

Cory's Groove * 5.9, 455 m. Gear to 4", 60 m rope(s) essential, 16 draws including 4 - 5 long slings. F.A. Andy Genereux and Gord Rinke, June 2002.

This route follows some interesting rock architecture in a prominent left leaning gully to the right of and behind the main buttress (southwest face) of Mt. Cory - home of the well-known climb *Cory Crack*. It starts directly below a large and very prominent black slab (which is clearly visible from the highway) and follows the edge of a bedding plane on the right side of the gully to the summit. Be aware that the route drains the entire upper face and if there is any significant rainfall, it turns into a stream!

Approach: Leave the Trans Canada Highway at the Bow Valley Parkway exit 4 km west of Banff and follow the 1A west towards Johnson Canyon. After 3.5 km the road divides and after another 1 km there is a pullout on the south (left) side of the road where you park. Cross the road and head north through the trees for 200 m to the power line. Follow this east (right) for about 200 m to the next power pole and then head up grassy slopes directly towards the black slab mentioned above. After a short time you will come to a small v-shaped drainage (a debris flow channel). Climb steeply up open treed slopes on either side of this for approximately 50 min until a series of broken cliff bands block the way. Traverse into the drainage and follow it to the base of the wall and the start of the climb (75 - 90 minutes from parking).

Although this is only a moderately difficult alpine rock climb, don't take it too lightly. A few of the pitches are sustained and some are a full 60 m, requiring an extensive gear rack. A recommended rack for the not-so-confident leader at this grade is: a full set of cams to 4" (double 2"-3"), medium TCU's and a single set of wired nuts. (A *solid* 5.10 trad leader could get by with a single set of cams to 3" and a single set of wired nuts.) Take 16 quickdraws (of which 4-5 should be long). Double ropes may be useful but are not essential if you use a few long slings. Allow 6-9 hrs (from the road) for the ascent and 2-3 for the descent. **Descent:** Either rap the route (all belay stations are equipped with 2 ringbolts; 2 ropes mandatory) or walk off north and descend the gully to the southeast (requires a couple of raps). Both options take about the same time.

Caution: Do not attempt this route if a party is already on it or if it is very windy - any rocks that get knocked (or blown) off will ricochet down the bottom 5 pitches of the gully like a pinball. Although the rock is mostly quite solid, this is the Rockies - so expect some loose rock. **Be especially careful of loose rock on pitches 7 and 8 and of rubble on ledges at the start of pitch 9.** Any cleaning of loose rock should be done by the second and *only* after first making sure that no one is below! **It is impossible not to dislodge rubble at the start of pitch 9 - be aware of this if there is another party below you.**

Note: With the exception of the second half of P5, the first 6 pitches are mostly easy 5th-class climbing with just a few moves in the 5.6 to 5.7 range here and there. The route follows the edge of the same band of limestone for the first 8 pitches and is confined to a strip of rock just a few metres wide.

P1: 5.4, 55 m. From the creek drainage climb a series of short corners connected by ledges which head up and left past 3 bolts to a large ledge and a large spruce tree. Belay on the right wall just past the tree.
P2: 5.6, 60 m. Enjoyable moderate slab climbing on water polished rock on the edge of the bedding plane on the right side of the groove past 8 bolts to a small stance and belay.

P3: 5.7, 60 m. More of the same only slightly more sustained past 10 bolts to a stance on the edge of the bedding plane.

P4: 5.7, 60 m. Start out protecting in a water runnel then up past a bolt to a ledge. The corner forks here; follow the main groove (the corner heading out right goes to the base of the Hoover Dam). Continue up the groove passing another 8 bolts to a ledge.

P5: 5.9-, 55 m. Continue up the moderate groove past 3 bolts to a small ledge. Make several hard stemming moves past 3 bolts to enter the shallow corner. Sustained 5.8 climbing follows the corner past several gear placements and 4 bolts. A hanging ringbolt belay is located on a fin of grey rock to the left.

P6: 5.7, 40 m. Climb the fin of grey rock directly above the belay past 5 bolts until it forms a ledge. Go left along the ledge to a scree-covered ledge and a tree. Belay on the right wall across from this tree.

P7: 5.8 or 5.9-, 60 m. Follow the corner past a bolt to 2 small trees at the base of a steep section. Hard moves (slightly easier on left) lead to a bolt. Follow the corner with sustained climbing mostly on natural protection to arrive at the ringbolt belay and an awkward stance.

P8: 5.8, 55 m. Sustained climbing up the corner past 6 bolts and several gear placements. As the corner ends look for a belay station directly above the last bolt, just below a large rubbly ledge with a big tree on it several meters to the right.

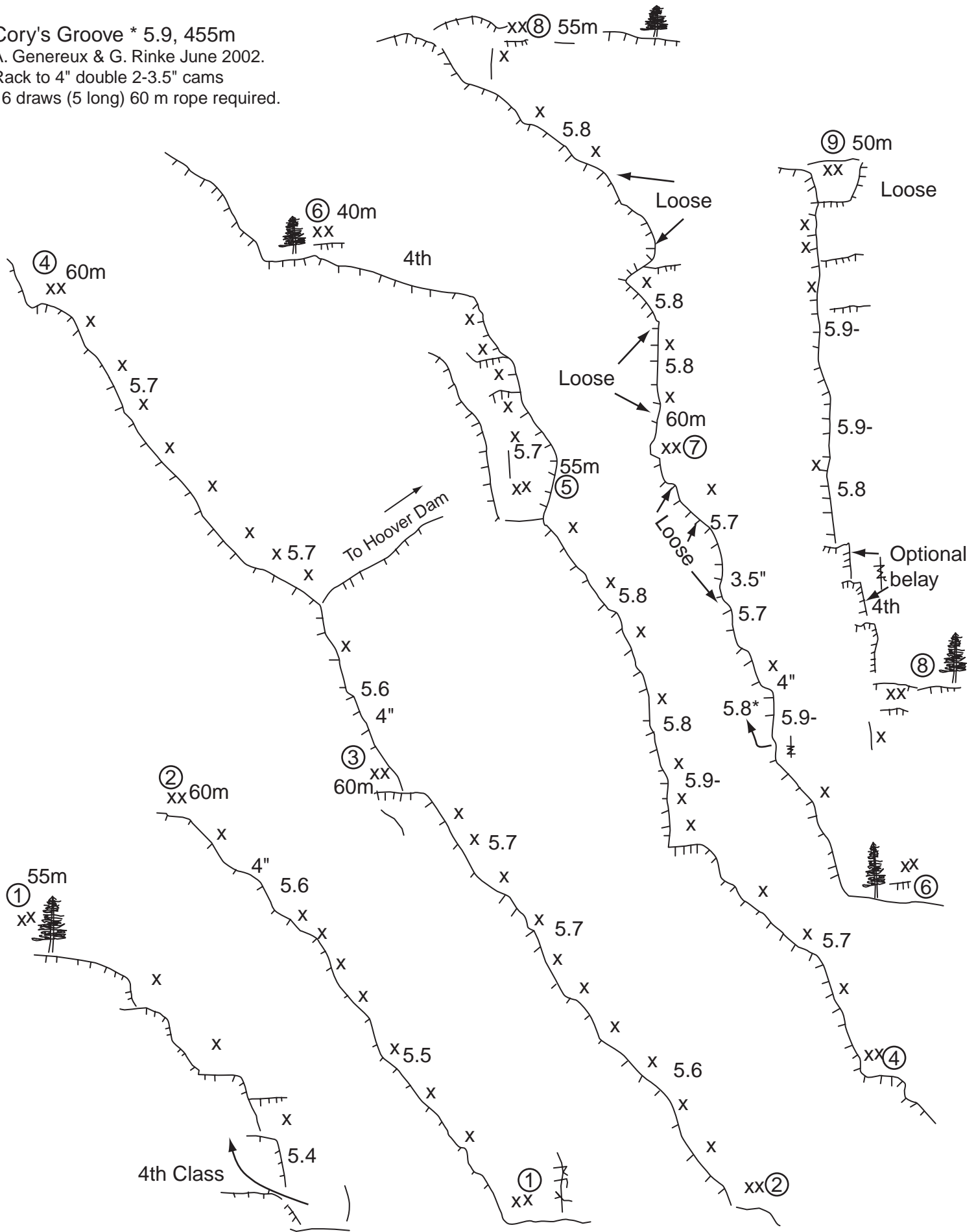
P9: 5.9-, 50 m. Scramble up and left on easy 4th class ground over several blocks to a large ledge at the base of an obvious right facing corner (20 m). You can, if you wish, set up a good belay on gear here to better protect the corner above, but there are no belay bolts installed. Climb the corner - the first 20m of which is sustained 5.8 to 5.9 (one bolt). Easier climbing and 3 more bolts lead to a belay on a good ledge.

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A. Genereux & G. Rinke June 2002.

Rack to 4" double 2-3.5" cams

16 draws (5 long) 60 m rope required.



* denotes grade of variation