

# Carneddau

(Mountains of the Cairns)

---

Reprint of a section of the 1993 guidebook to

**Ogwen and Carneddau** by Iwan Arfon Jones

(with Simon Cardy, Geoff Milburn, Andy Newton, Chris Parkin, & Mike Raine)

1993 guide ISBN: 0-901601-52-7

Edited by Ian Smith and Geoff Milburn and typeset by Ian Smith

This reprint prepared for web publishing by John Willson



Published by The Climbers' Club

The 1993 guide is no longer available. A completely new guide to **Ogwen** is in advanced stages of preparation, and publication is scheduled for 2009.

Work is now also under way on a new **Carneddau** guide (which will include Crafnant and Dyffryn Conwy).

The *original* route descriptions text for Carneddau is here being made available to bridge the gap. Please note that this is not a supplement or update – the content is completely unmodified.

If you have any comments on the route descriptions or any new-route information, please forward it immediately: go to the Climbers' Club website, click on the 'Guidebooks in preparation' tab, and follow the instructions.

Good action photos (any format) are also sought. Please submit any you would like to offer for consideration by following the same procedure.

# Contents

---

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Cwm Llafar</b>	<b>5</b>
Ysgolion Duon	5
Llech Ddu	14
Craig y Cwmglas Bach	29
Craig Dafydd	32
<b>Pen yr Ole Wen</b>	<b>34</b>
Craig Braich Ty Du	34
Craig Lloer	44
Craig Ddaear	49
<b>Carnedd Dafydd</b>	<b>51</b>
Carreg Mianog	51
<b>Carnedd Llywelyn</b>	<b>55</b>
Craig yr Ogof	55
Pen Llithrig y Wrach	58
Creigiau Gleision	58
Craig Llethr Gwyn	61
<b>Foel Fras and Foel Grach</b>	<b>62</b>
Craig Eigiau	62
Craig Fawr	63
Craig y Dilyn	63
Castell y Dilyn	64
Craig yr Ysfa	64
<b>Index</b>	<b>91</b>

# Introduction

---

Whosoever ventures into the Carneddau shall certainly realise that they have entered an arena where climbing sometimes takes second place to enjoyment and a feeling for mountains. They shall also find that high crag routes can also be found in North Wales away from Clogwyn Du'r Arddu. Many of the routes are brilliant mountain climbs of high quality and historical value. Indeed these cliffs rank with Lliwedd and Ogwen as being the original areas for the development of rock-climbing in Wales. However, the area's reputation for traditional routes should not mask the fact that there are many excellent modern routes. The atmosphere at some of the crags is stark and intimidating, and has contributed to their lack of development; but it is a part of the climbing and should be savoured as such.

The Carneddau is the largest mountain mass in North Wales and it has a unique and compelling character, comprising undulating mountains and pleasantly secluded cwms. It is a wilderness with few reminders of the twentieth century. The crags are widely scattered and are usually remote from main roads. They are often sufficiently far away to ensure relative peace and are quiet even in the height of summer; a great attraction for those who seek solitude.

There are seven major summits within the Carneddau area. The topography of this range is fairly complex with a greater area above the 900 metre contour than Central Snowdonia. The highest peaks are Carnedd Llywelyn 684 644 and Carnedd Dafydd 663 630. Two long, parallel ridges lead north west, one from each of the Carneddau to form Cwm Llafar, at the head of which are the huge cliffs of Ysgolion Duon and Llech Ddu. Yr Elen 674 651 is part of the northern ridge. Pen yr Ole Wen 656 619 is to the south-west of the two principal summits, and is the only one reasonably close to a road; it throws a spur southwards to Ogwen Cottage, which contains the cliffs of Braich Ty Du. On the opposite side of the mountain is Cwm Lloer with its secluded cliff. To the south east of Carnedd Llywelyn a ridge leads to Pen yr Helgi Du 698 629; on the eastern flank of this ridge is the sprawling mass of Craig yr Ysfa. Pen Llithrig y Wrach 716 624 is the farthest east while Foel Grach 688 658 is the most northerly and remote of the major peaks, and has Craig Cwm Dulyn to its north east. All of the summits are linked by a series of high ridges. Most of the crags are best approached from various points along, or close to, the A5. Some of the more easterly crags can also be reached from the Conwy Valley. Access points will be described in the preamble to each cliff.

In the main, Llech Ddu and Craig yr Ysfa are of the greatest interest. The minor crags, Craig Lloer, Carreg Mianog, Craig yr Ogof and Braich Ty Du are worthy of a few visits. The remainder can probably best be described as acquired tastes. Creigiau Gleision is indeed rather poor while Craig y Dulyn,

## 4 Introduction

the most remote of all the cliffs, is set above a tranquil cwm with a truly black lake and is a desolate place.

Llech Ddu which is north-facing, black and usually wet, can hardly be described as a friendly crag. It is a cliff for the improvement of fortitude and character.

Ysgolion Duon is a huge cliff, with a vast amount of scope for the seekers of adventure. The scale is such that cliffs that would attract attention elsewhere are lost among the maze of buttresses and rock walls staggered on different levels. Much of it is steep, usually extremely wet and with grooves and ledges choked with lush vegetation.

Craig yr Ysfa is also a very large crag, yet almost the antithesis of Ysgolion Duon. The general angle of the rock is low with large areas virtually buried beneath fields of heather. However, the Amphitheatre redeems the cliff with large sweeps of steep rough rock. The Right Wall has some stunning routes, comparable to the best on Cloggy! This apart, only the classic routes *Great Gully* and *Amphitheatre Buttress* are outstanding objectives.

The grading of the routes on these cliffs reflects their traditional style, the determination of the pioneers and the resolve required. Moreover, the climber must allow for the fact that the weather, vegetation, poor rock and lichen can compound the difficulties. Certainly there is no shame in retreat when adverse circumstances dictate. Routes are usually described from left to right, and as free as is possible, or is known. The pegs, which have been placed over the years should be treated with the utmost distrust, even on the more popular climbs. Furthermore, one should not use the mention of pegs either as a belay or a waymark as a measure of their worth. In all cases pegs should be backed up with other forms of protection. It must be stressed that rock-climbing is potentially a dangerous activity, any directions or information contained in this guidebook is acted upon at the reader's own risk. The standard preamble explaining adjectival gradings, technical gradings, stars et cetera can be found in the Ogwen Introduction.

Finally, one must remember that the cliffs of the Carneddau lend themselves to powerful and committing climbing, often in impressive or sombre surroundings; the antithesis of many Ogwen cliffs. The skills developed on such mountain routes, as well as the thrills, will be remembered for many years. The routes are for connoisseurs with a more discerning taste; who may relish the seclusion and bask in the fact that few 'Cafe Heros' could manage the walks in!

# Cwm Llafar

(Valley of Echoes)

---

This classic glaciated valley runs south-east from Bethesda towards the two principal Carneddau summits. The gentle lower reaches contrast well with the rugged head of the cwm which is dominated by huge and impressive cliffs.

# Ysgolion Duon

(The Black Ladders)

OS Ref 670 632

---

This cliff is remote from all roads, and about one and a half hours should be allowed for the walk. By far the least strenuous and most straightforward(!) approach is from Gerlan, OS Ref 634 665, above Bethesda. A narrow surfaced road leads to the uppermost bridge over Afon Llafar to Ty-slatters and the water treatment works, here is the start of the path. However, getting to this point needs the skill of an RAC rally navigator.

On entering Bethesda from the Ogwen Valley take the first turning on the right 626 660; this is Braichmelyn. Continue along the road and over a bridge, then go steeply leftwards to a junction. Turn sharply right and continue along a narrow road to a Post Office and chapel, it is best to park in this vicinity. Parking is very limited further along the road.

Walk along through farmland to where the road drops down to a small bridge across the Afon Caseg. It then rises back up to reach a fork, take the right-hand fork to gain the bridge over Afon Llafar, cross this, then bear left to gain the water treatment works. A stile immediately right of the gate takes one around the water treatment works to a ruined farm and an ancient trackway. If one approaches Bethesda from Bangor, it is still better to reach Gerlan from the Braichmelyn turning; which now becomes the last road on the left before the Ogwen Valley. Otherwise, ask for directions; you can only be sent the wrong way!

Once at the ruined farm, behind the water treatment works, a track leads over an ancient bridge to a stile. Marshy enclosures then give access to open moorland and the mouth of the valley; where, due to old explorations for Manganese, a better track is attained. This follows the south west bank of Afon Llafar to a point beyond Llech Ddu, where it peters out altogether. An ill-defined path then leads into the upper cwm. Boulder scree and water-logged ground provide options leading to the final steep incline. From the south, the best approach is from Glan Llugwy, OS Ref. 683 613. A little to the

west of Carreg Mianog a stream bed is followed on to the ridge. An easy walk then leads up to Cefn Ysgolion Duon.

The eastern ridge is cairned and provides a scrambling descent to the foot of the cliff. Easy descents can also be made at the extreme western limit of the cliffs. Central Gully may be descended, but this is not recommended for inexperienced parties.

Ysgolion Duon is really a whole complex of cliffs, forming an immense cirque below the summit of Carnedd Dafydd. Fortunately, three principal gullies provide good points of reference and the Pyramid Face is easily recognised. The remainder of the cliff is more confusing. The Y-shaped Eastern Gully is obvious; then Central Gully, slanting up to the left, is well left of centre. Western Gully, rising one cave pitch above another is approximately in the centre. The Pyramid Face is defined by Pyramid Gully on the left, and Central Gully on the right. Each of the buttresses is associated with an adjacent gully. There are three buttresses to the west of Western Gully; Western, Mid West and Far West.

Although the Ysgolion Duon cliffs are over 750 feet high and close to three quarters of a mile long, very few continuous lines exist. Tedious approaches and exits detract from the enjoyment of otherwise worthwhile climbs. The structure is of alternate ribs and grooves, the latter invariably choked with luxuriant vegetation encouraged by perpetual drainage. This, combined with the high angle of many buttresses and inaccessibility, accounts for the limited exploration that has taken place. The initial steep black walls and bands of overhangs quickly give way to broad undulating terraces traversing the cliff at various levels. These are known as Ysgolfeinciau (benches or ledges of the Ladder), and are largely responsible for the discontinuity of the climbs. Most routes are escapable, due to the broken character of the crag, yet the 'escapes' seldom prove to be easy.

Apart from the classic gullies and the routes *Flanders*, *Cannon Rib* and *Cannon Ball*, very few climbs can be recommended, most provide a little interest in what is otherwise a long scramble to the cliff top. It seems unlikely that this will ever be a popular rock-climbing crag; north-facing, wet and high on the mountain, it seldom provides comfortable climbing conditions. However, some people revel in these very conditions. They won't be disappointed, as ascents are usually eventful and have a less predictable nature than most; having more of a mountaineering than rock-climbing character. It is not a place for beginners or those who hanker after safe 'sport' climbs; indeed, many seasoned climbers have departed more respectfully than they came. Moreover, it may be wise to carry a selection of pegs and a hammer on an ascent of some of the harder routes as many belays are sometimes difficult to arrange and ancient pegs have rusted away. Here is a truly redoubtable cliff!

Route finding can be a problem, but precise lines are of little consequence here, as the climber can be left to devise one to suit his own abilities and the

time available. With this point in mind some climbs have been described in outline only. The climbs are described from Left to Right as are the buttresses.

**The Eastern Ridge** Moderate (Before 1895)

This somewhat vaguely defines the left-hand edge of Eastern Gully. It is gained above the initial pitch of the gully and provides an ascent or descent.

**Eastern Gully** Moderate (Before 1895)

After an initial waterworn pitch, the main gully is little more than a walk. The right-hand branch is slightly harder and steeper. It is gained via a vegetated rake leading diagonally right from the largest terrace some 250 feet above the steep black rocks at the base of the cliff. It is not particularly obvious.

## The Eastern Buttress

The buttress is situated between the two branches of Eastern Gully. It is broken, but more continuous on the left-hand side overlooking the main gully. Three routes have been made here:

**Pegasus** 190 feet Very Difficult (1947)

A poor climb, artificial in line. Start in the Eastern Gully. About 250 feet above the steep black lower rocks is a distinctive pile of large blocks, fringed with grass, on the left arête (Eastern Ridge) of the gully. A hundred feet higher and on the right of the gully is a slabby buttress. The slabs lead up to, and pass either side of, a large overhang. The lower edge of the slabs is defined by two short ribs.

**1** 30 feet. Climb either rib or the groove between them, to a ledge with flake belays.

**2** 100 feet. Climb a series of slabs, with grassy breaks, to a chimney groove, to the right of a large overhang. Swing out left when the chimney closes and gain a ledge awkwardly.

**3** 60 feet. Step on to a block above the stance, then go right, and follow a grassy groove. Exit right then belay well back.

Variation

**Chimera** 120 feet Difficult (1949)

A rather pointless alternative. May be split. Start from about 40 feet up pitch 2 of the original route, where a grassy rake on the right can be gained. A little rib defines the right-hand edge of the upper slab. Start immediately right of the toe of the rib. Gain a flake on the left, then take a cracked corner and mantelshelf to a boulder garden. Go up blocks and then cracks on the left which lead to the buttress crest.

**Mare's Nest Climb** 190 feet Severe (1947)

A pleasant climb, more accessible than most. Start about 50 feet above the pile of blocks mentioned for *Pegasus*. The largest of the grass terraces leads right beneath the Eastern Buttress. A further 40 feet up the gully bed

a rake leads up diagonally right; a short way up is a fallen block, above is a 20-foot rib with a groove on its right.

**1** 60 feet. Climb the groove and step left, then follow a little ridge to a broad grass ledge. Belay below a slab.

**2** 130 feet. Climb the slab 10 feet from, and parallel to, its left edge. Traverse right where it steepens into a wall, and go up a short vegetated groove, then back left on to a rib. Ascend the rib and a slab above, awkward at first, then continue on better holds to a ledge. Finish easily up a 20-foot block to a pile of rocks.

**Pyramid Gully** 280 feet Very Difficult (1961)

A rather open gully, not easy to protect. It defines the left edge of Pyramid Face. Start from Eastern Gully. Above the initial steep wall a grass terrace is traversed rightwards. Another 100 feet of scrambling then leads into a gully. This entry avoids the uninviting chasm, which provides a direct start and a positive means of identifying the gully from below.

**1** 120 feet. A curving waterworn groove steepens. Climb first on the right, then on the left, to a possible belay. Step on to the right wall above then make a couple of awkward moves back in to the gully bed.

**2** 100 feet. Scramble, then climb a little wall and continue past a flat block. Climb 10 feet of rock and then go easily to the foot of a tower on the right.

**3** 60 feet. Climb a crack near the left-hand edge of the tower, with increasing difficulty. A few more feet then the angle eases. About 200 feet of scrambling and easy rocks lead to the summit.

Variation

**Direct Start** 110 feet Very Severe

This is the obvious chasm below the gully; it is invariably wet, with a dangerously loose exit.

**1a** 100 feet. A broken groove leads to a wide chimney, widening still further into the chasm, which is strenuous and insecure. This gives direct access to pitch 1 above.

## Pyramid Face

This is the most easily identified section of the cliff, bounded on either side by Pyramid and Central Gullies. The base is guarded by jutting overhangs that are black with algae which thrive on perpetual drainage.

**Jacob's Ladder** 470 feet Hard Severe (1935)

Invariably wet and greasy. The route breaks through the initial overhangs impressively, but there is an unfortunate break above where a large grass terrace interrupts. The line is apparently the easiest available, but it is not well defined. Start about 100 feet right of the chasm at the base of Pyramid Gully where there is a large block lying against the crag, about 40 feet above the terrace. A line of overhangs are immediately above the block. Start 25 feet left of the block at a flake belay.

- 1** 50 feet. Two mantelshelves lead to an obvious traverse ledge, which is followed to the right to a corner formed by the block. Climb the corner to the top of the block and move right to belay at the far end.
- 2** 80 feet. 4b. Continue traversing, round a bulge, to a crack. Climb it and awkwardly gain a slab on the right. Go diagonally right up the slab, then traverse left along a line of vegetation beneath an overhang, to a large flake belay.
- 3** 120 feet. Ascend a rake on the left to a broad belt of steep grass which leads to a belay by a small cave.
- 4** 110 feet. Descend left for 30 feet to a large spike. Go over the spike and climb a rib above. Climb the left-hand of two grooves until forced right to grass ledges, which lead to a block belay.
- 5** 50 feet. Directly above the belay leads to a small grass platform. Gain a groove awkwardly and follow it more easily.
- 6** 60 feet. Make an exposed traverse right, over a hanging rib. Move right again and climb a groove and rib beyond to a spike. Thirty feet higher where an obvious traverse leads right into Central Gully, or scrambling direct to the top.

**Hoyland's Route** 500 feet Difficult (1934)

This route follows the fairly well-defined ridge on the left-hand edge of Central Gully. It is gained above the reed rake mentioned for the Gully. The line can be modified almost at will, and if a pitch leads inevitably into the Gully a short traverse left will find another. Higher up, an overhanging tower is best avoided on the right. Higher again, a monolith is passed.

**Central Gully** 500 feet Difficult (1879)

This gully is situated well to the left of the centre of the crag; it is easily identified as the one slanting left and defining the edge of Pyramid Face. The route really comes into its own in winter conditions, and ranks high among snow and ice routes in Wales. All the pitches can be climbed direct but the unpleasant introductory section is best avoided by following a reed rake, over on the right of the main gully line; this is gained via a 10-foot chimney. Only one pitch (60 feet), a tall chimney with a large jammed chockstone, is worthy of detailed description and this can be avoided on the left; it starts some 250 feet up the gully. Climb the back of the chimney to a stance at 30 feet, level with the first chockstone. Back-up and work outwards until an exit can be made above a block. A few moves then lead to the stony gully bed.

## Central Buttress

This is a rather ill-defined area of rock situated high up and to the right of Central Gully. Although it extends to Western Gully, it is broken yet steep, and is interrupted by broad vegetated ledges and barriers of overhangs. Only a very small section, known as Central Gully Wall, has been climbed on and even this is not very inspiring.

The Central Gully Wall is, in fact, a series of ribs, situated close to the gully and about 100 feet above the main chimney pitch. The next three routes all commence high in Central Gully and are very close together. The key to the starts is a short chimney on the right of a large jammed boulder in the bed of the gully, approximately 300 feet from the top. Some 40 feet directly above the short chimney, is a long wedge-shaped block on the right wall. All three routes are artificial in line and somewhat disjointed, but the rock is excellent. Long pitches may be split.

**Jupiter** 220 feet Very Difficult (1949)

Quite sustained and probably the most interesting of the three. Start about 20 feet above the short chimney and directly below the wedge-shaped block, where there is a narrow grass ledge leading horizontally right. Traverse this to a block belay.

**1** 100 feet. Gain a square chimney and climb it to a capstone. Exit right and go up to a grass ledge. Step left awkwardly on to a rock ledge and move along it for a few feet. Go up a rib above, keeping just inside its left edge, to grass. This is followed to a large block belay on the left.

**2** 120 feet. Step from the belay block and climb a rib directly above trending right into a scoop, then scramble up grass. Continue up twin cracks to a steep wall, with an awkward exit to grass. A crack and groove on the left lead to vegetation, then another short groove leads to broken ground.

**Juno** 160 feet Very Difficult (1949)

Difficulties are short lived and some of the rock is loose. Start at the wedge-shaped block.

**1** 100 feet. Squeeze behind the block and continue traversing right across a groove, around a rib to a large detached spike in another groove. Climb a knife-edged rib on the left and then three blocks to a short grass rake trending right. Move left to another rib and go up to a flake on its left. Boldly go up the flake (crux), to a grass platform and low spike belay.

**2** 60 feet. Trend slightly right to a little recess, past loose flakes and blocks to a summit rib. Belays and easy ground.

**Jason** 190 feet Difficult (1950)

This route enjoys more exposure than its neighbours as it emerges on to the face of the buttress. Start as for *Juno*.

**1** 95 feet. Ascend *Juno* for 30 feet then go up a short groove on the right, then a little slab on its right to perched blocks. Continue diagonally right until it is possible to step across the top of a groove. A few feet higher is a stance and belay.

**2** 95 feet. Move left and climb a slabby arête on superb holds, spiralling right to a ledge. Step left across a groove and go up to more broken ground to finish.

★**Flanders** 715 feet Hard Very Severe (1969)

An excellent mountaineering route. Most of the difficulties are concentrated in the first two pitches, but interest is well-maintained. The line follows the

left arête of Western Gully. Start by scrambling up to the foot of Western Gully. Follow the initial easy pitch to the highest of the grass terraces on the left, and traverse it for 30 feet. A shallow groove is above.

**1** 100 feet. 5a. Climb diagonally left for 10 feet before ascending rightwards to gain a shallow groove. Go delicately up the groove, to a small ledge on the edge of a rib. Continue up to a spike belay at the right-hand end of a grass ledge.

**2** 70 feet. 5a. Move left across grass for a few feet then go up into a steep groove trending left. Climb the groove and pull over a roof on good holds. Ascend another groove to a good ledge below a line of overhangs.

**3** 110 feet. 4a. Traverse a few feet left and break through the overhangs trending left. Step left and climb a thin crack in a slab until it is possible to move back right to good holds at the top of a shallow groove. Climb up to a small grass ledge and continue up a groove above to a small platform on the left.

**4** 20 feet. Scramble right through the hole behind a large flake to a good stance and chockstone belays at the foot of a huge groove.

**5** 140 feet. 4a. Climb the groove direct. Finish over broken rock to a fine ledge overlooking the gully

**6** 60 feet. 4a. Step down past a flake on the left, then continue on to the edge of a rib. Climb this direct on good holds to a small ledge.

**7** 30 feet. 5a. Climb the right-hand edge of a smooth wall above, with a delicate finish. Belay around the top of a pinnacle.

**8** 60 feet. 5a. Scramble across a horizontal ridge to the foot of a narrow chimney on the right of the ridge. Climb this to a broad grass terrace.

**9** 25 feet. Walk along the terrace to the foot of a grassy groove left of a short pillar.

**10** 100 feet. 4a. Climb the grassy groove to a small bay, ascend a corner on the left, then a short crack in the final wall. A short scramble along the ridge leads to the summit.

Central Buttress is defined on the right by the most distinctive feature of the cliff, a steep gully with cave pitches one above the other. This is:

**★★★Western Gully** 760 feet Severe (1901)

One of the great Welsh classics. It is sustained at a high standard with an inescapable line, and is more serious than *Great Gully* on Craig yr Ysfa. In less than perfect conditions it will prove harder than its grade. Although the line is very obvious, the lower section is less well-defined. The water course is the best guide.

**1** 250 feet. Eighty feet of unpleasant waterworn grooves lead to grass and the gully bed, which is followed past a couple of short rock walls to the first of the jammed stones. Alternatively a line to the east of the main gully bed, via a little chimney at 60 feet with a jammed stone, leads to the same place.

**2** 130 feet. Pass the chockstone on the right, then move across it and into the gully. Ascend the gully past a smooth section.

- 3** 85 feet. Bridge into the bottom of a narrow chimney. Face left as it narrows, and exit left to a large platform with a belay on the right. Continue to the stony bed of a large mossy cave.
- 4** 40 feet. Either traverse out right, over and behind piles of blocks to the foot of a groove above a large rushy terrace, or climb the cave direct, at Very Severe standard.
- 5** 70 feet. Make an awkward entry into the groove and follow it to a grass platform on the right. Vegetation and rocks on the left then lead to a belay just outside the gully.
- 6** 35 feet. Traverse easily left along a rock ledge to the right-hand side of a large jammed boulder which leads to the floor of another huge cave.
- 7** 50 feet. The crux. A slab on the right provides a clean and difficult pitch to reach scree above. Poor belay immediately, or continue.
- 8** 100 feet. Walk into a little amphitheatre where a chimney on the left provides the best exit. Grooves on the right are less pleasant and more difficult. Scramble up to a boulder bridge, which is taken on the right, or the slim may squeeze through. About 200 feet of scrambling leads to the ridge.

## Western Buttress

To the west of Western Gully there is a vast expanse of rock, which eventually peters out and merges into the mountainside. There are three fairly distinct sections, the first of which is the largest and is known by the above title. Here the terraces are larger and extend right across the cliff at approximately 250 feet above the scree. The routes described commence at this level.

The boundary between this buttress and the next is ill-defined, but the Mid West Buttress has an impressive barrier of jutting overhangs at about one-third height.

**Cannon Ball** 430 feet Hard Very Severe (1973)

About halfway between Western Gully and Mid West Buttress is a tall, broad rib, the most continuous piece of rock hereabouts. When approaching from the west (right), a very distinctive stone 'cannon' protrudes at about two-thirds height. Directly below the 'cannon' are two grooves. A short scramble leads to a grassy ledge below the grooves. Start on the grassy ledge below the right-hand groove.

**1** 150 feet. Scramble up to a ledge beneath the first groove of *Cannon Rib*. Traverse left into the left-hand groove and crack system and follow this past wobbly blocks to a large flat ledge on the right.

**2** 50 feet. From the left-hand end of the ledge, climb up to a small overhang, then traverse left with difficulty to a short groove. Cross this, to a crack which is climbed to easy ground. Belay well back.

**3** 150 feet. Scramble over steep grassy rock (very loose in places). This leads to a corner/groove forming the left-hand side of a prominent rib on the right.

**4** 80 feet. Climb the corner for 20 feet, then the right wall to reach a short chimney above and thus gain a ridge. Scrambling remains.

★★**Cannon Rib** 500 feet Hard Very Severe (1971)

A route of sustained interest. Start as for *Cannon Ball*, below the right-hand of the two grooves.

**1** 150 feet. Follow the groove until it divides, move up right then go back left to reach a crack in the left-hand groove, or continue up the original groove, this leads to a large ledge and spike belays as for *Cannon Ball*.

**2** 80 feet. Traverse right with difficulty on undercuts, (tiny spike runner above a bulge); this leads back to the original groove line, which has been climbed direct. Continue up the groove and across grass to a large spike belay on the right.

**3** 120 feet. Move back left for a few feet, then climb up into a long groove which becomes a flared chimney at half-height, and leads to a long ledge with spike belays.

**4** 150 feet. Move up left across large flakes to a groove in the centre of a rib, then follow it to the top.

## Mid West Buttress

This is a steep, compact crag with jutting overhangs. It is even wetter and more repulsive than its neighbours.

## Far West Buttress

Here there is a change of character, with less drainage and coarse-textured rock. It is the extreme right-hand buttress alone that is of any significance and this is easily distinguished by the sloping terraces which divide it into three tiers. About a third of the way along the base from the left-hand end, is a detached block 'The Turnstile'. Step left off the block to gain a grass ledge, which is traversed for 50 feet, where an awkward break gives access to the lower terrace, from which the next two climbs start.

**Roughcast Wall** 260 feet Severe (1937)

Vegetated, but the proportion of rock and the difficulty increases with height. Start by ascending the lower terrace past a clean little slab to another with a small pinnacle at half-height. Thread belay.

**1** 130 feet. Climb the slab on increasingly steep vegetation, until a platform on the left can be gained. A poorly protected pitch.

**2** 80 feet. Move up on to some blocks, traverse right along a ledge for a few feet, then climb a narrow grassy groove and wide crack behind a pinnacle to its summit. Continue up a slot to a terrace.

**3** 50 feet. Ascend a steep little wall behind the stance, then follow another more delicate wall, to complete the serious climbing. Scrambling remains.

**Roughcast Flutings** 190 feet Very Difficult (1937)

A less worthy route than its companion. Start at the upper end of the oblique terrace, 30 feet beyond the previous climb, by some large detached blocks.

**1** 70 feet. Climb a grassy groove, then traverse slabs on the left to belay on a ledge.

**2** 80 feet. Up a bubbly groove until a delicate traverse can be made right, to a sloping shelf. This leads to another groove which is followed to a grass terrace and large belay.

**3** 40 feet. Move over to the left and climb a steep slab to a large block. Scramble to the summit.

**West End Buttress** Moderate 250 feet (1911)

Well over to the right are the final rocks, gained via a little green col. Follow an obvious line up the edge of the buttress.

## Llech Ddu

(The Black Slab)

OS Ref 666 636

This crag is situated at the northern end of Crib Lem, the ridge running north west into Cwm Llafar from the summit of Carnedd Dafydd.

The most straightforward approach is from the village of Gerlan, OS Ref 634 665, above Bethesda, taking the route as for Ysgolion Duon but striking up the screes to the base of the crag after about one hour. Refer to that section for a detailed description.

Descents can be made to the east or west of the crag; use the nearest, both are fairly long but easy. However, loose scree is potentially a serious hazard to those below and care should be exercised.

Llech Ddu is a magnificent crag of great character, its size and steepness are not immediately apparent. Moreover, there is an unique atmosphere, stark, sombre and rather intimidating. A band of vegetation traverses the cliff at half-height and, in conjunction with steep central grass chutes, tends to exaggerate the discontinuity of the buttresses. Some of the routes are seriously affected by this vegetation.

The crag has a northern aspect and seldom gains advantage from the sun; this, combined with the vegetation and moisture-harboured summit screes, make it slow to dry. The structure is complex and difficult to comprehend on first acquaintance, and as there are relatively few good points of reference it is more than usually important to locate the more obvious features before approaching the crag too closely. The 'skylight' of *Iota* is well to the left and at the summit of a prominent arête; *Skid Row* chimney is obvious at the left-hand end of the Central Wall; *The Great Corner* is approximately in the

centre of this wall; and *The Groove* divides the most continuous buttress, steep and bulging below. Well over to the right on the West Flank is *Y-Chimney*, a forked groove. The West Flank is well-featured with a series of ribs and grooves.

Routes are described from east (left) to west (right). Those which commence at the base are dealt with first, then those from *The Pillar Traverse*. The routes on the upper and lower sections of the cliff can be coupled together to provide continuous climbing. The state of the pegs on this cliff is a cause for concern, they should all be considered as suspect. Many climbers have 'burnt their boats' in reaching a peg only to find it crumbling to dust in front of their eyes. Moreover, they are sometimes used in the text as waymarks, but appear and disappear regularly; they should not therefore be taken to be permanent features. One thing must be borne in mind when climbing on this cliff – all pegs should be backed up!

## East Flank

**Cave Route** 370 feet Moderate (1918)

A diagonal traverse of the upper part of the cliff's east end. To provide a route of some interest, *The Corridor*, a narrow horizontal slot, has been described with the original two pitches. Start at the extreme left-hand end of the cliff, on its east flank a mountain ash tree grows from a short rock wall. On its right is a scree gully. Some 40 feet up on the right is a poised slab which forms the roof of the cave.

**1** 50 feet. Scramble up, and where the true gully line trends left, enter the cave. Exit through a skylight to a platform.

**2** 50 feet. Climb a rib on the right edge, then a little groove where the rock is loose, and on to a broken area of cliff.

**3** 60 feet. *The Corridor* is obvious farther right. Follow the line over to it, past the top of one groove and down into the next. This is the top of *Corridor Gully*. Belays.

**4** 90 feet. Go up the opposite branch of *The Corridor*. It becomes lost in vegetation, but reappears blocked by a boulder. Belays at the foot of the right-hand of two cracks.

**5** 120 feet. Climb either crack. The line is obvious, but there are no real features until a 25-foot chimney leads to the summit.

**Meibion Glyndwr** 130 feet E2 5b (1989)

A line up the buttress left of *Far East Chimney*. Start as for *Far East Chimney* and scramble 30 feet to a belay below the wall proper. Ascend up and rightwards past a horizontal break. Arrange protection then work back leftward to gain the arête. Climb the arête to finish.

**Far East Chimney** 180 feet Difficult (1919)

There is very little clean rock on this climb, and even this can be avoided. An unsatisfactory route. Start below the extreme east end of the crag where a scrappy broken rock buttress drops down into the cwm. On its right is a

scree chute, above which are two gullies. This climb takes the least distinguished left-hand one.

**1** 100 feet. Scramble up vegetation. There are several equally pointless alternatives, all of which manage to avoid the rock. Poor tree belay.

**2** 80 feet. Walk left along the base of a wall, to a point where it can be climbed on small holds to an arête, which is followed to scree at the top. The arête can be taken direct, but this robs the route of its only virtue.

**Corridor Gully** 190 feet Very Difficult (1917)

A virtually inescapable line, but it is rather vegetated. A serious route, especially in wet conditions. Start as for *Far East Chimney*. This is the right-hand of the two gullies at the extreme left-hand end of the cliff. Belay on the right of the gully.

**1** 110 feet. Follow a grassy rake easily left into the gully. Make a move on the left wall, then step right and continue up the gully bed to a short rib on the left which leads to a little slab. Go past a jammed block and belay on another higher up. This pitch can be split.

**2** 20 feet. Pull over the block and scramble up to a good flake belay on the left.

**3** 40 feet. Walk into a corner and climb the left wall on good holds. Exit right up grass to a large spike belay. Here *The Corridor* crosses.

**4** 20 feet. Climb the left-hand branch to the top, or, follow *The Corridor*, as described for *Cave Route*.

**Iota** 260 feet Very Severe (1966)

Two grassy and serious pitches lead to a worthwhile finish in a fine position. Start towards the eastern end where high up on the cliff is a prominent pointed arête with a 'skylight' at its summit. Belay at the front of the buttress, directly below the arête.

**1** 60 feet. 4a. Climb a shallow groove on the right, move left beneath a small overhang, and continue up to a grassy ledge on the left. Good spike belay.

**2** 60 feet. 4a. Move back right on loose flakes then go up, bearing left, to a ledge and large spike belay.

**3** 140 feet. 4c. Climb up, trending left, to a grass ledge. Continue in the same line to gain an obvious groove to the left of an overhang. Climb the groove, keeping right where it forks, to a crack, which is followed to the top. Large chockstone belay well back.

**The Psychlist** 320 feet E2 (2 pts. aid) (1972/1976)

A serious and exposed route; requiring resolve and good ropework; its quality is only marred by the grassy break where *Ribbon Route* crosses. It follows the overhanging buttress to the right of *Iota*. Start at a groove in the left-hand arête at the start of *Ribbon Route*.

**1** 70 feet. 5a. Climb the groove and traverse right 15 feet below the overhang on dubious flakes to a block on the arête. Go straight up to a small stance on a flake.

**2** 80 feet. 4c. Go directly over the roof behind the stance to a chimney, then on to the ridge. Follow this through vegetation to *Ribbon Route* and a belay at the foot of a groove in the Upper Tier.

**3** 130 feet. 5c. Climb the groove, then swing left round the overhang to a steep wall and two thread runners. From the right-hand thread go straight up to a huge roof, peg. Gain a ledge which leads right to a scoop. Continue diagonally, two peg runners and one aid peg, to a sling. Tension from this to a rib on the right. Follow this to a constricted stance in the gully.

**4** 40 feet. 4b. Climb the slab behind and then the gully.

**The Ribbon** 330 feet Severe (1970)

The route is continuously vegetated with the exception of the last pitch. However, it has some merit, as it reaches a comparatively inaccessible section of the crag. Start just to the left of the diagonal rake which gives access to routes on the Central Wall where there is a thin line of vegetation with a small tree at 60 feet. Belay below the tree.

**1** 60 feet. Climb the thin ribbon of vegetation to the tree.

**2** 130 feet. Continue in the same line, trending left, to the top of the buttress. Spike belay below a huge bulging overhang. Sparse protection.

**3** 40 feet. Traverse easily left.

**4** 100 feet. Move up into a recess and turn an overhang on the left. Step right and go up a rib, then into *The Corridor*, exit on the right.

**Primitive Route** 270 feet Moderate (1917)

This route takes a diagonal line across the steep vegetation below the Central Wall. It is not recommended. A rock is embedded just above the path along the foot of the crag. Twenty five feet to its left is the grass-topped bollard of *Cupid's Inspiration*. Farther left is a pyramid-shaped rock, where the climb starts. Climb a tortuous track of vegetation diagonally left to the foot of *Askant Chimney*. Belays may be found.

**Cupid's Inspiration** 260 feet E2 (1968/1987)

Pleasant climbing in good situations. The line completely avoids the copious vegetation on this section of the cliff. Start in the centre of the cliff, from a grass-topped bollard leaning against the rock wall, about 100 feet left of *Central Route*.

**1** 130 feet. 4a. Climb diagonally right on to a slab, which is followed to the bottom of a big open groove, the principal feature on this part of the cliff. Ascend the groove to an obvious exit right, move across a wall and go up to a grass ledge. Belay at the far end.

**2** 130 feet. 5c. Traverse right across a slab and go up to overhangs, step left and continue upwards. The angle eases and a groove is followed. Move right at a bulge to avoid unpleasant vegetation, then go straight up to peg belays on the terrace. Finish either up the final pitches of *Central Route* or reverse *The Pillar Traverse* to the west end of the cliff.

## Variations

**Yr Wydd Grug** 120 feet E2 (1984)  
A direct finish to *Cupid's Inspiration* at about 5b.

**The Straight to the Heart Start** 120 feet E3 5c (1989)  
A direct start to *Cupid's Inspiration*. Start 30 feet right of the grass-topped bollard of the original route. Go straight up for a few feet then trend rightward over a bulge then go up again with a difficult move to gain the big open groove. Continue as for *Cupid's Inspiration* pitch 1.

★★★**Central Route** 420 feet Very Severe (1946)

A good route, which gets easier as it rises. This slight fault can be rectified by including pitch 3 of *Scarface* and pitch 4 of *The Groove*, to give a route of consistent standard and quality. The rock is clean and the situations fine. If the *Scarface* variation is included, the route is one of the best in the Carneddau. Start to the right of the cliff's centre at a prominent light-coloured, open groove with a V-chimney below. Two boulders, lying one below the other are a further guide; the path passes just above them and a few yards to the left is the recess.

**1** 110 feet. 4c. Climb the V-chimney to a large loose spike at 40 feet. Leave the chimney and move left for a few feet. The wall above overhangs and an awkward diagonal traverse right leads to a high step, easier rocks, then a stance and belay. A harder alternative, usually climbed in error, is to follow the line of the initial chimney almost to the stance of *Scarface* at the top. Then traverse left to reach the same stance and belay, as above.

**2** 100 feet. 4b. Climb a slab and corner crack to a recess below a steep wall. The right-hand retaining wall gives way to a short slab with belays at the top.

**3** 30 feet. 4a. The flake crack on the left leads to a field and a large belay at the foot of a chimney on the right.

**4** 90 feet. Easily ascend the chimney, to the Pinnacle.

**5** 90 feet. 4a. Continue up to the left or right of an obvious overhang, or anywhere.

## Variation

★★★**Scarface/The Groove Finish**

**3a** 80 feet. 4b. Climb the diagonal crack on the right (pitch 3 of *Scarface*).

**4a** 60 feet. 4b. Climb a wall on the right (pitch 4 of *The Groove*) then scramble up the bed of the chimney to the Pinnacle. Finish as pitch 5 above.

The next four routes take different facets of the Pinnacle, and terminate at its summit. The Pinnacle is not immediately recognisable as such, when seen in elevation. It is in fact a huge flake separated from the rest of the crag by *Pillar Chimney*. The *Pillar*, is at the right-hand summit of the Pinnacle, best seen from the west. There are two separate summits.

★**Scarface** 450 feet E1 (1967)

The climbing is varied and always interesting, with the hard moves concentrated on the second pitch, but the final few feet of the fourth pitch demand thought. The rock on the initial part of the second pitch requires care. Start 30 feet right of *Central Route* at the base of a clean groove leading right. The second pitch takes a slim groove immediately left of the huge bulging overhang above. Higher up the route goes across the face of the Pinnacle in a superb position.

**1** 110 feet. 5a. Ascend the clean groove, step right and go up a slab to a grassy ledge. Traverse easily left and stride on to a rock projection. Move delicately into a scoop, go diagonally left for a few feet, then move back right into a corner.

**2** 120 feet. 5c. Climb the steep rock immediately left of the corner groove for a few feet, then step into it. Continue until the groove terminates on a sloping ledge. Broken cracks now lead to a grassy ramp. Traverse left into a corner and belay, as for *Central Route*.

**3** 80 feet. 4b. Go up a diagonal crack on the right, and continue until a shallow groove is reached. Follow this to a grassy stance at the top of *The Groove*.

**4** 50 feet. 5a. Climb a wall on the right for a few feet, then step left to a wide crack. Ascend this, with an awkward exit, to a grassy bay and belays in the chimney beyond.

**5** 90 feet. 4a. Scramble up the bed of Pillar Chimney to the top of the Pinnacle and finish as for pitch 5 of *Central Route*. Alternatively, reverse *The Pillar Traverse* to the west end of the crag.

**Marathon** 350 feet E3 (1976)

This route takes a line left of *The Groove*. Start at a grassy bay below a rightward curving groove between *Scarface* and *The Groove*.

**1** 80 feet. 5c. Climb to the groove and follow it until a traverse right leads to a crack. From a small ledge above, step left and climb steep rock to reach a grassy bank. Peg belay below a right-slanting ramp, just right of a bulging overhang.

**2** 70 feet. 5b. Climb the ramp, then move up and left to a groove, which leads to a peg at the end of the traverse on *The Groove*. Traverse left for 20 feet to a grassy stance.

**3** 70 feet. 5a. Climb the depression above the stance for 20 feet, then move left to the arête and follow it to a ledge. Traverse 15 feet left to a stance.

**4** 80 feet. 5a. Climb the steep wall on the left to join and finish up pitch 3 of *Scarface*.

★★★**The Groove** 450 feet E1 (1961)

An excellent climb taking the most obvious feature of the cliff. Interest is sustained, but the difficulties are not great for the grade. Start some 30 yards right of *Central Route*, where a withered and weak Y-shaped tree remains on a terrace at 80 feet. This terrace commences just to the right of

*The Great Arête*, which is to the right of *The Groove*. Directly below the tree is a narrow groove; belay at its base.

**1** 80 feet. 5a. Climb the groove to the grass terrace, rather awkward at about 50 feet.

**2** 60 feet. 5a. Go up the corner behind the tree, turning the first bulge on the right. Take the right wall for a few feet, then step back to a small ledge and peg belays, good nut higher up. When wet a sling may be required for aid at the first bulge.

**3** 70 feet. 5a. Move down left from the stance and traverse delicately down left into *The Groove*. Go up this for 30 feet to an uncomfortable stance.

**4** 100 feet. 5a. Climb the groove direct to a ledge. An excellent pitch.

**5** 50 feet. 4b. Trend right up the wall on the right to a grassy bay and belays in the chimney beyond.

**6** 90 feet. 4a. Finish straight up as for *Central Route*.

★★★ **The Great Arête** 440 feet E4 (1969/1975)

A brilliant and very exposed climb on the edge of nothing, takes the hanging arête between *The Groove* and *Blitzkrieg*. This has much technical bridging and is quite strenuous. Many small wires protect the main pitch. Start as for *The Groove*.

**1** 80 feet. 5a. Pitch 1 of *The Groove*.

**2** 60 feet. 5a. Go up a difficult wall immediately right of the second pitch of *The Groove*, out of balance, into a tiny groove. Then go back left to belay as for *The Groove*. Poorly protected.

**3** 120 feet. 6a. The pitch! Move left for a few feet, then go up to a very thin peg. Trend slightly left and go up with difficulty to a very poor resting place below a small deep hole (difficult to see from below). A series of precarious moves is then made up a groove to the first overhang, (thread, and semi-rest). Move right beneath the overhang to reach a peg and crack above then surmount the overhang. Continue with difficulty into a groove on the right of another overhang and go up to a peg. Ascend the narrowing groove until it is possible to swing right on good holds where the angle eases. Fifteen feet higher is an uncomfortable belay on poor pegs. Better to use these as a runner, and traverse right to a secure belay and good stance on *Blitzkrieg*.

**4** 90 feet. 4c. Follow the left arête in superb position to the top of the Pinnacle

**5** 90 feet. 4a. Finish as for *Central Route*.

★ **Blitzkrieg** 440 feet E1 (1968)

A route of character, taking an intricate line up the steep broken wall right of *The Groove*. It trends left above the principal overhangs and goes up a prominent groove leading to the top of the Pillar. Start 40 feet right of the start of *The Groove*, near a little corner in the lower wall. A few feet to the left of the corner are two grooves which diverge slightly; the less distinct left-hand one is the first objective.

**1** 80 feet. Go easily up a shallow groove to a four foot high flake on the left. From the top of the flake, move up a steep wall and enter a groove, which leads to a large grass terrace. Spike belay above a small tree.

**2** 130 feet. 5a. Ascend diagonally left to an awkward little groove, climb this and step left to a resting place. Continue in the same line for a few feet, then move back right to an overhanging rib. Ascend this to easier grooves above. Keeping to the left of a small vegetated cave, continue on steep rock until it is possible to traverse left for 20 feet above the major overhangs. Small stance and peg belay below the final groove.

**3** 130 feet. 4c. Climb a wall to the groove, then go up it to the top of the Pillar. A fine pitch.

**4** 100 feet. 4a. Finish as for *Central Route*, or reverse *The Pillar Traverse* to the west end of the crag.

**Shrapnel** 220 feet Hard Very Severe (1970)

Takes the more obvious right-hand of the two grooves at the right-hand end of the lower wall, then makes its way through the overhanging laminated flakes above. It is technically reasonable but loose in the upper part. Start as for *Blitzkreig*.

**1** 110 feet. Go easily up a ramp leading right into the groove and continue to the top, with a diversion on to the left wall at mid-height. Large spike belay.

**2** 110 feet. 5a. From the right get on to a big spike and step left into a groove. Move up the slabby left wall then go back right. Continue to loose flakes beneath an overhang and step right on to an exposed arête, then go up into a niche. Climb an overhanging crack above. Rock and vegetation now lead to a block belay on *The Pillar Traverse*.

All the routes that follow (with the exception of *Gytrack*), start from *The Pillar Traverse*, and are described from east (left) to west (right). The part of the crag which lies above the *Traverse*, is divided into three sections. The Central Wall is above the grass chutes in the centre of the crag, and has a prominent terrace traversing below it. To its right and above the Pinnacle there is a fairly broken area of rock which provides exits for routes on the Pinnacle, and one independent climb, *Central Slab* route. Right again is the West Flank.

## Central Wall

This wall is of fairly consistent height and is uniformly steep. It provides a high concentration of hard climbs. The most obvious features are the *Skid Row* chimney on the left, and *The Great Corner* approximately in the centre. The wall steepens left of *Skid Row*, but becomes more vegetated and broken. There are three approaches; a climb on the lower section of the crag, *Cupid's Inspiration* or *Central Route* for example, *The Pillar Traverse* itself, or an obvious, steep diagonal rake leading right up to the foot of *Skid Row*, which is probably the most straightforward, if a little frightening.

**Sirius** 270 feet Very Severe (1976)

On Central Wall is an obvious groove left of *Anubis* and immediately right of the huge bulging overhangs. Start about 70 feet up the vegetated rake, at a good spike on the left.

**1** 120 feet. 4c. Trend leftwards up the lower wall for 40 feet then go straight up until a short traverse right, then a few moves straight up lead to a ledge. Move left and go up a short steep wall to the base of the main groove.

**2** 150 feet. 4b. Follow the groove to a cave than move out left to climb a second gully/groove to spike belays just below the top.

**Anubis** 270 feet Hard Very Severe (1976)

The central groove in the wall left of *Gytrack* leads to a V-groove on the skyline. Start up the vegetated rake to belay directly below the top groove of *Gytrack* at a rock step. An obvious traverse line goes left onto the wall.

**1** 120 feet. 4c. Traverse 30 feet left then step up into a shallow groove, which is followed until the wall can be climbed diagonally rightwards to the base of the main groove. Peg belay 15 feet up this.

**2** 150 feet. 5a. Climb the groove via a ramp to within 10 feet of the roof, then move out to the left edge. Step round and traverse left for 10 feet. Ascend a few feet then go diagonally rightwards to a ledge below the final groove. Surmount some shattered pinnacles and climb a V-groove to finish. No belays.

**Cerebus** 220 feet E2 (1976)

A rather contrived line up the steep arête left of *Gytrack*, giving interesting and exposed climbing. Start as for *Gytrack*.

**1** 80 feet. 5a. Pull over the initial bulge and traverse 40 feet left. Go rightwards up the wall above to the arête and step right to belay in the groove on *Gytrack*.

**2** 140 feet. 5b. Climb the arête to a small overhang, step left and go up shattered cracks in the steep wall to a tiny niche. Move back right to the arête and move up, then go diagonally onto a ledge, which gives access to an exit ramp trending leftwards to the top. Belays 30 feet back.

**Gytrack** 170 feet E1 (1968)

This route takes the line of the curving groove on the wall left of *Askant* and *Skid Row* chimneys. Some loose rock persists but this situation should improve with traffic. It is not high in its grade. Start from the diagonal rake leading to the foot of *Askant Chimney*. There is a peg belay some 60 feet below the chimneys, at the base of a shallow groove trending left.

**1** 150 feet. 5a. Step left and pull strenuously over a bulge into the shallow groove, which is followed to a steeper groove. Climb this, and move left at the top, then go back right above an overhang. Continue to a good ledge and peg belay.

**2** 20 feet. Climb a little corner to the top. Spike belays well back.

**Askant Chimney** 120 feet Difficult (1917)

A fine little chimney. Start by scrambling up the diagonal rake to the terrace of *The Pillar Traverse*. The start of the rake will be found on the right of a little square bay at the left-hand end of the vegetated central area of the crag. The first feature, a chockstone, may be passed either inside or out, and at about 75 feet an excursion on to the left edge is advisable. The capstone can be turned on the left or right. Exit on to scree, where belays are scarce.

**Skid Row** 140 feet Very Severe 4c (1968)

An apposite name! It is usually wet, and is graded for these conditions. A good pitch of mountaineering character. Start at the left-hand end of the terrace, just right of *Askant Chimney*. Climb the chimney direct to a grass ledge. A little slab on the left enables the chimney to be re-entered a few feet higher. Continue to the top.

**★Herostratus** 200 feet E3 (1968/1978)

An impressive wall climb, very exposed and difficult to protect. Start at the left-hand end of the terrace on *The Pillar Traverse*, 20 feet right of *Skid Row*, the obvious chimney.

**1** 80 feet. 5b. Climb a rib for 25 feet, then an obvious diagonal break rightwards, to a grass stance in the centre of the wall. Peg and small spike belay.

**2** 120 feet. 5c. Continue in the same line for a few feet then ascend a broken groove until the wall begins to overhang. Make an awkward move up, sling on a tiny spike, to a peg about two feet above and to the right. Continue up the steep wall and move right to a roof. Pass a peg (on *Endor*), gain a good spike on the left, then climb straight up to finish.

**★Endor** 200 feet E2 (1965/1981)

To the right of the wall of *Herostratus* and some 50 feet left of *The Great Corner* are two offset grooves, one above the other; they each form a diagonal slab facing west. The route is based on the slabs. Start at the highest point on the terrace, slightly left of the lower groove.

**1** 80 feet. 5a. Move diagonally right awkwardly to a peg and continue directly up the groove above. Trend left to an exposed stance and peg belay at the edge of the slab.

**2** 30 feet. 5c. Go up to an overhang and traverse right across a steep wall to the second groove, past pegs. Peg belay.

**3** 90 feet. 5a. Climb the groove by the slab to the roof. Move left on to an exposed arête, and climb a steep wall on very dubious holds, moving right above the roof at the top of the crag.

**★Venom** 200 feet E3 (1 pt. aid) (1966)

A line of roofed grooves immediately left of *The Great Corner*. Most of the loose rock has been removed, but some remains on the first pitch. Interest is well-maintained, and the finish is very exposed. Start by a small tree on the terrace just to the left of *The Great Corner*.

**1** 100 feet. 5b. Climb a shallow groove to a grassy ledge below a sloping overhang. Go up left over shattered rock to a spike on an arête. Ascend directly up a steep wall with increasing difficulty, until it is possible to move right to a ledge. Peg belay immediately below *The Great Corner* finish.

**2** 100 feet. 5c. Climb an obvious groove on the left, past a small overhang and continue to a peg. With aid from the peg gain a rib on the right and move up to a roof. Make a sensational move over the roof and go up a steep crack in the wall above, to finish on the left.

★★★ **The Great Corner** 230 feet E2 (1965)

A classic route. This is the most prominent feature on the Central Wall; a big corner capped by a huge roof. It provides good climbing on sound rock with excellent protection. Start directly below the corner, just left of a pinnacle on the terrace.

**1** 130 feet. 5a. The corner, with steadily increasing difficulty leads to a peg on the right wall. Continue into a niche. Stance and belay a few feet higher, under the roof on the right of a large detached flake.

**2** 100 feet. 5b. Traverse left across a wall on good holds to an arête. Move down five feet and step left into the right-hand of two grooves. Climb this with a hard move where it overhangs. Continue to a small overhang, surmount it and follow a groove to the top.

**Zenith** 150 feet E1 (1968)

This route follows a groove which leads to an impressive double overhang. Unfortunately, it is a natural drainage channel, and is rarely dry. Start from a small pedestal some 30 feet right of *The Great Corner*.

**1** 120 feet. 5b. Climb the obvious groove to the overhang, move left beneath it and go up on to a steep wall. Continue with difficulty to a short broken groove and so to a good sloping ledge.

**2** 30 feet. 4a. From the right-hand end of the ledge, climb an arête to finish. Belay well back.

★ **The Fourth Dimension** 430 feet E5 (1971/1989)

An impressive and sustained girdle traverse of the Central Wall. It is amongst the most serious routes of its kind in Wales. It is difficult to safeguard the route for both leader and second. Start at the left-hand end of the terrace as for *Herostratus*.

**1** 70 feet. 5b. As for pitch 1 of *Herostratus*. A rising traverse right leads to a belay on a ledge in the centre of the wall.

**2** 70 feet. 6a. Move up to a spike below the steepening wall (as for *Herostratus*), then descend rightwards for 10 feet to an arête on *Endor*. Traverse below roofs past two pegs to a stance (*Endor* pitch 2).

**3** 60 feet. 5c. Descend to a large spike. Traverse right across a steep wall for 10 feet, to the lower groove of *Venom*. Climb steeply, trending right, to the stance of *Venom* on the arête. Poor protection.

**4** 100 feet. 5c. Traverse right round the arête, then go across a wall to belay in *The Great Corner*. Climb down the corner for 40 feet, then traverse 30 feet right into a small chimney. Hanging stance.

**5** 90 feet. 5c. Descend 15 feet, to a small ledge. Climb right on to and across a steep wall to an arête. Ascend the arête then move round in to a groove (*Zenith*). Continue to the right, to reach an undercut chimney. Climb this for a few feet, then step right on to a steep slab and make a rising traverse to gain an obvious arête. Once again a hanging stance. Poor protection.

**6** 40 feet. 5c. Step up and left from the belay. Bridge across a groove to a peg high in a small niche. Pass this, then climb a groove above to a ledge, 10 feet of vegetation leads to the top. Belay well back.

The next climb starts at a higher level, above The Pinnacle.

**Central Slab Route** 290 feet Very Difficult (1921)

This climb provides a convenient way off routes which terminate on The Pinnacle and The Pillar. It follows more or less the original line. A good deal of vegetation and some rock. Start from the top of The Pinnacle, (see *The Pillar Traverse* pitch 2).

**1** 30 feet. Step from The Pinnacle on to a wall, then go easily up grass to belay at the foot of a rock rib beneath a big square overhang.

**2** 30 feet. Ascend grass and a little rock just by the rock rib to a belay.

**3** 35 feet. Traverse right to a mossy area and then go on with more exposure to a little niche and chockstone belay beneath an overhang.

**4** 30 feet. Step right on to a slab and climb it on small holds at first, to a grass ledge.

**5** 60 feet. Go up a weakness on the right, or better and harder, a slab. Continue up an easy-angled slab above, and a short wall on the left by some flakes, to a grassy bay beneath a huge quartz-marked overhang.

**6** 80 feet. Go up to the right-hand corner of the overhang and round it awkwardly then go straight up the wall above. Finish on lava 'eggs'.

**7** 25 feet. Easy rock leads to the top.

## West Flank

This is a fairly well-defined section of the crag, bounded on the left by the Pillar Chimney, and ultimately petering out into the hillside on the right. The base is formed by the rising dyke line of *The Pillar Traverse*. It is further identified by its structure of alternate ribs and grooves. The nature of the climbing is slightly less steep and the lines are more obvious than on some other parts of the crag.

**The Pillar Traverse** 820 feet Difficult (1917)

A long and very often exposed expedition, involving vegetation, stones and a little rock. Recommended only to experienced parties. It provides an excellent opportunity to see the topography of the crag. Knowledge of the precise line will be of great assistance when trying to locate other climbs; it also serves as a convenient escape. Start at the west end of the cliff at a terrace of grass at about 60 feet. On its left is a rising dyke line.

**1** 270 feet. Follow the dyke, which is intermittently apparent, to the second of two large belays.

**2** 100 feet. Go up the stony bed of the Pillar Chimney, behind a huge detached flake which forms The Pillar.

**3** 40 feet. Continue to the next semi-detached flake, The Pinnacle.

**4** 90 feet. Descend a chimney beyond The Pinnacle.

**5** 200 feet. A steep undulating grass terrace is traversed to the foot of *Askant Chimney*.

**6** 120 feet. Climb *Askant Chimney*.

**Witterer** 200 feet Hard Very Severe (1970)

The climb takes a crack line to a conspicuous sloping overhang, then traverses beneath it. Start 30 feet right of the *Pillar Chimney* at two large spikes. Immediately right of the right-hand of these is a short sloping groove leading to the crack. Flake belay at the base of the groove.

**1** 70 feet. 5a. Climb the slabby left wall of the groove, round a little overhang to the crack. Continue up the crack and exit right. Go up diagonally right to a stance and belay, below the overhang.

**2** 80 feet. 4c. Traverse diagonally left across a slab beneath the overhang and step awkwardly around the edge into a groove. Climb a bulge above the groove trending left. Traverse left for a few feet, then go straight up pleasantly to belay in a little niche on *Central Slab Route*.

**3** 50 feet. 4b. Move into a short groove on the right and go up through a notch in an overhang. Continue trending slightly right, until a grass rake leads easily to the right. Finish easily up the final section of *Central Slab Route*.

**Wit** 290 feet Hard Severe (1953)

A rather indifferent route apart from the good second pitch. Start 70 feet right of the base of *Pillar Chimney*, and 40 feet right of two large spikes. At the base of a grassy break between two fairly prominent ribs, higher up the dyke than its neighbour *Humour*.

**1** 50 feet. Trend slightly right to a small rock rib, which is followed to a good spike. Move back left into a square-cut corner. Good stance.

**2** 80 feet. Climb the corner and groove above using the slabby wall (possible belay at 30 feet). Continue up the groove, facing left to turn the overhang. Step back right above and belay at the base of a pinnacle.

**3** 70 feet. Pull on to the top of the pinnacle and step across on to a wall. Move right then back left, move right again and go up to grass. Stance and poor belay.

**4** 90 feet. A gentle slab on the left leads to the final section of *Central Slab Route*. Finish right of a big triangular overhang.

★**Humour** 300 feet Very Severe (1953)

A good route, varied and slightly easier than *Central Route*. Start 50 feet left of *Y-Chimney* and a little higher up the dyke, at a recess with an open groove. It has a crack line on either side of it. This route takes the obvious wide crack on the left of the recess.

**1** 70 feet. 4b. Climb the crack and follow grass to a spike belay at the base of the left-hand of two grooves.

**2** 30 feet. 4b. Go up either groove, the right-hand one is harder. Large spike belay and stance on the left.

**3** 80 feet. 4c. From the top of the spike step right, almost into the groove of *Elliw*, then move up awkwardly to gain a crack, which is followed to a flake at 40 feet. Traverse left and climb a superb crack to a belay at the base of a pinnacle. Or move straight up from the flake and climb a wall on excellent holds, trending left to the same belay; somewhat harder.

**4** 80 feet. 4c. Traverse easily right for 20 feet and continue delicately round into a groove, that of *Elliw*, which is followed until an exit can be made to the right (the crux). A grassy ledge leads to a large spike belay.

**5** 40 feet. Climb on in the same line as the groove to reach *Central Slab Route*, or escape easily to the right.

Variation

**The Laughing Finish** 80 feet Severe

A pointless escape.

**4a** 80 feet. Go straight up to the top of the pinnacle, junction with *Wit*. Step on to the steep wall above and climb this, in a few feet the angle eases.

Another variation climbs the wall and crack gained from the traverse on pitch 4 at Very Severe 4b.

★★**Elliw** 290 feet E1 (1965)

An entertaining route up the open, light-coloured groove in the recess left of *Y-Chimney*, a distinctive V-chimney. The rock is clean and the climbing sustained and technically interesting. Start as for *Humour*.

**1** 140 feet. 5b. Enter the groove by a crack and climb directly to an overhanging wall. Follow the groove more awkwardly, move diagonally left and go straight up to an overhang. Poor stance on the left.

**2** 150 feet. 4c. Traverse right and follow the line of a slim groove. Step right at an overlap and scramble to the top of the crag.

★**Commuter's Crack** 310 feet Hard Very Severe (1966)

A good route, following the crack line in the right wall of *Elliw*. Start as for *Humour*.

**1** 90 feet. 5a. Climb a little wall diagonally right to the base of the crack. Pull strenuously over a bulge to get to the crack above. Follow this more easily until the last few moves are made on the left wall. Poor stance, chockstone and spike belay.

**2** 80 feet. 4c. Continue up to the steep crack until it gives way to a groove. Pleasant bridging avoids vegetation in the bed of the groove and leads to a niche. Exit left, step left again round a little arête and go straight up via a good spike (possible belay). Scramble up a runnel of vegetation to a spacious stance and fine spike belays.

**3** 140 feet. 4a. Scramble up a gully on the right and climb a slabby wall on its left. This provides a pleasant and contrasting finish, if artificial.

**The Jester** 200 feet Hard Very Severe (1967)

Between *Elliw* and *Y-Chimney* is a fine arête on the left wall of which lies *Commuter's Crack*. There are two routes on the arête, *Jester* and *Trindod*. *Jester* takes a groove immediately right of the arête, then a crack, finishing up the arête itself, in a good position. Start at the base of the arête.

**1** 70 feet. 5b. Climb a shallow groove just right of the arête with difficulty, until the angle eases and a rib on the right can be followed to a grass ledge. Belay as for *Trindod*.

**2** 40 feet. 4b. Climb a deep crack above to a ledge at 20 feet (as for *Trindod*). Continue up a crack leading back left on to the arête. Good spike belay but poor stance.

**3** 90 feet. 5a. Bridge up over a bulge, treating a large loose pinnacle with due respect. Then climb the arête to a ledge and the top. Scramble to the right to descend.

**Trindod** 230 feet Very Severe (1966)

A series of cracks and grooves in the left arête of *Y-Chimney*. It takes a more obvious line than *Jester* but lacks the exposure. Start as for *Y-Chimney*.

**1** 65 feet. As for *Y-Chimney*.

**2** 45 feet. 4b. Move back into the chimney and move out across the steep left wall, then climb up to grass ledges. Belay.

**3** 40 feet. 4a. Go up to a chimney on the left and step right at 20 feet, then go up grass ledges to a belay.

**4** 80 feet. 4b. Ascend a shallow ramp until it widens into a deep crack. Step left and climb a short wall to the top.

**Y-Chimney** 200 feet Severe (1917)

A good climb, more varied than appearances might suggest. Start about 75 feet up the dyke line of *The Pillar Traverse* at the foot of the obvious chimney/groove.

**1** 65 feet. The chimney is more awkward than it looks until an opportune exit right leads to a platform and pinnacle belay.

**2** 55 feet. From the right-hand end of the platform a tricky little groove is climbed. A series of grassy ledges overlooking the chimney then lead to a good belay.

**3** 80 feet. The easy rib above is followed to the foot of a groove, climb it and exit right. Broken ground leads to the top.

**Y-Chimney Direct** 180 feet Very Severe (1961)

The natural line. Start as for *Y-Chimney*.

**1** 65 feet. 4a. As for *Y-Chimney*.

**2** 115 feet. 4c. Re-enter the chimney which is followed easily for 50 feet. A strenuous bulge then leads to precarious climbing and the top.

**West End** 230 feet Very Severe (1970)

To the right of the obvious chimney/groove of *Y-Chimney* is a light-coloured, water-worn depression. This is the objective. The route is usually wet. Poorly protected, yet technically very reasonable. Start as for

*The Pillar Traverse* on a broad ledge, some 60 feet above the base of the crag. Belay in a short corner with a wide crack in it.

**1** 70 feet. 4a. Climb a wall on the left, move into the crack and pull over a block to a grassy ledge. Traverse right into and across the water-worn depression, then go up a few feet to a large flake belay on the right.

**2** 60 feet. 4b. Continue delicately up a groove, step right and go up a further 10 feet, then diagonally left to a small stance and block belay.

**3** 100 feet. Go easily up a rib behind the stance and into a vegetated groove on the left. Climb this, and exit right at the top. Finish up easy ground to good spike belays.

## Craig y Cwmglas Bach

(Crag of the Little Green Cwm)

OS Ref 662 635

The approaches for this crag are identical to those for Llech Ddu, as it lies in a subsidiary cwm, Cwmglas Bach, higher and to the west. Formerly the crag was known as the 'Crag by Llech Ddu'.

Even by comparison with its neighbours, this is a poor crag; nevertheless, it has 10 routes. A prominent cleft, *The Gully*, divides it into two sections: on the left the steep, narrow Pillar Buttress and on the right the Main Buttress; also steep to half-height but then degenerating into easy-angled ribs. The climbing is varied and, vegetation is certainly prolific. The routes are described from left to right (east to west).

**Snuff** 180 feet Hard Very Severe (1990)

The first pitch is wet, slimy and thoroughly unpleasant, the second starts badly and gets worse, climbing tottering rock. A route for irresolute suicides. Protection is poor, hardly worth bothering with as the rock is unlikely to bear a fall. Approach Pillar Buttress over wet, steep vegetated ground, peg belay below short shallow corner.

**1** 30 feet. 4b. Struggle, slip, fight and slide (upwards a help) in the shallow corner, dislodging slime and moss may uncover holds. Resorting to pulling on runners may thankfully shorten the struggle.

**2** 150 feet. 4c. Move right to the deep, wet chimney which bisects the Pillar's face. Bridge this until it is possible to move left, via grassy ledges, to a tottering pillar perched on the left bounding arête, care required. From the top of the pillar step onto the arête and climb directly up, keeping left to follow the arête. Belay when the rope runs out. Scrambling remains to the top of Pillar Buttress.

**The Gully** 270 feet Severe (1936)

This wet, vegetated cleft separates the two buttresses. It has a very awkward start but relents. Unpleasant and recommended only to gully enthusiasts with a kink for poor belays. Start by scrambling to a point below a mossy rectangular chockstone in the gully.

- 1 20 feet. Bridge up past the chockstone with difficulty.
- 2 100 feet. Climb the right wall for a few feet, then continue up a groove and repulsive green ooze, where a little rock can be found, until the angle eases.
- 3 120 feet. Scramble up the gully bed, of no interest.
- 4 30 feet. Climb an obvious chimney in the centre of the gully. Scrambling remains.

**Covent Garden** 490 feet Difficult (1944)

A poor vegetated route. The backbone of the ridge immediately right of *The Gully* is reached by a rising traverse right, above the steep lower wall. Start in the bed of *The Gully*, 40 feet below the rectangular chockstone of the initial pitch.

- 1 150 feet. Make a rising traverse right across the right wall on a tufty ledge, rakes and go up grassy grooves to a vegetated saddle. Belay on a rib.
- 2 120 feet. Climb the rib direct to the top of a detached block. Step right, cross a little slab and go up to belays on the right. Various grooves on the right and left of the rib provide alternatives.
- 3 100 feet. Scramble up easily to belay 30 feet right of an overhanging nose.
- 4 120 feet. Climb over piled blocks, then scramble to a groove on the right; go up this. Continue via a flaky chimney, right of another overhanging nose, to the summit.

The next four climbs terminate well below the level of the vegetated saddle of *Covent Garden*, but in each case this can be gained by scrambling. The easiest and quickest way off from the saddle is to reverse pitch 1 of this route, or follow it to the summit tediously.

**Low Wall** 180 feet Severe (1949)

Not a worthwhile route, which takes a circuitous line up the steep lower wall on the left of the buttress. The route is forced well to the right by the impending upper section of the wall. Start immediately right of *The Gully*. Approximately 100 feet above the toe of the buttress is an isolated blade of rock protruding from the grass close to the crag. Just to the right is a recess with a line of grass leading out right. Above is a small triangular overhang. Scramble up the grass and a little slab to a block belay.

- 1 65 feet. Strenuously climb a little broken groove just right of the overhang to a heather ledge. Or, traverse right for 15 feet, then move delicately back left to the same place. Step left and follow a line of vegetation diagonally left to a ledge. Move back right and go steeply up rotten flakes to a belay.
- 2 45 feet. Descend for a few feet. Move right awkwardly across a rib to a grassy stance. Go up a little, then traverse right and descend to a triangular recess beyond another rib.
- 3 70 feet. Climb a groove above, taking the right-hand branch at 35 feet to a pleasant ridge. Scrambling leads to the saddle of *Covent Garden*.

**Dead Calm** 130 feet Hard Very Severe (1990)

Start as for *Low Wall*, the route is poorly protected.

**1** 90 feet. 5a. Move right along a wet grassy ramp, until it is possible to move back left below the steep wall. Climb directly up the wall to a small sloping ramp on the right (out of view), peg runner. Climb up left of the peg to a horizontal break, then hand-traverse the break leftwards stepping up to a grass ledge. Belay below a small overhang.

**2** 40 feet. 4b. Take a rising traverse right, below the small overhang and over a bulge. Climb straight up to a shallow corner and traverse right to a rib, belay as for *Smithfield/EEC*.

**EEC** 150 feet Very Severe 4b (1990)

A direct line to the final corner of *Smithfield*, drier than that route. 150 foot ropes will make the belay with a little stretch. Start 20 feet left of *Smithfield* at a small spike belay. Follow a ramp rising leftwards, then climb direct to the final corner of *Smithfield* turning the overhang en route on the left.

Care should be taken with loose rock whilst moving up into the *Smithfield* corner. Peg belay at the top of the corner on the right-hand side of the arête. Poorly protected.

**Smithfield** 210 feet Very Severe (1967)

The Main Buttress has three fairly distinctive sections; on the left a narrow sub-buttress, in the centre a recessed area and on the right a bilberry saddle with a barrier of overhangs above. Start just left of the toe of the sub-buttress.

**1** 80 feet. Scramble up to the right, go round a little arête, and climb a corner, slabby at first but steepening at about 60 feet. After a difficult move, good holds in a crack lead to a stance astride an arête.

**2** 130 feet. Step left from the stance and across a little wall. Go up for 40 feet until a traverse can be made right into a corner. Climb the corner to the top; belay ledge on an arête, junction with *Low Wall*. Scramble to the saddle of *Covent Garden*.

**Billingsgate** 220 feet Very Severe (1966)

Climbs the right-hand side of the sub-buttress, then moves left to the spine of the buttress where it joins *Smithfield* and *Low Wall*. Start a few feet right of the toe of the sub-buttress. Scramble easily up right over rock ledges and vegetation to a ledge at the base of a shallow groove.

**1** 80 feet. Climb the groove and continue in the same line to the level of the first of two prominent bands of overhangs. Move right and belay on a heather terrace.

**2** 70 feet. Make a rising traverse left between the two bands of overhangs, round a little rib and up to a grassy recess belay as for *Low Wall* pitch 2.

**3** 70 feet. Move out diagonally right and follow the spine of the buttress, joining *Low Wall* higher up. Scramble to the *Covent Garden* saddle.

**Petticoat Lane** 280 feet Very Severe (1971)

This route takes the prominent corner between the right-hand section above the bilberry saddle and the recessed central section. It is usually wet

and serious. Start immediately left of the little bilberry saddle abutting on the right-hand side of the crag, at the foot of a waterworn gully/groove.

**1** 110 feet. 4a. Easily go up the gully/groove, keeping to the right. Gain a broad boggy ledge on the bilberry saddle and belay.

**2** 40 feet. 4a. Traverse left on to a slabby rib and climb it diagonally right until it is possible to step right into the corner.

**3** 130 feet. 4c. Climb the corner direct, moving out steeply right at the top. Huge bilberry terrace and poor belay immediately on the left. Scramble 150 feet diagonally left to the vegetated saddle of *Covent Garden*.

**Day-tripper** 220 feet Hard Very Severe (1967)

Above the little bilberry saddle on the right of the Main Buttress is the big barrier of overhangs, with wet slabs leading up to them. This climb breaks through the overhangs on the right and takes a direct line above.

Worthwhile after a bad start. Poorly protected. Start right of the little bilberry saddle, higher up the scree in a little corner leading to the wet slabs.

**1** 100 feet. Go up a little rib and move on to the slabs. Continue easily (there are several lines) to the overhangs and traverse to the right-hand end of them to a small stance.

**2** 90 feet. 5a. Step awkwardly left on to the lip of the overhangs, then go up slightly right to undercuts. Climb a rough flake and step left into a shallow groove. Follow this to a small heather ledge on the right, move back left and continue in the same line to a block belay on a broad grass rake.

**3** 30 feet. 5a. Traverse left on to an arête and climb an awkward flake crack to a bilberry terrace.

**Straight Chimney** 200 feet Severe

This is the obvious chimney on the right of the crag. Belays are scarce.

## Craig Dafydd

OS Ref 664 633

High above and to the west of Llech Ddu is a small cwm, almost directly above Craig y Cwmglas Bach. At the back of the cwm a series of broken buttresses rise to the summit plateau of Carnedd Dafydd. The buttresses are close to 200 feet high in the centre. For those who have a yearning to escape their fellow beings, as yet only a single route awaits. There is scope for further development for those with the determination and the zeal.

**Top Storey** 160 feet Very Severe (1 pt. aid) (1969)

True enough there are not many other places as high as this to climb on in Wales. There are two gullies in the centre of the crag. This route traverses from the left-hand gully to a fault-line in the buttress. Start by traversing across vegetation above the lower rock band to the foot of a very small corner groove.

**1** 50 feet. 4c. Ascend the groove, with a sling for aid at 15 feet, then hand-traverse right on a ledge, and go up a corner crack to a good stance.

**2** 40 feet. 4c. Climb a wide groove by its right-hand edge to a stance just right of a prominent thin rock pinnacle.

**3** 30 feet. 4b. Climb the pinnacle until it is possible to step into a corner. Go up it, then traverse diagonally left to a good stance.

**4** 40 feet. 4b. Easily ascend a wall and crack to the top.

# Pen yr Ole Wen

(Hill of White Light)

---

## Craig Braich Ty Du

(Arm of the Black House)

OS Ref 650 606–651 626

---

This is a series of cliffs on the west flank of Pen yr Ole Wen lying approximately 300 feet above the A5 and extending for three-quarters of a mile north west from Ogwen Cottage and parallel to the road. The structure is extremely complex, with a maze of buttresses and rock walls separated by broad grass and scree-filled gullies, this really is a guidebook writer's nightmare! The previous guidebook sorted out the rather confusing nomenclature and this guide keeps to this clearer format. The buttresses have been numbered from right to left and the climbs, apart from Buttresses 3 and 8, similarly described; as most parties will start from Ogwen Cottage. Once over the Alf Embleton stile faint paths lead up diagonally leftward past three old pill-boxes to the rocks.

The rock strata are such that the crags are generally steep on the Ogwen flank and slabby on the other, with alternate ribs and grooves. In some areas the rock is friable but, if treated with care, should not detract from the climbing.

The area was first explored by Palmer who made 'No extravagant claims... but better climbing... than on the Gribin or the Milestone'. Perhaps he was being economical with the truth! However, Moulam then displayed his characteristic zeal for the obscure and found a number of reasonable routes. Meanwhile, others have shown some interest and a few routes have been added. There is still plenty of rock for many short hard climbs to be developed. The majority of the present routes are very artificial in line, many search for difficulty and comprise a series of short problems. All the really worthwhile climbing is concentrated on Buttresses 3, 7 and 8; apart from these, only *Pinnacle Ridge Route* can be recommended. Generally the buttresses are broken and vegetated. They nevertheless constitute the most easily accessible Carneddau climbing and provide an option for those who have tired of Cwm Idwal's polished routes and hordes of people.

Areas for further exploration may be found farther along and up the hillside towards Bethesda on Clogwyn Castell 649 618, Clogwyn Grugog 648 622 and Clogwyn Twll Du 651 624.

## Ogwen Pinnacle

OS Ref 650 606

This is the obvious, but not true pinnacle above the bridge at Ogwen Cottage. It provides one route and several boulder problems on the very steep right-hand side, including a Joe Brown crack and an unprotected arête, **Saint Laurent** (1982).

**Pont Pen y Benglog Buttress** 200 feet Difficult (1924)

A pleasant route on sound rock, ideal for novices. Many lines of varying standard can be taken. Start just left of an overhanging nose, at the foot of the buttress.

**1** 75 feet. Climb a short crack and move left to slabs. Traverse right to more slabs; ascend these on enormous holds to a platform.

**2** 125 feet. Two short steep walls are surmounted, then scrambling leads to the top.

## Buttress 1

This is the first piece of rock of any climbing significance to the left of the Ogwen Pinnacle. It is small but clean and sound. There is a corner crack leading to an overhang at the front and a steep wall on the right. The left-hand side is slabby. All the principal features have been climbed, between Severe and HVS, but there are no routes worthy of description. It serves well as a landmark, and just to confuse, one lost soul has misguidedly painted a figure 2 onto the rock!

## Buttress 2

Higher up than the previous buttress, it is situated between a vegetated gully on the left and a wide stony gully on the right. The gullies converge to form a broad gully between Buttresses 1 and 3. On the right wall there are some peculiar vertical markings like 'organ pipes'. There is one route.

**Introvert** 150 feet Severe (1950)

A scrappy climb with an awkward finish. Start in the wet vegetated gully on the left, 30 feet above the toe of the buttress.

**1** 70 feet. Step from the belay spike and mantelshelf. Trend right and go up a curved chimney formed by blocks, or over the blocks. Scramble up heather, then a little groove leads to a gnarled tree.

**2** 50 feet. Traverse left on quartz, then go up vegetation to more trees. Belay on the right.

**3** 30 feet. Climb a chimney in an arête, move awkwardly out right around a huge chockstone then go up a crack above.

## Buttress 3

This buttress is easily identified by the broken-down dry-stone wall leading directly up to it. It is larger than the preceding buttresses and is steep and

compact. The cliff can be seen easily from the dry-stone wall, therefore from left to right are:

★**Widdershins** 150 feet Very Severe (1950)

A good route in spite of being blatantly artificial. About 100 feet above the foot of the crag, and on its left, is a stout tree among some piled blocks. Higher, on the buttress flank is a squat holly tree on a ledge. Start at a flake belay below the holly.

**1** 60 feet. 4c. Climb a crack to the tree, then bridge awkwardly up an overhanging crack, large *Friends* useful. Step out left and go easily up a slab to a long heather ledge. Embedded flake belay on the left.

**2** 40 feet. 4c. Step left into a grassy corner, then go up its right edge for five feet and make a long stride across to a crack on the left. Go up and left to the top of a detached flake. Stance and belay in a chimney beyond.

**3** 50 feet. 3a. Easily climb the chimney for 15 feet then step left on to a rectangular grassy platform. Ascend a hard corner to a small grassy bay and a little wall to finish.

★**Ring of Scorpio** 120 feet E5 (1992)

The overhanging crack in the face left of *Georgie Lad*... over strenuous! Start in the gully beneath a shattered niche.

**1** 65 feet. 6a. Climb up over some loose blocks to gain the large spike in the niche. Swing left to gain the crack and follow it to where it fades, step right and finish up the slight groove with difficulty. Belay on a good ledge.

**2** 55 feet. 5b. The crack behind the belay, finish up the slabby arête above to block belays.

**Georgie Lad the Bricklayer** 130 feet E3 (1981)

Although strenuous and difficult, not a very good route. Start below the obvious overhanging groove with a loose block and ivy at its base, down and right of *Widdershins*.

**1** 80 feet. 5c. Climb the friable groove and make a hard exit to a belay on the left.

**2** 50 feet. Climb the wall above and either finish up the arête on the left or the continuation chimney on the right.

A 20-foot cracked block above provides three little problems. The prominent wide chimney on the right at the front of the buttress, directly above the broken down wall, has also been climbed at Difficult standard.

★**Time Served** 60 feet E2 6a (1981)

An entertaining route with a technically difficult but safe crux. It climbs the crack splitting the small neb. Start as for *Apprentice's Route*. Climb the cracks of *Apprentice's Route*, then the steep wall to the roof; jam up this. *Friends* are very useful. It is possible to climb the wide crack to the right behind the tree at about 5b.

**★Apprentice's Route** 100 feet Hard Very Severe (1959)

Still an interesting route. Start just above a subsidiary dry-stone wall on the right of the buttress, at some thin cracks above a small spike. There is a tree on a ledge above.

**1** 50 feet. 4c. Go up the left-hand crack to a sloping ledge, then ascend to the tree, either directly up a groove (5b) or easily on the right, but not as much fun.

**2** 50 feet. Ascend the wide crack to the left of the tree. The original finish fell down during the winter of 1991.

The steep crack to the right of the tree is **Let Your Feet Hang** E2 5b (1981). However, the block that forms the right side of the crack seems to be a prime candidate for joining its brother down on the A5.

**Deasel** 210 feet Very Difficult (1933)

A promising start gives way to scrambling. Start on the right of the buttress at a bay of rocks and heather. On its left is a steep wide crack.

**1** 60 feet. Struggle up the wide crack to a grassy ledge below a chimney. Gain the chimney awkwardly and climb it to a rift.

**2** 150 feet. Climb over rocks on the right, past a perched block, via a narrow cleft to a bollard. Scramble up heather to a short wall and pull over a block to finish.

**Extrovert** 90 feet Very Severe (1957)

Rather pointless. On the right of the bay facing *Deasel's* chimney, is a large block with quartz veins low down. Climb the right edge of the block, then a short V-groove and traverse to a little crack, which leads to a ledge at 40 feet. Continue straight up, stomach-traverse and climb the edge of a block to a slab. Go up another slab overlooking a gully and scramble to finish.

On the left of Buttress 3 is a broken area dotted with trees. Farther left again is another small squat buttress, separated from the next by a wide grass and scree gully. The squat buttress has a tall block on the skyline, with a tree on its right. The gully has a dry-stone wall built across it. Two routes have been made on this buttress, neither of which is good. The line described makes the best of the available rock.

**F Sharp** 130 feet Very Difficult (1951)

Start from the toe of the buttress. Climb a short steep crack to a ledge and a large flake. Step off the flake and follow the nose directly above to broken ground.

**Buttress 4**

This is much higher up than any of the other buttresses. Approaches are best made via the grass and scree gully, with a dry-stone wall built across it, right of Buttress 5, or from the summit of *Pinnacle Ridge Route*. The water-course between Buttresses 5 and 6 is less satisfactory. It is a steep and triangular little

crag; on the right-hand side are steep walls and overhangs. Both the climbs described start on the slabby left side.

**Blue Sunshine** 140 feet E1 (1992)

Start at a slabby groove (10 feet left of the narrow slab that is the start of Joyce).

**1** 95 feet. 5a. Ascend the slab, then ramp, to a steepening, then follow cracks to a ragged overlap. Step left and go up to a ledge. Follow easy slabs to a large block, move left to gain the top of a flake from where a shallow groove and 'crevasse' stance can be reached.

**2** 45 feet. 5b. Climb the obvious steep jamming crack above the stance; a subtle blend of delicate and brutal techniques required.

**Joyce** 140 feet Very Severe (1965)

A nice route with interest. The overhanging walls give way to slabs on the left. On the right-hand side of the slabs is a narrow subsidiary slab with cracked blocks on its right. Start at the foot of the narrow slab.

**1** 70 feet. 4b. Climb the narrow slab, then move right to beneath a little overhang. Step awkwardly right into a broken groove and continue via small ledges to a big flake.

**2** 30 feet. 3b. Move left on to a rib and go up into a 'crevasse'.

**3** 40 feet. 4b. Step across the 'crevasse' and go along a horizontal ridge, then up an obvious smooth groove. Swing out right to finish.

**Tyromancy** 140 feet Hard Very Severe (1992)

A quirky route which starts at the base of a slabby rib up and left of Aaron, spaced protection.

**1** 100 feet. 5a. Climb the rib until a move left gains a clean subsidiary slab. Follow this to an overlap, pull over this and scuttle up the easier upper section to belay at the slim groove of Joyce.

**2** 40 feet. Finish either as for Joyce, or take easy slabs on the left.

**Aaron** 100 feet Difficult (1956)

Start 30 feet higher up the wet gully on the left of the buttress. Scramble up heather to mossy slabs.

**1** 50 feet. Climb the lower of two slabs, then trend right along an obvious line and go up into a 'crevasse'. Stance on Joyce.

**2** 50 feet. Step across and go along the horizontal ridge, as for Joyce. Traverse left to heathery slabs and follow these to the top.

## Buttress 5

This is distinguished by a ridge of prominent pinnacles forming a serrated skyline. It is further identified by a long, forked tongue of rock which descends from the base of the buttress almost to the road, terminating with a small rock wall on the left and a semi-detached block on the right. A Very Difficult route has been made on the left and a Severe on the block. There is obvious scope for other problems. On the main buttress above there are three climbs.

**Gargoyle** 110 feet Severe (1967)

Unsatisfactory. Start 40 feet below the dry-stone wall in the gully on the right of the buttress. A belay block leans away from a little wall. Climb easily straight up a series of steps to an obvious pinnacle summit at 70 feet. Swing right across an overhanging wall to a ledge on an arête then go straight up to a heather ledge. Escape into the gully.

The next route is about 100 feet farther left.

**★★Pinnacle Ridge Route** 330 feet Very Difficult (1950)

A fine route, the lower section is particularly good. Unfortunately there is some easy ground before the final amusing ridge. There are two distinctive ribs, with a stunted oak low down on the right of the left-hand rib. Between the ribs is a bay of broken rock and heather. The climb takes the clean slabby rib on the right; 'P.R.' is marked on the rock.

**1** 130 feet. Climb the slabby rib to an obvious block, then make a high step into a groove on the right, or there is an easy option on the left. The trough above leads to a heather terrace.

**2** 50 feet. Walk up an easy-angled ridge.

**3** 150 feet. Traverse right and climb the ridge above until it peters out; or follow a shallow chimney to a 'totem pole' belay, then take a tower on the left to the crest of the ridge. Good fun.

**Digitalis Direct** 220 feet Very Difficult (1957)

Only slightly better than it looks, but it deteriorates higher up. Start at the base of the left-hand rib, 60 feet left of the previous climb. On the right of the rib is the stunted oak, below which are some large cracked blocks forming the foot of the rib. A short crack leads to a flake edge.

**1** 20 feet. Climb the crack, swing left on to the edge and belay by a small tree.

**2** 90 feet. Go up a slab on the right, step left awkwardly into a groove and continue in the same line to a little wall. Make a long reach to a gorse ledge. Spike belay.

**3** 70 feet. Broken rocks and vegetation lead to an obvious pinnacle. From behind it, step left on to a crest and scramble up to a rock tower.

**4** 40 feet. Take the left edge of the tower. Escape left into the gully.

**Buttress 6**

This is an extensive crag with a watercourse on the right and a large blunt pinnacle on the skyline. The central area is very broken and vegetated. There is a climb on either side of the buttress, neither of which is particularly worthwhile.

**Custodian's Creep** 250 feet Severe (1951)

A series of varied problems, with escape into the gully a tempting option at several points. Start at the extreme right-hand edge of the buttress, immediately left of the water-course, at the foot of the rocks.

**1** 100 feet. Climb a rib then move easily up to a large spike. Go behind it and climb a short wall to an overhanging crack.

**2** 70 feet. Go up the crack to a huge block. Trend right across a gorse terrace, then go up a little chimney to a broad heather ledge.

**3** 30 feet. Traverse right, then move back left up ledges to a block belay. Or, much harder, climb a strenuous thin crack in a short wall direct to the same belay. Poor final pitches.

**4** 30 feet. Ascend a corner to a heather terrace, rather loose.

**5** 20 feet. Climb the right-hand of three breaks, just left of a little tree. Escape into the gully or scramble to a corner crack and climb it.

On the left-hand side of this buttress is a small, partially detached sub-buttress. It is lower and to the right of the gully right of *Decameron Rib*. This little rock wall has numerous overhangs and a stunted oak on a ledge 10 feet from the top.

**Shelf Edge** 90 feet Severe (1960)

Start above some vegetated ledges on the extreme right of the sub-buttress. There is a protruding overhang low down, immediately on its left is an open groove. Climb the groove with difficulty to a tiny ash tree. Move right then left to a shelf beneath a small overhang. Climb out right, up on to a bilberry rake and finish up a wide crack. The route may be continued on the wall above.

## Buttress 7

Two diamond-shaped overhangs with a distinctive corner leading up to them help to identify this buttress. The left flank facing Buttress 8 across the gully, has a series of ribs.

★★**Decameron Rib** 170 feet Very Severe (1955)

A fine route for these crags. Start at the foot of a rib just left of the corner leading to the diamond-shaped overhangs on the left at the front of the buttress.

**1** 70 feet. 4a. Climb a crack splitting the rib to a small tree. Move up left to another tree. Continue up a crack, belay beneath the left-hand overhang. Or, climb the corner direct and move out left just below the larger overhang to the same belay.

**2** 70 feet. 4b. Move right into a bottomless chimney. Climb past a dubious block and continue up a crack, then move right to another crack. Go up it for 15 feet then escape left by a large loose flake. A steep slab leads to a belay.

**3** 30 feet. 4a. Climb up leftwards, then go easily to the top of a prominent pinnacle. Move left and scramble to the top.

Variation

**Boccaccio's Start** 90 feet Severe

A popular variant. Climb the cracked rib right of the corner, stance and belay. Traverse left into the corner and go up it to join the original route.

**Lazy Sunday** 210 feet Hard Very Severe (1981)

An artificial route up the slabs left of the roofs. Start as for *Decameron Rib*.

**1** 70 feet. 4a. *Decameron Rib* Pitch 1.

**2** 70 feet. 5a. Trend up the slab leftwards to the arête. After a thin move up, traverse right to reach oak tree belays.

**3** 60 feet. 4c. Fight the tree to traverse leftwards back to the arête then go up to a crack for protection. Move back right to a wide bottomless chimney then climb this to an exciting exit rightwards.

The vegetated gully with trees left of the previous route has been climbed.

**Another Route** 140 feet Difficult (1927)

A rather unsatisfactory climb making the best of what rock there is immediately left of the vegetated gully. Start 30 feet left of the lowest point of the rib. Climb a slab to a heather terrace and traverse right, then step round an arête to a gorse stance on the edge. Continue up a narrow slab on the right to a perched block, then take a knife edge to a heathery corner. Finish up a chimney on the right.

**Temptation** 130 feet Very Difficult (1960)

Takes a rib with a poised block, that is well-seen from higher up the gully between the buttresses. Start about 50 feet below the level of *Route 1*, on Buttress 8 opposite.

**1** 60 feet. Go straight up the rib to a heather niche. Belay on the left.

**2** 70 feet. Continue up the poised block. Avoid the obvious chimney and take a little corner on the right edge.

**Patience** 130 feet Severe (1960)

An intriguing route. Start at the foot of a rib 40 feet left of *Temptation*.

**1** 70 feet. Go up the rib to the foot of a wide open chimney. Climb it to an exposed stance on another rib to the right.

**2** 60 feet. Move left and climb to a heather ledge. Go straight up a shallow groove on the left of yet another rib, which is climbed. Step left and finish up a steep corner.

**Buttress 8**

This buttress faces Buttress 7, and starts 100 feet higher up the gully. It is smaller and its front is broken and not impressive. The hidden gully wall, however, is steep and clean. It proves to be the best of all the crags, with a high concentration of good little climbs. For convenience the routes are described from left to right along the gully wall.

**Route 1** 140 feet Severe (1927)

An interesting route, which emerges on to easy ground after each pitch. Start at the lowest point of the buttress at a detached pillar with a curved chimney on its right.

**1** 40 feet. Squirm up the curved chimney to the top of a huge flake. Move back on to the main part of the crag and a platform.

**2** 60 feet. Step awkwardly from the top of a pinnacle on to an overhanging wall and climb a little slot. Take a steep slab on the right to a heather ledge, traverse right and belay beneath a huge block on the skyline.

**3** 40 feet. Traverse left along a gangway on the face of the block. Broken rocks and scrambling to finish.

**Pat's Crack (Keep Pullin' Cen)** 75 feet E4 6b (1990)

Start 20 feet right of *Route 1* and five feet right of a dirty corner. Ascend the wall via a mantelshelf move, then traverse left to the top of the corner.

Follow a ramp up leftwards to where a hard move right gains a niche below an obvious finger crack splitting the headwall. Climb the crack to a difficult move past a finger pocket to gain a shallow groove on the right. Follow the groove to a roof where a long stride left allows access to a ledge and huge belay spikes.

**K.C. Route** 75 feet E2 5c (1991)

Start as for *Pat's Crack*. Climb up to the ramp, as above; but continue up the ramp until a move right is possible to gain a fist-sized crack. Follow the crack diagonally rightwards to a hard exit, belay as above.

★**Route 2** 110 feet Severe (1927)

A fine direct line. Start 40 feet right of the chimney of *Route 1*, at the base of some big jammed blocks.

**1** 50 feet. Go steeply over the blocks, then pull into a niche. Climb on to a horizontal 'needle' and step awkwardly out right. Ascend 10 feet to a stance and belay.

**2** 60 feet. Go straight up a steep quartz wall on good holds to a small tree. Move right and continue up the wall, a fine pitch.

★**Cuckoo Groove** 150 feet Hard Very Severe (1960)

An appealing and strenuous route. The main groove is the most prominent feature of the crag. Start about 20 feet right of *Route 2* at a 10-foot bollard.

**1** 50 feet. 4c. Step awkwardly from the bollard into the groove and follow it to ledges on the left.

**2** 50 feet. 4b. Move down and right to a small ledge. Traverse right for a few feet, then go diagonally up to an arête. Swing down and round to a bilberry corner.

**3** 50 feet. 4c. Climb the corner break strenuously, trending left at first. Then pull into and up the final little corner.

Variation

**2a** 50 feet. 5b. A faint groove to the right of the main groove also leads to the arête.

**Gwdihw** 150 feet E2 (1991)

Start as for *Cuckoo Groove*.

**1** 100 feet. 5b. Step awkwardly from the bollard into the groove for 20 feet. Now take the first of two diagonal thin cracks on the right wall of the

groove, with increasing difficulty to the arête. A few feet up the arête brings a good stance.

**2** 50 feet. As for *Cuckoo Groove* pitch 3.

**Alouette** 110 feet Very Severe (1967)

A commendable route. Start 20 feet right of the *Cuckoo Groove* bollard, at cracks leading to elongated blocks.

**1** 70 feet. 4a. Go steeply up over the blocks, then diagonally left across a quartz wall, with a thin move to better holds and the bilberry corner of *Cuckoo Groove*.

**2** 40 feet. 4b. Climb a nasty, strenuous, slanting crack on the right to join the easy finish of *Cluck's Nook*.

**Cluck's Nook** 100 feet Hard Severe 3b (1965)

Gratifying climbing with interest well-maintained. Eighty feet right of *Cuckoo Groove* is a chimney/crack-line with a holly tree above. Start below the chimney and either climb on to a spike and traverse to its base from *Ring Ouzel*, or scramble up vegetation of the left. Go straight up the chimney and cracks, then continue with an easy-angled chimney to a ledge on the left. Move along the ledge then pull over on to easy rocks and the top.

**Ring Ouzel** 120 feet Very Difficult (1960)

A fair climb. Start above another bollard, 90 feet up the gully from the *Cuckoo Groove* bollard – at the foot of a grass runnel.

**1** 90 feet. Climb a steep wall near the left edge on good holds. Step left to a bilberry nook at 70 feet.

**2** 30 feet. Ascend the short corner above, or more easily on the right, followed by scrambling to the top.

**Stone Chat** 110 feet Severe (1960)

Rather artificial and not as good as its neighbours. Start 15 feet right of the previous route. Go up the wall, keeping right of the fault line of *Ring Ouzel*, to the centre of a small bilberry ledge. A steep crack trending right is followed by a short corner. Scrambling remains.

## Buttress 9

This is the final buttress and also the most extensive. It is seen on the skyline from Ogwen Cottage and is several hundred feet in length. Unfortunately it is very vegetated, often wet and discontinuous. In all a dangerous and unattractive crag.

**The Lectern Grooves** 230 feet Difficult (1950)

Frightening, mainly on loose rock! It follows the skyline when seen from Ogwen Cottage. At the right-hand edge of the buttress, about 20 feet above its foot, is an embedded spike. Higher are three holly trees. If you really want to climb it (!) start at the spike. Up broken rocks above the belay, then a little groove leads to a sloping ledge just above the hollies.

Traverse easily left to a holly tree belay. Climb a cracked groove above and exit left. Go over more easy rocks then pass another tree to the 'lectern'. Cautiously go out left to easy ground.

Farther left is a vegetated gully, which has been climbed, then more broken rocks divided by gorse and heather terraces. On the extreme left is a slabby wall with sharp-cut overhangs. At the right edge of the wall the cliff drops back into a black and usually wet recess. Two unsatisfactory routes have been made here. **Primrose** (Difficult), starts at the back of the recess. Climb an overlap, then a ridge is followed via a crack and scrambling. A corner leads to another crack and heather is avoided on the left. **Lining Crack** (Hard Severe), starts on the left of the recess and follows a vague crack-line up overlapping slabs to a slender chimney, the line of which is followed to the top.

Much farther north are two gullies, which are reached by ascending the hillside directly above the eighth Bangor milestone. In defiance of originality they are known as: **Right Gully**, which has a pitch of Difficult standard left of a cascade, which can be avoided farther left, and; **Left Gully**, easier, with one avoidable pitch. Both can provide good winter routes given suitable conditions.

## Craig Lloer

(Crag of the Moon)

OS Ref 661 619

---

This cliff is situated on the south side of the Cwm above Ffynnon Lloer (Spring of the Moon). The cwm has an easterly aspect, but the cliff stays in the sun until mid-afternoon. It has a delightfully secluded flavour despite its apparent proximity to the road; in short, a wonderful place to escape the crowds.

The cliff has an Eastern and a Western Buttress separated by a wide scree-filled amphitheatre. The Eastern Buttress is the short, steep left wall of the amphitheatre, and it offers comparatively few opportunities for routes. A band of strange oviform rock traverses the wall higher up. The other buttress is a fine piece of rock. Approximately pyramid-shaped, it consists of a series of steep ribs separated by grassy grooves which converge towards the top. When approached from the llyn the apparent right-hand edge has a prominent overhanging nose low down. Beyond this, the crag is more broken. A descent of the amphitheatre is the simplest way down, although there is an easy angled but stony gully to the far right of the crag.

Approaches are best made from Glan Dena, at the east end of Llyn Ogwen 668 606; there is ample parking along the main road. A track leads to Tal y Llyn farm. Just before the farm turn up right and walk along a wall to a stile, go over this and then an initially faint path zigzags up the hillside west of Afon Lloer to a stone wall. After the wall, the path eventually leads into the

cwm and so the llyn. The crag is beyond the llyn, as is a small flat area of ground, on which to set up an idyllic campsite for the weekend.

## Eastern Buttress

**Central Route** 150 feet Very Difficult (1911)

This climb follows a rather unpleasant-looking water-worn groove, which is the first feasible weakness in the left side of the amphitheatre left wall. The line is direct and obvious.

**Hhier** 110 feet Very Severe (1960)

A steep interesting route taking the next line of weakness in the amphitheatre left wall. Start from a grassy bay below a knobbly overhang, about 50 feet right of the previous climb.

**1** 50 feet. 4b. Climb a steep wall to the overhang, step right, and swing round a rib with difficulty to a small grassy ledge. Belay on a huge knobbly spike.

**2** 60 feet. 4a. Go straight up, then exit right on to a bilberry runnel, and continue up a rib to the right, then its right edge. Step left to finish.

**Good Egg** 120 feet Hard Very Severe 5a (1976)

Start higher than *Hhier*, and 50 feet to the right at a light-coloured groove below the highest part of the crag. Belay at its base. Step left and climb the groove to a ledge at 30 feet. From its right-hand end go up on suspect holds to an arête. Move back left and go up to a small bilberry ledge. A short corner crack leads right to a large pinnacle. Step right from its top into a short, bottomless groove. A few feet higher easier climbing leads to the top.

**Moonrise** 170 feet Severe (1954)

Quite a good route, although the rock needs some care. It takes the line of least resistance through some impressive terrain. Start 70 feet right of *Hhier*, level with the top of the scree, directly below a huge pinnacle with an undercut base, high on the wall. The pinnacle is better seen from higher up in the amphitheatre.

**1** 80 feet. Ascend a broken groove to shattered blocks. Step out right and go up to grassy ledges. Climb a knobbly wall and a steep crack to a grassy niche and pinnacle belay.

**2** 90 feet. Traverse left across a steep wall to an obvious crack by the pinnacle. Step down and continue traversing for a few feet, then go up to finish.

The wide scree amphitheatre separating the two buttresses has three branches all of which have been climbed, but only the left-hand one provides anything more than scrambling.

## Western Buttress

**The Eastern Arête** 160 feet Difficult (1911)

A pleasant first pitch. Start at the base of a shallow groove, just to the left of the lowest point of the amphitheatre's right retaining wall.

**1** 80 feet. Climb the groove to a large heather platform, then go up to the foot of the next rock.

**2** 80 feet. Continue over the gendarme to an easy ridge and belays. Tedious scrambling above is possible.

On the right of the previous climb is a wide grassy bay with two little gullies. Right of this the true Western Buttress commences.

★★**Kirkus's Route** 280 feet Very Severe (1928)

One of the best routes on the crag, and worthy of its originator. Varied climbing on clean rock. Start immediately right of the bay at an easy sloping chimney.

**1** 90 feet. 3c. Climb the chimney to a platform on the right. Move up right towards a groove, then climb back leftwards to the edge of a slab. Climb it delicately to a heather ledge.

**2** 50 feet. 5a. Surmount a little rib above by an awkward pull, then mantelshelf on to a sloping ledge. Thrutch up the obvious crack to good finishing holds and a thread belay.

**3** 90 feet. 3c. From a heather shelf traverse right to a rib. Climb this, and a little groove that leads back to the top of a square furrow. Bridge up and climb a slab to a large spike belay directly above.

**4** 50 feet. Pleasant scrambling leads to the finish.

Farther right is a large recessed area with three parallel, vegetated grooves commencing from a large grassy ledge at 30 feet. The left-hand and central grooves are fairly continuous, whilst the third is shorter and less obvious.

**First Trinity Groove** 270 feet Very Difficult (1937)

Very vegetated, not well-protected and loose at the top. Just to the right of the chimney of *Kirkus's Route* is a shallow depression with heather ledges. Start on its left below the first groove.

**1** 90 feet. Climb a mossy wall then a square-cut shallow groove to the terrace. Scramble up to the main groove, and go up it for 20 feet. There is a large spike belay on the left, small stance.

**2** 80 feet. Climb grass in the groove, with a diversion on to the right wall higher up, to a ledge and spike belay.

**3** 100 feet. Continue up the right wall of the groove, almost to a sloping overhang. Traverse left to an overhanging block, which is apparently detached. Move round it cautiously and go up a groove above to easy ground.

★**The Rib** 260 feet Severe (1971)

The obvious rib between the *First* and *Second Trinity Grooves* provides delightful climbing superior to both grooves. Start at a detached block leaning against a rib at the lowest point of the buttress.

**1** 80 feet. Climb to the top of the block, then step left into the chimney, where difficult moves lead up to the heather shelf. Scramble to the flake belay on the previous route.

**2** 120 feet. From the bottom of the groove, traverse right on to *The Rib*. Follow it direct, awkward where it steepens, to belay in the right-hand groove.

**3** 50 feet. Move back left on to an arête, go up it, then a little groove to finish.

**Second Trinity Groove** 260 feet Severe (1937)

A fairly disgusting route, not to be commended! Belays and protection are scarce. Start on the right-hand side of the leaning block under the right-hand chimney/crack, at the lowest point of the crag.

**1** 60 feet. Climb a wall trending right, then the short crack with an awkward move on to the terrace. Scramble up heather to the base of the second groove.

**2** 130 feet. Can be split. Go up vegetation in the groove until it steepens. Move left on to *The Rib* for 20 feet, then step back into the groove. Continue more easily to a stance below a small chimney.

**3** 70 feet. Either, go up the chimney then broken rocks and vegetation, or better, trend right up grass and a slab, then go back left and easily to the top.

**Third Trinity Groove** 240 feet Hard Very Severe (1950)

Really just one pitch, very scrappy low down. Start 20 feet right of the blunt rib at the lowest point of the buttress at a shallow stepped groove.

**1** 40 feet. 4a. Ascend the groove to the terrace. Harder than it looks.

**2** 100 feet. Scramble diagonally right up the terrace to a shallow groove.

**3** 100 feet. 5a. Climb the groove awkwardly to a jug on the left, step right and up a mossy little slab to a rib, which leads to an overhanging niche. Exit awkwardly right from the niche to a good grassy ledge, no belay. Step back left and follow a crack-line to the top. Usually dirty, greasy and grassy!

★**Central Ridge** 250 feet Hard Severe (1953)

A good climb with varied problems. A worthy companion to *Kirkus's Route*. The line follows the pinnacled lower ridge, then the centre of a compact wall. Forty feet right of the nose mentioned for the previous route is a grassy break leading up to some large blocks. Start at the foot of an obvious ridge, directly below the blocks.

**1** 100 feet. 3a. Climb over the blocks to a 10 foot-crack in a corner. Ascend the crack, then another shorter one, step out left and follow ledges to a terrace. Blunt spike belay just above.

**2** 50 feet. 3b. Go up a V-groove on the left of the ridge. Move up right behind a huge flake, and from the top of it go up a wall on good holds to a juniper ledge.

**3** 100 feet. 4a. Climb a rib on the right, then traverse 10 feet left on a narrow ledge. Go up steeply to a grassy bay on the right. Enter and continue up a smooth groove with difficulty. Exit left to easy ground.

**Grooved Ridge** 260 feet Difficult

Fairly interesting, taking an obvious narrow ridge. Start down and left of the start of *North Arête* at a slightly recessed slab with a grassy groove on either side. The right-hand groove is taken, below and to the left of a seven foot high block.

**1** 70 feet. Climb the grassy groove to a terrace, then cross it to a fine 'horn' belay.

**2** 90 feet. A slab above is gained as soon as possible from the right. Climb it with a long move on the left to a stance. Follow a groove above to a capstan on the left. A short wall leads to a small grassy cave.

**3** 100 feet. Climb a narrow chimney on the left, then scramble and take any one of three short grooves. A steep bubbly wall leads to the top.

**★North Arête** 220 feet Difficult (1911)

Quite entertaining. It takes the apparent right arête of the cliff, which has a distinctive overhanging nose low down. Start slightly left of the overhanging nose at the left-hand of two chimneys.

**1** 70 feet. Ascend the chimney and exit rightwards. Easy rocks lead to a stance and belay by quartz-marked rocks.

**2** 100 feet. Climb the arête, broken at first. Move left where it steepens, step up onto a slab and move back right to the rib. Grassy ledges and belay a few feet higher.

**3** 50 feet. A crack on the left leads on to the ridge, then go up a groove and easier ridge above.

Right of *North Arête* the buttress becomes more broken and vegetated. Several routes have been made but none can be recommended. The best is described.

**Bivouac Buttress** 220 feet Difficult (1937)

Two hundred feet to the right of the nose of *North Arête*, the steep lower wall terminates with a grassy choked chimney with spikes at its foot. Thirty feet farther right there are some big blocks. Start at the foot of the chimney.

**1** 75 feet. Climb the chimney to a grassy terrace, trend right on to the crest of the buttress and follow it to beneath a nose with a zigzag crack in it.

**2** 45 feet. Move up left to a short chimney with a large chockstone, climb it and exit right.

**3** 100 feet. Go straight up above with decreasing difficulty.

Farther right there are two undistinguished routes of Moderate standard, each starting at an easy break. The buttress ends with an easy-angled stony gully. Right of the gully is a compact slabby little wall of good rock.

**Slab Route II** 150 feet Very Difficult

Quite a pleasing route to finish off the day. Start 15 feet left of the right-hand end of the slab beneath a groove. Climb the shallow groove below the edge, steep at first, curving over leftwards as it rises parallel to the edge.

**Slab Route I** 150 feet Moderate

The edge of the slab is fairly pleasant, and on good rock.

Up and right is a scrappy route.

**Chimney Buttress** 160 feet Difficult (1937)

**1** 50 feet. Start in a slabby corner and climb up to the crest of the ridge.

**2** 50 feet. The chimney is higher up on the left of the buttress. The exit is awkward; then swing up right to the edge.

**3** 60 feet. Cross to a corner on the left. Climb it and move right again to the top.

## Craig Ddaear

(Crag of the Earth)

OS Ref 659 623

---

Across the scree to the right of Craig Lloer lies the recently discovered Craig Ddaear. Never reaching more than 150 feet in height the cliff extends for several hundred yards. The right-hand end is laid back and provides the easier routes, whilst the left-hand end, by contrast, is deceptively steep. Good rock, solitary surroundings, and a south-facing aspect makes a visit worthwhile.

**★Sweating Peat** 80 feet E3 5c (1992)

Start at the arête bounding the left side of the very steepest part of the crag. Hard moves to leave the ground lead up the arête to better holds and a spike runner. Continue slightly left past another spike and swing right to a rest. Follow the short ramp rightwards to a ledge and a large block. Stretch up to gain a good hold on the arête above, swing left to a peg runner and sprint up the flakes past another spike runner to the top. Steep.

**★Surrogate Soils** 100 feet E3 5c (1992)

Start to the right of *Sweating Peat* by an obvious small pinnacle. Step off the pinnacle and climb an easy blocky groove. Step left to gain a left leaning and very innocent-looking left slanting crack. Follow this strenuously to a delicate move onto a blank sloping shelf. An airy step right gains a wide groove to finish.

The crag now drops temporarily in height, past a water course, and becomes less defined. Further down to the right stands a large flat-faced obelisk split by a finger sized crack. The next route begins below the crack.

**Wet Roots** 50 feet Very Severe 5a (1992)

Start in the bay 30 feet right of the water course. Climb the left slanting crack out of the bay and follow the obvious line into a deep groove to finish.

**Moving Moss** 100 feet Severe (1992)

The pinkish wide slab 50 feet left of the obelisk. Climb the cracks in the slab, and a steep flake. Trend left and finish up through some large blocks to easy ground.

**Earth Summit** 150 feet Very Severe 4c (1992)

Start below the obelisk. Avoiding the thin crack step up and follow a flake left to a protruding block on the left. Gain the wide crack above and follow the slab to the ledges (possible belay). Climb the slab above to a left slanting crack. Climb this and the easier slabs above.

**Whole Earth** 30 feet E2 6a (1992)

The thin crack which *Earth Summit* avoids provides a skinny well-protected problem.

**Salt of the Earth** 130 feet Very Severe 5a (1992)

Start at the right-hand side of the crag at its lowest point below a stepped pillar. Climb the short wall to a large grass ledge (it is possible to walk off or start the route from here). Tackle the crack in the next wall above with difficulty and follow the line leftwards. Finish up the groove, or harder, the unprotected wall to the right.

**Mother Earth** 150 feet Difficult (1992)

**1** 80 feet. Start just right of the last route. Climb the cracked bulge, a slab, and a groove to the right of the rib above to belay on good blocks.

**2** 70 feet. Walk back then climb the rib above.

# Carnedd Dafydd

---

## Carreg Mianog

(Angular Cliff)

OS Ref 687 619

---

A steep compact little crag situated on the south-east flank of Carnedd Dafydd. It can be easily seen from the A5, and with the exception of Braich Ty Du is the most accessible of the Carneddau cliffs. The best approach from the main road is to follow the access road to Ffynnon Llugwy as for Craig yr Ysfa to the leat or watercourse which traverses the hillside, and follow this to a footbridge just before Afon Llugwy; then take a direct line to the boulder slopes below the crag, about 30 minutes from the road. **On no account should the private road to the farm at Glan Llugwy be used.** Moreover, the access road serves both the farmer and the Mountain Rescue teams; therefore, **do not park in front of the locked access gate.**

There are two steep buttresses with a rather vegetated central bay. The climbing is usually strenuous and on sound abrasive rock. The routes in the intermediate grades provide the best climbing, whilst some of the recent additions are good. A variety of short walls and boulders in the vicinity are also entertaining. The routes are described from left to right commencing with the West Buttress. In general a fine little crag which receives sunshine most of the day.

★**Zip Wall** 90 feet Hard Severe 4b (1944)

An absorbing climb, with one hard move, on the left-hand side of the West Buttress. There is a small cave at the foot of the buttress. On its left a clean steep arête, then a groove. Start 10 feet left again. Climb the wall trending left. Make a long reach past a bulge to a ledge, step right to a crack then ascend a blunt arête to another ledge, finish up a steep thin crack above.

★**Zip Groove** 100 feet Very Severe 4b

A reasonable route with some good moves. Start at the groove immediately left of the arête mentioned above. Climb the groove easily at first, then more awkwardly to a ledge. Jam up another short groove to a ledge. Ascend a thin crack, as for *Zip Wall*, or, much harder, another crack 20 feet farther left.

★★**The Cracked Arête** 110 feet Very Severe 4b (1945)

Very enjoyable. Start at the foot of the arête left of the cave, on the left-hand side of the buttress. Go straight up a thin edge to a ledge. Step left and climb a pleasant curving crack, then go up and left to another curved crack, a little harder. Finish up the wide crack in a corner at the top of *The Crawl Climb*.

**★Zippo** 115 feet E3 5c (1989)

A steep little number. Start right of *The Cracked Arête* under a line of overlaps slanting up left. Climb the corner for a few feet until it is possible to move left at the overlaps. Some hard moves gain a small foothold on the edge then go up a little corner to the ledge on *The Cracked Arête*. Move down and right to gain the overhanging crack which is followed to the ledge on *The Crawl Climb*. Follow the arête again to a large ledge. Follow the top section of *The Cracked Arête* to finish.

**Moss Wall** 110 feet Severe (1962)

A poor start leads to a good jamming crack. Start in a corner right of the small cave.

**1** 50 feet. Easily ascend the gorse-overhung corner. Continue up a short groove then go left on to a mossy wall and the traverse of *The Crawl Climb*.

**2** 60 feet. Jam a steep crack immediately above, then make a rising traverse around the right arête to finish.

**The Crawl Climb** 160 feet Very Difficult (1944)

A rather circuitous route, which includes a few good moves. Start immediately right of another cave at the front of a little buttress, right of the first cave.

**1** 65 feet. Step from a large block on to a rib above the cave. Climb this, then a steeper rib and groove left of a bilberry chute. Scramble up to a heather shelf on the left.

**2** 70 feet. Continue traversing left, crawling round an airy arête and on to the upper part of *Zip Wall*.

**3** 25 feet. Climb the blunt arête of *Zip Wall*, just left of the stance then traverse right to a large platform. Finish up a wide crack in the corner.

**Crack and Corner** 130 feet Very Difficult (1944)

A reasonable route despite a broken central section. Start 20 feet right of the second cave, at the foot of a steep crack with a rowan tree above.

**1** 80 feet. Ascend the crack! Pull over a bollard on the left to a detached flake. Move up a wide crack, swing on to the flake and go up to a ledge.

**2** 50 feet. Climb a sharp-edged crack into a corner, which is taken direct, or a ledge on the left for an easy finish.

**Redstart** 115 feet E2 (1984)

Steep interesting climbing. Start between *Crack and Corner* and *Central Route*, below a steep wall.

**1** 50 feet. 5c. Climb the wall direct to a ledge and a huge pinnacle belay.

**2** 65 feet. 5b. Move up a short wall to a ledge and then climb the thin crack in the wall left of *Crack and Corner*. Finish via a shallow groove.

**Central Route** 80 feet Very Severe 4b (1958)

A deep groove left of the trees leads to a prominent square-cut overhang with the corner of *Crack and Corner* climb on its left, and the crack taken by this climb above on its right. Start at the foot of the groove. Grope up the vegetation in the groove to a ledge beneath the overhang. Go up the

right wall to gain the crack above the overhang and climb it with difficulty to a large ledge. Finish awkwardly up a steep little wall.

Carreg Mianog Pinnacle is really a perched block just left of the top of Angle Gully. The west side can be climbed via a short traverse and corner.

**Angle Gully** 80 feet Severe (1944)

This very obvious gully is the left-hand limit of East Buttress. Start by scrambling to the bottom of the gully. Climb vegetation and little rock to a cave. Flakes on the left lead to a very steep crack, then boulders with a thread belay beneath. Continue and exit right.

The East Buttress is another attractive section of rock. A wall on the left is interrupted by horizontal ledges, but the central part, which is the highest, has bold features. The right flank is steep but rapidly loses height, and is terminated by a short, yet very obvious chimney.

**Tramline Traverse** 90 feet Very Difficult (1948)

The obvious line from the hollies high on the left of the buttress. Quite pointless!

**Pectoral Wall** 110 feet Hard Very Severe (1971)

A mossy start leads to good rock. Start 20 feet left of *Biceps Wall* directly beneath a ledge full of hollies, left of a 'cannon'.

**1** 60 feet. 4a. Climb a steep wall between two cracks, move right at 20 feet and go up to a terrace. Traverse easily left until directly below a large perched block.

**2** 60 feet. 5a. Climb a shallow groove and move up right to an overhang. Surmount this then trend right and climb a crack on the right of the perched block to the top.

★**Temper** 100 feet E2 (1963/1982)

Good climbing on some steep ground. Start 10 feet left of *Biceps Wall* directly under a 'cannon' on a ledge.

**1** 60 feet. 5b. Climb the wall and crack to a ledge step right then follow the thin crack in the wall to end up just left of the 'cannon'.

**2** 40 feet. 5c. Move up leftwards, easy but prickly, to surmount the overhang direct.

★**Biceps Wall** 100 feet Very Severe (1948)

A good strenuous climb. Start 20 feet left of the edge of the lower wall below the little niche.

**1** 70 feet. 4c. Climb directly up a steep wall awkwardly into the niche.

Move on to a ledge and go up a wall on the right to a grass terrace. From a block step right on to a slab above an overhang, then continue to another grassy ledge with a 'cannon'.

**2** 30 feet. 4c. Fight past a holly tree on the left and go up the right wall of a shallow groove. Or, better, go straight up the wall above the 'cannon'.

**★Funny Bone** 110 feet Very Severe (1959)

Rather devious, but a route with real character and it is at the upper limit of the grade. There are two entertaining mantelshelves. Start below the front of the buttress, in a groove just right of the arête right of *Biceps Wall*.

**1** 30 feet. 3b. Go easily up the slabby right wall of the groove to a ledge and thread belay.

**2** 30 feet. 4c. Move up right, then hand-traverse on a poor edge and mantelshelf on to a ledge. Belay on the 'cannon' of *Biceps Wall*.

**3** 50 feet. 4c. Step back right and mantelshelf precariously into a grassy niche. Step right again and go up a little groove to a ledge. Layback into a wide crack above and continue to the top.

**Funny Bone Variation** 50 feet E2 (1982)

**3a** 50 feet. 5b. From the mantelshelf on pitch 3 climb an obvious leftwards-curving flake crack and finish over a small roof.

**Knee Cap** 80 feet Very Severe (1959)

Pleasant climbing. Start by scrambling up broken rocks and vegetation to below a greenish central groove at the front of the buttress (the most prominent feature).

**1** 45 feet. 4c. Go straight up to an overhang, then gain a ledge above and to the left. Bridge up the groove to another ledge.

**2** 35 feet. 4b. The steep flake crack above leads to another ledge. Step right and pull over a little wall.

**Mitre** 80 feet Very Severe 4b (1950)

Not very good. Start at a large spike below a tree on the right of the buttress. Move left on to a large ledge, then climb cracks to some grassy ledges. Finish up a steep broken groove on the right. Awkward.

**Jane (If she doesn't mind)** 70 feet Severe (1950)

Below and to the right of the buttress, is a short wall at right-angles to the main section. On its left is a conspicuous bracken ledge with small trees. Start at the base of the wall. Pull onto a little rib and scramble across the bracken ledge to a corner. Climb the corner, then the right wall to a ledge on the right arête. Move right on to another arête and so to the top of the cliff.

**Right Chimney** Moderate (1940)

An amusing chimney well to the right approached over broken rocks. Face right.

**Upper Tier**

At the back of the main cliff is a smaller upper tier. On closer inspection a 60 foot pinnacle is revealed in the middle of the tier.

**Pinnaclissimo** 60 feet Severe (1990)

Entertaining. The climbing is about Very Difficult, the jump isn't. Start at the back (East) of the pinnacle. Climb up on to the saddle, continue *à cheval* to a step left to gain the summit. Stand up, take a deep breath and jump to the safety (!) of the heather ledge opposite.

# Carnedd Llywelyn

---

## Craig yr Ogof

(Cliff of the Cave)

OS Ref 687 634

---

Originally, the cliff was inaccurately known as Craig y Tri Marchog (Cliff of Three Knights), hence the names of the three original routes. Then the cliff was named Craig Eryl Farchog (Cliff of Eryl the Knight) after the bwch above. It now has its correct name; hopefully! The crag lies in the cwm to the north west of Ffynnon Llugwy and is approached by traversing hummocky moraine from the path to Craig yr Ysfa. About 40 minutes from the road.

At a distance the crag appears slabby, but this proves to be an illusion as it is very steep in places with some excellent rock. Most of the climbing is situated on the roughly triangular buttress to the left. The first obvious feature is the large overhang on the far left of the cliff. To its right is a bottomless groove and a steep lower wall with a small pinnacle at its right-hand end; the start of *Gawain*. Above this wall are a series of ramps, cracks and walls. Farther right is a larger pinnacle, in fact a huge detached flake, with a steep arête to the left, a vertical crack on its front face and a vegetated slab to the right. Farther to the right of the slab is a final slanting buttress with the magnetic offwidth chimney of *Morgan La Faye*. The easiest descent is above this final buttress.

The cliff has a pleasant sunny aspect, in fact the sun remains on the face until late afternoon. This factor, coupled with good rock and an air of isolation, except for a few mountain ponies, make this crag worth a visit.

### **Llywelyn Ein Llyw Olaf** 200 feet E1 (1989)

A varied route with an intimidating start. Start on the left directly beneath the chockstone in the chimney.

**1** 60 feet. 5b. Climb straight up the clean area of slab. Boldly pull through the overlap then move left and up over the chockstone.

**2** 40 feet. 5a. The wide chimney continuation.

**3** 100 feet. 4c. Take the breezy arête over to the left, a complete contrast in two stages.

### ★**Pentangle** 160 feet E2 (1989)

The pod-shaped groove right of the chimney. Short but exciting due to the surprising steepness. Start at the foot of the overhung chimney crack.

**1** 100 feet. 5c. A steep but awkward break gives access to the groove from the left. Ascend the groove until barred by an overhang, then swing across

rightwards to reach a wide crack leading to the top of the large detached flake.

**2** 60 feet. 4a. Finish up pitch 3 of *Gawain*.

★★**Broadsword** 150 feet E2 (1989)

A very direct way up the central area, perhaps the most satisfying route on the crag. Start at the poised lozenge-shaped rock, an obvious feature on the low terrace.

**1** 70 feet. 5b. Ascend the hanging left edge to gain the point then hand-traverse the diagonal quartz crack to a bay. Climb the corner forcing its cap to the right.

**2** 40 feet. 5c. Delicately now on pockets in the arête ahead. Small threads.

**3** 40 feet. 5b. Power up the big layback crack in the headwall.

**Gawain** 150 feet Very Severe (1943)

A wandering route wending its way through some steep rock. Just left of the lowest point of the buttress, walk up to the left, then traverse easily back right through ferns to a corner behind a pinnacle boulder.

**1** 40 feet. 5a. From the top of the pinnacle boulder, make a long awkward stride left on to a sloping ledge or layback into the corner, harder, and go up to a vegetated ledge, then take an easy crack to rowan trees. Small wires protect the start.

**2** 50 feet. 3b. Traverse left along a ledge, above a crevasse, then go up a short chimney to belay on top of a large semi-detached flake.

**3** 60 feet. 4a. Move right and go up a steep little wall, then climb leftwards up an easy mossy slab to a large bilberry terrace. Go back right to easy ground.

**Launcelot** 130 feet Very Difficult (1949)

A scrappy route. Start below the pinnacle boulder of *Gawain*.

**1** 40 feet. Go leftwards up an easy slab then move up and traverse right to a corner behind the boulder.

**2** 40 feet. Squeeze right behind the pinnacle boulder then go up a thrutchy chimney, junction with *Mordred*.

**3** 50 feet. Traverse right for a few feet, then go up a steep mossy wall to a groove and broken rocks.

★**Gawain Direct** 190 feet E2 (1969/1990)

Much better than the original route, it provides an enjoyable and absorbing way up the cliff. Start at the foot of the lower tier.

**1** 50 feet. 5c. Climb the overhanging corner and take a quartz ramp to the top of the pinnacle boulder.

**2** 50 feet. 5a. The mossy V-groove (pitch 1 *Gawain*), then climb the rightwards-sloping ramp to the foot of the open central corner.

**3** 50 feet. 5c. Follow the big slanting corner, past an awkward bulge.

**4** 40 feet. 5b. The last pitch of *Broadsword*, which seems more appropriate than the original wide crack on the right.

★★**Gwynhyfryd** 150 feet E4 (1990)

Something of a test-piece. A leaning arête that reaches down to the very toe of the crag.

**1** 90 feet. 6b. Scale the initial sharp section of the arête then gain the sloping perch on the right in as dignified a manner as possible. Now the round edge is hard for a step before relenting.

**2** 20 feet. 4a. Go diagonally left across the slab to rowan tree.

**3** 40 feet. 5c. The thin crack and steep groove returning to the crack complete the climb.

★★**Cadwaladr** 140 feet E3 (1989)

Right of the arête a long slim crack runs up the face. Start below the crack.

**1** 80 feet. 6a. An overlap in the damp recess gives a trying start and the crack is quite strenuous and reachy. Where it merges with the edge step right and climb straight up a steep wall and a slab.

**2** 60 feet. 5b. Continue up the slab and dark groove above to finish.

**Mordred** 130 feet Difficult (1947)

To the right is a tree-filled crack; farther right is a grassy recess with another crack filled with loose flakes and blocks. Climb the crack to a pinnacle, step left and go up a wall. Possible belay by rowans on the left. Traverse right on good holds, across vegetation and a little slab. Block belay on the edge.

A Girdle Traverse of Difficult standard takes the first half of *Mordred*, then follows a line of huge flakes to an easy exit on the left of the cliff. The line is obvious.

To the right of the bay is a slabby buttress with a steep slanting face. Set in the face is an offwidth leading up to a groove.

**Meillionydd** 100 feet Hard Very Severe 5b (1990)

A short corner and ramp below the gash of *Morgan La Faye*. Start below the corner. Step into the corner and climb the ramp. Where this steepens pull over rightwards to good holds. Finish on the open rib above.

★★**Morgan La Faye** 100 feet E3 5c (1990)

A fine example of its genre, and a real bitch if not treated properly! Start at a slab under the bottom end of the offwidth chimney. Climb directly to the base of the sloping chimney, squirm, or otherwise, up this to reach the V-groove. Undercut blindly round the overhang to the left then follow the open groove to the top. *Friend* runners would be useful.

**Clustfeinydd** 100 feet E2 5c (1990)

A steep start leads to pleasant slabs. Start at a ledge under a steep bubbly wall to the right of *Morgan La Faye*. Climb the wall on pockets to a small ledge, surmount the bulge above and sidle up the slab diagonally leftwards.

## Pen Llithrig y Wrach

OS Ref 717 617

Translates literally into Slippery Head of the Witch; probably because the word Grach (witch) has been misused. Crach (poor or barren ground) is perhaps the correct word; however, the former is much more fun!

High above the head of Llyn Cowlyd, on the south-east ridge of the mountain, this steep compact little outcrop juts from the hillside. Only 70 feet high, it gives an impression of greater stature. Two routes have been made and there is obvious scope for harder problems on somewhat loose rock. Approaches are as for Creigiau Gleision, but it seems hardly worth the effort.

**Staircase**, 60 foot, Difficult, follows a series of steps on the left-hand arête, and **Puffin**, 70 feet, Very Difficult, takes a scoop near the right-hand side, starting on its left.

## Creigiau Gleision

(The Verdant Crags)

OS Ref 727 615 – 738 628

This extensive complex of crags stretches across the hillside for almost a mile above Llyn Cowlyd and is opposite Pen Llithrig y Wrach.

The approach from the Ogwen valley is via a boggy, ill-defined footpath from Tal y Waen OS Ref 717 594 to the head of Llyn Cowlyd. An alternative approach is from Trefriw in the Conwy valley; a long, gated road leads almost to the Cowlyd dam. Although not immediately apparent, there is a good low-level track traversing the south-east bank of the llyn. It is only from this track that it is practicable to locate the crags. Once among the maze of buttresses, scree slopes and steep heather it is very easy to get hopelessly confused.

Eight routes are described on four widely spaced buttresses. The broken and vegetated nature of the climbs, coupled with their remoteness make a visit of questionable value. For ease of identification the crags have been divided into four groups of buttresses, which are described from right to left. The routes are similarly described with the exception of the Central Group.

### Southern Group

This is the most extensive section, over a quarter of a mile in length. On the left is a series of clean-cut little buttresses leading to Castle Buttress, larger, square and also clean. A column of blocks some 40 feet high, leans against it on the right, and on the left-hand side is a sharp-cut overhang.

**Anvil Cracks** 140 feet Severe (1931)

A fine little route on sound abrasive rock. Start on a grassy shelf, left of the column of blocks, below an obvious crack. Just to the right is the 'anvil', a squat block with a spike.

**1** 70 feet. Ascend the crack, past a platform to a ledge. Move left to another crack and layback. Or, take a mossy slab via a pointed flake, harder and less pleasant, to the same heather stance. Awkward thread belay low down.

**2** 30 feet. Go up a V-groove on the left and walk to a belay in a corner.

**3** 40 feet. Climb the obvious bowed-Y cracks to finish.

Climbs of about Difficult standard have been made on the crags either side of Castle Buttress, but they are undistinguished. The Southern Group continues, becoming increasingly broken and vegetated, although higher.

A quartz-flecked scree chute, with a quartz crag at its head, is the next easily recognised feature. Both the Central and Northern Groups are best located from this landmark as it forms the boundary between them.

**Central Group**

Only two buttresses are of climbing interest, the routes are described from left to right. Immediately right of the quartz-flecked scree chute is a double buttress, which is somewhat larger and more continuous than others hereabouts. It is divided by a deep cavern. Some 40 feet below and to the left of the cavern is a little inset slab, on the right edge of the left-hand section of the buttress:

**Bird's Wing Buttress** 180 feet Severe (1937)

Start at the inset slab.

**1** 100 feet. Ascend the slab, then move right and climb a pocketed wall to a ledge and flake thread belay on the left.

**2** 80 feet. Go straight up over a small fallen block and follow a series of broken grooves to the top.

Variation

A much harder initial pitch has been climbed, starting up a short steep wall, 40 feet to the left, and trending diagonally right to the same stance.

**Trident Route** 170 feet Severe (1937)

Takes a groove from the deep cavern. Start in the cavern.

**1** 60 feet. Follow a gully and chimney to a grassy stance.

**2** 60 feet. Traverse right and climb a steep slab just inside the right edge, or, the slab direct leads to the same stance.

**3** 50 feet. Climb a rib or loose gully to the top.

Well to the right of the cavern and at a higher level, a wet rock gully defines the right edge of the buttress.

**Black Chimney** 170 feet Difficult (1937)

A poor climb. Start by scrambling to the foot of the gully.

**1** 102 feet. Follow an easy rib then a chimney. Continue up an easy-angled gully to a spike belay.

**2** 50 feet. Climb an obvious groove, awkward at the top, or, take the left wall after 20 feet.

About 100 yards to the right, beyond an area of broken rocks divided by wide vegetated gullies, is a buttress at the back of an amphitheatre. It is of fairly uniform height with a narrow slab to the left of centre.

**Amphitheatre Slab** 150 feet Hard Severe (1937)

The grade is for the line described, but there are several alternatives. The original route avoided both difficulty and interest by skirting the steep upper section on the left. Pleasant climbing on sound, abrasive rock. Start at the foot of two thin cracks at the lowest point of the narrow slab.

**1** 70 feet. 3b. Climb between the cracks and continue in the same line to a heather patch and belay.

**2** 80 feet. 4a. Go up for a few feet, then make a delicate rising traverse right, almost to a grassy ledge. Climb an awkward little groove and move back left to a small ledge. Diagonally right up a short wall, spike belay a few feet farther back.

## Northern Group

On the left of the quartz-flecked scree chute is a two-tier buttress, and on its left a small scree-floored amphitheatre with a prominent quartz band traversing the back wall. On the lower tier is:

**Autumn Buttress** 140 feet Very Difficult (1937)

At the right-hand end of the buttress, a shallow-angled shaley rib extends to a lower level than the sound rock. Immediately left of the rib, a little scree runnel leads up to the foot of the crag. Start here.

**1** 90 feet. Climb broken slabs to a heather ledge. Continue over loose spikes and mantelshelf into a V-groove left of a steep nose. Go up the groove and exit right or straight up. Belay high on the left by loose blocks.

**2** 50 feet. Cautiously pass the blocks into a groove on the left. A rib on the right leads to a platform, from which a groove in the left wall is followed to the heather backbone of the ridge.

**Band Stand** 140 feet Severe (1964)

A poor climb with much scrambling. It takes a broken rib with a pinnacled summit on the left of the scree-floored amphitheatre. Start in the centre, at the base of the buttress, at an ill-defined crack in a square wall.

**1** 30 feet. Ascend the crack to a grass terrace. Traverse right for 20 feet to belay.

**2** 60 feet. Pock-marked rock on the left leads easily to a stance. Climb a steep crack above and move strenuously out right. Finish over a perched block to slabs and a small pinnacle. Scramble up the ridge, across the quartz band and past a pile of rocks. Continue to the final arête.

**3** 50 feet. Finish up the crest of the arête, or just on its left.

## Far North Group

Several hundred yards north of the quartz-flecked scree chute, there is a discontinuous dry-stone wall running up the hillside, giving way to a scree tongue higher up. A little to the south there is a sheep pen at the lakeside. Although this group is extensive, only a very small section is worthy of attention and even this leaves a lot to be desired.

### **Sheep Pen Buttress** 170 feet Very Difficult (1949)

The rock is very loose low down, and the climb gains its length by traversing to the right. The remnants of the dry-stone wall reach the cliff, and about 30 yards to the right there is a diagonal break in a line of overhangs. Start by some large blocks, directly above the sheep pen and just right of the diagonal break.

**1** 70 feet. Move cautiously right on to a ledge. Trend diagonally right via a crack and traverse a heather ledge to a pile of loose blocks. Go up a little wall to a spike belay by a small rowan tree.

**2** 60 feet. Climb another short wall slightly on the left, and follow an obvious vegetated rake up to the right. Thread belay at the foot of a leaning pillar.

**3** 40 feet. Ascend a groove left of the pillar and slabby rocks to finish.

## Craig Llethr Gwyn

(Crag of the White Slopes)

OS Ref 721 612

---

Opposite Pen Llithrig y Wrach and at a lower altitude stands a small cliff overlooking the southern tip of Llyn Cowlyd.

### **Y Blaidd** 80 feet E4 6a (1991)

The centre of the crag is characterised by a large overhang at two thirds height. This route takes the clean wall to the left. Start below the roof at an obvious groove. Protection is good when needed, with the crux reserved for the final 20 feet. Climb the groove, two good flake runners. Move left, past a peg, and surmount a small overhang, peg. Climb the wall above passing another peg until a series of difficult moves gain good holds and the top. Belay well back on a natural bollard.

### **Ysgyrnygu** 70 feet Severe (1991)

The arête which bounds the extreme right hand end of the crag is pleasant enough.

# Foel Fras and Foel Grach

(Rough Hill and Barren Hill)

---

The four crags described in this section are situated in the very heart of the Carneddau, and are remote from all main roads. A minor road from Tal y Bont in the Conwy Valley leads almost to Llyn Eigiau, beyond this is a rough track to the dam, and another continues to Melyn-llyn (Yellow lake). Alternatively they may be approached on foot from the Ogwen Valley. None of the climbs can be recommended, but for those who seek the rare solitude of the mountains and enjoy long walks, they are interesting to visit.

## Craig Eigiau

(Crag of the Flocks)

OS Ref 718 657

---

Above the west side of the Llyn is a series of crags; wet, vegetated and discontinuous, but also compact and overhanging. At the northern end of the Llyn, about 15 minutes up the boulder screes is a small two-tier buttress. Close to the base of the buttress is a 20-foot isolated pinnacle. This summit is easily attained by the south face.

**Premiere** 200 feet Severe (1959)

It makes the best of what rock there is. Start 30 feet right of the pinnacle. Climb a dirty groove for 20 feet, traverse delicately left from a flake, go up and mantelshelf on to a big block. Step down right, then go up to an overhang, move out right and up parallel cracks. Walk 10 yards to a wall with rowans. On its left is an arête. From the right, go up over large loose blocks, then a crack. Traverse left round the arête and continue via cracks to finish.

**Vin Ordinaire** 190 feet Very Difficult (1959)

On the left of the pinnacle is an obvious easy-angled slab, often wet. Start at its right-hand edge. Pleasantly climb the slab, passing beneath a gnarled holly, then back diagonally right up a vegetated gangway to a silver birch tree. Climb a chimney round to the left, traverse left and scramble up to finish.

## Craig Fawr

(Big Cliff)

OS Ref 699 657

---

A very unsatisfactory, slabby buttress rises above Melyn-llyn. It has a very wet gully.

**Yellow Chimney** 220 feet Difficult (1942)

Start from the left-hand side of the crag at about water-level. Go up the left rib of the gully for a few feet, then follow the gully bed to an open groove and easy chimney. Finish up a narrow 40-foot chimney.

## Craig y Dulyn

(Crag of the Black Lake)

OS Ref 698 668

---

This enormous crag rises straight from a truly black llyn, which is estimated to be 50 feet deep only a few feet from the edge. So awe inspiring is this secluded mountain hollow that the dam and other evidence of man's presence do not detract from it over much.

There are two principal buttresses, of entirely different character. The one on the right is clear of the llyn. It is very steep in the upper third but marred by prolific vegetation in rakes sloping up from the right. At two-thirds height, easy ledges encroach beneath jutting overhangs. The ledges lead across the cliff, finally dipping below an impressive 80-foot wall. The features are bold but discontinuous.

A number of routes have been made on this section, mainly graded Very Severe and Hard Severe; they are all seriously affected by vegetation and none of them seems worthy of detailed description.

The area between the buttresses has four steep water-courses, the two on the left have been climbed and are reported to be rather unpleasant. All four of them have been done and are in the winter guide and provide hard winter climbing given the right conditions.

The left-hand buttress is very large, also vegetated but is usually dry. Features are less well-defined. In general it is pyramid-shaped, rising vertically from the lake and it lies farther and farther back as it gains height. Above the steep lower nose a diagonal rake leads up from right to left; this has been climbed and is Moderate vegetation. Starting from a grassy depression on the left of the nose, a diagonal gully rises intermittently to the top of the rake; this has also been climbed. Above the lines are coincident, with route finding hampered by a scruffy buttress and a complex of heather ledges. The gully is about Very Difficult standard, mainly vegetation.

**Waterfall Gully** is obvious, in the centre of the big amphitheatre between Craig y Dulyn and Castell Dulyn. About Difficult standard, it is loose and usually wet.

## Castell y Dulyn

(Castle of the Black Lake)

OS Ref 701 663

This scruffy little cliff is completely overshadowed by its neighbours. From the dam a path skirts the left edge of the llyn. Follow it, up steps beneath a large chockstone (The Needle's Eye), and continue for about 100 yards to the foot of the cliff.

**Garden Cracks** 180 feet Very Difficult (1949)

Towards the right-hand end of the cliff, there is a broad ledge at 25 feet, with a large boulder on it. Below is a block pinnacle and on its right a short overhanging groove.

**1** 50 feet. Climb the groove and the slot above to a ledge. Take a short mossy groove to a heather ledge and continue to the foot of a steep V-chimney.

**2** 30 feet. Strenuously follow the chimney.

**3** 40 feet. Traverse right from a tree and go up a short groove to a ledge.

**4** 60 feet. From a terrace right of some overhangs, climb a crack to a slab, which is taken direct to finish.

**Garden Wall** 110 feet Severe (1961)

Start 20 feet left of the edge of a steep little wall at the right-hand end of the crag at a vegetated groove.

**1** 60 feet. Ascend the groove to an overhang, then move out right to a good ledge.

**2** 50 feet. Climb diagonally left to beneath a small overhang. Go up a wide crack to the overhang, then on to a large flake on the left. A steep slab leads to the finish.

The right edge of the crag gives another 100 feet of climbing.

## Craig yr Ysfa

(Cliff of the Gathering)

OS Ref 694 637

The word *ysfa* does translate to mean a craving or itching. However, a much more likely explanation is that our *ysfa* is derived from the old Welsh word *hysfa*. This was where a shepherd would collect his sheep from the high pastures. Because of the previous errors, one can enjoy such morsels of writing as ...

'Experience, bitter experience, has proved that the simple literal translation of the name must be accepted. A party in 1916 entered the dark recesses of one of its gullies as cheerful and with as great a craving as any that had set out from Pen-y-Gwryd. Hardly had they roped up when they were attacked by myriads of small, but active and virulent gnats. The battle was fierce and long. No sooner had one cloud been added to the heap of slain that littered the bottom of the gully than other and still other clouds appeared. Climbing with desperation and haste, clinging with one hand and with the other endeavouring to slay their ten thousands, the members of the expedition finally emerged into the upper world, but at what cost! They have however the satisfaction of knowing that they have torn from the dark recesses of these cliffs the fearful secret of their name'.

The crag has many classic and/or historical routes which, combined with their remoteness, can rekindle the enthusiasm and energy of the most jaded of climbers. Archer Thomson and his friends first explored these huge cliffs, and *Great Gully* was a tremendous discovery for its time. Many others, of differing eras, have come to the cliff and left some stunning climbs of equal quality. Furthermore, there are now a number of difficult routes of a modern mode.

A few hundred metres west of Helyg on the Capel Curig to Bangor road, the A5, is the start of a tarmac access road (687 603) which strikes directly up the hillside northwards. Parking is available at Gwern Gof Isaf, some 200 metres towards Bangor. Rapid entry is required to the access road by Mountain Rescue Teams and the farmer; therefore, **DO NOT PARK IN FRONT OF THE LOCKED GATE!** Follow the tarmac road tediously, through several gates, to a fairly level section. Just where the road bears left fork off right along a narrow footpath over a rise to contour above the llyn, this is Ffynnon Llugwy, Spring of the Conwy (Lucovium). The path then strikes up the hillside to zigzags and Bwlch Eryl Farchog, Pass of Eryl the Knight. Either follow paths down to the base of the crags or continue up the ridge above the cliff to the top of the Amphitheatre. About one hour from the road to crag top.

Alternatively the long ridge of Pen yr Helgi Du (Hill of the Black Hound) may be gained from Tal y Braich on the A5, and followed to a large quartz cairn above the llyn. From this point a poor path contours round to the saddle above the crag.

From Tal y Bont in the Conwy Valley an unsurfaced, gated road leads to the dam of Llyn Eigiau. A good track traverses the llyn side, crosses the river beyond and continues to some quarry buildings. Marshy ground and a steep incline then lead to the foot of the cliffs. This is not a very satisfactory route for those based in Central Snowdonia but quite good for those coming in from the East.

Climbs in the Amphitheatre may be approached by descending the loose broken area in and about C and D Gullies, but this is not recommended for inexperienced parties.

Directions to the various sections of the crag are dealt with under appropriate headings.

Craig yr Ysfa is a large, complex cliff. There are two principal crags with a large Amphitheatre separating them. Despite its size there are relatively few long routes, and even these are generally of poor quality. *Amphitheatre Buttress* and *Great Gully* being notable exceptions. Much of the South Crag is easy-angled and almost buried in heather. There are four gullies, which are for the most part poor; nevertheless they serve to divide the crag into well-defined sections.

Small steep buttresses tend to emphasise the discontinuity and are responsible for inconsistencies in the standard of the climbs. This erratic quality is only partially redeemed by a few good short climbs in The Cirque.

The Amphitheatre has three facets. The Left Wall is steep but comparatively short and The Back Wall is broken, but The Right Wall compensates for all the crag's shortcomings. The exposure of The Lower Amphitheatre Right Wall is striking in spite of its being enclosed.

The North Crag is an anti-climax being initially steep, then falling back sharply at one-third height. Beyond Great Gully it becomes even more broken.

From the bwlch the two crags are barely visible, and The Amphitheatre is not recognisable as such. However, good views are obtained from Cwm Eigiau and the ridge of Pen yr Helgi Du opposite.

The climbs are described from left to right beginning with South Crag.

## South Crag

**Truant Rib** 300 feet Difficult (1938)

On the extreme left-hand side of the crag, left of *Pinnacle Gully*, a buttress emerges from the heather. The route follows the less vegetated upper section and although entirely artificial it provides some pleasant little pitches. Start where a flaky staircase commences and traverse right from the descent path, across the buttress towards *Pinnacle Gully*. The start is at the level of a substantial tree with a grass-topped bollard on its right and immediately above a small mountain ash tree. Scramble up easily for 50 feet to a flake belay.

**1** 100 feet. Take a pleasant slab to a bollard on the right, then another short slab to a bilberry platform.

**2** 90 feet. Continue up a broken rib to a bollard at its top and a ledge, then climb a slabby rib on good holds, just right of a vegetated groove.

**3** 60 feet. Gain a steeper rib on the left and follow the edge, with a delicate finish, to a heather terrace.

**4** 50 feet. Go up the edge of a rib, then step left into a scoop and so to the top. Scrambling remains.

**Pinnacle Gully** 600 feet Easy

Not really a climb, but the very distinctive rotten flake pinnacle serves well as a landmark, both from above and below. Its summit is easily attained. All obstacles in the gully can be avoided, leaving only stones and vegetation. It serves as a descent to gain access to The Cirque.

**The Banister** 150 feet Severe (1949)

A scrappy route, entirely artificial but it makes the best of what rock there is. Start at the level of the pinnacle in *Pinnacle Gully*. A bilberry saddle on the right is easily gained. There is a vegetated groove to the left of a large leaning pillar on the little buttress above the saddle. Left again is a tiny triangular niche with a broken groove above.

**1** 60 feet. Climb awkwardly via the niche to a grassy ledge, then another short awkward step, taken on the left, leads to a fern terrace. Large spike belay on the left.

**2** 40 feet. Go up a little groove directly above, then make a tricky traverse right beneath an overhang to an ash tree ledge, The Landing. Alternatively a short wide crack some 30 feet right leads to the same stance. Harder with less character.

**3** 50 feet. Follow a spiky weakness leftwards to the final mossy slab. Scramble to finish.

## The Cirque

This is a small high-level amphitheatre. Of the three walls only the least impressive left wall provides climbing. The other routes described under this heading skirt the edges of The Cirque, and *Arch Gully* goes right through it. There are three alternative approaches:

(a) a long, easy, but rather exposed traverse can be made from the paths descending from the saddle. Take the flaky staircase as for *Truant Rib*, continuing in the same line to *Pinnacle Gully*. Ascend this to the level of the pinnacle, over a bilberry saddle on the right and descend the first pitch of *The Staircase* into The Cirque.

(b) *Bending Gully* and its left-hand branch, which is preferable to *Arch Gully*.

(c) Descend *Pinnacle Gully* and continue as for (a) above from the pinnacle. Probably the easiest.

**The Staircase** 180 feet Very Difficult (1938)

This route follows the left-hand edge of The Cirque. Rather broken and vegetated. Start at a broken and usually greasy groove defining the edge of the left wall of The Cirque. Belay 15 feet to the left.

**1** 40 feet. Climb the groove to a ledge with numerous spike belays.

**2** 50 feet. Go easily up a grassy groove to a platform and large spike. A short crack leads to The Landing and gnarled ash trees.

**3** 90 feet. A slab is climbed on good holds at first. Then step left into a scoop and go up to an easier slab leading to a bilberry terrace. Finish up slabby rock left of a nose. Scrambling remains.

Originally the above route started some 50 feet lower down, 20 feet left of the jammed boulder of *Arch Gully*, at the toe of the rib between *Pinnacle* and *Arch Gullies*. This adds length and difficulty, but not merit. Either of two vegetated grooves may satisfy the purist and avoid pitch 1 above.

The next three climbs are on the left wall of The Cirque. They all have some merit.

**Gomorrhah** 150 feet Severe (1938)

A pleasant slab climb on good holds. It is often greasy, when it is harder than graded. Start a few feet right of the groove of the previous route, level with the end of a quartz tongue leading up to the back wall. The line is obvious.

**1** 80 feet. Trend slightly right at first. Continue direct avoiding most of the grass tufts, then traverse left to a notch on an arête and belay.

**2** 70 feet. Move back right and go up a short curving crack to rejoin the arête. Step from a big flake on to a rib and continue delicately to easy ground.

**Spiral Route** 120 feet Very Severe (1938)

A fine route which is delicate and not easy to protect. It takes a rather indirect line to a large grassy ledge, with the remnants of a small tree on it, in the centre of the wall. Similar in character to *Gomorrhah*. Start a few feet above the toe of the quartz tongue leading to the back wall of The Cirque, 15 feet left of the corner of *Angle Groove* and lower down. Poor belay low down.

**1** 70 feet. 4a. Climb a shallow diagonal groove to a small ledge and spike, just a few feet left of *Angle Groove*. Follow a curving depression back left; the line is marked by a thin crack. (*Gomorrhah* is easily accessible on the left). Move right over a bulge and then left again. A delicate slabby rib leads direct to the centre of the grassy ledge. Poor flake belay.

**2** 50 feet. 4a. Go straight up a cracked wall above, trending left to reach the easy section of the arête on *Gomorrhah*.

**Angle Groove** 120 feet Very Severe (1944)

A strenuous climb in contrast to its neighbours. Start by scrambling up a corner formed between the left and back walls of The Cirque. Belay at the base of a chimney level with the small ledge on *Spiral Route*.

**1** 90 feet. 4b. A few easy feet lead to awkward bulges, surmounted by bridging. The right-hand crack is followed where the chimney divides. Exit left and climb pleasant slabs via a grassy ledge to a large belay in a groove above.

**2** 30 feet. 4a. Climb the groove. Not without incident.

**Arch Gully** 820 feet Difficult (1901)

The lower part of this gully is a rather smooth, water-worn groove, which gives way to heather scrambling, leading in turn to two jammed blocks guarding access to The Cirque. Beyond The Cirque it becomes a deep cleft of considerable character. Start approximately in the centre of the South Crag at a deep recess from which two gullies rise and diverge. Low down they are separated by a narrow grey rib. A distinctive light-coloured scree chute spews into the cwm from the base of the gullies. This is the left-hand gully; the other is *Bending Gully*.

**1** 250 feet. The smooth groove. Slabs on the right give relief from the difficulties in the groove.

**2** 200 feet. Vegetated scrambling until the two jammed blocks give access to The Cirque.

**3** 150 feet. Walk up and into a deep cavern on the right.

**4** 100 feet. Ascend a steep chimney with good holds on the left, continue to a capstone and squeeze behind, or harder pull over left or right outside. From the capstone, the arch itself can be gained by 20 feet of hard delicate climbing.

**5** 120 feet. Go easily up the gully bed and over jammed blocks. A groove on the left gives way to easy ground or the gully bed may be taken direct.

A small buttress high on the cliff, defined by the two branches of *Bending Gully*, is known as Y-Buttress. It is split by a broad heather terrace leading out right from The Cirque. The next route commences from the terrace and *Arch Wall* crosses it farther right.

**Cirque Rib** 180 feet Hard Very Severe (3 pts. aid) (1963)

Not a good route, but the climbing is exacting. Start some 15 feet right of the left edge of the right wall of The Cirque at a stepped corner capped by a roof. There is a small tree at 30 feet.

**1** 60 feet. 5a. Climb the corner to the roof and traverse left to a small ledge on the arête, using a peg and a sling for aid. Step left across a groove (flake runner), and go up a little rib until it is possible to move back right to a juniper ledge.

**2** 60 feet. 5a. Use a shoulder to gain a groove on the left with a thin crack in its left wall. Ascend the groove then more easily go up grassy rock to a stance on the edge of The Cirque (junction with *Arch Wall*).

**3** 60 feet. As for *Arch Wall* pitch 5, go out right, scramble to a block, step left to cracked ledges and go up to the top.

The next two routes start from *Bending Gully*.

**Arch Wall** 340 feet Hard Severe (1937)

The lower half of this climb is vegetated and often wet, whilst the section above the heather ledge is more open and cleaner. The route is rather disjointed.

Start almost immediately above the bend in *Bending Gully* and a little below the level of some distinctive overhangs above the main (right-hand) branch of the gully, where a wet and rather unpleasant groove rises.

**1** 100 feet. 3b. Climb the groove until it begins to overhang, then escape left and follow bilberry ledges to an easy-angled slab.

**2** 90 feet. Go up the slab, or the vegetation on its right to the heather terrace. Continue up a vegetated rake to a platform in the centre of wall.

**3** 30 feet. 4a. Mantelshelf awkwardly on to a quartz ledge and gain a little groove on the left. Ascend the groove with a tricky exit.

**4** 60 feet. 3a. Over broken blocks to a short groove on the left. Climb the groove until the steep left wall leads to an airy stance overlooking The Cirque.

**5** 60 feet. 3a. Move out right and scramble to a huge detached block. Step left from the block to cracked ledges and go up to a bilberry saddle and the top.

**Cobweb Wall** 180 feet Severe (1948)

Not a very distinguished route. It commences from *Bending Gully* some 80 feet beyond the start of the previous climb and follows a vegetated groove rising towards the left-hand end of the distinctive overhangs above, then curves right for 50 feet to avoid them.

**Bending Gully** 600 feet Difficult (1900)

Other than providing access to the two previous climbs and a moderately interesting approach to The Cirque, this is an unsatisfactory climb. The left-hand spur leads to The Cirque and the main gully peters out amongst broken rocks and heather. Start in the deep recess, as for *Arch Gully*. This is the right-hand of the twin gullies.

**1** 300 feet. After passing a diagonally jammed monolith on the right, continue easily to two short parallel chimneys. Here the branches diverge.

**2** 300 feet. The main gully. A few obstacles before the bend are turned mainly on the right. Beyond, the gully becomes a deep V-groove. Pass left of some wedged splinters, then an easy slab on the right avoids a jammed stone. A groove is smooth at first and another slab is taken. Scrambling remains.

Variation

**2a** 250 feet. The left-hand branch. An initial difficult crack, then water-worn rocks and scrambling leads to The Cirque.

## Bending Gully Reach

This section of the cliff is defined on the right by Bending Gully and it extends across the cliff virtually to Avalanche Gully. It consists of an area of broken overlapping slabs, which are set back from the main line of the crag and rise from a field of dense heather. Higher up the slabs steepen into a wall with a distinctive band of overhangs on the left. The whole of this area is seriously marred by vegetation, the rock is mossy and the two slab routes are serious undertakings in the wet.

The approach and frustrating exits detract from the merits of these routes. The least unpleasant way off is to traverse left to the edge of Bending Gully

then scramble straight up, or better, traverse back right to join *Avalanche Buttress* above pitch 3.

Low down on the left, a shoulder abuts onto the slabs. This may be climbed by a cracked slab on the right or via a short groove from *Bending Gully*. It gives access to the next climb.

**Heron Slab** 260 feet Hard Severe (1965)

Vegetated, but may well improve with traffic. Not easy to protect. Start from the top of the shoulder. Poor belay.

**1** 40 feet. 3a. Climb delicately diagonally left to a spike then continue up a heather rake to a better spike. Belay.

**2** 90 feet. 3b. Go diagonally left for a few feet, then traverse back right and continue diagonally right until a thin quartz traverse can be made beneath an overlap. Step down and go right round an edge, to a vegetated break, which is followed to a pulpit and huge belay.

**3** 130 feet. 3a. Step out left and traverse left for a few feet, then trend diagonally right up a slab to a line of overhangs. Traverse right and go up a break in the overhangs to a broad ledge. Awkward belays just right of a little rock nose.

**The Slab Climb** 350 feet Very Difficult (1909)

The easiest line up the heather slabs. There are approximately equal amounts of rock and vegetation. Belays are scarce. Start to the right of the shoulder at a step in the slabs. Farther right, about 150 feet from the shoulder, scramble up 40 feet to belay. This is directly above a distinctive quartz-marked boulder, which is immediately above the path.

**1** 150 feet. Trend left over vegetated rock, crossing an overlap at 100 feet, to a rib, which is climbed to a comfortable stance at the level of an obvious traverse right.

**2** 80 feet. Traverse right across a slab to a short square chimney, then go up this to another chimney. Thread belay.

**3** 30 feet. Ascend the chimney, awkward entry, to small trees and a spike belay.

**4** 70 feet. Continue easily in the same line until a slab on the right can be gained. Climb it diagonally to more trees. Stance and belays.

**5** 20 feet. Go awkwardly up an obvious break in a wall above or avoid it on the right.

**Birch Tree Chimney** 180 feet Difficult (1909)

An unsatisfactory climb, with much vegetation and little rock. The final little chimney is the sole attraction. High on the right-hand side of *Bending Gully Reach* is a small twisted chimney, with a track of vegetation leading up to it. Start at the foot of the track of vegetation.

**1** 120 feet. Little more than a vegetated scramble leads to a leaning bollard on the left.

**2** 60 feet. Go up to a small cave and make an awkward exit on good holds over a chockstone. Climb the final chimney, loose.

**Avalanche Buttress** 670 feet Very Difficult (1950)

The first two pitches of this route are considerably more difficult than those that follow. However, the upper section does provide the best exit from the Bending Gully Reach climbs. Start in *Avalanche Gully*. Just beyond the last of the difficulties in the gully, a small shallow-angled rock rib divides the gully bed, with grass on the left and stone on the right. In the left wall of the gully a crack fails to reach the base, and on its left is a line of overhangs at 15 feet.

**1** 30 feet. Make a hard move over a small overhang, or use a shoulder, and mantelshelf to gain the steep crack. Climb it to a stance and belay.

**2** 60 feet. Climb a slab on the right to a little V-recess, then go out left across a wall and step round to a grassy bay in a groove.

**3** 80 feet. Climb the groove or either of its bounding ribs to a heather platform with a lying block. Exits from the Bending Gully Reach climbs join the route here. Above is a grass-filled groove with a small tree at the top. The line follows the very edge of the gully.

**4** 100 feet. A little grass, a slab and an avoidable crack, lead to a broad shelf at the base of a wall.

**5** 100 feet. Go up the wall to a crevasse behind a block. Scramble and trend right to a detached block. Belay on a small terrace.

**6** 300 feet. Take the edge of the gully, exposed to a distinctive platform. Continue up a series of mossy ledges and some optional rock. Avoid a chimney on the left and traverse right above it. Slabs and broken rocks lead to the top.

**The Untidy Buttress**

Towards the top of *Avalanche Gully* a subsidiary gully or break bears away to the left. Between it and the main gully is The Untidy Buttress. There are numerous wide fissures, cracks and tumbled blocks, giving an impression of serious instability, which is apparently well-founded to judge from the gully's name. All five routes are on the right flank and are best approached from above, either by descending the vegetated top section of the gully, or descending *Amphitheatre Buttress* and crossing the gully bed. Care should be taken to locate the correct gully, *Avalanche Gully* is the last before the amphitheatre. The climbs are broken into short sections, often of unequal quality and standard. None can be recommended, but *Troglodyte* and *Enigma* are probably the best. The rock is very mossy and treacherous in the wet.

**Original Route** 170 feet Very Difficult (1938)

Undistinguished. Start at the lower end of the buttress. The initial 50 feet are steep and avoided by a rake on the right.

**1** 40 feet. Trend left up the rake to the crest of the buttress.

**2** 80 feet. Can be split. Continue easily to a large flat-topped block. Go up a wall above to another ledge. Scramble up left to a poised flake, go under it, or pull over it. Platform on the right.

**3** 50 feet. Go up left over tumbled boulders. A gangway now leads left round a corner to a short wall. Or scramble to the second pitch of *Beaumont's Chimney* and climb it (much harder).

The next four routes are best located from the region of the two gendarmes and knife edge of *Amphitheatre Buttress*, pitch 4. Immediately opposite the big gendarme are two wide chimneys.

**Beaumont's Chimney** 110 feet Severe (1938)

Start at the foot of the left-hand chimney, by a large flat-topped bollard.

**1** 60 feet. Go up the chimney, behind and between huge blocks, to emerge on a terrace of broken blocks. Pinnacle belays beside a rotten tree stump.

**2** 50 feet. Climb another narrow chimney immediately above the stump. Struggle up facing right or awkward bridging to start. Above a cave, then a short wall and easy rocks lead to the top.

**Troglodyte** 100 feet Hard Severe (1949)

Part of this climb collapsed, but it has been reascended. All the difficulties are concentrated in the second pitch. Start at the base of the right-hand chimney, with debris spewing out and a large jammed stone above. It is 25 feet right of the previous climb and at a higher level.

**1** 50 feet. 3a. Scramble up through the chimney, behind the stone and up a gangway on the left to pinnacle belays and the rotten stump of *Beaumont's Chimney*.

**2** 50 feet. 3b. Step awkwardly right from the top of the left-hand pinnacle on to a mossy slab. Move up right to a steep, sharp-edged crack. Climb this strenuously with an awkward exit right to a good ledge. Ascend a wall to finish.

Variation

**2a** 50 feet. 3a. Most of the difficulties can be rather pointlessly avoided by moving right at the top of the chimney, up rust-coloured slabs and into a dangerously loose chasm. Pot-holing leads to a ledge, then go up a short wide chimney to finish.

**Sigma** 100 feet Difficult (1949)

Start some 50 feet right of and higher than the chimney of *Troglodyte* at a smooth grey wall, set forward from the main part of the buttress. At the very bottom edge of the wall is a spike belay; above is a series of grassy steps overlooking the grey wall.

**1** 45 feet. Ascend the steps and trend slightly left to a cave formed by jammed blocks.

**2** 55 feet. Climb cracks in the wall above the cave, taking either branch to a crevassed ledge. Ascend a short wall to finish.

**Enigma** 110 feet Severe (1949)

Start the smooth grey wall mentioned for the previous route which is terminated at its upper end by a large rib. In the corner between the corner

and rib is a vegetated stepped cleft, with a triangular recess in its left wall. Start inside the cleft.

**1** 50 feet. Go up the cleft for a few feet then traverse left just above the recess to a shallow broken groove, which is followed to a ledge and belay on the left.

**2** 60 feet. Move back right and go up to an obvious diagonal break. Follow it right via two jammed stones to a good ledge. Ascend a short wall to the top.

**Avalanche Gully** 750 feet Difficult (1905)

All the climbing is concentrated in the lower part of this unsatisfactory gully, which was once notorious for the danger of falling rocks, a point still not to be ignored. Except as an approach to *Avalanche Buttress* this route cannot be recommended. If taken direct the pitches are considerably harder than the grade given, especially when wet, but all the difficulties can be skirted on the right. The narrow cleft which leads into the gully is somewhat concealed amongst heathery slabs to the left of *Amphitheatre Buttress*, but the line is quite obvious.

**1** 250 feet. A rib lower on the right avoids a capped chimney. Stony scrambling leads to a wet cave with a very awkward rounded capstone, or take the right wall on good holds. Another short cave pitch and a wide mossy chimney are both turned on the right.

**2** 500 feet. Unpleasant vegetated scrambling leads to the finish.

★★★**Amphitheatre Buttress** 960 feet Very Difficult (1905)

A classic mountaineering route, not high in its grade, which is undoubtedly one of the very best at this standard in Wales; justifiably popular. The exposure provided by the Amphitheatre amply compensates for the unfortunate break midway. Archer Thomson described it perfectly as a 'very entertaining but not seriously difficult climb'. Start some 50 feet above the toe of the buttress formed between *Avalanche Gully* and The Amphitheatre, at the level where The Amphitheatre Left Wall peters out.

**1** 400 feet. Pleasant pocketed slabs, easy climbing and scrambling lead to a large platform below a steep wall. This can be split into short pitches. At about 200 feet a groove provides the principal obstacle.

**2** 70 feet. The crux, mainly due to polished holds. Go up a well-worn corner on the right to a huge detached block. Now go up again, with rounded holds to finish.

**3** 200 feet. Vegetated scrambling and paths!

**4** 100 feet. Climb the crest to a gap, two gendarmes and a knife edge leading to the main mass of the mountain. Exposed but not difficult; the knife edge can be taken *à cheval* by traditionalists.

**5** 180 feet. Continue up a good ridge on the right to the summit.

## The Amphitheatre

This huge recess is the principal feature of the cliff, and separates the North Crag from the South Crag. The left wall of The Amphitheatre is quite steep

while the back is disappointing; there are four gullies separated by three easy ribs, the two on the left provide pleasant climbs, whilst the division between the right-hand gullies is broken and indistinct. The magnificent right wall is undoubtedly one of the most impressive pieces of rock in Wales. It is steep and compact. A broad, sloping, bilberry ledge divides the wall horizontally at two-thirds height.

If one is only climbing in the Amphitheatre it is usual to descend into the cleft from the cliff top, choosing the easiest line in or about C and D Gullies. This is not easy to find and although technically easy, care is essential. A good spot to leave 'sacks is directly above Pinnacle Wall; just over a low stone wall. Here, one finds a sheltered spot to contemplate a good day's climbing. A long and rather humdrum approach can be made following the path down from Bwlch Eryl Farchog traversing the base of South Crag and scrambling up scree into the Amphitheatre. However, you'll only have to go back down to your 'sacks and climb up to the bwlch again!

## Amphitheatre Left Wall

The routes on this wall are short, steep and terminate on Amphitheatre Buttress. The climbs are frequently greasy and consequently often harder than their normal grade.

### **Figure of Eight** 110 feet Very Severe 4b (1944)

A fairly good route to do if *Mur y Niwl* is busy. Start at the left-hand end of the wall where a grassy bay gives easy access to the lower part of Amphitheatre Buttress. To the right of the bay are two large diamond-shaped blocks (the Figure of Eight) projecting from the wall. Start on the right of the bay where a ramp leads up to the top of the lower block. Climb the ramp to a grassy ledge. Step left and go up a steep wall to a large flake. Move right and go awkwardly up to a ledge, step left and climb a curving crack strenuously, to easier ground. Continue trending slightly left, until an awkward swing can be made on to Amphitheatre Buttress.

### **Pieces of Eight** 100 feet Very Severe (1949)

Another pleasant little climb. Some 40 feet right of the bay mentioned for the previous route are two parallel diagonal cracks leading left to the top of the upper block of the 'Eight'. Start at the base of the cracks.

**1** 70 feet. 4b. Go up the cracks and a little ramp to the top of the block. Trend slightly right up a steep wall to a perched block, then go up to a small overhang, lower and left of a larger one. Pull over this and step left to grass then scramble right to a pinnacle belay.

**2** 30 feet. Strenuously go up an obvious layback crack (the final pitch of *Sentry Box Crack*).

The most prominent feature on the next section of the wall is a huge bottomless 'sentry box', with a short block-choked chimney leading up to it.

**Sentry Box Crack** 100 feet Hard Severe (1950)

A rather disjointed climb. Start directly below the 'sentry box'.

**1** 70 feet. 3b. Scramble up vegetation to the short chimney choked with blocks, and climb it to a large sloping grass ledge. Go up a crack on the right of a large block to pinnacle belays.

**2** 30 feet. 3a. Descend a ramp leftwards to the foot of an obvious layback crack. Climb it strenuously to the top.

**Dover Road** 120 feet Very Severe (A2) (1955)

Start as for *Sentry Box Crack*.

**1** 70 feet. 4c A2. Climb to the blocks, then go up the crack on the right-hand side of the deep groove, cross left and go up to the roof. Aid across this then up to a small ledge above the overhang and step right to a stance.

**2** 50 feet. Step back left and climb the groove to reach the *Amphitheatre Buttress*.

**Cockroach Crack** 100 feet Severe (1944)

One of the better climbs on this wall, steep and enclosed, then more open. Start at the foot of an obvious recessed chimney/crack line to the right of the 'sentry box'.

**1** 30 feet. Scramble across vegetated ledges to the foot of the chimney.

**2** 70 feet. Ascend the chimney, awkward at first, then the continuation crack to a ledge. The block at the top of *Reed Rake* is climbed on the left.

**Reed Rake** 100 feet Difficult (1934)

An unsatisfactory vegetated break, to the right of the 'sentry box' and the previous climb is taken direct.

About 40 feet up and right of *Reed Rake*, opposite and level with the toe of *Amphitheatre Right Wall* is a large and roughly diamond-shaped rubescent sheet of rock. At about 10 feet above the floor of the *Amphitheatre* is a slanting ledge with two spikes.

★**Whirlwind** 150 feet E3 5c (1989)

The hanging flake crack in the smooth wall right of *Reed Rake*. A powerfully compelling line. Start on a hump directly below the undercut roof of the crack at the lower spike, sometimes damp. Climb the steep groove to the right-hand end of the roof. Traverse left beneath this and layback the crack to a second roof. Move left to a slight niche before romping diagonally up the face to a short groove and lofty perch on the right. A hard high step remains.

**El Niño** 130 feet E3 (1983)

Starts on the ledge at the upper of the two spikes beneath a blunt nose of rock

**1** 70 feet. 5b. Scramble up to the right, or directly and more boldly, to reach a foot traverse leading leftwards to below a small overhang. Climb up to the overhang and surmount it using the obvious flake line to the grassy ledge.

**2** 60 feet. 6a. From the left end of the ledge, gain a small slab which leads to a short groove, climb this to good footholds. Traverse left to a pulpit then finish direct with a long reach.

**Drought** 140 feet E4 (1983)

Start as for *El Niño*.

**1** 70 feet. 5c. Follow *El Niño*, but instead of traversing left, climb a steep slab to a tiny crack which in turn leads direct to a belay.

**2** 70 feet. 5c. Climb directly above the belay, then move right below some overhangs. Surmount an overlap via a crack and follow this for 30 feet until it is possible to gain the top of a quartzy flake. Move right to reach good finishing holds.

**Coffin Scoop** 150 feet Hard Severe (1944)

Rather vegetated especially in the upper part. Start to the left of an undercut slab shaped like a 'coffin', at the obvious weakness.

**1** 100 feet. 3b. Climb diagonally left, awkward to start, to the higher of two grass ledges. Trend right up the scoop, to the left of the 'coffin', a continuation groove leads to grass and belays.

**2** 50 feet. 3a. Move down to the right, and climb a chimney followed by a steep wall to the top, or escape easily left.

**One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest** 180 feet Very Severe (1976)

A good climb on the buttress right of *Coffin Scoop*; the line follows the blunt nose opposite *Mur y Niwl* on the lower section and the prominent groove on the left of the upper section. Start 40 feet right of *Coffin Scoop*, at the foot of the blunt nose.

**1** 130 feet. 4c. Climb straight up past two bilberry ledges to a bulge with quartz veins. Surmount this on the right, move left, then continue trending rightwards to a groove. Climb this for a few feet until a ramp leads to a stance.

**2** 50 feet. 4c. Go up a steep groove to a small ledge then swing out left to another groove. Move left round an overhang, then step right and follow a bilberry runnel to belay on *Amphitheatre Buttress*.

**Cradle Chimney** 110 feet Very Difficult (1944)

Rather unpleasant and usually greasy. Well to the right of the *Coffin Scoop*, at a higher level than the foot of *The Nameless Rib*, are some shattered blocks with a wide grass-choked crack leading to a very obvious chimney above. Start at the blocks.

**1** 40 feet. Go over the blocks and ascend the crack. Fortunately this rubbish is avoidable on the right.

**2** 70 feet. Climb the chimney.

## The Back Wall of The Amphitheatre

This section of the crag consists of a series of gullies with ribs separating them. None of the gullies is worth climbing, except perhaps in winter conditions, but two of the ribs provide pleasant routes. On the extreme left a

steep vegetated groove leads on to the upper part of *Amphitheatre Buttress*; to its right is A Gully, continuously vegetated. The broken rib between this and the next gully has a huge pinnacle at mid-height.

**The Nameless Rib** 430 feet Difficult (1905-8)

This is the left-hand of the two principal ribs. The line described is entirely artificial and can be modified at will. There are three rock sections separated by vegetation. Pitches can be split. The toe of this rib projects farthest down into The Amphitheatre. Start some 60 feet above the toe, and on the left flank at an overhanging block with a short wall on its left.

**1** 100 feet. Climb the wall and continue to a pile of boulders. Go up these to grass, which is followed to a slab and grassy groove.

**2** 130 feet. Ascend the slab and go on to a detached block on the right. A few feet up the right-hand of two bilberry grooves, then a delicate slab leads left to an arête. Walk to large belays on the right.

**3** 90 feet. Climb an arête pleasantly.

**4** 75 feet. Easy scrambling.

**5** 35 feet. Go up either side of the final nose.

**B Gully** 400 feet Very Difficult (1905-8)

Both unpleasant and unsatisfactory. This gully is in the centre of the Back Wall between the two principal ribs. After the initial easy scrambling a few nasty obstacles are surmounted or skirted on the right with difficulty.

**Amphitheatre Rib** 260 feet Difficult (1931)

A good little route. It provides interest and a less dangerous exit from the back of The Amphitheatre. The most reasonable line is described; there are alternatives. Start at the lowest point on the right-hand of the two principal ribs.

**1** 90 feet. Climb black slabs and trend right to an awkward corner. Climb this, then traverse right and climb the edge overlooking C Gully to a block belay and poor stance.

**2** 60 feet. Move left, then go diagonally up a pleasant slab. Traverse left, then go easily up to the left-hand end of a grassy ledge. Fifteen feet higher on the right are some spikes.

**3** 110 feet. From the top of a bollard traverse left along flakes. Climb an awkward little groove, then traverse right to a ledge overlooking C Gully. A little crack on the left and some scrambling lead to a final easy slab. Scramble to the summit.

**C Gully** 120 feet of climbing Difficult (1905-8)

Very loose and prone to funnel debris dislodged at the summit. It starts at the level of *The Crack*, in the Amphitheatre Right Wall. The line is obvious, there are several obstacles to surmount, commencing with a two-tier cave.

**D Gully** 200 feet Moderate (1905-8)

This is the least obvious gully as it diverges from the previous one after the first few pitches, and is not very distinct. Unsatisfactory as a route.

The whole area between C and D Gullies is very broken and can be traversed easily at almost any level. As a consequence it provides the best access into The Amphitheatre.

## Amphitheatre Right Wall

An excellent sweep of steep solid rock provides the best climbing on Craig yr Ysfa. There are two walls, one above the other; separated horizontally by a broad bilberry terrace. The routes on the lower wall can be combined with those on the upper or Pinnacle Wall. The lower wall is dealt with first and the routes are described from left to right.

## Lower Amphitheatre Wall

One of the finest walls in Wales, with tremendous exposure adding to the feeling of remoteness. As the base of the wall descends the Amphitheatre Screes, the height increases until it is almost 350 feet in the region of *Agrippa*. Beyond that point the wall terminates abruptly, giving way to a broken vegetated area. On the extreme left, high up, is a tricky access line to the bilberry terrace, right of which is the obvious cleft of *The Crack*. Down again is a short chimney low down, with a large V-groove offset above and to the right, the line of *Plumbagin*. Below this groove there is a step in the floor of the Amphitheatre, here a small gully abuts the wall, and a line of holds leads out of the gully to a grassy ledge. *Aura* starts in the gully while *Mur y Niwl* and *Griseofulvin* start beneath the ledge. The large open V-groove above, which leans to the right, is the line of the *Mur y Niwl Direct*. Beyond, the wall is even more compact, where *Agrippa* wends its way.

### ★**The Crack** 90 feet Very Severe 4c (1932)

A difficult and sometimes damp crack. Start at the base of the obvious crack-line immediately right of the base of *C Gully*. Struggle up the crack, which eases after 20 feet, to a grassy ledge (possible belay). Continue up a groove until a traverse left on good holds leads to easy ground and a short scramble to reach the bilberry terrace.

### ★★**Plumbagin** 150 feet E1 (1965)

A fine route, with some blind alleys! It follows the next line of weakness right of *The Crack*. Start below a distinctive V-chimney capped by a roof a few feet left of a large shallow groove.

**1** 50 feet. 5a. Gain the chimney and follow it to the overhang, move up left to a horizontal crack, then traverse right to a slender ledge. Belay on poor pegs and small wires above.

**2** 100 feet. 5b. Move rightwards to the base of the shallow groove, not without some interest, follow the groove to its top.

### ★★**Solid Air** 140 feet E3 (1980)

A steep little number. Start just right of *Plumbagin* at a vertical crack directly beneath the belay ledge.

**1** 40 feet. 5c. Ascend the crack to reach the belay ledge, both strenuous and sustained.

**2** 100 feet. 5c. Follow the thin crack above the left end of the ledge for 20 feet, trend left, then continue up the wall above to easier ground. Scramble up to the bilberry terrace to finish.

**★Turn the Centuries, Turn** 180 feet E3 (1981)

A little contrived, but with some good climbing. Start above the step in the Amphitheatre floor directly under a triangular overhang below the groove of *Plumbagin*. Belay to a rather loose flake.

**1** 130 feet. 6a. Move out right above a gully; go up right again then back left over a bulge to reach a short groove, and a peg. Step back down and move right, until difficult moves past a hole gain a thin crack. Follow the crack to the *Girdle Traverse*. Continue up the crack above to reach a belay.

**2** 50 feet. Scramble easily to the bilberry terrace.

**★★★Aura** 200 feet E2 (1975)

An utterly brilliant main pitch which struts its way up the wall. Start below the step in the Amphitheatre floor, where it forms a little damp gully/alley, directly beneath a small triangular overlap at 30 feet.

**1** 150 feet. 5b. Climb directly to the overlap then diagonally left up a crack, and move back up right to gain good holds at the base of a slanting crack-line. Gain the crack (crux) and follow it to its top with one tricky move right before the belay ledge.

**2** 50 feet. Scramble to the terrace.

**★Griseofulvin** 240 feet E3 (1964)

A route with good situations, but also a tendency for dampness. Low in the grade. Start lower than the rock step, below the alley, directly beneath the left-hand end of a grass ledge at 15 feet.

**1** 60 feet. 5c. Ascend the short wall to a grass ledge (as for *Mur y Niwl*). Trend up leftwards with difficulty to gain a rib to the left, then move diagonally back right to a small stance.

**2** 80 feet. 5a. Climb the awkward groove directly above and continue straight up the wall, moving right near the top to a grass ledge.

**3** 90 feet. 5a. A short steep corner leads to another grass ledge, then a groove on the right is climbed to join *Mur y Niwl*.

**4** 10 feet. 4c. The cracked wall of *Mur y Niwl* provides the finish.

**★★★Mur y Niwl** 250 feet Very Severe (1952)

A truly tremendous mountain route, sustained, steep and exposed. Near the base of the cliff, under a large but shallow groove in the middle of the wall, is a ledge at 15 feet. Start under the left-hand end of this ledge, as for *Griseofulvin*, below the damp gully.

**1** 40 feet. 4b. Gain the ledge, then traverse right to a belay. Harder if wet. The ledge can also be gained by a traverse on flat holds from the base of *Aura*.

**2** 100 feet. 4c. Go steeply up the wall to a niche, move right and continue on good holds to the base of the V-groove (possible belay). Hand-traverse

right along the upper of two horizontal ledges, then step down. Move right again and follow a rising 'staircase' to the perch stance. Awkward belay.

**3** 60 feet. 4c. Step down, exposed moves now lead right beneath an overhang to a ledge. Move back left and go up past a ledge, then an arête to reach a grassy platform, belay.

**4** 40 feet. 4c. Climb the groove behind the stance, then more easily ascend a glaciis and go up left to the base of a short cracked wall.

**5** 10 feet. 4c. The cracked wall is harder than it looks.

★**Mur y Niwl Direct** 200 feet Hard Very Severe (1967)

Continually interesting and airy climbing make this route worthy of attention. Start as for *Mur y Niwl*.

**1** 40 feet. 4b. As for *Mur y Niwl*.

**2** 110 feet. 5a. The steep wall leads to a niche, then move right and go up on good holds to the base of the V-groove (belay possible). A difficult step up from the groove on to the lip of an overlap leads to another move right then follow the blunt rib above on improving holds. Move back left to gain a slab in the groove then go up to a grassy platform.

**3** 60 feet. 4c. Scramble up to join *Mur y Niwl* pitch 5, and so the terrace.

**Faenaldo** 180 feet E3 (1992)

An absorbing and somewhat precarious addition. Start as for *Mur y Niwl*.

**1** 40 feet. 4b. As for *Mur y Niwl*.

**2** 80 feet. 5c. Move horizontally right to pull up onto the obvious ledge, about 10 feet away. A series of bridging and layaway moves, past a peg, leads to the 'staircase' of *Mur y Niwl*. Continue directly up the wall to a horizontal break, go up again and trend left to the rib of *Mur y Niwl Direct*. Finish as for that route.

**3** 60 feet. 4c. Scramble up to join *Mur y Niwl* pitch 5, and so the terrace.

★★**Amadeus** 250 feet E4 (1980)

Exhilarating and absorbing climbing when clean; even more difficult if dirty. Start as for *Agrippa*.

**1** 50 feet. 4c. Follow *Agrippa* to a stance on a flat ledge.

**2** 90 feet. 6a. From the left-hand end of the ledge, move up to a small ledge then left to a crack on the left-hand side of a roof. Climb the crack to a V-groove and follow this directly to the perch stance on *Mur y Niwl*.

**3** 110 feet. 4c. Follow the top pitches of *Mur y Niwl*.

★★**Mother of Mercy** 140 feet E5 6a (1991)

The groove between *Amadeus* and *Agrippa* provides a stunning and sustained outing up a very impressive area of rock. Start just left of *Agrippa*. Climb directly past a bulge to reach a ledge, go over another bulge to gain ledges and the rotten pegs of *Agrippa*. Follow the crack above, as for *Amadeus* initially, but continue in the same line to an obvious jam slot. Difficult moves lead to a pocket, then layback up the groove to an ancient ring peg. Move right to the sanctuary of the *Girdle* then up left to belay on the third stance of *Mur y Niwl*. Finish as for that route.

**★★Agrippa** 340 feet E1 (1959)

A breezy route of considerable character. Start 50 feet right of *Mur y Niwl* where a series of grassy ledges leads up to the left.

**1** 100 feet. 5a. Climb bulges just left of the bottom ledge to gain a leftwards-slanting vegetated groove to a grass ledge at 40 feet, possible belay. Continue diagonally right up a steep wall to a long narrow ledge and from its right-hand end go straight up on good holds to another ledge with a flake on the right.

**2** 50 feet. 5a. Climb the steep wall directly above the stance and step left above the second of two overhangs. Climb the corner then make a rising hand-traverse to a grass ledge on the right.

**3** 70 feet. 5a. Descend five feet and traverse right to a ledge on a nose. Continue up left past sloping ledges and a block to gain large holds to a ledge and belay.

**4** 120 feet. 4c. Traverse right on to a steep wall, then pull up into a groove and follow this to easy slabs, up these to belay on the bilberry terrace.

**★★★Girdle Traverse of the Lower Amphitheatre Wall**

500 feet E1 (1966)

One of the best girdles in Wales; the climbing is superb while the situations become increasingly airy as the Amphitheatre scree drops away beneath. Start as for *The Crack*.

**1** 70 feet. 5b. Climb the crack for 30 feet until it is possible to step right to a good spike. Descend a steep diagonal crack with difficulty (crux) to reach the top of the overhang on *Plumbagin* then step right to the belay ledge.

**2** 100 feet. 5b. Move down and right awkwardly, then a hard move past a hole gains a horizontal crack. Traverse right along the crack until it is possible to step into a niche. Move right to another niche, then semi-hand-traverse for 30 feet almost to the arête, peg and old nut. Abseil 30 feet and swing into a stance on *Mur y Niwl* pitch 2.

**3** 70 feet. 4c. Hand-traverse right along the upper of two horizontal ledges, then step down and move right to reach a rising 'stairway'. Follow this up to 'the perch stance' of *Mur y Niwl*.

**4** 70 feet. 5a. Descend a groove, below the traverse right of *Mur y Niwl*. Continue down over a small overhang until it is possible to traverse right to a jug on the arête. It is more usual to use a sling for aid on the jug, but goes at 5c free, descend to the hand-traverse of *Agrippa* pitch 2, follow this right to a stance.

**5** 70 feet. 5a. Descend five feet, traverse right to a perch, then continue up left past sloping ledges to reach a ledge. *Agrippa* pitch 3.

**6** 120 feet. 4c. Move right on to a wall then go up a groove to easy slabs and follow these to belay on the bilberry terrace; *Agrippa* pitch 4.

The Amphitheatre Wall now degenerates into a series of short rock walls and ledges.

**Limax** 330 feet Very Difficult (1955)

This route has the distinction of being the worst on the crag. To the right of *Agrippa* is a prominent pillar with a wide crack on its left; right again, is a smaller grass-topped pillar with a projecting block. Start on its left.

**1** 50 feet. Ascend grass and go over the smaller pillar.

**2** 150 feet. Trend diagonally right up or between rock walls and through lush vegetation.

**3** 130 feet. Traverse left into a gully chimney. Climb it to a cave then go up blocks forming the cave and take the left-hand gully rib to finish.

**Carpet Baggers** 230 feet E1 (1 pt aid) (1970)

Makes the best of what rock there is. The route covers similar ground to *Limax* but accepts the challenge of the short walls and includes the steep final wall. Approximately level with the Figure of Eight on the opposite side of the Amphitheatre is a little white slab right of a rib. Start at the top of the slab.

**1** 120 feet. 4b. Climb a greasy box-shaped chimney to a ledge, then go up a shallow groove to an awkward exit and a ledge. Climb straight up for a few feet to step left delicately past a large block to another ledge.

**2** 40 feet. 4a. Scramble up leftwards then go back right to the foot of the steep final wall.

**3** 70 feet. 5b. Climb the right-hand of three grooves, with a sling for aid, to a tiny ledge. Continue up a little corner to the top.

## Pinnacle Wall

Slightly less impressive than the main wall; however, the climbing is equally good. The main face is highlighted by a horizontal quartz ledge, the 'pavement', with a cuneiform pinnacle above; the latter provides the name.

The next two routes start directly from the upper bed of D Gully. Just above the point where C and D Gullies begin to diverge, there are three short, parallel, grassy grooves up and left of the main wall. High above them is a prominent overhanging nose.

**Clean Rib** 120 feet Very Difficult (1944)

Pleasant enough once the rib is gained. Start at the foot of the left-hand of the three grooves. Ascend the groove to a little bay left of a rib, step right and climb a little slab to the rib, then continue up the edge to a ledge.

Belay possible, but it is best to continue pleasantly up the rib to finish left of the nose.

**Skyline Chimney** 120 feet Difficult (1944)

Not the obvious chimney high on the crag, but the one immediately right of the prominent nose. Start at the base of the right-hand of three grooves.

**1** 60 feet. Climb the groove to belay under a small square overhang on the left.

**2** 60 feet. Move right and climb an open chimney, then step left and go up a cracked wall just right of the final chimney, or strenuously climb the chimney itself!

The next routes start from a subsidiary recessed terrace just up and left of the main bilberry terrace. This is gained by a tricky traverse in from the gully. The terrace has three corners.

★**Gettysburg** 160 feet Hard Very Severe (1969)

A strenuous route that takes an impressive line through some large overhangs. Start at the base of a steep slab below the overhang, between the left and central corners at a rib.

**1** 110 feet. 5b. Awkward moves up the slab lead to a step right into a niche beneath the first overhang. Surmount the overhang above with a struggle, continue to the second smaller overhang and pull round to a corner which is followed to a third overhang. Step left and go up to a stance.

**2** 50 feet. 4c. Climb a steep wall directly above the belay trending right to a ledge. Move left and go up two steps to the top.

★★**The Grimmitt** 160 feet Very Severe (1938)

A fine climb, taking in some steep ground. Start at the right-hand corner under a large sloping roof.

**1** 110 feet. 4c. Ascend an obvious corner groove to a cave, pull out left of the cave into another corner, then follow this until forced left to a narrow groove (crux). Bridge up past the overhang then climb easily and go out left to grass, belays up and right.

**2** 50 feet. 4b. Traverse left round an arête, go up a steep rough wall, then step left to a wide crack and follow this to the top.

★**Excalibur** 160 feet E2 (1981)

Reasonable climbing with one exciting swing round an arête. Start as for *The Grimmitt*.

**1** 110 feet. 5b. Follow *The Grimmitt* until it is possible to move right above the second overhang to the base of a shallow groove. Move up to a small overlap and pull round rightwards, in an exposed position, to reach a sloping ledge. Follow the crack above to a large grassy stance.

**2** 50 feet. 5a. Climb straight up to the obvious groove in the wall behind the stance, enter this and follow it to the top.

★**Spiral Scratch** 170 feet E2 (1983)

A good route up the slender pillar of rock right of *Excalibur*. Start as for *The Grimmitt*.

**1** 120 feet. 5b. Follow *The Grimmitt* for 12 feet and traverse right above the overhang to reach the arête; ascend this via a tiny ramp, hidden nut runner, to an overhang. Climb the overhang on the right to a ledge on the edge of the pillar, move up to a peg then go right and up the centre of the wall on good holds to a large stance.

**2** 50 feet. 4c. The arête on the right leads to easy ground.

The next routes start from the bilberry terrace, which is gained either by climbing a route on the lower wall, or a difficult access line below the left-hand end of the bilberry terrace.

★★**Pinnaclissima** 150 feet E2 (1969)

Continually interesting climbing on superb rock makes this route one of the best on these walls. Start under the left-hand of the quartz pavement where a line of weakness leads up to a short left-facing corner.

**1** 50 feet. 5b. Surprisingly strenuous climbing up the corner leads to a difficult move to gain the quartz pavement; belay at the base of the corner to the right.

**2** 100 feet. 5c. Bridge up the corner, small wires protect, past an overlap to reach the base of a wide crack. Follow the crack, not without amusement, to reach a horizontal break 10 feet below the top of the pinnacle. Traverse left to join *Pinnacle Wall* and follow this to the top.

**Ancient's Wall** 170 feet E3 (1962)

Artificial, but with some steep and absorbing climbing. Start 20 feet right of *Pinnaclissima* at a shallow right-facing corner under two overhangs.

**1** 80 feet. 5a. Climb the corner, then swing out left and go up the wall on jugs (bold) to reach the quartz pavement. Protection must be arranged for the second before moving right to belay at the right-hand end of the pavement.

**2** 90 feet. 5c. Move left and go up into a scoop, then step left and pull up to another ledge. Move right and swing on to the arête and so another ledge and a flake. Sidestep to the left end of the ledge and pull up and over a bulge to a crack and poor peg, wires beneath. Either traverse left with difficulty to enter a groove, or pull directly in to the groove, follow this to the top.

★★**The Haunted** 170 feet E5 (1983)

An exacting route, both bold and technical. Start at the foot of the ramp as for *Pinnacle Wall*.

**1** 80 feet. 5c. Climb directly up the wall on good holds with one long reach to gain the quartz pavement, unprotected. Arrange protection on the pavement for the second and move left to belay in the corner of *Pinnaclissima*.

**2** 90 feet. 6a. Difficult moves up a rib to the right of the corner lead to an overlap, surmount this and follow a flake crack rightwards to its end. Move left along a thin seam to reach a peg. Bold and sustained climbing up the thin cracks above prove to be the crux.

★★**Pinnacle Wall** 230 feet Severe (1931)

A great classic with an unusual indirect line. Start under the right-hand end of the pavement where a bilberry ramp/corner descends diagonally leftwards to reach the terrace.

**1** 40 feet. The ramp/corner leads to a stance.

**2** 90 feet. Climb up 10 feet to reach the quartz pavement and traverse across to its left. An awkward step past a crack leads to a good belay under a groove.

**3** 100 feet. Follow the groove for 30 feet, then trend diagonally up right to the apex of The Pinnacle, step left and finish up a slab.

Variation Finish 110 feet Hard Severe (1971)

**3a** 60 feet. 4a. Climb the groove above the stance then move a little awkwardly left into a small groove and go up it.

**4a** 50 feet. Go diagonally right up a grassy groove and take a mossy slab to finish.

★★**Sea of Dreams** 340 feet E3 (1983)

An exciting right-to-left girdle of the Pinnacle Wall. Start as for *Pinnacle Wall*.

**1** 50 feet. Climb the ramp and short wall above to belay at the right-hand end of the quartz pavement.

**2** 90 feet. 5c. Move up and left into a scoop, step left and pull up past a ledge to reach another ledge with a flake. Descend from its left-hand end and traverse left with difficulty to reach the descending flake crack.

Hanging stance in the corner of *Pinnaclissima*.

**3** 30 feet. 5b. Traverse left around the arête to join *Pinnacle Wall* at a good flake belay.

**4** 40 feet. 4b. Descend the slab to a stance and peg belay.

**5** 90 feet. 5b. Move out left and go up to a ledge. Continue left to the arête and step up and left again to a shallow groove. Continue more easily to the large corner of *The Grimmitt* and belay on a grass ledge at its top.

**6** 50 feet. 4b. Traverse left round the arête and ascend the steep wall and a wide crack on the left to the top.

## North Crag

### The Great Buttress

Although this section of the cliff is very large, it is also very disappointing. There is a serious lack of continuity and both approaches and exits are frequently long and tedious. There are two major gullies; Vanishing Gully, which does, and Great Gully, which is.

The first three climbs all finish inconveniently short of the crag top, making long uninteresting scrambles inevitable. Experienced parties may prefer to traverse left at a convenient point and descend easily, if precariously, into the lower part of The Amphitheatre.

**Low Climb** 130 feet Very Difficult (1910)

A poorly situated climb. Approximately 100 feet above the toe of the ridge flanking the right-hand side of The Amphitheatre is a short kinked chimney between a detached block and the main part of the crag. Start some 40 feet below the chimney at a mossy glacia adjacent to the scree.

**1** 60 feet. Cross the glaxis, go over a block and up a cracked slab and heather to the chimney, which is climbed.

**2** 70 feet. Ascend easy-angled slabs, then to a bollard. Continue to an overhang and turn it on the right, using small holds, to a poor grass stance. Continue 15 feet to a good ledge. Endless scrambling remains.

**★Nether Climb** 360 feet Severe (1938)

An absorbing climb, the best in this area of the crag apart from *Great Gully*. It takes a rib just to the left of *Vanishing Gully*. Start just right of the lowest point of the rib forming the left-hand wall of the gully, by a small tree.

**1** 100 feet. Ascend a short wall above the tree to an arête. Go pleasantly up the arête to the foot of a V-groove.

**2** 90 feet. Move out left and pull up on to a mossy little slab, go up it and step right across the V-groove. Continue to the edge and follow it, then move left and scramble up right to belay among boulders behind a prow of rock.

**3** 70 feet. An easy slab leads to a diagonal crack in a steep wall, follow it right to an arête and climb this to a ledge.

**4** 100 feet. Climb a clean groove on the right for 20 feet then go up the steep left wall, with good finishing holds, to a grassy rake leading right. From the rake, step down on to a mossy slab and traverse right below a steep wall to an easy break. Belay well back.

**Vanishing Gully** 350 feet Very Difficult (1904)

After quite a good start this gully fades out among the broken rocks and vegetation of the upper part of the buttress. This is the first gully to the right of *The Amphitheatre* and from most vantage points is much more obvious than its neighbour, *Great Gully*. The cave on the second pitch is easy to identify.

**1** 50 feet. Pass a grass-crowned jammed block on the right, and continue up grass and ferns to a cave.

**2** 50 feet. Climb out of the cave and climb a grass ramp to a comfortable hole.

**3** 60 feet. Climb a fine chimney, easily at first then more steeply. It gives out on to a ledge on the left. Move back and go over some chockstones.

**4** 60 feet. The gully narrows to a cleft and is steep. Either work up the back of the recess behind the uppermost chockstone. Or, chimney up outside and finish over the chockstone.

**5** 130 feet. The gully finishes. The easiest line above trends right, then comes back to the centre of the Buttress.

**★★★Great Gully** 725 feet Very Difficult (1900)

A great classic, undoubtedly one of the best gullies in Wales, seldom rivalled for atmosphere and character, culminating with a difficult final pitch. From the base of *Vanishing Gully* ascend the scree to the right for about 200 feet, to a cavernous gully entrance. Scramble up the gully bed for about 150 feet, skirting the first mossy step on the right to the initial obstacle.

- 1** 90 feet. A short crack on the left, past a jammed stone, leads to 80 feet of scrambling.
- 2** 120 feet. Another big chockstone is surmounted on the left, then 100 feet of scrambling lead to a belay under...
- 3** 60 feet. The Door Jamb (without the help of a snow bank or a Human Pyramid?). Then climb a short steep groove on the right, passing a ledge on the left, to a larger one. Walk back left into the gully bed.
- 4** 35 feet. Go directly up the gully bed, or better, climb a deep 40-foot chimney and a crack on the right, moving out left into the gully bed near the top.
- 5** 45 feet. The Chimney. This is climbed awkwardly facing right until a platform on the right is gained, or go direct to the top.
- 5a** 45 feet. Ascend a crack in the right wall of The Chimney.
- 5b** 65 feet. Avoiding The Chimney is much easier. About 20 feet lower down, the right wall is climbed via a big flake. A muddy path leads right then back left to a platform above. Misses out the fun.
- 6** 110 feet. Go up a groove on the right, then an 80-foot walk on stones.
- 7** 200 feet. Climb a narrow sloping chimney on the right of a rock rib, or surmount two mossy chockstones on its left. After 60 feet of scrambling go over a big jammed stone to another stone.
- 8** 15 feet. Climb an awkward undercut chimney on the right of the stone, or the right wall starting slightly lower, then step into the top of the chimney. Or, the chimney left of the stone is even harder.
- 9** 50 feet. The Great Cave Pitch, the crux and rightly so. Go up the left wall of the cave with difficulty, then traverse left to the outer of two chockstones. A tremendous ending to a stimulating outing.

#### Variation Finishes

For non-climbers and non-Gallios.

#### **Left Wall Exit** 70 feet

**8a** 70 feet. Part way up pitch 8 there is a strenuous slanting chimney with blocks; climb this to the top.

#### **Right Wall Exit** 70 feet

**8b** 70 feet. Climb the broken chimney opposite the previous one then broken ground to finish. The least satisfactory finish.

The next three routes commence from the Great Gully, in the vicinity of 'The Chimney', pitch 5. The obvious approaches are to ascend or descend *Great Gully*.

#### **Great Gully Pinnacle Direct** 100 feet Very Severe (1960)

Start 50 feet below 'The Chimney'. In the steep left wall of the gully is a corner crack leading to an obvious block pinnacle.

- 1** 80 feet. Ascend the corner crack, easy but greasy. Rickety block belay on a saddle.
- 2** 20 feet. Climb the right-hand edge of the pinnacle and descend the same way.

**Invisible Chimney** 130 feet Difficult (1938)

A series of good short chimneys gives sustained interest. Start up the right wall flake pitch 5b of *Great Gully* and follow the muddy path right, but instead of traversing back left continue past a clump of ferns to a short chimney.

**1** 45 feet. Go up the chimney bed, past a jammed boulder, to a mossy cave. A deep twisting chimney leads behind another block in the bowels of the mountain and emerges at a pile of boulders.

**2** 60 feet. Go through a small hole on the right, then straight up a wet chimney to where it steepens. Back-up past tiers of blocks to a deep recess.

**3** 25 feet. Ascend a steep enclosed chimney, then move out from beneath a roof to two jammed stones and a grassy ledge on the right. Scramble to the ridge.

**★Great Gully Wall** 220 feet E2 (1 pt. aid) (1967)

A strenuous and continuously interesting route. Above 'The Chimney' pitch of the gully is a large, shallow scoop, capped by an overhang, in the left wall. Spike belay and well-appointed platform at the top of 'The Chimney'. There is a wet mossy cave immediately on the left.

**1** 60 feet. 5a. Traverse out left for a few feet, then go up to an uncomfortable belay ledge below and to the left of the overhang.

**2** 100 feet. 5b. Traverse right, then cross the scoop to a point above a perched block on the right. Using a thin peg in a horizontal crack, move up to a muddy pocket, and continue traversing to a blunt arête. Climb a wall above, trending right, to belay on the second of two pulpit ledges.

**3** 60 feet. 5a. Follow an obvious line to gain an overhanging crack. Layback up it, and continue up a corner to the top. Scramble off.

To the right of *Great Gully*, the crag becomes very broken and unsatisfactory. One route has been recorded.

**Shean Treuse** 520 feet Very Severe (1941)

The climbing is quite good and varied, but its position detracts from the interest and there is a break at mid-height. High up and to the right of *Great Gully* is a substantial buttress of steep rock with slabs to its right. Above the slabs is a massive block overhang, the most distinctive feature hereabouts. Scramble up *Great Gully* for 150 feet, then traverse right along a heather terrace to the right-hand side of the steep buttress. The massive overhang is directly above. Belay at the foot of a wet vegetated groove.

**1** 125 feet. 4b. Step left and go up a little rib to a heather ledge. Traverse diagonally left round an awkward bulge, then go up to a ledge. Step up right to yet another ledge, then climb a steep wall. A bold pull leads into a short groove left of a block, then get on to the block. Vegetation leads right to the foot of a 10-foot groove.

**2** 100 feet. 3b. Ascend the groove, then walk diagonally left across a broad heather terrace, *The Dancing Floor*, to belay at the foot of the big slab.

**3** 125 feet. 4a. Go diagonally left across the slab, to the foot of a stepped crack in the left wall. Most of the vegetation can be avoided.

**4** 80 feet. 3b. Climb the stepped crack to a chock thread, then trend right up a grass rake until a break on the left can be climbed to ash trees.

**5** 90 feet. 4c. Climb a crack on the right, move on to the right wall just below a small grass-floored cave, then awkwardly climb up into the cave. Continue up a crack to a short groove which is avoided on the right. Only scrambling remains.

Approximately 100 yards right of Great Gully is Moss Gully which serves only to define the northern boundary of the crag.

## **The Obelisk or Craig yr Ysfa Pinnacle**

Some 300 yards north of Great Gully, amongst the broken rocks beyond the main crag, is a short wide gully where The Obelisk is situated. There are several alternatives leading to the summit none of which exceeds 40 feet in length.

# Index

---

Aaron	38	Central Ridge	47
Agrippa	81	Central Route (Carreg Mianog)	52
Alouette	43	Central Route (Craig Lloer)	45
Amadeus	81	Central Route (Llech Ddu)	18
Amphitheatre Buttress	74	Central Slab Route	25
Amphitheatre Rib	78	Cerebus	22
Amphitheatre Slab	60	Chimera	7
Ancient's Wall	85	Chimney Buttress	49
Angle Groove	68	Cirque Rib	69
Angle Gully	53	Clean Rib	83
Another Route	41	Cluck's Nook	43
Anubis	22	Clustfeinydd	57
Anvil Cracks	59	Cobweb Wall	70
Apprentice's Route	37	Cockroach Crack	76
Arch Gully	69	Coffin Scoop	77
Arch Wall	69	Commuter's Crack	27
Askant Chimney	23	Corridor Gully	16
Aura	80	Covent Garden	30
Autumn Buttress	60	Crack and Corner	52
Avalanche Buttress	71	Crack, The	79
Avalanche Gully	74	Cracked Arête, The	51
B Gully	78	Cradle Chimney	77
Band Stand	60	Crawl Climb, The	52
Banister, The	67	Cuckoo Groove	42
Beaumont's Chimney	73	Cupid's Inspiration	17
Bending Gully	70	Custodian's Creep	39
Biceps Wall	53	D Gully	78
Billingsgate	31	Day-tripper	32
Birch Tree Chimney	71	Dead Calm	31
Bird's Wing Buttress	59	Deasel	37
Bivouac Buttress	48	Decameron Rib	40
Black Chimney	60	Digitalis Direct	39
Blitzkrieg	20	Dover Road	76
Blue Sunshine	38	Drought	77
Boccaccio's Start	40	Earth Summit	50
Broadsword	56	Eastern Arête, The	46
C Gully	78	Eastern Gully	7
Cadwaladr	57	Eastern Ridge, The	7
Cannon Ball	12	EEC	31
Cannon Rib	13	El Niño	76
Carpet Baggers	83	Elliw	27
Cave Route	15	Endor	23
Central Gully	9	Enigma	73

## 92 Index

Excalibur	84	Jester, The	28
Extrovert	37	Joyce	38
F Sharp	37	Juno	10
Faenaldo	81	Jupiter	10
Far East Chimney	15	K.C. Route	42
Figure of Eight	75	Kirkus's Route	46
First Trinity Groove	46	Knee Cap	54
Flanders	10	Laughing Finish, The	27
Fourth Dimension, The	24	Launcelot	56
Funny Bone	54	Lazy Sunday	41
Funny Bone Variation	54	Lectern Grooves, The	43
Garden Cracks	64	Left Gully	44
Garden Wall	64	Left Wall Exit	88
Gargoyle	39	Let Your Feet Hang	37
Gawain	56	Limax	82
Gawain Direct	56	Lining Crack	44
Georgie Lad the Bricklayer	36	Llywelyn Ein Llyw Olaf	55
Gettysburg	84	Low Climb	86
Girdle Traverse of the Lower Amphitheatre Wall	82	Low Wall	30
Gomorrah	68	Marathon	19
Good Egg	45	Mare's Nest Climb	7
Great Arête, The	20	Meibion Glyndwr	15
Great Corner, The	24	Meillionydd	57
Great Gully	87	Mitre	54
Great Gully Pinnacle Direct	88	Moonrise	45
Great Gully Wall	89	Mordred	57
Grimmett, The	84	Morgan La Faye	57
Griseofulvin	80	Moss Wall	52
Groove, The	19	Mother Earth	50
Grooved Ridge	48	Mother of Mercy	81
Gully, The	29	Moving Moss	50
Gwdihw	42	Mur y Niwl	80
Gwynhyfryd	57	Mur y Niwl Direct	81
Gytrack	22	Nameless Rib, The	78
Haunted, The	85	Nether Climb	87
Heron Slab	71	North Arête	48
Herostratus	23	One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest	77
Hhier	45	Original Route	72
Hoyland's Route	9	Pat's Crack	42
Humour	26	Patience	41
Introvert	35	Pectoral Wall	53
Invisible Chimney	88	Pegasus	7
Iota	16	Pentangle	55
Jacob's Ladder	8	Petticoat Lane	31
Jane (If she doesn't mind)	54	Pieces of Eight	75
Jason	10	Pillar Traverse, The	25
		Pinnacle Gully	67

Pinnacle Ridge Route	39	Solid Air	79
Pinnacle Wall	85	Spiral Route	68
Pinnaclissima	85	Spiral Scratch	84
Pinnaclissimo	54	Staircase	58
Plumbagin	79	Staircase, The	67
Pont Pen y Benglog Buttress	35	Stone Chat	43
Premiere	62	Straight Chimney	32
Primitive Route	17	Straight to the Heart Start. The	18
Primrose	44	Surrogate Soils	49
Psychlist, The	16	Sweating Peat	49
Puffin	58	Temper	53
Pyramid Gully	8	Temptation	41
Redstart	52	Third Trinity Groove	47
Reed Rake	76	Time Served	36
Rib, The	46	Top Storey	32
Ribbon, The	17	Tramline Traverse	53
Right Chimney	54	Trident Route	59
Right Gully	44	Trindod	28
Right Wall Exit	88	Troglodyte	73
Ring of Scorpio	36	Truant Rib	66
Ring Ouzel	43	Turn the Centuries, Turn	80
Roughcast Flutings	14	Tyromancy	38
Roughcast Wall	13	Vanishing Gully	87
Route 1	41	Venom	23
Route 2	42	Vin Ordinaire	62
Saint Laurent	35	Waterfall Gully	64
Salt of the Earth	50	West End	28
Scarface	19	West End Buttress	14
Scarface/The Groove Finish	18	Western Gully	11
Sea of Dreams	86	Wet Roots	49
Second Trinity Groove	47	Whirlwind	76
Sentry Box Crack	75	Whole Earth	50
Shean Treuse	89	Widdershins	36
Sheep Pen Buttress	61	Wit	26
Shelf Edge	40	Witterer	26
Shrapnel	21	Y Blaidd	61
Sigma	73	Y-Chimney	28
Sirius	22	Y-Chimney Direct	28
Skid Row	23	Yellow Chimney	63
Skyline Chimney	83	Yr Wydd Grug	18
Slab Climb, The	71	Ysgyrnygu	61
Slab Route I	49	Zenith	24
Slab Route II	48	Zip Groove	51
Smithfield	31	Zip Wall	51
Snuff	29	Zippo	52