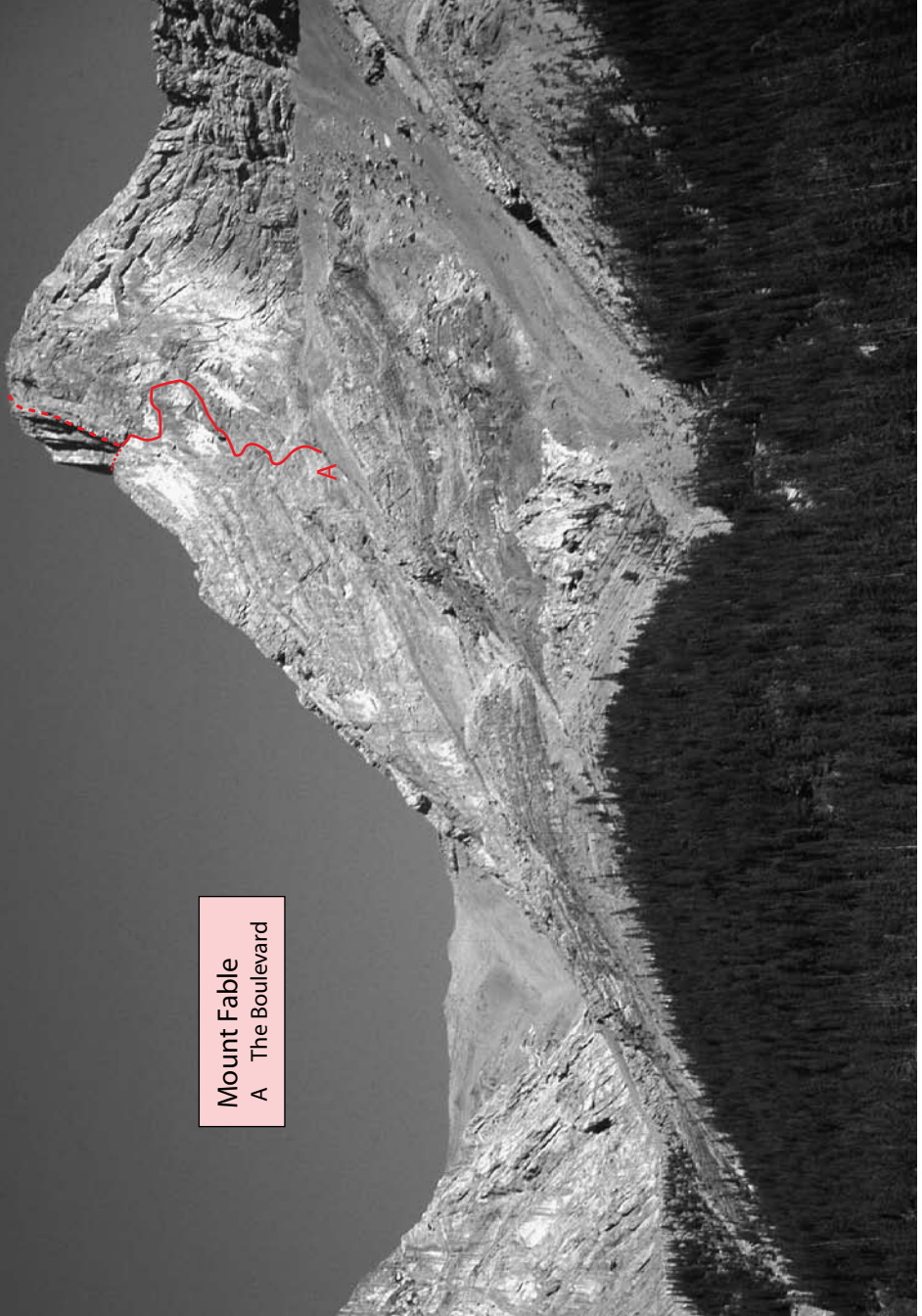


Mount Fable
A The Boulevard



MOUNT FABLE

Mount Fable is an impressive triangular peak situated in a side valley north of Exshaw. It is prominently visible from the town of Exshaw and from the Trans-Canada Highway just east of Heart Creek. There are three climbs on the mountain itself and two on a small slab of clean rock called Exshaw Slab situated below its south side. The mountain is quite remote and the three hour approach makes for a long day.

Approach

Turn north off Highway 1A in the town of Exshaw and follow a road on the east side of Exshaw Creek through a residential district to a small parking area by a footbridge that crosses the creek. Go across the creek and head north up the valley, following a good trail for about 10 minutes to a concrete dam. Cross the stream and scramble around the dam on its easier right side. Above the dam, follow the creek on a good trail to a major side valley on the left that drains the south side of Mount Fable (about one hour). Turn left for all climbs, including those on Exshaw Slab.

Exshaw Slabs

Approach From Exshaw Creek, continue along the side valley for about 15 minutes watching for a large cairn on the right about 100 m past a big treed slab. The slab is not visible at this point, but is only five minutes' walk uphill to the right (east) from the cairn.

The only routes established so far lie on the far right end of the outcrop, on a clean facet of rock to the right of a prominent right-facing corner.

Strictly For Bolten 22 m, 5.10a

J. Marshall & S. Stahl, 1984

This climbs the face immediately right of the prominent corner mentioned above. Climb up with difficulty past two bolts to a little tree. Continue past a fixed piton, step left to avoid a difficult section, and then move up and right to another bolt. Continue up and right to a fourth bolt and exit straight up. Alternatively, from the piton go straight up to the third bolt and continue directly to the top.

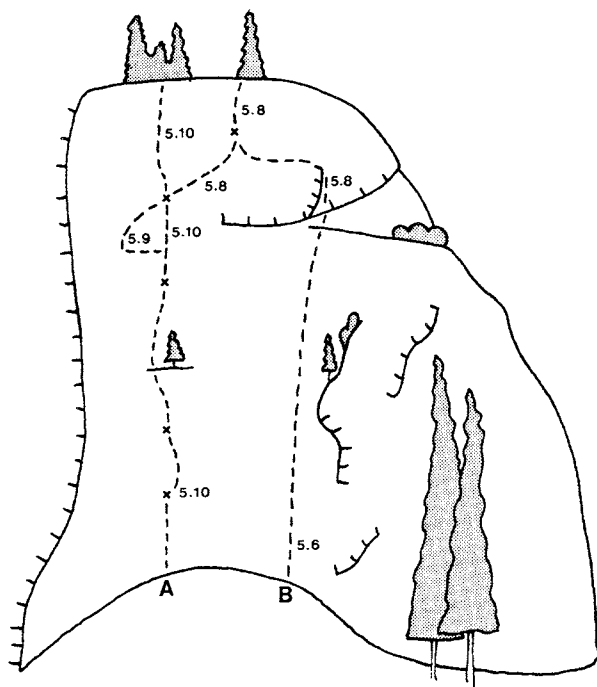
Neandorcrawl 22 m, 5.8

S. Stahl & S. Stahl, 1984

Start about 6 m right of Strictly For Bolten and climb straight up the slab, passing left of a small tree and shrub to a break below a small overhang. Climb a short, right-leaning corner, traverse left to the final bolt of Strictly For Bolten, and finish as for that route.

Opposite: Mount Fable with the southwest ridge on the left, The Boulevard (A) marked on the south face and the southeast ridge on the right.

EXSHAW SLAB



A Strictly For Bolten

B Neandorcrawl

5.10a

5.8

fixed pro

Topo John Martin.

Mount Fable

Two sharp ridges on the south side of the mountain provide classic routes to the summit. The impressive south face situated between the ridges is climbed by a more difficult route, The Boulevard.

Descent is down the standard west ridge route, which poses no significant difficulties apart from one narrow section near the top. Once at the col below the ridge, follow scree to the south into the side valley and hence to Exshaw Creek.

Southwest Ridge 5.5

D. Gardner, C. Locke & G. Walsh, June 1964

Direct Finish: G. Reisenhofer & party, 1996

Start Follow the side valley from Exshaw Creek until the base of the ridge is reached (about three hours from the car).

A choice of slabs is available for the first half of the climb. If the lowest is used, some difficulty will be found in switching to a higher one later on. The second to last slab provides a classic route with 6 pitches of continuous 5.3 climbing on excellent waterworn limestone. At the point where the lower slabs steepen to 60 degrees and the upper ones end, angle up and left into an obvious gully system. Climb to the highest good ledge and follow it rightward to within 5 m of the ridge crest. Follow a thin, diagonal crack for 30 m (5.5) to a ledge on the crest (piton). Continue up the left side of the ridge, becoming easier, to the end of the difficulties. A long easy ridge leads to the summit.

Direct Finish 120 m, 5.9/10a

Where the lower slabs end and the normal route goes left, continue up and right to a long, right-facing corner leading directly up. Climb the corner in 3 pitches (off-width crux, #4 Camelot recommended) to reach easy ground leading up to the summit.

The Boulevard 400 m, 5 10a

S. DeMaio (roped solo), May 1988

The Boulevard was established in an impressive solo effort, made over two days, and is the only route to date on the imposing south face of the mountain. It follows a circuitous line on the left side of the face and exits onto the southwest ridge. Being alone and at that point eager to be done with it, the first ascensionist avoided a steep corner leading from pitch 6 directly to the top of the face. He recommends this feature be climbed to give a more direct finish.

The climb has recently been repeated and the rock is reported to be a bit scruffy on the first two pitches, but becoming quite good higher up. Most of the climbing is moderate, with short and well-protected cruxes. Overall, it is an enjoyable rock climb to a scenic summit. There is very little fixed gear and a small selection of pitons is presently needed for protection and belays.

Start Approach as for the Southwest Ridge, but leave the drainage shortly before reaching the base of the ridge and scramble up and right to the start of the climb. Begin at a prominent ramp

system directly below a large cave about 70 m up the face.

- 1) 20 m, 5.5 Scramble up to a ledge below where the wall steepens (piton). Traverse right to a niche.
- 2) 50 m, 5.9 Climb out of the niche following a loose diagonal crack until it is possible to go straight up and then back right to the cave (piton). The cave was used as a bivouac on the first ascent.
- 3) 45 m, 5.6 Move out right from the cave and climb cracks. Continue up a ramp to its end.
- 4) 50 m, 5.6 Traverse right and down to another ramp and follow this to its end.
- 5) 35 m, 5.4 Step right and climb a slab until it is possible to move left and up onto a ledge.
- 6) 30 m, 5.4 Downclimb to a ledge on the left and walk to its left end.
- 7) 20 m, 5.10a Make an awkward step down and left into a clean right-facing corner. Climb the corner to a ledge on the left (bolt).
- 8) 30 m, 5.8 Follow a diagonal break up and right and continue up waterworn rock to a large ledge.

At this point several possibilities present themselves. For a challenging finish, walk 20 m left to a shoulder on the edge of the face and continue traversing on a wide scree ledge to the base of an obvious, right-facing corner (the Direct Finish to the Southwest Ridge route). Alternatively, continue traversing farther left and finish up the normal Southwest Ridge route. From the shoulder at the edge of the face it is possible to go up over a short step and continue directly up on excellent weathered rock (5.5) to the top of the face. A clean, right-facing corner 10 m right of the shoulder may be climbed for 25 m (5.7) until poor rock forces an exit left onto the ridge.

Southeast Ridge 5.5

G. Kinnear & P. Spear, June 1963

Start From Exshaw Creek, follow the side valley for about half a kilometre and then head up through trees to a well-defined ridge that curves up to a large buttress at the beginning of the main ridge.

The initial buttress is climbed by working up diagonally right toward the top and then cutting back left to gain the main ridge. This long ridge is very exposed and sharp in places. Where the ridge steepens to join the main peak, move right and climb 5 pitches on smooth, down-sloping slabs. Regain the ridge 200 m from the top and continue more easily to the summit.