



Memory of a Journey
**MEMORY OF
A JOURNEY**

Rock Climbing on Ben Lomond

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Robert McMahon & Gerry Narkowicz

BEN LOMOND GUIDE UPDATE

AS OF MAY 2010



Gerry Narkowicz on the
marathon second pitch of
Howitzer (22) at Pavement Bluff.

by Robert McMahon & Gerry Narkowicz

CLIMB TASMANIA INCORPORATED

■ INTRODUCTION

Memory Of A Journey, the climbing guide to Ben Lomond, was published in November 2008. For those of you who already own the guide and have climbed at Ben Lomond, you will know that it is the premier crack climbing venue in Australia. For those having a look at this update out of curiosity or have never been to Ben Lomond, buy the guide, book yourself a trip for next summer and experience crack climbs of singularity and purity not found elsewhere in Australia. The guidebook was comprehensive up until 2008, giving route descriptions and topo photographs to over 350 routes. The book is unique in that it also has 100 pages of memoirs by Robert McMahon, the main pioneer of new routes on the mountain. Copies are available online from Open Spaces Publishing www.osp.com.au or from the author: bob@orielstudio.com.au for \$44.95.

■ New Routes

Since the guide came out, an exciting phase of new development has been happening on the mountain. A fresh eye has been cast over the Flutes and some hard, thin cracks are being done. Previously, the hardest crack on the Flutes was grade 24, but now a new grade 26 has been put up by Ingvar Lidman. There are 3 projects being worked at the moment which will all be 28+ and there are plenty more amazing lines for the taking.

■ Africa

The other major development has been at Africa. In the initial development of the cliff in the 80's, climbers concentrated on the major cracklines. Attempts on the faces in between the cracks resulted in several retreats with stories of fused cracks, blank grooves, bad or non-existent gear and dead ends. Now with better gear, fresh vision and new tactics (cleaning on aid), some improbable lines at Africa have been done. Of note was the first ascent of *Kilimanjaro (25)* by Crazy John Fisher and Gerry Narkowicz, probably the greatest breakthrough on Ben Lomond in the last 30 years. More fun was had by Crazy John and his American compatriot Niels Tzietze. Attempting a super direct to *Kilimanjaro*, Niels broke a hold on the second pitch, ripped most of his gear and took a 50m screamer to within 15m of the ground. There are many new lines to be done at Africa but the size and location of the cliff demands a ground up approach and cleaning on aid when required. This is adventure climbing at its best, going onsight and linking incipient features up 200m cliffs. The reward will be a scary, awesome new route on consistently good rock, but failure could be potentially disastrous as Niels discovered.

■ Life After Bolts

People on the whole seem to have accepted the 'NO BOLT' ethic on the mountain. Some pillock took a bolt kit up on Stacks Bluff attempting a new route and placed a bolt. It was promptly removed. Why would you even carry bolts to Ben Lomond knowing it is a bolt free zone? While there has been a lot of whingeing about the removal of the rap stations on the Flutes, there has been an equal voice of approval for this action. Many people agree with our commitment to keep Ben Lomond as a 100% bolt free zone and as a pure bastion of traditional climbing – which includes bolt free climbs and bolt free descents. Descending is all part of the trad experience as well. The path down the gully is not as serious an erosion problem as the pseudo-greenies would have you believe – much of it is on a scree slope. Most critics are lazy in my opinion; they bring their sport climbing mentality to a big cliff and want the convenience of rapping down. Lazy pricks are also asked to STOP LEAVING TAT after the first pitches on some routes at the Flutes. Unless there is an accident or bailing due to bad weather, there is no excuse for not climbing to the top of the cliff and then walking down. On the established classics like *Ramadan*, *Rajah*, *Barbe di Vendetta*, and *Masterblaster*, there is little or no loose rock on the second pitches. A bit of weetbix near the top of the cliff is all part of the Flutes package. Swallow a spoonful of cement, harden up and get over it.

■ A New Era

The hard new cracks being done on the Flutes and the big new face climbs at Africa prove that Ben Lomond can progress into 26+ territory and possibly produce the hardest crack climbs in the country, all on natural gear. Anyone who places a bolt will look like a complete dickhead compared to some of the futuristic trad routes that are being attempted at the moment.

■ Use Of This Guidebook Update

The new routes in this update are linked to the index system in *Memory Of A Journey*. Note that climbs are indexed by route number and not page number. Photograph topos are included for most new routes and a few existing routes beside these are marked for ease of location. People are welcome to print the PDF and use in conjunction with *Memory Of A Journey*.

■ Acknowledgement

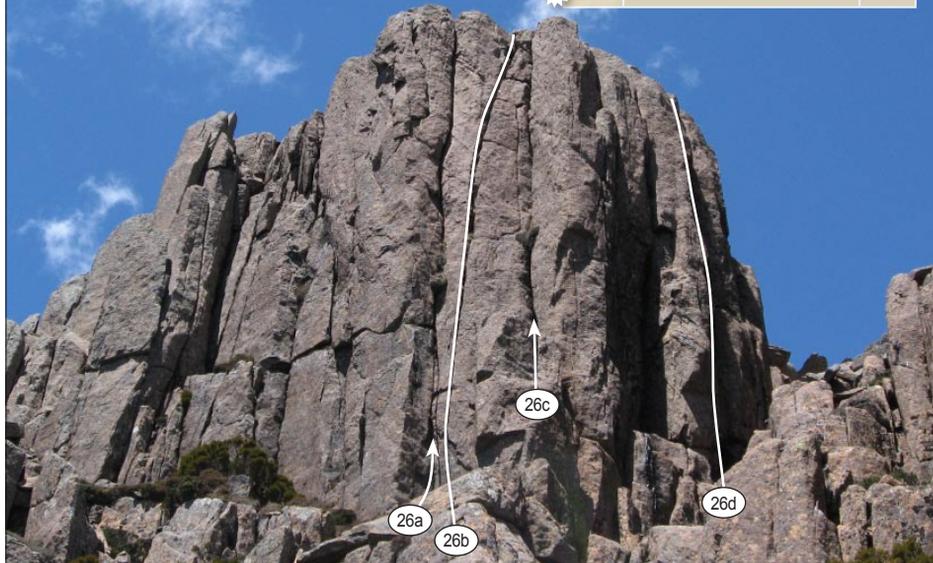
Some new route information was gleaned from www.thesarvo.com website with thanks.

Right: John Fisher and Gerry Narkowicz on the first ascent of *Kilimanjaro (25)* at Africa.



Upper Tenant Buttress Gully

New	26a	Whot-eva	18
New	26b	Innit	18
New	26c	Geezers Need Excitement	18
New	26d	De Klermont	16



UPPER TENANT BUTTRESS GULLY

**See Memory Of A Journey page 26 for more details*

Approach: Park at the top of Jacobs Ladder. Walk in a westerly direction for approximately 30 minutes to reach a small cairned summit between Tenant Buttress and Snake Buttress. From here the cliff is visible down in the gully.

26a Whot-eva 22m 18

Good hand jamming that gets wider and more strenuous at the top. FA: Ben Veltkamp, Andrew Geeves, Dec 2008

26b Innit 22m 18

Tricky to start with, then easy jamming across the diagonal crack. FA: Ben Veltkamp, Andrew Geeves, Dec 2008

26c Geezers Need Excitement 22m 18

Face climb past the dirty hand crack to a bush, then some offwidth and jamming. FA: Ben Veltkamp, Andrew Geeves, Dec 2008

26d De Klermont 18m 16

Finger and hand crack with some good holds on the face. FA: Ben Veltkamp, Andrew Geeves, Dec 2008

LOCAL LOSER

**See Memory Of A Journey page 45-51 for more details*

87a Born Again Loser 45m 24 ***

The direct finish to *Born Loser*. Up *Born Loser* to the top of the second corner, then from the roof, climb directly up the headwall via thin seams and face holds, with good small cams for protection. At the top of the headwall, continue up the unprotected slab to the ledge. Finish up the line of least resistance to the top, as for *Lapis Lazuli*. FA: Gerry Narkowicz and John Fischer. 3/1/10

Local Loser



85	Hidden Secrets	20	***
86	Small Change Big Time	26	***
87	Born Loser	23	**
New 87a	Born Again Loser	24	***
89	Lapus Lazuli	17	***

Robins Buttress

New	106a	Captain Planet	21	**
New	108a	Necrophiliac	21	
	109	Necromancer	21	
	114	Rigaudon	20	***
New	124a	Doug and Squib	24	***
	125	Climbers Variant	24	***



BULLFIGHTER BUTTRESS

**See Memory Of A Journey page 52-56 for more details*

When standing directly in front of Bullfighter Buttress, a short wall is visible down and just right of the main cliff.

103a Walk Like An Egyptian 10m 23

A thin start leads to a hand crack at the top (past some bushes) FA: Nic Perndt, Dec 2008

OSIRIS BUTTRESS

The next small buttress uphill from Isis Buttress and on the same side of the descent gully (opposite Bullfighter Buttress). Approach by traversing in from high up in the descent gully. Descend by an easy walk off the back.

103b Left Foot, Right Foot 18m 20

Up slab made by fallen pillar then take short hand crack on R to reach sloping ledge. Climb the crack splitting the face past a section that is not the most friendly of sizes. FA: Dean Rollins, Nic Perndt, Jan 2009.

103c Matter of Time 18m 17

As for LFRF to the sloping ledge, then take the dark crack in the corner. FA: Nic Perndt, Dean Rollins, Jan 2009

DESCENT GULLY AREA

About half way down the main descent gully a rough path leads uphill to the left underneath the cliffline. This is an alternative and shorter path to the base of Robins Buttress..

103d Turbulence 25m 23

A prominent thin corner about 50m along the path described above. Start up the short hand crack on the L, then move R into the line along rail and climb the thin open-book corner. FA: Dean Rollins, Nic Perndt, Jan 2009

Further along this descent track to Robin's Buttress, a short cliff appears on the R just before the saddle.

103e Arse Floss 10m 16

The clean crack towards the L end of the wall. Thin at the start, then widens towards the top. FA: Tim Stubbley, Dean Rollins, Dec 2008

SPLIT SURPRISE BUTTRESS

As you head up the scree towards the base of Robins Buttress there is a short cliff on the left which faces to the west. Split Surprises is the twin cracks in the centre, the left crack being rather wide.

105b Super Snappy's Homemade Salsa 10m 24/25

Sustained stemming up a thin line on the far left of the buttress. FA: Nic Perndt, Dean Rollins, Jan 2008

FREW'S FLUTES

**See Memory Of A Journey page 62 for more details*

106a Captain Planet 65m 21 **

Located on the far left of Robin's Buttress. Walk up the descent gully and near the top of the scree section it is possible to scramble back right to the base of the main cliff. The climb starts up the corner with a finger crack. 1) 20m, 21. Climb finger crack to a ledge at 7m. Continue finger locking and laybacking up corner until an exciting exit up the slabby groove. 2) 35m, 21. A splitter crack, easier than it looks thanks to numerous face holds. Direct off the belay is committing as it is difficult to place gear from the face holds. Alternatively, it is possible to climb up right and step into the line. 3) 10m. Solo to top. FA: Andrew Geeves, Ben Veltkamp alt. 06-02-2010

108a Necrophiliac 25m 21

The line L of the original first pitch to *Necromancer*. Step in from hand crack on the L, then climb the sustained hand and finger crack, finishing at the top of the square cut pillar. FA: Nic Perndt, Dean Rollins, Jan 2009

124a Doug and Squib's Route 75m 24

1) 30m, 22. Climbs the thin seam up the front of the buttress right of *Barbe di Vendetta*. Belay as for first pitch of *Climbers Variant*. 2) 25m, 24. The splitter finger crack left of the second pitch of *Climbers Variant*. 3) 20m, 17. Easy cracks to the top. FA: Doug McConnell and Squib. Summer of 2009

LAST OF THE INDEPENDENTS RIDGE

*See *Memory Of A Journey* page 72-73 for more details

Access: The obvious ridge with prominent pillars to the right of Robins Buttress. From the LHS of Robins Buttress take the usual path up to the base of Ramadan etc, then keep traversing on a rough path to the right past Barbe di Vendetta as if going up to Rondeau or King of Heaven. The last section getting up to the Rondeau ledge is a short crack with a tree to grab hold of. Once at the ledge, cross the gully and scramble down to the base of the climbs.

*Note that on the updated topo, routes 134 and 136 have shifted two lines to the right. *Jesus Was A Terrorist* is marked as *Blast From The Past* in the original topo.

133a Jesus Was a Terrorist 43m 22 **

The beaut finger to thin hands corner crack about 2m left of Ass, Gas or Grass. Climb the right facing corner bridging on face holds until a thin hands crux gets you to a jug/no hands rest. One more tricky move gets you to an easier crack system and the belay. FA: John Fischer, G. Phillips, 13 Feb. 2009

EL SHADDAI AREA

*See *Memory Of A Journey* page 80-82 for more details

153 Warsaw 100m 23 ***

Upgraded since the guidebook came out. A phenomenal east facing corner, now even better with its new direct start. One of the greatest pitches on the mountain. FA: Ben Maddison, Evelyn Lees. 1981

153a Warsaw Direct 20m 21 *

A new first pitch to *Warsaw*. Quality climbing up the thin jam crack leading directly to the belay ledge below the main corner of *Warsaw*. FA: Gerry Narkowicz and Ingvar Lidman. 29/12/09

154a Bridgemaster Zero 95m 26 ***

The ultimate bridging testpiece on Ben Lomond. The mindblowing thin corner 2 lines R of *El Shaddai*. The entire pitch is a continuous smearing, palming, stemming, crux with only 2 decent footholds for rests and hardly any hand holds. It is well protected by loads of small wires and cams. First ascent was on pre-placed gear. Belay where the corner starts to get chossy at about 50m height, then step left into a neater crack for a second pitch to the top. FA: Ingvar Lidman. 1/1/10

ROCK A DAY JOHNNY FACE

*See *Memory Of A Journey* page 82-86 for more details

160a Hickory Wind 45m 20 ***

Flakes and rib on the front of the pillar separating *Cuchulain* and *Conchubar*. A cracker. The Ben's answer to Skyrocket.

Start: belay ledge beneath *Cuchulain's* 3rd (corner) pitch. Lean around arete to place good cams, then climb 2m up *Cuchulain's* R wall to break. Follow this R. around arete and onto large creaky but good flake on face. Blast upwards on excellent rock, with beautiful moves and great gear (single set Cams to 3, plenty of good wires). Finish on belay at top of pillar. Exit up *Cuchulain/Conchubar*. FA: Ben Maddison, Squib. 16/01/2009

Robins Buttress (RHS)

New	124a	Doug and Squib	24	***
	125	Climbers Variant	24	***



124a

125

Last Of The Independents Ridge

133	Suddenly Last Summer	19	*
<small>new</small> 133a	Jesus Was A Terrorist	22	**
134	Ass, Gas or Grass	18	**
136	Blast From The Past	18	**



133

133a

134

136

Frews Flutes (Main Face)

151	Thirty Five Millimetre Dream	20	**
153	Warsaw '81	23	***
<small>Now</small> 153a	Warsaw '81 Direct	21	*
154	El Shaddai	22	**
<small>Now</small> 154a	Bridgemaster Zero	26	***



151

153

154

154a

153a

El Shaddai Area

New	153a	Warsaw '81 Direct	21	*
	154	El Shaddai	22	**
New	154a	Bridgemaster Zero	26	***
	155	This Is The End	22	**



154a

153a

154

155

Rock A Day Johnny Face



New	160a	Hickory Wind	20	***
	163	Laendler	20	***
New	163a	Knockin On Heaven's Door	19	
New	163b	Lay Lady Lay	24	

163a Knockin' on Heaven's Door 170m 19

Up the centre of the *Laendler Face*, linking a series of prominent features. Take some big cams. Start 30m R of *Laendler* at a prominent NW-facing crack splitting the front of a column. 1) 30m 17. Up the crack of various widths to ledge. Up wide crack above with chockstones to ledge on L (with big leaning block). 1a) 8m 16. Downclimb L to ledge below tower. 2) 32m 17. Chimney up behind the detached pillar to its top, then pull onto wall on R and up to belay ledge. 3) 22m 16. Up the obvious gash above. Belay off to the L on bushy ledge below wide crack. 4) 28m 19. Up handcrack to bottomless offwidth. 5) 25m 18. As for *Rock A Day Johnny*. Up recessed L-facing corner on R to niche, move L and up to ledge, then up short crack on L to block belay. 6) 25m. Scramble to the top. FA: Dean Rollins, Jake Bresnehan (alt.), 18/11/2008

163b Lay Lady Lay 170m 24

Start 30m R of *Laendler* at a prominent NW-facing crack splitting the front of a column (as for *Knockin' on Heaven's Door*). 1) 25m 17. Up the ever widening crack to a ledge. 2) 25m 24. From the right side of the ledge head towards the roof, climbing on the right side of a fin. Traverse left under roof. Belay up 2 meters and left of roof. 3) 20m 16. Step back right and climb the line above, eventually moving left on face holds to access the ledge and the start of a wide crack. 4) 10m 17. A wide crack. Take some big gear. 5) 25m 19. Straight up twin cracks via some tricky moves. Belay on high ledge or take a few extra mid sized cams and link pitch 5 and 6. 6) 12m 23. Some more tricky moves leading to some handjams. 7) 10m 10. Head up on the ridge till you can move left to the start of pitch 8. 8) 25m 18. As for *Rock-A-Day Johnny*. Up recessed L-facing corner on R to niche, move L and up to ledge, then up short crack on L to block belay. 9) 25m. Scramble to the top. FA: Gary Phillips, Jake Bresnehan (alt.), 26/11/2009

MOUSTACHE TOWER

*See *Memory Of A Journey* page 89 for more details

The square topped columnar tower about 50m right of Rock A Day Johnny Ridge.

165a Ancient Empty Street 70m 19

A line to the right of *Haggis* joining it for the last pitch. Start in the cave chimney at the front of the tower. 1) 30m 16. Chimney up until possible to pull onto main wall. Move R past spike and up to belay below R of two cracks. 2) 20m 18. A tricky start to gain the hand crack. 3) 20m 19. As for *Haggis*. Good climbing up the right leaning crack to the top. Descend off to the R and 2 abseils from spikes. FA: Jake Bresnehan, Dean Rollins (alt.), 19-11-2008

AFRICA

*See *Memory Of A Journey* page 119-136 for more details

239a Kilamanjaro 205m 25 ***

The long awaited direct route up the centre of the *Ruwenzori Face*. 1) 50m, 20. Start at the thin seam 15m L of *Ruwenzori*. Terrific face climbing with well spaced but good wires in the seam leading to the right trending crack/groove system which takes you to the base of the second pitch (corner fist crack) of *Ruwenzori*. 2) 40m, 22. From the belay ledge, some very committing moves left to the arête with little for protection. Up the face on great holds trending left to the base of a blank corner/groove with a small bush at the base. Climb past the bush, then go sensationally left up the face for about 10m before trending back right to a flake and small overlap. Tricky moves lead to a groove, then up this for several metres to belay at hanging stance. 3) 25m, 25. Traverse R into corner below small roof, up corner for a couple of moves then go left into thin crack on arête leading to slot above the roof. Up the improbable face (crux) with technical climbing several metres above small gear in an outrageous position. After the crux, trend slightly left into thin seams where the difficulty gradually eases at a small ledge. Take 4RP, 2RP, and C3 cam for crux section. 4) 30m, 17. Continue directly up line to gain large ledge. 5) 30m, 17. As for *Ruwenzori*. Up central corner of upper towers to big ledge. 6) 30m, 17. Up diagonal wide crack on R side of buttress as for *Ruwenzori*. FA: John Fischer and Gerry Narkowicz (alt) 7/1/10

Rock A Day Johnny

NEW	160a	Hickory Wind	20	***
	163	Laendler	20	***
NEW	163a	Knockin On Heaven's Door	19	
NEW	163b	Lay Lady Lay	24	
	164	Rock A Day Johnny	18	***



Moustache Tower

165	Haggis	17
NEW 165a	Ancient Empty Street	19



Heimdall Crag

Descent Gully Cliff

Descent Gully

238

239

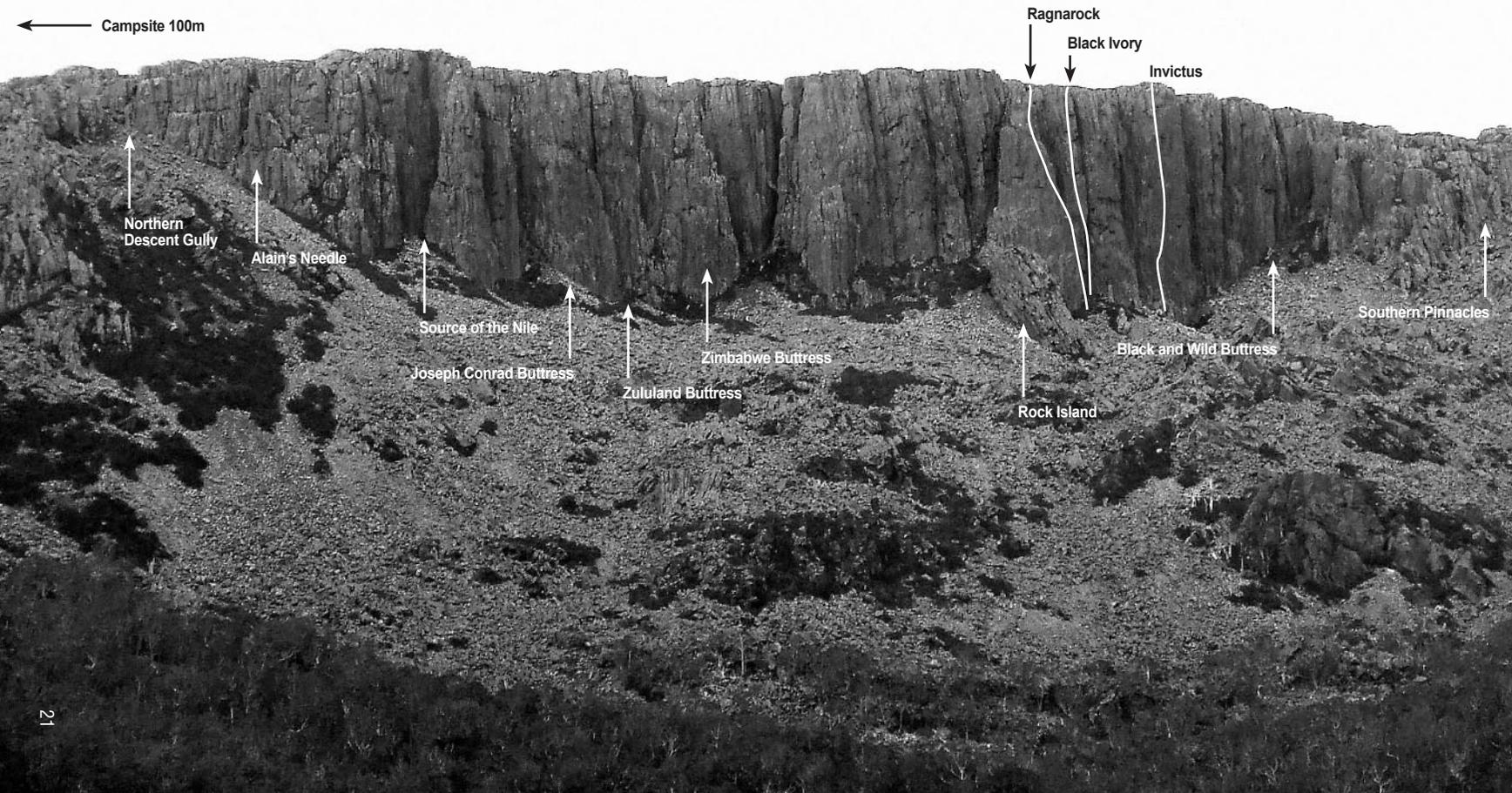
239a

240

Ruwenzori Face

238	Rorkes Drift	15	*
239	Touching Heaven, Changing Earth	22	**
<small>New</small> 239a	Kilimanjaro	25	***
240	Ruwenzori	20	***

Asgard Crag



← Campsite 100m

↑
Northern
Descent Gully

↑
Alain's Needle

↑
Source of the Nile

↑
Joseph Conrad Buttress

↑
Zimbabwe Buttress

↑
Zululand Buttress

↓
Ragnarock

↓
Black Ivory

↑
Invictus

↑
Rock Island

↑
Black and Wild Buttress

↑
Southern Pinnacles

Ruwenzori Face



 239a	Kilimanjaro	25	***
 239b	Kill A Mangy Roo	22	**
240	Ruwenzori	20	***

239a

240

Ruwenzori Face

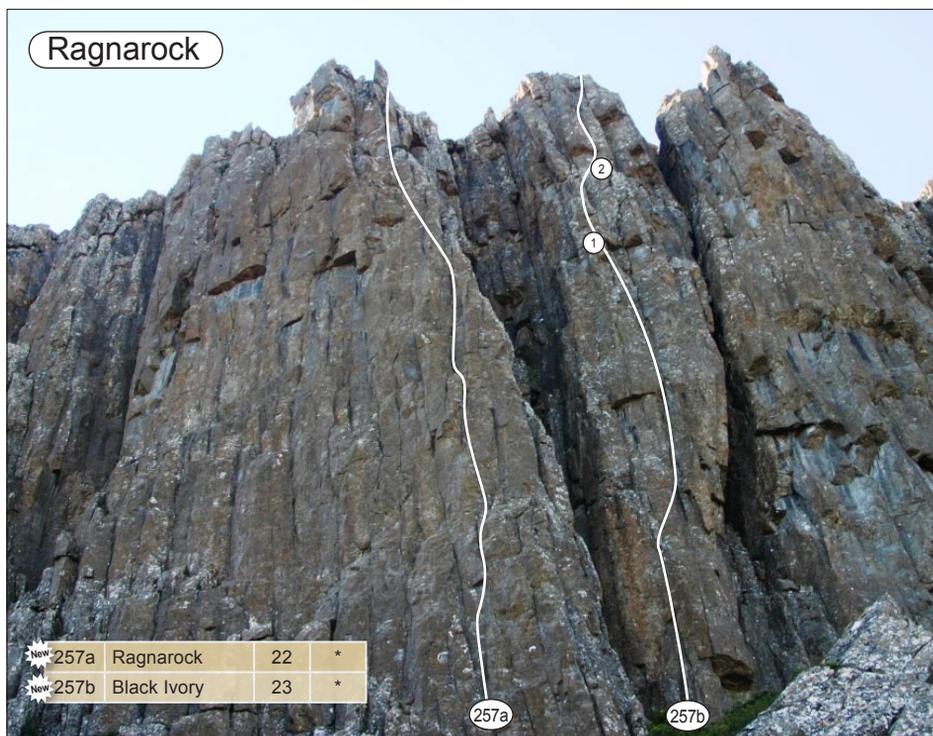
New 239a

Kilimanjaro

25



239a



239b Kill A Mangy Roo 205m 22 **

An alternative 3rd pitch to *Kilamanjaro* avoiding the desperate 25 pitch, and giving a desperate, run out 22 pitch instead. Pitch 1 and 2 as for *Kilamanjaro*. 3) 40m, 22. From the 2nd belay of *Kilamanjaro*, move right into the corner below the roof and continue traversing up and right for 8m to the arête. Committing and difficult moves up the face/arête to the ledge and 3rd belay of *Ruwenzori*. 4,5,6) Continue as for *Ruwenzori*. FA: John Fisher and Gerry Narkowicz. 6/1/10

257a Ragnarock 140m 22 **

Access: Walk 200m past *Kurtz* passing a big bushy gully (which ends at the top of *Ragnarock*). Continue past a 25m high detached boulder with distinctive diagonal lines on its south facing cliff (the *Rock Island*). Start left of the arete directly below the gigantic capstone at the top of the buttress. The splitter crack below that is the hand crack of pitch 4.

Gear: Double set of micro offset wires (peenuts), set of offset wires, set of RP's, single rack of cams from blue alien up to #4 Camelot. 1) 30m 22. Climb from the left easily onto a pedestal at 5m. From there smear up the corner crack to a bulge. Traverse right and climb the next corner crack (crux) to a scary pedestal under a dirty finger crack. Instead of going up this traverse under the roof right and gain the right hand roof crack. Airy moves on disconcerting but solid holds lead to righthand ledge. 2) 30m 22 (crux). From the ledge, climb left along a thin crack to another ledge. Up the obvious corner crack (crux) until it ends. Step left and mantle onto belay ledge. 3) 35m 21. Up the long corner crack until it ends. Climb left around the arete. Step on loose boulder and climb two corners. Traverse on jugs several metres left and belay at the base of the hand crack in the corner (on the first ascent this pitch finished before the traverse). 4) 45m 18. Climb the hand crack in the corner to the next ledge. Climb the right offwidth to the top. A step over the void to the left leads to easier ground. Another 15m or so of easy climbing leads to the summit. FA: John Fischer and Anna-Veronique L'hoest. 27/1/10

257b Black Ivory 100m 23 *

The next buttress to the R of *Ragnarock* is a slender pillar formation with a big grassy ledge at the base. 1) 50m, 22. Climb the awkward finger crack on the LHS of the buttress before stepping R at about 25m into the central corner groove. Bridge with difficulty and some dirtiness in the crack to the prominent roof. Turn via a handy chockstone and belay. 2) 50m, 23. Up easy wide crack for 10m to ledge, then step R to base of splitter finger crack through roof. Pure, sustained finger locking for 15m then negotiate desperate mossy upper grooves. FA: Niels Tzietze and Gerry Narkowicz. 28/1/10

257c Invictus 120m 23 ***

The fourth buttress R of the *Rock Island*. After *Kurtz*, probably the best route on Asgard. Start at double handcracks on LHS of big pillar. 1) 35m, 19. Jam handcrack on L to half height then step into RH one to top of pillar. 2) 35m, 22. One of the best pitches at Africa. From belay, climb onto arête on R, get good cam then a committing traverse R into fantastic central corner. Sustained finger locking and laybacking up the perfect corner crack. The crack peters out to a blank groove for the last 5m and some committing moves leading out from small gear to a small stance up right. 3) 50m, 23. Follows the path of least resistance to the top, trending R. A serious undertaking. Up thin cracks for 10m to flake, then head R into blank groove. Up this for 5m then head R and go through weakness in overlap (crux). Eventually the route tackles a face with several horizontal breaks with hard moves between each break and sketchy gear. FA: Niels Tzietze and Gerry Narkowicz (alt) 27/1/10

PAVEMENT BLUFF

**See Memory Of A Journey page 165-183 for more details*

319a The Grand Hoax 65m 19

1) 57m 19. Up face and corner to a ledge, then up hand, fist, o/w crack. The horizontal breaks take smaller gear. No.5 camalot useful at the top. 2) 8m. Jam to top. FA: Andrew Geeves, Ben Veltkamp, 25/1/09

316a The Golden Path 45m 22 **

Abseil to the ledge 5m above the gully. Superb face climbing with an occasional jam. Cruxy for the first 8m. FA: Ben Veltkamp, Andrew Geeves, Richard Halsey, 26/1/09



Blitzkrieg Buttress (RHS)



New 316a	The Golden Path	22	**
317	I Came For You	17	
319	Guderian	20	*
New 319a	The Grand Hoax	19	