

The Bridestones

Introduction

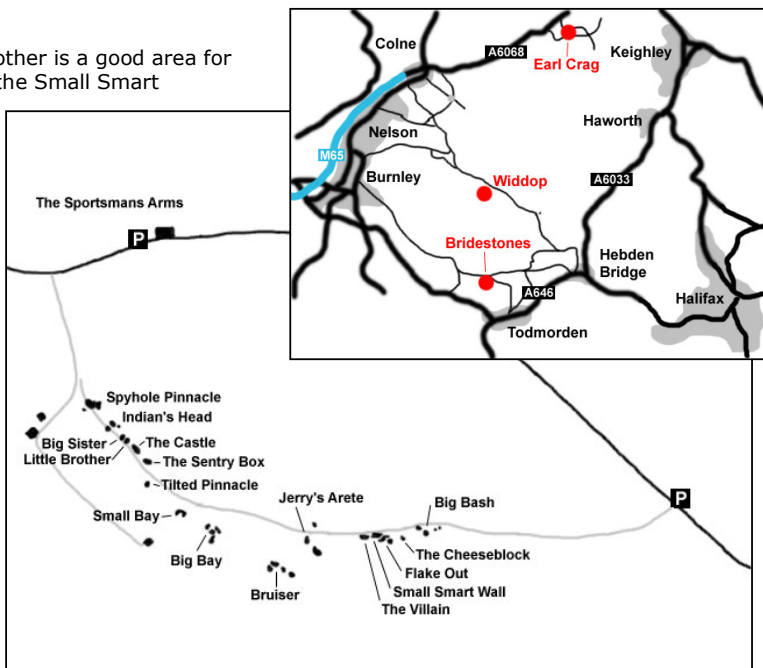
The Bridestones is one of the major Yorkshire bouldering crags. Numerous small edges and boulders spread out on the hillside above Todmorden provide excellent bouldering, including some classic highballs, with generally good landings. The rock is rough, and the climbing tends to feature unusual moves which can be tricky to work out. Many problems may seem to be undergraded on first acquaintance, but once you know how, they're easy!

The crag is very exposed to the weather. If there is a strong westerly wind it's best avoided - the lakeside boulders at Widdop are only 15 minutes drive away, and will almost certainly be sheltered. The crag can be shrouded in mist when the valley is clear. On a sunny summer's day the rock will be baking and the slopers un-hangable.

Access and Directions

The boulders lie close to a road known as the Long Causeway which runs along the edge of the moor above Todmorden in West Yorkshire. Finding a way up to the Causeway from Todmorden can be tricky on first acquaintance - the easiest (but longest) way is to head towards Hebden Bridge and take a left turn at the traffic lights at the edge of Hebden. Eventually this road passes through the village of Blackshaw Head, reaching a big car park at the Sportsman's Arms shortly after. Park here, then walk along the road a bit further to take a track which leads off to the left. The first boulders (Spyhole Pinnacle area) are obvious directly ahead.

Big Sister/Little Brother is a good area for warming up, as is the Small Smart Wall/Flake Out area at the other end of the crag. Other highlights include the bold problems on the Indian's Head, the Tilted Pinnacle problems, and if you're good enough, Jerry's Arete and the Cheeseblock.

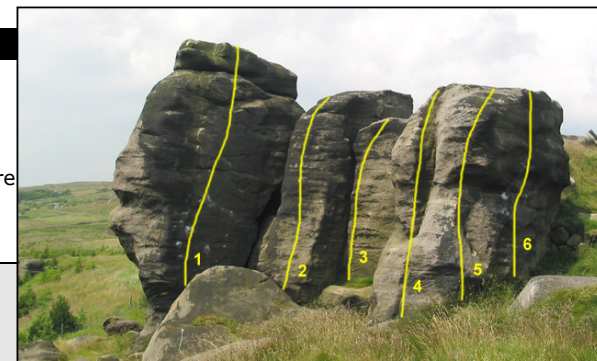


The Bridestones

- 98 problems
- Grades from V0- to V10
- Exposed hillside setting
- South facing
- Approach: 5-10 minutes walk

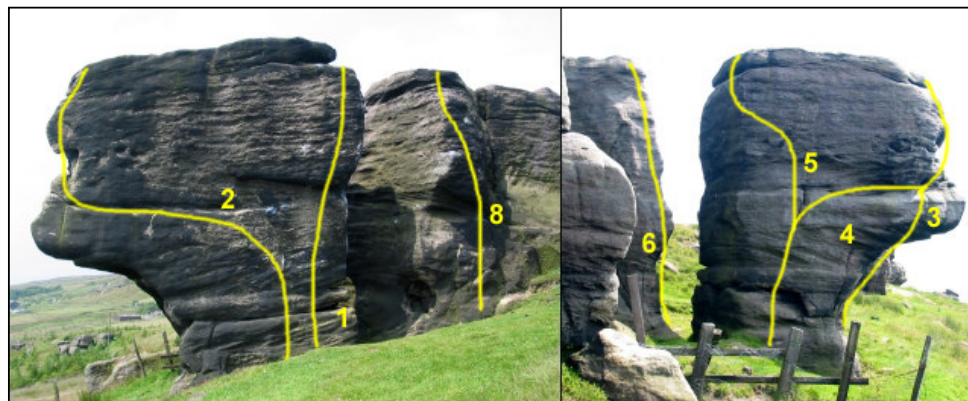
Spyhole Pinnacle

The first area isn't the best. There are numerous problems facing the farmhouse, but they have bad landings and aren't climbed very often. Further round the landings are better and there are some good problems.



- 1 **V5 Cleopatra.** The wall beside the arete is a classic.
- 2 **V3 Face Ache.** The pillar in the bay is excellent but a bit scary.
- 3 **V0 Short Corner.** The corner is excellent.
- 4 **V0-** The shallow runnel.
- 5 **V2** The blunt arete.
- 6 **V6 Out of Sight.** The right side of the arete, via a long reach from the obvious undercut.

The Indian's Head

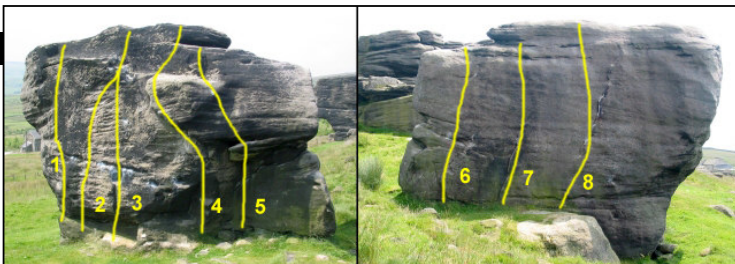


This big pinnacle is immediately recognisable, and has plenty of high quality, scary problems.

- 1 **V5 Horror Arete.** The big arete is a classic highball. Well-named!
- 2 **V9 Crucifixion.** Traverse the sloping break left to the arête. Another well-named problem.
- 3 **V7 Tete de Chien.** Climb the big overhang using the obvious pocket.
- 4 **V2 Warpath.** The obvious ledge leading right above the overhang. Feels very high and scary.
- 5 **V4 Cochise.** The arete. Start up Warpath, then move up and round the arete. Scary.
- 6 **V3 Long Knife Left.** The left arete of the wall opposite the pinnacle, climbed on the left.
- 7 **V2 Long Knife Right.** The right side of the arete.
- 8 **V3** The rounded arete opposite Horror Arete is excellent, but ... you guessed it, scary!
- V2** The blunt arete on the next boulder along towards Big Sister is nice.

Big Sister

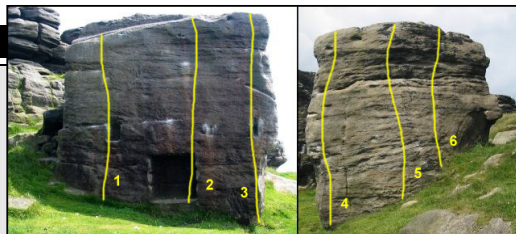
Just along from the Indian's Head, two blocks known as Big Sister and Little Brother offer excellent climbing with good landings.



- 1 **V9 The Cement Garden.** The wall left of Sisters of Mercy via a very long reach.
- 2 **V5 Sisters of Mercy.** The centre of the wall facing Little Brother on rubbish slopers.
- 3 **V2 Soul Sister.** The square pockets.
- 4 **V0- Hanging Flake.** Strangely enough this problem climbs the obvious hanging flake.
- 5 **V2** A nice little dyno.
- 6 **V0 Big Sister.** On the other face of the block, the left edge.
- 7 **V4** Use the crack and ledge to the left to reach a big sloper and the top. Height-dependent.
- 8 **V2 Sad Sister.** The flake crack, with a tricky rockover to reach the top. Scary.

Little Brother

- 1 **V0** The wall left of the recess in the face opposite Big Sister.
- 2 **V3 Brotherly Love.** An excellent problem up the wall above the recess.
- 3 **V1 Oh Brother.** The arete on its left.
- 4 **V2 Twin Brother.** On its right side the arete is a more difficult proposition.
- 5 **V2 A Little Pain.** The wall to the right of the arete.
- 6 **V0** The shorter wall further right past a shallow pocket at the top.



The Castle

This is the series of buttresses next to Big Sister/Little Brother. Not the best the area has to offer.

- 1 **V3 Chink in the Armour.** A rather contrived problem up the centre of the first smooth buttress.
- 2 **V1 Initial Wall.** The next buttress has a useful chip at the top.
- 3 **V5** Tricky moves over the bulge.
- 4 **V5** Traverse the lip of the overhang from left to right, finishing with a tricky move over the bulge.
- 5 **V7** The blank wall left of the arete.
- 6 **V4 Knight's Honour.** The obvious high nose.
- V0- Knot Tonight.** The wall left of the layback crack right of Knight's Honour.
- V0- Enjoy It.** The easy layback crack. Nice.



The Sentry Box

The next small buttress has several deep cracks and a classic overhanging nose.

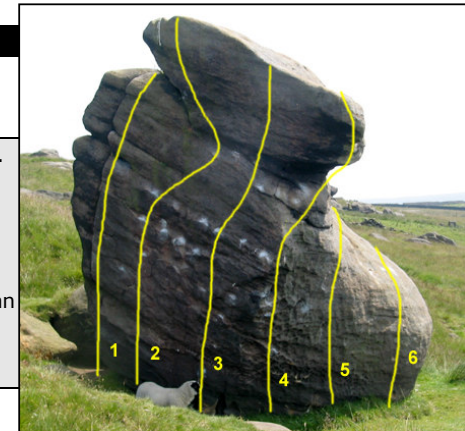
- 1 **V3** Slap your way up the arete.



Tilted Pinnacle

The small isolated pinnacle has some quality problems, including a classic mantel.

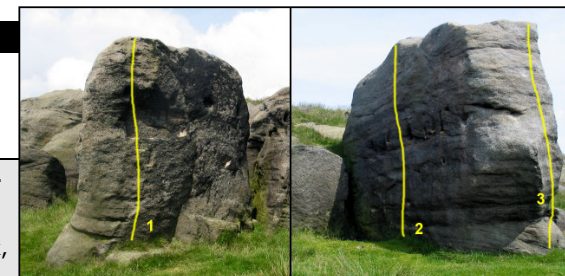
- 1 **V0-** The easy crack on the left side of the wall.
- 2 **V4 Lean and Mean.** The easiest line up the centre of the wall. Excellent.
- 3 **V5 Earplugs.** The wall just left of the arete.
- 4 **V5 Earache.** The arete is another excellent problem.
- 5 **V0 Ear'oule.** Climb the rounded slab using an obvious flake.
- 6 **V4** A desperate mantel on the rounded rock right of the steep wall.



Small Bay

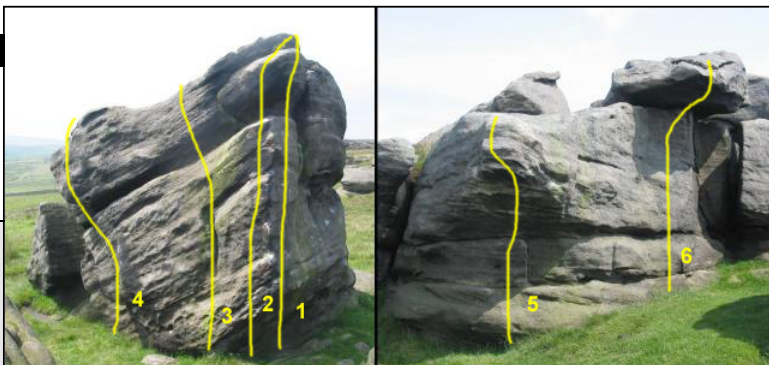
Two boulders slightly lower down the hillside form a small bay, with some pleasant easy problems.

- 1 **V0-** The arete of the left-hand block.
- 2 **V0-** The centre of the righthand block.
- 3 **V3** The arete of the righthand block, using a big undercut with the left hand and a long reach to the top.



Big Bay

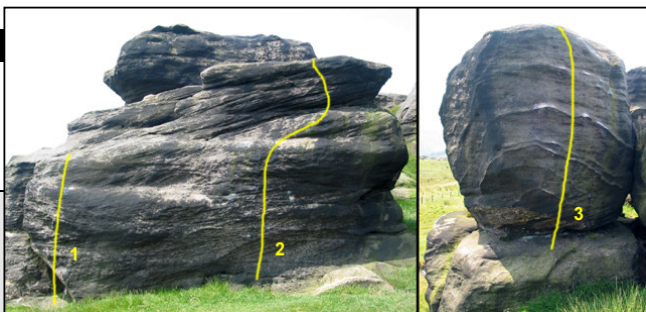
At the same level but further on, a jumble of boulders forms a bigger bay.



- 1 **V0** The big pinnacle has this impressive arete facing into the bay. The easiest way off the pinnacle is down the crack on the right.
- 2 **V0** The left side of the arete, moving right at the top.
- 3 **V2 Block Off.** The short crack and vague scoop left of the arete.
- 4 **V1 Not Cadbury's.** The flakes further left. Good.
- 5 **V4** The big overhang opposite the pinnacle, with a desperate mantel to finish.
- 6 **V3** The wall and roof further right. Scary.
- V4** On the boulder below the bay. A good left to right traverse round the lip of a small roof.

The Bruiser

Further on from Big Bay, and at the same level, this area consists of several buttresses with a few good problems.

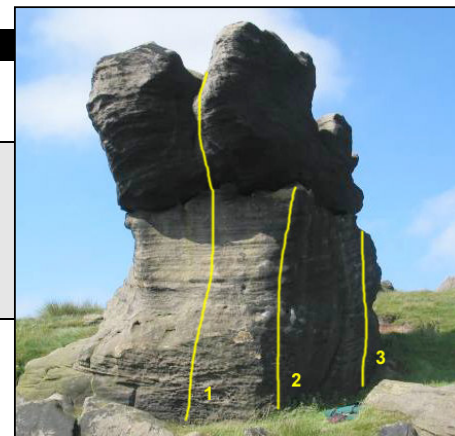


- 1 **V5 A Mouthful of Crystals.** On the lowest boulder in this area. Pull on with two poor slopers and slap for the top.
- 2 **V4** Starting at an obvious pocket, slappy moves lead up and right on slopers to a final rockover. Excellent.
- 3 **V1** The next boulder up the hillside has this entertaining problem on its uphill side.
- 4 **V1** The big rounded boulder has this nice arete.
- 5 **V1 Bruiser.** The wide crack is excellent.



Obscene Cleft

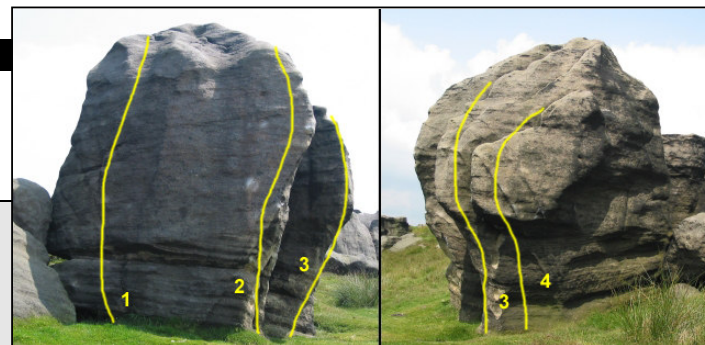
The next boulder along has a big cleft in its top half.



- 1 **E6 Obscene Cleft.** A rope is advisable if you want to try this hideous line!
- 2 **V3 Black Cheek.** The blunt arete right of the cleft to the break, then jump off. Superb, unusual climbing.
- 3 **V? Beta Blocker.** The wall to the right of the arete.

Jerry's Arete

Directly up the hillside from the Bruiser area is this big isolated block with an impressive arete.



- 1 **V5 Tom's Wall.** The blank wall left of the arete.
- 2 **V9 Jerry's Arete.** The impressive blank arete.
- 3 **V2 Slap.** The arete right of the hideous crack.
- 4 **V1 Whillans' Jam.** The layback flake further right.
- V0-** On the edge above Jerry's Arete, this problem climbs the superb sharp arete - start on the left, finish on the right.

The Villain

Near the trig point there are a series of vertical walls and aretes that give excellent climbing. This is the left-most area.



- 1 **V2 The Villain.** The excellent short crack.
- 2 **V0-** The right arete of the crack right of The Villain.
- 3 **V1 Perfection.** The narrow ramp line right of the crack.

Small Smart Wall

The next wall along is one of the best areas at the Bridestones. There is some confusion over where exactly the Small And Smart problems go, but who cares - all the problems are good.

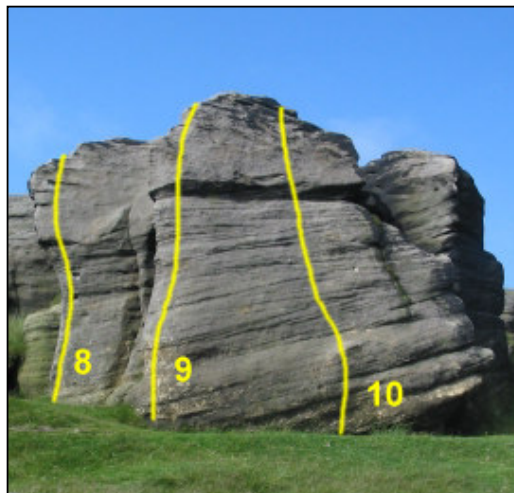
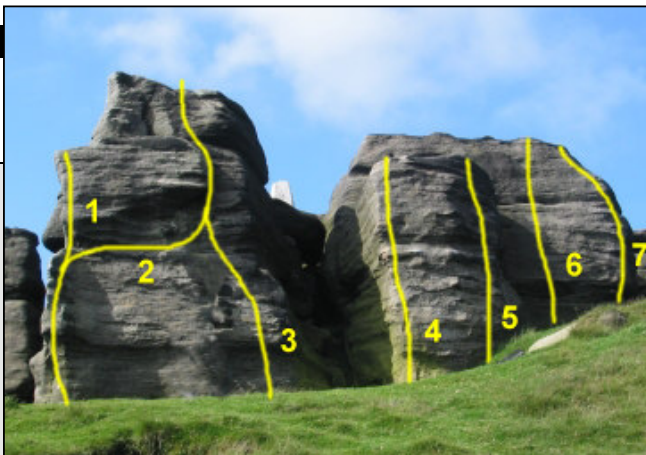


- 1 **V0 Straight And Narrow** The narrow buttress at the left hand end of the wall.
- 2 **V0** The arete left of Rampart.
- 3 **V2 Rampart.** A good little ramp line with unusual climbing.
- 4 **V5 Charlotte Rampling.** From the big pocket in the wall right of the ramp, reach up left (or dyno) to the top of the ramp.
- 5 **V0-Face Slap.** The excellent flake crack right of Rampart.
- 6 **V3 Small And Smart.** The line of least resistance up the centre of the wall. The easiest way involves undercutting with your thumb!
- 7 **V3 Smarter.** The line right of Small And Smart. Use the undercut with your left hand, and the pebble, to finish up Small And Smart.
- 8 **V8 Holdless.** The slab right again on pebbles.
- 9 **V0-** The arete of the crack on the next buttress.
- 10 **V4** An eliminate up the centre of the buttress without the aretes. Harder than it looks!

Flake Out

The next buttress, really a continuation of the edge, is a bit higher.

- 1 **V?** The left arete of the next buttress. High and scary.
- 2 **V1 Flake Out.** Start up the arete then move right to climb the big hanging flake. Superb and high!
- 3 **V2 Flake Off.** Gain the hanging flake from the right arete.
- 4 **V3 Big Nose.** The arete on the next boulder to the right. Technical and superb.
- 5 **V3** The blunt arete to the right.
- 6 **V4** The centre of the wall.
- 7 **V1** Another blunt arete.

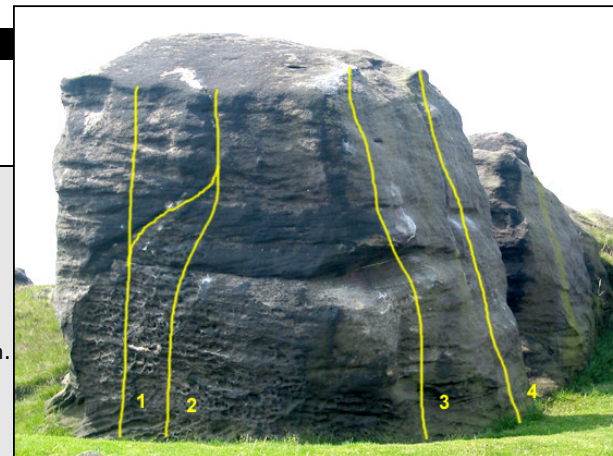


- 8 **V?** On the next boulder along, the sharp arete climbed on the right.
- 9 **V5 Buttonhole.** The rounded left arete of the big buttress. High and scary.
- 10 **V4 Things to Come.** Mantel onto the front face and either continue if you're brave or jump off.

The Cheeseblock

This small block has unusual wrinkly rock in its lower half, and some crimpy problems.

- 1 **V9** The left side of the overhanging wall starting on two undercuts.
- 2 **V9 Cheeseblock.** A hard move to a flake gains a sloping finish. An alternative, possibly easier start traverses in from the undercuts of the previous problem.
- 3 **V2 Bridesmaid.** The blunt right-hand arete, climbed on the right. Superb.
- 4 **V0** The crack in the slab. Not particularly good.



The Bridestone



Climbing on the Bridestone itself is banned but the boulders nearby have some good problems.

- 1 **V3** Sit start at a hole and use a sloping flake to gain the top.
- 2 **V0**- An easy slab.
- 3 **V2 Last Love.** Left of Big Bash, in the centre of the wall is a flake. Reach this by some strange contortions!
- 4 **V4 Big Bash.** A classic problem up the blunt arete. Lunge between two big pockets to reach a scary top-out.

Acknowledgements

This topo includes information previously published in:

- "Yorkshire Gritstone Bouldering", by Alan Cameron-Duff, published by ROCKFAX, 2000.
- "Yorkshire Gritstone", compiled by Dave Musgrove for the Yorkshire Mountaineering Club, 1998.

Feedback

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