

Great Western Rock - Lost Sport Crag

Nightingale Quarry

Gordon A Jenkin ©
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ACCESS BANNED

Absolutely NO CLIMBING allowed

Nightingale Quarry in Portishead is a clean, walled, flat-bedded, rectilinear quarry that was once, all too briefly, a burgeoning sport climbing venue. Developed at a frenetic pace in October 1999 it had all the attributes that would have made it today one of most popular sport crags in the Bristol area.

Sadly however it was quickly re-purposed by the police and all the bolt hangers and anchors removed. Today it houses the Black Rock Police Specialist Training Centre, a odd looking establishment sympathetically camouflaged (with stone filled gabions) to fit into its quarried environment.

Primarily used for firearms training by three police forces in the West Country its “Facilities include firing ranges, fake houses, interactive target systems and an abseil training area.”

Any thoughts of clandestine visits may not be a good idea. An anarchist group reportedly set fire to the building in August 2013, while it was in the final stages of construction, thereby delaying opening until 2015, so one might presume that the police are still rather sensitive about any illicit visitors.

Location And Approach (ST 44792 74793) ///junction.currently.pound

Positioned directly opposite the Portishead Recycling Centre you can still get a reasonable view into the quarry from the public road when standing in front of the entrance barrier. Google maps offers a further aspect.

The Routes – For Historical Interest

A complete description of the quarry's climbing was detailed in the 2004 Climbers' Club guidebook to Avon and Cheddar, now out of print.

Below is a highly abbreviated outline.

The Mitre Spur in south-east corner.

ATP v ARC 18m [3B]	F6a	<i>Francis Haden, Ed Heslam 6.10.99</i>
Alpha State 18m [5B]	F6a	<i>Francis Haden, Ed Heslam 1.10.99</i>
White Scar 15m [5B]	F4	<i>Francis Haden, Ed Heslam 1.10.99</i>

Concertina Wall Steep southern wall, incised with boreholes.

Universal Bolter 15m [5B]	F6b	<i>Francis Haden, Ed Heslam 1.10.99</i>
Squeezebox 15m [4B]	F6c+	<i>Ed Heslam, Francis Haden 1.10.99</i>
Cheapskate Left 16m [5B]	F6c	<i>Ed Heslam, Francis Haden 6.10.99</i>
Cheapskate Right 16m [5B]	F6b+	<i>Ed Heslam, Francis Haden 10.10.99</i>
Concertina 13m [4B]	F6a+	<i>Ed Heslam, Francis Haden 6.10.99</i>
Blood And Steel 14m [4B]	F6c	<i>Francis Haden, Ed Heslam 3.10.99</i>
Buzz The Fuzz 15m [4B]	F6a+	<i>Francis Haden, Ed Heslam 3.10.99</i>
Demolition Derby 16m [3B]	F6c	<i>Francis Haden, Ed Heslam 6.10.99</i>
Bolt Not Be To Is? 16m [4B]	F6a	<i>Ed Heslam, Francis Haden 3.10.99</i>
Black Melodeon 12m [4B]	F6b+	<i>Ed Heslam, Francis Haden 3.10.99</i>
No Crock, Good Rock But Too Many Barrels 12m [4B]	F6b	<i>Francis Haden, Ed Heslam 3.10.99</i>
Castle Of Bones 12m [5B]	F6b+	<i>Francis Haden, Ed Heslam 3.10.99</i>
Townies 12m [3B]	F6b+	<i>Francis Haden, Ed Heslam 3.10.99</i>
Covert Action 12m [4B]	F6a	<i>Francis Haden, Ed Heslam 3.10.99</i>

Haemacryst Wall Fab, crystalline western wall.

Crystal Miner 14m [4B]	F6b+	<i>Francis Haden, Ed Heslam 23.10.99</i>
Haemacryst 14m [4B]	F7b	<i>Francis Haden, Ed Heslam, Gordon A Jenkin 17.10.99</i>

Toberone Slab V-shaped slab on left side of northern wall.

Twinkle, Twinkle, Little

Star 18m [5B]	F5	<i>Ed Heslam, Francis Haden 3.10.99</i>
Pocketful Of Crystal 18m [5B]	F5	<i>Francis Haden, Ed Heslam 3.10.99</i>

Courtyard Slabs Bottom Lift slab on right side of northern wall.

Yellow River 16m [3B]	F5	<i>Ed Heslam, Francis Haden 10.10.99</i>
Good Old Ken 22m [4B]	F3	<i>Francis Haden, Ed Heslam 6.10.99</i>
Mission Impossible! 18m [4B]	F4	<i>Ed Heslam, Francis Haden 6.10.99</i>
Arachnoid Terror 18m [4B]	F4	<i>Ed Heslam, Francis Haden 3.10.99</i>
Reactionary Route 16m [4B]	F5+	<i>Ed Heslam, Francis Haden 3.10.99</i>
ER 160 12m [4B]	F4	<i>Francis Haden, Ed Heslam 3.10.99</i>
Fixe And Ryobi Present		
'The Gold Tour' 12m [4B]	F5	<i>Francis Haden, Ed Heslam 3.10.99</i>
'Oh No, It's The Cops!' 13m [4B]	F4+	<i>Francis Haden, Ed Heslam 26.10.99</i>

Middle Tier Slabs Middle Lift slab on right side of northern wall.

The Superannuated

Crustacean 13m [5B]	F6a	<i>Francis Haden, Ed Heslam 16.10.99</i>
Two Fit Girls 10m [4B]	F4	<i>Ken Wilkinson, Ed Heslam, Francis Haden 26.10.99</i>
Dego Girls 10m [4B]	F4+	<i>Ken Wilkinson, Ed Heslam, Francis Haden 26.10.99</i>
Publish And Be Dammed 10m [3B]	F4	<i>Francis Haden, Ed Heslam 23.10.99</i>
Drill Boy 12m [4B]	F6c	<i>Francis Haden, Ed Heslam, Gordon A Jenkin 17.10.99</i>
Bark Of The Meek 12m [4B]	F6c	<i>Ed Heslam, Francis Haden 23.10.99</i>