

Troed-y-rhiw

A large and rambling crag stretching across the hillside above Troed-y-rhiw. the village 'at the bottom of the slope'. Considering its size it feels like there should be so much more climbing here but the place has received little attention, in part because of its adventurous nature? Initially developed by John Harwood, then Martin Crocker, more recent activities by Alex Mannion and friends have yielded some decent bouldering. Whilst there may not be much in terms of volume however there are some things of quality here, including the regional highball/solo classic *Solo para tos zapatos* and it's more recent homage *Ain't no Crocker*.

Approach - heading north along the A4054/Cardiff Road take the first sharp right (CF48 4LJ) immediately after entering Troed-y-rhiw (last left if heading south, and opposite a bus stop). Continue to follow the bend left where plenty of parking is available beneath trees. To reach the crag walk along the road a short distance then turn right immediately after a fenced-in generator. Continue uphill for around 60m on an obvious path to reach the graffiti-covered ruin of the old lido, built as a recreational swimming pool for the community in 1934 but long since abandoned. The first buttress of *Solo para tos zapatos* is just beyond this.

The train station in Troed-y-rhiw is around 0.5 miles away (10-15 minutes walking) from the parking described above.

The first area of rock [A] just beyond the ruined lido has a distinctively slumped appearance. It features an impressive slab on the left and a high gritesque arête on the right.

1. **Slab** [5] The short slab on the far left provides entertainment (*A.Mannion 2012?*).

2. **Fell runner** [5+] Start on a big flat hold in the recess then tackle the undercut block above. A very good problem (*A.Mannion 12/5/12*).

3. **Grains from the blackvein** [E4 5c] The arête left of *Solo para...*, climbed on its left side, is just as intimidating as its more illustrious neighbour (*Richards, Sharp, & Shewring 20/5/12*).

4. **Slab left arête** [5] Climb the arête left of *Solo para..* on its front to a flat hold, or continue to link into the main event if feeling brave (*A.Mannion 2/5/12*).

5. **Solo para tos zapatos** [6a/E5 6a] A superb, intense line up the intimidating 12m slab on the left of the buttress, starting in the middle. The movement is exquisite but with no protection and a high crux this is best approached as a solo. A strong contender for the best sandstone micro-route in South Wales (*M.Crocker 26/12/91*). [#southsidetour](#)

6. **Slab right arête** [3+] The short arête right of *Solo para* (*A.Mannion 2/5/12*).

7. **Solo circum** [6a] Traverse the slab to link both arêtes, most logically from right to left following the rising ground (*A.Mannion 2/5/12*).

8. **Near Forty** [6a+] Traverse rightwards to link *Slab right arête* into the finish of *Unforgiven* using holds above 'Emma' (*C.Evans 13/1/13*).

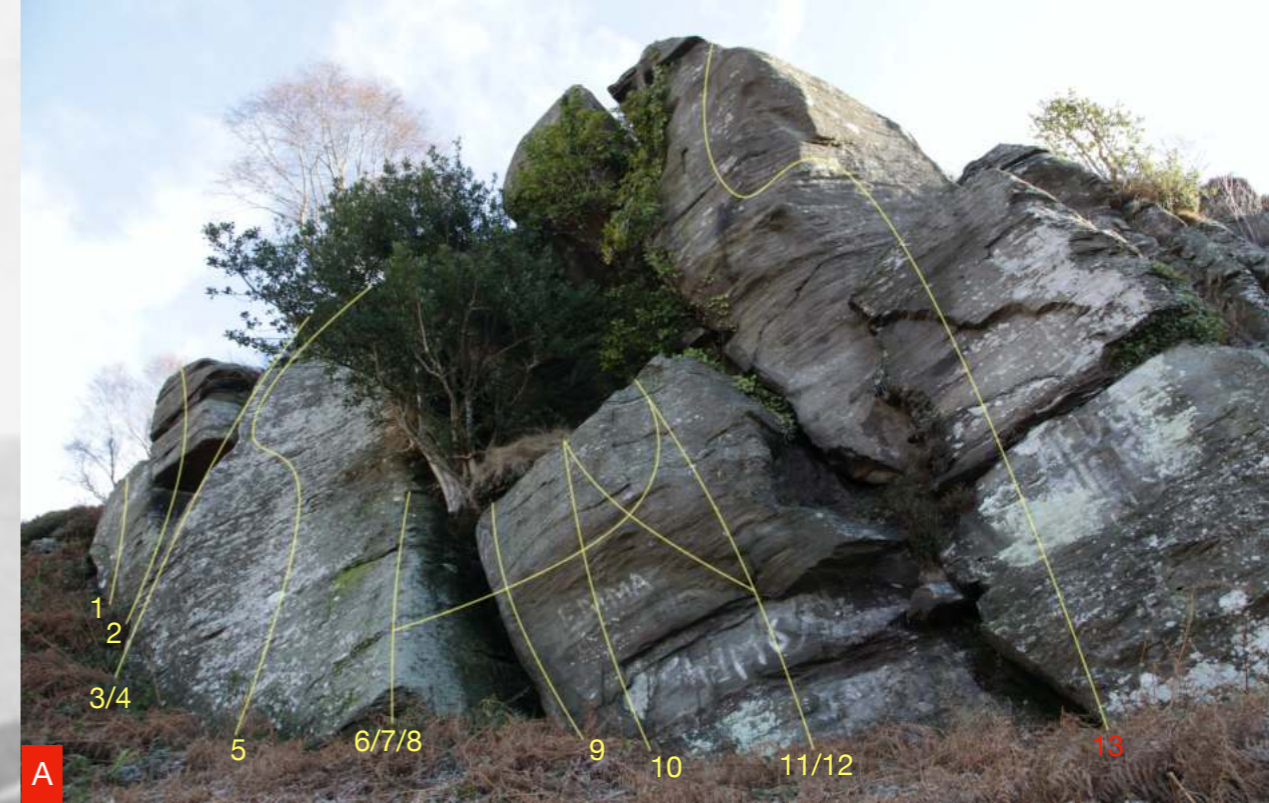
9. **Crock bloc** [6a, ss]. A good problem up the left arête of the bulging central section. Use of the wall further left is not cricket (*M.Shewring 17.5.12*).

10. **Baby spice** [6a+, ss] Climb direct to the top from a low flake beneath 'Emma'. Another good problem (*A.Sharp 17/5/12*).

11. **Ain't no Crocker** [6a+, ss] An excellent problem on the bulging middle section of rock which is one of the best in South Wales. Reach the obvious sidepull/gaston from a low start beneath it then head left on a series of superb edges (*A.Mannion 8/2/12*).

[#southsidetour](#)

12. **The Unforgiven** [6a+, ss] Start as for *Ain't no Crocker* but continue direct from the sidepull up a groove, without use of the right arête (*A.Mannion 2/5/12*).



13. **Snow jest** [E6 6b] An intimidating traditional route (*M.Crocker 4/4/94*).

About 10m up right an undercut boulder [C] juts out from the hillside...

A small quarry 30m further right (south) contains a handful of more problems. The first of these are on an attractive slabby boulder [B] up the hillside.

19. **Sketchy lefthand** [5+, ss] Two small edges to the top via horizontal break (*A.Mannion 8/2/12*).

20. **Sketch block direct** [4+, ss] (*A.Mannion 8/2/12*).

14. **Bloc party** [6a+, ss] The sidewall of the slab is a very good problem. Starting low is tricky and doesn't include the foot block (*M.Shewring 19/5/12*).

21. **Rhiw the day** [4, ss] A rather insignificant problem on the other side. Start low and traverse left to finish up the prow (*M.Shewring 17/5/12*).

15. **Slab left** [5] Left arête of the slab. A hard sit-start might be possible (*A.Mannion 2012*).

16. **Slab 2** [5, ss] Centre front of the slab from a low start (*A.Mannion 8/2/12*).

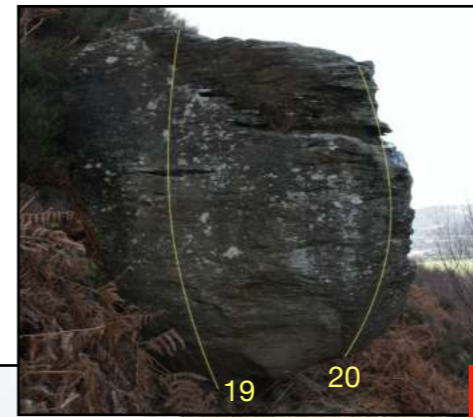
17. **Slab right** [5, ss] The right arête of the slab (*A.Mannion 2012?*).

18. **Upper slab** [5, ss] Start on the right arête then traverse left across the slab to finish up the left arête (*A.Mannion 8/2/12*).





Tom Elliott having a Bloc Party



C

Further along the hillside, around 200m rightwards (south) up from the quarry, there is a large boulder [E] with an obvious prow perched by itself on the slope. Traverse the hillside diagonally up from *sketch bloc* (20) or follow the path along the base of the hillside to strike steeply upwards once obviously underneath the boulder to reach it.



25. **Eagle rock** [5+] The front prow has big holds until the tricky finish [M.Richards 20/5/12].

26. **Lying Eyes** [5+] Climb the prow of *Eagle rock* up big holds until reaching the horizontal break, then traverse this rightwards to the far end. A lazy variant exits the traverse after 1m via a large sidepull (A.Sharp 20/5/12).



D

27. **New kid in town** (5+, ss) Direct up the broken wall just right of the prow (J.Sykes 2018).

28. **Pad pilot wall** [6b] Centre of the sidewall. A good problem (M.Shewring 20/5/12).

29. **Hotel California** [5, ss] Straight up from the flake crack (A.Sharp 20/5/12).

At the top of the quarry is a small but attractive wall [D] covered in graffiti.

22. **Desperate measures** [5, ss] A hard pull from crimps leads to better holds (A.Mannion 12/5/12).

23. **Tyson** [6a, ss] A tricky start from small holds leads to a big move. A good problem that is short but sweet (A.Mannion 12/5/12).

24. **Righthand** [4+, ss] Start low from good edges and use the arête to reach the top (A.Mannion 12/5/12).

30. **Life in the fast lane** [6a, ss] Start as for *Hotel California* then reverse the break into the finish of *Eagle rock* (O.Keynes 2019).

Continue north (left as you face the lido) for around 50m to reach two more boulders [F & G] which are just beside the path.

31. **Back arête** [3, ss] The higher back-end arête of boulder G offers a pleasant warm up on large holds, climbing up out of trees (2012).



STIKAL BERRY

WALL

STIKAL BERRY

JAY

KART



37. **Side slab** [3] The slabby side of boulder **G** beside the path can be climbed up various similar directs, the easiest of which goes straight up from the low foot boulder (*A.Mannion 8/2/12*).

38. **Hanging with Thomas** [3, ss] Start low on the left arête of the undercut end using the foot block, turn the lip and climb up big holds (*A.Sharp 17/5/12*).

The next boulder **[G]** has a distinctive and very aesthetic undercut end.

32. **Slab** [4] The slabby sidewall from edges in the hole (*A.Mannion 8/2/12*).

33. **Back left arête** [4, ss] Sit start from a good hold and finish rocking left (*A.Mannion 8/2/12*).

34. **Bloc buster** [6b, ss] The steep end face without using either arête (*M.Richards 12/5/12*).

35. **Back right arête** [5, ss] (*A.Mannion 8/2/12*).

36. **Cracks** [5+, ss] The left side of the slab beside the path has cracks. Sit start up into a faint groove (*A.Mannion 8/2/12*).

39. **Melvin doo** [6c, ss] A gorgeous isolated problem. Start low on the right, underneath the boulder, with a righthand jam & high heel-hook between the two blocs, then use an edge to move left and compress a way up the undercut end of the boulder. An alternative start can be made sitting the undercut lip directly. Both versions eliminate the low foot bloc (*A.Mannion 8/2/12*). [#southsidetour](#)

40. **Arête** [5] The right arête, climbed on its right side with a high step to start. A low sit-start may be possible? (*A.Mannion 2012*).

The cliffs above *Melvin Doo* contain a scattering of undocumented traditional routes alongside potential for more adventurous 'bouldering'. There is also an exceptional highball hidden up here on a unique 'shield' of immaculate sandstone **[H]**. To find this head direct up from *Melvin Doo* through trees, a more or less pleasant experience depending on the time of year!



Alex Mannion making Melvin Doo

41. **Crack** [?] The crack provides an entertaining microroute/highball (*fa unknown*).

42. **Project** [f?] The sidewall left of *Gadd tidings* has potential for a hard highball.

43. **Gadd tidings** [7a] A striking highball up the middle of the immaculate shield of sandstone. Positive holds at head-height on the curved arête begin a sequence of sustained technical movement into an airy finish on ledges (*J.Sykes 10/5/18*). [#southsidetour](#)

44. **Ribbed** [6a] The shorter rounded rib just right is an interesting feature that can be climbed to the tree. An easier variant bridges between this and the sidewall to the same finish (*fa unknown*).

The intrepid can find another buttress **[I]** further north along the hillside, though it takes considerable effort to reach!

