

Browns Slabs Arête Shepherd's Crag

Grade V Diff
Length 40m
Pitches 1
Quality 3 star
Approach 5 - 10 min flat walk
Ascent Time less than 1 hour
Start Point Shepherd's Crag Café, Borrowdale
Descent Scramble off the back to the left
Guide Book Borrowdale
First Ascent 1922 CD Frankland and B Beetham

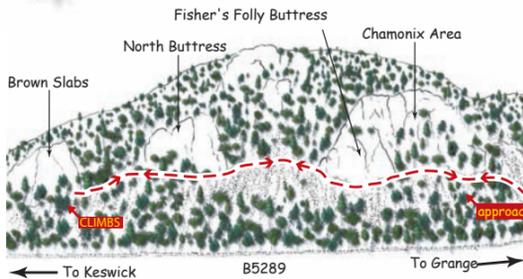
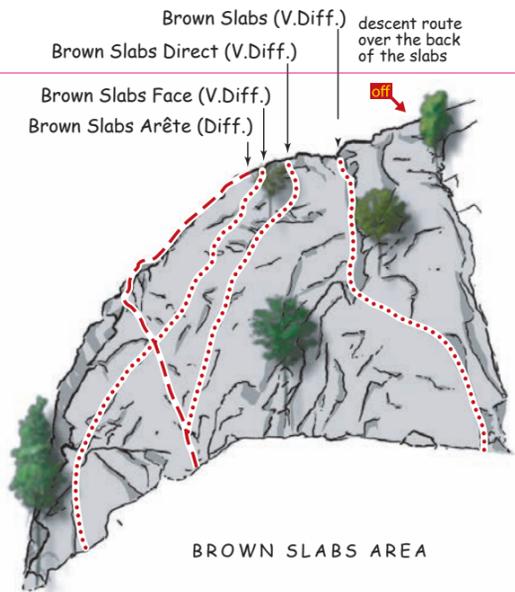


leo's approach:
 Brown Slabs at Shepherd's Crag is the best place in the Lakes for an introduction to rock climbing. This is no great secret, hence the rock is polished and it can get busy at times. However, the great views over Derwentwater and easy yet interesting climbing make it a worthy starting point.

Like countless others, I began my vertical journey on this modest slab and it has led me onto some remarkable climbs on the grandest walls in the most amazing places.

There are several routes of Diff or V Diff on the low angle slab, the best being Brown Slabs Arête on the left, though it is possible to climb almost anywhere.

Top roping is popular and the best option for novices, but leading the climbs is much more exciting and rewarding. The protection is a little tricky to arrange in places but the gentle angle and abundance of good holds help to calm beginners' nerves.



Little Chamonix Shepherd's Crag

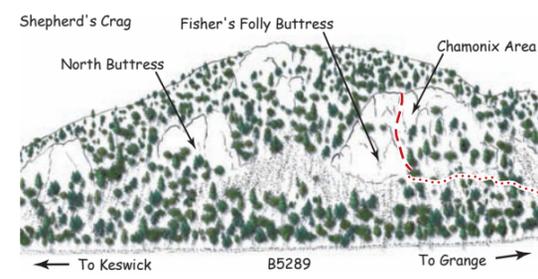
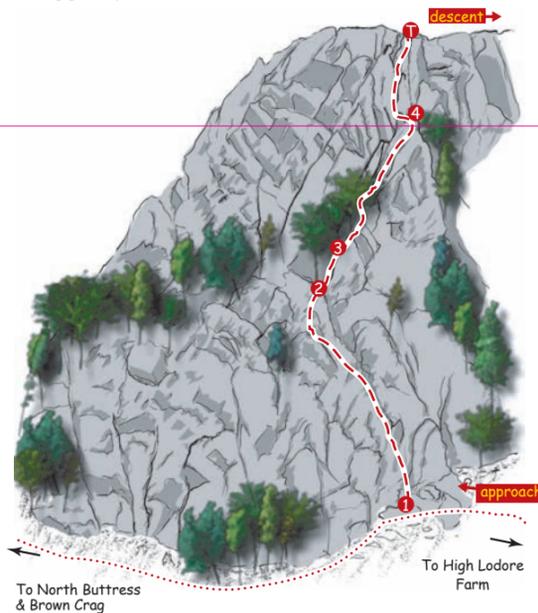
Grade V Diff
Length 71m
Pitches 3 or 4
Quality 3 star
Approach 5 - 10 min flat walk
Ascent Time 2 - 3 hours
Start Point Shepherd's Crag Café, Borrowdale
Descent Walk to right of crag and down path
Guide Book Borrowdale
First Ascent 1946 B Beetham



leo's approach:
 Named after the great Alpine climbing centre, the exposure and steep finale to this route evoke all the emotions of a big climb: it was my first multi-pitch route and forever changed my perspective of the world.

A gentle warm up pitch leads to a good ledge and tree belay. The second pitch is as technical as it gets at this grade, the traverse along the block requiring some creative climbing before the splendidly exposed saddle belay leads to the magnificent and airy final section. Steeper than you would expect, it is thankfully short lived and the big holds are a huge relief. This pitch is extremely photogenic from the buttress opposite.

The friendly flat top and tree belay provide a comfortable spot to admire the view and reflect on the day's achievements (and those of the late local legend Ray Macfee who famously climbed this route in roller skates and boxing gloves!).



Napes Needle Great Gable Crag

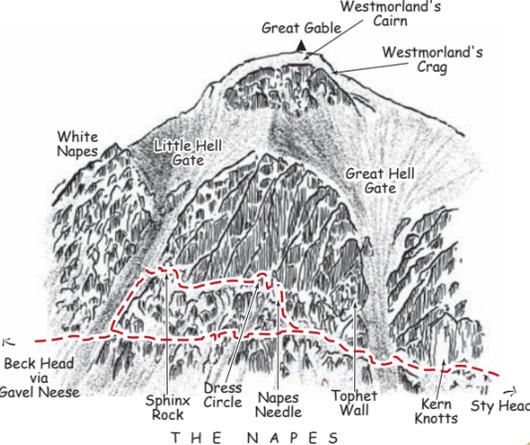
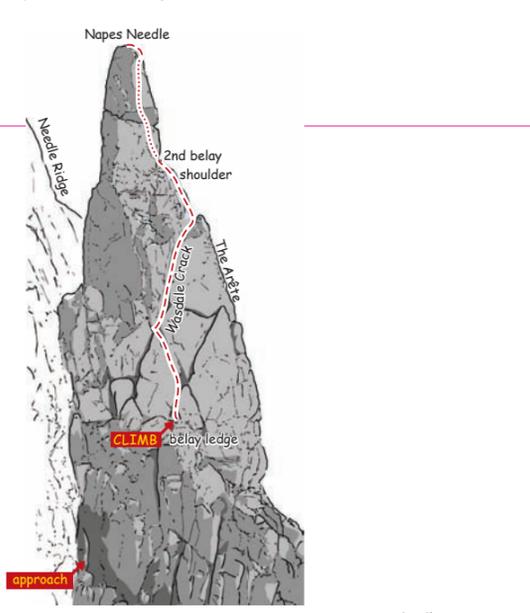
Grade Hard Severe
Length 21m
Pitches 2
Quality 3 star
Approach 1 - 1 1/2 hours
Ascent Time less than 2 hours
Start Point Wasdale or Seathwaite, Borrowdale
Descent Lead down the needle ascend gully to top
Guide Book Pillar and Gable
First Ascent 1886 Walter Parry Haskett-Smith



leo's approach:
 Another undisputed über-classic, the silhouette of this unlikely spire has been the icon of British rock climbing for more than a century. The first ascent, done solo, in 1886 is widely regarded as the birth of modern rock climbing.

Situated high on the flanks of Great Gable, an ascent of the Needle is a day in the fells you will never forget. The shortest walk in is from Wasdale (1 hour) though most prefer to take the slightly longer approach (1 1/4 hours) from the more accessible Seathwaite in Borrowdale.

There are actually eight routes up the Needle. All are great climbs but the Arête is least difficult and most fun. The hardest part of the climb is getting on top of, and down from, the Needle though the difficulties are far easier than they appear. The best way to get off the Needle is to lower the second to the shoulder and for the leader to down climb the pitch removing the protection on the way down.



Central Buttress Scafell

Grade E1 5b
Length 171m
Pitches 6
Quality 2 stars ("I think it should be 3 star!")
Approach 1 1/2 hours from Wasdale
Ascent Time 3 - 6 hours team dependent
Start Point Wasdale, Seathwaite or Langdale
Descent Walk down Mickledore, 1 hour
Guide Book Scafell, Wasdale and Eskdale
First Ascent 1914 SW Herford, GS Sansom, CF Holland

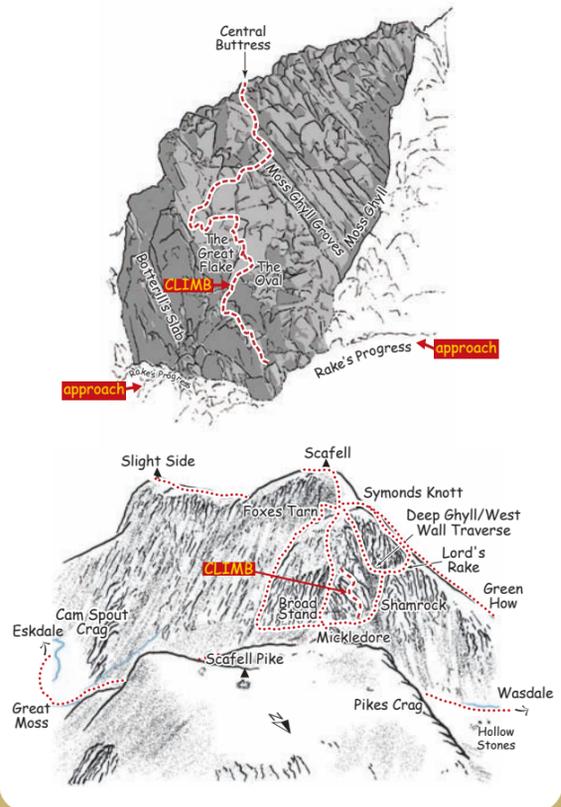


leo's approach:
 Reaching higher into the fells is rewarded, not just for the peace and splendour you would expect, but also with the very finest rock: nowhere in Lakeland will you find rock of superior quality on which to climb than on Scafell.

The Central Buttress route weaves its way up the centre of the main face of this complicated crag and can justifiably claim to be one of the most famous rock climbs in the country. Though some of the original character of the climb was lost with tragic consequences when the chock stone fell out of the great flake in 1994, a slight variation allows it to be climbed with only a small increase in difficulty.

This is a long climb, much more difficult and involved than the others I've described here, however if you enjoyed the others, once you have gained more skill and experience, Central Buttress is a big day out that you will always remember. High and exposed it is best done in the summer and, due to the length and complicated nature of the line, a guide book is essential. Consider bringing a small amount of food and water on the climb to enjoy on one of the great belay ledges.

Numerous variations of this climb can be done by linking pitches from other routes. Ascending pitch 3 of the Nazgul makes for a less wandering, slightly harder and more sustained ascent definitely worth 3 stars.



for more information, inspiration or if you're new to climbing and want to learn with a qualified guide, visit www.golakes.co.uk/onropes