

Castle Head


Grades



Just above the east side of the Borrowdale valley road, about 200m from the roundabout on the outskirts of Keswick, is the hillock of Castle Head. This is an excellent viewpoint over Derwentwater and Borrowdale. It is a volcanic plug made of dolerite, not the Borrowdale Volcanic Series more usual of the area.

Castle Head provides two climbing areas. Firstly, in the trees overlooking the road, is a series of outcrops containing a number of short climbs and, secondly, on the east side of Castle Head, is a quarry giving serious longer routes.

Castle Head Outcrops - NY 269 227 - Alt. 130 m

TRADITIONAL Uphill 15 mins SOUTH WEST facing 

Introduction

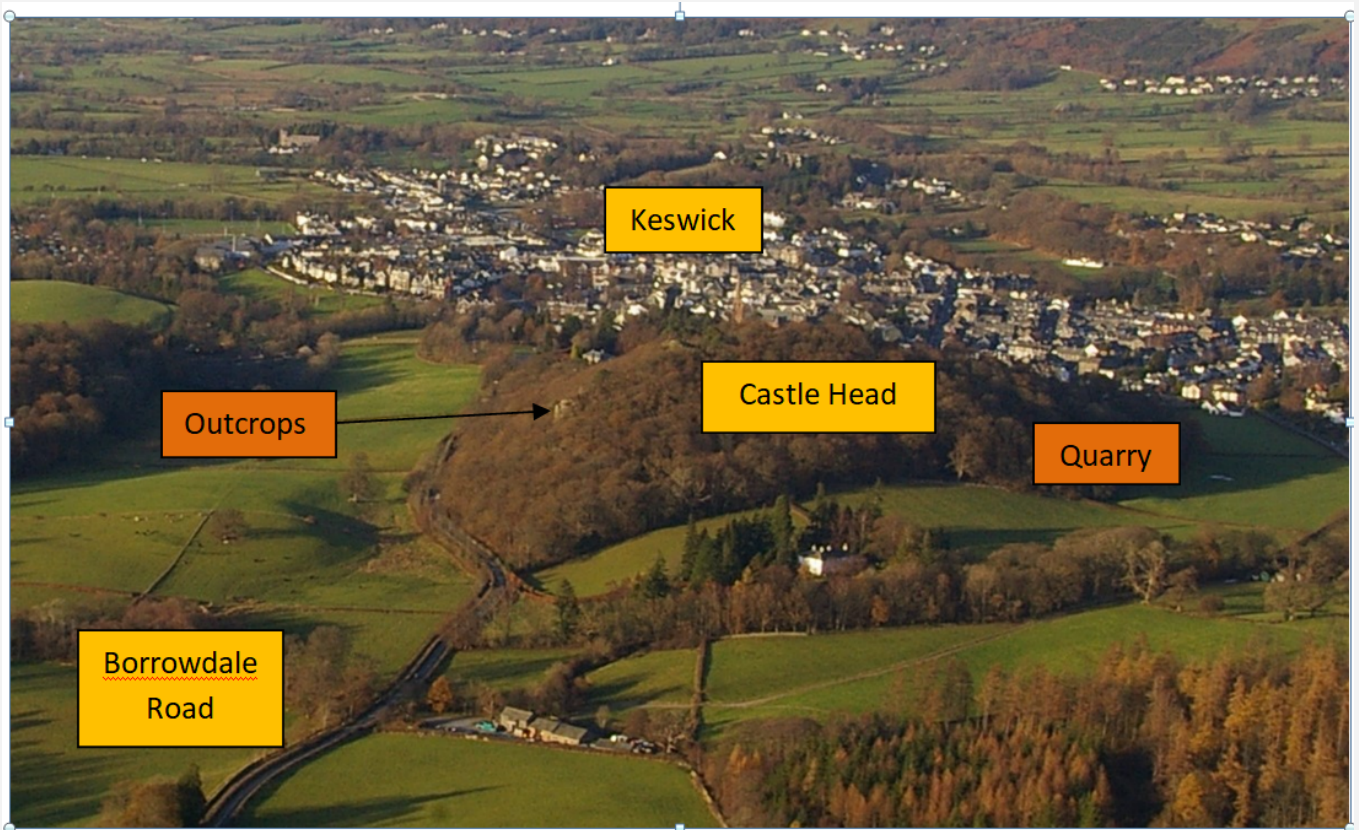
These short problems have been used for many years with first details of routes being given in "Crag and Hound in Lakeland", a book by C.E. Benson published in 1902.

They comprise a short polished slab with an overhanging right wall and a short pinnacle just in front of the slab up which the first route starts.

A lot of the routes are named from the album "Tommy" by The Who - the film of which was based in the valley, including on the summit of Castle Head. Ken Russell, who directed the film, had a house in the valley.

Approach

The outcrops are best approached from the Borrowdale valley road and are located about 50m south-west of the summit of Castle Head.



Castle Head

1 Tommy's Crack VD 6m

Climb the delightful crack up the front of the pinnacle.

2 Stubble HVS 4c 13m

Start at the left-hand side of the crag. Climb a groove to a tree and move out right onto the main slab. Continue to the top.

25.05.1992 B Stacey, M Cousins

3 Fiddle About? MS 10m

Ascend the polished slab starting up the slanting ledge, from the left. Finish directly up the slab, on some doubtful flakes, to gain tree roots at the top.

4 The Who E1 5b 15m

From the top of the step, 3m left of the corner of [Pinball Wizard](#), ascend delicately to dubious flakes. Make an awkward move and continue to a tree and then the top.

27.07.1999 N Snowball, C Cooper

5 Pinball Wizard HVS 5a 15m



Start on the right of the polished slab below a leftward-slanting corner. Gain the corner with interest and follow it with difficulty in a rising curve to finish as for [Fiddle About](#).

6 Unforeseen Danger E2 6a 15m

This route ascends the gangway in the overhanging right wall. Start just right of [Pinball Wizard](#) in a pit below a short overhanging wall. Overcome the wall and gain the base of the slanting gangway (peg runner). Follow this to below an inverted-V overhang and struggle over this.

15m to the right of the Polished Slab Area is a short buttress with a fine view over Derwentwater.

7 I'm Free MVS 4b 15m

Climb the groove towards the left of the buttress and either, gain holds on the right and finish awkwardly or, more easily, climb up a short rib on the left.

8 Duke Bluebeard MVS 4b 11m

Start 5m right of [I'm Free](#), and just before a rocky ledge. Climb the wall then follow the short black groove, exiting rightwards. Finish up the thin crack above. May become prickly and need trimming in summer.

26.01.2006 B J Clark
Solo

9 Miraculous Mandarin MVS 4c 10m

7m right of [Duke Bluebeard](#), and around the corner of the buttress, lurks a steep V-groove. Climb the awkward V-groove using an odd assortment of holds and jams.

26.01.2006 BJ Clarke
Solo

Castle Head Quarry - NY 272 227 - Alt. 100 m

TRADITIONAL Uphill 20 mins EAST facing 🏔️

Introduction

This intimidating quarry is hidden away in the trees adjacent to the footpath which runs from Springs Road to the Borrowdale valley road around the east side of Castle Head. A rockfall (1998) confirms the dubious solidity of some of the crag, and no guarantee is given about the state of any old pegs! This quarry can no longer be recommended as an abseiling venue.

[Jolly Joker](#) (E5 6b, 1997) took the curving thin crackline on the left side of the buttress but rockfall has removed its final section.

1 Amazing Journey E1 5b 22m

A varied experience taking the obvious wide crack which splits the centre of the crag. Start in the large corner and gain a small ledge. Ascend the steep crack rightwards on good holds to below the obvious chimney/crack. Enter and climb the crack until forced out near its top for a precarious finish.

The groove between [Amazing Journey](#) and [Miracle Cure](#) has been climbed at 6b to join and finish up [Amazing Journey](#).

2 Miracle Cure E3 5c 20m

A forceful line up the centre of the quarry wall. Start directly below the top of [Amazing Journey](#) and climb the wall to finish just right of the crack of [Amazing Journey](#).