

Sample Pages

Portland

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Climbers' Club

## The Cuttings Main Cliff

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The Main Cliff is a by-product of the quarry railway, which together with its attendant bridge has long since disappeared. This man-made face offers a different style of climbing from the rest of Portland, with grooves predominating. A less welcome feature is the top section of brittle, slatty rock and earthy slopes. Old metal fence posts, stakes, and the odd block provide adequate belays for those few routes that top out.

The first major feature of the crag is a large break in the cliff, the entrance to a sporting rift-system on two levels. This small cave is known as *Australia* or *Cherty Rift*. To the right are two walls; the second is split by the wide crack of *Jam*. Another noticeable structure is the ivy-covered mid section of *Kestrel*, which is made up of three flakes set one on top of each other. Further on, a blank-looking upper wall offers us *Haute Cuisine*, while right again two climbs make use of three short pillars: the 'Finger' climbs. Close to the end of the crag, *Modern Nightmare* climbs an overhanging open groove and the fluted wall of flowstone above, and *Shiver Me Timbers* voyages up a long thin crack.

The first fifteen routes on this cliff are extremely popular with beginner groups, and hence have become very polished. It is normal to find all the belays taken with top-ropes. Don't be dismayed – there are much better routes elsewhere on the Isle at similar grades – they simply require you to walk further. The routes here are not described in any great detail.

The first few routes are very short.

1 **Eat, Stick and Die** 6m F3 2B (1995)  
A short wall and poorly-protected rightward traverse.

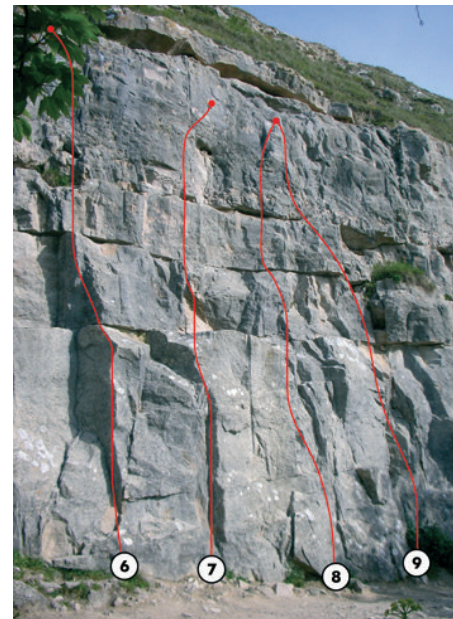
2 **We're Only Placing Bolts for Nigel** 5m F3 2B (1995)  
Start left of the ivy and brambles and climb direct to the lower-off of *Eat, Stick and Die*.

3 **Cheese and Pickle** 5m F4+ 3B (2008)  
The left-hand side of the lighter patch of rock is quite technical.

4 **Parsnip Soup** 5m F5 3B (2008)  
The right-hand side of the lighter patch of rock is also quite technical.

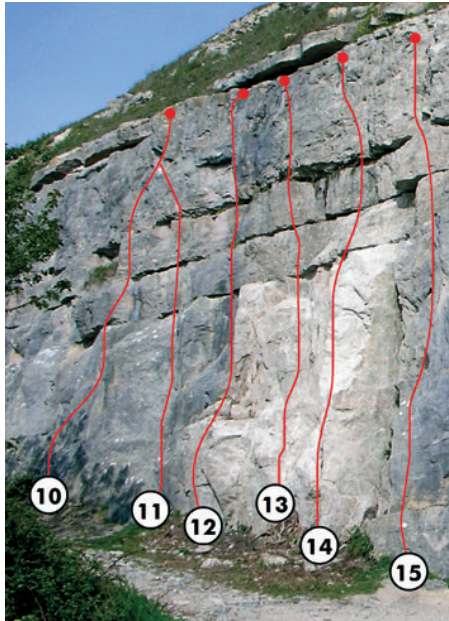
5 **Corporal Punishment** 7m F5 2B (1995)  
Start at the base of a small slab.

6 **On Manoeuvres** 7m F3 3B (1995)  
Start to the right of the small slab and climb the left-facing corners. Shared lower-off.

7 **Arc Angel** 7m F3 3B (1995)  
The short groove to ledges and the lower-off.



Neal Heanes on *Evening Mistress* F6a+ (page 311). BEN STOKES

8 **Charity Work, Mate** 7m F3 3B (1995)  
More or less direct up the steep wall, then ledges to the lower-off.

9 **Magical Misty Tour** 8m F4 3B (1995)  
The slight groove and ledges to the shared lower-off.

10 **Bonsai** 9m F4 3B (1995)  
Start beneath a large patch of grass at four metres. Follow a rightward trending line to the shared lower-off.

11 **Sting in the Tail** 9m F5+ 3B (1995)  
Climb the groove and wall to the shared lower-off.

12 **Baron's Revenge** 9m F3 4B (2008)  
Climb past a ledge, a corner and more ledges to a steep finish.

13 **Chicken Boy** 9m F3 4B (2008)  
Pull onto the ledge then use sloping holds to gain a higher ledge, finishing steeply to the lower-off.

14 **Tantrums and Tiaras** 9m F4 4B (2008)  
The tight groove left of the shattered groove is hard to enter and a little sustained.

15 **100 Sunny Days** 9m F3 4B (2008)  
Very pleasant climbing up flakes on the right of the shattered groove.



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**16 Juggernaut** 12m F5 3B (1995)  
Start beneath a large, light brown rock scar at 3 metres. Make a difficult move to gain a ledge and trend rightwards across the slab to the lower-off.

**17 Rock Lobster** 12m F4 3B (1995)  
Climbs the groove to the right of *Juggernaut*. Pull onto a flake that leads to a lower-off shared with that route.

**18 Amazonia** 12m F4+ 4B (1995)  
The groove just right again. Pull into the groove on jugs and follow the flake above to a ledge, before moving up and right to the lower-off.

**19 The Great American Hamburger Disaster** 12m F5 4B (29.10.88)  
The thin crack just right of *Amazonia*. Harder than it looks. Climb the crack to the ledge and move up to the lower-off shared with *Amazonia*.

**20 Definitely Maybe** 12m F6a+ 4B (1995)  
Particularly eliminate in nature – blinkers might be useful. Climb the tricky wall between the two flake lines and trend slightly right to the shared lower-off. Hard for the grade.

**21 Little Chef** 12m F5+ 4B

From the start of *The Sod*, move steeply left into a groove containing a peg. Follow the groove and gain a prominent foothold on the right with difficulty. Continue to the break and either finish up left to the lower-off, or scramble up the corner on the right to the top.



**22 Little Sod** 13m F6b+ 5B

(2.2.07)

An eliminate, starting as for *The Sod*. Pull up left to gain a small flake on the left wall of the groove. Continue direct, keeping right of the arête.



★ **23 The Sod** 13m F6a 5B

Start below the groove, opposite a manhole cover and a couple of large boulders. After a difficult and polished start, climb the bolted groove to its top. Finish either up the wall above to a lower-off on a protruding shelf, or top out as for *Little Chef*.



**24 Mindmeld** 13m F7a 4B

(19.7.95)

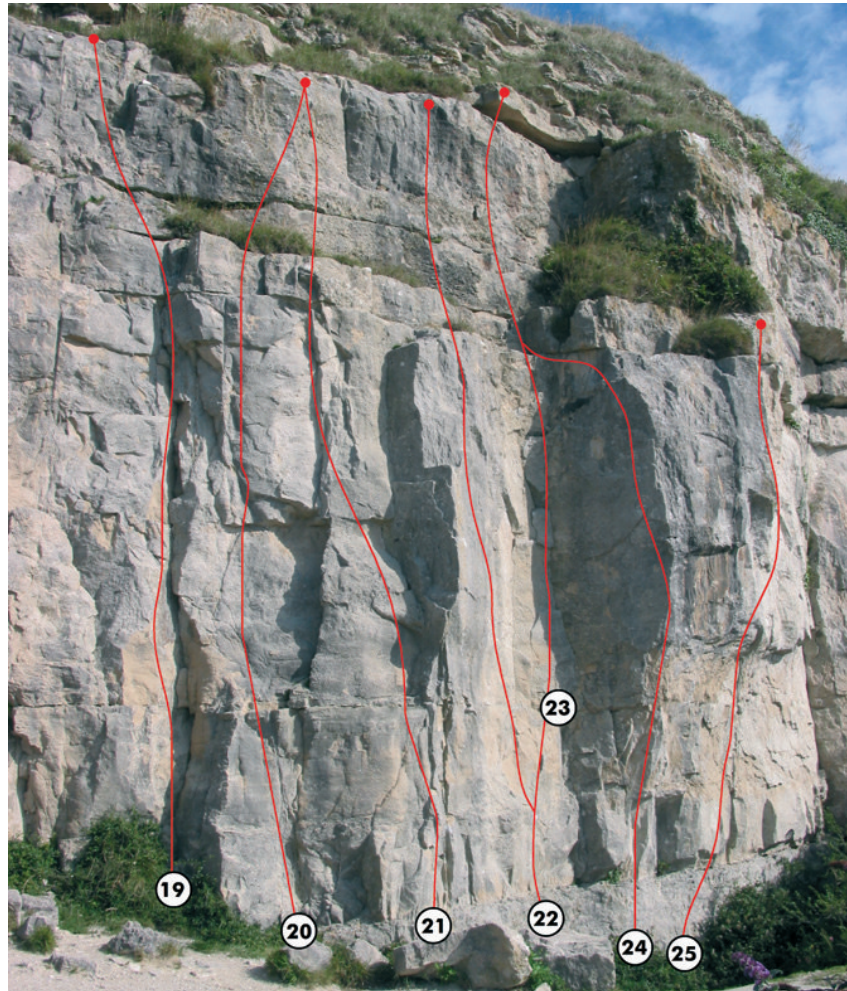
A good eliminate (i.e. keep out of the corner) up the arête right of *The Sod*. Pull onto the arête and follow it until it is possible to lean left to a thin handrail on the right wall of the groove. Make a high step (avoiding the groove) and then join *The Sod* to finish.



★ **25 Sign of the Vulcan** 11m F7b+ 3B

(4.9.94)

An intense and powerful line straight up the blunt rib, where passing the 'Vulcan pocket' is the crux. It has been soloed!



Dave Stringfellow on *Hillman the Hunter* F6b+ (page 310). RON KENYON



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The next two routes start behind a large flake, near a cave entrance.

**26 Hillman the Hunter** 13m F6b+ 4B (13.1.91)  
Start beneath an obvious bricked-up section. Move up to undercuts (crafty bridging should help) and make a hard move using a crack in the bulge. Continue more easily over a small roof and up the brick wall to a lower-off above its left-hand side.

★ **27 Hole in the Wall** 15m E1 5c † (22.5.77)  
Climb the crack in the shallow groove past an overlap to the overhang. Move delicately leftwards across the brick wall and up to the lower-off of *Hillman the Hunter*.

The starting-point for the last two routes is an entrance to Australia Rift; the other entrance is reached by a scramble up the centre of the bay, leading to the next two routes, both of which have been bolted to avoid the obvious natural challenges:

**28 Flying Peach** 10m F6b 3B (31.7.07)  
The wall to the left of the left-hand flake has clean rock and pleasant moves.

**29 Grapefruit Takes a Whipper** 9m F6b 3B (31.7.07)

The wall to the left of the right-hand flake also has clean rock and pleasant moves.

★ **30 The Cutting Edge** 12m F6c 4B (18.12.88)  
★ The fine, sharp arête on the right-hand side of the bay. Struggle up onto the ledge, move left, and follow the arête to a ledge. Reach right and clip the lower-off of *Dumbfounded!* The direct start warrants F7a.

**31 Dumbfounded!** 12m F7a+/7b 3B (15.4.90)  
The blank white wall provides a problematic route, the difficulty of which is highly dependent on reach. Claim at least F7b if you are 178 centimetres (the author's height!) or less. Start as for *The Cutting Edge*. The climb has two drilled pegs as well as the bolts. Clamber up onto the ledge. Climb the wall direct to a lower-off on its left side.

★ **32 Chalkie and the Hex 5** 13m F5+ 3B (1981)  
Short-lived, but excellent. Climb the fine finger-crack on the right side of the wall. Lower off, or continue to the top.

**33 The Ramp** 13m F5 5B  
Start just right of *Chalkie and the Hex 5*. Follow the flake ramp in the corner to its top and continue up to a roof. Either turn the roof on the right past an ancient bolt, and step up and left to the lower-off, or traverse leftwards and climb the wall and groove to the top.

Between the corners of *The Ramp* and *Evening Mistress* is a slight buttress. Two climbs have been crammed onto it.

### 34 **Lusty Wedlock Needs Coil of Prevention**

11m F7b 4B (27.10.94)

A short, intense eliminate up the left rib of the buttress. Scramble leftwards above the brambles and move up to a ledge. Step right and climb the right-hand side of the arête on very small holds to a hand-ledge. Go easily rightwards to the lower-off.

### ★ 35 **Rusty Chublock Seeks Oil of Lubrication**

12m F7b 4B (15.4.90)

A fascinating sequence up an overhanging black arête. Climb easily to the base of the right-hand arête. Climb its right-hand side and then its very edge on flowstone crinkles to ledges above. Shared lower-off.

### 36 **Evening Mistress** 13m F6a+ 3B (18.12.88)

Technical groove climbing. Climb the next corner and surmount the roof on its left side. The lower-off is on the left. Alternatively, on natural gear, move back above the corner and finish up the corner on the right.

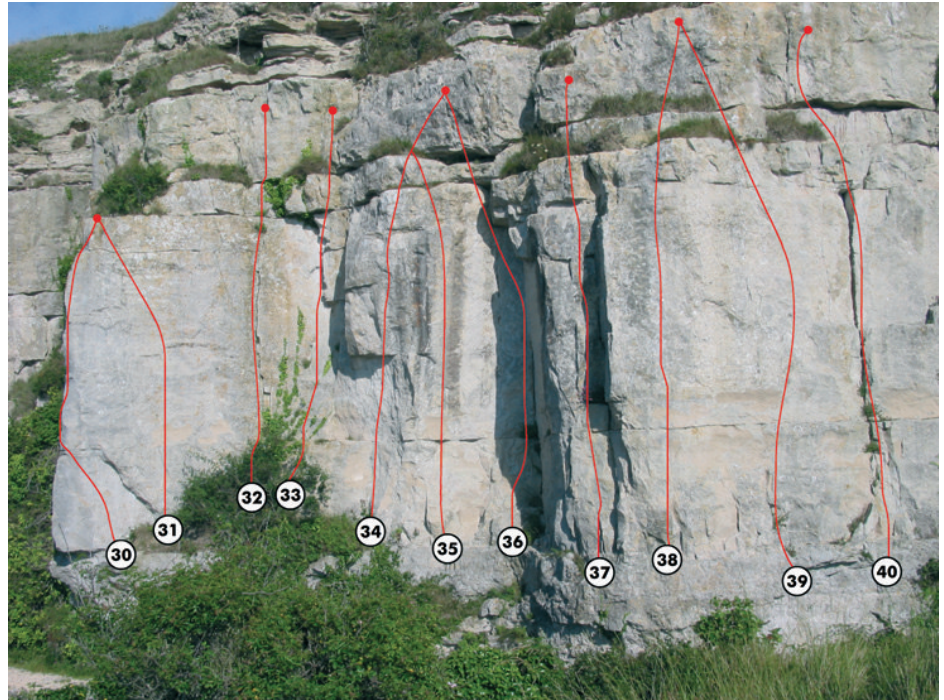
### ★ 37 **Amen Corner** 15m F5 5B

Start below the left arête of a slight bay. Very pleasant climbing up the groove with some hidden flowstone thrown in for good measure, though there are a couple of difficult (for the grade) clips.

### ★ 38 **Mousefolk** 15m F6c 5B (15.4.90)

Start 2 metres right of the grooved arête. Climb diagonally leftwards to the obvious projecting foothold and move up past the horizontal crack. Now layback up the right-hand side of the arête and go for the lower-off.

### 39 **Too Many Cooks Spoil the Broth** 15m F6a+ 5B (5.11.90)

The centre of the wall right of *Mousefolk* requires a long reach. The wide crack of *Jam* is off limits. Follow a vague crackline to the horizontal crack. Make a series of mantelshelves to the breaks and lower-off bolts shared with *Mousefolk*.

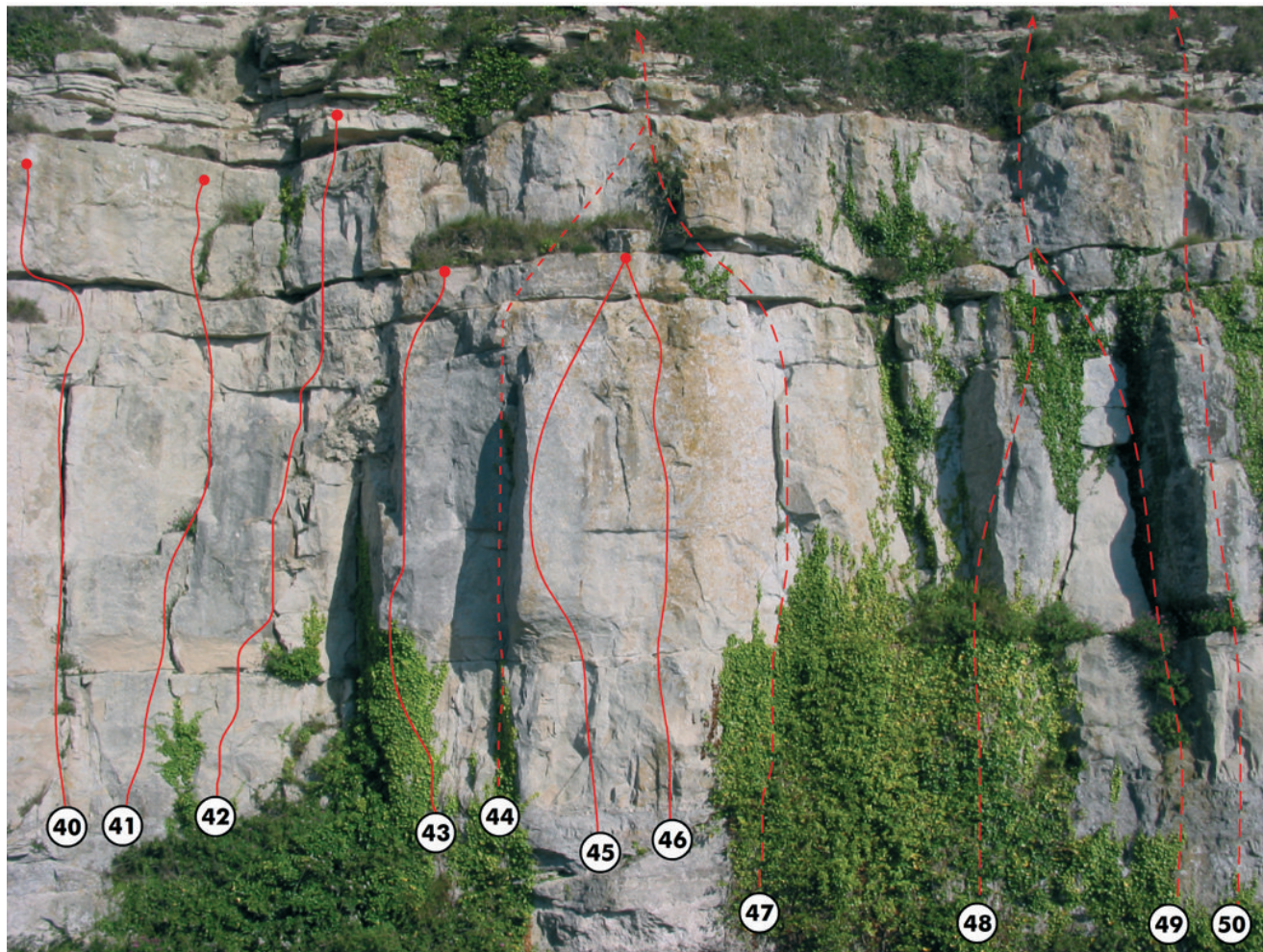
 

### 40 **Jam** 14m F4 3B

Low in its grade. Start below the prominent vertical fist-crack in the left wall of the slight bay. Climb the crack to the faultline. Either move left and up to the lower-off or traverse right and climb a corner to the top.



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- ★ **41 Chips with Everything** 15m F5 4B (21.6.80)  
A good route which starts 2 metres right of *Jam*. Climb the pleasant flake/crack to a tricky rockover beneath a small roof. Finish up the corner above to a lower-off.

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- ★ **42 Quality Family Day** 15m F5 5B (16.02.08)  
Good climbing up the flowstone flake, though loose to start. Step up onto the grassy ledge left of the flake and climb the wall, avoiding the loose initial section of the flake. Climb the remainder of the flake and flowstone to finish at a worrying-placed lower-off.

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- 43 True Love** 15m F6b+ 5B (16.02.08)  
The blunt arête left of *Bridget Riley* has a difficult finish.

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- ★ **44 Bridget Riley** 21m E2 6a (6.10.91)  
Excellent technical bridging. Start 5 metres right of *Jam*, below a smooth, wide groove. Gain the groove from the right and follow it with increasing difficulty to a peg. Reach for the 'swallow's nest' and pull out rightwards. Use the lower-off nearby or climb up over ledges to the top bolt of *The Mind Terrorist*. Step right and finish up the earthy slope. Post and block belays.

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- ★ **45 The Mind Terrorist** 15m F7c 3B (11.90)  
The flying arête just right of *Bridget Riley*. Climb straight up past the ledge to the break and go leftwards onto the arête. Keeping on the right-hand side, slap away until a long reach rightwards gains a flowstone boss. Use this and hidden pockets to reach the ledges. Move right to a lower-off.

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- 46 Knockout Punch** 15m F7b+ 5B (2.10.96)  
Technical climbing up the thin seam. Low in the grade. Scramble up the easy wall. Make a hard reach to a small finger jam (or use small pockets on

the right) and power up to a good flowstone sidepull and easier climbing.

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- ★ **47 Spicer** 24m E2 5c/6a (1986)  
One peg. Climb to a thin crack and follow it to the horizontal break. Hand-traverse left for 3 metres and finish direct.

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- 48 That Chill Divine** 21m E2 6a † (20.1.90)  
An obtuse technical problem up a seemingly-bare, square-cut groove. Reasonable protection from smallish wires. Start 3 metres right of *Spicer*. Go straight up to a good ledge. Climb the right-hand of two small corners, swing up rightwards onto the arête, and gain easier ground above. From the scoop, finish out rightwards as for *Kestrel*.

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- 49 Kestrel** 21m VS 4c (22.5.77)  
Start beneath a groove containing a flake broken into three parts. Climb the wall and then the tripartite flake. At the top of the flake make a difficult move to reach a horizontal break before going left and finishing out right. Block belay far back.

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- 50 Looking for Love** 21m E2 5b † (29.4.90)  
Sparsely protected. Start under the right arête of *Kestrel*. Climb the wall directly below the arête to *Friend 4* and *Hex 11* placements at the break. Follow the stepped arête to the top, moving slightly right when difficulties occur. (Hidden nut-pocket to the left at the first ledge.) Block belay far back.

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**Unknown climber on *The Cutting Edge* F6c (page 310).** PAUL BELFIELD

