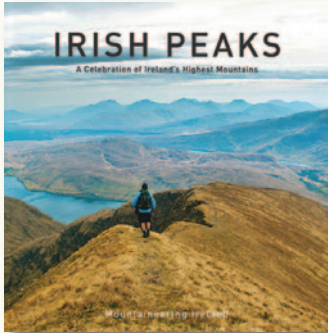


Mountaineering Ireland's new guide to routes on Ireland's highest one hundred peaks



Literary Editor Peter O'Neill presents reviews of some recently published books.



It has been said that a guidebook description should be a combination of information and inspiration. If that is to be the yardstick, *Irish Peaks* more than makes the grade. This beautiful book has obviously been a labour of love for all involved, and the result is a quality publication from cover to cover.

Let's start with the information. In terms of the routes selected, the book deals with the highest one hundred peaks in Ireland, which takes any selection subjectivity out of the picture. The key details of each route are presented visually in a two-page spread at the beginning of each walk. We are given some inspirational photos, the place names in Irish and their meanings, and a 1:50,000 map with the route marked on it. Summary ascent details are also given in a clear

graphic style with relevant map references, available parking and alternative routes.

As the book is a large format hardback, it is not one for sticking in a rucksack. However, a mobile phone photo of the relevant pages will give you all the information you need to take with you. The descriptions of the walks are well edited and stylistically diverse due to the variety of contributors, from those that are purely directional to others that take a more anecdotal approach. There are also very concise and interesting sections on Ireland's upland environment, covering geology, flora and fauna.

However, in my opinion it is at the inspirational level that this book shines. Firstly, the quality and selection of photographs throughout is simply stunning and will fill many a pleasant night by the fire, contemplating future trips to the mountains. Some contributors enhance the route descriptions in a way that gives you the urge to experience these wild places for yourself. John O'Callaghan has an extended quote from Praeger's *The Way That I Went*, describing the Nephin Beg Range as '...the very loneliest place in this country...', an appropriate quote to

accompany the directions to climb Slieve Carr, Ireland's most remote mountain. Peter Wilson weaves the local geology into the description of Errigal, such that one can almost feel the chill wind off the retreating glacier.



Loughs Cummeenapeasta, Callee and Gouragh from the Reeks Ridge

On the route to Masatiompan in the Brandon range, one passes over Sauce Creek, some 300 precipitous metres below. We are informed that people lived down on the shore up to the early 20th century. It is worth the trip there alone to witness and contemplate such a location for human habitation.

The Irish place names given truly capture the essence of places and can give pause for thought or a smile, such as Cnoc na gCainte (Hill of Conversation) and Tóin le Gaoith (Backside to the Wind). Such names and meanings are presented in a beautiful graphic style for all routes and also neatly interwoven into some walk descriptions.

Finally, *Irish Peaks* is most of all a deserved homage to **Joss Lynam**, who edited the original edition of *Irish Peaks*, which was published in 1982. Some newer participants in mountaineering and outdoor activities in Ireland might not

have heard of Joss, who passed away in 2011. **Patrick O'Sullivan's** excellent and warm biography of Joss in this book will give an understanding of his dedication and love for the hills, and how, in many ways, this book is the culmination of much of what he was about and will form part of his legacy.

Congratulations and many thanks are due to **Margaret and Alan Tees**, who herded the many cats to gather the route descriptions that are the basis of this book. **Helen Lawless** must also be commended for the huge amount of work she put in to bring this excellent book to publication.

If you love or are even curious about Ireland's uplands and wild places, this book has to be on your shelf.

Mike Keyes Hillwalker and climber, member of Limerick Climbing Club, past Chairperson of the Mountaineering Council of Ireland (now Mountaineering Ireland)



Mweelrea, Co Mayo