

# Gower

New Developments

2020

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up and under



## Remembering John Allen by Nick Taylor

*I love climbing on Gower, it has so many beautiful beaches and quiet places off the beaten track. After we got married in 2018, Lesley and I started a honeymoon tour of South and Mid-Wales and we came across a few small crags with new routeing potential. In the bay running east from Thurba Head we watched a baby octopus in a rock pool and climbed several routes in a gully, including a unique squeeze through a hole in the roof. On other visits I soloed the easier routes, but some good harder lines remained so I suggested to my mate John that we make a trip down from Sheffield to do the rest.*

*We stayed B&B in Swansea and tried a different curry house each night. Fuelled by cooked breakfast, we did most of the routes at Holys Wash and remaining lines at Red Chamber and Thurba East. I couldn't tempt him to make the second ascent of the hole in the roof. He certainly enjoyed tussling with the cracks at Holys Wash, particularly expressing his appreciation for the off-width as he swore his way up it. We also did some sport climbs at Watch House Crag and found a super little VS slab on the beach nearby.*

*We had plans to return for further exploration and to sample the recent sport climbing development, but John was tragically killed in a climbing accident at Stoney Middleton. All who knew John will describe his gregarious, entertaining nature and sense of humour. A real character and lovely man, I was privileged to know him, he will be greatly missed.*

*John Allen R.I.P.  
10th Oct 1958 - 18th May 2020*



**John Allen**  
Photo: Nick Taylor



White Edge and Block Buttress — Mewslade Bay

## Introduction

This publication is the third **Gower New Developments**. This one is different; this year's edition contains only trad routes. Most of the new routes here were first climbed by visitor Nick Taylor. Not only did Nick climb new routes, but he also climbed them on three new crags. Well done Nick! You set a fine example. May the locals follow your lead!

There are four new crags:

**Tears Point** must have been climbed on at some point, but it was left to Roy Thomas in 2019 to climb and record the first route on this undeveloped and forgotten crag. There is lots more to do here. The rock, of better quality than it first appears, has some intriguing looking lines along its considerable length and would keep a dedicated trad climber busy for some time.

Discovered in 2018, the climbs at **Thurba East Gully** were only recorded on the wiki in mid-summer 2019. A discovery by Nick Taylor.

Named after a cave marked on OS maps, **Red Chamber** is another well-hidden crag discovered by Nick Taylor. The climbs are quite short and the better ones appear to be on the front face.

A crag with a history, but which has fallen out of fashion in recent years, is **Black Hole Crag**. The crag provides a close and quiet escape from the crowds at Boiler Slab and, before a visit from the SWMC, contained some intriguing and unclimbed lines. On a visit there in 2019, Gwyn Evans set his sights on a hanging V groove at the top of the crag. Gwyn climbed it with two points of aid and, by a devious entry, the aid giving rise to the name *Needs Must*. Nick Taylor came along a little later, climbed the obvious start, dispensed with the aid but kept the name.

And finally, Nick Taylor has made another remarkable discovery. **Holy's Wash Buttress** at Oxwich Point has somehow been overlooked by new routers. Nick has added 9 new routes graded from D to E2. There is plenty more unclimbed rock at Oxwich Point!



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2020

Thanks to **Cockerel Books** for facilitating the Malc Baxter drawing.

Not for resale.

Online Version

**Cover:** Gwyn Evans at the top of Black Hole Crag

## Access Notes

### ***Tears Point***

Park at Rhossili *National Trust* car park and head down the track towards Worms Head. After 900m the track leads into a wide and grassy expanse and reaches a coastguard lookout after a further 300m. From the coastguard lookout descend the track that goes out towards Worms Head but turn left (east) when at the bottom and head along the small path for 600m. You will see the route on your left. (25 minutes from Rhossili).

### ***Thurba East Gully and Red Chamber***

Turn left (south) off the main Rhossili Road at Pitton to Pitton Farm (SS 427 876). Car parking is available (an honesty box - currently £3.00). Turn left when coming out of the car park and follow the road past some houses and farm buildings to a track. At this point the main track appears to veer off to the right. You should take the left fork (public footpath but marked 'private road'). Follow the track uphill and pass through two gates. Follow the track further until you come to another gate.

Go through the gate and either follow the signposted footpath directions directing you via the edges of the field or strike out diagonally rightwards across the field to reach yet another gate.

Pass through this gate, head down a shallow grassy valley towards the sea, and reach another gate (on the Wales Coast Path) after about 50 metres. This is the top end of Rams Grove. (1 km. and 15 minutes from parking). Pass through the gate and then immediately turn right and go up the stepped path and then follow the grassy track for 350m to a gate. Go through the gate and then descend the grassy valley to the base of an east-facing buttress (Thurba East).

Find the steep path (directly in front of the buttress) that descends to a broken rock platform above high-tide level. The main gully, containing most of the climbs (Thurba East Gully), is about 40m west but the scramble down is after about 20m. The gully is recognised by a blow-hole in the roof at the back and a chimney, just right, which leads up to another hole. Routes have mainly low to mid-tide access.

To reach Red Chamber you can boulder-hop across at low tide from Thurba East Gully by heading first towards the sea and then going east. (25 minutes from Pitton Farm).

### ***Black Hole Crag***

From Overton village green (SS 461 852) follow the road 250m south-westward until you reach a large gate at a point where the road becomes a track (bridal path). Follow the track westwards for about a half-mile and then go through a metal kissing-gate. (12 mins). Then follow the grassy path for about 100 metres and branch off right and up to another gate. Continue through the gate and then cross a field along its northern edge to another gate after 250 metres. (6 mins).

Go through the gate and follow the path branching-off left down a narrow dry valley. This will take you, after about 3 minutes, to the foot of Boiler Slab.

Now take the lower coast path to the eastern side of the first headland to the west. Scramble down its eastern side. (30 minutes from Overton).



### ***Holy's Wash Buttress***

Approach from Oxwich Green (SS 494 860 and limited parking) via a footpath running southwards next to a caravan park. Go through double kissing-gates then take the cliff top path towards

Oxwich point. The buttress is just beyond another kissing-gate. Follow the shallow valley depression down to the grassy base of the crag. (15 minutes from Oxwich Green). If parking is tight then try Oxwich Beach main car park.

### **Finding Gower Crags**

The location of crags in this mini-guide has been recorded on each topo page.

For all other crags on Gower see each Wiki page or scan the code above.

- 1 Tearaway - HVS, 5a
- 2 Project



# Tears Point

OS GR: SS 409 870  
WGS 84: 51.559840,-4.296507

# Thurba East Gully



## 1. Turkey Burglar - HS 4b

An isolated route 50m west at the left side of the beach starting inside a smooth sculpted bowl-shaped inlet. A gymnastic start leads to an easy wall with a conglomerate layer at the top, skirted on the right or direct which is solid but harder (not on topo). 10m.

## 2. Goggle Boggle - S 4a

On the left side of the gully at the first corner with a protruding block, heave over this to a ledge. Continue up the corner crack above. 10m.

## 3. Time of Porridge - HS 4b

Just right, climb to a ledge then the steep corner to a small capping roof. Pull right past a hole and up the cracked seaward facing sidewall. 11m.

## 4. Man Shot By Shed - HVS 5a

Where the gully wall steepens follow cracks then, after a brief shake out, the hanging arête. A good and sustained route. 11m.

## 5. Sorry I Ate Too Much Bread - E2 5c \*\*

Climbs through the obvious hole in the roof at the back of the gully. Start below and left of this then climb the steep wall to a ledge and then bridge across, undercut and launch, then use peristalsis to progress up the tube. 12m.

WGS 84: 51.557709 -4.272306  
OS GR: SS 425 867

Trad Grades	
<=HVS	10
E1-E3	2
E4-E5	0
>=E6	0







**6. Mayor Too Fat To Sky-dive - HVS 5a \*\***

At the back of the gully on the right-hand side is an undercut alcove with a chimney exit into another tube. A difficult start from the right gains the chimney and a jammed buoy provides protection. Continue into the tube, which proves easier than it looks. 12m.

**7. Slap My Elbow - HS 4b**

On the right side of the gully start 3m right at a wide crack. Climb this and then a short slab. 11m.

**8. Whack My Knee - VS 4c \***

Just to the right, climb the wall directly to the arête and follow this steeply. High in the grade. 10m.

**9. Minkihub - E1 5a \***

Climbs a direct line up the centre of the wall to the right. Has a tricky move onto the sloping ledge below the final steeper wall. Low in the grade. 9m.

**10. Melt Banana - HS 4a**

Follow the right side of the wall. A steep section at half height and an easier finish. 8m.

**11. Hotty Potty - VD**

Starting cracks at the seaward end of the wall and then step left to follow the flake edge and shallow groove. 9m.

**12. Ladder - D**

About 8m right, at a slightly higher level and above a rock pool, is a small cracked pillar facing the sea. Climb the front face. Good protection. 8m.

### 1. Hello Me Time - HVS 5a \*

The first route is on the west side of the gully at the seaward end. Start below the highest point of the wall and follow a line of weakness up the lower wall past a flake to a ledge. Step left and tackle the centre of the overhanging headwall. Optional tangled ship's rope belay. 9m.

**The routes are now described left to right and start on the left side of the east wall of the gully.**

### *Red Chamber, East Wall*

#### 2. Grass Tickle - D

Next to a boulder. The left side of the wall via an easy crack/runnel. 7m.

#### 3. Fly Tickle - VD

Start up the right-leaning crack just to the right and then finish direct. Pleasant. 7m.

#### 4. Knockus Nobbilus - HS 4a

The unprotected crozzly wall to the right again. 8m.

#### 5. No Naked Jacuzzi-ness - VD

The cracks; just right again. 8m.

#### 6. Am I Your Boss Now? - VD \*

Start below the arête and climb the front face to a ledge and then a crack just left of the undercut arête which leads up to a flake. 9m.

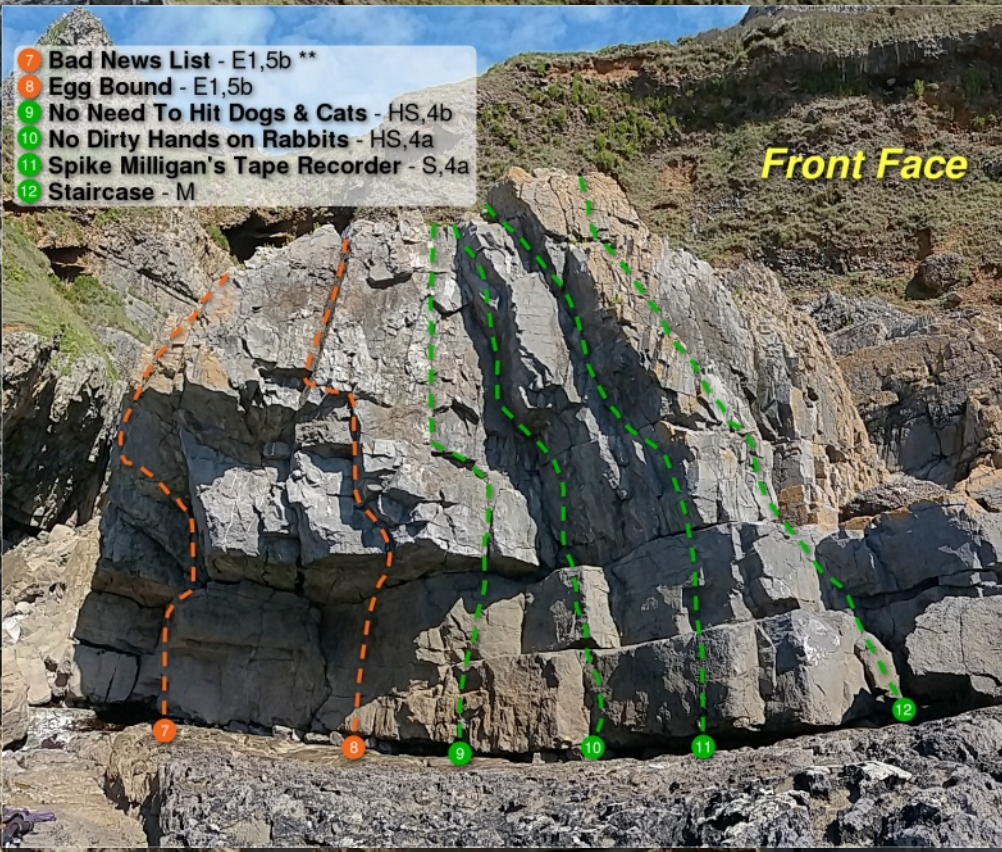


- 2 Grass Tickle - D
- 3 Fly Tickle - VD
- 4 Knockus Nobbilus - HS, 4a
- 5 No Naked Jacuzzi-ness - VD
- 6 Am I Your Boss Now? - VD \*
- 7 Bad News List - E1.5b \*\*

Trad Grades	
<=HVS	10
E1-E3	2
E4-E5	0
>=E6	0

OS GR: SS 426 867  
WGS 84: 51.557349 -4.271506





- 7 **Bad News List** - E1,5b \*\*
- 8 **Egg Bound** - E1,5b
- 9 **No Need To Hit Dogs & Cats** - HS,4b
- 10 **No Dirty Hands on Rabbits** - HS,4a
- 11 **Spike Milligan's Tape Recorder** - S,4a
- 12 **Staircase** - M

**Front Face**

**7. Bad News List** - E1 5b \*\*  
 Start 3m right of the undercut arête and swing up to a ledge on the right below the overhang. Difficult moves lead left and up onto the left side of the arête. Finish more easily up a jamming crack. Excellent rock and climbing. 10m.

**8. Egg Bound** - E1 5b  
 About 4m left of where the roof ends, pull through the overhang leftwards and then continue with determination up the nose above to a ledge. Step left into an easy hanging corner to finish. 9m.

**9. No Need To Hit Dogs & Cats** - HS 4b  
 Pull through the right-hand side of the roof at a crack. Continue directly and with limited protection. 8m.

**10. No Dirty Hands on Rabbits** - HS 4a  
 The corner which bounds the right side of the wall has limited protection. 8m.

(If the starts and finishes of the above two routes are transposed then they offer more balanced climbs of grades HS, if starting on left stepping right to corner, or VD if starting on right then stepping left to climb the wall left of the corner)

**11. Spike Milligan's Tape Recorder** - S 4a  
 The recessed groove in the right side wall of the corner. 7m.

**12. Staircase** - M  
 The easy angled pillar. 7m.

The seaward front face of the buttress has an undercut roof and a base which slopes up beneath so is less tidal as you go further to the right.



Gwyn Evans  
on the FA of  
*Needs Must*

## *Lazy Wednesday Gower Evenings*

Another warm, sunny Wednesday evening. It's getting towards the longest day so there's plenty of daylight for a trip down towards the western end of Gower. Despite being long retired I still find myself drawn to the Wednesday evening climbing trip, habit born of many years in Swansea with the local climbing club. A few routes and then a beer before home.

Tim, the keeper of the Wiki, has been walking and scrambling along the clifftops of Gower scouting out bits of unclimbed rock. Some of the bits he has taken us to have been uninspiring, and that's being kind, but we did some routes anyway. Black Hole Crag has been in the guidebooks for years but with only a few easy routes recorded, courtesy of Jeremy Talbot back in the 60s. On our first visit the obvious corner and crack at the left end of the pool caught my attention. There was a bit of a sting in the tail so it was *Not to be Sniffed At*. On this same visit we spied a hanging V groove standing proud near the top of the cliff, but we'd already done three new routes that evening and pub time was pressing.

A few weeks later it was time for a revisit, it has to be a couple of weeks to get the tides right. The finale of the route was obvious, but how to get to it. There was another corner directly below, reached by traversing above the water. Unfortunately the wave-washed rock was not receptive of runners nor did it help that my technique was found lacking on the day so a roundabout way of reaching the *piece de resistance* had to be found.

The bottom of the groove was undercut and whilst I had a couple of belting runners and some pretty good, if sharp, finger jams I couldn't get my feet up. There seemed to be a jug but that was out of reach also. Eventually, from the depths came the realisation that I would have to resort to aid. Two slings, attached to the two good runners, and a lot of wriggling, squirming and bloodletting and I got the jug. The rest was plain sailing. *Needs Must* as they say.

With it written up Nick Taylor came along with a good six inches extra

reach and gritstone training, and climbed the proper line also dispensing with the aid. He named it *Needs Must Direct*. We dropped the 'direct' and now the route follows the proper line.

*Gwyn Evans (June, 2020)*



*Gwyn Evans & Co.  
at the top of  
Black Hole Crag*

# Black Hole Crag

## Right

### 5. First Go - S

Starting at the right-hand end of the overlap. Go up the slab. 11m.

### 6. Goblins vs Martians - VS 4b

Go across the lower overlap, step left, then over a second overlap and then finish up the corner immediately right of the overhang. 11m.

### 7. Goblins vs Martians, Direct - HVS 5a \*

Go up the right side of alcove and around the right-hand side of the lower roof to join *Goblins vs Martians*. The direct start can also be used as a less direct means of attaining the groove. 13m.

### 8. Needs Must - E1 5b \*\*

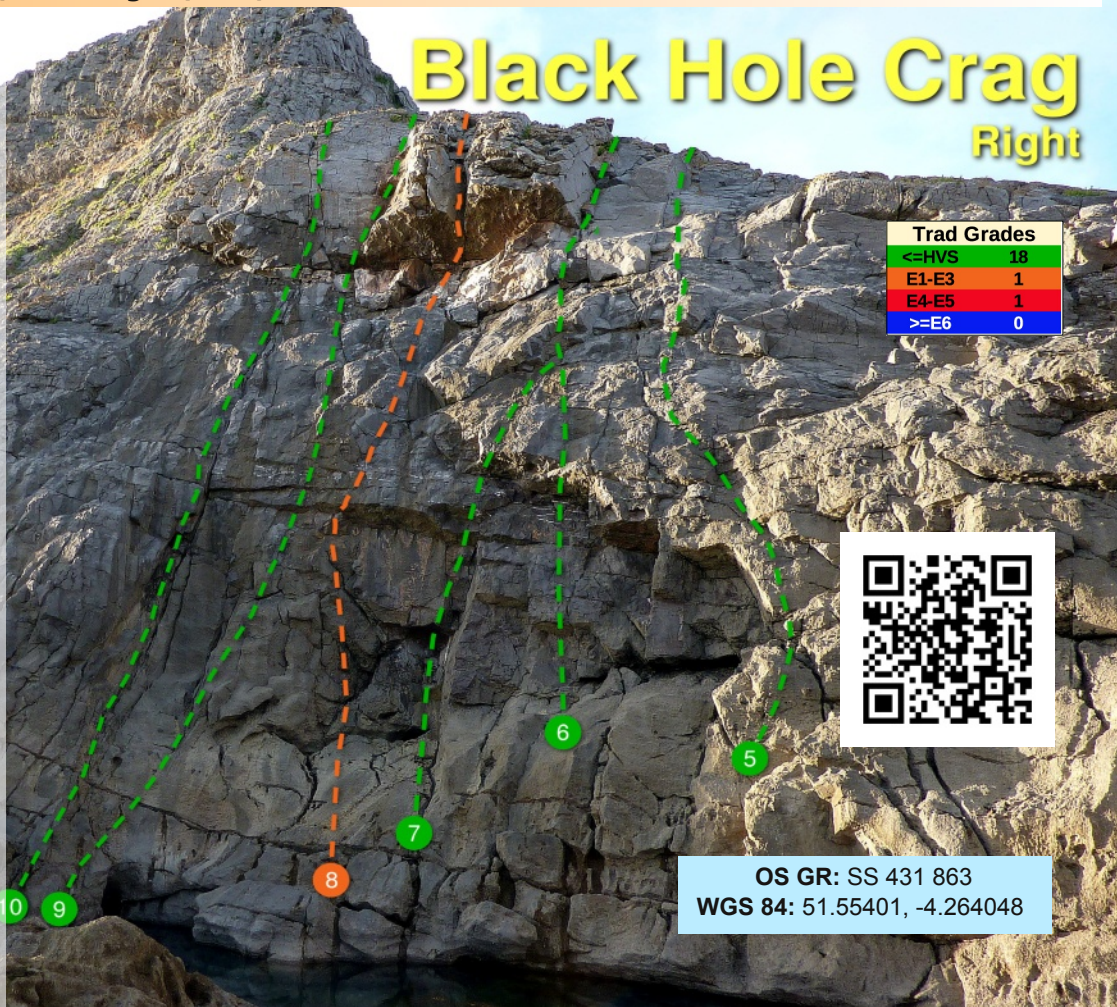
The most direct start to gain the roof and groove. Goes up the steep left side of the alcove and left side of lower roof. High in the grade. 13m.

### 9. Peg's on the Line - VS 4b/c

Climb the blunt rib a metre right of *Not to be Sniffed At*. Make some difficult moves onto the slabby area of rock above. Continue to the corner groove on the right. Finish with a difficult entry pull. 13m

### 10. Not to be Sniffed At - VS, 5a/4c \*

At the left end of the pool a crack goes up a corner and becomes a twin crack in the headwall. Follow the cracks. Crux on the



Trad Grades	
<=HVS	18
E1-E3	1
E4-E5	1
>=E6	0



OS GR: SS 431 863  
WGS 84: 51.55401, -4.264048

## Malc Baxter

At seventy-nine years of age, our artist Malc Baxter still climbs and is responsible for over 300 new routes. In 1961 he climbed the first extreme at Wimberry in the Chew Valley, *Wall and Bulge* E2 5b. An early and active member of the Manchester Gritstone Climbing Club, he is as keen to climb today as his body will allow.

It is significant that Malc is still producing outstanding art. The love of his craft is almost tangible and his enthusiasm and skill shine through. The majority of Malc's portfolio was produced for the British Mountaineering Council on a voluntary basis and is a measure of his huge generosity. In gifting his time for the love of the sport, Malc spent over six months (almost full time), producing his set of drawings for the 2002 Stange guide. These consist of 120 illustrations which were later described by Niall Grimes as, 'perhaps the finest set of crag drawings for any guidebook'. Illustrating more than thirty climbing guides, his stunning illustration of White Edge and Block buttress come at the back end of a career spanning almost sixty years; fifty nine to be exact! An achievement of which, there is no equal! In addition he recently completed two fine illustrations for the 2020 republication of the Ken Wilson classic, 'Hard Rock'.

### *David Price*

It is with great pride we publish Malc's creation. Producing this work helps keep guidebook drawings alive.



Malc Baxter, signing **Hard Rock** limited edition prints. © David Price

**1. Hello Neddy - E1,5a**

The steep front face of the left-hand pillar. Start right of the arête and climb up and left to a ledge. Make a tricky and committing pull onto another ledge. Step right and climb the headwall. 11m.

**2. Back-Body - VS,4b**

The short groove at the top of the cliff inbetween the pillar on the left and the compact wall just right. The lower wall is easy but poorly protected. The groove itself has an undercut start and may involve old schoolthrutching. 10m.

**3. Stumbles Around - VS,4b**

The compact wall left of the obvious right angled corner. Climb directly up the centre on good rock. Pleasant. 10m.

**4. Vintage Jam-pot Chimney - VD**

The wide chimney/crack in the corner. 10m.

**5. English Ghosts - HVS.5a \***

The obvious square-cut arête started from the base of its left wall. Good climbing, great position and high in grade. 11m.

**6. Why We Got The Sack From The Museum - E2,5b \***

The steep crack on the left side of the front face. Low in in grade. 12m.

**7. Chill Dummy - HVS,5a \***

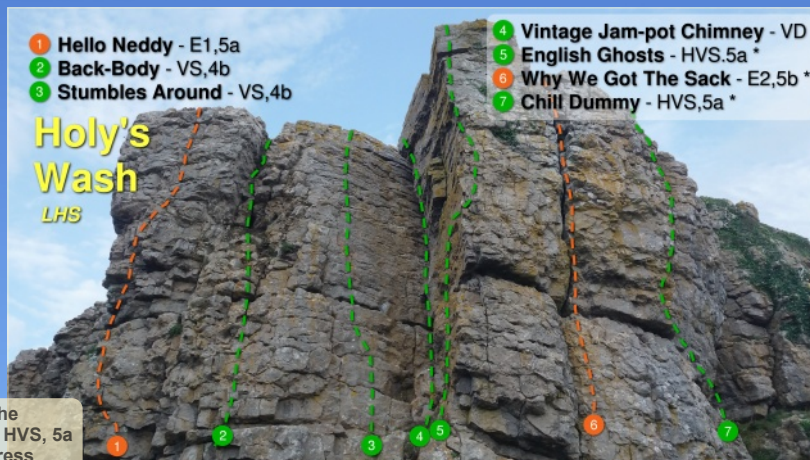
The right-facing corner/groove on the right side of the front face. Sustained and steeper than it looks. 12m.

**8. Society of Healthy Forms - E1,5b \***

The off-width crack starting at a higher level to the right. Good value. 10m.

**9. Sarsaparilla - VD**

The blocky chimney/cleft above the cave up to the right. 9m.



Nick Taylor on the FA of English Ghosts, HVS, 5a Holy's Wash Buttress

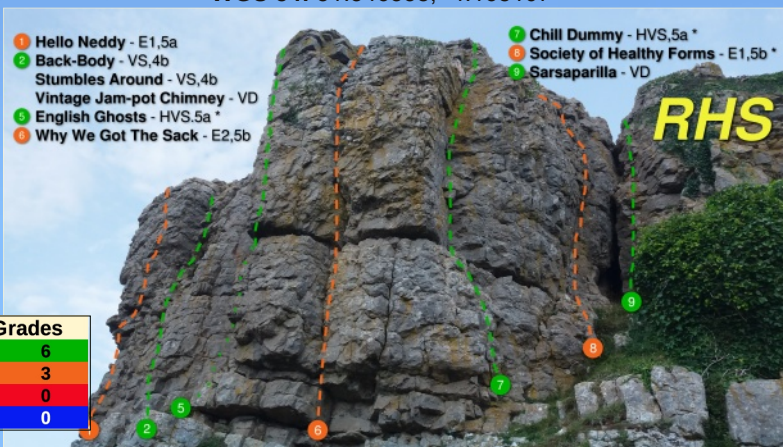
- 1 Hello Neddy - E1,5a
- 2 Back-Body - VS,4b
- 3 Stumbles Around - VS,4b

- 4 Vintage Jam-pot Chimney - VD
- 5 English Ghosts - HVS.5a \*
- 6 Why We Got The Sack - E2,5b \*
- 7 Chill Dummy - HVS,5a \*

**Holy's Wash**  
LHS

OS GR: SS 498 853

WGS 84: 51.546538, -4.168107



- 1 Hello Neddy - E1,5a
- 2 Back-Body - VS,4b
- 3 Stumbles Around - VS,4b
- 4 Vintage Jam-pot Chimney - VD
- 5 English Ghosts - HVS.5a \*
- 6 Why We Got The Sack - E2,5b

- 7 Chill Dummy - HVS.5a \*
- 8 Society of Healthy Forms - E1,5b \*
- 9 Sarsaparilla - VD

**RHS**

Trad Grades	
<=HVS	6
E1-E3	3
E4-E5	0
>=E6	0