

NORTH EAST SCOTLAND

This area runs east from Tongue on the far north coast of Scotland, then south from Duncansby Head. There are a surprisingly large number of stacks here in what tends to be a forgotten coastline.

Fort Rock

MR: Sheet 1 2063710

This stack is overhanging and about a 100 feet high. It is located some three miles west of Holborn Head.

Detailed access: The recommended approach is by boat from Scrabster.

Fort Rock 95 feet HVS 5a

This route climbs the groove which trends right up the east face.

Start by landing on the landward side of the stack and scrambling up to a large ledge at 25 feet. Go to the eastern end of this ledge move up into a niche and then make a tricky traverse right above overhangs to gain the groove. Ascend this to capping overhangs and then escape left onto the grassy top.

First ascent: Mick Fowler, Jon Lincoln, C. Newcombe, Chris Watts, 29 May 1988.

Clett Rock

MR: Sheet 12 106~7

A long stack, over 200 yards of it, lying off Holborn Head north west from Thurso. You need a boat to reach it. Note that there are strong currents and the sea is usually rough. The climbing tends to be very steep as well. This is strong stuff.

Detailed access: Sail to the stack from Scrabster. There is a landing 'platform.'

West Route 160 feet Severe/A2

This route takes the west face.

1. 30 feet. From the left of the landing platform go round a corner and climb a steep slab for 10 feet to a ledge. Go left along the ledge and up to the belay
2. 40 feet. Go up and around the corner from the left end of the belay ledge. Now go up a steep slab to gain an overhanging crack. Climb this using aid (~ section) to a ledge and belay.
3. 50 feet. Climb a wall on the left of the ledge for a few feet then move awkwardly right onto a small platform. Easy rocks lead to the next ledge.
4. 40 feet. Climb a prominent crack up the overhanging wall to a ledge and then the top.



Stack Rock

Abseil descent.

First ascent: R. Jolly, M. Willis, D. Young, 14 June 1969.

North Route 150 feet XS (E3)

Take the crackline trending rightwards on the north face. Start on the seaward side near the centre of the wall where a large flat ledge is obvious just above the high tide level. This ledge is about 30 feet long and capped by large overhangs 80 feet up; it is about 40 feet west of an obvious deep chimney-corner on the face.

1. 80 feet. 4c. From the right end of the ledge ascend an obvious right trending crack system until it is possible to stomach traverse right above overhangs to a ledge on an arete.

2. 65 feet. 5c. Move up leftwards into the overhangs and make difficult moves up right on to a projecting ledge. Continue up right trending cracks to a ledge and finish by grooves above and to the right.

First ascent: Mick Fowler, Jon Lincoln, J. Cuthbert, Nikki Dugan, 28 August 1988.

The Stacks

MR: Sheet 12 233741

Take the A836 east from Thurso to the left turning onto the B855 to Brough. Follow this to Brough where you take a minor road to Ham. After a mile on the minor road park the car and walk due north for about a $\frac{1}{2}$ of a mile to the coast and the stacks. Detailed access: Unknown - descend the cliffs to the foreshore. Low tide will probably be needed.

First ascent: Unknown so they may be unclimbed.

Duncansby Stacks

South of Duncansby Head and its lighthouse near the town/village of John o'Groats at the northern end of the A9. There are four red sandstone stacks here which can easily be seen from south of Duncansby Head lighthouse. The largest one is also the most southerly and is The Great Stack of Duncansby. Witches Hat Stack is just north of this. A mile to the north are, firstly, The Knee and, secondly, the Little Knee. Both of these are seriously affected by strong tidal currents. We will start at the north end of the quartet.

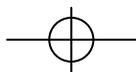
The Little Knee 100 feet Severe

Detailed access: Use a boat.

1. 100 feet. Start at the south east arete of the stack. Climb the arete to the ledge at 25 feet. Walk rightwards along the ledge on the seaward side of the stack to its right end from where an overhanging wall with good holds leads to the summit.

First ascent: Mick Fowler (solo) May 1989.

The Knee 150 feet HVS 5a





MR: Sheet 12 406728

This fine challenging stack is guarded by overhangs all the way round. Detailed access: Use a boat and get to ledges on the northern end of the seaward face.

1. 100 feet. 5a. From the highest ledge a short steep wall on the right gives access to another ledge. The steep corner on the left leads in 20 feet to a traverse line which is followed rightwards for 20 feet to a steep corner. Ascend this to the ledge system girdling the stack beneath the final overhanging section. The corner which leads to the ledge system is just left of a prominent chimney with a large precariously wedged block.

2. 50 feet. 5a. Ascend the overhangs in the centre of the face pulling right onto a projecting ledge. Continue direct to the top. Descend by abseiling down the seaward face.

First ascent: Mick Fowler, Paul Allison (alt), Nikki Dugan, Jon Lincoln, 27 May 1989.

Witch's Hat Stack 280 feet HVS

This is a 280 feet high triangular-shaped wafer of a stack just north of The Great Stack.

Detailed access: Use a boat and land at the seaward end.

1. 100 feet. 4b. Climb up on the south side to gain the seaward arete at a ledge. A short steep wall leads to a further ledge from where 35 feet of shallow cracks lead to a belay just below and right of the start of a prominent shallow groove.

2. 130 feet. 4c. Move up and left into the groove and follow this past several dubious flakes to gain the arete again just below the summit. Follow this to the top. Abseil down the line of the route.

First ascent: Mick Fowler, Nikki Dugan, Paul Allison, Jon Lincoln, 27 May 1989.

The Great Stack 230 feet V.Diff

MR: Sheet 12 400719

Detailed access: Use a boat.

Start at the south west corner of the stack and climb friable and vegetated rock to the top.

First ascent: Unknown.

There is a stack in Sinclair's Bay bay which is to be found north of Wick.

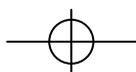
Sinclair's Bay Stack

MR: Sheet 12 380550 (aprox)

This stack is thought to be on the coast immediately west of Noss Head. The map reference only identifies the square on the map within which the stack should be found. Drive north from Wick on the A9.

Detailed access: Unclear.

First ascent: Unknown.





Stack Rock

Stack Of Ulbster

MR: Sheet 12 338415

This stack lies about six miles south of Wick. Drive south from Wick on the A9 for five miles to Thrumster. Take the minor road that goes left from the middle of the village for Mains Of Ulbster 21~ miles to the south. Ignore the turning to Sardet en route.

The road ends at Mains Of Ulbster so leave the car and walk south east a short distance to the coast and the stack.

Detailed access: The stack appears to stand offshore but it may be accessible at low tide. The coastal slopes don't appear to present any descent difficulties judging by the map.

First ascent: Unknown so it may be unconquered.

Occumster Stack

MR: Sheet 11 247347

There is a group of sea stacks located one mile north of Lybster harbour. Occumster Stack is the most northerly and the most impressive. It is a thin finger of rock 80 feet high on which the rock has very sharp horizontal striations. You need a boat to reach this stack.

Detailed access: Sail north from Lybster harbour.

80 feet MXS 4c

Start from a ledge on the south east corner. Climb a crack on the lefthand side of the seaward face. The rock is very poor as is the protection.

Descend by simultaneous abseil watching out for sharp rock.

First ascent: Mick Fowler, Nikki Dugan, Paul Allison, Jon Lincoln, 26 May 1989.

Lybster Stack

MR: Sheet 11 274354

This stack is north of Mid Clyth lighthouse. The rock is compact solid sandstone with an initial band of brittle slate.

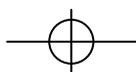
Detailed access: Park at the north end of a long straight road 2 miles north of Lybster. The road down to Mid Clyth lighthouse is 220 yards further north around a bend. Go to the lighthouse and then walk north along the coast to find the stack between two inlets, just inside a set of drying reefs which are normally home to a large group of grey seals. The stack is barely separate from the coastline and is easily missed

First ascent: Unknown.

Latheronwheel

MR: Sheet 11 194322

Here, according to an old AA Guide to the UK'. . . a rocky stack stands defiantly against the sea at the mouth of the tiny bay. ' The situation is picturesque with an unrestricted view up the broad sweep of the Caithness coastline. Latheronwheel is on the A9 south of Latheron and north of Dunbeath. Follow the minor road in Latheronwheel to its small harbour. There is ample parking here. Follow the coast for





550 yards southwards. You can descend the cliffs by scrambling down an easy stepped chimney on the north side of the stack. Alternatively, use a boat to get round to the stack on the north west of the harbour entrance.

Detailed access: Unclear.

There is a lot of cliff at Latheronwheel and one area is called The Stack. This may be a large stack set very close to the main cliff or it may just be a confusing name.

First ascent: Unknown.

Dunbeath Stacks

MR: Sheet 11 174300

There are several stacks here. Three are described. Go north from Dunbeath on the A9. Once up on the plateau, just over a mile from the river bridge in the centre of Dunbeath, take a track on the right to Iver. Walk east 1A of a mile to the coast and a steep descent to the stacks.

Detailed access: Unclear so a boat is probably the safest option.

Cleit Rhuadh 50 feet HVS 5b

This is the most northerly stack and you climb the seaward face. There is a short overhanging wall at 20 feet providing the crux.

First ascent: Chris Watts, S. Sheridan, Nikki Dugan, Mick Fowler, 2 October 1989.

Cleit Bheag 115 feet XS 5b

This is the central stack and the climb takes the fine central crackline on the side facing the sea. It is much harder than it looks.

First ascent: Mick Fowler, Chris Watts, Nikki Dugan, 2 October 1989.

Cleit Mhor

This is the largest of these three stacks and presumed to be unclimbed.

First ascent: None.

Berriedale Cliffs

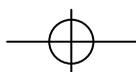
Bodach am Uird

MR: Sheet 17 108208

A sandstone stack, 120 feet high, one mile south of Berriedale and called Bochailean on the Ordnance Survey map. Another one that requires a boat to reach it. There are four climbs on it although it had been climbed before any of them as an abseil sling was found on the top.

Landward access would entail going south for two miles from Berriedale on the A9 until opposite the hill called Cnoc na Croiche to the east. Park the car and walk east to the top of the hill. The 600 feet slopes down to sea level are convex and eventually become vertical. The map shows no foreshore at all.

Detailed access: Sail a boat two miles south from Berriedale.





Stack Rock

South Route 100 feet HVS 5a

A good route taking a series of grooves on the south side of the stack. Start at the left-hand of two obvious grooves.

1. 25 feet. 5a. Climb easily up into the chimney in the back of the groove. Traverse the left wall to a stance on the arête.
2. 55 feet. 5a. Climb straight above the belay for 10 feet and move right to climb a groove to overhangs. Traverse left to the left arete of the groove (above the stance) and climb the wall above the overhang trending right to a good stance.
3. 30 feet. 4c. Trend leftwards on rather dubious rock to gain a shallow groove leading to the top.

First ascent: Mick Fowler, Chris Watts, 1 October 1989.

Landward Face 100 feet VS 5a

1. From the landing site on the seaward face of the stack, follow ledges up and round the north side to reach a good stance in the centre of the landward face, about 30 feet above the sea.
2. Climb the steep wall just right of a wide crack to reach a steep crackline that leads to a horizontal break. Continue up the wall above to the summit.

First ascent: Guy Muhlemann, Simon Richardson, 1 October 1989.

North Arete 130 feet EI 5b

The north edge of the stack features a large hanging flake at 80 feet. Start directly below this. Exdting climbing on the second pitch.

1. 50 feet. 5a. Climb a steep corner making a detour left then right to reach a good stance on the landward side of the arete.
2. 30 feet. 5b. Follow the corner crack in the hanging pillar above to the right to an overhang, then hand traverse left in a spectacular position and make a difficult exit on to a good ledge on top of the hanging flake.
3. 50 feet. 4a. Continue up the stepped ridge to the top.

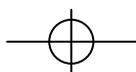
First ascent: Simon Richardson, Guy Muhlemann, 1 October 1989.

Bird Poo Wall 115 feet 4c VS

This ascends the obvious line on the seaward face.

1. 65 feet. 4c. Climb the left facing line of corners and cracks on the right side of the wall to reach a long overhung ledge.
2. 50 feet. 4b. From the left end of the ledge follow the vague crackline up and right to the top.

First ascent: Chris Watts, Simon Richardson, Guy Muhlemann, 1 October 1989.





EAST SCOTLAND

This area runs southwards from the southern shore of the Moray Firth to Dundee. The Firth of Forth area is in South East Scotland which is covered in the next section.

CUMMINGSTON

MR: Sheet 28 130693

There is a string of fishing villages along this north-facing coast of the Moray Firth. They have prettily painted stone cottages and tales of fishing vessel disasters associated with North Sea storms. Cummington is near Burghead just north of the A96 and Elgin. There are quite extensive red sandstone cliffs here and four stacks. It is a pleasant place with its boulder beach on a sunny day. On a bleak windswept day it shows its grimmer side.

Drive east on the A96 from Inverness and Nairn. About five miles east of Forres the B9013 goes north west through Newton in about a mile and continues to Burghead. A mile before Burghead another minor road goes west one mile to Cummington. Find a white war memorial and take a turning north just west of it. The road leads north to the coast from here and terminates at a car-park.

Detailed access: A track goes to the eastern end of the cliffs and an old railway line can be followed for about 200 yards to where a pebble beach can be gained. The stacks are to the west of this pebble beach.

Cummington Main Stack

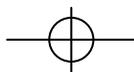
There are eighteen routes on this stack with grades ranging from E4 down to Moderate and that latter grade is also the line of the descent route. Although cut off by high tides the top is still accessible.

This stack is more like a coastal cliff as far as climbing is concerned than out average stack. Details of the climbs can be found in the Northeast Outcrops Guide published in 1994 by the Scottish Mountaineering Trust.

Cummington Minor Stack

This is to the west of the main stack. No climbs are recorded on it -probably because they are trivial rather than that they don't exist.

The Sentinel





Stack Rock

This the next stack to the west. It has a central tunnel through it and three routes recorded on it at Severe/Hard Severe standard. Refer to the Northeast Outcrops guide for descriptions.

Cummingston No. 4

No climbs recorded but it is most unlikely to be unclimbed.

COVESEA

MR: Sheet 28 176708

If you carry on the B9012 past Cummingstown it turns inland and the B9040 continues west along the line of the coast. Just over a mile east of Covesea Skerries lighthouse find a narrow road going to the coast. Park and walk. You reach a radio mast and encounter a coastguard lookout 100 yards further on. You can gain the beach by a set of stone steps east of Gow's Castle. Alternatively find a descent chimney, fixed rope and step ladder 55 yards west of the coastguard lookout. Stride eastwards along the beach to Boulder Bay and then the next bay with Covesea Stack.

Covesea Stack

high tide you can abseil into the stack bay using a fence post.

Crack-a-Gow-Gow 40 feet VS 4c

On the west wall of the stack you climb a crackline. Descend just to the right (facing out).

First ascent: 1986.

Gow's Castle stack lies in the next big bay to the east. The stack is on the eastern side of the bay.

Gow's Castle Stack Severe

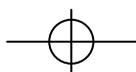
There are no recorded details of the line or the first ascent.

Logie Head Pinnacle

MR: Sheet 29 528682

Drive east on the A96 from Elgin. Where it turns inland to head for Aberdeen continue on the A98 and reach Cullen in about 10 miles. There is a caravan park entrance at the top of the main street in Cullen with a car park nearby. Walk around the caravan park on the east to find a track heading north. Take it and access a pleasant bay with Logie Head forming the eastern side of the bay. The Pinnacle should be visible and the rock is a fine-grained and compact sandstone.

Northeast Outcrops describes six climbs on this feature which other sources describe as a stack. The guide makes no mention of tidal restrictions. Interested people should refer to the guide for details.





Head Of Garness Severe

MR: Sheet 29 745648

Drive east on the A98 from Banff and Macduff. About a mile from Macduff the B9031 goes off to the east. Take this for just over a mile until a road goes north to the Mill of Melrose. Leave your wheels and find a gate to the east of the mill. Go through it and follow fences to the north and west to Mull Cleave cliff at MR: sheet 29 743648. About of a mile to the east you will find the Head of Garness and its attendant stack.

Detailed access: Go to the grassy promontory from which a ridge leads to the stack. Go along this to the base of the stack.

There is no information about the line or the first ascent.

Macduff Stack

MR: Sheet 29 721648

Details are sketchy. Go along the coast road east from Macduff to the Tairlair swimming pool. At low tide go to the shore and go across boulders to the base of the stack. It features five climbs ranging from diff to E2 6a. Something for most people. Going clockwise round the stack from the north we find:

Rotten Row 25 feet Diff.

This climbs the narrow and loose north face. Descend by abseil from an existing peg or reverse the climb.

First ascent: 1991 although probably climbed before given the grade.

Walking The Cod 25 feet E2 6a **

This climbs the east face. Go up twin cracks right of a hanging corner.

First ascent: 1991.

Oresteg Arete 25 feet VS 4c

Ascend the south east arete past an overhang.

First ascent: 1991

Chrichton's Crack 25 feet Severe

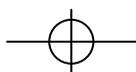
The south face features rock steps with a crack at the top. Go up the steps and the crack.

First ascent: 1991.

Stackattack 40 feet 5c **

Good rock and strenuous and sustained. Go straight up the middle of the west face right of a rock pool. Reach a small ledge, zig a little left, zag a bit right and climb directly through the overhang to the top.

First ascent: 1991.





Stack Rock

ABERDEEN

A long line of cliffs runs both north and southwards along the coast from Aberdeen. There appear to be several stacks in the area. The rock is granite. We start north of Aberdeen at North Haven near Longhaven.

North Haven

MR: Sheet 30

The bay of North Haven is split in two by a stack shaped like the dorsal fin of a shark. The bay is to the east east of North Haven village which, in turn, is just off the A975 running south from Longhaven on the A952. The seaward end of the stack has sound rock apart from the loose top section.

Detailed access: Go to the beach and walk across to the stack at low tide.

No grade is recorded.

First ascent: Unknown.

Dunbuy Rock

MR: Sheet 30 103372

This is a small island, not a stack with a large top comprising grass and guano. The narrow point of the channel between it and the mainland is about 70 feet across.

North East Outcrops records 13 climbs. Refer to that guide for further details.

The Sugar Loaf

MR: Sheet 30

Long Haven is an inlet east of Cruden Bay (North Sea oil terminal). At its mouth we find the Sugar Loaf, an unclimbed tower of shale.

Berrys Loup

MR: Sheet 30 078325

This stack is quite prominent. Loup' is a Scottish way of saying leap and a certain Mr. Berry is supposed to have leapt across on to the stack.

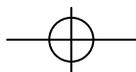
The A952 runs south from Peterhead until it meets up with the A92 Fraserburgh - Aberdeen road. Go south from Peterhead on the A952 for about 6 miles until the A 975 goes off to the left. Take this road for almost 5 miles to the point where a minor road goes left to Whinnyfold. Leave the car and walk south along the coast for about a of a mile until you reach the stack.

Detailed access: From the north scramble across easy slabs unless it is high tide or the seas are rough. There is a platform below the east wall of the stack.

The Berrys 35 feet HVS 5a

Start climbing up the middle of the east wall and follow a line rightwards and then straight up.

First ascent: 1986.





Cyndi Louper 35 feet VS 4c
This ascends the south east arete finishing to the left.
First ascent: 1986.

Oldcastle
MR: Sheet 30 053299
This rock is further south along the coast from Berrys Loup. It has four routes on it. Assume you drive north on the A92 from Aberdeen. Take the A975 after 8 or 50 miles and go north until the B9003 goes right to Collieston. A road is signed to Whinnyfold before a church. Take this and, after about a mile, walk down a track past a farm to the coast and a headland. Note that the rock is unreliable and the top of the stack is covered with gulls and their white, smelly and streaky products. Detailed access: The stack is accessible via a boulder beach below Old Slams Castle. It is cut off at high tide.

Old Castle Chimney 40 feet V.Diff
Climb the obvious chimney in the centre of the main face. Descend by down climbing or by a scrambly path' at the landward end of the stack or by downnclimbing a V.Diff corner ramp at the south end of the stack.
First ascent: 1975.

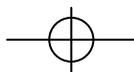
Carrion Laughing 40 feet VS 4c
Right of Old Castle Chimney there are two crack lines. Climb up to and up the second crack line to a ledge from which you reach a higher ledge from which you reach a bulge over which you go to the top.
First ascent: 1983.

Morte d'Arthur 40 feet VS 4c
There is a corner on the right side of the face. Go up a steep wall 10 feet left of this. Gain cracks and move to the left of a bulge so as to reach a groove which is followed to the top.
First ascent: 1983.

Burnt Oft Corner 40 feet EI 5b *
Climb the corner to the right of Morte d~Arthur.
First ascent: 1975.

South of Aberdeen we find a large amount of climbing on the extensive sea cliffi.
There are some unattractive stacks as well.

Long Slough Pinnacle
MR: Sheet 38 965030





Stack Rock

There is a prominent stack here on the south side of an inlet. A minor road hugs the coast immediately south of Aberdeen with a railway track between it and the sea. Once you reach Doonies Farm on this minor road continue for 250 yards to a point where a farm track goes under the railway line to the coast.
Detailed access: Reach the inlet and walk out over tidal rocks beneath vegetated cliffs on the southern side to the stack.

Long Slough Pinnacle V.Diff

Get on to the neck joining the stack to the mainland and climb up to the summit.
First ascent: Unknown.

North Face Severe

An alternative way is to traverse at sea level from the western end and climb straight up the slabs of the north.

The Humpback

MR: Sheet 38 965024

This is a big but low stack situated at the tip of a promontory separating Altens Haven into two parts. There are 15 routes on this stack. Perhaps you can knock them all off in one visit? Continue south on the minor road as for Long Slough until you reach the road to Altens Farm and another farm track that goes under the railway on its way to the coast. This point is map reference 961025.

Detailed access: A ridge leads down to the stack and you follow this. You can reach the stack at all states of the tide except extreme high tides or in very rough seas.

There is an easy way up at the north end - diff. For the other routes refer to the Northeast Outcrops guidebook.

Aitken's Pinnacle

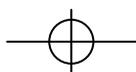
MR: Sheet 38 9622018

There is a small stack at Souter Head. This headland is one of the best known of Aberdonian climbing areas and the stack is a minor appendage. You go south on the minor road again as for The Humpback and find a bridge over the railway at map reference 959020. A footpath leads east from here to Souter Head. Go north up the coast path towards Burnbank's Haven and Aitken's Pinnacle is found just to the north.

Detailed access: Reach the stack at low tide via a narrow neck of rock.

Direct Route 20 feet Severe

Ascend the middle of the landward face with the crux at the start. Descend by downclimbing the next route or by abseil using a ring peg on the summit.
First ascent: 1944.





Southern Diagonal Traverse 25 feet V.Diff

Start from the nack joining the stack to the shore. Go up and right to a ledge on the edge and carry on easily to the top.

The Poor Man V.Diff

MR: Sheet 38 958015

There is a sea stack to the south of Red Cliff. Follow the coast road south as for Aitken's Pinnacle and carry on until it turns west to go into Cove. Park the car and walk east along a track passing underneath the railway line and so gain the clifftop path at Black Cove. The stack is found just over 100 yards south of the descent into the cove near a waterfall on the main cliff.

Detailed access: Unknown.

There is no information about the line but the rock is reckoned to be poor.

First ascent: Unknown.

The Knapps Of Downies

MR: Sheet 38 928950

This is a squat stack near to the village of Downies. The rock is a contorted 5chistose fairly free from vegetation. It has several routes on it and is reachable except at high tide. Go south from Aberdeen on the A92 for about 5 miles and look for a minor road on the left signed for Downies. Take it and go to this coastal village.

Detailed access: A track goes east from the village to the coast and the Knaps, hump-backed grassy hillocks. Follow a path out on top of the main grassy ridge, The Camel's Back, and go down right and back to reach a rocky neck. You can gain the stack from this.

There are fifteen climbs on this stack which is more like a sea cliff in atmosphere than a sea stack. Refer to Northeast Outcrops for details of them.

MUCHALLS

Muchalls is on the A9 just over five miles south of Aberdeen. On the coast to its south and north are some rocky items and known stacks that could be worth exploring.

May Craig

MR: Sheet 38 912926

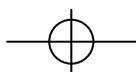
There are two other possibilities just to its north.

Detailed access: No information.

First ascent: Unknown.

Doonie Point

MR: Sheet 38 904909





Stack Rock

There is a 30 feet high stack here which is reached by walking south from Muchalls village. The stack is offshore and made from rotten rock.

Detailed access: Accessible around low tide.

First ascent: Details not known.

Castle Rock Of Muchalls

MR: Sheet 38 904909

(Doonie Point)

This big stack lies just south of Doonie Point. Gain the point by walking south from Muchalls village for about a 1/4 of a mile. It is a cliff top path. At the Point descend to the right and go down a wet shallow gully to broken ground and the beach.

Detailed access: Cross boulders when the tide permits to reach the stack.

North Face 100 feet VS

There is a trivial right-facing ramp on the north face. Go up this and then a left-facing groove to a very loose finish. Descend by abseil down the landward face using a block as an abseil anchor.

First ascent: No details.

Fame And Fortune Traverse 250 feet Severe

A girdle of the stack going round in a clockwise direction just above the sea.

First ascent: 1991.

This is as far south as Northeast Outcrops goes. There is no published climbing information in guidebook form to the next few stacks.

Tilly Tenant

MR: Sheet 38 900902

Detailed access: Unknown.

First ascent: No details.

Further south I found a reference to Elephant Rock.

Elephant Rock

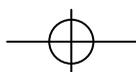
MR: Sheet 54?

At Boddin Point on the Scottish east coast. AA Guide p19415. A red sandstone stack in which the sea has carved 'legs' and a 'trunk.' Boddin Point lies south of Montrose. A 1/2 mile to the north of the point is Elephant Rock.

Detailed access: Unknown.

First ascent: Unknown.

Now we go south again to Arbroath.





The Deil's Head VS

MR: Sheet 54 671418

Also called the Pint Stoup or The Poll. It is a bulbous-topped pillar of rock near Arbroath on the east coast of Scotland. Take a minor road northwards from the centre of Arbroath that heads towards the coast and then runs along its edge heading for a nature trail.

Take the nature trail northwards along the coast until you reach a point about two miles from the centre of Arbroath. The Deil's Head is to be found where the coastline turns to the north west. Detailed access: Go down steep slopes and explore.

Climb the side facing the sea.

First ascent: Unknown.

SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND

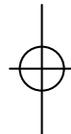
There are a surprising number of stacks in the Firth of Forth and to the east of Edinburgh.



Maiden Rock 40 feet

MR: Sheet 59 531158

Just over a mile to the east of St. Andrews we find this sandstone tower which is reachable irrespective of the tide. There are more than a dozen climbs on it - which we will not describe as a 'real' stack should be unreachable at high tide at least.



Isle of May

MR: Sheet 39 656994

This island is situated 9 kilometres from the Fife coast in the mouth of the Firth of Forth. It possesses, apparently, some good small stacks. The Nature Conservancy Council own the island and it is managed as a national nature reserve. You reach the island by hiring a boat at Anstruther. There is a basalt pinnacle all on its own in Pilgrims Haven. Detailed access: No information.

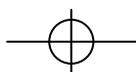
Pilgrims Haven Pinnacle 80 feet

Climb the ridge facing the sea.

First ascent: Unknown.

INCHKEITH

MR: Sheet 66 293825





Stack Rock

In the middle of the Firth of Forth between Edinburgh and Kington is the island of Inchkeith which has stacks around its coast. The island is owned by the RSPB and is a bird sanctuary.

Seal Carr

MR: Sheet 66 288828

Detailed access: By boat. No other information.

First ascent: Unknown.

Iron Craig

MR: Sheet 66 292822

Detailed access: By boat. No other information.

First ascent: Unknown.

Long Craig

MR: Sheet 66 297820

Detailed access: By boat. No other information.

First ascent: Unknown.

Bass Rock

MR: Sheet 58 602874

This guano-covered, bird-infested, privately owned volcanic plug lies in the southern part of the Firth of Forth. It is owned by Sir Hugh Dalrymple of North Berwick whom you telephone on 016202903 to request permission to land on it. You may also telephone the boatman on 01620 2833 to request the same thing.

The rock supports a population of 20,000 gannets and, apparently, Queen Victoria used to receive an annual delivery of Bass Rock gannets for they were considered a delicacy. Well, anyway, at the south west end of this enormous gannet WC there are stacks reported to exist on which a colony of shags live.

Detailed access: No information.

First ascent: Unknown.

Wheat Stack

MR: Sheet 67 863712

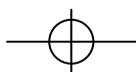
This stack lies off Fastcastle Head. Take the minor road to Fast Castle off the A1 107 some 12 miles east of Dunbar. Fast Castle is about a mile along the track and footpath that runs north from the end of the minor road.

Detailed access: Unknown.

First ascent: Unknown.

Midden Crag

MR: Sheet 67



This is two miles to the west of Fastcastle which, in turn, is almost 30 miles east of Edinburgh. The stack has about five routes on it which were put up very recently. Drive east on the A1 from Edinburgh for about 25 miles until, just past Cockburnspath, the A 1107 goes off to the left signposted for Eyemouth. Follow this for about 3 miles and then take a minor road leading to Dowlaw Farm. Follow the track on the right once you reach the farm for of a mile to its end. Walk north east to the coast and locate the stack.

Detailed access: Unknown.

Starboard Bow

First ascent: 1993

Turning In Tide Out

First ascent: 1993

Lunar Pull

First ascent: 1993

Port Bow

First ascent: 1993

ANO?

First ascent: 1993

The Souter

MR: Sheet 67 868708

This fine looking classic stack is south east of Midden Stack and you reach it the same way as far as the A1 107 is concerned. Once 3 miles along the A1 107 look for a very minor road leading to Dowlaw Farm. Take this and follow a track on the right once you reach the farm which leads across fields to the stack.

Detailed access: The base of the stack is reachable by boulder hopping at low tide.

Ordinary Route 100 feet HVS/E1 5a

An old description reads:

Start at the leftmost part of the south west face.

1. 30 feet. Pull up into a prominent crack to a good belay ledge.
2. 30 feet. Go round the edge and traverse on small holds. Then go up to a ledge.
3. 50 feet. Retrace the traverse but at the level of the ledge and go round the edge to get above the first belay. Go up a flake to the overhanging summit block. (And so to the top I presume.) Abseil descent.

First ascent: Robin Campbell, Dave Bathgate, 1969?

Squid Vicious E5 6a



Stack Rock

A route for punks, ho ho.
Climb the crack line on the north west face.
First ascent: Unknown but recent from the name

St. Abb's Head

MR: Sheet 67 908695

Between North Berwick in Lothian, Edinburgh's county, and Berwick upon Tweed in Northumberland lies a quiet stretch of coast. St. Abb's Head is just north of the village of St Abb's north, in turn, of Eyemouth. This headland is attended by tall pillars of red sandstone.

It is located in the St. Abb's Nature Reserve. Go to Coldingham on the A1 107 and then head north east on the B6438 to St. Abb's. Now walk north west across the National Trust of Scotland-owned coastal headland to St. Abb's Head and the stacks.

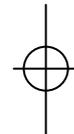
Detailed access: No details

First ascent: Unknown.

NORTH EAST ENGLAND



After the richness of Scotland in terms of stacks we are back in the desert with a mere half dozen or so between the Scottish border and the English Channel. Contrast this with the much larger number found on the west coast of England.



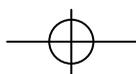
NORTHUMBERLAND

Two stacks here, one a solid shapely tower, the other a crumbling platform of a stack similar to Inner Main Stack at Old Harry in Dorset. South of Lindisfarne lie the thirty or so Farne Islands and we start with them.

Inner Farne Stack

MR: Sheet 75 219359

South of Berwick upon Tweed as you drive down the A1 you pass Holy Island and Lindisfarne and then the A1 trends inland as the coast swells out at Bamburgh and Seahouses. The B1340 runs along the coast connecting these two towns and from the road you can see the Farne Islands. They are a National Trust owned nature reserve, wild, rocky and treeless. The only inhabitants are ornithologists and wardens. The inner group has a fairly large member called Inner Farne and the stack is off its eastern side. It comes straight out of the sea and its top is streaked white with bird droppings. This beauty would not be out of place in the Shetlands. You can sail there from 29th March to 30th April and August to the end of September 10 am to 6 pm with access restricted in the sea bird breeding season - 1 May to 31 July 1:30pm to 5 pm.





The admission fee is £2.00 (1994 prices) which does not include the boatsman's charges.

Detailed access: Sail about three miles eastwards from Seahouses to reach and then sail round Inner Farne island to the stack.

First ascent: No details.

Marsden Rock

MR: Sheet 88 400650

(aprox)

A crumbling limestone stack at South Shields in Northumberland. This stack is on the coast just south of the Tyne. The whole area is part of the Newcastle upon Tyne conurbation and wild solitude is in short supply. Go to Marsden on the coast and get on to the beach. It may be a good idea to take advice from southern chalk climbers and consider an ice-climbing approach.

Detailed access: Walk across to the stack at low tide.

First ascent: Unknown.

YORKSHIRE



There is lots of steep rock between Marsden Head and Flamborough Head but it is not hard enough or jointed in the right way to sustain stacks. With Flamborough Head we return to chalk and find a stack or two here.



Flamborough Head

This is the kind of rock that, potentially, requires an ice-climbing approach with crampons and warthogs.

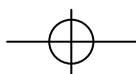
SELWICKS BAY

This is pronounced 'Silex' and is near the tip of the headland being just north of it.

Adam

MR: Sheet 101 254707

This is an isolated chalk stack on the south side of the bay. It had a partner called Eve once on the opposite side. However, Eve collapsed, clearly the weaker of the two. Starting from Flamborough, take the B1259 eastwards to Flamborough Head. You will find a car park adjacent to the lighthouse. There is a path to the left of the lighthouse which leads to Selwicks Bay, The stack should be visible on your right as you go down the path.





Stack Rock

Detailed access: The information available suggests that you can get to the stack around mid-to low-tide.

First ascent: Believed to be unclimbed. Get to it.

High Stacks

MR: Sheet 101 257704 (aprox)

This is a clay and gravel topped promontory of chalk. It may not be a true stack in the sense of being surrounded by the sea at high tide. You reach it by going to the lighthouse car park as for Selwicks Bay and following a track heading eastwards to the foghorn. Follow the cliff-top path south east to a point where a cliff path leads down to the shore at High Stacks. The stack is about 180 feet high.

Detailed access: Unknown.

First ascent: Unknown.

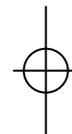
Green Stacks

MR: Sheet 101 257703

Flamborough Head runs south from the bottom of Filey Bay and forms a great nose sticking out into the north sea. There are isolated stacks on the headland itself. To reach them you could use the B1255 which runs north west from Bridlington and goes to Flamborough from where the A259 goes east to the lighthouse. Then follow cliff-top paths out to the head. Better, perhaps, to sail from Bridlington. As with Marsden Head you will find that expertise with ice tools is probably a prerequisite.

Detailed access: Sail from Bridlington and explore.

First ascent: Unknown.

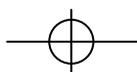


IRELAND

The information we possess about Irish stacks is limited. Eire does not possess the structured highly organised climbing clubs like the C.C, the SMC and the Fell & Rock, with their guidebook committees and annual journals with their new routes sections.

Donegal: Tory Island

Some sources report stacks on Tory Island. They have not been verified and my supposition is that there aren't any.





Mayo: Fitzpatrick Head

There is a 'truly delectable' stack here according to the first ascensionists.

Doonbristy MXS 5b

This stack used to be an arch and functioned as an old coastal lookout. The connecting arch collapsed in 1393. Climb the south west corner of the stack in two pitches.

First ascent: Mick Fowler, Nikki Dugan, Steve Sustad, May 1991.

Stacks of Broadhaven

These stacks are 1_ miles offshore from Benwee Head. There are seven precipitous stacks reported rising up to 300 feet from the sea. Benwee Head is north of the R314 which runs from the Mullet Peninsula to Ballcastle and beyond.

Detailed access: Boat!

First ascents: Unknown.

County Clare: Cliffs of Moher

County Clare has some of the most impressive cliffs in the British Isles in the shape of the five mile long 600 feet high Cliffs of Moher. Beside these the stack might seem insignificant. It is spindly and rise to 200 feet and afford brilliant views of the main cliffs.

A boat is clearly necessary to reach the stack. The alternative of a 600 foot abseil and swim followed by a swim and 600 foot prussik will only be of interest to SAS trainers.

Bramamore 200 feet MXS 5b

Climb the seaward side.

First ascent: Mick Fowler, Nikki Dugan, Steve Sustad, May 1991.

Loop Head

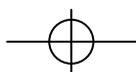
There is a stack at the tip of Loop Head which forms the north side of the Shannon Estuary. You will not believe the access details.

Lover's Leap Rock 170 feet XS 5c

Also known as Diarmuid and Fania's Rock.

Detailed access: Drive the car to the edge of the cliff (this can be exciting) and abseil from the car into the deep narrow channel separating the stack from the main cliff.

Swim across and traverse round rightwards to the east end of the seaward face.





Stack Rock

The climb is in three pitches with the top pitch forming the crux. You traverse right from a ledge on the east arete and then pull through overhangs to reach and climb the final wall.

First ascent: Mick Fowler, Steve Sustad, June 1991.

Kerry: The Skelligs

These are three stark and jagged rock pinnacles that thrust their way out of the Atlantic rising to a high point of 700 feet. The Skelligs are reached by boat from Valentia which is nine miles away and there are regular tourist trips in the summer, weather permitting. There are two Skelligs and the larger, Skelig Michael, has an old monastery on it with a flight of 600 steps leading up to it from the landing stage.

Be aware that the Skelligs are a major tourist attraction complete with The Skellig Experience. It is a visitor centre with audio-visual displays. Imagine the Hoy Experience! Yuch.

Skellig Michael

This Skellig is not a stack at all. It is a rocky island. Detailed access: By boat, probably not the regular tourist boat either.

First ascent: By monks!

Little Skellig Michael

This Skellig boasts 18,000 gannets which is the second biggest colony after St. Kilda. They are accompanied by puffins, shearwaters and fulmars.

Detailed access: A boat as for Skellig Michael.

First ascent: Unknown.

The Other Skellig

No details.

Donegal

There is an Irish climbing site at <http://www.iol.ie/~daveh/> which mentions stacks at Crohy Head in Donegal.

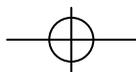
Crohy Head North

A small sea cliff on Crohy Head proper, to the north of a bay containing numerous sea stacks. The rock is quartzite, and some care is required at the top of the crag.

Four routes have been recorded on the mainland cliff, in the V. Diff-S grades.

Numerous possibilities exist at all grades but the climbing has little to recommend it.

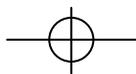
Detailed access: From Maghery follow the coast to park at the old watch-tower on the headland. The crag extends from below the tower for about 100m south. At the north end there are a couple of zawns, and beyond these, a steep 15m high wall. Beyond this wall, to the south, is the main bay where the rock is very loose. There is a





Section ID

descent to the left-hand side of the wall down slabs but the rest requires abseil access at all but low tide.
Guide: Donegal Guide, FMC I Guide Books, 1985.





Stack Rock

