

A Climbers guide to

Umphin

by

Iain Miller



Umphin Island

Umphin (Umfin or Iompainn) Island is a small uninhabited island lying on the seaward side of Inishmeane and just to the North of the much better known [Gola Island](#). The island sits approximately 3 KM from mainland Donegal and is normally surrounded by mildly tetchy seas.

Umphin is home to a ground nesting colony of several thousand sea birds and sees very few visitors of the human kind. Access to the island is by boat or if you are feeling Olympic by swim. There is no regular ferry service to the island and leisurely sea kayak paddle is an excellent way to approach and visit the island.

On the landward (Donegal mainland) side of Umphin there is a perfect natural harbour and shelved landing beach between mainland Umphin and the outlying Tornacolpagh Island. The channel between the islands provides a very sheltered landing spot which at low tide allows you to walk between the island as the sea retreats. The rest of the island's coastline is very exposed to every ripple of oncoming sea motion from all directions south west through to north and is effectively guarded by sea cliffs for most of its circumference.

The granite sea cliffs on Umphin provide excellent Gola type sea battered granite up to 25m in height and on Buckaneers Wall on the south face lives one of Ireland's most spectacular sea cliff roofs.

Map ref: B766284

Applecross Cracks S 4a 10m

Cross the big square sea arch on the west of the island and descend westward on ledges, coming back round to the left on a non tidal ledge, leading into a corner. There is a step on the ledge, and twin cracks directly above. Climb these to almost the top, step right and climb the crack in this higher section of wall on good holds and gear. Delightful, and easier than it looks.

A. Tees, V. Schafer 19/06/10

Fernest the Foam VS 4b 15m

Right of "Applecross Cracks" the ledge terminates in a corner. Climb onto the arete just right of this, cross a narrow ledge and surmount a couple of steps, before a fine exposed exit onto the top.

A. Tees, V. Schafer 19/06/10

Buckateer Wall

Buckateer E2 5b 20m

Climb the leftwards flying crack in overhanging wall. Start in the centre of the wall and then follow a prominent crack to where it veers leftwards on overhanging ground. Swing wildly on jams and buckets, reaching left to finish.

A. Anderson, C. Bull, G. Huxter 27/07/97

Harbinger E3 6a 20m

Takes the next crack left of 'Buckateer'. Boulder start and steep moves allow an overhanging groove to be reached more easily at 11 m. Finish up this directly in a good position.

K. Pyke, G. Huxter 27/07/97

Tierdrops E3 6a 20m

To the right of 'Buckateer' there is a three tier wall with crack systems. This route takes the central line. A powerful reach gains the first ledge. Painful jams the next. Continue steeply up the black cracks in the final tier.

A. Anderson, K. Pyke, G. Huxter 28/07/97

Splash Wall VS 4c 15m

Takes the east-facing wall forming the corner of the Buckateer area. Starts to the left corner chimney. Climb up and left to the centre of the wall. Move in fine positions and on good holds to finish up this directly.

K. Pyke, A. Anderson, G. Huxter 28/07/97

Curach Crack HVS 5a 25m **

Climb the arete/crackline to the right of the arch (facing in). Start on the ledge beneath the arete.

Follow the wide cracks in the arete until it moves onto the wall. Then directly up the wall on easier ground to finish.

C. Bull, A. Anderson 29/07/97

Diminishing Returns E1 5b 20m

Start at the right end of the face bordered by large ledges. Follow the first thin crack line directly, moving left on face holds at the top.

K. Pyke, C. Bull, A. Anderson 29/07/97

Hurrican Dan E2 5c 25m

Storm Wall (right of Buckateer- When facing in) "Hurrican Dan" Climbs the right fork of the bifurcating crack in the middle of the wall. Climb the steep crack for 6m to where it splits. Take the right fork up to the roof. Climb directly over the roof and ground above to finish.

G. Kirk, G. Huxter 01/08/97

Mungo Park's Missed Opportunity E4 6a 25m

Action Zawn (right of Storm Wall facing in) In the middle of the wall, there is a prominent crack/groove line. This route takes a crack and steep wall immediately left of this. Mungo Park's Missed Opportunity E4/6. 6a with rests. (Was not returned to for clean ascent due to bad weather). Climb easily up to a small overhang, pull through this and then continue strenuously up the crack. Leave this and continue directly up to steep wall via horizontal breaks to the top. Very steep and powerful climbing.

G. Huxter 29/07/97

Saved from the Gall VS 4c 12m

Climbs the leftward trending crackling on the seaward wall (left of 'Carlins Corner')

F. McCloskey, S. Carlin 06/08/97

Bridge over Troubled Waters VD 10m

The most westerly 'V' groove before descents and ledges.

F. McCloskey, S. Carlin 06/08/97

Tooce Mwaih HS 4b 10m

Carma Pholl ATseideain The First inlet north of the main wall. Both routes here are described as short but good. Tooce Mwaih climbs the main crack and flakes on the north wall, opposite 'Spot'. Easier than it looks.

F. McCloskey, P. Lemoine 05/09/98

Arete Patrick VS 5a 10m

Climb the wall and arete left of 'Tooce Mwaith'.

F. McCloskey, P. Lemoine 05/09/98

Spot VS 4b 15m

This is on the South wall, opposite the two routes above. Start on ledge, on left end of this wall, well above the sea. Traverse right to wet crack. move right at overhang (crux) or climb the flared offwidth overhang. Exposed but safe. The lower half of this route could be added to, but would be a lot harder.

F. McCloskey, P. Lemoine 05/09/98

Cogadh na gCarad VS 4c 10m

First corner crack East of An Straighre Dubh (descent). Up corner to ledge. Avoid juggy overhang by moving slightly right (crux) or climb overhang direct at 5c?

F. McCloskey, P. Lemoine 05/09/98

Fold Mhona HS 4b 10m

Abseil down west face of walls south of Camas Pholl a tSeidean. Climb the stepped corner midway along. Crux at top.

P. Lemoine, F. McCloskey 05/09/98