

EMBSAY CRAG

ROUTES & BOULDERING

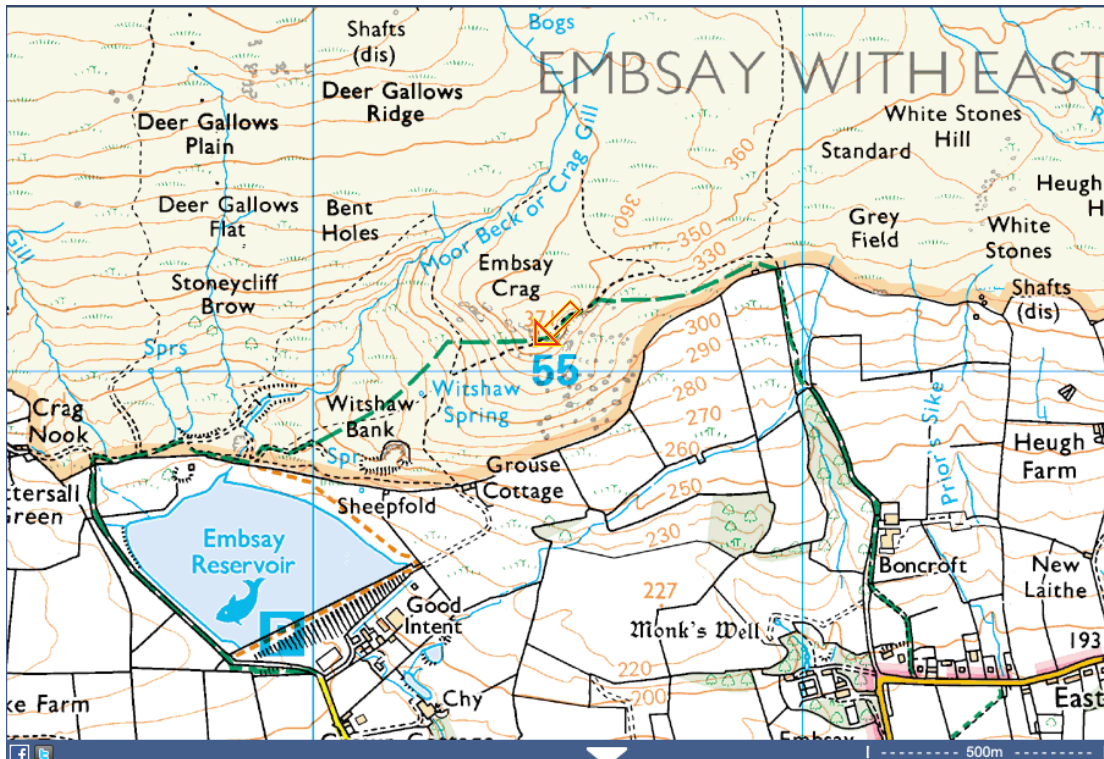


John Hunt on Hawk.

OS ref.SE 004550 alt. 371m

Embsay Crag is a proper little hill standing proud of the surrounding moorland, visible from miles around. Craglets ring it like a coronet and are a complex collection of mini-crag rather than a single edge. There are interesting problems, micro routes and routes in a spectacular setting and on good, rough pebbly grit.

The crag was heavily edited to fit into the 2014 guide and a lot has been added since then. This guide covers everything known about to date – routes and the tons of bouldering.



The crag divides up most rationally into:

- **The Left Hand Group** (the Deer Gallows side, centring on Gypsy Moth Buttress).
- **The Summit Group** (all bouldering).
- **Below Summit Buttress** (over from the summit, set into the hillside beneath the path off the summit plateau).
- **South Buttress** (only two routes at present).

Conditions and Aspect: The rocks ring the hillside - facing all directions from West to South-East. It is unique in giving varied conditions on the same day. It is often in condition when other grit is wet. The Left Hand Group can be more sheltered. In warmer months, if one sector is midgy a short relocation often solves this.

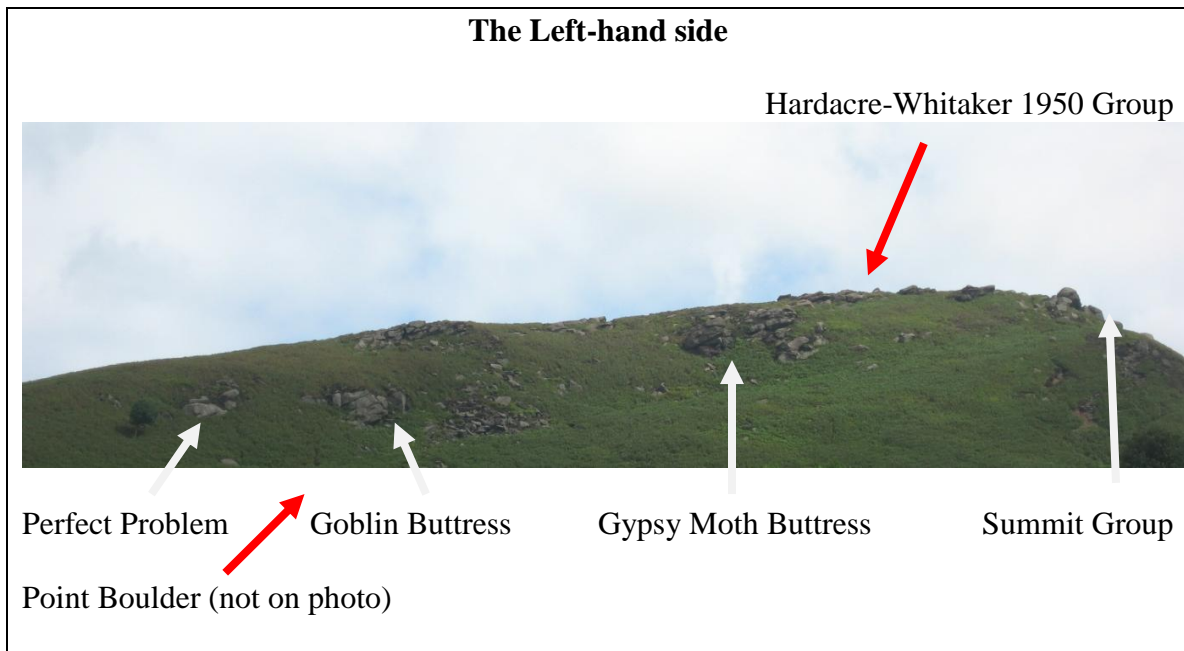
Routes and bouldering: 20 odd routes are mostly short but compelling, packing a lot into short lengths. Some of the lowlier grade micro-routes are good, but quite serious if soloed. There is a lot of really good bouldering; mostly in the steady grades but there is a major test piece traverse.

Parking and Approach:

Park as for Crookrise and follow the same farm track to the common access point. After the stile follow the bridal track east, picking up blue-topped posts, all the way to the summit. The initial flat section can be boggy.

There are alternative approaches over Yorkshire Water ground around the reservoir. 20 minutes.





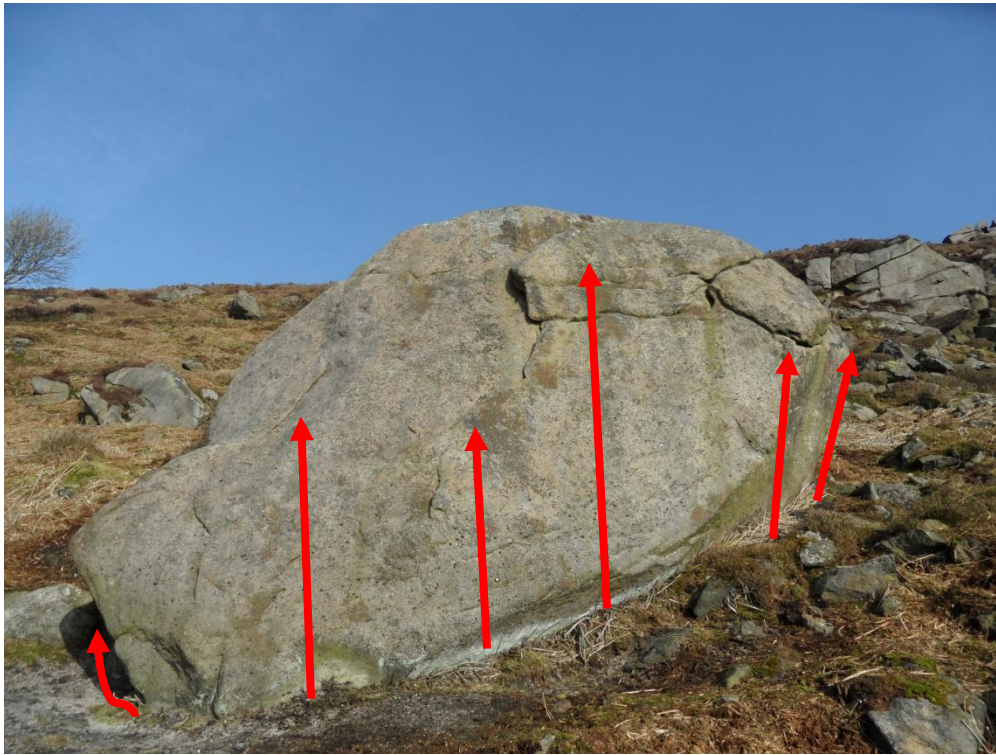
Access: Even before the CRoW Act this crag was on the Barden Moor Access Area. The moor does close for shooting (this is posted on the signpost at the first stile at the start of bridal track on the Crookrise approach). Dogs are only permitted on the bridal track.

THE LEFT HAND GROUP

POINT BOULDER - the low boulder just below the main line of craglets. It also gives a break to those don't fancy doing the summit push in one go.



Rachel Hunt on Ace Flake.



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7/8 9

1 Kin Evil M

Run up the ramp on the left of Point Boulder. Hands are banned.

2 Pointless Problem 6b

Sit start. The scrittley prow left of the shelf without the wall on the left.
John Hunt 2nd August 2019

3 Shelf Left 5+

Sit start the left side of the shelf. Great holds aid progress.
John Hunt 2nd August 2019

4 Big Shelf 3

On to the shelf, then totter round to the scrittly top.

5 Ace Flake 2

*

This one is impossible not to enjoy.

6 No Flake 4+

A delicate eliminate up the wall.

7 The Heart 2

Bull-work the heart and pull over.

8 The Heart Sit Start 5

On the lowest boulder.

9 No Pleasure 6a+

A strict eliminate between The Heart and End Wall - no runnel and no arête. Bone up from small holds to the break and then the top. Fanny Adams for feet; expect to pull.

John Hunt 2nd August 2019

10 End Wall 4+

Sit start. Take the end wall front on or from hanging the arête.

Up to the left is a little boulder normally submerged in bracken – there are four little problems on this (up to grade 2). Details on UKClimbing.



THE PERFECT PROBLEM BOULDER – on the next level up, the first boulder on the left.



1 Easy Face 3
Enjoy the left face.

2 Flaescmangere 7a
The pebbly rib left of perfect problem.
Gain a thin sidepull from slightly left

and use it to make a big move up the rib.
Step up pebbles to finish.
Paul Clarke 9th December 2019

3 The Perfect Problem 6c+ **
A boulder problem with everything.
Ascend the wall via a shallow flake.
John Hunt 2010

4 Baker's Dozen 4
Past the horizontal crack to the right of
Perfect.
Nigel Baker

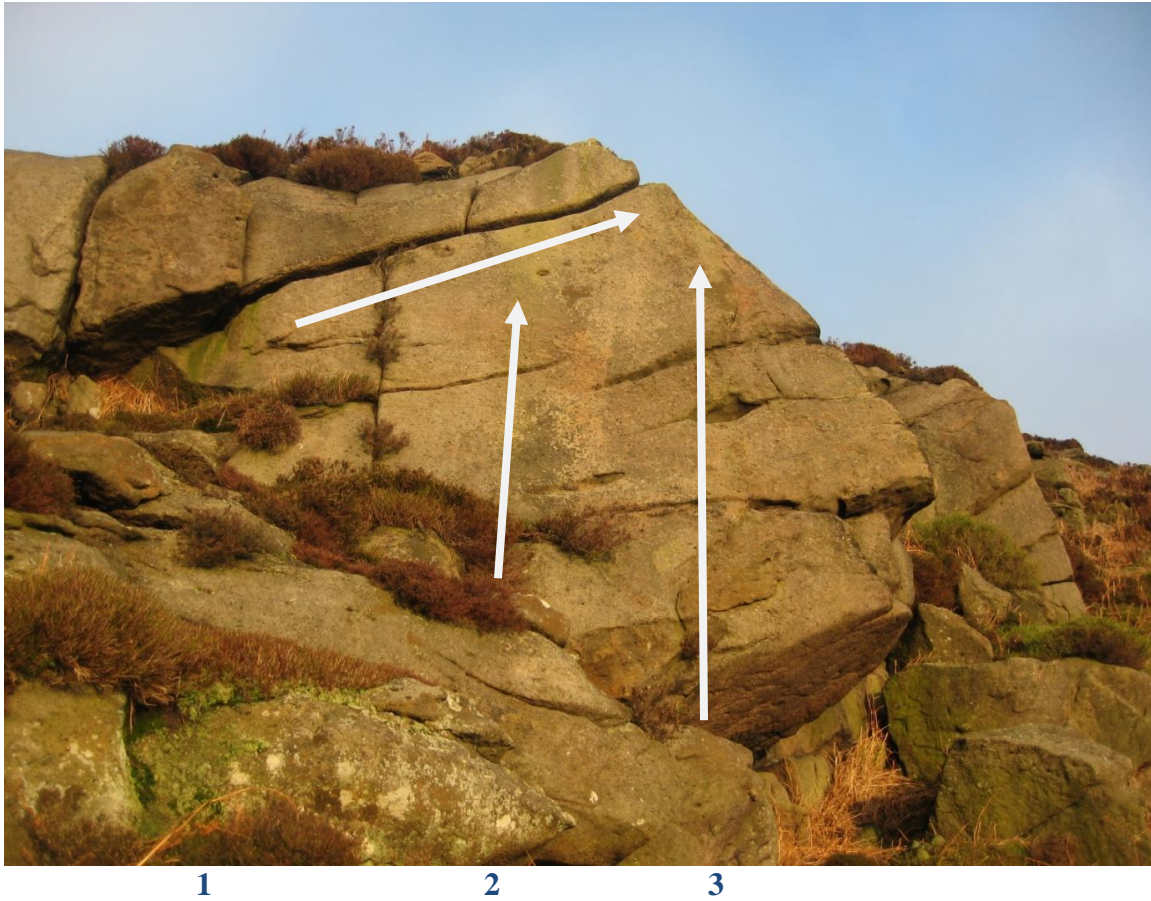
Right of here are some easy mantel
problems or desperate sitting starts.
Further right is:

5 Modest Crack 6a+
A little sit start crack.

The next buttress gives a mix of short routes and boulder problems.

GOBLIN BUTTRESS

This is the biggest of the cluster of rocks back towards Deer Gallows, at a lower level than the prominent Gypsy Moth Buttress.



1 Grounded HS 4b 4m (*but along the top of the buttress*)

Traverse the break to the arête – only little, but harder than it looks and a line you can see from the reservoir.

John & Rachel Hunt 16th October 2010

2 Full Frontal E1 5b 7m

Direct up the wall from the start of Up Front via a crucial small round pocket.

Bob Larkin, Dave Musgrove, Nigel Baker 1st June 2014

3 Up Front HVS 5b 7m

An easy start to the shallow hole leads to a committing swing onto the slab right of the arête.

John Hunt (solo) 20th December 2006

Round the corner is the little brother of Almscliff's famous Goblin and his mate, The Mekon:



4/4a/5



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4 Goblin Eyes HVS 5b 7m

Airily step off the boulder onto the eyes and up the slab above.

The sit start version is **4a Goblin Prayer Mat 6a *** which moves along the low handrail before slapping slopers on the parent route.

Both John Hunt (solo) 20th December 2006

5 Goblin King E1 5c 7m

The Goblin's face direct without recourse to the left arête. Only an eliminate, but harder.

John Hunt 20th December 2006

Just right and slightly uphill is:

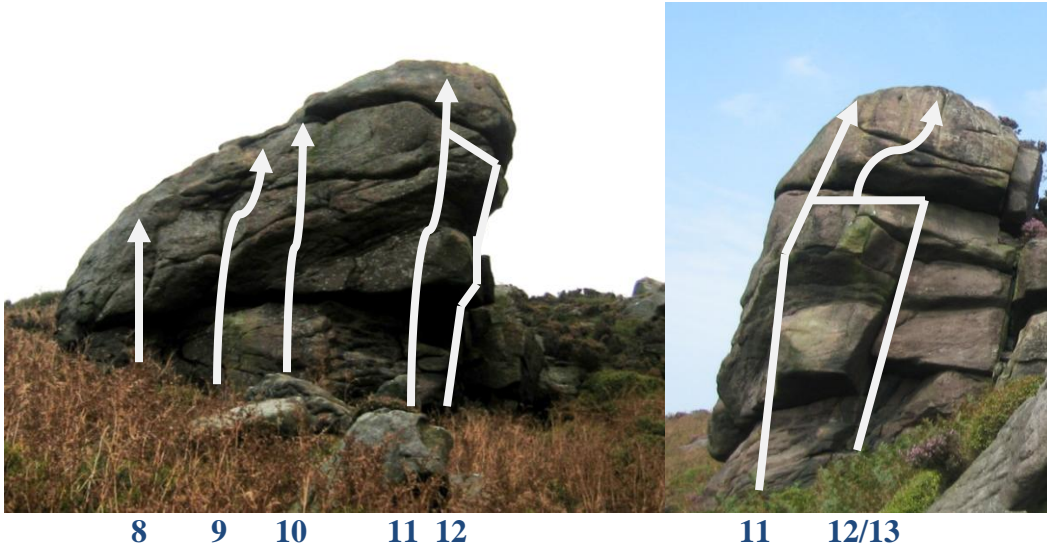
6 The Mekon 5 *

The left side of the Mekon's head from a sit start. Gritty, but great. The right hand side is the same grade.



GYPSY MOTH BUTTRESS

Prominent on the hillside between Goblin Buttress and the summit rocks; big and undercut at its right-hand side. The best of the routes at Embsay.



7 Caterpillar S 4b 7m

The delicate end slab. Nice with or without the central seam – it can be climbed on either side.

Jamie Moss 11th July 2009

8 Larvae HS 4b 7m

The arête between the slab and the flake system.

Matt Kilner 11th July 2009

9 Lymantria dispar HS 4b 7m

The overhung groove and flakes on the front face at left side of the buttress.

Matt Kilner, Jamie Moss 11th July 2009

10 Last Pitch E2/3 5b 8m

Reach some decent gear off the pedestal. Grope over the overhang, passing some small friend slots which are difficult to use. Reach the sanctuary of a brittle pinch at the bottom of a passable jamming crack - use this to top out. Gripping.

John Hunt 16th October 2010

11 Carmelia E3 5c 8m **

A direct up the undercut arête of Gypsy Moth buttress. Technical moves lead to protection in the second break. Finish as for Gypsy Moth (which swings in from the right).

John Hunt 4th January 2009

12 Gypsy Moth HVS 5b 9m **

Fly up the magnificent crack in the narrow south face to the large break below the bulging overhang. Swing left around the arête to a small ledge. Finish via a horizontal slot and rounded flutings.

Karl Bromelow and Mandy Robertson
11th May 2005

12 Gypsy Moth Direct E3 6a 8m **

Take the crack again to the break. Balance into a standing position under the left side of the headwall using a sloping hold, the arête and some other tricks. Span right into the central runnel before making a hard step to pull up to good finishing holds.

John Hunt, Paul Clarke 18th Feb. 2013

HAWK BUTTRESS

Just right of Gypsy Moth Buttress with a prominent horizontal crack in its left side. This must have been climbed on for generations.



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1 Here Comes The Story of A Hurricane
6c **

Traverse the break from left to right. Is it easier with feet under or out?

Paul Clarke 18th February 2013

2 Lancashire Bomber 5+

Sit down and take jams under the roof. Pull up the perfect silver wall on good but well spaced holds. Finish easily above.

Paul Clarke 18th February 2013

3 Toucan 3 (S 4a)

Use undercuts to surmount the wall right of the crack. Font 5 from sitting.

John Hunt 4th September 2010

4 Hawk 3 (HS 4b) *

A brilliant little micro-route. A pinch and good holds lead to the middle of a sloping crescent shaped hold – delicately mantel this to finish. Font 4+ from a sitter.

John Hunt 4th September 2010

5 Defiant 6a

Sit start off a sloping ledge and a side-pull. Pull up to finger jams on the heart shaped block before pulling into the cave.

John Hunt 21st February 2013

HARDACRE-WHITAKER 1950 GROUP

Chippers should not be rewarded but the graffiti does label these boulders conveniently. This is the highest tier on the left hand side. Some scrittly rock but decent problems.



D E F G H I

A Slopes Traverse 2

Follow the lip of the roof all the way and roll over at the right end.

B Jungle Jugs 2

Emerge from the heathery jungle to joyous jugs from a sitter.

C Mantel Practise 2

Take the weak point in the capping roof. Any knees or belly-flopping mean a re-sit.

D Grinder 5

Sit start on the smooth lower wall and take the widest part of the roof in the mantel style.

The next problems are across the chimney.

E Sandy Arête 2

The little arête.

F Crimp Wall 3

Prise your way up the wall just right.

G Ochre Arête 6a+

Sit start. Gain the rail. Make a long reach to take a good hold and pull up.

H Throwing the Match 6b+

Sit start the arête across the gap, left of Throw wall.

Paul Clarke 3rd June 2014

I Throw Wall 6a

Sit start from the eye-holes and with your feet up. Slap left to a flat edge; share and balance over. Grit ball-bearings to contend with but ace.

The labelling graffiti:



Just up and right is a gritty but good looking traverse.

THE SUMMIT GROUP

These problems are just below the summit, to the right of the direct approach track. There are some nice problems for small people on the actual summit.

Summit Boulder - a slightly overhanging lump of perfect rock, just right of the main footpath. This is the thing on the skyline that looks so magnificent from below – getting closer cuts it down to size but some of these still feel pretty high.



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1 Left 5

Move up on good holds to the horn.

2 Traverse 6a

From a sitting start, traverse most of the face to finish up the right hand side.

Insecure in places but superb.

3 Right 5

From the crescent hold move slightly left to more good holds.



4 5 6 7

4 Summit Scoop 4

Pull into the scoop with difficulty. Drift up and leftwards more easily but in an increasingly high-ball manner.

5 Embsay Crack VD

Proper butch jamming.

6 Embsay Wall 5+/6a (HVS 5c) *

Layback, undercut, contort, take the flake to reach the break...and it isn't all over there.

John Hunt 21st February 2013 (must have been done before).

7 Pure Class 3 **

Lay off and reach left for the break.
Classic.

The little square block to the right has a selection of good problems.

8 Left Arête 3

The left side of the front face.

9 Middle Face 3 **

Simply lovely. A pure line on a nice boulder.

10 High Steppa 6a

Take the left arête with the highest of high steps.

11 Overlapper 4

The line of the overlap.

12 Roofs 3

Sit start and bash up through the roofs.

Just beyond is a superb boulder with a prominent flake on its left side:

13 Beautiful Dirty Rich 6c+ *

From a sitting start, make a dynamic move from the big flake to a gritty sloper then fight like hell to top out. Photo below.

John Hunt September 2010



14 Just Dance 6b+

Just right of Beautiful Dirty Rich. Take the arête and a sharp side-pull in opposition, snap for a two finger boss and win the top.

John Hunt September 2010

EMBSAY SUMMIT OVERHANG

Words, lines and photo by Paul Clarke:

To the right of the *Beautiful Dirty Rich* block is a prominent overhang that remains an unclimbed challenge. Beneath the overhang is an overhanging wall of good rock that is the site of a good traverse that was first climbed in antiquity by a couple of Yorkshire Grit Greats.



1 Rad and Jerry's Traverse Font 7b **

From the corner move up and then down to gain the crack (first block is in). Gain and follow a line of crimps until a move up allows the shelf to be reached. Swing across this and make a long move to a big jug. An alternative finish is to stay low using the shelf for feet. This is less satisfying.

Jerry Peel & Mark Radke, 1990s

2 Ex- Cruciate 7a *

Sit start. Use the obvious slot/jug to gain crimps on the traverse. Follow this rightwards and up to gain the shelf.

Paul Clarke December 2019

3 Ex- Cruciate Left 6c+ *

Sit start and use the slot/jug again to gain the crimps but take the easier alternative going left and up the scrittly crack.

Paul Clarke December 2019



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The rest of this sector runs into big roofs above underlying pedestals - possible glory for some mad high-baller? A ground belay to prevent a roll down the hill would be a good precaution. The only breach so far is:

4 Flippin Heck 6a

The right side of big roof of summit boulders. Up the wall and grovel over right using crack. Using gear would be more sane.

Paul Clarke 3rd June 2014

The boulders on the end, past the roofs, before the drop down to Below Summit Buttress:

1 Going Around 5

boulder left of Baker's Wall. SDS on undercuts. Left and follow the rib to then step right and follow slab
P Clarke 3rd June 2014

3 Baker's Wall 4

The boulder right of the summit roofs. Centre of wall past obvious undercut.
Nigel Baker 3rd June 2014

2 A Straw Hat and no Waistcoat Day 6a+

As for Going Around. Step up the supporting block and over the hanging rib with some style?
John Hunt, Paul Clarke 2nd July 2014

4 Pocket 5

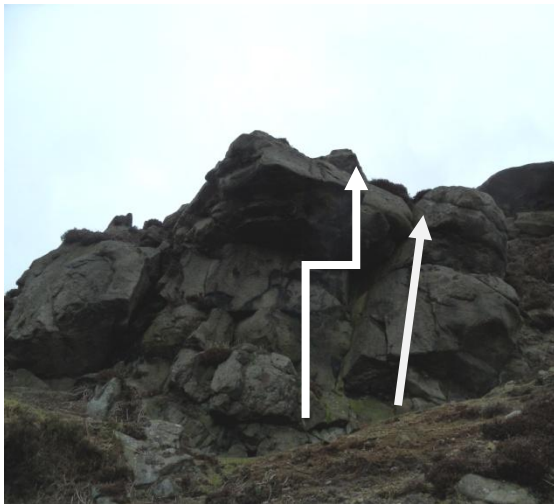
Just right from jam and past pocket
Paul Clarke, John Hunt 3rd June 2014

5 Cracking Rib 6a

SDS Rib past pocket and up
Paul Clarke, John Hunt 3rd June 2014

SOUTH BUTTRESS

A prominent craglet below the summit boulders on the flank facing Embsay village.



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1 South Buttress VS 4c 8m

Plough up left of the main crack. Turn the overhang and trend leftwards (breathing less heavily) to the top.
John Hunt, Tim Fryer 21st December 2008

2 South Buttress Crack S 4a 7m

Straight up the central crack.
Tim Fryer, John Hunt 21st December 2008

There is more to do here.

BELOW SUMMIT BUTTRESS

This is an extensive area of rock. It is just below the path leading away from the summit plateau when going towards Eastby; walk 20m and turn down to the rocks. An easier alternative to reach this section is to contour rightwards around the hill instead of following the bridal path to the summit.



BELOW SUMMIT BUTTRESS & surrounding boulders

Most routes

Crimpers / Can't Touch This

Japanese Ink



Mystery Wall

Undercut Slab



1/2

3/4

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1 Boom Boom, Blah Blah 4+ (VS 5b)*

The compact left face of "Below Summit Buttress". Dynamic moves lead to a large flat hold just below the top. The landing is a slope; best not fall off.

John Hunt, Tim Fryer 21st December 2008

2 McHale E3 6a *

A rightward traverse of the wall of *Boom Boom, Blah Blah* and the high hanging slab of the Resident routes. Follow the break to the jutting rump and turn this with difficulty above a savagely pointed boulder. Once established under the upper roof move to easier ground – finish via the crack in the roof or traverse off.

John Hunt, Paul Clarke 8th June 2014

3 Permanent Resident VS 4c 7m *

Climb the hanging slab to beneath the roof and traverse right to a right slanting finger crack. Pass the roof using this crack and good holds to the left. Trend left across the slab above the roof to finish at a very short crack above.

Karl Bromelow, Mandy Robertson 11th May 2005

4 Resident Direct VS 4c 8m *

A direct on "Permanent Resident" linking the initial hanging slab to the short finishing crack above without any deviation.

Tim Fryer, John Hunt 21st December 2008

5 Right, We're Off! E2 5c 7m *

Start immediately left of the square topped table high boulder. Tackle the bulges and overhangs above rocking up left to join Permanent Resident at the slanting crack; from the top of the crack finish rightwards via the hanging slab.

Karl Bromelow, Mandy Robertson 28th May 2005

6 A Right Old Knees Up E2 5c 8m

The jutting nose just right of 'Right, We're Off' taken direct. Hidden holds and a hard to place small friend protect the 'right good knees up' and the following rock-over. Perfect clean rock leads easily to the top.

Bob Larkin, Nigel Baker (both led). 08/Jun/2014

7 The Definitive Gritstone Kneebar S 4a 7m *

A few metres across the gully to the right of "Right we're off". Climb the brilliantly shaped flutings on offer - best on the outside. There is said to be a knee bar, a no-hands rest but there certainly isn't any gear so be careful!

Jamie Moss 11th July 2009

Moving right there is another area of massive overhanging roofs. The next routes are on a little wall just around to the right of these. This is set at a higher level and work better as routes than highball problems.





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8 Crimpers S 4b 6m

Climb the shallow corner on the left side of the little wall.

Jamie Moss 11th July 2009

9 Can you touch it VS 4c 6m *

The right side of wall. Gain the horizontal crack with difficulty. Latch the arête, followed by a massive reach for the top. Good gear is available in the break, but the low ledge is a concern.

Matt Kilner 11th July 2009

Mystery Wall – some new odds and ends. *Chalk was found so claims are welcome. There are more links to do here. See the area map to locate.*

1 Savage Copout 6a

Sit start in the very corner. Get level with the nose but copout up the crack on the left.

2 Crusty Wall 5+

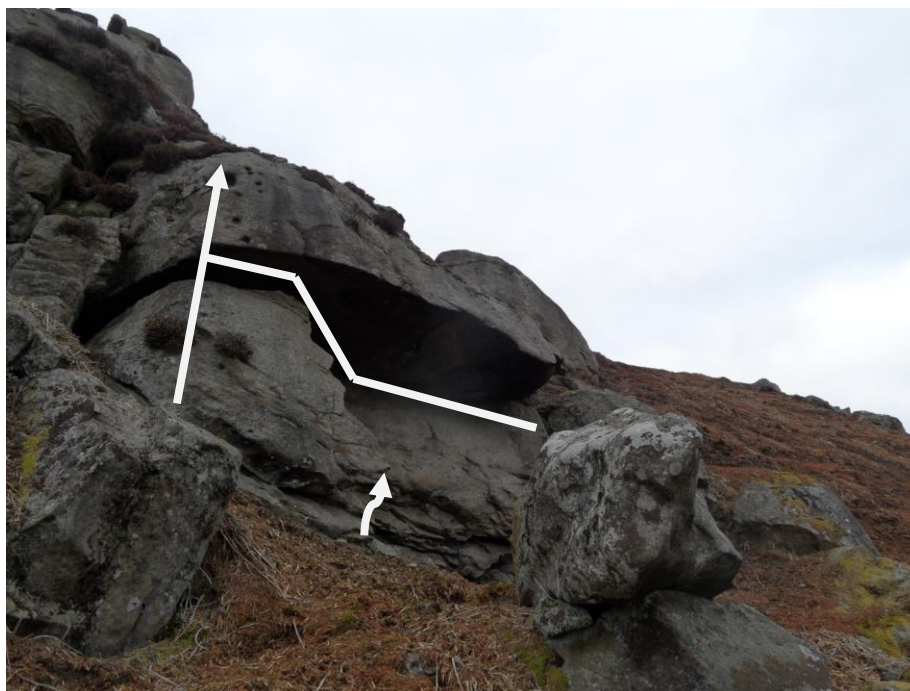
Sit start. The middle on the creaky wall facing the valley.

3 Private Guppy 6a

Sit start up the little arête on its left. Harder than it looks.

Further down the hill and right is a little buttress with a big overhang on its right.





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1 The Smell of Japanese Ink 3 (S 4a) *

The 'antler-chipped' holed arête bounding the overhang. Irresistible, but be careful topping out.

John Hunt 5th August 2010

2 Japanese Ink Little Arête 4

Sit start the little arête under the roof, pull left and do the finish again.

3 The Ah, So Desu Ka Traverse 3+ *

Balance R to L under the overhangs to finish up Japanese Ink.

Dave Musgrove

UNDERCUT SLAB (& Arrowhead Slab)

Just along the way is yet good looking boulder.



1 Arrowhead Slab 2

An inverted triangle of a slab just left of the excellent undercut slab which is the boulder furthest right on the crag.

On to the main slab:

2 Young Man's Hip 3+

The left rib of the undercut slab on the far right of the crag.

3 Hip-Hop 4+

Young Man's Hip step up right onto slopers and finish up the centre.

4 Hip-Hop-Hooray 6b

Direct start to Hip-Hop
Paul Clarke 8th June 2014

5 Pelvic Thrust 5

A direct start just right of centre via a small pocket.

6 Hippy Shake 4+

Starting on the right step up precariously left to flakes and slopers and finish in the centre. as for Pelvic Thrust.

7 Hippy Shake Sit 6a+

Go left again from a tough sitter.
John Hunt 30th November 2019

8 Hippy Shoes 4

The creased wall on the right of the boulder.

9 Hippy Shoes Sit 6a+

Sit start the last wall on its right. Thin seams.
John Hunt, Bruce Woodley 30th November 2019

Bouldering History:

Many of the problems here will have been done before. Lots of people you meet near the crag recall climbing here during their youth. Ron Fawcett, Bob Larkin and Brian Swales are all known to have been active on these boulders along with a host of others. Likewise, some of the route first ascent information may well be first recorded ascents rather than true first ascents.



John Hunt, December 2019

