

Routes for Completists: five routes formerly in the second edition of *Scrambles in Snowdonia* that have not been included in the third edition

Introduction

In putting together the third edition of *Scrambles in Snowdonia* all the routes were carefully reviewed before deciding to retain them. There were a handful of routes that did not make the cut, either because of safety considerations or because they were of dubious merit. We appreciate that a few people may still wish to tackle them – particularly those ticking off all the routes in the last edition – and so they are included here. They have all been re-climbed and route descriptions have been updated. None of the routes merit a star.

Braich Ty Du Face Right-Hand Start

A potentially good line reclaimed by nature and ruined by gorse and hazardous vegetation offers a scratchy alternative approach to the Porcupine Ridge of Braich Ty Du Face.

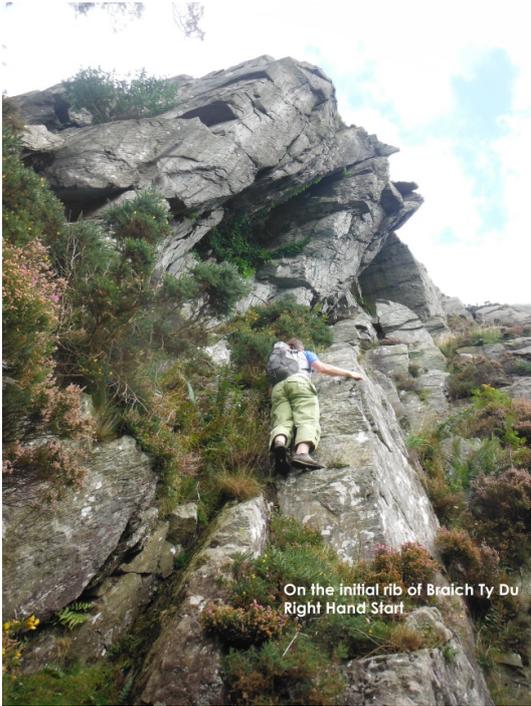
| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Grade | 3S |
| Location | Pen Yr Ole Wen, Ogwen, 648 609 |
| Altitude and aspect | 340m, west |
| Route length | This is a short route with a height gain of roughly 100m, although the gorse and heather will slow parties down. |
| Approach time | 15 min |
| Conditions | Gorse ridden and vegetated, it nonetheless dries quickly. Protection on the hardest move is less than ideal; wait for dry conditions. |

At best this is an approach for scramblers keen to save money on acupuncture treatment by having close encounters with unavoidable quantities of gorse. With an intervening descent, the route can be incorporated into an ascent of the full Braich Ty Du Face (Route 2) – but the only real merit in doing so would be to accentuate the quality of the other route. If determined to climb this right-hand start (and you really do need to be determined) a rope, long trousers and experience of climbing on hazardous vegetation are essential.

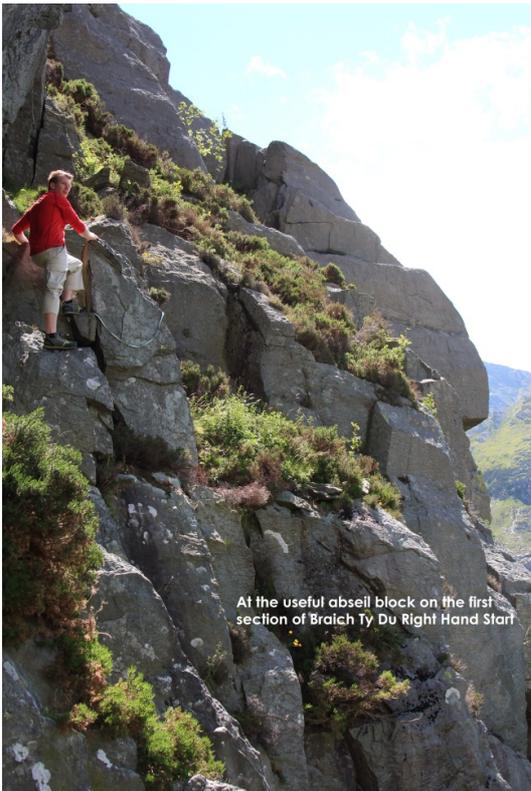
Approach: As for Route 2. Shortly before reaching the distinctive Pinnacle Ridge, a dry stone wall cuts across the traversing approach path. When this comes into view take the upper branch of the path, then follow the wall up (easiest on its right side) to the base of a broad-fronted buttress. Walk up steep grass on the left side of the buttress for about 25m, passing a tree halfway, to within 5m of a larger tree above on a ledge.

Ascent: Gorse dictates a start up a tricky 6m rib below the line of black rock nestled under the overhangs. The rib has a helpful shelf halfway up. Having gained the shelf, move precariously left onto a small slanting block. Then move left up a short white wall towards the black rock beneath the overhangs. Use the positive edge of the black rock to advance. Then scramble over bouncy gorse and exposed heather in a precarious position beneath the overhangs towards the crest of the buttress – passing a useful abseil pinnacle on route. Access the buttress crest by way of a simple chimney, or better, the clean rock to its right which leads to a deep notch on the true crest.

A slanting slab needs to be gained to escape the notch. Make an awkward and committing step up from the notch (it is best to utilise the large flake on the left). The protection here is poor, holds are sparse and heather pulling above the slab virtually unavoidable. Now aim for the obvious pinnacle on the rib crest. The pinnacle can be accessed from either the left or right, with the right side heading up from some small rowan trees being easiest but also the most gorse ridden. From the pinnacle, scramble up the remains of the rib searching for the cleanest rock and dodging the worst of the gorse, although laborious heather trudging is unavoidable. Once high up, trend left to join Route 2 above its Pinnacle Ridge or descend the couloir next to it to commence the Pinnacle Ridge at the start of the Braich Ty Du Face route (see Route 2 in *Scrambles in Snowdonia*, 2017).



On the initial rib of Braich Ty Du
Right Hand Start



At the useful abseil block on the first
section of Braich Ty Du Right Hand Start

Cwmglas Bach Spur

Scrappy scrambling to gain a broad, reclining ridge in a tremendous setting.

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Grade | 2 or 1 |
| Location | Carnedd Dafydd 665 635 |
| Altitude and aspect | 670m, north |
| Approach time | 1 hour |
| Route length | Height gain 370m, although much of this is on steep hiking terrain and the route is therefore a quick one. |
| Conditions | Passages of steep grass in addition to lichenous and mossy rock dictate that dry weather is best. The easiest possible line is navigable in most summer conditions, however. |

A route for the completist only, Cwmglas Bach Spur is of use mainly to those determined to find an alternative to the Llech Du Spur – to which it bears a superficial resemblance. There is not much scrambling by the easiest route (grade 1), while even the harder direct variants are escapable and offer little reward. Nonetheless, the views outwards are majestic.

Approach: As for Crib Lem (Route 5) to the hollow of Cwmglas Bach, above and to the right of Llech Ddu Crag – the truncating crag of Crib Lem. The spur terminates in Craig y Cwmglas Bach – an imposing triangular crag. Craig y Cwmglas Bach is bounded on the left by a couloir which leads up to an amphitheatre and the broad headwall of Craig Dafydd. Craig y Cwmglas Bach has a deep-cut gully (Severe) on its left side separating Pillar Buttress from the main crag. It also has a black cleft in the centre which begins at the toe of the buttress (Petticoat Lane, Very Severe), an incomplete right-hand gully and a bounding grassy couloir on the right. The crag offers no hope of a direct scrambling approach, either up the left gully, the central cleft or its main right-hand buttress. However, some sort of flanking route is possible on the left-hand Pillar Buttress at grade 2, while a scurry farther left to the amphitheatre offers an easier alternative – mostly on grass – at grade 1.

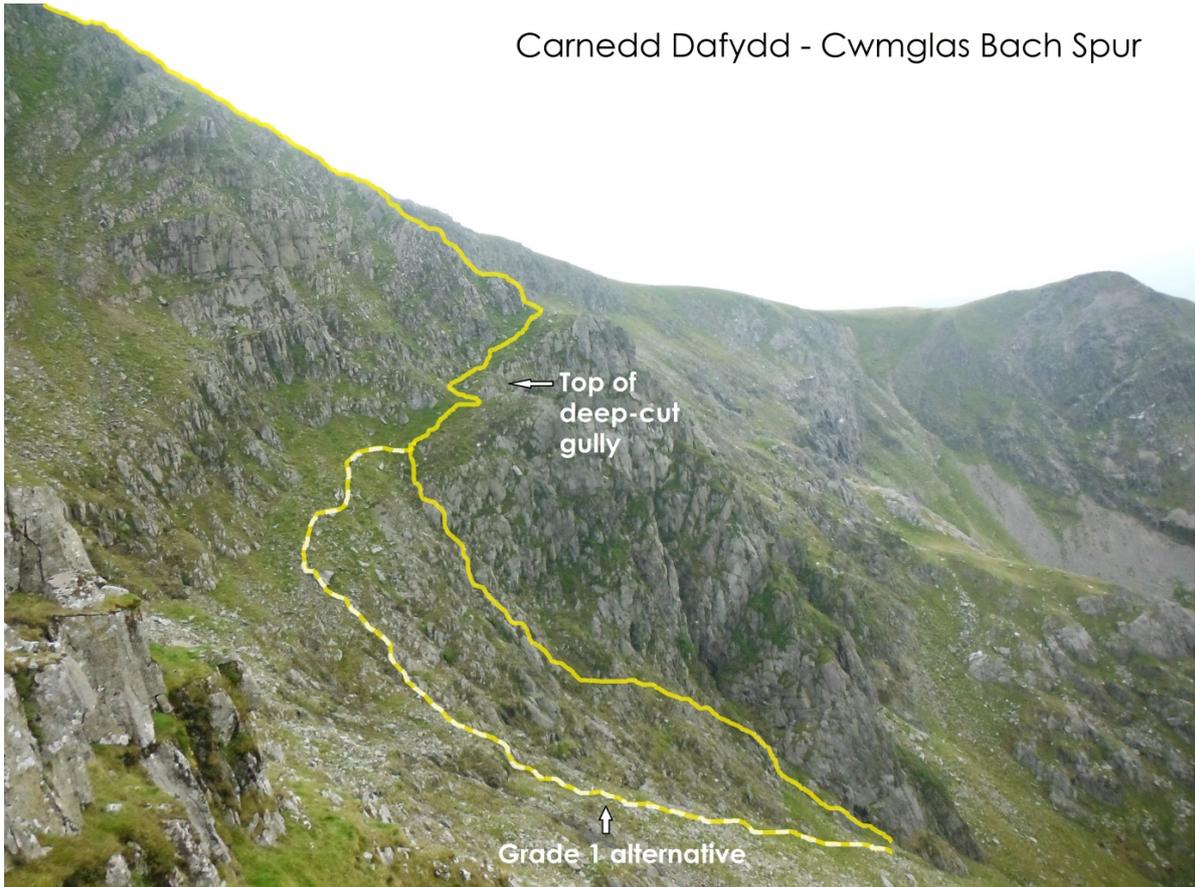
Ascent: From the toe of the buttress trend left to reach the base of the farthest left gully. From its mouth take a rising leftward line on grass and rock, searching out the best rock where possible. Continue for 150m or so until past the height of the steep pillar. Now work easily back right above the wall to gain the knife-edged crest of the buttress. (All this can be avoided by taking a grade 1 line up the couloir to the amphitheatre much farther left and picking the easiest line back right to the knife-edge.)

From a slight col on the knife-edge where the buttress crest joins the main bulk of the mountain, follow a clear sheep track rightwards across the top of the deep-cut gully to reach a grass shoulder above the main buttress of the crag. The broad, upper ridge now rises above. Avoid the first step on the right, or take it direct with a struggle up suspect rock and bilberry bushes at grade 2. A little farther along a 3m open-book of clean rock with a delightful off-width offers good sport also at grade 2 (although it too can be dodged). Continue up the crest with minimal amounts of scrambling onto the stones of the summit dome.

Descent by this route: A feasible descent by the easier grade 1 variant (though not by the grade 2 line). Difficult to locate in mist from the convex summit slopes and because it is rarely visited it is in no way as safe or reassuring as a descent of the Llech Du Spur. Therefore having identified the line on a prior ascent of the Llech Du Spur is a distinct advantage. Most steps of the upper ridge can be avoided on the left (looking out), and all the lower difficulties can be avoided by descending diagonally rightwards (looking out) from the crest of Pillar Buttress into the amphitheatre below Craig Dafydd.

Descents and combinations: As for Crib Lem (Llech du Spur) (Route 5 in *Scramble in Snowdonia*, 2017).

Carnedd Dafydd - Cwmglas Bach Spur



Western Arête (a Nantlle Ridge variant)

An unpleasant and insecure route of interest only to Jenga enthusiasts who will be delighted by the toppling blocks they will encounter. The setting and views are good, however.

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Grade | 3S |
| Location | Y Garn (<u>not</u> the Y Garn of the Glyders), Nantlle Ridge, SH 551 526 |
| Altitude and aspect | 480m, north |
| Approach time | 1 hour |
| Route length | Height gain 150m; it is not a route to move quickly on. |
| Conditions | Unstable blocks make this route hazardous throughout. Only those experienced with unstable terrain should consider this route. Helmets are essential. Passages of steep grass, with lichenous and mossy rock, ensure the route holds moisture for several days after wet weather; a prolonged dry spell is therefore best. |

Only competent scramblers determined to begin a traverse of the Nantlle Ridge with a precarious and tough ascent need bother with this line. Y Garn, eastern outpost of the Nantlle Ridge, appears wedge-shaped when viewed from Rhyd Ddu. The Nantlle Ridge begins up its grassy south-east flank, while a handful of climbs and this disappointing scramble ascend the rocky north-east face.

Approach: Initially as for the traverse of the Nantlle Ridge (Route 72 in *Scrambles in Snowdonia*, 2017), heading up the normal approach to Y Garn. After the higher stile, contour right across the hillside keeping below the large boulder fields and close to a lateral wall. Eventually this wall meets another wall which runs up to the foot of the crags on the north-west face. Up 80m to the right of the wall is a large heathery bay above the scree and boulders. Eastern Arête is on the left, with Central Gully – grassy and uninteresting – to its right. Right of the central blunt prow of rock is a heather recess below an **evil gully**, to the right of which – starting at a lower level – is the rock and heather rib of Western Arête.

Ascent: Gain the lower rib with difficulty from the right side and carefully ascend its crest over a lengthy series of dangerously loose spikes and blocks to a heather shoulder. All of this section can be avoided by scrambling nervously up heather in the high-angle gully/recess on the right.

Ignore easy ground to the right and ascend the upper rib near its left edge. Here the route and rock momentarily improve in interest before petering out towards the summit.

Descents and combinations: See Nantlle Ridge (Route 72 in *Scrambles in Snowdonia*, 2017).

Y Garn - Western Arete (a Nantlle Ridge variation)





Surmounting poised blocks on the Western Arete of Y Garn



Nearing the top of Y Garn with Craig y Bera, Mynydd Mawr beyond

Pennant Rib (a Nantlle Ridge variant)

Precarious scrambling up an impressive sharp rib on suspect rock.

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Grade | 3S |
| Location | Craig Pennant on Craig Cwm Silyn, Nantlle Ridge, SH 528 505 |
| Altitude and aspect | 580m, east |
| Approach time | 2hr 30min |
| Route length | Height gain approximately 100m |
| Conditions | The rock is extremely unstable and hazardous – a judicious and careful approach is essential. Takes little drainage but must be crisply dry. Faces the morning sun in summer. Rarely ascended. The challenging off-width start is caked in green lichen inside the crack and so particularly greasy and disconcerting when wet. Although less serious when dry, the crack is still worryingly dusty. |

This short and difficult scramble is useful for those parties desperate for a hard challenge and looking for an alternative ascent of the nose above Bwlch Dros Bern when traversing the Nantlle Ridge in a westerly direction (Route 72 in *Scrambles in Snowdonia*, 2017). Its start is poorly protected, close to a Severe grade rock climbing standard and harder than anything encountered elsewhere in *Scrambles in Snowdonia*. As such, the leg-width or off-width start should only be contemplated by experienced rock climbers armed with a rope and a good selection of climbing equipment (it can, however, be avoided).

Approach: As for Route 72 to Bwlch Dros Bern (531 507). About 100m beyond the metal post that marks the lowest point of the col, a sheep path can be located that dips down then contours beneath scree slopes on the south side of the ridge to a dry stone wall (the stone wall which runs up towards the crags). The recess above has a slender rib in it to the right of an easy scree gully. Head up the right-hand side of the wall towards the slender rib.

Ascent: Ascend the lower part of the rib to the first step, split on its left side by a slightly undercut 6m leg-width crack. This crack is desperately hard: sling protection can be placed at its base and marginal small nut protection placed to its left, or slightly more secure small nut protection on the face to its right. Climb either the crack, awkward to enter (try gaining height on the right face before stepping across left), or the slanting ramp to its left to reach a ledge and good anchors at the top of the sloping ramp – this is a very hard passage. From the ledge step right and continue rightwards to ensure the tempting but tottering pinnacle directly above is passed on its right side and reach easier scrambling along a rickety horizontal knife-edge (or avoid these difficulties altogether by entering at this level from the scree gully).

Ascend difficult slabs and a sharp rock edge to start the second step. Continue by a blunt edge – take great care with poised blocks here – until the rib falls back to emerge from the recess near the path leading to the summit of Craig Cwm Silyn.

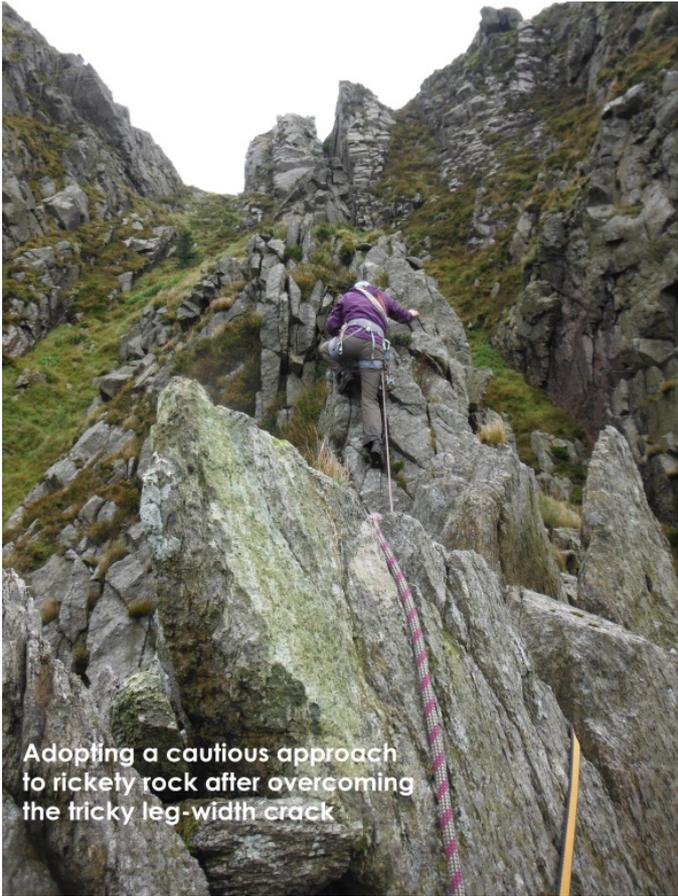
Descents and combinations: Descend the easy scree gully at the side of the rib to return to the foot of the recess. See also Nantlle Ridge (Route 72 in *Scrambles in Snowdonia*, 2017).

Craig Cwm Silyn, Nantlle Ridge
(A) Pennant Rib (B) Right Hand Pennant Rib



Contending with drizzle on the
middle stretch of Pennant Rib





Adopting a cautious approach to rickety rock after overcoming the tricky leg-width crack

Right-Hand Pennant Rib (a Nantlle Ridge variant)

A heathery face lacking the interest of its neighbour but with slightly sounder rock.

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Grade | 2+ |
| Location | Craig Pennant on Craig Cwm Silyn, Nantlle Ridge, SH 528 505 |
| Altitude and aspect | 580m, east |
| Approach time | 2hrs 30min |
| Route length | Approximately 100m |
| Conditions | Though much more stable than its neighbour, the rock remains hazardous and a careful approach is essential. Heather abounds, though this does not increase difficulty. The route is not significantly harder in wet weather. |

Right Hand Pennant Rib ascends a blunt rib – more of a heathery face – offering yet another alternative ascent of the nose above Bwlch Dros Bern when traversing the Nantlle Ridge (Route 72) in a westerly direction. It does not offer a considerable quantity of rock, and that which it does offer is not of the best quality. The upper section is formed by a steady heathery clamber. Nonetheless, the views and surroundings are superb.

Ascent: Start up the rib right of Pennant Rib by heathery scrambling then complete the ascent of the first rise by a rightward slanting narrow slab.

The face steepens above. Ascend its middle then move left when possible to its crest overlooking the gully (care with the rock here). Higher, avoid an unstable pile of rocks by moving left then back right on heather – not easy. Finish up a heathery ridge.

Descents and combinations: Descend the easy scree gully at the side of the rib to return to the foot of the recess. See also Nantlle Ridge (Route 72 in *Scrambles in Snowdonia*, 2017).

