

Welsh Grit Selected Area Guides

Cefn Cam

An Interim Guide to Climbing & Bouldering

By Dave Williams

"Imbued with a delightful sense of isolation, this is a wonderful place to get away from it all."



Don Sargeant enjoying *Spare Us the Cwter* on Cefn Cam's delightful Carreg y Gorlan
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Y 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. Poorly edited and somewhat lacking in inspiration, its overly complex and consequently confusing description of the area and its climbing effectively did little to motivate any real interest. As a result, a whole generation of climbers may now be unaware, or at least unsure, of the Rhinogydd's fantastic 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
Craig y Beudy
Carreg yr Ogof
Craig y Merched
Craig y Fotty
Craig y Ffridd
Cwm Nantcol Lower Craggs
Rhinog Fach and Cwm Hywel
Moel Ysgyfarnogod

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Cefn Cam *Crooked Ridge*

Overview:	An authentic ‘wilderness grit’ climbing experience, on superb quality rock, but with few of the usual ‘wilderness’ approach issues. Scope exists for further discoveries, bouldering in particular
<i>Altitude:</i>	400 metres
<i>Approach:</i>	AG1 : Up to 1½ miles walking; fairly level track. Some walking on untracked terrain/sheep paths. Wellingtons may prove advantageous after prolonged wet weather
<i>Approach time:</i>	15-45 minutes, (+ 45 minutes if walking in from Cwm Mynach)
<i>Aspect:</i>	Variouly south, south east and east facing (crag dependent)
<i>Drying:</i>	Very quick drying, with generally little or no seepage, but crag dependent
<i>Winter sun:</i>	Yes – morning and early afternoon, but not really a suitable winter venue
<i>Summer sun:</i>	Yes - until late afternoon
<i>Access Land:</i>	Yes
<i>Grade Range:</i>	D – E4

Cefn Cam is a quiet, little-known, rarely visited yet surprisingly accessible backwater set against an expansive ‘big sky’ panorama of fine, sweeping views which extend from the Aran mountains to Cadair Idris. Imbued with a delightful sense of isolation, this is truly a hidden gem; a wonderful place to get away from it all which is well worth any additional approach time.

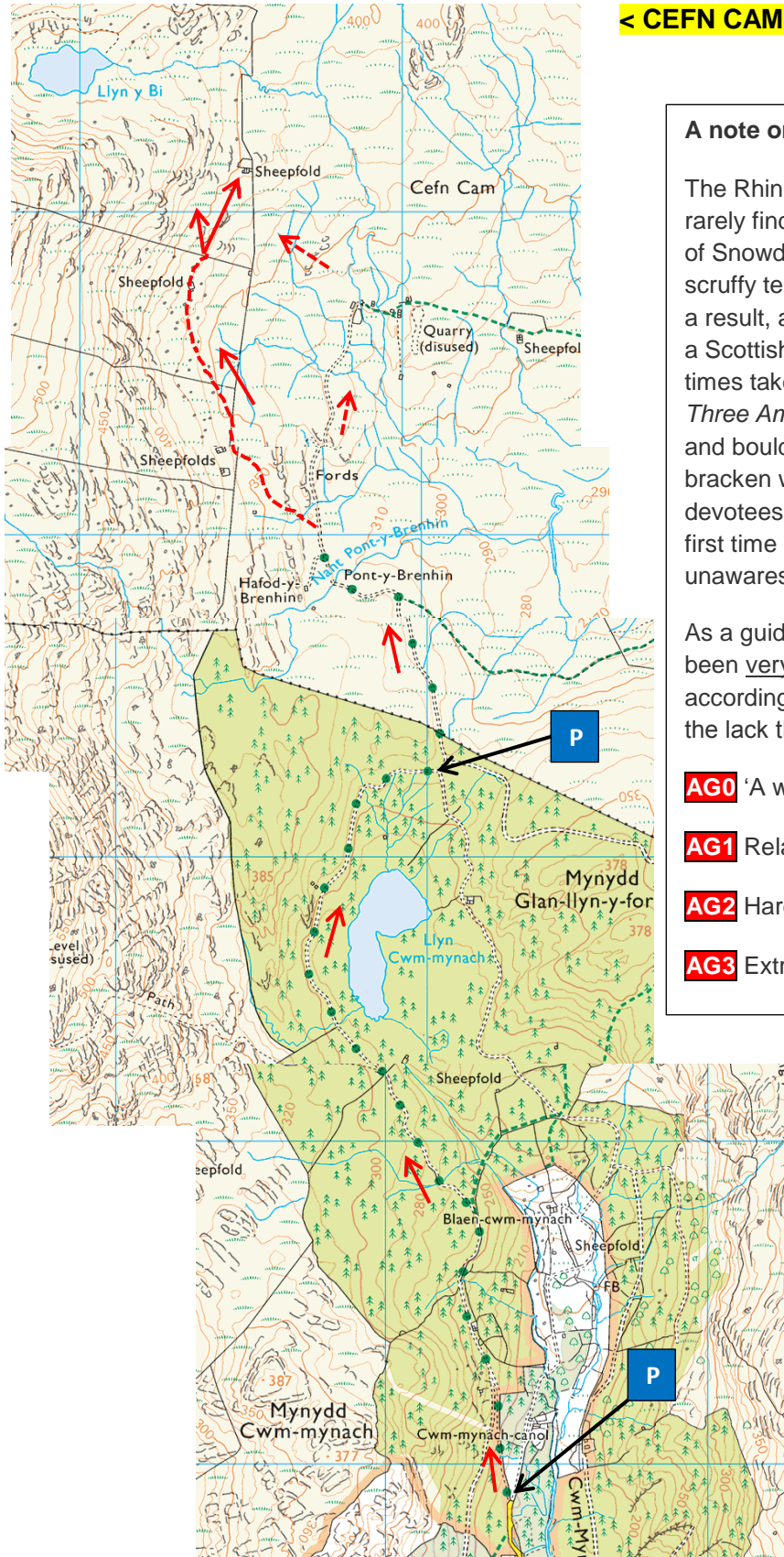
Situated east of Y Llethr and north of Cwm Mynach, this vast and open moorland area is a shallow, former glacial basin. Its western side is dominated by craggy, heather-covered slopes and yet, despite an excess of exposed rock, much is of limited interest as it is too broken, vegetated or lacking in height. However, there are a number of very notable exceptions, all of which give interesting and varied sport on generally clean, immaculate-quality gritstone slabs, walls and boulders. There is something for everyone here and, unusually for the Rhinogydd, Cefn Cam’s many outcrop climbs have a good spread of grades, with a great many lower grade routes. Additionally, the **bouldering** is amongst the most user-friendly in the Rhinogydd on account of its mainly flat, grassy landings. The bouldering described in this interim guide is far from definitive and actually only scratches the surface of what has been discovered. Far more definitive information will be available in Terry Taylor’s upcoming *Mid Wales Bouldering Guide*.

Also be aware that this is a habitat favoured by ticks and adders, so a certain vigilance is advised, both during and after a visit.



Access: While Cefn Cam can be accessed on foot from Ganllwyd to the east, this is hard going and is not recommended. (Access by mountain bike over forestry roads from Coed y Brenin Forest Park would be more feasible.) **Note that vehicular access from Coed y Brenin is strictly prohibited by Natural Resources Wales, who have stated that they will take legal action in all cases of unauthorised/illegal use of forestry roads.**

< CEFN CAM APPROACH MAP



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 *soupeçon* of bracken when in season. Rhinogydd devotees will know 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

The best (and indeed the only legal) access route is via Cwm Mynach to the south which is accessed from the A496 Dolgellau to Barmouth road by turning off onto a narrow minor road opposite the Penmaenpool toll bridge road at Pont Borthwnog. After a steep climb, continue for about 2½ miles to the end of the narrow tarmac road where it forks into two stone tracks (OS Ref SH 683 218). The left hand track is a very rough, unsurfaced council road which is best suited to 4x4 vehicles or those with good ground clearance such as larger vans or SUVs. At the time of writing it is also just about passable by most other vehicles with extreme care, with the first 300 metres being by far the worst; beyond which it progressively improves. Those with unsuitable vehicles will need to park in the small car park at the end of the tarmac road and walk-in from there (+45 minutes). Follow the track uphill for about 1½ miles to a staggered cross-roads and widening (OS Ref SH 680 242). **Park at the side of the track here, taking care to impede access, as there is no parking space beyond this point. There is no parking available for climbers' vehicles at Hafod y Brenin.**

Approach: On foot, follow the gated track northwards towards Hafod y Brenin, a former shooting lodge. The first Cefn Cam outcrop is just to the left of the lodge. If intending to climb on this crag, please respect the privacy of Hafod y Brenin residents at all times should the property be occupied.

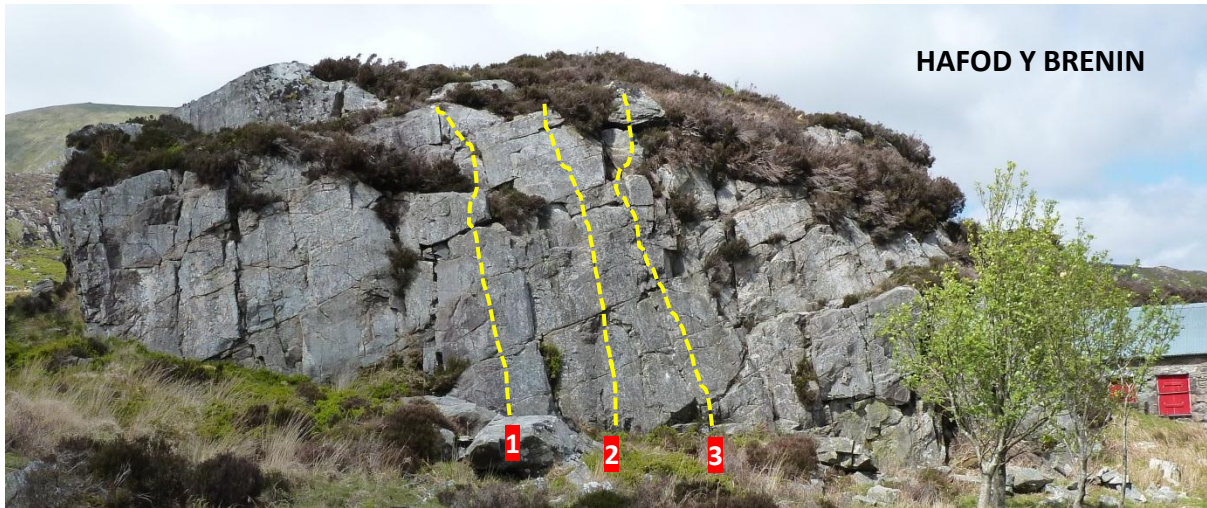


Hafod y Brenin *The King's Summer Residence*

OS Ref SH 67647 24812

Easy accessible, but unfortunately, despite its grandiose name, this little crag has the unfortunate distinction of being one of the least appealing of all Cefn Cam crags. Despite having good, clean rock, it is not really indicative of the quality of climbing found elsewhere in the area. Even so, its sunny aspect, three pleasant little climbs and a nearby bubbling brook, with a shaded pool deep enough for a cooling dip on a hot day, all make for a pleasant spot to while away an hour or so, whether climbing or bouldering. Located immediately south of the former shooting lodge, it can be accessed via old stone steps and a faint path from the Pont y Brenin stone bridge on the approach track. Descend easily on the left.





1. Diwrnod i'r Brenin 7m S

The slightly rounded slabby rib on the left has good holds and protection.

FA D Williams, D Kerr 16.5.16

2. Bagshot 7m VS 4c

The centre of the clean wall has pleasant but escapable climbing. Finish direct past a short recessed flake crack.

FA D Kerr, D Williams 16.5.16

3. King's Landing 7m HS 4b

A line just to the right following cracks and breaks, with good moves before a rightwards step to finish on the perched boulder.

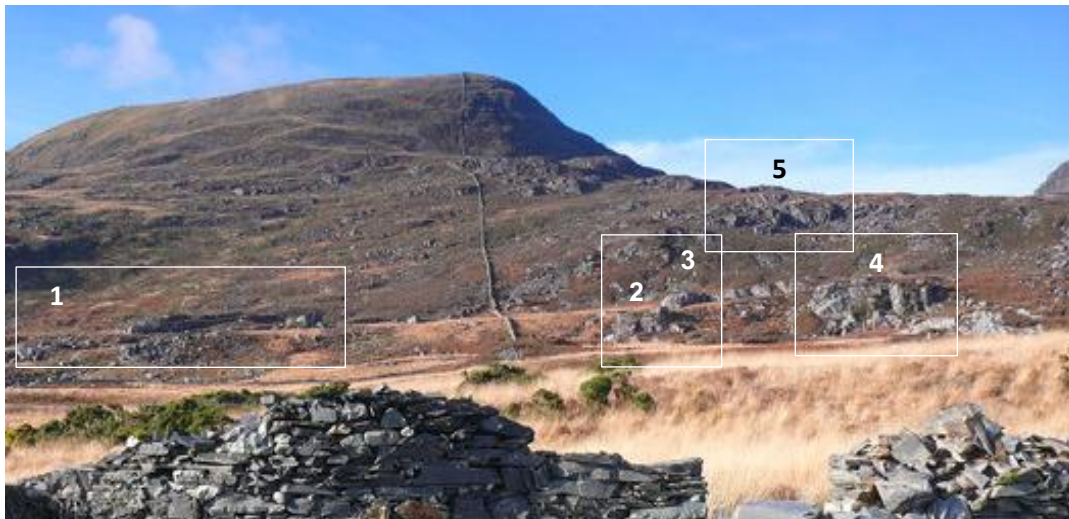
FA D Williams, D Kerr 16.5.16



Cefn Cam crags as seen from the quarry approach track beyond Hafod y Brenin: 1 – First Slabs/ Upper Wall area; 2 – Craig Cefn Cam; 3 – Carreg y Gorlan

For all other Cefn Cam outcrops - and the very best of the area's climbing – there are two possible approaches beyond Hafod y Brenin. The least satisfactory one continues for about ½ mile along the deeply rutted, wet track to the disused Cefn Cam slate quarry (OS Ref SH 678 257). The main outcrops, situated along the base of Y Llethr's eastern slopes, are easily

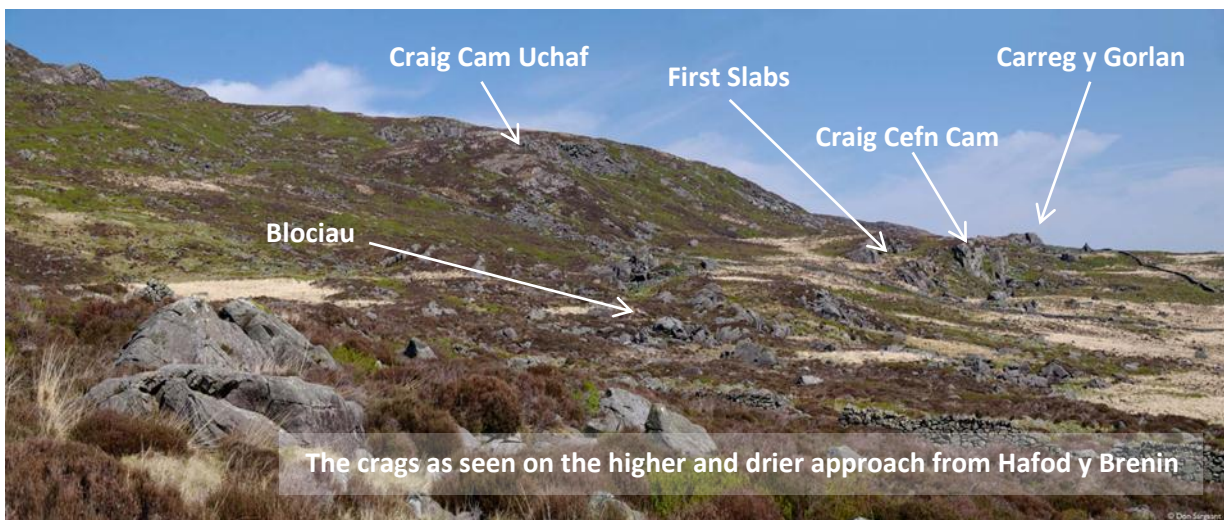
seen as one approaches the quarry, with **Craig Cefn Cam** being the largest and most noticeable.



The crags as seen from Cefn Cam quarry: 1- Blociau; 2 - First Slabs; 3 – Upper Wall; 4 – Craig Cefn Cam; 5 – Craig Cam Uchaf

Once at the ruins, a direct approach to the crags from the quarry involves crossing boggy, heathery ground (and bracken when in season), followed by an unavoidable climb over a high stone boundary wall crowned with strands of barbed wire. Neither can be encouraged, nor indeed recommended, but fortunately there is a far better and drier alternative.

A distinct path heads off right from the apex of the very final bend on the approach track to Hafod y Brenin. Follow this to a perennially boggy section just beyond the solitary ash tree. (Those wearing wellingtons will feel smug at this point, but the worst of the morass can be easily circumnavigated on the right.) Continue on the now drier path, past a sheepfold, to a stone wall and ladder stile at OS Ref SH 67455 25235. Once over the wall, bear right on sheep paths past a second sheepfold, heading in the general direction of **Blociau**. All Cefn Cam crags are now in sight and may be accessed by continuing to contour north, past Blociau, staying high on feint but good and fairly continuous sheep paths (if you manage to find them) in order to avoid the lower ground, which is invariably boggy.



The crags as seen on the higher and drier approach from Hafod y Brenin

As the crags are located quite close to each other, a great way to sample Cefn Cam’s variety and quality of climbing is to simply work one’s way from one crag or boulder to another.

Blociau *Blocks*

OS Ref SH 67342 25786

A very good bouldering area, centred on an old sheepfold located just south of **First Slabs**, with numerous short problems on large glacial erratic blocks, boulders and small outcrops. All are on immaculate rock with generally good landings, although a mat is recommended for all problems here. The blocks on the north side of the sheepfold are **Blociau Canol**, while **Crispy Wall** is a very short distance up the hillside and easily seen from the sheepfold. **Wing and Prayer Boulder** is a couple of minutes' walk below and left (south) of the sheepfold. The problems described, both at **Blociau** and elsewhere in the area, can easily be linked together to form an enjoyable circuit.

Wing and Prayer Boulder

OS Ref SH. 67393 25723

An entertaining little boulder composed of excellent, clean rock.

1 Ming f3+

The shallow groove moving left to the awkward wide crack.
FA D Kerr 23.5.16

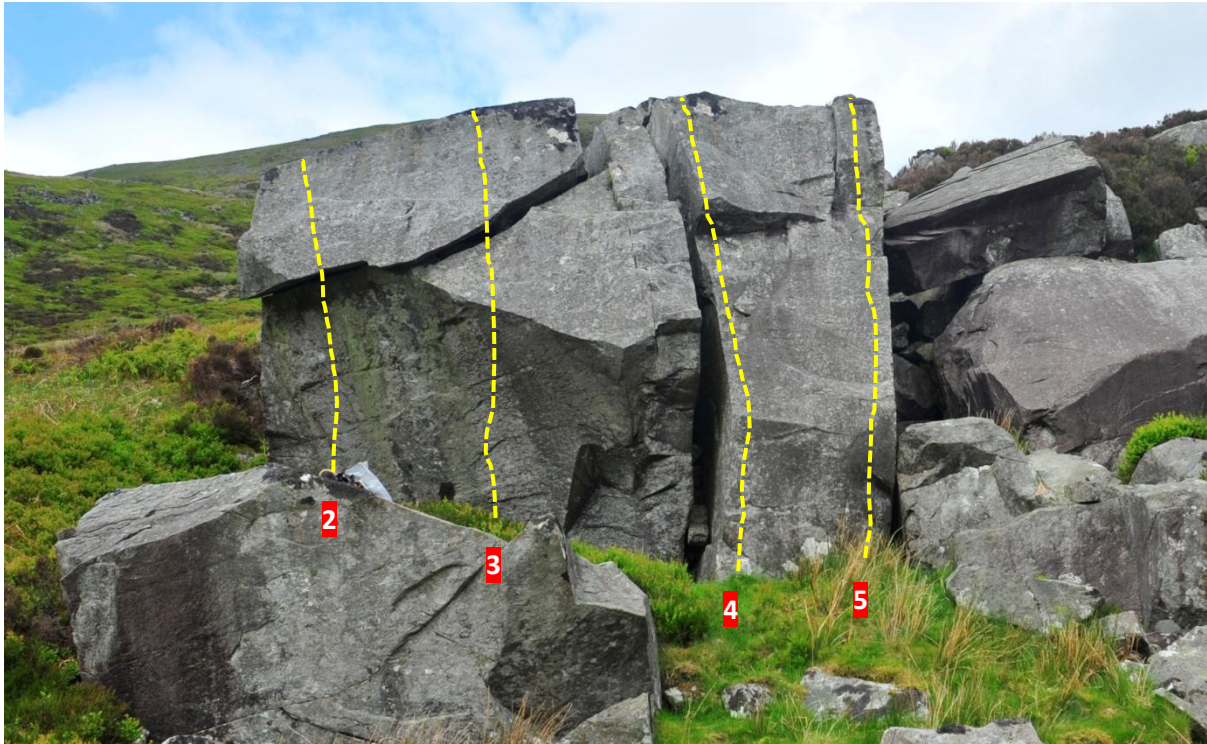
2 Livin' On a Prayer f6A ★

The undercut wall just right of the arête.
FA D Kerr 23.5.16

3 No Reply f6A ★

Start below the wide crack where it meets the lip of the little hanging slab. Pull up and right onto the slab to finish direct.
FA S Finch 23.5.16





4 Wingit f4+

The left arête on its right-hand side.
FA S Finch 23.5.16

5 Prayer f4

The right arête on its left-hand side.
FA D Kerr 23.5.16

Crispy Wall

OS Ref SH. 67314 25765

A compact yet intricately featured little wall, with much scope for further development, situated just a short distance from Blociau Canol's sheepfold.



Crispy Wall



On the right-hand side of the black wall:

1 Rice 'N' Crispy f5
FA D Kerr 23.5.16

2 Benidorm Sea Salt f5 ★
FA S Finch 23.5.16

3 Crackle f5+
FA D Kerr 23.5.16

Blociau Canol

Central Blocks

OS Ref SH 67342 25786

These are the chaotically-arranged collection of large glacial erratics and small outcrops which form the northern side of the sheepfold. There are a number of boulder problems here and the following are just a modest selection. There is much potential here for further discoveries.





1 Wotciau f3

The steep wall to gain the awkward wide crack.

FA D Kerr 23.5.16



Doug Kerr,
Wotciau, f3
© SY FINCH

2 Erratic Geriatric f4 ★★

An enjoyable and entertaining roof crack above a small, hidden cave. (Those adverse to all this 'sending' malarkey may be reassured to know that it can also be climbed properly at VS 4c (as on the first ascent)).

FA D Williams, S Finch, D Kerr 23.5.16



**Dave Williams on the FA of
Erratic Geriatric, VS 4c/f4
© SY FINCH**

The large pinnacle behind *Erratic Geriatric* provides a number of comparatively easy problems.

3 Hotciau f4 ★

The neat little wall, hidden away behind *Erratic Geriatric*, above an unpleasant landing.

FA D Kerr 23.5.16

4 Potciau f5

The steep groove just to the right above the rhododendron is deceptively awkward. Some pruning may be required before starting. The landing is equally unpleasant.

FA D Kerr 5.8.16



Around to the right, facing North East, are two arêtes which provide a couple of short, protectable micro-routes.

5 Sore Thumb 6m D

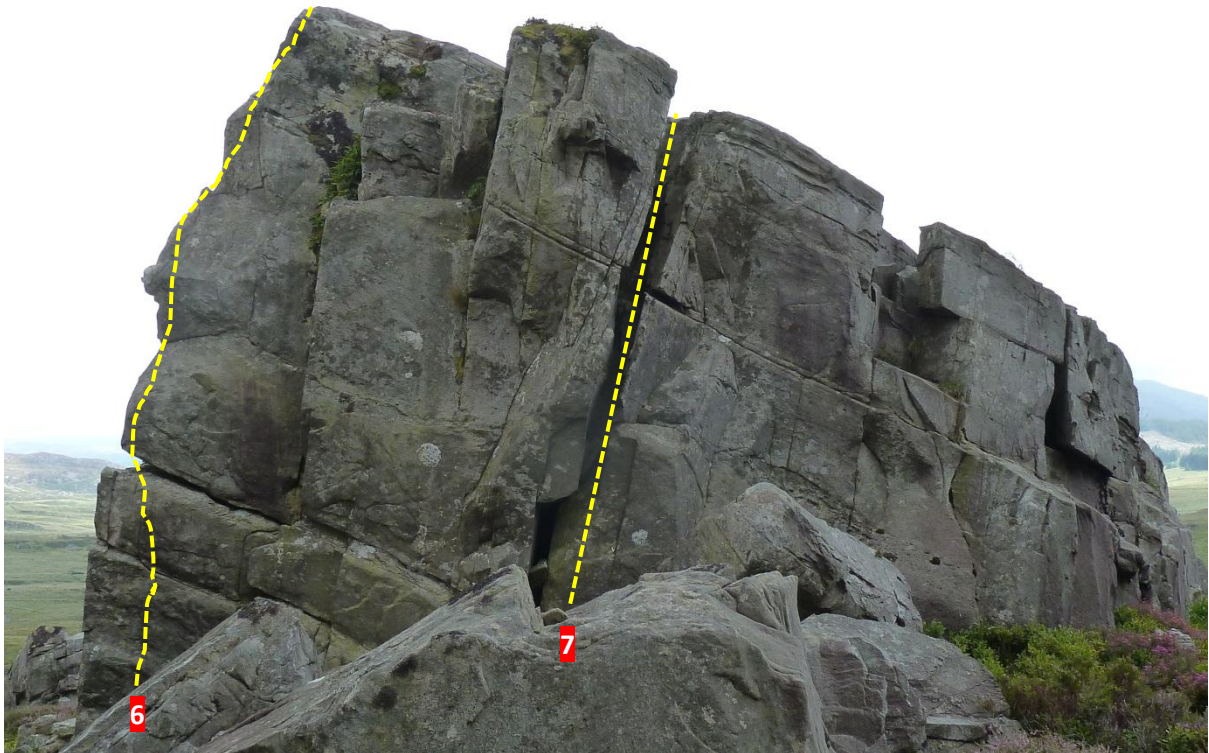
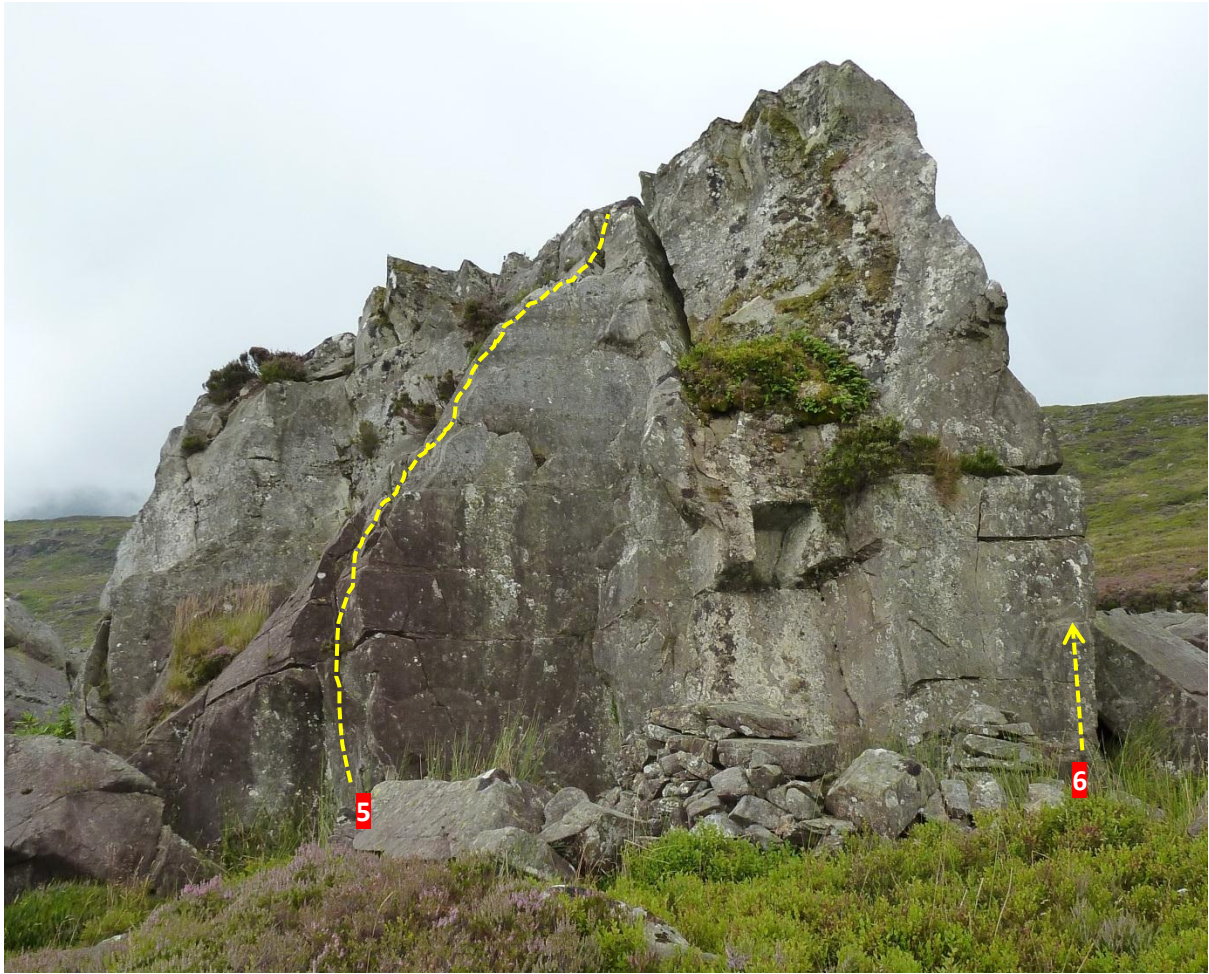
The slabby black arête on its right hand side.
FA D Kerr 5.8.16

6 Spooky Tooth 7m HS 4a

The sharp arête, climbed on its right hand side, has good climbing. It can also be started on the left which is slightly harder.
FA D Kerr 5.8.16

7 Harlech Shuffle f2+

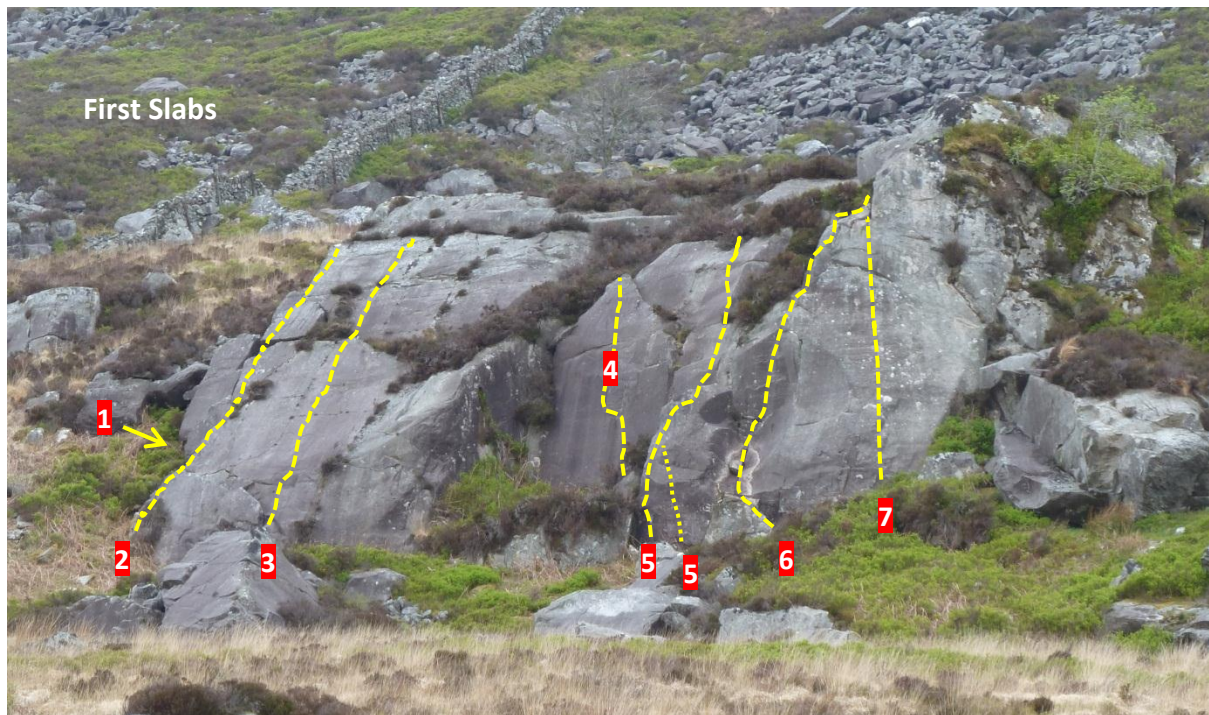
The short wide crack around to the right thankfully has good face holds.
FA D Kerr 5.8.16



First Slabs

OS Ref SH 67428 25898

Gritstone slabs are relatively uncommon in the Rhinogydd, but Cefn Cam has several. First Slab's rock is of excellent quality; the first three routes are on the left-hand slab.



1 Chwara' Plant 10m D

Despite its escapability, the narrow inset slab to the left of the main slab is very pleasant.
FA D Williams, D Kerr, both solo, 3.6.16

2 Decoy 13m D ★

The left edge of the slab proper is quite delightful.
FA D Kerr, D Williams both solo 18.4.16

3 Proxy 13m S ★

The slab just to the right of the thin and vegetated crack.
FA D Kerr, D Williams both solo 18.4.16

Sandwiched between the left and right hand slabs is a small 'holdless' wall which is reached by a short scramble.

4 Six Yard Box 6m VS 5b

Gain the centre of the wall from the right with difficulty and finish direct.
FA D Kerr solo 6.5.16

The right-hand slab has three good pitches on great rock.

5 Sitting Duck 12m VS 4c

The rib, starting on the left, leads to a narrow ledge. Finish delicately and directly up the slab just to the left of the heather. A much harder direct start is possible up the front face of the narrow rib.

FA D Kerr, D Williams, both solo, 3.6.16

6 Nos Du, Nos Da 13m S 4a ★

Pleasant climbing. Gain the scoop from which a short, steep exit quickly leads to an easy crack.

FA D Williams, D Kerr 6.5.16

7 Clean Sheet 13m E3 5c ★★

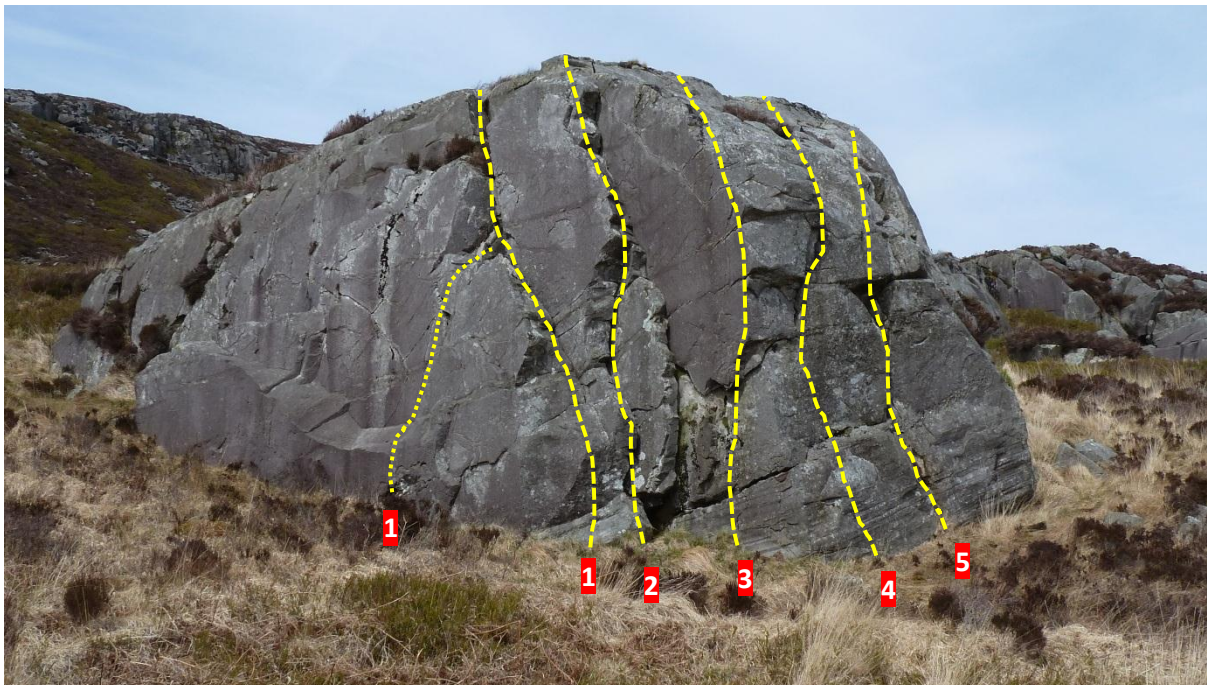
The blank slab to the right has bold and technical climbing which requires a great deal of faith in friction. A blistering pitch, but you won't need any gear.

FA D Kerr, D Williams 6.5.16

Upper Wall

OS Ref SH 67407 25921

This lies almost directly above **First Slabs** and is a superb feature, providing a wealth of contrasting micro-climbs and boulder problems on near-perfect rock. There are many possible variations to the documented lines.

**1 Onion Sack** 6m D

The broken crack gained either from the left or right via the triangular flake.

FA D Kerr 18.4.16

2 Toe Poke 6m VS 4c

The shallow groove has a very long reach.

FA D Kerr 18.4.16

3 Fat Chance 6m HVS 5c ★★

A micro-gem, which climbs the arête directly.

FA D Kerr 18.4.16

4 Cam Gwag 6m HS 4b

The crack is a little stubborn for a move or two.

FA D Williams, D Kerr 6.5.16

Doug Kerr on *Fat Chance*, HVS 5c
© SY FINCH



6 Cefn Dydd 6m D

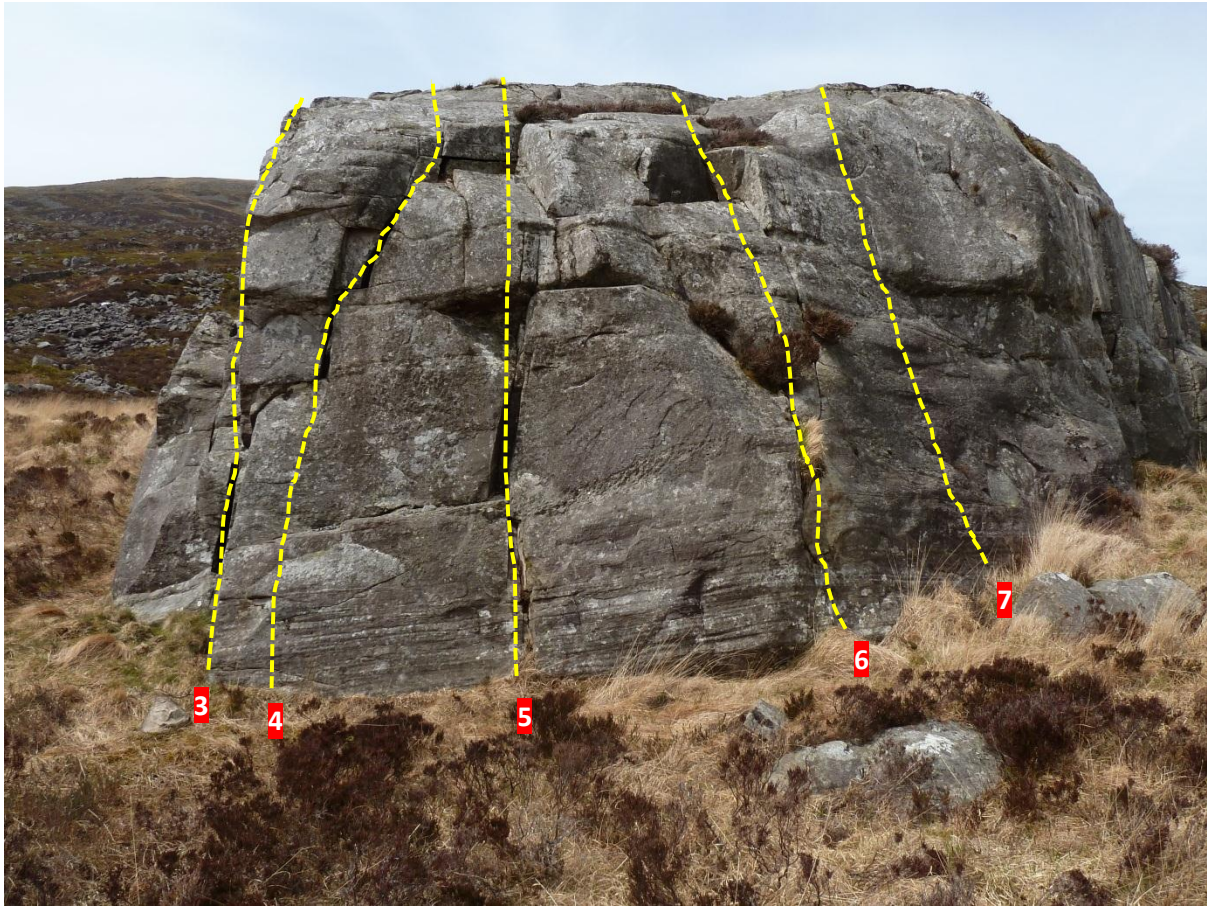
The thin crack right of *Cam Gwag*.
FA D Williams, D Kerr, both solo 6.5.16

7 Two Yellows 6m HS 4c

The slab just to the right of *Cefn Dydd*.
FA D Kerr, D Williams both solo 18.4.16

8 Straight Red 6m VS 5a ★

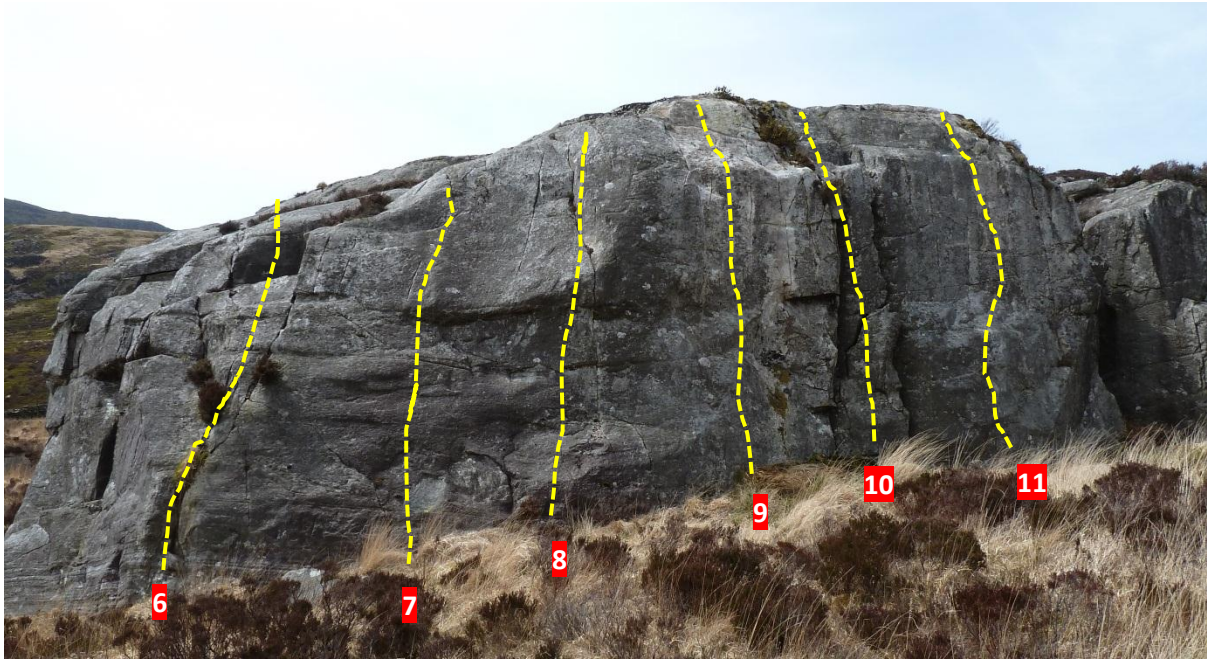
The shallow hanging groove to the right, with a fingery move to pass the bulge.
FA D Kerr 18.4.16



9 Top Corner 6m HVS 5b ★
The thin crack to the right.
FA D Kerr 6.5.16

10 Offside 6m D
The twin cracks.
FA D Kerr, D Williams both solo 6.5.16

11 Nutmeg 6m VS 5a ★
The centre of the wall has tantalising finishing holds. Gaining them, on the other hand....
FA D Kerr 6.5.16



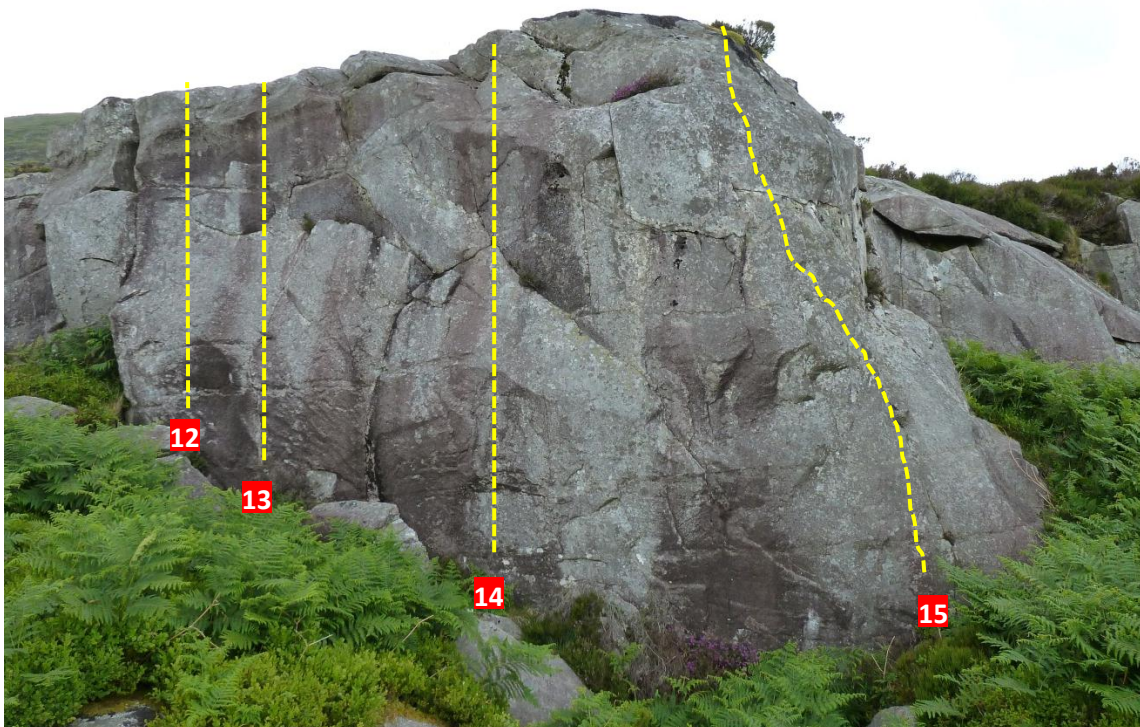
To the right there is a short wall which provides some good bouldering, but the first two problems struggle to maintain their independence.

12 Dodgy Keeper f4+

The short wall on the left (keeping away from the crack on the left).
FA D Kerr 5.8.16

13 Sweeper f4+

Climb the thin crack, over a slight bulge, and finish direct.
FA D Kerr 5.8.16



14 Wing Back f5 ★

Step off the block, gain a good hold and make a committing reach to good finishing holds.
FA D Kerr 5.8.16

15 Inside Right f4 ★

The blunt right-hand rib has good moves on positive holds throughout.
FA D Kerr, 3.6.16



To the right there is a more substantial wall with a recessed base which has a thin crack in its centre.

16 Centre Half 6m E1 5c ★★

The thin crack gives excellent climbing, but is a bit of a stopper. Make hard moves to gain the crack from the left before finishing direct.
FA D Kerr, unseconded 16.5.16

17 The Gaffer 7m E2 6a ★

An exacting and unprotectable solo. From the base of *Right Back* make thin moves leftwards across the slab to gain the tiny hanging groove. The prudent will mat out the landing.
FA D Kerr 5.8.16

18 Right Back 5m HVS 6a

The thin crack and very shallow groove on the right provides some thin and technical climbing at the start.
FA D Kerr 9.5.16

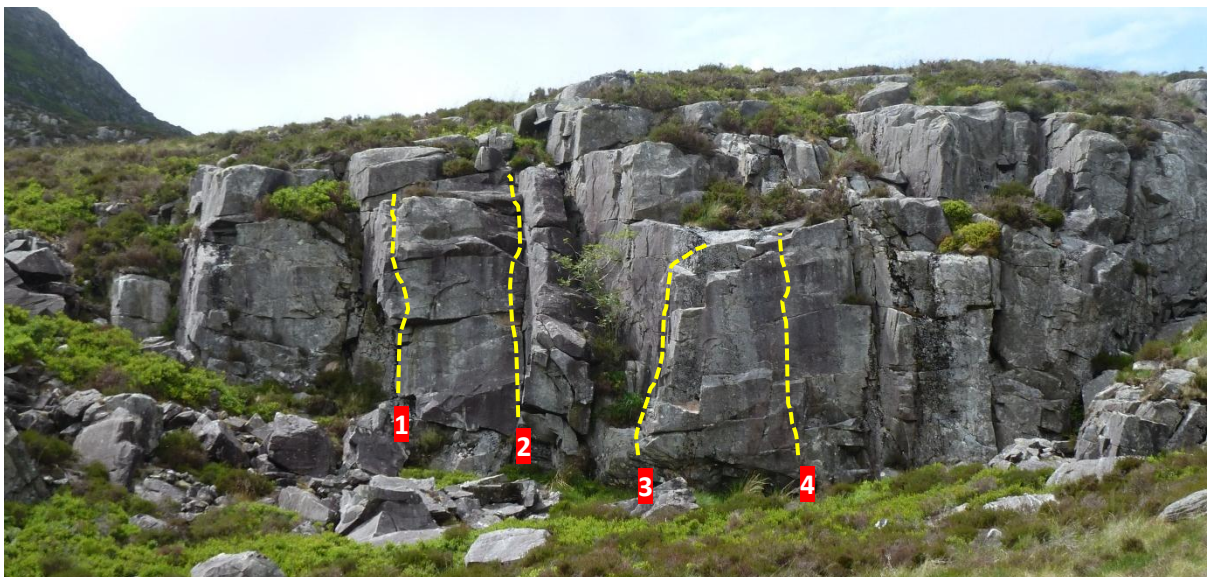


Craig Cam Uchaf

Craig Cam Uchaf is located further up the hillside above both Upper Wall and Craig Cefn Cam. It can be approached over trackless terrain from either of these two lower crags. It is actually a pair of crags; an upper **Hidden Crag**, which cannot be seen from below, and a lower **Main Crag**. The additional effort required to reach either of these crags will be time well spent, as both give worthwhile and rewarding climbing on great rock.

Craig Cam Uchaf: Hidden Crag

OS Ref SH 67234 26062



Hidden Crag may be accessed in about five minutes from the lower **Main Crag** by scrambling up past it (easiest on its left-hand side). Grade-wise, this is a crag of stark contrasts but, nevertheless, all its climbs are worth doing. Descend on either side.

1 Sweet Tooth 7m E2 6a ★

The undercut left hand arête has steep moves on good holds with a long stretch rightwards for a hidden jug. Finish directly. A single peg up and left (which can be clipped from the ground) protects.

FA D Kerr, D Williams 28.4.17

2 Y Rhigol Unigol 7m VD ★

The groove, with some assistance from the rounded rib, 'has very nice climbing.

FA D Williams, D Kerr 27.6.16

3 Llanc o 'Stiniog 7m VD

The steep flake arête, with good holds and gear, to a rightwards finish past a dubious block.

FA D Williams, D Kerr 28.4.17

4 Breast Stroke 6m HVS 5b

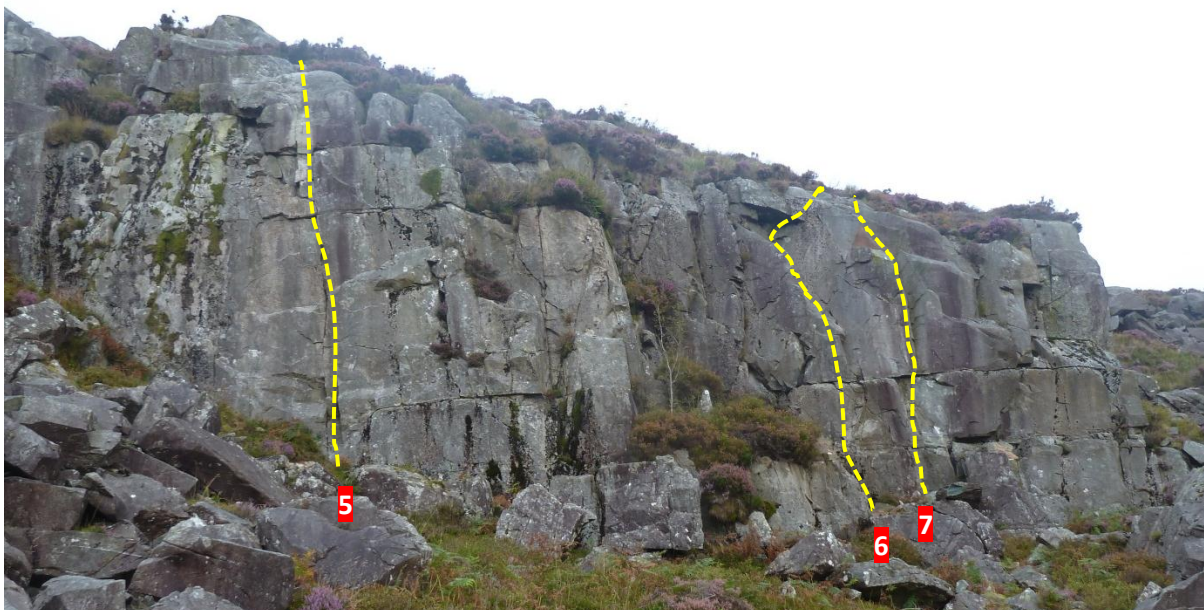
The clean, innocuous-looking wall has a tricky move (micro-cam protection) to stand on the ledge. Finish with a long reach for good holds.

FA D Kerr, D Williams 28.4.17

Craig Cam Uchaf: Main Crag

OS Ref: SH 67262 26060

Situated almost directly below Craig Cam Uchaf Hidden Crag, this steep little crag has an impressively overhanging left hand wall, a broken and vegetated central section and three grooves on its right hand side. The rock is absolutely superb but the crag is best visited in dry weather as it is prone to seepage. Descend on either side.



5 Final Score 13m E4 6a



The compelling crackline in the overhanging wall provides a superb route; the best at Cefn Cam. A burly, technical start gains better holds at the square block. Continue with steep climbing, on good holds, before a tricky, fingery pull gains the headwall. Finish more delicately up the scoop.

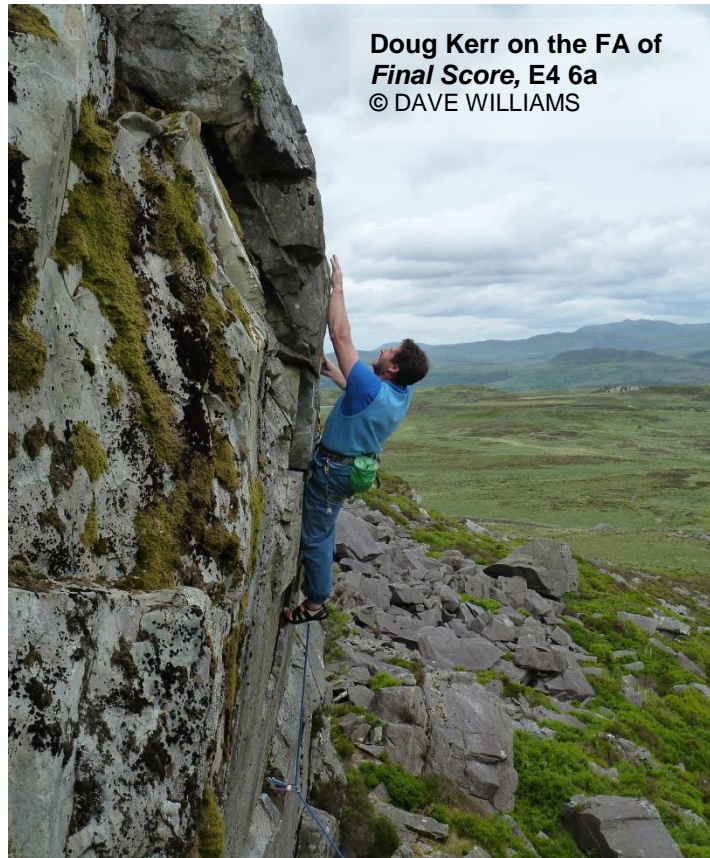
FA D Kerr, unseeded 15.6.18

6 The Porroh Man 10m HVS 5a



A tricky, steep and committing start leads to hidden finger jams. Pull up into a fine, but easier little groove and finish with a very wide rightwards span. Nut belays, plus a small bollard up and right.

FA D Williams, D Kerr 28.8.17



Doug Kerr on the FA of Final Score, E4 6a
© DAVE WILLIAMS

7 Quality Control 10m E2 5c ★

Steeper than it looks, the central hanging groove has sustained, technical climbing on great rock. Protection is good but awkward to arrange. Finish easily up the slab above and belay as for *The Porroh Man*.

FA D Kerr, D Williams 27.6.16

The dirty, inferior-looking third groove remains unclimbed. To the right, beyond a narrow scree slope, the crag continues as a blocky undercut wall (SH 67266 26098) which resembles the chaotic remains of a giant's tumble block game. This provides two minor routes as well as some further scope, especially for bouldering.



8 Just Name Another 7m VD

The left hand arête is climbed on its right hand side.
FA D Kerr, D Williams 27.6.16

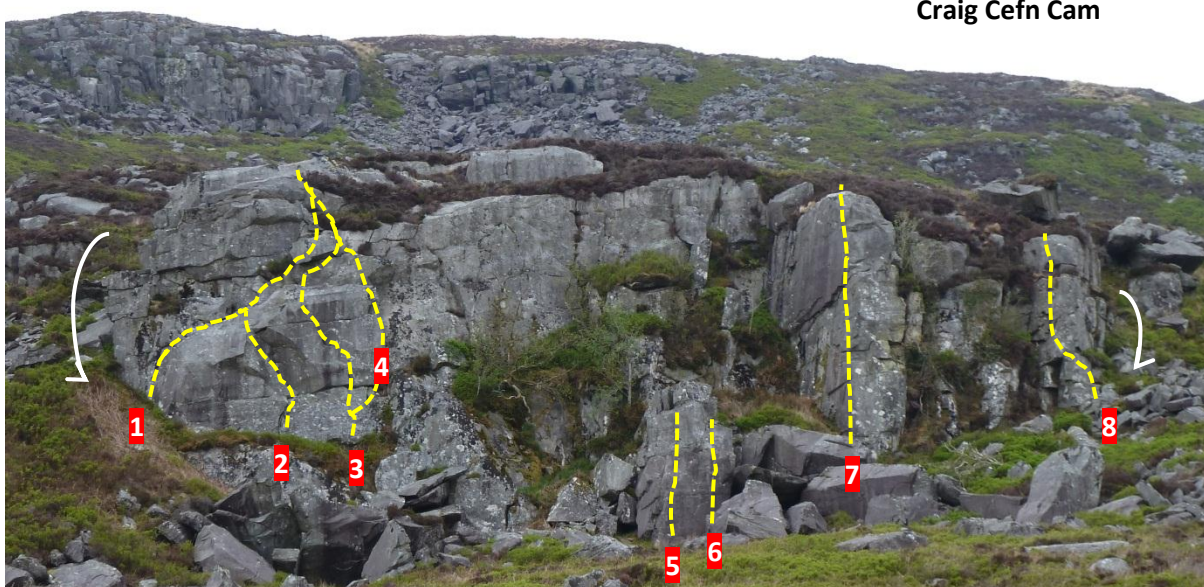
9 Good with Names 7m D

The blocky groove to a bulging finish on the right.
FA D Kerr 3.6.16

Craig Cefn Cam *Crooked Ridge Crag*

OS Ref .: SH 67435 26019

Cefn Cam's biggest cliff reaches 20 metres at its very highest and features a variety of nicely contrasting climbs; some slabby, others steeper but all on excellent, rough, clean gritstone. The crag's left side is composed of some impressively enormous and very deeply crevassed flakes; the mid-section is an aboralist's delight, while further right the soaring central arête commands unquestioned attention. Right of the arête, just beyond another verdant area, a second shorter arête marks the crag's rather abrupt termination. Descend easily to either side.

**1. Rampant** 17m D

An entertaining little expedition. Short twin cracks gain a flake which is hand traversed rightwards to broken ground. Gain a standing position on the perched block and then finish directly.

FA D Kerr, D Williams, both solo 9.5.16 (*Williams climbed the FA in wellingtons.*)

2. Ampant 12m S 4b

The short hanging groove has a tricky move to gain good holds on the slab above. Finish as for *Rampant*.

FA D Kerr, 9.5.16



Dave Williams,
Mur Cefn Cam,
VS 4c
© DON SARGEANT

3. Mur Cefn Cam 12m VS 4c ★★

The intimidating left trending flake, gained via the short wall, has excellent, steep, well-protected climbing on generally big holds. At the end of the flake, those unable to find the 'key hold' (a nice little edge) will need to make a long and committing stretch to a good but hidden handrail on the left. Finish easily to the right of the perched block.
FA D Kerr, D Williams, 9.5.16

4. Croeso i'r Ochr Draw 12m HS 4a

Start as for *Mur Cefn Cam* and traverse right to the base of the steep, crenulated right arête. Climb this in a rather fine position and make an exposed move left at the top before finishing easily to the right of the perched block. Worthwhile.
FA D Williams, D Kerr 23.5.16

5. Salus 8m HS 4c

The blunt arête, roughly in the middle of the crag at a slightly lower level, has nice climbing.
FA D Kerr, solo 18.4.16

6. Talus 8m VS 5b

The thin crack, just to the right of *Salus*, has tricky initial moves. Finish up the narrow pillar. Nice climbing but rather artificial and escapable.
FA D Kerr, 9.5.16

The central vegetated section may have some obvious potential, but it would require an extensive amount of (probably unjustifiable) cleaning and excavation. To the right of this section there is a clean, blank wall; yet another 'last/great challenge'

By way of a contrast, the wall's right hand arête provides a very fine and extremely well-positioned climb.

7. Sold On Dreams 20m VS 4c ★★

The striking central arête, visible from afar, provides a substantial pitch with excellent climbing and sustained interest; one of the best climbs in the Cefn Cam area. Follow the arête, mainly on its left hand side, to pull rightwards onto the sloping ledge. The finish, up the right hand side of the arête, is easier although the final moves feel rather bold.

FA D Kerr, D Williams, 9.5.16

8. Misguided Angel 10m HVS 5a ★

The steep left face of the lesser right-hand arête, starting from its right, has good moves but the gear leaves something to be desired.

FA D Williams, D Kerr 9.5.16

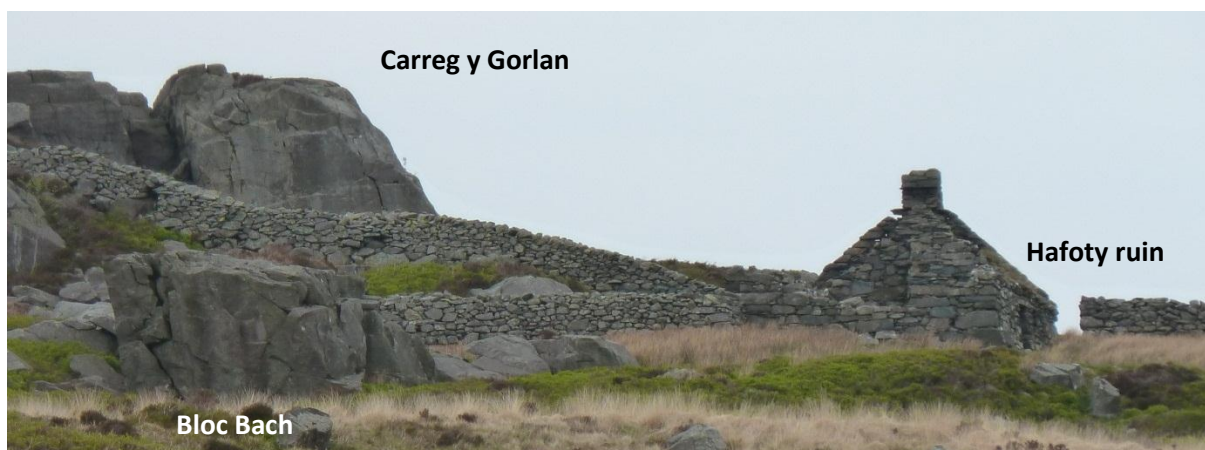
(So named as a large block, dislodged by Kerr, missed Williams by just a few centimetres.

*"Misguided angel hangin' over me....."
Cowboy Junkies, 1988)*



Bloc Bach *Little Block*

Approximately 50 metres south of **Carreg y Gorlan**, the clean south-facing wall of a large glacial erratic boulder provides three super boulder problems above soft, perennially boggy landings.



1 Foxtrot f2
The wide crack.
FA D Kerr 6.5.16

2 Tango f4 ★★
The centre of the
overhanging
wall on superb holds.
FA D Kerr 6.5.16

3 Oscar f4+
The right arête is
awkward.
FA D Kerr 6.5.16

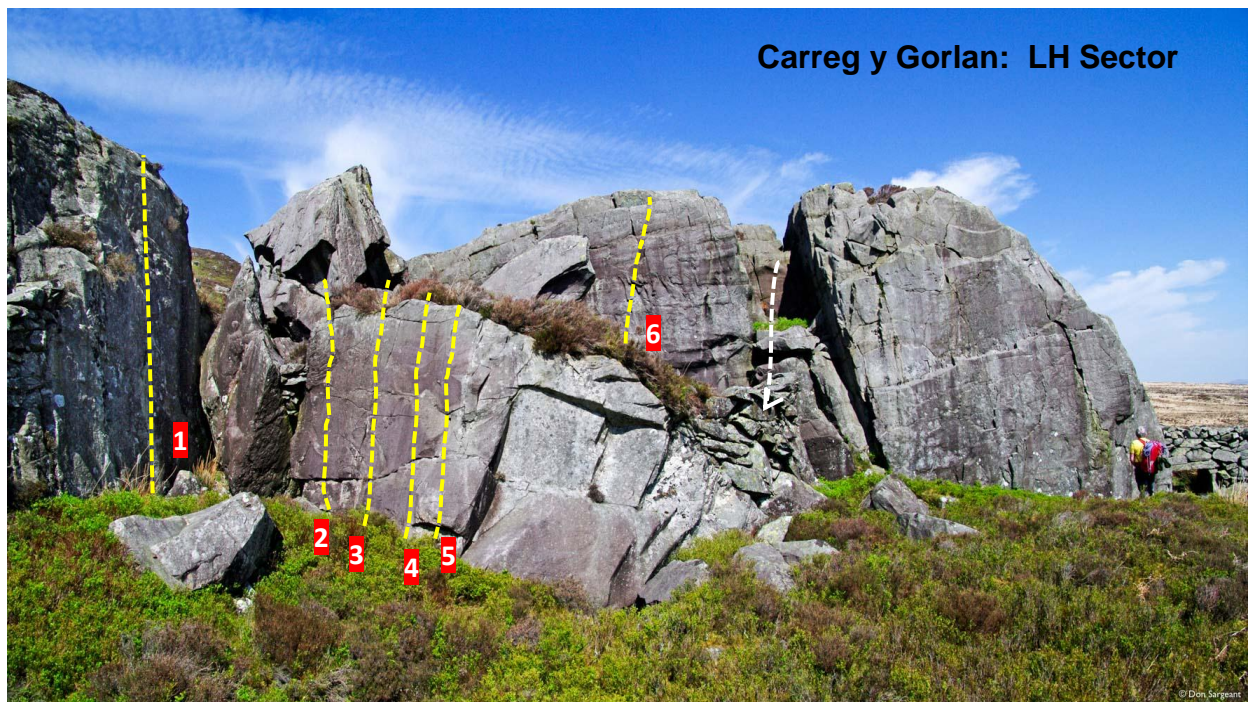


Carreg y Gorlan *Sheepfold Rock*

OS Ref SH 67500 26169

The most northerly of the Cefn Cam crags is a large and impressive block which forms one side of a small sheepfold directly behind a ruined 'hafoty' (summer dwelling). This is an excellent little venue which is well worth the additional walk, with a sunny aspect, super rock and a good range of grades. The Left Hand (LH) sector has a number of contrasting short lines; the clean, south-facing wall gently overhangs while the east face is contrastingly slabby. All three give superb climbing on perfect, clean, rough rock above mainly good landings.

As is the case elsewhere in Cefn Cam, further bouldering possibilities can also be found here.



The first route is located on the steep wall of a narrow cleft on the left upper side of the sheepfold.

1 **Grit, Guts and Glory** 6m HVS 5a ★

Short, high in the grade and far from inconsequential; the centre of the leaning wall is tricky, sustained and very poorly protected above a rather unfriendly landing. Belay to nuts and cams in excavated cracks on the exposed rock platform.

FA D Williams, D Kerr, 15.6.18 (*So named, as despite its very modest length, the déjà vu consequences of a nasty groundfall in such a remote location had put Williams off leading it for over 2 years.*)

By way of a contrast, almost directly opposite is the far more amenable **Little Wall**, home to four pleasant little problems on great rock above good landings.

2 Benson f3+ Climbs the rippled wall, keeping right of the blocks.

3 Hedges f4 Takes the centre of the wall via the thin cracks.

4 Lambert f3+ Just left of the rib.

5 Butler f2+ The rib itself.

All FA D Kerr, 3.6.16.

The next route climbs a nice little wall located above the drystone wall at the back of the sheepfold.

6 **Tab End** 5m VS 5a

Fun sized, protectable and on superb, clean rock. Follow good holds up and rightwards before finishing direct.

FA D Kerr, D Williams 3.6.16





Doug Kerr,
Sweet Virginia,
E2 5c
© DON
SARGEANT

To the right of the short gully, which provides an easy and convenient means of descent, is Carreg y Gorlan's steep **South Face**.

7 Fortuna 8m VS 5a

The steep left-hand arête on its right-hand side.

FA D Kerr, 18.4.16

8 Roll Up 13m VS 4c ★

Start as for *Fortuna* and hand traverse the narrow ledge rightwards to the arête. Awkwardly pass the arête and finish as for *Ceres*.

FA D Kerr, 25.4.16

9 Sweet Virginia 8m E2 5c ★★

Super climbing up the centre of the leaning wall to gain the thuggy, thin crack. Move slightly left to finish.

FA D Kerr, D Williams 25.4.16



Dave Williams,
Silk Cut HVS 5b
© DON SARGEANT

10 Silk Cut 8m HVS 5b ★★

Make steep moves to gain the deep crack and, keeping on the left side of the arête, finish direct. A great little pitch, with a contrastingly delicate finish. An alternative start, (climbing

up before trending slightly right to gain the crack) can be made up the wall just to the left at the same grade.

FA D Kerr, D Williams 25.4.16

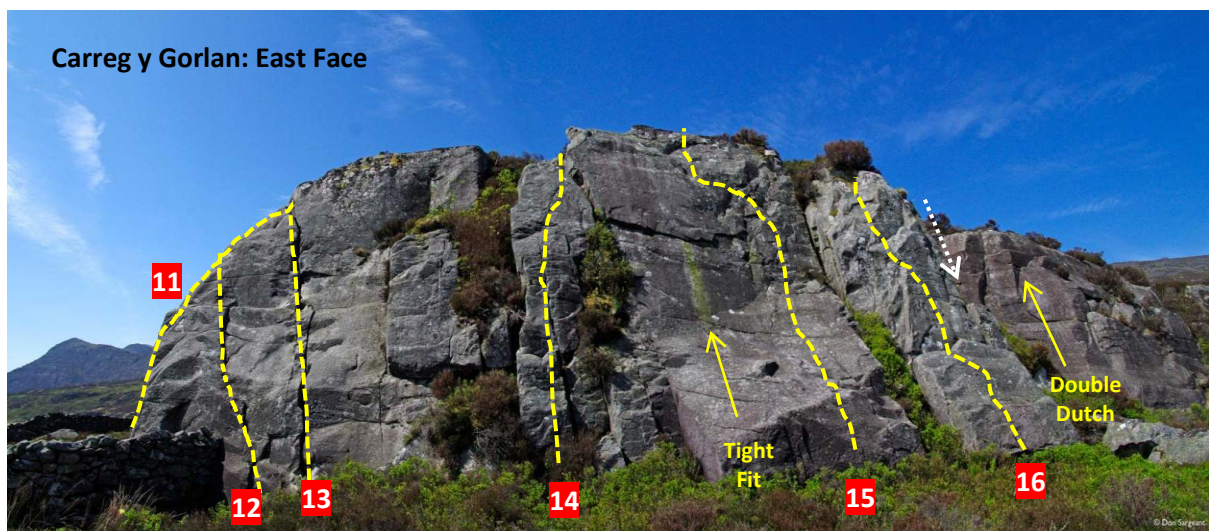
Alt. start: FA T Taylor, solo, 2.10.16 (*At the time, the discovery of the crag, and indeed the whole of Cefn Cam, was subject to much secrecy by Kerr and Williams. Not being aware of this subterfuge, Taylor mistakenly thought he had found a new and, as yet, unclimbed crag.*)

11 Ceres 8m VS 5a

Climb the arête on its slabby right hand side. An alternative, harder start (5b/c) can be made for a few moves on its left hand side.

FA D Kerr, 18.4.16

Climbing over the wall separating the two faces should be avoided at all costs and the climbs on the contrastingly slabby East Face are therefore best reached by an undignified grovel through a very conveniently positioned 'Cwter Ddefaid', or Hogget Hole. Descend easily via a short gully between *Triple Choc* and *Double Dutch*.



12 Serec 7m HS 4b

An eliminate. Follow the scoop leftwards to a ledge and pull directly through the slabby bulge. Finish just to the left of *Spare Us the Cwter*.

FA D Kerr, D Williams 9.4.17

13 Spare Us the Cwter 7m D ★

(Front cover photo.) After an awkward start, the obvious crack is short but sweet.

FA D Williams, 25.4.16

14 Defaid Drwg 6m D

The clean blunt rib forming the left edge of the right hand slab.

FA D Williams, 25.4.16

A poor eliminate, **Tight Fit** 6m E1 5c, (FA D Kerr, D Williams 9.4.17), climbs the narrow slab to the right. The left arête and the flake on the right are both out of bounds at this grade.

15 Grutfaen 6m D

Directly up the right hand slab, just right of centre, past a small flake crack.

FA D Williams, 25.4.16

16 Triple Choc 6m S

The pillar has one tricky move to reach good but rather dirty finishing holds.

FA D Kerr 9.4.17

To the right is a short, clean 5 metre slab. The tiny flake is **Double Dutch D** (FA D Kerr 3.6.16)

Looking north from Carreg y Gorlan, the lower left-hand skyline is dominated by an array of sweeping slabs. Unfortunately, on closer inspection, all are easy angled, broken and quite vegetated.

Creigiau Uwch y Wal *Above the Wall Craggs*

OS Ref. SH 690 240

Overview:	Small, sub-9 metre outcrops, composed of excellent quality rock which offer a multitude of enjoyable and mainly low-grade micro-routes, with some additional scope for new discoveries
<i>Altitude:</i>	340-380 metres
<i>Approach:</i>	AGO: About ¾ mile of walking on a good forestry road and minimal walking on pathless terrain. Also easily approached by mountain bike
<i>Approach time:</i>	20-30 minutes walking from the Cefn Cam parking area at the top of Coed Mynach; then 10-15 minutes from the forestry road (crag dependent)
<i>Aspect:</i>	Variously north west and south west facing (crag dependent)
<i>Drying:</i>	Quick drying in warm/windy conditions, but some seepage after prolonged wet weather
<i>Winter sun:</i>	Yes
<i>Summer sun:</i>	Yes
<i>Access Land:</i>	Yes
<i>Grade range:</i>	D – HVS, but mainly D - S

On the south eastern side of Cefn Cam and just to the east of the Coed Mynach forest boundary, the northern flank of Y Garn is littered with small outcrops composed of excellent quality and generally very clean rock.

Most outcrops are small and therefore best suited for the pottering-about soloist or boulderer, but three buttresses are significantly larger and can be seen easily from the forestry road connecting Coed Mynach with Coed y Brenin to the east. The lowest two – **Buttresses 1 and 2** - are excellent beginners' crags and are within a few minutes' walk from the forestry road, while **Buttress 3** is some 10 minutes' walk further up the hillside in a southerly direction.

Buttress 1 has the best climbing on Creigiau Uwch y Wal, although all three buttresses are worth visiting.



Creigiau Uwch y Wal: Buttresses 1, 2 and 3

Approach: There are two possible approaches:

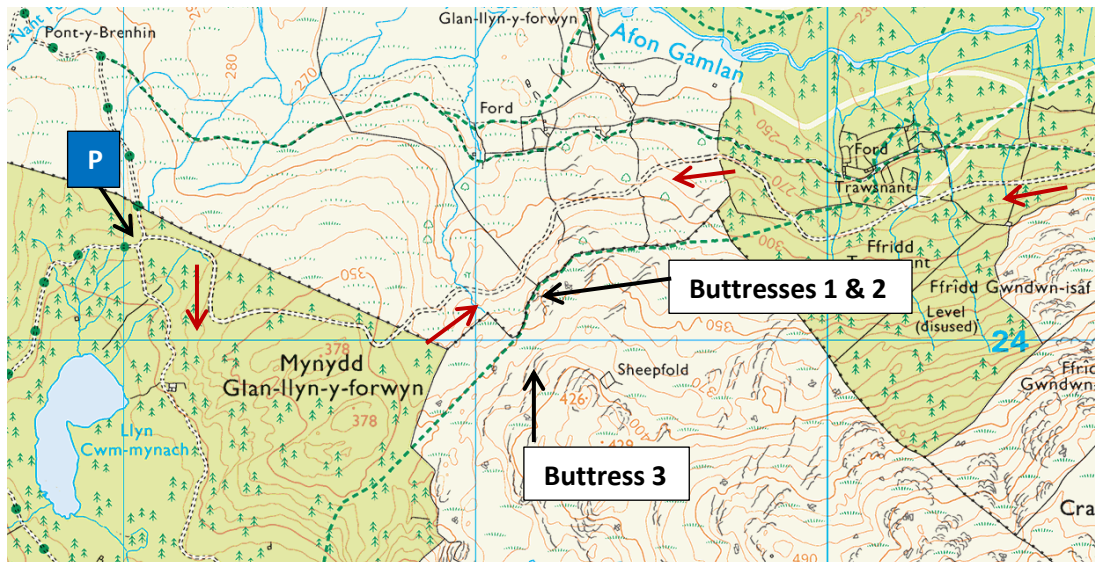
[1] Initially as for **Cefn Cam** to the parking area at the staggered cross-roads (OS Ref 680 242). **Park here as there is no vehicular right of way beyond this point.** On foot, follow the forestry road eastwards over Mynydd Glan Llyn y Forwyn to the forest boundary, from where the crags can be seen low on the hillside to the east. Continue along the road until just below Buttresses 1 and 2, then approach directly. A large boulder inset into the high stone wall close to the right-hand side of Buttress 2 facilitates a careful hop over the stone and barbed wire boundary wall.

Alternatively, a scenic approach can be made by following the little-used public footpath from **Cwm Mynach**, past **Craig Blaen y Cwm**, which leads over Mynydd Glan Llyn y Forwyn to eventually descend and pass directly beneath Buttresses 1 and 2.

Approaching by mountain bike from the Cefn Cam parking area instead of walking is yet another option.

[2] Creigiau Uwch y Wal may also be approached on foot or by mountain bike by following forestry roads from Coed y Brenin/Ganllwyd to the east. Access via the steep, narrow gated tarmac road which leaves the A470 at Ty'n y Groes Bach (SH 727 232). **Vehicles may be driven as far as SH71825 23935, where there is limited roadside parking, but must not be driven any further as there is no public right of access for vehicles beyond this point.** Continue on foot or on bike past Goetre along the unsurfaced track into Cwm Camlan. Bear left at the intersection (SH 71202 24824) and follow the forestry road which leads uphill into the Cefn Cam basin. The crags are located on the left approximately 600 metres beyond the forest boundary.

A large boulder is incorporated into the stone wall beneath Buttress 2. An easy climb up this, followed by a careful hop over the capping fence, facilitates the easiest access to all three crags from the nearby Cwm Camlan forestry road.



Creigiau Uwch y Wal's Buttresses 1 and 2



Buttress 1

OS Ref. SH 69172 24147

This linear buttress is comprised of two sections separated by an area of more broken rock.

Left-hand Section

Most of the climbs are found on the lower left-hand section. Climbs are described from left to right and there is a large block belay at the top of the left-hand section. Descend easily by scrambling down the gully between *Wall Child* and *Partition Wall*.



1 Blockwork 7m D

The wide leftward trending crack to a scruffy finish.
FA D Kerr, D Williams, both solo 20.5.16

2 Wall-e 7m VD

The thin crack up the centre of the wall.
FA D Kerr, D Williams, 20.5.16

3 Ble mae Wali? 7m D

The crack just left of the arête.
FA D Williams, D Kerr 20.5.16

4 Wall Games 7m HS 4c ★

The undercut crack just right of the arête has a steep and tricky start.
FA D Williams, D Kerr 20.5.16

5 Walls I Scream 7m S 3c

The narrow crack to the right is a little awkward.
FA D Williams, D Kerr 20.5.16

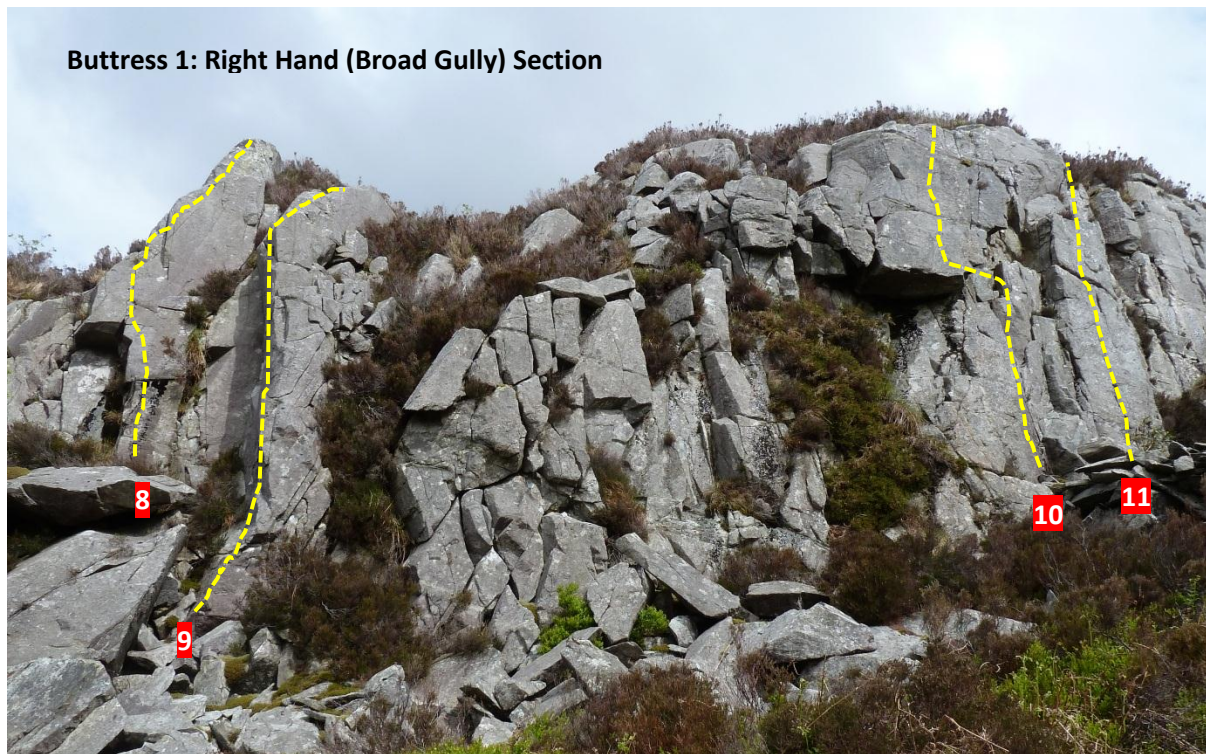
6 Partition Wall 7m VS 4c

An honest approach is required to climb the centre of the narrow wall as the difficulties are avoidable.

FA D Kerr, D Williams, 20.5.16

7 Dry Lined 7m S 4b

A thin move via the very thin crack gains good holds. Finish direct up the flake crack.
FA D Kerr, solo 20.5.16



Right-hand Section

Further up the broad gully to the right, past a section of broken and vegetated rock, lies a slender rib, left of which is an undercut arête.

8 Tug of Wall 6m VD

The undercut arête has good holds.
FA D Kerr solo 21.6.16

9 Walmart 6m D

The pleasant narrow slender rib.
FA D Kerr, D Williams, both solo 20.5.16

A few metres further right, a low stone wall abuts the crag, above which there is a perfect little hanging slab.

10 Party Wall 7m VS 5a

Starting from the right, a tricky move gains the centre of the hanging slab. Nice climbing.
FA D Kerr, D Williams, 20.5.16

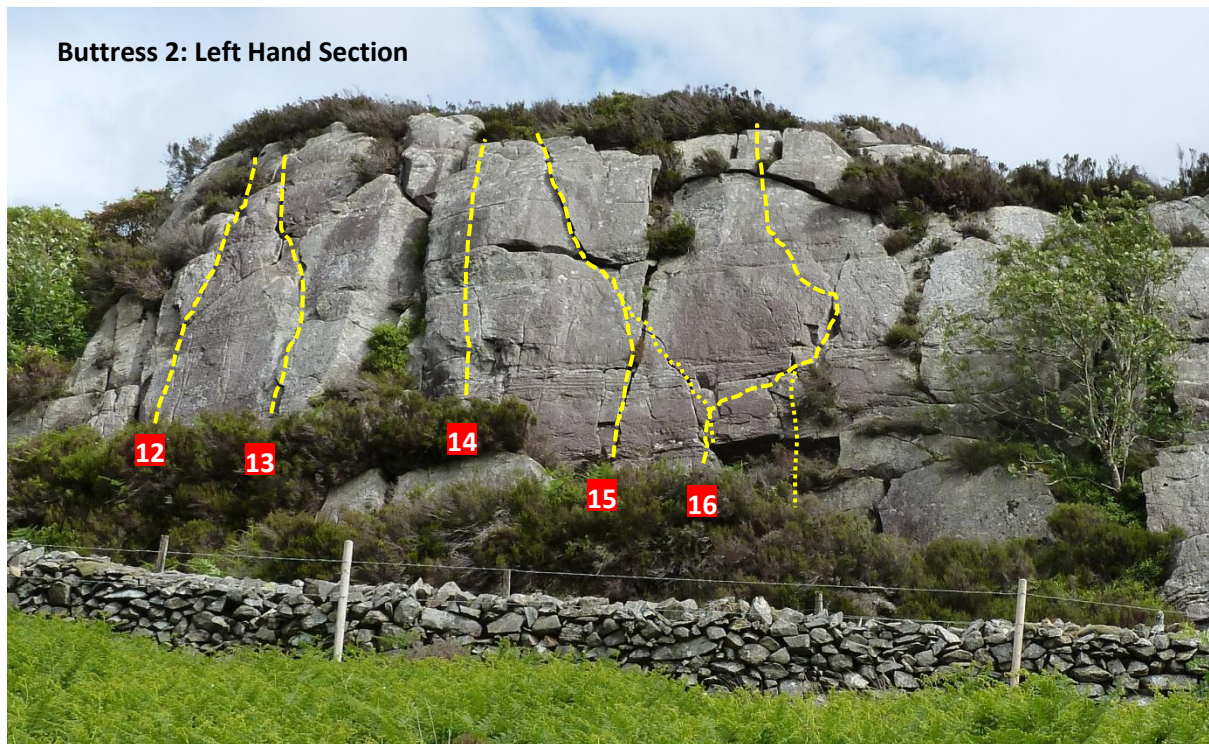
11 Firewall 7m S 4b

The slender pillar just right has some interesting moves.
FA D Kerr, D Williams, both solo 20.5.16

Buttress 2

OS Ref SH 69160 24118

Characterised by slabs on its left, a central rowan tree and a small block overhang on its right, this is at the same level and to the right of **Buttress 1**. Descend to either side.

**12 Wall to Wall** 7m VS 4c

The left edge of the slab is pleasant.

FA D Kerr D Williams 21.6.16

13 Wall of Words 7m D

The leftward trending crack.

FA D Kerr D Williams both solo 21.6.16

14 Boundary Wall 7m HVS 5b

A tight eliminate with nice moves, which requires considerable self-discipline as the climbing is completely escapable. Climb the left edge of the slab to a tricky finish, studiously avoiding any use of the wide crack on the right.

FA D Kerr D Williams 21.6.16

15 Star Walls 7m HS 4b ★

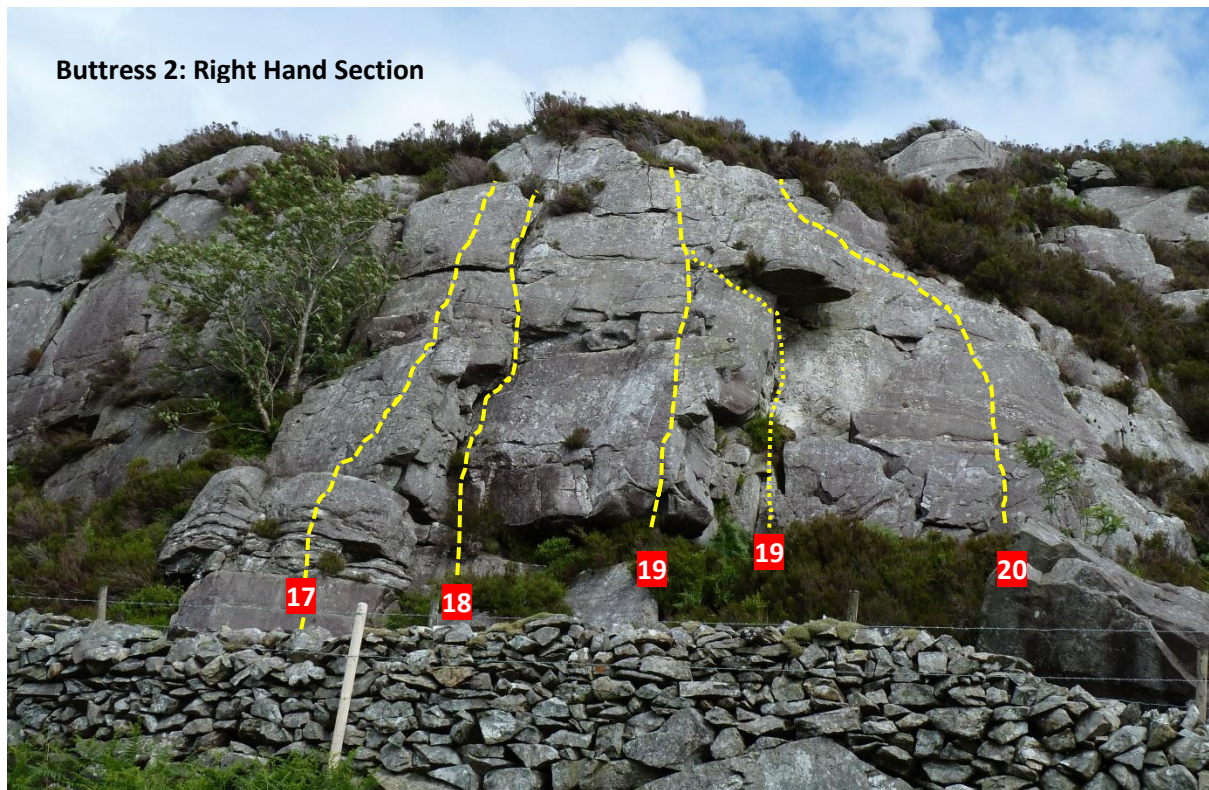
Gain the wide leftward trending crack via the thin flake, or more easily from the wide crack on the right and finish direct. Good climbing.

FA D Kerr D Williams 21.6.16

16 Wall King Dead 8m S 4a

Start left of the rectangular recess at the base of the slab. Traverse right to the crack (gear) and step back left to climb the middle of the nice little slab. It is also possible to gain the crack directly.

FA D Williams D Kerr 21.6.16



17 Wall of Tiers 8m D

The nice tiered slab to the right of the rowan tree.
FA D Williams D Kerr, both solo, 21.6.16

18 Liquorice Wall Sorts 6m D

Climb the groove and finish via the wide flake crack.
FA D Kerr 21.6.16

19 World Wall One 7m D

The rib has pleasant climbing with good holds. It can also be started via the steep groove on the right.

FA D Kerr D Williams, both solo 21.6.16

20 Second World Wall 8m D

The centre of the tapering slab to finish leftwards.
FA D Kerr D Williams, both solo 21.6.16

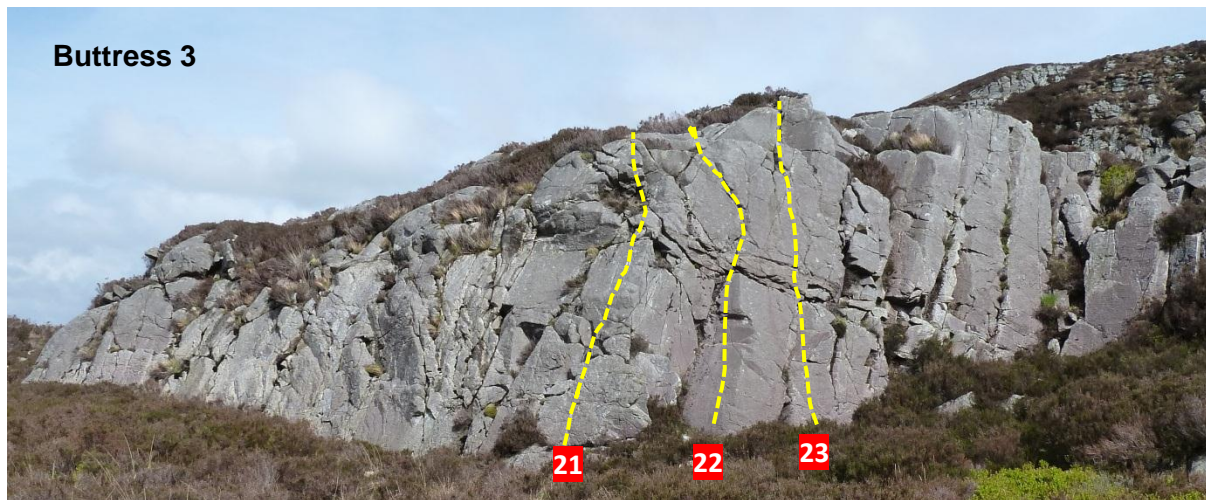
Buttress 3

OS Ref SH 69105 23968

This south-west facing outcrop is located above and right of **Buttress 2** on the edge of a small heather plateau area. The rock is both good and clean; an excellent spot for a little soloing above good landings. It can be accessed most easily from the upper end of the RH section of Buttress 1 by following good sheep paths in a south westerly direction for 5-10 minutes.

21 Mynd i'r Wal 6m D

The blunt rib.
FA D Kerr, D Williams, both solo 20.5.16

**22 Walls have Ears** 6m HS 4a

The short groove or slab, finishing leftwards across the headwall.
FA D Kerr, D Williams, both solo 20.5.16

23 Walk on Walter 6m HS 4b

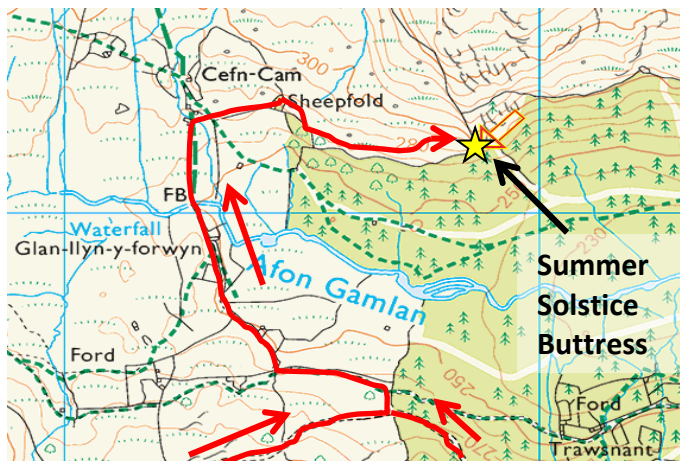
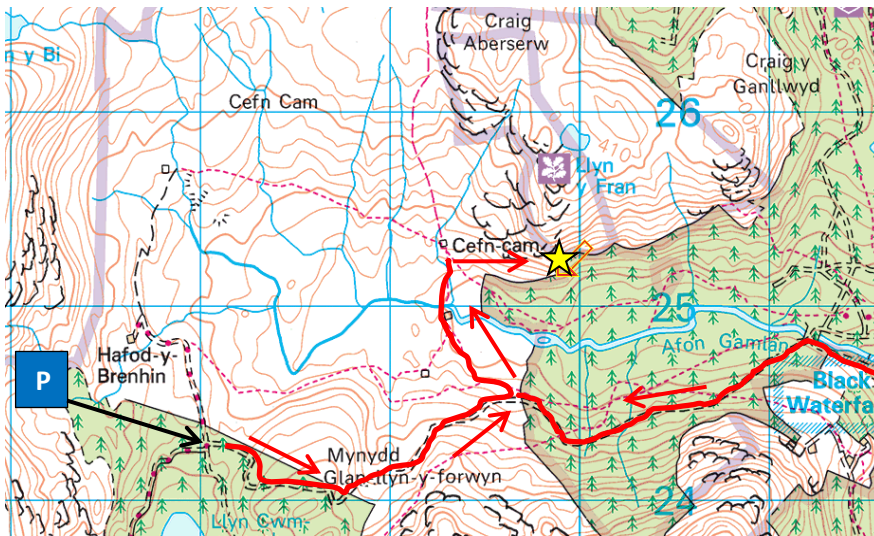
The short crack to finish up the centre of the wall.
FA D Kerr, D Williams, both solo 20.5.16

Craig Aberserw *Rock of the Mouth of the Serw*

Overview:	A small, well-positioned outcrop, composed of excellent quality rock which, despite being clearly visible from the Cwm Camlan forestry road, has a tiresome, perennially wet and very indirect approach. Scope exists for further development
<i>Altitude:</i>	300-400 metres (lower to upper tier)
<i>Approach:</i>	AG2/3 : About 1 mile of walking on a good forestry road followed by a very boggy footpath and further walking on awkward, largely untracked terrain. Wellingtons will prove essential in anything other than drought conditions
<i>Approach time:</i>	At least 60 minutes' walk from either west or the east
<i>Aspect:</i>	South west
<i>Drying:</i>	Very quick drying, with virtually no seepage
<i>Winter sun:</i>	Yes
<i>Summer sun:</i>	Yes
<i>Access Land:</i>	Yes

The craggy, heather covered slopes of Craig Aberserw demarcate the eastern edge of the Cefn Cam area. There is much rock here, but the only real attraction for the climber is **Summer Solstice Buttress**, a small, two tier outcrop at the very southern end of the escarpment. Despite having sections of good rock, the remainder of the west-facing Aberserw escarpment is too broken and heavily vegetated to be of any real interest.

Summer Solstice Buttress has some good climbing on super rock but, unfortunately, it will never be a well-visited crag, as the long and tedious approach requires a lot of dogged determination for, essentially, quite limited reward.



Approach: Initially as for **Cefn Cam** to the parking area at the staggered cross-roads (OS Ref 680 242). Park here as there is no vehicular right of way beyond this point. On foot, follow the forestry road eastwards over Mynydd Glan Llyn y Forwyn and descend to the Coed Cwm Mynach forest boundary. Continue along the road past **Creigiau Uwch y Wal** to a cattle grid on the edge of Coed y Brenin forest. The same point may also be reached, on foot or by mountain bike, using forestry roads from Ganllwyd to the east. It is a long way. **Access by vehicle from the east is strictly prohibited by the landowner.**

A muddy path descends to the left of the forest boundary to a metal gate in the wall on the right. Turn left and follow a descending path north westwards across extremely boggy ground, passing through the ruins of Glan Llyn y Forwyn farm, to a footbridge over the Afon Gamlan. Continue along the still marshy path towards Cefn Cam farm ruins and then bear right across a tiny stream to a stone walled sheepfold. From here, follow the stone (forest boundary) wall as closely as possible to the crag. This is much easier said than done. Moss covered boulders and low branches abound and there is no proper path, although the fortunate, or intuitive, may find and then link together a series of useful sheep paths, heading in generally the right direction, to aid what will otherwise be quite a trying walk. Approaching the crag during summer months is definitely not recommended, as all the sheep paths will then be obliterated by chest to head-height bracken.

For everyone other than obsessive devotees of molinia tussocks and perennially boggy ground, approaching via the seldom used, wet and overgrown footpath just north of the Afon Gamlan is not recommended either.

Summer Solstice Buttress

OS Ref SH 69872 25153

This, easily-seen outcrop located at the very southern and lowest end of the line of crags where Craig Aberserw abuts onto the Coed y Brenin forest boundary wall, is notable for some extremely impressive dry stone wall construction. There are two small tiers, with the upper one having the best rock.

**Lower Tier**

The quartz-speckled rock is unusual by Rhinogydd standards to say the least, but can be climbed with confidence, although its unusual and compact nature doesn't lend itself to placing any protection whatsoever.

1 The Longest Day 7m VD

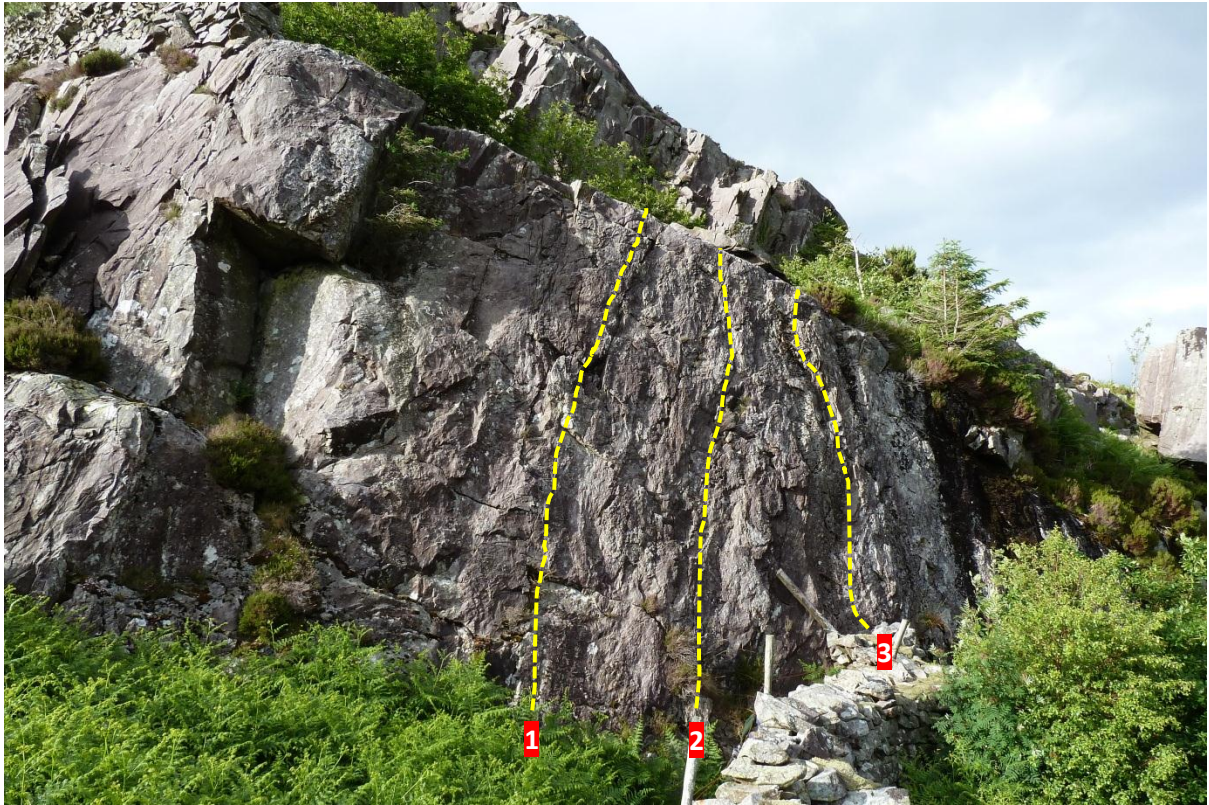
Climb directly to finish up the thin left hand crack.
FA D Kerr D Williams, both solo 21.6.16

2 Post Snapper 7m VD

Climb directly to finish up the thin right hand crack.
FA D Kerr solo 21.6.16 *(After an hour of increasingly desperate bushwhacking on 'The Direct Approach', Williams' eagerness to finally escape from the 'jungle' led to an undignified plunge off a high boundary wall with snapped fence post in hand.)*

3 The Direct Approach 6m VD

From a standing start on top of the wall climb direct via a very shallow, mossy groove.
FA D Kerr solo 21.6.16 *(Kerr had insisted that a direct approach to the crag, through dense scrubby woodland and by fording the Afon Gain, would be both easy and quick. It most definitely was not!)*



Upper Tier



The Upper Tier can be reached by one of three ways: by climbing a broken crack-line beneath the end of the upper short stone wall to the left of the Lower Crag, by climbing one of the lower tier routes or by carefully hopping over the wall, traversing right and then scrambling up well to the right of a very large block. The main features here are a disappointing slabby corner beneath a steep but very short wall, right of which is a clean (but unfortunately rather blank) little slab flanked by a fine grooved arête.

Descend well to the right via vegetated slabs and steep scrambling.

4 La Bouche 12m VS 4c ★

The nicely positioned grooved arête has a steep start on good holds. Finish more easily. FA D Kerr, D Williams 21.6.16

Just to the right is a steep, shallow groove.

5 Crumper 12m HVS 4c ★

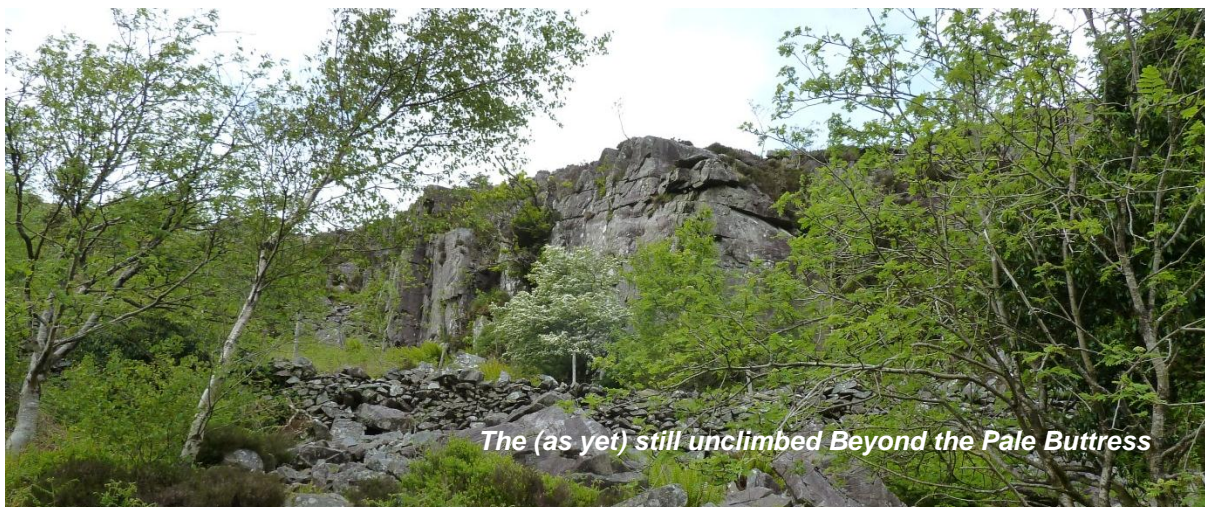
The groove has good climbing and excellent holds, but protection is woeful. FA D Kerr, D Williams 22.5.17

Right again are a few unclimbed lines on steep rock which would require extensive cleaning, particularly as Mr & Mrs Ivy have almost managed most of the first ascents.

A Step Too Far?!

Those who have relished (and indeed enjoyed) the challenges posed by the approach to Summer Solstice Buttress may wish to note that there is a relatively clean, not insubstantial and, as yet, unclimbed crag some 250 metres to the north-east.

This is the very aptly-named, even more inaccessible **Beyond the Pale Buttress**. It is about 10 metres high and has at least 6-7 possible lines on good, steep rock. Provided you manage to find and then follow the very feint, twisting goat path linking the two crags, it can be reached in an 'interesting' 20-25 minutes of hard-core bushwhacking 'thrash' through dense, scrubby, hawthorn and bramble-infested birch woodland. Definitely an **AG3++** grade approach, for which a machete may prove useful. Once at the crag the trap is sprung, as retracing the 'sporting' approach is..... Well, you get the message!



The (as yet) still unclimbed Beyond the Pale Buttress

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:

Sy Finch; Kulbir Kaur; Doug Kerr; Don Sargeant; Mike Shamash and Terry Taylor.

*Dave Williams
Steep Stone Climbing
January 2021*