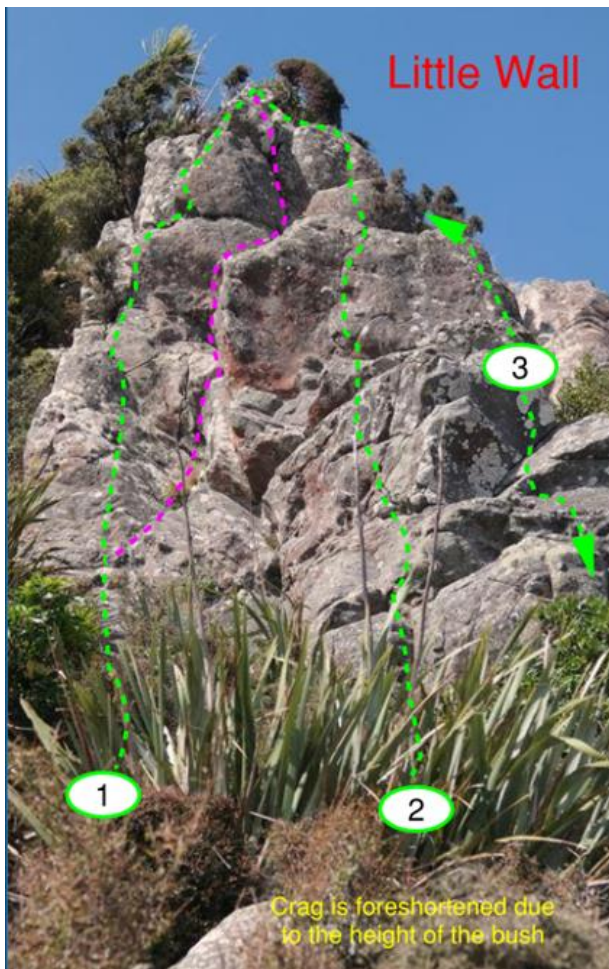
Access and Restriction Gibraltar Rock is located in Omaha Bush Reserve on the Summit Rd use GPS coordinates below for directions to the car park. From the car park follow the track downhill through the bush, go through the gate and cross the hillside and go through the new predator proof gates, bear right follow the NZAC directional sign through another gate, after 20metres or so leave the track to follow a series of waratahs with orange markers.

Area	GPS	Distance	Walk Time	Restrictions
Parking	-43.660754, 172.620787	-	-	No permission required
Gibraltar Rock	-43.660456, 172.613528	600metres	10 mins	Dogs are not permitted



Climbing





Little Wall The first buttress you come to is just above the access track when approaching, all these climbs were soloed. The routes 'Two Step' and 'Three Step', are steeply undercut at the start (not visible in the picture) and have poor protection.

The top of the buttress has sustained significant heave from the 2010/2011 earthquakes and extreme care should be exercised.

The top of the buttress can be accessed via a scramble through the bush on the left side of the buttress



1 One Step 12 S3 Tr 0Br

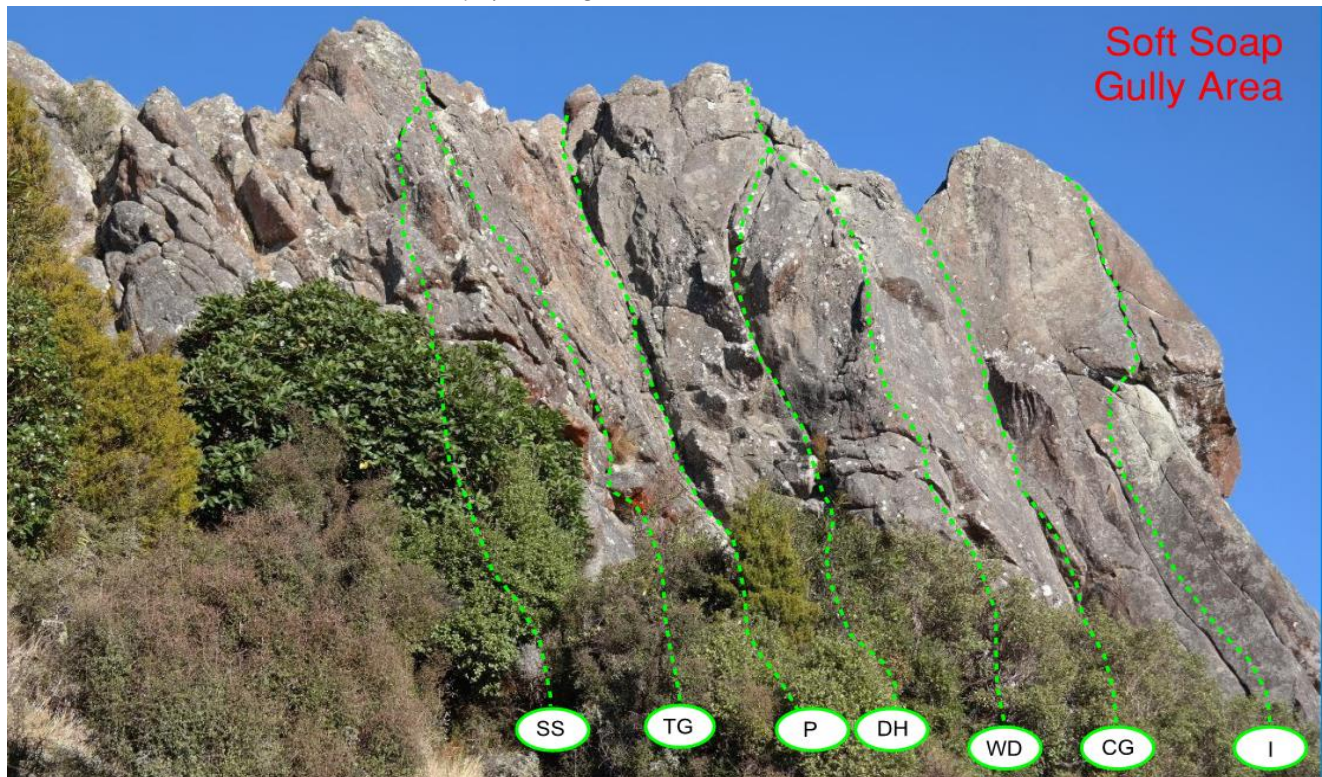
Tony Burnell (solo), June 2023

Starts up the slab between two flax bushes and climb the slabby left side of the buttress skirting the block at two thirds height to exit on the left side of the summit blocks.

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Var	Variation	12	S3	Tr	0Br	<i>Tony Burnell (solo), June 2023</i>
Starts up the slab between two flax bushes as for 1 but step right and go up the left facing corner and up a couple of small faces through to the summit blocks.						
2	Two Step	14	S3	Tr	0Br	<i>Tony Burnell (solo), June 2023</i>
Start down in the bush, climb the steep undercut left arete with a groove in it, once on the ledges head up a couple of short faces and finish using some hidden pockets.						
3	Three Step	16	S3	Tr	0Br	<i>Tony Burnell (solo), June 2023</i>
Climbs the steep undercut right arete on sloping holds, it's a bit of a tussle with a young native to get started. At the top surmount the head walls using the hidden pockets.						
4	Fourth Dimension	14	S3	Tr	0Br	<i>Tony Burnell (solo), June 2023</i>
Move around the right undercut arete, bridge onto the face and climb the blind cracks to a good spike, go straight up moving right a broadleaf tree and up the final wall. <i>This line is logical and protectable and was possibly climbed by Joe Arts at some point.</i>						
HB	Hydrabollocks	23	S3	Tr	0Br	<i>John Chambers, 1984</i>
<i>This is assumed as the upper arete which has definitely been climbed but the original route description fail to adequately identify the exact location of this climb, there are three lines that it could be.</i>						
Elusively located on the right side of the 'Small Wall' in dense bush before you get to the main crag. The climb takes a crack on the left to get to a rest, step right and climb a corner and up this onto the rib then good holds above then easy to the top.						

Main Climbing Area. *There are two vegetated gullies on the left side of the main face, one has a jammed chockstone and can be used as access the top of the crag.*



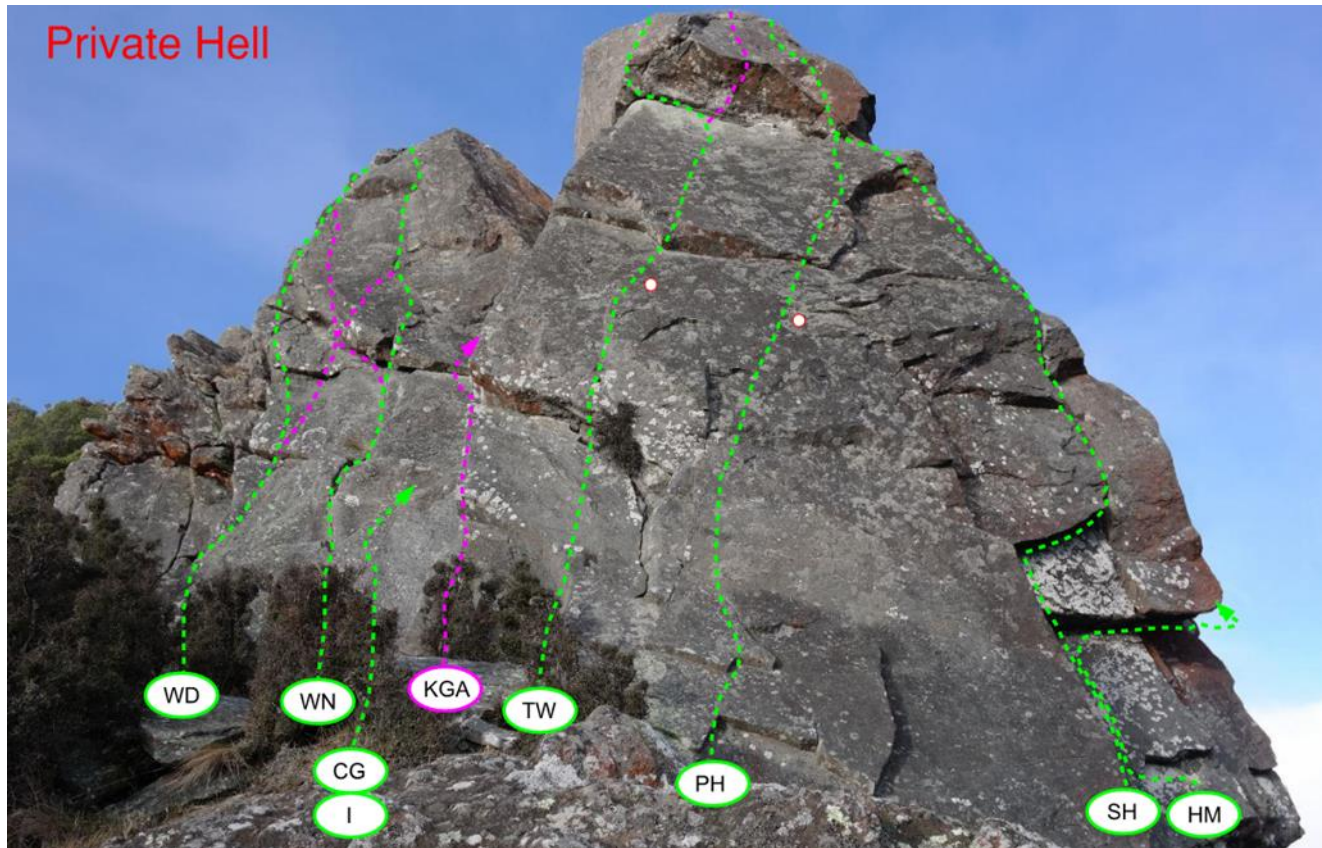
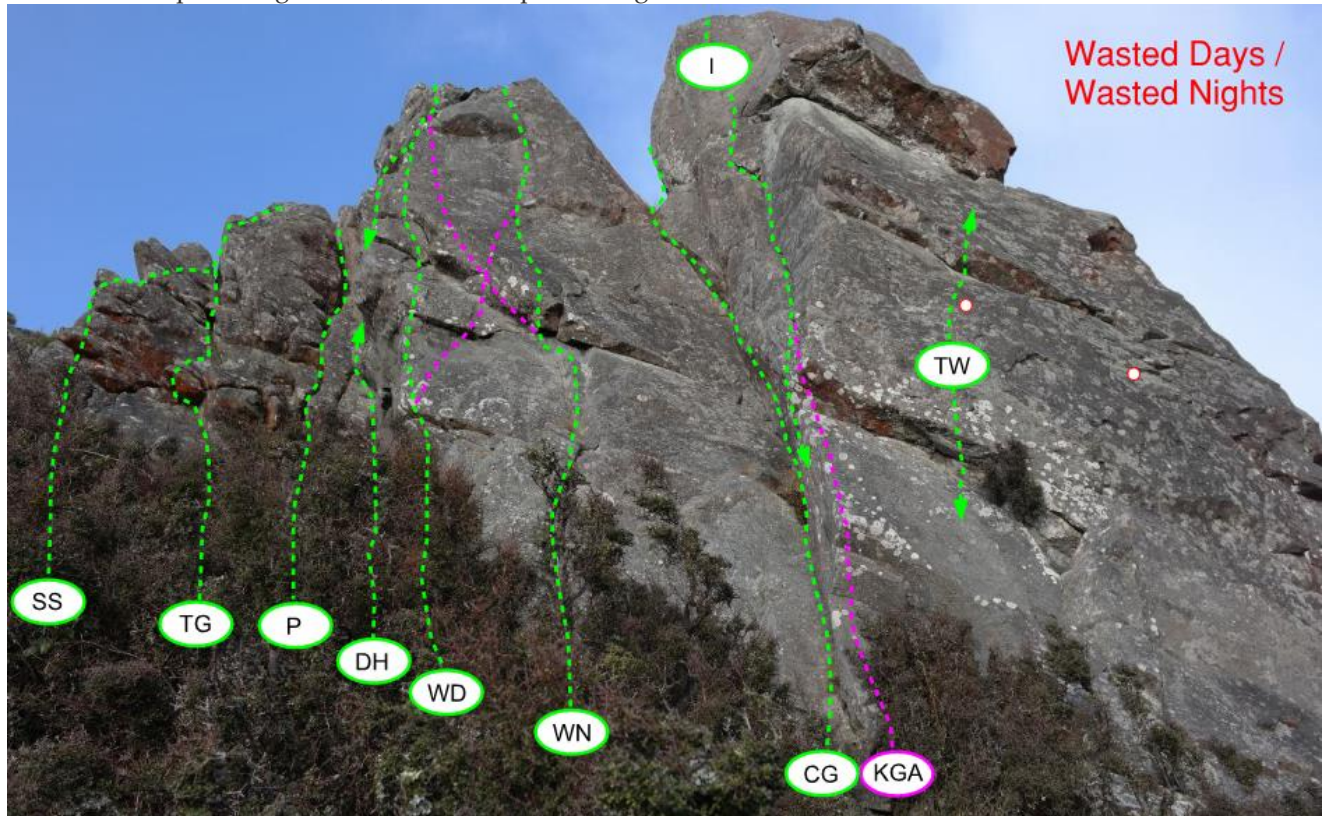
SS	Soft Soap	7	S3	Tr	0Br	<i>Unknown</i>
Just right is groove with a flax bush, climb the groove and wall.						
TG	The Gully	12	S3	Tr	0Br	<i>Unknown</i>
The second gully left of the main face is climbed on good holds. Good protection.						
P	Penitence	12	S3	Tr	0Br	<i>Unknown</i>
The second gully left of the main face is climbed on good holds. Good protection						

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DH Dynamo Hum 15 S2 Tr 0Br

Unknown

Climb the steep wall right of 'P', near the top move right into 'WD'.



DH Dynamo Hum 15 S2 Tr 0Br

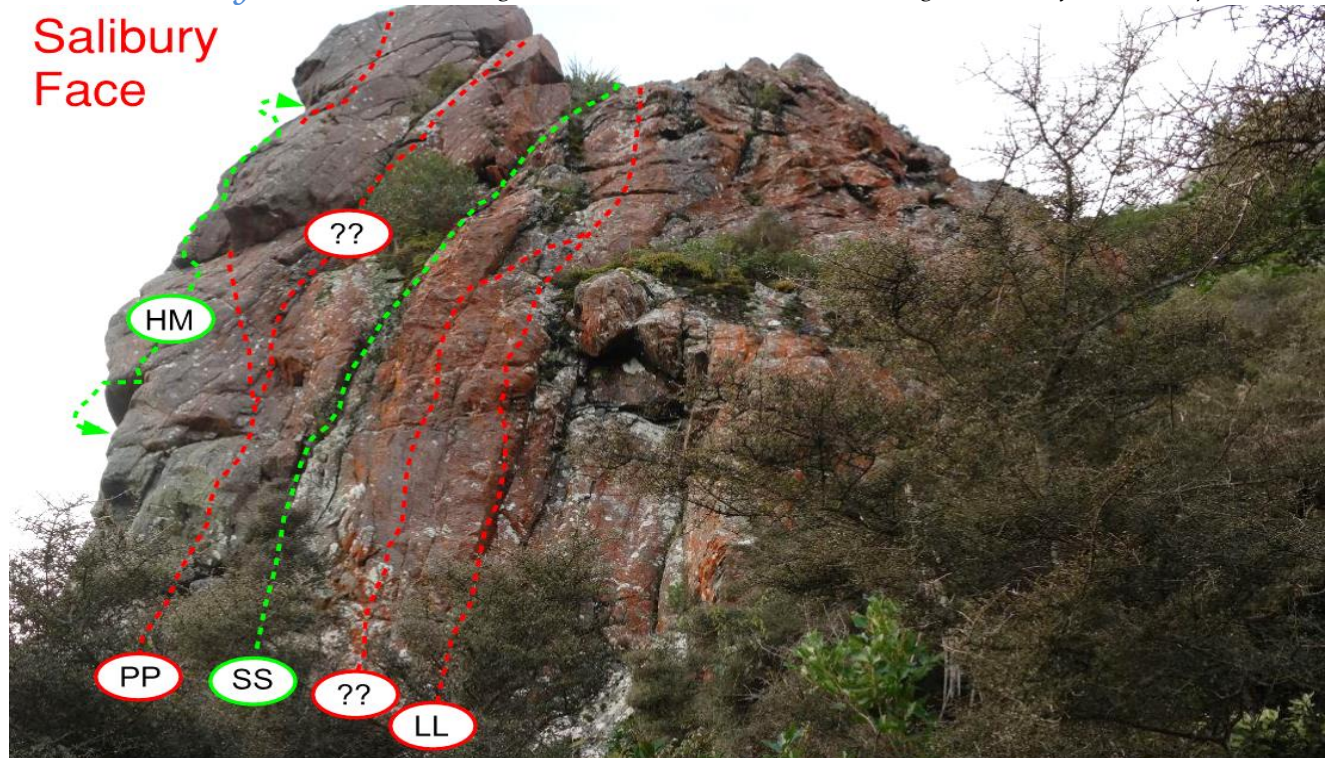
Unknown

Climb the steep wall right of 'P', near the top move right into 'WD'.

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WD	Wasted Daze	16	S3	Tr	0Br	<i>Unknown</i>
Climbs the left arête of the slabby wall. Easier if the central line is followed until three-quarters height, before moving left 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 right slightly at the top. <i>There are variation linking 'WN' and 'WD' these are shown in purple.</i>						
CG	Coup de Grace	14	S2	Tr	0Br	<i>Unknown</i>
The large open groove at the left side of pyramid 1.						
I	Iconoclast	15	S2	Tr	0Br	<i>Unknown</i>
Great climbing up the left wall, using cracks on the left climb the face left of the arête continuing up through the small headwall.						
KGA	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'. <i>The impressive right side of the main face.</i>						
TW	The Wasteland	22	S3	Mp	1Br	<i>John Allen (both versions), 1979</i>
The left side of the main wall. A bolt protects the initial difficult move then go up to gear before heading right into the horizontal break, from here, go either left 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 right of The Wasteland past a bolt, then continue with easier face climbing trending right and finishing up 'SH'.						
SH	Salisbury Hill	24	S3	Tr	0Br	<i>John Allen, 1979</i>
Climbs right arête of the main face probably the test piece of the crag. From the end of the ledge climb the corner, move right (tricky), then the crack to the break, over the bulge fist left then back right.						
HM	Hangman	22	S3	Tr	0Br	<i>John McCallum, Jamie Vinton-Boot 2011</i>
Start as for 'SH' but traverse right under roof and around the arete onto the south face. Follow the wall just right of the arete in a small subsidiary corner until you rejoin 'SH' at the traverse line going left, follow out left and finish as for 'SH'						

The Salisbury Face This is the large red wall it is somewhat lichenous, vegetated and oft times damp.



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PP	The Price of Progress	22	S1	Sp	11Br	<i>Shane France, 2023</i>
The first route to the right of the arete on the south face. Climbs the best-looking piece of rock on the south face, follow the bolts from a steep start before trending up and left to the short corner follow this then go up the head wall.						
??	??	?	S1	Sp	?Br	<i>Shane France (assumed), 2023</i>
Start as for 'PP' but continue straight up even slightly right to finish up the featured wall on the left of the prominent shrub.						
SS	Salisbury Sewer	17	S3	Tr	0Br	<i>Brent Davis, 1982</i>
Around the corner on the south face, the climb takes the vegetated off-width crack.						
??	??	?	S1	Sp	8Br	<i>Grant Piper (assumed), 2023</i>
Starts by climbing the blank looking wall right of 'SS' where the angle drops back join 'LL' to finish.						
LL	His Lordship's Lichen	17	S1	Sp	8Br	<i>Grant Piper, 2023</i>
Starts by climbing the wide groove exiting left onto the face, go straight up to a ledge then the slabbier wall heading up on the right of the flax in/on 'SS'.						