

# Lops Wath

OS Ref: NY 844 017  
Alt: 490m

Grades



Although only a few minutes from the road, there is very little traffic and the situation is extremely remote and quiet. The crag is nowhere more than 7m high. The views are outstanding, particularly of Great Shunner Fell and the fells behind Mallerstang Edge. The venue comprises an edge of mostly good quality gritstone, above ground that drops away immediately and steeply – not the best of venues for a bouldering-mat ! Care should be taken with the surface sandiness which is probably ever present. Some routes require an experienced eye to make the most of the protection available. Overall, the crag offers climbing comparable to the better gritstone crags of the Northern Dales. The crag is very obvious and it seems most likely that it will have been climbed on over the years.

The name of the venue is taken from the nearest topographical feature on the 1:25 000 map. A wath is thought to be a ford (derived from Old Norse vath). Whether Lops is a personal name or indicative of lopsidedness or anything to do with wolves is open to conjecture. Another possibility is that the “s” of Lops has been misplaced and that it would otherwise read swath (suggestive of mown ground) or even a misspelled swarth (Old Norse svartr - black).

The crag, being so close to the road, is likely to have received passing attention over the years, but the first documented ascents were made by Adam Long whilst based at Ravenstonedale in 2000. Over the course of several visits he soloed virtually everything on the crag but christened only the two hardest problems. The rest were named by Chris King and Stephen Reid who thought they were making first ascents in 2004, and by Alan Doughty, Kevin Flint and Maggie Ingram who were under the same illusion in 2006. There were some disparities with the grades given - those by the 2004 party may seem a little low and those by the 2006 party maybe a little high - just beware !!

## Approach

This roadside crag is situated in Birkdale, at the head of Swaledale, near the summit of the B6270 Kirkby Stephen to Thwaite road.

The crag lies on moorland that is designated Access Land under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Under that Act the land can be subject to temporary closures of up to 28 days a year. Notification of closures should be posted at Access Points locally and, prior to a visit, can be checked on [www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk](http://www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk) or via the Access Helpline on 0845 100 3298. Under the CRow Act, dogs are banned on this moorland.

## Descent

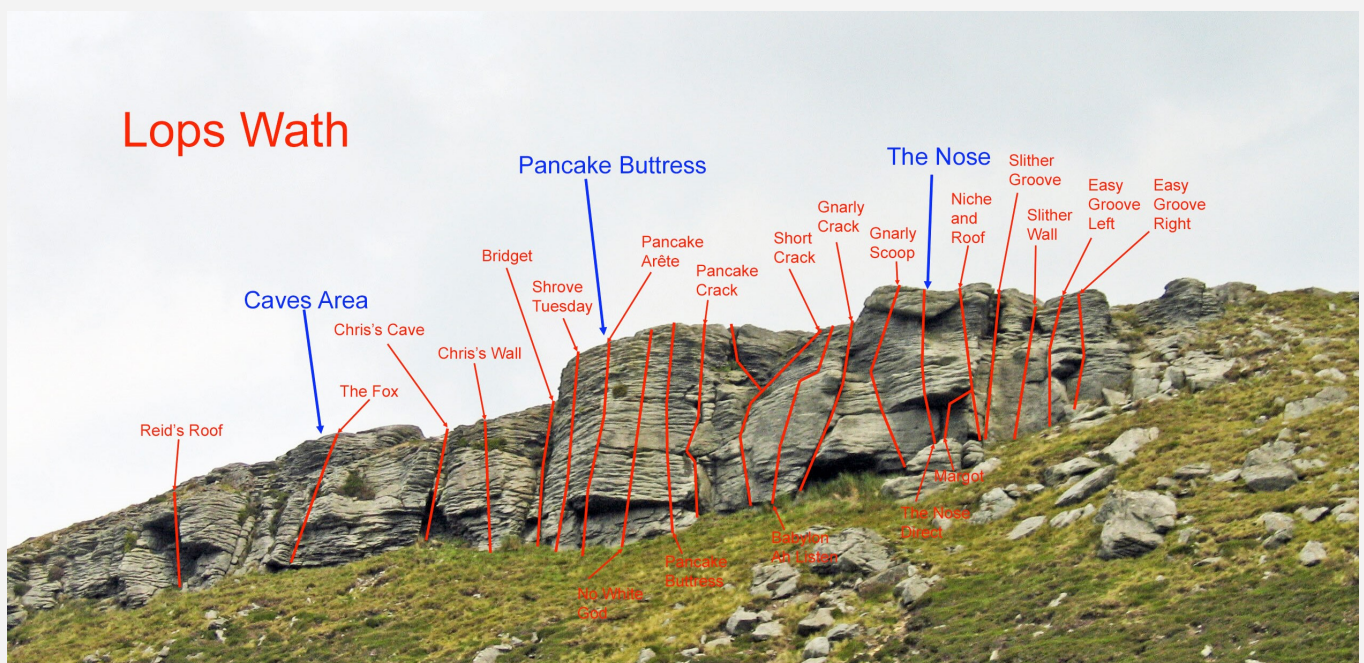
An easy descent is found at the right-hand end of the crag.

## Warmup Boulder

There is a nice traverse of the boulder, down by the road, which is a good warmup and a bit harder than it looks.

## Main Crag

Uphill 3 mins SOUTH-WEST facing ☀️



Lops Wath - Swaledale

### Cave's Area

1 Reid's Roof MS † 4m

The little big roof, climbed via the crack on the right, avoiding the roof on the right.

2 The Fox VS 5a † 4m

Climb the leaning, left-hand side of the obvious prow between the two caves.

3 **Chris's Cave** VD † 4m

The small cave and crack.

4 **Chris's Wall** VS 5a † 4m

The short wall.

5 **Bridget** MS † 6m

The heather groove on the left of **Pancake Buttress**. Do like the name says !

**Pancake Buttress** is the main buttress of the crag and features lots of pancake-like holds. It is climbable anywhere at VS-HVS.

6 **Shrove Tuesday** MVS 4b † 7m

Climb the crack just left of the arete and continue up the wall. ★

7 **Pancake Arête** VS 5a † 7m

Climb the arête direct, with an awkward pull to start.. Beware of grade given - this was later climbed and claimed as E1 5b!! ★

8 **No White God** E2 5c † 7m

This is the bold wall between [Pancake Arête](#) and [Pancake Crack](#). ★

2000 A Long

9 **Pancake Buttress** HVS 4c † 7m

The wall just left of [Pancake Crack](#). ★

11.10.2009 P Gunn, D Mavat, S Impey

10 **Pancake Crack** HS † 7m

The crack on the right of the buttress. ★

11 **Short Crack** S † 7m

Would be better (and easier) if it wasn't full of heather. Finish easily rightwards or more steeply up alcove/chimney on the left.

12 **Babylon Ah Listen** 6a/b †

This climbs the tricky bulging wall in between [Short Crack](#) and [Gnarly Crack](#). ★

2000 A Long

13 **Gnarly Crack** VS 5b † 5m

The obvious right-slanting crack has a very awkward (not to mention painful) start, but soon eases. ★

**The Nose** - prominent feature on the right of the crag.

14 **Gnarly Scoop** HVS 5a † 8m

Start on the left-hand boulder under the *Nose*. Traverse leftwards and upwards to gain the ledge. Climb the bulge above to a fine finish. Beware of grade given - this was later climbed and claimed as E2 5b !! ★

15 **The Nose Direct** E1 6a †

The roof right of [Gnarly Scoop](#).

2000 A Long

16 **Niche and Roof** HS † 7m

Start up [Slither Groove](#) and pull onto the top of the *Nose* on the left. Climb the bulge above via a crack. ★

*Variation* : **Margot** HVS 5b

Start beneath the overhang on the left, step-up and follow the crack rightwards to join [Niche and Roof](#).

17 **Slither Groove** VS 4c † 6m

The corner crack is harder than it looks.

18 **Slither Wall** VS 4c † 4m

The short wall, without recourse to [Slither Groove](#).

19 **Easy Groove Left** D † 5m

The short groove and crack at the right end of the crag.

20 **Easy Groove Right** D † 5m

The V-groove and pass roof on the right of the crag.





Pancake Arete - Lops Wath