<u>Tan y Grisiau</u>



Blaenau's premier bouldering venue with an impressive collection of problems found both above and below the dam road which runs below Craig yr Wrysgan and Clogwyn yr Oen. Historically the bouldering above the dam road has seen the most attention, and produced some of the hardest problems; however the rock quality below the dam road is significantly better. Here you will find an extensive area of walls and slabs with some very high quality problems.

There is a good spread of grades at Tan y Grisiau, plus plenty of different styles of problem on offer, from highball arêtes and walls to powerful roofs. The landings are generally quite good; nonetheless pads and spotters will be appreciated by most visitors.

Conditions: The boulders get plenty of sunshine and are mostly quick drying; the exception being Geoff's Roof which is often dripping with seepage. Providing it is not raining (or snowing) climbing is possible throughout the year.

Approach: Just after turning off the A496, take the left turn

towards the power station; follow the road around past the cafe and then up to the right and over the railway crossing. Go up the hill for 200m (ignoring the first two lay-bys on the right, which have double yellow parking restriction lines) and park at the next lay-by on the right which sits opposite a five bar gate on the left side of the road.

Go through the gate and head left to a little stream. At the stream head uphill trending slightly to the left — the first problems are at the left hand end of the complex of crags.



1. GCSE Arête 6B 🗵 🜟

A short but intense problem up the steep side of an obvious leaning block a few metres left of the stone enclosure. From a sit down start on the left hand side and feet on the little ledge power up on crimps to a juggy top out. [Sam Davis, Zed Jones 06.12]

2. Y Prifathro 6B+ 🗵 🚖

The left hand arête of the block gives a fine sloper problem.

Start sitting and keep your feet off the block to the left. The jutting foot block at the base of *GCSE Arête* is in if you want it. [Sam Davis, Zed Jones 06.12]

3. Chemical Crack 4C ^図 ★

The diagonal crack in the small bay behind *GCSE Arête* is a grade easier from a stand up. [Sam Davis, Zed Jones 06.12]

4. Chemical Brothers 6B+/C ^図 ★

A very good 'blinkers on' problem with a slightly morpho crux (thus the split grade). From a sit down start (hands matched on the layaway flake) climb straight up through the bulge, bouncing up to a jug near the top. The crack of *Chemical Crack* is out of bounds. [Sam Davis, Zed Jones 06.12]

40m up and left of *Chemical Crack* is a steep little buttress above a wide mossy terrace.



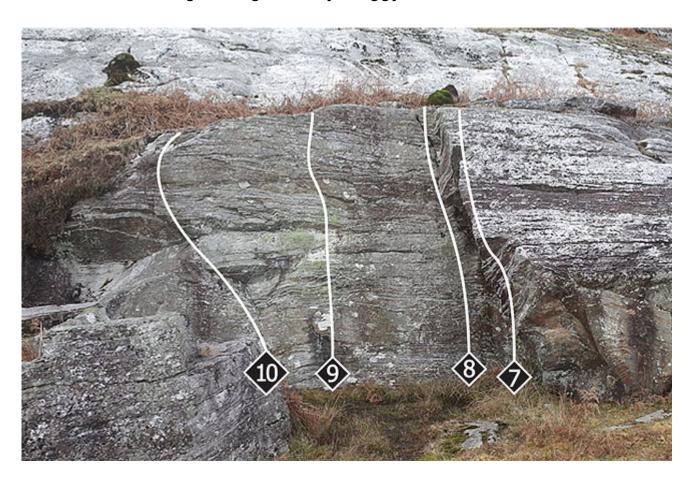
5. Sboncen Llaw Dde 4B

The big juggy flake on the right. [Sam Davis, Zed Jones 06.12]

6. Sboncen 5A

The obvious left hand line from a low start. [Sam Davis, Zed Jones 06.12]

25m left and slightly up from *Sboncen* is a white wall with a steep undercut arête on the right and a willow tree on the left. The landing can get very boggy here.



7. One Arm Bandit 5B

From a sit down start under the roof climb the steep arête, moving up on its left side. [Sam Davis, Zed Jones 06.12]

8. NSGA 5A

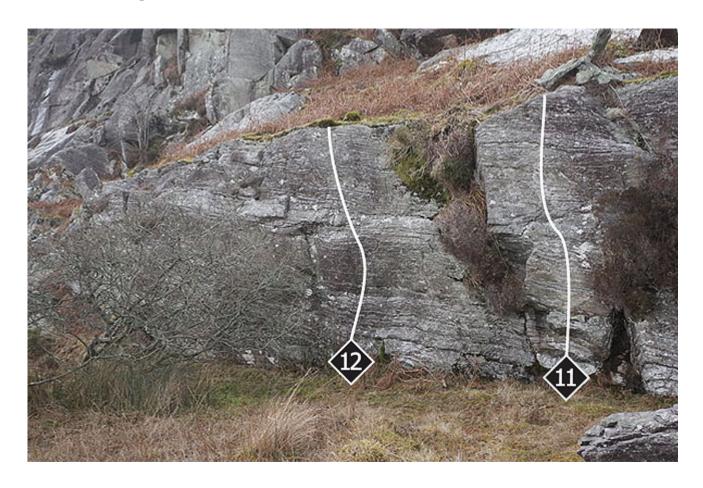
The leaning corner left of *One Armed Bandit* from a sit down start. [Sam Davis, Zed Jones 06.12]

9. Squelch 6B 🗵 🜟

The crimpy white wall 2m left of NSGA is good — shame about the boggy landing. [Sam Davis, Zed Jones 96.12]

10. Squelch 2 5A

The crimpy crack feature 2m left of *Squelch*. [Sam Davis, Zed Jones 06.12]



11. 4C

The narrow wall 4m right of the willow tree. [Sam Davis, Zed Jones 06.12]

12. 4C

The wall just right of the willow tree. [Sam Davis, Zed Jones 06.12]

To reach the next section cross a small stream on the right and head up rightwards on a vague path leading past a tiny wall in a notch. Above is a wide grassy terrace and a series of attractive, just-off-vertical walls.

Over on the left, just on the left side of the stream is a neat wall. The landing ledge has a considerable drop-off so care is required.

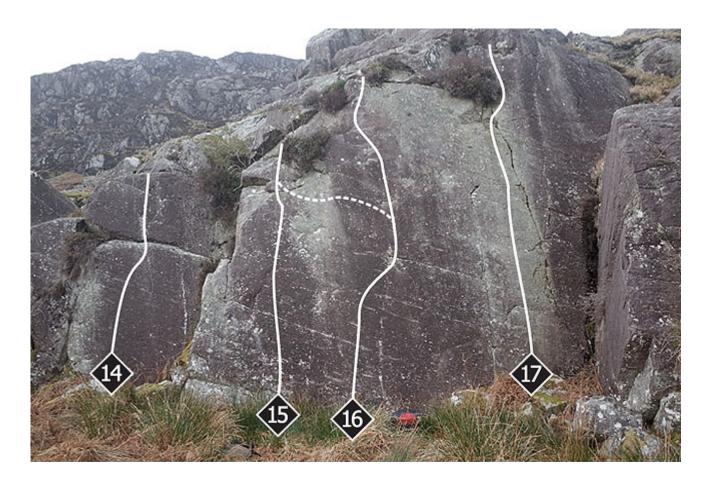


The blank wall is a potential project.

13. 4C 🗷 🚖

The crack and right arête.

15m to the right is the main event hereabouts, an impressive highball wall.



14. Llew Llaw Gyffes 5C/6A! ^図 ★

The smaller wall left of the highball wall. Make a thin pull to the break and move up past a useful sidepull on the upper wall. The landing (in its current state) requires care and lots of pads. [Sam Davis, Zed Jones 06.12]

15. Ar y Grwndwll 6A! 🗵 🜟

The left hand line on the big wall is spoilt by a lack of independence from the easy left arête. It is still good though if you avoid the arête low down.

16. Bendigeidfran 6B! 🗵 🗯 🖈

The central line on the wall is a stunning highball. A tricky start, coming in from the left, precedes a crux lurch up to a good finger jug. Continue boldly, but more easily to the top. [Dafydd Davis 2007]

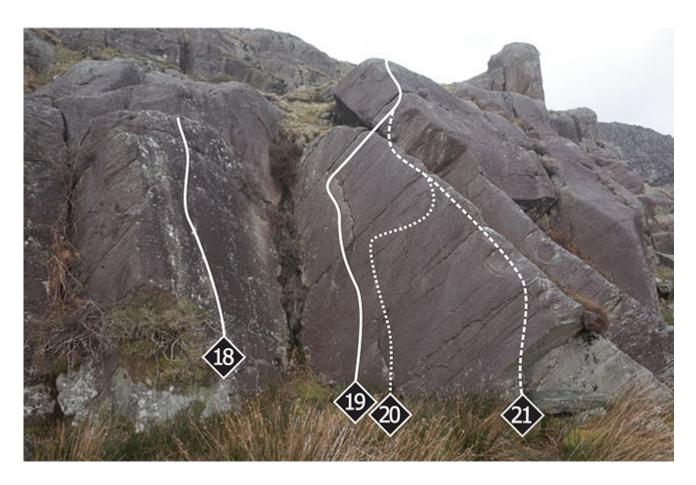
16a. Bendigeidfran Llaw Chwith 6B! [™] *

A less scary, but slightly reachy left hand finish is possible. From the finger jug climb out left into the finish

of *Ar y Grwndwll*. You can also climb down the arête if you don't fancy going up the heathery finish. [07.14 Sam Davis, Zed Jones]

The crack on the right side of the wall is an excellent highball line but the rocky landing does require care (and ideally, lots of pads).

Round to the right is a small bay with an attractive right wall.



18. Sam's Slab 4C 🗵 🜟

The wall on the left of the bay is worthwhile. [Sam Davis 06.12]

19. Minecraft Crack 6A! 🗵 🗯 🜟

Gain the flake line on the left side of the right wall and follow it up left before swinging back right to the arête. Finish up on the right side of the upper arête — this feels

high but the climbing is steady. [Sam Davis, Zed Jones 06.12]

20. Minecraft Wall 6C 🗵 🗯 🗯

The wall right of the crack has a brilliant crux sequence. Step up on the obvious large foothold then head up rightwards to grab *Minecraft Arête* (finish up or down this). There is an easier version which climbs the wall further right, using the diagonal crack — this is not as good though. [Sam Davis, Zed Jones 06.12]

21. Minecraft Arête 5A! 🗵 🜟

The right hand arête of the wall gives a pleasant highball problem. Finish as per *Minecraft Arête*. [Sam Davis, Zed Jones 06.12]

To reach the final section drop back down to the *Squelch* wall and head across to the incline which leads up to the *Tempest* area and the dam road. 25m beyond the incline is a pale slabby wall with a sloping top.



22. 5B

The short slab just left of the crack is a bit of a one move wonder. [Sam Davis, Zed Jones 06.12]

23. The Swarm 6A 🔼 🗯

The central crack has a rounded top out. [Sam Davis, Zed Jones 06.12]

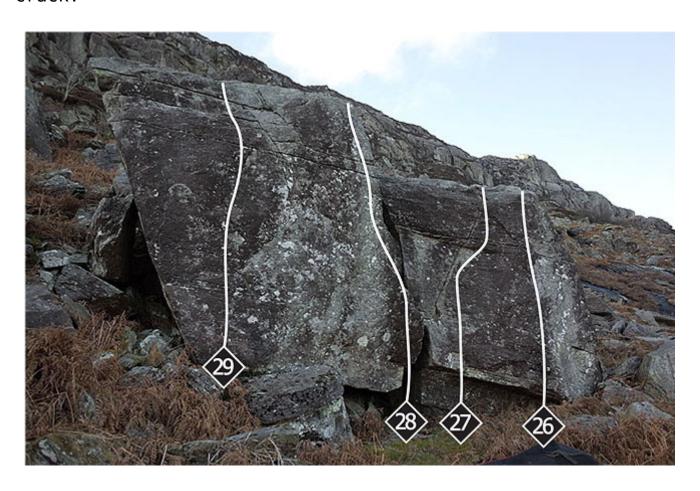
24. 5A!

The slab right of the crack with a slightly gripping top out. [Sam Davis, Zed Jones 06.12]

25. We like Trains 6A+

The short arête on the block up to the right is climbed on its right side from a sit down start. [Sam Davis, Zed Jones 06.12]

50m to the left, and at a slightly higher level, there is a distinctive pair of blocks, split by a wide, left leaning crack.



The right arête of the right hand block is quite good. [Sam Davis, Zed Jones 04.14]

27. 5C

Start standing with left hand in the quartz packed crack. Snatch the good ledge up right continue up with reasonable hand holds but poor feet. [Sam Davis, Zed Jones 04.14]

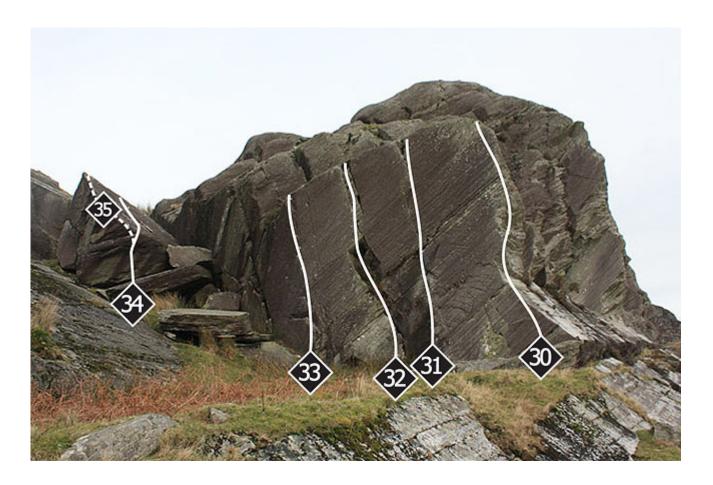
28. Mab y Mynydd 5C 🗵 🕏 🕏

The right arête of the left hand block is superb. Climb it on its left side, but switch to the right at the very top. There is a powerful 6C sit down start — the adjacent right hand block is, obviously, out of bounds. [Sam Davis, Zed Jones 04.14]

29. Tin Dros Ben 6A! 🗵 🜟

The front face of the left hand block is climbed straight up onto the big slopers at the top. A good problem, spoilt to some extent by the very awkward landing. [Sam Davis, Zed Jones 04.14]

The next section is situated further up the hillside on the right side of the incline. Approach it from the incline, either from below, or by dropping down the incline from the dam road. There are some eye-catching walls close to the side of the incline — these have some route lines, but the bouldering section is set back 20m to the right.



30. Crib Fawr 6A! 🗵 🗯 🚖

The big arête at the right side of the face is a bit of a frightener.

31. Hollt Fono 6B+! [▼] *

The thin highball crack is a compelling line, but unless you are climbing well within your grade, approach it with care! A distinctive forefinger mono move proves to be the key to success.

32. Hollt yr Arch 5C! 🗵 🗯 🗯

Another scary highball, but this time at a more amenable grade.

33. Tempest 7A 🗵 🗯 🛊

The attractive blunt arête gives superb, technical climbing and an engaging finish. [Ryan McConnell 27.04.02]

33a. Big Red Button 7A 🗵 🗯 🚖

Dyno for the top just left of the arête, using an obvious

sidepull on the arête for

the right hand. This can be done static by taking a slightly higher sidepull.

[Gruff Owen 23.05.02]

34. Y Chwydd 6B+ 🗵 🜟

Start matched in the big break and make a difficult transition to the upper slab; various methods exist, some harder than others.

35. Flying Arete 6C+ ^図 ★

Start matched in the big break and make some tenuous moves to get established

on the hanging arête, swinging round to the left to finish. [Pete Robins 28.01.12]

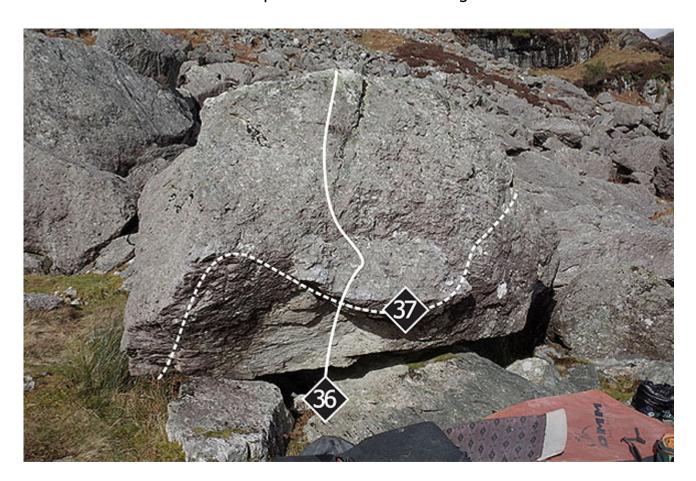
Above the Road

The rest of the circuit can be found up by the side of the Stylan Dam service road. There is a good spread of grades here, plus some hard test pieces. The rock is a bit sharp and snappy in places; however the more established problems tend to have better rock.

Approach: If coming from the 'below the road' circuit just walk up the incline and turn left. Alternatively, if the main focus of your visit is to try problems 'above the road' then it is best to approach from the Cwm Orthin car park. To reach this from the 'below the road' approach you have two options; 1. Just walk up the road from the lay-by for 50m, and then split off left to follow the dam road up. 2. (slightly less walking) Drive up from the lay-by and bear right at the road split then turn left at the T junction. Follow the road round for 200m, passing beneath the quarry tip on the right to park in a large lay-by on the left. The road ends here; beyond the gate is the start of the track rising up into Cwm Orthin.

Follow a path breaking off left from the Cwm Orthin track, cross the footbridge over the stream and continue over to join

the dam road which runs across the hill side beneath Craig yr Wrysgan and Clogwyn yr Oen. Follow the road until it crosses a prominent incline. 50m beyond the incline you will see the first of the described problems on the right side of the road.

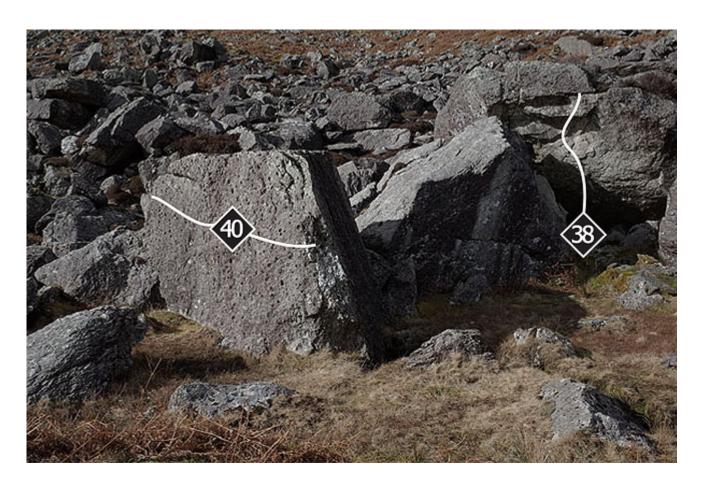


36. That's all Folks 5C

Sit start under left end of small roof. Pull up on lip holds to a small incut hold and a pocket on left end of roof. Mantel up and top out. [Tom Silsbury 03.13]

37. Loony Tunes 6B

From sit start on left arête traverse rightwards across the lip of the roof, and then make awkward and powerful moves up right to reach good jugs. [Tom Silsbury 03.13]



38. Flick of the Wrist 7C/+ 区 🙀 🖈

A powerful and much tried line. The obvious steep wall in a recess that can be seen 20m from the road. Start standing matched on the good sidepull. Four moves to the top, simple as that; the slabby left sidewall is out of bounds. The obvious sit down start on the undercut is a very hard project. [Jordan Buys 20.03.09]

39. Nodder's Arete 7B+ 区 🖈

This is the arete in a hole about 6m to the left of *Flick of the Wrist*. Start: right hand on arete and left hand on a sidepull on a steep wall. Match the arete and top out. [Dave Noden 2009]

40. Wal Pocad 5A 🗵 🚖

Traverse the pocketed wall on the left side of the block left of *Flick of the Wrist*. Start at the arête nearest the road and head leftwards, passing a distinct crux section.

On the opposite side of the road there is a boulder split by a

hand crack.



40. Dwylo i Fyny 5A 🗵 🜟

Climb the crack from a sit down start. A good introduction to the fine art of jamming.

25m left of *Flick of the Wrist* a 50cm high stone wall runs away from the road. The wall leads to a boulder with an overhanging face in a pit. This is *The Gout Club*, an old 7A+ which has lost a crucial hold and is currently unclimbed. The problem started on a pair of obvious edges.



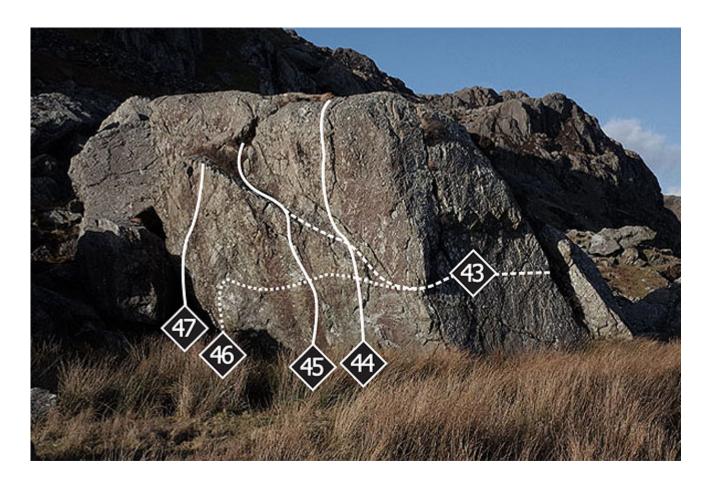
41. The Rib 6C+ 🗵 🜟

Undercut rib feature located about 6m to the left of *The Gout Club*. Start sitting very low down on the right and climb up leftwards. [Michael Allday 27.04.13]

42. Hufen y Ddraig 6B+ 🗵 🗯

Start crouching with hands on the edge and pocket on the left side of the alcove just left of *The Rib*. Climb straight up through the bulge. Make sure the landing is well padded out.

500m further up the dam road and past a bend there is a large block sitting opposite a lay-by and below Clogwyn yr Oen.



43. The May Queen 6B+

Traverse right-to-left across the slabby roadside face, then around the arête with difficult moves to gain and follow the juggy shelf across the steep face.

44. Cashmere 7B ^図 ★

Start sitting 2m left of the arête with right hand on a low sidepull and left on a low diagonal crimp. The original sequence snatched the distinctive finger hold with the left before powering up to the jugs on the shelf. An alternative method uses a right heel and takes an undercut pinch with the right. The upper crack line gives a good highball challenge in itself at a scary 6A+!. If you don't fancy that the leftwards ramp provides a more amenable finish. [Danny Cattell 13.03.02]

45. Chris's Kashmir Curry 6A 🗵 🗯 🔀

A Tan y Grisiau classic. From a crouching start on opposition side pulls move up past the clean ledge and juggy flake to reach the shelf; finish leftwards along this.

46. Hippocampus 8A/+ ^図 🏓

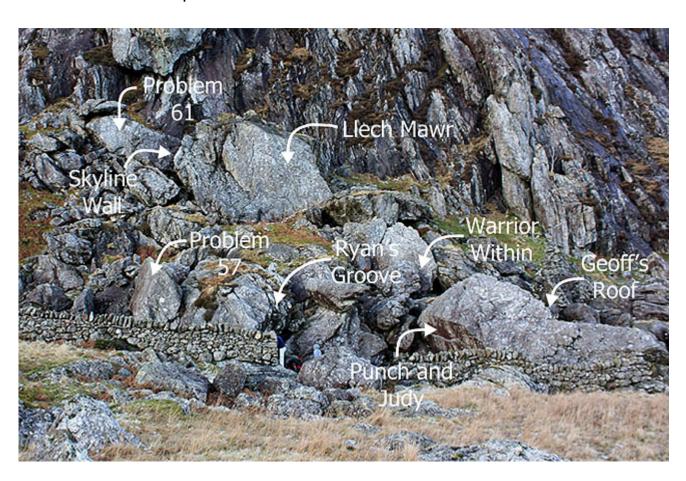
A steep and fingery traverse line. Start sitting at the left side of the face on opposition side pulls by the obvious block. The difficulty kicks in straight away with two fierce moves: a crossover to a dirty crimp, and then a dynamic lunge to a horizontal slot. Another few moves rightwards lead into *Chris's Kashmir Curry*. The problem then continues rightwards to finish on jugs at the right arête. [Adam Hocking 10.07]

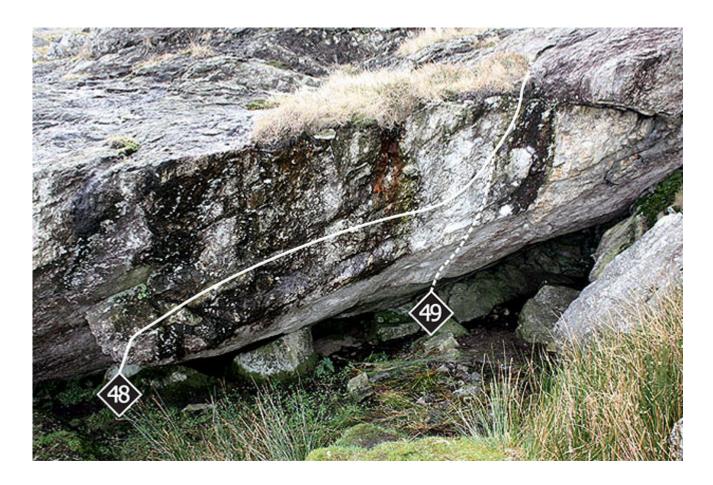
47. Jordan's Crispy Crunch 7B! 🗵 🗯

A slightly highball line left of *Hippocampus*. Start by pulling off a boulder (right

hand: undercut fin, left hand: pinch under the adjoining boulder). Snatch up the wall to a high finish. The awkward landing requires care. [Jordan Buys 20.03.09]

A further 100m up the road in a dip behind a fallen down wall more worthwhile problems can be found.





48. Geoff's Roof 7A 🗵 🗯 🚖

From a sit down start on a flake at the left side of the roof, move rightwards across the lip to gain and top out via the finger flake and boss. [Geoff Turner 2001]

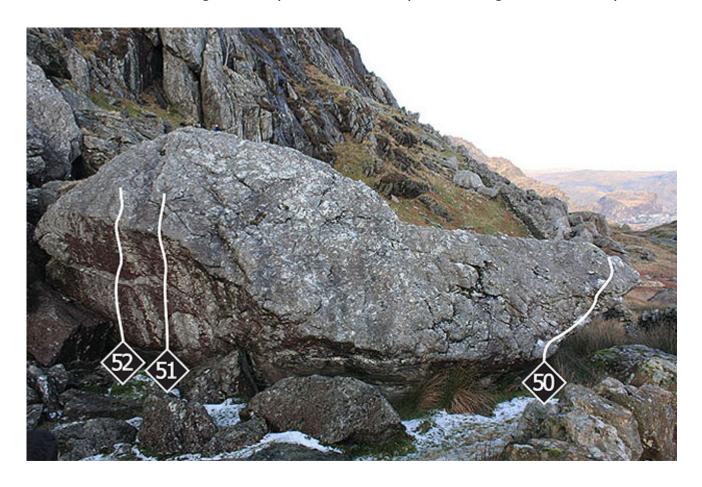
49. New Noise 8A 🗵 🚖

The original version of this powerful problem climbs the roof direct into the finish of *Geoff's Roof*. It starts from a crouching start, hands on a pair of small undercuts, one better than the other. Slap to the hold just above the lip, match and continue up the face via a crimp/flake. [Chris Davies 10.07]

49a. New Noise RH 7C/8A+ 🗵 🜟

A couple of variants are possible. Pull on with your right hand on the open pinch on the right and left in the better of the original undercuts at 7C. A harder (8A+) version starts lower with hands matched on the obvious crescent shaped hold, and then takes the better of the original undercuts with the

left before making an improbable slap out right to the pinch.



50. Problem Sam 6A 🗵 🜟

Start sitting 3m left of the hanging nose; traverse diagonally rightwards and gain

the top of the nose. [Sam Davis 28.01.12]

51. Punch and Judy 6A 🗵 🗯

From a hand match on the horizontal ramp gain the slopey lip and mantel over. Harder if you avoid the good foothold out right. [Ryan McConnell 11.03.02]

52. Meistr Pyped 6C ^図 ★

The similar looking line left of *Punch and Judy* proves to be a much harder proposition. Pull on, karate kick up right to a heel hook ion the ramp and make a long pull for the lip. Match somewhat desperately and pull over onto the slabby top. [Gav Foster 05.03.15]



53. Warrior Within 6C+

An undercut prow situated just up and left of *Punch and Judy*. Pull on from a sitting start with left hand on a large slopey sidepull and right on an obvious bump. Pop up to a large slopey hold and finish awkwardly, muscling out rightwards before it is possible to move back left to the obvious good hold. [Michael Allday 01.06.13]



54. Ryan's Groove 6B 🗵 🗯 🚖

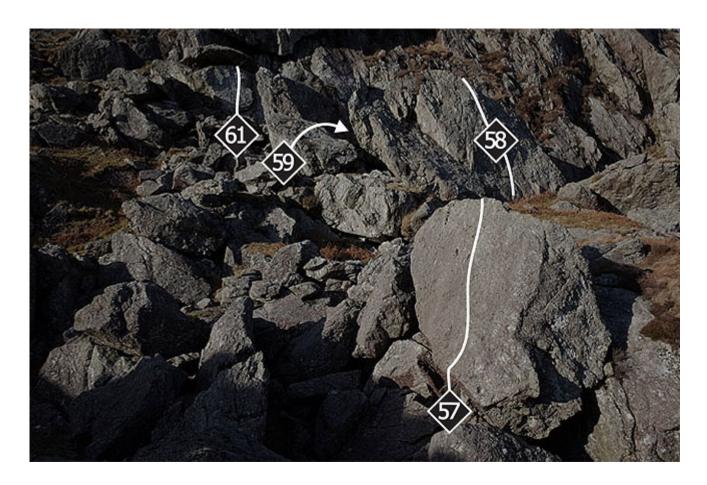
Climb the attractive groove feature from a sit down start, hands matched on a slopey ledge hold. [Ryan McConnell 28.01.12]

55. Festering Hell 6B+

There is a minor sit down start line on the wall left of Ryan's Groove. Pull on with a small pinch for the right hand and a good gaston edge for your left. Slap for the top and mantel out easily. [Michael Allday 01.06.13]

56. Lee Cooper 6B 🗵 🜟

The hanging prow taken from a sit down start on a large undercut. [Danny Cattell 03.03.02]



57. 5A! 🗵 🚖

Gain the hanging slab and teeter up on small holds. A good problem with an unforgiving landing. [Danny Cattell 11.03.02]

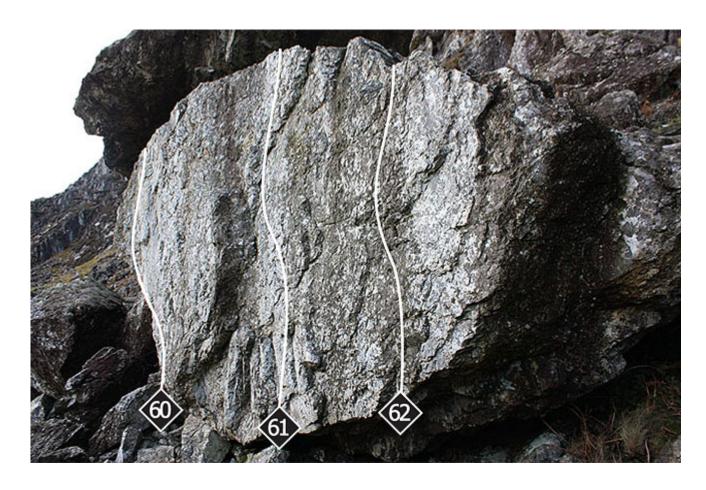
58. Llech Mawr 5A! 🗵 🗯

The central line on the big slab. Other variants are possible to the left and right. [Danny Cattell 03.03.02]

59. Skyline Wall 6C 🗵 🗯

On the back of the *Llech Mawr* boulder at the bottom end of the corridor there is a neat little problem. Start sitting, left hand in a two finger pocket, right hand on a side pull. Move up to a right hand edge then swerve up left to gain good holds on the ramp. Finish more easily. [Luke Owens 01.02.15]

The high wall at the top end of the same corridor gives a good 5A line — shame about the grim landing! Just up behind is a white wall:



60.6B 🗷 🚖

Sit down start up the left arête of the white face.

61. 5A 💌 🚖

The central line on the white wall.

62. 4B

The right hand line on the white wall.

63. 6A

Sit down start line on wall opposite Problem 60.