

Dove Crag

2005



Dave Birkett
demonstrating a
Fear of Failure E8 6c
North Buttress, Dove Crag
Photo: Steve Crowe



Dove Crag (376 109) Alt. 580 m

North East Facing

This magnificent crag is one of the most impressive pieces of rock in the district, its central and right-hand sections being sheer or overhanging for most of their height. The main face consists of two buttresses separated by a triangle of slabs leading up to steep corners and overhangs. The right-hand or North Buttress, about 60 metres in height, is a sustained overhang with excellent rock; the left-hand, about 90 metres at the highest point, is almost vertical. From the southern end of this face a sharp ridge, Westmorland's Route, descends forming the lower part of the wall of South Gully, the left-hand limit of the crag. The gully wall forms another face to the crag, looking to the southeast. The main feature of this face is a hanging gully, Inaccessible Gully. The climbs are described from right to left starting with the North Buttress area. All the climbs on this tremendous leaning wall offer good climbing on rock (mostly) covered with good flat or in cut holds. The protection is generally adequate, though a double selection of small flexible cams will be found useful on many of the climbs.

1. Explosion 30 m E4 ★ (F6c)

A deceptive pitch which is very strenuous and bold. Not a soft touch. Start at the very right of the buttress where a prominent easy gangway leads up and left.

(5c). Climb the steepening gangway up leftwards and then climb more directly upwards to the obvious corner which provides a rest and an easier finish.

Pete Botterill, Pete Whillance 30th June 1976

Outside Edge E5 ★★ (F7a+)

A short but sensational and photogenic finish to *Explosion*.

(6b). From the foot of the easy corner traverse left to the arête. Arrange protection then make wild moves up the arête past a thread to the top.

Neil Foster, Martin Berzins 4th August 1990

The FFF link E5 ★ (F7a+)

(6b) Start up *Explosion* until it steepens, step left and reach down to clip the thread on *Fetish for Fear*. Continue as for *Fetish for Fear* to finish up the *Flying Fissure Finish*.

Steve Crowe, Karin Magog 16th August 2003

2. Yorkshire Pudding 20m E3 ★

The thin crack that cuts through the traverse of *Explosion* is harder than it looks. Start about 3 metres left of *Explosion* below the obvious thin crack.

(5c). Climb the crack to the top.

Rick Graham, Paul Ingham 29th June 1988

The next five climbs all have a common start at an obvious flake about 10 metres left of the right end of the buttress and 3 metres to the right of the rock step at the base of the crag.

3. Fetish For Fear 30m E7 ★★ (F7b)

(6b) Start up the initial flake of *Fast and Furious*, to its top. Move up and right, passing a loose block to the base of a slim, left-leaning groove. Climb this (Friend 1 and 2) to an overlap. Reach over this to good holds. Make committing moves leftwards to an obvious large flat hold and in-situ thread on left. Move up and right on large spaced holds to join the *Flying Fissure Finish* at its peg. Continue up this to the top. Serious.

Chris Hope and Duncan Booth both led. Seconded by Alan Wilson and Jimmy Beveridge. 6th July 2003

4. Fast and Furious 45m E5 ★★★★★ (F7a)

A bold and sustained climb of great quality, which takes the shallow groove and headwall directly above the starting flake. Several longish narrow tapes are useful for the small spikes encountered on the wall also small cams and wires.

(6a). Layback to the top of the flake (thread on right) then climb the short bold rib (Rock 1 on left) to the base of a smooth wall guarding entry to the groove (small cams). Neatly avoid this obstacle with a step up to the right before hand traversing back left past Rock 3 to a (new) peg at the base of the groove. Layback boldly up the groove to better holds and runners (DMM $\frac{3}{4}$ then place $\frac{1}{2}$ friend blind up on left), then trend slightly rightwards passing a tiny spike to a long reach (crux) to gain a superb hidden jug on top of a short rib (Rock 3 in jug). The wall above is climbed, first right, then left, then straight up aiming for the obvious finishing chimney. Belay above this or continue to better nuts further up to the left.

Rick Graham, D Lyle, Bill Birkett 30 May 1982

The Flying Fissure Finish E5 ★★★★★ (F7a+)

A very steep right-hand finish to *Fast and Furious* following the hanging groove left of *Outside Edge* and right of the chimney of *Fast and Furious*.

(6b). Follow *Fast and Furious* to the superb jug after the crux. Move right to a peg runner then race up the wall past an in-situ thread runner to gain a line of buckets, which lead up the sensational groove to the top.

Neil Foster, Martin Berzins 11th August 1990

The Inside Out link E5/6 ★★ (F7b)

(6b) Start up *Fast and Furious* following the rightwards traverse (past the peg on FFF) to finish up *Outside Edge*. Mega pump.

Steve Crowe, Alan Wilson both lead. Seconded by Karin Magog August 2003

5. Bucket City 45m E6 ★★★★★ (F7b)

Another tremendous pitch this time taking the obvious diagonal crack to the left of *Fast and Furious* and an intricate line up the superb headwall (6b). Layback the starting flake of *Fast and Furious* but step left into a shallow cave. Pull over the bulge and climb up to the break. Step left round the rib to the base of a thin diagonal crack sporting several old pegs. Fight the stubborn crack to a rest in the niche (*Fear and Fascination* gains this point from the left), then climb up and rightwards as for *Fear and Fascination* passing a spike to gain the right end of the ledge system and a good rest. Make a couple of moves up the groove above before breaking out left via a line of holds above the lip of an overlap. These lead down to a slot (small cam) from which a line of reasonable holds, breaks and ledges lead directly up and back slightly right, passing a peg runner just below the top. Two sets of small cams useful.

Martin Berzins, Neil Foster 28th May 1988

6. North Buttress 59m E6

The original aid climb is now free after a series of attempts over many years. Although difficult the climb is somewhat disjointed.

1. 37 m (6b/c). Follow *Bucket City* to the niche at the top of the diagonal crack. Climb the short technical wall above past a line of decaying pegs and bolts to the ledge system. Traverse left for 10 metres to an uncomfortable niche with a peg and bolt belay and assorted nuts.

2. 22 m (5c). Climb up the back of the niche to an old peg runner; then move left and climb the ramp to more rusting horrors. Move up and right and climb the wall traversing rightwards, past a groove to a gangway leading leftwards to a tree and belays just above.

1969 Chris Woodall, R Clarke with some aid.

1977 Martin Berzins, Chris Hamper reduced aid to 2 points and followed a section of what was to become Fear and Fascination.

27th June 1981 Rick Graham, D Lyle, Bill Birkett Starting up what was to become Fast and Furious. 22 May 1988 Aid removed following the 1977 line. FFA 5th May 1991 Steve Meyers Free climbed the original line in its entirety.

7. Fast City 37m E5 ★★★

(6a). A direct line up North Buttress linking the start of *Fast and Furious* with the top of *Bucket City*. Follows *Fast and Furious* to the top of the groove and move left to gain the prominent spike (junction with *Fear and Fascination/Bucket City*). Climb up to the ledge system, then make a couple of moves up the groove above before breaking out left via a line of holds above the lip of an overlap. These lead to a slot (small cams) from which a line of reasonable holds, breaks and ledges lead directly up the wall and slightly right, passing a peg runner just below the top.

Rick Graham, D Lyle, Bill Birkett 27th June 1981

Climbed as far as the ledge system then continued as North Buttress.

Steve Crowe, Karin Magog both lead. Seconded by Alan Wilson 16th August 2003 Linking the start of Fast and Furious to the finish of Bucket City for the easiest direct line up the cliff.

The next feature is a two-metre rock-step at the foot of the crag behind a large block. The following four climbs all start at the foot of this feature where an obvious flake crack leads up and left to a rock shelf at 6 metres.

8. Fear and Fascination 48m E6 ★★★★★(F7a+)

A classic climb; bold, strenuous, intimidating and maintaining interest right to the top. Brilliant.

(6a). Climb the flake crack to the rock shelf. Pull up the wall at the right end of the shelf boldly at first to reach a good runner (Rock 9), continue up the wall to a good flake (and ¾ DMM) and then less easily to a short crozzly crack (Rock 3). Hand traverse right and pull into the niche on *Bucket City* (old peg and Golo). Step right and up as for *Bucket City* passing an spike to gain the right end of the ledge system and a good rest. Climb the fine groove line above, making a sneaky step out right when all the holds seem to run out, finishing via the obvious deep groove.

Rick Graham, Bill Birkett 26th June 1980



9. Beyond the Pail 53m E7 ★★★

A difficult climb with two contrasting pitches; the first is technically interesting and the second easier but very bold. Start at the foot of the rock step.

1. 27 m (6b). Follow *Fear and Fascination* to the (Rock 3) in the crozzly crack. Climb directly up where *Fear and Fascination* moves right, slightly left then back right, aiming for a peg just below the ledges. Traverse left along the ledge system to belay in the niche at the *Pail Face* stance.

2. 26 m (6a). Climb up past the good peg and continue up passing a pathetic blade peg runner on its right, until better holds eventually arrive. Continue to the top.

Martin Berzins, Al Manson 5th June 1989 More serious since the demise of a good placement at the junction with Fear and Fascination.

10. Fear of Failure 50m E8 ★★★★★

A very "big" route, freeing the old aided first pitch of *Broken Arrow*, before taking a sweeping run out across the top wall.

(6c). Climb the wall as for *Vlad* but pull up with difficulty to good side pulls (peg - from old aid section), make a hard move via a sloping pinch and continue with exciting moves to reach the ledge. Step up left to clip the first peg on the second pitch of *Beyond the Pail*, then make a harrowing traverse up rightwards to buckets on *Bucket City* and finish up this or the groove on the left. Exciting!

James McHaffie, August 2002

11. Pail Face 25m E6 ★★★ (F7b+)

Start at the foot of the rock step.

1. 25m (6b). Follow *Vlad the Impailer* past the insitu Rock 1 & 2½ Friend. Climb directly up the wall above to belay in the niche of *North Buttress*. Lower off!

Martin Berzins, Neil Foster 4th August 1990

Broken Arrow 25m E5

2a (5c). Follow pitch 2 of *North Buttress* but where it moves right continue up the easy ramp to the edge of the buttress. Traverse the ledge leftwards and cross the steep groove of Asolo to belay below the last pitch of *Hangover*. Finish up the last pitch of *Hangover*.

The first pitch of Broken Arrow followed a line 3 metres right of Pail Face by using both an aid nut and a poor aid peg to gain better holds and the ledge system. This has been superseded by Fear of Failure. Bill Birkett 1980

Andy Brown demonstrating the leftwards traverse high up on *Bucket City*.

Photo: Steve Crowe

12. Vlad the Impailer 35 m E7 ★★★★★ (F7c)

This is the obvious fault line leading out leftwards from *Fear and Fascination* to the bay of Asolo. Stupendous, bold and very strenuous climbing makes this an unforgettable route. Long slings are essential to prevent rope drag higher up the pitch. Start at the foot of the rock step.

(6b). Follow *Fear and Fascination* to the good flake. Swing left to a jug and then another (0 tech. Friend above and Rock 7 low to left) then traverse left past insitu rock 1 to jugs and vital Friend 2 ½ (Yellow and Blue Camelot). Undercut left to a downward pointing spike and good footholds, then pull up left. (1 stopper and crucial ½ flexible Friend and 6 walnut above). Swing down across left (3 Friend) then climb up past a peg runner to a jug (1 or 1 ½ flex. Friend on right). Gain the block and niche up and left (crux), peg runner and continue up the fault line (peg runner) to gain the belay of Asolo. Either finish up *Asolo*, or alternatively the leader can reverse to the in-situ gear and lower off.

Martin Berzins, Neil Foster 26th August 1990

"None of Martin or my Lakes routes were ground up - Martin's were the hardest, and he always gave them a good clean and look before hand, though the pre-practise would be limited to trying the odd move from a locked off descender - and even that would be very difficult on something like Vlad, in view of the overhanging / diagonal nature of the route. He certainly never top-roped any of his routes beforehand. Dougie repeated Bucket Dynasty ground up - a fantastic effort, though I think we only gave that one E6. To my knowledge Vlad remains unrepeatd, and I would certainly take my hat off to anyone flashing that one one sight - though I'm sure there are people good enough, it's just you rarely see them at Dove Crag!" Neil Foster on Rocktalk.

The next climb starts about 15 metres left of the previous climbs below the right end of an obvious grassy terrace (top of pitch 1 of Hangover).

13. Dusk till Dawn E7 6b ★★★★★ (F7c)

An Awesome route. One of the steepest lines in the Lakes. This route climbs the huge leaning pillar on the north buttress. Start as for *Bucket Dynasty* to meet *Vlad* at the 3 friend (Bold). Reverse *Vlad* for a couple of metres to good holds (.5 friend or 6 Walnut). Make moves up and rightwards to gain the right side of the Pillar. A series of big moves on good holds following a leftwards leaning ramp leads to a huge shake out below a ramp sporting a peg at it's top. Make hard moves up to and past the peg (leftwards) to superb jugs on the left side of the pillar. More huge moves upwards lead to small ledge. The tricky groove above is climbed to a ledge. Abseil Descent (in- situ). A double set of small cams is required.

Al Wilson, Chris Hope both led July 2003

(Rock 1, Friend 1, peg, small cams 0 and ½, Rock 3, Rock 2.)

13a. The Darkest Hour E7/8 6c ★★★★★ (F7c+)

The logical direct start to *Dusk till Dawn*. Follow the initial layback flake of *Bucket Dynasty* then step left on the first ledge. Start below the weakness in the roof above and directly climb up to the point where *Dusk to Dawn* leaves *Vlad*.

Dave Birkett June 2005

14. Bucket Dynasty 25 m E7 ★★★★★ (F7c)

Another steep and bold climb on good rock. Start at the obvious layback crack below the right end of the grassy terrace of *Hangover*.

(6b). Climb the crack to its top and follow the wall above until a move left leads to huge holds (2½ Friend, 5 hex). Climb the intimidating wall above to a good layaway (1 and 00 tech. Friends). Pull up again to gain *Vlad the Impailer* at the 3 Friend. Finish up *Vlad the Impailer*.

Martin Berzins, Neil Foster 27th May 1991

15. The Brasov Incident 40m E6 6b ★★★★★ (F7b+)

A sweeping L-R girdle, which starts up *Bucket Dynasty* to the bulge. Traverse right beneath the roof, passing two pegs, to join *Fear*.. at the spike below its crux. Move up and across as for *Fear*... to a junction with *Bucket City* and continue up until it is possible to step right at a good spike onto *Fast and Furious* below its crux. Move up to the good jug then continue rightwards beneath the *Flying Fissure Finish* to finish up the *Outside Edge*. It is possible to lower off the insitu slings with a 60m rope.

Steve Crowe and Karin Magog (finishing up the Flying Fissure) both led. 9th August 2003

The Vlad Stones and the Dove Crag ex insitu gear museum!

Photo: Steve Crowe

