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EDEN VALLEY

Scratchmere Scar



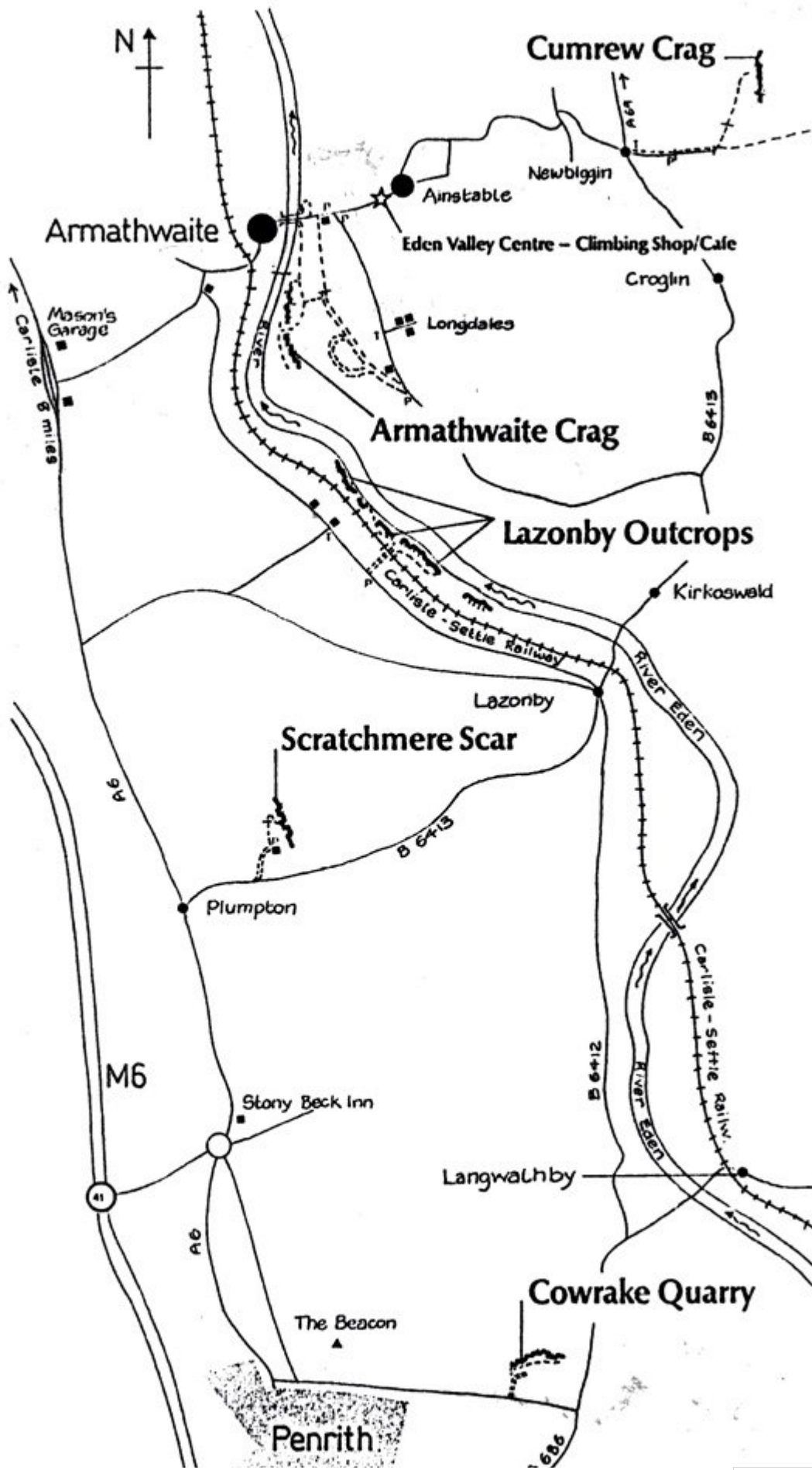
This crag will be included in the next FRCC Eastern Craggs guide (due 2008)

by **Stewart Wilson**

**FELL and ROCK
CLIMBING CLUB**
of the
English Lake District

Scratchmere Scar is located on the side of Lazonby Fell just a couple of miles east of the A6 at Plumpton midway between Carlisle and Penrith. The southerly aspect of this small crag of immaculate Penrith sandstone and its a fine position above a wooded slope looking across the surrounding countryside to the Lake District Fells means it is a delectable but never crowded venue. The climbing is on a number of buttresses never more than eleven metres high and often quite a bit less. The climbing is always steep but good holds tend to be plentiful in the form of pockets and flakes of a harder intrusion. The climbing at *Scratchmere* is also more varied than is usual on Penrith sandstone and most major features apart from slabs are encountered. This is a crag for the easy to middle grades, but one or two harder test-pieces and some good bouldering would make it a good choice for the competent soloist. The crag can often be a good choice on fine days in Winter as it is very quick to dry. The numerous trees above the crag provide good anchors.

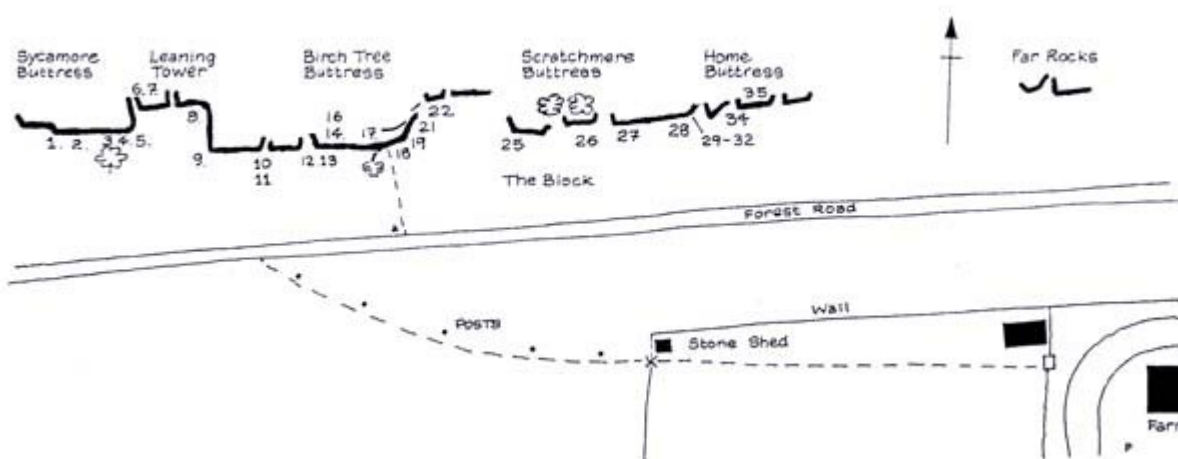




Approaches & Access

Scratchmere is best approached from the A6 at Plumpton about seven miles North of Penrith (leave M6 at Junction 41 and follow A6 northwards). From Plumpton, follow the B6413 road towards Lazonby and after a mile of uphill road, the crag will be seen across to the left above Scratchmere Scar Farm. Turn off the road at the Scratchmere Scar sign and follow the private concrete road down the hill into the farmyard. It is essential not to block any access required by the farmer and it is essential to ask at the farm for permission to park. Mr Brendan Atkinson farms Scratchmere and he allows climbers access over his land as well as parking. The crag itself is on land belonging to the Economic Forestry Group and access has been negotiated by the author with this body. **It is essential that dogs are not taken** to the crag and that fire precautions are stringently observed. When the access agreement was made, posts directed climbers up to the crag. It is essential that this route is followed although some of the marker posts may be missing. To reach the crag, gain the field under the wooded hillside via a gate beside the concrete and wood sileage shed and follow the boundary wall of the farm underneath the crag until a barrier is crossed to the left of a small stone shed. The path on the other side is followed for about ten metres until a branch slants up to the right. The path then slants diagonally leftwards through trees passing yellow-topped marker posts to meet the forest road. Turn right along the road and after thirty five metres a cairn on the left side of the road marks the path up to the crag. A steep ascent leads to the foot of *Birch Tree Buttress*.

The climbs are described from left to right and buttress by buttress.



Descents are at either end of the crag.

Sycamore Buttress

This is at the extreme left-hand end of the crag. It has a large sycamore tree growing close to the centre of the buttress.

-1) First of Many 8m VD

Start on the extreme left hand side, left of *Skeet*.

Climb the gully to the ledge and move right. Climb the face to finish. A pleasant little climb.

Nick Atkinson, Graham Uney, 23rd September 20005

1. Skeet 9m VD

Start at the foot of a tall, cave-like recess 2 metres left of a protruding block at head height. Climb up the cave until the sloping shelf on the right can be followed. Climb the corner on the right (*Pheasant Groove*) until a swing left on a ledge leads into the upper gully. Finish up the cracked arete on the right. Care with potentially loose blocks.

1a) The Famous Grouse 8m HS

(4b). Climb the face of the pillar between *Skeet* and *Pheasant Groove*.

Karl Lunt, Alison Sharman, 28th May 1997

2. Pheasant Groove 8m D *

A very enjoyable climb for the grade!

Start below a finger crack immediately left of the protruding block. Climb the finger crack and corner above to a good ledge. Climb the corner above on good holds.

3. **Over And Under** 8m VD

Start immediately behind the big sycamore. Climb steeply up cracks to a chimney recess (harder than it looks!) and gain a ledge on the left. Step right and climb the short, rectangular chimney to the top.

4. **Side By Side** 8m HD

Climb the steep, wide crack which is easier than it looks and finish up the short, rectangular chimney of *Over And Under*.

5. **The Arete** 8m S **

Excellent. This delicate climb starts just right of the arete, right of the steep crack of **Side By Side**. Climb the right side of the arete using this for the left hand throughout.

The recessed bay right of the arete has an easy chimney in the left-hand side and a recessed groove in the right-hand side. A steep rib separates the two breaks.

6. **Sidelock** 8m D *

Start at the foot of the easy chimney which has a chockstone near the top. Climb the chimney until a horizontal crack is reached on the left wall. Swing left on this and pull up to good holds on the next horizontal break. Climb the cracked wall above to the overhang and move left to finish as for *The Arete*.

7. **Choke** 8m M

Climb the chockstone chimney throughout.

8. **Boxlock** 8m D

Start below the right-hand break of the bay, to the right of the central overhanging rib. Climb the recessed groove to a ledge and finish to the right of a protruding block.

The steep, smooth right-hand wall of the bay is part of the next buttress:

The Leaning Tower

This monolithic block has a fine off-width crack splitting its front face. The upper part of the face is cut across by a wide ledge below the capping overhangs.

9. **Herne** 9m HVS *

A really good climb worth hunting out. Friends could be useful. Start below the left arete of the Leaning Tower .

(5a). Climb this mainly on its left side to the ledge, then finish straight up to good holds.

9a) **Schrodinger's Cat** 10m E1*

(5c). Start just left of *Blondie* and climb up and left to the arete which is ascended on its right side. Pull over the roof onto the ledge then finish above.

Karl Lunt, Alison Sharman, 28th May 1997

10. **Blondie** 10m HVS-E2 **

A versatile grading, which as usual, is a function of one's thickness!

(5a). Climb the fierce off-width crack with speed and determination passing a possible technicality in the upper half. Pull directly over the overhang above the ledge to finish.

JK suggests: Blondie HVS-E2 5b: I reckon HVS 4c, or VS 4c with a Friend 5.

11. **Leyline** 14m VD *

A very good climb in the "Traditional Classic" idiom, following a totally illogical series of weaknesses up a steep bit of rock. Start at the foot of the off-width crack of *Blondie*.

Move rightwards up a glacia and ascend a short corner to a sycamore tree. Step left, delicate at first, until the good shelf is gained. Traverse left along the shelf to the left-hand end of the overhangs.

Excellent holds enable the bulge to be overcome by a swing right to finish.

Birch Tree Buttress

This is the most impressive of all the buttresses at *Scratchmere Scar*, has the best rock, the best and longest climbs and is the point of arrival at the crag. The buttress projects out of the hillside and presents a short face towards *The Leaning Tower*. The front face is longest and has a large birch growing out of the face just above head height. To the right of the birch is a very steep wall with roof at mid-height providing short, hard problems finishing on a good ledge above, whilst the right-hand wall has a fine flake crack providing one of the best routes here: *Greta's Climb*.

12. **Extraction** 10m HVS *

A good climb at the lower limit of the grade. Care needs to be taken in the placing of protection. Start from an embedded flake just left of the left-hand arete of the front face.

(5a). Climb the arete on flat holds to a recess below an overhang. Continue up the rib above via a square hole.

13. **Out Of The Dark** 14m VD *

A good climb with a steep start and a sympathetic conclusion. Recommended. Start at the left arete. Pull up steeply and struggle onto the top of the flake. Traverse right for about 4 metres to a corner by the birch. Climb the corner which is easy and move onto a ledge on the right. (stance and possible belay on nuts). The shallow corner on the left is the easiest escape.

14. **Into The Light** 11m E1

Another good climb whose main interest lies in the smooth wall below the final roof. Unfortunately it moves left to finish. Start one metre right of the left arete.

(5b). Climb onto the top of the flake and gain a small ledge above. The middle of the steep wall is climbed on small holds to the horizontal break beneath the roof. Traverse left under the roof to finish up the last few metres of *Extraction*.

JK suggests: Into the Light E1 5b: Unless side runners are used in neighbouring routes, serious climbing at E2 5c, considerably harder for the short.

15. **Upright Pavement** 11m NL

(5c). The direct finish to *Into The Light*, straight over the roof.

JK suggests: Upright Pavement NL 5c: Harder than 5c - suggestions?

16. **Peanuts** 12m E1

This climb accepts the challenge of the attractive left-facing, shallow corner below the roof, but disappointingly, exits right. Start one metre right of the left arete as for *Into The Light*.

(5b). Climb onto the flake and move easily right to gain the top of a block below the shallow, left-facing corner. Climb the corner which is technical and fine and move out right below a small overlap to gain the obvious left-slanting crack (*Stormy Petteril*) to finish.

JK suggests: Peanuts E1 5b: An odd route I'd give E1 5c but some people find it much harder.

Both this and *Into the Light* lend themselves to top roping, and an on-sight lead is quite a necky undertaking hence suggested upgrades.

17. **Stormy Petteril** 12m HVS **

At the lower end of the grade, but a fine climb with a slippery-feel to the rock in the higher section. Start directly below the big birch tree on the face.

(5a). Climb the vertical, fist-wide crack to gain the birch. Easy rock above leads to a slim crack trending left to the top of a pedestal block. Swing left on smooth holds to gain and finish up the fine, left-slanting crack above.

To the right of the birch is a smooth wall split by a central groove. The wall is capped by a small roof. This section provides four short but technical climbs on impeccable rock:

18. **Overdose** 6m NL *

Start just left of the central groove and below a "stoneground" smooth wall.

(6c). Climb the wall to the roof. The wall above the roof is green-streaked and provides a desperate sequence involving long reaches and some pretty "nifty" footwork.

19. **The Black Streak** 6m E2 **

A much sought-after and attractive problem. Start at the central groove.

(6a). Climb the groove to the roof and surmount this to finish up the shallow, dimpled, black-streaked scoop.

20. Milligram 6m E1 ***

Magic! The original and best climb on the short wall. Start one metre right of the central groove directly below the slim, hanging flake crack.

(5b). Climb direct to the roof. Gain the flake and proceed carefully to the top.

To the right of *Milligram*, the wall bends round to the right and gain height.

21. Scratch 7m E4 6b **

Sustained and devoid of runners. The landing could be better. Start 2 metres right of *Milligram* and just right of the blunt arete of the lower wall. Climb the right-hand side of the arete to a horizontal pod at half-height. From the pod move up the steep wall above, but slightly right to benefit from presence of the odd edge here and there.

JK suggests: Scratch E4 6b: Has become considerably more chipped in the last 2 years.

To the right of *Scratch*, the ground at the foot of the crag steps up via a pedestal of rock.

22. Greta's Climb 11m HS **

One of the original climbs and still one of the best. Strenuous and a bit bold. The finish is superb. Start from the top of the pedestal block to the right of *Scratch*.

(4b). From the top of the block, layback boldly up the flake crack to gain a good ledge. From the point of arrival on this ledge, it is possible (and necessary) to reach a good horizontal break in the smooth wall above (runners). Swing right along this (exciting) to reach a groove and good finishing holds.

23. Don't Worry 9m VS

Start one metre right of *Greta's Climb* below a groove and a cave recess.

(4c). Climb the groove to the cave. Finish direct on good holds or right at a similar grade.

24. Be Happy 9m HVS 5b

Rather contrived but still worthwhile. Start to the left of the obvious birch tree 2 metres right of *Don't Worry*. Climb the wall behind the tree using a thin crack and the right-hand edge of the cave.

The crag to the right of *Be Happy* is broken and of no interest for ten metres. A large oak tree above the face is a landmark hereabouts.

The Block

This fine isolated pillar-like block about six metres high, lies below and just left of the massive oak.

25. Spiral Stairs 7m S *

Easy for the tall! Start at an embedded block at the foot of the pillar.

Step up and rightwards on ledges to gain the steep right arete. Finish up this arete.

Scratchmere Buttress

This is a fairly extensive buttress which is hard to view as a whole.

The major part of the buttress is to the right of an open gully and is identified by a barrier of overhangs at the bottom and another at the top of the crag. To the left of the gully is a rib which fades into a steep, upper wall immediately left of the big oak tree.

26. Hesitation 7m VS

Start below the rib to the left of the open gully.

(5a). Climb the rib until a tricky move on the wall above leads to a swing left and good finishing holds.

27. John's Climb 8m HS **

An intriguing, rather bold climb with an exciting finale on good handholds. Start to the right of the open gully from a flat rock ledge below the bottom overhang.

(4a). Make a stiff pull over the overhang and move left onto a slab. Climb directly up to a ledge. The rib above has a shallow, cracked groove on its right. Climb this by a bold entry and finish on better holds.

28. Fitch 8m HD

A very good and strenuous pitch on fine holds. Start one metre right of the bottom barrier of overhangs, at a sycamore tree.

Climb rightwards and up block corner to a good, big ledge. Pull out right onto the front of the rib and gain good footholds. Pleasant climbing on good holds leads to the top.

29. No Comebacks 8m HVS *

Accepts the challenge of the fine, finger crack in the upper, front wall of *Scratchmere Buttress*. Start from a pedestal at chest height below the smooth "problem wall" leading to the good ledge on *Fitch*.

(5b). Climb the wall to the good ledge. Bridge up the corner above and left to the roof and pull left into the finger crack which is followed to the top.

30. Get Close 7m VS *

(5a). Climb **No Comebacks** to the roof and pull round to the right and finish up a short jamming crack.

31. Jam Today 7m HS

Start 3 metres right of the sycamore below a wide crack leading up to a curving bulge.

(4c). Climb the wide crack and move left over the bulge to finish up *Fitch*.

32. Hob 6m D

Climb the steep gully just right of *Jam Today* taking care with potentially dangerous blocks.

Home Buttress

The wall and arete immediately right of the corner of *Hob* and its more broken continuation rightwards.

33. Home, Sweet Home 6m HVS

(5b). Climb the steep wall to the right of *Hob* and just left of the arete. This leads to an awkward, sloping finish.

34. Bobbery 6m VS *

Start directly below the arete to the right of *Hob*.

(4c). Climb the arete easily until it steepens. A short, sharp section on small finger holds leads to an easier finish.

35. The Cheesepress 7m D *

Start to the right of the overhanging arete of *Bobbery*, below a steep, flake crack. Climb easily up to the crack and follow this more enjoyably to the top.

The Far Rocks

These are reached by traversing the wooded slopes to the right of *Home Buttress* for a few minutes. They consist of three buttresses up to six metres high. The *Middle Buttress* is the biggest and is located by the presence of a huge scots pine above it.

The *Left Buttress* has a number of easy climbs.

The *Middle* and *Right Buttresses* have several good problems up to 5c.

This is an excellent bouldering area with fine rock and good landings. It is dirty because until now it was infrequently used.

**Scratchmere Scar
FIRST ASCENTS**

1970s & '80s

The first people to climb here were Ronnie Kenyon, Tim Dale and Stew Wilson who in the early Seventies were responsible for most of the original climbs on the crag including Stormy Petteril, Greta's Climb, John's Climb and Blondie. Following on from the first guide Stew Wilson climbed Herne in 1982. Pete Botterill scouted out several very hard short climbs on either side of Milligram including Scratch, the hardest climb on the crag which in all likelihood has not had a second ascent. Robin Curley in 1983 and Karl Lunt in

1985 both contested the steep face to the right of Extraction to produce two good climbs Peanuts and Into The Light*. The obvious finish over the roof however was not led. This was top-roped by by Andrew MacKay and called Upright Pavement. The fine little bouldering area at the far right-hand end of the crag was Stew Wilson's secret climbing gym in the early 1980's and some very worthwhile problems were produced which should become popular. There are still some hard eliminates to do in this area. Karl Lunt with typical thoroughness found No Comebacks and Get Close in 1988, both very good climbs. Some "last problems" exist, notably the wall to the left of Blondie and the left arete of The Block. These could soon be history.

1985	Oct	26	Into the Light	Karl Lunt (unseeded)
			However KL writes: When I later learned about Robin Curley's earlier route (Peanuts) I began to wonder if my line was pretty much the same (except that I moved left at the top to finish)? Someone needs to sort this out, they are very close to each other.	
1988	Apr	9	Hesitation	Karl Lunt (solo)
			Jam Today	Karl Lunt (solo)
1988	Oct	29	No Comebacks	Karl Lunt (solo)
1988	Oct	29	Get Close	Karl Lunt (solo)
1988	Oct	29	Home Sweet Home	Karl Lunt (solo)
1988	Oct	29	Don't Worry	Karl Lunt (solo)
1988	Oct	29	Be Happy	Karl Lunt (solo)
1997	May	27	The Famous Grouse	Karl Lunt, Alison Sharman
1997	May	27	Schrodinger's Cat	Karl Lunt, Alison Sharman
2005	Sep	23	First of Many	Nick Atkinson, Graham Uney

*fao Karl Lunt etc: just for the record, I did the first ascent of Into the Light, not Peanuts, and as far as i can remember it went directly over the overhang at the top - Robin Curley.

Karl Lunt replies: The route I climbed in 1985 I named "Into the Light" (to go with the next door climb "Out of the Dark") which I climbed not knowing about your earlier route thereabouts. In the 1992 North of England guide you are credited with doing this in 1983 and it's down as "Peanuts" (definitely not my name). Both lines are described as moving sideways at the top to avoid the overhang (although going in opposite directions). In the book this direct finish is called "Upright Pavement" and is described as being "not led" and 5c (undergraded I reckon as I tried it a couple of times and failed even though I was going a lot better than nowadays! I remember needing a big friend under the roof and tiny little crimps on the top wall). On later visits to the crag I began to think that both "Into the Light" and "Peanuts" may well climb the same lower wall anyway - talk about confusion?! If so, you can name it "Into the Peanuts on the Upright Pavement" or whatever? I live in Lancaster now and Scratchmere seems a bit too far to go for a small crag.

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