

Wynd Cliff

OS Ref ST 527 973

Wynd Cliff is the set of sunny crags visible from Wintour's Leap, the traditional pair appearing high on the hillside as you round a bend approaching the Forestry Commission Lower Wyndcliff car park and picnic area when driving north on the A446. The place has been a popular beauty spot since the construction of the 365 Steps path up to the Eagle's Nest lookout for the Duke of Beaufort in 1828. As the information board in the car park observes, 'The view from the Eagle's Nest lookout has to be one of the best in the Wye Valley. Look across the bend in the Wye to see the rocks of Wintour's Leap, the Severn bridges and estuary and, on a clear day, the Cotswold and Mendip hills.' It's true, and that's one reward you get from the belay at the top if you lead.

These two upper crags are left and right respectively, of the 365 Steps path, which serves as an approach and useful descent. The climbing is steep and sustained with the best of the routes following strong natural lines such as grooves or cracks, safe and sound on the right, more adventurous and exciting on the left. They are all single pitch but they have a big feel to them. The grades range from Severe to mid Extreme, so there's something for everyone except those looking for E5s.

To the right and only just above the road is Wyndcliff Quarry, containing predominantly short sport climbs for sunny evenings or when the upper crags are wet. A mile along the road towards Tintern is the smaller, slightly scruffy Black Cliff Quarry with a collection of shorter and mainly easier partly or fully bolt-protected routes.

Until the late 60s, the crags lay discrete behind a relentless blanket of ivy. Viewed from Wintour's Leap, they appeared as unlikely and insignificant as, say, do the Piercefield Rocks (a little to the south) today. But when the Severn Bridge opened and climbers from Bristol and the South West started using the Wye Valley road to motor to North Wales, a close-up view from immediately below told a different tale. Frank Cannings and Pat Littlejohn investigated and had soon pulled enough ivy off to reveal the two best lines: *Cadillac* and *Qwestor*.

Cannings continued to frequent the crag with Littlejohn and various other partners for a couple of years, and several more routes followed. Clive Horsfield and Phil Watkin worked hard at the left end and between them accounted for the first seven climbs in the guide. Watkin was founder-editor of *Rocksport*, the first brave attempt at a British all-rock-climbing magazine, and early activities were well publicized, not least by Cannings, who produced an interim guide. The crag buzzed with enthusiasm and activity and for some time became the most fashionable in the Wye Valley, attracting, especially, enterprising members of the Cheltenham MC. Chris Milford was the club's leading light at the time and in 1972 extended the list with *Shaft*, *Klute*, and *Zulu*.

After this initial boom, Wynd Cliff suddenly fell quiet for four years. But at the end of the long hot summer of 76, when standards soared everywhere, E2 replaced VS as the norm and Andy Sharp made his mark. Thereafter, with Wintour's Leap documentation in better order, and later Shorn Cliff and then Ban-y-gor being opened up, the Wye Valley regulars were busy with new-routing elsewhere, finding only occasional brief forays worthwhile. The ivy started creeping back...



Climbers on the Left-Hand Crag
Sinew (HVS) and Fibre (VS)
DON SARGEANT

Climbers usually pronounce 'Wynd' to rhyme with 'binned', while locals make it rhyme with 'bind'. The locals are correct. In Middle English, *wind* is often found spelt *wynd* in both its meanings/pronunciations. Here it almost certainly refers to the sharp bends in the hillside (most notably that between the two main crags) following the winding river valley below. The 'e' at the end of 'cliff' is another relic of bygone days and seems now confined solely to the old road signpost just north of St Arvans. We have followed the OS practice of treating the Main Crags' name as two words (matching Shorn Cliff) but running it into one where it serves as an adjective before 'wood', 'quarry', 'car park'.

Though quite eye-catching from a distance, Wyndcliff Quarry had been dismissed as loose and insignificant, but it possessed two major virtues: immediate accessibility and seemingly permanent sunshine, which in 1990 inspired Gordon Jenkin, Andy Tallant, and others to make available some fun routes – with bolts. A few years later, Pete Riley, involved with forestry work in the area, climbed a string of rather-less-fun routes – without bolts. Martyn Cattermole took time out from Tintern Quarry to switch the emphasis back to sport climbing here, and also discovered Black Cliff Quarry up the road. This was when the rumpus occurred, and the two quarries were quarantined until 2003.

The year 2006 saw a late flourish as Tim Wilkinson, charged with putting the Wynd Cliff house in order for the guide, and Jenkin, regearing his earlier routes for posterity, started working the remaining quarry possibilities. Martin Crocker, perhaps in reaction to spending three consecutive winters at dizzy heights restoring the grand rocks of Cheddar and GO Wall, walked past one day and saw what was going on. Never afraid to use bolts when he considers they will enhance the climbing, he takes delight in demonstrating an even greater enhancement in unexpectedly doing without them.

Wynd Cliff

The Main Crags

The routes have undergone a process of 'natural selection' over the years with the poorer routes seeing little traffic and being reclaimed by vegetation and, conversely, the better ones receiving more attention, staying clean, and even a getting little polished. As a consequence of the above, in addition to a more dedicated programme of refurbishment, all of the routes described here in full are in good condition at the time of writing and their quality and popularity should keep them that way.

These crags are generally refreshingly free of *in-situ* protection but what little there is was checked in 2005/6 and replaced if critical and practical.

The Left-Hand Crag faces south-east and the Right-Hand Crag faces south-west, so they make a great winter venue, though the trees tend to shade the latter a little more than the former.

The simplest approach is from the Lower Wyndcliff car park. Across the road is a track. Pass its barrier; then turn right (facing a small old quarry) and follow the 365 Steps path as it zigzags up through the woods, and in less than ten minutes the crags will appear through the trees.

- For the Right-Hand Crag, leave the path sharply rightwards on a straight section before it passes amongst some rocks. Then follow rough rocky steps up to the foot of the crag.
- For the Left-Hand Crag, leave the path leftwards at a bend after a set of railings where there is a three-trunked tree, a yew, and a boulder. Then contour over mossy boulders to the right-hand end of the crag.

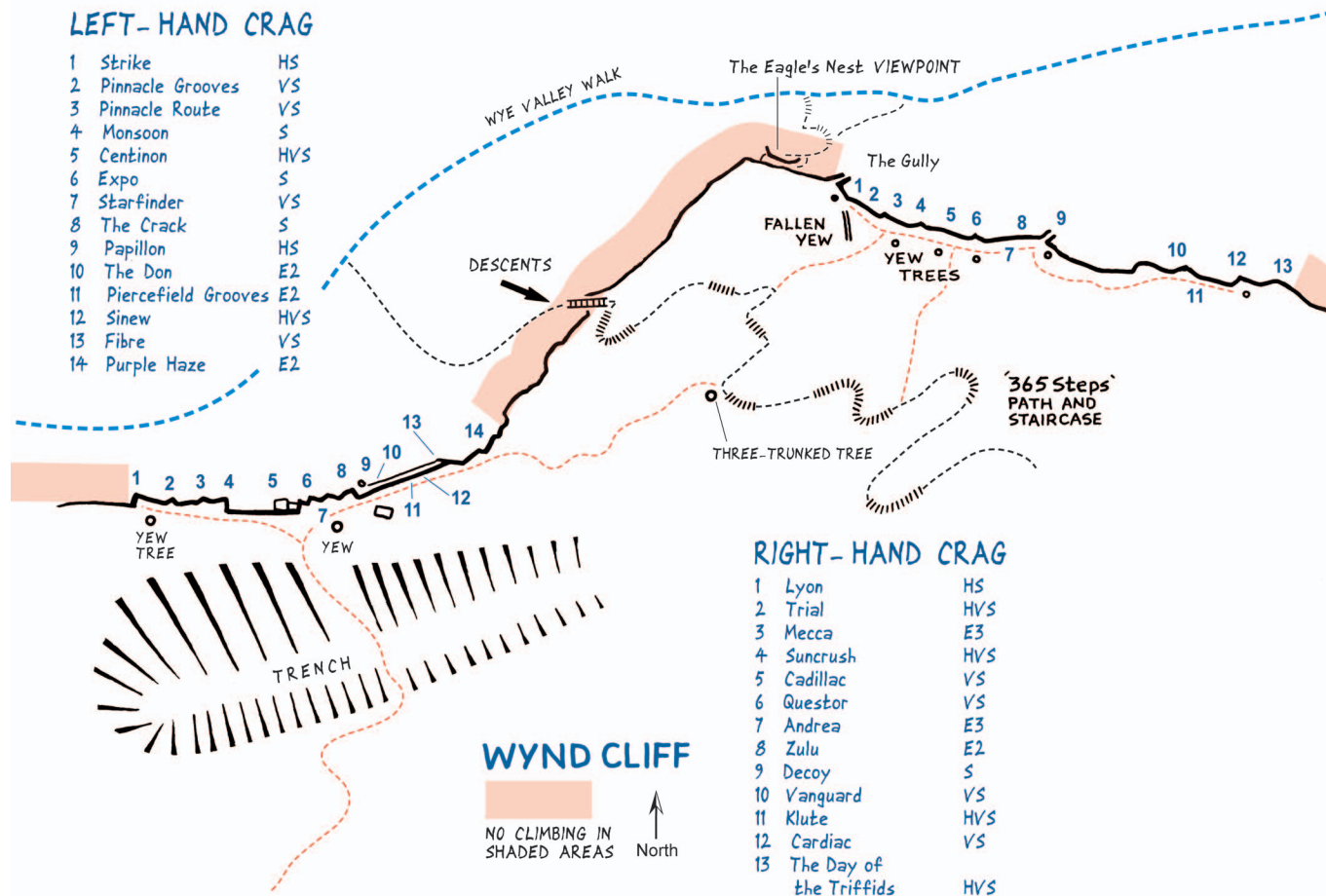
The same routes can be reached from above if you park in the Upper Wyndcliff car park and follow the Wye Valley Walk northwards towards (but not quite to) the Eagle's Nest, and then descend the steel staircase at the top of the 365 Steps path. The Left-Hand Crag can also be reached by scrambling up through the small old quarry just past the barrier, and then through the woods to a large trench, which is crossed leftwards to the foot of the crag, but this can be confusing on a first visit.

LEFT-HAND CRAG

1	Strike	HS
2	Pinnacle Grooves	VS
3	Pinnacle Route	VS
4	Monsoon	S
5	Centinon	HVS
6	Expo	S
7	Starfinder	VS
8	The Crack	S
9	Papillon	HS
10	The Don	E2
11	Piercefield Grooves	E2
12	Sinew	HVS
13	Fibre	VS
14	Purple Haze	E2

RIGHT-HAND CRAG

1	Lyon	HS
2	Trial	HVS
3	Mecca	E3
4	Suncrush	HVS
5	Cadillac	VS
6	Questor	VS
7	Andrea	E3
8	Zulu	E2
9	Decoy	S
10	Vanguard	VS
11	Klute	HVS
12	Cardiac	VS
13	The Day of the Triffids	HVS



To descend from the routes, either abseil from the trees on the lip of the crag, or top out by scrambling up to the higher paths in the woods, and then descend the steel staircase.

Some of the exits on the right-hand side of the Left-Hand Crag have been somewhat unfairly likened to vertical jungles in the past. However, during the preparation of this guide all exits were thoroughly cleaned, and knotted ropes have been attached to the nearest substantial tree on the worst to safeguard a top-out.

Wynd Cliff

Left-Hand Crag

The crag is divided above its lowest point by a large, brambled ledge-system, left of which is a series of corners, grooves, and cracks. To the right are more pronounced grooves, which give substance to the better climbing on this cliff. From the lowest point, a path leads up left to a large yew tree just right of vegetation, which is an ideal base for routes on the far left section of the crag.

Climbing is restricted to the area between *Strike* on the left and *Purple Haze* on the right. Any climbing outside this area will seriously threaten access.

One route was climbed outside the permitted climbing area but should not be attempted. **Q.E.1.** (37m HS 9.1.72) took a groove/chimney line, leading to a flake and poor exit.

★ **Strike 40m HS 4b** (3.10.70)

The obvious, right-facing corner to the left of the large yew is followed to a ledge on its right. Climb up to beneath an overhang; then traverse back left, taking care with the dubious flakes above. (This point can be reached direct from the ground at 4c.) Follow the crack to a peg on the right, and then the continuation of the crack on the left to the top.

The next two routes both have some loose or vegetated sections requiring care and experience at the grade.

Hostage 40m VS 4c (3.10.70)

Five metres right of the corner and directly behind the yew is a shattered arête. Climb the arête past several small ledges to the top of a pinnacle. Climb a steeper crack on the right to a small overhang, which is turned on the right to a blocky finish rightwards.

Pinnacle Grooves 40m VS 4c (26.9.70)

Three metres right of the yew tree is a corner. Climb the corner awkwardly to a ledge on the right of an unstable-looking overhang. Trend left to gain a ledge and, subsequently, the top of the pinnacle. Climb rightwards up a shattered wall, then left to finish as for *Hostage*.

★ **Pinnacle Route 37m VS 4c** (26.9.70)

An interesting line. Move right from the start of *Pinnacle Grooves* and climb a shallow rightward-trending corner to a pinnacle on the right, above which a flaky groove gains the oak tree on *Monsoon*. The corner on the left is climbed to a bulge, which is crossed, left then right, to finish.

Ten metres right and downslope of the yew is a small clearing below an oak tree on a ledge midway up the crag.

★ **Monsoon 40m S 4a** (13.9.70)

Nice climbing up a crack-system although the final section can be dirty. Cracks on the left lead over small ledges to the oak tree and its ledge, from where the crack on the right gains an earthy corner-system, which is followed to the top.

The combination of the first half of *Monsoon* (to the oak) and *Pinnacle Route* (to the top) makes an excellent outing on clean solid rock at VS.

The next group of routes have become heavily vegetated and are currently not viable. **Skyjack** (40m HVS 4c 13.9.70) climbed the corner on the right of the clearing and then finished rightwards. **Syrphus** (43m S 4a 19.9.70) climbed the crack 10 metres left of the lowest point of the crag.

The Main Crag

Above the lowest point of the cliff, three grooves appear above overgrown ledges. **Centinon** (43m HVS 4c 22.3.70) took the left-hand, **Expo** (43m S 4a 4.4.70) the centre, and **Umbo d'Jingo** (43m VS 4c 29.5.72) the right-hand.

Upslope a pair of short, wide cracks converge at a tree at 6 metres beneath a vegetated ramp that slopes up to the right.

Starfinder 41m VS 4c (15.3.70)

This route is on the fringes of the encroaching vegetation and was viable at the time of writing, but may not remain so in the lower part. Climb shattered grooves left of the tree to reach the ledges, and move up thorny cracks to the top of the rickety pinnacle. From there, take a crack on the left to a ledge above, and then swing left to cracks in the right of the final groove, which are followed to finish.

Press the Panic Button 41m E1 5a (12.2.84)

A poor start and finish but with good moves up the bulging arête in between. Take the left-hand crack to the tree, and then go easily left to the toe of the ramp. Climb the crack right of the rickety pinnacle to the higher ledge on *Starfinder*. Gain a ledge up and right; then make steep moves on the left side of the bulge to another ledge. Finish by trending leftwards past suspect projecting blocks.

Mustang 41m HVS 5a (2.5.70)

Good straightforward climbing. Follow the preceding route to the first of its steep cracks; then step back right to a ledge under a groove. Sustained moves up this lead to a small ledge, from where easier grooves pass some worrying blocks.

★ **The Crack 41m S 4a**

Worthwhile for the fine upper section. Climb the right-hand of the cracks to the tree, and then go left and up the ramp to a ledge. The wide crack on the right leads to a ledge (junction with *Papillon*), from where a step back left over hollow-sounding flakes gains a groove, which is followed to the top.

Six metres right of *The Crack*, above a pathside boulder, is a deepening groove leading to a tree at 10 metres.

★ **Papillon 40m HS 4b** (4.72)

Excellent throughout but high in the grade. Climb the groove to the tree, and then step left to the left-hand of two cracks. Climb this to a ledge (junction with *The Crack*) and go right to the finishing-groove, which is exited leftwards.

To the right, a horizontal ledge runs under a clean expanse of rock to join the rising path at its right-hand end. This impressive wall contains a number of grooves and cracks, all of which give sustained climbing for their respective grades. The arêtes in between are bold and demand care as the rock is generally not above suspicion. For the first three routes, start on the left end of the ledge by traversing in from the right or, more aesthetically, by pleasant climbing from the path below.

Sundowner 40m E2 5b (1.3.70)

This takes the leftmost groove from the ledge, linking easier climbing below and above to give a nice line up the crag. It is much improved on its earlier days but is still slightly bold, protected by pegs and small wires, and on less than perfect rock. Climb the clean open groove past two pegs to a solid jug, and step left to clip a hidden peg in a thin crack. Step up; then somehow get onto the big sloping ledge above. Move left to finish up the groove as for *Papillon*.

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★ Mercury 40m E4 6a (18.9.84)

The vague groove-line between *Sundowner* and *The Don* gives sustained and serious climbing – a compelling line and something to aspire to. Climb the steep pocketed crack to where the angle eases and continue, using ledges on the left, to where the groove steepens again. Arrange protection; then race up the hanging groove, using the most solid-looking positive edges, past two good pegs to a big hold on the left. Climb to a ledge on the right and then finish carefully leftwards.

The next route takes the more pronounced central groove.

★ The Don 40m E2 5c (1.3.70)

Fantastic technical bridging up the big soaring groove. Well protected throughout. Gain the ledge below the groove proper from the left. Sustained bridging past a solid *in-situ* thread gains the ledge on the left. Climb the short crack from the ledge; then step right to follow a series of ledges that lead rightwards to an exit at a big right-pointing flake. The same point can be reached by an exposed step back across the top of the groove from the ledge on the left and moving up as for *Jezebel*.

Jezebel 40m E3 5b (7.8.90)

A bold route on suspect flakes. The critical protection is from *in-situ* pegs but side runners could also be used. From 9 metres up *Piercefield Grooves*, step left to the arête between it and *The Don*. Climb the wall to a peg and then up with difficulty to a ring peg (and small wires) using some worrying flakes. Continue carefully to a ledge on the right, and finish up a small corner behind a block to exit at the big right-pointing flake on the right.

Piercefield Grooves 40m E2 5b (17.9.76)

Below and right of *The Don* is a shallow, open corner. Gain the corner directly from the path, and follow it, taking care with the detached blocks, to its end in overhanging rock, well below the shiny peg in the bulge above. Move right to the crack/groove and smaller ledge of *Sinew* with two pegs (from an old belay), then up and left to a ledge. Step left to a groove and move up to the ledge-system, and climb a crack/groove above to exit at the big right-pointing flake.

★ Sinew 43m HVS 5a (28.2.70)

Right again is a beautiful curving crack that shifts left at one-third height and then continues to the top of the crag. Follow the crack to its end and a ledge on the right; then step back left to a crack/groove and smaller ledge with two pegs (from an old belay). Continue up the easier groove above and its right wall past a projecting block (which is much more solid than it looks from below) to exit leftwards.

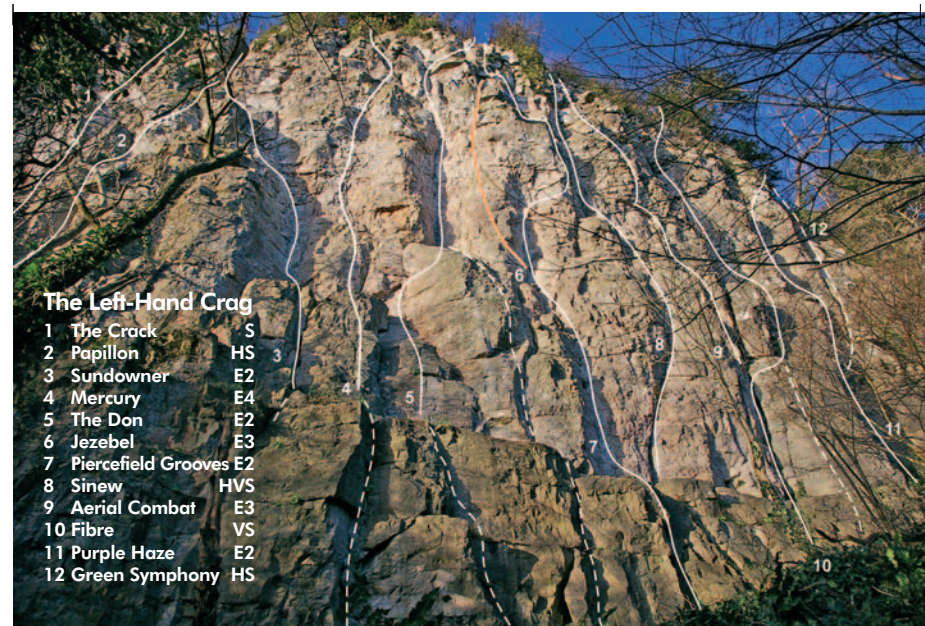
Above the right-hand end of the horizontal ledge is a deep hand-crack.

Aerial Combat 40m E3 5c (16.3.77)

Difficult and serious but worthwhile for the lower crack and the exciting bulge above. Follow the hand-crack straight up, ignoring the right-hand branch, to a big cracked ledge below a bulging wall. Arrange protection (good wires and a useless peg). Surmount the bulge boldly rightwards, using the safest-looking holds, to a ledge. Climb easier-angled rock to a break and gear placements; then trend leftwards to the projecting block and finish as for *Sinew*.

★ Fibre 43m VS 4c (1.3.70)

Steep, satisfying climbing which maintains interest almost to the top. Follow the hand-crack (or the wall/slab to its right) to a ledge on the right (belay possible). Another groove leads past a ledge to twin cracks and a jammed block under overhangs. From atop the groove and above the jammed block, go rightwards to a small tree and continue up the slabby wall above.



The Left-Hand Crag

1	The Crack	S
2	Papillon	HS
3	Sundowner	E2
4	Mercury	E4
5	The Don	E2
6	Jezebel	E3
7	Piercefield Grooves	E2
8	Sinew	HVS
9	Aerial Combat	E3
10	Fibre	VS
11	Purple Haze	E2
12	Green Symphony	HS

Purple Haze 40m E2 5b (18.4.70)

A fine technical central section leads to poorer vegetated climbing above. Start 5 metres right of *Fibre* below a short, wide groove containing a large flake. Climb the groove and the crack on the right to ledges below the obvious smooth groove. Climb the groove, with a move up the right arête, to reach broken cracks, and trend right to finish. Variations

Green Symphony 43m HS 4a

Worthwhile. Climb the groove, and then make a long rising traverse rightwards up various cracks to reach a groove at the end of the ramp and above a big ledge. Follow this groove to a vegetated ledge on the left; then climb loose cracks to the finish of *Purple Haze*.

Brown Coda (VS 4c) reached the vegetated ledge direct with an earlier departure from the traverse.

Left Wing Girdle 91m VS † (30.6.71)

This is not likely to have been climbed recently or, indeed, since the first ascent, but is described for the record. The first ascensionists' description is used and no technical grades are available. It may well be that parts are unclimbable owing to rampant vegetation.

- 1 15m Climb *Strike* and belay on a good ledge above the crack.
- 2 21m Move right past a large oak tree to belay on *Centinon*.
- 3 11m Cross the small amphitheatre, move up 3 metres, and swing right to belay below the final pitch of *The Crack*.
- 4 12m Descend 3 metres to a large ledge; move right (crux) and then up via a large, loose block (peg) to a belay on a small ledge above *The Don* and *Sinew*.
- 5 14m Spiral down a loose wall to a belay on *Fibre*.
- 6 18m Climb up 3 metres; then make a difficult move right to join *Purple Haze* just above its crux. Finish up this route.



Sundowner (E2)
Nigel Coe DON SARGEANT

The Main Crags

Right-Hand Crag

The crag is bounded on its left by a gully called, not surprisingly, *The Gully*, and is divided, roughly in its centre, by the dirty chimney of *Decoy*. Further right, after a vegetated section, is a small flat clearing, beyond which the crag continues down and right to peter out in looser, more vegetated ground.

Climbing is restricted to the area between *The Gully* on the left and *The Day of the Triffids* on the right. Any climbing outside this area will seriously threaten access.

The Gully 21m VD

Useful for access to the top of the crag though not recommended for descent. Above and left of a fallen yew tree, the steepening gully gives slightly better climbing than appearances suggest. Avoid the last steep step on the right.

Lyon (30m HS 4b 17.9.76) took the wall on the right of the gully but has now disappeared under ivy and brambles.

To the right, a ledge runs across the wall, terminating under the continuous crackline of *Trial*.

★ **Trial 23m HVS 5a** (5.7.70)
The obvious hand/fist jamming crack above the fallen yew. Climb the crack on the left of the pillar to the ledge. Then continue up the wider crack above directly to a tree.

★ **Old Smokey 24m HVS 5a** (3.4.84)
A variant on the first half of *Trial* but still worthwhile. Climb the wide chimney/groove opposite the end of the fallen yew to the right-hand end of the ledge. Then finger-jam and layback the crack on the right of the pillar to join *Trial* at the ledge.

★ **Mecca 23m E3 6a** (15.9.76)
A fun protectable struggle up thin cracks. Climb the wide chimney/groove (as for *Old Smokey*) to the ledge on the right beneath a thin crack. Make a hard move up this to gain a break with the hands and an even harder move to get standing on this (crux). Climb the leftward-trending crack and groove above with continued interest to the tree (of *Trial*).

To the right is a descending series of three equally-spaced yew trees standing 3 metres out from the base of the crag.

★ **Suncrush 24m HVS 5b** (28.2.70)
★ Excellent dynamic and spectacular climbing. Behind and a metre left of the second of the three yews is a groove/crack-system leading to an overhung niche. Arrange protection in the niche; then launch out to layback wildly up the flake crack for a few moves until a rest and more protection is gained. Follow easier cracks leading past a square block to the top.

★ **Elan 24m E3 5c** (1976)
Good, steep, strenuous, and well-protected climbing but unfortunately sometimes a little green and dusty. Start as for *Suncrush* but step right almost immediately and climb the thin finger-crack on the right to a hold behind a jammed block on a sloping ledge. Continue up the widening flake crack and join *Cadillac* to finish.

★ **Cadillac 30m VS 4c** (14.2.70)
★ The other classic of the crag, and somewhat harder than *Questor*. Behind and a metre right of the second yew is a crack-and-groove-system leading to an overhang. From here, traverse left to a ledge and then go up and back right to a junction with *Pilgrimage*. Take the groove on the left and finish rightwards.

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★ Pilgrimage 34m E2 5c (8.9.76)

Excellent climbing lower down but rather artificial higher up. Climb *Questor* for 5 metres; then follow a line of hollow-sounding flakes left to the first of two short square-cut grooves. Make a difficult move left from the first of these into the second (crux) and climb it to the cracked bulge. Surmount the bulge and climb cracks just left of the arête to the top, avoiding the groove of *Cadillac* as far as is possible. The first of the two grooves can be reached directly by climbing at the same technical grade but with poorer rock and protection.

★ Questor 34m VS 4b (14.2.70)

★ Undoubtedly the crag classic, although now a little polished, so it may seem tough. The long groove just right of the third yew runs out a little below the top of the cliff into an easy wall.

Christian 30m E2 5b (1976)

A contrived line with little to recommend it. Climb *Questor* for 5 metres until a step right can be made to a small ledge; then climb suspect, shattered rock slightly leftwards to a blind crack. Awkward moves up this crack and avoiding *Questor* allow the arête on the right to be reached. Trend up and left to finish.

The starts of the next three routes are congested and you'd be forgiven for straying slightly for holds or gear. Don't worry: the grades on all three are for what comes higher up.

Andrea 30m E3 5c (30.8.70)

Start 3 metres right of *Questor*, below a short, shallow groove. Gain this and then leave it, as the continuation groove is even more loose and flaky, for a ledge on the left (*Christian*). Climb up and into the bare groove above, and exit on the left.

★ Phoenix 34m HVS 5a (15.2.70)

Good steep climbing with just enough seriousness and exposure to warrant the grade. Climb the wall 4 metres right of *Questor* (holds straight up but gear slightly left) past some suspect rock, to a niche just left of *Zulu*. Climb the short, scruffy, right-facing corner to a ledge on the left and then the cleaner, left-facing corner above to bigger ledges. Finish up the steep crack on the right of the groove above.

★ Zulu 30m E2 5c (13.4.72)

★ A slightly bold start is rewarded by a beautiful and well-protected groove above. Climb the thin crack 6 metres right of *Questor* (gear straight up but holds slightly left) to a break and then a ledge. Enter the snaking groove above with difficulty (crux) and continue up this to the top of the prow on the right. Finish up the groove of *The Firebird* further right.

Variation

Groovy Baby (5m E3 6a 2000) leaves *Zulu* leftwards at the crux and climbs a short hanging groove to join the top of *Phoenix*.

Edge of Insanity 30m E4 5c (17.4.84)

The obvious prow: very bold, especially in the lower half. There is awkward-to-place gear en route higher up but there are side runners at arm's length in the routes either side which you'd be mad not to use. Climb the wall, on suspect holds, between the cracks of *Zulu* and *The Firebird* to a ledge. Climb a very shallow groove and then the flying fin, trying to avoid the routes on either side.

★ The Firebird 30m E1 5a (28.2.70)

★ Start a metre left of the chimney, below a thin crack, behind yet another (the fourth) yew tree. Some suspect flakes on the first wall lead to excellent climbing above. Climb the

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Zulu (E2)
Tim Wilkinson PAUL WOOD

Wynd Cliff

thin crack to a sloping ledge on the left, and step right (peg) to surmount the bulge and enter the fine groove-system above.

President Raygun 30m E4 5c (29.10.83)
Improving climbing from a very poor, bold, and insecure start. Climb the wall between *The Firebird* and the chimney to a peg, and then up using suspect rock on the right to a second peg. Move right into the chimney and, from the top, step back left onto the wall to a third peg. Then follow a thin crack up the blunt nose to a wider, flake crack leading to the top. The route can be climbed direct without a deviation into the chimney, utilizing a side runner (E4 6a).

From the chimney of **Decoy** (30m S 4a 11.4.70) the crag falls away under vegetation to re-emerge at a small clearing, under a conspicuous groove-system, and below an overhang at 18 metres. In between are four routes which have all become heavily overgrown and are no longer viable. **Wyvern** (30m VS 4b 5.5.74) took a thin crack 12 metres right of *Decoy*. **Tizer Grooves** (30m VS 4b 16.1.76) was a clean-cut groove 8 metres right of *Wyvern* and to the left of a yew tree. **Sting** (30m VS 4b 1971) climbed the wall left of a crack beside a yew tree and 6 metres left of the small clearing, then to traverse left to a ledge and finish up the steep wall by the corner on the right. **Apricot** (30m E1 5b 9.5.70) climbed the flake left of the clearing and then cracks to a groove before a traverse right to climb up past a bulge; finally it moved back left into the groove to gain an exit.

- ★ **Vanguard 24m VS 4c** (18.4.70)
Easier moves over suspect rock allow access to the fine upper groove. Start at the clearing below the groove-system. Climb the left side of the central groove to easier ground on the left. Traverse left, preferably above the detached flake. From the top of a large pinnacle, finish steeply up a groove. There is a rather pointless direct start (E3 6b 1986).

Above the central groove is the (still) collapsing overhang which gave the original finish to *Collapse Point*.

- ★ **Collapse Point 24m E1 5b** (13.10.81)
The replacement for the old *Collapse Point* takes the original line before escaping left for safer, more sensible ground. Climb the central groove to its end; then trend up and left to a shallow corner. Climb this, and exit leftwards to easier ground.

- ★ **What's Gone Is Gone 24m E3 5c** (24.1.88)
Deriving in part from the original *Collapse Point*, this route still contains much suspect rock in its upper third. Climb the groove; then continue directly to the roofs. Long reaches off flaky holds allow the roofs to be passed to a tree that is prising the crag apart. Finish up to the right.

- ★ **Shaft 24m E2 5c** (13.4.72)
★ Worthwhile for the steep and pumpy upper groove. Climb the wall 3 metres right of *Collapse Point* to blocks at 10 metres. Continue in the same line until almost within reach of the top on the right, but go left to gain the groove. Climb this with some athletic moves to good holds at its top.
- ★ **Klute 24m HVS 4c** (10.4.72)
★ The obvious crack 5 metres right of the central groove is harder than it looks but very worthwhile. Climb the crack straight up past two small ledges to the upper crack and an exit.



Klute (HVS)
Kevin Rogers · DON SARGEANT

Wynd Cliff

Blood Bank 24m E3 5c (1979)

The one that wouldn't go away. Loose rock, dusty rounded breaks, a vegetated ledge, and a friable upper wall render this route virtually unjustifiable. It takes an underprotected wander up the buttress to the right of the clearing to a thorny ledge; then moves right to join *Cardiac* for 5 metres before trending leftwards across the wall to finish.

Transfusion 24m E1 5a (24.1.88)

The hardest part of this route seems to be avoiding adjacent routes. Start below the left arête of *Cardiac*. Climb the arête, with a tricky move over the first bulge, to the large ledge of *Cardiac*. Finish up, or reverse down *Cardiac*.

★ **Cardiac** 27m VS 4c (31.8.70)

Worth seeking out: you'll be surprised how good it is. The obvious corner/groove, above a tree close to the crag, is climbed to a large ledge on the left. Continue up the groove above the ledge; then swing left under a tree to finish.

Beyond this point the crag disappears again under vegetation, though there were routes here once.

Close to the Edge (37m VS 4b 3.1.76) climbed *Cardiac* for 12 metres and then traversed left for 12 metres to a dead tree-stump on *Vanguard* and beyond to the finish of *Sting* amongst the undergrowth. **Every Trick in the Book** (18m E2 5c 8.9.87) climbed the wall 3 metres right of *Cardiac* to a short crack and moved right, then left through the overhang and under vegetation to finish. **The Day of the Triffids** (27m HVS 5a 1979) started 5 metres right of *Cardiac* below a tree embracing a block and climbed through vegetation to gain the tree and yet more vegetation above.

Violater 46m E2 (26.10.76)

Hardly a full-blooded girdle at all really, with little independent climbing; perhaps worthwhile if you've done everything else.

1 21m 5c As for *Elan*, climb the groove a short way before stepping right to climb the groove and crack above to a ledge. Traverse right (*Cadillac*), and then move up right to a ledge.

2 24m 5a Traverse right across three groove-systems to reach a fourth just left of the flying fin of *Edge of Insanity*. Finish up this groove (*Zulu*).

Two routes were climbed on the wall to the right, outside the permitted climbing area, and should not be attempted: **Don't Ask Me** (27m VS 4b † 1986) and **I Don't Know** (30m E1 5b † 1986).

Wyndcliff Quarry

Wyndcliff Quarry is the obvious roadside crag just up the A446 toward Tintern from the Forestry Commission car park and picnic area opposite Wynd Cliff itself. This crag gets all of the sun going and none of the wind. It's also the first rock to dry in the Wye Valley after rain, so it's the perfect place to spend the winter sport climbing or bouldering. In better weather though, you really should be somewhere else (such as just up the hill). The crag consists of two tiers, the Upper and Lower Lifts, which contrast dramatically in rock (and route) quality.

The majority of the routes are sport climbs, which have been recently equipped or re-equipped with stainless steel 12mm thru bolts or glue-ins. All of the abseil stations have two bolts and rings or maillons. Some of the bolt lines appear ridiculously close – the result of first ascents history or the search for solid rock. But persevere, as they all give good problems.

Wyndcliff Quarry

From the car park, walk up the road for five minutes toward Tintern (safest on the right). The crag will be seen on the left, and where it ends there is a small clearing from which a path leads back in the opposite direction to both tiers.

Descend all routes from the bolted abseil stations or trees.

Upper Lift

The Upper Lift is like any other quarry in having more than its fair share of loose rock, so all the usual precautions apply, such as not loitering under hanging blocks. The wearing of helmets is strongly advised at all times. Only the better parts of the rock have been developed and the climbs are clustered around the two ends, the left end being higher, around 15 metres, and the right being lower, around 5 metres. The majority are sport climbs in the lower grades, but the few trad routes offer some interesting harder climbing, mostly in cracks. All routes either finish at trees with slings or are equipped with bolted abseil stations for descent, as the upper slopes are unstable and the wood above is thick and impenetrable.

The Upper Lift is approached by taking the obvious path from the small clearing; then, after passing 20 metres through the shrubbery, turn sharp back right and steeply up to a path along the terrace.

At the extreme left-hand end of the terrace is a pedestal where the path runs out. The routes start here.

Pedestal Route 12m F6a [5B] (1998)

This takes the line of resin bolts starting up the pedestal. Climb the pedestal and wall above to an abseil station on the right.

Dewdrop 12m HS 4a (1996)

The discontinuous right-and-left-facing flake cracks just right of the pedestal. Climb straight up, laybacking the flakes, to an abseil station above.

Stranded No More 15m F5 [5B] (1998)

Start immediately right of the two-bolt belay at the foot of the pedestal. Follow a constrained eliminate line that just about avoids the adjacent climbs, and finish up rightwards via a short groove to an abseil station.

Not the Arête 12m F6a [5B] (1998)

The bolt-line not quite right up the arête. Pull up to the base of the arête and take the shattered crack and groove to its left for 4 metres. At the fourth bolt, swing right around the arête onto a flat hand-ledge and then make a delicate, bold-feeling move up to a large hold and an abseil station.

★ **The Arête** 12m F7a+ [5B] (19.11.06)

Great moves up the right-hand side of the arête. Pull up to the base of the arête. Stretch for a good sidehold up to the right, and then make hard moves on layaways right of the arête. Use the arête to gain the hand-ledge and finish of *Not the Arête*.

★ **Canine Crack** 15m E1 5b (23.9.90)

This takes the prominent, straight crack 2 metres right of *The Arête*. Start at the foot of the crack by the symbol K9 painted in red. Follow the crack to a rest where it eases in angle at two-thirds height. Finish straight up; then step left to the abseil station of *Not the Arête*.



Bogger Bob (E3)
Ed Heslam GORDON JENKIN

Wyndcliff Quarry

★ **Bogger Bob** 15m E3 6a (25.9.90)
The large orange sheet sports an eye-catching, central crack. Enjoyable climbing with plentiful protection makes this compulsive viewing. Start 12 metres right of *Canine Crack*. Climb the crack to a rest at mid height, and continue with increasing difficulty to the crux; then step right above to an abseil station.

Hong Kong Garden 18m E4 6b (23.11.91)
A right-to-left line across the orange sheet of *Bogger Bob*; thin and technical towards the end and high in its grade. Not cleaned or rebolted.

Shin Gi Tai 15m E4 6a (23.9.90)
A sustained, well-protected pitch gives meaty climbing up the bare face and dog-legged crack immediately right of *Bogger Bob*. Start at the foot of the small arête 5 metres right of *Bogger Bob*. Pull up the arête and step left to a sloping foot-ledge at 4 metres. Climb the wall above past a bolt to a small ledge, and reach right to place good wires in the crack. Make a hard move up the crack to stand on the ledge, and then continue more steeply (further good runners) to where an awkward reach left attains the abseil station of *Bogger Bob*.

Mark My Words 17m E3 5c † (21.1.07)
Climb the groove to the crack of *Shin Gi Tai* and pull out right into the hanging groove. Follow this to its top; then trend left to a good tree belay.

THE END 12m F6a+ (27.4.07)
A surprisingly amenable pitch that fingers the thin crack in the back of a shallow groove in the centre of the grey face. A soft touch for those with the necessary thin fingers.

All Hail Cathal 15m E1 5a (9.4.06)
Disconcerting, and high in the grade. The striking crack in the slim, orange wall 8 metres right of the *Bogger Bob* wall. Climb the crack, while showing restraint for its jammed flakes. Abseil from the tree on the lip.

★ **Sometimes I Won't Thrill You** 15m F6a+ [5B] (12.9.06)
Entertaining bridging up the obvious soaring orange groove right of *All Hail Cathal*. Climb the groove on the slabby left wall to start; then bridge to a climax where the groove steepens and a hard move is required to grab the big flake below the abseil station.

The next five routes are around the centre of the Upper Lift.

True Colours 13m HVS 4c (1999)
The obvious grey groove. Surprisingly good, and well protected with small wires. Climb the lower flake, then the groove proper. Abseil from the tree on the lip.

★ **Wilkinson's Sword** 12m F7a [4B] (19.11.06)
A barnstormingly barndooring arête. Step up onto a narrow ledge on the smooth face right of *True Colours*. Now layback the right-hand side of the arête to the abseil station on the right.

Sometimes I Think I'll Kill You 13m F7a+ [4B] (12.9.06)
Infuriatingly technical wall climbing on sandy edges avoiding the arête on the left and the groove on the right. Step up onto a narrow ledge on the smooth face, as for *Wilkinson's Sword*. Go up for a metre; then move right and up with great difficulty to the third bolt. Run for the abseil station up a series of small edges.

Wynd Cliff

There are two routes up the yellow wall 5 metres right of the preceding route; they share an abseil station.

Tight Man's Tips 10m F7a+ [3B] (19.11.06)

A good problem. Keeping left of the bolt-line, take incipient cracks straight to the abseil station. There are three undercuts en route – passing the second is taxing.

★ **Better In than Out 10m F6b+ [3B]** (9.4.06)

Short but entertaining. Climb the white wall; then swing left to an abseil station.

The next three routes are just to the right of where the path comes up to the Upper Lift.

Silver-Tongued Cavalier 6m F6a+ [3B] (1998)

Climb the right-hand side of the technical slab – harder the longer you avoid the arête – to the top and an abseil station.

Red Recess 6m F6b+ [3B] (1998)

The obvious red recess 3 metres right again is surprisingly good. Climb steeply and dynamically right, then left, to the abseil station.

Fishy Flavours 6m VS 4c (1995)

Climb straight up the flake right of the debolted arête to a spared bolt before the abseil station.

Six metres further right is the final group of shorter, easier routes on the Upper Lift.

Banana Crack 6m F5+ [3B] (1998)

The interesting-looking crack is reached via one of two starts: clip the right-hand bolt and step left, or climb straight up. Then follow the crack past a further two bolts to the abseil station.

Banana Skin 6m F5+ [4B] (1998)

Start 2 metres right of *Banana Crack*. Climb straight up; then traverse left at the third bolt to the abseil station of *Banana Crack*.

Bananarama 6m F5 [2B] (1998)

Climb cracks just left of the small corner 5 metres right of *Banana Crack* to an abseil station.

The Banana Splits 5m F4 [2B] (1998)

Climb the easy blocky groove/corner direct to the abseil station.

Little Slit 5m VS 4c (1995)

Climb the crack on the right of *The Banana Splits* (bolt); then traverse left to its abseil station.

Nice Thicket 5m F5 [3B] (1998)

Climb the ramp rightwards and then the short wall to the top, and lower off the last bolt.

Lower Lift

The Lower Lift is not much like a quarry at all. Its central section is a steep face of compact yellow limestone covered in breccia and flowstone features, like a tiny piece of Southern Spain in the Wye Valley. The routes are of a high quality, and short but very intense. Those with fixed gear are of a mix of styles from trad, with pegs and threads or minimalist bolts, to fully-bolted sport, as reflected in the grades. However, owing to the height, most can be converted to sport routes with the aid of a clipstick, or, in fact, to boulder-problems with a bouldering mat – and that's a fat one. The crag also offers the best, or maybe only, bouldering around here with an associated social scene.

Wyndcliff Quarry

All routes are equipped with (or can use) an abseil station for descent, as exit onto the terrace over loose rock could endanger those below.

The Lower Lift is approached by taking the obvious path on the left of the small clearing: after passing 20 metres through the bushes, continue straight on along the foot of the crag.

At the extreme left-hand end of the crag, where the path runs out, there is a short scruffy wall bounded by a chossy groove on the left and a dirty-looking corner-crack on the right. The following two routes are on this wall.

Chippa 10m E1 5b (1998)

Poor. Climb the dirty groove/crack, then a short wall via a flake and two bolts to an abseil station on the ledge above.

Choppa 10m E2 5c (1998)

Better. Climb the blank wall using an obvious chipped hold to the break (peg). Climb the steep wall above past a bolt to an abseil station on the ledge above.

Food for Worms 12m E1 5c (1999)

This takes the dirty-looking corner-crack on the right. The name doesn't sell it, but it is reasonable. Climb the crack to a ledge and then the corner and arête. Go left to the abseil station on the ledge above the preceding routes.

The next three routes on the face immediately right of the corner-crack are essentially boulder-problems to reach the big ledge. However, they have finishes and they are described thus. They all share an abseil station on the right.

Nice and Dry 12m E1 5b (1999)

Climb the cracked wall 2 metres right of *Food for Worms* past two pegs to the ledge. Step right and climb steeply past another peg to an abseil station on the right.

The Charlatan 12m HVS 5a (1999)

Start 3 metres right of *Nice and Dry*, at the blunt arête. Unprotected moves lead to the ledge. Then layback the unstable-looking groove/crack on the right to the abseil station or, safer, finish as for *Nice and Dry*.

Little Plums 12m VS 4c (1999)

This route should go right up the centre of the obvious steep wall to the right of *The Rotten Corner*, with a step left onto the ledge. Finish as for either of the preceding two routes.

The Rotten Corner 12m VS 4c (1999)

Not actually all that rotten. The breccia and flowstone-filled corner is followed past a peg and two threads to an abseil station on a ledge below the top.

Empire and Revolution 12m E2 6a (15.4.93)

This route should go right up the centre of the obvious steep wall to the right of *The Rotten Corner* but fails at the top. Climb easily to the first bolt; then make hard moves to the second and step right (or left) before the final headwall to finish. Continue easily over ledges up to an abseil station on the left of the ledge above.

The wall right of *Empire and Revolution* sports some weird-looking breccia formations and a fun-looking twisting crack.

Take care on the easy ground near the finishes. The routes are short and the bolts few, so a careless fall here can dump you uncomfortably close to the ground.



Still Stuck on You (HVS) Sam Trefgarne PAUL WOOD

One Tooth Short of a Smile

10m F6a+ [4B] (18.3.06)

An arching line across the breccia-splattered wall. A tricky start is followed by fun climbing on good holds. Climb directly up the improbable bare wall to big holds by the second bolt. Step right onto the short ramp and use some deep finger-slots above to reach further concretions and an easy hand-traverse to the abseil station above *Still Stuck on You*.

★ *Still Stuck on You*

10m HVS 5a (14.10.90)

An excellent natural line. Climb the twisting crack to the break. Pull carefully onto the wall above (bolt) and continue on good positive holds past another bolt to the abseil station below the top.

Kissing Moon 12m E3 5c (1998)

Start 2 metres right of *Still Stuck on You*. Climb to the left-hand end of the wide break (peg on right). Climb straight up, with a good wire out left and a cam in a horizontal break above, to the top and an abseil station out right.

★ *Finishing Touch* 12m F6b [3B]

(6.8.91)

Start 3 metres right of *Still Stuck on You*. Make a hard move up to the break. Continue with less difficulty above; then follow good spaced holds to the large ledge and an abseil station.

Sweet FA 12m HVS 4c

(14.10.90)

Nice climbing following the flowstone crackline immediately right of *Finishing Touch*. Climb directly up to reach the large ledge and abseil station on the left. Devious protection from small cams and wires.

Same Old Story 12m F6a [3B]

(25.3.06)

It would be a useful warm-up for the routes on the right if it weren't for the tricky start. Climb the bare wall right of, but avoiding, *Sweet FA* to reach the first ledge and hidden jug. Much easier climbing past a further ledge leads to an abseil station.

The Corrective Party 12m E2 6a

(19.5.91)

Essentially a one-move wonder – but before the first bolt is clipped (time for the clipstick or bouldering mat). Start 3 metres right of *Sweet FA* where the number 14 is painted in red on a flake at head height. Make a hard and spooky move to the first bolt. Much easier but still awkward climbing leads past a second bolt to the top and an abseil station on the right.

The next three routes are the best on the cliff, offering technical and fingery climbing on solid rock with solid protection.



Finishing Touch (F6b)
Claire Durant CARA TEECE



Diminishing Returns (F6c) Jo Stadden PAUL WOOD

★ **Mr Whippy** 10m F6c+ [3B] (6.8.91)

★ Just to the right of *The Corrective Party* lies the unrelenting and rather sterner *Mr Whippy*. Climb directly up the wall past the bolts to an abseil station on the right. That's it really, but much more easily said than done.

★ **Diminishing Returns** 10m F6c [3B] (19.5.91)

Start 2 metres right of *Mr Whippy*, beneath the left edge of the right-facing corner at mid height. Climb to the corner; then make a reachy move to a good hold above and left of the corner. Climb to the top and step up to an abseil station above.

★ **Miss Whiplash** 10m F6c+ [3B] (19.5.91)

★ A steep dynamic pitch up the bare wall 2 metres right of *Diminishing Returns*. Climb directly up the wall and move slightly left at about half height to gain bigger holds that lead to the top. Step up and right to an abseil station.

★ **And the Crowds Went Wild** 10m E2 5c (14.10.90)

Varied and attractive climbing on the calcite flows on the right-hand side of the wall. Start 2 metres right of *Miss Whiplash*. Some boulder-problem moves off the ground gain better edges and a small *in-situ* thread. Pull up to a good finger-pocket; then step across left to a rest and cam and nut protection. Continue steeply to a peg, and move up to the top and an abseil station above.

Less of the Ass 27m F7a [7B] † (14.4.06)

The roped girdle – the means to obtain a long pitch here. Easier alternatives are possible; and you wouldn't miss out much if you finished at the abseil station of *The Corrective Party*. Follow *And the Crowds Went Wild* to its flowstone niche (wires). Traverse intricately left, just below the level of the second bolt on *Miss Whiplash*, to gain sidepulls and *Diminishing Returns*. Continue left to the little fluting on *Mr Whippy*, make its hard move up, and relax on larger holds to the left. Traverse left and then descend a few moves before crossing *Finishing Touch* and making the last few moves on *Still Stuck on You* to gain its abseil station.

Shadows Run Black 10m E2 5c (19.5.91)

Boulder out the wall just right of *And the Crowds Went Wild* to the good finger-pocket. Bridge easily right to a bolt and a comfortable rest; then follow the calcite runnel to the top and an abseil station above the ledge.

Wyndcliff Quarry

Not the Return of Dr SquareHead 10m F5+ [3B] (7.4.06)

A short square-cut arête forms the upper right edge of the wall. It's well provisioned with ledges – if you can get onto them. Climb straight up the arête, taking the easiest line to the ledge and an abseil station at the top.

★ **A Bucketful of Suckies** 100m 6b

The low-level girdle. This fingery outing starts at *Food for Worms* and goes all the way, staying low, to *Not the Return of Dr SquareHead* (and back?).

Rightwards, beyond *Not the Return of Dr SquareHead*, the cliff is split by a horizontal ledge. This continues for 10 metres until the cliff becomes one again at an orange sandy cave with some flowstone formations above. The next cluster of micro routes are around this cave.

That One Might Be Work 9m E1 5b (1.4.06)

Climb into the cave; then pull out energetically on the calcite flakes (*thread in situ*), which are followed to the top and the abseil station on the right.

Wot! No Eric 9m F5+ [3B] (9.4.06)

A brief introduction, with congested protection, up the calcited wall immediately right of the cave. Disconcerting and snappy. Climb straight up, following the bolts, to the abseil station.

Can't 'Member 9m HVS 5a (1.4.06)

Follow the broken seam on the right throughout, with good nut and cam protection, to an abseil station on the left.

Four metres further right, past an abandoned bolt high on the right of an arête, is the final route on the Lower Lift.

Flowstone Wall 9m F5+ [2B] (1998)

A poor route. Climb the wall two metres right of the arête and behind the birch tree past an *in-situ* thread. Trend right, avoiding the loose crack on the right, to an abseil station above.