

Update of *Cheddar Gorge Climbs 2021: A Cheddar Hard Trad' Resurgence?*

News has reached me of the recent restoration of some of Cheddar Gorge's great trad' routes which had been disappearing once again under the irrepressible tide of ivy and invasive scrub.

Bristol-based locals Matt Ward, Guy Percival, and Ollie Benzie have been hard at it in 2022, relishing the oft-hidden qualities of the routes. Superlatives like: 'brilliant', and 'on fire and massively enthusiastic about the routes', confirms a much wider appeal which is best exploited while the routes are clean. (But that assumes you haven't thrown away your trad' gear including those essential multiple Rock1s!)

The following is a summary of the latest cycle of grafters' efforts, which updates the 2020/21 status represented in *Cheddar Gorge Climbs 2021*.



Far Bay

Vanity and *Eaten Alive* have been significantly spruced up, by all accounts.

Pigs' Hole

The following have been recleaned and reclimbed: *Newton's Wall...*, *Chic*, *Slowundress*, *Teenage Riot* and neighbouring routes.

Pepys Rock

Igor and *My Girl's got Muscles* have been recleaned – and the E3's to the left as a consequence.

Reservoir Walls

Picador, the tall technical groove just over the wall of the covered reservoir, has been recleaned and the fixed gear sorted out. (This has enabled peeling the ivy back from the top of neighbouring *Heavy Metal Eurotrash*).

Helen Ward on *Newton's Wall...* Pic: Matt Ward

Madrugada Wall

All the permitted routes are now clean again, including *Cold War* and *Fountain of Arethusa* thanks to 'a labour of love' of Matt's. The latter climb, one of the most enigmatic routes in the gorge, has had its first pitch repeated by Matt and Ollie, though Ollie's school run meant the second pitch is unfinished business.

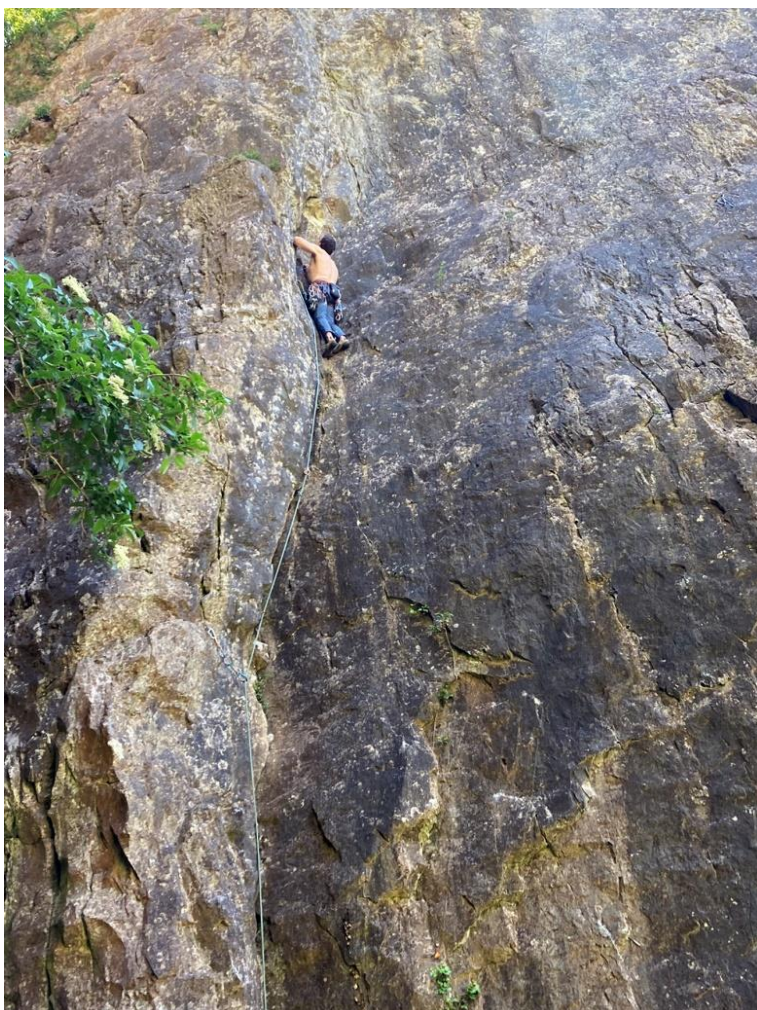
Kephalonia, one time much lauded if only by me, has enjoyed many more ascents, with all protagonists enthusing about its calibre.



That was then..... the first ascent of *Kephalonia* in 1984. Pic: Crocker coll. (Dave Ardron)



This is now: Helen Ward on *Kephalonia* in 2022. Pic: Matt Ward



Guy Percival on *Nice Crack* Pic: Matt Ward

The Zawn

At long last others have immersed themselves in the exotic charms of this remarkable cliff, recleaning the routes as necessary.

On the East Wall, *Chukostkiy* and *Alaska* have seen much attention, the former reckoned to be much harder (though much safer) than the latter. There's also a new route called *Zawn of the Dead*, an E1 up the crack right of *Alaska*.

On the West Wall there have been many ascents of *Shinanikin*, *Kumquat*, *Clementine*, *Shadowlands*, and *Nice Crack*, the consensus being that *Nice Crack* is E3.

There is even some interest brewing in repeating *Madonna* in its 2010 bolt-free state, which – given the drive of the guys involved – should have occurred by the time this is published!

High Rock

Ideas are emerging to clean up the lower left wing of High Rock i.e. climbs like *Play the White Man* and *Desert Rat*, which proved popular in the wake of the Cheddar Gorge Climbing Project. Hopefully they will become so once again.

Bolting Moratorium and the Climbing Agreement

Though the Cheddar Gorge bolting moratorium was time-limited, the landowner of the south side of the Gorge states that the position regarding bolting remains as defined in the guidebook and the climbing agreement. There has been no decision by Longleat that permits new bolts to be placed on the south side of the Gorge. Any proposals to establish new routes or carry out substantive restoration work must be made to the Cheddar Gorge & Caves office, as per the climbing agreement i.e. consent is required for activities like ivy and scrub clearance, loose rock removal, and making approaches including abseils to and from the climbs outside the agreed defined ways.