

A Guide to Rock Climbs at Bon Echo



1. Atomic Marshmallow 5.6 *
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4. One Sleeve 5.2
5. Mediterranean Sundance 5.10 !! **closed**
6. Garden Wall 5.2

These routes are rarely climbed, and as a consequence are covered in lichen, overgrown and hard to find. Don't let the easy grades lure you into an adventure you don't want.

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1. Atomic Marshmallow 5.6 *

Start: at the extreme north end of the cliff, scramble up 33m to a vegetated ramp. The start is directly below an obvious vertical crack high up on the face. It's reported to be hard to find – rockfall may have altered the cliff.

1. 5.6 26m Climb the steep face below an overhang and step left into a short open corner facing left above, traverse right into another short corner. Climb the corner to a ledge. Go up from the ledge until directly below the overhangs. Now move left, following the grain of the cliff until it is possible to step up over a very large bird's nest and into a prominent corner.
2. 5.6 33m From the belay step down and left around a corner. Go left onto a face, again following the grain of the rock. When progress appears impossible, step right and up towards the roofs. The steep face yields with surprising ease. Follow a sloping ledge directly under the roofs to the top.
- 1(a). 5.8 37m Start 10m right of the normal start, below a corner. Traverse slightly right, past an old ring peg, then up a short way and traverse back left into the corner. Follow the corner up to its end. Traverse left, along a band of black rock to a huge bird's nest. Step up over it, and belay in a prominent corner (as for the normal route).
- 1(b). 5.2 Start at a flat boulder at the water's edge, 10m left of Jerry's Route. Scramble up and right to a tree. Climb straight up from the tree, in an open book for 12m. Traverse left to a stance before difficulties (where pitch 1(a) comes up).

History: FA: Eric Marshall, Gerry Potvin, Aug 24th 1974. This party climbed pitch 1(b) and the crux section of pitch 1(a) before joining the standard route. This gave a three pitch route: 5.2, 5.8, 5.6. The 5.8 pitch was grossly undergraded by them at 5.6. Pitches 1 and 1(a) were climbed at a later date by unknown parties.

2. Squirrel 5.0 !!

Climb the rightwards slanting vegetated weakness, to the left of Jerry's Route until you intersect Jerry's Route, which is then followed to the top.

History: FA: David and Joanna Atherton, July 1965.

Note: Hard to find. Think about it – an unrepeated 5.0?

3. Jerry's Route 5.0

Start: at the bottom of a right-trending ramp filled with trees slightly south of the point where the cliff reaches down to the lake for the first time.

1. 40m Either climb via the forest or via the outside face to a vegetated recess.
2. 40m Branch left onto a broken ramp to the top.
3. 10m Continue up the ramp to the top.

History: FA: Jerry Prior, 1960.

4. One Sleeve 5.2

Offers a variety of chimneys, but is somewhat vegetated.

Start: The first obvious steep left-trending ramp from the north end of the cliff, 33m to the right of Jerry's Route.

1. 18m Up a sloping ramp to a cornerstone belay.

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2. 25m Continue up, then traverse left to a gully (on Jerry's Route).
 3. 30m Scramble up over big blocks in the bed of the gully, to the base of an obvious chimney. (Jerry's Route goes left up the ramp at this point.) Climb the chimney (possible belay above). Continue up and right in the same line.
 4. 13m Turn left under the overhangs and up a short lichenous slab; other finishes are possible.
- History: FA: David Atherton, Judy Gibb, June 1963.

5. Mediterranean Sundance 5.10 !!

climb closed

Vertical and overhanging face climbing on good rock.

Start: good footholds at water level, 6m left of the start of the Garden Wall ramp.

1. 5.10 18m Make a tricky move a short way above the belay. Traverse left to a short ramp, which is followed to a cedar. Climb a steep obtuse corner above the tree until just before it runs into the ramp on the right. Step left to a small belay ledge.
2. 5.10 25m Climb the steep face directly above the ledge (pin to the left), to a diagonal crack. Follow the crack to its end, then climb the prow of the buttress straight up to the Garden Wall ramp. Climb the ramp for 6m, then move right and up to a belay.
3. 45m Easy and unpleasant. Follow a diagonal crack, parallel to the Garden Wall ramp, up to the top.

History: FA: Rob Rohn, Tom Gibson, Sept 1980.

6. Garden Wall 5.2

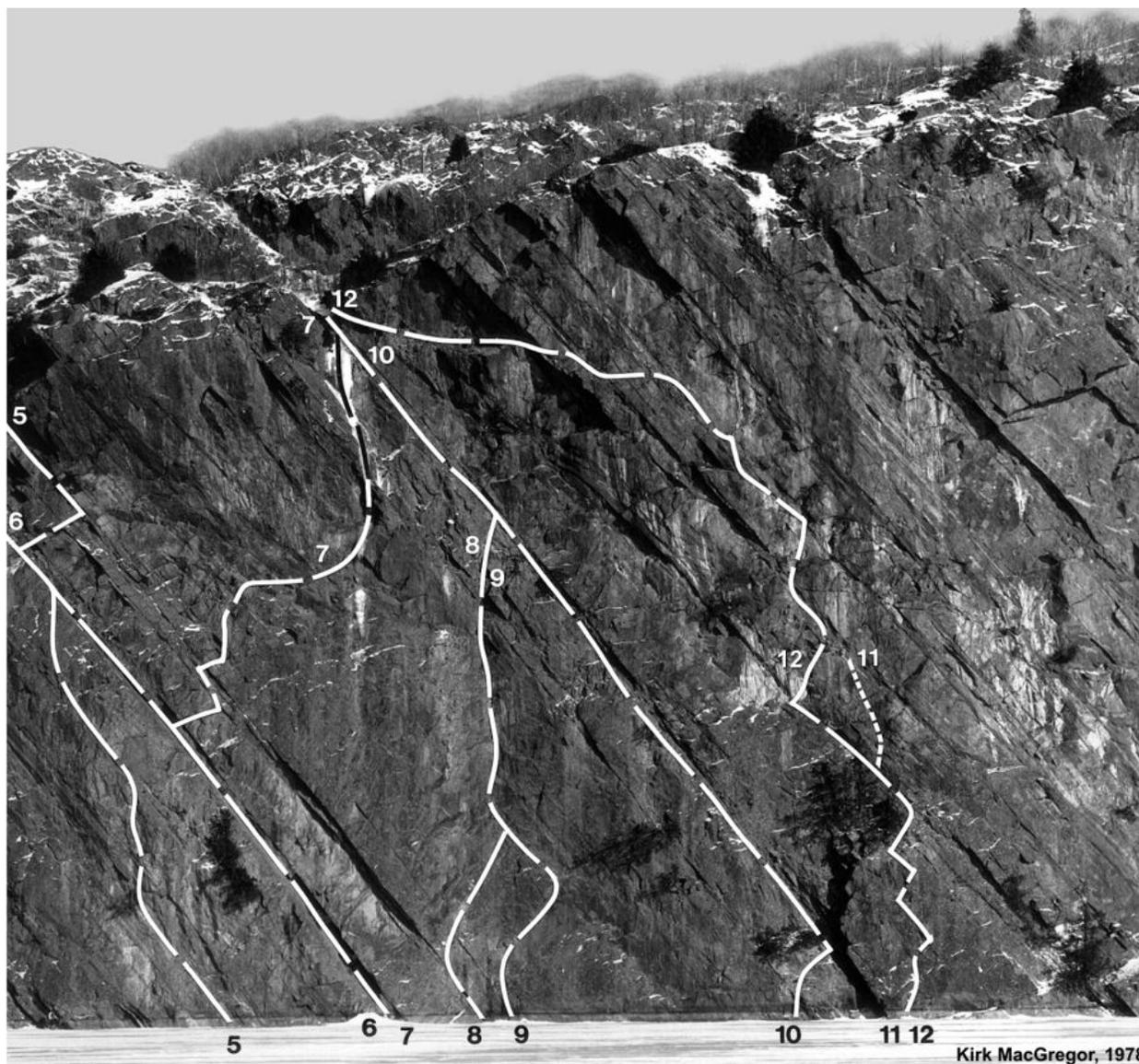
A pleasant start, but unattractive higher up.

Start: the second large left-trending ramp from the north end of the cliff, 33m to the right of One Sleeve.

1. 35m Climb the ramp to a small pinnacle at 18m Step left and go up past shrubbery. Belay atop the shrubbery on a narrow earthy ledge.
2. 27m Follow the ramp to its top and belay at some broken rocks. Poorly protected.
3. 35m Continue upwards. A piton high up on the right wall at 27m marks the start of the alternative exit, which goes straight up. The normal route continues to follow the diagonal line, round a corner and over an overhang capped by a large cedar. The climb proper finishes about 5m higher. Scrambling remains.

History: FA: Bob Adams, David Atherton, Quentin Shepley, July 1963.

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- 5. Mediterranean Sundance 5.10 !! **closed**
- 6. Garden Wall 5.2
- 7. Saturday Night & Sunday Morning 5.6
- 8. Dead Flowers 5.10 !!
- 9. Tumbling Dice 5.10 !

- 10. Crazy Paving 5.4
- 11. Thunder Crack 5.9 *
and Lightning 5.10
- 12. The Last Shall Be First 5.10

7. Saturday Night and Sunday Morning 5.6

Start: as for Garden Wall.

1. 35m As for Garden Wall.
 2. 5.6 20m Step right onto the face and go up to below a very prominent steep wall.
 3. 20m Traverse right under the wall and go up the left side of a large pinnacle. Belay on the opposite side.
 4. 25m Crazy Paving is just to the right. Follow it to the top or take one of several other possible finishes. Loose rock in places.
- 2(a). After the first pitch, continue up the ramp for about 6m to an obvious break on the right (a dihedral). Go over an overhang onto smooth rock. Traverse right delicately and step down to the normal traverse.
- 3(a). 5m above the 3rd belay, layback up the slab on the left, past a big flake, move onto the face and go left to a tree, then straight up to the top.

History: FA: Bob Adams, Ken Davis, Jim White, 1963.

Pitch 2(a) climbed by Judy Cook and Werner Heiss on June 7th, 1969.

Pitch 3(a) climbed by Nick Pawley and friends in May 1971.

8. Dead Flowers 5.10 !!

Start: immediately right of Saturday Night and Sunday Morning.

1. 5.10 Climb up easily to the base of a shallow dihedral. Climb the dihedral to a belay ledge.
2. 5.10 Follow Tumbling Dice to the rappel anchor.

History: The second pitch was climbed before the first pitch. The first pitch was added later by Kevin Lawlor.

9. Tumbling Dice 5.10 !

Start: 10m to the right of Saturday Night and Sunday Morning, belay at two bolts (2004) at water level.

1. 5.10 Climb the face to an old bolt on the left, then follow the underclings out right until the top of the corner. Make a long undercling reach to a mantle and belay (old bolt). Proceeding without a belay puts the leader in danger of a wet fall.
2. 5.10 Follow the obvious rising traverse left to the base of a large, clean obtuse corner. Climb past an old bolt and continue up to the top of the corner to an aging rappel anchor. The exit onto the Crazy Paving slab is barred by a large loose block.

History: FA: Dave Lanman, Lutz Rauhe, 1979.

FFA: (pitch 1) Dave Lanman, July 1982.

FFA: (pitch 2) Kevin Lawlor, Dave Lanman, Rick Susgin, July 1984.

10. Crazy Paving 5.4

The route follows a narrow rather lichenous looking ramp running the full height of the cliff.

Start: 30m right of Garden Wall, at the bottom of the obvious ramp.

1. 33m Climb the ramp, first in the middle and then on the left side to a ledge with a cedar tree.
2. 15m Continue past a big cedar at 8m to another ledge with a cedar.
3. 33m The ramp becomes narrower and looser. Follow it to the top.

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History: FA: Michael Rosenberger, Helmut Microys, July 1964.

11. Thunder Crack 5.9 * and Lightning 5.10

A great first pitch to play on if you have a boat to belay from.

1. Climb the obvious zig-zag finger crack in the pinnacle immediately right of Crazy Paving.
2. A second pitch (Lightning 5.10) can be had above this involving face climbing up to a bolt. At present it ends in the middle of nowhere.

History: FA: with aid, by George Manson and friends in Feb 1976.

12. The Last Shall Be First 5.10

Start: As for Thunder Crack.

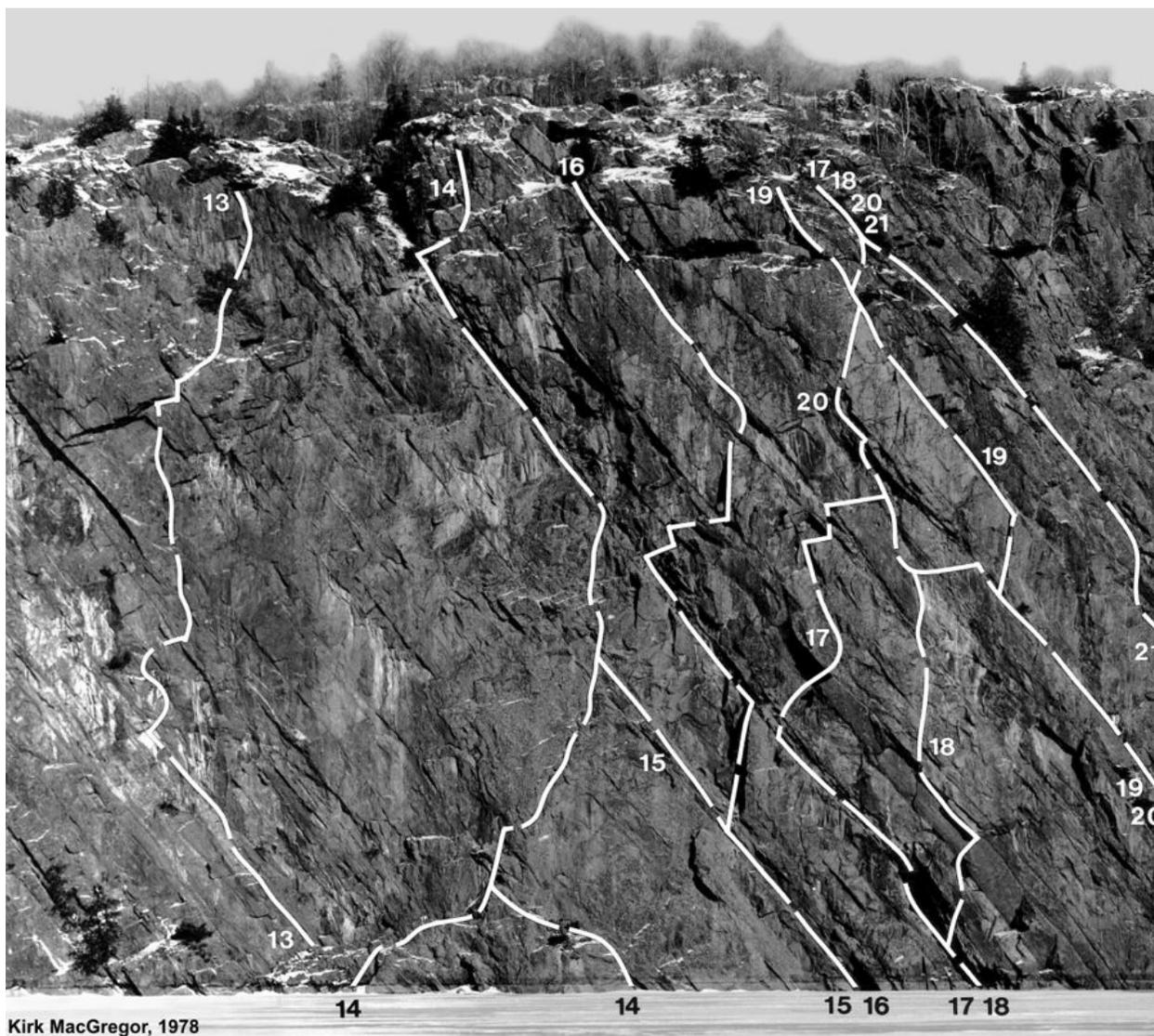
1. 5.9 Climb Thunder Crack.
2. 5.7 25m Follow a left-sloping ramp until it peters out. Go straight up over the overhangs to a ledge.
3. 5.8 23m Step right and swing up on a steep wall. Bear right at first and then left until a good belay ledge is reached.
4. 5.10 11m Angle up a left-leaning crack, with difficulty (6m), until it is possible to traverse delicately 5m to a belay.
5. 5.7 33m Angle up left to a loose ledge, leading to a walk off.

History: FA: Eric Marshall, Helmut Microys, Aug 18th 1974

FFA: John Owen, Kevin Lawlor, Dave Franklin, Joe Prokopiak Aug 28th 1983

The final section of the original last pitch fell into the lake sometime in the late 70s. The first pitch was rerouted in 2003 to avoid an Indian pictograph.

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- 13. Compulsion 5.10+ ***
- 14. Fanny Hill 5.5 *
- 15. Suzy Wong 5.7
- 16. Perversion 5.9 ***
- 17. Enovid 5.9+

- 18. Nilevan 5.8 A3 !
- 19. Great Leap Forward 5.10
- 20. Sweet Dreams 5.9+ ***
- 21. Little Flo 5.7

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13. Compulsion 5.10+ ***

A superb climb, very direct, on mostly excellent rock.

Start: 26m to the right of Crazy Paving on a broad vegetated ledge about 3m above the lake. A narrow ramp leads up to the left.

1. 5.10 26m Follow the narrow ramp and then climb the face to a ledge with a small cedar tree. (Alternatively climb a wider easier ramp further right, to the same ledge.) Step into another ramp which is followed to its end under an overhang. Climb the face to the right and go up under another overhang. Climb the overhang to gain an excellent belay ledge with a cedar tree and two belay bolts (2002).
2. 5.10 23m Go up and right past a bolt (replaced 2002) to gain a large exfoliating flake. Move right slightly, then go straight up past a bolt (replaced 2002) and pitons to a spectacular hanging belay at two bolts (replaced 2002). Many climbers prefer to combine pitches 2 and 3.
3. 5.9 23m Climb up and right over a small overhang, on excellent holds. Traverse right, then go up through a notch to easy ground, leading to a two-bolt belay (2002) next to an old tree.
4. 5.10+ 20m Go straight up the headwall via an obvious crack; exit up and right to avoid juniper bushes. (Alternatively, escape up an easy ramp on the left.)

History: FA: Helmut Microys, Eric Marshall, Werner Heiss, Sept 1969.

FFA (pitches 1, 2 and 3): Dave Lanman, Reg Smart, Adam Gibbs, July 1982.

(pitch 4): Steve Adcock, John Cotter, Joe Prokopiak, Aug 1985.

FWA: Dave Franklin and Adam Gibbs, with aid, Feb 5-6 1983.

14. Fanny Hill 5.5 *

Start: 33m right of Compulsion at the south end of a ledge system about 3m above lake level, 45m left of the Sweet Dreams ramp. Alternatively, start several metres to the north, near the start of Compulsion, and traverse easily right along a ledge system to join the original route.

1. 35m Move left and up onto large blocks (some loose). Go up 3m to a large ledge. Traverse 6m right on good holds. Climb up a flake and follow a "groovy crack" for 18m to a large stance.
2. 18m Climb the steep wall on the left. Ascend to the right, over a series of platforms to an obvious ramp running from right to left.
3. 30m Go easily up the ramp to an airy exit. Belay at two bolts (2004) at the top of the ramp.
4. 15m Either exit leftwards up the gulley through trees and shrubbery, or climb a somewhat loose overhang on the right, passing at least one large unstable block before topping out.

History: FA: Helmut Microys, Michael Rosenberger, July 1964.

15. Suzy Wong 5.7

A variation start to Fanny Hill.

Start: 15m to the right of the normal start, at an obvious ramp. Belay from the boat.

1. 40m Climb the pleasant thin slab, until you join the normal route at the first belay.

History: FA: Bob Adams, Arthur Large, Aug. 30th 1964.

16. Perversion 5.9 ***

A superb, sustained route.

Start: at the second obvious ramp 30m north of the Sweet Dreams ramp. Same start as Suzy Wong. Belay from the boat.

1. 5.7 30m Climb a pleasant thin slab to a large flake. Go up to the base of an open book.
2. 5.9 30m Climb up the open book, then left along a line of cracks (line of upper ramp of Fanny Hill) to a tree belay. Many loose blocks on the ramp.
3. 10m Traverse right easily to the base of a second open book.
4. 5.9 40m Climb the open book to a ledge (optional belay stance). Climb up to gain a left-sloping crack (crux) which is followed to the top.

History: FA: by Helmut Microys, Imre Michalik in Sept 1969, with some aid. Eric Marshall and Doug Cox reduced the aid to one short section on the final pitch on Aug 25th 1974. The whole route went free to Greg Cameron and George Manson in Oct 1978.

17. Enovid 5.9+

Start: at a cave at the first ramp north of the Sweet Dreams ramp, directly below the Sweet Dreams final pitch.

1. 25m From the cave, climb up a narrow ramp. Near its end, climb the wall above on poor rock to a ledge.
2. 25m Climb the wall to a narrow ledge below some overhangs. Follow the ledge to its right end at an overhang. Make a big step around it and climb the wall above to a large platform
3. 20m, 5.9+ Follow Sweet Dreams to the top.

History: FA: Helmut Microys, Michael Rosenberger, July 1964.

18. Nilevan 5.8 A3 !

Start: as for Enovid.

1. 45m Nail the right wall of the cave to a pinnacle on the right. Continue straight up to the end of the Sweet Dreams traverse. Follow Sweet Dreams to the large platform
2. 20m Follow Sweet Dreams to the top.

History: FA: Eric Marshall, Dave Sellers, Kirk MacGregor, Sept 26 1970.

Another aid pitch was climbed hereabouts by George Manson and Chris Rogers in Feb. 1976. An alternative start, 5m right of the cave, was closed to protect an Indian pictograph.

19. Great Leap Forward 5.10

Start: at the left-hand edge of the first big ramp at the north end of the cliff. This is the same start as Sweet Dreams.

1. 37m Climb the pleasant arête at the edge of the ramp until the ramp fades away. Belay as for Sweet Dreams.
2. 37m Go straight up an open book above the belay (very difficult) to another ramp. Follow the ramp to the top.

History: FA: Roy Preshaw, Maurice de St. Jorre, Nov 12th 1972.

FFA: Eric Marshall, Doug Cox, Aug 23rd 1974.

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20. Sweet Dreams 5.9 ***

For many years “the climb” to do, it remains very popular.

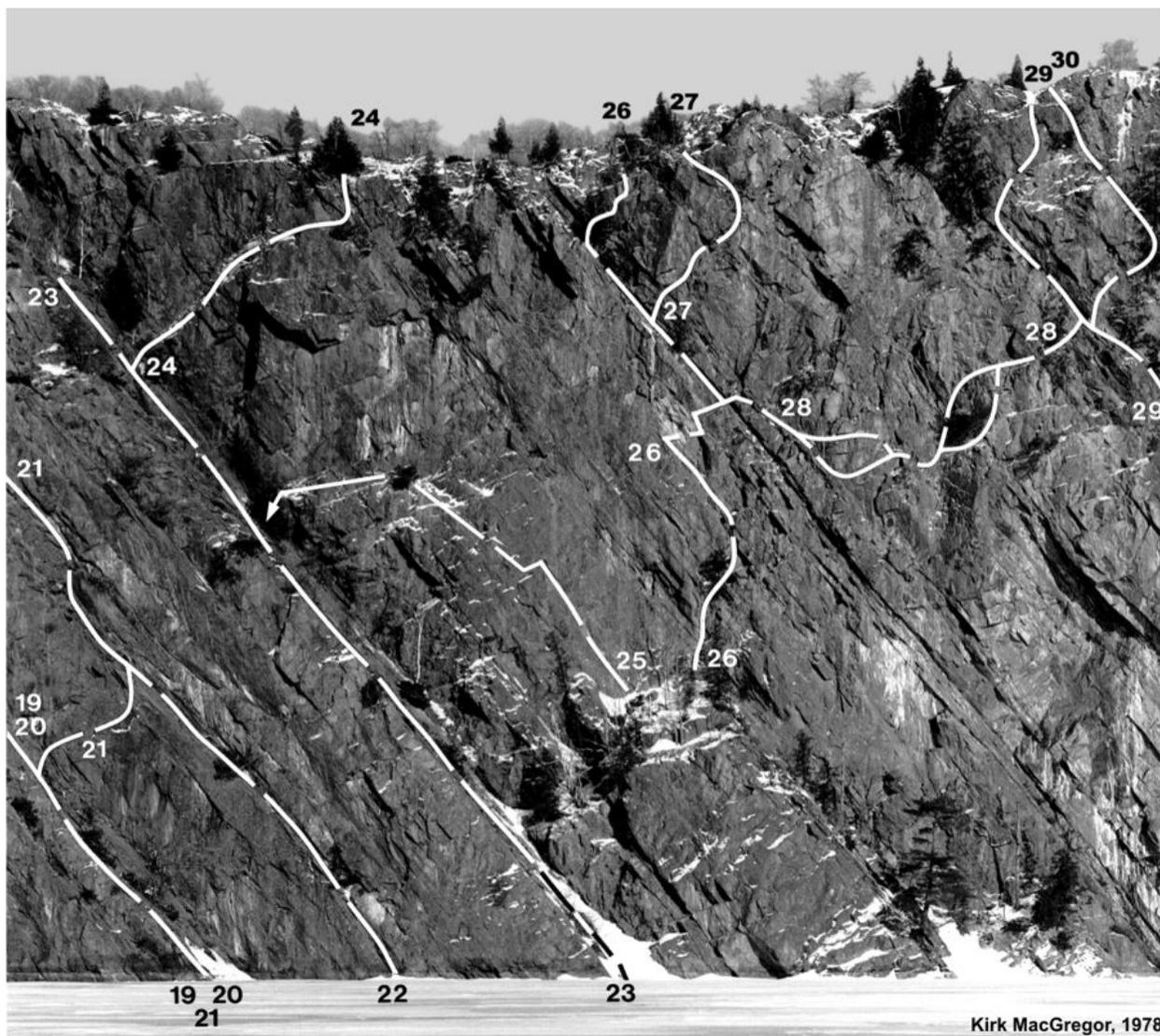
Start: at the first very large ramp at the north end of the cliff.

1. 40m From the middle of the slab, scramble towards its right edge. Climb the right side of the ramp to a belay at its end.
2. 18m Climb leftwards around the end of the ramp and make a breathtaking swing down to good footholds on the face. A spectacular traverse of 4m leads to a small inside corner facing right. Climb it to a large platform.
3. 20m From the right end of the platform, climb strenuously up the overhanging crack past the crux (the old piton was replaced with a bolt in 2001) to a sloping ledge, then move up and slightly left to a tree. Follow the obvious crack rightwards to a small juniper bush (optional belay using gear), then head up on good holds to the top.

History: FA: John Turner, 1960.

In 1998, a flake at the start of the third pitch came loose (narrowly missing the park tour boat). This makes the crux moves more difficult, and the grade was revised upwards from 5.8 to 5.9, with some opinion holding that 5.10a is more realistic.

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- 19. Great Leap Forward 5.10
- 20. Sweet Dreams 5.9 ***
- 21. Little Flo 5.7
- 22. Ciao 5.5
- 23. The Slab 5.4
- 24. Slabadob 5.3 !

- 25. Dead End Ramp 5.? !!
- 26. Top Secret 5.7 *** !
- 27. Wendy 5.7
- 28. Persuasion 5.6
- 29. Ottawa Route 5.8 **
- 30. Jolly Folly 5.8

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21. Little Flo 5.7

Start: as for Sweet Dreams.

1. 20m As for Sweet Dreams, to the right edge of the slab.
2. 42m From the belay, step up on the right face and traverse the obvious line to the right for 6m to a ramp. Follow the ramp up to an overhang. Climb over it, avoiding loose cokey rock, and traverse left to a slim birch. Continue up to a big cedar tree.
3. 10m Climb easily to the top.

History: . FA: Helmut Microys, Werner Heiss, Oct 1972.

22. Ciao 5.5

A more logical, but less attractive start to Little Flo.

Start: at an obvious narrow ramp between the Sweet Dreams ramp and The Slab.

1. Follow the ramp up until it joins Little Flo. Can you climb 5.7?

History: FA: Larry Mix, Petr Varmuza, Aug 4th 1975.

23. The Slab 5.4

The first pitch provides enjoyable climbing on small holds. The remainder of the climb is disappointing so it is common practice to rappel after the first pitch.

Start: at the second very large ramp at the north end of the cliff, 30m right of the Sweet Dreams ramp.

1. 35m Climb the smooth slab to a bolt, traverse left to the edge of the slab and climb to the horizontal cedar. This tree is very old and sensitive. Avoid touching it as much as possible. Bolts provide belay and rappel anchors.
2. 35m A variety of routes near the outside of the slab can be followed to twin oaks and a stance.
3. 18m Continue to the top, taking care with loose rock. Alternatively traverse left and down to a lower and equally loose ramp, which is followed to the top.
 - 1(a). Climb straight up past the bolt if you want a bit more difficulty. There are, of course, no cracks for your nuts or cams, so don't fall.
 - 2(a). 25m Traverse 6m right to a tree and climb up the centre of the slab for 18m to a large tree.
 - 3(a). 35m From the large tree, follow the slab to the top.

History: FA: Bob Shaylor, Jim White, 1961.

FA pitch 2(a) and 3(a): Dave Read, Rod Sykes, Frank Bartlet, July 1970.

24. Slabadob 5.3 !

If you didn't rappel back to the lake after the first pitch of The Slab, you may as well finish up on this route.

Start: from the top of pitch 3 of The Slab, descend the gully at the right edge to the foot of an obvious ramp running rightwards up the main crag, right of the gully.

1. 20m Gain the slab (loose) and climb it, traversing right (big loose flakes) to a tree on a ledge on the right.
2. 10m Climb the wall above the tree to the top.

History: FA: Cliff Syroid and Bert Jenkins, June 20th, 1987.

25. Dead End Ramp 5.? !!

Start: a few meters north of the Top Secret start.

1. Follow the ramp leading left from the Top Secret start up to a corner (15m, 5.6); in-situ pin here. Move left past the corner, using an obvious undercling. Attempt to mount the sloping ledge (bolt in-situ). Face climbing for 15m up to a juniper bush. Exit left along ledge and descend to The Slab ramp.

History: Not yet completed to the top of the cliff, though attempted by various people since the mid-60s. Helmut Microys and Bill Snider placed two bolts on the route in the early '70s. Sean Lewis also attempted the route in the late '70s. Note that all the pins and bolts are more than 35 years old.

26. Top Secret 5.7 ***

For 44 years, this was a very pleasant and enjoyable 5.3 climb, the only one at this grade not confined to a single ramp.

Start: on top of the tree covered buttress, 10m to the right of The Slab, 25m above the lake.

Scramble up the buttress on the left (north) side – the right side is still loose.

1. 27m, 5.7 Climb up and right past a bolt (there used to be a tree here) and onto a blocky ledge, then straight up (crux) past a bolt (2009). Now go up leftwards onto a narrow ramp. Follow this (up and left) to a ledge below a white quartzite patch.
2. 18m, 5.3 Step up and right across a left-facing open book, then around a nose (psychological crux). Traverse right to a ramp, turn left and go up the ramp to a stance just past a large tree. Take care not to dislodge loose rocks on the ramp.
3. 20m, 5.3 Continue up the ramp to the next tree, passing the first obvious break on the right. Turn right and climb the face up and right to the top. You can chicken out by finishing up the ramp but you miss the best part of the climb.

History: FA: David Atherton and Jim White, June 1964. In early 2008, the “somewhat loose blocks” on the first pitch all fell off, increasing the difficulty significantly. First repeat after the rockfall by Larry Forsyth, Rob Le Blanc and Helmut Microys, October 18, 2008 (docking-out weekend).

27. Wendy 5.7

Start: from the second belay station of Top Secret

3. 22m Climb the slightly overhanging wall, protecting where possible. Continue up past a small tree until forced right by overhangs. Keep ascending below the overhangs (loose block!) until a hard move brings one to a tree. From the tree move left awkwardly and climb the ramp to the top. Please don't sling the trees.

History: FA: Richard Dorling, Tom Lynch and Tim Mephram, June 13th 1965.

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28. Persuasion 5.6

A traverse connecting Top Secret and Ottawa Route.

Start: at the first belay station of Top Secret.

2. 8m Traverse right, as for Top Secret, to a ramp. (Top Secret climbs up this ramp.)
3. 25m Traverse right for another 6m to a ramp sloping down. Step down the ramp until a slightly rising traverse can be reached on a short steep face. Descend over loose rock and continue to a large open book facing left, capped by overhangs.
or 3(a). Traverse right for another 6m to a ramp sloping down. Step up onto a ledge and traverse right to its end. With courage, climb down 3m and traverse right to a large open book facing left capped by overhangs.
4. 20m Traverse right under the overhangs to the edge of an open book. Step up enjoyably on a steep face to a ledge under an overhang. Step right up to a comfortable belay in a corner. The 35m ramp of Ottawa Route terminates here.
or 4(a). Instead of traversing right, climb straight up in an open book over suspect-looking blocks. Then up and right to a comfortable belay in a corner.
5. Follow Ottawa Route to the top.

History: FA: David Atherton and Jim White, 1964

FA pitches 3(a) and 4(a): Helmut Microys and Cathy Stalder, 1978.