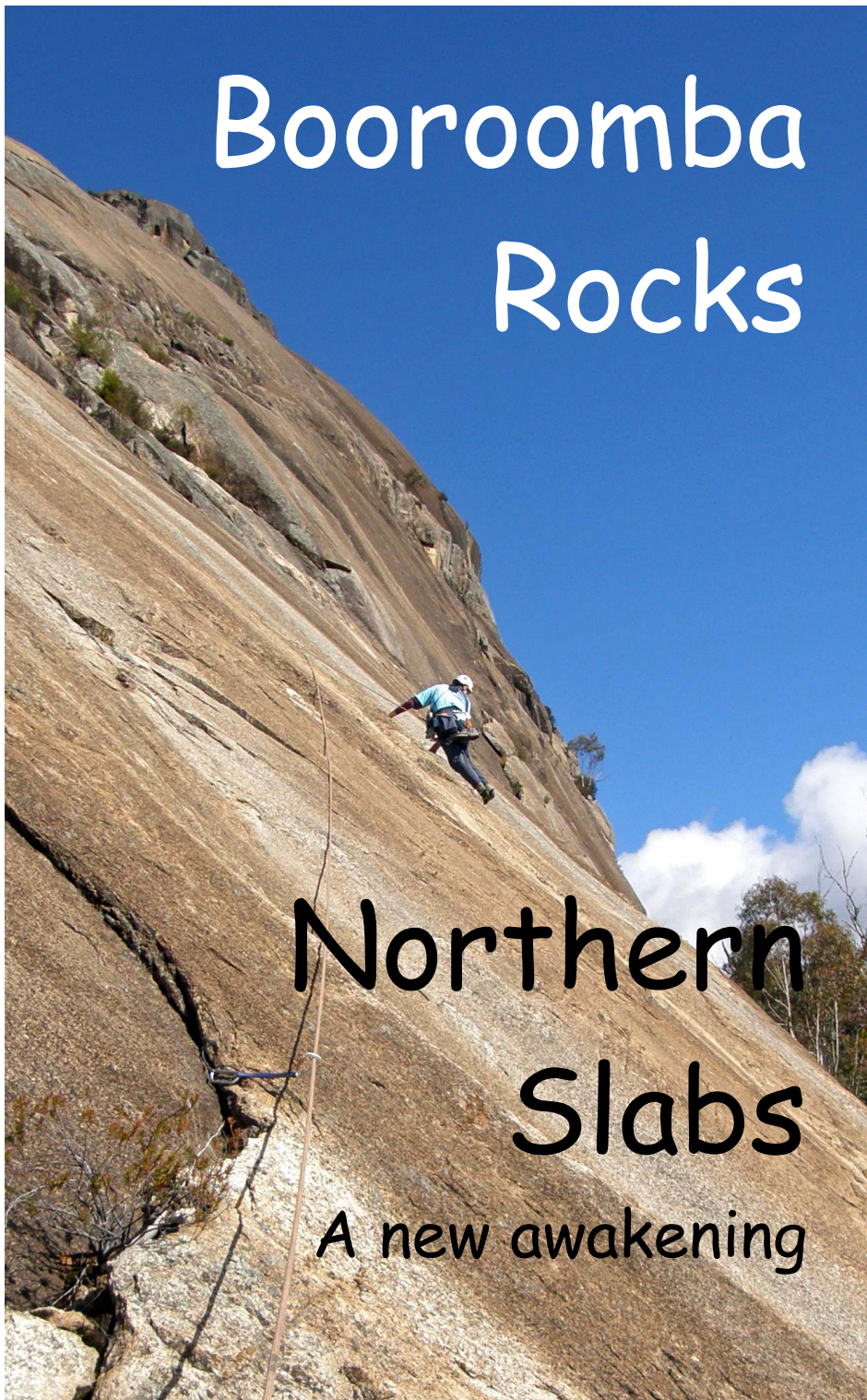


Booroomba Rocks

Northern Slabs

A new awakening

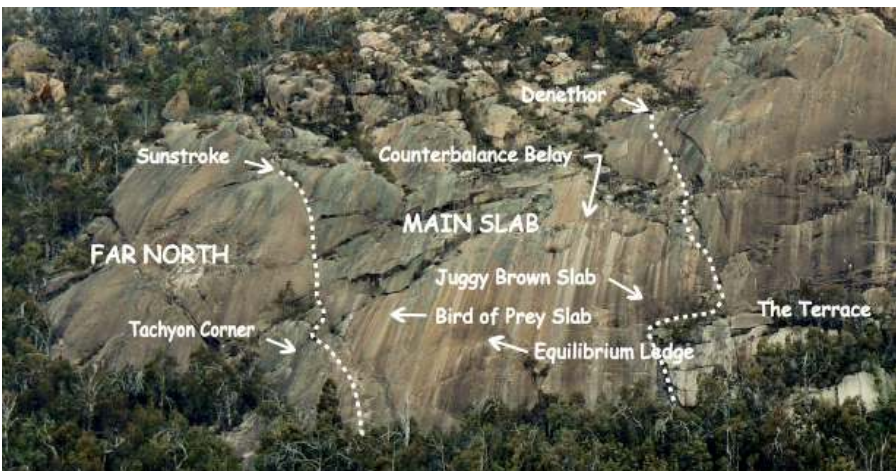
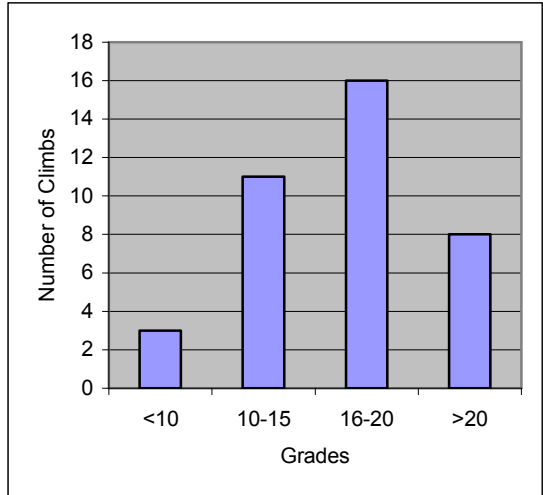


Booroomba's Northern Slabs

The **Northern Slabs** are at the eastern end of the North Buttress cliffs. It's all the rock east (left) of **Denethor**. This part of Booroomba's cliff line has the lowest angle, from 25 - 90 degrees, and consequently some of the best smearing climbs to be found anywhere in Australia. Despite the low angle most climbs are two to three pitches long, exposed and often run-out.

WHAT IS A SLAB

There is no generally accepted definition of slab climbing. Some climbers suggest it's anything less than vertical rock. Others suggest rock less than 70 degrees. We believe the easiest test is to find some good footholds (or a small ledge) and let go. If you don't fall off it's a slab. It's not exact but most rock less than 70 degrees will probably pass the test. At the Northern Slabs the rock angle is usually in the range of 40-60 degrees. While the angle is low, the rock is often featureless with smooth rounded surfaces heightening the sense of exposure. On many climbs there is a wonderful feeling of being adrift in a sea of granite. Fortunately, friction is excellent.



Features0637Drawing2

Cover photo—Unlocking the crux, 3rd pitch **Sleepwalker**—photo R Douglas

Main Features of the Northern Slabs

The Northern Slabs is a large area of rock and it's convenient to separate the cliff into two parts based on differences in the rock texture.

- Left of **Tachyon-Sunstroke**, called the '**Far North**', the rock has a lower angle and the rock texture is coarse. This is where the easier climbs are found.
- Right of **Tachyon-Sunstroke**, called the '**Main Slab**', the rock is smoother and slightly steeper.

The photo on page 2 shows the main features of the Northern Slabs.

Layout of this Guide

The layout of this guide is different to the typical rock climbing guide. All climb descriptions include a separate 'beta' section that grades the pitch and gives general information on protection such as where it is and what is needed. Additionally the climbs are grouped as multi-pitch, traverses and top-rope problems.

MULTI-PITCH CLIMBS

This section includes most of the climbs at the Northern Slabs. The climbs are described from right to left.

TRAVERSES

There are three climbs that traverse the cliff; namely **Solantic**, **Sleepwalker** and **Eagle Eye**. **Solantic** traverses from right to left while the other climbs traverse from left to right. While **Tachyon** is hardly a traverse it does wander a bit and has therefore been included in this section.

TOP-ROPE PROBLEMS

Some climbs, even though they have been lead, are obviously top-rope problems either because there are good/classic lines nearby (e.g. **Equilibrium** and **Entrophy**) or they are poorly protected particularly with a risk of ground fall (e.g. **Basilisk** and many others) or the first ascent party did not want it retro-bolted (e.g. **Total Control**) or the climb didn't fit elsewhere (e.g. **Tip Stripper**). All top-rope problems are single pitch climbs and most finish at the **Equilibrium** Ledge. The climbs are described from right to left.

Slab climbing is graceful and fluid, thoughtful and challenging.

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Preamble

During the 60s, 70s and early 80s Booroomba was renowned for its slab climbs. They were the best in Australia. But then a new climbing style arrived and Booroomba quietly became a 'sleeping beauty'. Traditional adventure climbing, particularly on slabs, was out of favour with sports climbing being the new mantra.

Slab climbing is but one of a number of climbing skills an all-round climber needs to master. However, Booroomba's slab climbs have a reputation of few gear placements and long run-outs. While for some climbs there maybe some truth to the rumour, it was enough to deter most modern climbers from attempting many of the climbs. Booroomba's slabs became the playground for a few lucky old trad climbers who knew better.

So that these wonderful routes are not forgotten or spoilt this guide has taken the unusual step of including information on protection in the 'beta' section of each route description. However, if you really want to experience a genuine on-sight lead, all the angst and uncertainty, the trepidation and commitment of a traditional slab climb, just read the route description. Check out the 'beta' after your ascent and let us know if we got it right.

BRIEF HISTORY

When first visited by climbers in the mid 60s the large expanse of smooth rock on the Northern Slabs was considered unclimbable. But climbers are resourceful and **Sunstroke** was soon found. It followed a natural line and provided natural protection with rudimentary nuts and slings. Next to be climbed was **Denethor**, another natural line, although the upper part of the last pitch is run-out but by then easy climbing. **Equilibrium** started up a natural line but the second pitch needed a few bolts to unlock the route. In hindsight this was the breakthrough climb as it opened up the possibilities of slab climbing at Booroomba. **Counterbalance** was an intimidating first ascent but turned out to be an easier climb than **Equilibrium**. Look up the crux pitch and you cannot see the next belay. It's over the horizon! The first ascent team expected poor protection. They didn't know where the next belay was and it might be impossible to reverse. In the 60s and throughout most of the 70s all new climbs were on-sight and repeats were flash ascents. These first four climbs are now the most popular routes on the Northern Slabs.

At the end of the 60s **Equilibrium** (17) was the hardest climb and remained so until **Balance** (18) was climbed in 1974. The late 70s were the golden age for

Booroomba's Northern Slabs

the Northern Slabs and twenty routes were found. By the end of the 70s three climbs were graded 20, namely **Equilibrium Direct Start**, **Steel Breeze** and **Metal Fatigue**. Up until 1998 (when the last guide was published) a further 12 climbs were added, all in the 80s, with five graded 22/23. They are the hardest climbs on the Northern Slabs.

There was no new route activity in the 90s but our research and route checking for this guide uncovered a couple of new routes bringing the total number of climbs to 38.



PICT0087Fix

**Stele
Breeze**
Pitch 2

SMEARING MASTER

The Northern Slabs is a slab climbers paradise. While not all climbs require good smearing technique as most routes have handholds and foothold, the following list have sections where 'faith in friction' is essential for an ascent.

- Melmoth (12)
- Balance Lite (15)
- Bird of Prey (17)
- Just in Passing (19)
- Picnic (21)

Tick these routes and you really can claim to be a 'Smearing Master'.

Gear

The Northern Slabs are a traditional climber's crag.

- All climbs can be ascended with a 50m* rope.
- Pitons are not required.
- All bolts include fixed hangers and old bolts have been replaced.

(* Abseiling down **Melmoth** requires a 60m rope)

During our route checking we carried the following gear:

- One set of Black Diamond micro stoppers
- One set of Black Diamond stoppers, size #1 to #13
- One set of Black Diamond cams, size #0.3 to #2
- 6 quick draws
- 2 short slings with two carabineers on each sling (60cm)
- 2 long slings with two carabineers on each sling (120cm)

Where additional gear is mentioned in the route description it means we regretted not having it with us on the day, but it didn't stop us climbing, we improvised.

HOW THINGS HAVE CHANGED

Ropes

When Booroomba was discovered the standard length of a climbing rope was 120' (36.5m) or 150' (45.7m). That's probably why **Denethor** was originally a five pitch climb and the first pitch of **Equilibrium** was originally three pitches. These days 50m and 60m ropes are common.

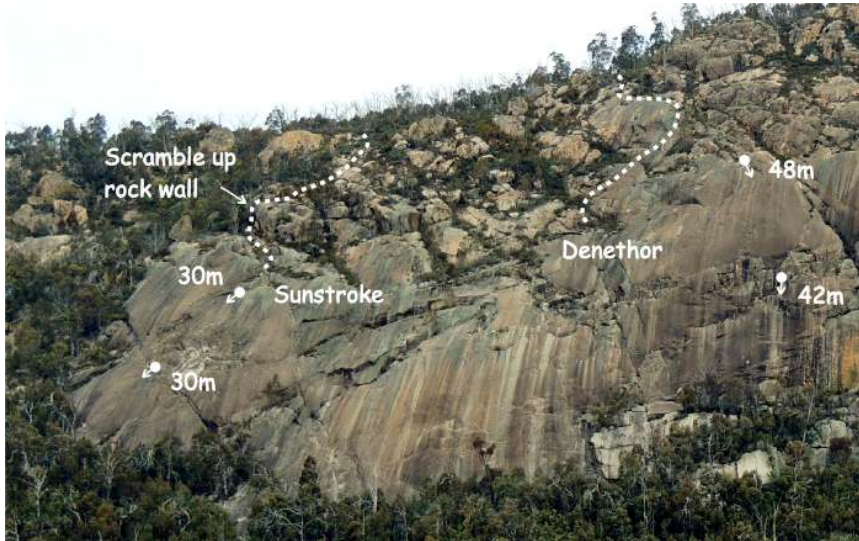
Rack

Climbing equipment has improved significantly since the mid 60's. Then protection was arranged with slings around trees, pitons, rudimentary (sometimes home made) nuts and the occasional hand drilled shallow small diameter bolt. Hand drilling in the hard granite was time consuming and laborious which is one reason why many climbs are run-out. Now days we have a comprehensive range of nuts and cams from 2mm to nearly 200mm wide.

Climbing Boots

The other big change over the last 50 years is climbing boots and particularly the rubber. In the 70s slipping at the **Equilibrium** crux was common and one climber reportedly had over twenty slides before finally completing the crux move. In the 80s Boreal manufactured the first 'sticky rubber' climbing shoe and slab climbing took a 'sticky' leap forward. These days it is rare to hear of anyone slipping on **Equilibrium**.

Getting There and Getting Back



Access0637Drawing1

The Northern Slabs cannot be seen from the lookout.
They are at the east end of the North Buttress.

GETTING THERE

There are three ways to get to the start of the climbs:

1. From the tourist lookout walk west (left when looking into the valley) along the cliff edge for about 20m to find a track that leads to a descent gully at 60m (the start of the descent is marked by a large fallen gum tree, blown over in a storm in August 2014). The descent track heads right (east) through the **Middle Rocks** section to the base of the **North Buttress** and continues on to the **Northern Slabs**. Time from the lookout to the start of **Sunstroke** is about 30 minutes.
2. From the old campsite (about 70m before the lookout), find the track that heads east over the **North Buttress**. Head partway down the walk-off track from **Denethor** then scramble right (if facing the cliff) over to the top of **Astrodyne** to find a set of abseil bolts. There are two abseils of 48m and 42m to reach **The Terrace** near the start of **Money, Marbles and Chalk**. Walk left (facing the cliff) to the first belay on **Denethor** where a further abseil (40m) off trees is necessary to get to the base of the cliff. Alternatively, walk right past **Vent Crack** then down through scrub to join the track along the base of the cliff.

Booroomba's Northern Slabs

3. From the old campsite below the lookout find the track that heads east over the **North Buttress** and follow this to the top of **Sunstroke**. Time from the campsite to the top of **Sunstroke** is about 15 minutes. Walk left (facing the cliff) about 15 m to the abseil bolts and second belay for **Melmoth**. There are two easy abseils of 30m to reach the ground. On the first abseil you almost run out of rope and on the second abseil you will run out of rope on a low angled slab at the start of **Melmoth** (**BE CAREFUL!**) Alternatively, swing left into the scrub.

GETTING BACK

The slabs inconveniently end below the crest of the ridge. The obvious way off is a scrub bash to the top of the ridge to find the track back to the old campsite. We recommend two ways to get off the climbs.

1. For climbs finishing left of **Counterbalance/Equilibrium** scramble left to the top of **Sunstroke** and follow the track back to the old campsite.
2. For climbs finishing right of **Counterbalance/Equilibrium** there is another 60m to 100m of bush bashing and scrambling to reach the crest of the ridge. Many climbers leave their friction boots on for this exposed scramble.

In the old days climbers descended the scree slope at the east end (left end) of the slabs. There was considerable erosion and after the fires in 2003 another alignment was tried (further east) but again erosion became an issue. Opinion these days is that this descent should be avoided and the scrub allowed to recover from the erosion caused by decades of traffic. **Please respect this wish of the local climbing community.** Instead abseil down **Melmoth**.

There are well cut tracks along the base and across the top of the North Buttress. Please use these instead of making more tracks. If you think a track can be improved or needs a bit of cleaning up, just do it. From time to time the Canberra Climbers Association organises track maintenance days but sometimes a track needs immediate attention and this is where you can help. Your peers will thank you.

In January 2003 the biggest bushfire in Canberra's history burnt through Booroomba. Apart from burning or killing all vegetation on the slabs the heat also 'popped' or loosened many flakes. Many previously clean cracks filled with ash and this has now decomposed to a rich soil that supports new and vigorous vegetation. The result is that the current condition of the cliff and the character of some climbs has changed forever.

Getting Lost

We know it's easy to get lost on a slab, which is why we have made extensive use of route photos. In fact our research suggests some first ascent teams did not know they were sharing belays with existing routes or were unaware of the closeness of existing climbs. While we have tried to figure out where all the previously published routes go, by consulting earlier guide books and/or contacting the first ascent party, finally there were three routes that could not be untangled. These were:

- **Sunday Stroll**, which we decided was too close to **Bird of Prey** to warrant inclusion. It's now recorded as a variation start to **Bird of Prey**.
- **Sunstroke Variant**. The original description made no sense at all. From the first belay on **Sunstroke** we think it joins the second pitch of **Ephemeros** then traverses left to the third belay on **Sunstroke** but does not cover much new ground and therefore did not warrant inclusion.
- **Staircase**. The original description made no sense at all. We have assumed it takes the easiest break in the overlap then straight up the slab.

We spent the most time on **Tachyon**. The previous guide described a three-pitch climb and as the first and last pitches were known the obvious second pitch was the second pitch of **Ephemeros**, hardly new climbing. However an earlier guide described four pitches and this sort of made sense, but blocks may have moved beside the **Bird of Prey** slab changing things slightly. We're not convinced we're right but hope we're close to the original climb.

Thrutch number 60 (June 1973) reports a climb beside **Tachyon** by Norm Booth and Lincoln Hall. Our best guess is a variation to **Ephemeros**, which was climbed in 1970. Norm could not remember details and we can't ask Lincoln (dec. 20/3/2012) so it will have to stay lost.

Thrutch number 64 (September 1974) reports a direct start to **Eagle Eye**. Clearly the climbers did not know that a direct start was climbed in 1972. This variant has not been included as the new bolt runner establishes the alignment for the direct start to **Eagle Eye** and (in our opinion) another route on this slab has no merit.

Thrutch number 64 (September 1974) reports a previously unrecorded variant finish to **Sunstroke** called **The Streaker**.

Thrutch number 66 (Winter 1975) reports a previously unrecorded variant to **Balance**.

Rocks and Rock Fall

The rock is granite. Technically the rock is a Shannons Flat Adamelite, part of the Murrumbidge batholith. The cliff face is convex in shape with the steepest rock usually at the base of the cliff.

The main part of the northern slabs, from **Denethor** to **Tachyon**, is a good example of exfoliation weathering (onion skin weathering). Starting near the second belay on **Denethor**, the overlap above **Counterbalance**, **Equilibrium**, the **Bird of Prey** slab and across to the **Tachyon** corner is a broken edge where a former slab has broken off in the geological past. This was not a single rock fall (*it would have been a great sight!*) but many small events with the most recent occurring at the turn of the century when about 50 cubic metres of rock broke off above the first belay on **Counterbalance** and slid and bounced down **Metal Fatigue**. *There is a suggestion that this rock fall had a lot of assistance.* Scrape marks can be seen on the rock near the bolt belay on **Counterbalance** and marks are visible on the cliff photos. It was probably the biggest rock fall since climbers have been visiting the cliff.

There may have been some movement of blocks on the left side of the **Bird of Prey** slab. We spent quite a bit of time in this area trying to make sense of the route description for **Tachyon**. Around Christmas 2012 a single block fell just right of the first belay on **Counterbalance** and in 2014/15 summer there were more single block falls in the same area.

Rock fall will occur again and is a natural process. The 2003 bushfires revealed many large boulders below the Booroomba cliffs. Some may have been exposed by erosion but many were the result of rock fall from the cliff above. The most likely area for further rock fall appears to be the main overlap above and left of the first belay on **Counterbalance**.

The risk of rock fall is higher during and just after rainfall especially where seepage is present. This is a good time to stay away from the cliff. In fact following soaking rain most of the slabs are too wet to climb, particularly where friction/smearing is needed.

Weather

Spring and Autumn usually have the most comfortable climbing weather for the Slabs. January/February can be debilitatingly hot as the cliff faces north and in July/August the rock can be finger numbing cold. Most climbs take 2-4 hours to ascend so in summer consider carrying water and in winter choose sunny days with little or no wind.

A Dilemma

In the 60s and 70s first ascents were on-sight from the ground up (flash ascents), but in the 80s things started to change as the sports climbing ethic evolved. Now first ascents may have been inspected from abseil or top-rope before attempting to lead the route. Certainly by this time if a bolt was placed for the ascent this usually means the leader had an opportunity to inspect the route or even (gasp!) practice the crux moves. The style of the ascent is rarely reported but it definitely changes the challenge. If we know the first ascent was on-sight the team is given the credit as on-sighting a crag that has a run-out reputation is a different and more impressive achievement.

It's clear the climbers of the 70s and 80s had mastered slabs and created a legacy of bold committing climbing. Hard scary unprotected routes were brilliantly climbed by Roark Muhlen, John Smart, Mike Law-Smith, Richard Watts, Paul Daniel and others. On these routes the slightest slip, a breaking crystal, anything, could have resulted in serious injury. There was no second chance.

Obviously a culture of risk taking existed then that just doesn't exist today. While their achievements are impressive and rightly deserve our respect and even though these climbs are only easy and moderately graded by today's standards, very few climbers are prepared to take similar risks and the result is nobody appreciates their achievements or the many fine climbs they pioneered. This means, if nobody bothers to figure out where the climb goes (*on a slab the line is often not obvious*) and is not prepared to give it a go, then the climb may as well not exist. For whatever reason, nobody cares.

The biggest problem for slab climbs is a scarcity of cracks and placing secure natural protection can be difficult. World wide, slab climbs either become top-rope problems or are bolted to various degrees. What has become clear over the last 20 years is that of the 38 routes on the Northern Slabs, four climbs took most of the traffic and consequently were at greatest risk of damage.

The old 'trad' climbers knew there were many more fine routes on the Northern Slabs, possibly a little run-out, but most were climbable once confidence in the slab climbing style had been developed.

If nothing was done to clearly document these climbs there was a real risk of accidental retro bolting by someone believing they had found a new route.

Booroomba's Northern Slabs

It has happened before at Booroomba! The Northern Slabs is a mature cliff and there is little room for quality new routes. Any infill or variation is likely to detract from the established climbs without contributing to the special character of the crag.

We have attempted to address this problem without dumbing down the routes too much. We have climbed every route and there are now clear route topos. We have occasionally re-aligned a route slightly to separate it from adjacent climbs. Any changes are described in the route description, which now includes more details about grade and protection on each pitch. Where we felt a bolt was needed to reduce the risk of serious injury we have attempted to contact the first ascent team and gain their approval to place one. If this was not forthcoming we have suggested alternatives to reduce the risk or (shock/horror) placed a bolt (only on **Solantic**—well really on **Balance** and **Steel Breeze** but they can also be used by climbers on **Solantic**). Any changes we have made to the first published route description are detailed in this guide.

Hopefully we have made these wonderful climbs more accessible without significantly changing the culture and character of the cliff. Where bolts have been placed we have used a minimum so that some routes can still feel committing, intimidating and a bit scary.

No doubt there will be criticism for our efforts. The preservationists, most of whom no longer climb, will not want any change and the young guns will say too little has changed. Maybe, just maybe, we have found a compromise. Like the bold climbers in the 70s and 80s only time will tell if we got it right.

The slab climbing style is characterised by balance and friction moves on very small holds. It's a climbing style that requires concentration, mental grit, precise foot placement and technical grace. Such climbing rewards brains and finesse rather than just brawn.

History may conclude that the attitude and ethics of the bold tough climbers of the 70s and 80s were shortsighted as they effectively sterilized significant parts of the cliff. Alternatively history may record the current generation, while technically superior and significantly stronger than earlier generations of climbers, simply don't possess the same mental toughness. Society, not just climbers, has changed and today people are more risk adverse. The risk pendulum is always moving.

Falling Off

It's not a good idea to fall off a slab climb. For one thing the rock miraculously changes from glassy smooth to a cheese grater and your last runner may be an uncomfortable distance away.

There is no safe way to fall. Turing around and running down the rock does not work, neither does sliding face down on the rock.

The best advice is DON'T FALL. That means don't attempt climbs where you expect to fall. These slabs are not sports climbs. Sensible confidence on slabs is important. Adopt the old 'trad climbers' rule, '*the leader never falls*'.

If you do actually slip off, despite your best efforts to remain in contact with the rock, then at least do so while wearing a helmet, trousers and a shirt. Your head, knees and nipples will thank you.

Remember, you are totally responsible for your safety at the crag. There is nothing in this guide that changes your responsibility to make a level-headed assessment of the difficulty and risk of the chosen route. You alone know your abilities as a climber.

Acknowledgements

Many climbers provided useful input and ideas, particularly around changing ethics, but two people in particular deserve special mention. This guide would not have been possible without the considerable assistance of Robert Douglas. Over the last two years we spent many enjoyable Thursdays climbing every route (usually more than once), measuring pitch lengths, checking the grade, noting the protection and undertaking a bit of track maintenance. Robert also proof read the guide and offered many helpful suggestions. Paul Daniel provided invaluable assistance identifying the starts to some climbs and offering some wonderful gems about the climbing scene during the 70s and 80s. The Canberra Climbers Association (CCA) helped by providing the bolts and brackets used for the fixed belays and runners on some of the climbs. You can help by joining the CCA. Finally a big thank you to those first ascent leaders who allowed us to modify their brilliant works of art.

Brickbats, bouquets, comments or corrections can be sent to brianmattick@hotmail.com.au.

Multi Pitch Climbs Starting from The Terrace—Main Slab

I know slab climbing sounds tame, the rocks aren't dramatically steep and as a second they are often easy to romp up. But put yourself on the sharp end and suddenly the climb takes on a whole new dimension. The slightest slip on a hold-less slab is heart stopping.

Four climbs start from **The Terrace**, namely:

- **In Cold Blood**
- **Fear of Frogs**
- **Peregrine**
- **Counterbalance**

In Cold Blood is described in **Top-Rope Problems** on page 53.



InColdBloodDrawing2

Multi Pitch Climbs—Main Slab—Right Side

FEAR OF FROGS 27m 17 (route photo p19)

A variation to **Peregrine** and enjoyable climbing on small sharp edges. The climb is sustained. Protection is adequate but fiddly to arrange and a better alternative may be to lower off the bolt on **Peregrine** and top-rope the route. The first ascent team did not want bolts placed on this climb.

Fear Of Frogs beta

Pitch 1 (17) Thin and sustained. Arrange protection as for **Peregrine** including stoppers at the top of the juggy brown slab. Then down climb to the top of the vertical groove, step right and climb the white streak. This is how they protected the climb in 1985.

Fear of Frogs

Pitch 1 (45m) Climb the short vertical groove then step right and climb the white streak 2m right of Peregrine to the 10cm wide ledge at 27m and bolt runner. Finish up **Peregrine**.

Matthew Larkin, Patricia Blumstein, Glen Jones 8-Sep-1985

*The black streak between **Fear of Frogs** and **Peregrine** has been top-roped and is harder than **Peregrine**.*

* **PEREGRINE 70m 18** (route photo p19)

Matthew Larkin remembers the climb as being reasonably protected however he did leave his approach shoes on a sling placed over a spike on the first pitch to hold the runner in place, so it couldn't have been that good. The spike is no longer there and Matthew has agreed that a bolt is needed. Start as for **Counterbalance**.

Pitch 1 (45m) Climb **Counterbalance** to the top of the juggy brown slab. Continue straight up the wall (crux, sustained) on small rounded edges to a 10cm wide curving ledge at 29m (*9m above the last runner*) and bolt runner then friction climb a further 15m (*run-out*) to the corner. Climb the corner, watch out for loose stones, and belay in the bushes using small cams and medium nuts.

Pitch 2 (25m) Up the slab mid way between the last pitches of **Denethor** and **Balance** moving left to a right facing corner. Climb to the top of the corner then up the easy angled slab to the vegetation. Tree belay.

Matthew Larkin, Glen Jones 12-Jul-1985

*Walk off as for **Denethor**.*

Peregrine beta

Pitch 1 (18) Protection as for **Counterbalance** in the juggy brown slab, bolt runner above the crux, medium nuts in the corner and a #1 cam up high.

Pitch 2 (14) The only protection is a sling over a knob at the top of the right facing corner at 10m. Leave your rack on the sling to hold it in place. Climbing the wall to the base of the corner is the crux of this pitch. *This pitch can be avoided by an easy traverse left to the last pitch of **Balance** or right and down slightly to the last pitch of **Denethor**.*

**** COUNTERBALANCE 90m 14** (route photo p19)

The fourth route at the Northern Slabs was another confidence booster at the time. The current belay points are different from those on the first ascent. Although the climb originally started at the left end of **The Terrace**, which is where this description starts, most parties include the first pitch of **Denethor** for a hugely enjoyable classic three pitch climb.

Pitch 1 (43m) Climb the juggy brown slab left of the short vertical groove to its high point (about 20m) then make a delicate move left (crux) to a small ledge (*peg belay on the 1st ascent*). Up leftwards for 7m to a shallow recess then follow shallow right-facing curving corners diagonally leftwards to double bolt anchors next to a prominent pointed block (*see break-out below*).

Pitch 2 (47m) Climb the slab to the highest corner on the right side of the overlap. Up the short corner (*3rd belay on the first ascent*), move right over blocks then follow up right the easy angled slab to the vegetation. Tree belay.

Tony Wood, J Langford, 6-Jul-1969
Walk off as for Denethor.

Counterbalance beta

This climb can be fully protected with nuts.

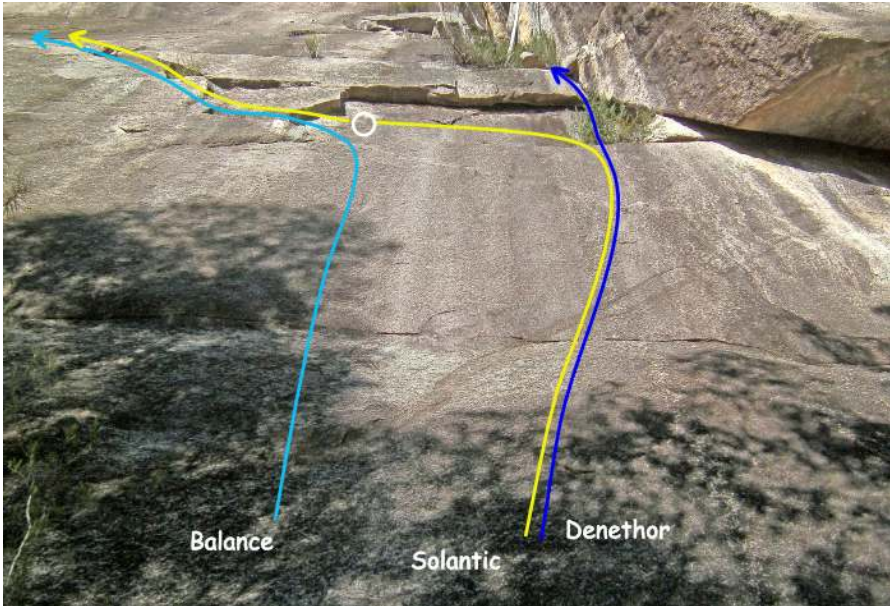
Pitch 1 (14) Several nut placements are possible in the juggy brown slab then a small nut at the old peg belay after the crux move. In 1969 (in fact until RPs were developed in the mid 70s) there was no pro until the belay at the pointed block. These days two or three small nuts (micro stoppers) at the shallow recess then 13m of runout climbing to the double bolt belay. *Avoid the obvious bolt on the left, it's on Metal Fatigue—a much harder climb.*

Pitch 2 (11) About 10m of friction climbing before nuts can be placed in the corner, then a sling on a tree and another nut low down in the easy angled slab.

The first ascent team looped a sling over the pointed block for the 2nd belay but within a short time the peg belay was eliminated and the sling over the block became the 1st pitch belay. In 1975 this mediocre belay at the block was replaced with a bolt but unfortunately it couldn't be seen from below resulting in many epics for lost leaders and a few embarrassing calls for a top-rope. A least one lost climber tried to go straight up from the shallow recess and took a big slide. Thankfully the new anchors are visible above the last runners in the shallow recess.

Multi-Pitch Climbs

Starting at base of cliff—Main Slab



** DENETHOR 117m 14 (route photo p19)

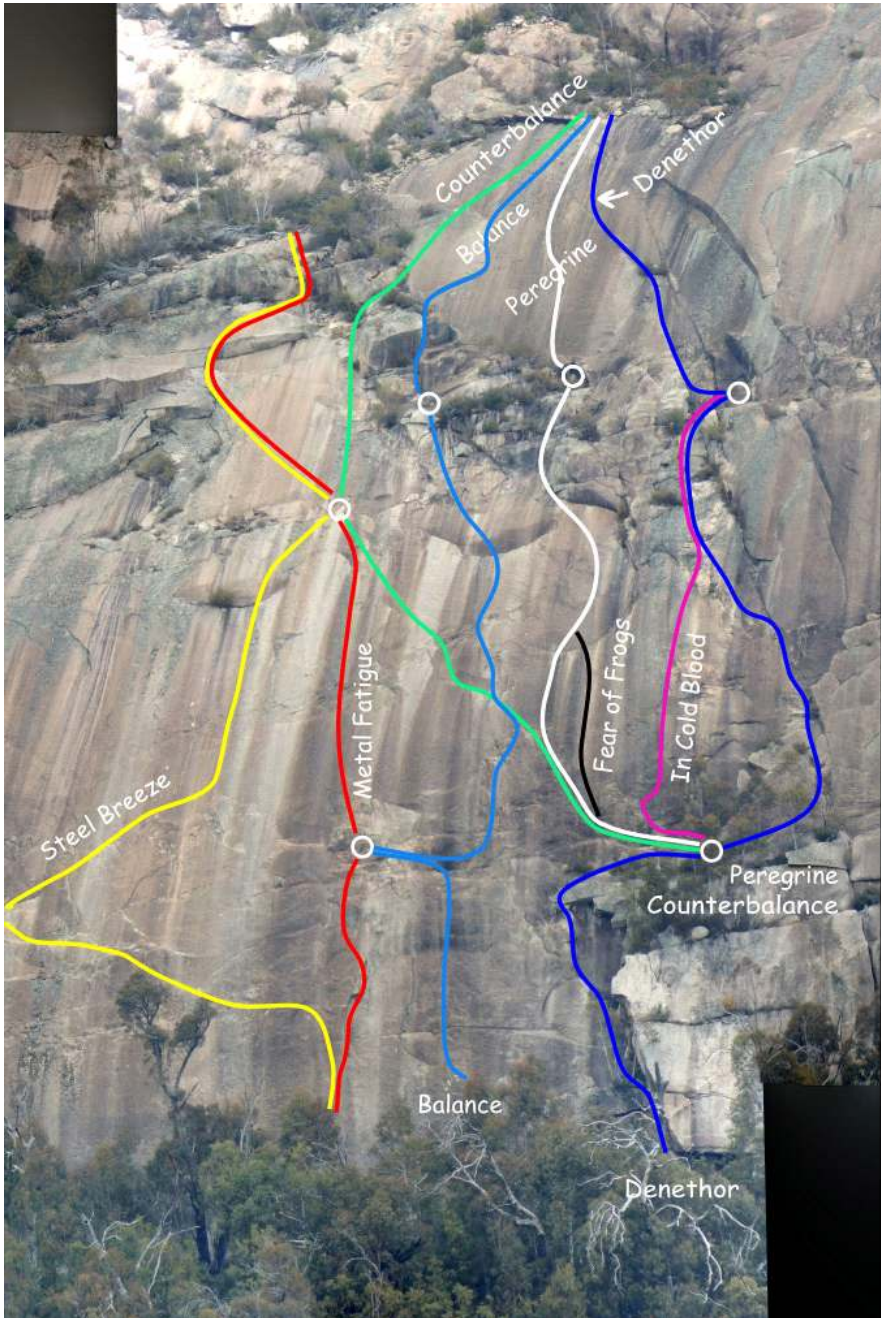
A popular climb and the second route on the Northern Slabs, it ascends the slabs and grooves bordering the right side of the Northern Slabs. Start at a short (8m) slab just left of an overhang where the walking track rises after skirting below **The Terrace**. Originally climbed in five pitches these days it is normally completed in three but if your second is likely to struggle it may be prudent to split the 1st pitch and belay on the ledge at 8m as the crux cannot be seen from the 1st belay. The 3rd pitch is rarely climbed; instead most parties finish up **Ivory Coast**.



The first often overlooked runner, view from above

Pitch 1. (38m) Climb the slab (crux) below the right end of the ledge at 8m, (a belay on the first ascent) then up the corner, over the bulge to the ledge above. Climb the slab just left of the corner for 5m then move further left up a shallow right-

Booroomba's Northern Slabs



DenethorDrawing2

← Joins Route
Photo on p25

See Route Photo on p47 for other
climbs in this part of the Main Slab

Multi Pitch Climbs—Main Slab—Right Side—Photo

Denethor beta

Although we have mentioned cams in the beta this climb can be fully protected with nuts.

Pitch 1 (14) The crux move is mounting a small pedestal on the initial slab and thin moves immediately above. Originally graded 15, the consensus has now settled on 14, albeit a hard 14. A small stopper (#6) can be placed side ways behind the pedestal. *An alternative start, which is often dry when the regular start is wet, is 2m right of the pedestal. Same grade and unprotected.* Above the ledge cams (#.75-#2, many placements) can be fixed under the overlap or nuts in the corner then nuts and cams in the corner crack above the overlap. before moving right up the shallow right-facing corner. There is no pro until the 2nd overlap near the top of the pitch.

Pitch 2 (13) A well protected pitch. The prominent groove can be protected by small and medium nuts in the lower half and small cams in the upper half. Save a #.4 cam for the top of the groove just before the awkward move left. At least eight runners can be placed in this pitch.

Pitch 3 (10) Runners can be placed in the crack but once it closes (at 15-20m) the climb is unprotected. Here, however the slab angle eases and there is easy friction climbing to finish.

Denethor pitch 1 continued...

facing corner and climb to the overlap. Traverse right and up to belay at the left end of The Terrace using a convenient tree, or cams and nuts behind the large block (2nd belay on the first ascent). *Some climbers stick to the corner (where there is pro) but its not as enjoyable as the route taken on the first ascent.*

Pitch 2 (40m) Walk right about 7m then climb over blocks to a prominent groove (3rd belay on the first ascent). Ascend the groove, which is awkward near the top, step left and climb slabs and blocks to belay on a comfortable triangular shaped ledge on the right. Use small cams (#.3-#.4) and medium nuts for the belay (4th belay on the first ascent).

Pitch 3 (39m) Move left and climb the crack, which closes to a thin seam and the gentle slab above to the vegetation. Tree belay.

Peter Aitchison, Tony Wood, 1-Sep-1968

*Scramble up the slabs immediately to the right of **Denethor**, to the crest of the ridge and find the walking track back to the campsite. Many climbers leave their boots on for this exposed scramble.*

*A bolt was placed between the various starts to **Denethor** by persons unknown in 2006 and subsequently broken off, also by persons unknown, in 2009. Clearly many climbers feel ownership of this great climb.*

Two climbs start from the 2nd belay on Denethor.

Ivory Coast ascends the corner crack above the belay for 4m then steps right to the base of the flake (route taken on the first ascent of **Ivory Coast**). It's also possible to move up the wall diagonally left from the belay to the base of the flake or traverse right along **Lepton** for 5m before climbing up to the base of the flake.

Lepton traverses down and right along the obvious ledge.

*I've been climbing **Denethor** for over 40 years and it was only recently that I noticed Robert Douglas using a high hand hold above the groove on Pitch 2 that really tames the awkward move to the left. Only wish I had found it decades earlier. It would have saved some very anxious moments on a number of occasions!*

The route description for **Solantic** is in **Traverses on Page 45**.

***BALANCE 125m 18** (route photo p19)

Now that the bolt has been replaced on the first pitch (it was removed in 1975) and the 1st belay improved this is an excellent slab climb. Thrutch 66 (Winter 1975) reports a previously unrecorded variation by Tony Nemeč and Victor Mylec but didn't say where it was! The obvious variation is a direct finish to the 1st pitch however when contacted Tony could not remember the details. The direct finish is now written into the route description. The 2nd pitch has been straightened. Previously it followed **Counterbalance** from the crux move to the recess.

***BALANCE LITE 15**

Pitch 1 It's possible to avoid the first crux (*start up **Denethor***) and the second crux (*traverse right then up to the ledge and back left to the belay as on the first ascent*) for an excellent sustained grade 15 slab climb.

Pitch 2 and 3 as for **Balance**.

The crux for this route is the white slab above the recess on pitch 2.



Robert Douglas contemplating the second crux on **Balance**

Balance



PICT3283CutFix

Balance

Pitch 1 (38m) Hard moves up the short black slab (crux) to a comfortable ledge at 8m. Climb left along the **Solantic** traverse for 13m (until below the bolt) then straight up to beneath the bulge and narrow ledge. *The first ascent traversed right at the bulge to easier ground then up and back left to the belay.* Instead climb the bulge (second crux) to the ledge then easily traverse left to the double bolt anchor. There is more than one spot where this hard move off the flake can be made. The bolt anchors replace a poor fixed piton belay, which is still there.

Pitch 2 (48m) Diagonally right to join **Counterbalance** at the top of the juggy brown slab. Make the crux move on **Counterbalance** then straight up to belay on blocks at the top of the slab. Belay on large nuts and cams (#.75 -#1).

Pitch 3 (39m) Climb over blocks and ledges to a short corner then to a prominent large flake. Undercling rightwards around the edge and finally up easy low angled slabs to the vegetation. Tree belay.

Bill Wilson, R Warner, 17-Mar-1974
Walk off as for **Denethor**

Balance beta

Pitch 1 (18) There are four runners on this pitch. The first crux is unprotected. Small cams (#.4-#.5) or medium nuts on the ledge above the first crux. At the left end of the narrow ledge (below the second crux) fix small nuts in opposition (either #4 and #5 or #4 and #7) and use a sling to reduce the risk of them pulling out. Its also possible to get a micro cam behind the flake. At the ledge above the direct finish there is a good #.75-#1 cam placement at feet level.

Pitch 2 (15) Small and medium nuts in the juggy brown slab, small stopper at the old **Counterbalance** peg belay, up 7m to scoop (on the left) and micro stopper (use a long sling). Friction climb up white rock on right to ledge and small nut on the left then diagonally left to higher ledge and a large nut placement then more easier friction climbing to the belay. Above the **Counterbalance** crux the pro is often small nuts in shallow cracks, which don't inspire confidence. The upper part of this pitch feels run-out.

Pitch 3 (14) A small nut below the short corner, large nuts or cams (#.75-#2) under the flake, medium nut around the corner then small nut behind a small flake when the slab angle eases.

**The route description for
Balance Direct Start is in
Top-Rope Problems on
Page 54.**

METAL FATIGUE AND STEEL BREEZE

These climbs start 19m left of **Denethor**. Both routes climb the two large flakes and the slab above. **Metal Fatigue** moves right to the base of the right facing corner (**Metal Fatigue Corner**) while **Steel Breeze** continues up to join **Solantic**. It was a sign of the times that previous guide book authors recommended these serious poorly protected routes. Fortunately the first ascent teams have allowed us to add a few bolts so that we can all enjoy these wonderful tough climbs.

METAL FATIGUE/STEEL BREEZE COMBINATION 112m 20

Previous guide books recommended climbing the first pitch of **Metal Fatigue**, reversing the third pitch of **Sleepwalker** to the bolt and finishing up **Steel Breeze**, because it made the best use of the natural protection. It is a good climb but, with the new bolts, unlikely to get many ascents.

*METAL FATIGUE 98m 20 (route photo p19)

A brilliant lead up the slab. Originally the first pro was at the corner some 30m above the ground and the 2nd pitch had no pro at all. Fortunately for us mortals, John and Ray agreed to bolt runners being placed on their climb. The second belay was the same as the belay for **Steel Breeze**. We have moved it to the first belay on **Counterbalance**. Previously it was in the broken slabs above the 2nd pitch of **Steel Breeze**.

Pitch 1 (40m) Thin and sustained. Climb past the two flakes, continue to the third bolt then diagonally right to the base of the right facing corner. Up the corner to the large block then step left and up to the **Balance** belay. Double bolt anchors.
Pitch 2 (33m) Climb the brown streak to the **Counterbalance** belay. Double bolt anchors.
Pitch 3 (40m) Up the slab moving left to join the last pitch of **Equilibrium** at the overlap (at about 25m). Same as the third pitch of **Steel Breeze**. Finish as for **Equilibrium**. Tree belay.
John Smart, Ray Lassman, alt, Nov-1978

Metal Fatigue beta

Pitch 1 (20) The right facing corner takes a #2 cam above the ledge on the **Solantic** traverse. Higher up a sling around a block (or medium nuts) before the move left onto the slab. There are two finishes to this pitch. The easier finish is trending right up the overlap. The other finish is trending left around the overlap.

Pitch 2 (19) Two bolt runners before the halfway ledge (*where it looks possible to escape right to **Counterbalance***) then slightly easier climbing past another bolt to the belay.

Pitch 3 (12) Unprotected until **Equilibrium** is reached at the overlap.

Booroomba's Northern Slabs

*STEEL BREEZE 105m 20 (route photo p19)

This climb represented a new level of difficulty for slabs at Booroomba and it was a couple of years before a harder route was established (also by Roark). In addition to the technical difficulty the 1st pitch was unprotected (amazingly this was an on-sight lead) and the 2nd pitch had only two runners none of which protected the crux. On the second ascent Rick McGregor placed the bolt (on lead) on the 2nd pitch giving a reasonably protected pitch by Booroomba's standards at the time but incredibly didn't think the 1st pitch needed any protection! Recently Roark has agreed to bolts being placed on the 1st pitch. The 2nd belay was a spike in the broken slabs but we have moved the belay to the 1st belay on **Counterbalance**.

Pitch 1 (45m) Thin and sustained. Climb past the two flakes then follow the four bolt runners to the **Solantic** traverse, which is then followed left to the **Equilibrium** belay. Double bolt anchors.

Pitch 2 (47m) Spot the bolt runner. Its 18m away, on the skyline at about 2 o'clock. Technical climbing to the bolt (*leave the carabineer behind, its needed for **Sleepwalker***). Straight up left of the white water streak to easy ground (at 33m) then diagonally right to the **Counterbalance** belay. Double bolt anchors.

Pitch 3 (40m) Up the slab moving left to join the last pitch of **Equilibrium** at the overlap (at about 25m). Finish as for **Equilibrium**. Tree belay.

Roark Muhlen, Apl-1977

When I spoke to Roark I forgot to ask who held the rope!



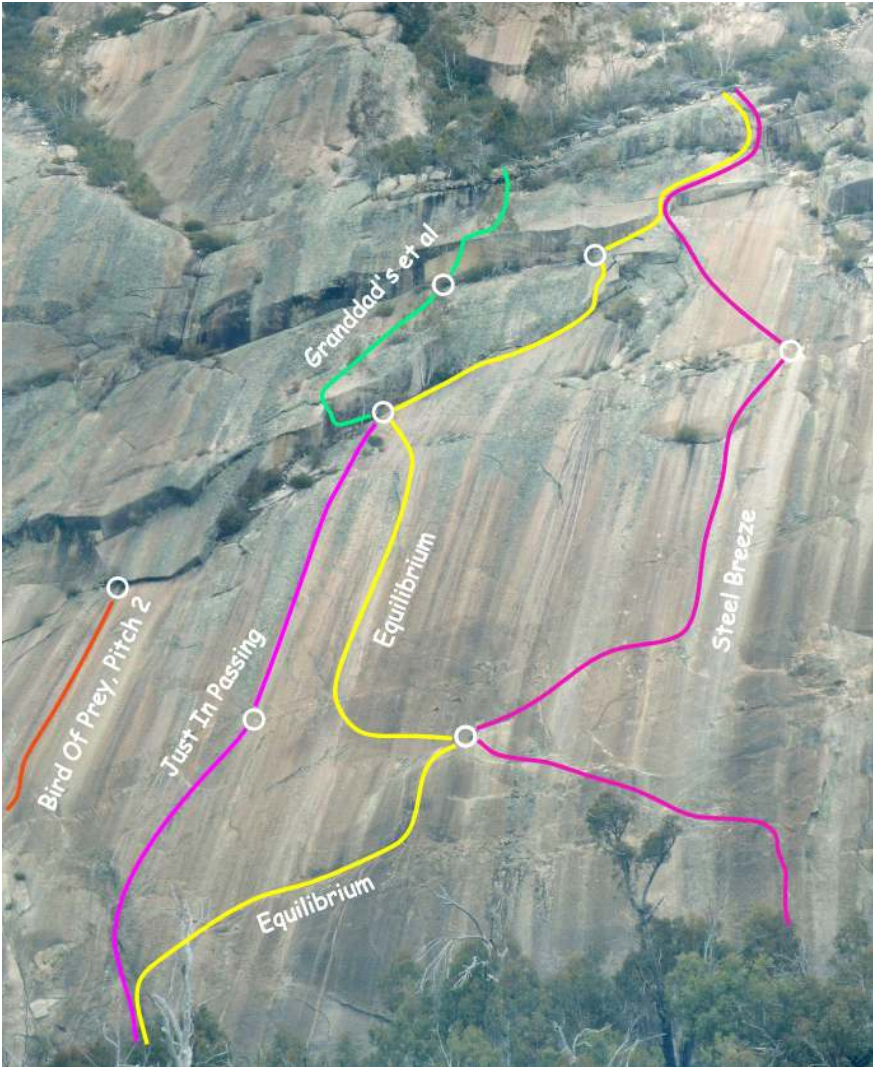
MentalFatigueDrawing1

Steel Breeze beta

Pitch 1 (20) The fourth bolt runner is just past the second crux on **Solantic**. Easier climbing to the belay.

Pitch 2 (20) There is a good large stopper placement at about 4m but no other protection until the bolt at 18m. The crux involves tiny edging and smearing between the bolt runner and a thin crack about 5m higher that takes small and medium stoppers. This is the last protection until the belay.

Pitch 3 (12) Unprotected until **Equilibrium** is reached at the overlap.



EquilibriumDrawing3

← Joins
Route Photo
on p31

See Route Photos on p47 and p57
for other climbs in this part of the
Main Slab

Joins →
Route Photo
on p19

Multi Pitch Climbs—Central Main Slab—Photo

It's possible to include some top-rope problems during a multi-pitch climb and a few suggestions are given on page 51.

The following climbs, **Total Control**, **Rock Lobster**, **Rounge Lizard**, **Tip Stripper**, **Basilisk** and **Equilibrium Direct Start**, are located between **Steel Breeze** and **Equilibrium**. These routes are single pitch climbs and the descriptions are given in **Top-Rope Problems** starting on page 55.

*****EQUILIBRIUM 140m 17** (route photo p25)

Another breakthrough climb for its time and the third climb on the Northern Slabs. A great and popular climb, so much so that some footholds now appear stained by rubber. Originally six pitches, the first three pitches are now combined and rockfall has changed the last pitch. Peter Aitchison, who lead the crux pitch, wore stiff alpine boots and hand drilled and placed all bolts on lead. Amazing! Originally there were three bolts on the crux pitch but the middle one was removed in 1975 as part of a cliff cleanup prior to publication of a new guide (*see break-out below*). Start in a shallow groove 60m left of **Denethor**. This is a fabulous introductory easy grade 17 slab climb.



EquilibriumDrawing6

Pitch 1 (48m) Climb the shallow groove for 22m (*bolt belay on first ascent - the original bolt has long been removed—the bolt runner above, at 26m, is on **Just in Passing***). Move diagonally right (*an intimidating set of moves out of the comfort of the corner*) to the large ledge (*nut belay on first ascent*) then further right and up wall to a comfortable ledge and double bolt belay (*peg belay on first ascent*).

Pitch 2 (40m) Spot the bolt. It's 15m away between 10 and 11 o'clock. Move to the left end of the ledge then up to the first bolt (*on the first ascent Peter went directly to the bolt location*). Continue up to the right of the small corner above to the next bolt then up (crux) to where the slab angle eases. Finally move diagonally left to the overlap to belay on nuts and cams (*#-.75-#2*) or a sling around a tree (*peg belay on first ascent and 2nd belay for **Just in Passing***).

1975 Cliff Clean-up

In 1975 bolt runners were removed from **Equilibrium** and **Balance** (and other climbs at Booroomba). While **Equilibrium** continued to be climbed **Balance** has had very few ascents since then. With the bolt replaced **Balance** deserves more ascents.

Escape to Sunstroke.

*At 22m on the 1st pitch of **Equilibrium**, move diagonally left to join the 1st pitch of **Sunstroke***

Equilibrium beta

Carry doubles for #.75 and #1 cams for the 3rd and 4th pitches. A few additional long slings are useful on the 1st pitch.

Pitch 1 (15) There is a text book nut placement at 15m and many good nut placements below this point. The next nut at 19m (#8 stopper) is the last before the step right and needs a long sling. This is an important nut placement as it's 10m to the next nut and without it there is small risk of a ground fall. There are at least 3 more pieces of pro, including a #1 cam on the ledge, all of which need long slings to avoid running out of rope on this pitch.

Pitch 2 (17) There are four pieces of pro in this pitch; two small nuts and two bolts. A nut can be placed in a diagonal crack directly below the first bolt (at about 10m) and a second nut in the left facing corner a few metres below the 2nd bolt (often not used). The climb between the bolts (it's about 15m) can feel very lonely.

Pitch 3 (11) Large nuts or cams (#.5-#1) anywhere under the overlap.

Pitch 4 (12) #.3 cam in a crack above the corner and #.75 cam in a crack in the slab below the final corner. Rockfall has changed this pitch.

Equilibrium continued...

*There's a number of ways to complete this climb, the easiest being to traverse horizontally right to the 1st belay on **Counterbalance** and then finish up **Counterbalance**. Another option is to traverse down and left around the overlap and join **Solantic** at the top of the **Bird of Prey** slab - ie the 3rd belay on **Solantic**, a distance of 24m. Alternatively climb **Grandad's Big Day Out** - a novel finish.*

The following two pitches are rarely climbed.

Pitch 3 (28m) Climb right along the overlap until a wide crack (at about 23m) can be climbed to the next slab. Belay off cams (#.5-#1) and nuts at the next overlap (the 4th belay for **Eagle Eye**).

Pitch 4 (24m) Continue 4m right along the slab to the corner (where a large block of rock broke off at the turn of the century) then climb the overlap. Move diagonally right on the higher slab to a short corner and climb (strenuous) to the vegetation and belay off a tree (the final pitch of **Eagle Eye**).

P Aitchison, P Cocker, 9-Jun-1969
*Walk off as for **Denethor**.*

Abseil off Equilibrium

*The bolt on the 1st pitch of **Just in Passing** will allow an abseil to the ground with a 60m rope. Furthermore this bolt can be easily reached by a short diagonal abseil from the 1st belay on **Equilibrium**.*

***GRANDDAD'S BIG DAY OUT 32m 16** (route photo p25)

This climb was recently spotted and has an entertaining and unusual move in each pitch. The pitches can be combined but rope drag can be a problem. Start at the 2nd belay of **Equilibrium**. There is a bit of lichen on the higher slabs. The climb starts up the third pitch of **Tachyon** but once above the overlap takes a different line.

Pitch 1 (18m) Climb the corner in the overlap (*about 4m left of the belay*) to the higher slab. Spot the thin flake on the next overlap, at about 1 o'clock. Move easily up the slab and belay off cams and nuts or a tree at the base of the overlap near the flake.

Pitch 2 (14m) Climb the very thin slightly overhanging flake (strenuous) to the higher slab. Move right along the top edge of the flake for about 5m then up over the third overlap to the vegetation and tree belay.

Watch out for loose rock above the final overlap.

Brian Mattick, Peter Cunningham (alt)
10-Jun-2013

*Walk off as for **Sunstroke**.*

Granddad's beta

Take a #3 cam. The slab climbing is very easy as is the final overlap. The 1st and 2nd overlaps provide all the entertainment.

Pitch 1 (14) A well protected pitch. #3 cam or sling around a tree at the base of the corner, sling around a small tree at the top of the corner, cracks in the slab for nuts and cams (#.5-#1).

Pitch 2 (16) Sling around tree at the base of the flake, #1-#3 cam behind the thin flake as high as you can place it. This is the last pro until the belay. There is an easier exit up the final overlap about 6m right.

***JUST IN PASSING 74m 19** (route photo p25)

Start mid way between **Equilibrium** and **Sunstroke**. The bottom half of the 1st pitch is contrived as the obvious line is to continue up the initial groove of **Equilibrium** until it runs out. The 2nd pitch is classic smearing and the name refers to a slide Paul Daniel took past the bolt on this pitch. In fact many leaders have taken a slide at this point. The 1st pitch was also serious as the 1st runner was at 12m and the 2nd runner was at 32m. Obviously a risk of ground fall. Additionally, after the 2003 fires there were many loose flakes on the bottom half of the 1st pitch, however this problem appears to have abated somewhat with the passage of time. Our view is use the **Equilibrium** start otherwise use the original start but occasionally slip across to place runners in the **Equilibrium** groove. We also took up Paul's suggestion of a bolt on the 1st pitch at the top of the **Equilibrium** groove, at 26m as that's where the serious climbing starts on the 1st pitch.

Just in Passing beta

Take extra long slings for any runners below the bolt on the 1st pitch as rope draw can be an issue on this pitch.

Pitch 1 (17) Runner at the recess (crack on the left at 12m) then runoff to the overlap at the top of the **Equilibrium** groove (at 26m and bolt runner). This section can be avoided by climbing **Equilibrium** or alternatively detouring across to **Equilibrium** to place runners on long slings, particularly the **Equilibrium** runners at 15m or 19m. At the bolt step right and up 6m to good medium nut placements in a short diagonal crack. Continue up and slightly left to join the last 5m of **Sleepwalker** pitch 2 (and 2 small nut placements) then right to the belay.

Pitch 2 (19) Sustained smearing. There is one bolt runner at about 15m and a bit of lichen at the top of the pitch.

Just in Passing

Pitch 1 (44m) Up the slab to a recess at 12m, up the bulge and slab above joining the **Equilibrium** groove above the point where **Equilibrium** traverses right (at 22m). At the bolt runner step right and up via ledges, slabs and grooves to a semi-hanging belay on cams (#1-#2) and medium nuts directly below pitch 2 and roughly at the same level as the **Equilibrium** ledge (*This belay point becomes a runner on the 3rd pitch of **Solantic***).

Pitch 2 (30m) Climb the slab to the 2nd belay of **Equilibrium**. Pure friction all the way. Enjoy!
Paul Daniel, Mike Law-Smith, John Smart, Geoff Robertson, Mar-1982
finish as for **Equilibrium**

The semi-hanging belay is awkward as the slab is too steep to sit on and the only ledge (on the right) is the size of a climbing boot. You need to carefully plan a changeover at this belay.

Link Ups

Its always possible to mix pitches from adjacent climbs to vary the experience of a day at the crags. A few suggestions are given below.

- Previous guide books mentioned the **Metal Fatigue/Steel Breeze** link up.
- **Just in Passing/Equilibrium/Granddad's** gives a sustained 16/17.
- **Tachyon, Epheros** and **Sleepwalker** offer variation starts to **Sunstroke**.
- **Eagle Eye Direct** or **The Streaker** give alternative finishes to **Sunstroke**.



SunstrokeStartDrawing1

*****SUNSTROKE 135m 9** (route photo p31)

The first climb on the Northern Slabs and one of the best climbs for its grade anywhere. A popular classic starting at a slanting crack 8m left of **Equilibrium** and following an obvious weakness to the top of the cliff. A tree at the top on the 2nd pitch was the original belay but was killed by the 2003 fires and has been recently removed (2014). This has greatly improved a wonderful climb.

Sunstroke beta

Take a #3 cam for the 4th pitch.

Pitch 1. (8) Well protected with cams, stoppers and a sling around a tree.

Pitch 2. (5) Poorly protected but easy climbing to the corner. There is a slot for a #2 cam or large nut about 5m above the belay.

Pitch 3. (9) Well protected with cams and nuts.

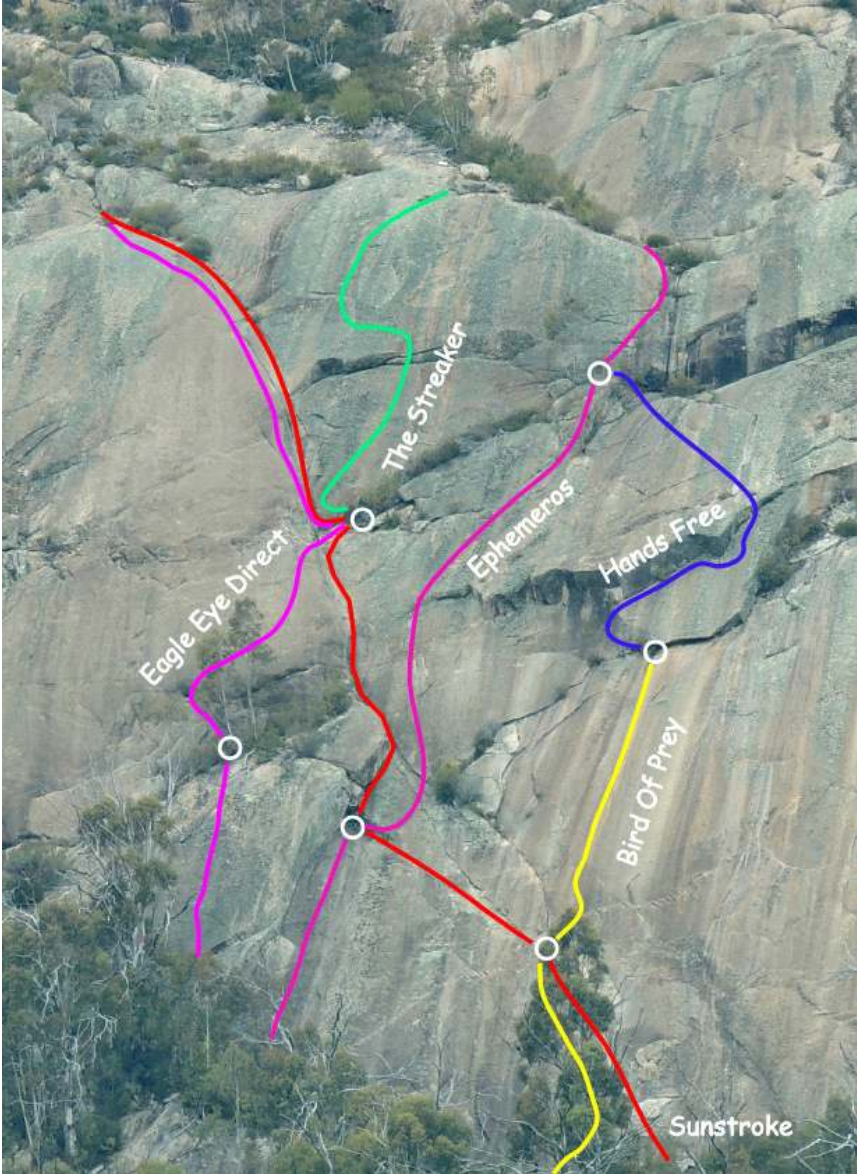
Pitch 4. (8) Well protected with large cams and big nuts.

Pitch 1. (40m) Rightward up the crack then follow the left slanting groove/crack to a comfortable slightly sloping ledge. Belay on cams (#.75-#1) and large nuts.

Pitch 2. (20m) Left along the sloping ledge to the often wet corner. Belay on cams (#.75-#.5) or medium nuts in the corner crack.

Pitch 3. (35m) An easy bridging move to start, layback the short easy angled corner then left up the steepening groove (crux). Continue to a ledge and belay on the right using nuts and cams (#.75-#2).

Sunstroke



SunstrokeDrawing4

Multi Pitch Climbs—Main Slab-Left Side—Photo

← Joins
Route Photo
on p39

See Route Photos on p47 and p57
for other climbs in this part of the
Main Slab

Joins →
Route Photo
on p25

SUNSTROKE VARIATION

Earlier guides mentioned a **Sunstroke Variation**. This has not been included as it appears to cover ground described in the 2nd pitch of **Ephemeros**.

SUNSTROKE - COMBINING PITCH 2 AND 3 43m 11

Follow the shallow groove up the slab to join pitch 3 above the layback. Continue to the 3rd belay. Poorly protected below the top of the layback.

Sunstroke continued...

Pitch 4. (40m) Climb the twin grooves to a large stance covered with loose rock. Belay on cams (#.75 - #1). Peter Aitchison, Ian Raine, 25-Jan-1968.

There is a cut track starting above the final belay. This can be followed to the crest of the ridge then along the ridge back to the old campsite below the lookout.

Escape is possible to the left along a scrubby ledge just below the crux on Pitch 3. At the first gum tree make a 20m abseil to the ground.

THE STREAKER 36m 15 (route photo p31)

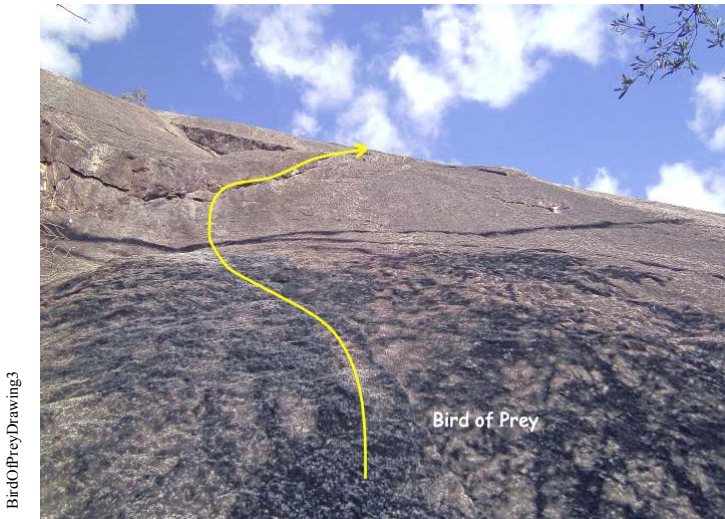
A variation finish to **Sunstroke**. Climbs the slab and headwall right of the final pitch of **Sunstroke**. This climb has never been recorded in previous guides and was reported in Thrutch number 64 (September 1974). As a result it's had few ascents and is marred by too much lichen.

The Streaker beta

A #3 cam is useful on this climb. The bolts were placed by hand on lead, however modern gear makes them redundant and they have not been replaced. If you really want to clip them you will need a bracket and possibly a spanner to tighten the nut. They were left in place to indicate the route.

Pitch 1 (15) Place a large nut in Sunstroke corner then #3 cam and medium nut below the overlap (below the bolt). At the next wall a #.4 cam can be placed at the base before moving up to the bolt. It's possible to avoid the final wall by traversing easily left into **Sunstroke**.

Pitch 1 (36m) Start up **Sunstroke** then move right up the slab to below the overlap and old bolt runner. Climb the overlap (crux) and move left around the corner to the next wall and old bolt runner. Up wall to finish over right at the large block. Use #1-#2 cams and large nuts to belay or a large sling (or climbing rope) around the block. Dick Hain, Peter Grey, 1974
*Walk off as for **Sunstroke**.*



****BIRD OF PREY 58m 17 (route photo p31)**

The 1st pitch requires thought and is run-out and the 2nd pitch is superb and even more run-out. Exposed friction climbing at its best. Start 15m left of **Sunstroke** on or just left of a large pointy block resting against the base of the cliff. The 2nd belay has been moved to the top of the slab. Previously it was around the corner of the overlap on the right.

Bird of Prey beta

Take a #3 cam and any extra gear needed for the exit pitches.

Pitch 1 (16) Small nut placement at the top of the crack on the left (at 8m), traverse right passing a thin diagonal crack and nut placement at 12m to the comfortable ledge then unprotected slab climbing up flakey edges to the belay. If you don't like the unprotected slab it's a short step right into **Sunstroke**.

Pitch 2 (17) **Unprotected**, 20m of pure friction. The variation start takes small and medium nuts and a #1 cam in a crack on the left (use a long sling) before climbing onto the slab.

Pitch 1 (30m) Technical climbing up and left for 8m then delicately right to a comfortable ledge at 14m before easier climbing straight up the slab to 1st belay on **Sunstroke**. Belay with large nuts and/or #.75-#1 cams.

Pitch 2 (28m) Move right over blocky ground then left up a short steep ramp to the **Bird of Prey** slab.

Mentally difficult move to step onto the slab then straight up to belay under the overlap on a tree stump and/or large nuts and #1-#3 cams (3rd belay on **Solantic**). Paul Daniel, John Carlson, Mike Peck, 15-Jul-1979

*Either finish the climb out left up **Solantic** or **Hands Free**, or easily climb right to the 2nd belay on **Equilibrium** - a distance of 24m.*

Pitch 2 Variation

Variation entry to the slab, climbs the crack behind the 1st belay then up right on a small ledge to enter the slab. Although you can get nuts in the variation it's still 20m of pure **unprotected** friction to the next belay.

Sunday Stroll starts 5m to the right of **Bird of Prey** and just left of a small tree at about 4m off the ground. There's a cracker of a move off the block onto the slab. Delicate and balancy climbing to the small tree then up a shallow scoop to join the original route at the comfortable ledge at 14m. There appears to be easier starts right of the small tree.



SundayStrollDrawing2

Sunday Stroll beta

The **Sunday Stroll** start is grade 17+ for a couple of moves then grade 15 to the thin diagonal crack, where small nuts can be placed, before joining the original route.



Above the **Bird of Prey** Slab.

Photo Robert Douglas

The route description for Sleepwalker is in
Traverses on page 46.

HANDS FREE 35m 18 (route photo p31)

This pitch was discovered while trying to figure out the route of **Tachyon**. Start at the 2nd belay of **Bird of Prey**. A balancy, exposed climb unfortunately marred by too much lichen. It was climbed after rain and avoiding the seepage also added to the drama. Take at least 5 long slings to reduce rope friction on this pitch.

Hands Free beta

Pitch 1 (18) Well protected to the prow with #.5 cam in the flaring crack above the 15cm ledge then nuts (at least 3) in the thin crack below the overlap. Use long slings. The balancy move around the prow is the crux or alternatively downclimb the slab and move right to get around the prow. There appears to be a good nut placement in the corner about 2m up from the prow (but seepage may make it out of reach—it was for us) however a thin crack in the slab about 2m higher takes micro stoppers before climbing the overlap on the left.

Pitch 1 35m Move left from the belay, then up and right to the slab above the belay. Climb right below the overlap then down and around the prow and up the slab until it's possible to pull up left onto the higher slab. Easier climbing diagonally left to join **Ephemeris** at the 2nd belay (about 20m away).

*Alternatively move right to join **Granddad's Big Day Out** where it climbs the overlap near the **Equilibrium** belay (about 5m away).
Brian Mattick, Robert Douglas, 26-Jun-2013*

EPHEMERIS 76m 15 (route photo p31)

A pleasant climb although the last few metres of the 2nd pitch (the 3rd pitch on the first ascent) has a bit of vegetation. The first pitch originally had one poor runner near the ground. Later two bolts were added by persons unknown (circa 1980) but they were unusable because they lacked a bracket, washer and nut. With Tony's approval these bolts have been replaced and a third added to give a brilliant, well protected introductory slab pitch and alternative start to **Sunstroke**. It was a serious poorly protected lead in 1970. Originally climbed in four pitches the 2nd and 3rd pitch are combined to avoid a poor belay at the top of the original 2nd pitch. Start 15m right of **Tachyon**.

*In 2014 an off-route climber broke an ankle in a short fall somewhere right of **Sunstroke**. He was lowered to the ground and winched out by helicopter..*

Ephemeros beta

Pitch 1. (11) Bolt runners at 6m, 13m and 20m. On the first ascent there was only one poor runner near the first bolt.

Pitch 2. (13) Reasonable protection at the start (small nuts and #.3-#.4 cams) and finish (small and medium nuts) of the pitch. The central section below the small roof is run-out with only a poor nut behind a loose flake. More cleaning may improve this situation.

Pitch 3. (15) Previously a piton was placed under the flake at the crux but now #.5 and #2 cams (two placements) do the job nicely.

Ephemeros

Pitch 1. (26m) Straight up the slab, past the bolt runners to the corner (*2nd belay on Sunstroke*). Belay on cams (#.75-#1) and nuts.

Pitch 2. (40m) Move right a few metres then climb the slab, up over a small roof at 20m then follow the crack slightly right to a small ledge at 25m (*a belay on the first ascent but a difficult site to place a nest of nuts*). Continue up the crack and arete (or the easy slab on the right) through the vegetation to a good ledge and tree belay.

Pitch 3. (10m) A technically interesting and enjoyable pitch. Climb the wall moving diagonally right to the bushes (crux) then on to a ledge and belay (climbing rope around a large boulder).

Tony Wood, John Langford, 15-Mar-1970

*Easy scramble to the walk-off track from **Sunstroke**.*



The route description for Tachyon is in Traverses on Page 49.

Multi Pitch Climbs—Far North



*EAGLE EYE DIRECT 93m 16 (route photo p31)

Start 2 to 3 metres left of **Tachyon**. Shares the second pitch with **Eagle Eye**. Pleasant worthwhile climbing. After discussions with Tony Wood a bolt has been placed on this climb and having the bolt actually changes (straightens and improves) the 1st pitch. Originally the route would have climbed to the small intrusion then traversed left along the intrusion (looking for a place for protection - there's none) and almost joining **Eagle Eye**, before climbing to the belay.

Pitch 1. (25m) Climb the large flake then up the slab past the bolt. Belay at the big flake or the left most of the three gum trees at the top of the ramp. There is lichen on this pitch but the granite is rough and there are plenty of crystal knobs for friction.

Pitch 2. (28m) Climb the wall and slab above moving to the right to the 3rd belay on **Sunstroke** (this is the 2nd pitch of **Eagle Eye**).

Pitch 3. (40m) Climb the shallow short corners immediately left of

Eagle Eye Direct beta

Pitch 1. (16) Two pieces of protection can be placed on this pitch. A small cam (#.4) at the top of the flake at 6m and the bolt runner. The climbing is sustained.

This pitch was unprotectable in 1971, a serious and impressive lead.

Pitch 2. (14) Good protection in the blocks below the wall, micro stopper in the wall. Unprotected on the slab but easy climbing to the belay.

Eagle Eye Direct Start

Pitch 3 continued...

the twin **Sunstroke** cracks to the arete, then follow the arete to the ledge and cam (#.75-#1) belay (*final belay on Sunstroke*)

I Taylor, T Wood, May-1972

Walk off as for Sunstroke.

Eagle Eye Direct beta

Pitch 3. (12) Small nut at the top of the shallow corner, then a medium cam (#.75) in a slot at 10m. The angle and difficulties ease at 15m and a further nut or cam can be placed on the left at 25m.

The route description for Eagle Eye is in Traverses on Page 50.

PROHIBITION 74m 11 (route photo p39)

An easy enjoyable slab climb on very coarse rock with a surprisingly exposed 2nd pitch. Originally the 3rd pitch went diagonally right along the weakness to join **Eagle Eye Direct** on the arete. We have described a variation 3rd pitch that attempts to stay away from the arete.

Pitch 1 (17m) Climb the leftward slanting crack to the foot of the ramp (just over the horizon). Belay using #1 and #2 cams or large nuts.

Pitch 2 (22m) Diagonally right on the slab above the ramp to a recess at 7m then up (crux) trending slightly right to a ledge with a large (and loose) block. Belay with a #0.3 cam and small and medium nuts.

Pitch 3 (45m) Straight up then slightly right to avoid the overlap, continue steeply right to a horizontal crack. Above the crack the slab angle eases but is now covered with lichen. (*Maybe a better finish is to join the final pitch of Eagle Eye Direct*). Belay on cams (#.75 & #1) as for **Sunstroke**.

Tony Wood, Ian Taylor, 8-Nov-1970.

Walk off as for Sunstroke.

The start is 15m left of Tachyon and requires a short scrub bash from the track into a corner. Eagle Eye climbs the vegetated ramp on the right and Drunken Delight and Prohibition climb the crack-ramp on the left.

Prohibition beta

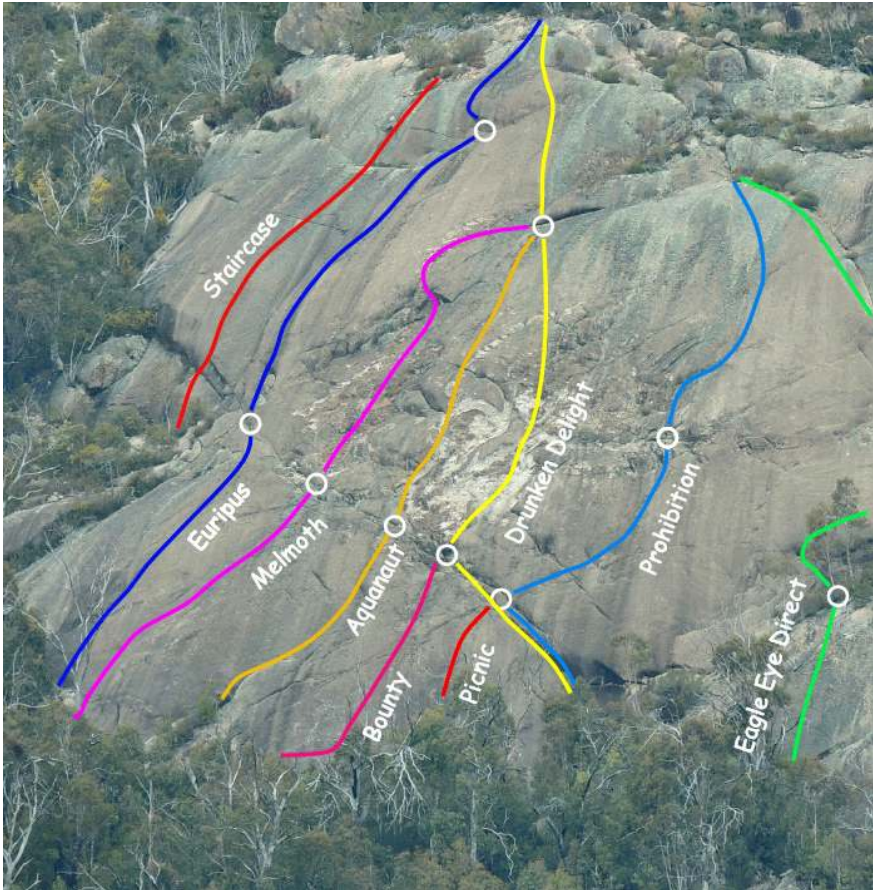
Pitch 1 (9) An easily protected pitch with a tricky start.

Pitch 2 (11) Nut runners at 4 and 7m then unprotected to the belay

Pitch 3 (10) #1 cam below the overlap then medium and small nuts in the horizontal crack (at least 3 placements can be found). The remainder of the slab (27m) is easy climbing and unprotected.

Multi-Pitch Climbs Far North

An area of low angled course textured slabs. At the Far North it's possible to climb anywhere and easily move between the various climbs. Shown below are the known climbs on this part of the cliff.



Multi Pitch Climbs—Far North—Photo

DrunkenDrawing6

Joins →
Route Photo
on p31

Booroomba's Northern Slabs

***DRUNKEN DELIGHT 85m 9** (route photo p39)

The second pitch is amazing. Start as for **Prohibition** (*see break-out p38*).

Pitch 1 (25m) As for **Prohibition** but continue along the ramp until it levels off. There is a small pocket that takes a #0.4 cam at the belay as well as other cracks for large nuts or cams.

Pitch 2 (30m) Up the amazing scoopy/blocky white slabby rock to a ledge and abseil anchors. *It's an easy walk right to the top of **Sunstroke**.*

Pitch 3 (30m) Up the easy slab behind the belay to the large dead gum tree.

Tony Wood, Ken Warner (alt leads),
Anne George, 3-Oct-1970

*Walk off right to join the track from **Sunstroke**.*

Drunken Delight beta

Pitch 1 (9) A hard start to get to the crack then easy climbing to the belay. Easy protection with cams and medium and large nuts.

Pitch 2 (8) Adequate protection with nuts is available. Use slings to reduce rope drag.

Pitch 3 (7) **Unprotected** and can be avoided by walking right to the final belay on **Sunstroke**.

PICNIC 21m 21 (route photo p39)

Starts about 8m left of **Drunken Delight**, a steep slab originally climbed with one bolt, the middle one. Paul has agreed to two more bolts on this challenging route.

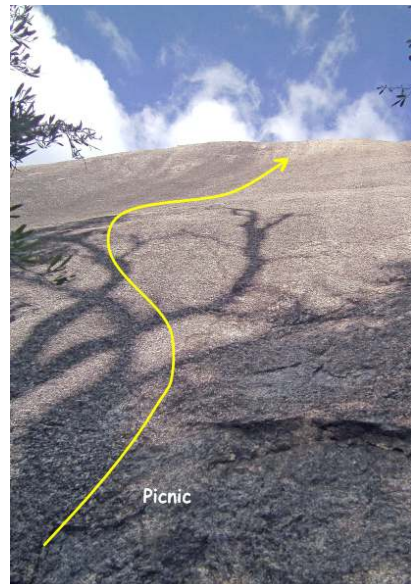
Pitch 1 (21m) Climb the slab. Belay as for **Prohibition**.

Paul Daniel, Mike Peck, 16-Jun-1985
Finish up any climb off the ledge

Picnic beta

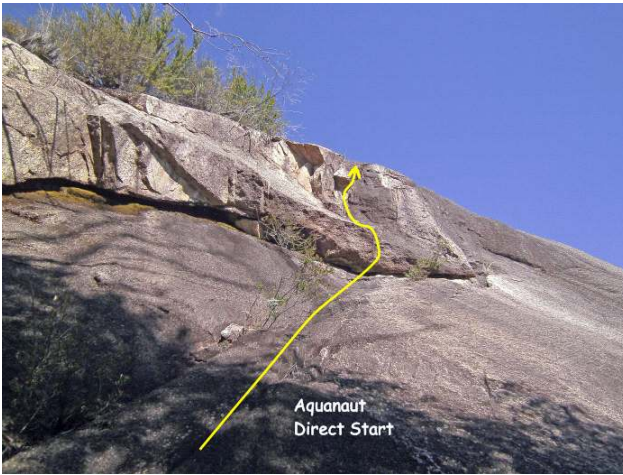
Pitch 1 (21) The difficulties start at the first bolt and the route is sustained. There are almost no hand and footholds on the slab. It's all about footwork to maximise friction. There are small stances at the first and third bolt but nothing at the second bolt so a quick draw needs to be handy. Paul took a slide to the ground when he broke a handhold near the first bolt.

PicnicDrawing3



Booroomba's Northern Slabs

AquanautDSDrawing4



Bounty is described in **Top-rope problems** on page 59.

AQUANAUT DIRECT START 15m 14 (route photo p39)

It was previously thought this was **Bounty** and rockfall had altered the start and grade. Paul Daniel soon put us straight. It's an obvious line but looks a bit unpleasant and menacing. Surprisingly steep for the Northern Slabs. Start 25m left of **Picnic** at a thin crack in a slab beneath a small overhang.



PICT0162Fix

Pitch 1 (15m) Up crack to overlap, climb overlap then either right or left to surmount the small overhang. Continue up the slab to the start of **Aquanaut**.

Brian Mattick, Robert Douglas, 5-Sep-2013

*Either finish up **Aquanaut** or scramble left along the vegetated ramp to return to the base of the cliff.*

Aquanaut DS beta

Pitch 1 (14) Small nuts in the thin crack, a #1-#2 cam under the overlap then #0.3 cam under the overhang. Moving right is the easier option.

Balance Pitch 1

Booroomba's Northern Slabs

AQUANAUT 64m 8 (route photo p39)

About 35m left of Drunken Delight (and 10m past the direct start) is a vegetated ledge leading back right across the cliff. Scramble along this ledge to the large flake and belay using cams behind the flake (#2-#3 and #0.4) and/or a sling around spindly scrub.

Pitch 1 (26m) Climb to the top of the flake then up the grippy (coarse rough rock) slab to the ledge belaying about 5m left of the 1st belay on **Drunken Delight** using #.5-#3 cams and/or large nuts.

Pitch 2 (38m) Up the slab keeping to the left edge of the white scoopy rock to a ledge and abseil anchors (2nd belay on **Drunken Delight**).

Ian Taylor, Tony Wood, 11-Oct-1970



AquanautDrawing1

Aquanaut beta

A #3 cam is useful (but not essential) for this climb.

Pitch 1 (8) Runner at top of flake (#0.75-#1 cams) then a large nut at 16m and a medium nut at 19m.

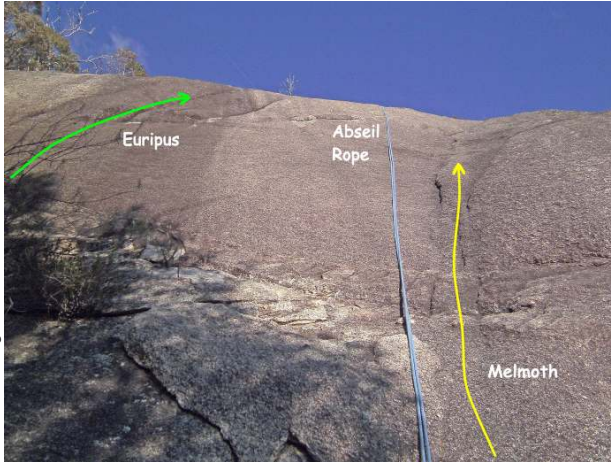
Pitch 2 (8) #0.5 cam at 5m then medium nuts at 14m and 22m. It's runout to the belay but the angle eases and the rock is grippy.

*It's an easy walk right to the top of **Sunstroke** or alternatively climb the 3^d pitch of **Drunken Delight**.*

The final moves on **Equilibrium**



Pic0154



Sometime between August 2014 and January 2015 a large tree fell at the base of the climb making for an easy direct start to the groove. Previously climbers traversed in from the left.

MelmothDrawing2

MELMOTH 61m 11 (route photo p39)

Start about 15 m left of **Aquanaut** and below a wide shallow groove with incipient cracks. The angle of the rock is low and it hardly feels like climbing but it can worry a tentative leader particularly as the pro is mostly small sizes and much of the 1st pitch is smearing. The original description is poor and the route description below is our interpretation. It's likely the original route continued up the unprotected slab to the left of the last pitch of **Drunken Delight**.

Pitch 1 (34m) Climb the slab to below the groove, then up the groove (crux) to the ledge belaying at the abseil anchors or right in a horizontal crack using #2 & #3 cams.

Pitch 2 (27m) Easy climbing up the orange scoopy rock to the overlap. Climb the overlap then continue up the low angled scoop and right to the ledge. Belay at the abseil anchors. (2nd belay on **Aquanaut**).

J Hoskins, 10-Jan-1971

*It's an easy walk right to the top of **Sunstroke** or alternatively climb the 3rd pitch of **Drunken Delight**.*

Melmoth beta

Pitch 1 (11) The step into the groove (crux) requires faith in friction. There is a micro stopper placement on the right before the first step into the groove. Then runners at 6, 15, 24 and 30m using micro and small stoppers and a #.5 cam. This pitch would have been hard to protect in 1971.

Pitch 2 (10) The only runners (medium stopper and #.5 cam) are at the overlap in the middle of the pitch. Grippy rock above the overlap.

Melmoth

Booroomba's Northern Slabs

EURIPUS 83m 11 (route photo p39)

A companion route to **Melmoth** starting about 10m left, but unlike **Melmoth** this route feels like a climb. Originally four pitches, the 2nd and 3rd pitches have been combined. Sustained.

Euripus beta

Pitch 1 (11) Runners at 8, 17 and 24m with #.4 cam and medium nuts.

Pitch 2 (11) #.5 cam behind the large block at the base of the water streak and a medium nut at 19m then easy unprotected slab climbing to the overlap.

Pitch 4 (10) **Unprotected**, but a short pitch.

Pitch 1 (33m) Climb the slab moving slightly right to the obvious crack.

Up the crack (crux) then step right and climb easy slabs to the ledge and belay using #.75-#2 cams.

Pitch 2 (40m) Easy scrambling along the ledge to the large block below the black water streak. Climb the water streak (crux) then up the grippy slab to the overlap. Belay on #.75-#1 cams.

Pitch 3 (10m) Climb the short wall or more easily move left or right and up to finish.

John Armstrong, 24-Apr-1971

*Walk off right, past the big dead gum tree to join the track from **Sunstroke**.*

After struggling up a hard Booroomba slab most leaders remember every piece of natural protection. They're so relieved to find it!

STAIRCASE 45m 14 ☠ (route photo p39)

Start 30m up the hill from **Euripus** and about 10m left of the large block on the 2nd pitch of **Euripus**. To avoid the scrub bash to the start it is better to climb the 1st pitch of **Euripus** then traverse left along the ledge past the large block to below the break in the overlap. The old route description is vague and we have described a single pitch climb. Poorly protected crux.

Pitch 1 (43m) Climb the short slab to the overlap. Climb the overlap on good holds then smearing (crux) up the slab trending left to an obvious horizontal crack at 17m, then up the easier slab to a black water streak. Climb the water streak and belay off a block using slings or cams (#.75).
J Hoskins, 10-Jan-1971

*Walk off right, past the big dead gum tree, to join the track from **Sunstroke**.*

Staircase beta

Pitch 1 (14) #.5 cam at 8m below the overlap. A poor #.4 cam at 17m (nuts maybe better), then another hard move before the grade eases. Next runner at 36m (#.75 cam on the left) below the black water streak. When the grade and slab angle eases lichen is present however the rock is grippy. **There is a ground-fall risk from the crux.**

Traverses

***SOLANTIC 157m 17** (see photo p18) (route photo p47)

A rising traverse of the Northern Slabs from right to left. The 2nd and 3rd pitches give wonderfully exposed and enjoyable slab climbing. Peter Riddy initially attempted to on-sight solo this route but common sense prevailed and he co-opted Peter Cocker for the first ascent. The **Balance** bolt was moved (left) so it can be easily clipped on this route and a bolt on **Steel Breeze** has been positioned to protect the second as there have been a number of falls by seconds at the crux. While Peter Cocker was OK with the bolts he didn't lead this pitch and we have been unable to contact Peter Riddy. I hope he is OK with this change to his great route. The 3rd belay is now at the top of the **Bird of Prey** slab whereas previously it was at the overlap, in the scrub, just before the top of the slab. Start as for **Denethor**.

Pitch 1 (12m) Climb **Denethor** to the ledge at 8m then left to the belay above the start of **Balance**. Belay on medium nuts and #.4-#.5 cams.

Pitch 2 (40m) Step left off the ledge and up a couple of metres then left along the vanishing ledge (first crux) to below the obvious corner (**Metal Fatigue** corner). Continue along the vanishing ledge again (second crux—another 5m) then easier climbing along more ledges to the **Equilibrium** belay, a double bolt anchor.

Pitch 3 (40m) Left along the ledge then up a few metres when it vanishes (the start of the 2nd pitch of **Equilibrium**). Continue left to the 1st belay for **Just in Passing**, then diagonally left (third crux) to the 2nd belay of **Bird of Prey**. Belay under the overlap on a tree stump and/or large nuts and #1-#3 cams.

Solantic beta

A #3 cam can be used at the 3rd belay.

Pitch 1 (14) Protect with a small nut (#6 stopper) behind the pedestal at 5m and medium cams under the overlap above the ledge at 8m. A variation start is described in **Denethor**.

Pitch 2 (17) Originally a serious pitch as there was only one runner, a large nut in the **Metal Fatigue** corner (now a #2 cam). Nowadays it's possible to clip the **Balance** bolt and another bolt where **Steel Breeze** joins this route. There are crux moves on either side of the **Metal Fatigue** corner both caused by a vanishing ledge. Left of the corner the higher vanishing ledge (at the same level as the cam) is easier.

Pitch 3 (17) A nut can be placed in a diagonal crack directly below the

Solantic continued...

Pitch 4 (25m) Left to the end of the overlap, up onto a 15cm ledge then left around a small nose to a short corner. Climb the corner to the higher slab then diagonally left to the 3rd belay on **Sunstroke**. Belay on nuts and cams (#.75-#2).

Pitch 5 (40m) Climb the last pitch of **Sunstroke**. Belay on cams (#.75 - #1) or large nuts.

Peter Riddy, Peter Cocker, 5-Jan-1974

There is a cut track starting above the final belay. This can be followed to the crest of the ridge then along the ridge back to the saddle.

Solantic beta continued....

first bolt on **Equilibrium** (at about 10m). Use medium nuts and/or medium and large cams on long slings at the **Just in Passing** belay. The next 4m to the comfortable ledge is the third crux then a further 11m of unprotected smearing to the belay under the overlap.

Pitch 4 (12) #.5 cam in the flaring crack above the 15cm ledge then nuts near the nose and nuts on the higher slab where the route crosses **Ephemeros**.

Pitch 5. (8) Well protected with large cams and nuts.



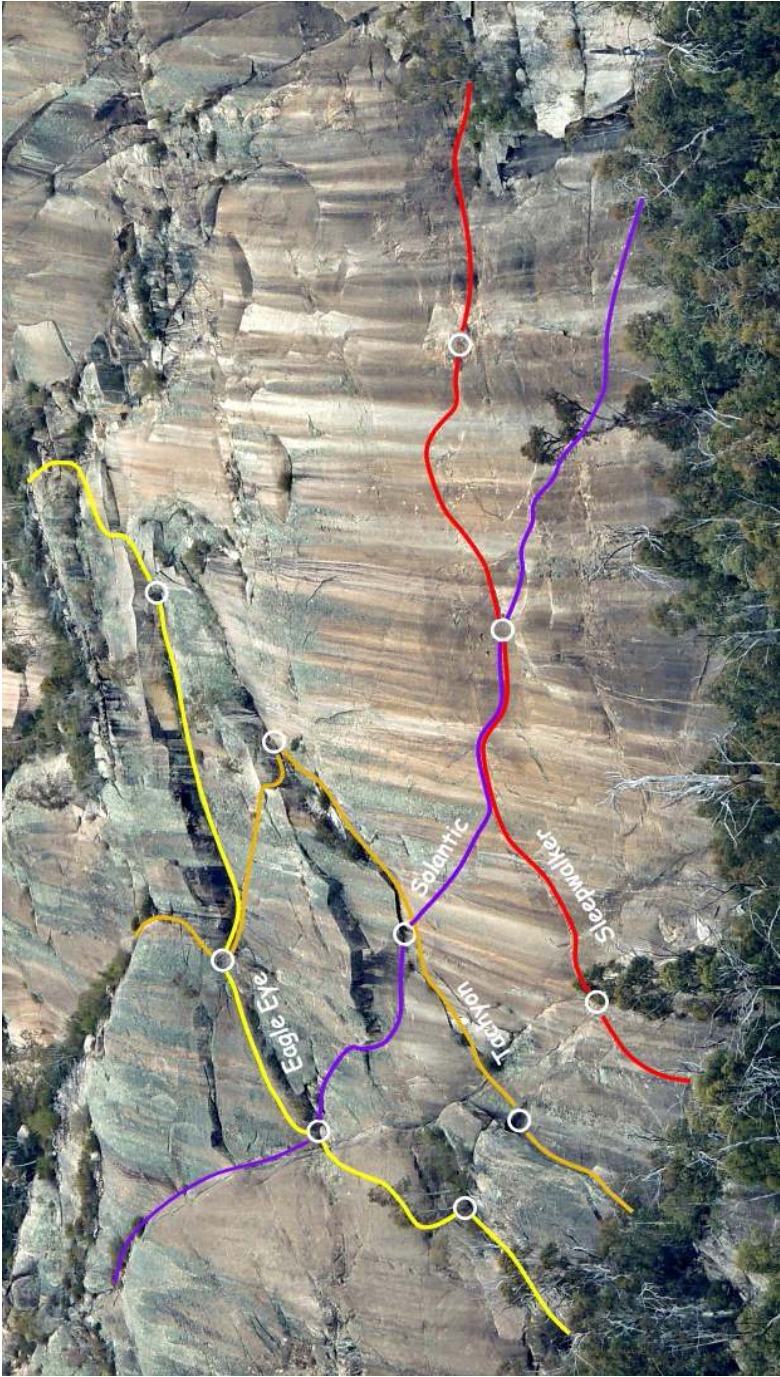
SleepwalkerDrawing1

****SLEEPWALKER 122m 18 (route photo p47)**

A fabulous and absorbing traverse from left to right across the main slab, with a technical crux pitch. In fact both the 2nd and 3rd pitches provide excellent and interesting climbing. The 1st pitch was previously poorly protected with only one piece of pro at the start of the climb. Fortunately Neil Montgomery has agreed to the addition of two bolts in the 1st pitch. Starts at the only corner (left facing) between **Sunstroke** and **Tachyon**, about 20m left of **Sunstroke** and 5m left of **Bird of Prey**.

Sleepwalker

TraverseRoutes2



Traverses—Photo

Sleepwalker

Pitch 1. (27m) Climb the corner then onto the slab above to easier ground at 17m before trending right to the belay on a slightly sloping ledge using cams (#.75-#1) and large nuts.

(1st belay on **Sunstroke**).

Pitch 2. (38m) A rising traverse along an obvious weakness (fine grained intrusion) below the **Bird of Prey** slab to the first belay on **Just in Passing**. Continue further right (horizontally) to join the second pitch of **Equilibrium** (at the first nut runner on the 2nd pitch) then down-climb to the belay. Double bolt anchors. (1st belay on **Equilibrium**)

Pitch 3. (30m) Spot the bolt runner. It's 18m away, on the skyline at about 2 o'clock. Technical climbing to the bolt (*as for the 2nd pitch of **Steel Breeze***) then delicately across the white streak (crux). Down-climb to the ledge (about 4m) then move right to double bolt anchors (1st belay on **Balance**—*the bolts can't be seen until the ledge is reached.*)

Pitch 4. (27m) Traverse right below the juggy brown slab of **Counterbalance** to **The Terrace**. Tree belay (1st belay on **Denethor**). Neil and Phil Montgomery, Donna Mroczkowski, 5-Feb-1979

*At this point you are back at **The Terrace**. **Peregrine** is a fine finish to this excellent climb*

Sleepwalker beta

Pitch 1. (14) Originally poorly protected with the only pro being a micro stopper in the corner at about 9m. Now a bolt has been placed at the hard move and a second bolt higher up to prevent a ground-fall.

Pitch 2. (17) Surprisingly this pitch is quite well protected with small nuts. A #1 or #2 cam can be used when you pass the **Bird of Prey** belay.

Pitch 3. (18) There is a good nut placement at about 4m but no other protection until the bolt at 18m. An old carabineer has been placed on the bolt to protect the second on the crux moves across the white streak (see breakout on the next page).

Pitch 4. (10) There are a number of opportunities to place pro on this easy traverse.



Recent bolt replacement,
old and new

Protecting the Second

*The third pitch of **Sleepwalker** requires down-climbing from the bolt runner to the belay, which means the leader is protected from above for the crux moves. Not so for the second, which is why an old carabiner has been left on the bolt runner. Now the second can be protected from above and when their safe at the 3rd belay, he/she unties and pulls the rope through the carabineer. A variation to this rig, which further reduces the fall potential on a traverse, is to clip his/her harness into the rope. In effect the rope that's tied to the second's harness goes through the carabiner on the bolt, through a carabiner on the second's harness then to the belayer's hands.*

TACHYON 24m 15 (see photo p36) (route photo p47)

Starts at the obvious right facing corner crack on the left edge of the main slab. Considerable time was spent identifying this route. We knew the climb finished up the last pitch of **Ephemeris** however, joining the two together was very difficult. Finally an early guide book had a description that started to make sense but there is still a possibility the route described here is not the original climb. I hope you enjoy it, even if it is a variation.

Pitch 1. (24m) Layback the easy pleasant corner to the 2nd belay on **Sunstroke**.

Pitch 2 (43m) Diagonally right to blocks on the left side of the **Bird of Prey** Slab. Climb the left edge of the slab to the overlap (past 2nd belay on **Bird of Prey**) then continue right and easily up (avoiding the vegetation) to the 2nd belay on **Equilibrium**. Belay on nuts and cams (#-.75-#2) or a sling around a tree.

Pitch 3 (26m) Climb the corner in the overlap (*about 4m left of the belay*) to the higher slab then easy climbing diagonally left to the 2nd belay on **Ephemeris**. Sling around a tree for the belay.

Pitch 4 (10m) A technically interesting and enjoyable pitch.

Tachyon beta

A #3 cam maybe useful on the 3rd pitch.

Pitch 1. (12) Well protected with cams (#.5-#1) and nuts.

Pitch 2 (14) Small cam before the tree, large nuts and medium cams at the blocks (which may have moved in the past) then #.5-#2 cams under the overlap. Unprotected easy climbing to the **Equilibrium** belay.

Pitch 3 (14) #3 cam or sling around a tree at the base of the corner, sling around a small tree at the top of the corner, cracks in the slab for medium nuts and small cams.

Pitch 4 (15) Previously a piton was placed under the flake at the crux but now #.5 and #2 cams (two placements) will do the job.

Tachyon pitch 4 continued...

Climb the wall moving diagonally right to the bushes (crux) then on to a ledge and belay (climbing rope around a large boulder). This is the final pitch of **Ephemeros**.

Peter Sands, Tony Wood, 7-Aug-1971.
*Easy scramble to the walk-off track from **Sunstroke**.*

After struggling up a hard slab how many leaders have heard their seconds claim the pitch is seriously overgraded? Slab climbing is definitely a mind game!

EAGLE EYE 129m 14 (route photo p47)

Not a lot to recommend this climb but it was useful for exploring the cliff in the early 1970s. **Eagle Eye Direct** is a better climb. After two pitches it traverses right across the main part of the Northern Slabs - giving an unusual perspective to this part of the crag. Pitch 5 is different to the original climb because of rockfall at the turn of the century. Previously the climb joined the last pitch of **Counterbalance**; now it joins the last pitch of **Equilibrium**. Start as for **Drunken Delight** about 15m left of **Tachyon** (*see break-out p38*).

Eagle Eye beta

Pitch 1. (5) An easy scramble and there are many cracks for nuts if needed.

Pitch 2. (14) Good protection in the blocks below the wall, micro-stopper in the wall. Unprotected on the slab, but easy climbing to the belay.

Pitch 3. (10) Only one piece of pro in the middle of the pitch, a micro-stopper, but the climbing is easy. Further cleaning may reveal more sites for gear. Alternatively, scramble along the vegetated ramp below.

Pitch 4. (7) Many opportunities for gear at the base of the overlap. Small cams (#.3-#.5) and small/medium nuts.

Pitch 1. (18m) Scramble up the vegetated ramp to the right and belay at the large flake or the first of the three gum trees near the top of the ramp.

Pitch 2. (28m) Climb over blocks to the wall. Up the wall (crux) and slab above moving to the right to the 3rd belay on **Sunstroke**.

Pitch 3. (20m) Climb **Sunstroke** for about 2m then traverse right along the slab (above the vegetated ramp) to belay at the trees. (2nd belay on **Ephemeros**)

Pitch 4. (37m) A short down-climb to the slab then continue traversing right beneath the overlap and belay about 4m before this slab joins the slab that extends down to the bolt anchors on **Counterbalance**. Belay on nuts and cams (#0.4-#1) under the overlap.

Booroomba's Northern Slabs



13P4040148

Inspecting the first pitch of **Balance**

Eagle Eye continued...

Pitch 5. (24m) Continue 4m right along the slab to the corner (where the rockfall broke off) then climb the overlap. Move right on the higher slab to a short corner and climb (strenuous) to the vegetation to belay. This is the last pitch of **Equilibrium** and is also joined by **Metal Fatigue** and **Steel Breeze**.

John Langford, Tony Wood, 4-Jan-1970

*Scramble right to the top of **Counterbalance** and walk off as for **Denethor**.*

Eagle Eye beta

Pitch 5. (12) #.3 cam in a crack above the corner and #.75 cam in a crack in the slab below the final corner.

Climbing Combinations

With a bit of imagination it's possible to turn a 3 pitch climb into 5 or 6 pitches just by adding a few top-rope problems to your route. Take a packed lunch!

Suggestion 1

Start at: 1st belay Equilibrium

Top-rope: Equilibrium DS, Basilisk, Tip Stripper, Rounge Lizard, Total Control (Phew!)

Finish up: Equilibrium or Sleepwalker or Solantic

Suggestion 2

Start at: 2nd belay Equilibrium

Top-rope: Just in Passing pitch 2

Move to: belay between Equilibrium and 1st belay Counterbalance

Top-rope: Entropy, Rock Lobster pitch 2

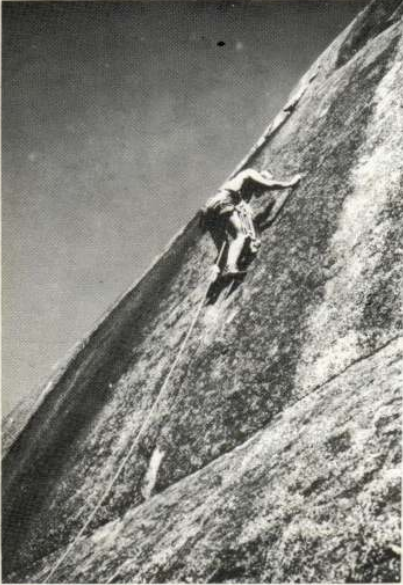
Move to: 1st belay Counterbalance

Top-rope: Stele Breeze pitch 2, Metal Fatigue pitch 2

Finish up: Counterbalance or Metal Fatigue/Stele Breeze pitch 3 or Balance pitch 3

Top-Rope Problems

Mary Kensington on BALANCE DIRECT START 19, Booroomba, A.C.T. Photo: Pete Morris.



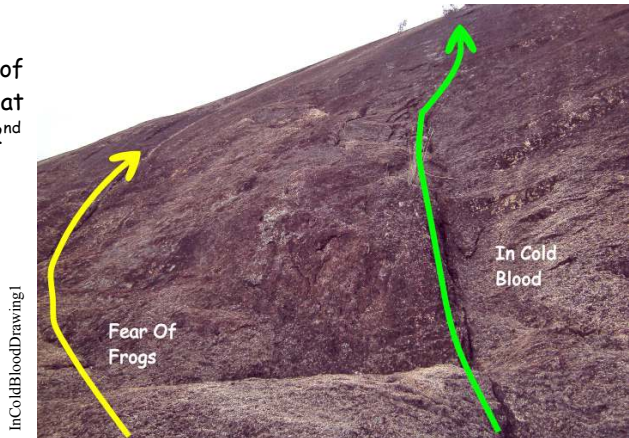
The section describes the following climbs:

- In Cold Blood
- Balance Direct Start
- Total Control
- Rock Lobster Pitch 1
- Rounge Lizard
- Tip Stripper
- Basilisk
- Equilibrium Direct Start
- Rock Lobster Pitch 2
- Entropy
- Bounty

Photo in Thrutch 71 Winter 1977
In the very macho world of scary 1970s slab climbs Mary Kensington is the only female to have pioneered a new route.

IN COLD BLOOD 35m 17 ☠️ (route photo p19)

The name refers to the skinned fingers sustained by Glen when he took a small slide on the route (he was seconding). The crux is unprotected and the climb is poorly protected; however it is an enjoyable top rope climb from the 2nd belay on **Denethor**. The first ascent team did not want bolts placed in their climb. Start in a shallow right facing corner about 3m right of the very large block that is at the start of the 2nd pitch of **Denethor**.



Top-Rope Problems

In Cold Blood beta

Pitch 1 (17) The crux is one move pulling up on good sharp finger edges followed by more enjoyable edges to the shallow groove. The only protection until **Denethor** is reached is in the juggy brown rock on the right at about 11m, way above the crux. Slots for small and large nuts (*including a text book placement for a #13 stopper*) can be found. **A slide at the crux would result in a ground-fall.**

In Cold Blood

Pitch 1 (35m) Climb the shallow right facing corner then move slightly right (crux) and climb a shallow left facing corner. Continue up the corner trending slightly right towards a shallow groove (next to juggy brown rock), up the groove (or juggy rock) for a few metres, then trend right to join **Denethor** for the last 10m of the pitch.

Matthew Larkin, Glen Jones, 28-Aug-1985

BALANCE DIRECT START 15m 19 ☠

Start at a short left-facing corner about 5m left of **Balance**. The line is not obvious from the ground but can be seen from the **Solantic** traverse and involves climbing a series of small flakes/ledges. There is probably a number of starts; however we chose to climb where a 1.0 x 0.5m flake has broken off.



*For a short time **Balance Direct Start** shared the honour with **Equilibrium DS** of the hardest slab climb at Booroomba. And typical of the time it was a very gutsy climb on which Mary took a skin tearing slide (she had grazes from her backside to her ankles) before cracking it shortly afterwards. This young lady had nothing to prove, no one to impress but for a brief moment outshone the blokes.*

Balance Direct Start beta

Unprotected. There is no pro until the bolt runner on Balance. An impressive lead. Rumour has it that soloing this climb was a test piece for the macho suicidal climbers of the early 1980s

Balance Direct Start

Pitch 1 (15m) Climb the slab to join **Balance** on the **Solantic** traverse. Continue up **Balance** or alternatively traverse right to join **Denethor**.
Mary Kensington, Peter Morris, Feb-1977

Total Control, Rounge Lizard, Tip Stripper, Basilisk and Equilibrium Direct Start are top-roped from the 1st belay on Equilibrium.

TOTAL CONTROL 45m 19 ☠ (see photo p24) (route photo p57)

Start 3m left of **Steel Breeze**. The line starts up lighter coloured rock where it appears a large narrow flake has fallen off. This route was on-sight soloed by Mike and John. An amazing achievement as the climb is sustained for at least 15m before the rock angle eases. Mike did not want bolts placed on this route. It's an awkward climb to top rope because it's so far right of the **Equilibrium** belay however clipping the top bolt on **Steel Breeze** with a long sling may help or lowering from the 1st belay on **Balance**.

Pitch 1 (45m) Climb the light coloured rock on small sharp edges (occasionally crumbly) until the angle eases, then trend left to eventually join the **Solantic** traverse.
Mike Law Smith, John Smart, Dec-1982

Total Control Beta

Pitch 1 (19) **Unprotected.** Hard and sustained climbing up the light coloured rock, then marginally easier thin climbing when the angle eases and the light coloured rock ends. At least 20m of solid climbing before some ledges and good handholds appear.

ROCK LOBSTER 75m 17 ☠ (route photo p57)

The climb starts 6m left of **Total Control**. The crux move was a mantleshelf onto a dinner plate sized flake a few metres off the ground. However, the flake has been loose since the 2003 fires and has recently fallen off. The crux move now looks impossible (*I'm sure someone will prove us wrong*) so only the second pitch, which starts from the **Equilibrium** belay, is described. The first pitch was led on-sight, was unprotected and graded 22. To top rope the 2nd pitch set up a belay midway between the 1st belay on **Counterbalance** and the 2nd belay on **Equilibrium** using medium nuts and small and medium cams.

Booroomba's Northern Slabs

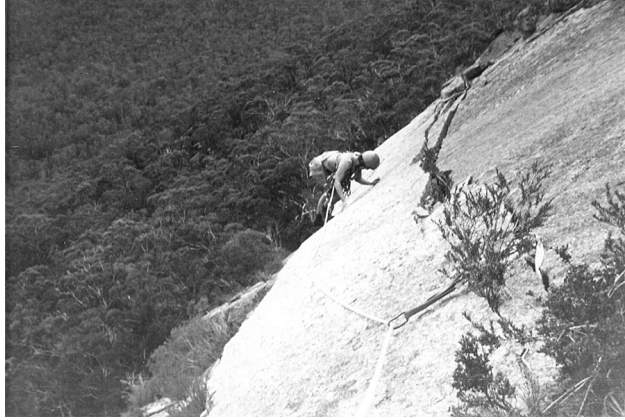
Rock Lobster beta

Pitch 2 (17) Harder than **Equilibrium**. There is a good nut placement at 4m, otherwise **unprotected**.

Rock Lobster

Pitch 2 (40m) Move 3 to 4 metres right of the anchors then straight up the slab. Similar to **Entropy** but a few more handholds and a couple of spots that require a bit of thinking. Roark Muhlen, Paul Daniels 22-Mar-1980

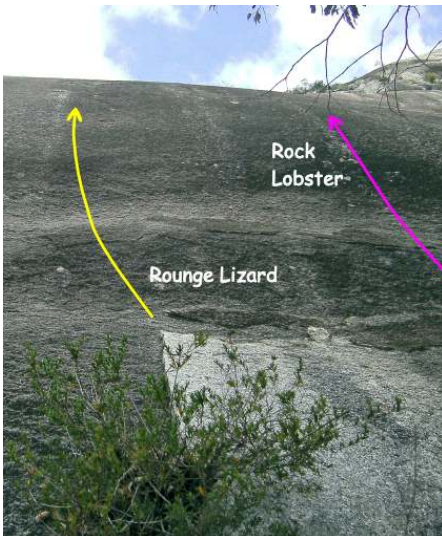
Equilibrium final pitch 1973 (*the slab in front of the climber fell off in 2000*). Climber unknown, photo Ross Templeton



Equilibrium Booroomba 1973Fix

ROUNGE LIZARD 40m 23 ☠ (route photo p57)

The climb was inspected from a top rope before John soloed the route. Start off some big flakes about 7m left of **Rock Lobster** and 8m right of **Tip Stripper**.



RoungeLizardDrawing5

Pitch 1 (40m) Climb the slab above the large flake to the obvious scoops in the steep wall. Up the wall to easier ground then up, right of the lichen, to join **Solantic** near the belay.

John Smart, Dec-1982

Rounge Lizard beta

Pitch 1 (23) **Unprotected**. The crux is the steep wall and it's really reaching the first scoop (hand hold). Once your feet are on the scoop the grade eases (slightly). It's a long reach to the scoop!

Booroomba's Northern Slabs

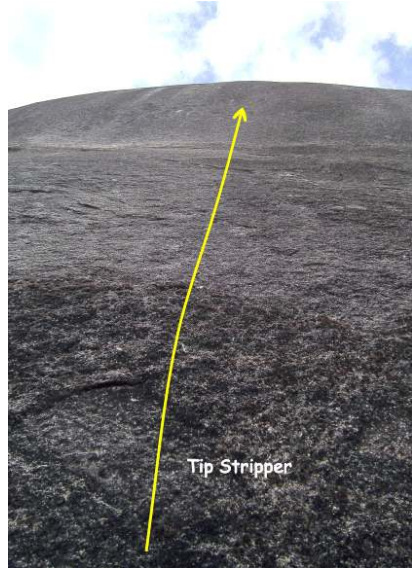
TIP STRIPPER 38m 22 ☠️ (route photo p57)

The bolt was placed on abseil. Start slightly left of the bolt about 8m left of **Rounge Lizard**.

Pitch 1 (38m) Climb the slab, then up the steep wall left of the bolt (crux) to easier ground after a few metres.
Mike Law-Smith, Dec-1982

Tip Stripper beta

Pitch 1 (22) **Unprotected** except for the one bolt. The crux is the moves around the bolt and involves pull ups on tiny edges (hence the name) with not much for the feet. Good luck!

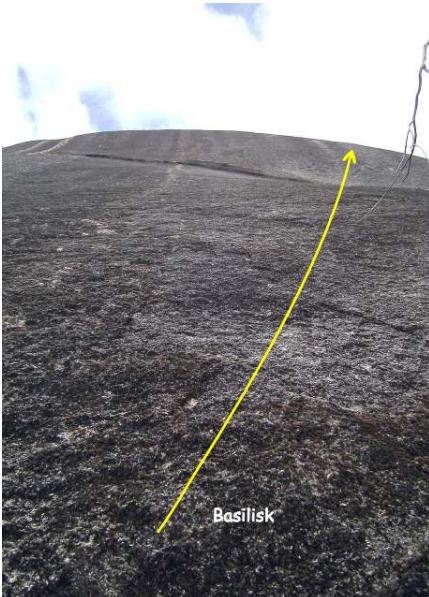


TipStripperDrawing4

BASILISK 38m 22 ☠️ (route photo p57)

Start about 6m left of **Tip Stripper** and 7m right of **Equilibrium Direct Start**. The line is about 4m right of a thin light brown water mark. Another extra-ordinary solo achievement.

Pitch 1 (38m) Climb the slab to the break then up the steep wall (crux) to easier ground after a few metres.
Richard Watts, May-1984

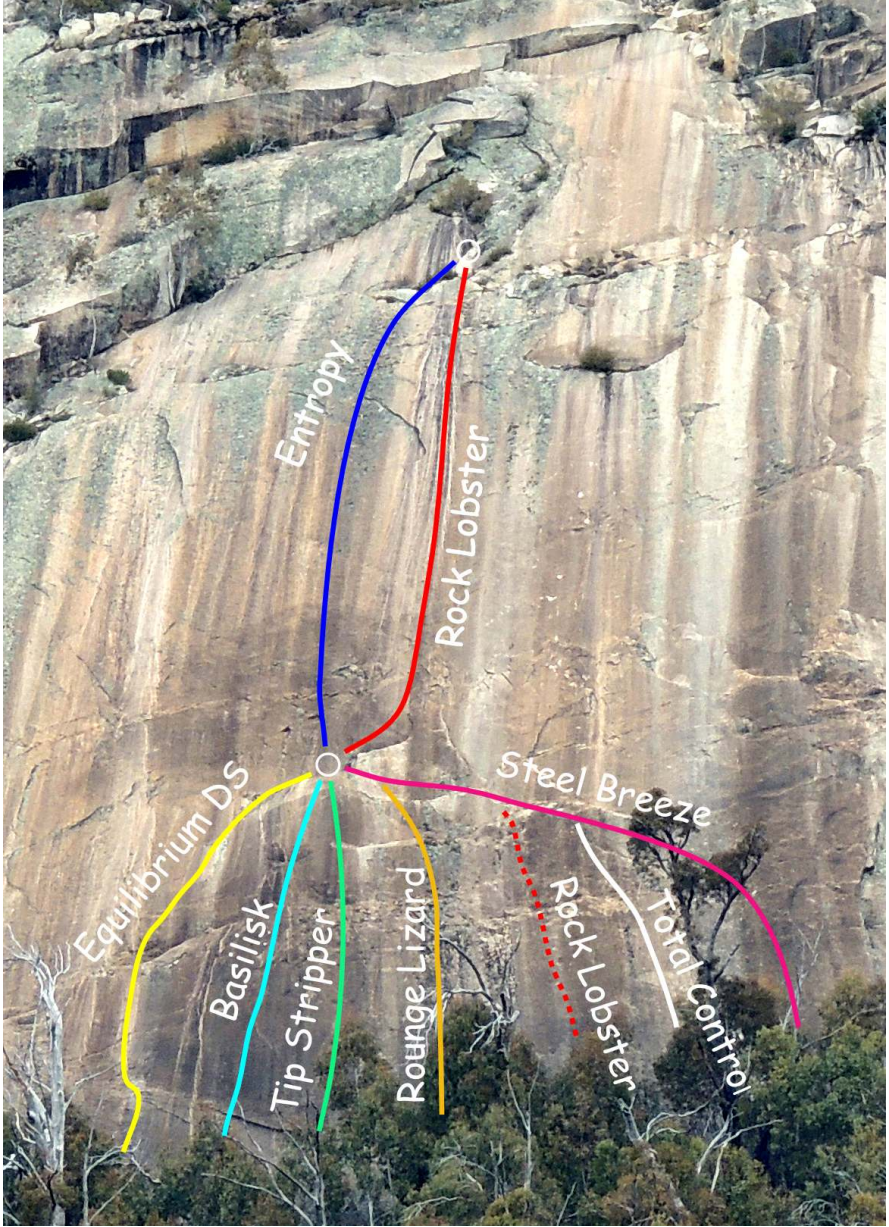


BasiliskDrawing1

Basilisk beta

Pitch 1 (22) **Unprotected**. The slab below the break is surprisingly hard but the crux is diabolical involving no hand-holds, minimal foot-holds and a long reach to a good hand hold on the left. I've tried this move a few times and only managed to nail it once (on a top rope) and that was years ago! Being taller than 1.75m would help.

Booroomba's Northern Slabs



TopRopeRoutes

Top Rope Problems—Photo

EQUILIBRIUM DIRECT START 39m 20 ☠ (route photo p57)

Start 4m right of **Equilibrium** near the top of the large flake/block lying against the cliff. Originally graded 19 the consensus has now settled on grade 20. Sustained.

Pitch 1 (39m) Climb the shallow groove moving right to the corner (crux). *There was once a poor branch runner here (pretend runner) but the branch eventually broke off and the 2003 fires turned the dead tree to ash.* Thin climbing to the break, move left to the first light brown water streak, then more thin climbing up the water streak to join **Equilibrium** on the traverse. The original climb finished up **Equilibrium**, but if you're on a top rope why not continue up the slab and traverse to the belay higher up?

Roark Muhlen et al. Nov-1976



Equilibrium Direct Start beta
Pitch 1 (20) **Unprotected**. It's possible to escape left at the break to **Equilibrium** or to find easier alternatives to climbing the light brown water streak.

ENTROPY 40m 17 ☠ (route photo p57)

Entropy was the result of Chris Largue not spotting the bolt when he first set off to climb **Equilibrium**! To pacify his whingeing seconds (*in those days the belay was a single piton*) he taped a sling over a rounded knob using tape from the handle of his hammer (*the knob would probably hold a falling mouse*). There are almost no handholds on this slab and it's an enjoyable exercise in smearing. A few laps on this climb is brilliant aerobic training. Lower off a belay midway between the first belay on **Counterbalance** and the second belay on **Equilibrium** using medium nuts and small and medium cams.

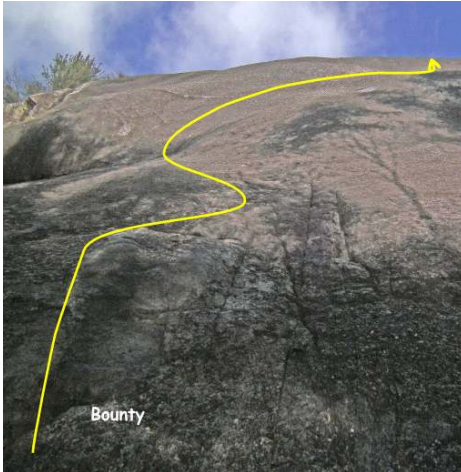
Entropy beta
Pitch 1 (17) Harder than **Equilibrium**. **Unprotected** unless you have really really sticky tape.

Pitch 1 (40m) Climb the brown slab above the anchors, moving right (or left) to avoid the lichen when the angle of the slab becomes flatter. Chris Larque, Damien Jones, Peter Mills, 1974

Booroomba's Northern Slabs

BOUNTY 27m 22 🏴‍☠️ (route photo p47)

A serious poorly protected wandering climb. Start 10m left of **Picnic** at a short thin indistinct crack. A large tree once marked the start, but the 2003 fires changed that. The original description suggests the start was directly below the first runner but it is easier to start on good edges and flakes left of the first runner and then step right to the runner. **Bounty** is top-roped from a belay left of the 1st belay for **Aquanaut**. Mike did not want bolts placed on this climb.



BountyDrawing5

Pitch 1 (25m) Climb the steep wall stepping right for the runner. Move up left towards the bulge then face climb right onto the slab (*not an obvious move and conditions may have changed since the fires*) and traverse right to a scoop and second runner. Continue straight up to easier climbing.

Mike Law-Smith, Paul Daniel, Noel Ward, 4-Apr-1986

Finish up any climb off the ledge

Bounty beta

Pitch 1 (22), There are runners at 2m (small nut), 10m (small/medium nuts—two placements possible) and 19m (large nut). The difficulties

Bounty beta continued...

ease about 4m above the second runner. The second runner is right of the start and the recess is not obvious from the ground.



PICT0149Fix

A end of a glorious day's climbing
Paul Daniel and Armando Corvini finishing **Melmoth**

Climbs by Name

✓	Name	Grade	Page
	Aquanaut	8	42
	Aquanaut Direct Start	14	41
*	Balance	18	21
	Balance Direct Start	19	53
	Basilisk	22	56
**	Bird of Prey	17	33
	Bounty	22	59
**	Counterbalance	14	17
**	Denethor	14	18
*	Drunken Delight	9	40
	Eagle Eye	14	50
*	Eagle Eye Direct	16	37
	Entrophy	17	58
	Ephemeris	15	35
***	Equilibrium	17	26
	Equilibrium Direct Start	20	58
	Euripus	11	44
	Fear of Frogs	17	15
*	Granddad's Big Day Out	16	28
	Hands Free	18	35
	In Cold Blood	17	52
*	Just in Passing	19	28
	Melmoth	11	43
*	Mental Fatigue	20	23
	Peregrine	18	16
	Picnic	21	40
	Prohibition	11	38
	Rock Lobster (pitch 2)	17	54
	Rouge Lizard	23	55
**	Sleepwalker	18	46
*	Solantic	17	45
	Staircase	14	44
*	Steel Breeze	20	24
***	Sunstroke	9	30
	Tachyon	15	49
	The Streaker	15	32
	Tip Stripper	22	56
	Total Control	19	55

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