

Widdop

Introduction

Widdop reservoir sits in a remote and beautiful area of moorland between Hebden Bridge and Burnley. Overlooking the reservoir on all sides there are numerous small crags and boulders, which offer some excellent climbing and bouldering.

The Main Edge. Three large buttresses and several smaller boulders on the south side of the reservoir make up the main edge. There are plenty of routes here, including the classic E8, "Reservoir Dogs", and some limited bouldering. On the whole the bouldering isn't great, and it is not documented here.

The Lakeside Boulders. This is the collection of large boulders beside the south shore of the reservoir next to the plantation. The climbing tends to be technical and sometimes fingery, with lots of classic wall and arête problems. The landings are invariably good, although often waterlogged, especially in winter. If there is a strong westerly wind these boulders will be one of the few sheltered crags in the area, but on warm summer evenings the midges can be ferocious.

Clattering Stones. At the head of the valley a short edge and collection of boulders have some good climbing. The edge, described as "The Drums" in the YMC guide, has some short routes and highball problems, while the boulders scattered across the hillside are better from a bouldering point of view.

Scout Crag. The edge on the north side of the valley, known as Scout Crag, is also good. The obvious smooth wall has several short routes, but is not particularly good for bouldering. Further right (looking in) the edge is more broken, but the bouldering is better. The climbing tends to be steep and powerful, in contrast to the other areas here. Climbing is officially not allowed though.

Access and Directions

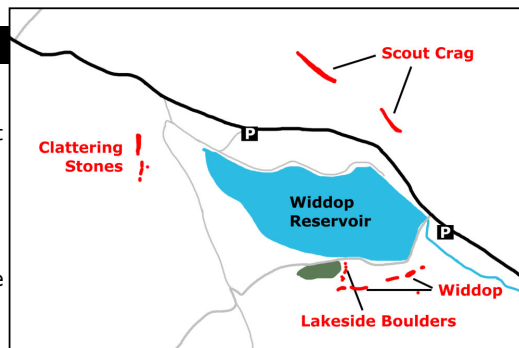
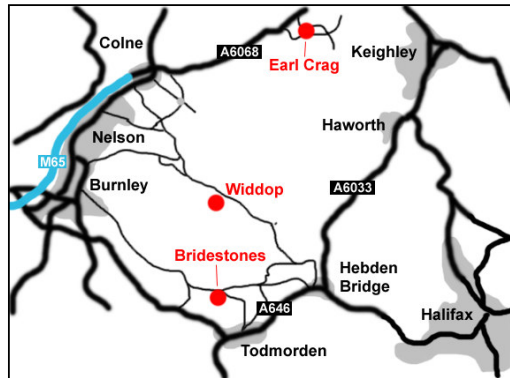
A minor road runs past the reservoir from Nelson and Colne in Lancashire to Hebden Bridge in Yorkshire. There is a car park at the east end of the reservoir, near the dam.

Lakeside Boulders. Park in the water authority car park near the dam. The boulders are obvious on the far side of the reservoir, next to a plantation. Five minutes gentle walk.

Clattering Stones. Park in the large lay-by at the opposite end of the reservoir from the dam. From here, the easiest way to reach the boulders is to walk along the road westwards

Widdop

- 95 problems in 3 areas.
- Wild moorland setting.
- Approach time: 5-15 minutes.



(away from the reservoir) to reach a track that starts at a metal barrier. Follow the track down the hill to cross the stream at a bridge. Continue along the path for a short way before sloggling directly up the steep hillside, aiming for the first large boulder – this is boulder 1. The other boulders are further up the hillside. About fifteen minutes walk to the first boulder.

Scout Crag. Park in the main car park as for the Lakeside Boulders. Walk along the road westwards until beneath the right-hand end of the crag, then head straight up the hillside. It's best to avoid the temptation to leave the road too soon. About ten minutes walk to the first boulder.

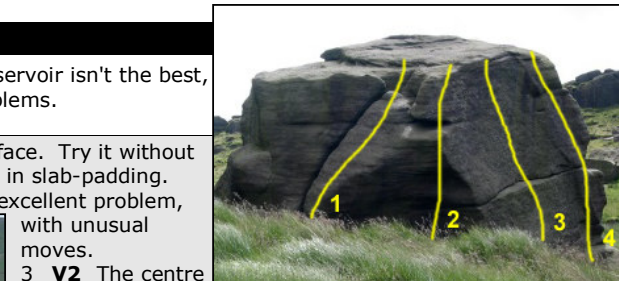
The Lakeside Boulders

The seven large boulders extending up the hill below Purgatory Buttress have some fantastic climbing. They are described from the boulder lowest down the hill, closest to the reservoir, upwards.

First Boulder

The small boulder closest to the reservoir isn't the best, but there are a couple of good problems.

- 1 **V0** The wide crack on the front face. Try it without using the left wall – a nice exercise in slab-padding.
- 2 **V1** The overhanging nose is an excellent problem,

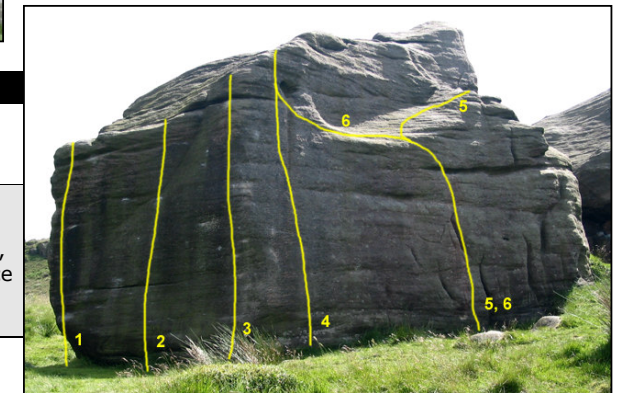


- 3 **V2** The centre of the wall has nice climbing, with a mantel start and sloping top.
- 4 **V1** The arête.
- 5 **V0** The centre of the uphill wall of the block on small holds, usually with a wet landing!

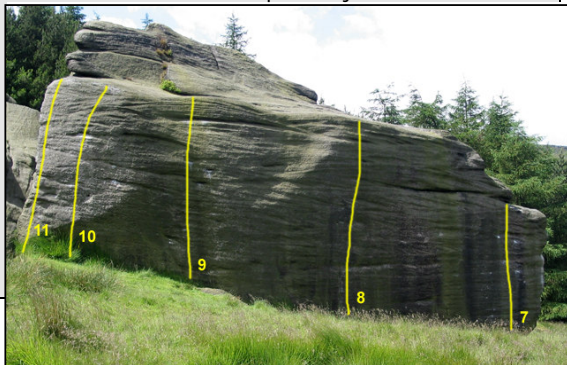
Fight on Black

This big boulder has several classic problems.

- 1 **V4 Splashdown.** A classic, dynamic arête problem. Several methods are possible. Well-named, but much improved these days since some kind soul dug a drainage channel.



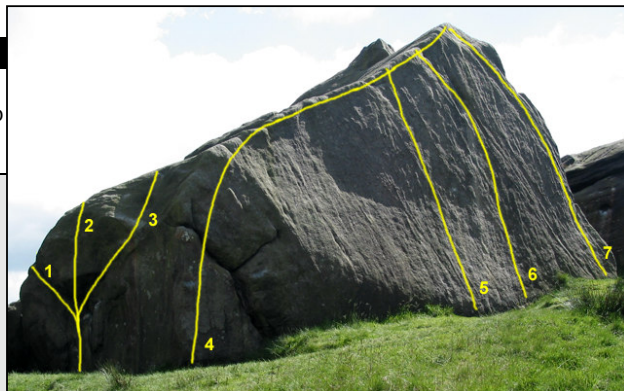
- 2 **V5** The shallow groove in the centre of the wall on small crimps. Very reachy to start, although taller climbers will find the next move harder.
- 3 **V9 Fight On Black.** The rounded arête has superb, sustained technical climbing.
- 4 **V7 The Runnel.** Baffling moves gain the runnel to the right of the arête.
- 5 **V2 The Shelf.** Start up the crack then use poor slopers to gain a standing position on the ledge. Excellent.
- 6 **V4 The Traverse.** Start up The Shelf then traverse left on slopers to join The Runnel. Good.
- 7 **V7** The crimpy wall left of Splashdown. Excellent.
- 8 **V7 Three Pebbles and a Funeral.** The left side of the big, blank wall. Now defunct since the loss of a pebble.
- 9 **V4** The line of rounded slopers holds just left of a shallow scoop.
- 10 **V3** The wall beside the left arête, with a reachy move from the slot to the top.
- 11 **V0-** The left arête is nice.



Pickpocket's Wall

There are more superb problems on this boulder. The big steep slab is particularly good.

- 1 **V0-** From the big hole, climb the crack up left to a slopy finish.
- 2 **V3** Undercut the hole and go straight up. Height dependent.
- 3 **V3 Pool Traverse.** Traverse right from the hole then straight up on slopers. Well-named, but excellent climbing.

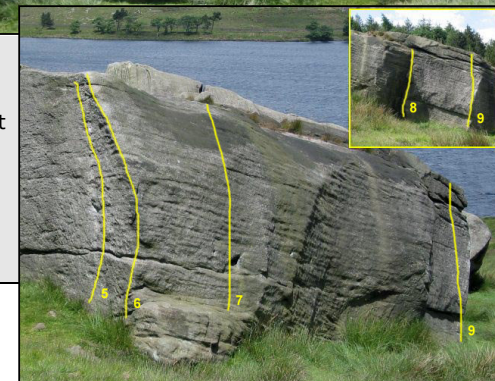
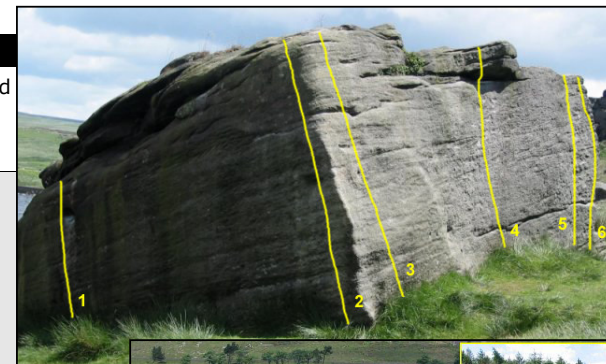


- V3** A right-hand variation to Pool Traverse. Start up the arête then make an excellent move left to finish up the normal route.
- 4 **V2 The Big Top.** Hand traverse the top of the big slab from left to right, finishing at the top of the boulder.
- 5 **V3 Pickpocket's Wall.** The steep slab just left of the crack, escaping left at the top.
- 6 **V3 Pickpocket's Crack.** An excellent slab problem. Tricky moves on monos lead to an easier crack. High!
- 7 **V0 Fagin's Ridge.** The right edge of the slab is also excellent
- V0-** The big slab in the gully has several easy lines.

Four Square

Another big block. Not quite as good as some of the other boulders, but the arête of Four Square is good.

- 1 **V0** Climb the wall from the obvious big sloper.
- 2 **V4 Four Square.** The left hand side of the arête with a tricky move on slopers at the top. Superb.
- 3 **V2 Four Square.** The arête on its right hand side. Probably the easiest line starts on the left and finishes on the right.
- 4 **V1** The centre of the wall right of the arête. Don't bother with the tiny holds, just jump!
- 5 **V4** An eliminate up the wall immediately left of the next arête on sharp holds.
- 6 **V0** The easy arête.
- 7 **V0-** The easy blunt arête starting by a slot.
- 8 **V0** The groove.
- 9 **V2** The blunt rib right of the groove is surprisingly awkward.



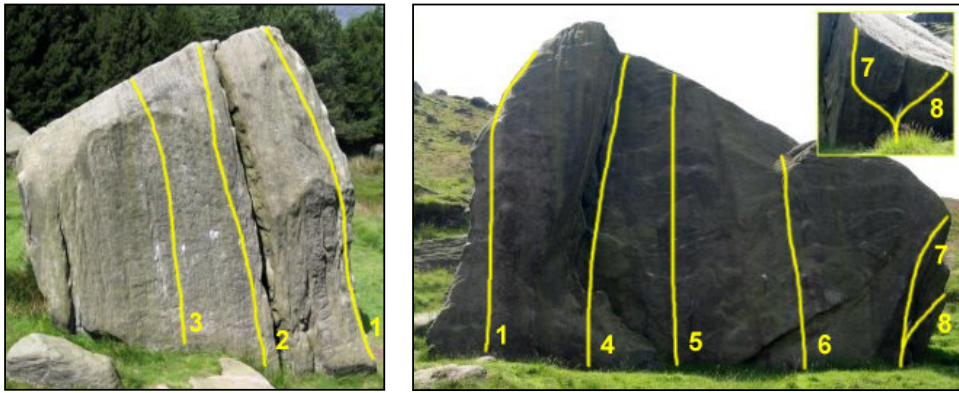
Lakeside Boulder 5

This boulder has yet another top quality arête problem.

- 1 **V2 Red Edge Right.** The obvious arête on its right-hand side, involving delicate smearing and laybacking. Try it without the arête!
- 2 **V2 Red Edge Left.** The left side of the arête is also good.
- 3 **V5 Red Edge Traverse.** Start on the right side of the arête then move around it and finish up the left side. Slightly artificial, but the move round the arête is very good.



Umpleby's Arête



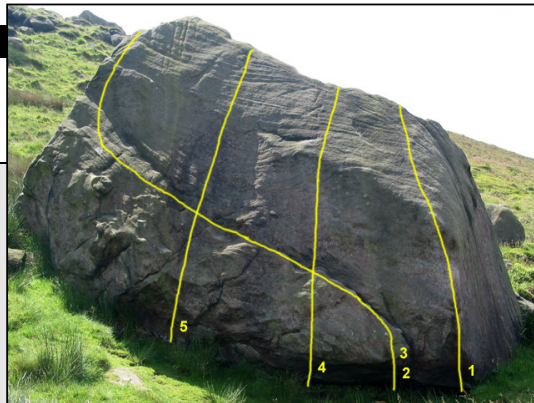
Another boulder, another classic arête!

- 1 **V0 Umpleby's Arête.** The big arête is superb but scary, the crux rockover being high up.
- 2 **V0- The Offwidth.** The wide crack left of the arête is entertaining!
- 3 **V6** The wall left of the wide crack on pebbles.
- 4 **V0- The Big Crack.** The wide crack right of the arête.
- 5 **V1 The North Face.** The slab right of the crack.
- 6 **V0-** The shorter slab further right.
- 7 **V?** On the short steep wall facing the plantation, sit start in the slot, slap left to the arête and up.
- 8 **V?** Start in the slot but slap up right to the lip.

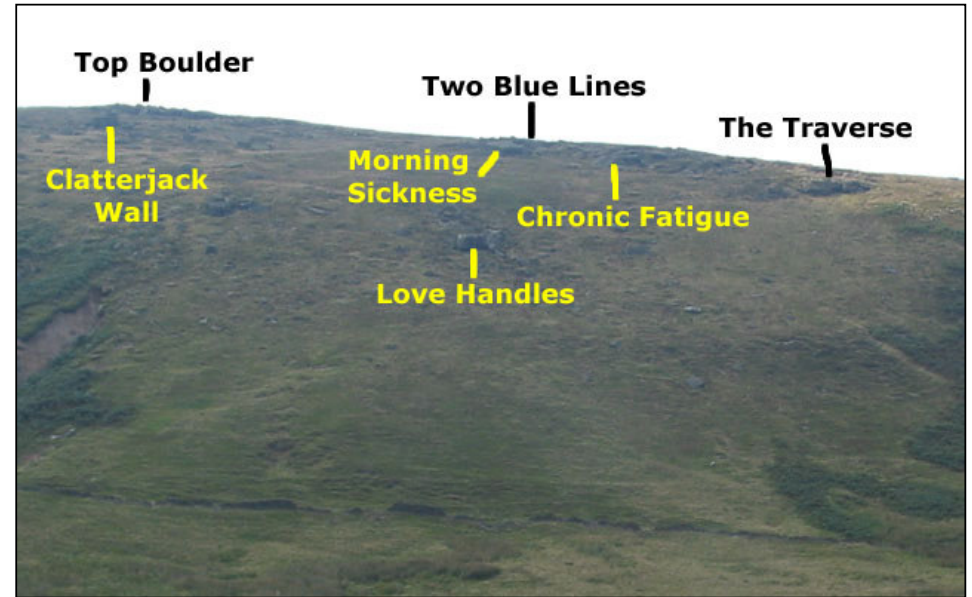
The Seventh

The last boulder has more excellent climbing. The ground beneath this boulder is often very wet unfortunately.

- 1 **V5 Seventh Wave.** Starting on the right-hand side of the arête, climb the blunt arête to a holdless finish! Superb.
- 2 **V0 Seven Steps To Heaven.** A right-to-left traverse with feet on the obvious line of holds.
- 3 **V3 System Seven.** The same traverse line but with hands on the line of holds.
- 4 **V2 Seventh Heaven.** A great problem up the slab, with a tricky rockover at the top.
- 5 **V2 Seven Deadly Sins.** The faint scoop further left is also good, high & delicate.



Clattering Stones



Much less extensive, and less well known than the Lakeside Boulders, this is nevertheless a good area. The highlights include the groove on the first boulder; the superb dyno 'Morning Sickness'; and the technical wall problems on the biggest block.

Love Handles

The first boulder, lowest down the hillside, has a clean wall facing the road.

- 1 **V7 Poppy Arlington.** The left arête of the boulder, using holds in the groove on the right.
- 2 **V4 Love Handles.** The groove right of the arête is superb.
- 3 **V0 Mothercare Here We Come.** The crack isn't very good.
- 4 **V1 Early Learning Centre.** The blunt arête.



Chronic Fatigue

Further up the hillside is a boulder with a big, easy angled slab.

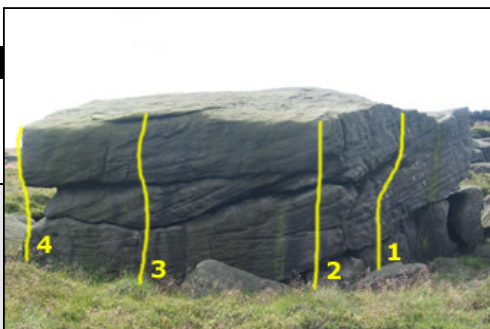
1 **V3 Chronic Fatigue.** Traverses the steep side of the boulder from a sit start. Easy after the first move.



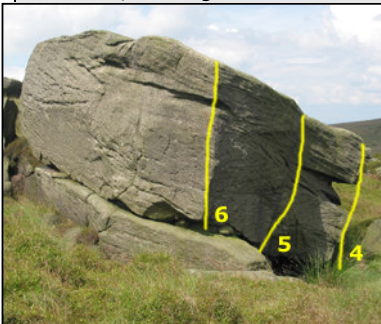
Morning Sickness

Further up this bigger boulder is fairly obvious. Not the best climbing in the area, apart from Morning Sickness which is a classic.

1 **V0- Fern Crack.** The easy crack line comes complete with a fern.
 2 **V? Antenatal.** The tricky blunt arête.
 3 **V? First Trimester.** The wall right of the left arête, starting from beside the boulder.



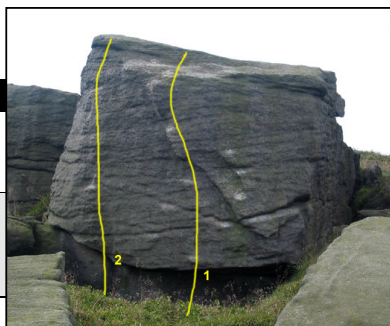
4 **V1? Birth Control.** The arête.
 5 **V4 Morning Sickness.** The vague scoop left of the arête. Start on the ledge, rockover and dyno for the top. Superb!
 6 **V1 What Women Want.** The arête above the ledge is scary.



Two Blue Lines

Just uphill from boulder 3 this block has a clean slab facing across the valley.

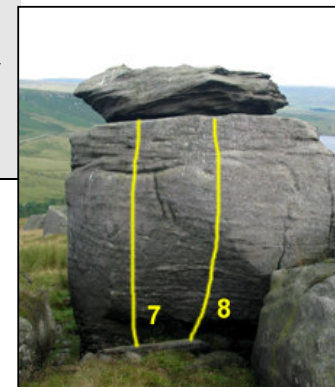
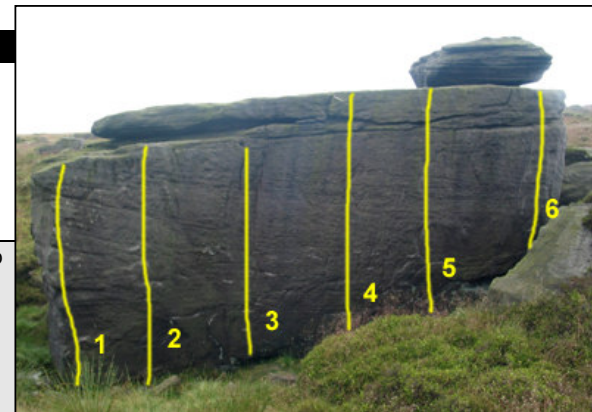
1 **V1 Two Blue Lines.** The right side of the slab via a big flake. Excellent.
 2 **V0 Predictor.** The left side of the slab, with a long reach or a step off the boulder to start.



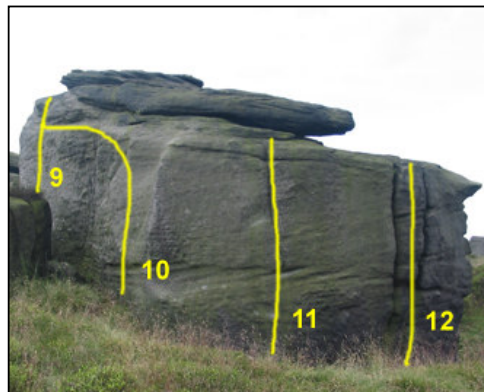
Clatterjack Wall

Further up the hillside again and much further left (looking in) is this excellent boulder, easily recognised by the perched block on top. The obvious smooth wall has some superb technical problems.

1 **V1 Clatterjack Toad.** The sharp arête.
 2 **V5 Linea Nigra.** The wall between the arête and the crack has at least two variations. Reachy and technical.
 3 **V2 Clatterjack Pencil.** The thin crack is excellent.
 4 **V? Androsterone.** The thin flake in the wall. Reachy and fingery.
 5 **V6 Fontanelles.** The thin flakes further right. Also reachy and fingery.
 6 **V9 The Uprising.** The impressive blank arête.
 7 **V1 Mesentery.** The right side of the arête.
 8 **V0 Mesoderm.** The wall just right again.



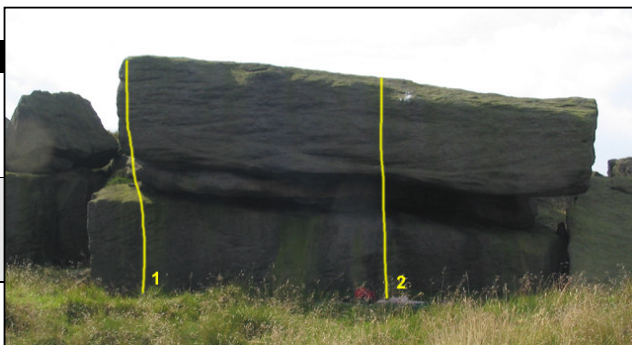
9 **V0 Zygote.** The obvious crack.
 10 **V2 Menarche.** Traverse the sloping break to finish up the previous problem.
 11 **V0- Blastocyst.** The crack in the slab.
 12 **V0- Braxton Hicks.** The twin cracks.



Top Boulder

Directly up the hill from the previous boulder. Both these problems need cleaning.

- 1 **V?** The left arête.
- 2 **V?** From a reasonable hold on the lip in the centre of the wall, slap for the top.



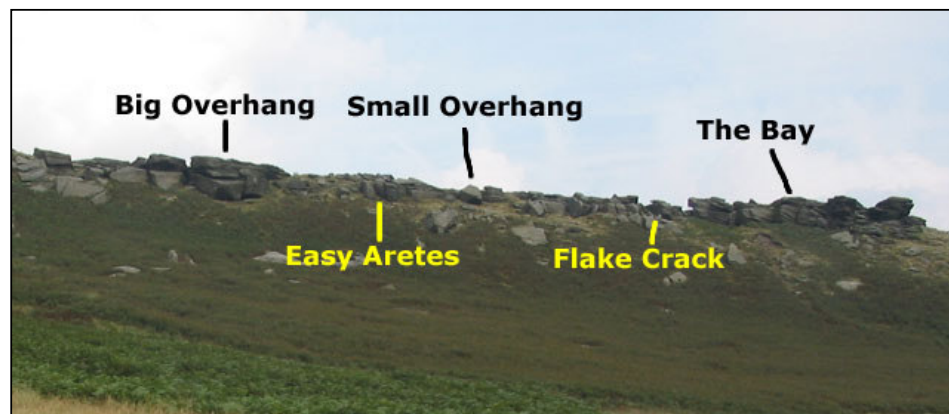
The Traverse

At the same level as boulder 2, half-way between it and the bigger buttresses of the Drums is this boulder with an obvious lip traverse.

- V?** The traverse of the lip in either direction on sloping holds.



Scout Crag

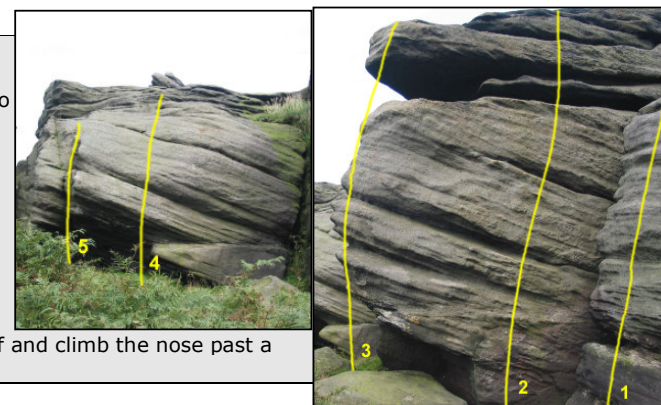


The best bouldering here is to be found on a series of boulders towards the right hand (east) end of the edge. Big overhangs abound, a total contrast to the Lakeside boulders across the valley. The obvious smooth vertical wall in the middle of the edge is less interesting.

The Bay - Right

The extreme right hand end of the crag consists of a number of high, broken buttresses that are of little interest to the boulderer. Slightly further left is a grassy bay with several boulders giving some good climbing.

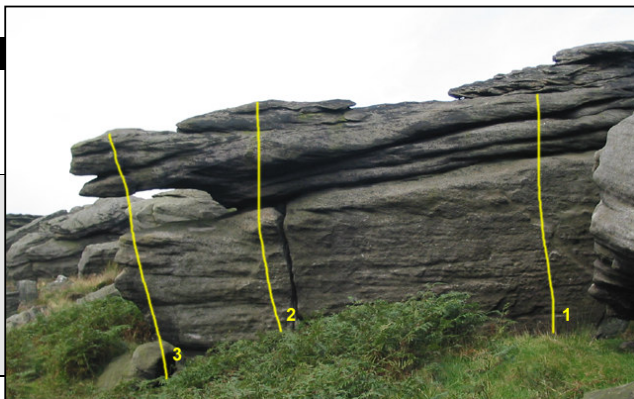
- 1 **V0-** The easy right side of the big corner crack is good.
- 2 **V3** Left of the corner, dyno between two good breaks. The finish is gritty - better to jump off.
- 3 **V0** The big jagged arête left of the corner. Good.
- 4 **V1** Left of the big arête is an undercut slabby boulder. Climb the centre of the slab on slopers.
- 5 **V3** Sit start under the roof and climb the nose past a flake.



The Bay - Left

The boulder on the left side of the bay has a smooth wall and an undercut arête.

- 1 **V4** A short crimpy problem up the right side of the wall from a sit start.
- 2 **V1** The horrible crack.
- 3 **V3** The undercut arête is excellent. Finish by moving left round the arête - the direct is harder and quite scary.



Flake Crack

Further along the edge is this small boulder with a flake crack on its front face.

- 1 **V0** The flake crack is good.



Small Overhang

The next worthwhile boulder has an small overhanging front face.

- 1 **V3** Climb the bulge from a sit start.

Easy Aretes

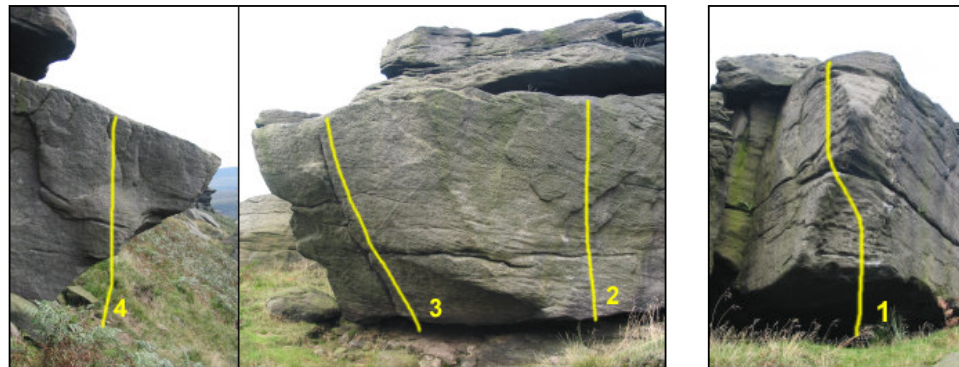
Further along two small arêtes offer some easy problems.

- 1 **V0** The right-hand, lower arête, climbed on the left or the right. Harder with a sitting start.
- 2 **V0-** The left-hand, slabby arête.



Big Overhang

Two large boulders next door to each other. The right-hand boulder is undercut, while the left-hand block has a severely overhanging front face.



- 1 **V2** Start hanging on the jug on the lip of the roof, slap up to more good holds, finish on the left side of the arête. Excellent and brutal.
- 2 **V?** On the smooth right wall of the left-hand boulder. Pull on using sidepulls and slap for the top.
- 3 **V?** The savage crack on the overhanging wall.
- 4 **V4** Climb the edge of the smooth wall left of the overhang. Excellent.

Feedback

- If you find this guide useful please post your comments & grade votes on the Widdop pages on yorkshiregrit.com.
- If you know of any worthwhile problems not recorded here, please tell us about them! E-mail feedback@yorkshiregrit.com or fill in the form on the contact page on the website (www.yorkshiregrit.com/contact.jsp).

Acknowledgements

- This topo includes information previously published in:
- "Yorkshire Gritstone Bouldering", by Alan Cameron-Duff, published by ROCKFAX, 2000.
 - Derek Hargreaves' Clattering Stones topo, published on the Leeds Wall website (www.theleedswall.com).