

Main Cliff

General Approach: The walk-in starts from either of the two small car parks that lie 180m and 220m beyond the café; either take the dirt path (SH 20670 82175) that leads off right (ENE) from the upper car park or the tarmac track (SH 20649 82211) that leads off right (ENE) from the lower one. The dirt path joins the tarmac one after 200m and so continue on the tarmac track towards the microwave relay stations. At the first crossroads of tracks head straight across the junction to take a dirt track that bears rightwards past them. The Holyhead mountain crag can be seen a few hundred metres directly ahead.

As you get closer to Holyhead Mountain keep going straight ahead and to the left at any junctions and thus gradually bear left away from Holyhead Mountain to an uphill section. As this levels out and heads slightly rightwards along a crest there is a well marked path that drops down to the left. Take this down for 390m to reach a gearing up area at the top of a steep gully (SH21590 83233).

The top of the gully just right of the descent path is massively under-cut and becoming more so and is thus not a good place to stand and admire the view

Once you've racked up head down the gully and follow a broken, undulating and occasionally collapsed path across the steep hillside beneath Upper Tier.

Follow this until immediately beyond the rock step that is below Central Park and 25m before the Strand

All of the sectors except Cordon Bleu are accessed by the small track that heads steeply downhill from just beyond here. This leads first of all to the slabby Emulator buttress.

Cordon Bleu is accessed by continuing on the Upper Tier path that passes 10m under the Strand and continuing around the back of the amphitheatre to its end at the far left hand side of the Upper Tier. A roped scramble leads down the steep grass slope from here to an embedded flake belay on the edge of the buttress.

Detailed approach descriptions are in the routes section.

Returning to the Approach Gully/ Gearing Up Area.

Emulator Area

From the belays at the foot of the Upper Tier follow the Upper Tier path back to the approach gully and the gearing up area.

All other Areas

After you have finished your route and are on top of the crag on the heather slopes you will normally need to get back to the gearing up area at the top of the approach gully.

Most of the routes finish at 90 -110m above sea level and it is necessary to scramble up the slopes to a good, small path that traverses the area at the 150 – 180m level.. There are several well defined paths that wind up the slopes from the finishes of the more popular routes and it is worth trying to find these to avoid heather bashing.

Once on the path that traverses the slopes head southwards (rightwards looking in) and follow it as it contours above the Upper Tier until a 2.5m rock and heather step puts you onto a small

ridge. The path splits here and you can choose the long, easy way via the uphill split or the shorter, steeper version via the downhill split. It takes 5 to 15 minutes to reach this point from the exit slopes.

The longer easy way follows the uphill track which soon levels and then gradually drops down towards the broken rocky slabs on the right, reaching the walls at their lowest point where they are just 3m high. Scramble down this easy wall and continue following the path to a junction with the main approach path. Turn right and 100m later you are back at the gearing up area. 10 minutes from the rock step.

The faster route follows the lower path gently downhill for about 40m to a small cairn where the path starts to gain height again. Turn off right here and head steeply downhill on the narrow path, generally bearing down and left. This leads with care and a bit of scrambling directly to the gearing up gully. 5 minutes from the rock step.

Routes

The crag naturally divides itself into several areas and the routes within each of these sectors have been grouped together so that it is possible to outline shared characteristics and to aid orientation within that area.

The sections and the routes within them are described from right to left as this is the usual method of approaching them.

A. Cordon Bleu Area:

Routes 1 to 9 – Interrogator to Cordon Bleu

This is the very RH of the main cliff where it leans back to meet the grassy slopes running down from the LH side of the Upper Tier. The buttress is positioned about halfway up the cliff and is identifiable as the shield of clean rock that lies above and slightly left of the Emulator buttress.

The Cordon Bleu area is approached by following the Upper Tier path to its very end. Thus after passing the 4m rock step below Central park continue on the middle path passing 10m below the Strand, then continuing around the back of the amphitheatre past the Energy Crisis wall to the slabby corner of Bezel on the far left hand side of the Upper Tier. A steep grass slope leads down from here for 25m to a 1.5m high triangular flake that lies embedded next to the edge of the buttress, just before the grass gets really steep. It is probably sensible to rope/abseil down this section as a slip could have dire consequences.

All the routes except one start at the embedded flake

The most obvious feature for orientation is the wide, squat red corner in the very centre of the cliff. This is the belay corner at the end of the first pitch of Sunstroke.

The crag dries quite fast because of its position above the sea, but there is quite a lot of red rock around the steep middle section and this dries more slowly.

It is common to combine pitches from the Emulator buttress that lies below with a route on the Cordon Bleu buttress and so reach the top of the crag.

1. **Interrogator** HVS 5b
2. **Interpolator** HVS 5b
3. **Sunstroke** E1/2 5b/c*
4. **Mistaken Identity** E4/5 6b*
5. **Diogenes** HVS 5b *
- 5a. **Diogenes Direct Start** HVS 5b
6. **Achilles** E3 5c **
7. **Coming on Strong** E6 6b *
8. **Revelation** E1 5b
9. **Cordon Bleu** HVS 5b **

B. Access to all other areas

Access to all the other areas is by following the Upper Tier path until a point immediately after the rock step below Central Park Wall and 25m before the Strand and then taking a narrow track that heads steeply downhill.

This leads to the slabby Emulator buttress.

Emulator Area:

Route 10 to 16 – Seeyerlater to Simulator

This is the first buttress reached on the Main Cliff approach path. It lies on a small platform about 15m above the sea, The easiest route to find is Emulator, which is the perfectly formed, left facing corner/groove system on the left of the platform that runs the full height of the buttress.

This buttress dries quickly and is not affected by tides or high seas, but seagulls like nesting on the ledges below the routes and can show their dislike for climbers during the nesting season (April/May) with accurate and persistent dive bombing runs.

All the routes here require you to scramble up the grass slopes above the buttress to reach either the Cordon Bleu or Upper Tier buttresses. You can either do a further route on one of these two crags or take the Upper Tier path back to the descent gully.

The ground above the buttress has lots of loose debris on it so take care not to dislodge any of it onto parties below.

The routes here tend to dry quickly and do not suffer badly from dampness or seepage, although the starting holds on Stimulator can be damp after the rest of the crag has fully dried because of its aspect

10. **Seeyerlater** HVS 5b
11. **Aardvark** E2 6a *
12. **Lardvark** E5 6b
13. **Imitator** VS 4c *
14. **Emulator** E1 5b ***
15. **Stimulator** E3 5c **
16. **Simulator** VS 4c

Gogarth Area

Routes 17 to 23 – Resolution to Falls Road.

Continue past the Emulator groove for 8m to the top of an open corner / recess at the edge of the platform and scramble down this for 8m with care and then continue traversing leftwards about 25m to the open corner formed by a huge pinnacle resting against the main cliff. This is the start of the route Gogarth and the pinnacle is the Gogarth pinnacle.

The routes to the right of Devotee are non-tidal and can be climbed in most seas. The routes on the front face of the Pinnacle (Garth Gog and Falls Road) are more restricted – Falls Road needs a low tide and Garth Gog needs a medium tide for a direct start.

The routes here dry quickly and with the exception of Devils Marbles, Garth Gog and Falls Road do not suffer too much from dampness or seepage

- 17. Resolution** E2 5b *
- 18. Devils Marbles** E5 6b
- 19. Resolution Direct** E2 5b ***
- 20. Gogarth** E1 5b **
- 21. Devotee** E2 5c *
- 22. Return to Garth Gog** E5 6a/b **
- 23. Falls Road** E4 5c

Positron Area

Route 24 to 28 – Bubbly Situation Blues to Eraserhead

The routes in the Positron area start from a high platform that lies on the far side of the Gogarth pinnacle. The platform is non tidal and is not affected by most seas, however access to it is affected by both.

From low to mid tide a fairly simple low level traverse around the pinnacle using large sea washed footholds allows access to the platform. It is possible at higher tides to traverse at two higher levels, the highest of these uses the horizontal hand rail that runs at 3m above the high water line. This has a long/hard, blind reach to pass the Falls Road groove that can be exciting, if not dangerous, with the sea crashing at your ankles.

Alternatively climb pitch one of Gogarth and abseil down the far side to the platform

This area of the crag suffers a little more from dampness on the initial pitches, but nowhere near as much as the neighbouring Dinosaur area.

- 24. Bubbly Situation Blues** E4
- 25. The Rat Race** E3 5c **
- 26. Ordinary Route** E5 6a ***
- 27. Positron** E5 6a ***
- 28. Eraserhead** E5 6a **

Dinosaur Area

Route 29 to 36 – ET to Mammoth Direct

The Dinosaur area starts in the recess just beyond the Positron platform and is easily identified by a series of dark, imposing corners and chimneys that combine to give this area an intimidating aura.

Access to this area and all subsequent areas can be difficult in high seas or beyond mid-tide because the only traverse line is quite low and the corner just beyond the Positron platform is one of the worst places on the traverse for rogue swells and big waves.

This area suffers badly from dampness and it is not really advisable to attempt these routes before the sun hits the wall and dries the surface moisture.

Mammoth and Mammoth Direct can be climbed at mid / high tide if you can get past the corner, all the other routes really need a mid tide or less and calm seas

The most obvious identifying feature is the parallel chimney of Mammoth Direct which is the leftmost of the chimneys.

- 29. ET** E6 6b
- 30. Skinhead Moonstomp** E6 6b ***
- 31. Alien** E6 6b ***
- 31a. Direct start to Alien**
- 32. Dinosaur** E5 6a ***
- 33. The Big Sleep** E6 6b **
- 34. Wall of Fossils** E6 6b
- 35. Mammoth** E5 6a/6b ***
- 36. Mammoth Direct** E5/6 6a/6b ***

Citadel Area

Routes 37 to 44 – Extinction to Sebastapol

The routes on the open steep walls to the left of the Dinosaur area can be climbed at all but the highest of tides providing you can get past the Dinosaur corner, with the exception of Sebastapol, Food and Graduation Ceremony which need a mid tide.

The lower pitches of these routes, especially Hunger, suffer from the morning dampness, but dry far faster than those in the Dinosaur area. The upper walls including the cracks on Citadel and Graduation Ceremony don't take seepage and dry fast.

The easiest identifying feature is the continuous crack of Hunger on the right side of the reddish wall. This runs all the way up the lower wall and is 4m left of the leftmost Chimney (Mammoth Direct)

- 37. Extinction** E8 6b ***.
- 38. Hunger** E5 6a ***
- 39. Ramadan** E5 6b ***
- 40. Citadel** E5 6b ***
- 41. Graduation Ceremony** E4 6a ***

- 42. Food** E6 6b ***
- 43. Drink** E6 6b 21m **
- 44. Sebastopol** E5 6a/b ***

Big Groove Area

Routes 45 to 55 – Tet Offensive to Hypodermic

After the Citadel area the walls become slightly less intimidating, but also a bit more confusing because there are less obvious and unique features to use as reference points from a sea level vantage point.

This area contains a lot of previously over-looked gems.

The best reference point is the large square block that marks the left edge of this sector. This sits about 4m above the traverse line and has to be climbed over to get any further along the traverse.

The top of the block itself is the start of Syringe and Morphine

The classics of this sector, Pentathol and Big Groove, start 12m right of this block below an indistinct, rightwards trending line of flakes.

The easiest traverse line drops down slightly at the start of this sector and it can be hard getting past here at low-mid tide or higher. Rough seas and tidal wash will also cause problems in this area

The starting blocks of Syringe and Jaborandi are a haven of safety and sit well above the high tide line.

The routes here are not normally badly affected by dampness although the crux pitch of Big Groove can take longer than expected to dry and it also takes seepage. The first pitch of Tet Offensive is also stubbornly resistant to drying out.

- 45. The Tet Offensive** E5 6b **
- 46. The Wastelands** E4 6a *
- 47. The Big Groove** E3 5c **
- 47a. The Big Groove Direct** E4 5c ***
- 48. Puzzle Me Quick** E5 6a *
- 49. Pentathol** HVS 5a **
- 50. Peepshow** E1 5b.
- 51. Jaborandi** E2 5b/c *
- 52. Morphine** E2 5c *
- 53. Syringe** E4 6a **
- 54. The Camel** E5 6a **
- 55. Hypodermic** E2 5c **

Needle area.

Routes 56 – 60 Needle to Nightproowler

A brilliant area that is full of classic routes of great quality.

The routes are all based on the front of the buttress immediately beyond Hypodermic. This area is more badly affected by high tides, rough seas and the wake from the incoming high speed ferries; but persevere and try them out because they are very good.

The initial cracks can be damp in the mornings.

The traverse and starts of the routes need a calm sea and a low/low-mid tide. Scavenger starts slightly higher on a small stance, but the rock architecture means the stance is subject to a lot of sea spray in all but calm seas.

The traverse past the Scavenger stance gets a lot more difficult for a short section before easing just before the large bay where Nightride starts.

All the routes start up the cracks that run up the lower face of the buttress; the starts are identified by counting the number of cracks along from the right arête of the buttress.

56. The Needle E3/4 5c ***

57. The Assassin E3 5c **

58. Hyena E3 5c *

59. Scavenger HVS 5a ***

59a Scavenger Direct HVS 5a **

60. The Night Prowler E1 5b *

Phaedra Area

Routes 61 – 66 Nightride to Zed.

This area is based around the deep bay situated just beyond Scavenger.

The deep bay contains seems to consist mainly of overhanging rock, massive hanging flakes and deep chimneys that give the routes an intimidating aura, however don't be put off because they are actually a lot easier than appearances suggest.

The traverse past the Scavenger stance gets more adventurous and is physically strenuous for a few moves. Care should be taken here. 10m from the Scavenger stance you reach the right arête of the bay from where Nightride starts.

All but the very intrepid will need a low/low-mid tide to get to this area, however once here the routes start from a relatively high level that is safe at mid tide.

There are a multitude of belay positions available – choose the one most convenient and safest for your route.

- 61. Nightride** E1 5b **
- 62. Dream Seller** E2 5b
- 63. Heroin** HVS 5b
- 64. Horse Above Water** E3/4 5c
- 65. Phaedra** E1 5c *
- 66. Zed** HVS 5a

Hustler Area

Routes 67 – 76 Hud to Wrangler.

This amazing area lies beyond the Phaedra recess and provides the adventurous with splendid routes in a setting that epitomise the Gogarth experience. There are very few crags in the UK that can give teams operating in the lower extremes the exposure and positions that will be encountered in the days exploring these small crags.

There is a fixed sling belay at the top left of Hustler that you can use to get back down to sea level after completing the main pitches. This way you can maximise the number of routes that you do.

Accessing the area involves making a roped traverse pitch leftwards from the Phaedra bay. All of the routes except Hud start perched below a large, hidden corner that is 17m from the Phaedra bay. The corner has a comfortable belay ledge on it's left hand side.

The traverse can be done at mid-tide and the belay ledge is quite high and so should be safe at a high medium tide in calm seas. The main difficulty is that getting to the Phaedra bay is difficult other than at low tide.

- 67. Hud** HVS 5a
- 68. Piglets Left boot** E5 6b *

- 69. **Mulatto** HVS 5a
- 70. **Mestizo** E1 5b **
- 71. **The Three Musketeers** E5 6a **
- 72. **The Hustler** E1 5b **
- 73. **The Third Man** * E2 5c
- 74. **Gringo** E2 5c
- 75. **High Noon** E2 5c
- 76. **Wrangler** E2 5c