



**Mel Tor  
bouldering**

Martin Crocker

## Mel Tor, Dartmoor OS Ref 694725

A minor venue with a day's worth of bouldering, mostly at an amenable standard, but featuring some good V1-V3s. This is an attractive and relatively relaxed place to climb all-year-round, the crags being favourably orientated towards the sun and a mere ten minute walk from your car. The views over the Dart valley and towards Bench Tor opposite are stunning. You could even link a trip with a visit to Luckey Tor, so long as you don't mind slogging back up the hill.

I did all the routes in 2020/21 and allocated names of a neutral and descriptive nature, since the problems will already have been climbed at a leisurely pace by the incognito. Some better info' has come to light, and I've altered the names on the main, 5-metre wall as necessary. The others can always be changed too, as a salute to history.

### Approach

From Ashburton follow the B3257, signposted 'Two Bridges', through Poundsgate to the Bel Tor car park on the left. Good luck with parking here during peak holiday periods and fine weekends.

Take the path to the south of the car park, which right-angles left and then right towards the tor. On your way you'll see some short steep walls down to the right of the highest point of Mel Tor. The first wall encountered, on the north side of the tor, is a 4m-high crack-seamed wall, which is slightly overhanging. It faces WNW.

**1 The Flakes** V0- (4a) Take the northeast-facing wall on the left on ample holds.

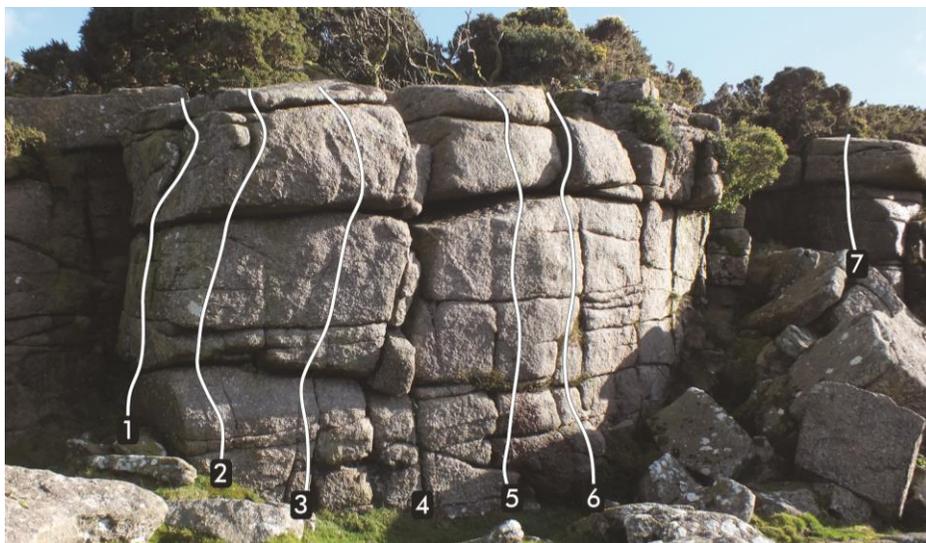
**2 \*Mel's Arête** V0- (4c) Starting lowish, a steep start gains capacious jugs.

**3 Rollover** V1 (5c) From a good break make a hard reach to sloping holds in the top break. Make a difficult, and rather scary, belly roll over the top – useful finger-jug back from the lip.

**4 Blocky Crack** V0- (3c) Climb said crack.

**5 \*Pristine** V0 (5a) Immaculate rock: take widely spaced jugs up the pillar, and mantel out direct.

**6 Off-fingers** V0- (4a) The fat-finger crack; try jamming rather than reaching past the crack!





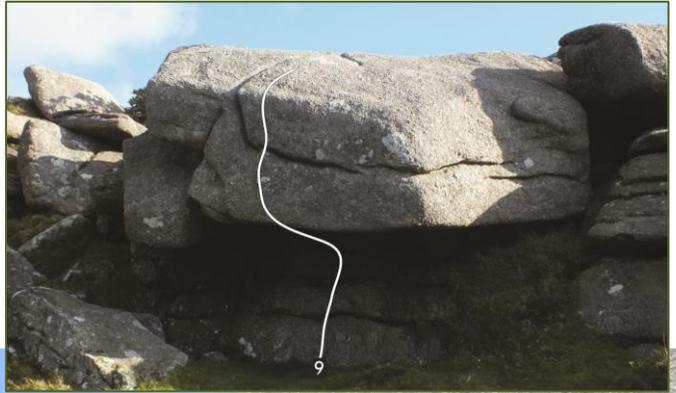
To the right is a jumble of boulders in front of a wall with a short hanging crack.

**7 Melt down** V0- (4c) Take the northeast-facing wall on good finger-breaks.

**8 Hangman** V0 (5a) A quick jam in the hanging crack and a one-arm pull-up, and it's all over. The landing is a bad one: with improvisation you can convert your pad to a hammock.

Fifteen metres up and right is a small undercut boulder.

**9 Yabber** V1 (5c) Sit start under the roof with right hand above the lip. Lock it, and go for the good flake.



To the southeast of the main tor is a wonderful south-facing 5m-high wall with a few subsidiary boulders to its right including the optimistically dubbed 'shark's fin' (more of a dogfish – no Hound Tor predator here). A sloping rock platform beneath the wall begs the use of a mat, though several problems have been on-sighted without any padding.

**10 \*Left Arête** V0 (4c) Quite high, so be careful at the top.

**11 Mel-tastic** V2 (5c) Take the wall immediately right of the arête, without use of the dogleg, to slopers. Exit tentatively using a finger-jam on the left. Possibly V3 6a.

**12 \*Mel-ancholy Indirect** V2 (5c) Climb the wall starting at a dogleg crack and continue via slopers in the higher break. The best line is direct and independent of 13 (although the two can be connected).



**13 \*Mel-ancholy** V2+ (6a) From a hand-jam for right hand in the low break, undercut high for the upper break. Finish direct, exiting on a jug.

**14 \*Low Break** V4 (6a) Sit start on a jug far right, notwithstanding gorse prickles. Finger/hand-jam left with assorted pain, and struggle up into the dogleg niche, so gaining the upper break and the *Left Arête*. Project: if you're able to fit, carry along the low break without gaining height (V6/7?).

**15 \*High Break** V3 (6a) Traverse the upper break only on the slopers in the break. Roving mat desirable! (Pic to left.)

The remaining problems occupy the subsidiary boulders to the right (facing in).

**16 Mel-on** V0+ (5b) Take the front of the boulder and finish direct on poor holds.

**17 Shark's Fin Left Arête** V0- (3c)

**18 Shark's Fin Central** V0+ (5a/b) Without starting too high, smear up the centre and use the diagonal crimp to exit.

