

THE ALTAR

Banks Peninsula
Climbing



TheAltar
Tony Burnell
Rev. A (2023)



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

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

General

The Banks Peninsula Crag are home to rare species of geckos & native flora & fauna take care not to disturb wildlife or damage native plants, do not cut down any native trees or shrubs. Inclusion of any climbing area or climb in this guidebook does not mean that there is any R of public access.

The crag, located in the Hunter Native Forest Scenic Reserve, is visible from Marine Drive as you head towards Diamond Harbour from Christchurch, the crag has good views over Church Bay. With a westerly aspect the crag is sheltered from the prevailing easterly & also has reasonable shelter from the southerly. The Altar was discovered & named by *Simon Courtois* in 2008 & accompanied by *Dave Shotwell* they started route development at the southern end of the crag, the steep roofed area was developed later by a mixture of climbers, but primarily *Derek Thatcher & Troy Mattingley*.

Climbing Notes

Climbing is Dangerous - By choosing to climb at these crags you must accept 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 which is now around 30 years old. At this crag trad climbing skills & the ability to construct & equalise your anchors is essential. Respect the existing climbs, do not add bolts, when doing new climbs make sure you know where the existing lines are before getting your drill out. Routes are described from Left to Right. 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. The climbs are all short therefore route lengths are not shown. Climb with care, test all holds before you pull on them, check your placements & wear a helmet. It is a good idea to take a brush & clean the routes, it will be appreciated by the next visitor to the crag.

Routes are described R to L from the point at which you arrive at the crag.

Tracks are marked in	YELLOW
Sport routes are marked in	RED
Variations are marked in	PINK
Trad or mixed protection climbs are marked in	GREEN
Seismically Damaged climbs are marked in	WHITE

The following Abbreviations / Definitions have been used

Sp - Denotes Sport Route.	R & L - Denote R & L.
Tr - Denotes Trad Route.	AS - Denotes anchor station/lower off point.
Mp - Mixed Protection Route (bolts & trad).	#Br - Denotes the number of bolt or chain links

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 & 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

The grades given here assume that the climber is climbing on-sight & placing gear on lead.

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.

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- S2 - Reasonable protection, but a fall could result in injury.
- S3 - Protection is marginal or non-existent & a fall could result in serious injury.

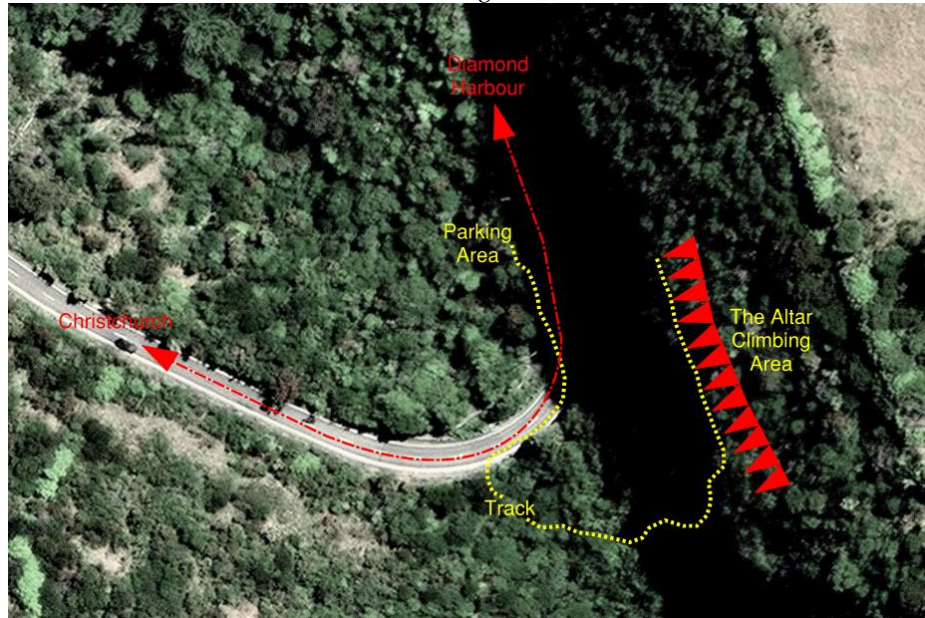
Climbers should remember that this additional suffix to the grade is my opinion & in no way scientific, gear can fail, rock can fail & any fall can result in injury.

Access & Restrictions

Permission is not required to access this crag. For driving directions to the parking use the GPS coordinates below.

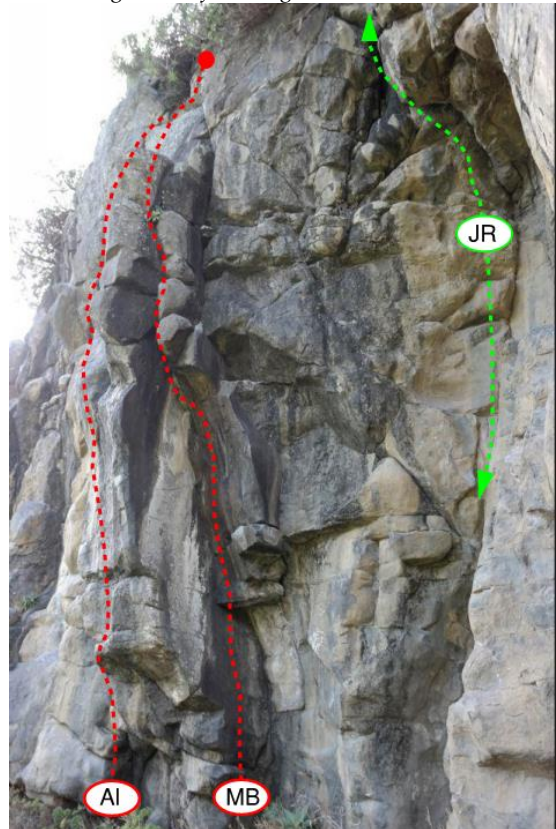
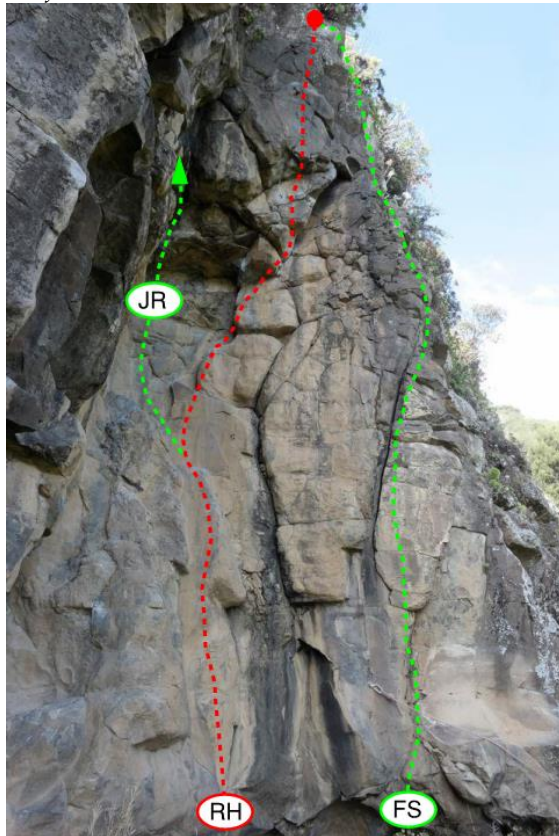
Area	GPS	Distance	Walk Time	Restrictions
Parking Area	-43.634359, 172.722982	-	-	<u>Permission is not required for this crag</u>
Crag	-43.634610, 172.723415	300mts	10 min	<u>Dogs should be on la lead</u>

The crag is in the Hunter Native Forest Scenic Reserve, there is limited parking on Marine Drive, park at the north end of the road bridge on the L. To access the crag, go back across the bridge to the chevron sign, cross the barrier & broken fence, follow the track upstream for about 80mts, cross the stream bed where you can see an old steel pipe, meander uphill via some formed steps heading right, cutting back L at the top of the steps & going uphill till you reach the handline, go up this.



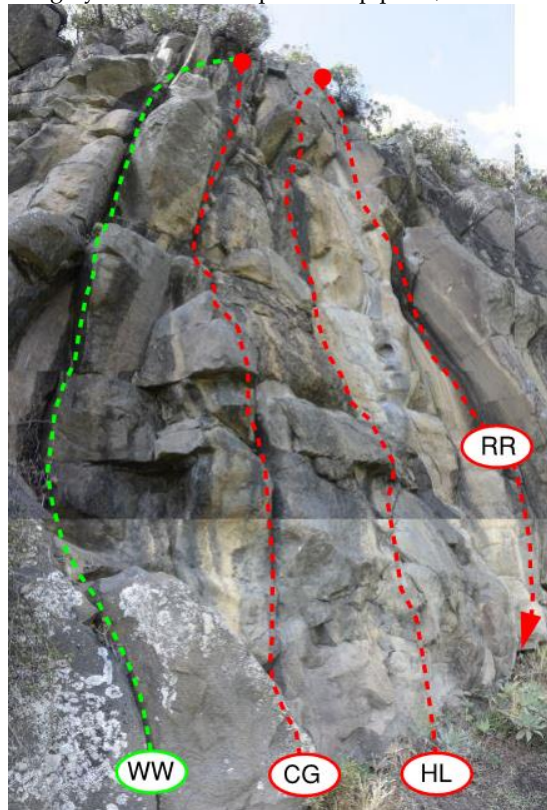
Climbing

The first climb (Face Scratcher) starts above the bolt that affixes the hand line at the right side of the crag.

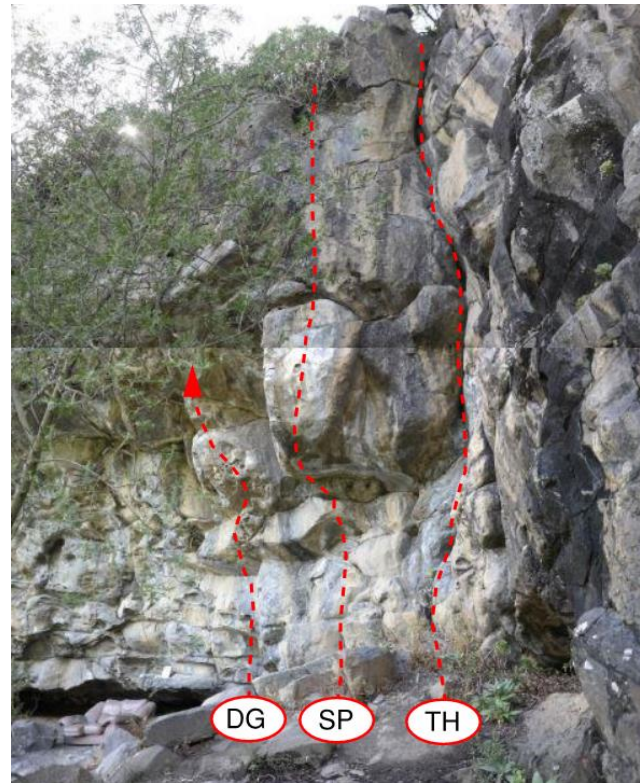
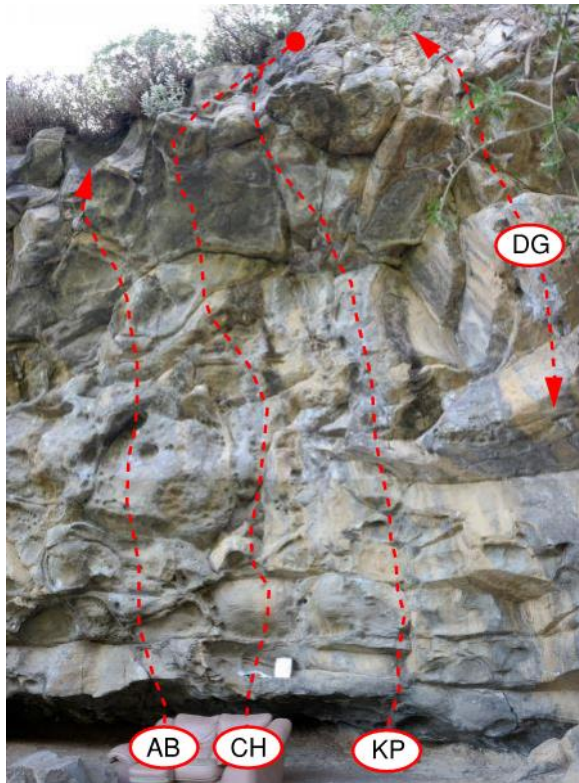


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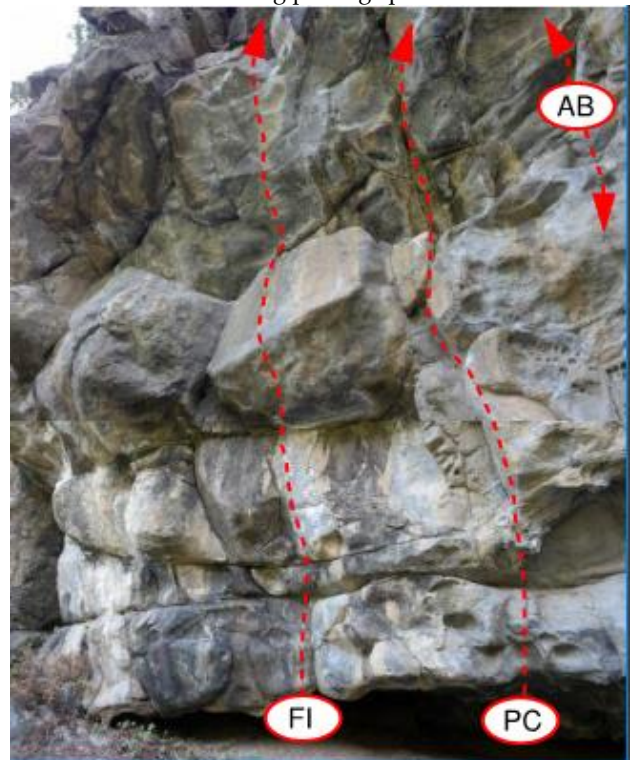
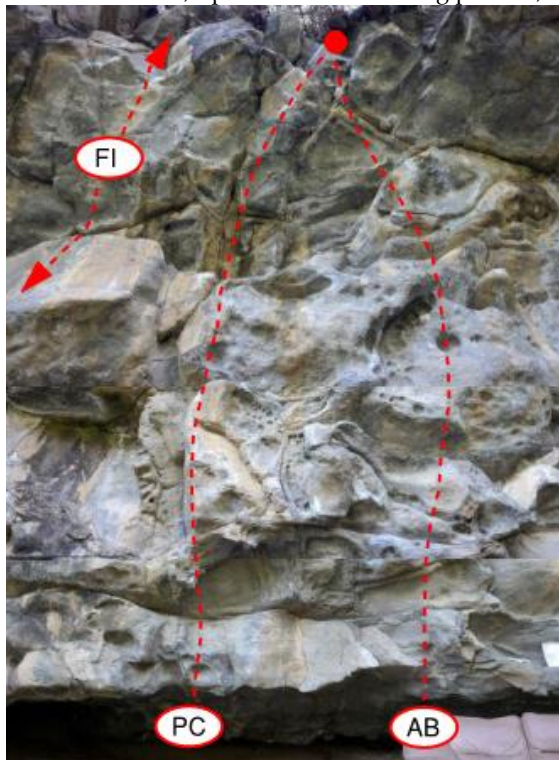
- FS Face Scratcher** 15 S3 Tr 0Br Simon Courtois, 2008
 Climbs the arete above the bolt for the hand line, use the thin crack for gear, take the easiest line up & R to the AS of 'RH'.
- RH Randal The Horny Clergyman** 21 S2 Sp 4Br Dave Shotwell, 2008
 A great climb basically up the corner then trend R following the roof before heading steeply up the black rock to AS.
- JR Joes Route** 20 S3 Mp 1Br Joe Arts, 2009
 Climbs the trad corner after clipping Br1 on 'RH', go L under the overhang & exit to belay at a tree.
- MB Moroni's Blues Band** 20 S2 Sp 4Br Simon Courtois, 2009
 On the R side of the next arete, up the corner & flaring crack to exit out L to an AS.
- AI Altered** 24 S2 Sp 4Br Rebekah Burberry, 2013
 Long dynamic moves up the steep prow, follow the easier rock on the R sharing a Br with 'MB, at the is common AS.



- RR Rasta's Revolution** 23 S2 Sp 5Br Dave Shotwell, 2008
 The black & brown groove with a pedestal about 1.5 mts up & a Br in the centre. At the top of the groove steep exit to the L & up to AS on the prow.
- HL Hindu Love Gods** 20 S2 Sp 5Br Simon Courtois, 2008
 Start in the thin crack & go direct up to & past a jutting flake, exit R via a crack to a common AS with 'RR'.
- CG Catholic Girls** 19 S2 Sp 4Br Dave Shotwell, 2008
 Climb the rib & corner groove system R of the arete of 'WW' to a common AS.
- WW Werewolves of Diamond Harbour** 17 S3 Tr 0Br Simon Courtois, 2008
 A gear route up the arête before you go around to 'TH' & L of the recess where 'HL' & 'RR' are located, at the top of the crack system exit R to a common AS with 'CG'.
- TP The Pulpit** 17 S2 Sp 4Br Dave Shotwell, 2009
 Climbs the middle of the wall R of 'TH', start where the two undercut sections of rock meet.
- TH Thor's Hammer** 21 S2 Sp 4Br Simon Courtois, 2008
 Climbs the black, brown curving corner groove system, at the top go R, after the difficulties go back over L to the AS.
- SP The Supreme Pontiff** 30 S2 Mp 4Br Derek Thatcher, 2014
 Climb up to the expressionless alien head, compress your way up this to the final headwall.



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|---|----------------------------|----|----|----|-----|---------------------------------|
| DG | David & Goliath | 27 | S2 | Sp | 4Br | <i>Chase Gatland, 2014</i> |
| At the R side of the main roof, climb the corner & bulge above to the final roof & the headwall above. | | | | | | |
| KP | Kneel to the Pope | 30 | S1 | Sp | 6Br | <i>Derek Thatcher (Assumed)</i> |
| There is a slot about a metre off the ground, start at its R side down & L of the grey, brown corner, knee-bar your way across the widest part of the roof, turn the lip & up to an AS. <i>Equipped by Troy Mattingley & Derek Thatcher</i> | | | | | | |
| CH | Charisma | 32 | S2 | Sp | 6Br | <i>Derek Thatcher, 2015</i> |
| Go up to roof R of 'AB' hard compression across the roof to a jug on lip. Go R to the AS on 'AS'. | | | | | | |
| AB | The altar Boy | 28 | S2 | Sp | ?Br | <i>Troy Mattingley, 2013</i> |
| Start off the altar, up the initial wall using pockets, head leftwards across the roof using pinch grips to a common AS. | | | | | | |



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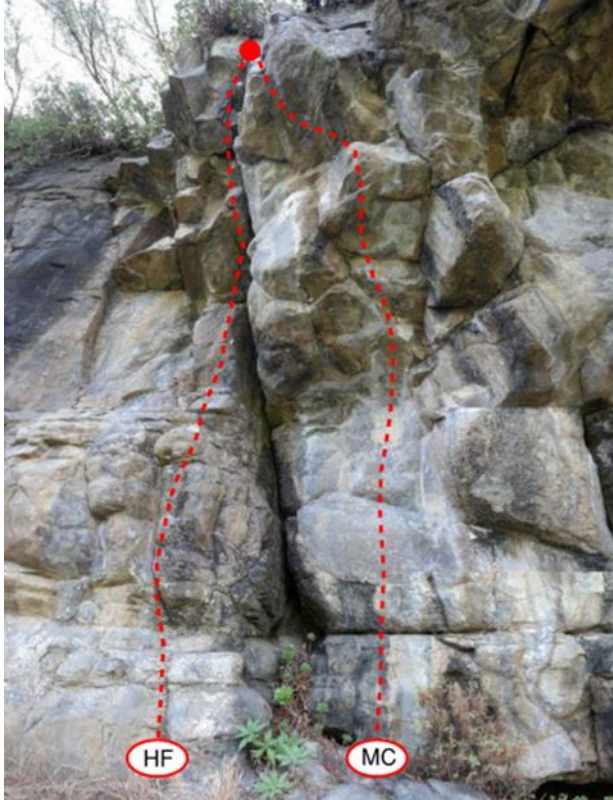
PC The Power of Christ Compels You 28 S2 Sp 5Br *Derek Thatcher (Assumed)*

Start up the prow & groove into a small R facing corner, cross the roof proper & exit via the weakness to the AS of 'AB'.

FI False Idol 31 S2 Sp 5Br *Derek Thatcher (Assumed)*

Start under a large block in the roof, using the large. Go up round the block to the roof proper using under-cling holds.

Equipped by Derek Thatcher & Jams Gunn



MC Mc Church 27 S2 Sp 4Br *Derek Thatcher, 2014*

Just R of 'HF' at the end of the roof, up the short wall to the roof, powerful moves into the L of two groove systems, then up to joint DBA.

HF Holy Fatima 23 S2 Sp 3Br *Rachel Williams, 2014*

The last climb on the crag. Start just L of the crack, take the easiest line up into the crack, tricky moves around the roof heading R & up to the joint DBA.