

# Ulster MPC 2016



**(14th - 16th Oct)**

**Mourne Mountains, Co. Down**

## **Background**

The Mourne Mountains are a small group of mountains, compact within an elliptical area of about 14 miles by 7 miles. There are 35 summits over 1500 feet high as well as a large number of interesting geological features such as corrie lakes, buttresses etc. The Mourne Mountains are composed of granite which is a hard, tough rock with a distinctive appearance. They were formed around 50 million years ago and since then have been subject to many climatic changes. The glaciers of the last Ice Age helped widen and deepen the Silent valley and also caused the formation of many of the rock buttresses to be seen in the Mourne Mountains.

The other major feature in the Mourne Mountains is of course the Mourne Wall. The wall is made of large granite slabs that were quarried locally from the mountain sides. Work started in 1910 and finished in 1922. The wall runs over the tops of 15 mountains, covering 22 miles and encloses around 9000 acres. The wall was built by Belfast Water Commissioners to define their catchment area. This area has an annual rainfall of around 70 inches. The route that you will be walking this weekend will cover the summits of the western Mourne Mountains and will give excellent views of the Silent Valley and Ben Crom reservoirs as well as the spectacular Slieve Bearnagh and Doan.

## **How to get there**

Travelling from Newry, travel on the A2 to Warrenpoint and on to Rostrevor. From Rostrevor continue on the A2 towards Kilkeel. Turn left at the junction at 265 154 and head to the small village of Attical. Follow the road to the main carpark (285 215).

## **Note**

This map has a very large scale 1:25,000 so distances can be deceiving. Each grid box is 1km X 1km in size. Also the distances in the Mourne Mountains can be very deceptive so the route may look much further than it is in reality. The contour interval is every 10 metres. Because of the large scale the six figure grid references are to the nearest whole number. All teams should make themselves familiar with the names of the major features such as mountains, lakes, tracks etc..

**The following route outline is the proposed route for the weekend. However this route is very much subject to change because of such things as weather conditions, staffing, participants ability etc.** Therefore the route can change and this should be

borne in mind by all participants. The same campsite will be used for both nights. All team members should carry their own gear for the Saturday route.

**Friday** - Car park (276 224) to Basecamp (289 243). Leave the carpark and follow the road to the smaller carpark at 285 215. From here follow the track into the mountains until it is intersected by the Mourne Wall. Follow the wall to base camp

### **Saturday (Day Hike)**

#### **Main Route**

Basecamp to river/wall junction 288 254

River/wall junction 288 254 to col 285 260

Col 285 260 to Carn Mtn 287 260

Carn Mtn 287 260 to Spot Height 290 264

Spot Height 290 264 to Slieve Loughshannagh (292 268) via col.

Slieve Loughshannagh (292 268) to Col 297 274

Col 297 274 to Slieve Meelbeg 301 279

Slieve Meelbeg 301 279 to Col 303 281

Col 303 281 to Slieve Meelmore 306 287

Slieve Meelmore 306 287 to col at 309 283

From here you can follow the track back in a south westerly direction passing around Lough Shanagh on the eastern side all the way to base camp. However weather and time permitting the following extension may be added;

Col at 309 283 to Slieve Bearnagh 314 282

Slieve Bearnagh 314 282 to track towards ridge end 317 271, then following the track back in a NW direction initially to where it joins the main track at 307281.

Now turn in a SW direction passing Lough Shannagh on the eastern side and follow the track back to base camp.

### **Sunday**

Weather permitting, the route heads along the wall in a SE direction to Slievenaglough 299 230. This provides very fine views of the Silent Valley reservoir.

Continue along the wall in a southerly direction to the stile at 294224 and head onto Slievenagore 294 216.

From here follow the track back down to the Banns Road at 287 219 and pick up the track to the main road and on to the carpark.

*Well done!*

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

