

Three Rock 3 7 5 0

Three Rock (GR O 176 231) is the most northerly of the Dublin/Wicklow Mountains. It's very popular with walkers, runners and mountain bikers at the weekends and evenings and has great views over the city.

Climbing-wise there are about a dozen technical problems in the 4/5/6 range. For a small area Three Rock has been quite popular and was probably one of the first bouldering areas in the Dublin/Wicklow Mountains.

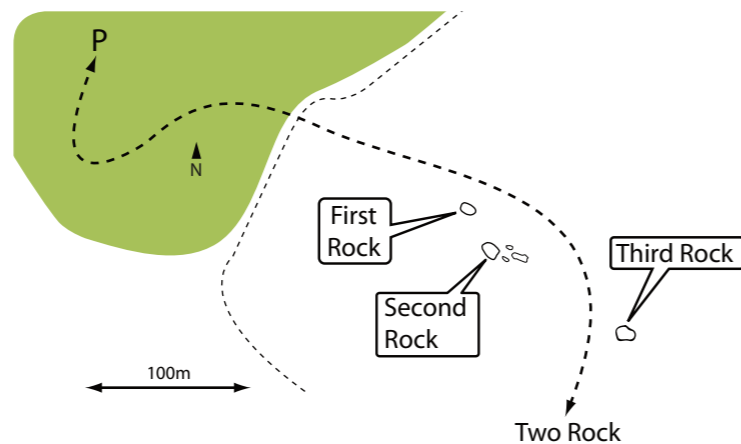
The First Rock has only a few minor problems around the back. Two Rock (GR O 175 219) to the south has a few easier problems but isn't worth a visit.

Conditions

Three Rock is very exposed to the wind which is a blessing in the summer, keeping the midge away and ensuring at the very least reasonable conditions, but it can get very cold in the winter. The rock is very rough granite with large crystals. The landings are flat and grassy which is fortunate as most problems, though not high, save their crux for the topout.

Approach

Exit the M50 at junction 14 and take the R113 west. Just before you cross the M50 turn left up Ticknock Road. Park either on the road at the entrance to the forest park (this adds another 10 minutes walk) or drive up the road into the forest and park at the locked gate, but you must leave the forest before the lower gate is locked at sunset. The closing time should be on the sign at the entrance to the forest. (20 minutes walk).



Diarmuid Smyth on the SS to problem 2 on the Second Rock.
Photo: Peter McMahon.

Second Rock

Around the back of the Second Rock is a steep wall with two horizontal slopy breaks, the **High Traverse 5+** has lots of steady moves on very nice slopers, the **Low Traverse 6a** starts gently on big jugs but has a powerful move to the jugs on problem 5. The problems are all similar in style, with the last moves usually the crux.

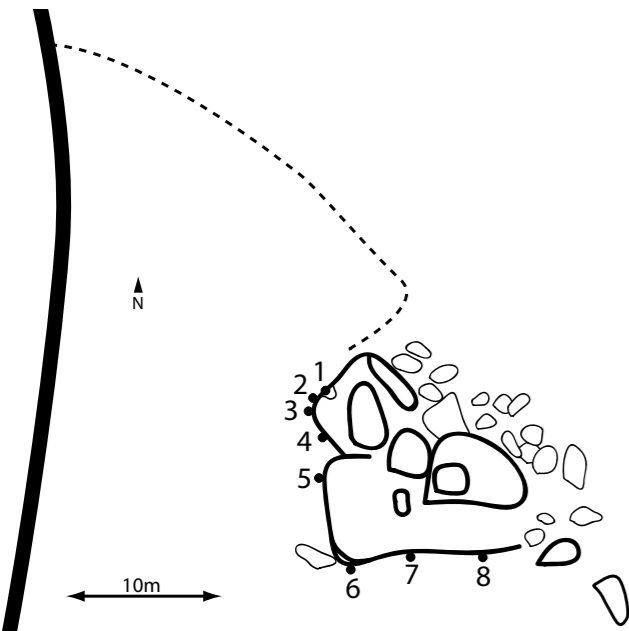
- 1 - 4+ A delicate top out. Watch out for the rock in the landing zone.
- 2 - 6a+ A fine problem, beta-intensive with a hard and unnerving finish. There is a low start 6c from the jug which doesn't use the low rocky platform for feet.
- 3 - 5 A blind slap to the nice rounded edge on the lip with an easier topout.
- 4 - 5 Another blind slap.
- 5 - 6b SS using the corner for your left hand then slap from the very sloping ledge to the huge jug. Can be a skin ripper.



Third Rock

The problems on the Third Rock are more varied in style and slightly more sheltered than the Second Rock. Every problem is well worth doing.

- 1 - 5 Brilliant meaty slap and press from the sloping ledge up the blank dome.
- 2 - 4+ Up the middle of the wall using the slopey breaks
- 3 - 6a Amazing 6 foot dyno from the low jugs to the nose. It's an eliminate but who cares. See photo on the right.
- 4 - 5 The center of the vertical wall. The low start is good.
- 5 - 5+ Hernia inducing mantel just right to the left end of the wave.
- 6 - 4+ Mantel on to the rounded ledge, step up and left. Use the shallow pockets to top out.
- 7 - 6a+ The wall left of the parallel cracks. Crimp up to the slopey break then pinch, jam or crimp to topout.
- 8 - 5 Start just right of the flared crack and top out up the middle of the slab using the flat hold to reach over the top



Jamie Mulhall on problem 3. Photo: Ciaran Mulhall.



Gene Fatagain on Dark Angle, The Scalp.

The Scalp

3 11 9 8



The Scalp (GR O 215 201) is a narrow rocky valley on the Dublin/Wicklow border between Enniskerry and Kiltarnan. The Scalp probably doesn't live up to its first impression however there is some decent bouldering and it's close to Dublin. The rock is featured and blocky unlike most of the Wicklow granite. This creates some finery and steep problems.

Standout problems include **Gen Tilly**, **Gully's Problem**, **Bottlebank**, **Primer**, **Dark Angle** and **Hollytree Roof**.

Conditions

The Scalp is well sheltered by trees and the steep slopes so some problems can stay dry in light rain but will take longer to dry afterwards. The midge aren't much of a problem on the east side but can get bad on summer evenings on the west side. The ferns grow thickly on the east side during the summer months so save your exploring for the winter.

Approach

Leave the M50 at the Carrickmines exit, pass Carrickmines Retail Park, head up Glenamuck Road, turn left at the lights and follow the road for 2.5km. The parking in front of the gate has room for three cars at most. It's also possible to get the bus to the Scalp, the number 44 goes from the city centre to Enniskerry and passes though the Scalp.

East Side

- 1 **Gen Tilly** 6b+ Nice left arete of the face, SS, keep right of the arete topping out. Tricky.
- 2 **Natural Born Crimpers** 6a Lock from the slopy ramp to a tiny edge just below the jug.
- 3 **Plank Arete** 6a Arete from the right, SS to good edge and over (SS left, bit trickier).
- 4 **Shady Bitch** 7a Steep boulder. Start from the edge, slap to the lip and right to the jug and mantel.
- 5 - 3+ Easy slab.
- 6 **Hollytree Roof** 6b This boulder is hidden behind a holly tree. SS under the roof on jugs then swing around the prow using the sidepulls.
- 7 **Bottlebank** 4 Arete at the mouth of the cave formed by the two boulders. There is an excellent technical traverse out of the cave that finishes up the arete at 6a+.
- 8 **Crimpnarris** 7a The overhanging wall left of the arete using the small crimp.
- 9 **Gully's Problem** 6b+ THE Scalp problem. From a SS climb the overhanging face on sidepulls to a high topout. See photo on the left.
- 10 **Tree Chimney** 5 Nice wall with a few big locks from jug to jug. Originally done by back and footing up against the tree.
- 11 - 5 Roof. SS on the slopy ledge, slap to the lip and mantel to the right. The direct line up from the start would be a lot harder.
- 12 - 5+ Arete of the long wall. Bit blind and tricky.
- 13 - 5+ Middle of the wall up the crack.
- 14 **Dom's Wall** 5 Highball face with a good landing. Watch for loose holds.

The slab beside the road is very sheltered but tends to seep.

- 15 **Chris's Arete** 5 Arete.
- 16 - 5+ Middle of the slab, hard start to reach vertical crack.

Switch

The hardest problem in the Scalp is high up in the scree 20m north of Quartz Crag. **Switch 8a** SS on an incut sidepull for the left and the low jug for the right with feet on the back wall. Use the slopy rails to hit the jug in the groove.

Rothery's Rocks

Further south is Rothery's Rocks. There are about two dozen problems which haven't been included, they are best discovered for oneself.

West Side

- 17 **LDF** 6c+ Steep roof. SS from lowest ledge and slap to the lip, finish right and mantel.
- 18 **Ahab's** 7b+ Big move straight to lip and top from a SS.
- 19 **Dark Angle** 6a Start on the jug sidepull and slap up the using the nice slopy arete. SS 7a.
- 20 - 5+ Low start up nice curving arete. (slap right to the arete from the edges on the wall is 6c).
- 21 - 5 Slabby bulge.
- 22 **Muppetree** 7a+ SS. Climb the arete all the way right with nice moves to a juggy top out.
- 23 - P Powerful mantel start followed by delicate slab moves to reach the ledge.
- 24 - 5 The slabby side wall of the boulder has loads of small quartz crimps.
- 25 - P Squeeze the aretes.
- 26 - P Rockover onto the juggy break then make a delicate step for the top.
- 27 **Primer** 7c Excellent curving arete.
- 28 **Dermo's Wall** P Steep face.
- 29 - 5+ Easier side face
- 30 4 Long sharp arete, more of a route.
- 31 - P Lovely steep slab.