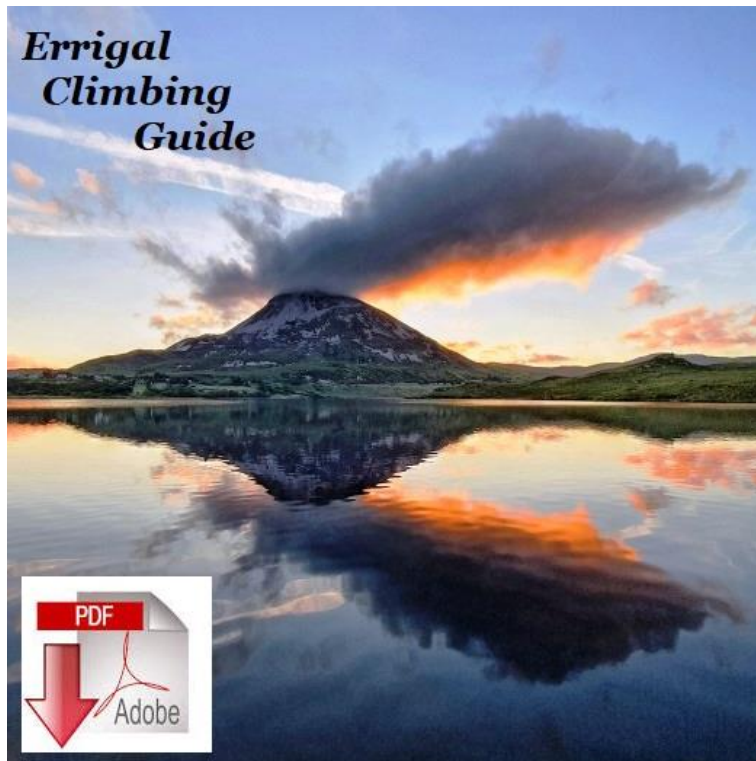


A Climbers Guide to

# Errigal

By

Iain Miller

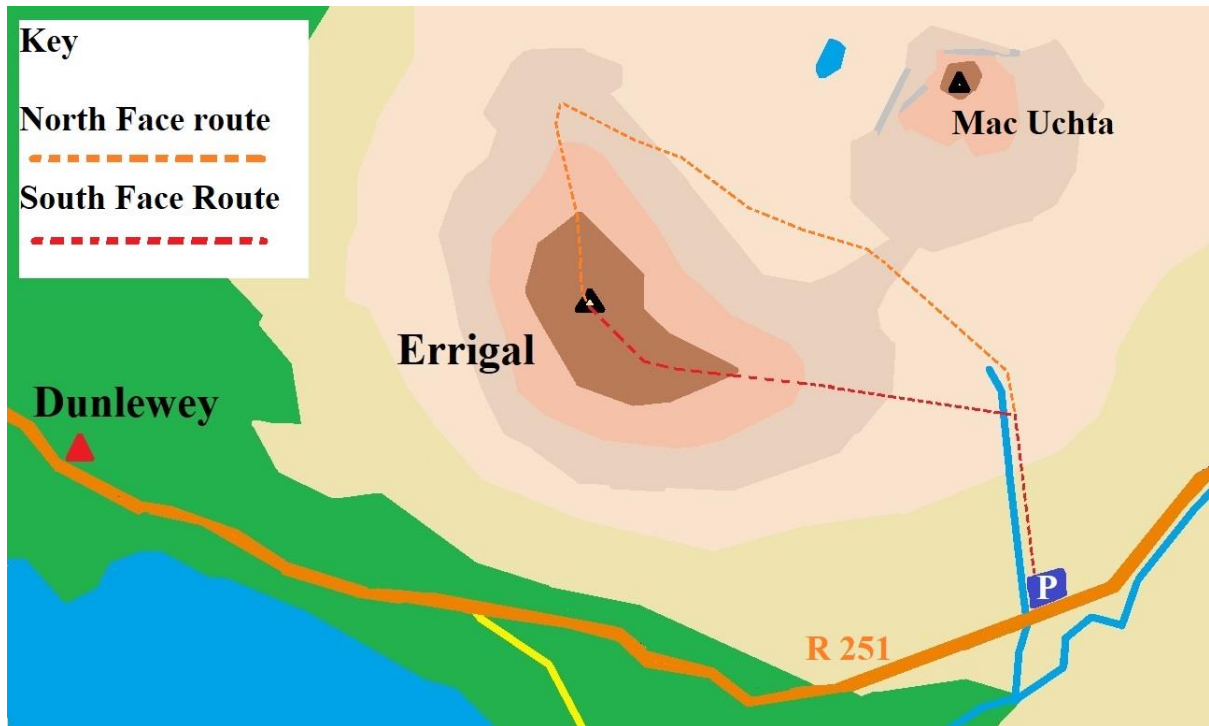


## Errigal

There are very few mountains in Ireland that compare to the isolated stature of Errigal Mountain in the Derryveagh Mountains in western Donegal. At 751m high it is Donegal's highest point as it sits in a commanding position above Dunlewey Village. As such it receives a huge amount of walking visitors to its twin pinpoint summits all year round.

Errigal lives at the southern end of the seven Sisters, it is the steepest and highest summit of this famous Irish mountain chain.

The Mountain is known for its unusual ability to completely change its shape as you drive around it, with its classic jagged peak view being from the North.



By far the most popular way to the twin summits of Errigal is by the extremely popular south face route. This is the least steep route up Errigal and it begins at the roadside car park at the base of the south face of the mountain. Experienced hillwalkers in good weather and light winds, this route is a very leisurely three hour round trip steep walk from car to car.

### Errigal walking routes

At present in December 2020, there is a newly constructed path planned to follow the following route. At the moment there are many very muddy paths leading in several different routes up this side of Errigal. The following is the best approach following the easiest features to navigate to on the way up and of course, on the way back down.

From the roadside car park, [Errigal Car Park here](#) follow the path out of the car park going directly up the hill. This excellent newly constructed path ends quite abruptly leaving you to pick the best way up through the at times, deep mud. Keep the river on your left as you ascend until you are near the first big stone cairn just to the left of the river. From here follow one of the many left trending paths as these all take you onto the start of the south ridge on Errigal.

Once above the bog and onto the stone covered south ridge there is a very well-defined path to follow all the way to the summit. The path has at times lots of loose rock underfoot and big drops off

the down the east face. Simply follow this rugged path to the twin summits of Errigal. Descend by the same path.

### **The North Face**

The steepest and most dramatic way to climb Errigal is up the steep and skinny north ridge. The north face of Errigal comprises two steep ridges separated by a wide loose and shattered gully. The primary ridge runs directly north and provides an excellent grade 1 scramble on a reasonably well-defined path with lots of excellent views and exposure in a very mountainous setting. The secondary ridge runs about five degrees to the west and is called Tower Ridge, it is a much steeper and much more exposed affair than the north ridge. With most people requiring the use of a rope and a small selection of climbing gear for a safe ascent, as this ridge is a very steep but excellent grade 3 scramble.

The easiest way to access the north face of Errigal is to ascend the south face route as above but instead of veering left to climb the south ridge. Continue straight to the col between Errigal and Mac Uchta from here cross the huge bason filled with glacial moraine and deep heaven to gain the base of the north face. This section is pretty much pathless and is very loose underfoot as you navigate your way through the boulders.

Once at the base of the north face ascent the very steep scree slope to find and follow the mountain track that takes you up this face to the north summit.

This is by far the more interesting and mountainous way up Errigal but does require a good amount of mountain knowledge and some experience of unroped scrambling.

When Errigal wears its winter coat it turns into a completely different animal mush more details for climbing Errigal and the rest of the Donegal mountains in winter conditions [CLICK HERE](#).

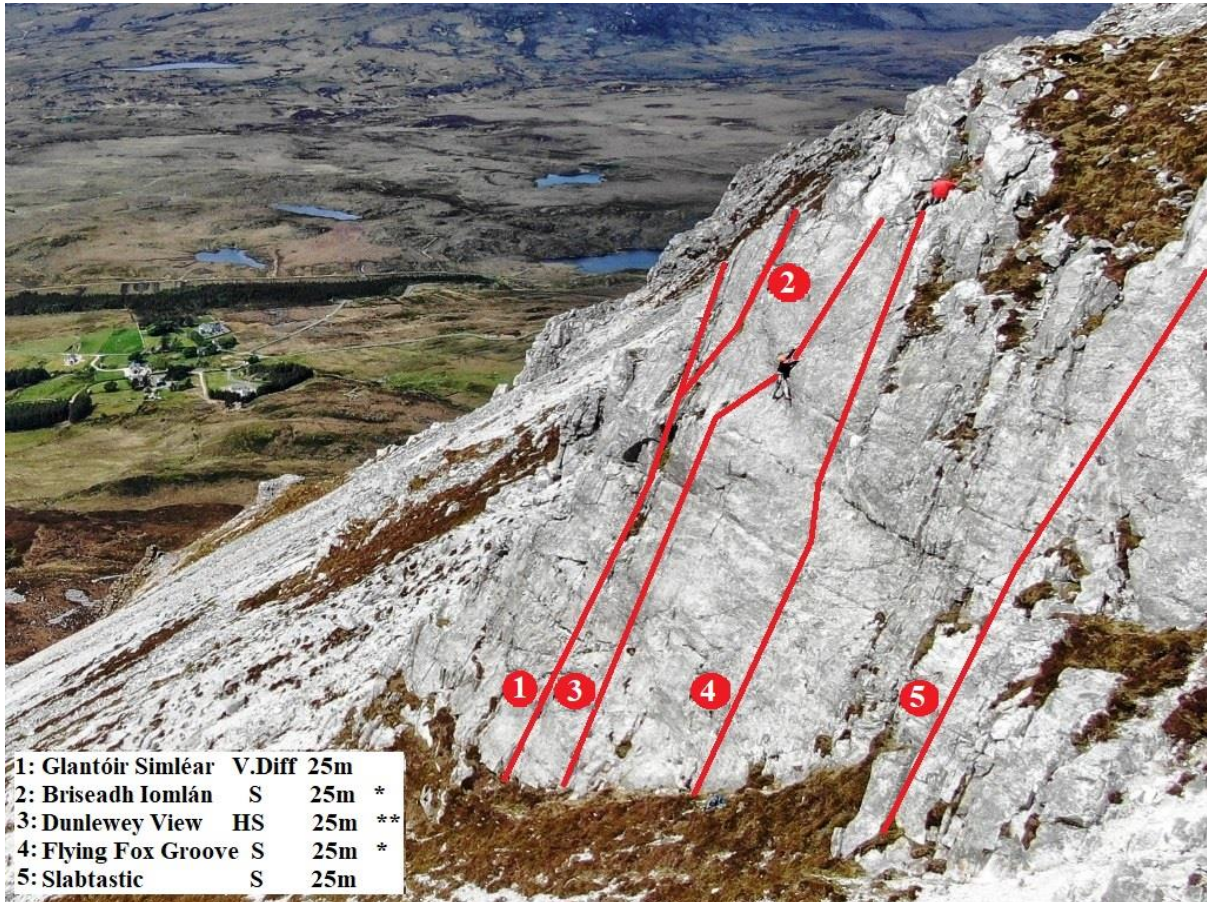
### **Rock Climbing on Errigal**

In general the quartzite on Errigal is far too shattered and broken to provide any good quality climbing. On the crags scattered about on the north face are a collection of V. Diff climbs that take most of the main features on these cliffs including some short climbs on the Dolorite walls on the top of the west face.

By far the best rock climbing on Errigal is found on a perfect 25 meter slab of Quartz found at the top of the west face just below the mountains south summit.

The climbing is excellent on small positive holds and good but at times small gear. The base of the crag has a very convenient flat area and the recess at the top of the crag is the perfect place for belays.

Access to the crag is by simply climbing Errigal from the south face car park mentioned above. Just before the final little steepening to the south summit, descend carefully down very steep and loose ground towards Dunlewey. Carefully make your way down for approximately 50 meters and the crag will appear on your right. [Crag Location](#)



### Errigal Rock Climbing

Glantoir Simlear V. Diff

Climb the deep chimney at the left hand side of the crag.

*I. Miller 13/05/19*

Briseadh Iomlan Severe \*

Climb Glantoir Simlear until above the deep section, pull out right and climb the deep crack in the left side of the main face. .

*I. Miller 13/05/19*

Dunlewey View HS 4b \*\*

Climb direct to the break in the mid crag height overlap just left of the center of the face. Pull through the overlap and climb to the highest point of the crag.

*I. Miller, L. Murdiffe 13/05/19*

Flying Fox Groove S 4a \*

Climb up direct to below the deep groove, From here pull out left and climb up the right side of the main face..

*I. Miller, L. Murdiffe 22/05/19*

Slabtastic S 4a

Climb the centre of the slab to the right of the main face.

*I. Miller 22/05/19*

## **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.