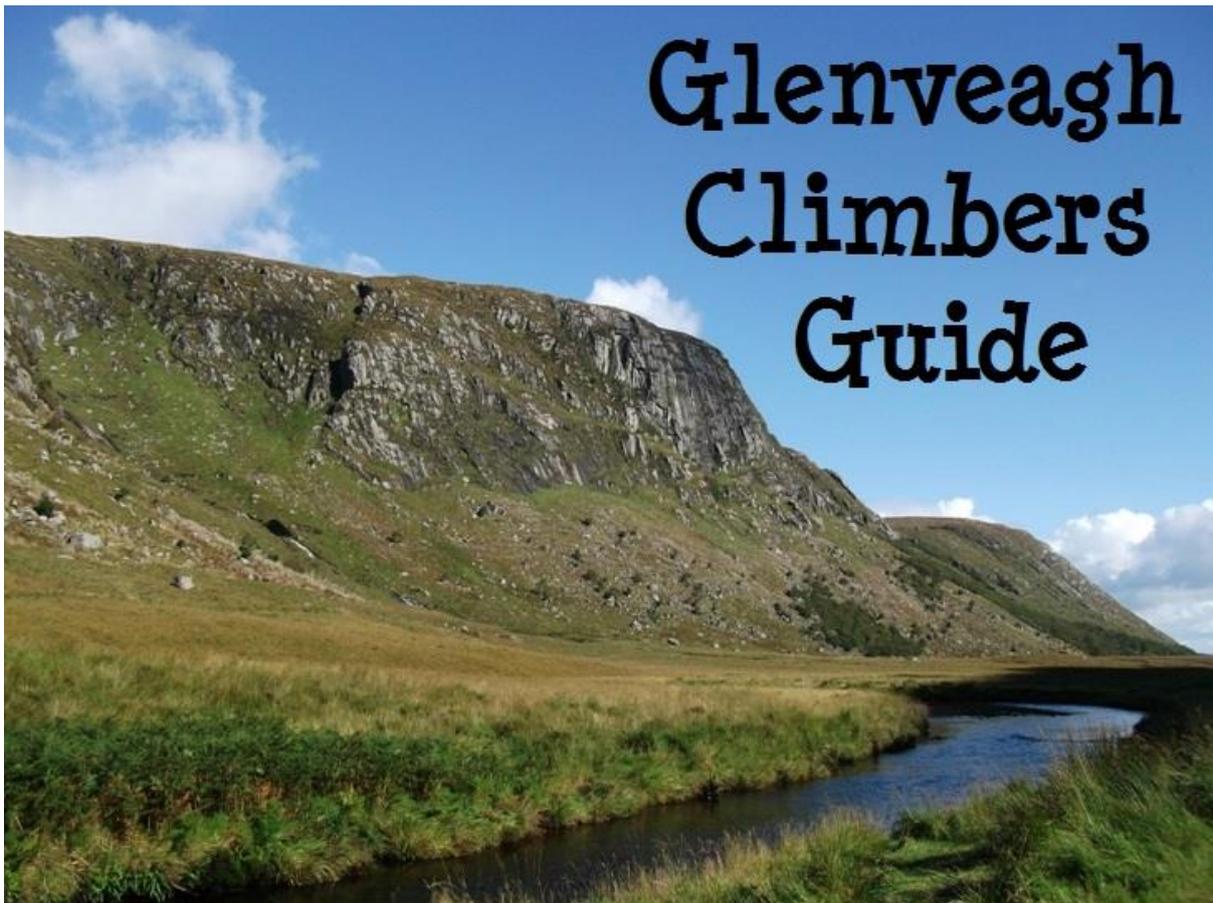


A climbers guide to

Gleann Bheatha

By

Iain Miller



Gleann Bheatha

Directions: Access to Gleann Bheatha is from the R254 An Dúchoraidh to Gartan road, there is a small roadside parking place at Grid Ref B972158. From here simply follow the path down in the stunning Gleann Bheatha, after approx 1km the path becomes an untarred road which takes you the full length of the Glen to the Castle and visitor centre. As you descend into the Glen the huge main cliff looms over you on your left.

After following the road for 3 KM there is an unlocked bothy on the right beside the road. Cross the stream by the stepping stones outside the bothy and make a KM long rising traverse to the base of the cliff.

Map ref: B995192

Catriona 60m V. Diff *

Some 200M left of the Main Cliffs is a line of broken crags, the left edge of these overlooks a wide gully and provides 'a delightful climb on clean rock'. Start 15M behind the lonely holly tree in the scree at its foot.

- 1: 14M Climb the short wall and continue to the back of a broad ledge.
- 2: 16M A steep wall leads to easier rock and belay, by a large flake at the corner of the main wall.
- 3: 30M Climb the flake by its left edge, step right and ascend to a small stance on the face to finish climb the crack passing a bulge to a heather ledge and easy rocks then lead to the top.

H. Drasdo, E. Langmuir 14/04/59

Billikins V. Diff 45m

Start in a corner of pink rock: 6M right and 9M below Catriona.

1. 18M Climb the rib to the right.
2. 18M Continue up and slightly right into a bower.
3. 9M Ascend the blocks at the back and continue to the top.

E. Healy, W. Hannon and U. Moore 15/04/60



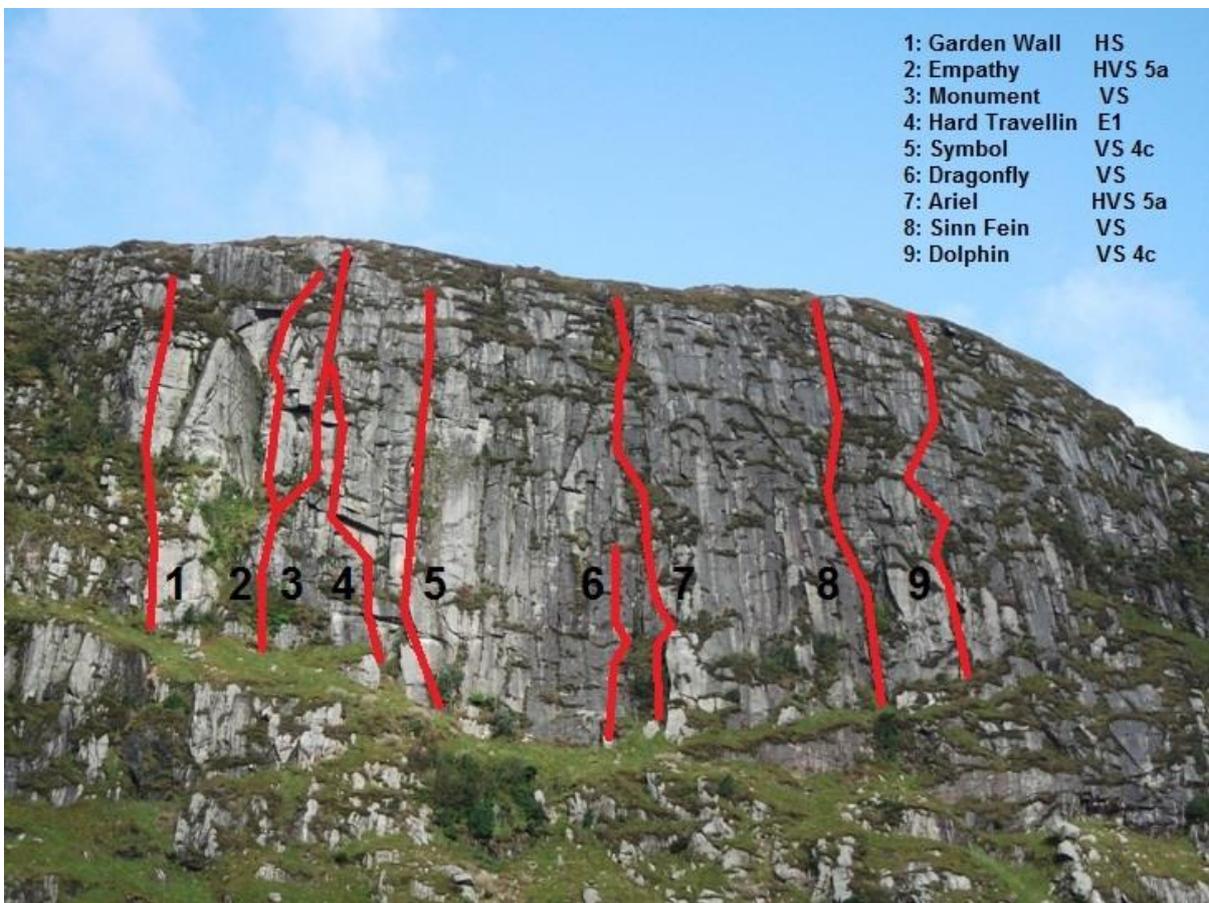
Main Wall

Garden Wall HS 120m

This route climbs the 'A' Buttress to the apex of the triangle, starting on a short wall resembling masonry. It then passes through the left hand of two large rectangular patches of vegetation below the overhangs at approx 1/2 way-up the face.

1. 6M Climb the 'masonry wall' to strenuous pull-up onto heather mat.
2. 30M Climb the white-ish outward-sloping slab on its right side to a point right of large overhanging patch of vegetation. Tree belay.
3. 24M Step down onto vegetation before climbing up to centre, then traverse rightwards to climb right edge. Belay under curved roof, behind 3M vertical slab.
4. 30M Scramble-up to an overhang between two projecting blocks. From the left, traverse, close to the roof and climb corner. Climb face above on good footholds.
5. 30M Bridge chimney above, past hazardous block on right, to the top.

P. Brennan, J. Rafter 18/08/1974



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Empathy HVS 5a 107m *

A direct line up the left flank of the A Buttress. 'A good climb' with technical difficulties left to the penultimate pitch.

1: 30m Climb crack/chimney for approx 6m, then short wall above to large heather ledge with good belay.

2: 27m From ledge climb left over a big block into corner. Climb round corner, traverse slightly right to arete; climb up to stance on arete beneath overhang. Belay.

3: 45m Continue up buttress edge for 5m, pass the overhang by moving left round corner to blocks and follow centrally to thin crack above. Move back right to arete, climb up to belay at back of terrace.

4: 5m The left hand wall of the buttress contains a thin crack, leading to an open-chimney, climb this to last 3m of buttress. Follow edge to a holly tree. (Original 1959 Description) OR Avoid final short wall by diagonally traversing right then back left to top (1985 guide).

A.J. Maxfield and R.Fryer 10/08/59 FFA P. McDermott, P. McHugh

Monument VS 152m ***

A highly regarded route: 'this is a climb of sustained difficulty, dramatic and very exposed' (CC Journal 1964) & 'the finest climb outside The Poisoned Glen' (CC Journal 1967).

1: 33m Start as for p1 of Empathy, then traverse right to an oak tree above a steep wet corner.

2: 33m Traverse across gully to a ledge belay, on far side; below a steep cracked wall.

3: 21m Climb short mossy wall, step left onto a large block. Use crack in corner to go right and gain large cracked wall. Climb the crack and surmount overhang. Easier climbing leads to belay on heather ledge.

4: 21m Climb chimney/gully gaining heather ledge belay on right.

5: 21m Climb steep wall, behind ledge, for approx 5m to a corner; follow to large heather ledge (belay) below steep arete.

6: 21m Climb the arete.

E. Goulding, P. Higgins May 1963

Hard Travellin' E1 5b 150m

1: 45m Climb right-hand-end of slab, traverse left; then up for 35m. Belay under large rectangular overhang.

2: 45m Climb up to overhang, then step left onto sloping-ledge. Climb crack to a spike and crack above using two aid pts (not known if in-situ). Difficulties continue to a detached flake, climb until a step left is possible to an undercut flake. Up this, then crack; belay is up and right.

3: 18m Climb overhang then left to chimney; climb its right wall to large ledge (belay).

4: 27m Climb cracks and grooves above, before moving left to bottom of gully/chimney.

5: 18m Chimney to top.

S. Billane, C. Torrans, D. Rankin 15/08/73

Symbol VS 4c 152m

1. 15m Through holly tree to crack, climb it; go under chockstone to gain platform.

2. 21m Climb 2m to top of smaller platform, up the overhanging right wall of the diedre above and step left to heather at 10m. Move out of diedre rightwards to stance.

3. 21m Up 3m to climb short wall leading to heather ledge. Traverse left onto heather ledge, above overhang. Climb slab to horizontal crack, then hand-traverse right to a heather ledge.

4. 9m Layback into crack, up 3m to spike and move right to heather; go up to belay stance beneath overhang.

5. 8m Step down. Delicate moves left to around corner to groove; climb it to belay on poor stance.

6. 18m Up 3m to heather ledge. Up crack (possible 1961 vintage wedge in-situ!), move left onto

vegetation. Climb wall on right to good ledge (ravens nest at back).

7. 60m a series of steep walls and vegetation lead to top. Moves right, then left; traverse right to reach an easy gully.

E. Gaffney, P. O'Leary, F. Devlin, D. Agnew July 1965

**Pitches 1,2,3 previously climbed by P. O'Leary and K. Shelley 04/1961.*

Dragonfly VS 45m

Starting at base of main rib to left of the gully, it goes up to Dragonfly Terrace before traversing left between upper and lower overhangs; a final pitch before an abseil off.

1. 20m Up steep and delicate rock left of gully, to vegetation and tree belay - level with pitch 1 of Ariel.

2. 25m Move left on side holds, poor protection, to heather ledge; belay on jammed-flake below overhang. Abseil-off.

P. O'Halpin, C. Sheridan 25/08/1974

Ariel HVS 5a 118m

The central fault-line of the Main Face.

1. 18m From the lowest point, where vegetated ramps cross, scramble (?) up to a pulpit.

2. 18m Pull up on rounded holds to a knob. Move up left to ledge and up vegetation to belay.

3. 24m Climb right hand wall, then left round corner; continue up right hand crack. Traverse left, up rock to grass ledge belay.

4. 12m (Description missing from 1985 guide, and 2002.) Up would be a good bet!

5. 24m Follow left edge of flake. Surmount bulge, continue up vegetated rakes to tree belay.

6. 12m Right hand corner to top.

E. Goulding, P. O'Halpin 05/05/62 (pitch 2 previously climbed by A. Ingram 04/1962)

Sinn Fein VS 135m *

A series of chimneys to a field of vegetation and a further chimney leads to the top, following a line of weakness 35m right of Ariel.

1. 27m Start from the bottom of a narrow chimney, topped with a Rhododendron bush, move right around corner, go up steep wall. Work right, then left to gain the right rib of chimney. Go right to grass stance (piton belay - 1962).

2. 10m Cross Rhododendron bush to gain foot of steep narrow chimney.

3. 17m Go up steep narrow chimney, strenuous exit to ledge with an oak tree belay.

4. 18m Go up left, avoid overhang, onto vegetation and up groove to grass ledge.

5. 24m Up to rock-flutings. Go right, up rock rib to grass ledge below a horizontal sloing rock ledge. Go right and up to field of vegetation.

6. 39m Up chimney, exit right at top. Short wall to finish (original 7th pitch).

S. Rothery, N. Browne, F. Butler 23/06/60

Dolphin VS 4c 176m

Approx 12m right of Sinn Fein is a lesser fault line.

1. 15m Up arrowhead pillar and surmount a small contorted roof.

2. 23m Climb slab on small holds, exit with difficulty to steep heather ledge. Belay on trees below a wall.

3. 30m Ascend vegetated corner to gain clean rock. Continue up and climb short chimney.

4. 36m Climb slabs above to narrow V-chimney.

5. 36m Chimney, exit right; finish up rock and vegetation.

6. 36m Scramble to top.

E. Healy, P. O'Halpin 14/04/63

Oisin VS 120m

The last right hand rib of the Main Face, just before an irregular formation including a spectacular overhang and a descent gully. Starting right of a rib which obstructs a green ramp.

1. 30m follow right hand edge of slab to chimney. Airy traverse left and up to small heather ledge.
 2. 15m Out left to slab, to heather and up chimney to larger heather ledge.
 3. 30m Delicately right, then left up slab to heather and grass ledge belay; under overhang.
 4. 35m Crux-pitch. Left under overhang, continue left until a steep right to a heather ledge; under small overhang.
 5. 10m Surmount overhang on its right. Scramble to top.
- C. Sheridan, P. O'Halpin (Alt leads) 10/08/74*

Outlying Crags

Left of the main crag is an impressive waterfall, falling in a series of steps for almost 200m. This waterfall itself provides a very pleasant climb in drought conditions with a variety of grades depending on the many options for an ascent. To the left of the waterfall, the valley steepens again and there is a series of small outcrops. Only two routes have been recorded to date.

Bombs Away HVS 5b 45m

This route takes the prominent sweeping corner on the highest of the outcrops.

I. Rea, J. Forsythe 24/04/84

Terra Nova E1 4b, 5b 50m

Start just to the left of Bombs Away.

Pitch 1: 20m Lay back up for a few meters until a sloping ledge can be gained at the base of a steep subsidiary corner. Continue up this, finishing on fine steep jugs to a spike and large friend belay.

Pitch 2: 30m Gain a grass ledge 2m above at the base of the steep upper slab. Climb the wide crack, over the initial bulge, continue up twin seams to the next bulge. Turn this on the right to a difficult rounded finish.

I. Rea, M. Rea 29/09/89



Gleann Leac

Almost directly across the bridle path at the fisherman's hut at the lake, (Grid Ref C003188) follow the wee path up the hill for approx. 1km. Stay on this path as you leave the forest and enter the open uplands of Gleann Leac. This crag is the large slab on the opposite side of the glen from the path. The crag is a slab of excellent rock which unfortunately requires at least 5 days of dry weather to allow the ground above the crag to dry out.

Wandering Aengus VS 72m

Start at the right side of the slab, just left of the vegetated crack with a holly tree in the centre of the crag.

Pitch 1: 36m Climb the slab to the overhang at 8m. Move delicately left under the overhang and pull up using knob on right, continue up the crack to a good ledge.

Pitch 2: 15m Traverse left to hollow sounding flake. Belay under overhang

Pitch 3: 21m Continue up slabs to belay

C. Torrans, C. Sheridan 22/04/76

Trespasser HS 72m

Start as for "Wandering Aengus."

Pitch 1: 36m Climb diagonally right to the holly tree. Climb the overhanging crack and continue up cracklines in slab to the ledge and peg belay as for "Wandering Aengus."

Pitches 2 and 3 as for "Wandering Aengus."

C. Torrans, C. Sheridan 22/04/76

Kinch HS 42m

Start at lowest point of the obvious arête to the right of the slab.

Climb the arête to a grassy ledge, continue up to a small tree, move left onto the arête and continue to the overhang. Move left around the overhang and up and out right into a good crackline to regain the arête and the top.

C. Torrans, C. Sheridan 22/04/76

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.