

Irish Mountain Log

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Vandeleur Lynams

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Welcome

Céad míle fáilte! As we come to the end of another year, which seems to have flown by again, it is always good to do a little stocktaking.

It has been another busy year for Mountaineering Ireland, your national governing body. CEO Murrough McDonagh and his excellent staff have certainly been kept on their toes. Our membership has increased and, overall, the numbers of people going hillwalking or climbing continue to grow. The numbers engaging in other outdoor activities also appear to be increasing, all combining to exert greater strain on the goodwill of the private landowners that we depend upon for access, and on the physical environment in Ireland's upland areas. It is important that we come to an accommodation with those who live and work in the uplands and others with an interest in these areas. It is also important that we continue to do the best we can to reduce any adverse impacts on the areas we visit and enjoy.

This year's Autumn Gathering, hosted by Galway Walking Club in Clonbur, Co Galway, was very enjoyable. It was also important in that, speaking at the panel discussion held on the Friday evening, Seán Kyne, TD, Chief Whip and Minister for the Gaeltacht, said that the Minister for Rural & Community Development, Michael Ring TD, was seeking advice from the Attorney General on an indemnity scheme for landowners, with the aim of having it in place by the end of the year, or for the start of the



The promised indemnity scheme could deliver assured access for recreation in most upland areas in Ireland.

2019 walking season (see report, page 6). Hopefully, this indemnity scheme will help ensure that responsible access to upland areas in Ireland is safeguarded. Certainly, Éamon Ó Cuív, local TD for Galway West, speaking at the same panel discussion, believes the indemnity scheme could deliver assured access for recreation in most upland areas.

As usual, I must thank all of the contributors to our magazine this year for their support for *the Irish Mountain Log*. We very much depend on those contributions and are always looking for articles to include. Please consider writing an article for the *Log*, be it about a recent trip or about a particular aspect of our sport.

On behalf of the editorial team and the board and staff of Mountaineering Ireland, I would like to finish by wishing all Mountaineering Ireland members an enjoyable Christmas and New Year and an active 2019.

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

Looking back along ridge on Buachaile Etive Beag and across Glencoe to Aonach Eagach during Mountaineering Ireland Winter Meet 2018 in Onich.

PHOTOGRAPH
ANDY RAVENHILL

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PARTICIPATION AND RISK

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 the Mountain Training Board of Ireland administers a range of training programmes for walkers and climbers.

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Newsdesk

2019 AGM and Members' Forum

The **2019 Mountaineering Ireland AGM** and **Members' Forum** will be held on Saturday, March 30th, 2019, at 6.00pm: location and venue are to be announced soon.

Mountaineering Ireland strongly encourages all clubs to send a minimum of two delegates to the AGM and to avail of their voting rights. Individual members also have voting rights and can attend too.

Mountaineering Ireland clubs and individual members are invited to put forward motions for discussion at the AGM. Motions may be submitted by any member club or by any three full members.

Motions must be submitted to the company secretary at **companysecretary@mountaineering.ie** or by post to

**Company Secretary,
Mountaineering Ireland,
Irish Sport HQ,
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by 5.00pm on Friday, March 1st, 2019.

The agenda for the AGM and the associated documents will be published on our website, **www.mountaineering.ie**, by March 8th, 2019. Members without internet access can request a copy from Mountaineering Ireland by phoning +353 (1) 625 1115 ■

Mountaineering Ireland renews insurance agreement

Mountaineering Ireland is pleased to announce a new, three-year insurance agreement with **O'Driscoll O'Neil (ODON)**, to run until November 2021. This new agreement includes a number of increases in the services offered to Mountaineering Ireland members.

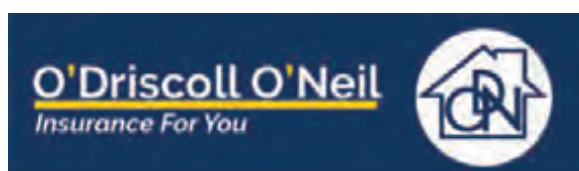
"This is great news for Mountaineering Ireland and for our membership," says Murrough McDonagh, CEO of Mountaineering Ireland.

"It sees increases in the cover provided, most notably in the areas of cyber liability, including GDPR, and in professional indemnity cover, which now also covers our club volunteers, coaches and leaders.

"We have also secured the removal of all age restrictions in respect of personal accident policy cover, which is a huge step forward for our membership.

"All of these changes, which are built on the relationship we have developed over the last three years, combined with the dedicated support of O'DON and its head office staff in Dublin, will ensure that we can be confident that the insurance cover Mountaineering Ireland is offering its members is fit for purpose."

Declay Troy, an O'DON director, added: "We are delighted to continue our positive and professional working relationship with Murrough and the team in Mountaineering Ireland. Central to the services we offer to all national governing bodies of sport, such as Mountaineering Ireland, is a personal connection that allows us to build up a relationship over time to fully understand all the requirements of an organisation and to support all areas of their business" ■





Autumn Gathering participants on the Environmental Walk on Maumtrasna



Autumn Gathering 2018

This year's Autumn Gathering was hosted by Galway Walking Club and based in the Fairhill House Hotel in Clonbur, Co Galway, over the weekend of October 12-14th.

By Anne Brindley (Galway Walking Club)

Members representing twenty-three Mountaineering Ireland clubs from all parts of Ireland descended on An Fhairce (Clonbur), Co Galway, for the Autumn Gathering, hosted by **Galway Walking Club** in collaboration with the team from the **Outdoor Education Centre Petersburg**.

Bhí an-áthas orainn fáilte ón ár gcoithe a chur roimh ár gcomh-shiúlóirí a tháinig ó chian is ó chónagar.

Storm Callum had the decency to arrive on the Thursday night rather than on the Friday as forecast, thus avoiding the need to cancel the walks on Saturday.

To get the weekend off to a good start, on Friday afternoon, **Orla Prendergast** of Outdoor Education GMIT, Castlebar, led twenty-six walkers on a sheltered woodland walk from Clonbur around White Island, a gentle prelude to the Gathering weekend.

Following an introduction by **Murrough McDonagh**, CEO of Mountaineering Ireland, Friday evening began with a welcome to the Gathering in Clonbur to all present by **Tom O'Connor**, Chair of Galway Walking Club. Tom welcomed everyone on behalf of the club, which was

established twenty-four years ago and now has 300 members, covering Galway, Mayo and Westmeath. He felt that clubs such as ours have much to offer the community, particularly in improving social inclusion in rural areas, where older people may become very isolated if they aren't involved in some activity.

The main focus of the evening was the panel discussion. The panellists were the Government Chief Whip and Minister for the Gaeltacht, **Seán Kyne TD**, **Éamon Ó Cuív TD** (Galway West) and **Helen Lawless**, Mountaineering Ireland, along with **Trish Walsh**, Director of Petersburg OETC, and local farmer **Tom Holleran**, both of whom are involved in

the Binn Shléibhe Pilot Mountain Access Project. The discussion was chaired by **Lorna Siggins**, *Irish Times* journalist and author, who introduced the evening's important topic: the role that outdoor recreation can play in the future sustainability of our upland areas.

Trish Walsh provided the history and context of the importance of the landscape and geology of Joyce Country, noting that **Éamon Ó Cuív**, a local, had launched the Mountain Access Project on Binn Shléibhe in 2009. Key to this project's full implementation is the indemnification of landowners, which has yet to be provided. Trish mentioned that open

access would be a disaster from a conservation perspective, that there is need to invest in looking after the environment and that hillwalkers have a responsibility to contribute towards this.

Minister Seán Kyne

recognised the great potential of the area we were in and the importance of the ongoing development of the future Geopark as well as the ongoing access issues. He said that the Minister for Rural and Community Development, **Michael Ring TD**, was seeking advice from the Attorney General on the indemnity scheme, with the aim of having it in place by the end of the year or for the start of the 2019 walking season. He added that it was easier to get funding for capital investment than for long-term maintenance.

Éamon Ó Cuív, a local TD, emphasised that the Mountain Access Project could not operate without the provision of indemnity for landowners and that while the project would work best in areas where facilities were in place, he still believed that, with this indemnity in place, it would open up access in 80% of mountain areas across the country.

Tom Holleran remarked that hillfarmers' incomes were

PETER LEONARD



Participants on Mount Gable during the Gathering weekend.

dwindling, but that from a recreation point of view farmers were not looking for payment for access but that insurance was the main concern for them. He said that walkers often try to avoid farmers, but he felt that they shouldn't. It is better for them to talk to the farmers when possible and share the pleasure they are getting from their activity.

Helen Lawless said that clearer access arrangements could be good for rural areas and that Mountaineering Ireland encouraged members to put something back by spending money where they walk and climb and by taking an interest in what was going on in the area. Helen added that for our activities to be sustainable there was a need to intervene at the point of impact between increased footfall and the fragile natural environment, as was now happening on Croagh Patrick. She called on the TDs to invest in caring for Ireland's mountain areas, on the basis that this would benefit everybody in society through improved water quality, flood mitigation, carbon storage, sustainable tourism and better recreational experiences.

Approximately 100 people attended the panel discussion and a number of members contributed to the discussion that followed. The positive feedback afterwards suggested that this could be a model for future Mountaineering Ireland Gatherings.

Saturday

A grey, damp morning greeted participants but, as planned, nine groups set off for their different walk destinations: Maumtrasna, Corcóg and Mullagh Glas, Leenane Hill, Buckaun, Bunacunneen and Bunbeg, Binn Shléibhe, Lough Inagh to Leenane, a Clonbur/White Island/Big Island loop walk and an environmental walk heading off on the ridge and plateau



The panellists at the Friday evening discussion (from left): Lorna Siggins (chairing), Éamon Ó Cuív TD, Minister Seán Kyne TD, Helen Lawless (Mountaineering Ireland), Trish Walsh (Petersburg OETC), Tom Holleran (farmer).

between Buckaun and Maumtrasna. The multi-pitch climbing was transferred to the indoor climbing wall in Limerick due to wet weather.

Feedback from all of the walks was very positive. The heavy mist lifted occasionally to allow a glimpse of burnt-orange mountains, green valleys, meandering rivers and wandering sheep. All of the groups felt they had made the best of the day and there was much swapping of stories on their return.

The **Members' Forum**, which followed at 6.30pm, was an opportunity for members to discuss Mountaineering Ireland's policies or other matters and make proposals for the AGM at the Spring Gathering. Club Officers' roles, walks' safety policies, the balance in the content of the

Irish Mountain Log and connecting with European walking clubs were among the topics that were raised.

After the Members' Forum we all retired to the bar before sitting down to an excellent meal in the Fairhill House Hotel. Well wine and dined, we retired to the bar for singing and dancing until the small hours, with musician Dave Dooley.

Sunday

After a late night, participants woke to a gloriously sunny day. After breakfast, three workshops were held concurrently: **Ruth Whelan**, the Membership Development Officer, led one on club development. It focused on GDPR, the roles of Club Secretaries and Membership Officers, and the policy

guidance available from Mountaineering Ireland. **Jane Carney**, Training Officer, took eight climbing enthusiasts to the Partrys for micro feature training, rope and knot work; while **Trish Walsh** and **Helen Lawless** led a group on an Environmental Walk in the Binn Shléibhe Mountain Access Area, accompanied by Matt and Mark of Upland Access Limited (who are working on the trial path work on Croagh Patrick), to look at the best route for a loop walk around Lough Chualainn, passing moraine hillocks, a Bronze Age fulacht fiadha and a rundale village.

Many people contributed to the success of the Gathering weekend. Eddie and his team in **Fairhill House Hotel** provided a warm welcome, good accommodation and great food over the weekend. Our walk leaders shared their passion for the mountains.

Portwest contributed generously to the goodie bag. Finally, Joyce Country and Clonbur truly welcomed walkers!

Beir bua agus beannacht! ■



Participants at the Friday evening discussion.



‘Sheds ag Siúl’ programme expands

‘Sheds ag Siúl’ moves to Dublin following its success in Cork.

By Jason King (Get Ireland Walking)

The ‘Sheds ag Siúl’ programme, designed for men by men, has commenced in County Dublin, with several **Men’s Sheds** participating. Get Ireland Walking, in association with the **Dublin City Sport & Wellbeing Partnership**, coordinated a Train the Trainers day for Local Sports Partnership Walking Facilitators and Development Officers. The day comprised a Walk the Walk Workshop delivered by Get Ireland Walking’s Programme Coordinator Emer O’Leary.

In addition, Lorcan Brennan from the **Men’s Development Network** contributed with a module on engaging men in walking and the best approach to take. Edel Byrne from the **Irish Men’s Sheds Association** covered the Sheds in general and provided those in attendance with information on the **Sheds for Life** programme, how the Sheds ag Siúl programme complements that, and what supports the Irish Men’s Sheds Association provides to members and partners. Overall, the day was a great success and the feedback was fantastic.

The tutors are now fully equipped to reach out to the sheds and deliver the Sheds ag Siúl programme on-site. We are really looking forward to its implementation.

The Sheds for Life programme will now identify new counties for the 2019 scale-up. Get Ireland Walking will be delighted to offer its support to these new counties next year.

Although the workshops are a really great way to engage men who are physically inactive, there are many men and Sheds within the network who are already very active indeed. We at Get Ireland Walking want to offer whatever support we can to all Sheds, so we have asked those Sheds interested in walking to register with us at www.getirelandwalking/registeryourshed and we will send them our walking toolkit. The toolkit includes

branded beanie hats and high-viz vests, a Sheds ag Siúl MAN-ual and useful contacts, local links and supports.

We recently attended the Men’s Sheds Gathering in Páirc Uí Chaoimh in Cork and were delighted to register over seventy new Sheds on the day. We are now open for business to register more Sheds. Check out our website for details ■

Woodlands for Health programme

Get Ireland Walking’s involvement in the **Woodlands for Health** programme has been very worthwhile. It is clear to see that walking in green spaces enhances mood and improves self-efficacy and motivation to walk. The enthusiasm for the programme among participants, partners and coordinators speaks volumes.

Laois and Wexford have just completed their programmes and others are due to commence soon. We hope to provide continued support to the existing groups in 2019 and add more counties, if possible, over time.



FUNDING: Woodlands for Health and the Men’s Sheds Walking Programme are funded by the **Dormant Accounts Sports Inclusion Fund**.

Walking promoted in public library workshops



Get Ireland Walking joined forces with **Healthy Ireland** at public libraries and the **Local Sports Partnership** network to promote the **European Week of Sport** during the last week of September.

As part of the week, we coordinated nineteen workshops at different libraries across several counties. The workshops were delivered by Local Sports Partnership Development Officers and Walking Facilitators and they proved a huge success. The workshops were delivered for local people and included a walk from the library following the presentation.

We also circulated **21-Day Walk Challenge Cards** to over 300 libraries across the country. We plan to keep all libraries stocked with cards for local people to access throughout the year.

Some of the workshops in Waterford were pitched at post-primary school students. Since then, a lot of other schools have expressed interest in the delivery of **Walk the Walk workshops** to their students. We plan to expand this initiative next year to reach more counties and population groups with these workshops.

Get Ireland Walking also collaborated closely with Sport Ireland, Mountaineering Ireland, Local Sports Partnerships and Healthy Ireland to promote and coordinate **National Walking Day** on Sunday, September 30th, 2018. This was the first year National Walking Day was marked in Ireland and we plan to build on this in 2019.

We want to take this opportunity to thank all groups who participated and to congratulate those who won our backpack prizes stuffed with goodies to get them started.

We would also like to extend our gratitude to Sport Ireland and the Local Sports Partnership network, who provided expert support building up to and during European Week of Sport ■



Get Ireland Walking officers Emer O'Leary and Jason King pictured at their stand at the Men's Health Expo in Páirc Uí Chaoimh in September

'Ireland Lights Up'

The GAA, RTÉ's *Operation Transformation* and Get Ireland Walking run "Ireland Lights Up" programme to encourage clubs and communities to become more active during the winter.

By Stacey Cahill (GAA)

After the success of the inaugural **Ireland Lights Up** campaign earlier in the year, the GAA is delighted to again team up with RTÉ's *Operation Transformation* and Get Ireland Walking to make exercise more accessible on dark winter nights.

More than 150 GAA clubs across the country participated in this exciting initiative in early 2018, with more than 5,000 walkers taking to their local GAA pitches each week to walk off the Christmas excess, catch up with neighbours and banish the winter blues.

Walkers benefitted by being able to avail of GAA facilities, which were lit up specifically to facilitate their walks in safety.

The GAA wants to double this figure in 2019 and is encouraging all GAA clubs that meet the criteria to sign up.

John Horan, Uachtarán of Cumann Lúthchleas Gael (the GAA), said: "In every corner of the country our network of clubs plays a crucial role in contributing towards a healthier Ireland. The benefit of this particular initiative is that it appeals to young and old, players and non-players, with benefits for everyone."

"The new year is always a time when many people look to get out and be a bit more active,

and the Ireland Lights Up initiative allows them to do that safely within their community and among friends. I'd be confident that we can meet the ambitious target of 10,000 participants that has been set for 2019."

Joanne Cahill, Healthy Club officer in Ballyboughal, Dublin, said: "We had no idea what numbers we would get, but we had 150 walkers, maybe even more, every week. They were coming from everywhere, with cars backed up. There were groups of people, families and kids from every walk of life. The walking track in the club is somewhere you can go for a safe walk because there is really nowhere around Ballyboughal, and people don't like walking on the dark roads in winter."

Jason King, National Programme Manager of Get Ireland Walking, said: "Get Ireland Walking is delighted to be part of Ireland Lights Up 2019. More and more people now identify with the positive benefits of walking and it is through initiatives such as this, in partnership with the GAA, that we can provide safe walking environments for communities and club members to stay active and engage with walking, in



Jason King meets President Michael D Higgins and his wife Sabina at the National Ploughing Championships

Get Ireland Walking drops in to the National Ploughing Championships

It was Get Ireland Walking's first year at the National Ploughing Championships, and what a few days they were! We teamed up with Healthy Ireland over the few days in Scraggan, Co Offaly, and enjoyed engaging with all those who paid us a visit.

President Michael D Higgins and his wife Sabina dropped in to pick up a few 21-Day Walking Challenge cards, a t-shirt and a pedometer to encourage them to get out walking. They were both very enthusiastic about the 21-Day Walking Challenge and could not wait to get started walking around the tracks of Phoenix Park.

Unfortunately, the second day of the Ploughing had to be cancelled due to inclement weather conditions, but we were ready to roll on the third day. We presented in the tent, highlighting the benefits of walking across many levels. We were very well received and we look forward to getting back to the Ploughing Championships next year!

particular over the winter months. The walking tracks are not just for winter and, when spring comes around, communities have a great base to build upon. Together

we can 'Get Ireland Walking!' Interested clubs can sign up by simply going to **GetIrelandWalking.ie**, reviewing the criteria and registering online ■



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**, contact us on (01) 625 1109 or email Jason at **jason@getirelandwalking.ie**.





New mountain rescue aid trialled on Reek Sunday

Sarcall, a new mountain rescue software package, was put to a full test for the first time in Ireland on Croagh Patrick on Reek Sunday 2018. **Donal McNamara**, the Sarcall Regional Administrator for Ireland, reports.

In Ireland, hillwalkers and climbers will be familiar with Reek Sunday. It is the day when there is a pilgrimage to the 764m top of Croagh Patrick in County Mayo. It has been held on the last Sunday of July for the last 1,500 years approximately. Pilgrims make their way up to the summit, where Masses are celebrated around the small summit chapel throughout the day. Scholars believe that the pilgrimage pre-dates Christianity and was originally a ritual associated with the festival of Lughnasadh. It even has its own Wikipedia entry: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reek_Sunday. However, it was the presentation that the Mayo Mountain Rescue Team gave at the International Congress for Alpine Rescue (ICAR) in Killarney in 2015 that really brought its significance home to me. The assembled delegates from mountain rescue teams from around the world had never experienced an event like this and could not believe the number of people who reached the summit on the one day or the emergency services' response required to support this.

This year, **Mountain Rescue Ireland**, the national representative body for all of the mountain rescue teams on the island of Ireland, decided that Reek Sunday would be a good day to test the new **Sarcall** system that the teams were adopting.

Sarcall is a software package developed in the UK for mountain rescue teams by mountain rescue personnel. It is a web-based package that manages everything from notifying team members about

incidents, to recording incident data and capturing debriefing data. It is GDPR-compliant and has all the support services that one would expect from a modern software package.

Team members can input data via SMS, smart phone, tablet or a desktop computer, depending on their access level. As some teams were only using the basic functionality of the system, we wanted to dismiss the myth that Sarcall was only a glorified 'WhatsApp' replacement. We wanted to show that it was a full call-out and management system that integrates many of the mapping, asset management and missing person-locating services that are regularly used by mountain rescue teams in responses to major incidents.

My own team, the South Eastern Mountain Rescue Association (SEMRA), had been very impressed by the Incident Logging function over the four days of the big snows earlier this year, with seamless hand-overs between three incident commanders operating from their homes (in geographically separate areas), responding to twenty-seven individual taskings from the various statutory bodies.

We had also used the Task function on a multi-team exercise, which we organised later in the spring. We felt that Sarcall would be really useful on Reek Sunday and that it would be a good opportunity to demonstrate the full capabilities of the Sarcall system to fellow team members. A tentative suggestion was made to the Mayo team and, as they say, the rest is history.

We were looking at having



An Irish Air Corps helicopter provided assistance on the day

Assistance provided on the day

By Pat Murphy (Sarcall Coordinator, Reek Sunday 2018)

No of hill parties: 3 hill parties in 3 shifts (additional roles included Operations, Logistics, Catering and Staffing the medical tent)

No of casualties: 17

No of carry-offs: 2

No of helicopter evacuations: 2 (an Irish Air Corps helicopter provided assistance on the day)

No of inputs into Sarcall: 498 (186 on the Task workflow option)

multiple individual mountain rescue teams operating on the Reek and involving voluntary first-aid agencies, casualty clearing stations, HSE ambulances and one Irish Air Corps AW139 helicopter in the action over the weekend. I am glad to report that the Sarcall system proved reliable on the day and contributed to the success of Reek Sunday 2018.

It was a quiet day on the Reek, with not too many injuries, and Sarcall was able to demonstrate its versatility. One of the biggest successes was that we were able to demonstrate the full Gold, Silver and Bronze command functionality of the system.

Another success was that the party leaders on the hill could directly input data from the hillside via SMS on the

progress of their individual tasks, while the Mountain Rescue base updated tasking and coordinated the other teams on the mountain.

The Gold command function of liaising with other voluntary and statutory services was also fully supported using the various reports available in Sarcall. The situational awareness this provides at the rescue base and remotely has to be seen to be appreciated.

Credit is due to all of the mountain rescue team members who gave of their time to support the mountain rescue response; to the Sarcall development team; and last but not least to our hosts, the Mayo Mountain Rescue Team, who had the confidence to let us trial the system on such an operational scale ■

Dublin-Wicklow Mountain Rescue Team wins award

The Dublin-Wicklow Mountain Rescue Team has won a National Lottery 'Good Causes' award for their work. The team, which currently has 60 volunteers, won in the 'Sport & Recreation' category at the inaugural National Lottery 'Good Causes' awards, which took place at a glittering ceremony in Dublin in November. The team received €10,000 in prize money to support the services they provide. The National Lottery 'Good Causes' awards are aimed at honouring the extraordinary work of individuals and groups helping communities all over Ireland ■



Lough Dan, in the upper reaches of the Avonmore River valley, Co Wicklow

Catchments and communities

The Local Authority Waters Programme

By Sinead Hurson (Community Water Officer, Local Authority Waters Programme)

Healthy waters are vital for our economy, our environment, our communities and our well-being. Pristine water quality sites located in our upland areas are especially important, as these are often at the headwaters of catchments. As water moves through a catchment area it is connected by streams, rivers, lakes and groundwater, and the quality of that water is impacted by our actions. Thus, we all have a part to play in managing and protecting water quality.

The **River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021** was launched in April 2018. It sets out measures to be implemented over the next four years and a new approach for the protection and management of our rivers, lakes, estuaries and ground and coastal waters. This approach requires close collaboration between local authorities, state agencies and all water stakeholders.

This 'new approach' to water quality management includes new and updated structures and resources working together to deliver the plan's objectives. One such resource is the **Local Authority Waters Programme**, which was set up in 2016 as a shared service on behalf of the thirty-one local authorities, to coordinate water-

quality efforts and engage with the public and communities.

Over the past two years, **Community Water Officers** have been working with staff from local authorities and state agencies to support community action on local rivers and lakes, with advice and funding for locally-led water projects with the very successful **Community Water Development Fund**.

The River Basin Management Plan also lists over 700 waterbodies for focused actions aimed at improving water quality. On-the-ground action will involve catchment assessments and stream walks to gain a better understanding of the issues impacting water quality and to develop solutions that are workable and relevant in each specific area. These targeted activities will be carried out by new teams of **Catchment Scientists**, who will focus on the areas for action over the next three years.

This will involve a collaborative approach, working with stakeholders and landowners to encourage implementation of measures to restore and protect good water quality. This, in turn, will deliver multiple benefits for the wider community and the environment. The new team will work closely with local authorities, Community Water Officers, the EPA, state agencies already working on water quality

and with the thirty advisors in the Agricultural Sustainability Support and Advice Programme.

Water catchments are where we live, work and play, and we can all play our part in protecting water quality. For more information, please see

www.watersandcommunities.ie ■

How to get involved

- Staff from the Local Authority Waters Programme will hold **public meetings** in the priority areas for action before any field work commences, to inform members of the public and water stakeholders about the planned local activities. These meetings have commenced but will continue throughout the cycle of the plan. Check your local press for details or see watersandcommunities.ie/public-meetings-priority-areas-action.
- Contact your local **Community Water Officer** if you have any project proposals or ideas in relation to your local waterbody. See watersandcommunities.ie/community-water-officers.
- Become a **citizen scientist**. Get involved in collecting scientific data: this could include monitoring or gathering information on biodiversity, invasive species or climate. For more details go to www.epa.ie/irelandsenvironment/getinvolved/citizenscience.
- If you wish to make an environmental complaint, please read guidance and information in the EPA's '**See Something, Say Something**' leaflet, which is available at: bit.ly/2OYktCI.



Freshwater complex in the east Burren, Co Clare



Climbers on Kangtega in the Himalayas in 1986.
Photo: Tom Frost. Insets: Jeff Lowe, left, and Tom Frost

Two American climbing greats pass away

A personal memoir by **Jim Leonard** of Jeff Lowe and Tom Frost, who died on the same day last August.

On August 24th, 2018, America and the world of climbing lost two of its legends. Lifelong friends, who shared many international climbing expeditions, **Jeff Lowe**, aged 67, and **Tom Frost**, aged 81, died within hours of each other.

Jeff Lowe grew up in Ogden, Utah, as part of a large family of boys and girls. Their father, Ralph, introduced Mike, Greg

and young Jeff to climbing at a very early age, when they first climbed the Exum Ridge on the Grand Teton. This was the beginning of a lasting relationship with the mountains.

As they grew up, they discovered that Utah was overflowing with vast climbing potential. This is where they spent their early days, climbing with their cousin

George Lowe, later to become another of America's legendary mountaineers.

It was at this time that older brother Greg started to design innovative outdoor equipment, which ultimately led to the founding of **Lowe Alpine Systems**.

Greg also made the first ascent of **Mahlens Peak Waterfall** in 1971, America's most difficult ice climb. This was the birth of modern ice climbing. The climbing world started to take notice when Jeff used some of Greg's new equipment to make the first ascent, with Mike Weis, of **Bridal Veil Falls** in Telluride, Colorado.

The brothers extended their climbing trips to South America, where they made some difficult ascents in the Andes, and later turned their attention to the Himalayas. They made a family expedition in 1979 to **Ama Dablam** with a team which also included **Tom Frost** and **David Breashears**.

The expedition made the second ascent of the Southwest Ridge and Jeff then made a solo ascent of the South Face.

Jeff pioneered difficult ice routes with his cousin George in many of the great ranges. His attempt on the North Ridge of **Latok I** with **Jim Donini**, **Michael Kennedy** and **George Lowe** in 1978 is considered by many to be the most difficult unfinished climb in the world.

Jeff's book, *The Ice Experience*, has inspired many of today's ice climbers. In 1991, Jeff soloed a new route on the North Face of the **Eiger** to add to his incredible list of first ascents.

I first met Jeff and Tom Frost in Lafayette, Colorado, after joining Lowe Alpine Systems in the early 1980s. Over the next few years, and after many trips to Colorado, Jeff and I became friends, working on a number of projects together, both over



Jeff Lowe on Ama Dablam in Nepal in 1979

there in Colorado and here in Ireland. I also met his famous cousin, George Lowe, when we went climbing in Estes Park.

The Lowe brothers, including Jeff, made many trips to Ireland, climbing on our crags and mountains. On one occasion, I arranged for Jeff to give a climbing lecture to a gathering of the Federation of Mountaineering Clubs of Ireland (FMCI), the forerunner of Mountaineering Ireland, in Tullamore, then the home of Lowe Alpine Systems International.

* * * * *

Tom Frost was born in 1936. He graduated from Stanford in 1958 with a degree in engineering. That year also saw his first ascents in Yosemite, where he made many first ascents with **Royal Robbins, Chuck Pratt, Yvon Chouinard** and others.

He was also involved in the design and development of modern rock and ice climbing tools, including the first fully rigid crampons.

In 1961, **Frost**, along with **Royal Robbins** and later joined by **Chuck Pratt**, made the first



Jeff Lowe climbing the North Ridge of Latok I in the Karakorum in northern Pakistan in 1978

successful ascent of **Salathé Wall** on Yosemite's **El Capitan**. Tom led the key final section of this climb, the trio reaching the summit on September 24th, 1961. It had taken eleven days and thirty-six pitches of vertical climbing. That year also saw Tom making the second ascent of the **Nose** on El Capitan.

In 1963, **Tom Frost, John Harlin, Garry Hemming** and **Stewart Fulton** made the first ascent of the remote South Face of the **Fou** above Chamonix. In 1964, **Pratt, Robbins** and **Frost** climbed Yosemite's **North American Wall**. These are just a few of Tom Frost's many famous

ascents.

Tom also participated in several expeditions, including ones to **Annapurna**, where he reached 25,000 feet (7,620m), and **Kangtega** (6,782m), which he made the first ascent of in 1963 with **Ed Hillary**.

He joined Jeff and Greg on

humour and an unforgettable smile.

It was an honour and a great pleasure to get to know both of these two great climbers over the years. We shared some good times together and I will not forget them.

To both of their families and



Tom Frost, Royal Robbins, Chuck Pratt and Yvon Chouinard after first ascent of North American Wall on El Capitan in 1964

TOM FROST

Tom Frost on Pitch 29 of Salathe Wall on El Capitan during first ascent in 1961



the Lowe Expedition to **Ama Dablam** (6,812m) in 1979, which he filmed, and they all reached the summit in the second ascent of the South-west Ridge. He was a very skilled mountaineering photographer and, in 1979, he co-founded **Chimera Photographic Lighting**, based in Boulder, Colorado.

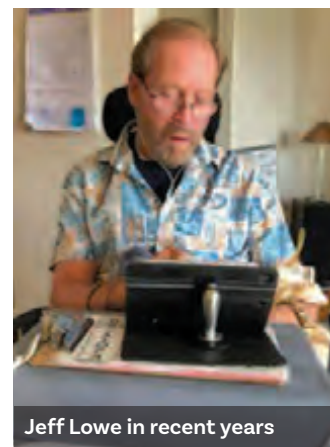
Frost described his profession as 'piton engineer' and, along with Chouinard in the late 1960s, he invented many climbing protection devices while working in the Great Pacific Iron Works and with Chouinard Ltd.

Tom also came to Ireland and was very interested in Irish archaeology, visiting Newgrange. He was a most interesting person to know, with a wicked sense of

to their many climbing friends around the world, I offer my deepest sympathies.

Jim Leonard

Jeff Lowe: born September 13th, 1950; died August 24th, 2018
Tom Frost: born June 30th, 1936; died August 24th, 2018



Jeff Lowe in recent years

Climbfest 2019

Next year's Climbfest will be held at Malin Head

By Alan Tees

While there won't be much change in the name of the venue for next year's Climbfest, from Malinbeg to Malin Head, these places are very far apart. Malin Head is on Donegal's Inishowen peninsula, at the northern extreme of the county (it is the most northerly point on the island of Ireland), while Malinbeg is at the western extreme of Donegal county, almost a hundred miles away.

This year's Climbfest will be held on Malin Head over the May bank holiday weekend, from May 3-6th, 2019.

The first recorded climbing at Malin Head was in the 1930s, when the Belfast-based Youth Hostel Association of Northern Ireland climbed the arête now known as **The Cutting Edge**. The logbook of North West Mountaineering Club recorded that the club went there to climb midweek in 1956, but no details are given of the routes that were climbed.

During the 1970s and '80s, exploration and development continued apace around Culdaff and Kinnego Bay, but it wasn't until 2004 that **Peter Cooper** sparked interest in the western end of Malin Head when he logged routes in the Colmcille Climbers online guide at what he called **Uncle Monty's Wine Cellar**.

Development of the extensive north-facing slabs of **Sea Area Malin**, the sea-stack **Skildren Mor**, the **Cauldron** and points further east which became known as **Malin Laundry** (the whiteness of the surf, you understand), followed.

The lower short routes are mainly on solid black rock, with good holds and protection, as are the climbs on the lower sections of the longer routes. Both are subject to the Malin swells and anything loose has long gone!

Higher up, more care is required as vegetation tends to prise bits of rock loose, and the alpine skills of caution and judgment take precedence over strength and dynamism. The friction, on the whole, is good and, in some areas, excellent.

Sadly, in 2015, the entire western side of Malin Head by Breasty Bay (about 70 acres) was privately purchased and closed off to locals and visitors alike. Initially, it was thought that the closure was only for the filming of *Star Wars*, but that took place in May 2016 and the barbed wire, electric fencing and 'Keep Out' signs are still there, denying access to the Sea Area Malin Slabs, Skildren Mor and Uncle Monty's, about fifty routes in all.

This has not gone down well, as locals cannot go there to fish and visitors cannot see the famous **Devil's Bridge** or watch the basking sharks, which are regularly spotted just off the point.

Despite the popularity of the Wild Atlantic Way and signage from afar indicating the way to Malin Head, the area is no stranger to access problems. The Glengad to Ballygorman way, one of the half-dozen best coastal walks in Ireland, is closed, and another picturesque bay has been the scene of attacks on foreign tourists. Hopefully, Rural Recreation initiatives and incentives will improve the situation.

Even if this part of Malin Head is off-limits, there will still be lots to do, from the brilliant two-pitch **Lizard Line/Cutting Edge** combination, the best VDiff in Donegal and arguably Ireland, to **Razorbill**, a *** VS, and many other good routes in the Severe range in between, and a few much harder.

The Climbfest is not aimed



The Cutting Edge, Malin Head

at extreme climbers: the target group is beginners, indoor-wall climbers and those for whom the sociability is as important as the rock. To this end, the campsite is beside the Sea View Tavern (bar, shop and seafood restaurant) in Ballygorman, about five minutes by car from the crag, or fifteen by bike, which we would recommend. Vans, caravans, etc, are also welcome. There is also a mobile coffee van near the crags, which serves excellent coffee

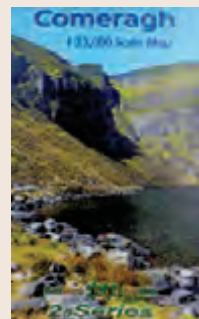
and cakes.

The crags at Culdaff are about twenty minutes away and the indoor climbing wall in Derry (Londonderry) is about forty minutes away, a worthwhile wet-weather alternative.

The Climbfest is the longest-running such event in Ireland and is kindly supported by Mountaineering Ireland. Watch out for a **downloadable guide** on the Colmcille Climbers website nearer the time ■

New Comeragh map

EastWest Mapping has published a new map of the Comeragh Mountains at a scale of 1:25,000. As usual with EastWest's maps, it has a lot of detailed information about heritage sites and place-names, this based on some eight months' research work there by Barry Dalby. We will carry a review of this map in the Spring 2019 issue of the *Irish Mountain Log*. The map is available now from EastWest Mapping at www.eastwestmapping.ie and from some bookshops ■



OSi Discovery Series Sheet No 74 error

The 2018 edition of the OSi Discovery Series map No 74, covering parts of Cork, Limerick, Tipperary and Waterford, has been printed with a mistake that was also carried in the first edition in 2013. The summit of Galty Beg is shown at the spot height of 786m, a location that is 2km east of its actual location ■

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Dennis Strong (Regional Manager, National Parks and Wildlife Service) describing the Wild Nephin wilderness project to conference attendees.

Sustainable development in the uplands

Mary Tubridy reports on the Irish Uplands Forum conference, “Innovation and Partnership in the Uplands,” held in Mulranny, Co Mayo, on October 4-5th, 2018.

By Mary Tubridy

The Irish Uplands Forum hosted a two-day conference in Mulranny, Co Mayo, on October 4-5th, to discuss sustainable development in Ireland’s mountain areas.

Over two days of talks, field trips and workshops delegates heard from leading researchers in upland ecology, socio-economics, community development and planning. The conference was also addressed by the **Minister for Rural and Community Development, Michael Ring, TD**, who is a local Dáil deputy.

The attendance of over one hundred included representatives from management authorities and interest groups concerned with upland areas in Ireland north and south, including **Mountaineering Ireland**.

The conference offered an important opportunity for networking amongst the various local groups present, ranging from ones from the Hill of Howth to the McGillycuddy Reeks.

There was a particular focus on the

potential of **European Innovation Partnerships (EIPs)**, which are new agri-environmental schemes to benefit habitats and species in specific upland areas; the networking of locally-based groups under the umbrella of the newly established **Uplands Partnership Management Board**; and the value to society of upland ecosystem services.

Minister Ring made a commitment to implement by the end of this year the long-promised indemnity for the two pilot **Mountain Access Areas**, Mount Gable in Clonbur, Co Galway, and the MacGillycuddy Reeks, Co Kerry. The Minister also promised an increase in the budget for the **Walks Scheme** under which landowners are paid to maintain marked walking routes across their land.

A presentation on new socio-economic research commissioned by the **Irish Uplands Forum** revealed some predictable and some unexpected characteristics of upland areas, and an interesting comparison between north and south of the border. A profile of Scottish upland

ecosystem services highlighted the importance of these areas as carbon stores and for flood mitigation.

There were lively and respectful exchanges during workshops and field trips hosted by landowners and managers. The rationale and operation of the Wild Nephin project was discussed by **Dennis Strong**, Regional Manager of the National Parks and Wildlife Service. **Bridget Murphy**, a farmer in the Ox Mountains, gave a presentation on issues of concern to farmers in the **Irish Natura and Hill Farmers Association**. There was universal support for the rolling out of the EIP approach to all upland areas.

The participation of the **Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT)** illustrated the value of a local teaching and research organisation to the promotion of local sustainable development. A Master’s student gave a talk on her research into agri-environmental schemes in Connemara, while **James Moran**, a lecturer in ecology, provided an analysis of the prospects for agri-environmental initiatives in the new **Common Agricultural Policy**.

The Irish Uplands Forum is currently preparing an account of the conference, similar to the reports on its previous conferences. This will be published on its website, irishuplandsforum.org ■



Pictured at the conference (from left): Michael Starrett (CEO of Heritage Council), Minister for Rural and Community Development, Michael Ring TD, and Frank Nugent (Irish Uplands Forum).



AUTHOR: Mary Tubridy is an ecologist and is Director of the Irish Uplands Forum with responsibility for research.

THANKS: The “Innovation and Partnership in the Uplands” conference was supported by the

Heritage Council, the Department of Rural and Community Development, and the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

FIND OUT MORE: For more information, see www.irishuplandsforum.org.



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Host club sought for Spring Gathering

Mountaineering Ireland is seeking a club, or clubs, to host the 2019 Spring Gathering next March. Even if you held one before, would you?

By Ruth Whelan (Membership Development Officer)

Does your club have an anniversary in 2019 or another special event it wishes to celebrate? Why not host Mountaineering Ireland's Spring Gathering 2019 and share your celebrations with like-minded hillwalkers and climbers from around the island of Ireland?

These Gatherings are always such enjoyable weekends for all involved, as the host club highlights the best their local area has to offer in terms of hillwalking and rock climbing. The Spring Gathering 2019 is also when Mountaineering Ireland's Annual General Meeting will be held.

The Spring Gathering 2019

will be held over the weekend of 29-31st March. If your club would be interested in hosting this important weekend in the Mountaineering Ireland calendar, please contact **Ruth Whelan**, Membership Support Officer, by email at **ruth@mountaineering.ie** or phone **(01) 625 1196** ■

Some members on Galtymore during this year's Gathering




satmap
way ahead

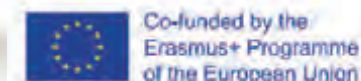
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Climbing in Dalkey Quarry

Get Climbing Project

By Natasza Berlowska (Get Climbing Project Coordinator)

It has been a busy few months for the **Get Climbing Project**. The programme is scheduled to finish in December 2018. However, **Mountaineering Ireland** is hoping to secure additional funding to allow us to continue the project into 2019.

Spring

During the last few months of the school year, more than seventy participants completed the **Get Climbing Programme**, gaining all of the basic skills required to safely climb indoors. The training sessions took place at Awesome Walls in Finglas, Dublin Climbing Centre in Tallaght and Gravity Climbing Centre in Inchicore.

Apart from the indoor climbing, two of the most advanced groups were rewarded with an outdoor climbing session in Dalkey Quarry, where they could practice their skills on real rock.

Summer

The schools' summer break was a quiet time for the programme. Two groups from **Foróige** in Tallaght, who started their sessions in July, would resume those sessions in the autumn. However, despite the amazing weather during July and August, the **club nights** at Dublin Climbing Centre continued throughout the summer, with the pupils not missing a single

one of them. The joy of climbing seems to have become ingrained in them.

Autumn

September came more quickly than expected, with **Firhouse College** students starting their sessions during the first week of school. Later that month, as part of the European Week of Sport initiative, **Sport Ireland** sponsored an eight-week course for two additional groups: **Killinarden Community Centre Youth Project** from Tallaght and **Ballymun Youth Block** from Ballymun. This was the third group of young people from Killinarden Community Centre to have taken part in the Get Climbing Programme. Participants from Killinarden who have previously finished



Some participants with their Get Climbing Programme Certificates

the course are now keen young climbers who climb independently on a weekly basis.

Seeing the positive influence of indoor climbing on their young climbers, Killinarden Community Centre is seeking funds to build a small climbing wall on their premises and, on top of that, is planning to

establish a youth climbing club affiliated to Mountaineering Ireland.

The Get Climbing Programme targets young people from disadvantaged areas. Participants often do not take part in any regular sporting activity and have no interest in outdoor life, simply because it is not part of their family or social life. The programme opens the door to not only indoor climbing but also to hiking, walking and camping. All of these outdoor pursuits are known for their positive impact, not only on physical health but also on mental health and self-awareness. It is really rewarding to see how, week by week, young climbers become more open and confident and better motivated to solve their problems and fight their fears.

One of the most striking aspects of climbing is its flexibility – it is suitable for everyone, for people of all social backgrounds and levels of education. So, if you have never tried it, do not wait any longer. Give it a go! ■

Get Climbing Project participants in Dalkey Quarry





Team at launch of Mourne Wall Restoration Project

Mourne Wall Restoration Project

A monumental challenge has been completed.

By NI Water

Built more than one hundred years ago, the 22-mile-long Mourne Wall is a granite, dry-stone wall, which crosses fifteen peaks within the Mourne Mountains.

Standing up to three metres high, it was constructed by hand between 1904 and 1922 by the Belfast Water Commissioners to mark and protect the 9,000-acre water catchment, which feeds the Silent Valley and Ben Crom Reservoirs, serving the Belfast and County Down Supply Zone.

Today the wall is in the ownership of **Northern Ireland Water (NI Water)**. It became a listed building in 1996 and as such is subject to the 'Protocol for the Care of the Government Historic Estate.' To ensure it fulfils its obligations regarding the Mourne Wall, NI Water appointed a Heritage Officer, commissioned regular surveys and set in place funding for a programme of repairs.

In April 2017, NI Water appointed a team of experts to embark on repairing the 600 identified collapses along the 22-mile granite wall. The team consisted of local stonemasons from the Mourne area – descendants of the original wall builders – who used the same age-old methods of construction to piece the wall back together. The stonemasons faced a daily hike of up to six kilometres, with their tools and supplies – including 6ft planks – before they could start a day's physical labour.

Collapsed sections were stripped back,

butt stones were re-set and the wall was built up again. The longest stretch of wall re-built was twenty-seven metres on Slieve Bearnagh. Much of the stone required for the repairs was lying adjacent to the wall, including over 3,000 capping stones – weighing between 80 and 120kg – which were rolled up planks and into place. Additional capping stones needed to finish the repairs were sourced from local abandoned quarries and were prepared to the required size using the traditional 'plug and feather' method of splitting (see photo, below).

Once split, the capping stones were bagged and transported by helicopter to the required locations. With the helicopter averaging one hundred lifts per day, and with no negative impact to paths throughout the mountains, this was found to be the most environmentally-favourable method of transport.

Another element of work carried out to repair and protect this iconic listed building, was the replacement of damaged stiles. NI Water and its contractors, **GEDA Construction**, assisted **Mourne Heritage Trust** to replace stiles on Donard, Commedagh, Donard/Rocky and Long Seefin mountains. The stiles were made by local timber suppliers and airlifted to the wall during the helicopter lifts.

The Mourne Wall is a companion to walkers, providing shelter, a 'handrail' to navigate by, and a favourite subject for photographs. The appeal of the Wall extends far and wide, but locally there is an immense sense of pride and ownership for this historical feature.

The restoration work on the Mourne Wall has been funded through the **NI Water Capital Works Programme**. Inevitably, the wall will suffer from further deterioration and collapses over the coming months and years. These will be surveyed and addressed, subject to funding, during the next Capital Works Programme, which commences in April 2021.

This restoration project has been completed through collaborative working, in all types of weather, by **NI Water** and its project partners, **GEDA Construction**, **RPS Consulting Engineers** and **Mourne Heritage Trust**, along with stonemasons from **Thomas Rooney & Sons Ltd** ■

Stonemason splitting a capstone using the traditional 'plug and feather' method



2019 Youth Climbing Series

Exciting new format this season

By Damien O'Sullivan

The **2019 Youth Climbing Series** will feature an exciting new format featuring two route-climbing rounds and two bouldering rounds. The Grand Final will be held over two days: one day will feature routes, the other day will feature bouldering. The new format promises to give the competitors more climbing, more choice and more fun.

The Youth Climbing Series is a key competition in the

development pathway for young climbers. Many young climbers target their training and practice at the Youth Climbing Series in order to qualify for the Grand Final. However, even more inspiring than the level of climbing on display at the Youth Climbing Series is the level of camaraderie between the competitors. For more information, please go to the Mountaineering Ireland website, mountaineering.ie ■



The Irish Bouldering League 2018/2019 season

Each round to last full fortnight this season



Sponsors of the Irish Bouldering League

By Damien O'Sullivan

Running since 1993, the **Irish Bouldering League** is reputedly the longest continually running climbing competition in the world! Thanks to significant input from the hosting climbing walls, it will be better than ever for the 2018/2019 season.

The big change to the Irish Bouldering League for this season is that each round of the competition will last much longer. The first day of each round will still be the big 'launch' day for each round. It will

feature extra events and spot prizes courtesy of **Rab**.

Each round will then continue for the next two weeks. This will allow competitors to come back and attempt the problems. It will also facilitate people to participate who just could not make it on the Saturday. Due to popular demand, the 'bonus' hold and allowing unlimited attempts on the problems are back again for this season.

As well as just paying to enter a single round, competitors can now also get an all-season pass for the Irish Bouldering League. For €20 you will get scorecards for all five rounds and a **limited-edition Irish Bouldering League t-shirt!**

Rab continues to support the Irish Bouldering League. Rab will be providing

spot prizes, which will be given out to competitors on the first day of each round, and overall league prizes for the top three competitors in each competition category.

For more information and to purchase an **all-season pass**, please go to the Mountaineering Ireland website, mountaineering.ie ■



Dates and venues for 2019 Youth Climbing Series

Round	1	2	3	4	5 (Grand Final)
Date	January 12 th 2019	January 26 th 2019	March 2 nd 2019	March 23 rd 2019	April 27 th & 28 th 2019
Venue	Dublin Climbing Centre	Foyle Arena	Awesome Walls Cork	Awesome Walls Dublin	To be confirmed
Format	Bouldering	Routes	Bouldering	Routes	Bouldering & routes

Irish Bouldering League 2018/2019: dates and venues

Round	Venue	Start Date	Finish Date
1	Awesome Walls Dublin	Saturday September 29 th 2018	Sunday October 14 th 2018
2	Suas Climbing Centre	Saturday November 3 rd 2018	Sunday November 18 th 2018
3	Awesome Walls Cork	Saturday December 1 st 2018	Sunday December 16 th 2018
4	Gravity Climbing Centre	Saturday January 19 th 2019	Sunday February 3 rd 2019
5	Dublin Climbing Centre	Saturday February 23 rd 2019	Sunday March 10 th 2019

New climbing training courses on the way



By Jane Carney

Following an extensive process of consultation, review, research and development, Mountaineering Ireland will launch a **Rock Skills Scheme** and an **Indoor Climbing Assistant Award** on January 1st, 2019, and a **Rock Climbing Development Instructor Award** later on, in spring 2019.

Rock Skills Scheme

The Rock Skills Scheme is similar to the popular Mountain Skills Scheme. It offers four courses designed to equip you with the necessary skills and knowledge to enable you to progress towards becoming an independent rock climber. This scheme is progressive and structured in style, leading to increased confidence, skill, experience and ability.

Each of the four courses available under the Rock Skills Scheme is framed by six shared elements, as follows:

- Background and Planning
- Climbing Skills
- Equipment
- Technical Skills
- Environmental Knowledge
- Hazards and Emergency Procedures.

As with the Mountain Skills Scheme, entry to the Rock Skills Scheme can be at any level, thus acknowledging any prior learning. Trainers will be happy to give guidance on the best level to enter at.

Rock Skills Introduction: 8 hours

By the end of this course you will be in a strong position to sit and pass a climbing wall belay test, to safely fit your own helmet and harness, to tie on, to belay and lower a climber, to climb routes on natural rock and to complete an abseil.

Rock Skills Intermediate: 16 hours

By the end of this course you will be in a strong position to become a competent second on natural rock, to belay and lower a lead climber, to remove and store climbing protection, to place protection, and to construct belays and personal abseils.



Rock Skills Learn to Lead Sport: 16 hours

By the end of this course you will be in a strong position to lead bolted sport climbs in indoor and outdoor settings, to lower off sport routes, to belay and lower a lead climber, and to abseil off sport routes.

Rock Skills Learn to Lead Trad: 16 hours

By the end of this course you will be in a stronger position to lead trad routes on rock, to place protection, to set up belays and personal abseils, and to belay and lower a lead climber.

Indoor Climbing Assistant Award

The Indoor Climbing Assistant Award responds to the need for a structured training and assessment of competence for those facilitating participation at grassroots level, in clubs, schools, colleges and training centres. It provides an accessible pathway towards the **Rock Climbing Instructor Award** and **Climbing Wall Instructor Award**.

Those successfully completing this

course will be able to operate under the direct supervision of a qualified instructor.

The course lasts 16 hours and covers the fundamental knowledge and skills required to assist a qualified instructor in an indoor setting. The course involves continuous assessment, at the end of which the candidate receives one of the following outcomes: 'complete' or 'did not complete.' If the latter, the candidate will be given an action plan towards completion ■

Candidate pathway

- 1 Join Mountaineering Ireland, where appropriate. The fee is discounted to €30 for award registrants.
- 2 Register for your chosen scheme on the Mountaineering Ireland website.
- 3 Select a suitable course date and venue from the Mountaineering Ireland course calendar.
- 4 Contact the trainer to book your place with them.
- 5 Start to add entries to your digital logbook.



Tips for the new club year

Some tips for existing and incoming committee members to help clubs make the most of their talents and strengths.

By Ruth Whelan (Membership Development Officer)

With the new club year in full swing and new committee members coming on board to volunteer within your club, it is a good time to think about how you are running your club and to check if you have the supports you need to run it well. Here below are a few tips for existing and incoming committees.

How a club is run largely determines how successful it will become. Good governance means a club will put in place policies and procedures that will ensure the club runs efficiently and effectively. However, good governance is not about rules; it is about committing to operating by a set of sound principles and behaviours. It is about the culture of the club and the behaviour of those on the club committee.

TIP Mountaineering Ireland has a set of policies and procedures for clubs to use. You will find these at mountaineering.ie/AboutUs/Downloads.

Every club has its own culture. Club culture effectively is the way we behave and expect others to behave and conduct themselves, and how we respond to others. Culture is a determining factor in the cohesion, commitment and loyalty that members have to a club. Everyone comes from different backgrounds, families and traditions. Having a shared culture in the club gives a sense of unity and understanding of one another, promoting better communication, better friendship and greater trust. It also promotes equality by ensuring each member is treated equally. If members see themselves as part of a club's culture, they are more eager to contribute to its success. They feel a higher sense of accomplishment for being part of a club they care about and they will work harder without having to be asked – they will be great volunteers!

Supporting volunteers is important to help them understand and feel comfortable in their role. Simple role descriptions will help greatly. Role descriptions help break down myths about a role, the time commitment

expected, the training needed, etc. However, clubs should make it work for them and be mindful that the key responsibilities and tasks are not forgotten about.

TIP A 'buddy' system for new volunteers will help to pass on lots of experience from long-standing, more experienced members.

Joining a committee can be the last thing that a club member wants to do. After all, getting into the mountains is about getting away from structures! Therefore, it is really important to provide people with information about what they might be expected to do on a committee, how much time it might involve and an assurance that others will help them too.

It is always important to have an eye on the future and to try to plan for succession. Some members will stand out as having a really good set of skills for taking on a particular role. Gently 'targeting' them about how the committee functions, and the responsibilities of a role they might be considered for, will help to do away with some of the barriers when they are finally approached.

TIP No matter who joins a committee, it is important that they receive a good induction so they have a reasonable understanding of what the club is about, its history and any policies or decisions that will have a consequence or need to be considered in the future.

Having a set of minutes and any other reports available will help to bring new members up to speed. All committee members must be able to appreciate that they are on the committee for the good of the club in its entirety, not to fight for their own corner, their grouping, etc.

Depending on the size and scale of the club, different skills may be required. It is important for committees to reflect and evaluate what the skill gaps are and if they can be compensated for by co-option or by planning for the future.

TIP The following skills and competencies might be beneficial for your club:

- An ability to chair meetings
- Good budgetary awareness
- Knowledge of good governance
- Leadership
- Administrative skills
- Planning skills.

Clubs should ensure that there are appropriate internal financial and management controls in place to provide appropriate lines within which money is received, lodged, retained in cash and expended. It is important that income and expenditure is monitored by the committee against the budget on a regular basis. There should always be a yearly report of income and expenditure presented to the members at the Annual General Meeting.

TIP Make sure your club considers how it is managing and recording the following:

- Club income and expenditure
- Online payments
- Bank account and other accounts
- Reporting
- Audit.

For full description of roles, read the Mountaineering Ireland's *Club Handbook*: mountaineering.ie/AboutUs/Downloads. If you think your club has anything useful to add to the handbook that is not in it already, please let us know.

To make sure you are handling your members' data appropriately, see the GDPR guidance for clubs at mountaineering.ie/AboutUs/Downloads.

FIND OUT MORE: For further information, support or advice, contact **Ruth Whelan**, Membership Development Officer, at ruth@mountaineering.ie or on (01) 625 1196.



Maths for the Mountains

No 2. DISTANCE ON A MAP. In the second of a series on navigation training, Mountaineering Ireland Training Officer **Jane Carney** explains how to measure distance on a map.

There are many reasons why we might need to measure a distance on a map, but primarily it is to determine the probable length of our journey. We can also use the distance to gauge how far away a feature is, to plan a route of a particular length or as part of making up a route card. There are three ways to measure the distance on a map:

■ 'Guesstimate' by eye

This is simple and quick, but not completely accurate. One grid box on the map is 1km by 1km; hence, $\frac{1}{4}$ is 250m, $\frac{1}{2}$ is 500m, $\frac{3}{4}$ is 750m.

■ Use the ruler on your compass

On a 1:50,000 scale map, one unit on the map represents 50,000 units on the ground. Therefore: 1mm = 50m; 2mm = 100m; and so on. To convert, halve the number of mm and add 00. For example: 18mm = 900m.

Top tip: When reading the ruler, bring your eyes down to almost map level and read it from the side rather than above. The numbers are printed on the underside of the compass and it is clearer to read this way.

■ Use the romer on your compass

Select the correct scale romer. Each romer is broken down into 100m intervals.

Different scale maps

The increasing popularity of hillwalking has led to the development of a variety of maps printed at different scales. Currently Ireland is covered by 1 : 50,000, but maps of other scales are available for some areas. It is therefore important to know how to measure all scales. With the ruler:

1:50,000: 1mm = 50m

1:40,000: 1mm = 40m

1:30,000: 1mm = 30m

1:25,000: 1mm = 25m



Key teaching points

- Use the compass romer to measure the distance
- Use the ruler to measure the distance
- Use the ruler to measure longer distances
- The ruler can measure smaller intervals
- Bring the eye down to the map level to read it most clearly
- Learn to use different scale maps

References

www.mountaineering.ie:

Presentations-Training-Training Downloads

MTUK: *Navigation in the Mountains* (page 36)

Schemes: Mountain Skills

Awards: Lowland, Hill & Moorland, Mountain Leader



➤ **Jane Carney** is the Mountaineering Ireland Training Officer.

MANAGING THE IMPACT OF RECREATION IN THE MacGILLYCUDDY REEKS

Early in October, all Mountaineering Ireland clubs received an email asking them to submit a form to the MacGillycuddy Reeks Mountain Access Forum prior to any hikes taking place in the MacGillycuddy Reeks. The *Irish Mountain Log* invited the Forum to expand upon its request, and we publish here an article from the Forum, alongside a response from Mountaineering Ireland.

By Patricia Deane (MacGillycuddy Reeks Mountain Access Forum)

The MacGillycuddy Reeks Mountain Access Forum was established in 2014 with a priority to protect, manage and sustainably develop this beautiful mountain range.

The MacGillycuddy Reeks are one of two pilot areas for Comhairle na Tuaithe's **Mountain Access Project**. The **Reeks Mountain Access Area** takes in all of the mountain area to the west of the Gap of Dunloe. All of the land in this area is privately-owned, either as individually-owned land or as areas of commonage which are jointly owned. Continued access to the MacGillycuddy Reeks, as elsewhere in Ireland, depends on the goodwill of the landowners.

The MacGillycuddy Reeks Mountain Access Forum is working in conjunction with the Reeks landowners, who display great tolerance and patience despite the many thousands of people hiking on their land throughout the year.

The Forum wants to remind all Mountaineering Ireland clubs and individuals who may be leading groups or organising hikes in the MacGillycuddy Reeks to submit a **Group Registration Form** to the Forum prior to any hikes taking place in the MacGillycuddy Reeks. This is a requirement for all **groups of ten or more** accessing the Reeks. If you are unsure of the number of people you will have, please submit a form with an approximate number. The registration form can be submitted online at macgillycuddyreekskerry.com/events or



Aerial view of the Reeks

emailed to reeksforum@skdp.net. The form is simple and only takes two minutes to complete.

Having groups submit Group Registration Forms means that the Forum knows what's going on in the Reeks on a day-to-day basis and this will help minimise erosion on the ground. How? Well, some routes can handle larger numbers than others, e.g., Caher can be soft underfoot due to the peat there and is particularly sensitive after periods of heavy rainfall. The Forum also wants to ensure that there isn't disruption when farming activities and recreation coincide, e.g., when a farmer is bringing sheep down off the hill on a day when there are large group(s) heading to the hills from the same starting point.

Should a situation arise where a number of group forms are submitted for the same date and location, those who submit later may be asked to consider starting from a different access point. This will help prevent congestion on narrow roads and in parking areas. This procedure has been in place for commercial guides using the Reeks for the past three years and has been working well.

The Forum also respectfully requests that all groups access the Reeks from one of the four main access points – Breanlee (Hydro Road), Lisleibane, Cronin's Yard or Kate Kearney's Cottage – where parking is available.

No one will be refused access – this is

not a restriction. It is a simple measure to encourage responsible access in this Special Area of Conservation, which we **all** have a duty to protect.

As the indemnity arrangement promised for the pilot Mountain Access Areas has not yet been delivered, all clubs, event organisers and those leading groups of ten or more are asked to submit a copy of their **public liability insurance**. This is to ensure that the landowners will not be held liable in the event of somebody becoming injured while out on the Reeks, as well as providing cover to the groups themselves.

The MacGillycuddy Reeks Mountain Access Forum extends its thanks to all those who have supported and continue to support their path work and habitat restoration in the Reeks, be that through making contributions for parking in the contribution boxes at Lisleibane and Breanlee, through donations, or through subscriptions as **Friends of the Reeks**. All this help is greatly appreciated.

Others who care for and respect the MacGillycuddy Reeks and who would like to support the work of the Forum are encouraged to visit the website www.macgillycuddyreekskerry.com for more information or phone either of the numbers below.

➤ For more information, contact Patricia Deane on (064) 662 4607 or 087 203 1034, email Patricia at pdeane@skdp.net, or visit the website macgillycuddyreekskerry.com.



➤ **Patricia Deane** is the Coordinator of the MacGillycuddy Reeks Mountain Access Forum. She has recently been appointed Project Manager for the European Innovation Partnership project in the MacGillycuddy Reeks (see IML 125, page 14). She was previously the Rural Recreation Officer for Kerry.



Beenkeragh Ridge, MacGillycuddy Reeks

Mountaineering Ireland responds:

Mountaineering Ireland has raised concerns in relation to the request from the MacGillycuddy Reeks Mountain Access Forum that all groups of more than ten people intending to walk or climb in the Reeks should register in advance and provide evidence of their insurance.

Mountaineering Ireland recognises that with ever-increasing visitor numbers and growing commercial guiding activity in the MacGillycuddy Reeks that landowners may feel they have less control over their land. Mountaineering Ireland agrees with the need to coordinate charity and challenge events in the MacGillycuddy Reeks and to advise organisers in relation to parking, route choice, etc. The threshold most commonly used to trigger such a process is **fifty participants** (e.g. in Wicklow Mountains National Park, in the Mourne and under Mountaineering Ireland's Events Policy).

It is Mountaineering Ireland's view that a group of ten people on a club walk does not warrant the same approach. Mountaineering Ireland asked the MacGillycuddy Reeks Forum to raise the threshold for group registration to fifteen people or even higher, but the Forum has decided to keep it at ten people for now.

In relation to insurance, the Reeks Forum has confirmed that there is no need for clubs that are insured through Mountaineering Ireland to provide evidence of insurance as Mountaineering Ireland will provide its certificate of insurance to the Reeks Forum, along with a list of insured clubs.

Mountaineering Ireland shares the Reeks Forum's frustration at the delay in delivery of the indemnity arrangement for landowners in Mountain Access Areas.

Over recent months Mountaineering Ireland has called on the Department of Rural & Community Development to arrange alternative insurance for the two pilot Mountain Access Areas, if the promised indemnity arrangement cannot be delivered before the end of 2018.

Mountaineering Ireland is concerned that group access to the Reeks should not be restricted to the four main access points and that clubs should be free to access the Reeks from other points, particularly from the Black Valley, provided that they are responsible in how they park and access the mountains.

Mountaineering Ireland understands the Reeks Forum's concerns in relation to the management of erosion in the Reeks. Mountaineering Ireland took a lead on this issue by organising the **Helping the Hills** conferences in 2012 and 2013, and we are actively engaged in upland path management in a number of areas across the island.

Through the MacGillycuddy Reeks path repair project, the participants, who include local landowners, have demonstrated an ability to deliver a high standard of work. Additional funding is needed to continue path repair work and to provide the sustained, skilled supervision that will be required as the path team moves on to more technically challenging terrain. The experience of the Reeks Forum also shows that sustained core funding is required to deliver the Mountain Access Project in a busy mountain range.

Mountaineering Ireland is conscious that it will not be possible to repair and maintain all of the popular routes in the Reeks, or elsewhere in Ireland's mountains, and that as hillwalkers and climbers we need to take responsibility for our impact and make choices that will

MOUNTAINEERING IRELAND IS COMMITTED TO WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP TO HELP ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF IRELAND'S UPLAND AREAS.

mitigate erosion. We are, however, unclear as to how registration by small groups would assist that process. All routes will be more susceptible to erosion following heavy rain, and the gentler gradient on the approach to Caher may make it a better choice over steeper routes, provided people avoid widening the erosion, especially in the peaty section just beyond the Hydro Road.

Mountaineering Ireland believes that hillwalking and climbing have a role in making a sustainable future for Ireland's mountain areas. Mountaineering Ireland has been a Friend of the Reeks since this initiative started. Rather than looking at this solely as a fundraising channel, we are suggesting to the Reeks Forum that the Friends of the Reeks has the potential to be a vehicle for positive engagement with hillwalking clubs and others who have an affinity with the Reeks.

Mountaineering Ireland is actively committed to encouraging responsible recreation, and to working in partnership with landowners, local communities and other interests to help achieve sustainable management of Ireland's upland areas. Recently, Mountaineering Ireland again invited the MacGillycuddy Reeks Forum to allocate a seat on the Forum to Mountaineering Ireland, so as to strengthen the links between the two organisations and so that we can more usefully contribute to the delivery of the pilot Mountain Access Project in the Reeks ■

MAYNOOTH CLUB'S 20th ANNIVERSARY

Paul Mather describes the origins and activities of Maynooth Hillwalking Club, which is marking its 20th anniversary this year with a range of special hillwalks, trips and social events.

This year is the 20th anniversary of **Maynooth Hillwalking Club**, which has provided members and visitors to the club with many wonderful memories of adventures in the mountains over the years. **Jim McMahon**, the club's founder, had had years of experience walking with An Óige and he liked bringing people out on his hikes in the hills. That sense of enjoyment and comradeship still pervades all of the club's activities.

A small band of hillwalking enthusiasts, who had met through the Glenroyal Leisure Club in Maynooth, formed the hillwalking club. The club was originally called the Glenroyal Hillwalking Club but subsequently became known as Maynooth Hillwalking Club, to ensure that potential members could identify where it was located. The club was then registered with the then Mountaineering Council of Ireland (now Mountaineering Ireland). At present, we have 68 members, representing all age groups, which bodes well for the future.

Above:
Members of Maynooth Hillwalking Club on a holiday in Ehrwald in the Austrian Tyrol.

Below:
Members of the club climbing Carrauntoohil.

In the early years, Jim McMahon organised the club's activities and, in keeping with the aims of the club, organised four hikes each month to suit walkers of different levels of experience and ability. Therefore, the walks' locations varied from the canals of Kildare to the slopes of Lugnaquilla in Wicklow, extending on occasion to weekend trips to the Mourne or the Comeragh Mountains. This proved a very successful model, since every newcomer was initially introduced to gentle hillwalking before progressing to more challenging hikes. Most walks were led by **Jim McMahon** and **Pat Flanagan**, who also had previous experience with An Óige.

As the club grew under Jim's leadership, he not only provided formal map and compass courses but also



➤ **Paul Mather** is a Mountain Leader and a member of Mountaineering Ireland. He has been an active member of Maynooth Hillwalking Club since 2002.



OUR WEEKLY HIKE ARE ALWAYS SOCIABLE AND ENJOYABLE DAYS OUT ON THE HILLS.

shared his extensive and valuable knowledge and experience with all who expressed an interest in developing their hillwalking skills. Guiding and encouraging novices to engage in mountain skills courses has ensured that the club has developed enough walk leaders for its growing membership.

Our weekly hikes take place mostly on Sundays and are always very sociable and enjoyable days out on the hills. On these days, while enjoying many breathtaking views, experiences of other walks and trips are shared, mixed with plenty of banter and good humour. This is continued afterwards during a coffee stop on the way home. Many good friendships have been made through the club and have continued over the years.

While most of our walks took place in Wicklow, with occasional trips to the Mourne, Cooleys and Slieve Blooms, our range expanded significantly when **Pat Foley** from Tipperary volunteered his skills and experience, leading hikes in the Galtees, Knockmealdowns and Comeraghs.

The annual night hikes around Glendalough each winter provide special thrills, whether trekking through snow or on clear starry nights. The club barbeque in midsummer and the Christmas party are the highlights of the year, when walkers of all the levels come together to enjoy a pleasant day's hiking followed by some well-earned refreshments.

Club weekends away are always very popular and allow many members to sample hiking in other parts of the country, from the McGillycuddy Reeks to the Caha Mountains on the Beara peninsula, Slieve League, the Twelve Bens and the Nephin Beg Mountains, gradually hiking on all of the highest hills around the country. This year saw our first visits to Achill Island in the west and to the Dunkerron Mountains in Co Kerry.

Venturing further afield on our first holiday abroad in 2004, we explored the Austrian Alps around Fiss in Tyrol. In subsequent years we have visited Selva Gardena in Italy, the High Tatras in Poland, Ben Nevis in Scotland, Snowdon in Wales, the Pyrenees, Vent and Ehrwald in Austria and, most recently, Madonna di Campiglio in the Brenta Dolomites in Italy, which was enjoyed by all.

The club's committee and walk leaders organise a quarterly walks programme, with hikes graded easy, moderate or hard to ensure all members can join walks that suit their ability. In addition, we provide monthly introductory walks to give newcomers an opportunity to sample the hills and to learn more about our club.

Visitors on these introductory walks are very welcome and members are always delighted to share their knowledge of the mountains with them. A visitor can do three introductory walks with the club before making their decision about membership. The meeting points for our hikes are usually in Maynooth in Kildare and in Blessington in Wicklow, where cars are shared to the start of the walks.

Upskilling has always been high on the agenda of the club, with members and leaders completing Mountain Skills 1 and 2, the Mountain Leader Award and Remote Emergency Care first-aid courses over the years to ensure everyone's safety.

We have had the good fortune that, over the twenty



Above:
Members of the club above Arts Lough on Lugnaquilla, Co Wicklow.

Below:
Members of the club above Keem Bay on Achill Island, Co Mayo.

years that the club has existed, we have only twice needed the assistance of the Dublin & Wicklow Mountain Rescue Team. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the volunteer members of that team, who assisted us so expertly. They provide an invaluable service and their skill and professionalism are very evident when an incident arises. In appreciation, we are very happy to make an annual donation from the club's funds to help support their activities.

To celebrate the club's 20th anniversary, we have been organising special events right through the year. These began with the repeat of a walk from the first walks schedule in 1998, a Royal Canal walk from Enfield to Maynooth. Then, on a beautiful sunny weekend in April, we travelled to Achill to complete hikes on Croghaun and Slievemore, with spectacular views of Ireland's highest sea cliffs. In June, a circuit of Camaderry and St Kevin's Way in Wicklow was followed by a barbeque at the Miners' Village in Glendalough. In July, members completed the Cloon Horsehoe in Kerry with an overnight wild camp. The Glenmalur Lodge, where the club celebrated its 10th anniversary, was again the venue for our 20th anniversary dinner in September. Members past and present enjoyed a slideshow of photographs and shared many happy memories of great days in the hills.

As we continue into our third decade, we look forward to following many new trails and having many adventures, which will be enjoyed by one and all ■



TOUGH SOLES

A young couple set out to walk all of the National Waymarked Trails in Ireland in a project they called Tough Soles. **Ellie Berry** reports on their progress so far.

A year ago, my partner **Carl Lange** and I set out on our **Tough Soles** project, to walk all of the National Waymarked Trails in Ireland (see *IML* 123, p7). A year later, the project is still ongoing, but there have been more twists and turns than in an old sheep trail on a boggy mountainside!

As I write, to this date in November, we have walked thirty-five trails (out of a total of forty-two) and over 3,000 km. To try to share all of the special moments we have had so far in just a few words feels impossible, so I am just going to share a few of our favourite trails so far.

Sheep's Head Way, County Cork, 175 km

We arrived in Bantry at the end of March, while the snows were still melting on the higher hills. This trail follows the long, beautiful ridgeline of the peninsula and then snakes along the coast, bringing you right up against the sea. When you reach the furthest point, you find yourself descending through a maze of red railings to get to a small lighthouse. We sat

Top: Ellie Berry looks back at Lough Derg while climbing Tountinna Hill on the Lough Derg Way.

there, wrapped up against the wind, appreciating how amazing this corner of the world was.

The Barrow Way, Counties Carlow and Kilkenny, 120 km

Not quite a canal, the Barrow is a navigable river with

Right: A map of the trails walked by the Tough Soles duo so far: trails in green have been completed while they have yet to walk the black trails.



► *Ellie Berry and Carl Lange are Leave No Trace Ireland members and Great Outdoors ambassadors. They hope to become the first people to have walked every National Waymarked Trail in Ireland. You can follow their walking project at toughsoles.ie.*



a towpath on one side. This trail follows that path the whole way downstream from just outside Dublin at Lowtown to St Mullins near the Waterford border. This is probably the trail that had the most off-road walking out of all of the trails that we have followed and we constantly felt surrounded by nature and wildlife. We fell in love with the small towns we passed through along the way and realised that there doesn't need to be a mountain on a route to make it a great hiking trail.

Lough Derg Way, Counties Limerick and Tipperary, 70 km

A wonderful hike taking you along every kind of trail you could imagine, walking canal banks straight out of Limerick city, on to high embankments along the River Shannon, followed by trails winding up and over Tountinna Hill, and finally bringing you down along the lakeside, showing off how beautiful Lough Derg really is.

Slí Cholmcille, County Donegal, 70 km

One of the five Donegal trails that we have walked this year, Slí Cholmcille is a three-day loop from

Top: Carl Lange descending by the cliffs to Port beach on Slí Cholmcille, Co Donegal.

Below left: Ellie crosses a small bridge on the Barrow Way.

Below right: Carl on the Kerry Way, approaching Waterville.

Ardara. The coastline here features some of the most breath-taking cliffs we have seen, which we got to really appreciate on our third day as we descended to Port beach. Inland, the trail climbs through places like Glengesh Pass and passes the Owenwee River waterfalls.

Kerry Way, County Kerry, 200 km

One of the most famous hiking trails in Ireland, the Kerry Way was the longest trail on our list. Taking eight days, we walked around the base of Carrauntoohil, crossed low mountain passes and found ourselves in woods that looked more magical than in any fairytale. Certainly one of the better trails as regards hiking infrastructure, the Kerry Way was the trail where we met the most other walkers, both Irish and international.

It has been a fantastic project so far and we have met so many amazing people along the way. If you are one of them, thank you so much for making our trip such a great adventure to date! We only have seven trails left to walk (roughly 840 km), and we plan on finishing our project early in 2019 ■



Exploring the MacGillycuddy Reeks, Co Kerry

ROUND THE VANDELEUR LYNAMS

Earlier this autumn, James Forrest, in just 56 days, summited all of the Vandeleur Lynams, the 273 peaks of 600 metres or more on the island of Ireland. **Patrick O'Sullivan** reports.

In just fifty-six days, English hillwalker **James Forrest** climbed all 273 peaks in Ireland measuring 600 metres or more. These are the **Vandeleur Lynams**, hills of at least 600 metres in height with a drop of at least 15 metres on all sides.

Forrest's feat was the fastest time the Vandeleur Lynams had been completed in so far; it is also thought to have been the first continuous round of these particular mountains.

James Forrest is 35 years old and lives in the English Lake District. He spent his formative years, up to his late twenties, in Birmingham, where his grandparents were ramblers and his family took holidays in the Lake District.

He moved to Cumbria some years ago in search of a more adventurous outdoor lifestyle. He enjoys hillwalking and scrambling, but is not a rock climber.

In Birmingham, James worked in the charity sector before going into journalism. He now works as a freelance journalist in the Lake District and is also involved in a National Trust project, **Fix the Fells**, which repairs mountain paths.

After he moved to the Lake District, James started hiking more often and then, in 2017, he took on his first major challenge when deciding to climb the

Nuttalls, the 446 mountains over 2,000 feet in England and Wales. He completed these climbs within six months, hiking at weekends and on days off.

He had not undertaken any major challenges before that, although he had completed the **Wainwrights** (mountains in the Lake District over 1,000 feet high, with one exception) over a few years.

Prior to attempting the Vandeleur Lynams, James had not done any hillwalking in Ireland, although he had been over here a couple of times. He had a vague plan before he started to climb the Vandeleur Lynams, but he wanted to remain flexible, responding to how he felt and to the weather he encountered.

He brought his car over to Ireland and started in Wicklow, with a general plan of going south and then west from there.

His first Irish hill was Seahan (647m) in the Dublin Mountains, which he climbed on August 9th, 2018.

He completed all of the Vandeleur Lynams in the Wicklow Mountains in the next five days, including Lugnaquilla (925m), the highest peak in Leinster. He did the Wicklow hills in one continuous round, wild-camping on overnight stops.

In general, on his rounds, James prefers to wild-camp, only staying in hostels on rest days or if the weather is too bad.

For navigation, James used Viewranger 1:50,000 maps on his phone, though he sometimes printed out his route and occasionally purchased hard copies of the maps.

From Wicklow, James moved south to take on the various mountain ranges in the south-east, including the Galtees,

Comeraghs and Knockmealdowns, before heading south-west to Kerry.

He says he loved the wildness of Kerry, having been a bit disappointed by the rounded nature of the earlier hills. He also loved the fact that many mountains he climbed were near the coast and, when he had good weather, he could see the coast and sea.

James tackled the MacGillycuddy Reeks in two days from the Gap of Dunloe, via the Knocknapeasta Ridge on to Carrauntoohil (1,039m). He had good weather, but he says he made sure the forecast was good before he started.

He tackled the Brandon group from Conor Pass, finishing on the Faha Ridge. He also managed to locate the bothy there that a local had told him about, for an overnight stay.

He walked on his own throughout and was surprised by how few people he met, compared to the numbers in the Lake District or on other English or Welsh hills. James generally walks on his own: he says he likes the solitude.

From Kerry, he drove to Belfast to meet his girlfriend and then tackled the Mourne, which he found ruggedly beautiful in good weather. He based himself in Newcastle and tackled Slieve Donard (850m) and other peaks in the Mourne on day-trips from there. From Down, he moved to Donegal, and then he worked his way back down along the west coast.

He found Croagh Patrick (Co Mayo) unusual in that there were so many people there, whereas he was usually on his own on the other peaks he climbed.

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





Waking up above the clouds on Knockowen in the Caha Mountains, Co Kerry



“IT WAS THE ADVENTURE OF A LIFETIME”

James had some bad weather on the west coast but was lucky when he tackled Mweelrea (814m), because the weather was good that day.

Moving down the west coast, he finished off in Kerry. His last peak was Knocknodobar (690m) on the north-west side of the Iveragh peninsula; he had already climbed three other peaks that day. Only 10km of walking that day, so not a long day, he says.

James climbed his last Vandeleur Lynam on October 3rd, 2018. He says it was raining and cloudy, so there were no views. Nonetheless he says it ‘felt awesome’ to know he had completed the challenge. It

had taken him 56 days, but he took ten rest days in that time, so 46 walking days in total. In that time, he covered more than 1,000km, walking up to 25 miles a day and climbing the 273 peaks at an average of five peaks a day. He says the most he did in one day was twelve or thirteen!

Overall, James was struck by how quiet it was on the Irish hills, with a lot less people than he would meet on the English or Welsh hills. He also said that the paths were a lot less developed than in England or Wales. He had no access problems anywhere and says the landowners he met were all very helpful and friendly.

He was struck by the views he got from some of the tops, looking out over the sea. In that respect, he would particularly like to return to Errigal, because he climbed that in bad weather and got no view at all. However, a video he took of waking up above the clouds on Knockowen on the Beara peninsula went viral and was viewed tens of millions of times. He says

he set up his tent in cloudy conditions but that the next morning he woke up to the most perfect cloud inversion. “It was like waking up in a heaven – a really special and beautiful moment.”

While he says it was the “adventure of a lifetime,” James also feels that it was more of a mental challenge than a physical one, although some of the days were quite tough, particularly in the bad weather at the time of Storm Ali. When he did a linear route, he would hitch back to where he had left his car and he found the Irish people he met to be warm and friendly, and usually interested in his exploits.

James, whose expedition was supported by outdoor clothing brand **Salomon** and the expedition food company **Summit To Eat**, hopes to write a book about his adventures in Ireland. His debut book *Mountain Man* – about his 446-mountain challenge in England and Wales – will be published by Bloomsbury in spring 2019 ■



In the Mount Brandon range on the Dingle peninsula, Co Kerry

Lecture tour

James Forrest will be giving the following lectures for Mountaineering Ireland in January:

- **Dublin, January 23rd 2019**
Irish Sport HQ, National Sports Campus, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15
- **Thurles, January 24th 2019**
Horse & Jockey Hotel, Kilnoe, Thurles, Co Tipperary, E41 NC84
- **Newry, January 25th 2019**
Mourne Country Hotel, 52 Belfast Road, Newry, BT34 1TR, UK

All talks will start at 7.30pm.

Further information and bookings will be available soon on the Mountaineering Ireland website www.mountaineering.ie.

Youth Mountaineering



Rhyna Conroy in Dalkey Quarry, Co Dublin. Photo: Eléonore Conroy

MY CLIMBING YEAR

At just thirteen years of age, **Rhyna Conroy** has already amassed a wealth of experience in climbing and hillwalking. A national champion on multiple occasions, a competent trad climber and a keen hillwalker, Rhyna is part of a new generation of young mountaineers who are equally content on a snowy mountainside as on an indoor climbing wall. Ask Rhyna what her goals are and she will tell you that she wants to compete in climbing at the Olympics and to climb Everest! Here, Rhyna takes up her story...

I have been hillwalking, climbing and camping for as long as I can remember.

I started hillwalking before I could walk, being carried around Wicklow, the Pyrenees and the Alps in a backpack by my mum and dad. At the age three, when my legs got strong enough, I tackled the mighty Sugar Loaf in Co Wicklow. When I was eight, I had a very memorable experience on a multi-day hiking and camping trip with donkeys in the Pyrenees. Since then I have hiked and climbed in the Alps, Corsica, Wicklow, the Burren and the Mournes.

I started climbing more often about six years ago. Since then, I have learnt a lot and improved more than I could ever have imagined. These past twelve months, I have improved not only in the

level I climb at, but have also learned lots of mountaineering skills. The past year has been jam-packed with adventures and so much more. The first big event in my climbing year was the **Irish Lead Climbing Championship**, which took place at Awesome Walls Dublin in November 2017. I was competing in Youth C and must admit that I was a bit nervous before the competition, particularly about taking falls. I had put a lot of work into my lead climbing. The competition turned out to be full of excitement, laughs, cheers and a few tears. The excitement of the day and support of my fellow competitors helped me to overcome my nerves and I managed to finish third overall in the competition.

I spent the next few months

competing in the various rounds of the **Irish Bouldering League**. What I really like about these competitions is the great atmosphere where everyone encourages and motivates each other, and that I get to travel to different climbing walls and to try lots of different climbs. It was a bonus to me that I was the

overall winner of my category in the competition.

In February, I competed in the **Irish Bouldering Championship** at Gravity. It was an amazing competition – tough! I had trained hard over the winter and my hard work paid off as I won the competition for my age group.

As the weather got better,



Heading down to Portrane cliffs with Lilou for some bouldering



Rhyna climbing in Glendalough, Co Wicklow



Written by Rhyna Conroy, a member of the Dublin Cliffhangers Youth Climbing Club. She enjoys all aspects of mountaineering, from indoor bouldering to trad climbing to hillwalking

and Tollymore National Outdoor Centre where we stayed was really great. I would recommend it to anyone who would like to learn about trad climbing and mountaineering in general.

After the holidays, I took part in the **Youth Boulder Battle** at Boulder World Belfast. I had a fun day and there was a great atmosphere. Everyone was happy and friendly, and I really enjoyed it. I then went to Scotland for the **Scottish Lead Championship**, which was held in the Edinburgh International Climbing Arena. The climbing centre is huge and the competition wall is enormous. It was great to see the level which people compete at in the UK. The climbs we did were very interesting and I really enjoyed myself.

I recently took part in the **2018 Irish Lead Championship** and I am only just back from a week-long bouldering trip in **Fontainebleau**, which is organised annually by Mountaineering Ireland.

I absolutely loved being in the forest and playing on boulders. I learned so much from my coaches and peers, and I am planning to go back.

I love climbing! Training indoors allows me to unwind after school and to catch up with friends. It also helps me to focus and become stronger. When new problems are set at the wall, it feels like Christmas!

As for being outdoors, I feel happy to be there and in the moment. Trad climbing requires a different mindset and your actions have real consequences. It also allows you to travel and see new places.

So that concludes my year in climbing and mountaineering. It really was a great year for new experiences and achievements and it is all thanks to Mountaineering Ireland, my great coaches and my mom (sponsor and belayer!) who supports me in everything and brings me to all my comps and events. I am really looking forward to next year ■



Rhyna climbing in Corsica

I went bouldering outside in **Portrane** with my younger sister, Lilou, and my mom, Eléonore Conroy. We climbed a few of the boulder problems there and explored one of the caves. The rock was smooth and dry, and the tide was out. I loved climbing next to the sea, in the fresh air, with almost no one around.

My mom is from France, so over the Easter holidays, my sister, my mom and I went to **Corsica**. It is nothing but mountains, sea and beautiful views. I got the chance to do lots of sport climbing, hiking, via ferratas and tyroliennes. Corsica is a wonderful place to visit.

In June, I took part in the **Youth Trad Fest** in the Mournes. It was a weekend of camping and trad climbing. I got the chance to learn how to place gear, belay from the top of a climb and build anchors. It was great fun and I

really loved it.

Over the summer, I went to **Dalkey Quarry** with my mom. We did some trad climbing and, for the first time, I set my own anchor. It was a great experience and we got a lot of climbing done. In **Glendalough**, I got a small introduction to multi-pitch climbing. I went for the day with my mom and Damien O'Sullivan, Mountaineering Ireland's Climbing Development Officer. We did a small multi-pitch route and a 60-metre abseil. It was so much fun and I really loved it, especially the abseil.

In August, I went to the Mournes for the **Youth Mountaineering Meet**. It was a full week of trad climbing, learning new skills (like how to abseil and how to prussic up a rope) and hiking. Not only did we learn about trad climbing but we also learned map reading, taking a bearing and so much more. I really loved it



Senior Female podium in the 2018 Irish Lead Climbing Championship at Awesome Walls, Dublin (left to right): Caroline Harney-Ayton, Lucy Mitchell, Sarah Hoare



Senior Male podium in the 2018 Irish Lead Climbing Championship at Awesome Walls, Dublin (left to right): Carson Carnduff, Andrew Mawhinney, Eoin Acton

LEAD CLIMBING CHAMPIONSHIP

The Irish Lead Climbing Championship 2018: a competition report by **Damien O'Sullivan**



Sponsored by **O'Driscoll O'Neil Insurance**, the 2018 Irish Lead Climbing Championship took place at Awesome Walls Dublin over the weekend of October 20th and 21st.

The route-setting team – consisting of **Brian Hall, Chloe Condron** and **Ricky Bell** – received a real boost to the stock of holds from which to craft the routes with the arrival of an amazing set of holds from Slovenian manufacturer 360 Holds. The new holds, the steep terrain of the DMM wall and the prow at Awesome Walls provided the setting team with the opportunity to set a mixture of technical and physical routes to really test the competitors.

The six groups of youth climbers competed on Saturday, beginning the day with two qualification routes. The top six climbers in each of the categories progressed on to a semi-final round, with the

top three then making it into the final to battle it out to decide the podium places.

The standard of climbing on show from the youth climbers was very impressive, with the standard being further bolstered by several visiting climbers from Scotland and Wales. The chief judge, **Robert Faulke**, made sure that fairness prevailed throughout the competition and responded to a few queries on scores and

results.

On Sunday, it was the turn of the senior climbers to take up the challenges set by Brian, Chloe and Ricky. While 2017's defending champion Lucy Mitchell was the favourite to win the Senior Female title for the umpteenth time, the Senior Male category was much harder to call, with Andrew Mawhinney, Carson Carnduff, Eoin Acton and Rory Sullivan all in with a strong chance of

standing on the top step of the podium at the end of the day.

True to form, **Lucy Mitchell** maintained her dominance in the Senior Female category, looking comfortable on sections of routes that pushed the other competitors. Lucy topped her final route in great style to take first place.

In the Senior Male category each climb in the qualification round and the semi-final round would have had the bookmakers scrambling to adjust their odds as a different climber seemed to come to the fore on each route.

In the end, it was **Andrew Mawhinney** who took first place ahead of **Eoin Acton** and **Carson Carnduff**.

Mountaineering Ireland would like to thank **O'Driscoll O'Neil Insurance** for their support of the competition, **Awsome Walls Dublin** for hosting it, the setting team of **Brian Hall, Chloe Condron** and **Ricky Bell** for all their work, and all of the people who volunteered of their time and expertise to assist with the belaying and judging ■

Results

The winners in each of the competition categories were:

Female Youth A

- 1 Anna de Souza
- 2 Robin Casey
- 3 Jessica McGarry

Male Youth A

- 1 Sean O'Connor
- 2 Tommy Myles
- 3 Jude McNerney

Female Youth B

- 1 Faith Blaney
- 1 Bonita Thurston
- 3 Keira Blazquez-Burke

Male Youth B

- 1 Dominic Donnell
- 2 Luke van Impe
- 3 George Lassov

Female Youth C

- 1 Holly Holmes
- 2 Caelin Frawley-Lenehan
- 3 Amy Rafferty

Senior Female

- 1 Lucy Mitchell
- 2 Sarah Hoare
- 3 Caroline Harney-Ayton

Senior Male

- 1 Andrew Mawhinney
- 2 Eoin Acton
- 3 Carson Carnduff

For full results please go to www.mountaineering.ie

Job role change

A staff member since May 2013, **Damien O'Sullivan's** role with Mountaineering Ireland has now changed from Talent Development Officer to **Climbing Development Officer**.

Damien began work with Mountaineering Ireland in May 2013 when he took over the role of Talent Development Officer from Neal McQuaid. The Talent Development Officer role and programme was funded by **Sport Northern Ireland** under its Performance Focus 2013-2017 initiative. Damien's role as the Talent Development Officer mainly comprised three areas: climbing competitions, climbing coach development and talent pathway

development.

In 2016, Sport Northern Ireland signalled that it would be discontinuing funding for this initiative and instead creating a new initiative, **Sport Clubs and Winners**, through which the role and programme of the Youth Development Officer (Northern Ireland), Kevin Kilroy, is currently funded.

Damien O'Sullivan's new role as Climbing Development Officer is a natural and logical progression for him and for Mountaineering Ireland. As well as continuing to develop many of the areas that he has been responsible for to date, Damien will now support and engage with the growing climbing community at all levels ■



Damien O'Sullivan

Youth Climbing Team Coach steps down

By Damien O'Sullivan

Terry O'Connor has stepped down from his role as **Youth Climbing Team Coach** following four years in the role.

Terry took on the role from **Eddie Cooper** in the spring of 2014. Since then he has overseen the development of the Youth Climbing Team and provided direction and support to team members at training sessions and competitions.

As well as working with the Youth Climbing Team, Terry has also provided expert advice to a wider group of young climbers through his involvement with the **Mountaineering Ireland Climbing Development Squad**.

Terry is also the leading figure in the



Terry O'Connor

ever popular and successful **Winders Climbing Club**, which has provided numerous young people with an invaluable gateway into climbing.

Ever mindful of the need to develop a successor for the role, Terry has been mentoring **Rob Hunter** in preparation for passing on the baton. Thanks to Terry's guidance and encouragement, Rob has now taken on the role of Youth Climbing Team Coach.

Mountaineering Ireland and members of the Youth Climbing Team, both past and present, would like to take this opportunity to thank Terry for all his guidance and support over the years ■

Climbing Development Squad

Applications are now open for the Mountaineering Ireland Climbing Development Squad

By Damien O'Sullivan

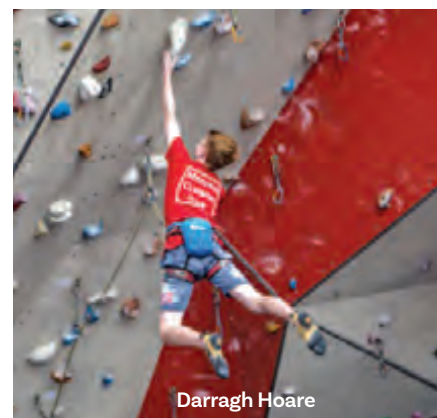
The Climbing Development Squad is suitable for climbers between the ages of ten and sixteen, who are keen to improve their climbing performance and who regularly compete in climbing competitions.

Membership of the Climbing Development Squad is reviewed twice per year, in September and December. In December, the membership is reviewed – additional climbers who have demonstrated that they meet the

selection criteria may be added to the squad, while existing members who are not meeting the requirements leave the squad.

Applications close on Friday, December 7th, at 10.00pm. Applicants must be members of Mountaineering Ireland.

► **For more information and to complete the online application, please go to the following page on the Mountaineering Ireland website: www.mountaineering.ie/youth/talentdevelopment** ■



Darragh Hoare

EIGER 160

The 160th anniversary of the first ascent of the Eiger by Irishman Charles Barrington was marked last summer by a climb of the same route by an Irish team, including two of his descendants. The team members **Dawson Stelfox** (lead author), **Frank Nugent**, **Ursula MacPherson**, **Matthew Barrington** and **Joshua Barrington** report.

In August 1858, Charles Barrington, aged 24, from Fassaroe, near Bray, Co Wicklow, visited the Bernese Oberland in Switzerland. Accompanied by Grindelwald guides Christian Almer and Peter Bohren, he climbed the Jungfrau (4,158m), the highest mountain in the range. With the same guides, he then went on to make the first ever ascent of the Eiger (3,970m) by its west flank and ridge – the right-hand side of the famous north face looking up from Kleine Scheidegg.

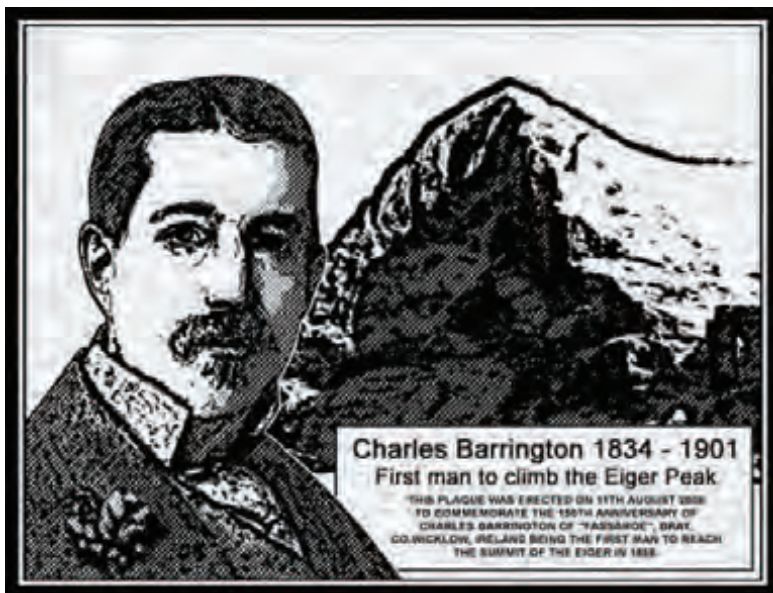
To celebrate the 160th anniversary of that first ascent, two of Barrington's great-great-grandnephews, Matthew and Joshua Barrington from Greystones, Co Wicklow, headed out to climb the same route accompanied by Dawson Stelfox, Frank Nugent and Ursula MacPherson, with the extended Barrington family gathering in Grindelwald to mark the occasion.

Above: Upper end of the Eiger's west ridge.

Below: Plaque in Grindelwald recording the first ascent.

Barrington's original ascent route on the Eiger, the west flank and ridge, is not climbed much these days. The popular routes on the mountain are the Mitteleggi Ridge, the south ridge and the many modern rock routes on the western pillars and the towers of the north face.

It is not hard to understand why. While the ascent



➤ **Dawson Stelfox MBE** is an architect and qualified mountain guide who lives in Belfast. On May 2nd, 1993, he became the first Irish person to climb Mount Everest. Dawson has served on the board of Mountaineering Ireland for many years and is a past Chairperson. He is currently Chair of Mountain Training Board Ireland.



BARRINGTON'S ORIGINAL ASCENT ROUTE IS NOT CLIMBED MUCH THESE DAYS.

from the Mitteleggi Hut is just over 600m, and that from the Mönchsjoch Hut up the south ridge even less, the starting point for the west flank at Eigergletscher station is over 1,600m below the summit. Add to that a reputation for loose rock and difficult route-finding, with a guidebook time for the round trip of around fourteen hours, and it is perhaps understandable why the route of Charles Barrington's first ascent is not that popular any more.

The west flank of the Eiger might be a marginally more popular route to the summit if there were a mountain hut halfway up, so that climbers would not be faced with a gruelling 1,600m of height gain and descent. Doing the route over two days, however, with a planned bivouac at what must be one of the most dramatic locations in the Alps, transforms the logistics. This turns what would be a daunting one-day race against darkness into an enjoyable, complete mountain experience, with time available to get full value from the trip, following the edge between the gloom of the north face and the sunlight on the west flank.

The Rostock via ferrata is highly recommended for an initial skirmish as it is enjoyable in its own right, a series of ladders and cables passing by one of the original railway tunnel entrances, weaving its way through steep pillars of immaculate rock. It is also a really great place to

Above: Matthew Barrington and other members of the team acclimatising on the Rostock.

Below: Members of the team acclimatising on the south-east ridge of the Mönch.

study the lower part of the west flank route and the approach from Eigergletscher station.

Following this, we made an acclimatisation ascent of the south-east ridge of the Mönch, where we met Christian Almer, the great-grandson of Charles Barrington's guide, who is warden of the Mönchsjoch Hut. We then set off from the Eigergletscher station ➤



THE EIGER



in the early afternoon, with heavy rucksacks, heading for the bivouac site at 3,000m.

The traditional line is well out on the flank, crossing a rock band via a snowy gully before traversing back left (north) to the ridge. However, the development of modern rock routes on the steep pillars around the north-west corner has also led to a variety of other approach routes, some with steep sections fitted with fixed ropes. We went up the traditional line but used one of the newer routes for descent the next day. It is probably shorter but is a more strenuous pull up and, as in many places on the route, there are numerous and often confusing lines of cairns.

Bivouac with a view

Three hours took us from the station to the 'Eiger Hilton,' a superbly located flat bivouac site perched on the edge of the ridge. It has dramatic views to the north and west, and the whole north face to peer over a short distance away.

As Ursula recalls:

"No matter how lightweight the approach, to bivouac means carrying additional gear and, in this case, water. There is none on the face, anywhere. To carry a minimum of three litres adds significantly to the weight of climbing hardware, rope, the means to cook, sleeping bag, and so on. That extra weight can be so well worth carrying, though, particularly when the setting and the night are as special as we experienced on the Eiger."

"Our bivouac site was marked by a floor of four welcome wooden planks, bounded on three sides by a low stone wall (see photo, right). A sea of cloud lapped around our feet and the north face. As we cooked our al-fresco evening meal of dehydrated delights, the nearby Mönch and Jungfrau appeared warm with

alpenglow above the cloud, while the sun set below cloud to the west. The evening sky was stunning.

"Snug enough in our light bivy sacs, we nonetheless stirred regularly during the night. Clear air at altitude, and the complete lack of the light pollution so prevalent nowadays, provided a sky full of stars, seemingly within touching distance. Ursa Major, lying on her side on her bed of cloud, replaced the earlier sunset, while Ursa Minor and her climbing companions were happy to be out on the mountainside, anticipating a 4.00am wake-up and the day's ascent later on.

"Without a doubt, it is worth carrying the extra gear occasionally!"

Onwards and upwards

We left the bivy at 5.00am the next morning, spending the first hour in darkness, with dawn finding us above the famous 'Kanzil' or mushroom rock. This is an unlikely detached pillar on the edge of the north face, now made famous by base jumpers. The first section of the route has good rock and enjoyable scrambling, if you stick to the crest, with looser but easier ground to the right, if the exposure of the north face yawning below gets to you.

Above the Kanzil, the best route follows a long traverse rightwards around the base of a series of rock steps, with multiple cairns and a few false trails leading you up onto steeper and looser ground. It is best to keep traversing until you are past the main rock buttresses and then go up and across a shallow gully out onto another flank.

Traversing from there again around the bottom of the last rock buttress feels interminable! From there, a line of metal posts cemented into the rock acts as belays and abseil anchors to take you back to the crest of the ridge again, now with even more dramatic views over the north face.

As Matthew said of this section:

"About 400m from the summit, we were faced with a massive sheer slope of crumbling rock with no solid

Above:
Matthew,
Frank and
Joshua on the
early traverse.

Below: Setting
up camp at the
'Eiger Hilton'
bivouac site on
the west ridge.





I THOUGHT OF BARRINGTON DOING THE SAME THING WITH HOBNAILED BOOTS, SUEDE JACKET AND NO MARKED ROUTE.

As Matthew said:

"Climbing the Eiger was by far the hardest, most challenging thing I have ever done, but with great challenge comes great reward. The feeling of reaching the summit of such a peak is hard to explain: joy, exhilaration, satisfaction, accomplishment, maybe even relief. I can only imagine the feeling Charles Barrington had when he reached the summit for the first time ever."

Five hours took us down to the bivy site. After a bit of sunbathing, in a further two hours we were down to Eigergletscher station, in plenty of time to catch a train to Kleine Scheidegg for some beer and chips before closing time.

Barrington's account of his climb

Charles Barrington wrote an account of his experiences to his half-brother, Richard Manliffe-Barrington, some years later. Frank Nugent, while researching his book *In Search of Peaks, Passes and Glaciers*, came across it and so much more about the intrepid Barringtons.

Charles started at 3.30am on August 11th 1858 from a hotel at Wengen Alp:

"We took a flag from the hotel. When we came to a point where one descends into a small hollow, I looked well with my glass over the face of the Eiger next us, and made my mind up to try the rocks in front instead of going up the other side, which had been tried twice before unsuccessfully."

"Almer and Bohren said it was no use and declined to come the way I wished. 'All right,' I said; 'you may stay, I will try.' So off I went for 300 or 400 yards over some smooth rocks to the part that was almost ➤

handholds and loose, ball bearing-like pebbles underfoot. I took time to think about Charles doing the same thing with hobnailed boots and a suede jacket, and with no marked route to follow. It made me proud to be a descendant of such a courageous man."

Reaching the summit

The next section up the ridge is probably the best part of the route, with solid rock, a great location and the summit at last coming into sight. Here we met the first of that morning's Mitteleggi teams starting the long descent after a quick romp up their short ridge. Towards the top the angle eases and the rock returns to scree, but there are distinct paths through it, so the summit ridge comes quickly.

What a summit! There are no easy ways up the Eiger and the mountain drops off precipitously on all sides from the narrow rocky ridge. It took us just over four and a half hours to get there from the bivouac site, moving continuously but steadily. It was still early morning when we arrived, but we knew the return would take us even longer.

So it proved; going down the steep and broken ground required caution and surefootedness. Even though we had just come up the route, it still took constant care and attention to find the best route down. Dawson had descended the route twice before, but that was in 1982 and 1988. On both previous occasions he had gone off-route and ended up abseiling over steeper than necessary ground. We already had deep respect for Charles Barrington, Christian Almer and Peter Bohren for finding a route for the first time 160 years ago and, by the time we got down, we were in awe of their achievement.

Above: Joshua and Matthew Barrington reach the summit of the Eiger.

Below: Ursula, Matthew and Joshua on the summit.



BARRINGTON WROTE: “THEY DOUBTED WE HAD BEEN TO THE TOP UNTIL THE TELESCOPE DISCLOSED A FLAG THERE.”

Barrington never returned to the Alps. However, his sporting achievements continued and he proved to be very versatile as an expert huntsman, yachtsman and shooter. He had the distinction of winning the inaugural Irish Grand National on his grey mare, Sir Robert Peel, on Easter Monday, 1870. Interestingly, his death notice in the *Freeman's Journal* also noted he was ‘the best of good fellows in club life.’

The Alpine museum in Grindelwald gives a good account of the first ascent and the subsequent eventful climbing history of the Eiger, still a focus today for hard new routes and record attempts. There are plaques in the town and at Kleine Scheidegg recording the first ascent, and the route remains a significant test of mountain craft and stamina. All who go up or down it know to give it respect and acknowledge the daring and resilience of Charles Barrington, 160 years ago ■

Left: Charles Barrington pictured on a leaflet commemorating the first ascent, also showing the west flank and ridge, the route he took to the summit.

Below: Matthew, Joshua and Ursula on the very steep descent to Eigerletscher station.

perpendicular. I then shouted and waved the flag for them to come on, and after five minutes they followed and came up to me. They said it was impossible; I said, ‘I will try.’ So with the rope coiled over my shoulders, I scrambled up, sticking like a cat to the rocks, which cut my fingers, and at last got up say fifty to sixty feet. I then lowered the rope, and the guides followed with its assistance.

“We then had to mark our way up with chalk and small bits of stone, fearing we might not be able to find it on our return. We went very close to the edge, looking down on Grindelwald, sometimes throwing over large stones to hear them crash down beneath the clouds.

“We got to the top and the two guides kindly gave me the place of first man up at 12 o'clock, stayed about ten minutes, fearing the weather, and came down in four hours, avoiding the very steep place as, looking down from above, we found a couloir, down which we came, and just saved ourselves by a few seconds from an avalanche.

“I was met at the bottom by about thirty visitors, and we went up to the hotel. They doubted if we had been to the top until the telescope disclosed a flag there. The hotel proprietor had a large gun fired off, and I seemed for the evening to be a ‘Lion.’”

Later in the letter he added:

“Not having enough money with me to try the Matterhorn, I went home.”





Near Port, Co Donegal.
Photo: Michael Guilfoyle

GOING INTO THE WILD

Michael Guilfoyle enjoys a remote coastal walk between Maghera and Port, Co Donegal.

South-west Donegal rightly boasts of dramatic Slieve League, but for me its 'wildness' and its charm are diminished, especially at its eastern end, by easy visual and fairly easy physical access, and overexposure to too many cameras and even drones! On the other hand, the coast on the other side of the peninsula, the 14 kilometres or so between Port and Maghera, is truly wild, remote and untouched. It is a place as God made it or, probably more likely, as the sea and its cold-climate cousin, the ice, did.

This route can be walked in one day. In my view, however, to really 'feel' its wildness and its remoteness, take two good days. Better still, do it when the elements are authentic and real and faithful to a place that was born and bred of the elements! Bring a light tent, start at Port, and overnight stay at Gull Island; and again, on your second night, light a candle and let the rising tide hide and protect you from the world and the weather in the highest, and therefore safest, one of the sandy-floored sea caves at Maghera.

The most important thing is to do it alone, and be present and mindful and attuned to it, to the sounds of its winds, its seas and its wild birds, the feel of it and of your own aloneness. Do this even just once in your busy life and don't be afraid of the descending night or the night sounds of a wild place, but feel that primal relief of daybreak and sunrise and, in a strange way, come to realise the safe and unthreatening indifference of wild places. Then, with your mind open and free of fear and any anxiety, the place will in turn reward you by opening its utter beauty to you!

The steep, well-cropped grass slope up from Port will make you conscious of that other primal feeling, your heartbeat. However, as you gain the high plateau of Port Hill and your heart relaxes, you can sit for a while and let your eyes fall and linger on that first claimant for your attention, Tormore Island. Then you will start to feel the energy of the place as you now descend along the easy curved rim of what I might call Glenlough Bay, taking in the sounds of sea growling on the boulders below, and

Above:
Near Port,
Co Donegal.

imagining life in this now-abandoned valley, bound only by mountains and the sea.

Then the mountains will meet the sea for a while, requiring your attention as you pick a path between them, and out of mountain, back onto cropped easy ground to your campsite where a stream, known only to God and the elements, empties anonymously into the sea at Gull Island. Make it your home, watch the sunset or feel the dark gradually snuffing out the light of a misty evening, and as you fall into sleep on the darkest of nights, try to distinguish the water sounds of maybe rain and the sea and the little river close by you.

Then wake to the daylight, your senses now attuned to a wider bandwidth than you've ever known, and take the day to explore the last bit of your coast walk, as the lovely north-west Donegal coast opens up to you. You will find easy access to the wide beach of Maghera and, looking back south from the beach, you will see the mouth of that cave, at least ten thousand years old, where many hid or found refuge, and wonder what storms lifted the beach sand to fill it nearly to its high apex roof.

I guarantee you will 'feel' that space, and you will be as

scared as I was. When you blow out your candle, the closing darkness of rock walls, the slow drip of ancient rain and the muffled swish of sea, will slowly connect with ancient rhythms and soothe away your fright.

And you will emerge next morning and walk the airy, bright and blowy beach back to your car, or your lift, and feel that a wild place has let you know it intimately and, in a strange way, welcomed you ■

**BE MINDFUL AND
ATTUNED TO THE
SOUNDS OF THE
WIND, THE SEA,
THE BIRDS AND
YOUR ALONENESS.**



► **Michael Guilfoyle** is a founder member of the Lung Gompas Hiking Club and lives in Dublin. He has hiked in the Alps, Pyrenees, Scotland, Wales and Iceland and has trekked in Kashmir, the Canary Islands, Nepal, Morocco, Vancouver Island and Patagonia. He has summited many Alpine 4,000m peaks, including Mount Blanc and Gran Paradiso, as well as summiting on Toubkal and Ouanakrim in the Atlas Mountains and most Pyrenean tops over 3,000m.

THE AK-SUU TRAVERSE

Gerda Pauler goes trekking in the remote uplands of the Issyk-Kul Region in eastern Kyrgyzstan.

Tired of overbooked huts or crowded trails? Then Kyrgyzstan, occasionally known as the Switzerland of Central Asia, is the place for you to visit, as it offers trails across stunning landscapes, which are free of mass tourism.

Jumping off the van in Jyrgalan, a village in the south-east of Kyrgyzstan, feels like being hurled back in time, sixty years at least. Under the Soviet Union regime, Jyrgalan was a prosperous place with a growing population, a hospital, a power station, shops and a school. Since Kyrgyzstan's independence in 1991, however, many villagers have left their homes as the local coal mine no longer guarantees a regular income. Houses have fallen to bits and weeds have

Above: On the way to Ak-Suu Valley.

Right: Location of Kyrgyzstan (in green) in Central Asia.

taken over in the gardens, where abandoned cars and tractors rust away.

In search of the guesthouse, promoted and praised highly on the internet, I walked along unpaved streets together with a few cows and their calves. I met a few children riding to the local shop where the owner does not bother putting the few items onto the shelves; the products are sold out of boxes and bags.



➤ **Gerda Pauler**, mountaineer and author, was born near Munich and, as a child, reluctantly went to the Alps with her parents. Surprisingly, as an adult, she developed a liking for the mountains. Since the 1980s, in addition to travelling through the Alps, other European ranges and the mountains of Central Asia and South America, she has made numerous journeys to the Himalayas in India, Pakistan and Nepal. In 2012, Gerda completed Nepal's Great Himalaya Trail which, at 1,700 km, is one of the longest, highest treks in the world. Since then, she has worked to support the **Autism Care Nepal Society**, which runs the only special needs school for autistic children in Nepal. She lives in Norway and works as a lecturer and social worker.





Waking up the sleeping beauty

A few years ago, one of the villagers had a brilliant idea – ski mountaineering! Russian guests were excited about the chance to use horses rather than cable cars or helicopters, and the number of visitors increased year after year. Against the odds this man in the village had sparked off new hopes for a better future in Jyrgalan. In 2016, local families founded the Jyrgalan Destination Management Organisation and, in 2017, the USAID Business Growth Initiative supported the project by marking trails and printing maps for one-day and multi-day hiking routes.

Six months ago, I read about these new trekking routes and decided to walk the Ak-Suu Traverse, which

Above: In the upper part of the Jyrgalan Valley.

Below: a profusion of blue *Pedicularis* together with orchids and campions in the Jyrgalan Valley, a botanist's paradise.

THE FIRST DAYS ARE LIKE WALKING IN A DREAM THROUGH THE EMPTINESS, SILENCE AND LONELINESS.

is about 155 kilometres long and the longest of the new routes. Although the brochure recommended starting in the west, I opted to start in the east. There are a couple of passes between 3,500-4,000m along the traverse, and acclimatisation is definitely easier when beginning in the east.

Leaving civilisation behind

Equipped with a tent, sleeping bag, stove and gas, food for about eight days and some modern technology like a solar panel, power bank and GPS, my backpack was heavy when setting off from Jyrgalan. 'This is total madness,' an inner voice told me. 'At the age of 61, you are a bit too old for this kind of solo hike,' I was thinking.

The first days are like walking in a dream through the emptiness, silence and loneliness. There are no sounds other than the roar of rivers, the gurgling of creeks and the whistling of marmots. Awash with wildflowers, the slopes resemble a sea of colours and I not only spot bluebells and primroses but also edelweiss and gentians. This is a true paradise for botanists.

Those who are used to looking for signs or markings every 15 to 20 metres (probably the usual distance between the coloured dots in the Alps) will be disappointed... or shocked. It can take hours on end before you detect another stone with a red arrow; my GPS came in handy more than once. Orientating in wide valleys and on high plateaus can be difficult in bad weather. Additionally, horses, cows and sheep have created hundreds of trails that rarely lead to the places you want to go to.





Repeatedly, boggy valley floors and minor rivers force me to choose whether I wear my sandals and wade across to the other side or put on my heavy mountain boots and jump from stone to stone, or from one tuft of grass to the next. A couple of times, solid-looking tufts are not solid at all and I sink into the mud up to the ankle.

In some places along the route proper, bridges, or at least planks or logs, make river crossings easy, but I need the help of a local herder to cross the Ak-Suu River as there is neither a bridge nor a ford. For 300 som (€4), he not only takes me and my rucksack across the river on his horse but also invites me in for a cup of tea and a snack in his yurt, a portable, round tent covered with skins and felt. From our conversation, I learn that the absence of a bridge provides him with a most welcome additional source of income.

Mass tourism: everything is relative

After five days' trekking and five pass crossings, I reach Altyn Arashan, famous for its hot springs. My map says 'Resort' and hours before getting there I imagine myself getting out of a hot spring, wrapped in a white towel, and waiting for a three-course meal to be served in my room. Wishful thinking! Altyn Arashan is no more than a tiny cluster of yurts and lodges offering beds in dormitories. I decide to put up my tent.

Since the start in Jyrgalan, I have met seven hikers on the trek in the five days. In Altyn Arashan, I meet forty or fifty tourists from all over the world within ten minutes. At first, I am surprised, almost shocked, to see so many people so close together but, compared to Nepal, for example, where hundreds of hikers walk in single file to the highlights in the Annapurna or Everest areas, it is a small number of visitors. The majority have arrived here by jeep or truck to enjoy the hot springs for a day or two. The others are doing

Above: Gerda Pauler at the Boz Uchuk lakes near Jyrgalan.

Below: Camp on the way to Ala-Köl Pass.

a popular three-day trek from Jety Oguz to Ala-Köl Lake. This mountain lake is my next destination.

Ala-Köl, the mystic lake

From now on my GPS remains at the bottom of my rucksack. The trail I am following is well used by both solo hikers and organised groups with guides, porters and kitchen boys, yet it may still be an hour or two between meeting people.

While plodding up Ala-Köl Pass, I begin to understand why everybody recommends walking the





Ak-Suu Traverse from Jety Oguz in the west. The last 200m height gain is a sheer nightmare of steep, loose scree. Whereas the hikers coming down from the pass merrily slide down the slope, I feel like Sisyphus, as for every two steps I take up the path, I slide 1½ steps back down again. Huffing and puffing, I finally reach the pass. I am totally exhausted.

However, within half a second (or even less) my tiredness and exhaustion disappear. Far below me, surrounded by high peaks, I spot the lake with its unreal, unearthly blue-green colour. I cannot help thinking of Phoksumdo Lake in the Dolpo region of western Nepal. I am spellbound by this coloured patch amidst the dull grey of the rocks. Clouds drifting by cast shadows on the rippled water and result in a constant subtle change in the tint. It takes some time before I resume my walk.

Apart from the fact that the last bit of chocolate is always mine, travelling on my own has another big advantage: I can make decisions on the spot without having to go through lengthy discussions with others. I dismiss my original plan to push on to the next yurt camp further down and pitch my tent at the lake. The ice-cold, windy weather presages an even colder night up here, but I do not care. The view is worth getting cold hands for when I prepare my dinner.

The descent from Ala-Köl is both time and energy consuming. I get caught in three successive thunderstorms and two heavy hailstorms. Traversing fields of wet rocks and boulders turns into a precarious balancing act. It is not before arriving at the yurt camp at the bottom of the valley that I can relax my tense muscles. I feel tempted to stay in the

Above: Ala-Köl Lake.

Below: Gerda on her way to Telety Pass.

THE ALA-KÖL TRAIL IS VERY POPULAR, BUT IT MAY STILL BE AN HOUR OR TWO BETWEEN MEETING PEOPLE.

cosy dining tent for the rest of the day, but after a cup of coffee I walk on towards Telety Pass, the last pass!

Farewell to the mountains, for two days

Crossing Telety Pass is pure fun; I am not surrounded by clouds and can enjoy a most magnificent view of

the snow-covered peaks.

Probably, this is the reason for the onset of my elation. Singing and whistling, I stroll down the path. Beside the river I spot a tiny camp run by a Russian couple and decide to have a short break there, which becomes a long one. Although my Russian is pretty basic, it is good enough for some small talk and I learn that the couple running the camp leave their regular jobs in summer and work as hosts for a tour operator.

It is both an easy and challenging job. On the one hand, there are hardly ever more than two groups per week, yet, on the other hand, everything they need has to be collected from a village that is





KYRGYZSTAN IS A COUNTRY OF UNLIMITED POSSIBILITIES FOR A MOUNTAIN LOVER LIKE ME.

located about two days away from the camp. Horses are necessary for transportation. They own an electric generator but only use it when groups are visiting the camp. No wonder that their children show great interest in my solar panel. "Can you charge a mobile with it?" the boy wants to know because the battery in his mobile has gone flat and he no longer can play games.

The last camp

Accompanied by the late afternoon sun, I walk on. After following the Telety Valley for a couple of kilometres, the trail follows a dirt road and, the closer I get to the last camp, the more vehicles I meet. My elation dwindles and disappears completely on my arrival; there are hundreds of people, cars and yurts. Fifteen years ago, I had cycled up this valley from Jety Oguz and there had been nothing but a few herders there. That peaceful place has been transformed into some kind of busy 'adventure' camp, where tourists (mostly locals) spend their holidays, riding, hiking, practicing archery, having barbecues or following the latest trend – going on a milk diet.

Shall I turn around and go back to the silence of the mountains? I opt for civilisation and a hot shower in a hotel in Karakol.

However, two days later I am back on a trail leading into the mountains. Kyrgyzstan is a country of unlimited possibilities for a mountain lover like me ■

Above: The Telety River tumbling down through the Telety Valley.

Below: A herder's yurt in Telety Valley, situated beside Telety River, in spate with meltwater from the snow-covered hills above.

General information

- **Distance:** circa 115 km
- **Duration:** circa 8 days
- **Highest point:** Ala-Köl Pass, circa 3,900m
- **Altitude gain/loss:** circa 7,500m
- **Best time to visit:** July to mid-October
- **Maps:**
 - Karakol and Jyrgalan Trekking Maps 1:100,000
 - Soviet Military Map (download Google Play)



EASTER IN THE ANTI-ATLAS

Orla Prendergast and **Joan Dinneen** are very impressed by the climbing in the Anti-Atlas Mountains of Morocco.

Above: Joan Dinneen on Pinnacle Ridge, a fantastic 600m severe.

Right: Orla Prendergast on Robin Hood Rocks, HVS.

The Anti-Atlas Mountains have been lurking near the top of our 'new places to climb' list for a number of years. However, as two women climbers we had some concerns about climbing in Morocco. Last Easter, we went there

and discovered that our trepidation was totally unfounded. Our only regret now is that we waited so long to go there.

The Anti-Atlas mountain range is famous for adventurous traditional climbing, winter sunshine, dramatic near-Saharan scenery and a fascinating Berber culture. ▶

▶ **Orla Prendergast** is based in Mayo and teaches Outdoor Education in GMIT. She is a member of the Access and Conservation Committee of Mountaineering Ireland. **Joan Dinneen** is from Cork and teaches Sport and Recreation in CIT. Together, Orla and Joan have climbed many long mountain routes in the European Alps, Norway, USA and Canada.





The highest peak is Jebel Sirwa (3,304m). It is in a norther prolongation of the range, linking it to the Atlas Mountains in the north of Morocco. The Atlas Mountains are higher and better known, but the Anti-Atlas provide better trad climbing. The climbing areas there are on both the north and south sides of Jebel el Kest (2,375m).

Long mountain adventure routes – some up to 800 metres – in remote settings are what attract many climbers to the area. However, there is a wide variety of climbing, with easily accessed granite bouldering and sports routes near Tafraout, and lots of roadside single and multi-pitch routes. There is a great range of grades in the Diff to E2 range and, unlike many multi-pitch climbing areas, there are lots of quality routes under VS.

The climbing covers a wide area and even the select guide describes over 1,400 routes. British climbers, including some famous ones like Joe Brown and Chris Bonington, first started climbing here in 1991 and new routes are continually being added.

Sampling some classics

On our ten-day trip, we sampled a tiny number of the classics; every route was high-quality and atmospheric.

There is a strong trad-climbing ethic, with the exception of some bolted granite routes near Tafraout. The routes in the mountains are on quartzite and, from a distance, the rock quality seems less than solid. Thankfully, though, the rock was generally very solid and clean, with positive holds.

The climbing was varied, not too strenuous, and well-protected. It is a pristine climbing area; no

Above: Granite climbing area close to Tafraout.

Below: Joan climbing a popular single-pitch crag in Palm Tree Gorge.

rubbish, no polished rock and no tat or pegs. On long routes, route-finding ability will be tested. Descent is usually by straightforward walk-offs, although some tough, very thorny bushes pose a challenge.

We were there over Easter, climbing on classic routes and, surprisingly, we met no other climbers at the crags. The mountain routes can feel a bit





isolated and, added to that, there is no rescue service, so the level of commitment feels high. There is good mobile phone coverage everywhere, but going in a small group rather than as a pair of climbers is worth considering.

There are several up-to-date guidebooks available and are full of information on travel, accommodation, local customs and gear lists. A range of guides can be purchased at www.climb-tafrout.com and they provide excellent information so that planning a trip is almost as easy as organising a sport-climbing trip to Spain. **UKC Forums** also proved useful when researching routes.

The bustling oasis town of Tafrout has lots of accommodation options, shops and services, and is a popular base. It gives easy access to climbing on the south side and most crags are reached within a one-hour drive. We stayed there for the first week and then moved to a base on the north side. As it was our first trip, we wanted to sample as wide a range of venues as possible, but there is sufficient climbing on either side to fill a trip. The north side is a bit cooler in hot weather and arguably provides slightly better-quality climbing. October to April is the climbing season, although winter may preclude climbing the high mountain routes.

On the north side of the range, we stayed in Kasbah Tizourgane, located in a spectacular fortified hilltop village (see photo, right). As accommodation options are very limited on the north side, it is likely that you won't be the only climbers staying there.

The Anti-Atlas are a magical place and, as a couple of women, we felt safe and welcome. We experienced none of the hustle and hassle common in Marrakesh and Moroccan resort towns. The locals take an interest

Above: Joan climbing Sun Ribbon Arête, a 10-pitch Severe.

Below: The impressive kasbah at Tizourgane, a popular climbing base.

WE SAMPLED A TINY NUMBER OF THE CLASSICS; EVERY ROUTE WAS HIGH-QUALITY AND ATMOSPHERIC.

in climbing, and climbers seem to be well regarded.

The Anti-Atlas Mountains are full of adventure and charismatic routes. We have great memories of our trip and will definitely return there ■





Access & Conservation



View of the 40-metre pilot path work on the lower part of Croagh Patrick's summit cone; the technique used provides a stable path that fits into the landscape.

Trial path work successful on Croagh Patrick summit

Stakeholders confident to move forward.

Alongside other members of the **Croagh Patrick Stakeholders Group**, Mountaineering Ireland recently participated in an evaluation of trial path work that was carried out on Croagh Patrick in October. The work was done over a period of two weeks by Scottish mountain-path specialist contractor **Matt McConway of Upland Access Ltd.**

The trial section of stone pitching is two metres wide, consisting of irregular steps and platforms, using only stone and material from the mountain.

The work took place in two locations along the traditional pilgrim path, with a 40-metre section completed on the summit cone and a short section lower down (just beyond the access gate to the mountain), to demonstrate different techniques.

The objective of the trial was to establish if the proposed methodology for constructing

the path would work using the small blocks of stone found on the steep summit cone. The path work was evaluated against the **'Helping the Hills' Guiding Principles** produced

by Mountaineering Ireland, and this included assessing the technique and quality of path work, landscape impact and environmental impact.

A number of groups and



Written by
Helen Lawless,
Hillwalking, Access
& Conservation
Officer

individuals connected with the Stakeholders Group assisted with the trial work. This provided an insight into the value of implementing the project, with a strong emphasis on training and voluntary inputs. Such an approach would build capacity locally to repair the path and care for the mountain into the future.

The result of the evaluation process is that the Croagh Patrick Stakeholders Group is confident to proceed with the proposed path solution, together with a maintenance and management regime.

The Stakeholders Group acknowledged with gratitude the assistance of the Mountain Shareholders on Croagh Patrick; Murrisk Development Association; GMIT Mayo Campus; South West Mayo Development staff and RSS workers; Mountaineering Ireland; Mayo Mountain Rescue; and all other volunteers who assisted with the trial path work.

The next steps for the



Chris York of Walking-the-Talk, right, who led the project to develop a repair solution for Croagh Patrick, pictured with participants in the evaluation. Martin Keating, Chairperson of the stakeholder group, is second from left and Vincent McAlinden, Mountaineering Ireland, is in the centre.

RESPECT

Responsible Enjoyment of Special Places with Empathy, Care and Trust

Share your ideas on shared space

Recently, while savouring the view from a popular summit with a friend, a hillwalker arrived and, standing less than two metres from us, released a valley-filling Tarzan call, without the slightest recognition that this could intrude on the experience we were enjoying.

The rarity of such incidents illustrates how the vast majority of recreationists are respectful of the fact that we share our outdoor space with others.

With more people using Ireland's mountains for an increasingly diverse range of activities, the concept of how we share that space is becoming more important. This can present a challenge for walkers, who have traditionally only come across the occasional hill farmer or a forestry worker on the hills.

There are practical things we can do to prevent conflict, like not walking on a mountain bike route (tyre tracks and constructed jumps provide clues to the possible presence of bikes). As well as being a danger to yourself and others you

might be impinging on the enjoyment of mountain bikers using the route.

How can we transmit an awareness of shared space to others? For example, to those who don't realise that unfenced hillsides are privately-owned sheep-grazing areas and, therefore, not a suitable place to let your dog run loose, or that parking your car on a narrow road could prevent access for a local resident or the emergency services.

Competition

We're keen to gather top tips on how different recreational users of Ireland's upland areas can co-exist without conflict. Send your ideas, or examples of things you have seen or done, to helen@mountaineering.ie before January 31st 2019. All submissions will be considered by three members of Mountaineering Ireland's Access & Conservation Committee and a selection will be published in the Spring 2019 issue of the *Irish Mountain Log* ■



By coincidence, Westport native John O'Callaghan (Clare Outdoor Club), centre, was on Croagh Patrick when the evaluation of the trial path work was taking place. He is pictured here with Caroline Goucher (Mayo County Council) and Brian Quinn (Fáilte Ireland).

Croagh Patrick project are to obtain planning approval through a Part 8 procedure in partnership with Mayo County Council and then proceed to implementation.

Commenting on the recent evaluation, **Martin Keating**, Chairman of the **Croagh Patrick Stakeholders Group**, said:

"Since the formation of the group, the Stakeholders Committee has been advising individuals and groups to prepare for their journey when

climbing Croagh Patrick, to take the right equipment and, most of all, to respect the mountain. It makes sense for us to take the same approach when thinking about the enormous task of repairing the damage and securing the future management of Ireland's 'Holy Mountain.'

"Rather than rush ahead with a quick-fix solution that we might later regret, we have been making careful preparations, taking advice from experienced

upland path professionals and doing trial work where bespoke solutions are required.

"The recent trial works have confirmed that we have a viable solution to repairing the summit section of the mountain, and they have given the stakeholders confidence to move forward to the planning and implementation phases of the project.

"This approach also provides us with an opportunity to train people in the highly skilled methods of upland path work, which sets in motion the long-

term relationship that we need to have with Croagh Patrick.

"The path work will be accompanied by ongoing measures to foster an understanding of the significance of the mountain, as well as the part we all need to play in looking after it.

"We are excited about the opportunities that the solution presents, mindful of the challenges ahead and appreciative of the widespread support that we have experienced on the journey thus far" ■

In brief...

Updates on the access article in our last issue:

Luggala: Mountaineering Ireland representatives have met with the Minister for Culture, Heritage & the Gaeltacht, Josepha Madigan TD, and the Minister has confirmed that her Department is in active discussions with the agents acting on behalf of the Luggala Trustees.

Northern Ireland: Mountaineering Ireland's September 2018 submission, outlining possible content for an Outdoor Recreation Bill for Northern Ireland, has been well received and has led to the formation of a National Outdoor Recreation Forum working group to further develop these proposals.



Recent and upcoming events

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



Written by
Jane Carney,
Training Officer

Meets

Mountaineering Ireland Winter Meet

■ **Onich, Scotland, February 17-23rd, 2019**

It is that time of year when we crave for those cold, crisp, Scottish conditions. Our annual Winter Meet usually attracts the cold-loving mountaineers amongst us and provides them with an excuse to sharpen their winter hardware in preparation for the unique Scottish experience.

For those new to winter mountaineering, select a skills course to suit your level or come along and make friends with other meet-goers and plan your winter adventures with the assistance of qualified instructors.

The **information evening** will be based in Dublin at **Basecamp's** new shop in the Smyth's Building, Jervis Street, Dublin, on November 28th, 2018, from 7.00-8.00pm.

Mountaineering Ireland Alpine Meet

■ **Chamonix, France, July 6-20th, 2019**

The next annual Alpine Meet will see Mountaineering Ireland return to Chamonix, the largest mountaineering area in France. Home of the Mont Blanc massif, Chamonix offers stunning trekking, high snowy and rocky peaks, and wonderful valley and alpine hiking and climbing.

There is something for everyone, including the young and older hotshot climbers, families, runners and clubs, and it is the perfect opportunity to meet folk with common interests. World-famous for its cuisine, France will please the coffee aficionados and foodies alike ■

Award Registration and Provider fees 2019

There will be an increase in the registration fees for the Leadership and Instructor Awards. A registration fee will also be introduced for the Skills awards.

The Provider fees will be increasing, after being fixed for many years. These changes will come into effect on January 1st, 2019.

- Leadership and Instructor Award registration fees will be increased from €50 to €52 (£45 to £47).
- Rock Skills Scheme registration fee for over-18s: €22 (£20). (Under-18s free.)
- Mountain Skills Scheme registration fee for over-18s: €22 (£20). (Under-18s free.)
- Indoor Climbing Assistant registration fee: €22 (£20).
- Climbing Wall Development Instructor: €69 (£57).
- Rock Climbing Development Instructor: €69 (£57).
- All award candidates can avail of the reduced Mountaineering Ireland membership rate of €30 at the time of registration.
- Provider fees: increase from €100 to €125 for one scheme, €200 to €250 for two or more schemes, capped at €250 ■

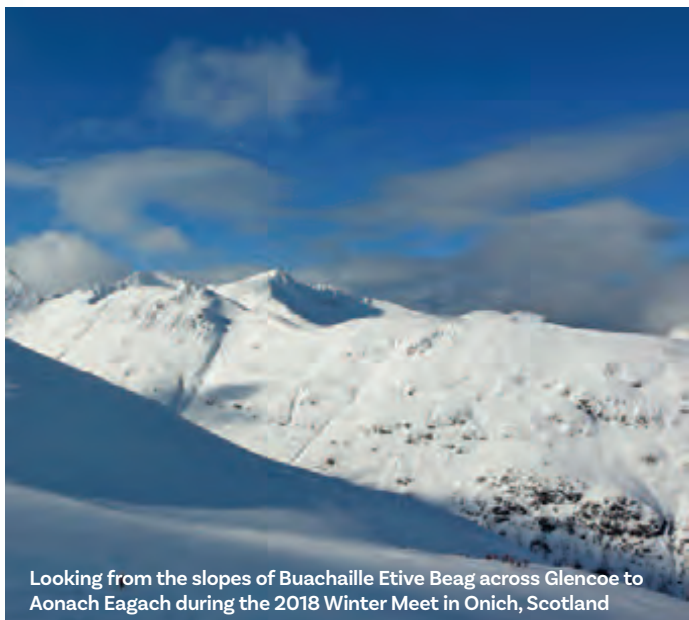
News for members

■ We encourage all members to check the calendar for one of the many **training opportunities** in the form of Skills Workshops, Club Training Officer Weekend Workshops and Train the Trainers events for those who wish to deliver award schemes. Note also the New Provider Inductions for the new Rock Skills and Indoor Climbing Assistant schemes.

■ **Skills Workshops** continue to be offered to our members over two weekends annually. These workshops are ideal for clubs and individuals to expand their skills and knowledge, which can be brought back to share with your club or to apply to your personal mountaineering adventures.

■ Please see the **National Guidelines for Climbing and Walking Leaders** and the **Good Practice Guidelines for Hillwalkers** available on our website's Training pages (Training Downloads).

■ The Mountaineering Ireland Ski Meet will not be running in 2018. The focus will be on developing the participation of young people, families, clubs and individuals in the **Mountaineering Ireland Summer Alpine Meet**. Mountaineering Ireland will continue to support those engaging in ski-mountaineering ■



Looking from the slopes of Buachaille Etive Beag across Glencoe to Aonach Eagach during the 2018 Winter Meet in Onich, Scotland



Participant enjoying excellent snow conditions during the 2018 Mountaineering Ireland Winter Meet in Onich, Scotland

News for providers

Providers are reminded to continue to submit **course reports** and **evidence of assessment forms** for all pass candidates of the ML, SPA, MPA, LLA and Level 1 Climbing Coach awards in a timely way.

■ **Data Protection Slides.** Providers are reminded to use these slides when delivering any ML, SPA, MPA, LLA or L1 CC courses.

■ Dates for **Provider Inductions** for the new Rock Skills and Indoor Climbing Instructor Schemes are shown on the 2018-19 calendar.

■ **Registration fees for skills schemes.** From January 1st, 2019, a registration fee of €22 (£20) for over-18s (under-18s free) will be introduced for the established Mountain Skills Scheme and for the newly introduced Rock Skills Scheme. See further details above.

■ Providers are again reminded to start populating **course reports** early, to flag any issues pre-course, such as candidates with lapsed membership, those not registered and those using the wrong email or membership number. Colleges and outdoor courses are asked to submit **manual registrations** well ahead of any courses (at least 6-8 weeks) ■

Update on rock climbing module on instructor training courses

Outdoor courses available in Ireland that offer Quality and Qualification Ireland (QQI) awards and modules need to be aware of the recent changes to the Single-Pitch Award QQI Level 5 and 6 modules. Mountaineering Ireland has four modules within the QQI listings: (1) Level 5 Mountain Skills; (2) Level 4 Rock Skills; (3) Level 5 Single-Pitch Award Training; and (4) Level 6 Single-Pitch Award Assessment.

The changes to the climbing awards need to be adopted by those offering the Level 5 and 6 Single-Pitch Awards. The key changes are:

- The experience requirements pre-training and assessment are now to include indoor and outdoor sport climbing leads. (The fully bolted outdoor sport climbing venue, Altnadue Quarry, Castlewella, is now open.)
- The duration for the training course increased from two to three days (20 to 24 hours), to include one full day at a climbing wall.
- The addition of two new modules: (1) Teaching Skills; (2) Managing an Assistant.

Please contact the Training Office to discuss the transitional arrangements for candidates and the course requirements for trainers and those managing outdoor course provision. Please contact the Training Officer for further details, Jane Carney at +353 (1) 625 1112 ■

Key dates 2018

- 12th December Provider Induction for Rock Skills and Indoor Climbing Assistant Awards, Tollymore National Outdoor Centre
- 13-14th December Train the Trainers, Tollymore National Outdoor Centre

Key dates 2019

- 14th January Mountain Training Board Ireland (MTBI) Training Meeting
- 1st February Provider Induction for Rock Skills and Indoor Climbing Assistant Awards, Sport HQ, Blanchardstown, Dublin
- 2-3rd February Club Training Officers Workshop, Wicklow
- 17-23rd February Winter Meet, Onich, Scotland
- 4th March MTBI Training Meeting
- 8-11th March Mountain Leader Assessment (venue TBC)
- 23-29th March Ski Meet - **cancelled**
- 29-31st March Spring Gathering (TBC)
- 29-31st March Mountain Training UK (MTUK) Meeting
- 10th April Summer Alpine Meet Information Evening, Basecamp, Jervis Street, Dublin (7-8pm)
- 18th May Skills Workshop: Navigation, Wicklow
- 18th May Skills Workshop: Scrambling, Wicklow
- 18th May Skills Workshop: Rock Climbing, Wicklow
- 19th May Skills Workshop: Navigation, Wicklow
- 19th May Skills Workshop: Scrambling, Wicklow
- 19th May Skills Workshop: Rock Climbing, Wicklow
- 24th May Summer Alpine Meet Preparation Workshop, Wicklow
- 1-2nd June Fair Head Climbing Meet
- 10th June MTBI Training Meeting
- 28-30th June MTUK Meeting
- 6-20th July Summer Alpine Meet, Chamonix, France
- 2nd September MTBI Training Meeting
- 14th September Skills Workshops (Navigation, Scrambling, Rock Climbing), Wicklow
- 15th September Skills Workshops (Navigation, Scrambling, Rock Climbing), Wicklow

Please see the website or contact the Training Office on (01) 625 1112 for further details. Please book early!

Stay safe out there!

SAFETY ON THE HILLS IN WINTER

Jane Carney provides detailed information on the clothes and gear to keep you warm and safe on the hills, especially during the cold-weather months and in snow and ice.

As the sun dips lower on the horizon, temperatures drop, days lengthen and conditions on the hills deteriorate. Winter is here!

Cold weather can provide some wonderful walking conditions when there is a crisp névé and you have the added security of crampons and an ice axe. However, conditions can also flip in a moment, creating a chaotic combination of low temperatures, strong winds, blizzards and poor visibility. In winter, we need to prepare for the best and the worst, when we go out on the hills.

Key priorities

Stay dry and keep warm

Staying dry and carefully monitoring and managing your temperature by adding or removing layers are central to staying safe in winter. A base layer, mid layer and softshell or windproof layer will cover most conditions with the addition of waterproofs, for when it starts raining. In addition, breathable fabrics will also help you avoid getting wet from condensation.



► **Jane Carney** is the Mountaineering Ireland Training Officer.

Wear and carry sufficient clothing to keep your core and peripheries warm and dry. Carry a spare layer of insulation, such as a belay jacket, for extra-cold conditions, lunch breaks or belay stances. This should ideally be synthetic, as down becomes less useful when wet.

Clothing should not be tight or restrictive as you may be wearing more layers than usual. Ensure you can operate the zips and access pockets while wearing gloves. Bring at least three pairs of gloves, including a waterproof pair. Mitts are warmer, but less dexterous than gloves. A large hood and short pack work best when wearing a helmet.

Keep your fuel tank full

Keep fuelled up with regular slow energy release snacks. Stay hydrated to help prevent the hot aches when the capillaries in the fingers shut down. Carry a warm drink containing calories.

Protect the gaps from heat loss

Your head, thighs and wrists are the places that you lose most heat from in your body and, therefore, need protecting. Hats and neck gaiters take care of the head, and trousers the thighs, but the wrists are often forgotten. Sleeves with thumb-holes and cuffed gloves will overlap this area and protect it. However, make sure your clothing is not too tight, as it can restrict the circulation and reduce mobility.

Although already mentioned, I stress, carry lots of pairs of thick fleece gloves

and a waterproof shell mitten or glove to keep them dry. Change the inners, if they get wet, and respond quickly to cold hands. Attach gloves and mitts to your wrists, like we do with children. A dropped or lost glove can prevent you from navigating, handling a compass, or holding ropes or an axe. Avoid gloves with a floating liner because they are almost impossible to get back on with damp hands, once you have pulled the liner out.

Keep your head warm

Your head and face are exposed and need protecting by wearing the usual hat, but in addition a balaclava, neck gaiter and ski goggles can cover the rest of your head in harsh conditions. Spindrift and strong winds can be blinding and, without goggles, it becomes very difficult to see, read a map or follow a route.

Keep your feet warm

Feet have little muscle bulk to generate heat. It is much easier to keep your feet warm than it is to warm them up, when they have got really cold. To help, put your feet into warm, dry boots at the start, and wear Gortex gaiters and thermals. Take the time to change your socks, if your feet get damp. Foot powder will help reduce perspiration. A thermal insole will prevent heat loss through the sole of the boot that is in contact with the snow and ice. Wearing a thin sock and a thick sock will also help. If you are ice climbing, the fit of the boot is critical and the toes must not

bang against the front, when kicking the foot into the ice.

The secret is to stay warm and to take action, if you are getting cold. Get out your insulated jacket, put on your dry gloves and change that damp top and those damp socks.



Selecting a useful mountaineering ice axe

One or two poles are possibly better than an ice axe on easy angled ground, but only where the consequence of a slip is not dangerous. I walk with a single ski pole in winter to keep my other hand free to use an ice axe, which acts as a walking stick, a self-belay and a braking system, if a slip turns into a slide. An axe can be used to cut steps, bucket seats, snow bollards, large ledges for resting or for organising equipment, and pits for checking snow profiles and emergency shelters, and can act as a buried axe belay. It can be used for climbing ice, hard snow, frozen turf or even rock. No other piece of winter equipment – and the skill to use it – is more important than an ice axe.

No single design of axe performs all of the above equally well. An axe that is a convenient length for walking is awkward for climbing slopes of more than 45°, because you must lift it high in the air. A pick set at a shallow angle for efficient self-arrest will not perform so well when climbing steeper slopes. Make sure the shaft is small enough for you to grip it with gloves on, and check that the swing is comfortable for you.

The correct length for an ice axe depends on how far your hands are from the ground – 60 to 70 cm seems a good place to start. Axes with a straight or

gently curved shaft (which have a better swing) can be plunged into the snow.

For general mountaineering, the head of the axe should be of one-piece construction, with a gentle curve. The adze should be a good size, slightly scooped and at an angle that continues the curve from the pick.

Selecting technical tools

Leashless climbing is the way forward! Leashless tools enable you to shake out more often and, with two grips on the shaft, they make it easy to swop hands. Another advantage, often overlooked, is that hands tend to get less cold as blood can flow more easily when you are not hanging in leashes. If you are nervous of leashless climbing, attach the axes via an elastic lanyard to your harness or try climbing with a leash only on one axe.

Technical axes are usually about 55 cm long with a curve in the shaft and a reverse pick that is better for hooking, ice penetration, and easier removal from steep ice. Some climbers may prefer a straighter pick for alpine work, where a bit of everything can be encountered. The adze will be more curved and more steeply drooped for hooking and torquing! For pure ice climbing, two hammers may prove more useful but, if it is your only set of tools, get an adze on one of them.

Choosing boots and crampons

Boots suitable for winter use have room for your toes to wriggle, are stiffer and have a sharp edge to the sole for kicking into hard snow. Any boot that can be bent more than half an inch or so when standing on the front edge will not work well with any type of crampon, but more importantly will not perform well in hard snow when not wearing crampons.



Crampons and boots are an integral unit and the wrong type of crampon on the wrong type of boot can break the crampon or allow them to fall off the boot. There are three broad designs:

- **Lightweight, flexible, walking crampons with simple straps**
Most commonly ten-point, they are light, simple and a good choice for low-angle snow.
- **Articulated step-in crampons attached with a heel clip and toe strap**
Most commonly twelve-point, they give the best balance between ease of attachment, walking comfort and climbing performance. They are a good choice for general mountaineering and even low- to mid-grade climbs.
- **Stiff crampons attached with a heel clip and toe bail**
They usually have twelve or more points. They are the best for pure ice climbing, but a pain for general mountaineering or walking.

The front points should stick out 25-35 mm. Front points that are drooped with the second row angled forward are more suited to ice climbing. The angled second points reduce calf strain by resting against vertical ice. Second points that are vertical facilitate a more ergonomic walking motion and are better for all-round mountaineering. Horizontal front points are more versatile and work better for general-purpose use than vertical ones.

Anti-balling plates are essential to prevent the build-up of snow on the underside of crampons, especially in wet snow conditions. The traditional remedy is to tap your crampons with your ice axe, but this is awkward, time-consuming and distracting.

► If you have any questions please contact Mountaineering Ireland's Training Officer at jane@mountaineering.ie ■



WINTER GEAR

Basecamp asked the staff at its new store in Jervis Street, Dublin, to describe their favourite items of gear for winter hiking. This is what they came up with.



Jack Layden: Fjallraven Barents Pro trousers

The first time I came across the Swedish brand Fjallraven was ten years ago in a store called Camp Four in Berlin, when I bought a pair of their Greenland trousers.

I wore them around a great deal, spoke about them, looked foolish at trade shows in them and even showed them to the odd mountain. I loved them. The Greenlands are gone, but they have been replaced by even better models. My favourites now are the **Barents Pro trousers**.

Why do I like them? They do not tear – the hardwearing G-1000 fabric makes them bulletproof. They can be made waterproof, after proofing with Greenland wax, which can be done by ironing the wax into the fabric.

They are warm – not windproof, but they feel like it. They have tons of pockets – long, deep ones, too, great for maps, chocolate and other essential bits and pieces for walking. And they are as comfy as be damned and stretchy too, which is important now that I am over forty. I love my Barents Pro!

Fjallraven Barents Pro €145



Barents Pro trousers



On the way up to Stob Coire nan Lochan, Grampian Mountains, Scotland

There is no such thing as bad weather, only inappropriate clothing.

I love my multi-day treks, so Merino wool t-shirts, baselayers and socks are always the first thing on my packing list, be it summer or winter. Merino wool's warmth to weight ratio is hard to beat. There are other brands mixing Merino with synthetics to 'get the best of both worlds,' but you run the risk of it smelling a bit. Merino wool's temperature regulation is fantastic. It keeps you at the right temperature. Add to that its wicking properties, antimicrobial prowess and the fact that it's a natural fibre, and you have a baselayer that deserves its reputation as 'the best.'

Icebreaker baselayers from €69.95

Becks Kelly: Mammut Trion Pro 35+7 backpack

The **Mammut Trion Pro 35+7** has to be the best backpack I have had experience with in recent years. It is a great bag for all sorts of adventures and especially for people with multiple hobbies like me, although it is geared mainly towards climbing and hiking.

It is much lighter than other bags, with more structured backs. This is something that is important to me as, with my small frame, I need to save on weight wherever I can. It retains comfort, however, with padding all along the back. The bag's carrying capacity is 20kg, which means its strong enough to carry a full rack or any camping or camera equipment you may want to take into the hills.

Something that really stands out for me in this bag is the accessibility of the main compartment. You can access it from the top, the bottom and the back. I think the back access is really cool as it frees up the front, where they've put a large pocket.

This bag has no netting on the outside and no

Alan Moore: Icebreaker baselayers

The **Icebreaker** brand comes from New Zealand, a country that is approximately 1,600km long as the crow flies. That's the same distance as from here to Portugal. Throw in the Southern Alps, capped by Mount Cook at 3,764m, and you know that Icebreaker gear will have been tested in all sorts of conditions on its home turf.



Icebreaker Oasis baselayer

water bottle side-pockets, which some users may find annoying. However, the bag comes with gear loops on the waist belt, and these are what I use to carry my water and a few extra bits with a carabiner.

You can take the top compartment off completely and rig it into its own little bag – a useful feature for travelling. At seven litres, the top compartment can carry a fair amount of stuff itself.

Overall, I would really recommend this bag. It is a very well-thought-out piece of kit.

Mammut Trion Pro 35+7
€159.95



Mammut Trion Pro 35+7
touring backpack

Conor Palin-Stewart: Petzl Myo headtorch

My 'go to' headtorch for all year round is the **Petzl Myo headtorch**. Its power and simplicity make it better than many other brands out there. With up to 370 lumens of light output, it really helps to light up the path during a night hike, but the minimum power of 20 lumens is also perfect, when I just want to see in my tent.

The Myo torch comes with a diffuser, which flicks into place and allows the beam to spread and light a wide area for those tricky parts in a hike. The beam can also be focused for long range, allowing me to see distant features to aid navigation. It is easy to use and the rugged, water-resistant design means I can bring it almost anywhere in any weather and I can rely on it to light the way. That's why I always carry a Petzl Myo with me when exploring the outdoors.

Petzl Myo headtorch €99.95



Petzl Myo headtorch

Mark Smith: Hanwag Tatra II GTX boots

These **Hanwag Tatra boots** have been my 'go to' leather boots for the past two winters. They have a stiff midsole and an aggressive Vibram outsole, which makes them perfect for wet and muddy conditions off-trail.

I also love that they have a single-piece leather upper, which makes them really easy to clean and then to wax. Combining this with the Gore Tex liner means that I have

never had wet feet in these boots. As we all know, Irish bogs are extremely acidic and being able to clean a boot well can add years to their life.

The Tatras are perfectly weighted, so they work great for long-distance walking and multi-day walks, as well as day trips. They are very supportive and grip my ankle very well. I would be lost in the hills without them.

Hanwag Tatra II GTX €259



Hanwag Tatra II GTX boots

Damien Broderick: Microlight Alpine jacket

For me, the **Microlight Alpine jacket** is the winter coat for here in Ireland. We don't have to deal with extreme, sub-zero temperatures here, and we don't have to deal with extremely high altitudes. What we do have to deal with is a cold that bites and plenty of rain.

The Microlight, for me, is one of the many moving parts that can get you around in Ireland with ease and comfort; one of those pieces you just put on and forget about. With optimum heat retention and being extremely packable and lightweight, the Microlight is my 'go to' insulator for three out of the four seasons here in Ireland.

The fit is snug and tapered, with nice thin baffles, allowing complete freedom of movement and comfort while keeping you warm. With a fill power of 750, this jacket has an incredible fill to weight ratio, with the size L weighing under half a kg.

Speaking about the fill, the jacket is hand-filled in Sheffield, England, ensuring the very best finish for each Rab product. The fill is ethically sourced European goose down. Before the jacket is filled, the down is sent off to NikWax to be given a hydrophobic treatment. Hydrophobic down can stay lofted up to an hour after being exposed to rain.

Rab Microlight Alpine jacket €229



Rab Microlight Alpine jacket



► Basecamp has a new address in Dublin and a new phone number. Here are the details:

Basecamp
(Jack Layden Enterprises Ltd)
Unit 1-4, Smyth's Building,
Jervis Street,
Dublin 1
D01 Y7F1
Tel: +353 (1) 878 2711
Website: www.basecamp.ie

No 2: OUTDOOR BOULDERING

In the second in a series of Climbing Good Practice Guides, Mountaineering Instructor **Angela Carlin** outlines her advice on bouldering outdoors safely and proficiently.

In the last few years, Ireland has seen an explosion of interest in bouldering, indoors and outdoors. With more and more people interested in starting bouldering outdoors, here is some advice on how to get started and to enjoy your first experiences in safety, as well as in preserving the rock and the local environment for others to enjoy.

Choosing a venue and a boulder problem

There are lots of considerations in choosing a venue, not just the grades of the problems. When starting out, it might be a good idea to go for a reasonably well travelled area, with flat landings and boulders of a sensible height. This will allow you to get some practice in placing the mats and spotting in relative safety. It will also give you a chance to learn key outdoor

bouldering skills, such as topping out a boulder, in relative safety.

Most guidebooks will give some idea of the general feel of an area, but they may or may not specifically warn you about what to expect in terms of the landings and the size of the boulders. The good thing about bouldering is that it is easy to see from the ground what you are getting yourself into so you can decide if you want to take it on before you leave the ground.

Taller boulders or 'highballs' can be relatively serious undertakings and have a lot in common with soloing on shorter routes – they should be approached with a similar mindset!

For many Dublin-based climbers, Glendalough is a popular first venue to visit. It has a great range of problems, which are well documented and easy to find. They range from easy to hard, and plenty of boulders can be attempted with one or two mats. There are many classic problems of different styles, from friction slabs through to roofs. Remember that the Miners' Road is a busy walking trail – try not to leave mats and bags on the track!

Bouldering movement skills

For those making the transition from bouldering indoors or route climbing to bouldering outdoors, there are a couple of skills that are almost unique to bouldering.

One is **topping out**: while we do sometimes perform a mantle-shelf move on a route, we definitely do them a lot more often in bouldering. It can be quite hard, especially if the top is rounded and is above an overhanging face. The key is to turn your pull into a push. Good tricep strength and hip flexibility will make it easier to convert this to standing on top!

If transitioning from plastic, it is often hard to get the hang of using tiny footholds and smears. Being able to spot them is difficult at first, never mind standing on them. The good news is that this improves with practice; climbing without hands on an easy angled slab is a great exercise for improving your bouldering footwork.

Friction slabs will feel more secure if you can remember to keep your heels down and really keep the pressure in your feet.

"Your footwork will improve with practice," advises Ricky Bell. "Getting a feel for how much you can weight or push on the footholds is said to be the foundation of climbing well on Glendalough granite."

Climbers moving from an indoor wall often find it difficult to read an outdoor boulder problem. Outdoor climbs are more subtle and, with an infinite range of possibilities for the feet, they can be



➤ **Angela Carlin** started climbing in 2001 and now enjoys trad climbing and bouldering the most. She is a manager, part-owner and frequent route-setter at Gravity Climbing Centre in Inchicore, Dublin. She holds the Level 1 Coach Award and the Mountaineering Instructor Award.

Barry O'Dwyer
on Turnpike Sit,
Gap of Dunloe,
Co Kerry



confusing. Try to think of it as unlocking a puzzle. If it feels much harder than the grade suggests, you may well be missing something. Have a good look and experiment with other methods; often the right way feels much easier, once you have found it!

Remember that plenty of mileage on easier boulders is important for building up your technique and confidence, so aim to climb lots and lots of problems. Don't get too hung up on the grades; pick out lines you want to try – and be patient!

Positioning your mats and spotting

Ideally, we would mat the entire landing area under the boulder with a flat, even surface, but in reality, this is rarely possible. Often, it is a case of matting the area where we are most likely to land and having a spotter or spotters to help direct the falling climber onto the mats.

Spotting is something that requires some practice to get right – it is really a case of learning to predict a climber's fall and directing them, feet first, onto the mat.

Like a roped climbing partnership, vigilance from the spotter will go a long way – it's upsetting to see that the person you thought had your back has gone off for a sandwich or grabbed their camera!

Environmental considerations and preserving the rock

As with traditional climbing, any attempt

to alter or enlarge holds on a boulder problem is strictly against the ethics of the sport. It is also important not to accidentally damage the holds, e.g., by using a wire brush to clean them. Use a soft brush with nylon or hair bristles to remove chalk between attempts.

Making sure your shoes are spotlessly clean and dry will not only increase your chances of success but also help prevent damage caused through polishing the holds. Some rock types, especially sandstone, can become very fragile after rain and should not be climbed on until completely dry.

Bouldering is a very social activity and lends itself to groups of people climbing together much more than traditional climbing does, but bigger groups of people have more impact on the mountain environment.

Bigger groups also generate more noise and disturbance to wildlife – especially if the group stays at the same boulder for several hours. This disturbance will increase if we add music or lights (for dusk or night-time bouldering). Be mindful of these factors and consider splitting up and going to different areas – you'll also get more climbing done!

When you have finished climbing on a boulder, it is good climbing etiquette to give excessively chalked holds and any chalk tick marks a brush off. This way you'll leave the boulder looking as beautiful as you found it ■

A word from David Fitzgerald

Brush your holds, clean your tick marks, preserve the rock as best you can

The climbing scene in Ireland has been small and exclusive for many years and, while it is great to see it welcoming so many new enthusiasts, we have to start taking responsibility for the upkeep of the rock to ensure its longevity.

With more and more climbers transitioning from indoors to outdoors, I've noticed that people are leaving a lot more **tick marks** on the rock and using way too much **chalk** on the holds.

There are many popular climbing areas around the world that have been marred by this lack of upkeep. I visited Magic Wood in Switzerland over the summer and was shocked at how much chalk damage there was on problems of all difficulties.

When tick marks and chalk aren't properly brushed away, the excess chalk inevitably gets wet and eventually dries again, creating a solid, textureless layer over the holds. After a while, it can get to the stage where it's practically impossible to recover the natural texture of the rock – and isn't that why we climb outside in the first place?

The same goes for tick marks: the more you apply, the harder it will be to brush them off. Ultimately, it will scar the rock.

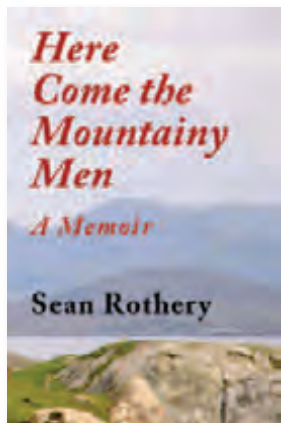
In Ireland, where our few well-developed areas are so precious to us, it is especially important that each of us does our best to maintain the natural integrity of the rock.

Please be sure to brush your holds, clean your tick marks and try to preserve the rock as best you can for the sake of your own climbing, as well as for future generations.

➤ **David Fitzgerald is one of the leading lights in a new generation of Irish climbers, excelling at climbing indoors and transferring that ability to outdoor bouldering, where he has achieved numerous ascents of bouldering problems in the 8th grade.**



An Irish mountaineer's life less ordinary



HERE COME THE MOUNTAINY MEN: A MEMOIR

By Sean Rothery

The Liffey Press, Dublin (2018), 188pp, €13.95, ISBN 978-0-9957927-8-4

Sean Rothery is a name that I knew well from climbing guidebooks, usually placed in front of or after Winder, with regard to the first ascent of some lofty rock route,

climbed while I was still in a pram, but I knew nothing about the person.

Don't be misled by the title and cover photograph: this is not a book about mountaineering. It is a nostalgic autobiography of a childhood in the 1930s, spent on the slopes of Three Rock Mountain, exploring and having the sorts of adventures that the current generation of children are so cruelly denied. There is nothing unusual in any of it, but it becomes clear that this highly intelligent child has more of an interest in the natural world than most, and that the detail of his early life is described with the level of clarity only available to the elderly.

Recollections of his education, the Emergency (World War II to me), early love and architectural studies

follow, somewhat disjointedly, but they are never dull. It is page 113 before mountaineering appears, when he joins the newly formed Irish Mountaineering Club and, soon after, loses two of his mentors and friends, who are killed in the Alps.

His cycle around the northern half of Ireland from Achill to Newry is a practice run for the highlight (for me) of the book, where he pedals across the empty roads of a Europe still on its knees after the war, from London to Paris to Switzerland to Florence and eventually to Rome. He has little money, and sometimes none, staying in hostels or seeking free board with bodies as diverse as the Catholic Church and the Communist Party. This is more than tourism, as he

seeks to expand his knowledge of his chosen profession by viewing and sketching the great buildings of Europe.

Mountaineering makes another brief appearance with his first visit to the Alps and a romantic trip to Glenbrittle (of all places) and the book finishes with his honeymoon in Connemara.

Little about mountaineering then, but an entertaining read about the extraordinary life of an ordinary person, a tonic after the current trend of biographies detailing the tedious trivia of the celebrity world.

Alan Tees Experienced mountaineer, Secretary of Colmcille Climbers and a past President and board member of Mountaineering Ireland.

Poetic, photographic ramble through Comeragh country



COMERAGH: MOUNTAIN, RIVER, COUM, RUMOUR

By Paddy Dwan & Mark Roper

Whimbrel Press (2018), 176pp, many colour photos, €25.00, ISBN 978-1-909751-93-4

Comeragh is the third collaboration between poet Mark Roper and photographer Paddy Dwan and, with *The River Book* and *The Backstrand*, completes a trilogy of books about the beauty and variety of County Waterford. Here their subject is the Comeraghs, touchstone of so many people from the Déise.

When we think of books, most of us think of them as comprising chapters. Chapters give order and organisation to the writer's thoughts and help to lead the reader through the narrative. Well, this book doesn't have chapters. Instead, on pages 8 and 9, we view a map of the Comeraghs and a figure-of-eight journey through the mountains. This will be our guide, as we follow Mark and Paddy on their travels through mountains, glens and villages.

This book is in essence an eclectic mix of information about Comeragh country, delivered in no particular order except in so far as it relates to the current location of the author on the journey.

Starting in glorious Coumshingaun, they first head south and visit places such as Fascoum, Mahon Falls, Coumtay, Ned Curran's, the Mauma Road, and the Araglin Valley, before turning north to call on Crotty's, the Boolas, Knockanaffrin, the Nire Valley and the Gap.

Paddy's lovely photographs and Mark's poetic writing explore a plethora of diverse topics, such as the Bronze Age

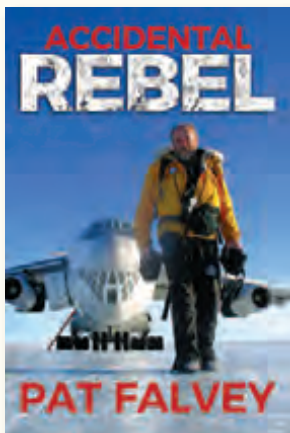
settlement in Coumaraglin, faction fighting, the hardship of sheep farming ('From the moment it's born, a sheep's main ambition is to die!'), Comeragh Gaelic language heritage, the West Waterford Flying Column, birds, flowers, myths, stories and characters like William Crotty and explorer John Palliser.

Comeragh is not meant to be a comprehensive guide to the Comeraghs. The authors wanted this book to be 'a creative artistic engagement with every aspect of the mountains.' It goes a long way to achieving this and as such it should attract both local and national audiences.

The appeal of the book is primarily visual and poetic. If you like great photos of nature and the landscape, you will enjoy it. Ditto if you like poetic writing, e.g., Mark waxing lyrical about the wren: 'Little whirr of bird, in and out of furze, song as strong and old as hills, and heart sung out each time it sings.'

Michael O'Donoghue Experienced hillwalker and a founding member of Rathgormack Ramblers Hillwalking Club, living in Co Waterford

One of our most successful mountaineers



ACCIDENTAL REBEL

By Pat Falvey

Beyond Endurance Publishing (2018),
320pp plus 32pp colour images,
€24.99, ISBN 978-0-9927125-5-6

In this autobiography, Irish mountaineer Pat Falvey writes in some detail about the ups and downs in his life. For a man from the deprived northside of Cork, who made his first million in his early twenties and then lost it again in a recession, and who has completed the Seven Summits twice, that was always going to be a fascinating story. Pat succeeds, I think, in also making this account of his life to date quite personal and revealing in so many ways.

The book is divided into seven main parts. After the first part, which looks at Pat's formative years, the other parts look at his mountaineering and adventuring years. That first part is interesting in showing where the man, who has enjoyed the success that Pat has in mountaineering terms, came from. His formative years gave him the determination that helped him to succeed on many of the climbs he attempted later. However, that first part also reveals his vulnerability, which strangely enough



Pat Falvey, right, and Clare O'Leary on the summit of Mount Everest on May 18th, 2004. It was Pat's second ascent.

actually brings him to mountaineering.

After his first climb on Mangerton in 1986, Pat gets hooked on hillwalking and heads up Carrauntoohil on his next free weekend. Never a man for half measures, at the age of twenty-nine on the 1,038m summit, Pat declares that he is going to climb Everest. His initial attraction to mountains seems almost a spiritual awakening and becomes a passion that drives him on in the subsequent years, as he follows up on that promise. Climbing and training with other Irish climbers takes him to Scotland winter climbing and the Alps, including an ascent of the Eiger in winter, before he gets a chance to attempt Ama Dablam in Nepal's Himalaya in 1991. Five years after climbing Mangerton, he feels he has served his apprenticeship.

The next part of the book deals with his first successful completion of the Seven Summits, including his first ascent of Everest from Tibet, in 1995. Ascents of Denali in 1994 and Kilimanjaro in 1995 are followed by that first ascent of Everest, when he proudly raises the Irish tricolour on the summit. The

descent is not without problems but he is already planning his ascent of Aconcagua later that year. Ascents of Elbrus, Vinson and Kosciuszko follow to complete his first round of the Seven Summits.

Pat's success makes him reflect on his life and he decides to devote it to adventuring. An ascent of Cho Oyu in 1998 follows, the first Irish ascent of an 8,000m peak without supplementary oxygen. He succeeds on Ama Dablam and then has two more attempts at Everest before he climbs it from the Nepal side with Dr Clare O'Leary, the first Irish woman to climb Everest. Then he sets off with Clare to complete the Seven Summits again. At this stage it is a fast-paced book, as he completes one of the ultimate tick lists for a second time!

After that, aged fifty, he takes up the challenge of polar exploration, heading first to the South Pole, which he reaches in 2009, and then turning his attention to the North Pole.

The book is a rapid run through the successes and occasional failures Pat has had on mountains around the world and in the polar



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

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regions. He reflects throughout the book on the pressure that lifestyle puts on his personal life, including the impact of the losses of various climbing companions and friends. Ger McDonnell's death on K2 particularly seems to cause him distress and to consider his lifestyle. It ends with a decision that, in his sixties, he should step back from that high-pressure lifestyle.

I certainly enjoyed reading this book, which does give some very personal insights into the life of one of Ireland's most successful mountaineers. It also gives a good overview of the problems that can be encountered climbing in the greater ranges and travelling in the polar regions.

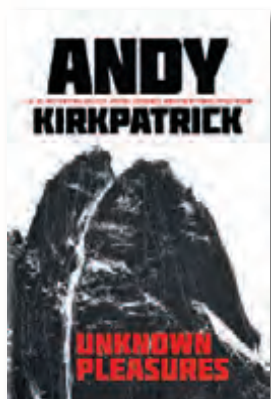
Patrick O'Sullivan Editor, *Irish Mountain Log*



Pat Falvey, right, and Clare O'Leary at 90 degrees North on their trip to the North Pole.



A highly entertaining, thought-provoking autobiography



UNKNOWN PLEASURES

By Andy Kirkpatrick

Vertebrate Publishing (2018), 232pp, some illustrations, £24.00, ISBN 978-1-911342-72-4

This book is the third instalment of British climber Andy Kirkpatrick's explorations of life and climbing. He is known as a specialist in hard, big-wall aid-climbing and winter routes, and his approach is masochistic. Here,

thankfully, he spares the reader the technical machinations of such endeavours, preferring to focus on himself, life, people and society, anchoring all to situations he has found himself in, on and off the hill, both as a boy, young adult and now middle-aged man. The results are frank, funny and often insightful.

Challenged by poverty, dyslexia and growing up in a broken home in the north of England, we get a picture of a young man keen to improve his lot in life. Drawing and climbing provide avenues for escape and he embraces both. One poignant story recalls him as a teenager shoplifting for cheese, not out of hunger but for the sense of hope the opportunity presents – hope that the future may be better. Climbing achievement follows, with difficult ascents and attempts made on the Dru, Troll Wall and

El Capitan, amongst others.

In 'Broken,' Kirkpatrick delivers an outstanding account of a winter ascent of the Frendo Spur, and the changes and fortunes it wrought on him and his climbing partner. Uncomfortable subjects are tackled, such as the damaging effects of marriage breakdown, for him and his ex-wife; the meeting of a long-lost brother; and his views on abortion, relative to those of his peers. Darkness doesn't always prevail – the tome is well balanced. From a low ebb he finds love again, unexpectedly, in a new partner, Vanessa, and life begins again.

Colourful, extraneous sections follow, such as his encounter with Chongo, the oddball in Yosemite; or musings on Russian anti-tank mine dogs; B-29 bombers; or propaganda in contemporary

media. On the subject of media, separately he gives a neat exposé on journalists' and pretentious climbers' ignorance and fascination with Everest and mountaineering in general. Importantly, Kirkpatrick's personality and integrity shines throughout the text and his ability to observe and analyse is obvious. Above all, he is a storyteller.

The production quality of the book is high and the author's illustrations – gritty etchings – enhance the text. One minor gripe is the marked use of slang, but I would direct this point to many writers and their sub-editors, for greater vigilance.

The verdict? This is a good book. Read it, think a little and enjoy it.

Gerry Galligan Experienced mountaineer, a member of the Irish Mountaineering Club and author of *Climbing Ramabang*

Accomplished mountaineer reflects on his life and climbs



NO EASY WAY: THE CHALLENGING LIFE OF THE CLIMBING TAXMAN

By Mick Fowler

Vertebrate Publishing (2018), 241pp, 16pp colour photos, £14.95, ISBN 978-1-911342-75-5

The high points of Mick Fowler's climbing life are impressive – many pioneering

first ascents in Scotland and the Himalaya; being awarded the Piolet d'Or three times; being voted the Mountaineer's Mountaineer; and so on – and this book shows us a man who is determined to do his best in the world of mountaineering.

"It's all very difficult, this business of getting the most out of life," says Fowler, but he manages it. A career civil servant all his working life, with a wife and family, like many of us he has had to manage his time carefully. He spends his weekends climbing in Scotland and uses his annual holidays to fit in challenging first ascents in the Greater Ranges. This book describes some of those trips, treks through remote areas and climbs which tested him physically

and mentally. Despite his time constraints, he gets to places explored by few from the West.

Mick Fowler picks mountains with quality (unclimbed, remote, eye-catching lines to the summit and technically challenging), in new places that inspire him. He enjoys the uncertainty of adventure and arranges expeditions on a do-it-yourself basis.

To succeed, he keeps fit by climbing and fell-running. He has been President of the Alpine Club and he lectures widely. Visiting Ireland is special, he says, and he maintains a work-life balance by squeezing in a visit to the tax office in Belfast alongside his lectures here.

There are brief asides, discussing the balance

between adventure and foolhardiness, or querying why some climbers use what he considers unethical techniques. "It's all very complicated, this ethics business," he says.

Fowler retired from the day job last year. There are challenges ahead, not all mountaineering, but, as he says, "Optimism is important."

I recommend this book highly to anyone who enjoys adventure. The photos are excellent and demonstrate why Fowler chose to climb certain mountains. He tells his life story passionately, as a man who clearly enjoys his hobby.

Nicky Hore Hillwalker, a member of Blayney Ramblers and a board member of Mountaineering Ireland

Selection of women's adventure writing and art



WAYMAKING: AN ANTHOLOGY OF WOMEN'S ADVENTURE WRITING, POETRY AND ART

Edited by Helen Mort, Claire Carter, Heather Dawe & Camilla Barnard

Vertebrate Publishign (2018), 280pp, many illustrations, £17.99, ISBN 978-1-910240-75-5

This is an exciting anthology of works by fifty-six female writers, comprising essays, poetry and art. The editors' wish is to encourage women to express what a woman's narrative of wild adventure would look like so we can hear voices that are not usually heard above the, at times, clichéd stories of men conquering mountains and other wild places.

The essays, poems and pictures all illustrate personal adventures. The stories sweep across the globe and a dip into the book can bring you to the Mourne Mountains, the Antarctic, Alaska, the English

Lake District, Nepal and a variety of places in between. You will find women travelling alone, others preferring company, women attempting a variety of challenges, expressing their love of the wild, all of them on physical and emotional journeys.

In Tara Kramer's essay *Lost in the Light*, she questions why she would live for two months with four people on a glacier in West Antarctica and describes the harsh landscape's effect on her. In the end, she proclaims: "Here, I breathe."

Solana Joy left Alaska at fifteen and lived in many places before finding the English Lake District where she could finally "feel like myself." *A Child in These Hills* describes her love of nature, where she feels it should be enough to just be in it - why do we have to go out and conquer it?

The poetry is given as central a position as the prose in this anthology, a brave decision by the publishers. The four sections of the anthology are bookended by excerpts from Cath Drake's *Snapshots from the Camino de Santiago*. Her observations and humour will resonate with many Irish Camino walkers:

*"Can I walk with you?
He laughs: too many miles to make
To wait for me."*

In Joanna Croston's poem *Falling*, she describes the moments after a simple slip

while climbing, which bring thoughts of falling in or out of love:

*"A single breath late
my mind
strangely calm
my body fighting
I thought of the good man
I was leaving
falling out of love
after all this time."*

day in the Peak District, *First Peak*:

A Response to Climber.

As Lizzie Dalton remarks about her imaginative pen and paint image *Titcomb Basin*: "The mountains hold some kind of innate power."

So, what is this female relationship with nature? Like all female experiences,

Steph Davis climbing at Moab, Utah, by Krystle Wright



There is some fabulous (and humorous) art depicted throughout the book, with a note by each artist explaining the origin of the work.

Nikki Frumkin's colourful *Enchantment Larches* captures the splendour of a winter sunset, the painting and artist having survived a long trek through the mountains.

Climber, a drawing by Hazel Barnard of her daughter Camilla evokes the physical and emotional exertions of climbing, and is accompanied by Camilla's memory of that

it is simply a human one, as this anthology demonstrates. However, I also think that there is something in this eclectic book that an all-male anthology would not possess. Women have their own means of waymaking, finding their way despite the difficulties.

Rita Connell Hillwalker, Secretary of Blayney Ramblers, a committee member of Women With Altitude and past Honorary Secretary of Mountaineering Council of Ireland (now Mountaineering Ireland)

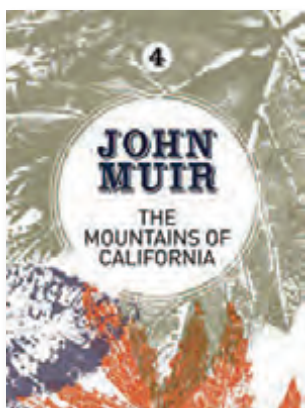


Enchantment Larches, by Nikki Frumkin



Titcomb Basin, by Lizzie Dalton

The first of John Muir's classics is republished



THE MOUNTAINS OF CALIFORNIA

By John Muir

Vertebrate Press (2018), Kindle, 161pp, ISBN 151 206 8012, £2.63; paperback, 190pp, £9.99, ISBN 978-1-84889-305-4

The works of John Muir (1838-1914) are being republished by Vertebrate Press as digital e-books on Kindle, which are being made available via Amazon, and as paperbacks. The first in the series is Muir's very first book, *The Mountains of California*.

English mountaineer, academic and Muir authority Terry Gifford introduces the

series by suggesting there has never been a time when mankind more needed to tune into nature. The words of Muir might help in this respect, he added.

Writing more than a century ago, Muir noted: "Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilised people are beginning to find that going to the mountains is going home." That sentiment, which I'm sure we all empathise with, is often reflected in articles in the *Irish Mountain Log* which recognise the restorative aspects of outdoor sports.

Muir pioneered the concept of establishing national parks for recreation, for the protection of nature and to preserve the natural environment for generations to come. He founded the national conservation movement in the US, including the Sierra Club, which is still a major force in conservation today.

America's first national park, Yosemite, was established in 1890, and Muir is said to have written this



Yosemite, California

book, *The Mountains of California*, for the supporters of that first national park.

In this book, first published in 1894, Muir shows his skills as a scientific observer of nature: he writes eloquent descriptions of the flora and fauna found in the Sierra Nevada and describes in detail the glacial origins of the Yosemite valley, previously held to have been formed by a collapse along a fault.

Muir also highlights the fact that glaciers were retreating and describes the extent of glacial recession in the Sierra Nevada. In explaining the changes, he cites John Tyndall, the 19th-century

Oxford physicist from Carlow who discovered the greenhouse effect, i.e., global warming caused by carbon dioxide gas (from burning fossil fuels) trapped in the Earth's lower atmosphere. Muir may have been ahead of the pack in recognising that climate change was already happening, even as far back as the 1890s.

Republishing these important and timeless books by John Muir in a very affordable format will hopefully make them accessible to a whole new generation of mountain-goers.

Patrick O'Sullivan Editor, *Irish Mountain Log*



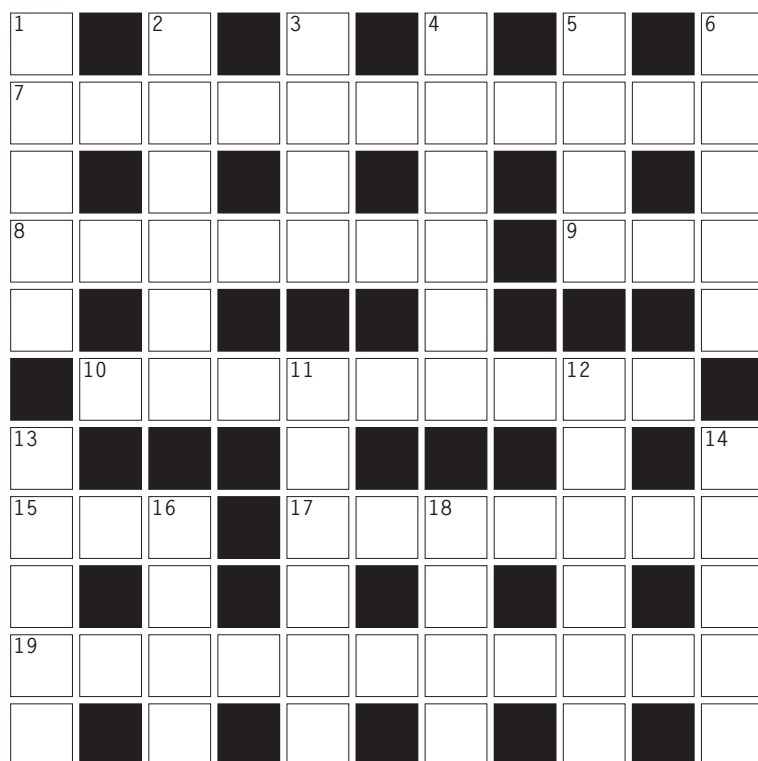
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Christmas competition

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CROSSWORD compiled by COLIN MACLOCHLAINN



Clues Across

- 7 The list of hills over 1,000 feet in height in the Lake District named after a local guidebook author (11).
- 8 Footwear for snow and ice conditions (7).
- 9 See 15 across.
- 10 A close-fitting cap covering the head and neck, often worn by hillwalkers in very cold weather (9).
- 15 and 9 across: an aid used in snow and ice climbing (3,3).
- 17 A crack, could be in a glacier (7).
- 19 Mountain routes with fixed ladders and cables (3,8).

Clues Down

- 1 A high mountain pass in Wales (5).
- 2 Albanian capital (6).
- 3 To make an exchange or substitute one thing for another (4).
- 4 First name of French climber who made first ascent of Makalu (6).
- 5 A command to a horse to halt (4).
- 6 Ski resort town in the Rockies (5).
- 11 The Great English king who saw off the Vikings (6).
- 12 Arched structures or large caves, may be underground (6).
- 13 A place to spend the night in the mountains in an emergency (5).
- 14 Birds found on some people's Christmas table (5).
- 16 Internet site for offering goods for sale (4).
- 18 What you might do on the internet or find breaking on the shore (4).



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Cut out this page or photocopy it and send your completed entry to The Editor, *Irish Mountain Log*, Mountaineering Ireland, Irish Sport HQ, National Sports Campus, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15, to arrive not later than Friday, January 18th 2019. Don't forget to include your full **name, address and membership number** with your entry as well as a **telephone number** or **email address** where you can be contacted. The winner will be announced in the Spring 2019 issue of the *Irish Mountain Log*.

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Basecamp Outdoor Store, Dublin and Kilkenny
Website: www.basecamp.ie

Uel Hamilton

A valued member of many Derry groups

Samuel 'Uel' Hamilton sadly passed away in Altnagelvin Hospital in Derry at the beginning of August, 2018, after a long illness. He was 72 years old.

Uel was born in April 1946, one of a set of twin boys. Both of his parents were natives of Donegal and he was reared on Derry's Cityside. After he left school, Uel worked there as a glazier for many years.

Initially much involved in the Boy Scouts, Uel Hamilton eventually realised that his main interest was mountaineering. He formed a group, **Strand Mountaineering Team**, within his scout group, the main purpose of which was to provide training in climbing and mountaineering to other scout groups. Strand Presbyterian Church in Derry/Londonderry thus became probably the only such institution in Ireland to have its own mountaineering club!

In 1980, an embryonic **North West Mountain Rescue Team** (NWMRT) was formed. Uel was one of the main players involved in setting up the team. While others, including myself, drifted off due to the level of commitment required, he stayed with the team right through its development and to the present day. Uel served a term as President of the NWMRT, and the team has a property in Fermanagh, which they named after him:

Hamilton House.

It was also partly due to Uel Hamilton that Derry was well ahead of the pack in building its first indoor climbing wall.

The ongoing tragedy of suicides in the River Foyle led to the formation of the **Foyle Search and Rescue Team** in 1993, and Uel became involved in it in 1996. He was again at the forefront of its development and was one of its longest-serving volunteers.



It is now a well-trained, well-resourced, highly committed and valued operation, which saves many lives each year.

A community man, Uel was a church elder and a valued member of many organisations in Derry.

Uel Hamilton was active on the local crags in Derry in the late 1970s and early 1980s. He was one of my earliest climbing partners, a modest individual of huge integrity and resourcefulness. Uel's opinion (quite often the last volunteered) was always worth

listening to and was, more often than not, the one adopted. I have always said that, if I was unfortunate enough to be in a really tight situation, there were few I would rather have with me than Uel Hamilton.

Uel is survived by his wife Anne, their daughter Lisa and their son Stuart.

May he rest in peace.

Alan Tees

Samuel 'Uel' Hamilton: born April 13th 1946; died August 4th 2018



Uel Hamilton on Tower Ridge, Errigal, Co Donegal, in 1980

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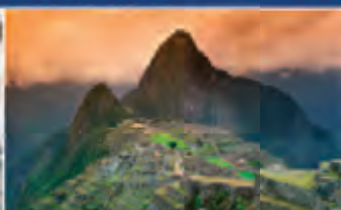
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