

HODGE CLOSE QUARRY PART 1



Hodge Close Quarry

(316 017)
Alt 170m
East, South and
West Facing

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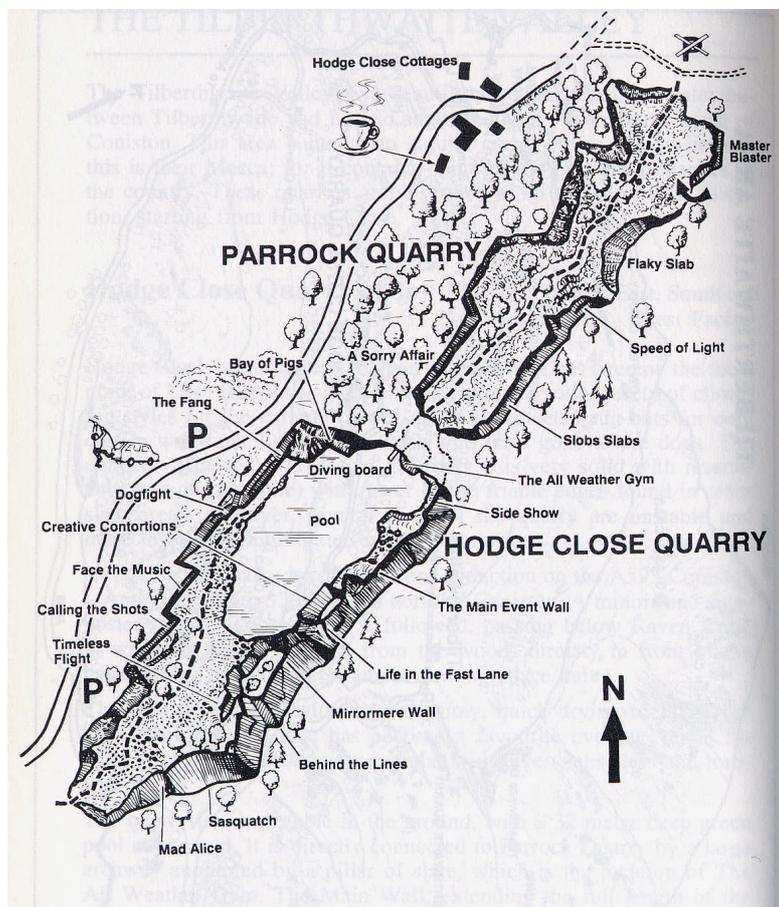
Hodge Close is an impressive quarry hole which has become the focal point of Lake District slate climbing. It offers a wide variety of climbing styles for the extreme leader, from unprotected run-outs for cool cats to well bolted routes for those who have gone to the dogs. The quality of the rock varies too; generally it is very solid with reasonable friction (for slate) with fewer of the friable edges found in other slate areas. However, several areas of the quarry are unstable and these have been highlighted in the descriptions.

Hodge Close Quarry is reached from a junction on the A593 Coniston – Ambleside road, 3 kilometres north of Coniston. A minor road signposted '*Hodge Close* only' is followed, passing below *Raven Crag*, to where it finally emerges from the woods directly in front of the huge quarry hole. There is ample parking space here.

The easy access, low altitude and sunny, quick drying rock has ensured that *Hodge Close* has become a favourite evening venue for local climbers. It is also very popular with divers, abseilers and tourists.

The quarry is a huge hole in the ground, with a 32 metre deep green pool at one end. It is directly connected to *Parrock Quarry* by a large archway supported by a pillar of slate, which is the location of *The All Weather Gym*. *The Main Wall*, extending the full length of the east side of the quarry opposite the car park, contains some of the best slate routes in the country.

The climbs have been described in a clockwise direction, starting from the south end of the quarry, near to where the access road emerges from the wood.



The West Wall

East Facing

This wall lies below the side of the quarry where cars are parked. The quality of the rock is poor in comparison with the *Main Wall*, but it does receive the morning sun.

Access is possible with care down the spoil heap at the southern end of the quarry, or alternatively abseil in.

The first route starts 16 metres right of the spoil heap, below a slabby arête which has a large dirty corner to its right. Start a couple of metres left of a sentry box in the steep wall below the arête.

** Calling the Shots 27 m E4 (F 7a) 1992

An excellent, technical pitch which follows the shallow groove 2 metres left of the arête.

(6b). Climb the short wall on good holds to a cleaned ledge. The shallow groove is followed with increasing interest to reach a horizontal break. Continue up leftwards and gain the short finishing groove with difficulty. This is climbed using its right arête to finish (4 bolts, lower off bolt.)

Two steep and sustained routes have been literally unearthed up the friable mossy wall, right of the dirty corner. These routes have cleaned up well with use, providing well protected and popular challenges.

Face the Times 20 m E4 (F 6c) 1992

Start just right of a small sapling growing above a large wire cable lying at the foot of the left-hand cleaned streak.

(6a). Climb the initial wall past a bolt to a ledge, then climb the wall behind to reach a diagonal faultline which leads to a pig-tail lower off (5 bolts).

Face the Music 24 m E4 (F 6c+) 1992

More sustained than *Face the Times*. Start in a red cave with 2 bolts in the right-hand wall, below the right-hand cleaned streak.

(6a). Climb onto the large ledge. Step right, and follow the cleaned streak up a slight faultline directly to a pig-tail lower off. Ten bolt runners!

Further along this wall of the quarry is a tunnel with a large ladder running up to it. This tunnel provides a safe, if wet, escape from the quarry. The easy but dangerous diagonal ramp running up right from here to the top of the quarry is known as *The Greaser's Exit*, a popular challenge for groups of inebriated *Hell's Angels* who party around the quarry.

The first clean wall to the right of the ladder contains a chipped route with 4 bolts.

** Dogfight at Virgin Massacre Creek 20 m E6 (F 7c+) 1987

A very fast drying route which is claimed to be better and harder than *Manic Strain*, the Llanberis test-piece. The holds are minute, and do wonders for tendonitis.

(6c). Climb the enhanced thin crease up the wall to a lower off bolt.

At the end of the walkway alongside the pool is a conspicuous cave.

Café, Boys do their Thong 10 m E1 (F 5+) 1989

Start 6 metres left of the cave.

(5b). Climb past a low bolt to gain a thin ramp line which leads rightwards into the short corner. Up this to a lower off (3 bolts).

The Fang 10 m E3 (F 6c) 1992

A stubborn line starting at the cave.

(6a). Pull up above the lip of the cave using a fang and a doubtful block, to reach good holds at the foot of the shallow corner on the left. Climb this to an awkward finish and lower off point on the slab above (3 bolts).

* Oiling the Lawnmower 38 m E1 1989

A pleasant excursion up the slabs above the pool. Start a few metres right of the cave on a block at the edge of the pool.

- 12 m (5b). Clip the bolt, then step down and right beyond the diagonal crack, before climbing directly up to a second bolt. Continue up the scoop above to a large ledge. Belay on the left.
- 26 m (5b). Climb over a steep wall to gain the clean slab above. Climb this directly past 2 bolts to a ledge (bolt – possible belay). Traverse left to a large tree in a vegetated corner. Abseil off or finish easily up the corner.

Chance Encounter 60 m VS 1980

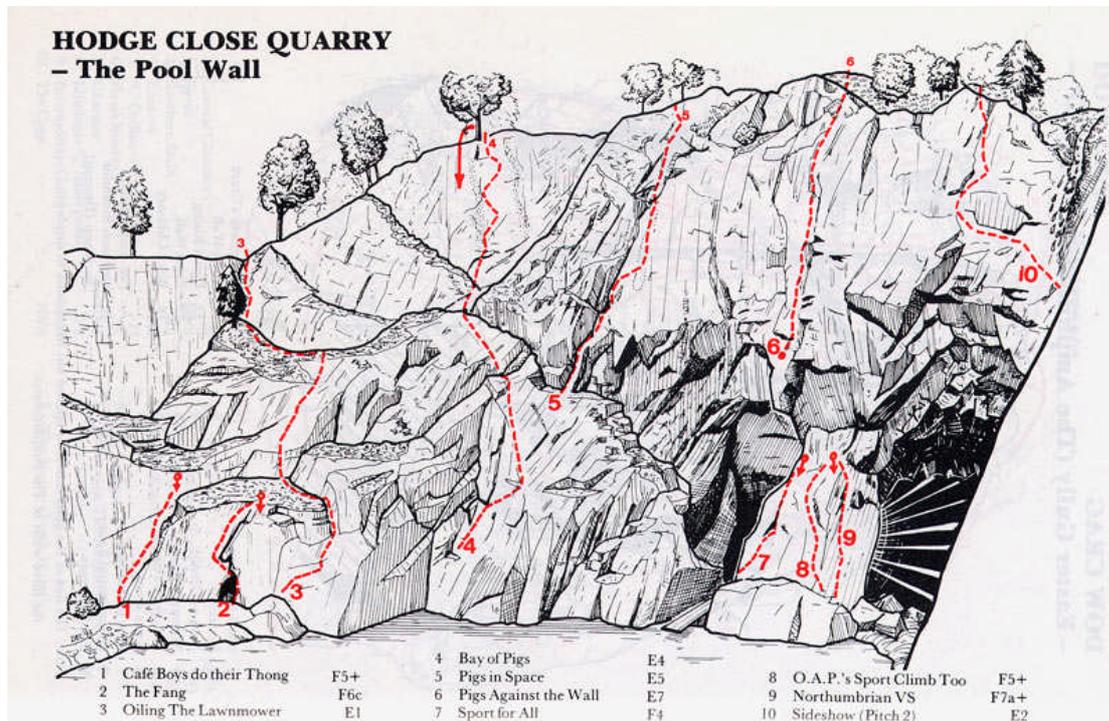
A very poor route starting from the ledge at the top of pitch 1 of *Oiling the Lawnmower*. It has been superseded by later routes.

(4b). Climb the broken corner crack slanting right (loose) to a belay on *Bay of Pigs*. The easy dirty groove is followed rightwards to the top of the quarry.

The Pool Wall

South Facing

This is the massive shattered wall overhanging the pool above the obvious diving board at the north end of the main quarry.



*Bay of Pigs 40 m E4

1992

A good contrasting route starting from a ledge 5 metres above the pool in the back of the bay mid-way between the diving board and the walkway by *Oiling the Lawnmower*. From the point where the road leaves the top of the quarry, walk rightward for 25 metres up the path to a large oak tree growing 1½ metres from the edge of the quarry. Abseil from this to the ledge, quarry spike belay. (Spare rope useful.)

- 23 m (5b). From the ledge, move right into a slabby scoop and continue to an overlap (bolt). Pull over this then climb rightwards, around the edge, onto a delicate slab. Follow the left edge of the slab to a diagonal break. A stride across a short steep wall on the left gains another slab, follow this diagonally left, keeping below the steep rocks above, to a ledge at the foot of an easy corner which slants up right. Steel spike, rock spike and Rock 8 belay.
- 17 m (6a). Climb the broken steps directly above the belay (peg) to reach a bolt below the steep striated headwall. Climb up and left to a second bolt, then go right to some little incuts where a long reach enables the huge finishing jugs to be embraced.

Pigs in Space 33 m E5

1992

A swine of a route on steep and occasionally loose rock. It follows the quartz band in the headwall left of the left-hand archway, starting from a large ledge in the centre of the face. This is reached by abseiling a couple of metres right (looking out) of the well scratched popular abseil at the top of the wall. Bolt belay.

(6a). Start in the corner right of the belay and climb up to a short ledge on the left. Ascend the steep corner above to a ledge on the right, then traverse precariously right across the leaning wall to reach the quartz band. Follow this with difficulty to a prominent gangway, follow this first right, then back left to the top. (7 bolts, 1 peg.)

The obvious diagonal line leading leftwards out of the left-hand archway, following a line of ledges below the headwall, has been climbed at VS.

* Pigs Against the Wall 29 m E7

1992

A stunning route up a grooveline in the headwall directly above the huge pillar. It starts from a hanging belay on a protruding nose about 10 metres above the chain at the top of *Big Gym*. This can only be reached by abseil – but only if you clip into the bolts as you descend.

(6b). From the belay, enter the very steep groove and climb it with difficulty to a little roof, continue in the same strength – sapping line to the top. The rope runs over some sharp edges of rock – if you can't swim – flash it!

The All Weather Gym

This is the name given to the huge pillar which supports the roof of the archway between *Hodge Close* and *Parrock Quarry*, from where it is reached. The umbrella-like headwall shelters the rock from rain (except during windy conditions), allowing climbing to take place at any time. These short bolt protected problems are described from right to left, starting from the diving board.

Sport for All 12 m VS (F 4) 1990

Scramble onto the ledge on the right 3 metres above the pool.

(4b). Climb the shallow grey groove in the centre to a bulge, pull left into a scoop which leads to a chain lower off.

* **Big Gym** 10 m HVS (F 5+) 1990

A good problem starting off the diving board.

(5b). Step up to the foot of a slabby rib which is followed on its left side, then move left onto a slab and climb this to a chain.

Broken Pelvis 10 m E1 1984

Start where the support girder for the diving board is cemented into the pillar. Recently retro-bolted.

(5c). Climb up hollow flakes below a shallow corner, then pull right into a short left-facing corner, finishing up a slab to reach the chain.

Pioneer Meets His Match 10 m E1 1993

Climbs the slab left of *Broken Pelvis*, utilizing the same bolts.

(5c). Climb onto the hollow flakes on *Broken Pelvis*, then pull out leftwards onto the hanging slab. Continue to the chain on *Big Gym*.

Quarry Slaves 9 m E4 (F 7b+) 1990

Start below the arête nearest *Parrock Quarry*. Very few people succeed in completing this route.

(6c). Climb the initial shallow groove with difficulty to a rest up right, continue steeply on desperate undercuts to the lower off bolt.

* **Cellar Dwellers** 10 m E3 (F 6b+) 1990

The steep arête between the entrance and *Side Show*.

(6a). Step off the block and follow the overhanging arête using long reaches to the lower off.

Northumbrian VS 10 m E4 (F 7a+) 1990

Some say its overgraded, and more like a Cumbrian HS! Start on a ledge opposite the crack of *Side Show*.

(6b). Climb the wall just right of the arête nearest the pool to enter a shallow square-cut corner. Up this (crux) to the top (sling lower-off).

OAP's Sport Climb Too 11 m E1 (F 5+) 1990

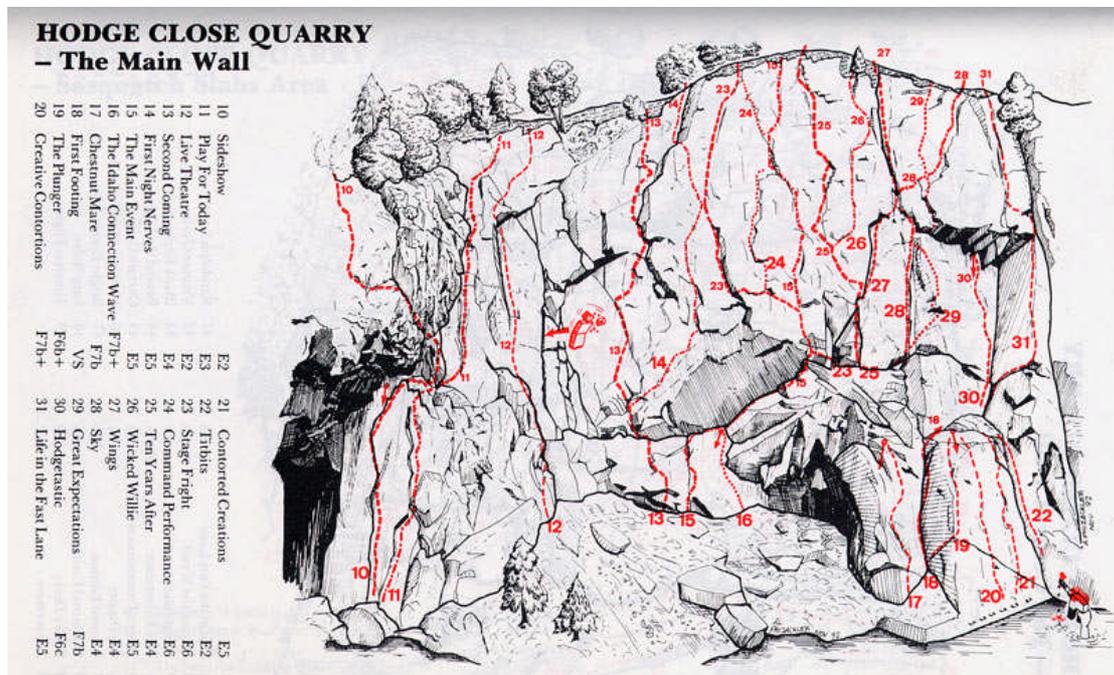
Start up the arête overlooking the pool.

(5b). Trend left, under steeper rock, to finish up an awkward hanging groove to a chain.

The Main Wall

North West Facing

This impressive wall extends the full length of the east side of the quarry and contains a large number of varied routes. These are described from left to right, starting from the archway which leads from *Parrock Quarry*, from where the routes up to *Movement* are usually approached.



*Sideshow 60 m E2

1980

A good route with two contrasting pitches – a sustained crackline followed by a thrilling upper pitch of pitiless exposure. This route is usually wet, suffering from seepage after bad weather. However, once it is dry, the overhangs above the first pitch provide shelter from showers. Start below the striking crackline on the left side of the archway.

- 24 m (5b). Climb the crack to the roof, where a chain lower off is available. Traverse right, past a doubtful flake to a belay in a little niche amongst some broken ledges.
- 26 m (5b). The left-hand groove is followed on insecure rock to reach a prominent iron quarry spike. A little higher, start an exhilarating leftwards traverse which leads across the headwall to a rock ledge (a Friend in a horizontal shothole is the only runner) Climb up, first right, then back left to finish amongst the trees.

Play for Today 53 m E3

1981

Climbs the large open corner on the left side of the *Main Wall*; a rather poor route with some suspect protection. Start just right of *Sideshow*.

- 17 m (4c). Climb the broken groove line until the wall on the right can be traversed into a larger groove, which leads to the belay on *Sideshow*.
- 36 m (5c). The right wall of the groove contains a slim subsidiary groove. This is quite delicate but eases once the main groove is rejoined, though the rock quality deteriorates. About 7 metres from the top of the crack, make an awkward move right to gain a small ledge, climb the wall to the right to finish.

A scramble round the edge of the pool leads to a large block strewn ledge. Above the highest point of the ledge are a stack of precariously balanced flakes, the line of *Stiff Little Fingers*. To the left of this is a long right-facing pod, *Live Theatre*, which starts at the foot of a short groove below the poised flakes.

Live Theatre 45 m E2

1980

An interesting and quite technical route which lacks substantial protection or structural stability.

(5c). Climb the lower groove to a ledge then step left to the foot of the long pod. Enter this, using the thin crack and climb it to the overhang. Step left and pull up onto a small ledge on the headwall. A fingery pull up right using a shot hole leads to the foot of a slight gangway. Either follow this up left to the top, or step right, and climb the excellent final crack of *Stiff Little Fingers*.

Stiff Little Fingers 45 m

1980

Due to the dangerous state of the rock on this route, it should be avoided if you have any plans for the future. The poised flakes are too unstable to warrant the inclusion of a description in this guide.

To the right of *Stiff Little Fingers* is a large, clean rock scar capped by an overhang. The shallow crease line at the right-hand side of this is the substance of the following route.

**** Second Coming** 55 m E4

1992

A superb, ingenuous climb, requiring a cool and competent approach. Start about 10 metres right of the highest point of the scree, below a little alcove sporting an iron spike at shoulder height.

- 1 46 m (6a). Stand on the spike (bolt) then climb up the two sloping niches on the left to gain the traverse line below the steeper rock. Move left into a hanging groove (nuts and Friend 2) then step left again onto a speckly slab using doubtful holds to reach a tiny shattered ledge below the blankness (wires). Climb up and right (bolt) to reach the shallow crease line, which is followed until a long stride right can be made above the third bolt onto a good flake ledge. Boldly climb onto a good hold above and a bolt, where an acrobatic sequence leads out right into the large bottomless groove. Follow this steadily to reach a large sloping ledge and a bolt belay a mere 8 metres below the top (5 bolts).
- 2 9 m (5b). Traverse left from the belay to a nut slot, and climb directly up the wall via two slim, stepped grooves. Tree belay.

***** First Night Nerves** 55 m E5

1987

An excellent route which provides sustained, well protected climbing up the steep black wall right of the rockfall scar, before taking a bold direct line up the left side of the *Main Wall*. Start as for *Second Coming*.

- 1 48 m (6b). Follow *Second Coming* to the hanging groove, then step up and right to gain twin bolts. Climb up and right precariously across a quartz band (bolts) to reach a good hold below an undercut flake. Climb the flake (wires) passing a bolt and further delicate climbing which leads directly to a junction with *Stage Fright* at a blunt spike, above and left of its crucial groove. Continue directly to another bolt, then traverse left to reach a large sloping ledge and bolt belay in the groove of *Second Coming* (6 bolts).
- 2 7 m (5a). Continue up the corner to the top.

**** The Main Event** 70 m E5

1980

An impressive route, which lacks popularity due to its wandering nature and poor protection, as well as the difficulty! Start below the overhanging wall, a few metres right of *Second Coming*, at the foot of a steep thin crack.

- 1 28 m (6a). Climb the thin crack, using a sloping ledge out left to reach the traverse line below the overhanging wall. Traverse right, following the flake to reach a large ledge which is the starting point for routes such as *Ten Years After* and *Wings*.
- 2 45 m (6a). Traverse back leftwards, along a ramp below the steep wall for 4 metres, pull up right, then back left to gain the upper wall and a peg 2 metres higher (the first protection on this pitch). Follow the thin flake up and left then rightwards to good ledges (junction with *Ten Years After*), then climb the shallow groove on the left to a ledge and bolt runners. Climb above these for a couple of metres before stepping right to finish more or less directly.

Variation Alternative Start to Pitch 2.

The short open corner above the belay (to the left of the big flake) can be followed to a peg at its top, then thin moves above lead to a junction with the main pitch at the good ledge. This reduces the grade to E4 (6a).

*** The Idaho Connection Wave** 9 m E5 (F 7b+)

1992

A short but impeccable test piece. Start 4 metres right of *The Main Event*, by two shotholes below 2 bolts.

(6c). Pass the first bolt to gain the shallow hanging corner, continue straight up into a little runnel and bolt lower-off on *The Main Event* traverse.

The next three routes start in the final little bay, just above the waters edge at the foot of a large corner adorned with two bent spikes.

*** Chestnut Mare** 15 m E5 (F 7b)

1992

This elegant route climbs the clean pillar to the left of the corner.

(6b). Start up a short rib below the lower arching overhang to enter the scooped depression on the left (bolt). Exit right, past the second bolt to a shothole, then back left to the arête using a ridiculously minuscule hold. Continue easily to the top and a lower off.

First Footing 13 m VS

1973

(4b). The large corner, passing two bent quarry spikes to the ledges. A good way of approaching any of the routes between *Stage Fright* and *Life in the Fast Lane*.

- *The Plunger** 15 m E3 (F 6b+) 1987
 A good technical problem up the right arête of *First Footing*.
 (6a). Climb the thin diagonal crack out right (wires) to the arête and a bolt. Follow the arête above to a good flake runner, and continue to the ledge. Lower-off.

The following four routes climb the steep clean wall which rises straight out of the right-hand end of the pool. There are a set of 'Via Ferrata' rungs protruding from this wall just above the water line which provide access to their starting points.

- ** Creative Contortions** 15 m E6 (F 7b+) 1992
 A desperately tenacious problem up the right-hand side of the wall. Start from the fifth steel rung, bolt belay.
 (6b). A hard move leads past a bolt to the diagonal crack and a peg. Climb the intricate quartz speckled wall above past 3 further bolts, directly and then slightly leftwards, to the ledge.

- * Contorted Creations** 14 m E5 1992
 An easier but bolder companion right of *Creative Contortions* which starts from the sixth rung.
 (6b). At the great risk of intimate personal injury, step up to reach the diagonal crack. Climb up past a bolt to a flake, then left and boldly up to another bolt. Follow a very slim groove to a tiny pocket, then grab the arête on the right and romp to the top.

- Titbits** 12 m E2 1992
 The short groove on the right of the smooth wall. A bolt belay at its foot can be reached either by climbing *First Footing* and abseiling down, or, more adventurously, by following the iron rungs above the water.
 (5c). Climb the groove past 2 bolts to where a secondary groove merges on the left. Climb either groove to the ledge (the left-hand one is easier).

- Movement** 22 m E3 1990
 A fairly aimless route. Start from the belay of *Titbits*.
 (6a). Climb the diagonal crack running across the steep wall above the iron rungs, past a peg, to reach the bolt on the arête of *The Plunger*. Finish up this.

The Upper Main Wall West Facing

The following ten routes start from the ledge system which runs across the foot of the Main Wall, about 20 metres above the pool. This ledge is commonly reached by abseil, but *First Footing* makes an easy approach from the edge of the pool. (The upper sections of *First Night Nerves* and *The Main Event*, both of which utilize the left side of this wall, have already been described.)

- *** Stage Fright** 50 m E6 1983
 A superb, sparsely protected and intimidating route, which climbs the narrow, tapering groove on the left-hand side of the wall. Start from a large flake on the left-hand side of the ledge.
 (6b). Traverse leftwards across a short ramp below the steep wall for 4 metres. Pull up right, then back left to gain the upper wall, and a peg runner 2 metres higher (as for pitch 2 of *The Main Event*). Traverse delicately left across the slab to a peg runner by the rib. Step left, using a hidden foothold, into the slim leftwards leaning groove then climb it with difficulty to a poor resting place and peg runner at its top. Move left and up to a good ledge (junction with *First Night Nerves*), then climb the wall trending rightwards for 10 metres until a thin flake leads directly to the top. (An extra rope is required to reach a belay).

- * Command Performance** 47 m E6 1990
 A rather unbalanced route which demands a cool, confident approach to reach the flake between *Stage Fright* and *The Main Event*, from where the difficulties diminish considerably.
 (6b). Follow *Stage Fright* until half-way across the traverse (peg) then move up to a good finger jug. Stand on this to reach a bolt out left with much relief! A difficult move leads into the base of the shallow flake line which is followed to the ledge and twin bolts on *The Main Event*. Step right and climb up to another ledge, then continue diagonally leftwards, boldly at first, to reach the top section of *Stage Fright*.

- ** The Final Act** 44 m E6 1993
 A very direct and bold variation to pitch 2 of *The Main Event*. Possibly the most frightening lead on this wall.

(6b). Follow *Stage Fright* to the peg (as for pitch 2 of *The Main Event*) then mantelshelf onto the small finger jugs above with difficulty. (Poor R.P. 2 here.) A hard move leads up to a good hold on the front face of the flake, climb directly up this to reach the ledge and twin bolts on *The Main Event*. Move up to another ledge above, then continue in a straight line up the headwall, between *Command Performance* and *The Main Event*, to the top.

*** **Ten Years After** 45 m E4 1980
A beautiful modern slate classic combining sustained elegant climbing with well spaced gear. Start off the left-hand ledge, below a large flake at the foot of a tapering flake groove (*Wings*).

(5c). Climb the large flake and enter the groove for protection (thin tape slot in the rib) before pulling out leftwards onto the undercut wall. Step delicately left then climb up to better holds by a peg and wire runner, then rock over leftwards to reach some ledges on *The Main Event* (good wires). Step right from here, and use a hollow flake to reach a shallow stepped groove which is climbed to a peg. Continue directly up the wall to a small groove, this has a good wire at its top to protect the awkward finishing move.

*** **Wicked Willie** 45 m E5 1987
A superb route with good but widely spaced protection. Start as for *Ten Years After*.
(6b). Climb *Ten Years After* to the first peg runner. Make a hard move up and right past this to gain a second peg, then up easier ground to a bolt runner. The thin flake above is climbed past a good Friend ½ placement, until a final wild move rightwards leads to a friendly ledge. Climb the wall above, first on the right (wire) before moving left to a good hold directly below the fir tree at the top.

Wings 42 m E4 1980
A worrying route with some doubtful rock, up the tapering groove in the centre of the wall. Start directly below this.

(5c). Layback the flake which leads into the groove, this is followed to its top. Make a poorly protected traverse right to gain an open corner, above and left of the large roof. Climb the corner to the top.

* **Sky** 47 m E4 1980
Good climbing, but the sparse protection and the hollow initial flake do not inspire confidence. Belay on the right-hand side of the ledge, below the left-hand end of the big roof.

(5c). Climb up to a ledge below a thin flake crack; follow this strenuously to where it peters out level with the big roof. Make a hard move left into a short corner and out again to join the upper grooveline of *Wings*. Step back right onto the headwall, and traverse rightwards across the ledge system above the big roof, past a bolt, to reach a shallow groove (wire). Climb this to the top.

*** **Great Expectations** 42 m E5 (F 7b) 1990
A very technical exercise up the vague rib and roof right of *Sky*. Start as for *Sky*.
(6c). Climb up and rightwards to a prominent overlap (bolt), pass this on its left, then traverse out right to the rib and the second bolt. Hard climbing up the rib leads directly to a good side hold by another bolt, where a move left enables the flake of *Sky* to be reached, this is followed to the roof (wires). Hand traverse the lip of the roof rightwards to a little flake, and pull over the roof to reach the upper traverse of *Sky*. (Bolt on the left.) Climb directly up the wall, past a final bolt to finish with a long reach.

The next three routes start from the right-hand end of the cleaned ledge above *The Plunger*, at the foot of the large slabby groove which slants down from the big roof.

Hodgetastic 18 m E3 (F 6c) 1992
An awkward, fingery line which climbs to the foot of the prominent fang below the big roof.
(6a). Climb up the lower part of the groove for 6 metres (wires) then pull out left onto the steep speckly wall above the second bolt. A vague line leads left, then back right to the lower-off below the roof (6 bolts).

Way of the Wyrd 42 m E6 1990
A route of contrasts, climbing the easy open groove below the large roof before venturing boldly above it in a most committing manner. Start at the foot of the groove.

(6b). Climb the groove (wires) to a point about 3 metres below the roof, then traverse delicately rightwards to the top of the arête on *Life in the Fast Lane*. Arrange vital protection in the groove on the right, then step left onto the crucial traverse of *Life in the Fast Lane*, just above the main overhang. From the peg pull directly over the bulge to gain the upper wall, which is climbed with great commitment, past a pathetic hand-inserted RURP, to reach a good peg in a horizontal crack. Finish more easily, directly above the peg, to the top.

** **Life in the Fast Lane** 45 m E5 1980
A classic, bold route which climbs the prominent rib leading to the right-hand side of the big roof and finishes up the wall above it. A courageous and controlled approach is required to deal with the sparse protection.

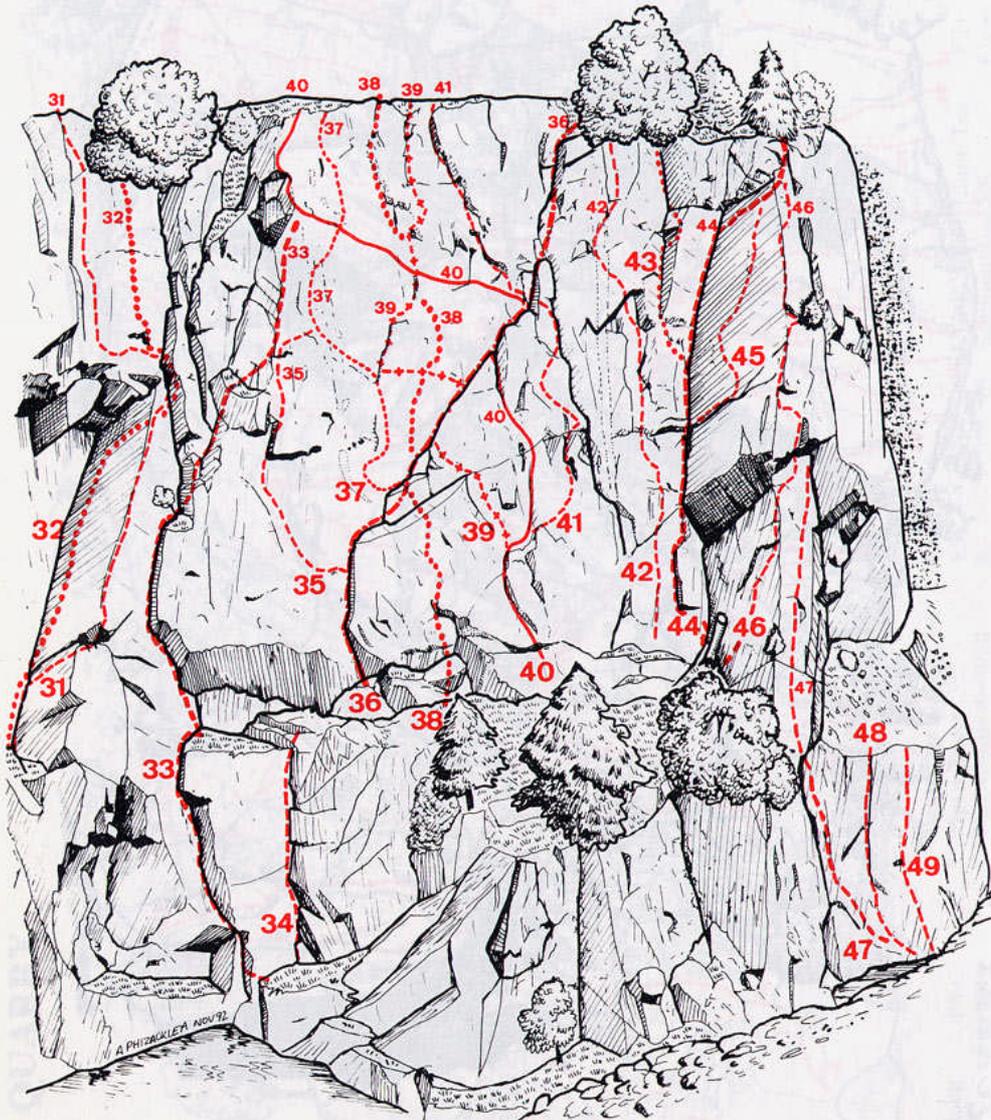
(6b). From the foot of the groove, a shattered flake runs up right to the rib (Friend). A very difficult smear leads to easier climbing directly up the rib to the right-hand side of the overhang. Step right into a dirty corner (runners), then traverse back left directly above the roof with difficulty (poor peg to start) to reach a shallow grooveline. This leads past a peg runner directly to the top.

The Central Wall

West Facing

The next dozen routes start from a pleasant tree-covered terrace which is easily reached by abseiling from a large sycamore tree.

HODGE CLOSE QUARRY – The Central Wall



31	Life in the Fast Lane	E5	41	Randolph Scott	E1
32	Way of the Wynd	E6	42	Vienese Oyster	E4
33	Amphibian	E3	43	Blank Expression	E5
34	The Entertainer	F6a+	44	Behind the Lines	HVS
35	Power Transmission	E5	45	Curtain Call	F7a+
36	Big Dipper	E1	46	Malice in Wonderland	E3
37	Limited Edition	F6c	47	Bright Eyes n' Blue	E4
38	Nocturnal Emissions	E5	48	Easy Rider	F5+
39	Stinky Dinks	E2	49	Timeless Flight	E5
40	Mirrormere	E2			

- Amphibian** 60 m E3 1980
 The line of grooves between the *Central* and *Main Walls*, just right of *Life in the Fast Lane*. Scramble or abseil down from a bolt below *Big Dipper* to a small ledge just above the right-hand end of the pool. Good sustained climbing, but slow to dry.
- 1 18 m (6a). Step left to a steel rung and a bolt below the groove, follow this and the crackline above to the ledge on the extreme left side of the main ledge.
 - 2 28 m (6a). From the flake on the left, step into the groove and pull round the overhang, continue with difficulty to a ledge. Climb the easier groove above and to the right to gain a ledge and bolt belay.
 - 3 14 m (5b). Move right and climb the stepped rib directly to the top, or climb the dirty groove on the left, which was the original finish (5a).
- * **The Entertainer** 11 m E2 (F 6a+) 1992
 A good entertaining route which starts as for *Amphibian*, just above the pool.
 (5c). Climb the shallow clean groove above the right-hand end of the ledge with dexterity to the ledge below *Central Wall* (3 bolts).
- Variation **Entertainment Value** 12 m E4 1992
 (6a). From the third bolt, traverse left for 2 metres then climb the steep committing wall in a most amusing fashion to the ledge.
- Return to Year Zero** 29 m E4 1993
 An interesting, but awkward pitch up the left edge of the *Central Wall*. Start at the extreme left-hand end of the tree covered ledge, at the top of pitch 1 of *Amphibian*. A logical lower extension would be to climb *Entertainment Value* to reach the ledge.
 (6b). From the flake on the left, step into the groove and pull round the overhang. (As for *Amphibian*, pitch 2.) Traverse right with difficulty, just above the overhang, to reach a good foothold. Follow the thin crack directly to ledges and twin bolt belay on *Amphibian*.
- ** **Power Transmission** 40 m E5 1988
 A tenacious route which claws out leftwards from *Big Dipper*.
 (6c). Climb *Big Dipper* to the top of its initial flake (wire), then step down and traverse left just below the bolt to reach the vaguest of ramp lines running up left. Follow this, past a second bolt, to a good hold up left, then swing right into a sentry box in the overlap above (wire). Climb out of this directly to reach the belay ledge on *Amphibian*. Step up the arête, then go right to join *Limited Edition*, which is followed to the top.
- An easier escape for those unable (or unwilling) to reach the sentry box can be made up left from the second bolt to large ledges on *Amphibian*.
- ** **Big Dipper** 46 m E1 1980
 A pleasant way of discovering the intricacies of *Hodge Close* climbing, which follows a diagonal ramp up rightwards across the *Central Wall*. Start on the large terrace below a steep flake crack, towards the left end of the ledge.
- 1 34 m (5b). Climb the flake which leads strenuously to the ramp system. Follow this right, past the bolt belay of *Limited Edition*, and the continuation groove to a bollard and bolt belay at its top.
 - 2 12 m (5a). Climb the wall on the right to finish up a groove. (Pitch 2 of *Mirrormere* makes an excellent variation.)
- *** **Limited Edition** 33 m E4 (F 6c) 1986
 An excellent route which climbs the left side of the wall. The recent increase in the number of bolts has drastically reduced the commitment required for its ascent. Start from the bolt belay at the top of the ramp on *Big Dipper*, usually reached by abseil.
 (6a). From the lower left point of the ramp, step across left (bolt) to gain a shallow right-facing scoop and climb this delicately past a bolt to an excellent hold. Traverse diagonally left across the wall to reach a flake and a bolt, then up and slightly right, past another bolt, to better holds below the slight steepening of the headwall. A hard move on quartz holds past the top bolt leads to a tiny right-facing flake, finish up this.
- Haggis** 42 m E6 1989
 A fairly pointless and protectionless variation to *Limited Edition*.
 (6a). Climb *Limited Edition* to the good hold above the scoop, step left and climb the wall directly above here, trending toward the top bolt of *Limited Edition*. (The bolts on the left were not clipped on the one and only known ascent to date.)

Nocturnal Emissions 38 m E5 1993

A very direct line up the wall, giving well protected technical climbing low down and a scary finish. Start 5 metres right of *Big Dipper*.

(7a). Climb up to a bolt, and pass it with difficulty to reach the ramp on *Big Dipper* (bolt). Step up directly to reach a bolt in the slab above, where a very hard move leads to the bolt on the traverse of *Stinky Dinks*. Climb up and right to a rock scar, then back left to a ring bolt. Follow a thin crack in the steeper headwall to a bold finish slightly rightwards.

* **Stinky Dinks** 45 m E2 1987

The highlight of this pleasant route is a very thin, but well protected crux which gives a good introduction to the techniques of smearing. Start on a ledge below the centre of the wall, 8 metres right of *Big Dipper*.

(6b). Climb a shallow scoop to a small conifer (wire), then go diagonally left, delicately, to join the ramp of *Big Dipper* at the bolt. Climb the flake on the right to a good spike runner, then step left onto the hard wall and traverse past a bolt to reach a good hold (on *Limited Edition*). Climb a ramp line back up right to reach a ring bolt in the headwall. Step right to a flake and finish direct, passing a peg runner.

* **Mirrormere** 52 m E2 1980

A good route, now less committing since the appearance of the bolts on the top pitch. Start as for *Stinky Dinks*.

- 1 22m (5a). Climb directly to a small conifer. Step right and continue directly up, until a step left enables the upper part of the flake of *Big Dipper* to be reached. Climb this to a bolt belay.
- 2 30 m (5b). Traverse the wall on the left for 8 metres, then climb up to the ring bolt on *Stinky Dinks*. Continue leftwards to gain the top bolt on *Limited Edition*, then step down, and traverse delicately left onto the arête which is followed directly to the top.

Randolph Scott 39 m E1 1987

A direct route up the wall, starting up *Stinky Dinks*.

- 1 22 m (5a). Climb directly to a small conifer, then traverse right across the wall for 5 metres to reach a short groove which leads to a ledge. Climb leftwards to a spike in the centre of the wall, then move right to the edge of the flake and follow it to a bolt belay on *Big Dipper*.
- 2 17 m (5b). Traverse left for 3 metres and follow the obvious curving grooveline which leads to a dirty finish.

Variation Direct Start

Start 4 metres right of the ordinary start.

(6a). Climb the smooth-looking wall direct to reach the short groove.

* **Viennese Oyster** 33 m E4 1989

An artistic sort of route which requires a bold approach low down and a delicate finishing touch by the white streak high on the wall. The section above the peg provides a superb, intricate sequence of climbing – take plenty of small wires. Start as for *Behind the Lines*.

(6b). Follow *Behind the Lines* then step left on large holds at 5 metres to reach a good diagonal crack. Ascend the thin slab above to a slight bulge, then pull over into a shallow niche and breathe again. Climb up to a peg in the small groove and swing left to reach a bolt, then carefully caress the crease above to stretch for a ledge out left. Step back right and follow a short crack to finish just left of the large tree.

* **Blank Expression** 33 m E5 1980

This seldom-led route ascends the short, shallow groove high on the wall left of *Behind the Lines*. This scary groove is the focal point of the route, the base of it can be reached by either following *Viennese Oyster* and stepping right or by climbing *Behind the Lines* to a good spike runner and stepping left.

(6a). Gain the base of the groove (tiny wires) and pull leftwards on nothing to enter it. Climb up precariously and exit right, using a good hold on the right-hand rib and continue to a sloping ledge below a corner. Climb the short stepped rib on the left to the abseil tree.

*** **Behind the Lines** 33 m HVS 1980

A classic of the quarry, this route takes the prominent slabby corner which forms the angle between the *Central Wall* and the arête of *Malice in Wonderland*. Start by a large pine tree growing at the right end of the ledge.

(5a). Climb delicately left from the tree to reach a short corner. A few bold moves up this enables the main corner line to be entered. Follow this, with good protection, to the bulge just below the top. Traverse right to finish.

* **Curtain Call** 40 m E5 (F 7a+) 1988
 A finger splitting route up the centre of the smooth slab just right of *Behind the Lines* – marked by five bolts. Start as for *Behind the Lines*.

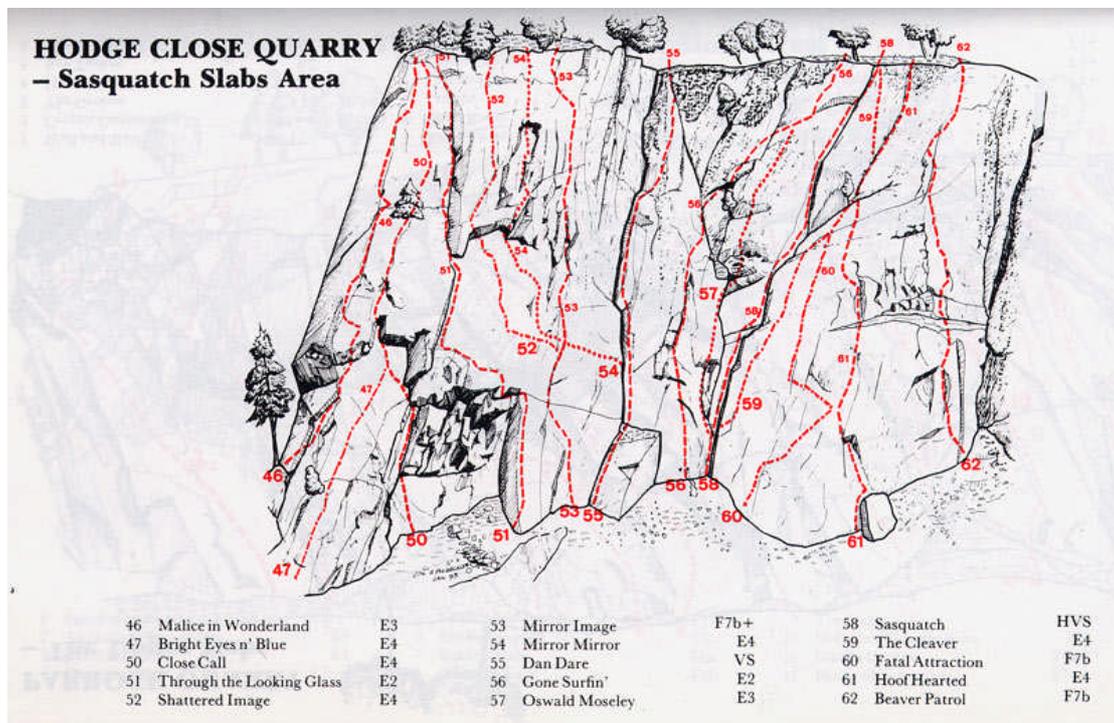
(6b). Go up *Behind the Lines*, and at 15 metres a thin crack leads rightwards across the slab. Follow this until below a bolt in the centre of the slab, where tenuous fingery climbing leads to the penultimate bolt. A difficult section past some tiny chipped nicks leads to the final bolt. Continue directly to reach the traverse line on *Behind the Lines*.

*** **Malice in Wonderland** 43 m E3 1980
 A beautiful route requiring a bold but graceful approach to climb the smooth arête right of *Behind the Lines*. Start at the pine tree, as for *Behind the Lines*.

(5c). Climb the slab on the right to a rib and follow it to the overhang. Step right, past a poor peg, and pull directly through the overhang on good, but widely spaced holds, to land on the slab above. Traverse back left, just above the roof to reach the main arête. Climb the left side of this, passing a good diagonal crack, to a tree on its right flank. Step back onto the arête and climb it with conviction, past a thin R.P. crack on the left, to a delicate and gripping finish.

The routes to the right of *Malice in Wonderland* all start from the quarry floor. This is easily reached by scrambling down the spoil heap at the southern end of the quarry or by abseil from the trees above the *Sasquatch* slab.

The next four routes all climb a short subsidiary wall below the foot of *Malice in Wonderland*. This wall is guarded by a small pool at its base.



* **Bright Eyes n' Blue** 55 m E4 1992
 This route is in effect the logical lower extension to *Close Call*, and it is the longest single pitch in the quarry. Start by the right-hand end of the little pool. Wires required.

(6a). Traverse left above the pool past a large flake to gain a cleaned red corner. Climb this to a narrow ledge level with the large tree covered ledge on the left. Continue directly up the narrow rib (bolt) to a little sapling on the arête, then follow the slab above, then right, to join *Close Call* below the niche. Finish up that route.

Easy Rider 13 m HVS (F 5+) 1992

A fine little line starting from the right-hand side of the pool.

(5b). Traverse left above the pool to gain broken rocks below a thin shallow groove in the centre of the slab. Climb this to the ledge.

- * **Timeless Flight** 12 m E5 1992
 A very thin route which has a reputation for clocking up flying time, especially by those trying to clip the third bo--agh!
 (6b). From the right edge of the pool, climb the centre of the smooth slab above past a bolt to a break. Continue over the overlap and finish up the difficult slab above (3 bolts).
- Trivia** 13 m HVS 1992
 A rather trivial pursuit starting up a short corner right of *Timeless Flight*.
 (5a). Climb the corner to the overlap. Continue rightwards and take the shallow groove just left of the rib to the top.
- The following route starts from the ledge above *Timeless Flight*; below the overhangs which guard access to the wall right of *Malice in Wonderland*. At the left corner of this ledge, a quartz band runs up diagonally right.
- * **Close Call** 42 m E4 1992
 An entertaining and quite varied route up the wall just right of *Malice in Wonderland*. Wires required.
 (6a). Follow the quartz and enter a slim, hanging gangway which leads precariously to an awkward exit left at its top. From the large metal spike, traverse left across the slab (bolt) and ascend directly to the prominent niche in the overhangs above. Climb up this with difficulty onto the slab, and follow a flake crack on the left to the tree on *Malice in Wonderland*. (Pass to the right of the tree.) Climb the steep wall above directly, past a bolt, avoiding both the arête and the groove on either side, to the top.
- ** **Through the Looking Glass** 42 m E2 1980
 Another excellent route which takes a shallow grooveline in the face right of *Malice in Wonderland*. Protection is reasonable and the rock is sound, except for a couple of hollow flakes. Start about 6 metres right of *Close Call*, below a short rib which leads to the right-hand side of a low blocky overhang.
 (5c). Climb the rib to a runner where it merges into the wall above. Step left, below the roof, and stand up on good holds beside a peg in the clean wall above it. Cross the lip of the roof leftwards to gain a good ledge, where good gear can be arranged for the next section. (An upward pulling nut prevents it from lifting out.) Climb the fine flake crack above to enter a long shallow groove, which snakes upwards to a tricky finish.
- * **Shattered Image** 41 m E4 1992
 Good sustained climbing up the wall just right of *Through the Looking Glass*. Start 4 metres right of that route, at the base of a slabby groove, below and left of the slabby corner of *Dan Dare*.
 (6b). Climb up leftwards to a junction with *Through the Looking Glass* at the top of its initial rib. Step right to a bolt, and pass this to reach easier ground and a second bolt. Traverse left to another bolt in the smooth wall, and continue left at the same level with difficulty for a couple of metres until a direct ascent can be made to another bolt below a roof. Enter the red niche below the left end of the roof (wire), and lurch over this to a horizontal break. Stand on this, bolt, step up, bolt and follow a slim ramp which runs slightly right up the headwall, before finishing directly up the brittle top wall.
- * **Mirror Image** 40 m E5 (F 7b+) 1991
 The steep, furrowed wall left of the dirty corner of *Dan Dare*, where poor rock, excellent protection and technical climbing blend together to provide a memorable outing. Start up *Shattered Image*.
 (6c). Follow *Shattered Image* to the second bolt, then continue directly up a shallow groove to another bolt. From here, a series of shallow channels continue with increasing delicacy to a climactic move past the fifth bolt to gain a hold in a horizontal break. Step right to a rest place on the arête, then pull back left, and climb the rickety headwall past a bolt to a Rock 8 slot. Climb back left, past a peg and a final bolt to reach the top.
- Mirror Mirror** 44 m E4 † 1981
 A large rockfall has altered the middle section of the route, leaving some doubtful flakes and an unattractive proposition. It sees few ascents.
 (5c). Climb the lower corner of *Dan Dare* to a large ledge, then traverse left at a slightly higher level to a bolt on *Mirror Image*. Climb up, then left, under the pink rock scar to enter a wide niche to the right of the roof. Climb this, then pull out left to a peg, and continue directly up the brittle headwall on improving holds. (Improving in the sense of becoming larger, not more secure!)
- Dan Dare** 39 m VS 1980
 A sadly neglected route, which takes the dirty corner between the steep *Mirror Image* wall and the slabs of *Sasquatch*. Start at the foot of the slabby groove below and left of the main corner, as for *Shattered Image*.
 (4c). Climb the initial groove to a ledge. Continue up the main corner line for 10 metres until vegetation forces a traverse right, past a loose sapling, to a thin crack which leads to the top.

Gone Surfin' 42 m E2

1989

A fine route despite some loose areas of rock. Start 3 metres left of *Sasquatch* below the magical flowing shot-holes, which provide an endless supply of clean water. (Some bolts missing at the time of checking.)

(5c). Climb the slab, slightly leftwards, to a bolt runner in a bulge. A thin crack just to its left and a continuation layback crack lead into a mossy scoop with a peg to its right (possible belay). Above the peg, and 2 metres left of some saplings, is a hollow flake. Follow this rightwards into the dirty crack containing the saplings. Cross the slab on the right past two bolts to reach the top arête, just left of the finish of *Sasquatch*.

Oswald Moseley 37 m E3

1991

This route is lacking in many things – solid rock, quality and bolt hangers. It takes a direct line up the fragile slabs left of *Sasquatch*, marked by nine bolt stubs.

(6a). Climb the soapy slab just left of *Sasquatch* past 3 bolts to a steepening just right of a grassy groove. Pull directly over this to a good hold near the fifth bolt, then climb the slab above with trepidation (the grass on the left beckons for those of weak moral fibre) to reach the top traverse line of *Gone Surfin'*, which is used to finish.

* **Sasquatch** 38 m HVS

1980

A good route up the white-streaked open groove/flake which runs diagonally right up the slab, starting a couple of metres right of the flowing shot-holes.

(5a). Climb the shallow white-streaked groove with difficulty to a ledge, then the wall behind to a second ledge. Climb the steeper smooth flake above (this is not totally sound) which leads delicately to a flaky crack in the upper slab, follow this to the top.

* **The Cleaver** 41 m E4

1989

A potential chop route up the brittle slab just right of *Sasquatch*. Previously known as *Meet the Cleaver*, the loss of a crucial hold resulted in a harder and more direct line.

(6a). Climb *Sasquatch* for a couple of metres, then move right onto the slabs. Poorly protected moves lead up then right, along a faint break, to reach a thin flake in the slab above. Climb this past 2 bolts, where fingery moves out right enable a large sloping ledge to be gained. Follow this rightwards to a small tree, where a ragged crack leads leftwards to the top of *Sasquatch*.

* **Fatal Attraction** 43 m E5 (F 7b)

1989

Intense and exacting climbing across the glassy slabs right of **Sasquatch** – one of the thinnest problems at *Hodge Close*. Unfortunately the rock is rather fragile. Start below a thin quartz flake 5 metres right of *Sasquatch*.

(6c). Stand on the quartz flake with care to reach the first bolt, then traverse diagonally right without respite past the second bolt to reach better holds by the third (this is also the first bolt on *Hoof Hearted*). Move up, then skate back left across blank slabs to reach a tiny nubbin, the fourth bolt, and a welcome rest. Climb a shallow groove above to reach an expanding ledge, then continue up the wall (2 bolts) to a good hold by the small tree at the foot of the upper slabs. Finish up the ragged crack cutting through the moss to the top (wires).

* **Hoof Hearted** 40 m E4

1987

Another sustained slab climb with some suspect rock, and rather spaced protection. Start 12 metres right of *Sasquatch*, on the left side of a large flake which leans against the slab.

(6b). Bridge up the flake to its apex, then enter a scoop which supports a tiny sapling. Climb carefully up left to a bolt, then follow a thin crackline above with difficulty to gain a large ledge with a flake above. Use the flake to clip a second bolt, then step left and pull up to gain a sloping ledge with a small tree on the left (junction with *Fatal Attraction*). Finish directly up the ragged crack above (wires).

* **Beaver Patrol** 32 m E4 (F 7b)

1987

The blunt, rounded rib at the right-hand side of these slabs presents a very technical challenge now that a crucial hold has gone. To the right of the flake of *Hoof Hearted*, the slabs recede to form a dirty corner and a vile flake system. This route starts just below the corner.

(6c). Step left onto a foothold on the slab, then climb directly up this to reach a peg below a small overhang. Step right and continue up to a loose ledge system. From the bolt just above, climb right to a second bolt, which is passed with great difficulty to reach the crest of the rib. Follow this delicately, first left, then back right, past two further bolts to the top.

Mad Alice 30 m E3

1981

A serious route lacking adequate protection up the blunt mossy rib, 15 metres right of *Beaver Patrol*. Start from the sloping ledge up and right of *Beaver Patrol*, about 7 metres left of the rib itself.

(5c). Some thin moves lead right into a vague depression, which is traversed delicately to the rib (crux). Step up, then move right into a slim groove which is followed to the upper section of the rib. This is climbed initially on its right, then on its left side, to the top.

The *Main Wall* of the quarry has two girdle traverses which cross the face in opposite directions. These routes share the same belays, and in places they climb the same line, but they are surprisingly independent and both give fine outings. Care is needed to protect the second man, and back-ropes are advised on some sections.

* **Close Encounters** 174 m E4 and A1

1987

A left to right girdle which takes the lower line across the *Main Wall*, utilizing a line of old bolts which gives an easy aid pitch below the large overhang. Start at the top of the quarry, above the main archway, a couple of metres left of the top of the corner of *Play for Today*.

- 1 24 m (5c). Descend a ramp easily into the corner, and follow a thin crack out right, above the roof of *Live Theatre* and passing a peg runner. Continue, crossing *Stiff Little Fingers*, and pass two more peg runners to a bolt and peg belay on a sloping ledge about 6 metres below the top of the crag. (On *Second Coming*.)
- 2 15 m (6a). Down climb the corner to a sloping ledge, then cross the wall on the right with difficulty (bolt), descending slightly to a spike foothold. Move up and right to a bolt belay on *The Main Event*.
- 3 40 m (6a). Climb down the groove below the right side of the belay to a ledge. Step down and reverse the thin move on *Ten Years After* to its peg runner, then climb down and right to join the groove of *Wings*. Follow this for a couple of metres, then cross the wall on the right, on brittle flakes to a spike. Belay on the right, at the left-hand side of the big roof, to an old bolt and nuts. (On *Sky*.)
- 4 25 m (A1, 5b). Traverse under the roof, swinging from bolt to bolt, until a tension move can be made into the groove of *Way of The Wyrd*. Move across onto the arête and climb this delicately to the base of a dirty corner, then traverse right to a sloping ledge and bolt belay on *Amphibian*.
- 5 30 m (5b). Climb up slightly to the rib on the right, move right onto the flake of *Limited Edition* and down climb this, passing a bolt, to a good foothold. Climb the shallow ramp for a couple of metres, then traverse a ledge line right to the flake belay of *Big Dipper*.
- 6 30 m (5c). Climb down the grassy corner to the right, then traverse delicately right into the corner of *Behind the Lines*. Follow a diagonal crack in the right wall which leads to the arête of *Malice in Wonderland*. Climb this to the tree and belay.
- 7 10 m (5c). Step right and finish up the groove of *Through the Looking Glass*.

** **Standing Ovation** 157 m E4

1987

A right to left girdle, taking a high line across the *Main Wall* and giving a superb, sustained route. Start as for *Through the Looking Glass*.

- 1 25 m (5c). Climb *Through the Looking Glass* to a tree and flake belay, on the left.
- 2 30 m (5c). Step left onto the rib of *Malice in Wonderland* and move down this for 2 metres. Descend the crack on the left which leads down to the groove of *Behind the Lines*. Traverse delicately left to gain a grassy groove which leads to the bolt belay on *Big Dipper*.
- 3 27 m (6b). Reverse the ramp of *Big Dipper* to a spike runner, traverse leftwards across the slab past a bolt to gain a good hold on *Limited Edition*. Climb this leftwards past a bolt to a flake, then step left around the rib to a bolt belay on *Amphibian*.
- 4 50 m (6a). A sustained pitch. Cross leftwards to gain a dirty corner, climb this until a horizontal crack crosses the left wall. Follow this (peg runner) to gain the upper shallow groove of *Life in the Fast Lane* (peg runner). Traverse left across the blank wall above the big roof to a peg runner and better holds, then climb up and left to gain the top ramp of *Sky*. Reverse down this past a bolt to gain the top groove of *Wings*, climb down this, crossing left into the main groove. Step down and across onto the left wall to a peg on *Wicked Willie*, follow this to its bolt, then climb down and left until a long reach can be made to the hollow flake on *Ten Years After*. Move down and across to a ledge, then climb the slim groove to a bolt belay on *The Main Event*.
- 5 25 m (5c). An unprotected pitch. Step down onto the wall to the left, and climb an upward rising line of holds, delicately, to gain a sloping ledge and peg belay on *Close Encounters*. Finish on the top, 6 metres above. Alternatively, climb down the flake below the left side of the belay for a couple of metres and traverse delicately left to a bolt, then continue up to the sloping ledge.