

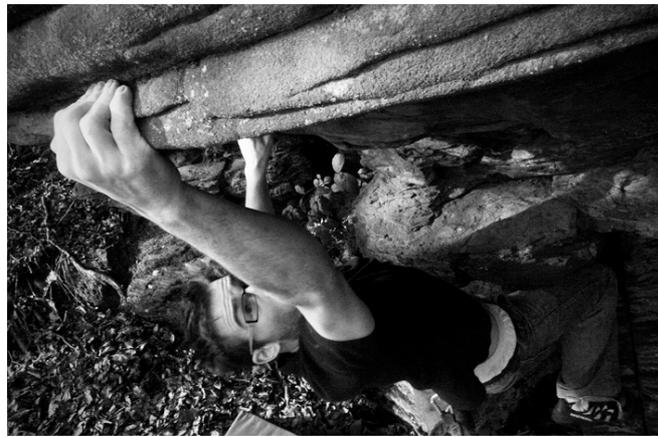
# The Little Gap

## Preamble

The Little Gap is a small but enjoyable bouldering venue near Abercynon. It is composed of a series of sandstone faces, some quarried, some natural. By far the best lines are to be found on the natural boulders, although some highball problems are of interest in the quarried section the crag. Similar in nature to Clogfaen Gigfran, the Little Gap hosts a series of quality problems, such as **Loner** (V4), **Plunder Economy** (V3) and **Imperfect God** (V3), which are a must for any aspiring local boulderer.

The crag is quite sheltered and so is often climbable in light drizzle, however the quarried section in particular is extremely prone to seepage and will probably only dry in high summer.

There is plenty of potential left for new routing, although one will have to bring a spade and a machete to unearth the tops of some problems.



Jamie on Kleptocracy , Photo Ryan Atkinson

## Approach

The best approach is to walk north from Abercynon, aiming for Incline Top, (the hill with power cables on it) walk round the hill until you pass a farm opposite a pylon. Walk for about a minute further on, past the corrugated sheet entrance on your left, until a series of boulders can be seen up the hill amongst the trees. Scramble through the bracken and the main section of the crag will be on the far left. Alternatively, take the same route as you would for the Gap but instead of turning right once past the A470 overpass, turn left. The crag will be on your right. Parking will be an issue.

The exact location is available at:

<http://www.ukclimbing.com/logbook/crag.php?id=9982>

## Access

No access problems have been encountered to date, but it is probably best not to make your presence felt too much, as the crag is very close to a nearby farm.

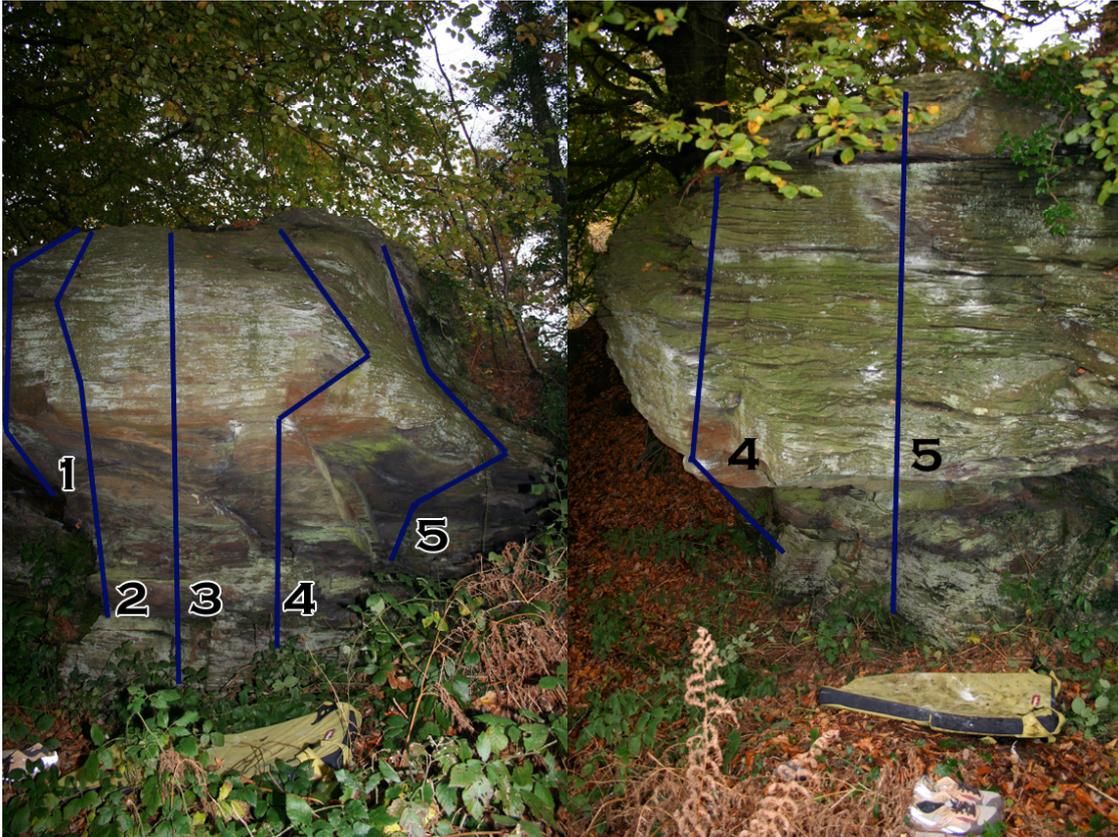
## A Note On Grades

As the bouldering in South Wales is still very much in its infancy, it is very hard to judge exactly what problems are in keeping with the local grading schema. On a national scale the grading would probably be considered soft. The problems here are largely unrepeatable and so feel free to provide feedback if you think a grade of a problem is inaccurate.

# The Problems

## The Natural Buttress

At the far left of the crag is a large overhanging buttress that can be seen from the road. This houses the majority of the crag's best problems including **Loner** and **Imperfect God**. The topouts, although clean, are very Fontainebleau-esk and a skill in mantling will be needed. It is advisable to bring spotters.



*The Natural Buttress, Photo Jamie Maddison*

**1.) Pikey President** - V0, Sit-Start. The arête at the far left of the natural buttress. A project stolen from one university president by another. F.A Ollly Birrell 24/02/2008

**2.) Kleptocracy** - V2 \*, Sit-Start. A bit of an eliminate. From sitting move up right to a crimp on the lip of the overhang, move the hand up again to a smaller crimp, before launching left to a good hold near the arête. A sloping topout. F.A Jamie Maddison, 16/02/2008 <http://www.vimeo.com/3273334>

**3.) Imperfect God** -V3- \*\*, Sit-Start. The second hardest line on the buttress. Take the face dead centre, using the obvious lip hold (used by Kleptocracy) with you left hand before moving up again and then launching

out right to a small finger pocket high up. Another hard move takes you to the top jug. A Fontainebleau topout ensues. F.A Jamie Maddison 24/02/2008

**4.) Arriva** – VI/V2: Sit-Start. The right hand blunt arête. From sitting, stick both hands to a protruding square of rock. From here move right to a series of jugs. A high foot finishes the difficulties. F.A Jamie Maddison 06/11/2008

**5.) Loner:** V4 - \*\* Sit-Start. Desperately awkward; probably the hardest problem at the crag so far. From sitting, go over the widest point of the roof, utilizing a stomach scraping thutch to reach a sustainable position and then an easy finish. F.A Jamie Maddison 06/11/2008 <http://www.vimeo.com/3273334>

**6.) Jamfooted** V0/I Sit-Start. From just right of Loner, traverse left along the edge of the lip and just underneath it, to the start of Pikey President. Jamie Maddison 14/11/2008 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKjOOihy2es>



**Jamie on Arriva, Photo Jamie Maddison**

# The Little Gap Section

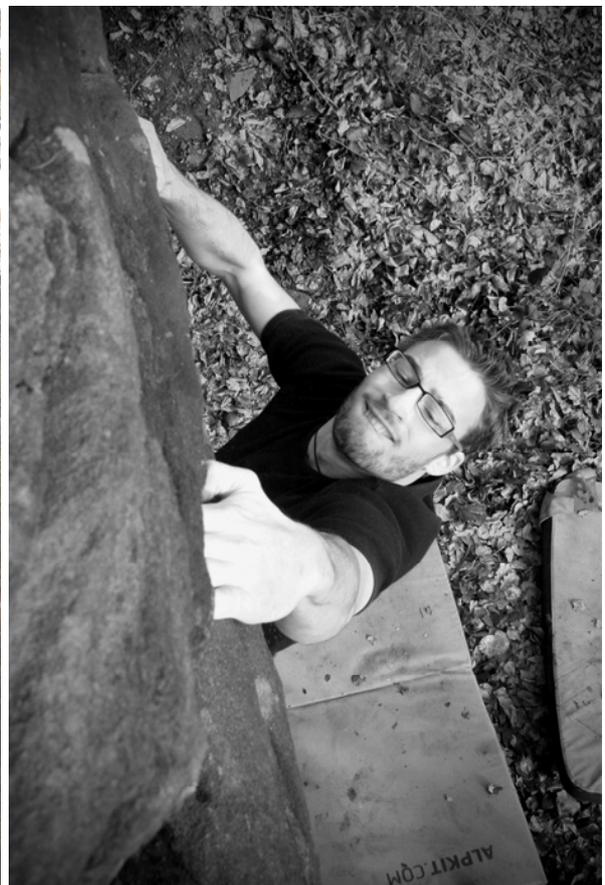
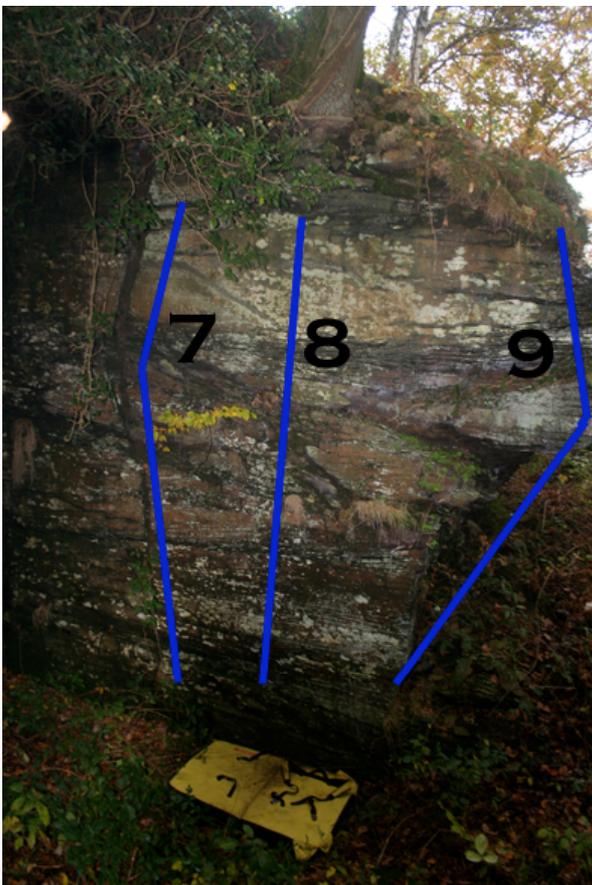
The tall quarried face. Although the lines are obvious, they are rarely dry, but come high summer an adventurous soul is likely to be rewarded with quite a few first ascents. The problems are highball so bring a pad. Top outs aren't advisable but the routes described below are counted if you touch the band of choss at the top. (!) Anybody with the time to dig the top out would seriously improve the overall quality of the crag tenfold.

<http://vimeo.com/2983334>

**Tastes like Victorino**, V0 - The obvious crack in the middle of the main face. F.A. Harry Andrews 27/01/2009

**Failed State**, V0+ A highball problem between the obvious crack and the arête on the right of the crag, easy moves lead to a pocket and the crux reach to the top. Ascended during the rain using a towel and a sock on each hand, this probably makes it easier if wet!  
F.A. Jamie Maddison 27/01/2009

**Moist Marxism** - V0+, The obvious standing arête at the end of the quarried section of the crag. The top out is always wet, finish at your peril. F.A. Olly Birrell 24/02/2008



# The Upper Tier

Above the Little Gap Section is a very small natural outcrop. On this, there is one of the best problems at the crag and two of the worst. To get up there, follow the path to the left of the **Imperfect God** Buttress up the hill, until you are directly behind the little Gap. All problems are obviously sit starts.

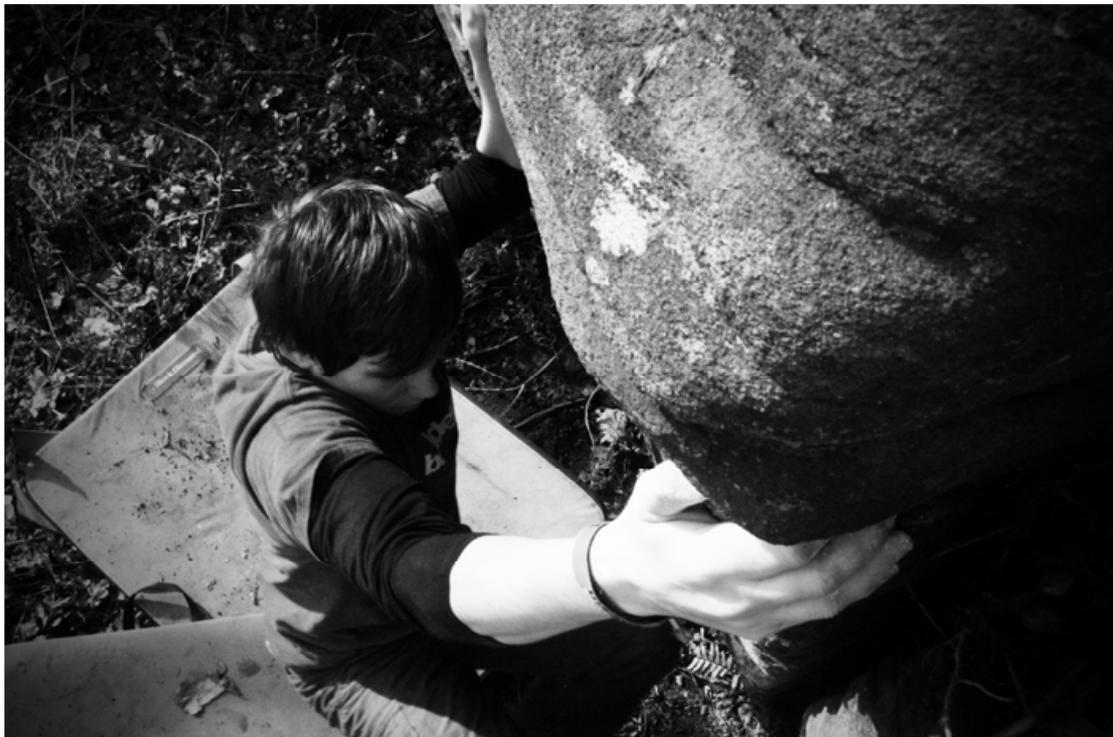
**Thorny Autonomy** - V1, The left hand crack next to Plunder Economy. It is impossible to describe the top out. F.A Jamie Maddison 24/01/2008

**Plunder Economy** V3 \*\* The right hand crack. A high left hand in the obvious pocket gets you started, followed by side pulls in the crack until the crux crimp. If you stick this, get your right hand into a good pocket, swing your leg up and finish.

F.A Jamie Maddison 16/08/2008

<http://vimeo.com/3240580>

**Colonial Rule** V0, Immediately to the right of Plunder Economy. From sitting, pull up using the little cave hold low down. Now grab some bracken to top out. Awful. F.A Jamie Maddison 17/02/2009



**Ryan Atkinson on Plunder Economy Photo Jamie Maddison**

# Traverse Wall

To the right of the quarried section is a series of natural outcrops. Virtually the entirety of this section is open to new routes, although many of the tops need to be cleaned. Only two routes have been recorded, these are twenty metres right of the quarried section, on a low wall suitable for traversing.

**Rise Against** VI, Sit-Start. Traverse right from the edge of the outcrop until the rock drops back to an inset. F.A Owen Tweedie 17/02/2009 2008  
<http://www.vimeo.com/3273334>

**Great-8** V0, Sit-Start. Picks up where Rise Against finishes. Traverse diagonally up and right to the very corner of the obvious inset. Apparently using the chockstone at the end is cheating! F.A Ryan Atkinson 16/08/2008

A link up between the two (probably to be named **Rise Against the Great-8**) has yet to be done, but is expected to be around the same grade.

Written by Jamie Maddison  
Cardiff University Mountaineering Club  
[redundantdream@gmail.com](mailto:redundantdream@gmail.com)