

INTRODUCTION

Minchin Hole has a complex history for a relatively young crag, banned for climbing for nearly 10 years that is until recently. Working with the National Trust, local volunteers and the BMC Access & Conservation Officer for Wales have resolved and lifted the climbing ban. A special thank you to those involved, Elfyn Jones (BMC officer) Danny McCarrol (volunteer), Stuart Llewellyn (volunteer) Sian Musgrave (National Trust)



LOCATION (NGR 537877)

From the A4118 heading towards Swansea, also known as the south Gower road, continue along this until you see signs for Pennard and take Vennaway lane on the right. Continue until you reach the junction

at the end of the road and turn right. Follow this road through Pennard until you enter Southgate, passing the Golf club. Parking is available in the National Trust car park the other side of the roundabout with a fee of around £3.00. Alternatively get a National Trust membership and park for free.

APPROACH

From the National Trust car park head east out of the car park on a cliff top path, heading towards the highest mound visible (three gully's along). Take a footpath down and bearing left around the side of the mound just above the high tide level. Keep scrambling along the coast until the very obvious entrance is reached. (Pictured above)



BACKGROUND & IMPORTANCE

Minchin Hole is a large coastal fissure, which has been studied for nearly a century. Remains of lions, spotted hyaena, horse, wild boar and deer have been excavated from the site. The site is important to the overall understanding of the history of much of the Last Interglacial and early Last Cold Stage in the British Isles, it contains two raised beaches representing two separate interglacial periods. The caves along this part of the coast, most notably Minchin Hole and Bacon Hole contain the remains of a richly fossiliferous sequence which, to expert knowledge, has no parallel in Britain. We are talking here about deposits which date to the period between about 120,000 and 90,000 years ago.

This is a SSSI, (Site of Special Scientific Interest) and as such the following must be followed;

- The “stuck-on” conglomerate features are particularly sensitive and important from a conservation perspective and are quite fragile and should be avoided. No loose rock is to be removed, the cave deposits go right up to the roof clinging to the sides outside as well as inside the cave. It is important that the complete sequence of rock is not disturbed.

- Vegetation should be left alone, gardening is not permitted, the cliff face must be left undisturbed.

- Bolt replacement on existing routes would be on like for like basis only.

- No new developments due to the sensitive nature of the site.

- Please avoid the loose flying buttress (shown right) of debris left of the start of The Raven. It is part of the bone-bearing 'cave earth' and has been left there to show how the sediments inside the cave link with those in the entrance.

- Should you see any fossil / bones etc (Do not dislodge if partially buried) please notify the National Trust on gower.admin@nationaltrust.org.uk or telephone the office on 01792 390636.





The routes described here, are the ones which have bolts in them, although the quality of these has not been checked. Previous guidebooks have many other routes described, these should be left as part of the crags history. Only the routes presented here should be climbed, please respect this and the work that has gone into regaining access to this venue.

WEST WALL

This is the wall creating the left wall of the impressive cave, the first two routes start from the grassy terrace.

1. Beyond the Fringe F6b

Begin up the slab, before taking the surprisingly steep headwall.

2. Triple Sigh F6b+

Head up the rib, bearing right at the start

3. Jump the Sun F7a+ ***

This route begins down from the terrace, below some overlapping roofs.

4. Crawling King Snake F7b

Starts further along, below the obvious arête. Start of route not shown in picture, below an obvious ledge below the arête.

EAST WALL

The right wall of Minchin Hole contains two routes in service.

5. Kestral F7c+

Do not use the flying buttress of debris pictured on previous page. Climb the vague arête, the belay is around the same height as the Raven's.

6. The Raven F7a ***

The crag classic, start at a 'V' feature and head towards the square cut groove. The best 7a in South Wales?

DISCLAIMER

Climbing is a dangerous activity and should only be undertaken by those with suitable experience. Whilst this document attempts to accurately record the routes at the crag, mistakes may have occurred in the descriptions and routes can change. Climbers should therefore make their own judgement of a route before attempting it. Climbers should also make their own judgement on the quality of in-situ equipment.

