

Monk's Moor Boulders

OS Landranger Sheet: 92

Map Reference: NZ962289

Aspect: West to North West

Altitude: 560m

Approach: 30 minutes

Mod - Severe	0
HS - HVS	0
E1 - E3	0
E4 and above	0
Bouldering	63

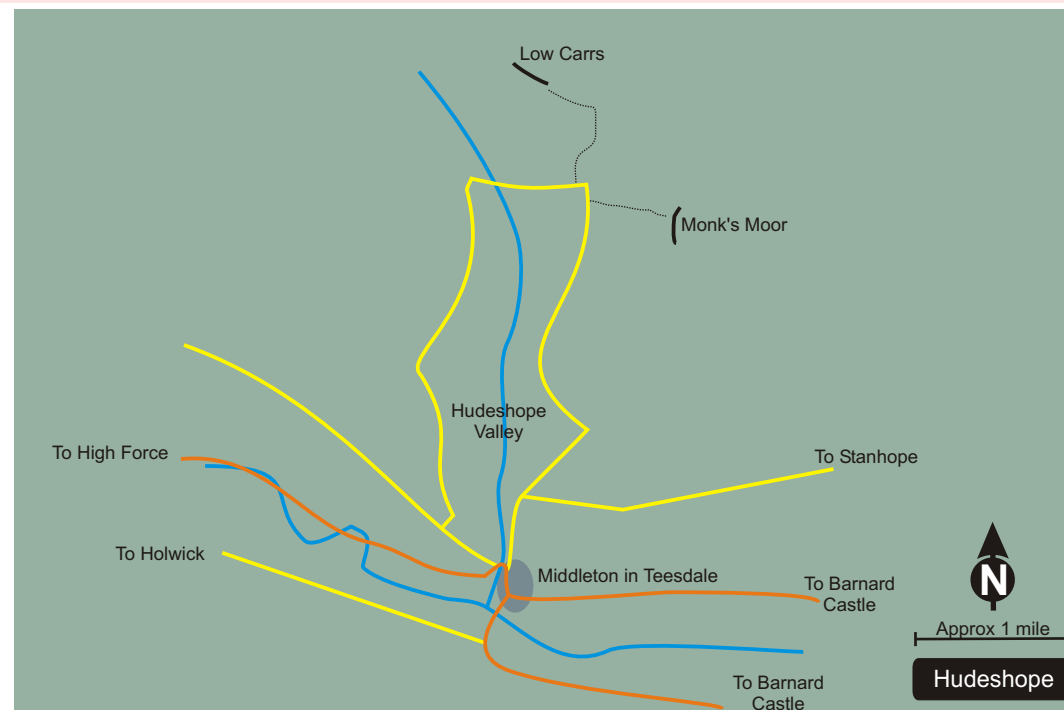
Situation and Character

This venue is a collection of boulders and small edges standing at the top of Monk's Moor, an area of moorland situated north-east of Middleton-in-Teesdale. It is well suited to bouldering. The rock is good quality Gritstone but, as no brushing was undertaken during the development, is still a little lichenous. The problems have been graded as of their current state. Landings are variable in quality and, generally, a mat would be sensible. The outlook, which encompasses the High Pennines, is superb and, given the westerly aspect, Monk's Moor should provide a pleasing afternoon and evening venue. So far the obvious lines have given easier or mid-grade problems but the potential for harder variations (especially traverses) suggests some interest for those seeking greater technicality. A visit can easily be combined with the generally more serious and difficult bouldering which can be enjoyed at the nearby Low Carrs (NGR: 948303). A walk across the moor of about thirty minutes duration connects the two sites.

History

Long before climbers explored Hudeshope the valley it was exploited for its minerals and there is an interpretative display and self-guided trail based around Coldberry Mineshop. The most prosperous period of lead mining spanned almost the whole of the nineteenth century, creating one of the largest mine complexes of the North Pennines. This industry transformed forever the landscape of Hudeshope Valley. Scattered around the valley are numerous mine entrances and associated buildings that suggest the extent of the intricate system of shafts and levels that exist below the surface. On the valley sides are reservoirs and the remnants of a man-made water system that was used to power the mine machinery. Coldberry Gutter, the largest hush in the North Pennines, cuts through Hardberry Hill to form a distinctive scar on the horizon that can be seen from miles around.

Alan Dougherty and Kevin Flint visited in late July 2005, when the first twenty-five problems were ascended and recorded. Three subsequent visits, during August of that year, by Carol and Alan Dougherty, resulted in the discovery of a further thirty-four problems.

**Access and Approaches**

Monk's Moor is now designated *Access Land* under the *Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000*. Under that Act dogs are excluded currently and the land can be subject to temporary closures of up to twenty-eight days a year. These are likely to be applied for during the Grouse nesting season. Notification of closures should be posted at *Access Points* locally and, prior to a visit, can be checked on www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk or via the *Access Helpline* on 0845 100 3298.

The area is covered by several conservation designations. Prior to development our intentions were run past English Nature. Their main concern was the possible disturbance of ground nesting and other birds.

Approach takes a comfortable thirty minutes. From Middleton-in-Teesdale take a minor road northwards up the east side of, the initially wooded and then mine-ravaged, valley of Hudes Hope. The road leaves Middleton-in-Teesdale from opposite the fish and chip shop and is sign-posted Stanhope. After 300m avoid the right turn to Stanhope and continue straight on – sign-posted Snaigsilg. Some three kilometres along the road from Middleton –in Teesdale a gate is reached, just before a sharp left bend. Prior to this gate it is possible to park a car carefully on an area of wider verge. A nearby gate gives access to a field east of the road. Walk upslope (roughly east) to a second gate from which an approximately easterly walk of 600m should deposit you at the boulders. By following a line from the second gate towards the left end of the outcrop gives easier going that avoids the deeper heather.

General Layout

Prominent near the centre of the edge is a multi-penned, partly derelict, dry-stone walled *Sheepfold* that has been built against the SHEEPFOLD BUTTRESSES. The left extremity of the boulders lies some twenty metres north of *Monk's Currick*, a round cairn come shelter on the moor above the edge. The furthest right of the boulders THE SHOOTING BOX GROUP lies close to the, also semi-derelict, hut - the *Shooting House*. All of these three features are marked on the 1:25000 OS map.

The Climbs

The problems are described from left to right as facing the crag.

Cave Boulder

Although some small boulders of little interest lie further north, the first problems described are some twenty metres to the left (north) of the Monk's Currick on a boulder with a small "cave" at its base.

1. 2m 4b

The left-hand (northerly) face to mantelshelf finish. Take care with loose block at top.

2. 3m 4b

Climb the left side of the front face.

3. 3m 5a

Ascend middle of the front face up a groove feature. (Using a nearby block on the floor reduces the grade to 4b)

Monk's Currick Group

Twenty metres to the right (south) are a group of boulders around an alcove below the cairn / shelter feature:

4. One Move Wonder 2m 4c

Takes the left hand mini "buttress," via a thin crack, to an awkward finish.

The central boulder gives a **VDiff.** problem.

5. 3m 4b

Ascend the middle of the face to the right of the central boulder, above a poor landing, to a hollow sounding finish.

6. 3m 4a

At the right-hand side of the alcove is a block split by two horizontal cracks. Climb them.

7. Dr. Flint's Flying Buttress 3m 5a

Wall at the far right of the alcove. Climb the marked prow feature above a poor landing.

The Nose

50m further right (5m before the left-hand wall of the sheepfold) is a slightly protruding block above ankle crunching landings:

8. 2m 4c

The left-hand face.

9. 3m 4c

The arête / nose from a sit start.

10. 3m 4c

The right-hand face. (S.D.S. 5a)

**Fold Left-Hand Wall**

Twenty metres right of *The Nose* and above the second wall of the sheepfold is the slightly impeding:

11. 4m 5a

Takes the arête, jagged crack and flake line which starts near to the gate hinges that have been leaded into the rock. The airy finish is above a serious landing but the holds are good.

12. 4m 5b **

Climb the wall direct via an incipient crack.

13. 4m 5a

The right-hand side of the wall via a large ledge.

Fold Right-Hand Wall

This wall is to the right of a gully.

14. 4m 5a

Initially straightforward arête, to right of gully, with a harder finish.

15. 3m 5a *

Wall just to right of arête.

16. 4m 5a

Centre of wall via pocket at three-quarters height.

17. 4m 5a

Just to the right of the previous problem via an edge feature.

18. Gate-post Arête 3m 4c

Move off the leaning stone gate-post and climb the blunt arête.

19. 3m 4c

The scoop to the right of the gate-post.

20. 3m 4c

Rib one metre further right.

21. 12m 5a *

Girdle traverse of the *Fold Left-hand Wall* and *Fold right-hand Wall*. Start up the arête at the left end of the *Fold Left-hand Wall* to gain the break at three-quarters height. Follow it rightwards without stepping on either of the gate-posts - strenuous.

Two-Tier Boulder

Some 100m to the right, beyond some smaller rocks of no interest, is an obvious two-tiered boulder. The large ledge at two-third's height separates a technical lower wall from easier finishes but adds some seriousness to the problems.

22. 4m 5b

Step off a block to climb the left-hand arête. Mantle-shelf onto the ledge and continue straight up the nose above.

23. 4m 5b

The face just to the right of the previous problem. Continue up the scoop above the ledge.

24. 4m 5b

Nose just further right.

25. 4m 5b

An "eliminate" up the middle of the lower wall is easier than it looks. Continue up the centre of the top block by a faint crack.

26. 4m 5b *

Faint crack just to left of nose. Finish boldly in a direct line above the ledge.

27. 3m 5c

Start about two metres right of the nose. Climb tenuously to the obvious pocket. Hand-traverse right and then gain the ledge.

27a. The Noodle 6b (Font 6C/V5)

A sit start to problem 27. Pull on with a slopy boss (RH) and a weird downward pointing spike (LH) pull up and make a hard move to a decent left hand hold then sort feet out on various poor holds before making a big move to a good hold just below the lip.

28. 4m 4c

A faint crack-line at corner 1m left of right edge. Continue up scoop / corner of the block above.

29. 4m 4b

Climb the right edge, just before the chimney with chock-stone, and continue up the corner of the top block.

30. Traverse from the Faculty of**Going-on About 9m 6a ***

Step off the block under the left-hand arête and follow the line of pockets rightwards, using neither the ledge above or any larger footholds low down. Fingery climbing eventually turns the corner, followed by a sustained section across the right face, to gain positive finishing holds in a horizontal crack.

**The Six Block Group**

An edge of blocks starting 5m to the right, and slightly above, the TWO-TIER BOULDER. They offer short problems and an extended traverse. The First and Second Blocks join at a marked square-cut corner. The Third Block is split by a wide crack and is separated from the Fourth Block, which has a large ledge across part of its base, by a gully with perched boulder. The Fifth and Six Blocks join at an open corner with double cracks.

31. 2m 5b

A SDS 0.5m right of the arête of the First Block is below some small stepped flakes. Interest and difficulty is added if intermediate holds are used before reaching for the top.

32. 2m 5b

Start 0.5m left of the corner between the First and Second Blocks. A SDS with hands as low as possible gives a number of fingery moves.

33. 2m 5b

The arête of the Second Block from a SDS with initial fingery moves.

34. 2m ?5b

Start below a flake in the centre of the front face of the Second Block. From a SDS, a fairly powerful pull gains side-pull at the flake.

35. 3.5m 4b

The crack of the Third Block direct. Only 4a if you drift leftwards for an easier mantle-shelf finish.

36. 3m 4b

Right of the central crack of the Third Block is a green stain and small wobbly block. Take this line to a classic mantle-shelf finish.

37. 3m 4a

The right-hand arête of the Third block is very straightforward until the mantle-shelf finish.

38. 2m 4b

On the Fourth Block the obvious prow, just right of the gully, from a SDS.

39. 2m 4b

At the right-hand end of the Fourth Block a faint crack / flake line, undercut at its base.

40. 2m 5a

The left arête of the Fifth Block from a SDS to awkward finish.

41. 2m 5b

Right of the Fifth Block arête, a low foothold near the right edge and undercling on the horizontal break are the initial holds for a reach to the top and subsequent mantle-shelf.

42. 2m 4b

The, scoop featured, left arête of the Sixth Block.

43. 2m 4b

On the Sixth Block, the face between the arête and the little corner from a SDS.

44. 2m 4b

Also on the Sixth Block, 1m right of the little corner from SDS.

45. The Road Goes Ever On 28m 5b

A left to right traverse of all of the Six Blocks using the top for hands but avoiding the large ledge on the Fourth Block. The start, across the First Block side wall, and the finish are the hardest sections. Probably more energetic for the mat-wallah leap-frogging mats along the mostly gnarly landings! Harder variations are possible.

A further 5m to the right, and slightly down, across a slope of small blocks is the ONE PLUS TWO GROUP, of which the Left Block has a vertical face above an alcove, whilst the Right-hand Pair present leaning walls. Five metres down-slope of the Left Block is a small block which provides excellent introductory mantle-shelf practice; a technique much used at this venue.

Thirty metres directly down-slope of the Sixth Block is a five side boulder which can offer interesting, if rather contrived, traverses by omitting the larger holds.

The Larger Inclined Boulder

Lies immediately to the right of the right-hand end of the ONE PLUS TWO GROUP.

46. Western Roll 2m 5c

SDS 1m left of the apex below a flaky, iron-stained area of rock. Use flakes (which are not above suspicion) to reach through and attain the sloping top. For those familiar with old school high jumping techniques the name suggests a possible appropriate technique.

47. Straight to the Point 2m 5b

Start under the apex of the front face. Reach for positive finger holds on the top surface.

48. Just to the Right of Centre 2m 5b

One metre right of the apex a high step with the right foot enables progress to an awkward finish.

49. Veering to the Right 6m 5b

Start at the left end of the front face and traverse the rising edge rightwards. Sustained.

Shooting Box Group

Some 25m right of The Larger Inclined Boulder is a selection of boulders adjacent to the semi-derelict corrugated iron shooting hut. Probably not a good place to be during high winds!

The Big Boulder

The large(!) boulder closest to the shooting box. The west face has a marked curving feature in the centre from half height.

50. 4m 5a

Slab between the left edge and central curving feature.

51. 4m 4a

Follow the central curving feature.

52. 4m 4a

Slab between the central curving feature and right-hand arête.

53. 4m 4a

The arête direct. The sit start is worthwhile at 5b

54. 4m 4b

Climb the narrowing south face just to the right of the arête, mostly on shallow pockets.

55. The Arete Traverse 6m 5b *

Start on the west face, under the central curving feature, and traverse rightwards at low level around the arête. Gaining an initial position on the south wall is the crux.



Inclined Block, Monk's Moor

The Little Inclined Nobby Block

This is the upper most block directly behind the Big Boulder

56. 5b

A powerful pull from a SDS should gain good holds above the leaning lower wall.

SDS Area

A series of small faces some 10m south-east, and slightly above, the Big Boulder give short problems enjoyed best from sit-down starts.

57. The Left Edge 5a

Start with a two pocket pinch for the left hand and an under-cling for the right. Avoid the obvious flake to the right.

58. 4b

Directly via the big pocket.

59. 5a

Follow the incipient crack avoiding the pocket and any large holds.

60. 4c

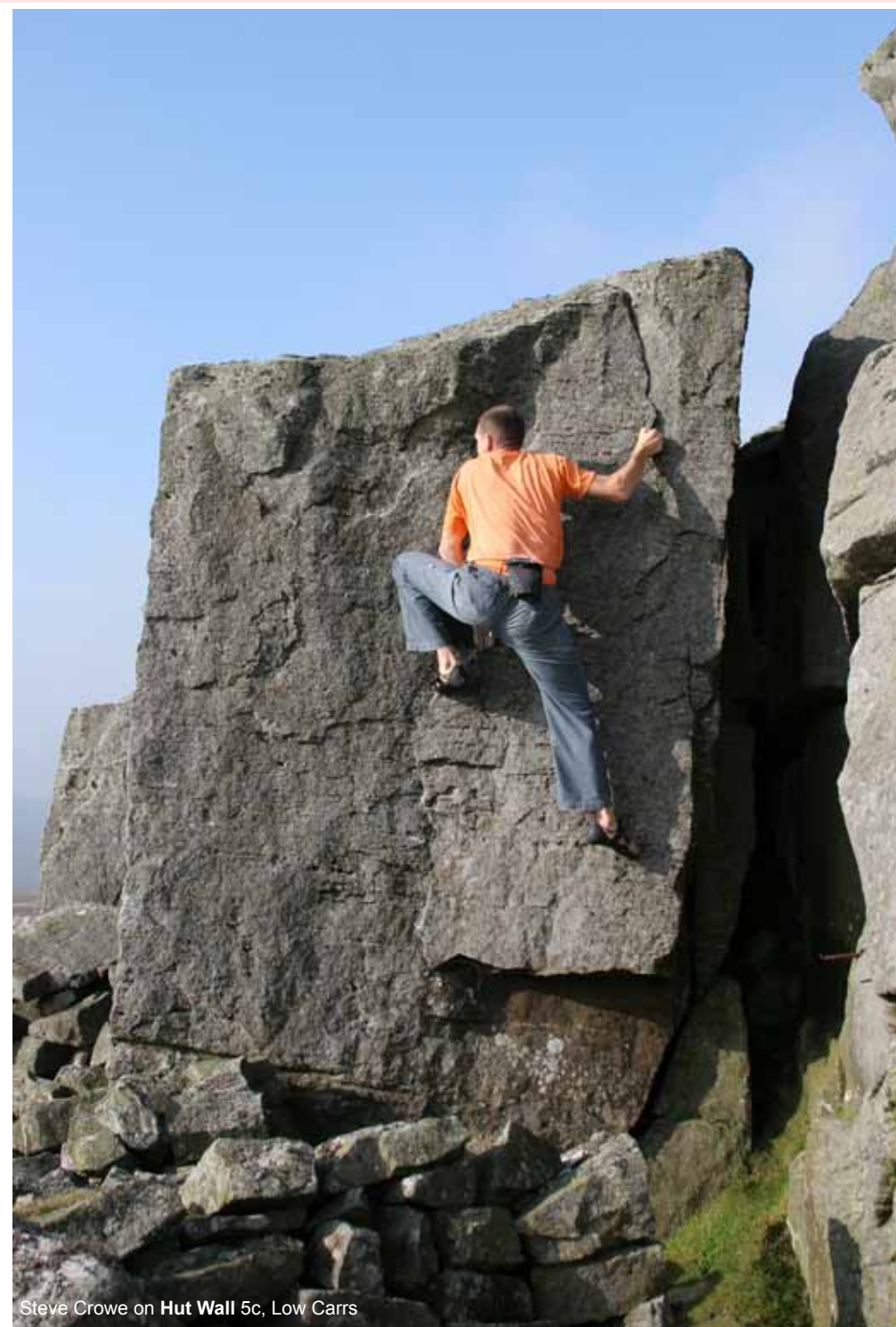
The central block, direct, not using the edges.

61. 5a

The right-hand protruding block, just right of a marked crack. Edges on the left of the block allow the top to be gained.

62. The Traverse 6m 5c

Traverse all of the blocks from left to right, not using the top, which is markedly more difficult for the last few moves.



Steve Crowe on Hut Wall 5c, Low Carrs

Low Carrs**OS Landranger Sheet:** 92**Map Reference:** NY948303**Aspect:** West to South West**Altitude:** 530m**Approach:** 30 minutes

Mod - Severe	0
HS - HVS	0
E1 - E3	0
E4 and above	0
Bouldering	30

Situation and Character

Low Carrs is a compact location comprising principally of several walls of excellent quality Gritstone up to five metres high. It stands on the southern edge of Middleton Common overlooking the valley of the Hudeshope Beck, both of which lie just to the north of Middleton-in-Teesdale. The outlook is magnificent and the site quiet. A visit can easily be combined with the generally less serious or difficult bouldering at the nearby Monk's Moor Boulders (NGR 962289). A walk across the moor of about thirty minutes duration connects the two sites. Landings vary from the good to the potentially back-breaking / body-impaling and, given that the lack of traffic so far means some of the rock is lichenous and gritty, a circumspect approach is advised towards some of the problems. Some of the more serious problems have been top-roped and await better conditions for the intended solo. Burly spotters and a selection of mats would be useful. Nevertheless Low Carrs holds some excellent quality wall and arête problems.

History

Carol and Alan Dougherty together with Kevin Flint visited in August 2005, when the first twelve problems were ascended and recorded. The Doughertys added a further seventeen problems during two further visits later in the month.

Access and Approaches

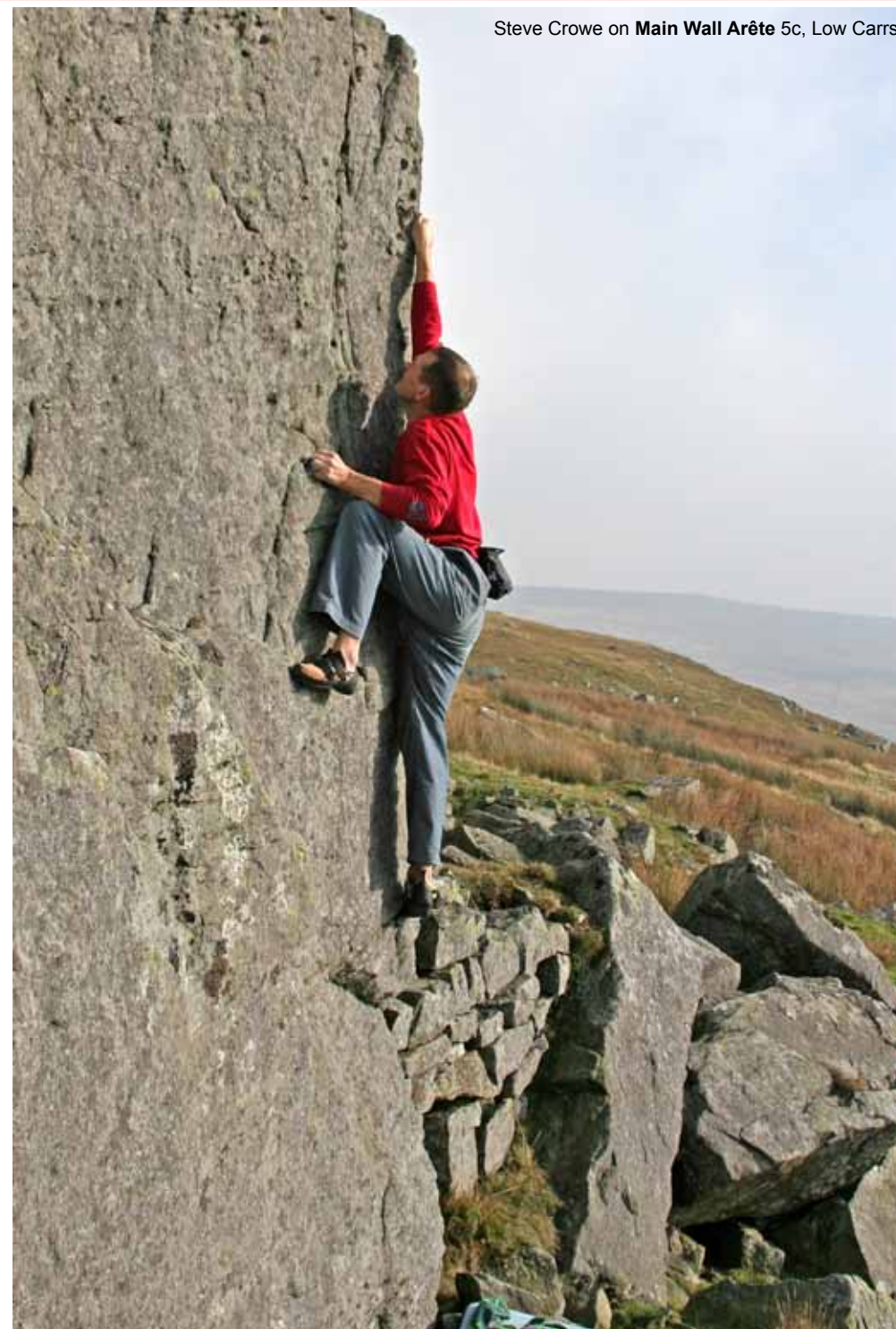
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Walk through the gate and take the track (not the sign-posted footpath) which starts behind a metal vehicle barrier and runs northwards from the sharp bend in the road. The track zig-zags upwards through a large spoil heap to reach some ruined mine buildings. At this point take the left-hand fork and continue through three wooden gates. Just after passing the third gate take a sheep trod on the left, which follows the line of the dry-stone wall across the moor. Low Carrs is reached in about 500m from this last gate, having passed some smaller boulders, one of which might give a bum-scraping traverse.

General Layout

On arrival the most obvious feature is that of the arête. To its left lies the main wall, whilst further left are the Left and Right Short Walls. To the right of the arête are the dry-stone wall remains of a ruined "hut," which enclose the side of the hut wall and part of the back of the hut three tier wall. Further to the right is the Elephants Forehead, whilst other problems lie on The Scrappy Buttress just to the right of this feature and on The Isolated Block diagonally right, further up the slope behind. The problems are described from left to right as facing the crag.

Steve Crowe on **Main Wall Arête 5c**, Low Carrs



Left and Right Short Walls

At the left-hand end of the crag area pair of short walls split by a chimney.

1. Left-Hand Short Wall 2m 4c

1m in from left side of wall is a crack. 1m further right is a small nubbin of rock protruding at head height. Use this for the right hand and climb centre of wall.

2. Lanky Bastard 2.5m 5c

Just to the right of the previous route is an alcove feature with an ovoid shaped hold at its top left. Use this to dyno for the top.

3. Silly Hat 2m 4a

Climb the front of the pillar between the alcove and the chimney.

4. 2m 5a

Ascend left side of arête to awkward mantelshelf finish.

5. 2m 5a

Layback the right side of the arête to awkward mantelshelf finish.

6. 2m 6a *

Climb the wall 0.5m right of the arête using a small flaky edges to gain a tiny and tenuous pinch-grip, just to the right of the scoop feature, from which reach for the top.

7. 2m 6a

Ascend centre of wall above right-trending edge.

8. 3m 6b **

Climb wall, on tiny holds, just left of the incipient crack. Could be easier for the very tall who might be able to reach through for the top but this would miss the point.

9. Girdle Traverse of Both Walls 6m 5a

Using the top for hands. The last section around the corner is above a serious blocky landing but the handholds are good.



Main Wall

A 5m high wall between a descent gully (beware wobbly block) on the left and a short section of dry-stone wall on the right.

10. 4m 5a *

Follow the thin crack directly. Using a scoop foothold to right at 1.5m reduces the quality (and grade 4b).

11. 5m 4b *

From a tricky start, climb directly the obvious wide crack; harder than it looks. An ability to jam helps. Using any footholds outside the crack reduces the quality and grade.

12. 5m 5b *

One metre right, start directly below the obvious pocket at three-quarters height. A fingery start allows a good foothold to be attained at head height. Continue via the pocket.

13. 6m 5c *

Start mid-way between two incipient cracks. Follow the gang-way leftwards until small holds below the left-hand crack enable a good foothold to be gained. Either follow continuation of gangway to left (easy) or climb directly up the line of the crack (harder unless you're very tall)

14. 5m 5b

Ascend the wall between the two thin cracks. The upper part, above the obvious ramp, gives fine fingery climbing.

15. Main Wall Arête 5m 5c **

Takes the left hand side of the obvious feature, which starts above the dry-stone wall. The crux is a long reach from a right-hand pinch to gain either the wider part of the mostly blind crack which runs just left of the arête or through to jug at top. The rock is still a bit lichenous and gritty, and the wall is a serious landing that deserves respect.

Around *Main Wall Arête* is another fine wall.



Steve Crowe on **Main Wall Arête** 5c, Low Carrs



Karin Magog on Hut Wall 5c, Low Carrs

Side of the Hut Wall

Situated just around *Main Wall Arête* is another fine wall.

16. Arête RH 4m 5c

Start from on top of the dry-stone wall. Lay-away with the left hand on the arête, to finally reach an excellent jug at the top. Again the landing that demands respect.

17. Hut Wall 4m 5c **

In the centre of the wall above the "hut" is a line of flaky holds that give an excellent problem with the crux near the top. The dry-stone wall below and metal spikes on the adjacent wall add to the seriousness and should be padded.

18. Hut Wall Variation 4m 5c

The wall just on the right using the right-hand arête for hand-holds might appear an easier option but is awkwardly off-balance in the upper section; and nearer the metal spikes.

Back of The "Hut" Three-Tier Wall

19. 4m 5c

Start just right of the left-hand metal spike. Attain the horizontal break. Gain the slab directly, and with some difficulty, then reach for good hold just left of the top block. It is sensible to pad the spikes with sacs

20. 5m 5c

Start between the two metal spikes. From the horizontal break (which would take gear) trend right and gain the slab above with some difficulty. Continue up the front face of the upper boulder. Again, it is sensible to pad the spikes with sacs.

21. 5m 4c

Start at the entrance to the "hut." Layback up the crack above to ascend a green stained wall and establish oneself on a good foothold at the head-height break. Continue up crack and edge of block above (which feels fairly highball but escape is possible to the right).

22. Between the Cracks 2m 5b *

Ascend the wall and slab without recourse to either crack. A splendid undercut / semi-mantle-shelf problem.

23. 2m 4a

Follow the bilberry choked crack and slab above, immediately left of The Elephants Forehead.

24. Carol's Traverse 5m 5b

Start under the right-hand iron peg at the back of the ruined "hut." Follow the rising break rightwards. Either exit up crack to left of the Elephants Forehead (easier) or, for the full effect, continue round the neb, via blind moves, to reach good flakes. It is sensible to mat the gnarly landing of the last section.

The Elephants Forehead

25. Forehead Left-hand 3m 6b

Tackle the left side (facing in) of the forehead on tiny holds but thankfully above a better landing than the next problem. Unfortunately it is possible to bridge leftwards to easier ground but for the full effect all temptation should be resisted.

26. Forehead Direct 4m 5b

Climb directly up the nose, with better holds on the right, above a blocky ankle-breaking landing.

10m right of the Elephants Forehead is a block split by two horizontal cracks which gives three rather scrappy problems – beware loose flakes.

The Scruppy Buttress

27. 2m 4a

Follow crack-line on left of arête

28. 3m 4b

The arête direct

29. 2m 5b

Climb the middle of the right face using a small handhold.

The Isolated Block

Some 50m east (115°mag) and diagonally upslope from the Elephants Forehead is a small leaning block which provides an entertaining problem.

30. 2m 5b

From a SDS under the front face, a gymnastic high step / rock-over / semi-mantle-shelf should gain the sloping top.

Karin on the Elephants Forehead 5b, Low Carrs

