

Munster MPC 2012

Mangerton Mountain and Cappagh Glen, Killarney, County Kerry

13-15th April 2012

Map: The area is split between sheets 78 and 79 of the Discovery Series (scale 1:50000). Due to this, a photocopy is being used for the event. The Ordnance Survey 1:25000 scale map of the Killarney National Park and also the Harvey Maps Sheet "Macgillicuddys Reeks" cover the first half of the route.

Introduction

Mangerton Mountain dominates the south of the Killarney region. Outside of the Reeks, it is the highest mountain of the Iveragh Peninsula, reaching an elevation of 839 metres. However, the summit area is a vast plateau, and as a result the mountain seen from a distance appears dull when compared with its more shapely neighbours. What cannot be seen from the lowland around Killarney is Glencappul (The Horse's Glen), a stunning example of the effects of glaciation on the Irish landscape. Much of the Saturday's route is a circuit of the great coum, which, if the weather is right, should provide memorable views.

Saturday's route ends in Cappagh Glen, where the campsite is overshadowed by the towering western cliffs of Bennaunmore, a rare example of volcanic activity in the southwest. Its eastern columnar cliffs have been called the Giant's Causeway of Kerry.

Directions to the start

From Killarney Town Centre, take the N71 towards Kenmare. After passing Muckross Park Hotel (and Molly Darcy's Bar) at 977 868, continue along the main road for another 1.2 km and turn off onto a minor road at 974 857. This is the Old Kenmare Road and part of the Kerry Way. Follow this road up through the woods to the Upper Torc Car Park at 966 842.

Friday Night

Upper Torc Car Park - Base Camp

Car Park (V966 842) to Camp 1 (V973 836)

The forest roads that you will need to follow for this section are very poorly marked on the map. The route will be flagged, so do not become demoralised at this early stage in the challenge.

Leaving the car park at V966 842, turn left, and then take the 2nd left, after approx. 100m and just after the barrier pole. NOTE: This road is not shown on either the 1:25000 or 1:50000 maps. It leads to a forest road junction, located at the sharp bend shown on the map at V967 839. Take the left hand option, and proceed to the road junction at V969 840. Keep left here and the road drops slightly before coming to another junction at V970 841. Keep right here and proceed uphill to another junction at V975 842. Turn right here and you will soon pass through the remains of a gate and uphill. At this point much of the forest on your left has been felled and cleared. Proceed uphill on this track until you reach another junction at V974 839. Turn left here and follow uphill till you reach a sweeping bend at V976 838. Leave the track here and proceed almost due west through the thinned forest and cross a small stream at point V977 838. Follow the east bank of this stream carefully up through heathery and stony ground. This was the old forest perimeter and also marks the edge of the National Park. You should follow it up till you reach a dead tree at V977 836. From here turn right and head to the Camp at V973 836.

CHECK IN and get your tents up!

Saturday

Camp 1 - Devil's Punch Bowl - Mangerton - Stoompa - Cappagh Glen

Camp 1 (V973 836) to Old Earthwall (V977 836)

Leaving the campsite, proceed east until you reach the remains of the earthwall at 977 836.

Old Earthwall (V977 836) to Path at V977 823

Follow this earthwall uphill, steeply at first and then gently, until you reach a point at 977 823 where the path shown on the map (known as the Toureencormack Bridle Path) passes through an obvious gap in the wall. Do not be tempted to follow the wall any further uphill as the ground gets very muddy. Instead, take heed of the "Path to Summit" sign and follow the Bridle Path to the southwest and soon arrive at the outflow from the Devil's Punchbowl (V975 817) known locally as the "Batchelor's Well".

Devil's Punch Bowl (V975 817) to Arête (V982 814)

The Punch Bowl is a dramatic location, so by all means stop to take in the view. The area of boulders and rock above the lake shore would provide shelter for a stop in bad weather. When you are ready, move along the northern shore of the lake (you should find a path leading through the rock) and up to the tiny pool at the foot of the arête. This will give you your first view of Glencappul.

Arête (V982 814) to Mangerton (V980 808)

From the pool follow the arête up to the edge of Mangerton's plateau. The arête is a great vantage point from which to view both the Punch Bowl and Glencappul or Horses Glen with its series of ribbon lakes also known as "paternoster" lakes because they resemble rosary beads.. And when reached, the view from the edge of the plateau is also impressive. Given the right weather there is an extensive panorama stretching from the mountains of North Cork in the east to the Reeks in the west. It is also possible to see the mountains of the Dingle peninsula to the north. Once you have taken in the view, head out across the flat boggy plateau to Mangerton's summit cairn. In mist this will require careful compass work.

[Please note: In any conditions care needs to be taken when ascending the arête, and there can be no messing by Scouts. It is not a knife edge, but a simple slip could turn into a fatal fall very easily, with steep cliffs on either side.]

[Bad weather alternative: Devil's Punch Bowl (V975 817) to Mangerton (V980 808)

In the event of poor weather (high winds especially), teams will not be allowed ascend to the plateau via the arête. Instead, from the Batchelor's Well the western arm of the coum is followed to the plateau. Once the top (V976 812) is reached the cliff line above the Punch Bowl is followed to where the arête reaches the plateau (V982 811). From here head across the plateau to Mangerton's summit, again using careful compass work in mist. It is not unusual for groups on Mangerton to completely miss the summit cairn in poor visibility.]

Mangerton (V980 808) to cliff edge (V982 811)

From the cairn the views are restricted by the flat nature of the terrain, although in good weather a short trip to the southern end of the plateau opens up more views of the south west. From the cairn, proceed to the cliffs above Glencappul.

Cliff edge (V982 811) to gully top (V999 807)

Follow the cliff line of Glencappul, as it heads south east, then north, then eastwards again. A faint track runs along the cliff line. As long as common sense prevails and there is no messing, this cliff top walk can be both pleasant and safe. But please be aware of the danger on your left at all times. The stream shown at V992 806 is permanent and is a good place to refill water bottles. The cliff line begins to become a little less distinct as you arrive above the area of the gully.

Gully top (V999 807) to Col (W003 807)

In poor weather it is advisable not to stick to the cliff line for the short stretch down to the Col before spot height 646m. Instead move to the slightly higher ground to the immediate south and follow the short broad spur down to the col.

Col (W003 807) to Stoompa South Top (705m) (W007 818)

From the Col continue over spot height 646m and up to Stoompa. Watch out for a track running along the left side of the Col which avoids peat hags and broken ground. Looking back along the route on this stretch, the arête you climbed earlier looks very dramatic.

Stoompa South Top (W007 818) to stream junction (W018 813)

From Stoompa South Top proceed to the North Top (694m) and then drop down to the Col on it's eastern side. From there continue to the stream junction.

Stream junction (W018 813) to Camp 2 (W030 814)

Follow the line of the stream down into the valley. The ground here is very broken and care should be taken especially if its wet. Towards the bottom of the slope you reach an ancient wood (not shown on the map). Where the river turns north in Cappagh Glen follow it and cross the river where staff indicate. Camp 2 is across the river from Spot Height 165m. Check in with a staff member and set up camp.

Sunday

Cappagh Glen - Lough Guitane - Finish

Camp 2 (W030 814) to road (W034 840)

Pack up your tent and gear and check out with a member of the staff. Proceed to the northern end of Bennaunmore and follow the track to the gate at W035 832. Cross the stream and cross a second one at W035 833. Follow the track to the farm building, through a gate and on to the road.

Road (W034 840) to T junction (W033 857)

Follow the road along the shore of Lough Guitane until you reach the T junction at Rossalia.

You will note that the finish is some distance from the start. On the weekend, we will arrange to ferry drivers back to the start.

Well done on completing this year's Munster MPC. See you in Leinster!

Don't forget there will be MPC T-Shirts and Hoodies available to purchase on Sunday!