



**A55**

**SPORT CLIMBS**  
Michael Doyle

**3RD EDITION**

**NORTH WALES ROCK CLIMBING**

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Third edition 2019

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## **Dedicated to Colin Goodey**

Local Colin Goodey had a 72 year climbing and new routing career in the area. He was a true gentleman and was climbing and establishing new routes very late in his life. Thanks for the climbs Colin.

## Crag Selector

The crags are listed east to west and all routes are described from left to right.

Crag	Routes	Approach time	Faces	Conditions	Up to F4	F5	F6a
<b>Ty Newydd</b>	17	15 min	South	Sun all day.			1
<b>Dyserth Castle Slab</b>	9	15 min	South	Sun all day. Sheltered.	2	3	3
<b>Dyserth Waterfall Crag</b>	17	10 min	South-east, south-west	Sheltered.		6	1
<b>Meliden Quarry</b>	6 + 9 boulder problems	2 min	West	Sheltered, sun after 2pm.	2	1	3
<b>Llanddulas Cave</b>	81 (5 sectors)	10–20 min	North-west, north-east	Sheltered.		6	13
<b>Rhyd y Foel Quarry</b>	4	10 min	West	Sheltered. Sun afternoon.		1	2
<b>Castle Inn</b>	52 (8 sectors)	Up to 7 min	South	Exposed, sun all day.	15	10	7
<b>Marian Bach</b>	21	15 min	South	Sheltered, sun all day.	5	9	4
<b>Penmaen Head</b>	65 (8 sectors)	8 min	West	Mainly sheltered, sun after 2pm.		6	22
<b>Trench Wall</b>	23 (4 sectors)	10 min	North	Quite sheltered, late sun.			5
<b>Chwarel Bach y Penrhyn</b>	10	10 min	South-west	Quite sheltered, sun afternoon.	7	1	
<b>Notice Board Crag</b>	5	20 min	North-west	Exposed, sun after 7pm.			
<b>Penmaenbach Quarry</b>	58 (3 levels)	20 min	North-west	Mainly sheltered.	6	7	14
<b>The Gallery</b>	25 (2 sectors)	10–20 min	North-west	Exposed.			
<b>Penmaen West Quarry</b>	15 (3 levels)	20–30 min	North-west	Usually sheltered, sun after 3pm.		2	4
<b>Creigiau'r Gigfran</b>	18 (5 sectors)	20–30 min	North-west	Exposed, sun after 3pm.		2	6
<b>Tyddyn Hywel</b>	11	35 min	North-west	Exposed.		1	1

F6b	F6c	F7a	F7b	F7c	F8 a-c	Trad	Summary	Page
4	4	4		3	1		A fine crag in a sheltered valley.	22
1							This rare limestone slab has some long climbs.	26
2		3	1	1	3		Two contrasting faces and grade range.	29
							A few sport routes and a useful bouldering wall.	35
22	10	7	10	4	8	1	Major venue with many significant harder routes and a big cave roof.	38
1							A new crag with a number of climbs on quarried rock.	58
5	6	1	1	1		5	Large selection of quality routes and grades across many sectors with a pleasant outlook.	64
2	1						Friendly and sheltered with a batch of mainly easier grades.	76
19	12	5				1	Arguably the crag of the A55 has many engaging routes with much character and easy access.	82
11	7						Technical climbs on quarried rock, which climbs a lot better than it looks.	98
2							A useful crag for the lower grade enthusiast and beginners.	106
1		2				2	Daunting, exposed cliff with pocketed, quality routes on rhyolite.	110
12	10	6				1	Hugely varied selection of worthwhile routes right across the grades.	114
6	5	10	3			1	Quirky climbing above a pathway / cycleway.	130
6	4		1			1	Characterised by long, quality routes on good rock in an atmospheric old quarry.	142
3	4			1		2	A number of natural crags across the hillside offer much varied climbing.	148
4	4	1					Engrossing, quality climbing on unusual rock with a glorious outlook.	156

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## Acknowledgements

Many people have assisted with this guide with freely given advice, feedback and with establishing new routes and sharing information. I am deeply indebted and this guide could not have been produced without them. My apologies if I have missed anyone.

### 1ST EDITION

In alphabetical order: Ian Andrews, Dave Bathers, Andy Boorman, Mike Burrows (for new routing and much assistance at **Penmaen Head** and **Penmaenbach Quarry**), Tommy Chamings, Norman Clacher (perennial activist and my main co-developer at **Penmaen Head**), Glyn Davidson, Chris Doyle, Angela Findlay (for draft document review, general support and great roast dinners utilising organic pork), Colin Goodey, Francis Gowling, Mike Hammill, Pete Harrison, Perry Hawkins, Guy Keating, Martin Kocsis, Alan James, Elfyn Jones – British Mountaineering Council Cymru access officer (for reviewing the crag access notes and providing the main access and conservation notes), Margaret Lally, Dave Lyon, Bonny Masson, Simon Panton, Chris Parkin (N. Wales Bolt Fund), Dave Prendergast, Lee Proctor, Mike Raine, Mick Ryan, Tony Shelmerdine (local guru and general historical database for comment and advice throughout and checking the draft document for accuracy), Richard Wheeldon, Pete White, Sarah Woodhouse (for taking the time to minutely check the draft document for grammar).

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Thanks are also due to the many climbers who have had the vision and energy to establish new routes (very often financed with their own funds) in the area – without them ...

### 2ND EDITION

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A further special thank you to co-activists: Norman Clacher and Tony Shelmerdine for much assistance and information along the road – but now it's time to get




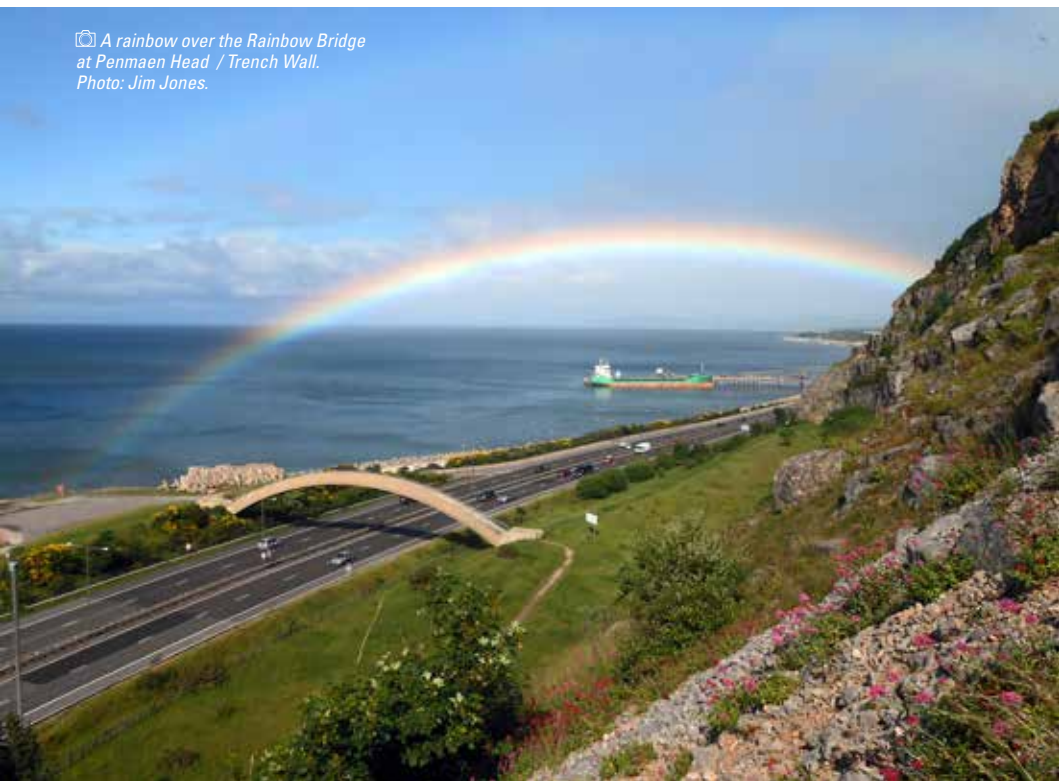
stuck in to those new crags! Finally, a special, special thank you to Chris Doyle for **The Gop** bouldering section, **Llanddulas Cave** and **Dyserth Area Crags** recent history, much information, advice and many route descriptions. Also for producing a batch of such inspiring and difficult routes – I’m not sure where he gets his talent and motivation from but it isn’t me!

### 3RD EDITION

Margaret Bassett, Chris Parkin (North Wales Bolt Fund), Awena Taylor (translation services), Colin Goodey, Andy Boorman, Margaret Duggan-Keen (initial proofreading

and crag selector spreadsheet), Pete Harrison, Ian Lloyd-Jones, Elfyn Jones (BMC Access and Conservation Officer for Wales), Chris Doyle (Llanddulas Upper Cave section), Mike Burrows, Lea Gaugler, Colin Goodey, Mike Bailey, Dave Evans, Tony Shelmerdine, Jim Jones, Mike Hutton, Keith Mills, Sue Molyneux, Phil Moore, Kyle Hudson, Jo Bertalot, Mike Bailey, Nick Buckley and a very special thanks to Harold Walmsley for sharing his many new route write-ups, topos and photos for this edition. Apologies to anyone inadvertently left out.

 A rainbow over the Rainbow Bridge at Penmaen Head / Trench Wall.  
Photo: Jim Jones.





📷 Penmaen Head activist Norman Clacher samples his own route 70 Degrees.  
Photo: Michael Doyle.

## Introduction

When the idea of developing Penmaen Head first germinated in October 2006, a simple, home produced, laminated topo was envisaged to record the routes and provide details for interested climbers. Yet here we are with the third edition of *A55 Sport Climbs*, the first two editions having sold over 4,000 copies between them, giving testament to the growth of development and popularity of the area. Maybe it shouldn't be too surprising as this region provides so much varied, excellent and very accessible sport climbing. There are now 21 crags or sectors and no fewer than 437 climbs (compared to 280 in the second edition) and all but a few within a 15 mile radius of Colwyn Bay. The area has now reached maturity and the time when it was billed as merely a useful wet weather alternative to other major venues has long past.

This edition has been fully revised and the facts checked as far as possible by visiting every crag and route, at least for a visual inspection as a minimum. Every word of the second edition has been reviewed. The same treatment has been applied to grades with personal experience, reference to other guides (particularly the *North Wales Limestone* guide) and online logbook databases such as that on UK Climbing (UKC). It can't be perfect but it will not be for want of trying! Inevitably we are running out of new rock in North Wales but activists have been busy; there are new crags and sectors to visit and many new routes that were not in the second edition at existing crags.

The new crags / sectors are, from the east:

**Rhyd y Foel Quarry**

**Marian Bach**

**Chwarel Bach y Penrhyn**

**Penmaenbach Quarry – Last Butt One Level**

**Penmaen West Quarry** (three levels)

**Fence Buttress**

**Black Slab**


**Tyddyn Hywel**

This guide is intended to get you to the crags and routes off the A55 corridor in North Wales. To that end it has been written in a readable and hopefully entertaining form, with as much detail as possible. Safe climbing.

## Using the Guide

All the information is presented in a consistent way with the first line of a route description containing all the key information. For example:

**5 Udder Head \*** **15m**  **F6a**

5 is the route number on that sector and corresponds to the numbering on the topo covering the sector. *Udder Head* is the route name. Nought to three stars is an indication of quality (see **Climb Quality Ratings** below). 15m tells you that the route is precisely 15 metres in length (length is only included where it has been measured accurately).  informs you that there are six bolts on the route (this information is given on most of the routes but is not given where it has not been able to make a precise count). F6a is the French sport grade.

### CLIMBING IS POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS

You might die or be very seriously injured. In all cases you are responsible for the decisions you make and your own judgement and no responsibility can be accepted for the way you use this guide. Rock can break and bolts, although this is extremely unlikely, have been known to come out. Bear in mind that anyone can install bolts. There is no qualification required, nor certification for fixed equipment. The route descriptions and grades are all given in good faith and are believed to be as accurate as possible, but they are nonetheless subjective and essentially it is your own judgement which counts. It is a very bad idea indeed to climb unless you have had previous instruction and are fully familiar with the techniques and equipment used.



## Sport Climbing Safely

A single climbing mistake can prove fatal or result in very serious injury. It is beyond the scope of this guide to provide instruction in sport climbing but a few crucial tips will help to keep you safe:

- 1. Do a buddy check** – Before the leader starts off, always do a buddy check. Belayer checks the leader's knot and leader checks the belayer's belaying arrangement.
- 2. Belaying** – The belayer should establish himself near to the rock and in a position so that the leader does not have to step over the rope, once started. The belayer should allow a lot of slack ready for clipping the first bolt – there is no point keeping the rope snug if it's not clipped into anything. Once the leader has clipped the first bolt, then the belayer should keep slack to a minimum to minimise the chance of an early ground fall by the leader. This should continue until the second bolt is clipped or preferably the third, then the belayer can move away from the rock if need be and allow reasonable slack.
- 3. Threading the lower-off** – When threading the lower-off, make sure you are attached to the rope at all times at your belay loop, either tied on or with a screw gate karabiner. Do not shout "safe". You aren't. 'Safe' is the signal for the belayer to stop belaying, and as you are at the top of the route then that is the last thing you want. Thread the lower-off methodically then check everything. Finally, weight the rope before unclipping from the lower-off thus confirming that you are actually on the end, being belayed and that your belayer isn't waiting for you down the pub.
- 4. Use a clip stick** – Consider using a clip stick to clip the first bolt or even the second. In sport climbing having a fall can be par for the course without further consequence but hitting the ground should not be risked, even in a short fall.
- 5. Wear a helmet** – Always wear a helmet thus guarding against being hit from above and bashing your head in a fall. With so many very lightweight helmets on the market it's an entirely unnecessary risk not to do so and there is no excuse.



## Grades

All sport climbing grades given are French grades. It does not seem to be commonly understood in the UK that the French grading system considers the overall difficulty of the climb, taking into account the difficulty of the moves and the length of the climb. This differs from most grading, such as the British system, where a route is rated according to the most difficult section (or single move). In the French system, grades are numerical, starting at 1 (very easy) and the system is open-ended. In this guide book, consistent with common modern practice, routes of F5 or under may be sub-divided with + or – while routes graded 6 and above are subdivided by adding a letter (a, b or c) and + or – may be used to further differentiate difficulty. Grades throughout are believed to be accurate and where possible this has been based on a consensus of a number of sources. For this third edition every single route has been assessed and reviewed using a combination of personal experience and independent feedback including reference to other guidebooks and the UKC logbook database. They are all subjective and thus a matter of opinion. How hard a climb feels can be due to many factors including talent, build, height, weight, age, strength, boldness, temperament and whether you had a hard session down the Dog and Duck the previous evening. Grades give rise to healthy debate – part of the richness of climbing.

The author's approach to route grading is simply that grades should be consistent and accurate as far as is achievable. 'Sandbags' (why?) should be avoided at all costs. If a grade is described as "F6b+ but tough for the grade" then it is clearly undergraded and should be recorded as F6c. There is no point in having a grading system if it isn't accurate.

## Climb Quality Ratings

\* A good route, well worth climbing.

\*\* A very good route and one of the best on the crag.

\*\*\* A superb route, one of the best in the area.

It should be noted that virtually all the routes in this guide are worth doing and the absence of a star does not necessarily indicate that a route is poor. For the third edition, every single route has been assessed and reviewed for quality using personal experience and independent feedback including reference to other guidebooks and the UKC logbook database. Route quality ratings appear to be popular and are based on a local area context to allow climbers to assess their choice of route – and perhaps rubbish it on UKC! It is not being claimed that a 3-star route at **Penmaen Head** is in any way comparable in quality to, say, a nationally important climb like *Cenotaph Corner*.

Consequently, it is hoped that the grades and quality ratings presented in this edition better reflect a consensus for the vast majority of routes but essentially it's all a matter of opinion. It should be noted that many of the new routes (especially on the new crags) have had very few repeats, if any, and a consensus has not been available in many cases to confirm grades and quality. It also takes time for a route to settle in and there may still be the odd loose hold or poor rock on some new routes so care should be exercised.

Feedback on any issues is welcome: [mjdoyle1@yahoo.com](mailto:mjdoyle1@yahoo.com)

### BMC PARTICIPATION STATEMENT

The BMC recognises that climbing 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.



## Bolts

A mixture of bolts have been used throughout the area, the type used being largely dependent on when the particular venue was developed and who was doing the work. These include stainless steel glue-ins (DMM, Fixe and staples) and through expansion bolts with hangers (Fixe and Petzl). Both systems have advantages and disadvantages but hangers are less kind to karabiners and cannot be used to lower-off from directly. The glue-ins have been fixed with either dual component resin from cartridges or, more recently, spin-in self-contained resin capsules. Both methods are well proven. It has been noted that some of the studs securing the hangers on a few older routes have a discoloured look to them. This may be surface corrosion or even just discolouration but nevertheless they should be treated with caution. Hangers fixed with stainless steel bolts (as at **The Gallery**) have lasted extremely well.

## Lower-offs

Virtually all of the routes in this guide have proper lower-offs fitted in the form of rings, large maillons, clip-ins or karabiners.

Some lower-offs are already showing signs of wear, especially where they are shared by several routes. Even stainless steel wears. Replacing lower-offs costs money and someone has to give up their climbing time to do it.

**To reduce wear on the lower-offs, please use your own quick-draws for lowering off as much as possible (last person threads).**

## Gear thefts

In recent years there have been numerous incidents of theft of fixed equipment on routes on the A55 crags. Most thefts have been of lower-offs and occasionally more than once of the same ones, as at **Penmaen Head** for example. It is not clear who has been carrying out the thefts but it is clear that most could only be accessed by people with rope skills. As well as costing the North Wales Bolt Fund money and local activists



*Worn lower-off – please minimise wear by using your own quick draws. Last person threads.*



*A common lower-off arrangement to save wear on the fixed equipment.*

time to replace them, it is also inconvenient for climbers doing the routes and potentially dangerous to arrive at the top of a route to find that the lower-offs have been stolen. There are still a few lower-offs missing that need replacing. Where known these have been noted in the text but vigilance is needed. Please challenge anyone seen removing fixed equipment and report any incidents and fixed equipment deficiencies to the author: [mjdoyle1@yahoo.com](mailto:mjdoyle1@yahoo.com).

## Equipment

A 50m single rope will suffice at most locations but up to 70m is essential for some routes. These have been noted in the text. Ten quick draws will, almost always, be more than sufficient, but as many as 16 will occasionally be necessary. In addition, it is wise to carry a couple of screw gate karabiners and a narrow sling. Wearing a helmet is very desirable, not only because of the risk from stone fall but also to avoid head damage if you turn upside down during a fall. Incidentally, a useful technique to avoid this scenario is to keep the rope in front and avoid the rope running behind your leg. This will minimise the chance of the leg being hooked on the rope and being turned upside down. When moving up on lead, as much as possible, let the rope run in the join between your foot and ankle, thereby keeping it at the front.

A clip stick is often very desirable. Carrying a pair of secateurs can be a very sensible idea as paths such as those to **Marian Bach** and **Penmaenbach Quarry** tend to get overgrown.

## Groups / Top-Roping

Easily accessible lower grade sport climbs such as those at **Penmaen Head** and **Castle Inn** often attract groups from outdoor centres. Unfortunately, this often leads to the monopolisation of certain routes as a line of people wait to try a route on a top rope. It also means that those routes are likely to become polished far more quickly than they would otherwise, and, if quick draws are not used, the lower-offs will wear more quickly and need replacing sooner. This is unreasonable.

Another issue of beginner groups being top-roped is when they wear mountain or walking boots. This is inappropriate practice on sport routes and can quickly lead to damage and polishing. If beginners are at a stage where they are wearing big boots then there are plenty of alternatives on trad crags with diffs and v. diffs, which are far more suitable for this kind of footwear.

The wear and tear that climbs are suffering is a growing problem. If you must visit the crags in a large

group, please consider other climbers and try to avoid monopolising classic climbs which are likely to get the most traffic anyway.

Please be aware of the needs of others; remove ropes that are not in use, and avoid popular climbs at busy times. Fortunately, the selfish continental practice of leaving ropes and quick-draws in place on a route while going off to try another route, or to have lunch, has not yet taken hold in Britain.

Always top-rope using your own lower-offs or screw gate karabiners to minimise wear on the lower-offs. Last person threads.

## Access & Conservation

(Provided by the BMC Cymru access officer)

Many of the climbing sites along the A55, especially the limestone cliffs, are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), on account of the flora and fauna that is found on the calcareous grasslands that are associated with the limestone outcrops along this part of the North Wales coast. The designations give legal protection to these sites, which include **Castle Inn** and **Llanddulas Cave**, and climbers need to be aware that gardening and cleaning activities at these sites could be deemed illegal under the Wildlife & Countryside Act. Climbers are asked to be sensible and discreet in opening new routes in these areas, and to take account of the special features and vegetation on these cliffs. The cliffs (and in particular caves on the cliffs) are the breeding and roosting sites for bats, which also have very strong legal protection. If you come across bats in crevices on the rocks, avoid disturbing them and give them a wide berth. If disturbed during the hibernating season they would probably die very quickly from the cold. If you do encounter any access problems, then please do not antagonise the landowners or other organisations, but refer the issue to the British Mountaineering Council's access & conservation officer at the BMC Wales office on 01690 720124 or elfyn@thebmc.co.uk.



All land in the UK is owned by somebody and the inclusion of any venue in this guide does not imply that you have a right to go there. Climbers have an obvious vested interest in acting responsibly, which includes responsible parking, taking your litter home (and other peoples), respecting Sites of Special Scientific Interest, keeping the noise down and generally keeping a low profile.

### BMC CRAG CODE

(Common sense really)

- RAD: regularly check the Regional Access Database (RAD) for up to date access information <http://www.thebmc.co.uk/bmccrag/>
- Parking: park carefully – avoid blocking gates, driveways and the road.
- Footpaths: keep to established paths – leave gates as you find them.
- Risk: develop the skills to manage the risks associated with climbing and be aware of other people around you.
- Respect: the rock, local climbing ethics and other people.
- Wildlife: do not disturb livestock, wildlife or cliff vegetation; follow 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.
- Sanitation: don't make a mess – bury solid waste and carry out sanitary items.
- Economy: do everything you can to support the rural economy – shop locally.

 Mynydd Marian Nature Reserve at Castle Inn, home to the Silver Studded Blue Butterfly (below).



Photo: iStockphoto.com

## North Wales Bolt Fund

Many thanks to Chris Parkin who administers the North Wales Bolt Fund and who was always quick to help out with gear when requested. Contributions were made to the NWBF from the royalties of the first two editions of this guide and contributions will continue with this edition.

The NWBF relies on donations from the climbing community and companies associated with climbing. Bolts cost money and stainless ones a lot more! Drills, resin and static ropes all eat away at the donations so it needs constantly topping up. If you have enjoyed the routes in this guide (or even if you haven't!) then please consider making a donation to the North Wales Bolt Fund and support your sport.

Donations can be sent to:

NWBF, Tegla, Lon Ganol, Llandegfan, Menai Bridge, Anglesey LL59 5DY, and are collected at the following:

V12 – Llanberis, Joe Browns – Llanberis & Capel Curig, The Beacon Climbing Wall and The Indy Climbing Wall. Cheques should be made out to: North Wales Bolt Fund. northwalesboltfund@googlemail.com

Bank details for donations:

Account: North Wales Bolt Fund

Account Number: 51426192

Sort Code: 40-32-15

Bank: HSBC

## Nutrition & Rehydration

### DYSERTH AREA

There are two pubs in the lower village: the Red Lion, Waterfall Road, Dyserth LL18 6ET and the New Inn, Waterfall Road, Dyserth LL18 6ET (food and drink). In the upper village is Y Bodunig Inn, High Street, Dyserth LL18 6AA

Curry take out: Bangla Fusion, Jade Bank House, High Street, Dyserth LL18 6AA and Dyserth Kebab & Fish Bar, 8 High St, Dyserth LL18 6AB.

### HOLYWELL AREA

While not immediately near a climbing venue, St Pios Café near the A55 deserves a mention and is well worth the short diversion from the expressway. This is a quirky venue serving homemade food using local produce at reasonable prices. Great coffee and cakes too. St. Pio's Café, Franciscan Friary, Monastery Road, Pantasaph, Holywell, CH8 8PE

### COLWYN BAY AREA

There are many pubs, take outs and restaurants in the area but after a hard session crimping at **Penmaen Head** why not treat yourself to a Thai meal at the nearby Tamarind Thai Restaurant at the Lyndale Hotel, run by a Thai family, 410 Abergele Rd, Old Colwyn, Colwyn Bay LL29 9AB. Near **Castle Inn** is the Semaphore Lodge pub and Chinese restaurant, Ffordd-Y-Llan, Llysfaen, Colwyn

Bay LL29 8SW. At Rhos-on-Sea can be found wonderful, authentic Mexican food: Mexican Wave, 6 Rhos Road, Colwyn Bay, LL28 4PP. Beware – devouring an entire burrito could cost you half a grade. Take out or eat in.

### CONWY AREA

Once again there are many pubs and restaurants in the area but there is a particular quality hot spot at Llandudno Junction. Enoch's Fish & Chips, 146 Conway Rd, Llandudno Junction LL31 9DU. Superb fresh fish and the best chips around. A contender for the best in Wales surely? Take out or eat in. Right next door to Enoch's is the best coffee shop in the area: Providero, 148 Conway Rd, Llandudno Junction LL31 9DU. Tasty cakes too.

## Local Climbing Walls

**The Boardroom** – Rectors Lane Industrial Estate, Rectors Ln, Pentre, Deeside CH5 2DH

A large and comprehensive climbing centre with lead walls, top ropes and a large bouldering area.

**Prestatyn Leisure Centre** – 2 Princes Ave, Prestatyn LL19 8RS

A small wall with a 6m top rope / bouldering wall and 200 sq. metres of wall surface. Opens 4.15 p.m.

**Boathouse Climbing Centre** – The Old Lifeboat Station, Lloyd Street, Llandudno, LL302YG. Approximately 300 square meters of climbing surface, bouldering area, 8 metre lead walls and top roping systems with auto belays.

**Junction Climbing Wall** – 6 G Road, Llandudno Junction, Conwy, LL31 9XY

A small wall with eleven top ropes and eight lead routes with routes from 4a–7c and some bouldering.

As well as routes and bouldering, there is a gear shop and training area.

**Indy Climbing Wall** – Indefatigable, Plas Llanfair, Llanfairpwllgwyngyll, LL61 6NT.

A comprehensive climbing centre with a particular emphasis on bouldering. Reasonably priced and a useful gear shop.

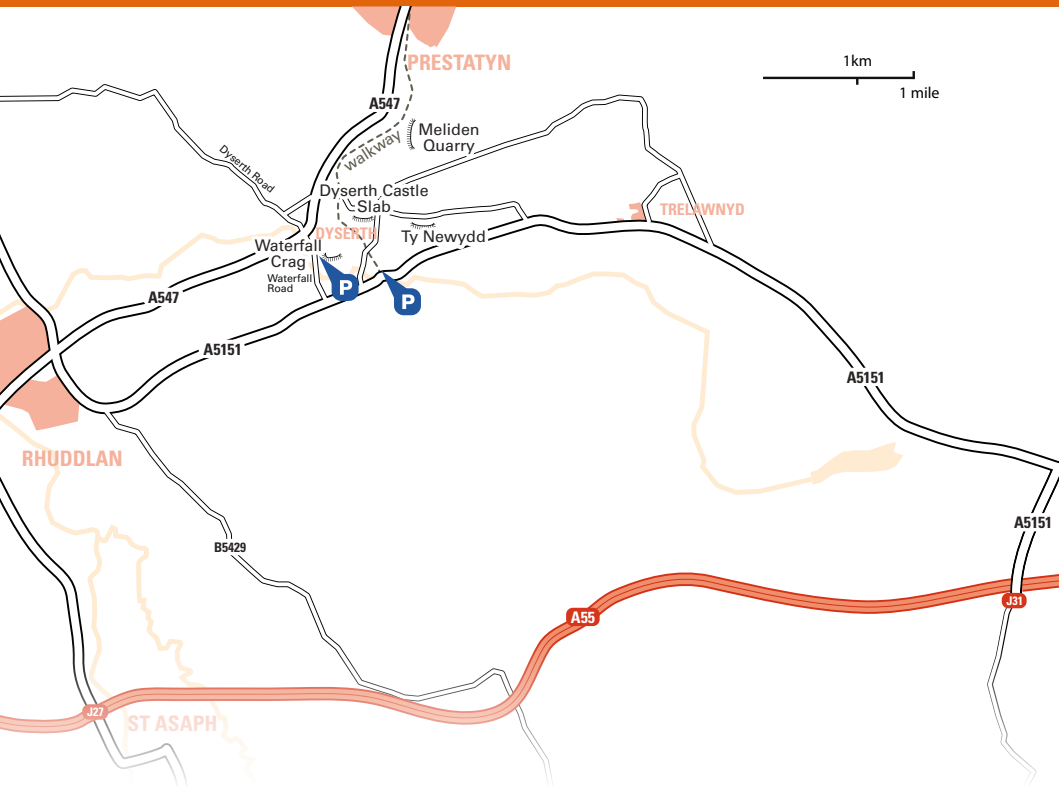
📷 Al Leary high on *The Menin Road*,  
Penmaen West Quarry.  
Photo: Harold Walmsley







📷 *Chris Doyle on the first ascent of Ivan the Responsible (F6b+), Ty Newydd. Photo Michael Doyle.*



## THE DYSERTH AREA CRAGS

The Dyserth Area crags stretch the concept of an A55 Sport Climbs guide slightly, but the quality of the crags and climbing more than justifies the short 6-mile diversion from Junction 31 of the A55 expressway – perhaps even a visit from as far as Llanberis!

The emphasis is on quality rather than quantity, ranging from the superb, solid and steep **Ty Newydd**, an important venue, to the delightful **Dyserth Waterfall Crag** with routes polarising between a decent number of

worthwhile F5s to far harder, beefy roofs. **Dyserth Castle Slab** offers some unusual, long limestone slab routes along with some easier, shorter climbs. **Meliden Quarry** has also been included. There's something for everyone.

## TY NEWYDD

Rock:	Natural limestone
Aspect:	South facing, sheltered, sun all day
Grades:	F6a F8a+
Routes:	17
Approach:	15 minutes

### Conditions:

Ty Newydd faces south and is in a sheltered valley. These factors, coupled with its overhanging nature, result in considerable immunity from rain. In the winter, it catches the sun through the bare trees and in the summer, it is largely shielded from the sun by the tree foliage, making it an all-weather and all-season crag. Spring brings the pungent aroma of wild garlic.

### ACCESS RESTRICTIONS – IMPORTANT!

The crag is on private land and there is no right of access. However, the farmer, Mr Jones, at nearby Ty Newydd farm (on the left of the A5151 going towards Trelawnyd) has been most amenable and very kindly agreed to permit climbing so long as the access stipulations are adhered to and the designated car parking and approach are used. He leases the valley for pheasant rearing and shooting, hence the restrictions.

Please consult the BMC RAD for the latest information: <https://www.thebmc.co.uk/modules/RAD/View.aspx?id=992>

1. No access to the crag from 29th September to 1st February inclusive.
2. From 22nd June to 28th September, climbing is restricted to between 1 hour after sunrise and 90mins before sunset. All climbers have to vacate the crag by then.
3. Follow the agreed approach route.
4. Absolutely no dogs allowed at any time.

**Please note that access is sensitive.**

**Any breaches could lead to a ban.**



This quality crag is located in a leafy valley and is composed of a flinty, solid limestone with good friction. The clean wall is overhanging overall (remarkably so on some routes) and has a sort of horizontal wavy structure featuring a series of short but intensely steep sections interspersed with brief, slopy slabs. The geological format and compact nature results in climbs that are often not easy to read and therefore difficult to on-sight. Friction is excellent and holds often sharp.

A 50m rope is ample for all routes. The crag has been known about and tinkered with by locals for years, but only received the attentions of serious development in 2010 and 2011 by Chris and Mike Doyle, Tony Shelmerdine and Norman Clacher.

There is a small, scooped upper crag, up and left, accessed from ledges, and a ramp descends from top right to bottom left below this to define the left end of the main crag. It has many features which unhelpfully keep repeating but to get your bearings, there is a shallow cave at ground level on the right. From the right side of this *Ivan the Responsible* starts and from the left side *Vlad the Implier*. To the left again and some way up, is the obvious flared porthole of *Three Degrees of Levitation*.

### APPROACH

From the A55, come off at Junction 31, take the A5151 signposted to Prestatyn and Dyserth. After 6 miles, and just after passing the Dyserth and 30mph signs, turn right in the dip into the 'Dyserth to Prestatyn Walkway' car park. Note that this car park used to be locked at 1700 daily but this no longer applies at the time of writing. From the car park follow the tarmac surface of the walkway towards Prestatyn for about 100m to a bridge. Ascend steps to the right just before the bridge and turn right to pass through a kissing gate. Follow the path to cross the field, then through trees past a finger post to a second kissing gate and cross a small footbridge onto a track. Turn left and follow what is a public footpath to a fence. Here turn right and follow the fence and hedge



through a gate to another fence around a cultivated area running down the bank. Turn right down the bank, through a gate and follow the fence line on your left to another gate. Go through this into a small wooded valley and the crag soon appears impressively on your left.

## Upper Crag

Situated up and left of the main crag and accessed from a ledge below the shallow depression.

### 1 Wild Garlic

*M. & C. Doyle 27.07.11*

Technical rather than strenuous. From near the left end of the ledge start up the small, broken corner to a side pull out right and then a satisfying series of subtle moves which lead to easier climbing. To finish move right to the lower-off of the next route. Well bolted.

*Don't do what one German climber did and throw yourself off just before clipping the first bolt! Fortunately a bruised buttock and ego were the only casualties.*

*Make sure your shoes are clean.*

### 2 Jumbo Loving

*C. Doyle 10.02.11*

Essentially roped bouldering. From the ledge a short but sustained sequence on small holds leads to a long stretch to the finishing break. Start at the left end of the shallow cave.

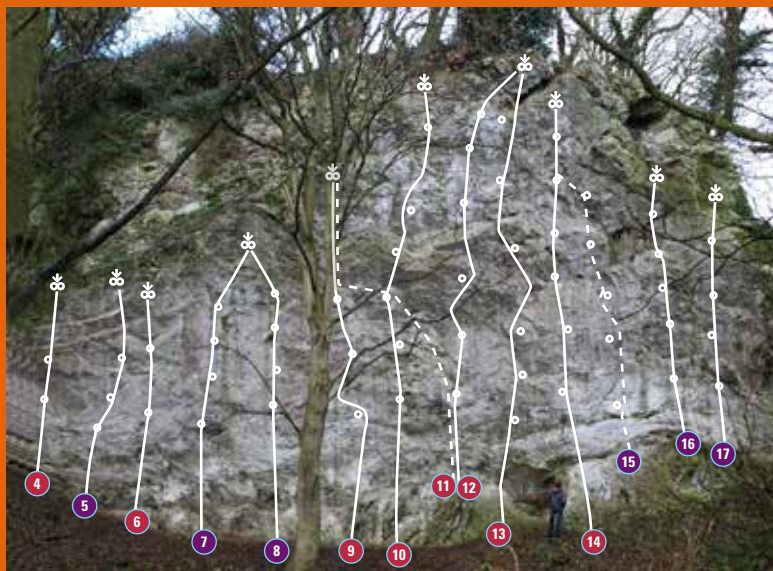
### 3 Dreambadger

*C. Doyle 15.06.11*

Another boulder problem in the sky (V8). Start just right of the flake supporting pillar.

*The Jones brothers scrambled up the obvious left to right rake in the 1960s while on exploratory expeditions of their father's land.*





## Main Crag

### 4 Madasafish

*N. Clacher 21.01.11*

Short, butch and sequency and climbs to the right of the bolts. The left side of the bolts can be had on good holds at F5+ and provides a warm up. Start near a prominent hole.

🔗 F6b

### 5 Clitoris Allsorts \*

*N. Clacher 18.01.11*

Sharp crimp cranking and some blind slaps make this route difficult to read. Keep the bolts mainly on your left. Start below two obvious pockets.

🔗 F7a+

### 6 Foobar \*

*N. Clacher, I. Andrews 21.11.10*

Climbs the wall on sharp crimps (painful for soft fingers) with an initial crux before easing off. Start where a horizontal break peters out.

🔗 F6c+

### 7 First Round, First Second \*

*P. Robins, C. Doyle 28.01.11*

*Bolted and originally worked by Chris Doyle.*

After an easy start up the ramp, a desperately tenuous sequence on appallingly small holds leads to the top. The holds are so bad they may not be apparent on first inspection and even clipping the last bolt is a trad 6b move. The name is another Sharma route parody. Starts below a triangular black area.

🔗 F8a+



📷 *Norman Clacher on FA of Clitoris Allsorts (F7a+). Photo Michael Doyle.*



**8 Three Degrees of Levitation \*\*** 10m ↻ F7c*C. Doyle 26.03.10*

An extremely reachy climb which may be impossible for the short – now there's a challenge! It is based on the obvious flared porthole and has two cruxes. The first is a dynamic snatch to catch the bottom of the porthole and the second (and probably harder) is leaving it. Start below the porthole. The first bolted route at **Ty Newydd**.

**9 Girls will Perform \*** ↻ F6b*N. Clacher, P. Ingram 02.12.10*

A steady start leads directly to a black boss jug and harder moves above. Moving right at the second bolt leads to better holds, a ramp and an easier but rather run-out finish. Start 3m right of the porthole of *Three Degrees of Levitation*.

**10 Chill Out \*** ↻ F6c*N. Clacher, M. Doyle 04.08.10*

A good route and with some surprisingly good holds. Reasonable climbing leads to two poor finger pockets and strenuous moves to gain the slopy ledge. The upper wall is nice. Start at some black streaks.

**11 The Dalai Limo** ↻ F6a*M. Doyle 17.06.12*

The obvious right to left ramp, clipping bolts as you pass each route. Start up *Chilly T*, clip the second bolt of *Chilly Out* and the third bolt of *Girls Will Perform* to finish on that route's lower-off. Another useful warm-up but perhaps not at a crowded crag!

**12 Chilly T \*\*** ↻ F6c*T. Shelmerdine 10.12.10*

A weaving line described by Mr Shelmerdine as "powerful / thin & slabby / powerful / thin & slabby", etc. This route, perhaps more than any other, typifies the climbing at **Ty Newydd**. The crux sequence is at the third bolt but harder sequences can be found! From the fifth bolt step up left before going up and right to the lower-off. Start on the ledges to the left of the shallow cave.

**13 Vlad the Implier \*\*** ↻ F6c*C. & M. Doyle 23.07.11*

Pull on to the wall from the left side of the shallow cave and make some testing moves past the third bolt. Move left slightly and finish up the leaning wall, taking some care with an apparently detached but glued jug. Vlad implies things – but does it viciously.

**14 Ivan the Responsible \*\*** ↻ F6b+*C. & M. Doyle 18.01.11 (Sport version only, most of the route had been climbed as a trad climb by others.)*

An overhanging route overall, which weaves up one of the few obvious lines of weakness on the crag and with the crux at the top. After clipping the third bolt make a tricky move to gain the sloping ledge. Easier climbing then arrives and leads to a hard and steep finish using a leftward leaning ramp to clip the lower-off. Start immediately to the right of the shallow cave.

**15 Turtles Progress \*** ↻ F7a*T. Shelmerdine 31.01.11*

Rather blind. Climb to a rest before the overhanging crack (crux) and finish up *Ivan the Responsible*. Start on the ledge to the right of the shallow cave.

**16 Black Wednesday \*\*** ↻ F7a+*C. Doyle 24.01.11*

A classic climb which builds to a glorious crescendo. After an easy start, tackle the crux sequence passing the second bolt. Another tricky section leads to a respite before the wall steepens and the undercut feature is gained. Great last move to the finishing jug. Start on the roomy ledge.

**17 Shakin Stevens \*** ↻ F7a*C. Doyle 20.01.11*

A great fingery test-piece with a hard crux sequence passing the third bolt. Above, the slopy ledge of doom awaits and also some fall-offable last moves. Start on the right of the roomy ledge.



📷 Annwen doing fine on her first rock climb: Jason and the Aga Nuts.  
Photo: Michael Doyle.

## DYSERTH CASTLE SLAB

Rock:	Quarried limestone	Grades:	F3 F6b+
Aspect:	South facing, sheltered, sun all day	Routes:	9
		Approach:	15 minutes

### Conditions:

The slab receives virtually no seepage, dries quickly after rain and can feel rather slick on a full-on hot summer's day.

A big limestone slab and a very rare beast indeed! Being south facing, it catches a lot of sun and can be a very pleasant place to climb – even in the winter. It also tends to be sheltered. The slab looks quite impressive from afar and the friction is excellent but on closer inspection the rock quality isn't too good on some areas of the main slab. The numerous rock scars and rocky detritus below the crag are evidence of much cleaning. A lot of time has been spent removing rotten rock from the lines which make the best use of the good rock. Traffic and weathering-in have improved the situation and the routes have settled down to become very worthwhile. The shorter routes on the right-hand side slab are mainly up-rough, solid rock with great friction and do not suffer from the rock quality issues of parts of the left-hand side. Strong calves highly recommended. Although no

problems have been experienced during the development phase or since, some very loose rock above the slab is poised to become airborne and must come down at some time. A helmet is therefore recommended. Beware of loose rock at the top of routes.

A 50m rope is ample for all routes.

This quarry, also known as Ghost Canyon to locals, has had some attention in the past and Dyserth local, Andy Pollitt was reported spending a lot of time here in the late 1970s and early 80s. It seems that he was responsible for the central route on the main slab, apparently called *Genesis*, which has two ancient bolts and a peg and reputedly was a boldish E3 6a. The modern development of the slab was by Mike Doyle after much cleaning and bolting in the first half of 2011.

The quarry is on the site of Dyserth Castle which was a

grand stone-built castle constructed by Henry III from about 1241, and eventually destroyed by Prince Llywelyn ap Gruffudd (the last Prince of an independent Wales) in 1263, after seven years of blockade and siege. Nearly all of the remains of the castle and the hill that it occupied were destroyed by quarrying in the period 1911–13, leaving only the earthworks of the outer court and some parts of the ditch. Postcards from 1911 clearly show the ruins of the castle on top of the hill. Some years later the quarry attracted some notoriety as a venue for parties and biker raves but things seem to have settled down of late.

## APPROACH

From the A55, come off at Junction 31 to take the A5151 signposted to Prestatyn and Dyserth. After 6 miles, and just after passing the Dyserth and 30mph signs, turn right in the dip into the 'Dyserth to Prestatyn Walkway' car park. Note that this car park used to be locked at 1700 daily but this no longer applies at the time of writing. Walk out of the car park and follow the Dyserth to Prestatyn walkway, along the old Prestatyn to Dyserth branch line (the line carried goods and later passengers from 1869 to 1973, reaching a peak of 16 trains a day in 1914). After about 10 minutes and immediately after crossing over a bridge, take the path on the right which doubles back on the other side of the fence. Go down steps and follow this footpath for about 100m to a path junction. Turn left down a good track into the quarry. The slab soon appears in front of you.

## ACCESS

The landowner is aware that climbing takes place here without having given explicit consent. There is no right of access but there have been no problems to date. If any occur then please contact the author. The quarry is regularly used by kids, dog walkers and secret campers. A lot of camping debris has been removed but it would help the landowner if climbers could carry out any rubbish with them.



📷 Margaret Bassett pads up *The Purple Ladies Verses Godzilla*.  
Photo: Michael Doyle.



📷 The author on the first ascent of *Llywelyn ap Gruffudd to Neil Crud (02.06.11)*.  
Photo: Chris Doyle.



## Main Slab

### 1 Llywelyn ap Gruffydd to Neil Crud\* 23m ⚡ F6a+

*M. Doyle 02.06.11*

A nicely sustained route which starts up the slim, clean ribbon of rock on the left of the slab. Thin climbing up the centre of the slab leads to a small sentry box. The steepening above is taken to the left of the third bolt and from the last bolt the pressure is off as good holds lead to the lower-off. Keep left of all the bolts.

### 2 Isabella Rose 23m ⚡ F6a

*M. Dowsett, P. Cubbins 13.01.13*

Takes the rather grotty and undercleaned groove line to the right of the previous route and shares the final bolt and lower-off. Start up a shallow groove right of the obvious flake feature and climb directly up the groove through some broken rock. Above the sixth bolt move off left to easier ground and the lower-off. Beware of loose rock.

### 3 Genesis \*\* 20m ⚡ F6b+

*A. Pollitt at E3 6a 1981. Cleaned and re-equipped: M. Doyle 2011*

The central line and the best route, on good rock retains the original name. Balance up an indistinct groove past two sets of concave depressions. The slab now gets steeper just as the climbing gets thinner and leads up, and diagonally right to finish more easily to the left of the rock scars. Start at the tree stump.

### 4 Tegengle \* 20m ⚡ F5+

*M. Burrows, M. Doyle 14.06.11*

Not the best of rock but worthwhile and better than it looks. Balance up to a good high foothold to clip the second bolt and then head leftish and up to the rock scars. Finish up these and step right at the top to finish after clipping the last bolt of the route on the right. Start 1m right of the tree stump and to the left of a slight, grotty groove.

### 5 The Purple Ladies Versus Godzilla \* 20m ⚡ F6a

*M. Doyle 10.06.11*

Trend diagonally left after clipping the first bolt to well protected, but thin, crux moves moving right at the third bolt. Good holds soon arrive for a relaxing romp to the top. Keeping right has better holds but is off route. Start at the apex of an earth mound.



## RIGHT-HAND

The right-hand slab has 4 short but worthwhile easier routes and features some excellent sound, rough rock. It features a prominent concave bay at mid-height.

### 6 Leo Saw Us Rex

*P. Cubbins, M. Dowsett 13.01.13*

The slab to the left of *Jason and the Aga Nuts* and sharing the same lower-off.

Start by the letter 'K' of the 'KEITH' graffiti and climb up, following the bolts. After the third bolt, head right to the lower-off.

### 7 Jason and the Aga Nuts \*

*M. Doyle 14.06.11*

An intro to the style of climbing on the main slab, this route takes the narrow slab to the left of the concave bay and avoids easier options out right. Start in the middle of the 'KEITH' graffiti.

*Aga nuts are multi-fuel cooker enthusiasts.*

### 8 Siamber Wen

*M. Doyle, M. Burrows 14.06.11*

Head for the left end of the concave bay and following the same line, clip the last bolt of the previous route and finish at that route's lower-off. Start just to the right of the 'KEITH' graffiti.

*Siamber Wen is said to have been the seat of Sir Robt. Pounderling, once constable of the adjacent castle, a knight valiant and prudent, who had one of his eyes knocked out by a gentleman of Wales, in the rough sport of tournament.*

### 9 36 Bolts to Happiness \*

*M. Doyle 19.06.11*

Make for the concave bay by climbing to the left of the first bolt. Climb out of the bay from the centre, up the vague runnel. A worthwhile variation at F6a+ can be climbed by keeping right of all of the bolts.

## DYSERTH WATERFALL CRAG

Rock:	Natural and quarried limestone
Aspect:	South-east / south-west facing, sheltered
Grades:	F5 F8b
Routes:	17
Approach:	10 minutes

#### Conditions:

The south-east face gets the sun early and the south-west face from about 11.30 in the winter. Even in heavy rain the crag remains remarkably dry and climbable (especially the face above the river) with only the middle of the south-west face and some flat holds becoming wet. Coupled with the large overhang to shelter under, it scores as a wet weather venue when other crags may be soaking. There is no seepage.

This lovely little crag, with a delightful aspect, sits on the Afon Ffyddion above Dyserth Waterfall and has two contrasting faces which are south-east and south-west facing. The lower part of the south-east face above the river is quarried, and sports a beefy roof which a batch of stiff test pieces breach. The south-west side has a number of worthwhile easier routes in contrast. The crag is particularly pleasant in the spring when the river level is falling and the air is pungent with wild garlic. It tends to be a sheltered suntrap and climbing should be possible, temperature permitting, throughout the year. The waterfall shop sells drinks, ices and cakes and has a pleasant garden to sit in on the other side of the river by the walls of the medieval waterwheel. There is a decent pub serving grub – Tafarn Newydd – just down the road. Even the car park toilet won 'Loo of the Year' award in 2009. It just doesn't get better than this! A 50m rope is ample for all routes.

Consistent with the other Dyserth crags, Waterfall Crag has been known about by local climbers for many years. Until recently it was regularly used for top-roping some of the more obvious lines on the south-west face. It is not known whether any of those lines had been led but given the loose rock and vegetated state of the crag prior to the burst of development in early 2011, it seems unlikely. The crag was developed by Tony Shelmerdine, Mike and Chris Doyle and Norman Clacher. The developers built a causeway for belaying on the steep side next to the river, using loose rock that had been removed from the routes. This may no longer be there, due to local kids removing the rock to build dams.

## ACCESS

There are no access issues and the crag is not within an SSSI. Please be aware that the immediate area is popular with visitors, many of whom are checking out the waterfall, and that there are houses on the other side of the river, so please keep noise to a minimum and take any litter away in order to avoid future access issues.

## APPROACH

From the A55, come off at Junction 31 to take the A5151 signposted to Prestatyn and Dyserth. After 6 miles, pass through the village of Dyserth and turn right at the lights towards Prestatyn on the B5119. At the bottom of the hill, park in the Dyserth Waterfall car park on the right (free). There are two routes in. The first is along the waterfall path (entrance to the waterfall and path is 50p,

apparently set by the waterfall committee, although this doesn't appear to be rigidly enforced). Follow the path past the waterfall and up the steps between the medieval walls. Wooden steps lead down to a path junction. Turn right and follow the river on a good path to the left. The alternative route is to pass the waterfall shop to a public footpath sign immediately past it. Take this path up steps, past the site of an old mill and, always trending left, to a white cottage. Take the steps which run down the other side of the cottage to a concrete bridge. Cross the bridge and immediately follow the river upstream, past an old boundary marker stone marked "Windsor" (a 19th-century landowning family), to the crag. 10 minutes.

## South-West Face

### 1 Suleiman the Insignificant 10m ⚡ F5

*M. Doyle 05.04.11*

A useful warm-up route which takes the steep pillar immediately left of the sharp arête above the tunnel, on good holds. The fourth bolt is shared with *Diamonds and Pearls*. Starts steeply at the bottom of the broken gully, which it avoids.

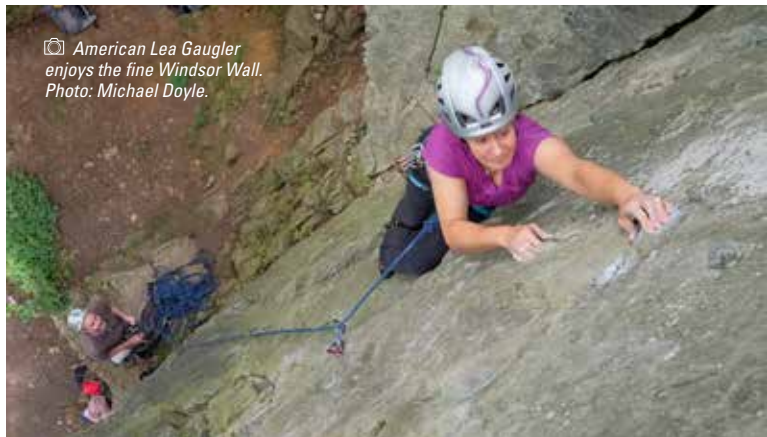
### 2 Diamonds and Pearls 10m ⚡ F5

*N. Clacher 24.02.11*

The crack and arête on the left wall of the big corner. Awkward. Start at the thin crack which has an odd hinge bracket at the bottom.



📷 *Boundary marker. The Windsor family was one of the dominant landowners in the area. Photo: Michael Doyle.*



📷 *American Lea Gaugler enjoys the fine Windsor Wall. Photo: Michael Doyle.*

**3 Custard Corner \***

10m ↻ F5+

*T. Shelmerdine 03.02.11*

Good climbing up the large stepped corner is easier than it looks due to some excellent holds.

**4 Windsor Wall \*\***

10m ↻ F6b

*M. Burrows 05.04.11*

This eliminate sports fine wall climbing with pleasing moves. It takes the centre of the wall to the right of *Custard Corner* to its lower-off, gets harder as you get higher, uses the bolts of *Magnificent Rita* on the right but ignores the crack of that route. Start in the centre of the wall.

**5 Magnificent Rita \***

10m ↻ F5+

*N. Clacher 27.01.11*

The obvious crack-line to the left of the arête has enjoyable steep jug hauling after an awkward entry start. Start on the cleaned ledges below the crack. *A tribute to Norman's mum.*

The next four routes share the same start from the river beach:

**6 North Wales Guidebook Wars \***

14m ↻ F5+

*M. Doyle 16.03.11*

More decent climbing. From the beach take the easy rock up a short groove to a ledge. Use a jutting shelf and pull into the crack on the left. A move or so up this, then head diagonally right and use the sharp slanting crack to easy climbing and the lower-off. Uses the first two bolts of *Rhubarb Wall*.

**7 Men of Dinorwic Slate \***

14m ↻ F5

*M. Doyle 16.03.11*

From the beach take the easy rock up a short groove to a ledge. Access the deep groove on the right and move up this to the lower-offs. Uses the first four bolts of *Rhubarb Wall*.

*Inspired by a film about the hardships of working in the slate quarries.*

**8 Rhubarb Wall \***

13m ↻ F6b

*T. Shelmerdine 31.01.11*

From the beach take the easy rock up a short groove to a ledge. Access the groove of the previous route on the right and make a few moves up this until it is possible to commit to the compact wall. Climb this steeply right, on sharp holds. The original way moved out right thinly, lower down on the wall, to a couple of pockets.

**9 Sweetcorn Man \***

↻ F7b+

*C. Doyle 28.02.14*

Start up the easy rock of *Men of Dinorwic Slate* from the beach and make bouldery moves on pockets to the arête on the right. The difficulty then relents substantially, up the arête to the lower-off.





📷 *Rhubarb Wall gets a stylish ascent from local activist Norman Clacher. Photo: Michael Doyle.*