

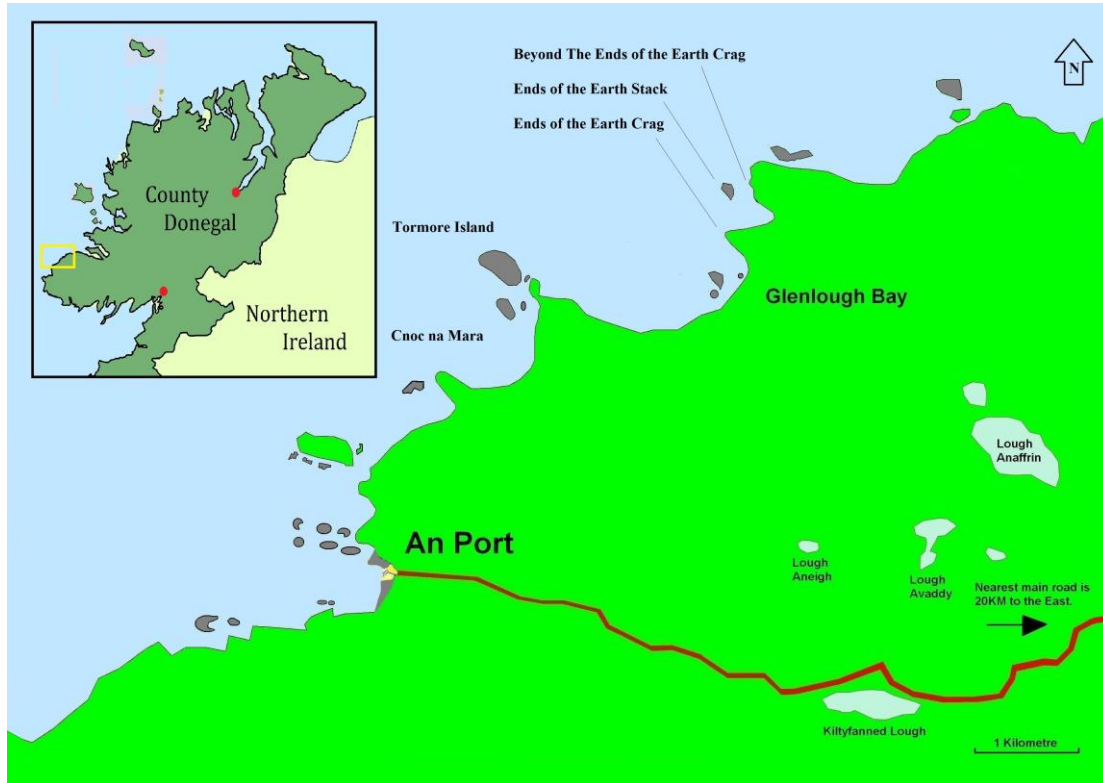
A Climbers guide to

# Glenlough Bay

By

Iain Miller





An Port and Glenlough

## Glenlough

Glenlough is a breathtakingly beautiful bay in the most remote location on mainland Ireland. It lies three kilometres north of An Port at the end of a winding 20km single track road and is Ireland's last great wilderness. Living along this coast are a huge collection of outrageous sea stacks and very remote sea cliffs. This guidebook covers this outstanding rock climbing location in Ireland's distant reaches.

To find An Port take the R230 Ardara road out of Glencolmcille Village for 500m and at a wee bridge take the Port signposted road left. Follow this road for approximately 7 kilometres to a T junction at Straboy. Take the left road and follow it for another 7 kilometres until you arrive at the ocean.

### [An Port Google Map pin](#)

For all other rock climbing locations in Donegal visit [Donegal Guide](#).

For a more comprehensive guide to this entire area of coastline download the PDF from [Sea Stack Guidebook](#).

## Tormore Group

The southern end of Glenlough Bay is dominated by Tormore Island, at 148 metres high it is Ireland's highest sea stack.

**ACCESS:** From the An Port road end follow the cliff top path for approx 2KM until you are on the headland overlooking these monster stacks. (Grid Reference G557906) For Cnoc Na Mara and Lurking Fear descend the 200 metre grass slope to the lonely pebble beach facing the stacks. Keep to the grassy slopes, directly above the beach and avoid the scree to your right.



### The Cnoc na Mara Family

#### Cnoc na Mara VS 4b 152m \*\*\*

Grid Reference G555906 This route climbs the superb landward arete of the 100 mtr “sharks fin” stack just to the South of Tormore Island.

Pitch 1, 35m. Climb the wide groove right of centre on the landward face to a grassy ledge and block belay.

Pitch 2, 22m. Scramble up the slab to the base of the huge knife edge arete.

Pitch 3, 35m. Climb the arete to a peg and block belay on the ledge at it's top.

Pitch 4, 60m. An airy pinnacle traverse along the knife edge ridge to the summit.

*I. Miller, A. Tees, M. McGuigan. 26/07/08*

#### Cnoc na Mara solo ascent

#### Cnoc na Mara Film

#### A Puffin Too Far, VS 4c 150m \*

This route climbs the seaward face of the Cnoc Na Mara. A 400 mtr channel crossing from the North end of the beach to the base of the seaward face is the easiest approach. Abseil descent of route from block and peg belays.

Pitch 1, 25m. From the tidal ledge right of the deep recess climb the black corner to the huge seaward platform and a choice of belay recesses.

Pitch 2, 45m 4c. Immediately left (north) of the huge seaward recess and big roofs, climb the right trending groove to below an ominous overhung corner. Struggle up the corner to a superb ledge above the void.

Pitch 3, 40m 4b. In the centre of the ledge climb the steep left facing corner to gain the summit ridge.

Pitch 4, 40m Scramble along the ridge to the summit.

*S. Tait, I. Miller 18/04/09.*

Euro Trash VS 4b 121m

This route climbs the groove system to the left of "A Puffin Too Far" on the sea ward face of Cnoc Na Mara.

Pitch 1. 20m Climb the wall to the right of the large sea level recess to a large ledge. (as for A Puffin Too Far)

Pitch 2. 20m Climb the staircase above trending left to a large ledge.

Pitch 3. 26m 4B Follow the V groove and continue up a higher groove. Gain the sloped ledge below the roof.

Pitch 4. 25m 4B Exit stage right and surmount the roof, continue up to reach the sea ward summit ridge.

Pitch 5. 30m Follow ridge to the summit

*W. Schuessler, A. Flynn 30/07/11*

### [First Ascent of Euro Trash Film](#)

An Appointment with Fear, VS 25m

Grid reference 556906 This route climbs South Face/Ridge of the 25 mtr stack on the landward side of Cnoc Na Mara. The atmosphere is considerable.

*I. Miller 15/04/10*

Cannonball Run HS 4b 25m

From the non-tidal ledge above the high water mark facing Cnoc na Mara climb the shallow corner and slabby face above to a steeper airy finish.

*I. Parnell, B. Wilkinson, J. Winter, H. Jepson 08/04/15*

[Lurking Fear](#) V. Diff 40m

This route climbs seaward face of the 25 mtr stack on the landward side of Cnoc Na Mara.

Pitch 1, 20mtr, Starting at the wee tidal stance at the Northern end of the seaward face, climb the steep wall of immaculate jugs to gain the easy angled ramp, pad up ramp to the sausage shaped block.

Pitch 2, 20 mtr, Continue up ramp to a very odd pillar, make an airy move up behind it and crawl to the exposed summit.

*I. Miller 31/05/08*

### [An Ascent of Lurking Fear Stack](#)

**ACCESS:** Access to Tormore Island and The Hidden Stack is an involved affair! Follow the access details as for Glenlough Bay stacks. Once on the beach, "coastaleer" your way West along the high water mark to the channel facing The Hidden Stack. For Tormore Island there is a further channel crossing to reach the non tidal platform at the bottom of the landward face of Tormore. From car to base of route approx 3.5 hrs! An alternative approach is to paddle from the storm beach as for Cnoc na Mara, this approach requires an uber calm sea.

[Tormore Island](#) VS, 220m

Grid Reference G556908 At 150m high is Ireland's highest sea stack, this stack is the Daddy of Donegal's Sea stacks, it can be seen from Dungloe, approx 40 KM to the North East! This route climbs the very obvious landward arete at the Eastern end of the island. This feature can clearly be seen from any position along this coast overlooking the stack. Access to this stack by land is a very involved affair a boat approach is recommended.

Descent is by 4 abseils back down this route using the block and peg belays described

Pitch 1. 45m Starting on the non tidal ledge in the centre of the landward face, directly opposite the secret 35 mtr stack. Climb the blunt arete to the right of the vertical basalt vein, follow the corners and ledges on superb quartz to a large block belay.

Pitch 2. 40m Continue up the arete on slabby mixed ground to a large ledge below the huge capping roof, peg belay.

Pitch 3. 45m Climb direct on superb rock to the left end of the huge roofs and become increasingly aware of your surroundings. Pass the roofs on the left and continue on mixed ground to a huge ledge and peg belay.

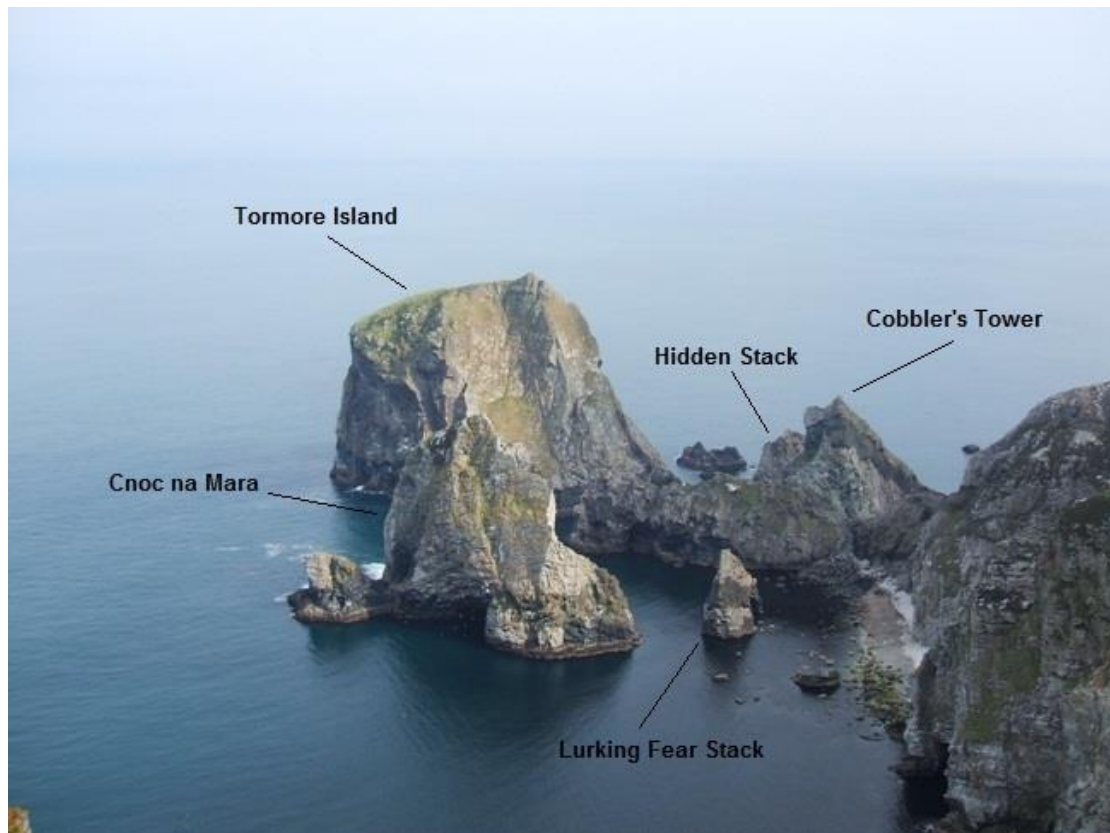
Pitch 4. 45m Climb gearless, near vertical grass to an exposed wee ridge, follow the ridge for 15 metres to a block belay.



Pitch 5. 20m Scramble up the grass covered ridge to the summit.

*I. Miller, P. McConnel, A. Tees, P. Cooper 10/08/08 FFA I. Miller, L. Lemanski 23/09/14*

### Tormore Island Film



**Tormore Area from the south**

#### Hidden Stack V.DIFF 42m

Grid Reference G556907. Hidden Stack sits in the channel separating "Tormore Island" and "Cobblers Tower." Access is by a superb paddle from the storm beach as for "Cnoc na Mara." This route climbs the Southern Ridge, the first feature on the stack you see as you paddle up the channel towards it.

Pitch 1. 15m From the non tidal platform at the base of the South end, climb the up the left side of the South facing ridge to a large ledge.

Pitch 2. 15m Continue up the ridge to a lonely huge Basalt boulder.

Pitch 3. 12m Scramble along the summit ridge. Abseil descent down the seaward face from the Basalt boulder.

The sea around "Hidden Stack" are very tetchy indeed and require due nautical care.

*A. Wainwright, I. Miller 13/10/10*

#### Cobbler's Tower Diff 130m

This is the huge tower between Hidden Stack and mainland Donegal, it requires a very calm sea state and considerable nautical guile to stand on it's summit.

Climb the north face of the tower, starting in a scalloped recess on the landward face. The climbing is steep mixed ground leading to a very scary and exposed summit which you will leave as quickly as you can

*S. Jock Read, I. Miller 10/07/13*

### Cobbler's Tower Film

## Glenlough Bay

**ACCESS:** From An Port road end follow the cliff top path North for approx 3 KM. Once you pass the Tormore viewpoint (Grid Reference G557906) continue to follow the cliff tops as they descend into Glenlough Bay. At Grid Reference G567904, descend to the wide gully immediately to the South of the large ominous looking buttress. Follow the stream down this gully until approx 70 metre above the sea, traverse north for 50 metres and descend the scree slope to the beach. (Directly below the ominous buttress)

Southern Stack, XS 4c, 45m

Grid Reference G567907. This route climbs the Land ward face of the “flying wedge” stack. Abseil descent of the route.

1: 4c 35m At the Southern end of the landward face, climb the left trending groove and continue upwards to a huge grassy ledge. Classic stack ground, a mixture of good/poor rock and a hint of insanity.

2: 4c 10m From the centre of the grassy ledge climb the very obvious bulging and very wide crack on surprisingly good rock and moves to the summit

*I. Chestnut, I. Miller 10/05/09*



**Glenlough Bay**

Grid Reference G568908, the following two routes climb the Landward face of the huge tent shaped stack in the centre of the bay.

Darkness Descends Diff 95m

From the large crater/pod at the bottom left of the landward face (Southern end), follow the right trending hand crack up the slabs (Northward). Continue right (North) through heather, grot and atmosphere to gain the foot of the North Ridge. Scramble up the ridge to the summit.

*I. Miller 25/11/08*

Rainman V.Diff 75m

From the pod/crater at the bottom (southern end) of the landward face climb direct to the summit, up the superb slabs and positive holds!

*I. Miller 25/11/08*

### Tent Stack Film

#### Glenlough Bay at it's finest

Jenga, E2 5a, 50m \*

Grid Reference G569908 This 30 metre quartz tower sits on the beach between the high and low water lines. This tower is an extremely serious climb, **a fall from the last 12 metres would be fatal.**

Pitch 1: 4a 15m Starting on the high water line at the southern end of the landward face, climb the knobby quartz to a small stance and make a superb rising traverse above the roofs/cave towards the sea to a large airy ledge above the void.

Pitch 2: 5a 35m Follow a raising traverse North to the centre of the seaward face. Climb the right trending fault to the southern end of the knife edge summit ridge. Scramble along ridge to summit.

*I. Miller, D. O'Connor 28/12/08*

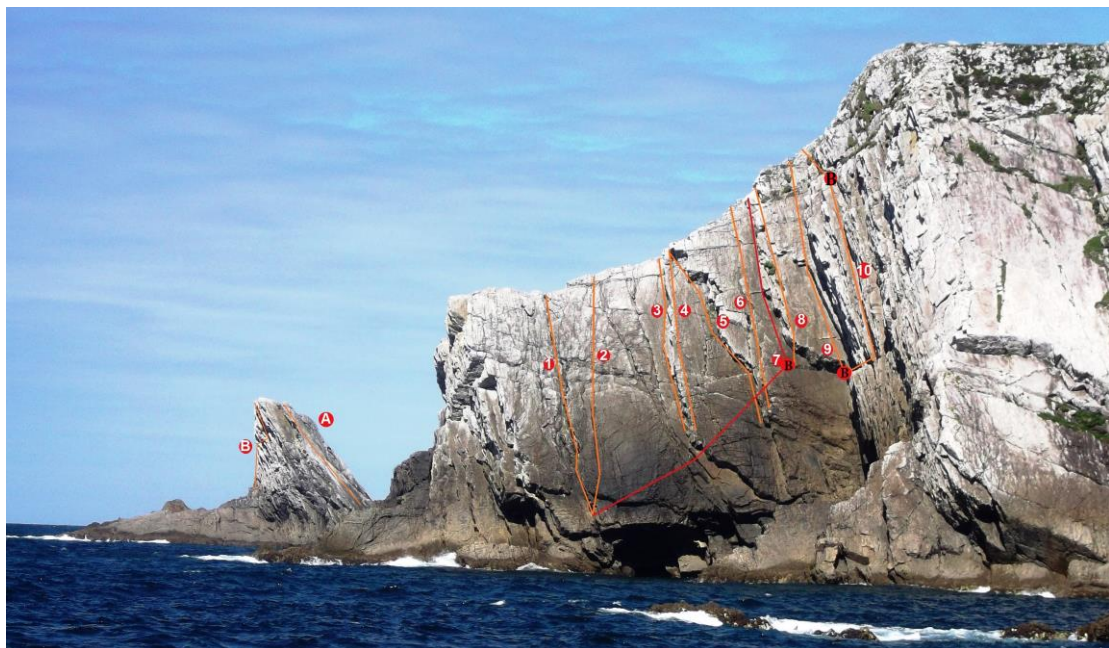
### **Ends of the Earth Crag**

**ACCESS:** Grid Reference G567912, This hanging slab of immaculate Quartz sits at the seaward tip of the Northern wall in the lonely and scenic Glenlough Bay. Access is a 3.5km cliff top walk from the An Port road end followed by a short exposed scramble down to the top of the crag.

Map ref: G567912

### End's of the Earth Crag film

#### End's of the Earth Crag Film 2013



**End's of the Earth Crag**

1: Groovy Gully Mod 35m

The huge groove at the left end of the slab.

*I. Miller, C. Gleeson 29/05/09*

**2: The Slippery Slope** Diff 35m

Climb the centre of the dimpled slab to the right of Groovy Gully.

*I. Miller, C. Gleeson 29/05/09*

**Lorraines Ladder** Diff 25m

Starting from the half height ledge, climb the the deep left trending groove 6m to the right of the access "Groovy Gully" chimney.

*P. Quinn, I. Miller 08/07/10*

**Maria's Steps** Diff 25m

Climb the deep right trending groove, starting 2m to the right of "Lorraines Ladder."

*P. Quinn, I. Miller 08/07/10*

**3: Caoimhe's Corner** V.Diff 35m \*

Climb the excellent left facing corner, 10 or so metres to the right of Groovy Gully.

*I. Miller, C. Gleeson 29/05/09*

**4: Dimples Left Hand** V.Diff 35m

Climb the left edge of the slab above and immediately to the right of "Caoimhe's Corner" direct through the summit niche of "Dimples Direct."

*I. Miller, S. Bottoms 14/08/11*

**5: Dimples Direct** V.Diff 35m

From the belay at the base of Caoimhe's Corner step right and climb the centre of the slab and through a wee niche to the summit.

*I. Miller, C. Gleeson 29/05/09*

**Dimples Right Hand** Svr 35m

Climb the next left facing corner to the right of "Dimples Direct," climb the steep corner above and up direct to summit.

*I. Miller, S. Bottoms 14/08/11*

**Fallen Block Romp** Diff 35m

Climb direct to gain the huge fallen block at mid height on the crag and romp to the summit.

*I. Miller, S. Bottoms 14/08/11*

**6: Ripples Direct** S 35m \*

Climb the centre of the next slab to the right. Your left hand/foot on rippled perfection whilst your right hand/foot is on smooth immaculate rock.

*I. Miller, C. Gleeson 29/05/09*

**7: Sonic Boom** VS 4c 70m \*\*

Abseil approach down "Groovy Gully" to a large recess above the rage.

Pitch 1: 35m 4a From the bottom of Groovy Gully, traverse right on superb rock. Stay as close to Neptune as possible and feel the energy of the sea level blow hole.

Pitch 2: 35m 4c Climb the steep smooth sided left facing corner to the summit.

*I. Miller, C. Gleeson 29/05/09*

**8: Slippery Tipple** HVS 4c 35m \*



Climb the left edge of the immaculate "Famine Village" slab. Gain the slab at it's lowest point (crux) and continue direct. Very bold up the bottom of the slab to mid height small wires.

*I. Miller, S. Bottoms 14/08/11*

**9:** The Famine Village VS 4c 60m \*\*

Climbs next corner to the right of "Sonic Boom."

Pitch 1: Traverse diagonally right along base of crag above undercut to main corner on right side of the main face. Belay in corner.

Pitch 2: Climb corner above via small overhang to start and then corner and nice slabby face above to poorer rock and the top.

*D. Millar & I. Krella 02/04/11*

Thank God Corner VS 4c 40m

Pitch 1, As for Famine Village to belay in the corner.

Pitch 2, Climbs the next corner right of the Famine Village. Climb famine Village corner to overhang, ascend Famine Village for a few metres then step up and right into corner groove. Ascend this to the top.

*D. Millar, I. Miller 08/04/11*

**10:** Prisms of Fear VS 4c 60m \*\*\*

Pitch 1. 20m Traverse Diagonally right along the base of the crag above undercut to main corner on right side of main face.

Pitch 2. 30m Gain the ledge on the steep wall on your right, climb the right trending fault/crack to gain the outstanding left trending ramp. Climb the ramp to a wee niche at it's top.

Pitch 3. 10m Continue on ramp to the summit.

An UBER exposed route with a very committing feel on immaculate rock/gear and surroundings

*I. Miller, D. Millar. 08/04/11*

The Widening Gyre HS 4b 70m

Pitch 1. 4a 25m Traverse the ledge to the huge recessed pod as for "Gogarth."

Pitch 2. 4b 45m Climb the ramp up and out of the left side of the recess. Climb the ramp until it terminates and continue to belay as for "Prisms of Fear."

*R. & L Kernan 22/08/21*

Gogarth VS 4c 75m

Pitch 1: 4a 10m Traverse in from base of abseil to base of main corner at right hand end of main slab.

Pitch 2: 4a 25m Climb corner for 5m to base of obvious diagonal crack splitting the steep right hand face. Climb this for 7m until you come across a large ledge system traversing the main steep face. Traverse the ledge system rightwards stepping down at one point and then back up to spacious pod in centre of the main face.

Pitch 3: 4c 30m Crouching down, traverse right from pod for few metres to base of a diagonal crack/groove breaking off the main ledge system. Climb this steeply at first and then continue up groove as the gradient eases to ledge system. Climb a leftward trending diagonal groove to a spacious ledge. From here step right onto main arete and climb this for 7m to belay at base of junction of good rock with broken rock.

Pitch 4: 4a 10m Continue up arete and easier angled right hand face on broken ground with care to top.

*D. Millar, G. Thomas 26/05/12*

## Glenlough Bay (North Headland)

This excellent wee stack sits in a very lonely and exposed location, 300m out to sea from the bay to the North of Glenlough Bay, approx 4.5KM from the An Port road end. The stack is efficiently guarded by an extremely tetchy Neptune and is a serious undertaking.

**Ends of the Earth Stack** Diff 20m \*\*\*

Climb the superb jug covered flake up the centre of the landward face.

*I. Miller 22/06/10*

Smooth Sailing HS 4b 30m

Climb the centre of the smooth slabs at the southern side of the landward face.

*I. Miller, M. Fowler 20/08/12*

The following three routes are on the seaward face of "End's of the Earth Stack."

The Entrance to Hades Svr 20m \*

At the northern end of the sea ward face starting 3 metres to the left of the enormous slot climbed by "Davie Jones Locker," Jug haul up the steepest part of the face, pull round the roof on it's left and stand on the summit.

*I. Miller 22/06/10*

Davie Jones Locker Svr 20m \*\*

Climb the huge right trending groove/cave. (internal caterpillar stylee) Pull out and jug haul to summit. Immaculate rock, superb climbing and a location that will live long in your memory.

*I. Miller 22/06/10*

Two Men in a Boat HVS 5a 25m \*\*

At the southern end of the sea ward face the rock steepens alarmingly. Starting below and left of the obvious summit groove climb on huge positive jugs and flakes and up the groove to the summit.

*M. Fowler, I. Miller 20/08/12*

**End's of the Earth Stack Film**

**End's of the Earth Stack Film 2**

**Beyond the End's of the Earth Crag**

This exposed sea cliff sits on the northern tip of the smaller bay just to the north of Glenlough Bay. Follow the same 3.5 KM coastal walk from An Port road end to the top of the headland containing the End's of the Earth Crag. From this headland looking north the crag sits at the far seaward tip of the opposite side of the bay. Access by walking around the smaller bay to the north for approx. for 500m with a steep section at the back of the bay onto the boulder beach. Once on the rock platforms overlooking the crag descend by the slabs to the south and round on the sea level platforms into the cave at the landward side of the crag. Low to mid tide required.

Grid Reference G570914

DJ Locker Traverse S 4a 70m \*

Starting at the landward edge of the crag at the lowest lowest point where the main wall meets the sea level slabs.

Pitch 1: 25m Traverse out to sea following the slightly rising thin breaks and ledges. Continue seaward through the right facing corner and belay in the recess.

Pitch 2: 25m Continue to traverse sea ward and follow the excellent smooth rock on rounded holds. (ascend too quick and the rock turns to rubble)

Pitch 3: 20m Continue to traverse rising slightly following the huge smooth holds  
*I. Miller, P. O Toole 03/09/13*

### [Beyond The End's of the Earth Crag Film](#)

Laura Surprise S 4a 45m

Pitch 1: Traverse out to the scalloped roofed recess.

Pitch 2: Exit out right of recess and climb direct to the summit.

*I. Miller, L & M Landau 10/06/16*

Gregory View S 4b 30m \*

Starting on the lowest approach step, make a rising traverse above Neptune until below the summit roof at the crags highest point. Climb direct to and through the roof to the crags highest point.

*I. Miller, L & M Landau 10/06/15*

I95 S 4a 25m \*

From the tip of the second approach step climb up to and follow the very shallow wide groove directly up the wall.

*I. Miller, T. Bennett, B. Arengi 20/05/15*

Exposure Explosion S 4a 40m \*\*

This is a high line traverse of the crag and an excellent exposed route much better savoured with maximum white water violence.

Start at the huge platform at the highest point in the cave below the crag. Traverse out to sea following the huge breaks to the "step down" in the crag summit.

*I. Miller, L. O Connor 12/03/14*

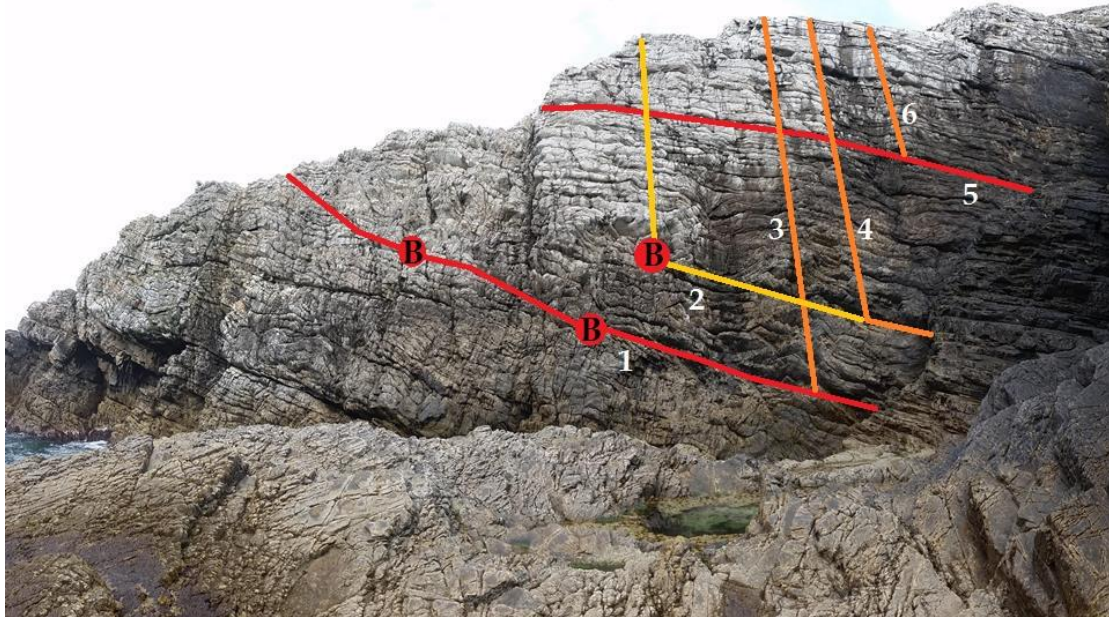
### [Exposure Explosion Film](#)

The Intruder HS 4b 20m

Starting at the step below the top of the black tower below the landward side of the crag. Traverse out onto the face and follow cracks and grooves to the surprisingly big roof, pull through roof to summit.

*I. Miller, P. Rooney 08/09/14*

1: DJ Locker Traverse	S 4a 70m *
2: Laura Surprise	S 4a 45m
3: Gregory View	S 4a 30m
4: I95	S 4a 25m
5: Exposure Explosion	S 4a 40m **
6: The Intruder	H5 4b 20m



**Beyond the End's of the Earth Crag Topo**

**The Unforgiving** XS 110m

Grid Reference G573916. This 60m twin headed beast sit's in a very remote/lonely location, 4.5km North of the An Port road end. It is fiercely guarded by monster cliff's and a very atmospheric gothic sea channel. Access on was a 750m superb paddle from the headland just North of Glenlough Bay around Neptunes wrath to the southern end of the beast. Descent of the stack is by Guile.

Pitch 1, 30m. Easily scramble up the south face of the southern summit.

Pitch 2, 35m. Continue upwards to the summit of the southern summit.

Pitch 3, 10m. Downclimb to the col between the two summits. Block belay.

Pitch 4, 35m. A monster pitch to the summit of the northern stack, up no grot but alas mucho loose rock/certain death and ultimately mega atmosphere.

A beast for the connoisseur. :-)

*I. Miller, C. Gleeson 04/07/09*



**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.