

TheShortSpan

bouldering in Ireland
volume 1
by David Flanagan

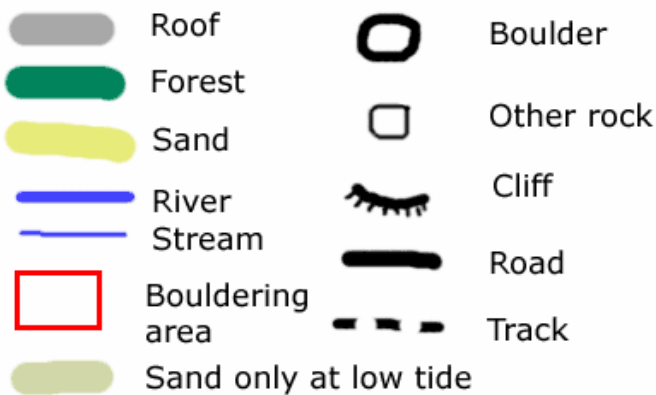
Using this guide

This guide uses the Fontainebleau system throughout. The chart opposite is the generally accepted mapping for those more used to V grades. The grades represent the consensus where one exists but some of the problems have had very few ascents. So the grades should be taken with a pinch of salt.

The vast majority of the older/easier problems weren't named when first done which can make things very confusing so I have retro-named some of them, I hope this doesn't offend.

The maps I have done are intended to get you to the boulders and are by no means perfect. If you are spending an extended period in one place, want to hike or explore the Discovery series maps published by the Ordnance Survey cover all of Ireland at a scale of 1:50,000.

I have used SS as an abbreviation for sit start. And P means a project or potential problem yet to be climbed.



V grades

V0-
3+

V0
4

V0+
4+

V1
5

V2
5+

V3
6a

V3
6a+

V4
6b

V4
6b+

V5
6c

V5
6c+

V6
7a

V7
7a+

V8
7b

V8/9
7b+

V9
7c

V10
7c+

V11
8a

V12
8a+

V13
8b

V14
8b+

V15
8c

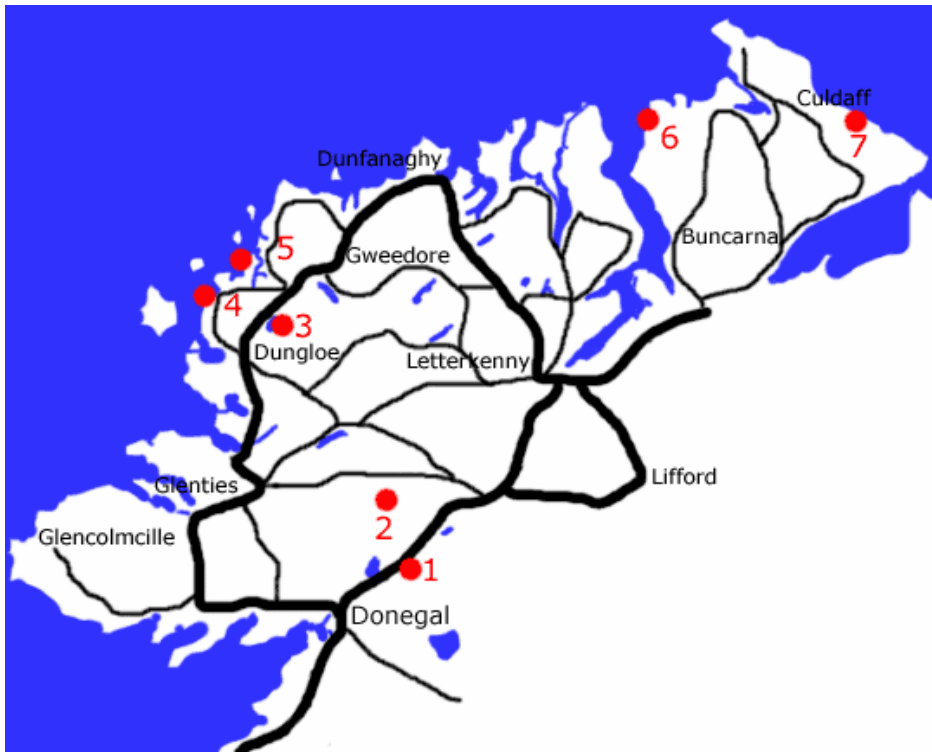
Guidelines

The guidelines below are an interpretation of the M.C.I. (Mountaineering Council Ireland) good practise for climbers document as it might apply to bouldering.

- No pof/resin.
- No chipping.
- Wire brushes should not be used.
- The removal of vegetation should be avoided whenever possible.
- Keep chalk marks to the minimum.
- Use a bouldering pad to protect the ground.
- Respect the country code and try to leave no trace.

The rock can be cleaned with a stiff plastic brush a wire brush will damage the rock and remove the top layer, witness the orange glow that is the crux hold on the Fin for an example of overuse.

Donegal



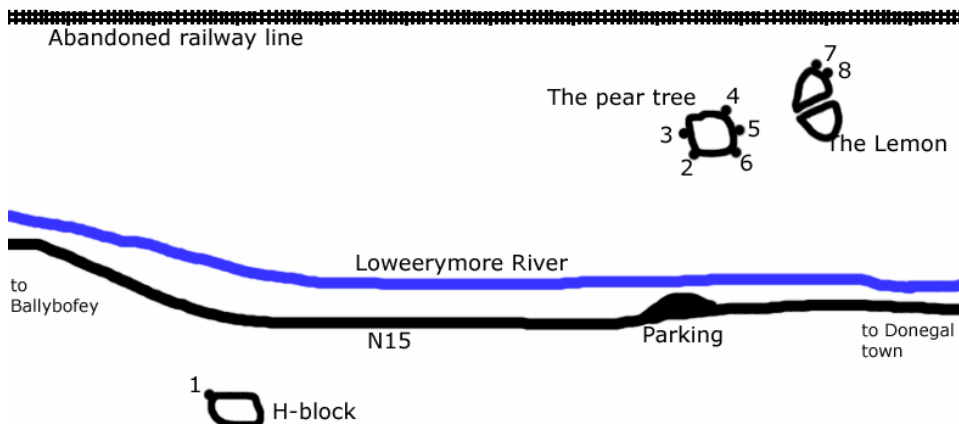
Nearly all of the established bouldering in Donegal is on granite whether it is beside the sea or in the hills. The only exception is Rubonid point where the rock is more like Dolerite.

The Gaeltacht (Irish speaking) area The Rosses has a great concentration of granite bouldering including Carrickfinn, Cruit and Crolla. A great place to explore and laze around on the beaches. The locals are friendly and there are some nice pubs and great camping spots everywhere.

It is possible (and cheap) to fly into Carrickfinn airport and travel from area to area on foot. The bus goes from Dublin to Dungloe (don't pronounce the g) from there a taxi would only cost a few euro to Burtonport.

Area	Rock	Walk in	Number problems	of < 4+	5 - 6c+	> 7a	Weather
1 Barnesmore Gap	Granite	2 mins	8	3	5	0	Valley at 200m
2 Polldoo glen	Granite	10 mins	17	9	8	0	Exposed hillside at 300m
3 Crolla	Granite	1 min	34	7	27	0	Low level
4 Cruit/Burtonport	Granite	1 min	+9	2	+7	0	Tidal beach
5 Carrickfin	Granite	1 min	26	4	21	1	Partially tidal beach
6 Dunaff Bay	Granite	1 min	28	3	25	0	Tidal beach
7 Rubonid	Dolerite	1 min	32	5	27	0	Non-tidal beside the sea

Barnesmore Gap

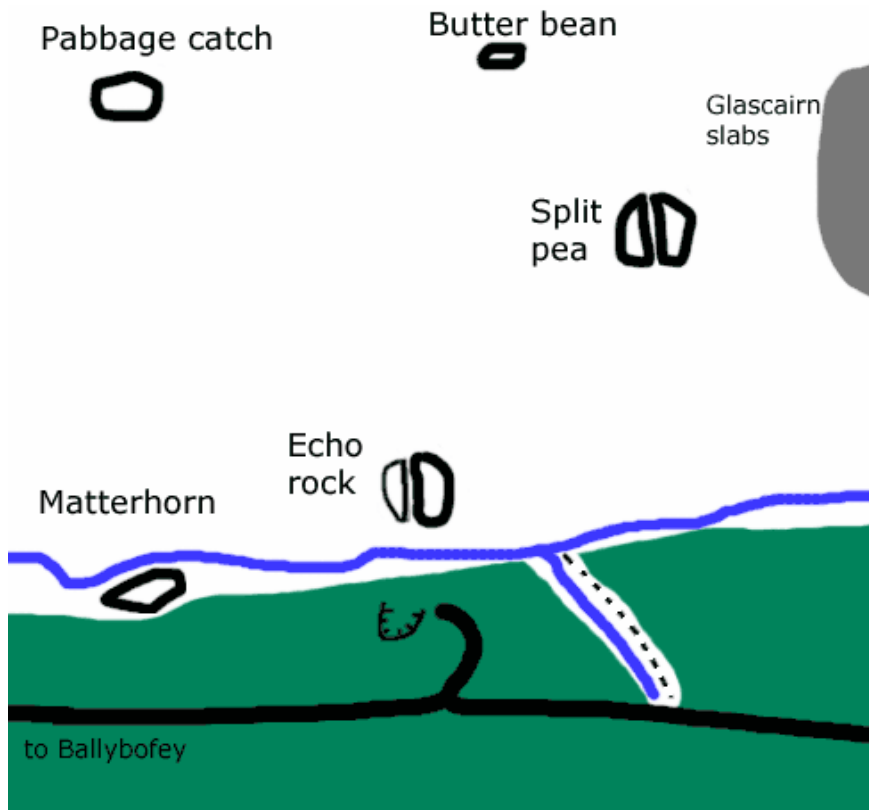


There are a few problems beside the road in Barnesmore Gap. Not worthy of a trip in themselves but they are handy stop off to stretch the legs and arms if you passing.

Barnesmore Gap is on the N15 from Donegal Town to Ballybofey. Coming from Donegal Town the parking is about one kilometre past Bidy O' Barnes pub on the right hand side.

- 1 - 6a Traverses the two sides of the block starting on the right arete.
- 2 - 3 The shot holed left arete.
- 3 - 5+ Start up the left hand wall, then move right and make a few technical moves to better holds out right.
- 4 - 4 The steep juggy arete to better holds.
- 5 - 4 The slabby crack.
- 6 **Stewed Arete** 5/5+ The right hand arete, hardest at the start.
- 7 - 5+ SS using a toe-hook on the arete, finish using obvious better hold on top.
- 8 - 5+ SS to better holds and top.

Polldoo Glen

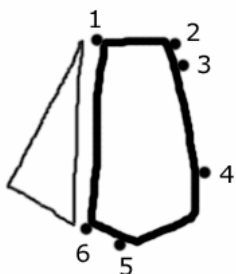


Deep on the north side of the Bluestacks is an isolated valley with five boulders in it called Polldoo glen. The rock is amazing pink granite, very clean and with a few edges. The **Butter bean** has no problems on it but there is an excellent project on the side facing the lake that starts on the obvious jug. It might be difficult to get back down though!

From Ballybofey take the R252 towards Glenties. After about six kilometre there is a sharp right hand bend in the road at a church. Carry straight on along the R253 minor road for approx eleven kilometres until, after passing a small forest a rough road follows the Reelan River down to the left (G 978 967). Follow this road for about six kilometres up and then down into the glen, towards the bottom is a junction, turn left and park in the quarry where the road ends. Break out right through the forest to the stream you should be close to the Echo rock.

The boulders are quite out of the way down some rough roads so a Discovery series sheet 11 map would be a worthwhile investment to ensure you find them.

Echo rock



Amazing. One of the most impressive boulders in the country. Shout to find out why it's called Echo rock. Photos don't do this boulder justice.

1 **Barry's Backbone**

5+ The left to right traverse along the top of the boulder finishing at the apex. A cop out can be taken 2/3rds of the way along the traverse at the obvious jug.

2 **Floppy Traverse**

3 The flaky crack, right to left, hardest at start.

3 **Nailgrinder**

5+ Takes the series of flakes and edges just to the left of the **Floppy traverse**.

4 **Big Al's Airy Traverse**

6a The groove to a small ramp at the base of a steep arete. Move gingerly across rightwards on small crystals and smears to a better hold and the top.

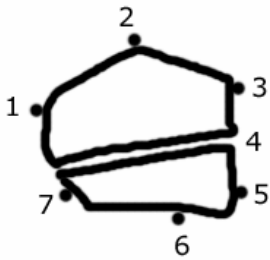
5
Paddington Bear

4
The slab directly right of **Split Arete** without using the arete.

6
Split Arete

6c
The beautiful arete done by Dave Millar. Highball with the hardest moves at start.

Split rock



Good problems and a few hard projects as well. Just uphill and left of this boulder is a fantastic arete that's well worth a look.

1
Splitting Headaches

5+
The overhanging wall on the left side of the main boulder facing down the valley. Really nice moves on really positive edges in a beautiful position.

2
-
P
The house roof like feature.

3
-
4
Easy wall.

4
Spam Chimney
3
Chimney.

5
Coley How
3
The easy slab left of the chimney,

6
Holey Cow
4
The face to the left again.

7
-
P
Dynamic moves on edges.

Pabbage Catch



Quite low but nice rock.

1
-
5
Start on a juggy flake, move right onto arete and up. Harder SS.

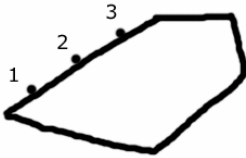
2
-
5
The wall using a high step for your left foot to better holds.

3
-
3
The wall using good edges for your feet and good hold out right to finish.

4
-
4

Start at the arete, traverse rightwards along the top edge using reasonable footholds.

Matterhorn



Easier problems down by the river.

1
-
5

The slab right of the crack using tiny edges.

2
-
3

The crack and slab.

3
-
3

The slab left of the crack. Start on a juggy flake, move right onto arete and up. SS 5+/6a.

Crollly

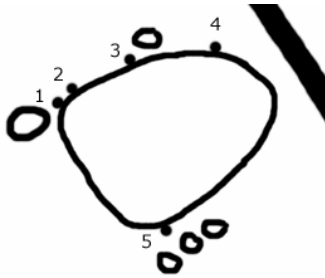


A great collection of granite boulders centred on the small village of Crollly. All are within a few minutes walk of the road if not closer. About ten minutes drive to Carrickfinn (follow the airport signs).

The Crollly roadside boulder has been the subject of many local legends such as Finn MacCumhail threw it from the top of Errigal, if the most beautiful woman in Ireland walks by it will fall on her and crush her, if you throw a stone onto the top and it stays your wish will be granted. When we visited in June the Christmas lights were still on the boulder so be careful not to get tangled in them.

Crollly on the N56 four kilometres south of Gweedore.

Crolly roadside boulder



The huge boulder (B 828 191) is also known as "Cloch Mór Léim a tSionnaigh" the 'big rock of the fox's leap' and to the locals as "An Clochan mór".

1
-
5
The left hand arete to the top, also the descent.

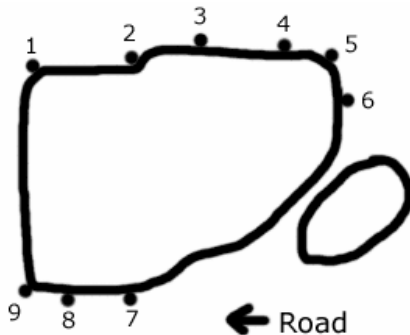
2
-
P
Slap from the sidepull to the pocket.

3
-
5+
The pocketed wall.

4
-
P
Hard arete.

5
-
P
The juggy arete to start, finish rightwards and on to the top.

The Tank



Every problem is worthwhile on The Tank (B 825 178) as it's right beside the road. The pocketed granite is very unusual. There is a smaller boulder up slope with an easy arete and a sit start project.

1
-
4
Left hand arete with the crack.

2
Wee Daniel
6a+
Layoff the rib on the left of the groove.

3
-
4+
Right hand side of the slab using pockets.

4
-
5+
Left hand side of the slab.

5
-
4
Very nice arete.

6
-
4+
Slab without using right hand arete.

7
-
5
Middle of the slab.

8
-
5+

Left hand side of the slab using the left arete.

9
Fast and Furious
6a+

The right hand arete using the obvious crimp and sidepull.

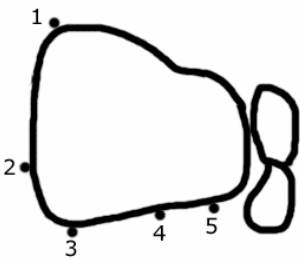
The Moon boulder



The Moon boulder (B 826 176) is visible on the small ridge above the lake.

1
-
P
The crescent shaped arete left to right.

The Bunawack boulder



Park at the bend in the road just before it ends, follow the stream uphill to the boulder (B 834 168) which is visible from the road.

1
-
4+
Left hand side of arete using slab, steeper side of the arete goes at 6a+.

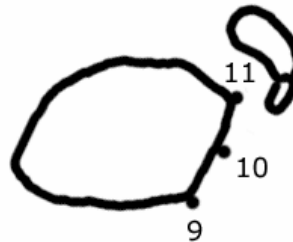
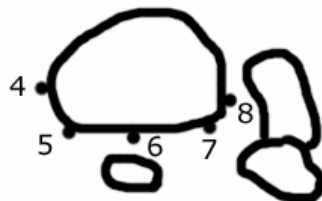
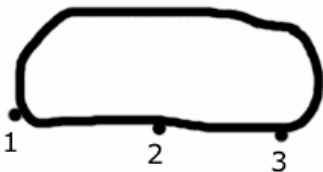
2
Highway Patrol
5
The high slab following the line of least resistance.

3
-
5
The arete gets sloppier at the top.

4
-
6a+
Up the face of the wave using the small pockets and edges.

5
-
6a
The scooped arete right to left awkward finish.

Hidden Valley boulders

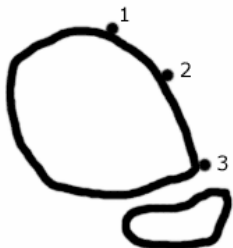


The Hidden valley boulders (B 837 209) are well named. Just before the turn for Bunbeg (heading north) is a pull in on the left park here and head down towards the small valley, the tops of the boulders should be visible in the vegetation. There also seems to be more boulders down river that might be worth a look.

1 - 5+ Left to right traverse of the top of the boulder.

2	-	P	Obvious slopy crimp to high break.
3	-	4+	Climbs the faint groove using good holds.
4	-	P	Arete, harder than it looks
5	-	P	Desperate arete, mega hard.
6	Croly crack	6a	Step off boulder using crack only (SS yet to be done).
7	-	P	Left side if arete using layaways and long reach.
8	-	5+	Arete using high step and sidepull, finish up slab.
9	Reverend Green	5	Arete finish right along boulder top.
10	Professors Plums	6a	Wall via high pocket and undercut.
11	-	5	Crack finish right for added pleasure.

Poo boulder



The Poo boulder (B 837 205) is on the other side of the road and not very obvious.

1
-
4+
Right side of slab using high breaks.

2
-
5+/6a
Pad the central slab.

3
-
5+/6a

The left hand side of the arete, eliminate climbing the arete on its right hand side.

Cruit Island



Cruit island (connected to the mainland by a bridge), which is pronounced *critch* and means "The Hump" in English, has a few nice beaches with some bouldering on them.

Add details of how to get to Cruit.

Trá Dearg

In the centre of the island is Trá Dearg (B 730 210) which has some bouldering on the south side of the beach. The walk along the coastline to Aughnish point is nice and there is some potential slightly inland for some bouldering on the outcrops.

Aughnish point

(B 721 201) Take the second turn left off the main road after the lake, follow this road until your car can't go any further then walk along the track until you reach a secluded cove, there is a nice overhanging wall and a few other problems around (need low tide) to the left facing the sea is Aughnish point itself. The bouldering is on the shelves of smooth granite. There are only about five problems but the setting is wild with great views over to Arranmore and the waves crashing below.

Burtonport

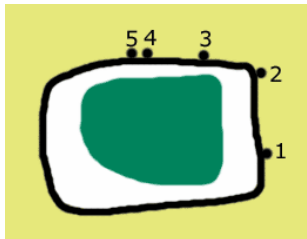


North of Burtonport (Ailt an Chorrain) there is a series of beaches that have some interesting problems. Travelling north out of Burtonport take the first turn left marked with a sign saying Beach/Trá.

The main Burtonport beach (B 715 171) itself has some nice problems especially when the tide is fully out.

Add more details of how to get to Burtonport.

An Chloch Ghlas



An Chloch Ghlas (B 711 174) is nice boulder/outcrop, tidal but with deep sand to land on. There are problems scattered all over this area. According to the map there is a fort on top though I never saw it.

1
Dyno
5

The steep side of the block has two ledges the perfect dynoing distance apart.

2
-
P

Juggy start with a long rockover/span to the top.

3
Back on Crack

5+
Brilliant crack, crux at the top.

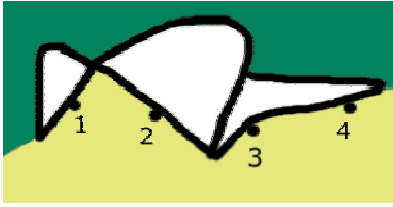
4
-
3+

Juggy breaks.

5
-
5

The middle of the wall using the slopey breaks.

An mballa



An mballa (B 713 169) is worth the short walk over the grassy hillside from the other beach.

1
-
6a
Slab using the 'smiles'.

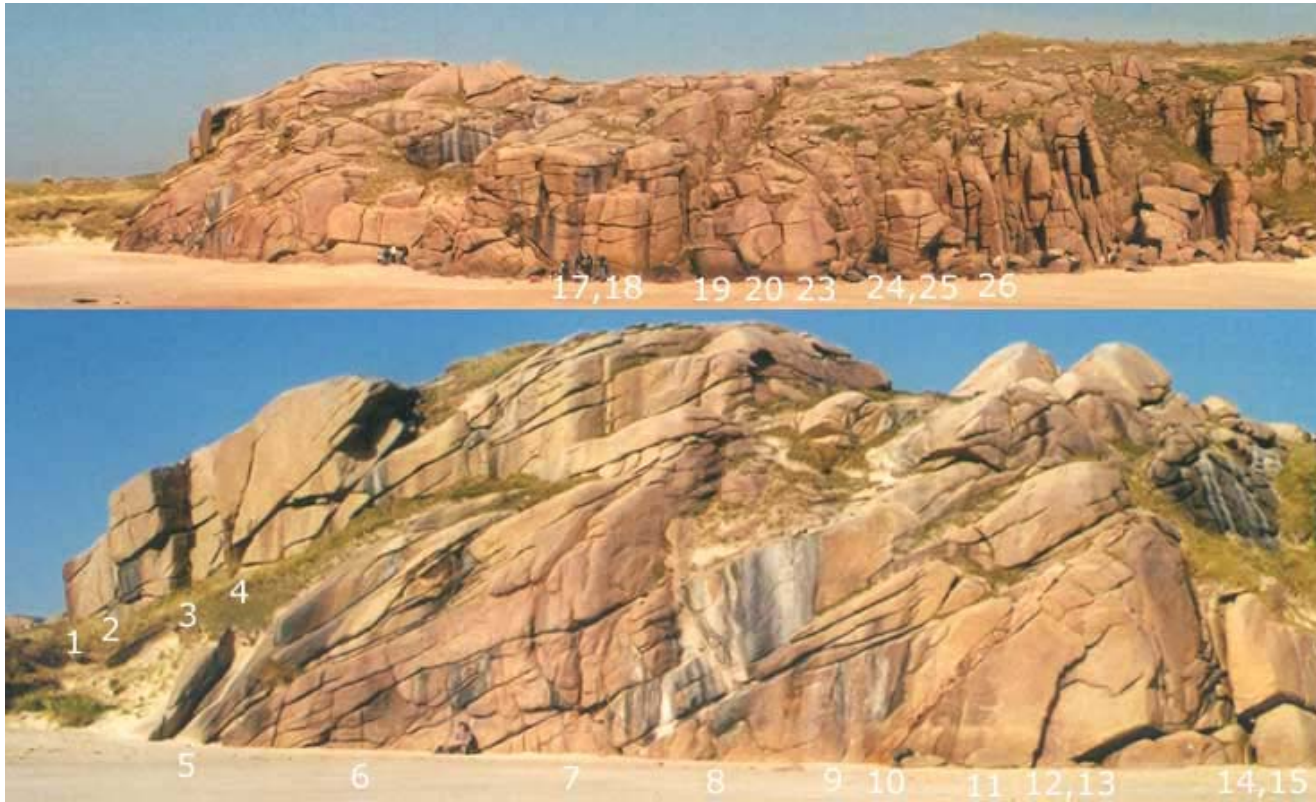
2
Wild Horses
4
Slab.

3
-
4
Corner.

4
-
P
Arete.

Carrickfin

Carrickfinn (B 780 234) is in North West Donegal on the same peninsula as the Donegal airport not far from Gola Island. To get there follow the signposts to the airport, take the road parallel to the runway, turn left as the runway ends. Immediately after the gate turn left. The rock is clean granite and the landing is sandy and generally good though there is the odd rock lurking in the sand. Climbing is possible at any time with high tide reaching **Barry's traverse**.

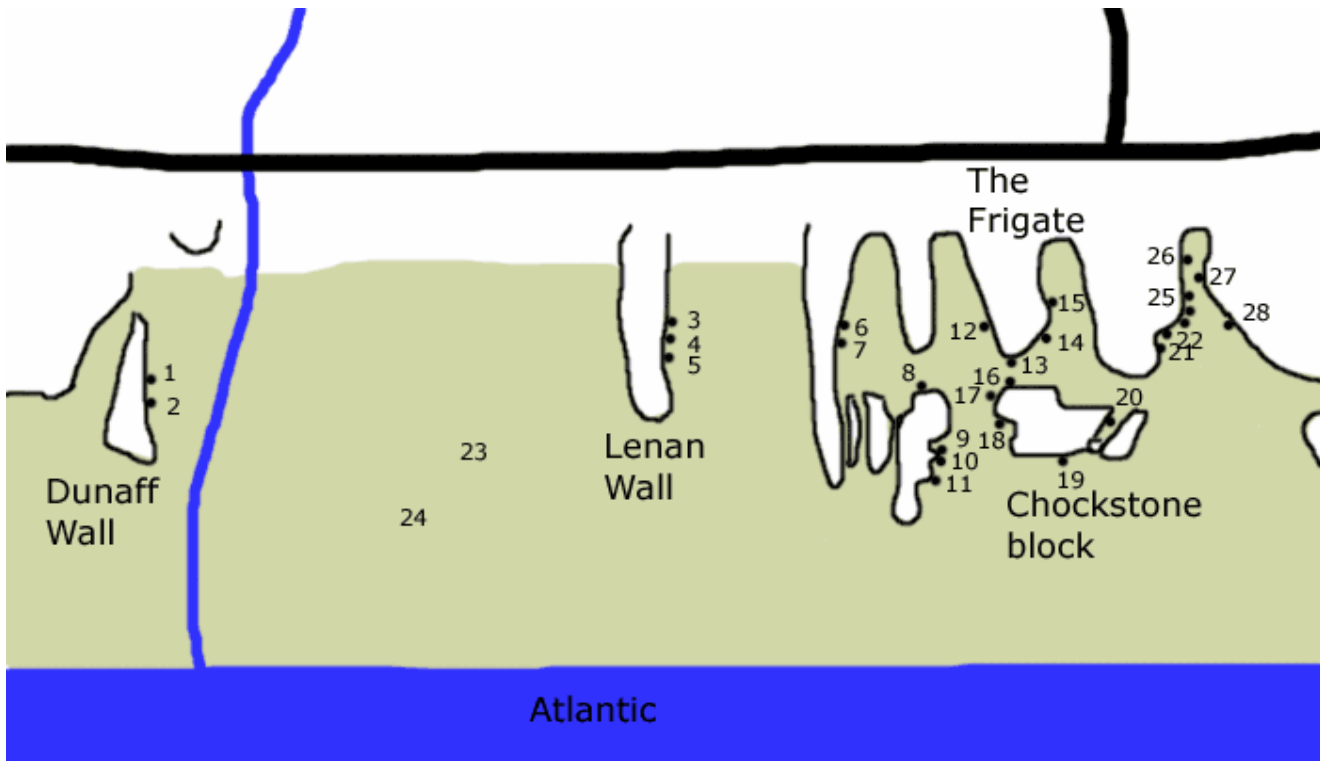


1	Three star Arete	<i>P</i>	The arete has seen off all challengers so far
2	Joe's crack	5+	Squirm up the wide crack.
3	Macro corner	3	Perfect very juggy corner.
4	High crack	<i>P</i>	Really a route.
5	Sandy slab	4	High but easy angled slab.
6	Michaels problem	5	Big lock from the diagonal break to the top.
7	Dyno	5+	Eliminate dyno left of the crack.
8	Barry traverse	5+	Traverse right and up the frustratingly slopey break.
9	Super	7a	Hard moves on slopers to gain the break.
10	Vin Diesel	4	Pleasant break to breaking just to the right.
11	Lifeline	5+	starts at the right side of the slab left of corner (not using the big rock at the bottom) then rockover to the horizontal break.
12	-	5	Brilliant corner.
13	-	5	Start in the corner and traverse the seam rightwards out then finish up the blunt arete.
14	-	<i>P</i>	Squeeze the arete, has a rocky landing.
15	-	5	Centre of the slab.
16	-	5+	Mini roof reach out and over the low roof.
17	-	3+	Easy juggy crack, high though, is the descent for Tough old station .
18	Tough old station	5	Excellent highball with good enough holds all the way.
19	Tackling the issue	5+	The issue is the mantel.
20	Leaping fish Left	5	Follow the left hand crack.
21	Leaping fish Direct	5	Using the hold in the centre.
22	Leaping fish Right	5	Start at the 'tail' them move right into the wide break.
23	Beware	6a	Tenuous slab.
24	Sector 7E	6a	Highball up the front face.
25	Sector 7G	6a	Low steep start followed by a rightwards slap to the jugs.
26	Scian	<i>P</i>	The knife-edge arete with a bad landing.

Dunaff Bay

Dunaff Bay (C 312 463) contains a fantastic series of granite boulders and outcrops. The rock is a bright orange granite, reasonably clean and solid and has a number of wave sculpted features providing an interesting landscape for the boulderer to play in. Landings are mainly cobble, but jutting rock outcrops do occur and a mat would be best advised along with a good spot.

From Derry/Letterkenny take the R238 to Clonmany via Buncrana. The R238 bends left six kilometres north of Buncrana, take this, the right taking you to Carndonagh. Drive through the main street in Clonmany and then continue west on the coastal road for Dunaff/Lenan. After about five kilometres you will come across a Post Office/Shop on a junction on your right. Take this road right and continue for another two kilometres to where the tar road ends and doglegs left. Park here. The bouldering is located in the tidal zawns next to the road.



Dunaff Wall

Dunaff Wall (C 312 466) lies less than half way along the shingle beach between Dunaff Head and Lenan Head. And is one hundred meters north of a stream flowing into the sea.

- 1 - 6a The first steep wall 5m to the left of the obvious broken break. The wall using flakes and open handed holds.
- 2 - 5+ The next wall using obvious jugs and easier top out.

Lenan Wall

This wall lies between the Dunaff wall and the narrow zawns.

- 3 - 6a The bulge from a SS with the aid of the thin diagonal crack.
- 4 - 5 The steep wall to the left of the bulge on good holds.
- 5 - 5 Traverse in from the far left, finish as for problem four.

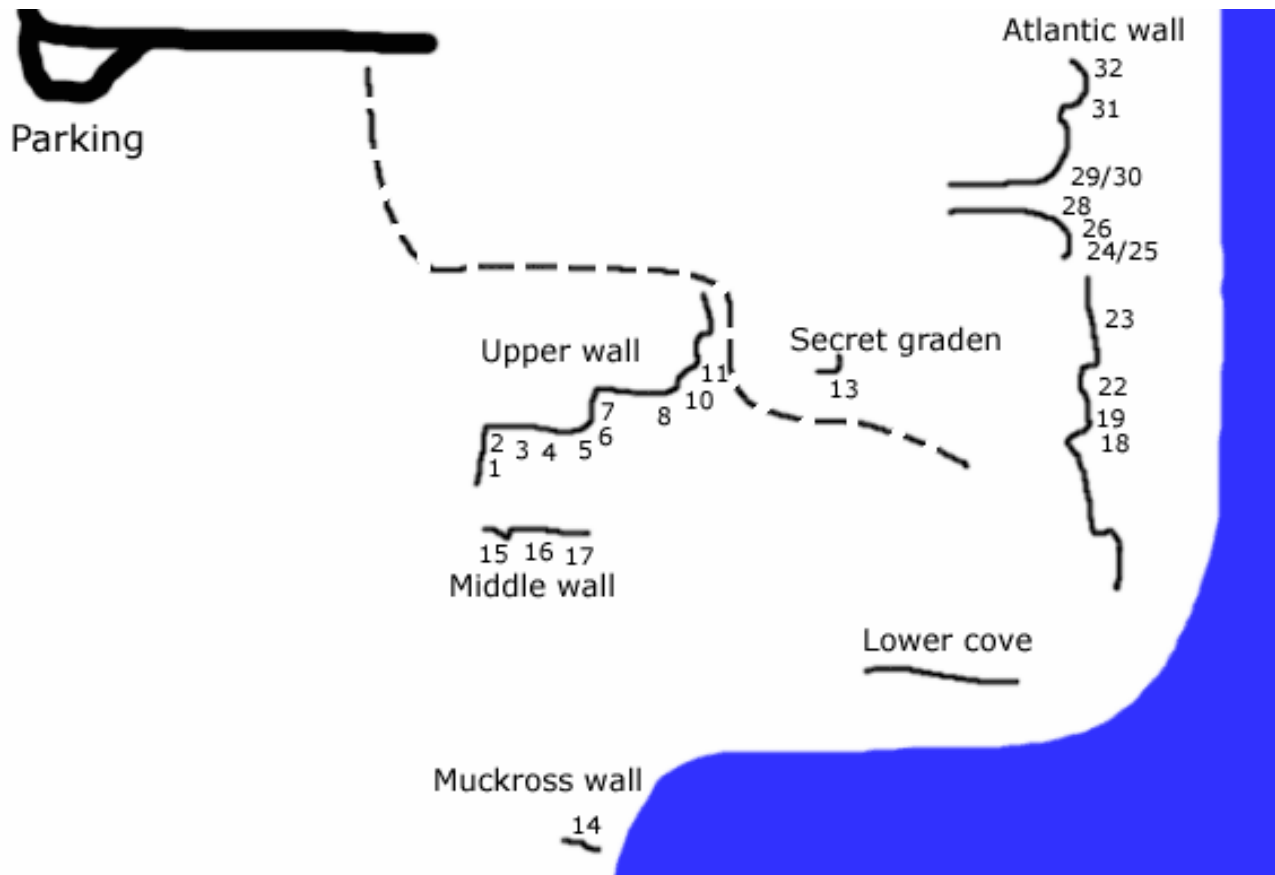
Narrow Zawns

The next set of problems lie in a set of narrow tidal zawns next to the road junction (C 312 463). The problems are described from north to south.

- 6 - 6a The steep wall to the right of the obvious overhanging prow to juggy finish.

7	The Three amigos	6a+	This climbs the overhanging arete 2/3rds of the way up the shingle beach. The prow from a SS using juggy pinches and side pulls.
8	Cesealya	5+	This problem climbs an obvious juggy overhanging wall. SS to good holds, traverse rightwards to finish.
9	The Fin	6a	The fin shaped arete via a SS to good jug on the right and the top.
10	-	5+	The wall to the left of the fin with/without the corner on the left
11	-	5	The seaward jug filled arete. Armbands and rubber ring recommended.
12	-	4	The cracked slab, various lines.
13	The Prow	6a	At the seaward end of the Frigate lies a smooth prow. The prow via a SS to good holds. Various alternatives.
14	-	5+	The steep vicious crack via a few nasty jams and the odd explanative.
15	-	5+	The scooped feature, hard to start.
16	-	5	Climbs the blocky steep wall opposite the Prow .
17	-	5+	Climbs the sloping cracked arete, directly opposite the Prow , hard to start.
18	-	5+	On the seaward side of the previous two problems lies a scooped feature. This problem climbs the smooth right hand side via the rightward trending crack and then finishes left.
19	-	4	The slabby seaward side of this block.
20	-	5	This block is split in two at its southern end by a pool with a huge chockstone above. This problem climbs the right hand wall above the pool, high finish.
21	-	4	This climbs the juggy wall, exit left/right to finish.
22	-	5+	The small wall, hard to start.
23	The Tulip	5+	The bow shaped prow via 2 good jugs on the right and an airy mantle. Manifique.
24	The Tulip - Direct	6a+/6b	The prow via a high side-pull on the right, triangular sloper high on left. Next go for the hold left of 2 good jugs (Prob. 23), heel-hook sloper & finish as for (Prob. 23).
25	-	6a	The next obvious arete. Hard to start, hard mantle.
26	-	6a+	The steep wall and arete to the left of the scooped feature, airy mantle to finish.
27	-	5+	The scooped feature.
28	-	6a	The wall to the right of the overhanging prow via moves up a corner to a long reach for good crimps and the top.
29	-	5+	The wall above the pot holed filled platform to the top. Various alternatives.

Rubonid Point



There are about thirty problems on the various short walls and boulders at Rubonid Point (C 577 491) near Dunmore Head, Culdaff on the Inishowen Peninsula. The rock is solid and has great friction similar to the Dolerite at Dunmore Head.

The area can be reached by driving south of Culdaff on the R238. At one kilometre take a left turn onto the small coast road and continue along this for a further four kilometres where you come to a cross roads (should see a sign with a yellow foot on top). Take a left here and park at the end of this road. Walk down the lane on the left for about four hundred meters, and hop over a gate on your right. Follow a faint path through a few fields and then heather for about four hundred meters to the Upper Wall.

Upper Wall

- | | | | |
|----|-------------------------|----|--|
| 1 | - | 3 | Crack. |
| 2 | Hole in the Wall | 6a | The right hand wall to the good horizontal break on the left via the diagonal crack. Finish via a good side-pull out to the right or slopy pockets direct. |
| 3 | - | 4 | Cracks. |
| 4 | - | 5+ | Crack. |
| 5 | - | P | Left side of the high arete. |
| 6 | - | P | Right side of the high arete. |
| 7 | - | 5+ | Cracked wall. |
| 8 | Moe's Arete | 6a | Arete to juggy lip and rest. Make a series of more committing moves via poor holds to finish. |
| 9 | Stu's Arete | 5+ | The square cut overhang. The lower wall to good undercut, reach out right, grab the arete and cut loose for the top. |
| 10 | - | 4 | SS. The pocketed arete. |
| 11 | - | 5 | SS. The wall using nice crimps and edges. Alternative dyno to top off lower crimps. |
| 12 | Rubonid Arete | 5 | The jutting arete. Start with left hand on the left arete, then climb on using a cunning kneebar and an awesome juggy finish. |

Secret Garden

- | | | | |
|----|----------------------|----|---|
| 13 | Secret Garden | 6a | Left to right traverse of this little wall. |
|----|----------------------|----|---|

Muckcross Wall

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------------|----|--|
| 14 | Stu's Traverse | 6a | Right to left low traverse of the first obvious short but wide wall you meet as you walk eastwards up the coast. |
|----|-----------------------|----|--|

Middle Wall

- | | | | |
|----|------------------|----|--|
| 15 | Lion King | 5 | Right to left low traverse of the first obvious short but wide wall you meet as you walk eastwards up the coast. |
| 16 | - | 5+ | Direct line, finish by mantelshelf. |
| 17 | - | 5 | Traverse the boulder right to left and finish direct via the highest point. |

Atlantic Wall

- | | | | |
|----|-------------------------|-------|---|
| 18 | - | 5+/6a | SS. The arete using a great side-pull to start and some slopy pockets to finish. Various variants on this arete and the slab to the right going at 6a/6b. |
| 19 | - | 3 | Slab. |
| 20 | - | 3 | Crack |
| 21 | - | 5 | Traverse the wall from left to right and finish up problem 15. |
| 22 | - | 5 | SS. Start on side pulls and then go for the good horizontal break and mantle to finish. |
| 23 | John Doe | 6b | Start on crimp horizontal break and reach for the slopy break above, get your feet high and finish via a better hold on top. |
| 24 | Rum | 4 | The left hand crack. |
| 25 | Navel Tradition | 5+ | Start as for the last problem and then at two-thirds height traverse the obvious diagonal break and finish as for problem 22. |
| 26 | Crispy Nanflakes | 6a | The slab between the two cracks via good crimps to the juggy break, finish as for Navel Tradition . |
| 27 | Sodomy | 4 | The middle crack. |
| 28 | The Lash | 5/5+ | The right hand crack. |
| 29 | Smithereens | 5+ | The arete to the right of the gully by climbing the slab to start and then moving out right to better holds and then finishing up left. |
| 30 | - | 6a | Same as the last except taking using a more direct start. |
| 31 | - | 6a | Steep wall using the horizontal breaks and an awkward mantle to finish. |
| 32 | - | 6a | Right hand wall using the breaks to the top |

Also various fun filled sea level traverses and solos on the walls of the inlet below Atlantic wall.

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