

# LION ROCK

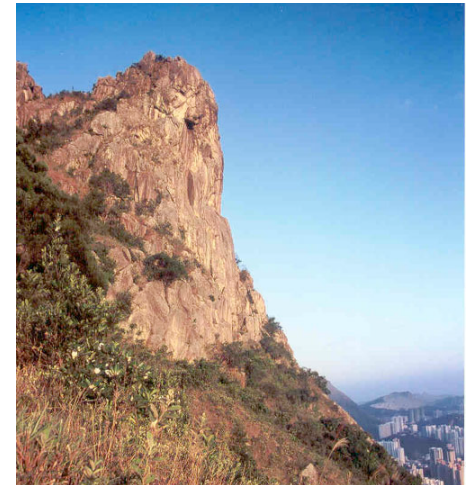


Rocky Lok on Last Round Last Minute (F8a+)  
Photo: Lok Collection

# LION ROCK

## GENERAL

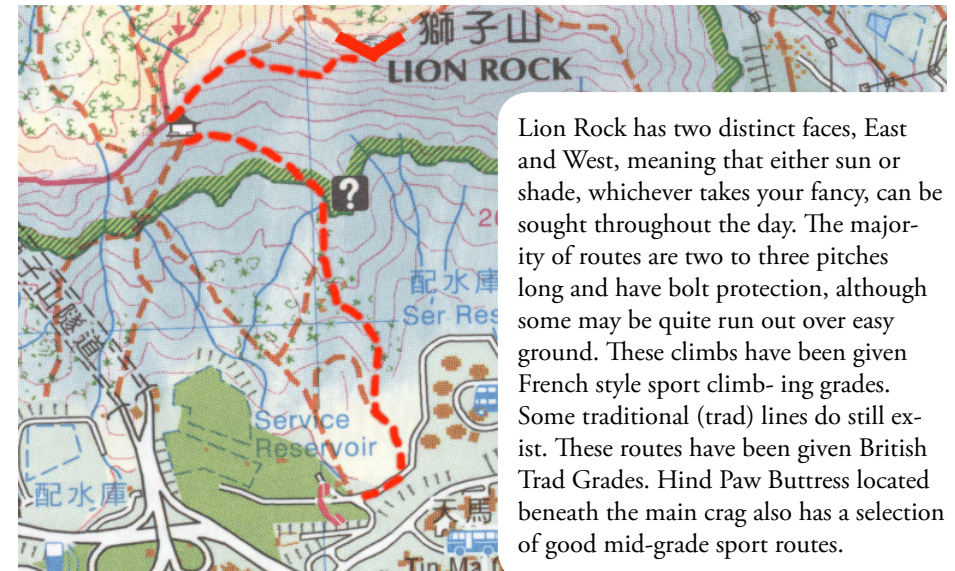
Dominating the skyline behind the Kowloon Peninsula, Lion Rock is probably Hong Kong's best 'mountain crag'. Although not huge, about 250 ft at its tallest point, the granite cliff is perched high on a hillside well above the city and with few other parties generally climbing there its easy to feel detached from the chaos of the crowds below.



## APPROACH

**Kowloon side:** Take the MTR to Lok Fu Station and get a taxi to Lion Rock Country Park (Sze Tsz San). Follow the road to the right of the park entrance gates for about 30 m before heading up the hill on a well signposted footpath. Upon reaching a small shelter on the ridge line take the upper right hand path (signposted to Lion Rock) and continue upwards. When approximately level with the toe of the crag a small dirt path breaks off right from the main track (by a small platform and a 'Danger - Steep Cliffs' signpost) and leads to the foot of the cliff. Approach time approx. 40 minutes.

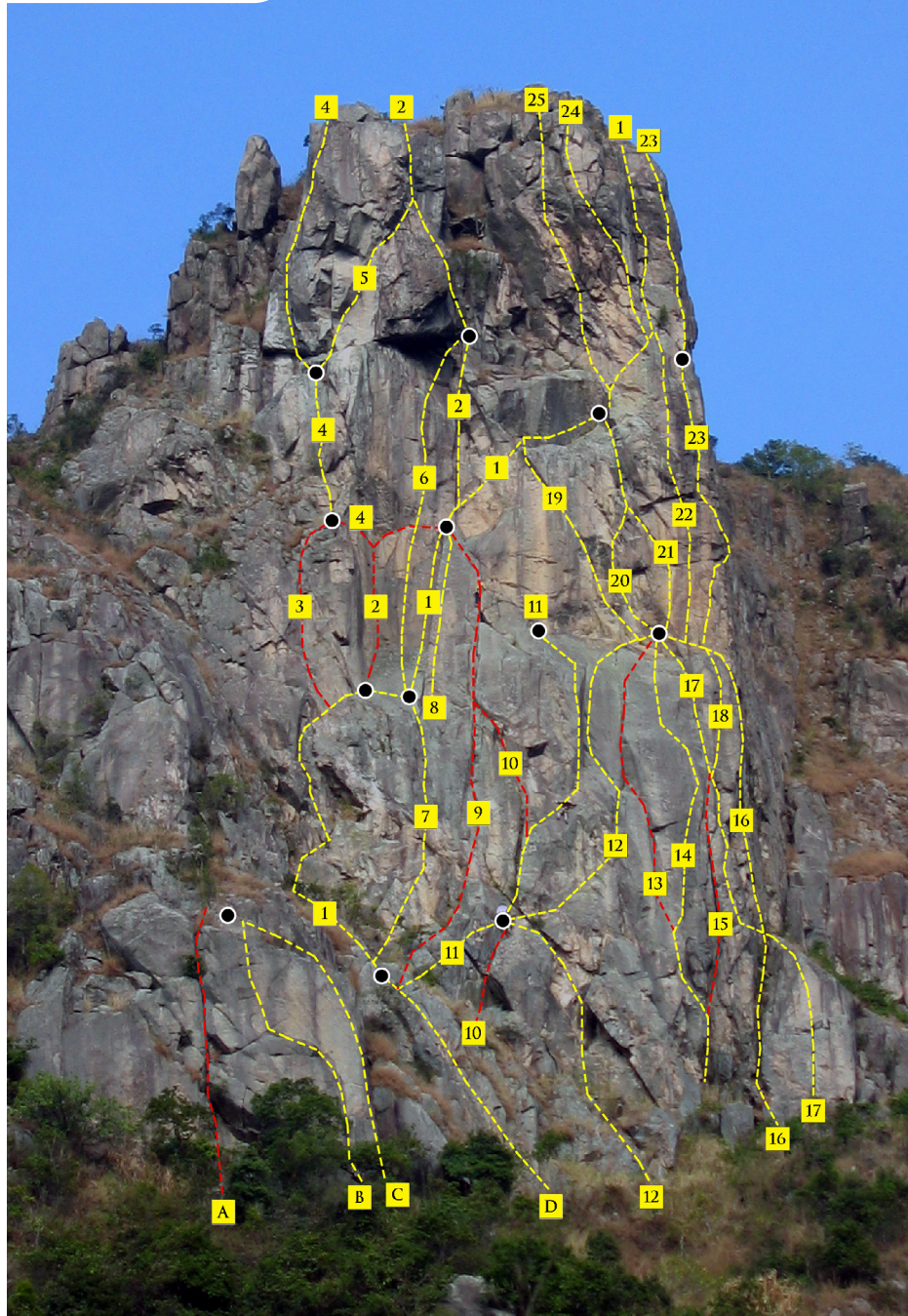
**Sha Tin side:** Take the MTR to Sha Tin Station and get a taxi to Mong Fu Shek BBQ. From here follow the obvious footpath up the hill towards the crag. From the shelter follow the left hand path up the ridge and approach as for Kowloon side. Approach time approx. 45 minutes.



Lion Rock has two distinct faces, East and West, meaning that either sun or shade, whichever takes your fancy, can be sought throughout the day. The majority of routes are two to three pitches long and have bolt protection, although some may be quite run out over easy ground. These climbs have been given French style sport climbing grades. Some traditional (trad) lines do still exist. These routes have been given British Trad Grades. Hind Paw Buttress located beneath the main crag also has a selection of good mid-grade sport routes.

Stuart Millis far above the maddening crowds on Scaredy Cat (F6c+)  
Photo: Ron Yue

## WEST FACE



## (A) Sauriaphobia E1 5b

Climb the grubby central crack to the left of Henry's Walk, using the overhanging crack on the right to start (Trad). Recently retro-bolted with a inferior start to the left of the crack.

F.A. M. Puttnam & L. Griener (1994)

## (B) Henry's Walk \* F5+

Follow the obvious leftward slanting crack line to just right of Sauriaphobia before heading vertically up.

F.A. G. Pilcher (1995)

## (C) Obsession F6a+

Climb the left hand wall of the corner to the right of Henry's Walk.

F.A. G. Pilcher (1995)

## (D) Prelude F4

Climb the easy slab up to the grassy ledges.

F.A. G. Pilcher (1992)

Routes 1-7 all start at the top of Prelude.

## (1) Gweilo \*\*\* F5+

*A Hong Kong classic offering relatively amenable climbing in a stunning situation.*

Pitch 1 - F4+. As for Wards Grooves

Pitch 2 - F5. Take the right hand corner crack, belaying on the ledge above.

Pitch 3 - F5. Make a short diagonal traverse right and climb around the corner to a large ledge.

Pitch 4 - F5+. Climb a short way up the wall above before traversing right to a small tree (crux). Follow the grooves above to the summit.

F.A. G. Pilcher & T. Brown (1991).

## (2) Wards Groove \*\*\* - HVS 5b, F6b

*The original line up the crag and still one of its most interesting lines.*

Pitch 1 - F4+. Start up the grassy gully before trending right to blocks below a dark overlap. Follow a rightward trending flake to a belay at the base of a corner.

Little in the way of fixed protection, can be better protected with wires, friends etc.

Pitch 2 - HVS 5b. Take the left hand corner crack before swinging right to a belay just below the lions head. (Trad). Can be avoided by climbing pitch 2 of Gweilo.

Pitch 3 - F6b. Climb up the crack and chimney directly above the belay.

Pitch 4 - F6a+. Step left from the belay, using the tree if necessary, and climb onto the right hand side of the lions head. Finish up the short wall.

F.A. J. Ward & J. Bunnell (1958) - retrobolted

## (3) Waikiki Beach \*\* HVS 5a

Start as for Gweilo pitch 1 and head left where the flake curves right. Continue up and slightly right to a ledge and abseil chain. (Trad) A good alternative start to Feline Phrenology

F.A. T. Brown, R. Wilkinson, M. Eckhardt (1994)

## (3a) Space Odyssey E1 5b

Start as Gweilo, up the grassy gully and stretch across to ledges on Wakiki Beach, move back left and up to small ledge. Continue up (slightly left) then go right to the Wakiki Beach belay (Bold).

F.A. Martin Foakes, Tim Brown (1994)

## (4) Feline Phrenology \*\* F7a

Pitch 1 - F6b. Climb Reunion II.

Pitch 2 - HVS 5b. Climb the left hand corner crack, as for Pitch 2 of Wards Groove, but don't traverse right at the top. (Trad - small wires and friends)

Pitch 3 - F6c. Climb the cracks and shallow grooves in the wall above to the large ledge (sustained).

Pitch 4 - F7a. Move left and climb the undercut corner crack, very technical. Continue diagonally across the slab above to a final exposed move.

F.A. M. Lancaster & F. Nell (1993)

## (5) Walking on Sunshine \*\* F7b

*An airy variation to Pitch 4 of Feline Phrenology.*

From the ledge make tricky moves up and right onto the Lions Head with nothing but thin air beneath your heels. Continue diagonally right until it is possible to rock round onto the final slab of Wards Grooves. Belay here and then finish up Wards Groove.

F.F.A. Rocky Lok

## (6) Double Espresso \*\* F8a+

Start at the end of Pitch 2 of Gweilo. Tackle the blank slab and wall located between the 'open book' on Gweilo and Wards Groove before launching up the steep headwall above.

F.A. Rocky Lok (2005).

## (7) Reunion II \*\* F6b

Climb directly up the wall to the left of Gweilo, pitch 1 via a long reach to a small shelf and the crack above.

F.A. M. Lancaster, G. Pilcher, M. Nichols (1992)

## (8) Unemployment Line \*\* F6a+

A fine alternative to Pitch 2 of Gweilo. Climb the arête and slab to the right of Gweilo Pitch 2.

F.A. Martin Lancaster plus others? (1994)

**(9) Topcat \* HVS 5a, 5b**

Pitch 1 - HVS 5a. Follow the obvious crack line, steep at first, moving left to a belay. (Trad)

Pitch 2 - HVS 5b. Move back to the crack, climb up easily to the blocks above making a final hard move to the belay. (Trad)

F.A. Unknown

**(10) Aslan \* E2 6a**

Start approx 5m. to the right of Prelude. Scramble up the grassy ledges and start up a short corner before moving right into the main crack line. Follow this to crux moves at its exit. Belay off to the left as for Reunion II, placing protection on the traverse to safeguard the second. (Trad)

F.A. M. Lancaster & R. Mugglestone (1993)

**(11) Fickle Felines \*\* F6b**

Start by traversing right from the top of Prelude to a two bolt belay with abseil chains on a good ledge at the base of Aslan. Clip a bolt on the rib to the right then step right into Cats and Dogs for a move until it is possible to step back left to the rib. The same point can be gained by climbing directly up the rib but is more difficult. Move up for a few metres and then make a rising traverse right wards (crux) to the edge of the Cats and Dogs belay ledge. Step left around the rib above and then climb insecurely in a fine position until easier ground and the abseil/Belay station is reached.

F.A. P. Collis & A. Thomson (2003)

**(12) Cats and Dogs \*\* F6a+, HVS 5b**

Pitch 1 - VS 4c. Start up the left hand side of the pinnacle and move left into a small crack/groove near its crest. Follow the groove right to a bolt (Trad).

Pitch 2 - F6a+. From the belay ledge climb diagonally right and then up to a short crack. Belay on the stance above.

Pitch 3 - HVS 5b. Follow the left hand crack and then traverse right across the slab to a large ledge and belay stance (Trad).

F.A. M. Lancaster & F. Nell (1991)

**(12a) Christmas Tree E4 6c**

Start as for Cats and Dogs but continue to the top of the pinnacle and take the thin crack line. Originally E3 6a, now much harder and getting harder with each ascent.

F.A. K. Brown & S. Bate (1995)

**(13) Jet Roar \*\* F6b+**

Start up Catastrophe (Route 15) and move left to a small slab. Continue out left onto the face and then follow the groove above, exiting on its left (crux). Follow the awkward right hand crack line above. Belay above Catastrophe.

F.A. M. Lancaster & P. Dockery (1992)

**(14) Kitten Claws \* F7a**

Start as for Jet Roar. From the second bolt on Jet Roar, step right and make technical moves to gain the small groove above. Climb directly past the sixth bolt using a good edge out left and so gain good holds that lead right into Catastrophe. Follow Catastrophe for several metres to a ledge then leave the groove / crack by way of an exposed step left onto the wall via a series of small edges that end at a small hand ledge. Follow the technical slab above to an anchor.

F.A. Francis Haden (2012).

**(15) Catastrophe HVS 5a**

Climb the obvious chimney / crack, leaving only for a short section near the top.

F.A. Unknown

**(16) Pussy Galore \* F6c**

Scramble up the gully until it is possible to step onto the wall at the level of the first bolts. Move up and right using the arête and holds on the right wall to reach easy ground. Follow this up the arête to reach a steeper head wall. Make a series of committing moves up the arête / wall and then follow the right side of the arête, with occasional rest stances on the arête itself, to the large ledge and belay anchors.

F.A. Stuart Millis, Christophe Terasse and Paul Collis (2009).

**(17) The Arête \*\* F6a+**

Start just right of the main face at a small off-width crack, jam up this to the ledge above - those not liking jamming or rope drag may wish to avoid this section and scramble up to the ledge. Stride left onto the arête and climb up it with minor excursions either side in search of holds, easy but very run out in central section. Keep left near the top and follow Catastrophe to the anchor.

F.A. G. Pilcher & M. Lancaster (1991)

This route superseded an old trad line (Dante's Arête) climbed by Martin Jones in 1970

**(18) Groove Finish \*\*\* F6b**

A better alternative finish to The Arête is to move right into the groove near its crest and follow its right hand edge to the top.

F.A. M. Lancaster & P. Dockery (1992)

**(19) Hello Kitty \*\* F7a**

Follow the thin left wards trending groove line to a tricky finish on the head wall above.

F.A. S. Millis & S. Yip (2004)

**(20) Firecracker \*\* F6c**

Climb the overhanging lay back crack directly above the final belay of Cats and Dogs.

F.A. M. Lancaster (1992) - bolted by G. Pilcher

**(21) Dancing with Fire F7b+**

Climb the line of old aid bolts directly above the ledge, traversing left to join Firecracker at the base of the groove.

F. F.A. Rocky Lok (1998)

**(22) The Power of Love \*\*\* F8b**

An awesome looking line tackling the obvious head wall directly above the belay ledge of the Arête (between Dancing with Fire and Balance of Power).

F.A. Rocky Lok (2009).

**(23) Balance of Power \*\* F7a**

*A spectacular free climb up the line of the old aid route Gerbolt.*

From the belay of The Arête step right and climb the arête to the top of the obvious groove. Traversing about 3 m right and climb up the wall above, past a single bolt, to a good jug and rest. Move back left on to the arête itself and make exposed moves past old bolts up to a sloping ledge, possible belay. Follow the arête and cracks to the summit.

F.A. S. Monks (1992)

**(24) Scaredy Cat F6c+**

Start as for pitch 4 of Gweilo. Climb a up the wall before traversing right to a small tree, as for Gweilo. Climb a short way up the groove above before breaking out left across the wall to the arête. Swing around the arête (crux) and climb the wall above. It is also possible to climb the route by attacking the arête more directly.

F.F.A. S. Millis & A. Christensen (2002).

Equipped by Paul Collis

**(25) Closed Project. Do Not Climb (yet)**

The headwall to the left of Scaredy Cat Bolted and being worked by Francis Haden (2012)

**Descent**

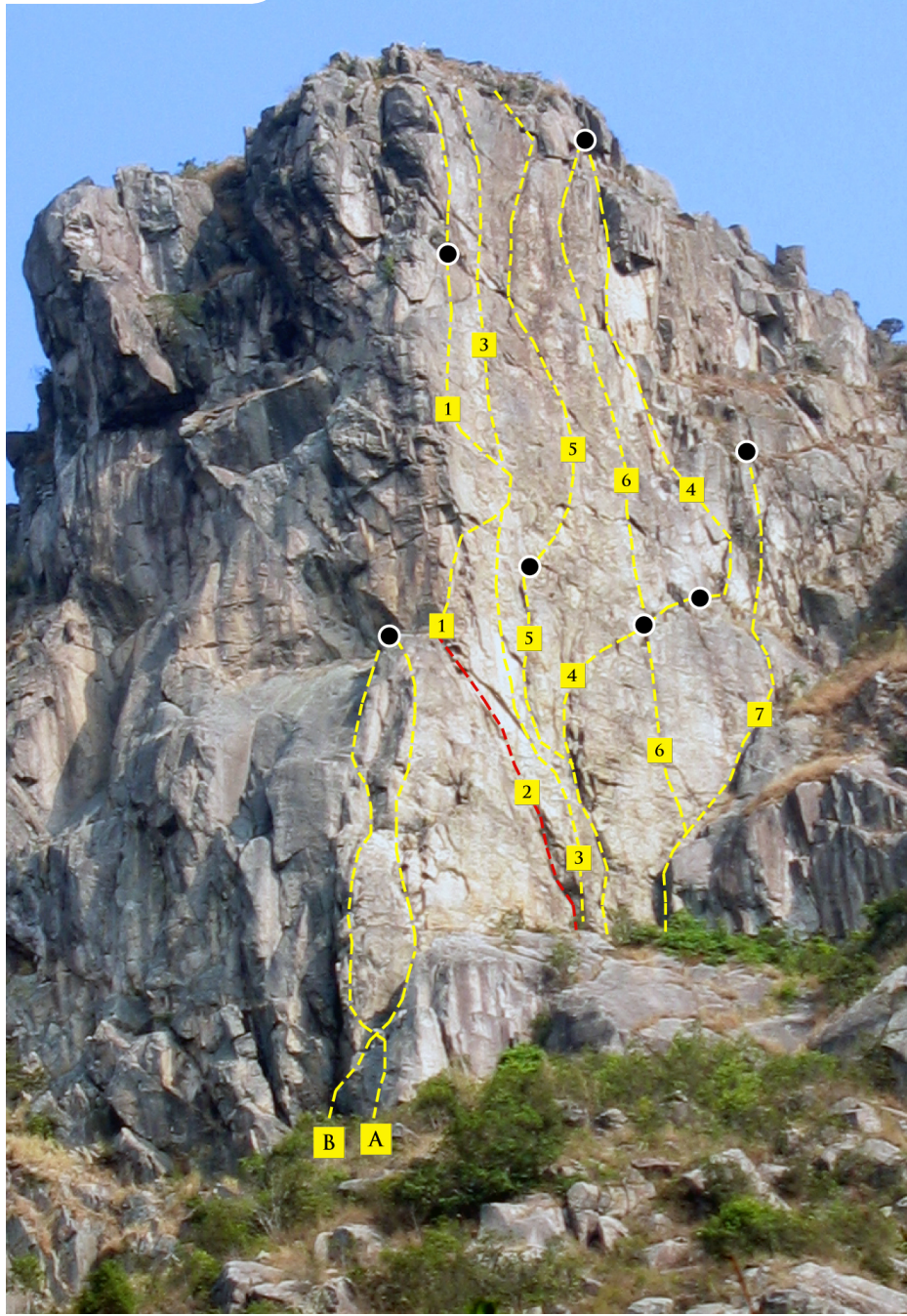
Routes 1-10: Abseil down the line of Wards Groove / Gweilo

Routes 11-16: As for 1-8 if topping out. Abseil down the line of The Arête (30m)



History in the making: Martin Jones making the first ascent of 'Dante's Arête' (HVS 5a) in 1970  
Photo: Martin Jones Collection

## EAST FACE



The first three routes are shown for reference purposes:

(A) The Arête \*\* F6a+

(B) Pussy Galore \* F6c

(1) Balance of Power \*\* F7a

Refer to details for the West Face

The following routes all start from the base of the East Face. This can be reached by scrambling up the gully at the base of The Arête or by climbing up the easy angled slabs directly beneath the face.

(2) East Flake HVS 5a

Approach by scrambling up the gully to the right of The Arête to a large platform.

Climb the large obvious flake up to the belay of The Arête.

F.A. J. Ward & J. Bunnell (1958).

(3) Last Round, Last Minute \*\*\* F8a+

*A monster pitch up the left side of the east face.*

At 45 m long and with 18 bolts a healthy dose of stamina and a big rack of quickdraws are definitely prerequisites for any would aspirants. Start left of the crack/ flake of Austrian Staircase and take a leftward trending diagonal line across the face, just above the obvious overlap. Once nearing the left side of the face change your trajectory to vertically upwards and pray that your arms "do their stuff" until you reach the belay.

F.A. Rocky Lok (2012)

(4) Austrian Staircase \*\*\* F6a

*Simply one of the best routes in Hong Kong. Start of the base of the obvious vertical flake.*

Pitch 1: F5+. Layback up the large flake, traversing right along its top, past the belay on Tigger, to a further belay stance on the far side of the face.

Pitch 2: F6a. Move right from the belay stance to the foot of the groove lines and climb these to a short slab and corner. Move up the corner (crux) trending diagonally left and follow the cracks and grooves above. Belay on a large sloping ledge.

F.A. M. Lancaster & G. Pilcher (1992)

(5) Lion King \*\* F6c

*A stunning line with some friable rock, however this is more than compensated for by the routes situation.*

Pitch 1 - F6b+. Start as for Austrian Staircase (Route 4). Just before the top of the large flake traverse left for about 4 m before continuing up via a tricky move to a hanging belay.

Pitch 2 - F6c. Climb straight up from the belay and follow a thin line of small holds, trending right wards, up the wall above. Trend left higher up towards a leaning crack and small belay stance.

Pitch 3 - F5. Finish up the crack to the top of the crag.

F.A. M. Gray, M. Lancaster & G. Pilcher (1994)

(6) Tigger \*\*\* F7a

*An excellent line straight up the middle of the East Face. Due to its directness it is possible to climb the route in one long pitch (60m Rope).*

Start to the right of Austrian Staircase at the foot of the corner crack (Beware of bees who sometimes nest in the back of it)

Pitch 1 - F7a. Climb the short corner crack to a large sloping ledge. Step off the ledge onto the wall above and climb directly up via a series of thin crimps and rockovers (run-out at the crux) until you reach a large jug/ flake. Move right from the jug and climb up the thin groove to a belay stance on the traverse of Pitch 1 of Austrian Staircase.

Pitch 2 - F6b+. Take a direct line up the wall above the belay stance of Austrian Staircase. It is possible to continue slightly above and left of this belay adding a few more metres, but little else, to the route. A sustained and interesting pitch with some friable rock in the upper part.

F.A. S. Millis & K. Knoyes (2001)

(7) Stray Cat Strut F5+

Start as for Pitch 1 of Tigger. Follow this to the large sloping ledge and continue rightwards along this until it is possible to pull on to the wall above, by the second bolt. Follow a series of small holds to broken grassy ledge level with the belay of Austrian Staircase. Continue up the steep face to the right of Austrian Staircase with minor excursions to the left and right. Going directly up the wall is unpleasant and increases the grade considerably (this section is also in need of cleaning).

F.A. K. Knoyes & K. Greenland (2002)

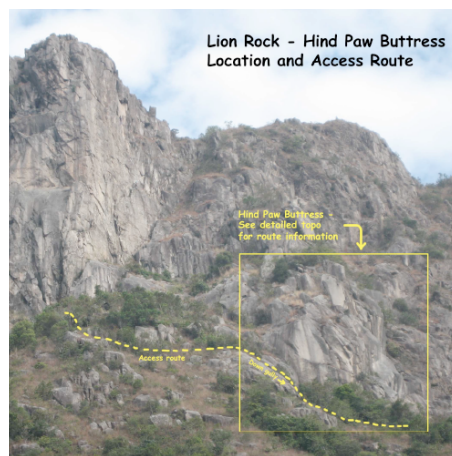
### Descent

From Summit: Either walk down the left hand ridge, footpath, or abseil the line of Wards Groove on the West Face.

From the top of Austrian Staircase/Tigger: Make two 30m abseils down the line of Tigger.

## HIND PAW BUTTRESS

Hind Paw buttress is located about 100 m below and to the east (right) of the foot of the main cliff. To reach it, start below The Arête then take a faint rough path down a few paces before traversing east. After traversing for a while the path steepens until a scramble down a short gully leads to the base of the buttress. Occasionally there is a fixed rope to assist descent of the gully. The climbing on this cliff is rather more relaxed than on the main face. There is shade at the base of most of the routes.



### (1) Jellylorum F4+

A short and easy warm up. Start below a slab just right of the descent gully. Follow the bolts up the slab. The lower-off has rope/slings which will be replaced with stainless steel carabiners.

FA. Paul Collis, Christophe Torresse, (2010)

### (2) Sex Kitten F6b+

Start a few metres right of the previous route below a short steep wall. Climb the wall strenuously to reach the ledge (crux) to briefly share a few holds with the next route on the right. Move left and follow the thin crack until it runs out, where difficult moves on the slab to the left lead to the anchor.

FA. Paul Collis, Dan Hannah, (2010)

### (3) Fangtastic \* F6a+

Start below a steep slab just right of a wide crack.

Climb the wall then left up into the crack and onto the top of a pinnacle. Step up onto a steep wall then a tricky move left wards leads onto a ledge (crux). Follow the pleasant leftward trending crack to the anchor.

FA Paul Collis, Christophe Torresse (2010)

### (4) The Cats Claws HVS 5b

Start at the base of the buttress, just left of the bolted start of Stephen and Stitt's Day Out. Climb a groove into cracks and then onto a large ledge. Climb the steep wall above using a crack until difficult moves enable one to get established in the base of a somewhat vicious hand crack to the left. Continue up more easily to a two bolt anchor. Use the lower-offs to the left or right but take care with rope length.

FA Richard Cunliffe, Jim Gray (2010)

### (5) Stephen and Stitt's Day Out \* F5

Begin at the bottom of the buttress below a short rib. Climb the rib then move up left wards then back right to a nice slab. Cross it right wards then climb a steeper blunt arête onto the upper slab. Go up this to a crack which is followed to the anchor.

FA Paul Collis, Richard Cunliffe (2010)

### (6) Project

Just right of Stephen and Stitt's Day Out a project has been mostly bolted. The line takes the right side of the blunt arête until it briefly meets Stephen and Stitt near the top before moving right to finish up a steep wall. As of September 2011 the bottom bolts had not yet been placed.

Projectors: Danial Hannah & Gianfranco Bigazzi.