

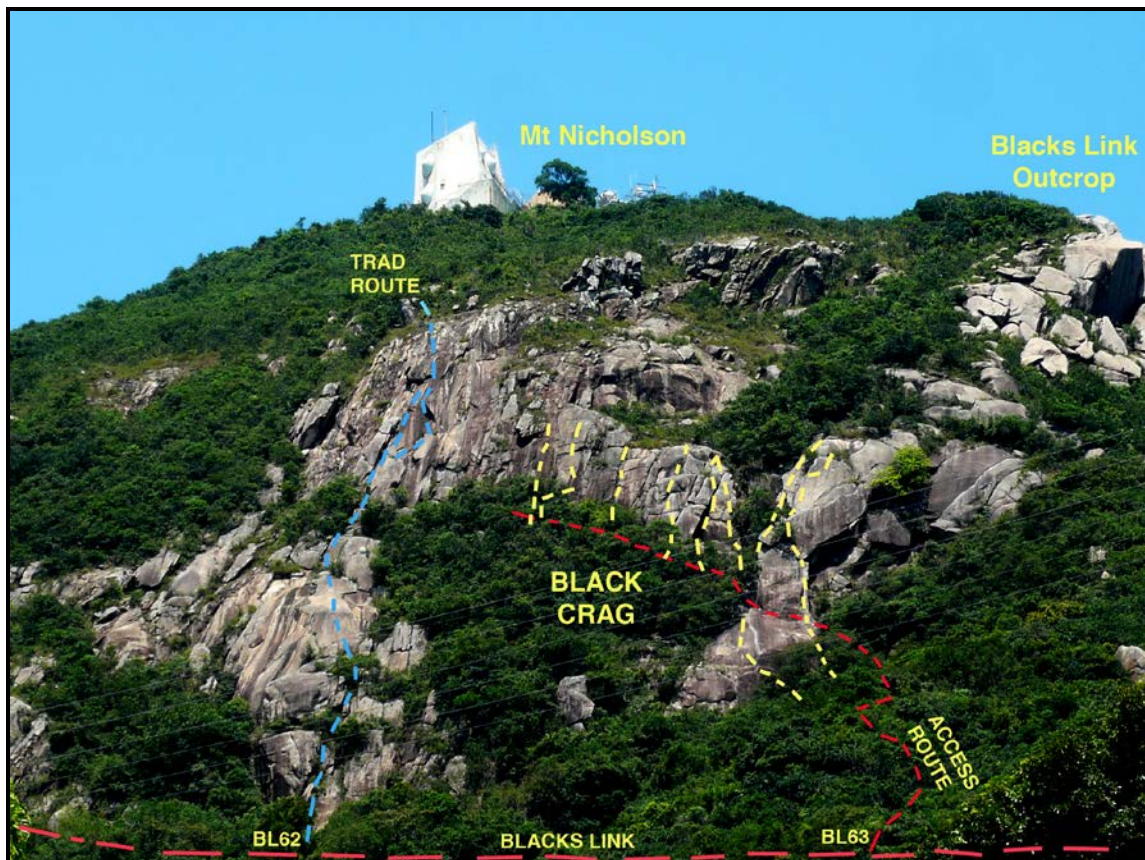
Black Crag

Overview

Black Crag is an easily accessible south-facing cliff of enjoyable HK island broken-slab climbing with a fantastic view out over the south of the island. It is two hundred metres below and left of the existing traditionally protected climbing on Blacks Link Outcrop, both easily visible from Blacks Link. Note: Blacks Link Outcrop is the prominent crag with an overhanging nose to the upper right on the skyline.

There are known to be two existing traditional routes on Black Crag. Based on available information and the vintage of climbing equipment found in the bushes at the base of the crag, they are presumed to have originally been climbed in the 1970's. The names of these climbs have not come to light, so they are named as ORIGINAL ROUTE and RIGHT HAND ROUTE in recognition of their early ascents.

In general, Black Crag is a low grade climbing venue, with the difficulty graded between F5 and F6a for most climbs. As such it is expected that Black Crag will become one of the most popular venues on Hong Kong Island for the ease of access and comparatively large number of similar grade routes adjacent to one another. The rock quality is particularly good, the routes of reasonable length and they are well equipped with marine grade stainless steel bolts and rappel rings.



Black Crag – general view

Access

The most convenient approach involves a taxi to the end of Blacks Link Road, as accessed from Wong Nai Chung Gap. If using public transport, walk up Blacks Link Road from the bus stops on Wong Nai Chung Gap Road, adjacent to the petrol station.

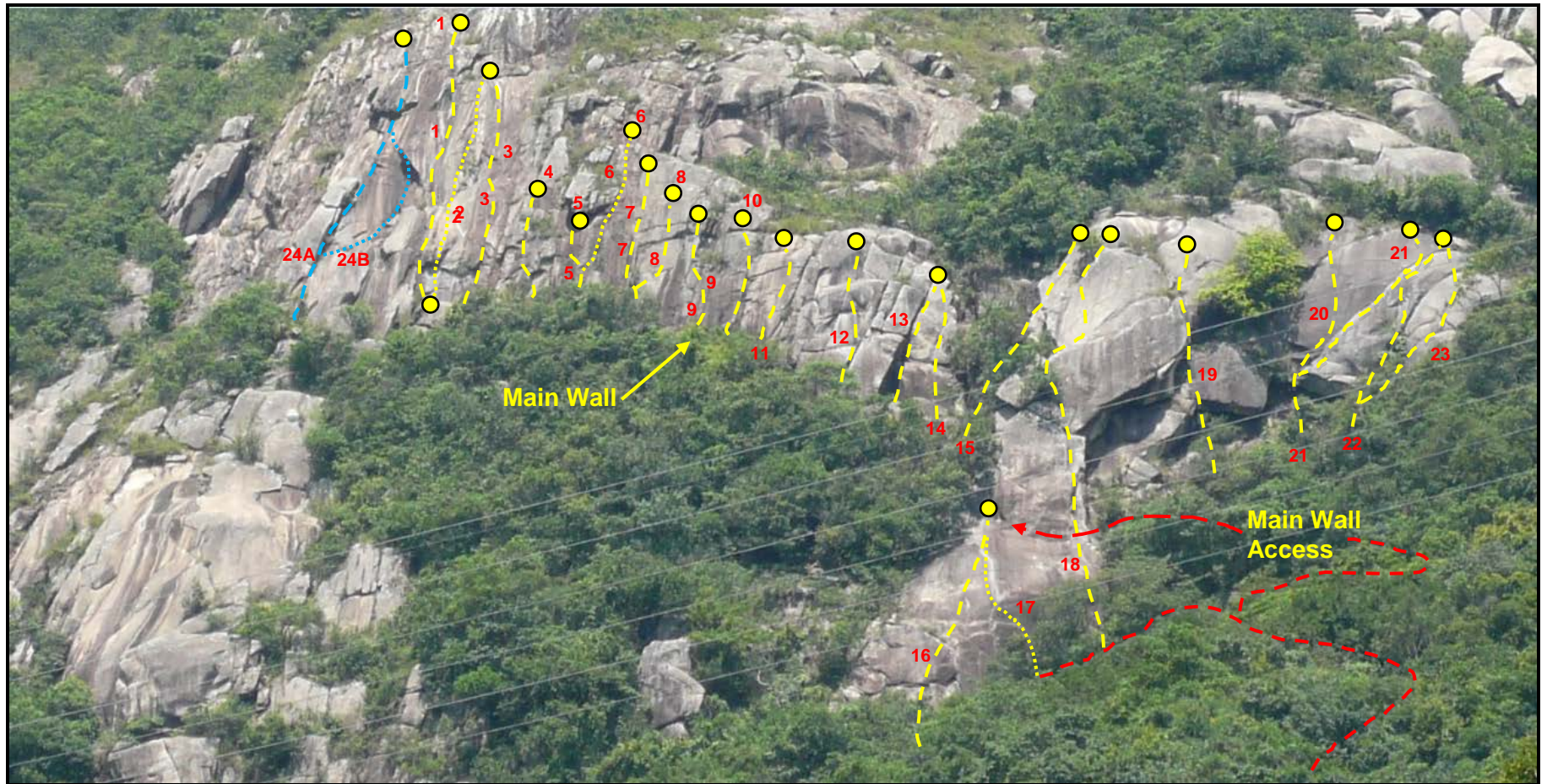
From the end of Blacks Link Road, walk westwards along Blacks Link trending uphill for about 300m to a white painted concrete water culvert on the right hand side, marked as "BL63". Walk into bushes on the right of the culvert and head right, up into the woods then bearing left and zig-zagging up following the purple string-tags hung on the branches until you reach a short handline fixed to a single bolt. The start of Black Bomb and Paint it Black is off to the left whereas continuing up past the short hand line immediately leads to a second handline above and where it terminates, the start of routes 19 – 23 in the bay above. Slightly further ahead, a final hand line traverses the slab to the Main Wall and purpose made belay platforms concocted for the discerning climbers' comfort (thanks to Paul Collis and co).

WARNING

The Blacks Link path lies directly beneath the crag and is typically busy with people walking (day and night). Climbers must NOT dislodge any loose material, as there is a significant risk of it falling onto people using the path below.

AN INCIDENT OF FALLING ROCK ONTO THE PATH INVOLVING THE PUBLIC IS VERY LIKELY TO RESULT IN A CLIMBING BAN, IF NOT A MORE SERIOUS OUTCOME

Particular effort has been made by the authors to remove loose material (often late at night with sentries posted on the path) however please take extra special care when climbing at this crag.



Black Crag – Main Wall

Main Wall

The first 3 routes are located at the far end of Main Wall.

1. **My Cat's Blacker than Yours***** F6a 22m 12 Bolts

Start on the raised ledge boulder at the very end of Main Wall. Pull over a small strip roof and a trying move to gain a large sloping ledge above. Step left off the ledge, onto a blank slab and force entry into the groove above (crux). Pleasant climbing leads to the top.

FA: Francis Haden, Donna Kwok 08/06/2014

2. **Black is Back***** F6b 22m 11 Bolts

Superb climbing on the headwall. Start on the block, beneath the strip roof. Crank over the roof to a good hold then scamper up onto the sloping ledge above and the opportunity to take in the fantastic view. From the sanctuary of the ledge, take on the headwall direct and the superb climbing all the way to the anchor, shared with Black Cat Strut.

FA: Francis Haden, Donna Kwok 14/06/2014

3. **Black Cat Strut***** F4 22m 12 Bolts

Start beneath a small roof. Surmount the roof and gain the fantastic groove above, staying to the right of the bolts towards the top.

FA: Francis Haden, Donna Kwok 01/06/2014

4. **Black-spot** F5+ 15m 6 Bolts

Start beneath a large flake at the point where the path narrows next to a bush. Pull up onto the flake and step left beneath the wall. Move up the wall with difficulty (crux) and so gain a small ledge and rest. Easily gain the lower off above.

(It is possible to link into Black Cat Strut – 2 expansion bolts protect)

FA: Francis Haden, Donna Kwok 06/07/2014

5. **Lost Link** F5 15m 6 Bolts

Start beneath a quartz infused groove. Step off the ground and at the second bolt; avoid poor rock on the left by moving right to gain good holds. Reach up to clip the third bolt, then step back left to a good jug in the small groove. Follow the groove, trending right to a lower off beneath the roof.

FA: Francis Haden, Donna Kwok 08/06/2014

6. **Long Link*** F4 22m 9 Bolts

Start as for route 5. Follow route 5 to the second bolt and continue moving right. A line of bolts leads up the wall above, passing a roof on the right until easier ground and eventually a lower off.

FA: Francis Haden, Connie Choy, Keung King, Donna Kwok 22/06/2014

7. **Linked In*** F5 19m 7 Bolts

Halfway up the slope is a small platform. Launch up the wall on flakes, step left and enter the vertical groove line.

FA: Paul Collis, Rich Cuncliffe

8. **Bright Black Morning Light**** F6a+ 17m 8 Bolts

Start as for route 7, at the platform. Pull onto the wall with steep moves then step right to a vertical crack. Head up the thin vertical crack without spanning across to the right

corner, and out left onto the left face (crux) and continue up to headwall via horizontal cracks and side-pulls within vertical cracks. It is possible to extend the climbing by continuing up to the lower off of route 7.

FA: Rich Cuncliffe, Paul Collis

9. Black Blast* F6c+ 22m 8 Bolts

Start below a steep bulge, slightly down slope of the belay platform. Pull onto the wall, on slightly crunchy rock and gain a prominent left side pull. From here, a powerful boulder problem gains a positive undercut and brief rest. A delicate series of smears and laybacks lead up the blunt arête and easier ground.

FA: Francis Haden 08/06/2014

10. The Missing Link* F7b 22m 8 Bolts**

Excellent technical climbing that forces the thin, vertical crack line. This is a route for technicians. Start beneath a cut tree stump in the face of the wall approximately halfway up the slope. Climb easily up the wall to a large undercut flake below the third bolt. A powerful shoulder press move gains the prominent finger lock by the third bolt, then a series of moves left and up gain a good hold around the fifth bolt. Further technical climbing eventually leads to easier ground and a lower off above.

FA: Francis Haden, Donna Kwok 08/06/2014

11. Linked In, Blacked Out F7b 22m 8 Bolts**

The hardest climb on the crag and a particularly difficult start and finish. Start by a tree, slightly up slope from a rock flake at the base of the wall. Step onto the wall and gingerly step right below the first bolt. Precarious, hard moves past the second bolt gain a crucial finger pocket for the right hand above. Reach left, and haul up onto the obvious undercut flake then force the groove above on improving holds to a rest next to a horizontal break. Stretch left across the wall to gain a good side hold and the start of a final tricky sequence to finish the climb.

FA: Francis Haden, Donna Kwok 14/06/2014

(The route has also been led by climbing the wall directly above the penultimate bolt, without following holds left, towards the finish of The Missing Link. This direct finish being somewhat eliminate, is considerably harder and a suggested grade of F7b+)

Given the risk to crag access that rock fall poses, the enormous flake in-between routes 11 and 12, has not been climbed upon due to concerns of instability.

Despite the temptation, climbers should leave it alone as it is completely detached.

12. Black and Tans* F5 17m 7 Bolts**

Climb from left side of "Collis Construction Belay Platform (TM Pending)" chimney up between two blocks until you can stand on the right block. Follow up the obvious crack then across two overlaps to finish.

FA: Paul Collis, Rich Cuncliffe

13. Black Moth Super Rainbow F5 17m 7 Bolts.**

Climb up the obvious chimney then use the left hand cracks to step between overlaps to anchor shared with Le Rose Noir.

FA: Jim Gray, Paul Collis

14. Le Rose Noir* F5 17m 7 Bolts

Climb on right side of "Collis Construction Belay Platform (TM Pending)" heads up to a move across a headwall and continues up and left to an anchor shared with "Black Moth Super Rainbow."

FA: Paul Collis, Jim Gray

15. The Black Swan* F4 20m 7 Bolts

Easy climb up above the gully right Ltd of "Collis Construction Belay Platform (TM Pending)" heads up diagonal cracks and ledges. Top Anchor can also assist in getting to top of Paint it Black.

FA: Paul Collis, Rich Cuncliffe

The following 3 climbs start from the base of the long slab.

16. Love thy Link* F6a 22m 12 Bolts

Enjoyable, lengthy slab climbing with a couple of sections requiring some thought.

FA: Francis Haden, Jonathan Knipper, Eugenie Knipper 25/05/2014

17. Black Bomb* F6a 15m 6 Bolts

Start at the bottom of the slab, as accessed from beyond the short handline fixed to a single bolt (refer to crag access). Head up cracks onto the slab, ending at the two bolts located at the end of the Main Wall access traverse handline.

FA: Rich Cuncliffe, Jim Gray

18. Paint it Black*** F6b/c 28m 14 Bolts

Start slightly higher up the slope from Black Bomb. Saunter up the slab with one move to gain a pocket. Cross over the handlines and launch up the arête above to a ledge and tree. Shuffle left behind the tree then up a diagonal crack to beneath a blank looking headwall. Technical moves on small holds lead up and left to gain the arête, which is followed back right to an anchor shortly above.

FA: Rich Cuncliffe, Paul Collis

The following group of routes are located in a bay directly above the end of the second approach hand line, where a large block has fallen across the trail.



19. Black Mac Terminator F6a 19m 10 Bolts

A fine finish but unfortunately the lower wall has some weak rock to start. Start by a tree, at the left end of the bay. Saunter up onto a large ledge and taking care, pull onto the wall that is followed on good holds until beneath the large capping roof. Reach around to the left and climb onto a ledge using good holds formed by a wedged block. Follow the easy corner above, moving onto a compact slab with a crux move to gain an anchor.

FA: Francis Haden, Donna Kwok 13/07/2014

20. Side Link F6b 18m 14 Bolts**

Fun climbing on the off-width, formed by the giant flake. Start directly below the large roof. Mantel the ledge above the belay and climb up the wall past some wedged blocks into a small alcove (created by the removal of the large block that is on the trail below!). Reach up to clip the bolt extension chain and stretch to gain a good jug in the roof then haul out left to gain the tip of the flake. Swing round underneath and so become established in the off-width behind. Move up the off-width and step onto the slab using obvious edges. Press on directly up the slab with a few entertaining moves to an anchor.

FA: Francis Haden, Donna Kwok 06/07/2014

21. De-Linked F6a+ 18m 13 Bolts**

Fun cranking, straight over the roof. Follow De-Linked to the roof. Pull out over the roof to gain the end of the flake but power back right to a good hidden hold on the lip of the roof. Gain the outer edge of the off-width and follow this, staying on the face until a rock up into the off-width prompts a final technical section that leads up to an anchor.

FA: Francis Haden, Donna Kwok 06/07/2014

22. Groove is in the Black F6a 18m 12 Bolts**

Start as for routes 21 and 22. Gain the initial ledge and climb past the wedged blocks above with care until beneath the roof. Force the roof above and so gain access into the groove with easier climbing. Where the wall steepens, stretch left to the flake line of route 21 and follow this to an anchor.

FA: Francis Haden, Donna Kwok 06/07/2014

23. Lost Link F5 18m 10 Bolts**

As for climb 22, gain the initial ledge and climb past the wedged blocks above with care until beneath the roof. Step right and move over a small bulge to become established in a crack line that runs up the wall. Follow the crack easily to where the wall steepens and a trying exit onto the slab and anchor of route 22.

FA: Francis Haden, Carmen Chu, Donna Kwok 13/07/2014

24A and 24B

There is one pre-existing traditionally protected route and the description can be found on www.hongkongclimbing.com forum of new routes. A double bolt belay was placed at the top of the final pitch to avoid a final scramble through rough ground.