

Raven Crag Ennerdale



Once Upon a Time in the North-West E7

Tim Millen

photo Chris Fisher

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Raven Crag

OS Ref: **NY 178 125**

Alt: **400m**

Raven Crag is the lowest crag above the forestry road on the south side of the River Liza. It lies east of the memorial footbridge and almost directly above a huge boulder by the forest track. Its extensive North Face is rambling, vegetated and usually wet, but the East Face is well worth a visit.

Approach

Although the crag is a long way from anywhere with vehicle access, it is easily approached from Black Sail Youth Hostel or by bicycle from Bowness Knott. From a layby (NY 182 126) at a high point east of the large boulder on the forestry track, avoid the obvious break in the trees dead ahead as it leads to an unpleasant heap of brash; instead, trend leftwards to gain a break through the trees on the left. Ascend the hillside, cross a fence and turn right above woods to arrive at the **East Face** (30mins from the track. 1hr 30mins from Bowness Knott).

Grades



Raven Crag - overview

East Face

90 mins Aspect: **East**
Lat/Lng: [54.501017779619, -3.2694599421566](#)

Introduction

The [East Face](#) is short but fairly clean and steep. Its main features are a very steep and smooth wall with a white streak down its centre and, left of this, twin right-slanting grooves. The only decent belay at the top is in a deeply recessed corner hidden round on the right.

Descent

From the recess, scramble up leftwards then descend to the left.



Raven Crag, Ennerdale, East Face

1 North-Westward Ho! HVS 5a 55m

An intimidating but well-protected and juggy lower section soon gives way to easier pleasant slabs.

1 35m 5a Follow an easy initial left-slanting ramp to under the right-slanting groove (shared with [Roadworks](#)). Sidle round the arête to the left and follow a crack up the wall to exit into a niche on the left. Continue up the crack in the slab until big jugs lead leftwards to a belay under a vast poised boulder.

2 20m Traverse right, crossing a grass patch, then up and right to the belay.

8.05.2017 CJ King, SJH Reid

2 Road Works E2 5c 45m

Takes the left-hand of the twin grooves. Start down and slightly right of the groove. Climb the leftward-slanting groove/ramp to gain the main groove. Sustained difficult moves up this (microcams) gain easier ground. Follow the crack above to the top.

3.07.2015 JF Hughes, R Jervis

3 Summer Breeze E1 5b † 45m ★

Takes the right-hand of the two grooves and is low in the grade. Start under the white streak in the centre of the wall. Step off an embedded flake at foot level and climb up a huge flake on the wall moving left to a slim corner. Climb the corner (large cams) to a ledge. Traverse left and make thin moves up the right-slanting ramp/groove above until it eases. Continue round to the right in the line of the groove until moves up left lead to a belay.

3.07.2015 R Jervis, SJH Reid, JF Hughes

4 Once Upon a Time in the North-West E7 6b/c † 26m ★★ ★★

A superb, fingery and sustained route on excellent rock. It takes the line of the crag direct up the centre of the vertical wall following the obvious white streak. Although the route is low in the grade, the numerous RP placements take considerable effort to place. On all ascents to date a DMM Walnut 0 was pre-placed at the crux – without this the climb would be a lot bolder. Start directly beneath the white streak and below a large flake against the wall.

Climb easily up to the top of the flake then make a hard move to become established on the wall. This is followed by strenuous fingery climbing up a thin crackline to reach a tiny break. A further series of difficult moves lead to a good hold in a small break up and left. Pull back rightwards to reach a good flake, then finish direct. A further 16m of easy climbing gains the top.

24.07.2011 G Read, S Litchfield

5 Texas Ranger E7 6b † 25m ★★

"Because Chuck Norris is the only man that can beat John Wayne".

A direct and independent start to [The John Wayne Variation](#). Climb the groove/flake as for [Once Upon a Time in the North-West](#) then bridge out right onto a slim ramp. Using the shallow mono above, (DMM Halfnut 4 in keyhole below) make a hard move right onto the wall. Using undercuts and a fingery sequence boldly climb to a junction with [The John Wayne Variation](#) and finish up this.

28.07.2024, T Millen, S Quinn

6 The Searchers E5 6b † 26m ★★ ★★

A fantastic route that tackles the obvious line of the corner and groove system to the right of the main face. Start on a platform beneath an obvious and innocuous-looking corner/crack. From the very first move this corner is brutal but eases higher up where the sanctuary of a left-trending glaciis is reached - gear can be arranged at the top of the ramp before the crux. A hard and insecure-feeling move up a thin crack in the bulging wall to the left of the blank groove allows for a fabulously precarious position with your hands on a sloping shelf to be reached. A move back right to the base of a crack gains a bridging position and brings welcome respite and gear. Things ease with the final crackline but the climbing remains steep and brilliantly positioned. A further 16m of easy climbing gains the top.

31.07.2011 S Litchfield, G Read

7 The John Wayne Variation E4 6a † 26m ★★

An alternative finish to [The Searchers](#) that provides good and well-positioned independent climbing but avoids the shoot out with the upper groove. Start on a platform beneath an obvious and innocuous-looking corner/crack, as for [The Searchers](#). From the top of the halfway ramp, make a tough move out leftwards to gain a rising crackline. Follow this steeply, initially leftwards and then back right to the top with maintained interest.

24.07.2011 S Litchfield, G Read

8 Great North-Western HVS † 50m ★★

An interesting climb on excellent rock. Start just right of the lowest point of the wall.

1 20m 5a Scramble up grass and climb a steep open groove to gain a large ledge on the left. Traverse left, overcome a short corner and sidle leftwards again to a wide slanting crack which is followed to a huge ledge.

2 30m 4c Just right of a large boulder is an undercut V-groove splitting the short overhanging wall. Climb this and directly up slabs to an overlap. Go straight over this and finish up a right-trending groove/scoop in the steep wall (belay in a recessed groove to the right).

Dry Variation Useful if the undercut V-groove is wet.

2 35m 4b Traverse the long ledge to its right-hand end and climb slabs leftwards to the left edge of the buttress. Step up over a small overlap (possible belay) and finish up a short right-leaning groove on excellent holds.

15.10.2021, P Winterbottom, SJH Reid

30.09.2015 JF Hughes, SJH Reid

9 Chasing the Sun E2 5b † 55m ★

A most unusual climb that links together the large ledges and steep corners on the wall above [Great North-Western](#). The strenuous cruxes are fortunately well protected.

1 25m 5b Gain an easy-angled white ramp at the very bottom right corner of the wall and climb up it a short way until the wall above can be climbed boldly to a huge ledge. Traverse the ledge and climb a short corner to a steeper corner: hard moves up this gain another ledge. Traverse left again to yet another steep corner which succumbs to even harder moves. A tenuous traverse left leads to a block and the wide crack of [Great North-Western](#) which is followed to a huge ledge.

2 30m 4c As for [Great North-Western](#).

15.10.2021 P Winterbottom, SJH Reid

On the first ascent, the [Dry Variation](#) on pitch 2 was taken.

North Face

Aspect: **North**  None

Introduction

This large area is slabby but rather vegetated and only two routes have been recorded, one of which could not be located.

Descent

To the left.



North Face - Raven Crag

1 Centipede HS 100m

Starting at the lowest point of the crag, gain a chimney up and right, and aim to follow the crest of the buttress. Several variations have been done and the ratio of vegetation to rock is approximately 50:50.

1937 DJ Cameron, W Heaton Cooper

2 Scarab VD 80m

Start about 45m up and right of [Centipede](#) following an independent line to its right. The line has proved impossible to locate.

1937 DJ Cameron, W Heaton Cooper

