



Granite Peaks Races

Runners' Guide



Granite Peaks Events Overview

Granite Peaks Ultra and Granite Peaks 25 events are mountain running races organised by Northern Ireland Mountain Running Association.

About NIMRA

NIMRA is a voluntary organisation that sets and manages the annual mountain racing calendar for Northern Ireland. In addition, NIMRA provides resources to Clubs organising races throughout the year, including among other items race safety pack, including radios, survival bags and first aid equipment. NIMRA organises and supports National and International Mountain Running Teams and supports the ongoing development of junior mountain running athletes.

NIMRA is affiliated to Athletics Northern Ireland and all NIMRA races are run under the rules of our association, available on the NIMRA website: <https://www.nimra.org.uk>

Event Organiser Details

Race Director: Ciarán McAleenan
Organisation: Northern Ireland Mountain Running Association (NIMRA)
Contact No. 07522113090
Email Address: ciaran@uphillcoach.com
Name of Event: Granite Peaks Ultra/ Granite Peaks 25
Location of Event: Mourne Mountains (see maps below)
Date of Event: 20th April 2024

Granite Peaks Ultra (Map below)

The **Granite Peaks Ultra** event starts at 9:00AM on 20th April 2024 at Tollymore Forest Park, Bryansford, just outside the rear of the Tollymore Outdoor Centre. From there it makes its way towards the Kings Grave, and beyond towards Trassey Track. The route continues up Trassey Track turns right once through the upper stile and heads for Happy Valley where it follows the track up to cross the Mourne Wall at the col between Meelmore and Meelbeg, proceeding in an anti-clockwise direction following the wall to the dam at Silent Valley, staying inside the Mourne Wall.

The race will continue up the access road alongside the Silent Valley and Ben Crom Reservoirs climbing the steps and making its way to the Slieve Binnian summit, via the Slievelamaghan/ Binnian col where it will follow the Mourne Wall down to the track at the edge of Annalong Wood. From there it will go up the track past the Blue Lough to Slievelamaghan and make its way to The Brandy Pad, via Cove Mountain and Slieve Beg. It continues in an easterly direction to reach the Mourne Wall at the foot of Rocky where it again will turn left towards the Bog of Donard before ascending Slieve Donard, Commedagh, Slieve Corragh and Slievenaglogh.

At which point it descends in the direction of Hares Gap where it will cross at the stile (above Hares Gap) descending what is lovingly referred to as the 'green ramp' back on to Trassey Track heading back into Tollymore Forest to the finish line.

Granite Peaks 25 (Map below)

The **Granite Peaks 25** event at 11:00AM on 20th April 2024 at Tollymore Forest Park, Bryansford, just outside the rear of the Tollymore Outdoor Centre. From there it makes its way towards the Kings Grave, and beyond towards Trassey Track. The route continues up Trassey Track turns right once through the upper stile and heads for Happy Valley where



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it follows the track up to cross the Mourne Wall at the col between Meelmore and Meelbeg, proceeding in an anti-clockwise direction following the wall to the stile at the col between Slieve Loughshannagh and Carn Mountain.

From there the race takes a left turn down the track between Loughshannagh and Doan all the way down to the base of Ben Crom Dam. Runners will check in at the aid station, situated at the base of Ben Crom Dam before ascending the steps to the top of the dam, crossing the stile and follow the track along the shoreline of Ben Crom Reservoir, taking the track just to the left of the Kilkeel River at the north end of the dam that leads up onto the Brandy Pad (not the river that leads to Hare's Gap).

At that point the races takes a left and follows the Brandy pad to Hare's Gap where it turns right, climbing the steps to the Mourne Wall continuing until it reaches the stile (at the top of the 'green ramp'). Crossing the stile the race descends the 'Green Ramp' to the Trassey Track and makes its way back into Tollymore Forest, past the Kings Grave ending at the Tollymore Outdoor Centre.

Route Markings

For your convenience parts of each race route have been marked with red/ yellow flags. On the Granite Peaks Ultra the section off the Brandy Pad to the Mourne Wall at base of Rocky is marked while on the Granite peaks 25 the route down from Loughshannagh/ Carn stile to below the Ben Crom Dam has been marked.

Please note the markers are there as guidance only and need not be strictly adhered to. If you have recced or find a better line to the checkpoints that is acceptable. The key is to ensure that you go through each of the checkpoints (see the list of points in the 'Marshals' section below).

All the routes on the map and on the GPX files have been travelled many times in the build up to the Granite Peaks Races and all are runnable/ walkable. Some may be very rough, as less travelled track, but they exist. So, take extra care when manoeuvring through the rough stuff.

GPX Files

GPX files for both routes are available on <https://granitepeaksultra.com/runners-guidebook> page. Again, they are there as guidance, but it is expected that proficient mountain runners have navigational capabilities and are well able to traverse the race route, unaided if necessary. The reliance on technology is not the wisest and having a map and compass will give you all you need to complete the course.

Car Sharing/ Car Parking

Car parking spaces at Tollymore Centre are limited so car share where possible. It may be that you will need to park in the main Tollymore Forest Park public carpark (Google maps will get you there). And from the main forest car park it is about 1 mile up the forest trails to the Race HQ (Tollymore Outdoor Centre).

Registration

Registration for both races is at the Tollymore Outdoor Centre. (GR 329 324)

- Granite Peaks Ultra registration starts at 8:00AM and
- Granite Peaks 25 registration opens at 9:15AM, immediately after the Ultra race starts.

Timings

Granite Peaks Ultra: 09:00 AM (with final cut off time of 08:30 PM)
Granite Peaks 25: 11:00 AM (with final cut off time of 04:30 PM)

The table below sets out the cut-off points and cut-off times for both races.



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Granite Peaks Races - Cut-off Times			
		Granite Peaks Ultra	Granite Peaks 25
		0km	0km
Start time		09:00AM	11:00AM
Cut off 1	Location	Ben Crom Dam	Ben Crom Dam
	Grid Reference	315 255	
	Distance	22km	13km
	Cut off from start	5 hours	3 hours
	Time of day	2:00PM	2:00PM
	Average pace (km/ hour)	4:40 kph	4:33 kph
Cut off 2	Location	Carricklitle Path	n/a
	Grid Reference	341 231	
	Distance	27km	
	Cut off from start	6.5 hours	
	Time of day	03:30PM	
	Average pace (Km/ hour)	4:15 kph	
Cut off 3	Location	Brandy Pad (below Slieve Beg)	n/a
	Grid Reference	343 279	
	Distance	34km	
	Cut off from start	8 hours	
	Time of day	5:00 PM	
	Average pace (Km/ hour)	4:25 kph	
Finish Cut off	Location	Finish Line (Tollymore)	Finish Line (Tollymore)
	Grid Reference	3300 3225	
	Distance	50km	25km
	Cut off from start	11.5 hours	5.5 hours
	Time of day	8:30 PM	4:30 PM
	Average pace (Km/ hour)	4:35 kph	4:55 kph

Mandatory minimum Race kit

Kit checks will take place at the start of the race and may also take place at random points on the course. Racers must subject themselves to any requested kit checks. Failure to submit to a kit check or any other infringement of safety, health or wellbeing rules could result in disqualification and a ban from participating in future NIMRA events.

Runners are to have the mandatory minimum race kit, which comprises:

- Footwear suitable for mountain race terrain,
- Waterproof whole-body cover (with taped seams (and integrated attached hood), hat, and gloves,
- Map of route, whistle, and compass,
- Bivouac (aka bivvy) bag,
- Emergency Foil Survival Blanket,
- Fully charged mobile phone with the race director's number (07522113090) stored.
(Note: mountain rescue call is 999 – Ask for 'Police' then 'Mountain Rescue')
- Tracking device (supplied by Primal Tracking at Registration),
- Thermal layer, and
- Emergency food and drink (minimum 500 ml water bottle).

Poles are not permitted in accordance with NIMRA rules. Use of poles will result in disqualification.



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Advisory Race Kit

- It is advised that if you are anticipating that your race will exceed 10 hours (Granite peaks Ultra only) that you also bring a fully charged head torch and back up.
- Racers may consider bringing basic first aid supplies with them. Some supplies will be available with marshals for runners to avail of, should they need them. Please note marshals are not trained first aiders.
- Sunscreen (even with an overcast day the use of sunscreen is advised)

Marshals

For your safety and assistance marshals will be on the course at the following locations. You must visit all checkpoints on your race route. Missing a checkpoint may incur a time penalty.

Location	Race	Grid Reference
Start/ Finish line (to the rear of Tollymore Outdoor Centre)	GPU/ GP25	GR 3300 3225
Exit from Tollymore Forest/ Entry to Trassey Track	GPU/ GP25	GR 311 313
Happy Valley	GPU/ GP25	GR 295 294
Loughshannagh/ Carn stile	GPU/ GP25	GR 291 268
Silent Valley Dam	GPU	GR 3082 2176
Ben Crom Dam (Aid Station) – base of the dam	GPU/ GP25	GR 3150 2545
Carricklittle Path	GPU	GR 341231
Slievelamaghan/ Binnian saddle	GPU	GR 321 256
Brandy Pad, where 25k joins	GP25	GR 331 286
Brandy Pad, below Slievebeg	GPU	GR 343 279
Stile above Hare's Gap, leading off to green ramp	GPU/ GP25	GR 3245 2900
Exit from Tollymore Forest/ Entry to Trassey Track	GPU/ GP25	GR 311 313

Granite Peaks Ultra racers may leave a **Drop bag** with the marshals at the Registration, which will be transported to the Aid Station at Ben Crom Dam. Keep it small(ish) please and no guarantee it will make it back to Race HQ.

Safety and Environment

SAFETY

All runners will attend a pre-race brief on safety, health and wellbeing matters just prior to the races starting times.

The races are semi-autonomous, which means that for the most part racers are to have all with them that they need fluids, nutrition, clothing etc. But there will be checkpoints where marshals (if able) will have a limited amount of water but remember because some of the checkpoints are in remote areas of the mountain this will not always be possible.

A fully stocked aid station will be available at the bottom of Ben Crom Dam where you can get refreshments and replenish your water supply. As always please be mindful that many other runners will want to avail of this too.

Extreme weather events can occur in the Mourne Mountains. The Race Director may opt to run a bad weather route, which will be relayed to race participants at the earliest opportunity. In the most extreme case, the event may have to be postponed. The Race Director is to monitor weather conditions in the week leading up to the races and will make that decision close to the time of the event(s).



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ENVIRONMENT

Only cross boundaries at designated points. Use stiles. Don't climb onto walls or fences. The route out onto the open mountain has 6 gates along the route. Each gate has a stile (mostly gate type stiles) to the side of it. Do not open any field gates as they are there to cordon livestock and or wildlife and ensure the gate-type stiles are closed when you pass through. Be patient with other racers at these points.

All runners are to take adhere to our 'leave no trace' approach to mountain races. A breach of environmental controls, including crossing the Mourne Wall at any points other than at recognised crossing points could result in disqualification and a ban from participating in future NIMRA events. Help us reduce waste. Please bring you own water bottles and fill them before hand or at the Tollymore Outdoor Centre, before starting. Water will be available at the Ben Crom Dam Aid stations and limited amounts at other more remote marshal points along the route.

A Habitat Impact Assessment and a site-specific Safety, Health & Wellbeing Assessment, with associated control measures form part of this runners' guide (available on <https://granitepeaksultra.com/controls-sheets>). The assessment include emergency response measures necessary.

Websites

<http://www.granitepeaksultra.com/>

<http://www.granitepeaks25.com/>

<http://www.nimra.org.uk/>

And finally...

May I offer you my best wishes for your chosen race. May it go at least as well for you as you expect it to and better than that hopefully. See you on the starting line.

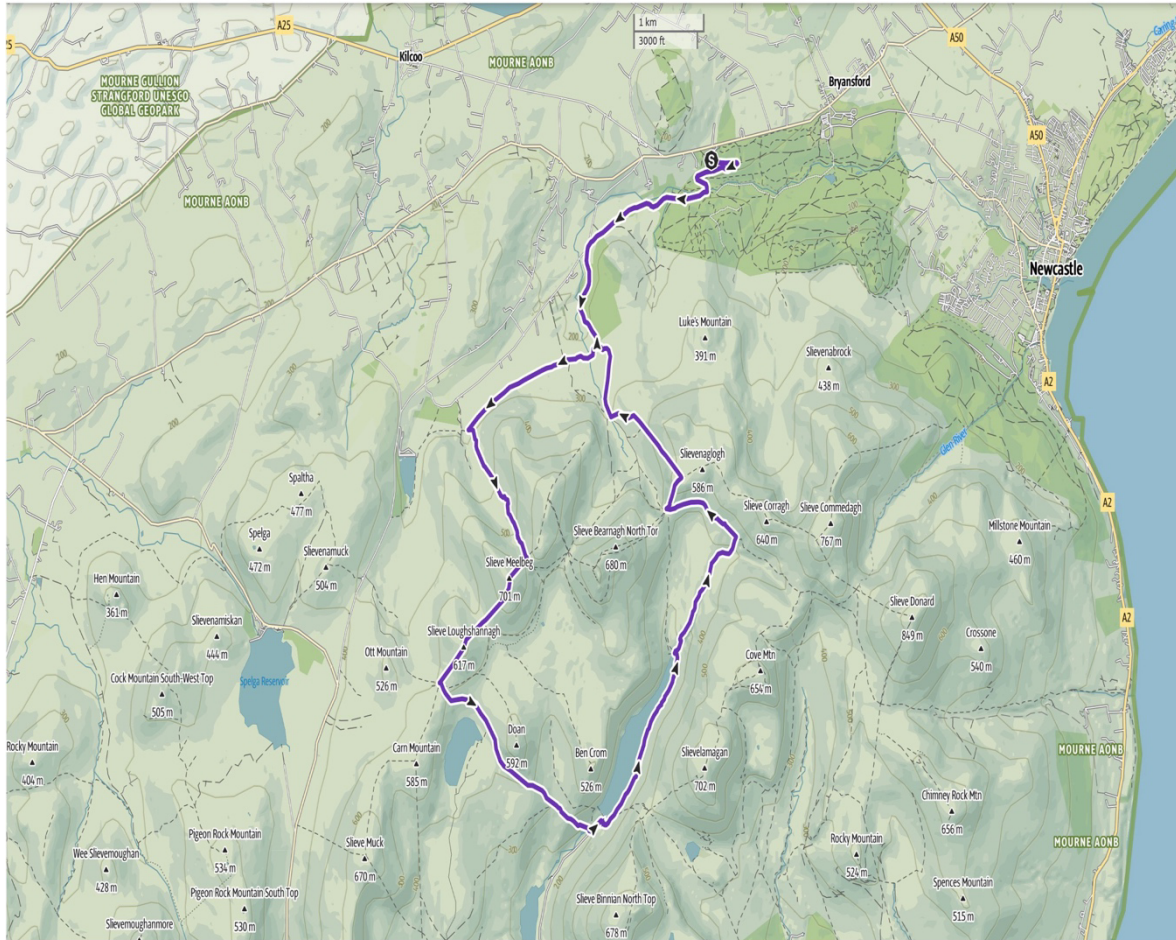


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Map courtesy of outdooractive.com Route ©Ciarán McAleenan

