

## THE DOVESTONES QUARRIES

O.S. ref. SE 022037 to 025040

By Chris Hardy (1987) Updated by Ian Carr (2012)

*Of it, one enthusiast has written: "It makes the Three Cliffs of Llanberis seem small beer".*

Edward C. Pyatt: *Where to Climb in the British Isles.* (1960)

### SITUATION AND CHARACTER

These huge man-made quarries dominate the eastern slopes rising above Dovestones Reservoir. The rock in all three is uniformly steep and The Main Quarry presents shattered walls and corners often more than 150 feet in height. This, and the steeply dropping hillside below the cliff, creates an atmosphere of unusual severity for gritstone. The Lower Left Quarry reaches a height of over 100 feet but is arranged in a rather more complex pattern of features, whereas the Lower Right Quarry is smaller, only 50 feet high, and possesses much less character (i.e. loose rock!)

In The Main Quarry, the area of rock immediately right of White Slab has undergone radical change since the last guidebook (1976). It must be stressed: **TREAT THIS SECTION WITH EXTREME CAUTION.** Indeed, care should be exercised on all the seldom-frequented routes. Nevertheless, despite some loose and dirty holds, the rock is generally of good quality and despite the quarries' poor reputation and unjustified lack of visitors, there are in fact many fine climbs that are well worth seeking out. Convenient belay stakes are in place above The Main Quarry and The Lower Right Quarry; small Cairns marks most of these.

### APPROACHES AND ACCESS

From the car park below Dovestones Reservoir dam, walk along the road past the sailing clubhouse and yacht park until the bridge over Chew Brook is crossed. Leave the tarmac road for the path on the left which leads round the reservoir. At the second of two stiles, follow the left-hand side of a dry-stone wall uphill until the quarries are visible; the first to be reached being the Lower Right Quarry (20 minutes).

A slightly longer approach (20-25 minutes) is to walk from the car park at Binn Green picnic sight on the A635, 1 ¼ miles from the Clarence Hotel in Greenfield.

The quarries are owned by the North West Water Authority that is willing to allow climbing but not camping or bivouacking.

[In 2010 the management of the area was taken over by the RSPB from United Utilities. Peregrine falcons and ravens regularly nest in the quarries resulting in temporary climbing restrictions during the nesting season. Please check the BMC's Access Database \(RAD\) if you are planning a visit at during May to August.](#)

### HISTORY

The first recorded climbs in these quarries were *The Seal's Back* (now known as *Disappointment*) and *The Waterfall Climb*; both described by George Bower in the very first addition of *Recent Developments on Gritstone*, published in 1923. The fact that progress was slow in the first half of the century is a measure of the cliffs' aura. Though Arthur Birtwistle forced a new route in 1938 on The Main Quarry, he nearly decapitated his second with a dislodged block, which, not surprisingly, discouraged even this bold explorer's pioneering zeal. A rock avalanche at about this time, in which most of the climb slid away, did nothing to promote the cliffs popularity.

It was not until 1948 that serious development took place. Initially, a visit by Joe Brown, Wilf White and Merrick (Slim) Sorrell resulted in *Titan's Groove*. From then on Brown, White and Sorrell accompanied by their 'Rock and Ice' companions, J.R. (Nat) Allen, Don Chapman and Fred Ashton, began to pay regular visits. *Mike's Meander, Initiation Groove, Brown Route, White Slab* and *The Dove Stone Quarry Girdle Traverse* all resulted from this activity.

In 1952, The Lower Left Quarry received its first attention from Graham West assisted by Michael Roberts and Ron Chambers. To them can be credited the first ascents of *Finger Flake, Alumina Crack, Cave and Traverse, Blanco Direct* and *Ultima Ratio*. In 1956 this team was joined by Phil Sowerby and Brian Dutton from the Bivouac Club of R.A.F. Ringway and the liaison was celebrated by ascents of *Birthday Layback* and *Jogged Crack*.

In 1957 Brown climbed *Ace of Spades* and *Tiny Tim*, and during 1958-59 Alan Parker, Peter Bamfield and other members of the Alpha M.C. added a fair quota of climbs including the original *Jericho Wall* and the fine *A-lu-te*. Members of the Manchester Gritstone C.C. were also active in the quarries, creating a mixture of 'free' and partially-aided climbs such as *The Silver, Swinging Chimney, Gatepost Crack*, and *Five Day Chimney*. A feat worthy of mention from this period (though repetition is not recommended) was Malc Baxter's first ascent of *Funny Move Groove* with Rimmon M.C. member, Tony Howard; the leader climbed with one arm in plaster!

Working for the 1965 guidebook; Tony Howard, Paul Seddon, Jeff Sykes, Brian Woods, Brian Hodgkinson and other members of the Rimmon M.C. added over a dozen routes including, *Brass Monkey, Garn, Clag, Gangapoochi, The Trollenberg Terror, Caramba, Feb.* and *Flutterbye Grooves*. Two years after the guidebook's appearance, Jim Campbell free-climbed *Gatepost Crack*, and in 1968 Bruce Goodwin and Bill Birchall produced *Gail's Progress* and a low girdle of The Main Quarry – *Sandblaster*. Coincidentally, a year later Howard and Bill Birch traversed in the opposite direction naming it *Elastic Homage*. As these routes shared the same middle pitch, both parties must share the honours. The latter pair then went on to climb *The Whipper-in* and *Loose Leaf*.

In 1970 Brian Toase, accompanied by Richard Sawicki, climbed *Black Cracks* and *Direct Route* whilst Con Carey took the lead for *Played Out*. In June of the same year, Bob Whittacker produced the excellent *Mindbender*. 'The quarries were popular at this time, and it was not unusual to see a dozen parties climbing here on a Sunday afternoon.' By 1972, new routes were falling thick and fast, for the 'Bacup group' had been drafted in, stimulated by a new guidebook in the making. Barry Rawlinson and Gerry Peel added *Tweedledee* and *Tweedledum* whereas Whittacker climbed *Variety Performance, 17 Year Itch, Amen Corner*, and *Quarrymaster*. Allan Wolfenden's contributions, with various seconds, were *Jenny Wren, Salamanka, Plumb-line* and *Slanting Crack*. However, the pick of the bunch was undoubtedly Rawlinson's *Hey! Jeannie* in The Main Quarry.

Having checked the existing routes for the 1976 guidebook (an enormous task, in itself) and led a batch of new ones, any sane person should have left well alone, but no!... the bug (with no known antidote) had bitten and Whittacker was back in 1977, this time with Ralph Pickering, to create *Too Tall For Dwarfs*, Jackie and a completely free ascent of *Five Day Chimney*, as well as reducing the aid on

*Metamorphose* to one nut. The following year, Steve Bancroft climbed past this sole indiscretion to produce the test-piece provocatively renamed *Bob Hope*. Since then, the free ascents of *Tweedledum* and *Quarrymaster* by Chris Hardy and Ian Carr, and Con Carey and Hardy's afternoon outing on *Elastic Homage* to remove the penultimate point of aid in this guidebook, are the only events worthy of mention. And of course the odd rock-fall.

New routes since the 1987 guidebook are inserted in the original text below. These are in Blue. There continues to be recurring instability in the right-hand side of the Central Quarry and rock falls occurring at regular time intervals. The Lower Left, Waterfall and Lower Right area remain unscathed.

Routes that are known to be either very overgrown or loose are marked with a "●"  
This may not be a definitive list.

THE CLIMBS in each of the three quarries are described from LEFT to RIGHT.

## THE LOWER LEFT QUARRY

The most prominent features of the quarry are the white central slab and capping overhang taken by Blanco Direct and, on the left, the huge black cleft left of Mercury Crack. *Farther left and at a lower level is a small isolated basin, 40 yards above a sandy plateau. This contains the following three climbs:*

### 1      **The Teazer**   VS 4c   1958   ●

45ft   Start beneath a long overhang at 30 feet. Ascend directly up the slab to an open groove which leads to the overhang. Pass this obstacle by moving left to a small ledge forming the top of a large block. The short finishing wall is 'delicate, exposed and the hardest part of the climb' though easier, 4b, for the tall.

### 2      **Olly's Option**   S      1958   ●

50ft   Starting 6 feet left of an easy-angled corner, climb the thin crack and slabby arête to reach a ledge. Above and slightly to the right is a 6-foot V-shaped groove; climb this to a spacious sloping ledge, then choose the easiest scramble up to finish.

### 3      **Scoop Route**   HVD   pre-1958   ●

55ft   Bridge the slabby corner to a scoop that leads left to a wide cracked groove and split blocks to finish.

A route has been worked out up the wall to the right of Scoop Route's upper section. The pocketed rib forming the right arête of the basin has also been climbed, S.

*The next routes are in the main section of THE LOWER LEFT QUARRY. High up, and almost at the extreme left-hand side of the quarry, are three parallel slanting cracks/grooves. Finishing up the left-hand one of these is:*

### 4      **Played Out**   VS 5a   1970

50ft   Climb up to and follow the leftward-slanting crack to a 'hard landing on a slab'. Move right, then go up a short corner to an awkward detour to stand on a small

ledge. Continue more easily via a layback to the top. The short corner can also be gained direct by a steep corner-crack; this is equally difficult.

**5 Tweedledee** HVS 5a \* 1972

55ft After the initial scramble, climb the undercut central crack by jamming and barn-door laybacking.

**6 Tweedledum** E2 6a \*\* 1972/1982

55ft Relatively easy rocks lead up to the right-hand groove which proves to be very hard to enter. This gives neat finger-jamming to an awkward bulging finish.

*The overgrown bay to the right is situated behind the buttress that forms Mercury Crack. Its left side can be climbed by a grassy route. The bay also has a wide chimney in its right-hand side, the (outside) wall to its left having a wide joggled crack near its right edge:*

**7 Pipers** VS 5a 1972 ●

50ft Climb easy ledges to the lichenous crack which, if followed direct, is surprisingly awkward.

**8 Black Chimney** VD pre-1958 ●

55ft The wide chimney (which is not as obvious as the name might suggest) has only a little loose rock but a lot of grass. The epitomy of all that is bad about these quarries.

*The quarry floor now drops to a slightly lower level. Twenty feet right of Black Chimney, and directly above, there is a large triangular overhang, the right side of which tapers out below a fierce crack. Going up to this but escaping leftwards is:*

**9 Birthday Layback** VS 4b,4c \* 1956

A good clean climb which, with careful rope-work, can be combined into a single pitch.

1. 40ft From a standing position on a shelf at head-height, climb the crack and 'leaf flake' to a position below the overhang. Traverse the slab leftwards to a belay on a good ledge below a square-cut corner.

2. 45ft Layback the corner for 'about 16 feet' until it is possible to move right onto a good ledge Exit via the flake-crack which is a finish common to the next route:

**10 Gatepost Crack** E1 5b \*\* 1960/1967

75ft The fierce jamming crack which splits the right-hand edge of the overhang is gained direct via a lower crack line. Superb, clean climbing up an impressive line. The protection is good and the upper wall is not as devoid of holds as first appearances might suggest.

**11 Mercury Crack** S(trugglesome) \*\* pre-1956

75ft For connoisseurs and cavers; not everyone's cup of tea. Easy rocks and a corner lead to the huge dark cleft. Follow this passing above the first of two chockstones to emerge through the hole at the back.

**11a Uranus Crack** HVS 5b 1995

22m How rude. The right edge of the inside wall via cracks. Finish by a squirm up the upper overhanging chimney cleft.

*Below and to the right of Mercury Crack's huge cleft is a clean, **WHITE WALL**.  
Going up the left-hand side of this is:*

**12 White Wall Left** VD pre-1958 ●

1. 50ft From a few feet up Mercury Crack, gain the wide and blocky groove. Climb this to an exit right onto a large and clean, sloping platform.
2. 15ft Escape rightwards easily or, alternatively and *much* harder, finish up the broken crack above the left-hand side of the platform.

**12a White Rib** E1 5b 2007

16m The left edge of the wall with a bold-ish mid section.

**12b Age Concern** E2 6a \*\* 1989

16m The central, thin twin-cracks to the slanting break via one hard move rightwards on a finger pocket. Move left on a letterbox to the upper crack.

**13 White Wall Direct** E1 5b,- \* 1969

1. 60ft From a few feet up Mercury Crack, traverse rightwards to a position beneath the WHITE WALL, the lower half of which is split by a number of cracks. Climb the wider right-hand one of these to a vague horizontal break before moving leftwards with difficulty to reach a second crack. Follow this by way of an unlikely layback and/or jamming to a hard landing onto a sloping shelf.

**Superdirect** (1989) gains the upper crack directly at a slightly harder grade.

2. 15ft Escape easily rightwards (As for White Wall Left).

**14 White Wall Right** VS 4c,- pre-1958 ●

1. 60ft From a few feet up Mercury crack, traverse even further rightwards (past a possible belay ledge) to a weakness where white rock meets black. This is climbed with difficulty past a small pinnacle and triangular ledge, before moving left to reach the clean platform.
2. 15ft Exit rightwards, then scramble up and leftwards to belay in a rocky channel.

*Fifty feet lower down, and at the base of rocky slope, the next climbs start from a small bay where the base of the crag levels off to the horizontal.*

**15 Black Wall Route** E1 5b,4c 1982

1. 25ft Climb the short wide crack and rounded left arête of the bay to reach a spacious ledge. A peg up to the right can be used as a belay.
2. 65ft Climb up to and over a slight bulge to reach a crack in the centre of the black wall. Follow this until a move left leads to White Wall Right. Climb this for a few feet, then move back right to finish up a short cracked corner (or the arête round to its right).

*Six feet right of Black Wall Route is a small recessed corner directly below a leaning black chimney. Starting here is:*

**16 Alumina Crack** VS -,4c \* pre-1958

1. 40ft Climb the blocky corner, aiming for a small ledge below the leaning chimney with a smooth left wall and a number of chockstones high up. A peg belay is *in situ*.

2. 50ft Climb the chimney somewhat precariously, passing the overhanging section with a difficult move to reach a good hidden hold. Finish up the slab which is easiest on its left-hand side.

**17 Black Cracks** VS 5a,4c 1970/pre-1976

1. 40ft Start just right of Alumina Crack and go up, and slightly rightwards, to a jamming crack. Climb this moving leftwards to reach the belay of the previous route.
2. 50ft Five feet right, and higher up, is a crack in a shallow corner. Follow this by finger-jamming and laybacking till a hidden handhold enables better footholds to be gained. Move leftwards to join and finish as for Alumina Crack.

**18 Right-hand Finish** E1 5a,5b \* 1972

1. 40ft As for pitch 1 of Black Cracks.
2. 50ft Five feet right is a crack. Ignore this, and climb the 'hard-to-start' arête to its right to gain a small ledge in the middle of the slab. Finish up the right-hand side of the slab via a thin crack and its right arête.

*Ten feet to the right of Alumina Crack is a rounded arête, starting about 12 feet up.*

**19 Mottled Groove** S \* pre-1958

1. 50ft Climb the broken left-hand side of the arête until it can be rounded to a flake on the right. The short wall above, and the corner to its left, are taken to a comfortable ledge below three split blocks (the 'Book Ends' belay). A more logical, and better, alternative to the initial arête is to climb either side of the large flake around to the right.
2. 45ft Ascend directly to up the blocks and the groove above, exiting on the left.

To the right is the large white slab, **AIMLESS SLAB**. Starting up the weakness just to its left is:

**20 Direct Route** VS 4c,4c \* 1970 ●

1. 65ft Climb easily up the weakness for a short distance to a corner crack on the left which is jammed to reach a bridging position at a large block. Surmount this direct, or by a slight deviation to the left, then continue more easily to a 'tooth' of rock. Move left to a belay at flakes/ledges.
2. 30ft A constricting groove/pod which contains a long thin flake of rock is entered with difficulty. At its termination, bulging rock is overcome direct using good holds.

**21 Cave and Traverse** VS 4c,4b pre-1958 ●

1. 80ft Go easily up the left edge of AIMLESS SLAB. A very delicate toe-traverse then leads round the bulging arête into a corner (junction with Direct Route). Reverse mantelshelf, then continue leftwards by hand-traverse to reach the top of a large flake (junction with the alternative first pitch on Mottled Groove). Pull up to gain a ledge beneath a smooth-looking corner and climb this past a large horizontal pocket to the 'book flake' and a good belay ledge directly below a small cave.
2. 35ft Climb parallel cracks (the left-hand one forms the 'book flake') until it is possible to step rightwards to the shallow cave (which can also be gained direct). Pull over the bulge with difficulty, then continue by 'turfed-in' chockstones, moving rightwards before easy upward scrambling. A harrowing pitch.

**22 Blanco Direct** VS -,4b,- \* pre-1958

Good climbing, though the flake on pitch 2 should be treated with the utmost caution. Beware of rope-drag on pitch 2.

1. 50ft Climb the pleasant crack, trending rightwards to reach a pedestal belay (the top of a finger flake).
2. 40ft Traverse left to the jutting flake high up in the corner. Stand on this, hold your breath, then pull quickly round the overhang (crux) to a move up rightwards to reach a small ledge and a nut belay.
3. 25ft Finish up the slabby wall, keeping to the left all the way.

*The large overhang to the left of the pedestal is **Blanco Superdirect**, E2 5c, (1972 / 1991). Arran Kirk, John Archibald (6th May 1992)*

*Fifteen feet to the right, and past a wide crack, is an overhanging groove with another wide crack, 6-foot long in the back:*

### **23 Mindbender** HVS 4c,5a \*\*1970

A surprisingly good and varied climb.

1. 50ft Climb the twin cracked groove, awkward to start, to gain a large platform (this can also be reached more easily via the first wide crack). Above are four cracks, the left-hand pair of which form a finger flake. Follow the right hand pair, then traverse left with difficulty to the pedestal belay on Blanco Direct.
2. 75ft Climb up and right to a niche. Move up (crux) and cross rightwards to a possible belay in Tottering Groove. Traverse back left to the arête before moving up and right to a leftward-curving crack that is followed to easier ground above.

*23a **Draft Bass** E1 5b \* 1992*

*33m Takes a line through Mindbender. Climb the broken groove to gain ledges, then the right-hand crackline. Move up and leftwards to meet Mindbender at the niche. Finish directly up the arête.*

*Paul Braithwaite, Chris Myles (28th July 1992)*

*Starting 5 feet to the right of Mindbender, and at a slightly higher level, is:*

### **24 Finger Flake** HVD pre-1958

50ft An alternative first pitch to Blanco Direct, at about the same standard. Climb the 'easy-looking crack' (which of course isn't easy) sloping off leftwards, to reach a broad platform. The left-hand pair of cracks form the finger flake, both of which are climbed (Koala Bear-style) to the pedestal at its top.

*Twelve feet to the right and fifteen feet higher up, is a large platform that can be gained from a dirty crack down left, or very easily from the right. Starting from the platform is:*

### **25 Amen Corner** E1 5a,5b pre-1976

1. 50ft Bridge up the vague chimney (or quit this as soon as possible for nicer moves up the clean, slabby wall on the left) to gain large footholds on a ledge/ramp. Hand-traverse the horizontal crack leftwards to a blind swing round the arête to reach the niche of Mindbender. Descend leftwards to reach the pedestal.
2. 60ft Probably a grade harder when dirty. Above is a steep, wide groove. Climb this with difficulty and peat, exiting slightly leftwards at the top to a slab where easy rocks

lead to the finish. Alternatively, move rightwards from the top of the groove to finish up the flake in the arête.

**26 Tottering Groove** VS 4b pre-1958

70ft Follow Amen Corner to gain a wide groove which proves relatively straightforward, if not secure. The groove can also be gained by a short leftward traverse, starting 15 feet higher up and to the right, which makes the route HVD.

**27 Ultima Ratio** VD \* pre-1958

50ft Stand on a spike to gain entry into the leftward-slanting groove which can be climbed direct on good holds.

**28 17 Year Itch** VS 4c 1972

50ft Start 8 feet to the right of Ultima Ratio at a small sentry box. Climb out of this with difficulty and follow the crack/groove prior to a poor finish on huge tottering blocks.

There are two girdles of the quarry which traverse in opposite directions; both are worthwhile. The first to be described runs up from left to right.

**29 Black and White Traverse** HVD \*\* pre-1958

200ft A rose amongst thorns; the positions are almost certainly unequalled by any other gritstone HVD.

1. 70ft Start from the base of Mercury Crack and traverse rightwards, below WHITE WALL, to reach the peg belay of Alumina Crack. Move right, then go up (crux) to the 'Book Ends' belay.
2. 60ft A slightly ascending traverse right, across grooves and corners, leads to the ledges above and to the left of the 'heavy' overhang on Blanco Direct. Decaying peg, but good nut belays.
3. 40ft Climb diagonally rightwards across the upper slabs to a stance on the opposite arête, 20 feet below the top. Superbly exposed.
4. 30ft. Move round onto a slab, then finish direct.

**30 Variety Performance** VS 4c,4c,4b,5a,4c \* 1972

280ft Start from a large platform, as for Amen Corner.

1. 4ft' Bridge up the chimney (or climb the slab to the left which is better) until above the small overhang, then move left to a ramp. Slither down this and, whilst dropping off the end, try to swing leftwards along the horizontal crack leading to the pedestal belay of Blanco Direct.
2. 70' Cross leftwards below the jutting flake of Blanco Direct and step down. Using a short curving crack, gain a prominent foothold on the arête and, using poor undercuts, change feet and totter across to a clean steep slab (junction with Direct Route). This is climbed to a comfortable stance and belay below three split blocks, as for Mottled Groove.
3. 50' Foot-traverse leftwards to reach Alumina Crack, then descend until a diagonal traverse can be made to reach a small ledge on White Wall Right.
4. 75' Follow a foot-traverse left until a hard move up a diagonal fault can be made to gain White Wall Left. Cross to Mercury Crack, then continue under the triangular overhang to a ledge on Birthday Layback.
5. 45' Layback the corner and traverse out right to a ledge, from where an easy shallow crack leads to the top (pitch 2 of Birthday Layback).

The next climbs are traditionally associated with this section of the quarry, despite being in no-man's land. *Right of 17 Year Itch is a wide gully (CENTRAL GULLY) which can be used as a method of descent or a winter route. Forty yards farther right, and high up, is an isolated buttress. When viewed from the right-hand side, a corner can be seen with a prominent joggled crack in its left wall. Round the arête, and 12 feet to its left, is a tongue of rock taken by:*

**31 Black Tongue** VS 4b 1970  
45' Climb the twin cracks, separated by a slim black pillar.

**31a Menage a Trois** VS 4c 1997  
15m *Left of Joggled Crack is a prominent tower. Up the left edge of this is a prominent corner. Climb parallel cracks on the left wall of the corner then continue up the crack in the left wall to pull out left round the arête to finish.*

*Tony Howard, Di Taylor, Mick Shaw (1997)*

**31b The Pillar** E1 5b 1993  
15m *The thin crack up the narrow face left of Joggled Crack*

*Paul Braithwaite, Craig Hannah, (1993 June 16<sup>th</sup>)*

**32 Joggled Crack** VS 4c \* 1956  
45' Start 12 feet right of Black Tongue and climb at will the wide, joggled crack or holds on the right-hand wall until forced to climb the corner direct. This is followed to a difficult (and joggled) exit.

**32a The Jogger** HVS 5b Date  
15m *The right wall of Joggled Crack. Climb the crack rising from the bottom right corner of the wall then move left at the overlap to reach a finger crack. Up this (or easier, stride into Joggled Crack). Just below the top of the corner a long reach right reaches a finger slot (Friend 1½). Pull right and right again onto the arête to finish.*

*Tony Howard, Mick Shaw*

**32b Nomad's Return** VS 4c, 4a 4c Date  
28m *10m right of Joggled Crack is a twin cracked hanging corner with a cracked left wall. Gain a belay ledge below this by traversing in from the right. Climb the left arête of the cracked wall.*

*Tony Howard, Mick Shaw (Date)*

**32c Boffin Wall** HVS 5a, 5b, 4c Date  
24m The centre of the cracked wall (right of Nomad's Return) finishing on the hanging arête on the right. (24m)

*Mick Shaw, Tony Howard (Date)*

**32d Rock of Ages** HVS 5b, 4c, 4c (Date)  
19m *6m right of Boffin Wall is a clean Tower cleft by a crack with a deep overhanging V-gash on its right. The gash is 4b. This route climbs the crack followed by twin cracks then left up the wall to below the final hanging arête of Boffin Wall up which the route finishes.*

*Tony Howard, Mick Shaw ( Date )*

**32f** *Evening Crack* HVS 5b 1993

*15m Climbs the obvious crackline splitting the pear-shaped buttress just left of Central Gully.*

*Paul Braithwaite / Craig Hannah, 1993 June 16*

*Fifty feet to the right, and at the lowest point of a large broken mass, starts **Rib Route**, 140ft, HVD, (pre-1965), a poor wandering route with numerous possible variations. Gaining a scruffy terrace at 110 feet is the crux.*

*Across to the right is the biggest gritstone quarry in the world; also referred to as 'Death Quarry', it is 'for big boys only' (quote!)... Though why little boys and girls should be so lucky seems most unfair.*

## THE MAIN QUARRY

Towards the left-hand end of the quarry (its lowest point) is a 30-foot broken corner beneath a huge tilted block, with a terrace above. Below, and 20 feet to the left of the block, a bald undercut (and unclimbed) arête has an attractive 20-foot crack in its right-hand side. Starting 12 feet left of the arête is:

**33 Left-hand Variant** VS 4b,-,- 1972 ●  
160'

1. 55' The left-hand crack gives initially clean jamming before a scramble up to **THE TERRACE**.
2. 20' Walk leftwards and belay 15 feet to the right of an orange-coloured rock scar.
3. 85' A poor pitch. Climb up until it is possible to move right to a cracked groove in the wall; this is climbed leftwards to a sloping ledge. Gain a second ledge and then avoid an escape left by climbing the wide crack to reach another ledge. Finish easily.

**34 Epitaph Corner** VS 4b,4c,- \* 1959  
150'

1. 65' As for Left-hand Variant, then belay 10 feet above THE TERRACE on ledges formed by some large blocks.
2. 60' Immediately above is a corner with parallel cracks in its left wall. Climb the corner direct.
3. 25' Easy ledges lead to the top.

**34a Oldham Wakes** E1 5b \* 1992

18m The thin crackline in the right hand arête of Epitaph Corner, starting from The Terrace. Climb the right hand of two corners, awkward to start. Continue up the broken arête before moving leftwards to gain a thin crackline. Climb this with tricky final moves.

*Paul Braithwaite, Dave Crilly ( 21<sup>st</sup> June 1992 )*

**34b Gracie Fields** HVS 5a 1993

15m Takes the thin crackline just right of the start of **Oldham Wakes**. Thereafter, move right onto the nose of rock just left of **A-lu-te**. Delicate moves to finish.

*Craig Hannah, Paul Braithwaite (16th June 1993)*

**35 Waterfall Direct** HS 4b,-,- \* 1958

- 150' Start 7 feet to the left of the arête at a crack with an old peg 10 feet up in its left wall.
1. 60' Climb the well-scratched crack and ridge to THE TERRACE and then belay on the blocky ledges (As for Epitaph Corner).
  2. 70' Climb easily rightwards to a vague chimney (**WATERFALL CHIMNEY**) that narrows into a clean-cut shallow V-shaped groove. Follow these direct to reach a small platform,
  3. 20' Climb the short wall to the top.

*Three feet to the right of the arête is the attractive thin crack. This provides the main difficulties for a hard, if disjointed, route:*

**36 Tightwalk** E2 6a,5a \* 1975

145'

1. 65' Follow the crack with increasing difficulty to a ledge at 25 feet. Climb the rib on the left (as for Waterfall Direct) to THE TERRACE and belay 10 feet higher, as for Epitaph Corner.

*Finish here, or jeopardise the star-rating by continuing.*

2. 80' From the left-hand end of the ledges, climb the chimney/crack then move up to a position below a short and steep curving crack. Swarm up this to an ungainly landing on a slab. The slab can also be gained by moving right from the base of the steep crack; ascend to an overhang, then go back leftwards to attain the slab. Upon joining Left-hand Variant, finish as for that route.

**37 Parallel Cracks** HS -,4b,- \* pre-1965

150' Start 8 feet right of the arête (and 5 feet to the right of Tightwalk) at thin cracks.

1. 60' Climb directly up the thin cracks to gain a ledge at 20 feet, then move left and follow the rib to a belay on ledges 10 feet above THE TERRACE. The thin cracks above and slightly right of the ledge at 20 feet constitute **The Parallelogram Start**, HVS 5a, (1987).

2. 70' From the ledge, hand-jam up either of the two cracks on the left. Move rightwards into Epitaph Corner and climb this until it is possible to make a short traverse left to reach two wide parallel cracks (the right-hand one contains a jammed block). These are climbed in tandem, with a tricky move to stand on the projecting block.

3. 20' Easy rocks are taken to finish.

**38 A-lu-te** S \*\*\* 1959

160'

1. 60' As for Parallel Cracks pitch 1.

2. 80' Above the terrace is the obvious line of Epitaph Corner and 15 feet to the right is the V-shaped groove of Waterfall Direct. Between the two, however, is a shallow, bottomless, 30-foot corner. Move up right to a position below the corner, and then follow it direct (the initial section can be avoided by the exposed arête on the left).

3. 20' Easy ledges lead to the top.

*Starting 20 feet to the right of the bald arête, below a large tilted block, is the original route of the quarry:*

**39 The Waterfall Climb** VD \*\*\* pre-1924

150'

1. 50' Ascend the broken corner to the block which is passed on the right. Belay on a large, flat-topped spike embedded in THE TERRACE.

2. 30' Climb up onto the blocky ledges, then continue rightwards to a smaller ledge below the V-shaped groove of Waterfall Direct.

3. 50' The chimney is used to reach the second of two cracklines on the right-hand wall; this leads to a platform. The right-hand (or lower) of the two cracklines can also be climbed at HVD; cleaner and better.

4. 20' The short cracked wall above provides a finish to this classic climb.

*Starting 5 feet to the right of The Waterfall Climb at a short crack is:*

**40 Feb.** VS 4b,4c,5a 1960

165'

1. 50' Take the awkward crack and broken ledges to reach THE TERRACE. Belay directly below the chimney and V-shaped groove of Waterfall Direct.
2. 95' Below, and slightly to the right of the chimney, is another groove which is slightly undercut and has cracks in the back. Climb the groove, step left, go up, then move awkwardly back right past an evil-looking spike to reach a small ledge. Follow the deep, rightward-curving crack to a slab, which is climbed to a belay below a corner crack.
3. 20' Climb the wide corner-crack above; short but exacting.

*The following four climbed are described as starting from the right-hand side of THE TERRACE at 40 feet. This can be easily gained by the ledgy wall just right of both Feb. and The Waterfall Climb.*

**41 Sideshow** E1 5b,5b 1972

1. 90ft Climb easily up overgrown ledges until a hard move up thin twin cracks on the left leads to undercuts on a fang of rock. Move left, then climb up to a slab and belay at Feb.'s second stance.
2. 30ft In the centre of the vertical right wall is a wide but narrowing, rightward-slanting crack. Follow this to the top; a 'hidden' finger jam aids the tricky finish.

**42 Brass Monkey** HVS -,5a \* 1961

Though strenuous, a good exposed route.

1. 40ft Climb overgrown ledges in the left side of the recess (as for Sideshow), to belay on top of the grassy ledges.
2. 90ft Climb the left-hand of two short grooves, with a difficult move to reach good holds on top of a large flake, then step up onto a sloping ledge. Move up, then left, to gain a wide crack which is bridged and jammed to reach the square-cut roof. Here, a difficult move gains good holds on a block; layback to stand on this. From this isolated position, good holds lead with reduced difficulty to the top.

**43 Garn** E1 -,5b 1962

1. 40ft As for Brass Monkey pitch 1.
2. 90ft Continue as for Brass Monkey to the sloping ledge but, instead of moving left, climb directly up the roofed-in corner until hard moves rightwards (at either of two levels) allow the crack of Pinnacle Gully to be reached (just where that route traverses right). Instead of following suite, continue directly up the cracks, past a small overhang. The good finish adds spice to an otherwise poor climb.

**44 Pinnacle Gully** VS -,4c,- ca 1950

1. 30ft Grovel up grass in the right-hand side of the recess, then move diagonally rightwards to belay on a grassy (and well disguised!) ledge below a vertical crackline. Alternatively (and harder, 4b), take a loose chimney then move leftwards to gain the stance; this is the original, if illogical, first pitch of Garn.
2. 65ft Ascend to a small ledge on the arête (the top of the minute, so called 'pinnacle'), then take the fierce twin cracks on the left, passing an awkward section to reach and overhang. Swing right on a big flake and pull up into a ledge. Cross rightwards to belay at the junction with Mike's Meander.
3. 45' Climb the groove, then crack, to the top (as for Mike's Meander).

**44a King Bill** E2 5b \*\* 1992

*40m Climbs the arête between Pinnacle Gully and Gangapoochi.*

1. 27m. Start as for Gangapoochi. Climb the overhung bay and steep crackline on to the arête, then reach a resting place. Continue up the arête, then traverse leftwards at the overhangs before moving up and to the right to gain a good stance.
2. 13m. Move up to the shallow scoop on the exposed arête. Delicate moves then lead to good holds, runner. Continue up and leftwards to finish

*Paul Braithwaite, Dave Crilly (26th June 1992)*

*Next on the right, up a series of intimidating grooves, is a splendid route:*

**45 Gangapoochi** E1 4c,5b,4b \*\* 1960s/1971

Probably the best route of its grade in the quarries... but with one very hard move.

Start directly below a long, square-cut groove capped by an overhang.

1. 25ft A short hanging corner leads, with a move right, to a position below the main groove.
2. 70ft Climb the groove to a bridging position below the roof. Using a large sloping hold and a poor hand jam, move rightwards (poor peg runner, crux) round the arête, then pull up to gain a large flake. Move right to a junction with Mike's Meander. Belay.
3. 40ft Immediately behind (and the left of Mike's Meander pitch 3), a wide crack curves up to an overhang at the very top of the quarry. Ascend to the overhang and move right using a good hidden hold, then finish direct.

*Parallel, and to the right of pitch 2 of Gangapoochi, is an impressive (and similar) corner/groove, this being the major feature of:*

**46 Mike's Meander** VS 4b,4b,- \*\* ca 1950

A strong 'natural' line and a good introduction to the cliff.

1. 50ft Start below and slightly to the right of the main groove line. Climb an awkward corner and belay on a ledge on the left.
2. 70ft Climb the groove by bridging and jamming, past a small ledge to a 'sloping crack' which leads to a large belay shelf.
3. 45ft Climb up and rightwards to a groove (awkward to enter) and wide crack which are taken to the top.

**47 Gail's Progress** HVS 4c,5a,5a \* 1968/1969

A good exposed route which takes the arête and wall to the right of Mike's Meander.

1. 50ft Climb Mike's Meander for 10 feet, then move awkwardly rightwards to follow a slanting groove. This leads, after turf-manoeuvres, to the left-hand end of a long and narrow, grassy ledge.
2. 65ft Climb a short wide crack to gain the arête on the left which is followed, in fine position, past a scoop to reach a large shelf. Belay here at a ring-peg, or better, 10 feet to the left on Mike's Meander.
3. 50ft The wall left of the arête is taken via a short curving groove past a small overlap to finish up a precarious-looking flake.

*To the right, the base of the crag levels out and above is the large unmistakable corner of Initiation Groove. Its left-hand wall is separated into two tiers by a **GRASSY TERRACE** (at about 40 feet), above which is a big clean wall riddled with thin, vertical cracklines. Taking a line up the left-hand side of this cracked wall is:*

**48 Jericho Wall** VS 4b,4c \*\* 1958

An excellent route, whose superb second pitch is best climbed in one run-out.

1. 50ft On the lower tier are three rightward-slanting (though ill-defined) cracklines. Climb the left-hand one to reach the terrace.
2. 110ft Ledges lead up right to a 'sentry-box'. Step right, then trend slightly leftwards up cracks to a sloping ledge just left of the arête (possible belay). Climb the groove on the right which slants up the wall (here the original climb traversed right), until a series of finger-cracks in the right-hand side of the arête can be followed to the final moves and the crux. Delightfully-exposed climbing.

*Just to the left of the start of Jericho Wall is a overlap with a crack splitting it, right of centre. This is 15 feet up and on the right-hand side of a vague arête/rib:*

**49 Plumb-line** HVS 5a,5a \* 1972

1. 50ft Climb the steep crack, passing the overlap on hand jams to reach the terrace. Move rightwards to a belay 20 feet left of Initiation Groove's dominant corner.
2. 110ft Climb thin parallel cracks, stepping right below a small overhang. Continue direct to finish up an innocent-looking shallow groove (crux).

**50 Initiation Groove** E1 4b,5a ca 1950

The large open corner is a magnificent line... but a poor climb. People are asked to leave the grass sods *in situ* (for the benefit of Winter climbers).

1. 50ft Climb an introductory corner, then move leftwards along GRASSY TERRACE.
2. 115ft The main corner is taken past a pair of poor peg runners on the right wall and a small ledge. Continue more easily in the same line to the top.

**51 The Whipper-in** HVS 4b,5a, 4c,- 1969

1. 40ft Fifteen feet right of 'Initiation', the next corner is bridged to reach a ledge.
2. 80ft Climb up to the scooped groove and follow it leftwards, moving out round its left edge to a pedestal. Continue up cracks, then traverse rightwards to belay in the cave of The Silver.
3. 50ft Twelve feet right of Initiation Groove's upper section, climb the huge detached-looking flake. Continue up cracks, keeping just right of 'Initiation'.
4. 15ft Climb the short slab on the right to a clean finish.

**52 The Silver** HVS 4b,5b,5a,4b 1960/1971/1987

1. 40ft As for The Whipper-in pitch 1.
2. 75ft Climb up and leftwards into a scooped groove (as for The Whipper-in pitch 2), then stride right to hollow-sounding blocks and rotting wooden wedges at the base of a vertical crackline. Climb this, with increasing difficulty, to belay in a shallow cave.
3. 30ft Exit right, then move up with difficulty to gain a slab which is crossed rightwards to a junction with Brown Route., or the wall just to its left, to reach the top.

**53 Too Tall For Dwarfs** E2 4b,5b,4b 1977

A minor variation on The Silver, though hard for its grade.

1. 40ft The Whipper-in pitch 1.
2. 100ft Climb The Silver until, 10 feet up the vertical crackline, it is possible to cross rightwards to the arête. Climb this, with difficulty and poor protection but in a fine position, to a slab (junction with The Silver pitch 3) which is crossed rightwards to belay.
3. 40ft Finish as for pitch 3 of Brown Route.

*40m The overhangs and arête to the right of White Slab. Climb up to the overhang on White Slab and move round this on the left. Move right to gain a steep crack and follow this to reach the overhangs. Move through these on good though well-spaced holds and climb leftwards past a large block. Move back rightwards to the arête and finish up this with difficulty. Friends 0 to 3 are useful*

*Paul Braithwaite, Dave Crilly (21<sup>st</sup> June 1992)*

*The big corner/groove to the right has an indefinite start, then becomes more obvious above halfway:*

**54 Brown Route** VS 4b,4c,4b 1948

1. 45ft Ten feet right of The Whipper-in, climb the corner and grass to a belay below the main groove.
2. 70ft Jam, layback and bridge the dirty corner to reach the second of two large ledges.
3. 40ft Take the final chimney/groove, moving slightly left or rightwards to finish.

**55 Quarrymaster** E2 5a,5c,4b \*\* 1972/1982

1. 45ft Starting 5 feet to the right of Brown Route, climb the shallow corner then belay as for that route.
2. 80ft An excellent sustained pitch with good protection. Climb leftwards, via a thin crack, to a vague niche on the left-hand side of the arête. The thin crack on the right, with a peg runner at its base, is taken (crux) until a move right heads into the main (continuation) crackline that is followed to an easy-angled slab. Move rightwards and belay as for Brown Route.
3. 40ft Climb the groove/chimney above (pitch 3 of Brown Route).

*The right-hand wall of Brown Route contains two curving grooves, one above the other:*

**56 Flutterbye Grooves** E1 -,4c,5a,5b \* 1962

A fine climb, with difficulties escalating to a strenuous finale.

1. 35ft Start 30 feet to the right of Brown Route. Climb up, then scramble leftwards to belay as for that route. Alternatively, follow pitch 1 of Brown Route.
2. 55ft Move up and rightwards to an overhang, then make an awkward high step up and right to reach the first groove which twists its way up to a slab. At its top, deviate left, or better, to the right, then move up to a belay ledge. Variation: The belay can also be gained via a leftward traverse from the first stance of White Slab.
3. 40ft The second of the two curving grooves is climbed with a hard move to gain a hand-jamming crack. Pass an overhang to the left, then move up and right to belay on a small ledge, as for White Slab.
4. 30ft Finish up the centre of the cracked hanging wall starting with a hard move up from the belay to gain the leftward-leaning crack-with-peapod. This gives superb, exposed but well-protected hand-jamming. Alternatively, and much easier, take the original finish which moves left to join and finish as for Brown Route pitch 3.

*To the right, a large section of the cliff has the appearance of a huge 'wedge'. Its left edge forms a big white slab cut by a leftward-slanting groove:*

**57 White Slab** HVS -,5b,5a \*\* ca 1950

1. 60ft Scramble up on the right, or take a more direct entry up a short mean crack (5a), to a slabby alcove below and right of the white slab.

2. 80ft Move up and slightly rightwards to an oppressive overhang. Undercut leftwards on jams to gain the long, leaning groove which leads, past a small overhang to a ledge on the left. A sustained and rewarding pitch. The inferior original way (5a) moved leftwards from the stance, then awkwardly back right, so avoiding the main challenge.

3. 30ft Above the belay are two parallel cracklines. Climb the left-hand one until the other looks easier! Finish quickly on large holds.

*Immediately above the right-hand start to White Slab is the previously mentioned 'wedge'-like feature; a huge, wide, overgrown, U-shaped scoop extending to the top of the cliff.* The Trollenberg Terror, Clag, Jenny Wren and Caramba all utilised rock that once filled the scoop. After the Winter of 1979, an enormous rock-fall (reconstructed on the diagram) converted these, and two other previously unrecorded climbs, into fresh-looking boulders which now agitate visitors into nervous upward glances... such is the power of frost and gravity! **Trollenburged**, 170ft, Grade IV, (1980), now takes this scoop; highly recommended to winter climbers and others used to taking such risks.

*To the right again, is a large prow in the upper half of the quarry. Climbing its left-hand side by a wide overhanging crack is:*

**58 Comeback** HVS -,5a 1970 +

1. 80ft Vegetated ground leads to the base of the crack.
2. 60ft The crack is taken on good jams, passing a detached flake, till a move left can be made to finish.

*At the base of the cliff, and to the right, is a jamming crack:*

**59 Loose Leaf** VS 4c,4b,4b 1969

1. 40ft The crack is hard to start, and to leave... and to find!
2. 40ft Climb cracks to an overhang and exit right, then move up and go back leftwards to reach a large grassy ledge.
3. 40ft Take the left edge of a huge detached flake to loose finishing blocks. Belay well back.

**60 Jackie** HVS 5a 1977 +

120ft The shallow curving groove just to the right of the direct start to Loose Leaf is followed by a cracked wall and arête on which it is possible to belay.

*Right again is the obvious line of Titan's Groove which has been formed by an enormous fallen pillar. From its base start the following five routes:*

**61 Unicorn Direct** HVS 5a,4b \*\* 1962

The best route of its standard in this quarry. Start 6 feet to the left of Titan's Groove where a steep and narrow corner-crack curves up to a roof.

1. 60ft Climb the crack to the rood. Step right onto the wall, move up for 8 feet, then, using small footholds above the overhang, make difficult committing moved back left to gain the grooved arête. This leads to a ledge and belay.
2. 40ft Step right onto the arête. Follow this and broken rocks to reach the top.

**62 Little Unicorn** HVS 5a,4b \* 1960s/late-1960s

1. 70ft Climb Titan's Groove for 20 feet, from where a crack in its left wall leads to a small overhang. Climb leftwards to the exposed open groove in the arête. Continue to a small ledge.
2. 40ft As for Unicorn Direct pitch 2.

**63 Tower of Babel** VS 4c \*\* 1960

Climb Titan's Groove until the cracked left wall can be gained. This is climbed direct, via a small niche and an obvious straight crack which gives joyous hand-jamming, to a move left at the top to join the arête of Unicorn direct. Finish as for that route. The (inferior) original route gained the arête, and Unicorn Direct, at mid-height.

**63a Titan's Wall** E1 5b 1993 ●

25m Start as for **Tower of Babel** but continue up and rightwards to a thin crack. Move rightwards again with difficult moves giving access to good finishing holds. (This route may have been affected by rock fall)  
Paul Braithwaite, Craig Hannah (16<sup>th</sup> June 1993 )

**The majority of these next three routes have fallen down during successive rock-falls in the 90s and 00s, the latest in Feb 2010.**

**64 Titan's Groove** VS 4b,4c 1948 ●

1. 50ft Climb the groove to belay below the top of the pillar.
2. 50ft Tackle the huge, doubtful blocks, then finish up the steep crack; the right hand of two corners.

Thirty feet right, around the arête from Titan's Groove and at a higher level, is a broken chimney choked with blocks:

**65 Swinging Chimney** VS -,4c 1961 ●

1. 35ft Climb the rubble-filled chimney beneath the leaning pillar, emerging to belay as for Titan's Groove.
2. 50ft Finish up the right-hand of two short corners (as for Titan's Groove).

**66 Birch Wall** E4 6a late-1960s ●

80' Start 5 feet to the right of Swinging Chimney, below a shallow groove, which starts at mid-height. A loose and poorly-protected 20 feet of climbing leads to better holds. Continue until it is possible to step left onto the top of the huge fallen pillar. Psyche up and move out for the slim groove on the right. A hard move involving a pinch-grip on the right arête will leave one musing on the 'Bancroft grading system'... originally HVS!

The short leaning corner 10 feet to the right is:

**67 Funny Move Groove** E1 5a 1969

80ft An exposed and poorly protected route. Climb the corner/crack for 25 feet to a small ledge (possible belay). Move left onto a dubious flake, then trend up right via a hanging groove and a shelf until an obvious leftward traverse leads into the corner. This is followed more easily to reach the top.

*The quarry now becomes a series of grooves which are increasingly well-defined the farther right one goes, as are the arêtes which separate them. The first groove is the most vague.*

**68 Small Groove** VS 4b pre-1958

75ft Worthwhile, though not too well protected. Start 10 feet to the right of Birch Wall and just to the right of Funny Move Groove. Gain the groove by a series of awkward ledges and continue by sustained laybacking up a shallow chimney/groove.

*To the right is a similar groove. Starting just to its left is:*

**69 Chlorophyll** HVS 5b,5a ca 1970

1. 45ft A series of blocks leads to a ledge on the right. From here, move leftwards to belay on a ledge.
2. 30ft Just to the right of Small Groove's upper section, start a crackline via a high step then continue, surmounting the bulge on good holds, to a blocky finish.

**70 Heather Groove** HVD \* pre-1958

75ft The obvious blocky-looking groove just to the right of Chlorophyll has its crux at mid-height through it reserves some entertainment for the top.

*Right again is a well-defined groove. The arête and the wall to its left are taken by:*

**71 Salamanca** HVS 5a

60ft The thin crack on the right-hand side of the arête leads to small ledges on the left. Climb the arête until it is possible to make a worrying move right on an obvious, but worrying, flake-handhold. Avoid The Butcher as much as possible by the use of a vertical crack which can be followed to the top.

*Just to the right is a large boulder embedded in sandy ground. Directly above is a groove with a small overhang at one-third height. The meat of this is (inevitably!) taken by:*

**72 The Butcher** S 4b \* 1959

50ft The prominent unstable-looking groove is climbed direct. Better than it looks, though the blocks should be treated with caution (to avoid the chop?).

**73 The Butcher's Apron** HVS 5a 1969

50ft Start 5 feet right of The Butcher at a thin crack on the left-hand side of the curving arête. Climb the crack, moving left below mid-height to pull over a small bulge. Continue up cracks and move round rightwards with difficulty, using a good handhold on the arête, to finish as for the next route.

*The prominent curving arête 10 feet to the right of The Butcher is:*

**74 Hey! Jeannie** E1 5b \*\* 1972

50ft An attractive and shapely buttress climb. Difficult layback moves up the right-hand side of the arête lead to a small bulge. Surmount this on the left, then move p right to finish via thin finger-cracks (crux) and the slab above.

**75 The Baker** VS 5a 1959

45ft The groove 12 feet to the right of Hey! Jeannie turns stale at mid-height.

**76 The Candlestick-maker** VS 4c 1959

40ft The vertical flake/crack 5 feet to the right of The Baker; nothing to wax lyrical about.

**77 Slanting Crack** HVS 4c ca 1970

40ft The rightward-leaning crack in the wall to the right of The Candlestick-maker is followed to a ledge. The original top section appears to have fallen down, so move right and then go back left to a choosy finish.

There are two girdles of The Main Quarry. Not only are they long and arduous expeditions (on one Joe Brown took 4 ½ hours for the first ascent), but they also pass through what is now considered to be seriously unstable terrain. The two routes are described here even though they have rarely been repeated in full since the 1978-79 rock-fall; their left-hand sections are however still worthwhile.

**78 Elastic Homage** E2 4b,4c,5b,5b,4b,5a,4c,4c,4c,- 1969/pre-1976/1987

615ft The character-building left-to-right girdle. A real adventure. Pitches 3 and 8, in particular, will be found to be high in their grades.

1. 65ft Take pitch 1 of Epitaph Corner.

2. 80ft Climb pitch 2 of Epitaph Corner until moves right, then up, gain the bottomless corner of A-lu-te. Using good footholds swing round into a V-shaped groove (WATERFALL CHIMNEY). Descend for 6 feet, then move right to join Feb. at a dubious-looking spike. Follow the deep, rightward-curving crack to a clean shelf (as for Feb.). Care is needed to avoid rope-drag.

3. 70ft Climb back down for 15 feet. Move right below a small roof, taking care with a loose block, then go up and step across to the sloping ledge (junction with Bras Monkey). Using a thin horizontal crack at waist-height, make a committing traverse rightwards for 12 feet, passing below a small overhang (paired peg runners, *in situ*) to gain Pinnacle Gully. Descend this for 10 feet, then move diagonally right to belay on top of the so called 'pinnacle'. Protect the second!

4. 50ft The second pitch of Gangapoochi is gained by an awkward bridging move and then followed to a belay on Mike's Meander.

5. 85ft Continue easily to the arête then, with a little more difficulty, cross Jericho Wall and Plumb-line by a slightly descending traverse on good footholds to reach the huge corner of 'Initiation'. Traverse rightwards (be wary of the man-eating block) to the cave belay of The Silver.

6. 60ft Exit rightwards to gain the exposed arête. Move right into the crackline of Quarrymaster which is descended awkwardly. Cross Brown Route to belay below pitch 3 of Flutterbye Grooves.

7. 45ft Move up and then right to join the crack of White Slab, then move across a narrow foot ledge on the undercut slab to an overgrown area of rock. Descend to belay on a flat-topped spike. Alternatively, start this pitch by descending rightwards before moving across to join White Slab.

8. 60ft Move awkwardly rightwards across a small slab to a 'scooped' foothold. Climb farther right and slither down to a lower grassy terrace, then cross to a comfortable stance (junction with Loose Leaf) and good nut belays on ledges formed by embedded flakes.

9. 60ft Step down and move right to gain the grooved arête of Unicorn Direct via a blind swing on a high jug. At the same level, move rightwards around the arête using finger holds in a thin horizontal break, then move up to gain good hand jams on Tower of Babel. Traverse delicately rightwards and belay in Titan's Groove.

10. 40ft Descend Swinging Chimney to reach *terra firma*.

The route can however be extended for a further 150 feet, though first one must ascend **Small Groove** to mid-height. Anyone capable of getting this far will have gained the necessary pioneering instinct to reach **The Baker** which provides the finish and the main technical difficulties. The logical connecting pitch, from the top of the pillar on Titan's Groove to Small Groove, has been altered by a rock-fall; it remains to be seen whether or not this section can be re-climbed. The first free ascensionists declined, having already used up eight of their nine lives on the earlier pitches!

**79 The Dovestones Quarry Girdle Traverse** E1 5b 1951

500ft Only for the serious(ly insane) climber. This goes from right to left starting up **Titan's Groove**, then reverses **Elastic Homage** to reach a stance on pitch 2 of **White Slab**. Climb White slab to its second belay then traverse left into **Brown Route**. Cross a broad sloping ledge, then a loose wall to a small belay ledge in **Initiation Groove**. A reasonable pitch then crosses **Jericho Wall** at two-thirds height before rounding the arête to reach a small ledge below a small roof. Descend slightly leftwards to reach **Mike's Meander**. Reverse **Pinnacle Gully** to join **Garn** for a few feet, then traverse left (crux) and finish up the corner of **Brass Monkey**.

**The Double Girdle**, E2 5b, (1969), following **Elastic Homage** to Titan's Groove and then returning, along **The Dovestones Quarry Girdle Traverse**, has provided over 1000 feet of death-defying entertainment.

## THE LOWER RIGHT QUARRY

*To the left of the main face is a broken mass of rock which contains a projecting rib. Zigzag*, 115 ft, VD, (1957), *takes a wandering line up this mass, passing the rib on its right.*

The next five excellent climbs are served by a meaty belay stake high up on the slope above the quarry top.

**80 The Ace of Spades** VS 5a \*\* ca 1957

50ft This is the fierce, leftward-slanting flake-crack which bounds the main face on the left; traditionally dealt with by layback. Excellent, sustained climbing, and high in its adjectival grade.

**81 Tiny Tim** VS 4c \*\* ca 1957

60ft Start 15 feet to the right of Ace of Spades. Climb the slab until below a thin vertical crack, then follow the line of leftward-slanting flakes to reach the top.

**82 Bob Hope** E4 6a \*\*\* pre-1965/1977/1978

55ft The old aid-route Metamorphose, has been transformed into a brilliant modern test-piece requiring determination and endurance... the most 'American-style' finger crack in the district. Climb the slab, as for Tiny Tim, to the soaring crack in the smooth vertical wall. This is followed on good 'locks... 5.11b.

*The corner to the right is climbed by:*

**83 Pedestal Corner** MVS 4c \*\* pre-1963

45ft Take the crack up the left-hand side of the 'finger' to reach the top of the pedestal. Bridge up the corner, then move right to finish up the exposed hanging wall on good holds.

*Twenty-five feet to the right, past a projecting rib and blank wall, is:*

**84 Five Day Chimney** E2 5c \*\* pre-1965/1971/1977

50ft Hand-jam up the right-hand side of a jutting block to get established in the leftward-leading fault line. Continue by an unusual combination of bridging, jamming and an unlikely foot-lock. Once above an old peg runner, a juggy but doubtful-looking block enables a swing right to be made, from where easier climbing leads to the top.

**85 Disappointment** VD pre-1924

50ft Start 15 feet to the right of Five Day Chimney at an easy-angled, leftward-slanting groove (which has a gentle slab for its left-hand edge). Follow the right-hand side of the groove/slab for 30 feet, where the wall on the left can be taken over easy rocks to the top. A variation start can be made to the left at the same grade via finger-jams. Left again, a thin crackline offers a worthwhile, if precarious, layback start at E1 5b.

**86 Stumpy** VD 1975 ●

60ft Fifteen feet to the right of Disappointment is a V-shaped groove. From 10 feet left of this groove, layback up to gain a slab, then follow its left-hand side to a variety of finishes, none of which are any good. Seekers of the obscure can reach the same point via a short wide crack from part way up the previous route.

**87 Stretcher** HVS 5b 1975 ●

40ft Layback the wide V-shaped groove and make a long and difficult reach to gain a sloping handhold on the left. Make a hard move up the groove using a poor foot jam, then follow a slab and easy rocks to reach the top.

*Eight feet to the right is a groove fading into smooth rock above:*

**88 The Tempest** HS 1972 ●

40ft Climb the groove until forced onto a smooth slab which is followed leftwards using undercuts to gain a spike. Finish up the easy corner. Other starts are possible; the groove 6 feet to the right or, illogically, the crack with a jammed flake 3 feet right again; both these variations are harder.

**89 Laybacker** MVS 4c 1975 ●

30ft Climb the easy-angled groove just to the right of The Tempest's right-hand variation start. A small bulge, low down, is more easily overcome by the tall.

*To the right, at a lower level is:*

**90 Happy Wanderer** S pre-1965 ●

55ft Scramble up unstable rocks to beneath a square-cut overhang. Avoid this on its left and finish awkwardly up the wide final crack.

*To the right is an overhang broken by a 'thin' crack:*

**91 Corking Crack** E1 5b pre-1965 ●

20ft Climb direct to the overhang which is taken by its thin crack.

**92 Ender HS 1975** ●

20ft The wide crack round the arête to the right of Corking Crack.

## DOVESTONES QUARRIES – LIST OF FIRST ASCENTS

- Pre-1924 **The Waterfall Climb** George S. Bower  
*Described by Bower in the 1923 edition of Recent Developments on Gritstone as being “20 fathoms in length” A direct start and finish (both pre-1931) were written up by Herbert K.Hartley in the 1936 Manchester University M.C. Journal.*
- Pre-1924 **Disappointment** George S.Bower  
*Almost certainly what was once known as ‘The Seal’s Back’.*
- 1938 Feb. **Flake Crack** B.K.Barber, M.Burton  
*Not described in the current text as its whereabouts are uncertain; the route was described as being the flake at the extreme ‘southern end’ of the crag.*
- 1948 ca Aug. **Titan’s Groove** Wilf White, Joe Brown, Merrick (Slim) Sorrell  
*The original second pitch collapsed during May 1969, leaving two cracks. The left-hand one was climbed with two nuts for aid: 24 May 1969 John Lumb (‘It appears the quarry is in a very dangerous state... we were nearly caught later when part of Initiation Groove collapsed on us’). This left-hand finish also fell down shortly afterwards.*
- 1948 ca Aug. **Brown Route** Joe Brown, Merrick Sorrell, Fred Ashton  
*‘On Dovestone Quarry Fred reached the end of his tether and capacity for uttering purple language. Slim and I were taking him up the route called Brown Corner. Dusk was falling when we reached the top; water was streaming down the rock, the cracks were filled with mud and the climb finished on a band of extremely loose shale. Fred was terrified and spluttered that he would never climb with me again.’*  
Joe Brown *The Hard Years*, 1967.
- However, once accustomed to the dangers of life, the ‘Rock and Ice’ men went on to Wimberry Rocks during the next week and produced dramatic new routes, including The Trident and Blue Lights Crack (See, in particular, the first ascent details of Freddie’s Finale).*
- ca 1950 **Mike’s Meander, Initiation Groove, Pinnacle Gully, White Slab**  
*Various Rock and Ice members The alternative (5a) first pitch to White Slab was added by Bruce Goodwin in 1968.*
- 1951 **The Dovestones Quarry Girdle Traverse** Joe Brown, J.R. (Nat) Allen, Don Chapman  
*At the time, this was considered to be one of the hardest undertakings on gritstone. The first half of the route now described in the text is radically different owing to a rock-fall in 1978-1979.*
- Pre-1956 **Mercury Crack**
- 1956 May **Joggled Crack** Graham West, Michael Roberts, Phil Sowerby
- 1956 **Birthday Layback** Graham West, Phil Sowerby, Brian Dutton  
*Climbed on one of The Queen’s birthdays.*
- 1957 June **Zigzag** Tony Howard
- ca 1957 **Ace of Spades** Joe Brown  
*‘... known to the quarry clientele for some years as Joe’s Layback’.*

- ca 1957 **Tiny Tim** Joe Brown
- Pre-1958 **Small Groove, Heather Groove, Avalanche Route**  
*The latter route is not described in the current text as it changed greatly after the rock-fall in the winter of 1963-64.*
- Pre-1958 **Tottering Groove, Ultima Ratio, Black and White Traverse, Blanco Direct, Finger Flake, Cave and Traverse, Mottled Groove, Alumina Crack, White Wall Right, White Wall Left, Scoop Route, Black Chimney** Graham West, Michael Roberts, Ron Chambers
- 1958 July 19 **Jericho Wall** Keith Taylor, Peter Bamfield, Richard McHardy  
*A direct version, now the 'normal' pitch 2, was added: April 1960 Paul Seddon, Tony Howard*
- 1958 July 19 **Waterfall Direct** Dave Saunders, Alan Parker  
*The route had been climbed before, but only in sections; see The Waterfall Climb.*
- 1958 Sept. **The Teazer, Olly's Option** Alwyn Whitehead, Tony Howard
- 1959 June 20 **Epitaph Corner** Alan Parker, Robert A. Brayshaw  
*First climbed direct (as described in the current text): April 1960 Tony Howard*
- 1959 June 20 **A-lu-te** Peter Bamfield, Alan Ellison
- 1959 July **Caramba** Tony Howard, Alwyn Whitehead  
*Some of the route was destroyed by the rock-fall reported on 24 May 1979.*
- 1959 Sept. **The Baker** Tony Howard
- 1959 Sept. **The Butcher** Alan Baker
- 1959 Sept. **The Candlestick-maker** Brian Hodgkinson
- 1960 April **Feb.** Tony Howard, Brian Hodgkinson, Paul Seddon
- 1960 April **Tower Of Babel** Tony Howard, Brian Hodgkinson  
*A variation on the original first pitch is now the normal route. This, the 'direct finish' indicated in the 1965 guidebook, by 'continue direct with pegs on shaky rock' was climbed free by Bill Tweedale, Brian Toase: 29 April 1971*
- 1960 May **Little Unicorn** Tony Howard, Brian Woods (*1 peg for aid*)  
*Climbed free: late-1960s.*
- 1960 June **Gatepost Crack** John Hadfield, Ron Hughes (*A1 S*). *Climbed free: 27 July 1967.*
- 1960 June **The Silver** Graham West, Stan Wroe (*A1 VS*). *Aid reduced to one point of tension: 3 June 1971. Climbed free: 18 May 1987.*
- 1960 July **Gangapoochi** Tony Howard, Tony Jones (*A1 VS*)  
*Climbed free: 1971*
- 1961 Feb. **Winter Wall** Malc Baxter  
*Not described in the current text; it fell down in 1963/1964.*
- 1961 June **The Trollenberg Terror** Tony Howard, Paul Seddon (*A1 VS*)  
*The name comes from a 1958 X-certificate horror film. It is debatable which was more frightening. Climbed free: Summer 1961 Malc Baxter, Jim Heys. 'Jim dropped the peg hammer... we had no choice!' Adrian Garlick and Brian Roberts claimed the route on 27 August 1970 unaware of a previous free ascent. Not in the current text. Destroyed by a rock-fall in the Winter of 1978-79.*
- 1961 June **Swinging Chimney** Malc Baxter, Michael Roberts  
*Much of the original route has fallen down.*
- 1961 Summer **The Trollenburg Terror** Malc Baxter, Jim Heys (*Free*)
- 1961 Sept. **Funny Move Groove** Malc Baxter, Tony Howard *Altered slightly by a rock-fall.*

- 1961.Oct. **Brass Monkey** Tony Howard, Jeff Sykes  
 1962 July **Garn** Tony Howard, Jeff Sykes  
 1962 Aug. **Flutterbye Grooves** Tony Jones, Jeff Sykes, Tony Howard  
*The alternative second pitch was climbed by Bruce Goodwin in 1968, and the now-usual direct finish (which the original team had failed on) was reported in August 1977 by Bob Whittaker and also by Mick Shaw and Tony Howard on 23 July 1983.*
- 1962 Oct. **Unicorn Direct** Rusty Baillie, Tony Howard  
 Pre-1963 **Pedestal Corner** Graham West
- 1963 May **Clag** Tony Howard, Ernie Howard  
*Not described in the current text; destroyed by the giant rock-fall after the winter of 1978-79.*
- Pre-1964 **Erosion Groove, Forget-me-not**  
*Though Erosion Groove's first pitch (shared with Caramba) remained intact, both these routes were greatly changed by the rock-fall of winter 1963-64: Not described in the current text.*
- Pre-1965 **Corking Crack, Rib Route, Parallel Cracks**  
 Pre-1965 **Five Day Chimney** Two members of the Manchester Gritstone C.C.  
*Aid reduced to 1 peg: 20 April 1971. Climbed free May 1977.*
- Pre-1965 **Happy Wanderer** Tony Howard  
 Pre-1965 **Metamorphose** (AI)  
*Aid reduced to 1 nut: May 1977.*

*'For the seeker of virgin rock there are still a few lines that may be forced whilst some of the latest Rimmon routes have still to have their second ascents.'*

Eric Byne, 1965.

- 1967 July 27 **Gatepost Crack** Jim Campbell, Adrian Garlick, Steve Tetlow (Free)  
 1968 March **Gail's Progress** Bruce Goodwin, Bill Birchall (2 Points of aid).  
*Climbed free 1969.*
- 1968 Dec. **Sandblaster** Bruce Goodwin, Bill Birchall, Alastair Buchan (VL) (1 rest peg).*The ascent was spread over three days between September 1967 and the end of 1968. Not described in the current text. The section from White Slab to Mike's Meander was climbed free whereas Elastic Homage went in the opposite direction and used aid.*
- 1969 July 3 **White Wall Direct** Peter Hayward, Eric K. Jessop *Most of the route had previously been climbed with aid: pre-1965*
- 1969 Aug. **The Butcher's Apron** Bob Whittaker, Les Hardman *The bottom section had been previously pegged: Pre-1965. Claimed as 'alts' though only one pitch.*
- 1969 Sept. **Elastic Homage** Bill Birch, Tony Howard (AL) (11/12 points of aid)  
*Climbed one three wet and windy afternoons. Aid reduced to 1 peg pre-1976. Climbed free 29 September 1987.*
- 1969 Oct. 11 **Double Girdle** Tony Howard, Bill Birch  
*Some aid was used on what is the longest climb in the area.*
- 1969 Nov. 1 **The Whipper-in** Tony Howard, Bill Birch (1 point of aid)  
*Some of this had been climbed before as Shake (not described in the current text): September 1967 Bob Whittaker, Geoff Smith*
- 1969 Nov. 2 **Loose Leaf** Bill Birch, Tony Howard (AL)  
 1969 **Gail's Progress** Bruce Goodwin, Con Cowans (VL), Dave Cowans (Free)
- Late-1960s **Birch Wall** Bill Birch, Arthur Robinson

- The route has probably since been altered by a rock-fall.*
- Late-1960s **Little Unicorn** (Free)  
*Traditionally climbed free at this time.*
- 1970 May 22 **Comeback** Bill Birch, Paul Seddon  
*The route was climbed by Bob Whittaker ca 1974 and recorded as Giant in his 1976 guidebook, unaware of a previous ascent.*
- 1970 June 7 **Mindbender** Bob Whittaker, Mick McKenna, Roger Treglown
- 1970 **Chlorophyll** Bill Birch, Paul Seddon
- 1970 **Black Tongue** Brian Toase, Richard Sawicki
- 1970 **Played Out** Con Carey, Brian Toase
- 1970 **Black Cracks** Brian Toase, Richard Sawicki (*1 peg for aid*).  
*Contrary to other records, Con Carey was not on the first ascent.*  
*Climbed free: pre-1976*
- 1970 **Direct Route** Brian Toase, Richard Sawicki, Con Carey
- 1971 April 20 **Five Day Chimney** Brian Toase, Bill Tweedale *Aid reduced to 1 peg.*  
*Climbed free: May 1977.*
- 1971 June 3 **The Sliver** Bill Tweedale, Brian Toase *Aid reduced to 1 point of aid on pitch 3 (even though this pitch appeared to be free in the 1965 guidebook!). Climbed free: 18 May 1987.*
- 1971 **Gangapoochi** Bob Whittaker, Gordon Mason (*Free*)
- 1972 Feb. 13 **The Tempest** Steve Bancroft, Paul Wood
- 1972 Aug. 12 **Hey! Jeannie** Barry Rawlinson, Gerry Peel (*The top section had previously been pegged: pre-1965*). *Named after Rawlinson's jubilant shout of success to his wife.*
- 1972 Aug. 12 **Quarrymaster** Bob Whittaker, Gill Peel (*1 peg and 1 nut for aid*)  
*'It'll never go free'. Aid reduced to 1 nut: ca 1980. Climbed free 21 July 1982.*
- 1972 Aug. 19 **Salamanka** Allan Wolfenden, Bob Whittaker
- 1972 Aug. 26 **Jenny Wren** (not described in the current text; destroyed by the Winter 1978-79 rock-fall) **Genesis** (probably in the same vicinity, same fate, same 'not described in the current text') Allan Wolfenden, Dave 'Grizzly' Johnson
- 1972 Aug. 27 **Plumb-line** Allan Wolfenden, Peter Bull
- 1972 Sept. 24 **Dust i'go** Dave Pilkington, Dave Johnson  
*Not described in the current text. Also known as Coalminer.*
- 1972 Oct. **Slanting Crack** Allan Wolfenden, Alan Barnes  
*Previously recorded as The Slanter.*
- 1972 **17 Year Itch** Bob Whittaker, Dave Pilkington  
*Steve Bancroft and John Tout claimed the same line, as Trollpuddle Martyr on 27 August 1972.*
- 1972 **Left-hand Variant** Gordon Mason, John Eckersly
- 1972 **Pipers, Tweedale, Right-hand Finish, Sideshow** Barry Rawlinson, Gerry Peel
- 1972 **Tweedledum** Barry Rawlinson, Gerry Peel (*1 nut for aid*)  
*Climbed free: 12 July 1982.*
- 1972 **Variety Performance** Bob Whittaker, Dave Pilkington  
*This was an extended version of Traf: 7 June 1970 Bob Whittaker, Roger Treglown (VL), Mick McKenna*
- 1972 **Blanco Superdirect** Allan Wolfenden (*1 peg for aid*)
- 1973 Oct. **Paper Tiger** Bob Whittaker, Bob Brockwell (*Not described in the current text, though it appears to be exactly the same as Jackie, June 1977*). *The second was on a week's holiday from the USA (and ended up in The Dovestones Quarries!)*

- 1975 Feb. 9 **Stumpy, Stretcher, Layback, Ender** Bob Whittaker, Gordon Mason  
 1975 Feb. 9 **Tightwalk** (2 pegs for aid) Bob Whittaker, Gordon Mason  
*Climbed free: 1975.*
- 1975 **Tightwalk** Bob Whittaker (*Free*)
- Pre-1976 **Amen Corner** Bob Whittaker, Gill Peel  
*Pitch 1 was previously climbed with Gordon Mason. The groove on the final pitch had already been climbed with aid from pegs: pre-1958*
- Pre-1976 **Black Cracks** (*Free*)
- Pre-1976 **Elastic Homage** Bob Whittaker *Aid reduced to 1 peg.*  
*Climbed free: 29 September 1987.*
- Pre-1976 **Loose Leaf Direct Start**
- 1977 May **Five Day Chimney** Bob Whittaker, Ralph Pickering (*Free*)
- 1977 May **Metamorphose** Bob Whittaker *Aid reduced to 1 nut. Climbed free and renamed Bob Hope: 27 May 1978.*
- 1977 June **Jackie** Bob Whittaker, Ralph Pickering
- 1977 Aug. **Too Tall for Dwarfs** Bob Whittaker, Ralph Pickering
- 1978 May 27 **Bob Hope** Steve Bancroft, Ernie Jones *The old aid climb, Metamorphose, free-climbed and facetiously renamed.*
- ca 1980 **Quarrymaster** Ted Wells, Ian Conway *Aid reduced to 1 nut.*  
*Climbed free: 21 July 1982.*
- 1982 July 12 **Tweedledum** (*Free*)
- 1982 July 17 **Black Wall Route** Con Carey, Steve Donnelly
- 1982 July 21 **Quarrymaster** Chris Hardy, Ian Carr (*Free*)
- 1987 Jan. 31 **The Parallelogram Start** Malc Baxter, Chris Hardy
- 1987 May 18 **The Sliver** Chris Hardy, Carl Dawson  
*First continuous free ascent. Probably done by Brian Toase shortly before his death in August 1972. 'It doesn't move...it just vibrates a lot!'*
- 1987 Sept. 29 **Elastic Homage** Con Carey, Chris Hardy (AL, Free). This also rids Double Girdle (11 October 1969) of its aid points.

### **New routes since the 1987 Guide**

- 1989 June 13 **White Wall Super Direct** RI Siddiqui, NI Siddiqui, J Siddiqui. Big Sid, Little Sid and Jane. *They also graded it 5.10a or Fr 6a – Never that far away from controversy.*
- 1989 June 13 **Age Concern** Nadim Siddiqui, Rehan Siddiqui, Jayne Siddiqui, Don Campbell, Stuart Cripps, et al
- 1989 **Scuttle Buttlin** Kevin Thaw *An early Thaw desperate.*
- 1990 **Jetlag** Kevin Thaw, fresh from the granite slabs of the USA
- 1991 May 06 **Blanco Superdirect** – Free, Arran Kirk, John Archibald
- 1992 July 28 **Draft Bass** Paul Braithwaite, Chris Myles. *Always up for a swift-one in the King 'Bill.*
- 1995 June 26 **Uranus Crack**, Craig Hannah, Janet Powell, Liam Corrigan
- 2007 Aug 1 **White Rib** Ian Carr, Marcus Buckley. *Climbed during guidebook work at which time the other routes in the area were cleaned-up.*
- 2010 Feb Rock fall that wiped out the remains of Titan's Groove, a 1948 Rock & Ice classic.