

Connaught Mountain Pursuit
Challenge
21st – 23rd September 2012
Maumturks Co. Galway



Map Sheet 37/38 Scale: 1:50,000

Introduction:

Located in northern Connemara, the Maumturks are both bleak and beautiful. They are substantially exposed, with the Atlantic Ocean only a few kilometres away to the west and there's not a lot of shelter to be gained from the Twelve Bens to the west, Killary Harbour to the north or the Connemara Lowlands to the south. There's not a lot of shelter and be aware that the weather can change dramatically in minutes.

Though the general area is dominated by Connemara Schists, this walk provides an unexpected combination of our commonly encountered blanket bog, generally restricted to the valley bottoms and lower slopes, together with bright rocky higher peaks dominated by quartzite and rocky screes.

Please bear in mind your "Leave No Trace" training in this special environment. Also be aware of the potential for "slips and trips" between the wet bogs and grassy slopes being very slippery and the higher peaks being very rocky, much of which is loose and some is purely scree.

Whilst you are watching your footsteps, keep an eye out for the local wildlife. If you are lucky, you will spot numerous plant specialised and restricted to the area including, St Patricks cabbage, Club moss, Bog Asphodel, Sundew, Bell Heather, Tormentil, Heath Milkwort, Starry Saxifrage, Cotton Grass, and Reindeer Lichen amongst others.

Friday Night:

Getting to the Start:

From Galway take the Clifden road to Maum Cross and turn right towards An Maum and Maum Bridge. Follow this road for about 6km. The start is located at the car park of the Community Centre and Garda Station at L 962 522, which is on the left about 500 metres before the T junction of Maum Bridge.

Please note that this is a public car park and may be in use for events at the Community Centre. If so, note that there is additional parking near the boat moorings at L 964 526 and just to the north-west of the T junction at L965 528

Check in at the Community Centre car park from 8.00 pm onwards. Anyone running late or having to cancel/other issues, please call ahead to let us know on the numbers below. All patrols will be inspected for the correct equipment. Those not properly equipped will be sent home. Do not leave the car park until you have been checked out by a member of staff.

The Hike:

As you leave the car park, head north-east to the road that runs up the Maum Valley at L 962 523. Follow this road north-west for approximately 3 km to the junction at L 936 534. Take particular care as this road has a number of residences and noise must be kept to a minimum.

At the junction, head south-west and walk along the track for about 1.5km, till you come to the river at L 925 524. Immediately beyond the river is a gate into the field. Enter this gate at proceed up the south-western side of the river to a stile at L917 526. Cross the stile and proceed

on along the river. Camping space is limited and is typically located near the river edge, where bad weather and high rainfall could lead to flooding, so check with staff as to the precise location of the camps that will typically be at L 915 257 (both sides of river), L 914 528 (south side of river) and at L 913 529. The section between the bridge and the camp will be marked with beacons.

Settle in and have a good night's sleep.

Saturday

This is considered to be one of the best walks in Ireland offering the best views of the Maumturks and its neighbouring ranges. The route is a horse-shoe ridge walk, which takes up to the summit of the highest Peak, Binn idir an da Log (702m). The route is airy and great care is advised whilst on route as the ridge gives way on all sides to steep ground and cliffs. Water will be scarce on the higher parts of the route so be sure to bring plenty. The hike on Saturday is with a Day Sack only, remember to pack the equipment from your day pack equipment list, enjoy the hike.

Base camp to River Crossing L 912 529

There will be staff on hand to point out the precise crossing point. Carefully cross the adjoining fence taking care not to damage the fence or hurt yourselves.

River Crossing to Maumgawnagh Col L 911 534

As you leave the crossing, head up to the right of the headland. Do not attempt to climb the headland.

Col L 911 534 to High Point L 909 535

From the col, head around the north-east side of the buttress and head for the high ridge at L 909 535

Head north-west along the Knokaunbaun ridge. Much of the ridge supports a post and wire fence that will provide a good "hand rail" in bad visibility.

Continue west along ridge to Spot Height 435 at L 887 542

Spot 453 to Re-entrant L 883 538

From this point, continue west along the fence, then follow the fence south-west to the top of the re-entrant.

Re-entrant to Maumahoge Lake L 880 537

Take care crossing the partly hidden small stream and keep following the fence line as it ascend the slope to the lake stream at L 880 537.

Take a rest and get something to eat here. This will also be the last place to collect water for a while if you're running low.

Lake L 880 537 to Marker Flag. L 884 534

This is the hardest section of the route and great care should be taken. The slope is covered in scree but it is possible to by-pass most of it. If visibility is good the bright scree field will be visible and you should pick a trail to the south-east from the lake, to the left of the scree, but to the right of the ridge until about the 500 metre contour. At this point, the ridge can be followed.

You are now on particularly rocky ground, much of which is loose. Take particular care not to dislodge rocks that could hit people below you, and for those beneath, keep a good eye out for rocks coming from above and don't be afraid to shout out if you see rocks falling.

When you reach the marker- flag the hardest of the climbing sections will be behind you. Take this section slowly taking plenty of rests and drink.

Marker Flag to Binn idir an da Log L 888 528

Continue up the ridge, passing a cairn at L 888 530. You are now on the main Maumturks ridge, follow it upwards in a dog-leg route to the summit. This is also a heavy climb so take plenty of breaks and drink. Use the breaks to align you map and do feature reconnection as a patrol.

Binn idir an da log L 888 528 to Binn idir an da Log SE Top at Spot height 659, L 894 526)

Taking a dog-leg route, first south then east, proceeding along the ridge taking care of the narrower sections till you reach the spot height.

SE Top at Spot height 659 to Binn Chaonaigh 633m L 900 516)

The spot marked as 633 on your map is known as Binn Chaonaigh. Follow the ridge off the summit and down into the col at L 896 518. From here take a dog-leg up to the summit of Binn Chaonaigh via a cairn at L 899 514.

Binn Chaonaigh to Marker flag L 914 517)

Head along the ridge to Binn Mhairg at spot height 612, (L 902 520). From here descend south-east along the spur following the fence line until the fence forks at L 910 517. The fence divides and goes both east and north-east. Make sure you follow the north-east fence line towards the valley bottom. This section is steep in places, gets boggy and is slippery, so take great care and choose your route accordingly.

Follow the fence to its junction with the stream at L 913 522 and follow the stream to the river and the river back into camp

Sunday

Reverse your route from Friday night and follow it out to the Garda Station.



Well Done!

MPC t-shirts (€8) and sweat-shirts (€18) will be available to purchase at the car park.

Gerry Hunt 087-2403501

Andy Worsnop 086-3819011

