

Burley Woodhead Quarry (by Malcolm Townsley).

Crag features

A series of quarries located on open moorland above Moor Road about 500m North West of Burley Woodhead on the south bank of Coldstone Beck. Far quieter than Ilkley the place has a peaceful feel with a beautiful outlook. The main (central) quarry offers some nice impressive lines while a series of smaller quarries to either side offer generally low grade bouldering and the odd short route.

The crag generally faces north and so is a poor option in winter but is good in hot weather. The rock is generally sound but there is evidence of two sizeable rock falls on the left-hand wall of the main quarry (in the last 30 or so years) and so lookout for any recent instability and treat this area with caution especially around Chicken Finger. The rock can be friable in damp conditions, especially on the left wall of the main quarry where fracturing has led to the rock being more weathered and, in some places, weaker.

Approach notes

Reasonable parking is available on the south side of Moor Road close to where Moor Road crosses Coldstone Beck near to two hairpin bends. The quarry is visible to the south (uphill) from the gate onto the moorland. Take the left hand path across Coldstone Beck and follow a path south eastwards close to a wall which leads to the quarry.

History

Like the main quarry on a damp December day the history of climbing here remains murky. The routes in the main quarry were documented in the 1970s by John Harewood and John Syrett and they probably did the first ascents of the harder lines although evidence of pegging on Fish Fingers indicates that this route may have been climbed previously using aid to pass the crux section. Routes such as Fish Fingers, Cod Piece, Soul Food and The Greaser represent notable additions to climbing in Yorkshire as they were climbed during the 70s free climbing revolution and are of similar difficulty to those being done elsewhere in Yorkshire and the Peak district at the same time. There is evidence of earlier development in the left-hand quarry and on both wings of the main quarry (Slanting Arête, the lower crack of The Greaser and Two Ten Job) with old chipped/improved holds evident which would indicate these lines were climbed in the 1950s/60s when manufacturing holds was far more common. As a couple of the chipped lines are boulder problems it seems likely that many of the other boulder problems on the edge would have been climbed at this time, as they are of similar grade, along with the easier routes in the main quarry (for routes my guess would be Fragility, Slanting Arête, Fish Fingers with aid, Chicken Finger, the lower crack of The Greaser and Two Ten Job). *If you can provide anymore information please contact me via Unknown Stones.*

Left-hand Quarry

A smaller quarry about 50m left of the main quarry offering a few good (often chipped) low grade problems and one route. There are two good blocks separated by a more broken area with a big rowan tree.



VDM. Venus de Milo F4 Left-hand Quarry, left-hand side of left-hand wall (at higher level and 1m right of a vegetated crack) use flakes and chipped holds to gain a prominent triangular hold and finish direct via obvious incuts.

Venus de Milo Unchipped F5 The problem without using the chips is better.

Malcolm Townsley 30/Aug/2022.

PI. Pieta F4+ Left-hand Quarry, 1m Right of Venus de Milo at the right end of the higher level. Using the chipped holds climb the wall via a right facing seam to a niche then finish trending left to good incuts.

Pieta Unchipped F6a Pieta without using the chips has a difficult start.

Malcolm Townsley 30/Aug/2022.

CA. Crack and Arête F4+* Left-hand Quarry, left-hand wall. Starting from the lower level climb the left side of the right arête of the block with the aid of the thin crack. The wider flake crack to the right is out. The crux is high up and it may be worth HS 5a without a mat.

JTC. Just the Crack F5 From the big low flat hold climb the thin crack of Crack and Arête without using the arête. At the top finish left of the crack using a good incut to the left. Crux is high up and it may be worth MVS 5b without a mat.

BFA. Big Flake and Arête F3+ Left-hand Quarry, left-hand wall. Right side of arête using big flake which is generally solid. From the top of the flake step left onto the left side of arête to finish using crack. The crux is high up and it may be worth VD 4a without a mat.

WW. West Wind S 4c*. 6m? Left-hand Quarry, right-hand wall. Climb the wall starting 1.5m right of the wide crack containing a rowan tree to half height (part chipped) then move left above the tree into the wide slanting crack and finish up this to a reasonable exit. Hiball F4.

RC. Ragged Crack F4. Left-hand Quarry, right-hand wall. The nice technical crack 1m right of West Wind using incuts and finger locks.

CA. Curved Arête. F4*. Left-hand Quarry, right-hand wall. The clean curved arête bounding the right edge of the block on its left side. Finishing holds are good.

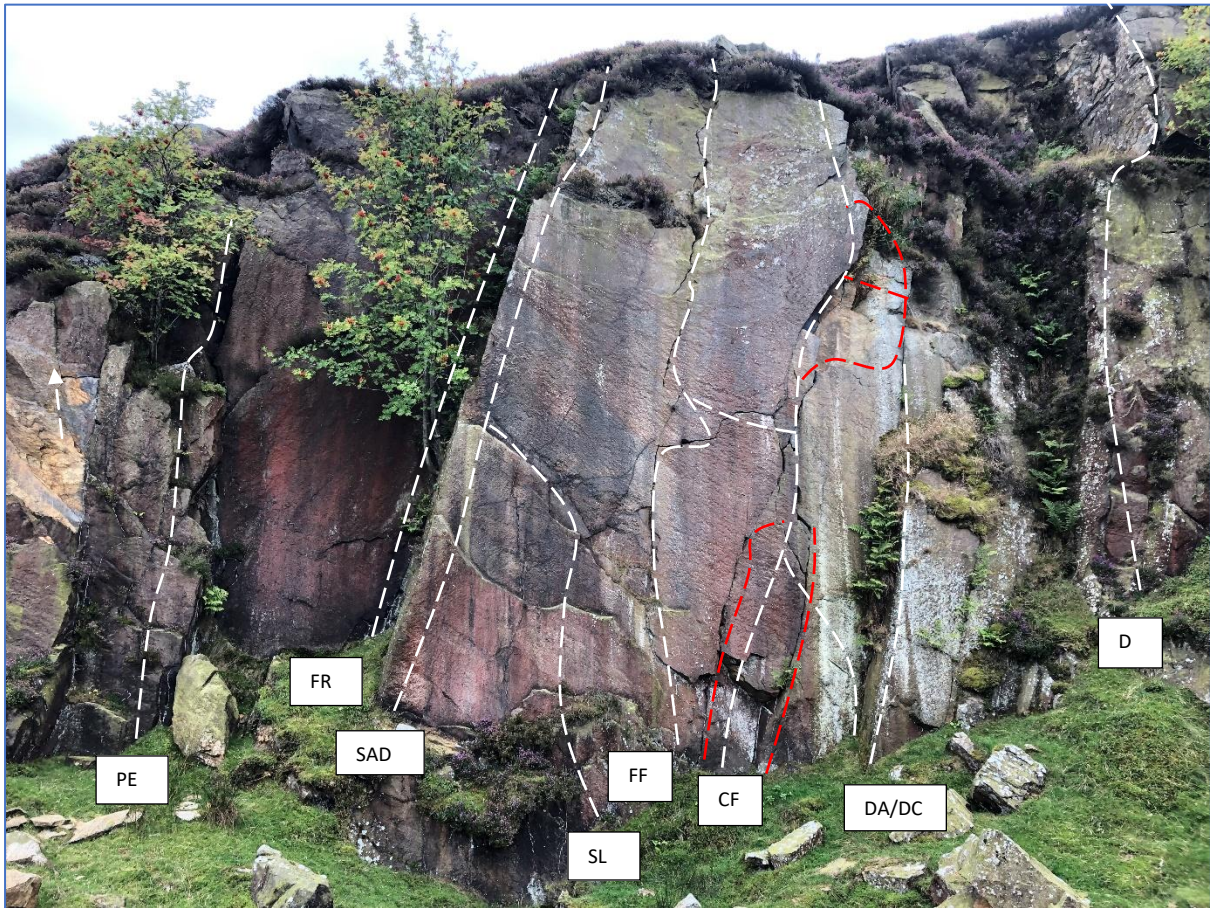
CAR. Curved Arête Right Hand. F3+. The right side of the curved arête is much shorter and not as good.



Main Quarry

The impressive main quarry offers some nice looking lines. The left-hand wall faces north and has some suspect rock but is generally clean due to its steepness. The right hand wall is slabbier, faces east and is generally more vegetated and lichen covered. There is a good belay stake which can be used for all the routes on the right-hand wall and a couple of good cam placements directly above Chicken Finger that can be used to belay the left wall.

The Main Bay



The Pie Eater MVS 4c

10m. One for the connoisseur of quarried grit and pies. To the left of Slanting Arête is a bay with a smooth back wall. The left edge of this bay is defined by a broken arête which leads to a ledge with a tree 1m right of a prominent rock scar. Climb the arête on its left side on good rock to the ledge then finish up the well protected off width crack directly above the right side of the ledge. Care required with the rock at the exit.

Malcolm Townsley (FRA) 15/Sep/2023.

Fragility VS 4c

12m. Probably the vegetated corner containing the big Rowan tree that defines the left end of the main section of the left wall. It is damp, loose and now mainly tree and has not been cleaned.

Slanting Arête VS 4c

12m. The striking arête immediately right of the corner of Fragility climbed predominantly on its left side gives a worthwhile climb. Start just right of the corner and follow a thin crack rightwards to join the arête at a prominent narrow ledge (via a couple of chipped holds) then continue up the left side of the arête until forced onto its right side near the top. The finish is reasonable and protectable but has some suspect rock. Adequately protected by small wires, cams and the tree.

Slanting Arête Direct E1 5b*

12m The right-hand side of Slanting Arête produces a good line although the climbing becomes less well defined and escapable above the slanting ledge. Start just right of the arête and follow positive holds to the slanting ledge. Continue boldly up the upper arête to good finishing holds at the second ledge. Protection as for Slanting Arête, E2 and serious if you do not use an extended sling around the tree.

John Syrett/John Harewood 1970s.

Slanting Ledge HVS/E1 5a

14m Start 1m left of Fish Fingers and climb directly up narrow ledges to reach the left slanting flake. Follow this left and attain a standing position on the narrow ledge where it joins Slanting Arête then finish as Slanting Arête (HVS) or Slanting Arête Direct (E1).

Malcolm Townsley (FRA) 23/Aug/2023.

Fish Fingers E3 6a*

12m. The blatantly obvious thin once pegged crack splitting the centre of the main left wall gives good climbing on generally sound rock with an intense bouldery crux middle section. Reasonable top out directly to the block above the crack. Although there are lots of gear placements placing gear on the crux middle section is difficult.

John Harewood and John Syrett (First Free Ascent) 1970s

Chicken Finger HVS 5a

12m. A nice route with reasonably sound lower cracks spoilt in its upper half by suspect rock. The ragged crack system at the right side of the main left wall, to a large rock scar and right facing corner running up the right side of the monster perched flake. Avoid the corner which contains fractured, weathered and suspect rock by finishing up the right edge of the flake on its left side (feels run out). The best and most sustained version of the route is to start between the two lower cracks and use both to gain the slot with the jammed wire while the easiest start is by bridging out into the corner 1m right. Well protected providing you are careful to avoid placements behind suspect blocks. The rock scar marks where a large part of the upper part of the route fell down 30+ years ago and the scar still contains poor rock and suspect blocks.

Chicken Finger – The Despondent Chicken Variation HVS 5a

14m. It is possible to bypass the worst of the suspect rock around the rock scar of Chicken Finger by moving right at the base of the rock scar, following jugs, to gain a large mossy ledge and the sound crack of The Despondent Chicken 1.5m to the right. Follow the crack to its top and then step carefully left across the corner to gain the right edge of the flake. Although not as good it avoids tackling the suspect blocks from below.

Chicken Finger Boulder problems:

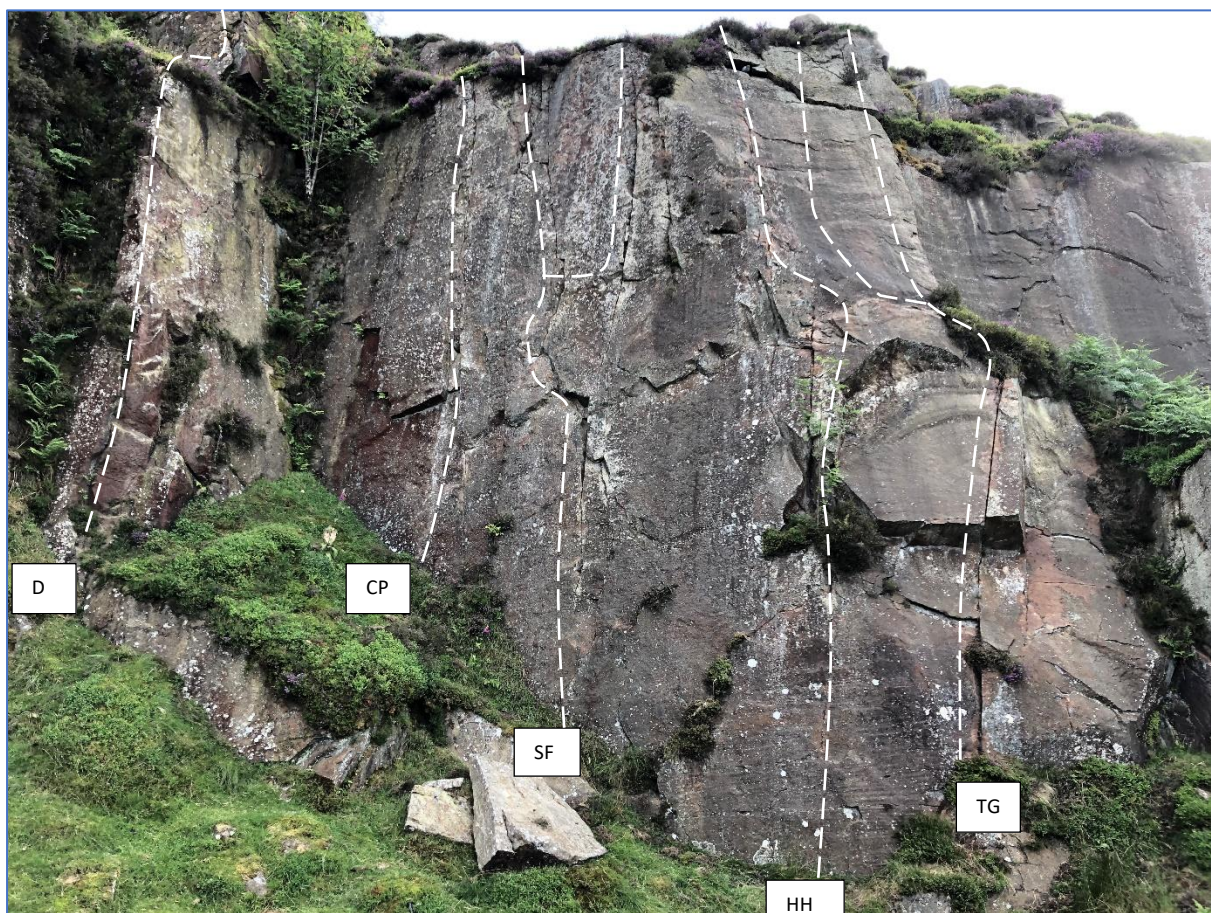
The two cracks at the start of Chicken Finger give three reasonable boulder problems.

1. Left-hand crack, f5+ The left-hand crack 1m right of Fish Fingers on excellent finger locks to the second pod then move right to the jammed wire.
2. Right-hand crack, f5+ The right-hand crack 1m left of the corner to the jammed wire without bridging into the corner.
3. Both Cracks, f4+ Start between the cracks and climb to the jammed wire using both cracks.

The Despondent Chicken HVS 5a, 12m

1m right of the start to Chicken Finger is a bracken filled corner. Climb the arête forming the right edge of the corner on its right side to the moss covered top of the block then follow the crack 1.5m right of Chicken Finger to its top, step carefully left across the Chicken Finger corner to gain the right edge of the flake and finish as Chicken Finger. The first half of this line climbing the arête and escaping makes a good boulder problem, Despondent Arête, f4+.

Malcolm Townsley (FRA) 15/Aug/2023.



Disappointment HVS 5a

12m. Probably the right side of the obvious arête 3m left of the vegetated central corner with the tree. Climb the slabby arête to tricky and insecure moves to gain the grassy ledge in a bay, step right 1m and climb the friable upper arête on the right side of the bay. Limited protection behind a fragile looking flake at 2/3rds height, the upper arête is well protected.

John Syrett/John Harewood 1970s

CP. Cod Piece E3 5c*

10m. The left-hand crackline of the quarries right wall gives some nice moves but has uninspiring and limited protection. Start 4m right of the central corner below an obvious slot. Make difficult and unprotected moves to gain a large jug at the top of the slot then follow the thin crack system directly above to a reasonable top out. Protection is limited and comprises uninspiring small wires and cams.

John Syrett/John Harewood 1970s

SF. Soul Food E1 5b**

12m. Lovely sustained technical climbing, one of the best quarried crack climbs at its grade in Yorkshire. Start at cracks leading past a flake about 6m right of the corner (2m left of Hermits Hole) and directly in front of a large block. Climb the cracks to difficult moves passing and above the flake then step right 1m into the left of two thin parallel cracks and follow this to an insecure heathery finish. Well protected but gear is often hard to place, F6a+ with pre placed gear.

Left hand finish following the thin left-hand crack directly above the flake in its entirety offers insecure technical crack climbing at about E2 5c, F6b with pre placed gear.

John Syrett/John Harewood 1970s

HH. Hermits Hole HVS 5b*

14m. A nice route with varied climbing but a serious finish, make sure it is clean before you attempt it. Start at the right end of the right wall directly below a large triangular heathery niche with a crack running out of its apex. Climb directly into the niche following a thin crack. Exit the niche with difficulty following the crack to the left end of a narrow ledge (well protected) then move slightly up and left and follow the thin blind crack up the left edge of the upper slab trending slightly right (there is no protection in the upper slab but the climbing is steady 4b/c).

Top-rope Slab UK 6a* 15m. Climb the centre of the upper slab between the thin crack of Hermits Hole and the arête of The Greaser using the obvious thin horizontal flake. From the flake trend slightly right and finish direct crossing the diagonal crack. As a route hard, technical and scary, there is no gear above half height until you reach the diagonal crack and so there is a 14m ground-fall potential. There is evidence of an improved key crimp above the flake and so this could be an old top rope problem.

TG. The Greaser E2 5c.

14m. Follow the right arête of the main right wall on its left side. Worthwhile, interesting technical climbing throughout. Start 1.5m right of Hermits Hole below an obvious diagonal finger crack splitting the undercut arête on its left side. Follow this crack direct through the overhang to a large bilberry ledge. From the ledge climb the left side of the arête bounding the right edge of the slab (just left of the slabby groove of Hermits Groove). The lower part is well protected; the upper arête is technical, green, scritty, insecure and has minimal protection until you reach the diagonal crack near the top. Escapable to the right at the bilberry ledge and not as serious as it looks as at several points you can either jump off onto the ledge or escape right into the groove.

John Syrett/John Harewood 1970s

Greaser Groove HVS 5b 14m. No new climbing but a good way to sample the nice lower half of The Greaser if you don't fancy the upper arête. Climb the lower cracked arête of The Greaser to the ledge then the upper groove of Hermits Groove to the diagonal crack. At this point re-join The Greaser and finish direct above the arête.

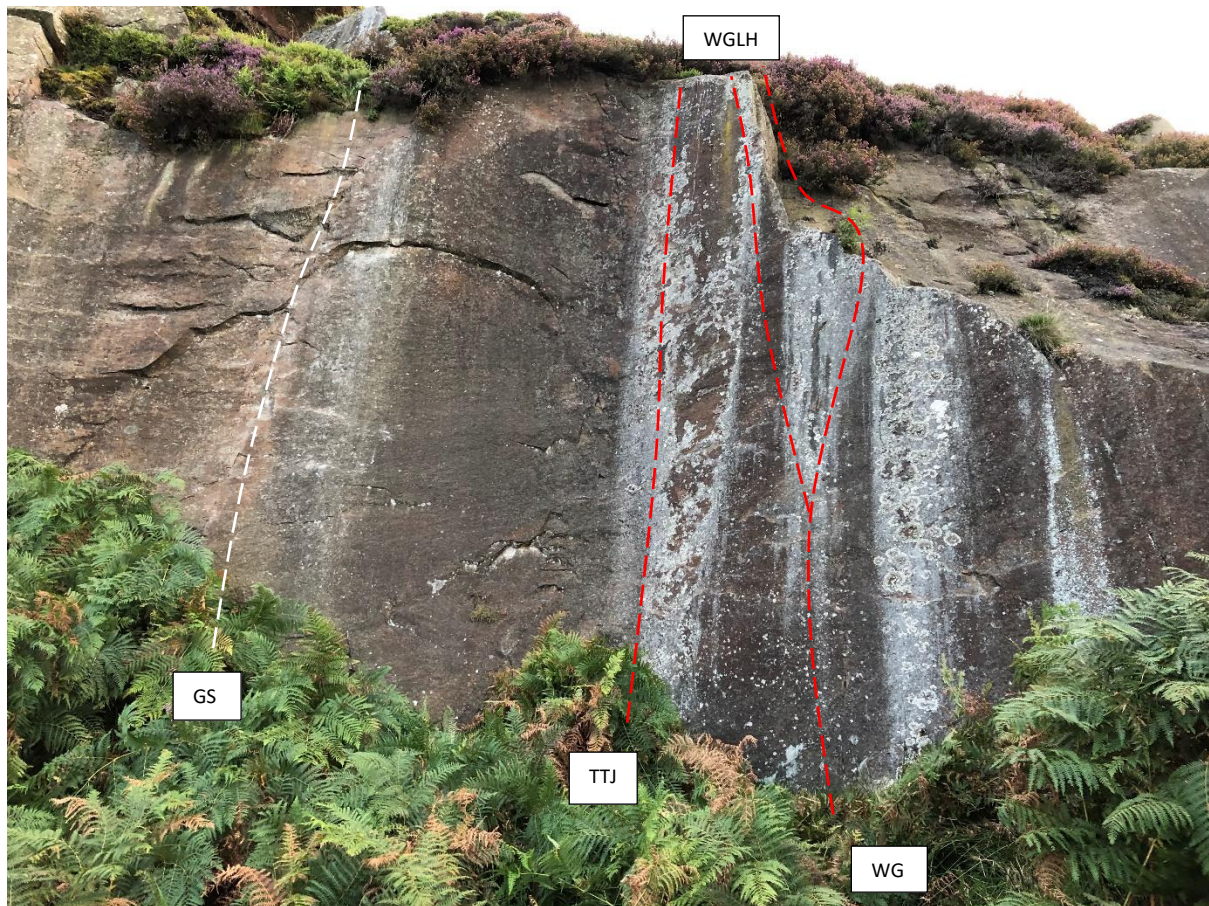
Hermits Groove VS 5a 14m. A bit disjointed but with some nice climbing. Start 2m right of the lower crack of The Greaser below a slabby open groove. Climb up the slab into the groove and follow this to a large jug at its top then move left into the top of the crack of The Greaser and grovel onto the large bilberry ledge (well protected using The Greaser crack). From the bilberry ledge climb the unprotected curved groove just right of The Greaser's upper arête to a left trending bilberry filled diagonal crack. Climb this across the slab to finish in the same place as Hermits Hole. A variation is to move right from the big jug at the top of the lower groove, gain the ledge and climb the featured slab 1m right of the groove before re-joining the main route at no change of grade.

Malcolm Townsley (FRA) 09/Jun/2023

Jagged Arête f4+

The left side of the stepped arête in the small bay 2m right of Hermits Groove to the Right Wing Terrace.

Right Wing Terrace



At its right end the right wall is split into two by a prominent bracken covered terrace. The wall above the terrace gives a few good lines. Lines at the left side of the terrace are serious as the terrace is narrow here and there is a big drop below. The lichen is generally easy to clean.

GS. Green Streak HVS 5c

5m. A bold unprotected slab problem on Teflon like rock would be a nice highball but for the narrowness of the terrace and a big drop below. 2m right of the corner of Hermits Groove is a shallow right slanting seam just left of a prominent green streak. Follow the seam to a poor top out.

John Syrett/John Harewood 1970s

TTJ. Two Ten Job E1 5b*

6m. The lovely looking curved groove is not as hard as it appears from below and is climbed on a series of chipped and natural holds with nice balancy moves. Two finishes are possible once you get to the level of the hanging arête; **a/.** use the arête and climb it on its left side using the chipped holds which makes the entire line bottom end 5b and HVS/E1, **b/.** climb further left using the seam and without using the arête making the entire line 5b/c and E1/E2, committing with hard moves high up. Possibly highball F5/6a with a couple of mats (the landing is good) but at the limit of this. Escaping onto the slab at the base of the arête is F5. Make sure that it is clean or you will not find the holds.

WG Whispering Grass MVS 5a

6m. Start directly below the prominent hanging arête about 1.5m right of the start to Two Ten Job. Climb the wall trending slightly right and rock onto the easy angle slab. Either escape right from here across the slab (F4+) or finish up the easy heathery right facing corner 1m right of the finish to Two Ten Job at MVS.

Malcolm Townsley 30/Aug/2022

Whispering Grass – The “Shut Up” Variation HVS 5a*.

6m. Start directly below the prominent hanging arête about 1.5m right of the start to Two Ten Job as for Whispering Grass but climb directly to the base of the arête and finish up this on its left side (also the easier finish to Two Ten Job).

Malcolm Townsley 15/Sep/2022

Right-hand Quarries

Low slabby quarries between 40 and 200m right of the right-wing terrace offering a few generally easy boulder problems and short routes. Going up the hill from left to right.

1st Bay



1BC. 1st Bay Crack F4 Right-hand Quarries first bay (Low slabby quarries between 40 and 200m right of the right-wing terrace) The well featured cracked wall in the left wall of the 1st bay. Start in the pit, difficult exit.



1BS. 1st Bay Slab F4+ Right-hand Quarries first bay, right wall. The slab left of the left-hand corner of the slabby right wall of the 1st bay starting from the lowest point of the block.

1BLC. 1st Bay Left Corner F3 Right-hand Quarries first bay, right wall. The left-hand corner in the slabby right wall of the 1st bay exiting right up the scoop.

1BRC. 1st Bay R Corner F4* Right-hand Quarries first bay, right wall. The right-hand corner in the slabby right wall of the 1st bay passing an overlap and exiting up the scoop.

SA. Stepped Arête F5* Right-hand Quarries first bay, right wall. The left side of the sharp arête right of the right-hand corner without using holds in the corner to the left (1st Bay R Corner). Much easier and poor if climbed on the right.

2nd Bay



SBC1. Sheep's Bay Crack #1 F5* Right-hand Quarries second bay. The overhanging hand crack high up in the left wall of the 2nd bay. From a SDS climb the crack (using only the crack for hands and feet) then hand traverse the lip of the block leftwards to the slab and finish up the left edge of the block.

Malcolm Townsley 1990s

SBC2. Sheep's Bay Crack #2 F5+* Right-hand Quarries second bay. As for Sheep's Bay Crack #1 but half way along the hand traverse exit directly over the lip onto the heather.

Malcolm Townsley 05/Sep/2022

SBS. Sheep's Bay Slab F3+ Right-hand Quarries second bay. The slab and short upper arête on the slabby wall to the right of Sheep's Bay Crack. Start at the lowest point.

2BW. 2nd Bay Wall F4. Right-hand Quarries second bay. At a lower level down and to the right of Sheep's Bay Slab. Climb the featured wall from its lowest point without using the arête to the right.

3rd Bay

The left side of this bay has several poor lines but the right-hand side is good.



MB. Message in a Bottle F4+ (VS 5a)*. 6m? Right-hand Quarries third bay left-hand block. Prominent high block with a distinctive arête at the right side of the 3rd Bay. Climb the slab 1m left of the arête to a heathery ledge at two-thirds height. Finish directly up the slab 1m right of a heathery groove to a prominent wide slot. Given a bouldering grade as the upper part of the slab is not serious, you just roll down the heathery slope.

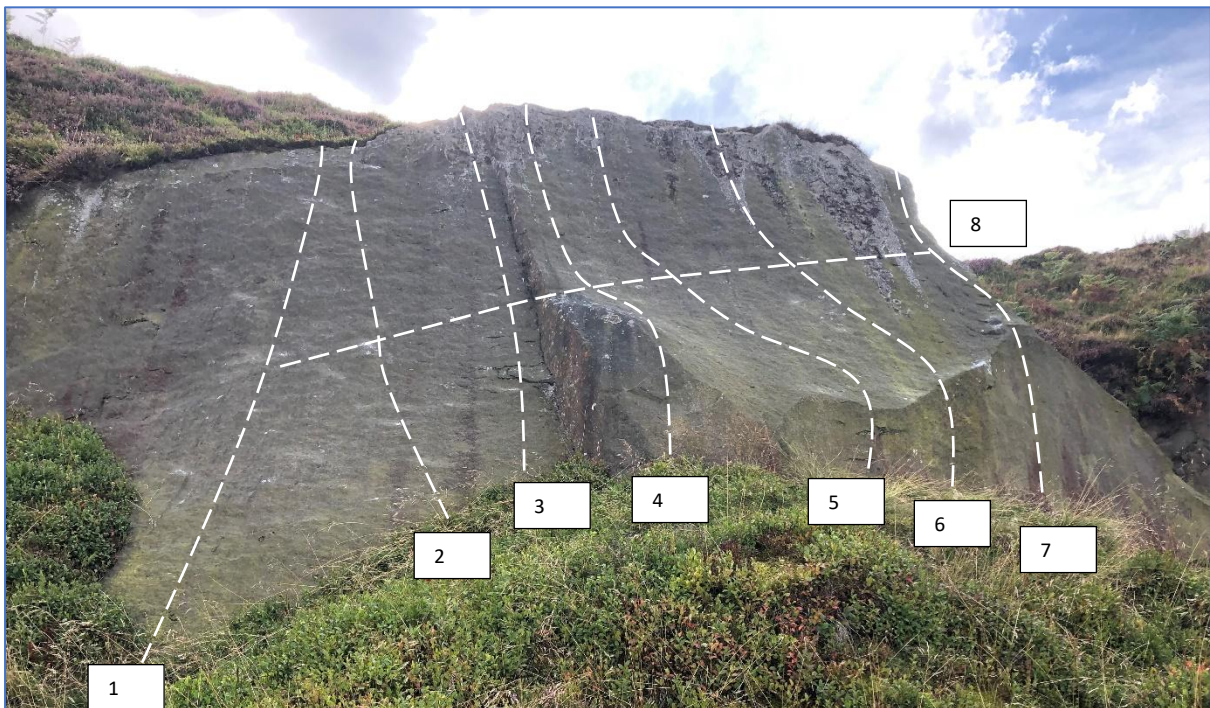
Malcolm Townsley 1990s

UTR. Uptown Top Ranking VS 5a (F4+)*. 6m Right-hand Quarries third bay left-hand block. Prominent high block with a distinctive arête at the right side of the 3rd Bay. From the lowest point on the block climb the left side of the sharp slabby arête. Highball F4+, the hardest moves are at the start. 1950s/60s?

UTRR. Uptown Top Ranking Right Hand MVS 4c (F4). 6m Right-hand Quarries third bay left-hand block. Prominent high block with a distinctive arête at the right side of the 3rd Bay. From the lowest point on the block climb the right side of the sharp slabby arête to half height then rock into the scoop and finish as Uptown Top Ranking. Highball F4, not serious and easy to escape.

Nice Slab

At the far-right side of the 3rd bay is a pleasant low slab offering plenty of low grade lines and numerous eliminates.



1. Nice Slab #1 F4+ Slab at far-right side of the 3rd bay. The slab left of the short corner from its lowest point.

2. Nice Slab #2 F5 Slab at far-right side of the 3rd bay. Slab starting just left of corner and finishing as 1.

3. Nice Slab #3 F4+ Slab at far-right side of the 3rd bay. The corner and slab to left, nothing right of the arête.

4. Nice Slab #4 F3 Slab at far-right side of the 3rd bay. The right side of the arête formed by the right side of the corner starting at large holds.

5. Nice Slab #5 F4 Slab at far-right side of the 3rd bay. Rock onto slab 1m right of arête of Nice Slab #4 and climb the slab just right of arête without using it.

6. Nice Slab #6 F5 Slab at far-right side of the 3rd bay. Rock onto the slab 1m left of its right edge and climb the centre of the slab right of the corner.

7. Nice Slab #7 F3+ Slab at far-right side of the 3rd bay. The right arête of the slab starting up a seamed short triangular shaped wall.

8. Nice Slab Traverse F5 Slab at far-right side of the 3rd bay. Left to right traverse with hands generally at about half height starting as Nice Slab #1 and finishing as Nice Slab #7.