



Reiff

By Ross Kirkland
(British Team member)

Every summer since the age of ten my parents have taken me to Reiff to climb and it has become my favourite climbing area. There are a huge number of single pitch routes of all grades, some as short as 5metres (really high-ball boulder problems) with the highest around 20metres. The climbing in the different sectors is really varied so you get a chance to try lots of different types of routes from climbing on small crimps to negotiating your way around large blocks. The area at Reiff where I learnt to trad climb is called the Pinnacle Area and it is a good sector for beginners because of the short well-protected routes and the ease of setting up at the top. However, this sector does have a wider selection of routes from HVS to E4 for the more experienced climber.



Top: Ross on Elastic Collision (E3)
Above: Ross on Executioner's Crack (E2)

This year Jess McAskey and her dad joined us for the first few days of the trip. Jess had never been to the Reiff area before and she was keen to try routes with the spectacular sea-views I had told her about.

As it was early in the outdoor climbing season for me, I started by working through the easier routes that I had climbed many times before, climbing a couple of E1s. The classic route in this area is a technical slab, Westering Home E1 5b. I first led this when I was 12 and this year found it just as enjoyable as I did then. Jess has done a lot of multi-pitch climbing, but I think she still found the short routes at Pinnacle to be worth a go.

After this we moved onto Seal Song Area which is dominated by two superb routes which follow twin parallel crack-lines; Seal Song and Elastic Collision, both E3 5c. I spent some time climbing the easier routes here to get used to the style before attempting Elastic Collision. For some reason the rock in Seal Song holds large numbers of bugs which jump out on you, usually just when you are about to do some hard move.

This does not bother me, but Jess was a bit freaked out by it and so we went back to Pinnacle Area the next day.

After Jess went off to climb the Old Man of Stour we went back to Seal Song and I on-sighted Elastic Collision. This is the hardest trad route I have climbed to date and although it has some excellent gear placements is technically quite difficult.

I had hoped to climb Seal Song during the trip but unfortunately it never dried out completely due to our classic Scottish weather. However I was able to climb Executioner's Crack E2 5b, this is a large sloping crack line which has some good hand holds and gear placements.

During the trip, as well as the Seal Song bugs we saw dolphins, otters, seals, loads of sea birds and a legless lizard (dad told me it had been in the pub too long!). What a great country we live in