

Irish Mountain Log

HILLWALKING • CLIMBING • MOUNTAINEERING

New hopes for outdoor recreation

State advisory body receives new mandate

Cork county high point

Knockboy: a hill steeped in history



www.mountaineering.ie



The mountains creek.

*Shoulder your Cerro Torre
Breathe in. Buckle up.
Zip, clip, adjust.*

*Listen for the horizon
Silence beckons you forward.*

*Brace yourself.
This is The Carry Moment™
Breathe out, and go.*



**MOVE
YOUR
WORLD**

NEW CERRO TORRE

Move through isolated wilderness carrying everything you need to survive in the Cerro Torre. A serious load carrier for self-sufficient trekking and expeditions - the most advanced carry system we have ever built. The Cerro Torre: designed to move your world.

lowealpine.com

COME & ENJOY THE DIVERSITY OF SPAIN

UNFORGETTABLE HILL WALKING TOURS IN UNDISCOVERED SPAIN

**|| Picos de Europa || Montañas de Riaño & León || The Pyrenees Ordesa & Monte Perdido ||
|| Sierra Gredos, Monfrague & Salamanca || Alpujarra & Granada ||**

www.rumboapicos.com/en/

Ireland contact (+353) 87 2248694 email: kevin@rumboapicos.com



Welcome

Céad míle fáilte! There is a chill in the air and the leaves are turning yellow and red and brown, so autumn is truly here! Generally, however, it has been a good year so far for getting out and about, so we must not complain.

* * * * *

After the fourth deadliest season ever on Everest with eleven deaths, climbers and guiding companies have called for changes in the way the government of Nepal issues permits to climb the mountain. The large numbers climbing the mountain and the inexperience of some climbers, and of some of the trekking companies, were blamed for the high death toll in the latest pre-monsoon season.

A group established to look at the matter has recommended increasing the experience required for climbers to be issued with a permit, and for trekking companies to be allowed to guide climbers on the mountain.

However, reducing visitor numbers will have an economic impact on the mountain communities, trekking companies and the government, so it remains to be seen if the recommendations will be implemented.



New restrictions are being sought on the numbers attempting Everest each year

It can only be hoped that they are, so as to reduce the number of avoidable deaths on the mountain each year.

Given the issues it has around commercial expeditions to Mount Everest, Mountaineering Ireland's policy is that it would be better for climbers to attempt a less popular 8,000m peak – or maybe one of the many unclimbed 6,000m peaks in the region – than to add to the increasing numbers attempting Everest each year and contributing to the environmental issues there.

However, as the highest summit in the world, Everest is always going to have an attraction for mountaineers.

* * * * *

I hope that we will all be able to take advantage of the reasonable weather, while it is still with us, to safely enjoy the Irish uplands in the coming weeks.

Patrick O'Sullivan, Editor

ISSUE 131

The *Irish Mountain Log* is the membership magazine of Mountaineering Ireland. The organisation promotes the interests of hillwalkers and climbers in Ireland.

Mountaineering Ireland

Mountaineering Ireland Ltd is a company limited by guarantee and registered in Dublin, No 199053.

Registered office: Irish Sport HQ, National Sports Campus, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15, Ireland.
Tel: (+353 1) 625 1115
Fax: (+353 1) 625 1116
info@mountaineering.ie
www.mountaineering.ie

Hot Rock Climbing Wall

Tollymore Mountain Centre
Bryansford, Newcastle
County Down, BT33 OPT
Tel: (+44 28) 4372 5354
youth@mountaineering.ie

Editor: Patrick O'Sullivan

Tel: (+353 1) 837 8166 (pm, wknds)
iml-editor@mountaineering.ie

Literary Editor: Peter O'Neill

iml-literaryeditor@mountaineering.ie

The *Irish Mountain Log* is published by Mountaineering Ireland four times a year, in March, June, September, December. The material published in the *Log* by the voluntary editorial team and contributors must not be taken as official Mountaineering Ireland policy unless specifically stated.

Copy deadline for the Winter 2019 issue of the *Irish Mountain Log* is: Friday, November 1st 2019.

Advertising: info@mountaineering.ie

Production: Cólín MacLochláinn, environs@iol.ie

Printing: GPS Colour Graphics Ltd, Alexander Road, Belfast BT6 9HP
Tel: +44 (0)28 9070 2020

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.



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

Hillwalking on Binn Chaonaigh in the Maamturks, Co Galway, with Binn Idir An Dá Log in the background

PHOTOGRAPH
HELEN LAWLESS

CONTENTS Autumn 2019

A tor (rock outcrop) in Coumshingaun in the Comeraghs. See story, page 34

News

- 5 Funding for Women in Sport programme renewed**
Ruth Whelan reports
- 6 New club membership fees set**
Murrough McDonagh reports
- 7 Hillwalking Development Officer appointed**
Patrick O'Sullivan reports
- 8 New mandate for Comhairle na Tuaithe**
Helen Lawless reports
- 8 Photo posts for Clare trails**
- 10 Three Kerry peninsulas hike completed**
- 11 Tipperary Suir Blueway officially opened**
- 12 Henry's Cottage: new club hut in the Mournes**
By Vicky Ward
- 13 Path repairs planned for Croagh Patrick**
Helen Lawless reports
- 13 New advice for visitors to Cuilcagh Mountain**
Helen Lawless reports

- 14 Irish project in contention for UIAA award**
Patrick O'Sullivan reports
- 15 'Protect Our Winters' campaign grows**
Graeme Glennon reports
- 16 Women in Sport Co-ordinator post advertised**
By Murrough McDonagh
- 16 Autumn Gathering in the Comeraghs**
- 16 Club support meetings**
- 17 Sir Chris Bonington to deliver Lynam Lecture**
- 18 Nepal Ireland Day celebrated in style**
Patrick O'Sullivan reports
- 19 New access rules proposed for Mount Everest**

News Features

- 20 Walking in Lanzarote**
By Liam Roche
- 22 Nutrition and hydration**
Jane Leonard provides some tips
- 25 The refuge that married a wall**
By Margaret Tees

Climbing

- 26 Youth Trad Climbing Camps**
Damien O'Sullivan reports
- 28 Burren Climbing Meet 2019**
Damien O'Sullivan reports
- 29 Competitions table**
By Damien O'Sullivan

Features

- 30 Quiet mountain**
By Don Baldwin
- 34 Jewel of the Comeraghs**
By Margaret Flanagan

- 38 Can Coronation Plantation be saved?**
By C  il  n MacLochlainn
- 42 Hanging out on Hekla**
By Michael Guilfoyle
- 44 North Wollo Highlands trek**
By Margaret O'Mahony
- 48 Bears walk in Ethiopia**
By Marian Wallis
- 52 No country for old men**
By Jack Bergin

Regulars

- 24 Crossword Competition**
- 56 Training**
Jane Carney reports
- 60 Good Practice Guides (No 5)**
By John Harrison
- 62 Books**
Reviews of recent books
- 66 The Last Word**
Gerry Walker



Traditional costume at Nepal Ireland Day



Top rope belaying at Suas Climbing Centre, Limerick

60 GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE No 5

Staff & Board

GENERAL ENQUIRIES

info@mountaineering.ie

STAFF

Chief Executive Officer

Murrough McDonagh,
murrough@mountaineering.ie

Administration Officer

Siobhán Quinn, info@mountaineering.ie

Hillwalking Development Officer

Ruth Whelan, ruth@mountaineering.ie

Access & Conservation Officer

Helen Lawless, helen@mountaineering.ie

Training Officer

Jane Carney, jane@mountaineering.ie

Training Office Administrator

Laura Griffin, laura@mountaineering.ie

Climbing Officer

Damien O'Sullivan,
damien@mountaineering.ie

Youth Development Officer for Northern Ireland

Kevin Kilroy, kevin@mountaineering.ie

Project Coordinator, Indoor

Climbing/Social Inclusion Project

Natasza Berowska,
natasza@mountaineering.ie

GET IRELAND WALKING INITIATIVE

Programme Manager, Get Ireland Walking

Jason King, jason@getirelandwalking.ie

MOUNTAINEERING IRELAND

BOARD OFFICERS

President

Paul Kellagher
president@mountaineering.ie

Chairperson

Paul Barron
chairperson@mountaineering.ie

BOARD MEMBERS

Imelda Buckley
(Chair of Finance, Audit & Risk Committee)
imelda-board@mountaineering.ie

Helen Donoghue
(Chair of Access & Conservation Committee)
helen-board@mountaineering.ie

Trish Kane
trish-board@mountaineering.ie

Colette Mahon
colette-board@mountaineering.ie

Michael Maunsell
mike-board@mountaineering.ie

Gráinne McLaughlin
(Chair of Hillwalking Committee)
grainne-board@mountaineering.ie

Clare O'Connor
clare-board@mountaineering.ie

Dawson Stelfox
(Chair of Mountain Training Board Ireland)
dawson-board@mountaineering.ie

Geoff Thomas
(Chair of Climbing Committee)
geoff-board@mountaineering.ie

Newsdesk



Participants at Women With Altitude event in Connemara in May 2019 enjoying a day in the hills

Funding for Women in Sport programme renewed

Mountaineering Ireland receives €50,000 Women in Sport Funding

By Ruth Whelan

Mountaineering Ireland was delighted to be named as one of the National Governing Bodies selected to receive support in the latest round of **Women in Sport Funding** from **Sport Ireland**.

This funding will help the existing **Women in Sport programmes** within Mountaineering Ireland to progress, as well as enabling the introduction of new programmes over the next two years. These programmes will help deliver Mountaineering Ireland's goals with regards to female participation as identified in the current strategic plan, which was launched last year.

Mountaineering Ireland's Strategic Plan 2018-2021 links the Women in Sport programmes with the four pillars outlined by Sport Ireland in its Women in Sport policy: Coaching and Officiating, Active Participation, Leadership and Governance, and Visibility.

■ Coaching and Officiating

Broaden the coaching base to include more women from grassroots to high performance. Increase the number of

women officiating.

■ Active Participation

Significantly reduce the active sport participation gradient between men and women. Reduce the drop-out from physical activity and sport in young girls. Engage with women of a minority background.

■ Leadership and Governance

Progress towards greater gender balance in board membership of funded bodies. Provide a pathway for women aspiring to become leaders of funded bodies.

■ Visibility

Increase the visibility and profile of our female role models in sport. Use the heroes of today to inspire the next generation of future Olympians and Paralympians.

Mountaineering Ireland's CEO **Murrough McDonagh** would like to thank **Sport Ireland** and **Government Ministers Brendan Griffin** and **Shane Ross** for their investment in increasing and supporting female participation in hillwalking and climbing throughout the island of Ireland ■

New club membership fees set

Here below are Mountaineering Ireland's new club membership fees for the 2019/2020 season:



By Murrough McDonagh

Following a motion passed at the Mountaineering Ireland AGM on March 30th, 2019, the new **annual club membership fee** of Mountaineering Ireland will be set at **€35.00** for all club members, commencing on November 1st, 2019 for the upcoming club year (November 1st, 2019, to October 31st, 2020).

Discounts

There are two discounted

rates for young people – firstly for club members aged **under 23** years of age, who are discounted to **€20.50** each; and secondly, where club members are under 23 years of age and are **sons or daughters of registered members** of their club, a special discounted rate of **€7.60** each applies for their club membership annually.

Apart from these two discounted rates for young people, the fee for all other Mountaineering Ireland club members is set at **€35.00** each.

Mountaineering Ireland will shortly be reviewing the membership fees for individual members.

Discontinued discounts

The discounts for **early payment** and for **clubs with over 200 members** have been discontinued.

The new club membership fee of €35.00 covers all of our benefits and services, including insurance and the *Irish Mountain Log*. It will no longer be possible for members to pay a lower fee by opting out of particular benefits or services.

New clubs, new members

Clubs joining Mountaineering Ireland for the first time can continue to affiliate before the new membership year starts, from September 1st onwards, getting up to fourteen months' membership for the price of twelve months.

The same arrangement applies for existing clubs registering newly-joined members at that time of the year. However, in both of these situations the new fee of €35.00 per member will apply from September 1st, 2019.

November 1st renewal date

It is important to have all clubs affiliated on or before the November 1st renewal date to ensure that all club members are covered under Mountaineering Ireland's insurance policy.

Benefits of membership

The club membership fee increase has been necessary in order to help Mountaineering Ireland to:

- Deliver our Strategic Plan's aims for 2018-2021,

as mandated by our membership in 2018

- Continue lobbying for improved and assured access for responsible hillwalkers and climbers
- Strengthen our support for clubs and hillwalkers by establishing a new Hillwalking Committee and ensuring that we have a full-time Hillwalking Development Officer
- Strive to ensure that mountain landscapes are valued and protected
- Work with other relevant organisations to tackle upland path erosion
- Develop and promote formal and informal training to meet the needs of hillwalkers and climbers
- Encourage young people to participate in all aspects of mountaineering
- Continue to ensure we get the highest level of benefits in our insurance policy at competitive rates
- Offer an annual suite of membership events (Gatherings, Winter Lectures, Meets, Environmental Workshops, Lynam Lecture, Coaching and Training events and Club Development initiatives).

Paying in sterling

The fee for those wishing to pay in sterling will be set by reference to the euro/sterling exchange rate in September annually and also possibly reviewed pending developments in Brexit ■

To all of our members: thank you. We appreciate your continued support

Books, guides and maps to meet all your needs...

Mountaineering Ireland continues to provide the book service previously operated by Joss Lynam. We can supply you with guidebooks and maps to almost any part of the world. For the walker, there is a large collection of Cicerone guides and books, or the wider selection of books and guides distributed by Cordee which also includes many climbing guides. Books reviewed in the *Irish Mountain Log* can usually be purchased through Joss Books with a members' discount. To place an order, ring the Mountaineering Ireland office on (01) 6251115 or email info@mountaineering.ie.

Joss Books

Hillwalking Development Officer appointed

Mountaineering Ireland appoints Ruth Whelan to post of Hillwalking Development Officer



By Patrick O'Sullivan

At the Mountaineering Ireland AGM in 2018, a motion was approved to establish a Hillwalking Committee. A working group was subsequently established to develop draft terms of reference and an initial work plan for the new committee, which was approved by the Board of Mountaineering Ireland.

The new Hillwalking Committee was set up in March 2019. In order to best utilise staff resources, it was agreed to align current staffing structures more closely to the five strategic pillars in our current Strategic Plan 2018-2021. To coincide with the restructuring of the Talent Development Officer's role to Climbing Officer, it was decided to restructure the Membership Development Officer's role, to focus solely on supporting and developing hillwalking, hillwalking membership and clubs.

Ruth Whelan started working for Mountaineering Ireland over five years ago, after obtaining a first class honours degree in sports management and an MSc in graduate research at the School of Public Health and Population Science in UCD.

Ruth has worked on many projects and has coordinated many Gatherings, events and workshops for Mountaineering Ireland. Her role has evolved over the years and, to date, she has had two main areas of responsibility: firstly, to increase membership of both climbers and hillwalkers, and secondly, to

support all members by organising and coordinating services, Gatherings and events to meet the needs of the members, while supporting the development of new and existing clubs.

In order to align Ruth's role with the current strategic objectives, she will continue to be responsible for the above tasks, but her role will be solely focused on developing hillwalking and supporting hillwalking members as the new Hillwalking Development Officer for Mountaineering Ireland.

Commenting on this new position, Mountaineering Ireland CEO **Murrough McDonagh** said: "I welcome Ruth to this new and exciting role. Given her experience and especially her work in recent years on the steering group for our current Strategic Plan, on the Hillwalking Working Group and in her role as secretary to the Hillwalking Committee, it was evident that she was the right person for the role of Hillwalking Development Officer.

"This, coupled with her vast understanding of Mountaineering Ireland, our clubs, our purpose, values and vision, together with her close working relationship with our clubs and members, means Ruth has all the credentials and experience to excel and help drive this new role forward and help support the work of the new Hillwalking Committee."

When Ruth first made the big move to Dublin in the early 2000s she joined a few colleagues to raise some money for charity by completing the Four Peaks Challenge, which cemented her love for the mountains and the companionship, remoteness and tranquillity hillwalking offers.

Her main areas for hillwalking these days are around Wicklow and the Comeragh Mountains.

She climbed Kilimanjaro many years ago and has walked and climbed in the mountains of the French, Italian and Austrian Alps. Ruth is excited about her new role as Hillwalking Development

Officer and is committed to working with and supporting the hillwalking members of Mountaineering Ireland.

You can contact Ruth Whelan on 087 161 2990 or at ruth@mountaineering.ie ■

Corrections IML 130

It has come to our attention that we made three errors in the previous issue of the *Irish Mountain Log* (IML 130, Summer 2019). Our apologies for any confusion caused. The errors were:

1. The caption on the first photograph on page 50, in the county high points article, described **Slieve Foye** as the County Antrim high point. In fact, it is the **County Louth** high point.
2. In the list of county high points on page 51, **Galtymore** (918m) should have been listed as the high point for counties **Tipperary/Limerick** and not Offaly/Limerick.
3. On page 26, in the dog training article from SARDA, the photographs were credited to author Sheelagh O'Malley's collection. In fact, they were taken by **Edelle Doherty** ■

Crossword results

The winner of our Summer crossword in IML 130 was **Billy Cantillon** from Limerick. Billy won an MSR Elixir 2 tent worth €300.00 from our crossword sponsor, Basecamp. The solution to the crossword is shown below. Mountaineering Ireland will contact the winner to tell him how to arrange to collect his prize from Basecamp.

1	A	R	2	D	E	3	R	I	N	S		4	M	D
	N			U		O					5	A		
	N		6	B	A	P		7	M	A	N		8	B
9	A	I		L		E		A			10	T	O	R
	P		11	I	N	D	I	A	N					O
12	U	R	N					M		13	T	E	A	
	R			14	C	A	N	T	E	R			D	
15	N	U	16	T		W		U		17	A	L	P	
	A		18	I	N	N		19	R	A	S		E	
				N				K		N		A		
21	K	2		22	S	E	A	S	T	A	C	K		



Access & Conservation Officer Helen Lawless paying a site visit to the Binn Shléibhe Mountain Access Area, Clonbur, Co Galway, in 2010, the year Comhairle na Tuaithe established pilot access areas both here and on Carrauntoohil, Co Kerry

New mandate for Comhairle na Tuaithe

By Helen Lawless

Mountaineering Ireland has welcomed the announcement made in June by the **Minister for Rural & Community Development, Michael Ring, TD**, of a new mandate for **Comhairle na Tuaithe** (the Countryside Council), the national advisory body on outdoor recreation.

The new mandate will reinforce and strengthen the advisory role of Comhairle na Tuaithe in relation to the sustainable development of the outdoor recreation sector in Ireland.

Speaking at the announcement, Minister Michael Ring said: "The new mandate provides the Comhairle with the opportunity to contribute to the development of outdoor recreation in a way which benefits rural communities, respects the rights of landowners and allows more people to experience the benefits of our natural capital.

"Outdoor recreation has become increasingly popular for many people as a means of social engagement and of enhancing their physical and mental well-being.

"Outdoor recreational activity also supports local tourism and rural economic development. In 2014, the adventure activity tourism sector was valued at €852 million by **Fáilte Ireland**; it contributed to the direct and indirect employment of 2,125 people."

Dr Liam Twomey was also introduced as the new Chairperson of Comhairle na Tuaithe. Dr Twomey brings valuable experience to his new role, both as a former TD and through his work in general practice.

The rejuvenation of the Comhairle follows the Minister's reflection on a 2016 review of Comhairle na Tuaithe and discussions last year with Comhairle members.

Responding to the announcement, Mountaineering Ireland Chairperson **Paul Barron** said: "It's great to see Comhairle na Tuaithe coming alive again, and especially

good to see the health and well-being benefits of outdoor recreation reflected in the new mandate for it.

"There is an opportunity now for the Department of Rural & Community Development to adopt a leadership and coordination role to ensure that Ireland's outdoor recreation sector evolves in a way that is positive for participants, landowners and local communities, and that is environmentally sustainable."

Mountaineering Ireland has been a member of Comhairle na Tuaithe since the body was established in 2004 and has made an active contribution to the work of the Comhairle, especially in relation to the Comhairle's pilot

Mountain Access Project and the development of a booklet on **access and occupiers' liability**.

The rejuvenated Comhairle na Tuaithe will have responsibility for advising the Minister on a wide range of matters relating to the future development of Ireland's growing outdoor recreation sector. Comhairle na Tuaithe met again in July to agree a clear vision for its work and to develop its work programme.

The Department of Rural & Community Development is also establishing an interdepartmental working group on outdoor recreation as part of its new structures ■

Photo posts for Clare trails



A series of interactive photo posts has recently been installed on walking trails in County Clare. Unlike traditional marker posts, these posts have smartphone holders installed on them.

The project was initiated by **Eoin Hogan**, Clare Rural Recreation Officer. The posts will allow walkers to take

selfies in safe locations. The special marker posts will also allow walkers to take photos of trail conditions and send reports directly back to Eoin Hogan.

Finally, walkers can take scenic photos and upload them automatically to the trails manager's website ■

Hillwalking holidays in the Austrian Tirol and the Italian Dolomites.

Experience a wonderful deluxe hiking holiday in the mountains and valleys the surrounding resort of Madonna di Campiglio, in the heart of the Italian Dolomites.

Enjoy unforgettable hillwalking tours in the beautiful Austrian Tirol resort of Ehrwald! Inspiring scenery and guided hikes will make for a truly unforgettable holiday.

Find out more at topflight.ie

Call 01 240 1753, or email hillwalking@topflight.ie



★★★★ SUPERIOR

Madonna di Campiglio Deluxe Hiking Tour.

Explore scenic mountain trails surrounded by the towering peaks and lush meadows of the Italian Dolomites, one of the most spectacular mountain regions in the world. You will be based in the luxurious 4 star Superior Hotel Cristal Palace, a beautiful alpine-style hotel.

Your Holiday Includes

- ✓ Return flights from Dublin
- ✓ Return transfers by luxury coach
- ✓ 7 nights at the 4 star superior Cristal Palace Hotel, half board
- ✓ 5 days guided walk with local guides
- ✓ Use of hotel wellness and spa facilities
- ✓ 20kg baggage allowance and airport taxes

Prices from €859 per person sharing

Available Dates: 17th or 24th June / 6th, 13th or 20th Sept 2020



Special Early Bird Offer!

€699pps for groups of 15 or more if you book by the end of Dec 2019.

Hillwalking Tour of the Austrian Tirol.

Create unforgettable memories, awaken your sense of adventure and immerse yourself in the epic Alpine landscape of Austria's Tirol with this incredible seven night hillwalking tour.

Your Holiday Includes

- ✓ Return flights from Dublin
- ✓ Return transfers by luxury coach
- ✓ Welcome drink on arrival
- ✓ 7 nights in the Sonnenburg Hotel with breakfast & dinner
- ✓ 5 local guided walks through the Zugspitze Arena
- ✓ A 'Tyrolean Evening' with live music
- ✓ A barbeque evening on one of our terraces
- ✓ Expert Topflight tour manager
- ✓ 20kg baggage allowance and airport taxes

Solo Week - no single room supplement 30th Aug 2020

Prices from €739 per person sharing

Available Dates: 24th or 31st May / 14th, 21st or 28th June
05th or 12th July / 2nd Aug / 6th, 13th or 20th Sept 2020

Exclusive use of the Sonnenburg Hotel for Groups/Clubs

If you have a group size of 30 or more, we would be delighted to book the hotel exclusively for your club. We will tailor make the itinerary for you by including mountain and walking guides, specifically and exclusively for your group, with a choice of routes and hikes to ensure the best experience the Austrian Tirol has to offer.





Late evening on Cnoc na dTobar, overlooking Cahirciveen

Three Kerry peninsulas hike completed

Aidan Ennis, who has previously written in the *Irish Mountain Log* about his separate walks on the three Kerry peninsulas, has now linked those hikes into one grand through-hike of all three peninsulas.

Aidan started his hike on Dursey Island, at the tip of the Beara peninsula, on Saturday, June 1st, 2019. His walk linked the **Beara, Iveragh and Dingle peninsulas** in one continuous 461-kilometre mountain hike. He walked into Dingle on Friday, June 14th, after fourteen days of hiking.

Aidan's hike began at the highest point on Dursey Island. The route that he followed was

an enchainment of the Slieve Miskish, Caha, Shehy, Derrynasaggart, The Paps, Mangerton and the Dunkerron Mountains all the way to Waterville, a section of the three-peninsulas enchainment he calls the **Great Kenmare Horseshoe**.

From Waterville, he hiked along the Kerry Way on a mountain-ridge line which ran over to Knocknadobar (Cnoc na dTobar) above Cahirciveen. He hiked the pilgrim path to the summit before descending to Kells and hiking the Glenbeigh Horseshoe mountains and from there to the Gap of Dunloe.

After celebrating his

birthday with his annual pint of Guinness, Aidan climbed the Reeks ridge to Carrauntoohil and then descended Caher, before crossing to Knockmoyle Mountain on the Dingle peninsula via Killorglin and Castlemaine.

From Knockmoyle, he continued to Caherconree and the Slieve Mish range and then hiked the entire length of the rest of the Dingle peninsula to Brandon Mountain.

From Brandon, he descended to the col and the Arraglen Standing Stone, before climbing the final mountain on the headland, Masatiompan (Más an Tiompáin). He then descended

to a campsite near Gallarus Oratory.

His final day, Friday, June 14th, saw him walking along the peaceful green Saints Road to Ventry, where he had a morning coffee break at the local post office and shop.

The last 6km were on the Dingle Way to Dingle town and the completion of his impressive, continuous 461km **Three Peninsulas Mountain Enchainment Hike**, as he has dubbed it.

Congratulations to Aidan on this achievement. We look forward to publishing a fuller account of his hike in a future issue of the *Irish Mountain Log* ■



His final mountain summit, Mas an Tiompáin, on Brandon headland



Arriving in Dingle after completing the three peninsulas hike



River Suir in Cahir, Co Tipperary

Tipperary Suir Blueway officially opened

Tipperary section of Suir Blueway comprises 53 km of walking, cycling and watersports trails



Tipperary County Council officially launched the **Suir Blueway Tipperary** in May, after almost seven years of planning and implementation. More than €5.6m was invested in developing this recreational resource, which will be an amenity for the local community and a tourist attraction.

The **Suir Blueway (Sli Gorm na Siúire)** runs from Cahir to Clonmel and on to Carrick-on-Suir. It has 53 km of walking, cycling and watersports trails through the beautiful landscapes and bustling heritage towns of Tipperary.

Highlights include the **Butler Trail** and the new whitewater **canoe slalom course** in Clonmel, which is used as a training base for the Irish national squad.

Suir Blueway Tipperary was officially opened in Clonmel by **John Treacy**, Chief Executive of Sport Ireland. "On behalf of Sport Ireland, I am delighted to be here on the banks of the River Suir to officially open the Suir Blueway Tipperary," he said on the day. "This is a wonderful natural amenity, which will provide an excellent base for outdoor activity and recreation for both the local community here in Tipperary as well as visitors from all over Ireland and overseas."

"Sport Ireland places a particular emphasis on supporting activity programmes, such as the Suir Blueway Tipperary, that will continue to support active lifestyles among people of all backgrounds and

circumstances. I would like to congratulate **Tipperary County Council, Tipperary Sports Partnerships** and **Tipperary Tourism** on the development and delivery of this collaborative project."

Visitors can join a guided tour of the world-renowned **Cahir Castle** before strolling or paddling down to the romantic **Swiss Cottage**. The Blueway continues through the picturesque towns of **Ardfinnan** and **Newcastle**, as the River Suir meanders to the historic town of **Clonmel**.

Walkers, cyclists, canoeists, kayakers and paddleboarders can enjoy beautiful scenery as they follow the river for 21 km along the refurbished historic towpath from the Monument Car Park in Clonmel to Sean Healy Park in **Carrick-on-Suir**.

Accomplished paddlers can take on the challenge of the 300-metre canoe slalom course in Clonmel, which was constructed in 2016 as part of the investment in the project ■



Cyclist and walkers on the Suir Blueway - Tipperary

Henry's Cottage: new club hut in Mournes

By Vicky Ward

Belfast Climbing Club is proud to announce that it has been given stewardship of a cottage in an excellent location in the Mournes, just outside Atticall. This will be only the second **Mountaineering Ireland club hut**, and we look forward to inviting any affiliated club to stay soon!

The house belongs to local climber and all-round nice guy **Henry McKee**, who bought it in the 1990s and put an additional storey on it. However, as he hadn't got much use out of it he decided earlier this year to lease it free of charge to the Belfast Climbing Club, as long as the club took care of it and used it to promote climbing.

The cottage was originally called McLaughlin's Cottage and had a thatched roof. After Henry's renovations and our ongoing work we will be renaming it **Henry's Cottage (Teachín Anraí)**.

The cottage is pretty big, with sleeping space for about fifteen people, as well as a flat grass space outside to camp. It has

AUTHOR: Vicky Ward is the Meets Secretary for **Belfast Climbing Club** and has been involved with the club since it started two years ago. She has been a keen hillwalker and climber for many years, having grown up near the Mourne Mountains.

Work done

- Electricity and water reconnected
- Windows replaced
- Walls scraped and repainted

Work to be done

- Bathroom and kitchen
- Painting
- Finishing Alpine bunks

electricity, water, plenty of fireplaces and even a stained glass window. We have many ideas for the space right now and are in the process of redecorating it and doing some carpentry to build brand-new Alpine bunks. We hope to have the cottage ready for other clubs to stay in by the beginning of 2020.

Atticall is in the western Mournes, below the Windy Gap in the Eagle Mountain area. It is a five-minute drive (or a

thirty-minute walk) from the crags at Pigeon Rock, and about a fifteen-minute drive from the Annalong Valley – two of the premier climbing destinations in the Mournes. It is also close to some fantastic walking (see our recommendations alongside).

Right now, there isn't a Mountaineering Ireland hut in the Mournes. We hope that the existence of this amazing wee cottage may encourage some new clubs to venture our way and try some of the treats in the area for the first time.

If you have any questions regarding the cottage, contact belfastclimbingclub@gmail.com.

If you wish to donate any furniture or cooking equipment, etc, we would also be keen to hear from you. We are very excited to start this adventure and hope to be able to share updates with you all as it progresses.

One last note: thanks, Henry! ■

Need reasons to book a club visit to the Mournes? Here are Belfast Climbing Club's top ten recommendations for places to visit near Henry's Cottage:

- The Mourne Wall challenge (the start is ten minutes' drive from the hut)
- Slieve Binnian (ten minutes' drive)
- FM (VD, 4 pitches) (ten minutes' drive and one-hour walk-in)
- Cove and Percy Bysshe Caves (ten minutes' drive and one-hour walk-in)
- The 'bird mountains' – Eagle, Pigeon, Cock and Hen – are all accessible from the cottage
- Climbing in the Annalong Valley (ten minutes' drive, 30-90 minutes' walk-in)
- Ice climbing at Eagle Mountain (from cottage)
- Sport climbing at Altnadue Quarry (twenty minutes' drive)
- Climbing at Pigeon Rock (thirty minutes' walk or ten minutes' drive, plus ten-minute walk-in)
- Silent Valley (ten minutes' drive)



At work on the cottage

Path repairs planned for Croagh Patrick

Planning application submitted for path work and habitat restoration along pilgrim route

A planning application has been submitted for path work and habitat restoration, to enable sustainable access along the pilgrim route on Croagh Patrick in Co Mayo.

This follows a successful trial in October 2018 to identify a methodology for path construction using the small blocks of stone found on the steep summit cone.

The application for planning consent has been submitted by the **Croagh Patrick Stakeholders Group** in partnership with **Mayo County Council** under Part 8 of the Planning & Development

Regulations.

The proposed work will consist of aggregate- and stone-pitched paths, path drainage consisting of culverts, cross-drains and water-bars, fencing for managing access during construction work, together with habitat restoration of eroded areas.

The Croagh Patrick Stakeholders Group is comprised of a broad spectrum of interested parties, including mountain shareholders, the Catholic Church, Murrisk community, Mayo County Council, South West Mayo Development



Trial path work on Croagh Patrick pilgrim route

Company, Mountaineering Ireland, Mayo Mountain Rescue Team, Croagh Patrick Archaeological Society and the tourism and adventure sectors.

The Stakeholders Group, which was formed in 2015, has prioritised efforts to address the erosion on Croagh Patrick

but is also considering other issues related to visitor management at Croagh Patrick.

The Croagh Patrick plans can be viewed in the **Murrisk Development Association** café in the car park at Murrisk; in **Mayo County Council's** offices in Westport and Castlebar; and online at www.mayococo.ie/en/Planning ■

New advice for visitors to Cuilcagh

Environmental awareness day to be held at Cuilcagh Mountain on October 12th

In response to continued erosion from high visitor numbers in the area at the top of the Cuilcagh boardwalk, and between there and the summit plateau, plans are being put in place to manage visitor activity in a way that minimises further damage.

Visitors to the boardwalk (on the County Fermanagh-side approach to **Cuilcagh Mountain**) are kindly asked to keep to the designated path and to remain within the confines of the viewing platform at the top of the boardwalk.

Mountaineering Ireland is asking hillwalkers who want to visit the summit of Cuilcagh to take other routes on the mountain and to avoiding using the Cuilcagh boardwalk, to prevent further environmental damage between the viewing platform

and the stile, and so as not to encourage others onto the fragile summit plateau.

The current platform was created as a short-term measure, and a redesign of this endpoint or destination area is currently being investigated. Line definition and conservation work is also planned for the summit plateau. However, this won't be implemented until next year.

Mountaineering Ireland is planning an **environmental awareness day** at Cuilcagh Mountain, to take place on Saturday, October 12th, in conjunction with the CANN project.* This event is aimed

*The **CANN Project** is a cross-border environmental project, which is working to preserve priority habitats and species at a number of sites across Ireland, Northern Ireland and Scotland, including at Cuilcagh Mountain. CANN is supported by the EU's **INTERREG VA Programme**.



Trampled peat at top of Cuilcagh boardwalk

primarily at **Club Environmental Officers**, but is open to other members interested in understanding Cuilcagh's complex story.

This study visit will provide an insight into the sequence of events that has led to the

current situation, as well as an opportunity to learn about the special features of Cuilcagh's natural environment. Places are limited; so if interested, please email helen@mountaineering.ie ■

Bags of litter collected by Pure Mile volunteers as part of the Pure Project initiative in the Dublin and Wicklow Mountains

Irish project in contention for UIAA award

By Patrick O'Sullivan



This is the seventh year that the **UIAA** has run a competition for its **Mountain Protection Award**. The nominees this year are twelve mountain environmental projects from around the world.

These projects are supported or run by UIAA member associations or by for-profit or non-profit organisations. Most are ongoing and all have a commitment to protecting the mountain environment and engaging climbers and mountaineers as part of that process.

This year's nominees include one Irish candidate, the **PURE Project**. The other nominees are:

■ **University of Colorado**

Sustainable Waste Management in the Sagarmatha National Park, Nepal

■ **Clean Climber**

Clean Climber, worldwide

■ **Fundacion Acceso Andino**

Sustainable Andes, Ecuador

■ **High Altitude Mountain Cleaners**

Ama-Dablam 2020, Nepal

■ **Protect Our Winters Switzerland**

Towards climate-neutral mountaineering, Switzerland

■ **Swiss Alpine Club**

Alpine Learning project weeks, Switzerland

■ **Mujer Montaña**

Construyendo Vidas 2019 Bolivia, Bolivia

■ **Alpine Club of Iran**

Mountain Sports Centre with the approach of Environmental Sustainability by Passive Solar Energy, Iran

■ **Biosphere Expeditions**

Mountain protection worldwide through citizen science and volunteering. Operates worldwide with mountain projects in Kyrgyzstan, Romania, South Africa, Spain, Russia, Oman, Poland

■ **Gandaki Urja**

Converting organic waste to compressed biogas and organic fertilizer, Nepal

■ **PSD Nepal**

PSD Nepal plastics upcycling and recycling in Langtang National Park, Rasuwa, Nepal.

■ **The Pure (Protecting Uplands & Rural Environments) Project**

is an environmental project established in the Wicklow and Dublin uplands to combat the increasing illegal dumping and fly-tipping there. It was officially launched in September 2006. Illegal dumping in the landscape is a cause for serious concern in Ireland and a growing problem for many communities. Dumping is illegal, unsightly and unnecessary, and causes serious problems to habitats, species and human health. It pollutes our watercourses, damages soil nutrients, encroaches on natural habitats, kills insects and animals and is a threat to both the people who live in the area and recreational users.

The **Pure Mile** is an environmental initiative of the Pure Project which aims to foster a greater appreciation and awareness of our country roadscapes and mountains by rewarding and acknowledging community and group efforts. The competition encourages communities and groups living in rural areas to adopt a mile (or more) stretch of road and upland. The objective is to keep these areas litter-free and to research information about the local wild flowers,

trees, wildlife, social and cultural heritage and the history and folklore of the area.

The Pure Mile is a perfect opportunity for communities and groups who want to improve and enhance the areas they live in. A large number of communities go the extra mile by repairing and painting old traditional gates, cleaning up farmlands and entrances, erecting bat and bird boxes, trimming hedges (outside of the bird-nesting season) and much more.

In Pure Miles where very little physical management is required, groups can focus on local research or on initiatives to increase awareness and appreciation of their chosen Mile among the wider community.

In supporting the nomination of the Pure Project for the UIAA Mountain Protection Award, **Mountaineering Ireland** said that the Pure Mile awards have been extremely successful in raising environmental awareness and building community pride across the Wicklow and Dublin Mountains. The achievement of the Pure Project in greatly reducing litter in that area is largely due to the awareness, pride and local action that has been stimulated by the Pure Mile initiative.

The winner of the 2019 Mountain Protection Award will be announced at the UIAA General Assembly in Cyprus on November 2nd ■





The Bossons Glacier in the Chamonix Valley in the 1990s, left, and in 2019, right. The Bossons Glacier is one of the larger glaciers of the Mont Blanc massif in the Alps. It is fed from the icefields lying on the northern side of Mont Blanc and descends down close to the Aiguille du Midi, ending on the southern side of the Arve valley, close to the town of Chamonix. It has the largest altitudinal drop of all the Alpine glaciers in Europe, and formerly extended much further down the valley than it does today. In the 17th century, the Bossons Glacier extended right down into Chamonix, but now it is only approximately 7.5 km long.



‘Protect Our Winters’ campaign grows

By Graeme Glennon

Climate change is one of the biggest threats facing humanity. It is having a global impact and is already affecting many outdoor activities.

Members of the Irish outdoor recreation community spend their free time in natural environments, where they can clearly see the impact of climate change. However, many members of this community, at both an individual and a corporate level, are unsure about what action they can take to mitigate this climate change. **Protect Our Winters** believes that, by getting this community to act, we can drive significant and effective climate action.

Protect Our Winters (POW) UK & IRL exists to accelerate the transition to a carbon-neutral society by inspiring

and equipping communities to take positive action on climate change.

POW UK & IRL engages people and organisations through their outdoors livelihoods and recreational activities, to address climate change. We educate them on the risks of climate change and support them to take effective action.

Whilst POW in the US has traditionally been largely focused on skiers and snowboarders, it is now engaging with other sports with **POW Climb** (see <https://protectourwinters.org/pow-climb>). In the UK and Ireland, we also want to be broader than just skiers and snowboarders and are working to engage the wider outdoor community. In the UK, **Matt Helliker** is an ambassador for POW Climb, whilst in the US we are backed by legendary climbers and mountaineers such as **Tommy Caldwell**.

Over the past twelve months, with the help of the **Patagonia** store in Dublin, we have run various fundraising campaigns and also presented a movie première. Through our strong relationship with Patagonia, we will be hosting more events later this year. (For more info on this, keep an eye on the **Patagonia Dublin** Facebook page).

In the UK, we are an official partner of the **Kendal Mountain Film Festival**, which attracted 30,000 visitors in 2018. We are also the main charity partner of the **Telegraph Ski and Snowboard Show**, which is held at the end of October and attracts over 20,000 visitors.

Although the reality of climate change is stark, there have been some major areas of progress recently – for example, a number of banks have announced they will stop funding high-carbon activities; electric vehicles are on the up; China is rapidly electrifying its bus fleet; and Ireland has become the first country in the world to divest away from fossil fuels. There is still so much more to do!

Finally, pause and remember you are part of something bigger. When you do something, always consider your options and take the environmentally less damaging option in everything you do.

Some examples of this include:

■ TRAVEL

Avoid flying. Take the train or drive, when possible, for longer journeys. For shorter journeys, use your bike, take public transport or just simply walk. If you have to fly or drive, then try to offset your carbon emissions.

■ KIT

Reduce, Re-Use and Recycle whenever you can. Repair rather than replace. When you do replace, give your old kit away or sell it. Don't let it gather dust in the wardrobe.

■ DIET

Try to cut down on meat, and shop locally, whenever you can. You will get the added satisfaction of knowing that your food has been grown locally and that you are supporting the community.

■ RESPECT

Respect the trails and crags you use. Try to leave them as you found them or, even better, try to make them better than you found them

AUTHOR: Graeme Glennon is the Partner Coordinator of **POW UK & IRL**



Follow POW UK & IRL

Website: <https://protectourwinters.uk/join-us>

Instagram: @uk_pow

Facebook: Protect Our Winters UK

Twitter: @uk_protect

Women in Sport Co-ordinator post advertised

Vacancy in Mountaineering Ireland for Women in Sport Co-ordinator

By **Murrough McDonagh**

Mountaineering Ireland is the governing body for hillwalking and climbing throughout the island of Ireland, representing the interests of over 12,500 members. The future of Irish mountaineering is incredibly bright given the steady growth in participation and the increase in affiliated clubs in recent years.

The post of **Mountaineering Ireland – Women in Sport Co-ordinator** is funded by Sport Ireland's Women in Sport initiative.

The Women in Sport initiative is central to the work of Sport Ireland. Since 2005, the Sport Ireland Women in Sport programme has funded a wide range of initiatives delivered by National Governing Bodies and Local Sports Partnerships to

further the agenda of gender equality in sport.

Sport Ireland has now renewed its commitment to women in sport through the development of a Women in Sport policy. This policy will serve as a guide for Sport Ireland's future work and investment in the area.

Role and purpose of Women in Sport Co-ordinator position

Mountaineering Ireland is committed to increasing women's sustained involvement in hillwalking and climbing as coaches, volunteers, club members, officials, leaders and participants, from all levels. The purpose of the role is to project-manage and ensure the implementation of current and future programmes, while developing strong

relationships and providing expertise and support to the current structures in the area of women's hillwalking and climbing.

More information about this post can be found on the Mountaineering Ireland website, www.mountaineering.ie.

How to apply

To apply for this post, a letter of application and full CV should be sent by email to jobs@mountaineering.ie (reference: Mountaineering Ireland – Women in Sport Co-ordinator).

Interviews will be held during the working week starting October 7th, 2019. The closing date for applications is Wednesday, October 2nd, 2019, at 5.00pm ■

Autumn Gathering in the Comeraghs

October 18-20th, 2019



Kilmacthomas Walking Club members are celebrating their club's fifteenth anniversary this year and are hosting the **Mountaineering Ireland Autumn Gathering**. They are keen to show off the

beauty of their home turf, the **Comeraghs**, and the joys of walking there. Details of this year's Autumn Gathering are as follows:

Host club Kilmacthomas Walking Club
Date October 18-20th, 2019
Location The Comeraghs, Co Waterford
Base The Park Hotel, Dungarvan

Registration is still possible through the website, www.mountaineering.ie.



Sgilloge Lough in the Comeraghs, Co Waterford

Club support meetings

Date	County	Venue
25 th September	Cork	Hibernian Hotel, Mallow
3 rd October	Down	Mourne Country Hotel, Newry
21 st November	Dublin	National Sports Campus, Irish Sport HQ, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15
27 th November	Galway	Menlo Park Hotel, Headford Road, Galway

Arrive for refreshments: from 7.00pm. **Meeting time:** 7.30-9.30pm.

Following on from the success of last year's **club support meetings**, when we visited Sligo, Bray, Kerry and Derry, this year we will visit **Mallow, Newry, Dublin and Galway**. The agenda will be similar to last year's.

Ruth Whelan (Hillwalking Development Officer), **Helen Lawless** (Access & Conservation Officer) and **Jane Carney** (Training Officer) from Mountaineering Ireland will participate, giving clubs in each region the opportunity to raise questions and club-related topics with these officers. The meetings will also allow clubs to network with other clubs in their region, to share ideas and information ■



Wilderness Lodge



Glenmalure Valley viewed from the Zig-zags

Glenmalure adventures

With the bonus of the efforts of the residents to clean up their valley through their Pure Mile, the **Glenmalure Valley** in Wicklow National Park, Ireland's longest glacial valley, is one of the nicest places to be on a sunny autumn day.

The **Wicklow Way** crosses the valley, near the **Glenmalure Lodge**, working its way over to Glendalough, and there are plenty of other walks that can be enjoyed. The valley is also less crowded than its neighbour, Glendalough, being generally less well-known.

Glenmalure is a classic U-shaped valley. It displays

many features of glacial erosion, such as the hanging valley – **Fraughan Rock Glen** – at the top of the valley and two corrie lakes, **Kelly's Lough** and **Art's Lough**. High above the end of the valley is **Lugnaquilla**, a Munro, the highest mountain in Leinster and, at 925m (3035ft), the highest mountain in Ireland outside of Kerry.

In recent times, in addition to the Glenmalure Lodge,

the **Wilderness Lodge** just down the road has started providing accommodation.

The apartments are well-provided for self-catering and they serve as a great base for exploring the valley or even **Glendalough**.

The owner, **Frank Quinn**, an adventurer and explorer in his own right, has come to roost in Glenmalure.

From a base in the **Wilderness Lodge**, he is offering guided and

self-guided walks in the valley. He is particularly interested in hosting groups from hiking clubs or other organisations, offering to organise hiking breaks for them in this lovely valley.

Depending on the group, the walks can be of different degrees of difficulty to suit any levels of experience and fitness. Maps and walking poles can be provided. The **Wilderness Lodge** is suitable for groups of up to twenty people (see advert, page 41) ■



Sir Chris Bonington to deliver Lynam Lecture

Date: Wednesday, December 18th, 2019, at 7.30pm

Venue: Chartered Accountants Ireland, 47-49 Pearse Street, Dublin 2



Mountaineering Ireland is delighted to announce that **Sir Chris Bonington** will deliver this year's Mountaineering Ireland Lynam Lecture.

Sir Chris, Britain's best-known mountaineer, writer, photographer and lecturer,

started climbing at the age of 16 in 1951. It has been his passion ever since. He made the first British ascent of the **North Wall** of the **Eiger** and led the expedition that made the first ascent of the South Face of **Annapurna**, the biggest and most difficult climb in the Himalayas at the time.

Sir Chris went on to lead the successful expedition that made the first ascent of the south-west face of **Everest** in 1975, and then reached the summit of Everest in 1985 with a Norwegian expedition. His greatest epic was the first ascent of the **Ogre**, in the

Karakoram, with **Doug Scott** in 1978. He still has the passion for the mountains that he had at the beginning.

The Mountaineering Ireland Lynam Lecture was inaugurated in 2011 in memory of **Joss Lynam**, one of Ireland's best-known mountaineers, in recognition of his enormous achievements in hillwalking, climbing and mountaineering in Ireland and overseas over some sixty years. During his lifetime, Joss initiated numerous developments in these areas of our sport in Ireland and he was the inspiration for a number of

generations of Irish mountaineers.

Since it was inaugurated, the Mountaineering Ireland Lynam Lecture has been delivered annually by leading national and international mountaineers.

The Mountaineering Ireland Lynam Lecture 2019 will take place in the Chartered Accountants Ireland Lecture Hall, 47-49 Pearse Street, Dublin 2, on Wednesday, December 18th, 2019. Refreshments will be available from 7.00pm with the lecture commencing at 7.30pm. Tickets are now available through the website, www.mountaineering.ie ■

Guests of honour at Nepal Ireland Day in Farmleigh House (from right): Cllr Mary Seery-Kearney; Sean Crowe, TD; Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of Nepal, London, Mr Sharad Raj Aran; Everest Marathon runner, Paul Maguire; and Vincent Barry, Managing Director of ICD Business School.

Nepal Ireland Day celebrated in style

The event comprised a delightful Nepalese cultural programme of music and dance

By Patrick O'Sullivan

The **Embassy of Nepal** in London, **Nepal Ireland Society** and various Nepalese organisations in Ireland, with support from **South Dublin County Council, Dublin City Council** and **ICD Business College**, jointly organised this year's **Nepal Ireland Day** on September 8th, 2019, at Farmleigh House, Phoenix Park, Dublin. The weather was excellent on the day and the event was a huge success.

After the opening speeches, the event comprised a delightful Nepalese cultural programme of music and dances. There was a colourful Nepalese handicrafts stall, stalls of Irish NGOs who work in Nepal, a Visit Nepal 2020 Europe lottery stall, and a photo exhibition on flat-screen TV sets of photographs taken by Irish tourists who visited Nepal in the last year.

Nepal Ireland Day is the biggest Nepalese event in Ireland. It commemorates the ever-growing friendship and links between Nepal and Ireland.

In his keynote speech, the **Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of Nepal, London, Mr Sharad Raj Aran**, said the celebration of Nepal Ireland Day highlighted the ever-growing links between Nepal and Ireland. He requested attendees to visit Nepal in the coming year to help make the Visit Nepal 2020 campaign a success.

Also speaking at the opening ceremony, **Sean Crowe, TD**, a member of the **Ireland Nepal Parliamentary Friendship Group**, vowed to continue

working to strengthen relations between Nepal and Ireland.

Representing Councillor Mark Ward, Mayor of South Dublin County Council, **Councillor Mary Seery-Kearney** said she had studied Nepal's constitution during her days as a law student and that she felt honoured to be able to participate in this celebration of Nepal's culture in Dublin.

The President of the Nepal Ireland Society, Mr Deepesh Man Shakyia, welcomed everyone and announced that the links between the two countries had taken a significant step forward with the arrival that very day in Kathmandu, Nepal, of an Irish delegation from the Ireland Nepal Parliamentary Friendship Group led by the Cean Comhairle, **Seán Ó Fearghail, TD**, together with the Convener of the Ireland Nepal Parliamentary Friendship Group, **Maureen O'Sullivan, TD**, and **Senator Catherine Noone**.

The delegation visited

Nepal from September 8-12th, visiting a hospital supported by an Irish NGO, and the Cean Comhairle paid a courtesy call to **President Bidya Devi Bhandari** to discuss relations between the two countries.

The Nepal Ireland Society has been organising Nepal Ireland Day annually in Farmleigh House since 2013 with support from the **Office of Public Works** ■





CLIMBING WALL SEMINAR – October 8-9th, 2019

A Climbing Wall Seminar is being organised by **Mountaineering Ireland** in association with **Petzl** and **Lyon Equipment**. The seminar is aimed at anyone who has an interest in climbing walls, including owners, managers, coaches, instructors, route-setters, technical advisors, etc.

The seminar will take place on October 8th and 9th in Blanchardstown, Dublin. For full details and to book a place, please go to the Mountaineering Ireland website, www.mountaineering.ie.

Restrictions proposed on numbers attempting Everest

By Patrick O'Sullivan

Following a disastrous pre-monsoon season on Everest (8,848m) this year, in which eleven climbers lost their lives, new rules have been proposed to control the number of people attempting to climb the mountain from the Nepalese side. Eight of the world's 8,000m peaks are in Nepal, but Everest has always attracted the most attention, as the highest summit on Earth.

The eleven deaths, nine of which were on the Nepal side and two on the Tibet side, sadly included two Irish climbers, **Shay Lawless** and **Kevin Hynes** (see *IML 130*, page 66). This was the fourth most deadly climbing season on Everest in history.

The deaths were put down to crowding and inexperience, resulting in calls from guides and climbers to limit the numbers attempting the peak and to ensure that guiding companies and climbers have sufficient previous experience to reasonably attempt the climb.

The calls were reinforced by photos of climbers queuing on the summit ridge, waiting for their turn to stand on the highest point on Earth, all the time while their precious supplementary oxygen supplies were being used up.

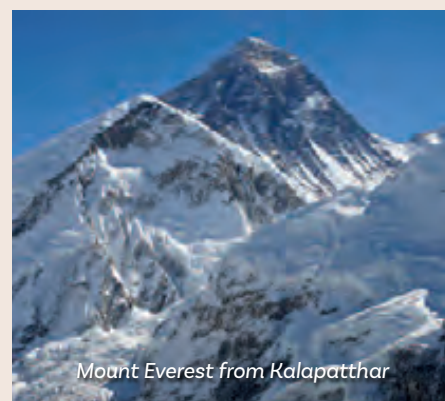
Certainly, the **UIAA**, while offering

condolences to the bereaved, strongly believes that access management, climber experience, training and self-responsibility are amongst the key topics to be addressed on Everest.

The **Nepali government** issued 381 climbing permits for the pre-monsoon season on Everest this year. The new regulations proposed would significantly reduce the number of permits being issued. A panel, made up of government officials, climbers and agencies representing the climbing community, was set up by the government after it was criticised for allowing anyone who paid the peak fee of \$11,000 (€10,000) to attempt to climb Everest. Some guiding companies have been warning about the dangers of overcrowding and inexperience on Everest for a long time.

Under the **proposed new regulations**, climbers wanting to attempt Everest will now have to provide proof that they have climbed at least one 6,500m peak before. Expedition companies would also have to have had at least three years' experience in organising other high-altitude climbs before guiding on Everest, and they would have to charge each climber at least \$35,000.

Climbers would also be required to submit a certificate of good health and physical fitness, as at present, and to be



Mount Everest from Kalapatthar

accompanied by a trained Nepalese guide. There are also proposals to further ensure the self-sufficiency of climbers by preventing people with certain disabilities from attempting the mountain.

The **Ministry of Tourism** will bring the proposed new regulations to the **Federal Parliament of Nepal** for approval in time for the pre-monsoon climbing season next year. However, given the likely economic effects of limiting the number of climbers on Everest on the mountain communities, the guiding companies and the government, there is some concern in the international community that they won't be approved ■



Rosway Walking Club members on Las Conchas beach on the island of La Graciosa, off the northern tip of Lanzarote

WALKING IN LANZAROTE

Rosway Walking Club went hiking on Lanzarote from May 27th to June 1st this year. **Liam Roche** reports

Rosway Walking Club is based in Ballinasloe, Co Galway. It was founded in 2006 and caters for walkers from the surrounding east Galway and south Roscommon areas. To keep the natives on both sides of the border happy, our club name is comprised of the first three letters in Roscommon and the last three letters in Galway!

We have about one hundred members at present, and the club has climbed all of the

highest peaks in Ireland and in the rest of the British Isles. We have also hiked in the Dolomites and in other Italian locations, along with visiting mountains in Austria and Spain.

My wife **Judith** and I have been members of the club since its foundation. In recent years, we have spent our holidays on Lanzarote, in the Canary Islands, and have discovered many hiking routes there. At a club walks planning meeting in November 2018, Judith and I proposed that we

lead a hiking week in Lanzarote the following summer. The proposal was received enthusiastically by the members.

We held information meetings in a local hotel in January, March and May this year. At the first meeting, the dates for the trip were agreed. May to early June is the best time to visit Lanzarote for hiking purposes, so we decided to go for a week at the end of May and beginning of June.

The other meetings were to inform members who were

planning to participate about what they would need to bring to ensure a safe and enjoyable week. Clothing, footwear, sun cream and first-aid kits were all discussed. The travel arrangements and walks schedules were also covered at these meetings, so that the club members participating would arrive in Lanzarote fully prepared and ready to explore parts of the island that most visitors never get to see.

After our group of twenty had settled in, our first walk was a short one around parts of **Puerto Del Carmen**, where we were based. Following that walk, we got the local bus to **Playa Honda** and visited the Deliland commercial centre to sample the coffees, teas, ice-creams and especially crêpes there. After that, we took the coastal route along the seashore and back to base.

The next day, a Tuesday, I led a long walk to what is known as the **Secret Garden**. This is really a treasure of a garden, built in under cliffs in a very remote but beautiful location beside the sea. Locals say that a couple whom had had a very

Rosway walkers pause for group photograph before the start of the Secret Garden and cliff hike



sick child promised to do something special if their child recovered good health. Within a short time of making their promise the child was running around full of energy, and so they started to build what is now called the Secret Garden. It is a magical place.

Judith did a shorter walk with the 'B' walkers along the cliff-tops from **Playa Quemada** back to **Puerto Del Carmen**, with a refreshment stop in **Puerto Calero**.

On the following day, we hired a private bus to take us up north on the island. We then walked to the most northerly point on Lanzarote.

On our return, we visited the **Mirador Del Rio**. This is a wonderful place to visit, as it houses a restaurant with possibly the most incredible views in Lanzarote, including across to the island of **La Graciosa**.

We were up bright and early on the Thursday, as we had to get on the bus at 8.30am to catch a 10.00am ferry to **La Graciosa**. The ferry leaves from the port of **Orzola**, which is in the extreme north of Lanzarote, so we had a long bus-trip there, but it was enjoyable for the sightseeing possible en route.

Visiting the island of La Graciosa is like stepping back in time, as there are only dirt



Rosway walkers in the Secret Garden

roads there, which are only accessible by 4x4 jeeps. I took the 'A' walkers on a 20-km coastal route, and we climbed **Montaña Bermeja** and finished at a beautiful beach called **Las Conchas**. Judith took the 'B' walkers on a 12-km hike across the centre of the island and they also visited **Las Conchas** for lunch.

Then we all had some well-earned refreshments in **Caleta De Sebo**, the only inhabited village on the island, before boarding the ferry back to Orzola, and then busing back to Puerto Del Carmen.

On the Friday, we did the hardest walk of the week. I led a 14-km hike, which started at

“The Secret Garden is a treasure of a garden, a magical place in a remote location beside the sea.”

sea level on **Famara beach** and went up to the highest accessible point in Lanzarote, the summit of **Peñas del Chache** at 670m, from where the views were amazing. Then we continued across to the **Mirador Haria** and descended on the **Malpais trail** to the beautiful town of **Haria**, also known as 'The Valley of a Thousand Palms.'

Judith brought the 'B' walkers on a lovely walk through the vine-growing area known as **La Geria**, starting from **Uga** and finishing in **Puerto Calero**. La Geria is worth seeing, as the local farmers have made the growing of vines an art form. The grapes produced are used mainly to produce the lovely **Malvasia wines**. There are acres of land with small stone-wall surrounds protecting the vines from the winds. The picón black lava ash gets moisture from whatever rainfall there is, stores it and then slowly releases it to ensure that the vine growth is abundant and consistent.

Saturday was our last walking day and we did a 13-km hike

from the town of **Tegüise**, which used to be the old capital of Lanzarote, along an old Camino trail, and finished in **Costa Tegüise**. Tegüise is famous for housing the largest outdoor market on these islands every Sunday. Busloads of tourists arrive to peruse and purchase leather goods, paintings, craft pieces produced locally, and much more.

Personally, Judith and I like to visit Tegüise on quiet weekdays to enjoy a stroll around and really see the beautiful old buildings, which include a lovely church dedicated to **Our Lady of Guadalupe** and the castle of **Santa Barbara**, the oldest castle in the Canary Islands.

We finished off the week in style on the Saturday night, as we put on our finest bits and pieces and went out for a lovely dinner together. We reminisced about all we had done during the week. The group gave Judith and I a lovely gift, which was greatly appreciated. It was very gratifying to hear our companions saying how much they had enjoyed the week ■

On a tough 'A' walk from Famara to Haria



► **Liam Roche** is a member of the Rosway Walking Club.

NUTRITION & HYDRATION

Dietitian **Jane Leonard** provides some nutrition and hydration tips for hillwalkers

When you are going hiking, you need to think about your nutrition and your hydration. Being well-nourished and keeping properly hydrated will help you to get the most out of your hike by optimising your endurance and allowing you to maintain your concentration during the hike, and by enhancing your recovery after the hike. This, in turn, will help you to minimise your fatigue and to reduce your risk injury, which is especially important when you are considering undertaking a multi-day hike.

Think of your body as a car being driven on a long journey. If you don't have enough fuel or have the wrong type of fuel in your car, then the journey is going to be cut short. The same principle applies to nutrition and hydration in relation to your body.

This article will help you to plan how to maintain your own nutrition and hydration during your hiking trips.

Planning your hike

It is important to establish good nutritional habits throughout the year and then tweak your nutrition in advance of a hike or trip to get the most out of it. Throughout the year aim to eat 6-7 pieces of **fruit and vegetables** a day, 1-2 portions of **wholegrain carbohydrates** (bread, pasta or rice) and a portion of **protein** (meat, chicken, fish, eggs, tofu or pulses) per meal to meet the nutritional requirements for healthy eating.

Like anything, practice makes perfect while hiking. Trialling different foods, fluids and the timing of when you eat on walks will help you to gauge what suits you best and to avoid a tummy upset or indigestion.

Here are a few things to think about when you are planning a walk:

- How long are you going to be hiking for? Is it a single-day trip or will you be doing a multi-day hiking trip?
- What is the expected weather? Will it be hot or cold?
- What is the terrain like? Will there be a lot of climbing and will you be at high altitude for long periods?

- Will there be easy access to food and water along the way, or will you need to bring supplies with you?

Hydration

Making sure you are hydrated in the run-up to, during and after hikes will improve your exercise tolerance, promote blood flow to your muscles for recovery and reduce the risk of cramps, fatigue and poor concentration. We lose water through breathing, through our gut and in our urine and sweat every day.

Fluid needs can vary from person to person depending on body size, gender, weather, fitness, exercise intensity and altitude.

In the run-up to your hike, make sure you are **drinking water regularly**, i.e., with all meals and snacks. If you are likely to perspire a lot during your hike (i.e., in hot weather) or to be at a high altitude during your hike, when you will lose more fluid through breathing in the drier air, you will need to drink more as your losses will be greater.

During your walk, take regular sips of water, sports drinks or electrolyte replacement drinks; depending on the intensity of your exercise you may need 400-800ml/hour during a hike. If you are hiking for more than one hour, it is recommended that, if possible, you drink fluids containing 6-8% carbohydrate (e.g., a sports drink).

A handy way to check your own hydration status is to check your urine. Are you maintaining your urine output and how concentrated is it? Have a look at the picture guide on the right to help you to see how well you are maintaining your hydration.

Before you go

In the couple of days before a hike, make sure you are eating a source of



How dehydrated are you?

A quick way to test how well you are hydrated is to check the colour of your urine:



carbohydrates at each meal (e.g., bread, potatoes, rice or pasta) to ensure you have plenty of energy for your hike. This energy will be stored in your muscles as glycogen and will be broken down and used as fuel during your hike.

On the morning of the hike, aim to have a **high-carbohydrate, moderate-protein and low-fat breakfast** to provide you with enough energy on the hike and to help reduce hunger. Most importantly, this sort of breakfast is easily digested, and that should help you to avoid getting stomach cramps on your hike. Some breakfast ideas that are suitable are eggs on toast (two slices), breakfast cereal (or porridge) with milk and fruit, or toast with peanut butter and banana.

During your hike or trip

On a day trip, you may need to bring a lunch, such as a sandwich, and some snacks with you. As you will have to carry everything in your backpack, aim for **nutrient-dense, lightweight snacks**. Some ideas include, trail mix, nuts, seed/fruit and

The Food Pyramid

For adults, teenagers and children aged five and over



*Daily Servings Guide – wholemeal cereals and breads, potatoes, pasta and rice

Active	Children (5-11)	Teenagers (12-18)	Adults (19-64)	Adults (65+)	Inactive	Teenagers (12-18)	Adults (19-64)	Adults (65+)
	3-4	4	4-5	3-4		3	3-4	3
	3-5	5-7	5-7	4-5		4-5	4-6	4

There is no guideline for inactive children as it is essential that all children are active.

There is no guideline for inactive children as it is essential that all children are active.

Sources: Government of Health, December 2016.

Drink at least 8 cups of fluid a day – water is best

Get active!

To maintain a healthy weight adults need at least 30 minutes a day of moderate activity on 5 days a week (or 150 minutes a week). Children need to be active at a moderate to vigorous level for at least 60 minutes every day.

Average daily calorie needs for all foods and drinks for adults

Active 2000kcal Inactive 1800kcal

Active 2500kcal Inactive 2000kcal

nut bars, and fresh and dried fruit and energy bars or gels.

On a multi-day hike, where you will have access to restaurants or cafés, aim to eat **high-carbohydrate, moderate-protein and low-fat meal options** during your hike, such as sandwiches, chicken, meat, fish or tofu and pasta, rice or potato dishes, and avoid creamy sauces, to aid absorption and digestion.

If you are going on a multi-day hiking trip with limited access to fresh food, it is important to plan out your

meals, eating the more perishable foods in the first couple of days, carrying light, nutrient-dense foods (as above) and bringing freeze-dried or ready-to-eat meals with you for later in the trip.

After your hike or trip

Remember the 3 Rs of recovery: **Rehydrate, Refuel, Rebuild.**

Rehydrating after a hike is essential, especially if you are preparing for another hike the next day. Depending on how much you sweat and the

“Remember the 3 Rs of recovery: Rehydrate, Refuel, Rebuild.”

intensity of your exercise, you may need around one litre of water or an electrolyte replacement drink to replace the electrolytes such as sodium and potassium that you have lost on your hike.

When you are **refuelling**, your meals should include carbohydrates to replace your muscle glycogen stores (energy) and some protein to help repair and rebuild your muscles.

Ideally, within thirty minutes of finishing your hike, you should aim to eat a snack such as some fruit and a glass of milk, or a fruit and nut bar, or yoghurt with nuts and seeds

and fruit. You should follow this with a meal, such as a chicken salad and bread, or pasta bolognese, when you get a chance.

This approach should help you to recover optimally from your hike and to **rebuild** yourself for the next one!

For nutritional advice tailored to your own needs, talk to a registered dietitian or sports nutritionist. Check out the **Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute's** website for contact details of accredited nutrition professionals at:

www.indi.ie/find-a-dietitian.html.

Happy hiking! ■



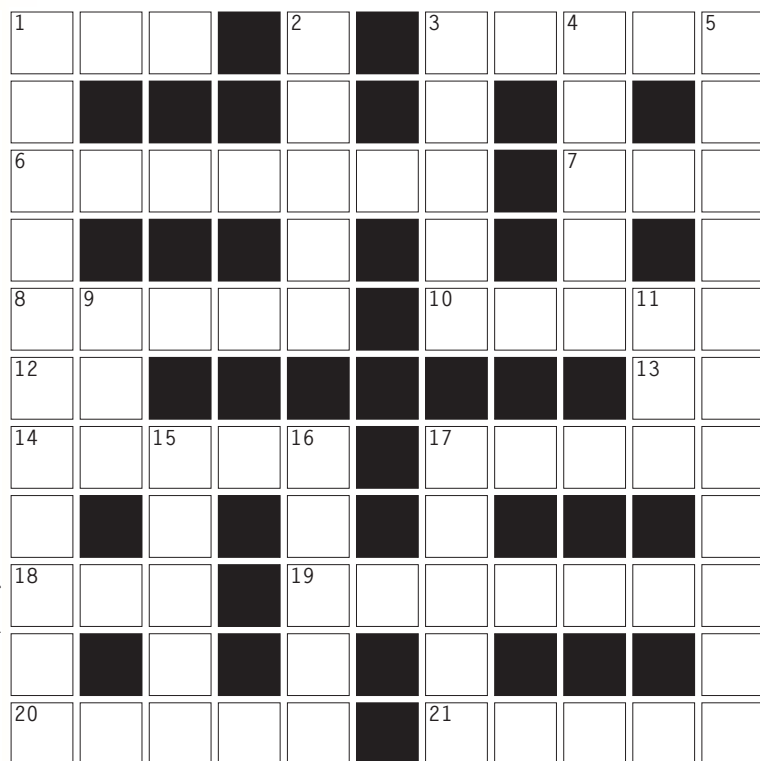
AUTHOR Jane Leonard is a CORU-registered dietitian (for more information, see info@coru.ie).



Autumn Competition

Win a great prize from **Basecamp** if your correct completed entry for this puzzle is the first drawn from the hat!

CROSSWORD compiled by COLIN MACLOCHLAINN



Clues Across

- 1 Arderin in the Mournes, over the top, in short (3).
- 3 Albertan town that hosts mountain film festival (5).
- 6 English mountaineer who lost his life on Everest (7).
- 7 Man's best friend (3).
- 8 Describes extreme form of marathon, for example (5).
- 10 Mistake (5).
- 12 Negative (2).
- 13 Irish writer George Russell's nom-de-plume (2).
- 14 Picturesque Alpine region in Austria (5).
- 17 A thin slab of rock – also found in a 99! (5).
- 18 You could be on life support if you're in here (1,1,1).
- 19 Ancient Irish lake dwelling (7).
- 20 Vehicles for crossing snow, often pulled by dogs (5).
- 21 Bare limestone rock formation, as found in Burren (5).

Clues Down

- 1 Cattle-populated uplands in Sligo? (2,9).
- 2 Picturesque vale, river and village in Wicklow (5).
- 3 Most famous river in Ireland's Ancient East (5).
- 4 Lowest point – of collapse or of career, say (5).
- 5 A type of knot commonly used to secure the rope to a climber's harness; also a type of descender (6-5).
- 9 A narrow Irish spade with single footrest (3).
- 11 Mighty tree, once an acorn (3).
- 15 A defined way up a rockwall or peak (5).
- 16 Cords to fasten your hillwalking boots (5).
- 17 Container for carrying hot drink to the hills (5).



Mambo 10.1mm 40m rope
for gym or crag climbing



WIN

a Boreo Helmet,
a Mambo 40m Rope
and a Reverso 4 Belay
Plate – a prize worth
€197.85



Reverso 4 belay plate



Boreo helmet



How to enter

Complete this crossword correctly and be in with a chance to win a prize worth almost €200 from Basecamp Outdoor Store, Jervis Street, Dublin.

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, November 1st 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** at where you can be contacted. The winner will be announced in the Winter 2019 issue of the *Irish Mountain Log*.

Competition prize

Basecamp's generous prize offer comprises three items: a Boreo Helmet, a Mambo 40m Rope and a Reverso 4 Belay Plate.



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



Plan Glacier Refuge, left, and having breakfast on the veranda: Alan and Margaret Tees and friends

THE REFUGE THAT MARRIED A WALL

While attending the Mountaineering Ireland Summer Alpine Meet at Argenti re in the Chamonix Valley in July, **Margaret Tees** took the opportunity to hike up to one of the refuges in the area.

The **Plan Glacier Refuge**, which huddles at 2,730m beneath the base of the south-west ar te of L'Aiguille de Tricot, near the back of the Glacier du Miage, is known as 'The Refuge that Married a Wall.' It is a tiny wooden refuge, charming, authentic in character and unusual.

The refuge was originally built by local guides, the '**Friends of the Plan Glacier Refuge**,' in 1991. That first shelter was destroyed by avalanches during the following winter, as was a determined second attempt to put a refuge in that location a few years later.

In 2006, the building was completely rebuilt at its current location, which is still in the same area but is proving to be more avalanche-proof. It is kept open through the winter as a winter shelter and, when the guardians arrive in early summer, they have a lot of digging out to do before they can gain entrance. This year, the current team, **Annabelle** and **Yanni**, could only identify a small section of a solar panel

peeping through the snow to show them where to start!

The accommodation is compact, to say the least. There are basically two rooms, one divided between the kitchen and the guardians' quarters, the other between three tiers of platform beds (for twenty people, who are willing to play sardines!), a table and seating for about eight people, and a tiny area for ablutions.

When we arrived, there had been three days of cloudy weather, so no solar power. Despite this, the four-course evening meal was a delight and was everything that hungry climbers could ask for, and nobody minded sitting with every item of their clothing on!

The walk-in to the refuge is amazing. Coming from the Mont Blanc Tramway station at Bellevue, it is a delightful Alpine walk (part of the Tour du Mont Blanc) up to the Col de Tricot. There the route changes to follow an ancient 'smuggler's path,' a superb balcony route equipped with handrails where necessary (which is quite often), magnificently zig-zagging across the 'haute montagne' towards the Glacier du Miage. It is a distance of 7.4km with 1,215m of ascent in all, and several pleasant hours, in our case.

For some of our group, this was the main target of the expedition and, after a very full breakfast (on the veranda), an enjoyable descent (on fresh legs) was made, back to the cable car at Bellevue.

For three others (slightly younger than ourselves), it was merely the starting place for the climb up to the Durier Refuge and the challenges of the L'Aiguille de Bonnassey and beyond ■

Con and Alan at the refuge



➤ **Margaret Tees** is a hillwalker, mountaineer and member of the North West Mountaineering Club. She has 'completed' the Munros in Scotland and has been taking on the Corbetts, also in Scotland.



Sean Blazquez-Burke climbing in the Burren

YOUTH TRAD CLIMBING CAMPS

Mountaineering Ireland held two Youth Trad Climbing Camps this summer. **Damien O'Sullivan** reports

Climbing continues to grow in popularity and participation in Ireland. This growth has been largely fuelled by the increase in the quantity and quality of climbing walls available in this country and also possibly in part due to the increase in media exposure of climbing due to movies such as *Free Solo* and *The Dawn Wall*, and the effect of climbing's inclusion in the 2020 Olympic Games.

Within this overall growth in climbing participation, there is a remarkable increase in the number of young people

getting into climbing. Many of these young climbers hear about and see images of climbing outside on real rock, be it from the amazing photos adorning the climbing walls, or in the myriad of online videos of climbing all over the world.

This July, Mountaineering Ireland ran two **Youth Trad Climbing Camps** with the aim of introducing young people to trad climbing and starting them out on the path to becoming competent and confident trad climbers. Some of the participants had little or no outdoor climbing experience, while others had

already begun to lead climb outdoors. Under the guidance of the camps' main instructors, **Angela Carlin** and **John Healy**, the climbers developed their skills based on their prior experience and their own personal aims for the camp they attended.

The first camp took place in the **Burren** in County Clare, with climbing activities centred on **Ailladie** and **Ballyryan**. The second camp took place in **Glendalough**, Co Wicklow. The Irish summer weather presented its usual challenges, but enthusiasm and invention prevailed to provide a great experience for the young climbers. You do not have to take my word for it. Here is what some of these young climbers had to say for themselves:

■ Patrick Galvin

When I arrived at the Rainbow Hostel in Doolin, a lot of the other climbers were already there. I was very nervous, as I wasn't sure how everything was going to go. Little did I know that this camp was going to be one of the best experiences of my life.

After a quick stopover at the hostel, we headed out to **Ailladie**, where we did most of

the climbing. Everyone had already got to know each other, so there was lots of chat in the car. At Ailladie, we learnt how to abseil, build anchors and set up a top rope.

The next day, we went to **Ballyryan** to practice leading with **John Healy** and **Angela Carlin**. On the third day of the camp, we split up into two groups, one sea-cliff climbing and the other lead climbing at Ballyryan. I went to Ballyryan first and we did lots of routes before switching over after lunch.

The sea-cliff climbing was very enjoyable but also quite scary, especially as the sea was far from calm. Despite this, I think it was the highlight of my trip.

Back at the hostel, we said our goodbyes and left. I had never done anything like the camp or the amazing climbing before. Learning new things and meeting new people made me want to go back next year and to do more trad climbing.

■ AnnaBelle O'Sullivan

I was delighted to be just old enough to be accepted for this camp, as I have not had many opportunities for outdoor climbing before. Also, I was secretly delighted that I would



Patrick Galvin climbing in the Burren

Youth Trad Climbing Camps next year

Dates and details for the **Summer 2020 Youth Trad Climbing Camps** will be released in early 2020. Keep an eye on the Mountaineering Ireland website and social media for information. If you would like to be added to a **reminder mailing list** for the camps, please send an e-mail to Mountaineering Ireland's Climbing Officer **Damien O'Sullivan** at damien@mountaineering.ie.



Written by
Damien O'Sullivan,
Climbing Development
Officer

and an abseil, and how to tie useful knots – skills that I will use in outdoor climbing trips in the future.

Gaining this knowledge has given me confidence when climbing outdoors. It has also given me a sense of achievement in that I am becoming efficient at doing things on my own in climbing.

Another important lesson at the camp was about safety in the mountains and how to always be safety-conscious when climbing outdoors. This is such an essential part of trad climbing, and I think it is so important that climbers put safety first.

If I had to pick something I didn't like about the camp, it would probably be the 6.00am starts to do the long walk in to the climbing spot. However, the climbing made it worthwhile!

Overall, I am glad I went to the trad climbing camp. I

learned many new things, gained experience and confidence in climbing outdoors, and made new friends.

■ Alex O'Connor

I went to the trad climbing camp in **Glendalough** to increase my knowledge of outdoor climbing and to learn how to lead climbs on my own. During the camp I learned how to climb a multi-pitch route, abseil, place gear, set up anchors, and many other climbing skills.

I started the camp by doing the multi-pitch route **Sarcophagus**. We climbed it in four pitches and did an abseil from the top. During the climb, I learned how to tie in to an anchor, how to belay on a multi-pitch route and how to set up and do an abseil from the top of a multi-pitch. It was one of the best climbing experiences I have ever had.

On the second day, we went to the **Annaleeka Buttress**, a great little crag in the Wicklow Gap. There we learned how to set up a belay anchor, how to tie in to the anchor to belay from the top and how to abseil using the same anchors. We also learned how to ascend a rope using Prusik loops. The highlight of my day was that I led a climb for the first time.

On the third day, we went back to the Glendalough crag and did more lead climbing. I led two more climbs and learned to belay from the top after leading a route.

Overall, it was a great camp and I learned a lot. The instructors were great – very helpful and informative. I plan to use the knowledge I got from this camp and put it towards learning more about the outdoors and do as much outdoor climbing as I can ■



AnnaBelle O'Sullivan climbing in the Burren

have my first trip away without my parents (don't tell them!).

After arriving at the Rainbow Hostel (which is lovely) in Doolin at midday, we did not waste much time before going to the crag. We were split into small groups and my group spent time becoming familiar with the rock by top-rope climbing and then setting up and using abseils.

After six or seven hours, we went back to the hostel for dinner and then did some rope challenge games.

The next morning, I spent a few hours learning how to lead trad climbs at the crag. I had a top rope keeping me safe and **John Healy** was next to me on a rope, helping me with the gear. It rained in the afternoon, so we went back to the hostel. When the rain cleared that evening, we practiced ropework in the back garden of the hostel.

On the last day, thankfully the weather was nice again and we went to cliffs right above the sea, where we set up anchors for top-roping and belayed each other from the top.

Everybody was very friendly and we all got on very well for the three days. I would recommend the camp to any young person who wants to improve their outdoor climbing skills and to have a few great fun days away from their parents!

■ Isabelle Madden

I really enjoyed my experience at the trad climbing camp in **Glendalough**. It was great to spend a few days close to nature, and I found it really relaxing. I also enjoyed spending time with the other girls in my room in the IMC hut there. I didn't really know many people going to the camp, but it was nice leaving, having made some new friends.

I learned tons of things – such as how to place nuts and cams when leading, and how to extract gear the right way. I also learned how to build a belay



Amy Rafferty climbing in Glendalough



Climbers at Ailladie in the Burren

BURREN CLIMBING MEET 2019

The Burren Climbing Meet from September 6th to 8th was a great success. **Damien O'Sullivan** reports

Jointly organised by the **Irish Mountaineering Club** and the **Dal Riada Climbing Club** in early September, the **2019 Burren Climbing Meet** rounded off the climbing season for climbers from all over Ireland.

Derek Hendrick from the Irish Mountaineering Club and **Neil Byrne** from the Dal Riada Climbing Club took on the responsibility of organising the meet this year. It was evident from the number of climbers in attendance that they had succeeded in reaching a lot of climbers and drumming up a lot of interest in the meet.

The good weather forecast

for the weekend helped to attract a large group of climbers from all over Ireland. While the climbing went on all over the weekend, those who attended the meet were rewarded with near-perfect climbing conditions on the Saturday – dry rock, a gentle breeze and just enough cloud cover to keep the temperatures in check.

In consequence, Saturday saw a huge amount of action at the crags of **Ailladie**, **Ballyryan** and **Oughtdarra**. It was amazing to witness so many ascents of the harder routes on the steep walls of Ailladie. From taking a

snapshot of the activities on Saturday it would seem evident that the general standard of climbing is noticeably increasing.

Highlights of the action from Saturday were **Chloe Condron's** heroic effort on Eliminator, **Anastasija Strizakova's** determined effort on Sunstone and, of course, the phenomenal climbing on display from visiting climber **Angus Kille**. Angus, who is originally from Shropshire in England but now lives in Llanberis in Wales, steadily climbed multiple E4s, E5s and a big E6, all onsight and all with a smile on his face!

After a long and highly enjoyable day of climbing on Saturday, the tired, hungry and thirsty climbers all descended on Donoghue's pub in Fanore. Replete with various combinations of liquids and solids, the climbers then settled in for an excellent presentation by **Angus Kille**.

Angus shared his climbing experiences from starting out as a

teenager in Shropshire to the present day, with ascents of routes such as Indian Face on Clogwyn Du'r Arddu (Cloggy) on the north flank of Snowdon now under his belt. The presentation was thoroughly enjoyable, connecting and resonating with the audience on many levels.

The **Burren Climbing Meet** has now established itself as one of the staples in Irish climbers' calendars. Hopefully we will see you there next year! ■



Anastasija Strizakova on Sunstone



Chloe Condron on Gallows Pole

Upcoming events in the indoor climbing season 2019-2020

Irish Bouldering League Various venues

Round 1	Awesome Walls Dublin	Start date: 5 October 2019	Finish date: 20 October 2019
Round 2	Awesome Walls Cork	Start date: 2 November 2019	Finish date: 17 November 2019
Round 3	The Dublin Climbing Centre	Start date: 30 November 2019	Finish date: 15 December 2019
Round 4	Suas Climbing Centre	Start date: 11 January 2020	Finish date: 26 January 2020
Round 5	Gravity Climbing Centre	Start date: 8 February 2020	Finish date: 23 February 2020

Irish Lead Climbing Championship

Youth Climbers	Awesome Walls Dublin	19 October 2019
Senior Climbers	Awesome Walls Dublin	20 October 2019

Youth Climbing Series Various venues

Round 1	Bouldering	Awesome Walls Cork	25 January 2020
Round 2	Routes	The Dublin Climbing Centre	8 February 2020
Round 3	Bouldering	BoulderWorld Belfast	7 March 2020
Round 4	Routes	Awesome Walls Dublin	21 March 2020



The **Irish Lead Climbing Championship** provides the opportunity to participate in an International Federation of Sports Climbing (IFSC) style of lead climbing competition for Irish climbers. The Irish Lead Climbing Championship is one of two national championships run by Mountaineering Ireland. The **Irish Lead Climbing Championship 2019** takes place at **Awesome Walls Dublin** over the weekend of October 19-20th. Youth climbers compete on the Saturday

and senior climbers on the Sunday.

The Irish Lead Climbing Championship is an excellent competition for spectators to enjoy. Come along and see some top climbers in action.

For more information and to enter online, please go to the Mountaineering Ireland website page www.mountaineering.ie/climbing/competitionclimbing/irishleadclimbingchampionship or go to bit.ly/ILCC2019.



QUIET MOUNTAIN

Don Baldwin pays a visit to Cork's county high point, Knockboy in the Shehy Mountains

Tucked inconspicuously into the rugged folds of the west Cork countryside, **Knockboy** (706m) quietly claims the title of County Cork's highest mountain, in a landscape little changed by the passage of time.

At first glance, large swaths of west Cork and the Beara peninsula appear to be an untamed land, where green scrub and grey rock vie for visual supremacy of this ancient territory.

Here, fuchsia, foxglove and other wildflowers, encouraged by the Gulf Stream, proliferate in the neglected margins, their heady scents lacing the keen salty air. This was the stronghold of the

Above: Lough Boy, with Knockboy (706m) in the background.

O'Sullivan Beare clan, Gaelic lords of the Beara peninsula. Tales of their illustrious past and sad demise still imbue this sea-shadowed land.

Glengarriff, a colourful coastal town nestling in the lee of the Beara peninsula on the shores of Bantry Bay, is an ideal place from which to explore nearby **Knockboy** (Irish: **Cnoc Buí**, 'yellow hill').

A charming little town, Glengarriff is as popular with tourists today as it was in the 1700s. It boomed in Victorian times as an important stop along the **Prince of Wales Route** between Cork and Killarney. WB Yeats found it very much to his taste, too, and used it regularly in 1920, while George Bernard Shaw stayed on the nearby wooded isle of **Garnish** in 1923.

From Glengarriff, head east on the N71 towards Bantry town. After a ten-minute drive, turn left for Coomhola Bridge. Pass through here and continue onto Mill Big, finally arriving at the start of Priest's Leap Road, a fifteen-minute drive in all.

You could then simply drive on up the four-kilometre stretch of undulating mountain road to **Priest's Leap Pass** itself, and hike on to the summit of **Knockboy** from there. However, if you want to make a decent trek out of it, then leave your car at the start of Priest's Leap Road, where there is ample parking, and start your walk from there. That way, you can



➤ **Don Baldwin** started mountaineering with the Irish Permanent Defence Forces, as a member of the 27th Battalion in Dundalk, Co Louth, training in the Cooley and Wicklow Mountains. He also served with the 46th IRISHBATT in the mountains of South Lebanon. Since then, he has completed several mountaineering courses in Tollymore National Outdoor Centre, including the WGL. Don is also an avid scuba-diver, writer and Advanced Adventure Sport Instructor.



THIS WAS THE STRONGHOLD OF THE O'SULLIVAN BEARE CLAN, GAELIC LORDS OF THE BEARA PENINSULA.

relax and enjoy solid footing and the wonderful scenery to your left in **Inchinagoum** valley below, without running the risk of joining it!

The valley of Inchinagoum is a quiet place now. Beyond the stand of stately Scots pines scattered along the near slope, the poignant remnants of a few crumbled cottages huddle about a vibrant stream;

Above:
Inchinagoum
valley, with Bantry
Bay beyond.

Below: Priest's
Leap Road.

these are all that now remain of some long-abandoned Brigadoon.*

Rabbits have made themselves at home in the valley, blissfully unaware of the aerial threat posed by the new, ravenous overlords of nearby **Garnish Island** – the reintroduced white-tailed sea eagles.

Scenery aside, do have a care when hiking up this narrow mountain pass, as cyclists can appear silently and suddenly, descending at impressive speed. Likewise, cars can quickly appear from behind blind spots and hidden dips in the road. They are not always easy to hear.

On a clear day, a skeletal steel cross erected on the saddle above is clearly visible and gives you good notice of the approaching Priest's Leap Pass up ahead.

A solid hour's hiking will bring you up to the pass, where stunning views await you. A large inscribed boulder by the roadside confirms your location, the historic **Priest's Leap Pass**.

Local tradition attributes the origin of the place-name to a monumental leap made on horseback by a priest escaping English soldiers, a jump of several miles, no less!

Although the account does appear a little embellished, as is the way with most good Irish stories, it does seem to contain a grain of truth, as the particular priest in question, a **Fr Dominick Collins**, had indeed been recorded for raising the country for ➤



* **Brigadoon:** a mythical village in the Scottish Highlands that remains unchanged and invisible to the outside world, except for one day every hundred years. Those who happen upon Brigadoon may remain in that beguiling place only if they love another enough to give up the world outside.



the defence of **Donal Cam O'Sullivan Beare's Dunboyne Castle** on the Beara peninsula in 1602. He was later captured in the course of the siege of Dunboyne and eventually executed. In due course, he was beatified by Rome on September 27th, 1992. At what point history is distorted and legend is blended into the priest's prodigious leap at the pass, I must let the discerning reader decide.

From Priest's Leap Pass, strike out east-north-east just beyond the decorative boulder, keeping the sheep fence to your left as you climb. This is definitely gaiter country, so you could save yourself some soggy grief by fitting them before leaving the road.

Continue in this direction for about 550 metres until you find your way blocked by another fence; cross this fence at the sturdy corner post with care. Turn left and then continue north-north-west, keeping the fence on your left as you go.

Curiously, once you have left the pass and slipped over the first pale knoll, an eerie silence will envelope you. The terrain here is like some withered prairie where poor grass and broken boggy ground compete with slabs of pale-grey rock to dominate the landscape. Wildlife seems all but absent and, with the exception of a hopeful sign banning the shooting of the rare red grouse, there appears scant promise of life. However, elusive sheep, frogs, slugs and bog cotton all do make a frugal living up here, while a few feral cattle and some polka-eyed ponies forage for meagre grazing on the mountain's lower slopes.

After a distance of some 500 metres from the sturdy corner post, the direction of the fence turns east-north-east, passing beside the peaceful waters of **Lough Reagh** and **Lough Boy**, where you will need to use a weathered timber stile close by the water's edge. This secluded upland is a pensive place, and even these still, dark pools hold fast to their secrets, concealing any sign of life.

From here, the last stretch of fence climbs steadily for one and a half kilometres along what is the county border of Cork and Kerry, until it finally peters out near the summit.

Quiet prevails up here and, as my restless

Above: Lough Reagh (below summit of Knockboy) and stile to the right.

Below: Decorative boulder at Priest's Leap Pass.

imagination ruminated on the turbulent history of this brooding land, my rebellious legs lamented my earlier exertions up Munster's highest mountain road. True, I could have driven up to Priest's Leap Pass and walked out to the summit from there. However, perhaps extending this walk was my own small tribute to those sorry souls who had endured one of the most arduous treks in Irish history, which had forged north through the parallel **Pass of Keimaneigh** just east of Knockboy, in the Long March of O'Sullivan Beare.

Long March of O'Sullivan Beare

After the fall of Dunboyne, O'Sullivan Beare had gathered one thousand of his followers and marched north on December 31st, 1602, in the hope of reaching his ally, **Lord Tyrone**, on the shores of Lough Neagh.

As they marched northwards through Munster, Connacht and Ulster, they fought against a much larger English force and their new Irish allies. The infamous march was marked by the suffering of the starving O'Sullivans as they sought food from a land already decimated by a harsh Irish winter. Exposure and hunger took many.

O'Sullivan Beare and his followers marched over 500 kilometres and crossed the Shannon on a dark midwinter's night, after slaughtering their horses and





YOU CAN ALMOST IMAGINE A WHISPERED LAMENT DRIFTING UPON THE BREEZE.

using their skins to make curraghs.

After the fourteenth day of the march, of the 400 fighting men who had started out, only eighteen remained and, of the other 600 followers on the march, just eighteen survived the ordeal, one a woman. They finally arrived at O'Rourke's Castle in West Breifne (in Leitrim today) on January 4th, 1603, a heroic feat of endurance that would put any testing day on the mountains into stark perspective.

Knockboy summit

An hour and a half from the pass, the linear lines of the **trig point** make for a welcome sight. It is all that serves as a sliver of shelter in this bare place. Still, despite its austere appearance, the 703m summit of Knockboy is an excellent vantage point for viewing the surrounding area.

To the north stretches the soft, rolling outline of the **Shehy Mountains**, unmarred by the passage of time. Seven kilometres to the east, the **Beara/Breifne Way** strikes off towards the north-east through the Shehy Mountains and deep into the heartland of Ireland, retracing the hard march of O'Sullivan Beara and his sorely-pressed followers. To the south glitters the safe harbour of **Bantry Bay**, where a French fleet of forty-three ships made anchor in 1796 to aid Wolfe Tone and his United Irishmen.

Far off to the south-west stretches the **Beara peninsula**, a veritable microcosm of Irish history. At its centre, in the heart of the **Caha Mountains**, stands the stark pinnacle of **Hungry Hill**, made famous by **Daphne du Maurier's** gritty novel of the same name about the local copper-mining barons of the nineteenth century. Further south, on Beara's southern shore, just beyond the bustling fishing port of **Castletownbere**, the sad remnants of **Dunboyne Castle** stand silent, mute witness to its terrible end.

Above:
Trigonometric
point on the
summit of
Knockboy.

Below: Delicate
fuchsia.

A little further along the peninsula, near its northern shore, lies the reputed resting place of the **Children of Lir**. Having wandered the wild seas for nine hundred years, cursed to exist as swans, they were drawn ashore by the alluring toll of a monk's bell in the village of **Allihies**. Here, they returned briefly to their human form before peacefully passing away.

Finally, at the very end of the peninsula stands the solid bulk of **Dursey Island**, where many unfortunate Irish women were held captive by Viking raiders, before being shipped off to the slave markets of Europe, during a very dark time in Irish history.

The Dursey massacre of three hundred men, women and children by Crown forces in 1602 will long resonate in the collective memory of this solemn place, for, as African-American novelist **James Baldwin** wrote, "people are trapped in history and history is trapped in them."

Thankfully, west Cork is a much more peaceful place these days, a haven of serenity for tourists and writers alike. Nowhere is that tranquillity more evident than on the silent slopes of Knockboy. Here, in this cathedral of quiet, where the untouched wilderness seems to store those dark indelible memories of the past, you can almost imagine a whispered lament, drifting upon the breeze ■





JEWEL OF THE COMERAGHS

Margaret Flanagan describes the captivating Coumshingaun Lough, the ‘jewel’ of the Comeraghs

The car park for Coumshingaun Lough was now full. Cars were parked up and down the roadside. People were collecting hiking boots and walking supplies in colourful mountain gear, with French and German accents as well as Irish to be heard. I wanted to shout proudly at the top of my voice: “Did you know that my father initiated this forest park many moons ago?”

My father had the foresight to leave the huge boulders to perhaps highlight this spot as the entrance to a magical lake under the Comeragh Mountains. The lake still generates a mystical energy for me. Coumshingaun Lough.

Above:
Coumshingaun Lough in the Comeragh Mountains.

My father would have been impressed by the numbers of visitors coming here now, as he was a forester in the Comeraghs long ago. It was the beginnings of diversifying forestry spaces into recreational spaces.

My sister Denise and I were about nine years old when we first went to the woods with him to do a bit of thinning of the thick rows of tree growth. The intention was to put a white ‘X’ on trees that were destined for felling, to make room for a car park or picnic spot.

My father pointed out the trees and we eagerly marked them. We loved roaming through this thick jungle of sweet-smelling conifer pines, which also harboured hosts of flighty midges. These could attach to your hair or sweating skin and feast upon you until you itched and just wanted to jump into Coumshingaun Lough for immediate relief!

The trip to the lake is up through woods, fields and rocks and across streams. You hear the sounds from bossy black-faced sheep calling ‘maaa,’ clearly telling you this is their space and to move on; or you can hear the wind’s whisperings resonating through the rocks.

The heady scents from honeysuckle, ferns and gorse serve to boost your upwards climb. The



➤ **Margaret Flanagan** grew up in Lemybrien, Co Waterford, right under the gaze of the eastern Comeragh Mountains. She worked in Africa for twenty years and loved the Drakensberg Mountains. She now lives outside Dungarvan, County Waterford, still close enough to feel the lure of the Comeraghs.



dramatic patchwork of textures and colours across the mountain-tops simply looks higgledy-piggledy, as though an ogre had been at work here to confuse you on your climb.

Spellbinding space

On arriving in this spellbinding space, there is an impressive view of the sheer rocky backdrop to the lake, with sides gently sloping down. According to my very old geography book, it resembles that of an old, inviting armchair, with the sheltering high back and sides opening in the front to expose a panoramic vista to this magical 'scape' of contrasts, colours and muffled eerie sounds, echoing through the valley.

The rock rises up from the lake to form a huge cliff-face. Here, solitary sheep climb to graze, and their 'maa' sounds echo across the lake.

I shout out to the lake and the sheep: "Hello! I have arrived. Did you miss me?" I am delighted, as the lake returns this same message to me, so enthusiastically. It repeats the message to me at least three times, gradually reducing its volume while overlapping in its soundings. I am delighted that I was missed.

Enormous boulders define the outer circle of water. They gradually become invisible through the brown hue, as the lake deepens and becomes black in

Above:
Coumshingaun
Lough viewed
from its steep
cliff-sides.

Autumn Gathering: October

Mountaineering Ireland's **2019 Autumn Gathering** will be held in the Comeraghs over the weekend of October 18-20th. The hosts, **Kilmacthomas Walking Club**, who are celebrating their fifteenth anniversary, are keen to show off the beauty of the Comeraghs. More information can be found on the Mountaineering Ireland website **www.mountaineering.ie** where it is also still possible to register for the Gathering.

colour. An odd ripple disturbs the surface as a brown trout reaches up to catch a stray midge.

At times, a whole cascade of ripples suddenly erupts across the entire lake, as if a giant has decided to blow across the surface, for his own amusement, just to view the endless waves that form.

The waves finally end in a frothy collection of bubbles at the other side of the lake, as if some monster from the deep had just suffered indigestion from over-indulgence in his favourite, slimy, underwater snack. The waves produce a white, bubbly substance at the shallow end of the lake.

This giant must also be wearing a good wetsuit, as this water is freezing, no matter how hot the sun shines. The enormous rocks provide shelter from the gusts of wind – that erupt at will – for you to enjoy a picnic surrounded by this almost prehistoric landscape.

Delay here, just a while, to wonder upon your own story, surrounding the creation of this cosmic space. Delve into its deep allure and bewitching charm.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT THIS ENCHANTING MOUNTAIN THAT KEEPS MY MIND THERE LONG AFTER I HAVE LEFT ITS SPELL?



Consider the misshapen boulders, the phantom monsters in these deep waters, the faery stories from around the blackthorn bush, or the ghostly tales of Crotty the Robber from just over the cliff's edge.

Magnetic pull

Do not linger past evening time, as the fog pours down across the lake's sides, and dark descends to cast its shadows. This is just the lake's spirit struggling to hold onto you for longer.

Of course, you can always find your way down, no matter what this mountain throws at you. Your journey down the mountainside is at a pace determined by the mountain's gravity. The smell of ferns is as delicious as ever. Droppings from grazing sheep dot their lawn, showing you a pathway for your descent; they are perhaps happy to see you are leaving their territory. There is even a view off to the distant glistening ocean.

The soft, rolling mountains are ever-surprising in colour, shape and texture, depicting their growth, grazing or cutting. Oddly-shaped ancient boulders line the steep decline and invite you to rest a while with their magnetic pull.

The aroma, coupled with the blast of bright blossoms from prickly gorse bushes, helps distract from the muscle strain as you try to dig down to reduce your footfall to a safer pace than is being dictated by the mountain drop.

We are almost down when my legs feel like jelly from trying to keep my own pace down and not let the steep mountain path decide it for me. Outside of our own pace, we are down from the mountain faster than we planned. My legs do not know this yet, as

Above: View of Coumshingaun Lough from the top of the cliffs.

Below: Coumshingaun Lough seen from the level of the lake.

they just want to keep on going. I sit on a big boulder lining the entrance to the mountain's lake to rest there a while.

What is it about this enchanting mountain that always keeps my mind there long after I have left its spell?

● *This article was previously published in Ireland's Own magazine and in The Munster Express* ■



Rab®

THE MOUNTAIN PEOPLE



RAB LADAKH GTX JACKET

Expertly balancing breathability with protection, soft GORE® C-KNIT™ and durable GORE-TEX Pro are paired to bring comfort to the most challenging of environments.

The next generation of Rab.



WWW.RAB.EQUIPMENT

THE NEW LADAKH GTX JACKET, AVAILABLE AT
GREAT OUTDOORS DUBLIN - GREATOUTDOORS.IE & WILDSIDE SPORTS BANDON - WILDSIDESPORTS.IE



SAVING CORONATION PLANTATION

A popular scenic forest in Wicklow Mountains National Park, Coronation Plantation is at risk from frequent fires and under pressure from grazing deer and sheep. What can be done to save it? **Cóilín MacLochlainn** reports

The Coronation Plantation is a popular scenic pine forest located to the west of Sally Gap in Wicklow Mountains National Park. Though not as well known as Glendalough or Luggala, it is popular with photographers and birdwatchers, who are attracted by its wild beauty and impressive wildlife.

You might think from the 'plantation' appellation that it was just another example of trees planted in a block. That was certainly the original plan, when tree planting began there in 1831, but the planting was never fully completed. Over the passage of time, trees persisted only in the plantation's more sheltered stream cloughs, which descend to the River Liffey not far from its source below Kippure (see map, opposite). This gives it the naturalistic appearance and aesthetic appeal it has today.

Above: Open woodland of Scots pine trees in the Coronation Plantation, near the Sally Gap in the Wicklow Mountains.

It is a beautiful pinewood. Owing to the uneven tree losses over the last 185 years, it now closely resembles a natural pine forest like those still found in parts of Scotland – the so-called **Caledonian forests**. But one thing is immediately obvious: it is thinly wooded and there are quite a lot of standing dead trees, mostly **Scots pines** and **European larches**. Also, when you look closely, you find very few seedlings or saplings on the ground.

It seems that the plantation is dying of old age or lack of regeneration, possibly as a result of overgrazing and fire. Fortunately, that is not entirely true, as a detailed study commissioned by the National Parks and Wildlife Service ten years ago showed; more on that later.

Rich in wildlife

It would be a great pity if the plantation were lost as it currently supports a raft of interesting pinewood species, including **red squirrels**, **crossbills**, **siskins** and **ravens**. It is also an important site for **merlin**.

In recent years, **great spotted woodpeckers** have arrived and begun nesting in the plantation – a welcome development. They have been spreading slowly since nesting in oakwoods in the Vale of Clara near Glendalough in 2007. They are Ireland's most recent avian immigrant, though it is thought they were here in the past but died out as the woodlands were felled.

➤ **Cóilín MacLochlainn** is the designer of the *Irish Mountain Log*.





Plans were overtaken by events when the marquess died. On a June morning in 1845 he rode out from Dublin through the Sally Gap, lunched with friends in Kippure House (just down the road from the plantation) and shortly after leaving had a seizure, fell from his horse and died.

Out of curiosity, I googled the 3rd Marquess of Downshire and found he died in September 1845, in London, and not in Wicklow in June of that year, so it seems his fall was not immediately fatal. Local lore probably changed the story for dramatic effect. Oddly, a space on the obelisk to record the finishing date for the plantation was never filled in.

It was an ambitious and extensive forestry project for its time, but Murray's efforts to grow poplar, alder and oak were not very successful, though some majestic oaks and alders still line the banks of the Lugnalee Brook and River Liffey. His 'scotch fir' or Scots pines, however, did much better and dominate the woodland today, along with some European larches.

Above: The upper, open area of the pine forest where natural regeneration is most likely to succeed, if facilitated and encouraged, according to the expert report.

Below: A healthy, majestic pine in the plantation.



Gravest threats

The report notes that **uncontrolled fires** posed the gravest threat to the woodland, and that the area had been subjected to repeated burning events. Meanwhile, browsing by **deer** and **sheep** limits any natural regeneration and hinders the re-establishment of native woodland species, including **mountain ash**, **silver birch** and **willow** species.

The wooded area of the 327-hectare site currently covers just 67.5 hectares. While the Ordnance Survey map from 1838 and an estate map from 1880 show the site as fully planted, the Ordnance Survey map of 1906 shows an area of just 65 hectares as being wooded, much as today. The authors note that it seems unlikely the entire site was planted, given the unfavourable soils and the lack of evidence of planting or related drainage over much of the site.

The woodland area was also reduced due to **commercial felling** in the north-west section following World War II (when there was a mobile saw-mill near the bridge; sawdust is still present) and through some **fuelwood harvesting** by local people. This helped produce the naturalistic lay-out of trees that contributes to the scenic beauty of the plantation today.

It also allows comparisons to be drawn to what a native Irish upland pine forest might have looked like, similar to the **Caledonian pine forests** of the Scottish highlands. Indeed, the authors note, the Coronation Plantation is probably the closest image available of what native Irish pine forests looked like before their decline during the first century AD.

It, therefore, has a 'hugely important cultural heritage value,' they write. Of course, since the report was written, it has been learned that a small **native pinewood** survives in the Burren, Co Clare. Others may exist but have yet to be identified.

Restoration plan

The remaining woodland is of three types:

- **Oak with Scots pine, silver birch, alder, mountain ash and willow, distributed along the riverbanks**

The oaks are all of similar age (greater than 150 years) with no young oaks present to replace them.

- **Mixed Scots pine and larch with some mountain ash and silver birch, mainly on more exposed ground**

The conifers here are all in a mature 'stag-headed' state. Regeneration was recorded but no seedlings were surviving above the herb layer, due to grazing.

The authors note that regeneration will be most successful in this area, if it is protected from grazing, because the species here are pioneer tree species.

Interestingly, they found the pines here to be of different ages, indicating that regeneration was continuous over a long period of time until grazing pressure became too intense in recent times.

- **Pure stands of Scots pine**

The main body of woodland within the site. The trees here all date from the original planting and all are now ageing and 'stag-headed.'

Expected longevity

Due to grazing in the woodland, there are virtually no trees younger than 90 years of age, although seed production, germination and regeneration do occur. The authors were determined to estimate the expected longevity of the remaining trees and found that, in general, the **pin**es show little evidence of significant dieback; and so, much of the pine is expected to last another 100 years.

In contrast, the **oaks** show a higher incidence of deadwood and dieback and the authors give them perhaps another 75 years. Given that the trees in the plantation have considerable remaining longevity, there is ample time available to find the most effective ways of encouraging strong natural regeneration.

Scottish regeneration model

The report describes a successful regeneration programme undertaken by the charity **Trees for Life** on a Caledonian pine forest in Glen Affric in central Scotland. It focused on the creation of **exclosures** to keep out deer and sheep and on two different strategies within the exclosures: (1) **natural regeneration only** and (2) a mixture of **natural regeneration** and 'enrichment' planting of trees of local provenance.

The project worked outwards from areas of strength, utilising pioneer species to facilitate the restoration, and also removing any introduced species, such as **rhododendron** and **cherry laurel**.

The same principles could be applied successfully in Coronation Plantation, beginning with exclosures, followed by enrichment planting and the application of rock phosphate to beat competition from heather, the authors write.

Short-term objectives recommended by the authors include liaising with grazing-rights holders regarding woodland management, developing a fire management plan, managing deer grazing, and commencing natural regeneration plots by erecting grazing exclosures.

Reducing the grazing pressure

There is clear evidence that a removal or substantial reduction of grazing pressure would result in the



Above: Raven, Ireland's largest crow species: it nests on pine trees in the Coronation Plantation.

Below: Sika deer stag. Significant numbers of this introduced species inhabit the Coronation Plantation.

emergence of a new generation of trees. In their management plan for the site the authors recommend the creation of a series of **exclosures** throughout the woodland, but particularly in the area of woodland on the more exposed ground (the second woodland type described above) where regeneration is most likely to succeed.

The creation of exclosures would then be followed by a programme of treatments, e.g., manual scarification using mattocks (to expose soil for seeds); enrichment planting of sessile oaks; and managed deer culling (some deer are already culled annually in Ballynabrocky as part of a wider national park plan).

Perhaps the greatest challenge of all will be **fire control**. It is thought that most fires are started by careless picnickers, but while some fires are no doubt accidental a significant number are malicious. Very few areas within the plantation have escaped a severe burn in the last twenty years, so a fire management plan is urgently required. This could include creating firebreaks around exclosures or along existing ditches and drains. The NPWS is developing a specific fire management plan for the site.

All in all, it seems Coronation Plantation can indeed be saved, if these measures, and others outlined in the plan, can be fully implemented by the national park ■

Note: This article, in an earlier version, first appeared in the June 2019 issue of *Woodland*, the Native Woodland Trust's membership magazine.



WILDERNESS LODGE, Glenmalur, Co. Wicklow
Base for Adventure Holidays in stunning Glenmalur
Well-Provided Self-Catering Apartments
Group Bookings for Hillwalking Clubs
<http://wildernesslodge.ie> and <http://wildirishwalkingholidays.com>
Telephone: 0404 46839 and 087 262 5549
Email: frankquinn24@gmail.com



HANGING OUT ON HEKLA

Michael Guilfoyle visited Hekla, an active volcano in Iceland, with his son Eoin in May of this year.

Medieval Icelanders regarded Iceland's most active volcano, **Hekla** (1,491m), as the 'Gateway to Hell'! Before the science of volcanology, that made eminent sense. Hekla's regular inferno of fire and lava, and inundations of suffocating dust, deeply traumatised Icelanders of the south-west of this country, and repeatedly wreaked havoc on their lives and livelihoods.

Now that they know better, Icelanders harbour an almost spiritual fascination with the mountain. They feel privileged to share their land with such an elemental and violent force of nature – perhaps reflecting the Icelanders' own penchant for terror and mayhem in their distant past as Viking warriors!

Indeed, during a winter eruption a few years ago, a sudden blizzard led to a huge operation to rescue the multitude of people who had driven out to feel close to the fires of Hekla and got themselves stranded in the cold and snow instead!

As a frequent visitor to Iceland since the 1970s, Hekla has fascinated me too. On a quick visit to

Above:
Landscape
around Hekla
littered with
volcanic debris.

Iceland in May, more to introduce my son **Eoin** to the country and to visit some very dear old Icelandic friends, I couldn't resist making the two-hour drive from Reykjavik to the base of the mountain. Warm-sector low cloud and rain, and a wind from the south-east, were plaguing the capital as we left, but we were soon in the brighter, clearer and dry air of the rain-shadow north of the large icecaps of **Eyjafjallajokull** and **Myrdalsjokull**.

We'd been warned, however, that a volcanic eruption at Hekla was "imminent."

Sure enough, a rather scary panel at the track-head informed us in graphic detail of all the horrible ways one could die, if caught close to an eruption – volcanic 'bombs,' mudslides and flash floods, suffocating dust and poisonous gases were but a few of the dangers! It also warned that we would receive only sixty or so minutes' notice (via SMS) of an eruption from the array of monitoring instrumentation on the flanks of the mountain.

Still, the vast trackless plains and low hills of dust, obsidian and tephra stretching away before us, seemingly ascending easily towards the visible base of the summit ice-cap, were irresistible. So, off we went and, even though we had a good map, we just took a mind-bearing on the highest snow-free part of the distant mountain's flank and determined to see how far we'd get!

There wasn't a hope, of course, that we'd make the summit. Even though we had hired a little 4WD Suzuki Jimny in Keflavik two days previously with Hekla vaguely in mind, the rough route beyond the track-



➤ **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.



WE HAD A FABULOUS WALK THROUGH A LANDSCAPE UNIQUE IN EUROPE.

head was closed as ‘impassable,’ so, from where we had parked, the summit would have required a hard-walk round-trip of more than 30 kilometres and about 1,100m of climbing, for which we just didn’t have the time, more or less permanent daylight notwithstanding.

In any case, as we were unable to access the standard approach from the east, and were required to approach the summit from the snowier north, it was likely we would have needed ice axes and crampons and perhaps even to be roped up, if we were to have any chance.

In the event, we had a really fabulous walk of about six hours through a landscape unique in Europe. From a hiking point of view, we probably covered 15 to 20 kilometres over firm, gentle hills and ridges of crushed stone and ash.

As we got closer to the volcano, we traversed vast, high terraces littered with volcanic bombs dropped out of the sky by ancient eruptions. The scale and texture of the landscape and its lunar-like feel, and the contrast of the familiar blue sky and cloudscape with the sterile, dark monochrome surface of lava and tephra, shocked and enthralled us in equal measure.

All around was a burnt, torn and pummelled landscape. Great rivers of lava emerged from fissures on the mountain’s flanks, and flowed down from the summit crater, only to stall far out on the dusty plains; these were brand-new landforms from out of the hot depths of the Earth, some only now submitting themselves to the attentions of wind and rain, snow and ice. Dramatic incised channels, created by torrents of meltwater released off the summit ice-cap by sudden eruptions, allowed us easy access upwards from one terrace to the next. On these high and wide terraces, the same fine dust that grounded most of Europe’s airlines in 2010 swirled about us in playful

Above: A view from the slopes of Hekla. Eoin Guilfoyle is visible on the left.

Below: Information panel at the track-head notifying visitors of the many dangers posed by the volcano to human life.

little ‘dust devils’ and shaped the ground into constantly shifting and changing micro-dunes and little drifts.

All the time, we kept our ears cocked for any subterranean rumbling that might have heralded an eruption, one part of our minds saying ‘Bring it on,’ relishing the prospect of that once-in-a-lifetime experience! In the event, the mountain remained slightly disappointingly quiet and allowed us to exit back to our jeep, and on to our friends in Reykjavik.

Later that evening, our friends told us that one of their friends was in the area and had witnessed the last eruption, in 2000. They told us that he would never forget the sound, the colour of fire and ejecta mixing with cloud in the evening sky, and the deep earth-shake seeming to emanate from deep beneath his feet. This secondhand telling of the man’s story, and the images conjured up by it, explained to us why the ancient Icelanders felt this mountain was indeed the ‘Gateway to Hell.’ It left us a little jealous to have missed out on such a primal experience and on having such a story for ourselves to tell! ■



NORTH WOLLO HIGHLANDS TREK

Margaret O'Mahony travelled to Ethiopia for a seven-day trek through the North Wollo Highlands led by the Irish charity Africa Direct.

Imagine for a moment waking up in a rounded African hut with stone walls held together by mud and with a pointed, circular grass roof. The golden glow of daybreak permeates the wood-slatted doors and windows. The door is swung open by whomever has got up first, and the vista that presents itself takes your breath away. Every morning, when I woke up on our trek in the North Wollo Highlands, each of my senses was brought alive by sounds, smells, tastes and sights impossible to capture either in words or pictures.

Ethiopia, formerly known as Abyssinia, is a landlocked republic in north-east Africa, the Horn of Africa, with a population estimated at 108 million, the second most populous country in Africa. It is Africa's oldest independent country. It has never been colonised and it served as a symbol of African independence throughout the colonial period. Ethiopia has a unique cultural heritage, being the home of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, one of the oldest Christian denominations. It was a monarchy until a coup in 1974.



➤ **Margaret O'Mahony** lives in Cork and is an active member of the **Cork Mountaineering Club** and of **Bishopstown Hillwalking Club**. She has been enjoying hillwalking for over fifteen years.

Above: Part of Lalibela town, the final stop on the trek.

Below: A busy street in Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital.

In 2007, **Irish Aid** initiated a project, funding communities along an 80-km stretch of the magnificent North Wollo Highlands to build tukuls, so that they could accommodate trekkers in this magnificent region. **Tukuls** are the round mud huts with a conical straw roof that are found throughout eastern Africa. The tukuls for trekkers are entirely run by the local communities and are a sustainable income-generating project.





THERE IS AN AIR OF PEACE AND TRANQUILLITY ON LAKE TANA'S MANY ISLANDS.

Africa Direct is an Irish, Cork-based charity run by volunteers, which raises funds to support projects in developing countries, with a philosophy of helping the people to tackle poverty in their own areas. Africa Direct leads treks to the North Wollo Highlands and this is one of its ways of sharing the experience of Ethiopia in a culturally and environmentally mindful way. In doing this, the charity supports the local communities, who run the tukuls, and also visits the projects it is developing with local communities.

Our trip with Africa Direct to North Wollo commenced on Friday, October 19th, 2018, when our group of fourteen people, including the trek leader, **Liz O'Donovan** (an Africa Direct member), met at Dublin airport. We landed in **Addis Ababa**, the bustling capital city of three million people, where the extremes of poverty co-exist with affluence.

We met **Getish Salew**, who was to be our local guide throughout our stay; he was selfless in his attention to the needs of the group and was expert in dealing with transport, accommodation, etc.

On that first day, we had the honour of having afternoon tea with **Sonja Hyland**, Irish Ambassador to Ethiopia, who especially acknowledged Getish's voluntary work with Africa Direct.

The source of the Blue Nile

The second day involved a long bus journey through the Ethiopian countryside to **Bahir Dar** on the southern shore of Lake Tana. Our third day commenced with a wondrous boat trip across **Lake Tana** to visit the island monasteries. The islands and peninsulas of Lake Tana

Above: The beginning of the Blue Nile at the outlet of Lake Tana.

collectively house more than 20 monastic churches, some of which date back to the 14th century. What was extraordinary was the simplicity of the monks' lives on these islands and the fascinating treasure houses there: items of immense historical significance are kept in stone houses, which are showing signs of deterioration from the natural elements.

There is an air of peace and tranquillity on these islands, with monks living their simple lives of prayer and fasting. We visited the outlet of the **Blue Nile**, where it exits Lake Tana, its source. (The river meets up with the White Nile in Khartoum in Sudan.) It was at Lake Tana that I caught my first ever glimpse of a **hippopotamus** in the wild and enjoyed the magical **pelicans**.

Start of the trek

The trekking began the following day. We went on a short bus journey through the Ethiopian countryside and then divided into two groups, as the community-run tukuls can only accommodate seven guests per night. The tukuls, which each sleep two to three people, are managed by the local community. Each group was accompanied by a guide. The two guides, **Getish Salew** and **Zinabie**, were generous and accomplished guides and were extremely knowledgeable about the geography, geology, vegetation and people. They were also fun teachers of Ethiopian dance!

Each day, the groups trekked to a new location at a pleasant pace for 6-7 hours through the countryside and along the escarpments. Smells varied from wild thyme, sage, juniper and eucalyptus, each step offering a variety of spectacular views, with the sounds of children laughing and singing out "Hello, Hello, Helloooooooo" as we passed by.

We walked through green pastures where children and adults were herding their precious cattle. Women and men tended crops of chickpeas, green lentils, ➤



wheat and **teff**, which is the grain from which their staple flatbread, called **injera**, is made.

The days started with a breakfast of freshly scrambled eggs, eaten while sitting at the edge of an escarpment, viewing the valley below. Donkeys, provided by the local people as part of the initiative, carried our rucksacks and we carried small day-packs with drinking water, which was available at all night-time and lunch-time stops. Daytime temperatures were a pleasant 22-25 degrees Celsius.

We trekked 105 kilometres from **Werot**, a short bus journey from **Bahir Dar**, to a district close to **Lalibela**. Midway through each day, lunch was available at another tukul. Walking between the villages is reasonably flat and would be possible for people with moderate levels of fitness. The greatest ascent was 1,000m. The community-run tukuls are at altitudes of between 2,800m and 3,000m, which means that temperatures at night can fall rapidly. Therefore, clothing for cold nights is required, as well as good sleeping bags.

Walking outdoors day after day with splendid views and in a comfortable climate brings a wonderful sense of wellbeing. Experiencing the hospitality of the Ethiopian people was an important part of this holiday. Each lunchtime, there were ritual ablutions followed by the coffee ritual, where an Ethiopian woman would bring a tray of roasting coffee beans, still smoking, to each person so they could inhale the aroma.

An array of food spread on trays to feed the hungry trekkers was then shared, while the pounding of coffee beans drummed a beat in the background. Curried potatoes, chickpeas, spinach and cabbage were served on platters of injera.

Striking views out over the plains, with donkeys grazing and Ethiopian chatter, was the backdrop to these wholesome meals. The lunches were rounded off with coffee served from a special clay pot; I have never tasted coffee like it; even non-coffee drinkers were converted.

Above:
An island
monastery
church.

Below:
Guesthouse
at Aterow.

The memory that will always stand out for me is arriving at the first village, **Mequat Mariam**, set on a promontory of the plateau at 2,800m. We came through a field of high wheat and suddenly we were at the edge of an escarpment with spectacular views across the valley. Each tukul seemed to be placed on the most extraordinary viewing point, generally at the edge of a cliff looking over the basin below and across to more mountains and cliffs. Even the views from the stand-alone tukul toilets were awesome, though these toilets were somewhat precariously perched for night-time visits!

Another highlight of this trek came at **Aterow** (meaning 'chickpea'), where we walked from our lofty tukul into a gorge with a waterfall, which was the home of a troop of **gelada monkeys**. All of us watched in stunned silence. When faced with wildlife and witnessing beauty, it can touch a primal part of our being; this was one such moment of coalescing features, wildlife, beauty and a group silent in awe and appreciation of the moment.





LALIBELA TOWN IS SET AMONG VAST ROCKY ESCARPMENTS, EACH CORNER PROVIDING A DIFFERENT SCENIC VISTA.

Work supported by Africa Direct

It was also very special to visit the two schools at **Sendenna** and **Wajella**, which have been supported by **Africa Direct** to build new, more sustainable school buildings, an impossibility without this assistance. Liz O'Donovan and the group were welcomed with singing and heartfelt appreciation for the work of Africa Direct.

Upon arrival at each camp around sunset, our hosts would greet us with tea and snacks. The evening meal was shared around the fire, food which was wholesome and a joy to the palate. The day-time views were matched at night by star-filled canopies blanketing the valleys. The moon illuminated the valleys below in a mystical night light that was breath-taking. We ate, talked, sang and danced around the night-time fire.

Above left:
Bete Giyorgis
(Church of
Saint George)
in Lalibela.

Above right:
Landscape in
the Semien
Mountains.

Below: **Gelada**
monkeys at
Aterow.

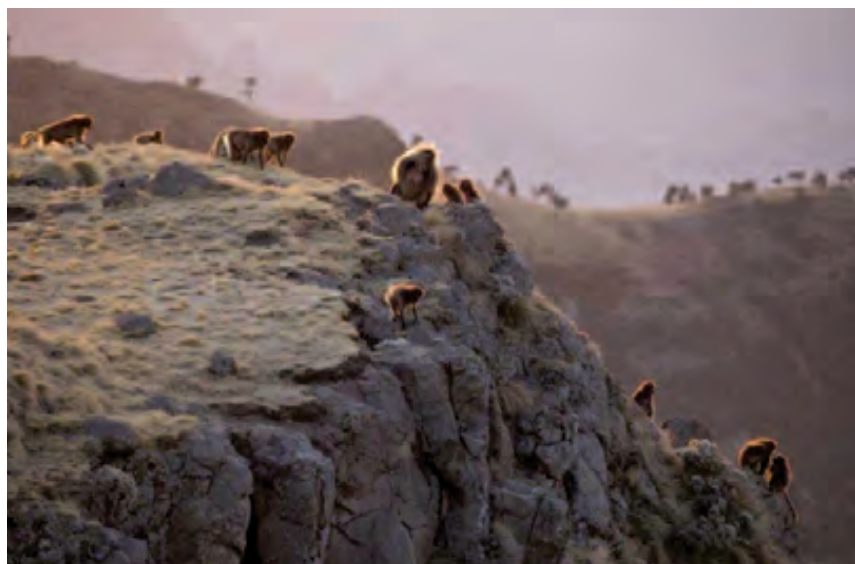
Language differences were no barrier to this sharing and enjoyment.

Our seven-day trek was over all too quickly. There is a timelessness to walking day after day, where all of our senses were stimulated. Our final stop at the end of the trek was at **Lalibela**, a town high in the mountains of **Lasta** and famous for its **rock-hewn churches**. At an altitude of 2,630m, it is set among vast rocky escarpments and mountains, so that each corner provides a different scenic vista. It is a growing modern town and a place of sacred pilgrimage for faithful Ethiopians. The holy places are living shrines, filled with many pilgrims. We were fortunate to witness the monks' colourful, rhythmic and sacred prayers and chanted rituals.

Our time at Lalibela rounded off an extraordinary trekking trip, one of rich experiences, outstanding scenery and amazing encounters with noble and gentle people, who provided genuine hospitality, fun and care for us as we visited their country.

The two groups met up again in Lalibela and there was a sense that we had all been touched by our experiences and that new friendships had been forged.

A proportion of the money paid by each trekker for this trip to the North Wollo Highlands went to provide funds to help **Africa Direct** in their work with the schools. Bringing trekkers to this area also provides direct income to communities along this trekking route ■



Links

- **Africa Direct** organises annual treks to Ethiopia. This year's trek will start on October 20th. Please see www.africadirect.ie or email africadirect@gmail.com for more information.
- **Getish Salew** guides for private treks as well: see www.ethiopianhighlandtrekkingandtour.com.
- Bishopstown Hillwalking Club plans to organise more trips to the Semien Mountains in Ethiopia in 2019-2020. For information contact the Irish coordinator, **Sean Cotter** of Bishopstown Hillwalking Club at bishopstownhc@gmail.com.

BEARS WALK IN ETHIOPIA

Marian Wallis and her husband Bertie Cahill of the Ballyhoura Bears Walking Club paid a visit to Ethiopia with other club members and set themselves the challenge of reaching the top of Abuna Yosef (4,260m).

In November 2018, my husband **Bertie Cahill** and I trekked across the Wollo Highlands of Ethiopia. Our goal was to reach the summit of **Mount Abuna Yosef** (4,260m), the sixth-highest mountain in Ethiopia and the nineteenth-highest in Africa. To do that, in all we hiked 130 kilometres and ascended more than 5,000m.

Our adventure began in the tiny airport of Lalibela, where a **TESFA (Tourism in Ethiopia for Sustainable Future Alternatives)** group jeep reminiscent of the 1980s drove us to our rendezvous with our guide, **Eusebio**, our muleteer and his mule. We had chosen to go with **TESFA Community Tourism**, which was founded in 2010 to generate sustainable tourism and bring much-needed income to remote villages in Ethiopia.

The drive in was a revelation as we trundled along a dirt road, across gullies and rivers, avoiding donkeys, goats, sheep, cattle and streams of children, men and women who were all competing for space.

The mountains rise sharply like volcanic sentinels out of the valleys. They shelter the most agriculturally productive and densely populated plateaux in Ethiopia. We began trekking from **Gashena**, the gateway to the

Above: Mount Abuna Yosef (4,260m) in Ethiopia.

Below: Lunch-stop on the way to Takeze Gorge.

highlands of **Amhara**. We followed a rock-strewn path across ploughed and golden stubbled fields, where men with sickles manually stacked and threshed the barley. Children tended animals in the fields, while women collected dry dung to use as fertiliser and building material.

This was an easy three-hour hike with an at times gradual ascent through the numerous eucalyptus forests found everywhere in Ethiopia. These trees are grown as a crop to provide a steady source of firewood, poles for construction and farm tools.

Shortly before sunset, we wound around to **Boya** and our first community guesthouse, which tottered on a 3,000-metre precipice. We looked west across numerous valleys and giant-like mountains to the towering massif of Abuna Yosef.



➤ **Marian Wallis and Bertie Cahill** are both members of the **Ballyhoura Bears Walking Club**. (Marian is also a member of Mountaineering Ireland's Hillwalking Committee.) Members of the club walk for 5-6 hours every Sunday in the Galty, Knockmealdown and Kerry mountains. Club members have also walked abroad in England, Europe and Africa.



ONCE THE SUN HAD SET, THE TEMPERATURES PLUNGED TO FREEZING.

The guesthouses are **tukuls** – round Ethiopian houses built of native materials. There are four bedrooms on each site with a double and single bed in each. The beds are formed by heaping earth into concrete-built rectangles topped with a mattress. Facilities were basic, though we had access to an eco-type latrine and water for handwashing.

A larger tukul acted as a restaurant and kitchen where some local women cooked the most delicious meals of eggs for breakfast and vegetables, rice and chicken for dinner.

That first evening, the setting sun cast a warm, red-tinted glow over the whole panorama of the **Wollo Highlands**. Once the sun had set, temperatures plummeted quickly from the twenties to freezing: a good base layer as well as warm fleeces, hats and gloves were essential. Within days we had adopted the Ethiopian custom of wrapping up in a blanket. Darkness fell within fifteen minutes, so then it was on with the head torches and a huddle around the campfire.

The next day began at 6.00am, with the rising sun clothing the landscape in soft yellow tones. We walked eastwards, following the plateau where the farmers were kept busy protecting their crops from marauding **gelada monkeys**. Much of the walk was along the escarpment, with a lunch-stop at **Waro**, where we were served the local staple food of **injera**, a flatbread, and vegetables.



Above: Taking in the view across the Ethiopian Highlands.

Below left: Local people wrapped up well in the cool morning air.

Day three had a very different pace. It involved a seven-hour walk down a 1,500m steep gully filled with loose stones and rocks. Forest-covered cliffs overhung the path. The path quickly came alive with men, women and children, who sped past us. Many were barefoot or wearing plastic sandals. However, our real rivals on the paths were herds of goats, who had no intention of standing to one side for any foreigners. All gave way to oxen, calves and mules.

We descended numerous rocky 'stairways' and crossed plateaux growing the staple grain crop **teff**, the grain from which injera is made. The sun was now relentless, so we were thrilled to go barefoot across the great but treacherous **Takaze River**.

High-altitude guesthouses

We had now descended to 2,000m and so our next three hours involved slithering up the precipitous slopes of the mountain wall which separated us from **Geneta Mariam**. This guesthouse was reached by an almost vertical zig-zag path. Nearby was one of the numerous cave churches for which this area is famous.

The next day brought rain clouds and an eight-hour walk skirting along the mountainside by contouring through forests of junipers and past one tree reputed to be at least 600 years old. This area was poorer and more remote. The rain lowered the temperature, which made the 900m climb up a treacherous gully of loose stones and rocks a little easier. Well-worn steps testified to generations of use. This region of Ethiopia has changed very little in the last one thousand years.

We were now so high up that we traversed along the tops of gullies as we swung around the highest point, ➤

ETHIOPIA



Left:
Guesthouse
of tukuls at
Geneta
Mariam.

Below: Looking
down a gully.

Right: Sunrise
at the Tadios
Amba
guesthouse
(3,600m).



to be faced with an ever-stretching complex of ridges between us and Abuna Yosef. We were now on paths so faint and narrow that only a local could find them. Holding our breath, we hugged the side, manoeuvring along the escarpment thousands of metres above the ravines.

We finally zig-zagged to the mountain pass. Continuous rows of pillar-like formations, tall, inscrutable and forbidding, rose out of the valleys. Scrambling over boulders, we were suddenly assailed

with the most wonderful smells of lavender, thyme, rosemary and bergamot, a natural herb garden.

We now dropped down again to reach our guesthouse at **Tadios Amba** (3,600m) just as the skies opened. Cold and icy gusts of wind swirled around the campsite as we huddled with the locals around the quickly-lit campfire.

Day five would bring us to the refuge (4,000m) at the foot of Abuna Yosef in eight hours. After first crossing some gardens, the trail quickly changed to rock and earth. The paths now appeared to be glued to the side of the mountain as we ascended to reach the **Ambo Bahir pass**. We admired the new panorama of mountains, home to fewer and poorer settlements.

Thin air on Abuna Yosef

Crossing one plateau, we launched on to a path up a wall-like mountain. This summit brought us into an Afro-Alpine landscape covered in a forest of giant **lobelias**. Here, women and girls were bent over as they carried bundles of lobelia home for firewood. Nothing else seemed to grow at this altitude. This was the home of **Ethiopian wolves, lammergeyers** and other large predatory birds.

Thunder rolled across the range as heavy rain and fog accompanied us along the north-eastern trail to the guesthouse at **Agaw Beret**, built by the Frankfurt Zoological Society. Forewarned about the cold, we were still surprised to find we needed to dress in every stitch we had as well as wrapping ourselves in blankets.

The following day dawned beautifully, with the sun casting a red and golden glow on the face of **Abuna Yosef**. The skies were clear as we ascended the last three hundred metres to the top. Icicles were testament to the low temperature at this level. This was the first time we had experienced the effort of





OUR STRUGGLE WAS OVER. WE HAD ACHIEVED OUR GOAL.

walking in thinner air. At first it was a gradual climb, but the last 100 metres were steep. We used boulders to pull ourselves up to the last scramble along the ridge. It was well worth all the effort, as we breathlessly surveyed the whole world spread below us with luminous clarity. Our struggle was over and we had achieved our goal.

We descended quickly, passing by the sharp **zigit**, pentagonal-sided pillars formed from outcrops of basalt rock. We were back amongst the giant lobelias until we came to the valley floor, where little was growing. Here everything is about food security as there is little fertility but large numbers of people.

Ascending to the large compound of **Hamusit**, we had a three-hour walk to **Ad Mehane Alem**. The last hour was level walking and a welcome relief to tired legs. Sitting that night on the cliff edge, we watched the sun go down over the ancient landscape. The moon was

Above: Marian Wallis and her husband Bertie Cahill on the summit of Mount Abuna Yosef (4,260m), the sixth highest mountain in Ethiopia.

bright and high in the sky as we chatted to the villagers about our two countries.

The final day dawned with a long descent to the town. Again, it was a magnificent walk along the escarpment, with thousands of metres of a drop on both sides. It soon became a quite treacherous and overpopulated path, as we encountered locals hurrying up and down. On one side, we had *Erica* plants (a giant heather) dropping down to regular woodland and more agricultural land.

We now had good views of the town and suddenly we were back to the noise of a more modern way of life. There was a lingering sadness as we said goodbye ■

Travel information

- We used **Ethiopian Airlines** to fly to, and to fly within, Ethiopia.
- We met with and arranged guides and donkeys with **TESFA Trekking** upon arrival in Addis Ababa.
- For further information see **www.tesfatours.com**.



NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN

Jack Bergin reports on an Irish expedition to Spiti, India, in 2018

“Do you not get enough hardship in life without creating more for yourself?” my late father once remarked, after sitting through a slide-show about a trip to Denali in 1982. I obviously do not, as here I was, setting off again!

The dream was to visit unexplored valleys and unclimbed summits in Spiti in the north-west of India. My previous two trips to India had involved fighting through dense rhododendron forests in northern Sikkim in very unsettled weather, so the priority was to improve on this.

After some preliminary discussions with our local agent, climber and guide, **Anindja Mukerjee (Raja)**, we decided to go to the Losar area of Spiti, a little-explored

Above:
Approaching
the summit of
Peak 6,015m in
Losar, Spiti.

area, which contains a number of unclimbed 6,000m summits.

Further research revealed that the late **Joss Lynam** had travelled through the valley in 1958, as part of a survey team, and had climbed a mountain there called **Fluted Peak** at the southern end of the valley (see *Himalayan Journal* 1958).

When we flew out, Raja met us at Delhi airport and the next day we travelled to **Manali** by overnight bus. The first few hours of the journey were completed in relative comfort, but the latter two-thirds were a harbinger of what was in store for us: very poor roads, roadworks and landslides – all combined to leave us bone-shaken and more than a little weary.

In Manali, we met our cook, **Lakpa**, who had served on many expeditions, including up to Camp 6 on Everest. The quality and variety of the food he produced on this trip was exemplary.

We also met **Pasang**, who was to assist us as a high-altitude porter. Pasang had summited Everest three times. We felt both of these gentlemen were necessary, as we had just about ten days in the area and wished to maximise our climbing opportunities.

We spent a day in Manali purchasing food and fuel for the mountains and organising both a jeep to



► **Jack Bergin** is a long-standing member of Mountaineering Ireland and a past board member. An active rock climber, he was involved with the development of Coumshingaun as the premier crag in the south-east and has a wealth of experience in the Alps. He has travelled widely and climbed in many of the ranges of the world, including Alaska, Nepal, and Sikkim (twice). He is an advocate of personal responsibility and self-reliance in mountaineering.



WE SPENT A DAY BUYING FOOD AND ORGANISING A JEEP AND THE NECESSARY PORTERS.

transport us the 200km to Losar and the necessary porters. While Losar sees quite a bit of indigenous tourist activity, almost all of this is transient ‘through-tourism,’ with almost no tradition of trekking or climbing in the area. The porters would thus have to travel from Manali.

We travelled from Manali to **Losar** in a jeep that had no treads on its tyres and was later revealed by the driver to not have four-wheel-drive capability either. However, the reliable Tata machine ploughed on through mud, grime, grit and boulder fields, taking us over the 4,000m **Rotang La**, followed by the 4,500m **Kussum La**.

From Losar to base camp

Our base in Losar was the extremely hospitable **Shambala** guesthouse, where **Sonam** proved to be a fantastic host.

There was no time for delay, and the next day was a tough acclimatisation exercise, doing a carry up the northern end of the steep-sided valley to the site of our base camp at 4,500m. Although this site was relatively comfortable, it was in a steep-sided valley with a north-south aspect, which meant the sun did not shine on it until late in the day, and then retreated again behind the hills quite early. Also, a constant cold

Above: Ki Monastery, outside Kaja.

Below: Descending from Peak 6,015m.

wind meant that down jackets were indispensable.

As the porters had failed to arrive to assist us with our first carry, we had a rest day, which was spent visiting the spectacular **Ki Monastery** about two hours away by jeep. The porters then arrived and we moved lock, stock and barrel up to base camp.

The plan was to explore two valleys to the east of the Losar Valley proper, making the second ascent of an **unnamed 6,015m peak** as part of our acclimatisation, and then to make a first ascent of at least one **unclimbed peak** in the next valley. ➤





First summit attempt

An early start and a four-hour slog over some rough ground brought us to the site of our first high camp at about 4,950m. There was no recce for this camp site, so we carried everything we needed with us: two tents, ice-climbing gear, food and stoves, sleeping bags and Thermarest mats as well as cold-weather gear. We felt every metre of the ascent.

First light saw **Alan, Raja, Lakpa** and myself on our way to attempt the second ascent of the 6,015m summit. We advanced over rough ground, much of this on moraine, but then managed to traverse onto a clean glacier at about 5,400m. The next 300 metres of ascent were the most enjoyable part of the whole expedition as we made our way upwards on clean, safe ice, never steeper than about 35 degrees. This brought us to a col at about 5,700m, when the reality of the terrain we were in dawned upon us.

The first 50 metres of height gain from the col was akin to climbing on a pile of road chippings – one step forward, at least half a step back. Progress was thus slow. As we got closer to 5,800m and a subsidiary summit called **Larimo**, progress improved on a narrow ridge with plenty of snow. We were now more sure-footed, and 10.45am saw us on the **summit (6,015m)** of this unnamed peak, well within schedule and all very happy.

However, the descent proved to be very uncomfortable and set us thinking: the quality of the rock was dire and, apart from the 300m of descent on the glacier, the whole day was spent on very poor, broken rock, scree and moraine, from 6,015m back to base camp at 4,500m.

Second high camp

The following day, we set off to establish another advance base camp at about 4,800m. After a night there, we went up the next subsidiary valley and put in a high camp there at about 5,000m. By now we had

Above: Shale and scree at altitude, hard on old legs.

Below: Ice makes a welcome change on Losar Peak.

realised that we were not in a position to attempt any of the unclimbed peaks without at least one more camp, which would have required either more time, or more porters, or both. There were two more accessible peaks, **Dom Rimo** and **Losar Peak** (both about 6,025m), that had been climbed before, and we decided to give at least one of them a go.

We set off with the intention of deciding which of the two peaks to climb when we reached the col between them at about 5,700m. However, we barely made it that far. We set off on very rough moraine before traversing onto a glacier at about 5,400m. The ascent on the glacier was very relaxed, apart from one brief crevassed area, but the next 100m of 40-degree muck, interspersed with sliding shale, drained our lungs, our legs and ultimately our willpower.

The others had left their crampons on for this section but, in my wisdom, I had taken mine off and, yes, that was a mistake. Slumped and gasping at the col, the words of my father came back into my head and, after a brief confab with Alan about the level of





WITH SNOW CONTINUING TO FALL, THINGS WERE GETTING SERIOUS. WE HAD TO GET OUT.

hardship, we concluded that this was 'no country for old men.'

Yes, the landscape was fantastic, the geology extremely interesting (including fossilised lugworms and clams discovered at about 5,000m) and the company great, but the underfoot conditions were appalling. A beer in Manali was suddenly a more attractive proposition than a 6,000m pile of shale with some snow on top.

Raja and Lakpa decided that they still wanted to bag the summit but, after another 30 minutes' slog, they, too, felt it was not worth it.

So, we all descended to base camp, looking forward to a bit of respite before the porters arrived the following day. Sadly, it was not to be.

At about 6.00am the following morning, it started to snow and it continued through the following day. It became clear that things were getting serious and we had to get out.

I spent the second night in fitful sleep, thinking of being avalanched into the deep gorge adjacent to our route out. We were faced with reversing our approach in treacherous conditions. We left camp, carrying only what we thought was necessary and stowed the remainder of our gear in a tent.

We managed the descent with some trepidation, and excellent route-finding by Lakpa in blizzard conditions, to find Losar under three feet of snow. While we were safe, the stick-and-mud roofs of the houses were no match for the elements. The guesthouse's roof leaked copiously and we had to move our beds around the rooms to try to avoid the leaks.

Above: Losar village, cut off by the freak snow-storm.

Below: Beginning to snow at base camp.

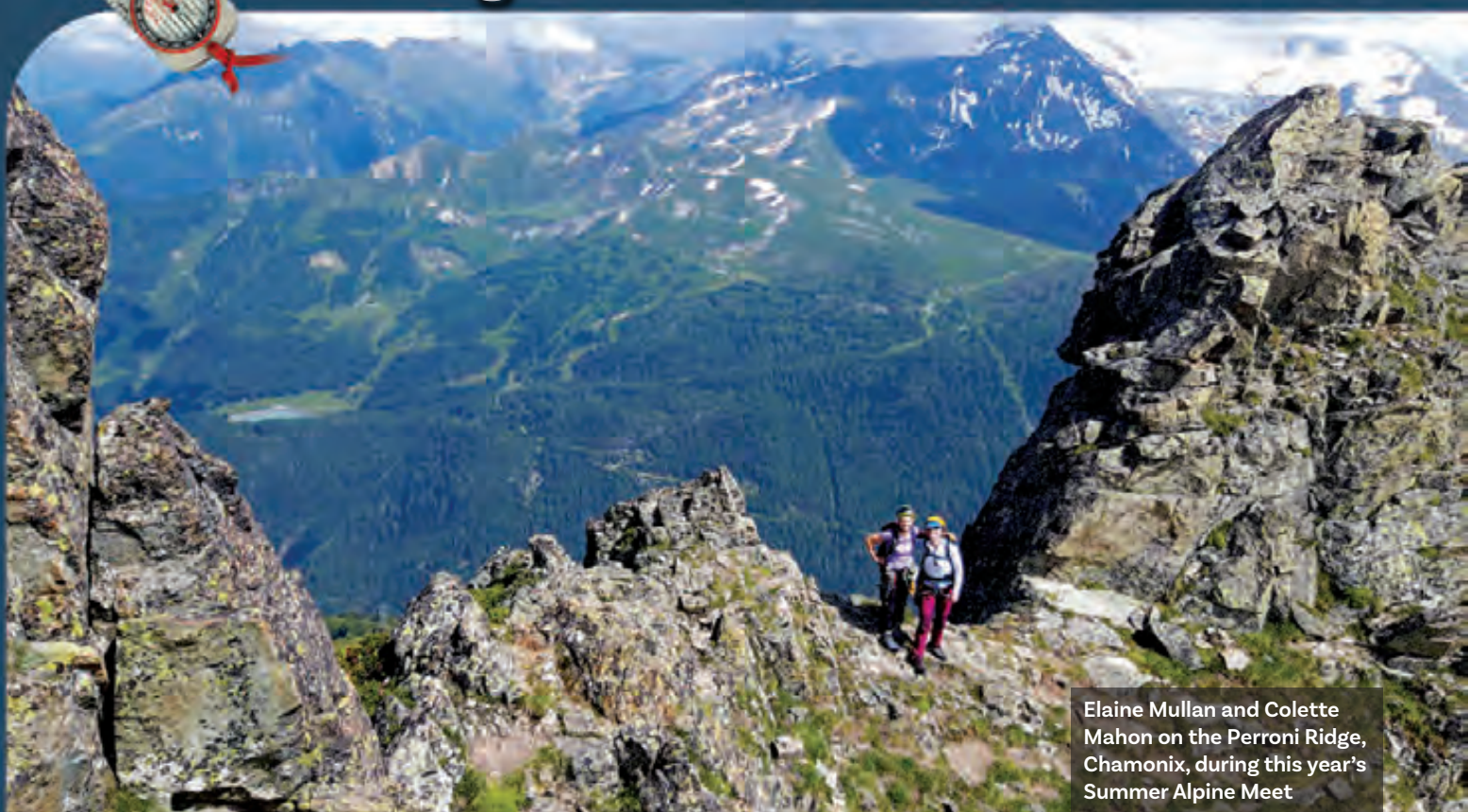
Without the assistance of Lakpa and Passang, and in particular the spectacularly resourceful and positive Raja, we would have had little to show for the trip.

Snowfall and landslides blocking the route we had approached on forced us to take a circuitous route back to Delhi, with major delays while landslides were cleared and roads re-opened.

The passes were opened about eighteen days after our departure, which meant that the porters could proceed from Manali and retrieve a lot of our gear. We were lucky that a group from Kilkenny, organised by **Kevin Higgins** from Tyndall Mountain Club, was going on a trek with Raja and kindly brought our gear home six weeks after the event ■

Plans are afoot for another four-week expedition to the Indian Himalaya in October 2020. If anyone is interested in joining the expedition, please contact **Alan Tees** at alanwtees@gmail.com.





Elaine Mullan and Colette Mahon on the Perroni Ridge, Chamonix, during this year's Summer Alpine Meet

Recent and upcoming events

Jane Carney reports on training news and events run by the Training Office



Written by
Jane Carney,
Training Officer

■ Mountaineering Ireland Alpine Meet Argentière, Chamonix, France, July 6-20th, 2019

The **2019 Summer Alpine Meet** was the most successful to date, based on the turn-out and the breakdown of those attending by age and gender.

Over 65 members attended the meet, with many availing of the Alpine walking, climbing and mountaineering courses, and others learning to lead-climb and to experience Alpine huts and trails for the first time. All of the participants stayed safe and benefited from the ideal learning environment.

Youths (under-25s) made up 33% of the participants, with under-18s making up 8% of all participants. The gender split was 58% male and 42% female.

Whilst youth representation has been increasing in recent years, the **Bursary Fund** greatly encouraged a further boost in numbers. The fund was used to significantly reduce the cost of courses for 18 to 25-year-old aspiring alpinists. The standard of applicants covered all abilities from the novice to the very experienced. We are pleased to announce that the **same Bursary Fund support** has already been promised for the **2020 Alpine Meet**.

The **2020 Alpine Meet** will take place in **Saas Grund, Switzerland**, where free lift passes for resident visitors are just one of the many benefits of this fabulous location. There, we will once again offer courses and opportunities to meet others and expand your skills' repertoire as alpinists.

The Alps offer a lifetime of new venues to explore, accessible to meet the needs, aspirations and abilities typically sought by clubs, individuals, families and students. The meet sees the

experienced mentoring the inexperienced in an apprentice-style pathway, and others following the more formal guide/client approach.

The Chamonix Valley is rich in well-signed trails, mountaineering routes, climbing venues, accessible huts and a range of accommodation options, including campsites. Make your Alpine trip plans for next year now and sustain your motivation by preparation, planning and perhaps even a little training ahead of the meet, at home or in Scotland.

The courses are run at cost and are not for profit. They are just one of the many benefits of your Mountaineering Ireland membership.

See you in Saas Grund, July 4-18th, 2020! ■

Ice climber Carris McKnight on Mer de Glace





STUDENT TRAINING & SAFETY SEMINAR 2019



16TH-17TH NOVEMBER
2019
IN
TOLLYMORE
NATIONAL OUTDOOR
CENTRE



PLEASE SUBMIT
TOPICS OR
SUGGESTIONS

SEE WEBSITE FOR
MORE DETAILS

News for members, candidates, providers

■ Mountain Training UK name change

It was agreed with the full support of Mountain Training Board Ireland that the **Mountain Training UK (MTUK)** organisation should henceforth be known as **Mountain Training United Kingdom and Ireland (MTUKI)**.

■ The MTUKI Walking Scheme Review

This review has commenced following the successful completion and implementation of the Climbing Awards Review.

We request that members, candidates and other stakeholders email the Training Office with comments for feedback to the MTUKI meeting in November. Periodical updates will be provided.

■ Training Grant applications

Please submit your Training Grant applications for the December 2019 MTBI meeting. New applications are now being accepted for Quarter 3 and 4 for review in December 2019.

■ Club Training Officers Workshops

Please see the calendar of events on page 59 for details.

■ Download these useful training guidelines

Please see the *National Guidelines for Climbing and Walking Leaders* and the *Good Practice Guidelines for Hillwalkers*, available on the Mountaineering Ireland website's **Training pages** → **Training Downloads** ■

Training awards and registration fees

■ Increased registration fees

Increases to the registration fees for the Leadership and Instructor Awards came into effect on January 1st, 2019, when a registration fee was also introduced for the Skills schemes.

Providers, please continue to support your candidates through the **registration process**. Screenshots from the website can be very helpful to candidates and can clarify the distinction between scheme or award registration and joining the Council, i.e. Mountaineering Ireland membership.

■ Leadership and Instructor Award registration fees will be increased from €50 to €52 (from £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 fee: €69 (£57).

■ Rock Climbing Development Instructor fee: €69 (£57).

■ All award and scheme candidates can avail of the reduced Mountaineering Ireland membership rate of €30 at the time of registration ■



Training

News for providers

■ **Sport Ireland Coaching** is to share a data protection (GDPR) update with providers.

■ The **MTUKI Walking Scheme Review** has commenced and we are seeking comments for the December MTBI meeting. Please email your comments to jane@mountaineering.ie.

■ The revised **Provider Handbook** is now live on the website. Please review and contact the Training Office with any comments, edits or queries.

■ Two new **Accredited Training Groups** (ATGs) have been approved: **Cappanalea Education & Training Centre** and **Tollymore National Outdoor Centre**. Mountaineering Ireland welcomes applications for ATG status, which is open to providers or groups of providers. Please contact the Training Office for details.

■ New providers have been inducted for the new **Rock Skills** scheme and **Rock Climbing Development Instructor** scheme.

■ **IMPORTANT!** The **QQI** (formerly FETAC) **Level 4 Rock Skills** scheme stays. The QQI Rock Skills Module will remain as a QQI offering. The proposal to remove it from the QQI list has been overturned. The QQI Level 4 Rock Skills scheme aligns with the NGB Rock Skills Introduction and Intermediate levels launched in January 2019.

■ For future **CPD events** see the calendar of events, page 59.



Group photograph at the top of a climb during the Alpine Meet (from left): Carris McKnight, David Hurley, Anna-Claire Garvey and Oliver Wynne

■ Providers are reminded to continue to submit **course reports** in a timely manner and **evidence of assessment forms** for all pass candidates of the ML, RCI, MPA, LLA and Level 1 Climbing Coach awards. These should include useful feedback and actions.

■ **Data Protection Slides:** providers are reminded to use these slides when delivering any ML, RCI, MPA, LLA and L1 CC courses.

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

Photograph: John Orr



Scottish Winter Meet

February 8-15th 2020
Onich, Scotland

Come along and develop your winter mountain skills, expand your knowledge and meet fellow walkers, mountaineers and climbers who enjoy snow and ice

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
Call the Training Office on 01 625 1112
or email jane@mountaineering.ie

DISCOUNTS for early bookings and group bookings

INFORMATION EVENING

Basecamp Store, Dublin, October 22nd, 7pm

Come along to find out more about the range of courses and training that will be available on the Winter Meet





Climbers Colm Peppard and Jeff Thomas on an AD grade climb on Aiguille Purtscheller, high above the Trient Glacier

Update to 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:

- Level 5 Mountain Skills
- Level 4 Rock Skills
- Level 5 Single-Pitch Award Training
- 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 at Altnadue, Castlewellan, is now open.)
- The duration of the training course has increased from two to three days (20 to 24 hours, to include one full day at a climbing wall).
- The introduction of two new and additional modules: (1) Teaching Skills and (2) Managing an Assistant.

Please contact the Training Office to discuss the transitional arrangements for candidates and the course requirements for trainers and those managing outdoor course provision. The **Training Officer, Jane Carney**, can be contacted for further details on (01) 625 1112 ■



Key dates 2019

- 25th September Club Support Meeting, Cork
- 3rd October Club Support Meeting, Newry
- 18-20th Oct Autumn Gathering, Dungarvan, Comeraghs
- 22nd Oct Winter Meet Information Evening, Basecamp, Dublin, 7-8pm
- 1-4th Nov Mountain Leader Assessment
- 2-3rd Nov Club Training Officer Workshop, Wicklow
- 8-10th Nov MTUKI meeting, Plas y Brenin
- 15-17th Nov Student Training & Safety Seminar, Tollymore National Outdoor Centre
- 21st Nov Club Support Meeting, Dublin
- 23-24th Nov Train the Trainers, Wicklow
- 27th Nov Club Support Meeting, Galway
- 2nd December MTBI Training Meeting, Sport HQ, Dublin
- 6th December Senior Providers Workshop (CPD), Sport HQ, Dublin
- 18th December Lynam Lecture, Chartered Accountants Ireland, 47-49 Pearse St, D2, 7.30pm

Key dates 2020

- 28th January Summer Alpine Meet Information Evening, Basecamp, Dublin, 7-8pm
- 30-31st January Train the Trainers, Wicklow
- 1-2nd February Club Training Officers Workshop, Mournes
- 8-15th February Winter Meet, Onich, Scotland (note revised date)
- 6-9th March Mountain Leader Assessment (venue to be confirmed)
- March/April MTUKI Meeting, Glenmore Lodge, Cairngorms (TBC)
- 23-24th May Skills/CPD Workshops in Teaching Navigation, Scrambling & Rock Climbing, Wicklow
- 4-18th July Summer Alpine Meet, Saas Grund, Switzerland

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



Stay safe out there!



No 5: FIRST VISIT TO A CLIMBING WALL

In the fifth in our series of Climbing Good Practice Guides, climbing wall instructor and coach **John Harrison** offers his advice on choosing the climbing wall that will best meet your needs.

As the autumn months close in, the days shorten and the weather invariably changes for the worse. It could be the right time to consider how you are going to keep your children active through the dark winter months, or indeed how to maintain your own health and fitness. How about trying indoor climbing?

Indoor climbing might just be the ultimate full-body work-out, according to various reports in the media, which detail how beneficial rock climbing is to your overall wellbeing, both physical and mental.

For children, climbing offers the opportunity to exercise the entire body in complex and variable movement patterns. Climbing develops and

exercises balance, strength, agility, mobility and problem-solving skills, all of which will stand the children in good stead for the rest of their lives.

This applies to adults too; climbing has long been lauded for the beneficial effects it has on adult bodies of all ages, keeping minds active and maintaining mobility, all in the comfortable and social environment of a climbing wall.

Now that I have explained how great indoor climbing is, let me answer a few of the other important questions you might have.

■ Where to go?

A quick Google search will locate your nearest climbing wall. Bear in mind that there are different types of climbing walls, offering a variety of climbing options, so do your research so that there are no surprises.

Every climbing wall has a good website with information regarding what they offer, and there is always someone on the end of the phone there to give advice and guidance.

■ What are the different types of climbing wall?

Some climbing walls specialise in **bouldering**. These walls are relatively low in comparison to roped walls, although still high enough to challenge all levels of climber. At around four metres in height, they are protected by deep matting at their base and offer a variety of climbing challenges to suit all abilities.

Some climbing walls have both bouldering and **roped walls**, providing

Young climbers receiving instruction



► *John Harrison began climbing outdoors in the mid-nineties, when climbing walls were few and far between. He now has twenty-plus years of climbing experience, outdoors and indoors, all over the world, and is a qualified climbing wall instructor, climbing coach and route-setter. He is part of the two-person team that designed, built and opened the **Suas Climbing Centre** in Gillogue, Co Clare, in 2017.*

top-rope climbing and **lead climbing** opportunities, in addition to the bouldering possibilities.

Top-rope climbing has pre-placed ropes linking the belayer and climber via a set of anchors at the top of the wall. That means the climber is continually protected from above by the rope and never really takes a fall of any distance.

In **lead climbing**, the rope is tied to the climber and attached to the belayer on the ground. As the climber ascends, they clip the rope through carabiners on the wall as they go. A slip in this case could result in a fall of several metres, before the climber is held by the belayer, which could be exciting!

■ Do I need to book?

For the most part, if you are new to climbing, it is essential to book in advance. A quick call to your local climbing wall will help inform you about the many different options available to get you going. These range from simple taster sessions designed to get you climbing quickly, so you can find out if you like it or not, to more involved introductory courses that will set you up with some basic climbing and rope skills and give you a good platform to progress from when you return.

■ What clothing and what equipment will I need?

Again, your chosen climbing wall will be happy to advise. In my experience, you should wear clothes that offer comfort and that stretch as you move; nothing too fragile, as the holds and wall surface can be quite abrasive, and nothing too baggy either, as you may be in danger of getting caught on a hold if you fall. You might get sweat and chalk on your clothes, so not your Sunday best either. You should also wear clean trainers, not sandals or flip-flops.

Specialist equipment such as harnesses, belay devices, climbing-specific shoes and even chalk is usually available for rent or provided as part of your introductory course.

If you get serious about climbing, you will at the very least want to invest in a good pair of climbing shoes that fit well, and to invest in a chalk bag.

■ What age categories are catered for?

Climbing is a sport for all ages. Roped climbing indoors can usually begin at the age of six or seven, as the child's concentration levels are at a stage of development where they can learn and take instruction well. This is not a hard-and-fast rule, but a guide.

Each climbing wall will have their own rules and guidelines relating to age and



Bouldering

will offer a variety of options to get your kids going.

NICAS and **NIBAS** (National Indoor Climbing/Bouldering Award Schemes) are two popular programmes offered by climbing walls designed to bring your child through a series of progressive exercises, equipping them with all the skills necessary to become strong, competent and independent young climbers. Many climbing walls also have youth clubs to get your kids climbing with other children in a fun social environment.

There is no upper age limit. Adults of all ages and abilities can avail of further

coaching, equipping them with good climbing techniques and movement skills, taking away some of the mysteries of climbing and paving the way to progression, getting stronger and climbing harder and for longer.

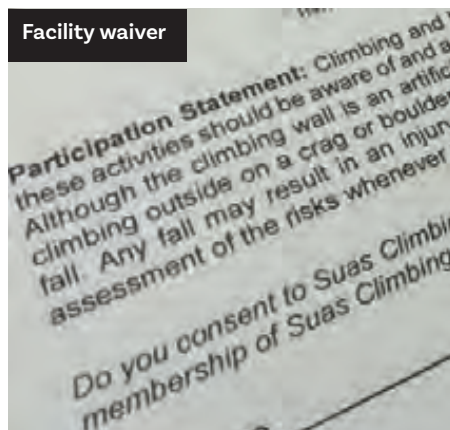
Ask about adult clubs, if you are looking to meet fellow climbers. While the centres themselves might not run a club, there is usually a local climbing club to get involved in.

■ Is there anything else I should know?

Climbing walls can be great places to hang out, meet like-minded individuals and grab a coffee or something to eat. If your end goal is to climb outside and prepare yourself for the following summer, then you are in the right place.

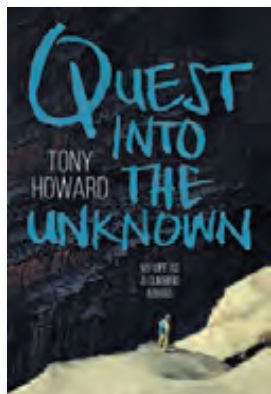
If all you ever want to do is climb indoors, then – guess what? – you are also in the right place. All the information you need is there – good contacts, good advice and decades of climbing experience amongst the staff and other climbers. Think of climbing walls as incubators for progression in the sport of rock climbing, which you can access with little more than a phone call, email or social media message ■

Facility waiver





Autobiography from an intrepid climber and inventor



QUEST INTO THE UNKNOWN: MY LIFE AS A CLIMBING NOMAD

By Tony Howard

Vertebrate Publishing (2019),
422pp, 48 photographs, £14.99,
ISBN 978-1-911-34-283-0

Tony Howard's story is one of a life dedicated to exploration, where climbing was the impetus to explore remote

regions. He touches lightly on trips that for many of us would have been the adventures of a lifetime. *Quest into the Unknown* documents his exploration of the climbing in North Africa, the Middle East, Scandinavia, Canada and the Americas, the Himalaya, south-east Asia, South Georgia and Antarctica.

He describes an idyllic childhood, his youth spent developing the crags of the English Peak District and the formation of the **Rimmon Mountaineering Club**. Howard records the club's years of climbing in the Romsdal Valley in Norway, where they put up the Rimmon Route on the Troll Wall.

Interspersed with these tales are some detours, including whaling-ship

voyages in the Southern Ocean and a thousand-mile canoe trip in the Canadian Arctic.

As part of the preparations for Troll Wall, Howard designed the modern climbing **sit harness**, now used by all climbers. He founded the company **Troll Climbing Equipment**, pioneering climbing equipment development and manufacture in the 1960s, and worked with climbers like **Don Whillans**. Throughout his time at the company, Howard's exploration and climbing served as innovation lab and field testing for the company.

Throughout the book, Howard treats his personal life lightly, but doesn't shy away from the cost of his dedication to travel in other

areas of life: relationships that came and went, and family moments missed.

His descriptions carry the reader from solo climbing in the Antarctic to the souks of Morocco, remote Bedouin camps in Jordan, and on to India and opium tribes in Thailand. Each story is brought to life by his dry humour and pleasure in connecting with the people that he meets, as well as his descriptions of routes and trails explored. Howard's drive to go to areas otherwise unexplored by western travellers opened up many areas, such as the **Jordan Trail**, to adventure tourism, and paved the way for so many of the trips we can now take for granted.

Una Vejsbjerg Hillwalker and climber

The climbing experience expressed in a volume of poetry



THE EQUILIBRIUM LINE: POEMS INSPIRED BY CLIMBING

By David Wilson

The Poetry Business (2019), 87pp,
no photos or maps, £9.95,
ISBN 978-1-912-19-674-6

Diving into David Wilson's verses is like getting into a story, *his* story.

With *his* subjectivity and experience, the gritstone he curls his fingers around comes alive. However, *The Equilibrium*

Line also tells a more general tale: that of the climbing experience and of the mountain as well, of the beauty of the mountain landscapes, the colours, the unforgiving weather and the losses.

The poet and writer takes us to many places: to Yorkshire, North Wales, the Alps, the Dolomites, and so on. Wherever he is walking, he is always trying to keep his balance – hence the title. As Wilson explains, the expression, 'the equilibrium line,' describes 'the altitude on an alpine glacier where the snow gained is equal to the ice lost.'

In a similar way, climbing costs about as much as it rewards. Throughout the four parts of this collection of poems, the reader experiences this precarious balance, seeing how the storm, the mist, the fingers numbed by cold and the falls are accompanied by the greens and blues, the



Approaching Bwlch y Moch

peacefulness and the familiarity of the slabs.

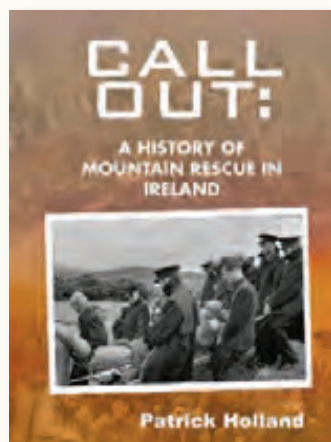
Wilson is at home in the mountains, so much so that they are the place he always returns to. They are where he feels the greatest urge to write, using words and sounds inspired by what he is surrounded by. If the hollow of the death is omnipresent in the poems, when you take a step back, the verses in this inspiring book all come together to form

a beautiful praise of the mountains.

Upon finishing this book, you cannot but agree with the verse about Bwlch y Moch, Tremadog – Wilson has almost become a native speaker of the language of the rocks!

Marine Dessaux Hillwalker and French visitor to Ireland who volunteered as a reviewer after reading a previous issue of the *Irish Mountain Log*

A warts 'n' all history of Irish mountain rescue



CALL OUT: A HISTORY OF MOUNTAIN RESCUE IN IRELAND

By Patrick Holland (Mountain Rescue Ireland)

Letterteckbooks, Cork (2019), 182pp, €20.00 (ppbk)

This impressive book chronicles the evolution of the mountain rescue services in Ireland from the 1960s to the present. The black-and-white photograph on the front cover is in contrast to the colour photo on the back cover, the former involving a rescue in 1967 and the latter one in 2009. Equipment has clearly changed, and yet (as the author points out), the act of carefully carrying a casualty down the mountain to medical assistance and safety remains the same.

In essence, what Patrick Holland has accomplished here is to produce a detailed account of the work carried out by the mountain rescue services in Ireland since 1967 and the challenges regularly faced by those voluntary services. The challenges described are not only from the mountain environment but also those from within the organisation itself, which include tribalism, lack of funding and resources, ineffectual administration at

local level and interagency strife between Mountain Rescue Ireland, An Óige and Civil Defence.

As a past chairperson of the South Eastern Mountain Rescue Association (SEMRA) and of Mountain Rescue Ireland, Pat is well placed to write a book on the history of call-outs in Ireland. There are only three chapters, and the first two make very interesting reading as they detail particular call-outs that the Mountain Rescue Teams have responded to over the years. These include missing or overdue hillwalkers, injured walkers

sick adults and children attempting to climb Croagh Patrick. He points out that, while the mountain rescue services cannot restrict access to the hills, "on occasion, participation in a Mountain Skills course is tactfully recommended."

The book carefully documents the development of Mountain Rescue Ireland, formerly known as the Irish Mountain Rescue Association (IMRA), since its inception in the 1960s. The author explains how, in the early days, rescue teams were made up of hillwalkers and others with



and climbers, missing patients, plane crashes, people who were lost or disorientated, suicides, medical emergencies and, in one case handled by North West Mountain Rescue Team, when a cow had fallen down a gully! On another occasion, the author himself required assistance after a fall.

Hillwalkers are accustomed to meeting people on the hills who are less than adequately dressed. Pat has met people walking on ice wearing runners, children in the hills without warm clothing, and

local knowledge. The dearth of resources is shocking by modern standards. In 1985, Dublin Wicklow Mountain Rescue Team (DWMRT) had no radio equipment. Team members were alerted by a knock on their door. When SEMRA was founded in the late 1970s, they did not have a stretcher.

The problem of securing funding is documented, as are other issues such as teams not taking up grants, and poor administration. In 2013, Mayo Mountain Rescue received only €7,000 in funding from the State. This was brought to the attention



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



of the media after an inquest into the death on Mweelrea of a walker whose body was not found for four days, after a thousand person hours of volunteer search time had been expended, involving several teams.

This book should be of interest to anyone who walks or climbs in the hills and mountains of Ireland. We all know that the voluntary 24/7/365 mountain rescue services on the island of Ireland deserve the highest commendation, but this book details what goes on behind the scenes in the delivery of those services and how much the individuals named have contributed despite the challenges faced personally and by the Mountain Rescue Teams they belong to.

Pamela Harbison Hillwalker and member of Tredagh Trekkers, a hillwalking club based in Drogheda, Co Louth





Personal account of a climber's most memorable climbs



SUMMITTS & SECRETS

By Kurt Diemberger

Vertebrate Publishing (2019), Kindle edition, 314pp, \$4.15. This ebook is based on the print edition, ISBN 978-1-91256-00-35

In March 2019, *Summits and Secrets* by Kurt Diemberger was published in ebook format by Vertebrate Publishing. It was first published in hard copy in 1970 and is an account of Diemberger's earlier climbs, including his first ascents of Broad Peak in 1957 and Dhaulagiri in 1960. Those ascents made him one of only



Kurt Diemberger, left, and Albin Schelbert on May 13th, 1960, on the summit of Dhaulagiri, Nepal, after the first ascent of this mountain.

two people to have made the first ascents of two 8,000m peaks.

Herman Buhl was the other person to make first ascents of two 8,000m peaks, Nanga Parbat and Broad Peak, the latter with Diemberger. Buhl was descending in a storm

with Diemberger on Chogolisa when he fell to his death from a cornice.

Vertebrate Publishing has also previously published in ebook format *The Endless Knot: K2, Mountain of Dreams and Destiny*, Diemberger's account of the 1996 disaster

on K2, when his British climbing partner **Julie Tullis** and fellow Brit **Alan Rouse** died with eleven others. Both books are translations from the original German and are excellent reads.

Patrick O'Sullivan Editor of the *Irish Mountain Log*

Comprehensive update to Dingle Way guidebook



DINGLE WAY (SLÍ CHORCA DHUIBHNE)

By Sandra Bardwell & Jacquetta Megarry

Rucksack Readers (2019, 3rd edition), 72pp, 75 colour photos, 23pp of contour route maps (1:55,000), €15.99 (£12.99) (ppbk), ISBN 978-1-898481-89-8

This third edition of the Rucksack Readers' guide to the Dingle Way has been fully updated. The user-friendly format has also been improved on so that, apart from being in the usual ringbinder and printed on rainproof pages, it is slimmer to help it better fit into a hiker's pocket.

It also now has larger-scale maps, clearly showing the current route, which has been altered in several places since the last edition of this guide.

The authors are both experienced hikers and guidebook authors, and have much experience of walking on the Dingle Way. They are very enthusiastic about the Way, and seem to have a good



handle on the culture of the Dingle Gaeltacht.

The Dingle Way is 183 km long and goes around the Dingle peninsula, starting and finishing in Tralee. It is usually divided into eight daily sections. Almost half of the route is on roads and lanes, albeit quiet country thoroughfares. Apart from the country lanes and roads, there are also cliff-top paths and long beach walks. Because of that, the sea and mountain

views from parts of the Way can be very impressive.

The main part of the guide describes each of the eight sections of the Way in some detail, illustrated by the appropriate parts of the map at a scale of 1:55,000, making them very clear. Overall, this guide is a very comprehensive update to the previous edition and is very easy to use.

Patrick O'Sullivan Editor of the *Irish Mountain Log*

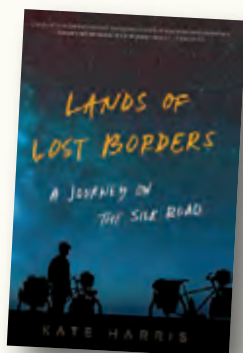
Boardman Tasker Award for Mountain Literature 2019

The Boardman Tasker Award for Mountain Literature continues to attract a substantial number of entries. There were thirty-two entries this year from Great Britain, Canada, Italy, New Zealand and the USA. The award will be made at the Boardman Tasker event at the Kendal Mountain Festival on Friday, November 15th, 2019. The judges for the 2019 award are Roger Hubank (Chair), Katie Ives and Tony Shaw. They have shortlisted six books, as follows:



No Easy Way, by Mick Fowler
(Vertebrate Publishing)

This is Fowler's third volume of memoirs of his mountaineering exploits in the Greater Ranges. It is written in his inimitable style, self-deprecating and understated. It was reviewed in IML 128.



Lands of Lost Borders, by Kate Harris
(Dey Street Books)

Harris's book is an account of an epic journey, fraught with difficulties and dangers, made by the writer and her partner, following the old Silk Road.



Inner Ranges, by Geoff Powter
(Rocky Mountain Books)

Powter's book is a wide-ranging anthology of essays and articles by a prize-winning Canadian climber and journalist, reflecting his life-long affair with the mountains.



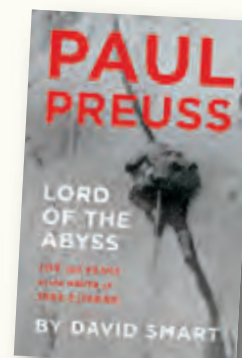
The Equilibrium Line: Poems Inspired by Climbing, by David Wilson
(The Poetry Business)

This is an interesting second collection of poems examining the challenges of climbing in different settings and where to draw the line. This book is reviewed in this issue (see page 62).



Hangdog Days, by Jeff Smoot
(Mountaineers Books)

Smoot's shortlisted book is an engaging account of the changes that took place in American rock climbing in the 1970s and 1980s, told in an enthusiastic way.



Paul Preuss: Lord of the Abyss, by David Smart
(Rocky Mountain Books)

This book is an account of the life and death of the influential Austrian climber Paul Preuss, who soloed many first ascents in the Eastern Alps, scorning artificial aids in preference of climbing in an ethical Alpine style.

Banff Mountain Book Competition 2019

The shortlist has also been announced for the various categories in the **Banff Mountain Book Competition**. This competition, which is a major part of the **Banff Centre Mountain Film & Book Festival** in the Canadian Rockies at the end of October, celebrates mountain literature in all its forms. It has eight categories.

In the Mountain Literature category, **Mick Fowler's** *No Easy Way*, published

by Vertebrate Publishing, has been included in this year's shortlist, together with *Hangdog Days* by **Jeff Smoot**, published by Mountaineers Books, *Paul Preuss: Lord of the Abyss*, by **David Smart**, published by Rocky Mountain Books, and *Inner Ranges* by **Geoff Powter**, published by Rocky Mountain Books, which were all also included in the Boardman Tasker Award shortlist. In addition, the judges for this prestigious

book prize have also shortlisted *Waymaking*, by **Helen Mort, Claire Carter, Heather Dawe and Camilla Barnard**, an anthology of prose, poetry and artwork by women inspired by wild places and also published by Vertebrate Publishing (see our review in IML 128), and *Rising*, by **Sharon Wood**, which is published by Douglas & McIntyre.

The winner will be announced in October ■

Gerry Walker

Wild camper, charity walker, club mentor

Gerry Walker sadly passed away in March this year, aged 57. He had cystic fibrosis and had been in hospital for some time. Gerry was a member and past Chairperson of the **Wayfarers**, and a member of **Mountaineering Ireland**. He grew up in Walkinstown, Dublin, and studied at DIT Kevin Street and Trinity College, obtaining an honours degree in maths.

He joined the civil service in the mid-1980s and worked in the Central Statistics Office as a senior statistician with responsibility for the national census. He is credited with re-designing the census form.

From an early age Gerry would go fly-fishing, but he also had a passion for hillwalking and, after joining the Wayfarers, realised that his main interest lay in the mountains.

In 1987, Gerry met the love of his life, **Margaret**, a fellow Wayfarer. They married in July 1989 and would have celebrated 30 years of a very happy marriage this year.

They initially lived in Rathfarnham, Dublin, but moved to Kilmacanogue, Co Wicklow, to be close to the mountains. Gerry loved their extensive garden because it gave him space to indulge in his other hobby, beekeeping.

On his first weekend away with the Wayfarers, in Kerry, we heard Gerry's nebuliser buzzing away in the morning. Then at breakfast he produced a cocktail of tablets for his cystic fibrosis. But he never wanted his health problem to define him... and it never did.

In his first year in the club, he climbed **Monte Peridio** (3,355m) in Spain. In Ireland over the years he took part in the long-distance walks – **Maumturks** (15 times), **Glover Highlander** (20), **Galtees** (15), **Blackstairs** (30) – and participated in the last official **McGillycuddy Reeks** walk,

before it was cancelled for insurance reasons.

Like Margaret, Gerry's real passion was backpacking and wild camping. He loved wild remote places. He was also an early adopter of new technology, being one of the first with an altimeter watch and a GPS, and he acquired a selection of tents and camping gear, all chosen for their technical advantages.

He enjoyed meeting people and loved mentoring new club members. As a club stalwart, he organised many trips abroad. He also travelled extensively with Margaret in Europe and North America and visited China, New Zealand, Malaysia and Borneo.

Gerry was always setting new records. He organised a charity walk in aid of cystic fibrosis in the mid-1990s, aiming to ascend all the Irish Munros in 48 hours: despite bad weather, that goal was achieved.



Gerry received a double lung transplant at the Freeman Hospital in Newcastle, England, in 2008. To honour **Martin**, his donor, he took on another challenge, **4Peaks4Life**, climbing **Carrauntoohil** in June, then **Snowdon**, **Ben Nevis** and **Scafell Pike** in five days in July. He reached the final summit on July 29th, 2009, exactly one year after his operation; it was also his and Margaret's 20th wedding anniversary.

Gerry decided that the

Wayfarers should do a charity walk in aid of the **Irish Motor Neurone Disease Association** when a club member, **Peter McIntyre**, was diagnosed with the condition. He set us the task of climbing 42 peaks in Wicklow, in small groups, on December 4th, 2011, calling the event his **'Marilyn Munros.'** The €10,000 we raised was presented to Peter and the Irish Motor Neurone Disease Association in January 2012. Sadly, Peter died soon after.

In 2013, Gerry set himself another challenge: to climb the 50 highest peaks in Ireland. He completed them in six months, climbing Mweelrea with Margaret.

Gerry always carried a camera, snapping shots of hikers and nature; he often won awards in club photo competitions.

His environmental agenda was extensive – access, littering, the use of quad bikes, or anything else he saw as a threat to the uplands.

Gerry will be fondly missed by many. He was helpful, full of enthusiasm and good humour and committed to all things mountaineering. He may not have climbed Everest but, considering his many health challenges, he probably climbed his own Everest many times.

May he rest in peace.

Members of the Wayfarers


Gerry Walker: born 1962; died March 22nd, 2019

HILLWALKING

TENERIFE

GUIDED WALKS FOR CLUBS & GROUPS

SEE THE MOST REMOTE AND HIDDEN PARTS OF TENERIFE




5/6 DAYS WALKING (ALL GRADES)
 Cost includes Airport Transfers and Road Transport on the island, Accommodation, Daily Guided Walks (a happy hour get together each evening before dinner).
All for only €385

Tel: 00353 87 257 1570
WWW.WALKINGTENERIFE.COM
 Email Martin: martin@walkingtenerife.com

pat falvey

Worldwide Adventures

- Fully licensed and bonded -



Ireland, Kilimanjaro, Everest Base Camp, Elbrus, Aconcagua, Antarctica etc

Ireland's leading Adventure Company
 for over 20 years.

Tel: +353(0) 64 6644181 • Email: info@patfalvey.com
www.patfalvey.com



CROATIA



HILLWALKING & CLIMBING TOURS

Explore the beautiful unspoiled landscape of Croatia. The Dinaric mountain range running from north to south, parallel to the coast, provides the perfect backdrop for superb hillwalking and climbing challenges. While experiencing these challenges, enjoy the stunning views over the Adriatic and the islands therein.

All grades of walkers and climbers catered for.
 Accommodation (close to the waterfront), airport transfers, daily transport and professional guides provided.
 Daily flights available from Dublin/UK to Croatia.

"I would highly recommend this tour for its mixture of great walking, beautiful coastline and cultural experience"



For more information: www.enjoydalmatia.com
 Contact: info@enjoydalmatia.com
00353 86 778 5777

John Keo Walking Tours



Walking Holidays in Nerja Spain



www.HikingWalkingSpain.com
 (0034) 647 273 502
John@HikingWalkingSpain.com
 Individuals and Groups



Mountaineering Ireland's new 'Irish Peaks' book will be published soon!



The book will be published in hardback with detailed descriptions and with a beautiful collection of images of the best routes on the 100 highest peaks on the island of Ireland.

A special Mountaineering Ireland Members discounted rate will be offered to support the purchase of this wonderful guidebook. Further details to follow.

Expected publication date is either in mid-December 2019 or early in 2020. This will be confirmed in the Winter 2019 issue of the Irish Mountain Log and on www.mountaineering.ie.

