

A climbers guide to

Gleann Cholm Cille

By

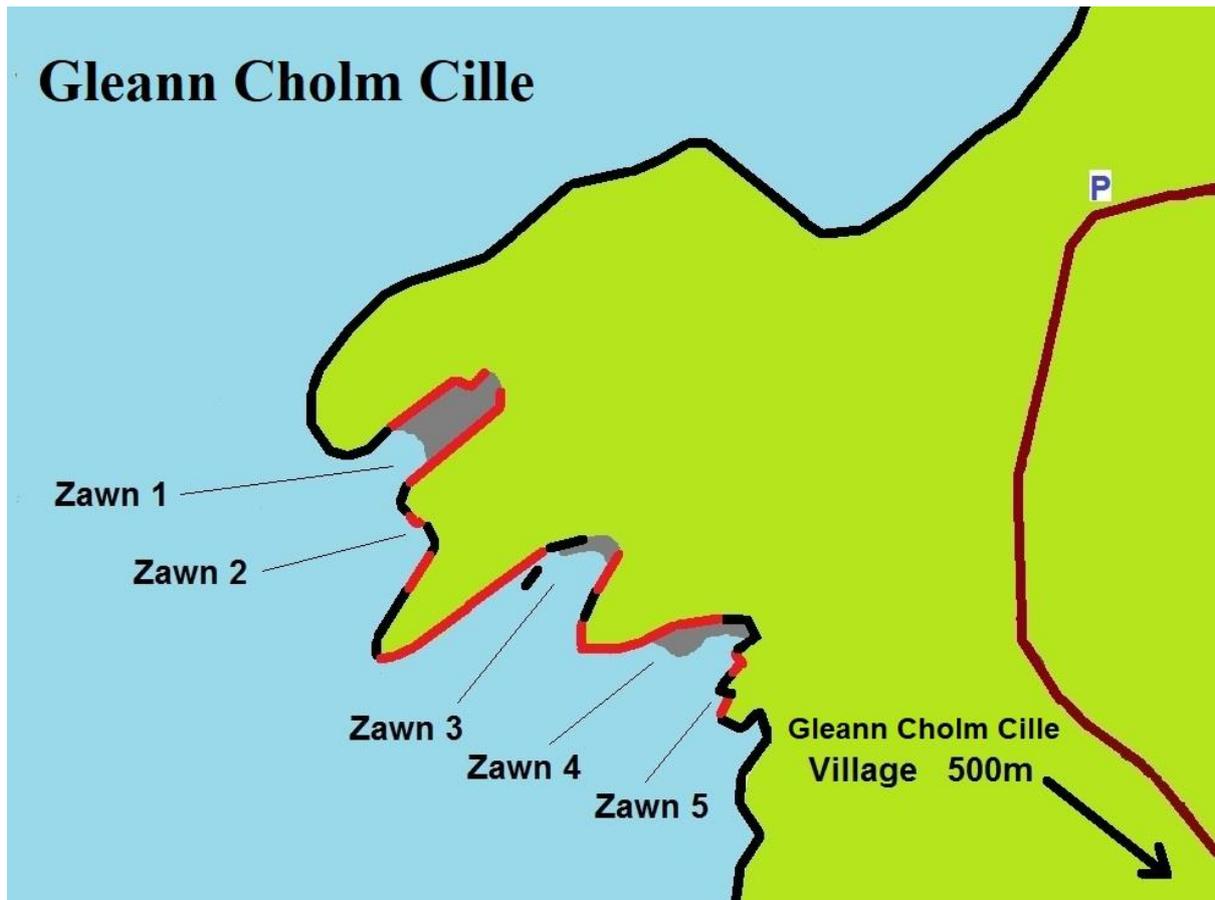
Iain Miller



Gleann Cholm Cille

Directions: This area comprises of a series of zawns situated on the inconspicuous grassy headland between Gleann Cholm Cille village and Glen Head. These zawns offer varied and excellent climbing each with its own character, and the routes tend to have a more serious feel than those at Málainn Bhig. Abseil stakes are in place where necessary. For the climber not yet moved into the extreme grade, these zawns will provide exciting and adventurous routes with a good selection up to HVS. The zawns are described North to South.

[Gleann Cholm Cille Google Maps pin](#) Map ref: G516857



Zawn 1

The routes to the left are on a black wall above the sea at the front of the zawn. The most prominent feature is a large right facing curving corner which stops at half height. The left side of this wall is defined by a long right-lacing corner with a quartz arête.

Midges Down Your Diddies V.Diff 20m

From near the back of the zawn, climb ledges diagonally right to the base of the tapering left-facing corner. Climb a steep but juggy flake crack across the wall on the left to the top.

J. Walls, E. Walls, P. Nolan Sept 90

Pre-Flight Checks S 4a 20m

As for "Midgies Down Your Diddies" climb the easy ledges and continue up the tapering left facing corner.

C. McDaid, I. Miller 10/05/08



Sky Gamut S 25m

Sky Gamut Below and 4m to the right of the tapering corner mentioned above, two parallel cracks go up to meet the obvious broken diagonal ramp. This route takes the less steep left-hand crack. Follow the crack to broken ledges past a short vague corner/groove. Easier climbing up ledges above to the top.

J. Walls, J. Stephenson Sept 90

Chance Meeting VS 4c 25m

The obvious thin crack 4m right of Sky Gamut and left of the wet streak. Difficulty increases with height, the crux being reaching the easy ledges near the top.

A. Currans, R. Allsop Sept 90

Protection City HVS 5a 25m

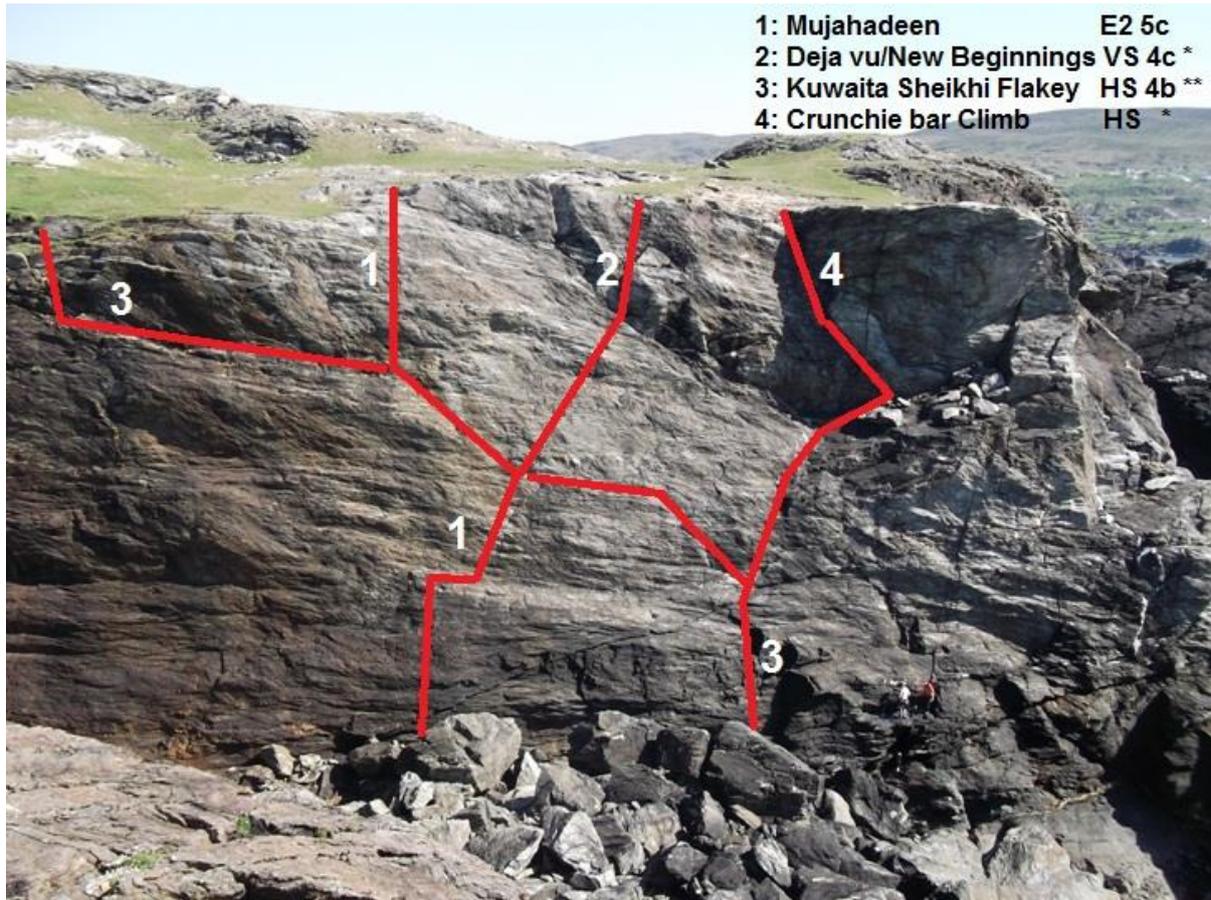
Same start as chance meeting for 6m, step right unto sloping ledge with thin diagonal crack (crux) Surmount this and onto top, trending right.

W. Canning, C. Wright Aug 94

Niggera Fall HVS 5a 30m

Starts 1/2M right of semi permanent wet streak, Climb straight up on fine moves to a small corner. Mantleshelf easily to Bulging Wall (Hard Move) right to finish.

W. Canning, R.J. Starrs Aug 94



1: Mujahadeen E2 5c
 2: Déjà vu/New Beginnings VS 4c *
 3: Kuwaiti Sheikhi Flakey HS 4b **
 4: Crunchie bar Climb HS *

Mujahadeen E2 5c 35m

Below the lower part of Kuwaiti is a ledge at 3m. Two parallel thin cracks run up to the side of the ledge, gain the ledge using the right hand crack, and step right to the thin flake crack; use this to reach the deep flake crack of Kuwaiti. Follow this leftwards to where it starts to become horizontal, near the top, below some bulging rock. Climb directly up bulging rock using a feint crack to reach a good finger slot (crux). Better holds will transport you to the top.

R. Allsop, A. Currans, P. Nolan Sept 90

Déjà vu/New Beginnings VS 4c 35m *

This route takes the obvious right- trending crack that cuts through the omnipresent Kuwaiti. Gain the ledge at 3m as for Mujahadeen and follow this route as far as the thin flake crack. Climb this crack with increasing steepness but good holds. Finish directly to the top up the left side of the block.

J. Walls, P. Nolan Sept 90

Kuwaiti Sheikhi Flakey HS 4b 40m **

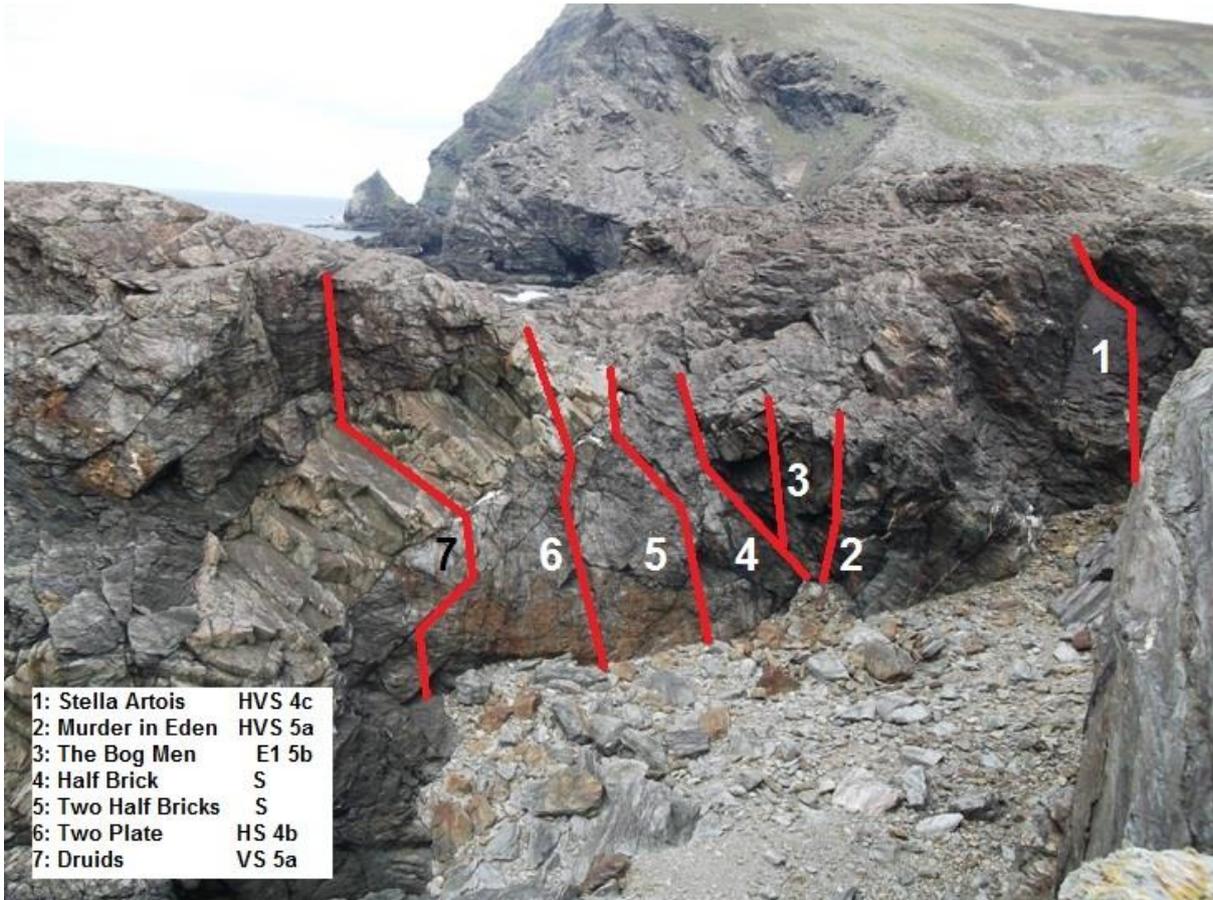
This route follows the by-now-famous right to left diagonal flake crack, starting under the overhanging prow and following it in a fine protection to where it ends near the wet streak. Every hold a jug A very good route.

J. O Dolan, C. O Dolan Sept 90

Crunchie Bar Climb HS 35m *

Below the overhanging prow is a large sloping ledge with large blocks on it. Gain the left-hand side by a series of thin flakes. Go up rightwards to the top the ledge and traverse diagonally left directly beneath the prow to reach the top.

J. Walls, R. Allsop Sept 90



The following routes are on the wall on the opposite side of the zawn.

Stella Artois HVS 4c 16m

Scramble up some blocks until you reach the base of a small triangular cave/niche. Climb up the crack and bridge up through the niche until it is possible to escape out left onto good, but overhanging face holds.

Z. Wang, G. Greene, 02/04/10

Murden in Eden HVS 5a 12m

On the first bulging section of rock on the right after descending the gully is a deep crack at about half height with a fine quartz vein on the right. Gain the crack with strenuous moves and up left to the top.

W. Canning, J. Starrs

The Bog Men E1 5b 12m

3m left of murder in Eden, around the corner, surmount the overhang to gain right facing chimney. Awkward moves right and up to the top.

W. Canning 20/07/91

Half Brick S 15m

10m left of the Bog Men, climb slabby rock to right facing corner. Climb corner to top.

M. Mc Guigan, W. Canning Aug 93

Two Half Bricks S 15m

3m left of Half Brick up slabby area to shallow corner which is climbed to the top.

J. Starrs, R. Cunningham Aug 93

Two Plates HS 4b 15m

10meters left of "Two Half Bricks" and starting at the base of the smooth walled groove, Climb the right trending crack line to the hollow sounding block and continue to the top up the left trending crack.

C. McDaid, I. Miller 10/05/08

Further down towards the sea where the crag rises in height, in the upper half of the crag there is a very obvious left facing corner.

Druids VS 5a 35m

Further down towards the sea where the crag rises in height, in the upper half of the crag there is a very obvious left facing corner. This route starts directly below this corner.

Pitch 1, 4B 25mtr, Climb the right trending crack line to the bottom of the smooth granite rock band and pad up to the top of the slabby granite.

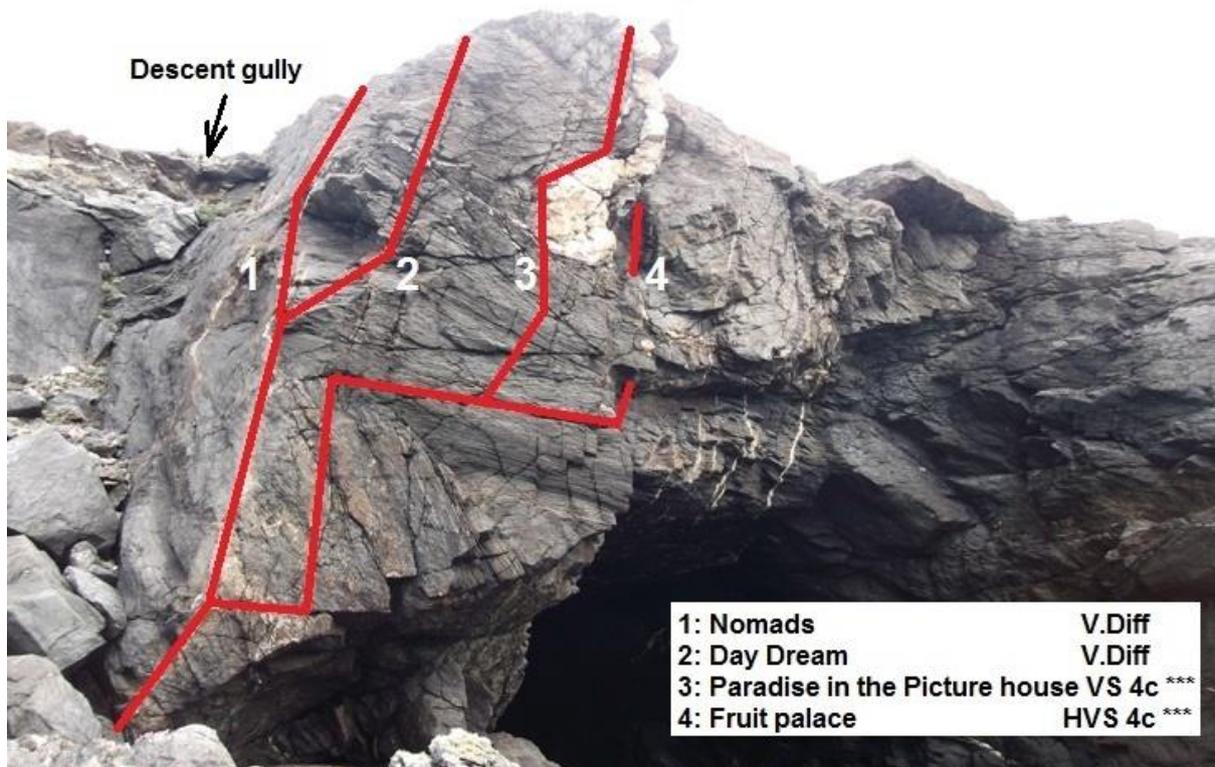
Pitch 2, 5a 10mtr, Climb the steep left facing corner.

I. Miller, C. McDaid 10/05/08

As an easier alternative 2nd pitch climb the cracked groove 8 mtrs to the left of the corner @ 4a and an overall grade of HS.

Zawn 2

Climbing here is in marked contrast to the last routes with the climbs around the huge cave giving tremendous exposure and great climbing. The first routes are on the face to the left of the cave.



Nomads V. Diff 25m

On the face to the left of the cave. Nomads Follow the quartz ribbon directly up the left arete, going left at the overhang.

P. Nolan Sept 90

Daydream V. Diff 25m **

Follow the left arete to the overhang and then move right to the obvious wide crack, which is followed to the top.

J. Stephenson, A. Curran Sept 90

Paradise in the Picture-house VS 4c 30m **

A diagonal line up the face left of the cave giving mainly easy but exposed climbing. Most difficult at the start and finish. Gain the bottom of the left arete and foot-traverse right along the obvious horizontal break. Make a tricky move up the thin crack to the large sloping ledge. From the ledge traverse right along horizontal breaks until a crack leads up to the quartz arete. Up the left side of the quartz to the overhanging nose and jam round this in a spectacular position.

J. Stephenson, A. Curran Aug 90

Fruit Palace HVS 4c 40m ***

A truly wild rock trip giving the most mind-blowing position for a route of its grade to be found anywhere in the country.

1) Follow Paradise to the horizontal breaks, but instead of climbing up to the quartz, continue traversing right to the arete. Belay here after changing your underpants. Bring your second up before changing your mind.

2) Make a short traverse across the overhanging wall to gain the base of the hanging corner above the left side of the face. Climb the corner with continued interest, taking time to savour your surroundings. Probably the finest route that side of Killybegs.

A. Currans, P. Noland Sept 90

Atlantic Bound E2 5a 40m *

Same first pitch as the Fruit Palace, leave the security of the corner belay and traverse right into a niche, a delicate move around the quartz leads to a faint crack and straight to the top.

W. Canning

The next four routes are on the other side of the zawn and are approached by an easy sea level traverse from the front of the zawn or by a short abseil from the ramp above Pioneers and Alcoholics

Pioneers and Alcoholics VS 4b 30m

This route takes the corner formed by the right side of the cave and the zawn wall. Another adventurous outing giving reasonable climbing though what looks from below to be not so reasonable territory. Start on the huge flat topped boulder on the right side of the cave mouth. Climb directly up from the platform, steeply at first until it is possible to step left onto the diagonal hanging Slab. Move across left to the end of the slab and then up steeply until progress is barred by overhangs. From here make a traverse right to easier ground. A short flake crack above leads to the top.

P. Nolan, J. Walls Sept 90

Billy Mc Grew the Sailor S 20m

This route takes the obvious left to right diagonal in the zawn wall right of the cave, to the left of the large concave recess. Finish straight up at the end of the crack.

R. Allsop, J. Walls Sept 90

Billy MCGrew the Sailor (Bawbag Finish) HVS 5a 35m **

Climb Billy Mc Grew till crack peters out, traverse hard right through quartzite band on crimps for 4 mtr until a couple of moves up gains another left to right trending crack. Follow to top. Mucho exposure

C. McDaid, I. Miller 10/05/08



That's the Shot VS 4c 20m

A route through the concave recess of Billy Mc Grew. Climb up the left side of the recess until the rock starts to overhang. Make a difficult traverse right to a protruding block, where a horizontal crack leaves the right side of the recess. Make a few moves along this crack until another diagonal crack leads back left to the main crack that leaves the top of the recess and follow this to the top.

R. Allsop, J. Walls Sept 90

Zawn 3

Zawn 3 sits approx 50m to the south and there is a free standing fin of rock with a number of short crack lines. The routes described are accessed by abseil down a moderately angled North facing corner close to the end of the headland separating Zawns 3 and 4.

Marty's Corner Diff 20m

Follows the abseil corner.

M. McGuigan, K. Monaghan 07/05/12

Left Winger S 4a 20m

Half way up the ab corner, branch left, where a few problematic moves lead to an easy angled crack and belay.

A. Tees, G. Thomas 07/05/12

Spreadeagled! HS 4b 20m

At bottom of abseil, climb chimney on left little protection and no handholds unto past crux at 6m with no handholds, smear bridge over 2 steps, on superb rock, unto easier ground, at top finish easily up

ramp on right.

K. & S. Monaghan 07/05/12

Tribute to the Bears S 4a 20m

3m right from bottom of abb. Climb slab to underneath large overhang. Climb high under overhand on sound flake and the stretch back left to gain good foothold on to large rock to gain upper slab. Finish easily directly to the top.

S. Kennedy, K. Monaghan 07/05/12

Sea Eagled S 4a 20m

Low tide only. Work your way down right from bottom of abb onto large barnacle covered blocks. Traverse back left 5m to crack with good holds, Climb 5m exiting onto ramp moving up left. From ramp take 1st corner on right (crux) with undercut holds to top of chimney on Spreadeagled. Quite a bit of drag so may need to bring second up before finishing as for Spreadeagled.

K. & S. Monaghan 07/05/12

Zawn 4

Zawn 4 provides a choice between pleasant low-grade slab climbs on the right or more demanding crack and groove lines above the sea on the left. The massive slab gets any sun that is going, this and its low angle makes it perfect for cold beginners. The bottom of the routes is reached by a gully at the back of the zawn

Keep Off the Grass HS 30m

Start at the bottom corner of the slab at the right-hand edge of zawn four. Take a diagonal traverses above the grassy verge to a distinct corner beneath a series of large blocks. Bridge up through the corner and follow the left hand edge of the blocks to finish.

S. Read, E. Ross May 09

Letting Go S 50m

Start at the left edge of the afore-mentioned huge block at the descent gully and climb up the fault until you're level with a grassy ledge on the right. Now follow the obvious horizontal fault which runs across the whole crag to the quartz/ intrusion near the seaward edge. Climb up above the quartz where you'll find a belay on the grass just below the blocky jumble.

I. Rea, M. Rea April 91

Lee Shore HS 40m

To find this, go to the base of the descent gully where a huge block leans against the crag. 3 metres left of this is an obvious blocky niche which you climb up by the left-hand side and over a bulge via the obvious crux. Follow a fault line up left to cross Bran Flakes and go into a vague depression (sounds fun!). Having got over this depression, you can finish straight up via a feint corner.

I Rea, M. Rea April 91

Heathen VS 4c 40m

Two metres left of Lee Shore, you'll find a blocky overhang 3m above your head. Gain the right hand side or this using a left-facing flake/edge. Go up the steep little wall and cross Lee Shore and follow the crack until it is possible to step left to below a quartz intrusion. Finish straight up and left of the quartz.

I. Rea, M. Rea April 91

Bran Flakes Diff 30m

The obvious left to right diagonal line starting behind the huge triangular pillar flake lying against the middle of the slab.

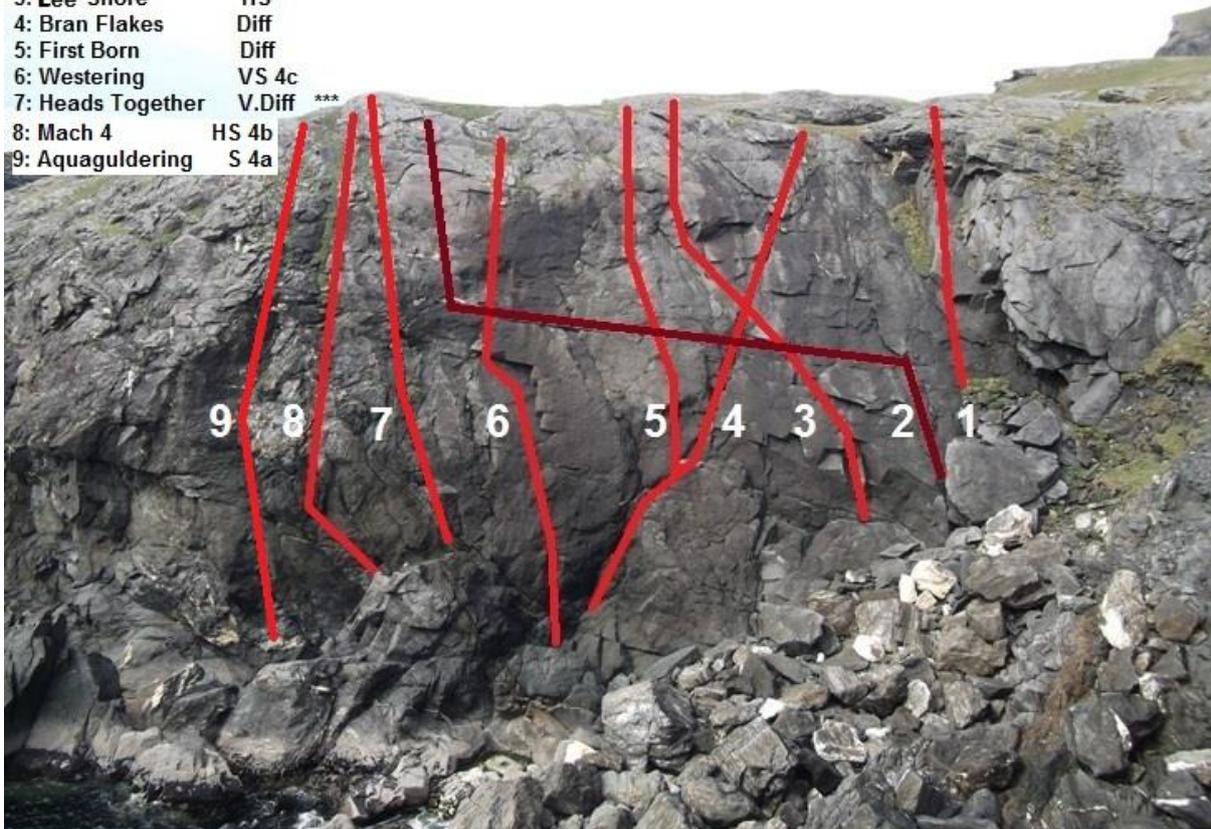
P. Nolan Sept 90

First Born Diff 30m

A direct line up the thin crack above the flake.

J. Walls, J. Stephenson Sept 90

- | | |
|----------------------|------------|
| 1: Keep of the Grass | HS |
| 2: Letting Go | S |
| 3: Lee Shore | HS |
| 4: Bran Flakes | Diff |
| 5: First Born | Diff |
| 6: Westering | VS 4c |
| 7: Heads Together | V.Diff *** |
| 8: Mach 4 | HS 4b |
| 9: Aquaguldering | S 4a |



Westering VS 4c 40m

Start 2m left of Bran Flakes below the bulging wall and climb up into the vague scoop. Step up left and then go straight up to below the largest overhang. Step right, and then immediately up to a horizontal break. From here move left to another niche and a quartz knob. Go right a few more feet and then straight up the wall. The start is bold, but the crux is near the top.

I. Rea, M. Rea April 91

Sea Breezes HS 40m

Start as for Westering but move out right from the scoop. Continue up the thin cracks from here, past a break, until you reach First Born Cross over this and follow the right-trending crack to a vertical fault which is followed to the car park.

I. Rea, M. Rea April 91

Baltic Breeze Sev S 4a 30m

Start a couple of metres right of "Heads Together" and follow the obvious fault line leading just left of the prominent left facing roofs at half height.

A. Feeney, PJ Monaghan. 07/05/12

Heads Together V.Diff 30m ***

Start a few metres left of the flake. Climb diagonally leftwards beneath small stepped overhangs and straight up to finish.

A. McAloon, J. Walls Sept 90

Mach 4 HS 4b 30m

From the LH edge of the big flake, traverse out left on quartz veins to the edge of a corner (Aquaguldering) and climb the vertical band of razor blade rock. This is similar to "Heads Together" but steeper. After a few moves the difficulties ease, and continue up the rock band to the top.

A. Tees, G. Thomas. 06/05/12

Aquaguldering S 4a 30m

Start at the left (seaward) base of the flake, and climb the corner on good side pulls/ flakes.

M. McGuigan, K. Monaghan 06/05/12

Climbfest Corner Diff 25m

The next big corner seaward, just beyond some overhangs, branching off right beyond the steep bit to avoid boredom!

A. Tees, V. Schafer 06/05/12

Escapapologist Diff 25m

Seaward of the slab left of Climbfest Corner, is a chimney to half height. Ab into it, and, if (like us) you can't get out again, follow a clean groove rightwards onto the slab, the centre of which is climbed on grippy rock to the top.

A. Tees, V. Schafer 06/05/12

The Mermaid HS 4a 25m

Beyond the chimney the slabs taper into an arête as they tumble to the surf. Descent is by abseil to a small ledge (not possible at high tide). Start up on the stepped arête, move right, and gain a big ledge. From here a pristine diedre leads to an airy ramp, for which you will need small wires, and a delicate move to gain the pockled upper wall, and belay.

A. Tees, V. Schafer 06/05/12

Alfie's Corner Diff 25m

Next big corner, and close to the end of the headland.

A. Conn, G. Thomas. 06/05/12

Smear Test S 4a 20m

At the end of the promontory, and just on the Bay 4 side of it, is a chute running down to the sea. Descend by Abseil, and re-ascend up the right hand diedre on friction and wires mostly!

A. Feeney, PJ Monaghan. 07/05/12

Upshoot and left up Quartzleghorn S 3c 25m

Ab down the chute and follow the chimney etc just left of 'Smear Test'. Interesting! Take the quartz exit, left at the top.

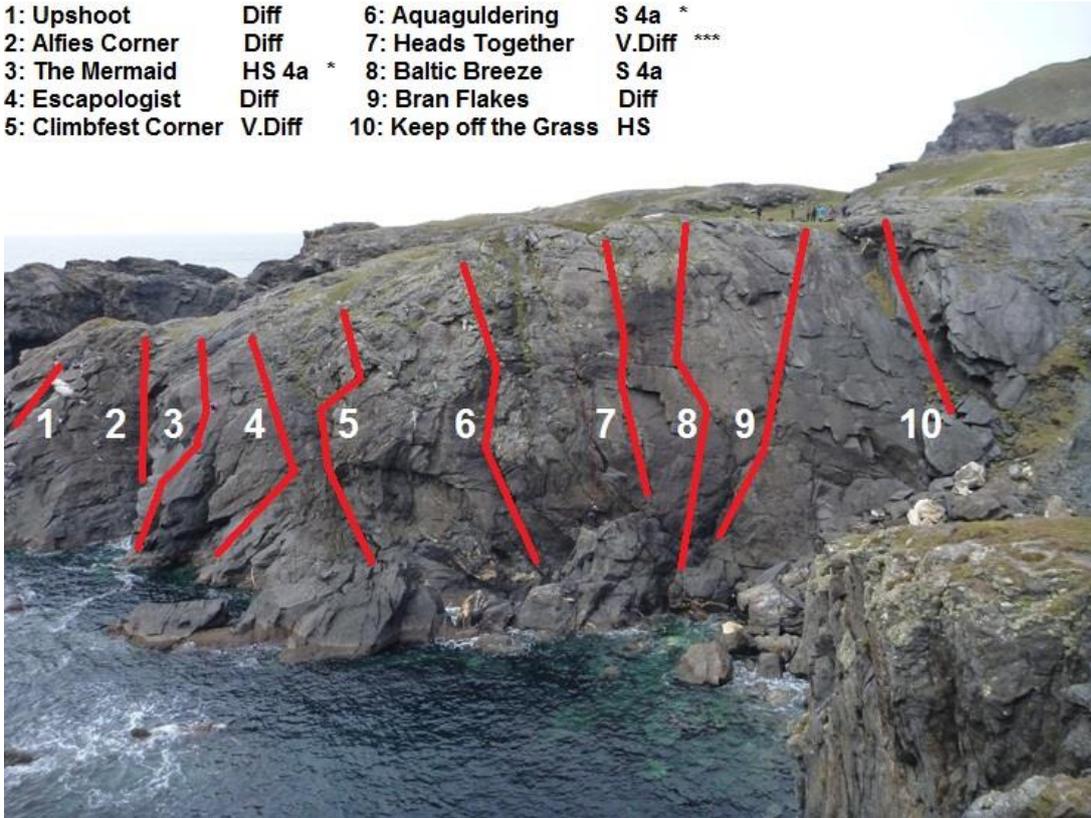
M. McGuigan, C. Ward 07/05/12

Man Flu HVS 5a 20m

Ab steeply down off the end of the promontory (slightly on the North side) into a 'V' channel. Climb the deep cracks on the left at the back to an edge, step across, and pull up onto a quartz ledge. Descend to the right, above the overhangs, and make a couple of thin moves to gain a deep' right to left' crack in the wall above. Climb this on steep but positive holds.

G. Thomas, A. Tees 07/05/12

1: Upshoot	Diff	6: Aquaguldering	S 4a *
2: Alfies Corner	Diff	7: Heads Together	V.Diff ***
3: The Mermaid	HS 4a *	8: Baltic Breeze	S 4a
4: Escapologist	Diff	9: Bran Flakes	Diff
5: Climbfest Corner	V.Diff	10: Keep off the Grass	HS



Sniffle Group S 4a 20m

Start as for 'Man Flu' to the quartzy ledge, but traverse left around the corner into Bay 3, to the first set of jugs, which are climbed pleasantly to the stash of sodden tissues!

A. Tees, G. Thomas 07/05/12

The following routes are on the other side of the Zawn 4.

Rockmail HVS 5a 25m *

This route takes the curving corner in the centre of the wall, obvious from the opposite side of the zawn. Abseil to a good stance at the bottom of the corner. Climb the superb corner on good holds and bridging. At its top traverse left across a sloping ledge to the bottom of a leaning groove and climb this with difficulty. Finish leftwards at the top to avoid loose rock. Good memorable climbing.

A. Currans, P. Nolan, A. Mc Aloon Sept 90

Out of the Blue HS 4b 25m

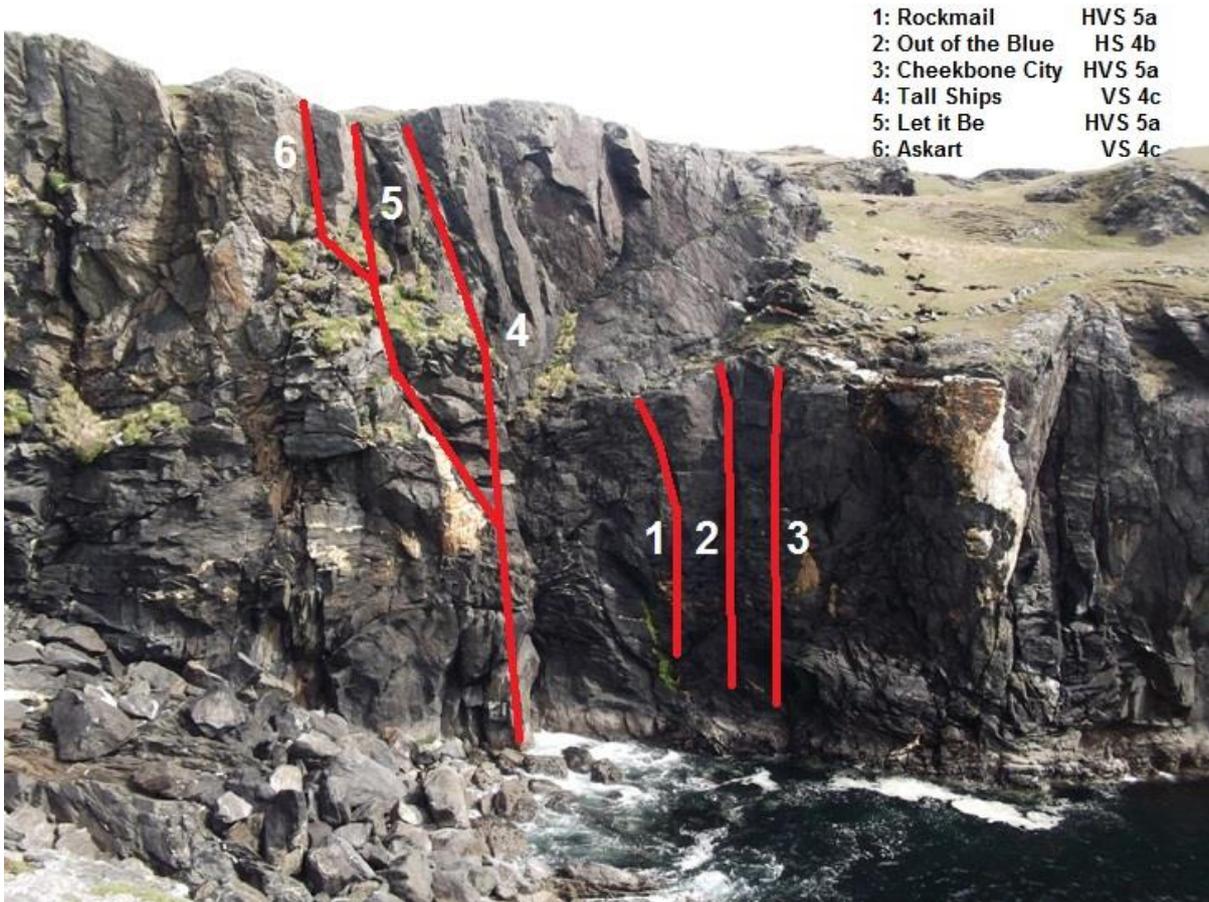
Three metres right of the main corner on the inland side of the wall. Abseil down to good ledges below a bottomless v-groove. Bridge up the v-groove crack and follow this to the top.

P. Nolan, A. Currans, A. McAloon Sept 90

Cheekbone City HVS 5a 25m

Three metres right of Out Of the Blue, the route follows a long thin crack which starts steeply and peters out at a right-facing corner where the rock bulges. Climb up and from the left, gain a good foothold in the steep crack. Make a difficult move up to gain the less steep crack above and follow this to the short corner. Move up this with increasing difficulty until forced out left onto the rib (avoiding a loose down-pointing spike above). Move up, then pull round right and up to finish.

P. Nolan, A. Currans Sept 90



1: Rockmail	HVS 5a
2: Out of the Blue	HS 4b
3: Cheekbone City	HVS 5a
4: Tall Ships	VS 4c
5: Let it Be	HVS 5a
6: Askart	VS 4c

Tall Ships VS 4c 20m

Starts from the boulder field to the left of the above in a dark corner with a Perched Block at 15m.

1: Climb to grassy terrace and belay

2: Continue on the obvious line of weakness to finish on corner to the right.

W. Canning, J. Starrs, D. Coyle 20/07/09

Let it Be HVS 5a 45m

Pitch one as for Tall Ships, traverse left to Quartz corner and trend right up towards two summit corners taking the right hand one.

W. Canning, J. Starrs Aug 99

Askart VS 4c 40m

As above only taking the left hand summit corner.

W. Canning, J. Starrs Aug 99

The Three Amigos VS 4b 40m

Pitch 1 as for Tall Ships. Traverse left into quartz corner, but continue left towards grassy platform at 3/4 height, where sheltered rock and deep V groove leads to exit on left of roof.

W. Canning, J. Starrs, D. Coyle Aug 99

Zawn 5

Approx 100m beyond zawn 4 walking towards Glencolmcille the following routes are located at the sea ward tip of the north facing wall. Although shorter this wall provides the best quality rock in

Skelpoonagh, so far. Access is by easily descending to sea level down the sea ward face of the peninsula separating zawns 5 and 6.

Skelp Arete HS 4b 15m

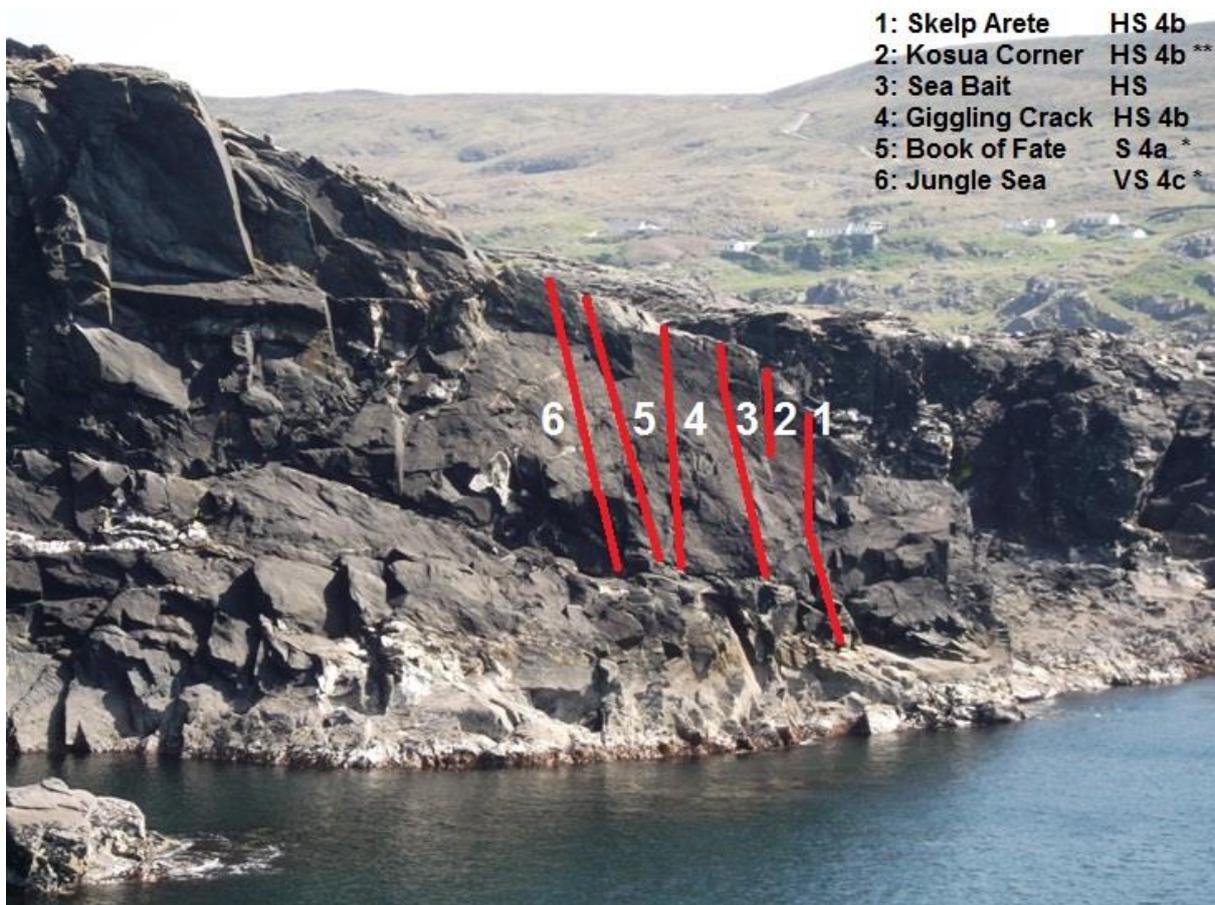
Immediately to the right of the steep open book corner, "Kosua Corner," climb the sharp knife edge arete.

I. Miller, D. O'Connor, C. Gleeson 27/05/12

Kosua Corner HS 4b 15m **

The steep open book corner.

S. Read, I. Miller, C. Gleeson, E. Ross 27/05/12



Sea Bait HS 15m

Climb the arete to the left of "Kosua Corner," climb to the flake on the right of "Giggling Crack," finishing up a thin gearless crack to the left.

S. Read, E. Ross, C. Gleeson 27/05/12

Giggling Crack HS 4b 15m

Climb the stepped crack 2m to the right of "Book of Fate" corner.

I. Miller, D O'Connor, C. Gleeson 27/05/12

Book of Fate S 4a 15m *

Climb the second Open Book Corner in from the sea.

D. O'Connor, I. Miller, C. Gleeson 27/05/12

Jungle Sea VS 4c 15m *

The arete to the left of "Book of Fate," pull up on 2 good jugs to an easier slab and up the final steep step to finish.

S. Read, I. Miller 27/05/12

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.