

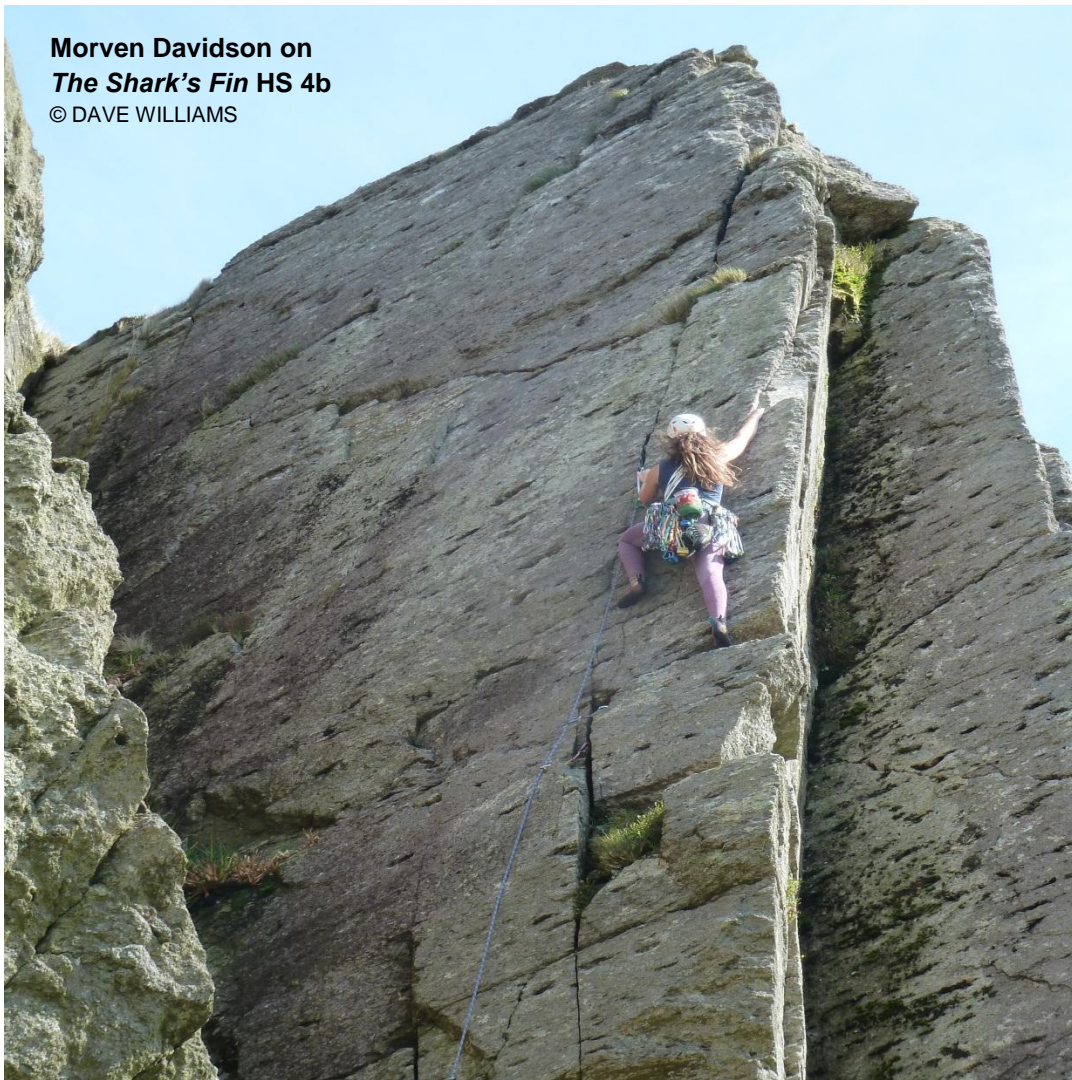
Steep Stone Selected Area Guides

Carreg y Foel Gron

An Interim, Definitive Climbing Guide

By Dave Williams

Morven Davidson on
The Shark's Fin HS 4b
© DAVE WILLIAMS



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Steep Stone's series of Interim Climbing and Bouldering Guides

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 in the Rhinogydd. While work on the new guide steadily progresses, Steep Stone is also producing 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 mini-guides will provide easy to follow access notes, accurate route descriptions and photo-topos.

In response to the Covid-19 Pandemic, Steep Stone is also producing a very limited series of interim *Coronavirus Friendly Crags (CFC)* guidebooks

The Welsh Grit Selected Area Interim Guide Book Series

Cefn Cam
Craig y Beudy
Carreg yr Ogof
Craig y Merched
Craig y Foty
Craig y Ffridd*
Cwm Nantcol Lower Crags*
Rhinog Fach and Cwm Hywel
Moel Ysgyfarnogod*

The Coronavirus Friendly Crags Interim Guide Book Series

Carreg y Foel Gron
Arenig Fawr*
Craig yr Aderyn*
Cyfrwy*
Cwm Cywarch*

[* In preparation]

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*This guide book is dedicated to the memory of my father, Emrys Williams,
one-time owner of Chwarel y Foel Gron slate quarry*

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Carreg y Foel Gron *Rock of the Round Bald Hill* OS Ref SH 745 427

Overview:	A nicely positioned outcrop, with excellent quality rock, a good range of grades, great climbing, a sunny aspect and a straightforward approach
Altitude:	450 metres
Approach:	Easy walking on a former slate mine access road or path
Approach time:	10-15 minutes
Aspect:	Mainly South and South west facing
Drying:	Generally quick drying, but with some seepage and lichenous, mossy areas which can remain damp after prolonged rain
Winter sun:	Yes
Summer sun:	Yes
Access Land:	Yes
Grade Range:	D – E5

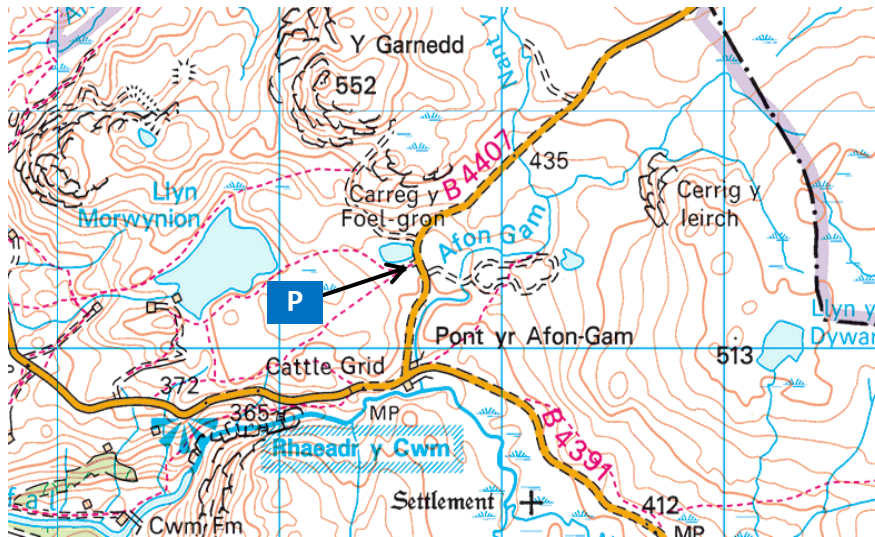
Carreg y Foel Gron is an easily accessible crag, with a number of quality, single-pitch climbs ranging from 25 metre slabs to 12 metre leaning cracks and arêtes. There is also some excellent bouldering, which is beyond the scope of this interim guide book. There is both an Upper and a Lower Crag; only the latter being visible from the parking area. In the now out-of-print Meirionnydd 2002 guidebook, the whole crag was quite dismissively described: “*The main merit of the crag is as a training ground for novices*”. Despite having been frequented by Outdoor Centres for many years, nothing, in fact, could be further from the truth.

Nicely situated on the very western edge of the desolate Migneint moorland plateau, the location embodies a wholly delightful sense of isolation. Located on access land, this quiet backwater, the 559th tallest hill in Wales, is an excellent venue on a sunny day and an absolutely perfect place to get away from it all during a global pandemic.



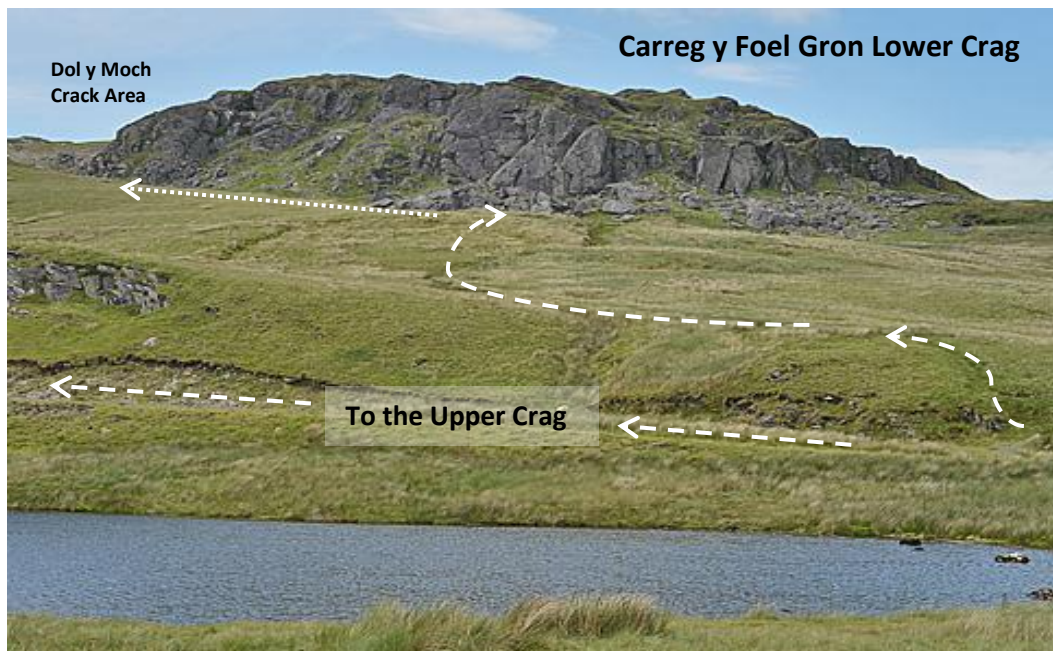
Denise Forster,
Slab Direct, E1 5a
© DAVE WILLIAMS

Geologically, Carreg y Foel Gron is formed from an older centre of vulcanicity, one lower in the Ordovician geological succession than the nearby Moelwynion crags. Here, the rhyolitic lavas and ashes of the Rhiw Bach Volcanic Formation have weathered to produce slabs and walls which are both rough and pocketed. The rock is sound and of high friction. Cracks and wider chasms abound; the cracks usually giving good protection. The cracks, in turn, are interspersed with more compact sections, which may not be as accommodating. There is hardly any in situ fixed gear.



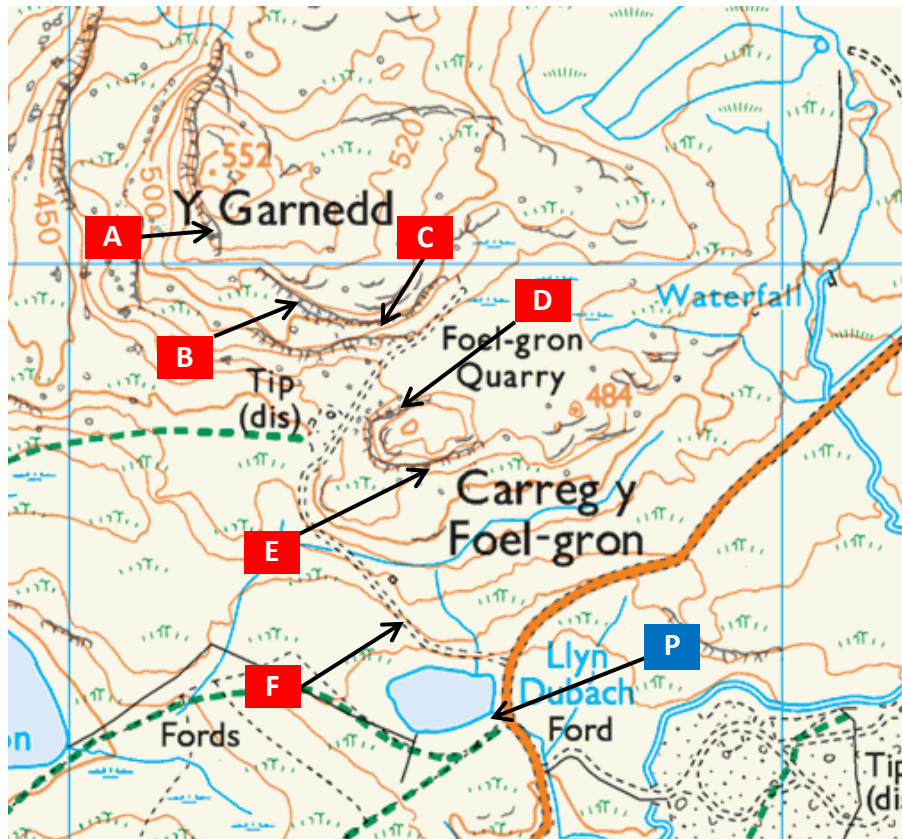
Access is from a small parking area on the southern shore of Llyn Dubach, a small lake just off the B4407 Ffestiniog – Penmachno road.

Approach: The South face of Lower Crag is clearly seen from the parking area. Upper Crag is hidden from view and is actually located on the southern end of Y Garnedd. Lower Crag can be approached directly via the obvious footpath (which



can get a bit boggy during wet periods). The Upper Crag area is best approached via the former Chwarel y Foel Gron slate mine access road just north of the lake. The whole Upper Crag area soon comes into view as one ascends the track in a westwards direction. Despite the obvious temptation, vehicles must not be driven up this track.

Orientation



KEY

- A – Far North Buttress
- B - Upper Crag
- C – Miners’ Buttress
- D – Dol y Moch Buttress
- E - Lower Crag
- F - Former Quarry Access Road
- P - Parking

Climbs are described from left to right throughout. Descents can easily be made to either side of all the various buttresses and are not described individually.

Bouldering

The crag’s numerous blocks and short walls have attracted climbers since at least the 1970s. An excellent bouldering guide, in either Welsh or English, is available on the *Hongian* website. See: <https://hongian.cymru> and click on the *Ffestiniog* link.

Upper Crag Area

If this is the primary objective, then it is best approached by following the former slate mine access road. As the hard surfaced stone track contours around the back of **Lower Crag**, the left hand **Upper Crag** and **Far North Buttress** quickly come into view. The collection of huge boulders and flakes forming the back, or north face, of Lower Crag are also visible to the right of the road. This is **Dol y Moch Buttress**, directly opposite which is **Miners’ Buttress**, on the right-hand side of Upper Crag.

Note that Far North Buttress, Upper Crag and Miners' Buttress are actually located on the south flank of **Y Garnedd** and not on Carreg y Foel Gron per se.

If there is time to spare, a visit to the 552m high summit of Y Garnedd itself is highly recommended on a fine clear day, as it is one of the best yet one of the least-known upland viewpoints in Eryri.

Far North Buttress



This small, satellite buttress, a short distance left of the upper crag proper, is well worth a visit.

Approach by following the former slate mine access road almost to its end before leaving it to contour north across the hillside to the easily visible buttress. The outcrop features two prominent arêtes; the lesser, right-hand one, remains unclimbed.

1. Mysterious Girl 16m HVS 5a ★★

The wall left of the prominent arête is taken direct to finish up the open groove. Steep climbing, but with good holds.

FA N Clacher, T Taylor 19.9.12

2. End Action 18m E3 5c ★

Quite runout and requiring a cool head. From the toe of the arête, climb directly up. The last gear is in the short vertical quartz crack just above halfway. From here, boldly follow the perfect arête to its top.

FA T Taylor, N Clacher 19.9.12

3. The Cement Garden 18m E2 5b ★

A direct line up the centre of the wall to the right. Start by a short groove and go direct to a narrow ledge by a holly tree. Commit to the thin vertical crack above and finish up the centre of the steep headwall.

FA N Clacher, T Taylor 19.9.12

4. Breezy Boho 15m VS 4b

To the right is a short sharp arête. The short wall and groove just to the right of this is followed to a steep grassy finish.

FA T Taylor, N Clacher 19.9.12 (*At the original VD grade, this was a classic sandbag.*)

Upper Crag

Located above the former slate mine workings, Upper Crag is both shorter and much steeper than Lower Crag and has a tendency to be lichenous in places. It gives climbing which, according to a local activist, is “*a cross between the positive jugs and pockets of limestone and the delicate balance and friction of gritstone and is unequalled by any crag in Snowdonia*”. High praise indeed.

Upper Crag has, at its left end, a fiercely overhanging wall split by two deep, vertical cracks. Perhaps not unsurprisingly, the left-hand one remains unclimbed.



1. The Crack 12m E5 6a ★

The fearsomely awkward off-width crack up the leaning wall is totally desperate, with a tricky and scary finish as a coupe de gras.

FA W Shakell 1996 (*A long sling was pre-placed at the top to protect the difficult finish.*)

2. Toxic Haste 12m E5 6a ★

The diagonally leftwards rising finger crack above a spiked boulder is a real fight. Well-protected if you can hang on to place gear. The crack was originally protected by an in situ peg.

FA T Taylor, M Davies 30.10.98

Further to the right is a slab with a V-corner to its right.

3. The Rambler 12m D

From the base of the V-corner, traverse left along the top of the leaning wall, in an increasingly exposed position, to finish up the wide crack.

4. Slab Direct 12m E1 5a ★★

Start as for *The Rambler*, but continue directly up the very centre of the slab on excellent rock. Easy moves for the grade, but steadiness is required as protection for

the crux near the top is mainly psychological. Purists will shun a leftwards-trending escape, as this is missing the point.



Simon Needham,
Slab Direct, E1 5a
© DAVE WILLIAMS



5. Quiet Introductions 12m VS 4b ★

A crackline leads slightly rightwards up the slab right of *Slab Direct*. Once it ends go up and left over a bulge to finish. Low in the grade; well protected and very pleasant.

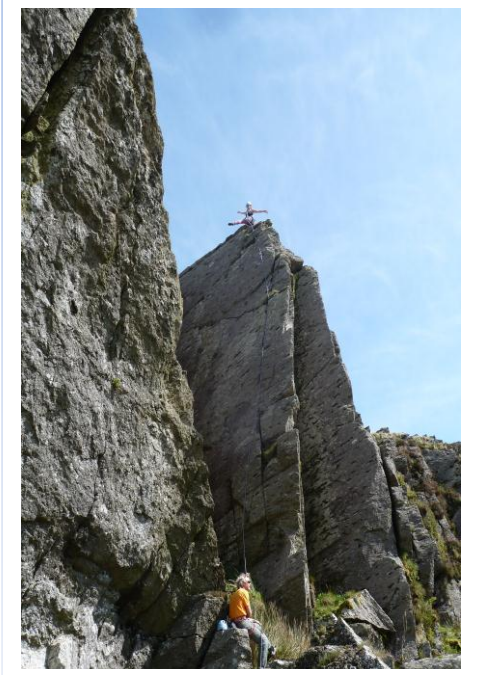
FA N Nix 1980 (*Led in walking boots. Nix was pointed at it by Ally Kellas, who reckoned it would “go at about Severe”.*)

< **Dave Williams, Quiet Introductions, VS 4b**
© MORVEN DAVIDSON

6. Half Height Fright 12m VS 4c ★

The centre of the right wall of the V-corner, on good pockets and edges, past a rock scar. A distinctly less frightening and far more worthwhile proposition now that the disturbingly loose flake has succumbed to gravity. There is a low, hidden belay stake on the right at the top.

To the right, a steep, clean arête provides a surprisingly dominating presence, fully demanding one’s unwavering attention.



Morven Davidson, *The Shark's Fin*, HS 4b © DAVE WILLIAMS



7. The Shark's Fin 12m HS 4b ★★★★★

A truly tremendous and superbly positioned climb on the stunning, shark fin arête. Although short, it is absolutely perfect all the way; a real gem which is also easier than it looks. Start up the V-corner and pull steeply up and right onto the arête, which is then mainly climbed on its left side. Belay as for *Half Height Fright*. A direct start is also possible but this, admittedly purer line, is harder and not as good. (*Cynics - or the uninitiated - may indeed question as to how a 12 metre outcrop climb could ever be worth three stars, but not only is this **the** climb of the whole crag, it is also a very strong contender for the best single-pitch HS in the country.*)



8. Josh's Corner 12m VS 4c

The narrow, normally quite scruffy corner, is capped by boulders. Climb it until, at three quarters height, it is possible to step right onto the arête and finish direct.
FA D Davis, 1990s

Dead Tree Arête 12m HVS 4c ★

Long considered to simply be a direct start to *Josh's Corner*, this bold line directly up the aptly-named arête right of the corner is a worthwhile and sufficiently independent undertaking. The original way starts up the lower crack and arête (with the big block) to join and then finish as for *Josh's Corner*. An eliminate, (HVS 5a, FA S Needham, D Forster 2015), goes directly up the pocketed wall between *Josh's Corner* and the arête to join the more defined upper part of the arête.

9. Yardi Yardi Yardi 12m E3 5c

Takes a direct line up the steep pocketed wall just right of the arête. Sustained, with good gear, but run out at the top.
FA N Tucley, B Hull 11.8.07

To the right is a clean wall above a small roof.

10. Indecision Collision 15m E3 5b

The inset arête. Climb the dirty corner then step up left onto a ledge beneath the arête. Then take the left side of the arête on good, if spaced, pockets to the top.
FA M Crocker, with soloist 10.7.07

Morwynion Corner 13m VS 5a

The scruffy, fern-filled corner, gained via a thuggy swing from a jug on the left arête. The corner is steep but has good holds.
FRA S Needham, D Forster 2015 (*Unrecorded until 2015 but, even then, it seemed unlikely that it hadn't been done before.*)

11. Prescription in Herdoo 10m E4 6a ★

The west facing wall right of *Morwynion Corner*, with a deadly start above a backbreaker of a boulder. Make a move up the corner then follow a shallow finger rail before a few powerful moves on pockets hopefully gain a flake hold. Continue much more easily on pockets to the top.
FA M Crocker, with soloist 10.7.07

12. Sweet Summer Evening 12m E3 5c/6a ★

A powerful, boulder problem sequence on pockets and crimps through the overlap leads to an easier (5b-ish) finish.

FA N Dixon 1990s

13. Too Many Children 12m VS 4c ★

The obvious crackline to the right is relatively popular, despite the fact that it gathers plants.

14. Not Enough Babes 12m HVS 5a ★

This climbs the thinner crack to the right of *Too Many Children*.

15. Sheep God 15m HVS 4c

Start two metres right of *Not Enough Babes* and climb a prominent, slim, left-facing groove to a grassy foot ledge. Step right and go directly up the steep wall to the wide break. Then climb the pocketed headwall above, trending slightly left at the top. Nice climbing and maybe worth a star if cleaner.

FA S Needham, D Forster 15.8.2010

16. Dangermoose 6m HVS 4c

Take the slight, blunt rib (left of *Perygl*), with little opportunity for protection.

FA M Crocker, solo after top roping, 10.7.2007

To the right is a big broken corner. The following climbs are based on the arête to its right.

17. Perygl 12m E1/2 5b

The route name is Welsh for 'danger', which is basically all you need to know. If still tempted, make powerful moves to gain jugs on the arête, followed by absolutely gearless climbing to the top.

18. Finding a Job 12m HVS 5b

Climb the awkward crack two metres right of *Perygl*.

To the right, some scruffy short walls intervene before reaching Upper Crag's right-hand side, commonly known as **Miners' Buttress**. Now home to a dozen characterful routes, this was once considered to be far too green, slimy and loose for climbing. There are several belay stakes on the grassy plateau above; likely providing a welcome sight after many of the ascents here.

19. Sannau Drewllyd 15m VS 4b

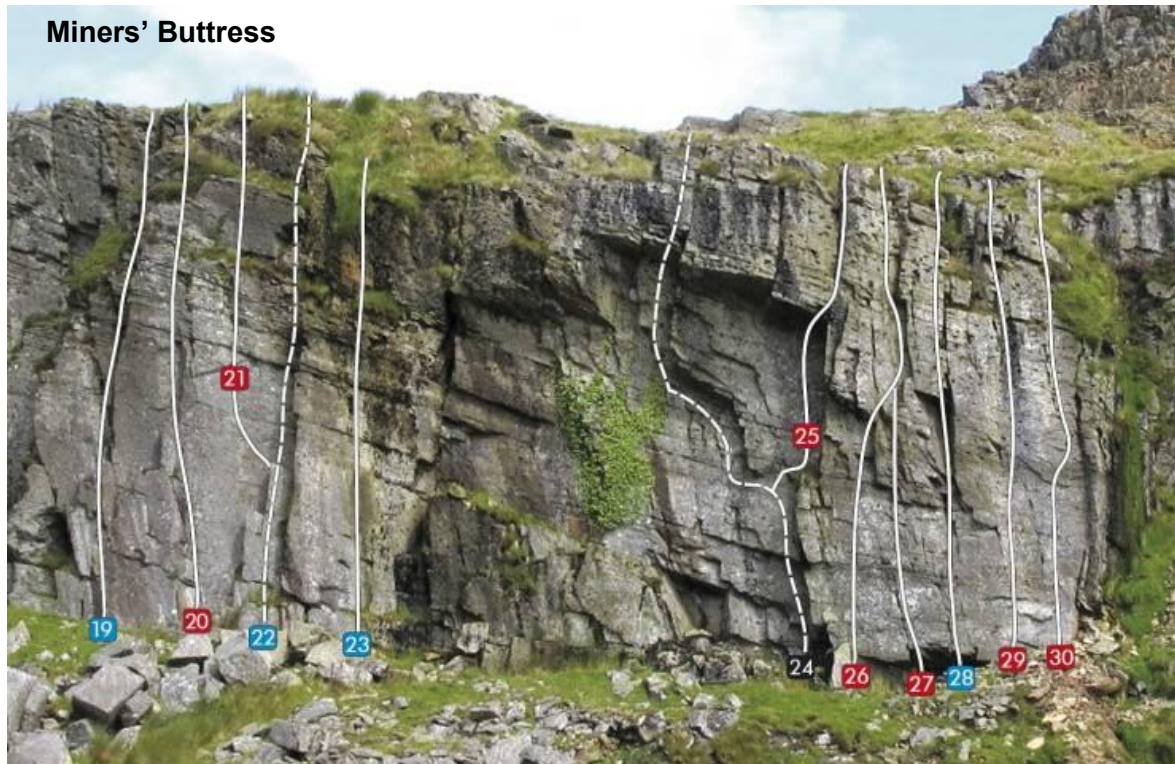
The groove in the left hand side of the clean white wall.

FA D Davis, M Williams 1995

20. Myrddin Emrys 15m E1 5b ★

The crack and wall giving fine, steep climbing to a grassy top out and stake belay well back.

FA D Davis, M Williams 1995



21. The Earl of Meirionnydd 15m E2 5b

An eliminate leaving the easy corner to tackle the upper centre of the wall, past a peg and some grubby rock.

FA D Davis, M Williams 1995

22. Fairley's Patent 15m HVS 5a

The open corner starts reasonably well, but quickly deteriorates into vegetation.

FA D Davis, M Williams 1995

23. Arch Noa 15m VS 4c

The line of the waterfall is, quite frankly, atrocious. Only completely dry during a "biblical drought" and perhaps best avoided even then.

FA D Davis, M Williams 1995

24. Ribidires 15m E4 5c ★

A fine line, taking the leftwards diagonal overlaps to pull through the roof via a crack.

FA D Davis, M Williams 1995

25. I Fewn i'r Arch â Nhw 15m E1 5b ★

Start up the corner to below the big overhang. Make exciting moves rightwards to gain the edge before finishing direct.

FA D Davis, M Williams 1995

26. Line it Up 15m E2 5c ★

The white wall to the right has a left facing groove in its upper half. Start by the boulder below the white wall and go boldly and directly up to join the easier groove.

FA M Davies, T Taylor 6.9.12

27. Asiffeta 15m E1 5b

The original way to the easy groove starts two metres right up some cracks.
FA D Davis, M Williams 1995

28. Be Ddudodd O! 15m VS 4b ★

Climb directly into the lovely niche and exit up the right crack. It is also possible to finish up the left crack.
FA D Davis, M Williams 1995

29. Pcedi Perffaieth 15m E1 5b ★

Very steep climbing up the wonderfully pocketed black-streaked wall, past a peg, on “perfect pockets”.
FA D Davis, M Williams 1995

30. Ceian* 15m E4 5c ★

The final edge on the right sits above a yawning drop into the deep quarry below, so best to firmly secure the belayer. Start two metres left of the final edge and go directly up on ledges to the small overlap. Somehow stretch past this, with marginal gear, to gain the vertical crack up and right before finishing directly.
FA T Taylor, M Davies 6.9.12 (**Formerly named “Chop Sided”.*)

To the right of the gaping, untopped mine chambers on Miners’ Buttress, there is a short orange-coloured wall with a natural outcrop immediately to its right.

House of Cards 10m HS 4b

A poor climb, which starts below a ledge at the front of the right hand side of the natural outcrop. Climb the quartz face and step right onto the ledge. Continue up into a left sloping scoop and follow this leftwards to the top. Care needed as there is a lot of loose rubble on the mid-way ledge and at the top. Note that there is no obvious belay at the top.
FA G Uney, solo 6.10.15

Dol y Moch Buttress

Dol y Moch Buttress: Left Hand Side

Some routes omitted for reasons of clarity

Considering its north facing aspect, on the whole this smaller, pocketed buttress is remarkably clean. Best approached as for Upper Crag, or by walking up and around from Lower Crag's left hand side (5 minutes). There are a number of poised slabs on its left-hand side. A useful bad weather excursion, named **The Den** and once popular with centre groups, starts up the (now) vegetated slab to the left of *Senna Adda*, then sidles along behind the massive detached flake before a couple of moves lead to easy ground. Other variations to the described routes are possible here.

1. Senna Adda 18m S ★★

Climb the first free standing boulder to a narrow rib which leads to a foot ledge beneath the final poised slab. Climb boldly up its middle to the top. A good outing, technically about VD, but sparsely protected.

FRA D Davis 1985 (*But almost certainly climbed before.*)

Bold Over 20m S

Start immediately left of *Over the Void* and climb the hanging slab just left of its start, then up a blunt arête to a break. Step up onto the sharp arête to the right of the finish of *Senna Adda* and follow this boldly to the top.

FRA G Uney 6.10.15 (*But almost certainly climbed before.*)

Over the Void 18m VD

Start up and right of *Senna Adda*, behind boulders, and below an obvious wide flake crack. Gain the slab to the left of the flake crack, then climb the wide crack into the upper groove to reach the void. Step over the void and climb the groove directly to the gap in the overhang, and pull easily through this to finish.

FRA D Neville, G Uney 17.9.15 (*But almost certainly climbed before.*)

2. Health Physics 15m E3 5c

The very steep wall left of the deep chimney is reached from the right. Follow the good flake edges to the little overlap then pull through and layback up the groove above.

FA D Davis, M Davies 1997

3. Bwystfil 10m HVS 4c

The chimney is a real "beast". Climb it whichever way you possibly can.

FA D Davis, M Davies 1997

On Edge 15m D

Right of *Bwystfil* there is an easy-angled slab. Start at the base of the slab and climb its scruffy right edge to the top. (*Not as good as other similarly easy lines on Central Buttress, but sometimes used by OE centres in an easterly wind.*)

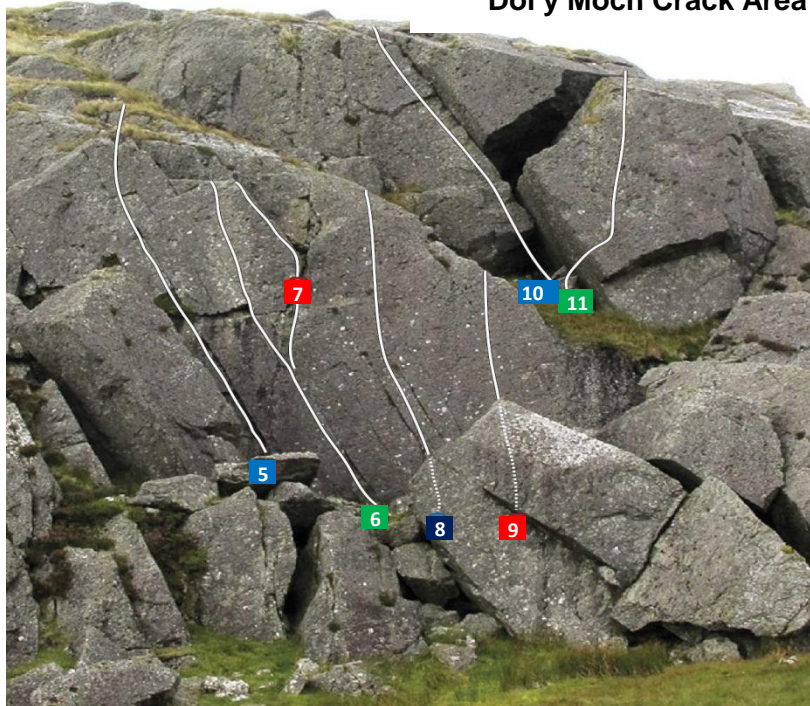
4. Pcedi Gwag 6m E1 5a

This tiny wall has some lovely pockets, some deep, some shallow or "empty". Either go directly up its centre, or slightly right for even more adventure.

FA D Davis 1984

The buttress' right-hand side, the **Dol y Moch Crack Area**, features a number of short yet testing climbs. The first five climbs all start from a small terrace, gained by scrambling up between the large blocks.

Dol y Moch Crack Area

**5. Balchder y Moch** 12m E1 5b/c

On the left hand side of the terrace is a shallow left facing corner that leads directly to a bilberry bush at mid-height. The upper wall leans over this and is split by 2 finger cracks. Ascend the corner, via a hard start, to reach the bilberry bush which is passed on its right. Then step back left and attack the steep cracks to reach a good ledge 3 metres higher. Stake belay a few metres down the ramp.

FA D Davis, A Hall 2004

6. The Libertine 12m E3 6a ★★

A fine climb up a very thin crack to the right of *Balchder y Moch*. Climb the thin crack to the break. Leaving the break to continue directly up the wall is fingery and all could easily end in tears before gaining some lovely jugs.

FA T Taylor, M Crook 7.9.12

7. The Langoustine 12m E2 5b ★

Start as for *The Libertine*, but break off up and right to the edge of the upper face. This is followed with “clamping interest” to the top.

FA G Morgan, T Taylor 7.9.12

8. Tramwyo 10m HVS 5a ★★

Take the two parallel cracks to the top of the slab and finish up the short headwall. Low in the grade, with nicely sustained, fingery climbing and reasonable protection.

FA D Davis, A Hall 2004

9. Fluff Stuff 8m E3 5b ★

No gear, so this is a solo directly up the wall just right of *Tramwyo*. Start by stepping into the small slot and ascend directly on multiple small edges. The landing is awful; the boulder beneath serving to really concentrate the mind.

FA T Taylor, solo 7.9.12

The next two climbs are best approached by descending the sloping ramp from the left. They can also be used as extension pitches for the climbs beneath the ramp.

10. Dol y Moch Crack 8m HVS 5a

The left slanting crack in the steep groove in the upper wall, with an awkward move past a slight bulge near the top. Low in the grade.

FA D Davis, N Nix 1984 *(Named after Plas Dol y Moch, a local OE centre.)*

11. The Armed Man 9m E2 5c ★

High in the grade. Start in the corner below the crack and somehow pull up onto the edge out to the right. Rock up onto the sloping ledge .A single rock spike to the right is the only gear before finishing directly.

FA T Taylor, M Crook, M Griffiths 22.9.12

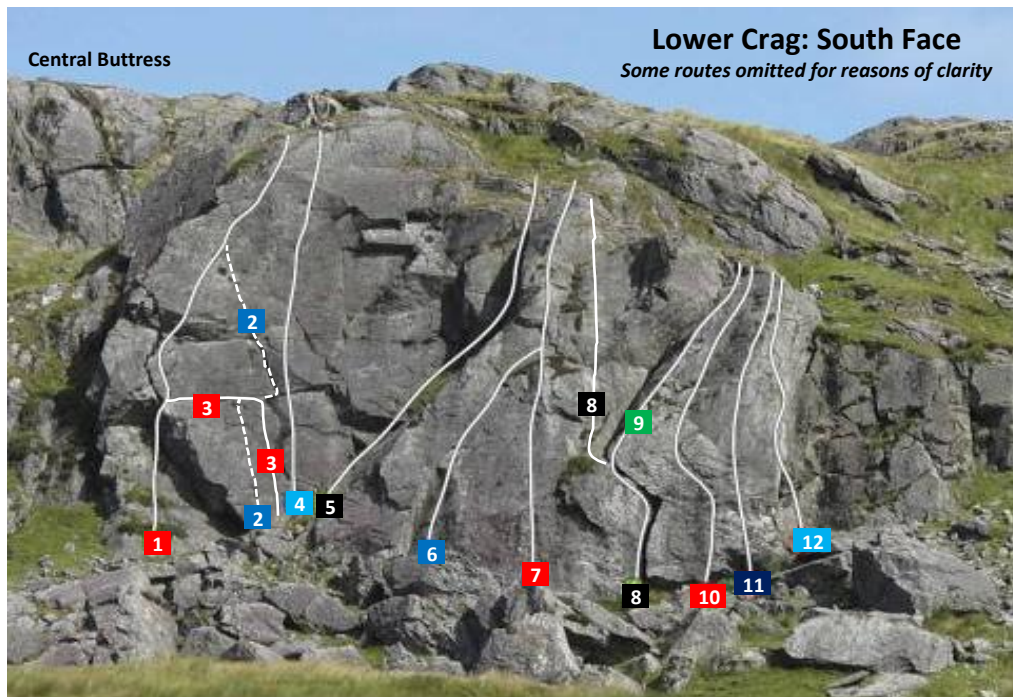
Stepped Ridge 25m VD

As one faces Lower Crag, there is a broad slope on the left leading up to the higher little Central Buttress, which is used by OE centres. Across this slope, and at about the same height as the foot of Lower Crag, is a ridge broken by ledges. Start at a groove at the foot of this ridge. Climb the steep groove to the first ledge. Short, easy steps now lead up the ridge's crest to a finish up a short steep wall.

FRA T Dodd, circa 1980 *(But almost certainly climbed before.)*

Central Buttress is a minor outcrop, popular with centre groups, located next to the descent path from the top of Lower Crag's South Face. The obvious lines are clean, Moderate to Difficult in grade, but are not described individually.

Lower Crag



Lower Crag gives a variety of climbing at a good range of grades on slabs, cracks, chimneys and walls. It has a sunny aspect, but its more shaded areas may remain

stubbornly damp when the rest of the crag is dry. Many of the in situ angle iron belay stakes, fashioned from bunk bed legs, date from the late 1970s. Note that, after much research, the route description and route name errors and omissions present in all recent guide books have now been definitively and comprehensively corrected.

1. Cracked Slab 24m VD

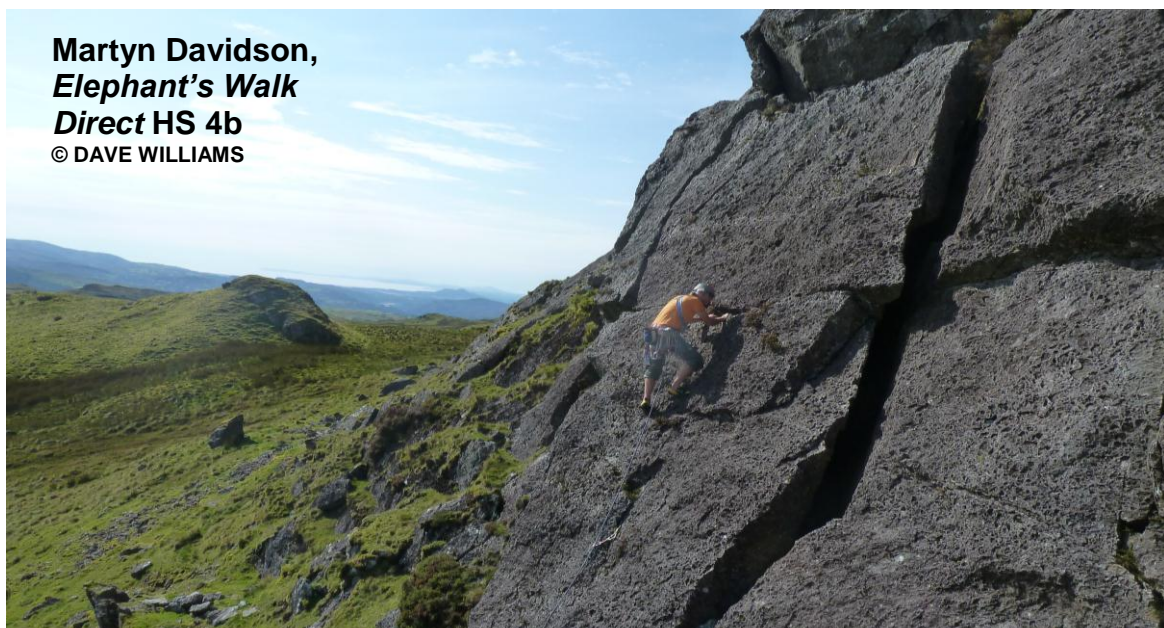
The crackline on the left of the main slab is gained by passing the small overlap on the right before continuing to the top. Other variations to the left are inferior. (*First climbed as a direct start to Elephant's Walk.*)

2. Elephant's Walk Direct 25m HS 4b ★★

Climb the centre of the slab a couple of metres left of the start of *Elephant Walk* to the horizontal break before moving right to pull through the overlap at the obvious notch. Finish up the left trending crack above. A well-protected excursion on superb rock; the best easy climb on Lower Crag.

3. Elephant's Walk 30m VD ★

A meandering line which climbs the right edge of the slab, immediately left of the wide crack, to reach a horizontal hand rail beneath the overlap. Hand traverse the break and finish as for *Cracked Slab*.



4. Tiger Feet 24m HVS 4c ★

Start just right of *Elephant Walk*. The uncompromisingly direct line to the top gives a fine route on excellent rock. A very bold undertaking as the steeper upper slab is unprotected.

Elephant's Crawl 24m S 4b ★

Climb the left-hand side of the inset slab until it is possible to enter and climb the shallow groove on its left. From the top of this, take the good crack, passing the first overhang on the left and taking a second direct to join and then finish as for *Elephant's Walk Direct*. A well-protected and worthwhile climb.

5. Inset Slab 24m VD ★

Start as for *Elephant's Crawl* and climb the inset slab to the more difficult corner above, which is well protected but has a tricky exit.

Skinny Arête 24m HD ★

Climb the very right edge of the inset slab and pull through the steeper nose to finish. A very pleasant and popular climb.

6. Shakin' Stevens 22m VS 4c

High in the grade and probably worth a star if cleaner. Start down and right of *Skinny Arête* at a pointed block. Climb the V-groove above the block, then up and slightly right on pockets to a grass ledge. Finish up the rib.

FA D Davis 1980s

7. Caractacus Dementicus 22m E1 5b ★

Climb directly up the centre of the wall on small positive holds to a slight bulge at 6 metres. Negotiate the bulge and continue up the easier slab above to join the nose of rock that forms the right hand upper edge of *Skinny Arête*.

FA D Davis 1980s

Crackin' Rock 25m E1 5b ★

A worthy eliminate, starting 2 metres right of *Caractacus Dementicus*. Climb up a thin discontinuous crack, passing a horizontal break. Take the small roof on its left, then go direct up the wall above on pockets and follow easy cracks to the top.

FA J Martin, A Clarke 25.7.17

To the right is an extremely large, detached flake which forms a distinct pinnacle.

8. Flake Crack 25m HS 4b

The deep, thrutchy crack on the left front face of the large pinnacle leads to a far easier finish up the slabby wall left of the ever widening crack. The slabby wall itself, if approached as for *Inspiration*, is about HD.

9. Inspiration 25m D ★

A very popular route with a memorable finish. Start by sidling along the base of the chimney behind the flake (*Separation*) to gain a ledge on the front face. From the ledge, climb the left side of the pinnacle, right of the widening crack, to the top. Finish with quite an exciting and committing jump across the deep chasm behind the pinnacle. To reduce rope drag, it is advised to take a belay at the very top of the pinnacle.

10. Bedrock 20m E1 5a ★

The dark pocketed wall 2 metres right of *Flake Crack*. Go boldly up the wall to the left edge of a perched flake. Continue more easily directly to the top and finish with a leap.

11. Collodd Allwedd Twll ei Din 20m E1 5b ★

High in the grade. Start just right of *Bedrock* by a slim leftwards slanting ramp and make some steep, committing boulder moves directly to the right edge/arête of the pillar. Pass the flake and continue directly to the top. Make the bold leap of

Inspiration, with relative relief, to finish. Protection is not where you need it, although using a mat (or a skyhook low down) would remove some of the sting.
FA D Davis 1980s

12. Wyau Pen Doman 18m E4 5c ★★

Start in the overhung niche and climb straight through its top to finish up the lovely arête above. Belay on top of the detached pinnacle as for *Inspiration*. A serious, poorly protected pitch.
FA D Davis, A Hall 1995

Separation 20m VD

The deep chimney behind the pinnacle is a connoisseur's delight, with an awkward belly flop over the chock stone thrown in for good measure.

Hen Dwl DREWLLYD 20m E1 5b

This strange route can be found within the chimney of *Separation*. It climbs the obvious diagonal crack in the chimney's back wall.
FA D Davis, M Williams 2001



Simon Needham,
Collodd Allwedd
Twill ei Din, E1 5b
© DAVE WILLIAMS

The buttress beyond the descent path to the right has several good, short climbs.

13. Rock for Brains 15m E2 5c

The slim wall immediately left of the *Sickle Cell* arête. Go direct up the centre of the wall to where it steepens below a small sloping shelf. Gaining and passing the shelf on its left side brings good holds on the top within reach. Pull up onto the top of the highest grass ledge.
FA T Taylor, M Crocker 11.7.07

14. Sickle Cell 15m E5 6b ★★★★★

A very fine line and a classic test of finger strength and cunning gear placements up the thin, bold, perfect arête.
FA N Dixon, 1990s

15. Crad's Wall 15m E3 6a ★

Long used by centre groups for abseiling, this gives clean, open climbing up the very centre of the steep wall.
FA D Davis, 1990s



16. Indecision 18m VS 4c ★

The right-slanting chimney. The awkward crux at two-thirds height requires a decisive approach.

FA N Nix, circa 1980-81

17. Groove 18m HS 4b

This follows the arête immediately right of the chimney and takes a direct line to the top via the left hand side of the inset block and shallow groove.

FA N Nix, T Dodd 1980

18. Interesting Drug 18m HVS 5a

Climb the stepped ramp line to the right of *Groove*. Interesting moves around the arête lead to a slabby wall. Make thin moves back left near the arête to finish.

FA J Appleby 1997

Two very small crags to the right have a few short, steep routes, essentially high ball boulder problems, which are much better climbs than appearances would suggest.

Full Bench Cut Buttress, a small, steep, cracked wall, is the first.

Turnpike Arête 6m VS 4b

The obvious arête, starting on the right hand side

FA D Davis 1994

Full Bench Cut 6m E3 5c

The steep groove, on good holds, with some long reaches.

FA D Davis 1994

Raised Camber Crack 6m E1 5b

The obvious curving crack.

FA D Davis 1994

Joskin Buttress is about 20 metres further right.

Joskin 6m E1 5c

The left arête of the buttress, starting on its left hand side.

FA D Davis 1997

Pentrefeelyarse 6m E2 6a

The obvious niche and arête.

FA D Davis 1997

Trails 'R Us 6m E2 5c

The left wall of the corner is quite technical and rather precarious.

FA D Davis 1997

Congol y Wal 7m VS 4c

The corner itself.

FA D Davis 1997

A Brief Historical Note

Carreg y Foel Gron has been frequented by climbers since at least the 1950s and, quite probably, from even earlier. R Elfyn Hughes, Wilfrid Noyce and Showell Styles are known to have climbed on the nearby Carreg y Fran and Craig Goch in the 1930s-1950s and it is not inconceivable that they, and others, also visited Carreg y Foel Gron at this time. The crag has also been used by Outdoor Centres and other organised groups from the late 1960s-early 1970s. First ascents, by centre staff, of many of the crag's easier climbs probably date from this period. The 1970s was a time when local Del Davies also explored extensively, but recorded nothing. As a result, this honest little crag has long been viewed as simply a training ground for novices; a somewhat scornful point-of-view repeatedly hammered home in successive Climbers' Club guidebooks.

It is just as well that two climbers in particular had the vision and determination to see the crag's true potential. First and foremost, and notable for his many significant discoveries, was local climber Dafydd Davis. Accompanied by fellow locals Marcus Williams, Andy Hall and Nigel Nix, he undertook a two decade long period of development from 1984 to 2004. As a result, he now has well in excess of 40 climbs and boulder problems at Carreg y Foel Gron to his credit.

The other dominant figure in the crag's development was Terry Taylor, an Irish émigré and local GP, who settled with his family in Tywyn in the late 1980s. This gave Taylor plenty of opportunity to seek out virgin rock for which he had an insatiable appetite. Taylor's many forays to Carreg y Foel Gron were variously accompanied by Norman Clacher, Malcolm Davies, Martin Crocker, Gary Morgan, Mel Griffiths and Martin Crook.

The last two decades have seen a modest and long-overdue increase in the crag's popularity and this needs to continue, as the rock has become noticeably greasier in recent years. A luncheon spot with dry stone walls amongst the boulders at the foot of the Lower Crag has long gone, as have the worn patches at the foot of the routes.

However, it is clear that some modern climbers once again appreciate the crag's true worth, resulting in a few new discoveries, as well as the, perhaps inevitable, reclaiming of older, long-ascended lines. While great care has been taken with research and collation of the definitive record of first ascents, the crag has been climbed on for a very long time and perhaps as an inevitable consequence, many first ascent details either remain unrecorded or have long been forgotten.



CYNEFIN by Dafydd Davis

NOTES

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*Dave Williams
Steep Stone Climbing
March 2021*