

# Connacht MPC 2016 - Nephin Beg



23<sup>rd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> September 2016

Glendahurk Circuit, Nephin Mountains, Co. Mayo

## Introduction

The Nephin Beg Mountain range of North West Mayo is one of Ireland's last great wilderness areas. The mountains are surrounded to the north by a vast area of trackless bog - the largest blanket bog in Ireland. The mountains are formed from quartzite and are around 600 million years old. This MPC offers the opportunity to enjoy the remote heights of the Nephins and also the splendid views of Croagh Patrick, Clare Island and Clew Bay to the south, the mountains of Achill Island to the west and the great bogs of north-west Mayo dotted with wind turbines.

Maps used: Ordnance Survey Sheets 30 & 31 (Discovery Series)

## Check In

From Castlebar or Westport head out to Newport which is on the main route to Achill. Continue past Newport towards Mulrany (also referred to as Mallaranny on some maps including the 1:50,000 map). Approximately 0.5km after Newport, you will come to a junction on your right (grid ref. L980 949). Take this fork (marked for Furnace) and follow along this road until you come to a crossroads at the crest of a rise (L974 981). Turn left here (signposted for the Salmon research Institute, between two lakes Lough Feeagh and Furnace Lough, on map as a Visitor Centre) and follow the road to the Institute where parking is available and Check-in will take place. Take care not to block any gates or slipways. Check-in is from 7.00pm onwards. Given the time of year, it is advisable to bring insect repellent, bite cream & midge nets for the head (if you have one).

## Route Description

### FRIDAY

#### **Check-in (L968 982) to T Junction (959 979)**

Having checked out follow the road Westwards, marked by the post with yellow arrows ( to the T-junction at the bridge.

**You will be passing farmhouses along the way so please be quiet and respect the local residents.**

#### **T Junction (959 979) to Base Camp (912 978)**

Follow the road uphill through a small crossroads. A short distance after the crossroads the tarmac ends and the road turns to a track. Follow the track straight ignoring all junctions until you come to the track junction at (L940 978). Turn right here and follow the track uphill where it turns westwards again and on to another track junction at (L926 978). Again, turn right and follow this track as it drops gradually onto a minor road at (L914 975). Once on this road turn right and follow it along beyond some farm sheds to the campsite, which will be in a field on the south side of the road at Glendahurk Bridge (L912 978). Check in and have a good night's sleep.

**Note: we are still trying to finalise permission to camp, so this campsite may have to change.**

## **SATURDAY**

Have a good breakfast and prepare for the hike. Because the proposed hike route is quite demanding you will not be carrying full pack on the route but will proceed out onto the hike route carrying day packs.

### **The Main Route:**

Please note that all hike routes are subject to change, mainly because of weather conditions and therefore it is vital that you study your maps carefully before the event. The hike route below is described in a clockwise direction but depending on wind and also to help stagger the departure of teams, you may be required to travel in an anti-clockwise direction. Therefore we request that each team prepare two route cards for this hike, one in each direction. If nothing else - it's good practice.

If weather conditions are too bad to go up high the alternative route (carrying full packs) will most likely be Glenthomas Valley circuit. You may wish to prepare a route card for this as well.

### **Glendahurk Bridge (912 978) to Spot Height 478 (899 013)**

Having been checked out by a staff member, follow the track uphill from the bridge in a north west direction. The track goes further then is indicated on the map but you should try to turn off the track onto the ridge once you have gained the high point of the track on the ridge (about 904 986). Leave the track and begin to climb up through heather covered ground. Try to keep to the centre of the ridge and you will soon arrive at the first spot height 444 m (901 008). The are great view down into the forest filled valley below. Continue along the ridge passing a number of rock formations and you will arrive at the spot height 478 m (899 013).

### **Spot Height 478 (899 013) to Corranabinnia South Top 681 (894 026)**

Continue up the ridge in the same northerly direction. The ground begins to steepen and the climb becomes harder. Keep to the centre of the ridge away from the steep ground on your right. The ridge appears to end quite abruptly with a steep drop into Corranabinnia Lough which is over a 300 m below. Head along the grassy ridge in an easterly direction towards the summit of the south top is marked by a small cairn. (The point marked on the map appears to be in the wrong place).

### **Corranabinnia South Top 681 (894 026) to Col (899 029)**

Leaving the summit in a northerly direction you quickly meet a very narrow, rocky ridge (called an Arête) which descends to the col. Extreme care should be exercised by all teams along this ridge. Please follow any instructions given by staff. Many of the fangs of rock can be by-passed though the use of hands will be required to steady yourself. There are tremendous views into the bouldery coum (a glaciated valley) to your left. You should also be able to see the two lakes at Corryloughaphuill. This is one of the most spectacular knife-edge ridges in the country and is a highlight of the hike.

### **Col (899 029) to Corranabinnia 714 (903 032)**

From the bottom of the rocky ridge an easy ascent up a grassy ridge gradually becoming more rocky, leads you to the rocky summit of Corranabinnia (903 032). The summit is marked by a trig. point. This is the highest point on the hike at 714 m. There are great views all around. To the north Glennamong & Nephin Beg, to the east you may see Nephin - the second highest mountain in Connaught.

### **Corranabinnia 714 (903 032) to Spot Height (911 030)**

Leave the summit in an easterly direction, travelling across rocky, stony ground. You begin to lose height very quickly and it is important to take care on this descent. Zig-zag down through the rocks and the slope flattens out as you approach the spot height (911 030).

### **Spot Height (911 030) to Col 357 (922 021)**

Another sharp descent leads down into a col (915 028). The ground is becoming more grassy but there are still large slabs of rock around. Still heading eastwards a slight climb leads to the Spot Height 468 at (918 026). Ahead you can see Bengorm, the final peak on the hike. There are fine views into the valleys on each side of you. The ridge begins to turn to the south and following the ridge a short descent leads you down to the col at (922 021).

### **Col 357 (922 021) to Bengorm 582 (928 013)**

Leaving the col begin the steep ascent of Bengorm. The climb gets more rocky as you ascend. Keep to the right-hand side of the mountain to have the best approach to the summit. The grassy summit is marked by a cairn. There are good views towards Newport and as far as Castlebar. To the east you can also see Lough Feagh and Buckoogh & Bireencorragh mountains.

### **Bengorm 582 (928 013) to Glendahurk Bridge (912 978)**

Depart from the summit in a southerly direction. The descent is initially gentle and the ground is heather covered peat. Try to aim for the west bank of the stream at (926 003). Stay above the stream and follow it in a southerly direction until it hits the track at (926 978). Turn right here and repeat part of the Friday night route back to the campsite.

## **SUNDAY**

### **Advanced Base Camp (912 978) to Track Junction (926 003)**

Have a good breakfast and strike camp. As we have been graciously allowed to use the field by the farmer please ensure that you leave no papers or rubbish on the site. A staff member will check your site and following check-out reverse the Friday night route until you reach the track junction at (926 003).

### **Track Junction (926 003) to Car Park (968 982)**

Take the left track as it contours around the hillside before dropping to meet the original track at (946 982). Turn left and again reverse the Friday night route back to the Car Park at the Institute.

You've made it - Well Done!

MPC hoodies (€15) and MPC 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary badges (€2 or more as all proceeds are going to Mountain Rescue Ireland) will be available to purchase.

