

Britain has a rich history of explorers, who expanded our knowledge of the globe, sometime at their own expense.

Captain **James Cook** (7 November 1728 – 14 February 1779) was a British explorer, navigator and cartographer. He made detailed maps of Newfoundland prior to making three voyages to the Pacific Ocean during which he achieved the first European contact with the eastern coastline of Australia and the Hawaiian Islands as well as the first recorded circumnavigation of New Zealand. Cook's first journey was from 1768 to 1771, when he sailed to Tahiti in order to observe Venus as it passed between the Earth and the Sun (to try to determine the distance between the Earth and the sun). During this expedition, he also mapped New Zealand and eastern Australia. His second expedition (1772-1775) took him to Antarctica and to Easter Island. A search for a Northwest Passage across North America to Asia was his last expedition (1776-1779). Cook was killed by a mob on Feb. 14, 1779, on the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii). At the time, he was trying to take the local chief hostage to get the natives to return a sailboat they had stolen. He was the first ship's captain to stop the disease scurvy (now known to be caused by a lack of vitamin C) among sailors by providing them with fresh fruits. Before this, scurvy had killed or incapacitated many sailors on long trips.

**Henry Kelsey** (c. 1667 – 1724), aka the Boy Kelsey, was an English fur trader, explorer, and sailor who played an important role in establishing the Hudson's Bay Company. He became the first inland explorer of the Company when he was seventeen years old (in 1684). On an expedition lasting from 1688 to 1690, Kelsey travelled to the Churchill River region. During his second expedition (1690 - 1692), he was the first European to see the Canadian prairies. Kelsey extended the trade routes of the Hudson's Bay Company's trade to the Saskatchewan River by negotiating with various Indian tribes, including the Bree and the Gros Ventres. He spoke Cree (and perhaps Assiniboin) and respected and enjoyed Indian culture. After his Canadian expeditions, he returned to his native England and remained with the Hudson's Bay Company. The Company kept his journeys secret for many years since they were crucial to its trade and his journal was re-discovered in 1926.

**James Weddell** (August 24, 1787 – September 9, 1834) was an English sailor, naturalist, navigator and seal hunter who in the early Spring of 1823 sailed to latitude of 74°15' S (a record 7.69 degrees or 532 statute miles south of the Antarctic Circle) and into a region of the Southern Ocean that would later become known as the Weddell Sea. He sailed on three expeditions to the Antarctic (in 1820-21, 1821-22 and 1822-23) on the brig "Jane." On these sealing/scientific expeditions, Weddell discovered the Weddell Sea (near the South Pole) and the Weddell Seal, *Leptonychotes weddelli* in 1823. Captain Weddell also set an 80-year record for the far-

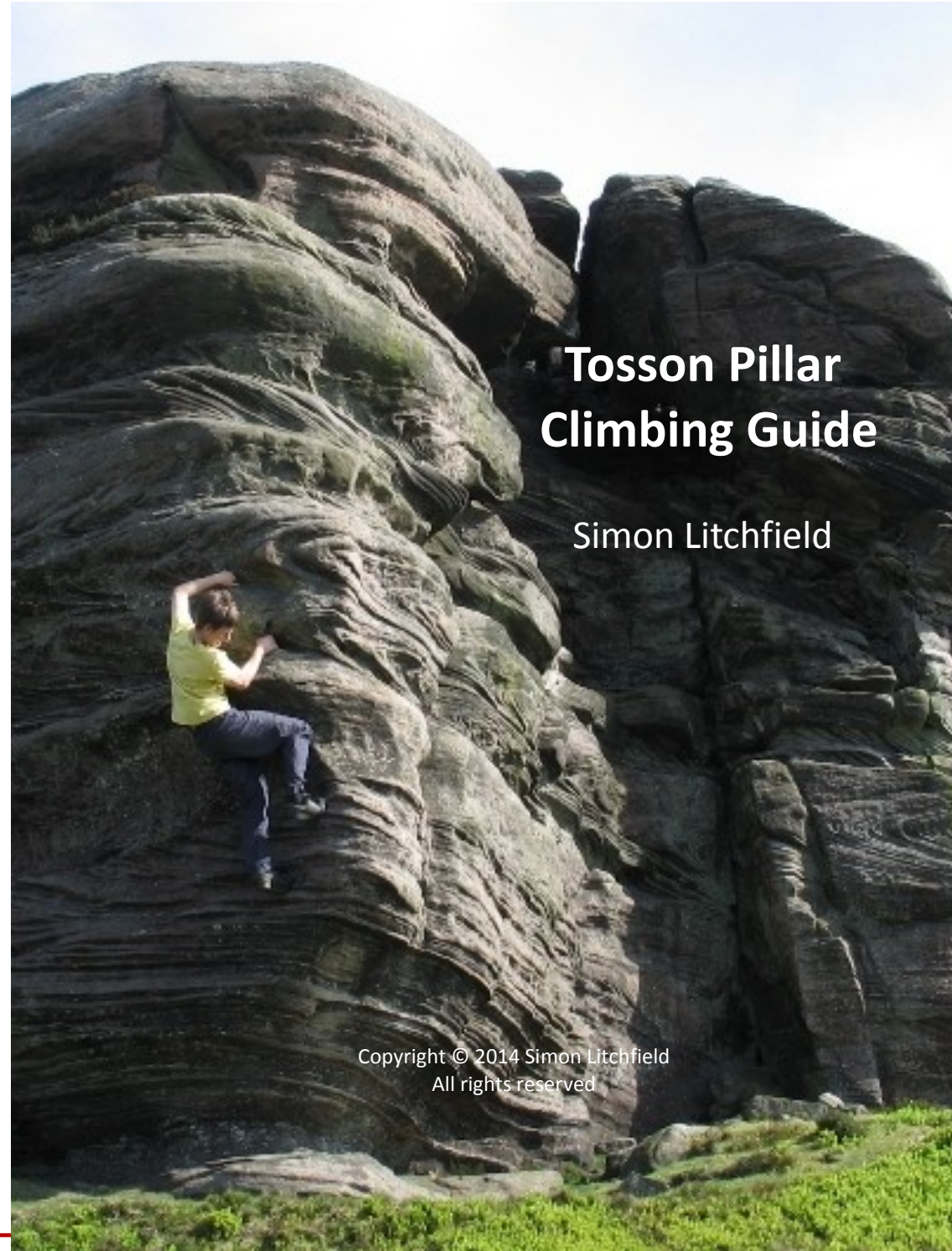
thest southern latitude reached (74°15'S, set February 20, 1823). He wrote of his adventures in the book *A Voyage Towards the South Pole in the Years 1822-24* (published in 1825) but died in poverty at the age of 47.

Captain **Robert Falcon Scott**, CVO (6 June 1868 – 29 March 1912) was a Royal Navy officer and explorer who led two expeditions to the Antarctic regions: the Discovery Expedition, 1901–04, and the ill-fated Terra Nova Expedition, 1910–13. During this second venture, he led a party of five which reached the South Pole on 17 January 1912, only to find that they had been preceded by Roald Amundsen's Norwegian expedition. On their return journey, Scott and his four comrades all perished from a combination of exhaustion, starvation and extreme cold.

Rear-Admiral **Sir John Franklin** KCH FRGS (16 April 1786 – 11 June 1847) was a British Royal Navy officer and Arctic explorer, who proved the existence of a Northwest Passage. He also served as governor of Tasmania for several years. In his last expedition, he disappeared while attempting to and navigate a section of the Northwest Passage in the Canadian Arctic. The entire crew perished from starvation, hypothermia, tuberculosis, lead poisoning and scurvy before and after Franklin died and the expedition's icebound ships were abandoned in desperation.

Captain **Matthew Flinders** (16 March 1774 – 19 July 1814) was one of the most successful navigators and cartographers of his age. In a career spanning just over twenty years, he sailed with Captain William Bligh, circumnavigated Australia and encouraged the use of that name for the continent, which had previously been known as New Holland. He and George Bass were the first Europeans to realize that Tasmania was an island; they sailed around it. Flinders survived shipwreck and disaster only to be imprisoned for violating the terms of his scientific passport by changing ships and carrying prohibited papers. He identified and corrected the effect upon compass readings of iron components and equipment on board wooden ships and wrote a work on early Australian exploration *A Voyage to Terra Australis*.

**David Livingstone** (19 March 1813 – 1 May 1873) was a Scottish Congregationalist pioneer medical missionary and an explorer in Africa. Meeting H. M. Stanley on 10 November 1871 gave rise to the quotation "Dr Livingstone, I presume?" A national hero of Victorian Britain for his roles as: scientific investigator and explorer, imperial reformer, anti-slavery crusader, and advocate of commercial empire. His fame as an explorer helped drive forward the obsession with discovering the sources of the River Nile that formed the culmination of the classic period of European geographical discovery and colonial penetration of the African continent.



# Tosson Pillar Climbing Guide

Simon Litchfield

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**Crag features**

Described in previous guides as “not worth the walk” the crag is far from the madding crowds located somewhere just past Tipperary. This is definitely a crag for explorers! The rock is of the same good quality as its neighbours and the small collection of routes are of good quality and take little drainage. Highballers and those venturing for a walk and a solo would do well to bring a pad and friend – some of the cruxes are exactly where they should be, right at the top.



“ The skylark (*Alauda arvensis*) is a small brown bird, somewhat larger than a sparrow but smaller than a starling. It is streaky brown with a small crest, which can be raised when the bird is excited or alarmed, and a white-sided tail. The wings also have a white rear edge, visible in flight. It is renowned for its display flight, vertically up in the air. Its recent and dramatic population declines make it a Red List species.”

**Situation and character**

As the highest point on the Simonside massif, Tosson Hill offers wonderful panoramic views of the Coquet Valley and Cheviots to the north, the coast to the east, and the barren military ranges to the west. Its remoteness is one of its greatest appeals, along with the wildlife that can be enjoyed. The heather moorland is a haven for skylarks making it a wonderful place for a remote picnic listening to their birdsong.

**Approach**

Park in the forestry commission car park between Lordenshaw and Great Tosson, just south of Rothbury. From here walk past Simonside and Coquet View until you reach Ravensheugh. From here head directly for the small cairn seen on the horizon which is slightly beyond Middle Earth. The further you go the more obvious track becomes and it leads to the trig point and cairn on the top of Tosson Hill (2.7 miles). A cross-country approach can also be made from Lower Tosson.

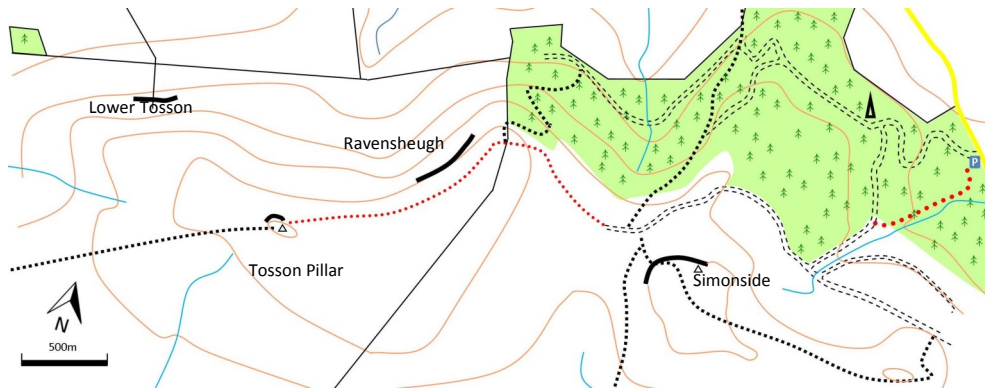
**Tosson Pillar**

By Simon Litchfield

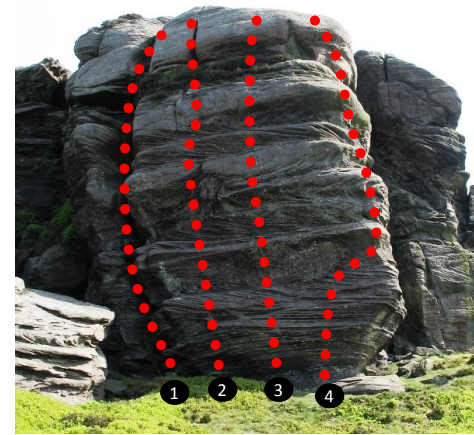
**The Climbing**

Climbs 8 – Rocktype Sandstone (hard) – Altitude 440m a.s.l. – Faces W - N

High above Rothbury and the river Coquet Tosson Hill is the highest point in the Simonside range. Just below the summit trigpoint is a diminutive buttress with a small collection of routes.



Photos: Simon Litchfield bouldering the start of *Scott's Step*, E2 5c



4) SCOTT'S STEP 9m E1/2  
(5c) Fine climbing tackling the main arête. Gain the arête from its left, before climbing it direct via a couple of pockets and rounded breaks. The crux step is where it should be: right at the top!

5) FRANKLIN'S PASSAGE 8m D  
Tackle the obvious open corner 4m right of Scott's Step

6) FLINDERS' NAVIGATION, 8m VS  
(5a) An airy expedition that circumnavigates a section of poor rock in the middle of the buttress. Climb the wall between Franklin's Passage and Livingstone's Expedition. Step right and climb the more solid rock leftwards to a short jamming crack in an airy position.

7) LIVINGSTONE'S EXPEDITION 8m VD  
Take the crack on the right of the buttress, before tackling the wall above.

**Bouldering**

There are a number of undercut boulders surrounding the crag which offer problems of varying difficulty.

**History**

Franklin's Passage has certainly been climbed before. In addition it is possible that the obvious lines of Livingstone's Expedition and Cook's Crack are likely to have been climbed. They have been named for completeness and logic when describing the other routes (and in keeping with the theme). The surrounding buttresses provided some more entertainment, but none are high enough or hard enough to justify recording.

All the routes were soloed, but a rope and climbing partner are recommended (if only to carry your crumpled body back to the car park after fluffing the crux on Scott's Step) as some of the top moves are tricky enough for it to feel a bit lofty for highballing / bouldering...

The climbs are described from left to right, from the obvious descent route by the cairn.

1) COOK'S CRACK 8m VD  
The obvious crack on the left of the buttress. As dirty as it appears.

The following 3 climbs are on fabulous, compact (and surprisingly clean) rock.

2) KELSEY'S CRACK 8m HVS  
(5b/c) Gain the discontinuous crack to the right of Cook's crack via a few hard pulls.

3) WEDDELL'S WAY 8m E1  
(5b/c) The wall between Kelsey's Crack and Scott's Step provides some nice moves with some long pulls in the middle and a high step to finish.

