

THE RUNES

The Runes are three relatively small buttresses separated by deep gullies and situated between Frodo and Bilbo buttresses. They are numbered from left to right. Climbs on the third buttress are particularly good as the rock is well-weathered and generally gives solid, technical climbing. The whole Rune area has the best selection of short, good-quality climbs and as noted in the introduction to CMC Valley, it is a popular location for early season climbing.

Approach

The Runes are among the easiest of all the CMC Valley crags to access. The more easterly of two broad "valleys" leads directly to the cliffs. A small but obvious trail goes up from the overgrown road near the creek to an open area below the cliffs. See the introduction for details.

R. Amann & party, 1982

Eulogy climbs a steep crack in the left wall of the gully between the First and Second runes. If loose rock is removed it may be possible to free climb the crack making it an impressive pitch.

Start where the gully necks down at the top of a grassy slope.

- 1) 30 m Climb easy gray rock to a bushy ledge belay below the corner.
- 2) 50 m Climb the corner (mixed free and aid).

Alternate: D. Guthrie & J. Buszowski, May 1985

This worthwhile route goes up an obvious corner/chimney that splits the upper half of the buttress. The first pitch is surprisingly sustained, but can be adequately protected by pitons that at present are not in place.

Start Located on the front of the Second Rune and just right of a group of trees is a series of parallel grooves. Double Direct takes the right-hand one directly below the obvious upper corner.

- 1) 35 m, 5.7 Climb the wall trending slightly right to a small ledge. Move up and left to a short corner, and continue up to a small ledge at the base of the upper corner.
- 1 alt.) 35 m, 5.9 Climb a short, overhanging corner just around the left edge of the buttress in the gully. Continue up easier ground to a belay and then move right to join the normal route.
- 2) 30 m, 5.6 Climb the corner to a steep wall, move right and then climb up to a belay in the chimney.
- 3) 30 m, 5.4 Climb the chimney to large ledges.

Descent Scramble up to a level portion of the buttress, traverse off right and descend the gully.

Brown Oaf 90 m, 5.7

B. Greenwood & J. Jones, April 1973

Start by a second group of trees uphill and about 15 m right of Double Direct just at the entrance to the next big gully.

- 1) 45 m, 5.7 Climb up a good-looking yet run-out gray wall and then diagonal left across the steep face to a short V-groove. Climb this and the easier face above to a belay on the slabs below a break in the roofs.
- 2) 45 m Either climb directly through the roofs (5.9) or cross them at a smaller break on the right (5.7). Continue more easily to the arete and follow this to a level section.

Descent Traverse off right and descend the gully.

On the left side of the buttress, a prominent water groove separates a smaller cliff from the

Snakecharmer could benefit from the replacement of old piton runners with bolts, particularly the latter, which is fairly run-out.

Descent from Weed From the top of Weed climb down a short distance to a small scree bowl on the left (west) side of the buttress. Descend the scree to the edge of the gully and rappel from two bolts (one 45 m rope is sufficient).

Descent via the Main Descent Gully Climbs on the right-hand side of the buttress use this descent that is described in detail in the Runewall section.

Loosey Goosy 5.6

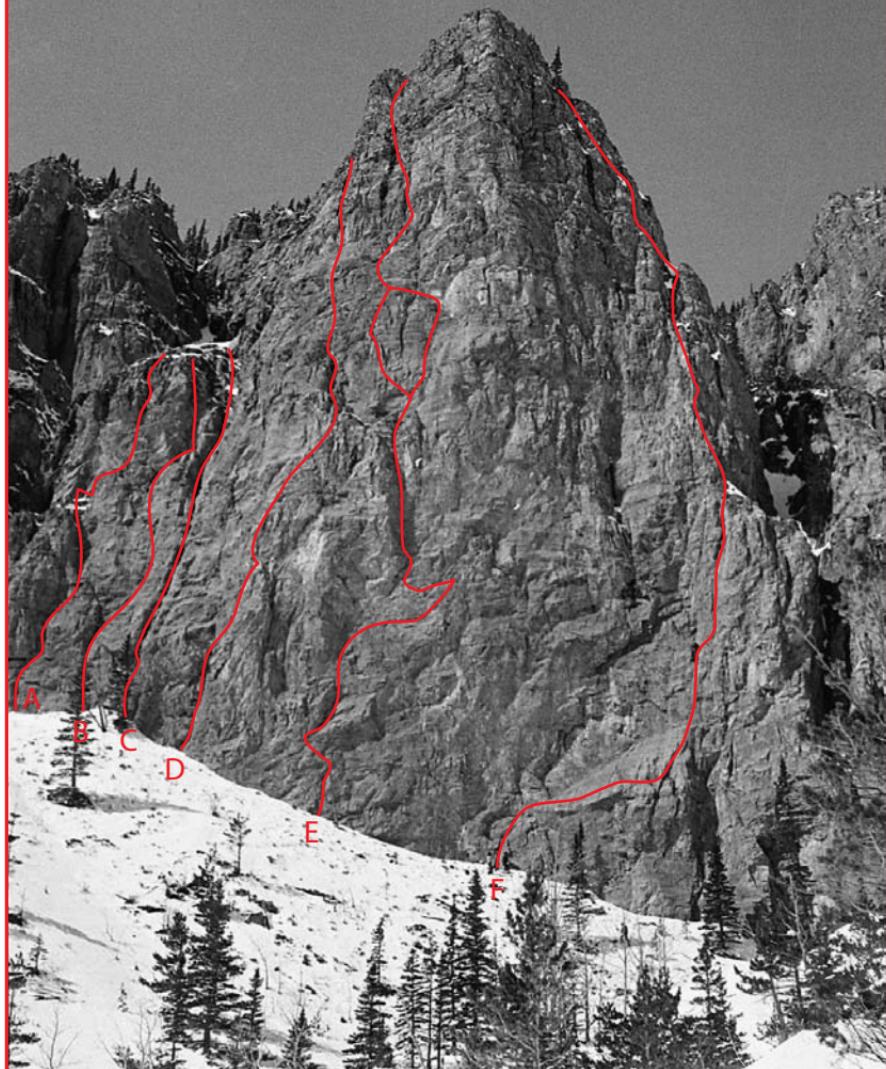
J. Elzinga & J. Martin, 1978

This uninspired route climbs the short crack in the gully wall, just left of the Weed descent route.

Shirtlifter* 60 m, 5.7

J. Jones & S. Slymon, March 1973

Start below a right-facing corner just right of the edge of the Rune and about 10 m left of



Third Rune

- | | | | |
|---|--------------|---|---------------------|
| A | Shirtlifter | D | Chingle |
| B | Snakecharmer | E | Hurricane Holocaust |
| C | Weed | F | Route 3 |

Weed.

- 1) 30 m, 5.7 Climb the corner past a bulge and continue to a large ledge on the left.
- 2) 30 m, 5.7 Move right and climb the steep face via an obvious break to large ledges.

Snakecharmer* 60 m, 5.8

J. Horne, J. Jones & R. Amann, March 1973

This interesting but fairly run-out route follows a sinuous line between Shirtlifter and Weed.

Start at a thin crack a few metres left of Weed.

- 1) 30 m, 5.8 Climb the crack to a corner below a bulge, place a runner as high as possible, and move right up a steep slab to a shallow groove just to the left of Weed. Continue up the face trending slightly left to a belay in a groove below overhangs.
- 2) 30 m, 5.7 Climb the groove and move right to the edge overlooking Weed. Continue up the steep corner above to large ledges.

Weed** 60 m, 5.6

J. Jones & S. Slymon, March 1971

This excellent gear route follows the prominent water groove. The rock is good and the climbing is continuously interesting.

Start below and left of the groove, just left of a large tree.

- 1) 30 m, 5.6 Climb the short lower wall to a bay below the groove. Continue up the groove and belay below the upper bulge.
- 2) 30 m, 5.6 Continue past a bulge (crux) to ledges on the left side of the buttress.

Chingle* 100 m, 5.8

B. Greenwood & J. Jones, October 1971

Chingle is a good face climb, with only one hard section, that follows the edge of the main buttress to the right of Weed. The climb deserves some attention and perhaps as a minimum, the piton that protects the crux could be replaced with a bolt.

Start about 7 m right of Weed at a steep corner to the right of a large tree.

- 1) 45 m, 5.8 Climb the corner to a ledge and continue up a crack on the right to a block. From the top of the block (piton), move left and climb the wall (crux) to small ledges. Continue up and right to a ledge at the base of a hidden corner.
- 2) 10 m Climb the corner to a flat ledge below the upper wall.
- 3) 45 m Climb out left over a bulge and continue up good gray rock to a groove near the top. Climb the groove to a large ledge.

Descent Either continue easily to the top of the buttress or traverse left on good ledges to scree slopes above Weed and descend as for that route. From the top of the buttress, the Main Descent Gully can be reached by scrambling down the east side and crossing a smaller gully

above Grumbit.

Hurricane Holocaust 125 m, 5.9+**

J. Lauchlan & B. Keller, 1975

This milestone route was established in the traditional ground-up style of the day, with no bolts being used for protection. The climbing is steep and sustained, and is probably closer to 5.10a in technical difficulty. Protection on the first and fourth pitches is barely adequate and in its present condition the climb is a serious undertaking. The climb can be done without pitons but a small selection is recommended.

Start below the highest point of the buttress, by a dead tree about 30 m right of Weed.

- 1) 35 m, 5.9 Climb a shallow groove to an overhang (piton) and move up left with difficulty to a short corner. Climb this and the wall above to another corner (piton), and then traverse right to a small slab beneath an overhang. Cross the slab to easier ground on the right and move up to a bolt belay.
- 2) 30 m, 5.8 Move back down to the left and traverse left to the foot of a prominent corner (piton). Climb the corner (piton) to a ledge and belay on the right below a crack.
- 3) 30 m, 5.9 Climb a short distance up the crack and traverse left onto the face. Move diagonally left to easier ground and continue directly up the face past a fixed piton to a small ledge, with two bolts, below and left of the final groove.
- 3 alt.) 30 m, 5.9 Climb farther up the crack to a small overhang (fixed piton) and then traverse left across steep rock to a V-groove. Move down and traverse left to join the original pitch.
- 4) 30 m, 5.9+ Move right and then up into the groove. Climb this with difficulty (poor protection) and then move left near the top to a ledge. A better alternative is to traverse left from the base of the groove for a few metres to a flake line that diagonals rightward up the steep wall. Follow this (Friend placement) to the large ledge.

Descent as for Chingle.

Route 3 125 m, 5.9

J. Firth & J. Jones, April 1973

Fifteen metres right of Hurricane Holocaust is a large gray slab a short distance above the ground. The route traverses across the slab and climbs a shallow corner to the right edge of the buttress,

which is then followed to the top. The route was done before the era of bolt protection and more direct route(s) should be possible up this promising piece of rock.

Start below the lower, left corner of the slab.

- 1) 40 m, 5.8 Move up onto the slab and cross it low down to its right side. Climb a short wall to a groove and continue up this to a small ledge on the left.
 - 2) 25 m, 5.9 Traverse right to a blind crack that leads up with difficulty to ledges on the arete.
- 3-4) Continue more easily up the edge of the buttress.

Descent From the top of the buttress, the Main Descent Gully can be reached by scrambling down the east side and crossing a smaller gully above Grumbit.

Grumbit 45 m, 5.7

R. Amann, J. Lauchlan & G. Jennings, March 1974

This short face climb is situated a few metres to the left of the Main Descent Gully. It begins at a small pillar and angles up left to a chimney. The addition of one or two bolts to the first pitch is probably justified as it is quite serious for its grade.

Start at the small pillar.

- 1) 20 m, 5.7 Climb to the top of the pillar and continue up left to a scoop that leads to the base of the chimney.
- 2) 25 m Continue easily up the chimney.

Descent By rappel or by moving east into the Main Descent Gully.

Cold War 45 m, 5.7

S. Jennings & C. Perry, March 1974

This route starts at the same point as Grumbit and climbs the edge of the buttress between that route and the descent gully.

- 1) 45 m, 5.7 Climb to the top of the pillar and move up right to a thin crack near the edge. Climb over an overlap to a left-facing crack and continue to the top of the pinnacle overlooking the descent gully. Move right and follow a ramp to the top. Alternatively, go left from above the left-facing crack and climb the front face via a break in the bulges.

Descent Gully Area

The following climbs are located in the upper part of the Main Descent Gully, above the lower cliff.

Whore's Heart 40 m, 5.7

J. Lauchlan & J. Martin, April 1974

A short distance above the small cliff at the base of the descent gully are two shallow corners in the left wall. Whore's Heart climbs the left-hand of these.

Something Somewhere 15 m, 5.7

J. Lauchlan, P. Merkley, M. Sawyer, J. Sterner & D. Wightt, 1974

Farther up the Main Descent Gully, where it starts to widen out and bend round to the right, is a small pinnacle, to the right of which is a short wall of good gray rock. Several climbs are located on this wall. Descent is to the left down the left-hand branch of the gully.

Something Somewhere is a short but interesting route that climbs a steep corner in a bay at the left end of the wall.

Window of Opportunity 25 m, 5.8

G. Macrae & G. Cornell, September, 1997

On the gray wall about 12 m right of the corner of Something Somewhere is an obvious L-shaped roof. The route goes up white rock beneath the roof, continues over the right side of the roof, and then moves slightly left up slabs to the top. Both the rock and protection are reported to be good.

Shark Breath 25 m, 5.6

G. Cornell & G. Macrae, September, 1997

A few metres up the slope to the right of the previous route is a small vertical rock fin. The climb goes over a bulge immediately left of the fin and continues up a slab to finish just left of a small chimney.

Lost Rune 150 m, 5.6

J. Martin, G. Mathew & J. Tanner, 1974

Up and to the right of the previous route is a long pillar with a broad, clean wall at its base. The route climbs the wall (5.6) and continues up a series of easier pitches on the crest of the pillar.

The Runewall

The Runewall is essentially the West or Southwest Face of Bilbo Buttress and is separated from The Runes by the Main Descent Gully. It has a large scree cone just right of centre, above which is a prominent corner climbed by Watchman's Crack. Many of the unstarred routes are on poor rock and are quite scrappy, but there are a number of areas of good rock, some of which have yet to be developed.

Approach

Along with The Runes, The Runewall is among the easiest of all the CMC Valley crags to access and the same approach is used.

Main Descent Gully

All the routes on The Runewall descend this gully. Follow scree and easy slabs west into the main gully between the Third Rune and Runewall. The gully itself is straightforward and usually has several logs to climb down on the short wall at the bottom.

Groundfall Wall* 25 m, 5.10b

J. Lauchlan, B. Keller & M. Keller, 1975

This short, poorly-protected route climbs a short wall of good rock immediately right of the Descent Gully. It was originally climbed in bold, ground-up style and together with Hurricane Holocaust was part of the evolutionary process that lead to the use of bolts on The Maker. Now, it seems like a relic of a bygone age that could seriously benefit from a retrofit.

Start about 5 m right of the descent gully at good holds below and left of two fixed pitons close together.

- 1) 25 m, 5.10b Climb up a short distance and then traverse right to below the pitons. Continue more or less directly up the wall past a third fixed piton to finish on the edge of the buttress.

Descent Either go left into the Descent Gully or traverse to the belay on Edna's Armpit and rappel.

Edna's Armpit* 50 m, 5.7

J. Lauchlan & R. Amann, April 1973

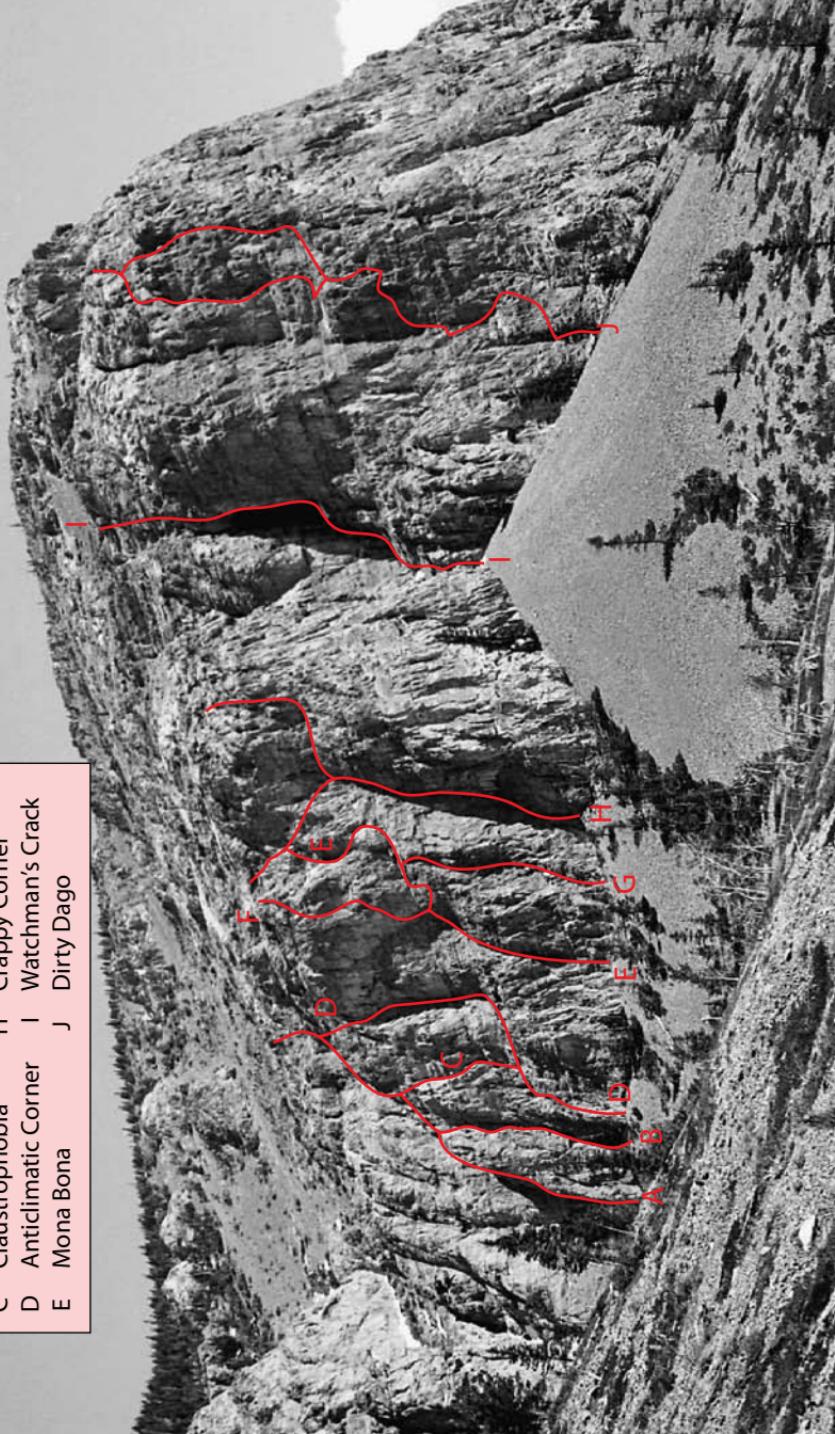
On the right edge of Groundfall Wall is a shallow corner and right again is a chimney. Edna's Armpit follows the corner and gives one pitch of good technical climbing that can be adequately protected with gear.

- 1) 30 m, 5.7 Climb the corner to a small ledge in a scoop (fixed belay).
- 2) 20 m Either rappel or scramble up loose easy rock to the top.

The Skoope 60 m, 5.7

Runewall

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| A Skoope Buttress | F Rubble Rouser |
| B The Morning After | G Mona Bona Erect |
| C Claustrophobia | H Crappy Corner |
| D Anticlimatic Corner | I Watchman's Crack |
| E Mona Bona | J Dirty Dago |



J. Lauchlan & R. Lefurgey, August 1971

This route follows the chimney just right of Edna's Armpit.

- 1) 20 m Climb the chimney and belay a few metres above a chockstone.
- 2) 40 m Continue up into a scoop and either climb a smooth ramp on the left (5.7) or exit right up a chimney that leads to the ridge.

Skoope Buttress 75 m, 5.6

J. Lauchlan & J. Sterner, April 1974

A small buttress forms the right side of the chimney and higher up turns into an easy ridge. The climb starts in a shallow corner on the right edge of the buttress.

- 1) 35 m Climb the corner, move left and continue up the buttress to an easier angled section.
- 2) 40 m Continue up the ridge to the top.

The Morning After 75 m, 5.6

J. Lauchlan & J. Sterner, April 1974

This climbs a broad grassy corner 5 m right of Skoope Buttress and joins it at about half height.

Claustrophobia 70 m, 5.5

J. Sterner, D. Zaychuk, J. Martin & J. Tanner, April 1974

To the right of The Morning After is a large sloping ledge at about one-third height.

Start below the lower, left end of the ledge.

- 1) 20 m Scramble up to the ledge and move right a short distance to belay.
- 2) 30 m Move back left and climb the corner, which becomes a tight squeeze at the top.
- 3) 20 m Continue as for Skoope Buttress.

Anticlimatic Corner 65 m, 5.7

J. Lauchlan & J. Sterner, April 1974

This climbs a corner at the right end of the ledge of Claustrophobia.

- 1) 30 m Scramble up to the right end of the ledge and belay at the foot of the corner.
- 2) 40 m Climb the corner, staying on the right at first.

Mona Bona* 70 m, 5.6

C. Perry & P. Merkley, April 1974

About 20 m right of Claustrophobia and Anticlimatic Corner is a small corner with a thin crack in the wall above.

- 1) 40 m, 5.6 Climb the corner to an easier-angled section. Move up and traverse right below a steep yellow wall to reach a smooth, sloping ledge (bolt belay).
- 2) 15 m, 5.6 Traverse right onto the steep wall overlooking Crappy Corner, move up with difficulty and continue up left to a stance.
- 3) 15 m Scramble up to the top.

Rubble Rouser 60 m, 5.9, A1

J. Lauchlan & J. Firth, April 1974

This is a direct finish to Mona Bona.

- 1) 30 m Climb the first part of Mona Bona and belay below the continuation crack in the steep yellow wall.
- 2) 30 m Climb the crack on its left side using mixed free and aid. Where the crack peters out, hand traverse right and climb up to a small ledge. Follow the steep wall and jamcrack to the top.

Mona Bona Erect 35 m, 5.7

P. Merkley, M. Sawyer & D. Wightt, April 1974

This climbs a broad, gray corner that leads directly to the belay at the top of pitch 1 of Mona Bona. Good natural protection is difficult to arrange. Start just right of two dead trees and left of the larger Crappy Corner.

Crappy Corner 60 m, 5.7

G. Homer & J. Jones, April 1971

Immediately right of Mona Bona Erect is a prominent open book.

- 1) 35 m, 5.7 Climb the corner to shattered ledges.
- 2) Exit to the left or the right.

Watchman's Crack 60 m, 5.5

J. Keunzel & F. Williamson, May 1971

Start at the base of the gully right of Crappy Corner at the top of a large scree cone. Follow the gully for two pitches exiting up the right-hand chimney.

Dirty Dago** 95 m, 5.9

G. Homer & J. Jones, April 1971

Pitch 3 alt.: C. Perry & J. Martin, July 1982

Located to the right of Watchman's Crack, before the edge of the buttress, is a steep, open corner. This is climbed by Dirty Dago—one of the best of the older climbs. Originally graded 5.8 by an insistent Jon Jones, it was frequently used as a yardstick for that grade, which accounts for some of the grading sandbags in the area. The main corner line is not followed all the way and this may make an interesting modern route. A direct start to the right-hand finish may be worthwhile up a sweep of steep and possibly good rock.

The climb has little fixed gear and is difficult to protect well. At present, a few pitons are worth taking. From Mona Bona follow a good trail across the scree cone below Watchman's Crack to arrive at the base of Dirty Dago.

Start behind two trees below the broad open corner of gray rock.

- 1) 20 m, 5.8 Climb a few metres up the groove and traverse right onto the face at an obvious break. Continue diagonally up right to bypass a steep section and then go up and back left to a ledge in the main groove. (The ledge can be reached directly at 5.10a, as on the first ascent.)
 - 2) 35 m, 5.8 Climb a cracked wall on the left to ledges. Step right into the main groove and climb it to a fixed pin. Traverse diagonally right to below a steep section and continue immediately below this round an arete. Climb up to a large ledge. There are three lines of weakness above the ledge: the main groove on the left, a shallow groove above the belay and a crack near the right arete.
 - 3) 40 m, 5.9 Climb the shallow groove to a ramp that slants up left. At the top of the ramp, above a fixed pin, either make a difficult mantle right onto a ledge in the groove or move left and up to another fixed pin; then step right onto the ledge. Continue easily to a ledge near the top.
- 3 alt.) 45 m, 5.8 Traverse right and climb the crack near the arete.