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Port Hills Climbing



**Black Wall &
Valley of Swallows**

**Tony Burnell
Revision F (2023)**



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

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

General

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

These crags are located on the South side of the Summit Road overlooking Lyttelton Harbour & are well sheltered from the Northerly & fairly sheltered from the Easterly winds. *The Black Wall* is the next crag from *Farm Park* accessed via the Crater Rim Walkway, *The Valley of Swallows* is accessed from *The Black Wall*.

The Black Wall has a mix of both good & not so good Port Hills rock, it also has some good & some not so good climbs. Predominantly the routes are sport climbs & it is a great little venue. The crag was discovered almost simultaneously by *Bill McLeod*, *Pete Sykes*, *Athol Whimp*, *Simon Middlemass*, *John McCallum* & *Gavin Tweedie* (not 100% sure of the teams). A hand full of pseudo sport climbs were done here during the early development, of these *Athol's 'Steel Rain'* & *Pete's 'Tarn'* are the stand outs. Some of the trad lines from this period were climbed on sight & in the case of climbs like "*Die Yuppie Die* & "*Principal* this is quite impressive. The crag was left alone until 1997/1998 when *Simon Middlemass* returned along with *John McCallum*, they in turn brought along *Pat Deavoll* to sort out some hard routes, amongst the best routes are *The Full Monty*, *If Jenny Craig Could See Me Now*, *Liaisons Dangereux* & *A Slice of Life*. Independently the crag was also discovered by *Craig Smith* & *Tony Burnell*. The last wave of development was by *Tony Burnell* & *Simon Courtois* post 2010/2011 earthquakes, post-quake they replaced almost all anchors some being repositioned from the top of the crag where quake damage was significant. Since the earthquakes *Simon* & *Tony* added some great climbs, such as *Learning to Fly*, *Between the Lines*, *Naval Gazing* & *Pincushion*. Controversy dogged the development at Black Wall with the de-gearing of *Joker Hysterical Face* & *Pressure Test* by persons unknown within days of the first ascents, & again in 2021 two climbs were de-gear by a local climber, both lines, *Dangelina Jolie* & *Don Whillans Drilling*, had been lead on trad gear by *Simon Courtois* but the decision was then taken to bolt the lines as the crag is predominantly a sport crag, in 2021 the hangers were removed & stolen & the studs hammered home by persons unwilling to own up to the act or return the hardware.

Valley of Swallows is the last crag in this area, currently there are 5 sport climbs & 5 trad lines, the trad lines were climbed by *Tony Billings*, *Mike Smith* & *Mike Smith*, the sport lines were climbed by *Lindsay Main*, *Joe Arts* & *Tony Burnell*.

Access & Restrictions

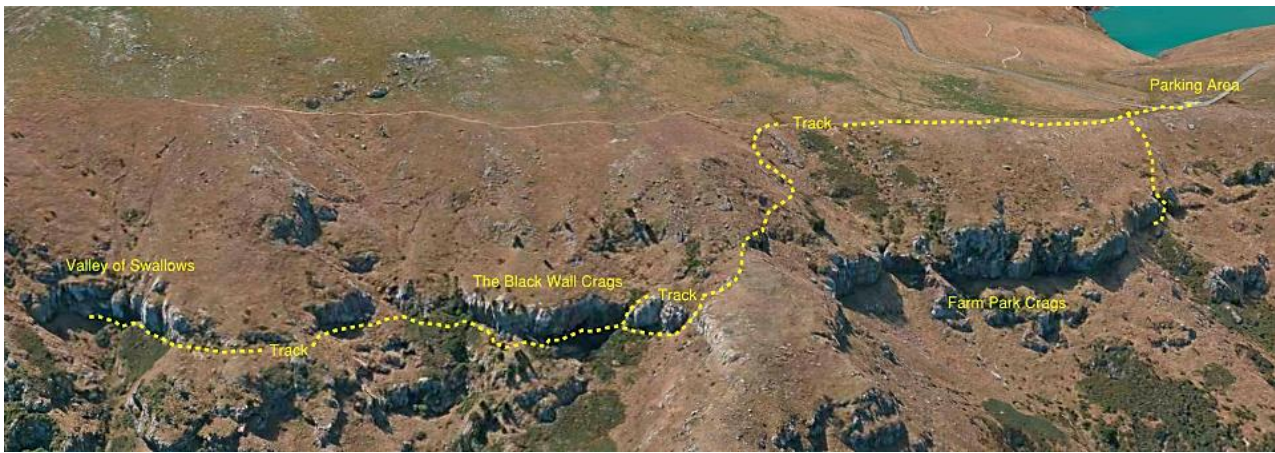
The Black Wall & Valley of Swallows overlook Whakaropa, Lyttelton Harbour, & are in Awaroa/ Godley Head Reserve with parking & access from Breezes Col.

Area	GPS	Distance	Walk Time	Restrictions
Parking Area	-43.59259, 172.78287	-	-	Dogs should always be kept on a lead
The Black Wall	-43.595748, 172.778109	620 mts	12 mins	
Valley of Swallows	-43.596042, 172.775248	950 mts	20 mins	

From the Breezes Col parking area cross the Summit Rd heading west, go over the stile & continue west towards Lyttelton on the Crater Rim Track. At the third orange topped route marker, just after a single formed step, go left off the track onto some rocks before dropping into a shallow gut, then contour across the flank of the hill following a vague track, with cairns, to reach a flat area at the head of an open gully for first time visitors head down the open gully & turn R to get to the foot of the Pinnacle.

To get to *Valley of Swallows* continue past *The Black Wall* & *West Wall*, at the end of the *West Wall* head into the bush & at the other side of the bush drop down through the bracken, head back up hill before & contouring under a small wall, after this keep at the same level heading west, after crossing an old slip go around the spur into the *Valley of Swallows*. There's lots of vegetation at the base of the crag & the easiest access is to stay close to the base.

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Climbing Notes

Warning, Climbing is 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 nor the author accepts 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. Replacement of gear has always been acceptable, but climbers should not add bolts to existing climbs.

The Black Wall is not the most popular crag around even though it has some good climbs. 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.

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 or staples.

DBA - Denotes anchor / belay station.

Sp - Denotes Sport Route.

So - Denotes solo route unprotectable.

Tr - Denotes Trad Route.

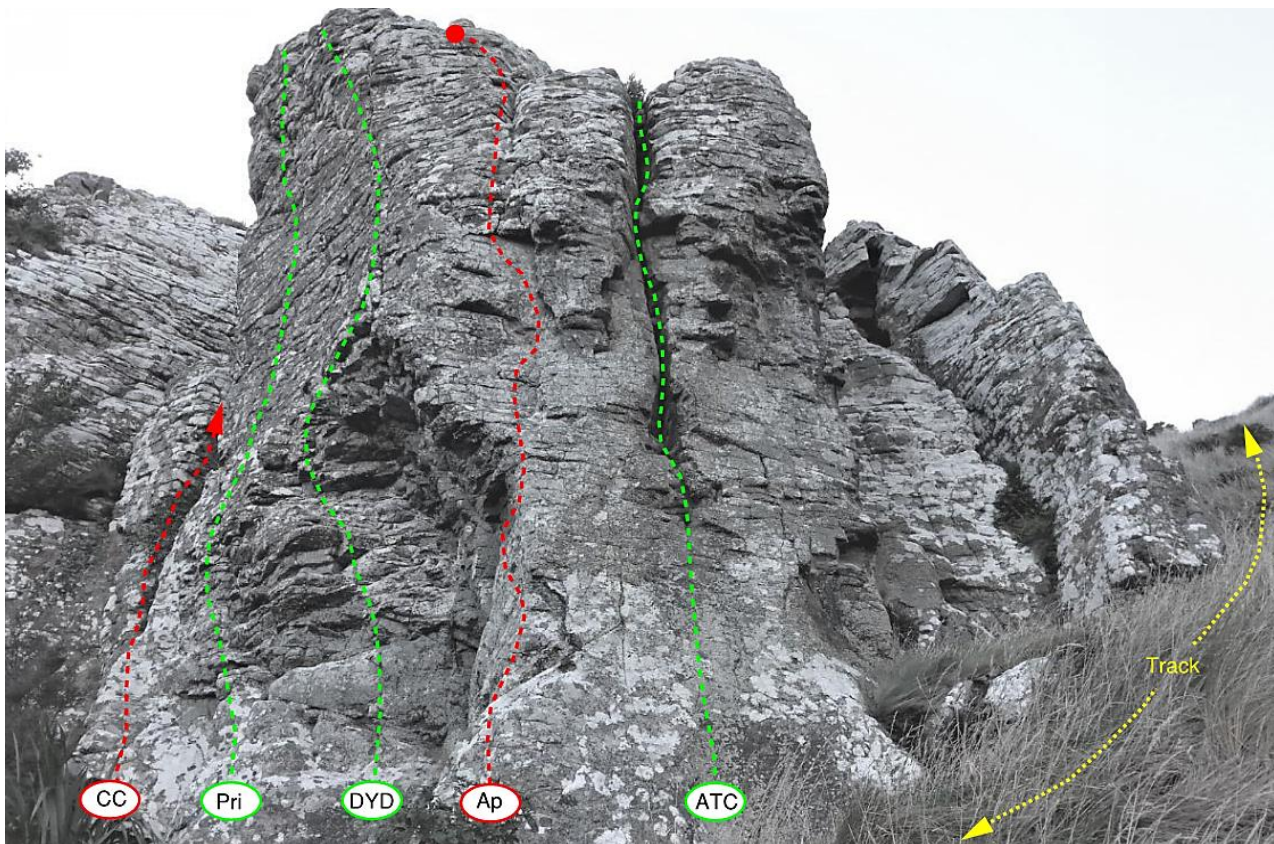
R & L - Denote R & L.

Mp - Denotes Mixed Protection Route (bolts & trad)

Seismic Damage

There has been some earthquake damage at *The Black Wall*, however it is not that significant as to make climbing there untenable. There were some issues with some of the rock layering at the top of the crag, where this has happened the worst of the rock has been removed & in some cases the anchor points have been lowered. One of the descent routes is down the rib to the R by *Twisting by the Pool* care should be taken as this rib which is very fractured post earthquake

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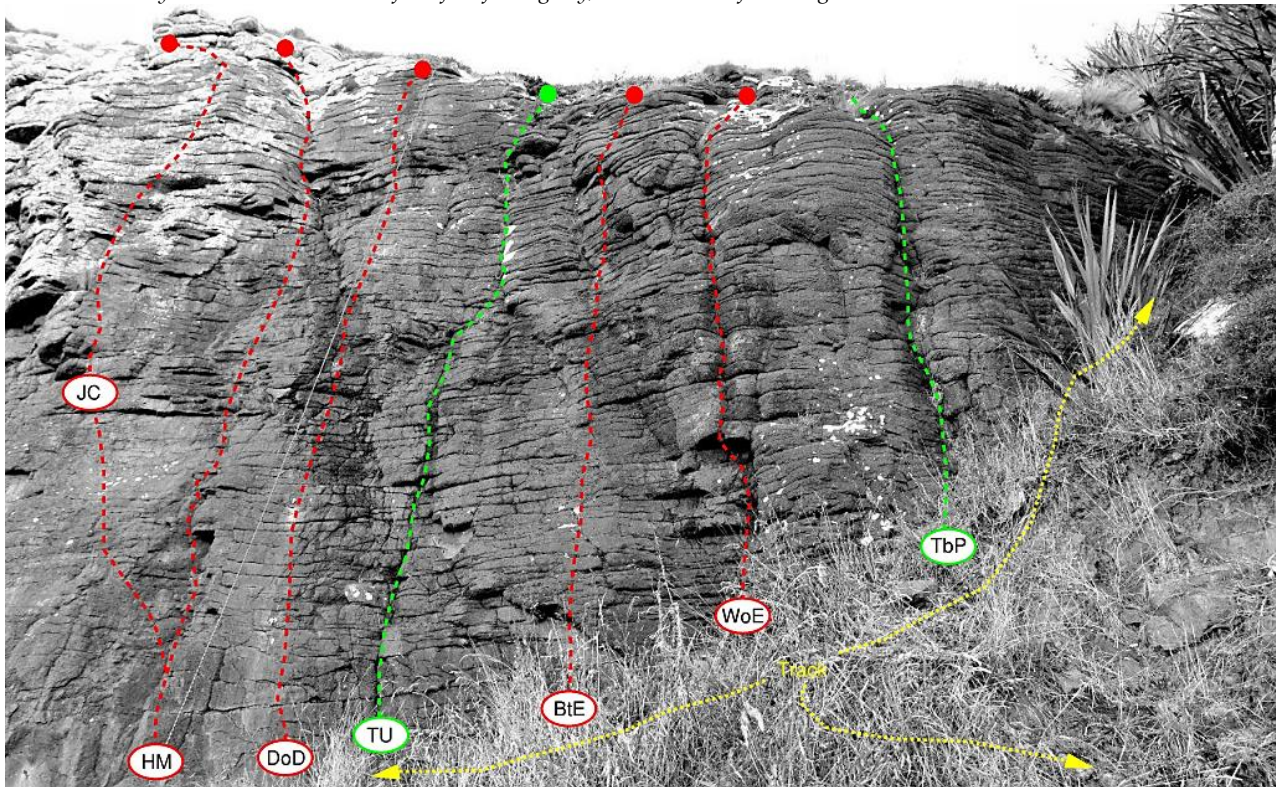
Ap Aplomb 19 S1 SP 5Br *Simon courtois, 2021*
 Start on the slab & move up to the base of the arete, skirt the lip moving R to a flake & crack above.
Pri Principle 20 S3 Tr 0Br *Bill McLeod, 1991*
 The rightmost & original line on the steep west face with incipient cracks, skirts the lip towards the blunt arete before going straight up, minimal pro. Lead & cleaned on-sight.

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DYD Die Yuppie Die	20	S3	Tr	0Br		Athol Whimp, 1991
Starts just L of the centre of the west face following the incipient cracks.						
CC Camelot Corner	16	S2	Sp	4Br		Cam Pawson, 2016
Start at the base of the left arête, climb the white wall to gain the cleft, bridge up this then climb the wall above. <i>The next buttress L has a roof on the L side & a prominent pink slab on its R side followed by a vegetated corner.</i>						
SD Staple Diet	17	S1	Sp	5Br	★	Grant Piper, 2016
The right most route on the slabby, pink, south face. Up the wall to the ledge up the whiter head wall to a DBA.						
Mir Miro	18	S1	Sp	5Br		Pete Sykes, 1991
On the slabby, pink, south face. Reequipped at the FA request, start just L of a choked crack straight up the wall past some left facing overlaps.						
PPP Pink Palette Pulling	21	S1	Sp	4Br	★★	Tony Burnell, 2016
Straight up the slabby wall, tricky start getting easier as you get higher						
CR Chain Reaction	20	S1	Sp	4Br	★	Grant Piper, 2016
Climbs the central groove on the pink wall. Tricky moves up into the groove with an easier finish to the anchors. <i>The next two routes share a common anchor, unfortunately a couple of local climbers removed all the protection.</i>						
PT Pressure Test	24	S2	Sp	5Br		Tony Burnell, 1998
Starting on the undercut slab, cross a small roof trending L then back R to finish up lichenous white wall.						
JHF Joker Hysterical Face	23	S2	Sp	5Br		Johnathon Wilkinson, 1998
Start almost on the arête move up & R through roof then go up the thin slab.						
Fin Finalmente	21	S1	Sp	5Br		Simon Courtois, 2021
Start in the groove in the arête, just L of the roof. Climb the groove, turn the roof on the R then up the slightly more user-friendly face.						
NS Kelvinator Crack	17	S1	Sp	5Br		Grant Piper, 2016
<i>(Not shown on Topo)</i> At the very L side of the buttress & takes a line up the groove system just L of the arête, straight up bridging the groove to an anchor station out R.						

Main Wall

This is the ruddy black wall at the base of the flax filled gully, the real start of the crag



The first (11) climbs are on the wall to the R of the large (Matipo) tree, the image is slightly skewed

TbP Twisting by the Pool	16	S3	So	0Br		Simon Middlemass, 1998
A short (4m) bulging boulder problem up the first vague seam/corner near the bottom of the flax filled gully. Single bolt at the top can be used to get down.						
WoE Winky the One-Eyed Snake	19	S1	Sp	4Br	★	Simon Courtois, 2016
Climbs the hanging groove, over a bulge & onto slabbier rock at the top.						

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BtE Blinky the Three Eyed Fish 16 S1 Sp 4Br ★ Pam Yee, 2016

Originally a top roped line by *Chris Owen in January 1997*. Now a sport line.

TU The Uprooter 15 S3 Tr 0Br John McCallum, 1997

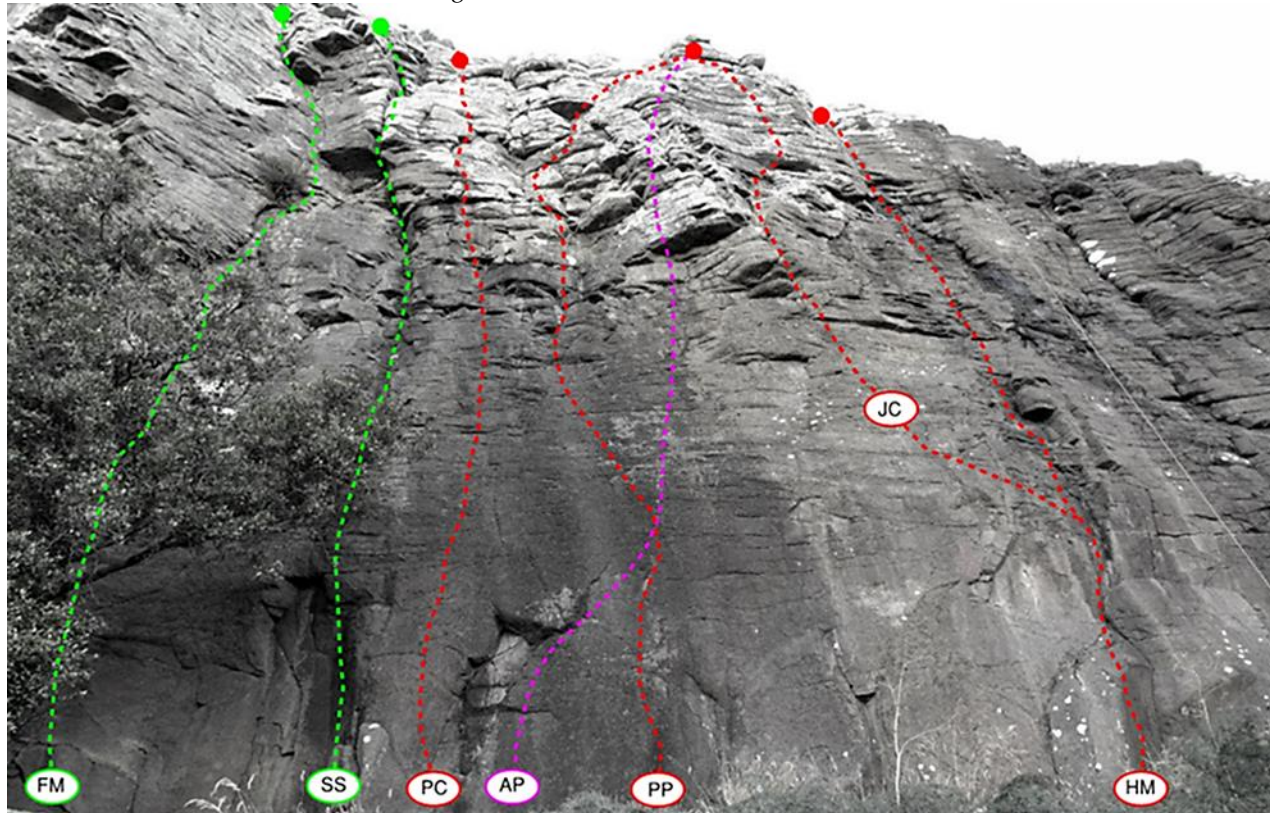
Climbs the R trending weakness between the bolted lines, gear is poor, take the line of least resistance past the lichen spots.

DoD Dreaming of Dry Rock 22 S1 Sp 5Br ★ Tony Burnell, 2015

Start L of 'TU' & climb the wall as directly as possible up the line of bolts, the crux is the last move to the anchor.

HM Half Man Half Biscuit 19 S2 Sp 2Br ★★ Gavin Tweedie, 1991

A good climb if under bolted. Where the level ground starts, climb the broken corner past 2 glue-in bolts. Straight up with an excursion out left before the final groove.



JC If Jenny Craig Could See Me Now 20 S2 Sp 5Br ★ Simon Middlemass, 1997

Start as for 'HM', at the first good hold go diagonally L to the high Br1 then up over bulge & head wall finishing L of the last Br.

PP The Power of Piss 23 S2 Sp 4Br John McCallum, 1998

Start directly below Br1, hard moves up the brown wall via thin layaways to get to Br1, head diagonally L to the R most of 2 side by side bolts, go up the shallow corner system before veering R to a common anchor.

AP Attitudes & Platitudes 22 S2 Sp 5Br ★ Tony Burnell, 2022

Start just R of the short leaning black corner boulder up & R to Br1 on 'PP' go straight up line of bolts to a common.

PC Pin Cushion 22 S1 Sp 7Br ★★ Tony Burnell, 2015

A direct line up the face between 'PP' & 'SS' straight up the line of bolts, start on the slabby tongue of rock a below Br1, hard moves to good holds, then finish up the steep white, lichenous rock.

SS Smoke Screen 21 S2 Mp 1Br ★ Craig Smith, 1998

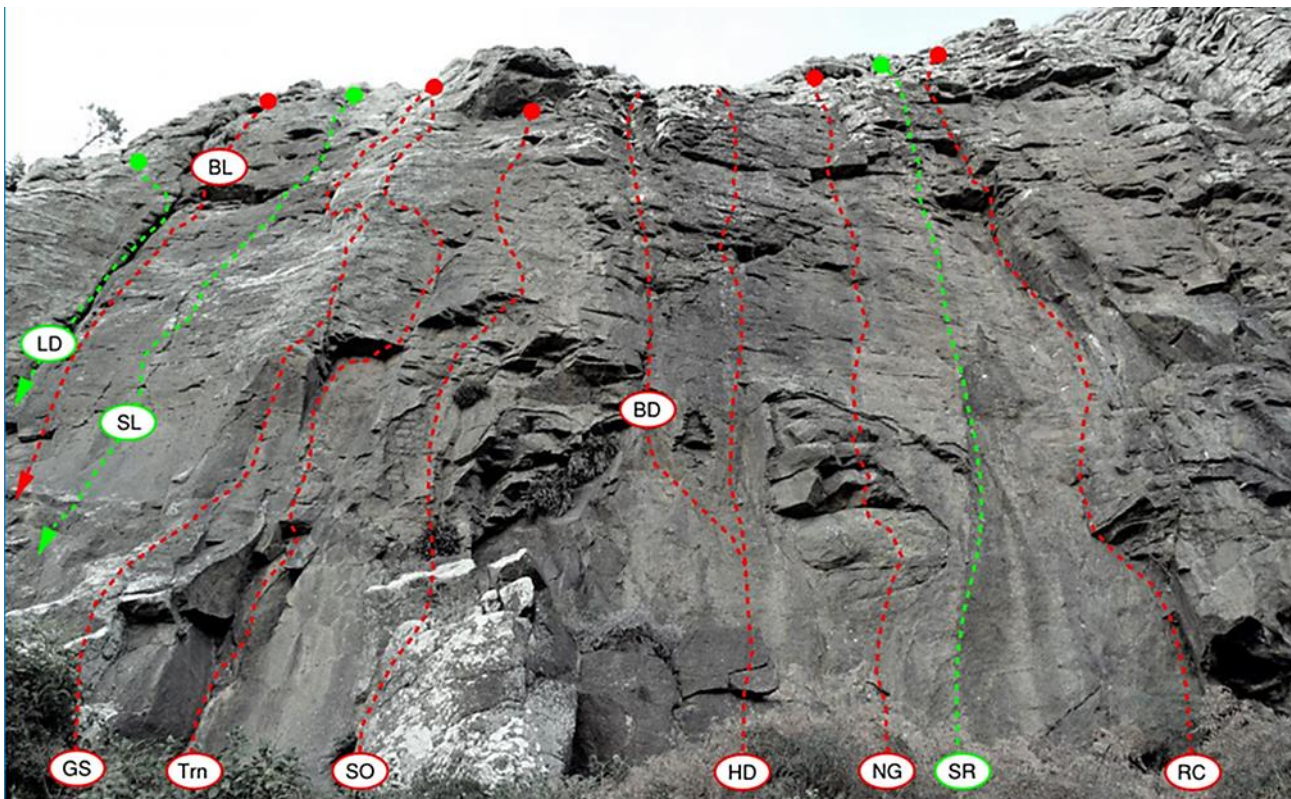
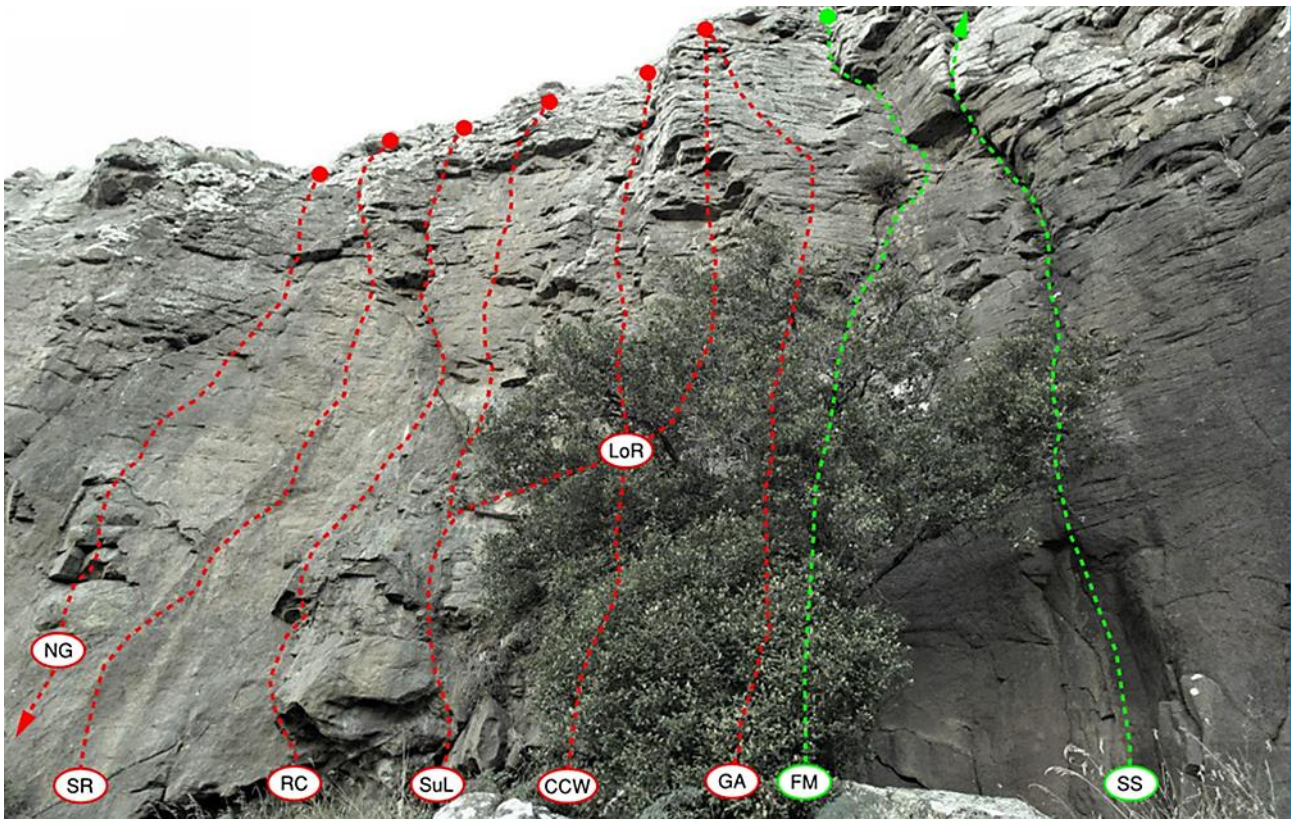
Just R of the obvious large tree is a small alcove with an obvious groove / seam above, again a bouldery start protected by a Br leads to easier climbing through the mid-section, committing moves through crack & overhang at top.

Going L from the Matipo Tree the crag is undercut at first with a series of grooves/corners above, 'FM' starts below the upper section of a prominent corner crack, 2Br's mark the starting wall.

FM The Full Monty 18 S2 Mp 3Br ★★ Simon Middlemass, 1998

Start off the large boulder just L of the tree (best to clip Br1 off the woodwork), up past 2Br & follow the weakness on natural pro to the roof, move out L at the roof to Br3 then follow the groove to the anchors.

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GA Galvanised Action 24 S1 Sp 7Br ★ Tony Burnell, 1998

Starts 2m L of the tree at undercut bulge with good slot, up into corner move R & go up to the roof, at roof, move R & go directly up face, step L to a common anchor.

CCW Carl's Car Wash 26 S2 Sp 7Br ★ Owen Davies, 2022

Start under the often-damp roof at 4m, move easily up to the roof crossing it with difficulty heading up steep rock to step L into the groove system follow this as it eases to the DBA.

LoR Let's off Road 24 S2 Sp 5Br Pat Deavoll, 1998

Name after a sketch in "The Fast Show", starts below a dirty looking piece of rock as for 'SuL', make the same initial

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moves before going R above the roof & onto the face R of the groove finishing up the face of the buttress.

SuL Spice up your Life 24 S2 Sp 6Br ★ *Pat Deavoll, 1998*

Start as 'LoR' but after Br1 keep L to go straight up the face.

The wall becomes smooth & vertical now with less features.

RC Rodeo Corner 25 S2 Sp 5Br ★ *Pat Deavoll, 1998*

At the L side of the undercut wall at a V-groove, hard moves to a big block then continue up the left facing corner next to 'SR'.

SR Steel Rain 24 S2 Sp 3Br ★★ *Athol Whimp, 1991*

An ode to the Gulf War. On the large section of flat wall is a left of L facing corner. Start on broken blocks/pedestal to the L & clip Br1, diagonally R then back L after Br3, wires to protect the final moves.

NG Naval Gazing 24 S1 Sp 6Br ★★ *Tony Burnell, 2015*

A *direct* line up the wall through the bulging naval. Using a hollow flake move up through the centre of the naval onto the face proper & Br3, after clipping Br4 tricky moves on the R leads to good holds, steep but easier climbing to the top.

HD Hugs & Drugs 22 S2 Sp 4Br *John McCallum, 1998*

L of the 'NG' is a peapod shaped groove head straight up wall from this.

BD Bolting with the Dolphins 21 S3 Sp 4Br *John McCallum, 1998*

A lazily bolted line, 2 of the 4 Br's are on 'HD'. Clip first Br on 'HD' to stop a ground fall, before climbing the bulges, use the last Br on 'HD'.

SO Stepping Out 23 S1 Sp 6Br ★★ *Tony Burnell, 2015*

A strenuous, fingery, line up the wall to the right of 'Trn'. Start up the crack on the L side of the white pinnacle, go up the broken rib to good holds on the L before moving out R with difficulty to a good rail, thin moves up the wall onto the slab & the anchors under the roof.

Trn Tarn 24 S2 Sp 5Br ★★★ *Pete Sykes,1991/Tony Burnell,2021*

The original line started off the slab L of the coffin shaped recess & had only 3Br's, Br1 was at the top of the recess.

Start down & R at ground level in a prominent corner, climb the corner past 2Br into the coffin, exit out of the top R corner onto the steep wall, Br 4 is on your L, after three moves go L to a large flat hold on the blunt rib head now straight up to Br 5 to a common DBA.

GS Game of Stones 26 S1 Sp 5Br ★★ *Tony Burnell, 2021*

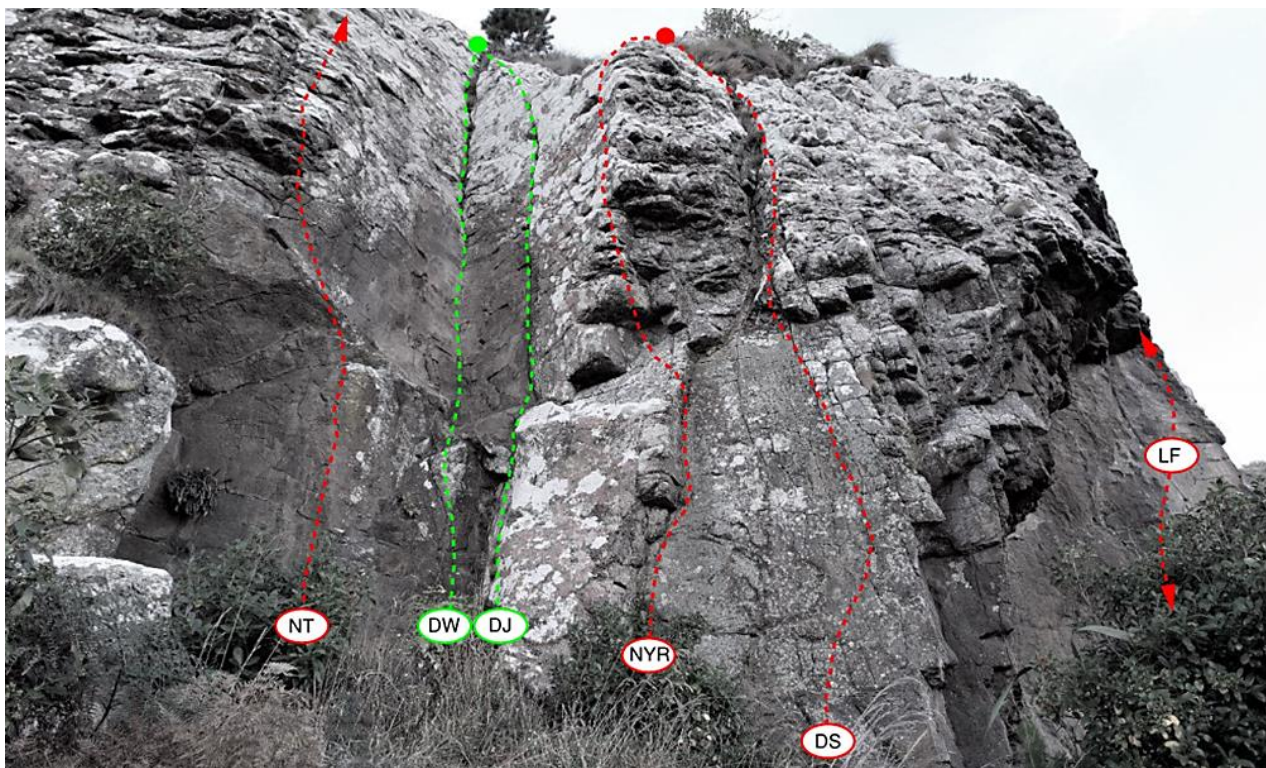
Head R across easy ground to clip Br1, hard moves to surmount the small prow & get into a blind crack, there is a reasonable hold near its top, harder moves up the face to get to good holds, step L to Br4 & straight up to DBA

SL A Slice of Life 22 S2 Mp 3Br ★ *Simon Middlemass, 1998*

Left of 'Trn' is a slightly concave wall, a steep start into the broken cracks. Climb delicately from either the R or the L using small wires to protect the moves to Br1, then go straight up.



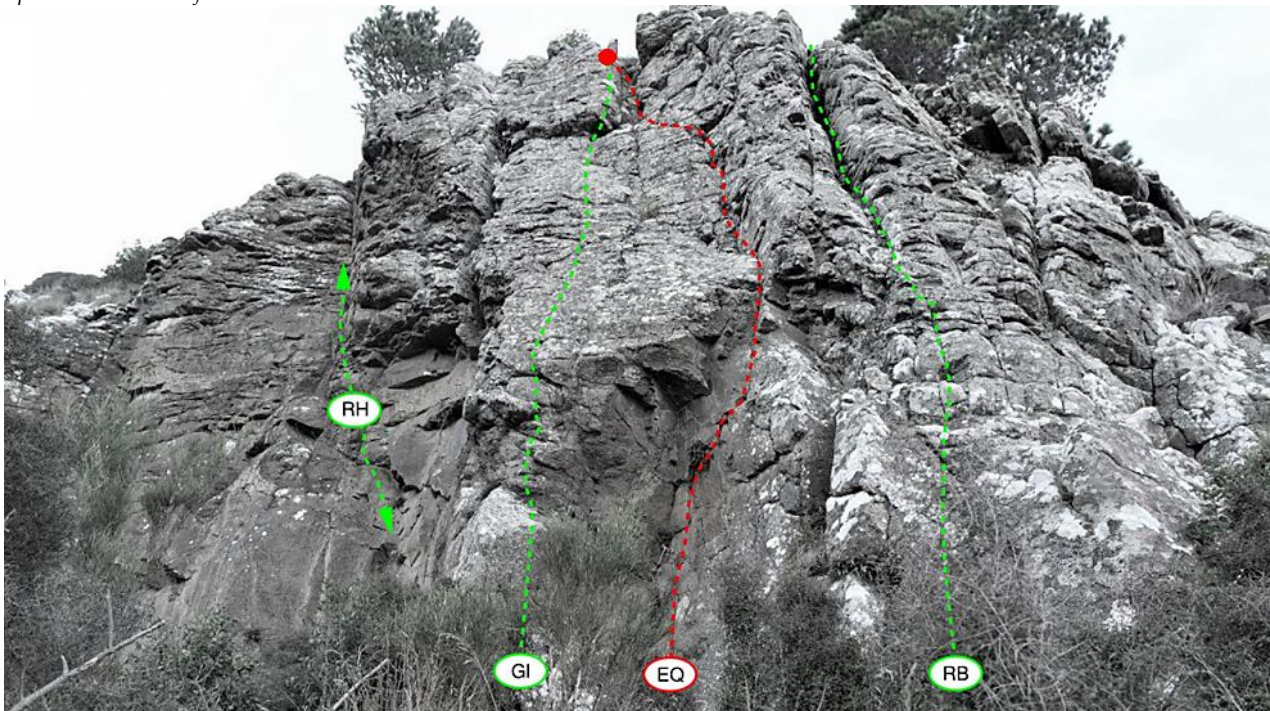
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- BL Between the Lines** 19 S1 Sp 6Br ★★ *Tony Burnell, 2015*
 Start R of the corner taken by 'LD', climb the blunt arête past Br5 to the small roof at the top of the crag, clip Br6 then move over the roof using the top of the crack.
- LD Liaisons Dangereux** 15 S2 Tr 0Br ★ *Simon Middlemass, 1991*
 Start just R of a steep white slab, up a small groove with a creeper to get to the base of the corner/flake crack, at the final bulge go L & up to the anchor station.
- RK Richard Kimberley** 21 S1 Sp 6Br *Richard Kimberley, 2016*
 Start down low & R of the arête. Up the thin groove at the edge of the slab, then out to the arête, go R onto the wall then straight up to the anchor of 'LD'.
Move down & L to a lower level below a capped corner, the next route starts in a short groove up the yellow wall.
- LF Learning to Fly** 20 S1 Sp 7Br ★★ *Simoin Courtois, 2015*
 Start to the L of the arête at a lower level, climb a short groove & wall above (tricky) past Br4, move up to a crack though the arête above, pull round the bulge & step R, go back L & run out up white rock to anchor point.
Go L again under the roof & around the arete to a prominent corner to -
- DS Desert Storm** 23 S1 Sp 6Br ★ *Tony Burnell, 2015*
 Climb the left side of the remarkably un slabby wall to gain the hanging groove, up this to the anchors.
- NYR New Year's Revolution** 23 S1 Sp 5Br *Tony Burnell, 2021*
 Climb the corner then move L & climb the arete on its L side.
- DJ Dangelina Jolie** 19 S1 Tr 0Br ★★ *Simoin Courtois, 2015*
 Climb the crack that splits the pinky white wall just on the R of the prominent corner. *The bolts & hangers were removed by persons unknown*
- DW Don Whillans Drilling** 16 S1 Tr 0Br ★★ *Simon Courtois, 2015*
 Originally a climb called Pine Tree Leads (*by Craig Smith in 1997*) went up the corner, a trad climb that collapsed in the 2010 earthquakes. The clean open book corner. *The bolts & hangers were removed by persons unknown*
- NT New Tricks** 23 S2 Sp 5Br *Tony Burnell, 2015*
 A strenuous route. Start on the left of "PTL", climb the short rib then hard moves up & past the second BR to gain the arête on the L, up this before stepping back R & straight up to the anchors.

The West Wall

From the bay where 'DJ', 'DW' & 'NT' are, contour along the base of the crag, cross an overgrown debris slope before moving back up hill to the start of The West Wall.



RB Right Brain 17 S2 Tr 0Br Tony Billing, 1998

The first feature is an off-width crag at the L end of some easy angled rock, climb the more solid bits to get to the crack finish up this.

EQ Exceeding the Quota 19 S1 Sp 5Br ★ Tony Burnell, 2015

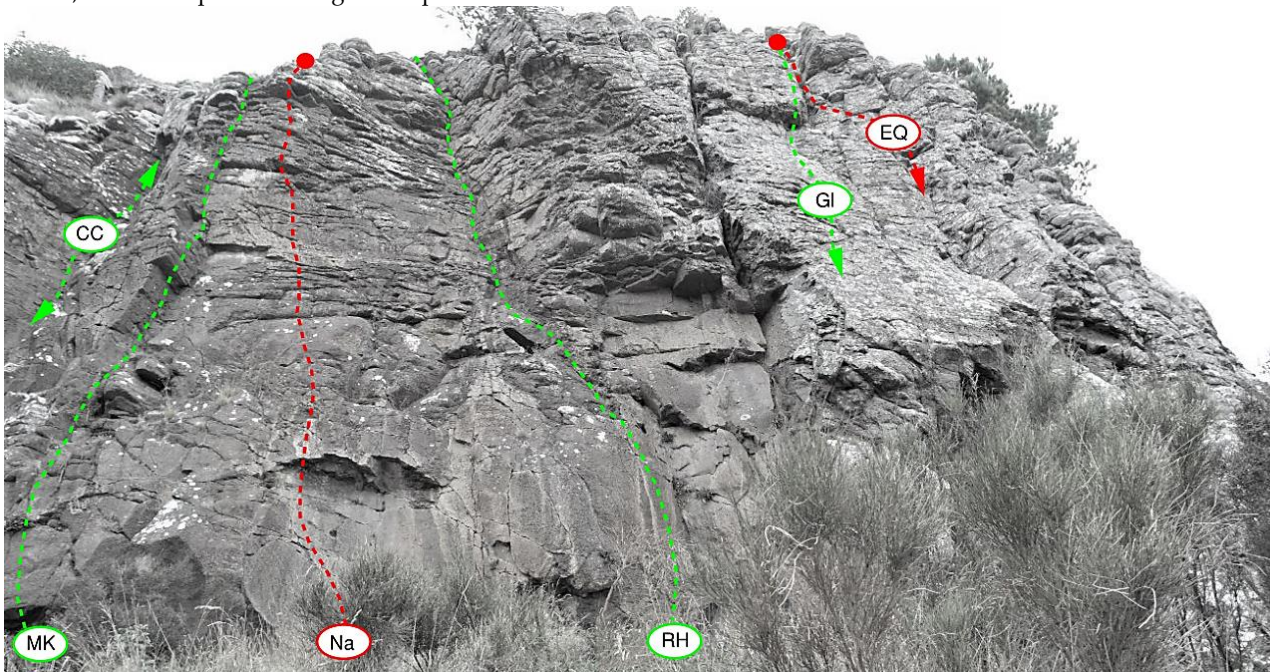
Originally top roped by *Craig Smith* in 1998 then forgotten about. Climb the corner moving slightly L to the junction of the roof & the arête. Go up & R into the shallow corner follow this till it runs out then step L & go up the chimney.

GI Glimmer 19 S2 Mp 4Br ★ Craig Smith, 1998

Start in an alcove below a hanging pinky white wall, exit via the small chimney at top.

RH Rush Hour 18 S2 Tr 0Br Tony Billing, 1998

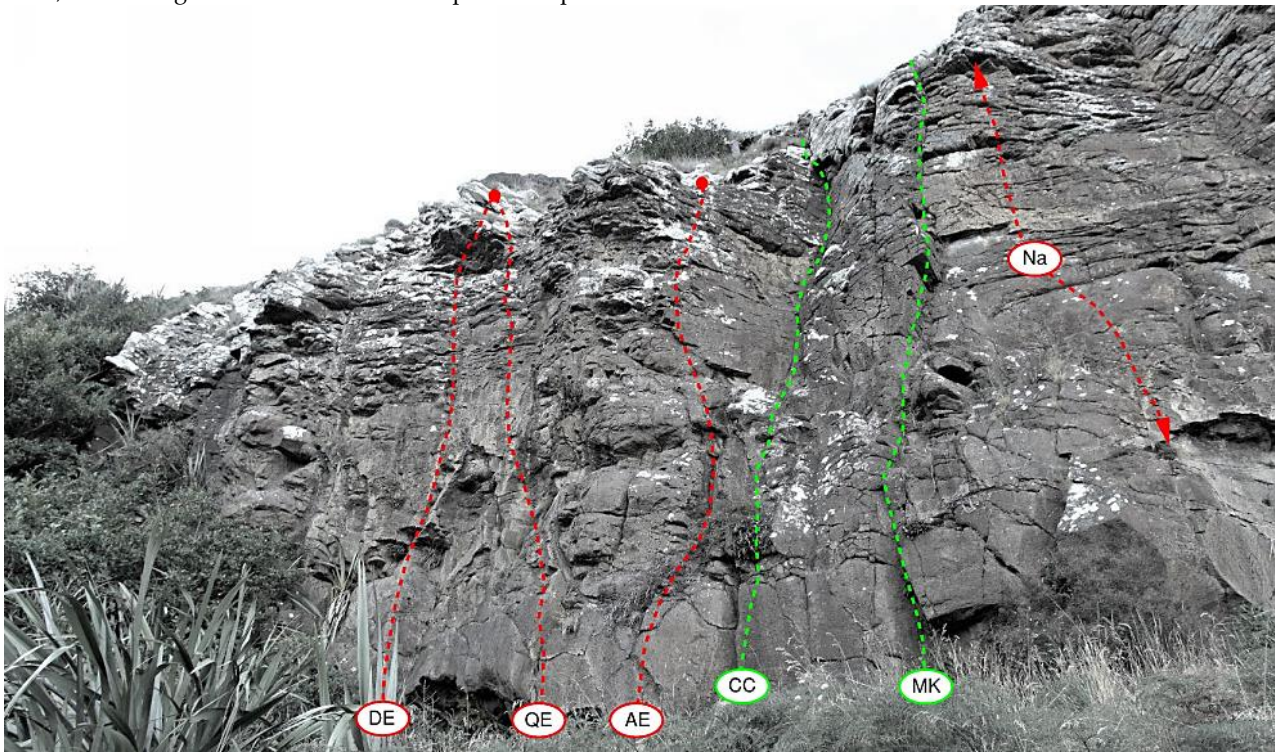
Start in the R facing corner below a horizontal roof, up the corner & move L to a good stance, follow the open book corner, near the top the corner gets steeper.



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Na Naval 20 S1 Sp 5Br ★ *Tony Billing, 1998*
 Start in the smooth vertical scoop capped by a small roof, using a pocket move up L & over the roof, follow the line of bolts.

MK Miss Kitty 17 S2 Tr 0Br *Tony Billing, 1998*
 Start 3m left of 'Na' almost directly below the sharp hanging arête, lay back up to ledge then climb right side of sharp arête, at half height move around L then up to the top.



CC Crispy Corner 16 S2 Tr 0Br *Craig Smith, 1998*

Around L of 'MK' is a corner starting at mid height, the start of the climb is marked by two dotted lines of white lichen.

AE All on Edge 19 S1 Sp 4Br ★ *Tony Burnell, 2016*

Start just L of 'CC', up the short groove then the wall just L of the arête. *Tony Burnell, 2016*

QE Quota Exceeded 21 S1 Sp 5Br ★ *Tony Burnell, 2016*

Start at the R side of the big undercut with bright yellow lichen under, tricky start, then move L & up a vague groove finishing through weakness in the wall above.

DE Domino Effect 20 S1 Sp 5Br ★ *Tony Burnell, 2015*

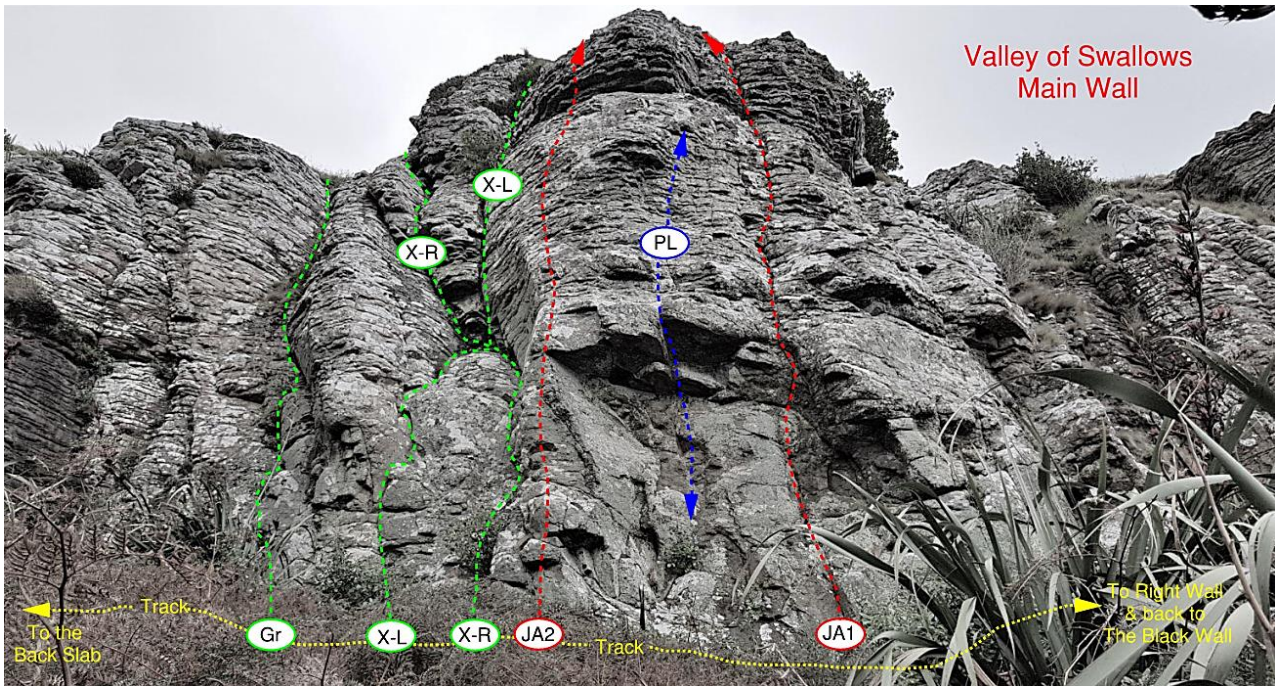
Start at the L side of the big undercut with bright yellow lichen under, up the rib into the recess then straight up using the vertical intrusion, go R through weakness in the wall above.

Valley of Swallows

From the Little Black Wall keep heading west until you cross the final spur into the Valley of Swallows. This is a small crag with three distinct areas; The Right Wall, The Main Wall & The Black Slabs.



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JA1 Joe Arts 1 19 S2 Sp 5Br Joe Arts, 2006

Climb the slab to the roof at the R end, exit into the groove that leads up the face, the anchors are about 8mts up the bank after exiting. *This is possibly an old Tony Billings project.*

PL Potential Line

JA2 Joe Arts 2 19 S2 Sp 5Br Joe Arts, 2006

Start on the rib at the L side of the main roof, go up the rib & R on to the face, go up this to the short head wall, exit to the common DBA about 8mts up.

X-R X Marks the Spot (Right) 15 S3 Tr 0Br Tony Billings, 1998

At the double cracks 5mts L, climb the weakness up the L side of the wall. At the roof move L following the easy climbing

X-L X Marks the Spot (Left) 17 S3 Tr 0Br Tony Billings, 1998

1mt to the L, follow the R trending crack to a niche, cross 'X-R' & move up into the upper crack

Gr Grovel 13 S3 Tr 0Br Tony Billings (Solo), 1998

The vegetated loose gully, climbed to access the top of the crag



Sw Swallow 15 S3 Tr 0Br Craig/Mike Smith, 1998

About 5mts L of 'GR', climb the L facing black corner to a cave, exit out to the R & bushwhack up the hill.

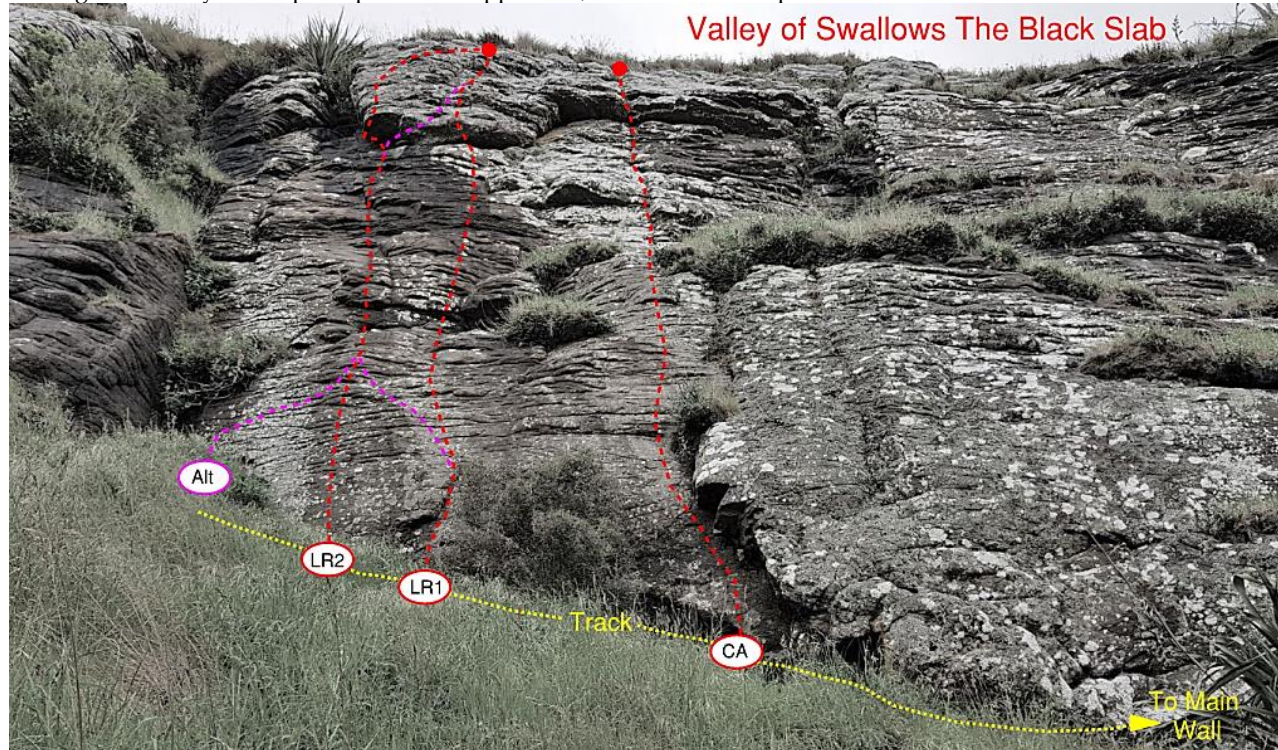
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LA Lardarm

18 S3 Tr 0Br

Tony Billings, 1998

There is a prominent diagonal roof at the L end of the wall & some large flax bushes, start off a block & climb the R leaning arch until you can pull up onto the upper face, bushwhack out up the hill.



CA A Cut Above

18 Sp S1 5Br

Tony Burnell, 2023

Start L of a R facing corner, follow the slab to the overlap, over this & up the short head wall to a lower off

LR1 Lindsay's Route One

17 Sp S1 5Br

Lindsay Main, 2006

On the back slab at the L side, start L of a native bush, follow the blind flake past Br1 to darker rock & easier ground, go straight up to the roof, cross this & up the short head wall & R to a DBA.

LR2 Lindsay's Route Two

19 Sp S2 4Br

Lindsay Main, 2006

The L side of the back slab, head straight up the clean slab to Br1, easier climbing now to the roof & exit over the roof at the L side & move R to a DBA. Climbing in from the R or the L (shown in purple) & exiting around R at the roof (shown in purple) makes the climb about 15/16.