

WAITOMO

By John Newby

Introduction

The Waitomo region is commonly recognised for its extensive caving and until now its rock climbing potential was hardly pushed. Over the years, various individuals (usually from caving backgrounds) have investigated the premise of Waitomo being a significant climbing area. Probably the first efforts were made by Auckland quarry veteran, Robbie McBirney. Three routes went up, one at Te Anga on the way to the west coast,

Local adventurer and cave guide Paul Hunt made what could be considered as the most significant effort in climbing at Waitomo. He put up the first routes on the Stubbs Wall in '97 with the help from fellow cave guide Angus Stubbs who lives quite literally, at the top of the crag. Paul also put some effort into bolting top rope anchors on the large boulders opposite the Glow worm Cave, as well as the first bolted route near the Mangawhitikau Gorge.

Years later Frog Pond became my crag of choice, courtesy of Angus and his larger than life depictions of towering limestone bluffs. Nevertheless the potential was there, a beautifully secluded yet accessible location, on good rock.

Horotea cliffs was rediscovered at a later date with failed attempts at climbing two unknown bolted and particularly dirty routes. The crag potential here is enormous, although the practicalities in its development will no doubt limit progress. The varying quality of rock is up to 40m high with hours of surface brushing required to expose a climbable surface. Two days hard graft has seen a two pitch line go up on the main wall next to the unknown routes.

A climber with enthusiasm and time on their hands could expose hundreds of high quality sport routes here of all grades, from beginner to possible international renown.



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Rock Climbing Information

Stubbs Wall

A short slabby wall about 10m high. What this small crag misses out on with its lack of height, it more than makes up for in sustained technical climbing on excellent quality limestone. There are currently four routes on the main face and one other on the obvious overhanging boulder at the bottom of the doline.

From left to right.

Oban (17)

Layback into the right tending crack. Where the crack ends, top out slightly left up a committing face move. Good pro on medium and small wires.

Paul Hunt, Angus Stubbs '97.

The Pink Pig (19)

The bolted line up the groove forces some fun yet unusual chimneying techniques...?

The top can be protected with a large wire or hex.

Paul Hunt, Angus Stubbs '97.

Heavenly Velcro (21)

Superbly non-strenuous, technical climbing. A straight line over three bolts.

John Newby, Winter '99.

Isaac (16)

An awkward off-width that begs to be experienced (though not necessarily enjoyed!).

Paul Hunt, '97.

Max'n'mum Power (20)

A short and powerful climb from under the hanging boulder.

John Newby, Josh Taylor, Sept. '99

Mangawhitikau Bluffs

Another aesthetic rock climbing location is found 15minutes south of Waitomo on Boddies road; A doline, north facing bluffs, a stream and a gorge. A cool dip in the stream or a journey into the Mangawhitikau gorge are an excellent way to break up or finish off a hot days climbing. Almost entirely undeveloped.

The doline:

Pauls Route (17)

A face route up the breaks. Naked bolts.

Paul Hunt, '96.

Horotea Bluffs

5minutes drive from beer, coffee, camping or bunkbeds. Need I say more. The main wall is the only to see development and rises over 40m high. Many more smaller walls rise out of the bush to the left and right. Developed here could be very exciting.

Two unknown routes.

Te tatua pounamo. (14)

3 bolt access route to below the overhang.

John Newby, Wendy Gilbertson, Mar. '00.

Project. (21)

Frog Pond

An aesthetic crag in a tranquil location, with some sustained climbs worthy of classical status. The crag consists of the Main face, Tangarahu outcrop to the left, and the stepped down wall with 'The Temptress' to the right. The overhanging nose is 15 metres high with the face rising in height back to the longest route of 21metres. The rock extends out from a native bush covered hill and the quality is good apart from the initial soft and dusty few metres on the main face. A set or two of wires and a range of cams is recommended for the few trad routes.

Access

Frog Pond is on the property of the Stubbs family, and is currently leased out to Greg Scott. Greg is happy for climbers to be on the property as long as permission has been granted from the stubbs family. He also expects the usual considerations with respect to his livestock and the closing of gates.

Before entering the property, permission must be sought from Ann or Alister Stubbs (o7) 878 8594.

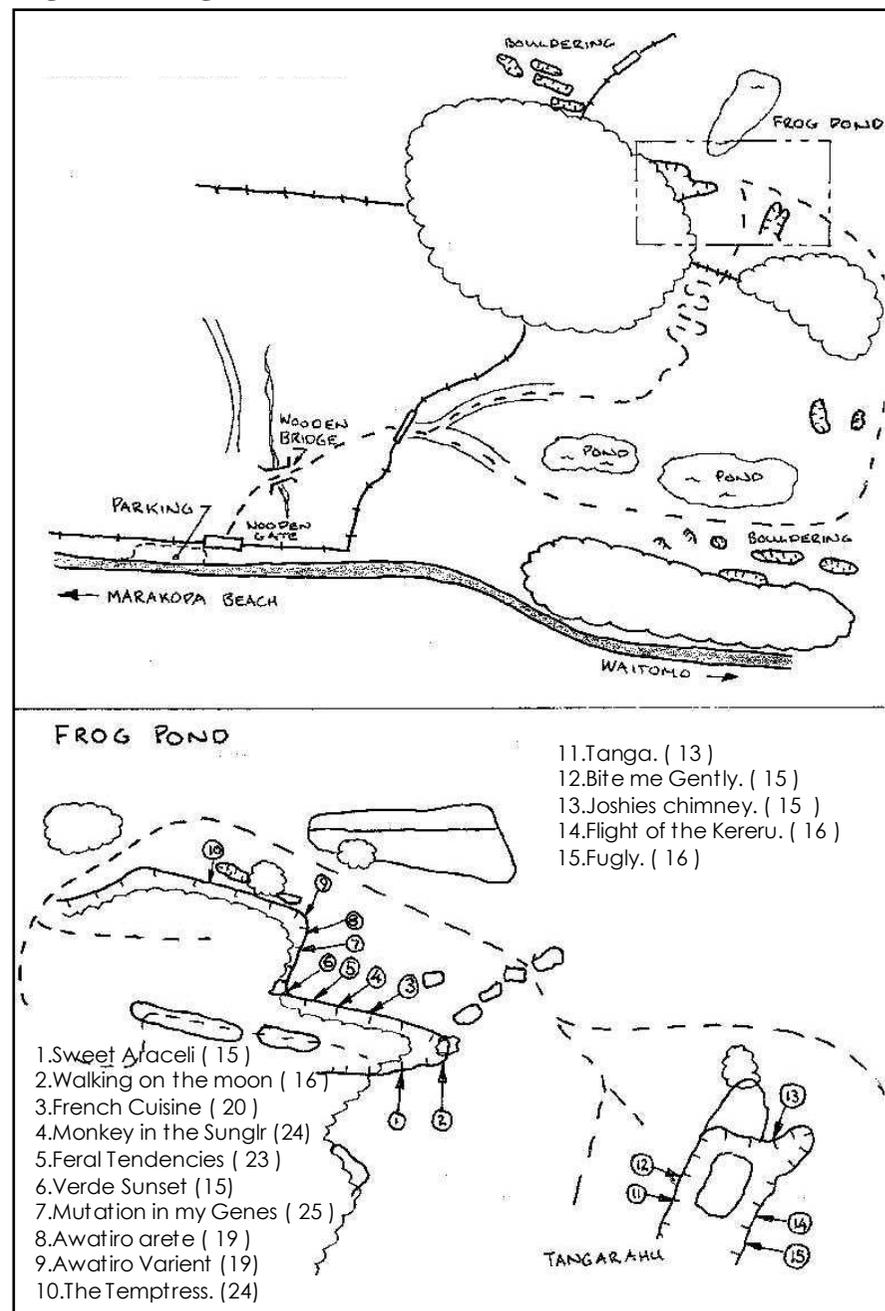
Location

The stubbs farm is located approximately 15km from the Waitomo Caves village towards Marakopa. Drive past the Awatiro driveway and the Te tiro driveways, and down a hill past Waipina road on your left. 1.8 km past Waipina road, as the road begins to straighten out, is a wooden gate off the road to you right. Park here and follow the track in to the crag (see map)

Disclaimer

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Figure 1: Frog Pond



From the east side of the nose, left to right.

Sweet Araceli (15)

A sweet route. Starting on the left arete under the nose, follow the short left tending crack onto the face and up to the horizontal break. Step right, onto the arete and up to the next horizontal break to place a solid last piece of pro. Up and step delicately right onto the laid back slab above the roof. [Pro: Trad]

Josh Taylor, John Newby, Lester Moore, Sept. '99.

Walking on the moon (16)

The first route at Frog Pond. Start as for *Sweet Araceli* but upon reaching the arete carry on traversing right along the thinning break into the corner under the roof. Climb this corner up to and underneath the roof for a rest. Traverse right along the handcrack onto the exposed arete of the nose itself. Abundant and bomber protection but be aware of rope drag. [Pro Trad]

John Newby, Kieran McKay, Sept. '99.

Project (21)

Start directly under the nose and up to the vertical finger crack. Around arete to the deep crack systems on the main face until they disappear and then traverse right along the hand crack to the large groove. Run out to the top of 'WOTM'.

French Cuisine (20)

On the main face is a central crack system running straight up to a big obvious groove. Start left into the lowest point of a curving horizontal crack. This tends right and up to a horizontal break which is traversed right, into the main crack line itself (about 5m up). The rock to this point is soft and sandy but then leads to superb climbing up steep sustained rock. Leave the crack system behind for the technical chimney. Finish up right on big jugs. Ringbolt belay. [Pro: Trad]

John Newby, Josh Taylor Sept. '99.

Feral Tendencies (23)

The ominous eight bolt route on the right of the main face. Destined to be a classic. The name rings true, as much for the nature of some particular moves, as it does for the lifestyle choice of the time. Ringbolt belay.

John Newby. Feb, '01.

Feral Tendencies Direct Project (25 ?)

At the fourth bolt of *Feral Tendencies*(23+), instead of stepping up and right to the finger crack. Brave the naked face directly into the orange orifice.

On the lower face of the main buttress are some good quality bolted routes up to 15m high. From the corner right of *Feral Tendencies* are:

Verde Sunset (15)

Super chimney. It was once a mossy nightmare.

Kelly Chiusano, Mar. '02.

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Mutation in my Genes (25)

Left of the arete. Climb up to the slopers tending right towards the arete, then back to centre face. Very sustained. 6 bolts. Ringbolt belay.

John Newby, Jan. '02.

Awatiro arete (19)

Boulder up to first clip, to arete and face. A good route with a variety of moves. 3 bolts. Shares same belay as 'MMG'.

John Newby, Josh Taylor, Mar. '00.

The Temptress. (24)

Technical crack to start, to sharp sloping crux, to long pumpy finish. 5 bolts.

John Newby, Nov. '01.

Left of the Frog pond is a small face, *Tanga rahu Rock*. Bolt belays and ridiculously easy access to the top.

Tanga. (13)

The crack/chimney on the right (uphill side). A comfortably pleasant natural lead.

Josh Taylor, John Newby, Sept. '99.

Bite me Gently. (15)

Face climb left of *Tanga*. A wee bite to start with, leads to some nice gentle climbing. Three bolts.

John Newby, Josh Taylor, Sept. '99.

Flight of the Kereru. (16)

On the back of *Tanga Rahu* are two bolted lines. Climb the centre line over two bolts for a balancey start, a juggy middle, then think again for the top.

John Newby, Josh Taylor, Oct. '99.

Fugly. (16)

Right of the Kereru is a three bolt climb with a face start to hand smears on the arete.

John Newby, Nov. '99.

Joshies chimney. (15)

On the North end is a discreet wide chimney. Stretch your way across and up, stepping right at the top onto the arete and face. 5 bolts.

Josh Taylor, Cleaned and Soloed. Mar. '00.

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