

WEST MIDLANDS ROCK 1995

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

GRADING SYSTEM

The standard adjectival grading system has been used up to and including Hard Very Severe. Beyond this the E grade has been used. Technical grades for pitches of 4A and above have been used in conjunction with this adjectival grade.

Please note that at Llanymynech Quarry, the new sports routes have also been given a French grade alongside the E grade and technical grade. It is assumed that this information will be self explanatory to those who are repeating these routes. This system certainly helps the climber to quickly identify those sports climbs which rely upon fixed protection.

If a pitch uses some aid, then the number of points required is indicated after the adjectival grade. If a pitch consists purely of aid climbing then the artificial grades of A1, A2 etc. have been used.

SANDSTONE GRADING

Grinshill and Harmerhill

In view of the unpredictable nature of the rock and in the absence of reliable natural protection, the routes are graded simply in terms of their technical difficulty, often with the indication of NL (Not Led). These routes are intended as top rope problems unless at a later date they are either led or soloed. Obviously the climber is free to decide whether to top rope, lead or solo. It is imagined however that this information will be only of minority interest as leading on sandstone can be a very serious affair. This grading system allows for flexibility as routes are included that would otherwise be omitted. It has been used effectively in other areas of the country and adequately reflects the problems of sandstone climbing.

Nesscliffe

At Nesscliffe the recent trend has been for lead ascents of the majority of the new routes, often after careful preparation. There has also been an increasing

trend for lead ascents of established routes which have sufficient natural or fixed protection. To incorporate this information, the adjectival grade (ie; the E grade) for on-sight ascents of all routes which have been led, are now included after the technical grade. PLEASE NOTE, this system is not designed to encourage on-sight ascents at Nesscliffe as leading on sandstone remains a serious business and the climber is free to decide whether to lead, top-rope or solo.

Taking into account the grading system used for Grinshill and Harmerhill it is inevitable that such a 'dual standard' system will attract criticism and possibly even cause confusion to users of this guide. However, this approach does go some way towards reinforcing the character of the sandstone crags with Nesscliffe being a serious 'hard mans' crag and Grinshill a more friendly 'something for everyone' venue.

ROUTE QUALITY

A system of 'stars' is used to indicate the quality of the routes. On all the crags the standard 'three star' system has been used. This helps to indicate the quality of the routes as follows;

*	Good
**	Excellent
***	Superb

It is worth noting that there are a large number of routes, which although not awarded 'stars', provide worthwhile climbing.

The symbol '+' has been used to denote a route which has not been checked or where details or the grade have not been confirmed. Climbers are therefore required to use their own judgement when approaching such routes.

NEW ROUTES

Please forward details of any new routes to Cicerone Press, 2 Police Square, Milnthorpe, Cumbria. This is essential if records are to be kept up to date. Comments on existing routes or inaccuracies within the text are also welcomed.