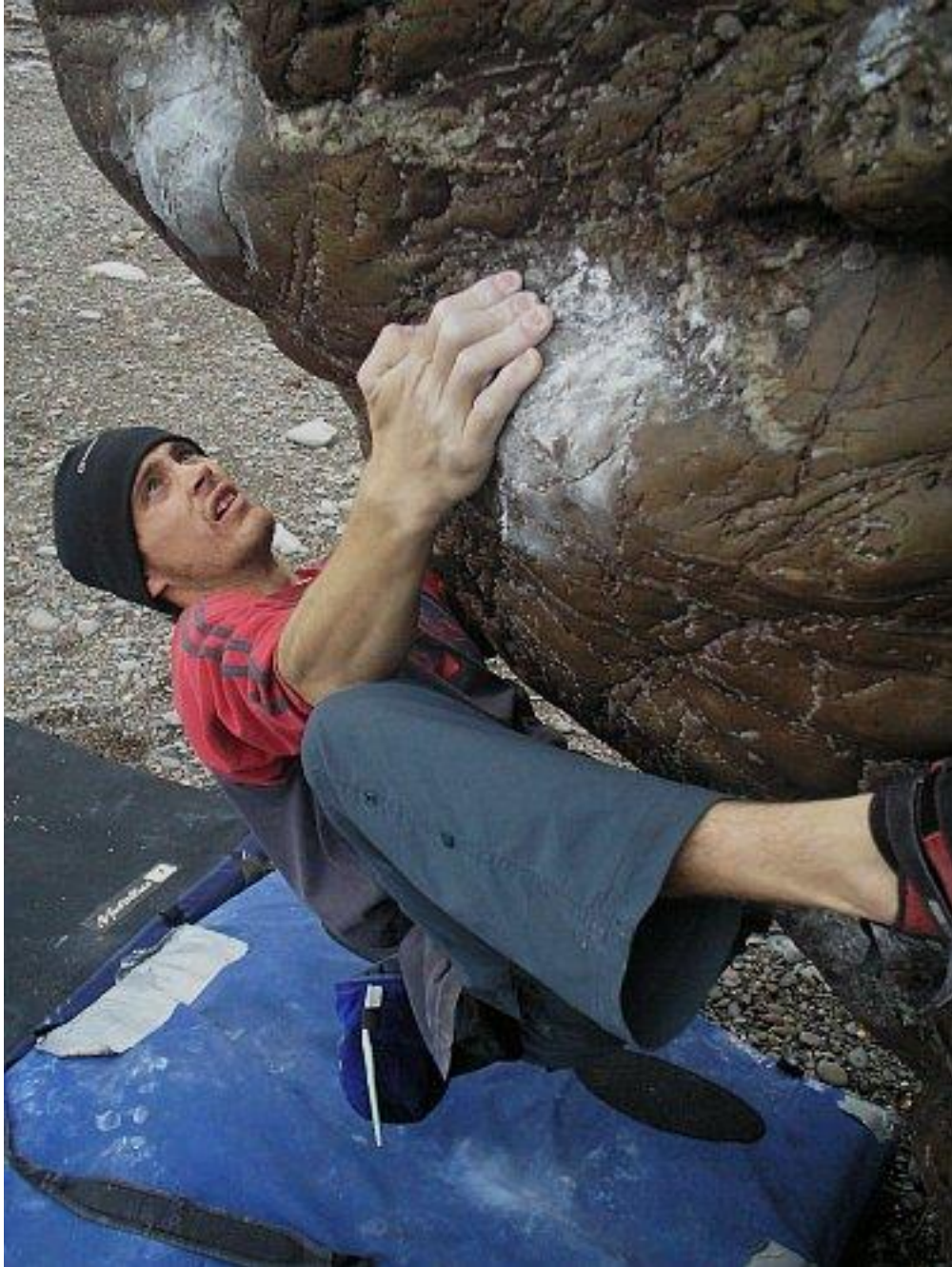


Exmoor Coast Bouldering

A mini-guide to bouldering at Lynmouth.



By Grant Edwards

Introduction

This is intended to be a simple 'no frills' guide to bouldering near Lynmouth on the Exmoor Coast in North Devon. Grades are given using the Fontainebleau scale and stars are given to indicate quality. Beach heights can vary greatly, so the grades should be treated as an approximation. The majority of the bouldering is tidal and will be covered by the sea at high tide. Therefore, to make the most out of a visit you should aim to come here around low-tide. Spring tides will allow access to more boulders, neap tides will mean boulders higher up the beach may not be reached by the sea. Conditions can be 'interesting' on this coast which is north facing (good for a bit of shade in the summer) and a strong breeze always helps things to dry. Feel free to use plenty of chalk to dry things out as it will be washed off when the tide comes in. Exmoor always guarantees a unique climbing experience in a beautiful and secluded environment, please don't leave any litter.

Details on first ascents of problems may be unclear and they have only been claimed on what are thought to be significant and new problems during a period of development which started in 2004. (FA name's appear in brackets).

Thanks to these folk for inspiration, knowledge and exploration. Mike Cleverdon, Mike Adams, Neil Blom, Joe Harris, Neil Empringham, Rob @ No Sweat, Neil Jenkins and Dave Westlake. Watch this space, there is plenty more out there if you wish to explore and there may be further volumes on Exmoor bouldering in the future.

Disclaimer

Bouldering might seem like a safe option but things can go wrong and it is a dangerous activity. At Lynmouth there are unstable cliffs and one of the largest tidal ranges in the world, this gives the potential for serious mishaps. I accept no responsibility for any accidents or epics that may occur as a result of following this guide. If you choose to access the areas listed in this guide and to climb the problems listed, you do so by your own choice. Climbing is an inherently dangerous activity with a risk of serious injury or death.

Getting There

Lynmouth is situated on the Exmoor Coast in North Devon. Now get your map out, type it into your 'sat nav' or look it up on the internet. There are bus services that run to Lynmouth from nearby towns and you can of course travel there by road or by whatever means you wish. Take care driving; The roads are steep and twisting. There is loads of accommodation and camping in the area. Directions to the boulders start from the main street where you'll find pubs, hotels, chip shops, cafes, shops, art galleries etc... There is plenty of parking but you will have to pay and display in the summer. (Facing out to sea) on your right side you'll see the river Lyn and a harbour with boats in it. There is footbridge over the river next to the harbour which leads to the boulders East of Lynmouth.

Lynmouth East (Blacklands/Point Perilous)

Cross the footbridge mentioned earlier in an easterly direction, being careful not to 'take out' any tourists with your crash pad. There is a sea front promenade here which you should walk along in an easterly direction. You'll eventually get to the end of this (it's not far at all) and will find yourself on the beach. Continue to walk east along the beach until you reach....

The Pink Wall

On your right as you walk along the beach is an overhanging wall of pink rock containing a few problems that will be available during most tides. The rock can be snappy.



1 Pretty In Pink 6a+ **

Sit Start on jugs, move up and left on more jugs, then out right to the arete and lay one on for the top jug.

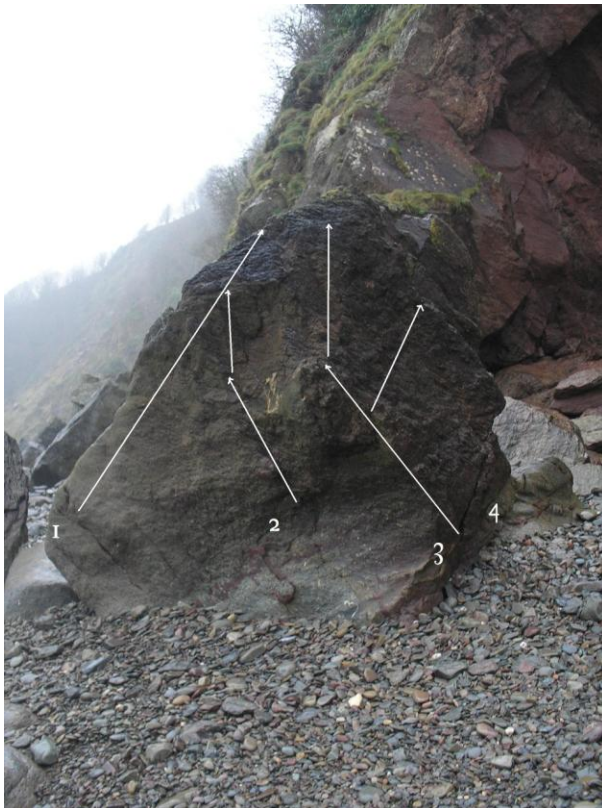
2 Pretty Long and Pink 6c+*** (Mike Cleverdon)

Start 5m left on low jug, traverse up and rightwards on incuts, then perform a heinous drop down into jugs on previous problem which now feels much harder coz your pumped.

Stinky Pinky ?ungradeable? (Grant Edwards)

A recent addition the eliminate dyno from the starting jugs on PIP to top.

It is also possible to reverse the traverse from the start of PIP or avoid the drop down move on PLP by staying high. There are easy problems up the left side of this wall and easy traverses to the right.



The Warm Up/ Eliminates Boulder

The first free standing bit of rock you come to on the beach contains several eliminates and games. Just beyond the Pink Wall. Here are a few problems to get you started, link-ups and more eliminates exist.

1 Arete 3+

Sit start the left arête and follow to the top.

2 Eliminate 6b

Start sitting on obvious hold, move up and left via crimps. No holds out right allowed. Fingery!

3-4 Right Arete 4+

Sit start then move up and left over a mini nose feature or rock it out rightwards.



Big Crack

Directly behind the warm up boulder is an obvious high crack above a dodgy landing.

1 What was all the fuss about? 6a *

The crack direct from a sitter if you must (descend down the back side easily).

2 Fuss in boots 6c

Sit start under the crack, traverse left and upwards, finish direct up the arête. Moving round leftwards makes life easier and less scary.

3 Snatch 5+

This is on the face just round to the left on the same boulder.

Start crouching on left side, make a quick snatch upwards and it's all but done, finish direct.

Situated just beyond this is.....



The Slope Traverse Boulder.

1 Slope Traverse Extension 7b (Grant Edwards) ***

Starts sitting at far right and traverses left to a wicked mantel at the left end. Beach levels will vary but the genuine start is strictly right on the end. Classic sloper shuffling.

2 Slope Traverse Original 6a+

An easier proposition misses out the starting moves on the above.

Project

Extend the start from up and right of the sit start. Utterly Desperate. 8b??



Goofy Foot Traverse 6b**

Looking out to sea from the Slopey Traverse you'll see a darker coloured boulder. Start low (almost lie down) on the protruding mini-nose, traverse left using plenty of cunning footwork and top out up the groove.

Leaning Block

An obvious rectangular block leaning up against the cliff (beginners wall) at the back of the beach.

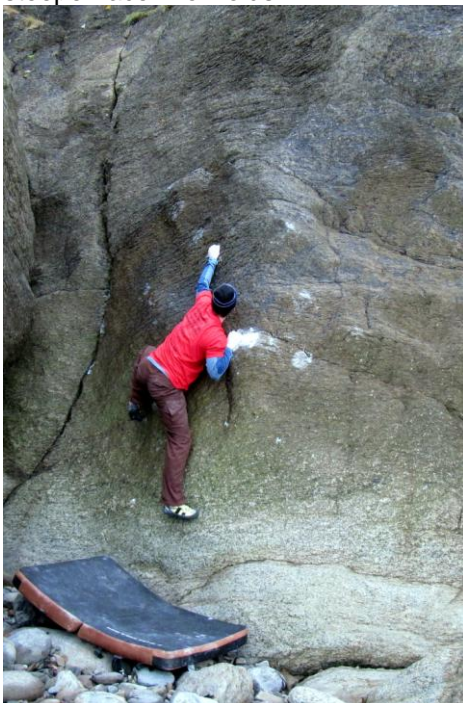
1 A selection of fun easier lines up the back of the boulder.

2 Pinball Gorge 5+/6b

Start as low as you wish, lower is harder (ie left hand in crack, right on sloper) heel hook and slap up the arete, rock around to the right, then pad all the way up the arête on it's right.

3 Project

An impossible looking/ feeling slab. direct up the steeper face. No Holds.



Beginner's Wall

There is a belay station with in-situ bolts on the wall to the right of the Leaning Block. They were placed by a local outdoor centre that no longer use the wall for safety reasons, presumably because the bolts are placed in dubious rock! Here you will find a selection of easy crack lines leading up to a section of looser rock. Traverse off or reverse back down. Diff to Font 6a/b ish.

Dave Westlake on a problem on the left side of Beginner's wall.



The Joker and the Thief Block

This boulder has enough to keep competent boulderers entertained for a long time and has some of the areas original and classic test pieces. Just look for the obvious 'bum cheeks' split by several cracks on your right as you move down the beach. The block is high up the beach and therefore is only affected around the time of high tide.

1 Face On. 5+

Slightly eliminate line climbs wall to left of arête avoiding big footholds to the left.

2 Face Off 7a+ *** (Mike Cleverdon)

The overhanging arête starts low with left hand on a sloper and right in shallow crack, reach up to an obvious hold with your right, then climb the arête onto the hanging slab above. There are 2 established sequences, both are powerful. Classic! *The start is currently hampered by a fallen block but it is still possible.*

3 Twister. 5+ or 7b/c ish? *** (Mike Cleverdon sitter)

The obvious and thin crack line. Originally done from a standing start reaching into the crack over the bulge. Named after the badly sprained ankle received from falling off. Sit start is much harder, depending on pebble level. **Cyclone 7a** A late addition from Dave Westlake sit start as for Twister and move right into Arete Thing.

4 Arête Thing 3+

Mantel onto ledge on the arête using good holds then pad up the slabby arête.

5 Slightly Harder Crack 4+ **

Just left of FF a very nice crack start as low as you wish and follow the crack up and right. There are variations if you use your imagination.

6 Finger Fury 7b *** (Mike Cleverdon)

Eliminate. The wall direct, just left of 7. no crack or jump starts allowed beach height may make that impossible anyway. Starts off poor holds, with left foot on small smooth quartz hold near the left arête. Very fingery.

7 The Joker and the Thief 6c+ *** (Grant Edwards)

Climbing the wall just left of the easy crack. A perplexing start off slopers with next to nothing for feet may enable you to lunge for a crimp and then enter into the crux. Turning into a bit of an area rite of passage, it might be 7a??

8. Easy crack. 2

The Whalebone.

Beneath the bum cheeks and around are more boulders with problems ranging from 2 to 5+. The beach levels can affect these quite a lot. Of particular note is a random little bone/whale shaped block. Given a low beach it is possible to start sitting under this on the left, move up right and around to find yourself where you began.

Now moving further east along the foreshore the beach opens out again about 100 yards further on there is the.....

Diamond Slab

1 Nosey Parker 7b+

(Mike Cleverdon)

The nose at the left end starting lying underneath, involved some kind of levitation and secret forces, that leaves it unrepeatable and unjustifiable. Good luck!

2 Left Side 4+

Starting off the block underneath might help. Starting without is gonna be hard.

3 Right Side 4+

No jumping & no arête.



The Big Slab

You can see this from miles off, it is a big slab! The landing is poor, it is quite high and there maybe some snappy rock up there. Try to avoid falling! On a positive note the angle is fairly easy and the grading is for height.

1 Big Slab Left 4

Move diagonally up and out to left arête above a chasm of doom then to the top.

2 Big Slab Direct 5+

Straight up the middle, the wall disconcertingly tilts back and runs out of holds at the top.

3 Big Slab Right 4

The obvious crack system going up the right side directly.

There may be more to be had on this boulder for the brave and/or foolhardy. Check the steep wall around to the left!



Where the shingle beach comes to an end and as you approach the Big Slab, you'll notice a jumble of boulders. These satellite boulders are left for your discovery, there are some good problems amongst the jumble.

However, if you walk east beyond the big slab you'll come to more bouldering of a higher quality. This area is easily identified by a large free standing boulder (the splendid block) in front of 2 caves..



Splendid Block - West

This is the west side of the splendid block and faces you as you approach from the Big Slab. There are a couple of problems here.

Pumpatron 6b+

Traverse from slopers left to right as far as you can go right round the corner until things ease off completely.

Jumpatron 6a

Jump to the obvious edge from the floor, catch it and then mantel out direct. Deduct grades accordingly if you can reach the edge.

Splendid Block – North

Just round to the left on the seaward side.

1 Talon Left 6b+ **

Direct up to slopers from good edges, either dynamically or via crimps

2 Talon Right 6c **

Break out right from the same starting holds as TL, finish up the vague arête. Good footwork could be the key.

The crack to the left of these problems looks incredible but it is full of ancient and giant limpets. Please leave them alone they are clearly very old and special. They also do a good job keeping the boulder clean. **Like it Or Limpet 6c** (Mike Adams) is the problem that starts in the crack (using limpets- be gentle) and then breaks out left through a 'shield' feature.



Splendid Block – East/South

1 Reach 3+

Start on shelf, reach, finish direct.

2 Eliminates Wall 4+

Sit start 5+. Eliminates exist.

3 Arête 4+

4 Kung Fu Lobster Grip 5+ *

Eliminate. Stay up the middle

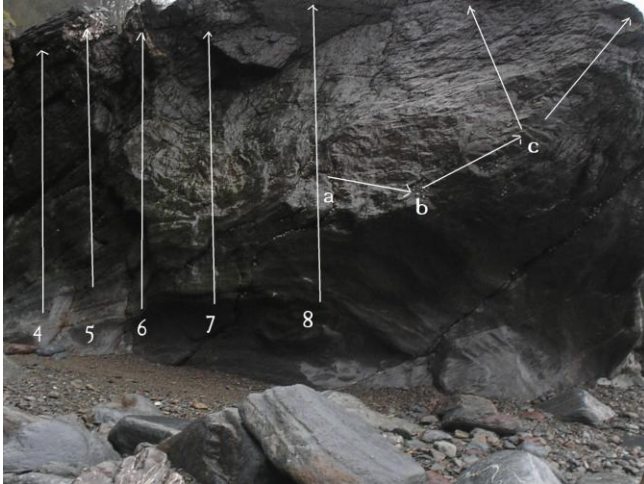
5 Groove 3+

6 Nose 4+

7 Slab left 4+ Start on slopers, lift off may be a problem.

8 Slab right 4+

Start on flake, getting off the floor is the crux.



Splendid Block – Detail

The following problems can be finished left or right without a significant difference in difficulty. In reverse order,..

C Campus Problem 6b

Jump to crimps and top out direct or make more moves out right.

B Monster Tide 7b *** (Dave Westlake)

Start off slopers and climb into previous problem. Just believe! Quality!

A Mike's Extension 7c/+*** (Mikey Cleverdon)

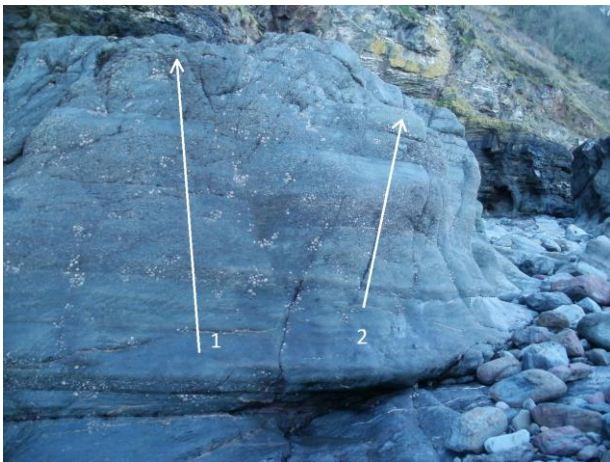
Starts off jug on 8 into Monster Tide...

Just behind this boulder is a wall, that holds some highball jug hauling.. which is nice. Watch those top outs the rock may be suspect and you will be quite high.

There are also 2 caves, the right hand one (when you are facing them) seems to be wet and seeping most of the time but Dave W has climbed a good problem here called **Slot Machine 6c** The left cave is a different matter. At the entrance on the left hand side is a good steep overhang with big flat holds, traverses, loops, campus circuits and such fun can be had here. It is also possible to traverse from the cave entrance on the right hand side, all the way into the depths of the cave to a jug right at the back... This is **The Grunewelder 6c+** . More recently Mike Adams extended this by crossing onto the opposite side of the cave and traversing back out until you can eventually stand on a rock shelf (add a grade if you like).

Further problems and games can be created in this cave....

Just east is a short wall with a couple of fun problems.



1 Short Groove* 5+

Utilise little crimps or go wild and jump for the top!

2 Sloper Slap* 6a+

Stand on the ledge and grope around aimlessly for holds (there are none). Somehow gain upwards momentum to catch the good ledge above. Fun!

Just behind this boulder towards the ocean are a couple of free standing boulders that are best accessed on a low spring-tide, a good breeze to dry them out is handy.



Spring Tide Boulder 1

1 Spring Slab 1 6b**

Beach height and limpets can make a difference to the grade but it is a brilliant slab.

2 Spring arête 3+

A nice jug festooned arête.

3 Spring Slab 2 6b+

Desperate if the beach is low as it is in this photo but hey we don't climb for grades do we?

The arête right of this SS2 is a pleasant stroll and there are some easier problems on the back of the boulder, including a cheeky eliminate mantel.

Just right of this is....

Spring Tide Boulder 2

It's a bit barnacley...

1 Barnacle arête 6b+

Start low off 2 pinches, an insecure slap leads to an easier finish.

2 Quartz Line 6a to 6c

Start right at an obvious jug and follow the quartz line left, the further you traverse left before topping out the harder it gets. Can you link it into barnacle arête?

There are some fun up problems direct through the traverse.



More barnacle riddled fun same boulder just round to the right.

1 Another Barnacle arête !!?

Goes from sitting, more skin thrashing than hard

2 Centre Groove !!?

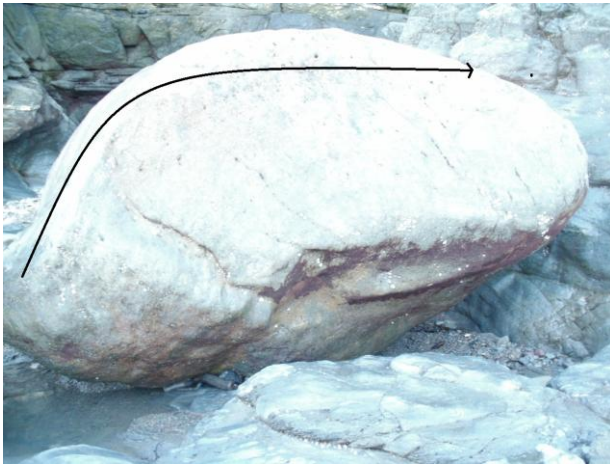
Another exercise in abrasion.

3 Jug Jug Top 4+ *

Pleasant holds compared to the previous problems, don't use the arête.

The next problems are based around a zawn with a large boulder in it's entrance, there are problems on the boulder itself as well as on the walls around the zawn. The cliff face at the east most side of this zawn is a tidal cut off point, if you get caught the wrong side of this you are in

trouble especially if it's the winter!! It is possible to climb in this zawn as the tide comes in and escape up the back west corner (escape route marked in photo topo). If you get embroiled in a battle with Time and Tide you'll probably find yourself using this escape route.



V-Cleft boulder (North Side)

This is the boulder at the entrance to the zawn.

North Arête 6a/6b/6c

When there's not a pool under it, you can climb the left arête from a sitter then traverse the top and top out on the right side, beach height changes the grade dramatically. Shallow water solo anyone?

V-Cleft (West Side)

1 Cleft Arete 5+/ 6a+

Can be climbed on either it's left or right side.

2 Cleft Slab 5

The slab with no arête, now try without the large hold and limpets!



V-Cleft (South Side)



1 The Lynmouth Boulder Jam Ho Down Throw Down 7b (Grant Edwards)**

Jump to catch slopers on the left side, then keep slapping right drop into the V-Cleft up 3 and continue to finish up right arête.

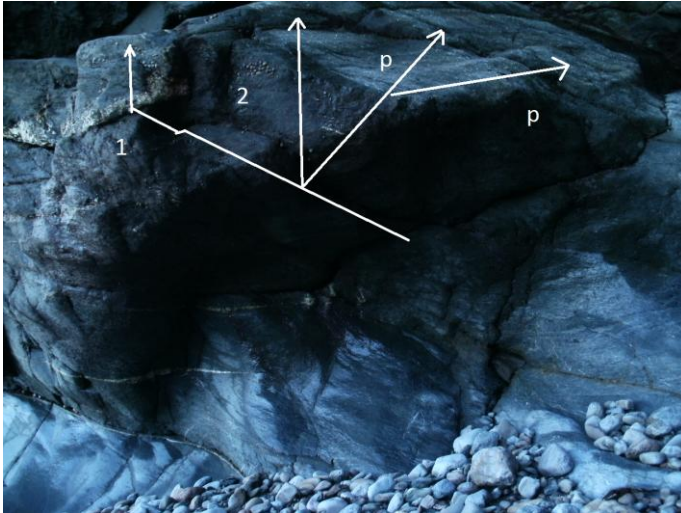
2 V-Cleft Left 6b*

Start matching the bottom of cleft, slap up left via super smooth slopers and mantel into the cleft.

3 V-Cleft Right 6b*

This time slap up right and mantel into the cleft.

Across the zawn in the back east corner is the Chimpanzee Acne roof...



Chimpanzee Acne* 7a** (Grant Edwards)

Climb through the steep roof on jugs, move left to a pocket and ape up through the quartz band, top out!

No More Nails* 7b+** (Mike Cleverdon)

Climb through the roof and finish more direct.

Projects

Slap out to the nose and finish direct or traverse out rightwards. You could potentially traverse the lip from right to left too...

The walls to left of this roof all way round into The Odyssey cave have lots of problems/ traverses and eliminates to play on these are left to your imagination. Next up is a wall at the back of the zawn.

1 Time and Tide* 7b** (Grant Edwards)

Start under left side of arête, move up to perfect slopers and make a hard move off them for the break, easier highball top out up crack. Has had one repeat from Mikey C.

2 White Men Can't Jump* Ungradeable???** (Mike Cleverdon)

A hands free jump starting on the ramp up to the obvious big flatty. Top out trickily direct.

3 Dr's Wall 6b** (Mike Cleverdon)

The wall through an obvious boss.

4 Batman's Wall 6b** (Grant Edwards) The thin wall right again.

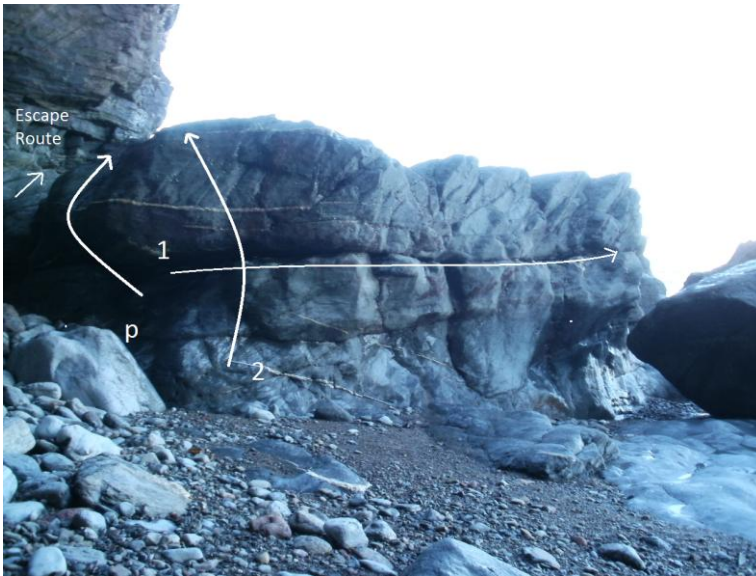
5 Thin Out The Numbers 7a+** (Grant Edwards)

Traverse the break right to left which gets exceedingly thin (cunning foot and handwork essential) before reaching the big flatty on WMCJ, originally finishes up T&T but you could finish up WMCJ.



The bowled out roof to the left of Time and Tide would be amazing if it had holds but it's pretty smooth. A traverse of the higher break here is definitely possible but it suffers from seepage and gets fairly high. There is also a direct line through the high roof left of Time and Tide. These lines are all unclimbed to my knowledge..

Next up is the long wall right of Thin Out The Numbers which runs from here all the way back down to the V-Cleft Boulder.



1 Long Traverse 6c

Traverse the obvious break, good warm up or good way to get pumped silly, you decide?

2 Mike's Eliminate* 7c

(Mikey Cleverdon)

Climb out onto the hanging slab and up, big triangular hold is not in. Unrepeated.

7a+ with triangular hold.

Projects

A lovely bulge topped roof, up the groove feature or straight through the bulge. Suffers from slime.

There are also up problems and eliminates right along the length of the wall, a particular favourite is the mantel at the end of the traverse. Grades are from 3+ to 6a+ ish..

Round to the east are 2 caves with 2 quality traverses, keep an eye on the incoming tide, you can get cut off here. Around the first corner is...



The Odyssey 7b+** (Mike Adams)

A funky left to right traverse with some very cool manoeuvres. Almost always wet but Mike eventually completed his project. Bring plenty of chalk, drying rags, sponges and enthusiasm...

Round the next corner is a very big cave with some potential for new problems but again wetness is an issue. However, the east side of the cave can dry out and has a fine traverse.

7th Wave Traverse 7a+** (Grant Edwards)

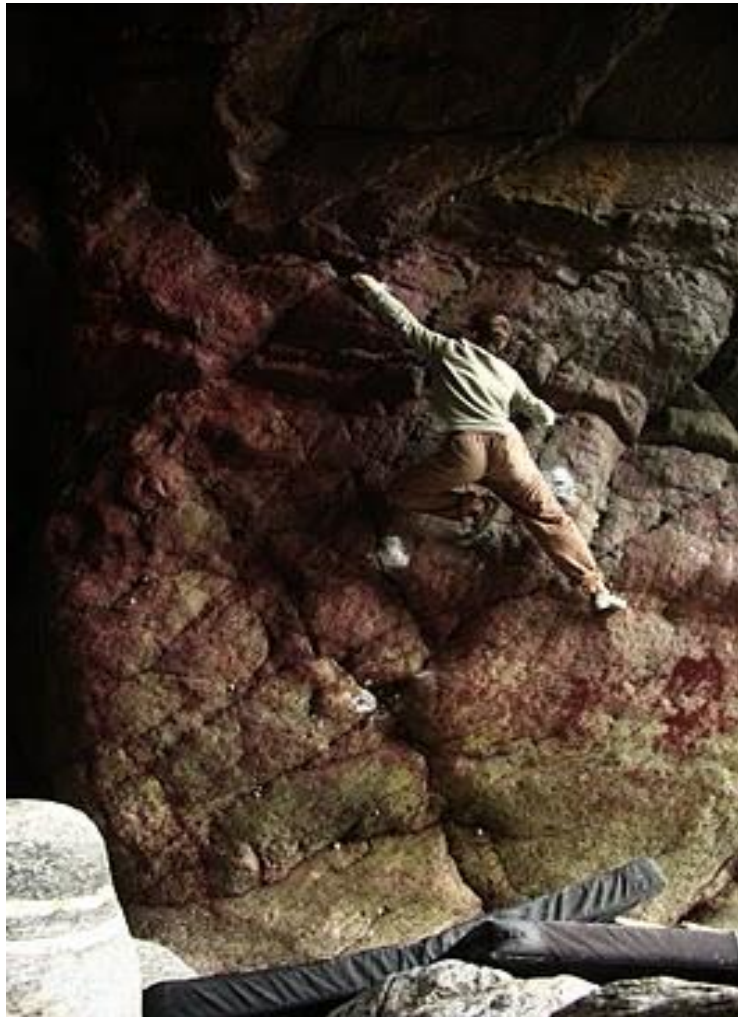
A left to right traverse starts on jugs, into a very thin section on slopy friction holds to finish at the obvious high jug up and right.



The Land Beyond

To the East beyond these caves there are countless further problems to discover, all the way through towards Sillery Sands and Foreland Point. The problems between here and Sillery Sands have not been documented because of the extreme tidal range in the area. Local knowledge of the tides is vital to avoid being cut off and as such it would be wise to ensure you know what you're doing before venturing into the unknown.

Alternatively, you could park up near the top of Countisbury Hill and walk into Sillery Sands/ Foreland Point from here, down the extremely steep 'zigzag' path. This venue is currently in vogue with us locals, some of the problems here are superb and new discoveries are constantly being made. You still need to be aware of tides if you intend to explore towards Foreland Point but if you stick close to the steps at the bottom of the path you'll be fine. The steep walk out is part of the experience and builds character.



Dave W on his problem Slot Machine 6c which can be found behind the splendid boulder

Lynmouth West – Giza and Anarchy Blocks.

An alternative to Lynmouth East is West which holds some classic highballs that are very high quality. Discovered by Mikey Cleverdon and Neil Blom. To access these boulders, you will need to boulder hop westwards along the 'beach' from the end of the 'sea wall' car park. An outgoing tide will give you the most time as you'll need to boulder hop back before you get cut off. (There may be an alternative route to these boulders but it is through private land so don't use it, unless you have permission off the owners.)

On the way out you may come across this slab which Mike Adams did the FA of, Mike's Slab is around 6b. There are more problems to discover in this area.



Giza Block

After some boulder hopping westwards you'll find a pyramid shaped block on a non-tidal platform with some good slab problems and a steep section.



Giza – Slab Face.

Tutan Come On 6a+*** (Grant Edwards)
The centre of the slab on sharp holds and a long reach for a good hold in the centre of the face.

Giza Left Direct 6b*** (Mikey Cleverdon)
The left side of the slab finishing straight up.

Giza Left right finish 6a+**
Finish more easily by reaching right into the good hold on Tutan Come On.

Project

The right side of the slab.

There is an easy highball slab round the back of this block.

Becky Guttridge trying Tutan Come On.

Giza – Steep Bit

Ankh 6a*

Sit start the arête and finish up it.

Ankh right finish 6c** (Mikey Cleverdon)

Sit start arête avoiding big hold, move right and finish up crimpers.

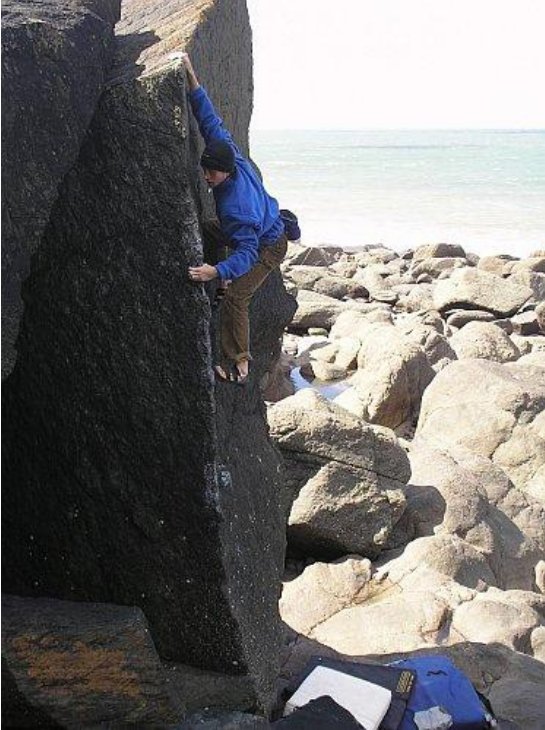
Dave W on the right finish to Ankh.



The zawn that forms a blow hole west of here has some good problems and maybe a bit of DWS in the right conditions. Further west again you will see the monolith Anarchy block standing proud in a little bay.

Anarchy Block

Named after the striking natural 'anarchy symbol' marking on the seaward face and home to a clutch of classics. Bring your highball mentality and you will be rewarded with some superb problems.



F.E.A.R. 6a+*** (Mikey Cleverdon)
The right side of the left most arête.
HVS/E1 5b in old money. The last
move is the crux, it's high and the
landing is awkward. Superb!

F.E.A.R left 6b** (Mikey
Cleverdon)
Climb the same arête on it's left
side.

Project

The centre of the wall right of
F.E.A.R and left of Anarchy Arete.
Hint... bring a bucket to empty the
rock pool so you can pad this out
better. Also bring a big pair of
cochones!

This photo is of Mikey C on the day
of the first ascent of F.E.A.R. The
arête to the right of this awaited the
attention of a braver soul to lead
the way.

Anarchy Arête 6b+*** (Dave Westlake)

It needed Dave W to pick this extremely ripe
plum. This intimidating but rewarding beauty
starts on it's right and then swings quickly
around to it's left side. E3 5b ish?!

Projects

Anarchy arête on it's right side only (the line me
and Mike were eyeing failing to notice the
obvious solution!)

The wall to the right of Anarchy Arête.

Sid Vicious 4+***

The furthest right and final arête on the block is
much more 'friendly'. Normally climbed on the
right but you can climb it on the left.

There is loads more to be had around here, this
is left for your discovery, explore, enjoy and
share.



Thanks to Dave Westlake for photos and putting the guide out of date on a regular basis. Thanks also to Mikey C and Mike A for photos. That's it now no more new problems please!

This guide is free to download from <http://www.javu.co.uk/> and <http://rustypeg.co.uk>.

Feel free to email me comments, news of first ascents or significant repeats to granticus@tiscali.co.uk

Alternatively you can/should report ascents here:

javu.co.uk

And here:

rustypeg.co.uk



Yours truly on Anarchy arête.

Cheers. Grant.