

It is hard at first to describe the veritable lost world that is Lustleigh Cleave. This is the kind of place you expect to see large beasts roaming through the woods, although you are only likely to see deer and ponies nowadays. Nestled along the steep and wooded hillside above the postcard-perfect village of Lustleigh are several outcrops which, between them, yield the highest concentration of hard routes on Dartmoor and some excellent, though rarely visited, bouldering. There has always been some confusion as to the location and name of the outcrops, something this guide intends to resolve once and for all with the map, topos, grid references and even GPS co-ordinates. The idyllic setting of the climbing in Lustleigh Cleave really is worth emphasising; the path leads through the woods to a breathtaking view of the moor, with wild flowers and ponies. Listening to the wind in the trees and the sound of the river far below you'll wonder if an undiscovered classic or the climb of your life is lying in wait for you down in the depths of the Cleave. The trees protect the rock from the elements so it tends to be less well weathered than moorland granite, take care on the sometimes snappy feldspar crystals. More so than for their moorland cousins, routes are worth an inspection and clean first.

Lustleigh lies three miles north of Bovey Tracey on the A382 Moretonhampstead road. From the A382 take the turning for Lustleigh at Kelly Cross where a lane winds its way to the village. In the centre of the village by the church are a small shop, a world-class cream tea shop and the Cleave Inn (TQ13 9TJ), which serves good grub and beer and has a lovely fire to warm cold and sore fingers.



Sadly North Bovey's delightful Ring O Bells with its picturesque thatched roof is no more after a recent fire. Hopefully it will be rebuilt soon and once again you can enjoy free roast spuds with your Sunday afternoon pint.

LUSTLEIGH CLEAVE overview from the south

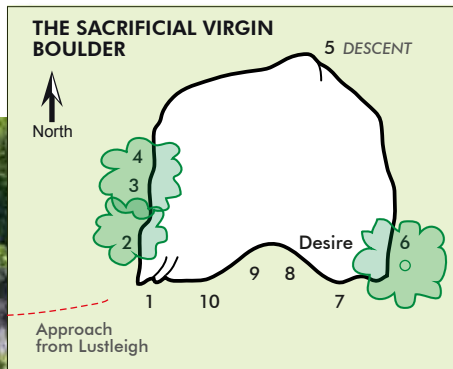


The Sacrificial Virgin Boulder

SX 781 816

This is the easiest place to find in the area and contains a handful of boulder problems and a couple of more committing highball challenges. Park in the centre of Lustleigh close to the church and walk past the Post Office down the short dead-end road into the small park. Follow the footpath through this and through the woods

trending slightly rightwards for 250 metres. The boulder is visible up to your right in a field. It isn't clear if the boulder lies on private land or not, so be discreet and if you are challenged be courteous.



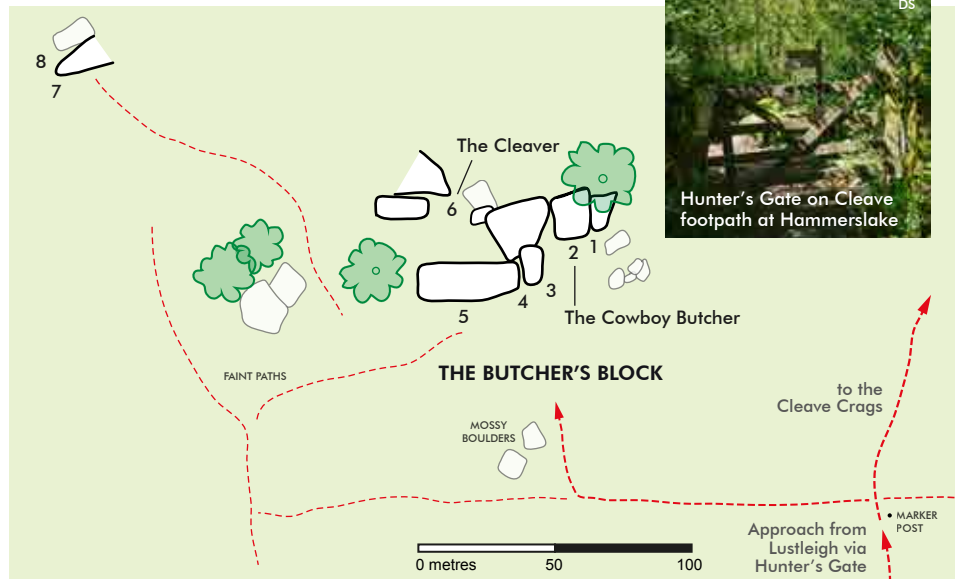
- 1 f4+
Cracks on the left of an overhung scoop.
- 2 f5+ Wall.
- 3 f5+ ★ Wall just left of a round metolius.
- 4 f6a Wall further left without using the rounded metolius.
- 5 f4 Descent.
- 6 f5+ Wall just right of a rounded rib.
- 7 f6b ★ The right-hand rib of the large overhanging scoop.
- 8 Desire f6b ★★★ Boldly climb the flake and right-hand wall to a scary top-out on some very sharp crystals *, highball. Currently the young tree below this problem is getting a bit in the way. * The author still bears the scars...
- 9 f6c ★★ Climb the overhang direct past an interesting chicken head-shaped nubbin. Scary, bold, and definitely highball. The final move can be chickened out of leftwards, which is barely easier and equally scary.
- 10 f5+ ★★ Climb the wall left of the scoop on small nubbins.

8 Desire f6b
Dave Henderson
DH collection



For the Lustleigh Cleave crags turn left out of the centre of the village just after passing the church and follow the steep and narrow lane to Rudge Cross. Turn right and drive for one mile past Pethybridge and Waye Farm to a widening in the lane where there is space to park on the left. This is about 250 metres before Hammerslake so if you reach Hammerslake you've passed it.

Walk along the lane towards Hammerslake and take a footpath into the woods on the left. This is just after a red gate on the left and before 'Grove'. Follow the path steeply through the woods to reach the crest of the hill after 10 minutes which is shortly after some large and mossy boulders on the left.



The Butcher's Block

SX 774 815

This small area is found to the left of the approach to the main Cleave crags and has a few excellent problems on high quality granite. There are two alternative approaches. Either take the left-hand path immediately after the gate and follow this until below the crest of the hill where a small path leads rightwards to the boulders; or from the main approach path turn left at a marker post and cross-road in the path then turn right after 100m before a couple of large mossy boulders are reached, the Butcher's Block appears in front of you after 50m.

- 1 **f6a** The steep jam crack.
 - 2 **The Cowboy Butcher f6c** ★★★
A classic, powerful moves from sitting lead to a nervy and sloping top out! Eliminates abound.
 - 3 **f5+** The left-hand arête of the block is good fun.
 - 4 **Kneel Before Zod f7a+** ★★★ A hard problem where funky footwork leads to success.
 - 5 The full sloping traverse awaits and will have a high grade
 - 6 **The Cleaver f6b** ★★ Another classic problem up the prow.
- Around the hillside is a nice Careless Torque style prow:
- 7 **Careless Whisper f6c** ★★
The fine prow from sitting, **f6a** from standing.
 - 8 **Conscientious Twix f6a** ★ The left-hand side of the arête.

There are more problems hereabouts, left for your own discovery.

2 *The Cowboy Butcher f6c*
Jason Maddick JAMES CLAPHAM

This excellent area has some nice bouldering and several good routes, a few of which are somewhat fierce. The large outcrop of Sharpitor is an impressive piece of rock and dotted around are many smaller boulders that sport some short routes and problems. Getting around between the boulders can be a bit 'hectic' (read awful) and the best paths are marked on the topo, the best way is usually the most indirect. There are two approaches. The best for the whole area except the Mick's Wall boulder is described first.

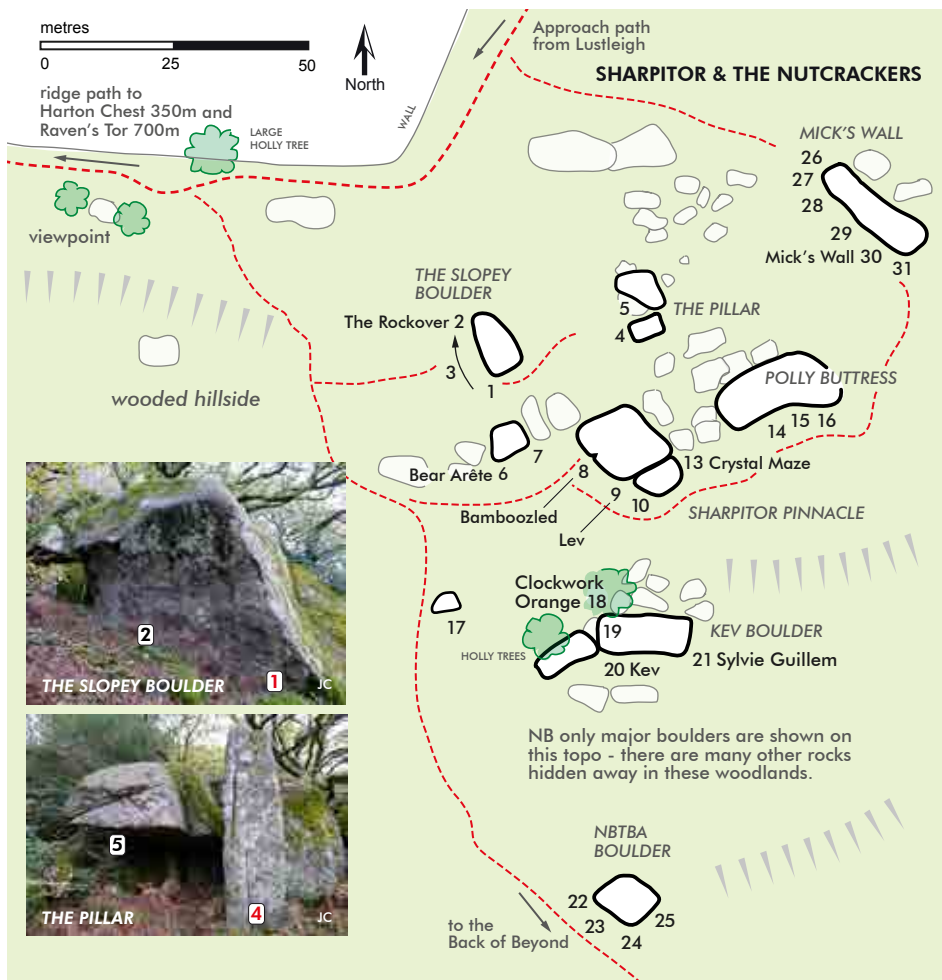
From the crest of the hill follow the path rightwards beside a wall and fence where you have to duck under a large drooping holly tree. Turn immediately left and drop down into the woods on a small path. If you reach a clean boulder with a view west nestled between two holly trees then you've just overshot the path. Follow the path down and left, passing right of an overgrown block. On the left, through the trees, the clean nose of the Slopey Boulder can be seen and a faint track leads up to a group of excellent boulders.

The Slopey Boulder

The right-hand (downhill) side of the boulder is a lovely slab when clean, f3.

1 Ivanov f6b ★ The steep side of the right-hand arête is climbed from a sit-start on small crystals to gain a small flake and then a runnel. It is a bit easier from standing.

2 The Rockover f6c ★ Start hanging on the good sloping hold on the lip and use the poor slopers up to the right to somehow gain the top via a tricky rock-over. A sit-start can be added from the arête down and left if you want to extend the problem.



3 T.B.L. f7b ★★ A hard traverse; start up *Ivanov* and move leftwards on huge but poor slopers to gain the good hold on *The Rockover*. Tricksome moves lead down and left around the arête to finish up the short groove.

A few metres beyond *The Slopey Boulder* are an obvious pillar and an overhanging boulder.

The Pillar

4 The Pillar f5+ ★★ Climb the front face of the pillar with some good moves clamping on both arêtes.

There are some powerful challenges to be had under the roof stretch out to the break and arête above and a sloping finish.

5 Over the Hill f7a ★★ From undercuts under the roof stretch out to the break and arête above and a sloping finish.

Sit start **Over the Mountain 7c+ ★★★**

These boulders are just above the summit block of Sharpitor, however, those routes are best reached by returning to the approach path and heading around to the bottom of the rocks. The main track continues down and left past some overgrown and overhanging boulders to deliver you at the foot of Sharpitor. The main features are the devious crack of *Bamboozled* and the arête of *Lev*. The following problem is tucked away left of the main rock on a low, overhanging boulder with a rail at half-height.

6 Bear Arête f6c ★★★ The arête seen on the left as you approach Sharpitor.

7 The Slap f6b ★ Sit-start low on the right arête and make a big slap up and left onto the juggy rail. Reach up to a good hold on the top and an easier sloping top-out.



Sharpitor

8 Bamboozled 18m E4 6a ★★

To the left of *Lev* is a large overhang split by an off-width. This route has still not been seen many ascents and success hangs in the balance until the very end. Do battle up the wide crack and pass the overhang using a flake on the right. Continue up the narrowing crack until it peters out and place gear, before exiting rightwards and blasting over the bulge above on small crystals to glory. *

FA S Cook 1990

* Or, like the rest of us, lob off

9 Lev 18m E6 6b ★★★

This route has proven the most popular of the hard additions to the moor. Take care on the lower unprotected section as a fall could have serious consequences for your kneecaps. Without resorting to pads or side runners it is probably E7. The striking upper arête is easier, although very bold. From the base of the gully make a committing traverse leftwards to reach the rounded arête. Follow the right-hand side of this to reach a deep break at half-height. Stuff this full of gear, breathe deeply and commit up the left-hand side of the upper arête to a rounded finish with excellent long fall potential.

FA D Henderson, S Seale 1.8.98

10 Split Pinnacle 20m VD

This meandering route finds the only really amenable way up to the summit of the pinnacle. Start up and around to the right of *Lev* and climb the flake/crack to a ledge then traverse leftwards into the corner. Step up and into a chimney, which is wriggled up until you reach the height of the main block. Traverse leftwards to an ivy-strewn crack and follow this to the top – up the middle of the split pinnacle.

FA 1950s

Level with the top crack of *Split Pinnacle* are three unprotected and scary arêtes.

11 Sloping Beauty 7m E4 5c †

The fall from this is likely to be more than double the length of the route and would be inadvisable. Climb the unprotected right-hand side of the arête to the left of *Split Pinnacle* (the top arête of *Lev* on its right-hand side).

FA R Linsey 14.11.00