

## Zarquon/Resurrection/ Erection E2 5c 114m

**Area:** Snowdon

**Crag:** Llechog

**Style:** Trad

**Rock type:** Rhyolitic Tuff

**Approach:** 90 minutes

**Altitude:** 650m

**OS grid ref:** 597 537

**First Ascent:** H Banner, C Yates 14.08.82/J Perrin, N Estcourt, C Yates 15.08.70/H Banner, C Yates 24.07.82

**There is a wonderful sense of isolation in this peaceful cwm.** Although the Snowdon summit train can be seen (and heard) chuffing in profile up the final ridge to the Snowdon summit, where the distant ant like forms of hill walkers are also seen, there will be no-one in the cwm itself. This is one of the least visited parts of the Snowdon massif, even the presence of a large slabby crag and a much celebrated, classic climb has done little to draw the crowds.

The best route on the cliff is actually a hybrid, combining the best sections of two routes, with the icing on the cake being provided by a stunning direct finish.

A hanging groove and indefinite crack marks the line of the first pitch (5a). Access to the groove is barred by a bold mantel onto a diagonal jug; try not to fall off this move or risk a ground swooping fall. Those who balk at this psychological barrier can pick their way up the insipient



crackline on the right. Either way the upper crack is reached; the climbing here is a little pushy, but by now the gear is good, so up you romp on a mix of directional holds and smeary footholds, all of which is apt preparation for what lies ahead.

Pitch two (5a/b) kicks off with a rising traverse of an immaculate and predictably gearless slab. The high belay on the right provides some comfort as a kind of diagonal top rope, but there are still a few sketchy, faith in friction moments before easier ground is reached at the top of the left arête/groove.



Take the time to fiddle in some wires here; they are pretty poor but nonetheless worth having because the rounded layback (up the diagonal groove) that follows is alarmingly insecure. The steep corner above is more positive and the gear is good, but don't relax just yet, a final thin slab

requires concentration and faith in your feet. Pitch three is an innocuous looking groove in the centre of a slabby wall. At this stage the difficulty is hard to gauge, but first there is the problem of getting out of the vegetated gully and onto the rock with dry feet; a few scurrying moves will deposit you on a comfortable ledge where rubber can be squeaked clean. And do make sure your shoes are spotless as the main groove features sustained, smeary climbing on mostly directional holds (do you see a theme developing here?). This pitch has a book grade of 4c, but in reality it is a harder lead than the first and not much easier than the second. E1 5a perhaps? At its top the final objective is reached, an immaculate red tinted slab. Place a wire and down climb the groove to a comfortable belay stance, where there are more wires. The original route on the slab (Resurrection) was climbed by Jim Perrin in 1970. Jim climbed up the crack on the right then traversed off left to reach a hidden groove. In 1982 Hugh Banner took on the challenge of the obvious direct finish up the attractive finger flake, naming it in true 'ooh-err missus' style: Erection.

The pitch starts in a fairly innocent fashion with delightful moves up the crack on the right, before an increasingly thin traverse leads diagonally left to some good holds and a cam, feet slipping - if you're not careful - just as the jug is grasped. Standing up here, one is presented with a positive flying arête for the left hand and, running parallel, a left facing flake crack for the right. A few energetic moves up should see you deposited on to a large foot hold, right on the very edge of the arête.

This is the point of commitment; sooner or later the sanctuary of your comfortable perch must be abandoned in exchange for what promises to be an uncertain and tricky battle.

The initial move into the finger flake is probably the hardest. Try twisting your right foot into a traditional jamming position, i.e. big toe upwards. This feels counter intuitive, but once weighted, tips your body rightwards allowing the directional flake to work better.

When you get moving there are even a few small footholds, plus the opportunity for a hastily placed small cam, and as you push upwards, improving finger jams and layaways. And then suddenly in a blur of excitement you will be grasping the top, eyes popping with the realisation that you have just climbed one of the best E2 pitches in North Wales!

A roped scramble to the summit plateau takes you back into the sun. Take a moment to soak up the fantastic views, most striking being that to the west, between the twin goal posts of Y Garn and Craig y Bera and down Dyffryn Nantlle to the ribboning form of Llyn Nantlle Uchaf.



Tim Badcock relaxing on the cliff top with the backdrop of the Snowdon summit Photo: Si Pantón



Si Pantón enjoying the final crux flake on pitch 4  
Photo: Tim Badcock

**Top tip:** It's a good idea to carry your approach shoes on the route as the descent drops down some rather slippy, and precipitously steep grass. Why not bring some snacks and a drink too, with it all packed up in a small rucsac and carried by the second. On the final crux pitch you can pull the right hand rope through and haul the rucsac, before dropping it again to the second.

**Rack:** Double ropes (50m or 60m), 12 quickdraws, 2 60cm sling, 2 120cm sling, full set of wires 1 - 11 with double ups on sizes 1 - 6, full set of cams sizes 0.5 - 3.5, prussic loops.

**Approach:** Start from the car park next to the Rhyd Ddu station, which is located just east of the village, on the Welsh Highland Railway. Follow the Rhyd Ddu Snowdon footpath to the ruins of Rhos Boeth (situated just after you pass through a gated wall). This takes approximately 35 minutes. Strike off left from the main track on a gradually ascending faint track that leads through a boulder field to a stone wall running up the hill. Hop over this and contour round the hillside, (passing above a large lone boulder with an adjoining ruined circular stone wall), until you reach Llyn Nadroedd in the lower reaches of Cwm Clogwyn. There is a small amount of bouldering in this area, probably not worth the walk for someone with a pad, but worth a quick play before or after the route. Continue up into the cwm to reach the base of the cliff.

**Descent:** Walk carefully down the big, steep convex grass ramp towards the lower end of the cliff. The easiest line down through the array of craglets that pepper the hillside is not that easy to follow and involves a fair bit of zigzagging about. Keep an eye out for a faint track towards the left side (looking down the slope). Once you are down at the base of the cliff, contour back round to collect your rucsacs.

**Conditions:** Although this is definitely a 'mountain crag', both in its altitude and position, Llechog is a bit more approachable than its larger neighbours, Cloggy and Lliwedd. During the summer months it receives plenty of sunshine in the morning. There are no significant drainage problems to contend with, although some slimy gunk may be found in the back of the groove on pitch three.

#### **Guidebooks, further reading and maps**

Cwm Silyn and Cwellyn (Paul Jenkinson, Bob Wightman Climbers' Club 2003), North Wales Rock 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Simon Pantón, Ground Up, 2009), Explorer OL17 (1:25000 OS Map)