

Wicklow Coast

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The cliffs south of Wicklow town stretch from the harbour past Wicklow Head itself. The rock is schist, the best climbing is on rock that has been smoothed by the sea so most problems usually have steep starts and smooth slopey holds.

The climbing is divided into two sections - Black Castle and Bride's Head. They are within walking distance but it's quicker to drive from one parking spot to the other.

It's definitely a summer venue. It remains to be seen how long into the autumn it stays into good condition. It could serve as a handy retreat from the grease and midge of the Wicklow hills in the warmer months.

Only ten minutes from the N11 it's a pretty accessible from the south side of Dublin.

There is miles more coastline south of Seal Beach and there are some coves between Black Castle and Stuck Cove which I have only looked at.



Diarmuid Smyth on The Dunbar Pinch, Stuck Cove.

Black Castle

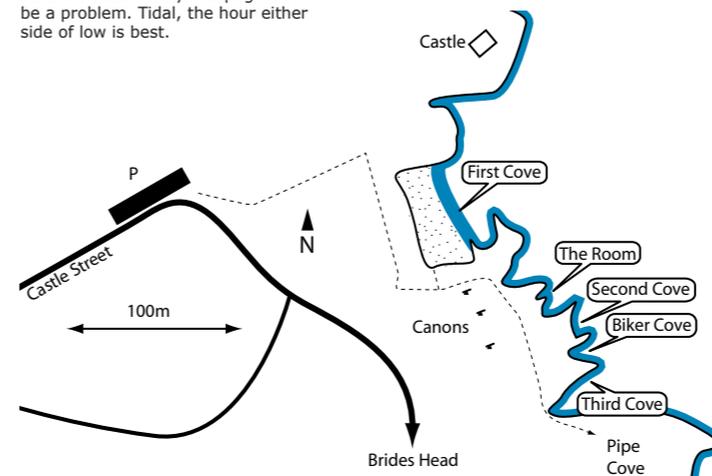
The three coves south of the Black Castle contain some good, if a little lowball, bouldering. The walk in takes less than two minutes and there are some good physical problems. So Black Castle is a good spot for a quick workout.

Approach

Drive south though the main street of Wicklow town. Turn left onto Castle Street just before the Gaol. Park in the carpark on the left. Walk across the grass and descend the steps with the railing down to a sandy cove. The bouldering is in the three coves to your right.

Conditions

Fickle. Summer only. Seepage can still be a problem. Tidal, the hour either side of low is best.



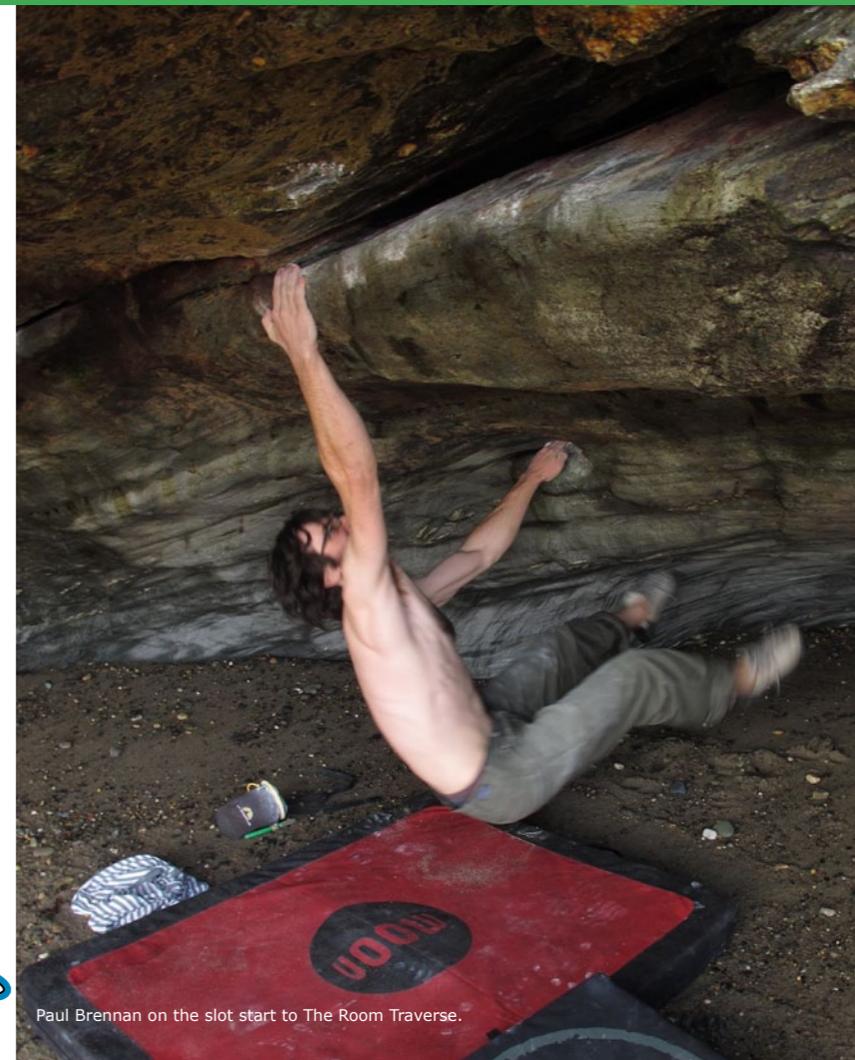
First Cove

There is a few warm up problems on the right side under the roof just right of the vertical borehole.

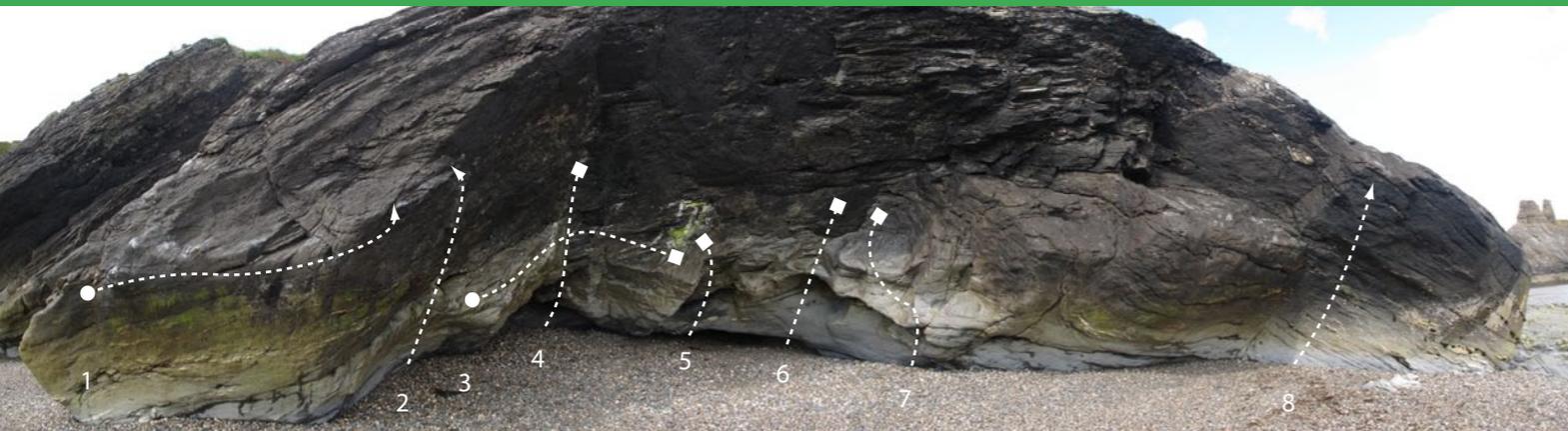
The Room

The deep cave has a great project that follows the slopy ledge across the back wall of the cave. It's possible (and nicer) to start from the slopy slot (see photo on the right.).

There are a few more problems left of the cave and a good traverse of the lip of the cave.



Paul Brennan on the slot start to The Room Traverse.



Second Cove

The main event. The right side gets the sun. The sand level seems to vary a hugely here.

- 1 **Guppy Traverse** 6a+ Traverse the slopy bulge from left to right. There are plenty of holds but it ain't easy. Finish at the jugs of the next problem.
- 2 **Blackfish** 6b SS on the rounded ledge and slap up into the good angled holds, follow the jugs to the lip.
- 3 - 5+ Traverse up and right until you can bridge over to and get stood on the triangular nose.
- 4 - P The steep corner from a SS. Similar start but follow the very slopey holds on right to the lip of the nose.
- 5 - P Good holds but steep moves.
- 6 **Bulk Purchase** 6a Wonderful pinching from a crouching start. Harder when pebbles are low.
- 7 - P SS on the good holds and battle into a standing position.
- 8 **Black Wall** 5 Start low on the face. Top out on the sharp holds. Watch the rocky landing.

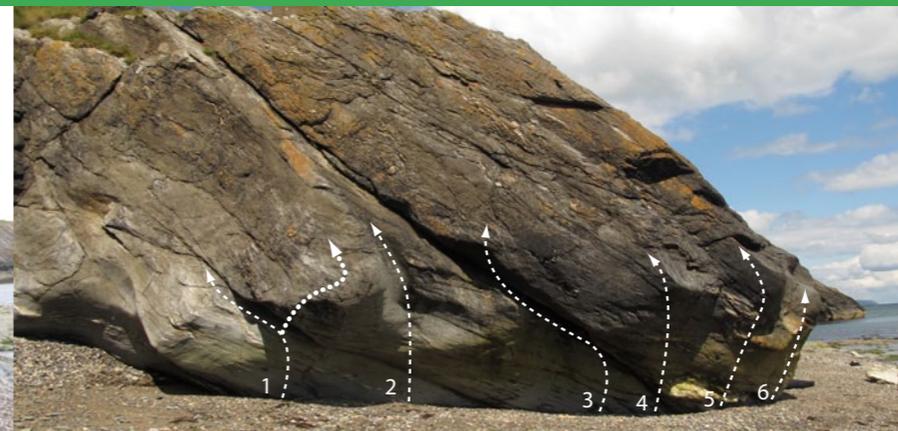
There is a traverse of the cove that starts as for problem 8 and finishes up problem 4.

Biker Cove

The black left wall of Biker Cove contains a few more crimpy problems which are nearly always in the shade.



- 1 - P Very hard moves on the very smooth protruding blobs. Same as problem 6 on Third Cove topo.
- 2 - 5 Jump for the lip and campus right.
- 3 - P Traverse the slopy arete starting from a SS as low as possible. Pumpy.
- 4 - P Start from the slopy ledge. Use the nice incut crimps to reach the good pocket just below the top.



Pipe Beach

Follow the coastal path for another 300m until its possible to scramble down beside the pip to Pipe Beach. Unfortunately the waste water that sometimes flows creates an unpleasant smell. There is some good climbing though.

Approach

The deep cave contains a long traverse on small sharp holds that should stay pretty dry in the rain especially if the wind of offshore.

To the right of this is a rounded bulge of very smooth rock. The bulge itself is permanently wet from seepage.

Right of this is a roof with no problems on it. If the tide is low it's possible to walk around this roof into the next cove. There is another wet roof with no holds. After this is some nice rock with a few good problems.

- 3 - 5+ SS on the good flat hold and make nice moves to the lip on positive holds.
- 4 - ? From the same start traverse right around the slopy nose.
- 5 - ? SS to the right of the nose.

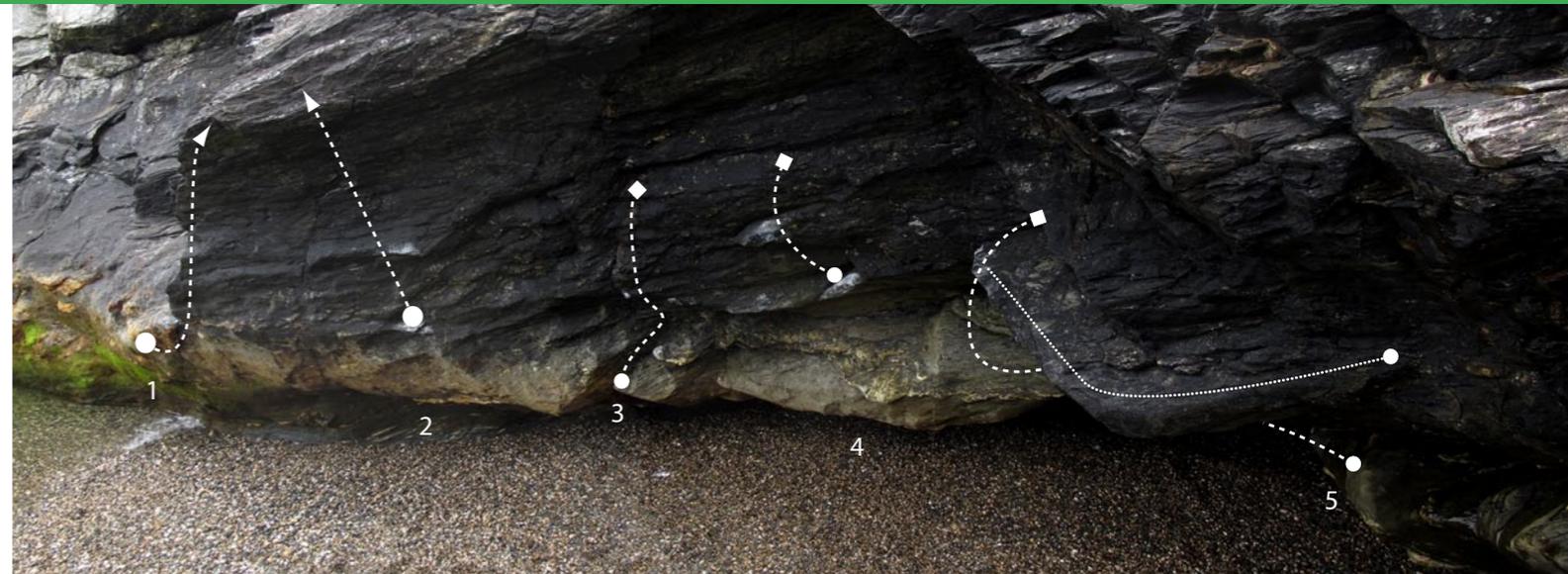
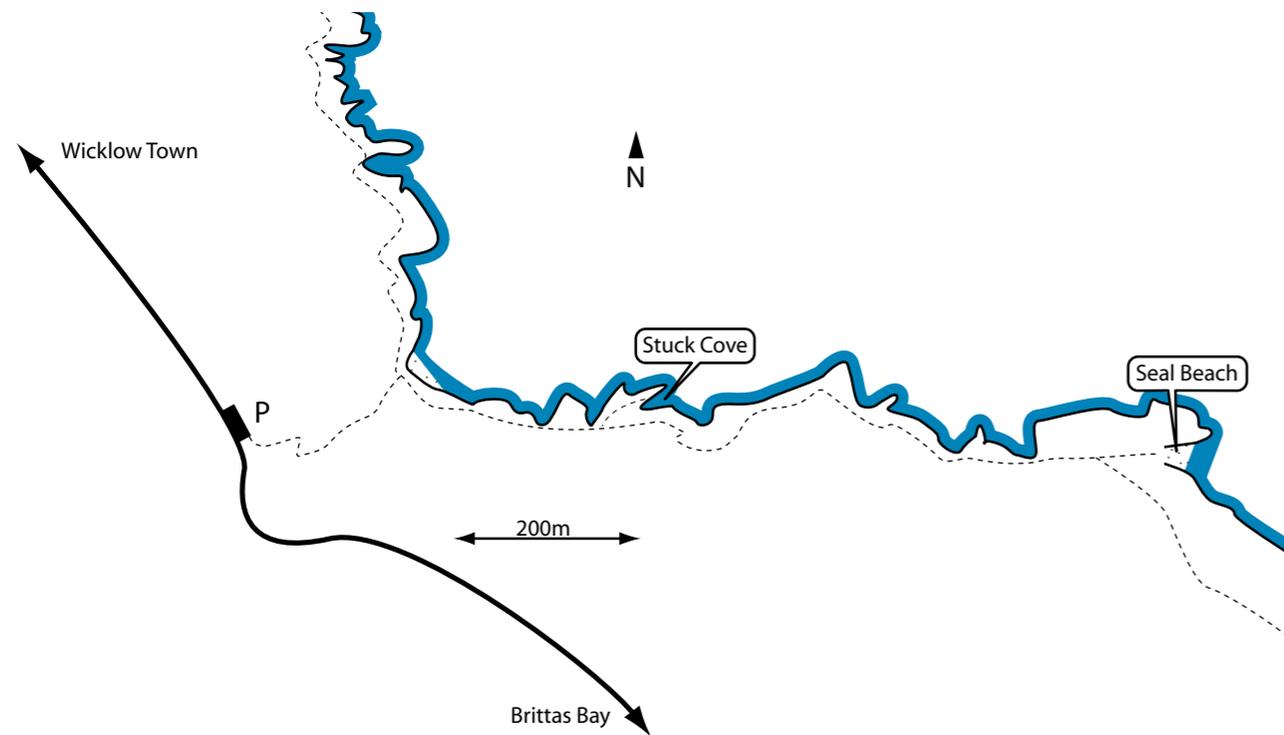
Further right is an overhanging wall with a good few holds. This is a handy spot to warm up.

Third Cove

The Third Cove gets a lot of direct sun during the day.

- 1 **N.D.A.** 6b+ Start under the small roof and make a hard slap to the incut holds over the lip. Use the chockstone in the crack to thrutch to safety. There might be a much harder direct line over the bulge.
- 2 **The Runnel** 5 Bridge and palm up the smooth runnel.
- 3 **Titleist 1** P SS at the foot of the diagonal crack. Use the chockstone and foot jams until its possible to reach over the roof and pull over on the chossy edges.
- 4 - P Hard move to the slopy lip.
- 5 - P Stand start using the slopy lip and a round blob for the left. Cusp your way over the lip.
- 6 - P Very hard moves on the very smooth protruding blobs. Same as problem 1 on Biker Cove topo.

Bride's Head



Stuck Cove

A steep black wall with some excellent problems on smooth slopers and edges. The cove is hard to get out of due to the smooth and steep walls.

Approach

From main street drive south, pass the golf club house. After the brow of the hill is a public carpark on the left. Park here and follow the path down through the golf course. Once you meet the coastal path follow this right (south). 100m past the railing a small path veers left. Follow this down to the narrow cove on the right of the little headland.

Conditions

The cove is best visited as close as possible to low tide. Most of the problems stay pretty dry. The wall is shaded from the sun in the morning so is great on sunny days.

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| 1 - | P | The high arete. Only accessible when the tide is at its lowest. |
| 2 | An Tonn Dubh | 6a Start from the good incut edge, make a dynamic move to the ledge and then some scary ones to get and mantle the lip. Not topped out. |
| 3 | The Crack | P SS from the incut edge. Hard moves to get the crack. Then layback the crack and drop off. |
| 4 | The Dunbur Pinch | 6a Powerful press/dyno from the slopy pinch to the slopy flake. Make another long move to some decent holds and drop off. See photo on page 126. |
| 5 - | P | SS on the slopy bulge and span across the roof to better holds. The start can often be damp. Rockover onto the sloped ledge and jump down. It's possible to campus into the finish from the right side of the roof. About 5 from standing. |

There are two more problems on the opposite wall that are really escape routes. The left one, which is always soaked, is the easiest way out of the cove.

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| 6 - | 4+ | Mantle the lip using the good but wet holds. Just left of the entrance to the other cave. |
| 7 | Slí na Bairneach | 5+ Just right of the rannel is a chest high blob of quartz, slap from this - using a big limpet for your foot - to nice slopy holds over the lip and rock up. |

There is a tunnel beneath problem 6 that leads to another cave but unfortunately the rock is very blank and damp.



Jeff Gardner on Borehole Number 3.

Seal Beach

Seal Beach (aka Bride's Head) is a small pebble beach surrounded by steep cliffs. The lower sections of which are nice and smooth. The beach is popular with the local seals and if they are on the beach they should be left undisturbed.

Approach

Continue along the coastal path, past Stuck Cove, for another five minutes until you pass through a rocky gap and the path leads down to the beach.

Conditions

Most of the problems are affected by tide. A good tactic is to climb at Stuck Cove until the tide turns and then go on to Seal Beach. The height of the beach can vary a huge amount from tide to tide.



North Wall

The north wall gets more sun.

- Jeff's Traverse** 5+ Traverse the slabby wall starting on the left end. Swing around the corner onto much steep ground and finish up one of the following problems.
- P The steep chossy wall has a few easier and maybe some hard lines as well.

Just right of the corner is a large jutting roof.

- Brideshead Revisited** 5+ Brilliant campus problem on the side of the roof facing the beach. Start from the good hold and campus up until you can get a foot on and rock up.

Around the other side of the roof is a cave.

- The Green Room** P SS at the back left of the roof on the green and red rock. Swing across the roof on beautiful rounded holds. Get low under the fin and cross the corner to finish up the diagonal groove. The finish is a worthwhile problem in itself.

South Wall

Around the corner is another series of roofs and caves, that require a low tide to be climbable. The wall left of the cave is very smooth and blank. For the next generation I think. The main roof is split by a crack that runs from the very back to the lip, this could a very epic, steep and long highball. The following problem starts low on the right side of the cave.

- 1 **Sealab** 5+ Traverse the juggy rail and get established onto of the low jutting roof. It should be possible to extend this problem around the roof.

The shaded south wall has some great problems using the boreholes which are non-tidal.

- 2 - P The right hand side of the roof. Using the jutting cobble on the arete to lever onto the slab. Variation up the thin crack?
- 3 P Thin seam.
- 4 - P Incredible rounded rib. Compression.
- 5 **Borehole number 2** P Stand up using borehole 3, reach left to another borehole.
- 6 **Borehole number 3** 6b SS on the borehole and match the slopy holds directly above. Then slap into the nearest borehole and rock onto the slab.
- 7 **Origami** 5 Bridge and layback up the slippery groove. Might be possible to mantle directly into the finish from the slopy edge to the left of the groove.
- 8 - 5 The very slippery slab.