

## Bankhead Buttress (incomplete)

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Banff Rock

This section of cliff is the most extensive of all the buttresses in the long line of cliffs that runs along the base of Cascade Mountain. It reaches a height of ---m and stretches eastward (northward) from the deep gully that separates it from *Mothers Day Buttress* to the long, southeast ridge of Cascade Mountain (*Minnewanka Buttress*) where the cliffs curve around to the north and drop down into *C-Level Cirque*. Most of the climbs were established during the 70's by Chic Scott, Lloyd MacKay and Ken Baker, all of whom were prominent Banff pioneers at that time. They generally follow the more obvious corner systems but a more recent semi-sport route, *Valley View*, ventures out onto sections of blanker rock and indicates an encouraging direction for future development. The most recent addition, *Lipburner*, is a difficult, four pitch semi-sport route that climbs through large roofs at the left end of the cliff.

Some of the early climbs are slowly being fixed up: *Dan's Delight* in particular, and *Ken's Cave* to a lesser extent. Bolted belays now make these climbs much more enjoyable. Farther right, where the cliff becomes more broken, some of the climbs are scrappy and discontinuous and barely worth repeating. *Hiker's Delight* and *L'Dublie (Forget It)*, for example, are included only for completeness, as their route names would suggest!

Overall, the quality of the rock on the buttress is not good. The rock tends to be shattered and loose in places, and the cracks are often shallow, making good gear placement difficult. Consequently, pitons are recommended for the less traveled routes and in addition to being prudent on such a big face, two ropes are necessary for the descent.

**Approach:** The easiest access for all climbs on *Bankhead Buttress* is via the drainage at its west end and a good trail that runs rightwards along the base of the cliff.

Continue past *Mothers Day Buttress* and the turn-off to *Two Jack Lake* on the right to a prominent drainage and a gravel parking area just past it, on the north side of the road. The total distance from the animal grid at the Trans Canada Highway is 1.1 km. Hike up the drainage following a good trail on its east side and continue through an open area to reach the base of the cliffs just right of the deep gully that separates it from *Mothers Day Buttress*. Follow the trail diagonally up and right below the cliffs to where it crosses a small scree gully and climbs the right-hand bank. The diagonal corner system of the first climb, *Valley View*, comes into view at this point and a short distance higher up the trail begins to level off below the cliff. *Valley View* starts at a shallow, low-angled bay leading up to ledges and the other climbs start further right. **Time:** 30 – 40 minutes.

**Descent:** The best descent from the top of the cliff is via a fixed rappel route near the left (west) end, immediately left of *Dan's Delight*. It is marked on the cliff photograph and a close-up view/topo. Unfortunately, there is no cairn or marking tape at the top of the cliff and the start is quite difficult to find from above. Also, the rappels are not continuous and some traversing and down-climbing are required. All in all, it is not in the most user-

friendly state at the present time and some additional work would be worthwhile. Some anchors may be in place further east and dropping down directly to the standard route. No details are available, however, and it is hoped to post updated information on the *tabvar* website. The current rappel route, in its present state, requires two 50 m ropes and takes about 3 hours.

It is also possible to traverse right (east) along the top of the cliff until a walk-off descent can be made via the upper levels of *C-Level Cirque*. After reaching the lake, the hiking trail is followed down the *Upper Bankhead* parking area, a distance of 2.2 km by road from the car. This is an easy and scenic descent (in daylight) which, given the current condition of the rappel route, takes a similar amount of time. It is worth considering for climbs near the eastern end of the cliff or if darkness is imminent.

### **Lipburner 100 m, 5.11d or 5.11a and A0**

*Chris Meyer, 2006*

This modern route climbs steep rock in the lower third of the face giving four pitches of difficult climbing with a rappel descent. It climbs through large roofs where the trail first meets the cliff about 200 m right of the dividing gully. Locate the first bolt on the slab a short distance above the trail.

**Gear:** 10 quick draws and a few long runners; Camelot's, # 0.5, #0.75 and #1; a 70 m rope is useful for rappel or two 60 m ropes.

**1. 35 m, 5.10a.** Climb past 7 bolts to the anchor.

**2. 25 m, 5.10b.** Climb up to the roof past 4 bolts, pull roof 10b up to crack.

Climb this (Camelot's) left to anchor.

**3. 25 m, 5.11d or 5.10b and A0.** Climb/French free headwall for 10 m (crux) to slab, past 2 bolts to 10a move to anchor.

**4. 25 m, 5.11a.** Straight up to horizontal crack (#1 Camelot), traverse right 2m to bolt, over roof 11a to right trending crack (.75 camalot), up this then traverse left under roof to anchor (good cam for second).

**Descent:** All rappels can be done with a single 60 m rope except for pitch 1 to ground which is 35 m. Either leave a rope at the anchor of pitch 1 or 2 (60 m to ground), or use a 70 m rope.



## **Valley View 190 m, 5.9**

*Mark Stewart, June 2001*

### **Topo:**

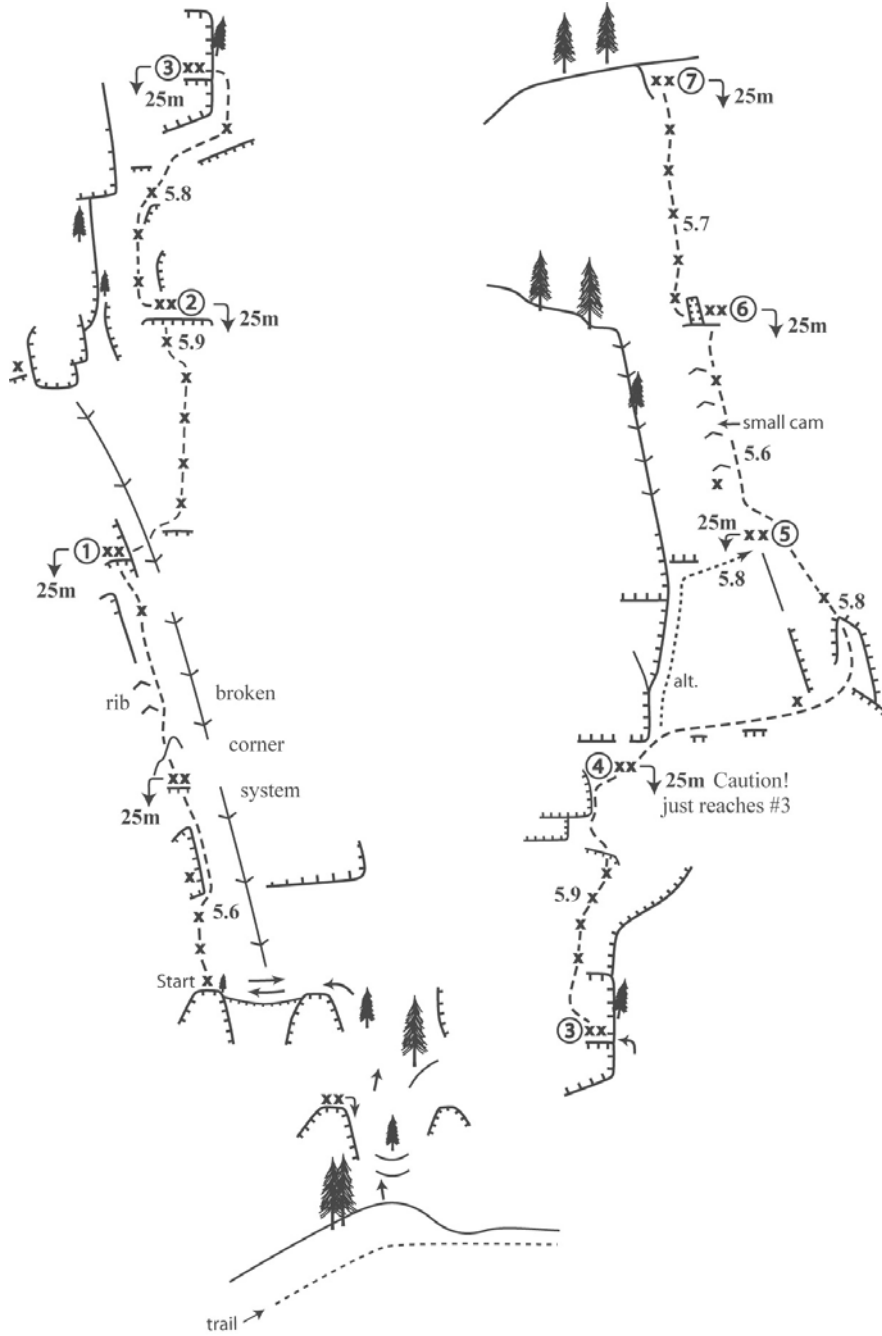
*Valley View* climbs a shallow corner system at the left end of the cliff and ends at a treed, slabby section at about four fifths height. It is basically a sport route, equipped for 25 m rappels, but a small rack and some long slings are required. A few cams to 2 in and some wired nuts to #7 are more than sufficient. The climb generally follows the line of least resistance up the corner system and there are short sections of steeper, well-protected climbing. The views are good and overall it is an enjoyable route with some good climbing. It makes a good introductory route and is the only climb on *Bankhead Buttress* with an easy descent. The slabby wall to the right of the corner system has large sections of interesting rock and perhaps a similar, but more continuous, bolt-protected route could be established here.

**Start:** The climb starts in a shallow, low-angled bay where the access trail climbs steeply and begins to level off (see *Approach* above). A large corner system with yellow roofs is visible up and to the left. Scramble easily up the left side of the bay to a rappel station and continue to a higher ledge system that leads over to the left. Traverse across to a single bolt belay at a small promontory on the left side of the corner system.

- 1. 40m, 5.6.** Climb the slab past 2 bolts to a small, right-facing corner. Go up this to easier ground and a rappel station. Continue straight up passing a single bolt higher up to a second station.
- 2. 25m, 5.9.** Move up and then right across the corner system to a ledge on the right wall (bolt). Climb the face above on excellent, gray rock making a steep move near the top to reach a station at a ledge.
- 3. 25m, 5.8.** Move left towards a large, broken corner and then go up past bolts to a short corner. Move up into the corner and then step left to a bolted station on the rib.
- 4. 25m, 5.9.** Move left and climb the rib to a bolt. Sustained climbing past 3 more bolts leads up and then diagonally right to easier ground. Move left into a right-facing corner system and go up this to a station on the right.
- 5. 25m, 5.8.** Make a long traverse right across the slab to a small alcove and then climb a small, right-facing corner to a hanging station. Alternatively, climb the corner directly above the belay until an awkward traverse right can be made around a rib to reach the station.
- 6. 50m, 5.7.** Move left and climb the rib to a bolted station at a flake below a slab. Good climbing up the slab past 5 bolts leads to the final bolted station.

**Descent:** The climb is rigged for 25 m rappels but a single 60 m rope is recommended for safety in reaching some of the stations. The rappel from station #4 to station #3 is exactly 25 m with only a hand-width of rope to spare! (see topo). Note that this rappel route cannot be used for descent from other routes on the buttress since there is no access from the top of the cliff.

# Valley View Topo:



## **Dan's Delight 410 m, 5.6**

*Lloyd MacKay and Dan Ish, 1971*

This classic route has been improved recently by the addition of bolted belay stations and some protection bolts. Route finding is now relatively straight-forward and the climb is better protected. Currently, the long corner on pitch 4 has no bolts and this makes the climb a little serious for its grade. There are fixed rappel stations up to the top of pitch nine and the climb may be ended at this point - two ropes are required to rappel.

However, the long traverse right below the summit overhangs and the satisfaction of getting to the top make the complete climb worth doing. Descent from the top is time-consuming however; less experienced parties and those unfamiliar with the descent are cautioned to start early and be prepared to turn around at the top of pitch 9.

The line described here and marked on the topo is actually the direct start which is now the recommended way of doing the route. The original climb began further right and followed a left-slanting series of corners and ramps that joins the route described below partway up pitch 6. Both starts are marked on the crag photograph (**specify**) but only the direct is described.

According to Lloyd MacKay "It was Dan's second climb and he thoroughly enjoyed it." Much of the climbing is easy or bolt-protected and a fairly small rack, to 2 in, is sufficient. Reasonable gear placement skills are required, however, particularly on pitch 4 where currently there are no bolts in the corner. Note that most rappels are 30 m but two ropes are required for pitch 4 which is 40 m in length.

**Start:** After climbing steeply up to the start of *Valley View*, the trail rises slowly along the base of the cliff, and on the far skyline, about 400 m further right, there is a ridge in the scree slope. *Dan's Delight* starts just beyond this, about 30 m to the right of a shallow drainage. A small cairn usually marks the start, at the base of the first, slabby wall. From the road, the line may be identified by a large, downward-pointing v-shape in the upper band of overhangs. The route climbs directly to the low point of the overhangs and then traverses right to gain the top.

**1. 25m, 5.6.** Climb straight up the slab passing the bolt on its left side to easy ground and a second bolt directly above. Traverse easily left and move up to a bolt belay below a diagonal overhang.

**2. 30m, 5.5.** Climb the slab up and right below the overhang to a bolt and then go up the corner directly above to a belay on the right.

**3. 25m, 5.5.** Move up and left to a bolt at the base of an obvious, open corner. Climb the left wall of the corner on good holds past a second bolt and then angle up left to a belay on the edge.

**4. 40m, 5.6.** Climb up and right to the left side of a large overhang. Move up left into a long, left-facing corner and go up this, staying on the left wall at first, until an exit right can be made to easy ground. The corner is not easy to protect and the addition of a few bolts seems warranted for a climb of this grade. Move up to a bolt on the rib on the left and then continue left across a slabby face past a second bolt to the station.

**5. 20m, 5.4.** Climb water-worn rock on the left to ledges. Move up and right, and then go back left to the next station.

**6. 30m, 5.5.** Move right and climb up to a bolt in a short wall. Steep moves up the wall lead to easier ground on the right. Ignore an interesting corner directly above and move right into a major, right-facing corner. Climb this easily to a station on the left.

**7 & 8. 50m, 5.5.** Move up and then right to regain the corner system and go up this to a rappel station on the right wall. Either belay here or continue to the next station about thirty metres higher.

**9. 30m, 5.6.** Climb the continuation corner on the right to its top and then head up and right on easy ground to the last ring-bolted station. A long, diagonal line of huge overhangs blocks the way above but an obvious traverse line leads rightwards beneath them to where they end. This marks the point of no return: four pitches of relatively straight-forward climbing lead to the top, or a series of fixed rappel stations provide a speedy descent to the base.

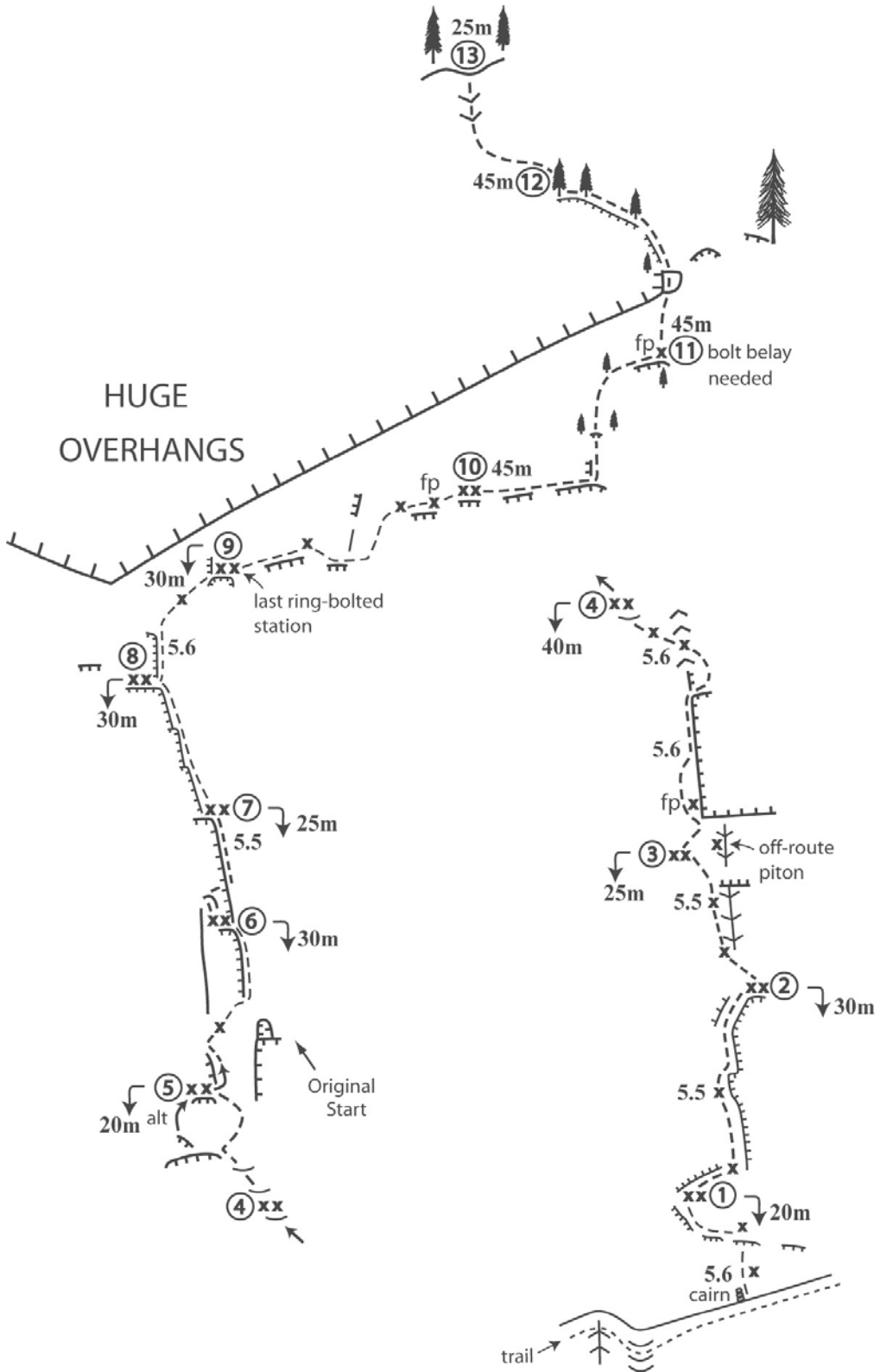
**10. 45m, 5.5.** Follow the traverse line to a bolt and continue right, moving down to ledges below a small corner. Climb diagonally right across the wall to a bolt and then continue easily rightwards to a bolted station.

**11. 45m, 5.4.** Traverse right along ledges to a short, right-facing corner and go up this to easy ground. Move up and right to sloping ledges below the far end of the overhangs. There is a single piton belay low down on the right (bolt belay needed).

**12. 45m, 5.4.** Move up to the end of the overhangs and climb a small slab to a broken wall. Go up this and then follow an easy, treed ramp up left to a tree belay.

**13. 25m, 5.4.** Traverse left of broken rock to gain a groove that leads to the top.

# Dan's Delight Topo:





## **Ken's Cave 430 m, 5.7/8**

*Lloyd MacKay and Ken Baker, 1971*

About 200 m right of *Dan's Delight*, just beyond the second of two major ridges in the scree slope, a large drainage runs cuts into the hillside forming a U-shaped bowl below the cliff. *Ken's Cave* climbs a prominent, right-facing corner system directly above the drainage.

The climb has had a number of repeat ascents and it is reported to be quite good. Bolts have been added to the lower part but currently the final pitches are in their original condition.

- 1. 40 m, 5.4.** Scramble up and right towards a small tree on the right-hand side of two large grooves. Belay at a bolted station below and left of the tree.
- 2. 60 m, 5.7.** Follow the easy groove above until it arches left and there is a bolt on the steep right wall. Climb the wall past a second bolt a little higher into a big groove leading up to a large, yellow roof. Go up the groove until it is possible to traverse left past a bolt to a ledge, and then go up past two more bolts to a large, exposed ledge and two-bolt belay, left of the large roof.
- 2 alt. 60 m, 5.6.** Instead of moving right and climbing the steep wall into the right-hand groove, move left below the arching corner and go up into the left-hand groove. Climb the groove passing a bolt higher up and move right to the belay station.
- 3. 50 m, 5.4.** Follow the obvious weakness left and up to an intermediate, bolted station at a ledge. Continue up past a bolt and a short chimney to a tree and two-bolt belay at the entrance to Ken's Cave.
- 4. 50 m, 5.7.** Step right and make a few tricky moves up to gain a crack. Follow the crack to a piton at an overlap and move right and up into the obvious inside corner above. Climb up to a large roof, move out right beneath it and go up to a two-bolt station 10 m higher, in the left-hand of two grooves.
- 5. 50 m, 5.7.** The corner above starts out easily and then gradually steepens to a difficult bulge/slot. Climb through this an belay in an alcove about 5 m higher.
- 6. 40 m, 5.3.** Continue easily up the corner to a wonderful hanging garden formed by seepage from below the big upper roof. An easier, left-hand exit is possible at this point and was probably the route taken on the first ascent. No details are available, however, and the line marked on the photograph is approximate. For the right-hand exit, as shown on the topo, continue up through the hanging garden (tread carefully) and belay directly below the big roof.
- 7. 50 m, 5.8.** There are two ways of climbing the next pitch which is currently the most difficult on the route. Traverse right and up slightly for about 8 m across the low-angle face to a piton and the go straight up to the roof. Traverse right again across the base of a smooth slab and then climb its right edge to a piton at the base of an inside corner. There is another piton about 2m higher in the small corner on the left. Climb left past the second piton onto a rib and then makes up a few difficult moves up (5.8R) to easy ground. Belay at the base of a large blocky roof. Alternatively, from the topo in Murray Toft original Banff guidebook, it may be possible to climb through the roof above the first piton into a large, right-facing corner which goes up to the seventh belay. This is marked on the accompanying topo but has not been verified and caution is advised.

**8. 50 m, 5.4.** Move left and go up to easy ground which leads further left to an obvious exit corner.

**9. 40 m, 5.2.** Climb the easy corner to the top.



**Lost 35 410 m, 5.7**

*Lloyd MacKay and Ken Baker, 1971*

About 125 m right of *Ken's Cave* and just beyond the first tree-covered rib, there is a large, left-facing, orange corner/overhang at the base of the cliff. The route starts about 30 m left of this feature, climbs up towards a large triangular roof near the top and exits on its right-hand side. Few details are available except that the rock is quite broken and the route may be varied somewhat. It was not recommended by the first ascent party and probably has not been repeated. The name refers to a 35 mm camera that was lost from near the top of the climb. Note that the line marked on the photograph is approximate and the route appears to join *Head Jam*, the next route to the right, near the top.

**Head Jam 410 m, 5.6**

*Lloyd MacKay and Ken Baker, 1971*

The climb follows a large, right-facing corner system about 125 m right of *Ken's Cave*. It has not been repeated very often and there is little fixed gear. However, it is reported to be quite good and probably deserves more attention – despite its unappealing name. Continue past *Ken's Cave* for about 125 m to a tree-covered rib and then cross a small drainage to a second, tree-covered rib. The large, upper corner system climbed by the route is visible directly overhead and at the base of the cliff there is prominent, left-facing, orange corner/overhang that arches over to the left. Start about 7 m right of the corner/overhang.