

Bob Smith  
On C Section  
Photo: Graeme Read



*Rímsíde Burn —  
A Bouldering Guide*

**TECHNICAL NOTES**

The location of each crag is indicated by its Grid Reference.

**Maps**

The County is covered by seven Ordnance Survey Explorer (1:25,000) maps. Sheets 339 (Kelso), 340 (Holy Island), OL16 (The Cheviot Hills), 332 (Alnwick and Amble), OL42 (Kielder Water), 325 (Morpeth) and OL43 (Hadrian's Wall). The majority of the crags lie on sheets 340 and 332.

**General**

On occasions the problems are referenced to routes that are not described in the climbing guide, or in the second edition bouldering guide. You may need these guides or to ask a local climber help you locate the problems.

**Sit Starts**

Most problems are written up as standing starts off one mat only! Generally sit starts are added at the end of a description where they add either to the difficulty, or quality. Only rarely will a sit start be separately named.

**Rules**

It has long been understood in Northumberland that if a twig is found on a 'good' foothold, then the foothold is out of bounds. The same applies to bedding planes, ledges and footholds in contact with the ground. Usually these are out of bounds. The previous guide wisely suggested that if you are wondering if the foothold is in, then it probably is not!

**Further Information**

The NMC website has a variety of resources relating to climbing in the County. If you have this PDF you've probably found it already. Otherwise go to: [www.thenmc.org.uk](http://www.thenmc.org.uk)

**New Problems**

Descriptions of new problems and routes should be sent to [newroutes@thenmc.org.uk](mailto:newroutes@thenmc.org.uk). A description, grade, date and name of first ascensionist should be included. A photo with a line marking the route would also help.



**Bob Smith**  
Greensheen Slopers Traverse  
Greensheen Hill  
Photo: Steve Blake

**BOULDERING GRADES**

It is true to say that there are only two grades, the problems and routes you can do, and those you can't. To the keen boulderer however it soon becomes apparent that this can be sub divided into the problems you can do and your mates can't, and vice versa! Grading boulder problems (and some routes) is an almost impossible task. The table below is a rough comparison of the common systems in use. Visitors to the County will probably find that, until they get used to the style of the problems and the intricacies of climbing on the County's various Sandstones, the accuracy of the table will be questionable. Grades are an art rather than a science, and while difficulty is central to bouldering, it is easily confused with quality. The pursuit of which is an equally rewarding endeavour.

The various grading systems are well understood, and like grades are an ongoing source of debate regarding their respective merits.

In these PDF guides we have retained the Font grades introduced in the last guidebook and their use is now established and understood.

**Highballs**

The height of many crags in the County demands a highball approach. Mats can reduce the consequences when highballing goes wrong, but there comes a point when they look very small. Many of these 'problems' would have been considered small routes not long back, (though some in this new series are not so small) and occasionally are compounded with bad landings. Falling off them should not be treated casually. While highballs are self-evident, many shorter problems have bad landings and need careful padding and spotting. Be careful!

FONT GRADE	UK TECH GRADE	V GRADE
3	4c	VB
4	5a	V0
4+	5b	V1
5	5c	V2
5+	6a	V3
6a	6a	V4
6a+	6b	V5
6b	6b	V6
6b+	6c	V7
6c	6c	V8
6c+	7a	V9
7a	7a	V10
7a+	7b	V11
7b	7b	V12
7b+	7b	V13
7c		V14
7c+		V15
8a		
8a+		
8b		
8b+		
8c		
8c+		



**Steve Blake**  
Dutch Courage  
Shitlington  
Photo: Alec Burns

**SUSTAINABILITY**

The quality and durability of Sandstone in Northumberland varies significantly both on and between crags. Iron hard rock with a case hardened patina can coexist with a super soft cheesy substance soft enough to be shaped by hand. Sadly there is much evidence that the tough patina when worn away reveals a soft inner that rapidly erodes. There are many examples, but Vienna at Bowden Doors is probably the most famous example, which in its current deplorable state is a much easier and sad shadow of the original.

Over the last thirty years the popularity of Rock Climbing and Bouldering has accelerated and there is much similar evidence of our impact on the crags. Routes and problems on Sandstone, especially on fragile and well-used Sandstone, are a finite resource and need careful and sensitive protection if they are to survive.

It is worth repeating that you should not climb on sandstone when there is any evidence of dampness. The rock becomes significantly weaker losing its bonding when damp, and is susceptible to accelerated erosion and breakage. Once a break occurs, or the outer patina is penetrated, then the effects of erosion are exponential.

Many magnificent routes in Northumberland have escaped significant damage, principally because the habit of top roping hard routes has not been adopted as readily as elsewhere. Bouldering however, is a particularly intensive game which can see a team cycling through repeated attempts on a problem, brushing and ragging between each effort. The impact of this can be seen on relatively recent problems on which holds are already bleaching out, and this is on rock thought of as hard.

We are the stewards of these places. There are many things we can do to minimise our direct impact on them:

1. Everyone should acknowledge and understand the fragility of the medium and learn to walk away if there is any suggestion of dampness and the rock is not in condition.
2. Set yourself a realistic number of attempts at a problem, if you can't do it, leave it until you can do it without beating it into submission. We need to have enough humility to understand that the rock's needs are more important than our egos. Learn to walk away and come back when you're capable.



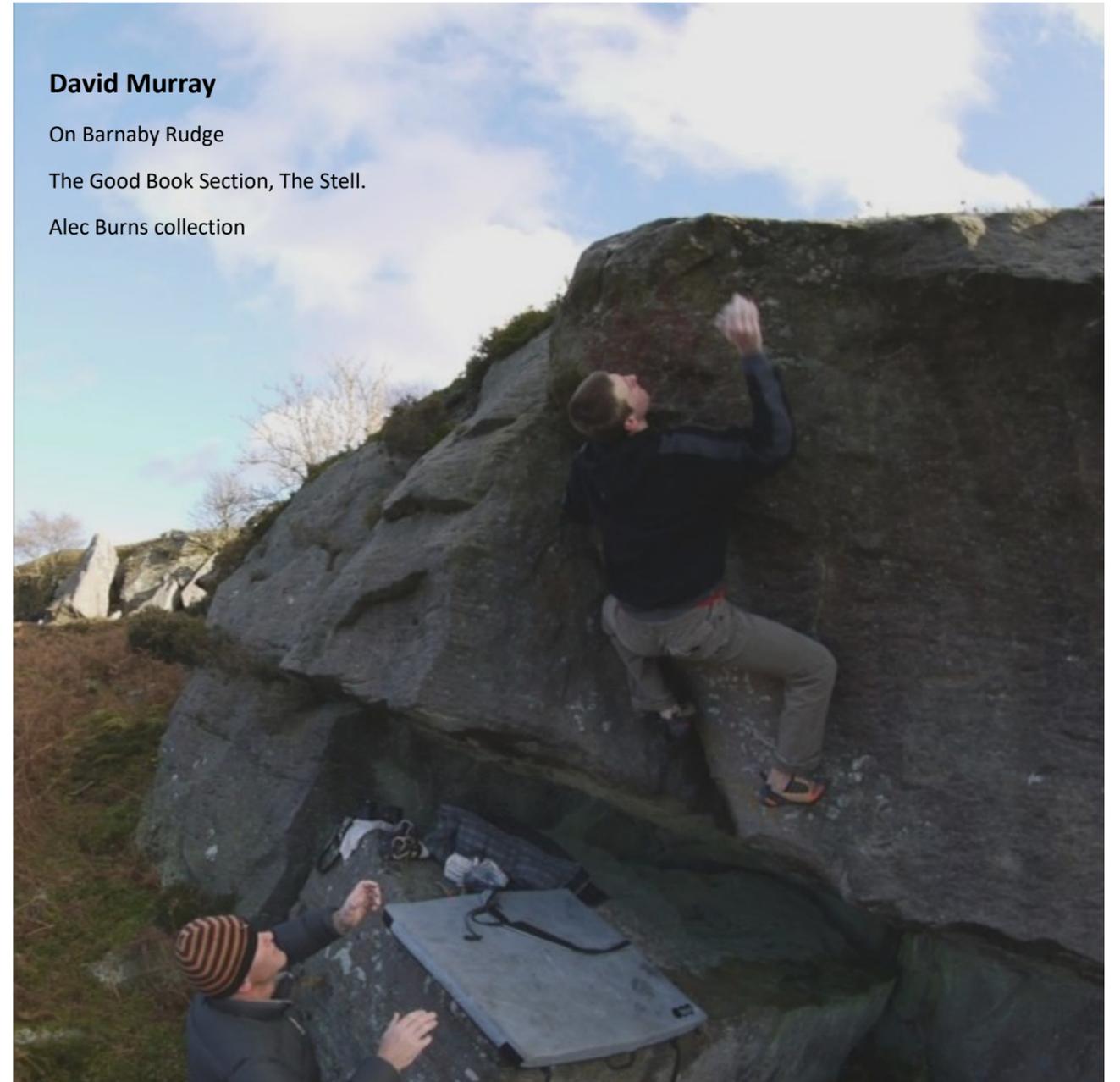
3. Be gentle with brushwork, and minimal with your chalk. Climbing indoors, we can brush the holds to our hearts content; outdoors, the effect can be catastrophic.
4. Poor footwork also impacts, so clean your shoes before you begin an attempt. Modern shoes allow a huge amount of force to be exerted through the feet, eg twisting on smears has a grinding effect that speeds up erosion. Be aware, use good footwork and tread lightly.
5. Don't use the problems for training. Running laps may look cool, but do it indoors on plastic, not on the rock.
6. Take your junk home, don't light fires, don't leave gates open. If you must, learn how to shit in the woods. Do not be generally antisocial.

**David Murray**

On Barnaby Rudge

The Good Book Section, The Stell.

Alec Burns collection



# Rimside Burn Boulders

OS Map Sheet 332 : GR NU 10440593

Altitude: 201m

Aspect: South Facing

Approach: 5 Minutes

The crag is on CRoW land.

## Approach

From the A1 at Morpeth take the A697 North, through Longhorsley and Longframlington. Approximately 3 miles North of Longframlington the road takes a sweeping left hand bend. Once the road straightens look for a large gravel layby on the left, opposite a gate. Park here. (The boulders will have been visible to the North of the road)

The crag is just inside the Access Land boundary and as such climbing is permitted. However, the most direct and quickest approach uses a public footpath over private land. There has been one encounter with the landowner who 'was unhappy about his land being crossed. To avoid conflict please use the approach described, lock gates and be meticulous about the 'Country Code' basics.

The described approach makes use of a public footpath to reach the Access Land that the crag sits in. Carefully double back along the road approximately 100m to a fingerpost on the North side. Cross the fence and follow an indistinct path next to a collapsed wall. Follow this down to a small gate (Sometimes muddy.) The blocs are 150m over to the right.

Parking QR Code: [Google Maps](#)

Old School Parking GR: NU 10440593

## QR CODES.....

Switch on your phone camera and point it at the CQ Code to the right. The phone will then 'ask' to open Google Maps in a browser tap the question/query and Google Maps will open with the parking place 'pinned'. If directions are required, choose to 'stay on the web'. Select your start point and Google Maps will calculate your route to the parking.



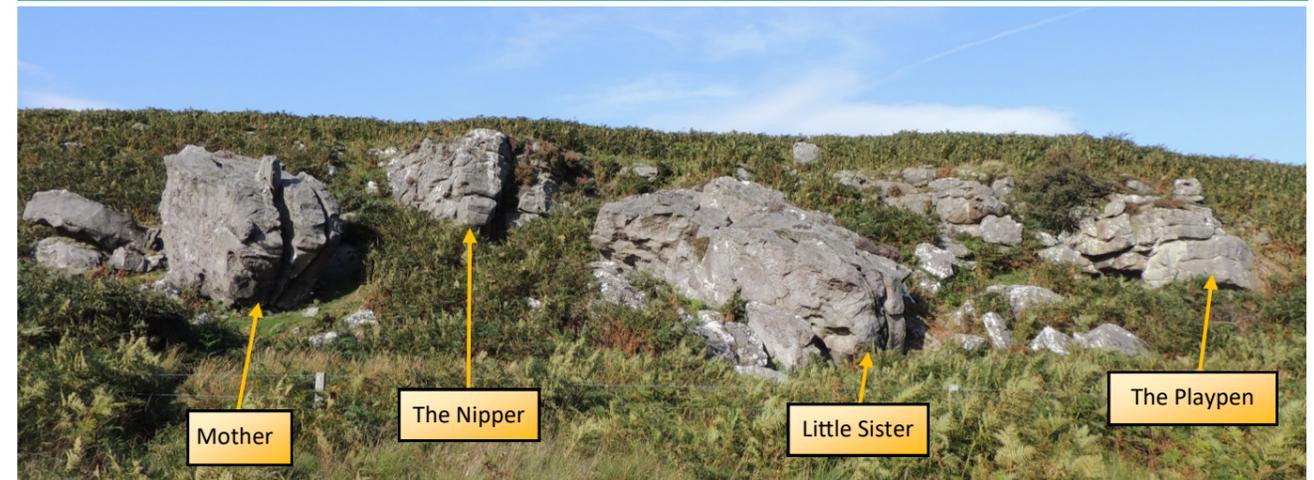
## Situation and Character

The crag consists of four small South facing blocks, that carry no drainage. The location is somewhat sheltered from northerly wind. The rock quality is mixed. Certainly the North side of the Mother should be avoided if damp as many of the hold are flakes that may break if moist.

The majority of the problems are in the mid to high sixes and with many entertaining eliminates there is plenty here to occupy an afternoon or evening. For those operating in the sevens, the Generation Game will make a visit worthwhile.

## History

These rocks have been hiding in plain sight for.....ever. Never visited because of a legend they were rubbish. Eventually Bob Smith took the trouble to actually visit the crag, discovering the real potential. He and Graeme Read then set about developing the blocs in 2019. Indeed, the most notable problem here is Graeme's Generation Game a difficult traverse on the leaning North wall of the Mother's backside.

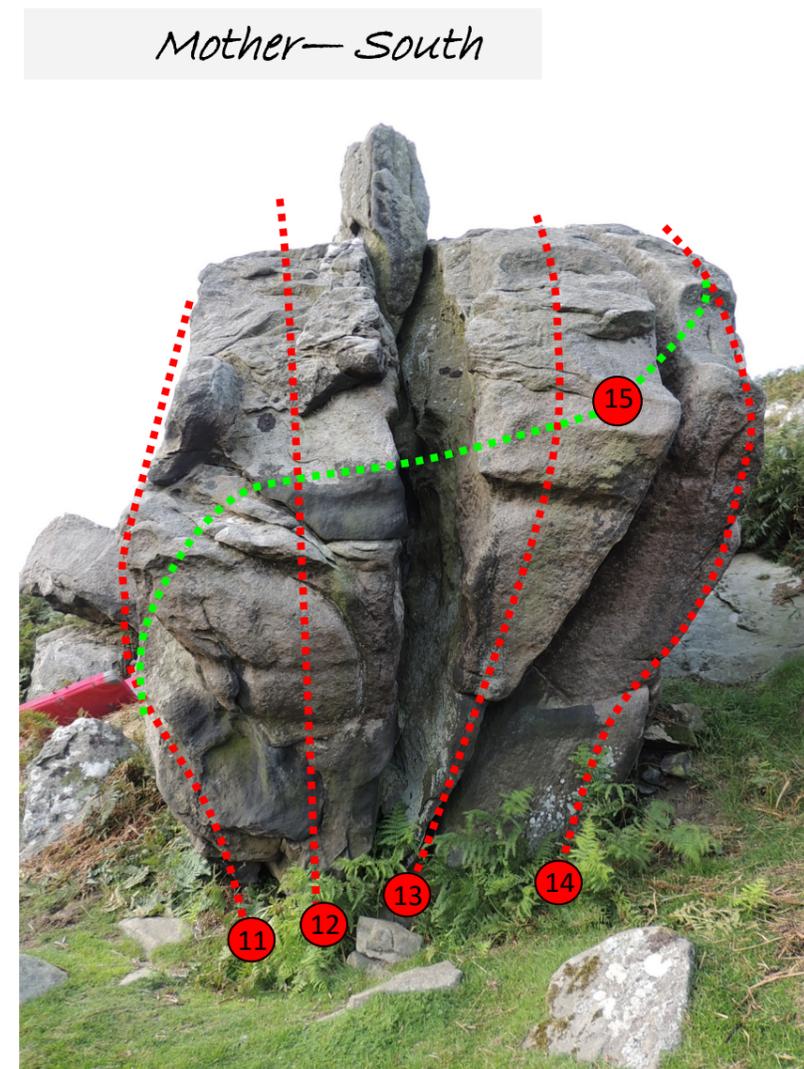
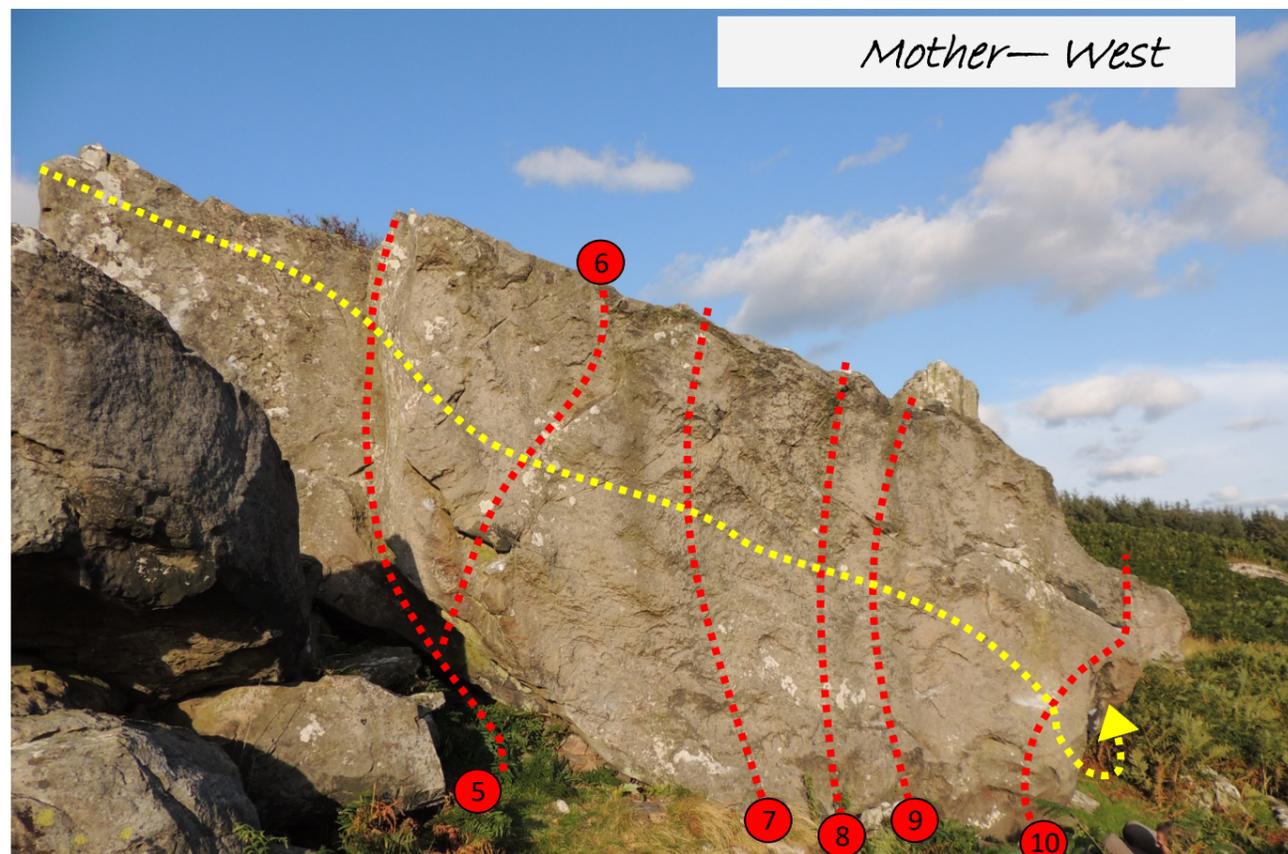
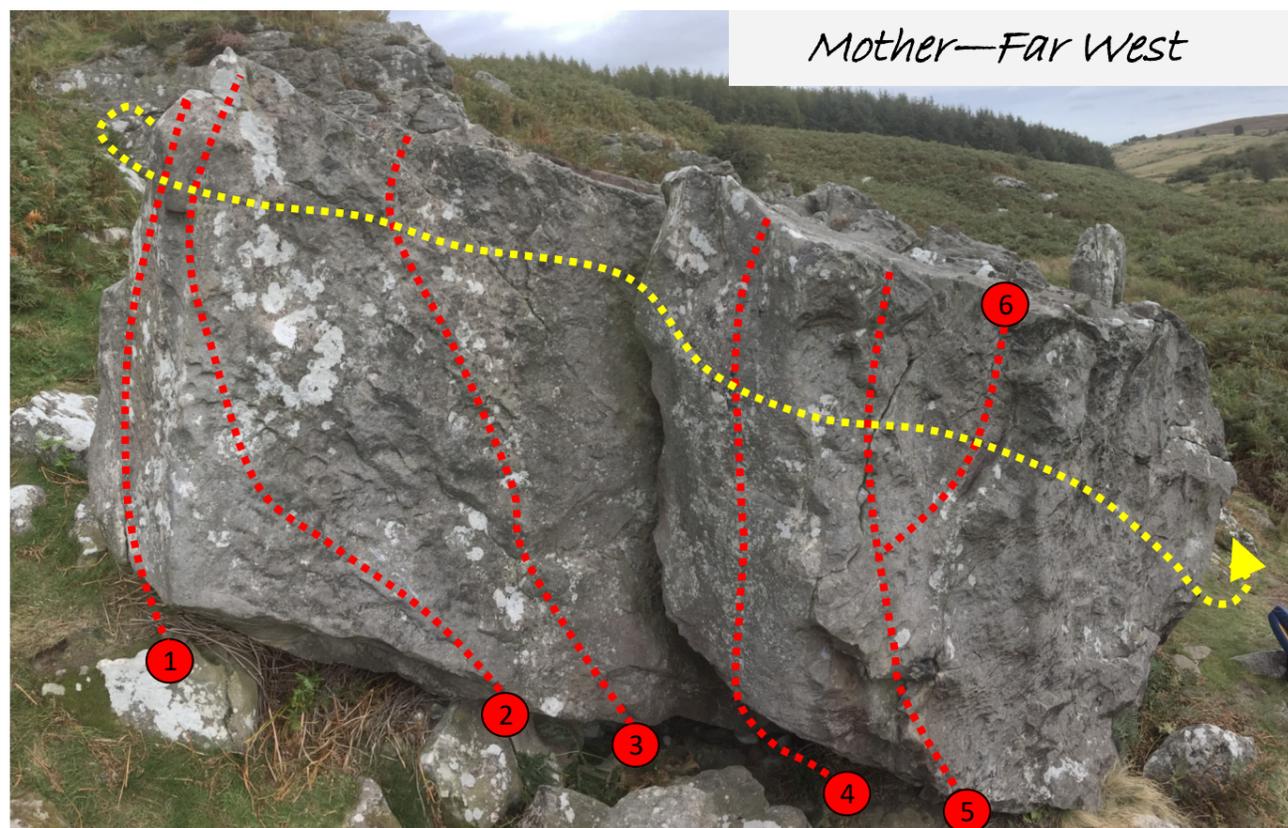


Graeme Read

On Some Mothers Do Ave Em!

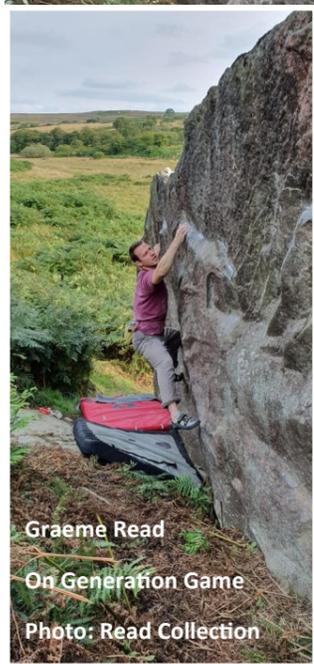
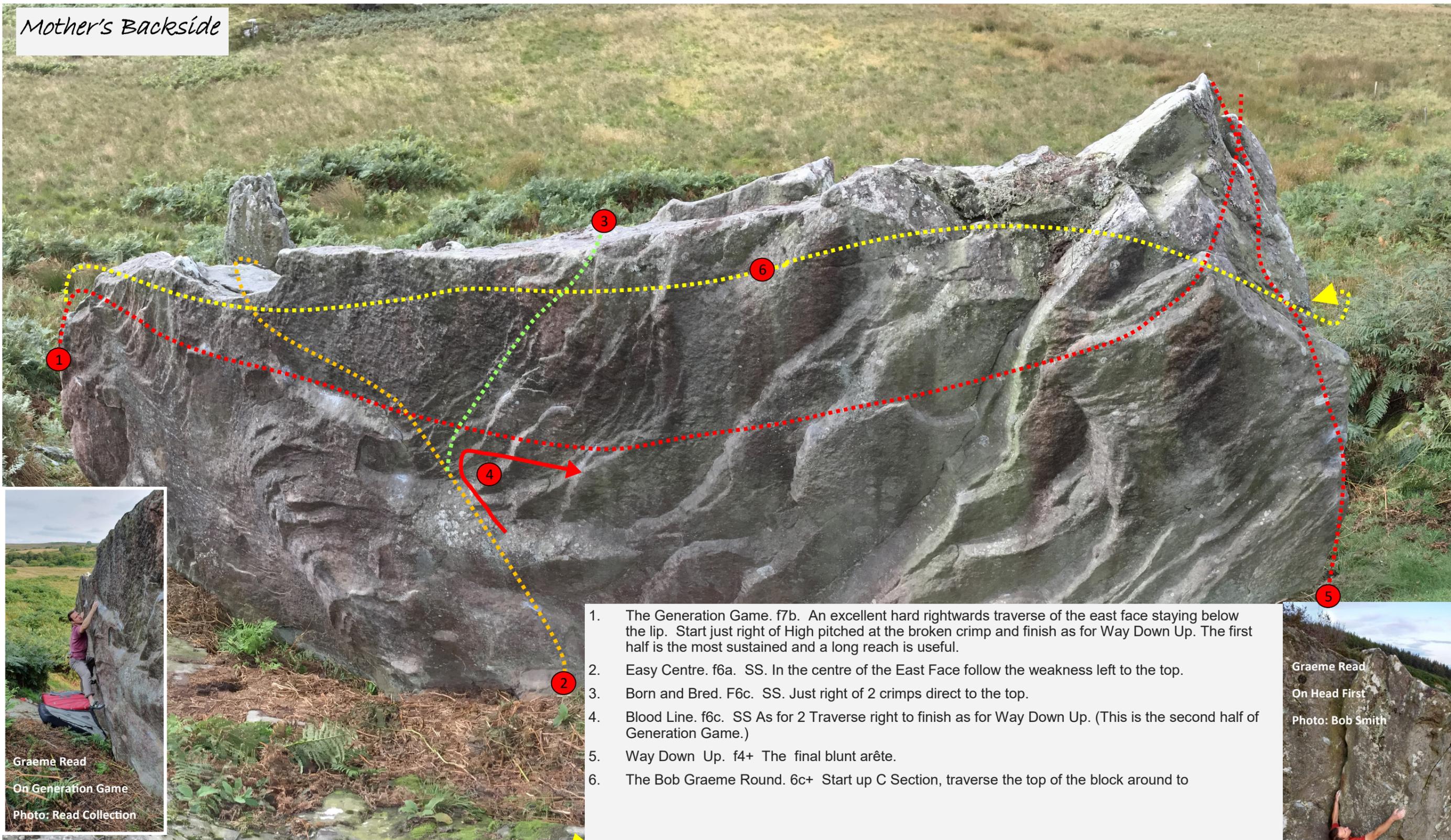
Photo: Bob Smith

The information and photographs contained in the guide have been supplied by Bob Smith and Graeme Read.

**MOTHER'S BLOC WEST AND SOUTH SIDES.**

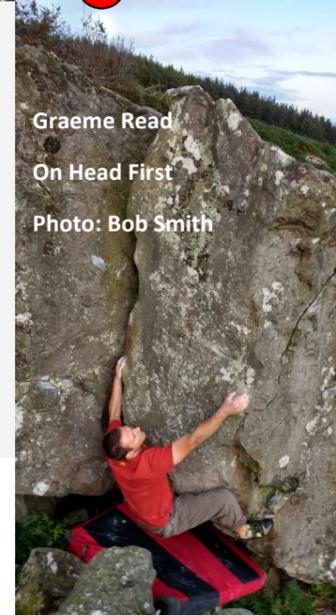
1. Legs Up. F6a. SS. From a good left hand (Right hand not so good.) an awkward pull gets your feet up.
2. Problem Child. f7a. SS Left hand on arête right on rounded crimp, climb the wall and arête with difficulty.
3. Nursery Wall. f6b+. SS. With hands on good holds, pull left and climb the awkward wall.
4. Head First. f6b. SS Start as low as possible, Slide down off the bum block until your feet meet the ledges clamp and pull your way out. A classic.
5. Heartburn. f6a. SS. From the jug move up, and stay on the arête.
6. Escape. f6a. SS. As for Heartburn but break out right.
7. PMT. f6a+. Straight up from two flat holds. Reachy.
8. Morning Sickness. F6a. Again straight up the wall.
9. Nausea. f6a. More of the same.
10. Some Mothers Do Ave Em! f7a+/b? SS. Pull up and right from a sloping hold.
11. Cramp. f6b. SS. Using two good side holds pull up and left.
12. Contraction. f6b+. The central flake is out.
13. Maribou Stork. f6c. SS. Left hand on a good crimp, right hand takes a poor pinch and a foot jam! Everything else is out!
14. High Pitched. f6c+. SS. Pull up the right hand arête.
15. C Section. f6c. Start as for 11 and traverse to 14 on the obvious flatish slopers. This is also the start of the Bob Graham Round traverse (f6c+).

Mother's Backside



Graeme Read  
On Generation Game  
Photo: Read Collection

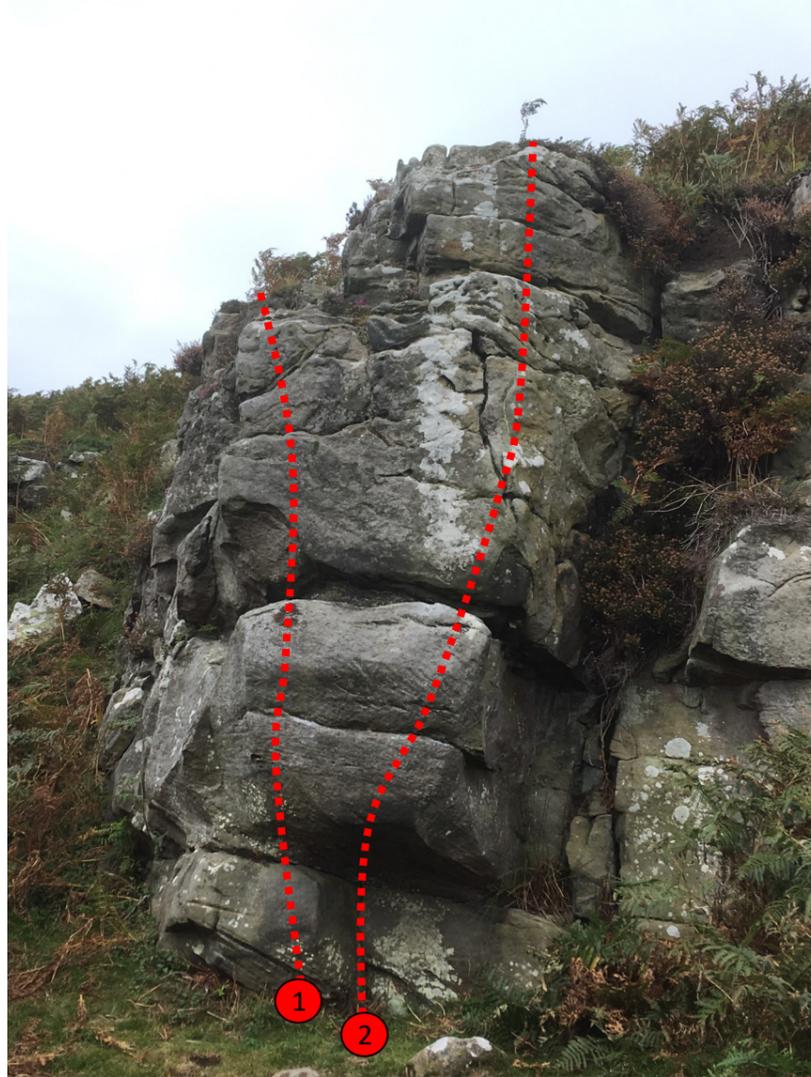
1. The Generation Game. f7b. An excellent hard rightwards traverse of the east face staying below the lip. Start just right of High pitched at the broken crimp and finish as for Way Down Up. The first half is the most sustained and a long reach is useful.
2. Easy Centre. f6a. SS. In the centre of the East Face follow the weakness left to the top.
3. Born and Bred. F6c. SS. Just right of 2 crimps direct to the top.
4. Blood Line. f6c. SS As for 2 Traverse right to finish as for Way Down Up. (This is the second half of Generation Game.)
5. Way Down Up. f4+ The final blunt arête.
6. The Bob Graeme Round. 6c+ Start up C Section, traverse the top of the block around to



Graeme Read  
On Head First  
Photo: Bob Smith

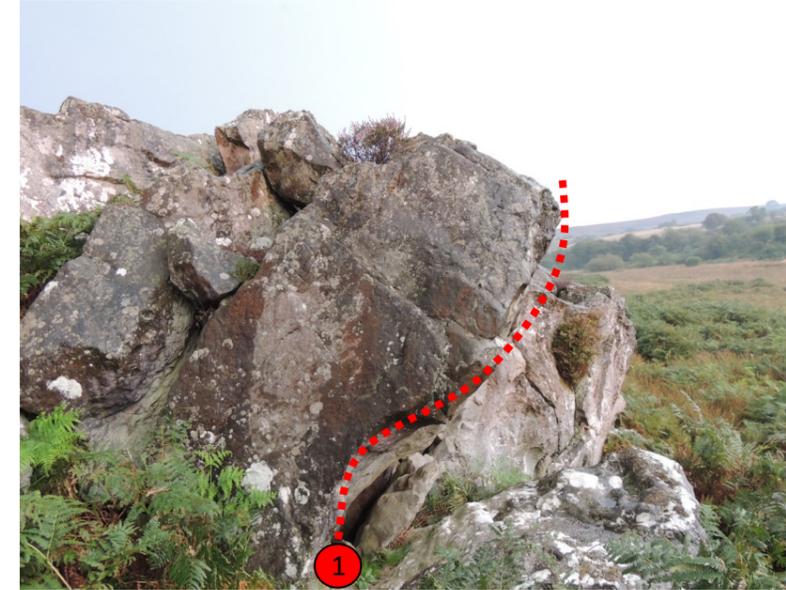
The leaning North side of Mother's Bloc is the surprise of the crag. However, it needs to be looked after....  
Most of the holds are flakes that could break if damp. Please don't climb on here if it isn't in perfect condition.

*The Nipper*



1. The Nipper. f6a+. SS. From two rounded crimps pullup and right to ledge. Not so easy to finish.
2. Fish Mouth. f5+. SS. Left hand in fish mouth right on rounded crimp, pull left to a good hold and easy finish.

*Little Bloc*

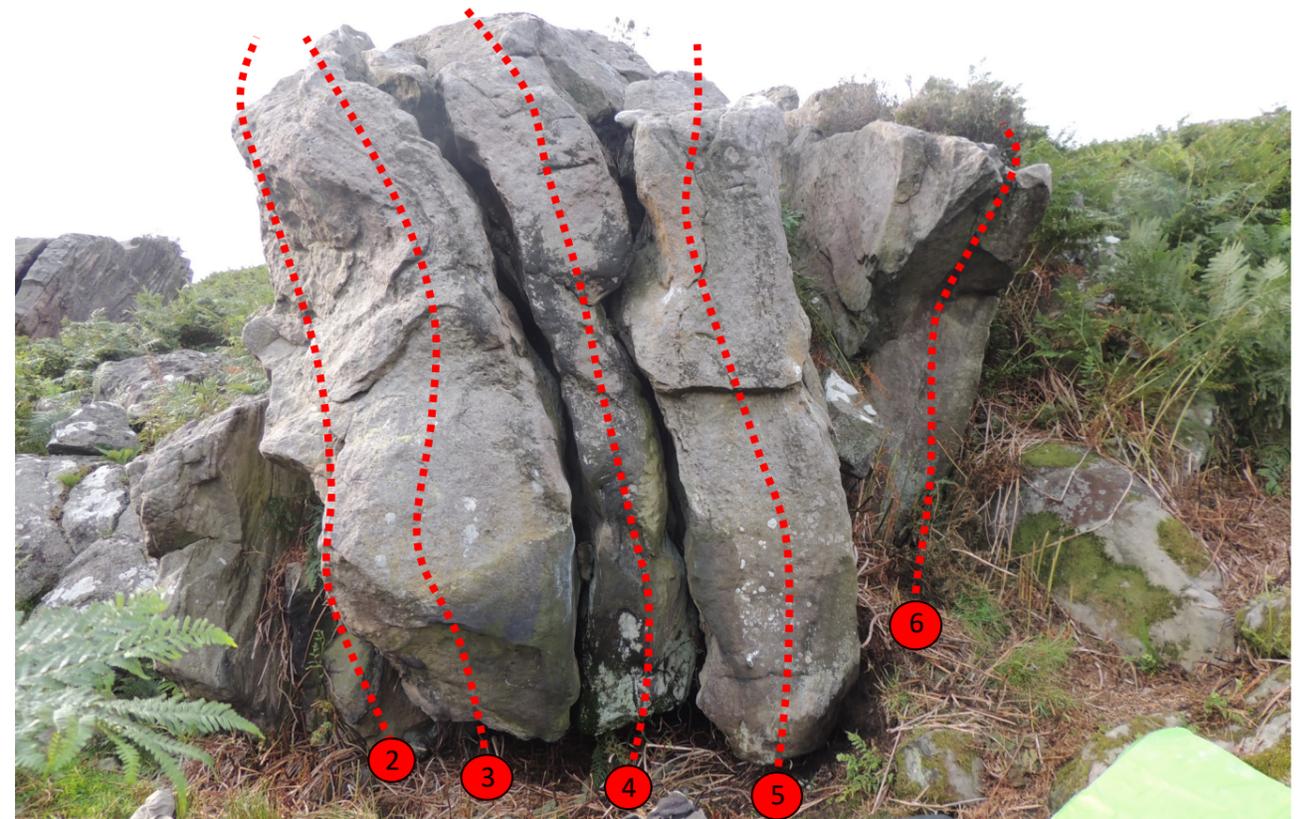


**West Side**

1. Little. f4+. SS. Climb the left hand arête.

**South Face**

2. Offspring. f6a/b. SS. From a pinch on the left hand arête go straight up.
3. Slap Happy. f6b. SS. From pinches for both hands, up the rib.
4. Nine Months. f6b+. SS. An eliminate only up the central flake.
5. The Egg. f6b+. SS. Two PINCH start, Pop left hand into the hole keep pinching and laying away on the right arête keep going.



6. Pull Together. f6b. SS. Right hand in hole left hand just underneath, pull up and swing left to good holds and finish.

## The Playpen

### 1. Under the Thumb. f6b+

SS. Crouch under the roof, using undercuts pull right to the jug on the nose use the vertical crack to drop down to the middle traverse follow this to finish up the arête.

### 2. The Thumb. F6c.

SS. Crouch under the roof, using the undercuts pull out to the jug on the nose pull up to the sloper then pull left to another sloper lock then grab the jug finish easily.

### 3. f6c+. Alternatively from the first sloper continue direct using pinches to the top 6c+

### 4. Easy Birth. f5+.

SS. Crouch under the roof, using the undercut and crack nip up the jugs to finish.

### 5. Blood Pressure. F6a.

SS. Sit on the block, pull left and up the dodgy looking crack to the top.

### 6. Cramped. f6a+.

SS. From the block, pull up and traverse right (cramped), to finish up the nose.

### 7. Push + Pull. F6a.

SS. Use the two crimps in the break, feet on the big ledge yank up and continue up the shallow groove.

### 8. Little Pull. f5+.

SS. Sit below the arête using two crimps aim for the flat jug then go.

### 9. Ground wipe. f6c+.

SS. Drop down to the lowest level then traverse right to the arête, finish up this.

*The aptly named Playpen is the last of the blocs. It is well featured and has three obvious traverse lines. These and the features have led to a number of eliminates. It's crowded, but fun!*

