

Beeley Quarry

by Dave Gregory (as per 1991 guide)

This quarry has a somewhat loose aura to it in parts, and some overgrown routes. However, it also has its share of cleaner, more attractive lines, and may well be of interest to the more intrepid.

Parking and approach: An overgrown track leaves the road from just by the millstone sign marking the southern boundary of the Peak District National Park. Beyond a gate the track sweeps leftwards and back rightwards becoming blocked by saplings through a gloomy wood towards the imposing, if almost hidden, outline of the supports of the old quarry railway. 10 minutes.

Conditions and aspect: The crag is in a fairly tree-shrouded environment, but as with many such quarries, seems to avoid most wetting from rain or seepage. Some routes are overgrown, and some are clean.

The climbing: Some big routes on imposing buttresses, although loose rock can be your abiding memory.

Access: The quarry is owned by Chatsworth estates who do not wish it to be used for climbing. Another fine example of philanthropy from the old duke.

Just beyond the railway supports, an ill-defined path leaves the main path, bears leftwards past a ruined stone hut and struggles through the trees and boulders until it reaches a tongue of rock rubble covered with grass. To the right of the rock-rubble tongue, at the base of the crag, is a blunt nose which has a large triangular bramble-covered ledge on top of it. Left of this, at a slightly higher level, is a grassy ledge with two vertical drill-holes above it.

1 Curved Crack S 1962
20m Climb a dirty groove to the left-hand end of the grassy ledge below the drill-holes. Move rightwards along the ledge to the foot of a curved crack. Climb this to land awkwardly on a ledge. Traverse rightwards and ascend a finger-crack to finish up a V-shaped corner.

OS ref. SK 267666 alt. 160m

2 The Arête S 1962
20m Start 10m to the right of Curved Crack and climb a shallow corner to a large triangular ledge. From its left-hand end follow a crack up the arête and move leftwards to a narrower bramble-filled crack in the centre of the slab. Follow this to an overlap, move rightwards across this to a crack in the arête and follow this to a bay above.

3 Red Wall HVS 5a 1962
24m Follow the corner at the back of a triangular ledge for five metres. Traverse rightwards above a tree and around the arête to a large ledge. Move back leftwards on to the wall and follow a thin crack to a small recess. A taxing mantelshelf leads to the top. Thirty metres to the right are two overhung corners:

4 Lobitoff S 1962
22m Climb the crack of the right-hand corner to an overhang. Swing leftwards to a grassy ledge; rampant hawthorn belay. Move back rightwards and follow a series of heathery cracks just left of the arête to the top. The left-hand corner can be used as an alternative start. Ten metres to the right of Lobitoff is a sunken bay. The left-hand side of the bay is formed by a steep yellow wall with a prominent vertical flake towards its left-hand side. This is the main feature of the next route:

5 Machismo E2 5a 1978
28m Gain the base of the flake via some precarious blocks to the left, and follow it to its termination. Move steeply leftwards around the arête and climb the right-hand edge of the slab to the top.

6 Manita E4 5c 1978
27m Slightly to the right on the lower part of the wall is a prominent sharp-cut shallow groove. Gain this directly and climb it and the steep wall above, to an adequate ledge. Continue directly up the impending wall above with difficulty to good finishing holds.

7 Original Route VD 1962
23m Ascend the crack in the left-hand corner of the bay past two sawn-off trees and move rightwards to a large sycamore. Climb the unpleasant corner directly to a nasty finish, or, better, move rightwards descending slightly to the arête on the right. Climb up to an oak tree and finish up the crack above.

8 Pedestal Crack VS 4b 1962
20m Climb the narrow crack in the centre of the right-hand wall to the sycamore. Take the crack just right to a grassy ledge and another crack just to the right to finish.

9 Sycamore Crack VS 4c 1977
20m From the sycamore of Pedestal Crack move leftwards to a crack in the left-hand wall of the corner. Gaining the sentry-box is the crux. Move rightwards near the top to avoid a loose finish.

Seventeen metres to the right, past a blunt arête, is a corner with a loose chimney starting at a slightly higher level:

10 Fear VS 4c 1962
20m The intimidating chimney. Move rightwards at the blockage and go up to a tree belay. Finish up the corner above. A farther 23m to the right, past a broken arête, is a shallow corner with a roof at five metres; this is split into two corners by a small arête:

11 Abitmore VS 4c 1962
20m Climb the left-hand corner to the roof and move leftwards on to ledges. Climb these and go leftwards to a buttress. Ascend this to a fir tree on a ledge on the left. Move rightwards and follow the arête to the top.

12 Grass Slab S 1962
20m Climb the right-hand of the two small corners and go up, slightly rightwards, just right of a small rib. At an overlap, move leftwards on to the slab above. Finish up the vegetated slab. Seven metres to the right is an obvious crack which splits two minor overhangs and runs up the right-hand face to the main overhang. This, the most striking face in the quarry, gives the next route; it was the only route on the crag to be given two stars in the previous guide-

book but it no longer merits them due to its current vegetated state.

13 Guardian Wall E3 5c 1978
27m Climb the crack past the first overhang and peg at 5m. Continue up the crack passing a second overhang until below the main overhang. Climb this directly and follow the steep groove above to the finishing crack.

14 Choss Corner D 1962
17m The broken, grassy face just right to finish up a corner is well-named.

15 Bay Edge Climb S 1962
20m Climb the arête forming the right-hand edge of the grassy face until a step rightwards can be made to a birch tree in a V-shaped groove. Climb the groove until a swing rightwards on an oak tree leads to a grassy ledge at the bottom of another, bigger, groove. Finish up this. Immediately to the right is a bay. Two cracks come down from a chimney/groove in the upper part of the bay:

16 Bay Groove HVS 5a 1962
22m The left-hand crack leads, after three metres, to an awkward step rightwards to a ledge. Move rightwards to the other crack. Climb this and the chimney/groove to a step rightwards below a disintegrating overhang to a grassy ledge. Move leftwards and follow unsafe cracks.

17 Feathered Edge VS 4b 1962
13m Climb the right-hand crack at the back of the bay to a ledge. Layback up the feathered edge to a good ledge by a tree. A variation start takes the blunt arête two metres to the right of the crack start and leads to the right-hand end of the ledge. Five metres to the right of the variation start is a smaller, mossy, grassy buttress which faces left across the bay.

18 The Start VS 4c 1962
10m The centre of the short slab leads directly to a birch tree. Hardest at the start.

To the right again is a steep wall rising from a sunken overgrown hollow The Snake Pit. Three metres to the right of the bounding arête of the wall is:

19 Slow Worm 5 1973

9m scend the block-filled chimney which forms broken cracks.

20 Scorpion VD 1973

17m The rightwards-slanting crack, with a sentry-box and elder bushes, four metres to the right.

21 Rattler VS4b 1973

15m The leftwards-slanting crack five metres to the right which, with Scorpion, defines a triangular wall. Five metres to the right again is a corner at a lower level, below and to the right of a ledge with an oak tree. The two routes, though once worthwhile, have become overgrown; a public-minded lunatic with a machete is needed.

22 Aspirants Crack HVS 5a 1973

17m Climb the crack rising from the corner past a large jammed flake to a small overhang and the remains of an elder bush. Follow the crack past this to a grassy finish by two birch trees.

23 Python HVS 5a 1973

17m Follow the rightwards-slanting crack out of the corner at the right-hand end of the wall to a ledge. Move up to another ledge on the left and go up to a grassy finish.

Beeley Quarry First Ascents

1962 **Curved Crack, The Arête, Red Wall, Lobitoff**

Direct Start, Original Route, Pedestal Crack, Fear, Abitmore, Grass Slab, Guardian Wall one point of aid, Choss Corner, Bay Edge Climb, Bay Groove, Feathered Edge direct Start Ted Howard and fellow-members of the Alpha Mountaineering Club.

1973 June 17 **Slow Worm, Scorpion** Geoff Milburn, Dave Gregory

1973 June 17 **Rattler** Dave Gregory, Geoff Milburn

1973 Sept. 23 **Python** Dave Gregory, Geoff Milburn

1973 Sept. 23 **Aspirant's Crack** Geoff Milburn, Dave Gregory

1977 **Sycamore Crack** Clive Jones, Dave Gregory

1978 **Guardian Wall** Tom Proctor, Ernie Marshall first free ascent.

1978 **Manita, Machismo** Tom Proctor, Ernie Marshall