

Southern Sandstone Climbs

A guidebook to the best route climbing and bouldering on Southern Sandstone

Text, route information and crag photography
by Daimon Beail

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and as credited

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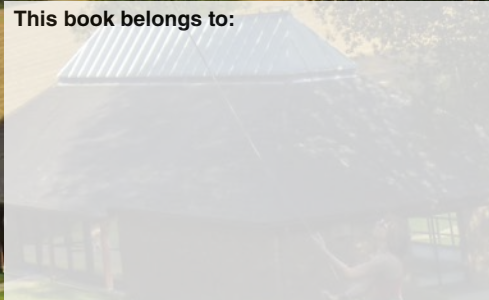
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This book is printed on FSC certified paper
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This book belongs to:



Cover: Simona Koplin on *Pig's Nose* (5c 5a) - page 92 - at Bowles Rocks.

This page: Anton Belodedenko at the top of *Serenade Arete* (6c+ 6a) - page 82 - at Bowles Rocks. Photo: Emma Harrington.

By Daimon Beail

AWESOME WALLS

CLIMBING CENTRES

**AWESOME WALLS
LIVERPOOL**
ATHOL ST, LIVERPOOL,
L5 9TN

**AWESOME WALLS
STOCKPORT**
PEAR MILL, STOCKPORT,
SK6 2BP

**AWESOME WALLS
STOKE**
SEFTON RD, LONGTON,
ST3 5LW

**AWESOME WALLS
SHEFFIELD**
GARTER ST, SHEFFIELD,
S4 7QX



WE CLIMB,
WE CARE,
WE'RE AWESOME!



AWESOMEWALLS.CO.UK

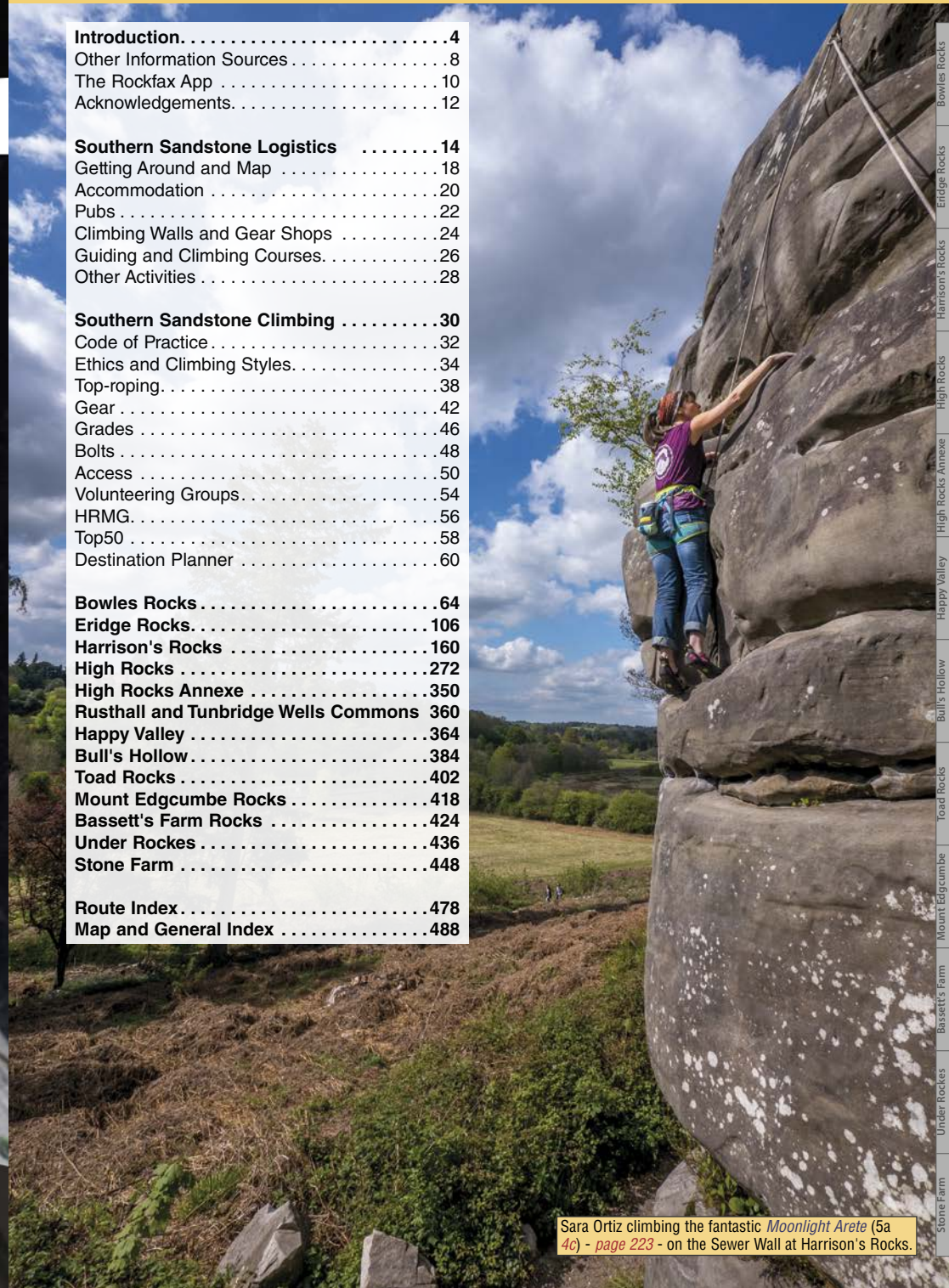
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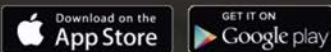
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Sara Ortiz climbing the fantastic *Moonlight Arete* (5a 4c) - page 223 - on the Sewer Wall at Harrison's Rocks.

In a back street in Liverpool a small wall was created in 1998 by a passion to prove to the world that climbing walls can be fun and inspiring places to climb and train. Awesome Walls Climbing Centres aim to provide frequent well set routes and boulder problems in a clean and friendly atmosphere!

DID YOU KNOW WE HAVE AN APP? DOWNLOAD IT HERE





Rob Greenwood bouldering out the starting moves on *Mick's Wall Arete* (6c+ 6a) - page 80 - at the Kemp's Delight area of Bowles Rocks. Photo: Rob Greenwood.

Located on the Kent and Sussex border are the mysterious sandstone rock formations of southeast England commonly known as 'Southern Sandstone'. It is an unlikely place to look for rock but, being within easy reach of London and Brighton, Southern Sandstone is actually one of the busiest climbing destinations in the UK.

Many of the crags are remarkably hidden, tucked away in valleys and woodlands surrounding by rolling hills and lush, green countryside around the spa town of Royal Tunbridge Wells. The small village of Groombridge is a good base when visiting the area, close to the largest of the crags - Harrison's Rocks - and within easy reach of all the other crags.

First time visitors often struggle with the unique and delicate climbing style, and the short and intense nature of the climbs means they pack a lot in. However, once mastered, there is a great deal of pleasure and satisfaction to be achieved by pushing your grade and tackling some of those iconic testpieces. Spend enough time here and you may even gain the accolade of being called a 'sandstoner'! A highly talented select few have honed their skills to pull off some amazing feats, including solo ascents of some of sandstone's hardest routes, with Matt Cousins' incredible solo of *Chimaera* (8a+) at High Rocks currently standing head and shoulders above the rest!

The sandstone rock presents many unique climbing features - strenuous honeycomb walls, crimpy technical masterpieces, tenuous stretches on rounded breaks, thuggy struggles up cracks, powerful pulls over bulging roofs and some of the most interesting off-width and chimney climbs in the country. Whatever your style, there should be something to suit here.

The sandstone of southeast England is a close relation to the rock found in Fontainebleau, but even softer. This delicate nature brings great responsibility to climbers to ensure it is not damaged or eroded. Only top-rope and solo climbing is allowed since any lead climbing gear would damage the rock too much. There are some simple and important rules to be followed known as the Southern Sandstone Code of Practice - see page 32 for more information. Unlike any other climbing area in the UK, the specific requirements regarding access, gear, top-rope set-up and climbing technique on Southern Sandstone are vital to help preserve the rock for present and future generations of climbers.

Southern Sandstone caters for all, and the general climbing culture is friendly and laid back, with many indulging in weekend picnics while top-roping classics at the various crags. Those who make the journey will be pleasantly surprised to find an abundance of memorable and highly-regarded climbs which sit happily amongst some of the best technical climbing the UK.

Daimon Beail, July 2017

CLIMBING

Coverage

This book contains all the information covering the best climbing on the major crags of the Southern Sandstone area. The big five of Bowles Rocks, Eridge Rocks, Harrison's Rocks, High Rocks and Stone Farm are displayed in all their glory with big photo-topos, overview photos, detailed maps, character symbols and full text descriptions. The same treatment is given to the smaller venues; Happy Valley, Bull's Hollow, High Rocks Annexe, Bassett's Farm and Under Rocks. The bouldering at Toad Rocks and Mount Edgcumbe make their guidebook debut.

The book is more than a traditional selective guidebook since it covers the vast majority of routes on the main and minor crags in the area. It can not claim to be 'comprehensive' though since there are climbs that have been done which aren't described and crags which have been omitted. These are mainly banned crags, minor venues with difficult or unknown access, climbs that have become too overgrown to be viable or long high traverses that have been climbed but see little interest these days and have exacting set-up requirements for top-roping.

The coverage sees a switch in grading policy with the much lamented Sandstone Tech Grade being given a minor role in favour of the more versatile and well know sport grade for the top-rope routes. With the use of bouldering pads now being widespread, many of the shorter routes have been reassessed as boulder problems and given Font bouldering grades in common with the rest of the country. The bouldering coverage extends to boulder problems that have mutated from routes with overgrown top-outs or are notable problems in their own right. See page 46 for more on grades.

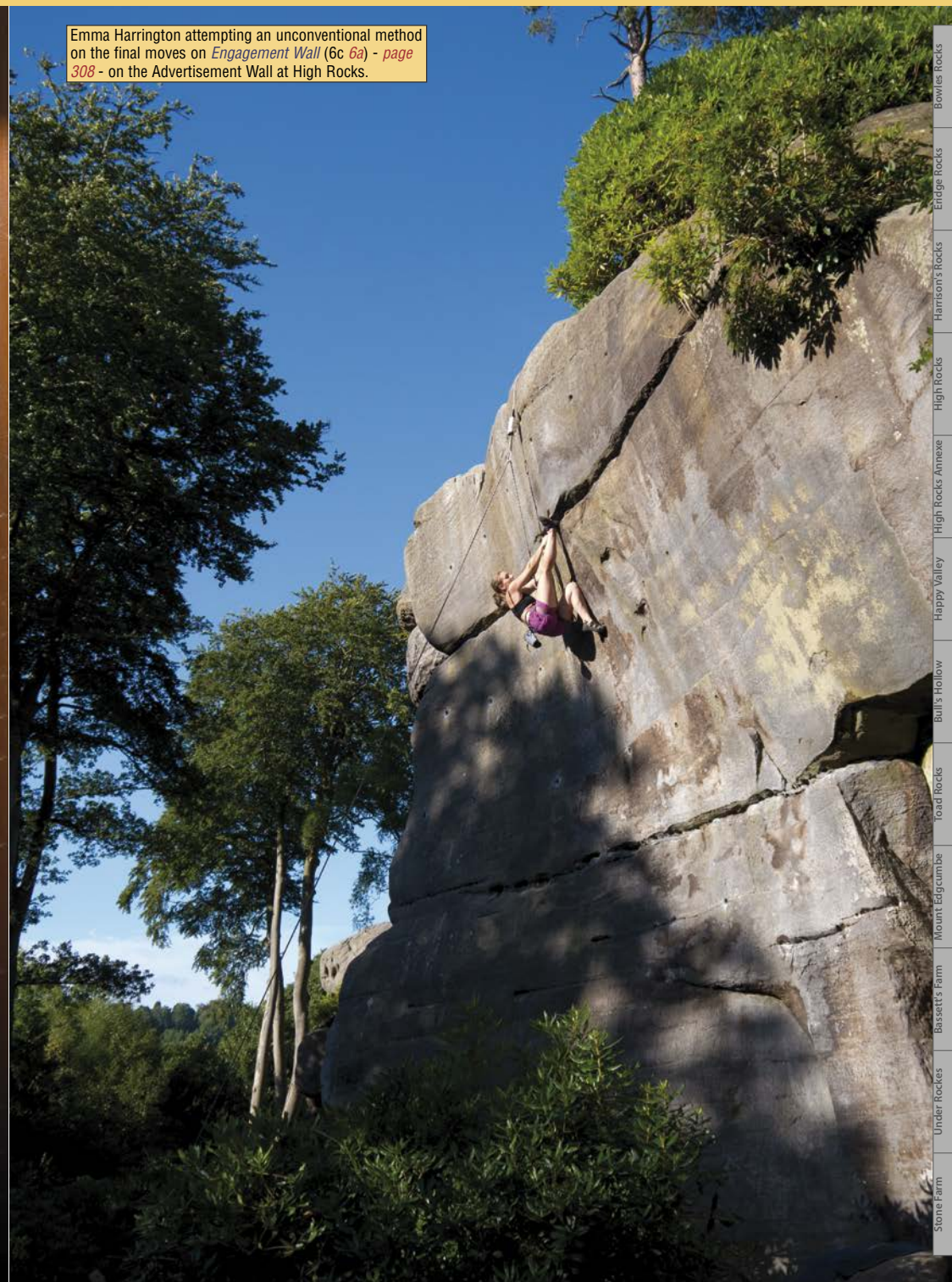
More information on crags and access can be found on the following web sites:

BMC - thebmc.co.uk/modules/RAD/
SSC - www.southernsandstoneclimbs.co.uk
UKClimbing - ukclimbing.com/logbook/
Rockfax - rockfax.com

Guidebook Footnote

The inclusion of a climbing area in this guidebook does not mean that you have a right of access or the right to climb upon it. The descriptions of routes within this guide are recorded for historical reasons only and no reliance should be placed on the accuracy of the description. The grades set in this guide are a fair assessment of the difficulty of the climbs. Climbers who attempt a route of a particular standard should use their own judgment as to whether they are proficient enough to tackle that route. This book is not a substitute for experience and proper judgment. The authors, publisher and distributors of this book do not recognise any liability for injury or damage caused to, or by, climbers, third parties, or property arising from such persons seeking reliance on this guidebook as an assurance for their own safety.

Emma Harrington attempting an unconventional method on the final moves on *Engagement Wall* (6c 6a) - [page 308](#) - on the Advertisement Wall at High Rocks.



Bowles Rocks
Eridge Rocks
Harrison's Rocks
High Rocks
High Rocks Annexe
Happy Valley
Bull's Hollow
Toad Rocks
Mount Edgcumbe
Bassett's Farm
Under Rocks
Stone Farm

Climbing on the southern sandstone outcrops has been documented since 1926. We are very grateful to everyone who has worked on previous guidebooks and to all who have documented their climbs in the area. A particular mention needs to be given to the **UKClimbing.com** crag moderators for their time and effort moderating their particular crags.

Guidebooks

Southern Sandstone and the Sea Cliffs of South-East England
Mike Vetterlein, Robin Mazinke (*Climbers' Club* 2008, reprint 2014)

Southern Sandstone Bouldering
James O'Neil and Ben Read (2011)

Sandstone Climbing in South East England
David Atchison-Jones (*Jingo Wobbly Guide Books* 2010)

Bowles Rocks - A Climbing Guide
Steve Turner and Marion Williams

Websites

ukclimbing.com - The UKC Logbook route database for all areas covered in this guidebook.

rockfax.com - Information on Rockfax publications and including an access blog.

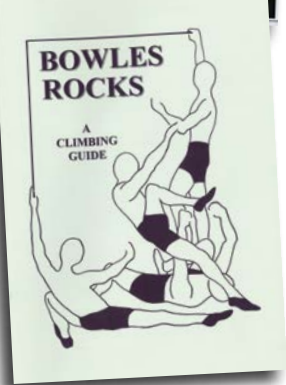
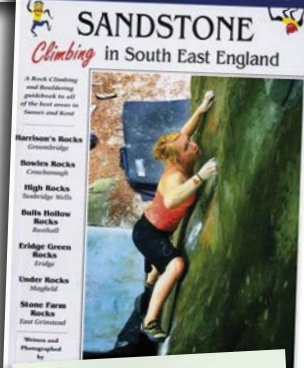
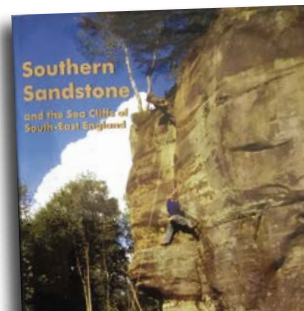
www.southernsandstoneclimbs.co.uk - A central point of information for all things southern sandstone.

sandstonevolunteers.org.uk - Information on the sandstone volunteers group and their activities.

thebmc.co.uk/modules/RAD/ - Latest access information to the climbing areas in England and Wales.

New Routes

The paper book that use to be kept at the old Evolution Climbing Wall in Groombridge has now been retired. These days online databases like UKC logbooks are the best place to submit new route information **ukclimbing.com/logbook/**



We are grateful to the following companies who have supported this guidebook.

Alauzon - Page 55
alauzon.com

Awesome Walls - Page 2
awesomewalls.co.uk

Boulder Brighton - Page 29
boulderbrighton.com

Castle Climbing Centre - Page 27
castle-climbing.co.uk

Chimera Climbing Centre - Page 21
chimeraclimbing.com

Reading Climbing Centre - Back flap
climbingcentres.co.uk

Cold Mountain Kit
- Inside back cover and page 37
coldmountainkit.com

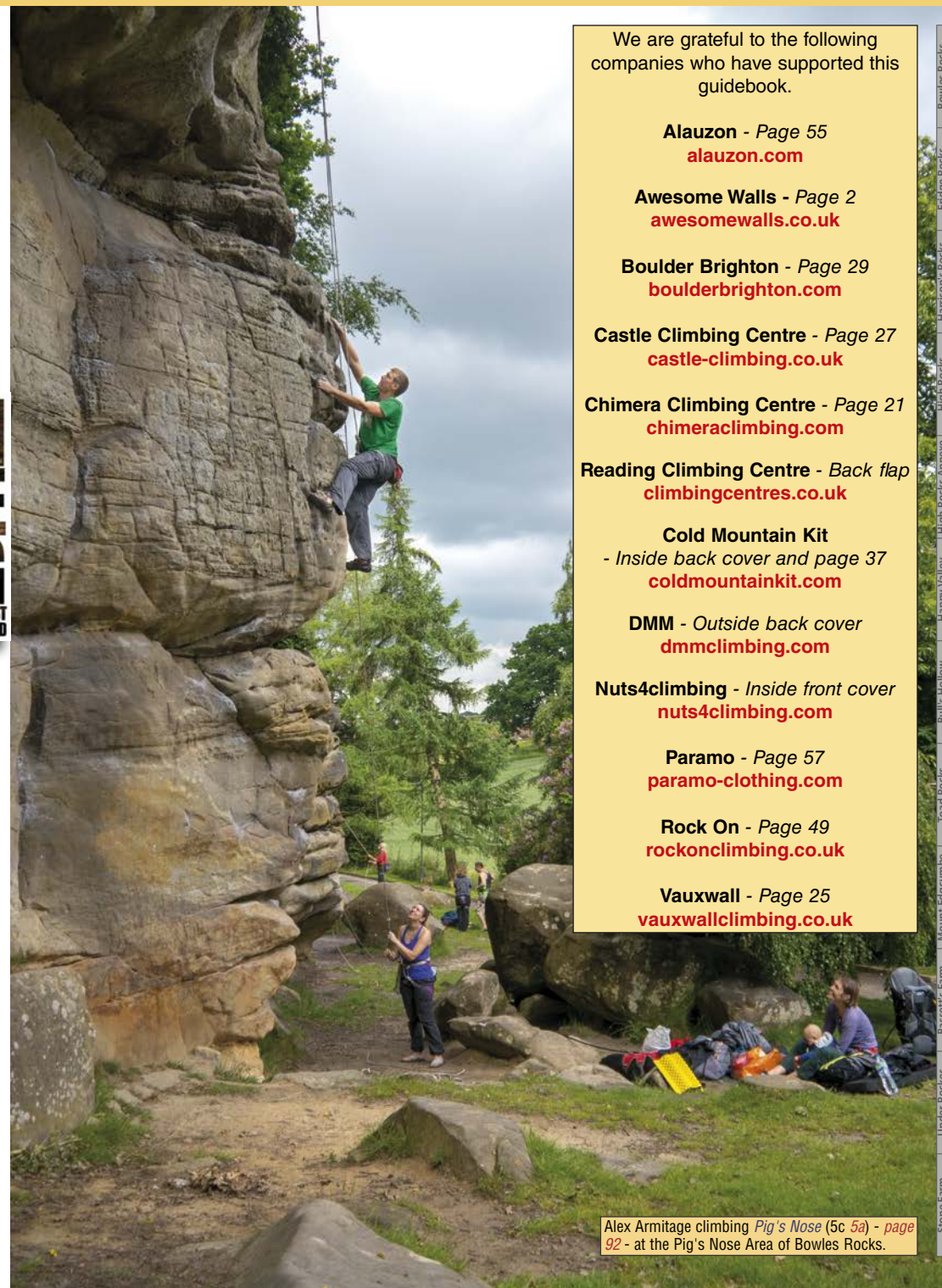
DMM - Outside back cover
dmmclimbing.com

Nuts4climbing - Inside front cover
nuts4climbing.com

Paramo - Page 57
paramo-clothing.com

Rock On - Page 49
rockonclimbing.co.uk

Vauxwall - Page 25
vauxwallclimbing.co.uk

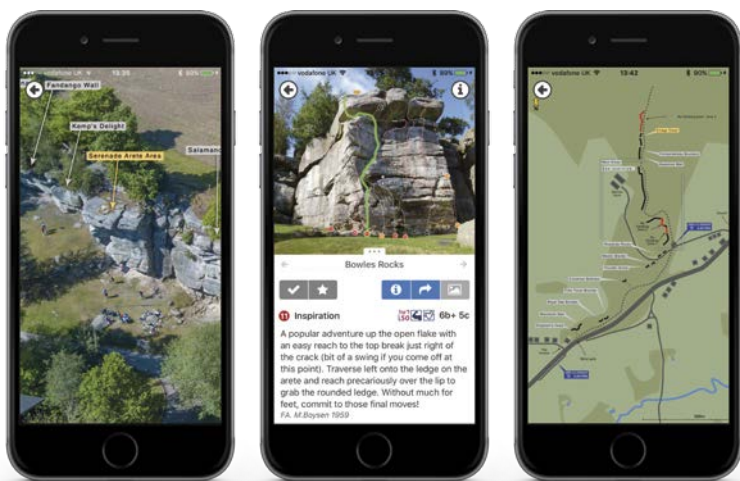


Alex Armitage climbing *Pig's Nose* (5c 5a) - page 92 - at the Pig's Nose Area of Bowles Rocks.

This Southern Sandstone Climbs guidebook is also available on the Rockfax App which brings together all the Rockfax climbing information with UKC Logbooks and presents it in a user-friendly package for use on Apple iOS devices (Android version available in 2017).

The heart of the app is the Rockfax crag and route information which is downloaded by way of paid in-app purchases for individual crags, or bundles of crags, in 'Areas' which correspond roughly to printed guidebooks. You can purchase each crag or area individually, or the whole book. The main data on the app is downloaded and stored on your device so you don't need any signal to be able to read the descriptions and see the topos and maps. There is a free sample crag for each area and some of these are quite extensive, enabling you to get a really good impression of what the app is like without shelling out any money.

The Rockfax App itself is a free download and incredibly useful in its own right. It contains a detailed crag map linked to the UKClimbing crags database. The map also displays all the 4,000+ listings from the UKClimbing Directory of climbing walls, outdoor shops, climbing clubs, outdoor-specific accommodation and instructors and guides amongst others.



To find the app, search for 'Rockfax app' in Google or in the appropriate app store.

UKC Logbooks

An incredibly popular method of logging your climbing is to use the **UKClimbing.com** logbooks system. This database lists more than 404,000 routes, over 21,400 crags worldwide and, so far, more than 33,000 users have recorded over 5.4 million ascents! To set up your own logbook, all you need to do is register at **UKClimbing.com** and click on the logbook tab. Once set up you will be able to record every ascent you make, when you did it, what style you climbed it in and who you did it with. Each entry has a place for your own notes. You can also add your vote to the grade/star system linked to a database on the Rockfax site used by the guidebook writers. The logbook can be private, public or restricted to your own climbing partners only. The Rockfax App can be linked to your **UKClimbing.com** user account and logbook so that you can record your activity while at the crag and look at photos, comments and votes on the routes. To do this you will need a 3G/4G data connection. You can also look at the UKC logbooks to see if anyone has climbed your chosen route recently to check on conditions.



Route Symbols

- A good route/problem.
- A very good route/problem, one of the best on the crag.
- A brilliant route/problem, one of the best in the area.
- A route of great significance in sandstone climbing in southeast England - see page 58.
- Technical climbing requiring good balance and technique, or complex and tricky moves.
- Powerful climbing; roofs, steep rock, low lock-offs or long moves off small holds.
- Sustained climbing; either lots of hard moves or steep rock giving pumpy climbing.
- Fingery climbing with significant small holds on the hard sections.
- Fluttery climbing often associated with highball bouldering or scary top-roping.
- A long reach is helpful, or even essential, for one or more of the moves.
- Sloping holds may be encountered.
- Graunchy climbing, wide cracks or awkward thruthy moves.
- A sit-down start for a boulder problem.
- A dynamic move ('dyno') may be required.
- Loose or friable holds or vegetated rock may be encountered.

Crag Symbols

- Angle of the approach walk to the crag with approximate time.
- Approximate time that the crag is in the direct sun (when it is shining).
- The rock is often green or prone to bad conditions.
- The crag suffers from seepage and may be wet and unclimbable in winter and spring.
- Some or all of the routes are affected by an access problem. Details in the crag information.
- Deserted** - Currently under-used and usually quiet. Fewer good routes or remote and smaller areas.
- Quiet** - Less popular sections on major crags, or good buttresses with awkward approaches.
- Busy** - Places you will seldom be alone, especially at weekends. Good routes and easy access.
- Crowded** - The most popular sections of the most popular crags which are always busy.

Topo Key



Map Key



This guide has been a labour of love spanning the past five years. The aim has been to produce a book worthy of promoting Southern Sandstone's unique climbs and the great sandstone environment while stressing the special conservation requirements. Much work has been undertaken to help move sandstone climbing forward in a new and positive direction particularly with regard to grading.

The first person I need to thank is Emma Harrington. Without her hard work, dedication, help with the project and support over the years, this guide would certainly not be what it is today. Emma was heavily involved behind the scenes at all stages. She organised photo-shoots, as well as climbing and posing for much-needed action shots herself. She assisted with the endless route testing, proofing and checking data. Emma is also a member of the HRMG (see page 56), contributed also towards the current Code of Practice (see page 32) and jointly runs www.southernsandstoneclimbs.co.uk to help promote information on all aspects of southern sandstone climbing. Jayda, the Labrador, has also been a big part of this and has patiently been with us on many a trip for photo-shoots, crag research and crag maintenance work.



Emma and Jayda

Tim Skinner, a true 'Sandstoner' and walking encyclopaedia of sandstone climbing, needs a special mention as he was my guru and guide when I first arrived on the sandstone scene back in the late 1990s. Many thanks to all those who have been out on the rock with me and those who have kindly posed for action shots over the years. Adrian Paisley deserves a special thanks for the days climbing and especially for helping with the Toad Rocks clear-up project. Zara Bloomfield has posed for photos and helped with clear-up projects and has also been out with us for many enjoyable days on the rock. Thanks to Robin Mazinke and Sarah Goodman - both keen Sandstoners, especially Robin who has climbed almost every route in the area within reason! Tom Gore has supplied me with up-to-date information on his ascents and has his ear to the ground concerning other new developments. Ben Read has offered valuable route information and Laurence Reading has helped on the new section unearthed at Bowles Rocks. Sarah Cullen for access to the now retired new routes books.

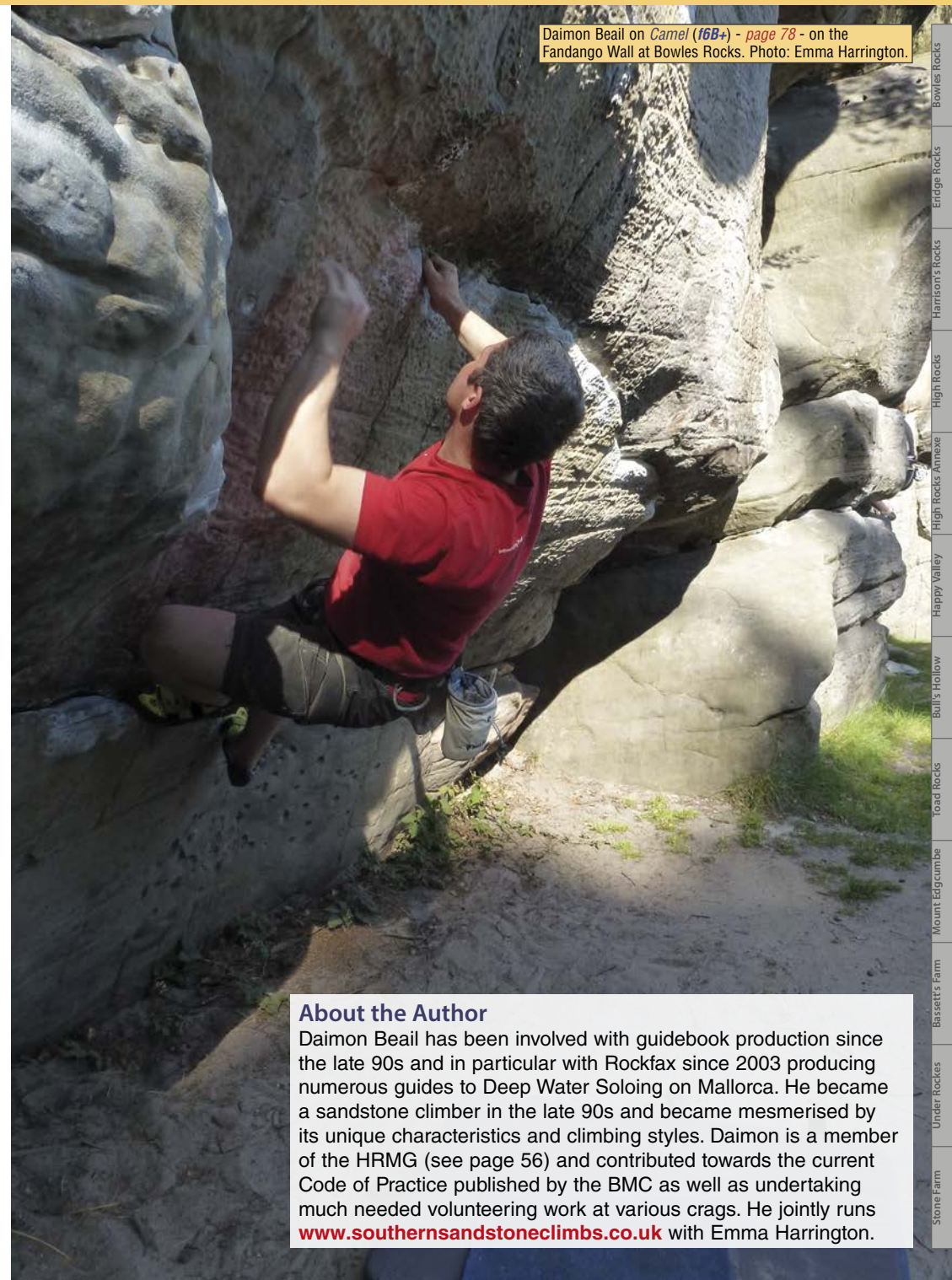
Many thanks to the Rockfax Team, especially Alan James for green lighting the project back in 2012 and being patient with me whilst it was being produced; his amazing work on the maps and for taking this book past the finishing line. Stephen Horne for his late night technical support responses and wizardry throughout the process.

Thanks to those who have supplied photos for the book - Tim Skinner, Rob Greenwood, Neal Grundy, Ben Hall, Szymon Dziukiewicz, Amy Wiggins and Richard Enticknap. I am also very grateful to Rebecca Ting for her amazing detailed proofing work.

Finally to all those people who have helped in whatever aspect however big or small, I hope you enjoy this guide.

Daimon Beail, July 2017

Daimon Beail on *Camel (16B+)* - page 78 - on the Fandango Wall at Bowles Rocks. Photo: Emma Harrington.



About the Author

Daimon Beail has been involved with guidebook production since the late 90s and in particular with Rockfax since 2003 producing numerous guides to Deep Water Soloing on Mallorca. He became a sandstone climber in the late 90s and became mesmerised by its unique characteristics and climbing styles. Daimon is a member of the HRMG (see page 56) and contributed towards the current Code of Practice published by the BMC as well as undertaking much needed volunteering work at various crags. He jointly runs www.southernsandstoneclimbs.co.uk with Emma Harrington.

Southern Sandstone Logistics

George Mellors on the final moves of *The Flakes* (7a 6a) -
page 194 - at the Long Layback Area of Harrison's Rocks.

Emergencies and Search and Rescue

In the event of an accident requiring assistance:

Dial 999

As the area is low-lying, standard ambulance services may well be all that is needed. For more extreme circumstances you should advise the 999 service that Search and Rescue may be required.

Search and Rescue

The two relevant local search and rescue services are charitable organisations dedicated to assisting the emergency services where the circumstances are too difficult for a straightforward ambulance rescue.

Kent Search and Rescue - ksar.co.uk

Sussex Search and Rescue - www.sussar.org

Mobile Phones

The area is well covered by mobile phone signals. Occasionally there are black spots and Harrison's carpark is sometimes bad in this respect. Please remember that even with little, or no signal on your phone, you may still be able to make an emergency call since these are channelled through all available networks.

Tourist Information Centres

If you are short of ideas about what to do on a wet day or need some accommodation, take a look at the Tourist Information Centres listed below; they contain a lot more useful information than it is possible to include in these pages.

Tunbridge Wells - Unit 2, The Corn Exchange, Royal Tunbridge Wells, TN2 5TE

Tel: 01892 515 675 visittunbridgewells.com

East Grinstead - Library Buildings, West Street, East Grinstead RH19 4SR

Tel: 01342 410121 eastgrinstead.gov.uk/tourism/

More information can be found at visitsoutheastengland.com and visitkent.co.uk

When to Go

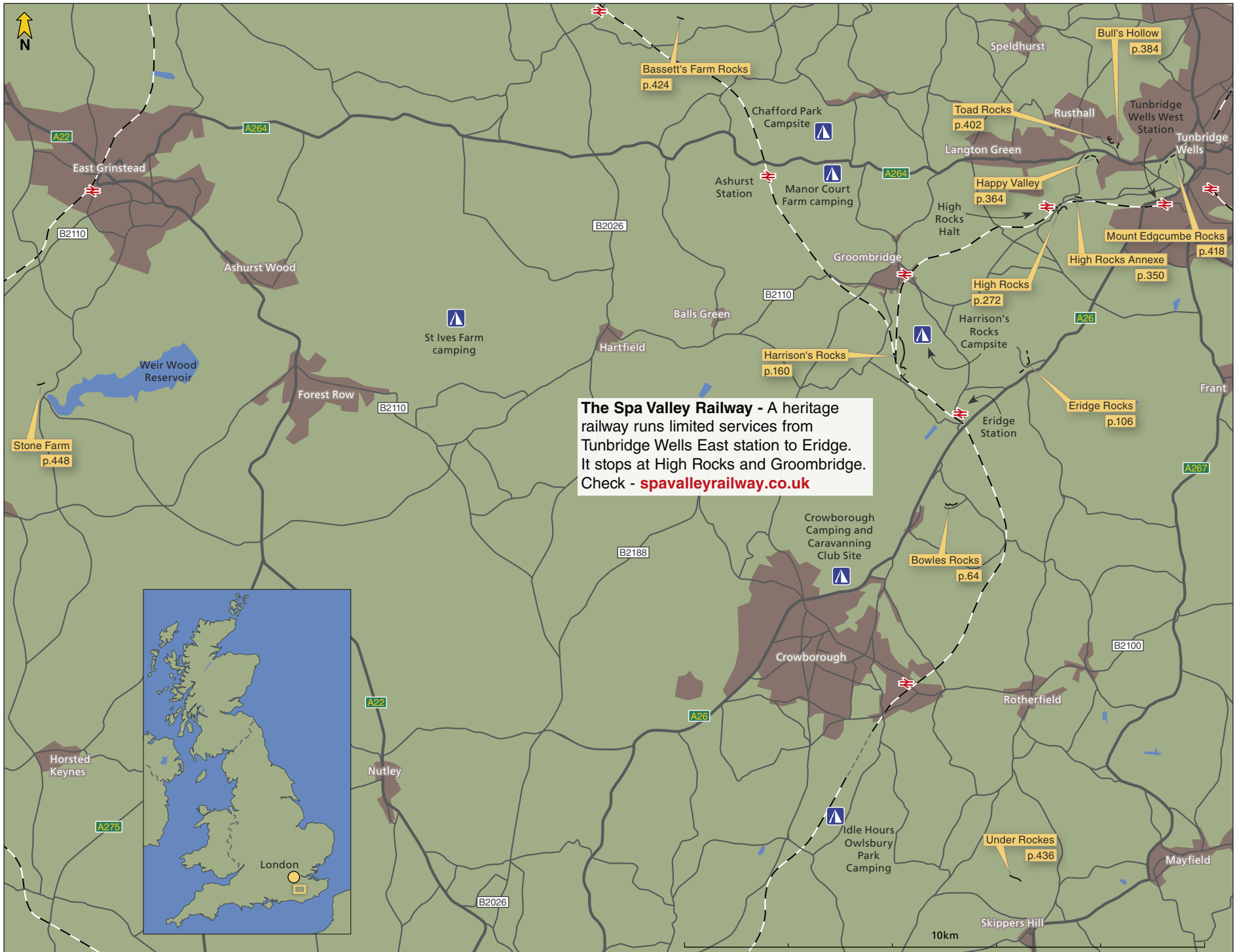
Climbing on sandstone is possible all year round as long as it is dry, but the best season for most of the crags is between spring and late autumn. Crags like Stone Farm and Bowles Rocks do well in the winter and dry out quickly after rain, whereas many of the other crags take a lot longer to come into condition, particularly if the foliage is dense. It is important to remember that you should not climb on wet sandstone as it becomes more brittle and prone to damage when wet.

Yearly Averages	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Average Max Temp (°C)	7.5	7.6	10.3	13.0	16.5	19.1	21.2	21.5	18.8	15.0	10.9	8.0
Average Min Temp (°C)	2.1	1.8	3.5	4.9	8.0	10.7	12.8	12.7	10.7	8.1	4.8	2.6
Average Rain Days/Month	13	10	10	9	8	7	7	8	10	12	12	13



Grant Dobson pulling through the powerful moves of *The Leaf* (16B+) on the Yew Crack Butress at Eridge Rocks. This is a sit-start to *Tortoise on a Spin Out* (7a 6b) - page 130 - which finishes at the first break. The top-outs at Eridge have become more difficult to negotiate in recent years, which has led to an increase in the popularity of these hybrid boulder problem starts.

The stations in Royal Tunbridge Wells and Eridge are well located for most of the crags, with a bit of a walk. There are good bus services as well. Check - traveline.info





Camping at Harrison's Rocks.

Campsites

Harrison's Rocks Campsite/Birchden Wood Camping – See page 162
forestry.gov.uk

A 16-pitch campsite allocated on a first come first served basis. Toilet and washing-up facilities available, but no showers. Purchase your ticket from the pay and display machine. Camping fees do not include car parking.

Manor Court Farm – See page 18
 Ashurst, Tunbridge Wells. Tel: 01892 740210
manorcourtfarm.co.uk

On a working farm with views to the Ashdown Forest. Tents, campervans and caravans welcome. Shower, washing facilities and logs for the campfire sites.

St Ives Farm Campsite – See page 18
 Butcherfield Lane, Hartfield.
 Tel: 01892 770213 stivesfarm.co.uk
 A secluded family site situated midway between Stone Farm and Groombridge. Tents, campervans and caravans. Minimum charge for 2 nights at weekends and 3 for Bank Holiday weekends.

Chafford Park Campsite – See page 18
 Ashurst, Tunbridge Wells
 Tel: 01892 740222 chaffordpark.co.uk
 Located just off the A264, between Tunbridge Wells and East Grinstead. A small tents-only site with showers.

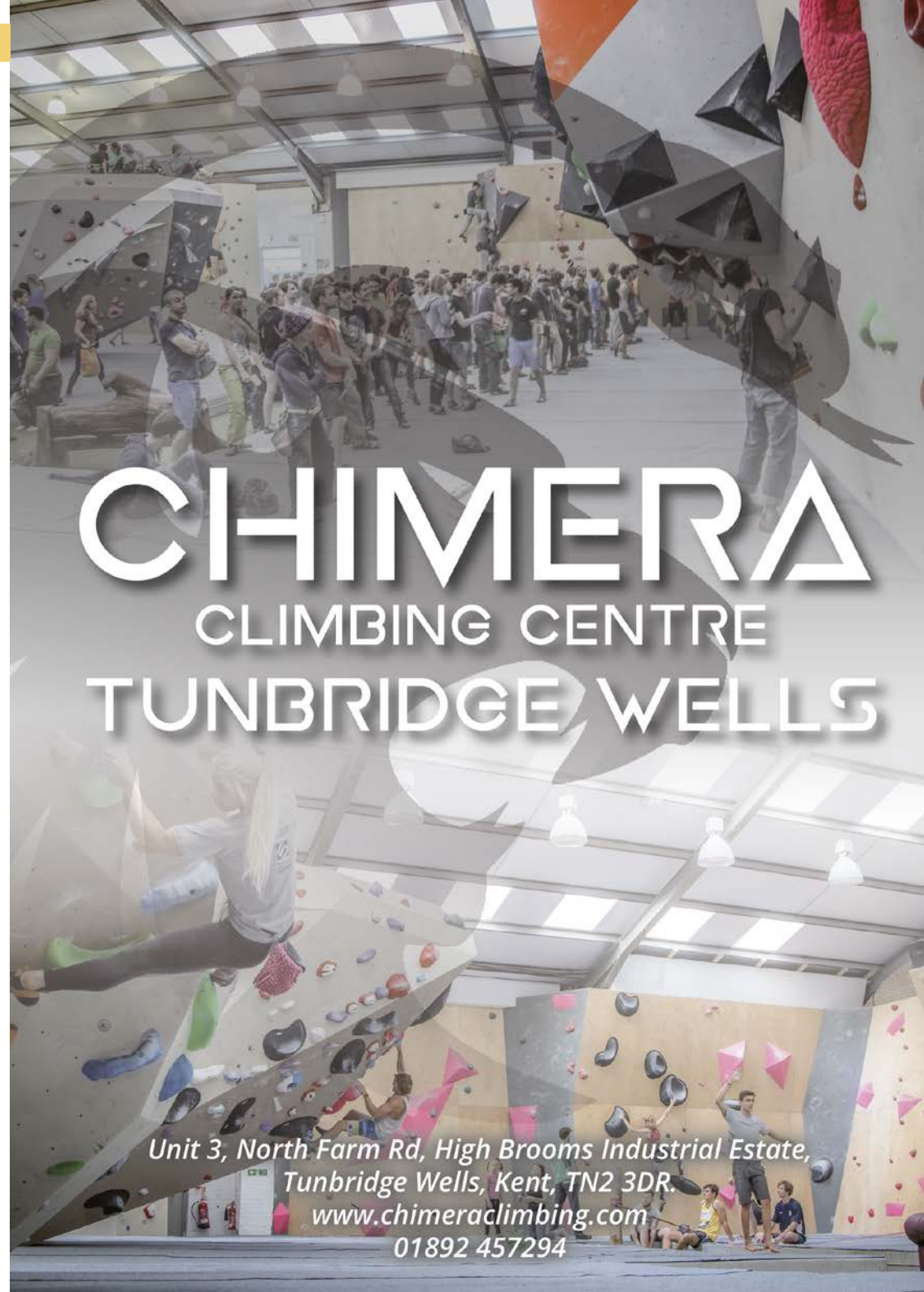
Crowborough Camping and Caravanning Club Site – See page 18
 Goldsmith Recreation Ground, Eridge Road, Crowborough. Tel : 01892 664827
 Near the A26 on the north of Crowborough, close to Bowles Rocks. Tents, campervans and caravans.

Idle Hours Owlsbury Park – See page 18
 Hadlow Down Road, Crowborough
 Tel: 07787945667
 South of Crowborough close to Under Rockes. No groups of under 25s. Full facilities.

Self-Catering Accommodation

The websites below all advertise self-catering accommodation in and around the Royal Tunbridge Wells area.

homeaway.co.uk
kentandsussexcottages.co.uk
cottages.com
sykescottages.co.uk
ownersdirect.co.uk
mulberrycottages.com
countrycottagesonline.com
hollambys.co.uk
lovecottages.co.uk
britainsfinest.co.uk



CHIMERA

CLIMBING CENTRE

TUNBRIDGE WELLS

Unit 3, North Farm Rd, High Brooms Industrial Estate,
 Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN2 3DR.
www.chimeraclimbing.com
 01892 457294

Harrison's, Eridge and Bowles Area

The Junction Inn - See page 162
Park View, Station Road, Groombridge.
Tel: 01892 864275

junctioninngroombridge.co.uk
Near Harrison's. Beer garden available.



The picturesque Crown Inn in Groombridge.

The Crown Inn - See page 162
Groombridge. Tel: 01892 864742
thecrowngroombridge.com
Cosy pub near Harrison's. Has an outside space overlooking the village green.

The Huntsman - See page 162
Groombridge Lane, Eridge.
Tel: 01892 864258. Good for Harrison's and Eridge Rocks. Situated next to Eridge train station.

The Nevill Crest and Gun - See page 107
Eridge Road, Eridge. Tel: 01892 864209.
nevillecrestandgun.co.uk
Near Eridge Rocks. Historic pub with garden for those summer days.

Tunbridge Wells Area

The Hare
Langton Road, Langton Green, Tunbridge Wells. Tel: 01892 862419
hare-tunbridgewells.co.uk
Traditional English country pub with large garden. Dogs welcome.

High Rocks - See page 274
High Rocks. Tel: 01892 515532
highrocks.co.uk
By the crag. Weddings take place here frequently during the summer.

The Beacon - See page 362
Tea Garden Lane, Tunbridge Wells.
Tel: 01892 524252 **the-beacon.co.uk**
Good pub near Happy Valley.

Toad Rock Retreat - See page 362
1 Upper Street, Tunbridge Wells.
Tel: 01892 520818
toadrockretreattunbridgewells.co.uk
Situated next to the parking for Toad Rocks and Bull's Hollow. Traditional pub with beer garden available.

The Mount Edgcumbe - See page 362
The Common, Tunbridge Wells.
Tel: 01892 618854
themountedgcumbe.com
Situated next to Mount Edgcumbe Rocks. Pub and restaurant with secluded garden. Dogs welcome on leads.

Bassett's Farm Area

The Bottle House Inn - See page 424
Coldharbour Road, Penshurst.
Tel: 01892 870306.
thebottlehouseinnpenshurst.co.uk
Country pub, which serves seasonal food and has a large garden.

The Spotted Dog
Saints Hill, Penshurst. Tel: 01892 870253
spotteddogpub.com
Small 15th century pub.

Stone Farm Area

The Old Dunnings Mill
Dunning's Road, East Grinstead.
Tel: 01342 821080. **olddunningsmill.co.uk**
An extended 15th century pub and old mill.

The Cat Inn
North Lane, West Hoathly.
Tel: 01342 810369. **catinn.co.uk**
A 16th century pub with an outside terrace.



Daimon Beail re-living the traumatic birthing experience on *Sapper* (5b 5a) - page 83 - at the Serenade Arete area of Bowles Rocks. Daimon is performing a 'clip-up' to protect those final moves - see page 40.

Climbing Walls

There is one climbing wall local to the sandstone area and lots more in London and Brighton. A few are listed below. More walls can be found at ukclimbing.com/listings

Chimera Climbing Centre - see page 21

3 North Farm Road,
Tunbridge Wells
TN2 3DR.



Tel: 01892 457294 chimeraclimbing.com

Modern bouldering facility with competition wall, roof section, top-out boulders and a dedicated training room. The closest bouldering centre to sandstone.

The Castle Climbing Centre

- see page 27

Green Lanes, London N4
2HA. Tel: 020 8211 7000

castle-climbing.co.uk



A huge wall in a Victorian water pumping station. Spread over 5 floors, over 450 roped and lead routes between 8m and 13m and a range of bouldering and training rooms.

Vauxwall Climbing Centre - see opposite

Arch 46 - 47a, South Lambeth
Road, Vauxhall, London, SW8
1SR. Tel: 020 7160 0248

vauxwallclimbing.co.uk



A modern bouldering centre located in the arches of Vauxhall train station with good train and underground links.

Boulder Brighton Climbing Centre

- see page 29

Victoria Road
Trading Estate,
Portslade, Brighton,
BN41 1XQ. Tel:

01273 422408 boulderbrighton.com



A large modern bouldering centre with walls of a variety of angles - slabs, overhangs, a cave and a top-out boulder. Has a dedicated training room.

Gear Shops

If you are short of gear, need to top up on chalk, looking for a new pair of boots, then consider the shops listed below. More shops can be found at ukclimbing.com/listings

Cold Mountain Kit - see page 37

44 Tower Bridge Road,
London, SE1 4TR
Tel: 020 7740 3393

coldmountainkit.com

Visit store and online
store available.

Specialists in big wall equipment. Stocks climbing clothing and climbing equipment.



Rock On - see page 49

Mile End Climbing Wall,
Haverfield Road, London,
E3 5BE

Tel: 020 898 150 66

rockonclimbing.co.uk

Stocks climbing
equipment and clothing.



The Castle Climbing Centre

- see page 27

Green Lanes, London N4 2HA.
Tel: 020 8211 7000

castle-climbing.co.uk

A fully stocked shop at the
Castle Climbing Wall.



Cotswold Outdoor

95-97 Mount Pleasant Road, Royal
Tunbridge Wells

cotswoldoutdoor.com

Gearshack

Fullers Passage, 19 High Street, Lewes

gearshack.co.uk

VAUXWALL CLIMBING CENTRE
INDOOR BOULDERING IN CENTRAL LONDON

London's Central
South Lambeth Road, Vauxhall, SW8 1SR
www.vauxwallclimbing.co.uk • info@vauxwallclimbing.co.uk

0207 1600248 • info@vauxwallclimbing.co.uk

CENTRE OPENS
Weekdays
6.00am - 11.00pm
Weekends & Bank Holidays
9.00am - 9.00pm

Bouldering Wall

Zone 1 air-conditioned centre in Vauxhall just 100m from the station
• Over 500m² of Bouldering surface, dedicated training space and café.
• Superfast check-in and easy online pre-registration.
• Weekly setting and regular #VauxComps

VauxWallClimbing
@VauxWall

Nuts4Climbing

- See inside front cover

Merlin's Cottage, Motts Mill,
Groombridge, TN3 9PE

Tel: 01892 860670

nuts4climbing.co.uk

Climbing courses are located outside on the sandstone outcrops and include taster sessions, introduction courses, personal training, family and school courses.

**NUTS4
CLIMBING**

Rock climbing courses and teaching is common place on sandstone. Here a class is being undertaken by one of the instructors at Bowles Rocks.

Bowles Outdoor Centrebowles.ac

Climbing courses for all ages next to Bowles Rocks.

Extreme Venturesextremeventures.co.uk

Climbing courses for all ages specialising in sandstone techniques

Hatt Adventuresthehatt.co.uk/adventures

Introductory and intermediate climbing courses and sandstone rope-work courses.

Kent and Sussex Climbing Ltdksclimbing.co.uk

Courses on sandstone. Taster sessions, private tuition and climbing tips.

Skyhook Adventureskyhookadventure.com

Skills courses for adults at Harrison's Rocks. Beginners and intermediate courses for sandstone set-up and climbing skills.

the
castle

LONDON

M25

SOUTHERN
SANDSTONETHE CASTLE CLIMBING CENTRE
GREEN LANES
STOKE NEWINGTON
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OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK!the
shopTHE BEST SELECTION OF EQUIPMENT
AND ROCK SHOES IN THE SOUTHWWW.CASTLE-CLIMBING.CO.UK

A great place to look for ideas for things to do is the Tunbridge Wells Tourist Information website visittunbridgewells.com

Kayaking - The section of River Medway from Tonbridge to Maidstone has been developed for canoeing with some great water shoots along the river at various grades. There are various places to hire canoes or you can use your own - you will need a licence. More information at medwaycanoetrail.co.uk

Cycling - The roads and surrounding woodland trails make for great cycling and mountain biking territory.

Walks and Trails - There are many footpaths and trails all over the Kent and Sussex countryside and this is a good option for seeing the surrounding countryside.

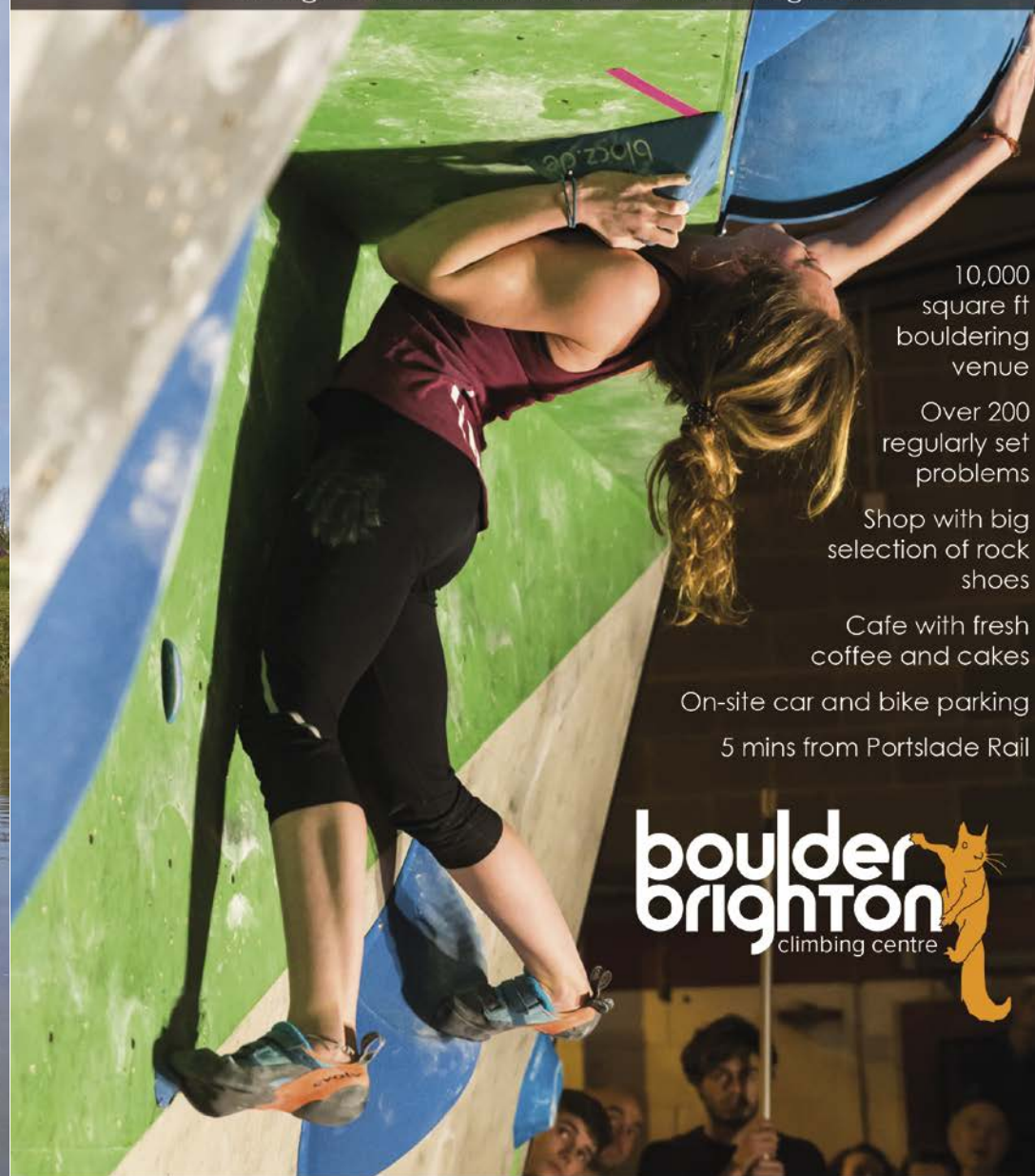
There are many things to see or do in the area depending on your time here and how far you're wishing to travel. In the local area are Dunorlan Park and Groombridge Place Gardens. Another local favourite is to visit one of the hop farms in the area.



Emma and Jayda enjoying a day out on the river Medway.

Get Bouldering!

at Brighton's dedicated indoor bouldering centre



10,000 square ft bouldering venue

Over 200 regularly set problems

Shop with big selection of rock shoes

Cafe with fresh coffee and cakes

On-site car and bike parking

5 mins from Portslade Rail



Portslade, Brighton, BN41 1XQ | 01273 422408

www.boulderbrighton.com



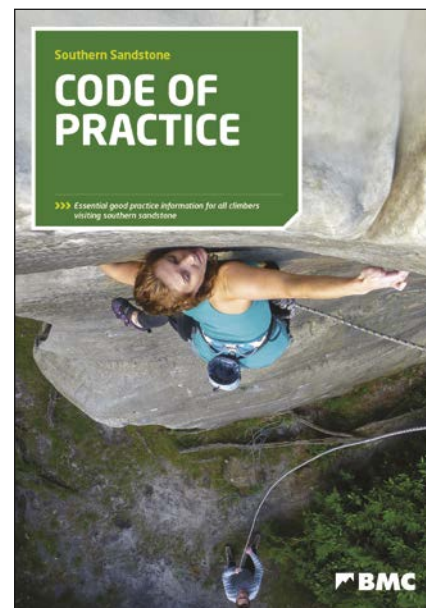
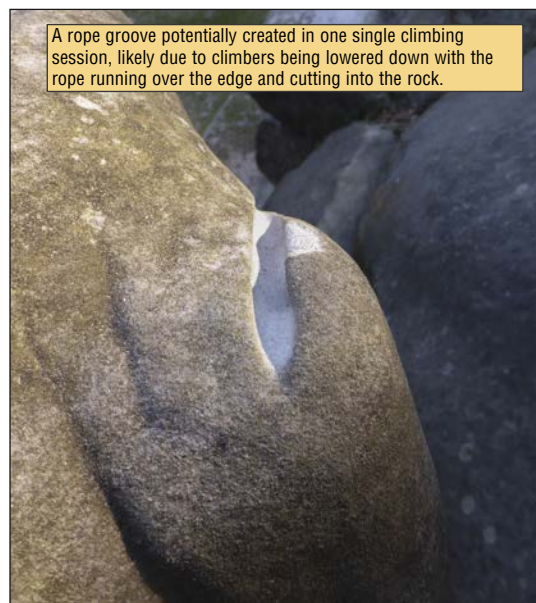
Southern Sandstone Climbing

Bobbie-Jo Bowes on *Archer's Wall* (6b 5c) - page 203 - at Harrison's Rocks. Harrison's is situated in some fine countryside and is one of the most popular climbing destinations in the southeast.



Sandstone

Before we go any further, we need to talk about sandstone and how delicate it is. Sandstone is basically just compressed sand with a thin weather-hardened outer layer. Once the outer layer is worn through, the sand underneath will erode rapidly if rubbed or left untreated. Holds often collapse through overuse, particularly where excessive brushing has taken place. Repair work is needed using cement, resin or other coating methods. If you see any damaged holds, please report them to access@thebmc.co.uk or call 0161 438 3309 - do not attempt to treat the damaged rock yourself.



Code of Practice

Climbing on Southern Sandstone requires rules to help protect the rock and ensure climbing can be enjoyed by future generations. The rocks are extremely popular, being the only outdoor venue near London, and receive heavy traffic throughout the year. A 'Code of Practice' was first developed by John Galloway in 2003 and the official document, which is now managed by the HRMG in conjunction with the BMC, is reviewed and updated when necessary in consultation with the climbing community.

A PDF version is available from www.southernsandstoneclimbs.co.uk

Pass on what you have learnt to others who may be new to sandstone. If you see bad practice, then politely challenge the climbers and show them this book or the Code of Practice leaflet. If you are ever challenged, then please remember to never take it personally and to assess what you are doing and make changes where appropriate.

Code of Practice Rules

- 1 Top-rope, bouldering or solo climbing only - no lead climbing is allowed.
 - 2 Use static (non-stretch) ropes or slings to ensure the top-rope carabiner hangs clear over the edge of the crag. When set up properly, there should be no rope moving in contact with the actual rock - see page 38 for more on setting up top-ropes.
 - 3 Walk off when you have finished a climb, do not lower off or abseil.
 - 4 Clean your climbing shoes before starting each climb.
 - 5 Use only soft bristle cleaning brushes or a soft rag/towel to flick away sand and chalk. No stiff-bristled wire, tooth, bouldering or climbing-specific brushes.
 - 6 Use as little chalk as possible and consider using chalk balls, Eco Balls or liquid chalk. Do not use resin (sometimes called 'pof').
 - 7 Sandstone becomes even softer when wet, and it is strongly advised not to climb when the crags are drying out after rain.
 - 8 Never use extreme methods to dry holds, always allow them to dry out naturally.
- For organised groups please also take note of the following guidelines:*
- 9 Avoid popular climbing areas at weekends.
 - 10 If using popular areas at other times, please limit your time.
 - 11 Remove ropes when climbs are not in use.
 - 12 Do not choose climbs which are too hard - skidding feet contribute significantly to erosion.
 - 13 Ensure that all footwear is cleaned using matting, carpets or rags before climbing. Use proper climbing shoes when possible.

Top-roping, solo climbing and bouldering are the only methods of climbing permitted on Southern Sandstone.

Lead Climbing

Lead climbing is strictly forbidden and there are no exceptions to this rule. The rock is simply too soft to take protection and this also includes soft protection like jammed knots.

Top-roping

A successful ascent is made when a route is climbed from the ground up, on a slack rope and topped out. Lowering off is not permitted and any ascent on which the climber doesn't properly top-out is not regarded as a proper ascent. See page 38 for more on setting up top-ropes.

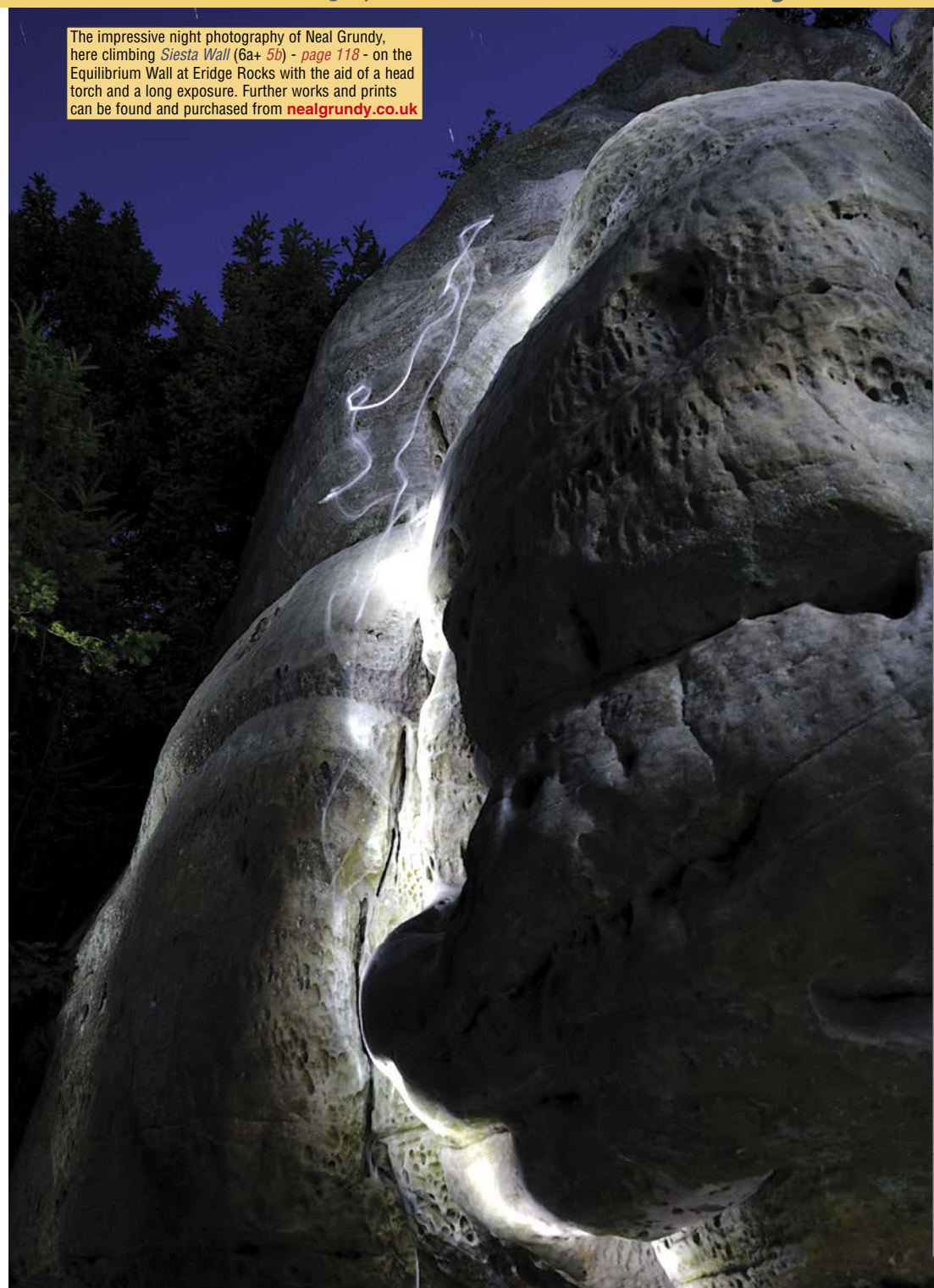


Emma Harrington deploying a mantle move to top out properly and complete her ascent.

Solo Climbing

The line between solo climbing and bouldering can become pretty vague these days especially with bouldering pads used extensively to protect highball problems. Purists may claim that an ascent above a pad is not a true solo ascent but, in reality, solo climbing is very much an individual pursuit and as such you should be happy with your own style. With all highballs there is a point at which a pad becomes redundant anyway. That said, solo ascents are not recorded in this guide (except one) for the reason that they are not particularly encouraged on sandstone due to the sandy and friable nature of the rock. If you do solo, please be aware that rock conditions can change; dampness and sandy rock making things more difficult than they could be with uncertain consequences. Only experienced sandstone climbers need apply!

The impressive night photography of Neal Grundy, here climbing *Siesta Wall* (6a+ 5b) - *page 118* - on the Equilibrium Wall at Eridge Rocks with the aid of a head torch and a long exposure. Further works and prints can be found and purchased from nealgrundy.co.uk

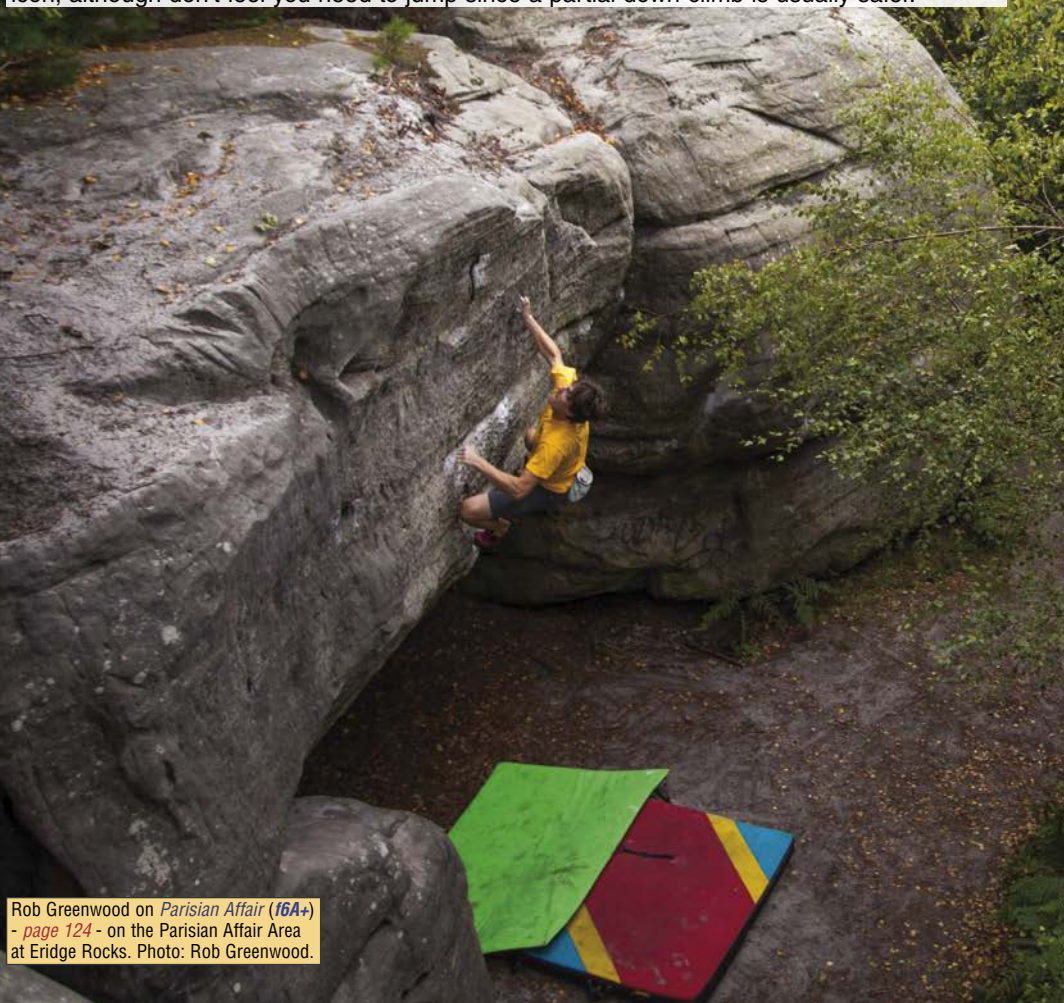


Bouldering

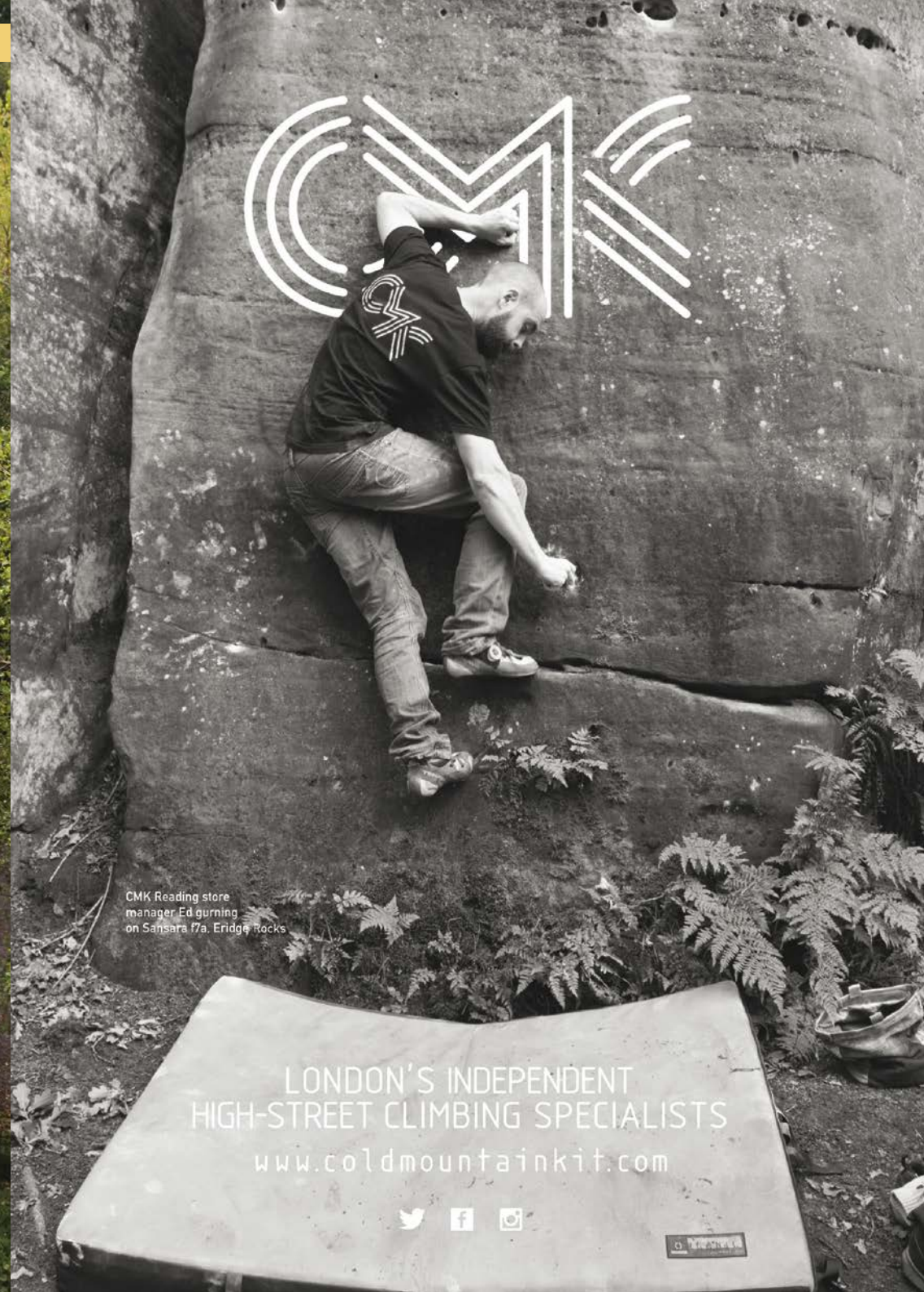
Bouldering on sandstone is increasingly popular and many of the areas covered in this book have been extensively developed with bouldering in mind in recent years. Some of this is at very friendly grades and it is a great way to enjoy lots of climbing without the hassle of a top-rope set-up, usually in a relatively safe environment. Of course you can still hurt yourself and a decent bouldering mat or two, and some friends as spotters are always advised. Bouldering can have an even more intense impact on the soft rock and you should familiarise yourself with the Boulder Sense section in the Code of Practice to learn how best to boulder without damaging the rock.

Boulder problems have been given Font grades - see page 46 for more on grades. 'Highball' problems (where you end up pretty high above the ground) are given a heart flutter symbol. If you are in any doubt, then ignore the bouldering grade and feel free to set up a top-rope since it is better to be safe than sorry.

Some of the problems described are alternative starts to routes which are commonly bouldered, but can be continued on a top-rope. More independent problems to certain points are, either noted in the text, or indicated with a finishing point on the topos - a 'J' for jump icon, although don't feel you need to jump since a partial down-climb is usually safer.



Rob Greenwood on *Parisian Affair* (16A+) - page 124 - on the Parisian Affair Area at Eridge Rocks. Photo: Rob Greenwood.



CMK Reading store manager Ed Gurney on *Samsara 17a*, Eridge Rocks

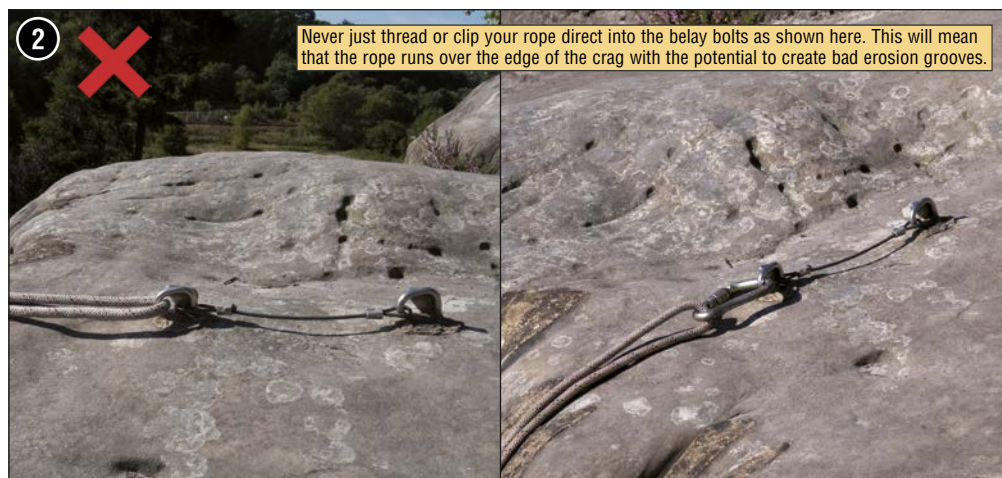
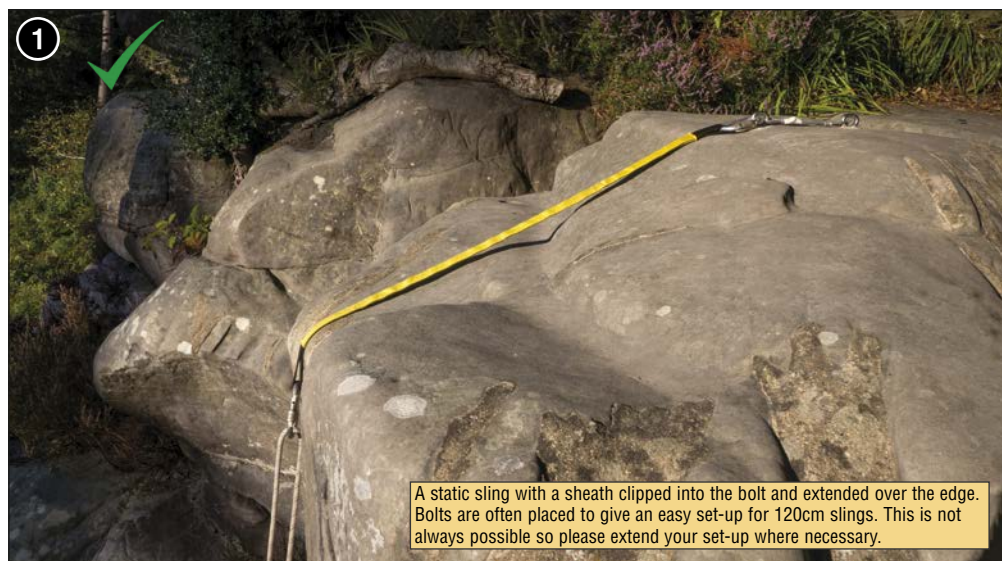
LONDON'S INDEPENDENT
HIGH-STREET CLIMBING SPECIALISTS
www.coldmountainkit.com



The soft nature of sandstone rock is the reason that special care is needed when setting up a top-rope, and why lead climbing is strictly forbidden. In days gone by this wasn't always the case and many routes on the popular crags have deep grooves at the top caused by overuse and bad top-rope set-ups. These days, general good practice and some modern techniques can be used to ensure that the damage to the rock is minimal.

Top-rope Set-up

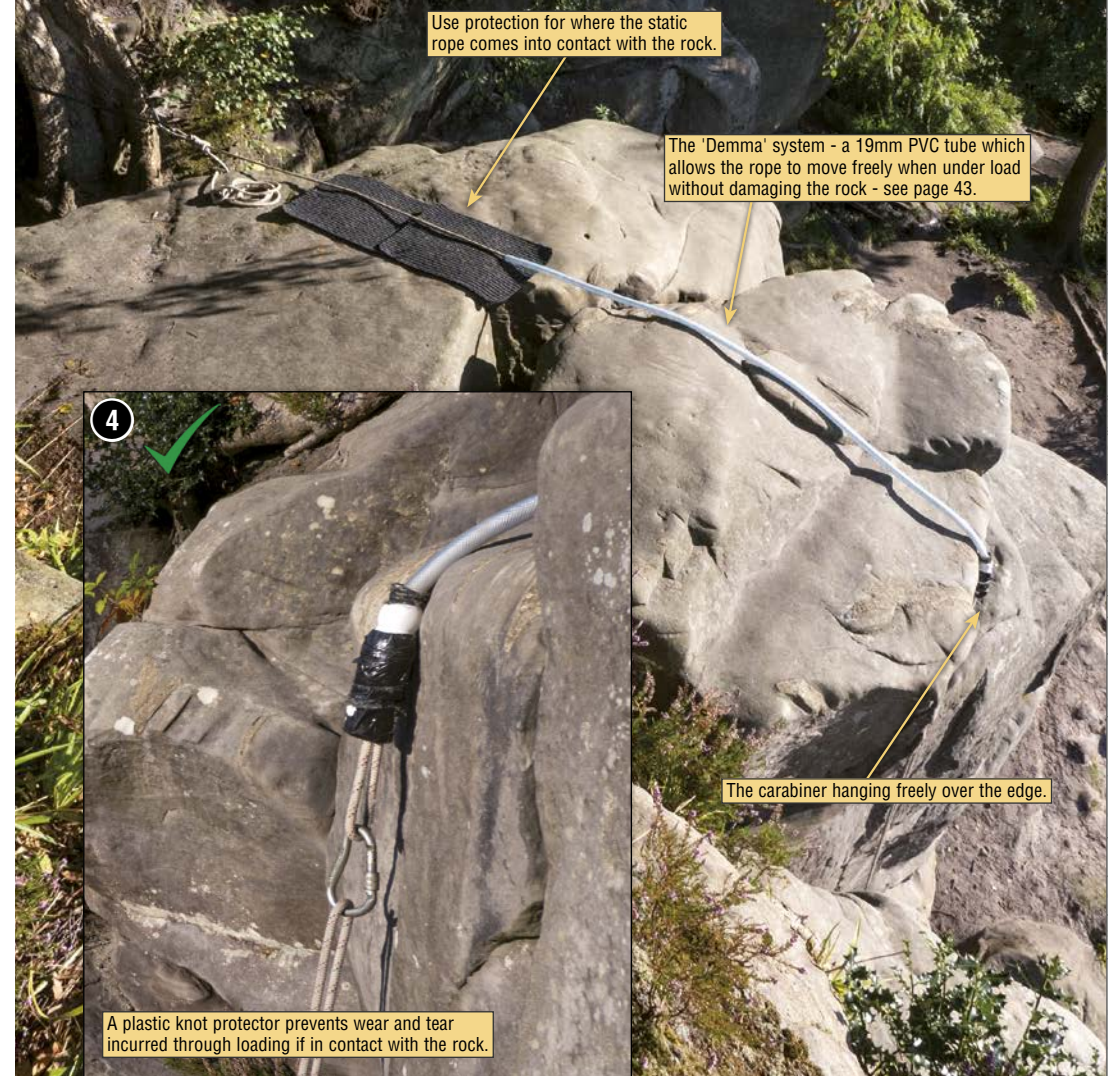
The majority of routes on the popular crags have either bolts or trees for top-rope set-up. By necessity these tend to be some distance back from the edge so an extension belay set-up is required to ensure that the belay carabiner hangs clear over the edge. When set up properly, the top-rope itself should pass through the belay carabiner but not really come into contact with the rock at any stage and certainly not so that it causes abrasion to the rock. Photos 1 and 2 below show a correct and incorrect method with bolt belays.



Extended Set-ups

Where there are no bolts, you need to use the crag-top trees which are often some distance back from the edge. A static rope can be used to provide an extended adjustable set-up. This can still incur some movement against the rock when loaded, so it is advised that you use sections of carpet and/or some other method of shielding the rope from the rock - photo 3.

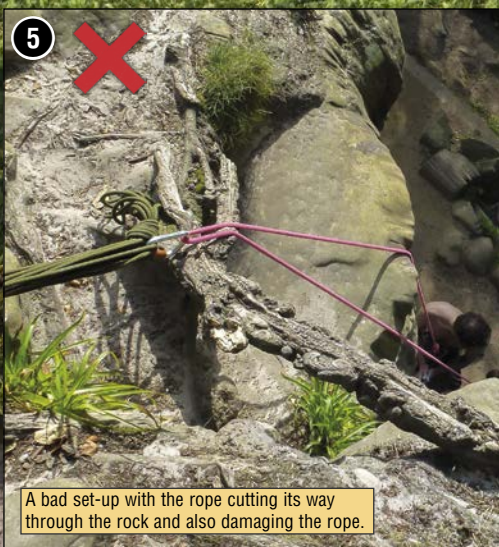
A plastic bottle can be used as a knot protector as shown in photo 4.



Clip-up Technique

True sandstone climbing often involves a short section of 'lead' climbing when topping out since you pass the belay which hangs freely some way below the edge. Those who are uncomfortable with this tend to set their belays too far back which causes erosion to the rock as the rope runs over the edge. A good method to avoid this is to use the 'clip-up' technique. This is where a quickdraw (sling or rope with a crab) is in place, connected to the top anchor, for you to clip above you before you attempt the last moves.

In some cases there is a ledge a good distance below the top which creates a second edge which is vulnerable to erosion - photo 5. In these cases two clip-ups can be in place to help protect the final moves - photo 6. It is important to note that clip-ups should only be clipped when you are attempting the last move. The technique is not a substitute method of lead climbing to be used over a whole route.



A bad set-up with the rope cutting its way through the rock and also damaging the rope.



A basic example of a 'clip-up' set-up. The belay is extended well over the lower edge but the climber can protect themselves by clipping into the extended quickdraws before attempting the finishing moves

Use extended quickdraws to protect those final moves.

Sandstone Top-rope Climbing Style

On sandstone the rope is there purely for protection and should not be used to provide assistance to a climber by giving them a 'tight rope'. It is different from top-roping at an indoor wall in this respect. Treat your top-rope only as a back-up in case of a fall and keep it reasonably slack throughout an ascent. In some cases the routes don't go in straight lines and care is needed in the set-up to ensure the rope is correctly positioned, both to offer protection for the whole length of the route, but also keeping in mind the hardest section where a fall is most likely. Certain routes in the book traverse long distances and may require special double top-rope set-ups.

Descent Method

Lowering off, or abseiling, from the top of routes is not permitted. Ensure you always top out and walk off when finished. If you 'take' at any point and are to be lowered back down, please do so as delicately as possible and do not jump in and out onto the wall as this will break holds.

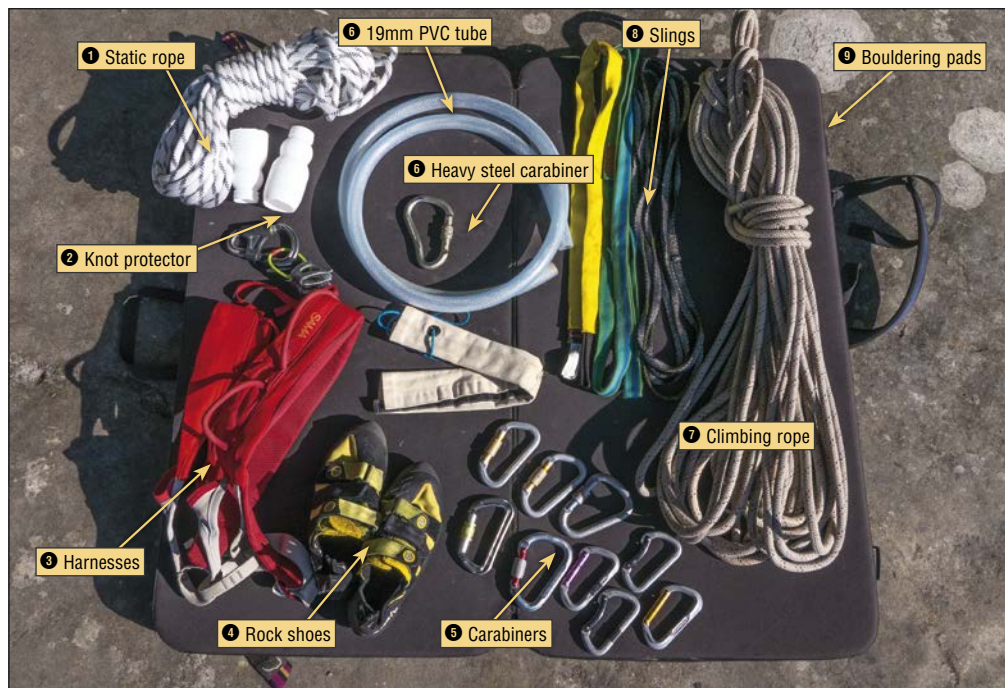
Working Routes

The practice of working routes is where you rest on the rope and practice hard moves until you can do them, the idea being that you then attempt the route from the bottom in good style to complete the ascent. This practice on sandstone has long been debated since the aim when top-roping is that the rope is only weighted in the event of a fall, and it is only when rope is weighted that it causes damage to the rock. 'Working' routes is bound to increase the amount of time a rope is weighted, hence it is likely to be more damaging. However, it is often possible to have a system where the rope is completely free from contact with the rock. In this case working a route is acceptable as long as the belay is properly set up as described in this section.



Do not lower off when you have finished a climb.

The sandy nature of the rock means that climbing on sandstone can take its toll on your gear much more quickly than on other rock types. This can be mitigated by good practice when setting up your top-ropes and it is certainly true that shoddy top-rope set-ups will not just damage the rock, but they will also hit you in your pocket as your gear gets trashed remarkably quickly. Most seasoned sandstone climbers keep a special set of gear for the purpose and usually this will be fat solid ropes and slings, big sturdy carabiners, plus much of the other gear described on these pages. This is not the place to try out your brand new expensive skinny 70m or lightweight slings and carabiners.



1 Static Rope

For extended anchor set-ups, usually from trees, you must always use a static rope. 15m to 20m is long enough.

2 Knot Protector

Where the belay knot hangs over the edge, a considerable amount of abrasion can be caused on the knot. A plastic bottle, cut off at the bottom and slid over a knot, is a good and inexpensive way to protect the belay knot where it hangs over the edge.

3 Harness

Since you are only top-roping, a harness full of extra features isn't required. You just need something solid that you can tie into. Some traditional climbers wrap the rope around their waists instead of using a harness. The idea here is that you don't hang around too long on a rope once you have fallen off.

4 Rock Shoes

There is no specific style of rock shoe for sandstone although most people don't tend to use their best pair if they have a choice. The only requirement is that you do use a rock shoe - no trainers or non-climbing footwear since this will cause more damage to the rock.

5 Carabiners

Carabiners are useful for top-rope set-up and, since weight isn't an issue, decent solid screwgate carabiners are preferable. A heavy steel carabiner is recommended for the one hanging over the edge.

6 Rope Protector

A rope protector is vital to protect both your rope and, more importantly, the rock. It should be used in conjunction with a static rope or sling. Standard canvas rope protectors tend to wear out quickly so seasoned sandstone climbers tend to use more robust solutions like inner tubes, hose pipes, rubber-based carpets or plastic sheeting.

The 'Demma' System is a cheap and simple solution for sandstone set-ups using static ropes. It consists of a 2mm section of 19mm (3/4") clear braided flexible PVC reinforced plastic tube that allows the static rope to move freely through the pipe. A heavy steel carabiner and a bottle knot protector made from two plastic bottles cut and slotted over each other and secured together by gaffer tape to stop them slipping up the rope.



7 Climbing Ropes - Static or Dynamic?

For the actual climbing (not the belay set-up) a 30m rope is adequate for any climb in this book. Some use a static rope since this minimises the movement in the system reducing the erosion caused by the moving rope. It also cuts down rope stretch which may stop you decking out if coming off low on a route. It does give a hard catch on the fall which can be a bit jarring for the climber. A dynamic rope is more pleasant to climb and fall on, since it gives a nice soft catch. It also puts less strain on any belay point, or clip-up point you might use. However, the drawback is that a dynamic rope will move more when in contact with the rock causing more erosion, and you might hit the ground on stretch if falling from low on a route.

8 Slings

Where there are well-placed belay bolts a single 2.5cm x 120cm static sling may be all you need. For more complicated belays, longer slings and extra slings for linking together are worth bringing along. Thick robust slings are better for sandstone so any wear can easily be identified. Slings are also needed to wrap around trees as well as for more advanced set-up techniques like the clip-up method.

9 Bouldering Pads

Bouldering pads are pretty much essential these days and come in all shapes and sizes. They also have the added advantage of protecting the ground from erosion and, because of this, they are also worth considering when top-roping routes with hard starts. Launch pads are special thinner pads that offer a small amount of protection if falling from the at the start of a problem. They also cut down on ground erosion and help keep your feet clean before setting off on a climb. If you don't have a pad of any kind then a section of rubber backed carpet is a useful replacement to clean your rock shoes on and keep them dry before setting off.

Richard Enticknap on *Ducking Fesperate* (15+) - page 474 - on the Inaccessible Boulder at Stone Farm. Photo: Richard Enticknap.



Chalk and Eco Balls

Although the use of chalk is accepted and normal on sandstone, it is strongly advised that you consider using an alternative to loose chalk in order to keep the impact to a minimum. Chalk balls are great at reducing the amount of chalk on your hands and preventing spillage. Eco Balls leave next to no residue on the rock and can give even better friction than chalk. Liquid or cream chalk substitutes leave no residue and can dramatically reduce the number of times you need to dip in your chalk bag if used in conjunction with chalk.

At some areas, like Eridge Rocks and High Rocks, access is sensitive and climbers' impact is always on show, so it is essential that chalk use is kept to a minimum at these venues.

The use of resin powder (pof) is not permitted at any of the crags in this book.



Cleaning Brushes

Sandstone does need cleaning from time to time to remove natural debris and loose sand. The best method is to use an extra-long very soft bristle hand brushes, such as those used to clean cars. Flicking holds with an old towel or rag is another option. Stiff-bristled toothbrushes, specific bouldering/climbing brushes and any form of wire brush are not to be used on sandstone. The damage that can be caused by the use of an inappropriate brush, or over-brushing, should not be underestimated.



Carpets, Towels

Clean rock shoes are essential when climbing sandstone. A dirty shoe will make the climb much more slippery and subsequently harder. Dirty shoes that skid against the rock also contribute to erosion. Use an old towel to clean your shoes and a section of carpet at the base of the climb to wipe your feet on and keep them clean before setting off.

Grades have always been a contentious issue on sandstone. For years the standard method has been to give each route a single UK technical grade which aims to give an indication of the hardest move on a route. This works to an extent, but can give a false impression of how difficult a climb actually is overall - a route with one **6a** move has the same grade as one with six **6a** moves without a rest yet is obviously not as hard. Another problem is that historically the UK technical grade has become very limited at the top end with a huge variation in difficulty within some of the top **6a**, **6b** and **6c** grade bands. This is well illustrated in the table opposite where UK technical grade **6b** spans sport grades from 7a to 8a!

Sport Grades

To give a better indication of the difficulty of routes in this book we have adopted a dual grading system. The first grade is a sport grade which gives an overall impression of the difficulty of the whole route and is familiar to most climbers both from sport climbing and climbing walls. The second grade is the more traditional UK technical grade, which gives an indication of the hardest move on the route. These are being included in this book to help with the transition between the grading systems. They do not appear in the app version of this guidebook.

It is worth bearing in mind that sandstone grades are renowned for being incredibly stiff primarily due to the unique climbing style and the historical compression of routes into the upper technical grade ranges. Routes also tend to be technically hard because the climber doesn't need to worry about the protection since you should always be on a top-rope.

Bouldering Grades

For boulder problems, Font bouldering grades have been used since this is now familiar to most climbers. The table opposite gives a very rough comparison of Font bouldering grades to the equivalent UK technical grade.

Feedback

There are bound to be some grading anomalies during the switch from the primary grade being the UK technical grade to sport and bouldering grades. Please use the UKC Logbook system to register your opinion on the grades - ukclimbing.com/logbook/

Colour Coding

The routes are given a colour-coded dot corresponding to a difficulty level. This gives you an impression across different climbing styles of routes you may be happy attempting. The difficulty level of boulder problems is a little higher for the equivalent colour code.

1 Up to 4c / Up to f4

Mostly these should be good for beginners and those wanting an easy life.

2 5a to 6a+ / f4+ to f5+

General ticking routes for those with more experience.

3 6b to 7a / f6A to f6C+

Routes for the experienced and keen climber. A grade band which includes many of the area's great classics.

4 7a+ or f7A and above.

The really hard stuff..

Sport Grade - Overall difficulty of the route

UK Tech Grade - Old grade for the hardest move

Font Bouldering Grade - For boulder problems

13 Pig's Nose **Top 1** **5c** **5a**
 A true sandstone classic up the nose on massive jugs. The top provides an exciting steep and exposed finale on good holds.

6 Devour **f6B+**
 Traverse the lower break from right to left, with a difficult drop down midway. Finish at the central break on the arete.

Sandstone Grade Table

Sport Grade	UK Technical Grade		Font Bouldering Grade	
2a	2a			
2b		2b	f2	
2c				
3a	3a			
3b		3b	f2+	
3c				
4a	4a			f3
4b		4b		f3+
4c			f4	
5a				
5b			f4+	
5c	5a			
6a				f5
6a+		5b		
6b				
6b+				f5+
6c		5c		
6c+	6a		f6A	f6A+
7a			f6B	f6B+
7a+			f6C	
7b			f6C+	
7b+		6b		f7A
7c				f7A+
7c+			f7B	
8a			f7B+	
8a+				f7C
8b				f7C+
8b+	7a		f8A	
8c				f8A+
8c+				f8B

There are many bolts on sandstone and all of them have been placed purely as top-rope anchors at the top of crags. There are no bolts actually on routes and they are never used to protect lead climbing.

Bolts on sandstone should not be regarded in the same way as bolts for leading climbing on limestone or other rock types. The softness of the rock means that there are special requirements when placing the bolts and they must not be used for any purpose other than setting up top-ropes. They are not designed for slacklines, zip wires or via ferrata. Excessive force placed on a bolt in the wrong direction may end up with the rock surrounding it failing and exploding in a sandy mess.

Bolts come in all shapes and sizes with numerous types currently in use. Some are now getting old and are held in place by 30-year-old concrete, but even these are still strong enough in most cases. New bolts are sunk into holes approximately 20cm in depth and kept in place by resin. The modern set-up usually has two bolts with a wire cable connecting them as a back-up (photo). These placements are designed for a pull in line with the direction of the twin bolt set-up and not for a cross-loading sideways pull. Such a pull will eventually cause a bolt to spin and move, severely weakening it.



Using the Belay Bolts

Most new belay bolts are placed back from the edge at a position designed so that you can use a 1.2m static sling to reach the edge and get the belay carabiner clear of the rock - see page 38 for more on this. The top-rope itself should never be threaded, or clipped directly, into the belay bolts. Whether you connect your static extension sling to the bolt with a carabiner or a knot is a matter of preference as long as there is no moving rope in the system. In some cases there are old bolts near the edge of the crag. You should still use a static extension sling in these cases since clipping direct to the bolt will not clear the edge sufficiently. Bolts in these positions are mostly being replaced.

Placing Bolts

Bolts are placed and tested by authorised personnel only and the majority are funded by the BMC. The Harrison's Rock Management Group test and inspect bolts once every 3 years. This involves weighting the bolt while closely observing it for movement. You must never attempt to place bolts yourself. If you encounter any problems with bolts on Sandstone then please email access@thebmc.co.uk or call 0161 438 3309



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Jess jumping in the dark at Harrison's.

There are varying requirements for access to the crags described in this book. Harrison's Rocks and Stone Farm Rocks are owned by the BMC, situated on open access land and present no problems for access. Eridge Rocks is open to climbers except for some no climbing zones which have been agreed between Sussex Wildlife Trust and the BMC. Bowles Rocks are owned by the Bowles Rock Trust and open to climbers with the proviso that you may be asked to relocate from certain areas if they are required for climbing instruction. High Rocks are on private land and have specific requirements including a fee - see page 274. The crags on Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall commons are managed by the Tunbridge Wells Commons Conservators and have no problems for access. Bassett's Farm Rocks and Under Rocks are both on private land and, although the landowners have never been identified, there are no known problems. More specific details are shown with each chapter. For up-to-date access information, check the UKC Logbook listing for the crag ukclimbing.com/logbook/, the BMC RAD (Regional Access Database) thebmc.co.uk/modules/RAD/ or www.southernsandstoneclimbs.co.uk

SSSI

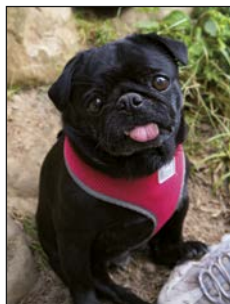
An SSSI (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) is an area protected by law to conserve the wildlife or geology and is designated by Natural England. Bull's Hollow, Toad Rocks, Eridge Rocks, High Rocks and Stone Farm are all SSSI. Climbing is allowed within an SSSI but extra care needs to be taken to ensure that no damage is done to the flora, fauna and rock. Climbing could easily be restricted at these venues if damage was attributed to climbers.

Trees

Many of the crags suffer from extensive foliage which can turn them into jungles in the summer months. Please do not take matters into your own hands by cutting down or pruning trees or using any chemical products to kill the plant life. If you think clearance work needs to be carried out, contact the BMC at access@thebmc.co.uk or call 0161 438 3309. Alternatively, get involved in volunteering through the HRMG (Harrison's Rocks Management Group) and the SVG (Sandstone Volunteering Group) - see page 54 for more information on volunteering.

Dogs

Dogs are welcome at all crags but must be kept under control at all times and preferably on a lead. Some people, and many other dogs, are not comfortable when dogs approach them. If your dog does not come back when called straight away, then they are not under control. Remove all dog faeces and dispose of appropriately away from site. Do not hang poo bags from tree branches for collection later.



Fire

No barbecues, fires or cooking stoves are permitted at any sandstone crags due to the obvious fire hazard within the surrounding woodland. Fire started near the rocks also has the added problem of causing serious damage to the actual rock.



Karen Gayly taking on some reachy moves on *Boonoonoonoos* (7a+ 6b) - page 314 - at the Boonoonoonoos area of High Rocks.

Illegal Camping

Camping and bivouacking is not permitted at any crags. Please use proper campsites or the camping facilities at Harrison's/Birchden Wood next to the carpark.

Vandalism

Chipping, creating new or enlarging existing holds, making engravings, permanently marking the rock and performing other forms of graffiti are all deemed acts of vandalism which are punishable by a fine or potential prosecution. Please report any acts of vandalism to access@thebmc.co.uk or call 0161 438 3309

General Behaviour

Simple reasonable behaviour like not shouting and swearing loudly, taking your litter home, not using sound systems and being polite to others should be obvious. Just remember to enjoy yourself and do what you can to make sure others enjoy themselves as well.

The BMC (British Mountaineering Council)

The BMC are heavily involved with access and conservation in the sandstone area, especially at Stone Farm and Harrison's Rocks which they own and manage. The bolts, fencing, signage, maintenance products and equipment are all funded by the BMC. Membership of the BMC or donations to the BMC Access and Conservation Trust (ACT) are well targeted when it comes to climbing on sandstone, so please visit thebmc.co.uk for information on how to join or make a donation.



The sandstone open meeting at Bowles Rocks.

Sandstone Open Meetings

Open meetings are held once or twice a year, usually in a meeting room at Bowles Rocks. They are a great place to air your views, meet other sandstone climbers and meet members of the HRMG and SVG. You can have your say, learn of any developments, feed into discussions or offer your own ideas for consideration. Meeting dates are posted on www.southernsandstoneclimbs.co.uk/meetings

The Steve Durkin Sandstone Trust

The Steve Durkin Sandstone Trust was set up in 2011 after an initial donation from the estate of Steve Durkin after his passing. It is to be used towards the safeguarding, maintenance and access to the sandstone outcrops of Kent and Sussex. The trust is funded 100% by donations and fundraising - sdst.org.uk



PROTECT THE ROCK



READ: Southern Sandstone Code of Practice

Essential good practice information for all climbers visiting southern sandstone.
www.thebmc.co.uk/southern-sandstone-code-of-practice



WATCH: Southern Sandstone Skills films

Short films about good practice techniques for climbing on southern sandstone.
www.thebmc.co.uk/southern-sandstone-skills



Volunteering Groups

Many of the climbing environments and rock conditions you see today would not be possible were it not for the hard work of a select few volunteering groups. The first volunteering groups appeared in the late 60s, but it was the hurricane of 1987 that inspired a much needed collaborative effort to deal with what was, at the time, a huge task. This effort improved the access, environment and sustainability of many of the sandstone crags.

The Sandstone Volunteers Group (SVG)

The Sandstone Volunteers Group was founded in 2003 by Graham Adcock and has been actively involved in many projects across the area ever since. In the winter of 2003/2004 the SVG, in consultation with the Tunbridge Wells Conservators and English Nature, undertook extensive clearance work at Bull's Hollow (a similar operation was also carried out 10 years later in February 2014). Significant tree clearance at High Rocks over the winter of 2004/2005, led by both by Graham Adcock and Oliver Hill, transformed the areas around the northwest-facing walls. More recently, the SVG have been heavily involved in the Harrison's Rocks Woodland Management Plan and subsequent conservation work associated with that.

Without the help of the SVG, and its volunteers, sandstone climbing would be a very different experience and many of the areas currently enjoyed would be overgrown and forgotten.

If you are interested in helping, have a look at sandstonevolunteers.org.uk

Sussex Wildlife Trust

Sussex Wildlife Trust, the owners of Eridge Rocks, undertake annual clearance work with the assistance of volunteers, which helps keep the rocks open for visitors. For more information have a look at sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk



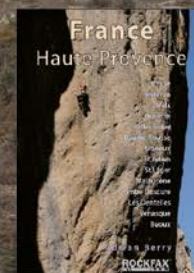
Tunbridge Wells Commons Conservators

The Tunbridge Wells Commons Conservators concentrate their efforts on Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall Commons. They receive a grant each year to undertake work but still rely on volunteers to help out. See twcommons.org for further information.



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The dining room



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Tim Skinner (HRMG) undertaking bolt inspections at Harrison's Rocks. This work is done once every three years by members of HRMG.

Daimon Beail (HRMG) performing repair work at Harrison's Rocks.

Harrison's Rocks Management Group (HRMG)

HRMG is a specialist sub-committee of the BMC responsible for the management of Harrison's Rocks and Stone Farm. They work with volunteers and other groups, such as the SVG, carrying out rock maintenance (resin, cement and hold repairs), bolt installation and maintenance, erosion control, conservation work, signage, fencing, woodland management programs and helping educate climbers regarding the Code of Practice. The group also works with the Forestry Commission who run and maintain Birchden Wood which includes the carpark at Harrison's and its facilities. Occasionally work is done at other sites when necessary, overseeing bolting work and maintaining good relations with landowners on behalf of the BMC.



The group meets three times a year in January, May and October. To contact the HRMG about access issues email access@thebmc.co.uk or call 0161 438 3309



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Routes

Photo Page

Photo Page

Photo Page

Photo Page

8a+

<input type="checkbox"/>	Chimaera	286	287
	High Rocks		

7b

<input type="checkbox"/>	Krait Arete	307	306
	High Rocks		

7a+

<input type="checkbox"/>	Boonoonoonoos	315	314
	High Rocks		

<input type="checkbox"/>	Nemesis	317	318
	High Rocks		

7a

<input type="checkbox"/>	Hangover 3	193	194
	Harrison's Rocks		

<input type="checkbox"/>	The Flakes	14	194
	Harrison's Rocks		

<input type="checkbox"/>	Woolly Cub		246
	Harrison's Rocks		

<input type="checkbox"/>	Infidel		298
	High Rocks		

<input type="checkbox"/>	Honeycomb	330	329
	High Rocks		

6c+

<input type="checkbox"/>	Fandango		79
	Bowles Rocks		

<input type="checkbox"/>	Serenade Arete	1,85	82
	Bowles Rocks		

<input type="checkbox"/>	Hate	89	91
	Bowles Rocks		

<input type="checkbox"/>	Craig-y-blanco		329
	High Rocks		

6c

<input type="checkbox"/>	Slim Finger Crack	211	204
	Harrison's Rocks		

<input type="checkbox"/>	Engagement Wall	9,309	308
	High Rocks		

<input type="checkbox"/>	The Wall	385	394
	Bull's Hollow		

<input type="checkbox"/>	Belle Vue Terrace		466
	Stone Farm		

Top50

The Top50 list covers the 50 most iconic routes on Southern Sandstone. The list spans a good spread of grades and styles and is in a rough order of difficulty.

6b+

<input type="checkbox"/>	Inspiration		83
	Bowles Rocks		

<input type="checkbox"/>	UN		95
	Bowles Rocks		

<input type="checkbox"/>	Henry the Ninth	300	298
	High Rocks		

<input type="checkbox"/>	Coronation Crack	307	306
	High Rocks		

<input type="checkbox"/>	Excavator	422	431
	Bassett's Farm Rocks		

<input type="checkbox"/>	Uganda Wall	434	438
	Under Rocks		

6b

<input type="checkbox"/>	Forester's Wall		228
	Harrison's Rocks		

<input type="checkbox"/>	Niblick	230	229
	Harrison's Rocks		

<input type="checkbox"/>	Birchden Wall		248
	Harrison's Rocks		

<input type="checkbox"/>	Unclimbed Wall	261, 263	266
	Harrison's Rocks		

<input type="checkbox"/>	Celebration		316
	High Rocks		

<input type="checkbox"/>	Odin's Wall	334	327
	High Rocks		

<input type="checkbox"/>	Central Crack	445	439
	Under Rocks		

6a+

<input type="checkbox"/>	Devaluation		90
	Bowles Rocks		

<input type="checkbox"/>	Hadrian's Wall		144
	Erldge Rocks		

<input type="checkbox"/>	Long Layback	161	194
	Harrison's Rocks		

<input type="checkbox"/>	West Wall	258	247
	Harrison's Rocks		

<input type="checkbox"/>	Simian Progress		338
	High Rocks		

<input type="checkbox"/>	Key Wall	468	466
	Stone Farm		

<input type="checkbox"/>	SW Corner Scoop	446	475
	Stone Farm		

6a

<input type="checkbox"/>	Zig-Zag Wall		268
	Harrison's Rocks		

<input type="checkbox"/>	Advertisement Wall	270	308
	High Rocks		

Photo Page

5c

<input type="checkbox"/>	Pig's Nose	Cover, 9	92
	Bowles Rocks		

5b

<input type="checkbox"/>	Sapper	62	83
	Bowles Rocks		

4c

<input type="checkbox"/>	Isolated Buttress Climb	244	247
	Harrison's Rocks		

4b

<input type="checkbox"/>	Eyelet		178
	Harrison's Rocks		

4a

<input type="checkbox"/>	Root Route 1		181
	Harrison's Rocks		

<input type="checkbox"/>	Bow Window	158	197
	Harrison's Rocks		

Bouldering

Photo Page

f7A

<input type="checkbox"/>	Nicotine Alley	79	79
	Bowles Rocks		

<input type="checkbox"/>	Change in the Weather		353
	High Rocks Annexe		

f6A

<input type="checkbox"/>	Brenva	347	342
	High Rocks		

f5

<input type="checkbox"/>	Red Snapper		375
	Happy Valley		

f4+

<input type="checkbox"/>	Ashdown Wall		473
	Stone Farm		

Bowles Rocks									1 - 4 min					A popular year-round south-facing venue with plenty of classics. Has an entry fee. There are sometimes request from the crag owners to reserve routes for their instruction purposes.	68	Bowles Rocks
Eridge Rocks									1 - 10 min					A wild venue with lots of smaller buttress and some good more continuous sections. Varying rock quality and lots of vegetation. Perfect for the adventurer.	110	Eridge Rocks
Harrison's Rocks									7 - 17 min					The most popular crag in the area with hundreds of routes across the grades. Owned by the BMC and managed for climbers.	166	Harrison's Rocks
High Rocks									1 - 3 min					An impressive set of walls with some of the best rock and routes in the area. Not as good in the easier grades. Entry fee applies and access restrictions mean that it can be closed.	280	High Rocks
High Rocks Annexe									1 - 4 min					Short walls which give some highball bouldering. Shaded by trees and is forever green, but good climbing when dry.	352	High Rocks Annexe
Happy Valley									3 - 5 min					A quiet area with a good selection of micro routes which are usually done as highball boulder problems above mats. One larger 8m tower suitable for top-roping.	365	Happy Valley
Bull's Hollow									1 - 4 min					An esoteric old quarry with a series of vegetated walls above a swamp. One quality wall and popular with connoisseurs when in condition.	388	Bull's Hollow
Toad Rocks									1 - 2 min					A mini Fontainebleau with lots of relatively easy bouldering on slightly soft rock. Busy with families and children on summer weekends.	406	Toad Rocks
Mount Edgcumbe Rocks									1 min					Challenging highball boulder problems within easy walking distance of Tunbridge Wells train station.	420	Mount Edgcumbe
Bassett's Farm Rocks									5 - 7 min					A small tucked away series of smaller buttresses including two excellent walls. Situated in some breathtaking countryside.	428	Bassett's Farm
Under Rocks									15 min					A small outcrop hidden in woods. One excellent wall with interesting square-cut potholes creating some unique routes.	438	Under Rocks
Stone Farm									2 - 5 min					A lone crag to the west of the other areas within easy reach of south London climbers making it popular. Many good routes and problems despite the sandy nature of the rock. Owned by the BMC and managed for climbers.	452	Stone Farm
TOTALS	1944	522	402	792	226			Faded symbol means that only some of the routes suffer from seepage and dampness / are green / are restricted								