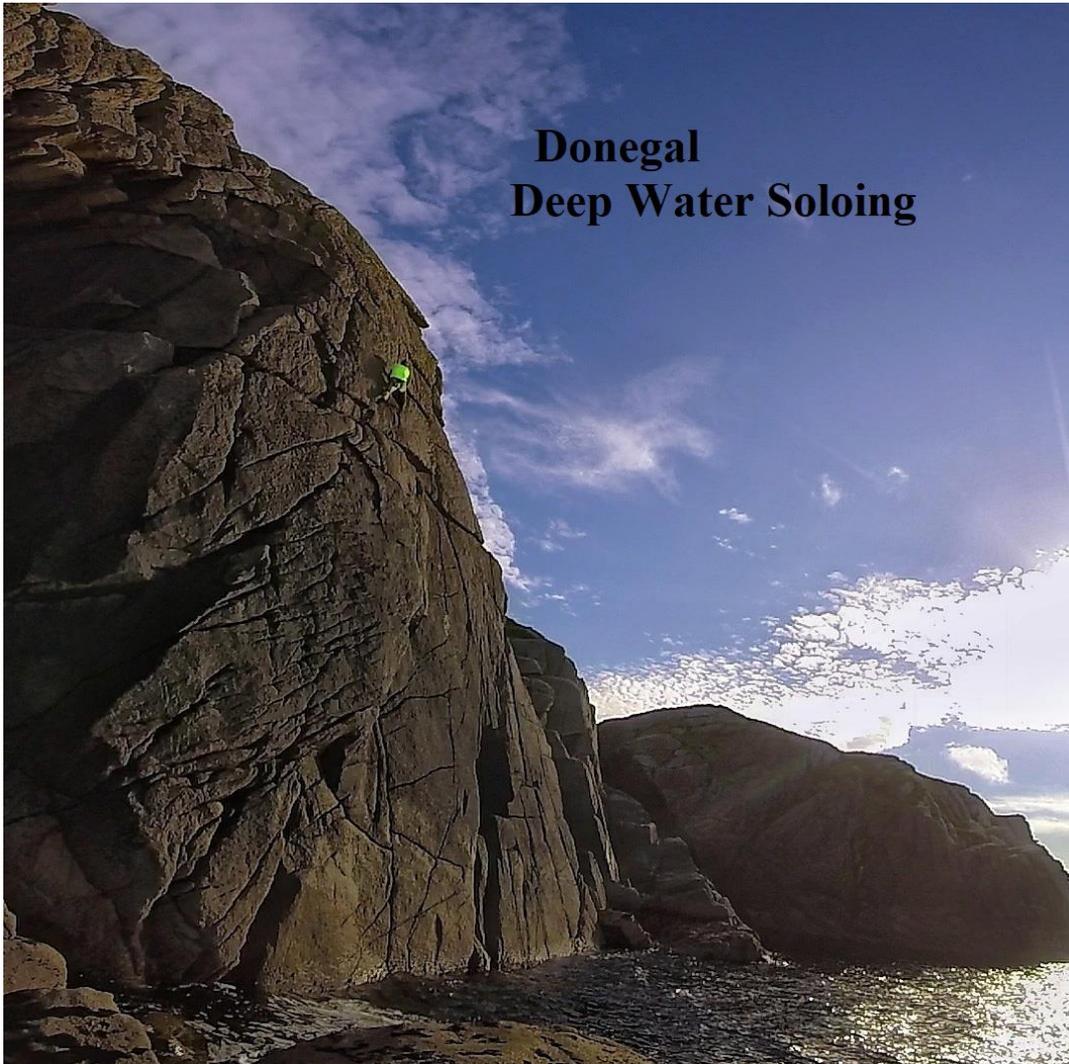


A Climbers Guide to
Deep Water Soloing
Donegal



Donegal
Deep Water Soloing



Deep Water Soloing

Deep Water Soloing is the sub-branch of rock climbing that involves climbing sea cliffs with no rope or protection. Below the climber is a body of deep seawater that, in the event of a fall allows the climber to land ideally unharmed. A safe deep water soloing venue must have quite specific attributes to prevent, as much as possible any nautical and vertical mishaps.

For the last decade or so I have been looking for suitable Deep Water soloing venues along the coast of Donegal. So far, I have only really found a few safe locations and all these locations require quite specific sea conditions to allow a safe wet fall. Both the below locations require high tide (over 2m mean) and minimal motion from North through Northwest as all these venues are in lea from all other directions.

This activity should not be taken lightly and I highly recommend you go for a snorkel below the crags to check your proposed landing prior to climbing. Combine your pre-climb swim with a check on what the tides are doing as both these tasks are essential before you begin to climb. All the crag described in this guide require as high a tide as possible.



Gaoth Dobhair

Gaoth Dobhair, (Gweedore) lives in between Cloich Cheann Fhaola and the Rosses to the south. Gweedore's coastline stretches for approximately 25km from Mín an Chladaigh in the north to Croithlí in the south. It's coastline is pretty much one very long Caribbean style sandy beach, at its northern end lives Tor na Dumhcha. The full guidebook is [Gaoth Dobhair Guidebook](#)

Tor na Dumhcha

This 20 metre high stack is situated just off the Lower Glashagh headland by Gaoth Dobhair. Access is by a five minute walk and a short sea passage. The stacks south face is a 20 metre vertical wall of excellent "Gola" type sea battered granite.

Directions: From Jacks Hotel as you leave Gaoth Dobhair take the sharp left and follow the B class road to the small beach car park. On foot follow the coastal path North over several new wooden bridges to the headland overlooking the stack.

[Google Maps Location Pin](#) Grid Reference B803304

The Plimsol Line VS 4b 8m

Climb the left face of the arête above the recess

I. Miller 26/08/21

The DWS Plimsol VS 5a 12m

Climb the right face of the arête above the channel.

I. Miller 26/08/21

Smile VS 4b 12m

Between "The Plimsol Line" arête and the deep corner of "A Bridge to far." In the center of this bulging face climb the line of huge perfect jugs to below the bulge. Reach up left and climb the twin cracks to the top

I. Miller 26/08/21

1: A Bridge Too Far S 4a 20m **

From the Large Triangular ledge at the seaward end of the face traverse across the steep wall on monster jugs to gain the base of the corner. Bridge (or squirm) up the corner with increasing air between your feet.

I. Miller, M, Boner 17/05/09

2: Chatterbox S 4a 15m *

Climb the big corner immediately to the seaward side of the main face, abseil access or a traverse in from the main face is much more sporting.

M. Boner, I. Miller 17/05/09

2a: First Blood S 4b 15m

From the stance at the end of the first pitch of "Nature always provides," traverse out to sea onto the square cut arête, climb this arête on its's outer edge to the summit.

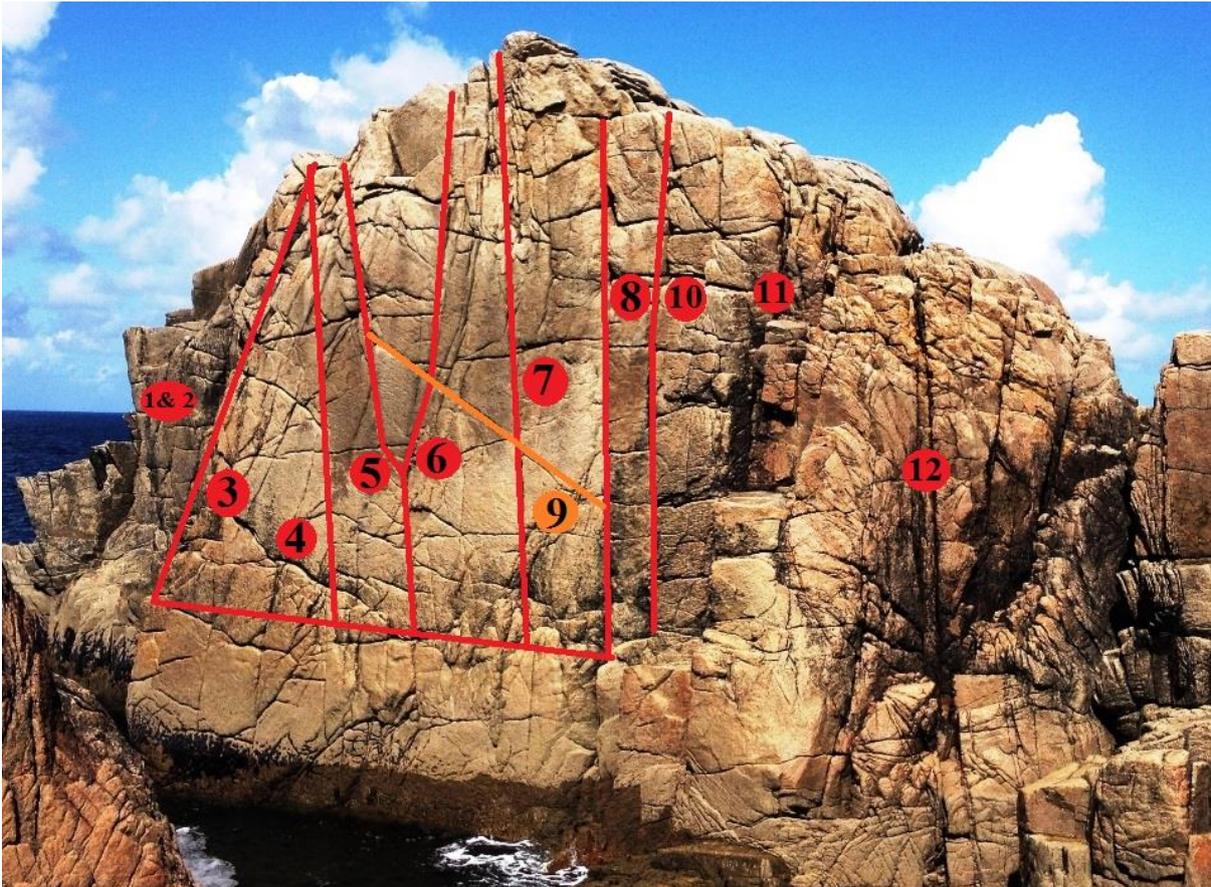
I. Miller, B & M Martin 15/06/16

3: Nature Always Provides S 35m **

Pitch 1: 20m Starting on the spacious recess at the bottom of Easy Exit, follow a superb sea level traverse just above the high water mark to a smaller stance at the bottom of the Arete at the seaward end of the face.

Pitch 2: 15m Climb the arête directly above the stance.

I. Miller, M. Boner 28/02/09



4: Ziggy Zig Ahh! VS 4b 15m *

Climb the left most crack on the face.

I. Miller, A. Harding. R. Anderson 10/08/14

5: Exit Stage Left VS 4b 15m **

Climb "Unhindered by Talent" for 3 metres, make a step left onto a superb series of layback jugs. Layback on jugs to the summit.

I. Miller, E. Wallace, M. Boner 31/05/09

6: "Fine Display, Young Wallace!" HVS 5a 15m **

Climb The steep & sustained finger/hand crack to the left of "Unhindered by Talent." Eases nicely in the last few metres.

I. Miller, E. Wallace, M. Boner 31/05/09

7: Unhindered By Talent VS 4c 15m ***

Climb the superb hand crack up the centre of the face.

I. Miller, M. Boner 17/05/09

8: The Internal Grin S 15m **

Climb the superb left facing corner, right of the centre of the face on huge jugs, big gear and a massive smile.

I. Miller, M. Boner 21/02/09

9: One for the Photographer VS 4b 18m *

Starting at the bottom of "The Internal Grin," make a rising traverse seaward following the shallow diagonal crack line, join "Exit Stage Left" and the follow to summit.

I. Miller, H. McCormack 09/10/14

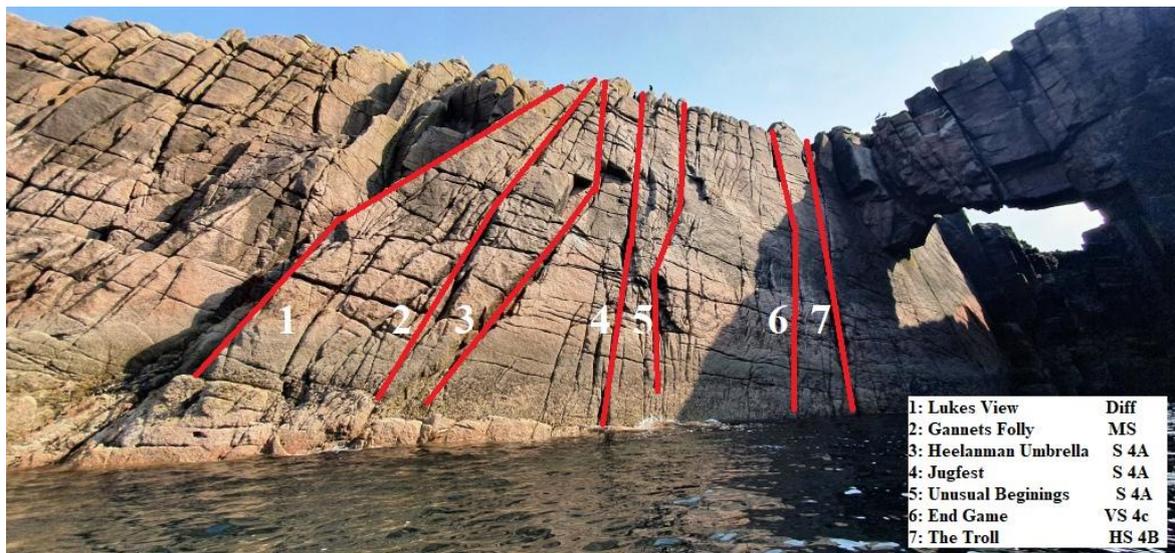
Tor Uí Arragáin

Tor Uí Arragáin is a 22 metre high rocky granite island living in the channel between Gabhla and Umfin Islands four kilometres off the Gaoth Dobhair coast. The island is effectively guarded on all sides by Gola Island quality sea cliffs and off course the potential for climbing new routes is enormous. Running through the centre of the island is a huge, and I do mean HUGE, sea washed water spout. It is difficult to imagine the size of this water spout but it would easily accommodate a million tons of sea water at a time.

There is no fresh water on the island and pretty much every horizontal surface is birded as this is home to approx. 500 nesting pairs of Fulmar and a token amount of Gannet. Best avoid the island during the nesting period as there is nowhere to go to avoid being spat on.

Access to the island by sea kayak from Port Arthur Pier at Map ref B798284 on the Gaoth Dobhair Coast. Landing on Tor Uí Arragáin is not without a certain degree of rocky uncertainty as there are no easy landing beaches, coves or recesses. The easiest landing is at the eastern tip of the island onto rock sea level ledges. With a west sea running the island provides excellent lee and this eastern tip has large non-tidal ledges for kayak storage. More information in the [Tor Uí Arragáin Guidebook](#)

Map ref: B766280



Lukes View Diff

Climb the gentle angled ridge at the seaward edge of the main face.

I. Miller 16/10/15

Gannets Folly Mild Severe

Climb the first deep crack in from the seaward end of the face.

I. Miller 16/10/15

Heelanmans Umbrella S 4a

Climb the tapering corner crack to a recess and follow cracks above to summit.

I. Miller 16/10/15

Jugfest S 4a

Climb the continual deep crack from sea to the summit.

I. Miller 16/10/15

Unusual Beginnings S 4a

Climb the next crack in from the sea where the wall steepens, holds get bigger as height is gained.
I. Miller 16/10/15

End Game VS 4c **

Climb the thinner cracks to the left of "The Troll."
I. Miller April 2016

The Troll HS 4b **

Climb the narrow twin crack immediately below the bridge on the seaward side.
I. Miller 01/06/16

The Corner V.Diff

Climb the big corner at the landward end of the wall right of the troll. Access by the green staircase at the very back of the spout.
I. Miller 01/06/16

Uaigh

Owey Island (Uaigh) sits off the Northern tip of Cruit Island and is only accessible by short sea passage. The best crossing runs from the far northern end of Cruit Island from the pier below the golf course club house and berths at the South East tip of Owey Island. This superb natural harbour on Owey provides lee from 90% of sea states alas it does not cope very well with large North to Northeast motion as the harbour entrance can be closed by violent white water. For more Owey Island Information view the guide [Owey Island Guidebook](#)

Peillic

Grid Reference B716239. This square flat topped stack sits off the North West tip of Owey and is very easily seen from the Owey ferry pier on Cruit. It is very effectively guarded by 60m cliffs and conflicting seas for over a Km along the coast. The summit takes green in big West and Northwest seas, the entire stack is immaculate rock. :-) It's location is outstanding.

Big Block Stack S 15m *

Climb the deep left trending crack/groove on the sea ward (East) face.
I. Miller 06/05/11

Infinite Traverse 5a 40m **

Starting at the sea ward end of the face, hand traverse on to the face and continue landward just above the high water mark. For the full traverse so far, gain and finish up "Dwarka."
I. Miller Sept 21

Summit Jugs 4c 15m ***

Climb the full crag height crack with the best finishing holds it is possible to imagine.
I. Miller Sept 21

An Domhain 4c 25m

Climb the coffin slot in the centre of the face, hand traverse to finish up An Cúinne.
I. Miller Sept 21

Am Aghaidh 4b 20m

Climb the deep crack and finish up "An Cúinne."
I. Miller Sept 21

An Cúinne 4b 20m

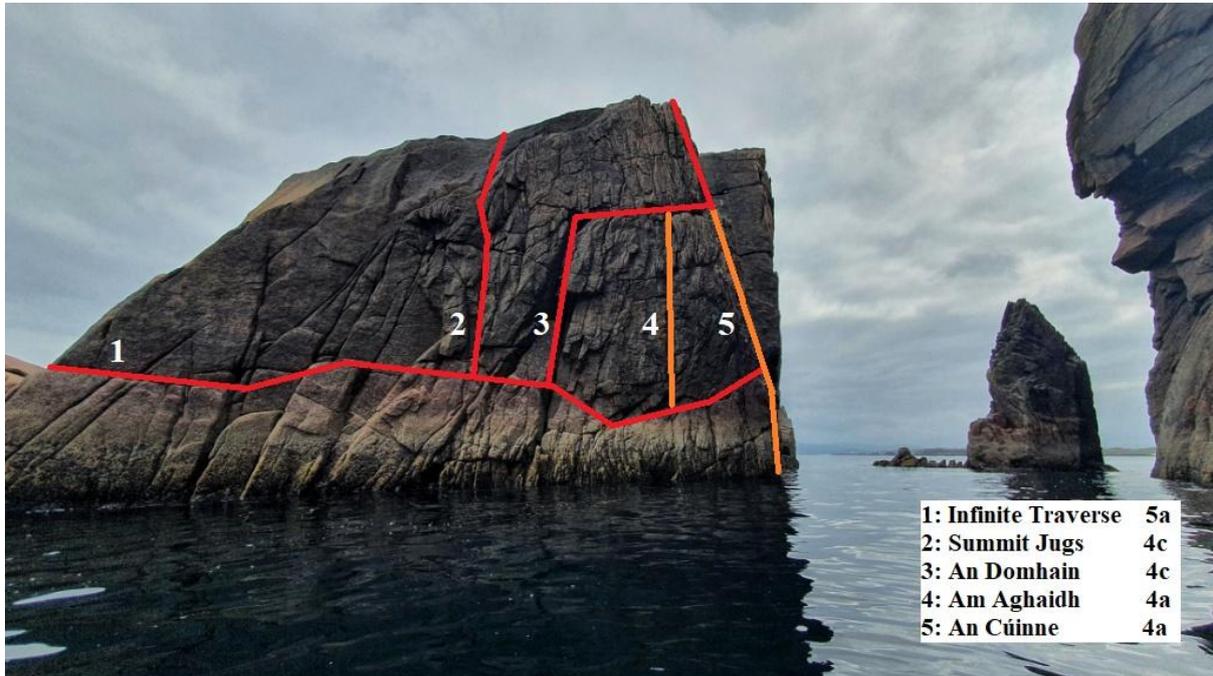
Climb the corner of the stack

I. Miller Sept 21

Dwarka 4b (5b low tide) 20m

Climb the incredibly deep crack which runs right through and splits a third off the stack on the face of the stack facing Ladaghroan Slabs. This was climbed as a deep water solo stepping off the kayak

I. Miller 01/09/20



Cruit Island Area

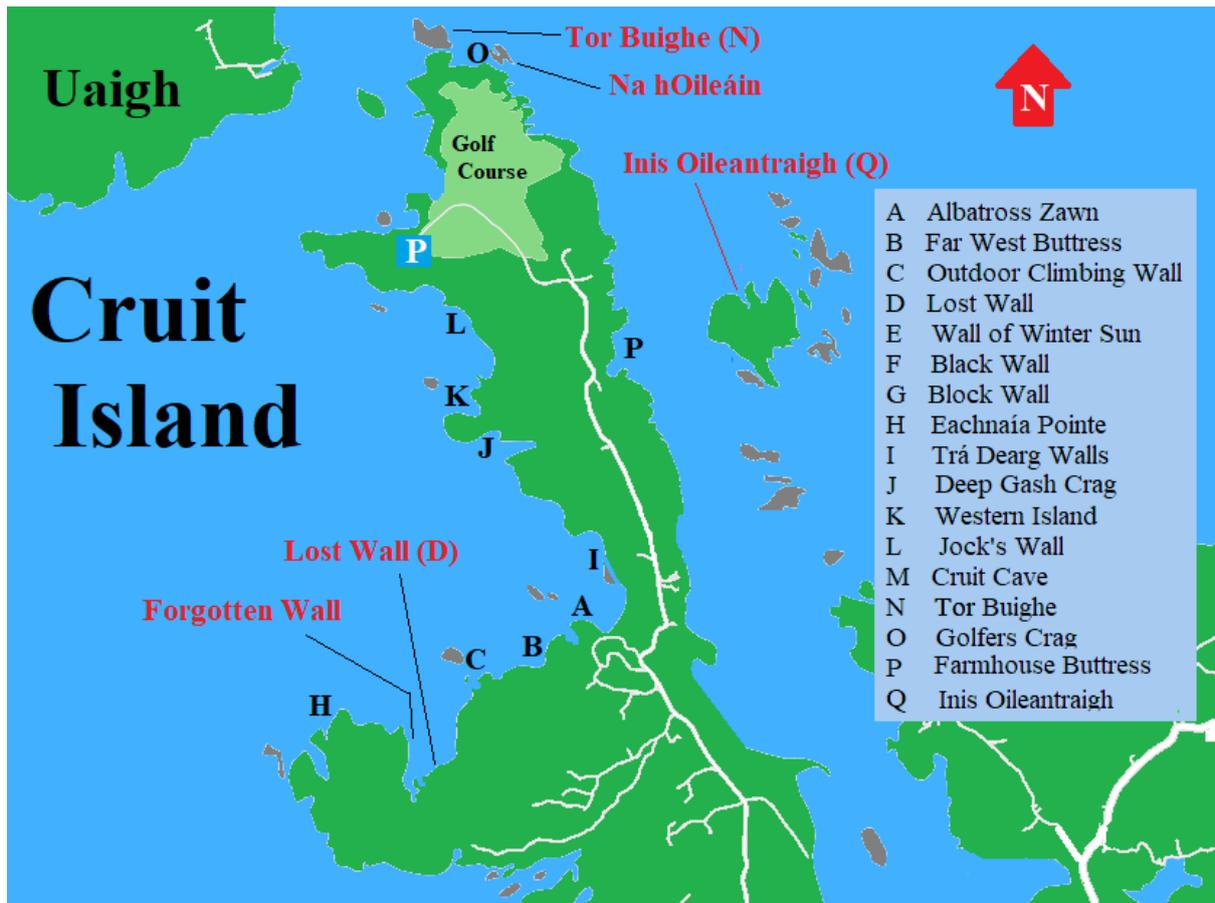
The Climbing on Cruit is on a multitude of 10 to 15m immaculate sea wash granite sea cliffs. On some of the more sheltered crags the rock contains huge very sharp crystals, all the crags provide good to excellent climbing in beautiful surroundings.

On your first visit it is best to locate the Albatross Zawn at the opposite end of beach from the Thatched Cottage Development. From the summit of this zawn it is possible to see most of the crags on the island stretching out to the left and right of you as you face the sea.

For more details download the full [Cruit Island Guide](#)

[Google maps Pin for Albatross Zawn](#)

Directions: From Croithlí Village on the main Dungloe/Letterkenny road N56. Follow the sign post for The Airport and continue on the R259 to the Viking House Hotel, turn down the wee road opposite the hotel and take the left fork after 100m. Follow this road over the bridge onto Cruit Island. Once on the island continue for a further 2km passing a grave yard on your left and a huge area of flat ground on your right. At the end of the flat area the road bends to the right and goes up hill to the thatched cottages, before this right hand bend take the wee sandy road to the left for approx. 100m to the left end of a superb sandy beach.



Cruit Island DWS Map

Tor Buighe

Directions: At the Northern tip of Cruit Island, approximately 100m out to sea sit's this island of immaculate Granite. Access is by an 800m coastal walk from the Owey pier followed by a short sea passage. Care must be taken on the sea passage as the channels separating the Island from Cruit are prone to monster seas.

[Google Maps pin for Tor Buighe](#) Map ref: B725231

Recourse VS 20m

Climb the corner line

W. Schuessler Aug 12

Na hOileáin

Living 50 metres out to sea from Golfers Crag is an excellent complex archipelago comprising two main islands. Both main islands run parallel to each other from north to south. They are approximately 10m high at their highest points and are approx. 100m in length. They pretty much contain every conceivable climbing medium from chimneys and tunnels to finger and hand cracks.

[Google Maps Pin to the Islands](#)

Easiest access to the islands is to follow the coastal path round from the Owey pier at the golf course clubhouse as for golfers crag. Just before Golfers Crag veer right to the tiny, enclosed storm beach. From here it is a 50m sea passage out to the crags

[Parking at Cruit Island Golf Course](#)



Na hOileáin



Na hOileáin map

The Outer Island

At the northern end of the island just before the “Into the Light” chasm lives two full crag height aretes. Access to their bases is by traverse above the high water line from the north.

Leftie S 10m

Climb the left arete, on good moves and no gear higher up. The groove to the left is climbed at V. Diff
I. Miller 09/09/20

Righty Diff 10m

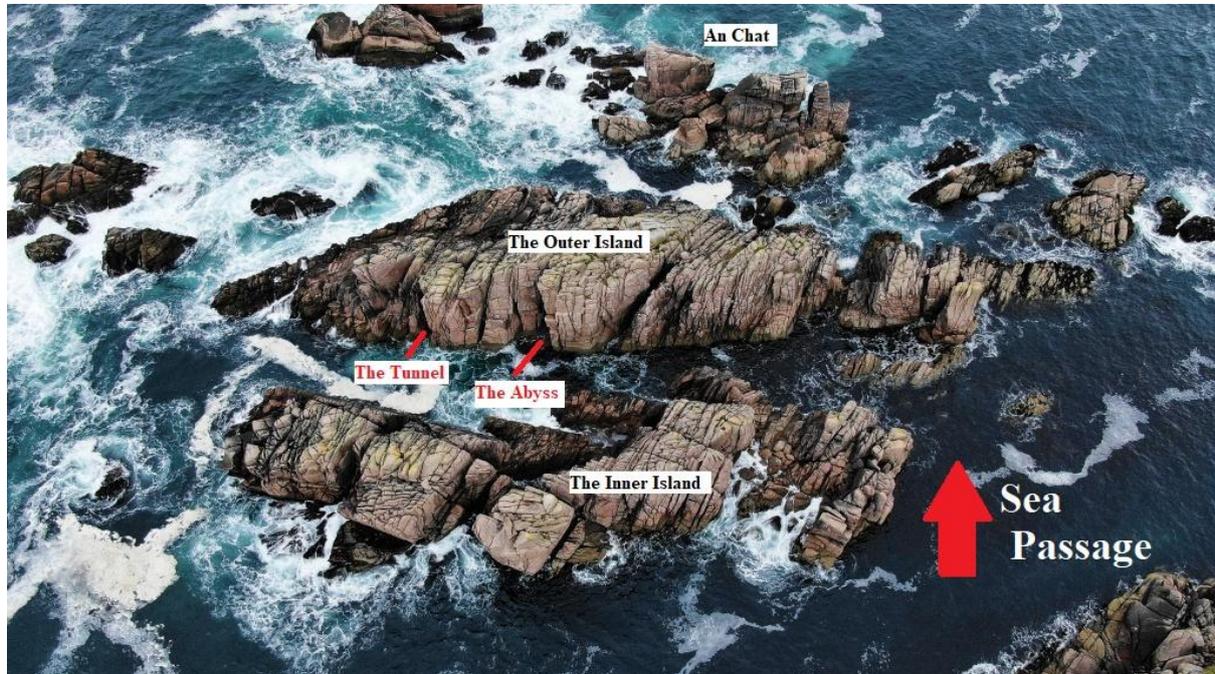
Climb the right arete
I. Miller 09/09/20

To the left (north) of the bulging prow lives a skinny tunnel the following three routes climb in this tunnel with increasing levels of technical grunting. Access is best by excellent sea level traverse in from the north.

Into the Light mild severe 12m

Climb the tunnel from sea level and follow the floor up and into the light.

I. Miller 04/09/20



Plan View of the Islands

Climb to the light, Carol Anne VS 4c 11m

At the mouth of the chimney climb directly up and shimmy up the groove above.

I. Miller 26/09/20

Dark Silhouette HVS 5a 12m

Climb into the tunnel until the floor start to steepen and the walls narrow. From here chimney up direct and exit into the light at the highest point of the crag, hyperventilating.

I. Miller 26/09/20

The cliff now bulges out to give a main face type feel

The only way is up E1 5a 10m **

Climb the steep main face starting as for "Céim Scoir ar Dheis." At just under half height span left to join the steep cracks and climb direct to the summit.

L. Murdiff 12/04/22

Céim Scoir ar Dheis VS 4b 10m

From the small niche at the base of the slightly overhanging face, climb the right trending groove to the deep recess above.

D. O'Connor 18/06/21

The cliff then has a square cut recess in its upper half the following climb up into and out of this recess.

The Crooked Stairway Mild Severe 11m

Climb the superb crack up to the recess from sea level and continue up the open book corner at the back of the

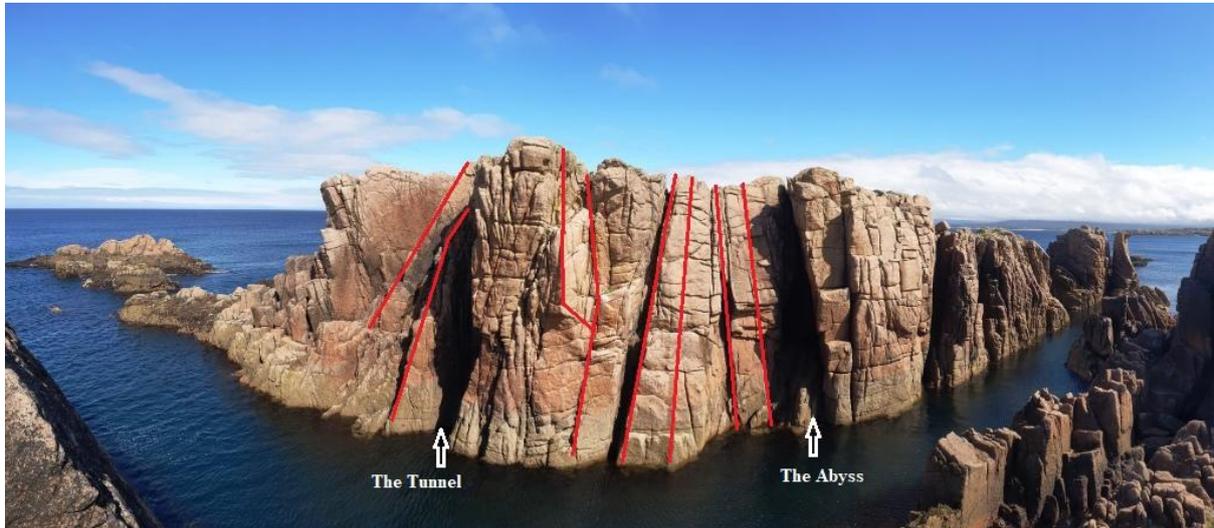
recess to the summit.

I. Miller 27/09/20

Ankou Arete E1 5b 10m **

Climb the crack out of the ocean as for “Crooked Stairway” until you can just about get into the recess. From here go out left above the roof to gain the foot stance at the base of the arete. Climb the arete and up to the summit. Airy and scary

I. Miller 27/09/20



The Outer Island's landward face

Air Arête V. Diff 10m

At the left side of the face climb the arete

I. Miller 09/09/20

The Flowing Grace HS 4b 10m

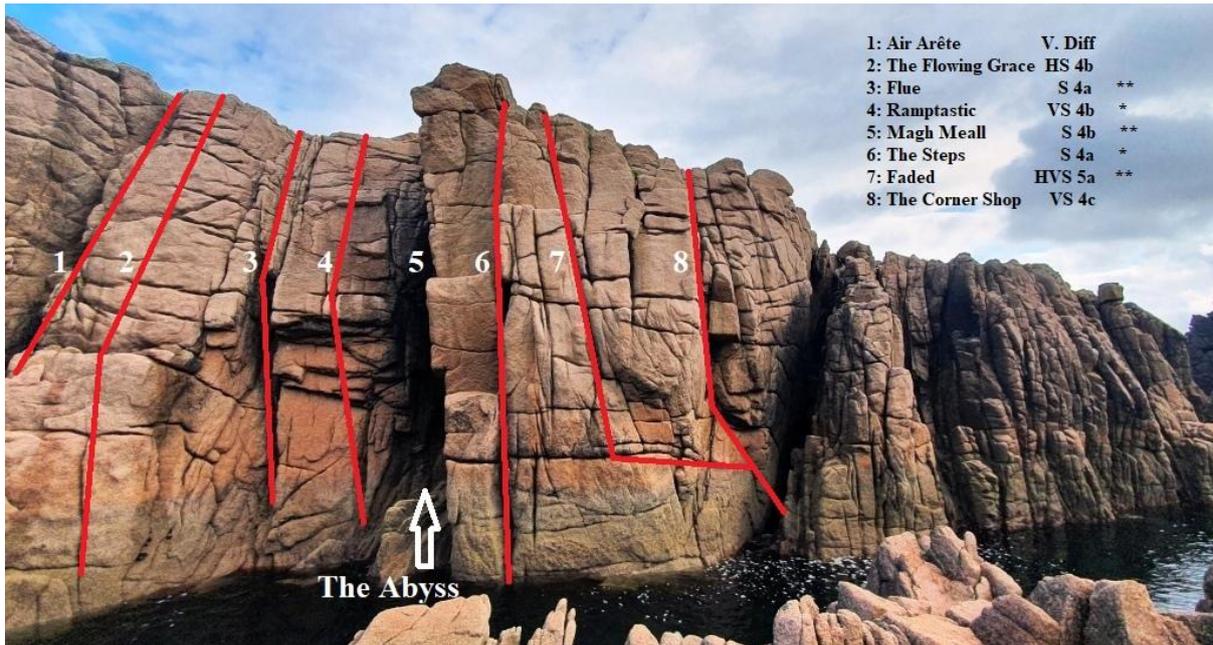
Climb the face between “Air” and “Flue” on a mix of rounded and positive holds.

I. Miller 09/09/20

Flue S 4a 10m **

Climb the chimney and cracks above in the centre of the face.

I. Miller 09/09/20



Ramptastic VS 4b 10m *

In the middle of the face between “Flue” and “The Abyss,” climb the inverted staircase and the ramp above.
I. Miller 27/09/20

The cliff now disappears under-ground again into The Abyss.

Magh Meall S 4b 11m **

Climb into the depth of the Abyss, simply climb as deep as you can until forced upward by your body width.
I. Miller 28/09/20

The Steps S 4a 10m *

Gain the wide stepped crack from the mouth of the Abyss
I. Miller 28/09/20

Bealach Gé VS 5a 10m

From the Abyss climb the arête and face to the left of “The Steps.”
G. Fredrikson, K. Boyle 20/07/22

Faded HVS 5a 10m **

Sea level traverse in to gain the left trending deep crack in the centre of the face.
I. Miller, F. Fhionnlaoich 16/10/20

The Corner Shop VS 4c 10m

Climb the recessed corner
I. Miller 28/09/20



The Edge of Spikes S 4a 8m

Climb the edge of spikes

I. Miller 27/09/20

Slanted Groove VS 4b 8m

Climb the left trending crack/groove

I. Miller 27/09/20

Wriggle S 4a 8m

Climb the chimney / groove on the face beside the slender stack

I. Miller 04/09/20

The following routes are found on the skinny sea stack with the very unusual gangplank sticking out the top. Getting off the summit is a jump across the gap to the parent island.

Slenderman Diff 8m

Climb the wide crack up the centre of the landward face of the skinny sea stack at the southern end of the island.

I. Miller 04/09/20

White Light S 4a 10m

Climb the corner/arete on the stack that points towards Errigal

I. Miller 09/09/20

Window of the Soul S 4a 10m

Bridge up the gap between the stack and the parent island

I. Miller 04/09/20

And finally, on the outer island this is the route of the crag best savoured climbed heading north. (climbing towards America)

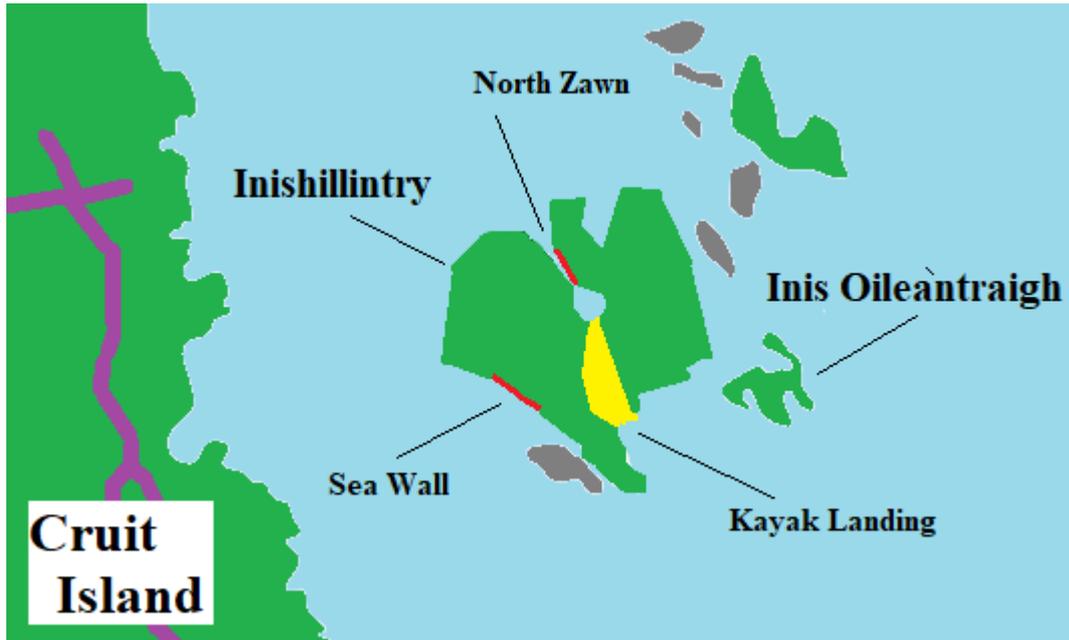
Comfortably Numb HVS 5a 100m ***

A sea level traverse from Slenderman Stack to the far end of the crag. As you traverse northwards the rock gets steeper, the moves and holds are simply outstanding right until the very end

I. Miller 28/09/20

Inis Oileantraigh

Inis Oileantraigh is a small uninhabited island that lies in the middle of Cruit Sound to the East of Cruit Island. The island comprises two small heather covered granite islands joined by a wide sand bar. This sandbar joining the islands creates an excellent tidal zawn on the north coast between the two islands. There are two climbing locations on Inis Oileantraigh both are suitable deep-water solo venues.



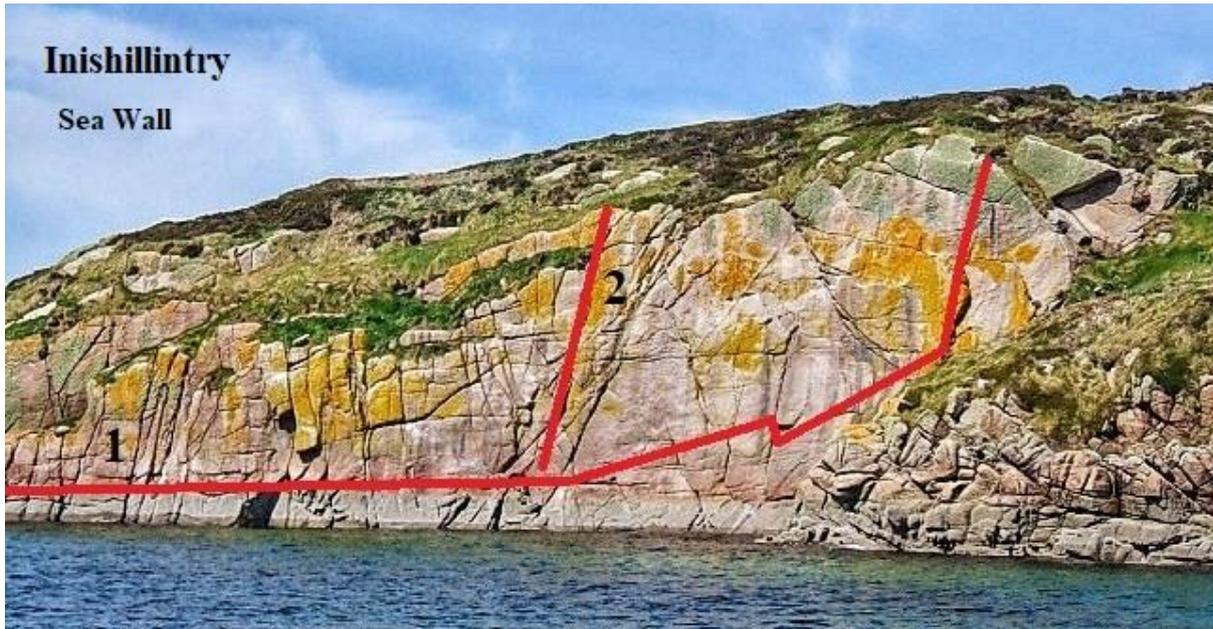
The first and most obvious cliff faces west across the sound directly opposite the Farmhouse Buttress on Cruit Island. The deep zawn between the two islands provides the second location and is an excellent deep water solo venue at high tide and a calm sea from the north.

Access to Inis Oileantraigh is by kayak from any of several public slipways on Cruit Island or Cionn Caslagh. Between the islands at the southern end is the perfect landing beach of golden sand and southern aspect. It is from this landing that directions to the two climbing locations on the island are given. More information in the [Inis Oileantraigh Guidebook](#)

[Google Maps pin for Inishillintry](#) Map ref: B725223

Sea Wall

From the sandy beach scramble through the thick heather towards Cruit Island. This takes you to the top of the sea wall, descent by abseil or traverse in from West as for Grace Jones.



Sea Wall on Inis Oileantraigh

Grace Jones 5c 60m

Descend a grassy ledge system at the very western edge of the wall. Traverse rightwards just above the high tide mark. Take a rising line up the smooth wall right of Island Life then make a step down a crack to small square cut hollow. Continue right then up a foot ramp to a shallow right facing groove. Climb this to some perched blocks then up and right to finish just below the cliff top directly above the square cut cave.

D. Turnbull Aug 2013

Island Life VS 5a 18m

At the far left end of the crag, Abseil from the cleaned thread 10m back from the cliff top to a superb stance just above the high water mark. Climb the right trending fist jamming crack until forced to make a very committing step up left. (Elvis may enter the building) Continue direct to the summit up several small edges and a worrying layback.

I. Miller, Nepal Paul 12/05/10

Zawn Wall

From the sandy beach walk inland until facing out into the narrow north facing zawn. For the first time visitor, scramble up left to the clifftops overlooking the zawn. This is the best place to familiarise yourself with the location and access to the base of the wall. The routes are described from left to right looking at the crag from across the tidal channel separating the islands.

1: Numb S 8m

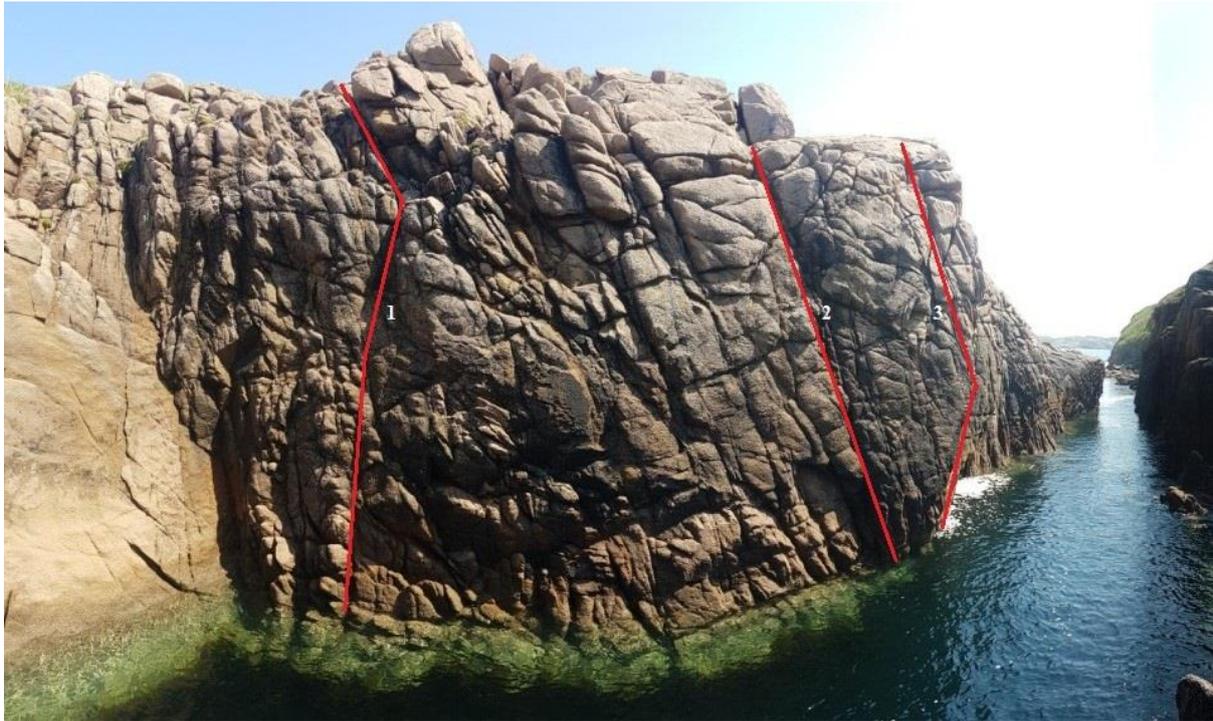
Descend the gentle slabs at the seaward end of the crag to sea level traverse to the second wee vertical groove. Climb on good rounded jugs to the top

I. Miller 21/05/18

2: Jaws HS 8m

Descend as for Numb and traverse at sea level for approx. 10m to a deep recess at the high water mark. Climb up and out of the recess and follow the left trending groove/crack to the top.

I. Miller 21/05/18



Main Wall Left Side

3: The Nose (left groove) HVS 5a 8m

Start as for the Nose and pull left into the left trending groove from the little recess on the prow. Follow the left trending groove to the top.

I. Miller 24/05/18

4: The Nose HVS 5a 8m

In the center of the crag there lives a prominent prow which provides excellent steep climbing on jugs and a lot of air around you.

I. Miller 24/05/18



5:

6: Damocles V. Diff 8m

Start at the foot of the slabby wall, capped by an overhang, to the right of Wino. Climb the wall moving right under the roof to finish up a ramp on the right of the roof.

I. Miller 21/05/18 7:

8: Damocles Roof exit V. Diff 10m

Climb Damocles until out past the ominous huge roof. Step left and follow the hand crack to the summit

I. Miller 21/05/18

9: Edge of Reason V. Diff 8m

Starting 4 meters right of the Damocles Corner, climb the right hand side of the slab.

I. Miller 24/05/18

Main Wall Right Hand Side

10: Ghost Walker V. Diff 8m

Climb the right-hand edge of the right most crag.

I. Miller 24/05/18

Cruit Island

The following two locations are a bit nearer to simply soloing with water under you. Both these locations need good high spring tides to get enough water for a safe fall and off course calm seas.

Lost Wall

Directions: From the Albatross Zawn continue for another 250m along the coast to the highest point on this coastline. Descent is easiest by scramble down the steps at the Northern end of the crag to sea level and traverse into base of wall. For alternative access to the base the use of a small inflatable and a bit of nautical guile allows for extremely easy access. Using the wee storm beach at the landward end of the crag gives excellent sea level access. The download the full [Cruit Island Guidebook](#) for the trad climbs in the same areas as these deep water solos.

[Google Maps Pin to Lost Wall](#) Map ref: B725203



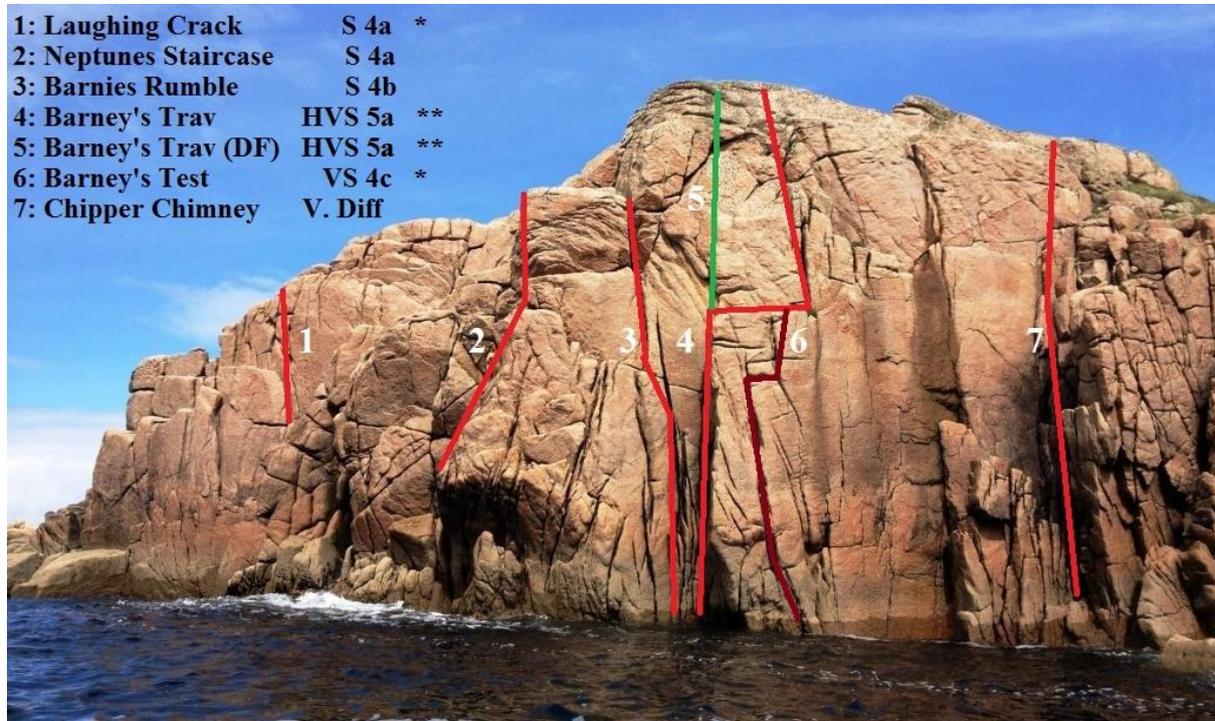
Cruit Island Western End

Neptunes Staircase S 4a 12m *

At the left side of the bulging arete that forms the juncture of the Sea ward and South Facing wall, climb the right trending ramp of immaculate blockiness and up the steep head wall above.

I. Miller, W. Schuessler 24/03/11

The following routes have reasonably deep water below them at very high tides



Barnies Rumble S 4b 14m

At the end of the sea level platform climb the right facing corner to a ledge directly above on the left of the corner. Continue direct up the deep crack above.

I. Miller 10/03/17

Barney's Traverse HVS 5a 20m **

At the end of the sea level platform, make a burly sea level traverse into the steep left facing corner at the seaward end of the South wall. Climb the steep corner to the platform and up the wall to the summit.

W. Schuessler, I. Miller 24/03/11

Swing Heil HVS 5b 14m **

Start as for Barney's Traverse, once established in the left facing corner make an excellent and committing move out right onto the arete. Climb the arete on superb holds to the ledge above, follow the crescent arch to the summit.

I. Miller 15/11/19

Another couple of routes based around the original Barney's Traverse.

Barney's Traverse (Direct Finish) HVS 5a 14m **

As for Barney's Traverse, climb the steep left facing corner and continue direct to summit up the crescent arch on underclings.

I. Miller 10/03/17

Barneys Test VS 4c *

Climb the steep cracks next right of Barney's Corner and continue up the deep crack as for the finish of "Barney's Traverse." The starting options for this route are abseil and hanging stance or I paddled into the base

in a little dingy and DWS'd the line from the boat.
I. Miller 10/03/17

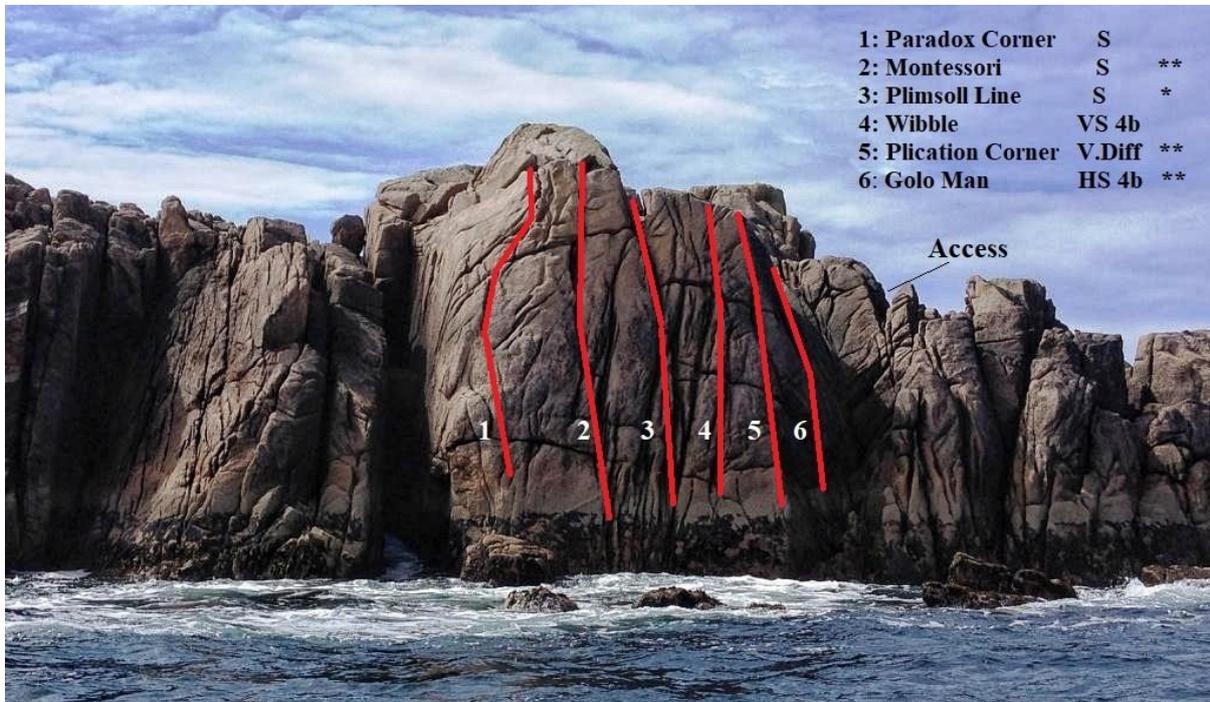
Forgotten Wall

Directions: Directly across the bay from the Lost Walls lives the Forgotten Walls. Access to the base and the start of the climbs is by scrambling down the recess on the seaward side of the main face and traverse in along just above the high water line on huge perfect holds.

[Google Maps pin for Forgotten Wall](#) Map ref: B724204

Paradox Corner S 10m
 Climb the landward corner of the crag.
I. Miller 10/05/11

Montessori S 10m **
 Climb the full crag height crack left of crag centre.
I. Miller 19/05/10



Lucky Numbers S 4a 10m
 Climb the right trending crack in the centre of the wall.
W. Schuessler, A. Flynn 29/07/11

Plimsoll Line S 10m *
 Climb the deep full crag height groove right of crag centre.
I. Miller 19/05/11

Wibble VS 4b 10m
 Climb the wall between "Plimsoll Line" crack and "Plication Corner." Easy at first with a slope fest top out.
I. Miller, A. Flynn 29/07/11

Plication Corner V. Diff 10m **
 Superb steep climbing up the sea ward corner of the crag.
I. Miller 10/05/11

Forgotten Wall

Golo Mann HS 4b 10m **

Climb the full crag height flake crack to the right of "Plication Corner."

W. Schuessler, I. Miller, A. Flynn 29/07/11

An Port

A complete sea level(ish) around the circumference of "Realm of the Senses Stack" at about F6a+ The best wall being the landward face in the narrow channel which provides a slightly overhanging wall of immaculate Quartz jugs with off course, much room for further development.

Andy Thompson and Naoise Ó Muircheartaigh 2020

Disclaimer

This guidebook is intended for information purposes only, it is not an instruction manual. This free guidebook is for the use of experienced outdoor climbers to make their own judgement calls as to what is and where is safe to climb on any given day.

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained within this guidebook at the time of writing, it alas cannot be guaranteed to be completely accurate. Many of the routes, locations and even some of the islands in these guidebooks are seldom visited, with a considerable amount of the routes having only ever been climbed once before.

The west coast and islands of Donegal are very exposed to the Atlantic Ocean swells brought by the ever-present trade winds. A good working knowledge of such nautical matters is essential to ensure safe practice whilst visiting and climbing on remote and very exposed sea cliffs and stacks.

Rock climbing is an activity with a very real danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities must employ appropriate levels of mountaineering / rock climbing guile and common sense. Participants must take personal responsibilities for their actions and involvement in these activities at all times.

In Ireland all land is owned by someone, the inclusion of a location in this book does not mean we have the right of access or the right to climb there. Please respect the rights of the landowner and we can continue to visit these beautiful places.