Caseg Boulders



Hidden away on the banks of Afon Caseg there is some excellent bouldering. The main Caseg boulder is a magnificent chunk of stone and hosts some of the most celebrated test pieces in North Wales. The other blocks have some fine mid and low grade problems. The rock is superb and the landings are generally good.

Conditions: The rock is fairly quick to dry on the main and upper boulders, but the Caseg Bach boulders are not — these can to be very slow to dry after rain, particularly during the winter months. Midges can be a problem during summer evenings, especially at the more sheltered Caseg Bach boulders.

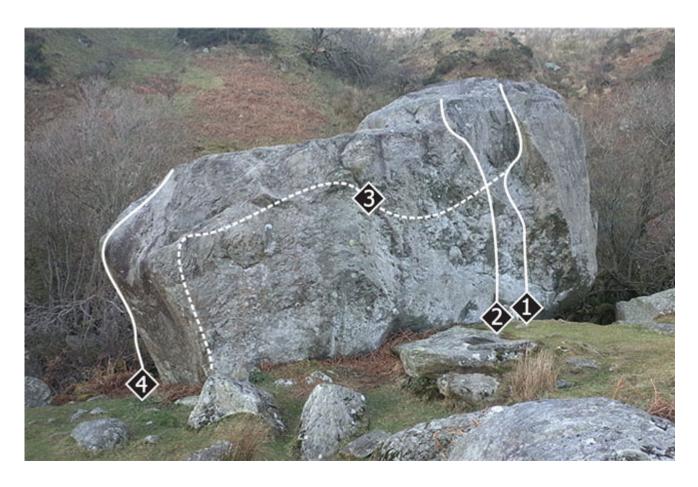
Approach: From the kinked Mynydd Llandegai crossroads at the Capel Curig end of Bethesda turn up the Braichmelyn road towards Gerlan. Follow the road over the river and up a steep hill to a junction; turn right and go past an old shop on the left (this is Gerlan). Farther along the road and just as you are leaving Gerlan, take the left hand turning (Ciltwllan), and follow it up to some houses on the right. There is limited

parking here but please consider local residents — if in doubt, park back down in Bethesda.

Walk up the road, which now turns into a track at the last houses on the right. Continue up for approximately 150m to the last left hand bend 20m before a livestock enclosure on the right. At the apex of the bend go through the gate on the right and follow the wall for 50m along the side of the field to another gate tucked in the corner. A path, boulder strewn at first, leads down to the riverside. A little further upstream there is a good crossing point (this can be tricky if the river is in spate). The main boulder lies 20m upstream.

Caseg Boulder

The easiest descent from the top of the boulder is to climb down through the mid section of *Tramwyiad Caseg*. The problems are described in a right-to-left clockwise fashion, starting at the groove at the right side of the landward side of the boulder.



Like most grooves this one is a bit tricky.

2. 4B

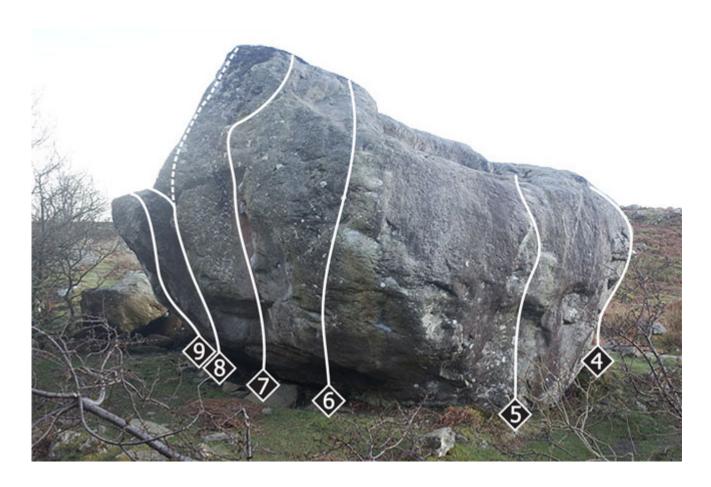
The short steep wall just left of the groove.

3. Tramwyiad Caseg 6B+ 🗵 🗯

An absorbing, technical traverse of the landward side of the boulder. Start hanging good holds at the left arête and traverse right, staying below the top, to finish up the groove of *Problem 1*.

4. 5C/6A 🗵 🜟

Tussle up the hanging prow with as much grace as you can muster. A contrived low start can be made to the left at 7A.



5. The Gimp 7B 🗵 🗯 🖈

A thin and crimpy challenge, typically conquered with either a high rock over or an optimistic deadpoint. A harder (7C) crouching start can be done: left hand low on a slopey pinch, right hand on a chest high sidepull. [Neil Dyer late 90s, low

start: Paul Houghoughi 09.05]

The bulging rib between *The Gimp* and *The Caseg Groove* gives a superb but fiercely difficult problem. There are a couple of different methods; the direct high rock over will suit shorter climbers, while the left hand method using an undercut out left favours the tall and is arguably a bit easier. The sit down start on the right is an obvious grade 8 project. [Mark Katz 2001]

7. The Caseg Groove 6C+ ≥ * *

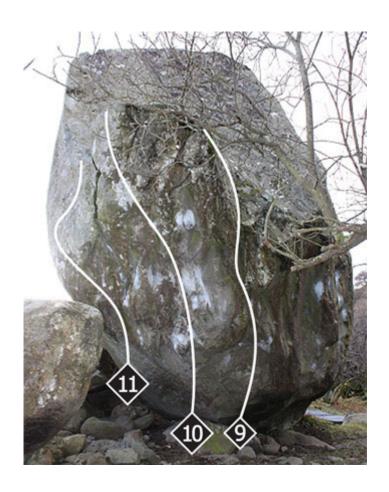
A truly classic problem tackling the attractive groove feature in the centre of the river side face. A tenuous layback move at the start might get you to some decent holds, but reaching the good flatty up left is another matter all together. If you make it step up right to finish more easily. [John Redhead early 80s]

7a. Caseg Groove sds 8A 🗵 🗯 🚖

An immaculate test piece — shame it's so desperate! Even using holds out to the right on *Main Vein* does little to blunt the difficulty. [Mark Katz 2001]

8. Hiraeth 7C 🗵 🗯 🚖

A powerful, dynamic problem taking on groove feature left of *The Caseg Groove*. Start from an obvious low crouching/tall climber's sitting position (right hand: sloper right of the groove, left hand: big undercut). A hard move up to a higher right hand pinch precedes a jump for the slopey shoulder; match and rock out leftwards to easy ground. It is possible to extend difficulties with a highball finish up the slabby upper arête, although it'll be worth giving the holds a good brush if you can reach them from the side. The problem was originally climbed at 7A+ from a specified pull on at chest high side pulls. [7A+ original start: Nick Dixon 90s, 7C sds: Mark Katz 24.12.07]



9. On the Wagon 7A+ 🗵 🜟

A tricky number that climbs up the right side of the prow of Don't Think, Feel. Harder for the short. Start sitting with feet on the obvious wedged block under the main boulder (left hand on the good pinch at the bottom of Don't Think, Feel), and pull up into an undercut (right hand) and slap a sloping boss in the groove (left hand). Continue up with more sketchy manoeuvres before snatching a good hold. Top out directly (a bit mossy), or better, traverse off left into the top of Don't Think, Feel. [Si Panton 03.11.06]

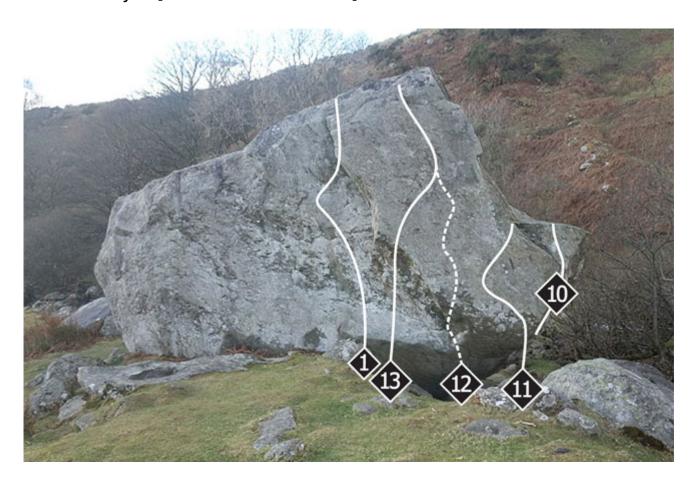
10. Don't Think, Feel 7C 🗵 🗯 🚖

The steep prow of the boulder goes from a sit down start and features burly, slapping on pinches. [Mark Katz 2001]

11. Don't Think, Drink 7A+ 区

A dynamic little problem. A crouching/sitting start on with right hand on a high pinch just left of the holds used on Don't Think, Feel and with left hand low on a slopey hold.

Fire off two deadpoint slaps, first to a diagonal edge, then more recklessly for the juggy base of the upper arete. Finish more easily. [Chris Davies 2001]



12. Prowed Slab 7A

A low start to *Monkey up a Stick* with a very awkward pull on. Start crouching with a good high left foot, and a good left hand undercut just above (in the base of the groove), and right hand on a small crimp on the slab (this is the same crimp you take with your left on *Don't Think*, *Drink*). A series of powerful pulls and hand flicks lead into the stand up version. [Jim McCormack 10.14]

13. Monkey up a Stick 5A 🗵 😕

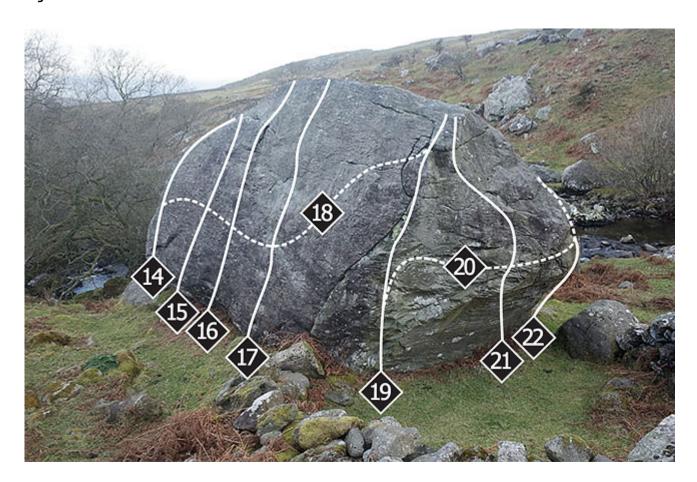
Monkey up the two opposing arêtes just right of the *Problem 1* groove.

Caseg Uchaf

150m upstream, and on the same southern bank of Afon Caseg is the Caseg Uchaf boulder. The problems are described left-to-

right across the slab on the landward side and round in an anti-clockwise fashion to the top riverside face.

The scoop face that greets you on arrival has a lovely leftwards leading feature. This rates about 3C and is excellent. Harder direct versions of it are also possible, although they feel highball. Some use the scoop as a descent route from the boulder top. An alternative descent is down the finish of *Tramwyiad Caseg Uchaf*, dropping carefully onto the adjacent boulder.



14. 3C 🗵 🚖

The pleasing left arête of the slabby face.

15. 4C

Climb the thin slab 1m right of the arête. After a hard step on it soon eases. A harder (5A/B) eliminate version avoids holds on the central line.

16. 4A 💌 🚖 🚖

The central line on the slab is very good. Make a forceful step-up on the large foot ledge and finish past a welcome flake.

17. 4B 🗵 🛊 🗷 🚖

A fine slab problem taking a line just right of the central problem.

18. Tramwyiad Llech Caseg Uchaf 5A 🗵 🗯 🚖

An entertaining left-to-right traverse of the slab, finishing up the *Danni*, *Champion* arête.

19. Danni, Champion of the World 4B 🗵 🚖

Left arête of the sheep pen, starting from inside the sheep pen. A harder (6A) sit down start can be done.

20. Tramwyiad Caseg Uchaf 6C 🗵 🕏 🕏

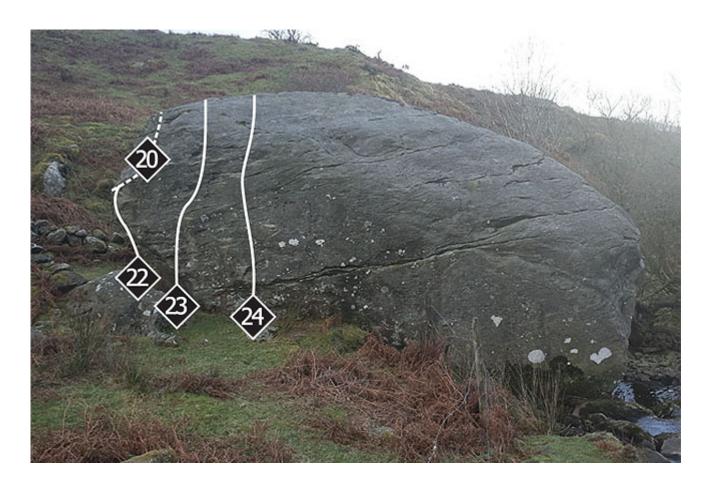
A superb left-to-right traverse across the sheep pen wall. Start with the first move of the *Danni*, *Champion sds* on the far left side of the sheep pen, and then head rightwards across the steepness. Finish by turning the arête and exiting up the wall. Earlier exits are possible but when the climbing flows this well, why bother?

21. 4C 💌 🚖

Pull up into the hanging scoop and finish leftwards, or rightwards.

22. 5C/6A 🗵 🚖

Tackle the undercut arête directly from a sit down start. Left hand on a positive flake, right hand on a sloper — snag some better holds and finish as per *Tramwyiad Caseg Uchaf*.



23. 6B

An awkward little line just right of the arête. Start sitting, partially on the boulder if it suits your height. After the first snatch it soon eases.

24. 4C 🗵 🚖

The wall just to the right of Problem 23 has some nice holds.

Caseg Fach

Much farther down stream, in fact, 100m up stream from the river bridge close to the Gerlan football pitch there are a couple of boulders of more 'local' interest. This part of the river gorge is much more sheltered and as a result the rock can be slow to dry after rain.

Approach: To reach them from the bridge follow the rather indistinct public footpath on the north side of the river until a moss-backed boulder can be seen down to the right at the bottom of the steep river bank.



25. Moss Slab 6A+

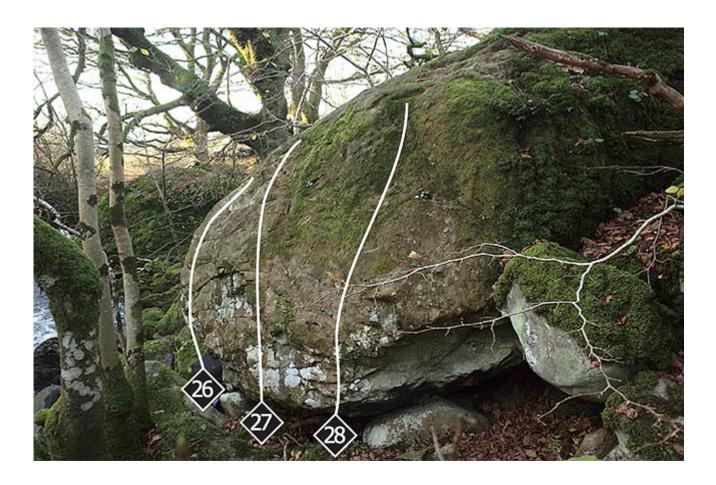
From a standing start climb directly up the slab above the pocketed wall.

[Phil Targett 05.05.14]

26. Moss Arête 5C

The arête to the right taken from a sit down start — undercut and side pull for hands, feet on the small boulder. Slap up then move up right, before rocking back left to finish up the slab.

[Phil Targett 05.05.14]



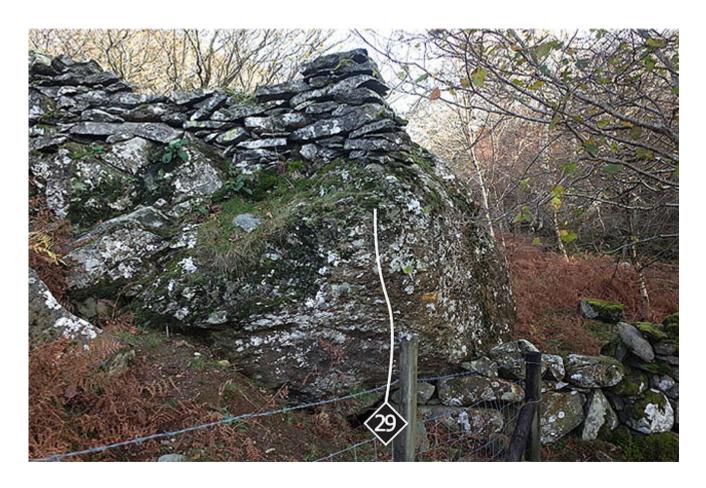
27. Moss Wall 5C

A sit down start up the centre of the wall right of the arête, using the boulder underneath for feet. Pull up from two crimps and grab a jug. Finish easily. [Phil Targett 05.05.14]

28. Moss Side 6A+

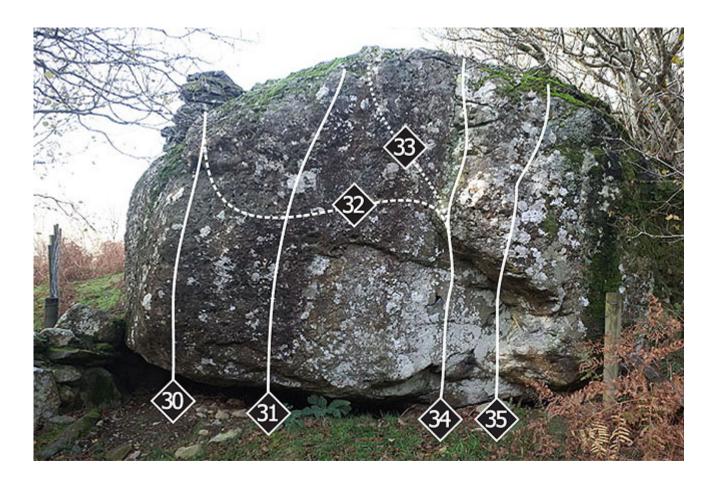
A sit down start line at the right side of the wall beneath the obvious hold. Gain this hold with a hard pull then use a pocket and finish direct. This time the boulder underneath is out of bounds for feet. [Phil Targett 05.05.14]

A little farther on, and up from the river bank, another boulder with a drystone wall on top can be seen. Care should be taken to not damage the wall either on top or below the boulder.



29. Fitz like a Glove 5C

A short problem up the steep wall on the left side of the drystone wall that meets the boulder. Start sitting with a high lay away/edge for the left and a low pocket for the right. Good moves up gain a 'ball in a hole' finishing jug. Don't top out. [Phil Targett 29.03.12]



30. Stage Fright 6A 🗵 🗯

The blunt arête of the main face taken on its right hand side. Use a small pocket and an edge and slap up to a good pocket on the lip. Finish by following pockets up and left. [Phil Targett 29.03.12]

31. Tony Two Slaps 6C ⊠ 🖈

The wall left of the *Elevator* groove. Use a good pocket to make a deadpoint to a sloper on the lip, before slapping right to another sloper and finishing direct. [Phil Targett 29.03.12]

32. Code Breaker 6C+ 🗵 🜟

An intense traverse line. Start sitting as for *Elevator*, gain the upper groove and then traverse left via a series of pockets/edges to finish up *Stage Fright*. [Phil Targett 29.03.12]

33. Scag Beach 6C 🗵 🗯

Start sitting as for *Elevator* and gain the upper groove. Pinch

the nose with the right, take a pocket on the left and then make a big move for the top. [Andrew Davies 31.03.12]

34. Elevator 6A 🗵 🚖 🗵 🚖

Climb the striking groove line from a sit down start, hands matched in the obvious pocket. [Phil Targett 29.03.12]

35. Undercut Strut 6C ^図 ★

Start sitting under the overlap at the base of the groove. Use the undercut at the back of the overlap and a high shallow two finger pocket on the right wall. A hard pull gains the big sloper ledge then a better hold on the right. Finish more easily.

[Phil Targett 28.04.12]