

# UAE ROCK CLIMBING

## five years later - an update



# INTRODUCTION

pages 6 - 17

## Information and Updates

The web forum at [uaeclimbing.com](http://uaeclimbing.com) is no longer in active use. Various Facebook groups exist. Of these, "Real UAE Rock Climbers" is the most credible. It is a closed group - apply to join.

## Accidents

The advice given in the guidebook on accident procedure is still broadly correct. Regrettably the UAE has still not implemented a national rescue service. Abu Dhabi emirate has helicopters with paramedics available but these would not necessarily be available in other emirates. One observation from a serious incident in Oman in 2010 is that it may be hard to direct local police to an accident location. Carrying GPS equipment and knowing how to communicate GPS coordinates would be helpful in those situations.

Visiting climbers should of course make sure they have medical insurance.

## Climbing Walls

Two major resources have appeared since the guidebook: Rock Republic in Dubai and the wall at Sorbonne University in Abu Dhabi. The latter has a private registration process.

## Instruction Courses

The advice given in the guidebook on instruction is out of date. Ask for the latest situation at "Real UAE Rock Climbers".

# KHASAB

pages 23 - 27

## **Access situation:**

No substantial change

## **Route development since the guidebook:**

Nothing new at Khasab Beach.

A very strong North Face sponsored team (Alex Honnold, Hazel Findlay, others) toured the Musandam peninsula in a catamaran, recording some mountain routes on Jebel Letub near Sibi village and elsewhere. Also one multi-pitch seacliff route and some DWSing.

## **Updated topos at the guidebook web page:**

PDF of notes received from Hazel Findlay, 2011

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# BEYOND RAK

pages 31 - 35

## **Access situation:**

No substantial change.

## **Route development since the guidebook:**

"Chossaneering" lives: Aidan Laffey, Andy LaBonte, Peter Thompson and others have been active repeating some of the longer routes in Wadi Ghalilah and adding new ones. Aidan answered the guidebook's challenge of a "complete route to the summit of Ras Al Qays".

At Shady Circus, Toby Foord-Kelcey finished off the excellent 4-pitch Acquiescence. It has received several repeats. The nearby Exit Surprise has also had a few repeats and is probably harder than the grade given in the book.

Outside the wadi, the Grayskull Canyon has had more routes added.

## **Updated topos at the guidebook web page:**

PDF topo for Acquiescence

PDF topos received from Aiden Laffey, Peter Thompson and Maurizio Piccoli.

No topo for Grayskull yet.

# RAK INLAND

pages 37 - 63

## **Access situation:**

No substantial change.

## **Route development since the guidebook:**

There has been extensive development since the guidebook, mostly at new cliffs within Wadi Shahah.

John Gregory, the UAE's most prolific new router, is responsible for most of the routes at Nearside, Farside and The Junction in Wadi Shahah.

Ralph Heath, with various partners, has added many routes elsewhere in the wadi including at the Cleavage and at Zombie Skull (right of Dickinadozer).

Peter Thompson and Andy LaBonte established the first routes at the impressive Red Wall in Wadi Naqab. This may be the longest sweep of continuously steep rock in the UAE.

At The Sentinel, several climbers have warned of incorrect grades and loose rock. Be careful.

## **Updated topos at the guidebook web page:**

PDF topo for Nearside and an update for the Cube

PDF topos received from Andy LaBonte and Peter Thompson.

Links to notes from Ralph Heath.

# WADI BIH

pages 65 - 89

## **Access situation:**

The climbing areas are all now inaccessible to non-GCC travellers, whether attempting to enter from west or east. Annoyingly this change occurred very shortly after the book went to print.

Don't be confused by the continuing existence of a "Wadi Bih" run once a year. This event is held in a wholly-different location (Wadi Khab Shamsi).

## **Route development since the guidebook:**

Unsurprisingly, given that very few can now enter the wadi: none.

## **Updated topos at the guidebook web page:**

None.

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# SOUTHERN SLOPE

pages 91 - 99

## **Access situation:**

No substantial change.

## **Route development since the guidebook:**

Tawiyan is very popular and has had a few additional routes added by Toby Foord-Kelcey and others. Correspondingly no-one visits Jebel Idhn and it probably does not merit inclusion in a future book.

The Coliseum has seen some development by Eric Claudel and friends.

## **Updated topos at the guidebook web page:**

PDF topo for the right side of Tawiyan Crag.

Link to topo for Coliseum by Eric Claudel.



# DIBBA INLAND

pages 101-119

## **Access situation:**

Substantial deterioration! In theory it is now only possible to cross the border into Oman at Dibba if you have an accommodation or tour booking with a registered Oman provider.

Additionally it has become common for people to camp at Damian's Boulders. This is close to a village and probably a bad idea.

## **Route development since the guidebook:**

Wadi Khab Shamsi has had a lot of attention since the guidebook was published with many new areas added. There is still much potential. Of the new cliffs, Blindspot and The Ranch were the most popular, until access deteriorated.

The awesome "Nant Bidi" has been developed but still has access issues. Climbers should keep a low profile. Do not visit in large groups.

## **Updated topos at the guidebook web page:**

PDF topo for the Blindspot.

PDF topos received from Brian Coones, Aiden Laffey and Stephen Hyndman for various Wadi Khab Shamsi crags.

Link to Nant Bidi update from Theo Giani

Link to The Narrows topo at 27Crag



# DIBBA COAST

pages 121-135

## **Access situation:**

More difficult. See "Dibba Inland" for detail.

## **Route development since the guidebook:**

DWS route development has been extensive since guidebook publication especially in 2011-2012. A major catalyst was a visit by a strong British team in April 2011. They (Neil Gresham, Tim Emmett, Grant Farquhar, Seb Grieve, Mike Robertson), accompanied by Read Macadam and Toby Foord-Kelcey, explored the whole coast up to the Straits of Hormuz in a dhow over one week, discovering many new cliffs. In 2012 local climbers including Theo Giani and Mike Green added more routes and discovered more cliffs.

Toby Foord-Kelcey and Aiden Laffey also climbed the ~300m "Pyramid", mentioned in the guidebook text, in 2010.

## **Updated topos at the guidebook web page:**

A major DWS update PDF topo for the whole area plus some other PDFs for DWS areas added subsequently.

Description for the Pyramid.

# CENTRAL

pages 139-155

## **Access situation:**

Hatta Crag may no longer be accessible. It has always been Omani territory; that status has been formalised with a closed border from the UAE.

## **Route development since the guidebook:**

This area has experienced the least change of any within the original print guidebook. No other cliffs have been developed whilst Hatta Crag itself, though remaining popular, has not seen much more development.

Of the new routes that have appeared, a proportion is shrouded in mystery due to the main developer being reluctant to provide information. However all the lines he bolted have been re-climbed. Quarrying continues but has not yet destroyed any known routes.

## **Updated topos at the guidebook web page:**

None.

# AL AIN

pages 159 - 179

## Access situation:

The border crossing into Oman to reach Wonderwall (and Shark Fin) has become more difficult and time-consuming. OK for a whole weekend visit, not for a single day. Ask for an update on the current situation at "Real UAE Rock Climbers".

## Route development since the guidebook:

The most notable change in this area has been the development of a small number of excellent steep routes at the Shark Fin cliff. Lactic Labyrinthe F7a+ there is one of the best sport climbs in the region.

Wonderwall has been developed further, especially by Theo Giani, and some existing routes, like Circus Sands, re-bolted.

Back on the UAE side of the border, NPZ has had some more routes added. Some short very minor routes were also added on the east side of Jebel Hafeet.

Paul Walley has explored some bouldering spots around Jebel Hafeet also, which are reasonably worthwhile for Al Ain or Abu Dhabi based climbers.

## Updated topos at the guidebook web page:

PDF topo for "Paul's secret boulders"

PDF topos received from Solomon Lau and Theo Giani

Link to Wonderwall and NPZ update from Theo Giani

Links to Shark Fin and other topos at 27Crag

# ABU DHABI

pages 182 - 183

## **Access situation:**

Google maps dated 2014 still show the rocks, but they may not survive long as Hodariyat island is a designated development site. If the bridge to the island opens to the public it may be worth driving over to explore. The boat approach described in the guide is almost certainly banned.

## **Route development since the guidebook:**

None. Crag on 34th Street was mainly included in the print guidebook as a joke ...

Several hundred km to the west, within AD emirate but close to the Saudi border, are some red sandstone outcrops by the sea. A brief visit in 2012 revealed nothing substantial enough to climb, but the area is very scenic.

## **Updated topos at the guidebook web page:**

None.