

Bwlch

Two contrasting areas either side of the A40 on the edges of Bwlch. Initially developed by Paul Tucker in the early 2000s **Bwlch south** offers classical bouldering on a peaceful hillside with stunning views. **Bwlch north** has a variety of problems/microroutes in a more typical quarry setting.



sandstone - east facing - 10 minutes

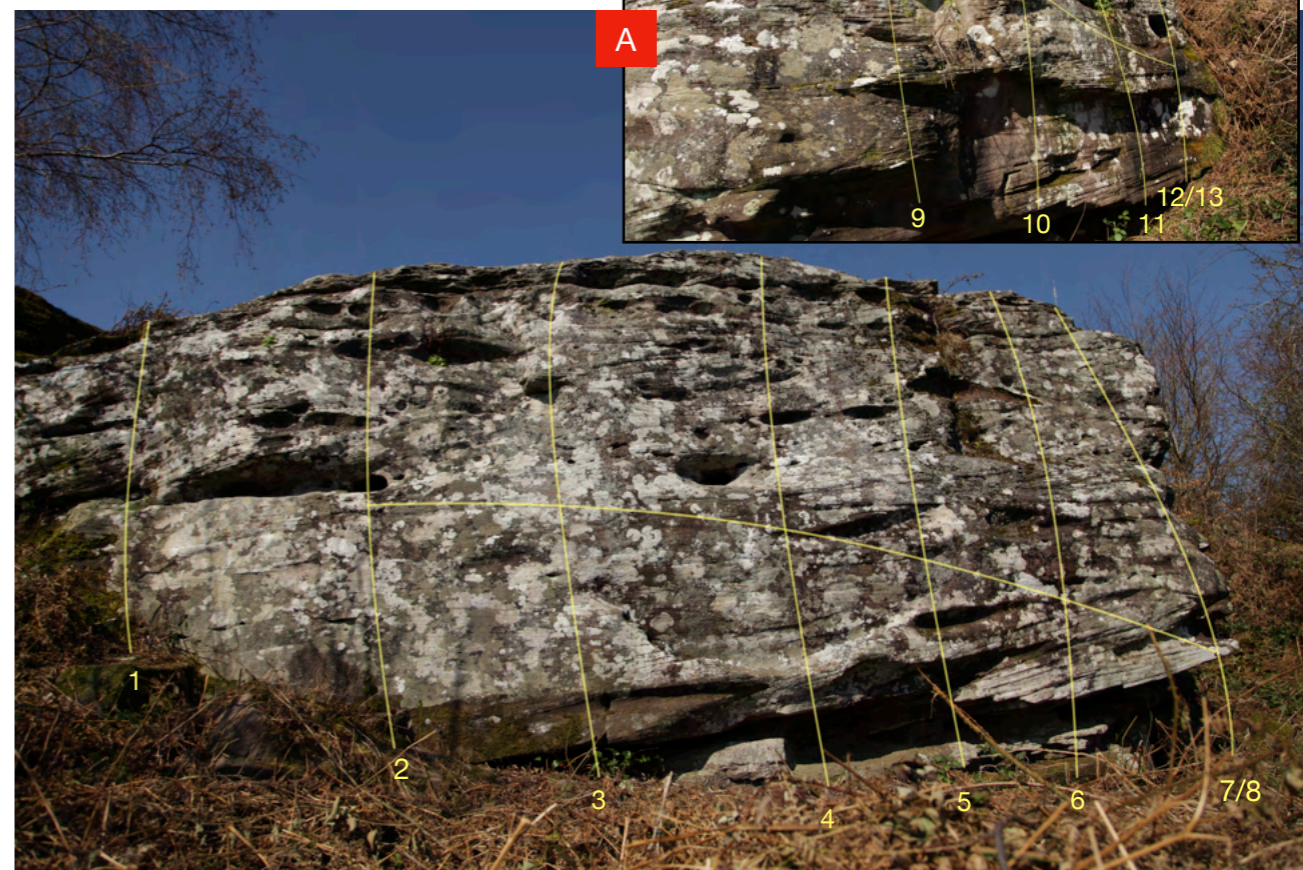
Bwlch south

The sandstone buttresses of Buckland Hill outcrop side-by-side along the top edge of the hillside. Varying in height around 3-5 metres they feature a variety of interesting pockets, slopers, and edges which are often harder to use than it seems from below. Problems can be combined to make a good low-grade circuit with some eliminates providing entertainment for those seeking harder challenge (not documented here). Landings are generally good but fast growing bracken with incumbent sheep ticks can be a problem during the summer months when paths may be overgrown depending on how frequently the rocks are being visited. All first ascents are credited to Paul Tucker between 1999-2004 unless otherwise stated.

Approach - From the western end of Bwlch turn south off the A40 into Buckland Hill (LD3 7HX). Follow this for roughly 300 metres until possible parking is available at a sharp right bend beside a green Forestry Commission sign (more parking further along if limited spaces are busy). From the bend take an obvious track to walk south and through the gate to enter open parkland. Continue ahead and when the path forks at a small ash tree turn left, heading south east to contour the hillside until a final short path left again leads to the top of the first buttress (A) - around 10 minutes/800 metres.

The first buttress (A) has a pocketed right side and a main south-east facing shelf then traverse leftwards using front characterised by a distinctive central 'smiling' ledge at its base.

1. **Pinched** [3+, ss] A one-move wonder on the far left of the front face.
2. **Pincher** [6b, ss] Start on two low edges and pass the hole.
3. **Eye liner** [6a+, ss] Starts from a left hand pocket/right hand sidepull to climb through the bulge. A good problem.
4. **Smiler** [6a, ss] A tricky sit start on the shelf leads to.
5. **Octoberon** [6a, ss] Start at the right side of the low recess, finishing left of the mossy scoop.
6. **Butterfly** [6a] Surmount the bulge to finish right of the mossy scoop. Hard for the short.
7. **Paul's traverse** [ss] Start on the low right side and a main south-east facing shelf then traverse leftwards using front characterised by a distinctive central 'smiling' ledge at its base. once established on the ledge until possible to finish up *pinched*. An extension starts further around the arête as for problem 10.
8. **Turn Of The Century** [6a, ss] Start on the low shelf and boulder through the sloping bulge above to finish left of the arête. A classic problem. [#southsidetour](#)
9. **The grunter** [6a] Low start with a right hand side pull/left hand edge. Unfortunately the tricky direct finish on the arête is escapable.
10. **The graunch** [6a, ss] The low start begins with a left hand sidepull/right hand edge. Move up from here through scoops in the wall above. A good problem.
11. **The grinch** [5] Stand start through the big pocket. A hard low sit start is possible on a small sloped edge beneath the lip.
12. **Grind-Graunch** [5+, ss] Traverse from the start of 1 into the finish of 4 following the obvious mid-level slopers below big pockets.
13. **The grind** [3, ss] Start on the obvious low edge at the far right end.
14. **Pop tarts** [6a, ss] Dyno from the shelf to the square cut edge. The problem is considerably easier [4] if climbed without the dyno.
15. **Owen's traverse** [7a/6b, ss] Traverse right from the shelf at the start of *Pop tarts* using slopers above the lip and smearing feet (the break is out) to finish up problem 18. Using the slopers only bumps the grade up considerably (O.Samuel 2004).
16. **Sleepwalker** [5+, ss] Direct to the top through the bulge from a low start on the pocketed shelf.



10. **The graunch** [6a, ss] The low start begins with a left hand sidepull/right hand edge. Move up from here through scoops in the wall above. A good problem.

11. **The grinch** [5] Stand start through the big pocket. A hard low sit start is possible on a small sloped edge beneath the lip.

12. **Grind-Graunch** [5+, ss] Traverse from the start of 1 into the finish of 4 following the obvious mid-level slopers below big pockets.

13. **The grind** [3, ss] Start on the obvious low edge at the far right end.

The next buttress (B) has an undercut high right side and a south-east facing front accessed via a small step (leading on to the top of Buttress C).

14. **Pop tarts** [6a, ss] Dyno from the shelf to the square cut edge. The problem is considerably easier [4] if climbed without the dyno.

15. **Owen's traverse** [7a/6b, ss] Traverse right from the shelf at the start of *Pop tarts* using slopers above the lip and smearing feet (the break is out) to finish up problem 18. Using the slopers only bumps the grade up considerably (O.Samuel 2004).

16. **Sleepwalker** [5+, ss] Direct to the top through the bulge from a low start on the pocketed shelf.



17. **Braveur** [6a, ss] Starting from the crozzly shelf.

18. **Pianoforte** [6a, ss] Climb direct from a low undercut beneath the roof, then using pockets and slopers to the top. A good problem.

19. **The piano** [5+, ss] Start on the low pinch beneath the roof then finish easily on the left side of the arête.

20. **Pianissimo** [5, ss]. Start on a low pinch beneath the roof to climb the wall right of the arête. Currently overgrown.

21. **Bleau down** [6a, ss]. A tricky start from a small rail leads to an easy finish.

22. **Bleau-Aberail** [6?, ss] A low link of problem 21 in to 24.

23. **Buckfest** [6a, ss]. Direct from the left end of the shelf via a scooped pocket.

24. **Aberail** [5+, ss]. A classic problem up the obvious groove, with a fantastic view down the Usk Valley behind you. [#southsidetour](#)

25. **Painted desert** [5+, ss]. Climb direct from the shelf up a reddish streak using pockets and edges. Another classic problem. [#southsidetour](#)

26. **Pancake** [6a, ss] Direct up the wall from the ledge 1m left of *Drop scone*.

27. **Drop scone** [4, ss] Direct up the wall from a crack beside the step. Take care with the landing.

28. **Concorde** [6a, ss] Starting under the roof right of the step climb directly to the top via a pocket. A good problem.

29. **Powys craic** [6a, ss] Start from the low vertical crack to finish up *Edgelane*.

30. **Edgelane** [4] The right arête.

The next buttress (**C**) is the biggest and juts out from the hillside. Its scooped right side is capped by a high roof whilst its front features a distinctive pointed roof on its left.

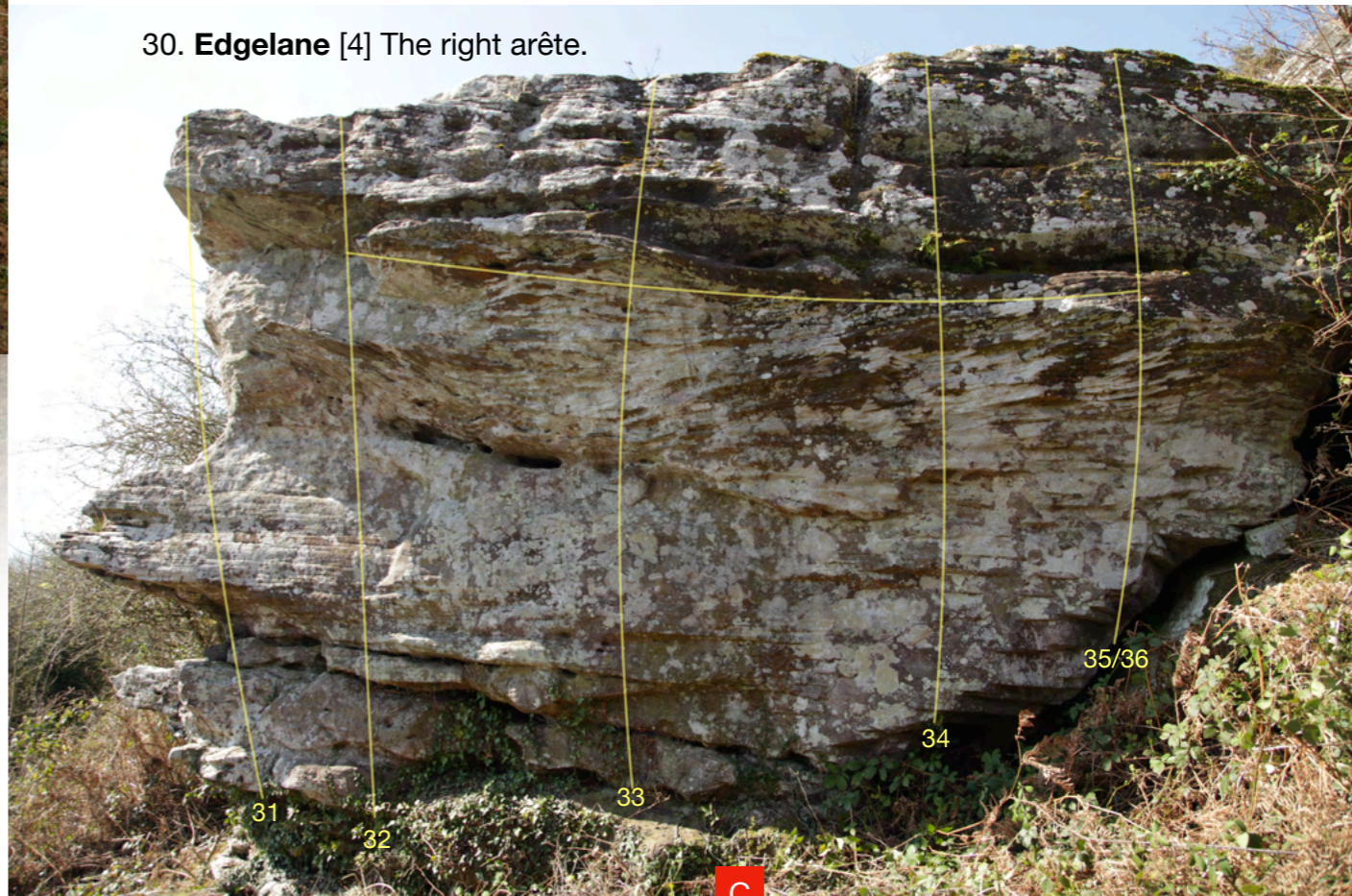
31. **A little step up** [4] Surmount the ledge on the left and then reach the top.

32. **Final contract** [6a+] An airy-feeling problem past the projecting flake from pockets.

33. **The engagement** [6a+] Starts from a pocket and jug to climb directly through the roof.

34. **Lace up** [6a+] Edges to shelf. Be gentle to the edges.

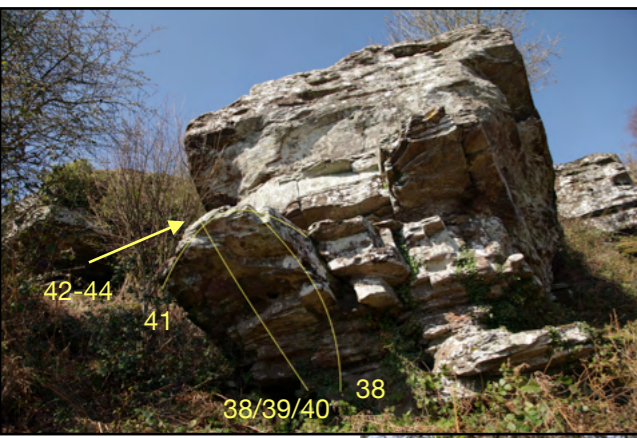
35. **For the sun** [6b] Start as for *Lace up* then follow an increasingly airy-feeling traverse leftwards along the shelf to finish as for problem 32.



C



Paul Tucker enjoying *Painted desert* on a warm spring day



Paul Tucker engaged on *The engagement* (right) and *Be prowed* (below right)

36. **Overload** [6b+] Pull on using smears on the block to the right then climb direct through the bulge above.

The next three buttresses (D-F) outcrop in a close line, each separated by narrow gullies.

37. **Prowess** [5+, ss] The right side of the projecting roof from a low start on easy holds. Mantle to finish.

45. **Cake walk** [3] The easy slab on the far left.

38. **Be prowed** [6a, ss] Start low in the cave and climb through the roof using all available options.

46. **Splash the cash** [6a+] The left sidewall of buttress D from a pocket.

39. **Gregorian chant** [6b+, ss] An eliminate through the roof. Start as for the previous problem then tackle the roof taking a central line and using only the holds under the roof (B.Gregory 2003?).

47. **Arête toujours** [6a] The left side of the left arête from the block.

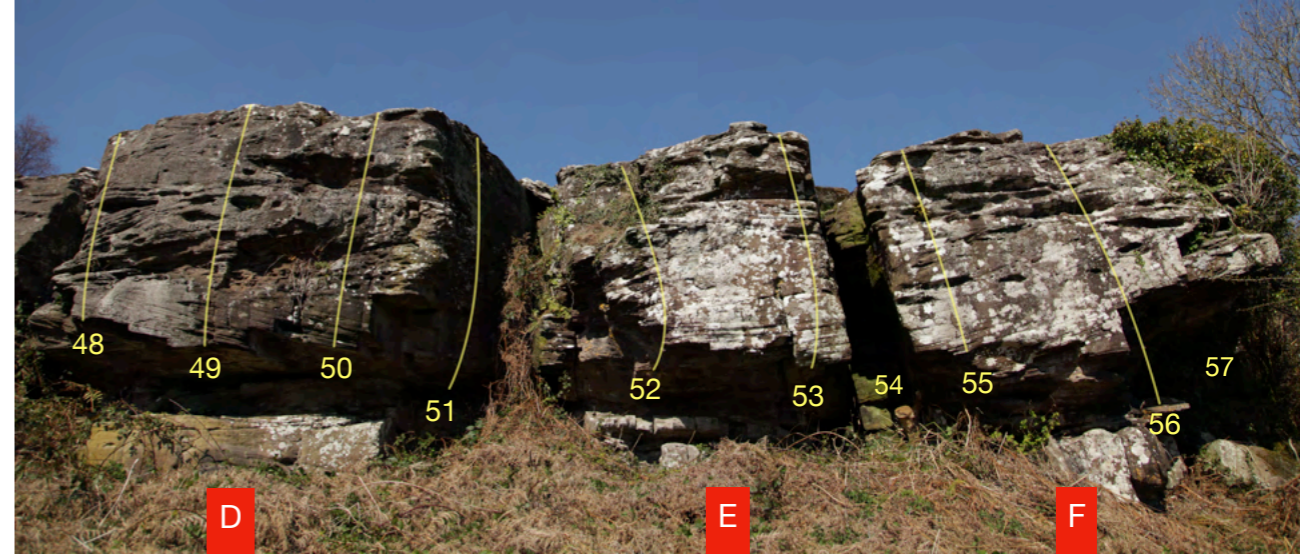
40. **Dyno-might** [7a] Dyno with full commitment from the back of the cave to the lip of the roof (M.Preece 24/5/2010).

48. **Arête de jour** [5] The left arête, climbed on the front.

41. **Roof traverse** [4] Traverse the lip of the projecting roof. Can be done in either direction but is better left to right.

49. **Metaspace** [5] Direct up the centre of the face.

42. A small wall on the upper left side of the buttress.



50. **We don't need no education** [4] A broken line up the right side of the front face.

57. A problem through the roof to the right is possible.

51. **Moonshadow** [5] Right sidewall of buttress D from two pockets. A good problem.

50 metres left of buttress six is a small but rather beautiful boulder (G) which has potential for some one-move wonders. A short walk further south along the top of the hillside leads to the final buttress (H), set apart from the others in a more secluded spot.

52. **Eyeless and Gaga** [6a, ss] The middle buttress (E) is the smallest. Front left side from a low start on flat edges.

58. **Planes of smoothing flow** [ss]. A hard low level traverse, starting on the far left to finish as for problem 64.

53. **Starline** [6a, ss] Front right, starting low at the back of the roof.

59. **Salmon stone send** [3] Climb to the top on the far left via the shelf.

54. **Chimney route** [4] Old-school back-and-footing up the narrow gully between buttress E/F.

60. **Salmon stone sent** [4] A harder variant of 61 direct up to and through the pointed prow.

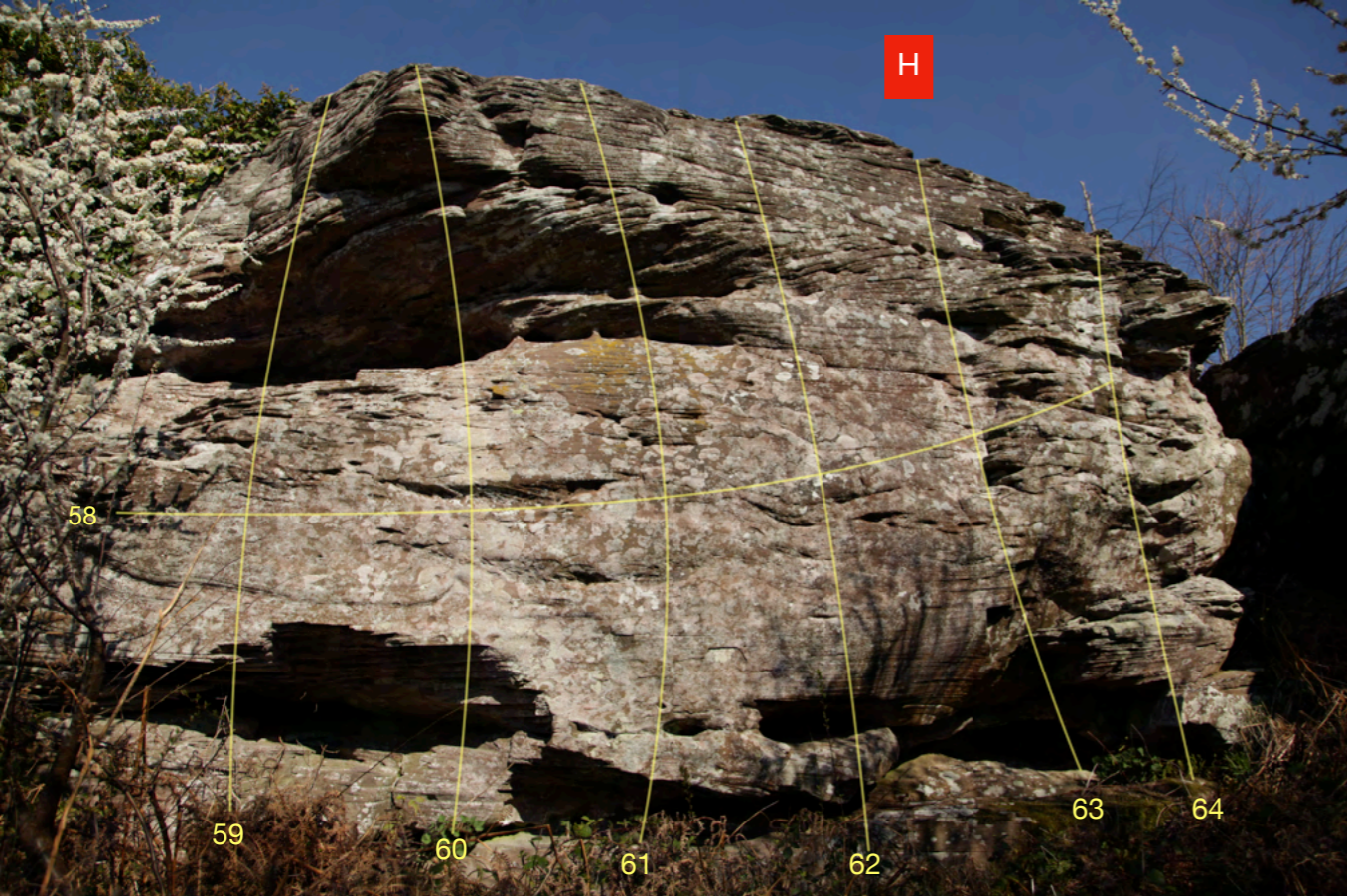
55. **Telescope** [5+] Front left on buttress F. A harder sit-start is possible.

56. **High five** [5+] From the pedestal through a scoop.

61. **Pocket full of gold** [6a+], ss Climb direct to the top via a pocket from some small sloping edges. A good problem.



62. **Lie hardd** [6a+]. The wall between 59/61 offers a good eliminate - using a sloper to two pairs of side-by-side pockets. Harder eliminates are possible here.



66. **The old road** [3, ss] Start sitting on the right side of the block.
 65. **Mai fair** [5+, ss] Start sitting on the left side of the block.

Bwlch north

An unexpectedly situated small quarry that has been climbed in for many years but with little documented records of past activity. Unfortunately most of the rock here is fractured and unstable but there are a few things of note.

Approach - From the eastern end of Bwlch turn north off the A40 onto Heol Tremynia/Tremynea Road and continue for around 1 mile until reaching a circular parking area on the right beyond a small house. Walk back from here to pass the house and then take a narrow footpath leading right for around 1 minute until reaching the quarry on the right.

1. **The surf's up** [7a+, ss]. A long problem along the low wall. Start from pockets and traverse from left to right without using the top of the wall. Can be finished half-way at the first jug [6c] (J.Bacon & M.Preece 07/09).

2. **Dark steps** [8a, 6m] Starting from two poor slots gain the sloping edge then a jug to finish up and left (M.Preece 5/7/20).

3. **Silver post** [6c, 6m] The wall right of *Dark steps*. Start without using the foot blocks (M.Preece 2010).

5 minutes - east facing

