

The Munros: 282 Summits [C1]

Una grande sfida per tutti gli amanti della montagna e dell'alpinismo: scalare tutte le 282 cime che compongono le Munro, le montagne più alte della Scozia.

Exploring the vast landscape of Scotland, location of the famous Munro mountains, can be a life-changing experience. Every year thousands of hillwalkers of all ages and backgrounds set out on a kind of [pilgrimage](#) to climb or 'bag' one (or more) of 282 Munros, named after the man who first [indexed](#) them back in the 19th century.

WALK THE HIGHLANDS

Mountains and walking are a central part of life for Paul Webster, co-founder and editor of Walkhighlands.co.uk. This donation-based website [features](#) over 2,100 walking routes in Scotland, including detailed routes up every Munro mountain as well as short [woodland](#) and urban walks. Webster is [keen](#) to [encourage](#) others, and with his wife Helen has co-authored more than twenty walking guidebooks based on their experiences. To find out more, Speak Up contacted Webster. We began by asking him why the Munros are so popular. **Paul Webster (Scottish accent):** In Scotland they are really dominant, and I think it's hard for people from other countries could understand that the walking world resolves so, so hugely around one strange concept. I think the reason why it's become so popular is climbing a mountain is an adventure, and you don't know how it's going to go and everything else, but doing something like the Munros, it makes a lot of achievable things like a one-day adventure, climbing a mountain, you can [string lots of that together](#) into a big adventure that for most people is going to be like a thing that's going to take a lot of their lifetime to climb all the Munros. It's just the perfect level of challenge. If there were less of them, then it would be quite easy. If there were many more, then for most people it would become impossible and there's such a variety in there that you can't walk up every single one, you've got learn to rock climb a little bit to do the

Inaccessible Pinnacle. It's a way of stringing all your adventures together into one massive adventure.

EXPLORATION

Since Sir Hugh Munro produced his catalogue of Scottish mountains of over three thousand feet in height, many others have explored [the length and breadth](#) of Scotland's Highlands and Islands. The Munros reveal much about Scotland's people and culture, as Webster explains. **Paul Webster:** The Munros is such a big [undertaking](#) that you're going to see so much of Scotland and you're going to come to understand not just where things are, but how places [fit together](#), how things are going to work. You're going to learn about things like the local communities in the Highlands that you probably weren't [aware](#) of at all. And you'll learn about other things that are going on in the hills like [forestry](#) and [deer stalking](#). Hopefully, you'll learn something about the environment and how man's changed the environment, which is a huge thing in Scotland.

MAGICAL QUALITY

Weather conditions can be unpredictable in Scotland, and it is best to be prepared. Webster describes how the seasons transform the Scottish landscape and the Munros themselves. **Paul Webster:** That's kind of what makes it magical in that no hill is ever the same twice. The conditions are always going to be different; a fine summer's day compared to [pigeonholing](#) through deep snow that's [utterly](#) exhausting, where you might have [sprinted up](#) that bit in the summer or something.

TOP TIPS

We then asked Webster for some tips for novice walkers or climbers who would like to begin to 'bag' Munros. **Paul Webster:** The key thing is to understand how much you know, and not to [overreach](#) too much at a time. You really got to have an appreciation for what you're [taking on](#), so a problem would be somebody who is very [blasé](#) and is thinking, "Oh, I'm sure

it's all fine," and hasn't really looked into it or taken on board any of the advice. The one thing that I didn't mention actually that's different about Scotland to elsewhere is that we don't have waymarked paths like they do in Europe, so there's going to be more navigation required in Scotland than what you'd be used to. So you need to use a map and a compass to find your way. So if they're beginners, I would say a great way to do it is to join a local walking club and learn from people who are more experienced. But I would say the key is that you are going to need to learn to read a map and interpret a map. And even if you're using GPS or an app on your phone, you still need to be able to understand and read a map and interpret the contours. The phone doesn't do that for you, although it's a great help.

LANGUAGE LEARNING

The Gaelic language plays a big part of life in the north of Scotland, and in climbing the Munros. The mountain names usually originate from Gaelic, which means that walkers need to understand what they mean and how to pronounce them. **Paul Webster:** They have names in Gaelic, so I think lots of hill-walkers, that's their first exposure to Gaelic names, and they're saying, "Well, how do I say the name of this mountain?" And they haven't got a clue and then they might find out what it means. And they'll learn a little bit about Gaelic and from that, again, you would learn a little bit about the history of the Highlands and how Gaelic might've been suppressed following Culloden and how everything fits together.

LEGACY

So, what would Sir Hugh Munro think if could see the large numbers of people heading out to climb mountains named after him? **Paul Webster:** I don't know but I hope that he would be thrilled — that obviously he was a keen mountaineer, so he must've thought mountaineering was a good thing. So more people doing it is good. I certainly know it's brought so much to my life, it's enriched my life so much that I don't know what I'd be without Scotland's landscape.

THE INACCESSIBLE PINNACLE

The most rugged mountains in Scotland are on the Isle of Skye. There, ranges of bare rock, more jagged and rocky than other mountains in Britain, make for rough walking only suitable for more experienced climbers, or novices with local guides. Almost all the mountains here require some scrambling and use of hands. Among them is the famous Sgùrr Dearg in the Cuillin range. If you manage to reach the summit, you encounter what is known as the Inaccessible Pinnacle (or In Pin), a fin of rock measuring 50 metres (160 feet). The top of the Pinnacle stands at 985.8 metres (3,234 feet) above sea level, which makes Sgùrr Dearg a Munro. However, its status as such is controversial. It is the only Munro with a peak that can only be reached by rock climbing and as such is a hurdle for many Munro baggers. The Pinnacle, which can be quite slippery, was never climbed by Sir Hugh Munro himself. www.walkhighlands.co.uk If you want to know more about this topic, read the article Scotland's Mountains: The Munros.

Glossary

- **blasé** = indifferente, senza entusiasmo
- **bare rock** = roccia nuda
- **pilgrimage** = pellegrinaggio
- **woodland** = bosco
- **undertaking** = impresa
- **fit together** = incastrarsi, combaciare
- **pigeonholing** = incastrarsi, incasellare (sprofondare nella neve)
- **forestry** = selvicoltura, scienze forestali
- **taking on** = intraprendere
- **jagged** = frastagliate
- **the length and breadth** = in lungo e in largo
- **utterly** = decisamente
- **overreach** = esagerare
- **scrambling** = arrampicata
- **haven't got a clue** = non avere idea
- **hurdle** = ostacolo, difficoltà
- **indexed** = catalogare
- **encourage** = incoraggiare
- **aware** = essere consapevoli
- **deer stalking** = appostamento al cervo
- **taken on board** = tenere conto
- **features** = presentare
- **keen** = appassionato, entusiasta
- **compass** = bussola
- **rugged** = aspre
- **slippery** = scivoloso
- **string lots of that together** = combinare
- **sprinted up** = scattare, accelerare
- **waymarked paths** = sentieri segnalati