

**MOUNTAIN  
VIEWS**

# THE SUMMIT

IRISH HILLWALKERS' QUARTERLY, MAY 2021

[NEWS](#) - [INFORMATION](#) - [RECENT CONTRIBUTIONS](#) - [FEATURES](#) - [FORUMS](#)

## WELCOME TO OUR MAY QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

**Emergence** Absence has made our hearts grow fonder for the hills. Get out with the spring and summer enjoy and MV will share your thoughts and emotions.



**This quarterly** has a different route in the Twelve Bens, an account of Monte Perdido in the Spanish Pyrenees, Paul Tempan savours Wild Garlic and we consider the opportunity provided by an NI government consultation exercise as well as the usual photos, comments and videos.

**Commemoration** Mountaineering Ireland has turned 50. It has become a strong well organised body. For hillwalkers recent years have seen much better support. This wasn't always the case. In the late 90s it offered little more in services for hillwalkers beyond insurance and training. Personally I remember sitting through an agm with reports from the then three climbing committees, wondering if there would ever be proper representation for hillwalkers who then as now were already the vast majority of members but lacked support and a committee. Things started to improve from the 2010s in my view. Latterly MountainViews has found it possible to collaborate on initiatives such as the Arderins and on mountain information. MI's hillwalking committee described what it has been doing in our most recent Annual and it's becoming a useful list. Let's look forward to the future with confidence and while we should learn from the past we do not need to dwell there. Embrace opportunities.

*Simon*

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Gauguin from Glascarns Hill 📷 madfrankie



PLACE  
COMMENT  
OF THE  
MONTH

## AN ALL-ENCOMPASSING DAY

### HORSE ISLAND (36M), WEST CORK

**Conorb's** excellent summit comment of April 8, entitled "Horse Island - Oilean Molua" embraces so much: history, scenery, kayaking, islanding, summitting, ridge-walking - even swimming is an option! Just reading that

list is so exhausting, but don't just read it, go there if you can, to Oilean Molua - an island that has everything. What more could one ask for in a day out?


Also known locally as Oileán Molua, Horse Island is an easy paddle out from Tráigh Carta. Alternatively, at low tide one could walk out to Trá na Marbh from Tráigh Carta and swim across the narrow channel with a dry bag/float and change on the main beach on the island. From the main beach which faces the mainland, there is a track up to the ruins of the old village and graveyard. Local residents used to be buried on the island due to its association with St Lua, an early Christian saint, and coffins would depart from Trá na Marbh (beach of the dead). Places of interest on the island include the ruins of a tower built by Tom Somerville as a marker for his ships coming from the America's in the 1770's. Once they sighted the tower, they knew the safety of Castlehaven Harbour was just inside it. The highest point on the island is a little hill on the middle of the island at about 36m. If one walks all the way to the SW corner there is a hair

raising ridge that one can walk out on a calm day that offers amazing views of the surrounding coastline. Can be easily be combined with Flea Island if you want to bag two islands on the one trip. The much smaller Flea Island can be reached on foot from Tráigh Carta at low tide by walking out across the rocky ridge known as the Cois.

Original comment:

[mountainviews.ie/summit/2543/comment/22828/](https://mountainviews.ie/summit/2543/comment/22828/)



Satellite view of Horse Island  Google

## WEST

 markmjcampion



### Walking on water

Bagging Inishlay Island off Galway first requires a 1km sea trip, which rewards with splendid views of the Maamturks enjoyed to the sound of

oystercatchers, writes **markmjcampion**.

Link: [mountainviews.ie/summit/2230/comment/22857/](https://mountainviews.ie/summit/2230/comment/22857/)

## WEST

 markmjcampion



### Abandoned island

Inchamakinna Island off Galway was once home to over forty people, the abandoned skeletons of their homes now the only reminder of their existence, writes

**markmjcampion**.

Link: [mountainviews.ie/summit/2232/comment/22855/](https://mountainviews.ie/summit/2232/comment/22855/)

## WEST



 wicklore


### As tough as an old boot

Having forgotten his boots, **wicklore** takes on the tough challenge of ascending Bireencorragh in a pair of trainers! [Ed: note, this is a historical comment, but just as funny now as when it first appeared.]

Link: [mountainviews.ie/summit/112/comment/20651/](https://mountainviews.ie/summit/112/comment/20651/)

## SOUTH



 dbloke

### Fine views from conical peak

An updated short summary on Colly in Kerry's Glenbeigh area by **markmjcampion** provides multiple approaches to this fine

mountain which offers exceptional views in all directions.

Link: [mountainviews.ie/summit/140/comment/4900/](https://mountainviews.ie/summit/140/comment/4900/)

## EAST




### By popular demand

Its closeness to the capital and accessibility make Djouce a busy spot during normal times, something that's evident in the very visible erosion, says **markmjcampion**

while regularising Short Summaries a project he is assisting with.

Link: [mountainviews.ie/summit/91/comment/4851/](https://mountainviews.ie/summit/91/comment/4851/)

## NORTH

 GerryCasey



### Easily coped with

A large plateau forms the summit of the relatively easy Copes Mt in the Darrys, which affords great panoramas of Benbulbin, Truskmore and a host of other hills, reports **GerryCasey**.

Link: [mountainviews.ie/summit/612/comment/22805/](https://mountainviews.ie/summit/612/comment/22805/)

## NORTH



### Rock top

An updated short summary on Slieve Bearnagh in the Mourne, surely one of the island's most dramatic peaks with its distinctive huge rocky tors, writes wicklore and **markmjcampion**.

Link: [mountainviews.ie/summit/83/comment/4843/](https://mountainviews.ie/summit/83/comment/4843/)

## NORTH



### Where there's muck, there's brass

Despite some very steep and energy-sapping terrain, member **slemish** enjoyed a very rewarding ascent of Muckish, which presented spectacular views of NW Donegal.

Link: [mountainviews.ie/summit/163/comment/6111/](https://mountainviews.ie/summit/163/comment/6111/)

## BRITAIN

📷 fergalh



### Michael McIntyre Unwelcome Here

Although possibly not quite as sniggersome as Bodmin Moor's Brown Willy, Dartmoor's Laughter Tor is still comedically

monikered and deemed worthy of a visit by **fergalh**.

Link: [mountainviews.ie/summit/B17501/comment/22803/](https://mountainviews.ie/summit/B17501/comment/22803/)

## BRITAIN

📷 fergalh



### Stone Temple Pilot

The Rhinogs are probably the most brutally rough mountains in Britain outwith the Scottish Highlands, and their vast expanses of outcropping rock were survived by **fergalh**.

Link: [mountainviews.ie/summit/B2062/comment/22765/](https://mountainviews.ie/summit/B2062/comment/22765/)

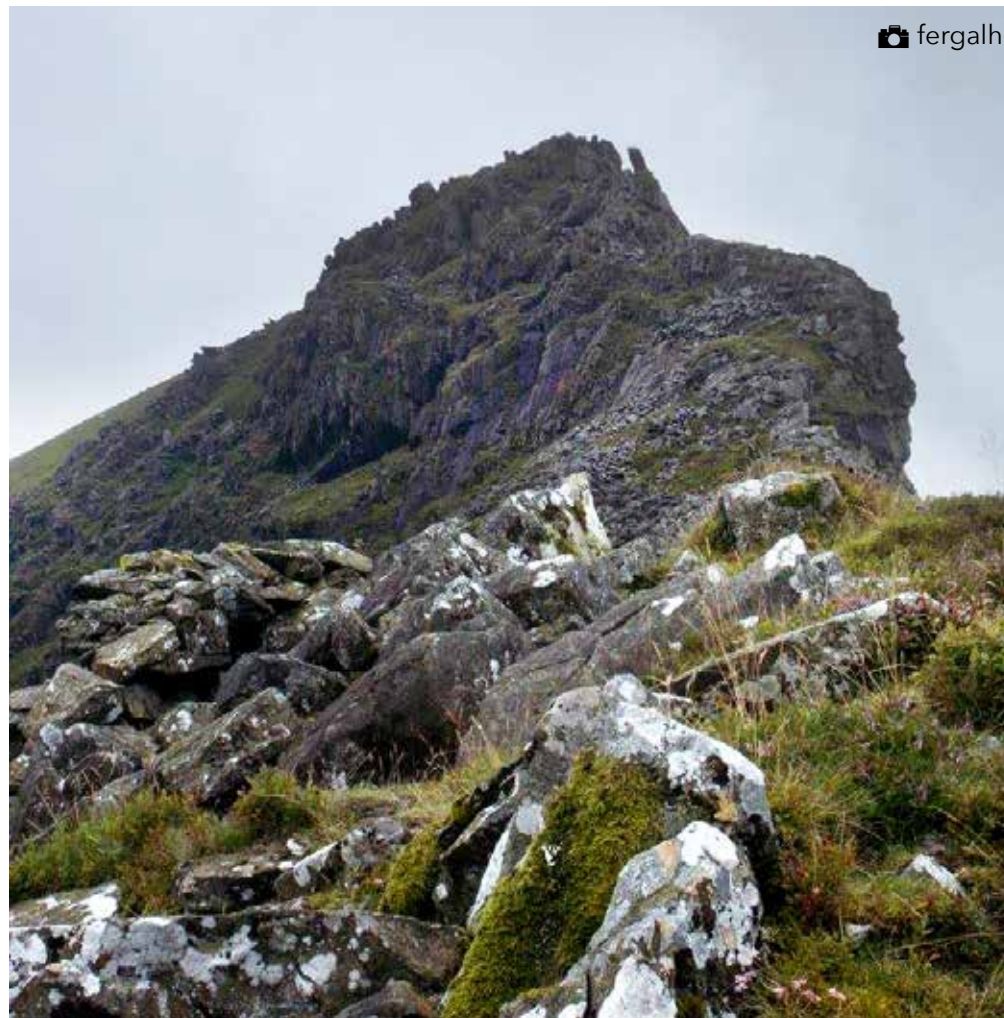
## BRITAIN

### A long way down

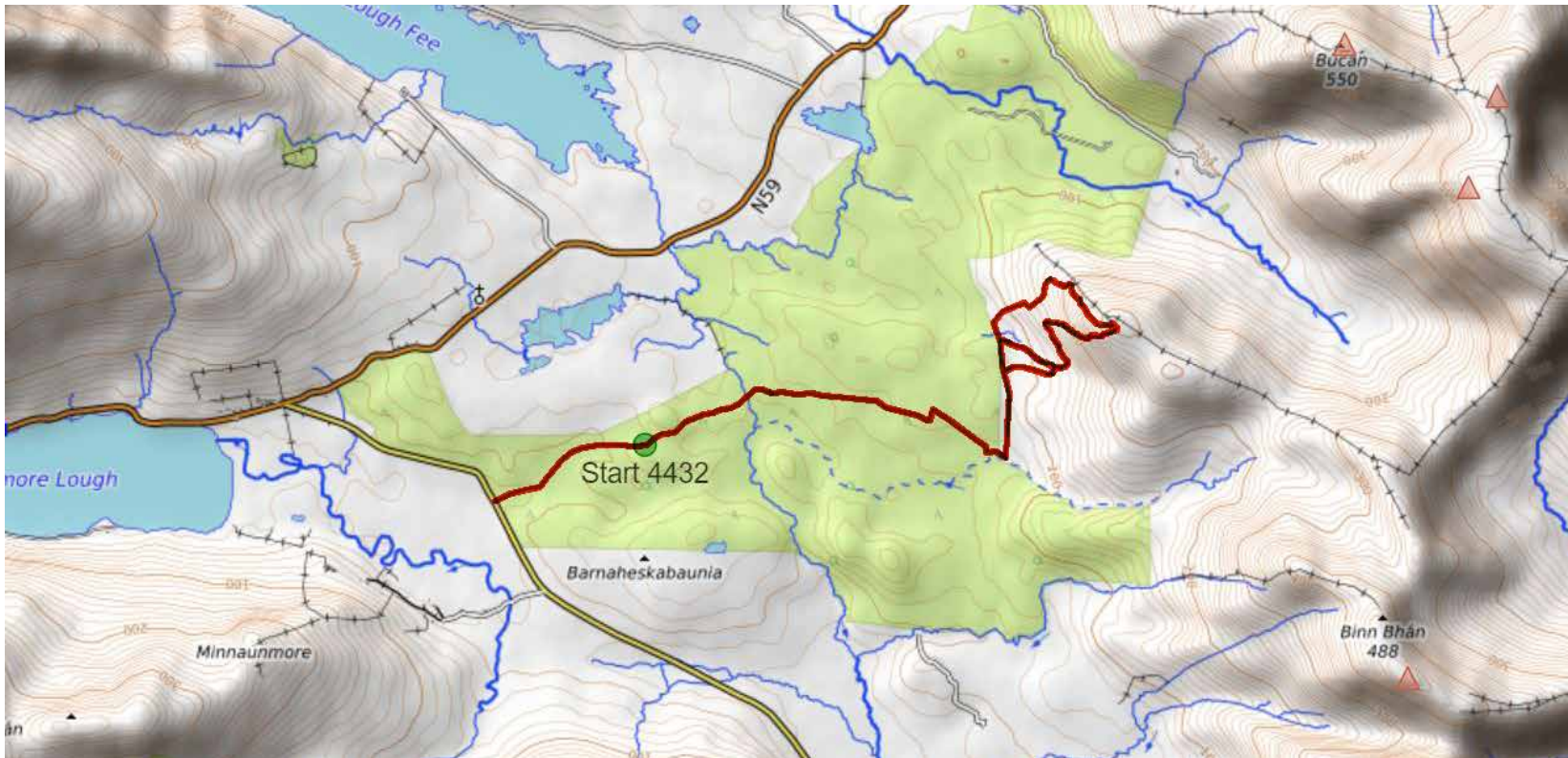
The most spectacular section of Snowdonia's excellent Nantlle Ridge scrambles over the exposed summit of Mynydd Drws-y-coed, writes **fergalh**.

Link: [mountainviews.ie/summit/B2008/comment/22691/](https://mountainviews.ie/summit/B2008/comment/22691/)

📷 fergalh



## TRACK OF THE MONTH - NAMING RIGHTS



### LETTERSCHANBALLY LOOP TO LETTERSCHANBALLY HILL

This month's selection comes courtesy of **markwallace** who has been exploring the lower hills fringing the Maamturks. Basing his walk around the relatively recent Lettershanbally Loop that waymarked path is used as a launchpad for an ascent of what he has christened Lettershanbally Hill. Much of both human and geographical interest is passed, and the views of the many surrounding mountains are excellent.



Lettershanbally Loop boardwalk



View from summit of Lettershanbally Hill

**LENGTH:** 11.2km  
**TIME TAKEN:** 2h 28m  
**ASCENT:** 349m  
**DESCENT:** 370m  
**PLACES:** Start at L80881 58382, end at L79954 58061, 980m W from Start  
 Link: [mountainviews.ie/track/4432/](https://mountainviews.ie/track/4432/)

## TRACKS



### NORTH:

#### I'll be damned

Northern Ireland's slightly more liberal (at least in terms of policing) lockdown measures have allowed **your track reviewer** to take some cautious trips to the Mourne. The circuit of Spelga Dam is a varied and not incredibly busy (compared with what has befallen some places in the last year) outing that swings from trackless bog to a bit of tarmac via all points in between, with some gloriously open prospects on a clear day.

Link: [mountainviews.ie/track/4435/](https://mountainviews.ie/track/4435/)

### NORTH:

#### The West(ern) End

The Arderin summit of Crocknafarragh and its satellites form a bit of an adjunct to the Sliah Sneachta group in Donegal's Derryveagh Mountains: hills that seem logical to combine on the map but rarely done on the ground. **melohara** has submitted a track that shows where to go; a nice walk with the possibility (with transport and a willingness to cross some rough and indeterminate ground) of linking into the aforementioned Sliah Sneachta.

Link: [mountainviews.ie/track/4431/](https://mountainviews.ie/track/4431/)





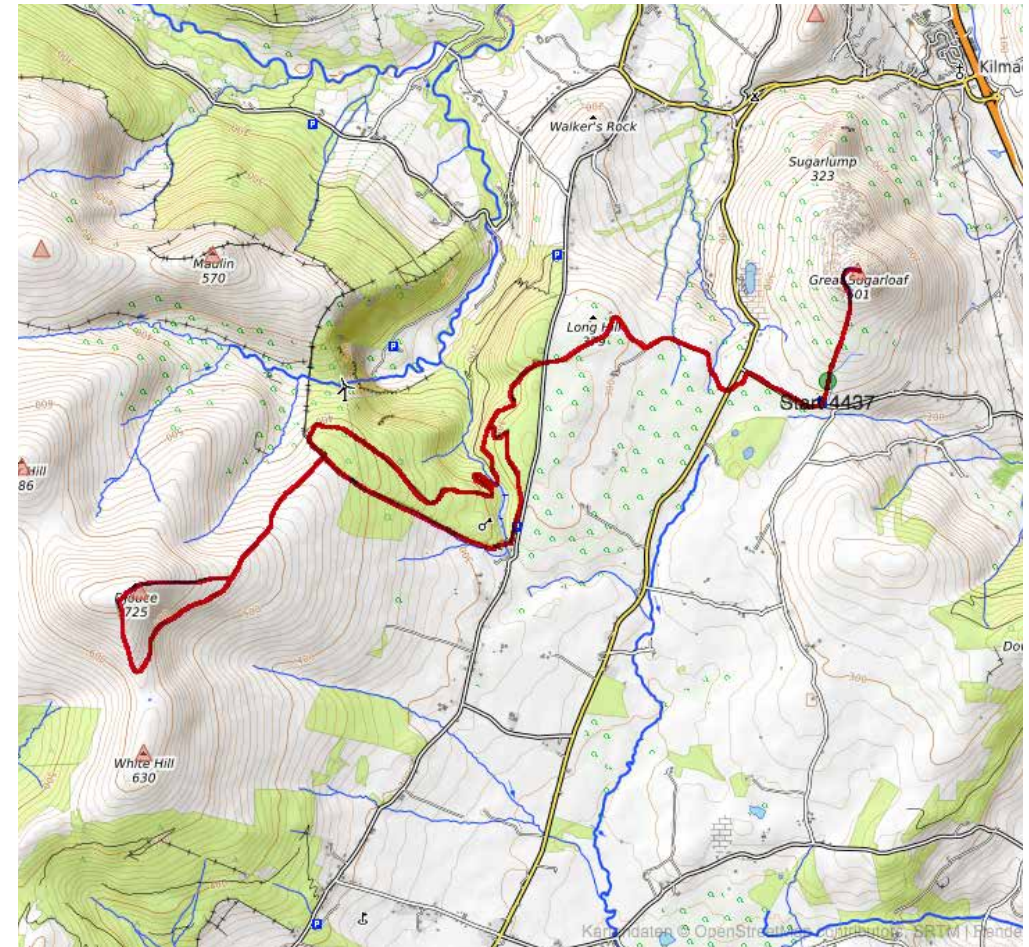
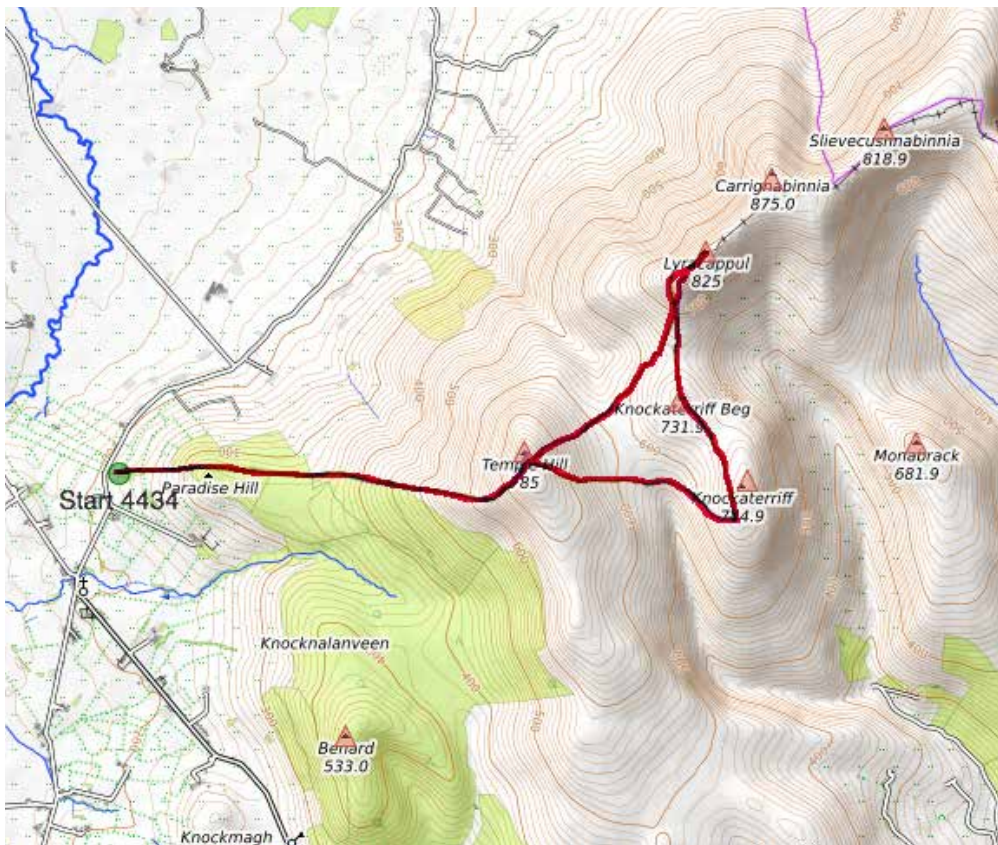
## TRACKS

### SOUTH:

#### Worshipping bacon

**cianshay** has uploaded a sharp little half day in the western part of the Galtees, climbing over Temple Hill in order to gain Lyracappul and the Knockaterriff summits before climbing back over it on the way back...a good workout for the thighs, I'd suggest. For those with more time it would be very straightforward to extend this walk as far as Slievecushnabinnia, or perhaps even to Galtymore itself.

Link: [mountainviews.ie/track/4434/](https://mountainviews.ie/track/4434/)



### EAST:

#### Using your loaf

An interesting integrale in the Dublin mountains from **tbaines**, linking the very popular summits of Great Sugar Loaf and Djouce. An early morning run for him, but would work very well as a lazy day with far less road involved than you might think, along with woodland and open mountainside, and mostly on marked or obvious paths.

Link: [mountainviews.ie/track/4437/](https://mountainviews.ie/track/4437/)

# CONNEMARA MOUNTAIN HIKE

BINN GHLEANN UISCE (BENGLENISKY)  
AND BINN GABHAR (BENGOWER)

By Brian Deering

Benglenisky is a famous walk start and southerly access point for the Twelve Bens near the Glencoaghan Loop. Most people access it from the west from start point Barr na nÓran Road, straight up. And that's fine and doable but this is an interesting different route ascending to the col between Benglenisky and Bengower, visiting both and then descending to the north. Another option for us to consider.

Our starting point was just off the N59 Clifden to Recess road, taking the Barr na nÓran road on the left before the turn to Ballynahinch. There is limited parking along this road (750 489). A local farmer suggested we take the route up and back through the forest below Tievebreen via the marble quarry, as the circular route we wanted to take through Gleann Uisce was very wet; but we per-

# EXPLORE



sisted with our plan. The farmer kindly pointed out the gate we should cross, the first on the right past the houses. We headed due east following occasional sheep trails until we met the stream (Du Ghlais) coming down from the broad gap between Binn Ghleann Uisce and Binn Leitri. The going was heavy through tussocks of moor grass and boggy ground - Gleann Uisce is well named - until we reached the stream (761 491).

Keeping the stream to our right, we followed it uphill until it disappeared just below the top of the gap. This route took the midline between Binn Ghleann Uisce on our left and Binn Leitri on the right, eventually taking us to the top of the gap (468 m). From here the summits of Binn Gabhar and Binn Bhraoin were on the right with the gentler climb on our left up to Binn Ghleann Uisce. The panorama to the north included Binn Bhan (partly hidden), Binn Fhraoigh, Meacanacht and Binn na Cailli.

As we headed uphill away from the gap the terrain was largely dry underfoot and firm. After a short scramble up the unusual rock formations of what proved to be a false summit, we attained the rocky plateau that led to the actual summit of Binn Ghleann Uisce (516 m). From here we had extensive views across Roundstone Bog to the south west and Binn Bhraoin (Benbreen) and the more distant Binn Bhan to the north east. Making our way back to the gap clearly showed the route up to the summit of Binn Gabhar with a steep but firm ascent to the col between that peak and Binn Leitri.

Once on the ridge the going was straightforward with wonderful vistas south-west towards Binn Ghleann Uisce on the right and Binn Leitri on the extreme left and looking east across Gleann Chochan (Glencoaghan) to Binn Doire Chlair (Derryclare) and Binn Chorr (Bencorr). The day was brightening up with beautiful autumn sunshine as we reached the rock-strewn summit of Binn Gabhar (664 m). We lingered here for some time, enjoying the extensive views in every direction, realising how blessed we were to be here on such a glorious day. We contemplated the route down the steep north face of Binn Gabhar towards Binn Bhraoin (Benbreen), but that was for another day. Now



Benllettery and the Roundstone coast 📷 Brian Deering



we had this elevated world to ourselves as we did not meet another soul for the entire hike.

Drawing ourselves away from such a tranquil setting, we reluctantly and slowly descended the ridge to the col, which once attained allowed the opportunity for a final drinking in of the magnificence of the location. Descending further, as we again approached the gap, the cloud cover increased, and a shaft of sunlight illuminated Binn Gabhar above us. Our route off the gap involved initially cutting across steep slopes of grass and heather in a north-easterly direction until reaching the boggy terrain on Barr na nOran as the evening shadows lengthened, eventually heading north-west to the corner of the forest, then directly west to the marble quarry. Shortly after that we reached the metalled road that took us back to our starting point. ■

Map: Connemara Mountains, EastWest Mapping, 1:25,000

Distance: 14 km.

Walking Time: 5.5 hours.

Elevation Gain: 821 m.

Full track at [mountainviews.ie/track/4436/](https://mountainviews.ie/track/4436/)

Bencullagh, Muckanaght, Benfree, Benbreen and Bengower 📷 Brian Deering



# MONTE PERDIDO – SPANISH SIDE OF THE PYRENEES

By Fergal Hingerty

**WHEN WE CAN GET OUT OF LOCKDOWN AND START VISITING PLACES ABROAD, HERE'S ONE TO CONSIDER.**

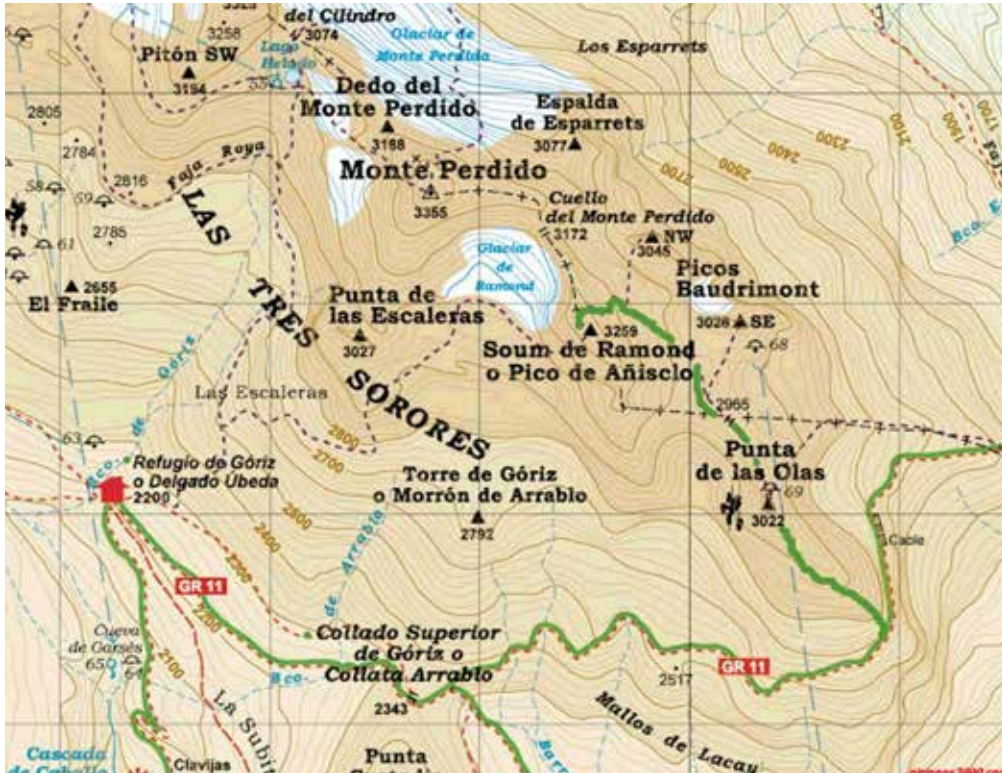
**W**e awoke at the dawning of the day in Refugio Goriz in the Pyrenees and went down to dining room to eat a light breakfast, eagerly awaiting the day's climb. We collected our packed lunch of Cheese sweets, juice and meat sandwiches and then we went and collected our Crampons and Ice axes which we had arranged the night before. We were now kitted out and ready to go.

The previous day myself and Dave (Onzy) Owens had set out from the village of Torla where we were staying and parked the car in the Ordesa National Park. The walk was along a gently sloping valley passing numerous waterfalls along the way with the towering cliffs on either side. At the end of the valley at a spectacular waterfall called Cascada Cola de Caballo we turned off the normal track that led to its base. From here we climbed the cliffs via the fixed chains at Cirque de Soasa.

At the top of the cliffs an easy climb followed by a long track led to the Refugio Goriz which was set on a small plateau before the higher mountains.



# EXPLORE



This hostel was basic with Cold water showers although it did wonderful meals in the evenings. The Refugio Goriz was at the intersection for people doing the GR11 long distance route and for climbers heading for the higher peaks.

We walked out the front door and looked at the swirling mist to the south. From here the peak could not be seen already we are at the height of 2,195 meters and there was still 1,160 metres to go to the summit of 3,355 metres. Monte Perdido is the third highest mountain in the Pyrenees and is normally a relatively benign climb in the summer but this year (2016) the snow fell late and was still on the ground in June over 2,200 metres.

What would the weather be like? a mixed forecast meant anything could happen weather wise. Dave turned to me and asked are you right...? Yes, I said and we were off.

We headed up first to Las Escaleras cliffs and soon had to put on the

crampons, as the snow was thick on the ground. After climbing along the edge of the cliffs we came to a small clearing, to the left was the ice lake called Lago Hegaldo . On the right was the steep white snow of the la Escupidera, here and there was scattered brown streaks from the wind-blown sands of the Sahara.

Some climbers who had started before us had left obvious tracks in the snow on the right-hand side and we followed it up to the first ridge. During the steep climb we were alternatively rained on, snowed on and blasted by the sun glaring off the snow. Extreme care was needed as there was deaths on this section when people slid during the snow in winter, the snow was wet and slippery but on the ascent it was straightforward.



Halfway up 📷 Fergal Hingerty

Three or four ridges of a very steep climb followed over the next few hours until we eventually we came to a small plateau around 100 metres from the summit. A short rest and a sip of hot tea was prudent as the sun suddenly burst through and unlike the others before us, we were able to get



The summit 📷 Fergal Hingerty

a clear view at the summit.

A short climb followed and the summit was finally attained of 3,155 metres and the views in all directions was fantastic. Now it was time to descend, ice axe in one hand and stick in the other a slow and careful descent started.

Around halfway down the first slope my feet went from under me and I started to slide and pick up speed. Fortunately I had done a winter skills course, so training kicked in... DROP POLE... drop pole... OVER ON FRONT... over on front... FEET IN AIR... feet in air... BANG AXE... bang axe... damn... BANG AXE again... Bang... stop...

I went back up to collect my pole which I dropped and proceeded down a little more cautiously.....I noticed on the left the track of someone who had a similar slide and stopped only thirty metres from the cliff edge. One thing for sure no way should this be considered without an Ice Axe and the knowledge and training of how to use them.

A long slow descent followed and eventually we arrived at the Refugio de Goriz and a celebration cup of tea in the gentle sun on the benches

followed watching the Marmots and ibexes in the near distance. The views of the peaks from here was truly wonderful.

Torla is the nearby village close to the Ordesa national park with plenty of accommodation and is easily accessible from Barcelona. There are numerous fantastic walks for all grades in this wonderful national park and is well worth a visit.

Refugio Goriz must be booked in advance as there is only 72 places and is full most of the year. Monte Perdido itself is relatively safe enough in the summer when the snow has melted but as I found can be hazardous in snowy conditions.

In the event of snow do not attempt to climb without the knowledge of ice axes and crampons and how to use them. It should also be noted that no one is allowed near the mountains in the snow, unless the people in the Refugio Goriz accept that you have the right equipment and the knowledge of how to use that equipment. ■

Refugio De Goriz : [www.goriz.es/](http://www.goriz.es/)

Ordesa National Park: [national-parks.org/spain/ordesa-y-monte-perdido](http://national-parks.org/spain/ordesa-y-monte-perdido)



Valley at Fajetas 📷 Fergal Hingerty

# CÉIM NA CONAIRE – A STEP ALONG THE WAY

Paul Tempan

Many of us have found we necessarily are taking shorter sometimes lowland walks during the Covid lockdowns. Here's an article that might help you find some interest along the way. Wild garlic anyone?

## March - the blackthorn

I must confess that I had paid more attention to the blackthorn later in the year when it is heavy with sloes, ripe for picking. Not for eating raw, of course. You only need to make that mistake once to remember how bitter sloes taste and how they leave your mouth dry. No, it is for delicious sloe gin that I have my eye on them. At the end of February my sister mentioned that she and her husband had spotted the first blossom on the blackthorn during one of their walks in Surrey and



Blackthorn blossom

that the flowers come out before the leaves. Being no botanist, this was news to me and I was intrigued. To be honest, I wasn't aware that any plant had such a strange cycle, let alone the familiar blackthorn. I just had to check this out. Zoë Devlin's *The Wilflowers of Ireland* has been my "go to" source for a while now,

and fits easily in the rucksack: "Flowers - 10-15mm, white, numerous, prominent stamens with orange anthers; in short, dense spikes, appearing before leaves, on blackish bark". Confirmed! Now I had to see this for myself in the field.

On March 1st, St. David's Day, I took a walk on the shores of Belfast Lough at the same spot where I picked the sloes last October (no, I'm not revealing more about the location than that - I'm looking forward to sloe gin again this Christmas / New Year!). Blackthorn is not so abundant around Belfast as further south. When I lived in Kerry, it was everywhere, one of the most common hedging plants, and I only had to walk a few yards from the house to pick a decent crop (mind your fingers - those spiky thorns are like nails!). So, this spot on Belfast Lough has taken a few years to find. Sure enough, the first tiny, creamy white blossoms were appearing, and no leaves yet.

## Logainmneacha / Place-Names

Killarney, Co. Kerry, Cill Airne, "the cell (a small early church) of the sloes"

Arnaghan, Airneachán, "place abounding in sloes", a townland in Lough Gowna, Co. Cavan. Almost an island, and probably once was a true island: [www.logainm.ie/5655.aspx](http://www.logainm.ie/5655.aspx)

Blackthorn Island, Draighneach, in the Shannon Estuary: [mountainviews.ie/island/2367/](http://mountainviews.ie/island/2367/)

Drinaghan, Draighneachán, "place abounding in blackthorn", a townland on the western slopes of Knocknarea, Co. Sligo:

[www.logainm.ie/45353.aspx](http://www.logainm.ie/45353.aspx)

Drains Bog, Draighean, "blackthorn" + bog, in a dip between Knockdhu





and Scawt Hill in Co. Antrim, and far more pleasant than it sounds in English:

[www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=16676](http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=16676)



Knockdhu, Co. Antrim, (384m) seen from Drains Bog. The blackthorns must be lower down near Drains Bay! 📷 Paul Tempan

## April - wild garlic, spring squill and a mystery solved

Many a mountain walk begins with an agreeable approach walk through woodland. In April one of the plants you are likely to come across flowering in the woods is wild garlic or ramsons. You may well notice its characteristic pungent but not unpleasant odour before you spot the attractive white star-shaped flowers. It is an indicator of ancient woodland. One of the locations where I've regularly encountered a beautiful carpet of wild garlic is in Glenarm Forest, Co. Antrim, sometimes at the end of a hill-walk from Larne over Sallagh Braes, Knockdhu and Scawt Hill. It is also abundant in Crumlin Glen in the same county (see photo below) and in Glenshelane, Co. Waterford. Very often one finds patches of bluebells elsewhere in the same woods. There is an overlap with the flowering of the bluebells, so time your walk right and you may well see both together. Two

years ago I came across an impressive carpet of garlic (see photo below) on either side of a path on the eastern slopes of the Ben of Howth ([mountainviews.ie/summit/1046/](http://mountainviews.ie/summit/1046/)). However, closer inspection revealed that this was three-cornered garlic, an introduced perennial found in some places in the east and south, which can be distinguished from the more common wild garlic by its narrower bladed leaves and the bell-shaped flowers.



Wild garlic in abundance in Crumlin Glen, Co. Antrim 📷 Paul Tempan

## Logainmneacha / Place-Names

All three of these are in Connemara, Co. Galway:

Gleann Creamha, "glen of garlic", Glencraff, a valley and townland near Leenane on the SW flanks of Búcán ([mountainviews.ie/summit/358/](http://mountainviews.ie/summit/358/)).

Leitir Creamha, "hillside of garlic", Lettercraff, a townland between Oughterard and the summit of Caorán na gCaorach / Keeraunnageeragh ([mountainviews.ie/summit/953/](http://mountainviews.ie/summit/953/))

Leitir Creamha, "red hillside of garlic", Lettercraffroe, a townland in the hills SW of Oughterard, between Cnocán na Lao ([mountainviews.ie/summit/1155/](http://mountainviews.ie/summit/1155/)) and Cloghermore ([mountainviews.ie/summit/1173/](http://mountainviews.ie/summit/1173/)).

Another attractive plant that blooms in April, but limited to coastal locations in NE Ireland (mainly Cos. Antrim and Down), is spring squill.



Three-cornered garlic below the Ben of Howth, Co. Dublin, and not a vampire in sight!  
 📷 Paul Tempan

It is easily recognised by its flowers which form six-pointed lilac-blue stars. It likes grassy spots and is a member of the asparagus family. You'll



Spring squill, Portbraddan, Co. Antrim 📷 Paul Tempan

notice the resemblance of its thick stem to a juicy asparagus spear. I first came across it at Portbraddan on the Ulster Way, just a few miles east of the Giant's Causeway. It is also found on the coast of Co. Down and has been chosen as the flower of the county.

On a recent walk on Slievemore in

Co. Tyrone ([mountainviews.ie/summit/940/](http://mountainviews.ie/summit/940/)), I was intrigued by a moorland plant with yellow flowers which reminded me somewhat of bog asphodel, except that it was a much paler shade of yellow and bog asphodel does not flower until June. These flowers were out in late March. I consulted the highest authority I know: Dr Rory Hodd, one of our own members who uses the handle scapania on MV. Rory was in the news late last year for discovering a rare and tiny fern in Kerry which was not previously known on this side of the Atlantic: [mountainviews.ie/newsletters/month/walkers\\_interest-Ireland-Kerry-fern-2020-10/#othernews](http://mountainviews.ie/newsletters/month/walkers_interest-Ireland-Kerry-fern-2020-10/#othernews)

Rory got back to me very quickly to let me know that what I had spotted was not so much a flower growing on grass in bogland, but the flower OF that grass, which he identified as hare's tail cottongrass. I then spotted it a few weeks later on my next hill-walk on Slievenahanaghan in Co. Antrim ([mountainviews.ie/summit/741/](http://mountainviews.ie/summit/741/)), which made me realise how common it is, if only you look out for it on boggy hillsides in the spring. Thanks, Rory! Always best to ask an expert...

## May - Bluebells

Bluebells are one of the most familiar harbingers of spring that we look for after primroses and cultivated plants like snowdrops and



A clump of hare's tail cottongrass flowering in late March on Slievemore, Co. Tyrone  
 📷 Paul Tempan



A spray of bluebells in early April, Stranmillis Woods, Belfast, Co. Antrim  
📷 Paul Tempan

daffodils. They appear in our woods already at the beginning of April. The first ones I spotted this year were at the foot of a mature beech tree in woods at Stranmillis when walking the dogs. They have two different names in Irish: cloigín gorm is simply equivalent to the English name and means “blue bell”; the other name is coinnle corra, which means “curved candles”, describing the way that the stem bends forward under the weight of the flowers as they develop.

MVs member *kernowclimber* found a lovely carpet of bluebells in the woods below Kilmichael Hill in 2014: [mountainviews.ie/summit/1197/comment/16072/](http://mountainviews.ie/summit/1197/comment/16072/)

Another favourite spot of mine, which I can't get to often enough is beautiful Glenshelane in Co. Waterford at the foot of the Knockmealdowns. However, woodland is not the only kind of habitat where they will grow. They need protection against the elements, but sometimes this is provided by an east-facing escarpment, sheltering them from the blast of westerly winds, as at Sallagh Braes near Larne, Co. Antrim.

Another spectacular location is above Murlough Bay near Fair Head. Back in May 2015 I led a fairly challenging walk exploring Murlough Bay, Fair Head and the Grey Man's Path with friends from Belfast Friendship Club, and I chose a date in mid-May so that we could have the added pleasure of seeing the bluebells both in the patches of woodland above Murlough Bay and on the open grassy slopes. ■



A spread of bluebells and gorse in early May below Knockdhu at Sallagh Braes, Co. Antrim 📷 Paul Tempan



A subtle grey-blue sprinkling of bluebells in the foreground of this view of Murlough Bay and Fair Head, Co. Antrim 📷 Paul Tempan

## "THE PROVISION OF ACCESS FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND"

A NI Government initiative to consider how this can be improved with input from stakeholders.

### SIMON STEWART REPORTS

Yes, you read that right. A government consultation about views different bodies have and how things can be improved.

In their own words:

*The aim of this consultation is to seek the views of key stakeholders on the current provision members of the public have to Northern Irelands natural environment for outdoor recreation, and investigate how provision can be improved, while protecting the environment and recognising the needs of landowners.*

To me the single most important thing about this is that there is a major public consultation on this basis at all and in such a free ranging open fashion. And while this particular exercise is about Northern Ireland, of course it is likely to have relevance to the Republic.

### Who did they ask?

The initial consultation was with 63 stakeholder groups and included: Representative bodies for hillwalking such as Mountaineering Ireland and the Ulster Federation of Rambling Clubs

Other sports such as the "Cycling Ulster", "Speleological Union of Ireland", "NI Mountain Bike Alliance" and the "British Horse Society"

QUANGOs like "Belfast Hills Partnership" and "Mourne Outdoor



Restrictions are increasing

You can read the full list at the end of [www.outdoorrecreationni.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/DAERAC1.pdf](http://www.outdoorrecreationni.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/DAERAC1.pdf)

The first phase of this consultation was completed on March 31st 2021 however there were various prior document referenced in the Introduction, see link above. There will be opportunities for public consultation later.

### Red lines

There were two issues not being considered:

- This consultation is not considering an overall "Right to Roam",
- or the development of National Parks in Northern Ireland.

The first of these is disappointing. The UK or rather Britain does have something of a Right to Roam in legislation and

Recreation Forum"

Also, bodies like Sport Northern Ireland

Local and national government such as:

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council (Countryside Officers) and Belfast City Council (Countryside Officers)

And of course farming bodies such as the NI Agricultural Producers Association (NIAPA) and the Ulster Farmers Union were asked to comment.



Land developers can simply block access in the absence of rules and reasonable framework

# NORTHERN IRELAND

also a body of common law court decisions supporting this. (Scotland is particularly good.) Logically it should be on the table for discussion in Northern Ireland.

The issue of National Parks, which have developed relatively easily in the Republic, has been mired in controversy in Northern Ireland so it was probably considered pragmatic to rule it out from this consultation.

## Mountaineering Ireland, MI

Submitted a comprehensive response here:

[www.mountaineering.ie/files/202141102517\\_70087064.pdf](http://www.mountaineering.ie/files/202141102517_70087064.pdf)

## Where do we, particularly MV members in Northern Ireland get our say?

MI is saying *"The engagement of hillwalkers, ramblers, climbers and other outdoor enthusiasts with the public consultation phase that should follow in the coming months will be really important. There will need to be strong evidence of public desire to have improved opportunities to engage in outdoor recreation across Northern Ireland if we are to achieve the level of political will that will be required to introduce the new Outdoor Recreation Bill proposed in this submission."*



How do we balance rights between landowners and reasonable recreational users? You will need to say what you want.

It's boring stuff, isn't it? We walk to escape the contentious things of life. But then we mutter or pretend not to notice as restrictions to where we walk appear. We live in an age where rules are being set in stone. Essentially, engage or face more restrictions. Our future enjoyment of the hills depends on it. The endless encroachments on access by various interests needs democratic push back fully taking

into consideration landowners' reasonable rights and the environment.

When a means to do something about access is offered, take it. Very likely the most important thing about individual's submissions will be their quantity. There may not be a dedicated civil servant reading your contribution but they will be sensitive to tone and volume. So when it becomes possible to make submissions, do so. A short reasonable but assertive response may be the most effective. Read the links above. Watch this space for news as to when and where to make a submission. ■



An increasingly common sight in many of Ireland's upland areas

## MAY IRELAND PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Horse Island off the Cork coast near Skibbereen and the picture is of the "hair raising" ridge to the SW. 📷 *Conor Buckley*

Original comment: [mountainviews.ie/summit/2543/comment/22828/](https://mountainviews.ie/summit/2543/comment/22828/)

## MAY INTERNATIONAL PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Foel Boeth is in Wales in the “Barmouth to Betws-y-Coed and Bala” area towards the north of the country and to the east of Snowdonia. 📷 *Fergal Hingerty*  
Original comment: [mountainviews.ie/summit/B3399/comment/22867/](https://mountainviews.ie/summit/B3399/comment/22867/)

# EMVEE-TUBE

## THE BEST VIDEO PICKS FOR MAY



MV user gerrym goes explores Belfast's Carnmoney Hill with his nephew  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=a46tIA65Wlk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a46tIA65Wlk)



Ellie and Carl of Tough Soles revisit the South Leinster Way  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=N8Mv66s1Jil](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N8Mv66s1Jil)



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# NOTICES

- If you are contributing, please be careful to respect the interests of landowners. Suggest access routes well away from houses, gardens or that could conceivably impact farming activities. When walking, keep away from gardens or farm buildings. Use stiles or gates wherever possible. Never do anything that could allow animals to roam where the farmer did not intend. Ask permission where appropriate.
- Report suspicious activity to the police forces, as below.
- If your car is broken into in an upland area report it to the PSNI or Gardai as this will help them be aware of the issue and tackle it in future. Store the numbers. In Northern Ireland use the PSNI non-emergency number 0845 600 8000. In the Republic you can find the local Garda District HQs phone numbers at [www.garda.ie/Stations/Default.aspx](http://www.garda.ie/Stations/Default.aspx). Specifically for the hotspot of Wicklow: the Garda Divisional Headquarters in Bray is 01 6665300.
- If you hear of a problem area or route, write it up in MountainViews which does everyone a service. Report rubbish tipping in the Republic - ring EPA hotline 1850 365 121
- Report quads in national park area (in which they are banned). For Wicklow please phone the Duty Ranger: 087-9803899 or the office during office hours Telephone: +353-404-45800. Put these numbers in your phone, take regs etc. Let MV know of contact numbers for other areas.
- If you see a fire or someone doing something that could start a fire, report it. In NI phone 999, in the Republic 112 or Coillte: 1890 800 455.
- If you have climbed some of the less well known places, we would appreciate a summit rating and also GPS readings for summits.
- If we can, let's make MV have more than one route up a summit so as to reduce the tendency for paths to appear. Your grid refs in place comments for different starting points show up on MountainViews maps.



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