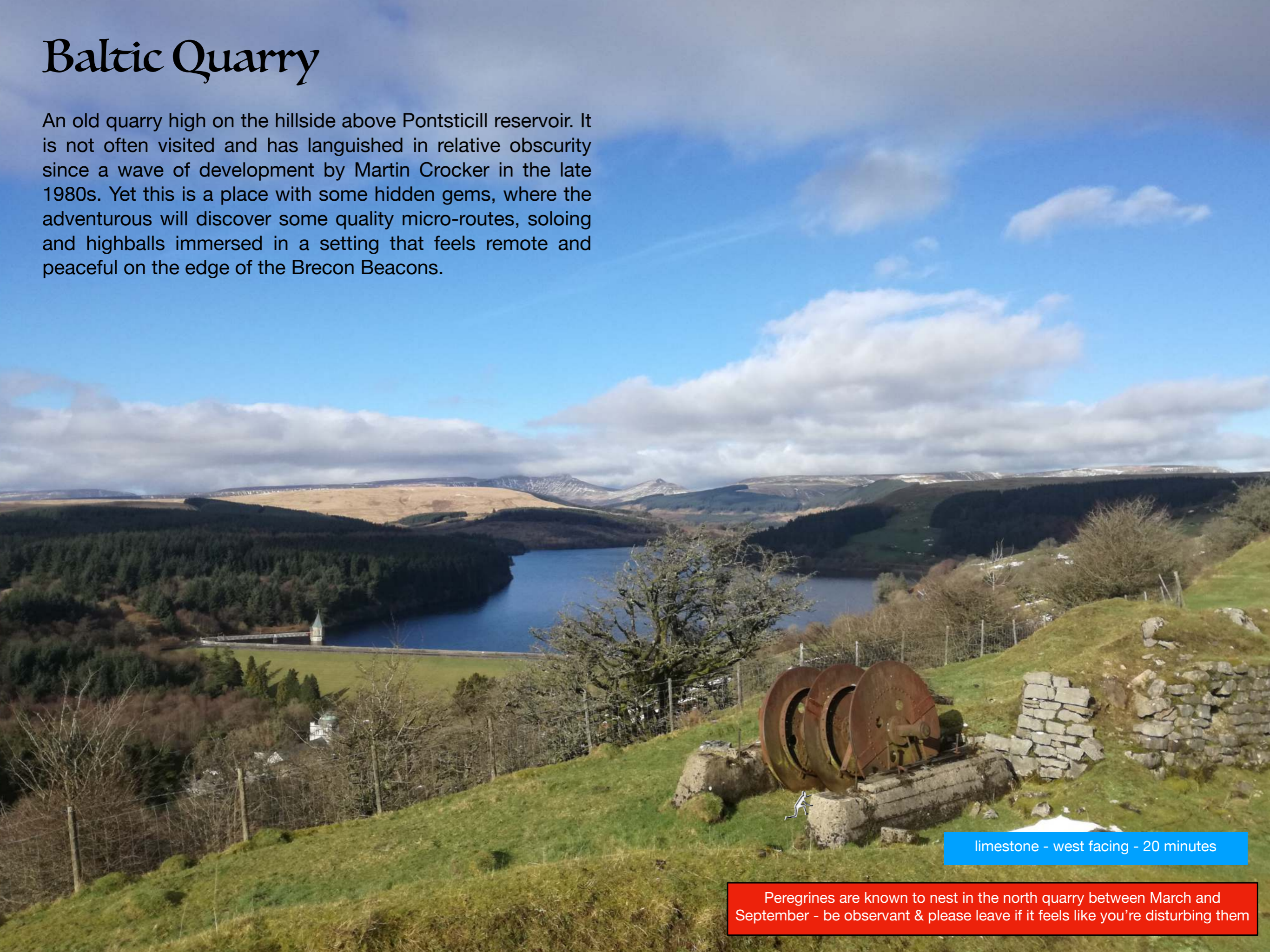


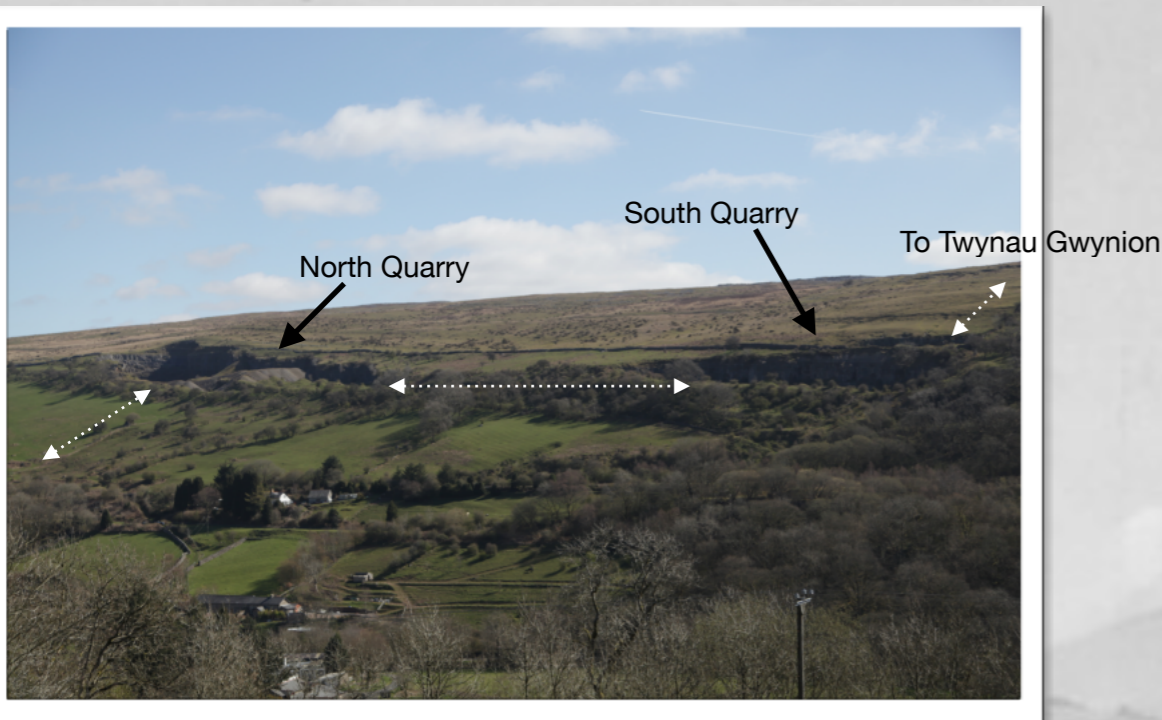
Baltic Quarry

An old quarry high on the hillside above Pontsticill reservoir. It is not often visited and has languished in relative obscurity since a wave of development by Martin Crocker in the late 1980s. Yet this is a place with some hidden gems, where the adventurous will discover some quality micro-routes, soloing and highballs immersed in a setting that feels remote and peaceful on the edge of the Brecon Beacons.



limestone - west facing - 20 minutes

Peregrines are known to nest in the north quarry between March and September - be observant & please leave if it feels like you're disturbing them



Baltic Quarry is split between two areas, described here as **north** and **south**. Before Martin Crocker's activities it appears to have been used by climbers from local outdoor centres whose routes were never recorded. The northern area has the biggest walls and a scattering of sporting and traditional routes at its most northerly end (details in Crocker's recent pdf guide). As the quarry workings continue south across the hillside the walls shorten and sections of greater interest to the solo climber/boulderer/micro-route enthusiast emerge.

Approach - Limited parking is available opposite the Pontsticill Water Treatment Works and on nearby roads (although note that historic car break-ins have occurred here so be mindful of security and park sensitively). From the water works go back up to the main village road (CF48 2YB) and cross to pass through a metal gate beside the stone wall. Follow the footpath uphill through a small tunnel beneath the Brecon Mountain Railway and out to open hillside. Continue ahead through another gate, following the permissive path diagonally uphill before veering sharply right towards earth works and an obvious large tree to enter the quarry.

The nearby quarry of **Twynau Gwynion** can also be reached from the end of the southern area. Walk uphill and then south-east for around 200m to enter this second quarry at its northern tip.

NORTH AREA: The described approach into Baltic Quarry leads to a large slag heap near the centre of the north quarry. Head left to find a trio of enticing arêtes. Beyond these are some bigger routes including a cluster of sport climbs.

1. **Minuscule** [4+/vs 5b - 6m] The rounded arête has lovely rock and makes for a good climb. Start just on its left by a small crack before joining the arête proper. Scramble back down on the right (*M.Crocker 15/3/87*).

2. **Taff's not well** [4/vs 4b - 12m] The next arête is a very pleasant way to the top of the crag (*M.Crocker 15.3.87*).

3. **Rediscovery** [vs 5a - 9m] The third angular arête is quite striking to look at and satisfying to climb (*M.Crocker 15/3/87*).

4. **Santa Sangre** [6?] Further right there is a vertical south-facing wall with a borehole feature running up the middle. Climb this (*fa unknown*).

Although fractured the next (southerly) section of wall has potential for more easier climbs.

5. **Andy borehole** [4/vs 5a - 6m] Another borehole that is not as tedious as its name suggests (*M.Crocker 28/2/87*).

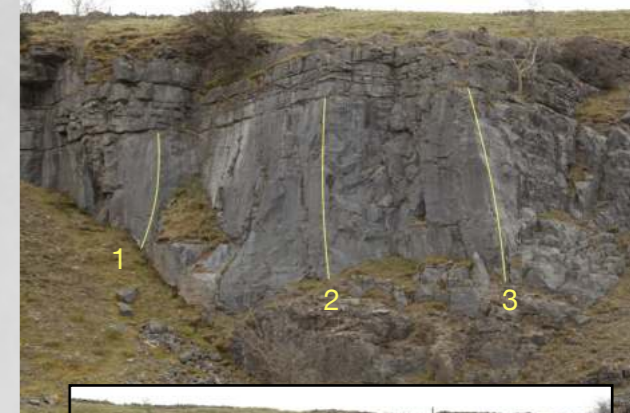
6. **Holiday fever** [5/e1 5b - 9m] A thin crack leads to a small sapling (*A.Gostick 5/6/88*).

The quarry now narrows briefly and its back wall is encroached upon by a slumped heap of slag. The rock in this narrow section can be climbed to the top for the complete highball/solo experience or bouldered to the obvious break, at which point a jump is still amenable (the landings are good here).

7. **Exam blues** [4+/hvs 5b - 9m] At the left end of the wall. Reach the crack and follow this to the top (*A.Gostick 5/6/88*).

8. **Tempress** [4/vs 5a - 9m] The thin vertical crack line (*A.Gostick 5/6/88*).

9. **The arch** [6b/e1 6b - 9m] The arch feature is tricky to get past. A good problem (*M.Crocker 15/3/87*).



10. **Slagged off** [6b/e1 6b - 9m] The wall gets steep. Tricky moves lead to a groove and the tree above (*M.Crocker 15/3/87*).

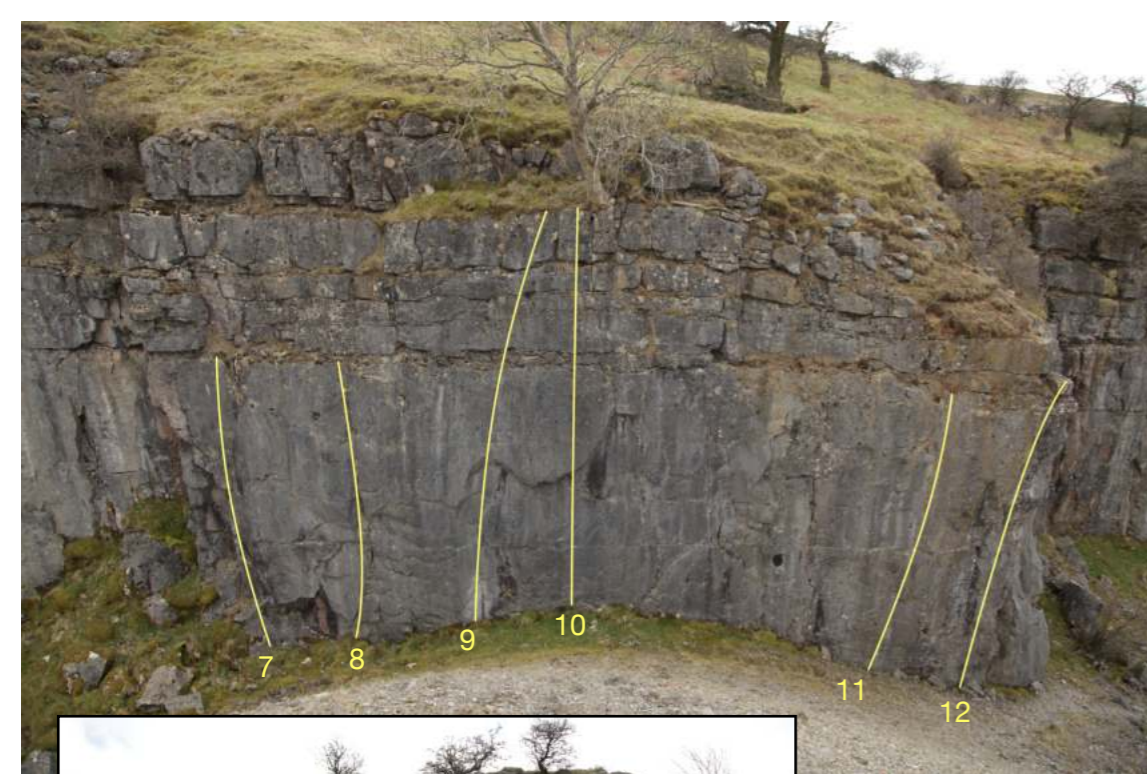
11. **Lonesome pine** [6a+/e3 6a - 9m] (*M.Crocker 15/3/87*)

12. **Slight alterations** [6a+/e3 6a - 9m] A very good highball/micro-route. Climb the calcite-filled cracks on the left side of the arête (*M.Crocker/R.Thomas/G.Royle 15/3/87*).

Right of the arête are two grooves.

13. **Not a problem** [3/vdiff?] The fractured groove immediately right of the arête is a straightforward way to the top (*fa unknown*).





14. **Not so plain Jane** [5/e2 5b - 9m]
The right-hand groove makes for much more interesting climbing up good rock. (A.Gostick 5/6/88).

15. **Health Inspector '87** [6a/e5 6a - 9m]
A gem of a problem just right of a blunt arête. The highball wall can be climbed direct or with use of its left arête at the same difficulty. A good spotter may be useful to remove landing concerns (M.Crocker/R.Thomas/G.Royle 15/3/87).
[#southsidetour](#)

16. **Stealth Inspector 2014** [6a+/e5 6a]
The blank groove just right (M.Crocker 17/9/14).

17. **Bitter & chips** [5+/e1 5a] The final groove before... (M.Crocker 17/9/14).

18. **White as White** [5/e1 5a] The white streak (M.Crocker 17/9/14).

19. **Sanitize** [e2 6a - 12m] Further right again the wall becomes calcitic and is tricky to start (M.Crocker/M.Ward 10/3/87).

20. **Soap & water** [4+] Crack to the big ledge (O.Keynes 2019).

20. **Nowt wrong with a little dirt** [4] A short cracked groove with various finishing options (O.Keynes 2019).





21. **Hypnotize** [5, ss] Sit-start the low crack to climb the centre of the shorter wall. Another good problem (*M.Crocker 17/9/14, ss O.Keynes 2019*).

22. **Crouching tiger hidden dragon** [5] follow the arête on its left side to the top ledge (*O.Keynes 6/22*).

The next section of wall is described more thoroughly in Crocker's pdf guide.

23. **Sterilise** [e2 6b - 12m] Just right is a grooved arête (*M.Crocker 22/4/87*).

24. **Llangattock decides** [vs 4c] The wall left of a large crack. Finish at the small trees (*M.Crocker 17/9/14*).

25. **Unknown slots** [e1 5c - 10m] A line of slots just right of the large crack (*fa unknown 1988*).

27. **Light speed** [7a - 9m] Climbing the centre of the smooth-looking wall is quite a challenge - apparently there are some holds. A single bolt (hopefully removed by now?) seems redundant as the flat landing makes this an excellent highball (*M.Crocker 22/4/87*).
#southsidetour

28. **Why wimp out?** [5+/e1 5c - 6m] The final section of solid vertical wall nearing the bottom end of the north quarry offers a very good problem. The top feels high but the landing is good (*M.Crocker 22/4/87*).

SOUTH AREA: Head south beyond the remains of rusting quarry equipment to reach the southern end of Baltic Quarry. Carefully cross a barbed fence and continue for a few minutes at the same contour through scrubby hawthorn until a short uphill path leads into the gorgeously tucked-

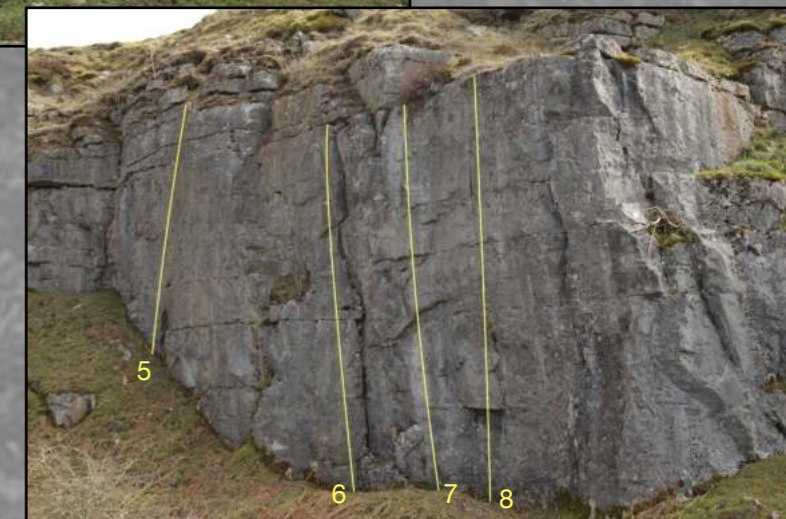
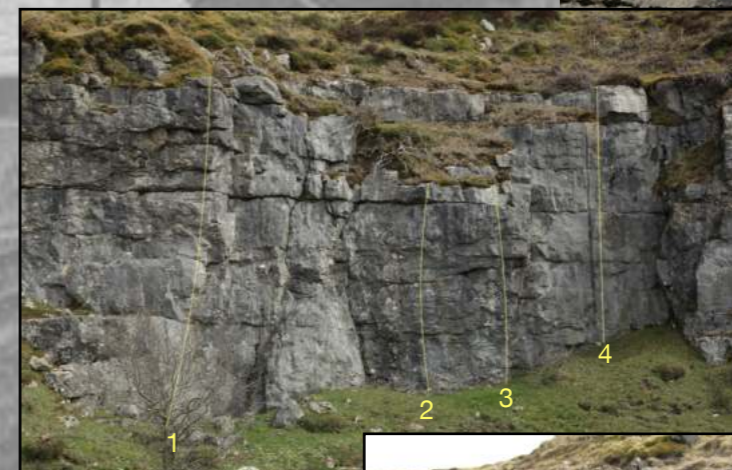
1. **Tucked away** [4] The gently overhanging arête is the first climb in the quarry (*P.Tucker 2019*).

2/3. **Tucker's wall** [6?, ss] The short middle wall offers some problems (*P.Tucker 2019*).

4. **The Brecons mountain send train** [6a, ss] The short borehole just right is tricky to start (*O.Keynes/G.Percival/P.Tucker 2019*).

5. **Iron awe** [hvs 5b - 9m] The centre of the slab further right (*M.Crocker 22/4/87*).

6. **Cavitation** [hs 4c - 9m] The left trending crack quickly gets steeper and more tricky (*D.Vousden 1/4/19*).





Rich Smith on a *Celebration of Life*

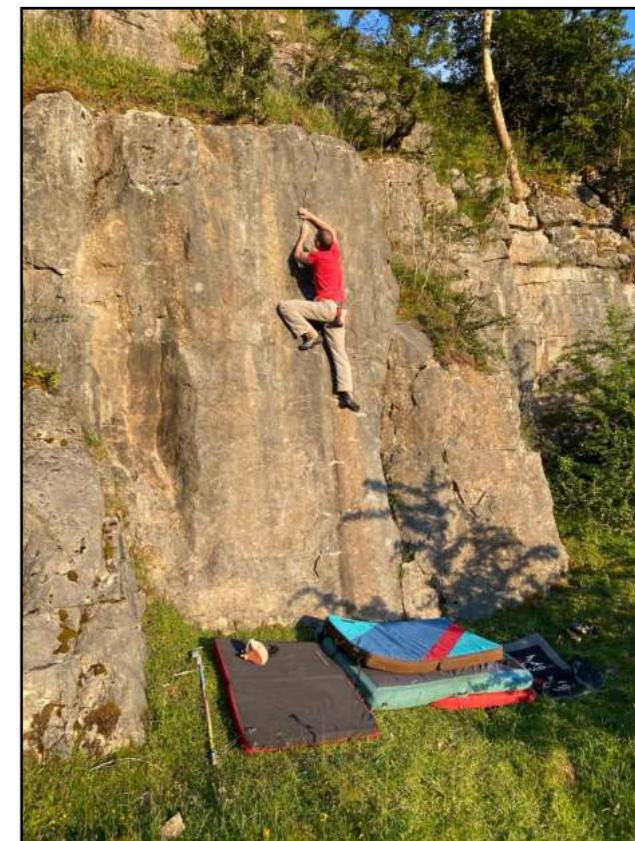
7. **Metal mistake** [6c+/e3 6b - 9m] A name that is unfortunately applicable to much in South Wales. The wall just right of *Cavitation*, starting below a projecting hold, has an old bolt placement (E1?). It is much better as a hard highball/solo that eases with height (*M.Crocker 22/4/87*).

8. **Harmony of the skies** [6b/e3 6b - 9m] The thin crack is a fabulous sustained problem that is hard to start. Perhaps best as a highball but there is an option of very good protection at 3/4 height (*M.Ward & M.Crocker 15/3/87*). #southsidetour

9. **Smile** [5 - 7m] Further right is an attractive shorter wall capped by a small hawthorn. Climb the leftwards trending groove (*M.Crocker 10/3/87*).

10. **Celebration of life** [6a+ - 7m] A very good problem up the thin crack-line just right of *Smile*, including the wall's right arête (*R.Smith 7/22*).

11. **The third worst place to live in the UK** [6c+] A great problem tucked away in a recess round to the right. Climb the borehole/corner to a crux finale going left (*O.Keynes & R.Smith 7/22*).



12. **Hellboy** [6c] Bridge up the corner (*M.Crocker 27/9/14*).

13. **Hellthorn** [6a] The arête just right, keeping feet out of the easy groove (*M.Crocker 27/9/14*).

14. **Appear, smear, disappear, then reappear** [e2 6a - 12m] Climb the slab further right up a central line of weakness, finishing directly or off to the right (*M.Crocker 10/3/87*).

15. **Bumbling about in Bhutan** [e4 6b - 12m]. The wall just right of *Appear* via a small pod feature (*M.Crocker & M.Ward 10/3/87*).



16. **Tortured** [vs 4c - 9m] The left crack (*M.Crocker 10/3/87*).

17. **Traction** [vs 5a - 9m] The right crack (*M.Crocker 10/3/87*).

18. **Has been** [4] Start as for *Traction* then follow the dog-legged crack right past a small roof ((*M.Crocker 09/14*).



19. **Retraction** [3+, ss] The shorter easy crack 2m to the right (*O.Keynes 2019*).

20. **Classic Baltic curry** [6a, ss] Sit-start the rounded arête on its left side (*O.Keynes 2019*).

21. **Has not been** [4] The bulging arête on its right (*M.Crocker 9/14*).

22. **Curb all intransigence** [e1 5c - 9m] The square arête climbed on its right side (*M.Crocker 10/3/87*).

The far southern end features a cave currently being dug by troglodytes. There is potential for more problems here (some additions, 23-25, are included in Crocker's pdf guide), although many landings need care.

To reach the bouldering/routes of **Twynau Gwynion** walk uphill from the end of the south quarry and head in a generally south east direction for around 5-10 minutes until coming to the quarry workings up on the plateau.

