

This well-known climbing area, often referred to in the anglicised form 'The Moelwyns', stretches from **Moelwyn Bach** in the south west to **Craig Nyth y Gigfran** above Tanygrisiau. The majority of the crags sit above the Stwlan dam service road, a convenient means of access, or directly above the town. A few more recently developed crags are hidden away up in Cwm Orthin.

Most of the crags face the sun for large parts of the day and as a result they are generally quick-drying. In addition, the rock is mostly solid, pocketed and rough. These factors result in routes that are often a delight to climb and which can be climbed all year round, given favourable, meteorological conditions. Although there are many easier-angled classic climbs to be done, there are climbs in all grades up to E8. The best of the routes here are as good as anywhere.

All the crags, with the exception of **Moelwyn Bach West Ridge** and **Clogwyn Holland**, are accessed from the parking area at the start of the Cwm Orthin track. From the A496 just south of Tanygrisiau take the well-signposted turning toward the power station and follow the road

round past the head of the reservoir. Pause for a while (or longer) at the excellent lakeside cafe from which the crags can be easily viewed. Shortly after, the road switches sharply back right up the hill. Cross the bridge over the river and turn immediately left onto the Cwm Orthin road. The road becomes a rough track and arrives at the parking area (**Grid Ref. SH 683 454**). Parking can get busy - there is some limited space for vehicles back before the bridge over the river.

The path from the car park heading directly across the stream provides a short cut to the Stwlan dam service road. Otherwise, walk up the Cwm Orthin track to take the approach to your chosen crag as described in the text.

In a departure from previous guides, the crags are described in the order of approach from the parking area up the service road; clockwise round Cwmorthin; then on to **Craig y Clipiau**, **Clogwyn Holland**, and **Craig Ffridd y Bwlch** at the top of the Crimea Pass; finally the crags below **Moelwyn Bach West Ridge** with different approaches from the south or west. For each crag, the route descriptions are in left to right order.





The next section of the crag is an unbroken 18-metre high wall called **Auction Wall** which gives some excellent routes on good rock. To the right of the black streak, the pocketed wall can be climbed direct as a high-ball solo in several spots above the bog and has been claimed as a route by various parties - *Nevski Prospect E3 5c*.

### 25 Sasquatch 18m E3 5c ★

Start at the second thin crack, left of the square-topped boulder, 10 metres left of the obvious groove on the right-hand side of the crag. Climb the crack (poor protection) and its continuation to a sloping ledge. Move up the wall to a series of converging short cracks. Climb rightwards to a horizontal break and finish direct.

FA M Griffiths, P Denham 06.1978

### 26 The Thin Flim-Flan Man 18m E4 6a ★

An eliminate between *Sasquatch* and *Dislocation*. Climb the first thin crack (left of the boulder) to a narrow sloping ledge and continue up to a flake (poor RPs). Step right until below the left side of an overhang (peg). Arrange side runners on the left before climbing direct on poor pockets to a step right to finish.

FA M Griffiths, T Taylor 28.06.1995

### 27 Dislocation 18m HVS 5b ★

Start at the square-topped boulder 10 metres left of the obvious groove on the right-hand side of the crag. Climb the flake and thin crack to a ramp. Climb the continuation crack to a ledge on the right. Finish direct up the short slab.

FA R J Eddington, J F Kerry (2 pts aid) 15.10.1967

### 28 Cuchulain 18m E4 6a ★★

The thin quartz crack on the right of the boulder is compelling. A small thread helps protect the initial moves into the very thin crack which is followed to its end.

FA M Griffiths, T Taylor 18.05.1994

### 29 Louis Wilder 18m E5 6a ★★

To the right of the crack is a shallow groove above a boulder. Climb boldly and directly to the halfway ledge and the first protection. Continue direct up the centre of the steep wall above with some more difficult moves to finish above a good small wire placement.

FA M Griffiths (solo) 09.1981

### 30 Wall of Ghouls 18m E3 6a ★★

Fingery climbing up the steep wall two metres left of *Gremlin Groove*. The steep start is much harder since the demise of a large flake. A more amenable start can be made using the edge of

*Gremlin Groove*. This leads to easier climbing parallel to the groove which is joined at the vertical crack.

FA M Griffiths, C J Hicks 10.1980

### 31 Gremlin Groove 18m E2 5b

Climb the obvious V-groove to the crack, move right, and climb the short wall and slab to finish.

FA J F Kerry 08.04.1974

### 32 Rivendale 15m E3 6a ★

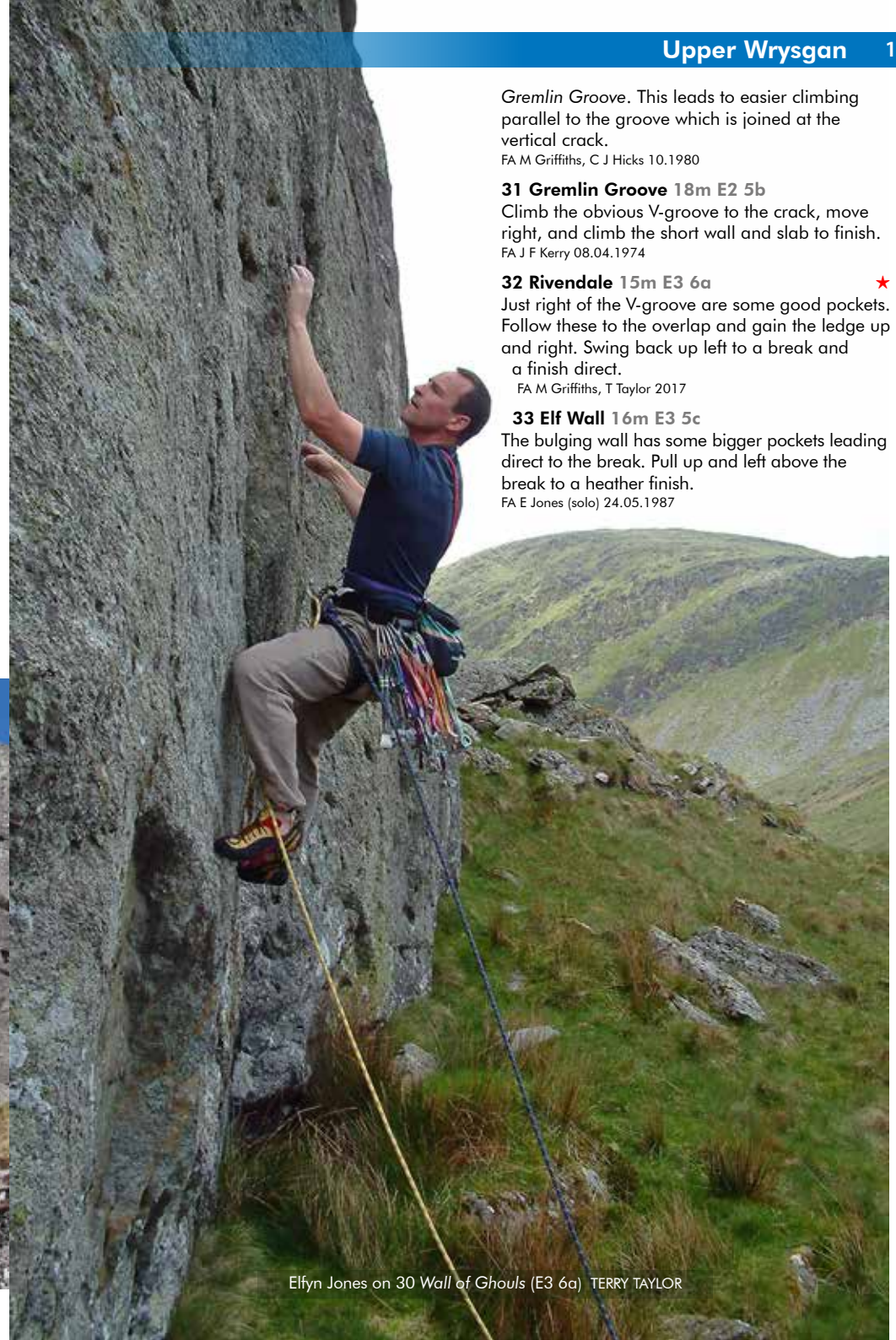
Just right of the V-groove are some good pockets. Follow these to the overlap and gain the ledge up and right. Swing back up left to a break and a finish direct.

FA M Griffiths, T Taylor 2017

### 33 Elf Wall 16m E3 5c

The bulging wall has some bigger pockets leading direct to the break. Pull up and left above the break to a heather finish.

FA E Jones (solo) 24.05.1987



Ellyn Jones on 30 Wall of Ghouls (E3 6a) TERRY TAYLOR





### Carreg y Foel Gron

Finely situated on the western fringes of the Migneint moorland plateau, this varied collection of walls and slabs provides a sunny outlook and a short approach. The rock is generally superb with high friction and protection is usually good.

The south facing **Lower Crag** is the first seen from the road. On the back of the hill are two hidden areas, **Dal y Moch** and the **Upper Tier**; while further north west lies **Far North Buttress**. The crag has long been used as a training venue by outdoor centres; but there are many more recent, and more difficult, additions.

First ascent details of many of the routes have long been forgotten. In addition, a number of the routes have been climbed and claimed by several parties.

The names given are the first recorded ascents and may not necessarily be those of the true first ascensionists!

**Approach:** Follow the B4391 from Llan Ffestiniog to the B4407 on the left, signposted Penmachno. After half a kilometre the crag comes into view. Park in the parking area on the south shore of Llyn Dubach. A brief walk brings you to **Lower Crag** with its main slabs. **Dal y Moch** is a short stroll left, and can be reached directly by the track along the north shore of the lake which also leads to **The Upper Tier**. For **Far North Buttress**, follow the miners' track to its end and contour across the hillside or left below Upper Tier.

### FAR NORTH BUTTRESS

OS Ref. SH 7400 4295 Altitude: 480m

#### 1 Mysterious Girl 16m HVS 5a ★

The wall left of the prominent arête is taken direct to finish up the open groove. Steep and satisfying.

FA N Clacher, T Taylor 15.09.2012

#### 2 End Action 18m E3 5c ★★

Climb direct from the toe of the arête to its top. The last gear is in the short, vertical, quartz crack just above halfway. Keep cool.

FA T Taylor, N Clacher 19.09.2012

#### 3 The Cement Garden 18m E2 5b ★

A direct line up the centre of the wall to the right. Start by a short groove and go direct to a narrow ledge by the holly tree. Commit to the thin vertical crack above and finish up the centre of the steep headwall.

FA N Clacher, T Taylor 19.09.2012

#### 4 Breezy Boho 15m VS 4b ★

To the right is a short sharp arête (as yet unclimbed). The short wall and groove just to the right is followed to a grassy finish.

FA T Taylor, N Clacher 19.09.2012



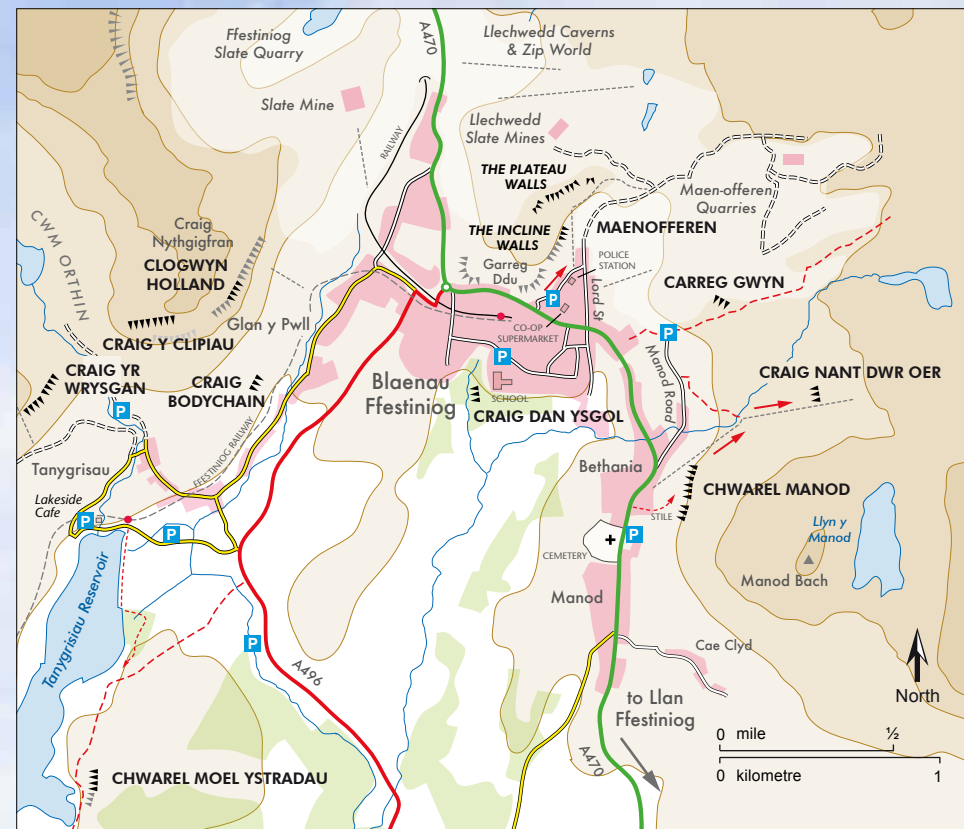
Barbara Murray on 7 *The Shark's Fin* (HS 4b) PAUL DREW  
(in the background is the approach track and Dol y Moch Buttress)





Dotted around Blaenau Ffestiniog and Tanygrisiau are a number of urban or semi-urban crags providing a different climbing experience to that on offer elsewhere in this guide. Most lie in old quarries and feature both traditional and sport climbing. Some of these venues are new but others have been frequented by local climbers for many years. Crags were developed and routes climbed, often soloed, at times not recorded and usually not widely publicised. Consequently, a number of these sites have been re-discovered and given alternative names, with routes being claimed that had already been climbed. There is an abundance of rock around Blaenau, usually in the form of short, quarried walls which continue to be developed.

Several of the crags lie on the flanks of Manod Bach, the rounded hillside to the north and east of the A470 as it passes through Blaenau, and are easily reached from the town. **Craig Bodychain** lies in Tanygrisiau, while **Chwarel Ystradau** is situated a short distance away on the south side of Tanygrisiau reservoir.



The crags are described clockwise, starting with the **Maenofferen** crags above Blaenau, past **Chwarel Manod**, out across to **Chwarel Ystradau** and finally to **Craig Bodychain**.