

WARNING! Rock climbing is dangerous. You could be injured or killed if you attempt any of the activities described.

Tom Thumb – Grade 13, 150m

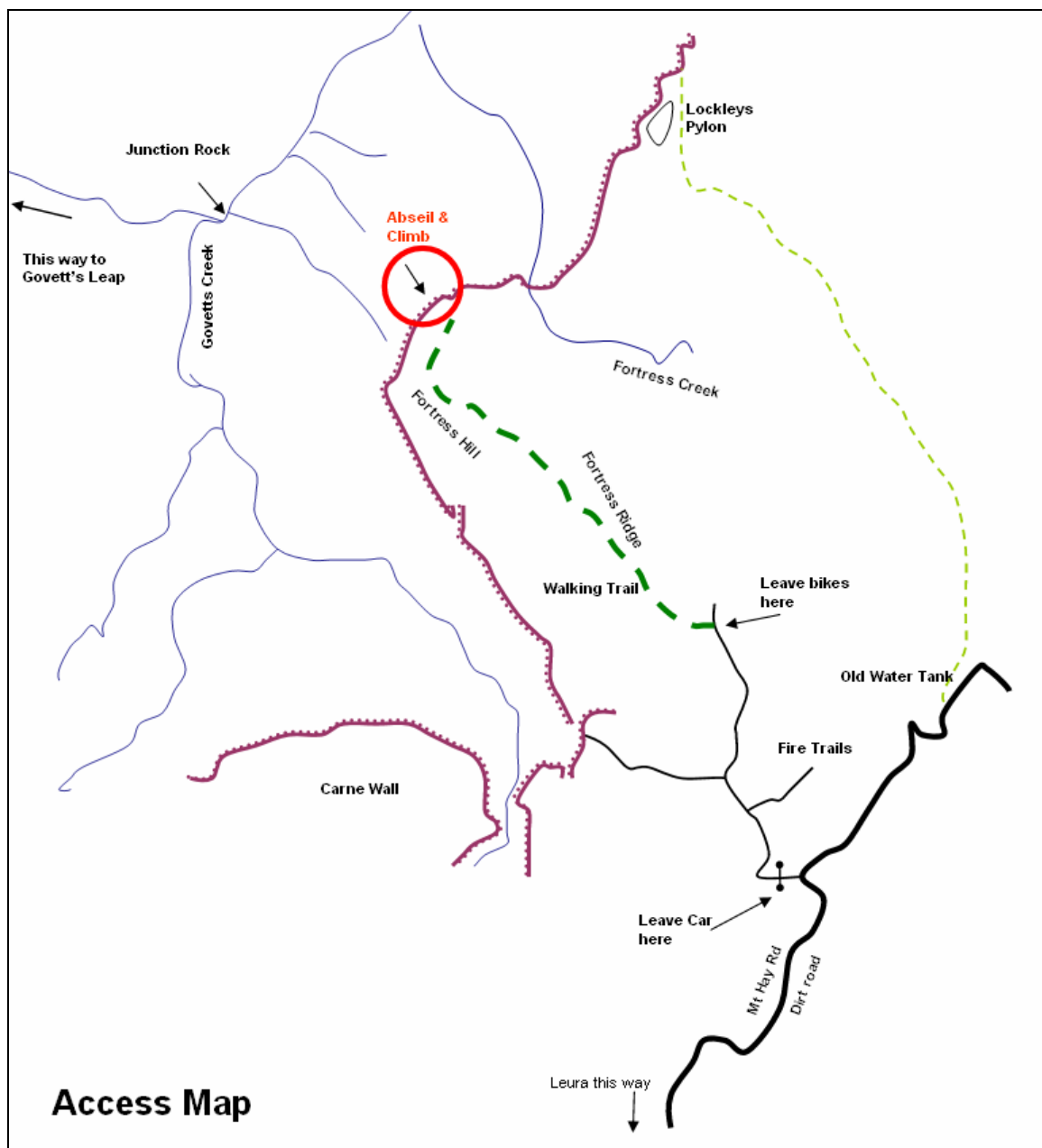
An easy day out in an adventurous location. This climb uses mainly bolts for protection (bring brackets) and a few camming devices. Best accessed from the top via abseil. Well suited to groups of three. Pitches are split to allow reasonable communication. The walk each way is about 1¼ hours and is quite pleasant.

Access

Just before Leura turn right from the Great Western Highway onto Mt Hay Road. Drive to the Fortress Ridge turn off on the left (sign posted). There is a locked gate. Leave car here and walk 25 minutes or ride 15 minutes to end of road. Leave bikes here.



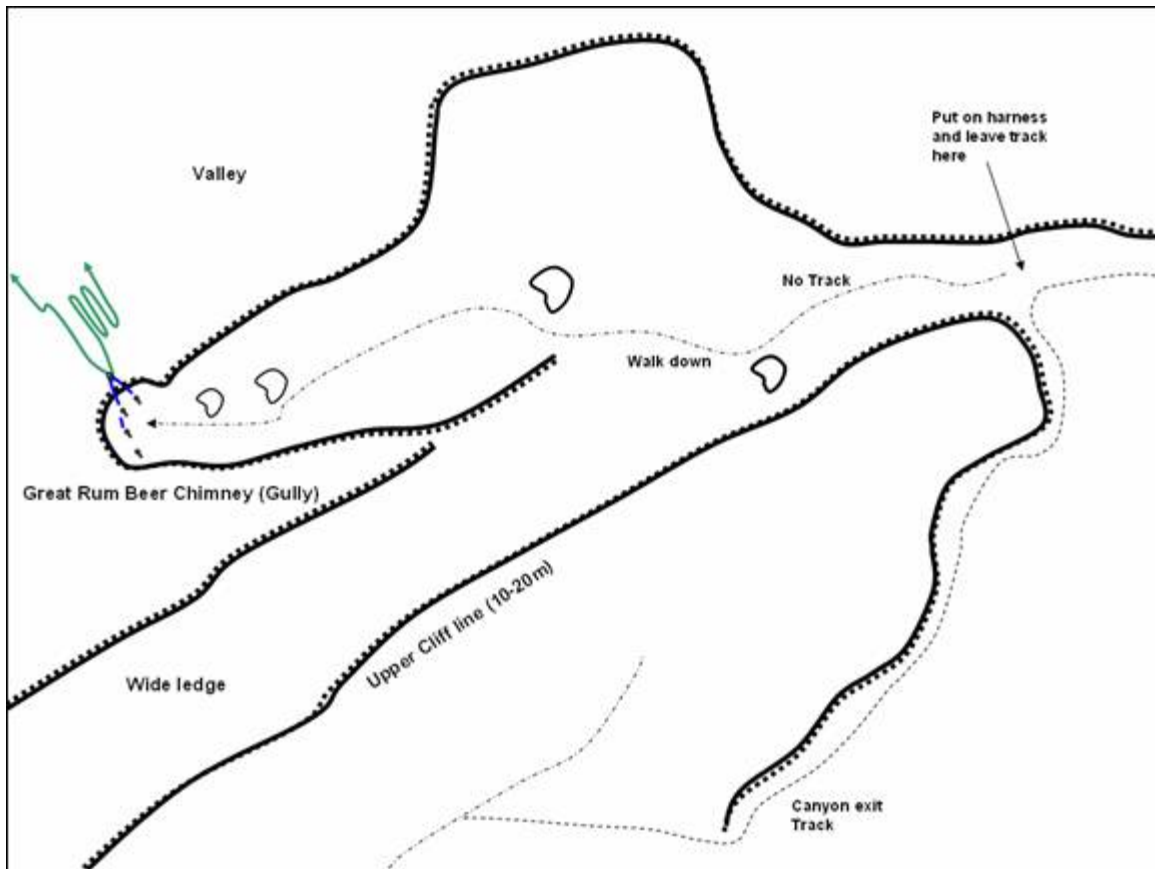
Andrew Jones on Pitch 5.



Walk out along the ridge till almost the end and then veer right onto the Canyon exit track. (Another 40 minutes). Go a few hundred metres slightly downwards, then along the base of a small cliffline. Where the track opens to the main valley, put on your harness and leave the canyon track, skirting left around the point.

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Once you leave the track, be careful when approaching the cliff edge. Although it is very easy ground, some people have felt more comfortable using a rope and belay. It is easy to slip or trip-over with a potentially fatal slide.



Aerial diagram facing North. Not to scale

Abseils

(Note: The first anchors will be upgraded to U-bolts in the near future)

A fun trip in itself. You'll need 2 x 50m ropes used canyon style (meaning you'll pull them down for each rappel). The first abseil has 3 x carrot bolts. So bring 3 x bolt brackets, 3 x krabs, 2 x longs slings for anchors and a screw gate krab to run the rope through. The climb finishes in the same spot, so they are easily retrieved. The second and third abseil anchors have two large u-bolts or loops that can be threaded directly with the rope.

Pay close attention not to tangle your ropes.

Abseil one (47m) is a bit exciting as you go over the lip. Stop virtually at the end of the rope on the lower (lowest you reasonably can?) bushy ledge (5m below the cave ledge). See picture 4 for details. Walk right 8m facing the cliff, through bushes to the u-bolt anchors.

Abseil two (45m). Stop at the u-bolts just below the large bushy ledge.

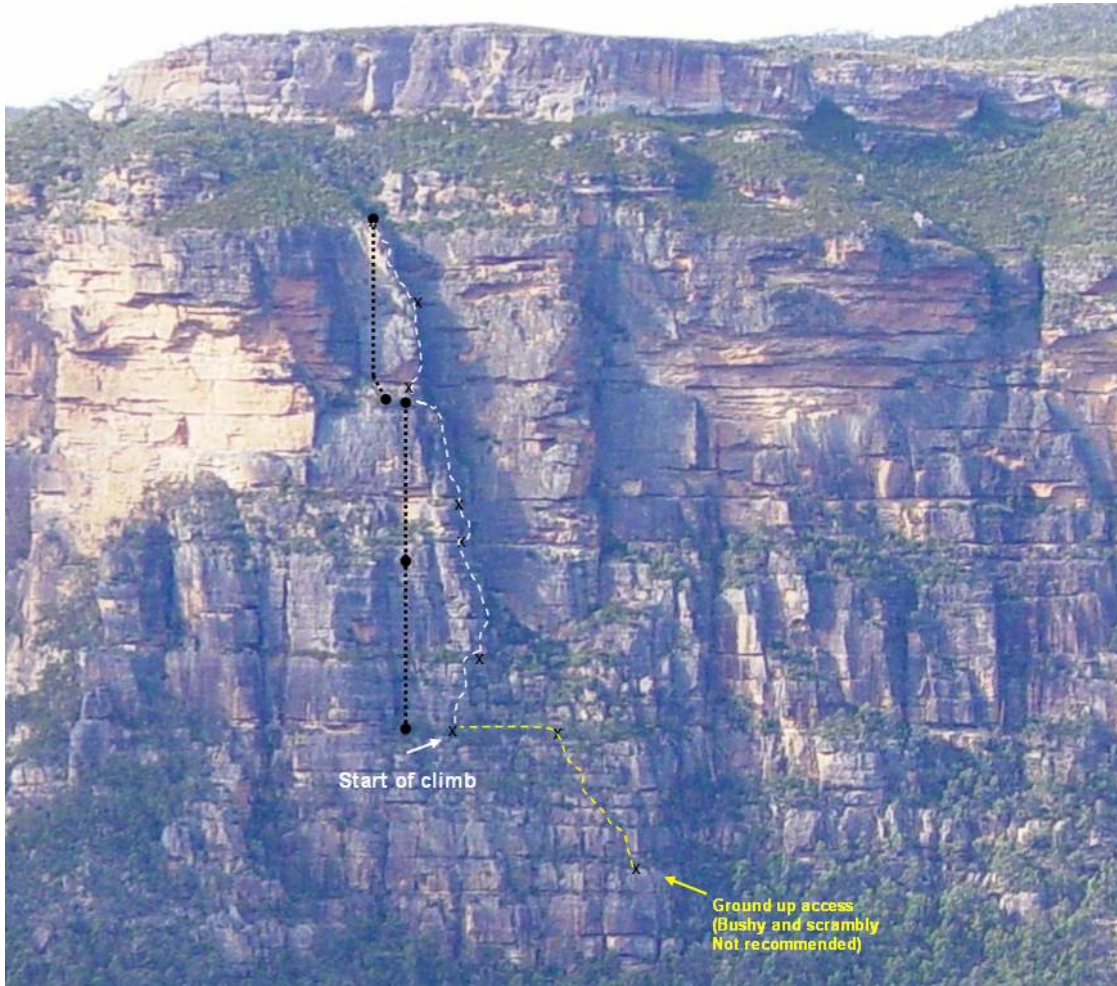
Abseil three (48m) uses virtually the full rope to get you on large bushy ledge with trees.

Walk right about 10m to start of climb. In this sea of bubbling buttresses there is a small cairn in a slight corner. The first bolt should be visible about 3m up.

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Aerial view approximately inline with cliff.
(not to scale)



Black = Abseil route, White = Climb, Yellow = Alternate ground up access.

1. 18m (8) Up a few metres to bolt (used more to show direction than for protection). Up to vertical crack for pro and up bulbous wall (another bolt on right) to DBB at top of buttress. Walk up and right 8 metres to start of next pitch. DBB on wall.
2. 40m (12) Left of belay grunt onto wall. Natural pro in crack or horizontal breaks up higher. Clip bolt on left. Then move diagonally right to small friend (#0) in horizontal crack and further rightwards on easy stuff to bolt (clip with sling to reduce drag). Up left clipping two bolts, steep tricky move (easiest if you move left). Easy 10m ramble with two bolts to DBB. Best to give your second a tight rope when they start the pitch.
3. 16m (9) Bolt on right shows the way, then up crack on left to belay. (Bolt and #½ friend.)
4. 45m (8) From right of the belay move up a few metres, then traverse left past bolt runner to arête/ridge. Up ridge 30m past 4 bolts. Walk across rightwards to bolt on little buttress. Over this and walk 10m+ (no bolt protection) and scramble through small bushes up easy crack into cave to DBB.
5. 21m (12) From belay start to the right. Up wall trending left past 4 bolts. Climb onto large blocks at top. They seem OK. And traverse right passing bolt that protects the second to DBB.
6. 26m (8) Clip bolt on right of belay. Stand on rock thing and up. Follow ridge with a few bolts to top. DBB.

Hayden Brotchie, Jenny Bradford. October 2004