

THE SUMMIT

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER 2015

Walking Highlights

Your best days on the hills in 2015

European Summits

Tackling the highest
mountains in Romania
and Spain

Into The Wild

A wilderness trek
in Greenland

An Irish Mountain Gathering 2016

Looking forward to
the Feb 19th event



Quiz

Win a copy of MountainViews
'A Guide to Ireland's Mountain
Summits'

Gallery

Some of the best
photography from MVs
members in the last year



Welcome to our first Annual magazine for Hillwalkers in Ireland!

For people new to MountainViews, I hope you get a flavour of what a community can do for hillwalking on the island of Ireland by way of free, shared and increasingly universal information and views.

If you are looking for inspiration, find plenty here by way of suggested routes, information on hills and mountains, and contributed photos. For photos the Gallery includes 10 out of the several hundred that members shared in 2015. Try the Big Quiz. Look at members' Walking Highlights of 2015. Challenge Walks. Hill videos. Walking abroad. Much more.

Long term members can review the new extra facilities we added in 2015 from videos, new lists, article quality tracks description etc. As a community we have found that innovative ways for people to share lead to more sharing.

So dig in everyone and don't forget our annual Gathering on 19th



Simon

West to the main Sperrins
from White Mountain

ADRIAN MCGLYNN

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Win yourself a copy of MountainViews 'A Guide To Ireland's Mountain Summits'

The Summit Annual Newsletter 2015, is published by the MountainViews committee in February 2016.

The usual MountainViews Summit Monthly Newsletter will return for March. Should you wish to comment on any article then you are free to do so through the Motley Views | General Forum within the usual terms of MountainViews.

Editor: Brendan O'Reilly **Contributors:** as shown for each article and photograph.

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A Grand Day Out

Your walking highlights of 2015

MountainViews member aidand had an idea: why not ask other MVerS to give us their stand-out mountain memories during 2015

After a truly rotten autumn I now ask you to tell us, in a few lines, about your best days walking on the Irish hills this year.

Unlike the Oscars there are no prizes here - no statuettes, red carpets or boring speeches.

You can remind other users of the site that it occasionally stops raining in Ireland and that when the sun shines you remember what a beautiful country we live in.

aidand

My walk of the year was the Mullaghanattin horseshoe on a fine April day. This was a walk I had on my to do list for years. The sun shone all day, there were new born lambs in the fields. The views in all directions were fabulous. Good company and a 6 hour challenging but not too difficult walk. A day to dream about on a wet winters night.

Kernowclimber

Martin and I undertook several great walks on our hills during 2015, but for me our 40 km multi-day trek of the Brandon massif over the Easter weekend was the highlight. Amazing weather showing off 360 degree eye candy of jagged mountains, golden beaches and the endless aquamarine of the Atlantic; wild and lonely



Wild camp below Masatiompan

MARTIN CRITCHLEY

camping spots with grandstand views of breathtaking ocean sunsets combined with the heady feeling of spring in the air heralded by the incessant song of the skylark, are memories to cherish. Unzipping our tent flaps to see a creamy pre-dawn full moon hanging like a Chinese lantern in a lilac sky is a sight I will take to the ghats.

Your walking highlights of 2015

David-Guenot

2015 has been my busiest year in the Irish hills since I really got back into hillwalking in November 2012. I have done many amazing walks over the past year, including the Coomloughra Horseshoe anticlockwise, two 10h-trips through the Slieve Mish and Central Dingle mountains, a fabulous traverse on Achill, etc...

But I would say my Walk of the Year 2015 is the Ben Lugmore-Mweelrea loop I completed in July; first because I did it with my good friend Wilderness; but also because I had been up Mweelrea, starting from the W in September 2005, but I was never sure I had reached the top at the time due to the terrible weather conditions I endured during the last part of the ascent. Being back there after such a long time -this time under clear skies to admire the breathtaking 360° vista- was a very special moment.

I can remember being slightly nervous at the beginning of the walk. I knew it was going to be a tough one. Fantastic feeling to reach and follow Ben Lugmore's ridge. Amazing feeling of emotion and self-accomplishment to reach Mweelrea, ten years after my first attempt, which had been followed a few days later by my first big walk, the (almost complete) Glencoaghan Horseshoe. To sum it up, ten years after I really started to be addicted to hillwalking in Ireland.



Breathtaking views over the Atlantic Ocean from the top of Mweelrea

DAVID GUENOT

If it hadn't been for Mweelrea, I wouldn't be aiming at completing the +500m Irish MV list today. And I probably wouldn't be a member of this amazing site.



Heading to Carnavaddy, looking down on Carlingford Lough & the Mournes

TRAILTREKKER

Trailtrekker

For me it was an old favourite, following the All Ireland Poc Fada in the Cooley Mountains. I have waxed lyrical about the event on here before, so I won't further extol it's greatness. It was far from the longest, quickest or highest walk, but that is not what makes it special. What made it extra special for me this year was that I had the privilege of following the legend Brendan Cummins around for most of it as he won his record 9th title. The views are fantastic and hurling skills on view are heroic, I could go on all night about it, but I won't!

Geo

My vote for walk of the year was my chance in June to do the Coomloughra Horseshoe in the Reeks.

Before and since in 2015 I have had more than my share of

- a) damp;
- b) moist;
- c) wet;
- d) soaking and
- e) horrendously Baltic with a side order of monsoon.

In fact lately some of my walking buddies have stopped joking about my jinx this year and begun to believe that

Your walking highlights of 2015



The cleaving of the mist over the Beenkeragh Ridge

GEORGE HODGINS

perhaps I am a rain god!

But I digress, back to the horseshoe, the culmination of my highest hundred summits which I have been working on since 2008 (the old 100 list from then not the 'new' list).

The June holiday weekend was quite mixed we did the Hag's Tooth and the Knockbrinnea's on the Saturday and were literally blown back to Cronin's Yard, bedraggled and you guessed it, wet!

On the Sunday as we did the horseshoe clockwise we had all the seasons and weathers in one day. We watched as clouds queued up to the west over the Atlantic and then raced towards us, mostly missing us by kilometres or only metres in some cases! Then

on top of Beenkeragh as we contemplated the enveloping mist and cloud and wondered if we would find our way across to the Bones, suddenly, almost biblically the cumulus was parted and we saw the promised land ahead, well ok more like a razor's edge!

What a thrill ride to finish the hundred perched on the Bones, with derriere at 956.5m and Ireland's highest all around, almost close enough to touch, I have to admit the 7 years getting to this point brought a tear, in addition to the one's the wind at that altitude would normally bring!

Glad to have had the company of the 3 musketeers and D'Artagnan as usual (Will there be a "Twenty Years After"?)

One of Ireland's great walks and a super day with wonderful company - That to me is a recipe for Walk of the Year.

Pazapas

My first thought was the Mullaghanattin (like Aidand) because it is the symbol of horseshoe walk in my mind and I was glad to share it with a very good friend. But finally, it could be Coomloughra horseshoe because of this unexpected picture I took.

Your highlights for 2016?

As you walk during the year why not consider what your highlights are for next year's Annual?



Coomloughra panorama

PAZAPAS

Through a net, dimly



Sharron Schwartz and Martin Critchley go wilderness trekking in Klosterdalen, Tasermiut Fjord, Greenland

The New Patagonia

It's early afternoon, late July, when our rib boat glides out of Nanortalik harbour. Located on an island of the same name, the southernmost town in Greenland (population about 1,300), rather worryingly means in Greenlandic, 'place where polar bears meet'. Our boatman assures us that the chances of spotting a polar bear anywhere in this region is next to zero.

So if you fancy a real wilderness experience, in a remote, unspoilt region which resembles the landscape of Ireland at the end of the last Ice Age, then Greenland could be the place for you. We are zipping over the petrol blue waters of the frigid Arctic Ocean past icebergs the size of houses, on our way up the Tasermiut Fjord extending inland some 70 km to the edge of the permanent ice sheet that covers the hinterland of this island nation of less than 60,000 souls. Snow streaked mountains, some around 2,000m high, lift their granite heads into a speedwell blue sky, shimmering waterfalls tumble headlong down vertical rocky walls sculpted by glaciers that have laid bare their geology, and turquoise rivers spill out

of surprisingly verdant valleys.

After about two hours we step ashore onto a seaweed strewn beach near the outflow of the Uiluiit Kuua River at the entrance to Klosterdalen, so named as this remote valley was once the site of an Augustinian monastery founded in the 10th century by Norse monks. Above the beach we make camp amid swathes of cerise pink fireweed and mauve harebells. The scenery is utterly face slapping: a 360 degree panorama of mountains



**Bow of boat heading towards ice cap
at the end of Tasermiut fjord**

MARTIN CRITCHLEY

and glaciers, including the 1.5 km high wall of ice at the end of the fjord and the towering granite monolith of Ketil (2,003m), one of the finest big wall climbs in the world. Tasermiut has been dubbed the new Patagonia for good reason.

Desiccated wood (juniper, birch and willow) is surprisingly abundant in southern Greenland and there are no restrictions on wild camping or lighting fires in the wilderness. As volleys of sparks from our camp fire ascend into a deepening blue sky, we indulge in a packet of freeze dried expedition food and a wee dram of Irish whiskey. The sun descends lower in the sky, casting a deep rose pink glow over the rugged mountains at the head of Klosterdalen and catches wispy cloud racing up over the face of Ketil marshmallow pink. Although it is hot and balmy by day, from 15-20 degrees Celsius, as soon as the sun sets, the mercury plummets to near freezing and we beat a hasty retreat to our tent.

The Blair Witch Forest

Following a chilly night (our 3 season sleeping bags

are at their limit) we get our first introduction to the local wildlife as clouds of midges and mosquitoes rise from the ground. Never before have we encountered such dense swarms of these insects, making head nets and repellent an absolute necessity.

We break camp, faithfully following the route marked on the 1:100,000 scale Tasermiut Fjorden-Nanortalik map by Harvey's Map Services, Scotland. This map turns out to be worse than useless; the route, clearly marked to the south of the river, leads us almost immediately into virtually impenetrable stands of dwarf birch and willow, most taller than a man. It's a struggle to remain upright clambering over the gnarled and twisted branches of these trees which spread like malevolent tentacles along the ground, akin to something straight out of the Blair Witch Project. The heat and humidity is stifling in this verdant prison and we are savaged by millions of midges and mosquitoes, attracted by the clouds of CO₂ we are panting as we bushwhack our way up through the valley. Amid these trees it's impossible to see exactly where we're going



Ascent of Klosterdalen

MARTIN CRITCHLEY



and they don't yield easily as we push our way forward, their spindly upper branches clawing and snatching at us like demonic fingers.

Finally emerging from this hellish jungle, we encounter a new obstacle. Boot sucking bog. Living in Ireland, we know all about bog, but Klosterdalen bog is in a league of its own! This eventually gives way to squelchy marshland and a couple of lakes. The map shows the route skirting the southern edge of the first lake, but we encounter numerous small streams too wide to jump, which forces us back into the evil arms of the Blair Witch Forest.

After seven hours of bushwhacking, the map shows we have covered a mere 4 km, but over 7 km due to zigzagging through the trees. We decide to camp for the night close to where we will cross the Uiluiit Kuua River tomorrow. We have this chocolate box pretty valley far from civilisation entirely to ourselves. The solitude is astounding. Hemmed in by jagged snow streaked mountains which seem to be bearing down on our tiny tent, we watch the mesmerising spectacle of the surrounding mountains turning ruby red as the sun goes down and the first stars wink in the darkening heavens.



Moonlit tent, Klosterdalen

MARTIN CRITCHLEY

River Deep and Mountain High

We awake to what sounds like light rain on the tent. But on unzipping the exterior flaps we see the mountains are draped in veils of mist, no rain. The sound is caused by thousands of insects hitting the canvas and we spy the depressing shadows of scores of mosquitoes on the inner tent below the flysheet lined up like jet fighters ready for another day of warfare!

Today involves an ascent of 600m up a branch valley to a col. But we must first cross the Uiluiit



Frozen lake at the head of Tupaassat Valley

MARTIN CRITCHLEY

Kuua River. Early in the day the river level is at its lowest and we scan the banks looking for a safe place to cross where the water is not too deep or fast flowing and has not undercut the bank, choosing a 20m section with a gravel bank midway across. Unbuckling our rucksacks, removing our boots and socks, rolling up our trousers, donning plastic Crocs and with our boots hanging round our necks, we wade into the chalky turquoise water. We move as quickly as possible diagonally downstream through the water which is knee deep in places. The intense cold hits us like a sledgehammer and bites into the very marrow of our bones. We're relieved to splosh safely onto a sandy bank on the other side.

We then encounter more dwarf trees followed by glacial moraine with boulders up to house size interspersed by dense, thigh high vegetation. Reaching the snowline, the vegetation thins and the pestilential swarms of insects subside. Removing our head nets is bliss; we can now eat unfettered and see the immense beauty of the landscape clearly and not through a net, dimly! After more slow progress through another boulder field with rocks that provide a double whammy -

angular and sharp to the touch and also covered with a rough desiccated brown lichen which scuffs our hands - we eventually gain the col. Close to a burbling stream of the purest glacial water, we erect our tent in a spot that has grandstand views overlooking Klosterdalen.

The shadows are lengthening as we descend a few hundred metres from the col to a deep blue lake nestled in a barren, rocky amphitheatre surrounded by a line of spiny peaks resembling the armoured plates of a stegosaurus at the top of the Tupaassat Valley. The winter this year was particularly hard and the lake is still partially frozen, with snow metres deep on its shoreline. We sit for what seems like an eternity, watching soft white cloud boiling about the mountain tops and sailing across a periwinkle blue sky. Back at camp, we marvel at the long shafts of sunlight radiating into Klosterdalen, causing its streams, river, wetland and lakes to shine like liquid mercury. By degrees the cloud above Ketil turns smoky grey and apricot and the western sky where the sun has set screams vermillion, chrome red and saffron yellow. Ketil responds by blushing deep orange and blood red, before fading through chalky mauve to steel grey.



Blood-red Ketil

MARTIN CRITCHLEY

Down by the Riverside

From the col it is possible to continue (down the Tupaassat Valley) to sea level, where you could feasibly get a boat to Nanortalik, or to continue up a second col to reach the Qinnquadalen valley, a route taking several days terminating back in the Tasermiut Fjord. Lacking the time to do a full traverse via Qinnquadalen and obtaining the weather forecast on our DeLorme Inreach two way satellite device alerting us to a föhn wind within the next 48 hours, we retreat to Klosterdalen. It isn't a good idea to be caught out on the high mountain passes where we would be forced to sit out this strong wind that blows off the ice cap sometimes for around two days. We contact our boatman to collect us at the beach at low tide within 48 hours.

The descent is as tedious as the ascent and care has to be taken traversing the boulder fields to avoid a fall or lower leg injury. The river crossing is even more of a challenge than before, as the water levels are much higher in the afternoon than early morning. We make camp on a sandy river bank.

The penetrating musty odour of the bog wafts in through the tent flaps along with scores of mosquitoes, as we rise to veils of white mist hovering above the valley floor. It merges with acres of white bog cotton making it almost impossible to see where the two meet. We decide to ditch the Harvey map, finding an easier route along

the gravel bank of the Uiluiit Kuua River until our progress is abruptly impeded by a channel leading into it which is too deep and wide to cross. Taking the plunge into the chalky turquoise water, we meander our way round huge boulders, scramble over rocks and wade through narrow channels. We greatly enjoy this challenge, but it might not be advisable when the river is in spate in early summer. Around a kilometre later, the terrain begins to drop, the speed of the water increases and the river channel narrows. We are forced to scale a granite outcrop, then descend into dwarf trees and bushwhack around 200m to emerge into the scrubland above the beach. Before long, the tell tale hum of a rib boat breaks the silence and we make our way down to the shore.

We trekked around 24 km, a distance which could easily be covered in one day in Ireland, but in Greenland, often moving little more than 1 km per hour through brutal trackless terrain with heavy packs, it's wise to plan for extra days. Are we glad we did this trek? Definitely. For long after the insect bites subside and the bruises sustained by bushwhacking through the vilest vegetation imaginable have faded, the views of endless expanses of shimmering white bog cotton, ice encrusted lakes, frigid glaciers, rushing turquoise rivers and spiky snow streaked mountains turning ruby red in the settling sun, will remain indelibly etched in our memories.

Watch our trek video at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fFihqt587gs>

Come together



Young Guns: Cian Quinn, Robert Lee and Simon Byrne receive their certificates from Simon Stewart

An Irish Mountain Gathering 2016

David Owens looks back at last year's Annual MountainViews Talks and Awards Night, and looks forward to the 2016 event.

It's that time of year again... when the general public and hillwalkers from all over Ireland are welcome to join us for some exciting presentations on a range of hill topics - and as usual, we have a great line up of speakers for you. Not forgetting our annual presentation of certificates for hill lists compliers.

Last year's event was one of the best and most enjoyable yet. An audience of around 100 heard from Helen Fairbairn as our main speaker. Helen's latest book *Ireland's Best Walks* had just been released and she drew on her Irish experience as well as her extensive walking abroad (She has authored no less than twelve guidebooks) to give us an exhilarating presentation on her 'Top Ten' of Irish hill-walking. For those who missed it, an article derived from her presentation was published in the MV newsletter for June 2015. In addition to Helen, we heard from Irish Times Travel Writer and gadget guru, Tom Kelly on the gadgetry surrounding walking and how gear has changed over the years. Our own Simon Stewart reviewed the MV year and the inimitable Peter Walker delivered a hugely entertaining romp through unique Irish hills with his own deadpan brand of wit. Our awards for completions were made notable by the celebration of a few unique feats; Simon Byrne



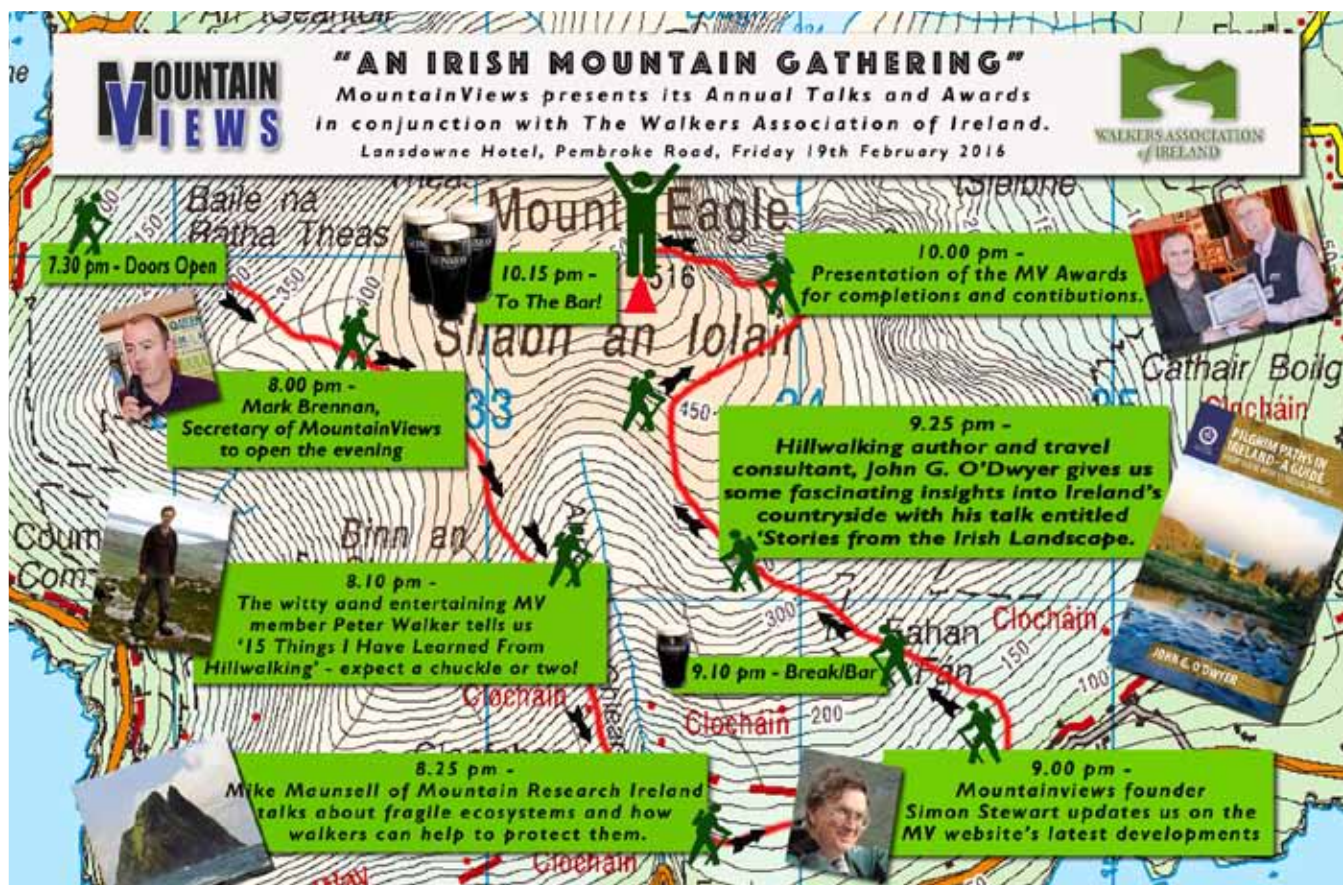
MC Mark Brennan gets the show on the road

JOHN FITZGERALD

completed the entire Vandeleur and Arderin list in under a year and took us through a presentation as to exactly how he did it; Rob Lee became the first person under 21 to complete the entire 600m list, and Cian Quinn became, as far as we are aware, the youngest person to complete the County Tops at age 12. In addition, a further 14 people received awards for list completion.

This year promises to be even better; the current line-up looks like this:

John G. O'Dwyer is a travel consultant and a teacher of tourism studies. A keen hillwalker and rock climber, he is a founder member of Mid-Tipp Hillwalkers and has



Helen Fairbairn counting down to Number One

JOHN FITZGERALD

twenty-five years' experience of leading hillwalking and mountain climbing groups in Ireland, the UK, Europe and Africa. He is a regular contributor of travel features to the Irish Times. His Tipperary & Waterford; A Walking Guide has become the classic guide to the region, and his more recent book Pilgrim Paths in Ireland; From Slieve Mish to Skellig Michael was published in 2013. John will speak on Stories from the Irish Landscape. He promises a talk covering places such as "Howling Ridge", the Knockmealdowns, Cave Hill, Slievenamon and where its name came from, the Comeraghs and William Crotty and the deserted village above Clonmel.

Mike Maunsell of Mountain Research Ireland will also be addressing us. Mike is a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and has worked for over 35 years

in mountain environments as a Mountaineer, Lecturer & Researcher, he was recently nominated to the UIAA (International Climbing and Mountaineering Federation), Mountain Protection Commission. He chairs Mountaineering Ireland's Access and Conservation Committee. His talk will cover our mountain ecosystems which are fragile and highly sensitive to environmental change. Hill-walkers can play a role in gathering important data on mountain environments through mountain based Citizen Science projects.

Simon Stewart needs no introduction. The founder of MV and the man responsible for the continued development of the website and the Community, will give a review of developments during the year.

Any Irish Mountain Gathering would be incomplete without **Peter Walker**; His theme for this year is 15 Things I Have Learned From Hillwalking. It is difficult to predict exactly what he might say, but it will be broadly (only broadly!) in the hillwalking area, and it will be light-hearted, and above all, it will be entertaining!

As has become usual, the night will be 'MC-ed' by our own Wicklore, **Mark Brennan**.

This is a once-a-year opportunity to meet your fellow hillwalkers in a relaxed convivial atmosphere - We hope to see you all there.

Note the date: Lansdowne Hotel, 8pm, Friday, 19th February 2016. Doors will open from 7.30pm. There will be a small charge (€8) on the door.

“I didn’t know my GPS could do that!”

Simon Stewart throws light on the mysteries of Summit to Summit Navigation with your GPS.

This article describes a simple way of navigating around Irish uplands with a GPS that you may find useful. It puts a semi-permanent collection of waypoints on your GPS so that in general you use the GPS to home in on specific places – something they are good at.

The main advantages

- Accurate navigation to the main targets of a walk.
- Less preparation.

Particularly useful if you are not the leader of a walk, want to use your GPS but don’t want to spend hours preparing.

- Gives appropriate enroute information such as distance to go and altitude gain to the next summit.

Considerations

- Although this method can work really well in most of the flattish upland areas of Ireland, for places where more intricate navigation is required other approaches may be more useful such as using a map on the GPS or creating a GPS route.
- Requires terrain knowledge and common sense. Bring a printed map (a principle of modern navigation: complement high tech with low tech). Test GPS indicated direction against the ground which you will have thought about in advance.

How does it work?

Download all the summits for a given area and put them on your GPS unit. Usually this is done with a USB cable. Most GPS units can store at least 500 waypoints. Leave space for some manually defined waypoints allowing



storing say 450 summits. If you mostly walk in for example the east of Ireland 450 waypoints will include all of the summits of the Mourne, Wicklow, the Cooleys, the Blackstairs etc. Many GPS units can store 1000 waypoints and some can store into the tens of thousands. If you are a regular walker you will probably want to minimise preparation time, particularly when you are not the leader on a given occasion. Keeping all the summits in the areas you generally walk in means that you frequently don’t have to spend any time preparing and yet can have valuable data immediately available when walking.

Sources of summit data

MountainViews provides summit data for Ireland and Britain. First clear your GPS of waypoints and .GPX files (backup first if you



Put data onto a GPS unit with a USB cable

Summit to summit navigation with your GPS

want to keep them). With a laptop or tablet go to <http://mountainviews.ie/lists/allirish/> Draw a box around on the map around the area you want summits for. Create list. Check the number of summits you have listed will fit onto your GPS. Click Export, then Download a GPX file. Select a place to put the .GPX file. Sometimes this can be directly onto some GPS units or sometimes you will need to store it on a local device first then upload it. On older devices you may need to use an intermediate program such as GPSU or Gatrip.

At the start of the walk.

At the beginning turn on the GPS well before you start walking and let it find its position. (Tip: Be aware that a GPS that hasn't been used for weeks takes much longer to get a fix because its knowledge of what satellites should be in view is out of date.) Get a waypoint for the start which is particularly useful for the return on loop walks. If you have time then calibrate the GPS for altitude and compass.

Getting Useful Enroute Information

Search for waypoints. Set the GPS to show waypoints in order of nearness to you. MountainViews created

summits will show up with their name or an abbreviation. Be aware that some names may be in Irish and when abbreviated may be unfamiliar. Select the first summit for the planned route.

It is also possible to select summits using whatever map display the unit has. You now have a reliable pointer to the first summit with the distance. Some GPS units will show the required elevation gain also or you can work this out. You will need to allow for ups and downs enroute. Remember the point about common sense.

Out on the hills

Use the GPS direction indicator. Unlike a compass, this points in the right direction when you are detouring. It's quick and efficient. You can spend more time relating to the terrain. In bad conditions you won't need to burden your concentration with the mindless step counting or time estimation of compass navigation.

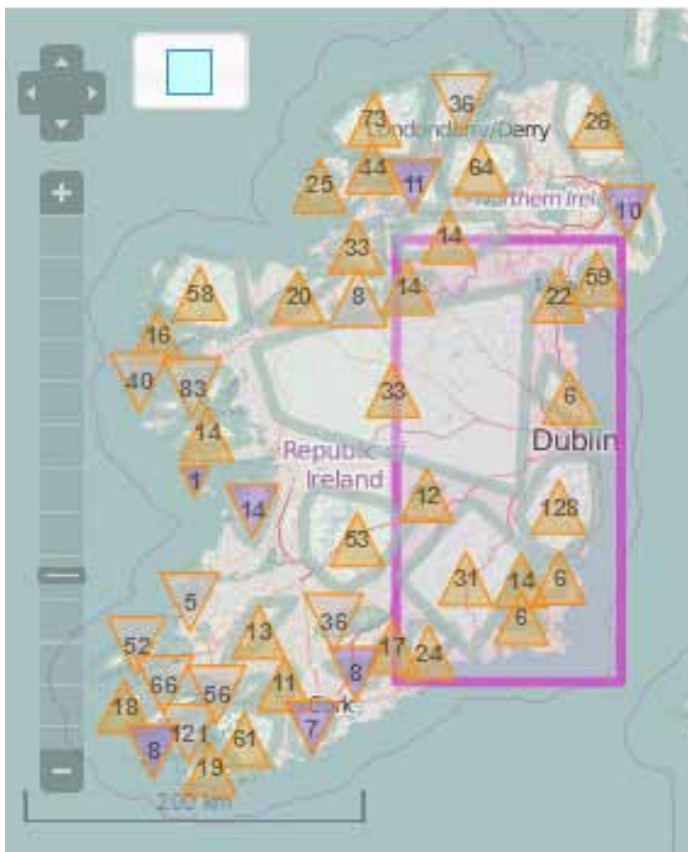
When you reach a summit (or other waypoint) set the GPS to go to the next one. Remember the common sense bit again. If the direct route to the next place goes across a chasm as shown on the map then allow for this, perhaps by a controlled deviation to left or right. It's much easier to control such a deviation given that you have a pointer to where you are trying to get to than it is with a compass. Occasionally you may need to put in intermediate waypoints particularly in poor visibility. The information from the GPS about distance to go, elevation to gain gives you a sense of being in control and being able to plan.

Hazards

Prat-nav is an expression usually applied in connection to drivers that mindlessly follow GPS instructions to take routes through lakes or too-narrow boreens. It also applies to outdoors GPS navigators. Sometimes navigation really matters and you need to concentrate hard on route choice. You should use the reliable information you can get from a GPS to spend more time on route choice or other tasks like group management. If you start mindlessly following the direction arrow you are in danger of losing situational awareness. It's when you forget someone in the party or you don't notice that your meticulously planned route is going to finish 60 mins after dark over a boulder slope.

More advanced GPS navigation

For more intricate routes you need a more powerful approach. For a method with an easy enroute interface



Selecting summits from "All Irish Summits" listing is quick

Summit to summit navigation with your GPS

then it's hard to beat the prepared GPS route. Essentially a GPS route is a collection of "route points". You navigate from one to the next to the next. The GPS senses when it has passed a route point and its direction and other information changes accordingly for the next route point.

Creating routes can be done manually on a GPS unit but is time-consuming and error prone. Another method is to create a route on a computer and upload it to the GPS. Various manufacturers have software to do this. Generally you need software with mapping which can be expensive.

MountainViews shares routes – members upload a route that they have done and it can be viewed on MountainViews. It is also possible to download a summarised form of their data and store it on a GPS unit as a route. This can be done using the Export Data button for any track. Remember the common-sense bit again. Some MV members are extremely fit and agile. It's your responsibility to check that the route is suitable for you and your party in the current weather.

For some challenge walks MountainViews has pre-prepared .GPX files. For example if you go to <http://mountainviews.ie/challengecalendar/> and scroll down to Maumturks Challenge there is a link for "GPX" which will allow you to download a complete route. As always remember the common-sense bits. Check the route being offered is what the organisers currently intend. Slavishly following even good routes in a place like the Maumturks can bring you over land that needs ability and stamina which you or the weakest member of your party may not have.

Obviously these methods are not mutually exclusive, however combining approaches will also have costs. Quick preparation, capability for complex ground, handy enroute. What two would you like?

"I keep a GPS in my rucksack only for emergencies"

No easy way to say this. You have it backwards. Keep the compass in the rucksack for emergencies. Learn to use the GPS by exercising with it regularly such as Summit-to-Summit navigation as described here.



Member shared route, in this case for Cummeengeara in the Caha Mountains

Practice when you are not under pressure. Properly used in conjunction with a map it provides much more information such as a reliable direction to where you started and to nearby landmarks. And it gives you a record of where you went.

Still not convinced? Remember the following. An unused GPS can take 5- 10 mins to get a fix when turned on. If you haven't tested regularly your batteries will likely fail. A really useful emergency piece of information on a GPS is the trail of how you got where you are but the GPS needs to be on continuously to get this.

Sometimes it is handy to get the grid reference for where you are to place yourself on the map. However if you find yourself doing this all the time then you may be stuck in the "locate yourself on the map then get a bearing to where you want" way of compass thinking. This mixes and confuses methods because with a GPS it is more about "select a waypoint to go to and use the direction arrow".

Summit to summit navigation with your GPS

Comparing approaches

A comparison of methods of using a GPS unit when navigation matters.

Method	Preparation	Capability	Enroute
Summit-to-summit	Low	Good in well understood easy uplands. Not good where intricate navigation required.	Easy to use but can lack start and intermediate point data. Gives useful data.
Pre-prepared GPS route	High, requires home system and some work to create a route.	Good, particularly where intricate navigation required.	Easiest to use in the field. Slavish use can encourage lack of situational awareness.
Map on GPS	Low, but can be expensive.	Depends on quality of map but often good and can relate well to OS printed map.	Requires visual feedback from the small screen and/or creation of on the fly waypoints which can be slow and error prone.

Batteries and Backup

To use GPS units successfully you need to become anally geeky about batteries. Most high capacity rechargeable batteries are of the NiMH type and progressively lose charge when not used, as much as 20% in a month. Always charge them fully before use. Any battery can fail any time for absolutely no obvious reason. Always have spares – two sets, different types. Batteries lose capacity in the cold. Keep the spares in an inside pocket in cold weather.

Always bring a compass. Check it once a year to see that it is still magnetized and hasn't developed bubbles. Always bring a paper map with a map case. Know how to use a map and compass together. We would recommend a Mountain Skills course for the basics with some months practice afterwards. Get a course such as that run by the Walkers Association of Ireland on GPS/ Modern Navigation to move on.

Investigate what is available on your phone. In emergency you may be able to use a navigation app



A map & compass should remain an essential part of your gear

like Viewranger. But you must know the limitations. It may depend on internet access to get map information. A really stupid scenario is that you use the app and it works but it drains your battery. Suddenly you have neither navigation nor emergency service access. Or the phone gets wet and stops responding to finger gestures to similar effect. (War story: On my admittedly four year old phone Viewranger kept crashing the entire operating system every hour or so. Required a hard reset by taking the phone battery out.)

Summary

Summit-to-summit navigation may suit you as one handy way to navigate with a GPS out of other possibilities. It's useful as a general method with low preparation but like everything else it isn't fool proof. Try it!



Make sure you've got plenty of these in your rucksack.

From Ptolemy to the Ordnance Survey.



The men who put Irish cartography on the map.

Colin Murphy puts away his GPS and takes a look at the history of mapping this island

Even in these days of the ubiquitous GPS, most walkers still carry on a love affair with their trusty paper OSI/ OSNI maps, which, if some of mine are anything to go by, are often rain-soaked, illegible in places and splitting at the folds. And why not? Travellers have been relying on maps to tell them what's what and where's where since ancient times, and Irish hillwalkers are no different.

Wintry

And speaking of things ancient, probably the first known map of Ireland was produced by a second

century Greco-Roman cartographer, Claudius Ptolemy, who based his work on the charts and reports of sailors. If the vague blob that barely resembles Ireland makes you chuckle, spare a thought for poor old Scotland, who Ptolemy depicts basically as another blob at right angles to the rest of the island of Britain. Ptolemy's Irish map doesn't identify any towns but does indicate lots of rivers and inlets such as the Logia (Belfast Lough), the Darbona (Blackwater) and the Senu (Shannon). He also tells us where you might run into which tribe, such as the Brigantes (Wexford/Waterford), the Cauici (Dublin/ Wicklow) or the Robogdii (Antrim/ Down), and so on. Ireland is named as 'Hibernia', which in case you didn't know, means 'wintry'. Ptolemy sure got that one right.

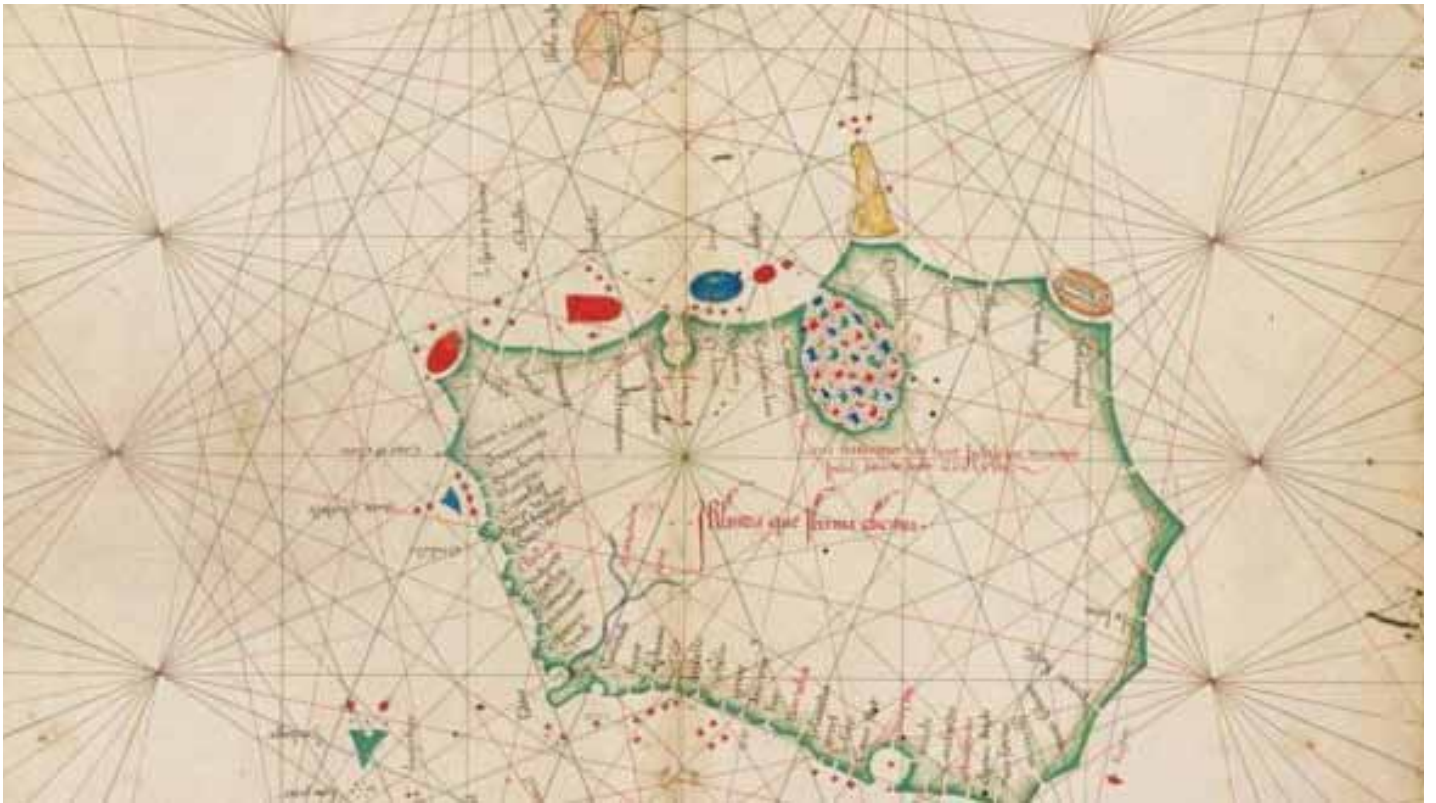
To be fair to Ptolemy, most of the maps that followed in successive centuries were only marginal improvements and we have to trek forward thirteen hundred years to find next interesting cartographic development.

A few years ago a tome turned up in Venice featuring a collection of maps produced in 1468 by the renowned Italian navigator and cartographer Grazioso Benincasa,



Ptolemy's Ireland c 150 AD

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF SCOTLAND



The oldest known map that specifically features Ireland. 1468.

CHRISTIES

among them the oldest map depicting Ireland (or at least another blob-like Ireland) on its own. This one names a myriad of coastal towns and a couple of rivers and appropriately its outline is emerald green, but it's not exactly the sort of thing you could use for a Sunday morning trek in the Reeks or the Sperrins.

Grim ending

At the start of the seventeenth century, a cartographer and artist called Richard Bartlett was sent to Ulster by Elizabeth 1 to produce a bunch of maps to help with the forthcoming Plantations and the result were a collection of maps that were a little short on detail but gloriously

illustrated. In fact some were less map-like and more like a bird's eye painting of areas or towns, such as that of Armagh. They are among the most famous maps of any part of Ireland produced during this era. There was a darkly amusing end to this tale, as poor Richard came to a bloody end: '*. . . when he came to Tyrconnell (in Donegal) the inhabitants took off his head, because they would not have their county discovered*'. Remember that the next time you're planning a trip up the Bluestacks...

The Great Ryghes

There were lots of valiant efforts at mapping Ireland in the succeeding couple of centuries including John Speed's map of the island in 1610, which was among the first to indicate mountain ranges, but with little detail. Interestingly it depicts Ireland with vast, almost unbroken tracts of forest. In 1646, Dutchman Joan Blaeu, produced a map of Munster that actually named some mountains such as The Great Ryghes (The Reeks), Slew Dakean (The Paps), Brandon and Knock Croglo Skardy to the north of Dingle – any guesses what that one is? (Croaghskeara, perhaps?)

Bald shading

For the first serious attempt at a map that a modern day hillwalker might consider useful for navigation, we bound forward in time to 1809, when a Scottish cartographer called William Bald was commissioned by



One of Bartlett's maps of Ulster from 1600-03.



Blauw's depiction of Munster in 1646.

the Mayo Grand Jury to produce a detailed map of the county. The cost was £6372 (roughly half a million euro at today's rates) and caused a bit of an uproar, which was hardly surprising given that most of the population hadn't two spuds to rub together. Having said that, Mr Bald produced an incredible work in black and white of such detail that it is quite mesmerizing. It is so precise that it actually indicates houses as black dots and interestingly, many of the villages shown simply ceased to exist during the Famine. Although Bald doesn't have the benefit of contour lines, he instead uses degrees of shading to indicate high ground and names individual mountains. Croaghnaun on Achill for example is clearly marked, as are its precipitous cliffs. Bald's map was produced in 25 separate sheets and may be viewed at the Mayo Library website: www.mayolibrary.ie.



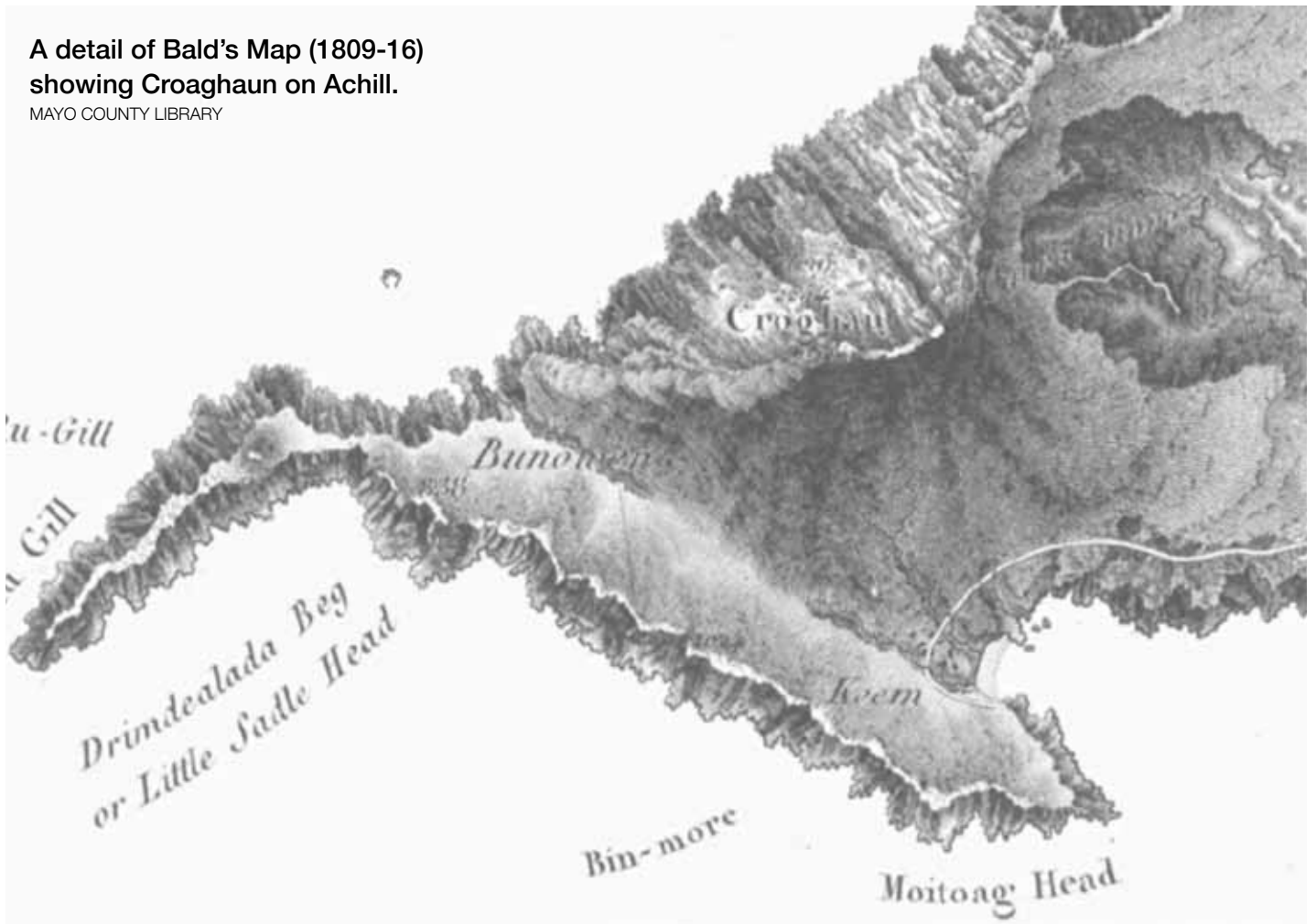
A detail the Ordnance Survey (1825-46) showing Lugnaquilla in Wicklow. Their measurement of its height is just 1m out.
[ordnancesurveyireland](http://www.ordnancesurveyireland.com)

Royal Engineers

The next great leap in Irish cartography was of course the establishment of the Irish Ordnance Survey.

**A detail of Bald's Map (1809-16)
showing Croaghuaun on Achill.**

MAYO COUNTY LIBRARY



The British government needed a detailed survey of Ireland for long-term taxation and military purposes and appointed Thomas Rice, MP for Limerick, to oversee that task. Rice was keen to have a large Irish involvement because of local knowledge of place names and areas and so forth. But in steps that other famous Irishman, the Duke of Wellington, who once, when asked about being Irish, remarked that 'being born in a stable does not make one a horse.' The Duke decided that us dim Paddies were too thick to do the job competently, which is why a team of Royal Engineers arrived on our shores in 1825 and began the laborious task of mapping the entire country. And a fine job they did, mostly, portraying the island of Ireland in a degree of detail never previously seen. I say mostly as it turns out that Mr. Rice was correct, as the Army Engineers famously anglicised most of the ancient place names in the country, thus all the 'Bailes' (meaning 'home') became 'Ballys' or Binn Chaorach (the mountain of sheep) became Beenkeragh and so on. Incidentally, this is the inspiration of Brian Friel's well-known play 'Translations', which concerns two English cartographers in 1825-46, one of whom writes down place names phonetically to make them smoother on his countrymen's ears, while the other opposes him because of how it undermines Irish heritage and culture.

A new era

But fair play to the engineers as their survey of Ireland, to that level of detail, was a first on the planet – not even England could boast such mapping at the time.

With the partition of Ireland in 1921, two separate bodies took over the task of mapping Ireland – the OSI in the south and the OSNI in the north, both of which came into existence in 1922. Initially both south and north continued to use the services of their respective army personnel to carry out surveying duties, but were slowly replaced by civilians over the decades. And of course most mapping is now done by pointing gizmos down at the ground from an aeroplane. No more tramping up mucky hillsides in driving sleet for today's cartographer. In fact, compared to those lads in Victorian times, who had no proper waterproofs, gloves, flasks, rucksacks, platypuses, heated socks etc etc, today's lot are a big bunch of wimps!

Having said that, a huge thank you to all the Ptolemys, Benincasas, Speeds, Blaeus, Bartlett, Balds, Royal Engineers, Irish Army Engineers, OSI, OSNI and all the thousands of cartographers who have painstakingly charted every square metre of the island down the centuries. Because honestly guys, we're be totally lost without you.



Iberian High

Mulhacén: Mainland Spain's highest summit

Brendan O'Reilly and Bernie Morrow tackle Iberia's highest mountain the easy way: by taking the bus.

Mulhacén from Capileira

Apart from Mount Teide on the Canary Island of Tenerife (which properly belongs to the continent of Africa), Mulhacén at 3,478m is the highest mountain on the Iberian Peninsula.

Somewhat surprisingly, this is not in the Pyrenees, or the Picos de Europa, but rather in the Sierra Nevada range in the SE of Spain. Mulhacén can be approached from several directions, but the easiest access is from the south, basing yourself in the mountain village of Capileira, where there is plenty of good and affordable accommodation.

It's unusual - at least in a European context, that a summit of such altitude can be climbed by mere hikers, the ascent being a straightforward walk requiring no technical ability. Though in winter, of course, it would be a different proposition.

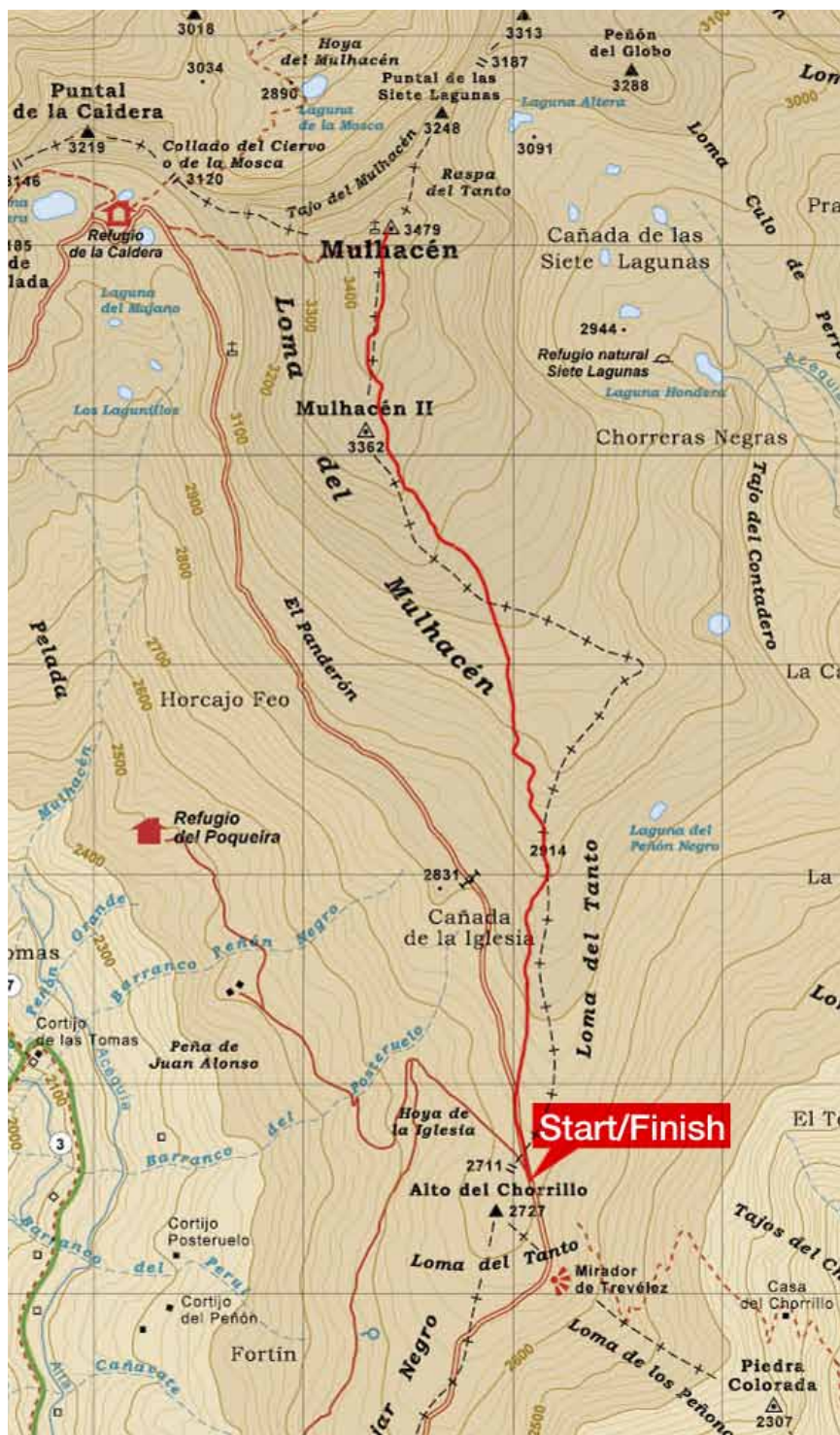
Mountain bus service

There is a morning minibus service from Capileira during the summer months, and this ascends a winding dirt



track to the 2,700m Alto del Chorrillo, a minor summit on a broad southern ridge, where the walk starts. This means the minibus has saved you over 1,250m ascent - a decent leg-up for the start of the walk. It's worth taking the minibus if for no reason than to listen to the entertaining guide Paco describe the flora and fauna of the Sierra Nevada.

Exiting the minibus continue down the track for a



short distance before turning right uphill on a minor path.

The ascent up over stony terrain interspersed with sparse vegetation is straightforward, though keep an eye out for cairns which not only show the way, but also deviations where you leave one track to join another. Also keep an eye out for the Spanish Ibex, one of the larger mammals native to this range.

The summit

The greatest effort is required on the pull up to Mulhacén II, a notional peak, and from there it's an easy walk to the small plateau where you'll find the distinctive summit trig pillar. Most walkers will reach the top in 2.5 to 3 hours

from leaving the minibus at the Alto del Chorrillo. You're unlikely to be alone at the summit, as it's a popular peak not only with Spaniards but also with international visitors alike (there was group from Cork when we summited).

The conical concrete trig pillar is set atop a rocky outcrop below which there is some sort of gated recess, the function of which is not entirely clear. There are precipitous drops to the north, so some degree of caution is required at the summit. Despite the altitude, we didn't experience any problems other than mild headaches on the descent, though this may have owed as much to the heat as to the slightly thinner air.

We descended by our ascent route, though there is a variation whereby you could descend west to the tarn at the Refugio de la Caldera, and then take a dirt road south back to the Alto del Chorrillo. The minibus arrived an hour later to bring us back down to Capileira, where cold beers awaited.

We flew from Dublin to Almeria (Ryanair) and hired a car to get to Capileira.

The minibus service from Capileira runs twice in the morning (8.30am and 11am) and returns to collect hikers at the Alto del Chorrillo twice in the late afternoon/evening (4.15pm and 6.45pm).

For more information you can contact the Capileira Information Point at 0034-958-763090. The mobile number 671-564406 is of Paco, one of the guides.



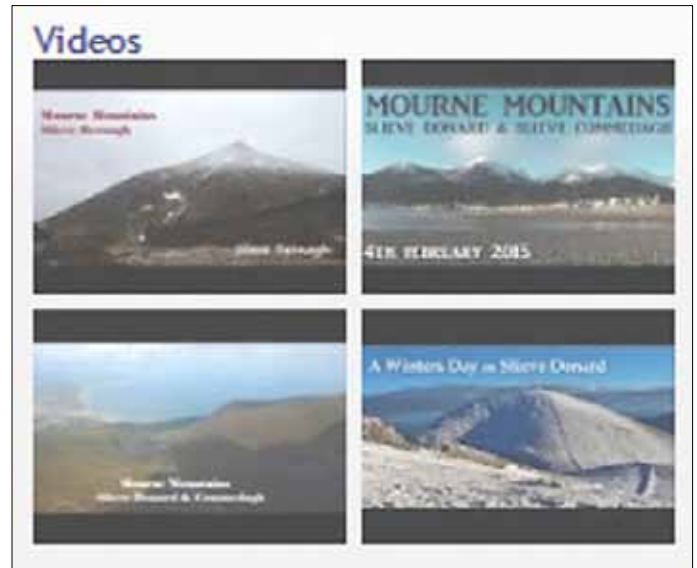
Stories, Video, Places. MountainViews new features for 2015

Simon Stewart gives the lowdown on the website's latest innovations

Telling better stories. That's what we've tried to add to MountainViews in 2015. Someone looking on occasionally would immediately note the Videos section where we show what hillwalking videos are available for any given area. Long-term however allowing illustrated tracks and better summit data will be just as valuable. We also added support for challenge walkers.

Videos

For a few years now hillwalkers have been creating videos of their exploits in the hills and posting them to YouTube. Information such as grid references, names and text are things that MV has done since 2002. If we want to get the feel for a place then we need to see it and video is one way to do this. Like everything in MountainViews it's a work in progress but increasingly you'll find a video for any given area. And increasingly the videos have music and are more ambitious as to production values. For many it's not enough to have a "plain, training" presentation. A video takes some time to watch so an artistic approach grabs and keeps



Choices for video appear where they are available.

attention. It's rumoured that one video creator is going to be using a quadcopter this year!

So sit back and enjoy the show! Or maybe create your own videos. Tell us about them at admin@mountainviews.ie

Our lists

Every time we add lists our very active community goes

out and describes the summits in words, photos and shared tracks. In 2014 we added 284 "Binnions" or Irish summits under 400m with a prominence (aka drop) of at least 100m. In July 2015 we added 97 of the "Arderin Bogs".

For mountains (over 500m) we already had the Arderins, which was defined as height 500+m, prominence 30+m. But it was always sort of odd that we combined that with the Vandeleur-Lynams list defined (by Joss Lynam) as 600+m with 15+m prominence. The Arderin Bogs now include the lower prominence 500m summits that is those with 15+m to 30+m prominence. Combining the Arderins and the

Mourne Mountains Area Slieve Croob Subarea
More detail

A Winter's Day on Slieve Donard Video by gerrym

Pub: 15 Jan 2027 by Gerry McVeigh gerrym

Summary: Highest of the Mounes in snowy conditions
Duration: 11m30

A Winter's Day on Slieve Donard

Granite Quarry

0:59 / 11:30

Cratlieve Hill Crotshliabh A name in Irish
also Laganan Mountain an extra name in English
Centre on map

Rating 52%

Challenge View Wilderness

2Play on display or full size. VIDEO: GERRY MCVEIGH

Stories, Video, Places. MountainViews new features for 2015



Garraun SW Top: Coloured conglomerate and unique angle on the Bens

DAVID GUENOT

Arderin Bogs means we have a list of all hills over 500m with a uniform 15m prominence.

Some are interesting places with unique features such as views or geology. An example would be Garraun SW Top in the Twelve Bens. Aka Altnagaighera this place had been formerly described in comments for Garraun which is often considered flat and featureless. Garraun SW however is much more interesting with colourful geology and much better views.

This is a community website not a tourist board production so we don't mind mentioning that some of the Arderin Bogs may be quite wild places but don't have much in the drama department. In time our rating system will tell you what to expect.

The community response has been great. Forty one of the Arderin Bogs now have "Short Summaries" and many more have ordinary comments and photos. Astonishingly only one has no recorded visits to it (Be the first to get to Tooreennamna in the Cahas!) while for Caher West Top in the Reeks over 600 have logged that they have visited it.

During 2015 we started more formally to cooperate with Mountaineering Ireland. They recognise the value of lists and now publish some of ours such as the Arderins on their website.

We are working on two other sorts of lists: Coastal

Features and Islands. These are substantial bodies of work and will take time. Volunteers welcome.

Names, positions and survey information

MountainViews has always had lots of information about each summit. As we are the first to create many of the lists with the sort of detail we include, there are inevitably tons of errors and/or improvements needed. Behind the scenes the way we put lists together was Cumbersome, Frustrating, Error Prone and Slow. If you wanted say to add a new name to a summit or change what county it was supposed to be in then the change was handled by a spreadsheet. To avoid versioning errors there could only be one master spreadsheet. Updates happened perhaps once a year. There were few changes and probably some suggestions simply got lost.

Starting 2015 we created a new way of doing things. Any logged in user can propose a change to any of the around 26 fields of information we have for a summit. Or propose an entirely new place. So, now, instead of a fickle trickle under the manual system we have a tiny torrent with over 200 changes proposed and most accepted by the "place moderators".

Many of the changes have been additional names to existing places. As you probably know to accommodate Ireland's complicated linguistic past MountainViews

Stories, Video, Places. MountainViews new features for 2015

takes an inclusive approach and allows at least three names for every summit, each name identified by language. So there's plenty of scope for "new" names to be added.

Many "new" summits were also added. For example in Feb 2015 members mcritchley and kernowclimber discovered that what we now call Brandon Far North Top (Dingle Peninsula) is actually a Vandeleur-Lynam, having a height of 840.1m and a prominence of 17.3m both established using surveying equipment. (Two other new Vandeleur-Lynams were uncovered in 2015, both by John Fitzgerald: Knockaunapeebra in the Comeraghs and Camaderry SE Top in Wicklow)

If you have ever been to Hen Mountain in the Mourne you will understand how it dominates the local landscape at the NW corner of the Mourne. But at 354m and even with a substantial prominence of 83m it didn't fall into any particular existing list. A perfect case for the "Local, Historical and Cultural" class to which it was added in February 2015.

The Hill of Faughart in the Cooley /Gullion area, with a prominence of only 23 meters was never going to feature one of our other lists but with a long and varied history, provided by member Trailtrekker, stretching from the last High King of Ireland to the troubles in the north it certainly deserved a mention as a hill of historical significance.

Significant also for the surveyors on MountainViews using high definition gps to record summit data the new system provided the facility to instantly record and upload the fruits of a days work and then make it live on the website while correcting all affected lists at the same time. It has also made keeping track of and responding to members proposals a quick and easy process for those of us reviewing the data provided.

Why do we bother with these corrections? While by no means the main or only issue, we believe in accuracy, in local and informed input, in respecting Irish norms for language and culture. It's not enough to have a big list – it must be informative and accurate. So if you see something that needs improvement in our data base – propose a change. It is quick and easy.

Knockaunapeebra in the Comeraghs

JOHN FITZGERALD



Sharing routes in the hills

In the past written routes tended to be shared through magazines and books. They still are (though the magazine end is a bit shaky in Ireland latterly) and they fulfil a need. Books and magazines are a one to many publication. However with the advent of the web another possibility exists, that of the many to many sharing of route information. A community approach where information is created and refined by many for many. Shared GPS tracks while certainly not a researched book chapter are often extremely good as a hint or suggestion for a route. Where to park, start, the main line of the route, the return etc. And often that is sufficient for the experienced walker. MountainViews started sharing GPS tracks in 2012. In 2015 we shared 360 tracks, most in Ireland, totalling over 1500.

This is all excellent progress but success has brought its own problems. For many popular starting points we have over 12 tracks. It becomes a chore to find one that is interesting to use. One immediate solution we have implemented is to allow moderators to hide tracks from the display when they are duplicates of existing ones. Longer term we have introduced rating, whereby creators and users can characterise tracks. How hard, what views, how wild. The object of this is that when we have enough tracks characterised then users can look for tracks of particular types. Could be they want more challenge or less, better views, a child friendly place or even cyclability. We plan other ways of making

Stories, Video, Places. MountainViews new features for 2015

choice easier.

Please support this community effort by rating your own tracks as you upload them and by rating other people's tracks when you know the area.

Track descriptions: barebones to illustrated articles

With the apparent & regrettable non-appearance of Walking World Ireland there are less places where an aspiring walker can get inspiration and ideas for walking in Ireland. During 2015 MountainViews introduced the capability for track uploaders to add photos to their tracks and also to format their text (bold, italics, headings, boxes etc.). You can add up to five photos. In short there are the means to turn shared GPS tracks into illustrated articles.

Let's say at once that since this feature was added in August 2015 not everyone sharing GPS tracks has chosen to add pictures and a worked out article. Not everyone has the time. MountainViews has always believed that most uploaded tracks, even without any further description are still extremely useful. We will continue to welcome them.

However in some cases member have put together marvellous essays about their tracks. Sometimes about the place using photos to illustrate, sometimes about the occasion full of honesty, pride and some pain! The monthly newsletter now includes some of the illustrated tracks and hopefully they provide in a modern way something of what you can get from traditional magazines and books such as inspiration, an engaging read with accurate information.

So take a look at the monthly newsletter and see what there are in the way of people's stories about interesting places and epic trips. Better still: have a go at creating one yourself.

Challenge walks

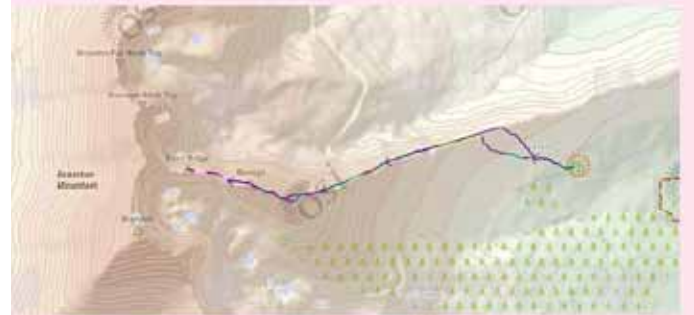
During 2015 MountainViews started to include the Challenge Walk Calendar. This is a place describing the main club and community organised challenges in Ireland. For each challenge there is further information and links on other pages. Using the calendar you can get a good idea of what Challenges are available, what they are like, with supporting data like routecards and the details about when they are on. The Challenge Walk Calendar was arranged with the agreement of the Walkers Association. Challenge Walks are covered more fully in another article in the Annual.

Featured track report

Faha fa fa fa, faha fa fa fa (with apologies to Talking Heads)

Brandon is many folk's favourite Irish mountain, a huge cliff-girt and mist-swaddled retreat cornered towards the end of the Dingle peninsula. Its eastern Faha Ridge is notorious and coveted among hillwalkers, a dramatic arm gnarling its way east from the summit ridge and a definite contender for the most spectacular route of ascent on this island. This month's featured track demonstrates how the wary summiteer can claim the two summits on its crest while avoiding the psychological cruces which would need passing on its complete traverse. The text is involving and descriptive, the photos highly demonstrative and totally appropriate; anyone reading, viewing and inwardly digesting should have all the information they need to make an informed decision as to their personal ability to follow in Captain Verigo's footsteps.

Note: As you may know, we recently started improving our shared track display. This is not finished by a long shot, however below shows how you can incorporate photos into a shared track.



This is a basic "up and down" route to the peak on the infamous Faha Ridge.

The summiteer completing the Highest Hundred, Vandeusler Lynam or Aderin Lists cannot avoid some portion of this ridge. You'll notice that while I traversed from nearby Benagh I made no attempt to continue west to Brandon itself. I had already walked all the peaks on the Brandon Ridge but more importantly I felt from viewing the terrain on the day, and recollecting the advice of others, that the portion of the Faha Ridge west of its peak was likely to be significantly more difficult than the traverse from Benagh. So the route I now describe ought to be understood in that context.



View west from Benagh Summit

I am assuming that you will manage to get from the Grotto Car Park (at the start of this route) to Benagh summit. If you can't do that, then you may forget about Faha Ridge for the time being!

Benagh is rather awesome. Its peak lies at the top of a long safe "staircase" and while the ascent is taxing, and must not be rushed, one cannot avoid throwing an eye behind to look at sumptuous Brandon Bay, and the extraordinary peaks of Brandon ridge ahead, and the lakes to the south and the Atlantic to the north.

Up, up, you go, over the stone defences of the approaching summit, until Benagh narrows like the prow of a great ship and you are on top. The mountain ends suddenly and the Faha ridge lies ahead. In fact the photo to the left shows you the view broadly west from Benagh Summit.

The horizontal distance between Benagh at 822m and the target peak on the ridge at 806m is approximately 500m. That half kilometre begins with a very sharp descent from Benagh through crowded rocks to a flattish area, followed by an easy enough ascent to a "middle peak" (seen clearly in the above pic) followed by a further drop and a final rise to the target Peak 800.

The first time I stood looking at this vista, some years back, the sky was dark, the wind was howling and cloud spilled and slithered across the way ahead. I turned around and went back the way I came and didn't return for years. In the meantime, I read everything I could read here and elsewhere, and watched the YouTube videos, and felt that maybe the ridge might prove to be my Inaccessible Finnan. I went back up Benagh in August 2015 on the strength of an excellent weather forecast which was happily accurate. My sober

assessment is that the traverse from Benagh to Point 800 can be executed safely and securely by experienced walkers who are happy to scramble provided the weather conditions are right.

My experience was that the descent west from Benagh at the beginning of the ridge required great care because of the steep angle, and the exposure, but the protruding rocks provided great holds. The rest of the crossing was relatively easy. There are a couple of places where the sheer drops are pretty annoying but manageable. The section from the "middle peak" to point 806m is "hairy" enough, but entirely possible in safety with good bright stable



Heading back to Benagh from Faha Ridge

conditions. It's very tempting to see if you can drop down west after achieving peak 800m but I was not prepared to risk it, particularly since I had deliberately left my backpack on Benagh and needed to get back for it. Benagh looks pretty ferocious on the return journey but in good conditions the steep ascent to its peak did not cause a problem. See the view to Benagh on the left.

I have to say that the 360 degree views from point 809 were among the best I have seen. I hope you all get there, in the right conditions, and home safe.

Whatever the length or terrain covered, please do submit suggestions for this "Featured Track" spot in future at admin-at- mountainviews.ie



The Grotto car park tends to make ridges look steeper than they really are...

Illustrated track description on Brandon's Faha Ridge

ORIGINAL TRACK: PAUL MOORE

Thanks to all

As publisher of MountainViews I'd like to thank all those in the community of users who have contributed so much to make 2015 a very successful year.

Gallery

For some walkers, taking a photo in the hills is just a record of the day. For others, the photography is as important as the walk itself. Here's a look back at a few of the best landscapes posted on MountainViews in the last 12 months.



Bannagher Hill: Lough Eske on the way up before the rain AIDY



Croagh Patrick sunrise SHAYGLYNN

Gallery



Caoinkeen SE Top from Conigar COLIN MURPHY



Misty, snowy Muckish in the Derryveaghs, Donegal. CAROLINE MCGONAGAL

Gallery



Sunset on Ketil, Klosterdalen, Tasermiut Fjord MCRTCHLY



Knocknagapple: Reeks and Dunkerrons DENISMC

Gallery



Over Loughs Salt and Greenan to Derryveagh Mountains AIDY



Torc sunrise NATTYGUEST

Gallery



Standing Stone on the southern slopes of Crockdooish AIDY



The view from Slieve Bearnagh AIDY

Gallery

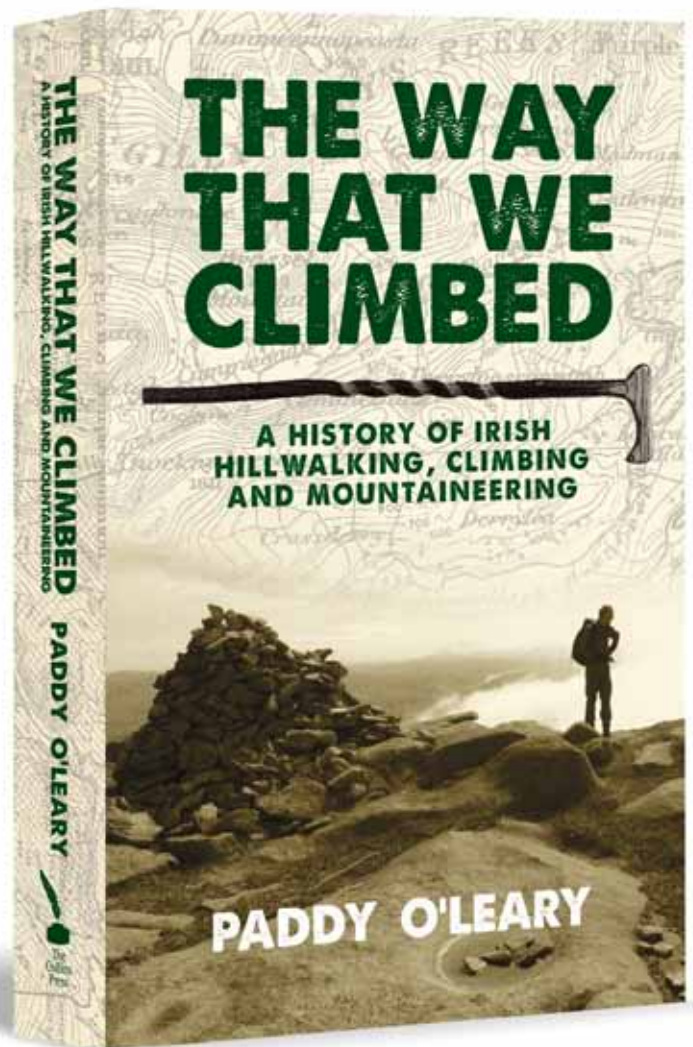


Striding Edge, Lake District HIVISIBILITY



Benbulbin's northern edge looking towards Benwiskin AIDY

Hillwalking and Mountaineering - Simon Stewart challenges some assertions from ‘The Way That We Climbed’, by Paddy O’Leary



Irish Mountain History

**Has a definitive history of hillwalking in Ireland been written?
Simon Stewart gives us his views.**

One thing that is admirable about the mountaineering tradition is its recording and maintaining of a narrative of sport development both in print and now on websites. This book by Paddy O’Leary is very much in that tradition. The author is both an insider and spokesperson for the traditional mountaineering viewpoint. His heavily researched and footnoted book contains valuable history unsystematised anywhere else. However the book verges from history into memoir in parts and is an expression of a point of view sometimes controversial. In particular it describes hillwalking as a relatively minor activity of mountaineering, when by numbers it isn’t.

The book is divided into periods ending in 2000. Periods have extensive descriptions of climbing achievements and firsts followed by sections on other aspects such as hillwalking. The book quotes sources extensively. However the sources it draws

on include far more climbing or mountaineering than hillwalking sources. There is almost nothing on hillwalking club history or organisation. Where hillwalking is mentioned it is often in the context of extreme firsts or in terms e.g. of its discordance with mountaineering ethics e.g. of numbers or conservation. The book’s very structure is an accurate reflection of how mountaineers saw hillwalking – an appendage to be mentioned later.

My reason for commenting is that it concretises the historical mountaineering narrative that has so influenced much of the modern hillwalking scene in Ireland and its organisation as a sport.

Walking led by mountaineers, what could possibly go wrong?

If you wondered how mountaineers and hillwalkers became so connected in Ireland (Republic, anyway)

Irish Mountain History

you can get an account of this from p235 to p236.

“This access to insurance and, perhaps, the availability of government funds, may have influenced walking and rambling clubs to join an organisation set up for and by mountaineers. In turn, numbers mattered in approaches to government, so the FMCI (forerunner to MCI and then MI) felt it could not be too precious in considering applications for membership”.

A pretty telling statement – hillwalkers joined for insurance, to the FMCI hillwalkers’ numbers were useful, but hillwalkers outlook was something to be tolerated. Reading these pages also reveals the priorities of mountaineering and such as the

IMC (Irish Mountaineering Club) and how “it began to make the running”. Early

priorities were alpine training visits, public lectures by foreign mountaineers, rock-climbing guides all parts of a climbing oriented vision that are relevant to the present day.

In describing the influence of mountaineering the author captures the situation. There was no push from one or more strong hillwalking clubs counterbalancing the mountaineers despite the far larger numbers of hillwalkers. Club hillwalking necessarily has organisation and narrative however this has been expressed generally within the club and less nationally, the latter a matter of regret.

My reflection on the period? The mountaineering approach was strong. It crowded out the walkers and worked against a creative vision for national services for hillwalking. For example, in my view there is a lingering disproportionate bias in MI media output in favour of climbing over walking. This has its origins in the early period. As also the lingering attempts by some to pretend that hillwalking is part of mountaineering for everyone including the total non-climbers who make up the vast majority. It also meant that hillwalkers “joining” the MCI after their clubs got insurance from there, didn’t find much else of interest and were disengaged from the national scene. Fortunately some realisation

by the present day MI of the multi-sport nature of its constituency has come in and this has found its way into some parts of MI planning.

Training

It wasn’t all bad for walkers. See p228, on training. Mountaineers involved with AFAS (Association for Adventure Sports) were embarrassed by the non-existence of a national representative body. Nationally organised training was behind that of other sports. Accidents were a worry. Something useful did come out of this for hillwalking which was a national framework for training in the Republic - BOS. (I’ll have to mention my slight involvement here. I was the Assistant Secretary for AFAS in the early 70’s and also benefitted from ML training in the mid 70’s – my final field assessment in 1975 being by, well, one Paddy O’Leary, who gave me a pass. :-)

Nothing happening

At various places there are remarks like this: p174 “... fresh hillwalking experiences of historical mountaineering significance were hard to come by ...” on p200 “.. As in the 1980s there was little done in regard to hillwalking that merit the interest of historians ...”

Climbing is largely described in terms of firsts. In the inappropriate attempt to shoehorn the description of hillwalking development into something similar, it starts to look like there were decades with nothing happening despite hillwalking being overwhelmingly the major activity



**ULSTER FEDERATION OF
RAMBLING CLUBS**

by headcount. In fact, particularly from the 1970s on, clubs and the un-clubbed hugely developed their numbers and repertoires, disciplines such as mountain running, challenge and overseas walking became more established and some of the groundwork was laid for summiteering.

My own club, the Irish Ramblers Club, one of the largest in Ireland and certainly the most active in terms of walking programme is barely mentioned in footnotes or passing two or three times (e.g p220). Most other hillwalking clubs, for instance the very successful Wayfarers Association, aren't mentioned at all yet they all contributed to sport development and have interesting histories and intriguingly different structures. And then there is no discussion of the Ulster Federation of Rambling Clubs which developed during the book's period and now has around 30 affiliated clubs, mostly hillwalking clubs, in Northern Ireland.

There is a loose group of people who do several challenge walks a year – it would have been great to see some discussion of their members, which of the early challenges they did and how they found them. Same with overseas walking & trekking, mountain running etc of the period.

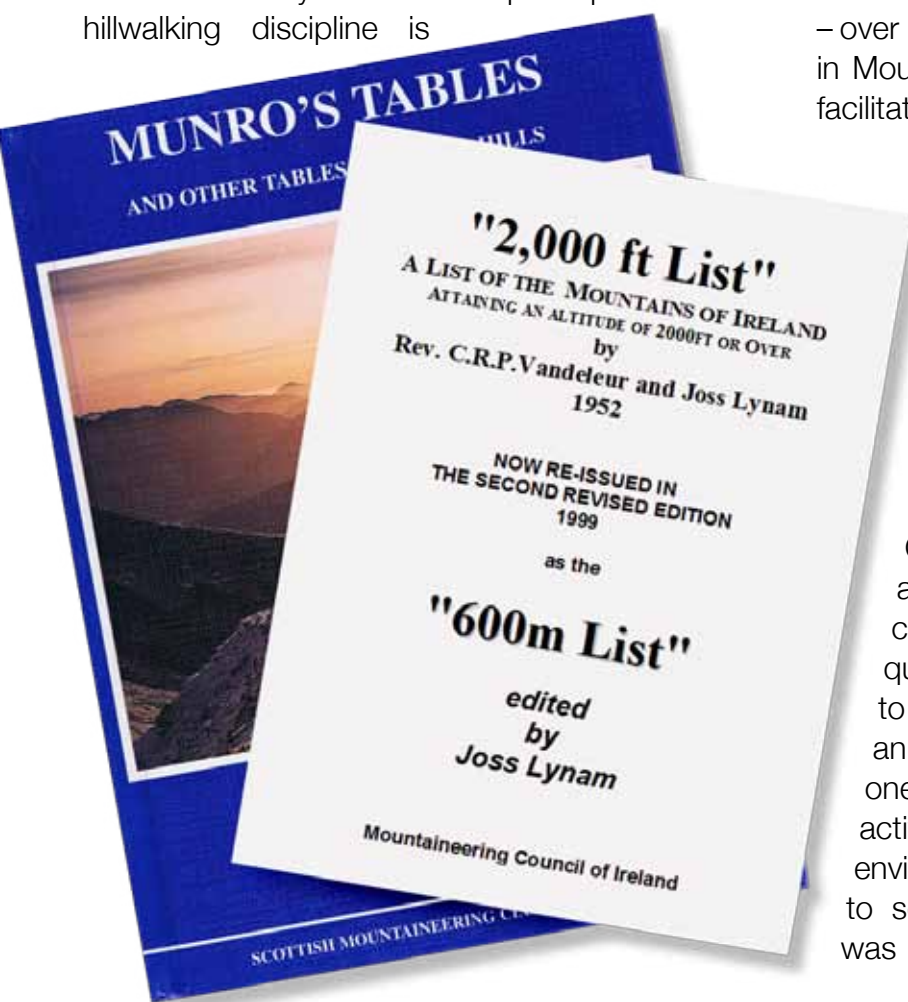
One particular interest some have is summiteering. As with the highly successful Munros or Marilyns in Britain a prerequisite for this hillwalking discipline is

lists. There was no mention of the Irish list tradition as created by Claude Wall, CRP Vandeleur and particularly Joss Lynam in 1952, 1977, 1997



Joss Lynam
SIMON STEWART

and 1999. There was scarcely a mention of any other list. Recently Myrddyn Phillips from Wales produced an account of no less than 40 lists of Irish hills produced before year 2000. (Summiteering for the less well acquainted is doing fine in Ireland – over 1800 people record what they have climbed in MountainViews.ie alone and much of this was facilitated by lists created earlier.)



Environment

As you read the text you get Dark Forebodings of where the author is going on environment and hillwalking. On p 61 we are told about the “consequences for the environment” of challenge walks. Similar on p95, p136, p198, p238 & p239. Even unpublished secret science is trundled out in the footnotes (p304, 54). Generally the position taken by the author and traditional mountaineers was that challenge walks were a Bad Thing raising questions of ethics. There were attempts to disparage or eliminate challenge walks, an antagonistic situation where adherents to one sport attempted to throttle an important activity of another sport. “Concern over the environment” became a tool sometimes used to selectively undermine challenge walks. It was a good example of how the association

of hillwalkers with mountaineers was seriously negative for hillwalking.

To me what was missing then for decades was any proper structured debate or resolution of the issue which therefore festered. In the last few years the MI sponsored “Helping the Hills” approach seems more balanced and moderate, realistically analysing the actual reasons for trail damage and what needs to be done about it. The MI Events policy permits challenge walks, though the overall MI approach is still mainly regulatory rather than developmental. Recognition of challenge walks as a discipline of hillwalking to be included in ongoing sport development however is still in the future. (One place you can see a better structure is in Britain where the Long Distance Walkers Association develops the activity nationally as an affiliate to the main walkers representative body, the Ramblers.)

More positively I can agree with the author where he says (p238) that “The direct effect recreational users had on hilly environments was sometimes exaggerated.” Really not so great compared to natural peat-hag erosion, turf cutting, agriculture, forestry, reservoirs, comms masts. So why did the author need to include the one-sided barrage on challenge walks?



Telecom infrastructure on Mullaghanish

COLIN MURPHY

Access

On p240 the author states his opinion that:
“The inhibiting effect of reliance on government

funds [for MCI] may have accounted for a certain lack of vigour in pro-active efforts to ensure access to the uplands.”

This is quite a statement from someone so knowledgeable about the MCI establishment. There were many in the hillwalking community who believed that MCI were pulling their punches. Some indeed thought MCI fell into “lack of vigour in pro-active efforts” by proclaiming there was no path between mild and extremist. Permit me also a wry smile. In 2004 (on behalf of the Ramblers club) I brought and got unanimously agreed a resolution at the MCI agm seeking to review the implementation of MCI Access Policy, given the dissatisfaction. Without re-fighting historical battles, let me just say the implementation (or non-implementation) of the resolution and its aftermath didn’t go well for anyone.

To me the developing Upland Forum movement is a more positive approach given the lack of a proper legal framework north or south. In recent years MI has proved itself independent enough to publicly admonish the slow pace of the “official” activity in CnaT (Comhairle na Tuaithe – an Irish government body develop a national strategy for leisure use of land etc) as well as taking a lead in preventing the sale of Coillte (Irish commercial company operating in forestry, land based businesses, etc).

Overall

There is some useful information for hillwalkers and a lot to be gleaned about how hillwalking got organised the way it did in the Republic. While the book is sub-titled ‘A History of Irish Hillwalking, Climbing and Mountaineering’, it is more biased towards the last two which no doubt it addresses comprehensively. However, the definitive history of hillwalking in Ireland is yet to be written.

By Simon Stewart, publisher of MountainViews.ie Opinions here are not necessarily those of any club or the committee of MountainViews

Moldoveanu

Moldoveanu (left) and Viştea Mare (right)

AMORPHISMAN (WIKIPEDIA COMMONS)

Climbing the highest summit in Romania

Niall Watts recounts a trip to one of Europe's less-frequented mountain areas: the Southern Carpathian Alps.

For most of us Romania is a largely unknown country. Yet it is ideal for hiking with its unspoilt countryside, beautiful wildflower meadows and vast mountain ranges where bears and wolves still roam. This is particularly true of the Southern Carpathian Alps in Transylvania which run from east to west across Romania, rising to 2,542 metres at Moldoveanu https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moldoveanu_Peak, the highest point in the country. So, in September 2015, twenty-two members of the Marley Hillwalkers headed for Transylvania. As we were breaking new ground, we decided to look for a guide and were fortunate in finding Iulian and George from Mountain Guides Sibiu <http://www.mountainguide-sibiu.ro/index.php/en/> to organise our walks, accommodation and all aspects of the trip. They proved to be a great choice due to their thorough organisation, excellent local knowledge and attention to the smallest detail.

On our first and hottest day we walked to the 'Sphinx', a rock formation resembling its Egyptian namesake, ascending by cable car, we hiked across dry uplands past flocks of sheep guarded by shepherds and their dogs and past signs warning us of the dangers of bears.

There are marked trails throughout the mountains and the ground was delightfully dry under foot. A typical day's walking started in farmland and followed tracks up through Alpine meadows, past springs with fresh, drinkable water, through steep valleys of mixed woods and on up to bare higher ground. The meadows were covered in wild flowers allegedly due to the absence of pesticides. Agriculture is still practiced in a traditional manner with much work being done by hand and horse. Fruit trees blossom by the side of the tracks which wander among ancient wooden houses with beautifully carved doors and eaves. Cowbells clank as you go by. In many ways the countryside reminded me of Switzerland only less busy, more friendly and unspoilt.

We stayed in several locations, both rural and urban. We did not quite know what to expect from our hotel accommodation. However, it was all very comfortable and the food was fine. When we were not hiking we had a chance to visit castles and wildlife refuges and to explore the towns of Brasov and Sibiu. They were originally founded by Saxon knights and the German influence is still evident. There are still some German

Climbing the highest summit in Romania



Moldoveanu Approach

NIAL WATTS



Podragu Hut

NIAL WATTS

and many Hungarian speakers in Transylvania.

To reach the highest points in the mountains, we drove up the Transfagarasan Highway which twists and turns through hairpin bends, crossing the Carpathians at over 2,000 metres. Near the top is the luxury Paltinu cabin, a former hunting lodge of President Ceausescu. Here, our group of 22 split in two with some exploring the area around the cabin, while the fitter members went on to climb Moldoveanu. This necessitated a long hike with three 300m ups and downs with full backpacks

before getting to the Podragu hut at 2,136 metres. We spent the night there. The hut was basic but provided cooked food and warm drinks and was our launching point for the summit. To reach Moldoveanu we followed a long ridge, traversing several mountains before making a very steep ascent to the summit. The final section of the summit ridge is narrow and exposed and in one place there are chains to guide hikers safely to the top. After summiting we returned to the hut and the next day re-joined the rest of the group. Our last day's walking in the Piatra Craiului ended in a delicious lunch at a shepherd's hut. It was a spectacular occasion in both food, drink and scenery and a fitting end to our trip.

Thanks to the good weather, beautiful scenery and excellent guides, the Marleys enjoyed their trip to Romania and we would recommend it to other Irish hill walking clubs.

Mountain Guides Sibiu:

www.mountainguide-sibiu.ro/index.php/en/

Paltinu Cabin

www.balea-turism.ro/

Podragu Hut

www.podragu.ro/podragu-hut-fagaras-mountains/

Video

More and more of us are filming our trips to the hills. Peter Walker and Simon Stewart considers the contrasting styles and different approaches of the video clips now included by MountainViews.



An Autumn Wild Camp in the Mournes

PURPLE PEAK ADVENTURES

2015 was the year that video clips went from being a relatively minor part of the monthly newsletter to a very integral part of the website.

Now when the user browses to a summit they are presented with any videos relevant to the general vicinity if they exist, permed from a database of 137 clips (at present...major updates are carried out three



Brandon in the mist

SCANNERMAN

or four times a year). Our coverage of the island (and of some fantastic destinations overseas) grows more comprehensive with each of these updates; we have now reached the stage where a comfortable majority of Ireland's major summits and significant itineraries have been rendered in what used to be celluloid and are easily viewed from MV.

The overwhelming majority of our featured clips come from MV users, and it's been very entertaining to watch their distinctive styles develop as their confidence grows and their equipment specification increases. The casual viewer of all these films would do well to remember the effort they take to film (often adding around 50% in terms of time to a walk, never mind the weight of camera gear) and edit (a process that is incredibly time-consuming if done properly).

Purple Peak Adventures (Martin Critchley and Sharron Schwartz) have introduced the Wild Ireland series recently as well as bringing out some notable videos such as those for Greenland and Iceland. Over the years they have moved from the handheld to more planned approaches. Following their Iceland video our newsletter of March 2015 noted the professionalism of



Carrauntohil ascent

PATRICK ŻERKOWSKI

having video synchronising with music, the considered compositions and the command of a wide variety of shot including night shots using timelapse photography. The later videos have upped the stakes with high 4k resolution, controlled rotation and slides. Looking at some of the Wild Ireland work the viewer is immediately struck by the arresting sight of natural wildlife as diverse as the speeded up Burren snail and the carefree munching of Wicklow deer. The painstaking attention to detail they show invariably pays dividends in terms of bringing out the quality of the landscape and the possibilities for walking in it.

Polish outdoorsman Patrick Żerkowski turns out films with incredible proficiency, often managing to put himself at the centre of the action in a manner that's very difficult to pull off (his clips very much show someone climbing a mountain, rather than being a film of mountains with people on

them if you can make the distinction). He also visits some genuinely heart-stopping locations that must be plenty exciting enough without the hassle (and possible risk) of filming them too. I doff my hat to you, sir.

The Auteur of Antrim (as I like to think of him, whether he likes it or not) gerrym has kept up his output and quality throughout the year: I'll even forgive him his habit of making the Sperrins look absolutely gorgeous on film when everyone knows they're actually a big huddle of used (but still very damp) teabags in reality. Gerry has a definite

knack of teasing out the details of a landscape, its flora and fauna, and coming up with something deeply elegiac. There are often shots of his gaiters too if you're interested in that sort of thing.



Gerrym in the Sperrins

GERRY MCVEIGH

We've featured numerous other clips from source both within and without MV: of the former my favourite was a very funny little clip condensing the ascent of the legendarily remote summit of Slieve Carr into 49 seconds from member peter1 (see August newsletter), and from the latter I would highlight some amazing pole/headcam footage of the Kerringear knife-edge on Slieve League that would put the fear of God into you...also from August. It's my birthday in August too, so it's a fine month all round.

So, what can we expect from next year? Well, even I've noticed that major electrical retailers are now selling drone cameras in the high street...



The real 'one man's pass' - Slieve League

IVAN MILLAR



The Long-Distance report

Challenge Walks

3.30am starts? Jim Holmes explains why challenge walkers are just that little bit different...

One category that we are proud to support here at MountainViews is the pursuit of Challenge Walks.

I suppose the best way to appreciate Challenge Walking is as a different (and unique) entity within the great fraternity of Hillwalking. In the same way that there is a world of difference between a ten foot mad Jamaican who lives on nothing more than chicken nuggets and breaks the land-speed record over 100 metres . . . and say a 5 foot nothing, forever smiling Kenyan who has actually never stopped running (not even to sleep) since his eighth birthday - who simply glides along every stride of his (new personal best) 26 mile-odd marathon... Challenge Walks slot into their very own niche and as such attract a slightly different disposition of Hillwalker!!!

Challenge Walkers need to be early risers with a 3.30 wake up call not being unheard of! Being a chatterbox is always a great help! Especially when coupled with a good Buddy, who over the course of up to twelve hours, can listen to (and appreciate) all your earthly moans and whines!

Doubling-up

Challenge Walkers have also to be oblivious to the weather. There is never to be an exit plan! If the day turns "woejuss" we don't drop out like many a fell runner - truth be told we never really grew out of the great youthful pursuit of splashing in mucky puddles! We

need to be resourceful too. We pack two of everything and we even include such items as bivvy bags, spare batteries, Kendall cake and grade Dyneema rope!

Maybe all of the above goes some way to explain as to why last years Irish Challenge Walking was certainly one of the most successful. But every bit as important. . . it was certainly one of the most memorable!

First of the year

There are 15 or so true Challenge Walks within the year's calendar and one of the first tends to be the Knockmealdowns Challenge. Coming when there is still the echoes of "Christmas extra buoyancy" - this will always be a fresh, fine day. 2015 saw Peaks Mountaineering Club host the Knockmealdowns on one of its most splendid days.

"...With all of the different grades of walks now meeting and intertwining a magnificent sun blazed down through the bluest of skies on all below who were resting atop Sugarloaf Hill admiring glorious views all round..." (from Report 2015).

Maamturks

The mighty Maamturks follow, usually in April and this year would see its 40 year anniversary! Testament to the progression of Challenge Walking it was incredible to hear old stories recanted in the mythical days before GPS and Gortex!

"...The day itself had a biting wind with an almost sub-zero wind chill . . . But the trade-off . . . some of the clearest, driest, sunniest weather that has ever graced the Turks. Definitely a blessing to celebrate such a proud marking. But after years of impressing my own "tuppence-worth" on previous Turks - no one needs any more of my rants and ravings 'bout arduous assents or cold flasks of coffee..." (from Report 2015).

Blackstairs chill

May always sees the "Blackstairs", the first of the offerings by the "big" Dublin clubs. The Wayfarers expertly lay on a wonderful day that is always noted for the kindness of strangers! This year saw an incredible 260 souls all ready and eager.

"...The day stayed clear with perfect views but it stayed windy and bitter cold. "The Pain Joe, the Pain..." was the utterance of choice on the almighty push up to Blackstair Mountain in a bitter cold wind chill worthy of North Alaskan Deadliest Catch. But atop Blackstair, straddling the County Border, it was all too evident that this day, that has stayed free from rain, was to be a great given blessing..." (from Report 2015).

The Lug

Occurring every second year - The Lug Walk certainly earns itself an important role as one of the tougher Challenge Walks in Ireland. The historic Dublin-based walking club, The Irish Ramblers, proudly host a day that can all too easily encompass everything within the Hillwalking spectrum.

"...This year's Lug Walk started in savage weather for the first stage. Biting wind and the real "wet" rain battered all up to Sally Gap. Thereafter a nice dry day would ensue till Wicklow Gap. And the last stage was a mix of overcast conditions, a little rain and yet some lovely sunshine. It should be mentioned that visibility was at times incredible... Wales was clear as crystal across the pond, as was Mount Leinster and indeed the Knockmealdown Mountains from the mighty Log na Coille itself..." (from Report 2015).

Donegal challenge

2015 saw a most welcome return of The Glover Highlander. Taking place in the beautiful county of Donegal - the walk consists of climbing the two greats of Muckish and Errigal (and everything in between). However, 2015 proved to be one of the toughest days Hillwalking in the Challenge Walks Calendar... ever!

"...Here there would be coded checkpoints with numbers to write on routecards that were quickly resembling Papier-mâché... To best these summits would take the efforts of true heroes! Grown men of



fourteen stone with bag and baggage were being thrown around like rag dolls. Whilst the battering rain was more akin to a battering ram - it was the full-on battering of the wind that quickly drained all . . . of their energies and of their reserves..." (from Report 2015).

And several others...

There's many others we didn't have time to describe in detail. From newish ones such as the "Tom Crean Endurance Walk", "Joyce Country Challenge" to old reliables like the "Mourne Seven Sevens" and the "Ring of Imaal Marathon Walk". You can choose from nineteen listed at mountainviews.ie/challengecalendar/ all maintained by Jim Holmes.

The year ahead

So onwards and upwards. It is with great anticipation that the eager Challenge Walker, who as we said earlier is of a different Hillwalking disposition... looks forward to 2016's Calendar...

Will the route be boggy or bouncy...

Will the weather give us a "Donegal Downpour" or "Sunshine and Buttercups"...

So yes indeed, 2016 should be every bit as intriguing! And yeah, yeah, yeah... if you were counting distances earlier (re the marathon runners) and were worried 'bout being short-changed... fret not... Challenge Walkers never forget the "odd bit" after their own marathon efforts...

The 385 yards in (old money) is very often the hardest part of the day... the arduous walk back to wherever the car was parked that morning :)

Support a local Challenge Walk near you.

Tracks

Uploading your tracks to MountainViews just got more interesting. Peter Walker explains.

Rate and classify Track 3098

Description  ★ ★★ ★★★ ★★★★ ★★★★★

Please only rate the features below if you know the area.

Status  Experimental Established Definitive Classic

Challenge  Multi-access Easy Moderate Strenuous Very Difficult

Wilderness, Uniqueness  Poor Average Excellent

Location  Poor Average Excellent

Environment  Inapplicable Low walker damage Some Bad

Children?  Not child friendly Older children Possible for younger children

Cyclable?  Not cyclable Road easy Road hard Off road easy Off road hard

[Enter Rating](#)

The MV track facility has reached a striking level of maturity in both functional and utilisation terms during the last year.

A plethora of new functionality has gone online: recently added is a comprehensive classification and rating facility for all uploaded tracks, as well as the ability to record your completion (either entirely or approximately) of tracks submitted by others. The most dramatic functional augmentation allows for the inclusion of pictures and swanky text formatting within uploaded tracks; what could previously just look like a map with a line on it and some text if you felt like it can now be rendered deeply slickly blog-entry-style and with infinitely more visual appeal.

With over 350 new tracks uploaded (bringing the total beyond 1500) it would be fair to say that certain areas of our island are pushing saturation point in terms of coverage (indeed there must be times when it's difficult to find elbow room in the Crone Wood or Glendalough car parks with so many MVer's firing up their Garmins and sallying forth), and with that in mind a further refinement introduced during the year allows site moderators to hide tracks that duplicate those already uploaded from the user base at large (although their authors can still see them, handy for those just looking

for a way of cataloging where they've been).

Finding genuinely new ground to record is going to be tough (never mind Ireland, we have tracks from every continent save for Antarctica...come on Martin and Sharron, pull your fingers out), at least as far as major hills are concerned. So to be truly original with your .gpx files you need to visit some of the lesser hills (many of which still have no tracks recorded), go ridiculously long in terms of distance and ascent, or start viewing Ireland as the screen of a giant Etch-A-Sketch... interested parties could check out what is still the ultimate example of this genre, CaptainVertigo's visit to Tara (mvtrack2927).

Suitably inspired you could then slog up to the Maumtrasna plateau

in thick mist, create and upload a track that spells out HELP ME! on the ground and then see how long it takes for someone to come and rescue you.



With the improved MVs Track features, it's easier to tell other walkers how to get lost.

The Big Quiz

Think you know Ireland's mountains? Try this quiz and you could bag yourself a copy of MountainViews "A Guide to Ireland's Mountain Summits"



Question 2: Which is the odd mountain out?

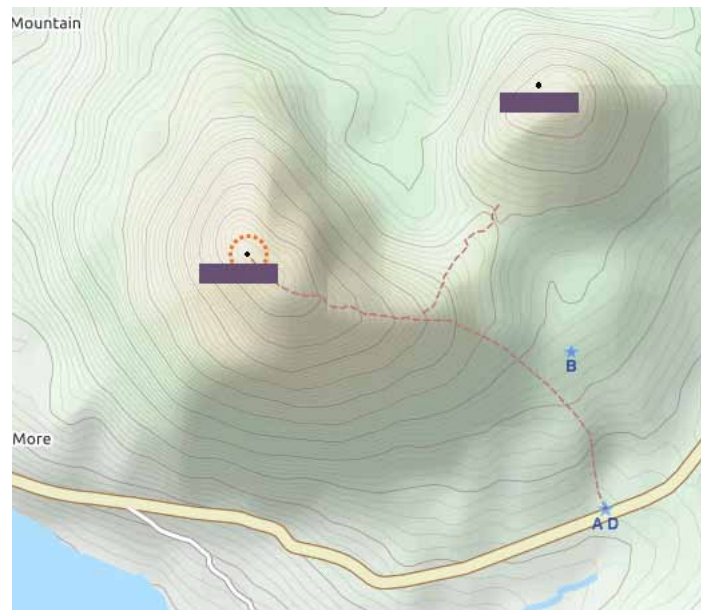
- Beenmore
- Coomnacronia
- Keamconneragh
- Beenreagh
- Macklaun

Question 3: Name the craggy-sided summit in the picture below.



Question 4: What summit in Ireland has a grid reference of *O16895 11338* ?

Question 5: Identify the two mountains in the map below.



Question 6: Name the river that flows under Sheeffry Bridge in the Sheeffry Hills, Co. Mayo?

Question 7: Can you identify the summit in the picture below?



Question 8: The transmitter mast on Kippure is the oldest in the Republic of Ireland. In what year was the mast erected?

The Big Quiz

Question 9: The view from the summit of a Connemara hill. But which one?



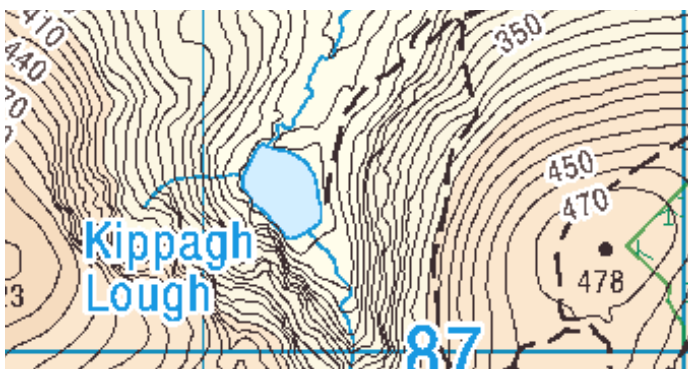
Question 10: The highest public road in Northern Ireland goes almost to the summit of which mountain?

Question 11: This distinctive cairn is set on a ridge on the approach to which midland hill?



Question 12: The col between Maumturkmore and Leenaun Hill in the Maamturks is more popularly (or infamously) known as...?

Question 13: Name the hill to the east of Kippagh Lough in the map below.



Question 14: On which Irish summit would you most likely to encounter a Wallaby?

Question 15: Nab Pony Trot (anagram) for this Ulster top.

Question 16: One of Ireland's highest mountains has the alternative names of Lackagarrin and Foilnabreachaun. What is its more usual name?



Question 17: This unusual trig pillar denotes the summit of which Leinster hill?

Question 18: Name Ireland's highest lough?

Question 19: In which mountain range would you find Bay Lough? (Clue: It's in Munster)

Question 20: Three of our twenty seven county highpoints are not actual mountain summits. Name the three counties.

To enter, email your answers (title your email as 'Quiz') to secretary@mountainviews.ie Please send entries by 15th February. First correct answers drawn wins the copy of "A Guide to Ireland's Mountain Summits"



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GUEST SPEAKERS:

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FOR MORE MORE DETAILS, SEE THE 'COME TOGETHER' ARTICLE ON PAGE II