

Climbers' Playgrounds—Europe

39 The Bruchhauser Steine

Joachim Schneider

(Translation: E. H. Sondheimer)

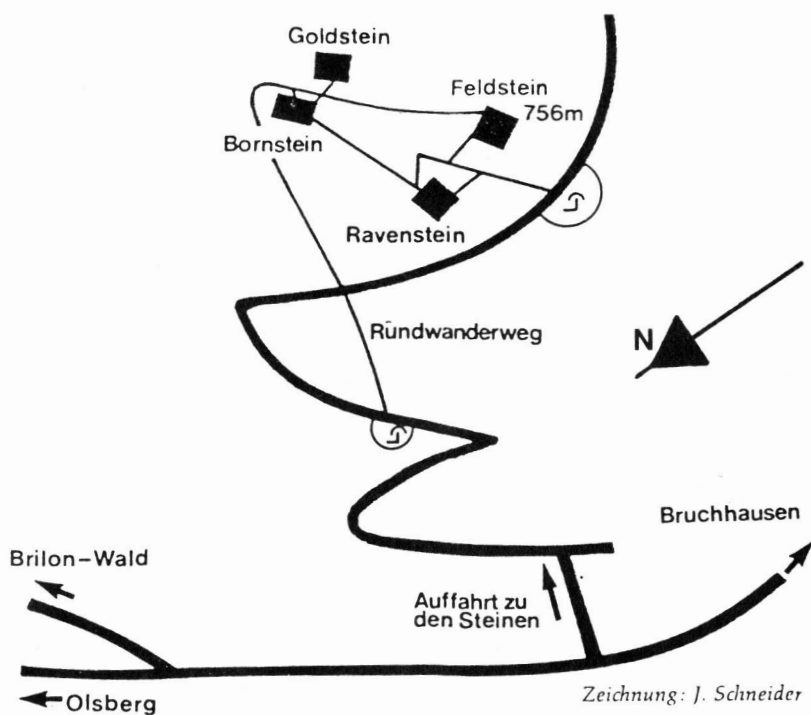
The attractive region of the Hochsauerland is visited each year by a stream of people in search of relaxation. In summer there are the 'tourists' and 'ramblers' and in winter primarily the 'skiers'. But the climber also finds here targets which merit a long journey. We refer to the four gigantic 'rock colossi' Goldstein, Bornstein, Ravenstein and Feldstein, on the steep Istenberg near Bruchhausen.

Situation Bruchhausen lies in the centre of the Hochsauerland and is easily reached by train or car. The nearest station is Bigge-Olsberg from where buses go to Bruchhausen. The best way to reach Bruchhausen by car is indicated on the sketch.

Accommodation Overnight accommodation can be found, apart from inns and boarding houses, in a youth hostel 2km behind Brilon close to the B251 in the direction of Brilon-Wald, in the Sauerlandheim (a DAV-hut of the Section Dortmund) in Bruchhausen, and in a AV-hut of the Section Hagen in Willingen by the Ettelsberg. Camping by the Istenberg is not allowed (Nature Reserve), but there is a camp site near Bruchhausen. It is also possible to bivouac under the overhangs at the foot of the mountains.

Rock type The Bruchhauser Steine are of volcanic origin. Hot flows of volcanic lava erupted from time to time through bursting cracks and spread out over the existing sedimentary layers after reaching the sea bed of that time (the Devonian period, about 400 million years ago). Cooling led to the formation of solid volcanic rock, quartz porphyry. Towards the end of the Carboniferous period this uniform rock layer split through folding into boulders and blocks. These were imbedded in the solidified Devonian sea sediments, the clay schist. This softer schist was removed more quickly by weathering and erosion, and the harder quartz porphyry rock—the Bruchhauser Steine—remained.

Climbing History The development was started around 1900 by climbers from Paderborn. The master roofer Balkenhol at that time opened up a few routes such as, for example, Grosse Verschneidung, Höhlenweg and Goldsteinriss, which are still graded V today. But most routes were only opened up between 1960 and 1970. About half of the first ascents were made by Franz Stratmann (deceased). Today there are about 150 routes, the average height of the rock being 40-70m (with 90m for the

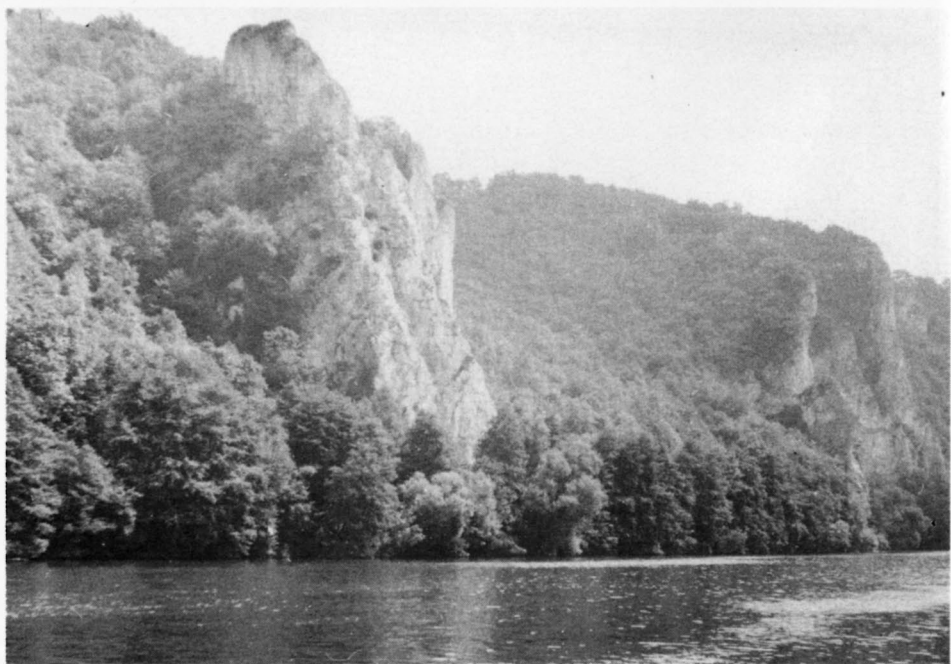


Zeichnung: J. Schneider



41 *La Falaise de Vertus*

Photo: Monique Rebiffe



42 *The crags of Freyr seen across the Meuse*

Photo: Edward Pyatt

Bornstein NW-Wall). The development is not yet completed—there is still new terrain left!

Nature Conservation The Klettergarten lies in the Nature Reserve Bruchhausen and is the private property of the estate of the Barons of Gaugreben in Bruchhausen. Climbers require a permit which must be obtained yearly from the estate office for a token fee. The occasional visitor can obtain it at the kiosk by the road which leads up to the rocks. Bornstein and Ravenstein are closed to climbers from 15 February to 30 June of each year, in order to protect the Peregrine falcons. (Enquire at the estate office about possible changes in the closure period.)

Routes These rock walls in our Mittelgebirge, up to 90m high and partially overhanging, are an excellent training ground for big Alpine ascents. Overhanging crack and friction climbing is the prize attraction on most of the routes. The slabby rock structure, covered in many places with lichen and moss, requires sometimes strength rather than elegance. For the hard routes one should take, apart from the wedges and slings which are here required, a few pegs so that old ones can be replaced.

Bornstein The N-Wall is 92m high and has serious, almost Alpine routes, e.g.: Alte Direkte (130m climbing) VI, Grosse Verschneidung V, Sauerlandweg VI. There are easier routes in the S, W and E-Walls. The normal route up the East wall gully is not difficult and is about 70m high.

Goldstein The main summit is easily reached from the south, the SW- and N-sides have rock walls with an average height of about 60m. Rewarding routes are: Grosser Quergang up the SW-Wall, 3 pitches, IV; Sauriss III-IV; Goldstein-Kante III and IV; Westverschneidung V.

Feldstein At 756m this rock has the highest situation. From the summit cross one enjoys splendid views over the Sauerland hills, into the plain of the Münsterland and even to the Teutoburger Wald, 80km away. The maximum wall height is about 45m. The normal route goes up a staircase on the SE-side of the mountain. Well-known routes are (amongst others): Schweinekamin III + , Süddach-Weg VI, Osterei VI-, Plattenweg V-, Jubilate V-.

Ravenstein On the W and N sides there are overhanging walls 70m high. There is a good bivouac site under the huge roof of the NW-side. The Gemeinschaftsweg leads through the 15m roof. This is the biggest technical climb in Bruchhausen. Amongst other interesting routes are: Mittagsroute V-, NW—Sporn V-, Regenwandl V, Maiweg III + . The normal route up the SE-side gives 20m of Grade I climbing.

On the remaining small rocks there are also various rewarding climbs with a wall height of up to 25m.

The Bruchhauser Steine are of interest not only to the mountaineer. Historians can inspect here a valuable monument of cultural history: the

remains of the prehistoric Flieburg between the corner pillars Goldstein, Bornstein, Ravenstein and Feldstein. Ramblers can find their relaxation on well-kept paths.

A guidebook for climbers and ramblers can be ordered from: Paul H. Steinacker, Hindenburgstr 3, 4740 Oelde 1.

40 Climbs in Champagne: Vertus

Monique Rebiffé

(Translation: Edward Pyatt)

No one would think to include Vertus among the leading climbing sites in France. However this modest cliff does offer certain attractions to the Parisian climber on account of its proximity to the capital. Situated a mere 130km from Paris, accessible in 1½ hr by the Autoroute de l'Est, it is one of those rare cliffs which can be visited when one has no more than a day to spare.

25m high, the crag offers 20 climbs all close to one another. The rock itself, actually better than it looks, is off-putting at first glance. It is a brittle limestone, extensively honeycombed; among its many holes there are many suitable for holds, often better for the hands than for the feet. They allow for natural advance in a terrain which is very steep, even overhanging. Safeguarding is important; fixed pitons and rock belays are insufficient. It is advisable to bring along many webbing or rope loops; on the other hand wedges can be left at home.

The general standard of climbs is around 5; few routes are really easy, none of extreme difficulty, but one can link up pitches of 5b/5c of strenuous character with some of 6a, of which your forearms will afterwards remind you.

Now a warning; do not visit Vertus in wet weather, unless it is the cellars of Champagne which attract you. To reach the foot of the 'Falloises', as they are called here, it is necessary to follow earth roads through the vineyards which can become very muddy. In addition, the upper part of the routes is covered by a lichen which is extremely unpleasant when it is wet.

Habituees of Fontainebleau will note that there are also sandstone blocks in Champagne; the Hottée du Diable offers three waymarked circuits (PD/AD/D) with several others not much harder. It is an airy little massif, which rounds off a visit to Vertus and gives you a good look at the collective possibilities of Champagne which, though perhaps of only secondary importance, are none the less not negligible.

Access Vertus is 20km SSE of Epernay. From the village, climb rightwards by earth roads across the vineyards to reach the rocks.

La Hottée du Diable is alongside the D310 between Coincy and Fère-en-Tardenois.

41 Freyr

Charles Mont

The limestone crags of Freyr, the principal climbing rocks in Belgium, rise impressively on the east bank of the River Meuse between Dinant and the Franco-Belgian border. Their stature is enhanced by flat land on the opposite bank. Only some 200km from the Channel ports, they are a reasonable proposition for a long weekend from England via Calais or Ostend.

There are six separate crags—from north to south, Merinos (70m), Cinq Anes (40m), Tête du Lion (30m), Rocher du Pape (90m), Rocher Al'Legne (up to 110m), Rocher Louis Philippe (up to 50m), offering routes up to British mountain length. Standards are high. There are splendid views over the valley to a grand château beyond the river.

A Belgian AC camp-site can be found at the top of the rocks, also ready road access with a car-park and cafés.

The guidebook, *Guide des Rochers Belges et Luxembourgeois* (Club Alpin Belge), published some years ago, is said to be out of date. However it describes numerous climbs both here and on other rocks in the vicinity, thus there is really quite a lot hereabouts for the visiting climber.