

Welsh Grit Selected Area Guides

Carreg yr Ogof

An Interim Guide to Climbing and Bouldering

By Dave Williams

"A nice, easily accessible, little Rhinog Grit outcrop in a lovely west-facing setting near the eastern shore of Llyn Trawsfynydd."



Dave Williams on *And Goats do Roam* VS 4c, Carreg yr Ogof

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The Rhinogydd

The **Rhinogydd** are a range of mountains located in Central Snowdonia, south of the Afon Dwyryd, east of Harlech, west of the A470 and north of the Afon Mawddach. *Rhinogydd* is the Welsh plural form of *Rhinog*, which means 'threshold'. It is thought that the use of Rhinogydd derives from the names of two of the higher peaks in the range, namely **Rhinog Fawr** and **Rhinog Fach**.

The Rhinogydd are notably rocky towards the central and northern end of the range, especially around Rhinog Fawr, Rhinog Fach and Moel Ysgyfarnogod. This area is littered with boulders, outcrops and large cliffs, all composed of perfect gritstone. The southern end of the range around Y Llethr and Diffwys has a softer, more rounded character, but this does not mean that there is an absence of climbable rock.

Steep Stone's Rhinogydd series of Interim Climbing and Bouldering Guides

For the rock climber, the Rhinogydd is arguably one of Wales' greatest yet least-known treasures.

Work is ongoing on **Steep Stone's** new **Welsh Grit** guidebook, which will detail the very best of over 1800 single and multi-pitch climbs and boulder problems. The previous Climbers' Club *Meirionnydd* 2002 guidebook unfortunately did the area few favours. Somewhat lacking in inspiration, its overly complex and consequently confusing description of the area and its climbing effectively did little to motivate any real, lasting interest. As a result, a whole generation of climbers may now be unaware, or at least unsure, of the Rhinogydd's vast climbing potential.

Steep Stone's *Welsh Grit* aims to right this wrong. While work on the new guide steadily progresses, Steep Stone will also produce a short series of definitive interim guidebooks with the aim of encouraging climbers to take a serious look at what the Rhinogydd has to offer. Building on the success of **Steep Stone's** 2018 **Central Wales - Elenydd** guidebook, these well-researched, free-to-download PDF interim guides will provide easy to follow access notes, together with accurate route descriptions and photo-topos.

The Welsh Grit Selected Area Interim Guide Series

Cefn Cam

Cwm Mynach

Craig y Fotty

Craig y Ffridd

Cwm Nantcol Lower Craggs

Carreg yr Ogof

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A note on the use of Approach Grades AG

The Rhinogydd are different and here you'll rarely find the close-cropped grass of the rest of Snowdonia. This is predominantly a rough, scruffy terrain with boulders and heather. As a result, a Rhinogydd mile is about as long as a Scottish one. Covering ground can sometimes take ages due to the Rhinogydd's "Three Amigos" of heather, bilberry bushes and boulders - with an added soupçon of bracken when in season. Rhinogydd devotees will know exactly what to expect, but the first time or occasional visitor may be caught unawares.

As a guide, the approaches to crags have been very subjectively 'graded' from 0-3 according to the ease of walking, or indeed, the lack thereof....

AG0 'A walk in the park'

AG1 Relatively easy going, reasonable paths

AG2 Hard going on mostly pathless terrain

AG3 Extremely difficult, pathless terrain

Carreg yr Ogof

Rock of the Cave

OS Ref 704 356

Overview:

A delightful, friendly and very accessible little Rhinog Grit outcrop in a lovely west-facing setting near the eastern shore of Llyn Trawsfynydd. Excellent rock and a good all-year-round venue for both bouldering and trad climbing, but it can be uncomfortably exposed in windy conditions

Altitude: 240 metres

Approach: AG0: Straightforward walking on an easy-to-follow and fairly level path. Wellingtons may prove advantageous after very prolonged wet weather

Approach time: 10-15 minutes

Aspect: Mainly west and south west facing

Drying: Very quick drying, with generally little or no seepage

Winter sun: Yes – late morning onwards

Summer sun: Yes – mid morning onwards

Access Land: Yes

Grade Range: VD – E2; f4A – f6C

Carreg yr Ogof is an easily accessible, clean little Rhinog Grit outcrop in a lovely setting near the eastern shore of Llyn Trawsfynydd, some 20 minutes' drive to the south of Tremadog. In addition to trad climbing, the crag is a very popular bouldering venue. Very large cams (eg. Camalots 4 & 5) may prove useful on certain routes. Be wary of adders during summer months. Both the climbs and the boulder problems are described from left to right.

Approach: The crag is on access land just to the west of Trawsfynydd village, which is easily accessed from the A470. Either park by the church (very limited parking) or use the main village car park. From the church follow the sign posted footpath behind the houses/gardens. Go through a metal gate and cross the field heading towards a wooden stile. Cross this and turn left to where the footpath crosses over a drystone wall; then follow a vague path across boggy farmland in the direction of the lake until the main crag comes into view on the right. The bouldering area is on a number of discrete linear outcrops to the left. (Approximately 10 minutes from the church to Carreg yr Ogof main crag.)



1. First Fright 15 metres VD

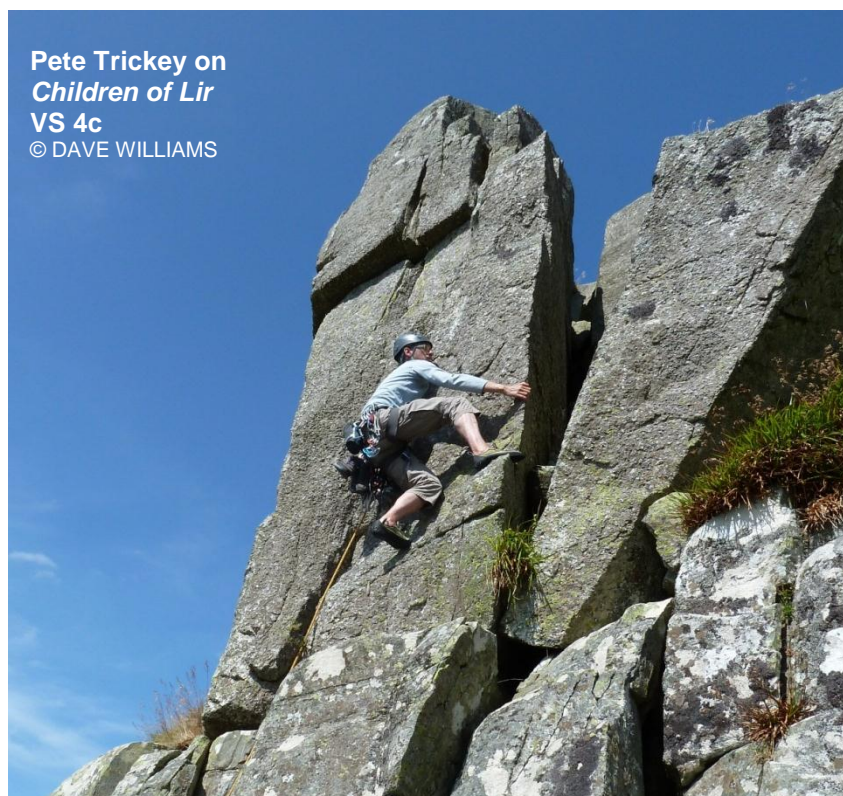
Start on the north face, 6 metres left of the **Tower of Lir**, the crag's highest point. Climb an obvious layback flake above a grass recess and then a short finger-crack to the top.

FA T Taylor, A Taylor 20.8.2001

2. Children of Lir 15 metres VS 4c ★

A delightful route, high in the grade and on superb rock, which climbs the obvious weakness on the front face of the tower. Either a left or right-hand crack leads to a short groove. Climb this (crux) before moving up and right to finish. Very large cams useful, but not essential.

FA T Taylor solo 28.8.2001



3. Alive Enough to Spawn 15 metres D

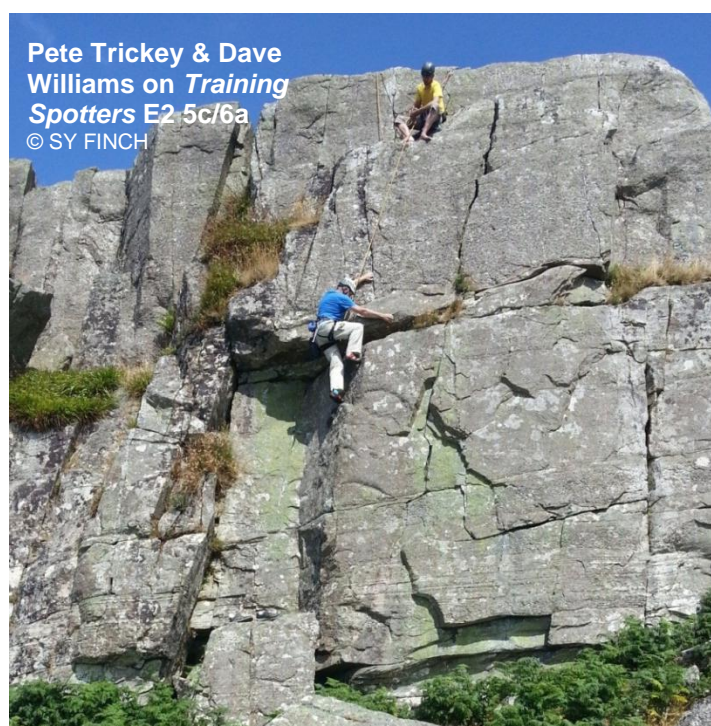
A vague crack in a stepped slab leads to the wedged block. Climb the crack in the left-hand side of the back wall to the top.

FA T Taylor, A Taylor, C Taylor 28.8.2001

4. Toxic Texan 15 metres VD

Climb a rib to a grassy terrace, which accommodates a huge wedged block on the left. Take the corner on the right to finish.

FA T Taylor, A Taylor, C Taylor 28.8.2001

**5. Training Spotters** 15 metres E2 5c/6a ★

Climb the smooth, open corner with difficulty and poor protection to a roof. Pull rightwards and finish up the steep finger crack in the upper wall.

FA T Taylor solo 28.8.2001

6. First Flight 15 metres HVS 5a ★★

A crack in the top face is reached directly via the wall below, which contains a short, difficult, vertical crack above a hard start. A sustained, well-protected climb that is solid at the grade.

FA T Taylor, A Taylor 20.8.2001

7. The Wrath of Cian 15 metres E1 5b

An exciting, 'blinkers-on' eliminate. Start 2 metres to the right of *First Flight*. After a hard start, good edges lead steeply to the blunt flake. Pass the break and, with difficulty, take the right-hand edge of the wall above. High in the grade, (possibly E2), with some bold climbing and less-than-reassuring protection.

FA T Taylor solo 20.8.2001

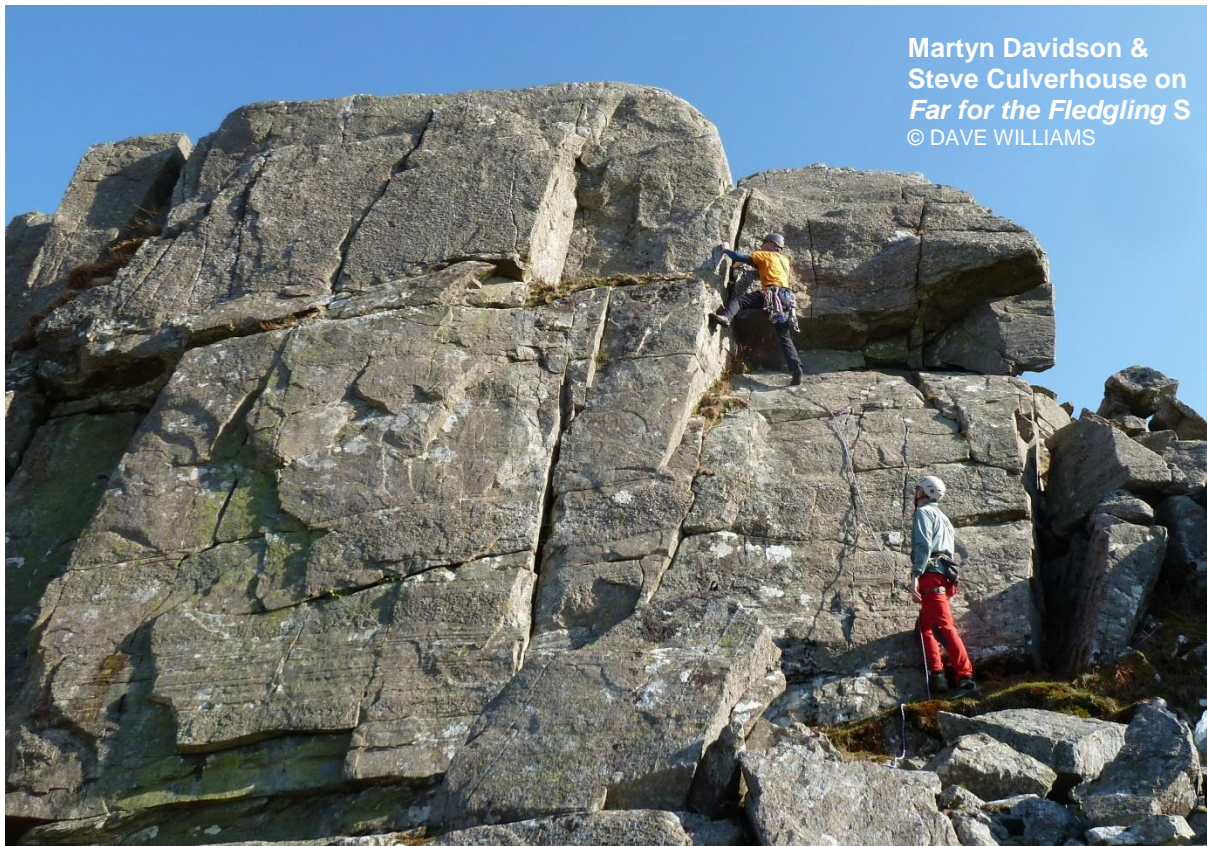
8. And Goats do Roam 15 metres VS 4c ★

The wide crack forming the left edge of the slab right of *The Wrath of Cian*, with a couple of tricky moves, to the grassy ledge before finishing up the corner above.

FA M Davies, L Steen 7.9.2006

9. Far for the Fledgling 15 metres S 4a ★

A worthwhile climb of contrasts, which takes the slab and steeper crack on the right. Climb the delicate left side of the slab to the deep overlap, step left and finish up the obvious crack. FA T Taylor, A Taylor 20.8.2001



Martyn Davidson &
Steve Culverhouse on
Far for the Fledgling S
© DAVE WILLIAMS

10. One Move Wonder 15 metres VS 5b

An aptly-named eliminate. Climb up the slab to the right of *Far for the Fledgling*. Pull blindly through the overlap just left of the obvious crack to an easy finish. Alternatively, climb the steep crack itself; the **Scorchio Variation**. Expect a bit of a fight (VS 6a). FA Unknown, circa 2005. Scorchio Variation: FA S Finch 17.7.2013

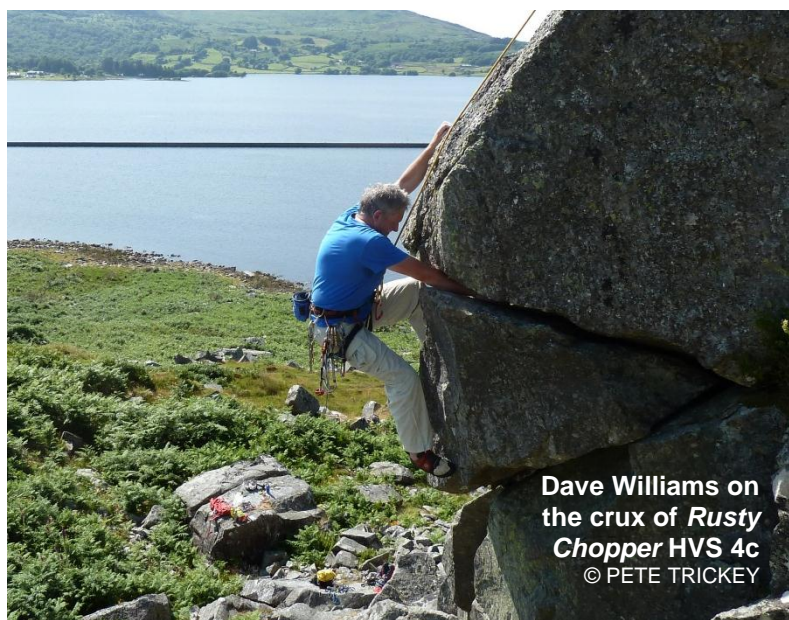


Sy Finch & Dave Williams
on *One Move Wonder*
VS 5b
© PETE TRICKEY

11. Rusty Chopper 15 metres HVS 4c

Start as for *One Move Wonder* and climb the right side of the slab to the large jammed block under the overhang and a very big cam placement (*Camalot 5*, or similar). Swing around the block and make steep, awkward moves up the right hand side of the hanging arête (crux) to easier ground. Interesting climbing that requires steadiness, not only on the crux but also on the easier finish above.

FA S Finch, D Williams, P Trickey, 17.7.2013

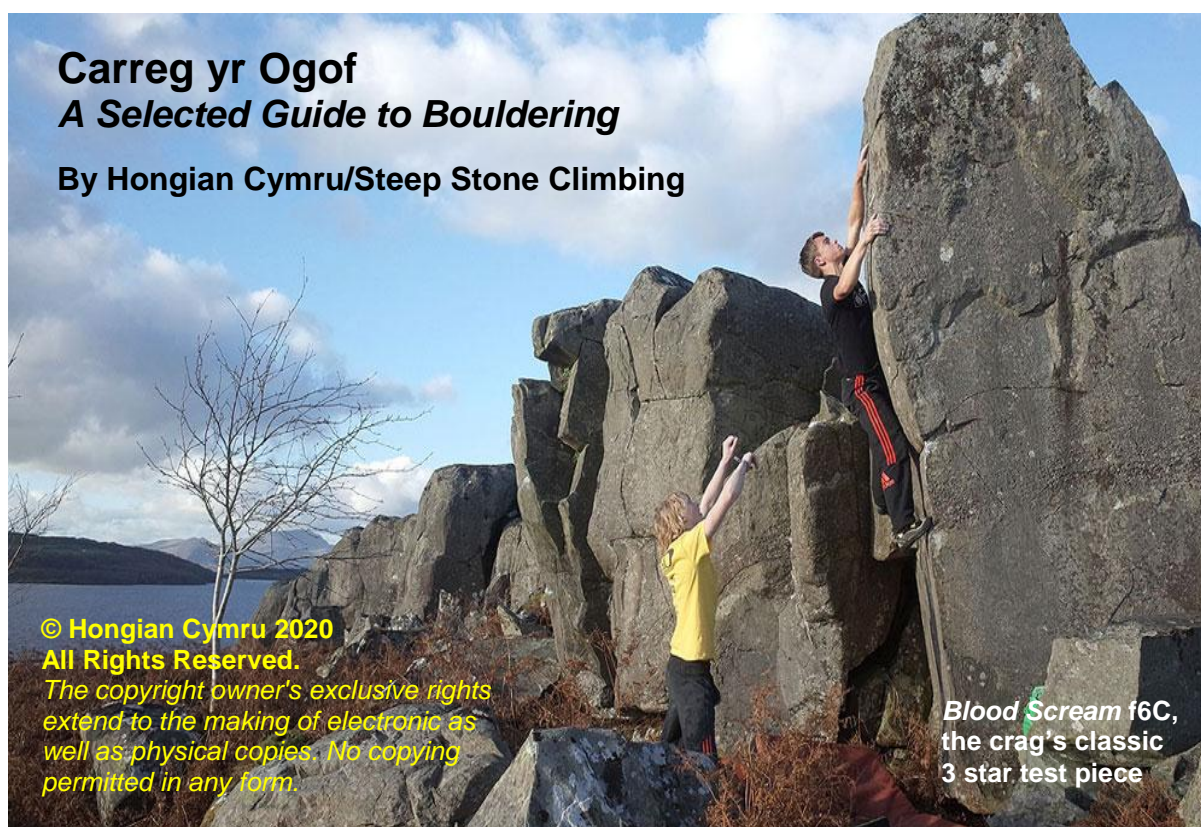


NOTES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author is indebted to the following Rhinogydd devotees for their valued company on the crags, for patiently posing for the camera, supplying excellent photographs as well as providing helpful advice and valuable feedback:

Steve Culverhouse; Martyn Davidson; Morven Davidson; Sy Finch; Doug Kerr; Terry Taylor and Pete Trickey.



Overview: A delightful, sunny venue with a superb circuit of problems. **Carreg yr Ogof** consists of a series of small escarpments lined up on the hillside above the eastern shore of Llyn Trawsfynydd. The rock is Rhinog gritstone – a fine grained version of its Pennine cousin. It is mostly of excellent quality but the occasional hollow/snappy patina will be encountered. The landings are quite rocky on the upper tier, but friendlier on the Undercut Wall area down by the lakeside.

This is a selected guide. For definitive coverage, see **North Wales Bouldering (2nd edition)** by Simon Panton; published by Ground Up, 2017

Conditions: The crag is southwest facing and as such catches any sunshine that is going. It is also fairly exposed so catches the wind too. The rock is very quick drying, although some of the lichen covered patches can remain slippery after rain – this tends to be more of an issue on the rocky landings than the problems themselves, which are mostly very clean. The sunny aspect is a blessing in winter, but can make it too hot during the summer months.

Approach: From Trawsfynydd church, follow the public footpath as described for **Carreg yr Ogof** main crag on page 3. Once on the open hillside above the lake, to reach the main bouldering area, bear leftwards for 150 metres or so, keeping fairly close to the boundary wall of the fields at the back of the village to hopefully pop out at the southern end of an attractive escarpment marked by the distinctive pillar of *Blood Scream*. Otherwise approach as for the main crag and then turn left to reach the left-hand end of the bouldering area. On first acquaintance the different escarpments can seem confusing, but the layout soon becomes obvious once you've made a few exploratory forays – if in doubt check out the next escarpment line.

The problems are described left to right, so start by walking to the left end of the escarpment. Here you will find a neat little wall which provides a good place to start a session.



1. f5A ★

The left hand groove feature – tricky moves lead to a handy jug; yard up from this to top out.

2. f6A+ ★

A ‘blinkers-on’ eliminate tackling the pillar of rock between *Problem 1* and *Problem 2*. The small finger jug just down and right of the large ‘handy jug’ on *Problem 1* is in. The feisty sit down start (left hand: side pull, right hand: low jug at base of *Problem 2*) boosts the difficulty significantly (f6B+).

SDS FA S Davis 23.11.2014

3. f4B ★

A fine problem with lots of helpful holds outside of the crack, should you need them.

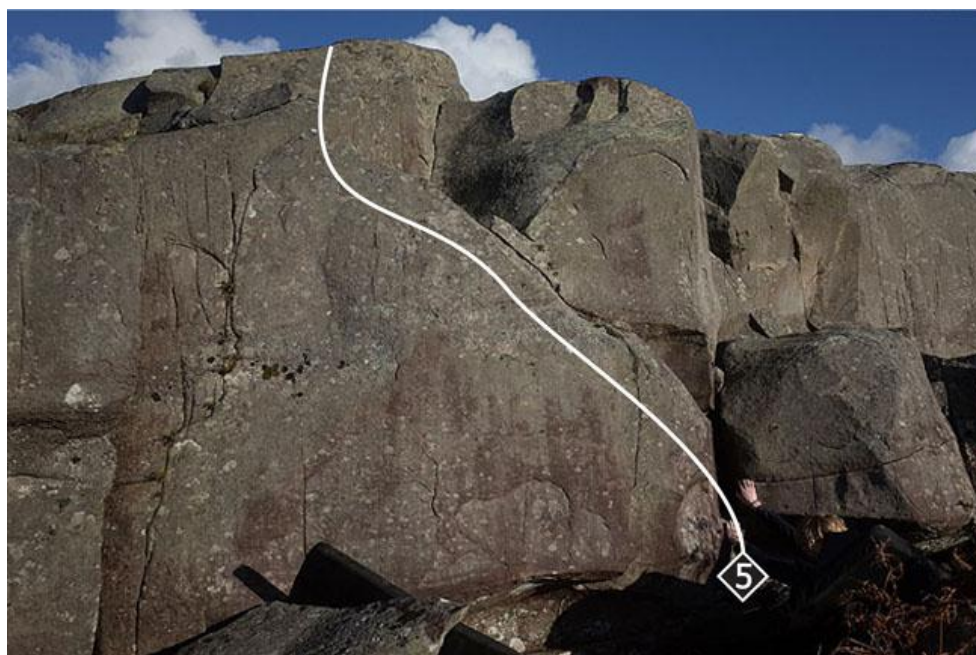
Ten metres to the right is an obvious undercut line.



4. f5C/f6A ★★

From a sit down start follow the crackline up around the bulge to a slopy top out.

Eight metres further right again is a diagonal ramp feature.



5. f6A ★

Start sitting low on the right and move up left to follow the rising ramp line.

Ten metres further right an eye-catching crack can be seen.



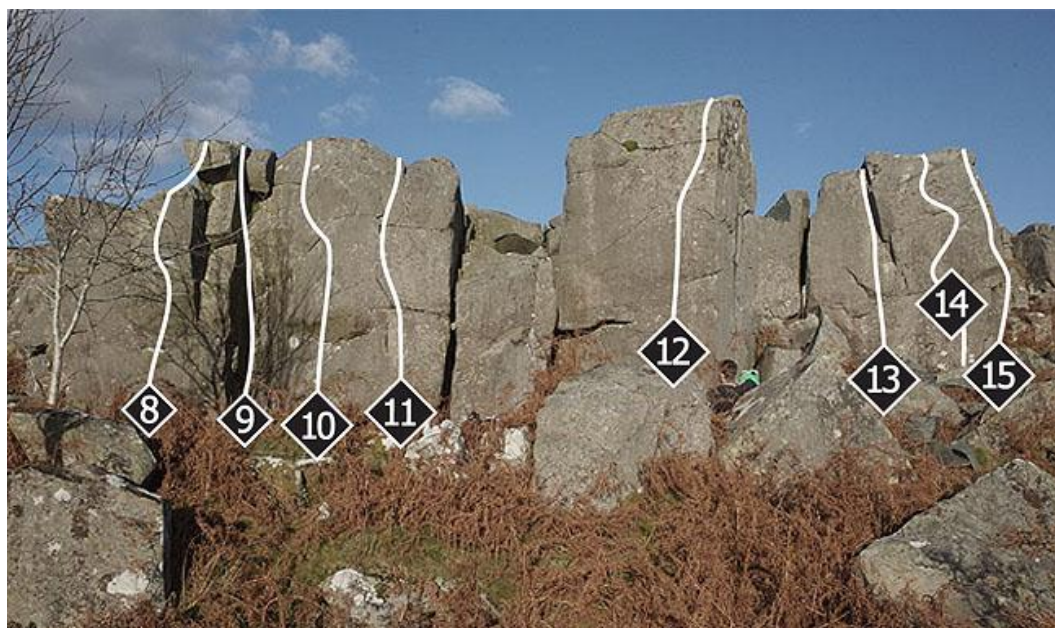
6. f4C ★

A good problem moving up past a text book jam in the crack – shame about the landing.

7. f4B

The curving undercut flake feature marks the line of this problem. Take care with the landing.

Ten metres further right is the final section of the escarpment. This area hosts some of the best problems on the crag.



8. Addicted to the Shindig f6B+ ★★★

The leaning wall and arête at the left end of the section is superb. From a sit down start (feet on the lower block) power up the steepness to the lip then finish up right via the top block. The keyed in wedge on the arête appears to be solid; it is of course possible to climb the line without recourse to the arête at all. This is a touch harder, but if you really want to push the grade up (perhaps to f7A), then try eliminating the foot block on the start. FA D Davis 1990s

9. f4C ★★★

The corner feature provides an absorbing problem.

10. Trawsnewid f6A ★★★

The undulating wall right of *Problem 9* is as good as it looks. It goes from standing at f5C but the sit down start is tougher: start hands matched on undercuts beneath low overlap. Climb up past a mini ramp feature.

11. Isgoed f4C ★★★

The kinked crack line is friendly and accommodating.

12. Blood Scream f6C ★★★★★

The striking arête provides the classic test piece of the crag. Climb it on its left side and save some juice (and bravery) for the slopy belly flop at the top. FA T Taylor 2001

In the bay behind the *Blood Scream* pillar there is another good wall and arête.

13. f4C ★★★

A steady line leading up the slight groove feature and past the left side of the sloping shelf.

14. Ching Aling Aling f6C ★

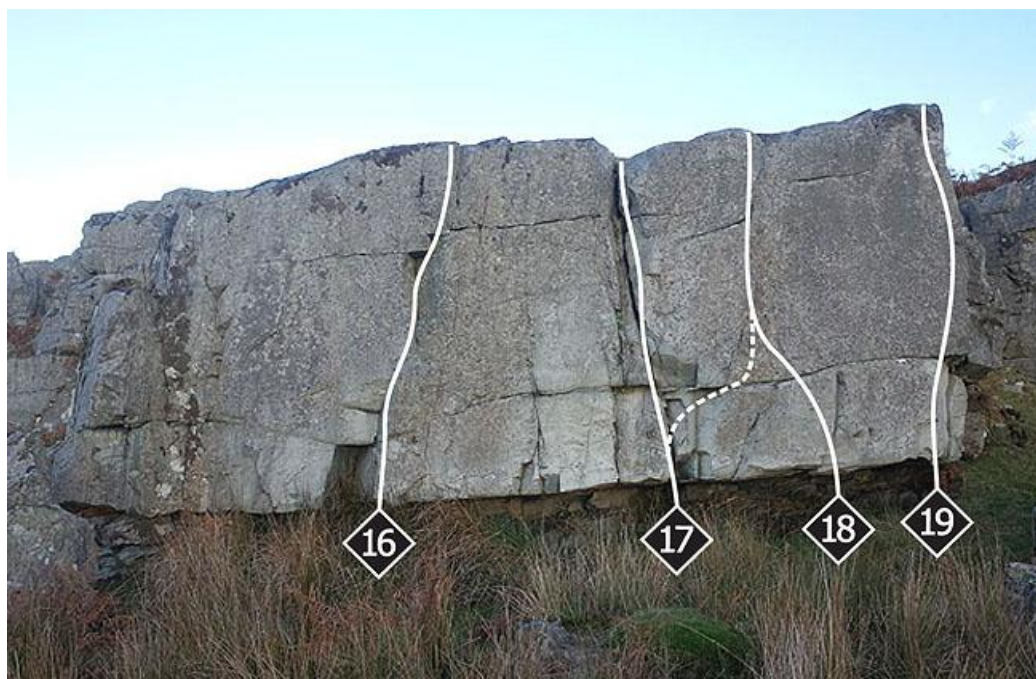
A tricky sit down start eliminate using the sloping edge of the groove on *Problem 13* and any face holds you can find, but not the right arête.

15. The Subtle Knife f5C ★★★

The right arête, taken on its left side, is a fine problem.

Undercut Wall

Down close to the lakeside, approximately 80 metres from the farmhouse is an attractive wall, undercut at its base by a low roof.

**16. f5A** ★★★

The broken groove feature at the left side of the wall is an entertaining romp. It is possible to force a f6A eliminate up the wall between the two cracks.

17. f5A ★★★

The wall is split in the middle by a central crack line – this is reasonable from standing but much more stubborn and awkward if taken from sitting (f6A). Much better is the f6B link into *Dafydd's Groove*.

18. Dafydd's Groove f5C/f6A ★★★

The small, shallow groove feature on the wall right of the central crack is excellent from a standing start. The equally fine f7A sit down start uses a choice of undercuts below the lip or side pulls above (or indeed, a combination of both) – lurch up to the slopy break and then make a hard transition into the groove feature.

FA D Davis 1990s

19. Magnox Arête f6A ★★★

The right arête of the wall proves to be harder than first appearance might suggest. The sit down start increases the difficulty to f6B+.

FA D Davis 1990s

Seven metres to the right is another wall, undercut at its left side.



20. Mr Stumpy f6B+ ★

From a sit down start at left side, make big move up right to obvious edge, match and finish directly. The low foot ledge in the alcove is out of bounds.

FA D Davis 1990s

21. f4A

A short and steady line.

Up to the right is a roof crack with a bad landing. The last problems can be found on the block just to the right.

22. Su' mai Wa f6B+ ★

From a sit down start climb the steep right side of the arête, following the diagonal feature to a mantel finish.

FA D Davis 1990s

23. Joskin f6A

Start on the right hand side of the block with hands on the high ledge – fire up left and finish direct.

Above the Undercut Wall level there are numerous minor problems on an assortment of blocks, the best is *Scaramanga*, f5C, a sit down start line up a steep groove on the right hand side of the biggest and steepest block. There is also a f6B+ sit down start line which goes left and straight through the steepest part of the block.

Carreg yr Ogof itself, at the northern end of the main escarpment, is a higher **section** with a number of trad routes (described on pages 3-7). There are a few highball lines here which may interest brave types. An obvious roof feature (*One Move Wonder* VS 5b and *Rusty Chopper* HVS 5c) and an arête (*The Wrath of Cian* E1 5b) just about qualify as boulder problems, but all require a steady approach on the easier but very high finishes. There are also a few worthwhile problems on a low south-facing wall to the right and also around the back of the **Tower of Lir**, the highest part of the crag. The best line here is *Ermintrude*, f5C, which takes the obvious arête on its left side to a difficult top out.

