

Cotton Bank Crag

O.S. Ref. SK087429 Altitude: 145m a.s.l.

A moss-enveloped boulder lurking in a dark wood on a steep bramble-choked slope. Currently unclimbable. Beneath the upholstery lies what would be quite an impressive slab but unfortunately cleaning would be a Herculean and, probably, ecologically unsound operation. It is no longer described here.

Conditions & aspect

North facing, and shaded by trees.

Routes & bouldering

More famous for the wit of its names than the quality, or indeed, the possibility of its climbing.

Parking & approach

If you really must see it, approach from Garston Rocks by continuing along the track on the left for approximately 1 mile, passing a farm, until a boulder adjacent to the track is reached on the right, a few hundred metres from Cotton Bank Farm. From here, the keen-eyed will spot the boulder through the trees, although, as mentioned, it is well camouflaged. Oakamoor-based naturalists may also reach it by a 25 minute walk.

From left to right, the routes were: **Rum Punch** (VS 4b), the groove and overhang left of the chimney; **A Scent of Lamb** (D), the narrow slab just right; Barriers in **Slime** (HVS 5a), the left arête of the main slab; **Porkstorm** (E1 5b), the centre of the slab; **Henry Hothead Realises that Being the Author of your Own Broken Ankle Can be Very Embarrassing** (E1 5b), the slab just to the right, passing a small overlap; **Poisonous Pieman** (VS 4c), the slab and crack just right again: all 1990.

1990 **Poisonous Pie-Man, Rum Punch** Roger Nicholls, Jim Nicholls,
1990 Mar **Barriers in Slime, Porkstorm** John Perry, Colin Cheetham, Rob Barnett, S Birch
1990 Jul 22 **A Scent of Lamb, Henry Hothead ...** Simon Alsop

Dimmingsdale

The first crag you won't encounter is Fisherman's Crag which lies up a mall valley opposite the start of the first pond. The crack on the left is **Fisherman's Crack (S, 1979)** and the front of the buttress to the right is **Basket (VS 4c, 1979)**.

Smelting Mill Buttress

Level with the top end of the first pool is a buttress. Climbing here is not very worthwhile. In the centre is an awful-looking wide crack complete with holly tree. **Slip Knot (E2 5c)** traversed the red wall. **Dimmingsdale Crack (E1 5b)** climbs the awful wide crack. **Iron Ore (E1 5b)** a flake and slab just right, **Green Slab (HVS 5b)**, a slab higher up, **The Mexican (E1 5b)** is a good problem climbing a roof crack higher up and round on the right, **Chocolate Orange (VS 4c)**, a groove to the right. Across a gully, **Twiggy (S)**, a crack, **Fagan (S)**, another crack further right. Fifty metres to the right is an isolated buttress alongside a prominent large fir tree. **Christmas Tree Crack (VS 4b)** is here. All these 1979.

1979 **Fisherman's Crack, Basket, Iron Ore, Dimmings Dale Crack, Slip Knot, Green Slab, Christmas Tree Crack** Steve Dale, Brian Dale
1979 Jul 26 **Chocolate Orange, Twiggy, Fagan** T Salt
1979 **The Mexican** Ewan Murray

Rainroach Rock

The climbing majorly overgrown. Park at the Rambler's and follow the track that runs parallel to the road for 150m. Strike directly up the hillside and a stile, then follow a path north along the edge to the crag. It once contained: **Five Bar Crack (HVS 5b, 1983)**, **Spreadeagle (S, 1969)**, **The Taxman (HVS 5a, 1969)**, **The Unveiling (VS 4c, 1969)**, **Pebble Drop (VD, 1976)**, **Climb To The Lost World (S and AI, 1976)** and **The Fly (E1 5b, 1969)**.

1969 **Spreadeagle** Austin Plant, J Stubbs
1969 **The Taxman, The Unveiling, The Fly**
(some aid used) Austin Plant, Bob Hassall The Fly was climbed free by Andrew and Jonny Woodward in 1975.
1976 **Climb to the Lost World** Unknown
1983 Mar **Longstop, Five Bar Crack** Steve Dale, Barry Marsden Longstop led originally with a peg for aid but climbed free by the same pair on the same day.

Toothill Rock

O.S. Ref. SK068425 Altitude: 150m a.s.l.

The rock commands an impressive position overlooking the valley, although the climbing is terrible with copious amounts of vegetation. It is best regarded as a superior vantage point for Alton Tower's fireworks or as a picnic site. To approach, park at the sharp bend on the Red Road (as for Rakes Dale), and strike steeply up the path (marked Toothill Wood). The crag can then be seen on the left. Approach 5 minutes. Toothill Rock itself has a huge overhang. The climbs are described from this point and from right to left. **The Highwayman (VS 4b, 1970)** takes the crack left of a roof and finishes up the wall behind the ledge. **Hot Pants (VS 4c, 1970)**, walls just right of the next arête and a groove above the ledge. **Droopy Draws (HS 4a, 1978)** climbs the jamming crack to the left. On the upper tier of the crag **Tyre Pressure (S, 1978)** takes a short corner, swings right and up the wall escaping left to ledges. **Parking Fine (VS 4b, 1978)** climbs the wall to the left. **Ant's Corner (VS 4a, 1978)** lies further to the left via a corner left of a pebbly-dashed roof (sounds like someone's house?). **Uncles Arête (VS 4b, 1978)** takes the arête on the left. Another 200m on past several awful buttresses is a less awful buttress! **Daddy Long Legs (HVS 5b, 1979)**, climbs a crumbling wall to exit via a jamming roof crack and nasty finish – bet you can't wait?

1970 Jan **The Highwayman, Hot Pants** John Yates, Barry Marsden
1978 **Droopy Draws, Tyre Pressure, Parking Fine** Ewan Murray, Sharon Tonks
1979 **Daddy Long Legs** Ewan Murray
1978 **Ant's Corner, Uncle's Arête** Steve Dale, Brian Dale, Barry Marsden

Hermit's Rock

Hermit's Rock lies in the trees on the opposite side of the dale near Earl's Rock cottage. Details are on the BMC website. Returning back to the Rambler's, follow the right-side of the dale. Continue past the Earl's Rock Cottage. Just beyond, a path cuts up through the trees. Take this and after 50m, go right up the hill. Here is a large buttress with a Hermit's Cave. **Maloo (HVS 5b, 1979)** is the wide crack above the cave. Going directly from here to Ousal Dale you pass a pleasant little crag. **Bubble (VS 4b, 1979)** starts in the pebbly wall and climbs rightwards to and through the overhang. **Squeek (VS 4b, 1979)** starts round right and follows the obvious traverse leftwards. Further down the dale is the tall Rainroach Rock.