

Porongurups

a Rock Climbing Guide



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Introduction

The Porongurups provide a range of long, serious and typically runout granite slab climbs. Many of these were established by the hardmen of the 70's and 80's and sport full pitch runouts, mind bending exposure, challenging route finding and shonky belays (if you're lucky !). Bolts have been used on the newer slab routes and there is a corresponding increase in safety. The Masters kicked off the bolting, but their routes would still be considered brown trousers time for most (e.g. Illusions of Grandeur). Slowly others have added to the scope with more contemporary bolt spacing and as such the area is becoming popular. Despite the alleged "contemporary" bolt spacing, expect serious runouts on all bolted slabs, including the recent routes. Take care, be cool and check your head!

Don't be too perturbed by the long runouts though, as the grades are within most people's limits and the routes are normally of good quality with superb exposure and a pleasant ambience above the karri forests. The cruxy bits normally have a bolt close by, and if you can manage them you'll be right for the runouts provided you have a steady head. The views to the north (Stirlings) and south (Albany coast) are superb. Take in the entire package; the approach walk through the forest, leisurely long routes, exciting descents and admire the spectacular rock architecture on some of the unclimbable steeper faces. If you're all slabbed out – head to Castle Rock for a change. It has some steeper, shorter routes and the best arête climbs in the state.

The area consists of sharp granite of Proterozoic age. The granite is eroded to steep sided residual hills often comprising granite bluffs and slabs with a very rough and sometimes flaky surface. Despite the flakey bits the rock is generally sound - but not in the same class as Peak Head. In the right season (spring) it is one of the most attractive climbing areas in the state and its large slabs give unlimited scope for new routes, especially if you are prepared to place a few bolts.

Disclaimer

The somewhat timely warning from the original guide is repeated once again for aspiring punters:

The descriptions written down in a book, matter-of-factly, fail to convey what the climber will encounter on the rock. So, the point is: BEWARE! Climbing any of these routes is dangerous; any fall will result in at least one injury and possibly two deaths. Protection and sometimes belays are scarce. Full pitch runouts are fairly normal.

Whilst the newer routes sport more bolts than their original contemporaries, care is required. Two deaths may be very unlikely on the recent creations, but long, rather scratchy falls down abrasive rock are still a real proposition. It's polite to buy a National Park pass and inform the ranger of your activities.

History

The Porongurups were formed by the intrusion of porphyritic granite into a layer of sedimentary rock around 1100million years ago. Over time the sedimentary rock has eroded, leaving behind large steep sided granite domes. The Range takes its name from the Aboriginal name "Purrengorep" meaning a "meeting place near water."

The area was first given a look over in the 1960s, but the equipment of the time and lack of protection made climbing too hard and too dangerous. The first serious look came in 1969, when John Harding and Peter Riddy investigated Marmabup Rock. They put up two climbs; Fairy Steps and Invitation Waltz – the later now called Pigeon Toes. They also attempted what was to become Riddy Wuzere. Slowly the area became more popular, largely facilitated by CAWA trips in July 1973 (Marmabup Rock) and February 1974 (Twin Peaks).

A second trip in 1974, corresponding with a weekend trip for the CAWA annual dinner, was of particular significance. During this trip the main faces of Gibraltar Rock and Marmabup Rock were

climbed for the first time. Five Flies up an Elephant (Marmabup Rock) and Dockyard Wall (Gibraltar Rock) were the breakthrough routes. Dockyard Wall was by far the stand out route. It was originally led, onsight, with no bolts and sported a grade 17 crux, poor belays and virtually no runners. Today the route has two bolts, one for the crux and one at the pre-crux belay. Combined with small wires, small camming devices and sticky rubber the route isn't quite as daunting as it once was. The FA team for this route was Mike Smith and Peter Hiscock. Mike Smith went on to dominate climbing in the Porongurups (and indeed many WA crags) for the next 10 years or so. He also returned to Dockyard Wall and installed the two bolts currently on the route in 1992.

In the 1980s bolted routes began to trickle into the Porongurups. First it was the shorter, harder routes at Castle Rock that were bolted, then by the end of the decade longer slabs were being bolted at Gibraltar Rock. The early 90's were probably the heyday of climbing in the Porongurups. Castle Rock and Gibraltar Rock received a number of harder bolted lines thanks largely to the Masters. In 1992 the much vaunted line of Karma fell to a young Richardson.

Another 10 years or so passed with little activity until Holland and Scott put up two more bolted lines on Gibraltar Rock. These direct and relatively well protected climbs are probably the most popular in the area. Soon after Truscott and Rosser visited various areas and put up some scattered bolted routes – Rehearsing the Fate of Absalom is by far their finest addition to the area.

Recent goings on have been very limited, but as the potential for new routes shrinks at other WA crags, the drills may well be pointed once again at the Porongurups....

Classic Routes

There are a few routes in the Porongurups that warrant classic status when compared to their contemporaries within Western Australia. Karma, and The Fate of Absalom warrant classic status due to quality alone; whilst Dockyard Wall and Riddy Wuzere attain their classic status through historical significance and bold first ascents. As for new route potential.... There is at least one unclimbed line at Castle Rock worthy of fame in Western Australian climbing and one or two others awaiting those with enthusiasm for exploration.

Here is a brief snippet on each to give you a taste:

Karma

Shane Richardson scored a great line here. An exposed, atmospheric and very stylish arête. The climbing is absorbing, the position superb and the bolting sensible. If you climb this on a weekend expect to be the apple in the tourist eye as they gaze slack jawed and glassy eyed at the remarkable line. Definitely an ego booster if done in the presence of some cute backpackers.

Dockyard Wall

A historical classic. The FA by Smith and Hiscock was bold ! very bold ! Consider as you climb the route; that it was originally done without any bolts and in climbing shoes similar to steel cap boots with sticky rubber. Nowadays with the bolt(s) and modern slinky outfits the danger and commitment is lessened... however it's a fine line that takes in some impressive terrain. It may not be as direct as the more recent bolted creations, but this is the line to take if you're serious about slab climbing.

Riddy Wuzere

This direct line took the best climbers of the era multiple attempts over two years to put up. Said to have been elusive because it was always wet, the lack of protection on the first pitch and at the crux must have also caused a few problems. In fact Dave James forced the crux with psychological aid from 4 pegs hammered edgeways into the shallow crack and tied off. Today's leader is able to take comfort from a #2 Camalot on the first pitch and again below the crux. However the climb remains one for the connoisseur of run out slab climbing while two delightful laybacks link lower angled rock. No bolts then and no bolts now maintain a climb of character.

Rehearsing The Fate of Absalom

The later half of this climb is up there with the best in the state for the grade. A pleasant, straightforward flake / crack pitch takes you to the tip of a massive flake laid up against the side of Marmabup Rock. From here it is worth pausing for a while and enjoying the view, vista and savoring the moment. The journey to the top is a pitch and a half of well bolted, relatively sustained slab climbing. The only drawback of the route is the rather trenchy first pitch and the interlinking block orienteering required to gain the base of the flake proper. Nevertheless, it is a worthwhile excursion.

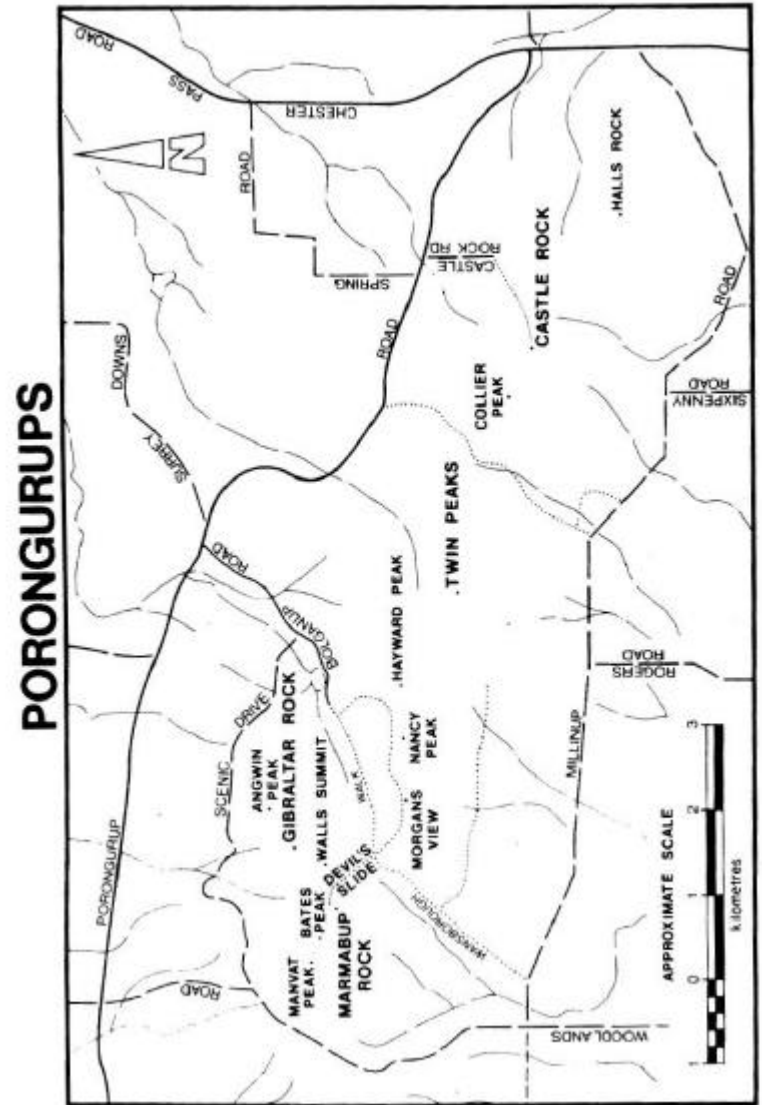
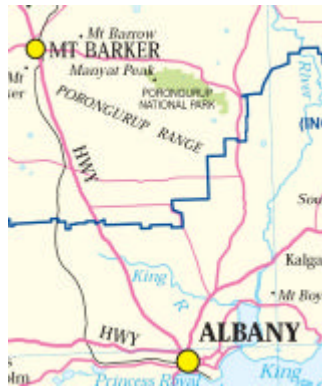
Beta

A 50m rope will suffice, although a rap rope is handy for Castle Rock and a 55m+ rope would help at Gibraltar Rock and negate the need for your second to start climbing whilst the leader is still on lead... ☺

As for the rack – a standard rack is fine for the trad climbs. Bolt pates are a must. Don't expect too many runners on the bolted routes... or the trad ones; especially those with lower grades or an FA date in the 70's.

Access

From Perth, head down Albany Highway until reaching Mt Barker. Turn left onto Porongurup Road and head east for approximately 20km. The National Park is adjacent to the road, on the south side. You can't miss it.



Credits

Jon Gregg – Castle Rock info/topo and general collation of new route info.

CAWA WA Guide – Original route and area descriptions

Redpoint September 1992 – WA Classic Rock – Porongurups, Steve Digwood

Cover Photo: Peter Thomas

Design: Neil Gledhill

Internal Photos: Kindly provided by the Brill, Gledhill, Gregg and Slee Collections.

Version 1, April 2006.

New routes or corrections – please post them on the CAWA website:

www.climberswa.asn.au

Marmabup Rock



An impressive dome. Its east face is fairly steep and offers pleasant climbing. The first climbs in the range were done here by Harding and Riddy, who mistook it for the Devil's Slide. The ambience of the surrounding Karri forests and the views to the south add a star to all the routes, regardless of their quality.

The must do route here is "The Fate of Absalom"; attempted ground up by Harry Butler and Jim Truscott; they were forced back by the unprotectable final slab. Jim returned with Matthew Rosser and the every reliable Mr Hitachi; the rest is history – a superb classic of the state. Once you overcome the rambling first 70m or so, two classic pitches await. The first is a great, easy flake and crack to a custom made belay perch. The vista from here is superb. Above lies a great pitch of well protected slab climbing then a ramble to the summit.

Access

Take Woodlands Road at the west end of the National Park off Porongurup Road. Turn left down Millinup Road along the South side of the National Park. Turn left again and follow the signs to the Wansborough Walk. Follow the good gravel track until you reach an old hut (Morgan's Hut) and a small gate. Park here. Follow the track on the other side of the gate using it to get as close to Marmabup Rock as possible. Bush bash to the base.

Descent: Scrambling down the east ridge from the summit is the most popular method. It pays to stay back a smidge from the base of the cliff on exposed rock. If you try and descend too close to the cliff the bush can be rather thick. In fact, the fleet footed climber has been known to descend this way and surf down on the very top of the foliage. This should be attempted with care however, as a fall into the shrubbery can be uncomfortable and overly spikey.

An alternative approach is via the walking track to Devil's Slide. From here follow your nose west along the ridge line to the summit of Marmabup Rock. Descend to the start of the climbs as described above

The Routes

Climbs are described working clockwise around the rock, i.e., from right to left.

Heathcliffe Direct 13m 12

Start: At base of outcrop where bushy gully leads to summit. First obvious line on the east face (i) 2m left of groove and go straight up wall past loose flake and onto top.

Clarke's Bloody Rib 46m 14

The narrow steep slab on the right of Pigeon Toes. Protection can be arranged with friends from the upper section in Pigeon Toes. Climb the centre of the slab.
Smith (plus a cast of thousands) 70's

Pigeon Toes 30m 8

Start: A steep narrow slab bounded on its left side by an easy angled groove. Up the groove P.
Riddy R Rathbone

Fairy Steps 10m 5

Start: From just left of Pigeon Toes, scramble left over some broken ground towards a gully with a conspicuous steep juggy dike on its left flank. Up the 'steps' over the reeds then scramble to top. P.
Riddy J. Harding

John's Jump 69m 9

Start: Under the big square rock several metres right of Moss Ghyll Groove.

- (i) 30m Easy walk across slab on left to enter true line with a jump. Scramble to belay in left wall cracks below steep corner.
- (ii) 26m Climb corner, then groove, chimney to chockstone.
- (iii) 13m Easily to top.

J. Watson, H. Kershaw

Moss Ghyll Groove 60m 12

Start: About 100m down the east face is an obvious deep mossy chimney. Scramble up to belay at base of climbing.

- (i) 30m Up chimney to chockstone belay.
- (ii) 30m Jam 3m then escape left and follow groove/gully to top. (A climb more serious than most of its grade).

J. Watson, K. Palmer (Alt) July 1973

Rubber Nails 85m 11

The next chimney to the left, in three pitches.

P. Riddy, H. Kershaw

**** Riddy Wuzere 90m 15**

Start: 30m Left of Rubber Nails at a pile of blocks and flakes (a classic). The direct line collects moisture and moss. Dry conditions preferable.

- (i) 25m Up for 7m then right into groove. Up it then onto left rib to peg belay on the vegetated ledge.
- (ii) 26m Up wall, then flake on right corner. Step down left to turn bulge then up vegetated groove, Passing chockstone to belay in lower alcove.
- (iii) 26m Into upper alcove then in short crack in left rib. Up and left to layback flake until it turns right.

- (iv) 13m Up wall, belay, scramble to top.

(i)-(ii) P. Riddy, M. Adams, J. Watson 1974, (iii)-(iv) D. James, M. Smith, Alt. 1976

Gemini 95m 18

Start about 10m left of 'Riddy Wuzere' at the obvious 4m layback corner.

- (i) pitch 27m Up corner. then slab to moss-filled crack in 3m corner (cleaning required). Then up right to belay at right side of vegetated ledge.
- (ii) 38m step right, up slab to layback. Follow up and around to right end below steep slab with grey water runnel. Up runnel for 20m (crux, runout). Move down right to belay in back of chimney that ends here.
- (iii) 30m (50m to belay) Straight up to small flake. Then up and left to gain crack. Follow crack then finish up slab past flake. Walk last 20m to belay at flat flake at vegetation.

A full range of tricams and friends are useful
Grant Edwards, Emil Mandeyczewsky 26/4/95

*****Rehearsing The Fate of Absalom 145m 17**

Starts just on the right (east) of the massive low angled slab on the south face.

- (i) Takes a direct line aiming for the base of the huge pointy flake. Start up easy angled slab with sparse pro. Aim for the trenchy looking crack just right of an overlap. Follow this to a grassy belay spot. 50m.
- (ii) Scramble up for 6m or so to a larger belay ledge. Climb up and out right with a bit of a move and some superb exposure. Easily right and up into a very comfy belay alcove. From here the line of pitch up the side of the flake is clearly visible.
- (iii) A very pleasant pitch up the left side of the massive flake as it leans against the rock. 30m, 15. Natural pro – cams and wires. Belay when you reach the top of the flake and admire the vista.
- (iv) Classic slab climbing past 9BR to a DBB. Great position. 45m, 17.
- (v) Scamper to the summit past a BR or two. 30m, 13.

J Truscott, M Rosser, 29 Dec 01

Slither 170m 13

Start: The south side consists of extensive slabs topped by a headwall. Start underneath the right end of the headwall.

- (i) 40m Up via a series of vegetated cracks to blocks at start of headwall.
- (ii) 40m Along cracks leftwards easily under headwall.
- (iii) 50m Continue left, drop down a few feet, then traverse left across slab and up the small corner to belay beneath big block.
- (iv) 40m Up beside blocks to the foot of an open chimney, then strenuous finish to left. Continue up slab on Five Flies.

M. Adams, P. Riddy, October 1974

*** Five Files up an Elephant 190m 14**

Start: At the western toe of the slabs at the obvious curving layback crack. A classic first pitch, however the rest of the climb is not much to get excited about.

- (i) 23m Up the layback crack until it eases - belay on left.
 - (ii) 25m Continuous, belay on ledge.
 - (iii) 23m Move right up slab to groove leading to small bushy ledge.
 - (iv) 25m Follow crack around to left then step right overlap and up to bushy platform past loose blocks.
 - (v) 46m Literally walk up to belay beneath large capstone.
 - (vi) 23m Walk up left then climb onto capstone. Slightly right then up steep bulging wall ahead.
- P. Riddy, J. Watson, Alt. and the Australian Olympic Wellington Boot Tossing Team (original description).

Two Ants on a Rhino - 103m 14

Takes the rock rib immediately right of *Five Flies*. Serious for the grade. Start as for 5F's.

- (i) 35m 14 - up layback until crack goes left (last pro). Step up right, onto slab and go up for 20m (crux) to belay in thin crack.
- (ii) 38m 13 - straight up for 25m to start of thin crack system (and first pro). Up crack to good belay on small step.
- (iii) 30m 11 - continue on to easier ground and flake belay. Scramble to top.

Gary Phillips & Steve Digwood (alt) - 5 June 1993

Manvat Peak



The western most peak in the Porongurups. Easy access and pleasant surroundings if you don't mind 200MHz radiation.

Access

From Woodlands Road, head up the communications tower access track until it ends. Follow the path for 10mins to the second tower overlooking the steep, east face.

The Routes

Climbs are described L to R with most being on the east face.

Panic and Shake 30m 17

Start at the northern end of the east face. Climb the slab with two BR then bog on up the crack and wall above.

J Truscott, M Rosser, 30 Dec 01

The Dream to Wear Cream 15m 16

Start about 25m left of the steel ladder. Crank up to the first BR then up the wall with another BR and an intermediate wire if you like.

J Truscott, M Rosser, 30 Dec 01

Storm Boys 15m 16

The crack and flake just left of TDTWC, with one BR in the headwall.

J Truscott, M Rosser, 30 Dec 01

Twin Peaks



Access

Extremely trying at best, disturbingly masochistic at worst – access to Twin Peaks involves a difficult bush bash through challenging terrain and a steep, rocky hills. Expect a one way duration of 2-3 hours depending on your route finding ability and luck. Expect neck deep foliage, suffering and considerable despair. Described by one hardman as "I'd rather go to hell, than Twin Peaks".

Approach from the south; turn up Millinup Pass track and take the first track on the left (following cleared property). Follow this track for as far as you dare – it's marked private property so proceed at your own risk. Take this track as far uphill as it goes – not much further than the house(s). Bush bash up towards the peaks which you should have eye balled from the road to the south. Various old timers have offered their advice with respect to the best bush bash approach. Maybe its better to head straight for the peaks... or take a direct line to the top of the ridge, then traverse across. I have not met anyone who has done both approaches and hence qualified to comment on which is best.

Descent from the east peak is either via a stiff scramble on the northeast corner, or an abseil down Clannad which is the first chimney on the north side. You can scramble down the centre of the West peak. Transit between the peaks is straightforward across the connecting ridgeline, allow 10mins.

The crag is very rarely visited nowadays. In fact, after the heydays of the Smith / Rathbone 1970s it has probably only seen one or two visits per decade. The easy, slabby natural lines are all but picked off. Matthew Rosser and Jim Truscott visited the area with a drill. They put up The Invasion of the Barbarians which is the only bolted line at Twin Peaks.

The Routes

West Peak

Start on the south east corner, the climbs are described from right to left.

Vivaldi 36m 13

Start: Up the first obvious groove/chimney on the east side of the South face.

Climb: (quoted from the original description). "after a surprising 'liftoff' introduction, proceed allegro gusto up ledge and along behind cantilevered rock spine to corner. Next move is andante, up the beveled groove to stance. The final move is inspirato up the flared foot jamming crack to the top." 16.2.74 E.Reid (solo)

Games Climbers Play 26m 10 ?

The left of two obvious chimneys on the southern face (Apparently they used combined tactics at the top - hence the ? next to the grade).

13.8.78. M. Smith, P. Wopereis, R. Rathbone.

Johns' 8m 11

Start: halfway between the west wall and the northwest wall is a pillar of rock 10m high. 20m left of the pillar is a right slanting crack in an enormous boulder. Climb the wall by a small crack system 4m right of the main crack.

J. Watson T. Fowler Feb 1974

Steves' 10m 9

Start: Continue round left to a tall narrow detached flake and start on the left edge of this. Climb up the left edge of the flake then either straight up or cross left to short chimney exit.

S. Lumsdaine Feb 1974

Hiscock's Crack 12m 12

Start 3m left of Steves'. Climb to womblike recess near top then exit either left or right off the recess.

P. Hiscock et al Feb 1974

East Peak***Sibelius 30m 17**

An exposed classic. Start at the base of the steep flared crack on the south west side of the peak. Climb up the flared crack until it dies out then transfer to the parallel crack on the right and continue to terminal platform.

E. Reid J. Waterfall Feb 1974.

***The Invasion of the Barbarians 35m 22**

Start at the RHE of the huge exfoliation flake 20m right of SIS. Cruise up once you get past the second BR. 9BR to DBB.

M Rosser, J Truscott 28 Dec 2002

Steal I Span 43m 12

Start at the left hand edge of the huge exfoliation flake on the west face. Climb up the right hand of two exfoliation flakes on the main peak until bridging onto the big flake is mandatory. Continue to top of flake then up wall to belay at a rock anchor.

E. Reid T. Fowler Feb 1974

Silly Wizard 45m 11

Start about 10m left of S.I.S.. Climb up the dark corner chimney.

P. Riddy, P. Davies Feb 1974.

Clannad 16m 12

Start at the next chimney left of Silly Wizard. Climb up the chimney, exiting right.

M. Smith, R. McArthur

Initiation 36m 14

Start at the next chimney left of Clannad with large horizontal cave near top. Climb for 30m up chimney then left to back of cave to belay. Swing out right onto wall to exit.

P. Wopereis, M. Smith, R. Rathbone Aug 1978

Golden Oldies 50m 15

Starts at col of eastern end of East Peak at left end of lowest bushy ledge near base of rock. Up the slab (no pro) and follow wall just to the left of a deep crack. Lower slab can be avoided by accessing just left of summit scramble.

Mike Smith, John Watson & Mac McArthur - 6 March 1993

The Bells the Bells 35m 15

A poorly protected chimney - follows the inside chimney of the huge flake bounded on its left by *Steal Eye Span*. Starts on top of the flake on the left ... chimney towards the roof. Pro at 6m. Exit gratefully to flake summit then follow the '*shakev flakey*' wall on the left.

Mike Smith & Ron Master - 27 February 1962



Castle Rock



Castle Rock offers the steepest climbing in the Porongurups. To the north lie the Stirling Ranges, a series of small humps in the distance and to the south lies the coastline of Albany. It is an impressive looking rocky outcrop, with great views from the man-made platform and lookout at the highest point.

The rock here is coarse finger shredding granite, offering great friction. The climbs are mostly face routes with a couple of hand and arm eating cracks to tempt true connoisseurs. It offers harder and shorter routes than elsewhere in the Porongurups.

All bolted routes require bolt plates. Most belay anchors are made to the poles of the lookout fence or the walkway. Leading any of the routes protected by mild steel carrots requires considerable nerve. They are best top roped Karma uses glued in machine bolts and is a consumer classic !

Although there aren't all that many routes here, the classics such as Vous (22) and Karma (24) rank among the finest climbs in the state.

Castle rock has been visited by most of the strong climbing parties from WA in the 80's and early 90's. Richardson arguably snaffled the finest line of "Karma", a route that would sit high on any climbers tick list. New route potential is limited to Perth like granite climbs wrt length; except one glaring omission. Castle Rock undoubtedly holds one of the best known and most spectacular unclimbed lines in WA. I won't spoil one of the worst kept secrets in the state.... But why a superb, atmospheric 40m long arête has received just a handful of feeble top rope attempts is unbelievable! Sure it won't go at a gym friendly grade.... But unclimbed lines like this are very hard to come by.

Access

Follow Porongurup Road east past the shop and caravan park. Look out for the small gravel road on your right and the sign "Castle Rock". From the car park it is a 1.5km uphill walk on the tourist track to the top, you can't miss it. An abseil rope is handy to reach the lower bay where routes 3,4,6 and 7 start.

The Routes

1. Rusty Bolt Arête 8m 22

The right hand arête on the first boulder right of the chasm leading to the ladder. Thin moves gain arête then up past stupidly placed bolt that sits on large foothold and move left to large diagonal crack (large cam required) and up to top. 2 rusty BRs and single FH on top for belay and abseil descent. Not recommended due to poor bolts.

FA details unknown.

2. Caesarian Section 8m 23

In the centre of the western wall that rises from the ground is a large diagonal gash, Up gash and what comes out of it is the only problem. One BR and one BR for the belay. Friends to #4.

Roark Muhlen-Schulte, Shane Richardson 17 Apr 90

Climbs 3, 4, 6 and 7 start from the lower bay platform below the walkway on the western side of Castle Rock.

3. * Meaningless 20m 22

Mark Colyvan spent a whole day breaking drill bits and swearing trying to place three BRs in the steel hard rock. The result was worth it – a great face climb. Start at the arête 2m L of Guinevere. Up the arête past 3 well spaced BRs (all on the LHS of the arête, 2nd and 3rd BR are hard to see).

Mark Colyvan, Greg Pritchard 26 Aug 83

4. Guinevere 18m 15

Up the obvious comer on the LHS of the lower bay. An old school classic. Big gear needed.

R. Skirrow 16 Dec 81

Project

Takes a line up the centre of the face between Guinever and Sir Lancelot. Equipped with 2 expansion bolts with no hangers and exposed threads. These bolts are not suitable for leading. Feel free to equip the route properly and claim the FA.

5. Sir Lancelot 18m 17

The RH offwidth corner of the bay, with a runout chimney start. Another old school classic, bold and somewhat intimidating to say the least ! Really big gear needed.

Mike Smith 6 Dec 81

6. *** Karma 25m 24

The impressive arête 4m R of Sir Lancelot. A classic of the state. This route is almost worth the trip from Perth on its own. Classy, varied and technical climbing from the first move to the last. A reachy start that will make you want long arms gets things underway. A brief respite is gained with jugs on the arête before some superb thin and technical moves take you to the top.7 BRs.

Shane Richardson, Derrick Toulalan 10 May 92



7. Merlin 8m 18

5m R of and below Karma is a sharp arête. Up this arête from the ground past 2 BRs to belay bolt at top. This route starts from the ground and finishes ontop of the recessed platform.

Shane Richardson, Roark Muhlen-Schulte 17 Apr 90

On the south east side of Castle Rock are 3 climbs. Vous is the standout classic. These climbs are bold or impossible leads due to ancient or non existent bolts. Feel free to replace the bolts with better alternatives. Retrobolting the Screw Route would be a welcome addition. However, the other 2 routes should only have the bolts replaced on a one to one basis and no new bolts added to preserve some of the excitement of previous ascents. The falls are clean enough. All routes can be top roped from the tourist walkway above.

8. The Screw Route 20m 20

The rightmost line, starting below the left end of a large rightward trending diagonal groove. Climb up past the screw to an OK stance. From here either amble up the tempting groove or continue straight up staying true to the line for an extra grade or so. The only pro is a ridiculous 4mm screw that sticks 20mm out of the rock! No other fixed gear but possibly some natural gear higher up. A good one to top-rope.

Not sure if this has ever been led. No FA details.

9. Plains Dweller 20m 22 ?

Steep and blank slab climbing up face to the right of Vous past some rusty carrot bolts. The originally described top-rope route of this name may in fact be the same as Vous. Still, this climb needs a name so Plains Dweller it is. Grade needs confirmation. The middle line past 4 very old mild steel carrots. Start up the faint and shallow groove and continue up with some serious mind control required. Expect small holds, very small holds and very very small holds! The line eases considerably when then groove deepens and the angle lessens.

FA details unknown.

10. * Vous 20m 22**

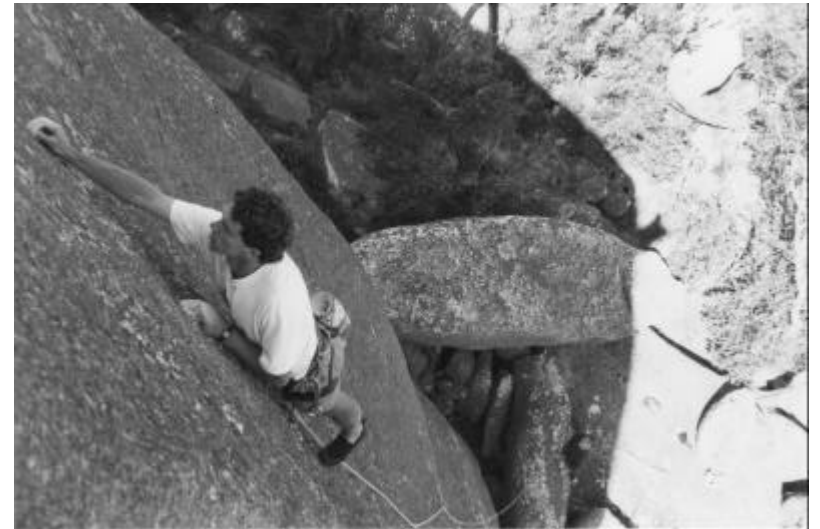
Left most line on the south east corner of castle rock. Takes the line adjacent to the arête past 4 very old mild steel carrot bolts, the last with a fixed hanger. Classic slab climbing in a superb position. The climbing is sustained all the way and the subtle moves on mostly good holds will leave you smiling. One of the best routes of this style in WA and the best route on this wall. May also be called "Von".

Mike Law Apr 88

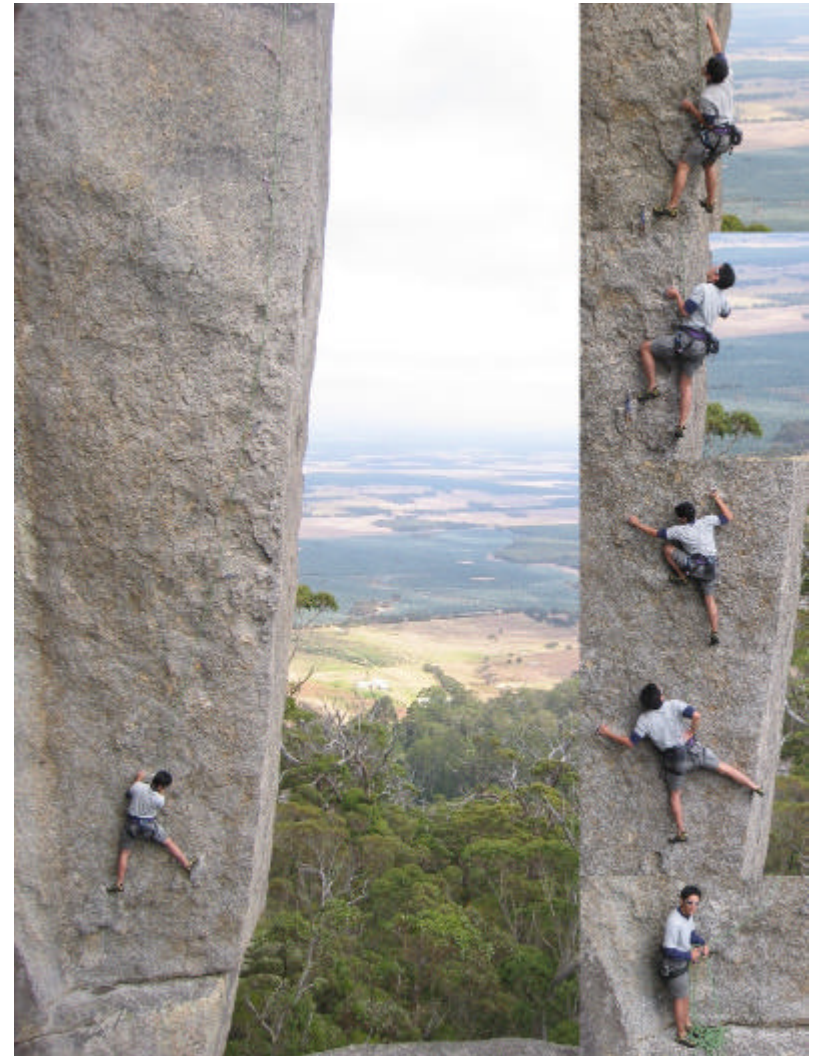
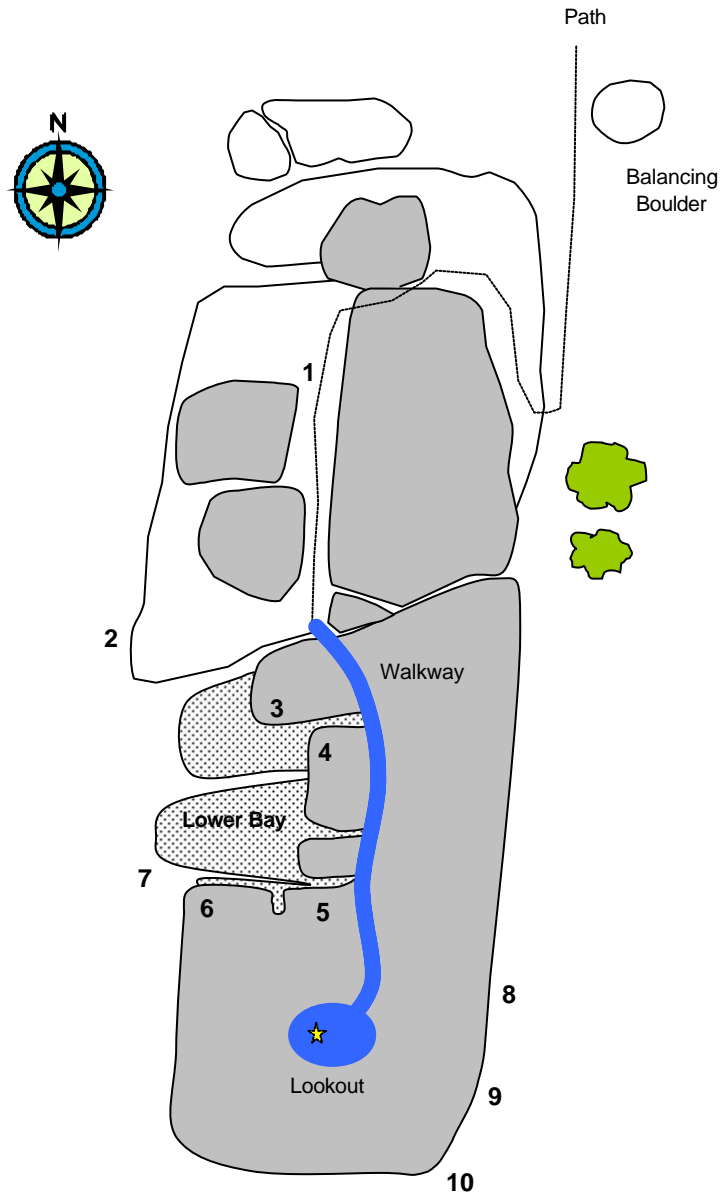
Flexural Slip 20m 18

Located amongst an outcrop of large boulders on the south east side of Castle Rock and down hill from the summit. Pleasant climbing up the twin cracks on the face of the pinnacle. Descend by chimney behind the pinnacle.

Wagland and co.



Castle Rock Topo



Gibraltar Rock



Gibraltar Rock is an enormous hunk of rough granite that provides the longest and most serious slab climbing in WA. Not everybody's idea of a good fun day out. Routes are usually characterized by fear and loathing - especially if it starts to rain, as retreat is impossible and advance difficult.

Access

The rock can be approached from the north via Bolganup Road and the Scenic Drive. The approach takes about 30 min. Drive along the Scenic Drive until the large dome of rock is visible. Look out for an old 4wd track heading south more or less opposite Gibraltar Rock. Follow this 50m or so off the Scenic Drive to a small clearing where there is a gate across the track. Park here. Follow the 4wd track past the gate for 5mins or so. As you climb out of the gully there is a very faint track leading off left to the base of Gibraltar Rock (200m or so from base of gully). This track used to be marked with tape, but after a big fire a few years ago the tape is gone and the bush is rapidly growing back. If you can find the track it will take you most of the way to the base of Gibraltar Rock with only a bit of slab crossing and bush bashing required. If you can't find the track its best to follow the 4wd track from the carpark until it has climbed out of the gully and begins to flatten off. From here head south and stay out of the gully for the thinnest bush.

Descent: Once the summit has been reached you can easily scramble down. Either go south and around the east side or west and around. If the slab starts steepening and looks rather suss, you have probably not gone south enough.

The Routes

The routes are described from Left to Right.

Most early routes were overestimated in length and some attempt has been made to give more accurate figures.

Second Anniversary Waltz 144m

Start Under right end of the two horizontal cave systems.

- i) 13m Climb slab to bottom of lower cave then up right to top cave via small slab.
- ii) 26m Traverse left along cave.
- iii) 40m Continue left under caves and exit onto main slab. Surmount overlap and climb slab to right of water runnel to block belay at reeds.
- iv) 20m Up water runnel to small crack on left (poor belay)
- v) 45m Straight up runnel to tree belay at top.

M. Smith, D. Pullin 2.3.75

Crime of Passion 160m 14

Start: as above.

- (i) 30m Up to below lower cave and traverse left to belay.
- (ii) 42m Continue left then up to belay in final cave of traverse on Second Anniversary Waltz.
- (iii) 42m Traverse left and up to slab above (crux). Up slab and onto broad terrace with caves on right. Belay at large block. Walk right to edge.
- (iv) 46m Gain slab by rib on right. Keeping well right go straight up, then left to peg belay at flake beside runnel. Scramble to top.

M. Smith, R. Rathbone. 12.8.78

*Dinosaur 130m 18

Crosses Dockyard Wall at the Smith Bolt.

- (i) 40m (18) Starts 80m left of *Illusion of Grandeur* at the base of a prominent curving corner flake. Up this to Petzl bolt (FH), then delicate finger traverse to big ledge. Continue rising traverse to right past 3 more Petzl bolts (FHs) (crux just after 2nd). Belay on the Smith bolt (FH) to the left of the 4th cave. Magnificent position.
- (ii) 45m (17+) Straight up to good runner at 12m, then another at 30m. Continue on to petzl bolt belay (FH). From here the prow of a dinosaur's head can be seen above while the back and tail snake out below you.
- (iii) 45m (13) Straight up to Petzl bolt at 15m just above prow, then onto nut and friend belay below wall. Runners on the way.

G Brysland, M Smith, P Cox, March 1992

**Dockyard Wall 195m 17

A great outing. When you reach the bolt, consider what it must have been like without it.

- (i) 30m - As for the first pitch of *Illusions of Grandeur*.
- (ii) 45m (13) Towards the overlap for 15m and good runner. Break out left over suspect flakes toward 4 caves. Petzl bolt belay (FH) in 3rd cave (counting right to left)
- (iii) 40m (17) Past the 4th cave to the Smith bolt (FH), then continue rising traverse to water runnel corner. Follow this past bushes to ledge belay with small tree.
- (iv) 35m (12) Retrace steps back to the runnel and head straight up to belay on blocks.
- (v) 45m (11) Meander towards small wall at top. Runners available along the way. Belay in crack below the wall.

M Smith and P Hiscock, 6 July 1974, rebolted in part by Smith and co 1992.

Apes Den 250m 12

Start: As for Dockyard Wall.

The precursor to *Illusions of Grandeur*, which takes the overlap direct.

- (i) 27m As for Dockyard Wall.
- (ii) 45m Straight up, heading for obvious crack and overlap. Blade peg belay at flake 5m below overlap.
- (iii) 45m Traverse left 5m to avoid overlap then straight up to cave avoiding loose flakes. Nut belay in cave.
- (iv) 41 m Exit cave on right then straight up. Belay on flake 5m left of obvious block (knife blade).
- (v) and (vi) Two 46m pitches until safe to unrope.

2.3.75 D. Pullin, M. Smith, Alt.

*Illusions of Grandeur 155m 14

Start on the north slabs at a tongue of rock forming a low angled slab which sweeps down to near the forest edge. A small rock bridge spans the gap in the lower section of the tongue.

- (i) 30m - Straight up slab several metres to the left of a grass clump and crack. A double bolt belay will be found.
- (ii) 45m - Obvious overlap, there is a bolt runner 20m above the belay and a second several metres below the overlap (crux). Bolt belay.
- (iii) 50m - Stay on line passing a small cave 5m to the left. Bolt runner with a second bolt runner after another 8m. A belay will appear after a 30m runout.
- (iv) Solo 30m easily up to blocks near top

R&R Master, R Tyson, M Dalziel, E Bumblez, A Roilo Oct 1988

Possum 160m 17

About 30m right of *Illusions of Grandeur* there is a sharp gully. The climb takes the slab wall on the left of this gully, to the first bolt belay. Then head straight up to the summit in three easier pitches. 2nd pitch has 3 bolted runners and bolt belay.

R&R Master

**Apesway 243m 12**

Two or three chrome-moly blades or rurs could be useful. Little good protection exists on this climb.

Start to the right of the toe of the crag. The first small gully darkens into a deep chimney. This groove/chimney is rat to the left of the first large gully on the right hand side of the crag.

(i) 40m (grade 12) Climb the rib on the right of the groove. At mid height move left into chimney - good protection at back. Continue out of chimney to a patch of rushes, a good belay can be engineered.

(ii) 41 m (grade 8) Initially continue on right of crack above rushes, protection at top of crack. Traverse left across face to stance at foot of lichenous watercourse. Peg belay low left.

(iii) 40m (grade 8-10) Climb watercourse 10m to small cave - two good protection points. Continue slightly left to reach large platform in recess.

(iv) 40m (grade 8-10) Out of recess on the right wall and pick up water course again. Slab angle starts to ease slightly. Follow watercourse to a small recess which takes a large hex or friend.

(v) 41 m (grade 8) Easier angle. Maintain line.

(vi) 41 m (grade 8) Maintain line to a few rushes at the top of large slabs on face. Peg belay. (vii) Walk off to top of crag.

W M Adams. J. Dixon June 1989

Alternative Start (grade 17): At the same time, Peter Nidd, Jill Ansell and Colin Graham made an alternative start to this route which is much harder. Led by Peter, the route starts at the head of the first large gully immediately to the right of the start of Apesway. Up the groove, move out onto right wall, later break back left to join Apesway at the end of pitch 1. Protection is very difficult to arrange.

Main Street 287m 14

Starts 20m L of SiB.

(i) 40m To crack belay below first cave. Runner at small overlap. Keep 6m right of reed-filled crack.

(ii) 27m Up to first cave. Flake belay on floor of cave.

(iii) 36m Exit cave on right (crux). Pass second cave on right, and continue to good nut belay in third cave.

(iv) 46m Exit cave on right and pass final cave on left, and keep climbing straight up.

(v), (vi) and (vii) Keep going straight up, three pitches.

M. Smith, P. Hiscock

*****Sucked in Ben 224m 15**

Starts at the most northern point of rock at the base of the cliff. The bolts may be difficult to spot from the ground. A great climb taking a very direct line up the main north face. Well protected compared to the other routes and an excellent introduction to the area. This is the only climb with lower-offs at each belay so it is a sensible choice if the weather looks suspect as descent is relatively easy... if you have 2 x 50m ropes (they will stretch enough for you to make the belay). A 55m rope is very handy - note the pitch lengths. 1st pitch has had an extra bolt or so added post 2000.

(i) 54m (15) First bolt is fairly high, head straight up past 4 more bolts to reach chain belay.

(ii) 50+m (12) Straight up past three bolts to third cave, climb flake on right hand side of cave to reach belay chains on ledge above cave.

(iii) 50+m (12) Straight up 10m to first bolt. Up again to crack. Move 3m+ right along crack then up for 5m to bolt. Veer right to belay chain past another bolt.

(iv) 50m easy straight up to first bolt at 10m. Climb up past double bolt belay to chains.

(v) 20m Solo to summit.

Steve Holland and Jeremy Scott, March 1999

The Moorish Steps 215m 14

Friends or large nuts plus a 50m rope are needed.

Start: 10m right of the tree touching the slab.

(i) 40m Up the crack and over the block, piton belay on right.

(ii) 10m Up left to chock belay in crack.

(iii) 43m Up, tending left to good nut just below third cave.

(iv) 30m Straight up to peg belay in crack.

(v) 16m Up, tending left to thin sling belay on solid flake.

(vi) 40m Straight up. Poor belay behind flake.

(vii) 36m Continue up until able to scramble.

D. James, D. Pullin Alt.

Europa Point 210m 15

The first ascent party tied their two 50m ropes together to stretch between belay points.

Start: At a separate tongue of rock with a deep chimney on its left at the right hand side of the main slab.

(i) 40m Up tongue to crack, belay just below where crack peters out.

(ii) 20m Move over left and up easy rock to cave and good nut belay.

(iii) 40m Exit cave on right and lead straight up to small cave directly above (crux). Good nut belay just below cave.

(iv) 55m Exit cave on right and climb straight up to good nut belay in small crack. (Nowhere to nut belay before this.)

(v) 55m Continue straight up to small nut belay behind solid flake. Scramble to top.

13.10.75 M. Smith, A. Ineichen Alt

***Rooster Carnage 208m 19**

Start in gully right of *Europa*, between face and up obvious crack

- (i) 35m (19) Chimney gully to first bolt at 8m (crux). Follow gully past good holds, keep to right hand ramp to reach bolt, climb through to reach chains. Some find the first 10m+ of this pitch awkward. Take care approaching the first bolt as a fall could be nasty. Natural gear required – cams and wires.
- (ii) 50m (16) Straight up past 7 bolts to reach belay chains on ledge.
- (iii) 53m (12) Straight up past 4 bolts to crack, up past two more bolts veer slightly left onto ledge with belay chains.
- (iv) and (v) same as *Sucked in Ben*

Steve Holland and Jeremy Scott, March 1999

A Call to Arms 23 ?m

The next line right of Rooster Carnage. Up groove to roof and headwall (with bolts / bail bina). Continue to top – details unknown.

Master ?

****Joint Venture 200m 20**

An intimidating and sustained route which takes the obvious discontinuous cracks up the central portion of the west face. Entails 150m of varied climbing excluding some scrambling on the easy angled start and finish. Take a complete selection of cams and nuts. All bolts have fixed hangers. Start at the steepening section in the midst of the west face at a crack which starts about 15m up.

- (i) 25m (8) Scramble up slab to junction of horizontal overlap (to right of crack), belay in obvious alcove.
- (ii) 40m (19/20) Follow the steepening crack past first bolt at crux blank section. Belay off second bolt with wire and small camming device backup. The pitch may be split in different ways. Rock is a bit gravelly in some parts.
- (iii) 25m (20) Continue up line for several metres to just below where crack terminates. Bolt protects leftwards traverse (crux) to join left hand crack and edge. Follow the line past 3 more bolts with some small natural pro. Belay on bolt in low angled corner.
- (iv) 25m (17) Up to the bowl formation, where crack terminates. Past 2 bolts straight up to double bolt belay on ledge.
- (v) 45m (13) Up past a bolt at 15m, then to a bolt anchor (difficult to spot) several metres below red stained headwall. Locate an historic carrot bolt 1.6m diagonally down left.
- (vi) 25m (6) – Scramble to Summit

R&R Master, David Wagland (alt) Nov 1992

****Zeppelin 118m 20**

A sustained traditional line through the discontinuous cracks and flakes just left of the west buttress known as Prow S. Take a complete selection of camming devices and nuts.

- (i) 43m (20) Start at the base of the obvious deep crack groove L of Prow S. Follow this for 4m until making an awkward (19) hand traverse out L along the gently rising break. Up to the RH edge of the oblong cave then make a difficult move (20) to gain the shallow pocketed crack in the center of the headwall. This is followed by bold and strenuous initially, easing once larger pockets are reached. Medium cams and wires protect. Continue to after a long reach (19) the angle relents and deeper cracks are gained (loose flake). Follow these for several metres before a rising traverse L across the hanging slabs gains the corner crack system. Belay in pear shaped alcove.
- (ii) 30m (16) Straight up the corner cracks to where they start to peter out, then run it out like a gecko for 15m trending slightly left to a reed filled bucket. Belay on large cams.
- (iii) 45m Scamper off stage!

Probably has not had a second ascent ! Apparently not too bad for the grade.... But if you have tried some of Bjorn's Perth test pieces you may be worried !

B Aikman, J Truscott, Dec 1997

****Let the fun begin 53m 20**

Takes the line straight up the center of the far west buttress known as Prow S. Great climbing on edges and flakes, a lot steeper than the other Gibraltar Rock routes. Petzl bolts and friends in halfway crack provide the pro. Main difficulties in the first third. Belay on second bolt or break at half way if you don't have a 60m rope. A very pleasant climb – underrated.

G Brysland & C Molinier Dec 1992

King Alfred's Castle

The castle is an area of enormous boulders on the ridge just west of Gibraltar Rock. The first of the boulders has a thick detached flake leaning against it forming a tunnel.

The Trans- African Aeroplane Canal 20m 13

Start, walk through beneath flake.

Climb the chimney formed by the right side of the flake and the boulder. Descend by abseil. *R. Rathbone, M. Smith. 12.8.78*

Gibraltar Rock Topo



NOTES:



