



# Climbing in the Brecon Beacons National Park

**Part 1: Mynydd Llangatwg and Mynydd Llangynidr**

**Martin Crocker**

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## Part 1: Mynydd Llangatwg & Mynydd Llangynidr

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Front Cover: Looking northeastwards from Bryniau Gleision, Darren Fach

### Dedicated to Brian and Betty Vincent

Gower & SE Wales climbing began for me in 1972 with forays from Bristol to Llangattock, Taf Fechan, and Gower with the Exploration Group of North Somerset. My knowledge of the area and its climbing potential grew from 1974 while studying at Cardiff University. Ten years later it gained a new momentum after I met my wife-to-be, Beverley. Her parents, the late Brian and Betty Vincent, who lived in Newbridge, Gwent, showed extraordinary understanding of my extensive climbing explorations in Wales. It was not always the case that I'd slip away climbing while they looked after their grandchildren, but – at times when I was super-keen – it must have seemed that way. My heartfelt thanks, therefore, to them and my family.

### Free Guidebook

It's a pleasure to be in a position to make this guidebook available without my pocketing any of your cash. All I ask is that you make a donation to one of the regional Mountain Rescue Teams (MRTs). They are all volunteers and on call 24/7. You might need them one day (but hopefully not). The choice of which MRT(s) you support is up to you; here's how to do it:



#### Brecon Mountain Rescue Team

Donations for Brecon Mountain Rescue Team can be made online through localgiving; i.e.: <https://localgiving.org/brecon-mountain-rescue-team>



#### Longtown Mountain Rescue Team

Donations for Longtown Mountain Rescue Team can be made online through JustGiving i.e.: <https://www.justgiving.com/longtownmrt>  
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#### Central Beacons Mountain Rescue Team

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#### Western Beacons Mountain Rescue Team

Donations for Western Brecon Mountain Rescue Team can be made online through JustGiving i.e.: <https://www.justgiving.com/westernbeacons>

## Print at Will

Originally I built the BBNP guidebook as a single entity, but it became apparent it would be huge, and impracticable to print domestically. So I have split it into seven mini-guides based on their host mountain or upland area. The introduction is the same in each. They have been designed to be printed in A5 format on both sides of A4 paper. Good luck with that. And enjoy.

## Copyright

A significant voluntary effort has gone into preparing this guidebook and making it freely available for personal climbing use. The publication of any of its contents either as hard copy or via the internet without the author's consent is prohibited. However, I appreciate that much information is shared on the internet these days, and I have no objection to basic details being referenced in any not-for-personal-profit (non-commercial) website. If in any doubt, just ask me.

## *Climbing in the Brecon Beacons National Park Guidebook Series*

*Mynydd Llangatwg & Mynydd Llangynidr* is one in a series of seven topo-based guidebooks to the climbs and boulder problems in the Brecon Beacons National Park. The crags in the BBNP essentially fit into two categories: limestone quarries (comprising mostly traditional climbs) and – the new kid on the bloc – Twrch Sandstone crags (comprising mostly bouldering). All the climbing sites are united by their stunning upland surrounds, and many are remote and rarely visited by walker or climber alike. If wilderness bouldering is your thing and you're not afraid of a good walk – eat four Weetabix, breathe deep, and take to the hills.

The aims of this series are to make available for public use details of some activists' explorations and to use this opportunity to raise money for a proven good cause. The guidebooks are *not* definitive records of the climbs since legitimate access to, and use of, sources of information outwith the public domain is not always available. I must express my apologies, therefore, for the inevitable omissions or errors, which could fill a guidebook. If nothing else, this project may well tease out more details of both past and present so a wider record of the climbing and – importantly – its correct history can evolve. As scotch mist Madge of the launderette in Tooting would tell me: 'It'll all come out in the wash, luv.'

There seems to be no universal convention regarding the publishing of first ascents of boulder problems. Originally I was going to publish the available known first ascent records (since boulder problems can sometimes be more significant than routes). Instead I've just summarised the years of development, allowing inferences to be made. Any first ascent details here should not be taken to heart. Many short or minor routes will not have been considered routes 'back in the day' and therefore left unrecorded. An effort has been made to estimate (+/- 5years) the date of any line so obvious that surely must have been led/soloed but where the first ascent is unknown.

In this guidebook series the climbing sites are generally described east to west.

## Grading

E grades coupled with UK technical grades are used for the trad routes. French grades are used for the few sport routes. V grades (in combination with UK tech grades) are used for the bouldering, but please feel free to convert to Font grades at your leisure, because I can't. No attempt has been made to V-grade anything less than 4c.

## Bouldering and first ascent style

Given the potential misery for a solo climber having to cart a mat uphill three, four, or five kilometres, the vast proportion of the bouldering has been achieved ground-up without a bouldering mat, but with the limited cushioning of a sleeping mat and a few old jumpers where necessary. In the absence of a mat some of the harder higher boulder problems will have first been inspected on a top rope (denoted **(H)**); a well organised team should find that spotters and mats more than compensate for top-rope inspection.

For solos of *routes* not indicated as ‘on sight’ or ‘above a mat’ assume they have been inspected and possibly even top-roped first. Routes indicated as ‘roped solo’ were led conventionally and safeguarded by a self-belay Soloist device instead of a flesh and blood climbing partner.

## Ethics

For each crag a brief statement on the usual style of ascent is given under ‘**Ethic**’; this is a matter of fact, and best considered as *de facto* acceptable practice proven by historical record. Where it is stated that bolts are or are not acceptable, this is based on long-established principles (e.g. no bolting at Morlais or Twynau Gwynion; bolting acceptable at Baltic Quarry) and should be found to be in accordance with any legitimate local drilled gear policy. ‘Bolting acceptable/permitted’ relates to establishing new routes only. Where routes were first climbed solo (as indicated in the first ascent details) a mat will not have been used unless stated otherwise.

## Stuff to Take

On the higher and more remote crags especially, equip yourself with robust all-weather gear as would a mountain walker; conditions can change quickly and a blue-sky day can become a mist-clad howling-gale in no time at all. A 1:25000 OS map and compass are invaluable when using this guidebook: the map references given are often the key data to get you to the crags. If you will be climbing on your own, also take a mobile phone (but don’t rely on it completely because of variable signal strengths), a head torch, and a whistle; and leave word of where you will be going.

The choice of what and how much padding to take is left to the individual boulderer. Certainly it is little hardship for an individual to take a lightweight sleeping mat to any of the crags, while a team might consider ferrying a bouldering mat or two. The use of bouldering mats will of course open up harder problems and unlock the remaining sit-start and bad-landing projects.

## Rescue

In the unfortunate event of an accident requiring assistance ring **999** or 112, ask for **Police**, and then state you need **Mountain Rescue**.

## Access

Access notes are included in each crag introduction. The vast majority of the crags are located on Access Land where visitors enjoy a right to climb. However that doesn’t mean you can do what you like on the crags: issues such as the presence of or potential for nesting birds of prey or protected scarce or rare plants take legal and moral precedence over your right to climb. Some sites are SSSIs, the citations attached to which denote the reasons for such declaration (e.g. rare plants, distinctive geology) and the management measures to maintain them including any necessary control over recreational activities (e.g. a direction that climbing is inappropriate).



A few of the crags within the boundary of the national park are *not* located on Access Land, but are approachable from RoWs without being forced to mount any fences or walls. **The inclusion of any climbing site in this guidebook does not assume or confer any right of access to it.**


You are best advised to do further reading by consulting the BMC's Regional Access Database ([www.thebmc.co.uk/rad](http://www.thebmc.co.uk/rad)). For access issues please contact the BMC's Wales Access and Conservation Officer or local volunteer access representative ([www.thebmc.co.uk](http://www.thebmc.co.uk)).

### Guidebook Disclaimer

You climb entirely at your own risk in line with the BMC Participation Statement (see below); this guidebook has been published strictly on that basis. The author and any other party connected with this guidebook cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions or be held liable for any personal or third party injuries or damage, however caused. The inclusion of climbs in this guidebook does not assume any right of access to them; please refer any access queries to the BMC.

### BMC Participation Statement

Climbing, hillwalking, and mountaineering are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept those risks and be responsible for their own actions and involvement.

		<b>CRAG CODE</b> <a href="http://www.thebmc.co.uk">www.thebmc.co.uk</a>	
<b>Access</b>	Check the Regional Access Database [RAD] on <a href="http://www.thebmc.co.uk">www.thebmc.co.uk</a> for the latest access information		
<b>Parking</b>	Park carefully – avoid gateways and driveways		
<b>Footpaths</b>	Keep to established paths – leave gates as you find them		
<b>Risk</b>	Climbing can be dangerous – accept the risks and be aware of other people around you		
<b>Respect</b>	Groups and individuals – respect the rock, local climbing ethics and other people		
<b>Wildlife</b>	Do not disturb livestock, wildlife or cliff vegetation; respect seasonal bird nesting restrictions		
<b>Dogs</b>	Keep dogs under control at all times; don't let your dog chase sheep or disturb wildlife		
<b>Litter</b>	'Leave no trace' – take all litter home with you		
<b>Toilets</b>	Don't make a mess – bury your waste		
<b>Economy</b>	Do everything you can to support the rural economy – shop locally		
<small><b>BMC Participation Statement</b> — Climbing, hill walking and mountaineering are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions and involvement.</small>			

### Abbreviations Used

BBNP	Brecon Beacons National Park		o-s	on sight
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest		stal	calcite/flowstone
SWMC	South Wales Mountaineering Club		BB	Bolt belay
SWCW	South Wales Climbing Wiki		BR	Bolt runner
RoW	right of way		<b>Adjectival Grades</b>	
km	kilometre		M/D	Moderate/Difficult
N	north, northern, northerly,		VD	Very Difficult
E	east, eastern, easterly		S	Severe
S	south, southern, southerly		HS	Hard Severe
W	west, western, westerly		VS	Very Severe
FA	first ascent		HVS	Hard Very Severe
SS	sit start		E1 – E7	Extreme

## Part 1: Mynydd Llangatwg & Llangynidr

The climbs of the Llangattock escarpment including Craig y Castell (East) are covered by a combination of the current SWMC/SWCW guidebooks and the Llangattock Update 2014 (a free download obtainable from [www.martincrockerclimbing.com](http://www.martincrockerclimbing.com) and The Climbers' Club website). Thanks to John Harwood, Peter Blackburn, and Guy Percival for their assistance with Part 1.

### Recent History

The principal crags of Llangattock are well established; the crags in this guide less so. Trefil got a mention in the minor crags section of the 1973 edition of the SWMC guidebook, but – though some went to have a look – no one appeared to have got stuck in: ‘first impressions are promising, but a closer inspection turns out to be disappointing.’ All of forty years passed before local team Peter Blackburn and Paul Tucker carried out a more detailed assessment of the possibilities in the area. They developed Craig y Castell, the Riglos-like pillar in Trefil Quarry, and – using bolts for a few routes – Cwar Blaen-Dyffryn (which others had previously checked but forgot about). In line with SE Wales's predilection for the esoteric – various other eclectic developments, including Martin Crocker's away-from-it-all bouldering, proceed to the current day. While perceptions of climbing quality are arguable, little derision should befall a common appreciation of the stunning landscapes.

CRAIG Y CASTELL (WEST) OS 1699 1670 – 1757 1672

This is the true Craig y Castell – a long low escarpment that overlooks and parallels the road to Llangattock (Hillside Road). It is N facing and therefore worth avoiding on cold and windy days (and mild and damp ones too!).

### Approach

Take the Beaufort to Llangynidr road (B4560) and turn right (signposted Llangattock) just before a sharp right-hand bend. Park in a large lay-by on the left, which is in clear sight of much of the cliff only 50 metres from the road.

**Ethic:** Bouldering, soloing, and trad.

On the reasonable assumption the Llangattock drilled gear policy applies, bolting is not permitted.

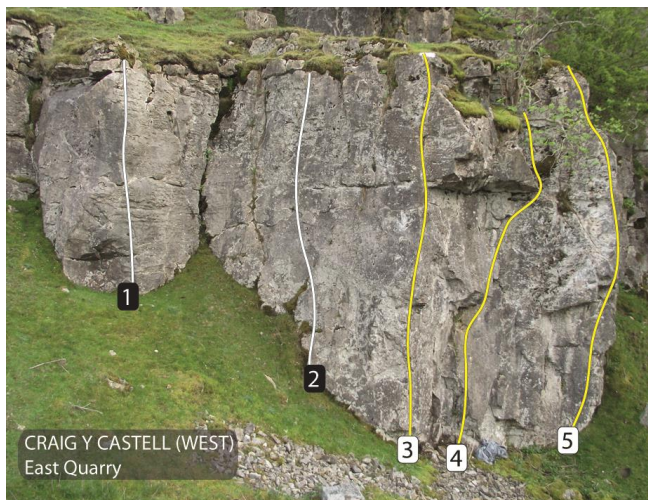
The climbs are described from left (E) to right (W).

### East Quarry

The main face of the East Quarry is a 12-metre high wall, all pretty damn filthy. Left of it is a small clean grey buttress with some nice lines, including an arête either side of a mossy corner. V grades are given for those rare people arriving with mats and spotters.

1 **Rib Far Left** V0 (5a) The isolated little rib.

2 **Mumps** 5m V0 (5a) The grey face past some stal lumps, keeping right of a crack.



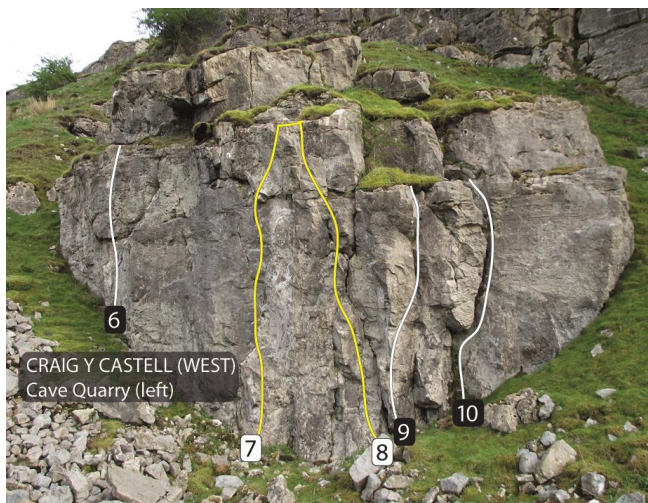
**3 \*Green-eyed Monster** 7m E3 6a (V3) (3.5.2014)  
The blunt arête left of the corner. Climb it direct; crux up a groove near the top.  
FA Martin Crocker (solo)

**4 The Cheese Stands Alone** 7m VD (3.5.2014)  
The corner to a small tree.  
FA Martin Crocker (o-s solo)

**5 \*Los Difuntos** 7m E2 5c (V2) (3.5.2014)  
The right-hand arête: go straight up it using small layaways on its left side.  
FA Martin Crocker (solo)

### Cave Quarry

The Cave Quarry is a 15-metre high vertical face overlying a cave at its base (Ogof Caci). Fifty metres left of it is a bulging wall above a small screeslope; this supplies a cluster of mini-routes on clean rock. The V grades assume the use of mats and a spotter.



**6 Impatient One** 5m V1 (5b)  
At the extreme left-hand end climb straight above the start of a rightward-trending crack on stal holds; exit with a shuffle left along a grass ledge.

**7 Stop and Frisk** 7m E3 5c (V3) (3.5.2014)  
Protectable. Start under a series of pockets in the centre of the crag. Take a slight groove and – using the obvious finger-slot – commence a powerful sequence of moves to grasp a shelf at the top. Swing right and mantel carefully.  
FA Martin Crocker (solo)

### 8 Suss Law

7m VS (4b) (3.5.2014)  
Protectable. An exhilarating and strenuous romp on large holds (HVS as a solo). Take the line of jugs and cracks slightly left to finish up a short groove.  
FA Martin Crocker (solo)

**9 Self Control Order** 5m 6a (V3) (3.5.2014)

Starting low, boulder up a leaning arête, reaching up and right into a grooved crack. A good flake enables large exit holds to be reached.

FA Martin Crocker (solo)

**10 Right Crack** 4m D

The right-most crack.

The main face, above the Ogor Caci cave, provides a collection of – for the most part – good protectable climbs. There are three stakes in place at the cliff-top.

Note that there are lots of loose stones on the ledges above the routes which are all too easy to dislodge: make sure your mate below is aware of this and wearing a helmet.

**11 The Smile** 18m D (4.2007)

Climb the boulder-filled gully and chimney onto a large ledge. Finish up the obvious groove in the headwall. Take pruners or get torn to shreds by wild roses.

FA Nona Thomas, Peter Blackburn

**12 Layback and Enjoy the Ride** 18m XS 5b (5.2012)

It lets down the other extremes on the crag: contrived and manky, and your life depends on the unquestionable instability of a huge block. Try to climb independently just right of the gully/chimney, moving leftwards and then up to an overlap beneath the undercut block (which forms a sharp right-pointing flake). Surmount the roof, and scramble to the top.

FA Peter Blackburn, Paul Tucker

There is a boulder in the ground 3 metres right of the gully/chimney, which provides the starting point for the next three routes.

**13 When the Sun Shines** 15m HVS 5a (5.2007)

This route aims for the obvious off-width crack in bulges at 12 metres, which – unfortunately – can often be filled with saplings. Climb the groove, wall, and another groove to an overhang split by the off-width. Climb the off-width and scramble to the top.

FA Peter Blackburn, Nona Thomas

**\*14 Foundation Crack** 18m VS 4c (5.2007)

Climb the groove to a large break. Step right and climb the steep wall to the second large break. Take a crack to easier climbing.

FA Peter Blackburn, Nona Thomas

**\*15 Royal Welsh** 18m E1 5b (5.2007)

Excellent, low in the grade, and protectable. Start just right of the boulder and climb the fine crack above to a large break. Go straight up the wall and slight groove to the second large break. Swing left beneath an overlap and climb the exhilarating wall just left of a small arête to easier ground.

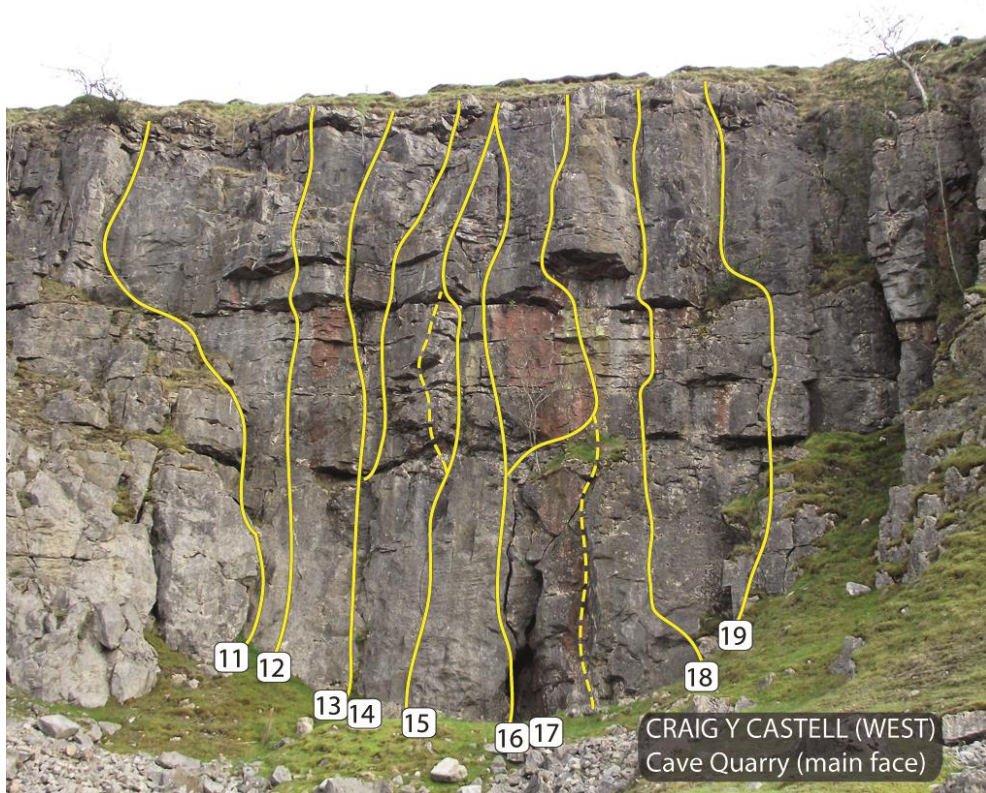
FA Peter Blackburn, Nona Thomas

**15a Variation Royal Welsh (left hand)** 18m E2 5b (5.2007)

From the ledge at the first break, step left and climb boldly on the left-hand side of the arête to join the original line at the second break.

FA Peter Blackburn, Nona Thomas





\*16 **Farmer's Arms** 18m E2 5b (4.2007)

Probably the best route on the crag, which features a spectacular finish – all very protectable. Start at the cave. Climb the deep crack left of the cave to a large break. Continue up the wall making a long reach to the second large break. Enter a short corner, and proceed strenuously up the rightward-leaning layback crack to the top.

FA Peter Blackburn, Nona Thomas

\*17 **Double Duplicity** E2 5c 18m (5.2007)

A trying and committing crux section but which can be protected well enough. Note that there is a huge unsupported loose shield of rock above the cave which you have to step on. Follow *Farmer's Arms* to the first break, and fix (and extend, or retrieve after the traverse) good gear. With your partner standing well away, foot-traverse gingerly rightwards across the top of the loose shield onto a grassy ledge. Take the yellow wall above onto a perch below the large overhang. Power around the left side of the roof and follow the steep vertical crack to the top.

17a Variation **Original Start** XS 5c Absolutely horrific: take the technical leaning groove right of the cave until faced with the stark reality that you must layback without gear the dangerous loose shield of rock onto the grassy ledge. (The shield could do with trundling – though please don't trap any cavers!)

FA Peter Blackburn, Nona Thomas



\*18 **Wide Legged and Eyeless** 18m E2 5c (5.2007)

Varied, and it builds to a testing finish. Start 4 metres right of the cave. Stride left from a stack of white blocks to gain a layback edge in the slab. Climb the slab boldly onto a ledge at the first large break – first gear. Take a short corner onto the top of a block. Gain the second large break and pull gymnastically over a roof into a lovely groove which maintains interest to the top.

FA Peter Blackburn, Nona Thomas

\*19 **Bananas** 18m Severe 4a (5.2007)

Scramble up rocks and grass to a grassy ledge at one-third height. Climb the crack in the wall to a wide ledge. Step left and climb a fine square-cut corner to the top.

FA Nona Thomas, Peter Blackburn

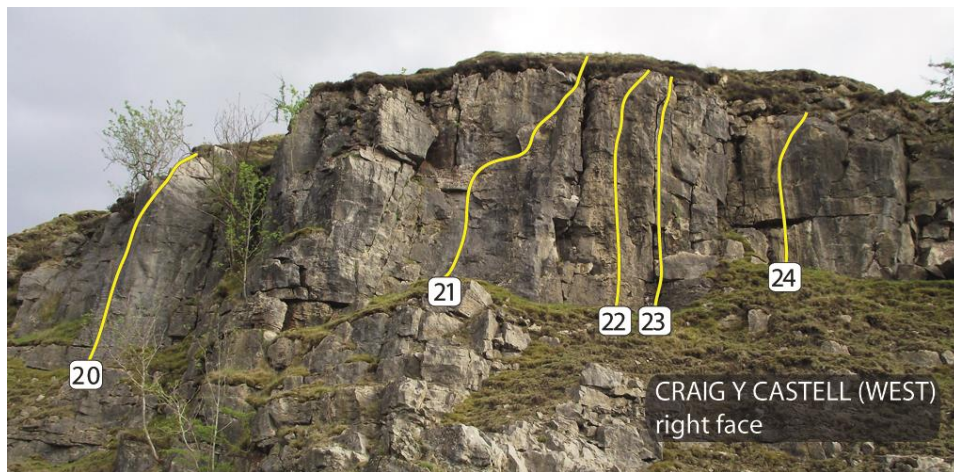
Fifty metres right of the main face is a fluted rib high up and just under the cliff-top.

20 **Lives become Clouds** 8m HS 4a (3.5.2014)

Follow the rib, and swing around right onto its front face for the finale. Exposed and unprotected.

FA Martin Crocker (o-s solo)

The next routes lie on the quarried bluff around the corner on the right and just under the cliff-top; the obvious finger-crack is *Disharmony*.



21 **21 Years to This Day** 8m VS 4b (3.5.2014)

Climb the black slab diagonally rightwards to the top of a wide (unclimbed) crack on the right; take care with the exit.

FA Martin Crocker (o-s solo)

22 \***The Tristan Chord** 7m E4 6a (3.5.2014)

Superb and fierce; the crinkly leaning wall between the two cracks. Climb its centre (two pegs) and finish slightly right past a good wire placement.

FA Martin Crocker (roped solo)

**23 Disharmony** 7m E1 5b (3.5.2014)

Climb the finger-crack – very well protected.

FA Martin Crocker (roped solo)

**24 One into the Road** 5m E2 5b (3.5.2014)

Though only very short the inevitable catastrophe in the event of a fall warrants a proper grade.

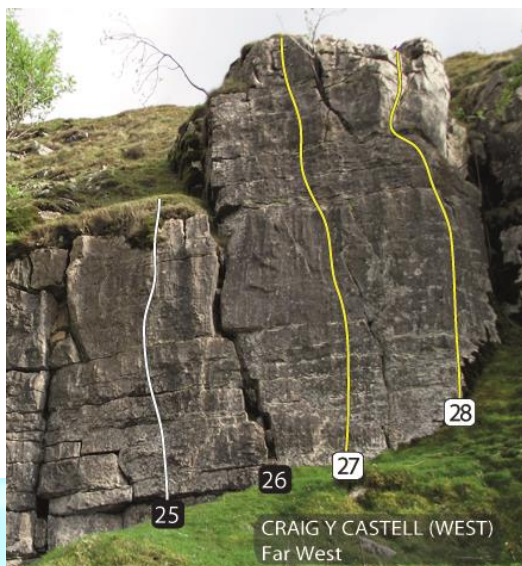
Right of the finger-crack is a black wall with a white flowstone streak up its left side: follow the steak direct (without recourse to the crack on the left). Not bad.

FA Martin Crocker (solo)

The dirty rightward-trending crack in the wall is unclimbed, I think.

**Far West**

At the W end of the edge are some small walls including, on the right, an unquarried face of the best rock on the crag. The rectangular face is *Sixteen Disappeared*.



**25 For the Birds** 4m V2 (5c) A steeply sloping landing – mind your ankles. Start just left of a wide crack and crank hard to a shallow break and then a monster-jug above.

FA Martin Crocker (solo)

**26** 4m VD The wide crack.

**27 \*Sixteen Disappeared** 6m E2 5c (3.5.2014)

Climb the immaculate smooth grey face past a sloper to a crack and jugs above. Pull up just left of a small rowan growing in the crack. Unprotected, but with a grassy landing.

FA Martin Crocker (solo)

**28 Far West Arête** 6m D (3.5.2014)

The easy right arête of the rectangular face. FA Martin Crocker (solo)



**BLAEN ONNEU OS 1567 1679**

There are two immediately adjacent east-facing 8- to 10-metre high quarries merely seconds from the B4560, from which they are readily visible when travelling N. They get sunshine up until 1.00 pm during summer. The stakes at the top and the ease of accessibility suggests that the obvious lines will have been climbed eons ago.

**Approach**

Take the Beaufort to Llangynidr road (B4560) and park in a three-car pull-in on the left, 200 metres north of the right turn to Llangattock. The South Quarry is but a dyno away.

**Ethic:** Bouldering, soloing, and trad.

**South Quarry**

There is still potential for easier climbs, but much of the quarry face is interrupted by ledges.

**1 South Side 7m VS 4c (26.6.2017)**

A short route taking the small roof and overlying compact slab.

FA Guy Percival (solo)

**2 Tortured Terrain of your Brain 9m E1 5b (21.4.2015)**

At the extreme left end is a curving rib. Layback boldly up the left-hand side of the rib to gain a break (cam possible); continue up an easier groove to the top. Soloed on sight, a subsequent party cleaned and climbed the route on the right-hand side at HVS.

FA Martin Crocker (o-s solo)

**3 Down South 9m VS 5a (26.6.2017)**

Start from a raised grass ledge; then trend rightwards to the right-hand end of the roof. Pull around on side-pulls (good gear in the crack), and finish direct.

FA Guy Percival (solo)

**4 Southern Comfort 9m E1 5b (26.6.2017)**

The shallow groove. Pull steeply onto the ledge and take the slab to the break. Make a series of difficult moves into the shallow steep groove above to an easy top out.

FA Guy Percival (solo)

**5 \*South Paw 9m E1 5b (26.6.2017)**

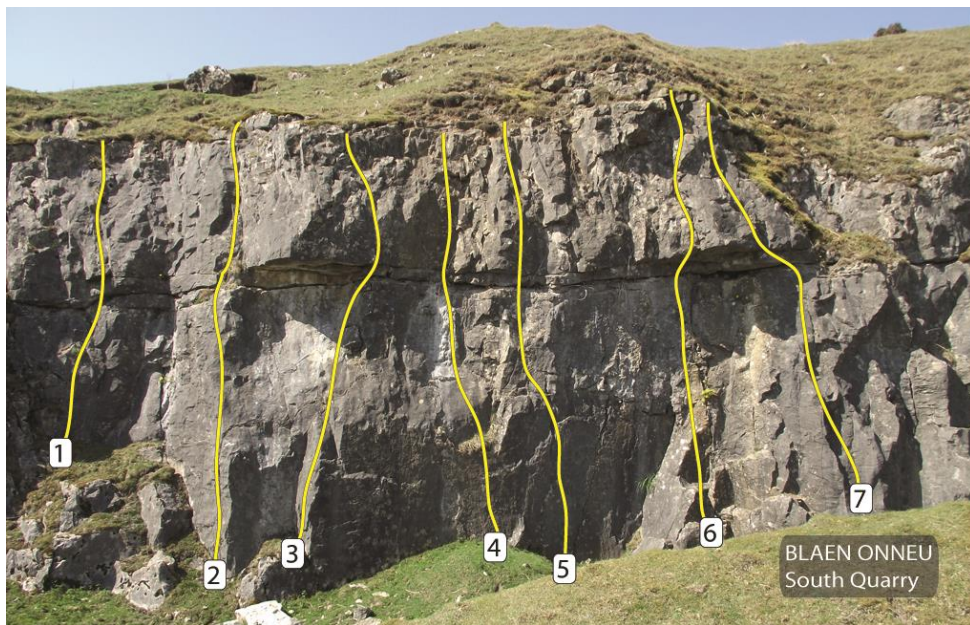
Start 2 metres right of *Southern Comfort*. Climb the steep wall to the break. Make hard moves to gain the slight groove above (the edge on the right proves very useful).

FA Guy Percival (solo)

**6 \*Southern Style 9m E1 5b/c (7.8.2017)**

A fine strong line with good gear and rock. Start 3 metres right of *South Paw*. Take the easy crack to the roof. Make awkward moves to pull around, and trend right to finish.

FA Guy Percival (solo)



#### 7 \*I've Pulled 9m VS 4c (7.8.2017)

Start below the right-hand end of the roof. Take the good rock on square pinches directly to the right end of the roof (good gear in the break). Pull through and trend left to an easy solid finish.  
FA Guy Percival (solo)

#### 8 Blaen Onneu Groove 9m S 4a (1970s/1980s)

Climb the obvious groove in the centre of the cliff to the hawthorn tree at the cliff-top.

Right of centre, beyond the hawthorn at the cliff-top, is an attractive wall hosting some waterworn cracks. Unfortunately interest wains after 6 metres and distasteful muddy ledges take over. In 2015 the routes were soloed with a traverse right along the break at 6 metres to an easy descent ramp. Equally, you can climb easily to the top if leading (there *is* gear on the routes).

#### 9 Blaen Onneu Flake 9m VS 4c

The flake crack and groove on the left.

#### 10 Attractive Wall 1 6m S

The fine crack, also a possible descent.

#### 11 Attractive Wall 2 6m HVS 5b

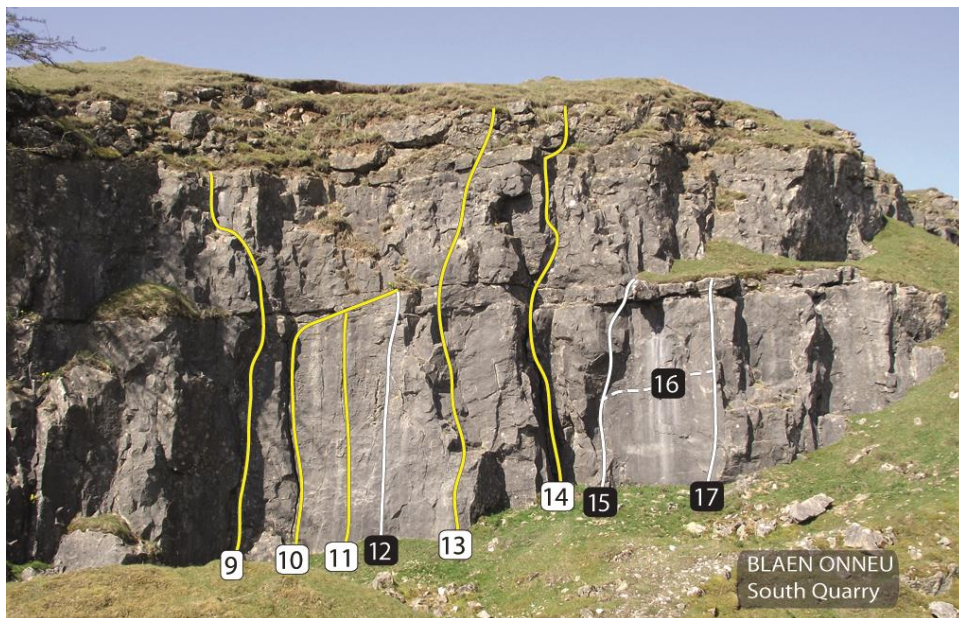
The crack in the centre of the face.

#### 12 Attractive Wall 3 6m V2 (6a) A boulder problem with a sketchy starting-move to a flake.

#### 13 Independence Day Wall 9m S (1970s/80s)

The wall to the left of the prominent corner-crack of *Blaen Onneu Crack*.





Near the right-hand end of the quarry is a corner-crack with a smooth wall to its right capped by a gravity-defying mega-conk.

**14 \*Blaen Onneu Crack** 10m HS 4a (1970s/1980s)

Climb the crack to a ledge. Continue on good holds, but without any further protection.

Three boulder problems complete the fun in this quarry.

**15 Dent du Nez du Geant** V2 (5c) Take the overhanging groove, using holds on the rib; and mantel onto the left-hand side of the nose. It is possible to extend the route to the top.

**16 Nose Wipe** V3 (6a) Start as for *DdNdG*, reach up right into a scoop and traverse the sheer wall.

**17 It's All in the Hips** V1 (5b) Take the right-hand side of the wall, making some use of the rib on the right. Mantel onto the grass ledge at the top.

North Quarry

**18 Blaen Onneu Wall** 8m HS 4a (1970s/80s)

Climb the rib and crack at the left-hand end of the crag; a good route. Double stake belay.

**19 \*Flash the Readies** 9m E2 5c (2010s/21.4.2015)

Excellent. Climb an easy groove; move up on a large undercut and reach right into a thin crack in a shallow groove. Climb this strenuously (good wire on crux) to large holds and an easy top out. Block belay 6 metres back.

FA Martin Crocker (roped solo), but some chalk on the route was in evidence



**20 \*When it Comes to the Stars** 9m E4 6b (21.4.2015)

The blunt rib; technical and thin (but low-6b). Climb the left-hand side of a sheer wall to a break (cam on right). Use a sharp undercut to begin a neat sequence on thin sideholds either side of the rib (peg on right); some rounded finger-edges enable a jug on the left to be reached. Mantel out.  
FA Martin Crocker (roped solo)

**21 Slam Dunk** 9m E1 5a/b (21.4.2015)

Climb the groove right of the blunt rib past a break at 4 metres.  
FA Martin Crocker (roped solo)

**22 Scram Junk** 9m E1 5a (21.4.2015)

Unprotected; but the holds are good. Climb an easy groove to the break. Trend leftwards on large rugged holds to a jug at the top; the exit is straightforward.  
FA Martin Crocker (solo)

**23 Solstice Wall** 9m E1 5a (21.6.2017)

Start as for the previous route but continue up the depression on conglomerate holds.  
FA Guy Percival (solo)

**24 Solstice Rib** 9m VS 4b (21.6.2017)

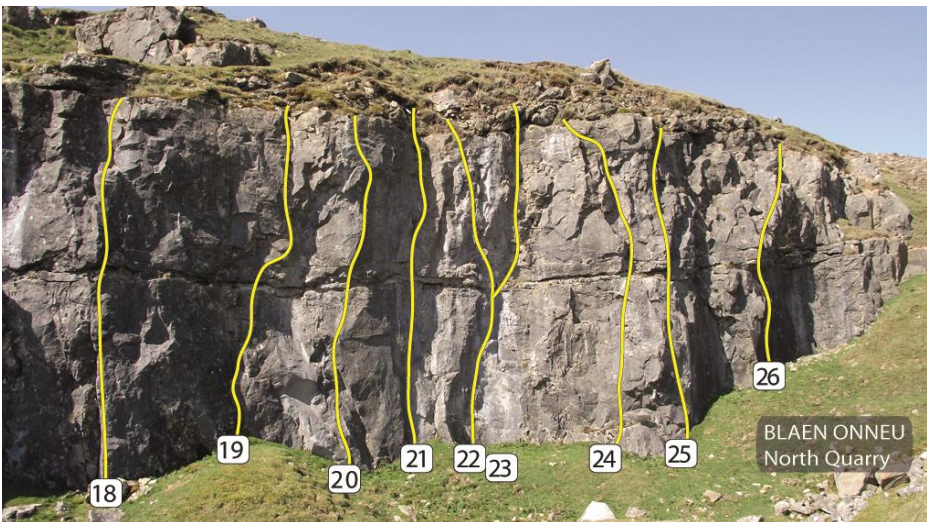
Start just left of the rib far right. Take the wall to a break; then follow the juggy ramp to the top.  
FA Guy Percival (solo)

**25 \*Blaen Onneu Rib** 9m VS 5a (1970s/80s)

An enjoyable climb up the rib far right. Start the rib with difficulty and gain a break. Follow the upper rib (good small wire placement), trending right to a steady exit.

**26 Solstice Hangover** 9m VS 5a (21.6.2017)

Start left of a crack, below a small roof. Awkwardly pull through the roof and finish easily right.  
FA Guy Percival (solo)





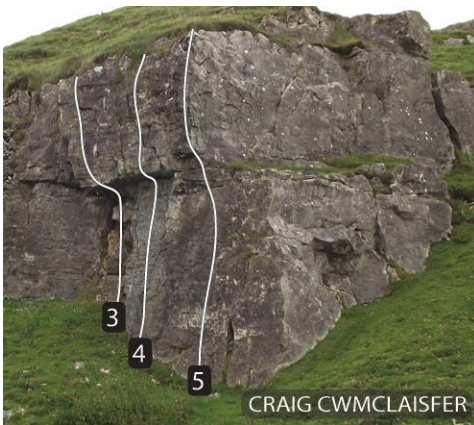
**CRAIG CWMCLAISFER OS 1506 1693**

A very minor, NW facing part-quarried crag but with outstanding views; useful in a heatwave. Some of the routes and problems were probably climbed long before the ‘first ascents’ proposed here.

**Approach**

Take the Beaufort to Llangynidr road (B4560) and park in a large car-park on the left 400 metres N of the right turn to Llangattock (a fave place for OAPs to nap in their cars). Head due W from the car-park to the first of the crags (400 metres).

**Ethic:** Bouldering, soloing, and trad.



Routes are described from left (E) to right (W).

In the first shallow quarry are: 1 4b A trivial wall on the left, without using the hand-ledge; and: 2 V0 (5a) The nice arête on a small buttress at the right-hand end of the quarry.

Around to the right the edge springs to life – brace yourselves!

A 5-metre high wall with a wide crack on the left presents:

3 V0 (5a) Surmount the roof right of the crack.

4 V0 (5a) The centre of the wall using the obvious crack; feels rather high.

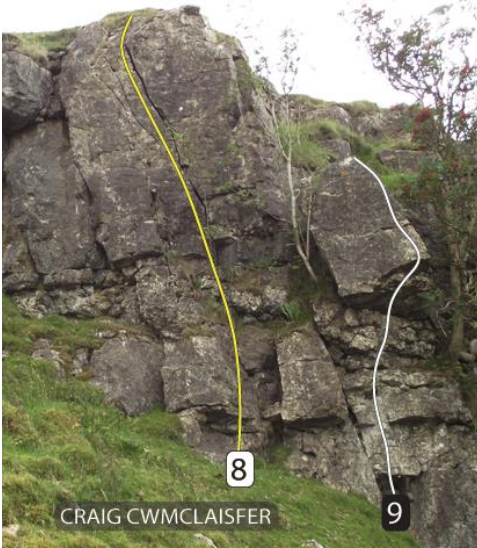
5 4b The right arête.

To the right is a short wall inconveniently sited above a patch of potent nettles (‘now why didn’t I bring my mat!’).

6 **Nettle Whine** V0+ (5b) The thin crack in the centre.

7 **Deep Stinger Solo** V0 (5a) Starting just to the right; trend right to the top.





Next comes a narrow 7-metre high face right of a large rowan.

**10 \*People can be Thorns** 7m E3 5b (12.8.2016)  
Climb straight up the slight rib: very sustained  
(crack on next route out of bounds).  
FA Martin Crocker (solo)

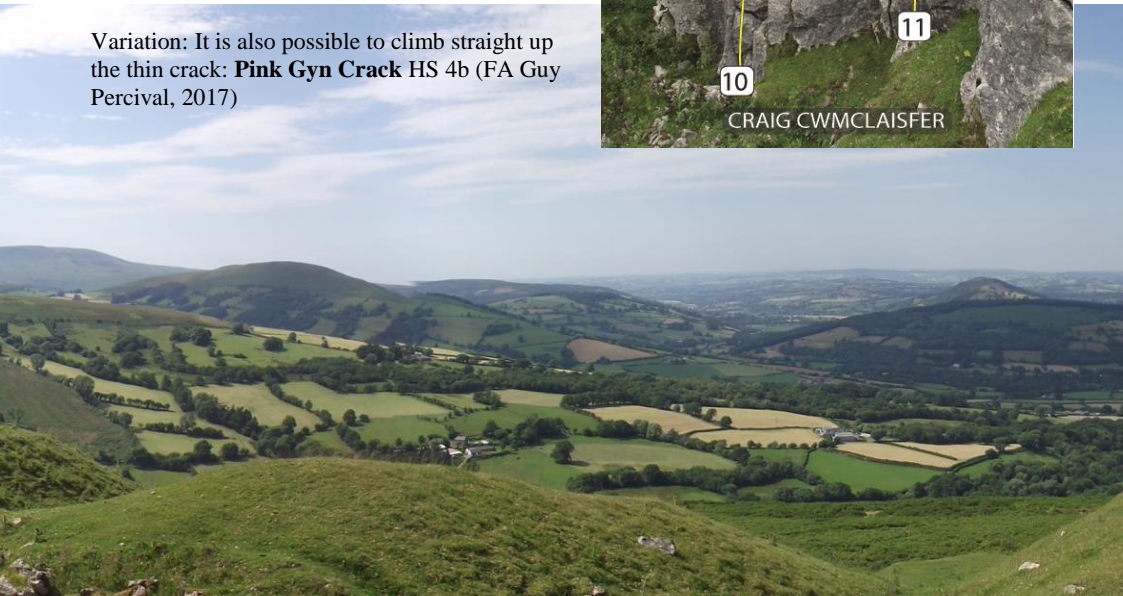
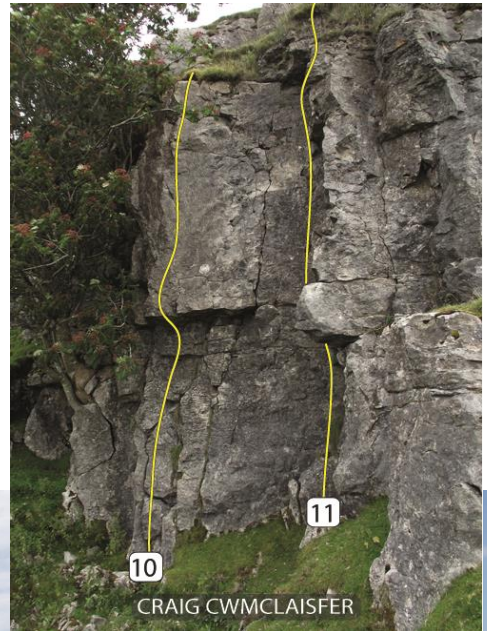
**11 Help from the Left** 7m S  
The groove, which could be protected using kit in  
the crack a metre to the left.

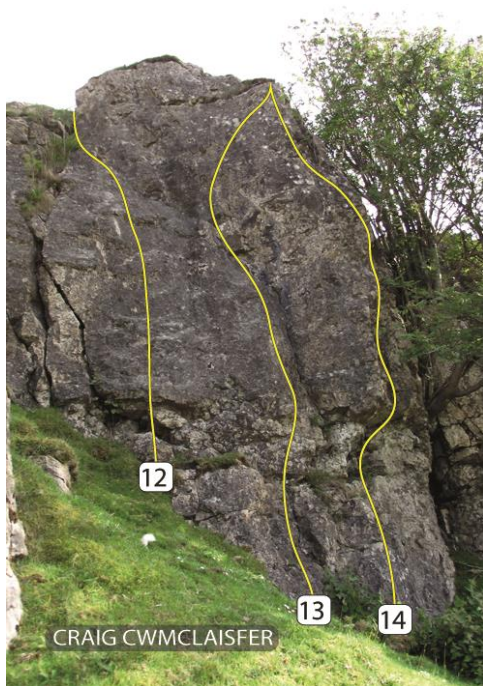
Variation: It is also possible to climb straight up  
the thin crack: **Pink Gyn Crack** HS 4b (FA Guy  
Percival, 2017)

A little way to the right the edge grows  
somewhat, and on its left is a wall pierced by a  
moderately striking crack.

**8 \*To Strive to Seek ...blah, blah, blah** 6m  
HVS 5a (19.7.2016)  
Possibly best led, depending on your tippie.  
Climb the distinct crack to finishing-jugs.  
FA Martin Crocker (o-s solo)

**9 \*Tenuous Tennyson** V3 (6a) Rather  
scrumptious. Pull over the roof and layaway the  
short hanging arête (block on the left not used).  
Very steep ground beneath – best not fall.





To the right, high up, is a slab and arête – quite sizeable for these parts.

**12 Love is Like a Heatwave** 8m E3 5c (19.7.2016)

An eliminate solo. Dabble up the constrained crusty slab to exit up the crack on the left.  
FA Martin Crocker (solo)

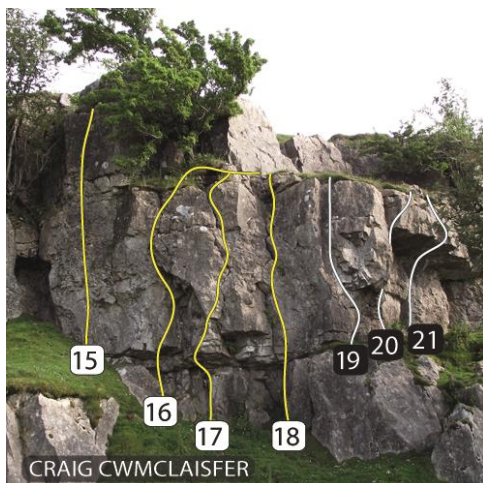
**13 \*Heat Exhaustion** 9m E2 5c (19.7.2016)

Lead grade: the groove. Small wires/micro-wires protect, but not very well (E3 to solo). Make a long hard move up the groove, and gain a flake slightly left. Step up direct, and swing right to exit up the tip of the arête.  
FA Martin Crocker (solo)

**14 \*Barmy Army** 9m E4 5c/6a (19.7.2016)

The arête: a treat and it puts the crag on the 'esoteric gems' map. Reach a good layaway on the left side of the sharp arête and power into a slight groove in the arête. Using holds either side, bound up the edge of the arête to the top. Unprotectable, but with a flat landing. (Drop two or three grades if you climb the right-hand side of the arête after the start!)  
FA Martin Crocker (solo)

To the right is a series of walls with a large hawthorn in a niche above two cracks.



**15** 6m E1 5a (19.7.2016)

Climb the narrow wall left of the twin cracks and hawthorn.  
FA Martin Crocker (solo)

**16** 6m VS 4c (19.7.2016)

The left-hand crack; take care with the rock at the start.  
FA Martin Crocker (o-s solo)

**17** 6m VS 5b (19.7.2016)

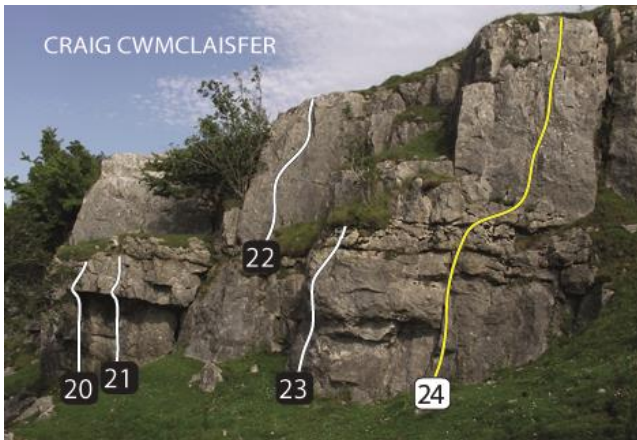
The right-hand crack gained with a strenuous move from the left.  
FA Martin Crocker (o-s solo)

**18** 6m S 4a (19.7.2016)

The groove right of the cracks.  
FA Martin Crocker (o-s solo)



A lower wall with a roof extends right; it is short for sure but any fall would involve a rocky tumble and broken bones.



19 V0 (5a) The slight groove left of a right-facing corner: one long reach is involved.

20 V3 (6a) The right-facing corner, roof, and scary exit (dig a grass handhold above first!).

21 V2 (5c) SS the crack to the right and surmount the roof on flatties.

22 4a Above is a slabby grey wall.

And on a little buttress far right:

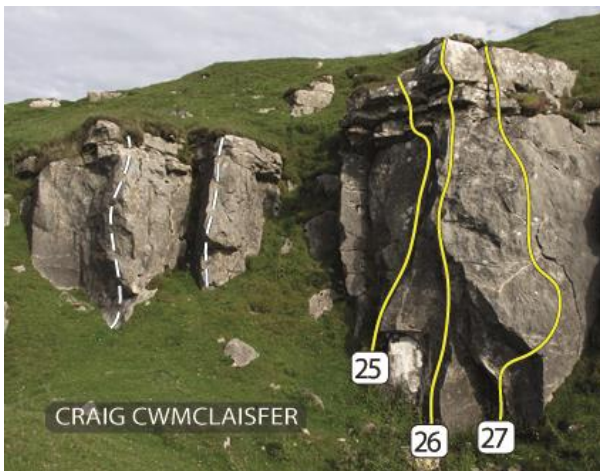
23 V2 (6a) Start the rib low and layaway right around it to pull onto a ledge hosting dainty rowans.

24 **An Afternoon Ramble** 6m S (19.7.2016)

Trend right up the slabby grey wall on the right.

FA Martin Crocker (solo)

One hundred metres right, at the same level, is a small quarry with a gorgeous slabby rib a monumental 6 metres high. (On the left is a pair of short arêtes: both 4a.)



25 **Great Ambitions** 6m HS 4a (19.7.2016)

The groove on the left, finishing over a little roof.

FA Martin Crocker (o-s solo)

26 **\*Shrinkflation** 6m S 4a (19.7.2016)

The arête, on superb holds.

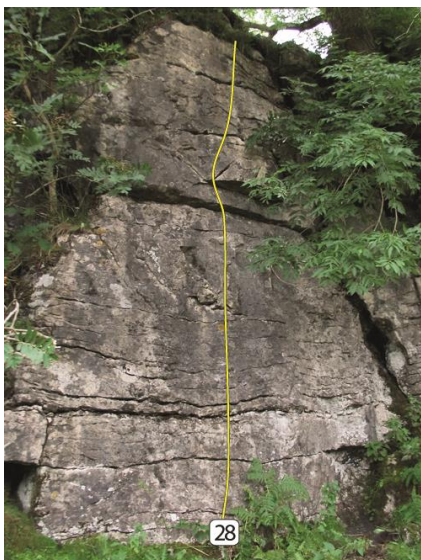
FA Martin Crocker (o-s solo)

27 **\*Whinge-o-rama** 6m HVS 6a (V2) (19.7.2016)

More a boulder problem than a route. Start at the arête, and make difficult moves low right onto flakes on the slabby face. Take the

flakes to the top (mind the shaky blocks at the top). Much easier if started from standing on the right.  
FA Martin Crocker (o-s solo)





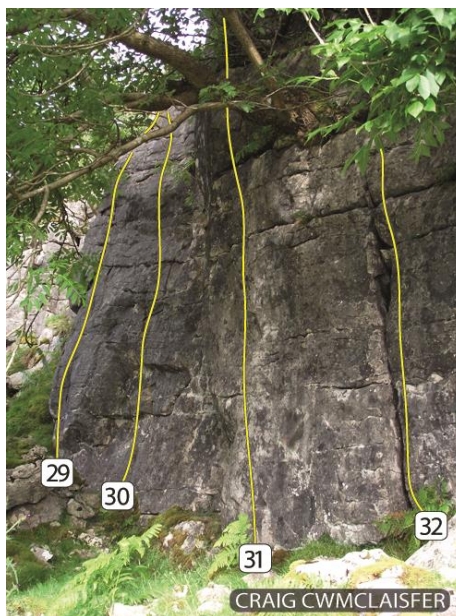
The edge continues, facing a coniferous plantation (part of the Cwm Claisfer Nature Reserve), but only intermittently. There are plenty of prospects for short scrambles, but technical interest seems limited to the following.

Approximately halfway along the edge is a slabby wall under trees.

**28 Claisher Wall 7m E1 5a (12.8.2016)**

Climb the centre of the wall (it would be easier if the breaks were cleaned).

FA Martin Crocker (o-s solo)



One hundred and fifty metres right is a more promising buttress of fluted rock.

29 S 4a 5m The left-hand arête.

30 HS 4b 5.5.m The wall right of the arête.

**31 Forest Gump 6m HVS 5a (12.8.2016)**

The blunt rib right of an unclimbed (dirty) groove; start slightly right, and trend left before climbing straight up between breaks on the most unimaginable holds imaginable.

FA Martin Crocker (o-s solo)

32 D The crack to the right.

to



## TREFIL QUARRY



The climbing potential of Trefil Quarry (OS 1174 1434 – 1174 1380) was noted decades ago, but people went abroad or bolted valley sandstone instead. The showpiece here is the Mallos de Trefilos, an outstanding obelisk of water-sculpted rock left intact by the quarrymen. Much of the remainder of this extensive quarry is unstable chaotic tot, but not all of it e.g. Chartists' Wall. Limitations aside, climbing in the quarry can be quite a pleasing affair, given its W-facing orientation and moorland ambience. Constant companions Pen-y-Fan and Corn Ddu tiptoe on the horizon, not far away. The cliff is sunny and quick-drying, and can be winter friendly.





## Environment

Trefil Quarry is Blaenau Gwent's largest ancient monument for its industrial quarrying interest.

There is evidence of a hawk's nest on an unclimbed buttress in the far S of the quarry; please avoid this part of the crag during the nesting season if the birds are present.



## Approach

A private road and bridleway used weekdays by quarry lorries runs N from the village of Trefil to the quarries of Cwar Blaenddyffryn, Cwar yr Hendre, and Cwar yr Ystrad. Signposts at the gated entrance to the road state that the barrier is locked between 17.00hr and 08.00hr and at weekends. It also warns that any unauthorised vehicle in the road is likely to be confiscated by the police. Cars should therefore be parked along the verge in the N part of the village *before* the barrier; there is plenty of room to avoid causing an obstruction.

Walk a km N along the road (initially under a working quarry); then ascend diagonally right up the hillside to Trefil Quarry.

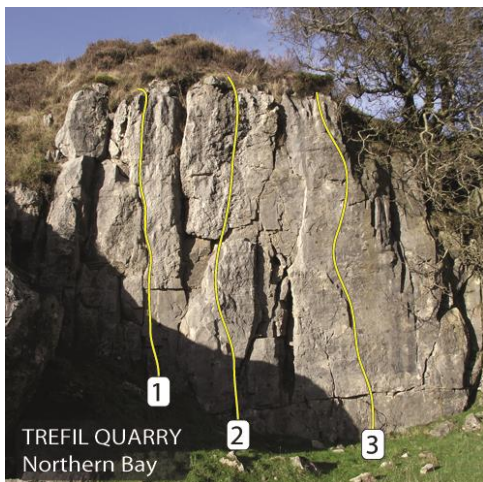
**Ethic:** Trad, bouldering, soloing; there are no bolts.

The routes are described from left to right.

## Northern Bay

The extreme N end of the quarry comprises a bay of low walls.

On the left is a leaning S-facing crack-seamed wall above flat ground (V grades for mat users).



### 1 Geocaching 6m VS 4c (V0-) (6.12.2014)

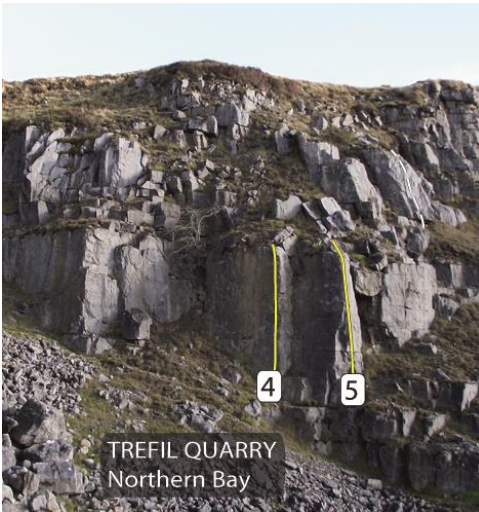
The twin cracks, making good use of the left-hand one; swing left to exit.  
FA Martin Crocker (o-s solo)

### 2 Geodesic Dome 6m E1 5a (V0) (6.12.2014)

The crinkly grey wall right of the cracks direct. Exit with handfuls of heather.  
FA Martin Crocker (o-s solo)

### 3 George of Asda 6m E2 5c (V1) (6.12.2014)

Takes the steep wall far right. Using holds on the face only, reach the right-hand arête and then take jugs to finish just left of the large hawthorn's branches.  
FA Martin Crocker (o-s solo)



Short walls and boulders are scattered on the main W-facing side of the quarry; opposite the crack-seamed wall are two arêtes separated by a groove.

**4 Ends Now** 5m E1 5a (6.12.2014)

The left-hand arête; use holds on the left wall at the top – delicate.

FA Martin Crocker (o-s solo)

**5 Ends Here** 6m HVS 4c (6.12.2014)

The right-hand arête above a bad landing.

FA Martin Crocker (o-s solo)

Ten metres up to the right of the arêtes is a light grey boulder, which gives a V0 (5a) eliminate problem up its frontal slab. Twenty metres right of the arêtes are various messy walls: a crack through an overhang gives an adventurous V0- (4c) problem.

**Mallos de Trefilos**

By far the finest piece of rock in the quarry is the unmistakable white pinnacle in its centre.

Fortunately its Stennis-like karst texture has been left unharmed by the industrialist (quarryman or climber!).

Descent is by tiptoeing carefully over its exposed narrow back onto a loose ridge, and then scrambling down the muddy gully to its S. It is also possible to abseil from block belays on its summit (mega-sling left in place in 2014).

**6 \*Le Nez** 15m E1 5a (29.6.2014)

A little run out, but with great positions. Start from a flat platform on the front of the pinnacle.

Climb a short crack and then take the shallow groove that runs up the arête of the pinnacle to the top.

FA Peter Blackburn, Paul Tucker

**7 \*Jawline** 15m VS 4c (29.6.2014)

Get your cameras out. One of the best climbs of its grade in the area, especially considering its photogenic outlook. High in the grade. Start at a well-defined crack just right of the arête. Quit the crack almost immediately for a thinner crack that runs up just right of the arête. Follow the crack to ledges near the top, and summit out.

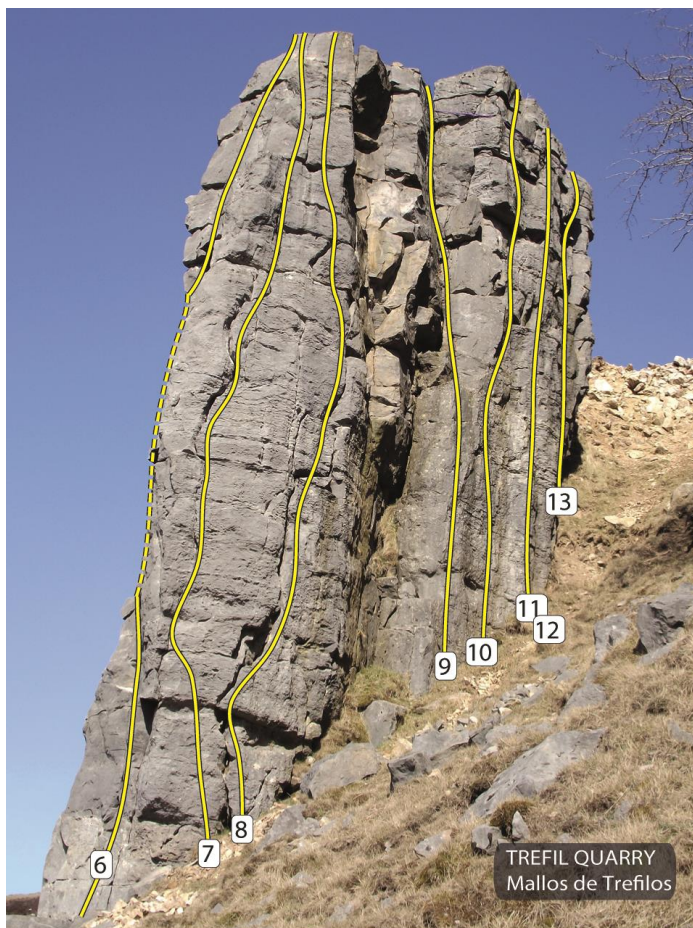
FA Peter Blackburn, Paul Tucker

**8 Crackatus** 15m VS 4c (29.6.2014)

Climb the well-defined crack next right; don't move into the loose groove on the right, but finish up a rib to the finish of *Jawline* (or, at HVS 5b, go straight to the top).

FA Peter Blackburn, Paul Tucker

The remaining routes take the right-hand side of the pinnacle face starting from the steeply sloping muddy gully.



**9 Victory V** 11m HVS 5b  
(29.6.2014)

Slightly bold and technical moves lead up the right-hand side of the short arête. The continuation groove is more amenable but a little loose.

FA Peter Blackburn, Paul Tucker

**10 The Aneurin Way**

10m HVS 5b (29.6.2014)

Climb the scoop between the short arête and the deep crack to the right boldly using small holds. Follow discontinuous cracks leading up to and through a break in the overhang to finish direct.

FA Peter Blackburn, Paul Tucker

**11 Bevan's Crack** 9m

HS 4b (20.3.2015)

Climb a short deep crack and then continue up the crackline to the top.

FA Martin Crocker (o-s solo)

**12 Free at the Point of Use** 9m HVS 5a (29.6.2014)

Ascend the blunt arête to the right of the wide crack and continue steeply but on positive holds in a direct line to the top.

FA: P Blackburn, P Tucker

**13 Mushroom Wall** 7m HS 4a (29.6.2014)

Take the very steep cracks in a scoop near the right edge of the wall. Look out for the fossilized 'mushroom' and tread carefully.

FA Peter Blackburn, Paul Tucker

**14 Eclipse! What Eclipse!?** 7m Severe (20.3.2015)

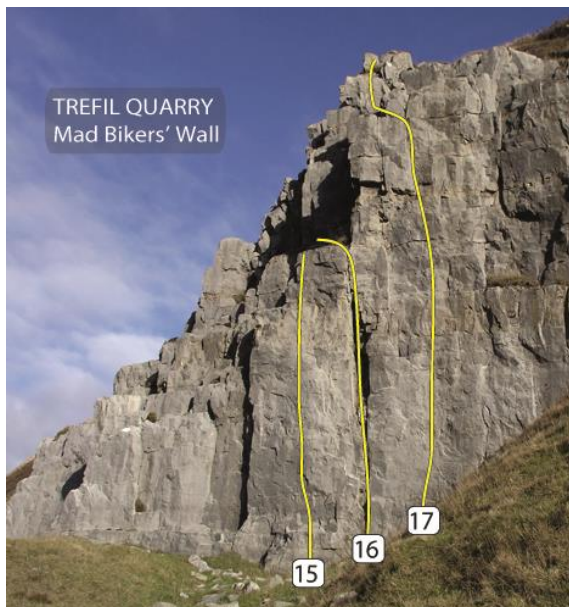
Climb the rib opposite the Mallos de Trefilos high right in the muddy gully. Pleasant, but the blocks sitting on the ledges near the top could do with trundling (ideally without you attached).

FA Martin Crocker (o-s solo)



## Mad Bikers' Wall

In the centre of the quarried scarp is a clean grey wall split by a narrow chimney.



### 15 **Trouble with Trefils** 6m E1 6a (V3) (6.12.2014)

The sheer wall left of the crack; an intricate crux.

FA Martin Crocker (solo)

### 16 **Chimney Crack** 7m HVS 4c (6.12.2014)

Climb the crack, taking care with some of the holds; then make a strenuous hand-traverse mantelling leftwards to escape.

FA Martin Crocker (solo)

### 17 **Thirty Years Comeback** 10m E4 5c (6.12.2014)

Excellent, but a solo. Climb straight up the smooth slabby wall right of the crack and reach up left for a jug in a vertical crack. A crucial long move gains another jug; swing left to exit.

FA Martin Crocker (solo)

## Southern Bay

There is a lot more rock here, but few lines. On the left is a small boulder-strewn cwm with a tall leaning wall on the right. There is a small sunny face with twin parallel cracks, left of the cwm. Escape from the three routes here is by scrambling up easy ledges (nut and rock-spike belays).

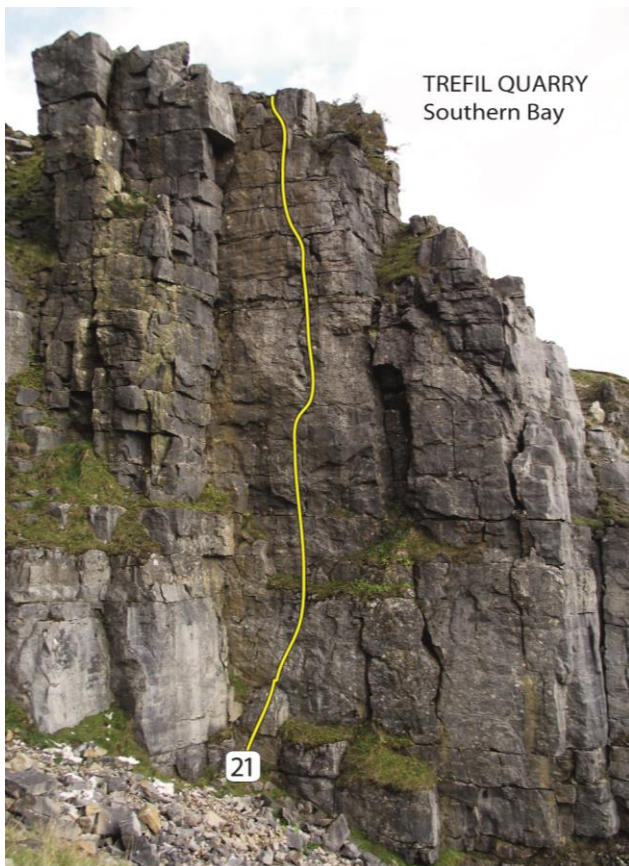
18 **Newport Rising** V0 (5a) Climb the left arête, using the left-hand crack, to a hair-raising mantel.

19 **Votes for All** 6m E1 5c (9.10.2015) Climb the right-hand crack and exit with a testing mantel: bomber wire protection. FA Martin Crocker (roped solo)

20 **Freedom Fighter** 9m E3 6a (9.10.2015) Morpho, hence the hold-by-hold description. Take the first 2 metres of *Votes for All*, place a wire above; then – keeping low – stretch right to a sidehold around the arête on the right. Make a tough move for a triangular hand-ledge (cams) and finish up the arête using holds either side. FA Martin Crocker (roped solo)



## TREFIL QUARRY Southern Bay



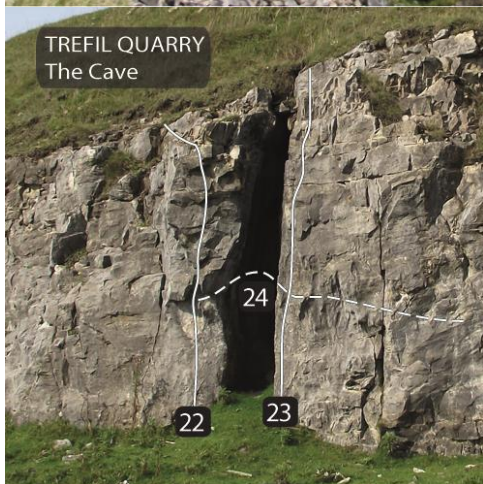
21\*\***Chartists' Wall** 20m E3 6a  
(9.10.2015)

A SE Wales quarry classic (when clean). The crack in the leaning W-facing wall overlying the boulder-strewn cwm; plentifully protected once above the horrid initial wall. Enter the big corner and then climb carefully diagonally right onto a grass ledge at 6 metres. Follow the crack (thread, peg), using holds on the left at first and then holds on the right, to gain a break above the steep section. Continue more easily up the fluted wall to a hawthorn tree and the top just above.

FA Martin Crocker (roped solo)



## TREFIL QUARRY The Cave



### The Cave

On the W side of the quarry (at the central entrance) is an irrelevant SE-facing wall split by a cave.

22 V1 (5c) Using a big undercut take the left arête of the cave, swinging left to avoid shocking crockery at the top.

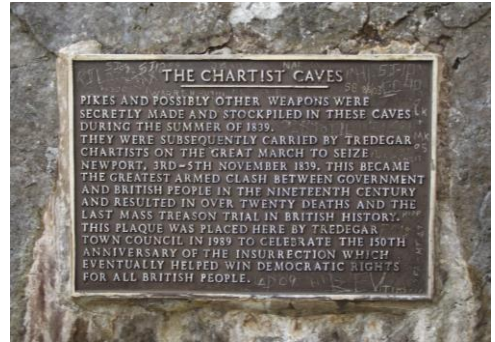
23 V0+ (5b) The smooth right arête of the cave – cool.

24 V1 (5b) Traverse the wall from the undercut of the 5c.



## BLAEN CWMCLAISFER OS 1274 1615

The following morsels can feature in the itinerary of a healthy circular walk from Trefil also including Chartist's Cave. Find the cave (no mean feat); then walk a little to the E in order to pick up a path that heads due N to the W end of Cwm Claisfer and its cute craglets. So far as is known, the problems as described were first climbed in 2016.



There are two 3-metre high nuggets overlooking Cwm Claisfer; if only all SE Wales limestone was of this quality.

**Ethic:** Bouldering

On the left is an undercut nose.

1 **Humbug!** V0- (4c) SS beneath the roof; then jug up the left-hand arête.

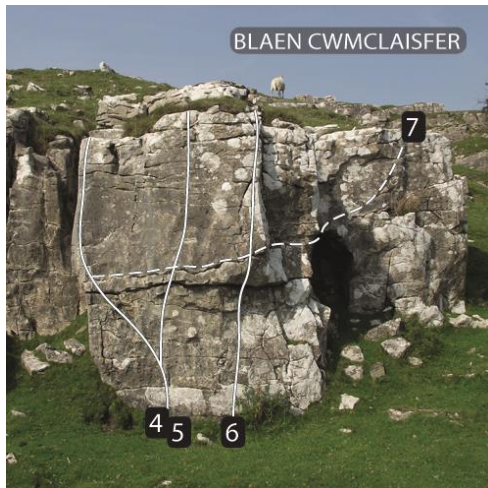
2 **\*BJ Hissy Fit** V0+ (5b) SS under the roof and stretch from an undercut cluster to jugs over the roof.

3 **Lipstick on a (Chauvinist) Pig** V0 (5a) SS under the roof and use a hollow undercut for left to vanquish the right-hand arête.





Fifty metres right is a delightful karst cuboid right of a huge rusting 'cistern'.



**4 Obscurity** V0- (4c) The left-hand arête starting from the centre of the face.

**5 \*Rust in Peace** V2 (6a) SS and climb the front face using a slanting finger-edge for right.

**6 Does What it Says on the Tin** V0- (5a) The right-hand arête without using stuff in the groove on the right.

**7 A Palanquin for Pat** V3 (6a/b) A compressed (if you're tall) low-level traverse: work right from the hand-ledge on the left arête using the horizontal crack.

If you follow the escarpment N you come to a highpoint at OS 1288 1713 overlooking Trosglywyd. The crags here reach 8 metres in height but are disappointingly broken.

#### GARN FACH OS 1163 1605

Though prominent from the private road to Cwar Blaen-dyffryn this limestone crag is a total let-down. Climbing interest is marginal at best and limited to some overhangs on the right: a V0+ hand-traverse across the overhangs (which becomes V1 if you just use the jug-line a little lower) and some contrived 5a/b SSs through the overhangs. Divert for the views only.



## CLO CADNO (*In the middle of beautiful nowhere*) OS 1180 1652

A solid mildly leaning 4-metre high limestone wall in exquisite position facing NNE towards the Black Mountains. To avoid a whole body rash or gut-wrenching disappointment you'd best eschew the stinging nettle season and periods following heavy rainfall when the crag seeps. So far as is known, the problems as described were first climbed in 2016.

### Approach

From Trefil Quarry walk due N for 2 km along the escarpment; then continue NE across the plateau, and you should (or might) find the crag somewhere in the middle of nowhere. There are a few trees to its right (facing out) which could aid navigation.

### Ethic: Bouldering

#### Left-hand wall

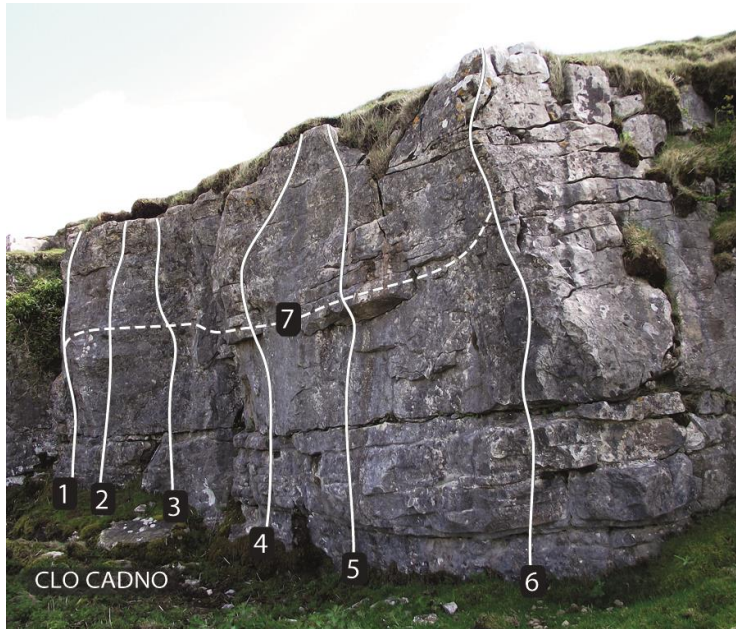
The wall is bisected by an easy-looking groove.

1 **Toff the Knob** V0 (5a) The left-hand arête to jugs.

2 **\*Charlamagne tha God** V2 (6a) A single big move off a good fingerhold for right just right of the arête.

3 **Lamentable Leaders** V1 (5b) The right-hand side of the wall, just left of a groove.

#### Right-hand Wall



4 **\*Will of the People** V3 (6a) The left-hand arête, on its right-hand side, trending right.

5 **What about the Will of the Other People?** V0 (5a) The centre of the wall from the undercut.

6 **\*Aneurin's Ashes** V0 (5a) The fluted right-hand arête.

7 **Them in Their London Bubble** V3 (6a) The left-to-right traverse with feet using the break most of the time, strenuous to gain route 5.

## CWAR BLAEN-DYFFRYN OS 0971 1492

This is a N- and W-facing unquarried crag overlooking the deep valley and nature reserve of Dyffryn Crawnon, just N of and outside the redundant Cwar Blaen-dyffryn quarry.

There is evidence of climbers having visited (but probably just group abseiling) as far back as the 80s. The existing bolts (glue-ins) have been in place since 2012 when the described climbs were set. As to whether any attempts at formally negotiating access have been made is unknown.

### Environment

The cliff is part of the Cwar yr Ystrad A Cwar Blaen-dyffryn SSSI in which the respective citation lists recreational activities as an 'operation' requiring consent from the conservation agency Natural Resources Wales. The primary SSSI interest is the succession of Lower Carboniferous rocks exposed in the cliffs. An endemic hawkweed is also noted as being significant. A Peregrine nests hereabouts, most commonly in the quarry: please avoid this cliff during the nesting season if the Peregrine is nesting on or adjacent to it.

Apart from the first two minor climbs only the routes on the W-facing wall are described: this is because the wall is almost entirely clear of plant-life and loose rock and the potential impact on the SSSI interest would therefore appear minimal. The N-facing wall is contrastingly quite vegetated and to climb here would be likely to prove sensitive and counterproductive.

**Ethic:** Trad, sport, soloing.

At the opposite end of the W-facing wall, facing NE, is an isolated triangular wall high up but fortunately with a good landing (OS 09775 14948).

### 1 **No Sugar Tonight in my Coffee** 6m VS 4a (6.8.2016)

The right-hand arête; unprotected.

FA Martin Crocker (o-s solo)

### 2 **\*No Sugar Tonight in my Tea** 6m E2 6a (V3) (6.8.2016)

The centre of the wall via a powerful long reach.

FA Martin Crocker (solo)

The W-facing wall is 10 to 15-metres high, comprising fine waterworn-smooth rock in the centre. It boasts one of the best outlooks of any SE Wales crag. There are multiple bolt belays on the overlying ledges including two pairs of modern-spec abseil stations.

### 3 **\*Carry on up the Dyffryn** 15m E3 6a/b (6.2012)

The undercut crack on the left. Gymnastics through the roof gain a finger-crack and a rest just above. Proceed up the bulging crackline but on good holds, swinging left at the top.

FA Paul Tucker, Hywel Jones

### 4 **\*\*\*Three Steps to Hedfan** 12m F7a+ (4.2012)

Immaculate and super-smooth; quite unlike anything else in SE Wales. Climb up and left to an undercling. Tech improvisation above gains a finger-jug. Continue with a sketchy move and finish sensationally over the capping bulge.

FA Peter Blackburn, Paul Tucker



## CWAR BLAEN-DYFFRYN



### 5 \***Inner Place** F7a+ 13m (4/5.2012)

Climb the wall right of the recess via a fingery sequence. The finish is steeper but on improving holds. (Three spaced bolts.)

FA Paul Tucker, Peter Blackburn

### 6 \***Adventure Alternative** 11m E4 6a (4.2012)

The incipient cracks next right; superb complicated climbing with sufficient but hard-won protection. Climb up left to good handholds. Stretch over a bulge and – using a flake on the right (1.5 cam) – reach up left for flat holds. Finish up a small groove.

FA Peter Blackburn, Paul Tucker

### 7 \***Clec Hebog** 10m HVS 5a (4/5.2012)

The deep crack on the right past a tree at 4 metres.

FA Peter Blackburn, Paul Tucker

### 8 **Up the Dyff** 10m E1 5a (4/5.2012)

Three metres to the right of *Clec Hebog* climb the wall and broad scoop via a wandering line on some suspect rock. The finish is steeper but more solid.

FA Paul Tucker, Peter Blackburn

### 9 **Dolen Groove** 14m S 4a (4/5.2012)

Climb the long curving corner in the right-hand side of the face. The main groove is solid and amenable after a fragile start.

FA Peter Blackburn, Paul Tucker

## CWAR YR HENDRE

The next routes are all within the central principal quarry which is not part of the SSSI (whether this encouraging characteristic will have a bearing on the sustainability of access here is hard to say). Certainly the quarry has been frequently accessed by the public – on foot, on bikes, on motorbikes, and in cars, and sometimes with guns. So far as is known, the routes and problems as described were first climbed in 2015 and 2016.

There is a vast acreage of unclimbed rock in the quarry much of it highly unstable. (Arguably some of it might best be climbed using bolts – but please leave existing trad routes alone.) However a couple of walls are not so afflicted and offer potential for some (relatively) solid climbing.

**Ethic:** Trad, bouldering, soloing.

Three hundred metres up the road and next to a flat area and a junction with a track is a right-angle arête (OS 0961 1477); there are two highballs above flat landings here (though not too high).



1 **Gamla Stan Man** V4 (6a/b) Left of the arête climb a slight blunt rib on crimps to a jug 4 metres up and left. Finish without a problem. (Finger-jug just right of crack on the left is off- line.)

2 **Heja Sverige** V2 (6a) Layback the arête; tricky to start.





From the quarry road a track diverges left into a long quarried bay that forms a low canyon. A tall rectangular face bisected by an off-width crack is clearly visible from the road 50 metres in on the left. It takes some sunshine from mid-afternoon outside the winter period.

### 3 \***Unthinkable** 15m E2 5b (11.9.2016)

An off-width which is unlike most things south of *Elder Crack*; fortunately paraphernalia other than large cams go in. Climb the starter crack into a niche. Follow the sustained crack past the odd useful break to a blocky exit slightly left that requires a gentle touch. Thread belay in blocks immediately. FA Martin Crocker (unseconded)

### 4 \***Great British Jerk Off** 12m E4 6a (11.9.2016)

A technical and challenging face route right of the crack. Start from a grass terrace on the right (walk in from the right). Climb a short easy slab and clip a high peg (back-up wire next to it essential). Step back down left to a point 3 metres right of the crack. Make a hard insecure move over a bulge, and take a very shallow groove to a break – good gear. Climb the wall on layaways (peg) to a final break, peg. A quick haul and you're on top. FA Martin Crocker, John Harwood



### 5 \*\***Inflatable Moon** 12m E5 6a (11.9.2016)

The fluted right-hand arête features hard moves away from (good) gear. Clip the first peg of *Great British Jerk Off* but step up right before swinging left to a hand-ledge on the arête (peg, cams). Make long thin moves up the arête to jugs (sling, peg). A contorted move gains a fab fluting at the top. FA Martin Crocker (unseconded)

Overleaf is a pic of a nearby pinnacle which holds at least one good line. Still unclimbed in 2019, it may well not be by the end of 2020!





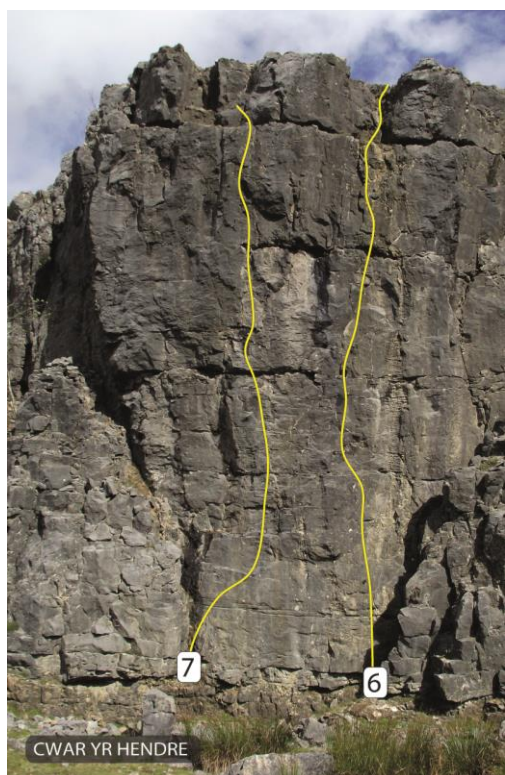
Several hundred metres deeper into the quarry past various arêtes to the right (some potential subject to judicious consideration and full body armour) is a leaning solid 20-metre high prow. This provides a superb hard route. There are multiple stakes on the ridge above (ownership unknown).

#### 6 **Handbags at Dawn** 20m E4 5c (9.10.2016)

A challenging, serious line. Climb the calcited wall just left of a shattered gully to a hand-ledge at 6 metres (peg on the right – first gear). Bear up left to the foot of a groove (vital small cam and wire cluster). Make committing moves up the groove to a pocketed break (peg, and cams). Follow the steep flake crack above (*in-situ* thread) and finish via a short groove onto the scree bank. FA Martin Crocker, John Harwood

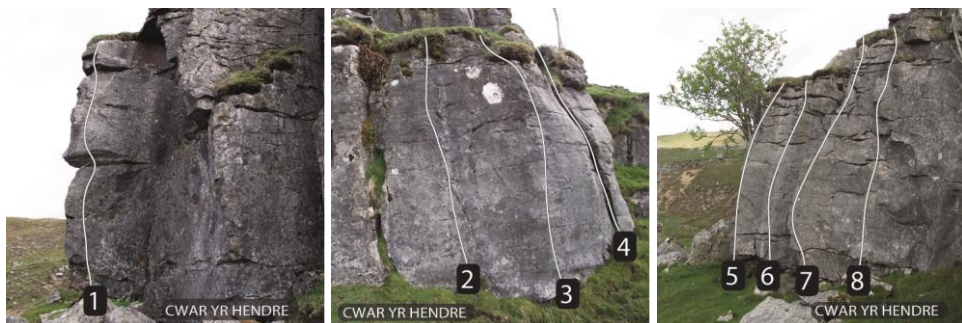
#### 7 **\*\*Secrets of Exotic Matter** 20m E6 6b (9.10.2016)

A fantastic lead of escalating difficulty with no real rest (yet low in the grade). It climbs the central line up the prow. From a pointed block on the left, mantel right onto ledges on the wall and ease up to a break (peg, back-up wire). Climb straight up flowstone to a hand-ledge and good break (cams). Take the layaway above to a jug (peg on right and poor peg above), and reach a pocketed break a little higher (good wire placement). Now the route gets steep! Make hard sequency moves up the groove above (two pegs) to a ledge. Pull out on a rope pre-fixed to the stakes. FA Martin Crocker (unseconded)



The ridge on the right hosts a series of small unquarried N-facing outcrops overlooking the main quarry road. Prepare to be underwhelmed.

On the ridge is an arête.



1 **Look Left** V0 (5a) Layback the arête, taking care not to barn door leftwards into oblivion!

A 4-metre high compact slab 10 metres right of the arête hosts the next three problems.

2 **Stone** V2/3 (5c/6a) Take the slight black scoop in the left side of the slab, and mantel the grass.

3 **Extend or Bend** V2 (5c) The rounded rib left of the fluted crack begs a long reach.

4 **K.313** 4b The fluted crack.

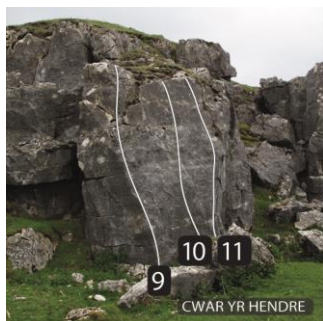
Above is a little two-faced buttress.

5 4b The left-hand arête of the left-hand face.

6 4a The slab just right.

7 4a The fluted left arête of the right-hand face.

8 VD Deep karst holds up the centre of the right-hand face.



Two hundred metres right, in the direction of the dystopian concrete 'house' on the hill, is a compact slabby face in a boulder recess.

9 4a The left-hand arête.

10 4b The slab to the right.

11 V0- (4c) The rib to the right.



## BRYNIAU GLEISION: DARREN FACH OS 0901 1626

Bryniau Gleision supplies some unusual bouldering at altitude (520m) with magnificent 360-degree views of Pen-y-Fan and The Black Mountains. The N-facing escarpment is of no real interest but that which faces E over Dyffryn Crawnon holds a 4-metre high crag of rippled limestone. It is definitely worth throwing your rock shoes in your sack when out on a circular walk from Trefil or Pontsticill. So far as is known, the problems as described were first climbed in 2015.

**Ethic:** Bouldering



**1 Sheep Start** V3 (6a) SS the sheer 3-metre high wall on the left. Or start from sheep.

**2 Going the Distance** V0 (5a) The tower past a small square-cut roof.

**3 Love Bombs** V3 (6a) The arête on smidgens – harder than it looks and sustained (no long layaway on the right).

**4 Suicide Squad** V0+ (5b) The headwall above blocks – high and scary.

**5 Rib with a View** VD The little arête towards the right.

