

# Ash Head 2023

## Routes and bouldering





# Ash Head Crag Routes and Bouldering 2023

**Climbs** - 140

**Altitude** 370m

**Faces** NW to SW

## Condition info:

A fine and remote set of crags high on Masham Moor with some very good routes up to 12m high and some excellent bouldering.

Development and revision since the YG1 YMC guide make a full rewrite appropriate. Don't be put off by the shooting lodges that sit in front of the main buttresses.

This is a good crag with great rock, though, as with other moorland locations, some problems can be scrittly and need brushing.



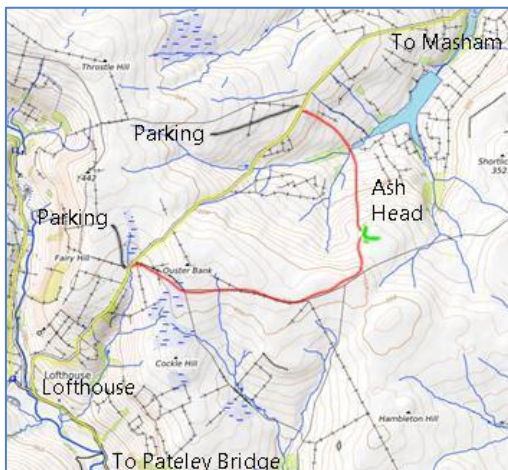
*"The crag first appeared in the 1982 guide, but no new routes were added during work for that book and the preparation for this edition only produced one minor line. Is this a crag that is truly worked out?" YMC Yorkshire Gritstone 1989.*

There were 21 climbs in that edition and the same number appeared in the 1998 guide. No more routes were added for the 2012 guide but 22 boulder problems were. There are a lot more now, it is in the selected Boulder Britain Guide, and there are still gaps!

The initial bouldering was developed years ago by, amongst others, the Sowden/Rhodes combo who left their explorations unrecorded. These and a lot of excellent new additions provide an attractive circuit. Landings for the boulder problems are often, though not always, flat. Some of the problems are high so at least a couple of mats are a good idea. As mentioned, lots of new and rediscovered problems so grades and names are tentative.



*Alex Thompson enjoying the fine rock at Ash Head*



## Parking and approach info:

Open Access Land. Dogs are discouraged, need to be kept under close control and restricted to public rights of way. Check the Natural England Open Access webpage for general and date limited restrictions to access.

The shortest way is from 100m west of the track leading to **Summer Side Farm at West Summer Side** on the Lofthouse to Masham road. A stone stile crosses the wall near a line of trees and there is ample parking on the grass a short way to the west of this. Pass to the side of the farm and drop down to the bridge crossing the river. Follow a grassy track, left then up, to a gate then diagonally through the fields and a couple of gates to gain the moor at a double gate. A path leads up to the crag from here. an alternative, but longer and tedious (unless cycling), is the moorland track from near the top of the road summit with parking found a short way back on a slight bend.

Source *Open topo map*

## Layout:

Ash Head is an extensive and, at first acquaintance, a rather confusing set of crags and boulders. It stretches for some distance along an edge overlooking the upper reaches of the Agill Beck Valley. The main group is around the Ash Head Moor Shooting Huts but the leftmost area (Coombs Crags) is around a vague spur and is well to the East of the huts above the path that comes up from the valley. There is a Lower Tier some distance in front of the main areas and another wall at Low Ash Head, near the approach path. At the main crag, the climbs vary from NW to South facing though some blocks have faces in all directions.

**Cover photo** Dave Turnbull on *Chicken Head Rib*  
*One of the many superb problems at Ash Head*

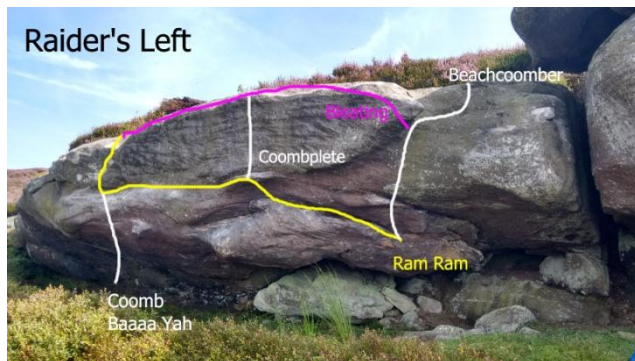
## Coombs Crags

An extensive area of blocks. There are a couple of worthwhile areas with a different character to the main crag. On the far left is a line of low overhangs.



### Raider's Roof

An overhanging band of well featured rock with an offwidth in the middle. Good summer sport but likely to seep in winter.



### Coomb Baaaaa Yah 6b

SDS. Pull sheepishly up to left end of *Ram Ram* and do its finish. Low in grade.

*The next problems all start sitting at good holds in the cave and spurn the underlying block.*

### Ram Ram 6c+ \*

Hanging traverse left across the break/holds past the low horn and top out over the main bulge after a section on slopers. The crux is not scraping your back on your mat.

*Adam Brown Aug 2016*

### Coombplete Control 6b\*

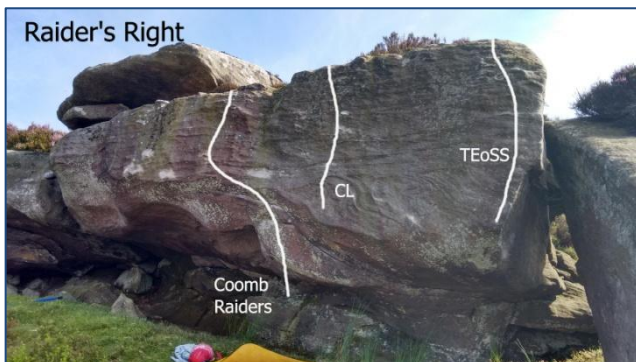
Follow *Ram Ram* to the high good hold and then up  
*Pete Naylor Aug 2016*

### Bleating Ridiculous 6b \*

Follow *Beachcoomber* to the high horn then swing left along the top to the finish of either of the previous two.  
*Paul Clarke Aug 2016*

### Beachcoomber 6b \*

Sit start on good holds in the cave. Pull directly up to the higher horn and top out to the right of it using a convenient 'hook'.  
*Chris O'Connell Aug 2016*



*The right-hand roof is severely undercut and could provide some very tough SDS challenges.*

### Coomb Raiders 6c+ \*\*

Sit start under the right-hand roof using the finger rail to reach the chicken head to the left and up to better holds.

*Adam Brown & Alex Thomson Aug 2016*



*Alex Thomson on Coomb Raiders*

### Coombing Least 6b

Start on two crimps and go for the top – no French start (SDS off lowest rail will be quite tough).  
*Paul Clarke Aug 2016*

### The End of Something Special 6b+ \*

But what about the beginning? Right arête from standing, climbed on crimps and guppies. SDS possible?  
*Paul Clarke Aug 2016*



## Ash Head Crag

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### Fun Slab

To the right of the overhangs an easy slab abuts the roof. A couple of nice easy problems and a bum slide descent.

#### The Fat Coomb Stroller 3+ \*

Slab arête stepping on via chicken head footholds.

#### Coomb On, Coomb On 4 \*

Rock on – to the slab right of the arête.

### Alphabet Blocks

Right again, past small block are a couple of good looking walls split by a crack.



#### Alphabet Aerobics 6c+ \*\*

The red wall on the left.

*Andrew Barker 16 Mar 17*

#### A Arete 5+ \*\*

The right arête of the obvious big red wall/slab – avoid using the crack.

*Alex Thomson Apl 2016*

#### Coomb Dancing 6a+ \*

Wall just right of the crack stepping rightwards. Needs a clean.

*Paul Clarke July 2016*

### Big Block

Down to the right is a big block. The uphill face has a tempting traverse break.

#### Catacoombs 6b+ \*\*

The undercut arête of the uphill face. SDS with hands in the break then make use of the arête to launch for the top.

*Alex Thomson 31/Jul/2016*

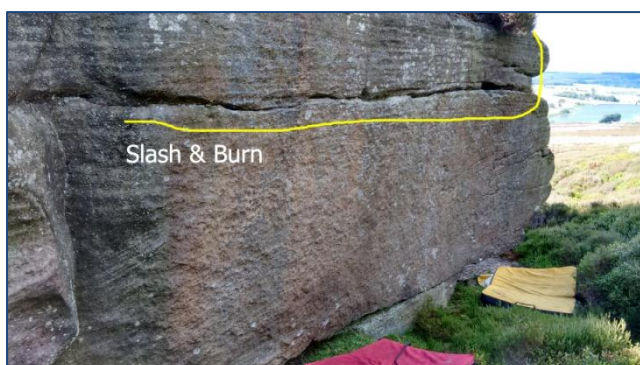
#### Catacoombs Right 6c \*

Start in break to right of *Catacoombs* start. Up to arête with left hand, launch for the top and mantel a cheval to finish

*Andrew Barker 16 Mar 17*



*Alex Thomson on Catacoombs*



#### Slash and Burn 5+ \*\*

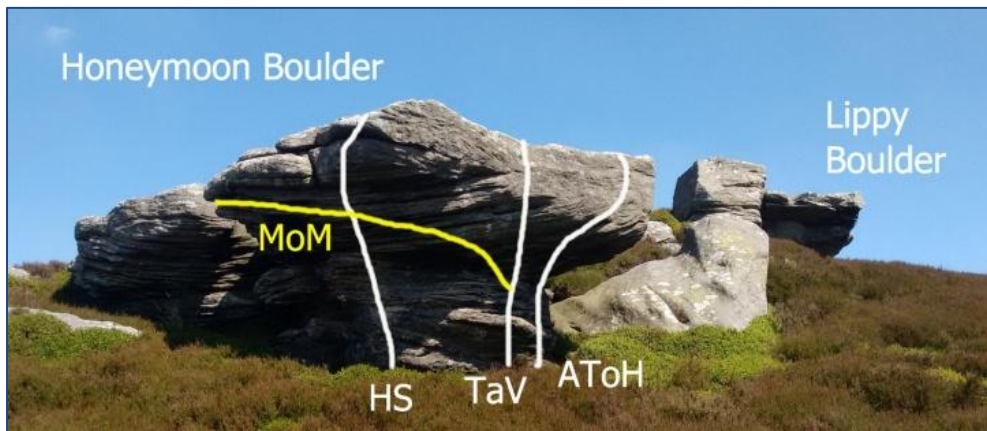
Starting from the corner swing along the break on great holds. Rock up at the end.

*Paul Clarke July 2016*

## Ash Head Crag

Back towards the buildings and starting with a couple of mushroom shaped blocks – the Honeymoon and Lippy Boulders. The first problems are on the left-hand one:

### The Honeymoon Boulder



#### Honeymoon Sweet 6a \*\*

As it should be. SDS at the left-hand shelf, up right to the flake bulge, then further right before launching for a small horn and buckets to top out.

*Chris and El O'Connell July 2016*

#### Take a Vow 6a+ \*

SDS. Breaks then big throw for top and tricky finish

*Paul Clarke July 2016.*

#### A Taste of Honey 6b \*

SDS. Similar just right. Sweet.

*Paul Clarke July 2016.*



#### Month of Mead 6c \*

Left to right traverse. Start with right hand in a ledge pocket. Traverse up and left on breaks to a suck it in top out up the leftmost groove.

*Adam Brown July 2016*

### Lippy Boulder

A small block to the right is the fun:

#### Lip-Up Fatty 6a \*

SDS in short corner on left. Follow juggy break right to nose and up.

*Paul Clarke July 2016.*

#### Buster Bloodvessel 6a+ \*

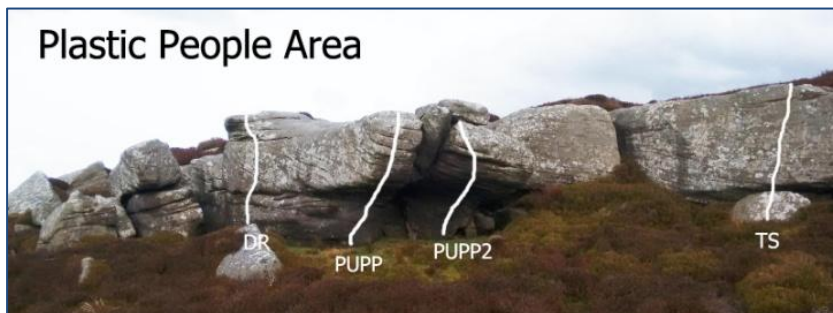
SDS. Centre breaks to lip and belly flop (or elegant) finish.

*Paul Clarke July 2016.*

*Adam Brown on Month of Mead*

### Plastic People Area

Still a short way to the left of the buildings – an area of walls with two impressive prows and some rounded walls on either side of these. *There is plenty of potential here but bring a brush if you fancy a bit of exploration.*



#### Dave's Rib 5+ \*

Rib at the left side of the wall.

*Dave Turnbull May 2016*

#### Pumped-Up Plastic People

7c \*\*\*

SDS. Hug and slap the obvious attractive, jutting prow. Worth the walk! There is rumoured to be a 7b+ method.

*Dave Sutcliffe 2016*

#### PUPP2 6c+ \*\*

SDS. The prow to the right. Easier but also a fine problem.

*Dave Sutcliffe 2016?*



# Ash Head Crag

## Two Step 4

On slab to the right. Step off the underlying block going slightly rightwards.

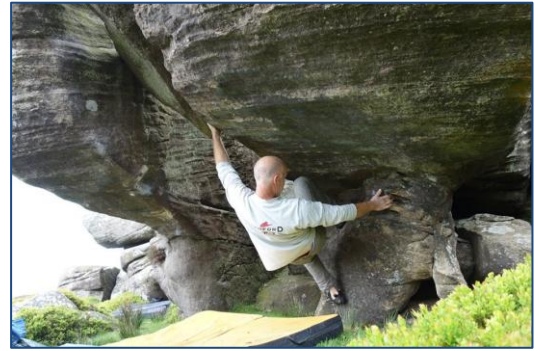
*Dave Musgrove June 2016*

## Heart of the Matter 6b+ \*

The heart shaped end of this block.

SDS. Weird crimp pull to slap the right arête, then left, then top.

*Paul Clarke Aug 2016*



*Paul Clarke on PUPP2*

## Main Crag, Main Crag Blocks and the Giant Blocks

The layout of the main area at Ash Head is rather confusing on first acquaintance being composed of the crag walls, with their routes and boulder problems, and a mass of blocks that are both big and small. The descriptions start by following the main edge from left to right and then going around the enormous Rhombic Block and its associated satellites before returning to the Scoop Block. After these The Outer Blocks are tackled. The diagram will hopefully aid your exploration:



## Garden of Eden

The smooth looking wall across to the right, and just left of the buildings, that sports a low shelf running across it. Problems (somewhat squeezed together in places) tend to depend on the degree of bend in your arm once on the shelf and vary from ok to impossible depending on your height.

## Hell 5+

Left side of wall. Use obvious chicken head to gain the break. Pull round the blocks leftwards

*Paul Clarke Aug 2016 (to his shame).*

*There are three problems (closely packed) to the left of the green streak.*

## One Armed Frenchman 6b+ \*

Starting standing on the shelf and right hand on the chicken head crimp. Make a move to the break rocking onto a goodish left foothold.

*Adam Brown Aug 2016*

## Crimpinology 6c

A variation, squeezed-in, study in stealing. Same crimp but step up and rock using a small foothold in the slight groove feature on the lip.

*Paul Clarke 2016*

## Corpus Crimpy 7b \*\*

Up the green streak and graded for those of normal height.

From a left hand on the chicken head go right to the two finger crimp and gingerly make for the break. Extremely height dependent. Perhaps 7a+ for the tall.

*Adam Brown Aug 2016*

## Habeas Crimpus 6c \*

Up the wall to the right of the green streak. Taking the right hand hold from Corpus Crimpy as a left hand crimp, use a semi-imaginary crimp for the right and, with a good right foot, think light thoughts and pull to the break.

*Adam Brown Aug 2016*

## Eden Arête 6b

Tackle the right arête by stepping off the block to the right. A direct start would be worthwhile.

*Oliver Parkinson Feb 2018*

## Golden Delicious 5

Step onto the left end of the break and shuffle along it to its right end. Contemplate the future of mankind – or jump off.





## Behind The Barn

The right-hand wall is close behind the left-hand building. This makes taking a useful topo picture difficult and falling off rather risky! It ends at a fine undercut arête and a wall, to the right of which, is a slanting bottomless crack and then a fine bay.

### Mustang Sally 6a+

The rather scrittly arête at the left end of the wall – right of the chimney – climbed on its right side.

*Oliver Parkinson Feb 2018*

### Sideways Action 6b \*

A traverse of the break that runs across the wall behind the barn. Good but needs a clean.

*Paul Clarke 2016*

### The Horn E1 5b 8m \*

The obvious horn is the line of a good route that sensibly uses lasso tactics for protection. Climb to the break and then chicken-heads lead to the horn. Steel yourself and stand on it to reach an easier upper section above the big break.

*Robin and Tony Barley Sept 1965*

### The Horn Sitter 6a+ \*\*

Sit start to *The Horn*.

*Nathaniel Larsson Sept 2016*

### Barnstorm HS 4b 9m \*

Near the right end of the wall, Climb the obvious line traversing right and go up the corner that contains a wide crack.

*Tony and Robin Barley Sept 1965*



*Oliver Parkinson on FA of Gun Shy*

*To the right are a collection of fine problems:*

### Gun Shy 7c+ \*\*\*

The fine prow above a character-building landing. Plenty of pads are advised!

*Oliver Parkinson March 2018*

### Splatomatic 7a \*\*\*

High. The round wall left of the flake. A superb problem with more holds than it seems.

*Dave Sutcliffe 2016*

### Flake Crack HS 6m

As it says. Also done as a Font 4.

*Tony Barley 1964*



### Crack A No-Go 7b+ \*\*\*

Tackle the short leaning crack that hangs enticingly above the roof. Looks steady but offers less purchase than you'd want.

*Dave Sutcliffe 2016*

### Split Arête 6c \*\*

Layaways and arête in the cleft to the right to reach the break then swing round and up. Ace, but watch your back.

*Dave Sutcliff Feb 2016*

### Hidden Rib 6c \*\*

SDS. The rib that splits the cleft is quite tough.

*Dave Sutcliffe Feb 2016*

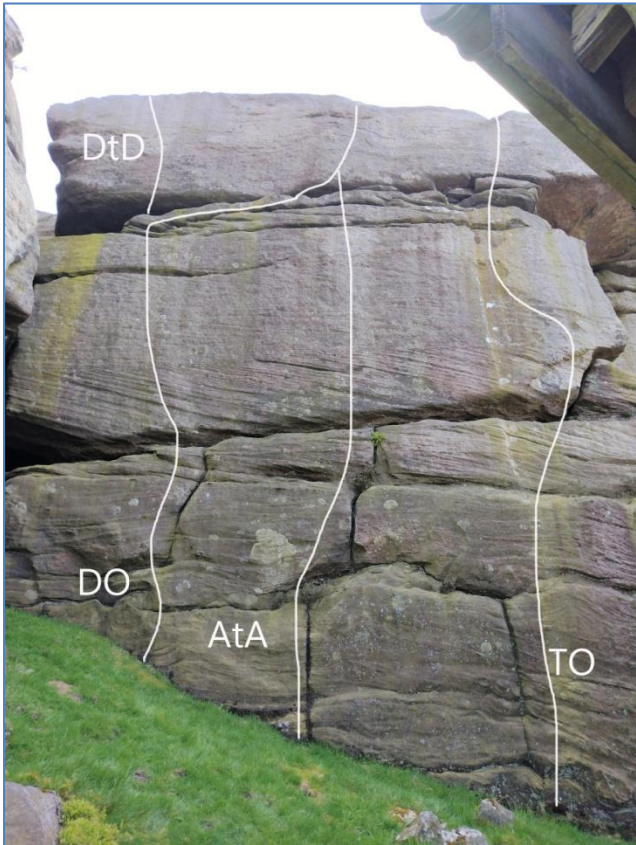


# Ash Head Crag

## Behind The Hut

### Dust Off Wall

The wall immediately behind the right-hand building and starting just right of a giant cleft. There has been some confusion over the exact line of early routes but this may now have been sorted.



#### Dust Off E2 5c/6a 11m \*\*.

The wall just right of the cleft starting up the first short crack. Climb to break and make a tricky step up to gain the next. A couple of pulls gain the big break (Font 6a/b highball to here depending on ones height). The original and easier finish moved 3m right then up. A direct finish, **Dust to Dust** E3 6a, is possible and better.

*Tony Barley and Ken Wood July 1974 Variation Paul Clarke October 2016*

#### Ashes to Ashes E4 6a 11m \*\*\*

Climb the second short crack and use undercuts to stand in the break. If you are tall a pair of poor chicken heads may be in easy reach (so E3 5c) but most will need to rock on to the big sloping foothold using a poor hold and/or little crystals. Once up, a better chicken head and holds lead to the top break. Finish direct – the original finish of Dust Off.

*P Clarke Oct 2016*

#### Tip Off HVS 5a 10m \*

Quite bold despite some good holds. Start left of the right-hand edge. Climb to the break then up to the top break. Finish direct.

*Martin Hannan November 1988*

*To the right is a roof-capped corner feature and a big chimney.*

#### Windy Wall HS 10m \*

Climb up to the corner then the left arête to the break. Finish as for *Tip Off*.

*Jack Wilson early 1950s*

#### Headstand HS 4a 10m

The chimney moving to the right to finish.

*Robin and Tony Barley September 1965*

An easier variation, **Fluted Rib** Hard V Diff combines parts of *Windy Wall* and *Headstand*.

### Last Rites Wall

To the right is a fluted wall with a discontinuous crack system.

#### First Rites 5+ \*

A boulder problem direct start to Last Rites. At the big break escape left.

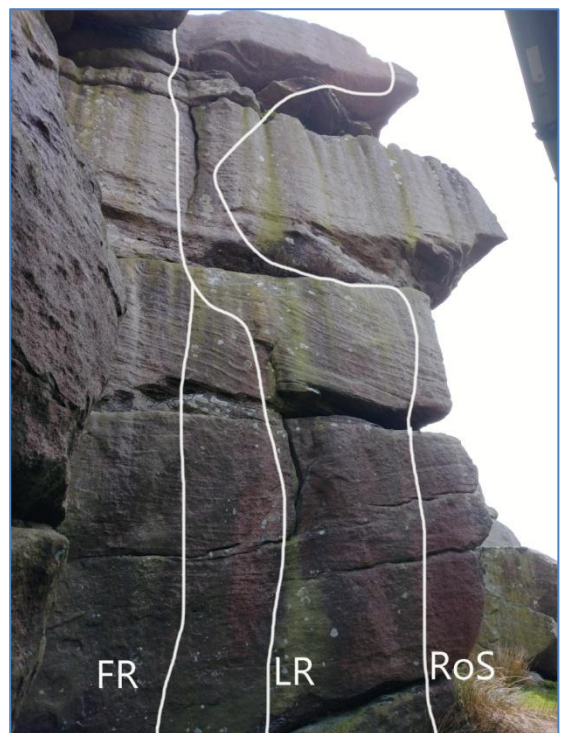
#### Last Rites VS 4c 10m \*\*

The crack system in the wall just right.

#### Rite of Spring E2 5c \*

Attempts the wall and arête to the right but avoids a rather blank section by some deviousness. Climb the wall and arête to the big break (big-ish hex in hole/slot on the right). Moving left, stepping up on banded footholds, to reach the crack on Last Rites feels a bit bold. Use the edge of the crack to make a big reach or bounce to gain a jug in the flute up to the right then move up to the break. Go right and pull up the bulging nose on good holds. A reach for a crimp may enable a left-hand finish for those that can ..... Starting up First Rites is a good variation.

*Paul Clarke, John Long May 2023*





# Ash Head Crag

## Thunder Crack Bay

Just to the right of the hut is a fine sheltered bay below **big** overhangs with the superb hanging Thunder Crack. Below the right end of the overhang a pile of blocks hide the entrance to a long narrow cleft that runs for some way behind the crag. Right again is a rippled slab with a vegetated crack at its centre.

### More than Life E6 6c 11m \*\*\*

The stunning, bulging and fluted prow to the left of *Thunder Crack* is taken direct with much excitement and mighty fall potential.

*Dave Sutcliffe Feb 2016*

### Thunder Crack HVS 5a \*\*\* 12m

An excellent climb. One of the best mid-grade routes in Yorkshire and worth the walk alone. The interesting arête (hole for hex/sling) followed by a traverse along the break gains the fine hanging crack-line. Pull steeply up this and swing leftwards along the upper break to reach easier ground and a fine finish. Well worth the HVS grade - VS in YG1! Note: It is possible to pull one rope and drop it down the left side of the *More Than Life* arête to protect the second on the starting arête as the protection invariably lifts off.

*Tony and Robin Barley September 1965*

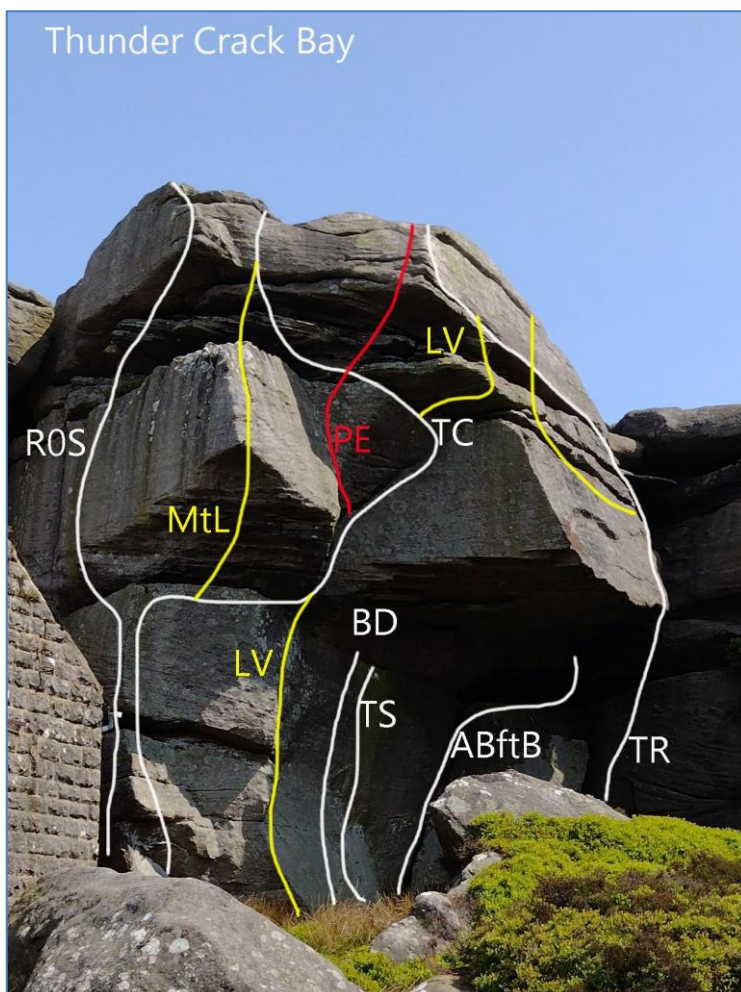


*Dave Sutcliffe on FA of More Than Life*

### Positive Energy E2 6b \*

Variations on a theme. The hard start to *Lightning Variation* leads to the crack. Bridged across that, swing left into the open groove and gain the break. Pull steeply up the hanging arête.

*Paul Clarke, John Long May 2023*



### Lightning Variation E1 6b 11m \*\*

Hard moves gain the hanging crack (pad useful). Romp up the crack and exit rightward to finish leftwards up the slab. HVS in YG1.

*Tony and Robin Barley September 1965*

### Lightning Start 6b \*\*

Starting wall/rib of *Lightning Variation* leads directly to the hanging crack. Traverse left and down or drop. A good problem in its own right.

*Tony and Robin Barley September 1965*

### Blue Dawn 7a+ \*

Just left of *The Storm* climb up the wall on chicken heads and sharp edges to a leap for the finish of *The Storm*.

*Robin Nichols Dec 2019*

### The Storm 6c+ \*\*\*

The very fine wall to the right of *Lightning Start* finishing at the break. Harder than it looks, though perhaps low in the grade.

*Chris Sowden and Friends?*

### The Storm Dyno 6a+? \*

The problem can be done as a dyno. Allegedly easier than the original for those with the bounce or are so lanky that they avoid the climbing.

*Will Hunt Oct 2016*

*To the right is the aforementioned pile of blocks hiding the entrance to the rift running behind the crag.*

### Down to Earth ?? \*\*\*

An expedition for the skinny. Surmount the blocks and walk then wriggle to eventually climb the opening at the far end.



## Ash Head Crag

### **A Bolt from the Blue** HS 4b \*\*

Another expedition – very old skool. The short corner crack or front of the block right of The Storm to the big ledge. Delve into the cleft of *Down to Earth* for a few metres then chimney upwards passing breaks to exit via one of two holes above (the inner one is bigger).  
*John Long, Paul Clarke, May 2023*

### **Astraphobia** Diff \*

Climb hanging blocks to the ledge then bridge up the open corner to the top.

*FRA Paul Clarke May 2023 but must have been done before?*

### **Thunder Road** Mild Severe 16m 3c \*\*\*

The wrinkled slab to join Astraphobia's corner and follow it to the break just below the top. An easy but exposed traverse along the upper break leads to the arête finish of *Lightning Variation*.

*FRA Paul Clarke May 2023 but must have been done before?*

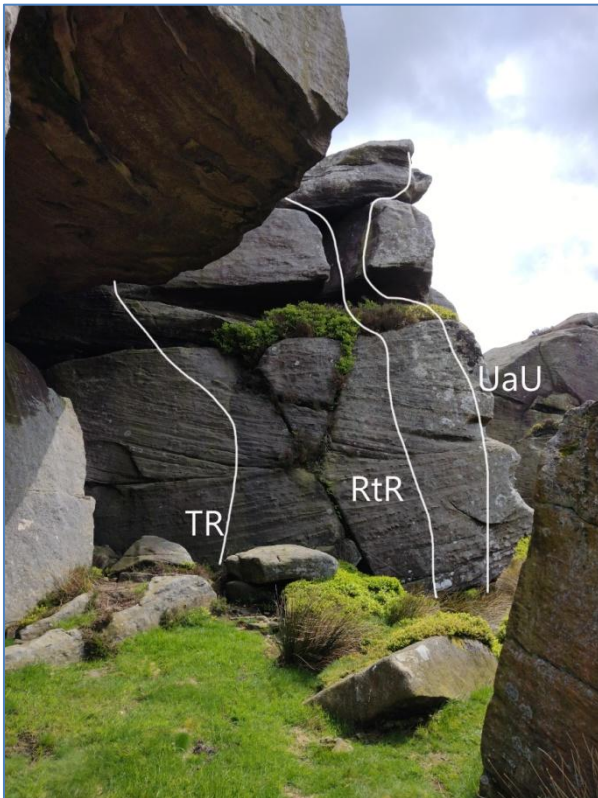
### **Beneath the Sheets** VS 14m 4c \*

Climb Thunder Road to the breaks and traverse with hands in the lower one to the left edge. Step up and take the wall slightly rightwards to finish.

*Paul Clarke May 2023*



*James Turnbull on The Storm*



### **Right to Roam** VS 5a 8m

The slab just right of the vegetated crack. Take the V chimney and exit left.  
*Malcolm Townsley May 2005*

### **Ketchum Wall** 4+ \*

The re-cleaned first section of the route *Right to Roam*  
*Alex Thompson July 2016*

### **Up and Under** VS 4c 9m

The left side of the arête to the bilberry ledge. Take the V chimney and exit right.

*Tony and Robin Barley September 1965*



*Stretch Scoop (see next page)*

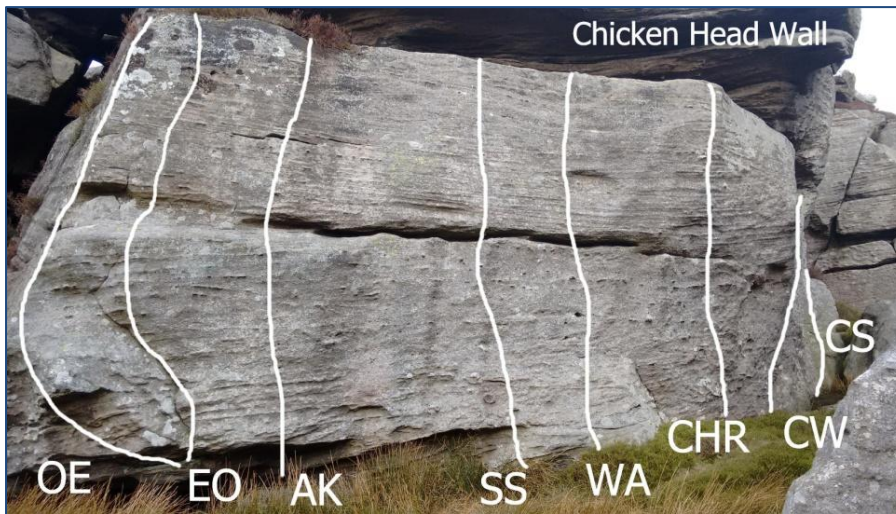


# Ash Head Crag

## Chicken Heads Wall

To the right of the Thunder Crack Bay starts the fabulous Chicken Heads Wall - littered with the eponymous protuberances.

The wall is split by two breaks. Some routes tackle both the lower walls and the upper band. The boulder problems going to the second break are still quite high. At the break escapes to the right or left are available.



The next three problems have rather veggie finishes but are nevertheless good.

### Over Easy 6a \*

From a sit start underneath the small roof. Traverse left under the arête. Finish up chicken heads on the rib's left side.

Jamie Moss

### Easy Over 5+ \*

Start as for *Over Easy*. Climb the slanting crack then up the rib's right side past a hole.

Jamie Moss

The thin breaks to the right are the start of *Alien Kiss*

### Alien Kiss E1/2 5b/c 9m \*

Climb past the breaks. The moves to the top break are currently dirty but ok. The hanging upper arête is started with a long reach to a finish. Climbing just the lower section is *Alien Kiss Start 5+ \**

Malcolm Townsley July 2005

To the right are some great highball boulder problems. A couple of finishes have been explored but, so far, remain unclaimed.

### Stretch Scoop 6c \*\*\*

The left side of the shallow scoop with a long, long reach for a chicken head. Low in grade but very good.

Richard Mallinson, Jim Davies 2016

### Wishbone Ash 6c+ \*\*\*

Quality. Centre of the scoop passing a vague undercut feature by another extended reach/throw off a chicken head.

Paul Clarke 2016

### Chicken Head Rib 6b \*\*\*

The blunt rib starting just left of *Cobalt Wall* up many chicken heads. Superb.

Dave Sutcliffe 2016

### Cobalt Wall 6c \*\*

The engaging wall trending right on a pebble and chicken head rails is approached from left then climb direct. A direct version from slightly right using a chicken head 'thumb' is an easier variation.

Dave Sutcliffe Feb 2016

### Chicken Scoop 5+ \*

The rather artificial, shallow scoop at the right end of wall

There are two low traverses of the wall that provide good warm up exercise but are worthwhile in their own right.

### Chicken Eddy 6a+ \*\*

Traverse the bottom break in either direction, hardest at the right-hand end.

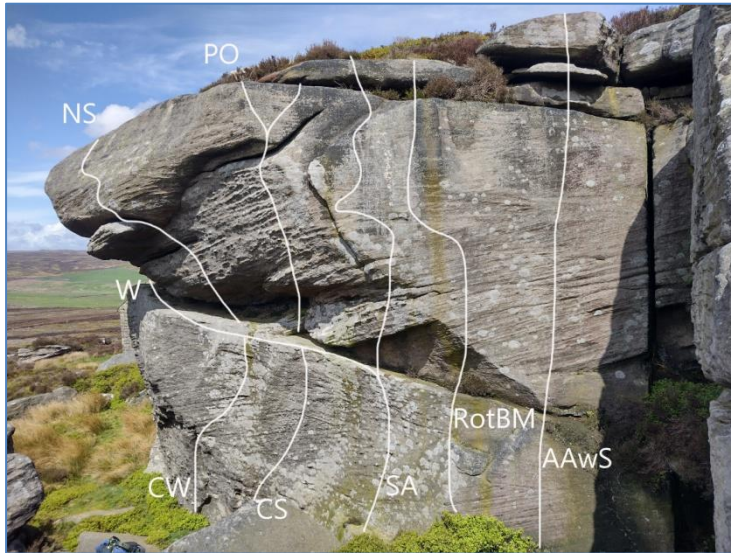
### Rooster Cogburn 6a+ \*\*

As for *Chicken Eddy*. Traverse left from the right end of the wall but continue on chicken heads below the break to *Easy Over* then finish or, better still, back along the break. A good warm up



James Turnbull on Chicken Head Rib

Above *Cobalt Wall* and to its right are several routes and boulder problems.



## Wanderlust S 4a 17m \*

Weirdly worthwhile. Step up to the left end of the big break and traverse (walk, crawl and grovel) leftwards to finish up the chimney exit to *Up and Under*.

*Tony and Robin Barley September 1965*

## Nashville Skyline E5 6b 11m \*\*\*

A fine addition requiring cold conditions. Start up *Cobalt Wall* or its direct variant to the ledge. Pull up to the hanging break. A pair of good crimps allow poor friction holds to be reached and used to stand up. A very tenuous move left gains marginally better holds followed by a step up onto the slab and, eventually, the top. Perhaps E6 for the on-sight?

*Paul Clarke 2023*

## Pullet Off E4 6b 8m \*\*

Step up to the break using either the *Wanderlust* or *Chicken Scoop* starts. Awkwardly place gear as for *Shark Attack*. Climb the leaning, banded wall to crimps at the break and then good jams. Use the good undercut to reach holds above

the rounded bulge to finish. A more sensible variation is the **Chicken Run Finish** – stepping on to the fin of *Shark Attack*

*Paul Clarke May 2023*

## Shark Attack. E3 6a / f6a+/b 8m \*

The hanging flake to the right of *Cobalt Wall*. Steep with good but fiddly gear and a difficult move (using a poor hold on the right that will probably need cleaning) to access the crack and flake. Step right then up to finish. Also given Font 6a+ but .... It's called Shark Attack because all you see is the fin before you get a mauling.

*Malc Townsley May 2008*

## The Return of the Bantam Menace E4 6b / f6b+ 7m \*\*

The increasingly tenuous slab just to the right. Step onto the ledges and then up and left to a testing move to gain the final runnel of *Shark Attack*. High.

*Paul Clarke Oct 2016*

**An Argument with Silence.** E2 5c / f6a 7m \* The slab to the right. Start in centre of the slab and finish over blocks near crack.

*Malc Townsley May 2008*

## A Shaped Crack Area.

To the right are A shaped cracks.

## A Climb S 6m \*

The very good, if short, left-hand crack.

*Roger Sutcliffe, Chris Amber and Ernie Hodgson May 1962*



## Hitchcock Arête 6a \*

SDS. The obvious elevated arête. A psychological thriller.

*Alex Thompson July 2016*

*The cleft leads through to the Drill Press Area of the South West Blocks – described later..*



*Paul Clarke on Nashville Skyline*

## Ledge and Scoop S 6m

The right-hand crack to mantle the ledge. The continuation leftward leading scoop is the finish..

*Hanging invitingly (?) above a ledge on the jumble past the end of this wall (Right of the A shaped cracks) is an arête. To the left of this, in the cleft, is:*

## Ke-mo sah-bee 7b \*

The thin wall just to the left of the arête. A standing start using a left-hand razor blade gaston and right-hand low razor edge. The SDS is an open project.

*Robin Nichols Jan 2020*



## The Outer Blocks



The remaining problems are found on the complex of blocks that stand in front of the crag. A route size green slab faces north, opposite Chicken Heads Wall, and is one face of the massive Rhombic Block. Set just below the slab and separated from it by a narrow, dark corridor is the fine Scoop Wall Block. There are sizable blocks East and West of these.

**Rhombic Block** The lines and faces are described going clockwise:

### North Side

The big green slab. There are some good routes that have seen little or no attention in recent times. This is a pity as they look good..

**Easy Ridge** M 7m The easy edge on the left side of the slab, also useful as a descent. **The American Girl** VS 4b 8m, the wall to the right on chicken heads. **The Actress** VS 4c 8m, the wall to a shallow corner feature. **Gangreen** HS 4b 8m, the slab to a shallow slanting groove that is currently full of heather.

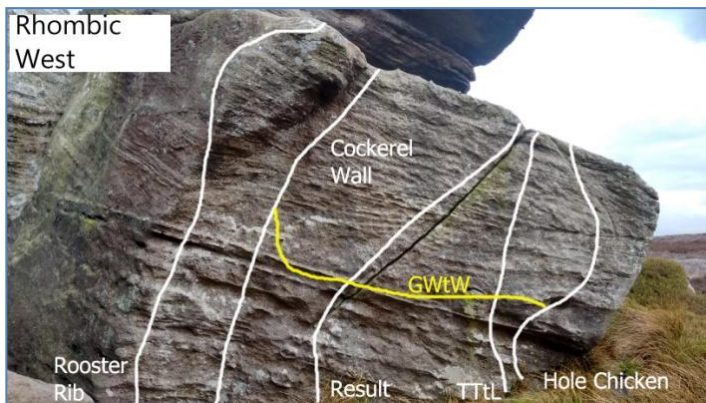
Passing through the dark corridor is a face with a striking diagonal crack. The opposite side is Scoop Block – described later.

### West Side

#### Rooster's Rib 6c \*\*

The rib overlooking the entrance to the corridor. Tough and/or technical to gain a rail and up.

Alex Thompson July 2016



#### Cockerel Wall 6b \*\*\*

The wall just right of the arête and left of the crack on chicken heads and a puzzling move.

Chris Sowden

#### Cockerel Eliminate 6c+ \*

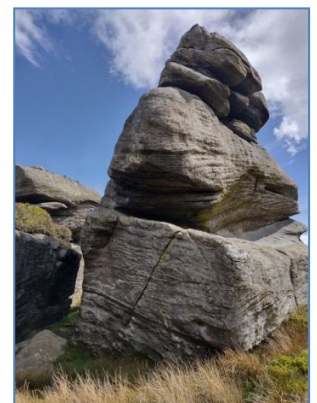
An eliminate just right – match and jump! (Not on Diag)

Oliver Parkinson March 2018

#### The Result MVS 4b \*

Climb the fine crack to the ledge. Traverse left and climb the slab.

Robin and Tony Barley  
September 1965



#### Result Start 4+ \*\*\*

The fine diagonal starting crack of The Result. So good.

#### The Thigh's the Limit 6c \*

SDS. LH hole to a pair of crimps and throw.

Paul Clarke July 2016

#### Hole Chicken 6c \*\*

SDS hands in big low hole. Big move gains flake and then infeasible tricky footwork allows the top to be reached.

Dave Sutcliffe 2016

#### Gone With the Wing 6c \*\*

SDS. Traverse from Whole Chicken and up Cockerel Wall.

Paul Clarke July 2016

#### The Chicken in Black 7a \*\*

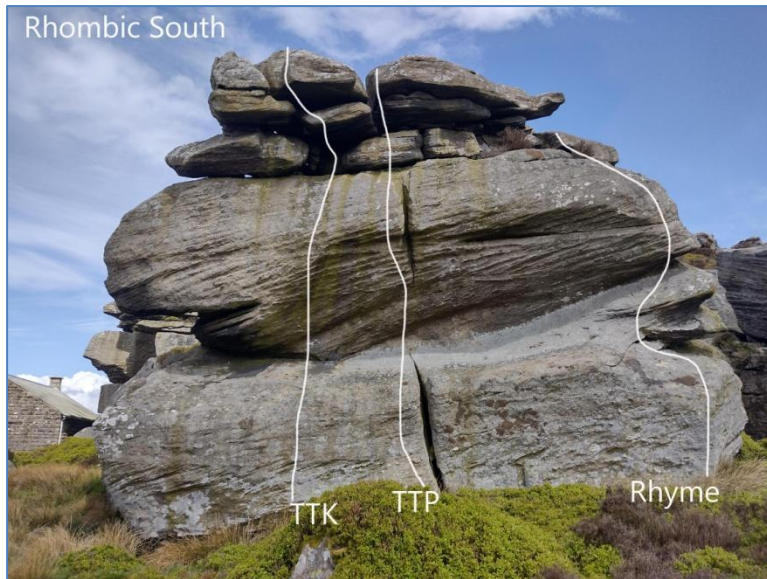
Extend the previous traverse into Rooster's Rib.

Robin Nichols Jan 2020

# Ash Head Crag

## South Side

The big face with a large ledge at one third height.



### The True Knobler E1 6a ?? 8m

The blank looking wall to the left of the crack. FA by strong team – looks tough and is unrepeated?  
*Al Manson and Ken Wood June 1976*

### The Tea Party HVS 5c ?? 8m

Obviously no picnic. The wide, bulging and discontinuous crack. Bring big friends.  
*Tony and Robin Barley September 1965*

### Rhyme VS ?

The rounded arête is quite bold.  
*Tony and Robin Barley September 1965*

## East Side

### Rhythm V Diff 8m

The central rather vegetated crack leading to the huge perched block. Finish leftwards.  
*Tony and Robin Barley September 1965*

### 21<sup>st</sup> Birthday Wall VS 4b 8m

The wall to the right of the crack. Use the right side of the block to finish.  
*Jamie Moss July 2005*

## South West Blocks

Past the impressive South Side of Rhombic Block is a line of lower blocks. In the first bay is an undercut wall on the left and a nice rib to the right.

### The Drill Press 7b+ \*\*

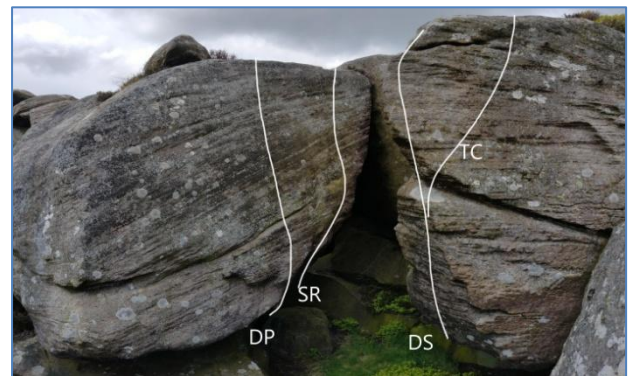
SDS. Pull through the bulge to gain the narrow shelf and rock up/mantle...Tough!  
*Dave Sutcliffe 2016*

### Drill Press Stand 7a ish \*\*

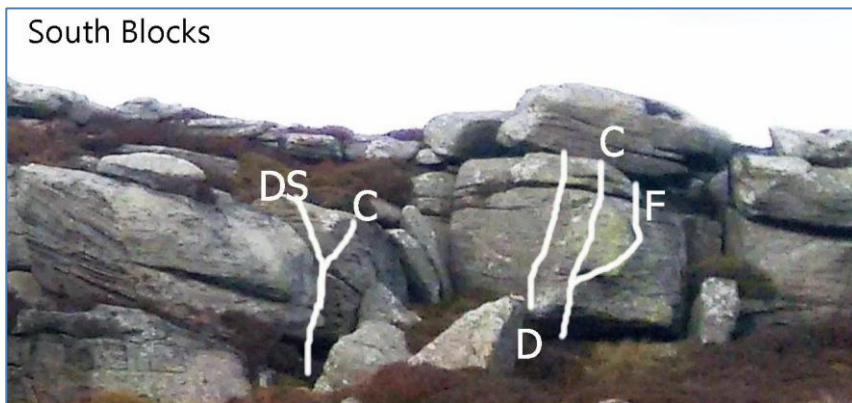
Still worthwhile.  
*Dave Sutcliffe 2016*

### Sloane Rangers 8a \*\*

From a crouch at the start holds of *Drill Press*, head direct up the arête via technical compression and footwork to emerge onto its LHS. 'Very Font yah'. Possibly harder for the tall.  
*Dan Varian 2018*



The cleft to the right goes through to the A Shaped Crack Area.



### Drill Sergeant 6a \*

SDS. Steep little rib opposite *Drill Press* on good rock.  
*Dave Sutcliffe Feb 2016*

### The Chuck 6a+

SDS. Similar to above but pull rightwards.

*To the right is a block with a blunt arête and short flake on its right side.*

### Debt 4

Climb the left side of the blunt arête starting with a high right foot.  
*Steven Phelps Sept 2016*

### Counsellor 6a+ \*

SDS. Move up the front of the overhang on good edges and help from the sloping left arête near the top.  
*Steven Phelps Sept 2016*



# Ash Head Crag

## Forsaken 5

Same start as Counsellor but once at the good right hand edge, move rightwards to finish past a short flake.

*Steven Phelps Sept 2016*

## Scoop Wall Block

Facing Chicken Heads Wall is a rather dirty, slabby face with an obvious scoop on the left.

## Grot Knows 4

The nose of the block facing toward *A Shaped Crack* – grotty.

## Step to It 4 \*

The right side of the arête.

*Paul Clarke July 2016*

## Nuggets 4 \*\*

The inviting (when clean) scoop just to the right climbed direct past a surprising hold.

*Paul Clarke July 2016*

## Scoop Wall

### Easy Lay 2 or 4 \*

The easy ridge forming the right edge provides a descent line - or is harder on its right side

*Just around from the ridge is a line that has 3 exits.*

### Not Again 6a+ \*

Left side of wall to gain arête above mid-height.

*Chris Sowden and friends?*

### Do It Again 6b+ \*

Small chicken heads to reach the upper part of the curving edge.

*R Mallinson, M Credie 2016*

### Boomstick Wall 7a \*\*

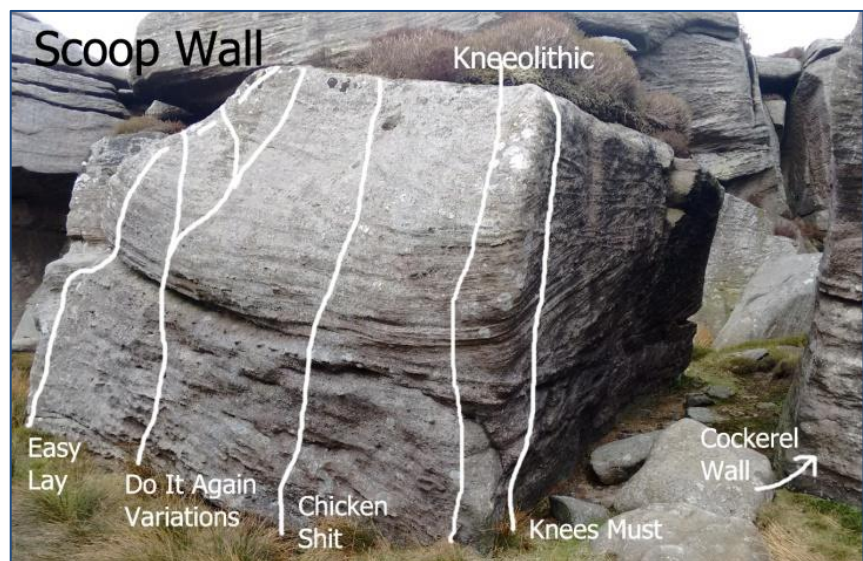
As above but no arête. Finish urgently at the small horn.

*Alex Thompson Apl 2016*

### Methane 6b+ \*

It is possible to start up *Chicken Shit* and then move left with feet in the break, rock up to gain the finish of Broomstick.

*Paul Clarke July 2016*



### Chicken Shit 5+ \*\*\*

The super scoop – with or without the big pocket. Lovely problem, shit name!

*Chris Sowden and friends?*

### Kneeolithic 7a+ \*\*

The left side of the right arête with a very tenuous step then a grab for a tiny nipple and scabble up. Quite high in the grade. The SDS is 7a+ and even higher in the grade.

*Paul Clarke July 2016. SDS Robin Nichols Jan 2020.*

### Knees Must 7a \*\*\*

The right (corridor) side of the arête but starting face-on using guppies. Tough and excellent. Recently lost a hold. The SDS is 7a+ and good

*Dave Sutcliffe 2016. SDS Dan Varian 2018.*

### Bruce Almighty 5+ \* The break from R to L

*Bruce Woodley 2016*

*Dave Musgrove on Chicken Shit*

# Ash Head Crag

## The Corridor

The aforementioned corridor/gap leads back towards Chicken Head Wall and presents some future opportunities.

### Look-Alike 6a+ \*

The obvious hanging groove in the corridor to the right of *Knees Must*. May require two pads or a jump to reach the starting holds. Resembles the problem Brad Pit (a bit). The sitter awaits.

*Alex Thompson July 2016*

### Delicatessen Girl 6c+

Start just right of *Look-Alike*. Use a sloper and a crimp in the break to pop for the top and mantel to finish. Shorties will need two mats to reach the starting holds.

*Steven Phelps Aug 2016*

### Pullet Town Edge 5+ \*

SDS hands in low break. Up the left side of the arête to an urgent finish.

*Alex Thompson Aug 2016*



*Alex Thompson tackles Eric's Wall on The Heather Top Block.*

## Giant Blocks

Below the Rhombic and Scoop Blocks is a huge jumble of big blocks at both ground and an elevated level. The blocks are described from left to right starting with the **Heather Top Block South Slab** and working around past problems opposite Scoop Wall and into the big bay topped by a massive block and then onwards in a counter clockwise manner.

### Heather Top

*All unaccredited problems by Chris Sowden and Friends*

#### South Slab

##### Flakey Pastry 4+ \*

Flake with high steppin' start.

*Dave Musgrove June 2016*

##### Gordon's Slab 5 \*

Right side of the slab moving left near top

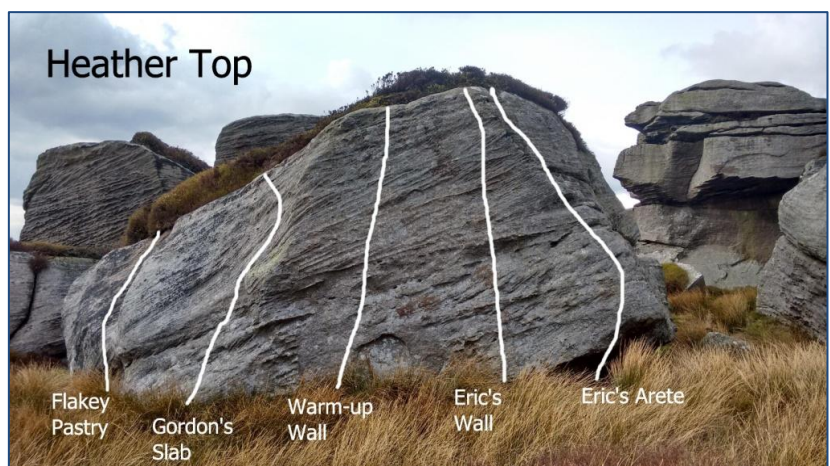
##### Warm-up Wall 6b \*

The crinkly wall staying well left of the arête.

*Dave Sutcliffe and friends 2016?*

##### Eric's Wall 6a \*

The wall left of the undercut arête. A pocket right of the arête proves useful to finish.





## Ash Head Crag

The next problems are on the crack-split slab facing Scoop Wall.

### Eric's Arête 4

The undercut arête, start on the left.

### Ain't No Yoke 5

Slab left of wide crack.

### Steve's Arête 4+

Arête to the right of the wide crack climbed on its left side.

## The Heather Top Bay

A grassy floored bay overtopped by a huge fluted block. Those problems under the roof take some drainage and may well be wet in winter.

### Dynominator 7a+ \*

The undercut SDS start to the arête then the narrow slab using both arêtes.

Paul Clarke July 2016

### The Great Divide 6b \*\*

The divided hanging arête just right (Left arête of the big bay) climbed on its right side. Pull up into and past the wide break.

Paul Clarke July 2016

### Revelator 6c \*\*\*

Same start as Great Divide but eliminates the arête. From the big underclings contort up right for the rail then pull up the top.

Alex Thompson July 2016

### smAsh Head 7a \*

Pull on in the break 1m right of the *Revelator*. Jump or nipple tweak up to the good hold.

Dan Varian 2018

### The 3<sup>rd</sup> Nipple 7a \*\*

From a sit start in the corner, climb up the chicken heads and tweak that nipple like a bad 'un to gain the pockets high up. Drop off or finish through the hole. "**For When the Nipple Breaks**" is a 7B+ eliminate that avoids using the nipple. Obviously this would just become the problem once someone stands on the nipple a bit too hard.

Dan Varian 2018

### Labour's Pains 4+

Right arête of the bay to a veggie finish.

## Banded Walls

The line of reddish coloured, chicken-head banded walls facing the buildings. Rather dark and takes some drainage but with a couple of good problems.

### Paradise Rib 6b \*

SDS. From the large sloping break, pull up to the obvious slot before using holds either side of the rib to reach the top. Similar grade from standing. Steven Phelps Sept 2016

### Bev's Traverse 5 \*

Knobbly R – L traverse starting in a corner and across to the edge. A finish up Paradise Rib adds to this problem – 6bish

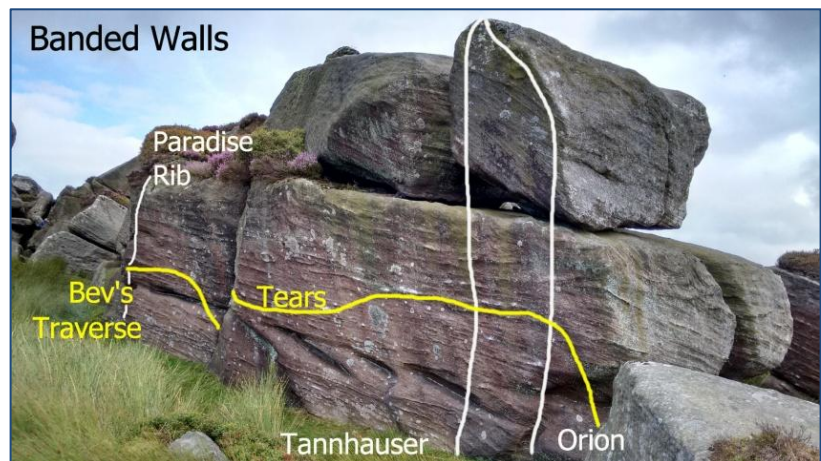
Bev Jowett July 2016

The next problems are all on the right-hand wall – from the arête to a green crack on the left.

### Tears in Rain 7a \*

SDS. Sharp. A low traverse, starting at the right arête and ending at the crack. Best suited to shorties with a massive arm-span – the crux being keeping your feet off the ground.

Paul Clarke Aug 2016



## Ash Head Crag

### Tannhauser Gate 6a \*\*

High. Up the wall then take the left arête of the standing block to good holds at its apex. SDS adds a grade.

*Paul Clarke Aug 2016*

### The Shoulder of Orion 6b \*\*

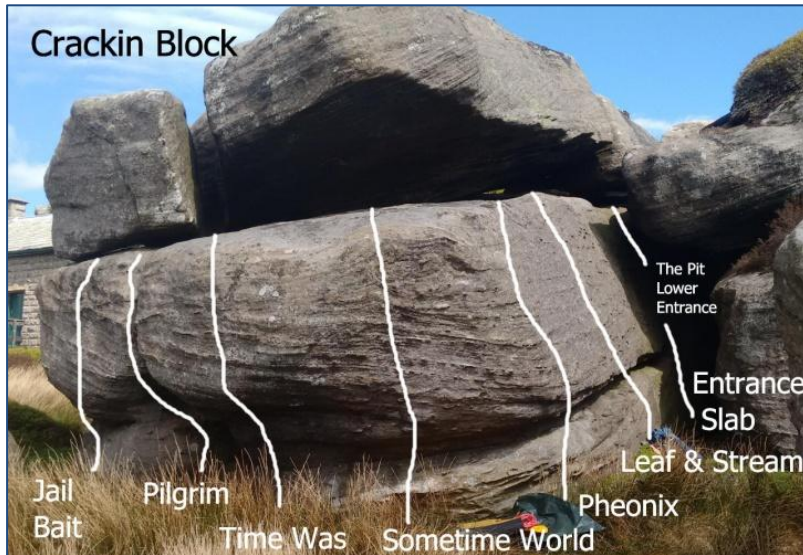
High. Up the wall then take the right arête of the standing block to good holds at its apex. A SDS adds half a grade.

*Paul Clarke Aug 2016*

### Crackin' Block

Around the corner facing downhill is a face split by a crack. On the right is an easy angled slab. Chicken heads abound.

*All unaccredited problems by Paul Clarke 2016*



### Jail Bait 5 \*

SDS. The wall on the left.

### Pilgrim 5 \*

SDS. Edge or Crack – your choice.

### Time Was 7a \*

SDS using undercut blob and sandy pocket to start. Pull out and up. May be easier for the lanky.

### Sometime World 6b+ \*\*\*

SDS at obvious low hold. Pull out and up with a reach for a super finishing hold.

### Pheonix 5+ \*

SDS to left edge of the slab.

### Leaf and Stream 2 \*

Chicken head slab – also the descent.

### Entrance Slab 2

Chicken head slab as it disappears into The Pit.

### The Pit

Between Crackin' Block and Blunt Nose is a corridor overtopped by a massive block. Follow it to the depths to find some good, hidden problems in a tunnel!

### The Edge 5+ \*

Arête on east side of the gap.

*Dave Turnbull May 2016*

### Pit Arête 6c \*

Climb the short arête and chicken-heads on the opposite (west) side with care above a very awkward landing.

*Dave Sutcliffe 2016*

### Tyrannosaurus Brexit 6c \*

SDS. Black wall just left of Black Tufa from RH on the low break.

*Paul Clarke July 2016*

### Black Tufa 5+ \*\*

Climb the tufa like feature from a sit start low left with hands in the break. Short but super.

*Mark Credie 2016*

### The Squealer 6c+ \*

SDS on opposing ribs just right of the last problem. Slapping and sharp crimps aid progress - as does a bit of squealing.

*Paul Clarke May 2016*



*Pit Arête Will Buck*



## Ash Head Crag

### Low Block - Blunt Nose

The wall with a bulging blunt nose to the right of The Pit.  
*All unaccredited problems by Jamie Moss/Chris Sowden.*

#### Left Wall 5

Pull onto the wall and reach for the top just right of the starting hold of the traverse. Mantel to finish.

*Steven Phelps Aug 2016*

#### Chasing the Dragon's Tail 6c \*\*

A chicken head traverse around the whole block. Graded for the pump factor. Begin at left arête by entrance to The Pit and follow protuberances going right with hands eventually above the nose bulge to a finish up *Easy Wall*. Mega.

*Paul Clarke Aug 2016*

#### Cherknobl 6c+ \*

Crimps and an explosive throw gain the big chicken head. Use holds above to progress.

*Paul Clarke Aug 2016*

#### Big Scoop 5+ \*

Not really a scoop? The vague crack & wall left of the open, hanging groove on the lower face.

#### Hanging Groove 5 \*

The obvious groove.

#### Big Nose 6a+ \*

The rounded nose on the right.

#### Hole Arête 6a \*\*

The undercut arête past a hole. Nice.

#### Logan's Run 6a

Wall on sharp crimps with good feet.

*Carl Bowkett Sept 2016*

#### Easy Wall 4

The wall/slab to the right of the arête.

*There is a passageway to The Pit just to the right of Easy Wall.*

### Hithcock Wall

On the block above Low Block are a couple of good problems.

#### Highball Exit 4+

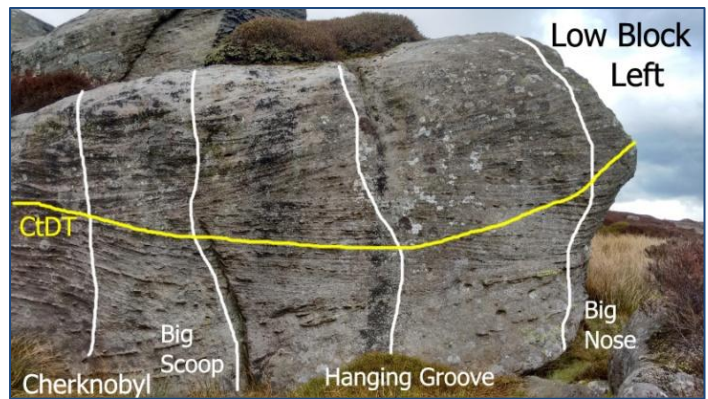
The arête located above *Hanging Groove* with a committing step onto the upper slab.

*Dave Musgrove June 2016*

#### Hithcock Wall 6a \*\*

SDS. The centre of the enticing rippled wall right of Highball Exit. Another psychological thriller.

*Alex Thompson July 2016*



### Flying Flake Block

Just below Low Block is a block with a crack/flake feature on the western side and a very featured wall on the opposite side.

*All unaccredited problems by Paul Clarke 2016*

#### Flying Flake Wall 6c \*

SDS. Use two small crimps to reach the top. If you can hold the swing on the lip then, in theory, you can mantel to finish.

*Steven Phelps Aug 2016*

#### Flying Flake 5 \*

SDS. The flake with some undercutting - and possibly a knee bar.

## Ash Head Crag

### Flying Arête 5 \*

SDS. The arête just right.

To the right is a low angled slab with some nice Font 1 or 2 grade problems. Its right edge is:

### Slab Arête 3

On chicken heads to a heathery finish.

### Red Wall

Around the corner is a red coloured, highly featured wall with some steady but fun problems.

### Red Edge 5 \*

SDS. The left arête. 4 from standing.

### Red Rag 5 \*

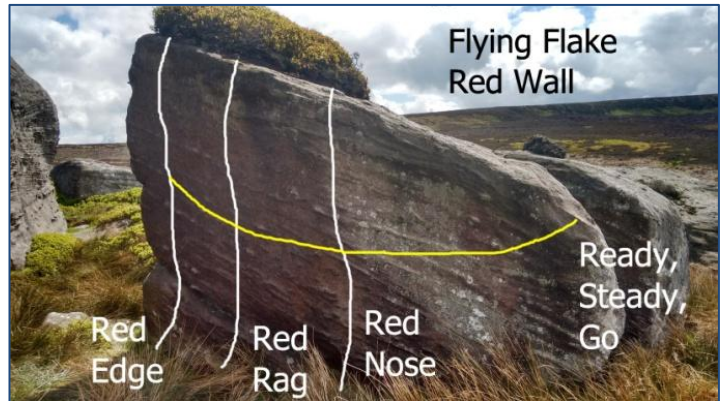
SDS. The middle of the wall. 4 from standing.

### Red Nose 4+

SDS. The nose. 3 from standing.

### Ready, Steady, Go 6a \*

Start RH on rib and LH on obvious 3 pointed hold. Traverse and finish up Red Edge (or go across the slab).



### Forward Block

The clean free-standing block that sits in front of the hut and gives a compact set of problems.



*Ben Finley on Dolis Dyno*

### Solid Air 6a+ \*

On the left wall. A good flake hold and throw for the top.  
*Paul Clarke June 2016*

### Curl You 6b \*

The left leaning flake line and rock for the top without using the flake and edges to the right.  
*Paul Clarke June 2016*

### Easy Living 3

Obvious line of holds left of arête.

### Rock On 4+ \*

SDS. Left arête of front face.

### Dolis Wall 6c \*\*

The central wall sans arêtes using the rail and the pocket is truly solid. A variant using LH side-pull is 6b and worth a star.  
*Alex Thompson Apl 2016*

### Dolis Dyno 6c+ \*\*

You've done *Dolis Wall* so now try this. Using the same obvious crimp rail, wind yourself up and go big for the top!  
*Ben Finley Sept 2016*

### Barn Door 6a+ \*

The right edge. Good and tough. Using the obvious jug reduces the grade to 6a.



# Ash Head Crag

## Outlying Areas - The Lower Tier Crag

A lower line of grit crosses the hillside some distance downhill from the main Ash Head Crag. Climbing is to be found on both sides of where the approach path to Ash Head steepens. Knappa Stones is somewhat out of sight across to the right. Low Ash Head is obvious and to the left.

### Knappa Stones.

The first block encountered is an obvious finger.



#### The Finger

**The Finger 5+ \***

SDS. Use hugging techniques to climb the prow direct

*Steven Phelps Aug 2016*

*Past a slab a block stands alone in a grassy area surrounded by bilberry. A jumble of three blocks up to its left is:*

#### The Jumble

**Chuck Berry 6b+ \*\***

SDS at right side of left roof. Feet off the forward underlying block. Pull left along the lip rail and chuck for the top edge. Rock back right onto the rail. Good.

*Ben & Paul Clarke July 2016*



### Bilberry Bloc

Starting on the left (uphill) wall:

#### Bilberry Left

**Pie's the Limit 6c \*\***

SDS with both hands at left end of the lower break. Pull on and up via a cool rock-over.

*Ben & Paul Clarke July 2016*

#### Rocker 4+ \*

Use a jam in the break just left of the arête and rock up.

*Ben & Paul Clarke July 2016*



### Bilberry Right

Moving around the arête to the slabby side.

**Bilbo 2+ \***

The arête and groove thing.

*Ben & Paul Clarke July 2016*

**Bill Worker 5 \***

Up off thin crimp just right and left of the cleaned holds

*Ben & Paul Clarke July 2016*

**Bilberry 4+ \***

Obvious line up the centre of the right hand side. Start on big crimps in the break and stand to reach the top. Dyno version also possible. 6a.

*Adam Brown July 2016*

**Billiant 4+ \***

Traverse the obvious line L to R and up.

*Ben & Paul Clarke July 2016*



Ben Clarke on *The Pie's the Limit*



Adam Brown on *Bilberry*



Adam Brown on *The Benevolent Boggart*

## The Cruise

Up again, at a higher level, is a wall/slab of lovely rock.

### Voyager 5 \*\*

The scoop feature then up the rib  
*Paul Clarke July 2016*

### The Voyage Out 4 \*\*\*

The centre of the wall past the break on excellent rock.  
*Paul Clarke July 2016*

### Break Fast 4 \*

Follow the break from R to L and finish up the corner crack.  
*Paul Clarke July 2016*

## Low Roof

Some way to the right and at a higher level is a long, low roof.

### The Benevolent Boggart 7a+ \*\*

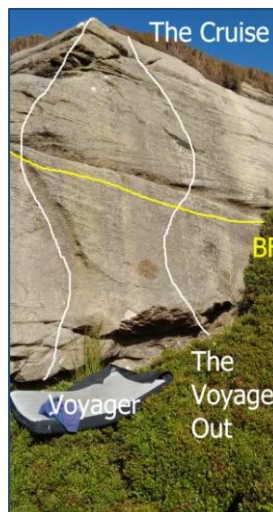
A lip traverse starting down right on a flake in the roof. Pull up to the lip and traverse leftwards on good holds and heels. Top out before the big bulge using a good right hand pinch/crimp.

*Adam Brown 16/Jul/2016*

## Banded Roof

### Bandy 6a

At a lower level and to the right is a jutting roof. SDS up the bands and pull over leftwards.

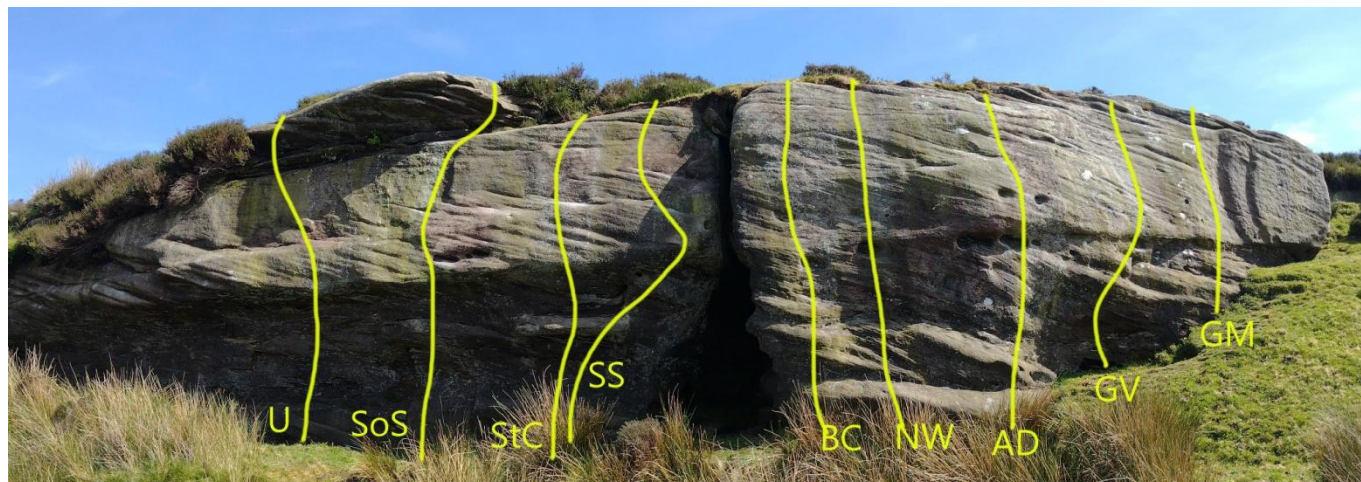




## Ash Head Crag

### Low Ash Head

A featured bouldering wall where interesting rock makes a visit worthwhile. To the left of the approach track and just before it steepens, a narrow path leads across leftwards to below the crag that is situated just above the dry-stone wall. There are walls and blocks on the other side of this wall. They are not on access land and are disappointing so please do not cross.



#### Sisyphus Parts 1 and 2 7a \*

P1 Starting at the bulbous left end, pull on and follow the lip slopers to the cave with only the dark coloured parts of the plinth for feet. A finish up Several Species is possible from here. P2 Step across and make a low traverse to pass through the wee cave on *The Grand Vizier* to eventually reach the top. Keep going until a mantle near the right arête provides a fitting finish.

*The 'up' problems have SDSs but they don't add a lot.*

#### Ummagumma 7a

Gain the shelf and right facing side pull and pass this to the bulge and gain a good break. An easy finish over the breaks remains.

#### A Saucerful of Secrets 6b+/c \*

Reach the obvious side-pull hole and use it to reach a crimp. Pull hard, undercut and push to reach the top.

#### Set the Controls 6c \*

Reach for slopers then use a left-hand side-pull and the left end of the obvious shelf to push for the top.

#### Several Species of Small Furry Animals Grooving in a Cave with a Pict 6b+ \*\*

A hole in the arête is used to make a long reach for the shelf. Pull left then mantle.

#### Be Careful with that Axe Eugene 5 \*\*

The arête and wall is climbed to a reachy finish.

#### The Narrow Way 6a/+ \*

An eliminate that climbs just to the right but spurning the arête.

#### Astronomy Domine 6b \*\*

Pass the big holes and slopers with a rock-over and a reach.

#### The Grand Vizier's Garden Party 6b \*

From a SDS in the small cave, climb to pass the big slots and then go up just to the left of (and using) an obvious small hole.

#### Grantchester Meadows 4

Climb up to step into the small hole.



*Steve Phelps on Be Careful*

*The problems were climbed in 2023 by Paul Clarke and Steve Phelps.*