

A climbers guide to

# Donegal Winter Climbing

By

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## Winter Climbing in Donegal.

Winter climbing in the County of Donegal in the Northwest of Ireland is quite simply outstanding, alas it has a very fleeting window of opportunity.

Due to its coastal position and relatively low-lying mountains good winter conditions in Donegal are a rare commodity indeed. Usually, temperatures have to be below 0 for 5 days consecutively, and down to -5 at night, and an ill-timed dump of snow can spoil it all. To take advantage of these fleeting conditions you have to drop everything and brave the inevitably appalling road conditions to get there, for be assured, it won't last!

When Donegal does come into prime Winter condition the crux of your days climbing will without a doubt be travelling by road throughout the county. In this guide I have tried to only use National primary and secondary roads as a means to travel and access. There are of course many regional and third-class roads which provide much closer access to the mountains but under winter conditions these can very quickly become unpassable.

The first recorded winter climbing I am aware of, was done in the Horseshoe Corrie in the early seventies and since then barely a couple of new routes have been logged anywhere in Donegal each decade since that! It was the winter of 2009/2010 that one of the coldest and longest winters in recorded history occurred with over 6 weeks of minus temperatures and snowdrifts of up to 12m in the Donegal uplands. During this period several teams were active in the county and over 60 new winter routes were recorded.

### Scottish Winter Grades

#### Grade 1.

Climbs for which only one axe is required, uncomplicated, average angled snow climbs normally having no pitches. May have cornice problems or long run outs

#### Grade II.

Gullies which contain either individual or short pitches. Difficulties are usually short. The ridges are more difficult, but usually still summer scrambles or moderate rock climbs.

#### Grade III.

Similarly technical, but usually more sustained than Grade II, there will generally be at least one sustained pitch or several shorter ones.

#### Grade IV.

Steep ice requiring some arm strength, from short vertical steps, to long pitches of 60/70 degrees. The mixed climbs require more advanced techniques, such as torquing but will be short lived.

#### Grade V.

Sustained steep ice at 70/80 degrees. Mixed climbs requiring linked hard moves with a degree of rock climbing ability and the use of axe torquing, hooking and similar winter techniques .



### An Mhucais

**Directions:** The North Face of An Mhucais Mountain contains a huge steep sided coire with numerous gullies, ice falls and winter climbing features.

**Access:** For access to the North face of An Mhucais there is a public single track road right to the base of the face into the heart of the coire. Drive through the village of Creeslough travelling towards Dunfanaghy on the N56. About 2 miles north of the village there's a cemetery on right, turn left at the junction opposite the cemetery. Follow this road to it's end passing the huge quarry on your right.

Map ref: B999285

**Stone Chute** I 300m

The stone chute has been done many times over many winters, but this is a new interesting top out! Climb a short cleft in the rock band, on the left at the top, and continue up short steep gully to summit plateau.

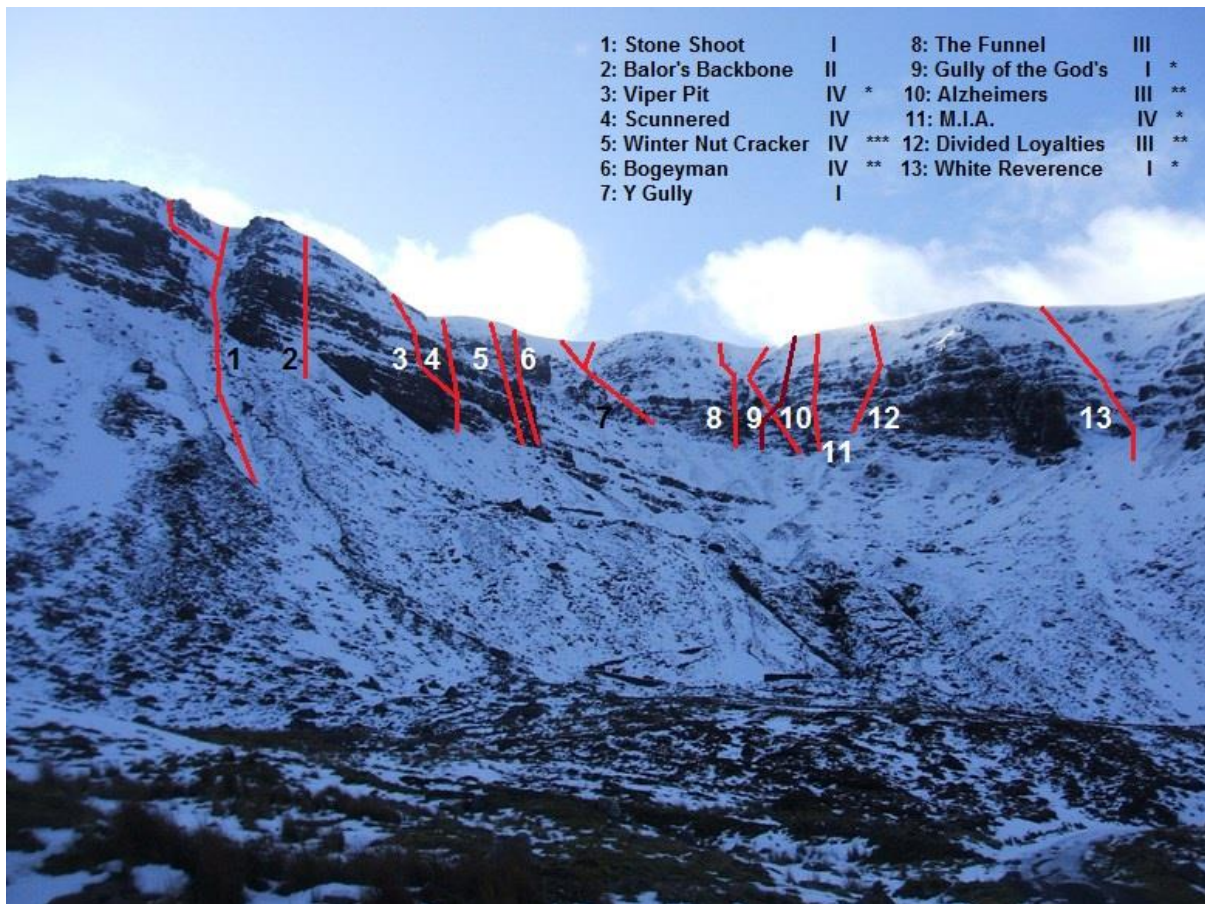
**Balors Backbone** II 120m

About 40 meters right (south) of Balors Pinnacle there is a obvious steep gully splitting the rock band. Climb this to the top. Angle eases after 60 meters then another rock band is reached. Climb the



rock or up easier gully on right.

*P. Tinney, G. Scott, K. McGee 27/2/10*



The Viper Pit IV 120m \*

To the right of the massive overhang is a small gully. Climb up this on steepening ice to the top. This point can also be gained by numerous variations to the right of the gully. Traverse left along a ledge above the overhang until you reach a small snow slope leading to a corner. Climb this and continue up to the final rock band. Climb up past a large flake, place some gear, hook a chock stone and hope the turf is frozen for the exit on the right. Climb the long snow slope and any rock you can find on the way to the top.

*K. McGee, P. Tinney 27/02/10*

Scunnered IV 50m \*

Climb the same ice gully as the Viper Pit. At the top of the gully move right and climb up the steep v corner. At the top of this move right round the corner and climb up over a large jammed flake about 5 feet up with good hooks onto the edge of the arete. Continue to top.

*K. McGee, P. Tinney 05/12/10*

Comfortably Numb IV 50m

Start about 15m left of the corner of the Nutcracker Buttress.

Pitch 1: Gain the ledge to the left of the small overhang Move slightly right and make a few steep moves up the next wall, exit left on to a ledge and follow easy ground up the corner. Bridge up the final few metres of the corner until the sloping ledge on the right can be gained. Traverse right to a large belay ledge which is shared with the Nutcracker.

Pitch 2: Climb up the thin groove at the left edge of the belay ledge, trend slightly right and up the open book corner to gain a large ledge above. Climb the corner crack to the top

*K. McGee, P. Tinney 24/03/13*

### Winter Nutcracker IV 50m \*\*\*

Start left of the corner of the buttress. Follow the obvious line of weakness up two steps to a stance on a large block. Step out right into the small corner which leads to the left edge of the ledge. Move to the right of the ledge and climb the steep corner to gain a stance at the base of the chimney. Make a few awkward moves to get into it and climb easily to the top. Start in the centre of the final wall and move left to gain the edge and follow this to the top.

*K. McGee, P. Tinney 28/11/10*



### Bogeyman IV 45m \*\*

Start to the right of the corner of the buttress. Follow the obvious rightward trending ramp to level with the odd rock formations. Step left to a protruding block to gain a stance in a small alcove. Climb steeply to the large platform. The next section is the crux but well protected. Move left and follow the line of the vertical crack using thin horizontal cracks for upward progress. Haul yourself into a stance behind the large block. Move easily behind this and into the chimney and climb up and then out the righthand corner. Follow a crack line (large cam at base) on the right edge of the final wall to a stance below a slightly overhanging corner with some loose stones at the top. Climb this to the top.

*K. McGee, P. Tinney 19/12/10*

### Pick'n'Mix II 100m

To the right of the Winter Nutcracker climb past the edge of the large buttress to gain access to two gullies separated by a rib with numerous rock outcrops that lead to the quarry. Any number of variations can be taken offering simple snow plods to technical moves on iced up rock to short steep ice steps.

### Mine Sweeper I 60m

At the back of the mine on the far left there is a nice line leading to the summit. It has 3 small rock bands which add interest and a steep snow slope at the top.

*P. Tinney 27/02/10*

### Easter Rising I 60m

To the right of Mine Sweeper climb the rightwards trending ramp until the rock band. Surmount this

and easier snow to summit.

*A. Tees, M. McGuigan, C. McLaughlin 30/03/13*

Crowe's Gully I 60m

This short gully climbs to the plateau of An Mhucais from the back right of the excavated platform near the summit of An Mhucais. OK when banked up, as rock is very loose.

Y Gully I 150m

This gully starts up a rock step just right of the ramp on the miners track. It soon forks, and both options provide an enjoyable outing (the right being probably better) and an atmospheric exit onto the plateau in the right conditions.

The Funnel III 100m

The chimney in the northern amphitheatre of An Mhucais, just right of the miners track. A gully leads to the narrow loose chimney, which opens out above. Turn a slab on the left?

*D. Golden, P. Turley, A. Tees 29/01/84*

Alzheimer's III 250m \*\*

Climb up the frozen stream at the start of the miners path. At the top of this follow the right hand gully (the ridge and miner path steps are kept on the left). Climb a series of iced up chimneys to get through the 3 rock bands. Climb the snow slope to the middle of the wall between the Funnel and Gully of the Gods. Climb up the centre of the 5m wall on small holds and poor protection. Take the obvious line of weakness through the next section and then climb a short steep corner to a good belay. Traverse right into Gully of the Gods, up another short ice step and move right again to the base of a small ice fall (10m). Climb this and continue to the top.

*K. McGee, D. Millar. 24/12/10*

Blue Steel III 130m \*\*

This route climbs the ridge to the left of Gully of the Gods. Start on the lowest rock step to the left of the gully. Climb the arete to a good belay below the large pinnacle. Climb the pinnacle on the right edge on good holds but poor protection to gain a stance in the little cove. Climb up and step left at the top to regain the ridge. Continue up the ridge to the top climbing all the rock walls. The second last wall is steep but well protected.

*K. McGee, P. Tinney 09/01/11*

Gully of the Gods I 130m \*\*

Climb the superb gully starting 20m to right of "The Funnel." Climb the gully and taking the right fork at the Island mid height. Perfect atmospheric Grade 1 snow gully with a micro steepness through a slight constriction at half height, easily passable single axed. :-)

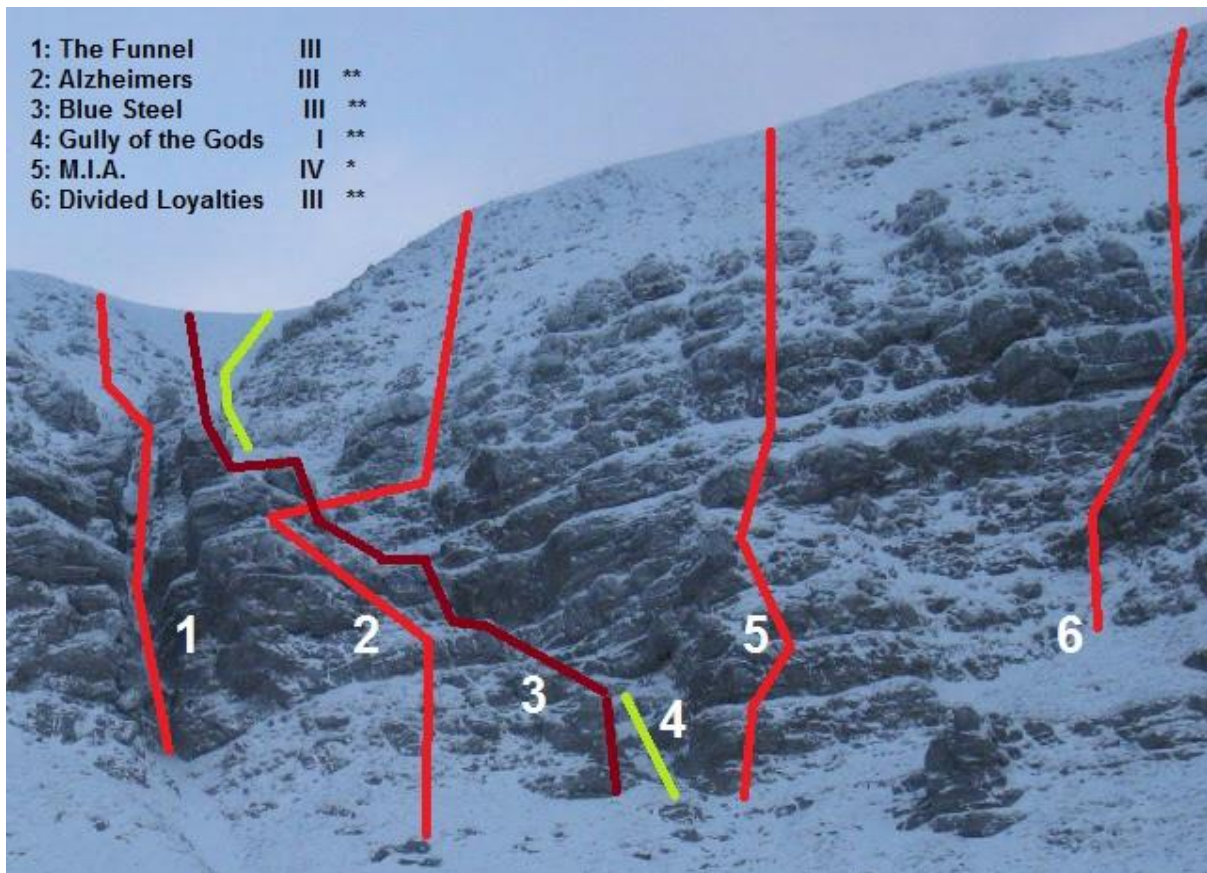
*P. Tinney, K McGee Dec 2009*

M.I.A IV 130m \*

A good climb offering superb technical climbing through the rock bands but unfortunately contains lots of easy ground. Starts a few metres to the right of Gully of the Gods. Climb the overhang to gain the ledge. Move slightly right and climb the steep corner. Continue over easier ground and belay at the large block. Climb up the next wall (poorly protected) to reach more easy ground. Climb up a short slab to gain a stance below an overhang with two parallel cracks. Climb this, using a small chockstone in the right crack to make life easier for yourself. Continue to the top.

*K. McGee, P. Tinney 9/01/11*





Divided Loyalties III 130m \*\*

To the right of Gully of the Gods is an obvious line falling over a number of rock bands on the left side of a corner. Climb the first step (mixed) to gain thicker ice and follow this to the top of the rock bands (60m). Continue up the long snow slope to top.

*K. McGee, P. Tinney 05/12/10*

The Escalator I 150m

Climb the narrow Gully immediately behind the rock tower, a wee rock step about half height provides the crux

*K. Kiely, P. McDermott, J. Black, I. Miller 22/01/15*

Unnamed II 150m

Climb the broad rocky ridge between "The Escalator" and "White Reverence" gullies, many variations possible at about Grade II.

*P. McDermott, K. Kiely 22/01/15*

White Reverence I 150m \*

At the far right of main face immediately to the right of the big chunky tower, start at the 2nd gully to the right of the tower. Climb this gully to a very short steepening and continue up the centre of the pristine uniform snow slope above to the summit plateau with a huge feeling of "Big Air!"

*I. Miller 05/03/10*

Caradhras Gully I 120m \*

Approx. 100m to the right of the chunky tower at the base of "White Reverence," climb the huge gully to the left of the face containing the huge cave.

*A. & P. Tinney 16/02/14*



## South Side of An Mhucais

Centre Gully I 100m

Grid Ref B996267, Immediately to the East of Droichead na nDeor on the North facing slope in the high gap at the Southern end of An Mhucais. This route climbs the ominous looking gully up the easy angled frozen stream. 5 Mins walk from the road!

*I. Miller, C. Gleeson 06/01/10*

### Cnoc na Láraigh

Drive through An Mhucais Gap towards Falcarragh, Sruthán an Sceardain is the stream with the main waterfall on the North Side of Cnoc na Láraigh. Grid Ref.B982265

Crock of Gold III 150m

Climb the main right-hand fall which starts steeply and eases as it enters and follows the outstanding stepped ravine above.

*A. Tees, P. Robinson 11/02/91*

Cool Láragh II 50m

Climb the left steam of Sruthán an Sceardain, this fall is slimmer and less stepped than the parent fall. It tends to form much quicker and disappears equally fast.

*P. Robinson, A. Tees 11/02/91*

## Sagart na Dubhaise

Blunt Points II 50m

On the north west face of Sagart na Dubhaise, there is series of slabs and rock steps. This route goes up the left side as you look from the main road. Climb easily up first slab to large rock step. Go over this on the left and follow iced slab up and over some more iced steps and slabs. The walk in is about 10 or 15 mins from the main R251 road to Errigal at Grid Ref: B 988 223.

*K. McGee, P. Tinney, G. Scott. 03/01/10*

Sharp Points II 55m

About 10metres to the right of Blunt Points go up over the large rock step on the right. Move up slab to next steep step and up large slab to final step with difficult exit on heather above.

*K. McGee, P. Tinney, G. Scott. 03/01/10*

## Mac Uchta

Directions: Leave the main Errigal Road, R251 at Droichead Charlach Motháin at Grid Ref B953205. On foot follow old access road for Altan farm for 200 mtrs until it turn right sharply, leave the road and turn West to travel past Crystal rock until you reach the North face of Mac Uchta.

Map ref: B942216

Op out Ridge I 100m

Climb up most eastwardly ridge on good rock and snow with some thin ice it is in 3 pitches with small scrambling between pitches.

*M. Boner 29/12/09*

Y Ridge I 80m

Start at entrance to central gully and scramble on to several small ledges to get up on main ridge follow spine until connecting with Op out ridge and finish as same.

*M. Boner 29/12/09*

**Central Gully I 160m**

Start same as Y ridge climb up left side of wide gully on good snow until small break between Y ridge and a large wall like ridge that run up middle of main gully of face ,follow up this into another wide gully that runs parallel with wall like ridge this gully steepens at it top and on to easier ground in main gully to near top where there are optional exit.

*M. Boner 02/01/10*

**Wall Ledge I 160m**

Start same as Central Gully follow up right side of wide gully past break in wall ridge and follow up left of wall ridge on steepish wide ledge until small snow bank and trend right up steep gully wall on mixed rock and frozen turf to small face at crest of next ridge A tricky rock step back slightly to left and exit up steep narrow Chute to easier ground and scramble to top.

*M. Boner 28/12/09*

**Twin Step Gully I 180m \***

Start at next gully to the right of wall Ledge ,follow up slightly wide gully on good snow until steep rock step into narrower gully on mixed ice and rock until it widens again with snow Follow up until crossing of wall ledge route and staying left of gully climb a short steep snow wall on poor snow and traverse right into central gully carry on up easier ground C Gully and exit as per Central Gully.

*M. Boner 30/12/09*

**Step Diversion I 180m**

Start as Twin step follow to snow gully to 1st step and turn right and climb up right hand bank of Gully on rock and frozen turf to crest of main ridge in face scramble leftward over grassy ledge to snowy wide slope on right and climb up this steep face to a ledge with frozen turf/rocks and turn left at cliff edge into a slope of mixed ground to exit.

*M. Boner 27/12/09*

**2009 Exit II 180m \***

Start in next gully to right of Twin Step Gully .Climb up narrow steep gully on Mixed Rock and Ice to a widen snow slope keep left and climb another narrow gully on good ice until it meet step diversion route .Finish as per Step diversion.

*M. Boner 01/01/10*

**2010 Entry I 200m**

Same start as "2009 exit" but divert right before 2nd gully up a steep gully bank on rock and frozen turf to crest of adjacent ridge scramble rightward in to a wide snow slope which leads to a narrow snow filled ledge with some exposure traverse ledge until it comes to easier ground and turn left and exit on mixed ground.

*M. Boner 31/12/09*

**Stephen's Ridge I 200m**

50 mtrs further right from start of 2009 exit and much lower is start of this ridge climb on to ridge on good rock some patches of ice and snow until meeting with 2010 entry route finish as per 2010 entry.

*M. Boner 26/12/09*

## **Errigal**

Directions: Errigal Mountain, Donegal's highest point, it's south ridge route is climbed by thousands on an annual basis. Under Winter conditions this mountain provides exceptional winter mountaineering routes on it's North, West and East faces. Access to these faces is by the winding B road travelling North from the Dún Lúiche. Discretion and considerate parking on this small farm road are required. The excellent Dún Lúiche centre, just to the south of the hamlet, displays current information

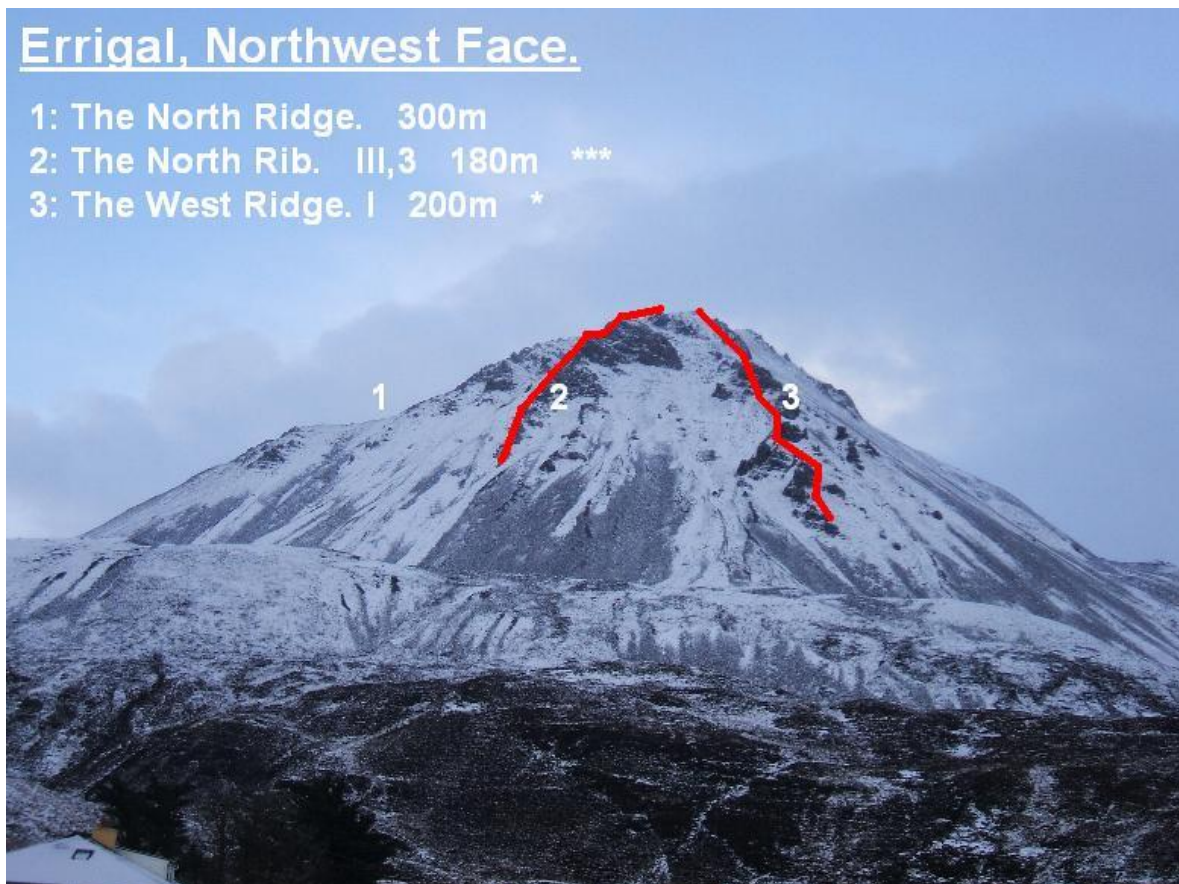
regarding access to the North side of this mountain. Routes are listed starting on the West face (Above Dún Lúiche) and moving clockwise round to the East Face.

Map ref: B9220

West Ridge II 200m \*

Climb the excellent west ridge of Errigal, up superb sustained grade I steepness, with several avoidable grade II steep sections through the sentinels that live on this ridge.

*I. Miller 21/12/09*



The North Rib. (Tower Ridge) III, 3 180m \*\*\*

Climb the hanging knife edge Rib high on Errigals NW face. An absolutely outstanding mixed winter route with two distinct cruxes and considerable exposure/atmosphere. Immaculate rock, holds, turf and climbing!

*I. Miller 22/12/09*

Snow Bunting I 30m

From the top of the climb 'Heather' move up Thumb Ridge to the base of some crags but then skirt left onto the gully on the western side of Errigal's Tower Ridge. Move up the gully to the base of a crag. And climb about 3 metres and then move left and climb up the crag to the col between Tower Ridge and the North Ridge.

*M. McGuigan, P. McConnell, C. McLaughlin 04/01/10*

Redpoll Gully I 50m

This very pleasant Grade I winter route takes the gully on the western side of the 2nd Pinnacle on Errigal's Thumb Ridge (Northwest). The exit onto a snow bound ridge provides an interesting rocky challenge.

*M. McGuigan, C. McLaughlin 04/01/10*

### Snow Goose II 30m

Above the 3rd Pinnacle (Leaning Rock Crag) high on Errigal's Thumb Ridge (North West) locate a prominent triangular shaped rock. The climb is to the right and above this rock. Climb directly on the right hand side of the scoop. There is some protection in the wall on the right just below the slanting rock and there is a bomb proof belay at the top.

*M. McGuigan, C. McLaughlin, P. McConnell 04/01/10*

### North Ridge I 300m

This route is 10 degrees NNE of Errigal's lower summit. However, it is so close to North that the title North Ridge is appropriate. Access by road is available below Errigal's North Face. Parking is not guaranteed. Climb until base of scree slopes at the base of North Gully and take the scree slope on the left skyline. Climb all small rocky outcrops that appear (just for enjoyment) until you reach the Col. Locate a slanting slab with very visible central crack and climb this and follow ridge until an overhanging rock forces a short move onto the Eastern Face for 4 meters. Then climb directly to regain the ridge and enjoy all the way to the lower summit.

### Heather Left Branch II 30m

Above the 3rd Pinnacle (Leaning Rock Crag) high on Errigal's Thumb Ridge (Northwest) locate a prominent triangular shaped rock. The climb is to the right and above this rock. Climb about mid-height and move left onto more vertical challenges. Frozen turf appears just when it is needed. It is a very airy climb, there is minimal (if any) protection available and there is lots of air beneath your heels. However, there is a bomb proof belay at the top.

*P. McConnell, M. McGuigan, C. McLaughlin 04/01/10*

### Eastern Gully I 120m

This winter route takes the very visible central gully below and between the twin peaks on the Eastern Face of Errigal. The climb exits at the col between Errigal's twin summits. Access to the climb is either from the 1st Col on Errigal's North Ridge and a traverse of the Eastern Face to the Gully. Alternatively, as on this climb, access can be gained from the Col between Mac Uchta and Errigal. This involves a brilliant airy snow (and sometimes) ice traverse on a narrow ledge and onto Errigal's Eastern face. From either start, one has to cross snowbound Scree Slopes until a deep gully flanked with what appears to be Glacial Moraine type scree appears. Climb the gully direct until a short wall presents itself and either climb the wall (if snow / ice conditions are good) or climb the left or right flanks to gain the wide gully above. Exit to the left (Summit) or right (Lower summit).

### The Crescent II 80m

To the right of Rusty Nail across a broad slope is another ridge. Climb this from it's lowest point to the top and then continue along the normal route to the summit. This is mainly grade1 with a few grade 2 moves but the harder sections can be easily bypassed.

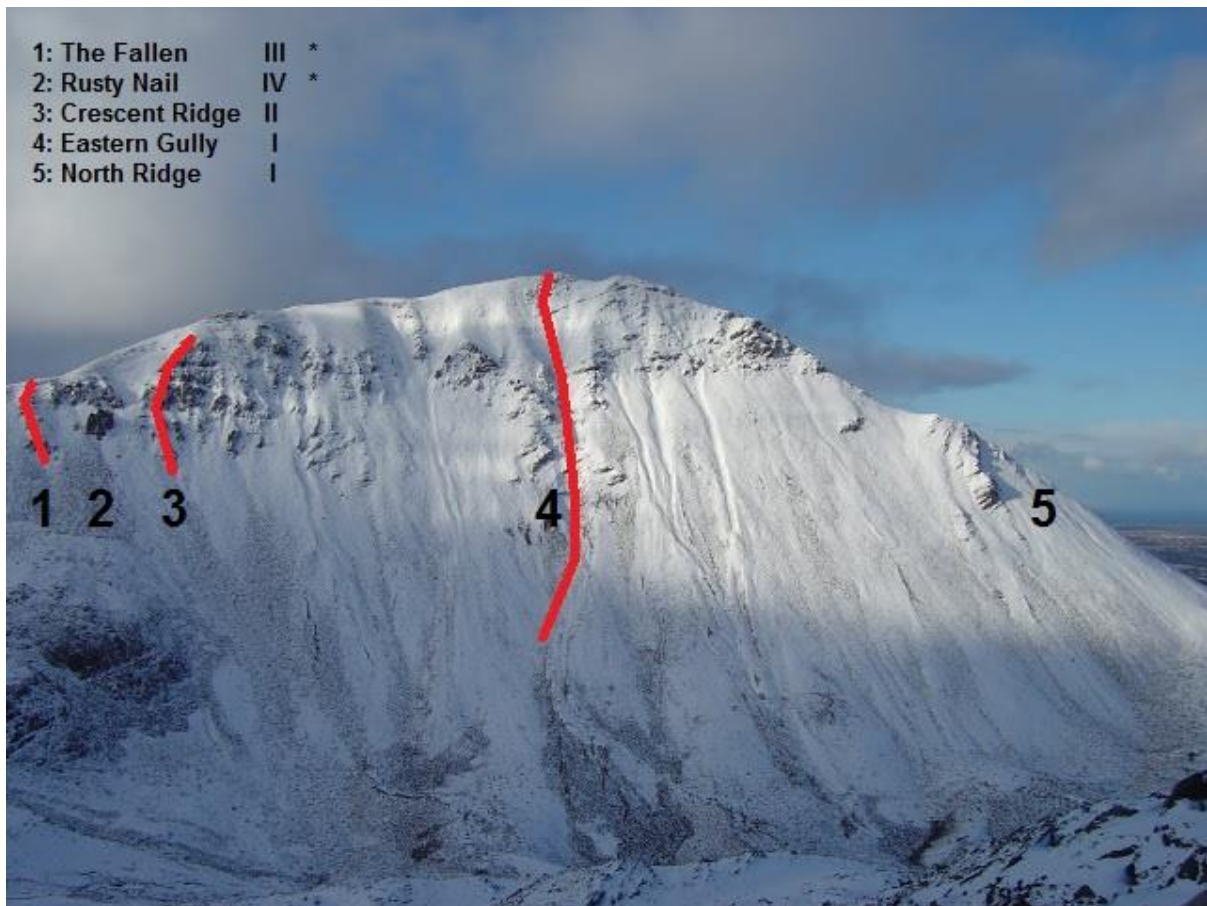
*K. Mc Gee, P. Tinney 21/02/10*

### Rusty Nail IV 50m \*

To the right of The Fallen is a large pinnacle. Climb a small step to gain a grassy ledge at the base of the pinnacle. Climb directly up to a wide crack and some protection. Good axe hooks help the next ledge to be gained. Climb easily over the top and down the other side being careful of loose stones. Continue along the next series of rocky steps to gain a good belay spot. From here cross a short snow slope and another small rock step to the base of the next pitch. Climb over the loose flakes and up the obvious steep crack which has excellent protection. Follow the rock steps and climb the right edge of the final one and belay. Gain ridge and follow the normal route to the top.

*K. Mc Gee, P. Tinney 07/03/10*





The Fallen III 50m \*

High on the east face are a series of rocky ridges. They can be reached by traversing onto the face from the normal route. The Fallen climbs the first of these. Climb directly up the centre of the pillar and then make a move on the left edge to gain the highest point. Drop down the other side and climb the remaining rock steps to a good belay spot. Cross the snow slope to the base of a thin crack, climb this past a small niche to a grassy ledge. Move left past the large flakes and make an airy move onto the left side of the face. Climb to the highest point, drop down the other side and climb the final rock step up past the loose stone.

*K. Mc Gee, P. Tinney 21/02/10*

### Mám an Leaca

Directions: The North face of Mám an Leaca, easiest access is from the car park at the south face of Errigal. Follow the stream at spot height 243 to Loch Chró an Lochán, pass the loch along it's Southern shore to the smaller lochan (Grid Ref B959194) and the base of this excellent winter venue.

Map ref: B962192

Hidden Gully I 150m

At the Eastern end of the crag approx 200m left of "The Black Run," Climb the excellent full crag height gully which arcs back right around the eastern end of the crag. Mostly easy Grade I with 2 wee cheeky steep bits at 1/3 & 2/3rd height.

*I. Miller 30/11/10*

The Black Run III 180m

Follow the most Northerly of the streams feeding the wee lochan East of Loch Chró an Lochán. After 100m take the left hand branch and follow the ice falls to the summit via the superb 40m ice ramp and

the cheeky wee summit chimney.

*I. Miller, C. Gleeson 03/01/10*

Jumble Falls IV 150m

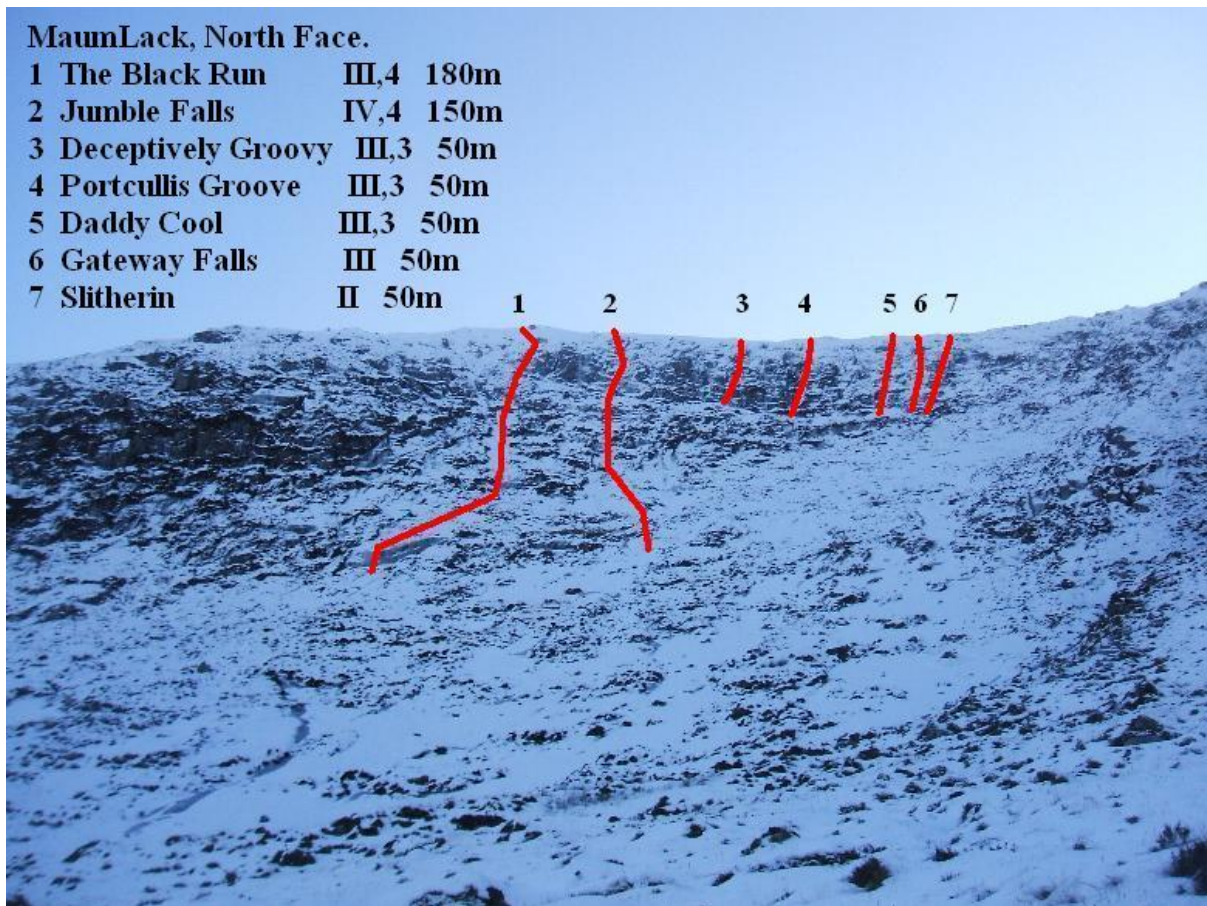
Follow the same stream as for "The Black Run" and take the right branch at the Y junction. Climb this steep stream to the summit. Looks a bit like Angus the giants bubble wrap from below.

*I. Miller 04/01/10*

Deceptively Groovy III 50m

Approx. 30m from the right edge of "Jumble Falls" climb the "Easy Looking" steep groove direct to the summit with a thought provoking mini roof crux.

*I. Miller 04/01/10*



Portcullis Groove III 50m

Approx. 20m to the right of "Deceptively Groovy" climb the deep V groove. Frozen sphagnum and turf is essential!!

*I. Miller 04/01/10*

Daddy Cool III 50m

Climb the stepped cascade fall with the 2 block pillar at its base.

*Iain Miller 03/01/10*

Gateway Falls III 50m

10 or so metres right of the "Daddy Cool" pillar, climb the steep cascade fall through the twin huge block gateway at 20m.

*I. Miller 04/01/10*

**Slitherin II 50m**

Climb the nicely angled ice fall up the slabs immediately to the right of The Gateway Falls.

*I. Miller 04/01/10*

**Loch Chró an Lochán Gully I 120m**

B953194 From the left hand edge of Loch Chró an Lochán climb the very obvious gully, either up the centre over or avoiding the large boulders or climb its right hand edge.

*C. McLaughlin, M. McGuigan 10/01/10*

**Brain Freeze III 50m \***

On the North side of Mám an Leaca there is a large gully leading up from the small lake. The gully is a easy and interesting climb. About 2/3 the way up the gully there is a large slab of rock on the right looking from the lake with superb ice on it. Grid ref: B 960 191. Climb the ice to the top making an awkward step onto ramp above. (75' ice). Follow steep ramp leftwards to the next section of ice. Climb this at about 70' and step onto the final section of hanging ice to the top of the large boulder.

*K. McGee, P. Tinney. 05/01/10*

## **Cró Nimhe**

The Cró Nimhe in the Cnoic Doire Bheatha is by far the most outstanding winter climbing venue in Donegal and a contender for the best in Ireland. This wall of North facing cliff stretches for over a kilometre and reaches a height of 400m at it's highest point on An Bhearna Buttress. The cliff is seamed with deep wet gullies and hidden vertical water courses and given the correct winter conditions it will provide many lifetimes of icy climbing potential.

Alas in the harsh winter of 2009/2010 when the glen came into excellent condition it was prone to be subject to temperature inversion which in turn allowed great underfoot walk in conditions but meant an early start to avoid the midday thaw.

Access is from the Dún Lúiche road end at Grid Ref B930189 from here follow the Abháinn Cró Nímhe for approx 2.5 KM.

Map ref: B9416

**Never Ever Again! III, 3 80m**

Starting at the skyline ridge at the far left of the above Castle Face photo, climb up to the first steep rock band and make a thrutchfest type move up the wide crack at it's left end. Climb towards the huge hanging roof block, traverse (teeter) leftward to gain the right facing corner and ascend to the salvation of the huge platform above "Culham Rib."

*I. Miller 01/12/10*

**Giggle Gully II 170m**

Approx. 60m to the East of the start of "South Gully," climb this thinner gully to a divide, climb the left fork up a steep chimney or boulder grovel up the right fork with an un-nerving "cut loose" moment, these mini gullies reconvene and join "South Gully." Climb South Gully for 50m to a further divide of three exit gullies take the steep left fork to the huge flat expanse above "Culham Rib."

*I. Miller 01/12/10*

**South Gully I 250m**

This is the obvious gully on the left of the Castle, in the Cró Nimhe. There is one short step, otherwise straightforward.

**Central Gully III 300m**

Start up Castle Gully, fork left, and follow steep gully up the centre of the Castle. Has been climbed, but no ascent in proper winter conditions known. Grade III or IV probably, depending on the line taken.



### Castle Gully II 400m \*\*\*

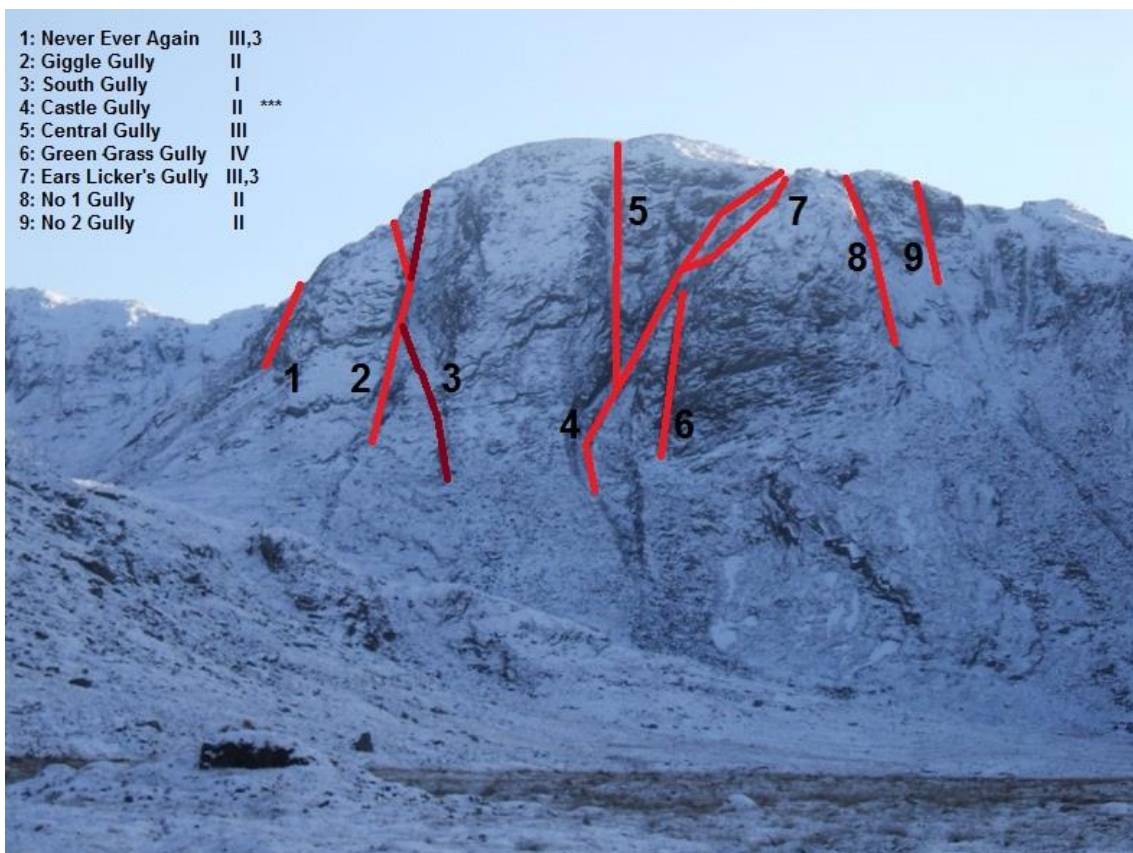
This is the deep rightward curving gully starting just left of Green Grass Gully in the Castle. Mainly straightforward, with a chimney two thirds way up, and a narrow rock chute at the top. Have been up this many times over many winters, but this is the first time I have done it in proper winter conditions, the iced up chimney makes it Gr 2. A great outing!!

*A. Tees, M. McGuigan, V. Schafer, E. Johnston, C. McLaughlin 09/01/10*

### Ear Lickers Gully III, 3 380m

Start up "Castle Gully" until it sweeps round to the right behind the Castle Face. At the convergence of "Castle Gully" and "Central Gully" take the gully on the right up through a very steep ice boulder problem and follow the gully above to the summit. After the initial hard start the gully eases for 50m and the final 50m is very steep with a slightly overhanging boulder choke finish. A full body pump is guaranteed! :-)

*I. Miller, O. Millson 08/12/10*



### No.1 Gully II 100m

A two pitch, deep, gully at the right hand edge of the Castle.

*P. McConnell, K. Monaghan 08/01/10*

### No. 2 Gully II 100m

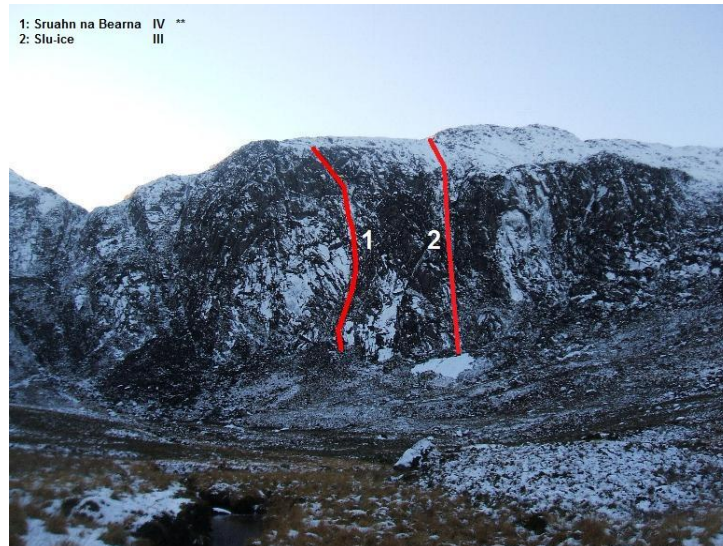
The next gully right of No.1 Gully, a short vertical pitch of 5m, followed by steep ice/frozen heather to the top.

*P. McConnell, C. McLaughlin, K. Monaghan 08/01/10*

### Arctic Tern III 12m

This is the short ice wall about 100m down from Windy/An Bhearna in the Cró Nimhe, on the LHS as you descend. Climbed from the lowest (right) side.





#### Sruthán na Bearná IV 4a 450m \*\*

Grid Ref B943165. This route climbs the multiplied falled stream immediately to the West of the An Bhearna Buttress in the Cró Nimhe. The main stream course is followed with several grade IV pitches in succession. The route follows the stream through the excellent & huge summit gully and up a final boulder choke to salvation. A strenuous and committing route.

*I. Miller, A. Tees 08/01/10*

#### Slu-ice III 400m

This takes the drainage line directly up from the top of Australia Slab. On the right hand side of the area between An Bhearna buttress and West Buttress climb mixed grooved granite (and hopefully some ice), until a big heathery rake is gained, which leads off leftwards. Ignore this and continue up a narrow gully under a big overhang and up a chimney (the best bit) to the top.

*A. Tees, P. Robinson 1991*

#### Gully of the Ghouls II 120m

Grid Ref B937168 This superb gully is clearly shown on the OSi map. Approach the Cró Nimhe from the Dún Lúiche Side, at the juncture of the three streams (GR B944169) head West and up into the sky line gully. Climb the gully with continued interest till the very top. Mainly steep Grade I with 2 near vertical ice walls. If banked up this gully would be a classic Grade I climb.

*I. Miller, O. Millson 20/12/10*

### Sliabh Sneachta

Directions: The huge, remote and mildly intimidating North face of Sliabh Sneachta in the Cnoic Dhoire Bheatha, provides a selection of excellent low grade winter climbs in a superb and atmospheric location. Access is from Dún Lúiche road end at Grid Ref B930189, from here walk South for 3km to the Lochán an Mhama at the base of Sliabh Sneachta North face.

Map ref: B 9215

#### The X factor I 350m \*

Climb the centre of the North Face as for "Hogmanay," and take the obvious left hand snow ramp/gully to the summit. This snow ramp can be easily seen from Dún Lúiche 6 km to the North.

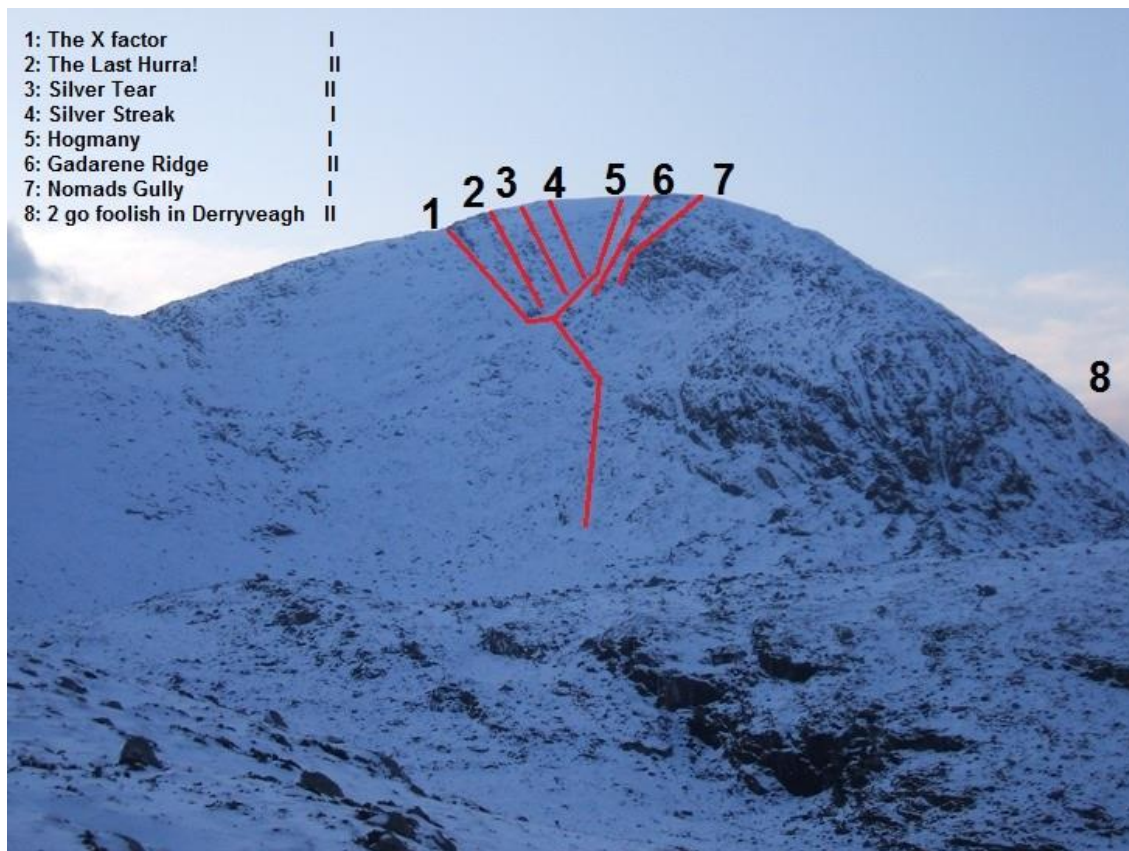
*I. Miller 25/02/10*

#### The Last Hurra! II 120m

From Dún Lúiche 6KM to the North of Sliabh Sneachta, the North face of Sliabh Sneachta is bisected by a huge X of prominent snow ramps. The upper half of this X is taken by "X factor" on the

left branch and "Hogmanay" on the right branch. From the centre of the X (the intersection of "X factor" & "Hogmanay") climb direct to the summit up a series of steep iced slabs and even steeper iced corners.

*I. Miller 25/02/10*



Silver Tear II 120m

Starting 5 metres to the right of "The Last Hurra" climb direct to the summit up more steep iced slabs and corners.

*I. Miller 01/03/10*

Silver Streak I 120m

Starting 10m to the right of "Silver Tear" climb up the icy slabs and up the centre of the snow ramp to the summit. This is a very icy route when not banked out!

*I. Miller 01/03/10*

Hogmanay I 350m \*\*

This route climbs a direct line up the centre of the huge, remote and intimidating North face of Sliabh Sneachta in the Cnoic Dhoire Bheatha. Grid Ref B924147 Starting centre bottom of the thick ice covered slabs climb a direct line for 200m up the slabs to a huge boulder at the base of a prominent left trending ramp. Ascend the ramp to gain the huge steep centre gully high in the upper face. Climb the centre gully to the summit. A winter grade of I would be appropriate for this long and superbly atmospheric climb.

*A. Tees, P. Robertson 13/01/91*

Gadarene Ridge II 350m

Climb the centre of the North Face as for "Hogmanay" to the huge boulder at the base of the left trending snow ramp. Climb directly up from the boulder, following the slightly left trending groove/gully, climb up a steepening and up into a larger gully. From the base of this larger gully gain and ascend the large blocky ridge to the summit. This summit ridge provides several superb

situations.

*I. Miller 25/02/10*

Nomad's Gully I 150m \*

Climb the steep snow gully to the right of "Gadarene Ridge" to the summit.

*I. Miller 01/03/10*

Two go foolish in Cnoic Dhoire Bheatha! II 130m

On the North Ridge of Slieve Snaght, approx 5m right of the summer route "5 go wild in Cnoic Dhoire Bheatha " climb the huge open book corner for 30 or so metres and continue direct up superb ice smears running down the slabs. Excellent climbing on immaculate iced slabs with just enough frozen turf to save the day!!

*I. Miller, S. "Jock" Read 23/12/09*

### Horse-Shoe Coire. (Loch Beara)

Directions: This huge steep sided coire immediately to the North West of Lough Beara in the Cnoic Dhoire Bheatha provides many steep water courses and Falls. The potential for further winter routes is enormous.

Map ref: B9213

Jock's Route II 120m

At the Northern end of the east face of Cnoc Fada, climb the steep full crag height arete which bounds the left wall of the huge unclimbed "deep gash gully."

*S. "Jock" Read, I. Miller 23/12/09*



Grid Reference B919135, on the Eastern face of Cnoc Fada, immediately North of the Deep Gash Gully, three obvious icefalls converge. The following four routes climb these falls.

Plan B I 120m

Ascend the iced up slabs and steps leading to the fall left of Morbid Angel. At the bottom of the fall climb a steep rock corner and traverse left to gain more iced up slabs and steps. Climb these to the top.

*K. McGee, P. Tinney, D. Millar 23/12/10*



Morbid Angel III, 3 120m

Climb easily at first, up the converged falls and then steeply up the centre fall, through superb ice and mixed ground.

*I. Miller 10/02/09*

Right Hand Path IV,4 120m \*\*

Climb the very steep and very unforgiving fall immediately to the right of "Morbid Angel."

*I. Miller 13/01/10*

Right Corner III 50m \*

Ascend the ice steps to the right of Right Hand Path and climb the steep pillar of ice in the corner. Continue up the next step and then move a few metres left to climb the final step.

*K. McGee, P. Tinney, D. Millar 23/12/10*



Sruthán Chró Lao Falls II 100m \*\*

Grid Ref B922136. Climb this excellent easy angled slabby fall through several short steep steps to a final very cheeky steep finish and into "The Valley of Jack" river bed finish.

*I. Miller 13/01/10*

Sruthán Chró Lao Smear II 100m

Climb the full crag height ice smear, approx. 100m to the North East of the Sruthán Chró Lao Falls.

*I. Miller 13/01/10*

The following two routes climb different water courses up the Sruthán an Sceardáin Ghil Waterfalls at Grid Ref B927136

The Centre Fall II 80m \*

Climb the main fall up the centre of the broad lower slabs, through two wee steepenings to the pool/skating rink at the base of the short steep upper fall. Climb the upper fall to salvation!

*I. Miller 25/12/09*

The Right Fall II 80m \*

Climb the slimmer right hand fall up the broad lower slab to the pool/ice rink at the base of the steep



upper fall. Climb the steep upper fall to salvation.

*I. Miller 25/12/09*



Square Cut Gully III,3 140m \*\*\*

Grid Ref B934135. Climb the most obvious huge gully on this crag, clearly seen from the last farmhouse on the "main" road. This is an outstanding climb under winter conditions, mainly Grade II climbing with a most definite steep ice pitch at 2/3 height.

*I. Miller 22/12/10*



Square Cut Gully III,3 140m \*\*\*

## An Chruach Gorm

Directions: Sitting in the South East of the county An Chruach Gorm Range has enormous potential for Winter climbing.

Access to An Chruach Gorm in winter conditions is by far the crux of climbing in the range as all the convenient approach roads are very narrow and winding B roads and very prone to icing as they are suitably sheltered from the Southwest sea breezes. The easiest approach is also the longest and starts from the Barnesmore car park on the N15 at H031857, this approach only uses national roads and involves a long walk West from your starting point.

Below are the few routes so far recorded.

Finn McCool III 150m

High on the North Side of An Eaghla, above Loch Finne. Park at the West end of the Loch and follow a ravine, before breaking out left onto the hillside. This is a narrow steep stream, which can be identified from the road. Grid Ref G896998.

*A. Tees, U. Hamilton 16/02/94*

Perrin Gully II 200m

This is a thin gully with a small stream in it on the South side of Barnesmore Gap, just before you exit the gap going towards Ballybofey. There is a more prominent gully beside. Numerous small rock steps, some or all of which can be avoided. Easy of access by road.

*A. Tees, U. Hamilton, M. Manson 1976*

Glas Slipper III 200m

On Cnoc na nGlascharm, in the An Chruach Gorm, Grid ref G980925. This takes the small stream that spills out of Hidden Gully, and down the slabs. Two pitches up the slabs, lead to a series of steps and into the gully and two more pleasant pitches to the final step.

*B. Magowan, A. Tees 08/01/03*

The Grey Mare's Tail III 150m \*\*\*

The big waterfall in An tSruthall Valley grid ref G825897. Starts easy, gets steeper, then eases again.

*A. Tees, P. Marshall 14/01/87*

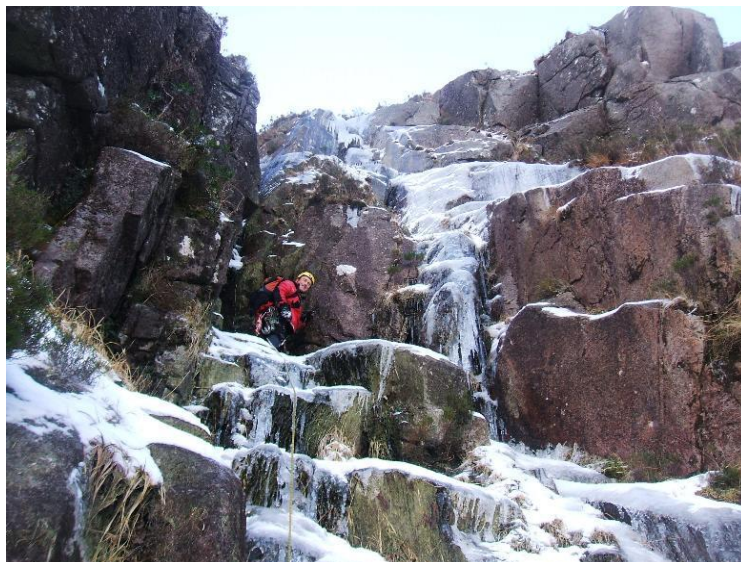


**Errigal from Sliabh Sneachta**





**High on “Hogmanay,” north face of Sliabh Sneachta**



**Pitch 4, “Sruthán na Bhearna” in Cró Nimhe**



**Pitch 3, “Two go Foolish in Cnoic Doire Bheatha”**

## **Many thanks to**

Alan Tees, Kevin McGee, Patrick Tinney, Caoimhe Gleeson and Stephen “Jock” Reed  
for their help in researching, photographing and climbing the routes to make this guide possible.



## 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.