

PART THREE

BRISBANE ROCKCLIMBING CLUB

THE STEAMERS

The Steamer formation, so called because of its resemblance to the superstructure of a ship, consists of a group of rhyolitic residuals 4-500 ft. in height rising from the ridge which separates the middle and south branches of Emu Ck. From West to East the formation is as follows :-

The Prow, a large wedge shaped mass with an almost continuous cliff-line except where it narrows into the ridge continuation. This mass is the official Mt. Steamer on the Army map. As far as is known no serious climbing has been carried out on this cliff-line and this is understandable with greater attractions close to hand.

The Funnel next along the ridge is elliptical in shape having a wide heavily timbered summit. An almost continuously sheer cliff-line lends this peak the distinction of being one of our few mountains having no easy or "tourist" route up it.

The Mast is a long narrow pinnacle some 500 ft. in height and narrowing to only 3 ft. wide at one point on its summit ridge.

The Pinnacle a lower continuation of the Mast is separated from the Mast by a gap some 150 ft. deep and 6 ft. wide at its narrowest point.

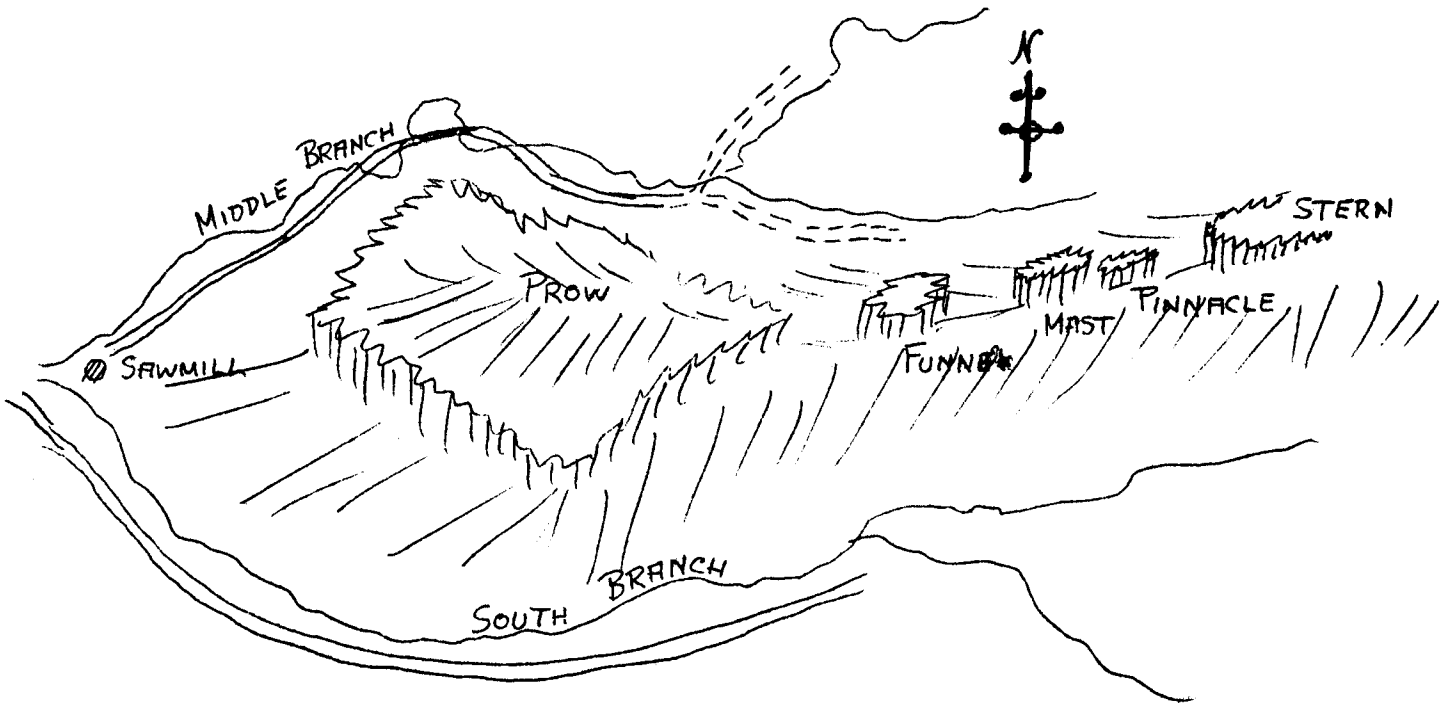
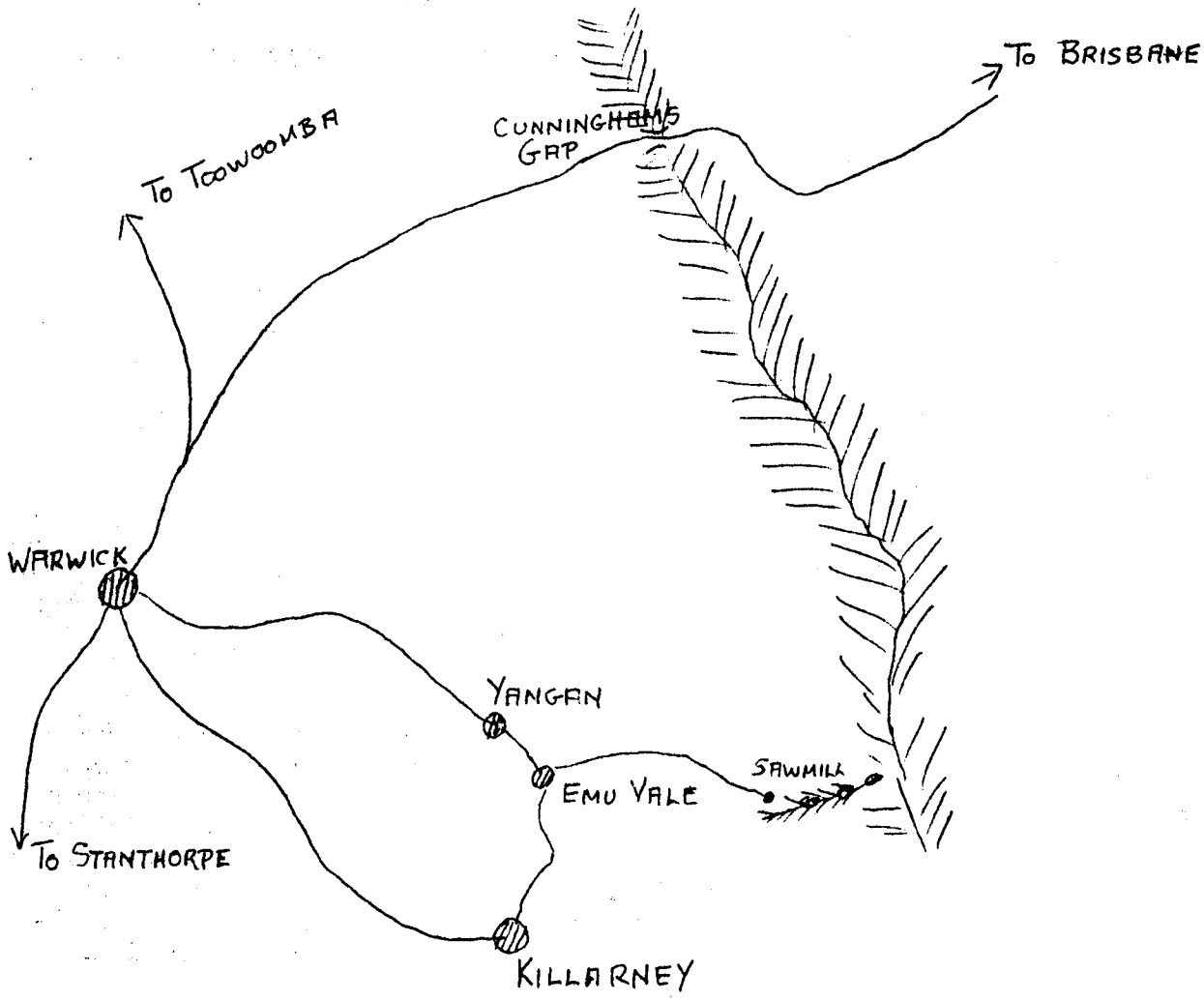
The Stern is an abrupt wall rising above the ridge and broadening out as it runs back into the main transverse ridge of the Main Range between Mts. Asplenium and Roberts.

Access The easiest and best road in turns off to the left before entering Warwick coming from Brisbane. From the turnoff drive 13 miles to Yangan and then a further 4 miles to Emu Vale. From Emu Vale turn off to the left and 11 miles of reasonable dirt road leads up the valley to the deserted saw-mill. Unfortunately the condition of the eight odd creek crossings encountered varies widely over the years and previous heavy rains may necessitate a walk in.

Camp Sites The South branch offers many fine camp sites close in under the rocks but suffers from the disadvantage that this side of the Steamer ridge is covered in heavy rainforest necessitating a tiring uphill scrub bash. The Northern slopes of the ridge however are open forest leading down to the Middle branch. Whilst the flow of water in the Middle branch is not dependable camp may be made at the saw-mill and the old road followed up the valley. A side valley runs in at 522 034 which provides easy access to the foot of the ridge. A comfortable cave exists about half-way along the Northern base of the Funnel, water however is a problem.

The Rock is a rather rotten rhyolite, being greyish-white mostly and providing numerous finger holds and pockets, which tend to crack off. As usual, most orange parts are overhanging. The only solid rock are the columns on the south faces of the Funnel and Mast; East, North and West faces are very rotten. Long pegs can be used, and channels and blades are very useful.

The Climbs are nothing out of the box (Tercho however has a unique rope traverse) but the surroundings are second to none.



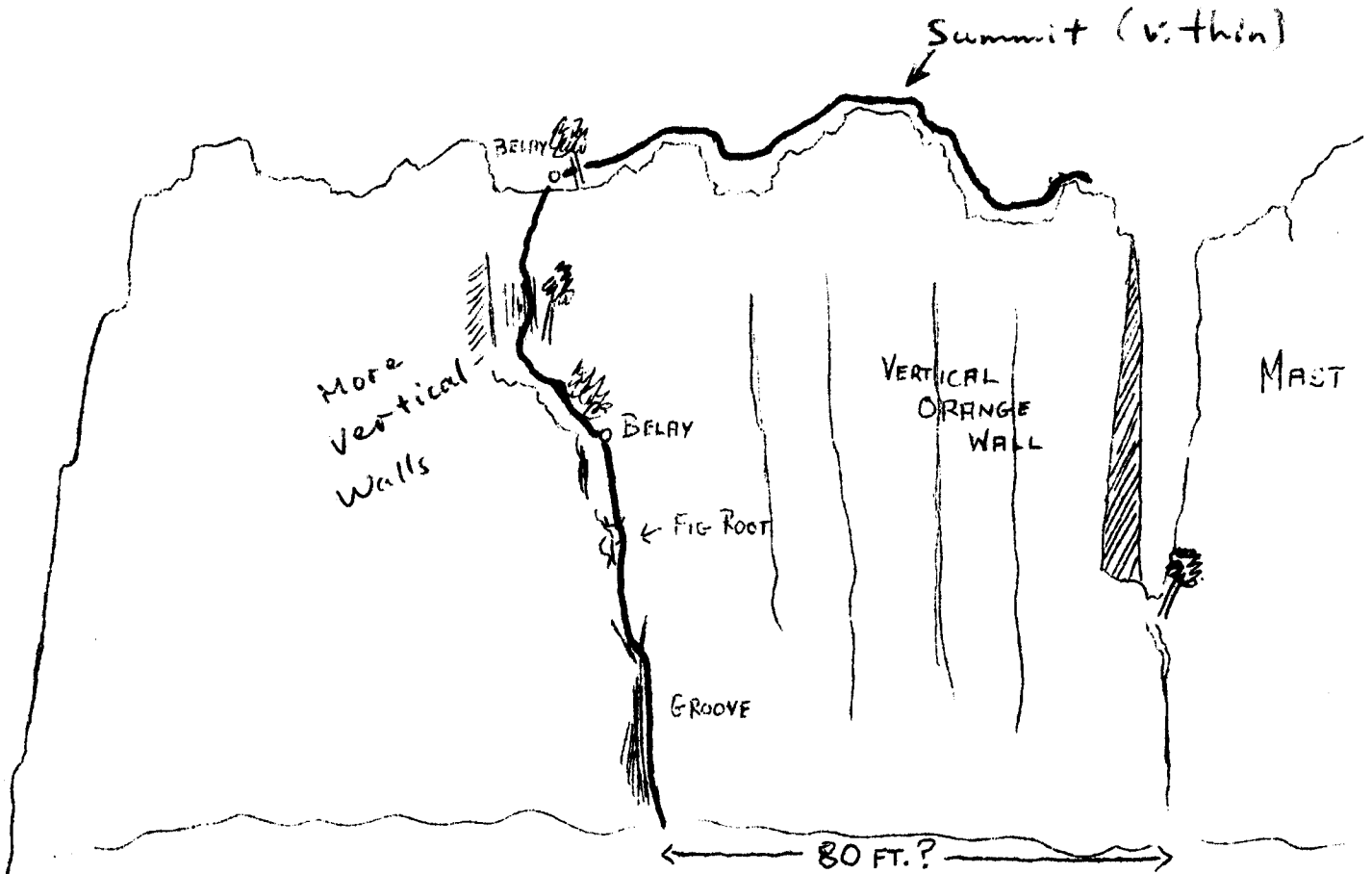
THE PINNACLE : NORTH FACE #

Standard :- Mild Difficult
1st. Ascent :- J.Comino, R.Waring - 1952

Start :- Walk along under the North Face of the Mast until you come to a chimney which leads up to a large tree and the gap between the Pinnacle and Mast. The wedge shaped, uniform, vertical, orange face of the Pinnacle is more or less straight above. Traverse still further, under the Pinnacles North face until you come to a second groove; 50 ft. up there is a fig root which is obvious from below.

1105 ft. ..3-....Up groove or corner, slightly to the left to a ledge below fig root. Thread sling runner around root, through bushes and then slant up a diagonal broken ledge. Short steep corner and then bush belay.

280 ft. ..3- (might be more)....Up to left slightly for 15 ft. and then up to base of vertical wall. Up wall for 8 ft. to tree; runner. Up right behind tree, rather loose here, and over top onto summit ridge. Good tree belay. To gain top, walk along ridge towards Mast. Watch out for many huge, loose, blocks!



THE MAST : EAST FACE : "JERICHO" #

Standard :- Difficult

1st. Ascent :- Ted Cais, Les Hicks - 12/3/1966

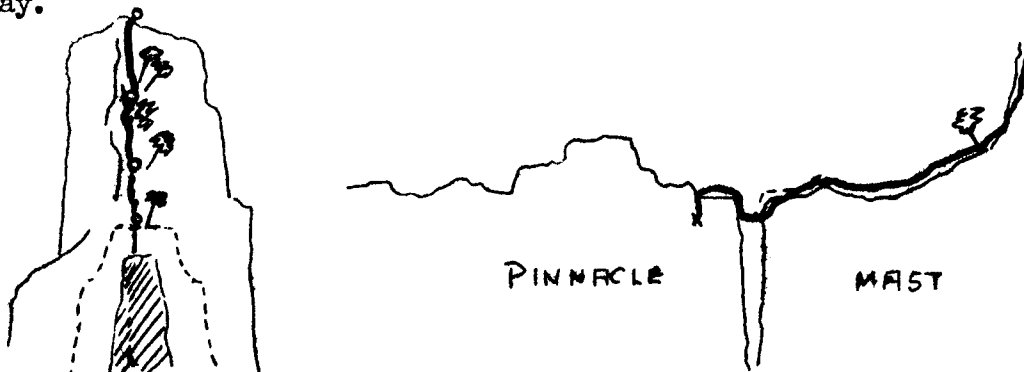
Called "Jericho" because one trumpet note would most likely bring the whole place down.

Start :- The start of this climb is quite unique. You first must climb the Pinnacle! After you have reached the knife edge or summit ridge of the Pinnacle formation follow it to the Western end, i.e. towards the Mast. Now the Mast and Pinnacle are separated by a gap, a minimum of 6 ft. wide and 180 ft. deep. You must cross this to gain the Mast on its Eastern end. Now at the end of the Pinnacle there is a sharp wall about 2-3 ft. wide and with a small ledge and bush on the South side. This wall is 7 ft. high above the little ledge and terminates the arete on the Pinnacle. Below is the big gap and across this is a spacious ledge on the Mast, well supplied with trees. At the end of the wall on the Pinnacle go down 5ft. on its Northern side. You will find a peg inserted upside down under a big slab which is part of the wall. Thread a long abseil loop through this and pass it over the top of the wall and down the South side. In this way you have a mechanically sound abseil point. To effect the crossing the leader should also be belayed with a second rope which can be tied to a channel peg which can be driven in a crack in the middle of the wall, above a little bush on the ledge. The leader now abseils down the gap, belayed, for 30 ft. until he reaches a point level with the end of the Mast, above the vertical end which forms one side of the gap. Now follows a very athletic bridge - at least 6 ft. and slowly the leader leans over and falls on to the Mast. Once there a flying-fox type arrangement can be made for the second to cross on. Up, from the gap edge now through medium trees along nearly level ground to a short wall of piled up blocks. Up 15 ft. to good tree belay. 45 ft.

1...70 ft. ... 2... Follow edge up through scrub to second tree belay.

2...110 ft.... 3... Up to base of first difficulty, a slightly overhanging 15 ft. wall, flanked on the left by a booby trap consisting of a great pile of very unstable blocks. Up over shaky rock to base of solid, grey wall which seems to have horizontal columns in it. Up 10 ft. peg runner. Up over edge of wall, which is capped by a large plate of rock. Along 45° broken ridge, over to right and tree belay.

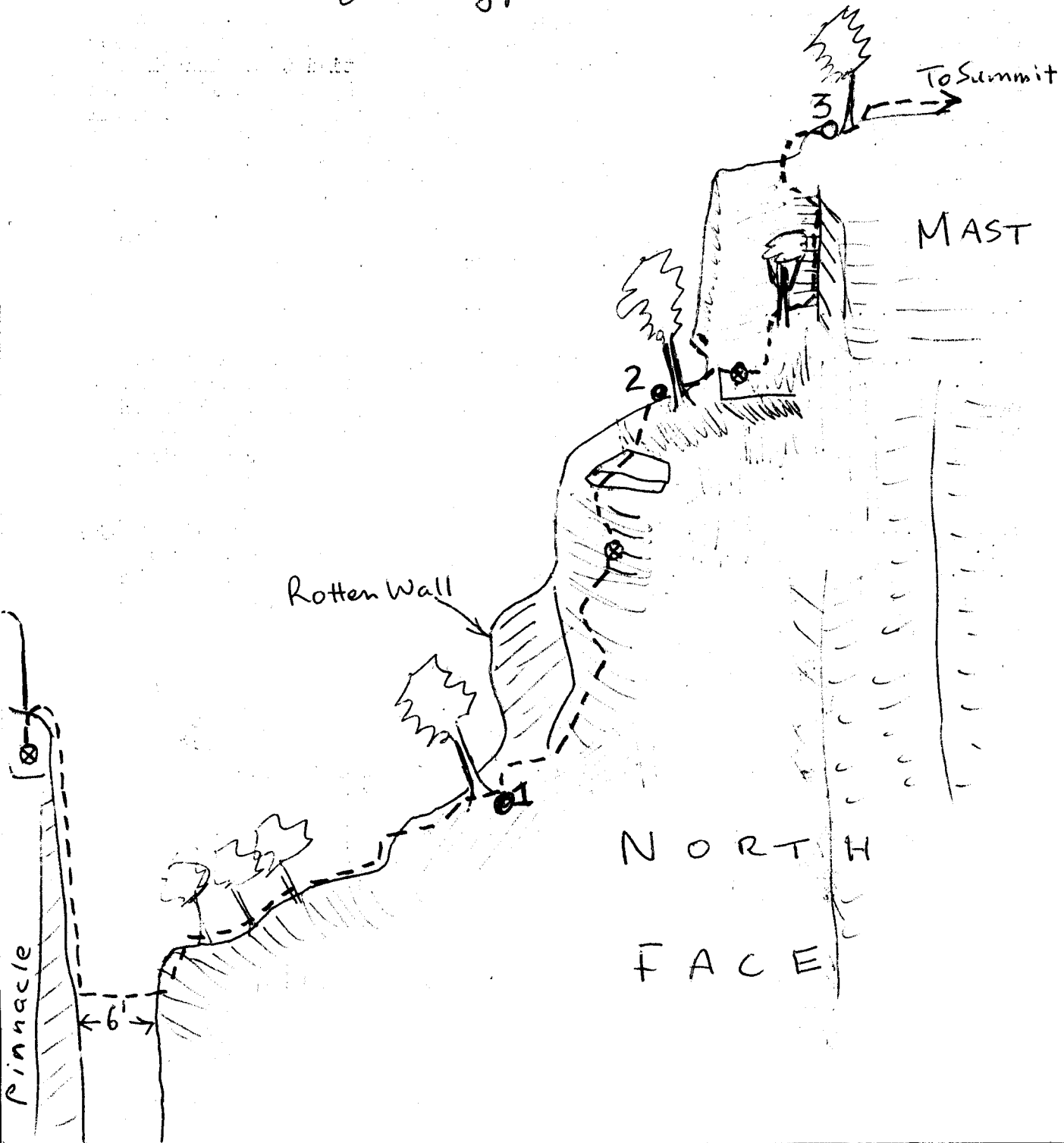
3...80 ft.... 3-... Up 5 ft. from tree below vertical edge and around a bulge, which forms an overhang below, to the right i.e. on to North face. Tricky traverse on loose rock to large tree growing out of wall. Runner. To right and up crack in corner to the top. 15' walk along ridge to summit ridge and tree belay.



JERICHO:
(Mast East Face)

⊗ = peg

○ = belay point



THE MAST : STANDARD ROUTE

Standard :- Hard Difficult

1st. Ascent :- Bob Waring, Jon Stephenson 24/8/50

Start :- Approaching the Mast from the western end (i.e. from the Funnel) about 30 yds. along the the southern face a chimney/gully ascending right and up is found.

1....110ft....2.... Climb up into the chimney/gully and ascend to an overgrown verandah about 80 vertical ft. above the ground. Loose rocks are abundant. Tree belay.

2....40ft....2+.... After an easy walk through the undergrowth towards the main buttress, tend towards the left. A climb up a small wall leads to a clear platform at the base of a prominent chimney. The platform is situated on the true crest of the ridge. Block belay.

3....80ft....3+.... Traverse from the platform to the base of the chimney. Runner advisable here. Ascend chimney (loose and rotten rock) and at its top move right and belay round tree.

4....120ft....3+.... From belay traverse right across overgrown ledge to broken shelf. Ascend few ft. left and then diagonally up tending right to just below summit. Tree belay. A short scramble leads to the summit.



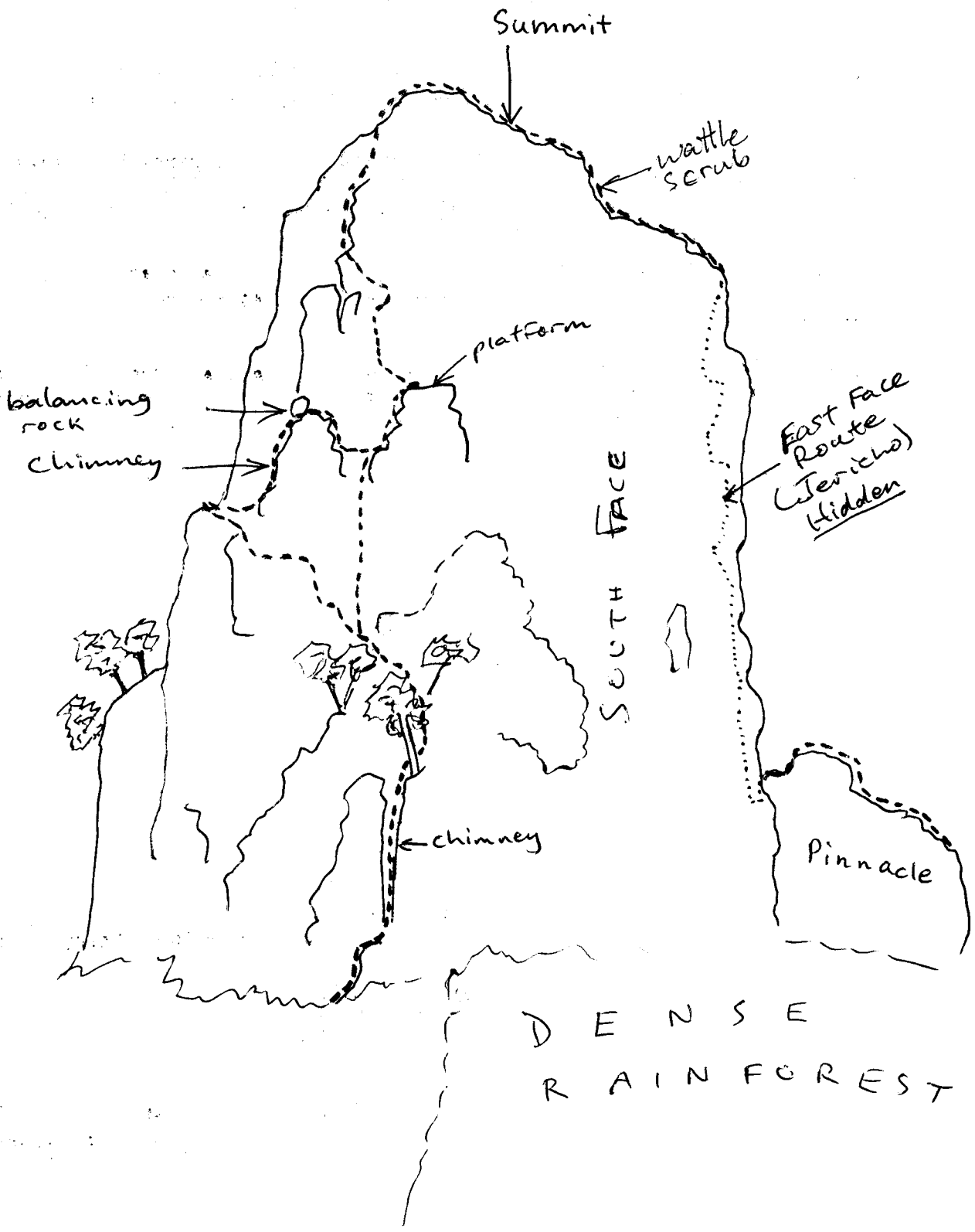
POER DIAGRAM

See over

Page →

O = MAIN BELAY POINTS

THE MAST FROM THE BASE
OF THE FUNNEL



THE FUNNEL : FLAKE ROUTE

Standard :- Very Difficult

1 st. Ascent :- Bob Waring, Kemp Fowler 2/12/50

Flake route is the original route up the Funnel and provides a climb of great interest spoilt by a hairy traverse over loose and crumbling rock.

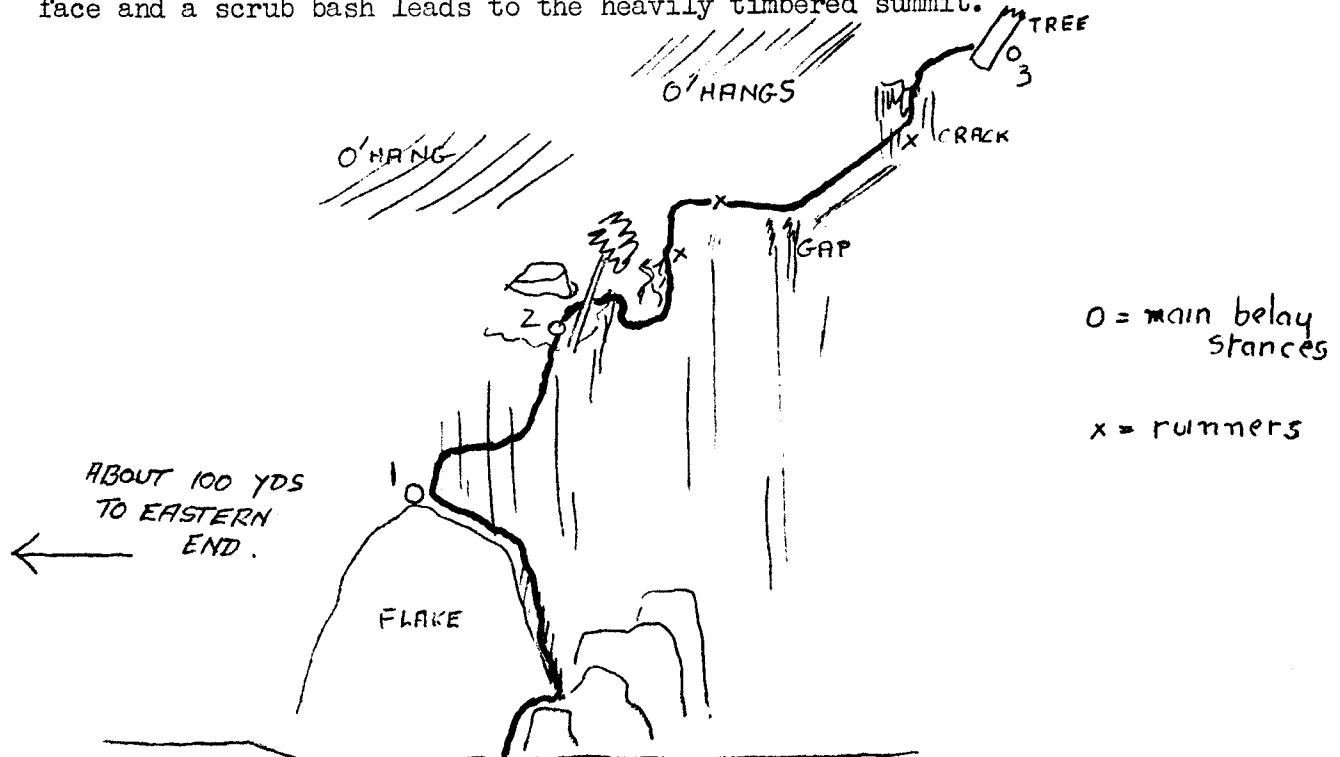
Start :- Approximately 100 yds. from the Eastern end of the Funnel on the North face at the foot of a large yellow-brown flake below a similarly coloured overhanging. The crack behind the flake cannot be seen altogether from the bottom. The start is up over some piled blocks to get to the wide crack behind the flake.

1....45 ft....2....Up over the blocks on the right hand side of the flake, step across into the crack or onto the edge of the flake and then up to the flat top of the flake. Piton belay.

2....30 ft....3....To the right and up a steep 15 ft. wall, easier climbing leads to a wide overhung ledge. A large crumbling block hung with remnants of old slings sits on the ledge. Belay from the tree on the edge of the ledge.

3....105 ft....4...From the ledge descend a few feet over its right hand edge. Up a series of fig tree roots on the undercut wall adjacent to the ledge, followed by a loose vertical wall for another 6-7 ft. Runner beside old piton. Another old peg is to be found at the top of the wall and may be used as a runner before launching out on the delicate traverse to the right. Traverse right, descending slightly, across an exposed gap and up a sloping ledge through some garbage to the foot of a small wall. Up a rotten crack using hand jams. Runner. A large tree is reached at the end of the difficulties. Tree belay.

From this point it is a scramble up through scrub tending left to the ridge of the mountain. A short wall on the ridge crest is turned on its left, i.e. Southern face and a scrub bash leads to the heavily timbered summit.



THE FUNNEL : "REPTILE" #

Standard :- Very Difficult
1 st. Ascent :- Bill Peascod, Neill Lamb, Donn Groom 19/5/56

An interesting climb having the novelty of starting on one side of the mountain and finishing on the other. Somewhat soured by patches of rotten rock.

Start :- At the Eastern end of the Funnel walk along under the Southern face for 30 ft. to a large tree with a large rock at its base. The Window, a hole through the narrow Eastern arete, is almost directly overhead at this point.

1....75 ft....4.... From the base of the tree a slanting groove is climbed until a traverse to the left leads to the base of a semi-detached pillar. This pillar is surmounted using an obvious crevice in its corner, and an ascending traverse to the right leads to a steep wall directly under the window. Once above this wall (which has some loose and rotten rock) a prominent ledge to the left of the window is reached. Piton belay.

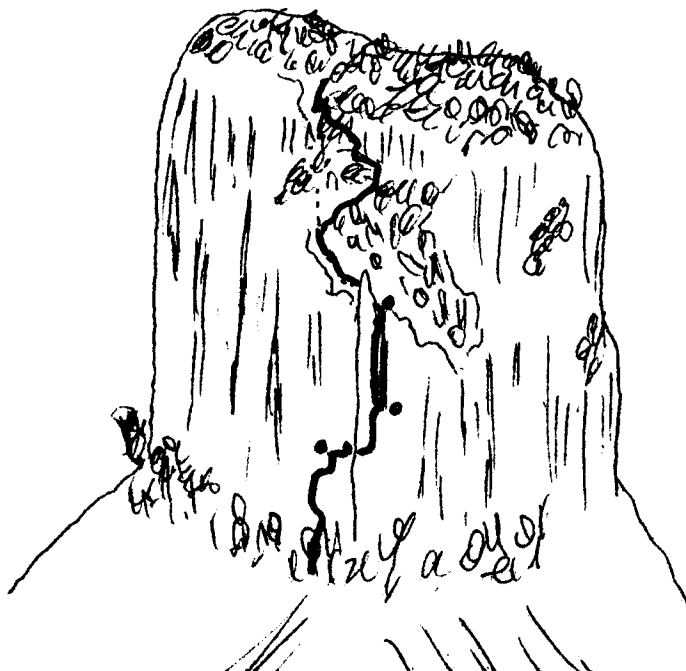
2....55 ft....3.... Traverse right from the ledge on friable rock and climb through the window onto the Northern face. An ascending traverse to the right leads over a large unstable block to a commodious rubbish covered ledge. Piton belay.

3....35 ft....3.... A vertical and loose wall directly above the ledge leads to a small platform at the base of the large chimney. Piton belay.

4....60 ft....2+... The chimney is climbed to its top and easier ground. Tree belay. If preferred pitches 3 & 4 can be taken as one.

From this point the route follows the narrow ridge over an easy 20 ft. wall where it joins Flake route on the large timbered verandah. A short final wall on the crest of the mountain is passed on its left i.e. Southern edge and the wide, heavily timbered summit reached.

At the end of pitch 1 it might be preferable to set up the belay point sitting in the window itself. This would obviate the considerable drag of the rope running around the window whilst engaged on the following pitch.



● = BELAY POINTS

THE FUNNEL FROM THE EAST

THE FUNNEL : "REPTILES TAIL"

Standard :- Very Difficult

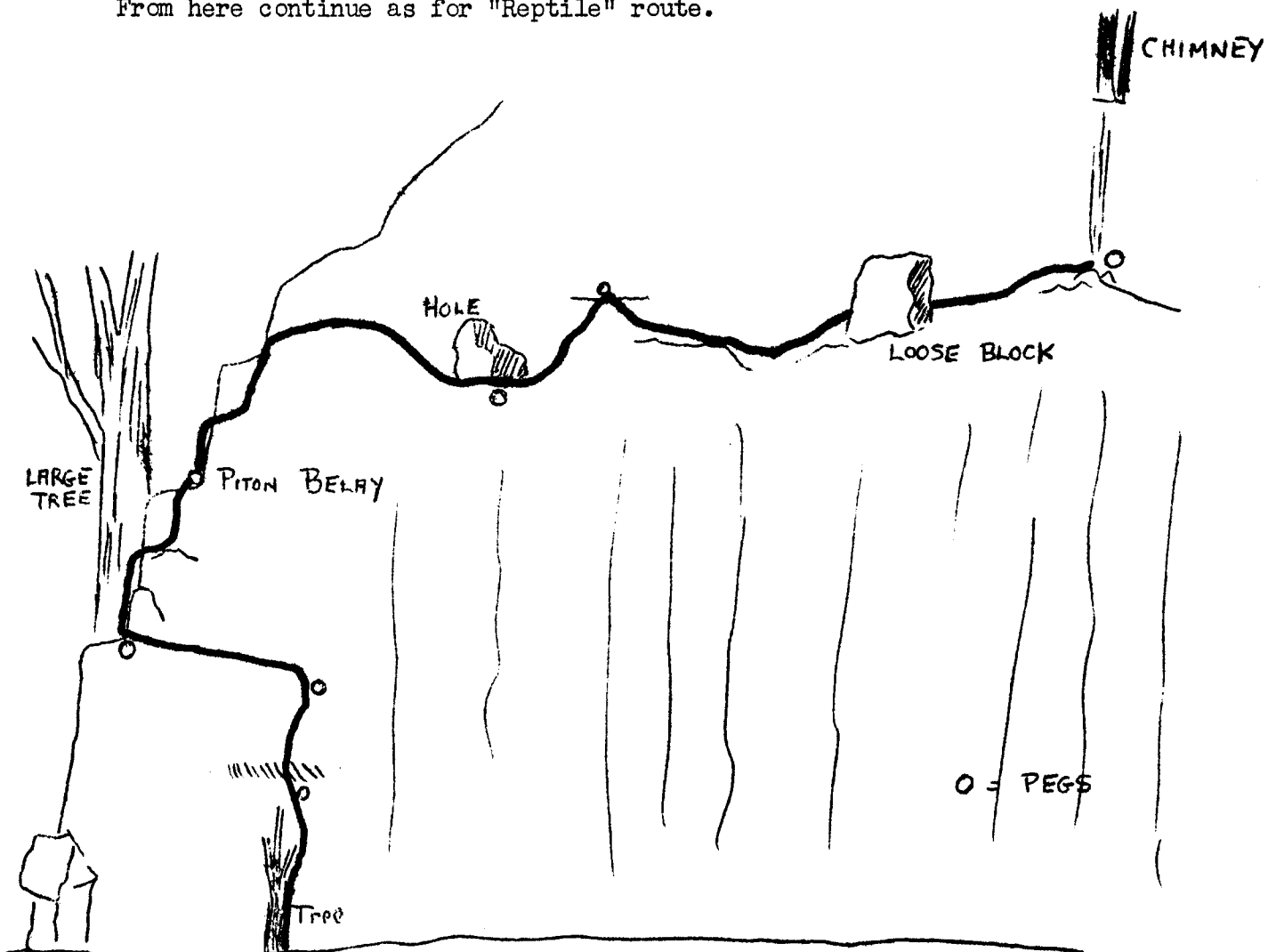
1st. Ascent :- Donn Groom, Bob Fick 13/3/66

This route follows the Eastern edge of the Funnel more closely than "Reptile" which it joins at the Window.

Start :- Straight up from tree about 10ft. to the right from the balancing blocks found on the extreme end of the narrow Eastern ridge of the Funnel

1....50ft....4....Small tree hampers first movements. Straight up 10-12ft. over small holds. Good piton cracks under slight bulge. Continue up until approximately level with first ledge. This ledge is almost invisible whilst on the face but enquiries to second can determine when to start traverse. Peg runner. Traverse left over small foot-holds, this becomes delicate as approach to ledge is made. Straight up right side of wall behind ledge to just below second smaller ledge. Piton belay.

2....70ft....4....Straight up wall behind ledge, then traverse right onto the face. Ascend to edge of flake and determine position of hole (invisible from below) by comparison with first belay point of "Reptile", which is visible from this point. Ascend, tending right, and up until hole is reached. Piton belay at right of hole. From here continue as for "Reptile" route.



THE FUNNEL : "HANGING GARDENS"

Standard :- Hard Difficult - Mild V. Diff.
 1st. Ascent :- J. Tillack, N. Eberhardt 1962

So named because of the vertical wall of orchids, rock and dirt on pitch 1.

Start :- From the very Western end of the Funnel traverse down under the South face for 60 ft. Above you now is the only broken wall on the whole of the South face, and you start on the right hand end of this broken line of rock. The rock is good, but covered in much dirt and orchids.

1....110 ft....3-....Start on vertical wall to extreme right hand side of possibilities. Up over a series of dirty ledges for 15 ft. Peg runner here somewhere. Now traverse right slightly and take a diagonal line for an obvious tree which is atop a vertical column on wall. Belay off tree.

2....95 ft....3+.4- From tree head now more or less straight up, heading for an obvious large tree, above which is a large area of medium sized trees. Up steep, sound rock for 30 ft., to right slightly. You should now be on a ledge below a vertical wall with a peg in it. Runner. Very tricky move up past peg and traverse out horizontally to left around a corner. Second peg runner around here. Now straight up, tricky move or two, to reach obvious large tree. Up and over trunk, which is nearly horizontal and is semi-circular in cross section. Belay off solid tree above and to right of this first tree.

3&4...120 ft....2....Traverse diagonally to right all the time now; through scrub one 15 ft. chocolatey-brown wall to climb. More scrub and loose earth to top of South face. Very dense mass of wattle bush on top. It is advised that if you wish to go on to the summit area to drag the rope behind you, with one end tied to one of the many bushes at the top of the route. This way you will find the start for the way down again.

For the descent, climb back to last belay tree above pitch 2 and do a diagonal abseil off this down to left to a medium tree on a very small ledge projecting over a 50 ft. wall below which there is a spacious, rubbishy ledge and a small bush. 120 ft. abseil.

Now down to small bush. 50 ft. off small bush (use new sling; there will probably be an old one there still) to base of cliff. ~~125 ft.~~ (65 ft.)

