

# THORN CRAG



Mike Binks on knights of the Turntables: Greg Chapman

51 30 16 3

**STRICTLY NO DOGS!**

**Walk-in: 40 minutes**

**South Facing**

**Altitude: 460m**

**N.G.R. SE 596571**

## Thorn Crag

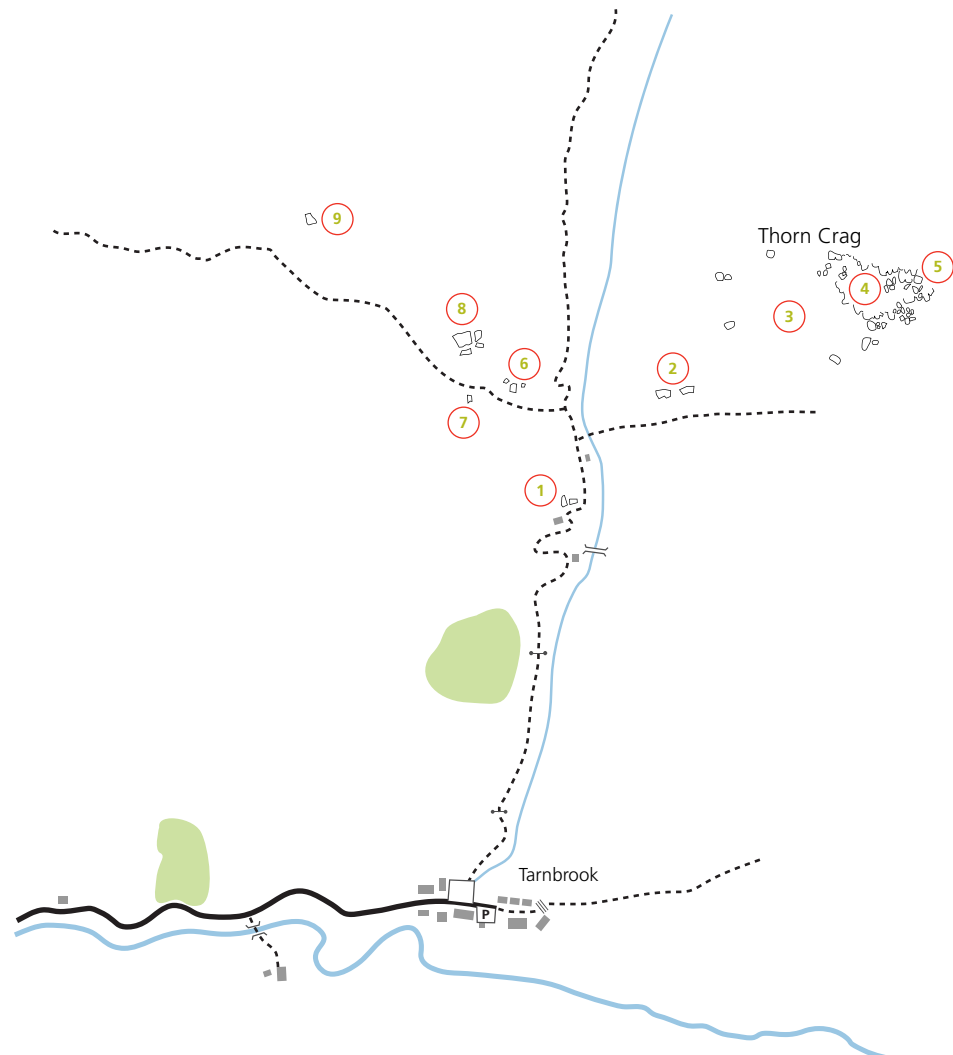
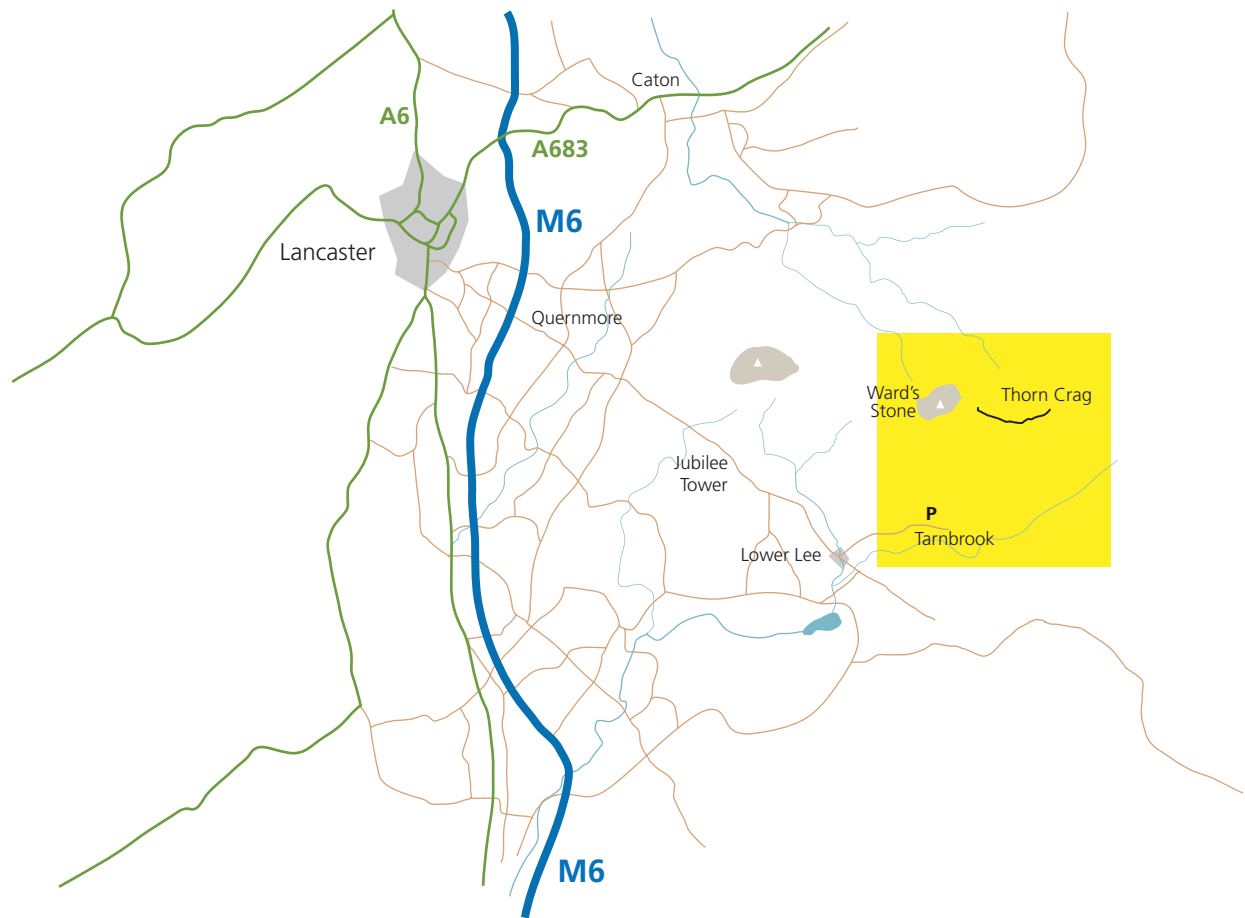
### Character and Situation

A crag of superlative fine-grained gritstone tucked away in splendid isolation upon the rugged high moors of the wild and beautiful Trough of Bowland, yet only twenty minutes from the motorway. Despite the ease of access it is easy to feel like you've stepped straight into the set of Heartbeat as you leave the modern world behind and slip into this golden backwater circuit of unique quality. The crag faces south and takes all the sun going; as a result most of the problems, bar some beneath the crag itself, are clean and dry quickly. On a fine day it commands an unrivalled view of the Morecambe Bay area and Fylde coast all the way to Blackpool Tower. As with most gritstone, winter conditions are essential for the harder problems, but the crag is a great place to climb year round. There is something for everyone here amongst the 80+ problems; from delectably delicate easy slabs to the utmost in desperate sloper-slapping burl. Take a trip in the time-warp and enjoy!

### Approach & Access

From J34 of the M6 take the A683 east for around 2m to the village of Caton, almost immediately after entering the village take a right turn (Quernmore Rd) and follow this minor road for 2.3m, whereupon a left turn (Postern Gate Road) is reached. Follow this for a further 2m to a crossroads in the tiny village of Quernmore. Turn left and take the snaking road uphill. Follow this up onto the moor, past its apex at the famous viewpoint (and suicide spot!) of Jubilee Tower, and down into the valley base to the small hamlet of Lower Lee (4m from Quernmore crossroads). A left turn signed to Tarnbrook can now be taken and followed to its termination (1.5m). Parking for between 2 and 4 cars can be found to the right of a gateway in the centre of the hamlet; do not park in the large grassy area on the left. Continue on foot back to the large grassy area and follow the obvious track through a gate and on up the hillside, the Crag Boulders are reached in approximately 40 minutes.

# THORN CRAG



1. Pit Stop Block
2. The Crag Boulders
3. The Satellites
4. Crag Sector
5. The House
6. Trackside Boulders
7. Paradise Boulder
8. Seaview Boulders
9. The Loaf

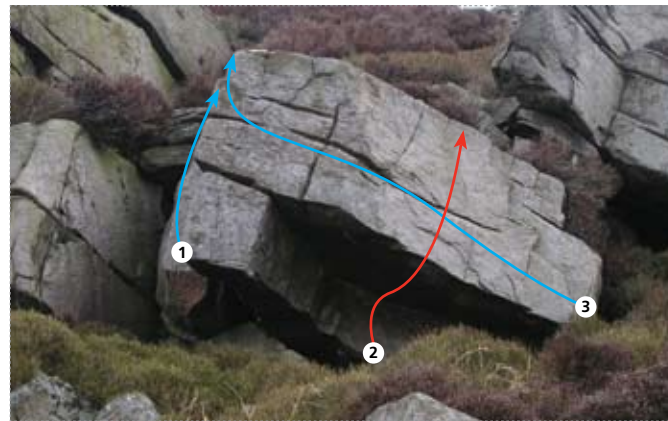






Greg Chapman on Fix My Sink: Liz Crane

### Area 1: Pit Stop Block



The first block encountered is as the name suggests merely a taster to refuel at before the main event; nevertheless the problems are of reasonable quality.

1. ● (4) SDS. The arête from low to the left.
2. ● (7a+) **Pit Fight** SDS. Start matched on an edge at the back of the roof. Pull on, suck it in, and reach out to the lip. Now make a blind slap for the break. Finish direct.
3. ● (5) **Pit Stop** Start on the right of the block and follow the break leftward into the prow, finish up this.

### Area 2: The Crag Boulders

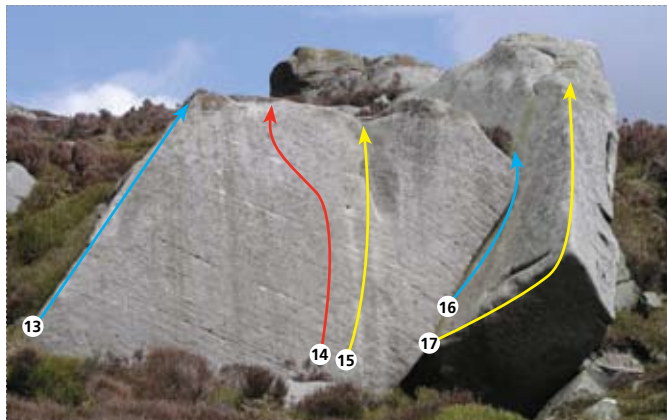


The original and most travelled area of the venue is a superb starting point for the first time visitor, its combination of classic easy to mid-grade problems and superb landings make for a delightful spot. Stand out lines include Burnt Heather, And For My Next Trick and Score. The steely finger elasticimos amongst you will find harder ground in the shape of the fantastic and underrated Fix My Sink.

1. ● (3) **The Slab** Fun easy slab with a couple of finishes.
2. ● (6a) **Dimple Dance** A tricky mantel problem up the centre of the block (This problem is on the back of the block).
3. ● (5) **Jubilee Tower** The classic arête on its right has a low crux, and a highball "shall I or shan't I?" finishing move. For the tick, you should!
4. ● (5) **Wiggling Crack** A low crux gives way to the shallow crack and a highball finish.

5. ● (4+) **Rising Smoke** The chimney.
6. ● (5) **Perving Arête** The sweeping arête is climbed on the left to just over half height, now rock up and finish on the right.
7. ● (3) **Slab Run** The wonderful slab can be climbed direct or in a meandering fashion; guaranteed to raise a smile however it's done.
8. ● (5) **Score** Sidle up the exquisite curves of the right side of the blunt arête. Marvellous stuff!

## Area 2: The Crag Boulders



## 13. ● (5) Neil's Thorny Arête

The curving arête on the right shouldn't provide any thorny issues if you layback with a bit of grit flair. Very pleasant. The sitter is 6a.

## 14. ● (7b+) Fire Wall

This obvious eliminate uses the pocket of BH for the right hand to step left and make a huge span for a cleaned sloper waaaay up and left.

## 15. ● (6b) Burnt Heather

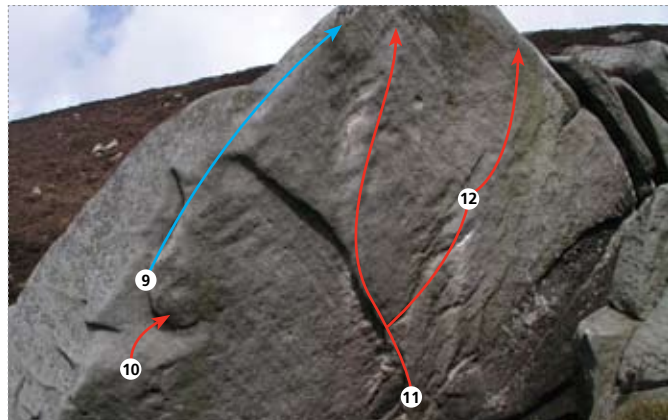
An interesting combination of great handholds and pathetic footholds make for an intriguing problem up the slight groove.

## 16. ● (4+) The Crack

The awkward and permanently mucky crack.

## 17. ● (6a+) Grit Nose

SDS. From the base of the crack use the slopy shelf to move right and gain the arête on it's left side.



## 9. ● (5+) Easy Karma

Layback the delightful dorsal rib to reach to a high hidden hold.

## 10. ● (7c) The Plumbers Link

SDS. From sitting below problem 9 traverse into and up problem 12.

## 11. ● (7a) And For My Next Trick

SDS. A class line up the centre left of the wall. The stand up is 5+.

## 12. ● (7b) Fix My Sink

SDS. Pull up and right into two in-cut crimps and make a dynamic move to the slopy rail above, now trend back left to the apex of the block.

## Area 3: The Satellites

This is the scattered collection of boulders between the Crag Boulders and the crag itself. All the areas on the slopes above the Crag Boulders are best reached by the following means; walk uphill from the Crag Boulders veering slightly west (left) for around 100m. Once roughly level with the Diamond contour back east toward the crag – thus avoiding the boggy sump below the Bad Moon Boulder.

## 3.1 The Diamond

## 3.2 Ouzel Slab

## 3.3 Monster Minds

## 3.4 Cracked Boulder

## 3.5 Pit Boulder

## 3.6 Banana Land

## 3.7 Bad Moon Boulder

## A. Easy Problems

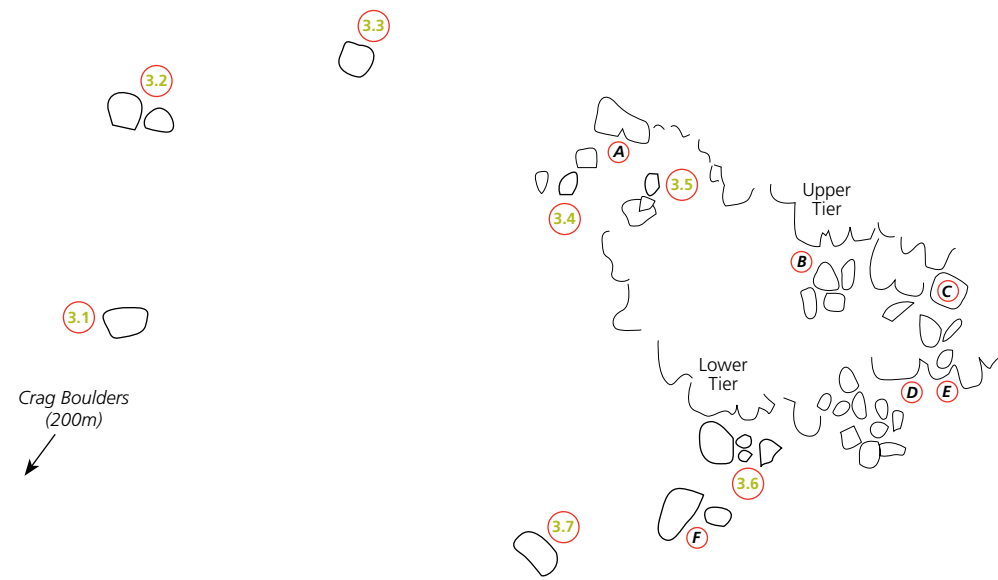
## B. Crag Sector

## C. The House

## D. Squirreling Dervishes

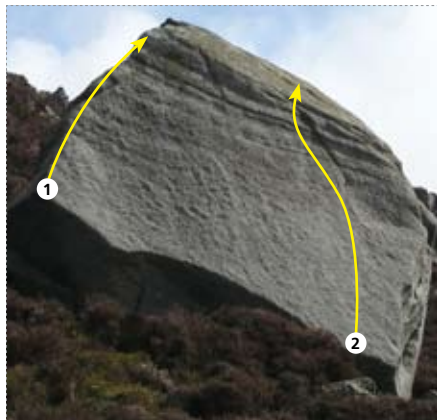
## E. The Man From Del Monte

## F. Megalodon





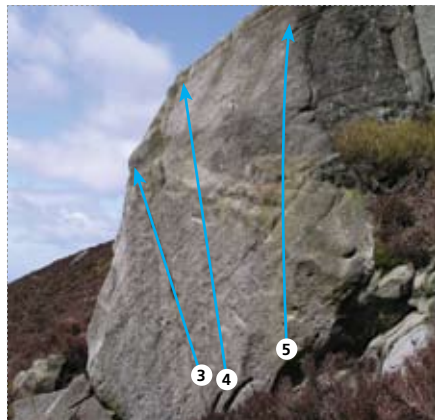
## Area 3.1: The Diamond



This obvious gem shaped block sits proudly on the hillside above the Crag Boulders and is an obvious distraction on your way to the ever-popular Bad Moon Boulder. This block offers a few good easier problems and a classic highball jaunt up the "smear or disappear" front face.

1. ● (6a) **Cubic Zirconium**  
Arête on the right.
2. ● (6b) **Here I am Again**  
Use all your grit wizardry to stand on the slab and make the stretch to the winking hanging crack, and up. Highball.
3. ● (5) **Diamond Crack**  
SDS. The crack is dispatched on its left side and after a tricky pull on soon eases.
4. ● (5)  
SDS. Wall immediately right of the crack (without the dirty slopers out right), is climbed on edges to a slopey ramp, trend left to finish.
5. ● (3)  
Easy rib direct.

## Area 3.2: Ouzel Slab



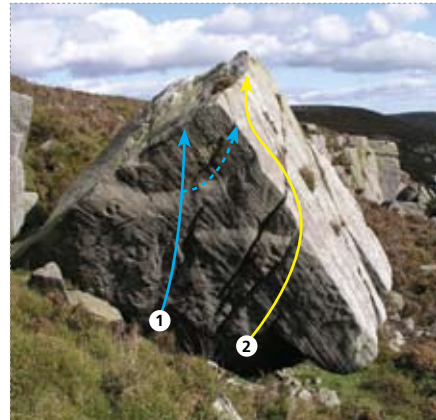
## Ouzel Slab

Yet another impressive, if limited, square cut block sitting high on the fell, approximately 80m to the rear of The Diamond.

Ouzel Thorn 6b – The crack and arête on the right side of the block would be highball classic if a little more accessible.

There are a couple more lines on the smaller sandy block right of Ouzel Thorn but these are not really worth recording.

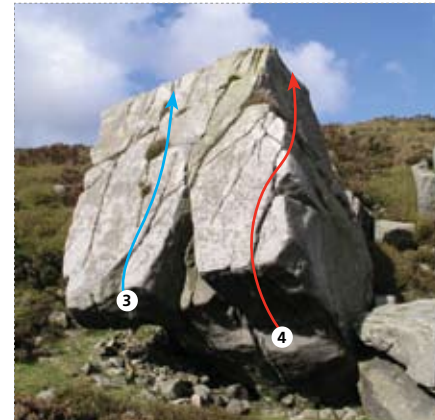
## Area 3.3: Monster Minds, West Face



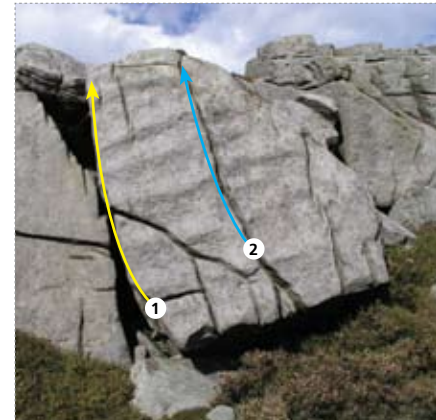
The highest block of the venue offers a stand out 7a+ – which is well worth seeking out – and a handful of other reasonable lines.

1. ● (4+)  
SDS. Climb the face starting left of center, finishing to either the left or even better the right.
2. ● (6b)  
SDS. A good problem with a hard start. Start on the west face move up and left into the rib and on toward the apex of the block.
3. ● (5)  
The critty undercut slab immediately left of the inverted v-notch.
4. ● (7a+) **Monster Minds**  
SDS. Climb the prow come arête from a low hugging start, moving onto the right side of the arête at mid height.

## Area 3.3: Monster Minds, South Face



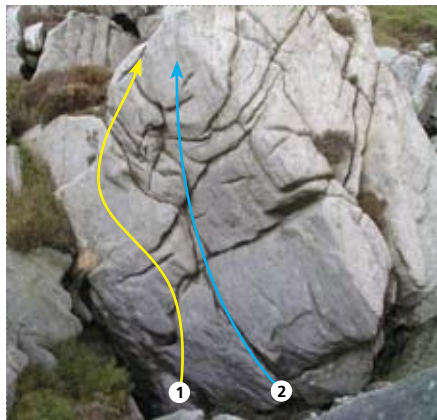
## Area 3.4: Cracked Boulder



Perched on the outskirts of the Crag Sector is an isolated block purveying a much-maligned yet nifty little arête problem. The blocky wall to the rear of this boulder offers a few good warm-ups.

1. ● (6a+) **Mackerel Arete**  
SDS. From a good hold climb the arête utilizing holds on either side to a pokey top out. Bridging the neighboring block is considered poor form!
2. ● (4)  
The sandy crack.

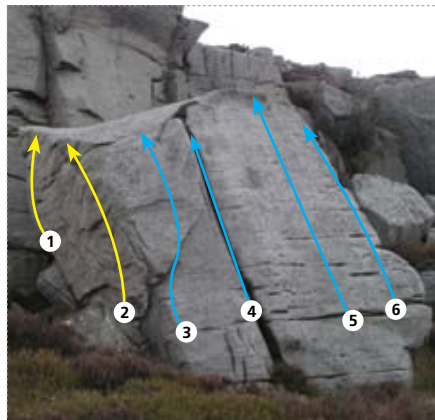
Area 3.5: The Pit Boulder



On the western approach into the main amphitheatre of the Crag Sector a well-featured boulder, fronted by a deep pit, is passed.

1. ● (6b) **Crumple Stiltskin**  
SDS. From the base of the pit use side-pulls to move up before swinging left to a good hold via a long move. Continue direct for a surprisingly high but juggy finish.
2. ● (5)  
SDS. Up the diagonal crack then direct to the apex, rocking rightward to finish. Sandy.

Area 3.6: Banana Land



The next area is part of the Lower Tier of the crag and is 40m to the rear of the Bad Moon boulder. The area consists of a large block sporting an obvious crack, and a well-hidden smaller tier approximately 50m up and right of the cracked block.

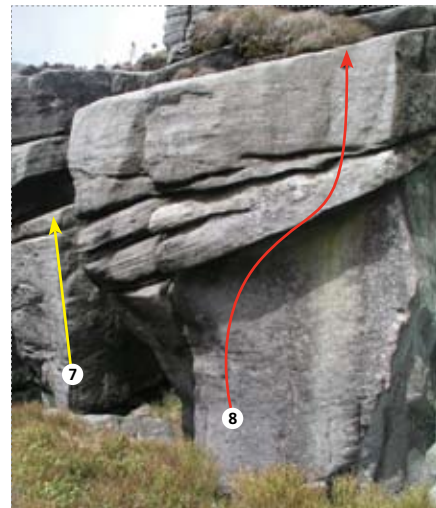
1. ● (6c+) **Bananarmor**  
From a shallow slot and sloper, pull on and slap the top.
2. ● (6c+) **Banana Split**  
SDS. The wall left of the arête is climbed from a pocket and pinchy side-pull to a boss, from here the line bears left to finish.

3. ● (4) **Banana Boat**  
Utilize the shield feature and crack to climb the narrow wall.
4. ● (3+) **Look No Hands**  
As the name suggests the feet are the most useful extremity on this gaping crack.
5. ● (4+) **Lower Slab Direct**  
The eye-catching slab has a magnetic appeal and is climbed direct without the crack or arête.
6. ● (3) **Banana Land**  
The easy bounding arête is a pleasant outing indeed.

On the low block directly in front of the Banana Land boulder is a short but intense problem at the far (downhill) end of the block.

- (6c+) **Megalodon**  
SDS. The short arête is ascended via a stiff pull-on, from a pocket and shallow edge, a throw for the lip and saucy mantel finish.

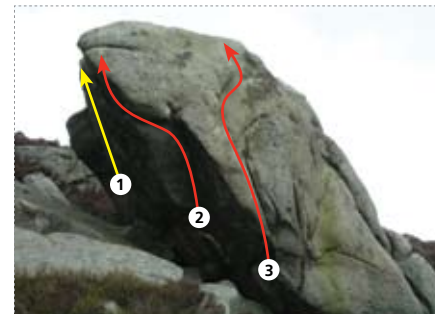
Area 3.6: Banana Land



The next two problems are situated on a small tier below the main crag, which is a 100m north east of problem 6.

7. ● (6c+) **Squirreling Dervishes**  
SDS. Start in the pit and climb the undercut arête on the left. Easier for the short!
8. ● (7a+) **The Man From Del Monte**  
SDS. Up the centre of the prow bearing right as you go, passing a tempting but superfluous pocket. Good but a bit sandy.

Area 3.7: Bad Moon Boulder



This prominent block looms broodingly over the moor guarding one of the crag's stand alone classics, the burly and magnificent Bad Moon Rising; an essential tick for the travelling hardman. The striking Slice of Life also justifies a visit to this block.

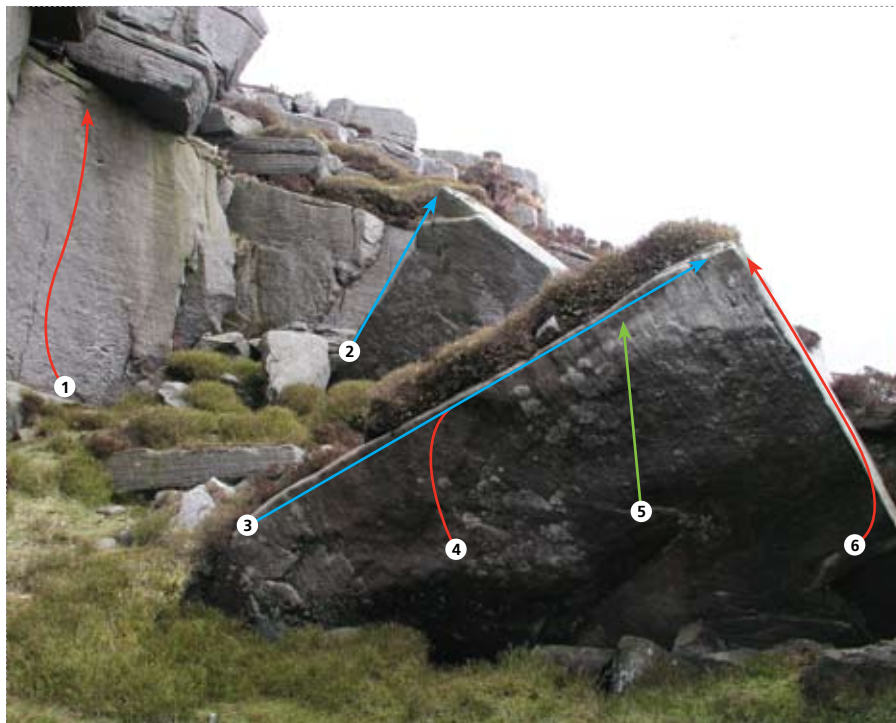
1. ● (6b)  
SDS. From an undercut and edge make dynamic slap to the top.
2. ● (7b+) **Bad Moon Rising**  
SDS. Power up from the low flake via burly moves until a crucial slap to the "Bad Moon" sloper accesses a spooky top-out.
3. ● (7a) **Slice of Life**  
SDS. The front face of the boulder is a stern test of bottle and grit technique. Start on the large flake and finish with a "do or die" slap for the top.



Bouldering, trekking, alpinism & other extreme outdoor activities



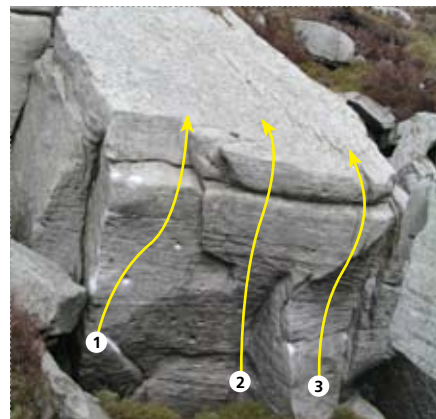
## Area 4: Crag Sector



A short winding stroll/scramble leftward of Squirreling Dervishes provides access to an elevated position looking down into the heather and bilberry-clad amphitheatre of the crag's Upper Tier. Home to the best hard wall problem on grit!

1. ● (7c+) **Return of the Fly**  
A testament to Mother Nature's creative streak. Climb the wall starting in the seam on the left, moving into a central position to finish up the gully.
2. ● (3+) **The Bug**  
SDS. Satisfying arête climbed on the right. Starting sitting on the right and making a hard move into the arête is 6c+.
3. ● (4)  
A good warm up traverse. Please try not to damage the handholds of Vector with your feet.
4. ● (7a+) **Fizzix of Pop**  
SDS. From a mono (LH) and a diagonal edge (RH) pull on with difficulty and slap up for the lip, traverse this to the apex.
5. ● (8a) **Vector**  
SDS. A wild two move paroxysm of controlled thrust, setting forth from a frown like set-up of in-cut crimps to the slopy rail.
6. ● (7b) **Patricky**  
SDS. The sharp arête is ascended via a number of brushed patina imperfections and is a hidden gem.

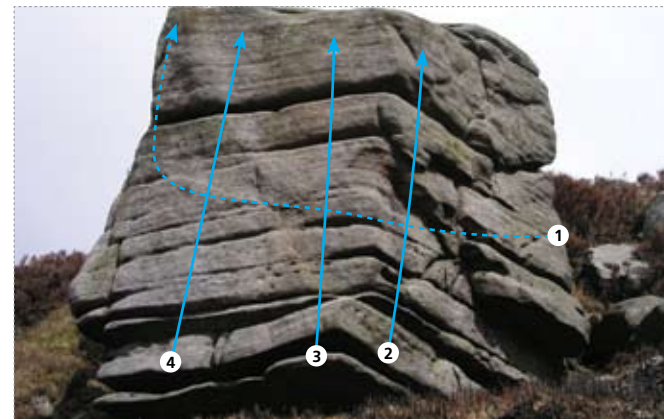
## Area 5: The House



This smart little block is 10m southeast of The Bug and is home to three excellent problems with splendidly interesting sequences and good landings.

1. ● (6b+) **Blam The New Jam**  
SDS. From a diagonal edge bounce up for large shallow pocket, now use the arête to lean across and finish direct.
2. ● (6a+) **Jazz Hands**  
SDS. An off balance egyptian to start is followed by a stretch up to the flake, finish in a more conventional fashion.
3. ● (6a) **Where's Gary?**  
SDS. Narrow prow climbed direct.

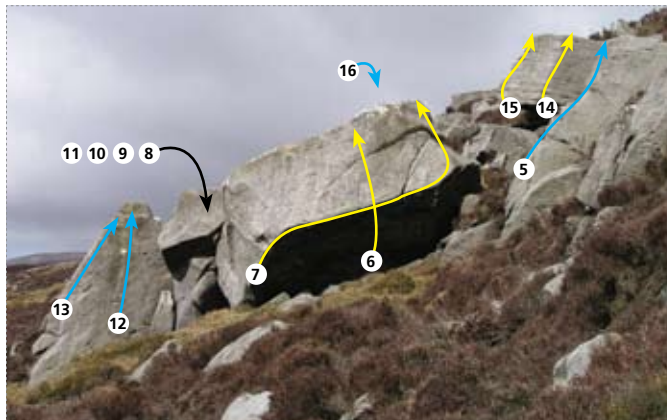
## Area 6: Trackside Boulders



Home to a couple of fine problems this sector is reached by carrying on past the right turn to the Crag Boulders, and following the bridleway west across the hillside. The boulders can be clearly seen from the track. Problems here are described from right to left.

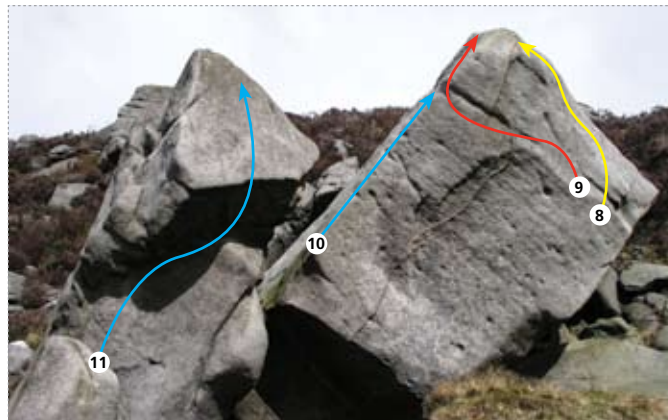
1. ● (4) **Andy's Traverse**  
Keep low as you crab round the boulder and up the short arête on the left side of the block.
2. ● (3+)  
SDS. The well-featured wall.
3. ● (5) **Sphagnum Arête**  
SDS. Great heel locks in the break help on a tricky start.
4. ● (4+) **Andy's Wall**  
Direct up the wall.  
15m behind the Andy's Traverse block is another small boulder. Two short sitters exist on the east face – The centre of the wall is 6a and the left arête without the blocks for feet is 5.

## Area 6: Trackside Boulders



5. ● (3) **Gritasaurus**  
Enjoyable, but more a scramble than a climb.
6. ● (6c+) **2001 A Grit Odyssey**  
Start on crimp pockets in the roof and slap/lock through to the rail, more pleasant moves to the ridge ensue. 5 from the rail.
7. ● (6c) **Elemental**  
SDS. Traverse the rail from left to the extreme right, finishing up the blunt rib.

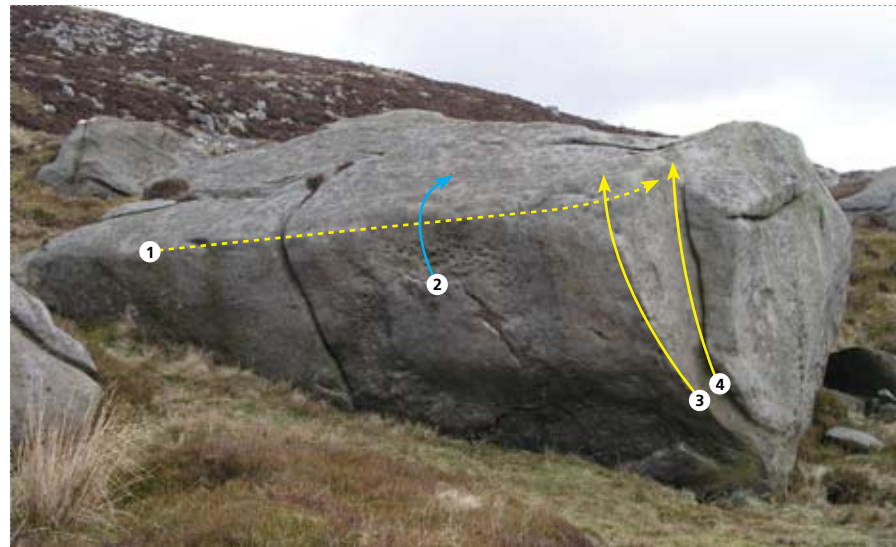
8. ● (6a+) **RIF Light**  
From the flake rock onto the right slab again finish at the ridge.
9. ● (7a) **Resistance is Futile**  
The end of the block is sent via an obvious flake side-pull to a pinch up and left, continue left finishing with an ungainly scuttle up the ridge.
10. ● (5)  
Slopy arête.



11. ● (5) **Jacaranda**  
The capped tower is started on the detached block then taken on the right.
12. ● (4)  
Slab without the arêtes.
13. ● (3) **Deadly Sins**  
The slabby arête is straightforward.
14. ● (6c+) **Guns n' Ammo**  
SDS. Climb the undercut arête direct to a committing finishing lunge.

15. ● (6c) **Knights of the Turntables**  
SDS. The superb undercut arête, climbed on the right, is only slightly marred by a tapering landing.
16. ● (3+)  
The undercut shield just down from problem 15 climbed centrally.

## Area 7: Paradise Boulder

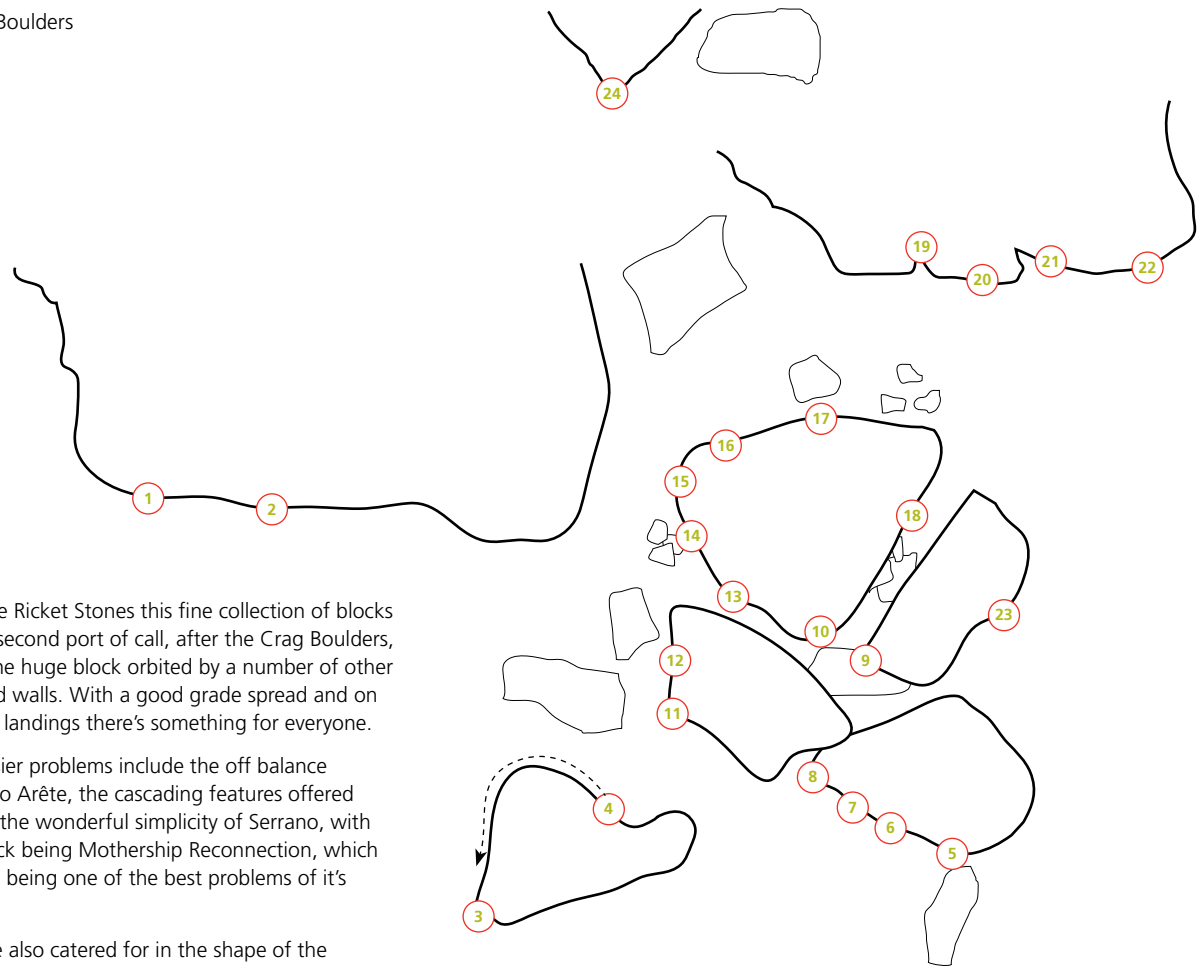


1. ● (6c+) **Red Rose Addict**  
SDS. The slopy lip is traversed from left to right finishing up the hanging groove.
2. ● (5+)  
SDS. Off the broken edge direct for a mantel finish.
3. ● (6b) **Visions of Paradise**  
SDS. Short arête on the left is powerful.
4. ● (6b) **Paradise Found**  
SDS. The hanging groove on its right side – harder than it looks.

150m further west along the track and just before reaching the larger sector of the Seaview Boulders is a low barrel-sided block to the left of the track as approached. Despite being a little underwhelming on first encounters the short sitters are better than they look and the lip traverse of Red Rose Addict is a minor classic.



## Area 8: Seaview Boulders



Also known as the Ricket Stones this fine collection of blocks is most climbers' second port of call, after the Crag Boulders, and consists of one huge block orbited by a number of other smaller blocks and walls. With a good grade spread and on the whole decent landings there's something for everyone.

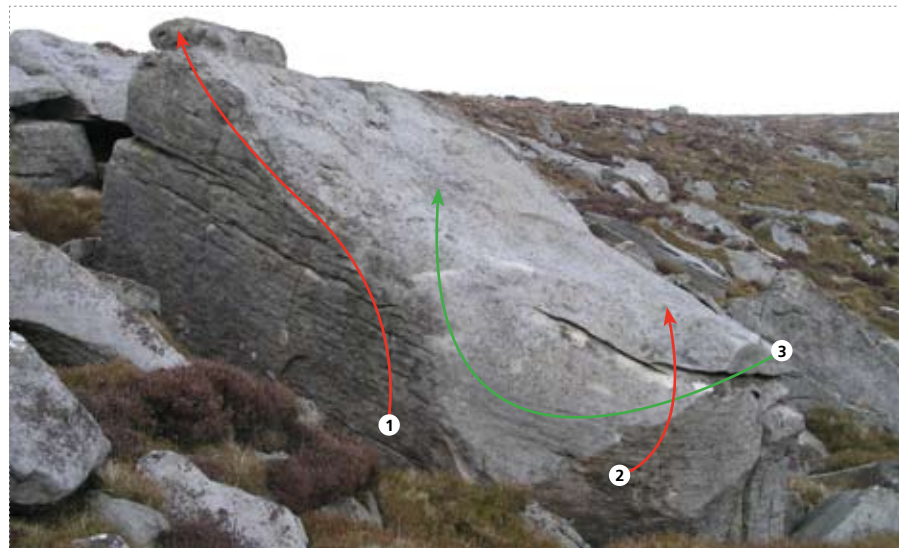
The stand out easier problems include the off balance jollities of Jalapeno Arête, the cascading features offered by Yatsufusa and the wonderful simplicity of Serrano, with the classic hard tick being Mothership Reconnection, which has a fair claim to being one of the best problems of its style on grit.

Visiting beasts are also catered for in the shape of the barrel-huggingly good Endangered Species.

## Area 8: Seaview Boulders

- (6a) **One Eyed Willie**  
SDS. A sloper and pocket aid a tricky pull into the vague sloping ramp, finish up this.
- (5) **The Goonie**  
SDS. The water worn runnel system is climbed direct and is more awkward than first anticipated.
- (6a) **Fresno**  
SDS. The nose climbed on the right is a great little puzzle.
- (6a+)  
Bum drag traverse round the lip of the block's north face.
- (3)  
Right arête on the left.
- (3)  
Centre right on the slab is a good introduction to smeary climbing.
- (3)  
Centre left of the slab.
- (3+)  
Left arête on the right.
- (7a+) **Mothership Reconnection**  
SDS. The central column is the main attraction of the sector. Start as low as possible and launch up the centre of the prow swinging left to finish.
- (5+) **Chilica**  
The highball slabby arête taken on the right. Those who don't find it too hot to handle can take an e-point!
- (3+)  
SDS. Roll leftward along the lip and up the short arête.
- (5+)  
An entertaining eliminate which requires the climber to rock onto a mini ledge and pull through to the top of the left arête.
- (8a) **Endangered Species**  
SDS. Starting in a rocky hollow use a shallow dish and hand smear to invoke a stomach churning pull on, in the same motion lunge up and left for a distant positive edge. Continue up the flake system above to finish.
- (6a) **Yatsufusa**  
Surmount the bulging wall on rounded edges and rock right to the weather worn flake system. The sit start is 6b.
- (6a) **Jalapeno Arête**  
The classic arête is generally climbed on the right and packs it in all the way the top. The sit start on the right is a touch harder.
- (5+) **Poblano**  
More balancy fun climbing the triangular slab direct. Start immediately left of the arête, which is out-of-bounds. The sit start is a very thin 7a.
- (3) Flakes trending left.
- (4+) **Neil's Slab**  
Up the thin wall starting immediately right of the chock stones.
- (3) **Red Dusk**  
The narrow wall between the gully and layback flake, is climbed direct from a low start.
- (3) **Serrano**  
The large and wonderful layback flake.
- (3)  
SDS. A series of small ribs trending up and left.
- (3+) **Chilli Billy**  
The concave slab climbed with the aid of a shallow seam.
- (4+)  
Short easy slab.
- (7a+) **Yule Jewel**  
SDS. 10m to the rear of problem 19 is a blunt, weather worn arête climb it on the right. Tricky!

## Area 9: The Loaf



The final boulder described is perched on the vague southeast facing rocky ridge of Ward Stone Breast, around 450m further west of the Seaview Boulders. This large rectangular block is easily seen on the skyline as approached, and is approximately 100m from the main track. Despite the size of this impressive polygon the geometry and situation are such that only three pure lines exist. In spite of these detracting factors those who make the effort will not only be rewarded with great panoramic views but also the sloping beauty of Outer Reach, in which Herculean efforts and great conditions are the required formula for success!

Once The Loaf is in view the best method of approach is to follow the track to where it almost converges with the rocky ridge at a passing place, from here skirt round the base of the ridge trending gradually upward.

1. ● (7b) **Positions Of Strength**  
SDS. From a side-pull make a hard move to a slopy slot and up again to the sloping lip/rail. Follow this up leftward to the top of the block.
2. ● (7a+) **Budmunk**  
SDS. A hard pull to start allows you to bare right for a mantel finish.
3. ● (8a) **Outer Reach**  
SDS. A couple of pedestrian moves left give access to the slopy ramp, from here move out to an appealing undercut, before making a hard move to a distant dish (the crux). Continue up and left to a precarious finishing move.



Greg Chapman on Outer Reach: Liz Crane