

NEW CLIMBS

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PEAK DISTRICT LIMESTONE

Since the publication of the Derbyshire Limestone Guide Book, two years ago, some attention has been paid by members of the Mountain Club to the cliffs and pinnacles of Dovedale. It is thought that details of these routes should be of interest to those who have begun to practise their craft on Derbyshire limestone.

The Guide Book previously mentioned was written and published by the Manchester Gritstone Climbing Club. Although a worthy and needed publication, it was nevertheless sadly erroneous in many places. Obviously not enough proof reading was done by people with authoritative knowledge. The most serious mistake will be found to be the location and description of the Dargai Crack in Castleton's Cave Dale. This crack, first climbed by J. W. Puttrell in the Victorian Era, is the first known limestone climb in the Peak District.

The route described and listed in the Guide Book (page III) as the Dargai Crack is actually a climb long known as Puttrell's Crack. The route described as Spinal Finale (page 113) is the true Dargai Crack.

DOVEDALE

The new climbs here are mainly concerned with the Rock Tors and pinnacles of the Twelve Apostles, Raven's Tor, Pickering Tor, Tissington Spires and Ilam Rock.

THE TWELVE APOSTLES

Here the main climbing is on a large and obvious pinnacle near the river and a quarter of a mile from the Stepping Stones on the left side of the valley. The routes described lie on the south side of the pinnacle.

CATS EYE CORNER. 70 feet.

Starts out of the obvious cave, where a thin line of holds leads to the foot of an obvious corner (all peg work this), which is hard at first and then eases to a belay at the foot of the corner. Then very severe free climbing up the corner gradually breaking leftwards on to a slab leading to a belay ledge. The last pitch, of very difficult standard, begins by climbing a crack above the ledge until a step can be made on to a ledge on the left arête. Then up a crack round the corner to the left.

Variation. An alternative start is by a very severe rightward traverse to the corner belay ledge at the top of pitch I.

CRYPT ROUTE, JACOB'S LADDER 50 feet. Difficult.

Jacob's Ladder is split into two separate pinnacles by a deep cleft. At the centre of this a cross roads is formed by the meeting of two natural archways, one in each pinnacle. From the cross roads, and facing the subsidiary pinnacle, the route starts up the left of the archway with a short pitch ending in a chimney move into another natural archway. Walk through this to a tree and belay on the other side of the pinnacle, from where a short steep pitch of grass and rock leads to the top of the pinnacle.

P. Williams, J. Amies, April 27th, 1963.

SNAKES ALIVE. 70 feet. Very Severe.

This route ascends the obvious corner to the right of Phil's Route (see Guide Book). At the start the corner overhangs for 10 feet, then eases for a little way up to an obvious overhang when one is forced out on to the left wall and into a small niche. The step back on to the nose of the overhang is hard. Free belay at the top.

P. Williams, May 25th, 1963.

WATT'S HERE. 50 feet. A.1.

An obvious crack on the subsidiary pinnacle, starting 25 feet left of Crypt Route. Easy pegging up the crack, the rock becoming doubtful near the top and needing respect.

P. Williams, R. Watts, May 25th, 1963

RAVEN'S TOR

This crag has yielded a couple of routes as follows:

BROWN'S BLUNDER. 80 feet. Hard Severe.

Starts at the foot of the Central Gully where an obvious rake breaks leftwards. Follow this rake ascending left, then two delicate moves leading left to a belay ledge on the usual Left Hand Route. Finish as for Left Hand Route up an overhanging corner on the left. A good free route on a hitherto mechanical crag.

P. Williams, J. Amies, April 12th, 1963.

RAVEN'S TOR GIRDLE. 170 feet. Very Severe.

The start is up Southern Gully which is the obvious corner to the south of the main south buttress, at a point 20 feet left of the start of the Southern Rib route.

1. 30 FEET. Up Southern Gully to a tree belay.
2. 25 FEET. Rightwards traverse across the slab, employing an underhand layback beneath the overhang to a stance at the top of pitch I of Southern Rib.
3. 30 FEET. As for pitch two of Southern Rib, breaking rightward to a ledge and belay at the top of the corner. Exposed with a crux move at the top.
4. 10 FEET. Rappel down on to a ledge, and belay at the top of Left Hand Route.
5. 25 FEET. Easy rightward traverse across the central wall to a belay over a slight nose.
6. 45 FEET. Traverse Central Wall into Central Gully to a tree belay. Finish by a 90 foot rappel to the ground, or walk up the gully to the top of the crag.

P. Williams, J. Amies, May, 5th, 1963.

BALEY BUTTRESS

This crag is opposite to Raven's Tor, Mill Dale, and is a smaller buttress about 60 feet high with an overhang at 25 feet on the main face. The buttress gives two routes.

THE CLAW

A steep impressive climb demanding strong fingers. Commences by taking a thin crack below the overhang and then crosses this overhang by means of an obvious broken crack which is the main weakness splitting the bulge.

THE BEAK. Very Severe.

A short corner surmounted by a small block overhang on the right wall of an ivy-covered buttress at the right hand end of the crag. It is mainly of difficult standard except for two awkward moves getting out of the overhang at the top.

P. Williams, September 15th, 1963.

PICKERING TOR

THE ARÊTE ROUTE. 40 feet. Severe+A.2.

The obvious route to the summit of the pinnacle via the arête rising from the col. Not recorded in the guide book, but first ascended in 1931 by Frank Elliott of the Nottingham Mountaineering Club.

PICKERING TOR GIRDLE. 150 feet. A.3.

1. Ascend the Cave Route to a belay ledge on an obvious grass rake.
2. Continue up broken rock on the A.3 route to a belay ledge on a grass rake.
3. Ascend from the ledge and take an obvious traverse line into the foot of Pickering Overhang, belaying in etriers.
4. Ascend to below the overhang and traverse right to below a belay ledge on the Arête.
5. Finish up the Arête.

P. Williams, J. Amies, March 16th, 1963.

TISSINGTON SPIRES

These rocks have provided several routes as follows:

JOHN PEEL. 180 feet. Hard Very Severe.

This steep exposed route on mainly sound rock follows the Curving Scar on the main Tissington Wall, and starts in the gully below a large tree.

1. 100 FEET. Start with an ascending leftwards traverse, following a line of small trees (useful as runners) until a difficult move leads to a small broken ledge just below the overhangs (piton belay for running protection). Difficult moves up the small slab above bring more difficulties up a broken corner, but a further rightward trend brings relief in the form of a small inadequate stance, where a piton runner can be placed. Then traverse rightwards for 15 feet and then up to a small stance on the series of small ledges. A high piton belay is the safest form of protection.
2. 30 FEET. Underhand layback moves up a steeply sloping slab give access to a semi-finger traverse rightwards to the large yew tree (belay).
3. 50 FEET. Move left out of the yew tree, ascending leftwards to a series of large ledges. Belay at the top of the buttress.

P. Williams, J. Amies, September 16th, 1963.

WATCHBLOCK INDIRECT. 100 feet. A.2.

This route lies on the Watchblock which is the tower crag next to Pickering Tor, and can be identified by the conspicuous and seemingly unstable block on the edge of the top of the crag.

Start at the left end of the crag, to the left of an obvious natural tunnel suitable for bivouacs. Then peg up and over the entrance of the tunnel and rightwards on to a small 60° slab. A further traverse right then a short overhanging corner leads to the upper slab. A short traverse left is made, then a direct ascent to the left of the Watchblock.

OVERHANG BUTTRESS

This impressive buttress with a large roof is situated between the Watchblock Tower and Pickering Tor. It gives a fine open route on sound clean rock.

BEGINNER'S LUCK. 70 feet. Hard Severe.

Starting at the foot of the buttress nose, a delicate slab on the right, or alternatively an overhanging layback crack, leads to a ledge in 15 feet. Then easily up the corner above until forced left by an overhang, followed by a leftward, ascending semi-hand traverse to the nose, breaking on to an easy ground and a ledge (piton belay). Next traverse right, under the overhang, followed by two delicate and exposed moves into the foot of a short corner (Chockstone runner). Climb the corner awkwardly to a yew tree belay at the top.

P. Williams, J. Amies, March 23rd, 1963.

ILAM ROCK

Has yielded another route to add to its famous quota. This is

PLEB'S DELIGHT. 50 feet. A.3.

Start at the centre of the wall between the White Edge and the Girdle Traverse routes, and take a direct line up the wall to a small niche. Three pegs into and out of the niche overcomes the crux, direct for four moves, then a rightward trend to finish up the White Edge. A belay in etriers is recommended on the Girdle Traverse Crack so that the final corner of the White Edge can be made free with the least amount of rope friction.

P. Williams, J. Amies, April 28th, 1963.

RAVENSDALE

(see *Limestone Guide Book to the Peak District*, page 74)

A number of fine new routes have been made here on the various limestone crags. They are numbered in accordance with the various routes already recorded in the Guide Book, and are the work of members of the Peak Climbing Club.

2A. IVY CORNER. 55 feet. Severe.

On Tower Buttress, just to the right of its centre, there is a clean cut corner almost hidden by ivy. The quality of the climbing and the cleanness of the rock are surprising. From the top of the corner, move right on to the last few feet of Tower Climb.

2B. TOWER CLIMB. 50 feet. Difficult.

A broken open corner immediately left of The Tower.

The next climbs are in the bay on Raven's Buttress, at its left side.

14A. THE RUNNEL. 70 feet. Very Difficult.

The broken vegetated corner, right of the clean wall of Round the Bend. Rather loose.

14B. YEW CAP. 60 feet. Very Severe.

About 30 feet right of The Runnel. Commences with a deep wide crack which gives very awkward climbing. A stance can be made on a good narrow ledge in 15 feet, then move right a little to a shallow corner and up this to broken rock leading to a yew tree with a pleasant little bower behind it. Then in 15 feet the top is reached.

J. A. Loy, D. Mellor, September, 30th 1962.

14C. Y CHIMNEY, RIGHT BRANCH. 50 feet. Very Severe.

A hard route. The narrow chimney is climbed until it is possible to gain the thin right hand crack which is followed to the top by bridging and layaway moves.

A. Wright, D. Gregory, September 30th, 1962.

16. DELUSOR. 135 feet. Very Severe.

A new and better line for the first pitch has been made by ascending the diagonal crack leading to the stance below the main crack of the climb.

P. Crew, B. Ingle, September 30th, 1962.

21. FRERE. 140 feet. Very Severe.

This is the correct name for the route wrongfully recorded as Flypaper in the *Limestone Guide Book*. The correct description of this climb is as follows:

The climb is in two sections on the right hand side of the buttress and is exposed and quite a serious undertaking. Start about 30 feet right of the lowest point of the buttress and climb a narrow crack to a small grassy ledge at 10 feet. Then from the right hand end of the ledge, ascend a steep open groove, overhanging at first, until an excellent spike on its right is reached. Then move right, then diagonally right again to a point just below a large flake of rock surrounded by ivy. Climb the steep wall below the flake and then the flake also, to a large ledge and tree belay.

From the left hand end of the ledge a short easy chimney leads to a yew tree, and from a ledge above the tree traverse back right to the bottom of an ivy filled groove (belay). Now climb the groove for 15 feet followed by a rightwards, slightly ascending, traverse for 10 feet, and then upwards to a piton fixed in the bulging rock above, which protects the necessary moves to gain a ledge and piton belay.

From the right hand end of this ledge ascend awkwardly to a small ledge and then traverse easily right until able to finish directly up to a small tree. No belay at the top.

J. A. Loy, W. Woodward, November, 1958.

RIGHT CROSS. Very Severe.

An ascending girdle of Raven's Buttress.

Ascend the original first pitch of Deluser, then traverse right to Medusa and along to the Pinnacle Belay. Move right, crossing vegetated rock to the higher of the two stances above pitch one of Mealy Bugs, and then descend 5 feet right and continue round to a wide crack which is followed to a yew tree. Now up past the tree to the ledge of Frere (Flypaper) and belay on saplings at the bottom of a groove (Pitch 3 of Frere). Now ascend pitches 3 and 4 of Frere to finish.

D. Mellor, J. Loy, May 14th, 1961.

About 100 yards right of Raven's Buttress will be found the large Cave Buttress with the cave at its right hand end. Here will be found two routes.

SOUTH CRACK. 50 feet. Severe.

A prominent cleft some 15 feet left of the cave. The first few feet are the hardest.

E. Howard, J. A. Loy, June 19th, 1960.

CHOSS. 75 feet. Very Severe.

On the frontal wall of the buttress, some 20 feet left of South Crack, a steep shallow groove forms the essence of the route.

E. Howard, J. A. Loy, June 19th, 1960

NORTH WALES

KANGAROO'S CRAWL, CWM SILYN. 200 feet. Very Severe.

This route is on the smaller buttress to the right of the face on which lies Kirkus's Route. There is an obvious groove at the bottom of the buttress which marks the start of the climb.

1. 60 FEET. The left wall of the groove. Belay on a big ledge.
2. 40 FEET. The left corner for 20 feet, then right to the continuation of the original line. Poor belay.
3. 40 FEET. Move right on to a steep wall for 20 feet to a ledge and continue to a belay below the overhang.
4. 60 FEET. Left across a short wall and continue leftwards to the arête leading to the top.

M. Owen, A. Wright, Leading through, October, 1963.

AXMINSTER VARIATION, CLOGWYN DU'R ARDDU.

90 feet. Very Severe.

A variation finish to Carpet Slab.

1. 120 FEET. As for Carpet Slab.
2. 40 FEET. As for Carpet Slab to where the route breaks away to the left up grass. Chock belay.
3. 40 FEET. Climb the short steep corner (10 feet) on to a slab. Traverse right across a slab to a grassy groove.
4. 50 FEET. Back leftwards on to the rib and up fairly easily to the top.

N. J. Soper, A. Wright, Through leads, August, 1963.