

Yew Crag – North Buttress, Thirlmere

(NY 3074 2096) Alt. 180m West Facing

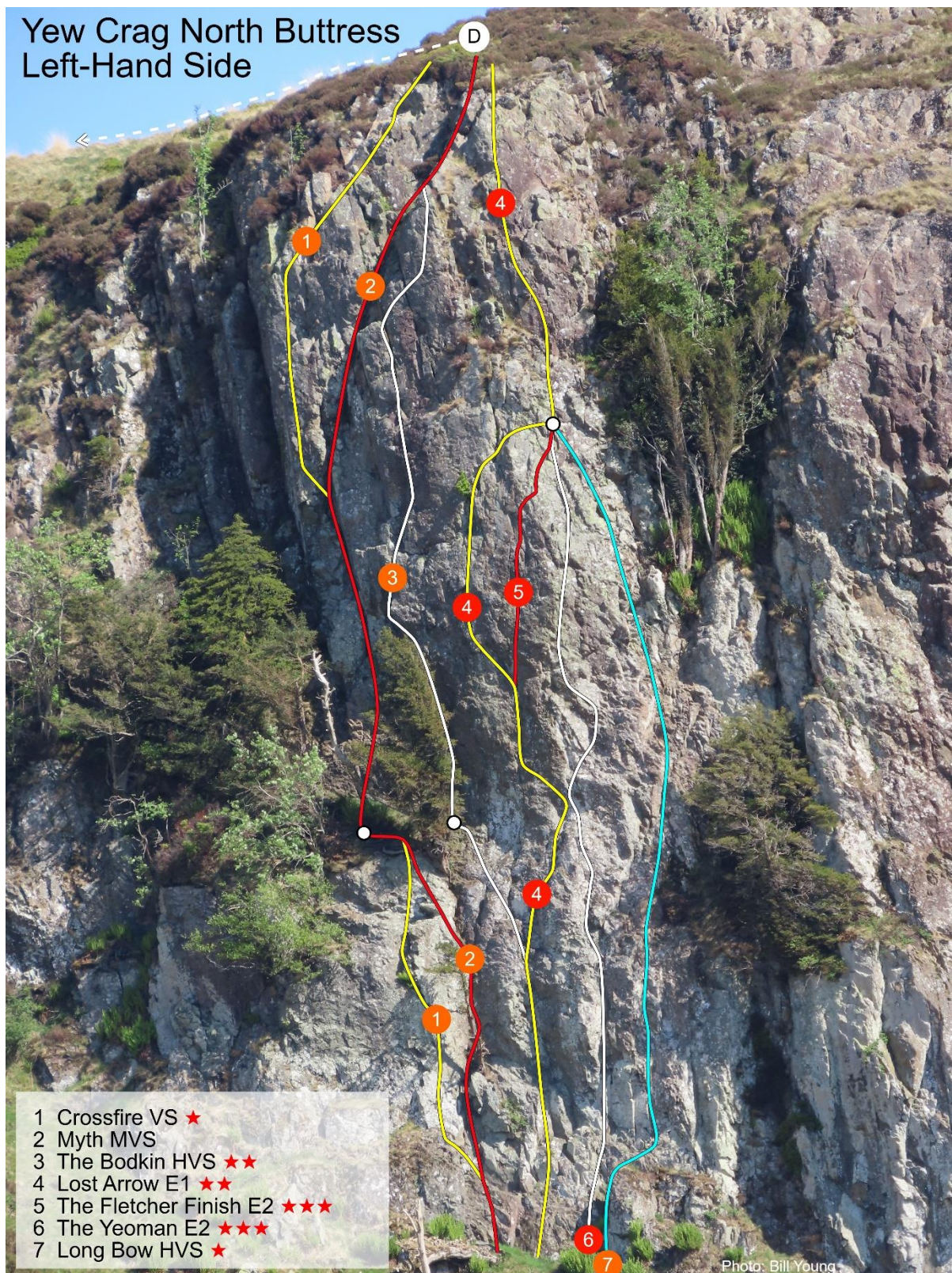
Situated on the western side of High Rigg, Thirlmere, Yew Crag was climbed on in the 1960s and 1980s but omitted from the last FRCC *Eastern Crag*s guide due to its overgrown state. The crag was cleaned and redeveloped in the 2020s.

Approach: Park in the large layby on the left, some 3¾ miles out of Keswick on the A591 Keswick to Ambleside road, and a few hundred metres before the start of the dual carriageway (NY 3016 2054). Go through the gate on the left and follow the wide track to another gate, then head up right to gain the top of a low ridge. The crag can be seen from here being the left-hand and tallest of a line of crags on the opposite hillside. Turn left and follow the low ridge to a point about 50m from a stone wall, then turn right and head for another low ridge. Once on this ridge turn right and after about 70m (the best point to view the whole crag) go down to a stone wall and cross it via a wire fence repair. Stride across the watercourse and zigzag up the hillside to the crag (20 minutes). In high summer the bracken is quite tall making access more difficult.

If you are climbing the routes in one pitch, beware of rope drag. It is worth carrying a few tape slings for runners. Any mention of Friend sizes in the route descriptions refers to the original single axle cams, not the modern double axle ones. There are three bolts at the top of the crag; these were used for cleaning the routes as there were no natural anchors.

Descent: The best descent is down a wide open grassy gully on the left, about 50m from the top of the climbs.

Yew Crag North Buttress Left-Hand Side



The climbs are described from left to right, the first few being on the wall to the left of the yew-filled groove in the centre of the crag.

1 Crossfire 40m VS *

W Young, C Downer (Alt) 13.09.2024

Start below a wide crack.

1 10m (4c) Climb up for 2m, step left then up the wall to reach a curving crack. Follow this to reach the tree covered ledge. Belay on the third tree along this ledge.

2 30m (4c) The easy wall to the groove and up to the block. Step off this and follow the fine finger crack to easy ground.

2 Myth 42m MVS

P Ross, J Lee 25.04.1965

Start below the wide crack.

1 12m (4b) Climb up to the wide crack which is followed to the tree covered ledge. Belay on the third tree along this ledge.

2 30m (4b) The easy wall and groove up to the block then continue up the rightwards-trending line.

3 The Bodkin 42m HVS **

C Downer, W Young, C Fowler, D Sperry 13.10.2022

Start 2m right of Myth.

1 14m (4c) Climb the groove for 4m before moving left to the tree covered ledge. Belay on the first tree.

2 28m (5a) Climb the steep crack/groove direct to a difficult move right onto the wall; good gear here. A bold move up the arête leads to twin cracks. Follow these to easier ground.

4 Lost Arrow 40m E1 **

K Telfer, S Telfer, S Kennedy 02.1982

Start as for The Bodkin.

1 28m (5b) Climb the groove for 4m then up right to a block (good gear). Stand on this (good Friend 2.5 up right in a pocket). Small but good holds lead into the groove and a peg (in place). Move up for a few moves before moving left into a crack. Continue up on good holds past a niche before moving right to a belay ledge with a peg (in place). (The original route went straight up to the top rather than moving right to the belay ledge. This has not been cleaned).

2 12m (4b) Climb straight up the wall to a steepening. Overcome this then climb more easily to a bolt belay.

5 The Fletcher Finish E2 (5c) ***

C Downer, W Young 21.08.2022

1 28m (5c) As for Lost Arrow to the peg (in place) but continue straight up to another peg (in place). Difficult moves past this brings good holds and a belay on the right.

2 12m As for pitch 2 of Lost Arrow.

6 The Yeoman 40m E2 ***

C Downer, W Young, C Wornham 02.09.2022

Start beside a large block.

1 28m (5b/c) Climb the steep groove and head for the block on Lost Arrow. Attain a standing position on the ledge above. Move slightly right then back left passing a good but small flake (thin tape). Intricate climbing leads past two pegs (in place) and up to the belay (peg in place).

2 12 m (4b) As for Lost Arrow.

7 Long Bow 40m HVS *

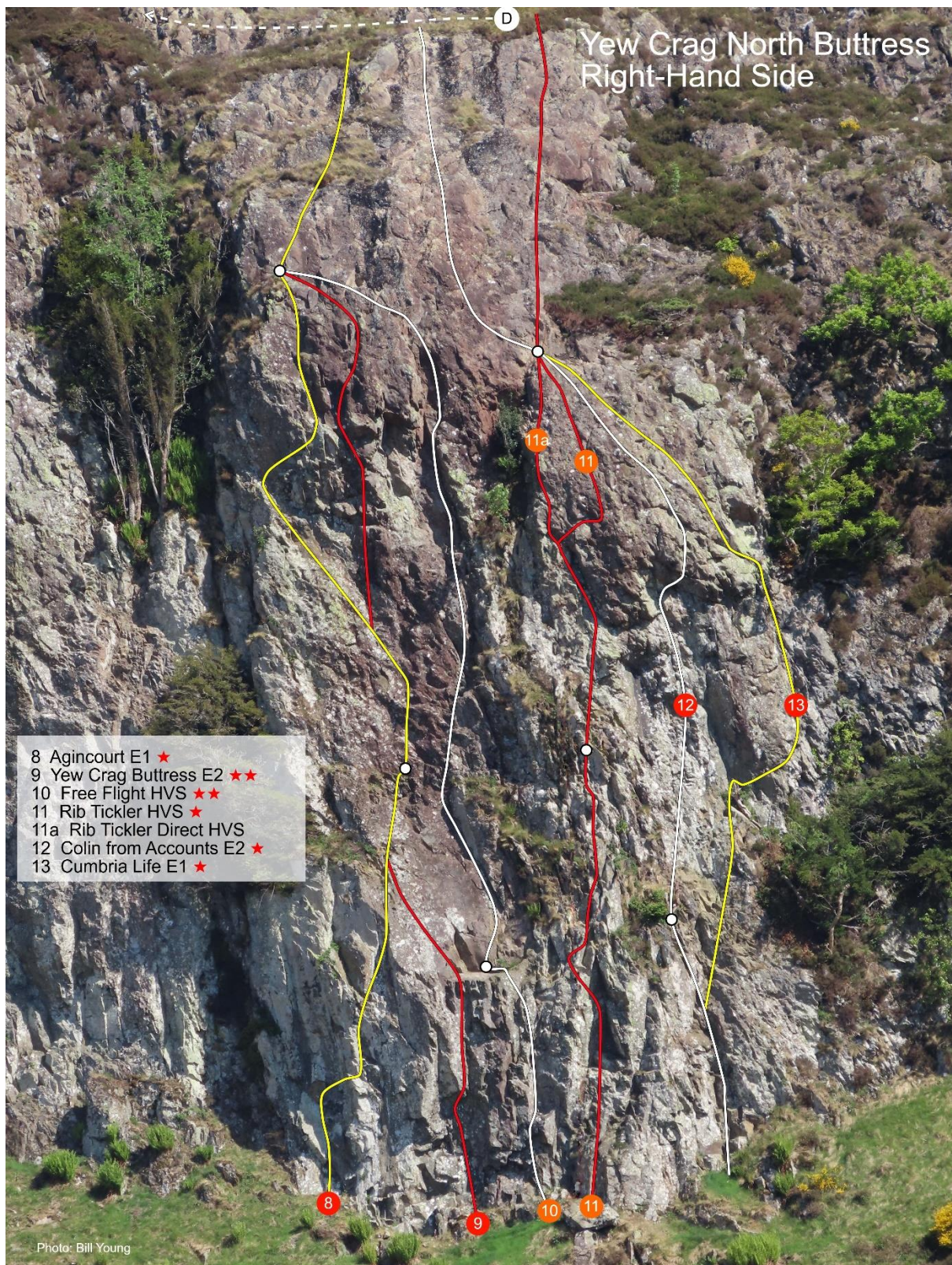
K Telfer, S Telfer, A Winter 02.1982

Start beside a large block.

1 28m (5a) Climb onto the block, step right, then up the wall to a move left onto ledges. Continue directly, just left of the gully to the belay ledge (peg in place).

2 12m (4b) As for Lost Arrow.

The remaining climbs lie to the right of the yew-filled groove.



8 Agincourt 55m E1 *

K Telfer, G Telfer, A Winter 02.1982

FA new start C Downer, W Young, G Lee 08.07.2022

Start at a short corner just right of the yew tree filled groove.

1 20m (5a) Climb the corner to a large flake. Traverse right, past a peg, onto the arête then up into a groove/crack. At the top, pull onto the slab then climb easily to the belay ledge (peg in place). The original route started at more or less the same place, climbed the wall and the left edge of the groove (peg runner) then up to the same stance. This was E2 5c and has not been cleaned.

2 25m (5b) Above is a shallow brown groove. Fantastic climbing up this leads to a traverse left to a spike on the arête. Bold moves diagonally rightwards lead to a break with good holds. Go up to a belay ledge below a short slanting crack.

3 10m Easily to the top.

9 Yew Crag Buttress 55m E2 **

C Downer, W Young 23.08.2022

Start 3m right of Agincourt.

1 20m (5b) Climb the steep corner to a ledge. From the left-hand side of the ledge climb the difficult slab on small holds to the belay (peg in place).

2 25m (5b) Climb the shallow brown groove, as for Agincourt, but continue up to the overhang. Bold moves through the niche lead to easier ground and the belay ledge below a short slanting crack.

3 10m Easily to the top.

10 Free Flight 55m HVS **

K Telfer, G Telfer (alt leads) 02.1982

Start 2m right of Yew Crag Buttress at the next groove

1 10m (5a) Climb the groove on good holds to arrive at a large ledge. Belay recommended.

2 35m (5a) Climb the short corner then continue up the obvious groove line on the right to a chimney on the right of the overhang. Steep moves lead to easier ground and the belay ledge below a short slanting crack.

3 10m Easily to the top.

11 Rib Tickler 45m HVS *

C Downer, D Sperry 19.04.2022

Start 2m right of Free Flight below a niche.

1 15m (4c) Climb into the niche (good Friend 1 in slot). Bridge up on good holds and pull out left. Follow flakes to a large block belay below a leftwards-leaning groove.

2 15m (5a) Pull into the groove (good gear) which is climbed to a protruding flake (good nuts above). Move horizontally right above the overhang in a fine position until it is possible to climb the slab more easily to a ledge and peg belay (in place).

3 15m Either of the two easy ways up the slab to the top and bolt belay.

11a Variation Rib Tickler Direct HVS 5a

C Downer, W Young, M MacKay 10.04.2025

On pitch 2, instead of traversing right from the flake, continue straight up on good holds before moving right to the peg belay. Easier climbing but not as exciting.

12 Colin from Accounts 40m E2 *

C Downer, W Young, D Sperry 21.05.2022

Start 4m right of Rib Tickler at a corner.

1 25m (5b) Climb the corner then move right onto a ledge (possible tree belay). A groove is followed first left then right to below the overhang (peg in place). Above is a block with a crack down the side (1.5 Friend). Pull steeply out right onto a good foothold then up and left to a slab on the right (good Friend 1.5). Follow the slab to peg belay (in place).

2 15m Either of the two easy ways up the slab to the top and bolt belay.

13 Cumbria Life 40m E1 *

W Young, C Downer 19.04.2024

1 25 m (5b) Climb Colin from Accounts to the ledge. Move up rightwards to a corner (good gear here). Step down slightly (peg above in place) and pull onto the wall in a committing position, moving right to a good ledge. Continue up passing a couple of spikes to the right end of an overhang. Tricky moves diagonally left soon bring easier climbing and a peg belay (in place).

2 15m Either of the two easy ways up the slab to the top and bolt belay.