

The western crags of Gilwern are a very popular destination for those searching out climbing in the 5th and 6th grades. The crags are all quarried, and on the developed sectors the rock is usually reliable although the less travelled lines still have friable sections. The approach is now longer than in the past due to the road that passes the cliffs being closed because of a landslip (and looks like it is unlikely to reopen). The rockfall that has closed the road occurred between the Tyre and Ivor Biggun sectors and although this has not altered the climbs, careful attention should be paid to further instability developing.

### Conditions

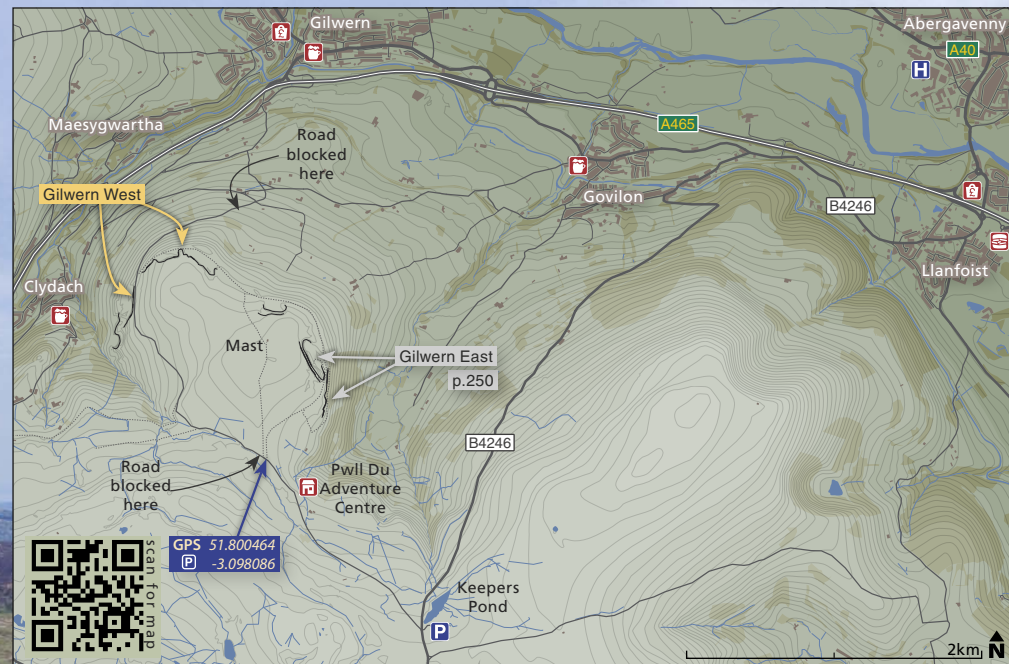
High and very exposed to the elements. Seepage can be a problem during prolonged wet spells. A good place to head for in hot weather as it is high up and catches a breeze.

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### Approach

From the A465 turn off at the Abergavenny junction and head south on the B4246 following signs to Blaenavon. Continue up the hill to Keeper's Pond, then turn right onto a minor road and follow it for 1.6km to parking just before where the road is closed and tracks leads onto the moor and a communication mast. Follow the left-hand track towards the mast and head left past it on a small path that heads down to the track that runs under the quarries/crags. Go left and the various sectors are encountered from here. Alternatively (and slightly longer) follow the blocked-off road to where paths lead off left and right to the various sectors.

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Bethan Cox getting to grips with the superb flowstone holds on *Pwll Du Crack* (6a) - p.275 - on the Main Wall the finest section of cliff at Gilwern West. This is one of the most popular climbing destinations in the region having plenty of easier and mid-grade routes. The crag, like many others featured in this guidebook, has been the focus of a rebolting program. Photo: Mark Glaister



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Not much sun  
20 min  
Windy



### Pear Buttrass

Two compact buttrasses that might prove to be useful if the other crags are busy. The routes are short but pack in the moves and most are reasonably bolted. Some of the first bolts are high and a clip-stick will be useful.

**Approach (map and overview p.269)** - After dropping down from the moor to the track the wall is at the far end of the first quarry encountered.

**Conditions** - Shady but quick drying. Seepage may occur but the rock does dry quickly after rainfall.

#### 1 Wayne Fell in Do Do ..... 4c

The narrow rib to a lower-off just left of an old chain. Weave about to find the easiest line. It is a drainage line and dirt is sometimes washed down the line at the top.

FA. P.Tucker, H.Jones 3.2012

#### 2 Jetison Bilge ..... 5a

The crack, initially sharing bolts with *Wayne Fell in Do Do*. Move right near the top to a lower-off. It is a drainage line and dirt is sometimes washed down the line at the top.

FA. P.Tucker, P.Blackburn 3.2012

#### 3 Fruitless Pair ..... 6b+

Climb direct up smooth rock to the right of the crack that features a tough bouldery sequence to start.

FA. P.Tucker, P.Blackburn 3.2012

#### 4 La Poire ..... 6b

Start up a tiny right-facing corner and then take the face above rightward to finish.

FA. P.Blackburn, P.Tucker 3.2012

#### 5 Posh and Becs ..... 6c

The wall direct passing a tiny orange niche.

FA. P.Tucker, P.Blackburn 3.2012

#### 6 Apples and Pairs ..... 6a

Follow a series of blind corners moving leftwards above them to a shared lower-off with *Posh and Becs*.

FA. P.Blackburn, P.Tucker 3.2012

#### 7 Welcome to Sport Mountain..... 4b

The first route on the narrow buttrass 25m right of the main buttrass.

FA. M.Davies 22.7.2019

#### 8 Florence Nightingale..... 3b

The groove to the right of *Welcome to Sport Mountain*.

FA. M.Davies 22.7.2019

#### 9 Iron Bolt Hill ..... 4a

The right arete of the *Florence Nighting Gale* groove.

FA. M.Davies 22.7.2019



Daniel Sadler on the technical wall climbing encountered on *Under a Blood Red Sky* (6a) - p.277 - at the Hindu Kush Area, Gilwern West. This section of the crag is typical of many hereabouts being only around 10m in height but packing in tricky moves from the first to last. Photo: Mark Glaister

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### Main Wall

The left-hand side of the main area is composed of a fine wall of flowstone which, although not very tall, offers some sustained and enjoyable pitches. The right-hand side is less appealing but the climbs are a bit more challenging than first appearances might suggest.

**Approach (map and overview p.269)** - This wall is between Pear Buttress and the Hindu Kush Area.

**Conditions** - The area is high up and exposed to the elements. Seepage may occur but the rock does dry quickly. It gets the sun from mid-afternoon onwards.

#### 1 Jug Fest ..... 5a

An enjoyable little line that starts on the far left of the wall and heads up and right and then back left on good flowstone.

FA. B.Gregory, P.Bowen 4.2007

#### 2 Black Tide ..... 5b

Climb stuck-on holds onto a black slab. Move left at the top. Care is needed with the rock in places.

FA. P.Blackburn 4.10.2016

#### 3 Porcellena ..... 5c

The groove. A steady start leads to a tricky move up the corner. Care with the rock is needed in the upper half.

FA. P.Blackburn 2.10.2016

#### 4 Destination Brynmawr .. 6a

Climb up and right into a steep right-leaning corner. Make a strenuous pull to gain a flake and finish on sometimes dirty holds to a lower-off on the right.

FA. B.Gregory 2005



#### 5 Tea Leaves ..... 6b

The left-hand arete of the flowstone face has some testing moves in its upper half where a couple of pulls up right gain better holds. Climbing the line direct is closer to 6c.

FA. B.Gregory, B.Brewer 2.2007

#### 6 Battle of the Bulge ..... 6c

The direct line up the smooth face and bulge to a lower-off.

FA. B.Gregory, B.Brewer 2.2007

#### 7 Nose Job ..... 6c+

Climb the steep calcite wall with a hidden pocket high up.

FA. P.Blackburn 6.2016

#### 8 Flow Job ..... 6b

An excellent piece of flowstone face climbing from start to finish.

FA. P.Tucker, P.Bowen 2004

#### 9 All Things Bright and Beautiful ..... 6a+

Climb up before making a hard sequence rightwards to more reasonable holds. Continue on still interesting ground to the top.

FA. P.Tucker, P.Bowen 2004. Wrongly named Christian Broke My Flake.

#### 10 Diagnosis Made Easy . 7a

Bouldery moves on a tight line. Climb directly up to and over the bulge onto the upper thin wall.

FA. B.Gregory, B.Brewer 2007

#### 11 Pwll Du Crack ..... 6a

Good climbing up the steepening line of weakness on some excellent holds. *Photo p.270.*

FA. P.Bowen 2004

#### 12 Go With the Flow ..... 6a

A worthwhile line with flowing moves up the slight rib between Pwll Du Crack and There's No Business Like Flow Business.

FA. P.Tucker, P.Bowen 2004

#### 13 There's No Business Like Flow Business ..... 5c

Climb the fine drape of flowstone. Slightly escapable.

FA. P.Tucker, P.Bowen 2004

#### 14 The Brexit Legacy ..... 6a

Climb the calcite pillar using hidden pockets. Avoid the short corner to the right at this grade.

FA. P.Blackburn, H.Charles 7.2016

#### 15 Should I Stay ..... 6b+

The first line on the right-hand wall. Climb the arete between the short corner and the groove of Article 50.

FA. P.Blackburn, P.Tucker 2016

#### 16 What, Still No Bolts ..... 6c+

The groove direct between Should I Say and Should I Go.

FA. M.Crocker 14.2.2012. Retro-bolts and also known as Article 50.

#### 17 Should I Go ..... 6b+

Climb the shallow scoop right of the Article 50 groove until a stretch up and right to a good hold provides the key.

FA. P.Blackburn, P.Tucker 15.6.2016

#### 18 Sailing to Freedom ..... 5c

Climb directly to a pocket and then up the crack above it.

FA. P.Blackburn, H.Charles 8.2016

#### 19 Whatever Floats Your Boat ..... 6a

A delicate step left leads to a groove and finish.

FA. R.Hayes, P.Bowen 2007

#### 20 A Paddock Full of Ponies . 5c

Climb the steep wall with stuck on holds to easier ground.

FA. R.Hayes, P.Bowen 2007

#### 21 On White Horses ..... 6a+

The faint groove with a short but tricky sequence. Stay strictly in the groove. Using any holds on other lines drops the grade.

#### 22 Crack Me Up ..... 4c

Climb the crack direct.

FA. R.Hayes, P.Bowen 2007

#### 23 All Aboard My Dinghy ... 5b

An appealing line that follows the square-cut rib.

FA. R.Hayes, P.Bowen 2007

#### 24 Rounding the Mark ..... 5c

The short wall and awkward step over the bulge. Contains more climbing than first appears.

FA. P.Blackburn, H.Charles 8.2016

A low-level bouldering traverse of the wall starting to the left of Jug Fest and finishing at All Aboard my Dingy is 15.

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### Hindu Kush Area

A long low crag that has a number of good little pitches that are technical and sustained. This makes for more of an experience than might first be anticipated. The rock is good and the crag base is flat and grassy.

**Approach** (map and overview p.269) - This is the wall encountered on the approach before the closed road is reached.

**Conditions** - Exposed to wind and rain but the face is quick drying. It gets the sun from mid-afternoon onwards.

#### 1 Health Freak ..... 5b

Move up the initial groove with one difficult move. Finish up the short steep wall and final arete. *Photo inside back cover.*  
FA. P.Blackburn 25.2.2017

#### 2 Cod Liver Oil ..... 6b

Make some intricate moves up left before heading back rightwards to a lower-off. More involved than it first appears.  
FA. B.Gregory, P.Bowen 2007



#### 3 Glucosamine and Chondroitin ..... 6c

Climb directly up the wall to the bulge and pull through it on crimps. Short but intense climbing.  
FA. B.Gregory, P.Bowen 2007

#### 4 Green Energy ..... 7a+

A very tight eliminate line. The black scoop direct between *Glucosamine and Chondroitin* and *Fuelled by Pies*. Utilises the bolts of *Glucosamine and Chondroitin* for protection.  
FA. P.Tucker 2000s

#### 5 Fuelled by Pies ..... 7a+

Thin and complex pulling and undercutting up the wall just left of *Johnny Takes a Tumble*.  
FA. B.Gregory 2007

#### 6 Johnny Takes a Tumble .. 6a

Climb the crack and traverse left to shared lower-off. Can be muddy on the finishing holds.  
FA. B.Gregory, P.Bowen 2007

#### 7 The House that Jack Built .... 6a

The wall and overhang avoiding the crack of *Johnny Takes a Tumble*.  
FA. P.Blackburn 8.4.2017

#### 8 Snap Crackle 'n' Pop ..... 6a

A good pitch that has a difficult start. Above things gradually ease. *Photo p.19.*  
FA. L.Jones, B.Hayes 8.9.2007

#### 9 White Noise ..... 5a

Follow the faint thin crack on good holds to a shared lower-off with *Snap Crackle 'n' Pop*.  
FA. J.Steer, B.Hayes 8.9.2007

#### 10 The Road to Nowhere ..... 5a

Head up a flowstone wall using a series of hidden finger holds and delicate steps.  
FA. P.Blackburn 18.3.2017

#### 11 Back, Crack and Sack ..... 5a

Follow the crack-line to the overlap and then move up rightwards to a lower-off.  
FA. J.Steer, B.Hayes 8.9.2007

#### 12 Take me up the Hindu Kush .. 5c

An easy start leads to a hard move to finish.  
FA. B.Hayes, J.Steer 8.9.2007

#### 13 To Dai or not to Dai. .... 5c

Relatively easy climbing leads to one hardish move.  
FA. P.Bowen, D.Williams 8.9.2007

#### 14 Brittle Biscuit ..... 4c

Avoiding the crack pushes the grade up to 5c.  
FA. D.Williams, P.Bowen 8.9.2007

#### 15 Tad ..... 5a

The first of three short climbs. Follow a line directly just right of the line of bolts.  
FA. P.Blackburn 14.1.2017

#### 16 Smidgen ..... 5b

The middle short line begins under a small overhang. Pass the overhang via a dynamic move.  
FA. P.Blackburn 14.1.2017

#### 17 Scintilla ..... 5c

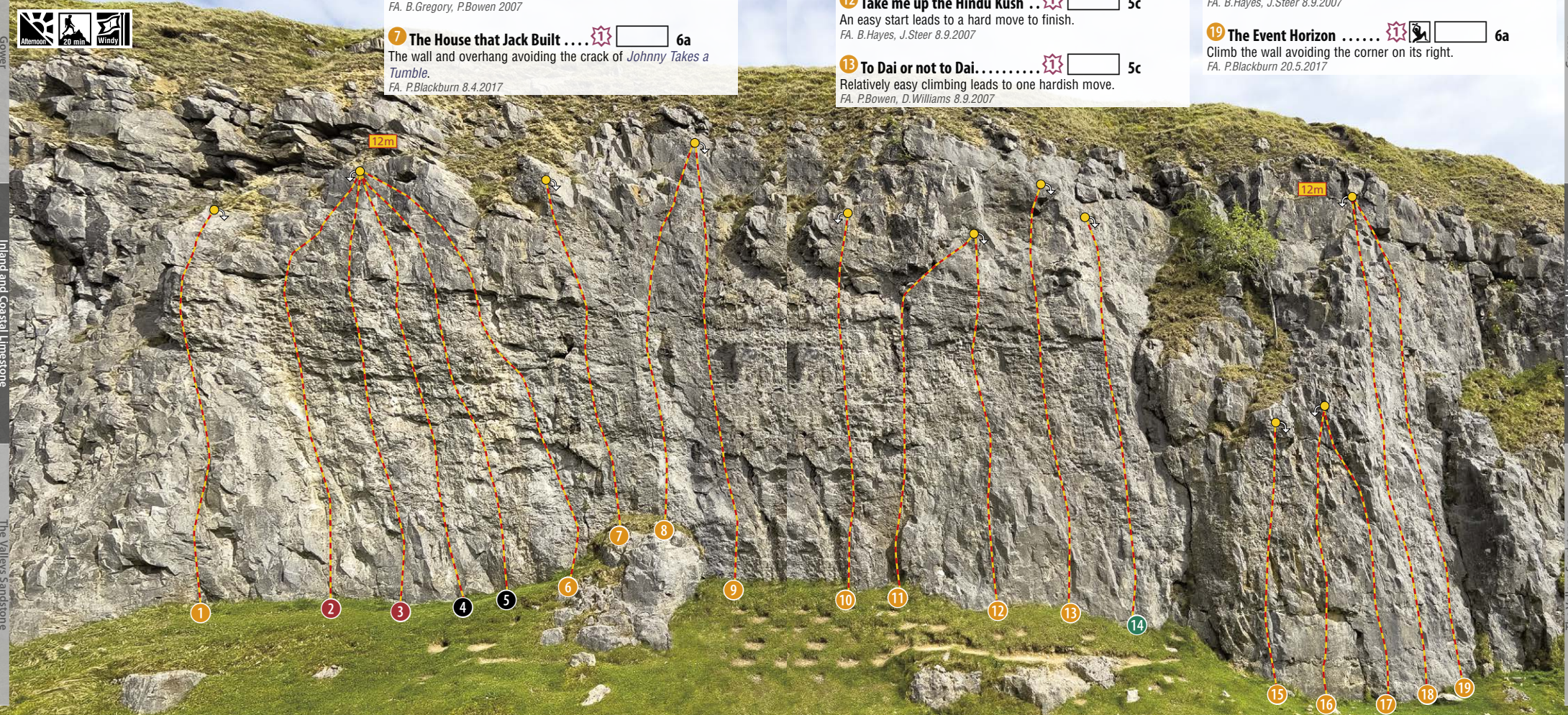
Thin and delicate moves lead to better holds.  
FA. P.Blackburn 7.1.2017

#### 18 Under a Blood Red Sky .. 6a

Thoughtful climbing requiring delicate footwork. *Photo p.273.*  
FA. B.Hayes, J.Steer 8.9.2007

#### 19 The Event Horizon ..... 6a

Climb the wall avoiding the corner on its right.  
FA. P.Blackburn 20.5.2017





### Tyre Sector

A long low wall of quarried rock that has a lot of climbs in the 6th grade and a number a notch in difficulty higher and lower. All the routes are worth doing but some loose holds are in evidence on the less travelled lines. This is a very pleasant spot which has been cleared of tyres illegally dumped from the road above. The face receives sun from mid-afternoon and is a lovely spot on a summers evening.

**Approach (map and overview p.269)** - Walk down a short path from the closed road to arrive at the base of the crags and the first climbs.

**Conditions** - Exposed to the elements but a very pleasant location on warm afternoons and evenings.

**1 Coming Unstuck** ..... **6b**

A hard bouldery start leads to delicate sustained climbing on fragile concretions.  
FA. G.Gibson 19.7.2017

**2 I'm Stuck, I'm Off....** **6b**

Climb the wall on its left-hand side. Pleasantly sustained with a bit of a reach for the belay  
FA. G.Gibson 19.7.2017

**3 Stig of the Dump** ..... **6a+**

The short but worthwhile wall on mostly good holds.  
FA. G.Gibson 19.7.2017

**4 Stickle Brick**..... **5c**

Straightforward climbing on the left-hand side of the next buttress.  
FA. G.Gibson 19.7.2017

**5 Stick it up 'em** ..... **6a+**

The wall is climbed on stuck-on holds and rugosities.  
FA. G.Gibson 19.7.2017

**6 Stick it to 'em** ..... **6a+**

Similar to the previous line via a shallow scoop.  
FA. G.Gibson 22.6.2017

**7 Evostick** ..... **4b**

The right-hand side of the wall is a nice pitch. Stay left on the best rock.  
FA. G.Gibson 22.6.2017

**8 William James Memorial Route**

..... **6c+**

The enticing wall to the right of the tree. Follow the rib to a bulge. Pass the bulge rightwards to an easier finish.  
FA. G.Percival 25.8.2017

**9 Rubber, Blubber** ..... **6c**

A super little pitch that features some tricky to read technicalities and varied moves up the slim pillar.  
FA. G.Gibson 22.7.2017

**10 Tyre and Brimstone** ..... **6a**

Intricate face climbing on accommodating holds.  
FA. G.Gibson 22.6.2017

**11 Funeral Tyre** ..... **6a+**

The brown drainage streak with unobvious moves low down.  
FA. G.Gibson 22.7.2017

**12 Tyred Out**..... **6a+**

The slabby face steepens gradually to a fingery finale. Care with some holds needed midway.  
FA. G.Gibson 22.7.2017

**13 Retyred** ..... **5b**

The superb little crackline/jug-fest to the right is a very good pitch at the grade.  
FA. G.Gibson 22.6.2017

**14 Too Tyred?** ..... **6b+**

Fingery and sequecy climbing up the face just right of *Retyred*. Finish as for *Retyred*.  
FA. G.Gibson 22.7.2017



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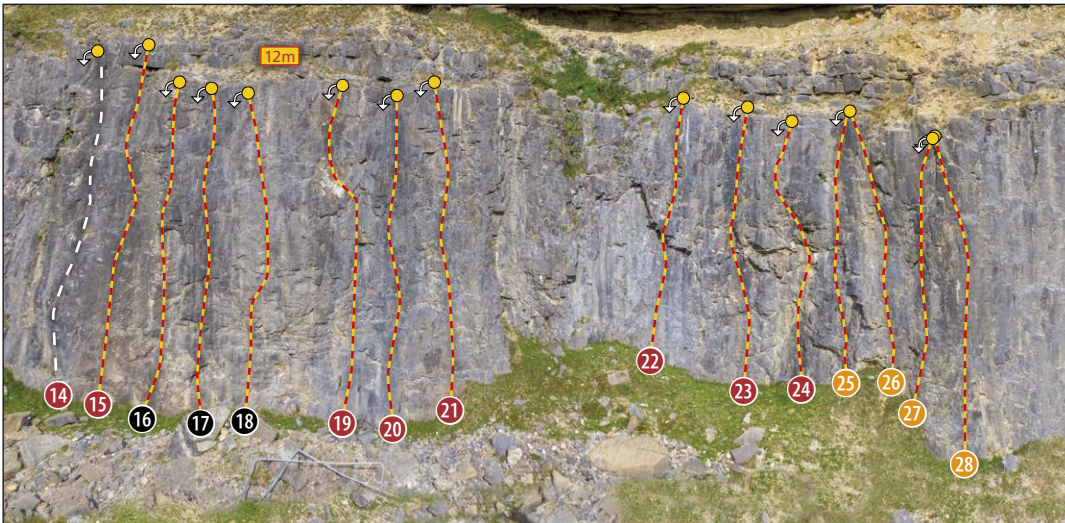
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**15 Walls Have Ears** .....  7a

A highly technical, varied and sustained pitch.  
FA. P.Blackburn 1.7.2017

**16 Pirelli Times** .....  7c

Desperate and very reachy moves just above the second bolt.  
FA. G.Gibson 5.7.2017

**17 Don't Worry be Snappy ..**  7b+

After some hard starting moves make big moves up and left of a bolt to a layaway. Head back right to finish up a rib.  
FA. G.Percival 12.9.2017

**18 Dim Tipio Anghyfreithlon**  7b

The fine open groove to the left of *It's Been a Goodyear*.  
FA. G.Percival 7.9.2017

**19 It's Been a Goodyear** ....  6c+

Climb the intricate wall on side-pulls to better holds.  
FA. G.Gibson 5.7.2017

**20 Dunlop Special** .....  6b+

A fingery and long move above a ledge.  
FA. G.Gibson 5.7.2017

**21 Retread** .....  6b

A great piece of sustained face climbing.  
FA. G.Gibson 5.7.2017

**22 Remoulded** .....  6c

Pass an overlap utilising some undercuts and crimps.  
FA. G.Gibson 5.7.2017

**23 Tyre Times** .....  6c

A complex series of moves on side-pulls and edges.  
FA. G.Gibson 5.7.2017

**24 Locking Nut** .....  6c+

Long moves through a bulge then a hard move left and up.  
FA. G.Gibson 17.7.2017

**25 Onto the Canvas** .....  5b

Good face moves if slightly short-lived.  
FA. G.Gibson 5.7.2017

**26 Bald Patch** .....  5b

Face climbing heading leftwards near the top.  
FA. G.Gibson 5.7.2017

**27 Mal Alignment** .....  5b

An easy start leads to steeper moves. Care needed with the rock.  
FA. G.Gibson 17.7.2017

**28 Get Tracking** .....  6a

Gradually increasing delicate difficulties up the slight rib.  
FA. G.Gibson 17.7.2017

**29 Wear and Tear** .....  5b

A good face route at the grade.  
FA. G.Gibson 17.7.2017

**30 Majorca With Tyres** .....  5b

Good face climbing moving rightwards near the top.  
FA. G.Jenkin, D.Grange, C.Jameson 17.6.2019

**31 Wheel and Tyre** .....  6a

Climb the steady face to some pushy finishing moves.  
FA. G.Gibson 17.7.2017

**32 Rimmed** .....  6a+

A bouldery initial wall gains an easy groove.  
FA. R.Thomas, G.Gibson 19.7.2017

**33 Torque Wrench** .....  6b

The face direct on some sloping holds.  
FA. R.Thomas, G.Gibson 19.7.2017

**34 Running Hot, But Cool in the Zone** .....  5b

Head up the arete and then up to a slot close to the top.  
FA. G.Jenkin, D.Grange 17.6.2019

**Ivor Biggun Sector**

The tallest section of crag at Gilwern that is very close to where a landslip has occurred. Assess the danger of further instability before embarking on the climbs.

**Approach (map and overview p.269)** - Walk past the Tyre Sector to where the landslip marks the left edge of the Ivor Biggun Sector.

**Conditions** - Exposed to the elements but a very pleasant location on warm afternoons and evenings.

**1 Ivor Biggun** .....  5c

- 1) 5c, 12m. A difficult wall gains a ledge system and rope that leads to a bolted belay.
  - 2) 5c, 13m. Move onto a block and then head out to, and up the left-hand bolted line to a lower-off.
- FA. M.Davies 7.2018

**2 Everybody Wants One** ...  5c

- 1) 5c, 12m. *Ivor Biggun* pitch 1.
  - 2) 5c, 12m. Begin as for *Ivor Biggun* pitch 2 but follow the right-hand bolted line to a lower-off.
- FA. M.Davies, G.Percival, P.Tucker 18.4.2019

**3 Pimp My Ride** .....  6c

Bouldery moves up the flakes.  
FA. G.Jenkin, D.Grange 18.9.2018

**4 Your Wheels ain't Fly** ....  6a+

Some of the moves need a bit of figuring out.  
FA. G.Jenkin, D.Grange 18.9.2018





### Right-hand Walls

All the right-hand walls require care when approaching, moving along the base and belaying. The first sector is a wide horizontally banded wall that has a number of bolted routes along its full length. The lines are prone to being dirty, loose and have seen little attention since they were established. The next sector is another horizontally banded wall that features a topping overhang which provides some hard finishes. Again the lines are prone to being dirty and see little traffic. The final sector is a small compact wall at the far end of the escarpment.

**Approach (map and overview p.269)** - Each sector has its own short approach. All involve moving up ledges to the base of the wall and bolted belay options - needs care in places.

**Conditions** - Exposed to the elements. Many of the lines are dirty and loose.

**1 The Slow Lane** .....  6a

Climb the narrowing corner and short headwall.  
FA. G.Percival, G.Jenkin, P.Tucker 20.8.2018

**2 Middle Lane Hogger** .....  6c

Pumpy jug pulling up the ragged crack. Finish on the right.  
FA. G.Percival, P.Tucker 20.8.2018

**3 Fast and Furious** .....  7b

Thin crimp pulls on calcite and edges up the leaning wall.  
FA. G.Percival 3.10.2018

**4 Riding Shotgun** .....  6a+

Sustained and varied with a hard start.  
FA. G.Jenkin, D.Grange 5.10.2018

**5 Drive-by Shooting** .....  6a

The faint crack-line.  
FA. G.Jenkin, G.Percival 27.9.2018

**6 Driven 2 Destruction** .....  6a

Another pitch of sustained climbing.  
FA. M.Davies, G.Percival 17.9.2018

**7 Junk Yard Jete** .....  6c+

Climb just left of the low overhang.  
FA. G.Percival 13.9.2018

**8 Chassis Chase** .....  7a

Overcome the low roof and then make gigantic spans up the steep ground above.  
FA. G.Percival 13.9.2018

**9 Need for Speed** .....  7b

Make some reachy pulls to pass the low overhangs and then make progress above on conglomerate holds.  
FA. G.Percival 27.9.2018

**10 Mystery Trad Route X** .....  6c+

The mid-height brown calcite streak sporting two old pegs.  
FA. G.Percival 27.9.2018

**11 Hurry, Muttley! Huttley!** .....  6c

The left-hand line that has a punishing finale at the top overhang.  
FA. G.Percival 13.9.2018

**12 Wacky Races** .....  6b+

Juggy pulling up the lower wall gains the top overhang which provides a tough ending.  
FA. G.Percival 13.9.2018

**13 As High as a Kite** .....  6a+

Head up on big holds to the high roof and pull leftwards and then back right to pass it.  
FA. M.Davies, G.Percival 3.10.2018

**14 The Driverless Flightless Car** .....  5c

Ascend direct to the right end of the upper overhang.  
FA. M.Davies, G.Percival 3.10.2018

**15 Crash Test Dummy** .....  6b+

The first line on this section of wall is on good holds, but the rock is unreliable.  
FA. G.Percival 17.9.2018

**16 Brunette** .....  7a+

The middle line of the trio on this section of the wall features a hard lower sequence.  
FA. G.Percival 17.9.2018

**17 Caramel Wall** .....  6c+

The exposed wall on the right.  
FA. G.Percival 7.9.2018

**18 The Final Countdown** .....  6a+

The left-hand line with tough moves midway.  
FA. G.Percival, G.Jenkin, D.Grange 13.9.2018

**19 The Final Fantasy** .....  5c

Juggy climbing to a hard finish.  
FA. G.Percival, G.Jenkin, D.Grange 13.9.2018

**20 The Book of Revelations** .....  4c

The wall just to the left of the groove/corner.  
FA. G.Percival, G.Jenkin, D.Grange 13.9.2018



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