# Virtual Crag: Tilberthwaite

Discovered and developed as far back as the late nineties, the Virtual Crag, or V-Crag, is a sizeable chunk of rock, perched above the road on the southern slopes of Tilberthwaite. Originally developed by Andy Hyslop and Dave Birkett, the pair cleaned and climbed most of the obvious 'top to bottom' stand up lines on offer (some as top rope problems) and, in *Technobabble*, one good sitter. Despite its inclusion in the Lakes Rockfax bouldering guide (and the unfathomable amount of stars therein!) it seems likely that this initial phase of development was the last time the crag saw much by way of concerted interest, and over time this lack of activity has furthered the crag's unpopularity, as it has gotten ever dirtier through the considerable drainage taken by the upper central section.

Having looked at this venue intermittently over the years, I've often wondered if a slightly more modern approach to the way the V-Crag is both described and further developed may actually make it a more interesting proposition. Having now finally spent a fair bit of time at the crag, researching this topo, this has indeed turned out to be the case.

Thus in this new guide, the V-Crag undergoes a reboot; with emphasis being put on the left hand side of the crag, which has both better landings, plenty of sit start, traverse and link -up potential as well as obvious finishing/drop-off high-points, a la the Bowderstone. Please be warned, if you do intend to top anything out, the upper part of the crag (right of *Technobabble*) is very dirty and/or overgrown.

**Aspect:** Its NE facing aspect and elevated position makes this crag a great option when other areas are feeling the heat. In particularly wet spells the problems right of *Technobabble* are a effected by drainage off the top of the crag.

**Approach:** From the A593 Ambleside to Coniston link, turnoff down the Tilberthwaite road, around 3km north of Coniston, and follow it for 1.3km (3/4 mile) to some parking in one of two grassy lay-bys next to the river. The crag can be seen on the brow of the hill above the parking.

The on-foot approach is shown in the image to the right.





Virtual Crag
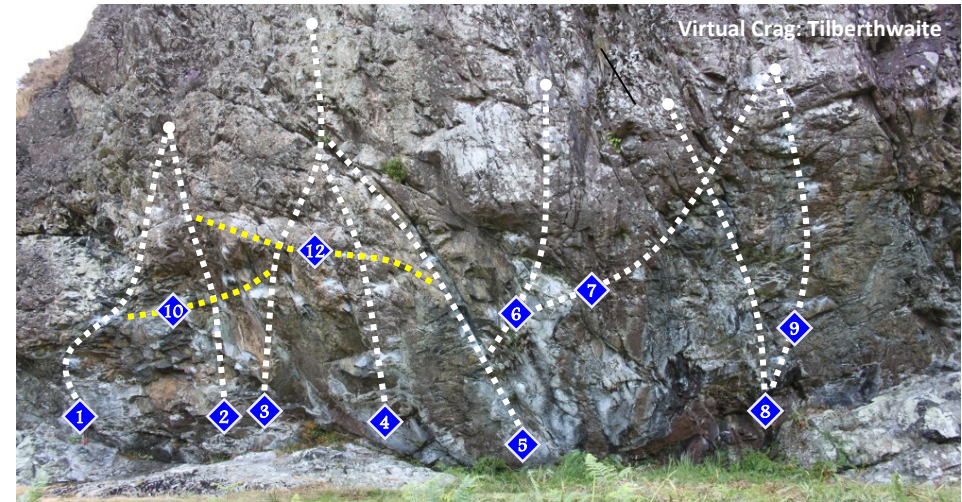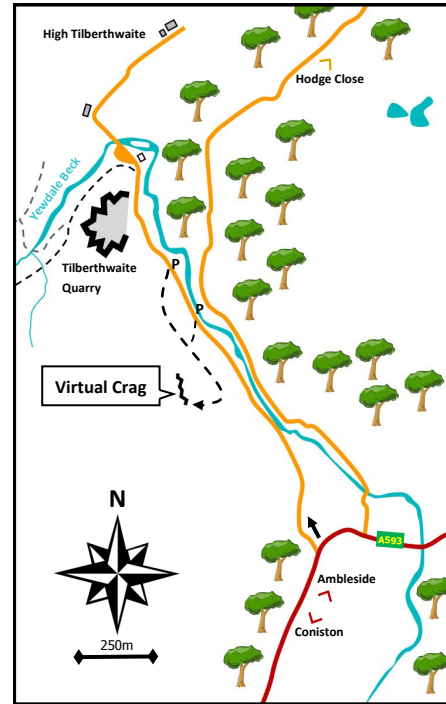
**1)** ◆ **Electric Planet** (5+/V1) SDS A slightly reachy start from two flat holds leads up and right on positive edges to a finishing jug in the dirty groove. The shelf to the left is out for feet.

**2)** ◆ **Bluetooth** (7A+/V7) SDS From a poor undercut and a diagonal edge, pull up into the groove. Sort your feet and dyno for a diagonal flatty way over the lip, then continue up to a good jug to finish. All holds (bar the finishing jug) on *Electric Planet* are out of bounds. *

**2a)** ◆ **Bluetooth Fairy** (6C+/V5) SDS Start as for p2 but once established in the groove escape left into and up p1 to finish.

**3)** ◆ **Hackers Homeland** (7A/V6) SDS Use a triangular undercut pinch and side pull to climb past the slopey shelf to a deep pocket over the lip, then up and slightly right to big finishing holds at the top of the crack. *

**4)** ◆ **Digital Decade** (7A+/V7) SDS Use a small RH undercut and LH edge to head straight up via burley opening moves. *

**5)** ◆ **Technobabble** (7A/V6) SDS The steep, left leaning crack starting at an obvious pointy flake is very powerful and very good. Tough at the grade. **

**6)** ◆ **Technologic** (7A+/V7) SDS Again start up the steep crack but once pulled up bust out right, via a hard move, to eventually gain a ergonomic jug below the bulge. Now make a big move round the bulge to an edge and up to finishing holds left of a dirty groove. *

**6a)** ◆ **HotJava** (6B/V3) *Technologic* from standing. *

**7)** ◆ **Skynet** (8A/V11) SDS As per p6 but once at the good hold (below the 'ergonomic jug') move right to hold in a crack then right again, via an undercut, to a dynamic do-or-die move to gain a good hold, before continuing up right to the jug at the top of p9. **

**8)** ◆ **Hyperlink** (7A+/V7) SDS The broken crack is much better than it looks. 6C/V4 from standing.

**9)** ◆ **Silicon Slave** (7C+/V10) SDS From a good edge make a move up to a rail. Now head directly up the steep board-like wall on poor holds to a couple of good holds over the lip. For those prone to wandering, all handholds in the crack are out. Utter quality! ** 7C from standing.

**10)** ◆ **Shockwave** (7C/V9) SDS Start up p1 but traverse rightwards, keeping below the lip, to a slopey shelf and good side pull to its right. From here it is possible to reach a deep pocket over the lip and continue up right to some big finishing holds above the crack. *

**11)** ◆ **Shock Value** (8A/V11) SDS As per p10 but continue right (sticking below the lip) to *HotJava* and finish up this problem. *

**12)** ◆ **The Cloud** (7B/V8) SDS Start up p5 but once established in the crack traverse left, following the slight lip, to eventually meet the top of p2. Sustained. *

**13)** ◆ **Qubit** (7B/V8) SDS Link p4 into *The Cloud*.

**Climbs 14-18 (Not Described):** A further 5 lines have been climbed above the broken pedestal/shelf to the right of p9: Superhighway (6C+), Crash (7B), Cybersex (6B), Browser Wars (6A), Birkett's Bandwidth (6C+). As the top outs are now very dirty and few have safe finishing/drop-off points they are a bit defunct as user-friendly problems. They are fully described in the Rockfax Lakes Bouldering guide.