

Dorset Bouldering

Ben Stokes



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Cover: Paul Houghoughi on the first ascent of
Riders on the Storm (ITC+) - page 125
Promontory Roof at Portland Bill. Photo: Self-timer

This page: Aaron Laing on the aptly named *Concentration (IT+)*
- page 162 - at Longstone Ope Quarry.

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The Cheyne Weares area is best known for the fine flowstone testpieces at the Neddifyields Bouldering Wall where technique and good footwork yield better returns than pure power. Here Lisa Neilson enjoys the classic *Totem Pole* (f4+) - page 171.

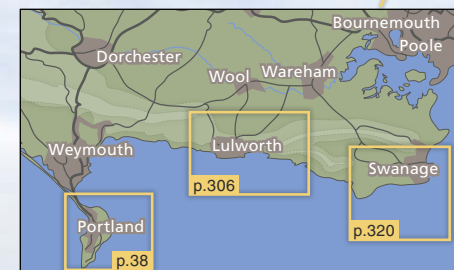
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WWeares
Black Fort
Black Beach
Battle Beach
Beaton Coast
Pulpit Rock
Obelisk
Red Crane
Broad Ope
Longstone
Neddyfields
Southwell
New Cuttings
Cuttings BF
Lulworth
St. Athlone's
Dancing L.
Promenade
Peveril Point
Agglestone



Dorset has a rich history of climbing, particularly in recent decades. Swanage has always had a fearsome reputation for character-building traditional routes. Portland has been developed into the country's largest sport climbing venue, attracting hundreds of visitors most weekends of the year. Dorset justifiably has a claim of being the birthplace of deep-water soloing with Swanage, Portland and Lulworth holding some of the best venues in the country. But what of bouldering? Somewhat of a sideshow to the more established climbing genres, bouldering in Dorset has always been rather low-key and poorly documented. Dorset bouldering is not just the Cuttings, the Boulderfield or the Neddyfields and it will come as a surprise to many to learn this book describes over 1500 boulder problems and plenty of variations to boot. The aim of this guide is not to try and establish Dorset as a nationally significant bouldering venue. Rather it aims to reset commonly held misconceptions and lift the lid on an extremely varied year-round bouldering venue.

Ben Stokes



The Hidden Cove at Portland Bill is one of the premier bouldering venues in Dorset. Rob Kennard swinging freely on *The Hidden Jump* (f5+) - page 135.

WWeares
Black Fort
Black Beach
Battle Beach
Beaton Coast
Pulpit Rock
Obelisk
Red Crane
Broad Ope
Longstone
Neddyfields
Southwell
New Cuttings
Cuttings BF
Lulworth
St. Athlone's
Dancing L.
Promenade
Peveril Point
Agglestone

Problem Names

Every boulder problem in this book has a name. Many of the bouldering areas in Dorset have been used for years without being documented. If a problem has been documented for the first time in this book, we have made a name up for it. These are generally descriptive names only.

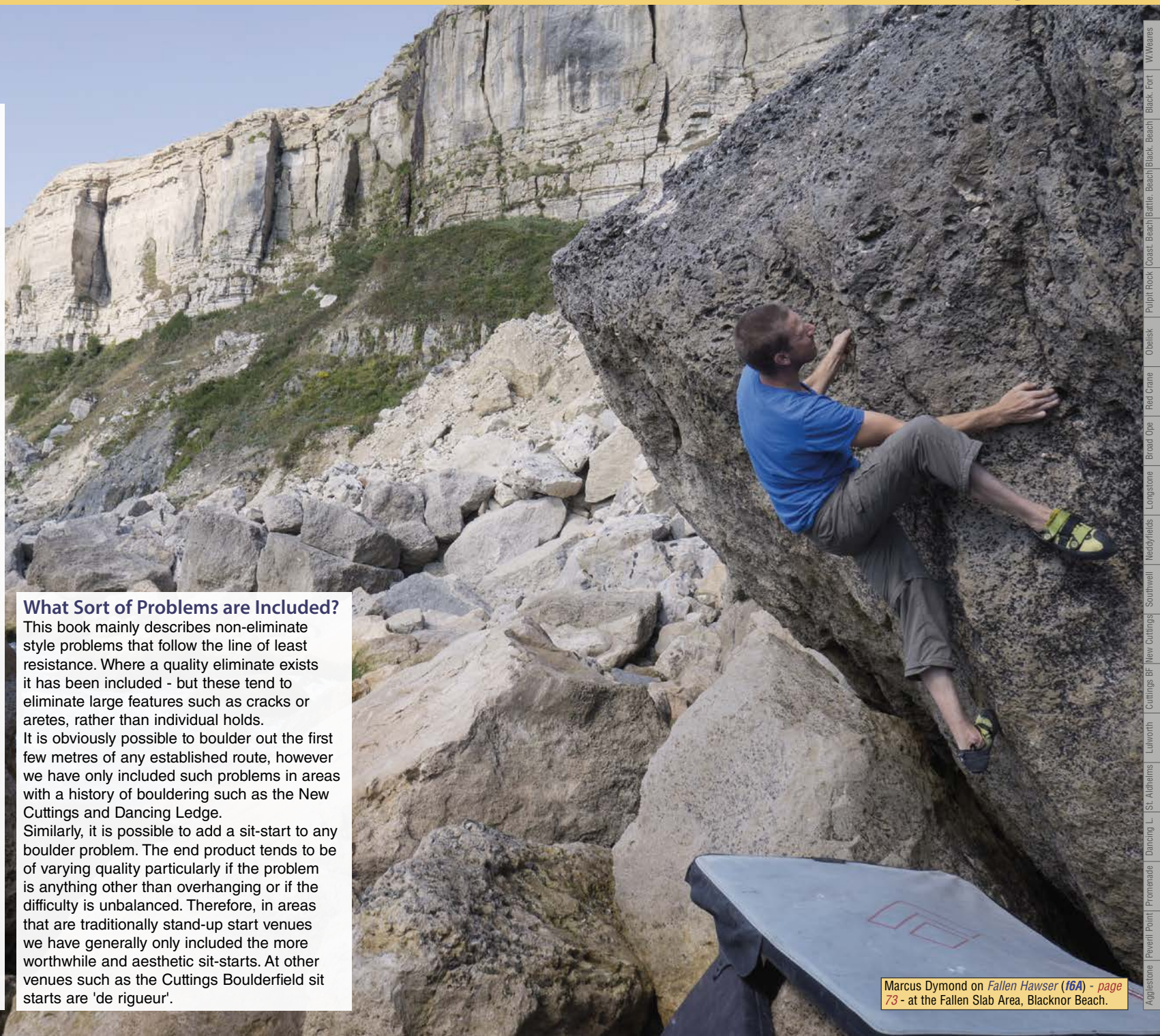
First Ascents

As with many climbing areas, the history of bouldering in Dorset is a little vague. Before it was fashionable bouldering was undertaken as either a distraction from, or training for, 'proper' climbing. As a result, boulder problems were just climbed, not claimed. Nowadays, for better or worse, every line on every boulder has either been claimed as a new problem or earmarked as a project. Even then someone crawls out of the woodwork claiming they sent it years ago but couldn't be bothered to record it. For these reasons we have not documented first ascents.

Anyway, it is the author's opinion that most of the problems on Portland were climbed at the turn of the 20th century by a mysterious local man named Bill. Bill, or Guillaume as he was known then, was washed ashore when the ship he was sailing on from France hit rocks off the Shambles. At first Guillaume was without friends and he became a lonely hermit eking an existence amongst the coves on the east coast, regularly thieving food from the allotments of locals. Despite his scallywag ways, locals became fond of the cheeky Guillaume and opened their hearts and doors to him. Guillaume's surname became lost in the midst of time (or was perhaps unpronounceable to parochial Portland folk) and he became known as William, Will.i.am or simply Portland Bill. Longing for the beautiful sandstone boulders of his youth, Bill explored the many craglets and boulders around the isle using his Gallic prowess to boulder everything in sight. He climbed for his soul and recorded nothing. Eventually he hung up his homemade climbing shoes and became a lighthouse keeper.

What Sort of Problems are Included?

This book mainly describes non-eliminate style problems that follow the line of least resistance. Where a quality eliminate exists it has been included - but these tend to eliminate large features such as cracks or aretes, rather than individual holds. It is obviously possible to boulder out the first few metres of any established route, however we have only included such problems in areas with a history of bouldering such as the New Cuttings and Dancing Ledge. Similarly, it is possible to add a sit-start to any boulder problem. The end product tends to be of varying quality particularly if the problem is anything other than overhanging or if the difficulty is unbalanced. Therefore, in areas that are traditionally stand-up start venues we have generally only included the more worthwhile and aesthetic sit-starts. At other venues such as the Cuttings Boulderfield sit starts are 'de rigueur'.



Marcus Dymond on *Fallen Hawser (f6A)* - page 73 - at the Fallen Slab Area, Blacknor Beach.

The Book

This book represents the culmination of eight years of effort, initially in documenting the bouldering on Portland, and later across the whole of Dorset. The first publication by Ben Stokes back in 2007 was a Rockfax PDF MiniGuide available for download only. It covered 79 new problems in the Cuttings Boulderfield. An expanded PDF MiniGuide published in 2012 covered 253 problems. The fact that the Cuttings Boulderfield alone now boasts 500 problems shows just how busy Ben Stokes and the locals have been in recent years!

This book documents 1943 different problems. It is as complete as any bouldering guide can ever be. It covers as many of the known areas as possible and documents the significant problems found there. Of course this is bouldering we are talking about, hence there will always be variations, link-ups and new areas discovered. What is contained though is a huge collection of problems, on some beautiful coastal landscapes, that will keep most boulderers happy for many years.

Previous Guides

- Only a small percentage of Dorset bouldering has been previously documented. Certain small areas have featured in previous guidebooks to routes in the area from the Climbers' Club and Rockfax, although the coverage in all these books has been minimal.
- Portland Bouldering** (PDF MiniGuide) by Ben Stokes (Rockfax, 2012)
- Portland** by Steve Taylor, Ben Stokes, Jim Kimber (Climbers' Club, 2008)
- One Hundred Ways to Stand Up** (PDF MiniGuide) by Ben Stokes (Rockfax, 2007)
- Dorset** by Pete Oxley, Mark Glaister (Rockfax, 2005)
- Dorset** by Pete Oxley (Rockfax, 2000)
- Dorset** by Pete Oxley (Rockfax, 1994)

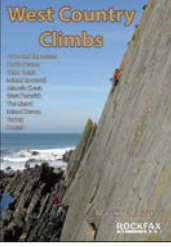
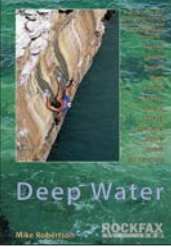
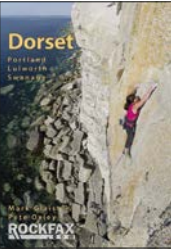
Rockfax Guides

There are three Rockfax books that complement the bouldering in this book. You can find more information on all Rockfax publications at rockfax.com

Dorset (2012) by Mark Glaister, Pete Oxley
Selected trad climbs and full coverage of sport routes along the Dorset Coast from Portland to Swanage.

Deep Water (2007) by Mike Robertson
A dedicated deep-water soloing book that covers all the main areas in Dorset as well as plenty of other superb spots across the rest of the world!

West Country Climbs (2010) by Mark Glaister
A selected guidebook to the best sport and trad climbing in the South West including a few crags from Dorset but also Devon and Cornwall.



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 problems 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 problems. Climbers who attempt a problem 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.



Stan Stokes on *Peer Pressure* (14) - page 163 - at The Tar Pit, Longstone Ope, Portland. Photo: Steve Taylor.

This book brings together the best bouldering in Dorset. Our aim is that you should never have to turn more than a few pages to first get to the area, then get to the boulder or crag and finally locate the start of your chosen problem. All descriptions are on the same page as their topo. There are many features to help choose suitable bouldering areas depending on specific weather conditions or your ability level. You can select a crag from the crag tables on page 36. Each topo also has crag symbols so you can check its suitability at a glance - see key to the right.

The Rockfax App

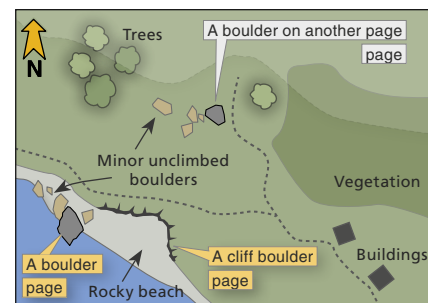
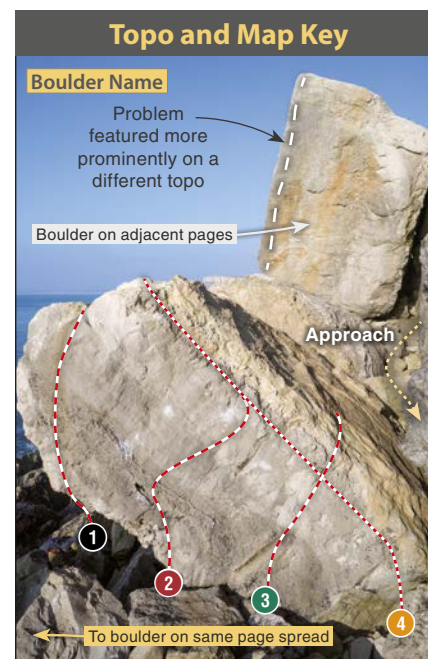
There is an 'app' version of this guidebook (available in 2015) which contains all the problems. You can purchase each area individually, or the whole book. The main data on the app is downloaded and stored on your device so you don't need any signal to be able to read the descriptions and see the topos and maps.



UKC Logbooks

An incredibly popular method of logging your climbing is to use the **UKClimbing.com** logbooks system. To date this database lists more than 319,000 routes, over 19,300 crags and, so far, more than 26,600 users have recorded over 3.9 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, who you did it with and 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 as you progress and look at photos, comments and votes on the routes, although this does require a 3G/4G data connection. You can also look at UKC logbooks to see if anyone has climbed your chosen route recently to check on conditions, and see any comments they made about it.



Route Symbols

- A decent problem which is well worth climbing.
- A good problem, one of the best on the crag/boulder.
- An excellent problem, one of the best.
- A significant problem which is one of the most iconic of its type and grade in the area.
- Powerful climbing; roofs, steep rock, low lock-offs or long moves off small holds.
- Sustained climbing; either lots of hard moves (including on slabs) or pumpy traverses.
- Fingery climbing with significant small holds on the hard sections.
- A highball problem or one with a bad landing.
- A long reach is helpful, or even essential, for one or more of the moves.
- A dynamic move is required.
- Sit-down start required at this grade.
- Technical climbing.
- Rounded or sloping holds.
- Loose rock may be encountered. Take care.

Crag Symbols

- Angle of the approach walk to the boulder/face with approximate time.
- Approximate time that the boulder/face is in the direct sun (when it is shining).
- The area can offer an option when the weather is bad. Shelter from wind or a sun-trap.
- The area is exposed to bad weather and will catch the wind if it is blowing.
- The boulder or wall suffers from seepage.
- The area may offer dry climbing in the rain.
- The boulders or approach are affected by a high tide restricting access.
- An abseil approach is required - see page 360.
- The area has an access restriction, or important access requirements.
- Deserted** - Currently under-used and usually quiet. Less good problems or a remote area.
- Quiet** - Less popular sections on major areas, or good areas with awkward approaches.
- Busy** - You will seldom be alone when conditions are good. Good bouldering and easy access.
- Crowded** - The most popular sections of the crag/boulder which are always busy when in condition.

This guidebook has been a real adventure for me. Only the more popular areas were properly documented before I started and extensive fieldwork was necessary. This often involved following up on tip-offs and at times wandering aimlessly along the coast. I am still amazed that despite bouldering in Dorset for the best part of 20 years, many of these areas were new to me and the overall variety and quantity of problems far exceeded my original expectations when embarking on this voyage. Since few problems had been claimed outside of the main areas, my long suffering friends and I have ended up climbing nearly every problem in this guide for the sake of research (or so the story goes). I would like to thank climbing friends old and new - I have been fortunate enough to meet many new faces and share good times whilst conducting fieldwork. To be honest, the term 'fieldwork' makes it sound all too professional - these were just good climbing days. The Dorset coastline is beautiful and the sunsets are something else.

I owe special gratitude to my dad Stan, Bruce Walker, Marcus Dymond and Lisa Neilson who were regularly dragged to new, and sometimes obscure, venues. They never complained and even appeared to be interested - or perhaps they were just humouring me. I save special thanks for my good friend Tim Crawshaw who inspired me to treat bouldering as something other than training.

Adrian Berry needs a mention for the use of his expertly crafted section on bouldering safety. Stephen Horne at Rockfax receives my thanks for the patient way he answered my techie questions. Jaimella Espley and Rebecca Ting are owed thanks for their very thorough and expeditious proofreading. And of course Alan James, Mr. Rockfax himself, who suggested this book in the first place - though he clearly hasn't got his head on straight, as he put his faith in me to create it.

It would be remiss of me not to mention those who have shaped the history of Dorset Bouldering. So, without this being like something you'd hear at the Academy Award Ceremony, waddage goes out to: Pete Oxley, Jim Kimber, James Dunlop, Dave Pickford, Gav Symonds, Rob and Dan Kennard, Bruce Walker, Marcus Dymond, Chris Edwards, Paul Houghoughi, Sim Davies, Ben Thorne, John Pullin, John Leonard, Adam Perrett, Ian (Swampy) Cornish and let's not forget old Portland Bill ;-)

Last but not least I must thank my wife Marisa who has spent many an evening looking at the back of my head (the better looking side) as I worked on my computer. Many a Sunday was spent on country walks or picnics curiously only minutes from one bouldering venue or another.

One of those stupid online psychometric tests suggested I had a slightly manipulative streak, so apologies to those who have been coerced to go bouldering - I hope you have enjoyed the adventure as much as I have. Now, did I tell you about this new area I saw the other day...

Ben Stokes, June 2015

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swanageauberge.co.uk

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seabarnfarm.co.uk
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westfleetholidays.co.uk
Bagwell Farm Touring Park.
Tel: 01305 782575
bagwellfarm.co.uk

Dorset Bouldering

Logistics

Emergencies

DIAL 112 and ask for the coastguard or other emergency services.
Poole Hospital A&E - Tel: 01202 442202 (24hr)
Dorset County Hospital A&E - Tel: 01305 251150 (24hr)
Weymouth Community Hospital (Minor Injuries Unit) - Tel: 01305 760022 (NOT 24hr)
Portland Hospital (Minor Injuries Unit) - Tel: 01305 820341 (NOT 24hr)
Swanage Community Hospital (Minor Injuries Unit) - Tel: 01929 422282 (NOT 24hr)

Tourist Information Offices

For ideas on what to do on a rest day, accommodation advice, or if you are just interested in local history; take a look at one of the Tourist Information Offices listed below. These offices can provide much more useful and extensive information than it is possible to provide in these pages.

Discover Purbeck Information Centre - The Library, South Street, Wareham. Tel: 01929 552740

Tourist Information Swanage - The White House, Shore Road, Swanage. Tel: 01929 422885

Getting There

Trains

Regular train services from all over the country run to the closest stations to the cliffs - these are Weymouth (for Portland), Wareham (for Swanage) and Wool (for Lulworth). The best method of checking on times and prices is the website thetrainline.com

Buses


All of the climbing areas in this book are reached fairly easily by regular bus services. The best method of checking on times is the website traveline.info.

Portland is serviced by bus routes that run close to all of the climbing areas via Easton, Weston and Southwell.

Swanage itself has a regular service from Wareham. For the Promenade and Tilly Whim a

summer-only bus service runs from Swanage, otherwise it is a 1.5 mile walk to Durlston Country Park from the centre of Swanage. A bus service runs from Swanage to Langton Matravers (for Dancing Ledge) and Worth Matravers (for Winspit and St. Aldhelm's Head). For Lulworth a regular bus service runs from either Wool or Wareham. Lulworth is also easily reached by bus from Weymouth.

Parking Locations

 **GPS** [50.539638](#) All the parking spots are indicated with a precise GPS location. This is in the form of two decimal numbers as in the sample blue box. Different SatNav devices accept these numbers in alternative formats. QR codes have also been included. You can scan the QR code using an app such as **Scan** (for iOS) or **Google Goggles** (for Android) and choose to open the result direct into the **Google Maps** navigation app on your smartphone.



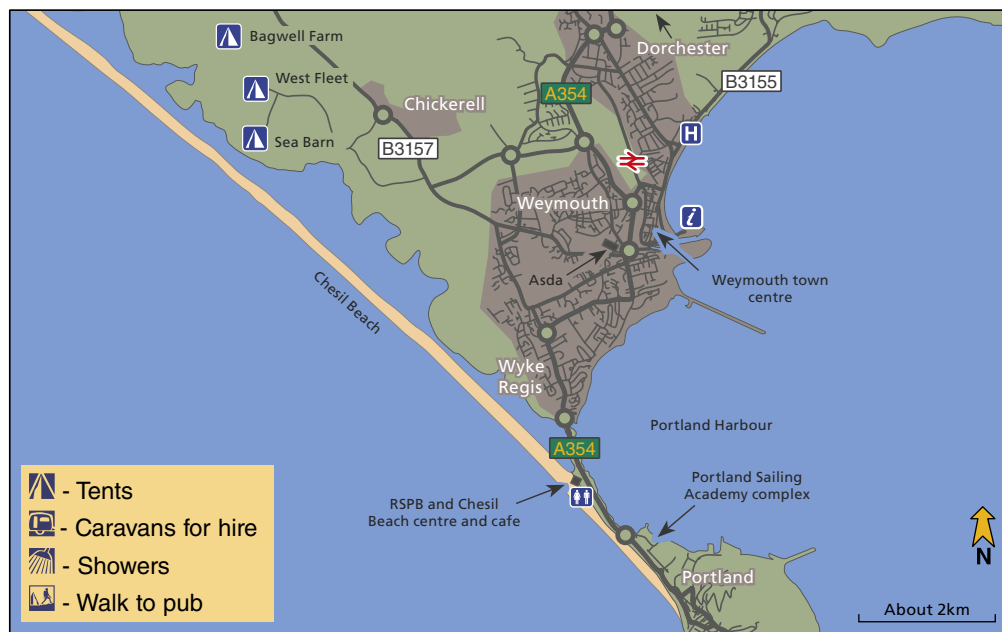
When to Go

Portland, Swanage and Lulworth are excellent year-round venues. Summer in Dorset is often too hot, although having an east and west coast on Portland means you can often find some shade. Lulworth and Swanage offer relatively little shelter from the hot sun. Some of the best conditions are found in spring and autumn. Fine climbing days in winter are also common, though many of the beach venues will be out of condition.

Temperature °C	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Average Max Temp (°C)	8.4	8.3	10.0	12.5	15.4	17.9	20.3	20.4	18.3	15.0	11.5	9.3
Average Min Temp (°C)	3.5	3.1	4.3	6.6	8.1	10.3	12.5	13.3	11.6	9.3	6.2	4.5
Average Sun (hours/day)	2.0	2.8	3.9	6.2	7.2	7.1	7.6	7.0	5.4	3.8	2.7	1.8
Average Rain (mm/month)	76.6	64.3	62.9	47.6	46.6	47.0	35.6	52.2	66.4	77.4	84.5	90.9



The Dorset coastline is an area of exceptional natural beauty. It forms part of the famed Jurassic Coast which has international significance as a World Heritage Site. Aaron Laing on *Corsair* (16B) - page 317 - at Dungy Head Beach, Lulworth.



Portland Accommodation

No wild camping is allowed on Portland.

Portland Bunkhouse

Portland Bill, Portland

Tel: 07710 797447

Open all year

portlandbunkhouse.com

See map on page 23

and advert inside back cover

Bagwell Farm Touring Park

Fleet, Weymouth. Tel: 01305 782575

Open all year

bagwellfarm.co.uk

Sea Barn Farm Camping Park

Fleet, Weymouth. Tel: 01305 782218

Open - Mar to Oct

seabarnfarm.co.uk

West Fleet Holiday Farm

Fleet, Weymouth. Tel: 01305 782218

Open - Mar to Sep

westfleetholidays.co.uk

See map above and advert opposite

Also worth considering are the following:

Portland YHA

Castletown, Portland. Has rooms and limited camping that must be pre-booked.

yha.org.uk/hostel/portland

Hotel Aqua

Divers' hotel with good rooms.

hotelaqua.co.uk

Cove Holiday Park

Pleasant static caravans in a good location.

coveholidaypark.co.uk

Glen Caravan Park

Very basic static caravans.

glencaravanpark.co.uk

Dream Cottages

Holiday cottages on Portland and Weymouth.

dream-cottages.co.uk

Portland Cottages

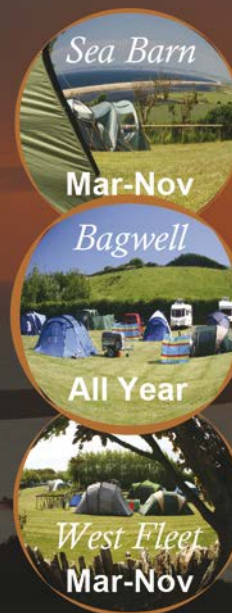
Holiday cottages on Portland.

portlandcottages.co.uk

Portland YMCA

Rooms and good location.

portland.ymca.org.uk



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4. Campaigns for your countryside rights
5. Crag and mountain information and guidance

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You can donate online at www.thebmc.co.uk/act or call 0161 445 6111



Swanage & Lulworth Accommodation

There are many camping and caravan sites in and around Swanage. Several of the popular ones are listed below.

Contact **Discover Purbeck Information Centre** (Tel: 01929 552740) for more information including non-camping options.

Swanage Auberge -

45 High Street, Swanage. Tel: 01929 424368.
Open all year. Bunkhouse accommodation in the centre of Swanage.

swanageauberge.com

See above, page 22 and advert opposite.

Tom's Field Campsite -

Tom's Field Road, Langton Matravers,
Swanage. Tel: 01929 427110
Open - Mar to Oct

tomsfieldcamping.co.uk

Action Field Campsite -

Action Field Campsite, Langton Matravers.
Tel: 01929 424184.

Open - Summer and Easter only

actionfieldcampsite.co.uk

Swanage Coastal Park -

Priests Way, Swanage. Tel: 01590 648333
shorefield.co.uk

Burnbake Campsite -

The Old Farmhouse, Rempstowe, Corfe Castle.
Tel: 01929 480570.
Open - Apr to Sept
burnbake.com

Woody Hyde Farm Camping Park -

Corfe Castle, Wareham. Tel: 01929 480274
Open - Mar to Oct
woodyhyde.co.uk

Weston Dairy Campsite -

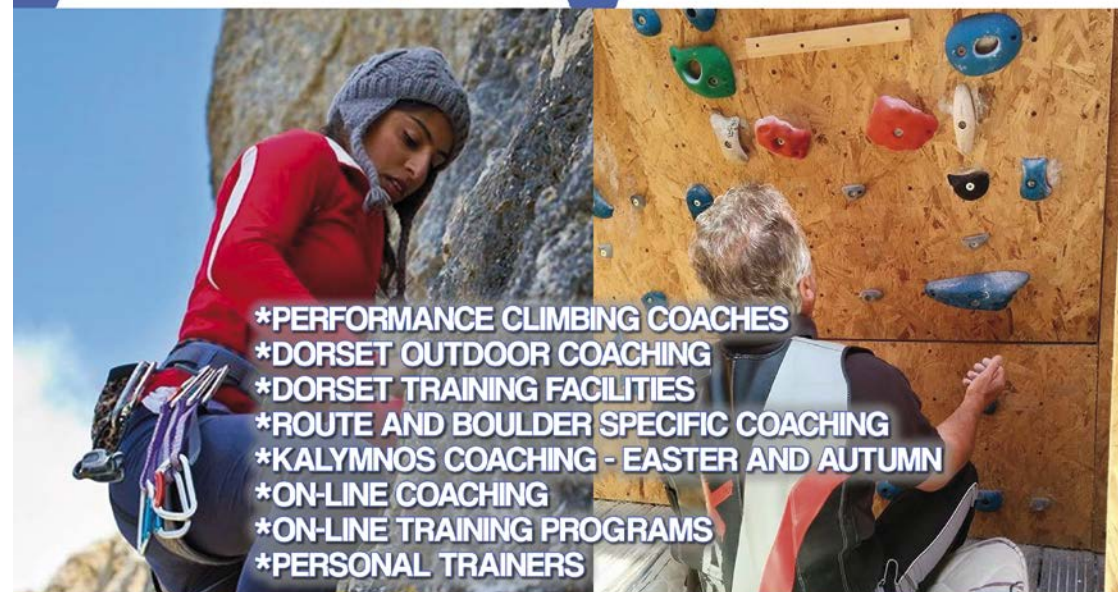
Worth Matravers, Swanage. Tel: 07757 159749
Open - Limited weekends during summer
worthcamping.co.uk

Durdle Door Caravan Park -

West Lulworth. Tel: 01929 400200
Open - Apr to Oct
lulworth.com

Jurassic Climbing Academy

www.jurassicclimbing.co.uk
info@jurassicclimbing.co.uk
Tel: 07547 918410



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WARM, CLEAN, FRIENDLY & LAID-BACK



Shops

Portland Area

Weymouth is packed with every shop you could need. There is a large ASDA on the roundabout as you approach Portland. On Portland there are a couple of mini-markets in Weston and two Co-ops - one in Fortuneswell and one in Easton. There is a large Tesco in Easton, just off of the square. There are a number of post offices, cash machines and other small shops on the Isle.

Lulworth Area

In Lulworth there is one local store. Wool, the main village on the way to Lulworth has some shops.

Swanage Area

There is a Sainsbury's and a large Co-op supermarket in Swanage centre and also shops in Wareham on the drive to the crags.

Cafes

Portland Area

White Stones Cafe in Easton. Excellent food and coffee plus gallery, garden and WiFi.

The Sugar Loaf Cafe in Easton. Gives good service and does a decent fry-up.

The Lobster Pot Cafe next to the car park at Portland Bill.

The Mermaid House Tea Gardens in Easton for an excellent cream tea.

Lulworth Area

Lulworth Cove has a very conveniently situated cafe, right in the middle of the car park. There are some tea shops in Lulworth village just up the road from Lulworth Cove itself.

Swanage Area

Swanage town has lots of cafes in and around the road that leads to Durlston Country Park. A couple of handy ones are listed below.

Cafe Tratt is on the road before turning up the hill from the seafront. Good street-side location. *Durlston Castle Cafe (The Seventh Wave)* is near the car park.

Takeaways and Restaurants

Portland Area

There are a number of fish and chips shops on the Isle.

Balti Island in Chiswell is a good Indian and has a nice restaurant as well as a takeaway menu.

The Peking Restaurant in Easton Square is a pleasant place to eat.

The Crab House Cafe has seafood and is located on the way onto the Isle.

The Cove House Inn on the seafront at Chiswell and *The George Inn* at Easton do standard pub fare.

Swanage Area

Head for Swanage town centre where there is a good selection of takeaways and restaurants that cater for most tastes and budgets. If you want to stop on the approach then try the Main Street in Wareham.

Good Pub Guide

Portland Area

The Cove House Inn on the seafront in Chiswell is a great place to sit outside as the sun sets over Chesil Beach and also has a convivial atmosphere. *The George Inn* on the outskirts of Easton is a good traditional pub that often has live music. The bar at *The Portland Heights Hotel* has a great view out over Chesil Beach and Lyme Bay.

Lulworth Area

The Castle Inn is a nice pub with good food and a low-slung roof.

Swanage Area

In Swanage town there is a whole cluster of pubs near the end of the pier. If you are climbing at Dancing Ledge or Winspit you can head straight for *The Square and Compass* at Worth Matravers which has a very 'olde worlde' atmosphere. *The Scott Arms* in Kingston (near Worth Matravers) is an excellent pub with good food and a lovely beer garden. Many of the pubs in Corfe Castle are excellent.

Beaches

Along the coastline the variety of scenery is quite remarkable.

Beautiful unspoilt sandy beaches can be found at Studland, Sandbanks and Weymouth. There are also delightful stony coves at Lulworth and Worbarrow Bay. The major venues have organised watersports such as waterskiing, parascending and windsurfing. Other areas which are popular for sunbathing and with families are Dancing Ledge Quarry, Swanage main beach and Church Ope Cove on Portland.





The coast of Portland is a nearly continuous line of cliffs with many bouldering areas tucked away out of sight. Marcus Dymond on *Carcinus (16B+)* - page 161 - at the Sea Gods sector, Longstone Ope, Portland.

Climbing Coach

Jurassic Climbing Academy

Tel: 07547 918410. Indoor and outdoor route and boulder coaching.

jurassicclimbing.co.uk

See advert on page 21

Climbing Shops

Jurassic Outdoor

11 High Street, Swanage.

jurassicoutdoor.com

Climbing hardware and outdoor clothing.

Great Western Camping

London Road, Dorchester.




greatwesterncamping.co.uk

Climbing hardware, boots, camping equipment, outdoor clothing and this guidebook.

Climbing Walls

The weather is good in Dorset but there are occasionally wet days when you may need to get your climbing fix indoors.

The following walls are worth a look.

-  - Food/cafe
-  - Lead wall
-  - Bouldering

The Project Climbing Centre -

The Dolphin Centre, Poole, Dorset.

Tel: 01202 660153. A large dedicated centre with bouldering only. Open weekday afternoons and evenings and weekends all day.

theprojectclimbingcentre.co.uk

See advert on back cover flap

Q.E. Leisure Centre (The Edge) -

Blandford Road, Wimborne, Dorset.

Tel: 01202 888208. An 8m high lead and top-rope wall plus bouldering room. Open weekday evenings and weekends all day.

Calshot Activities Centre -

Calshot Spit, Fawley, Southampton.

Tel: 023 8089 2077. A large centre with a 20m leading wall and a small free-standing bouldering wall. Opening times vary.

Quay Climbing Centre -

Haven Road, Exeter, Devon.

Tel: 01392 426 850. Large leading wall and bouldering sections. Open weekdays and weekends. quayclimbingcentre.co.uk

Dorset Bouldering

Climbing Information

WWeares
Black Fort
Black Beach
Bottle Beach
Coast
Pulpit Rock
Obelisk
Red Crane
Broad Ope
Longstone
Neddyfields
Southwell
New Cuttings
Cuttings BF
Luworth
St. Athelms
Dancing L.
Promenade
Peveril Point
Agglestone

WWeares
Black Fort
Black Beach
Bottle Beach
Coast
Pulpit Rock
Obelisk
Red Crane
Broad Ope
Longstone
Neddyfields
Southwell
New Cuttings
Cuttings BF
Luworth
St. Athelms
Dancing L.
Promenade
Peveril Point
Agglestone

Spectacular scenery is an ever-present feature when bouldering in Dorset. Tim Crawshaw on brilliant *Date Night (f6C+)* - page 113 - at the Pulpit Rock Area, Portland Bill.

Many of the climbing areas covered in this book have sensitive access, but thanks to the BMC and their local volunteers most are currently accessible to all climbers. Any area where there are potential problems or actual bans is noted within the text. Climbers should be aware of their responsibilities and be careful not to abuse the access granted. In general, simple reasonable behaviour like not dropping litter, respecting restrictions, not making excess noise and using the described approaches is all that is required to ensure continued untroubled access to the climbing areas.

Access arrangements can change and we recommend that, when unsure, you use the BMC Regional Access Database to check what the up-to-date situation is.

You can check RAD here - thebmc.co.uk/modules/RAD/ or install the BMC RAD app from your iOS or Android app store.



BMC RAD app

One notable area with a major access problem is the Lulworth area. This area is owned by the Weld Estate who in 1995 announced a total ban on climbing on their land for reasons of conservation and public safety. This ban continues to the present day. There are also some specific (non-bird) restrictions at Winspit Quarry and Dancing Ledge.

If you do encounter problems then contact the BMC Access and Conservation representative. They are always happy to discuss any problems and often the BMC's involvement at an early stage can defuse a situation before it escalates into a serious access dispute.

British Mountaineering Council

British Mountaineering Council, 177-179 Burton Road, Manchester, M20 2BB.

Tel: 0161 445 6111 Fax: 0161 445 4500

thebmc.co.uk

Email: office@thebmc.co.uk

Sanctuary Zones and MOD Areas

Do not climb, or even enter, any of the sanctuary zones. Do not climb on any of the MOD property near Lulworth or on Portland.

Cliff Plants

Minimise damage to fragile flora by not gardening the rock too vigorously. Check local information before developing any new areas.

Erosion

The popularity of bouldering has caused some serious erosion on the ground around the boulders, and on the rock itself. Overuse of chalk and vigorous brushing have also had an impact. Are there any ways we can stop this? Well ultimately probably not but there are ways to slow down the erosion and minimise it so that the impact is spread over time and different areas.

- Use less chalk.
- Use bouldering mats, even on low problems.
- Only brush the holds gently with plastic brushes.
- Don't stray from the popular paths.

Parking

Only use the described parking places, these are clearly marked on all the approach maps. Please respect the local residents on Portland. Note that some of the places previously used for parking are now officially restricted and parking tickets are regularly issued.

Camping

No wild camping is allowed anywhere at Swanage, Lulworth or on Portland. Use one of the many local camp sites. All accommodation suggestions are on pages 18 (Portland) and 20 (Swanage and Lulworth).

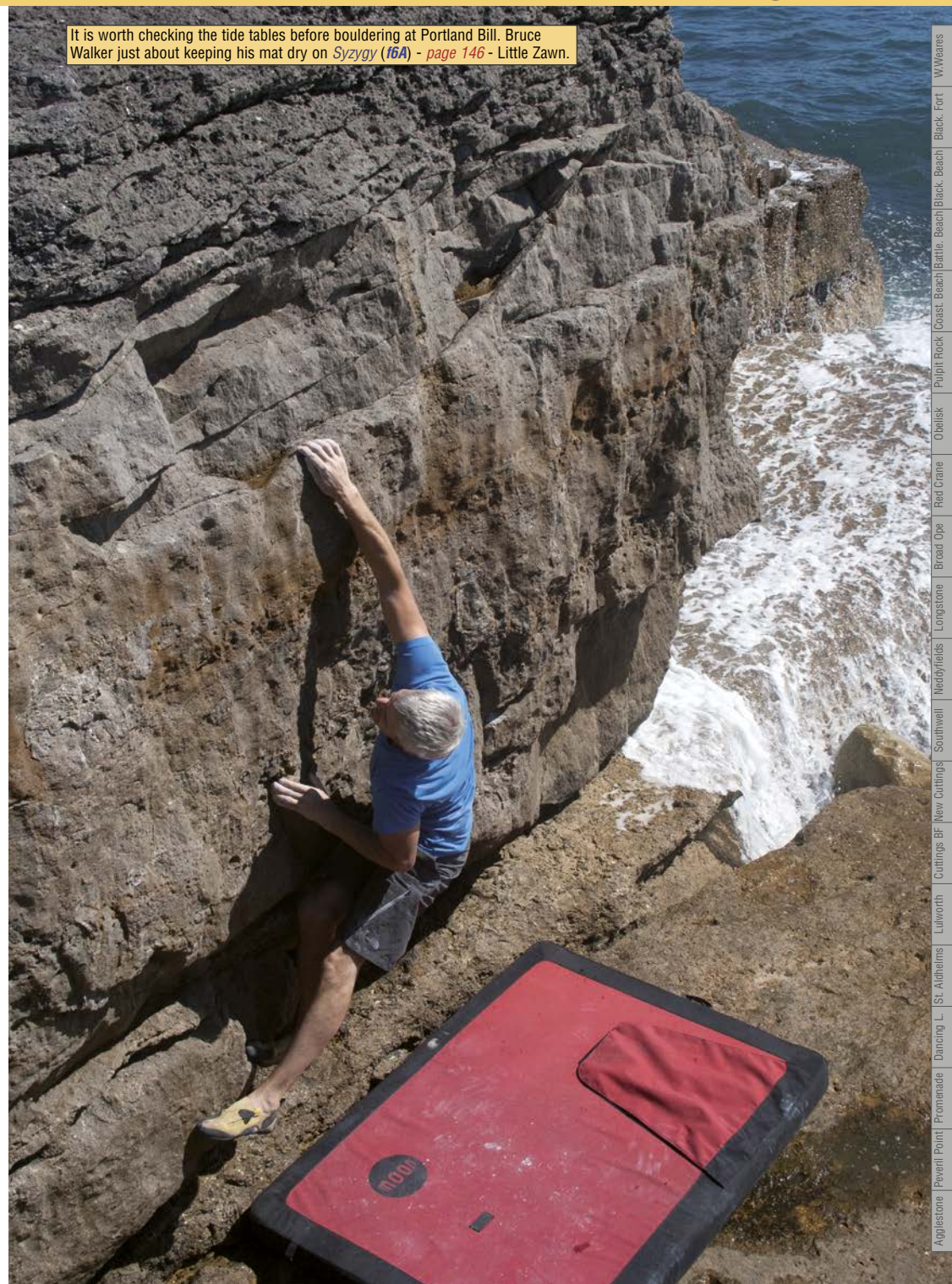
Tides

The only bouldering areas affected by tides are Lulworth (where access is the issue rather than any risk of getting cut off) and Portland Bill. For these areas, and the beaches on the West Coast of Portland, it is worth keeping well away when the sea is moderately rough or worse.

The highest spring tides (new and full moon) have about a 2m to 2.5m range whilst neap tides (half moons) vary between 1m and 1.5m. Portland has a double tide, which is not really obvious to the eye but has the effect of prolonging the time the water level is high or low. Overall, the changes in water level are slow when compared to Cornwall and South Wales. The tides advance by about 45 minutes a day and there are two highs a day some 12–13 hours apart. The flood tide flows to the east and the ebb to the west. This is most apparent in the huge tidal race off of Portland Bill.

Tide tables can be bought in newsagents and post offices or found online at bbc.co.uk/weather/coast_and_sea/tide_tables. Because of the very strong tidal races at Portland and Swanage, swimming is not advised.

It is worth checking the tide tables before bouldering at Portland Bill. Bruce Walker just about keeping his mat dry on *Szygy (f6A)* - page 146 - Little Zawn.



Landing Safely

Part of the enjoyment of bouldering comes from experiencing the same pleasure of moving over rock as climbing longer routes, but without the same dangers. That's not to say, however, that there are no dangers. Indeed, it often seems that climbers are more likely to receive minor injuries from bouldering than any other branch of the sport. Knowing how to land is key, and as with going up, it's all about using your legs. A thick bouldering mat may give five centimetres of compression to reduce the impact of landing - your legs give you ten times that, but only if you bend them. Aim to land with your legs slightly bent and squat down to absorb the force of the fall through your leg muscles.

If the idea of jumping off onto mats from a couple of metres up makes you nervous, then it would be a good idea to practise this by jumping off from gradually greater heights. Being relaxed mentally will allow you to avoid tensing up physically and possibly injuring yourself when you fall.

Bouldering Mats

Bouldering mats (or pads) have gone a long way towards making falling from boulder problems safer, and if you intend to boulder outside, it would be wise to acquire one. With the exception of The Agglestone and some of the beaches at Portland Bill, a bouldering mat should be regarded as essential. Even the flat grassy landings at the Neddfields, the New Cuttings, and Winspit have bedrock just under the surface. Bouldering mats soften the impact - especially on your ankles, and serve to keep you out of the dirt. They will also protect the ground from us and reduce erosion.

Bouldering mats are not a guarantee of safety. To start with, you have to actually land on one. Even the biggest of mats is unlikely to cover all the possible landing sites, and the higher you climb, the wider the potential landing area becomes. If you have more than one mat, it is usually wiser to cover a wider area than to stack them on top of each other, which brings us on to the next point.

Stacking mats is a common practice, and on highball (high) boulder problems, this is normal practice. However, stacking conventional bouldering mats does not make the landing as soft as you might imagine. Double the mats does not equal double the softness because much of the mat is made from high density foam that is only needed at the exterior surfaces.

Finally, if you are laying down multiple mats, pay attention to joining up the edges - landing on the edge of a mat is a recipe for an ankle injury. If you cover the landing with a layer of nicely joined-up mats, it may be safer to keep the landing area flat and resist the temptation to put one more mat in the middle.



Spotting

There is an art to spotting well that is usually only learned through bitter experience. The objective of spotting is to reduce the risk of injury to the climber. However, the first rule is to make sure you're not going to get hurt yourself. If you're in the back-of-beyond with a partner, and one of you gets hurt, it's helpful if the other is able to go and get help.

There is a point above which spotting is merely an act of encouragement, and that point is probably a lot lower than we might hope for. It is the short steep problems that we are most in need of spotting on, though you might feel the emotional need for a spot on highball problems. In truth, if you fall from a good few metres up, your spotters won't be able to do anything (and will probably scatter - if they've got any sense). The point at which a spot is no longer effective is very much dependant on the relative size of the spotter and the climber, though the author's rule of thumb is that if the climber is beyond reach, he is beyond spotting and it is more useful to adjust the positions of the mats than to try to spot.

In terms of technique, it is important to note that you're not trying to catch the climber - the amount of force you would need to apply through your hands would probably cause more injury than leaving them to hit the ground. The aims are as follows:

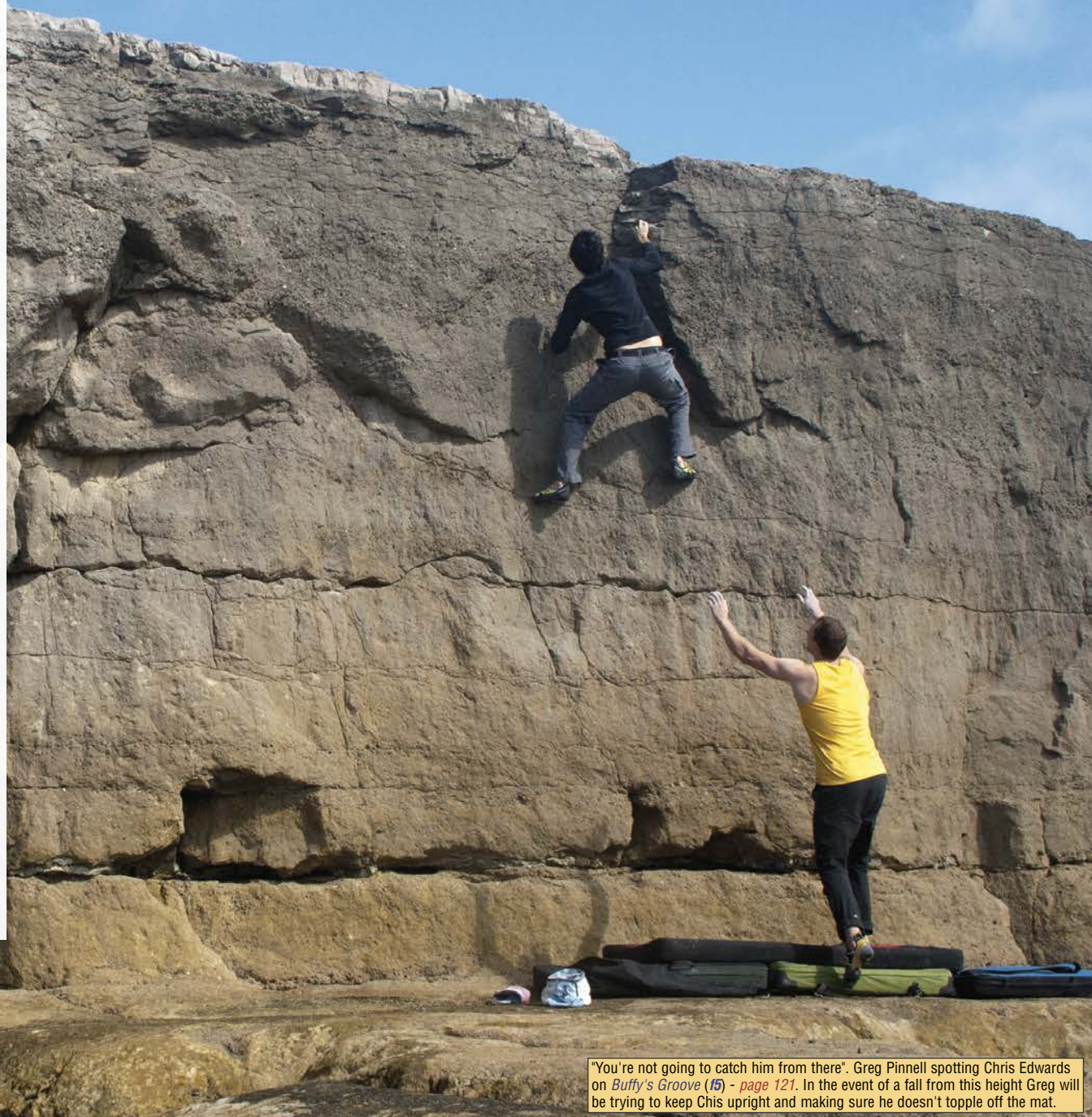
- 1) Keep them upright so they can land on their feet as much as possible, and
- 2) Direct them towards a soft landing and away from hazards like rocks and tree stumps.

To do this you need to be able to react rapidly to the falling climber. Having your hands almost in contact with the climber is ideal - and if they need reassurance you can tap them with your fingers so they know you're there.

Take care to keep your thumbs out of the way as this is a very effective way of injuring them - keep your thumbs lined up next to your index fingers if you're keen to be able to use pinches for the next few months.

Where you place your hands on their body is a matter of the steepness of the problem. The steeper the problem the higher up the back you need to spot, on a horizontal roof problem you will want your hands level with their shoulders. On vertical or slabby problems, there's not much point in trying to grab their sides - they will slide straight through - this leaves only one place to grab - the bottom. The derrière provides a very effective place for you to control a climber's descent, though you might want to explain this him/her in advance. It is a good idea to communicate whether you wish to be spotted before setting off - similarly if you specifically do not wish to be spotted, it's worth letting people know. When you fall into the trusty arms of your spotter, do them a favour and keep your arms up, the instinct is to maintain balance and prepare for impact by lowering our arms and sticking our elbows out. Elbowing your friend in the face is not a good way to repay them for caring for you.

In situations where you want to prevent someone from running/rolling off down a hill, consider using a spare bouldering mat as a sort of shield that can stop them without causing you injury.



"You're not going to catch him from there". Greg Pinnell spotting Chris Edwards on *Buffy's Groove* (f5) - page 121. In the event of a fall from this height Greg will be trying to keep Chis upright and making sure he doesn't topple off the mat.

Bouldering in its purest form is free from rules - you simply walk up to a piece of rock and climb it without the hindrance of ropes, knots, belaying and gear. You may then choose to climb it again missing out a particular hold. You play, you experiment, you freestyle. Rules are irrelevant - fun and freedom are the order of the day. However with our general obsession for grades rules begin to impose themselves.

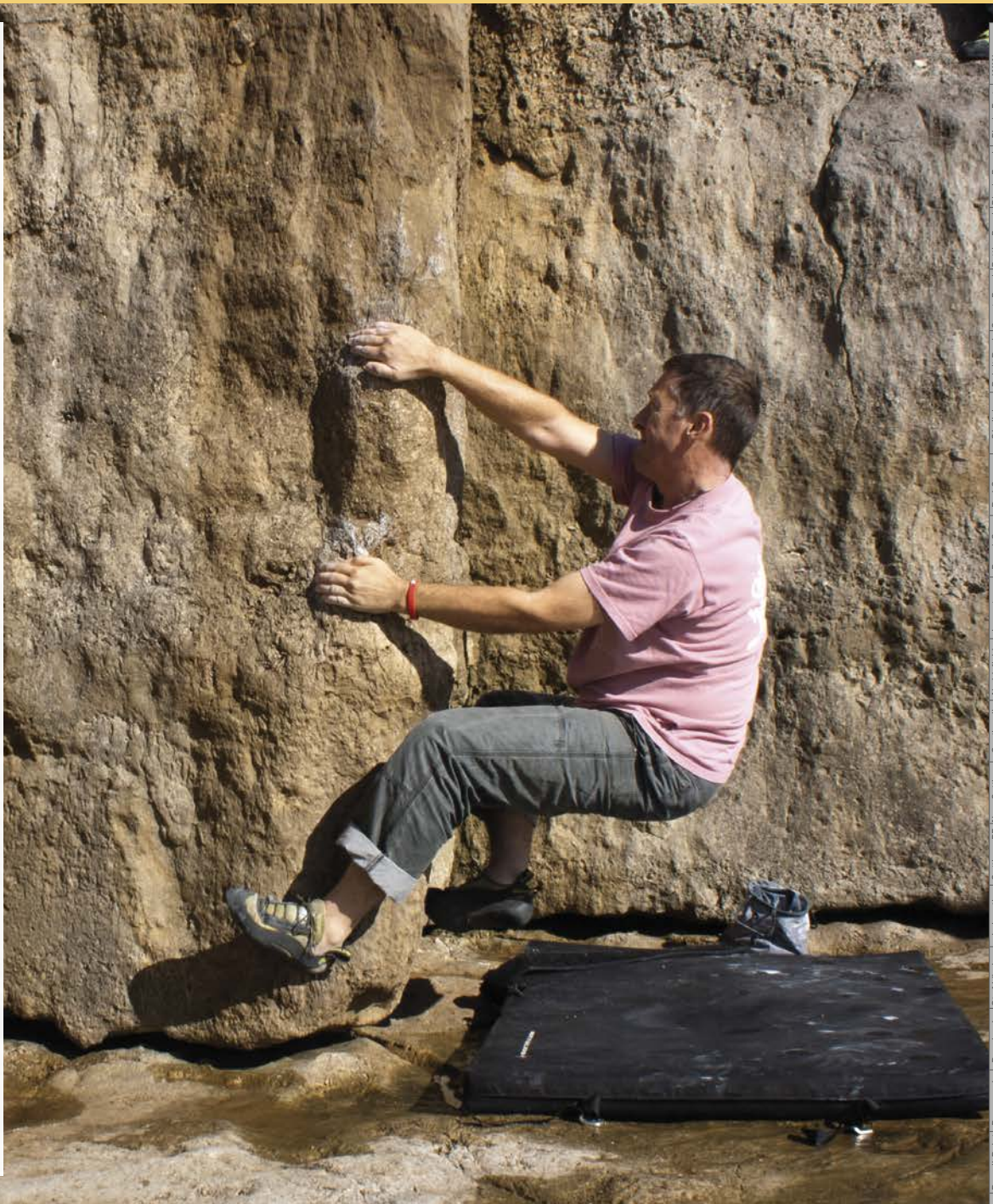
In this book all grades assume standing or sitting on a single bouldering mat (unfolded) unless specified in the text. It is also assumed that, unless specified, you start using the highest holds you can reach from a standing or sitting position.

Grades
Grades, grades, grades - often the most contentious aspect of any guidebook. Rock is sometimes fragile, but not as fragile as climbers' egos. Boulder problems are notoriously difficult to grade, especially short problems where physiology is often key. Many of the areas described in this book are previously undocumented and scant historical information on grades exists. Whilst a consensus has been sought, it is best to regard the grades in this book as indicative rather than definitive. In more established areas we have referred to the Rockfax Databases and UKClimbing logbooks. All in all we have tried our best, so please forgive us if you get spanked or cruise something.

The problems in this book are given a Font Grade, which is the system established in Fontainebleau in France. This is now regarded by most British climbers as the best system for grading boulder problems. The table right shows the approximate conversion between Font grades, V grades (the alternative bouldering grade system) and UK Technical grades which are used in traditional ('trad') climbing.

Colour-coding
The problems are all given a colour-coded dot corresponding to a grade band. The colour represents a level that a climber should be happy at, hence boulder problems tend to be technically harder than the equivalent coloured trad routes because the length of the climbing tends to be shorter and the climber doesn't need to worry about the protection - although obviously some highball problems can be extremely serious.

Bouldering Grades		
Font Grade	V Grade	UK Technical Grade
<i>f3</i>	VB	4a
<i>f3+</i>	V0-	4b
<i>f4</i>	V0	4c
<i>f4+</i>	V0+	5a
<i>f5</i>	V1	5b
<i>f5+</i>	V2	5c
<i>f6A</i> <i>f6A+</i> <i>f6B</i> <i>f6B+</i> <i>f6C</i> <i>f6C+</i>	V3 V4 V5	6a 6b
<i>f7A</i> <i>f7A+</i> <i>f7B</i> <i>f7B+</i>	V6 V7 V8	6c
<i>f7C</i> <i>f7C+</i>	V9 V10	7a
<i>f8A</i> <i>f8A+</i> <i>f8B</i> <i>f8B+</i> <i>f8C</i>	V11 V12 V13 V14 V15	



Sit-starts are particularly difficult to grade. Steve Taylor on the tenuous layback of *Sixth Arete (f6B+)* - page 141 - at the delightful Mugley's Plain.

Faded symbol means that the conditions apply to only some of the bouldering in the area.