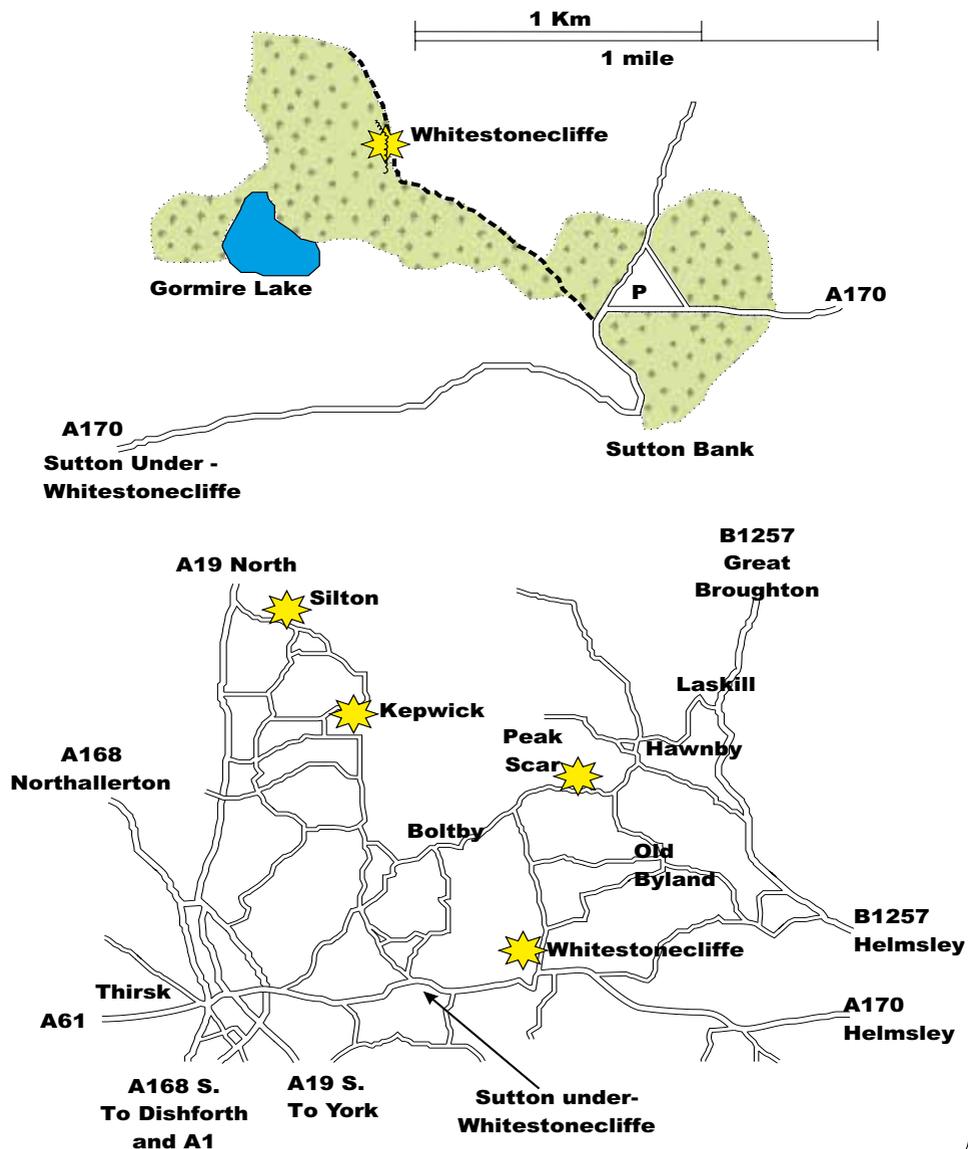


Whitestone Cliffe

Karin Magog
35. The Night Watch VS 4b
© Steve Crowe



WHITESTONE- CLIFFE



WHITESTONE CLIFFE

OS Landranger Sheet 100

Map Ref: SE507836

Aspect: West Facing

Altitude: 300m

Approach: 10 minutes

Mod - Severe	11
HS - HVS	31
E1 - E3	6
E4 and above	2
Bouldering	0

History

The incident, which helped create Whitestone Cliffe, occurred on the 25th March 1755 when John Wesley, a Methodist Preacher, who was visiting the nearby village of Sutton-under-Whitestone, recorded this event. Wesley wrote; "It began at about 7am when workmen near the cliff reported hearing, "a roaring like many cannon", and then "the ground shook and trembled, disturbing the peace and tranquillity." We know from recent surveys that Wesley was recording a massive landslide that exposed the escarpment we see today. Sadly, the climbing history of the crag is less well documented. Although many of the first ascensionists are still active and have been contacted for information, their lack of records and their now failing memories, has meant that it has been impossible to attribute accurate ascent details for many routes. Hopefully, one day, some of these gaps will be filled before the history is totally lost! The first recorded activity dates from the 1950s when climbers stationed at nearby RAF Leeming and Topcliffe pioneered some of the more obvious lines including *Thyrus* and *Gauche*. Serious exploration began in 1960 when Terry Sullivan accompanied by Andrew Marr climbed the now classic *The Night Watch*, and a few weeks later, the imposing line of *Countdown* with Vic Tosh. Considering the nature of the rock, the limited protection and their insistence on climbing from the foot of the cliff without inspection or cleaning, these early achievements were, and still are, outstanding. These early climbs were widely reported in 1961 and it wasn't long before the next wave of development began. First to take up the challenge were the talented team of Ernie Shield and Chris Woodall. The pair quickly repeated all the existing climbs then began probing the crag's defences, adding several routes including *Masochist* and *Couldn't*. The same team also saw the possibility of traversing the whole cliff, and over several weekends they managed to girdle the crag to produce the magnificent *Chameleon*. Throughout the crag's early development, Ernie Shield was at the forefront of exploration, creating some superb and often very bold climbs including *The Leash* and the frightfully loose *Double Time*. Derrick Van Meerbeeck, Stewart Patterson and Richard Clarke were also actively exploring and over the next few years they were responsible for adding several of the major lines including *Blitzkrieg*, *Sassenach* and the formidable *Black Mamba*. During 1965 Chris Woodall with Malcolm Farrow climbed the superb *Central Crack* and a few weeks later Miles Mosely and Richard Clarke added the now classic *Last Post*. Chris Woodall created *The Skab* in 1967 using a peg for aid. The climb was repeated free the following year by Tony Marr and Johnny Adams. Then in 1968 Chris Woodall climbed one of the most stunning lines on the crag, to produce *The Claw*. The climbing was unrelentingly steep and very bold, but required several points of aid. Just over a decade later Kelvin Neal pulled out all the stops and managed the climb completely free, to produce one of the finest pitches on the crag. The 1970s saw great advances in climbing protection devices, which allowed climbers to push the free climbing limits and challenge the use of artificial aid, leading to determined efforts to free climb all routes that previously required it. Several routes, such as *Wailing Wall*, *Blitzkrieg*, *Espeekay* and *Black Mamba* were the scenes of much activity, resulting in impressive aid reductions. Unfortunately the names of many of the climbers responsible for these improvements remain unknown. In early 1972, Tony Marr and Jim McGee discovered the delightful corner of *Frigg*, which was followed a short time later by Derrick Van Meerbeeck and Stewart Patterson's companion route, *Mars Bar*. Pete McNulty and Mike Readshaw were responsible for two very bold and serious climbs during 1974, *Pillar of Winds* and the aptly named *The Trembler*. Over the next decade the crag's popularity waned and little of interest was added until 1986 when D. Downe climbed a very hard finish to *The Night Watch*. Despite regular visits by many strong teams over the last few years, only one worthwhile new climb has been reported, *Jurassic Scarp* by John Moulding and Fred Stevenson in 1995. No doubt, in time a new generation will seek out the crag's remaining challenges and the cycle will begin again. Luke Hunt and Franco Cookson made the first free ascent of the girdle traverse climbing left to right in 2009 finishing up *Jurassic Scarp*.

Situation and Character

This is the largest crag on the Cleveland and Hambleton escarpment, reaching a height of 40m and extending for more than 300m. The crag's yellow colour and vast size make it clearly visible from the A1 and A19 trunk roads to the west. It consists of steep, friable limestone, making all the climbs serious undertakings due to the unpredictable nature of the rock. However, by exercising care, experienced climbers can enjoy some truly unique and exciting climbing in a delightful setting.

Health Warning- This crag is not a suitable venue for beginners, young children or pets.

Access and Approaches

The crag is best approached from the market town of Thirsk, close to the A19 trunk road. Follow the A170 Scarborough road east from Thirsk for about 9km to the summit of Sutton Bank. Parking is available at the National Park Visitors' Centre (parking charge currently £1.50/day). From the car park follow the well-defined track (The Cleveland Way), heading northwest for about 1km. There is a Nature Trust sign at the top of the crag, which overlooks Gormire Lake.

To protect the delicate flora and fauna, no attempt should be made to approach the crag from the lake or the nature trails below. Protected birds have occasionally nested on the cliff – if they are present look out for on-site signing with details of the restrictions.

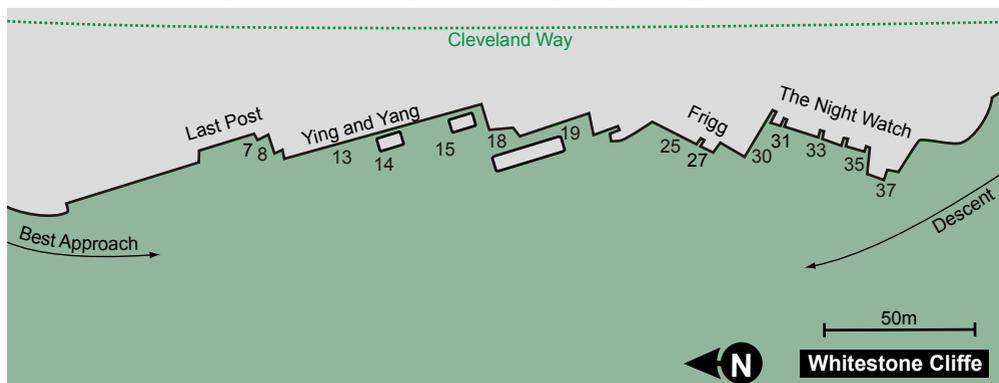
The Climbs

There are four popular ways to reach its foot though none is particularly easy, being either steep or overgrown. It is possible to descend a steep gully lying to the right of the Nature Trust sign. This can be dangerous and it is recommended that a spare rope be fixed as a handrail. Possibly the safest approach, but with dense undergrowth in summer, is to return along the path towards the car park for about 120m to where a broad V gully descends into the wood. Descend the gully for about 30m then contour rightward through undergrowth, just beneath the outcrops, to arrive at the south end of the main crag. It is possible to descend at the extreme north end of the crag down a steep grass slope and short rock step. Lastly, it is possible to abseil directly to the foot of the climbs, although great care must be taken to prevent dislodging loose rock onto oneself.

It is strongly recommended that an extra rope be carried as many of the belays are from trees, some distance back from the top of the face. In summer the base of the crag is carpeted by dense nettles making access to some routes unpleasant, and it is probably best to make a first visit in the spring/autumn. As Peregrine have started nesting here again the owners, Yorkshire Wildlife, may impose restrictions between March and July check with the BMC for the latest information. The climbs are described from left to right (North to South).

General Note

Pitons were originally used for both aid and protection and, although a few remain in situ, it is fair to say that modern protection devices have eliminated the need for most. Any pegs mentioned in the route descriptions may well be untrustworthy or even completely missing!



1. Masochist 13m S 4a

The first chimney/crack. Climb the crack to a ledge on the left, and then continue over a bulge at the top.

Chris Woodall, Bob Cornwell, Ernie Shield 8th June 1963.

2. Conflict 22m VS 4c

Follow the steep crack line 5m to the right of *Masochist*. **The block making up the top half of the crack was in a dangerous condition in 2005 even by Whitesone standards! Best avoided.**

Ernie Shield, Mike Stellings 1963.

3. Couldn't Again 30m HVS 5a

The original route Couldn't, collapsed in a rock fall in 1968 leaving the Direct Finish without a start. The route described makes use of an adjacent climb to produce a worthwhile pitch. Begin as for Conflict, following the crack for about 15m to where it crosses the girdle traverse, then trend rightwards to a small stance at the foot of a groove. (Ancient bolt belay) Climb the overhanging groove on the right with interest!

Couldn't: Ernie Shield, Chris Woodall. 1963. The climb joined Conflict to finish.

Direct Finish: Stewart Patterson, Derrick Van Meerbeeck 1964. 2 pegs for aid in the final groove. Couldn't Again: Rick Graham, Tim Clarke 14th October 1972. Couldn't rises from the ashes, and Rick free climbs the final groove dispensing with the aid pegs.

4. Throwback 30m VS 4c

Starts at a faint corner to the right and below a small tree halfway up the crag. Follow the corner/crack to a small ledge then move left to a tree. Follow the crack behind the tree to a small ledge. Awkward moves lead right up a rising gangway to a large ledge and the top.

Ernie Shield, Tony Marr. May 1964.

5. Pygmalion 33m HS 4b

A serious route requiring care with very soft rock. The start is 10m right of *Throwback* below a prominent corner. Climb the wall on the right on good holds until an awkward move at 20m leads to a small ledge. Climb the left wall of the corner to a bulge that is passed on the left with difficulty, and then better holds lead to the top.

Ernie Shield, Chris Woodall. May 1964.

6. Wailing Wall 33m HVS 5a A1

Start in the centre of the wall 5m right of *Pygmalion*. Trend right up a thin crack, past an old peg runner, and after 10m trend left to reach a ledge. Continue left to gain an obvious rightward traverse leading to a ledge in the centre of the wall. (Belay possible). Continue up

the inverted "V" slab, step right and climb the steepening wall with the aid of two pegs. Move right again to escape near the top of *Last Post*.

Chris Woodall, Ritchie Clarke 1965. The first ascent used 15 points of aid (VS A2). Interestingly, the original description read: From the belay follow a wandering line of cracks using 12 American pegs and a piece of gas pipe! Yes, gas pipe; home made wedges and pegs were common at this time.

Late 1970s. The aid was reduced to its present level. Climbers unknown.

The next climb has the best rock of all the routes at this end of the crag, and is justifiably popular.

7. Last Post 35m VS 4c **

Start below a left facing corner/crack 12m to the right of *Pygmalion*. Gain the jamming crack and climb it until a step left allows a grassy gangway to be reached. Follow the ramp to exit by a bulging crack.

Miles Mosely, Ritchie Clarke. September 1965. Mosely had noticed the line earlier in the year but didn't have an opportunity to try it. At about this time his parents relocated from Teesside to Harrogate, which allowed him easy access to the gritstone outcrop of Almscliff, where he practiced his jamming techniques. Returning to Whitestone a few weeks later with Ritchie Clarke he made a rapid and flawless ascent of the route. Asked about the climb later, Mosely commented that he had found the crux jamming crack particularly enjoyable thanks to his Almscliff training.

8. Clutcher 36m VS 4c *

Start around the corner from the last route. Climb the prominent chimney/crack running up the left side of the large overhangs, passing under or over the huge perched blocks to reach the final chimney.

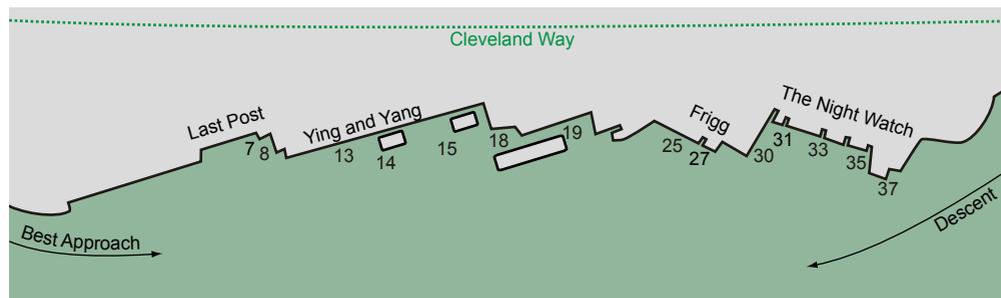
Chris Woodall, Terry Sullivan. Early 1960s.

The next four routes are all serious undertakings due to steep and unpredictable rock. Take care!

9. Blitzkrieg 35m E2 5c **

Start 5m to the right of *Clutcher*. Climb a crack into a large cave at 10m. Belay. Traverse left across the steep wall beneath a roof to a resting place below a bulging crack. The crack is climbed using a peg for aid (in place). Finish as for *Clutcher*.

Derrick Van Meerbeeck, Ritchie Clarke. Mid 1960s. Originally graded VS A2 using several pegs for aid. Early 1980s; aid reduced to 1peg. Climbers unknown.

**10. Espeekay 33m E2 5b (A0) ****

This climb takes a higher and more direct line than *Blitzkrieg*, using some dubious old pegs for protection. Start at a crack line directly below the right hand side of the cave. Climb the crack into the cave at 13m. Belay. From the cave climb a line slanting left to a resting place; continue directly over a square-cut overhang [peg for aid] to escape up a broken groove to the top.

Stewart Patterson, Derrick Van Meerbeeck. Mid 1960s. Originally graded S, A2 and used several pegs for aid. Early 1980s; aid reduced to 1peg by Andy Parkin.

11. Black Mamba 40m E2/3 5b **

A very strenuous and exposed route climbing a steep crack through the bulges at the back of the cave. Start as for *Espeekay* and climb the crack to the cave. Climb the overhanging corner/crack to the large roof. Then traverse right around the prow to a good ledge (rusty pegs in situ). Belay. Step down and move to the right then follow cracks to the top.

Derrick Van Meerbeeck, Stewart Patterson. Mid 1960s. Originally graded A2 requiring 10-12 pegs for aid. FFA Chris Woodall, A.N. Other. Late 1970s. The roof can also be passed on the left but this could lead to a tangle of ropes and an unplanned hanging belay!

12. The Possum 38m VS 4c (A2)

Takes the wall 7m right of the main overhangs. Follow a series of disjointed cracks straight up the wall. The in- situ pegs and bolts are the originals and should not be relied upon.

Late 1960s. Climbers unknown.

13. Ying and Yang 30m HVS 5a **

Start 12m right of the main overhangs. Climb a short chimney left of a detached block. Step onto a slab and move up to the overhang, move left and pass the overhang to gain a wall. Climb the wall to another roof then go left for 2m and pull over the roof to a ledge. Belay possible. Trend rightwards, climbing the final wall to the top.

Ernie Shield, Mike Hosted 1964. Using 2 pegs for aid. FFA Early 1970s. Climbers unknown.

14. Sassenach 36m HVS 5a

This route has become very loose and scary, and is best avoided. Start just right of the last climb. Surmount the detached block then move rightwards across a narrow slab to reach a steep crack. Follow the crack over some very doubtful rock until ledges lead right to the final crack.

Stewart Patterson, Derrick Van Meerbeeck Early 1960s. One of the earliest routes to be climbed at the crag.

15. Gamin 22m HS 4a *

Start at the chimney in the corner to the right of *Sassenach*. Climb the chimney to a chockstone, and then move out right and up the wall to finish at a tree. Strenuous and with some awkward moves. **(Overgrown and passing a very prickly bush may prove impossible)**

Early 1960s. Climbers unknown.

16. Pillar of Winds 70m HVS 5b

This route is very loose and not recommended. Begin by climbing *Gamin* to the tree. Belay. Step up then cross the wall on the left for about 10m to a peg. Move down to a small ledge, then trend left and up to gain another ledge, which is followed to the crack of *Ying and Yang*; descend this to a good ledge. Belay. Continue traversing (peg runners not in place) to cross *The Possum* and finish up *Black Mamba*.

Peter McNulty, Mike Readshaw 4th May 1974.

17. Yangtze 20m HS 4b

Climb the arête just right of *Gamin*.

The start is covered with thick ivy.

Ernie Shield, Les Barker 23rd April 1972.

Around the arête to the right, above a huge boulder, is the prominent corner of...

18. Thyrus 22m S 4a

Start in a corner behind the huge boulder. Climb the corner for a few metres, using curious holes on the left wall. Move left at a small grassy ledge, and climb the wall (spaced protection); the old alternative of sticking to the corner is now

impractical due to vegetation. At the top of the wall, move up and left towards the arête, which is reached just above a small hawthorn. Finish up the right side of the arête.

Attributed to a team from RAF Topcliffe. 1950s.

The next climb crosses the huge slab to the right of *Thyrus* then finishes via the impressive hanging cleft in the final wall.

19. The Leash 36m VS 4c **

Starts 5m right of *Thyrus* below the large slab. 26m 4b. Climb the wall following thin cracks then move left using a flake to gain a ledge. Trend right onto a slab then up a steep wall leading to the main slab. Cross the slab to the left until beneath the final imposing crack. Peg and nut belay on the left.

10m 4c. Climb the loose wall to the roof. Pass the roof on excellent holds but in a very airy position. This pitch is well protected once you reach the chimney and cannon ball.

Ernie Shield, Les Barker 1964. Another fine climb by Shield taking an eye-catching line with a "mind blowing" finish. Not for the faint hearted!

**** The next four routes are all serious undertakings due to loose rock and are best avoided. ****

20. Double Time 30m VS 4b

Dangerously loose and very serious. Takes the large corner to the right of the slab. Follow the corner to finish by kicking steps in vertical rubble. **Best avoided!**

Ernie Shield & party. Mid 1960s.

21. Garbage Groove 29m D

Situated 5m right of the slab. A natural rock bridge leads into a loose chimney; the route's name says it all. **Best avoided!**

Early 1960s. Climbers unknown.

22. The Trembler 40m VS 4c

Climb a shallow corner just right of *Garbage Groove* to a roof then move right to a grass ledge. Step left and follow a crack, then traverse right onto a huge poised block (if it's still there!). Move up and right to finish. **Best avoided!**

Mike Readshaw, Peter McNulty 1972.

23. Garth's Causeway 28m VD

Start 4m right of the last route at twin cracks; the left crack being choked by a tree. Climb directly up a series of cracks and chimneys to the top. Loose and overgrown. **Best avoided!**

Early 1960s. Climbers unknown.

24. The Nocker 30m VS 5a

Follow the left facing corner 3m right of *Garth's Causeway* to a grass ledge at 10m. Step up right to gain a groove with a detached flake, use the spherical protrusion to pull through the "cleavage" in the overhang to reach better holds and the top.

Chris Woodall, Ritchie Clarke. Mid 1960s. 2pts. of aid used. FFA Ken Jackson, Tony Marr 1970.

The next climb tackles the prominent corner/groove 2m to the right of the previous route.

25. Odin 33m VS 4b *

Twin cracks lead to a ledge and tree. Follow the corner to the final overhanging crack. Climb the crack on shattered blocks then step right and scramble to the top.

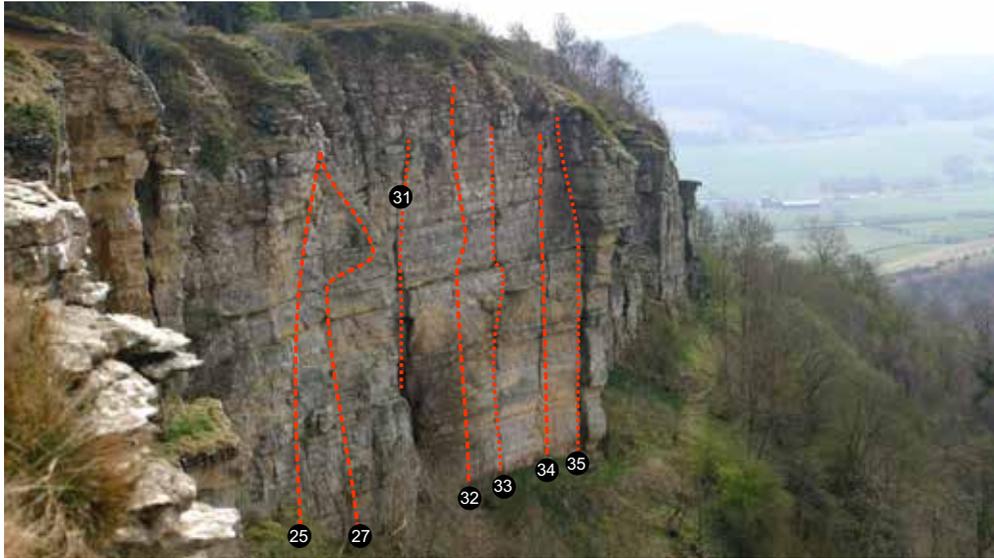
Early 1960s. Climbers unknown. The climb included an unusual piece of in-situ protection, a crankshaft from a car engine (however it disappeared in the 1990's!).

26. Odin Direct 30m HVS 5a (A2)

Follow Odin to the tree. Continue up a steep corner on the left, to the roof. Follow the thin crack on the right over the roof using several pegs for aid.

Chris Woodall, Ritchie Clarke. Mid 1960s.



**27. Frigg 42m HS 4b ****

Climb the long corner 3m to the right of *Odin* passing a small overhang at 20m. Above the overhang a ledge leads right to the arête up which the climb finishes.

Tony Marr, Jim McGee 23rd April 1972. The corner originally held a column of blocks forming a slim pillar 12m high. Tony was several metres up the pillar on his first attempt when he felt the blocks begin to topple and glancing down he saw his runners dropping out of the ever-widening corner crack. Fortunately the blocks re-jammed giving the shaken leader time to escape. The pillar remained standing but leant at a precarious angle and obviously needed removing. It could not be demolished safely by hand, so a little mechanical assistance was devised. The pair returned the following weekend with their "little helper", a long handled car jack. With the jack strategically placed the pillar was quickly and safely dispatched.

28. Mars Bar 48m VS 5a (A1)

Start about 1m right of *Frigg*. Climb directly up the wall for 18m to a small ledge. Continue straight over two roofs with a peg for aid at each (not in-situ), then to the top. A strenuous pitch.

Derrick Van Meerbeeck, Stewart Patterson. 9th July 1972.

29. Pie & Pea Pillar 48m HVS 5a

Climb the overhanging arête between *Odin* and *Gauche* mainly on its right side.

Chris Woodall, Ritchie Clarke. Mid 1960s.

A route has been recorded up the bulging wall to the right of Pie & Pea Pillar (HVS A1, Ken Jones and party, 1972). A small amount of aid was used low down. The climb is not recommended due to poor rock.

30. Gauche 23m VD *

The impressive right facing corner. Despite the route's fearsome appearance the climbing is quite reasonable and enjoyable. Start up the rib of rock leading into the cave. Belay. Climb up the back of the cave for a few metres then traverse left on good holds around the ceiling to finish up the corner. Aply named with good situations.

Attributed to a team from R.A.F Lemming. Late 1950s.

Direct Finish: Tout Droit 36m VS 4c *

Climb the pillar into the cave of *Gauche* (optional belay) and continue directly up the back of the cave. At the roof make an increasingly exposed traverse to the lip on the right and pull round. Follow the crack to the top.

Ben Pearce and Chris Coapes 18th June 2017 (during the Moors Festival of Climbing)

31. The Skab 36m HVS 5b *

Follow *Gauche* to the ledge in the mouth of the cave. Belay. Step right and climb a steep corner into the bottom of the hanging crack above, move immediately left to a flake crack and follow it to the top.

Direct Finish: E1 5b * Follow the continuation of the hanging crack leading right over bulges to the top.

The Skab: Chris Woodall, Mike Hosted 1967. 1 peg used for aid in the steep corner.

FFA Tony Marr, Johnny Adams April 1968.

Direct Finish: Tony Marr, Alan Taylor, and Andrew Webb. 17th August 1975.

The steep wall to the right is composed of some of the best quality rock on the crag and is climbed by some of the best routes.

32. The Claw 36m E4 5c *

Begin 5m to the right of *Gauche*. Climb the wall just right of a crack to small ledge. Step right, then trend up left to reach twin horizontal cracks and junction with the girdle traverse. Climb a thin crack to reach a good shelf beneath the overlap. Pull over the roof, then move left and follow a crack line directly up the steep wall to more broken and easier rock. A strenuous pitch with sustained climbing.

Chris Woodall, Ernie Shield 1968. Originally climbed in two pitches with a belay in etriers at half height. The second pitch required several points of aid.

FFA Kelvin Neal, Alan Moss. Early 1980s. A superb and totally free ascent by this strong team.

33. Countdown Direct Finish 36m HVS 5a **

Start 3m right of *The Claw* at the first of two prominent cracks. Climb the steep crack line passing through a bulge at half height, then step left and follow the continuation crack to the top. Good climbing throughout.

*Countdown: Terry Sullivan, Vic Tosh. May 1960. A very impressive ascent for its time with minimal protection. The original Countdown escaped right at half height to follow Central Crack for a short way before trending right to finish at the top of *The Night Watch*.*

Direct: Ernie Shield, Brian Snowdon. 14th April 1962. The true and more satisfying finish.

34. Central Crack 36m HVS 5a **

Begin at the bulging crack 3m to the right of *Countdown*. Follow the fine crack line directly to the top, passing a ledge at half height.

Chris Woodall, Malcolm Farrow. June 1965.

To the right of the last climb is the best climb of its grade on the North York Moors limestone.

35. The Night Watch 36m VS 4b ***

The steep corner/crack offers superb and well protected climbing.

Direct Finish: E5 6b. Follow the normal route until it is possible to move right under the prominent nose on the arête. Pull over the front left corner of the roof to finish up the nose of the impressive prow.

Note: There are no reports of this variation having been repeated; therefore the grade and accuracy of the description should be treated with caution.

The Night Watch: Terry Sullivan, Andrew Marr. 1960. The first difficult route to be climbed on the crag. Considering the route was climbed on-sight, with only three line slings for protection, this ascent was an outstanding performance. Direct Finish: D. Downe. 1986

36. Bad Concept 36m HVS 5b A2

Start beneath the roof immediately right of the last route. Pull around the overhang at its left end, and then climb the wall trending right to a peg. Use the peg to gain the wall above then continue (free climbing) to pass another roof via a crack to a bolt. Cross the large roof using the bolts to gain the final wall. The headwall is climbed trending rightwards to the top. Bold and airy climbing in a spectacular position.

Rick Rowland, Charlie Rowland. June 1973

37. Jurassic Scarp 36m E3 5b **

Start in a corner 3m right of *The Night Watch*. Follow the fine groove for 16m to a sloping ledge. Move left to a subsidiary groove and climb this until stopped by the overhang. Traverse out to the right and up the strenuous headwall (in-situ thread runners).

Note: The thread runners were replaced in 2008 making this one of the better protected routes on the cliff. It ought to become popular.

The climb was previously called Gormire Eliminate (Chris Woodall, M Hosted 1965), requiring 5 pegs and several threaded slings for aid. "The main problem was threading the threads and the thought of pre-placement would have been in those days, and now, a sin." A rock fall in the late 1970s reshaped the first groove slightly.

FFA John Moulding, Fred Stevenson 14th April 1995. The route was inspected from an abseil prior to the free ascent. This allowed the original thread runners to be replaced and tests of the fragile holds. Stevenson tried the climb first but unfortunately, after a couple of determined attempts he tired on the final wall and had to rest on a runner before retreating. Wiser as to the difficulties ahead, Moulding took over the lead and proceeded to make a smooth and flawless ascent.

38. Backache Crack 28m VS 4b

Follow the large corner to the right for 10m then move left to a small ledge. Climb the corner crack leading over the overhang. Belay just below the top.

Ernie Shield & party. May 1974

39. Absinthe 32m HS 4b

Start 4m right of *Backache Crack*. Climb a thin crack followed by a move right and then back left up a wall until stopped by a bulge. Move right around a corner to a tree.

Ernie Shield & party 1974

The crag is now split by a steep grassy gully that finishes close to a Nature Trust sign. The gully is convenient as an access route but, it has been the scene of several accidents, and extreme caution is required. Climbers wishing to use the gully are strongly recommended to fix a spare rope and use it as a handrail.

Immediately right of the gully the outcrops gradually reduce in height, but the rock is generally more solid and it is perhaps an ideal place to begin.

40. Domino 17m VS 4c

Climb the first crack immediately right of the gully, passing loose blocks near the top. Move to the right just below the top, and scramble to finish.

Ernie Shield, Brian Snowdon 1963

41. One Half Shift 17m VS 4c

Climb the second crack right of the gully, passing a bulge at 7m and finish up a groove.

Ernie Shield, Brian Snowdon 1963

42. Hobbledehoy 17m S 4a

The third crack/corner right of the gully leads to a shallow bay at 13m. Continue up the crack to the right. A worthwhile introductory route to the crag.

Ernie Shield, Brian Snowdon 1963.

42a Flying Goats E1 5b

Climb the undercut arête between *Hobbledehoy* and *Ace of Hearts* to the bay of *Hobbledehoy*. Bold and friable but with a good thread at half height. From the ledge move up and left across a sandy wall to ledges and the top by a tree.

Dave Brown 2008. May have been climbed before.

43. Ace of Hearts 15m VD

The prominent chimney right of the last route. Climb the chimney, taking care with loose blocks near the top.

Ernie Shield, Brian Snowdon 1963.

43a. I Seem to Have Left an Important Part of my Brain Somewhere in a Field in Hampshire E3 5b

Climb the arête between *Ace of Hearts* and *Confusion* on its right passing a low overhang and a steepening finish. Threads and large quantities of questionable gear provide some relief from the questionable rock.

Dave Brown, Henry Tyce 09.03.08

44. Confusion 15m S 4a

Round the next corner a square block stands at the foot of a large corner crack. Follow the crack, passing the overhang on the left.

Ernie Shield, Brian Snowdon 1963.

45. Finesse 15m S 4a

Climb the crack line in the centre of the wall on the right and left of the chimney.

Ernie Shield, Brian Snowdon 1963.

46. Humdrum 12m D *

The chimney 5m right of *Confusion*. A pleasant route on good rock.

Ernie Shield, Brian Snowdon 1963.

47. Penumbra 12m VD *

Around the corner to the right is another chimney. Climb the chimney moving left near the top. A final short wall leads to the moor.

Ernie Shield, Brian Snowdon 1963.

To the right lies a gully/chimney (Mod), which can also serve as a descent route. Beyond the gully are a series of short walls and buttresses, which have all been climbed upon but do not warrant detailed description.



Karin Magog

35. The Night Watch VS 4b

© Steve Crowe

48. Chameleon 283m E2 5c (A1) ***

This is a girdle traverse of the main cliff. The climbing is not unduly technical but it is long and arduous. It is recommended that all members of the party be experienced in aid climbing techniques, and that the leader should carry a selection of pegs to supplement missing or rusted equipment. Allow 8-12 hours for the climb. To reach the start, scramble up the descent gully to the right of *Absinthe* for about 15m to a stance on the left (Alternative starts can be made by beginning up either *Absinthe* or *Backache Crack*).

1. 10m 4b

Traverse leftwards across the broken wall to belay in the large corner of *Backache Crack*.

2. 20m 5a

a) Cross the steep wall passing a good ledge on *Jurassic Scarp*. Continue around the corner below the roof into *The Night Watch*. Descend to a belay in the chimney at the 12m level.

b) Alternatively, from the ledge on *Jurassic Scarp*, climb straight up a groove then pull onto the wall on the left, traverse around the prow just above the roof and into *The Night Watch*. Descend the chimney to a belay at the 12m level.

3. 18m 4c

Hand traverse the horizontal crack to reach the good ledge and belay on *Gauche*.

4. 25m 4c

Cross the wall to the rib and continue more easily on broken ledges to a tree just left of *Odin*. Step up to a grass ledge leading to the next corner. Belay.

5. 8m 4b

Cross the steep wall above, scrambling through a tree, to reach *Garbage Groove*. Belay.

6. 20m 4c

Move round the next corner and descend to a narrow ledge. A crack leads to the edge of the large slab, stance and belay.

7. 20m 4b

Cross the slab to a stance and belay on *The Leash*.

8. 7m 4a

Step down and round a corner to tree belays.

9. 13m 4a

Climb up *Thyrus* then step left to a tree belay near the top of *Gamin*.

10. 17m

Abseil from the tree down *Gamin* to a ledge about 5m from the ground. Belay.

11. 35m 5a

Continue across the obvious line of ledges interrupted by a corner on *Ying and Yang*. Cross the steep wall (in situ protection pegs) to reach an exposed stance and peg belay on the edge of the buttress.

12. 7m A1

Step down and around the corner, using the in situ pegs for aid to reach the large cave. Belay.

13. 20m 5c

Traverse the steep wall beneath a roof until below the blocks on *Clutcher*. Continue across the wall to a peg and thread belay on *Last Post*.

14. 16m 4b

Descend the grassy gangway of *Last Post* then follow a ledge system crossing *Wailing Wall* into the large corner of *Pygmalion*.

15. 12m 4c

Follow the corner of *Pygmalion* until it is possible to move leftwards to gain a grassy ledge a few meters below the cliff-top. Belay.

16. 15m 4c

Descend the grassy rake and traverse beneath a small roof, then pull up onto a slab at an old bolt, below the final corner of *Couldn't Again*. Belay.

17. 20m 4b

Cross the slab then move down to a lower line and continue to the end of the crag. Now reverse back along... (Only kidding!)

Chris Woodall, Ernie Shield. Alt. Leads. 1963.

The route was initially climbed in stages (from left to right), over several weekends until the whole of the main cliff had been crossed. The climbing was not without incident and humour as Ernie vividly recalls, "I was pegging out of the cave on Black Mamba when suddenly the heavens opened and I was engulfed by a torrent of hail and rain. I tried to return to the stance for shelter but my team who were enjoying the spectacle and taking photos, held the ropes tight and ignored my splutters. I took my revenge later..." Chris also remembers exploring the pitch from Odin to Gauche. "I'd placed two pegs but didn't fancy committing myself to the moves, so quickly passed the lead to my eager partner. Ernie set off in determined style and was soon swinging onto the second peg, which immediately popped out depositing him below a bulge. After a few choice expletives he swarmed back up the rope to the remaining peg, which also popped out, and Ernie found himself even further down. When he eventually returned to the stance the air was so blue that the pitch gave in without any aid being used."

First continuous crossing in a single day, Chris Woodall, Malcolm Farrow Alt. Leads 1965.

The team had camped overnight at the crag and began the climb at first light. They re-emerged at the top of The Night Watch several hours later, triumphant but very tired. Although the traverse was first completed by climbing from left to right [because the right handed leaders found it easier to place pegs that way], the most interesting situations are to be experienced by tackling the route from the opposite direction as described. Of interest is the impressively quick crossing [in an evening], by Chris Woodall and Mike Mortimer in June 1989. Mortimer managed to free climb most of Blitzkrieg, which Chris said, "saved us a lot of time but frightened us both!"

Chameleon Extension: Pitches 1, 2 added. Chris Woodall, Jim George. December 1972. Pitch 2 followed the upper section of Jurassic Scarp then traversed above the prow into The Night Watch.

Variation on Pitch 2: Rick Rowland, Charlie Rowland July 1973.

From the ledge on Jurassic Scarp the traverse was continued at the same level around the corner under the prow into The Night Watch.

FFA 30th June 2009 by Luke Hunt and Franco Cookson, HXS 6a/b Climbed left to right, finishing up Jurassic Scarp.