

# Robin Hood Quarries

by Reuben Brown

A crag for the broad-minded. A cavernous jungle-complex of quarries featuring a diverse collection of routes. Find the right day and you could encounter an inspiring crag with quality routes and a certain 'je ne sais quoi'. Go on the wrong day (i.e. most days), and grown men will shudder at the dank, soft, florid awfulness of the place.

**Conditions and Aspect:** The good news: on some dry days in winter and late summer, some fine sheltered routes are available, with only a brush and a pre-placed belay rope usually needed (most top-outs are scary). The bad news: the quarries are neglected and overgrown, much of the rock is covered in a lichen that has a lot in common with dandruff, and the shelter means damp can be a problem most of

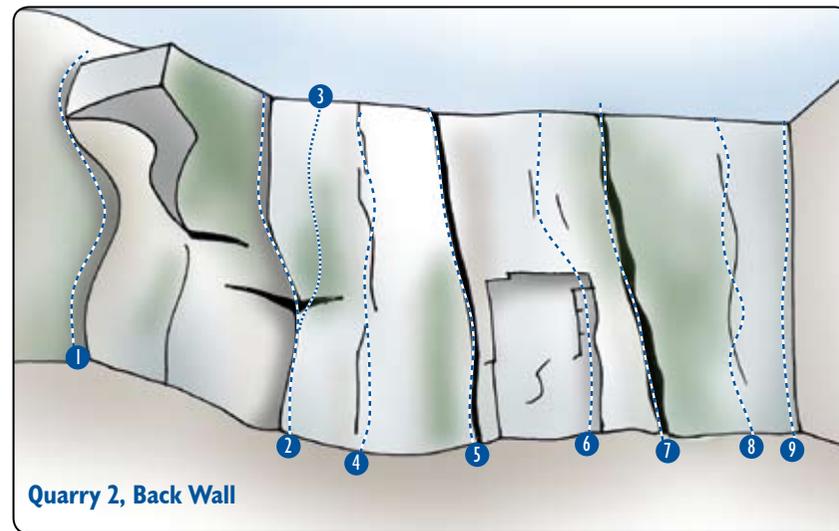
OS Ref. SK 335550 to 334548 Alt. 100m

the year. Also, some of the rock is soft – look out for its tell-tale yellow colour.

**Routes and Bouldering:** Routes come in all shapes and sizes, from big adventurous lines to sharp little challenges. The lack of traffic means grades should be treated with suspicion, even where the dagger symbol (†) has not been used. No bouldering.

**Parking and Approach:** See map on page 443. The Robin Hood Quarries lie 600m north of Whatstandwell (good bus and train service) on the Holloway Road. Park opposite a footpath-indicating lamppost. Behind the lamppost lies this mysterious hidden realm... while 50m up the road lies a pleasant tea-shop. The choice is yours.

**Access:** No access issues are known of.



## Robin Hood Quarry No. 2

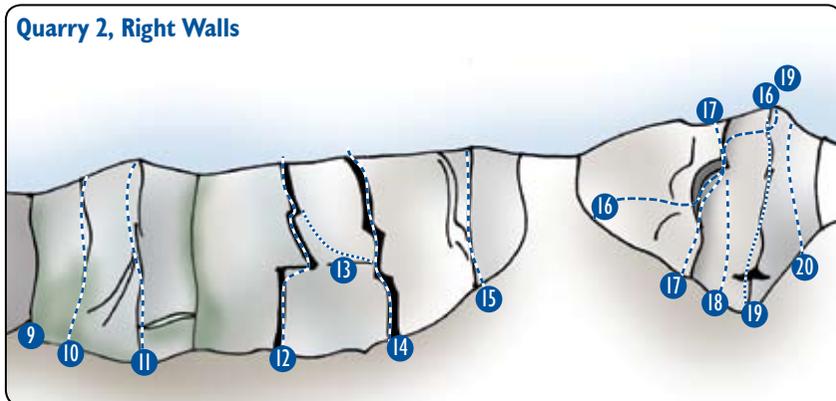
To the right is this bay of fearsome soaring walls. Ironically, much of its best climbing is located on its smallest buttress. The first routes are very overgrown, even by local standards: **Eudoxia**, HVS 4c (1977), takes a right-trending flake on the left; **Eudoxia Right-Hand Start**, HVS 5a (1977), is a direct start; **Wyoming Cow Girl**, E3 5b (1997), is the bold line to the right; **Animation Corner**, HS 4c (1977), is the corner to the right; **Dumbstruck**, S (1977), is the arête, entering the scoop on the left to finish; **Turf Stripper Variation**, S (1977), is the direct arête finish; **The Road to Freedom**, S 4a (1977), is the next arête. To the right is a massive flake chimney:

- 1 Blockhead** S 4a 1977  
15m The large flake to the right is climbed to a sloping ledge. Finish above a small cave.
- 2 Manyana** HVS 5b 1977  
28m Ascend the obvious stepped-corner to the right past a number of saplings.
- 3 Better Late** E3 5c 1986  
25m Just to the right of Manyana. Starting from a

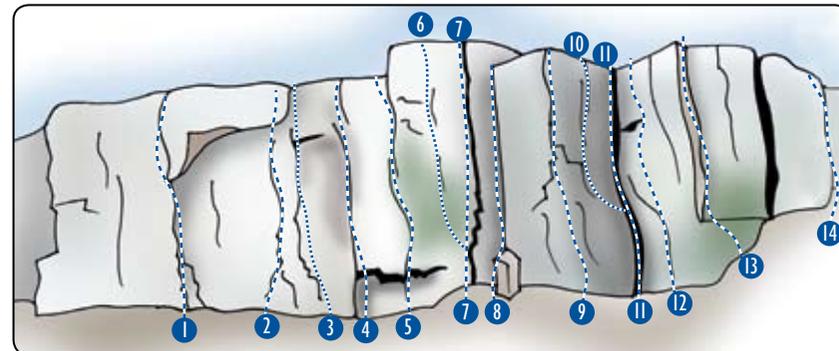
big ledge, at five metres, climb the chimney, crack, and blank-looking headwall above the overhangs.

- 4 Delayed Action** E3 6a 1986  
25m The obvious cracks just to the right (two pegs).
- 5 The Mule** E1 5b 1977  
25m Follow the stubborn, wide crack to the right past a widening at half-height.
- 6 Absent Without Leave** E5 6c ★ 1988  
22m This impressive route stays clean. Safe, but with a massive reachy crux that is pushy at the grade. The striking wall is taken by a crack as far as the overhang. Pull over at its right-hand end (pegs), then move leftwards (peg) to gain a ledge. Continue upwards to your pre-placed belay rope.
- 7 Whodunnit** VS 4c 1977  
22m Immediately to the right is a wide crack. Climb this to a tree and a loose corner.
- 8 Exocet Smith** E2 6a 1986  
22m The obvious, thin crack in the wall to the left of Point Counter Point, finishing to the right of a tree.

## Quarry 2, Right Walls



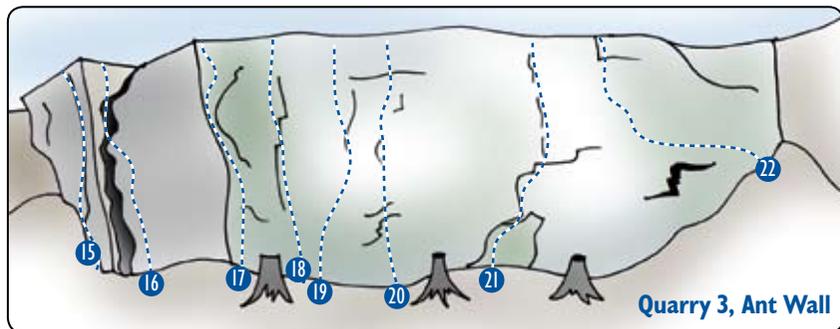
- 9 Point Counter Point** VS 4c 1977  
22m The grotty corner is followed all the way.
- 10 The Living Death** E2 5b 1977  
22m The grotty corner is followed all the way.
- 11 Careful with that Axe, Eugene** E3 5b † 1977-85  
22m Boldly climb the arête to the right via the thin crack and flake on its right-hand side.
- 12 Blue Riband** E2 5c ★ 1986  
22m The wall to the right has a steep groove. Climb this to the overhang, then traverse rightwards to pull on to a ramp. Climb the ramp leftwards and finish directly. Very strenuous and exciting climbing.
- 13 Attention Mars! Everyone to the Tunnels** E2 5b 1997
- 14 Chantilly** VS 4b ● 1977  
16m To the right and seven metres to the left of Chimney Flake, ascend a flake-crack.
- 15 Chimney Flake** VD 1977  
16m The well-named route at the end of the wall.
- Scoop Buttress:** This retiring little buttress features some of the quarries' best routes, which are all in the short-and-sharp gritstone genre. Sadly getting a bit mossy.
- 16 Merry-Go-Round** E1 5a 1977  
20m A traverse of the buttress. Start behind some trees at the left-hand side of the buttress. Use some flakes and a ledge to move rightwards under the overhang. Move up and rightwards as for Funfair to gain a thin crack, then continue rightwards to finish up the arête.
- 17 Funfair** E1 5a 1977  
10m The central scoop is followed boldly on good holds until a tricky move rightwards beneath the overhang brings a thin crack and a welcome runner placement. Move up and leftwards to finish.
- 18 Non-Stick Nightmare** E3 6a 1991  
10m Extended bouldering directly up the superb wall to the right leads to a series of improving holds above mid-height and a runner placement at eight metres (above all difficulties). A pre-placed sling is sensible to overcome the grassy exit, especially for soloists.
- 19 Helter Skelter** HVS 5a 1977  
10m The crack in the right-hand arête of the buttress.
- 20 Non-Stop Pocket Wurlitzer** E1 5c 1991  
16m High up on the right-hand side of the arête are two pockets, one of which happily consumes Friends. Start up the steep bank and reach the pockets by a committing move from a large flat hold. Move up to a ledge on the arête and the finish.



## Robin Hood Quarry No. 3

This extensive quarry contains a number of distinct bays, and some of the best climbing whereabouts. This are the first quarry found on the approach from the road. The wall opposite *Curdled Cream* features one route, which climbs cracks towards its right-hand side: **Yellow Peril** (E1 5b, 1977).

- 1 Birth of a Camel** VS 5a 1977  
17m High up on the right-hand side of the arête are two pockets, one of which happily consumes Friends. Start up the steep bank and reach the pockets by a committing move from a large flat hold. Move up to a ledge on the arête and the finish.
- 2 Baby Rhino** VS 4b 1977  
17m Climb the next flake to the right, past a sapping.
- 3 Curdled Cream** VS 4b 1977  
17m Ascend the third flake.
- 4 Autumn of my Madness** E1 5c 1977  
20m Climb the pleasant crack and from its top, giber to the highest branches of the tree above; the men in white coats cant get to you there!
- 5 Crime and Punishment** HVS 5b 1977  
20m Climb the crack to finish up the left-hand cracks.
- 6 Ant Wall** HS 4a 1977  
20m Start as for Thunderstruck but move on to the ledge and follow a rising traverse leftwards to finish as for Autumn of my Madness (use of the tree is optional).
- 7 Thunderstruck** HVS 5b ★ 1977  
25m The strongest line in the quarries; the electric crack is climbed to a choice of finishes – right is easiest. A band of sandy rock low down doesn't really mar the climbing.
- 8 Je Reviens** VS 4c 1977  
25m Climb the flake.
- 9 The Woodlander** E2 5c 1990  
25m Just to the left of the big corner is an indefinite crack which starts at some small, sloping ledges. Climb up and make a hard move at five metres. Continue with interest up the more reasonable crack above.
- 10 Mark of Cain** E1 5b 1977  
25m Climb Big D for eight metres and move on to the left-hand wall past some blocks. Finish up the steep cracks above.
- 11 Big D** E2 5b 1977  
25m Wrestle with the gruesome corner-crack.
- 12 Hard Labour** E2 5b 1990/97  
25m Climb the groove to reach an overhang. This is overcome on the left via a crack which leads into a corner. Climb the corner until a crack and groove on the right provide a finish.



**13 Trilobite** VS 4c 1977  
17m Starting from some ledges, climb the corner. Perhaps a suitable route for old fossils.

**14 Ultimate Warrior** E1 5b 1997  
13m The arête right of Trilobite. Climb from the grass ledge and mantle out left on to the arête. Move up and left to gain a thin groove which is followed with exposure in fine position to the top.

**15 After the Flood** HVS 5b 1977  
20m Climb the rib to the right of the cave to gain a strenuous, widening crack (gain it above half-height).

**16 The Great Gig in the Sky** E2 5c 1977  
20m Climb a short corner, five metres to the left of an arête, to a ledge. Move rightwards to climb a thin crack, then move up and leftwards to finish up another crack.  
**Ant Wall:** This solid sheet of rock is the showpiece of the quarries.

**17 Antagonist** E1 5b ★ 1977  
20m A good route, with a technical crux that feels more dangerous than it probably should. Climb the arête with difficulty to a thin flake and gear. Press on to a niche and ledgy but still-testing terrain above. If you fall from the crux and hurt yourself, you can consider the climb to be E2.

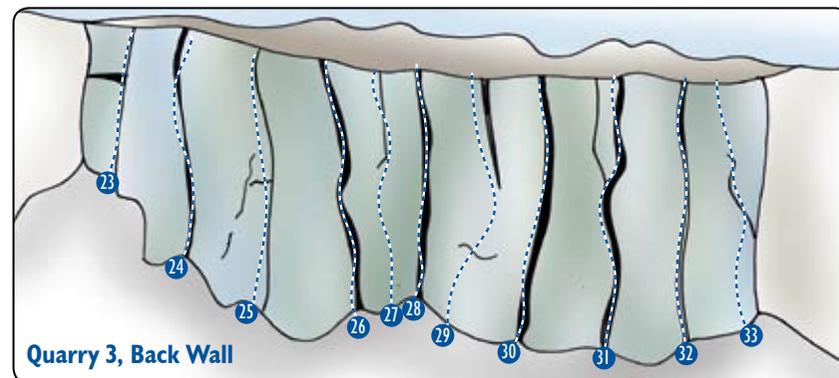
**18 Saucer Full of Secrets** E2 5b † 1977  
20m Just to the right of a tree is a flake-crack. Climb a wall to reach this and ascend the flake. Step leftwards and go directly to a tree at the top.

**19 Frantic Antics** E6 6b † 1987  
20m Unfortunately, this route is often covered in moss and lichen. Start three metres to the right of the previous route. Climb up rightwards to a peg (which may be missing or hidden under the moss), then go up and rightwards to reach a second peg. Move back up leftwards to the obvious ramp and make some long stretches up and leftwards to clip two pegs. Follow the ramp and continue up the obvious line to the top.

**20 Upping the Ante** E5 6b ★ 1987/92  
25m A fine objective for those wanting to climb extremes in quirky locations: the best line on the wall, and usually kept clean-ish by abseilers. Climb flakes to a poor tied-off peg. Continue past a more comforting peg to good holds in the break (more pegs). Funky holds lead to the next break (pegs), from where difficult moves lead up and left to a final peg, and then into a shallow finishing scoop. The original finish took off rightwards at the second break to climb past the left side of a block.

**21 Rip, Rig, and Panic** E5 6a (2pts) 1987  
20m Start nine metres to the right of Upping the Ante. Climb a curving flake/overlap, using the second and third pegs for aid, to gain a line of shallow cracks which lead, past some more pegs, to the top.

**22 Metaphysical Warrior** E3 5b 1977  
27m Start halfway up a bank at the right-hand side of Ant Wall. Traverse leftwards above an overlap for ten metres to gain a good resting place. Move up to a large peg, then climb a small flake followed by a corner. Finish up a wall.



**The Far Right:** The walls to the right look soft and overgrown, but actually contain some of the quarries' more accessible outings.

**23 Rough Twist** S 1977  
17m Follow the first crack to the right of the bank.

**24 Passing Cloud** VS 4a 1977  
17m The loose chimney is a home-from-home for the Beeley Quarry devotee.

**25 St Bruno** VS 4c 1977  
17m Ascend the corner to the left of a pillar.

**26 Woodbine** VS 4b 1977  
17m The thin chimney to the right of the pillar.

**27 Gitanes** VS 4c 1977  
17m A slim groove high in the wall to the right is gained directly from some ledges by a mantelshelf.

**28 Old Holborn** VS 4b 1977  
17m The wide crack to the right is bold but straightforward.

**29 Gauloise** HVS 5a 1977  
17m Gain some ledges to the right of the previous route and finish up a shallow groove.

**30 Golden Virginian** VS 4b 1977  
17m A steep crack leads to a ledge followed by a corner.

**31 Roll Up** VS 4a 1977  
17m Climb a block-filled chimney and corner to the right of Golden Virginian.

**32 Bel Air** VS 4b 1977  
17m Climb a wide crack which has a ledge near its top.

**33 Rough Flake** HS 1977  
17m Just to the left of a beech tree is a slanting crack. Climb it, taking care when using a rough flake.

Rising from the pit to the right is the corner of **Quatermass**, VS 4c. Under the moss to the right, **Rise and Shine**, VS 4b, climbs flakes to a ledge, finishing up a thin crack on the right, while the shallow corner next-door is **Criss-Cross Corner**, VD. **Morning Glory**, VS 4c, climbs the centre of the wall right again, approached from the next route. Next, **Evening Arête**, VD, Evening Arête, VD, is one of the quarries' only not-so-bad easy routes and has a rare safe exit. The loose feature around the arête is **Evening Crack**, S, and the the cake-mix corner further right is **Double Diamond**, VS 4b. All 1977.

**34 Crack of Dawn** HVS 5b ★ 1977  
9m One of the most accessible routes here. The steep crack packs a brief-but-rapturous punch. Stays clean but does seep.