

A SHORT HISTORY OF LAKELAND CLIMBING PART IV (1970-1985)

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The 1970's created more changes in the Lakeland climbing scene and attitudes than any other decade. At the beginning of the decade the Lakeland climbing scene was rather stagnant and awaiting the impact of a new generation of rock athletes such as Livesey, Matheson and the Carlisle lads.

The breakthrough in climbing standards led climbers into new areas of rocks once thought impossible to climb free, with routes such as Footless Crow, Shere Khan, Take it to the Limit and Das Kapital. Leading on to the 1980's this has brought about a general increase in climbing standards with more climbing the hardest routes. Climbers who stamped their marks on the decade were Jeff Lamb, Pete Whillance, Pete Botterill, Dave Armstrong and Steve Clegg from Carlisle; Cohn Downer and the Keswick lads, Cohn Read and John Adams; Ed Cleasby, Rick Graham, Rob Matheson and Andy Hyslop from the South Lakes, Martin and Bob Berzins and Ron Fawcett from Yorkshire, Bob Hutchinson and John Earl from Northumberland and Ed Grindley. However, one climber who really made his mark, was Pete Livesey. With a serious attitude to training he made a series of new modern routes on the 'outcrops' of Yorkshire and Derbyshire, such as Bulldog Wall, Jenny Wren, Mulatto Wall and Central Wall, Kilnsey. His route Footless Crow represented a quantum leap in difficulty in Lakeland climbing. It was the same in Wales with his ascent of Right Wall on Dinas Cromlech. This had a profound effect on the decade although it perhaps took two years for other climbers in the Lakes to gain the same level of ability. When they did a flood of new routes occurred. It wasn't exceptional summers that transformed East Buttress, it was the new generation of rock athletes.

The increase in standards was due to a number of factors. There was a change of attitude from the 'traditional' to a 'professional' approach with better training, and pre-cleaning (and inspection) of routes. This has now led to ethical arguments throughout the world on the way climbs are made. The traditional approach of starting at the bottom of the climb is now being attacked by different international ideals and the basis of the change occurred in the 1970's. As to the future we must wait and see or act accordingly.

Climbing walls were designed to be used as training machines to improve strength, agility and technical ability. Climbers were able to practise during the winter months and also wet weather. A lot of climbers seem to prefer them to the crags. The recently opened walls at Carlisle and Ambleside provide excellent wet weather alternatives. Most older climbers must be bewildered and possibly horrified by these walls, but with the present levels of climbing difficulty the practice walls are an important part of the climbing scene.

The equipment moguls have devised various new ways of protecting climbs. In 1970 the development of nuts was in its infancy: the MOAC had been introduced just a few years earlier, and the baby MOAC was available together with an assortment of oddities. At the end of the seventies we had rocks and Friends - not to mention chalk. E gradings were introduced to make sense of the overburdened extreme grade - initially with gradings EI to E5.

I am sure that any climber who stopped climbing in 1960 and started again in 1970 would have seen much less change in climbing attitudes over that period than someone who had stopped

in 1970 and started again in 1980. Climbing is a changing sport.

1970

This was a relatively quiet year. The major routes of the year were in Langdale where Allan Austin climbed the excellent Brackenclock on Pavey, and Jack Soper was unearthing Oak How to produce Crossword and Gurt Gardin Stuff. Rob Matheson climbed Paladin in White Ghyll, initially with some aid, which he subsequently eliminated to produce a superb route. It heralded the start of a series of modern routes by this climber. At the time some were thought unethical, with the use of pre-placed pegs. Now they are accepted as excellent routes.

In Borrowdale Bill Robinson and Colin Read climbed Zoar and with Johnny Adams climbed Turbulence, on Hind Crag. Ray McHaffie was finding (is still finding, and will forever find) routes throughout the valley with Autobahn and Green Cormorant.

On Gable Crag The Jabberwock and Trundle Ridge (Rod Valentine/Wilkinson) and Potheen and Bandersnatch (Dave Miller/Wilkinson) were climbed as well as The Serpent (Read/Robinson); good additions to this not too frequented crag.

On Buckbarrow L.A. Goldsmith and D.A. Banks climbed Lothlorien during a spell of development leading to the publication of a pirate interim guide in 1974. The crag's real potential was not appreciated until the 1980's when a sustained period of activity yielded many good routes of all grades.

In Langdale Ragman's Trumpet (Pavey) was climbed by Valentine/Austin, whilst in White Ghyll they completed Haste Knot Direct. White Ghyll Eliminate was climbed by Al Evans, and Pete Livesey climbed the slab right of Laugh Not to give Longhair - a serious lead. Back on Pavey Livesey climbed Sally Free and Easy. On Deer Bield Matheson, G. Fleming and J. Poole climbed the Graduate with a pre-placed peg and long sling and received the wrath of the FRCC who omitted the route from the 1973 guide. This route had been climbed (*with aid*) by Les Brown and Ken Jackson in the 1960's and not recorded. It was climbed free in 1979 by Jeff Lamb.

On Dow, Matheson showed the way with Holocaust, an audacious line with two aid points which he climbed free in 1975. On Esk Buttress he climbed Amoeba, a worthy companion to Red Edge. Lower down the valley on Heron the West Cumbrian team of Trevor Martin, Brian Smith and Joe Wilson climbed the Last Exit. On Scafell, Bonington climbed two 'big' routes - Central Buttress Girdle with Mike Thompson and The White Wizard with Nick Estcourt. Much aid was used on the White Wizard but it was subsequently climbed free in 1976 by Martin Berzins and Gordon Higginson. The more direct pitch 3 was climbed in 1977 by Pete Botterill and John Taylor.

Just left of Narrow Stand, Hugh Banner climbed the oft forgotten little gem of Last Stand. Tony Barley and Pete Long forced a line up East Buttress with Doomwatch - two points of aid were used on the first pitch which still awaits a free ascent.

Above Honister Pass on the side of Fleetwith Pike a new crag had been spied. Soper, Ian Roper, Cohn Taylor, Neil Allinson, Mike Burbage and Geoff Oliver climbed between them four routes and a girdle traverse but the crag with its northerly aspect and slow drying has never gained any popularity. Along the ridge on Gable Crag Geoff Cram and Bill Young climbed Spirit Level, a girdle of the Engineer's Slab wall. On the right-hand side of Eagle Crag, Buttermere G.

Tough climbed Visions of Julie (with Pete Fleming) and Fiesta (with D. Cook).

On Dove Crag, Read and Adams completed a long-awaited girdle traverse, using some aid, but nevertheless a major achievement. On Raven Crag in Thirlmere Matheson, Poole and Fleming climbed the very steep Blitz using a fair amount of aid. This was climbed free in 1977 by Gomersall and Livesey and renamed Blitzkrieg. In Borrowdale Pete Downie climbed Parlophone (Shepherds) with some aid (now free) and in December McHaffie climbed the fine Kaleidoscope (Gowder).

1972

In Langdale Matheson climbed the fine line of Cruel Sister (Pavey) but again received the wrath of the FRCC after having pre-placed a peg and sling. This route received scant mention in the 1973 guide but was climbed free by Lamb and Botterill in 1975 and included in the 1980 guide to give one of the best routes on the crag and one of the most popular E3's in the Lakes. Livesey came in on the act with Fine Time (Raven) with a pre-placed peg and a very long sling. This followed the line of the aid route Kaisergebirge Wall. It was climbed free by Botterill and Lamb in 1979. John Hartley climbed Mithrandir, the obvious groove of Gandalf's Groove on Neckband, and Ed Grindley started a campaign on Pavey with Risus. Bill Birkett went to Upper Spout Crag and climbed Dindale (with Mike Myers and one point of aid) and Spiny Norman (with

R.Gill and more aid) climbed free by Berzins. Recent routes by Whillance and Armstrong may attract more climbers here. In October Grindley and Roper climbed the pod-shaped groove on Pavey to produce Fallen

Angel, an impressive route which used some aid but was climbed free in 1974 by Lamb and Botterill.

Beside the road to Coniston Birkett and Myers broke the extreme barrier at Raven Crag, Yewdale and climbed Albatross and Raven Girdle. On Dow Crag the Mathesons were active, climbing two excellent routes with Catacomb and Tarkus, and Austin, Grindley, Miller and Barley linked together 'B' Buttress Variations.

On Esk Buttress Young, Burbage and John Workman climbed West Point. On East Buttress Read and Adams climbed the impressive Incubus, with 3 points of aid - it was climbed free in 1982 by Berzins and Sowden. In the Buttermere area Read and Adams were active with the pleasant Grey Wall (Grey Crag), linked together Catalyst (Buckstone How) and climbed the difficult Deimos (Eagle Crag). This very active team also climbed Phobos on Dove Crag and opened up the left side of Greatend Crag in Borrowdale with Nagasaki Grooves - they employed 5 points of aid on the route which was climbed free, solo with a backrope in 1974 by Livesey.

On the remoter Pillar Rock, Bill Young and Barney Barnes climbed the varied and interesting Megaton, Bill Lounds and Chris Eilbeck climbed the well-situated Soliton and Dennis Hodgson and John Workman found and climbed The Magic Rainbow.

1973

Rob Matheson and his father continued the opening up of Dow with the now popular Pink Panther and the short but awkward Hesperus. In Langdale Grindley was suffering Brain Damage on Pavey, Keith Myhill was receiving a Mindprobe on Bowfell, and Pete Long found Pearls before Swine on Deer Bield. On Esk Buttress Young and Ian Singleton scored a Grand

Slam, with one point of aid, which was subsequently climbed free by Lamb and Adams in 1974.

On Eagle Crag Buttermere the Northumbrian teams were active with Birkness Eliminate (John Earl, Banner and I.W. Cranston) and Warlock (Bob Hutchinson and R. Mitchinson). In the quiet dale of Newlands Read and Adams climbed the excellent little Bolshoi Corner. In Borrowdale little happened. McHaffie climbed the short Black Icicle (Shepherds - *since found to have been climbed previously by D Fielding in 1958*) and The Rack (Reecastle). Livesey and John Sheard climbed the very direct Raindrop on Black Crag, giving a true superdirect. On Raven Crag Thirlmere, Myhill and Ken Jones climbed the excellent Empire with 2 points of aid, subsequently climbed free by Lamb.

1974

Although there were only 3 routes done in Borrowdale these three gained the spotlight of the Lakes this year and represented a quantum leap in difficulty. Livesey was the main performer initially with the ascent in April of Footless Crow on Goat Crag, with Robin Whitham. This was by far the hardest route in the Lakes, being a long, strenuous and serious lead (no Friends then). It immediately became the milestone of Lakeland hard climbing and initially received a number of attempts but not many successes. Since then it has been cleaned up and received more ascents. Though there are now harder climbs in the Lakes it still has a great aura about it. Livesey and Sheard climbed the excellent and now very popular companion route of Bitter Oasis. On Upper Falcon, Livesey climbed the wall left of Route 1, solo with a back rope, to produce Dry Grasp. What a position it must have been in the middle of that wall! To complete the day he soloed, with a back rope, the first free ascent of Nagasaki Grooves.

In Langdale, Livesey and Al Manson climbed Eastern Hammer (Gimmer) which replaced the old aid route of If, which had been climbed by Paul Ross in 1960. On Dow, Matheson and John Martindale climbed the pleasant Murray's Super Direct. It was also claimed as Lynx, a much more ingenious name! The wrath of the climbing world was directed at Valentine and Tut Braithwaite for their controversial ascent of The Cumbrian on Esk Buttress - 'one of the Lakes last great problems' - when they used 3 points of aid to force this much sought-after line in time for the new guide. It was climbed free in 1977 by Martin and Bob Berzins. Lamb and Botterill climbed the sustained and interesting Zeus left of Phoenix on East Buttress Scafell, originally starting up Morning Wall. The much harder first pitch was climbed in 1982 by Sowden and Berzins.

Earl and Hutchinson were active again on the less-frequented crags with The Hanging Chimney Direct and Pierrot on Eagle Crag, Buttermere and the excellent Heorot on Scrubby. On Buckstone How a new name appeared, Pete Whillance, who with Hughie Loughran climbed the loose Brutus. An attempted second ascent by Lamb ended when loose holds broke and he fell and broke his leg. On Pillar, Read and Robinson climbed the contrived Klingsor.

Just outside the Lakes, the Eden Valley and Chapel Head Scar were receiving much attention. Being out of the fells they have better weather and have developed into useful outcrops for locals and as wet weather alternatives to the Lakes - unfortunately not quite the same as Tremadoc.

1975

In Borrowdale there was interest in the Watendlath valley on Caffell Side with ascents of Blondin (Steve Clegg and Lamb), Slack Alice (Lamb and Botterill) and Juicy Lucy (Whillance

and Mike Hetherington), and over the hillside there was the grand cleaning and opening up of Greatend Crag by the Keswick team of Cohn Downer, Dave Hellier, Ian Conway and Dave Nicol. Equipped with an assortment of tools they unearthed this crag to produce Earthstrip, Greatend Groove and Greatend Corner. Botterill then started an intensive campaign on Eagle Crag starting with The Cleft Direct (with Roger Clegg). Whillance and Clegg climbed the excellent Where Eagles Dare and Clegg and Botterill climbed Autopsy and Verdict. On Falcon, Pete Gomersall and Nigel Bulmer climbed the improbable Usurper and Nicol, Conway and Bob Wilson climbed the tricky Extrapolation. On Shepherds Birkett and McHaffie climbed the vicious Savage Messiah (with some aid) - this was climbed free shortly afterwards by Berzins and Clegg - also Mike Lynch and Cleasby climbed the fine steep Jaws. On High Crag in Buttermere Cleasby and Birkett climbed the superb arête of Philistine.

Over on Dow Crag, Livesey and Jill Lawrence showed the way for the future with the two companion routes of Rough and Tumble, whilst Matheson and Martindale climbed the steep and strenuous Abraxas (with one point of aid). It was climbed free by Berzins in 1976. On Scafell, Adams and C. MacQuarrie climbed Overhanging Grooves Direct.

1976

In 1976 the action hotted up. Attention was directed at Dove Crag with Berzins and Cleasby teaming up for the serious Problem Child. Botterill and Whillance started an Explosion of Interest on the right of the crag. Cliff Brown and Birkett climbed Redex on the rather obscure Raven Crag, Threshthwaite Cove. This crag did not become popular until the 1980's, when realisation of its quality sparked off a wave of development.

On the better known Raven Crag in Thirlmere, Botterill and Clegg climbed the superb, hard Gates of Delirium and Creation - two routes which attracted much attention leading to the renewed development of this fine crag.

In Borrowdale McHaffie was digging out the right-hand crag on Gowder to produce a number of routes, but only The Rib is worth any attention. Of more interest were activities on Goat Crag with the ascent by Botterill and Dave Rawchiffe of Tumbleweed Connection and by Clegg and Botterill of the stupendous Voyage. On Black Crag, Matheson and Cleasby cemented the Grand Alliance and higher up the valley on Long Band Crag, Botterill climbed the Masochist. On High Crag in Buttermere Livesey and Sheard climbed the problematic Lost Colonies.

In Langdale Cleasby climbed the elegant Equus on Gimmer and on Pavey Whillance, Botterill and Clegg climbed the sustained Eclipse with one rest - later freed by Berzins. Shortly afterwards the Berzins broke out of Eclipse on a girdle of the upper section of the East Wall, Startrek, whilst Cleasby and Matheson climbed the steep Mother Courage. On Gimmer, Livesey and team climbed the eliminate Breaking Point.

On Scafell a period of sustained action was starting. Botterill and Clegg climbed the sustained Shadowfax, up the wall left of Botterill's Slab - he should have called it Botterill's Wall. John Eastham and Cleasby then climbed the often looked-at wall right of the Flake on Central Buttress to give the stupendous and surprisingly not too difficult Saxon. On East Buttress Livesey and Lawrence made a characteristically bold ascent of the central overhanging section of the crag with Lost Horizons. This was flawed by pre-placed protection and a point of aid, but nevertheless an excellent route which was climbed free by Bob Berzins and Mike Browell in 1982.

1977

In 1977 there was action everywhere - the fuse had been lit!

The action continued on Scafell with the Berzins brothers and Chris Sowden climbing the exceedingly steep Ringwraith, up the wall left of Nazgul. The Berzins also climbed Foxshooter up the wall left of the C.B. Flake.

On the weekend of 28th-29th May, Cleasby and Matheson climbed two excellent routes, the magnificent Shere Khan and the exceedingly elegant arête Edge of Eriador. Lower down the valley on Esk Buttress the Berzins climbed Humdrum.

On Dow Crag some new climbers came in on the act to produce a series of good routes. Initially Andy Hyslop and Ian Greenwood climbed Misty Mountain Hop on 'B' Buttress and then Hyslop and Rick Graham climbed the companion Four Sticks. The same climbers also climbed Samba Pa Ti, to give a hard continuation of Isengard and the companion Brocklebank Variation. Cleasby and Gordon Tinning climbed the athletic Issel Roof above the wall taken by Giant's Corner. Just to the right, Hyslop and Graham climbed Born Free, an ascending traverse across Tarkus, Leopards Crawl and Pink Panther.

In the Eastern Craggs there was a lot of action on the guide's three main crags. In Thirlmere on Castle Rock Gomersall and Bonny Masson climbed a variation finish to Barbican, Matheson Avenue, and then the steep crackline of Ted Cheasby. Across the valley on Raven Crag Clegg and Botterill opened up the year with Close to the Edge, an interesting climb starting up The Medlar and finishing up the groove between that climb and Gates of Delirium. On the same day the Berzins climbed The First Circle - an arduous crossing of the crag linking some very exciting pitches. Shortly afterwards Livesey and Gomersall stole the show with the exceedingly difficult Peels of Laughter and Blitzkrieg - a free version of the very steep Blitz. Over on Dove Crag Martin Berzins and Chris Hamper whittled down the aid on North Buttress to give an almost free and very airy route on the right side of the crag, to show what was possible there. Left of Extol, Whillance and Armstrong climbed the good and steep Aurora. On the secluded Thrang Crag in Martindale Earl and Hutchinson climbed three routes - Jude the Obscure, The Wilderness and Locusts - to open up this little crag.

In the Langdale area the action started at Deer Bield when Armstrong and Whillance climbed Gymslip, a serious and technical route up the wall left of The Crack. Shortly afterwards this team returned and attacked the face right of The Buttress to produce the intricate Desperado. Later in the year Cleasby and Matheson caused controversy with their prior top-roping of Imagination - a bold and serious lead up the arête right of The Chimney. On the very accessible Raven Crag, Grahame Summers and Cleasby climbed the spectacular R'n'S Special with a wire for aid, whilst higher up on Gimmer Crag, the Berzins climbed the difficult mini-girdle of Enormous Room. On Pavey, Pete Sansom and Bill Lounds squeezed in Kudos and the Berzins climbed another mini-girdle, Solstice. Fawcett, Gibb and Ian Edwards climbed the impressive Big Brother, just left of Cruel Sister; Mortimer and Allen climbed the oft looked at Rib, left of Rake End Chimney and that ever active pair of Whillance and Armstrong climbed Obscured by Clouds. Lower down on White Ghyll, Cleasby and Matheson climbed the sustained Warrior and Lounds and Sansom climbed the contrived Waste Not, Want Not. Over in Borrowdale the final routes were claimed before the new guide. Botterill and Doreen Hopkins climbed Black Sheep at Shepherds - definitely undergraded in the guide at HVS. On Black Crag, Bill Freeland was active - with McHaffie he climbed the excellent Jubilee Grooves and with Lamb and Syd Clark completed the contrived girdle High Plains Drifter. Livesey and

Gomersall nearly free climbed the old aid route, Wack, renaming it Scrutineer - Lamb did free climb it later and renamed it Wack. Gomersall led the excellent and now popular Prana and with two other 'stars', Livesey and Fawcett, climbed Tristar.

Downer, Nicol and co. were still active on Greatend Crag producing the now classic Banzai Pipeline together with Punk Rock and New Wave, as well as the pleasant Point Blank on Goat Crag. These and other similarly excavated routes showed what could be produced with thorough gardening from abseil ropes etc. The route of Goat however was Alone in Space climbed by Tony Stephenson, Chris Sice and Ray Parker, a now very popular and good route up the centre of the crag. It was to have been named Flying Scotsman after a Scot who had fallen down the crag at that time but Alone in Space seemed more subtle. On Eagle Crag Lamb and Freeland continued developments with the impressive Inquest Direct.

On Great Gable the Carlisle teams were out in force. Whihlance and Armstrong climbed the impressive Supernatural up the wall left of Tophet Wall, the fine Sarcophagus left of The Tomb on Gable Crag, and then The Cayman, near Crocodile Crack on The Napes. Lamb, Botterill and John Taylor climbed the impressive overhanging crack above Tophet Wall to produce Sacrificial Crack and then Botterill and Lamb climbed the technical Golden Calf.

1978

This was certainly the middle of a golden era of development. On East Buttress, Scafell, Botterill and Lamb continued the flow of excellent routes with Talisman up the walls left of Trinity, the eliminate of Caradhras, the beautiful Equinox up the corner and faint crack left of Lost Horizon, the sustained Lucius and the deceptively difficult S.O.S. The Berzins, always close at hand, climbed Cullinan. On Esk Buttress Hyslop and Graham climbed the serious direct continuation of Trespasser Groove to give Strontium Dog.

In the Eastern Crags two fillers appeared on Castle Rock: with White Dwarf by Birkett and Ken Forsythe, a direct variant between Rigor Mortis and The Ghost, and Ecstasy by Cleasby, Wright and Matheson. Across the valley Cleasby and Matheson opened up with the technical Polytruk but Livesey and Gomersall replied with the super impressive Das Kapital.

On Dove Crag Lamb, Botterill and Taylor climbed the wall left of Dovedale Groove to produce Ommadawn.

Hutchinson and Earl were scouring the lesser-frequented crags and found some interesting routes with Darth Vader on Scrubby, Heat Wave on Hutaple and the very good Bloodhound in Swindale.

In Langdale Whillance and Armstrong were again active on Deer Bield and produced the short but difficult Stiletto, The New Girdle and the super serious Take it to the Limit - a Whillance special - a route that gave second ascensionist Ron Fawcett some worrying moments.

On the excellent little Neckband Crag the Berzins climbed Cut Throat and Birkett and Forsythe climbed Flying Blind. Fawcett and Gibb climbed the very thin Heartsong on Pavey then free climbed the old Paul Ross aid route of The Horror in White Ghyll (since collapsed).

The production of the Borrowdale guide in the year sparked off a period of development in the valley. On Falcon Crag, filmgoers Graham and Birkett squeezed in Close Encounters and Star Wars, then Botterill and Lamb linked together the fine Kidnapped. Hyslop led Wuthering

Heights and Forsythe and Birkett climbed the steep Cyclotron.

In the quiet Watendlath Valley, action started initially on Caffel Side Crag with Everard and Apricot Lii, by Whillance, Armstrong and Martin Berzins. Across the valley Lamb showed the potential of Reecastle with his ascents of Guillotine, White Noise and Thumbscrew, and Dougie Mullen, 'fresh' from the Carlisle M.C. Dinner, climbed the now rather misnamed but good Widowmaker. These routes started the development of one of the 'hard' crags of the valley. On Black Crag Botterill and Parker climbed Silent Sun.

On the central area of Greatend Crag Livesey and Gomersall climbed the very difficult Hiroshima and Whillance and Armstrong replied with Trouble Shooter. A number of routes were climbed on Hind Crag and the Upper Right Wall of Gillercombe but have not become popular. On Goat Crag Ron Kenyon and Alan Hewison climbed Solid Air, then Colin Downer climbed Fear of Flying (with some aid, later free) and the excellent High Flyer. Bill Wayman climbed the oft 'inspected' line of the abseil on the right of the crag to produce Heretic.

1979

The flow of good routes continued this year. On Scafell, Lamb and the Berzins brothers found more excellent routes. Mythical Kings, a direct based on Ichabod, finishes up the tower on the left, Roaring Silence (what a super name!) gives airy climbing right of Ichabod and Forbidden Colours attacks the wall further right. Lamb and Botterill climbed the deceptively difficult corner of Burning Bridges, and, just to the right, Berzins and Lamb climbed Subaudition. Botterill and Lamb climbed the intimidating slab of Chartreuse direct and finished up the very difficult headwall to produce Midnight Express. Down the valley on Esk Buttress Birkett and Hyslop climbed the very bold Fallout.

In Thirlmere Lamb and Botterill climbed The Ultimate Eliminate on Castle Rock, and with the Berzins they climbed the difficult Relay on Raven Crag. On Gable Crag Lamb and Botterill squeezed in The Angel of Mercy.

In Langdale Lamb and Cleasby made the first completely free ascent of Trilogy, the deceptively steep corner on Raven Crag.

On Gimmer Crag Mortimer and Cleasby and team climbed the immaculate and popular Spring Bank.

Interest was then directed towards the Bowfell area. Kenyon and Rick Bennett went to investigate the central corner/groove just left of The Sword of Damocles, first seen by Kenyon in 1975. Thinking that such an obvious line must have been tried before, he thought it must be very hard but was surprised to find it a relatively easy E2, Mindbender. On Flat Crag Cleasby and Greenwood climbed the direct Fastburn then the Berzins climbed Slowburn and the exceedingly steep Ataxia. On Neckband Fawcett and Gibb climbed the thin Wilkinson's Sword and on Pavey they climbed the eliminate Supernova. Also on Pavey Lamb and Botterill climbed the impressive and sustained Coma. In White Ghyll Gary Gibson and D. Beetlestone climbed the serious Dead Loss Angeles up the Slabs left of the chimney.

Development still continued in Borrowdale. On Reecastle Lamb and Parker opened up with Ricochet, McHaffie followed with Bold Warrior and Whillance and Armstrong, the following day, climbed The Executioner. Lancashire climbers Knighton and Cronshaw found some excellent routes on the long forgotten Walla Crag with Blazing Apostles, Muscular Delinquent and Total

Mass Retain (different names to the more traditional White Buttress and Snowstorm).

On Shepherds Crag Whillance and Armstrong created interest in the overhung base right of Vesper with their Dire Straits. Lamb and Botterill turned attentions to the Shepherd's Chimney area and free climbed the airy Inclination. The Berzins replied with a free ascent of the dynamic Exclamation. On Bowder Crag Whillance and Armstrong changed things with their ascent of Wheels of Fire. Shortly afterwards Fawcett's free ascent of Hell's Wall stamped the crag on the lists of all aspiring hard men. On Castle Crag Birkett and McHaffie climbed the big wall left of Libido to give Corridors of Power and on Goat Crag the ever active Berzins and Lamb team climbed the interesting eliminate of The Thieving Magpie.

An interesting guide appeared to Winter Climbs in the Lake District. Although not fully comprehensive this helped to distract the winter attentions from Great End and Helvellyn to a wealth of excellent ice climbs elsewhere in the Lakes such as on the Screes in Wasdale, Inaccessible Gully and Raven Crag Gully. This, with the general increase in ice climbing standards caused by better equipment and the 'coffee table' book of Cold Climbs, has led to new winter routes in the modern idiom during the 1980's. Traditional summer routes received winter ascents such as Jones's Route direct from Lord's Rake and Botterill's Slab on Scafell, Engineers Slab on Gable Crag and Bowfell Buttress - not to mention a complete winter ascent of Central Buttress by Tony Brindle and Adrian Moore in the winter of 1986. And so the decade ended very much on a high note, with an emerging newer generation looking for any unclimbed rock, big or small.

1980

The new decade began with the rediscovery of Hodge Close quarry at High Tilberthwaite. Whillance and friends initiated development and by Easter were joined by the Cleasby/Matheson team. The result was a number of fine atmospheric routes mainly in the upper grades. Over on Dove Crag's North Buttress Graham and Birkett forced two impressive lines with Broken Arrow and Fear and Fascination. Botterill and Whillance found a number of short hard pitches on Deer Bield and Goucher Crag, Swindale, and during the latter half of the year began to tap the potential of Raven Crag, Threshthwaite Cove.

1981

That potential was realised the following year and most of Raven's major lines were snapped up by Botterill and Whillance in the company of Lamb and Armstrong, producing some superb routes like Top Gear and High Performance.

The unlikely Iron Crag, Thirlmere came under scrutiny during the year and a number of good quality climbs were found on the cleaned walls up and left of the main crag. The same team was also active up on Eagle, Langstrath where they produced a fine trio of hard crack climbs; Dead on Arrival, Flying Circus and the intimidating Coroner's Crack. On Reecastle, Watendlath, they breached the wall left of White Noise to produce the magnificent Penal Servitude, and in the west of the district pushed forward standards on the recently redeveloped and popular Buckbarrow in Wasdale with their ascent of the aptly-named Wild West Show.

Back in Borrowdale, Rick Graham climbed a first pitch to Mirage on Goat Crag to produce an excellent route. Visiting American Mark Wilford bouldered up two hard pitches, Day of the Jackals on Goat and Rough Boys on Shepherds Crag, and on Bowderstone Botterill and Lamb transformed the old aid route Bulger into a brutal free route of the same name as well as adding Heaven's Gate to its right. There was renewed activity on Scafell with the Berzins

brothers removing the remaining aid points on Lost Horizons and Incubus and Botterill/Lamb climbing the awesome Almighty left of Hells Groove.

On Dow Crag, Coniston, Cleasby and Matheson climbed the handsome groove behind Woodhouse's Pinnacle to produce Close to Critical and over on Dove Crag Graham and Birkett renewed their acquaintance with the North Buttress by climbing the withering Fast and Furious.

On the Bowderstone Crags the impending wall right of Lucifer was climbed by Jerry Moffat to give the as yet unrepeated De Quincy.

1983

By comparison this was a quiet year. It did however see the free ascent of the fine hanging pod left of Eclipse on Pavey Ark by Chris Hamper. This had previously been climbed back in 1981 with some rests taken on runners but had never really been accepted. Also of note was the first route to breach the futuristic crag right of Iron Crag Thirlmere's main buttress. This was the Committal Chamber and was the work of Graham and Downer. Up on Scafell during the course of guide book research Martin Berzins found the excellent Zeya.

1984

New route activity started early with Downer and Bacon hard at work during the winter months unearthing the hillside north of Grange Bridge in Borrowdale to reveal Grange Crags, much to the chagrin of the owner of the surrounding land. The end result was fifty worthwhile routes of all grades. They took their wire brushes and spades to Bleak How in Langstrath where a similar operation produced ten quality routes. Dave Hellier had earlier pointed to the potential of this long-neglected crag with his ascent of the excellent Bleak How Buttress at the end of 83.

Two very technical routes appeared during the year. One was Centerfold on Raven Langdale by Birkett and the other was Daylight Robbery on Reecastle, Watendlath by Chris Sowden, stolen from under the locals' noses. To round the year off Whillance and Armstong climbed the impressive thin crack between The Vikings and Supernatural on Tophet Wall, Great Gable to produce Incantations.

1985

This year will be remembered most for the wettest summer for many years, and in consequence attention was focused on the low-lying crags, with many outcrop-style routes and variations appearing. Gate Crag in Eskdale saw a number of fine additions and the Eastern Fells came under the scrutiny of Bob Smith and John Earl, producing some good routes including their impressive Stern Test on Upper Thrang. In Langdale Birkett and friends developed the remote Crinkle Gill producing a number of hard routes. As in 1984, Borrowdale came in for much attention with the imminent production of a new guidebook. Dave Armstrong developed the steep Lower Knitting Howe and many minor gems appeared through the valley.

Summary

Rock climbing has evolved and is still evolving. Equipment designed to protect the climbers such as PA's, double nylon ropes, bolts, skyhooks, chocks and Friends, now allow them to venture onto rock faces once thought too dangerous. Climbing walls and fitness programmes have been designed to increase strength and technique (and compensate for English weather!). Climbing competitions are held in various countries - thankfully this is not generally done in Britain. Imagine the crags relegated to vertical sports fields with top ropes flowing down them and closed for the day for a competition sponsored by a cigarette company!

All this was unheard of or indeed unimagined when Napes Needle was first climbed. The top climbers of each generation have broken down the frontiers of difficulty. As to the future it is difficult to imagine the climbing scene in ten years' time never mind another hundred years. Hopefully there will still be that special mystique which draws climbers onto the crags of Lakeland.

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