

**Sand Point climbs**  
by Martin Crocker

## Sand Point climbs

A guide to the climbs of Sand Point, nr Weston-super-Mare, North Somerset (OS ref. 324661)

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Front cover: soloing the mini-classic *Hopeful Slab* (VS) in 2005. Pic: Jonathan Crocker

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It's a pleasure to make this guidebook available without my pocketing any of your cash. All I ask is that you make a donation to ASSAR.

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ASSAR, a registered charity, has been providing cliff rescue services for Avon Gorge, Cheddar Gorge, and the area's other cliffs since 1975. (Avon Gorge and Cheddar Gorge rescue teams amalgamated in 1990.) More recently, in liaison with the police, ASSAR's remit was broadened to include a search and rescue function – saving lives other than those of climbers. Few would dispute that we owe ASSAR a huge debt of gratitude. The team's creation was the cornerstone in the climbing access agreement for Cheddar Gorge in the late-70s, which set the framework for all subsequent agreements. Furthermore ASSAR volunteers have given their time freely to support local partnership initiatives such as Cheddar Gorge's CragAttak festivals and ClimbBristol.

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### **North Somerset Coast Guidebook Series**

*Sand Point climbs* is one in a series of free guidebooks to the climbs and bouldering of the cliffs of the North Somerset coast. The aims of this series are to make available for public use details of some activists' explorations and to use this opportunity to raise money for a proven good cause. The guidebooks are *not* definitive records of the climbs since legitimate access to, and use of, sources of information outwith the public domain is not always available. The author expresses his apologies, therefore, for any omissions; and he would be happy to receive details of same, so a wider record of the climbing and – importantly – its correct history can evolve.




Abbreviations Used		Grades	
BMC	British Mountaineering Council	E	Easy
ASSAR	Avon & Somerset Search And Rescue	M	Moderate
RoW	right of way	D	Difficult
m	metre	VD	Very Difficult
km	kilometre	S	Severe
FA	first ascent	HS	Hard Severe
Soloist	A self-belay device that enables ground-up lead-climbing without a partner	VS	Very Severe
SS	Sit start	HVS	Hard Very Severe
NT	National Trust	E1 – E7	Extreme
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest	V	Bouldering grade

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Climbing, hillwalking, and mountaineering are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept those risks and be responsible for their own actions and involvement.



**CRAG CODE**  
[www.thebmc.co.uk](http://www.thebmc.co.uk)

<b>Access</b>	Check the Regional Access Database [RAD] on <a href="http://www.thebmc.co.uk">www.thebmc.co.uk</a> for the latest access information
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<b>Respect</b>	Groups and individuals – respect the rock, local climbing ethics and other people
<b>Wildlife</b>	Do not disturb livestock, wildlife or cliff vegetation; respect seasonal bird nesting restrictions
<b>Dogs</b>	Keep dogs under control at all times; don't let your dog chase sheep or disturb wildlife
<b>Litter</b>	'Leave no trace' – take all litter home with you
<b>Toilets</b>	Don't make a mess – bury your waste
<b>Economy</b>	Do everything you can to support the rural economy – shop locally

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### First Ascent Notes

Full first ascent details for the trad-graded routes, where known, are included. Reasonable assumptions that some routes were climbed in the '1960s' have been made and back-slashed with the dates of subsequent *known* ascents (e.g. 'late-80s'). For the boulder problems first ascensionists' names are not identified in the text, though the earliest available ascent dates are. Hopefully a future era of ethical publishing will ultimately resolve it all – misinformation and disinformation alike.

**Thanks** to Jonathan Crocker, James Squire, Ian Squire, Guy Percival, Damo Carroll, Nigel Barry, and Tim Meehan for their assistance.

## Sand Point, North Somerset

*Adjacent craglets [Middle Hope] provide perhaps the best bouldering on the peninsula, all of which has been documented, but not here. Avon and Cheddar Guidebook, 2004.*

The Sand Point and Middle Hope peninsula is an uncelebrated gem for walker and climber alike. Along its north coast is a modest line of short but steep Carboniferous limestone cliffs rising to 12m in height. Something of a mystery, the climbing here dates back to the 1960s but with records consistently hard to find, which has led to some of the routes and boulder problems being claimed and reclaimed time and time again. The rock is sea-washed and generally solid, and the climbing comes in all grades including some pleasant easier climbs with strong lines. However the rock in the lowest 4m or so can be razor sharp, and even a small slip could have you in stitches (the climbing at Finlands can be especially painful and indeed hazardous).

There are two principal crags: Middle Hope, roughly centre in the coast, and Swallow Cliff, just to the east of Sand Point itself. Most of the bouldering is situated at Middle Hope.

The headland, which is Access Land, is owned and managed by the National Trust. It is an SSSI for both geology and botany, and a Regionally Important Geological Site. Amongst the limestone you'll even find some volcanic ashes (tuff) and pillow lavas outcropping on the beaches.

The cliffs are tidal and seem to all but disappear at high spring tide (just check out the omnipresent black sea-moss-rich tide-line halfway up the cliffs). This characteristic has the disadvantage of leaving the limestone weeping and the sea moss moist for quite some time after a big tide.

**Fanatic's Tip:** visiting during periods of lower, neap tides which don't reach and saturate the sea-moss can be good news, especially for the Middle Hope bouldering and Swallow Cliff and Finlands routes. In any event most climbs are only inaccessible up to two hours either side of high tide.

### Approach

Sand Point is located 8km north of Weston-super-Mare from which it can be approached via Sand Bay. The best approach from the M5 however is to follow the signs to Worle and then to Kewstoke and Sand Bay, which lead you into Queens Road just beyond the Sainsburys supermarket. Continue along the minor road signed Sand Bay. When you reach Sand Bay turn right and follow the coast road to a NT car-park at its end on the right (this is a pay car-park: 2020's prices are £3.50, high season; £1.00, low season).



There is an alternative approach and free car-park which is a reasonable option, especially if your destination is Middle Hope. From Queens Road, take a right turn into Newton Road signed Woodspring Priory. Follow this road over a blind crossroads into Collum Lane which leads to a choice of car-parks at its end just before the priory. The main car-park is 150m down the rough track on the right. To get to the climbing, take the RoW leading from the left (north-west) corner of the car-park through a hedgerow and out across fields onto the Middle Hope ridge. Do not attempt to take any short-cuts from the priory across private land.

## Ethics

The routes are trad and bouldering; bolts are not permitted.

## Caution: Fixed Gear

There is little *in-situ* gear on the cliffs, but what there is must be treated with the utmost caution. The small number of pegs and threads mostly date from the first ascents and have been subject to a battering by wind and sea ever since. **Assume the fixed gear is unreliable and in need of replacement.** These warnings very much apply to the cliff-top *in-situ* rope lower-offs and stakes too: check them before you rely on them, and back them up!

## History

There is a high probability that the Sand Point and Middle Hope coast was first explored and climbed upon extensively in the 1960s (while not shutting the door on superhuman prospector Graham Balcombe 30 years earlier). It was a progressive era when, with improved transport and opportunities, enthusiasts decided to break away from Avon Gorge in search of new and less urban climbing environments. Leading this exploration in the early-1960s was Cotham Grammar School teacher and climbing instructor John Hone. While Hone is noted for his Brean Down activities and guidebook, in his associated press releases of the time he talks about the ‘Somerset sea cliffs’. With children to teach, his quest was to find: ‘cliffs that had been cut back by the sea to leave a first class surface to climb.’ It is tantalizing and reasonable to believe therefore that, notwithstanding the absence of specific records for Sand Point, Hone would have climbed here too.

The first viable climbing record dates from 1973. A few years earlier – while out for a family walk – Martin Crocker noted the potential and scrambled up some easy routes on the Point. Inspired by Swanage’s *Traverse of the Gods*, he returned with Dave Ford to give Sand Point the same treatment, but, arriving on a spring tide, they were forced repeatedly onto the cliff-top path! At two and a half miles long, the epic *Motorboat to Mars* (see page 39) best fitted the coastering (coast path?!) genre.

An enlightening article published in UBMC’s 1976 Journal entitled ‘The Alternatives’ listed Sand Point and stated: ‘A nice area for a day trip, especially in summer.’

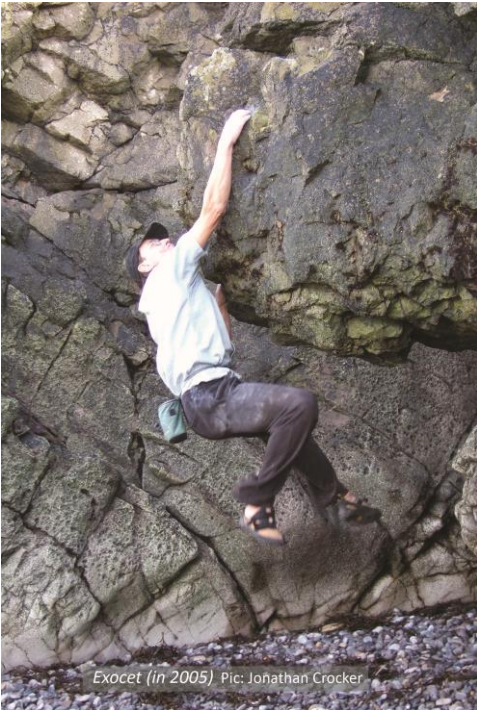
Almost certainly Sand Point would have entertained the odd visit in the 70s and 80s but nothing was publicly recorded until a wet-weather weekend in 1987 when Crocker and Matt Ward’s Pembroke plans were thwarted. They hit Sand Point instead. According to Crocker’s diary: ‘Horrendous day: windy and wet; but somehow the cliffs stayed dry!’ ‘Eventually’ that day Crocker pulled through on the mega-roof *Psycho 2*, a route that took all of 30 years to resonate with modernists. A further visit followed to soak up the best remaining lines on Swallow Cliff including the fierce *Underdogs* by Ward, before the team dissolved into the shadows of Cheddar Gorge.

In 1993 the evergreen Bristol duo of Damian Carroll and Dave Viggers checked the place out ‘to see if we could find some new rock, knowing that at low water the routes would be 30 feet’ higher’. Together with Brian Watson and Vika Moisey they discovered nine more routes on Swallow Cliff; all action-packed and rather like a shrivelled-up Stackpole.

Several years later, in 1997, a team including Nigel Barry, Peter Sleet, and Andy Tallant, began to explore the more amenable and delightful Finlands, a sector of arêtes to the west of Swallow Cliff. A throng of fine lower grade routes transpired, but mysteriously their records (which eased into the CC new routes database) missed the 2004 guidebook. Consequently, successive claims were staked.

With his family playing on the nearby beach, the next major happening, in 1998, must be Crocker's *Motorboat to Mars: The Re-release* – an eventful deep water solo where 'deep' was a delusion and the aim a redemption for his flop 25 years earlier.

In 2003, while enjoying a windfall of time, Crocker set out on a crusade to comb the North Somerset coast from northeast to southwest leaving few boulders unturned and the promise of a bouldering guidebook in its wake. Middle Hope proved the hotbed, building on bits and pieces he and others had already climbed across the mists of time. His focus was the Prow Bay where he laced the crags with mini-routes and problems while his kids teased the crabs. *Exocet* and *Weston Mercury Rising* held the promise of low-V grade classics while *Stalking the Moon* and his solos in Elgar's Gully required more effort. Also, since no-one else appeared to have done so by then, he – with assistance from son Jonathan – climbed the arêtes of Finlands. All the material was sketched in the 'Little Blue Book', but they had might as well have been coded in LinearA since more pressing commitments meant the promised bouldering guidebook never emerged. Unfortunately – but understandably therefore – some of his additions were reclaimed many years later, echoing Barry's situation before him. The correct names and details are given herewith, but likewise are subject to any earlier ascents that may yet still come to light.



A challenge that was left was an ascent of the Middle Hope prow without using the footwall of *Little Bighorn* (V6) climbed in 2005. Acting on a tip-off, bouldering whirlwind James Squire got stuck into the line in 2013 and *Prow* (V8) came into being. The associated YouTube publicity got tongues wagging and lured other hotshots for repeat ascents. On a roll, Squire also tamed *Zero Degrees*: 'I found it really hard and it took me the whole session, so I reckoned on ~7c+'.

In recent years climbers operating at a more modest grade discovered for themselves the promise of peaceful easier climbing at Sand Point. Teams featuring Tim Meehan, Micheal Unwin, Peter Holey, and Mark Davies recorded many such routes and reclaimed the arêtes' of Finlands in the process – unaware of earlier ascents. At the higher grades Guy Percival, who had already repeated many of the hard routes, added a few of his own including the deadly *Ben's Roof*. On the bouldering front Ian Cooper considered the slanting roof at the back of Elgar's Gully fair game for highballing and duly exploded up the brilliant *Fear against Litany* and *Arrakis*.

Looking into the future, what would be well deserved is for the main trad routes on Swallow Cliff to see more action. However I suspect such wishful thinking awaits a sustainable solution to tackle the blood-letting cliff-top scrub (see page 17). Meanwhile bring full body armour or a first aid kit.



## THE CLIMBS

### Middle Hope

This is a bountiful climbing venue next to possibly the most beautiful bay on the North Somerset coast. From a climbers' perspective Middle Hope comes good for two things: the sub-VS climbs in the *Hopeful Slab* area and the adjacent classic bouldering.



#### Approach

From the Beach Road NT car-park, take the right-hand of two paths (a tarmacked lane initially), which then zig-zags up through trees to the top of the ridge. Walk eastwards for half a km and then drop down to a semi-circular bay, with pebble beach, to the left. If approaching from Woodspring Priory car-park head northwards onto the headland via a RoW and then truck west; relax and enjoy the walk (15 to 20 minutes to Middle Hope, 30 to 35 minutes to Swallow Cliff). Before getting embroiled in the main event, you could stop off at a lovely secluded cove half a km east of the bay which is home to an enclave of aliens. Near the back of its pebble Beach is a plug of 'moon rock'.

1 \***Mini Lip Trip** V2 (6a) (25.9.2019) SS far left, and lip traverse right to exit up a scoop.

2 \***Tuff at the Bottom** V3 (6a/b) (29.9.2019) SS the prow at an undercut; power up on pockets and shuffle over slightly right on big gritty holds. Flows well (except when the holds break).

3 \*\***Stalking the Moon** V4/5 (6b) (27.2.2003) The height of crankiness: a strenuous low right-to-left traverse. It can be

weighted down with ascent). SS under follow low crater. Curl for a nose. gain the exit on the *below* the chunks winter revealing two right of the crater.

viewed on [Middle Hope bouldering: some late-80s/early-](#)



climbed in light rain (an umbrella stones helped on the first a left-slanting vein and finger-holds into the left and span across pocket under the Strenuous moves next niche, and an left. All the holds are lip. Sadly various were removed by 2019/20 storms sets of big holds, one Pre-storm topography can be

[\(Sand Point, North Somerset\) noughties classics - YouTube](#)

4 \*\***Abnormal New Normal** V5+ (6b) (16.5.2020) An epic traverse. Start up 1, reverse 3, but carry on low moving up to a shallow round pocket and finishing at an obvious long pinch far right.

The attractive diminutive white buttress at the back of Middle Hope's large pebble beach is a useful juggy warm-up on which you can also contrive a few harder worthwhile problems subject to pebble levels: two bum-drag starts over a little roof on the left (V1, V3), a high-level traverse at V0, and a rather good left to right very-low-level traverse starting with a difficult finger-rail along the lip of the little roof and finishing with a trying foot-barren balancing act across a smooth face (just about V4 for the start). At very high beach level the problems all but disappear (get your kids digging).

The main action for movers and shakers is in a recess ('prow bay') in the low cliffs at the eastern end of the main bay; the routes here are described **from right (west) to left (east)**, as approached from the beach. The boulder problems are (too?) packed in, but you can pick and mix holds to suit.

A prow dominates the recess which is always pebble-filled meaning a mat isn't obligatory unless you're going to fall repeatedly on your back from the *Exocet* prow. The cliffs then heighten as you head eastwards (mostly solo/lead territory rather than bouldering).

1 **\*Supralittoral Zone** V0+ (5a) (late-80s) Blast straight up to the triangular apex of the leaning wall using some fab rock-spike holds.

2 **Periwinkle Picker** V3 (6a) (late-80s) From standing, power up the rightward-slanting fault/seam on slopers. (Ignore low sharp pocket/jug left of seam; i.e. keep to the seam.)

3 **\*Holdfast** V4 (6b) (19.7.2005) From squished deep inside the little cave take jugs out right into the hanging rightward-slanting fault of *Periwinkle Picker*; follow slopers up this.

4 **\*The Encruster** V2 (5b) (late-80s) Start standing in the cave, bridge up, and follow the crack slightly leftwards through roofs. You can also do a direct dyno start from a wide pinch (V2, 6a).

5 **Rockweed** V3 (6a) (4.1.2003) Start just left of the little cave, and use a sidehold for left hand to spring for good holds under a bulge. A small sharp left-facing arête rounds it off.

6 **Air Bladder, Ladder** V5 (6b/c) (19.7.2005) A hybrid: start low at a fist jam left of the cave (as for *Prow*) and undercut straight out over the roof into a crack; move right into the finishing crack of *The Encruster*.

There are (at least) three different ways of climbing the prow, each a test in itself and of no greater or less quality than the other two.

7 **\*\*Prow** V8+ (6c) (12.2.2013) Beastly Squirrel's grand interpretation: keeping your feet high and off the retaining slab creates the prow's purest and hardest line. SS low right and take the prow out left to finish on its left side (which is an easier finish than *Exocet* would provide).

8 **\*\*Little Bighorn** V6 (6b) (19.7.2005) Start from sitting/kneeling just left of the little cave, on a fist jam. Traverse left, feet *on* the retaining slab, to a jug and undercuts below the prow. Join *Exocet* to finish, pumped up. (No escaping up *Iron Eyes Cody*!)

9 **\*\*Exocet** V3 (6a/b) (late-80s) The original way of surmounting the prow, and a footless ultra-classic. From standing under the prow launch from a jug to a crimpy sloper for right hand just right of the nose; then – if you're tall – struggle to pull yer gut up.

10 **Iron Eyes Cody** V0 (5a) (4.1.2003) Swing onto the prow using holds to its left.



11 **\*Wingspan** V4 (6a) (15.2.2003) A logical traverse from far right to far left, which ultimately follows the obvious finger-rail onto the prow.

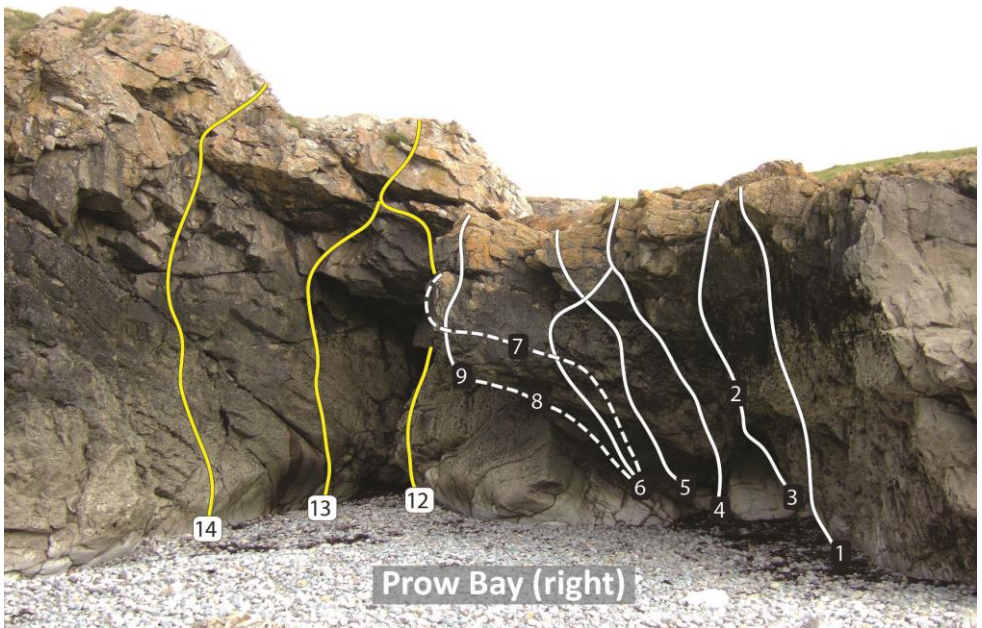
To the left, at the back of the recess and left of a descent chimney, is a slabby wall capped by roofs. Beware: the kids like to throw pebbles at the cliff, with the effect of filling the holds.

12 **LoftSpace** 6m E1/2 5b (late-80s) Climb the easy rib left of the chimney (roof to the left) and reach slopers above on a projecting shelf. Swing boldly left along the break under the capping roof (gear possible) and pull rightwards over the bulge  
FA: possibly Martin Crocker (on-sight solo)

13 **\*SubSpace** 6m E1/2 5b (late-80s) Climb the slabby wall, bridge up (roof to the right), and reach a finger jug in the centre of a sloping overhang above. Reach around right to gain the break and finish of *LoftSpace*. Protection looks possible.

**Variation:** E3 5c (15.2.2003) Pull straight over the roof between 12 and 13.  
FA: possibly Martin Crocker (on-sight solo)

14 **Well Honed** 7m HS 4a (1960s/late-80s) Climb easily up the slabby wall, place wires, and make a tricky move to gain the left end of the high sloping overhang. Swing right on jugs to exit.  
FA: possibly John Hone





Prow James Squire Pic: Ian Squire

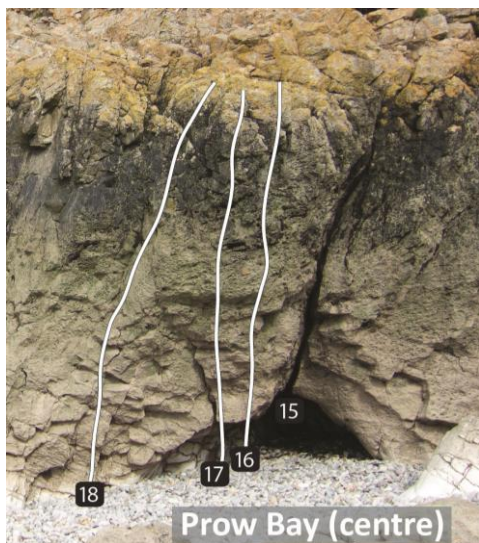




*Weston Mercury Rising* Pic: Jonathan Crocker



Several metres left, past an easy descent ramp, is a fist-crack that rises from a low cave. A 5m high pillar left of the crack hosts a Sand Point essential (and gets a slice of winter sunshine). Note that a pyramidal boulder erupting from the pebbles impedes your landing zone.



15 **Iced Out** V0 (5a) (4.1.2003) Swarm up the hand-crack. Mind that boulder!

16 **\*\*Weston Mercury Rising** V2 (5c/6a) (4.1.2003) The other low-V classic hereabouts. Flow up the front of the pillar on finger-jugs (a quick foot-jam in the crack on the right helps with the dynamic start, though it's purer and harder (V3) to ignore the crack and use the immediately adjacent heel-hook). The SS is just-V4, and fires up from the crack low left.

17 **\*Best Served Cold** V2 (6a) (15.2.2003) The left side of the pillar, via an undercut for right hand: shockingly sharp!

18 **Hold up the Sky** V0+ (5b) (4.1.2003) The slanting groove left of the pillar: lock hard to reach ragged holds.

There is a good lanky V0+ (5b) eliminate up the rib just left of *Hold up the Sky*.

Round the corner to the east a neat slab soars skywards towards the Lulsgate flight path.

19 **\*Hopeful Slab** 8m VS 4b (1960s/late-80s)

Climb the middle of the serrated black slab; then continue more delicately up the yellow-lichen-flecked upper section on pockets and crimps. You can also climb the slab via a different sequence immediately to the right. (Video still, below.)

FA: possibly John Hone



**20 Hope it was Hone** 8m HS 4b (1960s/late-80s)

Move up onto a ledge and follow the angular left-facing groove with good gear but a hard pull.

FA: possibly John Hone

**21 \*Middle Hope Madness** 8m VS 4c (1960s/late-80s)

Bridge up the cleft; reach a flake crack in the hanging black groove overhead and exit steeply.

FA: possibly John Hone

Just left is a slabby pillar of charming rock quality.

**22. Hubris** 8m S 4a (1960s/30.6.2013)

Climb the V-chimney and fist-crack right of the pillar and the steepening wide continuation crack.

FA: possibly John Hone/Stuart Ivory

**23 \*Grey Edge** 9m S (1960s/late-80s)

Take the right edge of the honeycombed slab. Rock-spike runner on the left at two-thirds height.

FA: possibly John Hone

**24 \*Slab Cracks** 9m M (1960s/late-80s)

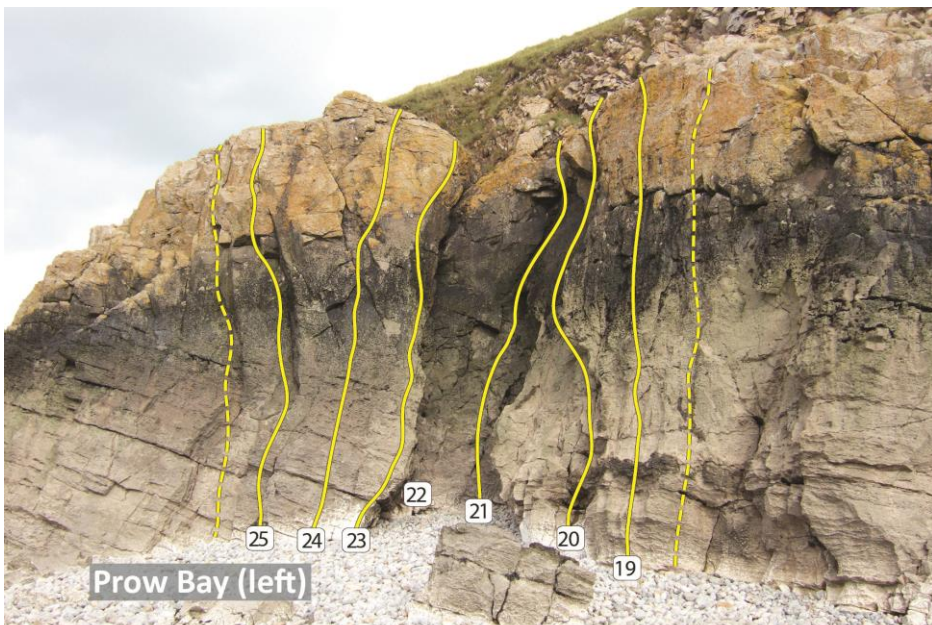
Climb the slab via the crack and flake; nicer still.

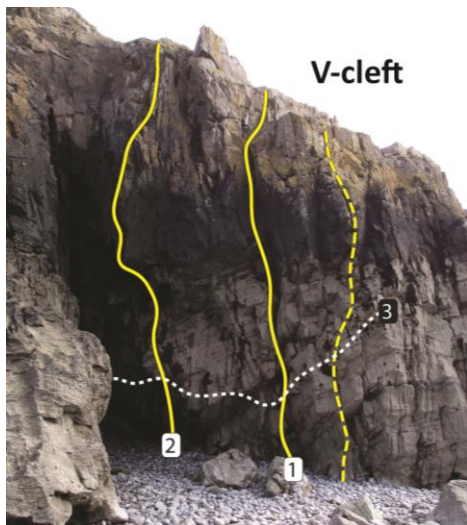
FA: possibly John Hone

**25 \*Nose to the Grindstone** 8m HS 4b (1960s/17.7.2005)

Very enjoyable. Follow the leftward-trending shallow groove to a little roof. Ignore the flake ledge on the right-hand rib and make a difficult move direct to a finger-slot. Top out. (The parallel easier-looking groove just left is Moderate.)

FA: possibly John Hone/Martin Crocker (on-sight solo)





Left of a less steep buttress with a couple of pleasant arêtes and corners is an oft-manky large V-cleft. The routes here are afflicted with sea-moss, a nightmare to climb on if at all damp.

The poor right-hand arête (S) has a sharp bulging start and a sea-moss finish. Better is:

**1 Magic Money Tree** 7m HS 4a (17.7.2005)

The V-groove above two ominous boulders (so don't solo the route – there's good gear).

FA: Martin Crocker (on-sight solo)

**2 Sub-marine Stubble** 8m E4 6b (23.3.2003)

Climb to undercuts beneath a hanging rib. Break through the overhang into a groove in the rib.

Then it's easy. Tough if the stubble is wet.

FA: Martin Crocker (unseparated)

**3 \*Spacesex** V5 (6b) (3.8.2020) A low left-to-right traverse of the right wall, starting from a large rock-spike deep in the cleft. Poor for feet, which are kept mostly between one and three feet up.

Twelve metres left of the V-cleft is a right-slanting fissure (M grade) and to its left an attractive wall.

**4 \*Bells of Rungholt** 9m VS 4c (17.7.2005)

Nice, and protectable. Climb up the crozzley black slab to a small roof stack. A thoughtful move (thread hold) gains a jug between the two roofs. Step left to top out or via a right-facing groove.

FA: Martin Crocker (on-sight solo); possibly climbed before

**5 The Torpedo Testers** 9m D (1960s/17.7.2005)

Climb onto a pedestal ledge at 4m. Bound up the short left-facing groove on large flakes.

FA: possibly John Hone

**6 Instructors' Groove** 9m D (1960s/17.7.2005)

Follow the wide, open groove to the top.

FA: possibly John Hone

**7 \*In the Balance** 9m S 4a (1960s/17.7.2005)

An elegant arête. From a ledge at 3m take the arête which sharpens for some cool moves.

FA: possibly John Hone

The easy chimney just left is indeed Easy and is a possible descent for experienced climbers.

**8 Outdoor Pursuits** 9m M (1960s/17.7.2005)

Follow the open groove right of the sharp arête, starting up over a bulge.

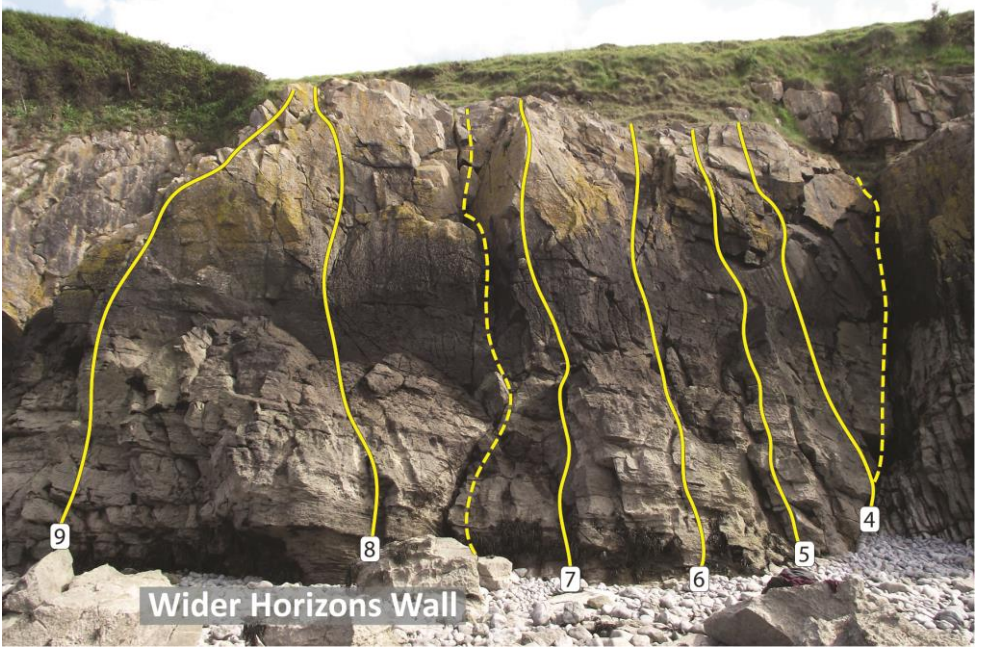
FA: possibly John Hone

**9 \*Wider Horizons** 10m D (1960s/17.7.2005)

The beautiful sharp arête before the cliff-line turns a corner. Climb it on its right-hand side.

FA: possibly John Hone





The next six routes are situated on a buttress 150m east of the bay and below a stone wall that crosses the Middle Hope ridge. The buttress has a prominent left-facing corner left of a slanting overhang. There are tree belays above. Care is required with some hollow rock on both top-outs.

### 1 **Lip Slip** 12m E1 5b (23.3.2003)

Tip-toe diagonally left along the lip of the overhang to finish up the broken arête. Good protection.  
FA: Martin Crocker, John Harwood

### 2 **Pedestal Overhang** 10m E3 6a (23.3.2003)

Name change (and grade) required: the pedestal under the slanting overhang appears to have been sucked into the sea. Originally, by standing on the pedestal, holds on the lip could be reached at full stretch. You would then pull over and finish up a broken arête. Is this route now defunct?  
FA: Martin Crocker, John Harwood

### 3 **Never to Go Back** 10m HVS 5a (23.3.2003)

The enjoyable left-facing corner. Beware the dodgy flakes on the traverse left near the top.  
FA: Martin Crocker, John Harwood

### 4 **Peace Protest** 10m E4 5c (23.3.2003)

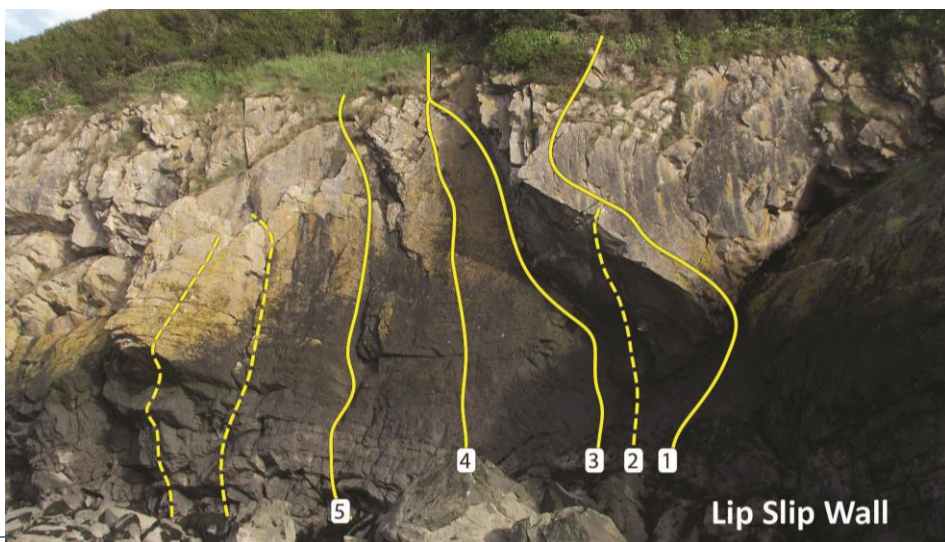
Take a balancy line up the centre of the smooth yellow slab left of the corner. Two wire placements only, with a big, scary gap between. So don't mess up.  
FA: Martin Crocker (after top-roping), John Harwood

### 5 **Tiananmen Square Massacre** 10m VS 4b (8.6.2014)

Follow the groove onto grass at the top. Pre-fixed belay rope used. Quite good; and possible as a solo (or lead) if you traverse left on jugs from the high niche and descend *Missing Left Crack*.  
FA: Mark Davies, Rob Stanfield

The crack just left again is **Missing Left Crack** (VD) which provides the descent for **Death?** a deadbeat E3 5b (17.7.2005) over the jutting roof 8m left (a horror-fest of snapping finger-edges).

Stretching left from *Death?* is a low wall which provides an old bouldering traverse – rancid if wet.



## Swallow Cliff

The largest cliff is located 1km from the tip of Sand Point. It comprises a series of walls, prows, and roofs of chunky rock. These offer surprisingly good, albeit short, pitches of character. If they don't appeal you could take the plunge on Sand Point's madcap contribution to the 'deep' water soloing scene (see page 39). Care is required with veg' and loose holds when topping out. Successive Climbers' Club guidebooks left the routes under-rated and under-starred (first ascensionists' fault) which didn't do anything to generate the interest they deserved. The other factor is the damn...

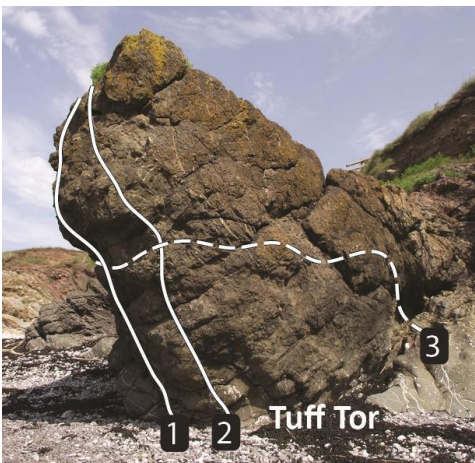
### Cliff-top Scrub: what to do about it!?

Throughout the 80s and 90s topping out was no problem: the cliff-top was picnic-quality grassland and the belay stakes and trees could be readily accessed. Since then a 6m to 12m wide jungle of brambles, blackthorn, and wild rose has grown up making escape from routes on the main cliff at best agonising and at worst impossible. Understandably this has proved a turn-off, even when trying to fix a belay rope above beforehand. (At the time of writing there is a man-made tunnel through the scrub to the exit of *Sands of Time* with *in-situ* low-stretch ropes taken to the cliff-edge above *Severn Bore*, *Psycho 2*, *Sands of Time*, and *The Incalculable Cleft*. These, however, are subject to being blown well back by the wind, subsumed in the scrub, and potentially impossible to reach when you reach the top of a route.) The existence of a local climbers' think-tank surely suggests there should be a desire to find a solution. Apart from taking no action, the following two options appear available: a) A BMC-led recommendation to the National Trust for volunteer climbers to clear the scrub and to install approved stakes, or b) If (a) is unacceptable, BMCSW considers the installation of bolted cliff-top belays following NT approval. (And – yes – bolts are absolutely undesirable here.)

### Approach

From the northern end of Beach Road (and the NT car-park) take the concrete steps and path leftwards up the hill, which lead to a trig point on top. Walk westwards along the ridge for 150m; then find a path on the right which descends leftwards to intersect the Swallow Cliff-top path. Turn right to a small secluded pebble beach which faces west down the Bristol Channel. The cliff extends westwards from the beach: these climbs are described **from left (east) to right (west)**.

Venting from the beach is a tor of volcanic tuff which supplies a bit of bouldering used for warming-up and winding down in the pre-sit-start 80s and 90s. A mat isn't normally required.



1 **Pillow (Lava) Talk** V0+ (5b) SS under the left-hand side of the nose and flow up big holds.

2 **\*Nose Direct** V3/4 (6a/6b) (1987/2015)  
Originally climbed from standing (V0+) but far better as a SS. To start, use a collaboration of slopes (no foot-ledge out left) and latch a finger-pocket for left. (More like V4, tech 6b, when the beach is unusually low and a bed of basalt for your butt is revealed.)

3 **\*Tuff in '87** V4 (6a) (1987) SS on the boss of lava on the right and from a finger-pocket traverse leftwards; then skirt around the nose before picking up a foot-ledge. Continue under the bulge. (Hands below the little roof at all times.) Pumpsville.



At the landward end of the beach, rising behind boulders, is a violently leaning wall.

**1 Underdogs** 12m E3 6a (12.9.87)

A vicious and unusual diagonal line across the leaning wall. From a boulder, pull over a small roof and follow the line leftwards with hard moves to finish up the smooth headwall (two *in-situ* threads).

FA: Matt Ward, Martin Crocker

**2 Memento** 12m E1 5c (8.5.96)

Climb the bulging blunt white rib just to the right of the start of *Underdogs* to sumptuous jugs. From blocks on the left, take the short groove and slab above to the top.

FA: Martin Crocker (solo after top-ropeing)

The scars in the corner at the far left-end of the wall suggest someone has made their mark.

Where the leaning wall morphs into gentler ground (and the slab of *Souvenir*) there is a low-level roof with four problems including one of Sand Point's hardest. There's normally a little gravel beach below, which offers encouragement for the giant slaps. A mat is required for the 'up' problems.



**3 Frostbite** V6 (6b) (26.1.2013) SS on the left using a sloper and heel in the crack; a pair of crimps enables a slap to the lip. Top out.

**4 Pocket Rocket** V6 (6b) (4.11.2017) Right hand on crimp in high break, left on sloper-side-pull at end of same break: slap-a-do!

**5 \*Zero Degrees** V10 (7a) (29.9.2018) SS and – using two undercuts – slap wildly for the lip. Supersedes the standing start (26.1.2013).

**6 \*Not Another Lip Traverse!** V3 (6a) (26.1.2013) SS far right on a jug, and finger-traverse left. When a boulder intervenes reach up left to the next line of holds, extending the pump to *Underdogs*.

**7 \*Souvenir** 12m Very Severe 4c (12.9.87)

An amenable pitch up the centre of the slabby west-facing wall. A problem start over a roof leads to small holds on the wall. Follow these, trending left to a straightforward exit.

FA: Martin Crocker (on-sight solo)

**8 \*Keepsake Crack** 12m HS 4b (31.8.2018)

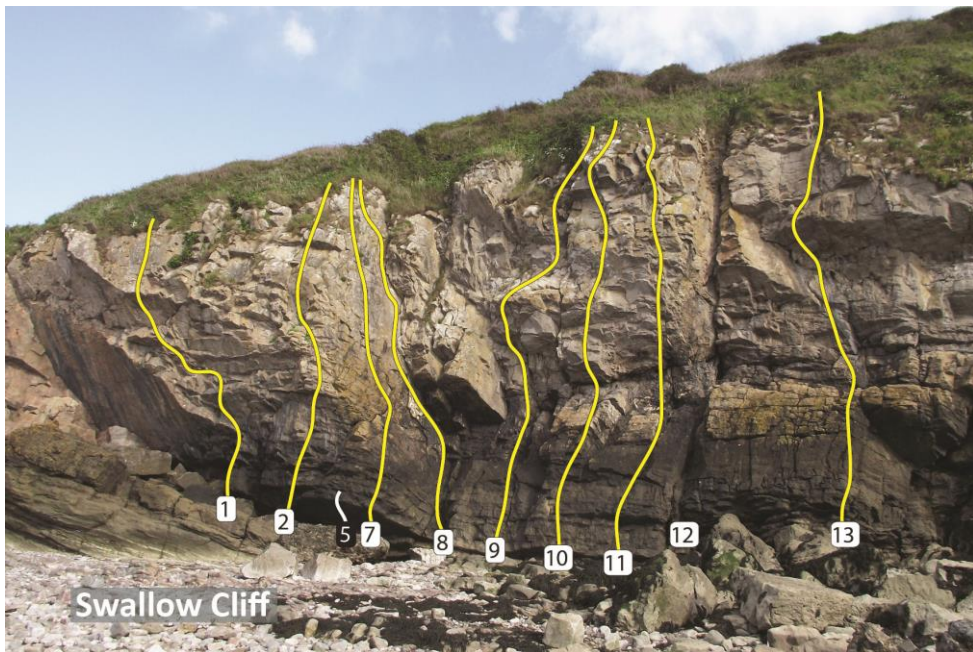
A good climb; safer than its neighbours. Follow the corner-crack to exit on the left as for *Souvenir*.

FA: Mark Davies, Don Sargeant

**9 A Cherry on the Top** 12m HVS 5a (31.8.2018)

Start under a slanting roof 5m up, right of *Souvenir*. Climb a crack and traverse left above the roof. Move back right to finish on big holds.

FA: Mark Davies, Tim Meehan, Don Sargeant



Ten metres right of the *Souvenir* slab is a prominent crack in a bulging white buttress.

**10 Drop a Clanger** 12m E2 5b (8.5.96)

Remember the Clangers? Climb the eliminate left-hand side of the bulging white buttress to finish up a small left-facing corner. There are long reaches between good flat holds, one of which rocks.  
FA: Martin Crocker (solo after top-roping)

**11 \*Soup Dragon Warbles** 12m E3 5c (12.9.87)

Named in honour of a charming old bloke at work who could have done the show's sound effects admirably. Climb easily to the bulging, rounded rib left of the prominent crack. Launch up the rib via a thin crack and jugs, and continue (*in-situ* thread) to finish over a rock beak: pumpy!

FA: Martin Crocker, Matt Ward

**12 Broad Reach** 12m VS 4b (18.7.93)

Climb the striking crack right of the previous climb.

FA: Brian Watson, Vika Moisey

**13 Mister Fuzzy-wuz** 12m E1 5b (12.9.87)

Gain a niche below the roof right of the crack. Pass the roof (*in-situ* thread) to finish up a thin crack.

FA: Martin Crocker, Matt Ward

Further right, the cliff hosts three caves with intervening prow formations. The next three routes occupy the leftmost cave.

#### 14 \***Rugrat** 8m E4 6a (25.4.96)

A superb run of moves up the centre of the sheer left wall of the cave. Dyno for a projecting jug, reach right to a flake, and so gain a good slot at 6m. Continue direct until a swing left from finger-pockets gains the arête and slab. Fix gear; then descend the easy slab leftwards to the beach.

FA: Martin Crocker (solo after top-roping)

#### 15 **Sockthing** 12m E1 5a (8.5.96)

A character, at least compared with that sap Kipper. Start in the back of the cave. Climb the front of the grey column to a bulge. Extend for jugs over the bulge and follow these rightwards, moving up and then right to gain the top move of *Seven Bridges*.

FA: Martin Crocker (solo after top-roping)

#### 16 \***Seven Bridges** 12m E1 5a (18.7.93)

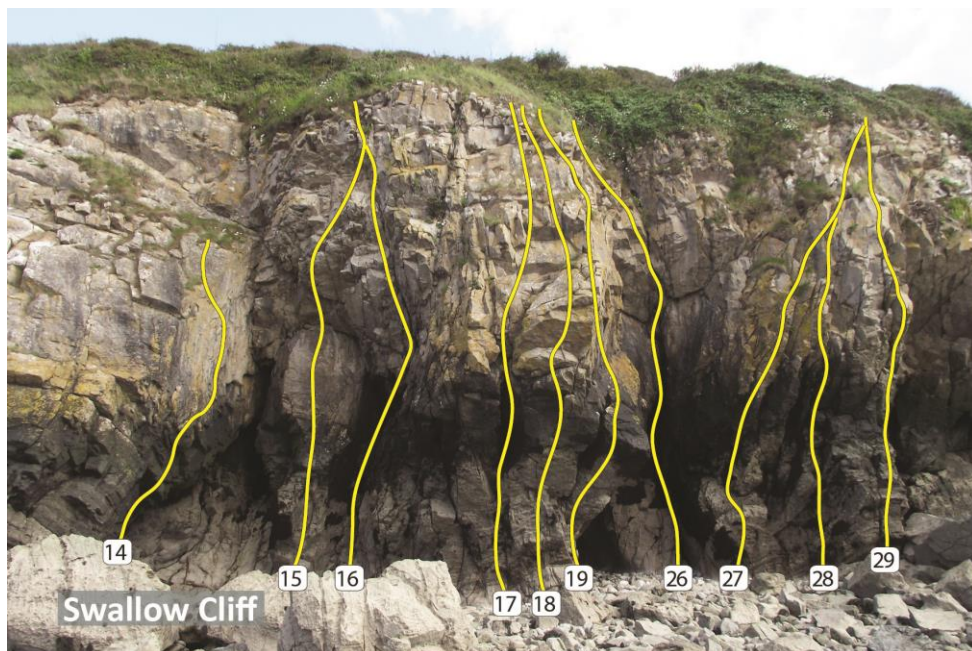
Very steep climbing up the crack that rises out of the cave. A route that feels big for its size. Start up the chimney right of the grey column, and then follow the crack up the intimidating wall.

FA: Damian Carroll, Vika Moisey

#### 17 **Weston Approaches** 12m HVS 5b (18.7.93)

Sea-moss permitting, climb the ultra-steep chimney-crack in the buttress between the leftmost cave and the central cave. Scramble to the top.

FA: Damian Carroll, Dave Viggers





### 18 **Jutland** 12m E3 6a (12.9.87)

Climb madly up the underside of the left-hand and most overhanging of the prows (*in-situ* thread) to a ledge above. Scramble to the top.

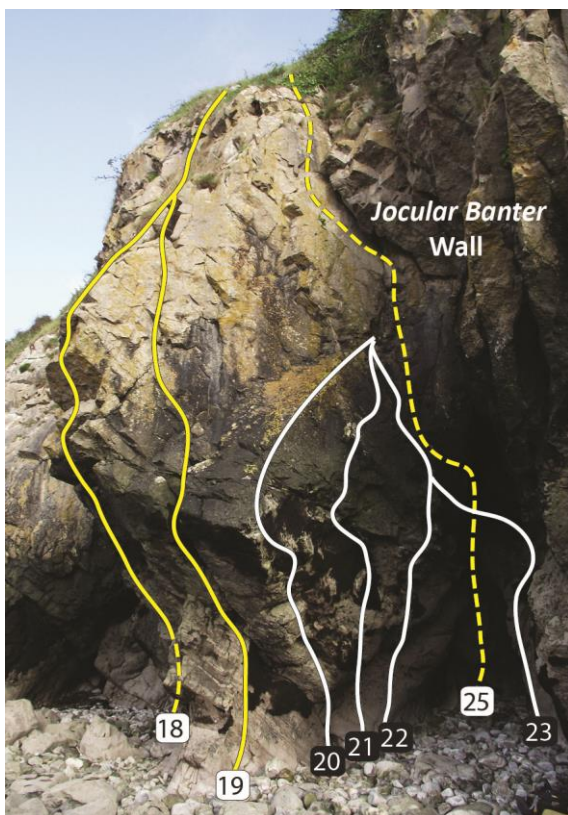
FA: Martin Crocker, Matt Ward

### 19 **Buoy Racer** 12m E1 5b (11.7.93)

Enter the awkward, outrageously hanging crack right of *Jutland*; step left above it, and take a short wall to easier ground and the top.

FA: Dave Viggers, Damian Carroll

Forming the left wall of the central cave is a black diamond-shaped wall, so terribly steep. This hosts a clutch of ‘boulder-problems’ – all a trouser-filling 5 to 6m high at current (2020) beach level. The V grades assume a low, 2019 beach level where the obvious hand-sized undercut pocket in its centre is 2 to 3 feet beyond reach (when *Jocular Banter* was first climbed the beach level was higher). Two mats seem essential, though ‘one man and his mat’ has been there, done that – albeit with a nasty back-down. Unfortunately an enthusiastic band of seas-moss has the habit of colonising some of the holds, which must be brushed from time to time. The easiest way to do that is to climb the chimney and bridge across to buckets above *Feel Free to Applaud* (this is *The Descent* route, which is about HVS 4c in ascent), and place good wires for a belay at 7m.



### 20 **\*\*Motormouth** V3 (6a) (7.8.2019)

Ace: the hanging left arête. Pounce for a sharp finger-jug for right (no retaining wall), stretch up left for a jug on the arête; then contort rightwards up the right-hand-side of the arête to the jug-nest above the centre of the wall.

### 21 **\*\*Sultans of Spin** V4 (6b)

(7.8.2019) A powerful classic (to be). Make a desperate move to reach the undercut pocket, span out left for a two-finger pocket; then – using a finger-pocket for right – extend for a block jug high above. Pull over onto the jug cluster.

### 22 **\*Feel Free to Applaud** V3 (6a)

(7.8.2019) Reach a coarse jug with left hand and then a refined hold high on the hanging rib. Pull up to jugs and the jug cluster above and left.

23 **The Descent** V0- (4c) From the back of the cave step out right onto the sea-mossy right wall. Bridge across the chimney to sharp jugs on the left wall and swing up left onto the jug cluster. Reverse as for problems 20 to 22: mobile mats a bonus!

There are two smoking-hot link-ups on the wall. **\*\*Talk the Talk** (V4, 20.8.2019) links *Motormouth* with *Sultans of Spin*, and **\*\*Wash your Mouth Out** (V4, 20.8.2019) is a traverse linking *Motormouth* with *Feel Free to Applaud*.

**24 Jocular Banter** 12m E2 6a (18.7.93)

The sequence I remember is (at higher beach level) to use the undercut pocket to trend rightwards to jugs above 22. The route then finishes up the corner-crack. (Warning: the start is unprotectable.)

FA: Dave Viggers, Damian Carroll

**25 Gay Repartee** 12m E2 6a (18.7.93)

From the back of the cave, traverse left under a bulge on greasy undercuts to join *Jocular Banter*.

FA: Dave Viggers, Brian Watson

**26 Mass Debate** 12m E2 5c (18.7.93)

The cleft in the nether regions of the central cave leads to a strenuous jamming crack (which has become vegetated). Finish left.

FA: Dave Viggers, Damian Carroll

**Access Note:** Nesting Ravens!

There is a ravens' nest above the cave of *Second Severn Crossing*, which is readily visible from the beach. The ravens were still using the nest in 2019. Please avoid disturbing them during the nesting season; it is advised you do not climb anywhere right of *Mass Debate* up to and including *Sands of Time* between 1<sup>st</sup> February and 31<sup>st</sup> May.

The following five climbs end in a cornice of pernicious veg', but there is a short length of *in-situ* low-stretch rope fixed to a stake and blackthorn at the cliff-top which should be within reach. As an alternative there are good belays, including a rock-spike, below the cliff-top which offer the possibility of sacrificing a bit of kit to abseil off. The rock-spike takes a tape sling, which – if renewed each visit – offers one such facility.

**27 Less is More** 9m E3 6a (26.7.2019)

Is there no end to the steepness? Start 2m right of the *Mass Debate* crack. Pull up onto a short rounded rib. Take the slanting overhangs rightwards using an assortment of undercuts and weird pockets to a thread-jug and more jugs above to pull round onto easy ground and the belays.

FA: Martin Crocker (led with Soloist)

**28 If less is more, just think of how much more 'more' will be?** 9m E2 5b (26.7.2019)

In the front of the prow is a black overhanging flake with a narrowing slit beneath. Step up to the slit and sling in loads of gear. Hang a rock-spike (tape runner) and muscle up a short hanging rib above.

FA: Martin Crocker (led with Soloist), though this was part of the deep water solo traverse of 1998.

**29 \*Leaning Difficulties** 12m E3 5c (18.7.93)

The grey flake-line in the right-hand side of the overhanging prow between the central and the rightmost cave. A powerful and testing route, but care is required with the flakes when you pull up onto easier ground. Surge up the line of flakes (crucial good wire up right on the face, shared with *Severn Bore*), and undercut left to larger flakes, one or two of which moves. Exit up broken rock.

FA: Damian Carroll, Vika Moisey

The next two routes, which start from the rightmost cave, *were* affected by major rockfall. However, all is not lost, as they have both been re-climbed – but at higher grades.

30 **\*\*Severn Bore** 12m E4 6a (12.9.87)

Tryingly steep (and far from boring), but only just meriting the grades. Take layaways in the left wall of the cave direct to a square-cut finger-boss, making a committing move to a hand-ledge. Use a jug on the arête and climb up the grey (rockfall) face; then swing around left onto easier ground. (It used to be E3 5c, but the errant ‘E3 flakes’ are now somewhere in the Atlantic Ocean!)

FA: Martin Crocker, Matt Ward. Reclimbed: Martin Crocker (led with Soloist) 31 July 2019

31 **Third Severn Crossing** 15m E4 6a (11.7.93/2.8.2019)

No longer dysfunctional, but hard and bold. Squeeze up the chimney at the back of the cave and gain a rest under the sloping roof. Pack crucial small wires into a small pocket; then span repeatedly out left to gain a sharp flake. Keep cool (nasty fall potential) and gain the arête. Scramble to the top.

Original start: Climb the right-hand of the two cracks at the back of the cave – much easier.

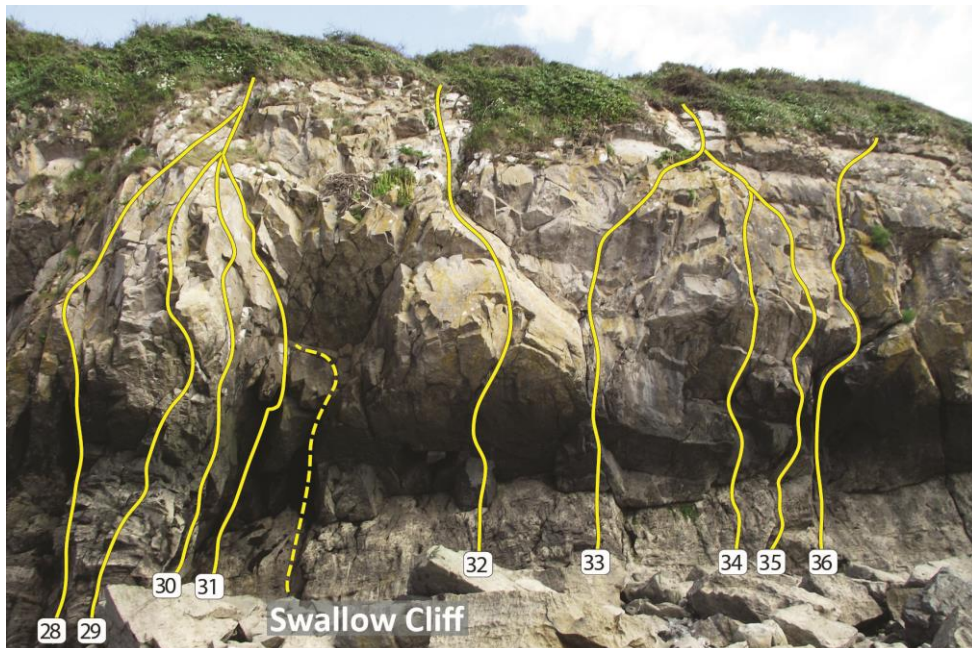
FA: Damian Carroll, Vika Moisey; reclimbed with a new start by Martin Crocker (unseconded)

Immediately right of the cave is a fine buttress, characteristically undercut by massive black roofs.

32 **\*\*Psycho 2** 15m E4 6c (6.9.87)

The virtuoso 3m ceiling in the left-hand side of the buttress: a nugget in North Somerset’s Eldorado. Undercut out under the roof on painful finger-jams and innovate to the lip (*in-situ* thread; but good wires – no cheat pinkpointing now!). Exit easily on the left up a groove; *in-situ* rope fixed to a stake.

FA: Martin Crocker, Matt Ward





33 **\*Sands of Time** 15m E3 6a (6.9.87)

Start up the crack right of the 3m ceiling and reach into a short white groove (*in-situ* thread). Make a sharp hard pull up right to gain good holds and an easy exit; *in-situ* rope fixed to a tree.

FA: Matt Ward, Martin Crocker

34 **\*Too Big to Swallow** 12m E3 6a (12.9.87)

Great rock! And some great holds! An improbable line over the 2m roof at mid-height: top of the grade. Bridge up a gap onto a pedestal block beneath the roof. Step right (thread) and make a long reach for jugs over the lip. Struggle desperately over using the vertical slot on the right (if not occupied by a cam!), and continue up the face to join the exit of *Sands of Time*.

FA: Martin Crocker, Matt Ward

35 **Then Chew on This** 12m E4 6a (12.9.87)

Easier than its partner but harder to protect. Jam for 4m up the prominent rightward-curving hand-crack and gain a rest under the roof. Arrange tricky gear; then pull straight over the tough roof before moving up left to the exit of *Sands of Time*.

FA: Martin Crocker, Matt Ward

36 **\*Good to Go Rogue** 12m E1 5b (17.6.2004)

Quite a good intro to the powerful climbing on the cliff, which can be protected well. Work up the V-groove right of the hand-crack; then strenuously swing right into a wide crack. Follow the wide crack on big holds to the top (*in-situ* rope on the right).

FA: Martin Crocker (led with Soloist)

37 **\*The Incalculable Cleft** 15m E4 6b (6.9.87)

Yes, its ungainliness is evil! Towards the right-hand side of the buttress is a large black roof split by a cleft. Fight ham-fistedly into the cleft but evacuate it as soon as possible into a niche above the roof on the right. Take the narrow groove on the right and finish easily; *in-situ* rope.

FA: Martin Crocker, Matt Ward

Variation: **\*The Incalculable Cleft (Redux)** E5 6b (24.8.2018) Instead of swinging out right, continue up the cleft with sustained difficulty. Take the groove above to link up with the original.

FA: Guy Percival, Jack Bradbrook

38 **Ben's Route** 12m E5 6a (24.8.2018)

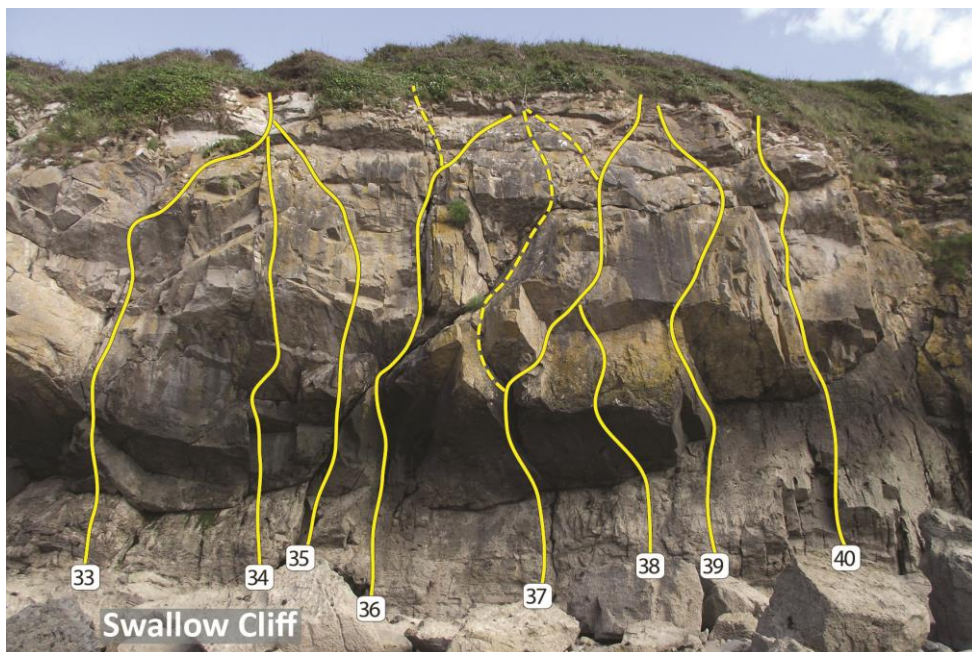
Very nasty, especially if you fall off (the only gear on the crux is dubious small wires in the underside of the roof). Tackle the ceiling right of *The Incalculable Cleft* with some gymnastics and join that route at its second (smaller) roof.

FA: Guy Percival (after top-roping)

39 **\*I've Cleaned That!** 12m E2 6a (6.9.87)

Dedicated to GG and his war cry. Hard! Gain a short rib between the roofs from the right. Pull over the upper roof using a spike out right and finish as for *The Incalculable Cleft* (two *in-situ* threads).

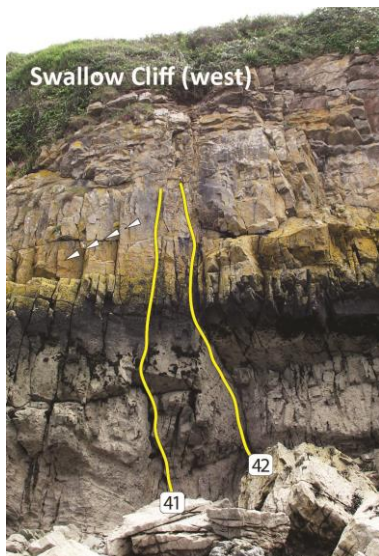
FA: Martin Crocker, Matt Ward



#### 40 **S'all Yours** 12m E2 5c (25.4.96)

Start at the right end of the roofs 3m right of *'I've Cleaned That'* beneath an open overhung groove. From an easy slab, make thin moves leftwards and up into the open groove 2m left of the arête, and ascend this to an undercut bulge. Pull over and exit with caution.

FA: Martin Crocker (solo after top-roping)



Twenty metres right of the roofs (*S'all Yours*) is a not-altogether-unpromising wall divided by a groove that runs the full height of the cliff. Unfortunately the groove turns into rubble 3m below the scrub-laden cliff-edge, so the best bet is to engage the following tactics.

#### 41 **Keyboard Hero** 9m VS 4c (7.7.98)

Start 2m left of the groove. Take an eliminate line up the steep wall on fair spaced holds to a point 3m below the top. Traverse left and down on good footholds to a belay. To retreat make a long traverse left and descend a crack right of the roofs (about D grade).

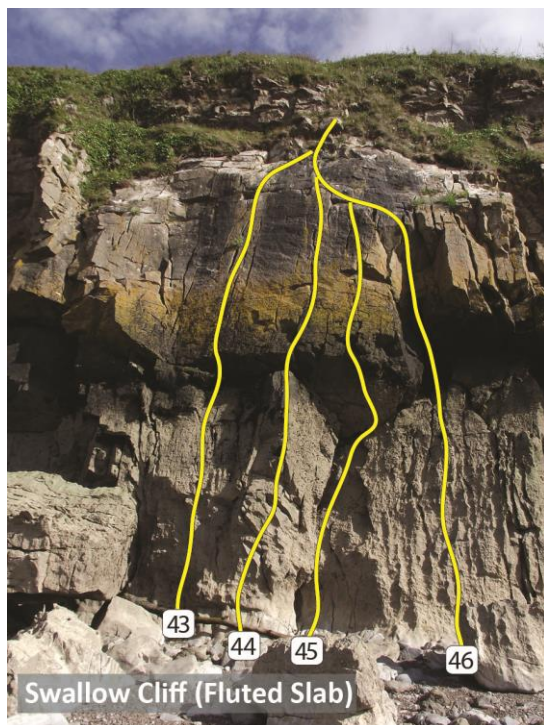
FA: Martin Crocker (on-sight solo); possibly done before

#### 42 **Goosebumps Song** 9m VS 4c (7.7.98)

Follow the steep groove on good pockets until rubble blocks the way. Retreat as for *Keyboard Hero*.

FA: Martin Crocker (on-sight solo); possibly done before

A further 25m to the right the cliff forms a clean slab with fluted vertical cracks and a rugged rib leading up to the centre of the slab. The four climbs here finish at the same point; there is a stake 2m back and a short rope hanging over the cliff-edge. This may help with the slightly loose exit, though it is not essential. All routes here provide enjoyable climbing on lovely rock.



43 \***Flute Elope** 12m S (15.2.2003)

Climb the sharp slab left of the rugged rib to a break beneath the slab. Climb the left-hand vertical crack in the slab, step right, and take the obvious exit.

FA: Martin Crocker (on-sight solo)

44 \***Pipe Music** 12m S (15.2.2003)

Climb the rugged rib to the break. A huge jug gives access to the right-hand crack. Climb the crack to the common exit.

FA: Martin Crocker (solo)

45 \***Suggestive** 12m E1 5c (15.2.2003)

Climb easily to a sizeable roof under the right-hand side of the slab. Undercut for a hanging flake over the lip, stretch for a finger-jug, and pull over. Pockets above lead to the exit. Perfect protection.

FA: Martin Crocker (solo after top-roping)

46 \***Ain't No Sunshine** 12m HS 4b  
15.2.2003)

Enter the V-groove right of the slab awkwardly. Large holds lead onto the slab above. Climb diagonally left to the exit.

FA: Martin Crocker (on-sight solo)

One hundred and fifty metres west of the beach is a zawn – well, a wide gully (Elgar's Gully) beyond which is a series of attractive arêtes/fins (Finlands).







Finlands climbing (*Madonna and Child*) Tim Meehan

## Elgar's Gully

Big enough to host an orchestra, the pebble-filled gully supplies two sheer faces staring at each other and a batch of routes and problems on each. While most routes were originally soloed without mats, do note that the floor of the gully is often littered with unfriendly rocks amongst the pebbles. The beach level varies +/- 0.7m which can make a difference to fear potential and seriousness (for example: in 2019 the breach level was 0.7m lower than in 2003 when many of the climbs were first done). No doubt the grades of the routes could be reduced by piling up mats beneath, which is a matter of personal choice. There is a stake belay in the grassy spur above the East Wall. To descend into the gully from the routes on the West Wall (between *Mutilation* and *Right Arête*) there is a rock-ramp (often vile and wet where it reaches the back of the gully) or a very exposed climb (VD) down a lower, slanting crack. Or, you can thrash through scrub to the cliff-top path.

Note that the black sea-moss at the tide line, which stays wet after a big tide, can be a problem, especially on the west wall. You may first need to brush some of the holds from an abseil rope.

### East Wall

#### 1 \*Elgar 12m VS 5a (22.6.97)

Bijou elegance and good wire protection up the narrow slab on the seaward rib, if eliminate. Move up onto a slim pedestal. Ignoring big holds on the right, climb direct with a tricky rock-up onto a sharp left-hand finger-flake, and continue up the slab to the top.

FA: Andy Tallant, C Jones

#### 2 Enigma Arête 12m HS 5a (22.6.97)

Layback the hard overhanging arête (painful!) to jugs; then continue to the top much more easily.

FA: Nigel Barry, Helen Barry

#### 3 Sterling Sea Moss 10m HVS 5c (8.2.2003)

Quite tough, but the sea-moss doesn't seem to get in the way. Start 2m right of the arête. Climb up to a flake with difficulty. Pass a large thread above, eventually stepping left onto the arête.

FA: Martin Crocker (on-sight solo)

#### 4 \*Pomp 10m E1 5c (15.9.87)

Excellent, though you'd best ensure crucial holds in the moss-band have been defuzzed. Starting 3m right of the arête, climb strenuously into a niche at 5m. Follow a rightward-curving crack on good holds; then escape leftwards along a ramp.

FA: Martin Crocker (solo)

#### 5 \*\*Circumstance 10m E3 6a (15.8.87)

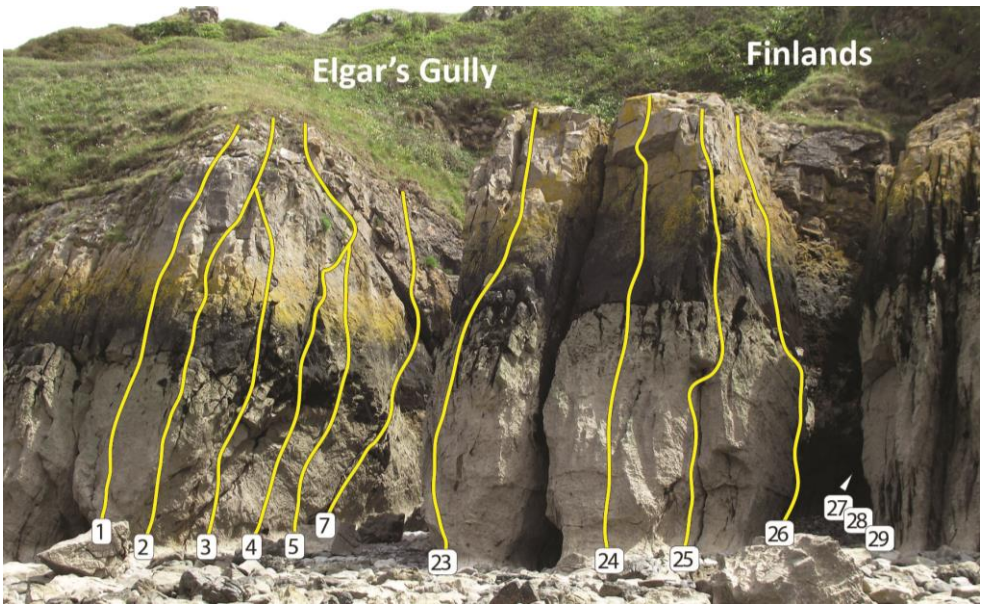
Still one of the best extremes at Sand Point – but a solo. Use a finger-flake and a mono to initiate long reaches to twin jugs in the centre of the smooth face. Sweet finger-edges and a rock-up lead to the exit of *Pomp*. Unprotected, but with the hardest moves to gain the twin jugs (V3 thus far) and – if you're blessed – a bank of pebbles rather than boulders beneath. (Video still, page 29.)

FA: Martin Crocker (solo after top-roping)

#### 6 \*Where Coral Lies 10m E6 6a (8.2.2003)

A very serious solo given the back-breaker boulders waiting for you at the bottom. Make a move up a rightward-twisting crack, and take a vague blunt rib above using two coral-stem projections to finger-pockets and a sloping mantel exit. (The jugs on *Circumstance* are off line.)

FA: Martin Crocker (solo after top-roping, above a roll of sleeping foam)



**7 \*Press F to Pay Respects** 10m HVS 5b (1987/7.9.2018)

The enjoyable and protectable twisting crack. Follow the technical crack to the ramp; move up and over a bulge and little headwall on the right.

FA: Martin Crocker on-sight soloed the crack in 1987 (at '4c', with a reverse down the ramp). Route as described by Jack Bradbrook, Fernando Hidalgo, Mark Davies

**8 Severn Suite** V0 (5a) (4.2.2003) Step off the boulder and connect two finger-jugs in the shallow scoop right of *Press F to Pay Respects*. Bear right to solo down the ramp.

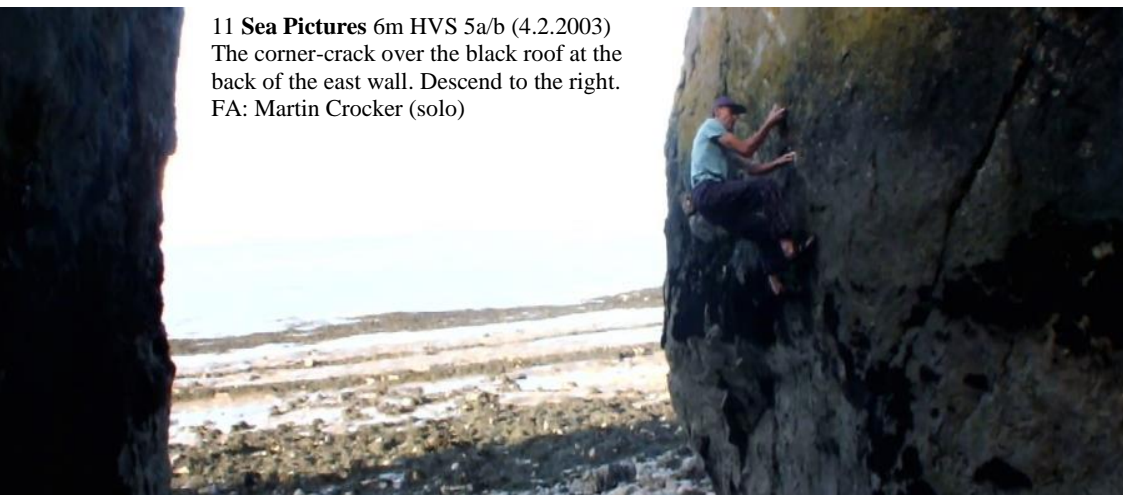
**9 Whelking with Carol** V3 (6a) (20.6.2019) From the beach, gain the second finger-jug direct; way hard. Step up left to gain the ramp where the twisting crack reaches it (bold). Solo down the ramp.

\***10 March of Time** V3+ (6a) (11.10.2003) A cerebral bouldering traverse of the east wall. At low beach level a scooped ledge appears which is not used (keep feet above the bulge). Start 2m right of *Enigma Arête* at a slanting crack, and – if not out of synch – finish up *Severn Suite*.

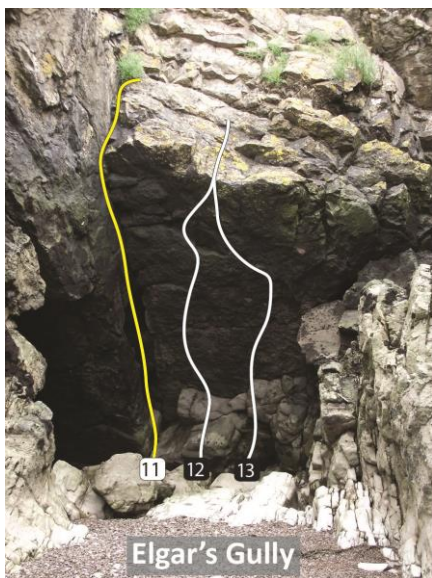
**11 Sea Pictures** 6m HVS 5a/b (4.2.2003)

The corner-crack over the black roof at the back of the east wall. Descend to the right.

FA: Martin Crocker (solo)







The *Sea Pictures* roof has seen action by boulderer Ian Cooper who described it as a '45 degree board'. Fair enough, since his additions and *Beastly Squire's Arrakis Direct* look pretty amazing. Bear in mind, however, they were first 'sent' with spotters and a stack of mats. The landing isn't a dune but a hostile series of ridges of bedrock, so 'one man and his mat' should think again. If resources are limited an alternative, life-affirming strategy might be a top rope (and a top roper). Beta is available on YouTube.

12 \*\***Litany Against Fear** V7 (6b) (1.6.2017) Using the left arête, dynamically go for the sloping finger-ledge and hit the top (no side wall – otherwise you'd be climbing *Sea Pictures* (V0!)).

13 \*\***Arrakis** V9 (6c) (1.6.2017) From SS, elaborate up and left to join *Litany*' at the top (no arête).

14 \*\***Arrakis Direct** V9 (6c) From SS, forge direct up the middle of the 'board' (no arête).

## West Wall

There are two main cracks in the slightly overhanging wall.

### 15 **Mutilation** E1 5c (V2) (4.2.2003)

Flounce up the pocketed subsidiary crack far left. A possible highball but there is an underlying wart of bedrock waiting to exact life-changing injury.

FA: Martin Crocker (solo)

### 16 **The Icky** 6m E3 6a (V3) (4.2.2003)

Tight: fire direct via the obvious fingerhold in the little headwall. E grade is beach-level dependent.

FA: Martin Crocker (solo after top-roping)

### 17 **Rasp** 7m E1 5b (4.2.2003)

The left-hand crack, safe to lead.

FA: Martin Crocker (solo after top-roping)

### 18 **A Traction** 9m E5 6b (23.3.2003)

Long, hard moves above a big-bounce fall. Climb to a mono left of *Stomp* (wire in base of crack, and wire in slot on *Rasp* to the left). Connect small holds in the headwall above and exit direct.

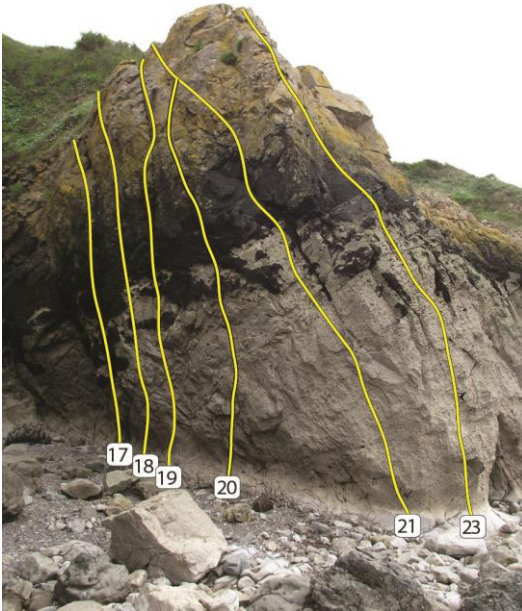
FA: Martin Crocker (after top-roping), John Harwood

### 19 **Stomp** 9m E1 5c (15.9.87)

The right-hand crack; well-protected after the hard start.

FA: Martin Crocker (solo after top-roping)

## Elgar's Gully (west wall)



### 20 **Put your Foot Down** 9m E3 5c (20.6.2019)

Unprotected. Start at a tiny overlap at knee/waist level. Boulder up the blank wall and then use holds in the sea-moss to gain a big black sidehold to the right. Avoid escaping right, press on direct to grab an angular jug just right of the top of *Stomp*. A move up the ramp of *Romp* gains the top.  
FA: Martin Crocker (solo after top-roping)

### 21 **Romp** 12m VS 4a (22.6.97)

Intimidating, and poorly protected above half height; but the holds are good. Use a jug a metre left of *Left Arête* to get started. With feet on ramp, climb leftwards to the top.  
FA: Nigel Barry, Helen Barry

22 **\*\*Land of Hope (no Glory)** V5 (6b)  
(11.10.2003) A brilliant left-to-right traverse of the west wall. Start at a line of undercuts far left, gain jugs on the initial wall of *Rasp*, and keep just below the sea-moss zone. At low beach level a scooped ledge appears, which is not used (keep your feet up).

## Finlands

Right of Elgar's Gully the cliff-line is incised by a series of attractive arêtes/fins. They really are lookers and are well worth a day's outing if you like V Diff's – VS's by the seaside. Being obvious and protectable features, some may well have been first ascended a long, long time ago. Amusingly, they've been re-climbed and renamed repeatedly; the earliest available records (from 1997 and 2003) taking precedence over later claims (to maintain probity and civil order). The intervening cracks are good too.

### 23 **Left Arête** 9m D (22.6.97)

Climb the broken arête which faces *Enigma Arête* opposite.  
FA: Nigel Barry, Helen Barry

The wide crack is an old descent route (M).

### 24 **Central Slab** S 9m (22.6.97)

Climb the grey slab to a break at half-height (gear – not much above). Continue up a smooth yellow slab and pull energetically over the small capping roof on finger-jugs.  
FA: Peter Sleet (on-sight solo)

### 25 **\*Right Arête** 9m S 4a (22.6.97)

Climb the small roof-capped groove and the delightful arête.  
FA: Andy Tallant, C Jones



In the narrow gully next right are several curious items.

**26 Mantelshelf Wall** 9m VD (22.6.97)

Starting 3m inside the gully climb up onto a long flake on the east wall. Mantel; then follow bountiful *Shrike*-like flakes up the wall to the top. You can gain the long flake by starting 2m inside the gully and tackling the smooth wall (5a).

FA: Andy Tallant, Peter Sleet, Nigel Barry (on-sight solo)

And, on the west wall are:

**27 \*The InDenials** 7m E2 5c (V1) (20.6.2019)

Start with right hand on the pointed flake of *Course of History* and climb the bulging wall on pretty good holds to a juggy hand-ledge top centre.

FA: Martin Crocker (solo)

**28 Groupthinkflunk** 7m E1 5b (V0+) (20.6.2019)

Starting a metre inside the gully, use undercuts at head-height to gain good fingerholds. Pull up and – avoiding escape to the right – make a long stride-and-reach left for the juggy hand-ledge.

FA: Martin Crocker (solo)

**29 \*Course of History** V3 (6a) (11.10.2003) A bouldering passage, best taken left to right. Make a hard start to gain the sharp spike; then use undercuts to finish via the fingerholds of *Groupthinkflunk*. At low beach level a scooped ledge and footholds appear, which are not used (keep your feet up).





Heading out west again past a fist of razor-sharp Wolverine fins is another gully (more of a cove really) containing a 3m high pinnacle and a good-looking wall on the left ('little pinnacle cove').

**30 Finlandia** 5m V0 (5a) (11.10.2003) Layback the right-hand side of the sawblade fin left of the pinnacle, while avoiding slashing your wrists! (Video still, above.)

**31 Madonna and Child** 9m VD (19.8.2018)  
Climb the front of the pinnacle to its summit; stride across to the mainland and amble up the ridge.  
FA: Tim Meehan (on-sight solo)



**32 Do It or Lose It** 8m HVS 5a (11.10.2003)

Climb the strenuous flake behind the pinnacle and the easier rib above to the top.

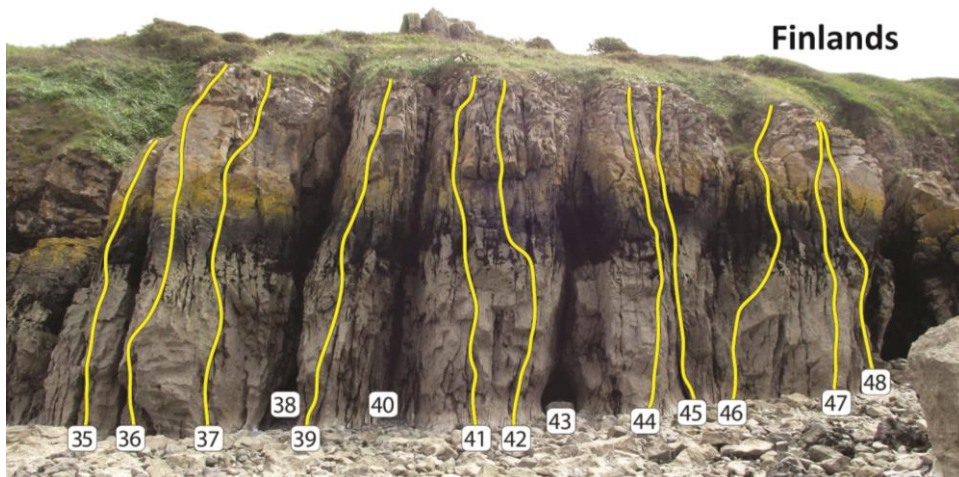
FA: Martin Crocker (on-sight solo)

**33 In It to Win It** 9m E3/4 6a (11.10.2003)

An eliminate adventure. Start behind and right of the pinnacle and climb straight up the face while ignoring the flake to the left and easier ground to the right. The E4 option is the solo.

FA: Martin Crocker (solo after top-roping)

In the right wall of the ‘little pinnacle cove’ is a yellow slab before the main group of arêtes/fins. A rock outcrop in the scrub furnishes thread and nut belays that could serve routes from *Moonrise* to *Clair de Lune*. For those beyond, you will have to belay well back on trees. To descend, it is safest to attain the cliff-top path and regain the beach via a ramp in the broad bay just to the west. (There are two alternatives: you can climb down into the back of the ‘little pinnacle cove’, but this is exposed and tricky; or – especially useful for soloists – you can reverse *Way Down*.)



34 **Moonrise** 8m VD (11.10.2003)

Climb a blunt rib onto a pedestal, and finish up a crack in the yellow slab.

FA: Martin Crocker (on-sight solo); possibly climbed before

35 **Sharpcut** 8m S 4a (11.10.2003)

Take the right arête of the yellow slab.

FA: Martin Crocker, Jonathan Crocker; possibly climbed before

36 \***Hunter's Moon** 12m HS 4a (11.10.2003)

The tallest, yellow arête – a great little line. Start on the left; but then stick to the smooth narrow face of the arête. Take care with the rock at the top. The overhanging direct start makes the route VS 5a.

FA: Martin Crocker, Jonathan Crocker; possibly climbed before

37 **Moonface** 12m HS 4a (11.10.2003)

Climb flakes and a crack in the right-hand side of the same arête, finishing slightly right.

FA: Martin Crocker (on-sight solo); possibly climbed before

38 **Madonna's Love Cave** 12m S (25.8.2018)

Speleology by the sea. Bridge the outside of the cave cleft; immerse yourselves in the bowels of the feature and then chimney out to the top.

FA: Tim Meehan (on-sight solo); possibly climbed before

39 \***Clair de Lune** 11m VS 4b (11.10.2003)

Take the big serrated flakes and sharp holds on the next arête; various starts possible.

FA: Martin Crocker (on-sight solo); possibly climbed before

**40 I'm Addicted** 11m VD (7.9.2018)

....to wide cracks! Follow the next big crack, stepping left at the top.

FA: Tim Meehan; possibly climbed before

**41 Mad on the Moon** 11m VS 5b (11.10.2003)

Take the awkward steep groove in the left side of the next (wider) rib passing an overhang to its left. Take special care to protect the difficult start and beware the loose exit.

FA: Martin Crocker (on-sight solo); possibly climbed before

**42 130 Days by Car** 11m HVS 5a (11.10.2003)

Climb the hanging arête in the wide rib and step left to a rest under the roof. Surmount the roof to finish past an oft-*in-situ* nest. Take care at the loose exit.

FA: Martin Crocker (on-sight solo); possibly climbed before

**43 \*Into the Groove** 11m S 4a (31.8.2018)

The purest (and best) of the cracks which rises from a small cave containing a block. Take the groove and hand-crack with a step right at the top.

FA: Tim Meehan, Mark Davies; possibly climbed before

**44 \*Apollo 11** 11m HVS 5a/b (11.10.2003)

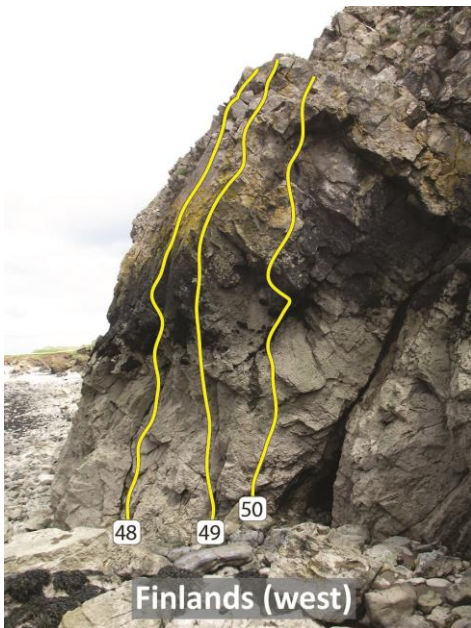
Committing. On the next arête, shimmy up a pillar (which forms the right edge of the arête) to a welcome jug at 5.5m. Take one small step into the easier crack and follow massive karst jugs to the top. (There is a left-hand version at VS 4b, which climbs the left edge of this arête).

FA: Martin Crocker (on-sight solo); possibly climbed before

**45 Moonset** 11m S (11.10.2003)

Climb the crack to the right, which passes an overhang on the right wall.

FA: Martin Crocker (on-sight solo); possibly climbed before

**46 Way Down** 9m M (11.10.2003)

A possible descent route: the gully and rib to its right, between the final two fins/arêtes.

FA: Martin Crocker (on-sight solo); possibly climbed before

**47 Coq au Van** 9m VD (8.8.2014)

Start 2m right of the gully. Move up a slim rectangular rib and bear right up a grey slab.

FA: Michael Unwin, Alan Thorne

**48 \*Van Deeman** 9m S 4a (22.8.2014)

A good route. Start under the left edge of the face, behind a boulder. Climb up a slight groove and pull over onto an obvious juggy ledge. Finish up a crack in the fine grey slab.

FA: Peter Holy, Michael Unwin



Right of the fins/arêtes is a boulder-filled bay with an easy escape up a ramp at the back. On its left-hand side is an overhanging west-facing wall (which is the end-wall of the fins/arêtes).

49 **\*\*Do or Die, No Ifs or Buts** 9m E3 5c (23.7.2019)

Forget the vacuous spin, this is one of the best micros on the crag. Wire protected. Start a metre left of the cave at a short vertical crack. Climb straight up spaced jugs to a beautiful pocket at 6m in the arête. Span steeply up right for a sloper and exit on big holds. (Video still, below.)

FA: Martin Crocker (solo after top-roping)



50 **\*It's Over** 9m E4 5c (15.2.2003)

It will be if you fall off. From the small cave gain a ragged finger-jug, and then undercut over a bulge to reach the left end of a high sloping hand-ledge. A powerful final lock and it genuinely is all over (until the next one).

FA: Martin Crocker (solo after top-roping)

At the back of the bay, on the right behind a block, is a white pillar left of the descent ramp.

51 **Pon Farr** 10m E4 5c (17.6.2004)

Solo up the centre-left of the pillar. Gear potential is pessimistic, so keep in charge of your emotions. (*Exit Through the Gift Shop* is an HVS 4c variant up the pillar's right edge, climbed much later, which appears to have the advantage of some protection in the crack on the right.)

FA: Martin Crocker (solo after top-roping)

There are two boulder problems in the bay, on the right.

52 **T'Pau** V1 (5c) (15.2.2003) Tackle the stepped overhangs under the escape/descent ramp by the hardest line you can work out.

53 **T'Pring** V1 (5c) (15.2.2003) Conquer the sheer triangular face keeping right of a leftward-slanting crack (which is about S). A two-fingertip dink for your right hand is the key.



### Double Cleft Wall

To the right (west), just beyond some foreshore blocks, is a long low buttress dissected by two clefts in its centre. The buttress has been well and truly investigated for easy routes – and why not?

The first three routes take the face left of the left-hand cleft.

#### 54 **St Crispian** 6m VD (20.7.2014)

Layback the crisp arête to ledges and an easy finish. (Only M if you climb the cracks on the left.)

FA: Fernando Hidalgo, Micheal Unwin

#### 55 **Bob's Yer Uncle** 8m HS 4b (30.8.2014)

Start under a series of left-facing flakes in the centre of the face. Layback the flakes and pull up right on a larger hanging flake onto easier ground. Follow the ramp on the right to the top. (In the first 5m you can stretch to place gear in the crack to the left.)

FA: Fernando Hidalgo, Micheal Unwin

#### 56 **Trench Town** 8m E1 6a (15.2.2003)

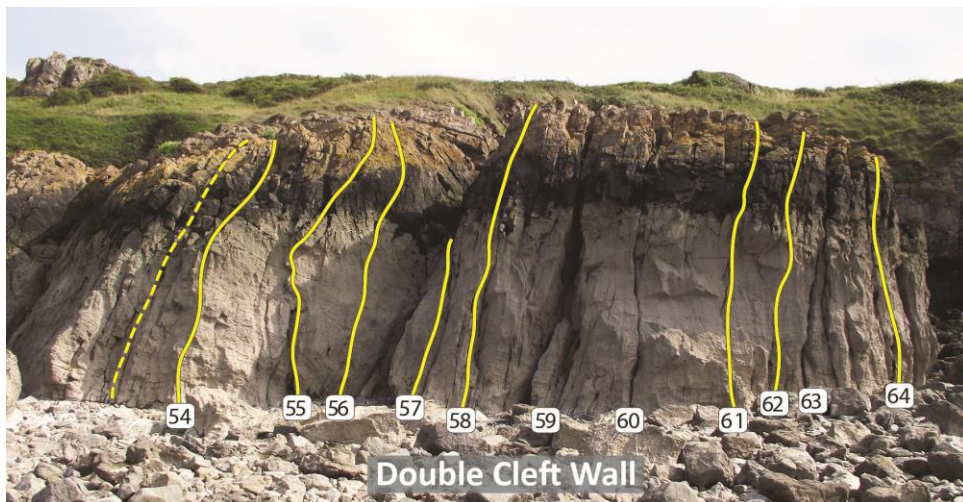
Start in the centre of the face and, using the obvious elliptical finger-pocket, make hard moves to sharp finger-holds. Swing right onto a razorblade jug, and take black sawtooth cracks to the top. (There is a pleasant V0+ eliminate up the grey rib between this route and *Bob's Yer Uncle*.)

FA: Martin Crocker (on-sight solo)

#### 57 **Misses Robinson** 8m M (21.7.2014)

Follow the left-trending crack in the black right wall of the first cleft.

FA: Micheal Unwin



**58 The One Time** 8m VD (21.7.2014)

Take cracks in the rib right of the left-hand cleft.

FA: Micheal Unwin; possibly climbed before

**59 My Tea Cleft** 8m VD (22.8.2014)

Climb the right-hand cleft past a bulge and chockstone.

FA: Micheal Unwin (on-sight solo); possibly climbed before

**60 \*Stifler's Mom** 8m VD (20.7.2014)

Neat. Follow the crack which rises just left of a pedestal in the base of the cliff.

FA: Micheal Unwin

**61 Stifler's Gran** 8m HS 4b (21.7.2014)

Climb up to the right of the pedestal and make a hard move up a shallow, mossy left-facing groove. Finish without any further stress.

FA: Micheal Unwin

**62 Camp Freddy** 8m S 4a (31.7.2014)

Eliminate. Start a metre right of the pedestal. Take the smooth wall to a bulge where a big jug on the left kick starts a few steep moves to the top.

FA: Alex Roberts, Micheal Unwin

**63 Doggerel** 8m D (20.7.2014)

Climb the prominent rightward-trending crack.

FA: Micheal Unwin (on-sight solo)

**64 Dogger Bank** 8m VD (31.7.2014)

Start a metre left of a 5m high crack far right (M grade). Move up the smooth lower wall and take flake cracks to the top.

FA: Alex Roberts, Micheal Unwin



\*\*\***Motorboat to Mars: The Re-release** 150m XS 6a (S3) (7.7.98)

The area's premier deep water solo attraction, which navigates the main cliff near the beach on an intricate, sustained, and fairly inescapable traverse. Although the climbing is generally only between 2 to 5m above the sea, predatory boulders lurk not too far below the surface including on some of the hardest sections. (The maximum depth of water above the boulders is merely 1 to 2m; any deeper than that and you would be underwater! But don't take my word for it: look after yourself and check out the fall zones when the tide is out.) Start by descending onto a projecting rib between two hollows, some 150m west of the pebble beach. Traverse east, stepping down and fingering across the steep side-wall with difficulty. Continue around onto the seaward face and pursue a line of choice until after 60m of 4a-4c climbing you arrive at a short overhung corner that forms the right edge of the main cliff (i.e. *S'all Yours*). The sea should now be lapping just beneath foot level. (If it isn't you'll either be drenched or be risking impalement on the boulders.) Traverse left beneath roofs, descending a little along a crack. Continue in the same line between roofs until a jug-rail leads into an alcove with an overhanging left wall (*Severn Bore*). This will appear fairly intimidating and, since you know that boulders lurk below, you'll want to lose, rather than gain, height. Descend the wall strenuously leftwards onto a rib which provides a semi-rest. Either climb the flakes straight above or the flake slightly left to easier rock. Continue into an easier recess, reverse a ramp, and pull up a steep wall onto a rib. Traverse left into a third and final recess and get established on a square-cut column at its back (*Sockthing*). On the left is a steep undercut wall; again, aim to lose height and reach good finger-jugs 3m left just above the bulges. From here, make one final hard move to pull around onto slabrier rock. Romp easily leftwards for 20m, with a nice section above a tilted rock platform leading to the pebble beach and a welcoming committee from the Weston Mercury.  
FA: Martin Crocker (solo)

## SOMERSET COAST

*Motorboat to Mars*, 2½ miles. V.S.

This is a complete girdle (sea cliff) of the cliffs from Sand Point to St. Thomas's Head—just to the north of Weston-Super-Mare, Somerset.

Although not sustained, it contains some excellent climbing on good limestone.

The cliffs range from 30–50ft. in height, rising directly from the sea. Although some pitches are rather hard for the grade—escape is possible throughout the traverse and excellent protection may be arranged. The route starts from the tip of Sand Point and keeps at about midheight for all its length. If anything, the traverse becomes easier towards St. Thomas's Head with the crux fairly near the start. Two short pendulums were made across small caves and no pegs are required at all. The traverse becomes very exciting at high tide.

*First ascent: M. J. Crocker & D. Ford. Completed: December 1973. (3 days climbing).*

Beyond, the cliff-line remains less inviting until the Point is reached. Here the limestone turns dolomitic and yields various clean slabs and cracks of up to 10m high. Many of these will have been subject to pottering in the 60s by persons unknown. More recently they been given a good 'going over', and the reinventions can be found described elsewhere. Alternatively – in Sand Point tradition – you might merely explore where the breeze takes you, all the while keeping your eyes and ears on the Severn's rip tides!

To finish on a zany note, herewith the original description of *Motorboat to Mars* which was published in *Rocksport* magazine in 1974. So far as I can remember it wimped out of the crucial Swallow Cliff section which was underwater at the time (and in any event too hard!). This unforgiveable misdemeanour wasn't resolved until *The Re-release* 25 years later, but not by the wizardry of Danny Seraphine.

