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Irish Mountain Log

HILLWALKING • CLIMBING • MOUNTAINEERING



Expedition to Patagonia

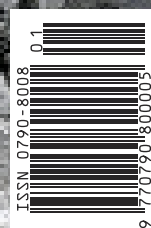
Irish team succeeds on South Avellano Tower

The King's Trail

A remote wilderness route in Sweden



www.mountaineering.ie



SUMMER ALPINE MEET 2018

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- Five-day glacial trek
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website, www.mountaineering.ie

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Wednesday, April 11th, 7.00pm
Alpine Prep Session, Wednesday,
April 25th, 9.15am to 4.00pm.

Need more information? Go to www.mountaineering.ie, email training@mountaineering.ie
or phone the Training Office on (01) 625 1112



Welcome

Céad míle fáilte! The start of another year and already we are well into it, with spring now well upon us. Another year and it brings a new Strategic Plan for Mountaineering Ireland.

The **Draft Strategic Plan 2018-2021** was discussed at the Members' Forum during our Spring Gathering and AGM in the Glen of Aherlow, Co Tipperary. The plan is available for downloading on the website and final comments can be submitted now before it is finalised and published by the Board of Mountaineering Ireland.

This is an important time for your National Governing Body, as the Strategic Plan is the blueprint for the organisation's development over the next four years. Members' engagement with, and ownership of, the Strategic Plan is essential for its successful implementation.

This, the first issue of the *Irish Mountain Log* for 2018, is full of interesting material. The result of the Christmas crossword competition is announced on page 9. There seemed to be a lot of interest in it this year and there were requests that we include a crossword competition more frequently; so we will look at that.

The call for people to submit their favourite views of mountains also got a great response, making judging difficult. The most interesting four images



Our new Strategic Plan will be the blueprint for Mountaineering Ireland's development over the next four years.

submitted are published on pages 6 and 7, and to my mind they are really quite inspiring. Thank you very much to everyone who submitted their favourite view.

The inaugural **Killarney Mountain Festival** was held over the weekend of March 9-11th. It was a great success and very well supported, with some great speakers and films. It augurs well for future such events. (See our report, page 16.)

Finally, in the features, Paul Swail reports on what was a very successful and enjoyable climbing trip to **Patagonia**, when an Irish team made some impressive first ascents (see pages 54-57).

As the evenings get longer and the weather improves, we can all hopefully look forward to getting out more.

Patrick O'Sullivan, Editor

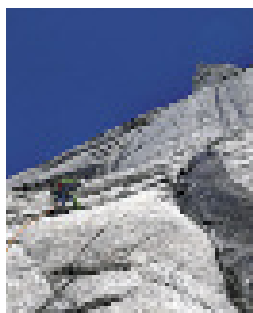


Write for the Log

Contributions of features, news items and photographs for the *Irish Mountain Log* are always welcome and should be sent to the Editor at: iml-editor@mountaineering.ie.

Contributors' guidelines can be downloaded from the Mountaineering Ireland website, www.mountaineering.ie.

To join Mountaineering Ireland and receive four issues of the *Irish Mountain Log* delivered to your door each year, please also go to the website, www.mountaineering.ie.



ON THE COVER

Tackling the first pitch on the East Face route of the South Avellano Tower in Patagonia. See story, page 54.

PHOTOGRAPH
THE IRISH TORRES DEL AVELLANO
CLIMBING EXPEDITION 2018

ISSUE 125

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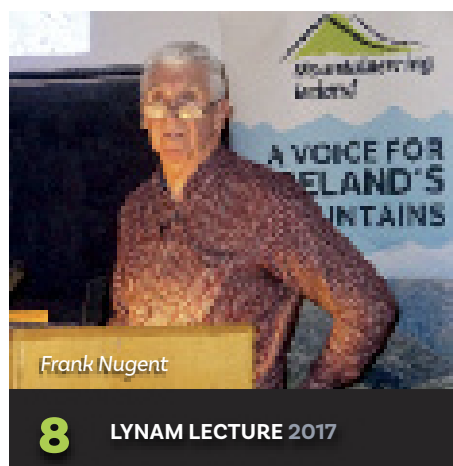
Readers of the *Irish Mountain Log* are reminded that hillwalking and climbing are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept these risks, and be responsible for their own actions and involvement. Mountaineering Ireland publishes and promotes safety and good practice advice and through Bord Oiliúint Sléibhe (BOS, the Irish Mountain Training Board) administers a range of training programmes for walkers and climbers.

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Relaxing at the Erzherzog Johann Hütte during the Coconuts Hillwalking Club's trip to Austria. See story, page 36.

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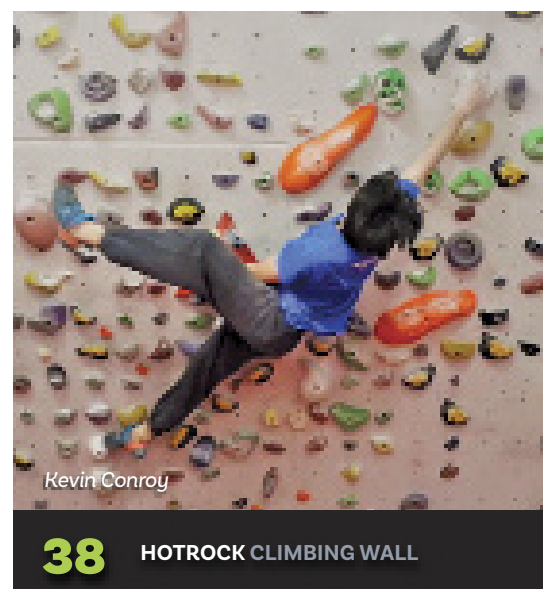
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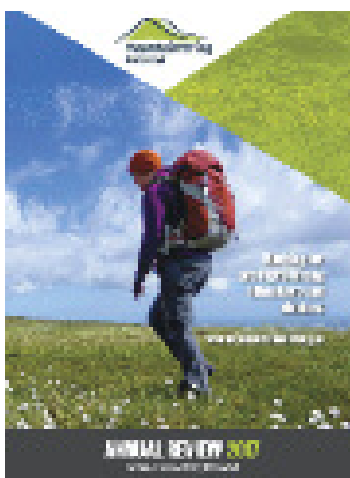
Newsdesk



Planning for the future

Mountaineering Ireland's Draft Strategic Plan 2018-2021

Representing and supporting hillwalking and climbing



Mountaineering Ireland published its draft Strategic Plan (2018-2021) in advance of the Spring Gathering and AGM, which was held in the Glen of Aherlow, Co Tipperary, over the weekend of March 23-25th. The plan was discussed at the Members' Forum on the Sunday, March 25th.

Mountaineering Ireland's purpose is "to represent and support hillwalking and climbing."

Mountaineering Ireland's vision in the new strategy is that hillwalkers and climbers will become more skilled, self-reliant and informed, that access will be improved, and that our mountain landscapes will be valued and protected.

The strategy's aim is to inspire and support hillwalking and climbing throughout the island of Ireland and encourage adventure and exploration in the mountains of the world.

The values expressed in the strategy are:

Adventure

- We find personal challenges in the hills, mountains, crags and climbing walls at whatever level
- We recognise the value of the unknown and the uncertain outcomes of our activities

Personal responsibility

- We take personal responsibility for our actions and we manage the risk involved
- We foster the development of skills among clubs, groups and individuals

Respect

- We respect our wonderful but fragile environment and we are a positive voice for its protection
- We are responsible in how we enjoy access

Well-being

- We enjoy the relationships that flow from our activities
- We appreciate the health benefits, both physical and mental, of our sports

Partnership

- We are committed to advocacy to promote our members' interests
- We recognise that relationships and trust are vital in helping us realise our vision

This challenging new Strategic Plan is available to download on the Mountaineering Ireland website, www.mountaineeringireland.ie. It will be open for final comments for a short period before being finalised and published by the Board of Mountaineering Ireland ■

What's your view?

We asked readers to submit a photo of their favourite landscape and say why it appealed to them. Here are four of the best responses received.

By Helen Lawless

For its size, the island of Ireland possesses an unusually diverse geology, which has been sculpted by episodes of glaciation to leave us with a rich variety of mountain, upland and coastal landscapes, all with regional distinctiveness. These landscapes inspire and attract people to engage in a spectrum of mountaineering activities that range from adrenalin-pumping adventure to relaxation and restoration.

In the last issue, we asked readers of the *Irish Mountain Log* to submit a photograph of their favourite landscape along with a brief note of the qualities that make that view special to them.

Here we show four of the submissions, selected by our judges for how they illustrate the beauty of our mountains and how the supporting comments give an insight into what people appreciate in our mountain and coastal landscapes. Taken together, the words and images show how the mountains afford us some very special experiences.

These, and the other submissions received, confirm the strong connection between the quality of the landscape and scenery, and the quality of our recreation experiences.

Mountaineering Ireland strives to protect Ireland's mountains, and the quality of the experiences we enjoy there, by working towards our vision that Ireland's mountain landscapes will be valued and protected as environmental, cultural and recreational assets ■



Ben Gorm, Co Mayo

"This is Ben Gorm, taken from Bundorragha Pier. I grew up here and my family have farmed sheep on it for over a century. Why is it special? Simply put, it represents home for me. It's the first mountain I ever climbed and is where my love affair with mountains began." – **Geraldine Nee**



Silent Valley, Mournes, Co Down

"Any view from my tent on a Mournes summit would be my favourite. This example is from Doan summit, overlooking Silent Valley Reservoir, and was taken in March 2017. When I get up onto the summits for a night, the stresses of life are gone. It is my reset switch, and that is what makes these views my favourite." – **Seán Branagh**

FURTHER INFORMATION: Read more about Mountaineering Ireland's vision for the future of Ireland's mountains and upland areas at bit.ly/2FJ9tcM or at www.mountaineering.ie/accessandenvironment/EnvironmentalPolicy/default.aspx.



Mount Brandon, Dingle Peninsula, Co Kerry

"This view of Mount Brandon from the Conor Pass near Dingle never ceases to lift my spirits every time, whatever my mood! Having climbed its various slopes and summit many, many times, each providing a totally different experience, this vista invariably whets my appetite for the next trip up this magical mountain." – **Noel O'Neill**



Eastern MacGillycuddy Reeks, Co Kerry

"The view of the eastern Reeks from the top of Carrauntoohil is known to many climbers, but the view captured in this picture is seldom experienced. The eastern Reeks are dusted in snow and tower above a low-lying blanket of soft cloud and into a bright blue sky on a beautifully clear and sunny day." – **Bertie Hickey**

Frank Nugent delivers 2017 Lynam Lecture

By Patrick O'Sullivan

Frank Nugent, the outstanding Irish mountaineer, explorer and author, delivered an enthralling Lynam Lecture to a large and very enthusiastic audience in Trinity College's Davis Theatre on the evening of Thursday, December 7th, 2017.

The Lynam Lecture was inaugurated in 2011 in memory of Joss Lynam (1924-2011), one of Ireland's best-known mountaineers, in recognition of his enormous achievements in hillwalking, climbing and mountaineering in Ireland and overseas over some 60 years. During his lifetime, Joss initiated numerous developments in these areas of our sport in Ireland and he was an inspiration to a number of generations of Irish mountaineers.

Joss Lynam's achievements included many mountaineering expeditions to the Greater Ranges and an outstanding voluntary contribution to the development of adventure sports in Ireland. Joss was known to many Irish and international walking enthusiasts for his many hillwalking guidebooks. He



Frank Nugent delivering his Lynam Lecture in Trinity College, Dublin, in December.

was also the editor of the *Irish Mountain Log* for more than 20 years. Joss continued as the Literary Editor of the *Log* up to the time of his death.

Since it was inaugurated in 2011, the Lynam Lecture has been delivered by leading national and international mountaineers: Harish Kapadia (2011), Dawson Stelfox (2012), Stephen Venables (2013), Clare Sheridan (2014), Ines

Papert (2015), Paul Swail and John McCune (2016). These have been outstanding lectures that have generally reflected on the development of our sport and how it might progress in coming years. This year's lecture by Frank Nugent followed very strongly in that tradition.

Frank knew Joss Lynam very well, having collaborated with him on several initiatives ranging from expeditions to developments in our sport at home. That association and friendship came through strongly in his presentation.

He divided his wide-ranging talk up into various sections. Expeditions with a big 'E', he told us, needed funding over and above the norm because of their importance to national self-esteem. Frank talked about the Irish expeditions to Chang-tse in Tibet (1987) and Manaslu in Nepal (1991), and the lessons learned, which he felt laid the foundations for the successful Everest expedition

in 1993. These earlier expeditions had not reached the summit but the lessons learnt established an expedition model that facilitated the Irish success on Everest.

Frank remembered summit day on Everest in 1993, climbing un-rope high on Everest with Dawson Stelfox. Having problems with his oxygen supply, he decided to abandon his own attempt, so that he wouldn't hinder Dawson's summit bid. That team success increased the prominence of our sport in Ireland and also saw the setting up of the Irish Himalayan Trust by the expedition members so that surplus expedition funds could be used to support future Irish expeditions as well as supporting environmental projects in the Himalaya and the building of a school for a hill community in Nepal.

After Everest, Frank's attention turned to repeating Shackleton's *Endurance* rescue voyage in Antarctica by





Ruth Lynam presents Frank Nugent with a Lynam Lecture medal on the occasion of his talk in Trinity College Dublin last December.

planning the 1997 *South Aris* Expedition with Paddy Barry, Jarlath Cunnane and others. In the *Tom Crean*, a replica they built of Shackleton's *James Caird* lifeboat, they followed Shackleton's track from Elephant Island to South Georgia, and successfully made the first repeat traverse of South Georgia since Shackleton in 1916.

In 2001, Frank, again with Paddy and Jarlath, built *Northabout*, a 50-ft aluminium sailing boat, with which they completed the first Irish navigation of the North-west Passage, sailing from Westport to the Bering Strait. Following his polar exploits, he recorded the achievements of Irish Polar explorers since 1740, in both the Arctic and Antarctic, with his book *Seek the Frozen Lands*.

Frank then went on to talk

about his time as Chair of the Mountaineering Council of Ireland (1997-2000). Among his accomplishments, he listed the employment by MCI of its own staff, opening its own office in the House of Sport, the first MCI Alpine Meet in Ailefroide in 1998 and the Millennium Youth Project 1998-2000. He then talked about the ascents he made in the Alps and Norway following in the footsteps of the Irish mountaineers featured in his 2014 book, *In Search of Peaks, Passes and Glaciers: Irish Alpine Pioneers*, which was shortlisted for the Boardman Tasker Prize for Mountain Literature. Finally, he talked about his trips in recent years, which have included making many first ascents in Greenland and a traverse of the Haute Route.

Frank finished what had

been a most absorbing reflection on his life as a mountaineer and explorer by talking about his recent work as Chair of the Irish Uplands Forum. He closed with a plea to those present, "Who Cares for the Uplands?", saying that

we all need to support local upland groups who are trying to manage our hills sustainably for future generations, something that would have very much been in keeping with all that Joss Lynam valued ■

Crossword competition

The winner of our Christmas crossword in IML 124 was **Enid Hughes** from Swords, Co Dublin. Enid won an Airzone Trekplus rucksack from our crossword sponsor, Basecamp. The solution to the crossword is shown below.



Reviewers wanted

Like to write a book review for the Log?

The book review pages of the *Irish Mountain Log* comprise one of the most popular sections of the magazine. A prerequisite for publishing book reviews is a good pool of reviewers, and the *Log* is always looking for new volunteer reviewers to add to its pool.

You do not need to be a literary critic to review a book for the *Log*. You review a book or guidebook as a reader writing for other readers. Reviews of even the most significant books rarely exceed 500 words, and most reviews are generally between 200-400 words. Ideally, to review a guidebook, you should be familiar with the area covered. To review other books, it should be a topic which interests you or you know something about.

Unfortunately, our reviewers cannot keep the books they review, as all of the books are put in the **Mountaineering Ireland library** so that others can read them.

If you would like to volunteer to join our pool of reviewers, please email our Literary Editor, **Peter O'Neill**, at peter.oneill@ucd.ie, adding a short note outlining your interests – whether hillwalking, climbing, travel, botany, geology, ornithology, or whatever – and the name of your club, if you are a club member.

We email a list of books received for review about six times per year, asking for expressions of interest, and we try to match books to the preferences expressed. We look forward to hearing from you. Thank you ■



Recent advances in mountain rescue messaging systems have improved the response time and efficiency of our mountain rescue teams.

Currently, eleven voluntary mountain rescue teams provide search and rescue services in upland areas across the island of Ireland. Collectively, the teams are represented by **Mountain Rescue Ireland (MRI)**. MRI is a member of the **International Commission of Alpine Rescue (ICAR)**, the international coordinating body for mountain rescue organisations.

When a person is injured or lost in the hills, they or someone who is aware that they are overdue or injured should report the incident by dialling **999** or **112**. The operator who takes the call will then re-direct it to **An Garda Síochána** or the **Irish Coast Guard**, depending on the nature of the call. An Garda Síochána or the Coast Guard will then contact the relevant mountain rescue team and pass on all details available about the callout to the team.

To be able to use SARLOC,

The key to undertaking a rescue mission is getting the location of the casualty. While that is being established, team members will have been alerted by text message, bleeper or a phone call. The team leader assembles a first response team, usually two or three people. The first response team will take essential medical equipment and patient comfort bags and go directly to the casualty's location, when it is established.

Meanwhile, other groups of team members will be assembling and getting ready to go out with the stretcher and any other necessary equipment to the

MHT consists of the following bases:

Donagh MT	North West MHT
Biloei Lough MT	Moore MT
Alm MT	Coastal/Midwest MHT
Galway MHT	Gen of Innes MHT
SA/DA the coast	South Eastern MHT
SE MHT	

All communications during the rescue are conducted by radio. Most teams are now using **Tetra radios**, which use a shared network and make talking to other teams possible from any location in the country.

Once the casualty has received supportive treatment at the location of the incident, the responding team/s will make an evacuation plan. This may involve another service like the **Coast Guards** or the **National Ambulance Service**. The casualty will then be evacuated from the location

Callouts in Ireland in 2017 mostly happened during the summer holiday months, when more people were out on the hills. The duration of the callouts ranged from one hour to six hours. Some went well beyond that, lasting several days in the case of one search operation.

Mountain rescue volunteers are committed 24/7/365 to participating in rescue missions. Funding is always an issue for teams and, in addition to the time spent on rescues or on practice exercises in the hills, much time also has to be spent by volunteers fundraising for their teams.

Mountain Rescue Ireland was delighted when, in 2017, the Minister for Rural and Community Development, Michael Ring TD, announced a scheme to support first-response rescue services under the **CLÁR** programme. The programme allows the mountain rescue teams to seek funding to replace vehicles and equipment approaching the end of their operational life. It is certainly welcomed by the team members, who give so much of their own time to providing this essential first-response service ■



Sligo Mountain Rescue Team training with the Irish Coast Guard.

Volunteers restore old hill path

Members of Hillwalkers Club clear an overgrown path at Oldboleys in Glencree.

By Brian Madden (Hillwalkers Club)

Last July, on the last leg of a Hillwalkers Club hike from Prince William's Seat to Glencree, in the Dublin and Wicklow Mountains, we took the path from Cloon Wood to Oldboleys Quarry. We found that about half of this path, which is about 2km long, was seriously choked with gorse: luxuriant, virile and colourful, but savagely prickly. Everyone agreed that something should be done about it; otherwise, we could lose the path permanently to nature's territorial ambitions.

Jim Barry got working on the legal and safety end of things. The National Parks and Wildlife Service, Andrea Webb of Wicklow Mountains National Park, the landowners and Helen Lawless of Mountaineering Ireland were all very helpful. The cutting could take place between September 1st and March 1st and would be covered under our club's insurance with Mountaineering Ireland.

On Saturday, November 11th, 2017, eight of us gathered at Oldboleys to hack the gorse. A second work session took place on Saturday, November 25th, and once again we had a work party of eight. The weather was perfect on both occasions. Everyone worked hard and, more importantly, enjoyed themselves. Loppers turned out to be the most useful tool, with a bowsaw needed occasionally. Everyone had working



Members of the Hillwalkers Club and the Ramblers gather to cut gorse in February.



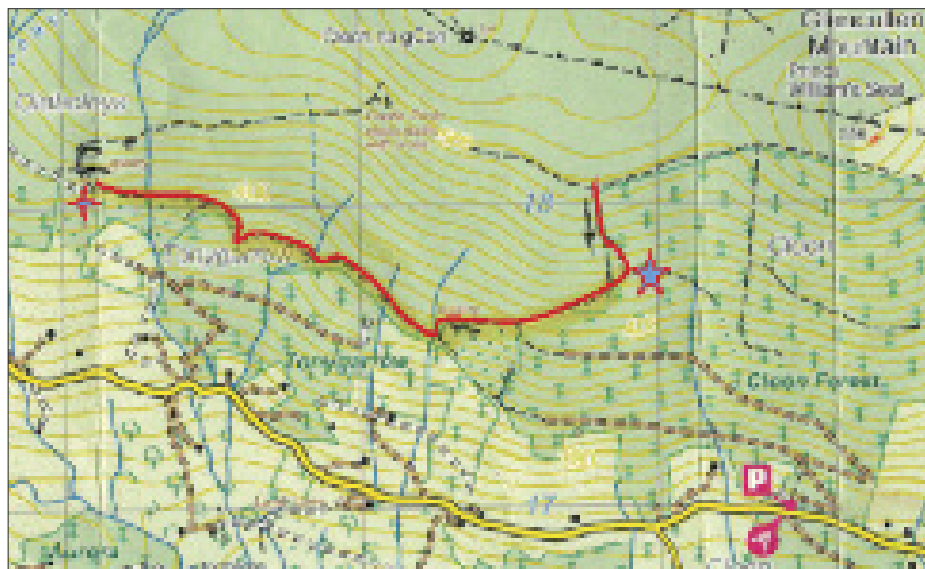
The path, overgrown with gorse.

gloves and goggles for eye protection.

During our third session, a group from the Irish Ramblers Club passed by and offered to help. True to their word, four members of the Ramblers joined us for our fourth and final cutting day on February 17th, 2018.

The map shows the track marked in red. It starts at Oldboleys Quarry (on the left) and finishes at Cloon Forest (at the star on the right). Hikers can continue to the top of the forest and head for Prince William's Seat and the Wicklow Way, as indicated.

The greatest reward for our labours would be to see lots of walking groups making use of this most interesting path. Get out and enjoy it before the gorse grows back! ■



The cleared track, marked in red on a scan of one of EastWest Mapping's detailed maps.



The path, cleared of gorse.



Men's Sheds group on a walking exercise.

Get Ireland Walking rolls out more projects

There is a lot going on in the Get Ireland Walking initiative. The following is a snapshot of some of our work, which includes some of the programmes we are currently offering and how, through a partnership approach to delivery, we are getting the job done. Read on....

By Jason King (Get Ireland Walking)

Ireland lights up with the GAA

The GAA, in partnership with RTE's *Operation Transformation*, invited community champions to attend a Get Ireland Walking **training day** in Croke Park in early January. The Get Ireland Walking team was asked to coordinate and deliver training to 160 attendees, to empower and upskill them to engage with their local communities to set up and support walking groups in their localities.

We delivered four workshops: **The Benefits of Walking** by Michelle Hardie-Murphy of Get Ireland Walking; a **Fitwalk** by Majella



Fennelly; Cormac MacDonnell from Sport Ireland intrigued the attendees with different **locations to walk**; and Nollaig Cruise, one of our County

Walking Facilitators, delivered training on **engaging and motivating groups**. The event was also attended by the experts from the *Operation*

Transformation show.

The overall day was a huge success and the feedback we received was fantastic.

Get Ireland Walking supports the delivery of many walking programmes to a variety of population groups across the country. These include our Active Community Walking Programme, the Men's Sheds Walking Project, the Schools Walking Project and the Woodlands for Health initiative. The following explains these initiatives a little bit more:

Active Community Walking Programme

The Active Community Walking Programme commenced a number of years ago as a pilot. It has grown into a nationwide



initiative and has had a very positive impact on many people's lives. It addresses physical inactivity, improves mental health and wellbeing, and promotes walking within communities that are generally inactive. Importantly, it connects people, and that is a huge benefit!

We have found that the social element is very important; people make new friends and explore new places, and groups love to finish off their walk with a cup of tea, sharing stories of the walks and the fun that they had along the way.

The **Local Sports Partnerships** facilitate these groups on the ground. If you want more information, contact your **Local Sports Partnership Coordinator**, who can link you to a group within your local area. A full list of all the Local Sports Partnerships can be found on the Sport Ireland website, www.sportireland.ie.

Schools Walking Programme

Get Ireland Walking values the participation it gets from children and young people in its programmes. Children love to be active in the outdoors, and we understand that it's hard for them to sit at desks all day long. We want to support children to learn through play and activity, too.

Get Ireland Walking has developed an **Active School Walkway pack** that includes walkway signs that a school can erect on their grounds. In addition, the pack includes useful information on how best to use the walkway before, during and, indeed, after school. Posters are also provided that can be placed on school noticeboards, and information about challenges and events that can be

incorporated into **Active School Week** in April and the **European Week of Sport** in September.

This initiative will be formally launched this April and we look forward to circulating the packs with our partner, **Active School Flag**. Watch this space for further information!

Men's Sheds Project

Get Ireland Walking has partnered with the **Irish Men's Sheds Association** to support 'Shedders' in becoming more active through walking. Like the schools initiative, this project is supported by the Dormant Accounts Fund.



Get Ireland Walking coordinates workshops in the Sheds for men and informs them about the benefits of walking, how they can incorporate walking into their day and the value of walking within a group.

Walking and talking is something we find that men enjoy, and the shoulder-to-shoulder approach seems to sit well with them. It's all about having a bit of fun and craic with your mates, exploring new areas such as woodlands and forests, and tapping into the skill-set within the Sheds. These men are very creative and valued



within their communities, and they can offer so much to a local walking agenda.

Workshops kick off in Cork in the coming weeks and will include a variety of different approaches to walking. The **Irish Heart Foundation** has trained local facilitators in Cork (as part of Cork Local Sports Partnership) to deliver "Get into Walking" work-shops in sheds. These facilitators will then aim to engage the shedders in an eight-week walking programme. We are looking forward to this immensely and can't wait to get started.

Woodlands for Health

Following the successful pilot of a **Woodlands for Health** initiative by Coillte and the HSE in Dublin, Get Ireland Walking got on board and is now expanding the initiative to other counties.

Positive mental health is something we all try to attain, but for some who are experiencing life's more difficult challenges, it's not so easy. Motivation to get out and be active can be a huge challenge, and although many know the benefits of this approach it is difficult to make this first step.

With the support of **Mental Health Ireland** as a service provider, participants on this

programme will be fully supported. This will include transport to a suitable location with qualified and trained personnel, who will support the walks when they get there.

Again, there is a big social factor to this, and walking and talking together can have a hugely positive impact on people's mental health. The research suggests that walking within green spaces has a more positive impact on our mental health than walking in general. It's fair to say that we always feel better after a walk than we did before we went out and, when walking in forests and woodlands, this is greatly enhanced.

The findings from the previous programme suggest this, and Get Ireland Walking is fully committed to supporting the users of mental health services. Some previous participants have gone on to set up their own walking groups or joined other groups within their local area. That is what it's all about. All finished off with that cup of tea or coffee.

For further information, contact us on **(01) 625 1109** or send an email to jason@getirelandwalking.ie with any questions or queries you may have. Happy walking! ■



AUTHOR: Jason King is Programme Manager of Get Ireland Walking. **Get Ireland Walking** is an initiative of Sport Ireland, supported by Healthy Ireland and hosted and delivered by Mountaineering Ireland.

FIND OUT MORE: To find out more about Get Ireland Walking, visit the website www.getirelandwalking.ie.



Beenkeragh, Ireland's second highest mountain. Its Irish name, Binn Chaorach, means 'mountain of sheep'.

Agri-environment scheme for MacGillycuddy Reeks

By Trisha Deane, Rural Recreation Officer, Kerry

The Department of Agriculture recently announced that the **MacGillycuddy Reeks Mountain Access Forum** (through lead partner **South Kerry Development Partnership CLG**) has been successful in its application for a locally-led agri-environment scheme under the **European Innovation Partnership Initiative**.

The project title is: "Maintaining and Increasing Sustainable Agricultural Practices for the Conservation and Restoration of Upland Habitats in the MacGillycuddy Reeks through Collective Management Regimes."

The aim of the project is to develop practical, achievable actions and innovative solutions to address the issues facing farmers in the MacGillycuddy Reeks, through

the development of a four-year pilot scheme for farmers to restore, preserve and enhance the biodiversity of this unique Natura 2000 area. Landowners will be invited to participate in the scheme.

In order to fully achieve the project objectives, 1,500 hectares of upland habitats in the MacGillycuddy Reeks will need to be under the scheme.

You can keep up-to-date with this project, and with the

MacGillycuddy Reeks Forum monthly **photo competition** and other initiatives, via the Forum's website **macgillycuddyreekskerry.com** and its Facebook page, **macgillycuddyreeksforum**.

You can also become a **Friend of the Reeks** for as little as €10 by visiting the website and, in return, you will receive a car sticker to publicly show your appreciation of this beautiful resource ■

Birds of prey are nesting

Climbers are asked to respect nesting birds on cliffs and crags.

By Helen Lawless

Crags and cliffs provide suitable nest sites for **ravens** and birds of prey such as **peregrine falcons** and **kestrels** in many areas. These birds are now nesting on crags in the Burren, Wicklow and other coastal and upland sites across the country.

Climbers who come across signs such as the one shown, or who sense that they are disturbing, or might disturb, nesting birds are asked to respect the birds and climb elsewhere.

Signs of disturbance include agitated behaviour, alarm calls and birds flying out of the nest and not returning. Disturbance places stress on the birds and interrupts their ability to incubate their eggs, and also to hunt and supply their chicks adequately.

If you notice any suspicious behaviour close to a nest site, please report it to the local **wildlife ranger** at **www.npws.ie/contact-us** or, in Northern Ireland, the **PSNI** on **101**.

Vigilance and responsible behaviour by climbers will

allow these impressive birds to breed successfully ■

RECORDS WANTED:

The Irish Raptor Study Group is seeking breeding records for all upland bird-of-prey species. Reports should be submitted to **Irene O'Brien, secretary@irsg.ie**, with as much detail as possible, ideally including grid reference, townland, county and habitat type.





Alex Schweikart on pitch two of The Viasa 45 Gully, Fair Head, Northern Ireland. Photo: Ray Wood

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Killarney festival

By Patrick O'Sullivan

The inaugural Killarney Mountain Festival was held over the weekend of March 9-11th, in association with **Kendal Mountain Festival**. Mountaineering Ireland had a stand at the festival, where Mountaineering Ireland's Membership Development Officer, Ruth Whelan, as well as volunteers, dealt with enquiries from the public.

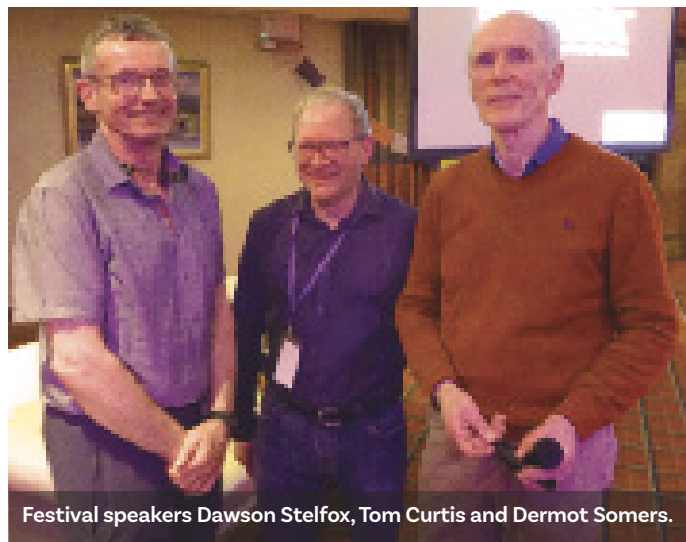
The festival was designed to celebrate the wonderful surrounds of Killarney. There was a programme of over forty events during the weekend, including guest speakers, outdoor adventure films, guided walks, a park run, a photographic exhibition, an opportunity to climb on Ireland's highest climbing wall, and an interactive exhibition with SARDA Ireland (the national search & rescue dogs association) and the Kerry Mountain Rescue Team.

The line-up of guest speakers at the festival was

impressive. The opening speaker on the Friday evening was the Scottish mountaineer and author **Cameron McNeish**.

On the Saturday, the speakers included **Trisha Deane**, Regional Recreation Officer for Kerry, who spoke about the work of the Reeks Access Forum.

Pat Dawson, SW Regional Manager of the National Parks and Wildlife Service



Festival speakers Dawson Stelfox, Tom Curtis and Dermot Somers.



Killarney Mountain Festival's basecamp.

(NPWS), talked about the Killarney House restoration project, which he had been involved in before his move to the NPWS and which was clearly still close to his heart. Following the completion of extensive restoration and reconstruction work there in

2016, the house and gardens have been restored to their rightful place as the gateway to Killarney National Park.

Dermot Somers, Dawson Stelfox and **Tom Curtis** gave an entertaining presentation about their experiences climbing the six great North Faces in the Alps - the Grandes Jorasses, the Eiger, the Piz Badile, the Petit Dru, the Cima Grande di Lavaredo and the Matterhorn.

They were followed by mountaineer **Andy Cave**. On the Sunday, the speakers included **Mike O'Shea** and **Stephen Venables**.

The first Killarney Mountain Festival was a very successful event with some great speakers and some great mountain films. It was very well attended and augurs well for future mountain festivals there ■

George Ponsonby on the second pitch of "Mizzen Star" E2 5b



Fair Head Meet 2018

The annual meet at Fair Head, Co Antrim, will take place this year on the weekend of June 1-3rd.

By Paul Swail

The 2018 Fair Head Meet will take place over the weekend of June 1-3rd. It will follow the usual format of camping at Sean McBride's farm (£5 per person per night), a guest speaker on the Saturday night, and lots of climbing and laughs during what will hopefully be a weekend of good weather!

This year's guest speaker will be the North Wales-based climber **Calum Muskett**. He will be talking about his progression from the crags of North Wales to the big rock and ice-faces of the Alps, Yosemite and Patagonia, as well as his motivation for climbing them. Some of the stories he will tell will include his climbs on Paciencia on the Eiger; new routing in Patagonia; and an assortment of shorter tales about successes and failures.

This year's Fair Head Meet will be hosted by the **Dal Riada Climbing Club** and is supported by **Rab** (outdoor clothing and climbing gear manufacturers) and **Mountaineering Ireland** ■

Irish Uplands Forum

A summary of the Irish Uplands Forum's activities during 2017.

By Georgia MacMillan

The **Irish Uplands Forum (IUF)** is a voluntary organisation dedicated to promoting a partnership approach to the sustainable management of Ireland's upland areas. Mountaineering Ireland has been a member of the forum since its foundation in 1995.

In April 2017, the IUF held its annual general meeting and networking event in Kinnitty, Co Offaly, hosted by **Frank Bergin** and the **Slieve Blooms Walking Group**. The event was well attended and the programme featured guest speakers **Áine Macken-Walsh** (Senior Research Officer at Teagasc) and **Michael Starrett** (CEO, The Heritage Council).

The IUF's *Uplands Community Study*, published in 2016, recommended the provision of multi-year funding for active upland community groups and the deployment of a national Upland Partnership Co-

ordinator. The IUF was pleased to see the appointment, in October 2017, of **Mary Mulvey** as **Uplands Network Co-coordinator**. Mary is contracted by the **Heritage Council** and will be reporting to a newly-formed **Upland Partnership Network Management Board**. Her role is to liaise with and support local upland groups to plan and sustainably manage their local mountain environment with the aid of state bodies, local authorities and NGOs.

The IUF reviewed its governance during 2017. It created **four sub-committees** to manage key focus areas and is currently updating its Constitution and developing a *Members' Handbook*.

In November 2017, the IUF made a presentation to **Colin Murphy** to commemorate his retirement from the Board. Colin was made an Honorary Member of the Irish Uplands Forum for his long association with and service to the forum as well as to the **Wicklow Uplands Council**.

In December, the IUF announced a small **grant opportunity** of €500 for a research project concerned with Irish mountains (defined for the purpose of the project as any area above 150m in altitude). Eligible topics include:

- Physical environment of mountains (particularly water);
- Natural environment of mountains (particularly in relation to farming and recreation);
- Cultural environment of mountains (evidence of past use, and people who live, work or recreate in mountain areas);
- Any other topic related to the centrality of mountains in the provision of ecosystems



Frank Bergin (Slieve Bloom Walking Group), right, with Michael Monahan, Catherine Bergin, Georgia MacMillan and Ged Dowling on the Irish Upland Forum AGM walk in Kinnitty Castle Forest in April 2017.

and cultural services.

The first of two opportunities to apply for this grant closed on January 31st; there will be a further opportunity later in 2018 (deadline: August 1st).

An eventful 2017 closed with a highlight for the IUF as the Chairperson, **Frank Nugent**, was invited to present the **Joss Lynam Lecture** for Mountaineering Ireland in December. Frank's lecture, "*Of Mountains and Wild Places*," was a wonderful blend of memoir, history, science and superb photographic records of Frank's exploits with many hardy comrades, including on the first Irish expedition to Everest; on the South Georgia expedition in the steps of Shackleton and Crean; and on his journey through the Northwest Passage in the footsteps of Franklin and his crew, as well as on a range of other climbs.

Frank finished his lecture by summarising the work of the IUF and by making a plea, "Who cares for the uplands?", to the audience.

Membership of the IUF is growing steadily, with more than 30 groups affiliated in 2017, spread over the island of Ireland. This shows increasing interest and support for the sustainable management of upland areas. Individual membership is also available.

It is important that the membership of the IUF is reflective of those who care for and represent the uplands.

IUF's 2018 events include:

- **April 7th**: Annual General Meeting, The Club House, Castlegregory, Dingle Peninsula, Co Kerry.
- **October 4-5th**: Autumn Conference, "Innovation and Partnerships in the Uplands." Mulranny Park Hotel, Mulranny, Co Mayo ■



Frank Nugent (Chairperson, Irish Uplands Forum) makes a presentation to retiring Board member Colin Murphy.



AUTHOR: Georgia MacMillan is Mountaineering Ireland's representative on the Irish Uplands Forum.

TO JOIN: The **Irish Uplands Forum** encourages readers with an interest in the sustainable management of upland areas to join through their website www.irishuplandsforum.org or by contacting membership@irishuplandsforum.org.

‘Get Climbing’ programme expands and grows

Get Climbing is a social inclusion project working in disadvantaged areas to engage young people.

By Gráinne O’Brien, Get Climbing Project Coordinator

Mountaineering Ireland’s Get Climbing programme continues to grow, with additional funding now secured from Sport Ireland to ensure that the programme can run until the end of 2018.

New groups are continuing to feed into the programme, with participants from **Killinarden Community Centre Youth Project** and **Firhouse Community College** among the latest recruits.

Get Climbing now runs weekly club nights at **Awesome Walls** and the **Dublin Climbing Centre**, where participants who have completed the programme can continue to climb each week and develop their skills. Recently, we have had some guest coaching sessions with **Michael Duffy** and **Ricky Bell**, which have proved very popular with participants.

Club nights

As **Brandon** from Finglas explains, “I remember first doing rock-climbing and it killed my arms, hands and fingers. I was extremely tired afterwards, but

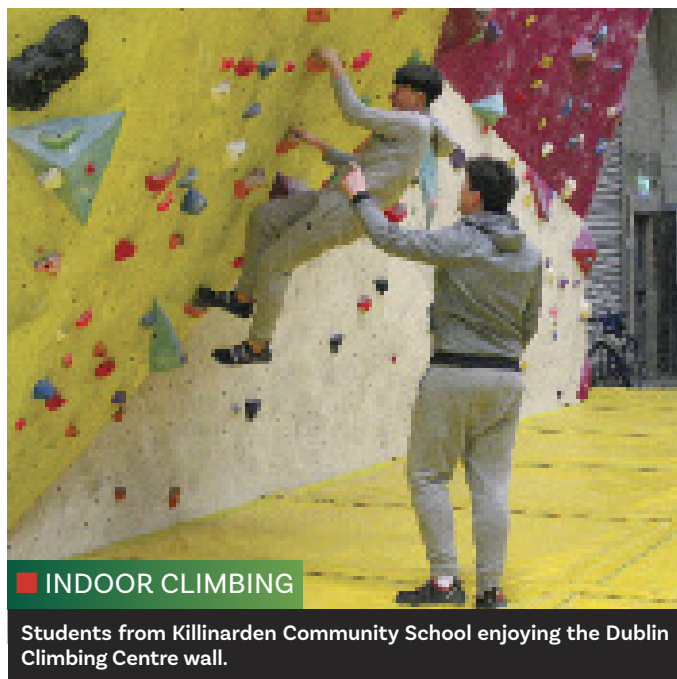
now, after a few months of it, I have no problem climbing. I can even do certain climbs I wasn’t able to do before, after being taught some tricks about how to climb.

“My favourite time by far has been the week when Michael Duffy came in to teach us. He was so interesting and easy to talk to, and he went into so much detail, demonstrating techniques to us so that it was much easier for us to understand and learn.”

Cian from Finglas says, “I always look forward to the Wednesday evenings when we go climbing, because I really like climbing, solving problems while climbing and being taught new techniques to overcome the problems on certain routes. I can already see myself getting better, and that wouldn’t happen if the lessons were much more than €3, because it wouldn’t be as easy to go weekly.”

Plans for spring

There will be three teams from the Get Climbing programme representing their



INDOOR CLIMBING

Students from Killinarden Community School enjoying the Dublin Climbing Centre wall.

schools at the **Schools Climbing Competition** in Awesome Walls in March.

In addition, plans are underway for an **outdoors climbing day** in spring.

We are also expanding the programme to include groups at **Gravity Climbing Centre** and at **Activate Waterford**. We are looking forward to working with these centres in 2018 ■

CONTACT: For more information on the Get Climbing project, please contact Mountaineering Ireland’s office at 01 625 1115.



Matthew from Finglas receives coaching tips from Michael Duffy.

Wayfarers’ Four Peaks Challenge, May 25-27th, 2018

The **Wayfarers Hiking Club** is inviting Mountaineering Ireland members, club or individual, to join them as they undertake the Four Peaks Challenge over the last weekend in May, to raise funds for the charity **Concern**.

The organiser of the challenge is **PJ Howell**, Chairperson of the Wayfarers, who has served as a volunteer with Concern in Bangladesh, Uganda and Lebanon.

A busload of thirty Wayfarers and friends will leave Dublin at 6.30am on Friday, May 25th, returning around midnight on Sunday, May 27th, having summited (all going well) on the highest peak in each province in the following order:

(1) Friday, May 25th, 12.00 noon: **Carrauntoohil** from Cronin’s Yard. (2) Saturday, May 26th, 9.00am: **Mweelrea** from Dadreen. (3) Sunday, May 27th, 7.00am: **Slieve Donard** from Newcastle car park. (4) Sunday, May 27th, 4.00pm: **Lugnaquilla** from Fenton’s Pub.

Each participant will raise a minimum of €200 for Concern.

Mountaineering Ireland members are invited to join the challenge for any of the hikes, with a suggested donation of €25, payable in cash on the day to PJ Howell ■

FIND OUT MORE: For further information, contact **PJ Howell** at 1pjhowell@gmail.com or on **087 259 7658**.

Club Training Officers meet in Clonmel

By Greg Kenny, Club Training Officer, Peaks Mountaineering Club

Peaks Mountaineering Club, based in Clonmel, hosted the first Regional Club Training Officers' Meeting of this year in Clonmel in January.

Invitations to attend were sent to all hillwalking clubs in the Munster area. Despite the extremely poor driving conditions on the evening, the meeting was very well attended, with more than fifty representatives present from eleven clubs from as far apart as Wexford and Tralee.

In his opening address, the Chairperson of the Peaks club, **Ray Prendergast**, welcomed **Jane Carney** (Mountaineering Ireland's Training Officer) and **Helen Lawless** (Mountaineering Ireland's Hillwalking, Access & Conservation Officer).

The topics discussed during the course of the evening were many and varied, and included such items as ways to encourage new members to join hillwalking clubs; skills



Jane Carney and Helen Lawless of Mountaineering Ireland (both in blue tops) with some of those who attended the Regional Club Training Officers' Meeting in Clonmel in February.

training within the club setting; the various resources available to hillwalking clubs through Mountaineering Ireland; and how Mountaineering Ireland can be of assistance to clubs in their development. One topic that got a lot of attention was how hillwalking could be promoted within secondary schools.

Helen Lawless gave a very interesting presentation on the need for a more responsible attitude towards the recreational use of the upland

regions. She gave details of how mass tourism projects and new windfarm developments were having such a negative and damaging impact on some of the most scenic mountain regions. She also highlighted the need for greater communication between the hillwalking community and the landowners of these special and fragile places.

Overall, it was a very successful evening, enjoyed by those in attendance. These

meetings are important events for a number of reasons: as well as bringing hillwalkers from different clubs in the region together to discuss various topics of interest and relevance to them and their clubs, they also allow the membership at large to meet the full-time officials within the Mountaineering Ireland administration and be brought up to date with the most recent news and developments ■

Articles sought for historical mountaineering journal



By Declan O'Keeffe

In 2001, Mountaineering Ireland established the **Irish Mountaineering and Exploration Historical Society (IM&EHS)**

in order to further interest in the rich history of Irish mountaineering and exploration. The society published two issues of a journal in 2002 and 2005, which were edited by the late Joss Lynam. They were well received and contained much of historical importance in the field. The journal was successfully

revived in 2012 with Volume 3. Volume 4 followed in 2015. Plans are now afoot to produce a fifth issue later this year.

As with its predecessors, the journal will include fresh research as well as articles published elsewhere in order that, in Joss' words, 'the IM&EHS Journal...be recognised as the best source of information on our history [and] that all important articles...be found in it.'

We are always interested in getting new material for the journal. If you are interested in writing an article on an appropriate subject (or already have done so, even if already published elsewhere), please contact the editor, Declan O'Keeffe, at caldeno@gmail.com ■

Staff departures

Ruth Carson, Training Administrator and Website Development Officer, and **Gráinne O'Brien**, Project Coordinator, Indoor Climbing/Social Inclusion Project, have decided to leave Mountaineering Ireland to take on new career challenges.

Michelle Hardy-Murphy, National Development Officer, Get Ireland Walking, and **David Gaul**, Project Coordinator, Schools Walking Project, have also decided to move on.

We thank them all sincerely for the commitment and expertise they demonstrated in their work, which will be missed. We wish them well in their future careers ■

The ultimate tick list? Be tick aware!

Some ticks carry the bacterial infection that causes Lyme disease, a debilitating illness.

By Dr Patrick O'Sullivan

From spring to autumn, anyone who spends time walking in grasslands or woods in Ireland should be vigilant for tick bites. Ticks are tiny, insect-like creatures that feed on the blood of birds and mammals, including humans. A small proportion of ticks carry a bacterial infection that causes **Lyme disease**, or Lyme borelliosis. This bacterium may be transmitted to humans when they are bitten.

In a minority of people who are infected, Lyme disease causes debilitating heart and nervous system disorders. It can also cause arthritis, with pain and swelling in the big joints. It is estimated that there are now at least 50-100 cases of Lyme disease in Ireland each year.

Symptoms

Many infected people have no symptoms at all. The commonest evidence of infection is a characteristic red **'bull's-eye' rash** that occurs in 80-90% of infected people. This rash develops between three days and a month after a

tick bite and spreads outwards from the initial bite site. It can last up to a month.

A small, red bump often appears at the site of a tick bite or tick removal but it resolves over a few days. This is normal after a tick bite and does not indicate Lyme disease.

People with the infection also complain of flu-like symptoms such as headache, sore throat, neck stiffness, fever, muscle aches and general fatigue. Occasionally, there may be more serious symptoms involving the nervous system, the heart, the joints or other tissues.

Complications following Lyme disease are uncommon and tend to occur some time after initial infection. They are common in people who did not realise they had been infected or who did not receive treatment initially. They may affect different parts of the body, including the joints, with swelling and pain in large joints; the heart, with inflammation of the heart muscle (myocarditis) and irregularities in the heart rhythm; the eyes, with



LYME DISEASE

The 'bull's-eye' rash of Lyme disease on arm of five-year-old girl.

conjunctivitis and eye pain; and the nervous system, with numbness and weakness, meningitis/encephalitis and Bell's palsy, a facial paralysis.

Prevention

Currently, there is no vaccine available for humans. There was one in use, but it was withdrawn in 2002. Therefore, the best prevention is to avoid tick bites.

People who spend time walking where sheep or deer are present in the countryside can prevent tick bites by:

- covering up by wearing long trousers, long-sleeved shirts, a hat and boots when walking in long grass, bracken or woods;
- tucking the ends of their trousers into their socks, or wearing gaiters;
- using a DEET-containing insect repellent on exposed skin.

At the end of your walk, you should check your skin (particularly in the skin folds) and hair for ticks. If you find any, you should remove them as carefully as possible, trying not to leave any of the mouth-parts, which may break off. Ideally, tweezers should be used to remove the tick and its mouth-parts by gripping it as close to the skin as possible. When practicable, the skin where the tick was attached should be washed with soap

and water. The area should then be checked from time to time over the following few weeks for any redness or swelling.

Removing a tick within 24-48 hours of it biting you should prevent transmission, as all the evidence suggests that ticks need to be attached and feeding for quite some time (as long as 48 hours, according to some authorities) before there is a risk of becoming infected. In addition, in Europe generally only 10-15% of the ticks that transmit Lyme disease are infected with the causative bacterium, *Borrelia burgdorferi*.

Anyone who develops the typical bull's-eye rash (erythema migrans), which occurs in 80-90% of infected tick-bite cases, or any other symptoms, such as fever, chills, headaches, stiff neck, fatigue, muscle aches or joint pains, should go to their family doctor and explain that they have been bitten by a tick.

Only a minority of ticks (10-15%) carry this infection. If a tick is removed within 48 hours, the risk of infection is low. Once diagnosed, Lyme disease can be treated by using antibiotics. Ignored and untreated, the infection may go on to cause severe debilitation and chronic health problems ■

➤ Further information about Lyme disease can be obtained from the national Health Protection Surveillance Centre, at www.hpsc.ie/A-Z/LymeDisease.



The dog (or castor bean) tick, *Ixodes ricinus*, common in Ireland.

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Mountaineering Ireland continues to provide the book service previously operated by Joss Lynam. We can supply you with guidebooks and maps to almost any part of the world.

For the walker, there is a large collection of Cicerone guides and books, or the wider selection of books and guides distributed by Cordee which also includes many climbing guides. Books reviewed in the Irish Mountain Log can usually be purchased through Joss Books with a members' discount. To place an order, ring the Mountaineering Ireland office on (01) 6251115 or email info@mountaineering.ie.



Joss Books



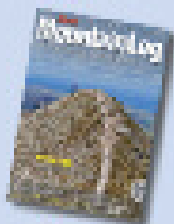
Irish Mountain Log

Vacancies on editorial team

The Irish Mountain Log editorial team needs new members. We have vacancies for various roles, including News Editor and Features Editor.

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Winter Meet 2018

Our Winter Meet in February was based in Onich, Scotland.

By Ruairí English

If you are thinking about broadening your experience, learning more and pushing yourself a bit, then I strongly recommend that you sign up for Mountaineering Ireland's next Winter Meet in Scotland.

This year's Winter Meet in Onich was my first trip to the Scottish Highlands and, while we had some luck with the weather, this being Scotland, we also got battered and blown in full white-out conditions. This is where your skills are tested, under full supervision from qualified personnel, if you've signed up for one of the courses. I've climbed and hiked in all conditions in Ireland but this is climbing at another level; it was a brilliant experience and certainly a learning one.

The 'après-climb' is something you might not think about too much, but this part of the meet was as vital and as entertaining as the climbing itself. Assessing avalanche forecasts, understanding weather forecasts and route choices are based on a number of factors, and when done with like-minded people, full of stories and experiences, if you are like me, you soak it all up, listening, learning and laughing.

Don't put it off – just get over there, but before you do, make sure you have the right gear and, if you're fit, get fitter – much fitter! ■



On the Winter Meet in Scotland in February 2018

Irish Mountaineering Club talks

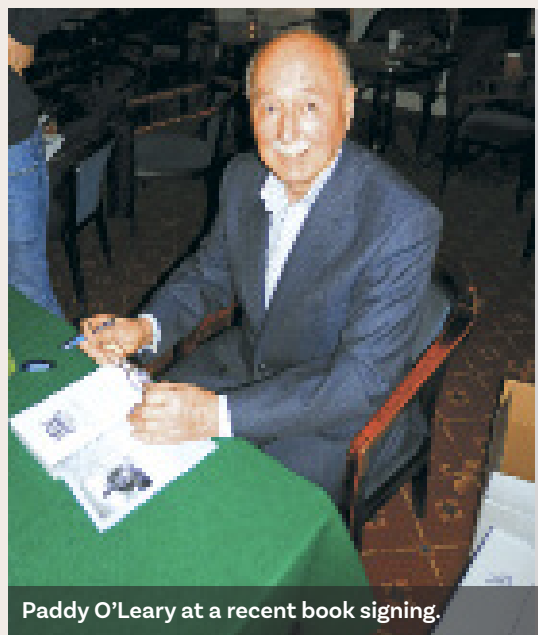
Paddy O'Leary was the February guest speaker in IMC's winter talks series.

By Patrick O'Sullivan

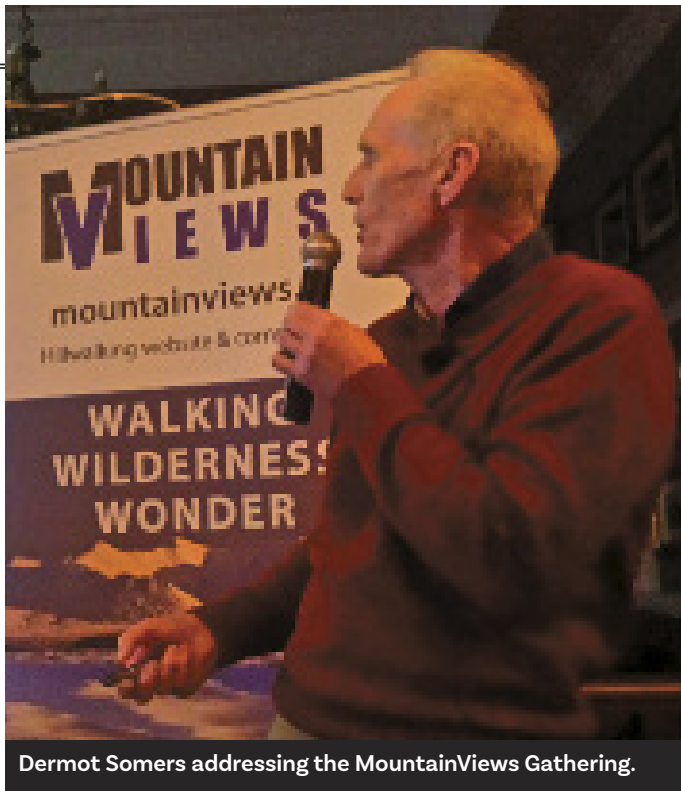
The Irish Mountaineering Club (IMC) organised a presentation by Paddy O'Leary in February as part of its winter series of talks in The Teachers' Club, Parnell Square, Dublin.

Paddy has been a member of the IMC since the 1950s. He has climbed on mountains all over the world and led the first Irish expeditions to the Himalayas and Peru. His book, *The Way That We Climbed: A History of Irish Hillwalking, Climbing and Mountaineering* (2015), looked at the successes that Irish mountaineers have had on some of the highest mountains around the world.

Paddy is a strong advocate of the exploration and ascent of middle-range peaks with altitudes of around 6,000 metres in more remote areas. The focus of his informative and enjoyable presentation was to demonstrate that in more remote areas around the world there are still many mountains in that altitude range that have not yet been climbed. He encouraged Irish mountaineers to explore these less travelled areas off the beaten track, where there are still these relatively high altitude mountains awaiting first ascents, and he offered to share any information that he had ■



Paddy O'Leary at a recent book signing.



Dermot Somers addressing the MountainViews Gathering.

MountainViews Gathering & AGM

By Patrick O'Sullivan

MountainViews held its annual Gathering on Friday, February 23rd, 2018. In a full programme, after a welcome and introduction by MountainViews Chairperson, **Jim Holmes**, there was a light-hearted review of the year by **Peter Walker**.

Shay Walsh, Chairperson of **Mountain Meitheal Ireland**, then talked about the important work of that voluntary group. Mountain Meitheal Ireland is the governing body for the two Mountain Meitheal branches which currently undertake projects to protect and conserve mountain and forest areas in the east and south-east of Ireland. They aim to counteract the pressures which are evident in the fragile Irish landscape by building and maintaining trails which are sympathetic to the surrounding countryside. They promote sustainable recreation by encouraging personal responsibility and awareness. Their motto is 'Get out, get dirty and give back!' and they estimate that, since they were founded in 2006, their volunteers have given more than 25,000 hours to their work. With branches in the east and south-east, they are always looking for more volunteers to help them with their work (see their website, mountainmeitheal.ie).

Simon Stewart, who developed the MountainViews website (MountainViews.ie), then gave an overview of developments on the website in the last year.

After a break, **Dermot Somers** spoke on "Cross-country: a view from above," a stimulating account of trips in different mountain ranges but beginning and ending with some of the crosses found on Irish summits.

As usual, there was an awards ceremony for list completers and for contributors to hillwalking or to MountainViews.ie.

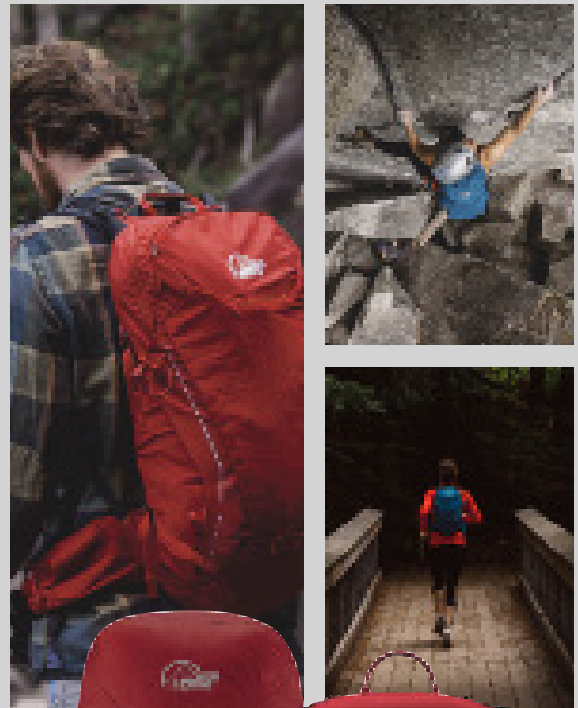
The *MountainViews Annual* for 2017 is available online at their website, MountainViews.ie (See also Books, page 62) ■

Photograph: Patrick O'Sullivan

Spring 2018

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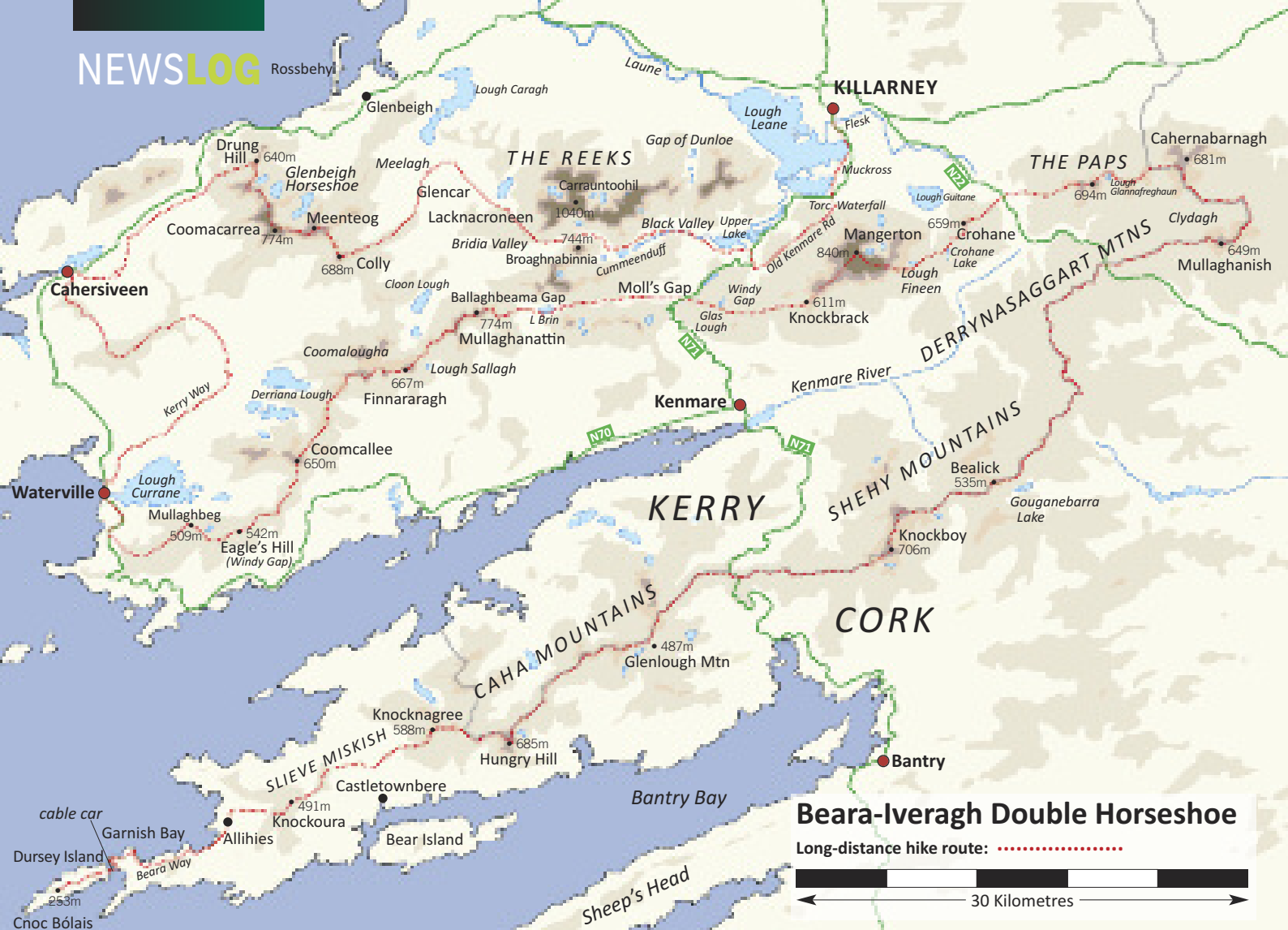
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Map: C  il  n MacLochlainn

The Beara-Iveragh Double Horseshoe

Following much interest in an article we featured in the last issue of the *Irish Mountain Log* about a long-distance hike, the Beara-Iveragh Double Horseshoe (IML 124, pages 38-41), and for completeness, we have prepared a map of the route followed. The article author, **Aidan Ennis**, has also kindly provided some more information about his route and the gear he used.

Hiking route stats

Hike	Dursey Island, Co Cork, to Killarney, Co Kerry
Duration	10 days
Distance	366 kilometres
Approximate elevation gain/loss	At least 10,813m ascent/10,833m descent, according to Viewranger 1:50,000 OSI Mapping
Time walking	94 hours 14 minutes on-the-move walking
Average speed	3.9km/hour
Camps	7 wild camps
Stays	2 town stays (Waterville and Cahersiveen)

Comment The extraordinary thing about this route is that almost all of the 252km of walking in the section from Dursey to Waterville is on high mountains, except for the small section around Allihies, the crossing of the N22 after the Paps and the section at Moll's Gap. This was the primary attraction of the route for me.

Gear

Backpack: Granite Gear Crown V.C 60 Litre (960g). I have used this on all my long-distance walks over the past few years. The weight of the backpack and gear without food was 7.8kg.

Food: Food for seven nights' rations and daytime snack food for the hike weighed in at 5.2kg, or about 742g per full wild camp day.

Tent: Z-Packs Solplex tent/shelter, which uses your walking poles as the two upright tent poles, 439g, with some light tent pegs, still only 495g.

The tent is made from Dyneema Composite Fabric (or DCF, formerly known as cuben fibre). DCF has several advantages over other materials: it has a very high strength-to-weight ratio and the material can handle high wind forces, it does not tear easily and it is inherently waterproof.

Sleeping mat: Klymit Inertia X Frame (240g)

Sleeping bag: Lightweight down Kimm Lite sleeping bag (500g).

Footwear: On long-distance summer trips, I use Salomon X Ultra 2 Men's Low Rise Hiking Shoes.

Cooker: MSR Pocket Rocket 2 (73g).

Phone charger: Goal Zero Nomad 3.5 Solar Panel with a Guide 10 Power Pack (4 x AA rechargeable batteries).

Satellite tracker: I used a Spot 3 Messenger satellite tracker, for safety. It tracked my movements and was visible to my family at home, allowing me to text set messages via satellite when out of phone signal coverage, which was almost every night in remote wild camps. It also has a SOS facility for emergencies.

Additional items: First aid supplies, medications, personal hygiene items, hat, gloves, jacket, rain gear, sun lotion. A midge head-net for some evenings is important too!



On the Glenbeigh Horseshoe, Iveragh Peninsula.

Future plans

I plan to continue the route this coming June.

Starting at my finishing point last year in Killarney, I will hike over Tomies Mountain and Purple Mountain to the Gap of Dunloe. I then intend to follow the Reeks Ridge to Carrauntoohil before descending to Killorglin and going on to Castlemaine, to enter the Slieve Mish Mountains at Knockmoyle.

The plan is to follow a route I did a few years back, along the complete length, via the high mountains of the Dingle Peninsula to Brandon Mountain and Brandon Head, before ending in Dingle.

The end result of linking the Beara-Iveragh Double Horseshoe with the Dingle Peninsula section would complete what I would call **"The Three Peninsulas Mountain Expedition."**

Will I walk it all as a single route one day? Almost definitely, but starting in Dingle and ending on Dursey Island. Dingle to Dursey? That has a nice ring to it!

Distance-wise, it would add another 160-180 kilometres to the overall hike (depending on my final route choice to Dingle), bringing the entire long-distance route to well over 500 kilometres. This would take about 16 days to complete ■

Autumn Gathering 2018

Clonbur, Co Galway, October 12-14th



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Hosted by Galway Walking Club

Further details will be posted on www.mountaineering.ie

Walking in the Mountains



WICKLOW UPLANDS COUNCIL

Jim Sheehan reports on the activities of Wicklow Uplands Council, which is working for people, places and nature.

The Wicklow Uplands Council (WUC) is a voluntary body formed twenty years ago to address the many concerns of those who live, work and recreate in the Wicklow uplands. It has four panels that represent respectively (i) the farmers and landowners, (ii) the communities, (iii) the local business and tourism interests and (iv) the environment and recreational users of the Wicklow/Dublin uplands. Each panel elects a number of representatives to the Council's Board, and all of the Board's decisions are by consensus.

The work of Wicklow Uplands Council is funded by membership subscriptions, a grant from the Heritage Council, grants from local authorities and by private sources.

One of WUC's major achievements has been the setting up of **Agreed Access Routes** through privately-owned lands onto the open mountainside, the two most notable of these being the route up the Zig-zags in Glenmalure and the route west of Lough Dan giving access to Kanturk Mountain.

Currently, WUC, Mountaineering Ireland, the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Mountain Meitheal and Coillte are seeking LEADER funding to survey about 100 kilometres of informal upland paths, to assess their condition with a view to carrying out effective and environmentally sensitive repairs, where necessary, to limit the damage of walkers' footfall.

Above:
Jim Sheehan, right, on an Irish Peat Society visit to the Zig-zags Agreed Access Route on Pat and Margaret Dunne's farm in Glenmalure.

Below:
Wesley Atkinson (Wicklow Mountains National Park) explaining upland ecology during a recent Wicklow Uplands Council workshop on Djouce.

It is proposed to engage the services of an experienced surveyor from abroad – probably from Scotland – and to train people as part of the project so that we can have a local pool of surveyors to call upon for future surveys.

In addition, WUC is giving organisational and logistical support to a number of local initiatives to open new walking trails, such as the **Avonmore Way** from Kilafin to Rathdrum, the **Sugarloaf Way** from Kilmacanogue to the Sugarloaf car park, a circular walk around **Bray Head** and a trail linking the Bray Head trail to the Sugarloaf Way by way of the **Little Sugarloaf**. Walks around the two **Roundwood reservoirs** are also being completed.

WUC is also campaigning to improve **parking facilities** in the uplands and to improve security for parked cars in the area. A visit to Cronin's Yard in the Reeks is planned in order to see what can be learned from that very successful enterprise.

Work is ongoing by WUC to raise awareness about the need for **dog control** in the countryside in general, and in the uplands in particular. Hill farms and



➤ **Jim Sheehan** is a member of **Club Cualann**, a hillwalking and climbing club affiliated to Mountaineering Ireland. He is Mountaineering Ireland's nominee to the Environment and Recreation Panel of Wicklow Uplands Council.



commonages rely heavily on sheep. Dog attacks on sheep are both costly and stressful for upland farmers. While it is acknowledged that most of the damage from marauding dogs is caused by local dogs, everybody is urged to take great care that their dogs are under strict control at all times, and that they are micro-chipped and licensed, as required by law.

WUC has just been awarded funding to run a **European Innovation Partnership (EIP)**. The **Sustainable Uplands Agri-environmental Scheme (SUAS)**, devised by WUC, aims, over the five-year term of the pilot project, to improve the environmental condition of upland farmland and commonages by involving local farmers and commonage holders.

Those who successfully achieve the aims of the scheme will receive payments based on the level of improvement in their holdings as well as benefiting from the increased productivity of their lands. One benefit to recreational users would be a reversal of the degradation of the uplands that has followed the decline

in hill-grazing of sheep and the uncontrolled growth of heather and bracken.

The **PURE (Protecting Uplands and Rural Environments) Project** is an initiative through which rubbish dumped in the Wicklow/Dublin uplands is removed promptly by the PURE truck. Litter and dumping can be reported by phoning **1850 365 121** or by using the 'See It, Say It' smartphone app. WUC initiated



Above: Severe path erosion near Luggala summit.

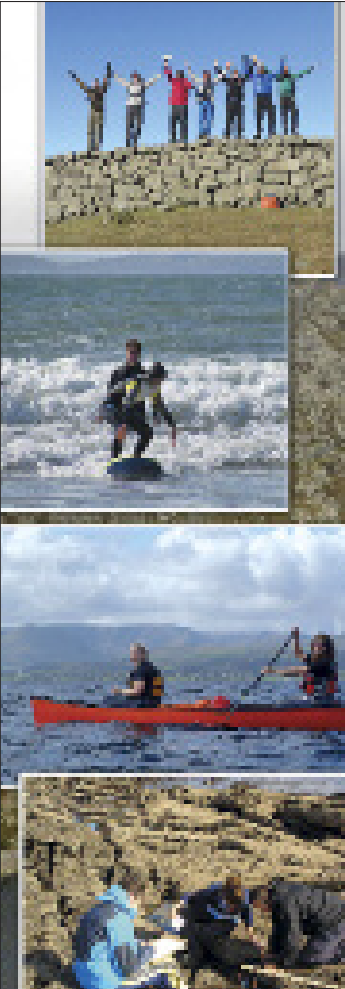
Below left: An Agreed Access Route sign in Glenmalure.




the PURE Project and lends it ongoing administrative support. PURE also promotes the **PURE Mile competition** under which local groups maintain a mile of local road litter-free. Some hillwalking clubs have participated in the PURE Mile competition, while others have helped by doing occasional litter picks in an area of their choosing (see www.pureproject.ie).

Wicklow Uplands Council is working to improve the amenities of the Wicklow/Dublin uplands, for the enjoyment of residents and visitors alike. However, not unreasonably, it asks that visitors reciprocate by showing consideration for residents and the upland environment, and by making a return to the locality through the use of shops, garages, restaurants, hostels, pubs and other local businesses ■


FIND OUT MORE: For more information go to www.wicklowuplands.ie.





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FICHE BLIAIN AG FÁS

Crannagh Ramblers in Inishowen, Co Donegal, have celebrated their twentieth year. **Catherine Doyle** reports

The Crannagh Ramblers' inaugural walk took place on Sunday, June 15th, 1997, when the club founder, the late **John Doherty**, led twelve pioneering members across Mamore Hill in the Urris valley, situated to the west of Clonmany, Co Donegal. The spectacular views, and the vivid stories of pilgrimages and poitín stills, ignited a love and

appreciation for the hills which has lasted for twenty years. In fact, three of those founding members are still regular walkers with Crannagh Ramblers today.

Since then, the club has grown significantly and now has around forty members. Based in Inishowen, the group took its name from the Crana River on which the town of Buncrana is built. Nonetheless, the Crannagh Ramblers is a cross-border club, with many members coming from Derry.

Regardless of how the club has progressed, fun remains at the heart of its activities. We cherish the enjoyment we get from walking in some of the oldest landscapes on the planet, trekking in the footsteps of those who have used these mountainous places for hunting and gathering, for sacred reflection, as defensive points and even for distilling illicit spirits.

We all look forward to our trips away, which have taken us to many parts of Ireland and beyond. Some of the most memorable trips have been to the Mournes, Slieve League, the Wicklow Mountains, Austria and Slovenia.

In 2017, the Crannagh Ramblers celebrated the club's twentieth anniversary in style. Here as follows are some of the events we held:

- In January, 2017, our annual **John Doherty Memorial Walk** was more special than ever, given the year that was in it. In the middle of the climb there was a moment

➤ **Catherine Doyle** is the Club Training Officer with the Crannagh Ramblers.

Above: Walking towards the famous Urris Ridge on the Inishowen peninsula, Co Donegal.

Below: Walking on the Leenan coast on the Inishowen peninsula, a geological wonderland.

of fond reflection to commemorate our founding leader, John Doherty, at a lovely spot on the side of Mamore Hill, the hill he chose for the first walk to launch the club.

- In June, the club spent a weekend in the Mournes, climbing Slieve Binnian on the Saturday and following the more leisurely Granite Trail on Sunday. As well as the sun, which accompanied us on the trip, our group of twenty-six thoroughly enjoyed the offerings of local hosteleries from our base in Newcastle.

- In September, the club spent a week enjoying everything the Wicklow outdoors has to offer. We followed parts of the Wicklow Way, enjoyed a day's walking in breath-taking Glendalough, completed the





famous Bray-to-Greystones coastal trek (and back), took in the Powerscourt waterfall, house and gardens, summited the Great Sugarloaf and, last but not least, conquered the mighty Lugnaquilla.

As rewarding as our days were, our evenings were equally enjoyable. We sampled the offerings of local establishments, watched Mayo once again succumb to the might of Dublin, barbecued, played cards, held a table quiz, shared stories and enjoyed local entertainment.

As part of our big birthday, we, the members of Crannagh Ramblers, helped play host to **Mountaineering Ireland's 2017 Autumn Gathering**. In particular, we led two challenging walks in Inishowen, which included completing the spectacular Urris ridge and a walk taking in the two highest peaks on the peninsula: Slieve Main and Slieve Sneacht. A fabulous weekend was had by all.

As a club, we pride ourselves on how we sustainably promote our sport and our locality, and on how we strive to achieve one of our many written goals – 'Appreciating Inishowen's Great Outdoors.'

The exposure the area received during the Autumn Gathering resulted in a number of other hillwalking clubs organising trips to the Inishowen peninsula, much to the delight of the Crannagh Ramblers. The experience has even got us thinking about how a walking festival would introduce others to this amazing region – watch this space!

The finale of our twentieth-anniversary year came in November, when we held a club reunion dinner and social evening. We invited all current and past members...and they came in their droves to relive the great events that had taken place down through the years. In our twentieth year, we reminisced on the many experiences we enjoyed together, the many friendships that were made along the way and on our

Above:
Enjoying
Autumn
Gathering 2017
at the
spectacular
Mamore Gap in
north
Inishowen.

many shared memories. We realise that, while people come and go, the mountains remain, unchanged, forever holding the heritage of each passing generation. And we cherish our memories of them ■

Crannagh Ramblers. Visit the club's website at www.crannaghramblers.com, or find them on Facebook. Walks are scheduled fortnightly on Sundays. New members are always welcome.

Below left: A
page from *The*
Inish Times
reporting on
the 2017
Mountaineering
Ireland Autumn
Gathering held
in Inishowen
last October
and hosted by
the Crannagh
Ramblers.

Below right:
The stunning
west
Inishowen
coastline.



Saint Jeannet, in south-west France
Photo: Ian Lawler

SAINT JEANNET

Ian Lawler reports on a very different Hallowe'en for the Dublin Cliffhangers Youth Climbing Club.

My daughter Ciara and I joined the **Dublin Cliffhangers Youth Climbing Club** in February 2017 and were made feel very welcome. Cliffhangers' members meet up twice a week at **Awesome Walls**, coinciding with the Awesome Academy Sessions under the tutelage of the inimitable **Éamon Ó Riain**. They also have monthly outdoor meets in season.

After a few sessions at Awesome Walls and a couple of outings to Dalkey, I found myself realising that, thirty years after I last put on my climbing shoes (boots back then!) as a postgraduate student, I still really enjoyed climbing. Ciara was having a ball and the whole family had bought into the new activity.

Joining the club brought a further education in social media, as everyone kept in touch via WhatsApp or Facebook; as social media Luddites we had never used them before! We soon found that WhatsApp worked very well for marshalling the troops on weekend outings, while Facebook was better for letting people know about scheduled events.

We were intrigued when a WhatsApp message from our Events Officer, **Keith Johns**, popped onto the phone in early June, suggesting a trip to the south of France over the Hallowe'en school break. Saint Jeannet, just twenty-five minutes north of Nice, was the proposed destination and even a cursory Google search showed just how spectacular it was.

A little more research as to the range of climbing available there, and some discussions at the Awesome

Above: View of Saint Jeannet from the first tier on the south face of the Baou de Saint Jeannet.

Right: Ian Lawler struggles on Colorado 5a while his daughter Ciara flies up Croquetout 4a.

Below: Sean Brown clips in on Croquetout 4a.



Walls sessions, led to a flurry of bookings being made. Within three weeks, four families had signed up for the trip. The summer passed quickly. We had a preparatory tutorial on sport climbing in the **Dublin Climbing Centre**, delivered by one of our most experienced members. Following the advice in the guidebooks for Saint Jeannet, we travelled with 60m ropes, 10-15 quickdraws, slings, belay plates and small sets of trad gear for each of the four Dads. Everyone else just brought their personal shoes, harnesses and helmets.

Fifteen of us, eight adults and seven children, flew out to Nice late one Sunday night, planning to return the following Thursday evening. With delays in our flights, we got into Nice around midnight and were very late arriving at our accommodation. Three families were in the village of La Gaude, six kilometres from Saint Jeannet, while the fourth was in Saint Jeannet itself. Despite arriving at between 1.00am and 2.00am, our AirBnB



➤ **Ian Lawler** returned to climbing after a thirty-year absence from the sport, having originally climbed in the late 1980s when he taught at an outdoor activity centre.



hosts were all very welcoming, but it meant that our first day on the crag was going to have to have a 'relaxed' starting time.

First thing the next morning was a quick trip to the supermarket for supplies, and then we headed up to Saint Jeannet. Finding the car park outside the town was a little tricky, and the WhatsApp messages were flying, trying to guide people in. The one thing you couldn't miss, though, was the view of the crag, the **Baou de Saint Jeannet**, towering over the landscape as we drove up from La Gaude. It looked even more impressive than in the photos.

After consulting the guidebooks, we decided to try the first tier on the south face of the Baou, as it was closest to the village. However, finding the way there proved a little difficult as the signposts were in a state of disrepair. Once we reached the foot of the crag, we relaxed in the 20°C sunshine, ate lunch and admired the views.

There were over fifty routes on the first tier, thirty of which were in our guidebooks. We settled on starting with the nearest two of a reasonable grade – **La Una 4c**, and **La Dallas 5a** – dispatching Hugh McLain and Keith Johns respectively to set up top ropes for the kids. Once those were set up, we moved on to set up **Le K 5c**, Keith doing the honours again. The routes were hard for the stated grade, resulting in voluble commentary from the climbers.

All the climbers got a run on the first two routes, after which Rob Brown and I were sent up to clear them, a pattern we kept to over the next two days of climbing. The Dads took it in turns to do the initial climbs and either top rope them or set up two screwgates so that the kids could clip in once they had finished leading the route and could be lowered safely without having to do a rethread though the maillons ('quick links,' similar to carabiners but without hinged gates, having instead just a screw thread, so they can be closed). Once everyone had taken their turn, one of the Dads would strip the route.

As the day drew to a close we only managed to get Cian Johns and Sean Brown on Le K, but all of the children had made at least two climbs, a great start to the trip. We paused for refreshments once back down in the village, before going for a well-deserved pizza.

For the second day, we headed west through the village to a lower set of climbs, collectively called **La Source**, all pretty much on a level track. At the western end of the climbing there were a number of house-sized boulders, where we set up, kicking off on one called **Les Croutes**, with routes ranging from 2 to 5c.

Using the same routine as the day before, all of the kids got to lead four routes from 2 to 4c to get them into the swing of things. Two routes of 2 and 2+ proved ideal for getting the mums involved too. We also had a chance to show the youth members how to safely strip a route under supervision.

After lunch, we worked our way back towards the village, checking out the available climbing on the way. Eventually we stopped at an area called **La Knubel**, in the trees at the foot of a 20m wall, which had a nice range of 14-16m routes ranging from 4 to 6c in difficulty, though some were rather polished, which made life a bit more difficult. We top roped a 5c and set up a 4c and a 5a for leading. By the end of the day the Dads and children had all completed six or seven climbs and the mums had been initiated; a great day out.

We found La Knubel such a good spot that we went back there the next day too, but moved a little further towards the village, setting up on climbs ranging from 4a to 6b, with top ropes on the higher grades for the children. One route, a very handy 3, came with a convenient tree at the top which allowed one of the Dads to clip himself in, perch in the tree



Above: Ella Brown leading La Roue du Moulin 3.

Below: Ciara Lawler on La Una 4c.

Bottom: The support crew!



and give the junior climbers a supervised run-through on how to rethread their ropes through the maillons again; it was a really fantastic training opportunity for them all. After another great day's climbing, it was back to the McLains' house for some excellent take-out pizza.

Sadly, that was the end of our climbing at Saint Jeannet, but it had been a great trip. Since then, the club has continued to be active, with two members in the **Climbing Development Squad** and 4-6 competing in every round of the **Lead Climbing** and **Bouldering Leagues**, where they have performed very creditably.

We are all really looking forward to 2018. The club has ten new members this year already. Ten members are competing in the **Youth Climbing Series**, and then we have club trips to Transylvania, Donegal and the Burren planned, not to mention the routine outings to Dalkey. I have a funny feeling that Hallowe'en 2018 could see us back on some familiar French territory, though! ■

Getting there

Flights: Aer Lingus and Ryanair fly direct to Nice. Saint Jeannet is 25-30 minutes from the airport by hire car.

Accommodation: There is plenty of accommodation available in the area on AirBnB.

Guidebooks: France: Cote D'Azur: Rockfax Rock Climbing Guide by Chris Craggs has a very good, well-illustrated section on Saint Jeannet.



CLIMBING IN CALPE

Defence Forces club holds climbing meet in Calpe in Costa Blanca, Spain. **Fran Whelan** reports.

In February, six members of the **Defence Forces Association of Mountaineers (DFAM)** – Flight Sergeant Ned Flood, Flight Quartermaster Sergeant Fran Whelan, Sergeant Noel Shannon, Sergeant Dave Nordon, Sergeant Tom Everard and Private John Sharkey – participated in a four-day climbing meet at Calpe in the Costa Blanca in Spain. The purpose of the meet was to sample the single- and multi-pitch climbs in the area and to practice the skills associated with such climbing.

Costa Blanca is the winter capital for sport climbers in Europe. It has the combination of reliable weather and an availability of a diversity of climbing, mainly on limestone. This diversity covers virtually all climbers' needs, ranging from low-grade sport climbs to via ferratas and scrambles, through to top-grade sport climbs and long, multi-pitch routes, both adjacent to the sea and high in the coastal mountain ranges.

The area also offers some spectacular mountaineering ridges such as the **Bernia Ridge**, a 3.5-km ridge running between Bernia and Pinos. In addition, there are numerous trad climbing routes there. It is necessary to carry a small rack of gear on some of the multi-pitch routes to protect the long run-outs between bolts and the dodgy tat.

Sgt Noel Shannon and I shared the organising of the meet. The overall costs were quite low and it was cost-effective to travel there at that time of year (February). Return flights to Alicante and accommodation in Costa Blanca worked out at less than €200 per person; this included a 20kg baggage allowance shared between each climbing pair for climbing and medical equipment.

Our accommodation was in a six-bed villa with a swimming pool in **Calpe**, a mere ten minutes' drive from

Above: Tom Everard and Ned Flood climbing on the Toix Este cliffs with the Rock of Ifach in the distance.

Below: Members of the DFAM group (left to right): Noel Shannon, Fran Whelan, Tom Everard, John Sharkey, Dave Nordon, Ned Flood.

the climbing areas. We hired two cars for travelling to and from the crags. Alicante to Calpe was around fifty minutes by car, with one €5.50 toll en route (but be careful not to speed on the tolled roads in this region as you might find an automatic speeding fine waiting for you at the other end).

Calpe town is full of history and culture, and it attracts tourists throughout the year, although in February it was pleasant and not crowded. The area has a variety of restaurants and supermarkets for the necessities. The prices are quite cheap, as one might expect in Spain.

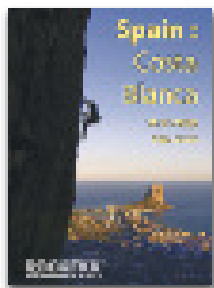
Calpe's strategic location on the coast has attracted many voyagers and settlers throughout history, and it is marked by the impressive **Rock of Ifach**. This immense rock was designated a nature park in 1987 and provides shelter for a variety of plants, such as rockrose and tree germander, as well as the Ifach mushroom. The rock towers to 332 metres, jutting out into the Mediterranean; it has some nice climbing routes.

We had four full days of climbing in Calpe. On the first night we organised our gear and decided where we would start climbing. We had researched the climbing areas prior to travelling, using the Rockfax Climbing Guide Spain:



► **Fran Whelan** is a flight quartermaster sergeant with the Air Corps. He works as an account manager in a logistics role. He is also a climbing instructor with the Defence Forces Association of Mountaineers (DFAM) and is a qualified Mountain Leader and SPA holder.





Costa Blanca, written by UK climbers Chris Craggs and Alan James.

On the first day, we drove to the Toix cliffs in ten minutes and spent the first part of the day climbing single-pitch climbs on the **Far Oeste** crag. The walk in to the crag took about five minutes. This was an ideal

way to start the trip, as the climbs started at low grades and got progressively harder as we moved along the crag.

There were also some two-pitch climbs (of about thirty metres' pitch each) to practice anchors and rappelling before hitting the longer, multi-pitch routes.

Our main focus was on practicing basic sport climbing skills, such as threading the rope through the top anchors safely before being lowered off a climb; making a range of anchors suitable for multi-pitch routes; using carabiners, slings and protection; and abseiling.

Safety was paramount, and we double-checked all systems. We also discussed alpine-style abseils for use on longer routes, and we looked at scenarios that might occur, such as passing an anchor, and the possibility of running out of rope between pitches and having to make alternative anchors.

As the day progressed and as we became more confident on the rock, we moved on to higher grades. The weather was quite good and there was only a scattering of other climbers coming and going during the day.

On the second day, we started on the **Toix Oeste** crag, which is an impressive rock face. The highest point on the Toix ridge offers some lovely, if often sketchy, climbing with some long run-outs between bolts. We used some of our racks on these routes, in between bolts, especially on the harder moves. We climbed multi-pitch routes, mostly of two long pitches, and then abseiled off. The views from the belay stances were spectacular.

The next day, we decided to move further up the Toix cliffs to the **Toix Placa** crag. This involved a steep, twenty-minute scramble in the cold morning air, up to the higher crag. The sun came out and warmed us up as we settled to pick out our climbs, with fantastic views all round.

Right: Ready for an abseil on Toix Far Oeste.

Below: Preparing for an abseil: John Sharkey and Dave Nordon on Toix Oeste.



The climbs up here were made more dramatic by the higher starting point. The bolted protection on some of the climbs was rather sparse, consisting more of rope threads, which were sometimes quite unusable, so we used trad protection.

There was an amphitheatre of rock next to this crag called **Toix TV**, which was a huge, tufa-laced amphitheatre perched at the very top of the Toix ridge. The amphitheatre was a great sun trap and an ideal venue for cooler days.

For the last day of climbing, we had intended to do the longest multi-pitch climb on the Toix ridge, **Cilber**, which leads to the summit of the ridge, but the winds picked up and we had to call it off. We felt it was a bit risky, after taking advice from a local climber.

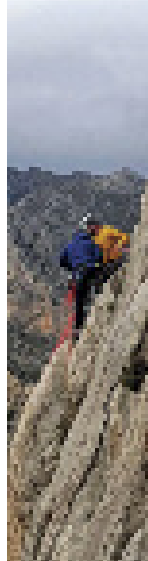
We decided to go instead to the far end of the Sierra de Toix, a seven-minute car journey, to climb on the **Toix Este** crag. This crag faces straight out into the Mediterranean and has great views over Calpe and the Ifach rock. The walk-in was a very pleasant ten minutes.

The routes were mainly four to five pitches of climbing on limestone but at a lower grade to the previous crags. Nevertheless, we spent the whole day climbing here in the sun, shielded from the winds. The routes had great views out over the sea and were ideal for long, multi-abseil practice.

The trip was immensely successful from start to finish, with most things going as planned. Most of our equipment was drawn from the DFAM stores in Athlone. The medical side of things was taken care of by Sgt Dave Nordon EMT (a qualified emergency medical technician), who stitched up a few cuts, but nothing too serious.

The aims of the trip were all met and we agreed it had been a very successful exercise, enhancing our climbing skills and techniques and allowing us to practice rope work and to climb long, multi-pitch routes on limestone. These are all essential skills for instructors and will be put into the armoury for future training in the Defence Forces. Most importantly, we all had a great time climbing safely without suffering any injuries.

Many thanks to the Chairman of DFAM and to the other members of the group for supporting this trip. We aim to organise another trip to Spain later in the year ■



Below: John Sharkey climbing on Toix Placa.



CALPE CAPERS

Feel Good Factor members go sport climbing on the Costa Blanca. **Anna-Clare McGarvey** reports.

In November 2017, the Feel Good Factor Club travelled to Calpe in the Costa Blanca region of Spain for four days of sport climbing. This was the club's first sport climbing trip. For many of the women who went on the trip it was also their first experience of climbing outdoors. The Feel Good Factor Club is a club run by women, for women. Its message is **'Get out there, keep fit and feel great in doing so!'**

The club, which is based in Bryansford, Co Down, a prime location in the shadow of the Mourne, engages in various mountain sports, including hiking, walking, climbing and biking. Since the club's establishment in spring 2015, it has grown from a group of friends in the Mourne area, who met socially to hike, walk, climb and bike, to a highly organised club, which now boasts forty-eight members.

The group that went to Calpe consisted of Alwynne Shannon, Anna-Clare McGarvey, Cara Lavery, Deidre McGuire, Emma Clarke, Fiona Mullan, Joanne McCandless, Kath Maguire, Kelly O'Reilly Smith, Maeve McKeever, Nicola Campbell and Siobhán McKibben, a dynamic collection of women. There was a great mix of ages and occupations, as well as a broad range of experience, from beginners to CWA, SPA and ML trainees and holders.

Calpe was our chosen destination so as to be near to the Sierra de Toix ridge, which has a reputation for its wide

Above: Feel Good Factor members pose for a group shot before going to climb at Echo 1.5 in Vall de Guardar, Calpe.

Below: Maeve McKeever climbing a route at Toix Placa in Calpe.

variety of mid- to lower-grade routes, perfect for those getting to grips with sport climbing for the first time!

It was also convenient to be at a resort beside the sea, much to the pleasure of our morning and evening swim enthusiasts. We rented a villa in the Maryvilla suburb of Calpe, on the northern slopes of Sierra de Toix, for close access to the crags. However, having rental cars was essential for getting around efficiently, with the added luxury of eliminating time-consuming walk-ins.

The November weather provided excellent climbing conditions, with temperatures peaking at 20°C in the midday heat, sandwiched by cool shade in the morning and late afternoon.

The majority of us set off on Wednesday, November 15th, flying from Belfast International Airport to Alicante, with an hour's drive to Calpe. There, we joined two of our members, Maeve McKeever and Deidre McGuire, who had arrived a few days earlier to scout out the area's climbing offerings and how to get around. Maeve, the club's Climbing Training Officer, had visited Calpe the previous spring with Wexford Mountaineering Club.

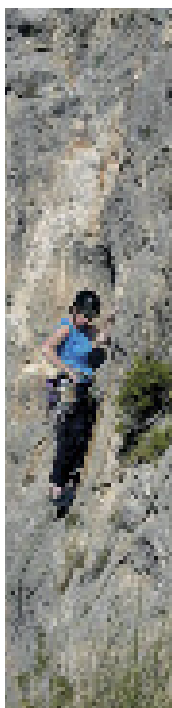
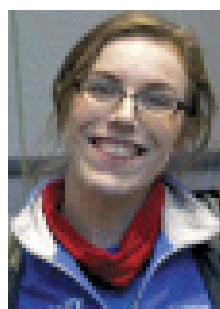
Having someone who was familiar with the area proved really helpful in planning our climbing days. Maeve and Deidre had also bought food supplies, and they prepared dinner for the rest of the group's arrival, for which we were all very grateful.

The Toix Far Oeste crag

For our first day's climbing, we headed to the Toix Far Oeste crag, where there were plenty of slabby routes to get warmed up on. The crag was well sheltered, yet offset by epic views across the ocean. We also had the added bonus of having the crag to ourselves.

In the morning, we paired beginners with those with more sport climbing experience, to help the former build their skill and confidence lead-climbing. This, the transfer of skills within the club, is a key principle of the Feel Good Factor Club.

➤ **Anna-Clare McGarvey** is a Mountaineering Ireland member who started climbing and mountaineering in 2012 as part of **Queen's University Belfast Mountaineering Club**. She works for **Sticky Feet Climbing** in Belfast, is a CWA holder and is CWLA trained. Currently a member of the **Feel Good Factor Club**, Anna-Clare's regular activities include sport climbing, trad climbing and hiking.



Once everyone had warmed up on short, positive slab routes, we were keen to try longer, more vertical routes. By the afternoon the 'psych' was high, and some women were pushing up into the 6 grades. Top ropes were left up on certain routes to give less experienced climbers a taste of more technical and pumpy moves on the higher-graded climbs. After a successful and full day's climbing, we headed into Calpe for a well-earned pint.

In the evenings, we took it in turns to cook together in threes or fours, and all ate together as a group, which was a nice way to get to know everyone a little better.

The group headed to the Toix Placa crag on day two of climbing, where once again the variety of route grades as well as the many two-star routes allowed for lots of climbing and gradual progression up the grades.

The guidebook repeatedly used the word 'worrying' in the descriptions, which proved to be the case, with old tat as threads in many cases, rather than shiny bolts. Some of the climbing proved challenging, which resulted in half of the group returning to Toix Far Oeste, but two of the women, Joanne McCandless and Fiona Mullan, pushed hard and attempted a multi-pitch ridge.

For the third day's climbing we decided to travel a bit further to Echo Valley (Vall de Guardar), about an hour's drive inland from Calpe. The approach to the crag was breath-taking in itself, both figuratively and literally, as we ascended steeply into the seclusion of the mountains up a winding road only wide enough for one car at a time – luckily we didn't meet any oncoming traffic. Once parked just above our chosen crag, Echo 1.5, the panoramic view over the valley gave a sense of being at the top of the world.

Growing self-awareness

At this stage of the trip, there was a growing self-awareness, from personal climbing goals for the day to

Right: Kelly O'Reilly Smith seconding a multi-pitch route at Toix Far Oeste (Joanne McCandless is on lead).



Above: Anna-Clare McGarvey climbing at Toix Far Oeste.

Below: Members of Feel Good Factor Club climbing at Echo 1.5.



smaller details such as taping up, and practical considerations such as how much and what food and drink to bring. Those who had started out as beginners were gaining confidence in reading routes and giving beta.

This was the hottest day of climbing, as the crag wasn't sheltered from the afternoon sun, but this didn't deter the psych; a number of women successfully ticked off 6a leads, while others tested their endurance sending vertical 25m routes.

A very satisfying day's climbing was topped off with a spontaneous pit-stop in the charming coastal town of Altea la Vieja, where we stumbled upon a street party for the Spanish bank holiday. Before we knew it, we were dancing with the locals to a Spanish brass band.

On Sunday morning, our last day in Calpe, the group split into those who were eager to squeeze in one last climbing session and others who wanted to take it easy and go to the beach. Six women ventured to the Sierra de Toix crag called Tropical Dreams, another stunning location overlooking shimmering seas, with challenging routes to finish off the week.

The Feel Good Factor Club's first sport climbing trip was a huge success. There was lots of climbing, no injuries and a great group atmosphere, with everyone developing individually as bona fide sport climbers. Many on the trip had experienced sport climbing with other climbing groups, but what was different about climbing with Feel Good Factor was the relaxed and supportive atmosphere created by the Feel Good women; there was no pressure to climb hard but rather an invitation to have fun climbing and to gain confidence in doing so.

A big part of the trip's success was due to how well it was organised in advance by Maeve McKeever, the club's Climbing Training Officer. Calpe was superb as a climbing destination, offering something for everyone ■

FIND OUT MORE: For more information about the Feel Good Factor Club, or to join, go to thefeelgoodfactor.org or contact them at thefeelgoodfactor@outlook.com.



GROSSGLOCKNER

Coconuts Hillwalking Club took on Austria's highest peak on their annual trip. **Margaret Kennedy** reports.

The **Coconuts Hillwalking Club** in Cork went to the Hohe Tauern National Park in Austria for their 2017 annual end-of-summer hiking trip, intending to climb Austria's highest mountain, the **Grossglockner (3,798m)**.

We flew from Cork to Munich on August 24th and then made the three-and-a-half-hour journey to our hotel in Kals am Grossglockner (1,364m) by pre-booked local bus. We stayed in Kals for the first eight nights of our eleven-day trip. The weather was excellent when we arrived and, apart from one wet afternoon, it happily stayed that way until our last evening there.

Under the guidance of our able chief organiser, Conor, we began by familiarising ourselves with local routes. On the first day, we headed north, following the local river up-valley to the village of Taurer, and then taking the Herrensteig track to the **Stüdlhütte (2,802m)**. The mountain guides use this hut as their base for the Grossglockner.

I noticed several young, athletic-looking guides departing with their sometimes anxious-looking clients, while others were simply enjoying lunch.

We also witnessed the arrival of a rescue helicopter with a young woman, who had been airlifted from the same Grossglockner ridge that we expected to follow in a few days' time. She had had a panic attack, but happily she seemed fine as she walked away from the helicopter.

The popular route up the Grossglockner, starting from the Stüdlhütte, involves crossing a glacier and using via ferrata-style fixed ropes along a ridge.

Also starting from the Stüdlhütte is the more strenuous popular rock-climbing route called the **Stüdlgrat**.

Above:
Margaret Kennedy in Hohe Tauern National Park, Austria, with Grossglockner peak in the distance.

As most of us had no Alpine experience, we booked guides for the easier, two-day option, with an overnight stay in the **Erzherzog Johann Hütte (3,454m)**. Before we left Ireland, we had made contact with a local guiding company, **Bergführer Kals**, and tentatively agreed August 30th for our attempt.

The **Hohe Tauern National Park** was established in 1981. With an area of 1,836 km², it is the largest national park in Austria and the largest nature reserve in the Alps.

As well as the Glockner and Venediger groups of mountains, there is a network of excellent walks here, accessible to any reasonably fit hillwalker. Over the first five days, we took in the following routes from Kals:

- Tauern to Stüdlehütte to Lucknerhaus
- Dorfertal Gorge: an area saved by local women from flooding for a hydroelectric dam in the late 1970s
- Rotenkogel by cable-car from Kals, with some returning via Blauspitze
- The Figerhorn
- The Peischlachtörl Pass
- The Glorer Hutte.

All wonderful and accessible walks, and most of them offer a view of the Grossglockner to whet your appetite for the big day. We made use of local buses, taxis and cable-cars to get to the start, or to get back from the finish of walks.

After hiring stiff-soled boots and checking in with the guide office on Tuesday evening, we booked a taxi for 9.00am the next day, August 30th, to take us to **Lucknerhaus (1,910m)**.

A pleasant 2½-hour hike from there gave us plenty of time to get to Stüdlhütte in time to meet the guides at 12.30pm. There was also time to deal with newly-acquired blisters, courtesy of the stiff-soled boots for two of us, before we met our first guide, Aryn from Innsbrück. He had forsaken a career in physiotherapy to concentrate on mountain guiding, for now anyway. He handed out our helmets, crampons and harnesses and demonstrated how to put them on.

We headed off, carrying our extra gear in our backpacks. An even and gently-sloping track brought us to a flat



➤ **Margaret Kennedy** is a member of Coconuts Hillwalking Club and Cork Mountaineering Club. Although a Wicklow woman by birth, she enjoys hillwalking in Munster and taking an annual hiking trip to the continent.



Left: Walking across the glacier.

Right: On the summit of Grossglockner.

Below left: Approaching the top of Grossglockner: Mairead O'Reilly, Margaret Kennedy and Rosarie O'Connor.

Below right: Grossglockner.



glacier, which we crossed without crampons, to the base of an exposed rocky ridge.

As we stopped to put on our harnesses, our second guide, Gary, a native of nearby Leinz, joined us. We roped up in two groups of three, each with one of the guides. Our guide Gary's first task was to get us quickly across a short avalanche-prone section before leading us to **Erzherzog Johan Hütte**, via fixed ropes on the ridge, a Grade 1 scramble. I found this scramble demanding and unrelenting, as I perspired in the afternoon sunshine. The occasional stops indicating various points of interest were always welcome.

The guidebooks are full of praise for this busy hut with its wonderful panoramic views and not-to-be-missed sunsets. The lure of a cold beer was strong, so we joined other hikers already enjoying theirs in the afternoon sunshine. The views were indeed wonderful, the changing shadows from the evening sun enhancing the distance, depth and layers of mountain ranges in every direction.

The hut was very comfortable, and we enjoyed our evening meal. Gary advised us to be up by 4.45am to have breakfast and get started before the rush in the morning. Leaving most of our gear in the hut, we set off in darkness at 5.50am and were soon happily crunching our way across a glacier. Head-torches were not necessary: the stars above and a pre-dawn glow provided enough light. I decided there was nowhere else I would rather be right then.

After crossing the glacier without incident, the walking poles and crampons were cached in some rocks for our return. We roped up, with Gary leading for the climb to the top. The only bit that caused me some anxiety was a short, exposed arête on a narrow ridge, near the top, between the Kleinglockner and Grosse Glockner. There is little room for overtaking here, and this often leads to bottlenecks. All went well, however, and we joined our friends on the other rope, with Aryn, at the highest point in Austria, in perfect weather conditions, before 8.00am.

After taking many photos, we proudly returned by the same route. We had no problems on the way down, apart from a slight difficulty with the transition from rock back to glacier, when we had to put the crampons on again. It wasn't long until we were finished with the slushy glacier and back at Erzherzog Johann Hutte.

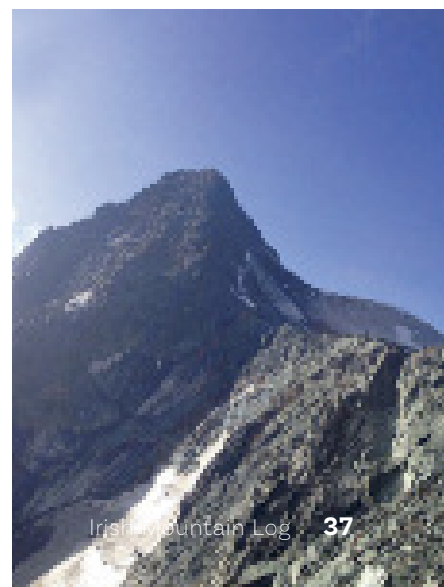
After a well-earned coffee with home-made Apfelstrudel and cream, we all made our way back down the via ferrata to Stüdlhütte. Though we were not very hungry, this was an opportunity to try out some of the local mountain fare. I ordered a Bernierwürst mit speck – a delicious cheese-filled sausage wrapped in ham and served with mustard and salad. The Austrians certainly know how to provide the hearty calories!

We bade goodbye to our guides and were back at our hotel by 3.00pm, with boots returned and in time for the last complimentary afternoon refreshments in the friendly hotel.

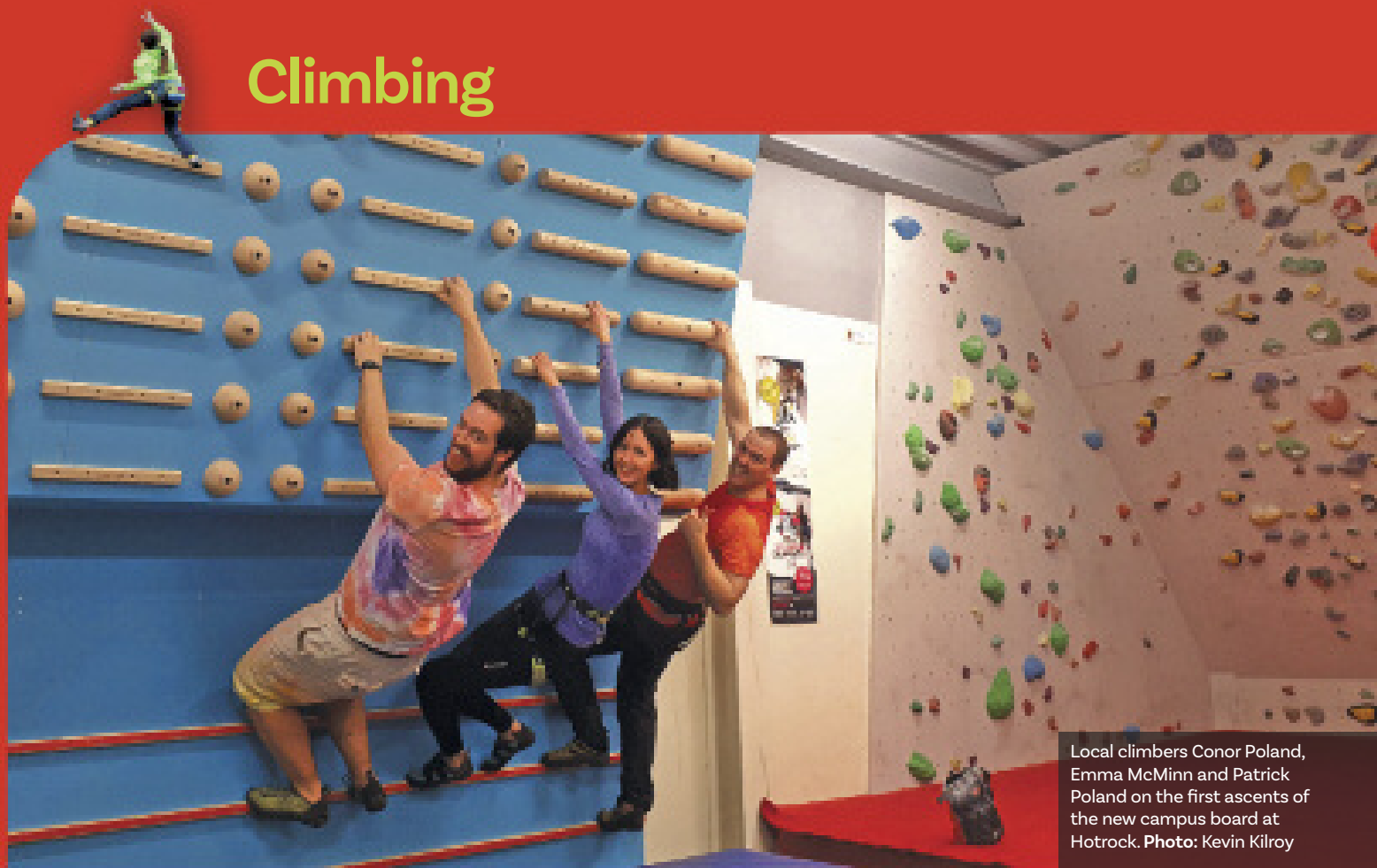
The promised change in weather came that evening, bringing heavy rain, snow on the surrounding peaks and a drop in temperatures overnight.

We left Kals for Mattrei de Oistrot, in our winter gear, in torrents of rain the next day. When the rain finally stopped on Sunday, we fitted in a walk up as far as the snowline, with a stop for hot chocolate at the Zunigalm.

On the way back, we had time to join the locals in their annual harvest festival, with wonderful traditional music, food, dancing and yodelling, making the perfect end to the trip ■



Climbing



Local climbers Conor Poland, Emma McMinn and Patrick Poland on the first ascents of the new campus board at Hotrock. Photo: Kevin Kilroy

HOTROCK CLIMBING WALL

Kevin Kilroy reports on some recent developments at the Hotrock Climbing Wall in Tollymore.

Mountaineering Ireland has made some recent changes at Hotrock Climbing Wall, located in the Tollymore National Outdoor Centre in the heart of the Mourne, Co Down. This article describes these changes, hears what locals have to say about them and outlines what to expect from one of Northern Ireland's most ideally situated indoor climbing facilities.

Hotrock Climbing Wall was built by Mountaineering Ireland at Tollymore National Outdoor Centre in June 2000, the second climbing wall to be built there. "The original granite outdoor wall, which is still actively in use at Tollymore, dates from the 1970s and was the first artificial climbing wall to be built in Northern Ireland," says **Trevor Fisher**, centre manager at Tollymore.

The Hotrock Climbing Wall is owned by Mountaineering Ireland and managed by Tollymore National Outdoor Centre. It was designed and built by legendary rock-climber and wall-builder **Crispin Waddy** and the Living Stone Climbing Walls Ltd team, a revolutionary Welsh business in the climbing wall industry,

which around this time often built resin-coated fibreglass walls complete with characteristic rock features – pockets, flakes, tiny little crimps and the magical smears.

At Hotrock, you only have to try one of the two corner lines to realise the craftsmanship behind the wall's design. It is in these corners especially that the magical smears come into their own...within a couple of bridging moves you are whisked away in your mind's eye to a blank granite scoop somewhere high in the Mournes!

The effect is the same whether it's your first or your hundredth time trying the Hotrock corners. The quality of the design and manufacture

has stood the test of time... literally! All of the smears are still perfectly useable, with no signs of any polish or loss of friction despite eighteen years of traffic.

One of the strengths of the Hotrock Climbing Wall is that the routes there are re-set four times per year. Mountaineering Ireland employs qualified route-setters to strip, clean and fully re-set the wall over three days. The 2018 dates for this are March 29-31st, June 7-9th, September 13-15th and December 6-8th. Hotrock will be closed to the public on these dates. Last year, Mountaineering Ireland also invested £1,000 on new holds for the wall.

In partnership with Tollymore National Outdoor

Centre, Mountaineering Ireland has installed a new campus board and a 40° overhanging board in Tollymore's Training Room. Thanks to **Pat Nolan** of Bolder Climbing Walls for a superlative job on both boards.

"For me, the most beneficial part of the new training room has definitely been the construction of the 40° board," says local 14-year-old climber **Luka Hallissey**. "It has increased my strength massively, as I have found when competing on powerful overhanging routes."

Youth climbing classes are held on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday evenings, facilitated by Tollymore National Outdoor Centre. These instructor-led classes are the perfect way for children to

start climbing and developing their climbing skills. Check out Tollymore's website, www.tollymore.com, for more information and bookings.

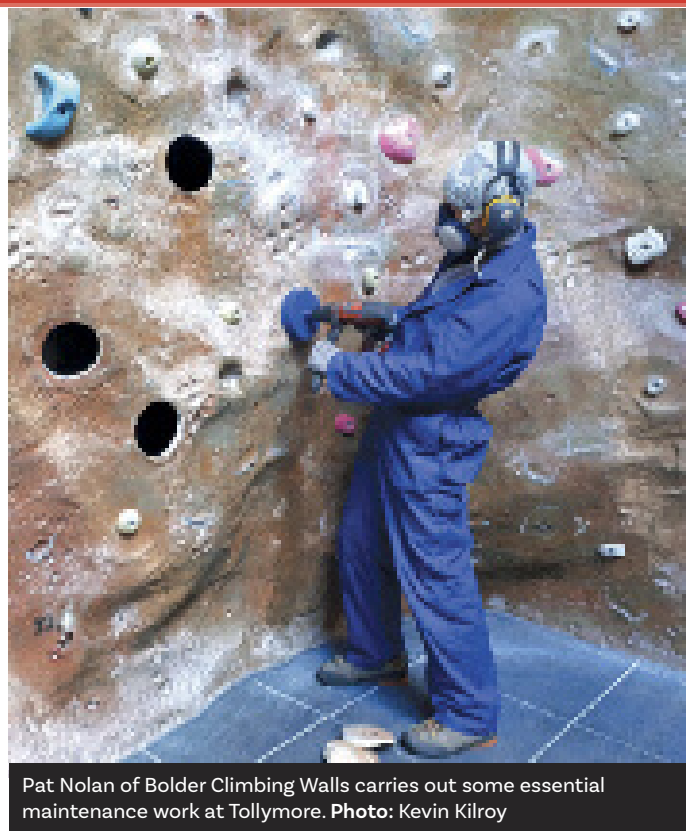
There are regular Thursday night social climbing sessions for experienced climbers, with an optional pub quiz afterwards in downtown Newcastle, usually at the Anchor Bar at 10.00pm. Just call in and say hello any time after 6.00pm on Thursdays at Hotrock.

"The recent development of the training room has attracted more experienced climbers to the wall," says Luka Hallissey. "This has led to a great social scene, where we all meet up during the week and help each other in developing our skills and strength."

One such experienced climber who frequents Hotrock regularly, **Ian Rea**, says: "What I have really noticed with the campus board is the intensity of the burn you get. It gives you a chance to incrementally feel you are getting somewhere in your training. The boards that I had seen in the past were all without footholds – useless for someone like me – so the Tollymore one is a godsend!"

"Eleven-year-old **Eabha** and I were there one evening and she said, '**Claire Hardy** showed me this one; she says it's really good for developing core strength,' as she proceeded to hang off the end rungs, lifting her knees to her waist height. I only managed four or five then! That was only a few weeks ago but I can now do sets of eight or nine."

The Friday night youth climbing sessions are supported by Mountaineering Ireland and are currently open to any local families with previous climbing experience. The sessions have been very well attended since last summer. They are a fun and social evening for families with children to come and climb, and make new friends. The



Pat Nolan of Bolder Climbing Walls carries out some essential maintenance work at Tollymore. Photo: Kevin Kilroy

wall is closed to the public on Friday evenings, so please contact me, **Kevin Kilroy**, at kevin@mountaineering.ie for more information.

Regarding these youth climbing sessions, parent **Garath Leneghan** says: "My daughter and I have recently completed a course, Next Step Learn to Lead, at Hotrock, as part of the new improved climbing club that Mountaineering Ireland has developed there. This would not have been possible if it was not for their Friday

Climbing Club and the excellent facilities at Hotrock. The concept of developing a Friday night family climbing club has been a great opportunity for like-minded, keen-to-learn climbers to develop their skills and build friendships. The constant changes to the Hotrock wall to challenge both the beginner and more advanced through new route settings and holds have also been a great success. Coupling this with experienced instructors has brought our skills and



Written by
Kevin Kilroy,
Youth Development
Officer for Northern
Ireland

enthusiasm for climbing on so much."

Hotrock really has got something to offer climbers of all ages and levels, and it is all thanks to the developments and visions made real by many people down through the years.

A special thanks to **Dawson Stellfox, Ian Luney, Mike McClure, Oisín Hallissey, Kieran O'Hara, Trevor Fisher, Angela Carlin, Stewart McGill, Paul Swail, Pat Nolan, Michael Duffy, Crispin Waddy** and all the coaches and route-setters who have inspired young climbers over the years. Thank you all!

Finally, a couple of wise words from **Sam Gordon** on his eighteen-year relationship with Hotrock. Sam works as a health and fitness officer and continues to follow his passion for rock-climbing as a father of two: "I have been a climber for over twenty years and an exercise professional for eighteen. I fondly remember being dropped off by my parents after pestering them to take me to Hotrock, proudly wearing a t-shirt with a lizard on it. I soon met **John Dunne** and **Eddie Cooper** and learned lots of movement skills, such as when Eddie taught me how to toe-hook; **Kieran O'Hara**, who taught me some manners; and recently **Ian Rea**, who inspired me afresh. I truly believe that a climber and person can improve for as long as they are inspired. The developments at Hotrock have inspired me to simply improve."

So, the next time you're in the Mournes, please pay Tollymore a visit, buy a coffee and a brownie, stay the night, join a club, book on a course and support this great facility in the heart of the mighty kingdom of Mourne ■



Claire Hardy route-setting at Hotrock during the Route Setting Association Level 2 course at Hotrock in February. This was the first course of its kind held in Northern Ireland. Photo: Kevin Kilroy



IRISH LEAD CLIMBING CHAMPIONSHIP

Damien O'Sullivan reports on the 2017 Irish Lead Climbing Championship.

The 2017 Irish Lead Climbing Championship took place across the weekend of November 25-26th at **Awesome Walls Dublin**.

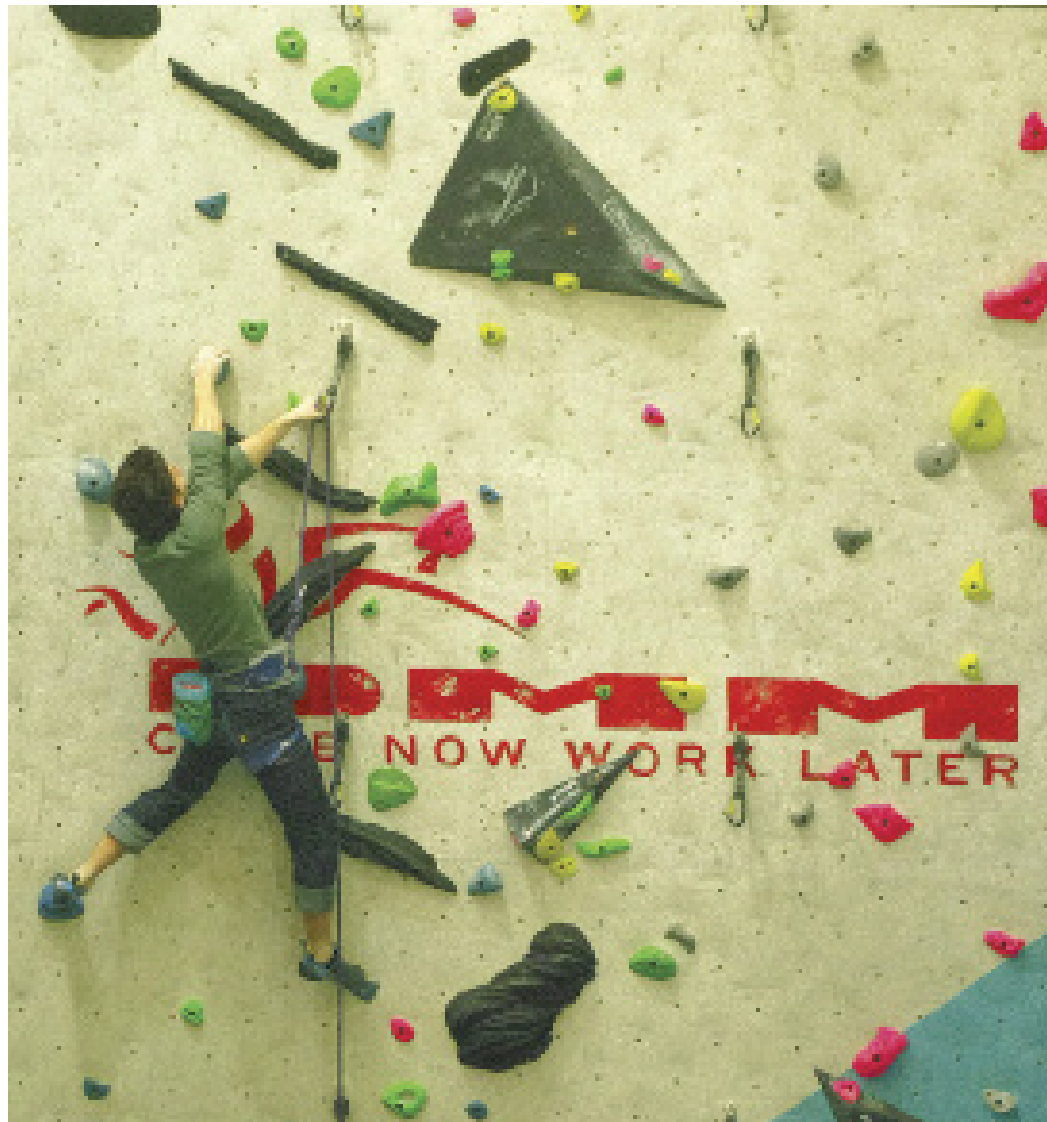
Sponsored by **DMM**, the competition attracted some very high-level climbers from all over Ireland as well as a number of very able visitors from further afield.

Route-setters **Brian Hall**, **Adam Pracownik** and **Éamon Ó Riain** put up a range of climbs to challenge competitors across the qualification, semi-final and final rounds. Climbers in Youth A, Youth B and Youth C competed on the Saturday, while Senior climbers competed on the Sunday.

Saturday's climbing gave a clear demonstration of the current prowess of the top youth climbers across Ireland. Many of these young climbers are now at or above the level of most adults. This is largely down to the level of dedication from the young climbers themselves and the high-quality route-setting and coaching available at the climbing walls.

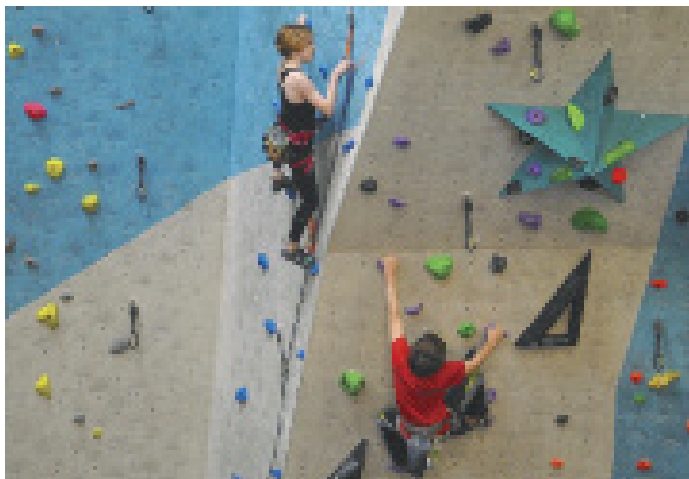
On Sunday, the Senior climbers took their turn on the

GRAINE O'BRIEN



Ciaran Scanlon on his way to taking first place in the Senior Male category.

IAN LAWLER



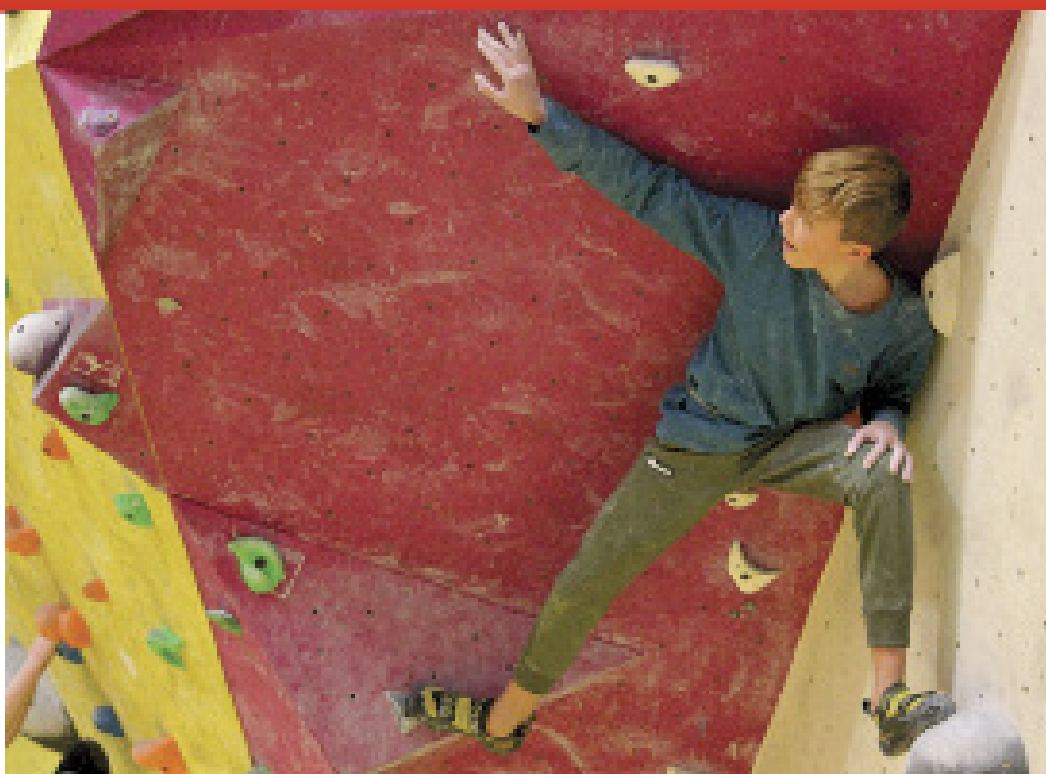
Sarah Walker-Palin and Sean Brown competing in their Youth categories.

routes. In the Senior Male category, the competition was very close between Ciaran Scanlon, Ben Preston and Michael O'Neill. Michael topped the ranking after the semi-final but, in the final round, **Ciaran Scanlon** did just enough to take the title.

In the Senior Female category, **Lucy Mitchell** continued her dominance to take first place by a comfortable margin. Youana Kim and Aisling Brennan battled it out for second and third place, with Youna eventually taking the silver ■



Sponsors of the 2017 Irish Lead Climbing Championship



Daniel Luca Ciobanic competing in the 2017-2018 Irish Bouldering League.

IRISH BOULDERING LEAGUE

Damien O'Sullivan reports on the 2017-2018 Irish Bouldering League.

Running for twenty-five years now, the Irish Bouldering League is the stalwart competition of the Irish climbing scene. Sponsored by **Rab**, this season's Irish Bouldering League took in four rounds across four different climbing walls. Adult climbers competed on the Saturdays and youth climbers took up the challenge on Sundays.

The league opened at the **Gravity Climbing Centre** in October. Round two took place at **Boulder World Belfast** in November, and round three took place in December at the recently opened **Suas Climbing Centre** in Gillogue, Co Clare, across the Shannon from Limerick city. It was not until the final round at the **Dublin Climbing Centre** in January, when the results from all four rounds were known and the top three results could be identified and added, that the overall results were known.

In Masters Male, **Éamon Ó**

Riain achieved first place in three different rounds to win ahead of Ger O'Sullivan and Ciaran McDonald.

Christina McInerney won Senior Female B with a round to spare, with second and third places going to Gillian Barclay and Róisín Kearney respectively.

In the Male B category, **Erik Durco** finished the league in style, taking four wins.

Female A was won by **Victoria Watterson**, with Vanessa Woods and Youna Kim completing the podium.

In the Male A category, **Michael O'Neill** overhauled Sean Marnane to seal the win on the final round, leaving Sean in second place overall and Michael Murphy in third.

The youth categories proved equally competitive, with some amazing climbing on show across the four rounds.

Daire Oglesby took first place in Male Youth D, ahead of Leo Adan and Patrick Galvin.

In the Female Youth D, **Eve Buckley** climbed very consistently to stay ahead of Napsugar Bodi and Freya O'Connor.

Youth C Male climber **Joshua Hoare** won all of the three rounds in which he competed and took first place ahead of Fionn O'Connor and Brian McDonald.

Female Youth C was a very competitive affair, with **Rhyna**



Written by
Damien O'Sullivan,
Talent Development
Officer

Conroy needing to climb her best in the final round to win the league. Rhyna remained composed to take the top spot on the podium, ahead of Ciara Burgoyne and Bonita Thurston.

In Male Youth B, a very much on-form **Luka Hallissey** took first place ahead of Matthew Smith and Benedict Thurston.

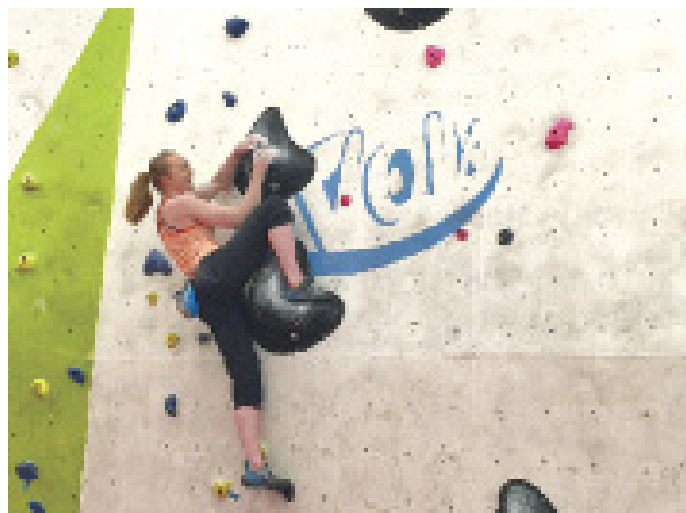
Amy Orr climbed consistently well across the league to win the Female Youth B category, with Keira Blaquez Burke and Ella Brown completing the podium.

A very impressive performance from **Tommy Myles** at the final round saw him win the very competitive Male Youth A category ahead of Daragh Hoare and Marcus McDowell.

In Female Youth A, **Jessica McGarry** was the decisive winner ahead of Caoimhe Broderick and Jessie Smith-McCarthy ■

Rab

Sponsors of the 2017-2018
Irish Bouldering League



Victoria Watterson on her way to taking top spot in the Female A category.



IRISH BOULDERING CHAMPIONSHIP

Damien O'Sullivan reports on the 2018 Irish Bouldering Championship.

Sponsored by **Rab** and hosted by the **Gravity Climbing Centre**, this year's Irish Bouldering Championship provided some of Ireland's top competition boulderers with a challenging but enjoyable competition.

On Saturday, February 3rd, climbers in Youth A, Youth B and Youth C competed in a qualification round and a final round to decide who would be crowned champion in their relative categories. The number of youth climbers was bolstered by a group of climbers who came across from England. Not only did these climbers add to the numbers, but they also really added to the quality of the climbing.

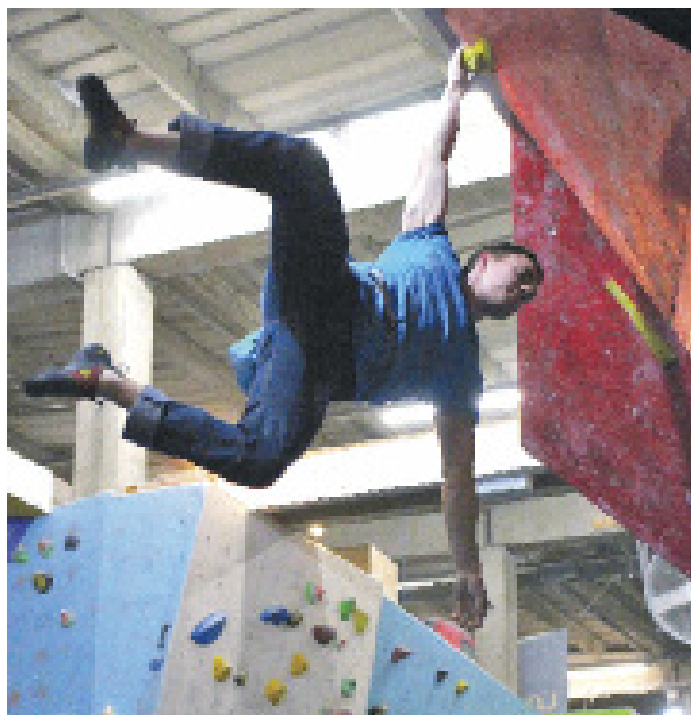
The qualification round consisted of eight boulder problems for each of the climbers. In the Male Youth A category, **Alexander Dent** made a huge impression by qualifying in first place in a very competitive category.

ANGELA CARLIN



Lucy Mitchell, the eventual winner in the female category, competing in the 2018 Irish Bouldering Championship.

ANGELA CARLIN



Ciaran Scanlon competing in the 2018 Irish Bouldering Championship.

In the final round, the top five climbers in each category were challenged on four boulder problems to decide the results. Strong final performances from **Pippa Watkin, Sean O'Connor, Anna De Souza, Luka Hallissey, Rhyna Conroy** and **Luca McDowell** saw them take the top place in their respective categories.

On Sunday, it was the turn of the climbers in the Senior category. A broad field of male and female climbers settled into the competition, with a qualification round of five boulder problems.

The Semi-Final round for the top ten climbers in each category continued to distil down the field, until the top five climbers in each category

were identified for the Final round. The top three places in both the Male and Female categories were very closely run, with the top place possibly going to any of the top three climbers at a number of stages in the final round.

On the third of their final boulder problems, **Ciaran Scanlon** edged ahead of Dominic Burns and David Fitzgerald to take the title.

In the female category, **Lucy Mitchell** won the title ahead of Victoria Watterson and Sheila Nolan ■

Rab

Sponsors of the 2018 Irish Bouldering Championship

ADVENTURE DEGREE

Coláiste Dhúlaigh, Dublin, in partnership with University of Chichester, is offering an honours degree in Adventure Facilitation and Education.



Written by
Joyce Meade,
Coláiste Dhúlaigh
College of Further
Education

Coláiste Dhúlaigh, College of Further Education, is delighted to announce it is now offering a one-year degree programme in Adventure Facilitation and Education (BA Hons) in partnership with the **University of Chichester**. This is the first outdoor degree programme of its kind to be offered on the east coast of Ireland.

Accredited by the University of Chichester, the programme has been developed by the coordinator and tutors to be relevant to our students, the growing outdoor adventure industry and the outdoor recreation scene, both at home and abroad. It looks to draw on existing knowledge and experience, and it develops the 'theory to practice' links that are essential for an effective adventure facilitator.

The course is a unique blended-learning programme, combining academic studies with a strong philosophical and psychological foundation, which incorporates practical placements for students to apply their learning.

The course modules include:

- The Reflective Practitioner
- Soft Skills Facilitation
- Advanced Pedagogical Skills



Trainees out in the Wicklow Hills.

- Applied Coaching
- Issues in Adventure Environments
- Dissertation

The course is taught by a combination of academic and industry professionals, with workshops and visiting guest lecturers to enhance the programme.

The programme is delivered on a part-time basis over two afternoons/

evenings a week (Tuesdays and Wednesdays) in the Coolock, Dublin 17, campus of Coláiste Dhúlaigh, College of Further Education, with a minimum of twelve contact hours per week. The remainder of the week is given to industry experience.

► If you wish to find out more about this new and exciting programme, visit the college's website, **BA Adventure Facilitation and Education**, or bit.ly/2FIFH7P, or email the coordinator, Joyce Meade, directly at jmeade@cdcfe.com ■



Trainees up in Glendalough, Co Wicklow.

► **Joyce Meade**, a past student of the Outdoor course (Shackleton), has been a tutor and coordinator on the Outdoor Adventure Management and Social Care courses in Coláiste Dhúlaigh for fifteen years. She completed a degree in applied social studies and has always had a strong interest in how the outdoors can benefit those most vulnerable in our society. Joyce was delighted to take on the role of coordinator and is confident this programme will have a hugely positive impact on the outdoor industry in Ireland.



A WEEKEND IN NORTH WALES

Daniel O'Brien visits Snowdonia with two long-time friends to mark their 40th birthdays.

During our annual Christmas camp on the slopes of Trusmore above Glencar Lake on the Sligo-Leitrim border, the subject of going abroad for a climb came up. My friends and I had not been away together for a few years and we decided that, in the year of our 40th birthdays, nobody could deny us a trip abroad. Grand, ambitious plans were hatched but, when real life and busy schedules cut our options down, we decided to spend a weekend in Wales – it ended up being a great weekend!

Conal Sexton, Gareth McElhinney and I got the ferry from Dublin over to Holyhead on a Friday morning in August. After we arrived in Holyhead, it took little more than an hour, even in the heavy traffic across Anglesey, to get to the Snowdon Inn campsite at Rhyd Ddu, beside Llyn Cwellyn, where we were staying. The little village of Rhyd Ddu is located to the west of Snowdon and is the starting point for the Snowdon Ranger and the Rhyd Ddu paths up Snowdon.

Above: The Crib Goch Ridge with Garnedd Ugain (1,065m) to the right and Snowdon (1,085m) in the distance.

Below: The campsite at Rhyd Ddu.

Snowdon Horseshoe

The plan for our first day was to do the Snowdon Horseshoe, which includes the classic scramble along the **Crib Goch** ridge. This route starts out at Pen-y-Pass, at the top of the Llanberis Pass. Although the car park there is large, it fills up very quickly, so be there early or you will have to park at one of the other parking spaces in the area. We ended up parking at Pen-y-Gwryd, which is about a kilometre east and downhill from Pen-y-Pass. As we discovered later, care is required when picking a parking space there.

The Horseshoe starts out on the **Pyg Track**, a lower-level route up Snowdon. On a Saturday in August, this path was about as busy as Croagh Patrick on Reek Sunday. The weather was quite inclement on the morning when we set out, with heavy showers of rain and strong winds. We asked



► **Daniel O'Brien** is a Mountain Leader, hillwalker and rock climber from Sligo. He is a member of the **Hanging Rockers Climbing Club** and of Mountaineering Ireland. As well as walking and climbing extensively in Ireland, he has climbed or walked in New Zealand, the Patagonian and Peruvian Andes, Iceland, Scotland, Morocco, Norway, Slovenia and the Swiss and Italian Alps.



the National Trust warden at the car park about Crib Goch ridge in that weather and he advised against doing it. We accepted that this day would not be our day and we set off up the Pyg Track. However, by the time we had reached the junction at Bwlch y Moch, where you turn off the Pyg Track for Crib Goch, we started to question the warden's advice. There were other people heading up for Crib Goch and we decided to go for it. I'm not saying this would have been the right choice for everyone, but we decided, based on our experience and ability, it was worth a shot.

The track up to Crib Goch ('red ridge') thankfully took us away from the crowds on the Pyg Track. As the track petered out and the scrambling started, our first obstacle was encountered. We were faced with a large rock step, with about ten people at the bottom, all debating the best way to approach it. It was wet and slippery and care was required.

Above left:
Daniel O'Brien
below Crib
Goch.

Above right:
Looking back
at Crib Goch
Ridge.

Below: Looking
over Glaslyn
from Garnedd
Ugain to other
side of
Snowdon
Horseshoe.

Although a number of these people had done the ridge before, nobody seemed to be sure of the route to take.

A little frustrated, I started to climb a gully and fairly soon found myself in a precarious situation. As I scrambled my way delicately upwards to safety, I shouted down not to follow me! Fortunately, two climbers showed up and shot through a chimney fairly easily, so then everyone knew the right way to go. From there, route-finding along the ridge to the summit of **Crib Goch (923m)** was easy, with enjoyable scrambling along the way.

The top of Crib Goch is where the famous ridge begins. There are steep drops to the south, inside the Horseshoe, and a vertical drop in most places along the north side of the ridge. I had been looking forward to this for quite some time and now I looked out at the knife-edge ridge as it disappeared into the clouds with nervous anticipation. There was nothing else to do but get stuck in!





On a wet and windy day like that, we didn't climb right along the knife edge, but dropped a few feet down to the left, or south, of the ridge, using the ridgeline itself as a handrail. There were excellent foot and handholds everywhere when needed, so the scrambling was straightforward.

It is the sense of exposure that makes this ridge so exhilarating. Care is needed because the rock is highly polished from so much traffic over the years. One drawback of the ridge is its popularity. There are many novices who attempt it but who, perhaps, aren't quite ready for it. Our group, and two English climbers we had befriended, involuntarily became guides to the less experienced.

After a while we reached the **three pinnacles**. On a day like that, we decided to traverse around them, which in itself still provided some great scrambling.

After the pinnacles, the ridge gradually broadened out to form a saddle at Bwlch Coch. It was at this point that the sense of euphoria really started to kick in! It wasn't over yet, though. There was some more great scrambling ahead and our two new English friends knew the way through some great situations along the **Crib-y-Ddysgl** ridge to the summit of **Garnedd Ugain (1,065m)**.

From the summit of Garnedd Ugain, it was only a relatively short walk to the summit of **Snowdon (1,085m)**. It was at that point that the large crowds started to re-appear, as we joined the railway track and passed the standing stone at the top of the Pyg Track, at Bwlch Glas.

Unfortunately, on a Saturday in August, the summit of Snowdon is not the high point of the day. Six walking tracks and a railway lead to Snowdon's summit and the crowds there were overwhelming. The smell from the waste tanks of the summit café added to the unpleasantness. We skipped the actual summit because of the queue and continued on

Above: Looking towards Y Lliwedd (898m).

Below: Conal Sexton scrambling.

down the Watkin Path, where fortunately the crowds dwindled away again.

At Bwlch Ciliau, we broke off the Watkin Path and headed for the summit of **Y Lliwedd (898m)**, which happily gave us some solitude. Again, this part of the route offered some great scrambling, though it was nowhere near as exposed as the Crib Goch ridge.

From the summit of Y Lliwedd, the track dropped away into Cwm Dyli and joined the **Miners' Track**. The Miners' Track is virtually a road, but at that point we were happy to be back on an easy path, knowing that our day was done. We could look back up at the Crib Goch ridge with a great sense of satisfaction and achievement.

We were soon back at the car after a good eight-hour day in the hills. Unfortunately, we were greeted, as were many others, by a parking fine on the car. We had parked in a clearway, so that is something to watch out for. However, we didn't let that spoil our day!

Tryfan's North Ridge

On our second day, we tackled the North Ridge of **Tryfan (917m)** in the Glyders. This route starts from Llyn Ogwen, where parking is much more readily available. We set out from the bottom of **Milestone Buttre**, which is a Mecca for climbers in the area. The route skirted around to the left of the buttress and went up over many rock steps, which continued the whole way to the summit.

There was a much more 'mix and match' feel about this route, compared to the day before on Crib Goch. The ridge is relatively wide and therefore was much less prescriptive: you could pick your own way to scramble up through the rocks.

As always, care was needed to ensure that we were not blindly following others. A large number of groups, including ours, scrambled into a bottleneck at a tricky rock step, which couldn't be retreated





Above: Tryfan (917m) from near Llyn Idwal.

Below: The view down Tryfan's North Ridge to Llyn Ogwen (with Conal Sexton in the sky-blue jacket).

from. A few awkward moves through a very exposed crack and we were free to continue.

The summit wall can be tackled in any number of ways. It is probably best to sit back and watch a couple of groups make their way up to see what you think will work best for you. We arrived to find a group in retreat from the central part of the wall and we decided to skirt around left. This was also difficult ground. We found out later it would have been better to scramble up through the central part of the wall. After this, getting to the summit was a straightforward scramble.

On the summit, there are two large standing stones, **Adam and Eve**. It is said that, if you climb on top of one of them and jump to the other, you will receive the freedom of Tryfan. I climbed up on one of

them but found the top surfaces of the rocks to be so polished that I decided to forego the freedom of Tryfan! Despite all the talk about Adam and Eve, I think the jump is rarely attempted these days.

A straightforward walk north took us to the **Bwlch Tryfan saddle** between Tryfan and the Bristly Ridge on Glyder Fach. The scramble up Bristly Ridge could be attempted from there, but the weather was closing in fast, so we gave it a miss and headed back down to the car.

The next morning, we made the journey back to Holyhead, to catch the ferry home. It took us only forty-five minutes to get to Holyhead. The relative ease of getting to the mountains in North Wales means that we will definitely be going back there again! ■



THE KING'S TRAIL

Fran Lynch and Fíona Gallagher have an Arctic wilderness experience in northern Sweden.

The **Kungsleden**, or King's Trail, is Sweden's premier long-distance hiking trail and one of the most classic remote trails in the world. Starting at Åbisko over 150 kilometres above the Arctic Circle, and stretching over 400 kilometres south to Ammarnäs, this trail is well worth putting on your bucket list.

Being situated in a very remote area at the tip of northern Europe, getting from Ireland to the trailhead was a journey in itself. Most refreshingly for those of us who are too connected to the virtual world, there was no phone signal for six days. This remote experience gives a truer sense of being close to nature than you can experience even in the Alps.

In September 2016, we hiked the northernmost section of the King's Trail with a group of friends

Above: View of Reaidavaggi valley.

Below: The trekking party about to set off from the trailhead at Åbisko Tourist Station.

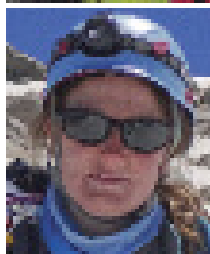
from Sligo Mountaineering Club, covering a total of 136 kilometres and culminating in an ascent of Sweden's highest mountain, **Kebnekaise** (2,099m).

In our eight days on the trail we experienced glorious autumnal colours, perfect weather and amazing river crossings, and saw reindeer herds, distant Sami villages and a display of the northern lights.

Our journey started in Stockholm, where we took the overnight (and most of the next day) sleeper train right to the trailhead at **Åbisko**. This was a nineteen-hour journey which traversed the entire length of Sweden. This trail is so popular with the Swedes that it has a rail-stop of its own at the start,



➤ **Fran Lynch** is a Mountain Leader and a BOS Provider. A member of Sligo Mountaineering Club for almost 30 years and of Mountaineering Ireland, and a former member of Sligo-Leitrim Mountain Rescue Team, she has hiked extensively in mountain ranges across Europe and further afield.



➤ **Fíona Gallagher** is a 25-year veteran member of Sligo-Leitrim Mountain Rescue Team (SLMRT) and a member of Mountaineering Ireland. She is currently Training Officer with the SLMRT, and the Mountaineering Ireland representative to the executive of Mountain Rescue Ireland.



minus the platform. We disembarked there at 5.00pm and, after nineteen hours on the train, we were glad of the chance to stretch our legs on the 15km hike to the first hut, **Abiskojaure**, travelling the last few kilometres by torchlight.

All the huts on the trail are run by the **Svenska Turistföreningen**, the Swedish tourist association, and staffed on a voluntary basis throughout the season. They differ significantly from Alpine huts in that they are self-catering. This effectively means that you have to cook for yourself, wash up and clean the kitchen and bedroom area when you leave. There is no running water, so drinking water has to be fetched from a designated spot at a nearby stream, and wastewater has to be disposed of in an appropriate sluice area. Toilets are of the long-drop type, always a distance from the hut, and wood needs to be chopped and stoves lit to warm the huts.

These mountain stations generally comprise a collection of small huts and, at some, there is a small shop selling expensive tinned and long-life food. This means you don't have to carry more than one day's supply of food at a time. At the end of a long day on the trail, there is still a couple of hours' work to do, but this gives the trail a pioneering feel, which befits its beauty and remoteness.



Each day's walk averaged out at about 20km, with less ascent than you would find in the Alps, but bear in mind that this is trekking country and therefore a fundamentally different experience.

The King's Trail, particularly at its start, goes through sensitive terrain and the tourist association has laid down many kilometres of boardwalks to reduce the impact on the fragile ground and to make hiking a more pleasant experience on the wetter sections.

There are many wide and fast-flowing rivers en route, and the tourist association has erected single-person suspension bridges across the wider rivers, which were exciting to cross and offered many photo opportunities.

After our first night in Abiskojaure, we had a 350m ascent out of the birch forest, and traversed 21km along the beautiful **Alesjauri Lake** to the huts at its end. It was tough underfoot but offered beautiful vistas to the high fells east and west of the trail.

At the **Alesjauri huts**, we were rewarded with one of the most scenically positioned saunas we have



Top: Tjäkja Mountain Station.

Above: Signpost on the trail.

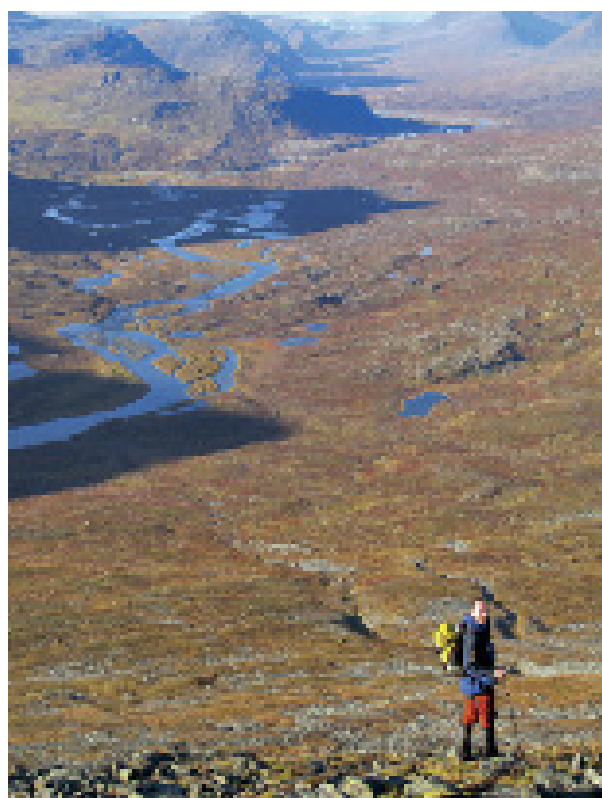
Left: Taking a boardwalk on the way towards Tjäkja Pass.

Right: Looking back down the Tjäkja valley from the lower slopes of Stuor Jierta.

ever been in. Several of the huts on the trail have saunas, which again have to be tended by the guests. Water has to be fetched, timber chopped and fires stoked, but it's definitely worth the effort. A jump in the cold river afterwards is optional!

From Alesjaure, we continued south to **Tjäkja**, a smaller hut, where extra guests sleep on mattresses in the kitchen. No one is ever turned away. This was a beautiful valley, with impressive massifs on all sides and several optional day-trips to the surrounding high peaks. Snow can remain here for a long time in the summer and, in June 2015, several metres of snow blocked the pass and access to the cabin, and was still there when the winter snows came again.

The next morning, we climbed steeply across the beautiful **Tjäkja Pass**, the highest point on the Kungsleden at 1,150m. Our objective was the **Sälka huts** and the promise of another sauna. The climb to the pass was slow but rewarding, and the view from it was almost Tolkienesque. Wave after wave of rounded high fells framed the glaciated valley in front of us, stretching away to infinity. A gun-metal grey sky contrasting with snow-dusted peaks added to the feeling of remoteness and isolation. This was truly the far north. ▶





At **Sälka**, we flew the flag for Ireland, much to the amusement of a large guided group, who later tried to rob it in an international friendly. There is always good company in the huts at night and the Swedes we met were impressed to see an Irish group on the trail.

Our fifth day of walking took us over heathery ground, through a wide valley dominated by the Kebnekaise massif to the east and the passes into Norway on the west. We left the beaten track in search of reindeer antlers, which are shed annually. We weren't disappointed and we strapped them to our rucksacks as trophies!

Stuor Jierta

Perfect weather saw us arrive at the beautifully located **Singi huts** by lunchtime. This allowed us to do a side-trip. The pointed peak of **Stuor Jierta** (1,543m) to the south caught our eye and we climbed it in the afternoon with lighter packs. The views were tremendous, stretching west to Norway and back along the valley to the Tjåkja Pass.

A nice dinner of meatballs and Smash, and a celebratory whiskey for one of our birthdays finished off the day nicely. We were rewarded with a display of the northern lights at about 10.00pm that night, in freezing temperatures.

After a good night's sleep in a very cosy hut, the following morning saw us deviating eastwards off the main King's Trail, towards Kebnekaise mountain station. We traversed the dramatic **Läddjuväggi valley**, with its thousand-metre steep sides and cascading streams. It was cold and very icy underfoot, as the sun hadn't penetrated to the deep valley floor that early.

Towards the end of this valley, we were rewarded with the sight of the dramatic **Duolbagorni** (1,662m), with its sheer walls rising from the valley below. The next day's hard climb of Kebnekaise could now also be seen clearly and we weren't sure if this was a

Above:
Duolbagorni
(1,662m), near
Kebnekaise.

Below: Suspension
bridge.

Bottom: Looking
towards **Stuor**
Jierta.

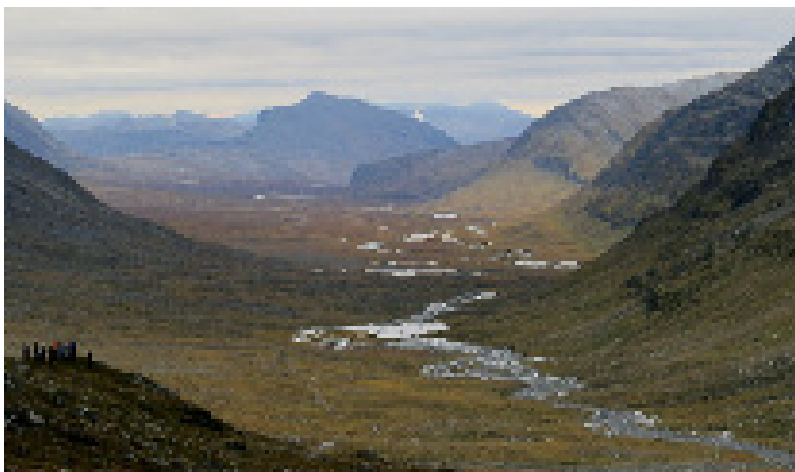


good or a bad thing.

The last mile home is always the longest and the radio mast of the **Kebnekaise mountain station** never seemed to get any closer. We were reluctant to leave the remoteness and peaceful feeling of the high Swedish fells and trade it in for the almost resort-like atmosphere of the large fjällstation at the foot of Sweden's highest mountain. We filed in together, feeling a bit disoriented amongst the weekend trekkers, many of whom had arrived at this rather plush mountain centre by helicopter. We treated ourselves to a nice meal, which didn't come out of a tin and was cooked by real chefs! Early to bed, as we had a 5.00am start.

Summit day

Summit day dawned gloriously and, with thankfully lighter packs, we set off before the main crowd. At 2,099m, and straddling 67°N, **Kebnekaise** is Sweden's highest mountain, a demanding climb and a cherished dream for many Swedes. We took the western route, which involved a demanding hike up the **Kitteldalen valley** to the **Vierranvárri** peak at 1,700m, crossing





Above: The view westwards from the summit of Kebnekaise (2,099m), Sweden's highest peak.

Below: Members of the Irish party at the summit of Kebnekaise.

over high alpine boulder-strewn snowfields.

From here, we had a 200m descent into the **Kaffedalen valley** and then went straight into a 500m ascent to the old **Peak Cabin** on the shoulder of the Kebnekaise massif. It was essentially Croagh Patrick multiplied by five!

From here, we boulder-hopped to the snowline and the stunning new emergency cabin on the summit plateau. The summit of Kebnekaise is a small ice-field that varies in height from year to year; caution is advised on this very steep ice-pinnacle as there is a sheer drop of several hundred metres on two sides.

We thought we were the first people on the summit that morning, but we were beaten to it by three hikers who were dropped straight in front of us by a helicopter. They assured us they were going to hike out!

After soaking in the view, which encompasses eight per cent of Sweden along with Norway's distant peaks, we started the descent. We met the bulk of the day-hikers on their way up. The descent returns the same way as the ascent and is hard on already tired knees. However, the feeling of achievement was immense as we arrived back at the mountain station following eleven hours on the trail. We had celebratory drinks that night and then a bit of a sleep-in.

Kebnekaise fjällstation closed for the season the following morning and we made our 19km trek to the roadhead at **Nikkaloukta**. We took advantage of a Sami-run waterboat taxi along the turquoise **Laddjujarvi Lake** to shorten the journey somewhat.

We lost quite a bit of elevation and entered the autumnal birch forest again, after several days on the high fells. Nikkaloukta is a Sami village with a daily bus connection to **Kiruna** and it represents the beginning and the end of many a hiker's journey. For us, it was the end of our adventures on the King's Trail.

The Kungsleden offers many experiences and is a therapeutic place for both mind and body. The days on the trail follow a natural rhythm, and the variations in the landscape, with its long valleys, challenging summits and rounded high fells, are a pleasure to the senses. In many ways, it represents much that we have lost in the modern world we live in: a physical and spiritual connection between us and the landscape ■

Getting there

Daily flights from Dublin to Stockholm. You can overnight there and catch the morning flight to Kiruna the following day. From Kiruna, take the Narvik-bound train to the Abisko stop. Alternatively, you can do as we did, and take the overnight sleeper train to Kiruna and on to Abisko.

Website

The Swedish Tourist Association website at www.swedishtouristassociation.com. You can book all your hut-stays here and become a member, which offers a significant discount on the huts and on many hostels operated by the Swedish Tourist Association in several towns, including Kiruna and Stockholm.

Maps

Abisko-Kebnekaise-Narvik Mountain Map, 1:100,000, Lantmateriet edition. Order from Stanfords.co.uk. Swedish Online Topo Maps at <https://kso.etjanster.lantmateriet.se/#>. Excellent printable maps of the entire Swedish trail system.

Suggested reads

Kungsleden: the Royal Trail through Sweden, by Claes Grunsten, available from Amazon.





ITALY'S LAKE GARDA

Lake Garda is a great place for an activities-based holiday. **Patrick O'Sullivan** reports.

I visited Lake Garda in September last year as a guest of the **Lake Garda Trentino Tourist Board**, with a small group of Irish journalists. I wasn't sure what to expect in a place I assumed was mainly a tourist resort – with a focus on water sports, perhaps – but in the end I had an excellent and surprisingly active stay there.

Lake Garda, the largest lake in Italy, covers an area of 143 square miles and is situated in the north of the country, at the foot of the Dolomites. After flying into Verona airport, we drove the 85km to **Riva del Garda**, the main town at the northern end of the lake. It is an ideal base for an activity-based holiday here.

Being on a lake with a mountain river flowing into it, possible activities include many water sports, such as canoeing, sailing and windsurfing, but with mountains all around the lake and the steep rock faces of the Dolomites up-valley, activities such as hiking and rock climbing also beckon. In addition, a full range of other activities such as cycling and mountain biking are well catered for. For anyone with an interest in culture, as well as Verona, Venice is also very accessible from here.

The outdoor activities are favoured by a generally mild climate, tempered by the lake, which encourages a typically Mediterranean vegetation here, with lemon trees, olive trees, laurels and palm trees. Winters can be quite cold and summers are sunny and hot, but with thunderstorms. The best times to visit Lake

Above: View of Lake Garda in the Dolomites, Italy.

Below: Members of the group go e-biking in the Garda valley.

Garda are spring, early summer, in particular from mid-April to mid-June, and autumn.

In fact, September is a popular time for tourists to visit Lake Garda, so we stayed in a hotel a little out of the city centre. However, getting around was fairly easy, as taxis were quite cheap.

After settling into our comfortable **Hotel Campagnola**, we met a representative of the Lake Garda Tourist Board, Danielli Tonelli, who made all the arrangements for us. Then we went out for a meal at **Ristorante La Berlera**, which is a restaurant carved into rock. It was certainly very impressive and the food was wonderful. In fact, throughout our stay, the meals were all excellent, and the people seemed very keen to promote their local produce.

The next day, we started our activities with a paddle around the lake. The open canoes were heavy enough and more difficult to handle as the wind got



▶ **Patrick O'Sullivan** is the Editor of the *Irish Mountain Log*.

POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES INCLUDE WATER SPORTS, HIKING AND ROCK CLIMBING.

up. We had an enjoyable couple of hours looking at points of interest from the water, as we paddled along the side of the lake before coming round in a circle to return to Riva del Garda by paddling down the middle of the lake. Apart from the occasional ferry and some sailing boats, we had the lake to ourselves.

In the afternoon, I visited the **Museo Alto Garda museum**, where they had a section entitled “Altitudes of Vision,” which documented the changes that have happened over the years in the landscapes from the top of the Alps and the Dolomites down to Lake Garda through photographs and film from 1880 to 1930.

The museum also had a tower, which you could climb to get an impressively panoramic view of the town, the valley, the lake and the surrounding mountains. Then I went for a walk on a well-marked trail by the side of the lake.

The next day, the morning was taken up with visits to coffee- and olive oil-producing factories, both local enterprises they are proud of.

In the afternoon, we went up-valley to **Arco** and I was taken up the **Via Ferrata Colodri** by a local guide from the Friends of Arco. On the way to the start of the cable, we passed some people who were sport climbing.

Once above the trees, at the bottom of the via ferrata cable, we each clipped on. Reassuringly, the guide said that the cable had recently been replaced and that the points where the new cable was fixed to the rock had been brought closer together so that, if you fell off, you wouldn't fall so far before being brought to a halt by the stanchion below!

The climbing was very enjoyable, with exposure in safety. The climb was an ascent of 270m. When we got to the top, after taking our via ferrata gear off and taking some photos, we started the descent down a path at the back of the mountain.

The next day, we went **e-biking** up the valley, covering maybe 40km there and back and gaining about 400m in altitude. With the boost on these bikes, even though I hadn't been on a bicycle for many years, the distance and the uphill stretches were very



Above: Climbing on the Via Ferrata Colodri in Arco.

Below: Mountains towering over Riva del Garda.

manageable. While we were cycling mostly on roads, there was little traffic and any that we met certainly treated us with respect.

Lake Garda is popular among climbers for its **sport climbing**, because of the large numbers of climbs of all grades there that are easily accessible. Because of the proximity of many routes to the lake, they offer an impressive panorama during the ascent. Summer is the most popular season for climbing but, with the mild climate of Lake Garda, it is possible to climb there all year round.

In addition to the numerous sport climbing routes in an area that are well-maintained by the local authorities and mainly seem to be concentrated at the northern end of the lake, there are many other routes there at grades from 5a to 9a, which have been bolted by local climbers and are not necessarily maintained. Around **Arco**, one of the main **traditional climbing** areas, there are many trad routes from 5a to 6b up to 300m in length. There are also seemingly hundreds of traditional climbing routes ranging in length from a few hundred metres to over 1,200 metres on the great walls of Brento/Casale.

For bad weather days there are also various **climbing walls**. Certainly, there was an impressive one at Arco but, with all the excellent rock around, it would seem a pity to have to use an artificial climbing wall. There also seemed to be about nine **via ferrata** at the northern end of the lake, again of varying difficulty.

Because of the excellent climbing here, the Czech world champion climber **Adam Ondra** agreed to be an ambassador for the Garda Trentino area, which he says is a “climbing paradise.” He has won the **Rock Master competition** there in Arco several times and has put up a new 9b route at Lake Garda, the **Queen Line**.

There are various well-marked **hiking trails** in the area as well, some of which will take you from hut to hut ('rifugio') over several days, and three of which are loop walks of varying lengths at the northern end of the lake ■



PATAGONIAN FIRST ASCENT

Paul Swail reports on a Patagonian first ascent by a team of Irish climbers last January.

In summer 2017, I was sitting in Chamonix with **John McCune, Will Sim** and **John Crook**. We are all passionate about the mountains and are always planning our next adventure, whether it be a quick trip to Oltre Finale for some sport climbing or something slightly

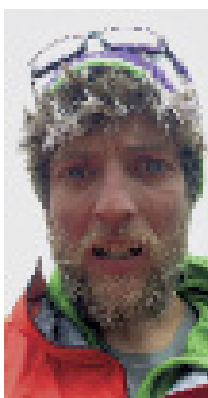
further afield.

The conversation slowly came around to the potential for planning a big trip in January 2018. January 2017 had been a pretty bad time for snowfall in Chamonix (where we are all based) and, with less snow, we had less work, so we thought: 'Why not head off next January?' European winter is the perfect time to head off to the southern hemisphere to try an unclimbed objective in northern Patagonia.

John Crook had twice visited the area of **Torres del**

Above: John Crook on a bold slab pitch, admiring the Torres del Avellano.

Right: Team members enjoying some pancakes in the 'Garage Mahal' at basecamp, with a cloud-covered South Avellano Tower in the background.



► **Paul Swail** is an Irish IFMGA Mountain Guide based between Chamonix and Ireland. He has climbed all over the world but believes that climbing nowhere else can beat topping out on a route at Fair Head in the setting sun. Paul offers guiding services all over the world.



PATAGONIA IS FAMOUS FOR BAD WEATHER AND DIFFICULT CLIMBING CONDITIONS.

Avellano, located about 35km east of the second-largest lake in Chile, Lago General Carrera, and the highest peak in Patagonia, Monte San Valentin (4,058m). On both trips he had attempted to climb the 1,000m-high East Face of the **South Avellano Tower**, but he had been unsuccessful each time because of what Patagonia is famous for: bad weather and very difficult climbing conditions.

In planning our expedition, we knew that, to succeed, we had to be prepared to climb in any conditions. On a 1,000m-high wall, that meant bringing a lot of gear. In the end, I think that we may have had one of every piece of climbing gear that is currently available! We also knew that, with the logistics involved in simply reaching basecamp, we would need around six weeks for the trip. We decided to go from just after Christmas until the beginning of February.

When I met Will and John McCune at Heathrow Airport on December 30th, we started something that became a bit of theme for the trip: packing and repacking all the gear. In total, between the three of us, we had just short of 300kg of equipment.

John Crook and his girlfriend, **Ruth Bevan**, met us in Coyhaique, in southern Chile. Rescue would not be so easy where we were going and, as Ruth is a doctor in addition to being a mountaineer, she was a valuable addition to the team.

Another important matter for a trip like this, where we were planning to spend twenty-five days in basecamp, was to have enough supplies, mainly food but also gas and other things. John and Ruth were tasked with this and did a brilliant job. By January 1st,

Above: A shot taken from basecamp of the team high on the South Tower.

Below: Paul laybacking on the fourth pitch of the East Face route.

2018, we were all set to head off on our adventure in the Avellanos.

Journey in to basecamp

On expeditions, the journey to basecamp is often one of the most memorable parts of the trip as there is a certain amount of heading into the unknown. The Austral Highway, or Route 7, is a 1,300-km highway that runs through rural Patagonia and, for the most part, consists of gravel and potholes.

A day of travel took us to Puerto Guadal, where we enjoyed the hospitality of American climbing legend **Jim Donini** and his wife **Angela**. Jim has been climbing for most of his life and has made some incredible ascents all over the world. We were treated to first-hand stories about his epic 28-day attempt on Latok I and his discovery of **Toni Egger's** body while climbing on Cerro Torre, and making the first ascent of what was later called Torre Egger.

Our journey continued until we reached the tiny community of Fachinal, where we met **Pascal**, a local man who was going to look after the logistics for us and provide us with the boat we needed to cross Lago General Carrera to reach the valley of La Laura.

The huge lake is notorious for unpredictable winds that can spring up out of nowhere. The boat was loaded with Pascal, John Crook, Ruth and 700kg of kit, leaving John McCune, Will and me on the shore to await Pascal's return. We waited and waited, but he didn't appear. It seems that the winds had picked up on their crossing and the boat, being somewhat overloaded, started to take on water. When they finally arrived on the other side, Pascal made the decision to wait until the winds dropped. As we didn't expect the boat crossing to be an issue, we hadn't split the two-way radios, so the three of us left behind didn't know what was happening. We spent the day sleeping, sunbathing and trying not to worry. ►



WE GOT A FORECAST OF LIGHT WINDS AND NO PRECIPITATION FOR FIVE DAYS. THIS WAS OUR CHANCE!

left over from the heavy winter's snowfall. However, equipped with portaledge and other big-wall gear, we knew that, even if conditions were not in our favour, we could have a good go at climbing it.

The first day on the wall was a wet one. John Crook and I set off to fix some ropes. The initial pitches were really wet, but at an easier angle, and we made good progress. On his previous attempt, John had climbed about five pitches up the wall and our aim was to reach his high point that day. We did that mostly free, but with some aid on the sections that were too wet to climb clean. Fixing 200 metres of rope from our high point, we abseiled back down to basecamp.

John, Will and Ruth had constructed what we called the 'Garage Mahal,' a structure that was watertight, sheltered from the prevailing winds and would allow us to have an open fire in any conditions. It was also somewhere for everyone to hang out instead of being stuck in our tents on bad-weather days, something that really helps to keep morale high.

John McCune and Will Sim spent the next day pushing the route higher on the wall, which was exciting for them as they were in virgin terrain, not quite knowing what was ahead. They made excellent progress and reached a ledge system about one-third of the way up the wall, where they fixed ropes and then abseiled back to basecamp. Psyche and morale was high, having gained a new high point after four days, and it was now just a waiting game. We made pancakes, read books, listened to music and studied the wall.

We could see a huge corner system that looked possible but also looked permanently damp. There was also a series of cracks above but we were unsure, even with binoculars, if they could be climbed or would just be dead-ends.

Through our sat-phone, we received daily updates from **Jon Griffiths** back in Chamonix. We couldn't

Luckily, we made friends with **Don Gerardo**, one of the villagers, who supplied us with home-made bread and Mate tea. As we were bedding down for the night, Pascal came back and reassured us that everything was okay. We got across safely the following morning. Throughout our trip, Chilean hospitality was second to none.

We had the assistance of packhorses on our approach to basecamp up La Laura valley. **Louis**, the gaucho, who lives in the La Laura valley for ten months of the year, supplied the horses which transported our equipment up the valley. This was an opportunity to appreciate the beautiful Patagonian landscape.

Louis put us up for the night at his farm, where we enjoyed a freshly slaughtered roast lamb, did some fishing, attempted some horse-riding and even tried our hand at lassoing – none of which we were very good at!

Louis left us at the head of the La Laura valley as the horses were unable to travel any further due to the steepness of the terrain. This left the five of us to carry all the equipment up to basecamp, which was totally epic. Haul bags are extremely uncomfortable, and the food weighed a lot. River crossings and bog walks with 30-40kg on your back are hard going. It all felt like one step forward and two back, but once we were established at basecamp, all the sore shoulders, achy knees and stiff hips were worth it.

Our first inspection of the **East Face** of the **South Avellano Tower** showed that it was covered in snow

Above: Will Sim on about pitch 20. "After 14 hours' climbing, we had reached some easier ground."

Below: Topo of the team's East Face route on the South Avellano Tower.



believe our luck when we got a forecast of high pressure building with light winds and no precipitation for five days! This was our chance; it was game on!

On Monday, January 15th, we were up at 2.00am. We brewed up, had some breakfast and set off. It was a little under an hour to the base of the wall where, as a team of four, we climbed up the fixed lines to our high point. We were set up as two pairs. I climbed with John Crook and Will climbed with John McCune. We were well equipped with large racks, including some pitons, plenty of tat and waterproofs – because in Patagonia, anything can happen.

John Crook and I set off, with the other pair climbing our line with slight variations, where possible. The rock for the most part was excellent, but we knew that we had to tread carefully as we obviously didn't want to knock anything too large down on the guys below us. After a short block of leading, I handed the lead over to John for what turned out to be one of the best pitches on the route, a slightly overhanging crack with good protection and super burly climbing.

At this point, we were committed, but when I came up to John he was unsure of where we could push a line through. I spotted a hanging groove and, as long as it had some protection, I was happy to have a go. Protection it had, but with exposure in abundance and some of the best climbing on the whole route. It was probably E4 and was the key pitch to unlocking the route, allowing us to gain more corner systems and find our flow. More amazing pitches revealed a broken ledge system where we could move together, alpine-style, to make up some time.



The rest of the climb flowed extremely well and we arrived at the summit of the South Tower as the clouds started to roll in and the wind picked up. We indulged in a lot of high fives, selfies and plenty of smiles on the top before we began to plan our descent.

Without crampons we couldn't descend on foot, so we abseiled back down a line similar to our route up. The first abseil resulted in damage to our rope's sheath, so that you could see the core of the rope. Somehow it survived the following fifteen abseils and we got down in perfect time. As we reached the bottom, the rain came on and it got dark. Twenty-two hours after we had set out, we arrived back at basecamp, where Ruth surprised us with a delicious



Above: Paul Swail on the crux pitch that allowed the team to gain the corner systems.

curry and a lemon cheesecake – also perfectly timed and very well received!

*East Face of the South Avellano Tower
Paul Swail, John Crook, Will Sim and John McCune
E4 6a – 1,000m
15/01/2018*

Below left: Summit selfie.

Below right: The team at the end of the trip (from left): Paul Swail, Ruth Bevan, John Crook, Pascal, John McCune, Louis and Will Sim.

More first ascents

Twelve days into our trip, we had climbed our main objective. That left us a few weeks to explore the area, and we were able to do another four first ascents between the team. To say this was a dream trip would be an understatement; it was well and truly a trip of a lifetime and I am still buzzing!

With time to spare before catching our flights back to Europe, we relocated to Cerro Colorado. This huge dolerite column protrudes from the Chilean desert just south-east of Lago General Carrera and was the location of some more first ascents by our team...but that's a whole other story! ■

Paul Swail and John McCune would like to thank **Mountaineering Ireland** for its financial support for this trip.





Input to ASCENT project in 2017

Path erosion the major impact of increased numbers.



Written by
Helen Lawless,
Hillwalking, Access
& Conservation
Officer



Brona Duddy (Gartan OETC), followed by Helen Donoghue (member of Mountaineering Ireland's Access & Conservation Committee) during the October workshop at Errigal, Co Donegal.

ASCENT is an EU-funded project, led by **Donegal County Council**, which brings together partners from five northern European countries to collectively develop tools to address the impact of increased visitor numbers on the natural environment. A key focus within the project is on the management of path erosion.

Over the last year, **Mountaineering Ireland** contributed to the ASCENT project by participating in the **Errigal Stakeholders Group**, joining a study visit to look at upland path work in Scotland and visiting Croagh Patrick to meet with representatives of the **Croagh Patrick Stakeholders Group**.

In October, Mountaineering Ireland facilitated a session on the future of Errigal in Dunlewey, as part of Mountaineering Ireland's Autumn Gathering. At the end of 2017, following a **path condition survey** and further discussions within the local community, the Errigal Stakeholders Group agreed the best line for a repaired path on Errigal. The council is now proceeding with an ecological assessment of that route.

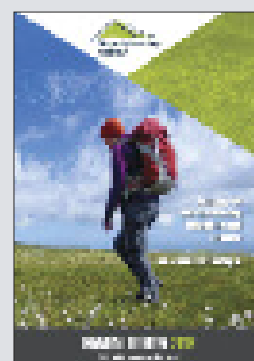
Gullion and Mourne

Slieve Gullion and Slieve Donard are also ASCENT sites, through **Newry, Mourne & Down District Council**. During the summer, Mountaineering Ireland provided input to consultation

about further path work planned for Slieve Gullion.

In November, a number of Mountaineering Ireland members participated in an ASCENT workshop in the Mournes, where the Helping the Hills guiding principles were discussed and accepted as providing appropriate direction in how to address upland path erosion – see www.helpingthehills.ie. The importance of investing in looking after our upland paths, the need to build capacity to do skilled work and the value of sharing experiences all came through at the workshop. Further discussion is to take place amongst key organisations on the island of Ireland that share an interest in fulfilling these objectives ■

You can read more about Mountaineering Ireland's work to address upland path erosion, along with our other Access and Conservation activities last year, in Mountaineering Ireland's *Annual Review for 2017*, available now on www.mountaineering.ie.



Pictured on a site visit during the ASCENT workshop in the Mournes (left to right): Richard Fox (Fix the Fells, Lake District), with Matthew Bushby (Mourne Heritage Trust) and Bob Aitken.

Mountain Environment Weekend and one-day workshops

Mountaineering Ireland's weekend-long celebration of **Ireland's mountain environment** will take place on May 25-27th at a venue to be confirmed in the west. We will have people with expertise in different aspects of the upland environment joining us for two days of exploration and learning in the mountains, as well as evening activities. Plans are also in train for one-day environmental workshops in each province.

These events are of particular value to **Club Environmental**

Officers and Mountaineering Ireland Training Providers.

However, subject to availability of space, all interested members who are in a position to share the knowledge they acquire with others are welcome to participate ■

FOR MORE ON THESE EVENTS: For details of the upcoming events, see our website www.mountaineering.ie or email helen@mountaineering.ie.

RESPECT

Responsible Enjoyment of Special Places with Empathy, Care and Trust

Celebrate and share our upland heritage

Ireland's mountains and upland areas are rich in reminders of how previous generations have interacted with the landscapes where we walk and climb. Visible reminders include standing stones, the walls of old houses, lazy-beds and disused mines, while place-names sometimes provide invisible evidence of historic events or settlement. Yet Ireland's mountains and upland areas are living landscapes, too, where the interactions between people and the landscape continue to evolve, contributing to our shared cultural heritage.

2018 is the **European Year of Cultural Heritage**. Cultural heritage is diverse; embracing landscape, wildlife and farming practices, as well as literature, art, music, food and folklore. The knowledge of hillwalkers and climbers, and the passion that we have for Ireland's mountains, also form part of our cultural heritage.

The theme for European Year of Cultural Heritage this year in Ireland is **'Make a Connection'**. This theme aims to deepen the connection between people and heritage, and build a legacy of greater public engagement.

Mountaineering Ireland is encouraging all clubs and individual members to tap into the cultural heritage of the places where we walk and climb, and to celebrate and share our upland heritage, for example through guided walks or a photographic exhibition. Doing so in conjunction with an upland community group could make for a mutually beneficial exchange. You could find out more about the mountains where you're active, and it would help to

build understanding within host communities of what interests recreational visitors.

Deepening our connection with the places where we walk and climb will give us more confidence that we're welcome. It will also help us to see how we can enjoy our activities without imposing, and how we can bring greater benefit to the area.

Learn more about the European Year of Cultural Heritage on www.eych2018.com ■



The isolated ruins of Ned Curran's cottage in Coumtoy in the Comeraghs, believed to have been a 'safe house' in the Civil War.

Cooley arrows removed, rugged beauty restored

The spray-paint vandalism across the Cooley Mountains reported in IML 123 (page 11) came to a positive conclusion in December when volunteers removed hundreds of arrows from rocks along the scenic ridge between the Windy Gap and Slieve Foye, in a clean-up that was co-ordinated by Mountaineering Ireland and the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS).

It is understood that the arrows were spray-painted onto rocks to mark the route for a charity challenge, something which landowners, hillwalkers and other events organisers all described as being both unnecessary and unsightly. The matter was highlighted on Facebook in August by local Mountain Leader **Derek Watters** and subsequently discussed at a public meeting called by **Matthew McGreehan**, a local hillfarmer and Chair of Louth IFA's



Derek Watters, right, and Donal McMorland get stuck into the task of removing yellow arrows from rocks in the Cooley Mountains.

Rural Development Committee.

As the Cooley Mountains is a Special Area of Conservation, the NPWS carried out an assessment to ensure the arrows could be removed without causing further damage. Over two work days early in December the arrows were carefully

scrubbed off by a small party of landowners, hillwalkers and runners, working under guidance from the local NPWS Conservation Ranger, **Hugh McLindon**.

Although it was tough work, especially on the second day when the weather brought high

winds and snow showers, the participants took huge satisfaction from seeing immediately how their efforts restored the natural beauty of the mountains. The cooperation between landowners, hillwalkers, runners, local politicians, NPWS and Mountaineering Ireland in resolving the matter was also really heartening.

The ultimate reward for all concerned will be to see the Cooleys and other mountain areas remain free of this type of marking into the future.

Note: In 2017, the **Mourne Outdoor Recreation Forum** adopted an updated protocol on waymarking for events, which states that the use of spray-paint is unacceptable and outlines alternatives – see bit.ly/2u1DC1z. See also Mountaineering Ireland's Policy and Guidelines for Organised Events in Ireland's Mountain Areas, at bit.ly/2Gc9oxT ■



Recent and upcoming events

Brief reports on training events of note run by the Training Office



Written by
Jane Carney,
Training Officer

Club Training Officers' Regional Meeting, Clonmel

The latest Regional Meeting for Club Training Officers was expertly hosted in the lovely Park Hotel, Clonmel, by **Peaks Mountaineering Club** on January 11th. These meetings are organised by a host club, with support from the Mountaineering Ireland Training Officer, who chairs

and presents at the meeting.

This regional meeting was the best-attended to date, with over forty participants representing eleven walking and climbing clubs.

The workshop had a broad focus on access, navigation, leadership, communication and climbing, with some

super ideas and suggestions emerging to feed into the design phase of the next strategic development plan.

The agenda of these meetings is flexible to suit the needs of the participants. The shared skills and learnings from the meetings provide networking opportunities,

strengthen relationships between clubs in the region and provide experience of the range of training models adopted by clubs.

Does your club want to host our next regional meeting? Just express your interest to Jane Carney in the Training Office ■

Mountaineering Ireland's 2018 Winter Meet

Mountaineering Ireland's 2018 Winter Meet, based in Onich, Scotland, took place from March 11-17th and was well-attended, attracting over 20 participants and filling two skills courses. Conditions were much better than on last year's meet, with plenty of snow on the ground this time.

As always, skills courses were offered, with a focus on fostering independence and confidence through developing skills and experience.

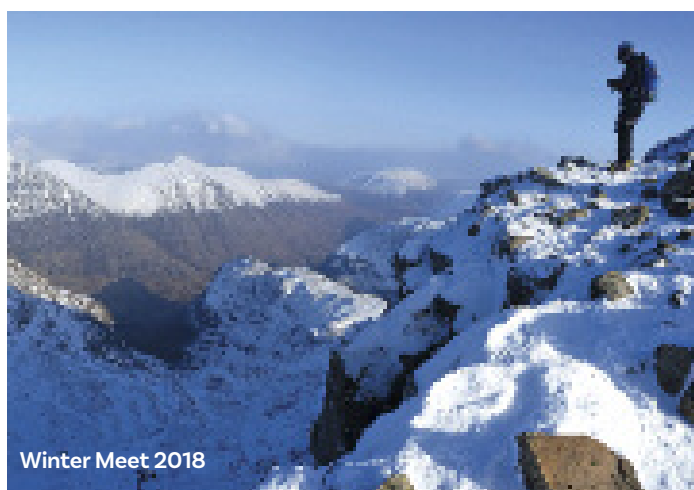
Those pursuing winter qualifications attend the meet to gather quality mountain days, observe instructors and spend days in the mountains with others.

This year saw a 50-50 balance between independent mountaineers and those seeking training. Some past trainees returned to carry out their own activities, whilst benefiting from the advice

available. Participants met and joined with other like-minded people to create teams to head out on trips.

At times, the weather was extremely challenging and harsh, which is to be expected in Scotland in winter. The speed with which conditions changed surprised all groups on the first day of the meet. The first day started calm, clear and sunny, but it was quite apparent that the summits were extremely windy and gusty, and that cornice-crested slopes were dangerously loaded and to be avoided.

Mountaineers need to start information-gathering in the weeks and days before travelling to Scotland. They need to read the weather forecasts and avalanche reports over time to build a historical knowledge of the



Winter Meet 2018

conditions and maintain this daily vigil while in Scotland. On approach, look for evidence during the drive to, and walk into, the mountains. This builds up a local picture and focuses the mind in preparation for a day in the mountains.

Harsh and changeable conditions remind you of the necessity for practiced and

accurate navigation, and confident and appropriate decision-making and judgment calls. Considerable pressure can be created by the wintry, windy, cold conditions and remote setting.

.....
READ MORE: Read a participant's report on this year's Winter Meet on page 22 ■

Fees for training candidates

Mountaineering Ireland has *reduced* the **membership fees** for training candidates from €41.60 to €30.00.

The **award registration fee** has been *increased* for training candidates from €40 to €50 ■

Revised climbing awards

The revised climbing awards will be launched on April 2nd, 2018.

- Single Pitch Award (SPA) becomes **Rock Climbing Instructor (RCI)**
- Climbing Wall Award (CWA) becomes **Climbing Wall Instructor (CWI)**
- Climbing Wall Leading Award (CWLA) becomes **Climbing Wall Development Instructor (CWDI)**

Please contact the Training Office or see the website for details ■



Winter Meet 2018

All-island training board

The new **Mountain Training Board Ireland (MTBI)** has held its first meetings. The members of the new Board include Dawson Stelfox (Chair), Kevin O'Callaghan, Colin Gibbon, Alan Mordaunt, Lorcan McDonnell, Kate Thompson, Stephen Creber, David Batt, Maelíosa De Buítléar and Joe McKnight. The Board's Technical Advisors are Kieran O'Hara, John Cousins and Mountaineering Ireland's Training Officer, Jane Carney, who is also Secretary of the MTBI. Administrative support will be provided by Mountaineering Ireland's Training Administrator.

News for providers

■ Induction is required for the revised climbing awards: SPA, CWA, CWLA. Thank you to those who have attended this induction course already. More dates will be made available for those who have been unable to attend so far.

The new awards will be available to be delivered by those who currently deliver the SPA (RCI), CWA (CWI) and CWLA (CWDI). Candidates will be able to transition between the schemes. Please contact the Training Office with any queries.

■ Providers are reminded to save venues when completing the course report and to add candidates before the course. This will flag any issues pre-course, such as candidates with lapsed membership, those not registered and those using the wrong email address or membership number.

■ Dates for forthcoming CPD opportunities are on the 2018 calendar.

Changes to climbing modules on Instructor Training Courses

Outdoor courses available in Ireland that offer Quality & Qualification Ireland (QQI) awards and modules need to be aware of the upcoming changes to the Single-Pitch Award QQI Level 5 and Level 6 modules.

Mountaineering Ireland has four modules within the QQI listings: the Level 5 Mountain Skills; the Level 4 Rock Skills; the Level 5 Single-Pitch Award Training; and the Level 6 Single-Pitch Award Assessment.

With the changes that have resulted from the climbing awards review, it is important that those courses, including the Level 5 and Level 6 Single-Pitch Awards, be aware of the effect of the revisions on those schemes.

The key changes are:

- the experience requirements pre-training and the assessment to include indoor and outdoor sport climbing leads;
- the duration for the training course increases from two to three days (20 to 24 hours), to include one full day at a climbing wall;
- the introduction of two new and additional modules: (1) Teaching Skills and (2) Managing an Assistant.

Please contact the Training Office to discuss the transitional arrangements for candidates and course requirements for trainers and those managing outdoor course provision.

Key dates 2018

- 13th April Alpine Meet Lecture, Basecamp Store, Dublin, 7pm
- 17th April Youth Club Climbing Kickstart, Gilford Community Centre, 7pm
- 27-30th April Climbfest Donegal Meet
- 11-13th May Women with Altitude Event, Glendalough, Co Wicklow
- 25th May Alpine Preparation Session, Wicklow
- 26th & 27th May Skills Workshop Navigation, Wicklow
- 26th & 27th May Skills Workshop Scrambling, Wicklow
- 26th & 27th May Skills Workshop Rock Climbing, Wicklow
- 1-3rd June Fair Head Climbing Meet
- 18th June MTBI Training Meeting
- 22-24th June MTUK Meeting, Tollymore
- 6th July Outdoor Learning Symposium, Tollymore Field Study Centre
- 7-21st July Alpine Meet, Val Di Mello, Italy
- 14th September MTBI Training Meeting
- 15th & 16th Sept Skills Workshop Navigation, Kerry
- 15th & 16th Sept Skills Workshop Scrambling, Co Kerry
- 15th & 16th Sept Skills Workshop Rock Climbing, Kerry
- 17th September Mountaineering Instructors Award (MIA) Workshop
- 21-22nd Sept Mountain Skills Providers Workshop, Wicklow
- 5-7th October MTUK Meeting, Plas Y Brenin
- 12-14th October Autumn Gathering, Clonbur, Galway
- 2-5th November Mountain Leader Assessment
- 16-18th November Club Training Officers Workshop, Galway
- 28th November Winter Meet Lecture, Basecamp, Dublin, 7pm
- 3rd December MTBI Training Meeting
- 6th December Lynam Lecture, Dublin
- 7th December Senior Providers Workshop Wicklow

Please see our website, www.mountaineering.ie, or contact the Training Office (01 625 1115) for more details. Please book early!

Outdoor Instructor Training Courses

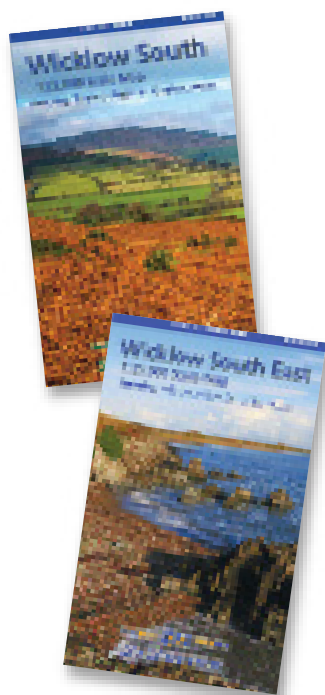
At the request of our members, we will continue to inform members of the outdoor training course options. Mountaineering Ireland will continue to add to the list of outdoor course offerings. Please send in an overview of your course so we can add it to our list ■

Stay safe out there!



Books

1:25,000 Wicklow maps issued by EastWest Mapping



WICKLOW SOUTH

By EastWest Mapping

EastWest Mapping (2018)

€12.50 (on map paper)

or €19.50 (laminated)

WICKLOW SOUTH EAST

By EastWest Mapping

EastWest Mapping (2018)

€12.50 (on map paper)

or €19.50 (laminated)

These two maps are the first in EastWest Mapping's new series of 1:25,000 maps for the Wicklow area. They also expand the area covered by the current EastWest Mapping series to include south Wicklow.

The new 1:25k scale will feel more natural to most navigators than the old 1:30k, but the most exciting development with this new series is the contour interval of 5m. This gives razor-sharp detail of the ground on the hills. It will make night navigation exercises a pleasure, or at least easier!

As we've come to expect from the excellent maps by EastWest Mapping, the accuracy of the forest tracks and other on-the-ground features is every bit as good as in the previous series. The work that has gone into gathering place-names and historical data is very evident from the long list of people thanked in the heritage and place-names section.

The bad news for hillwalkers is that not much of



Trooperstown Hill, Co Wicklow

the uplands is covered by these new maps, although Trooperstown Hill is covered on the Wicklow South East map, and the hills south of Aughavannagh and around Tinahely are covered on the Wicklow South map.

Still, there is plenty of interest and, given the amount of forest cover on these hills, the accuracy of the forest tracks is particularly important. One place I will be visiting as a result of studying the Wicklow South map is the location of the last fatal avalanche in Ireland in 1867,

near Aughavannagh, which is marked on that map.

The good news for hillwalkers is that EastWest Mapping has plans to publish its other Wicklow maps using the 1:25k scale and 5m contours. The Lugnaquilla & Glendalough map is due to be published in April and the others hopefully by the end of the year. These will be very valuable additions for any keen explorers of the hills in Wicklow.

Mairead Kennedy Member of the Bootleggers Hillwalking Club, lives in south-west Wicklow

Mountain Views' third annual published; superb photos



THE SUMMIT ANNUAL NEWSLETTER 2018

Edited by Simon Stewart

Mountain Views (2018), 58pp, many colour photos. Available free as PDF download from mountainviews.ie or for €15.24 (£15.62) plus VAT for printed copy.

The third annual newsletter from Mountain Views is now available as a free download on its website at mountainviews.ie, or again, at a price, you can have the satisfaction of holding a printed copy in your hands.

Orders can be placed at www.blurb.com/b/8538309-

the-summit-2018 and a printed copy will be mailed to you. The quality of the photographs is again superb, so consider supporting this production by ordering your own copy.

The editor's selection of articles ranges widely, both at home and abroad. At home, we have interesting articles about the Dunkerrons in Kerry; coastal walking on Inis Mór; the Moyle Way in north Antrim; and climbs and scrambles on headlands and sea stacks in Mayo and Donegal.

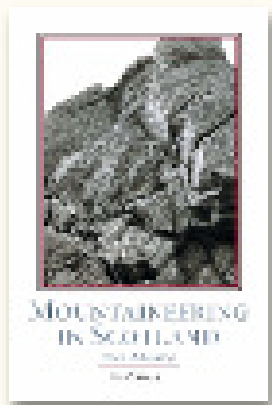
Abroad, the articles venture

somewhat further afield this year to Georgia, Ethiopia and La Réunion (featured not long ago on TV5 Monde's *Chroniques d'en haut*, available on Virgin Media).

These articles are complemented by articles on Mountain Views tracks, challenge walks, access and conservation, the Na Sléibhte club, and naked walking, a walking style which, climatically and culturally, may be slow to catch on here.

Peter O'Neill Literary Editor, *Irish Mountain Log* and member of the Irish Mountaineering Club

Scottish mountaineering history, Part II



MOUNTAINEERING IN SCOTLAND: YEARS OF CHANGE

By Ken Crockett

Scottish Mountaineering Club (2017), 412pp, with 84 illustrations, hdbk, £25.00, ISBN 978-1-907233-24-1

This magnificent book covers mountaineering in Scotland in the years from 1914 to 1971. It is a follow-up to the previous volume by the same author, which covered the

Victorian period. It will be followed by a third volume in which he will bring the history right up to date.

Ken Crockett's work is a tour de force of research and more than competent writing skills. All sources are quoted: this is very valuable because it makes it possible for us to follow the links to read the full versions of the necessarily condensed stories he tells. Think of it as a website, valuable in its own right but also full of leads which open up other worlds of wonder to us.

Scotland has a very rich body of excellent mountaineering literature and this is a guidebook to it. We read stories about first ascents and epics on mountains throughout the country. We are introduced to the men and women who had the

adventurous spirit and curiosity which led them into finding and climbing mountain routes, which became classics for, and inspired, those who followed after them.

Accounts are given of ascents of almost 600 routes in Arran, the Cairngorms, Skye, Rum and the Northern, Central and Southern Highlands. These are not just bare stories of climbs but are populated by all sorts of interesting people with a range of characteristics from dour to almost, but not quite, irresponsible jokers.

The general index contains almost 1,000 entries listing people and clubs, and also equipment and development of equipment.

If I could cavil about any aspect of this book it would not be about the book itself



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

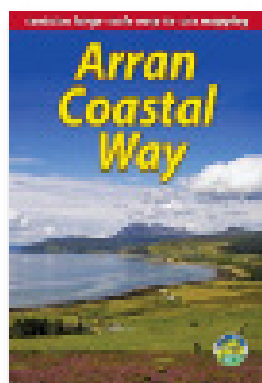
Buy now

This is the book we recommend most highly from our spring 2018 reviews

but about us and the fact that we are Irish. Most of us will lack the intimate knowledge of routes referenced and climbers cited, which helps the imagination to visualise what we are reading. We will not have the easy familiarity with background which Scots will have. Despite our handicap, this is a wonderful volume, which should introduce us to a wonderland beyond our ken.

Sé O'Hanlon Mountaineer

Walking around Arran



ARRAN COASTAL WAY

By Jacquetta Megarry

Rucksack Readers (2018, revised, with new large-scale maps), 76pp, many colour photos, 10 pages of 1:55,000 maps, £12.99, ISBN 978-1-898481-79-9

The Arran Coastal Way is shorter, at 105km (65 miles), than some of the other Ways covered by the guides in the Rucksack Readers stable that we reviewed recently. It

encircles the island, mainly at or near sea level, as a suggested seven-day walk (or a more challenging five- or six-day hike for fit walkers who make early starts).

Goat Fell, 874m, the roof of Arran, is the main fine-weather, higher alternative. The ferry crossing from Ardrossan to Brodick can be reached by train from Glasgow, providing convenient access from Ireland.

Maps at 1:55,000, described as 'new large-scale maps' came as somewhat of a surprise when other Rucksack Readers' guides have provided maps at larger scale, but these maps are very clear and this scale provides adequate detail.

The guide follows the familiar waterproof, ring-



bound format, with clear route descriptions, notes on accommodation and bus routes and information on topics such as geology, pre-history and history, Scotch whisky and wildlife, and a reminder to be tide-aware.

Arran, described as 'Scotland in miniature,' has perhaps in the past attracted climbers rather than walkers. This guide may help to

introduce more walkers to the dramatic scenery of this beautiful island, but heed the warning that this walk should not be underestimated. Picking your way among boulder fields near sea level can make coastal walking more demanding and slower than might be anticipated.

Peter O'Neill Literary Editor, *Irish Mountain Log* and member of the Irish Mountaineering Club



All-achieving adventurer on peaks and high seas



HIGH MOUNTAINS AND COLD SEAS: THE LIFE OF HW 'BILL' TILMAN: SOLDIER, MOUNTAINEER, NAVIGATOR
By JRL Anderson

Tilman Books (first published 1980, republished 2017), 416pp, £12.00, ISBN 978-1-909461-44-4

As Tilman was arriving in Iceland on one of his later Arctic voyages, a passenger on a cruise ship asked where the boat was headed. "Greenland," replied Tilman.

"Ah," said the questioner, "following in Tilman's footsteps!"

I hope the story is true, as it would encapsulate so much of Tilman's life; so famous as to be an icon, but still to go unrecognised on his own boat; so prolific as to have left enough footprints that he could be simultaneously following them and making new tracks.

That same profile is a problem for a book like this: how do you properly record the life of a man who was decorated in two world wars, became a farmer in Kenya, prospected for gold, cycled across Africa, climbed many of its highest mountains, then turned his attention to the Himalaya as half of one of the most influential partnerships ever seen in mountaineering, before spending his later years sailing the southern and

Arctic seas?

In fairness to the author, you don't; there's just too much. To Anderson's credit, it would seem that he realised this and wrote something much more useful: a brilliant overview that can be read as a complete biography or, better still in my view, a starting place, in essence a massive index from which you can branch out and read Tilman's own books about whichever expeditions or voyages catch your imagination. And there are lots of them to choose from: one boat alone, *Mischief*, inspired six books.

Besides books, Tilman's other writing habit was to write to his sister, a fantastically comprehensive record of his life that they shared with determination and ingenuity no matter where he ended up,

exchanging letters from Arctic islands and behind enemy lines. Those letters, together with accounts from fellow travellers, seem to me to put the lie to the infamous misogyny Shipton attributed to his partner. I would read Tilman as being quite shy, a theory the author discerned but then discarded as Tilman was able to lecture to large audiences.

Though many readers of the *Irish Mountain Log* will already be aware of Tilman, there is so much to this book that there will almost certainly be parts of his life new to you, and that alone is reason enough to open the book and enjoy it.

Kevin Duffy Mountaineer, currently in training to fulfil polar ambitions, which he hopes will take him in some of Tilman's footsteps. You can find out more at www.kevinandedel.com

Tilman's final voyages and triumphs



TRIUMPH AND TRIBULATION: NO SHIP SHOULD BE WITHOUT TABASCO SAUCE
By HW 'Bill' Tilman

Tilman Books (first published 1977, republished 2017), 153pp, £12.00, ISBN 978-1-909461-42-0

I took on board my own suggestion of using Anderson's biography of Tilman as a port of departure

and followed it up by embarking on *Triumph and Tribulation*, Tilman's account of his most northerly voyages and what turned out to be his final book. It's wonderful!

Tilman was an engaging and literate writer. While he had the odd harsh word about the behaviour of some crew members, overall he was warm and likeable and, as the afterword describes, he was more liked by his crews than many claimed. He displayed a touching loyalty to some of them long after they sailed together.

Tilman also managed to make his journals detailed technical accounts of his trips, but despite my very basic knowledge of sailing I found his style made them

understandable. Tilman didn't start sailing as a sailor, but rather as a climber trying to reach new and less accessible ranges. His books still included climbing but I found his transition to prolific sailor a joy to read about. Perhaps it's that transition that makes his writing accessible to non-sailors like me?

During one of the journeys related in this book, the prolific exchange of letters between Tilman and his sister ended with her death. The effect this had on Tilman is shown by how little he says about it, though a poignant undercurrent of encroaching age starts to emerge from there on. That didn't stop him, though, and

he went on to tackle northern voyages after that with no apparent lack of determination in the face of tough conditions.

Obviously this was Tilman's last book, but not his last sail, and perhaps that's a fitting way to end, his last voyage as skipper being his last entry as author. It seems unlikely we'll again see a combination of career, character and canon like this. If you value those things, I can't recommend this book, or the rest of this re-issued series, highly enough.

Kevin Duffy Mountaineer, currently in training to fulfil polar ambitions, which he hopes will take him in some of Tilman's footsteps. You can find out more at www.kevinandedel.com

Play captures atmosphere of Antarctic exploration

SHACKLETON

Developed with Jocelyn Clarke, directed by Niall Henry

Blue Raincoat Theatre Company, Project Arts Centre, Temple Bar, Dublin. Duration 80 mins. Run ended March 10th, 2018.

"Men wanted for hazardous journey. Low wages, bitter cold ... safe return doubtful."

While it seems that this advertisement may never have actually been placed, the Blue Raincoat Theatre Company, Ireland's longest-running theatre company, definitely put on an interesting visual theatre presentation of *Shackleton* at the Project Arts Centre in Temple Bar, Dublin, in February.

This atmospheric production certainly held my attention. It helped to know the story of Ernest Shackleton and Tom

Crean's failed Antarctic exploration and their voyage from Elephant Island to South Georgia. The play used the wordless actions of its cast, complemented by original film footage and scaled puppetry, to tell this story of bravery and persistence as Shackleton and his men attempted to escape from Antarctica by crossing the Weddell Sea to South Georgia. Once they made landfall, Shackleton, Crean and one other crew member still had to cross the island's mountain range to get help from Fortune Bay.

All of these adventures were portrayed wordlessly by four



actors very effectively using white sheets to create the icy seas, and recount the destruction of the *Endurance*, the journey in the three lifeboats across the Weddell Sea and the crossing of the mountain range on South Georgia. If you have an

interest in polar exploration, this is a play to see, if you get a chance. I found it very thought-provoking and something that stayed in my thoughts for a good while afterwards.

Patrick O'Sullivan Editor, *Irish Mountain Log*

Breath-taking footage of world's mountains

MOUNTAIN

Written by Robert Macfarlane, directed by Jennifer Peedom

Irish Film Institute. Temple Bar, Dublin. Duration 75 mins. Run has finished.

In a collaboration between filmmaker Jennifer Peedom and the Australian Chamber Orchestra, and narrated by Willem Dafoe, *Mountain* looks at mankind's fascination with the world's highest peaks, something we can all, I'm sure, empathise with. With Peedom, Robert Macfarlane, mountaineer and author, wrote the evocative script for this excellent but sometimes frustrating film, which was shown at the Irish Film Institute in Temple Bar, Dublin, earlier this year.

The filming is amazing, making you wonder sometimes how they got

some of the shots. The music is dramatic and generally quite appropriate, though, like me, you'll probably be focusing on the mountains being portrayed.

Apart from mountaineering and climbing, several other extreme mountain sports are shown, but the focus is always on the grandeur of the mountain scenery. The frustration I had, slight though it was, was not always being able to place all of the mountains being shown, as we zipped around the world, and back and forth, with few attempts being made in the film to identify the mountains being so dramatically portrayed.

Overall, it was an enthralling experience, the film bringing together some amazing



photography and bouncing all around the world, from the Alps to the Himalayas, to the Southern Alps to the polar regions, and so on. The film celebrates the mountain environment but also expresses some concerns

about the overuse of that environment and the exploitation of the indigenous peoples who live there in pursuit of sport.

Patrick O'Sullivan Editor, *Irish Mountain Log*

Jim Bridwell

American big wall climber



Jim Bridwell in 1990

Jim 'The Bird' Bridwell, the flamboyant renegade American big-wall rock climber with a reputation for wild living, has died in Palm Springs aged 73 years from liver failure. That liver failure was as a result of a hepatitis C infection, which he contracted after he received a traditional tattoo when he walked across Borneo in the 1980s.

Bridwell was a prolific big-wall climber. In Yosemite, he climbed more than one hundred new free routes in the 1960s and '70s, plus some A5 big wall aid routes on Half Dome and El Capitan, in consistently fast times.

For Bridwell, speed was safety. His first ascents included the hardest routes in the world at the time, first the Pacific Ocean Wall and then later Sea of Dreams with its notorious A5 'Hook or Book' pitch.

With Frank Sacherer, Bridwell made a reconnaissance of the classic Nose route on El Capitan in 1964, with the intention of climbing it in a day. Royal Robbins had taken seven days to complete it in 1960, but Bridwell persisted, teaming up in 1975 with two younger climbers, John Long and Billy Westbay, to finally make the

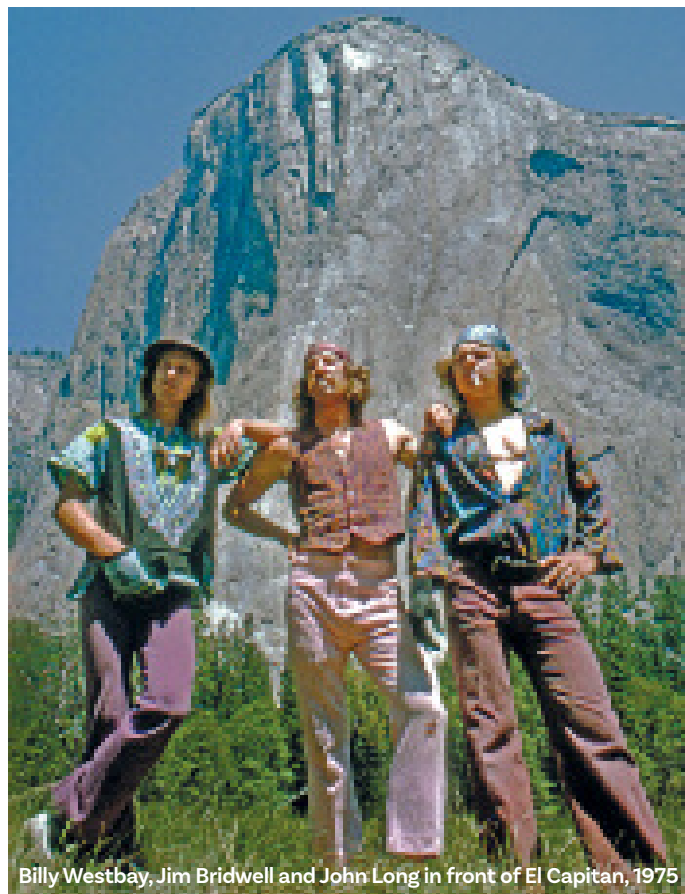
first ascent of the Nose in a day.

He camped at Camp 4 in Yosemite for months on end, seemingly with impunity, despite his wild lifestyle. The authorities were apparently happy to let him be because he had started the local mountain rescue service there in 1970.

Bridwell was born in San Antonio, Texas. He grew into an able athlete and decided to go to college in San José, California, for its track programme. However, the call of Yosemite and his anti-establishment sentiments soon took him down another track.

Bridwell's climbing career began in the early 1960s as a young climber among the established big-wall climbers of Yosemite's golden age, such as Royal Robbins and Chuck Pratt, and culminated in the free-climbing scene of the mid-'70s. Bridwell was a central figure amongst the hippie climbers who populated Yosemite in the 1970s, a group that became known as the Stonemasters.

In his time, Bridwell climbed with many other greats, including Chuck Pratt and Layton Kor, after whom he named his son.



Billy Westbay, Jim Bridwell and John Long in front of El Capitan, 1975

Bridwell was party to the dramatic rise in free-climbing standards in Yosemite and later moved on to extreme aid climbing. He was influenced in his climbing by Yvon Chouinard, who thought that skills developed in Yosemite could be used on big walls elsewhere. Bridwell proved Chouinard right when he made the first complete ascent of the south-east ridge of Cerro Torre in Patagonia in 1979. In 1981, he made the first ascent of the east face of Moose's Tooth in Alaska.

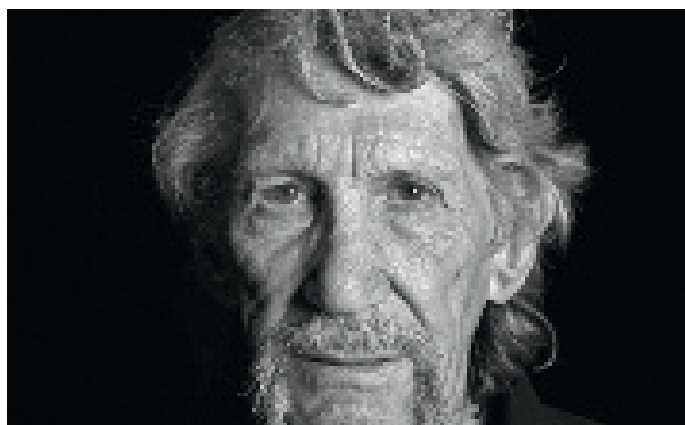
Bridwell had less success in

the Himalayas, where he unsuccessfully attempted Everest twice by new routes. He was, however, among the four Americans who in 1982 completed what was described as the first trek around Mount Everest, a 300-mile trek that required ascending peaks like Pumori.

Jim Bridwell is survived by his wife, Peggy, whom he married in 1974, and his son, Layton.

Patrick O'Sullivan

Jim Bridwell: born July 29th 1944; died February 16th 2018



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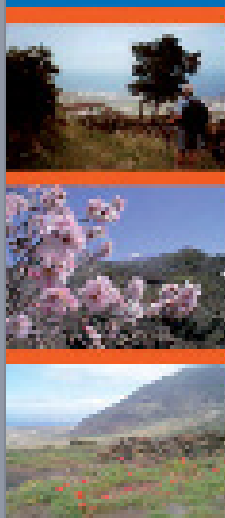
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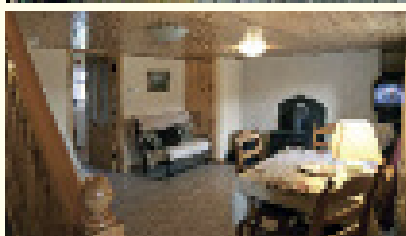
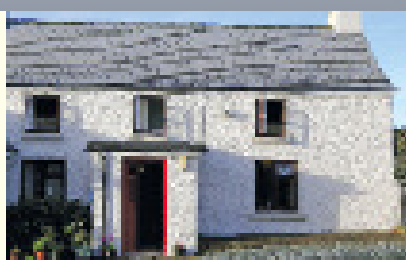
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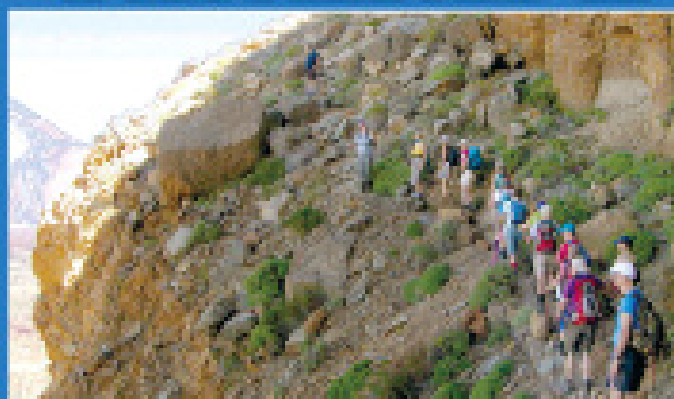
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