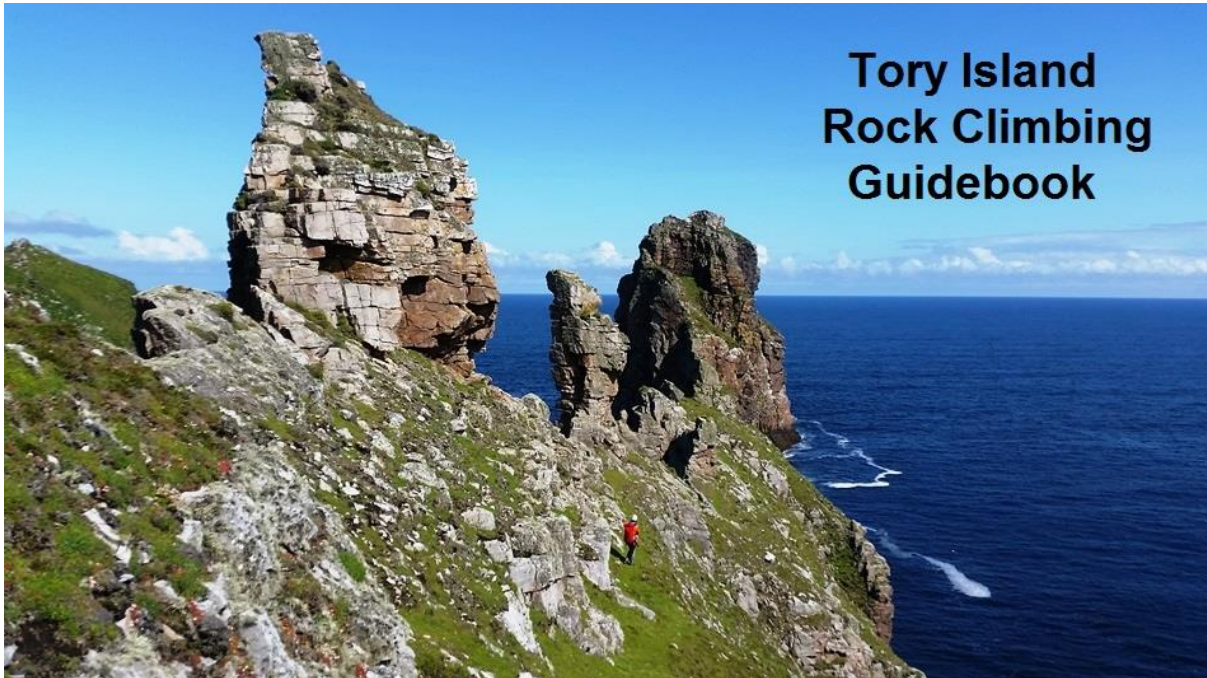


A climbers guide to

# Tory Island

By

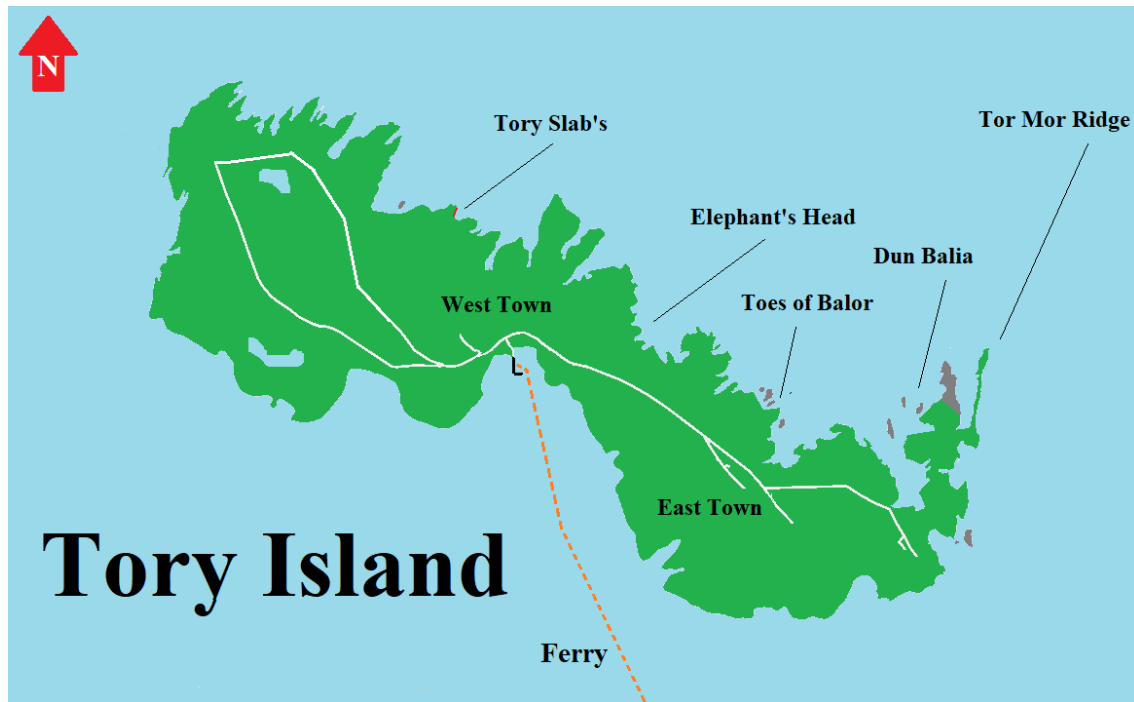
Iain Miller



## Rock Climbing on Tory Island

Tory is Ireland's most remote inhabited island. It lies 14km off the west coast of Donegal. The island is approximately 5km long and 1km wide, with 91 residents living in two tiny villages at each end of the island. Getting to Tory is by daily passenger-only ferry service from Magheraarty on mainland Donegal to West Town on Tory (<https://toryferry.com>). A day trip to the island can be a very rushed affair and a much longer stay is by far the best way to experience the island. For further Tory Island rock climbing information go to the online guide at [Mainland Donegal Guide](#) and [Donegal Islands Guide](#)

### Tory Island Film



### Tory Slabs

Directions: Crags are North & slightly West of Village, around the most Westerly longest zawn.

The West side of the first inlet is a big clean eroded slab. Abseil from the cleaned block to the huge sea level central recess. Abseil access from the summit of the slab to the central sea level recess, the rock, gear and climbing is excellent.

Directions: Take the Turasmara boat from Magheraarty or Bunbeg to West Town. Crags are North & slightly West of Village, around the most Westerly longest zawn. There are higher and more spectacular cliffs east, but rock quality is perhaps not so good.

[Google Map pin to The Tory Slabs](#) Map Ref: B852472

Crested 10 HS 4b 15m

Three quarters out along the East side of a long zawn are two obvious corner/grooves, split by a fin or sliver of rock. This takes the right one.

A. Tees, B. Magowan 05/06/04

Long Zawn Sliver S 4a 15m

This takes the LHS of the rock sliver. Starts out to the left, and gains the corner higher up. 50 metres West of Long Zawn, are 2 short inlets separated by a promontory which narrows into an arete.

B. Magowan, A. Tees 5/06/04

## Tory Slab

### Gravy Groove S 4a 45m \*

Pitch 1. From the huge recess at sea level in the centre of the crag, traverse at sea level towards the back of the geo to the base of the full crag height groove.

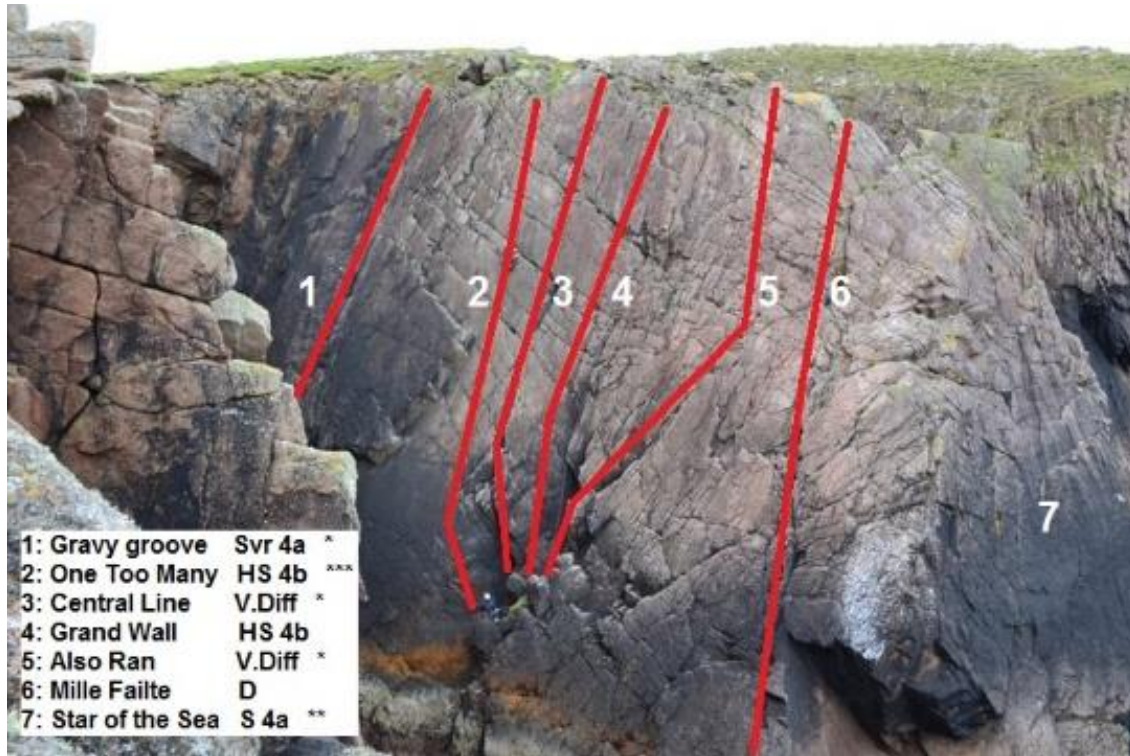
Pitch 2. Climb the groove on immaculate rock.

*W. Schuessler, C. Gleeson, I. Miller 28/07/11*

### One Too Many HS 4b 30m \*\*\*

From the central recess at sea level make a rising leftward traverse to the centre of the slab on your left, continue direct up the slab.

*W. Schuessler, I. Miller 28/07/11*



### Central Line V.Diff 30m \*\*\*

From the central recess climb the full crag height hand crack up the left of the recess.

*W. Schuessler, C. Gleeson 28/07/11*

### Grand Wall HS 4b 27m

From the recess climb the left wall directly above. A tad necky! :-)

*I. Miller, C. Gleeson 28/07/11*

### Also Ran V.Diff 28m \*

Climb the right ward trending hand crack from the huge sea level recess, finish direct.

*I. Miller, C. Gleeson 28/07/11*

### Mille Failte Diff 20m

The long easy eroded crack near the end of the West face of the first short zawn, just West of the long zawn containing Crested 10.

*A. Tees, B. Magowan June 04*

### Star of the Sea S 4a 20m \*\*

On the sea facing wall at the end of Tory Slab, abseil from the top of arete above Mille Failte to a small ledge at sea level. Climb the centre of this sea facing wall.

*B. Magowan, A. Tees, June 04*

**Arrowhead Slab V.Diff 20m**

On the opposite side of the zawn from "Mille Failte" there is an obvious slab descending to a point. Abseil down the slab to a platform below and climb up again! Start in the corner to the right of the point.

*A. Tees, B. Magowan June 04*

**Huffin and a Puffin S 4a**

On the east side of the island before you reach the bigger cliffs this wall can be found on the right 200 meters past the path. approach is by abseil down a corner to a good stance on the far right of the wall. climb the corner to top. Excellent for the grade.

*H Hennessy M Keogh R Redmond 08/06/2013*

## **Centre Stack Area**

Sitting off the north west side of Tory Island there stands in a row four very impressive 45m sea stacks.

From the main pier in the west village where the ferry to mainland Donegal arrives, follow the only road out of the village east. After 1 Kilometer turn off the road and over the moonscape land toward the huge tower dominating the horizon. This tower is clearly and easily seen from main land Donegal, alas it is not a sea stack as it is still joined to Tory Island by a loose and exposed ridge. From the view point overlooking this tower look out to sea as all four of these stacks are in perfect view either side of the tower. For the three stacks to the West of the tower, abseil down to the storm beach facing the nearest stack. From here it is an excellent wee sea crossing to all three stacks.

The nearest stack to the storm beach is the right hand of the three to the left of the tower. This 45m stack has a wide groove/narrow chimney in its upper reaches of its land ward face. The stack has two recorded routes to its pinnacle summit, both are based around this chimney feature. The easier route climbs the chimney direct and continues up the steep ledges above to a perched belay at the edge of the abyss. Descent is by abseil down the chimney.

The highest and most impressive of these sentinels is the 45m centre stack. This perfect cone pinnacle stack has been climbed twice by two different routes. In 2009 the sea ward face was climbed by a full stack height arête. In 2011 the much more impressive and slightly scary looking land ward arête was climbed at Severe a much more relaxed grade than it looks.

### **[Google Maps pin to The Toes of Balor Area](#)**

The smaller stack to the left of the centre stack remains unclimbed!

**Sea Ward Face Route. SVR 4a 45m**

Grid Reference B868463. This route climbs the seaward face of the largest and central stack of the trio North of the Tower on the Island of Tory. Access is by a 50 mtr abseil and a superb wee sea passage.

Pitch 1: 4a, 20m. From the seaward end of the channel between this stack and the beast to the south, climb cracks up left of the sea level platform and a steepening, step up and right to belay at base of chimney.

Pitch 2: 25m. Climb the clean rib to the summit

*P. Stevens, M. Boner 18/07/09*

**Proper Mission S 4a 40m \*\***

Grid Ref. B868463. Climb the outstanding landward arete of the centre stack.

Pitch 1. 10m 4a. Climb the steep face directly below the arete to a large slabby stance.

Pitch 2. 30m 4a. Climb the arete on excellent rock, holds and gear.

*I. Miller, W. Schuessler 27/07/11*

### **[First Ascent of Proper Mission film](#)**



The Land Ward Face. VS 4c 45m \*

Grid Reference B868462. This route climbs the landward face of the superb stack immediately to the West of the tower on the island of Tory. Access by 50 metre abseil and a wee sea passage.

Pitch 1: 4b, 20m. From the base of the landward face, climb the slab & step/swing over the void. Continue upward on massive jugs to belay on the ramp.

Pitch 2: 4c, 25m. Scramble up the ramp, & thrutch up the very obvious chimney. Continue up the very wide crack on superb rock to the summit.

*I. Miller, C. Gleeson 18/07/09*

North Face Route. HVS 5A 43m

Grid Reference B868462. This route climbs the Northern face of the Southern Stack, starting at the land ward end of the channel separating the 2 stacks.

Pitch 1: 4C, 18m. From the sea level platforms, climb the obvious "V" groove in the nose of rock to a belay on the landward facing ramp.

Pitch 2: 5A, 25m. Climb the Chimney as for the "The Landward Face Route," and continue to the summit by the steep right hand cracks.

*P. Stevens, M. Boner 18/07/09*

Rí Thoraigh E1 5b 65m \*\*

Pitch 1: 25m Start on the left side of the face. Climb big blocks and up the corner to the belay on the ramp below the right end of the diagonal left trending roof.

Pitch 2: 20m Climb the face up and left parallel to roof line until its end. Continue up passing the bulge split into two parallel finger cracks to reach the comfy belay on the ledge.

Pitch 3: 20m Climb to the right for 2m on the steep face and climb up and right following protection and wisely choosing the good quality rock.

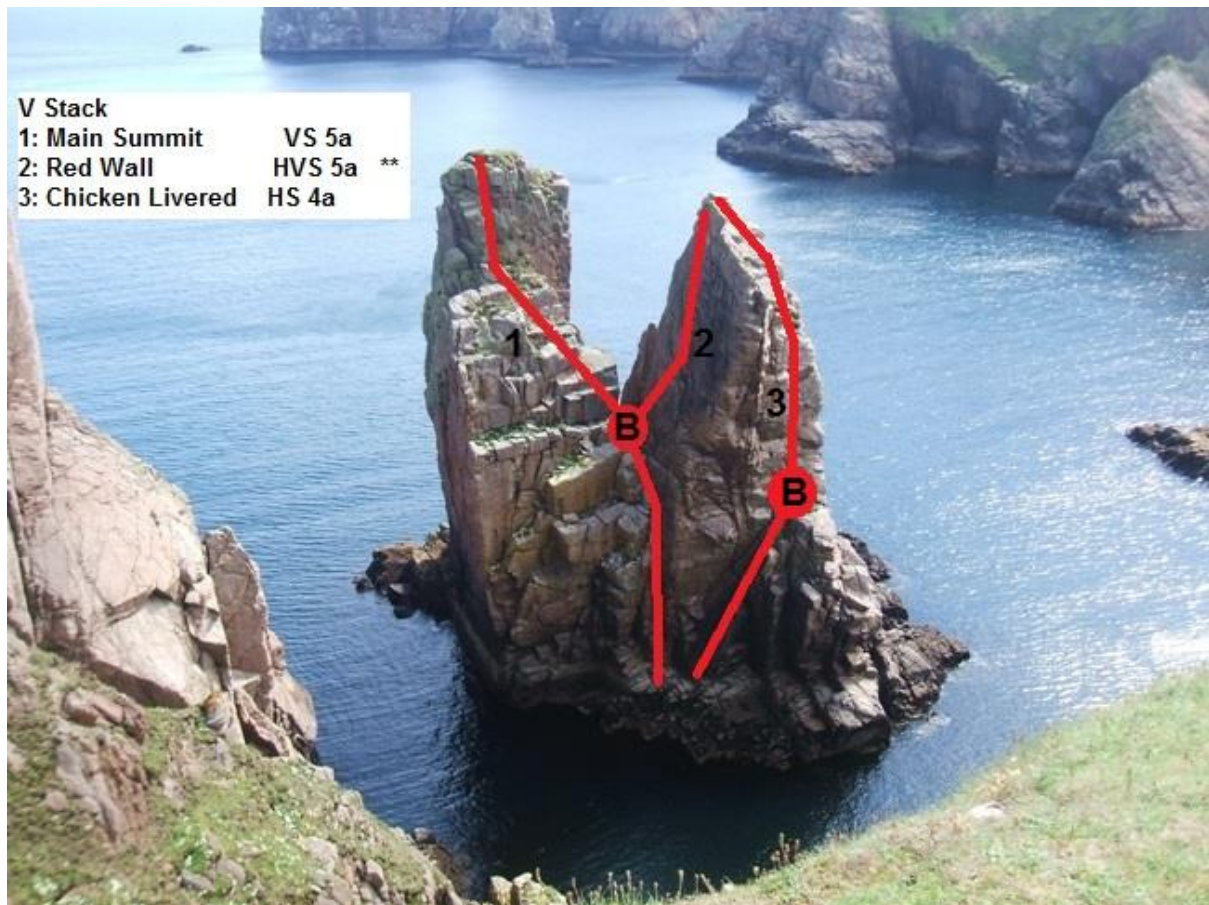
*M. Przybylski, P. Tinney 29/10/2014*

## V Stack

To the right of the tower sits V stack an excellent twin summited 40m sea stack.

Access is as for the Centre stacks to arrive at the viewpoint overlooking the tower. An abseil is required from here to access the sea level platforms facing the land ward face of the stack. (No insitu abseil anchors on the cliff tops 2011) From the sea level platforms it is a short sea passage to the base of the land ward face and a large recess at the base of the V.

Both summits have been climbed from the same initial pitch up the steep corner below the V. This takes you to a huge ledge with a airy window looking out to sea between the summits. The left summit, the slightly higher one is climbed about Severe up a series of large ledges to a final grot struggle up a loose chimney to its flat topped summit. The slightly lower right summit is climbed direct from this platform following a deep crack up the wall above to the small summit spire.



Main Summit. 45m VS 5a

Grid Reference B869461, This route climbs the landward face of the left hand summit of the ULTRA obvious "V" shaped stack, Immediately to the south of the "tower" on the island of Tory. Access is by a 50m easy angled abseil and a short sea passage, descent is by abseil of route.

Pitch 1, 5A, 25m. Starting below the meeting of the twin summits, climb the steep corner, step left & continue to a superb belay between the summits.

Pitch 2, 4a, 20m. Climb to the left hand summit via the very obvious summit chimney

*P. Stevens, I. Miller 19/07/09*

Red Wall. HVS 5a 43m \*\*

This route climbs the right hand summit of the "V" stack on the island of Tory. Access and descent as for main summit.

Pitch 1, 5A, 25m. as for main summit route.

Pitch 2, 5A, 18m. From the recess between the twin summits, climb the thin ramp rightward, and continue

leftward, climb to the summit up broken cracks.

*P. Stevens, I. Miller 19/07/09*

Chicken Livered HS 4a

This route climbs the landward face of the right hand summit.

1: 20m Climb the ramp to a stance at the base of the upper wall.

Pitch 2: 20m 4a Climb the wide crack to the summit.

*W. Schuessler, F. Donnelly 02/09/12*

## Dun Balai

This 40m square block sea stack sits in a supremely atmospheric location at the base of the 90m high Dun Balai headland at the east end of Tory Island. It is by far the most adventurous of Tory's outstanding collection of sea stacks.

Access is by a 2km walk east from the main west village on Tory to a wee north west facing storm beach just beyond the east village. Above the beach are the remains of the old fishing boats winching gear that Tory islanders used to use to dry heave their fishing boats on to land for the winter for safe keeping. Once on the storm beach it is a 800m paddle around the 50m high Promontory Fort head and out to sea north ward along coast below the base of the ominous 90m Dun Balai headland. Landing on the stack requires an flat calm sea. The stack has easy landing platforms at the base of both it's sea ward and land ward faces. The base of the stack sits in a very exposed location and can only be safely gained in a very calm sea state. The channel between the stack and the headland behind it contains a collection of semi submerged skerries and these cause a great deal of white water violence at most tide states.

Once on the stack there is a huge ledge system around its base allowing easy access to all of its faces.

The only recorded route to its summit climbs the groove system up the centre of the sea ward face in two pitches at a very amenable V.Diff. Descent is by abseil down the route.

**Dun Balai V. Diff 50m \*\*\***

Grid Reference B876463. At the Eastern end of Tory Island and sitting in an outstanding location at the base of a wall of 80m sea cliffs is a remote and UBER intimidating 55m sea stack. This route climbs the center of the West face. (sea ward face)

Pitch 1. 25m From the center of the sea ward face climb the right facing corner and up ledges to a large stance below a right trending crack.

Pitch 2. 25m Climb the short steep crack and ascend a series of right trending steps to the summit. Access is by an ultra committing 700m paddle from the wee storm beach at GR B876455 and descent of the stack is by abseil down the route.

*I. Miller, R. Khanna 15/08/10*

Behind the stack is a huge sea arch running through the Dun Balai headland, this huge arch makes for an excellent wee paddle through.

## Tor Mór Ridge

At the far Eastern end of Tory Island lives a truly outstanding 400m long rock ridge sticking out into the Atlantic ocean. The ridge is attached to Tory island at a summit known as The Anvil and runs North out into the Atlantic for 400m to the spectacular Tor Mor summit at it's sea ward end. It's highest point on the ridge is Tor Mor at approx 70m and the ridge is on average 50m high and in many places a true knife edge with spectacular drops at your feet into the sea.

On 26th August 2012 Stephen "Jock" Read and myself climbed the ridge using a mixture of mountaineering and rock climbing techniques, moving roped together for the ridge traverse and pitching several rock steps at about half way along the ridge at about Severe. The final 50m of the ridge onto the summit of Tor Mor was an excellent pitch of immaculate granite climbed at Severe.

Tor Mor Ridge provides an outstanding day out of mountaineering and rock climbing along a very exposed and atmospheric ridge high above the sea. Standing on Tor Mor Summit will live a very long time in your happy memory.

Breakfast in Bed HVS \*\*

Climb the overhanging nose to the left of the open book corner of the original route.

J. Redman, E. Jones June 2021

**Tor Mor Ridge Ascent Film**



Climbers of the summit of Tor Mor



## 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.