STUART LLEWELLYN
Stu is a passionate climber, new router and local enthusiast. His dedication to the local climbing community through the BMC has not only improved access and support locally, but increased the area’s national presence with the creation of the Gower Climbing Festival, the first step to the creation of this new guide.

With the release of this book, and a step back from local climbing politics, Stuart is set to once again climb the rock, not just talk and write about it...

MATT WOODFIELD
Matt Woodfield is a climbing instructor who works locally; teaching, instructing and taking people on adventures. Soon after moving to Swansea to study at the University in 2002 Matt turned his passion for climbing into a profession and has never looked back.

He enjoys nothing more than getting out on rock with people and helping them develop their skills, confidence and experience. To find out more about what he can offer you, go to  www.outdoor-matters.co.uk

This guide offers a wide range of climbing on an enticing array of venues. From routes where you can step straight off golden sands onto classic lines, to others you can avoid your way across peaceful cliff-top paths before dropping into some pretty demanding terrain just a stone’s throw from ice-cream-scoffing tourists and pastoral picnic spots.

Gower offers a variety of climbing on an enticing array of venues. From routes where you can step straight off golden sands onto classic lines, to others you can avoid your way across peaceful cliff-top paths before dropping into some pretty demanding terrain just a stone’s throw from ice-cream-scoffing tourists and pastoral picnic spots.

The selection of venues and climbs included in this guide will provide plenty of adventure for all climbers, among some of the best scenery in the UK.
The UK trad grading system gives an adjective and a technical grade. The adjectival grade gives an idea of the overall difficulty, a measure of how sustained the climbing is and of how well protected it is. The technical grade is the difficulty of the hardest move or short section on the climb.

### Grade Comparison Chart

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GOWER ROCK

STUART LLEWELLYN & MATT WOODFIELD
Any visitor to the area will see why: it is packed full of stunning beaches and welcoming villages, and provides a breath-taking backdrop to numerous outdoor activities including surfing and paragliding. There are miles of fantastic coastal paths to walk along (a perfect way to explore the many treats of the peninsula) and copious amounts of climbing.

The spark that ignited this guidebook was the creation of a dozen topos for the British Mountaineering Council (BMC) Gower Climbing Festival, which debuted in 2009. The aim of this event is to promote climbing on the peninsula, drawing climbers from all over the UK for one weekend in September to celebrate Gower climbing while raising money for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI), the Coastguard and the South Wales Bolt Fund (SWBF).

Gower Rock

_Gower Rock_ aims to showcase the depth and quality of rock climbing on this wild, beautiful yet somewhat unknown peninsula. The book’s development has been inspired both by local enthusiasm and the absence of a modern guidebook to the area. While we love the tranquillity of the crags and the absence of queues, we also want to share this really rather special place with others. The area has been crying out for a modern guidebook for many years, and now you hold it in your hands. We hope it will lead you into new and exciting places where adventure, challenge and excitement are all part of the experience.

It is perhaps because of the absence of just such a guide that Gower is often overlooked. This is a genuine shame as the area contains a wide variety of climbing on an enticing array of venues. On some routes you can step straight off golden sands onto classic lines; in other cases you can wend your way across peaceful cliff-top paths before dropping into some pretty demanding terrain just a stone’s throw from ice-cream-scoffing tourists and pastoral picnic spots.

To most climbers, coastal climbing in South Wales means Pembrokeshire. After glancing through these full-colour topos and drooling over the inspirational photographs, we hope that you’ll reconsider driving past that wiggly bit of coast just before the M4 ends and spend some of your time on our cliffs and crags.

The magnificent areas of Fall Bay and Three Cliffs have enough classic routes to keep you busy on many visits to the peninsula. The sport crags of Southgate compliment and add variety to the well-established hard routes of Oxwich and Pwlldu. The selection of venues and climbs included in this guide will provide plenty of adventure for all climbers, among some of the best scenery in the UK. In a letter to his girlfriend, Swansea’s poet son Dylan Thomas described Gower as: “GOWER is a very beautiful peninsula, some miles from this blowsy town… as a matter of fact it is one of the loveliest sea-coast stretches in the whole of Britain”.

In 1956 the Gower peninsula was designated as the UK’s first Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many individuals have contributed to the finished book you hold in your hands. A core collection of climbers have helped the two authors massively by providing feedback on the routes, topos and approaches and contributing to the contents of the book: to John Bullock, Stefan Doerr, Nik Goile, Martin Kocsis, Simon Rawlinson, Simon Robinson and Steve ‘Sparky’ Warrington, thank you!

A handful of photographers deserve special praise for the exciting look of this guide, and we are very grateful to be allowed to use images from your collections. Gower now has a deserving modern guidebook full of inspirational imagery, a match for any other area in the UK. Our thanks must go to: Simon Rawlinson (www.makethenextmove.co.uk), Chris Allen (www.rockall.biz), Carl Ryan (Red Mist Extreme photography) and Wayne Tucker. Thank you to all who posed for the photos; we hope you like the shots as much as we do.

We must also thank those that kindly sat and read through the endless scripts which were the bare bones of the book, before the creation of this colourful and glossy sleek-finished guide: Becky Bailey, Donna Carless, Gwyn Evans and Ben Tiffin.

Personal thanks from Stuart must go to Christopher Mathewson, who helped in the early stages of approaching a publisher and the hours you spent guiding Stuart and the project.

We would also like to extend special thanks to Elfyn Jones (BMC) and Sian Musgrave (National Trust) for assistance and guidance with the Access and Conservation notes, and Charles Romijn for his brilliantly drawn and entertaining cartoons. Our kind thanks also go to the following people for their various contributions and support: Berwyn Evans, David Garnett, Tom Hill, Tom Hutton, Tony Rees, Andy Sharp, Dave Sperring and Roy Thomas.

A final word of thanks must go to our publisher Franco Ferrero for giving us this opportunity. You no longer have an excuse not to have experienced Gower Rock!

The Worm at sunset.
Photo: Stuart Llewellyn.
The Worm.

Photo: Wayne Tucker.
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USING THE GUIDE

This aim of this book is to be a modern selective guide, showcasing the best climbing Gower has to offer. We have attempted to profile the best on show for trad, sport, bouldering and even some deepwater solos. Where a crag has been included, the majority of routes have been described (unless they are of poor quality). In the case of sport crags, all lines have been included to avoid confusion. This approach, akin to the recent trend of other guidebooks, is designed to make this a useful and practical guide to help people get out and climb.

All route information is presented in the following style:

Example Route

20m VS 4c
FA A. Climber & A.N. Other 1982

The first line is route name, difficulty and length, with the number relating to the photo topo. Details of the first ascent team, and date climbed, are provided in the second line. Additional information to compliment the photo topo is then provided in the description; don’t forget to read any notes about tides, access or descents.

GETTING THERE

The approach to each venue is described at the start of the chapter, and assumes use of the peninsula map on the inside cover of the book to help get you close.

Where the parking is not so obvious, each chapter has further details to help you find the intended spot. There is an accompanying approach map to get you from your car to the crag. Several of the areas can be reached by bus from the main bus station in Swansea.

OTHER GUIDEBOOKS

The guidebook team would like to acknowledge the efforts of all the climbers who have worked on documenting the climbing on the Gower peninsula over the years, from the very first guide book (Jeremy Talbot’s 1970 Gower Peninsula) to the many comprehensive guides since produced by the South Wales Mountaineering Club (SWMC) including the 2003 edition by Roy Thomas and Goi Ashmore. Adrian Berry’s Rockfax miniGuide is a recent update for the area, documenting sport climbing developments. Without these books and the information they contain, we wouldn’t have climbed in this wonderful area and been able to document the routes for this guidebook. In recent years the SWMC has made a lot of this information freely available on their website, with climbers submitting up-to-date new route information for not only the Gower but the vast Southeast Wales area. Search online for ‘SWMC wiki’.

A history of Gower climbing guides.
BOULDERING

Dotted between the detailed pages of the main climbing areas, suggestions of bouldering venues along the peninsula are also included for you to seek out and crank! Descriptions of where to park, tidal status and approaches are included, but in general we recommend simply exploring (that’s half the fun). For those who do want an itinerary of problems search online for ‘SWMC wiki’, where a great collection of information can be found.

Bouldering mats:
Highly recommended; it must also be emphasised that in some venues the top outs are loose.

GRADES AND LINES

In compiling this book the team has consulted with numerous local climbers and also checked with the voting system on UKClimbing.com in an attempt to obtain a consensus on grades. Personal climbing experience and numerous crag visits were used to check the lines drawn on the topos, but it is inevitable that there are some errors; you should always use your own judgement.
**HELMETS**

It's highly recommended to wear helmets when climbing as a large proportion of Gower crags have loose sections of rock (even the premium venues featured here).

**ETHICS, STYLES AND DEVELOPMENTS**

The whole array of climbing styles can be found on the peninsula, from pure traditional climbs (some with in situ pegs) to fully equipped sport routes. The area is covered by a detailed bolt policy on a crag-by-crag basis, which can be found on the South Wales Bolt Fund (SWBF) website (www.southwalesboltfund.co.uk). For those wanting to develop bolted routes, a process is in place facilitated by local BMC volunteers to allow consultation with the local climbing community and the appropriate landowner. To contact the local access representative, visit the BMC website (www.thebmc.co.uk) and search for ‘Access & Conservation’. Alternatively, contact the BMC office.

**PEGS, BOLTS AND OTHER FIXED GEAR**

As with other sea cliff venues, the conditions of pegs and in situ threads must be treated with major caution. It’s entirely possible that these are the original bits of gear from the first ascent, which have been subjected to years of weathering and corrosion in a marine environment. You may also come across remnants of someone’s trad rack which the second has not been able to retrieve; the same caution must be applied.

A mixture of bolts will be found on the sport routes of Gower, from expansion bolts with hangers to various different glue-in designs.

The majority of these bolts were funded by the first ascensionists when they developed the climb. Since the re-awakening of the SWBF, some of the long-established sport-climbing venues have had their ageing bolts replaced. At the time of writing, Foxhole and parts of Oxwich have been reequipped by willing volunteers with kit provided by the fund.

To make a donation to bolt funds, visit the SWBF website. Alternatively, there are donation boxes at Dynamic Rock (Swansea) and Boulders (Cardiff) climbing centres. Thanks in advance for any donations you may give.

**GOWER NUGGETS**

Dotted in and around the book are some nuggets of knowledge from the team about Gower’s geological, human and climbing history. It is hoped that you find these interesting, or at least useful for dropping into the conversion in the pub after your day’s climbing.

**CONTACT THE AUTHORS**

A lot of effort has gone into ensuring that the information in this guide is relevant, accurate and informative. If you spot any errors or inaccuracies (or simply had a good day out!) please feel free to send your feedback to gower.rock@gmail.com.
WHAT MAKES GOWER SPECIAL?
The Gower Peninsular is home to a wide variety of natural history dating back some 400 million years and a human history dating back 33,000 years (see Paviland Valley). Nesting peregrines (the fastest creatures on the planet) and rare plants that grow nowhere else in the UK can be found, and a record of the developing planet is held within the rock beds and cave sediments around the coast. The species and landforms found on the Gower cliffs provide a stunning and impressive backdrop to the climbing sites, and it’s in everyone’s interests to do what we can to protect these incredible sites for future generations.

WHAT PROTECTS GOWER?
Almost the whole of the South Gower coast is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), in order to provide legal protection for its conservation. An area can become a SSSI for its rare fauna and flora such as rare plants or nesting birds or its geophysical features.

All land is owned by somebody and the inclusion of a venue in this guide does not imply that you have the right to go there. There are no known access issues at any of the venues in this guide, but climbers have an obvious vested interest in acting responsibly. This includes responsible parking, taking litter home, respecting SSSIs, following nesting restrictions and generally keeping a low profile.

KEEPING OUT OF TROUBLE
Given the SSSI status, it could be deemed illegal to recklessly damage or disturb the key conservation features of the site.
It is a criminal offence to disturb any nesting bird or to damage any nest site while it is in use. The bird restrictions noted in this guide protect the nesting sites for important species to prevent their further decline.
Always be aware of the impact your action may be having on the wildlife and landscape around you.
Activities such as route cleaning, modifying the rock face and placing bolts could cause damage to the protected features, and permission from the landowner should be sought. For more information on new routes please see the section on ‘Ethics, styles and developments’ above.

BMC Participation Statement — Climbing, hill walking and mountaineering are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions and involvement.

CRAG CODE
Access Check the Regional Access Database (RAD) on www.thebmc.co.uk for the latest access information
Parking Park carefully – avoid gateways and driveways
Footpaths Keep to established paths – leave gates as you find them
Risk Climbing can be dangerous – accept the risks and be aware of other people around you
Respect Groups and individuals – respect the rock, local climbing ethics and other people
Wildlife Do not disturb livestock, wildlife or cliff vegetation; respect seasonal bird nesting restrictions
Dogs Keep dogs under control at all times; don’t let your dog chase sheep or disturb wildlife
Litter ‘Leave no trace’ – take all litter home with you
Toilets Don’t make a mess – bury your waste
Economy Do everything you can to support the rural economy — shop locally

BMC Participation Statement — Climbing, hill walking and mountaineering are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions and involvement.
If you do encounter any problems with access while out on the cliffs of Gower, then please do not antagonise the landowner or other organisations. The best course of action is to refer the issue to the BMC via their regional access database (RAD; www.thebmc.co.uk/bmccrag), where excellent up-to-date information can be found.

**FEATHERED FRIENDS**

The cliffs of Gower are renowned for their bird populations. Some are present year round, while others are spring and summer visitors only. If you hear obviously distressed birds screeching or flying around in an agitated manner, especially during the nesting season, it’s highly likely that you are causing a disturbance. If this is the case, then move away from the site as quickly and safely as possible. It takes as little as 20 minutes for abandoned eggs to chill and for the chicks to die.

Nesting Restrictions are in place 1st March–15th August at Yellow Wall and Thurba Head. These restrictions are sometimes lifted earlier once nesting finishes; see the BMC RAD for up-to-date information.

There are many different species present on the cliffs, each with their own special requirements. The following are just a small selection of the birds found on Gower.

**Chough**

The chough (a small crow) is easily identified by its red beak and feet. This nationally rare bird is a sociable and year-round resident. They only nest at a handful of sites on the peninsula, normally around March and occasionally a second attempt as late as June.

**Peregrine falcon**

The peregrine falcon feeds on small mammals and other birds. It has a distinct high-pitched shriek and hunts by hovering effortlessly until its prey is spotted. They nest on rocky ledges and cover the surrounding rock in white guano. They are the fastest creature on the planet, reaching speeds of over 200mph during their hunting swoop. The sound when they hit their prey is unforgettable.

**Razorbill**

Razorbills are members of the auk family, seabirds which only come to land for nesting. A large colony resides on Worms Head, alongside the guillemots and seals.

**Others**

Other species found on Gower include kittiwakes (which are becoming more endangered and nationally scarcer), various gulls and cormorants. The ubiquitous fulmar is always present on the Gower cliffs, and is a bird that climbers do not need to be reminded to avoid. It has a very accurately delivered defence mechanism of puking a putrid and stinking goo over any climber that inadvertently gets too close!
The gravitational pull of the moon and sun create a ‘bulge’ in the sea on opposite sides of the planet. If the sun and moon work together and pull in the same (or directly opposite) direction we experience larger ‘spring’ tides; if they pull in different directions then we see smaller ‘neap’ tides. Due to the regularity of the moon’s orbit around our planet and our planet’s around the sun, the time and height of the tide can be predicted. There are two high tides and two low tides every day, occurring around 6 hours apart. The geography of the Bristol Channel gives it the second-largest tidal range in the world; a tidal range (vertical difference between high tide and low tide) of up to 13m during springs can be experienced around Gower.

Big storms sitting offshore can affect these cliffs in two ways: first by creating a ‘storm surge’ effect which pushes the whole body of water further in than it would otherwise be, and second by creating big waves that dampen holds, moisten feet and wash your belayer off their ledge.
Consider the following Top Tips to ensure you make the most of your day.

- Check before you go. Information about tide times and heights can be found online at www.climbers-club.co.uk/tides, or in a tide table bought in a local shop.
- Information in this guide is based on a rough average; what you experience on the day may not be what you were expecting.
- Pick your tide well. Spring tides offer more room at the crag’s base at low water, but reach higher up the face at high tide. Neaps move less water around, allowing access to ledges all day on some crags (and preventing access to others).
- Keep an eye on the sea; it comes back in fast, especially in narrow zawns where it’s funnelled in.
- Some waves team up out at sea to make rogue waves whose aim in life is to surprise and soak the unwary. Consider building a belay at the base of the cliff to avoid being swept away.

**DISCLAIMER**

Climbing may result in personal injury or death and is by its very nature dangerous. These risks are increased if you are inexperienced and ill-equipped, so ensure you know what you are doing. If not, seek professional instruction.

Loose rock, pegs, in situ threads and even bolts carry a particular risk. It is down to the individual to assess the situation and make their own decisions.

Although every care has been taken, the authors accept no responsibility for errors or omissions or the way you use this guide: climbers are responsible for their own safety, using their judgement and assessment of risk.

The authors, publisher and distributors of this book do not recognise any liability for injury or damage caused to or by climbers, third parties or property arising from such persons seeking reliance on this guidebook for their own safety.
VISITING GOWER

Below are some suggestions for places to eat, sleep and be merry when staying in the area; see the map on the inside cover for locations.

ACCOMMODATION

There are options for all budgets when staying in the area, from camping to plush hotels. More information about all kinds of accommodation can be found by visiting www.the-gower.com.

Recommended campsites (see area map on the inside cover) include: (1) Pitton Cross near Rhossili; (2) Hillend at
Llangennith; (3) Carreglwyd at Port Eynon; (4) Nicholaston Farm; and (5) Three Cliffs Bay. Wild camping is not allowed anywhere on Gower; please respect this and stay at a campsite.

Slightly further up the comfort scale is the Rhossili bunkhouse sleeping 22 people, ideal for individuals or groups. The YHA in Port Eynon (located in an old lifeboat house) is also a good option.

For those who prefer hotels, there are several on the peninsula as well as dozens in nearby Swansea. The Worm’s Head Hotel at Rhossili is well situated at the western end of Gower and boasts stunning views.

**OUTDOOR SUPPLIES**

The nearest Cotswold stores are in Llantrisant (just off the M4 J34 near Cardiff) or in Carmarthen, great if you realise you’ve forgotten something while *en route*. Climbing gear can be bought in Swansea High Street from Leisure Quest, or from Dynamic Rock climbing wall in Clydach. Various camping gear and outdoor supplies are available from Mike Davies Leisure in Upper Killay, just on the edge of Gower itself.

**CLIMBING WALLS**

There are a few options for indoor climbing in South Wales, perfect for when the weather turns wet (which it has been known to do on occasion). The closest to Gower is Dynamic Rock in Clydach, just 2 minutes north of the M4 J45: a small friendly centre with good climbing and bouldering. Further west, Cardiff is home to Boulders: a large centre with a good range of walls, bouldering and training facilities.

**PUBS**

There are many pubs in the area, but here is our pick of the bunch.

The Worm’s Head Hotel at Rhossili has stunning views and is right next to the large car park.

The Countryman in Scurlage offers good reasonable food, beer and friendly local farmer types. Minibus runs to and from the Pitton Cross campsite are provided in the summer.

The King Arthur in Reynoldston has a popular beer garden and excellent cuisine.

The Kings Head in Llangennith is worth a visit if you’re staying out that way, and very close to the popular surfing beach.

The Gower Inn is conveniently located on the main road in Parkmill. Its ample parking, seating and beer garden are good reasons to pay it a visit.

The Beaufort Arms in Kittle does a good pint and very good food.

The Joiners in Bishopston has great local beers and a friendly atmosphere (well worth a visit on the way home).

**FOOD**

There are supermarkets in Swansea, Killay and Mumbles and small shops at Scurlage, Knelston, Parkmill and Southgate that should sort out lunch. However, you’d be foolish not to call into the Kittle Bakery and sample the best sandwiches, pasties and cakes in the area!

For dinner there are the usual options of pub food, fish and chips in Scurlage and Mumbles and hundreds of restaurants of every kind in Swansea itself.

**OTHER ACTIVITIES**

It’s not just climbing on offer in this area: surfing, walking, mountain biking are all also available, as well as some world-class beaches for relaxing and family days out.

If you’re looking for the surf then the beaches of Llangennith, Rhossili, Caswell and Langland are popular spots, so it’s worth bringing your board (although you can hire at some spots).

The National Trust provide some great walking maps of the area from their shop at Rhossili, showcasing the best the area has to offer. A walk onto Worms Head is highly recommended but be warned: the causeway is tidal and getting stuck on The Worm is a job for the lifeboat crews.

Mountain biking on Gower is of limited appeal, but some good trails can be found. Just to the east is the Afan Forest Park, home to five world-class trails and some of the best Britain has to offer.
Stuart Llewellyn on the first ascent of *Pillars of the Earth* (F6b).
Photo: Matt Woodfield.
The cliffs of Rhossili overlook three miles of sandy beach, complete with ship wreck and haunted house. The crags are old quarried faces with a fine mix of both bolted and traditionally protected lines, as well as ample opportunity for deepwater soloing. If this isn’t enough for you, then the car park is outside a pub, the walk in is flat and the sunsets are world class.

**Trial Wall:** After 5 minutes or so, when the track is closest to the cliff top edge, peel off and follow a path down to the right. The crag appears in front of you as you descend (the path is not as steep as it looks).

**Retribution Wall:** Found just around the corner from Trial Wall, follow the path down and around to the right.

**Wedge Wall:** This crag forms the bank of the descent path to Trial Wall. Head down as for Trial Wall and, as the main path heads right, peel off left and continue down a gully that leads to the base of the wall.

**Sheepbone Wall:** Located at sea level directly below Trial Wall. Head down to some ledges under Trial Wall, then either scramble down to beach level or make a short abseil down one of the corners to ledges below.

**Platform Area:** From where the drystone wall turns away from the track, head towards The Worm for another 100m until a path can be followed between two large gorse patches and down over a steep edge to the lower level. Below you is a large tidal platform frequented by fishermen. The crag is to the right of this and can be easily viewed on the approach. Scramble down ledges to reach the start of the routes.

**Poser Buttress:** As for Platform Area to the lower level, then follow the path to the left. The crag is tucked away in the narrow zawn below you.
Access agreements: No climbing is allowed on Worms Head itself due to its international importance as a bird nesting site. The Head is home to many cliff-nesting birds including razorbills and the last colony of kittiwakes found in the area. There is also a breeding seal colony, another reason why Worms Head is a National Nature Reserve and Special Area of Conservation. Please respect this agreement, and the wildlife it protects.

The name ‘Worms Head’ comes from the Norse word ‘Verm’, meaning sea monster! It was given by passing Vikings who saw the waves breaking on the head and assumed this to be the serpent breathing fire and stayed well away… or so the story goes.

TRIAL WALL

Trial Wall is an old west-facing quarry which offers good-quality steep rock and a mixture of both sport and traditional routes. The sheltered face dries quickly and gets the sun from about midday, making it an ideal location even on a winter afternoon.

SS 4066 8783
Aspect: W

1. The Adulteress 24m E2 5c
FFA Andy Sharp & John Hanwood 8th November 1981
A beautiful line on the left side of the wall. Follow the crack energetically past the overhang, traverse right at the break and then keep it going up the final crack to finish.

2. Blackman’s Pinch 24m E4 6a
FFA Andy Sharp & John Hanwood 5th December 1981
The lower crack and overlap have some bolts, but you get to place your own gear for the finish shared with The Adulteress.
3 Skull Attack  24m F7c  
**FFA Andy Sharp & Pete Lewis 15th April 1984**

Superb climbing up the technical wall. Head up to and past the overlap, then continue up past a thin break to a hard section that leads to the prominent groove.

4 Crime and Punishment  23m E4 6b  
**FFA Andy Sharp & John Harwood 18th October 1981**

One of the stand-out routes of the crag and the first of the old aid routes to be freed here. Several bolts are in place, but a few wires are still needed for the sustained upper wall.

5 Black Wall  23m F8a+  
**FA A. Forster & Andy Sharp 1988**

A thin start gains a thin crack, then awkward moves through the bulge lead to a desperate finish through the overhang. The original finish avoided the crux with a short traverse right, reducing the grade to a mere F7b+ (which makes for a more consistent and worthwhile outing in its own right).

6 Inch Pinch  16m E3 6b  
**FA Andy Sharp & Pete Lewis 29th May 1983**

A hard bouldery start leads to easier climbing past the break of *Shakeout*.

7 The Hant  16m F7a  
**FA Andy Sharp & Pete Lewis April 1987**

A right-hand variant to *Inch Pinch*, with good independent climbing in the upper section.

8 Tribulations  12m F7a  
**FA Roy Thomas 20th September 1998**

The arête on the right provides complex off-balance moves.

9 Shakeout  30m E3 5c  
**FA Andy Sharp & John Harwood 23rd October 1982**

A girdle of Trial Wall starting on the right and following the obvious break line to finish as for *The Adulteress*. 
RETRIBUTION WALL

Retribution Wall is the seaward face just around the corner from Trial Wall, which offers a good mix of routes, styles and grades. The older traditional lines can now finish at the lower-offs, saving you the esoteric grassy finishes. This crag is not affected by the tide, but faces north and takes its time to dry outside of the summer months.

SS 4067 8785
Aspect: N

1 Spades of Glory 16m F5+
FA Matt Woodfield 21st August 2011
Scramble up grassy ledges to gain the corner on the left side of the crag. Climb the corner using holds on the face on the right until a tricky step can be made to the lower-off.

2 Laughing Spam Fritter 25m VS 4b
FA Tony Penning & Peter Cresswell 8th November 1981
Scramble precariously up to the base of the crack, layback up this before reaching the ramp and continue along the crack, stepping right at its end to gain the lower-off.

3 Pillars of the Earth 23m F6b
FA Stuart Llewellyn 21st August 2011
Climb the pillar of rock past the bulge and onto the slab above, avoiding the jug flakes out left (Laughing Spam Fritter). At the top move right to the lower-off.

3a World Without End 23m F6b
FA Stuart Llewellyn 21st August 2011
A variation on Pillars of the Earth approaches the difficult slab from the left side of the pillar over the roof.
4 Somme Mothers 23m HVS 5a
FA Andy Sharp & John Harwood 8th November 1981
Scramble to the base of the obvious crack and climb this with interest to the lower-off.

5 24,000 Ballpoint Pens 24m HS 4a
FA Steve Warrington 21st August 2011
Begin as for Somme Mothers, but follow the ledges right to gain and climb the steep crack. Follow the crack above to reach the lower-off.

6 Buckets of Bubbly 25m F5
FA Steve Warrington 21st August 2011
A technical start on small holds leads to an inconsiderate ledge, mantel onto this and have a picnic. Move through the stepped ramps and slab to the steep upper crack, stepping left (crux) to reach the lower-off.

The wreck of the Helvetia.
Photo: Wayne Tucker.
**WEDGE WALL**

Wedge Wall is a recent addition to the area and this small crag boasts several easy lines on quarried rock. It faces west and is quite sheltered, but feels very greasy when the rock is damp.

**SS 4063 8781**

**Aspect:** W

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1. **The Fin End of the Wedge**  
   **9m F5**  
   **FA Stuart Llewellyn 9th September 2011**  
   The left-hand route up the positive arête starts with a tricky couple of moves out left, finishing in the grassy bay above.

2. **Wedgling**  
   **9m F5**  
   **FA Stuart Llewellyn 9th September 2011**  
   Go up the wall on good holds between ledges. At the top a hand traverse right (crux) leads to the lower-off.

3. **Wedge-egade Master**  
   **9m F5+**  
   **FA Stuart Llewellyn 9th September 2011**  
   Brilliant wall climbing up the centre of the face.

4. **Wedge Dew Bin**  
   **8m F5**  
   **FA Matt Woodfield 9th September 2011**  
   Good wall climbing on positive holds.

5. **Atomic Wedgie**  
   **8m F6a**  
   **FA Matt Woodfield 9th September 2011**  
   Follow holds, both large and small, up the face.
**SHEEPBONE WALL**

Sheepbone Wall is a sea-level crag with good rock and good low-grade routes; this overlooked and underrated venue is well worth a visit. Although not the tallest of crags, this venue does offer a real sea cliff feel. When looking down the crag from below Retribution Wall, an oval pool can be seen at the base of *Chimney Crack* (a useful landmark when abseiling in). Climbing is possible from the ledges about 2 hours either side of low tide. The crag faces northwest so gets very little sun, making it slow to dry outside the summer months.

**Aspect:** NW

1. **First Diedre** 10m D
   *FA Jeremy Talbot 1968*

   Head up the pitted wall and finish up the groove above.

2. **Mauk Wall** 10m S 4a
   *FA Jeremy Talbot 1968*

   A good route up the steep wall, passing the block on its left.

3. **Curving Crack** 10m HS 4b
   *FA Jeremy Talbot 1968*

   Climb to and along the obvious curving crack, gained from the deep cleft on the right. A bold direct start adds a grade.

4. **Chimney Crack** 10m VD
   *FA Jeremy Talbot 1968*

   Start in the corner and head up the chimney.

5. **Skull** 10m 4a HS
   *FA Jeremy Talbot 1968*

   Start as for *Chimney Crack*, then step right to the sloping ledge at 4m and climb the steep cracked wall above.

6. **Cross** 12m D
   *FA Jeremy Talbot 1968*

   Follow *Chimney Crack* to the ledge at 4m, then step right to finish up the easy groove.

7. **Deep Cut** 18m VD
   *FA Jeremy Talbot 1968*

   Gain the deep crack high on the wall by traversing in from the start of *Cross*. An alternative and steep direct start is rated severe.
8 Forgotten Elephant 14m HS 4b
FA Matt Woodfield & Stuart Llewellyn 19th April 2011
The thin crack up the steep wall right of Deep Cut gained from below.

9 Great Diedre 12m S 4a
FA Jeremy Talbot 1968
The black slabby corner offers plenty of mediocre protection.

10 Yellow Edge 12m S
FA Jeremy Talbot 1968
Climb cracks right of the arête until a step left allows it to be followed to the top.

11 Great Diedre II 15m VS 4c
FA C. Hard & Gwyn Evans 1975
A good climb up the corner past a tricky overhang.

12 Pistas Canute 15m VS 4b
FA Alun Beaton & Chris Allen 1989
Start up Slanting Chimney, then break out leftwards up steep ground, around the arête and finish up the wall above.

13 Slanting Chimney 14m VD
FA Mike Harber pre-1978
Climb the slanting crackline.

14 Gambolling Gareth’s Arête 17m E1 5a
FA Alan Richardson & R. Lloyd 1992
The arête is gained from the right and has a bold feel.

15 Recess Crack 17m VS 4c
FA Jeremy Talbot 1968
Head up the back of the recessed area then the top crack to finish.

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PLATFOR M AREA

Platform Area is a quality venue set just above high tide level, sporting two good traditional routes and a fine deepwater solo.

SS 4038 8765
Aspect: NW

1 Stardust 24m HS 4a
FA Andy Sharp & John Harwood 18th October 1981
Drop down the groove from the platform and traverse left along the break until a move past an overlap (just before the arête) leads you up the final wall, taking care with the rock to finish.

2 Year of the Snail 24m VS 4b
FA Matt Ward 16th August 1987
Start as for Stardust but then head directly up the wall.

3 Avoid Meeting the Portuguese Man-of-War 40m VS 4c
FA L. Davies & Phil Thomas July 1989
A great deepwater solo with many variations and extensions. Start as for Stardust and continue around the arête, through the cave and into the sea on the other side, finishing up on easy rock across the water.

For a longer outing start on the pedestal next to the fishermen’s platform, down climb the chimney and traverse around left to join the original route. Instead of jumping in at the end, make the tricky move around the next corner and keep moving left until you run out of rock, water, strength or sunlight. Lots of escape routes are available en route, as well as ledges to rest on.

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WARNING

For any deepwater solo in this area a high tide is needed. Although most of the landings on this route are deep and clear of obstacles, some rocks do protrude below the water line and should be treated with caution. Check the landing zone at low water before attempting the route. Rough seas, water temperature, strong currents, other water users and seals should also be taken into account before setting off. If in doubt about the risks involved, don’t do it.
POSER BUTTRESS

The vertical wall of Poser Buttress houses a fine selection of crackline challenges above the sea. The square-cut zawn is very tidal, but the routes described are best started from the ledge belay marked on the topo (reached via abseil). Climbs can be started from the base about 1 hour either side of low water, but the lower wall takes time to dry and is not very pleasant. A hanging belay can be taken below any route, although this can be very uncomfortable. All routes can be viewed by scrambling round to a ledge on the other side of the zawn. The angle of the wall and the depth of water below at high tide means that these routes could be approached as deepwater solos.

SS 4934 8761
Aspect: NW

1 Normal Service 18m VS 4b
FA Andy Sharp & John Harwood 5th December 1981
From the belay ledge, climb right for a couple of metres and head up the first crack.

2 Splash Landing 20m HVS 5a
FA Andy Sharp & John Harwood 5th December 1981
Traverse right from the belay ledge and climb the second crack.

3 Dicky Five Stones 22m E3 5c
FA Andy Sharp & Pete Lewis 1990
A bold route that heads up the blank-looking wall between the cracks. Traverse in from the belay ledge and make technical moves with some long reaches up the wall. Climbing eases with height.

4 The Poser 24m E1 5b
FA Tony Penning & Andy Sharp 23rd May 1982
The third crack along is the best of the bunch, gained by a long traverse in from the belay ledge across a thin break.

5 Burning Rubber 26m E2 5b
FA Tony Penning & Andy Sharp 23rd May 1982
The final crack needs a long traverse to reach. Finish direct where the crack peters out.
The UK trad grading system gives an adjective and a technical grade. The adjectival grade gives an idea of the overall difficulty, a measure of how sustained the climbing is and of how well protected it is. The technical grade is the difficulty of the hardest move or short section on the climb.
STUART LLEWELLYN
Stu is a passionate climber, new router and local enthusiast.
His dedication to the local climbing community through the BMC has not only improved access and support locally, but increased the area’s national presence with the creation of the Gower Climbing Festival, the first step to the creation of this easy guide.
With the release of this book, and a step back from local climbing politics, Stuart is set to once again climb the rock, not just talk and write about it.

MATT WOODFIELD
Matt Woodfield is a climbing instructor who works locally; teaching, instructing and taking people on adventures.
Soon after moving to Swansea to study at the University in 2002 Matt turned his passion for climbing into a profession and has never looked back.
He enjoys nothing more than getting out on rock with people and helping them develop their skills, confidence and experience. To find out more about what he can offer you, go to www.outdoor-matters.co.uk

RHOSILI
FALL BAY
MEWSLADE
PAVILAND VALLEY
PORT EYNON
OXWICH

FEATURES:
• Trad routes from Df to E8.
• Single pitch sport venues.
• Beach side bouldering.
• Full colour photo topos.
• Scale area maps, highlighting the approaches.

GOWER OFFERS A WIDE VARIETY OF CLIMBING ON AN ENTICING ARRAY OF VENUES. ON SOME ROUTES YOU CAN STEP STRAIGHT OFF GOLDEN SANDS INTO CLASSIC LINES, IN OTHER CASES YOU CAN WEND YOUR WAY ACROSS PEACEFUL CLIFF TOP PATHS BEFORE dropping into some pretty demanding terrain just a stone’s throw from ice-cream scoffing tourists and pastoral picnic spots.
The selection of venues and climbs included in this guide will provide plenty of adventure for all climbers, among some of the best scenery in the UK.

TOR BAY
THREE CLIFFS BAY
SOUTHGATE
PENNARD
PWLDBU
MUMBLES

Gower Rock offers a wide variety of climbing on an enticing array of venues. On some routes you can step straight off golden sands into classic lines, in other cases you can wend your way across peaceful cliff top paths before dropping into some pretty demanding terrain just a stone’s throw from ice-cream scoffing tourists and pastoral picnic spots.
The selection of venues and climbs included in this guide will provide plenty of adventure for all climbers, among some of the best scenery in the UK.

SELECTED ROCK CLIMBS
STUART LLEWELLYN AND
MATT WOODFIELD

SELECTED CLIMBS ON THE SOUTH WALES PENINSULA

STUART LLEWELLYN (left) and Matt Woodfield (right)