

Sewer Wall

| Cave Routes | Septic Sector



Description

One of Canberra's oldest and newest sports crags, with legend being that it was first climbed by Tony Wood and Mike Todd in 1976. The main wall - Sewer Wall - was bolted by Mike Peck and co in 1991 and then largely ignored until late 2013 when Chris Bennetts-Cash got hooked on the idea of some quality climbing so close to town.

Located about 10 minutes drive from Belconnen and either a 15-20min walk or 5min 4WD, climbs vary in height from 8-55m and difficulty from single digits to mid-20s, although the original (& harder) lines have not yet been rebolted as of March 2014 and are probably NOT SAFE.

Development is continuing through 2014 so there may be more climbs than those listed here, which were current as of March 2014.

The original wall is in shade most of the day but through Summer Septic Sector and the Cave Routes are in full sun in the afternoon. The water is a great way to cool off, it's upstream from the water treatment plant so you're safe and it's usually a nice temperature throughout the warmer months.

It gets dark very quickly once the sun touches the Brindabellas in the West, and the start of the track back can be difficult to find, so a torch is a good idea. The ramp down to Sewer Wall gets very slippery very quickly in the rain.

Take your camera not just for the climbs but for the awesome scenery and abundance of turtles, lizards and, yes, piranha carp.

Approach



Approach

Get yourself to Stockdill Drive, Holt, and follow it a way until you can glimpse the water treatment plant in the gaps between trees.

For the 4WD track look for a dirt driveway to your left, opposite a clearing on the right. If you get to Shepherd's Lookout you've gone too far.

Go through 2 gates (chained but not locked - shut them behind you) and follow the 4WD trail until you see a yellow combine harvester on a hill to your right. Aim to the left of the combine, through another gate (open) and then follow the left fence line up the hill until there's a sharp change in fence angle and a bit steel fence post to jump over.

Scramble down the hill and slightly right, keeping the edge of the young pine forest just on your right to meet the walking track.

For the walking trail continue past Shepherd's Lookout to a locked gate on your left and a 'no camping' sign after the last corner. A driveway for Actew Water is opposite.

Jump the gate and follow the dirt track to a dam. Cross the dirt bridge (dam on your left, tree in a hole on your right) and follow a faint trail over the rolling paddock. You'll see a large line of brambles with a several-metre gap between them, walk just to the left of the bushes

and continue in a straight line over a rise to the top corner of the paddock closest the river. Jump the gate in the corner into the river corridor and turn left, following the trail closest to the fence line crossing the first gully and then passing just to the right of two large trees on top of the following crest. Continue straight as the path crosses another gully, on your way out of the gully follow one of several tracks contouring the next rise to the right. Follow these until you pass into and out of the young pine forest (meeting the track to 4WD access).

Turn right, going downhill along the edge of the pine trees. Pass through a clearing following a faint trail (straight) and follow faint trails to a very large gum on the edge of the cliff. This is the top of Cave Routes.

Follow the trail downhill and left, staying close to the cliff until, just after stepping over a fallen tree, there's a clearing to your right and a lone tree near the edge of a 15m cliff. About 4m past the tree is the top of Hung Like A Sewer Rat, and you can scramble around Septic Sector from here using the topo.

ACT Parks & Conservation have confirmed that the walking access is through unleased Territory land and that access is permitted (but camping is not). The 4WD trail may or may not be on private land so should probably not be used unless you've gotten any permission necessary.



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Septic Sector

Approach

From the tree marking the top of Hung Like A Sewer Rat follow the faint trail left (facing the water) down dirt and rocks to reach the start of the first climbs (and a good place to swim), or scramble right and around to get to the base of HLASR and Prairie Dog.

Climbs are described from right to left.

1. AGB - Another Gully Buster | 14 | 2 bolts to DBB

Up the right side of the first ledge, sharing 1st bolt with Long Drop, then directly up to the second ledge. Think about dinner as you wander up the grassy gully (unprotected) for a few metres to the second bolt and up for an enjoyable finish.

FA: Chris Bennetts-Cash, February 2014

2. Long Drop | 14 | 3 bolts to DBB

Up the right side of the first ledge, moving left around the rooflet and then up to ledge & DBB.

Named for a swinging fall taken while scrubbing the climb, when a skyhook popped unnoticed.

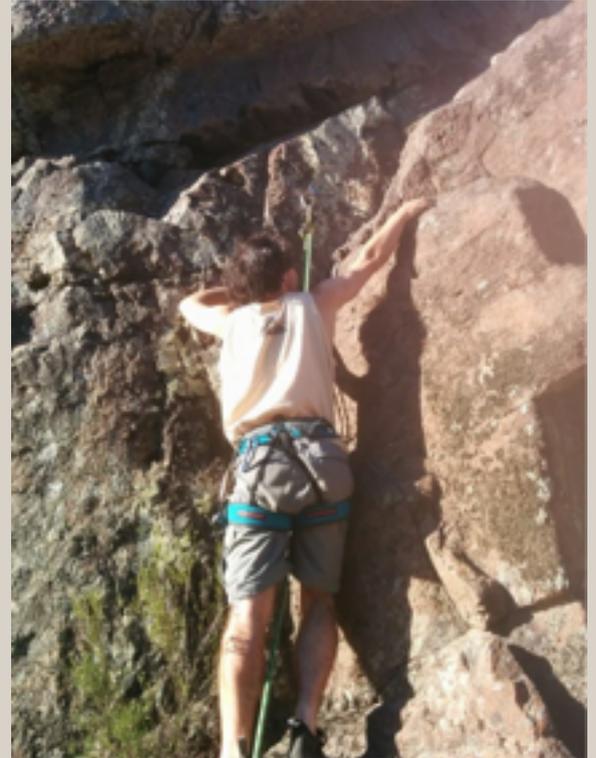
FA: Chris Bennetts-Cash, February 2014

Bolts have been installed directly above Skid on a wall accessible by scrambling to the ledge above AGB's anchor and traversing around for quick access & setting top ropes.

3. über Skid | 19 | 3 bolts to DBB

A direct line from the start of Super Skid using the face and flake, topping out at the ledge to the left of Long Drop.

After the difficult crossover at bolt 1 position your feet for a good hold in the higher horizontal crack below bolt 2. Left crack & right pocket to layback until you're high enough to get good right holds on



Andrew Stevenson on the second ascent of AGB (Another Gully Buster), 14

the flake. Clip bolt 3 & continue up the flake, using the big pocket at the top to move left to DBB or heelhook to ledge.

FA: Chris Bennetts-Cash, April 2014

4. Super Skid | 19 | 3 bolts to DBB

Start at left side of ledge for a direct start to Skid Marks. Up the right side of the arete, moving left to meet 2nd bolt of Skid Marks.

FA: Chris Bennetts-Cash, February 2014

5. Skid Marks | 16 | 3 bolts to DBB

Up to the ledge on good (but reachy) holds then move right for a couple of moves before reaching the crack. Up the crack and arete for a tricky finish.

Named because it was first climbed on trad and there is zero protection for the first 2/3 of the climb.

FA: Chris Bennetts-Cash, February 2014

Septic Sector

6. Wattle Wipes | 19 | 5 bolts to DBB

A good link-up following the first 3 bolts of Skid Marks, moving delicately right to the 3rd bolt of über Skid, more delicately (find the sidepull) to the 3rd bolt of Long Drop, then head up to Long Drop's anchors.

FA: Cameron Lindsay, May 2014

7. A Crack In The Pipes | 6 | Trad/Free Solo

An easy 5m crack for quick access to the following climbs (or easily scramble down & right from the top)

FA: Chris Bennetts-Cash, January 2014

8. Shit Line | Project

Not bolted. A boulder at the top of the wall has 2 bolts for top rope access.

9. Prairie Dog | 20 | 4 bolts to rap chain

Up easily to start and slightly left. Find a right hand crimp side pull on the otherwise blank face to make the ledge. Up from there through the rooflet then some awkward moves to the chains.

As of early May one suspect block remains between bolt 4 and the chains, but I can't make it budge.

FA: Andrew Stevenson, February 2014

10. Hung Like A Sewer Rat | 18 | 4 bolts to DBB

Slightly overhanging and pumpy start on good jugs. Nice climbing through the low crux (well-protected) to an easy finish. 10m.

FA: Chris Bennetts-Cash, February 2014

FFA: Mick "Dr. Dirt" Hughes, 21 February 2014

Access to the following routes is by walking right from the tree at top of HLASR (facing the water) near

the bottom of the ramp heading in the direction of Sewer Wall.

11. Blinky the 3-eyed Fish | 13 | 5 bolts to DBB

Named because no matter where you look you'll find something to hold on to. Nevertheless quite a fun climb, particularly above the ledge.

Shares 2nd bolt and DBB with TPWP.

FA: Chris Bennetts-Cash, February 2014

12. The Problem With Poop | 15 | 5 bolts to DBB

What looks like an interesting bouldery start is actually very easy but has some fun eliminates. Up the pocketed face trending left, traverse right (exciting) & up to ledge. From there directly up with a short layback (more exciting) & crack climb to DBB.

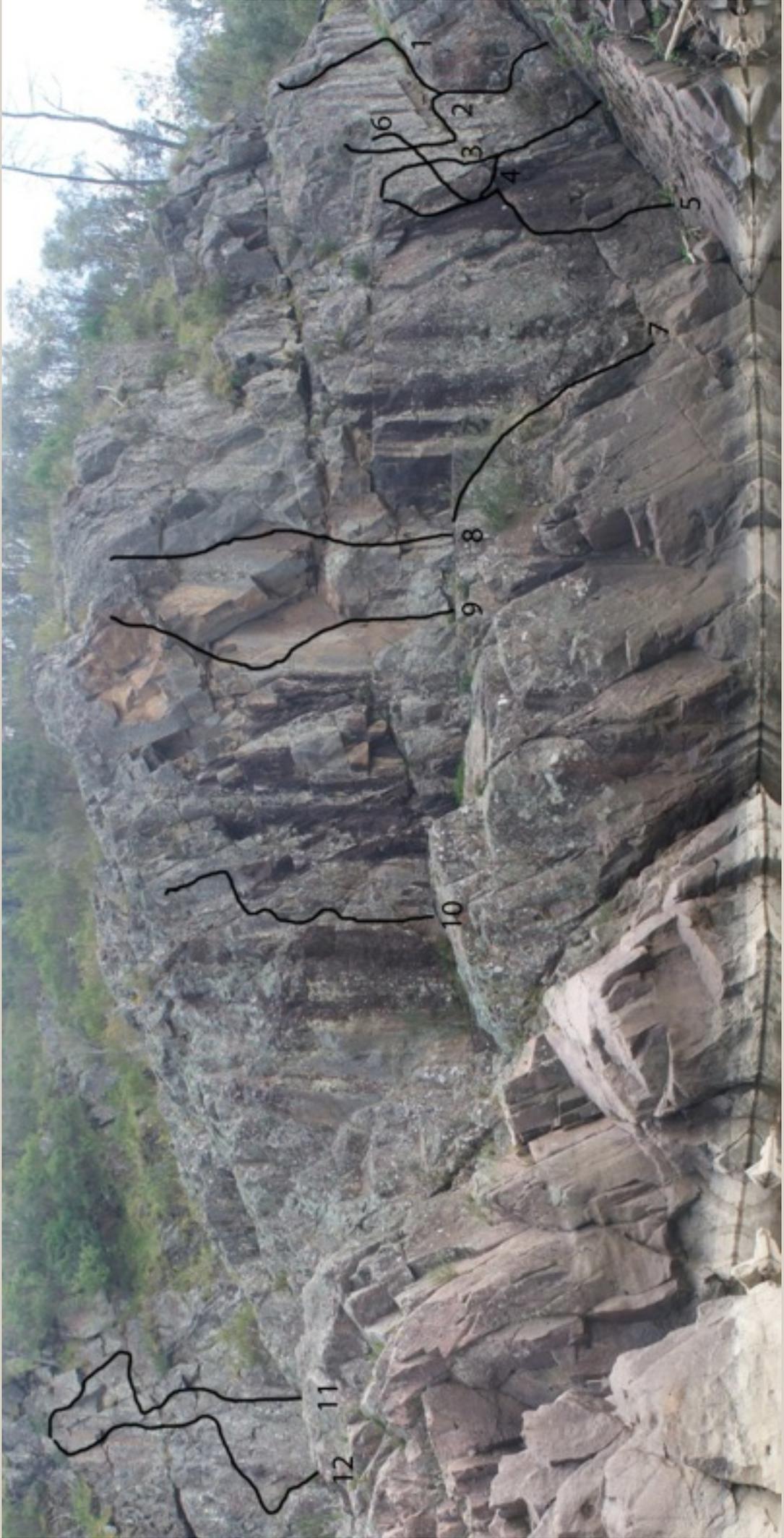
FA: Chris Bennetts-Cash, February 2014

From TPWP continue down and around to some buttresses just above the pebbly/sandy "beach".

13. Just Hold It In | 21? | Not Bolted

I went back to bolt this climb and couldn't find it again. Maybe it only comes out in Summer

Essentially a V1 boulder problem on rope. Get established on the wall, throw for the good left sloper, stabilise on the right pocket then find a better pocket around the corner. A balancey reach up the arete leads to an easy scramble to the top.



Cave Routes

Approach

The cave routes are about halfway between Septic Sector and Sewer Wall, although start from a high ledge that can be accessed either by walking from the bottom to the base of Sewer Wall then up the ramp and scrambling to the ledge, or by following a faint trail coming sharply right from the track down (from the Cave Routes tree), crossing the top of TPWP & BT3EF, and continuing down to the starting ledge.

Alternatively the rap in from the top, using the great, big, healthy tree as an anchor, is much faster and easier.

Four single hangers have been placed across the ledge around the start of routes to secure the belayer (& hang gear from) - although the ledge IS stable, they're just there for comfort & school groups.

A significant amount of rotten rock exists in this area. While the bolts appear to be in good rock and every obvious hand- and foot-hold has been pushed, pulled, kicked & pried to ensure it's sound you might spy a hold we didn't and get a surprise - so be mindful of this and take care of your rope and belayer.

1. Visit The Head | Project

Starts 1m right of the rightmost (first) belay bolt.
LOOSE ROCK.

Named for an excellent jug at the start of the climb that came off & got me in the face when first climbed.

2. Better Out Than In | 17 | 5 bolts to DBB

2m left of first belay. Head up and right on solid holds until you reach the vertical wall. Heel hook over it and walk up to DBB.

A variant finish probably exists up the crack system, not yet climbed.

A variant, slabby, start can be made from the 2nd belay bolt.

FA: Chris Bennetts-Cash, March 2014

3. Gas Mask | 19/20 | 5 bolts to DBB

Easily up trending right starting from the 3rd belay bolt. The 3rd bolt is an easy reach up from the cave. Crank through the roof, staying as far right as you dare, then up the headwall (move right then heel hook left) to the middle DBB.

Named for a wonderful smell that was blowing in from the sewage plant when I finally freed the headwall (solo).

FA: Chris Bennetts-Cash, March 2014

4. Waste Not, Want Not | 14? | 4 bolts to DBB

Follow Gas Mask to the 3rd bolt then move left around the cave roof to another bolt (14) and continue up and left to the leftmost DBB.

FA: Chris Bennetts-Cash, March 2014

5. Cleaning The Pipes | 10 | Trad

Start from either 3rd or 4th belay bolt, passing 1st bolt on Drank The Slab and following the parallel left leaning cracks on good micro RPs to 3rd bolt of DTS.

FA: Chris Bennetts-Cash, March 2014

6. Drank The Slab | 14 | 4 bolts to DBB

Start from the 4th belay bolt, moving up then traversing left before going up again and traversing right (crux) after the 3rd bolt to meet the 3rd bolt of Gas Mask and finish up GM or WNNW.

FA: Chris Bennetts-Cash, March 2014

Cave Routes

7. River Phoenix | 18 | 5 bolts to DBB

Follow DTS but head up when you're on the tree ledge rather than traversing right to cross a rooflet. Move right (crux) to meet 4th bolt of WNWN.

FA: Chris Bennetts-Cash, March 2014



Chris Bennetts-Cash trying for (& failing) the second free ascent of Wattle Wipes, 19 (that honour went to Stefan Buick)



Sewer Wall

Approach

Follow your nose to the water as far downstream as the rock will take you on this side of the river. Either scramble on past Septic Sector or, for extra hair on your chest, take the traditional descent down the ramp past the Cave Routes.

1. **Let's Elope To The Sewer** | 20 | 30m

A few good moves down low deteriorate to the usual dirt & choss. Up the groove right of Sewer Side past 3 bolts (crux at second) then up (wires & friends) & left to join Sewer Side at the top.

FA: John Churchill, Mike Peck, November 1991

2. **Sewer Side** | 22 | 30m

Steeper than the average slab, bigger than most climbs twice its length, with a fun roof. Start in the right hand of two slabby corners right of the river. Delicately up onto the arete past bolts to the roof. Crank across right to clip the peg (a 3/4 friend & #4 RP back it up) then heel hook out left & slap blind (die laughing) for the jug above the lip. Follow the bolts to the bird shit & up the steep headwall past another bolt to DBB. A 2-rope rap (ed: maybe when 50m was standard?) avoids the gruesome scramble up loose dirt to the top.

FA: Mike Peck, 10 April 1991

3. * **Doppelwandiger Schnellröster mit Aromakontrolle** | 22 | 30m

Another Bosch marvel. Takes the left-hand slabby corner left of Sewer Side. Up the slabby corner & arete past 4 bolts to the overhang. Reach up & clip a bolt, then a technical pull-through to a short crack (2.5 friend & #3 RP). Up the wall above, right at first then back left, past 2 more bolts to the alcove in the BIG roof. Small wires protect the final clip, then bridge up & launch out left over the roof to a ledge & rap station. Two ropes (ed: ?) to the ground.

FA: Mike Peck, John Stone, 20 April 1991

4. * **The Lure of the Sewer** | 23 | 15m

Horrendously technical pocket climbing with more bolts than decent holds. Start on the brink, where the surf meets the slabs. Clip the bolt to avoid a watery death. Pull leftwards out over the waves to a sloping foothold, then cruise up past 2 more bolts. A small detour left, then relentless pocket pulling to DBB.

FA: Mike Peck, John Stone, 4 April 1991

5. **Gristle & Gravy** | 22 | 15m

More of the same steep pockets. Start as for LOTS. Climb past 2 bolts, then lean left & clip a bolt below the little overlap. Move left keeping your feet below the overlap (crux) to a good pocket, then a jug & and bolt, of course. Up directly past 2 more rawldrive surprises then back right to the rap stance on LOTS.

FA: Mike Peck, 6 April 1991

6. *** **Gutter Crimes** | 22 | 40m

A big route threading the major roofs, Quite sustained with brilliant moves through the top overhang. Double ropes, 11 draws & a #2 friend are the essential items. Start as for LOTS & RD. Left 5m as for RD, then up into the little V-groove. Follow this up & take the diagonal line to the roof (5 bolts to here). A #2 friend protects the clip above, then seize the suspect mega-block & pull awkwardly through to good jugs & a bolt on the wall above (good rest on the guano ledge out left). Cross the wall rightwards (crux) to the diagonal crack & another bolt, find the high jug & cut loose left through the final roof onto a sloping ledge. Up & easily right past a final bolt to the rap station at the top of Doppelwandiger. Two ropes to the ground.

FA: John Stone, Mike Peck, 13 April 1991

Sewer Wall

7. Blind Pew | 22 | 45m

Fine pocket climbing down low & awkward groping past loose blocks in the first overhang. Takes a rightwards line crossing Gutter Crimes at the first roof; double ropes as usual.

1. 15m. As for Rising Damp to the 2-bolt stance
2. 30m. Move right from the belay & climb the wall on deep pockets past 3 bolts, sharing the odd move with Sewer Rat. This will land you under the first roof on Gutter Crimes. Clip the bolt in the groove above & traverse right past another bolt & the suspect blocks, then long reaches right (crux) to big jugs, pockets & a bolt. Continue up past another bolt then some leftwards moves through the final roof to the last bolt on Gutter Crimes. Move right to the rap stance at the top of Doppelwandiger. 2 ropes to ground.

FA: John Churchill, Mike Peck (alt.), 18 May 1991

8. Sewer Rat | 22 | 55m

A devious climb which weaves around some big overhangs. Double ropes & some long slings will save major rope drag.

1. 15m. Rising Damp to the 2-bolt stance.
2. 30m. Up to the first bolt on Mission Brown, then right & up the corner past 3 more bolts to the hanging groove on Gutter Crimes. Up this (#2 Friend below the roof & a long sling to the bolt) & left onto the guano ledge. (There's a 2-finger pocket in the roof left of Gutter Crimes groove for anyone who wants to take the route straight through). Clip another bolt (long sling) then out to the arete. Up past a high bolt (crux) to a thin crack (#1 RP) then up & right to the belay on Mission Brown.
3. 10m. Stroll right to the rap stance above Doppelwandiger.

FA: George Fieg, Mike Peck (alt.), 11 May 1991

9. ** Mission Brown | 24 | 50m

Overhangs like the outside of a toilet bowl but twice as slick. A Canberra sea-cliff classic taking the bulging groove in the middle of the wall. Start as for LOTS & RD.

1. 15m. RD to the 2-bolt stance
2. 25m. Fun moves through the roof past a couple of bolts, then into the groove above. Follow it past 3 more bolts to where it dies, then an action packed sequence past another bolt takes you up the right wall to the big roof (#2.5 Friend). Traverse right to a 2-bolt stance.
3. 10m. Right to the rap stance at the top of Doppelwandiger. 2 ropes to the ground.

FA: John Stone, Mike Peck (alt.), 13 April 1991

FFA: Tony Barten, Mike Peck (alt.), 1 May 1991

10. Rising Damp | 21 | 55m

A 3-pitch excursion out over the tide & the turds, which also provides access to routes on the left-hand side of the cliff. Piranha carp await the hapless leader or second taking a tumble on this one.

1. 15m Traverse left from the 1st bolt of LOTS. Two more bolts then a #3 RP, then left & up to the 2-bolt stance.
2. 15m. Downclimb & keep traversing just above the water to a bolt. Left up the slab (small wires) & around the arete to another bolt. Cross the alcove (#1.5 Friend) then up left to a high stance (2 bolts).
3. 25m. Up to a bolt then pull left through the roof. Up the slab (lots of wires) to where it steepens, then up the wall above (crux) trending slightly leftwards all the way past another 3 bolts. DBB on the ledge above. A 3m death scramble leads to the top (stay roped up).

FA: John Stone, John Churchill, Mike Peck (alt.), 4 May 1991



