

Mountaineering Ireland Summer Alpine Meet 2010

Date 3 – 18 July 2010

Venue
Ailfroide, Dauphine Alps, France

Information Pack



Contents

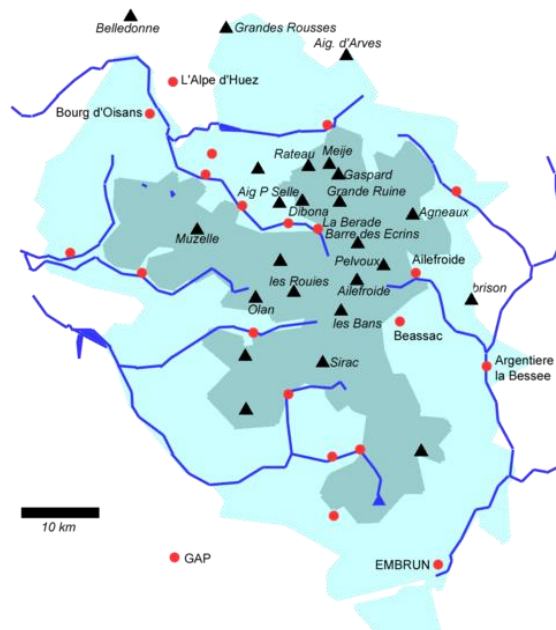
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Where is the Ailefroide?

The location for the 2010 Alpine Meet from July 3rd to 18th is Ailefroide, in the High Dauphiné Alps. Nestled at the foot of the Mont Pelvoux (3946 m) this beautiful, small and rather quiet village is located in the 2nd largest French mountaineering area after Chamonix. The Dauphine Alps (meaning Dolphin) is one of France's foremost areas for all mountain activities with three of France's highest mountains outside of the Mont Blanc massif and many other fabulous peaks and glaciers. With spectacular, high walking passes, more than 100 peaks over 3,000m and steep rock walls, it is hardly surprising that walkers and mountaineers have been attracted to this region for more than a century.

Walking - The area is a haven for walkers wanting to explore some spectacular scenery in France's largest national park, with hundreds of kilometres of well-maintained mountain paths. You can, without having to use a car, take paths leading to refuges, traverse tracks made by chamois and marmots lined with orange lily and martagon flowers, and perhaps if you're lucky spot the Isabelle butterfly, a very rare species.



Rock climbing - Ailefroide is renowned as one of the most beautiful climbing spots in the world. Whether you are a beginner or an experienced climber, whether you prefer long routes or boulders, you'll find something to suit you. The campsite at Ailefroide nestles amongst towering rock walls. If cragging is your thing then this is the place to be.

There are

- Two bouldering circuits
- 5 sport climbing crags (150 pitches, 3c-7b)

- 45 great routes (150-300 m) accessed in not more than ½ hour walking.
- There are 300m rock walls five minutes from the campsite, 600m walls just down the road and beautiful rock ridges in the higher mountains.

Easily accessible rock routes abound in the area whilst the surrounding areas of the Briançonnais, Cerces, Vercors and Devoluy contain numerous multi pitch and single pitch routes, usually on limestone.

Alpinism - The area has some of the finest challenges in the Alps with classic routes to all the major summits: From Ailefroide you can rejoin one of the refuges (Glacier Blanc, Ecrins, Pelvoux or Sele), spend the night and get an early start on one of the prestigious surrounding summits: the Pelvoux traverse and the descent by the Violettes glacier, la Barre des Ecrins, Roche Forio, the Neige Cordier pic, etc.

Via Ferrata - Originating in Italy, these routes are a mixture of hiking and climbing, secured with cables, steps and ladders, they enable you to climb to great heights. For a video of a local via ferrata go to <http://vimeo.com/9215805>. The via ferratas listed below are all accessible from Ailefroide and cater for all different levels:

- **Via ferrata des Vigneaux:** one of the 3 original French via ferrata. Most popular in France, due to its superb location on the road to Vallouise, and the clean lines and exposed nature of the route. It divides mid-way into 2 distinct routes: an easier and a harder option.
- **Via ferrata des Gorges de la Durance:** overlooking the turbulent waters of the Durance, this route offers three suspension bridges and exposed traverses, as well as a zip line. The drop below you and the roar of the river make a really dramatic impression – a true classic. This route is graded as ‘very difficult’.
- **Via ferrata de Tournoux:** this takes you to the Oreac plateau, above Tournoux, (at Col de la Pousterle), where there are lovely views over Vallouise. Suitable for all the family - this route is graded as ‘a little difficult’.
- **Via ferrata du Torrent de la Combe:** specially designed to enable all the family, children included, to explore the valley of the Torrent de la Combe and its Sentier Botanique, with exciting bridges suspended above the torrent.
- **Via ferrata de l’Horloge:** Accessed from L’Argentierre, this one is specially designed for children and beginners, with it’s closely spaced equipment. It is quite easy to complete and is a good place to start before attempting other routes in the area.
- **Via ferrata de la Grande Falaise:** Accessed from the Freissinières Valley, this historic route was the first via ferrata to be created in France. It has length, exposure and the wonderful scenery and light of the Ecrins Mountains. Rated ‘difficult’.

Who is the Meet aimed at?



That's simple – The Meet is for everyone - walkers, rock climbers, and mountaineers of all ages and abilities. This is a wonderful opportunity for **all** Mountaineering Ireland members, new and old to meet established friends and make new ones, go walking, mountaineering and climbing in some of France's most beautiful scenery. The purpose is to gather like minded people together in an alpine area where they can walk, rock climb, boulder and climb snow covered and rocky alpine peaks. The main emphasis of the meet is to have fun, make contact with fellow MI members, and develop skills through getting out in the mountains independently or on one of the Mountaineering Ireland, climbing or walking courses.

The Meet is a wonderful opportunity to share information, learn techniques and develop skills, discover new climbing partners, join walking groups and generally share in the exploration of an alpine area. Many people return to the Meet every year whilst others may be visiting the Alps for the first time, joining more experienced friends or taking part in one of the Mountaineering Ireland courses that supplement the meet. The Meet has a huge, informal, social aspect and musicians, dancers and singers are encouraged to bring their voices, legs and musical instruments to the legendary parties.

The formal courses are designed to introduce you to the skills required for walking and climbing, but with the long-term aim of enabling you to walk and climb independently in alpine areas. There are also courses for people who want to refresh or upgrade the skills learnt on previous meets. A natural progression is for people to participate in a course in the first few years and then return to the Meet as an independent walker/climber.

The IFMGA Mountain Guides and IML Walking Leaders are at the Meet not only to run formal training courses, but also to give advice and share information with everyone on mountain conditions and recommended routes in the area.

Families are welcome!

Families are particularly welcome at the Summer Alpine Meet and Ailefroide is a great base for a wide range of activities for younger people. See the list on the next page.

Other options and family activities

Ailefroide isn't just the mountaineering mecca, it's also a place to relax. There's plenty of interesting places to visit - Argentière's Silver Mine and Museum, wine producing and cave dwelling site at la Vignette, sundials in Vallouise, Pelvoux and Puy St Vincent, old walled town of Briançon.

Pretend to be a real acrobat in the "Parc Aventure" at Puy St Vincent, learn about the flora and fauna at the "Maison du Parc" at Vallouise where the children will love the ludic trail, relax in the swimming pool complex in Briançon or have fun on the summer toboggan in Puy Saint Vincent.

Watersports - Water is everywhere in the Hautes-Alpes! Choose between white water rafting or gently floating downstream while enjoying the scenery or try your hand at sailing on Lac de Serre-Poncon and fishing in the lakes and rivers

Orienteering - Permanent courses are set out just down the valley. The Tourist Office will be happy to give you a map and compass.

Tennis - Courts available 3 minutes walk from the apartment.

Husky trip - Half day trips or whole day trips are available from the resort of 1600.

Quad bikes - Accompanied 1 or 2 hour trips every day departing from ski stations of Puy St Vincent 1600 and Pelvoux (just beyond Vallouise). You can have your own quad bike or sit on the back of a bike driven by one of the guides.

The Honey Farm/House (La Maison du Miel) - The Honey Farm just down the valley offers hot drinks, cakes, nougat, candles and of course numerous types of honey all produced on site. There is also a small museum to inform you all about the production of honey. In summer you can see the bees at work and guided tours are available.

Forest of Thrills (Foret de Sensations) - A nature adventure located above 1600. This is open to all the family, who can hop from one tree to another over 'tyroliennes' (cable pulleys) and rope bridges, swing on lianas and enjoy all sorts of balancing exercises. Different levels of difficulty.

Paragliding - The Pollen Paragliding School in Vallouise offers first flights, introduction and advanced courses. Another way of discovering the resort.

Swimming pools/Water Park - There is a swimming pool located at the small town of l'Argentière la Bessée. There is also a water park in Briançon, about 20 minutes drive from our apartment. It includes indoor and outdoor pools, padding pool, waterslide, water jets and river runs. Sauna, steam room, spa and sun room also provided

Free Information Evening

Are you considering attending the 2010 event but want to ask some questions? If so join us at the Summer Meet information evening at the Great Outdoors Shop, Chatham St, Dublin on Wednesday 7 April 2010 at 7.30pm. This will be an opportunity to meet the new training officer see a presentation of what Ailefroide has to offer and ask questions. Staff from the shop will be present to give an insight into the gear you will need for the meet.

How to get to Ailefroide

Ailefroide is easily accessible by plane, train, bus and car. Turin and Grenoble is the gateway to the area and the French high-speed train (TGV) gets there in less than 3 hours from Paris.

Flying

The nearest airport is Turin International Airport (Caselle), which is located 135km away and takes about 2 hours to drive (10€ in motorway tolls). However Grenoble is only 140 km: 2 hours 15 minutes (no tolls, no motorways). On arrival in Turin or Grenoble we suggest you hire a car which can be organised via your airline's website or independently.

RyanAir fly: <http://www.ryanair.com/>

Dublin to Turin, Grenoble, Marseille and Milan
Shannon to Milan

EasyJet fly: <http://www.easyjet.com/>

London Luton to Grenoble, Turin and Nice
London Gatwick to Milan (Linate and Malpensa), Grenoble, Marseille and Nice
London Stansted to Lyon and Nice

Jet2 fly:

Belfast to Milan

Other airlines

British Airways, Air France, KLM, Alitalia and many other airlines fly into Turin.
By Car

Other nearby airports:

Marseille (Marignane) – 251km: 2 hours 45 minutes (10 Euros in tolls)
Milan (Malpensa, Linate, Bergamo) 279 km: 3 hours (19 Euros in tolls)
Lyon – 234km: 3 hours 30 mins (9 Euros in tolls)
Nice - 240km (4 hours)

The onward transfer options from Turin airport are:

- Hire a car and drive (Click here for driving directions from Turin airport)
- Taxi (expensive)
- Bus and train combination (cheap - about 20€ one way , but takes most of the day)
- Bus times from Turin airport to Turin Porta Nuova train station http://www.sadem.it/orari_tariffe.htm (once on the Sadem bus website click Aeroporti and then Torino Caselle Aeroporto: andata to display a timetable)
- Train times from Turin Porta Nuova train station to Oulx go to <http://www.ferroviedellostato.it>
- Bus times from Oulx to Briançon <http://transports-autocars-excursion-voyages-scolaires.autocar-resalp.com/>

By car

The journey takes approximately 10 hours from Calais.

- From the North: (Grenoble, Lyon or Paris)
- Take the A51 motorway.
- At Grenoble exit at Pont de Claix in the direction of Briançon on the N91.
- From Briançon follow signs towards Gap on the N94 .
- At l'Argentière la Bessée turn right on to the D994 in the direction of Vallouise (turn left if you come from the direction of Gap/Aix en Provence). After Vallouise and Pelvoux you'll reach the village of Ailefroide.

Alternative route from the North: (Grenoble, Lyon or Paris)

- Take the A43 motorway (via the Fréjus tunnel).
- Exit in the direction of Oulx, Montgenèvre.
- From the Montgenèvre col and ski resort follow directions for Briançon.
- From Briançon follow signs towards Gap on the N94.
- At l'Argentière la Bessée turn right onto the D994 to Les Vigneaux.

By Train - The closest train station is located in l'Argentière La Bessée, 18 km from Ailefroide. In Argentière you can take the bus to reach Ailefroide. For timetable information from the UK and ticket purchase contact Rail Europe.

Rail Europe Travel Centre
179 Piccadilly
LONDON W1V 0BA
Tel: 08705 848 848 or 08708 371 371

Camping

Camping municipal d'Ailefroide
05340 Pelvoux

Téléphone: 04 92 23 32 00 or 04 92 23 31 07

Fax: 04 92 23 46 43

At an altitude of 1515m, it is a vast natural campsite with great views and quiet camping places. Facilities include hot and cold water, showers, WC, sinks, electric hook-ups, telephone box, volleyball court and children's games.

The campsite is rather big. You'll find the reception on the left site when you enter the village. If you prefer the more quiet places, just pass through the village across the bridge over the river. Here the campsite is quieter and you can set up your tent almost next to the boulders and climbing site. Officially campfires are not allowed, but in general it's no problem.

The small charming village has a few bars/restaurants and three small shops with limited choice. In general the climate during summer is very nice and sunny with warm days but the nights can be very cold.

There are shops in town where you can buy or rent climbing gear, maps, climbing and bouldering topo-guides of the area.



Maps & Guidebooks

The area is covered by Didier and Richards 1:50,000 map sheet number 6 – Ecrins Haut Dauphine. The general mountaineering guidebook for the area is the 'Alpine Club' - Ecrins Massif - by John Brailsford. The definitive walking guide is 'The Ecrins National Park' by Kev Reynolds. Another walking guide is the Tour of the Oisan: GR54 by Andrew Harper. There are many topo like guide books and these are best acquired in the valley.

Mountain Huts

- **Refuge du Glacier Blanc**

Ailefroide, 05340 Pelvoux. Téléphone: 04 92 23 50 24.

Altitude: 2550 M

Kept from 2 April 12th September 2010

131 beds. Restaurant.

- **Refuge du Sélé**

Keeper: Raoul GAENTZHIRT (Guide de Haute Montagne)

Beds: 76. Restaurant.

Tel: 04 92 23 39 49 (refuge) 04 92 23 37 91 (home)

Email: raoulski@wanadoo.fr

Site: <http://monsite.wanadoo.fr/raoulski>

More info: Starting point for glacier routes on "les Ailefroides" or "le Col du Sélé", this refuge is also a magnificent panoramic view point for hikers.

Attention: The final climb to reach the refuge is a secured rocky ridge, more impressive than dangerous but some rocks may fall.

- **Refuge des Ecrins**

Keeper: Jean FAURE

Spring opening: 4 April to 24 May (+ pentecote weekend)

Summer opening: 6 June to 13 Sept + following week with advanced bookings

Beds: 120. Restaurant.

Tel: 04 92 23 46 66 (refuge) 06 80 23 33 03 (keeper)

Email janofaure@orange.fr

Site: www.refuge-ecrins.com

More info: Starting point for glacier routes on "le Dôme" and "la Barre des Ecrins" (4102 m) amongst others, it's a high mountain refuge by excellence.

If you're not a mountaineer but a very good walker, you can walk up to the refuge and return to the valley in the day.

- **Refuge du Pelvoux**

Ailefroide, 05340 Pelvoux. Téléphone: 04 92 23 39 47.

Altitude: 2724 m

Kept from June to September

58 beds. Restaurant.



Summer Alpine Meet 2010

Workshops & Courses

The workshops and courses have been designed to suit all tastes, budgets and interests. If you are more interested in independent walking, mountaineering or climbing you can also join us at the meet on a camping only option. If you are just booking a place on the campsite only and you are not doing a course please complete the form and send the booking deposit of €20 per person. This covers the discounted camp fees at the campsite.

The below course fees cover **tuition only** and do not include insurance, food, cable car costs, camp fees, accommodation or local travel costs. Course dates are provisional and may be adjusted to meet demand. These will be finalised during May based on bookings received and participants will be advised of any changes.

Mountaineering Ireland reserves the rights to cancel any course should there be insufficient numbers. The closing date for receipt of applications is 30 April 2010.

Terms and conditions apply: see the Summer Meet booking form.

Insurance - You must purchase specialist mountaineering insurance covering helicopter rescue, medical treatment, cancellation and repatriation. The BMC's Alpine & Ski policy is recommended. You must bring all insurance documentation with you on the course.

Reciprocal rights card - The Reciprocity Fund, managed by the Swiss Alpine Club, allows Mountaineering Ireland to supply its members with a card entitling the holder to discounts (normally between 20% and 50%) in the many huts owned by the organizations that are signatories to the agreement (the Alpine Clubs of France, Switzerland, Italy, Germany, Holland, South Tyrol, Austria and Spain). The Reciprocal Rights card is sometimes also recognised by organisations and countries that are not signatories to the charter. For an application form go to <http://www.mountaineering.ie/downloads/index.asp>

- **Half day workshops (also bookable at the meet)**

€ 30/person. Minimum ratio 1:4 - Maximum ratio 1:10.
Start time: TBA at the meet

This year the MI training officer (IFMGA Mountain Guide Alun Richardson) will be offering a series of half-day workshops (weather permitting), based in the camp site, to refresh some of the skills needed to mountaineer safely. These are not meant to replace the full courses and will require previous knowledge and experience. Timings for these will be flexible but will last approximately 3 hours

- **Glacier crossing & crevasse rescue.** 4 & 11 July (morning session)
- **Multi pitch climbing techniques.** 5 & 12 July (morning session)
- **Simple rescues for rock climbing level 1.** 6 & 13 July (morning session)
- **Simple rescues for rock climbing level 2.** 6 & 13 July (afternoon session)
- **Movement skills for rock climbing level 1.** 7 & 14 July (morning session)
- **Movement skills for rock climbing level 2.** 7 & 14 July (afternoon session)
- **Private guiding/tuition**

If there is a group of you, private half or full day sessions can also be booked at €170 for a half day and €280 for a full day.

- **Short duration rock climbing courses**

Each week there will be the following rock climbing courses on offer
Minimum ratio 1:2

- **One day introduction to rock climbing** €100 6:1 ratio. 4/5/11/12 July
- **One day improvers rock climbing** €100 6:1 ratio. 6/7/13/14 July
- **One day multi pitch rock climbing** €200 2:1 ratio. 8/9/15/16 July

- **Longer 3 to 5 day courses**

The following courses are three to five days duration, commencing at 18:00hrs on Saturday 3 or Saturday 10 July, run over a six-day period with one rest day. The rest day will depend on the weather conditions.

5 day Walking tour (to be confirmed: contact the office if you are interested in this option)

€500, maximum ratio 1:6. Dates: 3-9 and 10-16 July

This multi day circular walk will be led by an International Mountain Leader, and will take you through truly spectacular terrain in the Ecrins Massif.

5 day Alpine Adventure Walking

Up to 3 people - €600, 4 people - €550, 5 people - €500, 6 people - €450. ratio 1:6 or 2:8. Dates: 3-9 and 10-16 July

Designed for fit walkers who want to learn how to tackle more technical alpine walks. Such walks might require negotiating ladders, steep tracks, snow slopes, high passes and glacial terrain. You will learn to use an ice axe and basic rope work techniques. Mountain huts will be used for some of the course. A good level of fitness and sense of adventure are essential.

5 day Introduction to Alpine Mountaineering

Up to 3 people - €700, up to 4 people - €650. Ratio 1:4. Dates: 3-9 and 10-16 July. The aim is to introduce the basics of Alpine mountaineering. By the end of

the week you will be familiar with how to safely travel through glaciers, rocky ridges, rock faces and steep snow slopes. Weather permitting you will climb several Alpine peaks and spend at least one night in a Mountain Hut. All those booking on to this course must have a good level of fitness. Some climbing experience is helpful, but not essential.

5 day Intermediate Alpine Mountaineering

€800, ratio 1:2. Dates: 3-9 and 10-16 July

This course is run at a ratio of 1:2 to allow participants undertake more technical routes. The aim is to improve your existing mountaineering skills, focusing on safety, efficiency and independence in the mountains. The course will include; efficient rope work, quick movement on alpine terrain and navigation. All participants must have experience with crampons, ice-axe and a basic knowledge of rope work. Some rock climbing experience and a high level of fitness level are essential.

5 day Advanced Alpine Mountaineering

€900, ratio 1:2. Dates: 3-9 and 10-16 July

This course is run at a ratio of 1:2 to allow participants undertake more technical routes. It is essential that participants have previous Alpine experience and sound knowledge of rope work and belays. Scottish winter mountaineering experience would also be an advantage. We would hope to progress onto multi-pitch climbs on snow and ice at grades of AD to TD.

3 day climbing for the over 50s

€300 ratio 1: Dates: 4-7 July and 11-14 July

An opportunity for those of us who are chronologically challenged to share some time in the mountains together with a mountain guide, walking climbing and mountaineering. You need some fitness but the pace and objectives will be decided amongst the participants. Whatever you do in the alps the fitter you are the more enjoyment you will have. You should aim to do some cardiovascular exercise 2/3 times per week.



How to apply & further information

Booking forms are available to download from the web site. Book as soon as possible to ensure a place on the course, and to allow us to warn the campsite of the numbers arriving. If you are just booking a place on the campsite only and you are not doing a course please complete the form and send the booking deposit of €20 per person. This covers the discounted camp fees at the campsite.

Please contact the training administrator on (+353 1) 625 1117 or Alun on Alun@mountaineering.ie before making any course booking or booking your flights.