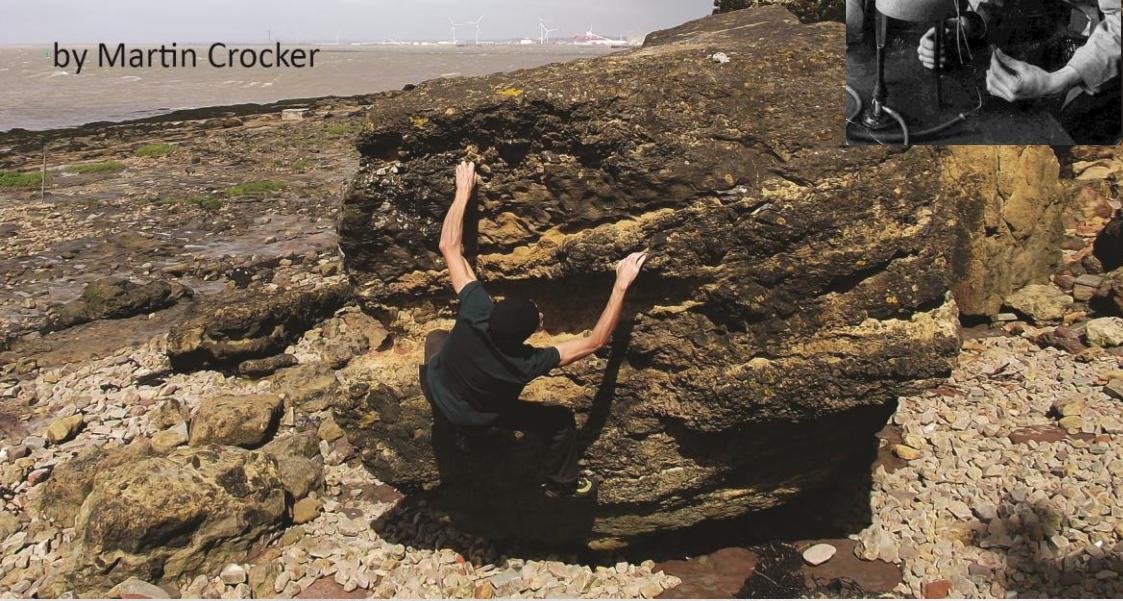


The RAC Memorial Boulder Portishead

by Martin Crocker




The RAC Memorial Boulder, Portishead, North Somerset (OS Ref 472776)

Guidebook Disclaimer

You climb entirely at your own risk in line with the BMC Participation Statement (see below); this guidebook has been published strictly on that basis. The author and any other party connected with this guidebook cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions or be held liable for any personal or third party injuries or damage, however caused. The inclusion of climbs in this guidebook does not assume any right of access to them; please refer any access queries to the BMC.

BMC Participation Statement: 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
Access	Check the Regional Access Database [RAD] on www.thebmc.co.uk for the latest access information
Parking	Park carefully – avoid gateways and driveways
Footpaths	Keep to established paths – leave gates as you find them
Risk	Climbing can be dangerous – accept the risks and be aware of other people around you
Respect	Groups and individuals – respect the rock, local climbing ethics and other people
Wildlife	Do not disturb livestock, wildlife or cliff vegetation; respect seasonal bird nesting restrictions
Dogs	Keep dogs under control at all times; don't let your dog chase sheep or disturb wildlife
Litter	'Leave no trace' – take all litter home with you
Toilets	Don't make a mess – bury your waste
Economy	Do everything you can to support the rural economy – shop locally
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Introduction

The RAC here is not a reference to a motoring organisation but – rather indulgently – it serves to honour my dad, Raymond Arthur Crocker. Fair play, he did work most of his life just around the corner in Portishead power station, as an industrial chemist. The power station (actually there were two) was Portishead's best known feature, its chimneys an iconic symbol of the town. With demolition complete by 1992, a chic marina trying to be Concarneau eventually arose in its place.

Our boulder lies on the short stretch of coast between Portishead Marina and Battery Point, just to the west of what is an unexpectedly charming pebble beach that faces north to Denny Island and Wales's Wentwood beyond. At 3m high and 6 metres long it supplies a clutch of reasonable problems which – if you get bogged down with the traverses – should occupy a full skin-limited session. The rock is a 'prickly' sandstone breccia, which – evidenced by little in the way of things snapping off – proves much more solid than it looks. Landings are mostly large pebbles, so bring at least one mat and someone to shadow you on the traverses. The problems were conceived mostly between the late-70s and the early noughties (some stragglers gatecrashed in 2020).

Though tidal, access is only precluded for an hour or two at the highest spring tides (you should be keeping your feet dry up to 11.5m tides).

Front cover pics.

Top: *Amazons* (V3); pic by Jonathan Crocker. (Inset: Dad at work in Portishead A laboratory, 1949)

Bottom: Portishead A & Portishead B Power Stations (1978); pic by Raymond Crocker

Approach

Hit town, drive up Cabstand, and turn right into Woodland Road which eventually morphs into Pier Road. Park respectfully at the end of Pier Road or, if an active Royal Inn customer, in its car-park. Walk west along Woodlands Road for 100m to a viewpoint on the right. Take a footpath on the right down through trees to the 'charming beach'. Now walk westwards for 200m along the foreshore to the boulder, which is sited just below diminutive sea cliffs and some luxurious abodes.

The problems are described in an anti-clockwise direction starting with the east face.

EAST FACE

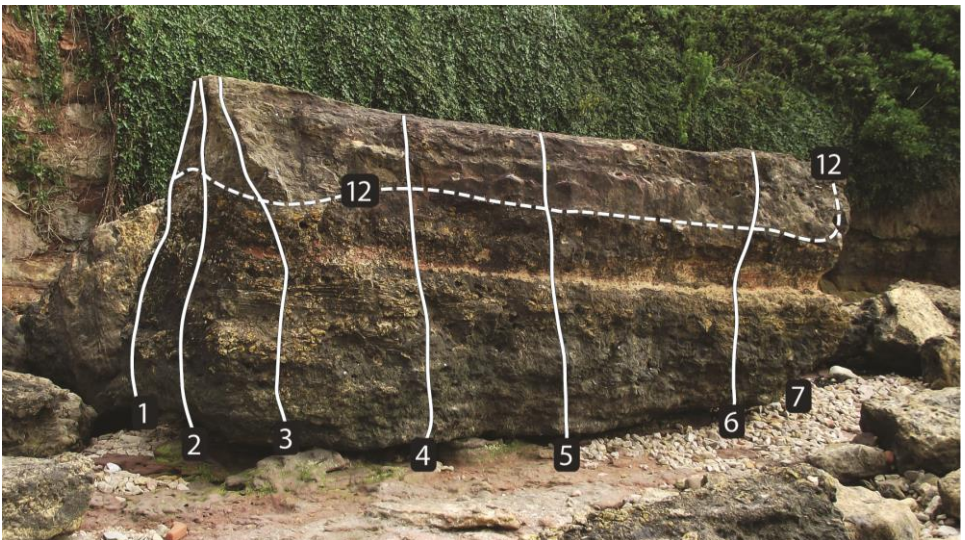
- 1 **Descent Route** E/Mod The left-hand arête, even easier if you start from the pointed boulder.
- 2 **Smoke Bomb** V0- (4c) Take the centre of the east face without recourse to either arête.
- 3 **Power Station** V0- (4c) Layback the right arête; quite good, with an interesting mantel.

NORTH FACE

- 4 **When I'm 64** 4b The wall a metre from *Power Station*, via a cute pocket.
- 5 **Dad Threw the TV out of the Window** V0- (4c) The wall 2m from *Power Station*, starting with a good layaway for left hand and finishing with a balancy mantel.
- 6 **Putting the Pressure On?** 4b 1.5m from the arête of *Pistachio Lace* on the right, take the juggy wall from an undercut for left hand.

WEST FACE

- 7 ***Pistachio Lace** V0 (5a) Sit start the left arête – great!
- 8 **Bakarkhani** V0 (5a) Sit start the centre of the wall; good holds, variations possible.
- 9 ***Ginger Nuts** V1 (5c) Sit start the hanging right arête as low as you can; one of the boulder's best.





Ginger Nuts Pic: Jonathan Crocker

SOUTH FACE

10 ***Berthed by Damo V2** (6a) Sit start 1.5m right of the *Ginger Nuts* arête on small crimps. Pull hard and gain pockets just below the top.

11 **Should Have Been Delivered to Stonehenge V1** (5c) Sit start in the centre of the face left of a big jug (not used). Move up via a shelf and a finger-pocket for right hand.

THE TRAVERSES

These are what you're here for, presumably. None of the traverses uses the top of the boulder.

12 **Swallows V3** (5c/6a) Start on *Descent Route* and traverse right and around *Power Station* onto the north face. Make a technical traverse across the wall, which gets increasingly pumpy towards the end. Finish up *Pistachio Lace* or carry on the heavy breathing along:

13 ***Amazons V3** (6a) Sit start the arête of *Pistachio Lace* and traverse right and around *Ginger Nuts* onto the south face. Traverse across the wall, all the way to *Descent Route*. All handholds are in (except the top, of course): most are 0.5m – 1m below the top.

14****Swallows & Amazons V4** (6a) The clichéd combo, but – at 16 metres – what a work out!

15 ****Denny Island Discs V6** (6b) An 8-metre long low traverse of the west and south faces. Sit start the arête of *Pistachio Lace* and take the orange hand-shelf onto the big hold on the *Ginger Nuts* arête. Follow a seam rightwards, which is laden with good spaced crimps, until a juggy sidehold can be grasped. Continue via a big pocket onto *Descent Route*. All holds above the shelf and seam are out (so don't be tempted). Now all you need do is to add a similarly low prequel along the shallow hand-shelf on the north face: good luck with that.

