


FINGAL VALLEY

New Route Update

December 2016



Featuring the new
sport crag at
North Sister

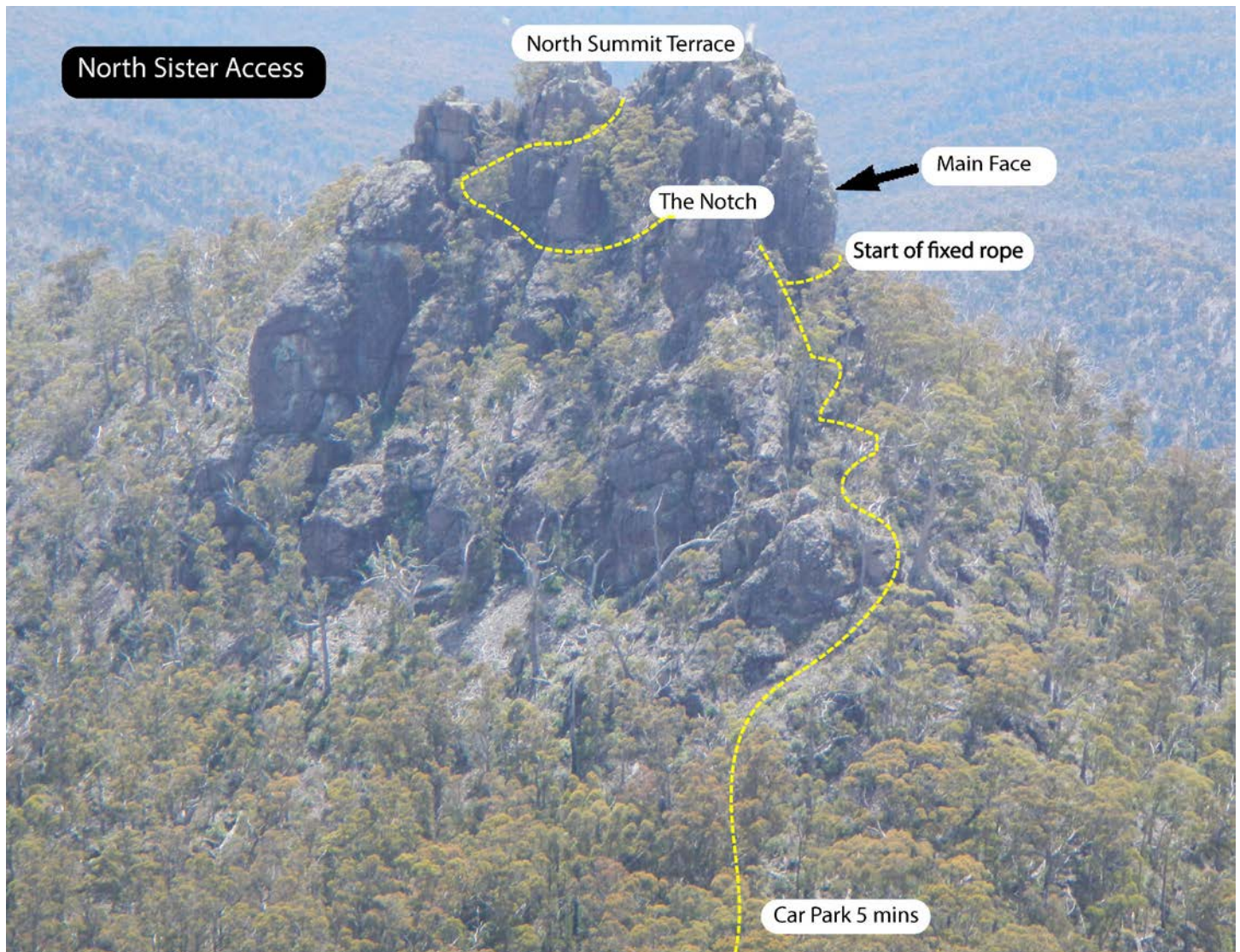
By Gerry Narkowicz

Heather Hancock seconding the perfect
jam crack of 'Sit Down Pisser' 20 at Gilligans Creek
Crag. Photo: Nick Hancock



NORTH SISTER

The new sport climbing area at North Sister hardly needed discovering as the crag is a prominent outcrop about 2km north of South Sister, near the town of St Marys. Robert McMahon and Gerry Narkowicz scrub bashed across from South Sister in the early 80's but dismissed it as a climbing area because there are no crack lines. Local climber Ashley Mason put up the first sport climb in 2013 but has focused his attention over the years on the more extensive crags at South Sister. At Easter 2016, Gerry Narkowicz checked it out for sport climbing potential and began bolting some of the uncompromisingly difficult and sustained faces at the crag. The climbing is characterized by slightly overhanging face climbing on generally good quality dolerite.

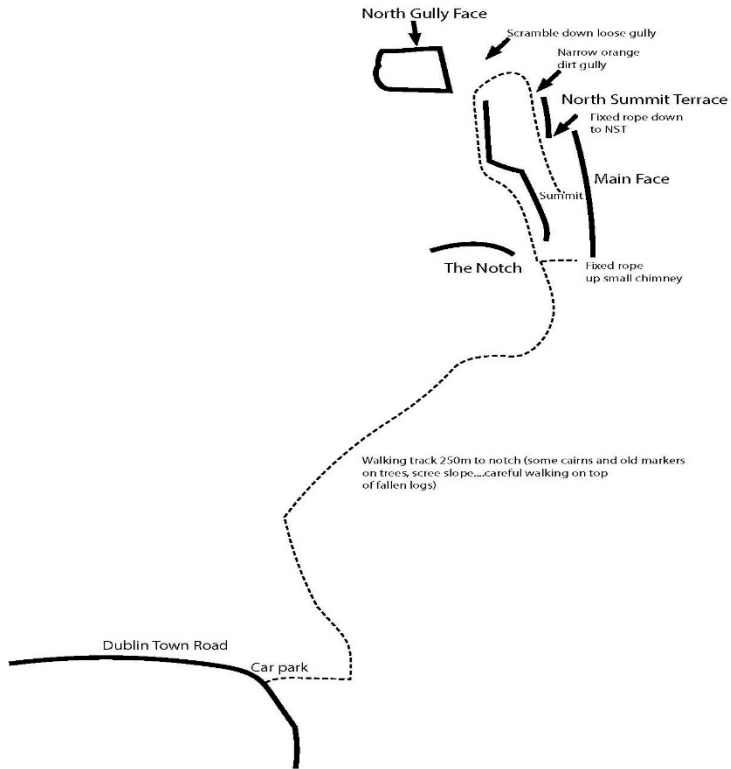


ACCESS

North Sister is approximately 130km from Launceston and the trip takes about 90 minutes. From the Midlands Highway, turn at Conara Junction and take the A4 road heading east to Fingal and St Marys. About 1km before St Marys, look out for the sign marked Top Marshes Rd and South Sister Lookout. After a couple of kilometres there is a crossroads. Continue straight ahead up the hill (the sign says Upper Scamander) and after 3 km there is a left turn to South Sister. Continue on the main road for 250m and turn left onto Dublin Town Road. On this section of road, the mountain is clearly in view. After 1.6km the road takes a sharp left in the vicinity of the mountain. There is a car park on the right at this bend in the road.

Follow a 4WD track for 30m until a cairn of stones marks a footpad to the left. The track makes its way up onto the south-east ridge via a rough pad through the scrub and also some scree slope. At one stage the path goes along the top of a large fallen tree. Towards the summit it becomes more defined. The track passes through a narrow notch or gap in the cliffs to emerge amongst the summit crags, and continues on to the summit.

NORTH SISTER



MAIN FACE (Eastern face)

About 20m before the walking track passes through the notch, go right for 10m along a scrubby terrace to a short chimney with a fixed rope. Up the fixed rope to a ledge where a bolted fixed line extends for 50m underneath the main face. Careful along this ledge as there is a substantial chossy cliff below the fixed line.



North Sister Main Face
35m high

1. Back To Eden 24 **
2. Argo 23 *
3. Lick My Love Pump 22 ***
4. Keep Licking 25 ***
5. Twisted Sister 24 ***
6. Yank Me and Crank Me 24 **



Love is For Suckers 20m 22 **

The first climb starting about 10m along the fixed line. Slightly overhanging face climbing leads to an insecure, technical crux in the blank corner high on the route. Best to rap from the anchors. FA: Gerry Narkowicz. 22/4/16. 9B

Back To Eden 30m 24 **

The second line is technical and steep and would be a difficult onsight. After the big jug at the 6th bolt, the difficulty eases (rock quality not great for a few metres), then a tricky mantle over the roof and the exciting conclusion on the headwall where it joins Argo for the last 2 bolts. Fantastic climb. FA: Gerry Narkowicz. 26/6/16

Argo 30m 23 *

The third line is a crack in the middle of a face heading up to a roof. Good climbing on chossy rock for the first 20m to the roof. Intimidating moves to gain the splitter hand crack under the roof which is turned on the left. Exhilarating moves up the headwall on excellent rock redeem this climb completely.

FA: Gerry Narkowicz 12/6/16. 16B



Lick My Love Pump 20m 22 ***

The prominent boxed groove with a white quartzite layer over the rock, in the middle of the face. Superb technical bridging. Steeper than it looks. FA: Gerry Narkowicz. 14/5/16

Keep Licking 10m 25 ***

The second pitch to Lick My Love Pump. From the belay of the Love Pump, climb up several metres of choss and grass to the start of the line. A beautiful natural feature of flakes and thin seams up the middle of the wall. A gymnastic series of moves near the top provide the crux..beta is to stay left of the central seam. FA: Gerry Narkowicz 13/8/16

Twisted Sister 35m 24 ***

The pick of the lines and the classic of the crag. Towards the end of the fixed line is a shallow groove on black rock, leading up to the summit tower. Some hard bridging and technical face climbing culminating in steep jug hauling near the top. Fantastic route. A 60m rope will not reach the ground from the lower-off.

FA: Gerry Narkowicz. 22/4/16. 18B

Yank Me and Crank Me 20m 24 **

The next route right, starting on a grassy ramp. Slightly overhangs all the way. A relentless, pumpy climb with great moves. FA: Gerry Narkowicz. 12/6/16. 10B



THE NOTCH

Immediately after passing through the notch (narrow gap in the cliffs) on the walking track, there is a north facing crag to the left with a u-bolted route on a slab.

Fuck Nose 10m 15 *

The u-bolted slab immediately to the left as you pass through the notch. FA: Ashley Mason. 2013

Back From The Dead 15m 18 *

On the attractive face to the right is a bolted face climb starting near the base of a large eucalypt, and going up to the same anchors as the u-bolted slab. A fun and worthwhile climb. FA: Ashley Mason. 22/4/16

NORTH GULLY FACE

From the notch, the track passes under some slabby faces and down a rocky slot to reach a saddle or gap between two cliffs. The summit track now takes a sharp right turn and goes up a narrow, orange dirt gully. From the saddle, go down the wide gully with a very mobile scree slope, to the base of the big crag on the left side of the gully. On the northern side is a beautiful overhanging orange coloured face.

Nick Hancock Project 20m 27



NORTH SUMMIT TERRACE

Follow directions for North Gully Face as far as the saddle, and continue up the summit track via the narrow, orange dirt gully. At the top of the gully is a small saddle between the north summit tower and the southern summit tower. The southern summit is the tallest and is reached by a scramble up some slabs. From the aforementioned saddle and facing the ocean, the terrace is down to the left and is reached by a short scramble down a bolted fixed line.

Sponge Bob 10m 24 **

The attractive face with a faint corner feature up the middle. A bouldery, finger intensive crux at half height. FA: Ingvar Lidman. 7/5/16

Smell The Glove 10m 20 *

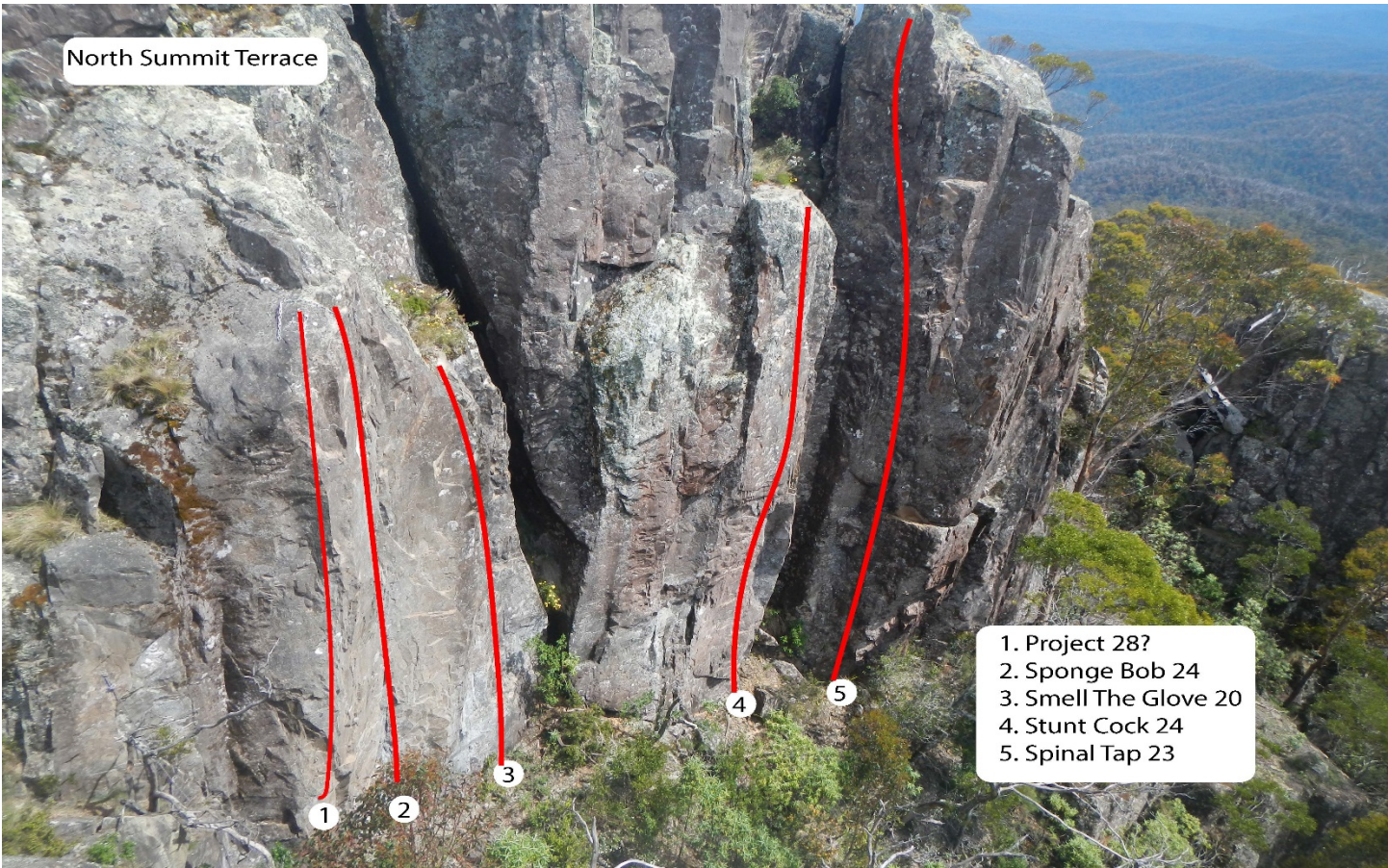
Next right is a face with a v-groove at the top. Some thin moves to gain the groove, then a technical conclusion in the groove. FA: Gerry Narkowicz. 14/5/16

Stunt Cock 12m 24 **

On the next buttress 5m to the right is a sharp arête to the left of a wide crack. A sustained route which is climbed on the left face before eventually gaining the arête. FA: Ingvar Lidman. 14/5/16

Spinal Tap 15m 23 **

Next right is a south facing wall just right of a wide crack. Starts with a perplexing bridging problem in a blank corner then some steep face climbing. Good route. FA: Gerry Narkowicz. 7/5/16

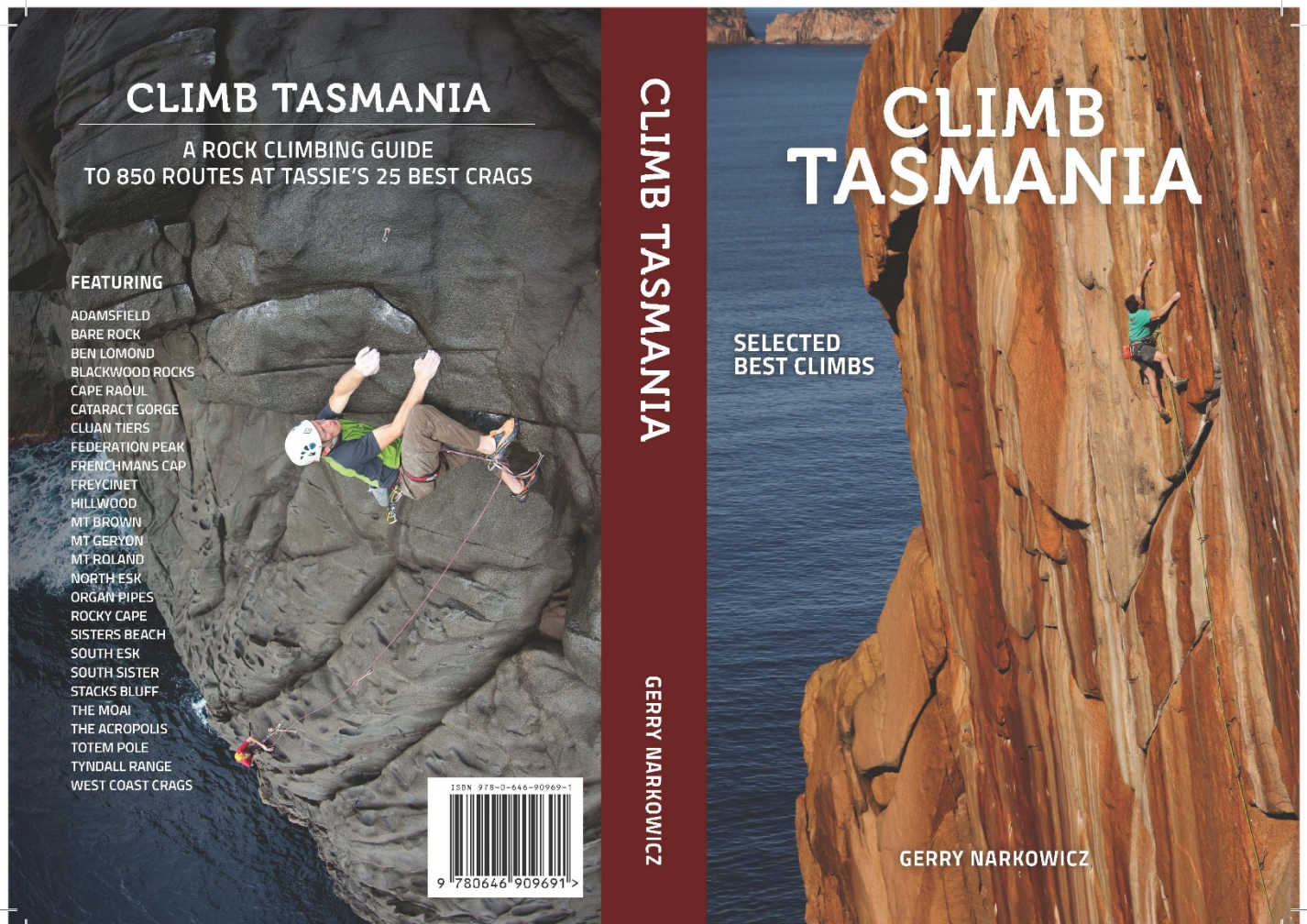


SOUTH SISTER

South Sister is an 832m dolerite peak at the eastern end of the Nicholas Range close to the township of St Marys. The mountain is easily recognisable by the transmission masts and fire tower on the summit. South Sister has some of the best one pitch crack climbing in Tasmania.

Access: South Sister is approximately 130km from Launceston and the trip takes about 90 minutes. From the Midlands Highway, turn at Conara Junction and take the A4 road heading east to Fingal and St Marys. About 1km before St Marys, look out for the sign marked Top Marshes Rd and South Sister Lookout. After a couple of km's there is a crossroads. Continue straight ahead up the hill (the sign says Upper Scamander) and after 3 km there is a left turn to South Sister. From the carpark, a good footpath leads to the summit.

***FOR A SELECTED BEST CLIMBS TO SOUTH SISTER, SEE THE CLIMB TASMANIA GUIDEBOOK**



UNKNOWN BUTTRESS

Approach as for Absent Friends Buttress. See the Climb Northern Tasmania guide for details. Go up the summit track and follow the cairned route further along the ridge about 5 minutes past the last building, then drop straight down the hillside on the northern side about 80m to the buttress. About 40m up the hill and to the right (west) of Absent Friends Buttress is a neat 15m high cliff.

The Great Unknown 15m 23 **

The splitter finger crack in a shallow corner. Technical flared jamming and a great challenge.

FA: Gerry Narkowicz and Andrew Martin. 11/6/16

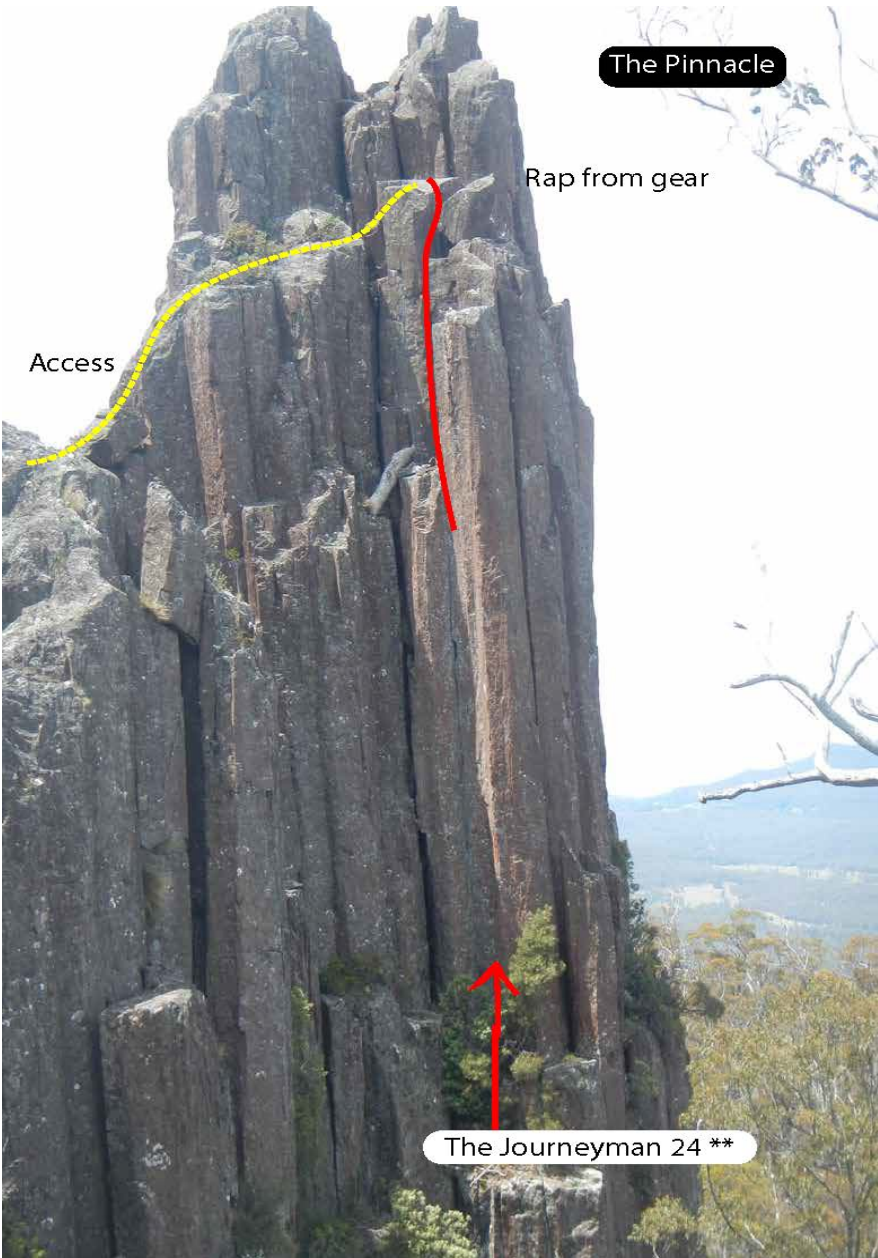


DOGWOOD BUTTRESS

From the car park ascend the walking track to the summit, then from the last building on the main ridge head west staying on the northern side following a line of cairns for about 100m. After 100m look out for a right leaning fallen pinnacle which is a landmark for the path across to the top of Dinosaur Buttress which is over left. Dogwood Buttress is about 40m further along the ridge from this point. It is a small buttress facing south about 15m high with several fabulous clean crack lines. Either abseil down or scramble down the west side of the buttress.

Double The Pain 15m 22

The line on the far left of the cliff. A gnarly flared finger crack. Initial estimate was grade 17, but turned out to be 5 grades harder. FA: Gerry Narkowicz and Andrew Martin. 6/7/16



THE PINNACLE

The Pinnacle is a large isolated buttress on the southern side of the mountain below Dinosaur Buttress. From the car park ascend the walking track to the summit, then from the last building on the main ridge head west staying on the northern side following a line of cairns for about 100m. After 100m look out for a right leaning fallen pinnacle which is a landmark for the path across to the top of Dinosaur Buttress which is over left. Access by abseil from Dinosaur Buttress and scramble across. 5m below the top of the pinnacle towards the RHS is a ledge from which to abseil.

The Journeyman 20m 24 **

On the northern side is a precise corner with a finger crack, the first decent line on the left hand side of the buttress. Excellent sustained route, a bridging testpiece. FA: Gerry Narkowicz and Andrew Martin. 26/9/16

STARSTRUCK BUTTRESS

About 60m further west along the ridge is a neat north-west facing cliff on the right hand side of the ridge. Scramble down through a hole in the boulders to gain the base.

Psychobitch 12m 22

The central crack which is a bit crazy, slippery and wide at times. A brutal exercise in jamming of various widths. A route never to be repeated. FA: Gerry Narkowicz and Andrew Martin. 6/7/16

Lady Starstruck Project 27

Next right is the improbable looking blank groove which will test bridging skills to the limit.

Abby's Lasagne 12m 18

The major crackline on the RHS which is a bit wide and loose to begin with, but ends up as a neat hand crack. Best left in the bin. FA: Gerry Narkowicz and Andrew Martin. 11/6/16

Heatseeker 12m 21

The very thin seam on the far right of the cliff leading to a ledge, followed by a neat jam crack in a corner. Great moves. First ascent was on pre-placed wires. FA: Andrew Martin and Gerry Narkowicz. 6/7/16

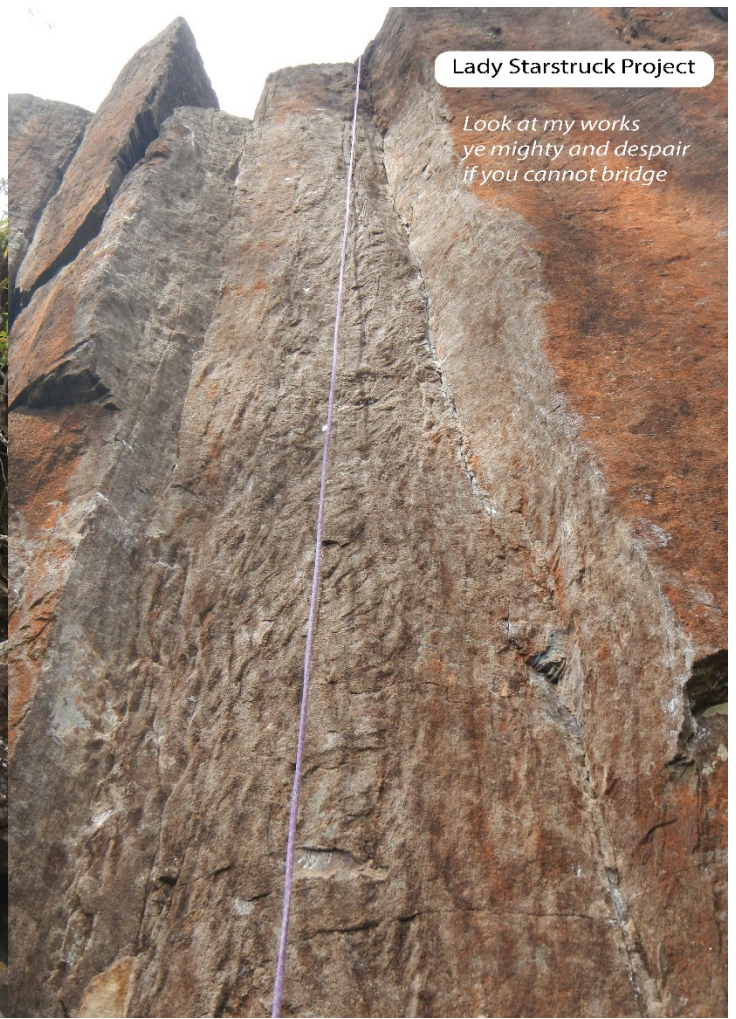


Heatseeker 21 **



Lady Starstruck Project

*Look at my works
ye mighty and despair
if you cannot bridge*



GILLIGANS CREEK CRAG

Gilligans Creek Crag is the big granite block high on the hill easily seen from the highway about 4km past Avoca. The name is a misnomer because the crag is nowhere near the creek, but the vehicular track on the approach goes up the Gilligans Creek valley. The crag has two excellent trad routes but there is limited scope for anything else. Worth the walk up here for two fine jam cracks and a fabulous view.

4km past Avoca, turn left onto Leona Rd. Shortly after the bridge, turn left and head up the road towards the telecom tower. At the base of the hill about 200m before the tower, look for a 4WD track on the right near a patch of orange dirt. Follow the main track up the valley, which is navigable with care for ordinary cars. After about 1.5km, park just before a creek crossing (it is possible to turn around here). Follow cairns on the left up the hill for about 20 minutes.

The cliff has two crags, bisected by a gully. The two climbs are on the left wall of the gully, on the lefthand crag.

Sit Down Pisser 15m 20 **

The beautiful splitter jam crack on the left. Batman up the blank wall via a bolt to gain the base of the crack. Blast up the hand crack to a bolted lower off. FA: Gerry Narkowicz, Nick Hancock, Heather Hancock. April 2016.

Dick Brain Turd 15m 23 *

The gnarly finger crack on the right hand side. A brutal exercise in flared finger locking. FA: Gerry Narkowicz, Nick Hancock, Heather Hancock. April 2016.



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Gerry Narkowicz leading the first ascent of Dick Brain Turd 23.
photo: Nick Hancock



The first ascent of the classic jam crack Sit Down Pisser 20.
photo: Nick the sit down pisser

TOWNSHIP CREEK

The crags of Township Creek lie in a deep gorge in the valley immediately to the east of Bare Rock at Fingal. The cliffs were discovered by Robert McMahon and Gerry Narkowicz in September 1984, and several trips were made resulting in 25 trad routes on 3 different crags. For descriptions of all the routes from the 80's, see the Climb Northern Tasmania guide by McMahon and Narkowicz.

Thirty years later in September of 2014, Gerry Narkowicz along with Ingvar Lidman and Andrew Martin, made another trip to the area and cast a fresh eye over the cliffs for sport climbing potential. The result has been 22 additional routes, mostly superb bolted faces and aretes.

* FOR THE UPDATE TO ALL THE ROUTES AT TOWNSHIP CREEK SEE:

<http://climbtasmania.com.au/blogs/news/17958632-township-creek-guide-to-22-new-routes>

The landscape in the area is breathtaking with the crags situated on the summit of the hill above a gorge with a lovely creek and its wide aprons of smooth water washed rock, swimming holes and waterfalls. Access is a 15 minute flat walk from the carpark. The gravel road is accessible to all vehicles, however care should be taken over the last 3km as the road becomes a bit rockier. As a guide, Ingvar's matchbox car, a Hyundai Getz, makes it all the way, with some careful nursing over a small ditch at a creek crossing near the cliff.

ACCESS

From Avoca it is 51km, allow 55 mins to drive. Turn right at Avoca and go 18km to Royal George.

From Royal George, keep going 3km to Merrywood Rd turnoff on the left. From here it is 30 km to the cliff. Turn left into Merrywood rd and after 3.3km turn left onto road signposted T.P.F.H private road, St Pauls Rd. This road eventually goes up the hill, follow what appears to be the main road at intersections (2 sharp right turns). There is a locked gate after 6km (open and shut it after – we have permission to access) then another locked gate after 1km. After the 2nd gate follow the main rd (Mt Foster Rd) for 14.5km along the top of the range.

After 14.5km, turn left up a hill at a Y intersection (tag on tree and cairn) and follow this for 4.6 km to a clear felled logging coupe where a large cairn and tags on the left hand side mark where to park the car. There is the remains of an old campfire just off the road at this spot. 800m before the car park is a concrete ford over a creek, and just before the creek is a good campsite on the right. Drive slowly across the ford being wary of a ditch on the other side. From the car park, you can see a forest at the northern end of the coupe which has been spared by the Gunns arseholes. Walk in a northerly direction through the coupe on a vague vehicle track to locate tags marking the path to the crag.

WATERFALL BUTTRESS

An adventurous day out with a great climb in a glorious landscape. Access via a 40 minute rock hop down the creek from the campsite. Straightforward approach, though depending on water levels in the creek, you may have to wade a few shallow pools. On the left of the creek beside a waterfall is a magnificent large buttress.

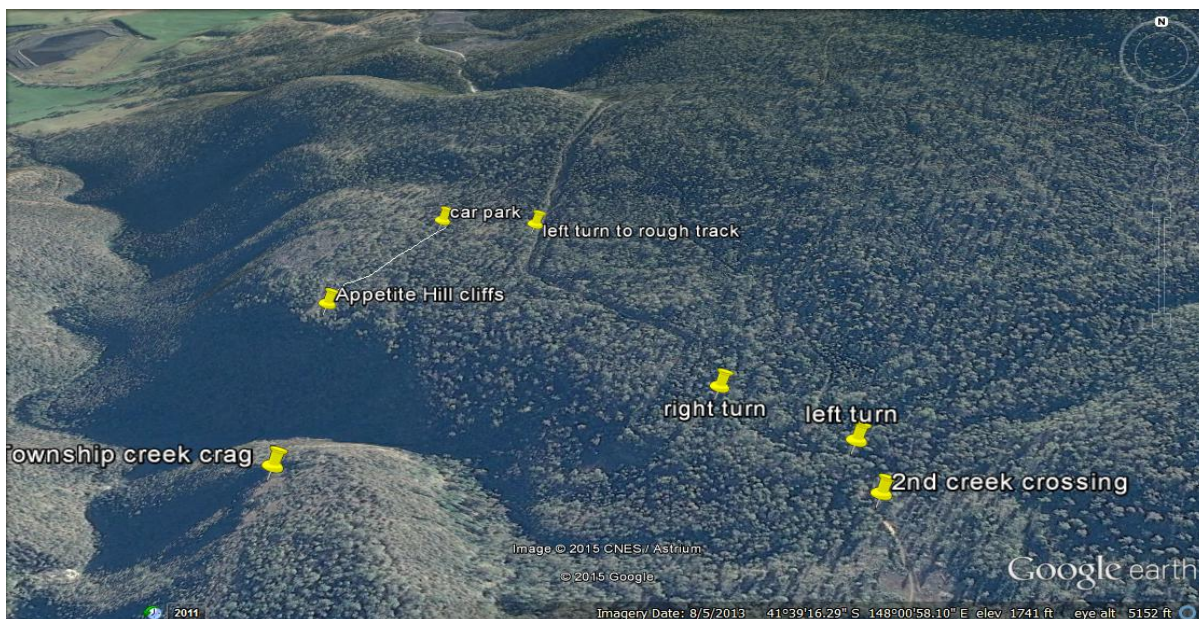
My Back Pages 30m 21 ***

The prominent corner of the buttress with a terrific finger crack. Lovely fingerlocking on smooth rock with some footholds for respite. Belay on ledge, then scramble (stay roped up) across flake to the right and downclimb small pinnacle. Abseil from tree near the edge. FA: Gerry Narkowicz and Andrew Martin. 6/11/16

APPETITE HILL

On the south facing hillside to the north of Township Creek crags is a handsome line of dark cliffs about 30m high. These quality buttresses were first climbed on in 1984 by Narkowicz and McMahon. The cliff is characterised by powerful crack lines with some excellent new and difficult sport routes on the faces and aretes in between.

Access: Follow directions as described for Township Creek crags. From the cairn marking the start of the Township Creek track, go north on the road for another 950m to a 2nd creek crossing. Shortly after this (about 100m), turn left and after another 250m is a junction where you turn right up a hill. Follow this road (a few muddy sections) for about 700m to where a rough track turns left into a logging coupe. After about 200m the track becomes impassable and park here. Locate pink tags which lead through open bush in a southerly direction for about 500m to the cliff. Some cairns mark the descent gully.



FAR LEFT

As far left as you can go on the escarpment, about 100m left of the main crag. There is a prominent leaning tower on the buttress.

Soap On A Rope 18m 17 *

At the far left of the buttress is a neat thin jam crack. Pleasant enough and worth the walk over if you wanted something more moderate in grade. Still a little dirty. FA: Gerry Narkowicz and Andrew Martin. 5/11/16

UPPER LEFT TIER

From The Eye Of An Eagle 25m 20 **

A classic on the far L-hand end of the cliff. The first part climbs a groove recessed into the arête with a couple of finger pockets and well spaced hand holds providing exquisite climbing. Lower off from bolts. FA: Mick Ling and Gerry Narkowicz, Robert McMahon. 30/9/84

In Evil Hour 25m 19 **

On the upper section on the L of the scarp. It is the best looking crack about two or three lines R of the arête of the upper amphitheatre. The climb is a very sustained off-hand to fist crack but thins towards the top. Superb jamming. FA: Robert McMahon and Gerry Narkowicz. 16/9/84

Pity The Fool 16m 18

On the R (shorter end) of the L section is a superb thin corner that looks desperate. In fact it offers exquisite bridging with good faceholds and a neat finger crack. FA: Gerry Narkowicz and Robert McMahon. 14/10/84

LOWER RIGHT TIER

Hunger Games 28m 25 **

Towards the LH side of the lower tier is a bolted arête about 10m L of a gigantic chimney. A series of tricky boulder problems on small holds to the half way point, then some balancy moves on the upper slab. Excellent and thought provoking route. FA: Gerry Narkowicz. 17/4/15

Farewell Companions 28m 21 **

One of the most striking corner cracks you'll ever clap eyes on, easily recognisable by the initials FC scratched on the rock near the bottom. Jam the corner until the crack narrows. Bridge around the fused section. This is the crux and is desperate as much for the thinness of the bridging as for the mobility of the surface of the rock which is coated with a dusty fine red lichen. The hard climbing soon eases into a hand crack to a little roof. Pull over the roof into a strenuous offwidth. Pull easily around the roof at the top. A masterpiece of variety and strenuousity. FA: Gerry Narkowicz and Robert McMahon, Mick Ling. 30/9/84

Spaz Attack 23m 19

The next best line to the R is a lovely big corner which is a bit mossy these days. Strong varied jamming all the way. FA: Gerry Narkowicz and Robert McMahon. 14/10/84



Eating The Cannibals 15m 24 **

The bolted arête L of a big chimney and finishing at a ledge half way up the cliff. Superb technical climbing. FA: Gerry Narkowicz. 18/4/15

Troubles 15m 17

A short distance to the L of Amundsen. A wide crack up a face leaning back a little off the vertical. At the half way point you can go either up the L or R crack. On the first ascent Bob wrote: I take the right, a hand crack. With only a couple of moves to go to the top the whole left edge of the crack in the form of an 8ft long tooth of rock begins to detach itself with me attached to it. It is the most fearful moment of my climbing in the last 10 years. I keep the detached tooth in place and at the same time back climb removing the 3.5 friend in the crack. Everything just hangs together. Both Gerry and I would have gone. I switch to the L-hand variant and tremble to the top. FA: Robert McMahon and Gerry Narkowicz, Mick Ling. 30/9/84

Dirt Track 16m 18

Immediately L of Amundsen. An uninspiring corner with a large tooth of rock for the first half. The jamming at the top is awkward. FA: Robert McMahon and Gerry Narkowicz. 14/10/84

Ingvars Project

Line of bolts up the blank wall with intermittent seams just left of Amundsen.

Photo: Bob on the first ascent of Amundsen in 1984

Amundsen 15m 18 ***

On the R-hand end of the scarp is a terrific leftwards trending jam crack. Overhanging thin jams to start and the occasional hand jam as the crack widens. A rather beautiful route. DBB at the top.

FA: Robert McMahon and Gerry Narkowicz, Mick Ling. 29/9/84

Calabrisella 25m 19 *

The big corner crack R of Amundsen. A neat jamming experience and not at all grovelly. Climbed on the 2nd anniversary of Bob McMahon's death. FA: Gerry Narkowicz. 18/4/15