

FREECLIMB WEB GUIDE

A Climbers Guide to the
Waikato, King Country Crags
& then some
Over 800 routes

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Introduction

Acknowledgements

Six out of Crags included in this web guide are from Mike Camilleris guide "New Ignibrite Climbs". The material for crags such as Bosch, Gower and Halls has basically remains unchanged with only a few editorial corrections. Smiths, Sheridan and Bayley's have been updated after resent rebolting and new route activity. Five new or previously unpublished crags have been added they include, Secret Valley, Waipapa, Kinloch, Mangaotaki & Frog Pond.

A large number of people have contributed information for this guide. Grant Pearson wrote the Secret Valley section, while John Newby supplied all the data for the crags in the Waitomo area. Piaere is an edited reprint of Pete Manning's guide published in Central North Island Rock while Kinloch was based on a typed up guide written by Mark Jones. I wrote the Mangaotaki and Waipapa section and put the Froggatt section together with the aid of Andrew Wilson's and Pete Manning's guides. Bryce Martin, David Garrity, Tony Sargent, Martyn Owen, Kevin Barratt, Ruth Barratt, Richard Knott, Kerry Crawford have also contributed new route information or helped edit the guide.

The plan is to continually expand this guide to take in new or existing crags elsewhere in the country, so if you have any information that you would like posted please send it in to freeclimb@freeclimb.co.nz

Disclaimer

The author, publisher, and landowners take no responsibility for damages, injury, disability, or death resulting from the use of this guide. This guide does not guarantee any of the fixed gear, including www.freeclimb.co.nz. Number One, for up to date Rocking Climbing Information.

bolts, peg, or belays mention in this guide. All fixed gear is to be used at the climbers own risk. Ownership of the guide does not grant you entry onto any of the properties or crag published in this guide. Access to all properties must be negotiated by the climber, see the relevant access information for each crag. The Information in this guide was current at the time of publication, but is subject to change. No responsibility is accepted for the accuracy of the information in this guide. Climb at your own risk.

Access and Code of Conduct

We are totally dependent on the good will of the landowners and farmers who allow climbers onto their land. We are climbing in their backyards, so show courtesy and respect.

Please be on your best behaviour to ensure that access continues.

Special access information appears for each crags in each section.

Access

- Park your car without blocking gates or farm tracks
- Respect that access may be refused for any number of reasons (e.g. lambing or calving)

Impact

- Leave gates as you find them, open or shut (**REALLY IMPORTANT**)
- Cross fences at stiles or strainer posts, and locked gates at the hinged end
- Take all rubbish out with you, including food scraps.
- Don't take alcohol to any of the crags.
- Take care of native bush.
- Use the toilets were provided.

Stock

- Don't disturb stock
- Take special care around dairy cows, lambs, calves, and deer

Behaviour

- No dogs!
- No guns!
- No Alcohol!
- No fires!

- Watch you language –

Be friendly and courteous to the land owners. Many of them are interested to find out who you are, where you have come from, and why you chose to drive hundreds of kilometres to spend a weekend climbing in their backyard.

Grading

Routes in NZ are graded according to the Australian system (also known as the Ewbank system). The original idea was to give each climb a single grade taking into account the technical difficulty of the crux, how sustained the route was, gear and objective danger. However now a days the trend is to just grade the technical crux leaving things such as how sustained the climb is or how good the gear is to the route description.

So how are most of the grades in this guide book arrived at. Well despite what a lot of people think it is not the result of hours of debate taking into considering the countless different climbing style of the wider climbing community followed by a democratic vote. On the contrary the typical grading discussion goes something like this.

Second arrives at Belay, "Shit that wasn't that hard, why did you take so long to lead it". *Leader*, "You should try it on lead it was bloody scary".

Second "Year I suppose it wasn't a bad effort for a bumbly like yourself"

Leader "F#!@ you, it was heaps harder than the last route of yours I'd give it 21"

Second "OK OK it was about the same grade, I'd say about 19 – 20.

Leader "OK so we agree then, we'll call it 18.

Well maybe its not always that bad, but the thing to remember is it may only be the opinion of one or two people, so don't get hung up on the grade and enjoy the climbing first. Ask others about the grade or argue about it with your mates but don't let it ruin your days climbing.

For climbers visiting New Zealand from overseas, the following table gives a conversion between the Australian, USA, and French grading systems. This conversion is not exact.

Table 1 Grading Comparison Table

| Au s | US | FR | UK | | |
|---------|------|----|----|----|---------|
| 14 | 5.7 | 5a | 4b | S | HS |
| 15 | | | | | |
| 16 | 5.8 | 5b | 4c | VS | |
| 17 | 5.9 | 5c | 5a | | HV S |
| 18 | | | | | |
| 19 | 5.10 | 6a | 5b | E1 | |
| 20 | | 6b | 5c | | E2 |
| 21 | | | | | |
| 22 | 5.11 | 6c | | | E4 |
| 23 | | | 6a | E3 | |
| 24 | | 7a | | | |
| 25 | 5.12 | 7b | 6b | | E6 |
| 26 | | | | E5 | |
| 27 | | | 7c | 6c | |
| 28 | 5.13 | | | | E8 |
| 29 | | | 7a | | |
| 30 | | | | | |
| 31 | 5.14 | | | | E9 |
| 32 | | | 7b | | |
| 33 | | 8c | 7c | | |
| 34 | | 9a | | | |

Star Quality

I have given routes a star rating, this is to act as a bit of a guide so as to give you a few suggestion when you turn up a crag for the first time and are faced with 60 new routes to do. If a line doesn't have a star it doesn't mean that it not worth doing. The rating system works a bit like this,

*** The true classics. Worth travelling to the crag just to climb this line a real stunner.

** Exceptional climbs, A must do if you are at the crag.

* A good line worth taking a look at.

The star system in is this guide book is Autocratic, with me being at the top of the heap.

New Routes

If you want your new route or crag included in this guide then email name, grade, length, and brief description of the route including gear etc to freeclimb@freeclimb.co.nz

Where to Stay, Food and Drink

Bryces Café at Wharepapa has a wide range of accommodation and is the only place within at least 15 km of Wharepapa South that sells food and drinks.

The Wharepapa school allows campers to stay overnight on designated areas in the grounds. The rules for camping at the school change from time to time, so call in at Bryce's Café before you stay. The current rules are.

- Camp in the allocated camping area

- No cooking , candles or camping on ANY porches or school buildings
- A donation of \$4 is expected. Please pay at Bryces Café.
- Use the campers toilets behind the swimming pool, Do not use the school Toilets.
- Take ALL rubbish with you including food scraps. (important !!)
- No Fires.
- No noisy or rowdy behavior.

If climbers do not respect these rules and the school, camping will be stopped. For \$2 you get a place to camp, a toilet, and a pool - real value. Make sure you pay, and follow the rules, to ensure that climbers never become a liability.

A Brief History

The first routes at Wharepapa "Castle Rock" were done by Graeme Dingle, Geoff Mills and Kevin Boekholt in the early 1980's. A group of Hamilton climber lead by Grant Pearson, Gary Lokum and Phil Higgins then started bolting the crag from 1987 on. They were soon joined by Auckland climbers who then moved onto discover and climb at Froggatt edge in 1990.

Piarere aside all except all but about three routes in this guide were developed after 1990. Froggatt was one of the first crag to be developed and was opened up by Luke Newnham and co. Sheridan Hills was then discover by Ross McGarva and John Jamieson and then latter developed by Bryce Martin and David Garrity. By the end of 1991 Pete Mannings 'Central North Island Rock' was published and this included about 230 routes at Wharepapa, Froggatt Edge and Sheridan.

Fresh from developing Sheridan Bryce Martin and Dave Garrity then took on a few young (compared to them) green apprentices, Michael Cammileri, Dean Maxwell, Andrew Sussex and myself. Having being introduced to climbing at in the Bay in the late 80's and then cutting my teeth at Mt Eden Quarry I'd had always thought that I had missed the golden days of New Route development in NZ. What I didn't realise at the time, is that the Central North Island is a wash with unclimbed rock. From the end of 1991 to mid way through 1994 this core of climbers developed Smiths, Bosch, Bayleys and open up old crags like Mangaotaki.

During this time development continued at Froggatt with Luke Newnham, Andrew Wilson all adding new and hard routes. A number of Hamilton based NZAC members developed a new crag they named Secret Valley. Grant Pearson, Allan Cox, Phil Higgins and others development the crag from 1990 through to 1997 before www.freeclimb.co.nz. Number One, for up to date Rocking Climbing Information.

the "Secret" got out into the wider climbing community. Unfortunately the challenge in developing crags in NZ is to get as many climbers as possible to visit you new crag not to keep your new potential routes secret. As a result few have visited the crag over the last few years, which is a shame as there are some great climbs especially at the lower grades. Hopefully publishing in this guide will reverse this trend.

Development at Mangaotaki has continued through out the late 90's and still continues to date. Bouldering has been the latest development at Managotaki giving the crag another dimension. John Newby and co started developed the limestome crags around the Waitomo area. The Airstrip is now one of the CNI prime bouldering locations and John has also opened up a number of other crags in the area most notably Frog Pond. The limestone areas of Wiatomo and Mangaotaki all have huge amounts of undeveloped climbing potential.

In 1999 Kevin Barratt put up the first line on the main cliff at Waipapa. Since that date this crag has been the main focus of new route activity in the area. The crag has seen first assents from a number of climbers which is always healthy for crag development.

Recently crags such as Smith, Sheridan, Froggatt and Baley's Road have been largely rebolting breathing new light into these crag and opening them up to the wider climbing community. A lot of these climbs have had numerous bolts added and although in many case this has been a positive development we still need to make room for the routes where the crux is not just some gymnastic manoeuvre but instead a mind game where a large run out or a technical section on marginal gear needs to be negotiated.

A Day in the Life of Ignimbrite Rock.

Andrew Sussex

Most of the climbs described in this guide are on a type of volcanic rock called Ignimbrite. When you next dyno for that micro edge, 5 m above your last bolt, spare a thought for the rock and how it came to be here - and will it still be there after you grab the hold and haul on it.

Ignimbrite is born in a most violent manner known as a pyroclastic flow. First you need a volcano (anything of a respectable size will do - Lake Taupo would be great). Secondly, your volcano must go bang (as opposed to splutter as the Auckland basalt producing volcanoes like Mt Eden do). This explosive type eruption needs thicker, more stodgy (higher viscosity) molten rock along with a bit of water and carbon dioxide.

If you're lucky (i.e. hundreds of km away) the volcano erupts with a colossal bang, throwing up ash, soil, water, steam, trees, sheep, and whatever else was standing on it at the time, way up into the sky in a large column reaching up to 10 km high. As the erupted material falls it gathers speed, and then flows outwards and sideways, away from the volcanic source. The falling material behaves like a liquid and flows sideways away from the volcano. The sideways speed is somewhat faster than your average speed climber, with speeds of over 200 km/hr documented by observers who witnessed the event without getting vaporised into part of the next great climbing area.

The erupted material is intensely hot. Often the huge eruption columns will glow, with the light from the molten rock at the base reflecting in the large clouds of ash above the volcanic vent. As the pyroclastic flow moves out over the surrounding land, destroying everything in its way, it tends to follow valleys and fill depressions forming a new land surface. At the edges of the flow trees are often bowled over by wind generated by the flow. The flows can travel as

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far as 200 km away from the vent, so living in Hamilton is no safe haven from the next Taupo eruption.

As the flow comes to a stop the material cools, fusing together as rock. The gas pockets trapped within the rock provide the pocks so useful to climbers and people that hate jamming. And the best bit for those that hate bolts, is that when the rock cools it contracts cracks appear, often in columns with a hexagonal block structure (if you cut the cliff in half horizontally and look down you see hexagon shaped blocks with cracks between them).

Ignimbrite cliff faces can become exposed, either by erosion of the countryside in place before the eruption exposing the newer rock, or by a river cutting through the ground, eroding the softer material, leaving the harder newer rock exposed. Often the cliffs are exposed by collapse along the crack (joint) lines, i.e. columns of rock are undercut by water or erosion and topple over, exposing new rock. The cracks often form vertically, but also form at angles, so when a block drops out a steep overhang may result.

As with most things that get older, the rock also softens due to weathering. The hard crystalline crust that is seen in most climbing areas weathers away to softer, easily eroded material with much less strength. The rock can become weak enough for camming devices to gouge out tracks under body weight (the author's body weight will not be quantified in this article, but it was enough to witness this phenomenon in person). Eventually the cliffs will erode away or fall over, until the next pyroclastic flow comes racing down the valley.....be careful out there!

Bolts

A guidebook is not the best place to conduct a discussion on bolting as no one, except for author, can voice their opinion. I will therefore resist the temptation on filling these pages with my views and laying down bolting ethic as I see them. Instead I have tried to outline the bolting system used at the crags in this guidebook, and what at the time of writing this guide was considered best practice. This is bound to change with time as bolting systems develop and climbers work out what works best for each rock type.

There are three types of bolting system used in this guidebook, Expansion Bolts, Glue In's, or "Drive In's".

Expansion Bolts

These bolts rely on an expanding wedge mechanism to hold the bolt against the side wall of a hole drilled in to the rock. They are ideal for hard or compact rock types, such as Limestone, Basalt or Granite. They do not work on Ignibrite as the soft rock gives way as the bolt expands against the side wall of the hole.

Glue Ins

As the name implies these bolts rely on an epoxy glue to hold them into the rock. They have been developed over the 10 to 15 years and are widely used in the construction industry. An over size hole is drilled then an epoxy glue is injected into the hole. The bolts is then pushed into the hole and the glue is left to set. These bolts can be used on all rock types and have excellent pull out and shear strength. They are probably the most widely used bolt system for rock climbing now a days, and you will find "glue ins" bolts at Froggatt, Waipapa, Kinloch and Mangaotaki.

Drive In Bolts

This is bolting system developed by climbers for us on very soft rocks. An over sized engineering bolt is driven into an under sized hole. Often some sort of mastic sealer will be used but this is more to seal the bolt from water than to hold the bolt in. Basically there are oversized nails and as such the bigger and longer the bolt the better, 160 long M12 or M10 bolts are the currently the norm. They have very low direct pull out strength and as a result should not be used on roofs or any other placement were a direct outward pull could be used on a bolt. Drive in's are however very strong in shear and if place correctly extended with quick draw etc they function well.

Bolts Material

Another continuous issue with a number of options and plenty opinions. Stainless Steel bolts and hangers are first choice however galvanised bolts are sufficient in the Central North Island area were corrosion is not a big issue. Any crag exposed to the sea however should have stainless steel bolts and hangers. No black or anodised bolts anywhere.

Hangers

15 years ago naked bolts were the norm, 10 year ago we were using chain links for hanger. Now hangers and ring bolts should be used on all climbs unless there is some environmental reason to limit their use.