

# **Lower Tosson Climbing Guide**

Simon Litchfield  
2015

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## Lower Tosson

By Simon Litchfield and Graeme Read

Clearly visible from Hepple Whitefield, it is of great surprise that for so many years Tosson Hill was hidden and neglected in the back of the guidebook. Perhaps it was the tales of evil Duergar dwarfs that abound in the area that put intrepid explorers off, however, those now making the trip will be rewarded. Situated in a grand position above Coquetdale the buttresses may appear esoteric compared to its neighbours, but this is more than made up for by the generally excellent quality rock with interesting features and tremendous natural lines – including the largest roof in the county.

“ And once upon a time did not the caverns and recesses amid the rocky heights of Simonside nightly witness the unearthly revels of a tribe of ugly elves and dwarfs - so says tradition - amongst whom it was dangerous for the solitary wanderer to venture...

Morpeth Gazette 1889

”

Lower Tosson is yet another fine feather in the cap of Northumberland climbing, and another gem to be unearthed in the Simonside Hills. Along with Simonside, Ravensheugh,

Sandy, Selby's and the relatively modern bouldering venues of Dove Crag, Old Stell and Rocher Tosson, Lower Tosson offers a great deal of variety to the climber, whether they be a VD or E5 leader, or a dedicated boulderer.

### Conditions and Aspect

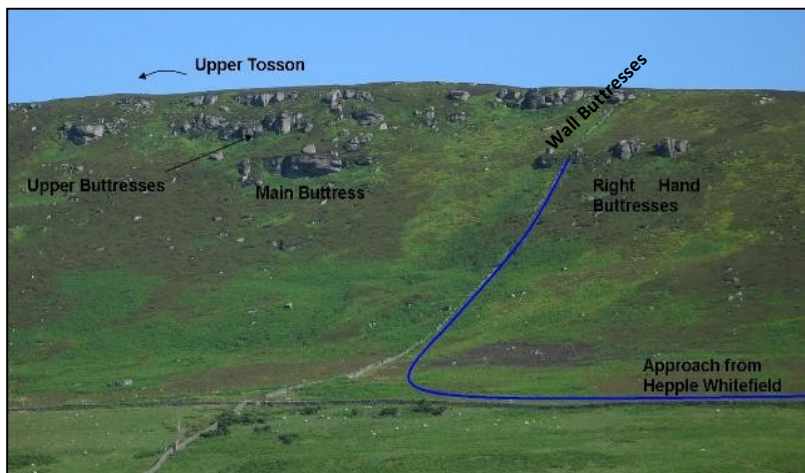
The crag faces north west and in summer the buttresses bathed in the warm evening sun. It takes a bit longer for sun to reach the back of the bouldering cave, however, given the capping 6-8m overhang any rain will struggle to get in. Unlike Simonside and Ravensheugh it is not situated on the very top of the hill, making it much less exposed to the wind.

### The Climbing

The crag is a labyrinth of jumbled buttresses with about 30 routes of often VS and above. Great lines abound and there is something here to suit almost all styles of climbing: from obvious cracks, delicate slabs to steep brutality. The rock is also varied, with cracks, crimps, slopers, smears and flakes.

There are also many boulder problems. The most obvious of which can be found: in the Main Buttress Cave; on a free standing prow to the far left, and on some of the upper buttresses.

A handful of the routes on offer are, in our opinion, of top quality. Broken Promises, for example, is reminiscent of the superb Guardian Angel at Howlerhirst, Cossack Dancer similar to the three star South Yardhope test piece Quiet County, and Somewhere over the Rainbow provides one of the best outings of it's grade in the County. Bold words maybe, but if you are after good quality routes and problems on excellent rock and in a stunning setting, then a visit here, particularly on a sunny summer evening, and you will not be disappointed.



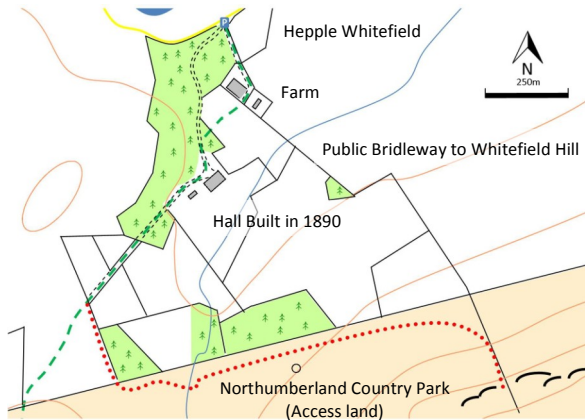
Cover Picture: Simon Litchfield showing no disco legs on the FA of Cossack Dancer, E6 6b

Rear: Touching Wood? Graeme Read on 17.2cm Wooden Block / Deception Buttress Direct, E3/4, 5c



## Parking and Approach

The crag is best approached from Hepple Whitefield. Take the B6341 out of Rothbury continue through Hepple. Just after crossing a river turn left (signposted Tosson and Bickerton). After 0.6 miles park at the triangle in the road (GR NY 987 996) where there is space for a few cars. Follow the public bridleway through a farm and past a small country house towards Whitefield Hill. On reaching open moorland (access land) leave the bridleway and cut back left (on yourself) and follow the stone moorland boundary wall over a burn and past a sheepfold until you reach a ruined wall. Follow this old wall up past grouse butts to the buttresses. Avoid the temptation to cut diagonally up to the crags - the heather / bracken can be quite deep making progress hard (1.8 miles, 40 minutes).



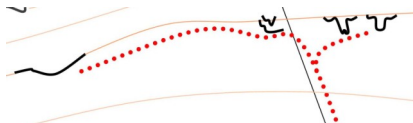
## Access

There is a right of access under CRoW



## The Climbs

The buttresses are described as approached from below. The climbs are described from left to right. Right of the wall on the approach are two small buttresses: **GR NY995 985**.



**Right Buttress** - This buttress can be identified by an obvious crack starting half way up.

### 1. Unnamed 9m E2

(6a) A contrived route up the thin hanging crack using a good undercling and the left arête  
FA Simon Litchfield (1st June 2014)

### 2. Unnamed 6m VD

An unremarkable route up the wall right of the corner to a dubious flake finish.  
FA Simon Litchfield (1st June 2014)

### 3. STONE WALL MARCHES 9m HVS

Bold climbing up the left hand side of the main arête.  
(5b) Start beneath the left arête at its lowest point. Climb the arête on its left hand side, with a tricky move towards the top.  
FA Simon Litchfield (30<sup>th</sup> June 2009) Solo.

### 4. SCHWÜLE SOMMERTAGE 9m VS (\*?)

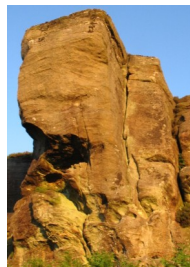
Good climbing up the central crack.  
(5a) Start at the lowest point of the buttress and climb steeply between breaks to gain the crack. Continue to the top on good jams.  
FA Simon Litchfield (30<sup>th</sup> June 2009) Solo

5. DEATH BY 1000 MIDGEBITES 9m (H)S  
(4a/b?) The open scooped corner is trickier and better than it appears. A traditional approach rewards.  
FA Simon Litchfield (30<sup>th</sup> June 2009) Solo

6. ZWEI FLIEGEN MIT EINER KLAPPE 4m font 4+  
Hug up between the two chimneys.  
FA Simon Litchfield (17<sup>th</sup> May 2014)

**Far Right Buttress** - 20m further right is a buttress with an obvious crack line on its right hand side.

7. MIDGE ARÊTE font 5+  
Climb the right side of the obvious arête.  
FA Simon Litchfield (20<sup>th</sup> April 2014)

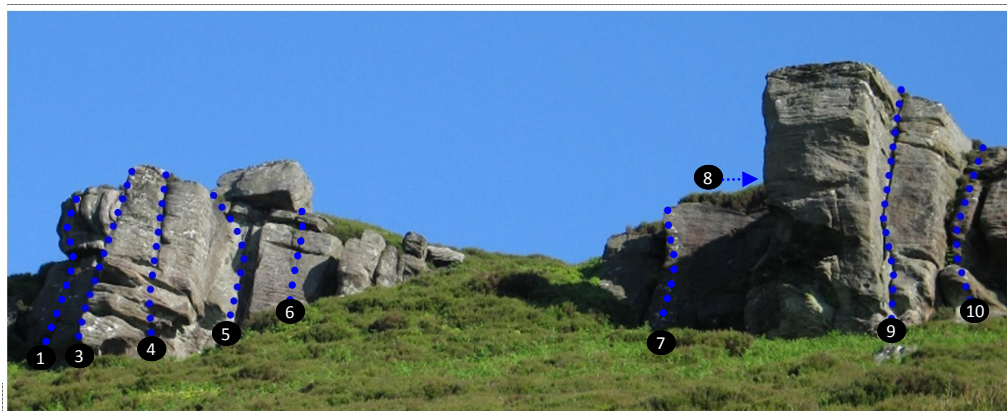


8. GNATTER 8m E3  
Climb the scoop and wall left of the prow. (6a) Moving off the pedestal provides the crux. Easier for the tall.  
FA Simon Litchfield (20<sup>th</sup> April 2014)

9. CULicoides impuNcTatuS 8m HS (\*?)  
Good climbing up the corner crack  
(4b) Climb the crack on plentiful positive jams.  
FA Simon Litchfield (24<sup>th</sup> June 2009) Solo (while being eaten alive!)

10. JABBERWOCKY 7m VD  
Climb the dirty crack on the right of the buttress.  
FA Libby Kerr and Simon Litchfield (31<sup>st</sup> May 2010)

11. THE SLITHY TOVES 4m font 5+  
The scoop trending left at the right end of the but-  
FA Simon Litchfield (20<sup>th</sup> April 2014)





Immediately left of the approach wall is an undercut boulder (**Lower Wall Buttress**) topped with an attractive arête (**Middle Wall Buttress**).

11. LOWER WALL ARÊTE  
Step onto the arête from the left.

FA S.Litchfield (1 June 2014)

12. LOWER WALL CRACK  
Layback the obvious corner.

FA S.Litchfield (1 Jun 14)

13. MIDDLE WALL RIBS  
Climb the left wall with the help of two ribs.

FA S.Litchfield (1 June 2014)

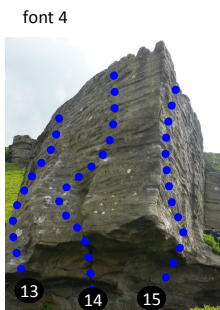
14. MIDDLE WALL SCOOP font 6a \*  
Sitting start. Climb the scoop with interest.

FA S.Litchfield (1 June 2014)

15. MIDDLE WALL ARÊTE  
font 6a+ \*\*

Sitting start. Climb the right side of the attractive arête.

FA S.Litchfield (1 June 2014)



Further left of the wall are some larger buttresses:  
**GR997 985**

**Main Buttress** - This buttress can be identified by its large capping roof – the largest in Northumberland?!

16. THE TIN MAN 8m VS  
(5a) The slab to the left of the buttress leads to a short crack. A grasping heather finish awaits.  
FA Simon Litchfield and Libby Kerr (31<sup>st</sup> May 2010)

17. THE SCARECROW 8m E1  
Bold climbing up the slab and groove.

(5a) The right hand slab to the left of the bearded arête leads to a large break (poor gear). Above a bold groove leads to a heathery finish.

FA Simon Litchfield and Graeme Read (03<sup>rd</sup> June 2010).

18. THE BEARDED WIZARD 9m HVS  
(5b) From the yeti like beard on the left arête (no brushing required) reach right to a pocket and crimps underneath the roof. Make good powerful moves over the roof before trending right to finish up the wide jamming crack.

FA Simon Litchfield, Graeme Read and Libby Kerr (31<sup>st</sup> May 2010).

19. WINGED MONKEYS 11m E1

(5b) Climb the right arête and swing up through the flakes and jugs to the left hand jamming crack in the roof. Finish as for *The Bearded Wizard*.

FA Simon Litchfield and Graeme Read (03<sup>rd</sup> June 2010)

20. THE LION WHO FOUND HIS HEART 11m E2  
(5b) Start on the right of the arête of *Winged Monkeys*. Use a flake to reach a boss and traverse the rail to pull up and reach the right hand crack. Finish up *Pot of Gold*.

FA Simon Litchfield (05<sup>th</sup> June 2010) (Solo).

21. POT OF GOLD 11m VS (\*\*?)

A grand expedition on good holds, starting from the back of the cave.

(5a) Climb the crack at the back left corner of cave on positive holds to a ledge. A hard move to gain the pod leads to an easier finish up a jamming crack.

Simon Litchfield, Graeme Read and Libby Kerr (31<sup>st</sup> May 2010).

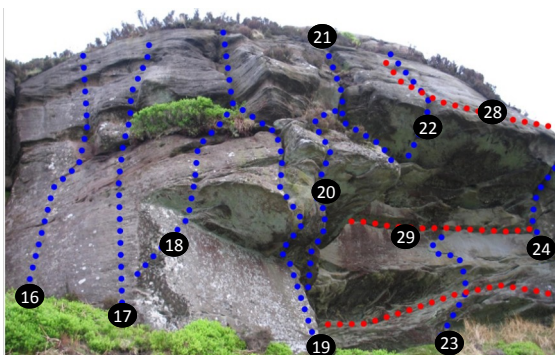
22. Unclimbed Roof Crack 12m ???

(??) The crack in the roof awaits a very strong, very technically able and very bold ascensionist.

23. THE EMERALD CITY 13m VS

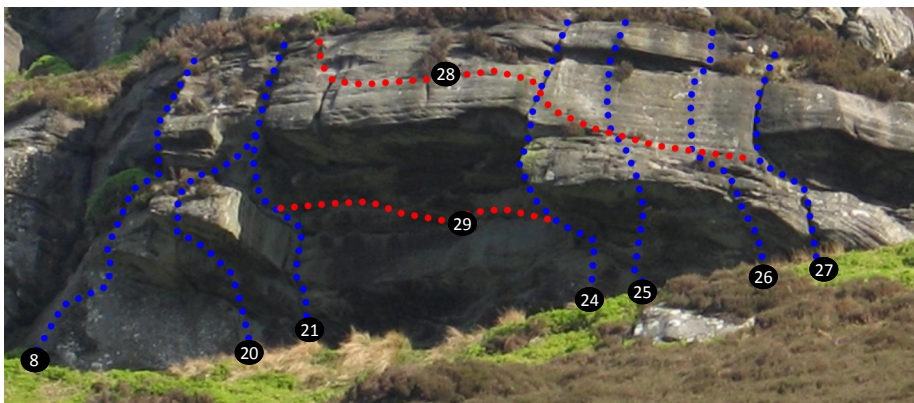
(5c) A boulder problem gains a curving flake crack. Mantle to join *Left in Kansas*. Follow this left or right to top out

FA Simon Litchfield and Graeme Read (16<sup>th</sup> June 2010)





# Lower Tosson - Main Buttress Right



**24. FOLLOW THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD** 12m VS (\*\*?)  
Great climbing through central crackline of the roof..  
(5a) Start in a corner just right of the protruding nose. Swing leftwards and up into the corner below a fearsome looking roof crack. Climb the roof crack and pull onto the slab above. Finish up the slab and crack above.  
FA Simon Litchfield (24<sup>th</sup> June 2009) Solo.

**25. Unclimbed** 10m ?  
An ankle snapping move from a flake to gain the slab above.

**26. THE WICKED WITCH OF THE WEST** 9m HVS (5b) Pull over the overhang on good holds. Step left and delicately climb the right centre of the slab using a small pocket.  
FA Simon Litchfield, (22<sup>nd</sup> May 2010) Solo.

**27. TOTO'S TAIL** 9m VS (5a) A hard start off the block and up the overhanging crack leads to a ledge. Step left and layback / fist jam the obvious crack to a heathery finish.  
FA Simon Litchfield, (22<sup>nd</sup> May 2010) Solo

Traversing the lip of the overhang is (one of) the outstanding routes of crag (or should that be Northumberland?): ...

**28. SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW** 20m E4 \*\*\*  
One of the finest expeditions of its grade in the county with some unrivalled airy situations.

P1 (5a) 10m Climb the initial crack of *Toto's Tail* and traverse easily to a junction with *Follow The Yellow Brick Road*.

P2 (6a) 10m From the belay a low set of foothold-salong the lip of the roof and a sloping shelf for hands leads to a crack that takes good gear. Tough moves left along the very lip of the overhang may lead to the crack before *Pot of Gold* or may result in some quality air time..  
FA Simon Litchfield and Graeme Read (alternate leads) (03<sup>rd</sup> June 2010) (Photo Graeme Read on the crux of the first ascent).

**29. LEFT IN KANSAS** 20m VS  
A trip under the rainbow.  
P1 (5a) 15m Start right of *The Emerald City* (left of the hanging arête). A steep boulder problem leads to a break under the roof. Traverse left across the roof to join *Pot of Gold*.  
P2. (5a) Follow *Pot of Gold* to the top  
FA Simon Litchfield and Graeme Read (16<sup>th</sup> June 2010)





“ Somewhere over the rainbow, way up high, there's a crag that I heard of once in a lullaby...

Quite how Lower Tosson could originally have been described 'a number of scattered buttresses which offer a couple of harder lines' will probably remain mystery. However, on exploring the hills and discovering the crag at different times in 2009 Graeme Read and Simon Litchfield couldn't believe their luck. Could it really be that a whole new crag lay waiting for development? Surely this was the realms of fiction books.

On his first visit to the hitherto unknown crag with only a pair of boots, chalkbag and a helmet Simon couldn't resist all the great lines and jammed his

way up the first route, later to be named Follow The Yellow Brick Road.

The next trip to the crag was less successful. After marching along the stone walls and coming to within 20m of the buttresses the weather gods said no and a rainbow formed when the heavens opened above the crag. Back in Newcastle when asked by some fellow climbers where he had been, Simon didn't want to give the game away and stammered 'erm Rainbow Crag'. Lower Tosson now had a codename and a theme.

”

# Lower Tosson - Main Buttress Bouldering

## Main Buttress Cave

The impressive Main Buttress Cave has almost unlimited potential for steep problems, eliminates and pumpy traverses. Ok so the iced cream van is more than five minutes away, and tea will have to come from a flask, however, the landings are flat and owing to the 7m overhang above most of the problems will stay dry for long periods. In fact the cave was often a saving grace when developing the crag, while hiding from both the rain the searing summer heat.

The route *Left in Kansas* provides good finishing holds for highball problems. The starts to *The Yellow Brick Road* and *Pot of Gold* also provide easy down climbs.

### 21. POT OF GOLD font 4+

An easy up/down climb in the left corner (but topping out is most fun VS 5a).

### B1. GOLD DIGGER font 6a

Sitting Start from the deepest recess at the back left of the cave.

FA Simon Litchfield (28th June 2010)

### B2. OMAHA BEACH font 7b

Stand Start, negotiate the roof with some adventure and head rightwards along little crimps once it is reached.

FA Dan Varian (2012)

### B3. MUNCHKIN COUNTRY font 6a

A sit start and pull on crimps to reach the obvious hole. Over too quickly.

FA Simon Litchfield (August 2010)

### B4. Unnamed font 7a

FA Dan Varian 2012

### B5. THE EMERALD CITY SITTING START font 7a+

At an obvious crimp at the back of the roof, track leftwards to join B6.

FA Dan Varian (2012)

### B6 /23. THE EMERALD CITY font 6b

A highball problem. Pull steeply up to the large flake. A mantle gains *Left in Kansas* (topping out up *Pot of Gold* or *Follow the Yellow...* is VS 5c).

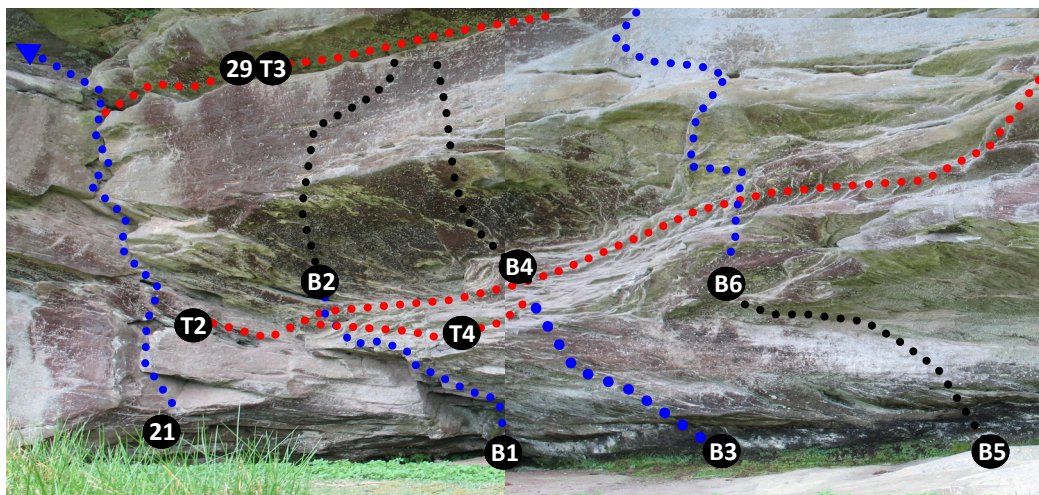
FA Simon Litchfield (28th June 2010)

### B7/ 29. LEFT IN KANSAS font 4+

A traverse of the upper break (from right to left). Start just left of the hanging arête. Climb steeply on good holds to gain the break. The further left along the traverse you go, the harder it gets. Top out up *Pot of Gold* for an adventurous VS 5a tick.

### B8. LEFT IN KANSAS SITTING START font 7a+

Powerful climbing along the obvious rail to the lip. Hold the swing and yard to the break. FA Graeme Read





# Lower Tosson - Main Buttress Bouldering

## B9 KANSAS CITY SHUFFLE font 7b

Sit start at the back of the arête and power out along some nice grips. FA Dan Varian (2012)

## 24. FOLLOW THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD font 5

Start in the corner to the right of the arête traverse left the rail before pulling up into corner. From here, topping out is best at VS 5a, otherwise reverse all the moves or finish along *Left in Kansas*.

### The Cave Traverses

#### T1 THE YETI TRAVERSE (not pictured) font 5

Start as for *The Bearded Wizard* and traverse under the roof to *Pot of Gold*. Can be used to extend *Tosson Traverse* but does not really affect the grade.

FA Simon Litchfield (28th June 2010).

#### T2. TOSSON TRAVERSE font 6b

A long traverse tackling the easiest way along the overhang and a good way to perfect your heel hooking. Never technically that hard, however it is long enough and steep enough to guarantee a good workout.

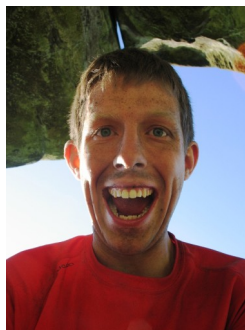
FA Graeme Read (17th June 2010)

#### T3. THE CIRCUIT font 6b+/6c

Still not pumped enough after the traverse?

Having completed the traverse continue up and along *Left in Kansas* and finish down *Pot of Gold*. Continue ad infinitum. Outstanding.

FA Graeme Read (17th June 2010)



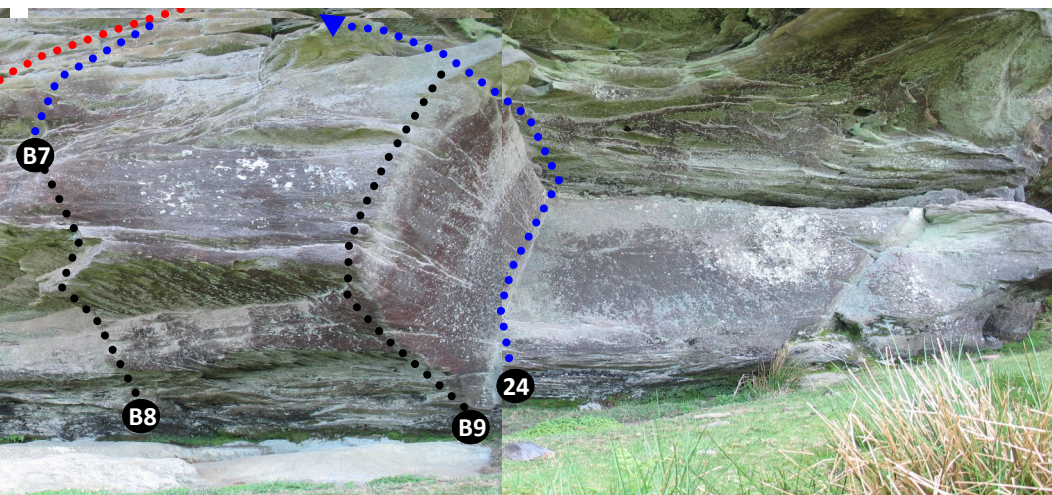
Simon psyched to get climbing after another cleaning session!

#### T4. AWAITING TELFER'S LIP font 6a

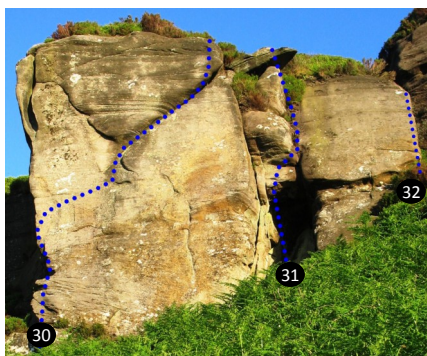
A lower traverse using only the lowest handholds up to 20cm above the lip. Starting in the left corner and finishing with both hands in the circular midway pocket. Heel hocks allowed (but only on the handholds that are in).

FA Simon Litchfield (28th June 2010)

#### B1 + T4 Link up font 6a+/b



# Lower Tossion - Upper Buttress



Immediately above the main buttress are two buttresses

**Upper Buttresses** – On the right is a buttress with currently there are no routes (and no grips?). To the left is a buttress that can be identified by a y-shaped feature and is home to another outstanding route.

## 30. COSSACK DANCER 9m E6 \*\*\*

Brilliant and varied climbing up the face and shelf. (6b?) From a ledge on the left arête span right to reach a crimp to establish yourself in the centre of the face at the bottom of the y feature. Use an undercling to gain a position on a rightward trending crackline / ledge. After (blindly) arranging gear use imaginative and perplexing moves to follow the crack rightwards to good jams. Battle to the top.

FA Simon Litchfield, Graeme Read and Libby Kerr (31<sup>st</sup> May 2010) (FA Photo).

## 31. BREAK DANCER 9m VS

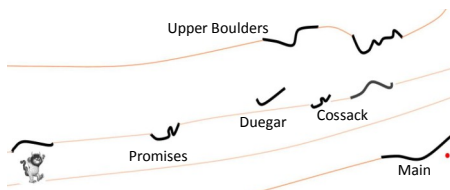
(5a) The chimney and crack. Surmounting the bulge proves tricky.

FA Graeme Read and Simon Litchfield (17<sup>th</sup> June 2010)

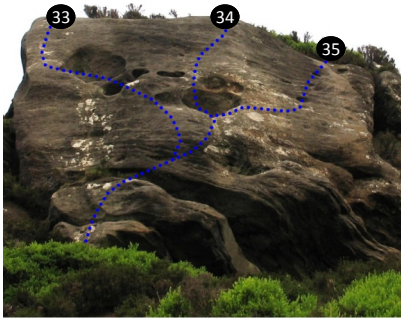
## 32. BALLROOM DANCER'S ARÊTE 4m font 6a+

The slabby right arête feels higher than it actually is.

FA Simon Litchfield (18<sup>th</sup> May 2010)







15m to the left and above of *Cossack Dancer* is a further buttress: **Deception Buttress**, which despite its diminutive height, packs as hard punch.



## 33. DUERGAR ARÊTE

7m E4 (\*\*?)  
Bold climbing up the left arête with a memorable top. Don't be thinking its short!

(6a) Start as for 17.2cm Wooden

*Block / Deception Buttress Direct* but head immediately left to the arête via a series of large holes. Arrange a low friend before making insecure moves on rounded holds to reach the top. A knee bar before the crux, may be of use.

FA Simon Litchfield and Graeme Read (17<sup>th</sup> June 2010)

“ The sky in the east was turning grey, and by its dim light he saw that he was still sitting on the big grey stone. But it was the topmost stone of a dark, rugged precipice. Had he leaned over to the left to reach the other gate-post, as the dwarf had challenged him to do, he would have fallen down the cliff and killed himself. ”

Grice (1944) Folk-tales of the North Country



## 34. 17.2cm WOODEN BLOCK / DECEPTION BUTTRESS DIRECT 7m E3/4 (\*?)

Good climbing up the blunt arête above the large hole. (5c) Pull onto the ledge and gain the large hole. Arrange the largest gear you can find (a homemade wooden chock hidden in the break beneath the buttress may... may not prove helpful). Use a good pocket (left) to gain slopers and maybe the top  
FA Simon Litchfield and Graeme Read (17<sup>th</sup> June 2010)

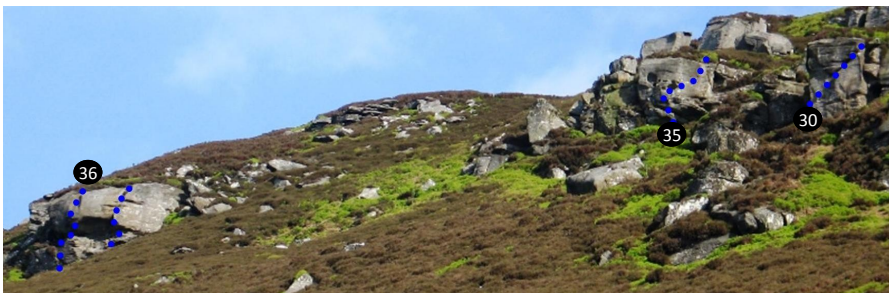


## 35. DUERGAR SLAB 7m E2 (\*?)

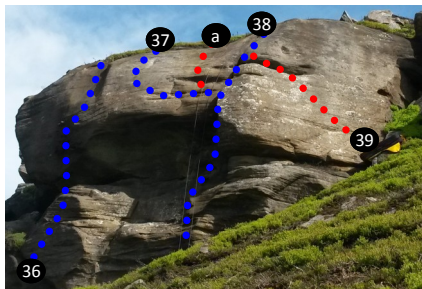
A fine route up the attractive set of holes on the right of the buttress.

(5c) From the hole on *Deception Buttress Direct* traverse down and right. Pull on small crimps to reach good pockets and an easy topout.

FA Graeme Read and Simon Litchfield (17<sup>th</sup> June 2010)







35m to the left of Deception Buttruss is: **Far Left Buttruss GR998 985**. This buttruss can be identified by a prominent crack on the right, and a set of bizarre protrusions under a blank scoop in the centre.

## 36. BROKEN PROMISES 8m E5 \*\*\*

A frightening route up the centre of the buttruss.

(6a) Climb directly to a set of intriguing protrusions. Mantel onto these and establish yourself below a hanging blank scoop. This gives you a good opportunity to: look up and realise there really are no holds; look down and question whether slings around the protrusions might actually hold; or (in the case of the first ascent) ponder the meaning of life while climbing on an unknown crag where no one knows where you are. Commit and smear up the blank groove above.

FA Simon Litchfield (18<sup>th</sup> May 2010) Solo.

## 37. COMPULSIVE LIAR 10m E4 \*\*

Another bold spacewalk.

(5c) Climb *The Caterpillar* and immediately after the bulge traverse left to the base of a folded seam. Follow this to the top.

FA Simon Litchfield (17<sup>th</sup> May 2014)

## 38. THE CATERPILLAR 8m HVS

(5b) Battle up the wide crack on the right of the buttruss. Good if you like that sort of thing.

FA Simon Litchfield, Graeme Read and Libby Kerr (31<sup>st</sup> May 2010)

## 38a. THE CATERPILLAR—ALTERNATIVE FINISH 8m

(5b) Finish left, up the scooped slab. Given how close the crack is there is no real change of grades.

FA Simon Litchfield (17<sup>th</sup> May 2014)

## 39. SERTRALINE DREAMS 6m E3 6b/c, font 7a \*\*\*

From a launchpad on the right, control a dyno sideways and up to simultaneously gain the obvious foothold and a very sloping break for a hand. If you have missed being sucked past the event horizon move left and up to finish up *The Caterpillar*. Brilliantly Dawesesque. Now do the Lambeth Walk and seek out *Lupino Lane* at Ravensheugh.

FA Simon Litchfield (17<sup>th</sup> May 2014)





Left again is an impressive free standing prow.

## 40. WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE font 6b \*\*\*

The fabulous hanging arête is an impeccable and obvious line. From the boulder on the left, gain the arête and climb to the upside down flake. A highball finish awaits (E3 5c).

FA Rob Fielding (August 2010).

## 41. WHERE THE WILD THINGS SIT font 7c+ \*\*\*

A stunning stand out line. Worth the walk alone!

FA Dan Varian 2012

## 42. TOSSON' A WOBBLY font 7a+

The undercuts wall right of the prow from sitting.

FA Dan Varian 2012



The centre of the left slab behind the block is:

## 43. WHITE LIES font 6a+

An interesting test in friction and is a good warm up for *Broken Promises*. Pulling on heather at the start is frowned upon, but grasping it at the top is obligatory!

FA Simon Litchfield (June 2010)

## 44. BULGED FLAKE font 6a

Surmount the rounded flake.

FA Simon Litchfield (17<sup>th</sup> May 2014)

## 45. SCOOP AND ARÊTE font 6a

Start up the scoop before breaking right to hug the upper arêtes.

FA Simon Litchfield (17<sup>th</sup> May 2014)

## 46. NO SCOOP ARÊTE font 5

(SS) Climb the right side of the right arête.

FA Simon Litchfield (17<sup>th</sup> May 2014)

Immediately right is a further is the final block of the far left cluster.



## 47. MAURICE'S MANTEL font 4

Climb the left side of the buttress.

FA Simon Litchfield (17<sup>th</sup> May 2014)

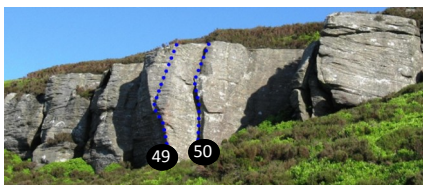
## 48. SENDAK'S SLAB font 5+

From the toe of the right side, smear up the slab.

FA Simon Litchfield (17<sup>th</sup> May 2014)

## Upper Bouldering

On the hillside above *Cossack Dancer* are some smaller buttresses with a number of boulder / highball problems. Best done ground-up... Unless you have a 75m rope!



## 49. WHERE OLD MAN TELFER FEARS TO TREAD font 6b/+ \*\*\*

The striking arête and discontinuous crack is a stunning line with equally stunning climbing. Well worth the walk.

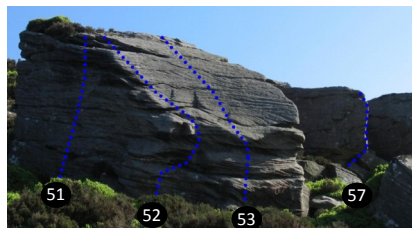
FA Graeme Read (28<sup>th</sup> June 2010)

## 50. THE CRACK font 6a

The obvious crackline is more awkward but better it looks.

FA Graeme Read and Simon Litchfield (28<sup>th</sup> June 2010)

To the right is the free standing 'Kilimanjaro' boulder.



## 51. ACCLIMATISATION, font 5

Climb the centre of the left hand face.

FA Simon Litchfield (12<sup>th</sup> June 2010).

## 52. CLIMB HIGH, 6m VD

From the arête climb the left side of the slab.

FA Simon Litchfield (22<sup>nd</sup> May 2010) Solo

## 53. SLEEP LOW font 6a

From the lowest point of the buttress, use underclings to gain the slab, continue to the top.

FA Simon Litchfield (22<sup>nd</sup> May 2010).

## 54. YMCA TRIBUTE ACT font 6a

The smooth wall on the right of the block. Use a crescent to gain the breaks and then the top

FA Simon Litchfield and Graeme Read (17<sup>th</sup> June 2010)





Right again is a block with an obvious **keel prow / hanging arête** (similar to at Rothley), which gives a few excellent problems.

55. The Elves font 6b

A good problem up the left arête. Sit start left of *The Hole* and slap your way up the arête to glory.

FA Graeme Read and Simon Litchfield (17<sup>th</sup> June 2010).



56. THE HOLE font 5

Climb out the bottom of the hole, with a large reach towards the top

FA Simon Litchfield and Graeme Read (17<sup>th</sup> June 2010)

57. HANGING ARÊTE font 6b+

The fabulous hanging arête is a great line and a great problem. Deserves a sitting start.

FA Graeme Read (17<sup>th</sup> June 2010)



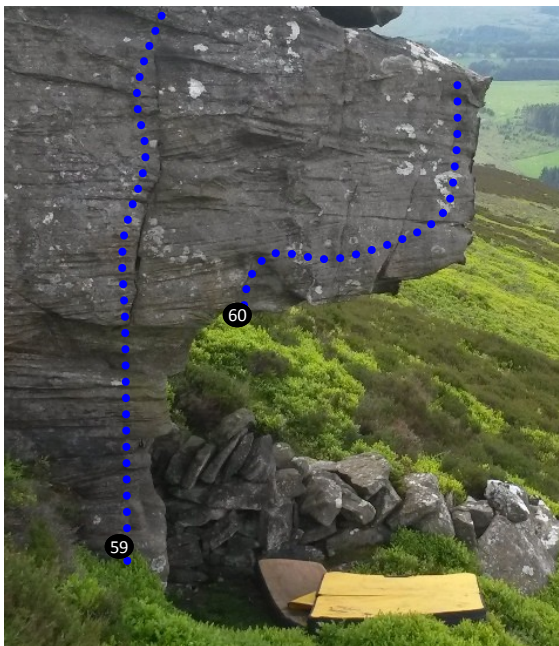
A block with rippled, wrinkled features is right again.

58. THE MAIN FACE font 5

All problems on the face are about English 5b.

FA Simon Litchfield and Graeme Read (17<sup>th</sup> June 2010)





Climb the left arête with excitement.

FA Simon Litchfield (1 June 2014)

61. UPPER WALL WALL  
font 5

Climb the wall above the wall.  
Careful on those crispy crimps!

FA Simon Litchfield (1 June 2014)

62. UPPER WALL RIGHT ARÊTE  
font 5+

The right arête.

FA Simon Litchfield (1 June 2014)

63. UPPER WALL RIGHT  
font 4

Sitting start. Climb the short wall to  
the right of the buttress.

FA Simon Litchfield (1 June 2014)

The arête of the small boulder to  
the right has also been climbed  
from sitting... but is likely to disap-  
pear once the heather grows again!

Further up the hillside lies Upper  
Tosson... a crag for real explorers.  
Guidebook also available online.

Further right and at the top of the stone wall followed  
on the initial approach is the severely undercut **Upper  
Wall Buttress**.

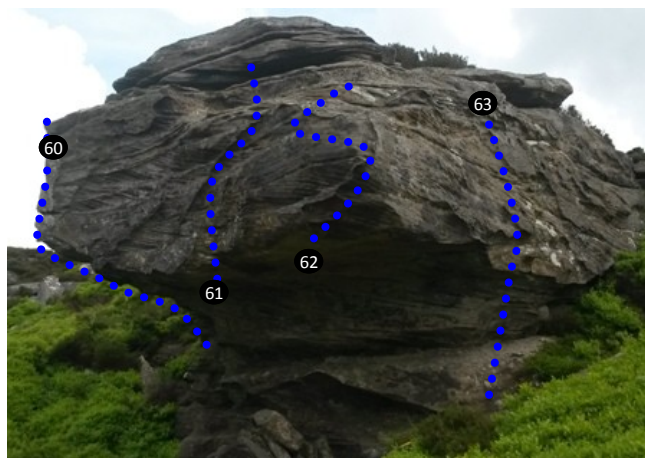
Care should be taken  
on some of the crispy  
holds otherwise you  
may find yourself  
sprawled on the  
eponymous wall.

59. UPPER WALL LEFT  
font 4

The wall and crack on  
the left side of the  
buttress.

FA Simon Litchfield (1  
June 2014)

60. UPPER WALL LEFT  
ARÊTE  
font 6a+ \*\*





Lower Tossion Sunset © Jim Stanton



## History

Continued from page 7

Subsequent trips in 2009 year uncovered an number routes including *Cossack Dancer*. An abseil down the line revealed a paucity of holds on the upper section and sparked a burning desire to climb such a stunning line. A holiday to the Ukraine and the end of summer put plans on hold. On returning to the crag in 2010 for a cleaning session a combination of psyche and frustration at not being able to jump on his project led Simon to the Far Left Buttress. The bold *Broken Promises* was soloed and motivated the first ascensionist to sort himself out and write the dissertation he had been avoiding.

By mid-May 2010 the crag was ready for a new route blitz. With the help of Graeme and Libby Kerr a number of good lines fell, including *Cossack Dancer* and *Somewhere Over the Rainbow* which everyone enthused about. Libby added a route of her own and looked at Deception Buttress. Another abseil revealed that the buttress was going to be no pushover with a bold and innovative approach required. Thus the necky *Duergar Arete / Slab* and eponymously named 17.2cm *Wooden Block* fell.

The bouldering was developed in a more piecemeal manner. The 'Kilimanjaro Boulder' was climbed in memory of a Mr. Lane who had died a social death after performing a particularly special rendition of the YMCA while in full climbing attire. The fine *arêtes* fell to Graeme and in the main cave Simon climbed *The Emerald City* and announced it 5a. This was then raised to 5c after Graeme demonstrated that he was significantly less flexible and significantly more pumped than Simon having just established the über-classic *traverse* and *circuit extension*.

On hearing about unclimbed prows Rob Fielding raided

from the lakes and added the outstanding *Where the Wild Things are*, but the challenging direct start remained. Finally in 2012 Dan Varian took up the mantle, mopping up the harder problems in the cave and managing the sit start to the *Wild things*, thereby establishing a true king line at Lower Tosson.

In 2014 Simon returned with a fresh pair of eyes to tidy up some of the remaining boulders. He was surprised to find the excellent *Sertraline Dreams*. Like his frame of mind it required a bit of lateral thinking to prevent disappearing beyond the event horizon, but perseverance paid dividends.

*"A great deal of credit must go to Simon, for without his dedication (his visits to the crag reached double figures in a matter of a few weeks, sometimes just spent cleaning potential routes and not actually getting to put his climbing shoes on) this guide would still be work in progress."* Graeme Read June 2010

## Graded List - Routes

The first ascensionists have offered stars for the very best routes judged on: rock, lines, climbing and position. Other routes arguably deserve stars, but will remain unstarred until repeated.

Similarly until repeat ascents the grades remain subjective. Climbs which the first ascensionists considered borderline (and low in the grade) have been indicated with a: ↓.

### E6

Cossack Dancer (6b) \*\*\*

### E5

Broken Promises (6a) \*\*\*

### E4

Somewhere over the Rainbow (6a) \*\*\*  
Duergar Arete (6a)



# Lower Tossion - Graded List

## E2

Duergar Slab (5c)  
The Lion Who Found His Heart (5b) ↓

## E1

Winged Monkeys 11m (5b)  
The Scarecrow 8m (5a) ↓

## HVS

Stone Wall Marches (5b)  
The Bearded Wizard (5b)  
The Caterpillar (5b)  
The Wicked Witch of the West (5b)

## VS

The Emerald City (5c)  
The Tin Man (5a)  
Pot of Gold (5a) \*\*+?  
Follow the Yellow Brick Road (5a) \*\*+?  
Break Dancer (5a)  
Toto's Tail (5a)  
Left in Kansas (5a)  
Schwüle Sommertage (5a)

## HS

CULicoides impuNcTatuS (4b)  
Death by 1000 Midgebites (4a/b) ↓

## VD

Jabberwocky  
Climb High ↓

## Boulder Problems

A muscle sign has been given to problems that are technically easy but strenuous

**Font 7a+** Left in Kansas SS

## Font 6b+/6C

The Circuit 🐼

## Font 6b+

Hanging Arête

## Font 6b/+

Where Old Man Telfer Fears to Tread

## Font 6b

Where the Wild Things are  
The Elves  
Tossion Traverse 🐼  
The Emerald City ↓

## Font 6a +

White Lies  
Ballroom Dancers Arête  
Awaiting Telfer's Lip

## Font 6a

The Crack  
Munchkin Country  
YMCA Tribute Act  
Gold Digger

## Font 5

The block right of the obvious arête  
Sleep Low  
The Yeti Traverse  
The Hole  
Acclimatisation  
Follow the Yellow Brick Road

## Font 4+

Pot of Gold  
Left in Kansas

I hope you have (had) as much fun exploring this venue as I did. Feedback may be sent to user: Si Litchfield on Ukclimbing.com





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