

New routes at the Three Brothers, Flying Fox and Pole 28 areas

Medlow Bath.

Tom Hepner - August 2010

The Three Brothers and Flying Fox crags are long-forgotten trad crags with routes detailed (vaguely) in the 1997 Sydney Rockies Guidebook. Many years later, with the luxury of good quality glue-in bolting and camming devices, some new lines have become possible on these walls, with funky features and good rock making for charismatic climbing. Access is relatively quick and straightforward, and the shorter walls here have a friendly feel with great views and a variety of aspects. The newer Pole 28 area has mainly sport climbs and has grown along two sections of cliff above and below each other. ‘Lower’ Pole 28 is technically part of the old Flying Fox crag. It has the new addition of a fantastic and unique mixed route *Bewilderbeast* (21) in a very atmospheric amphitheatre.

These pages give beta on 6 new routes across these areas, and how to get there.

Access

From the highway turn onto Bellevue Cres, 100m south of the service station at Medlow Bath. Pass Delmonte Ave then before the right hand bend turn left down a rough dirt road, park on Bellevue if your car has low clearance. Follow the dirt road downhill over numerous water-bars, a dry creek crossing filled with river rocks, and note powerlines crossing overhead with a green power-pole on left – you are aiming for the second pole (visible ahead) accessed by steep left-hand turn a little further on with parking under the powerlines. The access road is not great for cars with particularly low clearance, but an average 2WD should manage with careful driving and a few minor scrapes. You can always discreetly park on Bellevue and walk 10 min extra.

Left of the closest power-pole in this parking spot is the start of a very obvious and well manicured track. Walk 150m or less to a fork, then turn left and head downhill 30m or so to a slabby step-down with the Three Brothers pagodas in front of you. The track swings sharp right here another 30m, then just before a sharp left-hand bend take a discreet track with a cairn on the right. After 10 or 15 metres of flat ground a series of switchbacks descend down short ledges (look for cairns) into a broad gully. The track hairpins hard left at a tall white gum and down a tighter gully between two short walls, before opening onto the half-way terrace between the upper and lower cliff-lines. This is the base of the upper descent gully – 5 mins from car.

See overview and detail maps next page >>>

**Brothers K (22) sport
Kalifornication (closed project)**

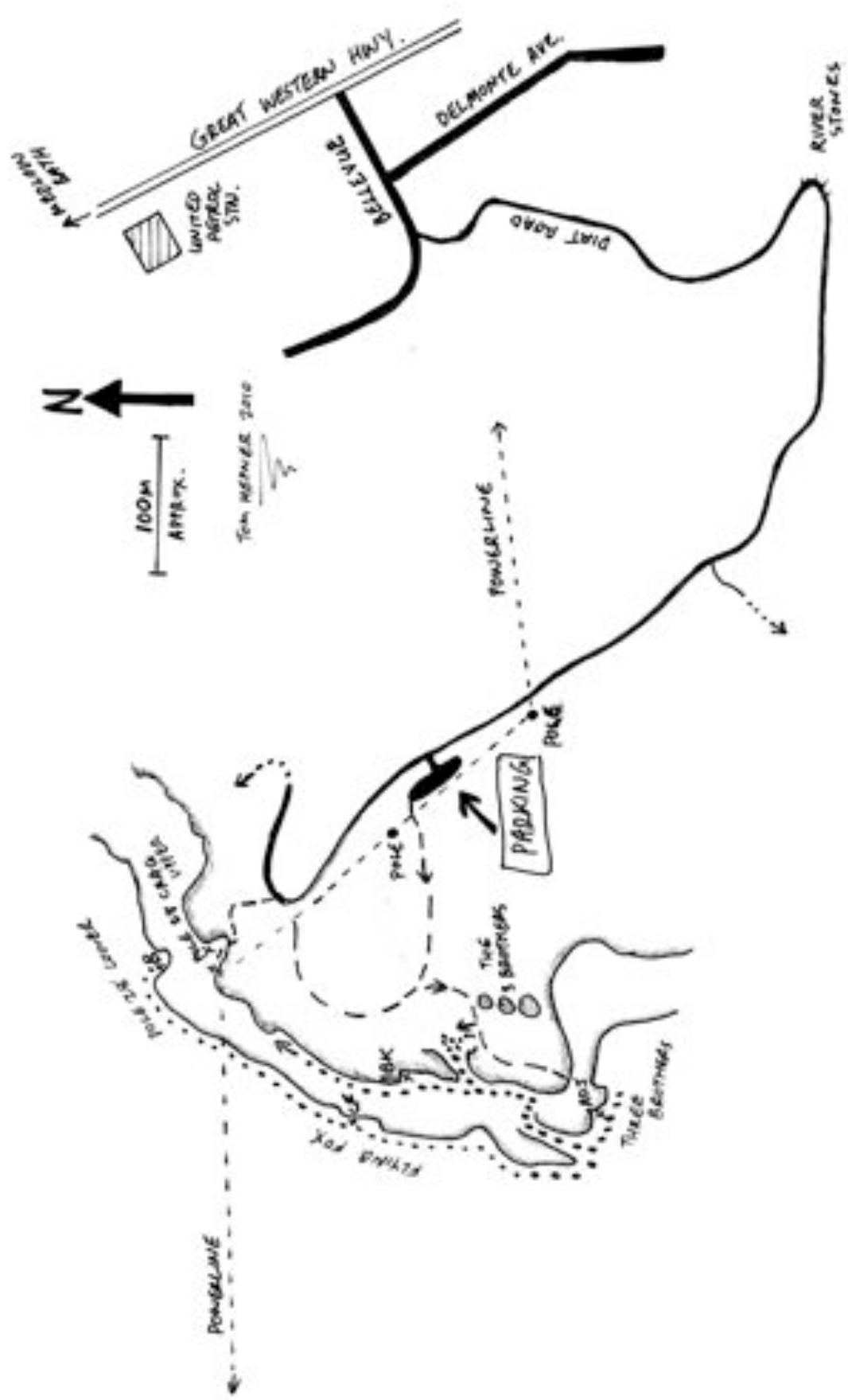
Alfonso Dominico Jones (19) mixed

Crankenfurten (20) sport

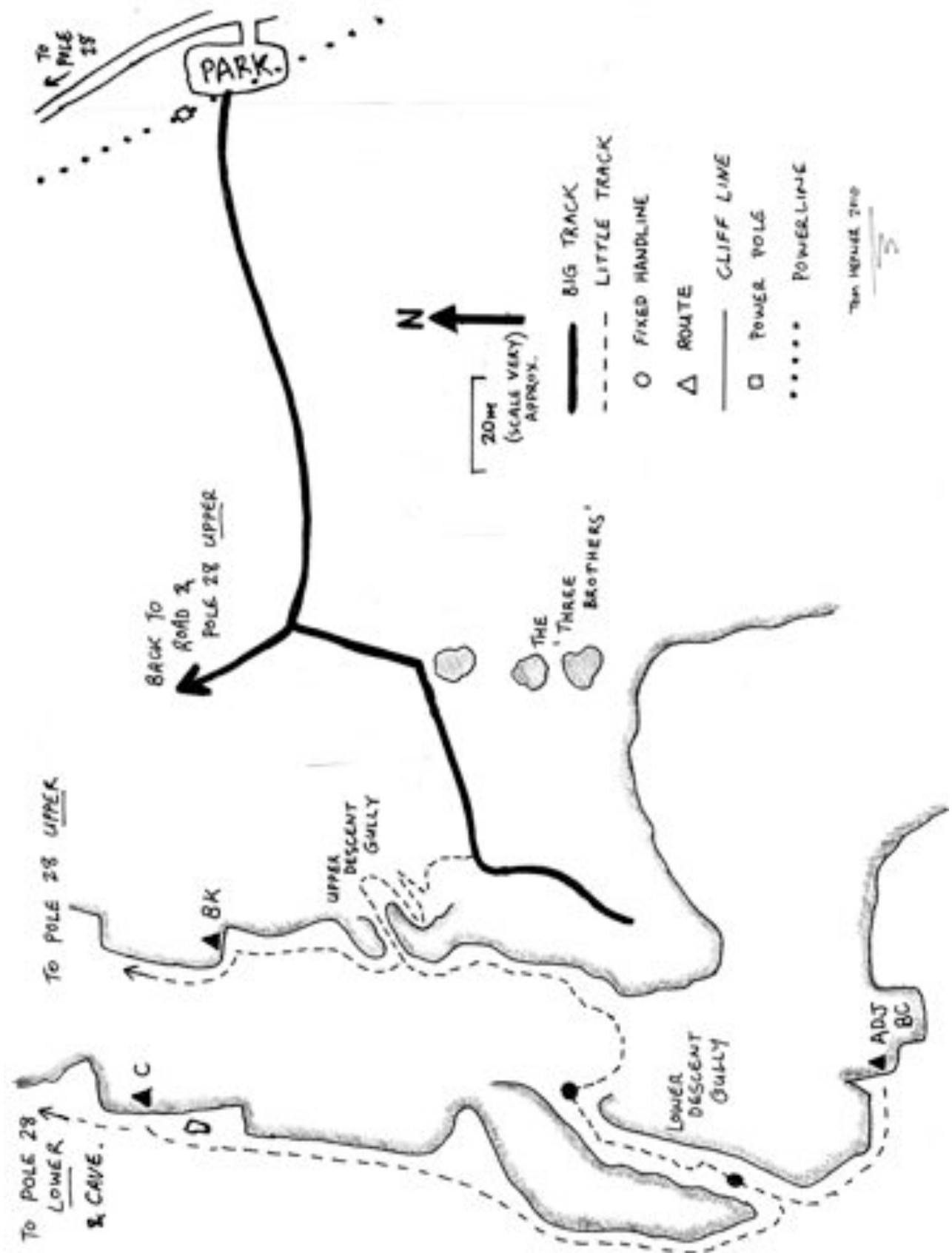
Bewilderbeast (21) mixed ***

**Alpha Male (21) sport
Beta Mail (20) sport**

OVERVIEW MAP



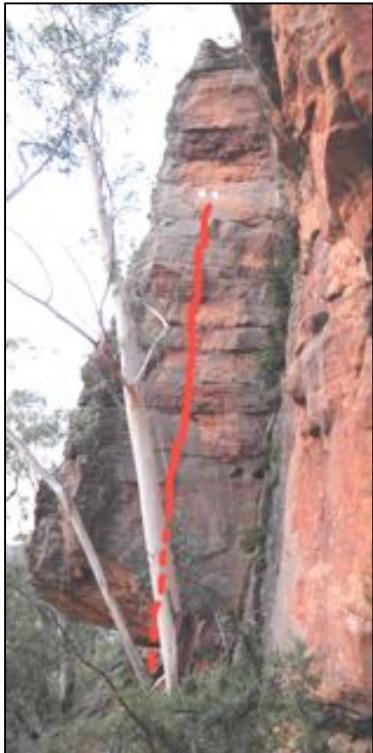
DETAIL MAP



The Three Brothers area

From the base of the upper descent gully there are two routes within 50m to the right. The first one along is a closed project on a steep orange nose. Just past this is *Brothers K* up the centre of a narrow shady wall with an undercut start and a ferny corner to the right.

Kalifornication – closed project. Bolted in freezing Blueys rain and fog just days before migrating to the US and summer climbing, and without enough time for the FA.



Brothers K (22) 18m Sport Route: 5 bolts to lower-off. Named after my Kaminskas kinship, the three brothers.

Stick-clip first bolt for sweet boulder moves through undercut start on good face holds, then pleasant wall climbing on funky features to a thin finish over the bulge.

Tom Hepner, Hannah Hepner, Tom 'T-bor' Thomson. 12/6/10

Brothers K (22)



For the lower cliff, turn left at the bottom of the upper descent gully and follow the wall for 50m or so before heading right through tall grass, left a few metres across a fallen tree, straight downhill ten more metres, then traverse sharp right 20m or so to a large Banksia. There is a fixed hand-line here (and old original chain and spikes) for a short downclimb, then scramble left (facing out) down a short scrubby gully with another short hand-line. This is the bottom of the lower descent gully.



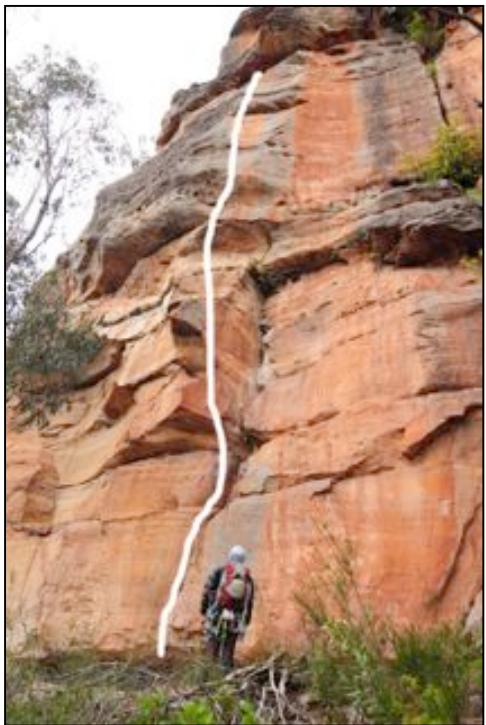
Alfonso Dominico Jones (19) 22m Mixed route: 4 bolts, single set cams (0.3 – 2 Camalot), medium wire or two. Lower-off.

Named after Bucket's charismatic dog in the ABC series *Seachange*. Access from the base of the lower descent gully: follow the cliffline left (south) about 30m past the initials 'RC' (*Red Crack*) and then around to a striking red wall and shady chimney with initials 'BC' (*Blue Chimney*). Starts one metre out from the corner, on the right-hand face at a thin crack, and a few metres left of the white 'BC' initials.

Stem for several metres with smaller cams and a medium wire in a strange slot feature, trend right past 2 bolts and small cam, to ledge (no. 2 Camalot) then nice finish up wall and arête past 2 bolts to lower off.
Tom Hepner. Gavin Oliver seconded. 26/7/10

Flying Fox Area

From the base of the lower descent gully follow the cliff line along to the right (north) for about 100m past undercut black slabs and eventually a tall yellow wall capped by a roof. At the far end of this wall is the blocky orange buttress of *Crankenfurten*.



Crankenfurten (20) 23m Sport Route: 10 bolts to lower-off. A funky and gymnastic route with a thoughtful crux. Starts at a flared groove in the yellow wall.

Up groove for several metres then onto left wall, up through thoughtful blocky bulges on nose (after clipping 6th bolt, unclip 5th for less rope drag) then aesthetic grey & orange face to lower-off.
Tom Hepner. August 2010

Pole 28 Lower / The Cave

The lower Pole 28 area (actually part of the old Flying Fox crag) has a couple of two-pitch Grade 22 sport routes accessed by rappelling off the power-pole atop the cliff, just downhill from the upper area (see *Blue Mountains Climbing* 2010 ed.). Alternatively, access via the directions to Cranefurten but keep following the cliff line around the corner (unknown carrot route through tree on orange face looks sweet) and a few hundred metres further to the two Grade 22 routes of lower Pole 28. Continue past these a short distance and around the corner to a massive amphitheatre with an obvious traverse crack in a smooth steep wall.

Bewilderbeast – Three Stars! Unique positions and varied climbing styles, not to forget the lower-off shenanigans and a cool setting. Awesome cam placements protect a splitter horizontal traverse crack in a smooth overhanging wall as the ground drops away steeply below, then bolts protect where the crack gets too big and the route turns into steep face climbing. First climbed on-sight with only two bolts, placed on lead, before running it out across to the arête and around the corner to a ledge amongst a wonderland of black, slabby blobs (there are two rap-in carrot routes above here that look OK but no details anywhere). When the screw-bolts were replaced with glue-in U's a third bolt was added to protect the end of the traverse and a 4th where the route was given a better finish up the steep face before the arête.

Start on the left where the horizontal splitter leaves a ledge. Reach out and plug in a good no. 2 Camalot before stepping off (take time to make sure it's bomber). The belayer is best to stand 5 metres below you on the ground. Climb confidently the first few metres/placements as a swing into slab would be unpleasant.



Bewilderbeast (21) 20m+ Mixed Route: 4 bolts plus med-large cams (double #2; 3, 4 Camalot). Lower-off.

With first piece placed, launch into a pumpy no-footer hand traverse (no. 3 then no. 4 Camalot) before passing 3 bolts where the crack widens, then a 4th bolt heading straight up the steep wall on crimps to horizontal break (no. 2 Camalot ideal but a no. 1 or 3 would work) and lower-off anchors just left of arête.

FA original line: Tom Hepner, Tom 'T-bor' Thomson. 12/6/10
FA: Tom Hepner. Gavin Oliver seconded. July 2010

Savour the position here and look back at your line – way cool! Wave goodbye to your belayer as you are lowered out of sight, below them and 20m away, to a nice landing down the hill at a burnt fungus-covered log. Watch rope length. Only practical to clean on second.

Pole 28 Upper



Access from base of the Three Brothers upper descent gully - follow the cliff around several hundred metres past *Brothers K*. Otherwise best to walk further down the road from the parking to where the powerlines dive off the cliff. Find a good track down stairs and just past where they end you'll walk under these two new routes on your left. The other Pole 28 routes can be seen opposite, about 30m across the dry drainage (see *Blue Mountains Climbing 2010 ed.*)

Alpha Male (21) 12m Sport Route: 4 bolts to lower-off. The first route on the left, at overhung base of arête. Short but sweet & steep cranking.

Traverse in from right to first bolt on steep nose then up a few pumpy moves to easier scoops on LH face.
Tom Hepner. July 2010

Beta Mail (20) 11m Sport Route: 4 bolts to lower-off. Start a few metres right of the arête and Alpha Male.

Tricky balance move to steep climbing on good holds.
Tom Hepner, Hannah Hepner. July 2010

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