

Knightsstone Boulder Wall - Sue Hazel & Ollie Scott



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Overview

The bouldering area is located towards the northern end of Weston Super Mare at a hidden wall on the western side of Knightstone Island. The nearby Marine Lake (a tourist attraction) is currently undergoing restoration and is closed to the public until summer 2022. This lake is on the landward side of the bouldering wall and is a popular location with visitors in warm weather. There are two cafes on the Island and good views can be had on a circular walk around the elevated footpath.

It is worth pointing out that although the main wall has a relatively isolated feel about it at the bottom, you will be on view as you ascend, and particularly visible on the wall overlooking the lake. As the climbing is situated below residential flats, you are effectively climbing in 'someone's back garden', so be as discrete as possible, so as not to arouse any cause for complaint.



Approach OS REF 310 621

The nearest parking is either on the Island Causeway, or adjacent roadside areas, (payable by meter) or you may be lucky to find a free roadside spot towards the old Birnbeck Pier, slightly further north, then walk back.

Access on foot is along one of two cement walkways around the outside of the lake (when re-opened). In the meantime, it is possible to avoid these closed-off areas and the security cameras, by walking towards the end of the causeway parking, on the east side of the island, then stepping over the gate for the ferry which overlooks the small harbour (opposite stones café). Descend the concrete steps, taking care with a small muddy lower corner section, until the path swings round to the front face of the island. Keep following the sloping concrete ramp/pebble beach turning the next corner until the main face comes into view. Topos are described left to right, starting with the problems overlooking the lake.

Layout & Grading

Numbers for the problems are detailed from left to right looking at the crag from the bottom. Grades are given in Font grade & corresponding V grades.

Tides & weather

The crag is not accessible 2.5 hours either side of high tide. Once there is public access to the lake again, it should be possible to get in from the lake walkways until 2 hours either side of high tide. It is also worth bearing in mind what direction a strong wind may be blowing from on the day of your planned visit, especially in winter time. This can greatly change the ambience of the crag. An end of day sunset, sitting out of the wind at the bottom of the crag is really rather special.

Tactics

The rock is compact, sea-washed limestone, increasing in friction once you're off the initial smooth, sometimes seaweed or mud covered footholds. It is worthwhile bringing a brush with you and an old water bottle to be filled with sea water from adjacent rock pools, to clean the crucial footholds for the

harder problems on the main wall. By the time you've warmed up on the easy problems, they should have dried off nicely.

The rock ledge above the wall serves as a useful 'walk-off' to descend the crack of problem 20, taking care at a 'bad step' section. At first appearance the problems all appear to be a bit highball, but confidence will be gained by starting on the easy options first. For the harder problems, the upper section eases after the lower technical moves.

Please leave no litter or any other trace of your visit!

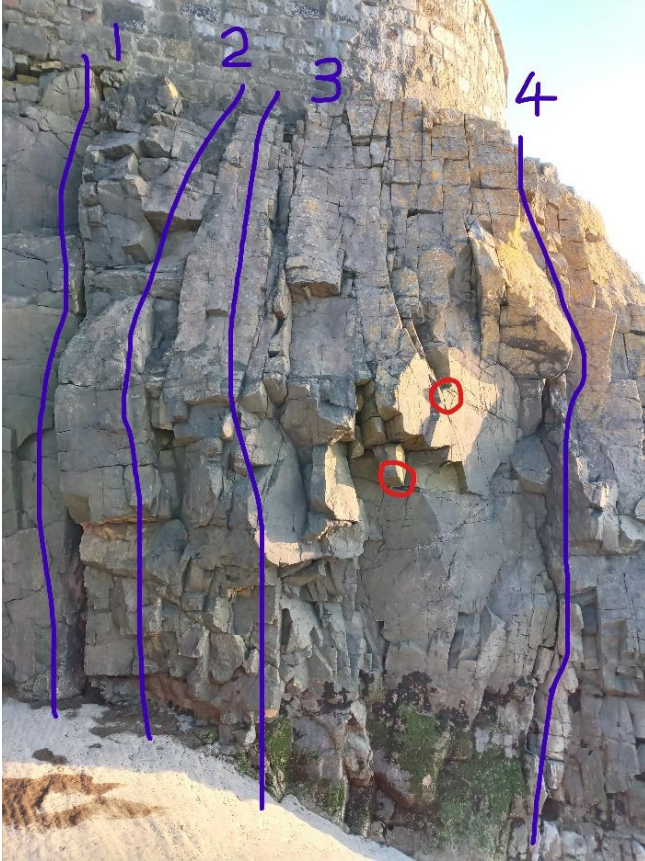
Acknowledgements

With thanks to Duncan Critchley for publishing details of his routes on the main face, climbed in 1983 and repeated by him in July 2021 which initiated my interest in the venue. These routes were 9, 10,12,13,15 & 20 on the main face topo's and the grades assigned are from his original information. I climbed all the remaining obvious lines for the sake of completeness in March 2022 before compiling this guide, but I'm sure they've all undoubtedly been trodden before.

Also to Ollie & Jeremy Scott for the printing & proof reading.



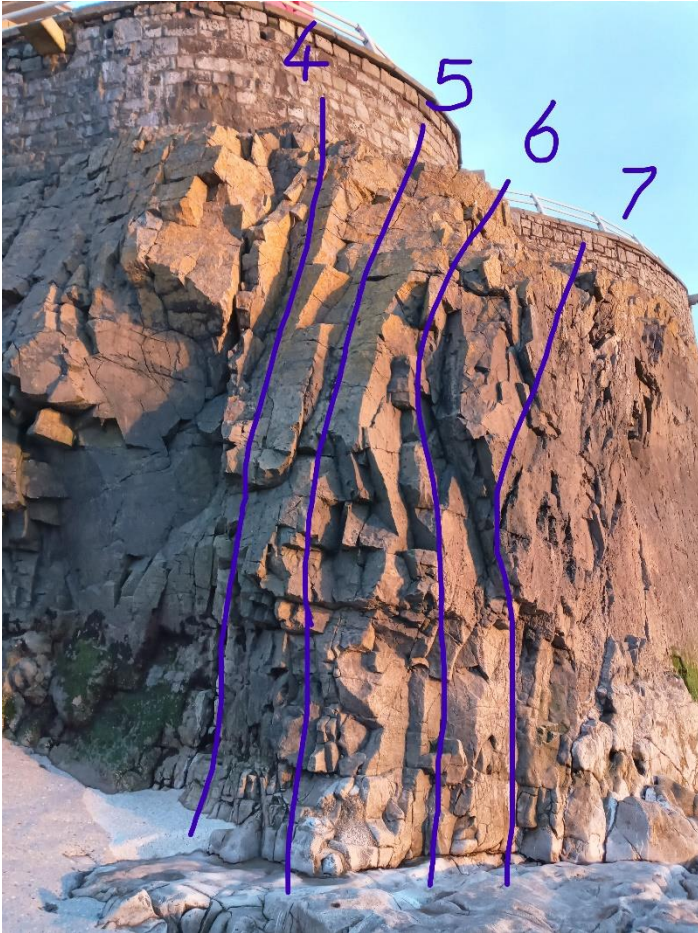
LAKESIDE BUTTRESS



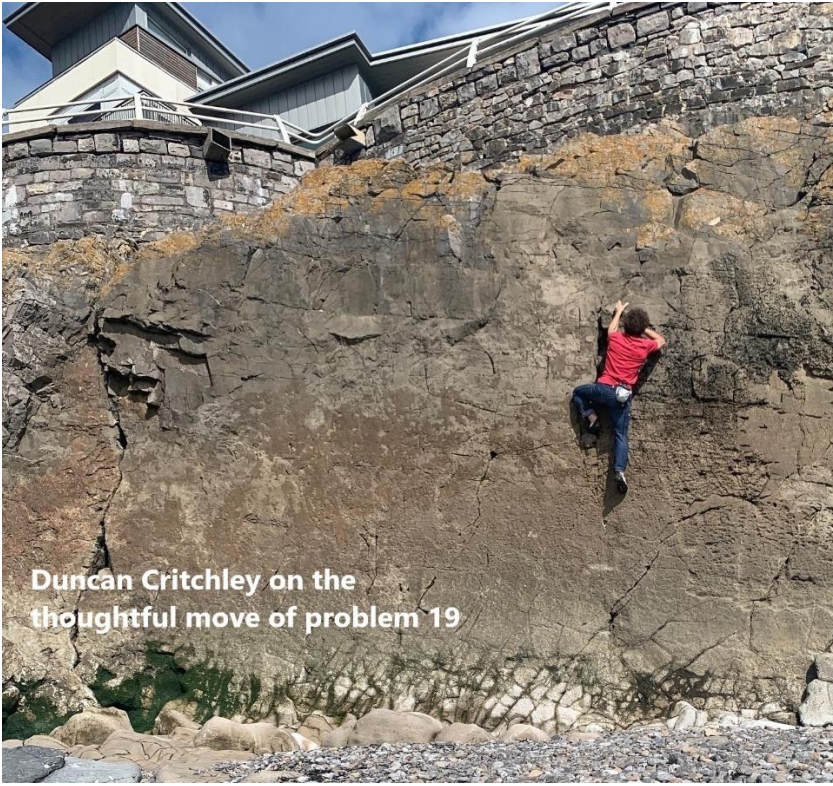
1. The leftmost crack line at the crag. F3 VB
2. The second crack line. Some slightly crunchy concrete footholds. F3+ V0-
3. The third crack line. Watch your mat doesn't go wandering down the slope. Shares some common ground with crack 2 on its upper part F3+ V0-

I've not recorded the problem in between 3 & 4 that goes through the small roof, due to at least a couple of holds becoming detached, which will only become worse with traffic (ringed in red on the topo)

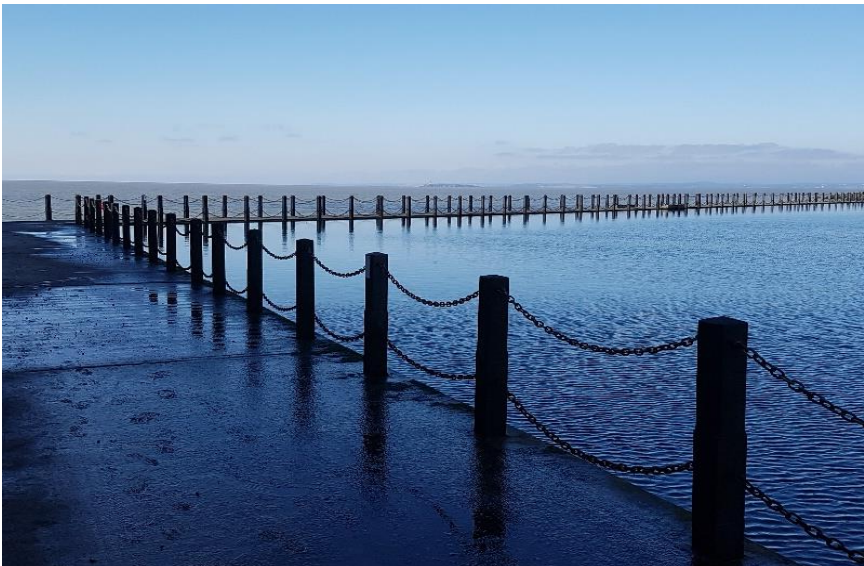
CORNER GROOVES



- 4 The obvious corner groove which is quite good. F3 VB
5. A squeezed-in groove line. Not very independent. F3 VB
6. The curving groove. A good 'staircase' warm-up. F3 VB
7. Another tight line taking the left-hand flake on the edge of the face
F3 VB



Duncan Critchley on the thoughtful move of problem 19



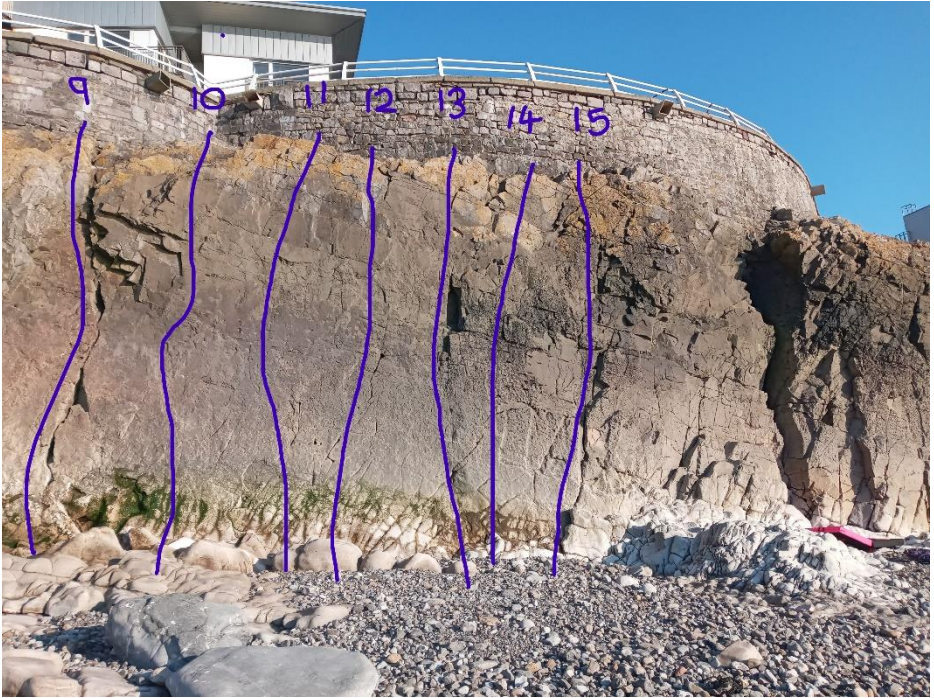
LEFT FACE

8. The central line of the left face, passing through the large triangular recess. F3+ V0-
9. The crack line, with a few thoughtful moves and a committing feel to the exit. F4/V0
10. The thin crack slots, leading to better edges above. F6a V2/3
11. Knightstone Superdirect. Starting on the twin vertical slots, fire up the centre of the wall on sharp incuts and shallow pockets. More sustained than its neighbours and more committing on its upper section. Beware if you start to project it, as it is a skin eater. F6b/6b+ V3-4*
12. The thin vertical crack, via the triangular pocket. F6a V2/3

**This is a very tentative grading as it took the author multiple lone visits, changes of beta, shoes, underwear (OK then, maybe not the last one) before the final send. Someone with a better ability to crimp and healthier fingers may well find it a path and dispatch it far more quickly, prompting a downgrade?*

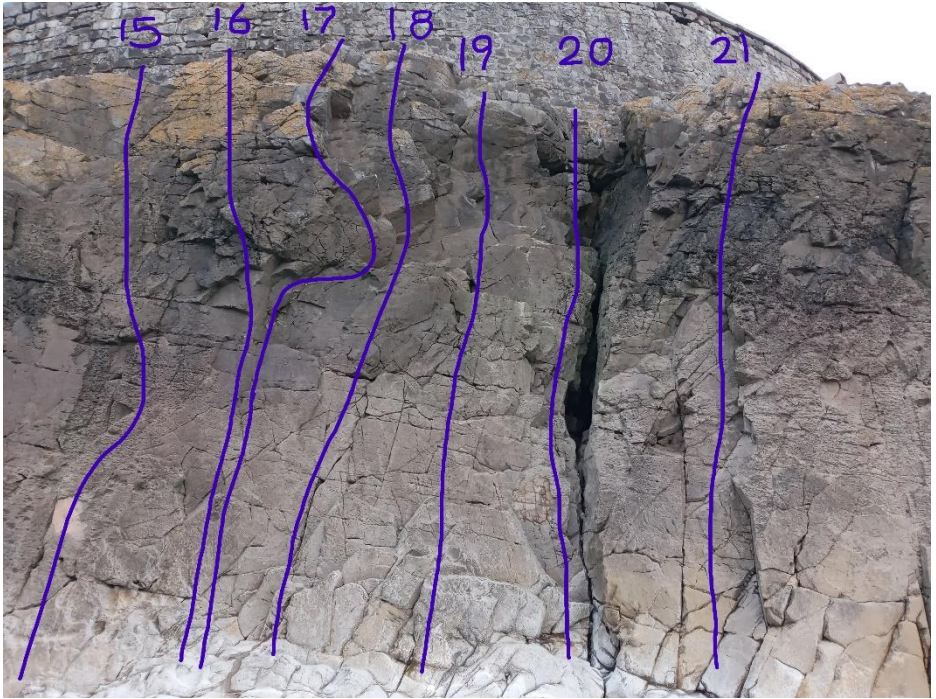


MAIN FACE

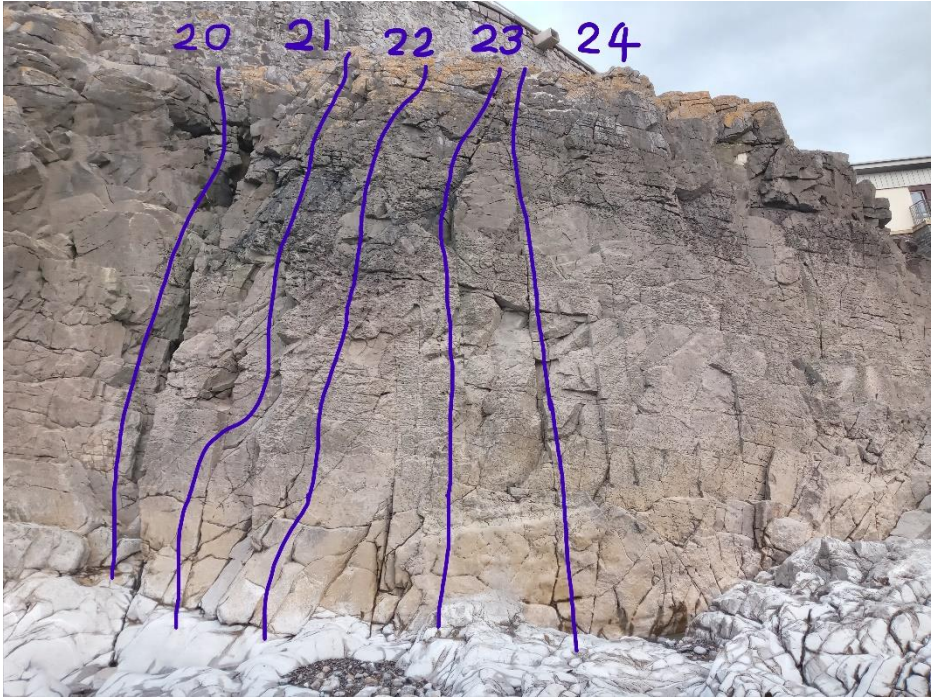


13. Climb to the small sentry box. It's not quite all over once you've reached it. F5+ V1/2
14. Climb direct up the sharp, pocked wall. Surprisingly worthwhile F4 V0
15. The large crack following a steady line. Climb straight up with blinkers on F4+ V0+
16. The roof overhang taken direct. Start at the face high V-notch, 1 metre right from crack 15. Treat the thin flakes with care. Quite exciting. F4+ V0+
17. The roof dodge. From the start of 16, make a dogleg right at the roof, swinging back into the groove/corner above. F4 V0
18. Climb direct to the stepped corner midway between the cracks of 15 & 20. F3+ V0-
19. From a face high V notch 1 metre left of crack 20, follow the 'steps'. A steepening finish. F3+ V0-
20. The large crack which is useful as a descent route. F4 V0

MAIN FACE, (RIGHT, CLOSE-UP)



RIGHT WALL



21. The groove to the right of the crack. Quite good climbing F3+ V0-
22. The sharp, crunchy wall. Squeezed in, but it does climb independently. Take care with the fragile holds. F4 V0
23. Climb direct and past the triangle pocket. Quite absorbing. F3+ V0-
24. The thin vertical crack, F3+ V0-

Disclaimer

You climb entirely at your own risk in line with the BMC Participation Statement detailed here. The author and any other party connected with this mini-guide cannot be held responsible or be held liable for any personal or third party injuries or damage, however caused. The inclusion of problems in this booklet does not assume any right of access; please refer any access queries to the BMC.

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