

Issue 107 ■ Autumn 2013 ■ €3.95 UK£3.40 ■ ISSN 0790 8008

Irish Mountain Log

The magazine for hillwalkers and climbers

UPLAND ACCESS

Will Comhairle na Tuaithe deliver?

LUGNAQUILLIA

Ascent by hillwalkers
with disability

THE ARDERINS

One writer's favourite
500m peaks

DEVELOPING TALENT

Training young climbers


**Mountaineering
Ireland**

www.mountaineering.ie





Mountaineering Ireland has invited Stephen Venables to deliver the 2013 Lynam Lecture. Stephen Venables is a renowned mountaineer, writer, broadcaster and public speaker and was the first Briton to climb Everest without supplementary oxygen. He reached the summit alone, after climbing with a small American-Canadian team by a new route up the gigantic Kangshung face. Everest was a thrilling highlight in a career which has taken Stephen right through the Himalaya from Afghanistan to Tibet, making first ascents of many previously unknown mountains. His adventures have also taken him to the Rockies, the Andes, the Antarctic island of South Georgia, East Africa, South Africa and, of course, the European Alps, where he has climbed and skied for over forty years.

Stephen Venables



Lynam Lecture 2013

Venue: Edmund Burke Theatre, Trinity College Dublin, December 12th 2013. Doors open 7:00pm, start 8:00pm.

Bookings: Go to www.mountaineering.ie (€5 for Mountaineering Ireland members, €10 for non-members).



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PARTICIPATION AND RISK

Readers of the Irish Mountain Log are reminded that hillwalking and climbing are activities with a danger of personal injury or death.

Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept these risks, and be responsible for their own actions and involvement.

Mountaineering Ireland publishes and promotes safety and good practice advice and through Bord Oili  nt Sl  ibhe (BOS, The Irish Mountain Training Board) administers a range of training programmes for walkers and climbers.



Welcome

The great weather we have been having seems to be coming to an end and the evenings are drawing in. The cycle of the seasons moves on but, as it does so, when one door closes, another opens and we have the opportunity to enjoy the autumn colours in the uplands as we engage in our sport.

When it was set up in 2004, Comhairle na Tuaithe (the Countryside Council) was the great hope of recreational users for ensuring sustainable access to the uplands that was acceptable to all parties. Its priorities were to be access to the countryside, developing a countryside code and developing a countryside recreation strategy. A forum where representatives of state bodies with an interest in the countryside, farming organisations and recreational users of the countryside could meet should be seen as hugely important by any government that recognises the economic importance of the uplands and the potential benefits of access to them for the health of the population.

The leaflet enclosed as an insert in this magazine, *Recreation in the Irish Countryside*, provides definitive information on access and occupiers' liability. It is an important product of Comhairle na Tuaithe that will hopefully reassure landowners regarding the extent of their liability for recreational users of their property. It is important that all landowners and recreational users of the uplands are aware of its contents.

Mountaineering Ireland has supported Comhairle na Tuaithe from the outset, but now the government's commitment to CnaT's objectives is being questioned. Karl Boyle,



The government's commitment to Comhairle na Tuaithe is being questioned

Mountaineering Ireland's Chief Executive Officer, voices the national governing body's concerns in an important article on page 7.

We have many articles in this issue that highlight the wide appeal of our sport and the benefits of participation in it in terms of our health and wellbeing, from the successes of the Irish Youth Climbing Team, to the successes of a Polish team of amputees in reaching the summit of Lugnaquilla and of ten year-old Ois  n McDevitt in climbing Mount Elbrus, his second of the Seven Summits. We also have a moving piece that reflects on the cycle of life for a hillwalker, something we can all empathise with, whatever age and level of ability we are at. As we go through life, we have to change our aspirations to match our ability, but that is something our sport can accommodate with ease, providing we can access areas that are suitable for us, emphasising again the importance to everyone of having agreed and sustainable access.

Patrick O'Sullivan, Editor

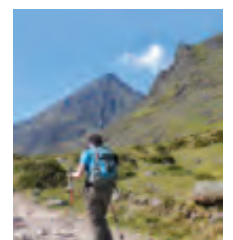


Write for the Log

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

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

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



ON THE COVER

Hiking up to Carrauntoohil in the Reeks, Co Kerry.

PHOTOGRAPH BY
FRANK McMAHON

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Cloghans near Mt Brandon, Co Kerry



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Topflight – your travel partner for all seasons!

Topflight is pleased to announce that we are now the official travel partner for Mountaineering Ireland.

For over 20 years, Topflight, a fully Irish owned and 100% bonded company has organised trips for many members of Mountaineering Ireland as well as other sporting groups.

These trips to many destinations in Europe and beyond, are enhanced by Topflight's staff on the ground, as well as Topflight's relationships with local tourist boards and suppliers – people in the know – who can help us provide a trip with a difference for you!



Our Markets: Topflight is the leading tour operator to Italy and to Austria. Topflight has been voted best winter ski operator for 19 years in the Republic of Ireland, and 10 years in Northern Ireland. Topflight have charter flights operating from Dublin, Cork and Belfast to destinations including Italy, Austria, France, Andorra as well as airline partner destinations in Portugal, Madeira, Lanzarote, North America and beyond. With our Topflight Worldwide team – who have been voted Best Worldwide Suppliers in the Irish travel trade – we can offer group holidays to a myriad of destinations.

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Trip Planning: We can help you plan your trip. We can ensure that your pricing stays competitive for all your club members, by planning in advance. We offer low deposits and we can offer spread payment terms. We provide full luggage allowances with allocated seating. We provide transfers and services, and local area guides. And should you wish us to only take care of ground arrangements, we can do this too!

On The Ground: Topflight's service on the ground, allows Group Leaders to enjoy their holiday with their groups, by providing fully trained and knowledgeable representatives to look after group organisational needs. And if you want to throw us a challenge, we will live up to it!

Some ideas to whet your appetite!

Winter is nearly upon us!

- Watch out for news on a big ski/snowsports challenge trip we are planning for March 2014 with Mountaineering Ireland!
- **France:** With direct charters from Dublin and Belfast for the winter season, we can offer great deals to the French Alps for skiers and ski mountaineers and climbers – check out our new range of chalets and ski in-ski out properties this season!
- **Austria:** How about a winter hiking trip to Austria? We can offer great low season deals in January and mid March for Walking and Hiking Groups. And of course we have some great deals on ski trips – catering for all snowsports – all winter long – with a choice of flights from Dublin, Cork and Belfast and charter flights running from December right through to end March!
- **Norway:** How about heading north to Lillehammer for cross country skiing or trekking in Hafjell, or even further north to Trysil – Norway's largest ski area!



Planning ahead for Summer 2014!

- How about a warm weather challenge in Madeira or Lanzarote!
- Or Lake Garda's Trentino area – for walking, hiking, cycling and climbing!
- Or plan a trip to Austria for summer 2014 – build a trip around the Summer Solstice or a festival, or one of their myriad of summer sporting events!



It's all about Knowledge – yours and ours - to make a trip work for you!

Call us now:

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New Training Officer appointed

Mountaineering Ireland appoints Jane Carney as new Training Officer

Jane Carney has been appointed as the new Mountaineering Ireland Training Officer, replacing Alun Richardson who left at the end of July. She took up her post at the beginning of September.

Jane trained at John Moore's University in Liverpool as a secondary school teacher of Outdoor and Science Education; she graduated with honours in 1995. Since then, she has taught and learnt through the outdoors.

Her qualifications now include the Mountaineering Instructor Award (MIA); the Mountain Leader and Winter Mountain Leader Awards (ML/WML); and the Single and Multi Pitch Awards (SPA/MPA).

Jane has always managed to climb things, be it the "forbidden trees" in her primary school garden or the "sitting-room traverse" at home; sport routes in Spain or trad routes in the Wilton Quarries; snow and ice in Scotland or glaciers in Greenland.

She tells us that, when she was three years old, she made a wish to "teach science" and "climb things." She feels that she has been very lucky in life because she has realised both of these childhood ambitions. However, Jane believes her new job will allow her to advance her age-three Master Plan to new heights!

Jane has already worked for around eighteen years as a trainer for and provider of the entire range of BOS Award Schemes. She has also been offering specialised training to clubs, individuals,

and colleges, at climbing walls and centres all over Ireland.

Although she says that she was sad to have to put her mountain training company, Safe Summit, to sleep after fourteen years, she feels that it has provided her with a wealth of experience, both as a mountaineering trainer and as a business manager, experience that she will now be able to bring to Mountaineering Ireland.

As Mountaineering Ireland's new Training Officer, Jane's initial focus will be on improving the delivery of existing schemes; meeting the needs of clubs and individual members; and introducing new award schemes/courses for leadership, personal skills and coaching, as necessary.

Alun Richardson, the outgoing Training Officer, did a superb job, completing a huge number of training projects and initiating many more that Jane now hopes to bring to completion. She feels that Alun has laid the foundations for further exciting developments within mountain training in Ireland. Jane says she is thrilled to be joining such an enthusiastic team, to start what promises to be the "best job in the world" ■





View from Ballycoyle, Glencree, Co Wicklow

CÓILÍN MacLOCHLAINN

Comhairle na Tuaithe ‘not performing’

New leaflet on access and liability welcome, but failings of Comhairle na Tuaithe are visible

Enclosed with this issue of the *Irish Mountain Log*, there should be a copy of *Recreation in the Irish Countryside*, an information leaflet about access and occupiers' liability in the Republic of Ireland. This leaflet has been published by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government on behalf of Comhairle na Tuaithe (the Countryside Council). The aim of the leaflet is to make the undisputed facts regarding access and liability available to landowners and everyone who uses the countryside for recreation.

Readers can have confidence in the contents of this leaflet as, not only has it been issued by the State, it has also been endorsed by the members of Comhairle na Tuaithe, who include Mountaineering Ireland and the farmers' representative organisations. All users of the countryside have a responsibility to be familiar with and understand this information.

Property rights and access, rights of way, the responsibility of recreational users and occupiers' liability are all covered in the leaflet and supported by examples from case law. Over the years, some landowners have voiced their concern about the lack of definitive information published by the State on

these matters. This leaflet corrects that deficiency and hopefully this information will now be widely distributed to landowners by their representative organisations.

Lack of commitment

While an output like this from Comhairle na Tuaithe is highly positive, it would be remiss of us not to inform members that, overall, Comhairle na Tuaithe is not performing. It appears that resources are not necessarily the issue, but rather a lack of political and departmental will.

It is with disappointment that Mountaineering Ireland has learned that Des Moore, the senior member of the Rural Recreation Section that administers Comhairle na Tuaithe, has tendered his resignation due to a lack of support for the section and the priorities of Comhairle na Tuaithe.

Des Moore has been dedicated to outdoor recreation over the past number of years and the reasons behind his imminent departure raise considerable doubt about the future of Comhairle na Tuaithe. On behalf of Mountaineering Ireland, I would like to thank him for his considerable efforts to date.

Mountaineering Ireland has

communicated its concerns to Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government, Phil Hogan TD, who has responsibility for Comhairle na Tuaithe. A meeting with the Minister has also been requested to determine his and his department's commitment to outdoor recreation and the delivery of Comhairle na Tuaithe's objectives.

Karl Boyle,
Chief Executive Officer,
Mountaineering Ireland

► A pdf of *Recreation in the Irish Countryside* is available through the News section of our website, www.mountaineering.ie. Additional copies may also be requested from the Mountaineering Ireland office ■



The Annascaul Walking Festival



Annascaul Lake Walk

The Annascaul Walking Festival is on the October bank holiday weekend

Annascaul Walks Hillwalking Club is a small, friendly walking club based in the heart of the Dingle peninsula, where brooding mountains, stunning coastlines and fast-flowing rivers provide magnificent walking all year round. The club embodies the adventurous spirit, friendly humour and co-operative nature of Annascaul's famous son, Tom Crean, the Antarctic explorer.

Annascaul is also a walkers' paradise.

Within a 20-minute drive of the Co Kerry village there are ten 750-metre peaks with spectacular steep gorges, awesome cliff faces and wonderful scenery. Inch Beach is a mere five minutes away; then there's the mystical beauty of Com Dubh as it nestles in the mountains. The history and adventuring of Tom Crean, William Hussey, Mary O'Donnell and many others seeps out of every

crag, headland and ruin in the parish.

In addition, Annascaul offers wonderful craic and friendship in the pubs, food-houses, B&Bs and hostels. This year, our annual walking festival takes place on the October Bank holiday weekend, from October 25th to 28th. Do enjoy the walks, marked looped walks and the hospitality you will find during the festival weekend or, indeed, at any other time of year.

Cumhacht na sléibhte agus na farraigí libh go léir! **Brian Lucey**

► For more details, please visit our website, www.annascaulwalks.org, or visit our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/AnnascaulWalksHillwalkingClub ■



Walkers pose at the Tom Crean statue in Annascaul, Co Kerry, during the Annascaul Walking Festival in 2012

Window notice to deter break-in thieves

This removable car window notice is available free to members of Mountaineering Ireland

In response to an increase in the number of break-ins happening to vehicles parked in upland areas, Mountaineering Ireland has developed a removable car window notice with messages printed on both sides.

The notice has an easy to fix and remove suction cup so that you can put it on one of your side windows while you're walking or climbing and then take it down afterwards. The strong colour and simple graphics should attract attention and hopefully deter thieves. The inside has a reminder message not to leave valuables in your vehicles.

The Gardaí have confirmed that there were 254 reported thefts from vehicles in Co Wicklow between 1st June and 31st August this year, more than double the number for the same period in the previous year. Almost one-third of these thefts were from vehicles that were unlocked. The Gardaí in Wicklow are in the third year of Operation Uplands, which involves patrols by marked and unmarked cars as well as checkpoints, with the aim of reducing this type of crime.

Mountaineering Ireland is aware that break-ins to parked vehicles are a problem in many upland areas, from the



Mournes to Kerry. However, it is important that we play our part in trying to reduce the number of break-ins by adhering to the following advice:

- Avoid leaving bags, clothing, etc, on view in the vehicle while it is unattended;
- If you must leave anything in a vehicle, put it in the boot before you arrive at the parking location;
- Open the glove box and, where possible, the lid on the boot, to show there is nothing in the vehicle;
- Remove portable sat navs, including cradle and suction pads; also wipe any suction marks off the

windscreen;

- Lock your vehicle;
- Use Mountaineering Ireland's removable window notice;
- Report all break-ins or damage to vehicles;
- Report any suspicious activity to the Gardaí or Police.

Helen Lawless

► You can get one of these car window notices by contacting Mountaineering Ireland at 01 625 1115 or email info@mountaineering.ie. While the notice is free, there is a small charge to cover postage and packaging; this is reduced if club members order together ■



One of the campsites at Electric Picnic...

The Leave No Trace campers ensured that a section of Stradbally's beautiful environment was not disturbed. It is clear that an increasing number of people want to preserve the beauty of the outdoor environment they enjoy. Since this year's Electric Picnic, Leave No Trace has been inundated with requests to join next year's campsite. There is a great opportunity to make Electric Picnic more sustainable and reduce the impact the festival has on the land it is held on. Watch this space!

empowering people to 'Leave No Trace' works! The campsite remained clean all weekend and the contrast with the adjacent campsites was all too stark. Whilst the Leave No Trace campsite was beautifully clean and green with 'Picnickers' sunbathing on the grass, in the other campsites beer cans, food waste and general litter covered the

► Leave No Trace is an Outdoor Ethics Education Programme designed to promote and inspire responsible outdoor recreation. Follow us on Facebook and Twitter. **Text and pictures by Dorothy-Ellen White** ■

Leave No Trace campsite the envy of all at Electric Picnic

The lucky 400 campers staying in the first ever Leave No Trace campsite were the envy of all at this year's Electric Picnic in Stradbally, Co Laois. Those who registered for this free camping option woke up to a pristine campsite complete with picnic benches, morning yoga, a wishing tree and, most importantly, somewhere to recycle their rubbish and dispose of their waste properly!

Campers using this campsite took great pride in using the green and brown biodegradable bin bags provided in their welcome packs. Based on this experience, we can safely say that

ground so that you could no longer see the grass. A key aspect of the ethos in the campsite was the education of the people staying there about the Leave No Trace principles so as to inspire responsible camping. There was no policing involved and everyone took responsibility for their own waste and their own impact on the land.

...and the Leave No Trace campsite

Beara Breifne Way stamps

Heritage route stamps launched by An Taoiseach Enda Kenny



Heritage stamps for the Beara Breifne Way were launched by An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny TD, in the Mansion House, Dublin, on May 15th. The Chairman of the Heritage Council, Conor Newman, also addressed the launch. The heritage stamps will be used to mark walkers' and cyclists' 'passports' as they complete the various sections of the route.

The Beara Breifne Way follows the route of the fourteen-day march from Beara, Co Cork, to Breifne in Co Leitrim, completed by Donal O'Sullivan Beara and one thousand of his followers in 1603.

The Beara Breifne Way, the longest in Ireland, runs almost the length of the country and takes the walker and cyclist to some of our most beautiful and least explored areas – along the coast of the Beara Peninsula; across six mountain ranges; along the banks of the River Shannon; and through the lake regions of Roscommon and Leitrim. The landscape consists of an extraordinary variety of heritage sites, many of which bear witness to the march of four hundred years ago. The Beara Breifne Way also interlinks a series of local ways.

The Beara Breifne Way is an ambitious undertaking which will see the development of a walking and cycling route along the spine of the country, from Beara to Breifne. All aspects of the route's heritage will be presented along the walk, and archaeological and ecological surveys are currently being undertaken along the route. Plaques and map boards are to be erected along the way, covering topics ranging from local

mythology to birdlife and hedgerows. The route is being developed to the standards required by the National Trails Office and will be subject to their inspections.

The Beara Breifne Way is unique in Ireland in terms of its length and, when completed, will pass through counties Cork, Kerry, Limerick, Tipperary, Offaly, Galway, Roscommon, Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim. Walkers will be able to experience the whole range of beautiful landscapes that these counties have to offer.

At a local level, the route is divided into a series of smaller ways, some of which are already complete and which include the Beara Way and the Ballyhoura Way.



1	2	Beara Way
2	3	Sli Gaeltacht Mhuscraí
3	4	Duhallow Area
4	5	Ballyhoura Way
5	6	Multeen Way
6	7	Ormonde Way (to be developed in 2012)
7	8	Hymany Way
8	9	Suck Valley Way
9	10	Lung Way (to be developed in 2012)
10	11	Miners Way & Historical Trail
11	12	Leitrim Way
12	13	Cavan Way

Collect a stamp on each of the twelve Ways along the Beara-Breifne Way and at each of the 60 stops along the overall route

Around these local walks and cycles, a number of loops and spurs are planned where there are features of interest away from the main route.

As with many walking routes in Ireland, the Beara Breifne Way is based on cooperation between

local community groups and landowners. With 240 farmers living along the Beara Way alone, the scale of community collaboration that has been necessary is clear ■





Moonlight Challenge

Night-time charity walk on Saturday, November 16th



The Glen of Imaal Red Cross Mountain Rescue Team have announced that they are organising another Moonlight Challenge, now in its fourth year. The team is also celebrating their 30th anniversary this year. They hope that members of Mountaineering Ireland will be able to join them on the Moonlight Challenge on Saturday, November 16th, to help them celebrate their 30 years in active service and support their fundraising efforts.

The Moonlight Challenge is a 24.5km Full Moon Walk along St Kevins Way and the Wicklow Way or, new this year, a 20k Trail Run from Glen of Imaal to Glenmalur. The registration fee for walkers is €25 per person plus a minimum fundraising target of €75 per person. For runners, the entrance fee is €50 per person.

► For more information or to register, go to www.wmr.ie or www.moonlightchallenge.com ■



Celebrate Nepal Day

Help celebrate Nepal Day in Ireland on September 29th

Organised by the Nepalese community in Ireland and other friends of Nepal in this country, Nepal Day – in Farmleigh House, Phoenix Park, Dublin, September 29th – will be a celebration of the diversity that Nepal has to offer. This should be a great day out for anyone who is interested in Nepal.

The day has been organised

by the Nepalese Embassy, the Nepal Ireland Society, various Irish charities with projects in Nepal and the Nepalese community in Ireland. It will showcase the diverse cultures and landscapes that are to be seen when visiting the country. There will also be talks about the trekking and mountaineering possibilities there.

► For more details, see www.nepalireland.org or Facebook www.facebook.com/nepalireland ■



MARGARET TEES

Irish ten-year-old climbs Mt Elbrus

Oisín McDevitt previously climbed Kilimanjaro

On Saturday, August 3rd, Oisín McDevitt became only the second 10-year-old ever to climb Mount Elbrus (5,642m/18,510ft) when he summited with his father, Fergie McDevitt, in poor weather.

They had battled through 30 mph winds to stand on the summit in -28°C temperatures at 9:30am local time. It seems they took advantage of the only weather window available to their expedition and went for the summit two days earlier than planned. This was possibly their only chance, as there was heavy snowfall after their summit day, which may have signalled the end of the climbing season on Mount Elbrus.

Of the expedition group of ten that they were with, only five made it to the top, with two young men from Dublin joining Fergie, Oisín and their friend, Denis Quilty, on the top. Oisín's family is originally from Ireland but now lives in the Channel Islands.

We previously reported on Oisín McDevitt's successful



Oisín and Fergie McDevitt on summit of Mt Elbrus

ascent of Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa, by the Western Breech route earlier this year (see *IML* 106, p11).

Mount Elbrus is the highest peak in Europe, being also the highest in the European part of the Russian Caucasus range. Its western summit

stands at 5,642m and the eastern summit is slightly lower at 5,621m.

The lower of the two summits was first ascended by Khillar Khachirov, a guide for an Imperial Russian army scientific expedition in 1829, and the higher in 1874 by an English expedition led by

Florence Crawford Grove, a man who was later a President of the Alpine Club.

After their successful summit bid, Oisín and Fergie had to wait in a mountain hut at 4,000m for the weather to clear, but both were then able to return safely to their base camp. **Patrick O'Sullivan**

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Get away from it all – volunteer with An Óige!

Volunteer with An Óige in beautiful Glenmalure valley in Co Wicklow

Fancy spending some time away from it all in a history-laden valley? Look no further. An Óige are looking for volunteers to run their iconic hostel in the Glenmalure valley, Co Wicklow.

Glenmalure is the longest glacial valley in Ireland. The hostel is surrounded by mountains and is beside a sparkling, murmuring river. For company, you will have a varied selection of hillwalkers, historians, gardeners, craftsmen and those who enjoy escaping the city and the trappings of modern life, staying at the hostel to enjoy the peaceful setting.

If this sounds like something you would enjoy doing, then join the band of dedicated volunteers – many more are

needed – who run An Óige's iconic Glenmalure Hostel in Wicklow.

The hostel will be familiar to hillwalkers who have climbed Lugnaquilla via the scenic Fraughan Rock Glen and waterfall. It is surrounded by many hillwalking opportunities, and is steeped in centuries of Irish history. With no mobile phone coverage, electricity or running water, the house maintains its historic character, and encourages storytelling by the fire and candlelight.

The hostel was for many years the summerhouse of Maud Gonne MacBride. Many of her now published letters to William Butler Yeats were addressed from the house, including one in which she tells of a famous incident where her son-in-law tried to burn the house down while her daughter Iseult was inside.

Yeats himself often visited and his biography tells of poems written during these visits. Dr Kathleen Lynn, chief medical officer during the 1916 Easter Rising and founder of St Ultan's Children's Hospital, subsequently owned the house. Dr Lynn stayed at the house in July of every year until she passed away in 1955. Éamon de Valera officially opened the house as a hostel in 1956.

Volunteer numbers permitting, the hostel will continue to open seven nights a week during the summer months, on Saturday nights throughout the year, and will continue to be enjoyed for many years to come.

► For more information, contact Glenmalure Hostel at 086 359 3724, glenmalurehostel@outlook.com ■

Death of Carrauntoohil landowner

John Doona was one of four who own Carrauntoohil commonage

John B Doona, one of four owners of a commonage that includes the summit of Carrauntoohil, a section of the MacGillycuddy's Reeks ridge and most of the Hag's Glen, in County Kerry, passed away on August 18th, 2013, following a brief illness. On behalf of hillwalkers and

climbers, Mountaineering Ireland extends its condolences to John Doona's family and friends.

Mountaineering Ireland members who have not met John Doona may have seen his photograph in Jim Ryan's *Carrauntoohil & MacGillycuddy's Reeks* guidebook, published by The Collins Press.

John Doona's brother Donal is also one of the owners of Carrauntoohil ■



JIM BARTON

ROB ROY

CYCLE OF LIFE

An ageing hillwalker is reduced from summit attempts to wobbly-legged walks along the road

I am sitting here in my bedroom, writing this, after coming in from my daily roadwalk. I used to do a bit of hillwalking, but my old legs started to get elastic, like a bicycle tube with not much air in it, and I started to wobble a bit as I walked. I had to pack in the harder grade 1 walks, going to the summits and the like, and start doing the easier walks – grade 3 walks – which were on forestry roads, around lakes and along the coast. Now, I am just walking on the country roads on my own.

When I packed in the grade 1 walks, three of the walk leaders from my club, who I had always had a bit of craic with, invited me on an unofficial hillwalk. They said they would go slowly, at my pace, so we started up a local peak, which is a grade 2 walk and slightly easier than a grade 1. It is a lovely mountain and, down in the foothills, there are a lot of old farmsteads and broadleaved trees.

I think I wandered off the beaten track a bit, but the others walked after me and kept a close watch on me. They had no bother keeping me within their sight. So there I was, starting to wander back in time, as you do, when you come to my time of life.

When we arrived at the first old farmstead at the bottom of the hill, we had a good look around. We found an old spring well from which the last inhabitants would have drawn water. While the three leaders

“They were tying the sleeves of two raincoats together, to break my fall.”

were having a look at the old walls of the farmsteads, I slipped out of sight, climbed up a tree, opened my mouth and started to yodel, like Tarzan used to do back in the 1940s films. As I looked down, I could see three very startled faces looking up. Then it all turned to panic stations, but, as professionals have to keep a cool head, I could see an organised response click quickly into place. One of them came slipping like a cat up the blind side of the tree from me, being careful that I would not see him, while another applied his camera to the critical situation!

As I went out on a branch, the leader in the tree with me was getting prepared to talk me back in again, while the other two were tying the sleeves of two raincoats together, hoping to break my fall. As I was standing on the branch, holding on to an upper branch, the leader in the tree was afraid to put his foot on the branch I was standing on, in case it would break. With no other branch to step on, his arms and legs were wrapped around the trunk of the tree. As he was hanging there, he called down “Will we get the fire brigade?”

“No,” said one of the others, “Try to coax him down.”

The leader in the tree said, “Come on, boy, come to Daddy,” and I walked in on the

branch, holding on to the upper one, quiet as a lamb. Then we climbed down the tree like two of our ancestors. They talk about old people going back to their childhood in their way of thinking, or not thinking, but I think I went back to my ancestors that day!

That was roughly three years ago. I walked the grade 3s since then, up to about six months ago. By then, my pace had got so slow that I was reduced to walking with my dog and he was suffering from an allergy that made his feet very sore. Sadly, he got so ill recently that he had to be put down.

When I talk with the walk leaders on the phone now, they always talk about having a get-together, but, as we say in the country, I think they are frightened of another ‘handlin’.

So, I walk on my own now and I’m down to an old wobbly-legged man looking over every field gate, always counting sheep or whatever other stock is in the field. This is a habit I have, as I used to keep some stock myself and always first thing in the morning, when I would enter the gate or the cow shed, I would be counting right away. So now I am walking and counting sometimes. I also take car numbers and try to add up the individual numbers, as I think my old brain needs exercise as well as my legs and, if I get the wrong answer, who is going to know? Not even me!

Some months back, my 80th birthday came up. The family got together and had a bit of a ‘do’ for me. Among the many presents I got was a t-shirt from one of the leaders with my photograph on the front of it, with my mouth open like Tarzan in the jungle. I think that’s one bit of uniform that should go on top of my coffin, when I die. I’ve lived a daft sort of life; I might as well look daft when I am going down on the two ropes! ■



‘Rob Roy’ is a pseudonym.



Island in the sun: Owey, Co Donegal

A visitor's guide to the climbing and boating delights of Owey in Co Donegal, by Alan Tees, who also delves into the history of sea stack climbing there.



Climbing a sea stack on Owey

literally riddled with holes below the waterline, many of which link or open out into huge caverns. Then, of course, there is the 'lake below a lake.' Bill Magowan and I were about to catch the boat back to the mainland (well, Cruit Island is near enough mainland, being connected by a bridge) when we met an elderly couple of former residents who mentioned the above, with a bit of a twinkle in their eye! We weren't sure if we were being had, but couldn't wait to get back to investigate. Perusal of a map showed a small lake at the far side of the island, and further exploration revealed a fissure in the cliff beyond it, which led down, and down, to a large cavern with a lake in it. We have been down since with an inflatable dinghy, paddles and a powerful flashlight and crossed to a fissure on the far side. Remarkable!

The cliffs on Owey are very impressive, but many of them suffer from 'feldspar leaching,' in that the granite is sugary and loose, and many's the mouthwatering line turns out to be more of an exercise in survival. There is, however, 'Gola quality' granite in a number of areas. David Walsh visited in 1991, putting up the excellent 'Nordkapp,' amongst other routes, and returned in 1993 with reinforcements. By the end of that year there were almost thirty climbs on the island.

The Colmcille Climbing Club landed in 1999 and 2000, climbing in a big bay on the south-west side, which they called Dragon's Bay (the correct name is Scealpán Buí). The climbing was adventurous

I first went to Owey, Co Donegal, in June 1989 on a North West Mountaineering Club (NWMC) island camping trip, its first to that island. In the end, there were only Dennis Golden, myself and my two small sons who braved the waves and canvas, with the rest of the club turning up next day.

The weather was glorious, the sun sparkled on turquoise seas, and there was an island to be explored! The population of the island had steadily decreased from its maximum of 152 in 1911, to zero – the last permanent residents left between 1975 and 1977. The houses were left open, with many of the

contents still inside. The schoolhouse was still there....

If Gola is a rock climber's island, Owey is one for adventure and exploration. We were stunned by the array of high cliffs, sea stacks, pinnacles, arches, small coves, narrow channels and, of course, caves, after which the island gets its name. Owey is



Stackamillion sea stack

and spectacular, rather than technical, due to the nature of the rock, but great for photography! They caught the Owey bug and have been going back ever since.

Probably the most striking feature of the island is 'Stackamillion' at Cladaghroan, a teetering pinnacle in a bay partly surrounded by two sea arches, which, amazingly, was climbed in 2003 by two passing Poles. Even more amazingly, they left the route description of their new route, 'Blade,' E2, in the golf club at Cruit Island. Well you would, wouldn't you?

At Torglass, there is another stiletto of clean granite, which was also climbed by the Poles and, more recently, by Dave Millar and Martin Bonar, in 2009, after several suitors, including myself, had been repelled by the lack of protection and advancing tides. Just west of this is the aptly named 'Holy Jasus Wall' (Na Farragáin), whose plunging vertical ramparts are come upon suddenly and usually given a very wide berth indeed!

Autumn 2013

In 2010, we came into possession of a beautiful hand-drawn map by John McGinley (one of several maps of the west coast of Donegal) and, from this, we have been able to learn the correct local names for many, but not all, of the geographical features. There is a copy hanging on the wall of Iggy's Bar in Kincasslagh.

For walkers, a circumnavigation of the island will provide a fascinating and photogenic short day's walk, but a day-trip really cannot do Owey justice. The proper experience involves immersion in the timelessness of a deserted island, paddling, exploring, swimming, fishing, maybe climbing and barbequeing, then watching the sun set on the Atlantic and the light fading on Errigal; sea pink on the grey and yellow granite, and the cry of the gull. Absolute magic! If you have a canoe, bring it!

Owey is a place of contradictions. Seaward, you can feel an amazing sense of remoteness and adventure amongst the spectacular island rock architecture. Then,



The Harbour, Owey

as you walk over the hill, back towards the camp, suddenly there are golfers just across the channel going about their business or loading their clubs into a car to go home, whilst you look on from what seems like another planet!

Access to the island is more problematical than Gola, for

although closer to land the channel is much rougher, the entrance to the harbour (Spink) narrow and tricky in certain tides, and the boatman, Dan Betty, often won't chance it.

Never mind; if you can't get across, there is still plenty to do in Cruit! ■



Sea arch on Owey



Club Training Officers' Workshop

Amanda Lynch of the Wayfarers reports on last year's CTO Workshop in Laragh, Co Wicklow

Mountaineering Ireland's 2012 annual Club Training Officers (CTO) Workshop was held in November over a weekend in lovely Laragh, Co Wicklow. Myself and other members of the training team from the Wayfarers decided to attend, as we are always on the lookout for new training material and ideas. This seemed like a good opportunity to learn new skills and to share training experiences with members from other clubs.

The workshop participants were from clubs of all sizes and levels of experience, from small clubs formed by a small group of friends who walk together, to bigger clubs like ours. We chatted about our training styles in some detail – from groups using informal methods to incorporate training into their hikes, to the larger clubs who tend to have a more formal, structured training programme. We shared the advantages and disadvantages we found in those different styles of training.

The formal element of the weekend was based around a mix of workshops followed by practical on-the-hills instruction with our Facilitator, Dave Gaughran. At the start, Dave welcomed us and introduced us to the formal training that Bord Oiliúint Sléibhe (BOS) has to offer.

Helen Lawless, Mountaineering Ireland's Hillwalking, Access & Conservation Officer, also attended and in the opening workshop gave us a run-through of the various



teaching materials that are available in the form of books, leaflets, DVDs, etc, that can support trainers and be incorporated into each club's training programme.

We brainstormed the gaps we believed existed in our individual clubs' training programmes and discussed how Mountaineering Ireland could assist us with coaching or by providing material to fill those gaps.

One aspect that found broad agreement was a desire to see the introduction of a new Mountain Day Leader course as we believed there was a gap in formal training between the Mountain Skills 1 & 2 and the Mountain Leader courses. These brainstorming activities proved of interest to participants from all the clubs present, irrespective of the size or level of sophistication of their current training activities.

Teachable moments

Let's face it, you can only keep a group of hikers locked up in a room for so long before they make a break for the hills, so Helen and Dave took us out across Brockagh Mountain to do a series of bite-sized outdoor workshops they called 'Teachable Moments.' These teachable moments included identifying opportunities to promote Leave no Trace; how to use the landscape to demonstrate map features or hazards; and how to encourage leadership skills but also personal responsibility amongst hike participants.

Personal responsibility

Personal responsibility turned out to be a recurring theme over the weekend. Many of the training programmes run by participants tended to focus on the technical aspects of leading, launching straight

into "What's a grid reference?" and "What type of gear do the leaders need in their rucksack?", but few of the clubs had training which focused on hike participants and their responsibilities. We had some lengthy and spirited discussions on a recent *Mountain Log* article ("When is a leader not a leader?", *IML* 103 pp60-61) by Alun Richardson, which discussed the responsibilities of a leader of a hike, but also the responsibility of participants in the hike and indeed the group as a whole.

What we agreed we need to do in our club training is to relate each topic we teach back to the concept of personal responsibility. As an example, we shouldn't simply recommend that people carry extra clothes in their rucksack: we should also link this back to the question of why people should do this, explaining that it is because,

as a walk participant, you need to have the ability to cope with cold or with an accident with the contents of your rucksack. There should be no expectation that others will provide for your welfare by giving you their extra clothes, thereby putting themselves in danger because you were not properly prepared. As trainers, we agreed that we need to drive home not only how to do something but also why people should do it.

The formal structure of a club – the committees, leaders and trainers – are a vehicle to bring together like-minded adults who have a shared goal of enjoying the hills. The club itself, or individuals within it, are not service providers and should not be viewed as such. Each participant in a walk should take responsibility for their own safety and should prepare themselves to the best of their ability.

Sunday washout!

The Sunday agenda was to be a nice stroll around Glendalough during which each CTO could give a brief example of teaching, using the surrounding environment to provide live examples, such as

explaining grid references, features, what a contour is, *etc.* Thanks to the Wicklow weather, we had high winds, rain, hailstones and sleet for the entire day, which, above all else, turned it into an extended teachable moment on the difficulties of staying warm and dry! We made the best of it and our short talks veered towards topics such as the importance of keeping warm, what side of the hill to walk on in severe weather conditions, navigating in bad visibility and how to spot or help members of the group that are in difficulty due to the terrain or weather. All of these talks were extremely informative, with each participant having something

to bring to the discussion.

Being a member of a large club with over 300 members, the Wayfarers have quite a formal training programme which has developed over many years, with several people participating in the training team. Even so, we feel it is always a good idea to keep abreast of new training techniques and share ideas with other clubs. I could quite happily have spent a week on the hills listening to the views of everyone who attended. Thank you all for being so generous with your knowledge.

Thanks

Thanks to Dave Gaughran for being an excellent facilitator, coach and trainer for the

weekend; to Helen Lawless from Mountaineering Ireland, who coached us on environmental awareness and how we can make others aware of our impact on the environment and other users of the mountains; to the other CTOs for sharing tips and styles of imparting information in a fun and informative way. I thoroughly enjoyed the weekend and, with my fellow Wayfarers who were also at the workshop, I brought home lots of new ideas and challenges to inflict on or impart to future participants in our club training efforts.

* * * * *

Mountaineering Ireland's 2013 Club Training Officers (CTO) workshop will be held in the Burren over the weekend of November 2nd-3rd 2013. Full details are in the Events section of the Training pages on www.mountaineering.ie. This two-day workshop is for Club Training Officers or for those interested in becoming Club Training Officers. Those attending should have good navigational skills and be keen to support the development of skills within their club.

► Amanda Lynch is a member of the Training Team of the Wayfarers Association Hillwalking Club ■



Braving the harsh conditions in Glendalough on the second day of the workshop (left to right): Dave Gaughran, Ena Rafferty, Frank O'Keeffe, Amanda Lynch, Ursula Timmins and Keith Mooney



Ursula Timmins and Frank O'Keeffe (with Mick Feehan in background) at the workshop



Walking the Bangor Trail

The Ramblers take to the Bangor Trail in County Mayo to walk from Bangor Erris to Srahmore. **Patrick Gray** reports



Contouring around Knocklettercuss

"The Nephin Beg range of mountains is, I think, the very loneliest place in this country, for the hills themselves are encircled by this vast area of trackless bog." – **Robert Lloyd Praeger (1937)**

It was twenty years ago that a group from the Irish Ramblers Club last tackled the Bangor Trail. They based themselves in the now defunct An Óige hostel in Traenlaur and walked north from there to Bangor Erris. The following day, after being bused back to Treanlaur, they walked from the hostel to Newport. Since then, the Bangor Trail has not been addressed as a club project by the Ramblers.

Last winter, a group of Ramblers set themselves the challenge of following the Bangor Trail from Bangor Erris south to Srahmore. All club members were informed about the proposed walk,

which was open to all, affording an opportunity for a wide standard of walkers to experience the beauty and remoteness of the Bangor Trail. Accommodation had been found in the Mulranny Park Hotel. A number of older members indicated their willingness to take part in the walk and a programme of Sunday training hikes was organised.

We had mixed fortunes with our training. The first hike in January had to be cut short (snowstorm); the second went well; the next was cancelled (snow again); but the fourth was completed successfully. The last had to be altered and curtailed (bad weather around Lugnaquilla).

Despite these setbacks, a good team spirit was built up and it was heartening to get great support from others in the club. In particular, we were grateful to those who

led the training hikes for us.

Tuesday, May 21st, saw us gathered in Mulranny, where an early night was had by all. The following day dawned dry and clear with every prospect of continuing so. By arrangement, the hotel provided us with their usual full Irish breakfast at 6:00am. The staff throughout our time there could not have been more helpful – nothing was too much trouble. On the day, twenty-two of us felt confident enough to attempt the walk. Shortly after 7:00am, having picked up our packed lunches, we were on our bus and heading towards Bangor, 45 minutes away. We were on our way south on the Bangor Trail just after 8:00am, walking the first few hundred metres of a dry, stony path before we began a gentle climb. Soon, the conditions underfoot became boggy and we found ourselves moving cautiously, step by step, to avoid the

worst-looking areas, not always with complete success. Contouring around Knocklettercuss to the east, we weaved our way between small hills. By around 11 o'clock we were heading downhill along a small section of recently-built boardwalk, towards Tarsaghaunmore River.

News had come through the previous week that the bridge there was no longer safe to cross. Thus warned, we had come provided with old runners or other footwear to use when we forded the river. As others searched the area for a suitable fording point, it was suggested that we might cross by carefully stepping along some of the remaining struts of the bridge, which were just out of the water. Soon we were all across and tucking into our packed lunches.

On both sides of the river there lie the ruins of cottages. We pondered the subsistence



Descending to Tarsaghaunmore River

nature of the living that would have been wrested from the desolation around. Perhaps income could have been gleaned from passing traffic on the trail, in its heyday. A 1992 guide published by Mayo County Council said that one of the cottages had been the home of a herdsman for cattle and sheep owned by the local landlord.

Pressing on, we passed between Slieve Alp and Slieve Carr on a recently maintained track heading towards Nephin Beg to the east. All was desolate around us with very few signs of wildlife, but the views from Slievemore to the west, and round to Croagh Patrick to the south, were magnificent.

The silent, empty bogland of Owenduff and Scardaun was ahead of us, like a bowl. In the fair conditions of the day, it was not too difficult to follow the trail, although it is now, through lack of use or maintenance, very largely covered by sphagnum moss which has blocked the drainage and made conditions underfoot very trying. In one or two places, there was encouraging evidence of work being done to upgrade the trail, by cutting back the moss, to reveal its original stone and gravel surface.

At irregular intervals there are newly-erected waymarks which are easy enough to spot. However, on a wet and misty day things might have been very different and we might have had to rely more on our GPS for navigation.

We pressed on and a second drum-up was called on the slopes of Tawnyanruddia, quite near the ruins of the last inhabited house on the trail. By this time, we were behind



Crossing the river at the waterfall below Lough Scardaun

schedule and a leisurely post-shower, pre-dinner pint was not looking likely. Redoubling our efforts, we made good progress, passing on our way the only tree on the trail, an oak, tucked into a sheltered hollow.

We reached the river at the waterfall under Lough Scardaun. This proved to be the slowest and most difficult crossing so far and needed great care.

Tramping through the bog was energy-sapping but eventually we began to see in the distance the forestry around Srahmore. Regrouping at the Lough Avoher Hut, we were greatly cheered by an encouraging

note found there. It had been left by others of our group who had been walking in the Letterkeen area and who had met some of the crew maintaining the trail.

From here on the trail was drier, but it went over very rough stones until at last we found ourselves walking the last few hundred metres on a lovely track along the river towards the car park, where two minibuses and their cheery drivers were waiting. We had completed the 25 kilometres of the route – not bad for a party with so many veteran holders of travel passes – and no sight could have been more welcome.

Later, a tired but happy bunch of hikers sat down to a

well-deserved meal in the hotel, already planning other adventures, especially in the coming year of the 50th anniversary of the founding of our club, the Irish Ramblers.

The Bangor Trail is clearly shown on OS Sheet 23, but few guides are available for it or for the surrounding Nephin Mountains. The isolation was a complete change for us, more accustomed as we are to the Wicklow Mountains. We would recommend the Bangor Trail and the quiet of Ballycroy to any group of prepared walkers.

► For more information, visit the Irish Ramblers Club website at www.theramblers.ie ■



On the home stretch



Club members gathered on the beach at Port to begin the first walk of the trip

Gardaí go climbing in Donegal

*The Garda Mountaineering Club recently organised a members' hillwalking weekend away in the Slieve League (Sliabh Liag) area, Glencolmcille, Co Donegal. **Stephen Gavin** reports*

The Garda Mountaineering Club was founded in 2007. The membership is a mixture of Gardaí, serving and retired, and civilians. Most of the members live and work in the Leinster area, and their main stomping ground is the Wicklow Mountains. The club provides a sociable and healthy outlet for people who enjoy hillwalking and other mountaineering activities.

We are a small club with a steady membership of approximately forty. While some of the original founding members are still with us, and a number of others have been members for a few years now, we are delighted to have been joined by some new, younger members in the last two years. In addition to hillwalking, the club also uses Awesome Walls in Finglas to practice rope-work and wall-climbing during the winter months.

One of our objectives this year was to explore other mountain ranges in Ireland on a more regular basis, so in April of this year we decided to organise a club trip to Donegal.

On April 11th, fourteen members headed off after lunch to Donegal. We had a break on the way and arrived in Glencolmcille at about 8:00pm. This part of west Donegal is well known for its beautiful scenery and we got a taste of it as we travelled there. We checked into our accommodation at Áras Ghleann Colm Cille.

Day 1: Port to Maghera

The first day started with breakfast at 7:30am. We met up with four members of Sliabh Liag Hillwalking Club on the way to the start of our walk at Port Harbour, which is at the side of a tiny, sandy cove at the end of a very narrow, twisty road. The morning was cloudy with about 2km visibility.

Shortly after 9:00am we left Port for Maghera, with Patrick McBrearty from Sliabh Liag HC leading the way. A ten-minute steep pull up straight from the car park warmed us up and then we had nice, level walking with perfect dry, spongy ground underfoot. We had magnificent views of the

coastline nearly all day. As we walked, we were kept informed about the history of the area. At the half-way point, between the hills, we had a short break at the remains of

some houses in Glenlough where the poet Dylan Thomas had spent some time.

The highest point of the walk was Slievetooley at 472m, where we were in mist for a



View from Glenlough, on Day 1

short time due to low cloud. As the afternoon went on, the weather improved and we had good sunshine for the last hour.

There was a steep climb on rough ground about 2km from the finish at Maghera, which used up any spare energy we had left! We stopped quite a lot during the walk to take in the fantastic scenery and take a few photos. The walk took about seven hours and we covered approximately 18km. Before our final descent, the views of the beaches around Maghera were stunning from high up, and in the distance Slieve Snaght and the Derryveagh Mountains were visible, with pockets of snow still lying on their slopes.

We all had a very enjoyable day, thanks to the relaxed local guides, and a bowl of fish chowder, some bread and a pint went down very well in Nancy's Bar, Ardara, afterwards. We returned to the hostel to freshen up and then went on to Carrick for dinner and a sociable evening.

Day 2: Malinbeg to Bunglas

The second day started off sunny but a bit cooler with a

stiff breeze, so there was no hanging around at Malinbeg. Again, the ground was ideal for walking – dry but slightly spongy. However, unlike the previous day, there were constant ascents and descents, and a few stream crossings had to be negotiated during the walk to Bunglas.

As we progressed, under the leadership of Marion McGinley from Sliabh Liag HC, the cliffs of Sliabh Liag became visible. Members jokingly referred to Sliabh Liag itself as 'Mount Doom,' because of the clouds rolling in over it! The climb to its summit at 595m was tough for everyone, with the surface changing from grass to loose rock and then to rocky paths. There was a marked reduction in conversation levels during the climb!

After Sliabh Liag, we negotiated "One Man's Pass," a narrow arête approximately 300m long with intimidating drops on both sides. For some, this was their first time on an arête and all seemed to enjoy the experience.

However, just a short while later we were introduced to the real "One Man's Pass," a very narrow scrambling ridge.



Negotiating One Man's Pass on Day 2

It is not for the faint-hearted, but four club members decided to cross it and there was plenty of cheering when all were safely across!

Due to the stunning views, we had numerous stops for photos and to explore the cliffs, so the pace was nice and relaxed. We were very lucky with the weather, as we felt some raindrops for about the last 30 minutes of the walk.

We were out for about 5½ hours, and covered approximately 13km.

After the walk, we again adjourned to Carrick for a bowl of chowder, refreshments and later on for dinner. We returned to Glencolmcille later that evening for a sociable drink in the local pub before returning to the hostel.

Day 3

On the last day, we had planned to see the cliffs from the sea with Paddy Byrne, a local Carrick man who runs boat trips, but unfortunately, due to the worsening weather, the boat trip was cancelled. We all returned to Dublin safely after a very enjoyable trip to Donegal.

► If you would like to come hillwalking with us, or want more information about the group, please contact us via the Contacts page on the club's website. We put a strong emphasis on health and safety in the mountains, so 'No Boots, No Walk.' A calendar of walks is now available on the website, www.gsmountaineering.com.

► Stephen Gavin is Secretary of the Garda Mountaineering Club ■



All downhill to Maghera, on Day 1



The Hillwalkers Club celebrates 20 years

The Hillwalkers Club has been twenty years a'growing since its foundation in 1993...but it is just another eighteen years to the centenary of its founding organisation, An Óige, which was established in 1931. Warren Lawless reports

ANNE-MARIE KEOGHAN



Summitting can be challenging...but we always get there in the end!

Wicklow and their immediate environs. The highlights of our walking year include long weekends, when the club ventures further afield to other mountain ranges across Ireland.

Christmas is a special time and the club arranges a festive party, with hikes before and afterwards. Last year's event was a case in point, with memorable hikes in the snow-bedecked Mourne, coupled with a Yuletide gala dinner in Carlingford, and capped off by a Sunday hike in the Cooleys.

The annual Holly Hike involves a pre-Christmas walk that ends at a Wicklow tavern and is followed by festive carols and general merriment,

while St Stephen's Day brings walks on Howth. Our New Year's Day hike is, traditionally, an ascent of Lugnaquilla from the Glen of Imaal.

The club also regularly organises hiking holidays further afield. Frequent trips to England, Scotland and Wales are an essential part of the club's calendar and have given members many holidays in delightful places, and unforgettable memories.

Beyond Ireland and Britain, there have been numerous ventures to all parts of the continent, including the Italian and Bavarian Alps, the Bernese Oberland, the Carpathian Alps and the Pyrenees, amongst many

Hillwalkers Club



The Hillwalkers Club celebrates its 20th anniversary this year, having being formed in 1993 as the successor to **An Óige Mountaineering Club**. However, because of An Óige's long history of involvement in hillwalking, it is not unreasonable to trace the club's lineage back to the foundation of An Óige in 1931.

Based in Dublin, the Hillwalkers Club currently has around 120 members. Like our sister groups in An Óige, we hike every week using private buses hired for the day. Except for public holiday weekends (when other activities are afoot), you can be guaranteed that the club bus will be leaving at 10:00am every Sunday from Burgh Quay,

whatever the weather or season.

The requirements for participation in these hikes are proper equipment, reasonable fitness and some experience, as hikes are typically 16-20km with circa 800m ascent. Most of our weekly hikes are in the Dublin and Wicklow Mountains but occasionally we make forays to the Blackstairs, Cooleys or Mourne. Our ethos is really quite straightforward – we are a friendly, welcoming club which combines a lively social dimension with a busy hiking programme.

Variety is the spice of hiking, and the club provides members with opportunities to walk beyond Dublin,

DONAL FINN



Working on navigation and mountain skills can be fun



The summit always brings out the smiles in members of the Hillwalkers!

DON REILLY

more. Each holiday is unique and, for many, has proven to be memorable, with members bringing back memories of unforgettable landscapes, good craic and ultimately great personal achievements.

Apart from the highly rewarding and fulfilling aspect of our hiking activities, the social element is the true gem of the club. Over the years, it has sustained interest and enjoyment when sore feet or poor weather could have otherwise dampened spirits. From set dancing in Leenane, after being soaked on the hills, to tall tales in the Blue Loo Bar in Glengarriff, or indeed a good laugh in our beloved Palace Bar in Fleet Street, it creates a bond and provides the silver lining to any cold, wet or windy day. Social activities include days on indoor climbing walls, camping, comedy nights, theatre, greyhound racing, orienteering by night, meals out, discos and even Shannon cruises.

The club organises regular training in map use, navigation and mountain skills as well as club-tailored leadership skills, which ultimately aims to coach new leaders for our hikes. The responsibility for leading is

something the club tries to share, and many within the club accept it as a way of giving back to their club.

The club keeps in contact with its members via regular newsletters, email, Facebook (search for The Hillwalkers Club) and its own website, with information on all ongoing activities, including a comprehensive archive of all our newsletters since our founding.

Our voluntary committee is elected at the club's AGM and is the engine behind the club's

activities. The current committee is a nice mix of old stalwarts and new blood, providing a beneficial blend of experience and fresh perspectives. Indeed, many have served on the committee over the years and others have done great service as hike leaders and co-ordinators, so it is appropriate here to thank them all for their dedication and for all the enjoyment that has flowed from their efforts.

In looking forward to the next eighteen years to our centenary, the club hopes to

continue providing an opportunity for people to enjoy hillwalking, to provide training which enhances responsibility and enjoyment of the hills, and to offer an interesting and varied programme of hikes throughout Ireland and abroad.

Why not come along and join us some Sunday morning? A warm welcome awaits you!

► For more information, visit the Hillwalkers' website at www.hillwalkersclub.com ■

WARREN LAWLESS



All Sunday hikes lead in the evening to the Palace Bar on Fleet Street, Dublin, the social heart of the club!

Autumn 2013



Andrew Malwhinney learning to lead on the Expectancy Slab, Glendalough, Co Wicklow

Wicklow youth trip

This trip was fantastic! Mother Nature played ball, making the climbing venues world-class; there were some awesome, enthusiastic and very talented coaches; and there was a fantastic bunch of young people to hang out with! What more could you ask for?

For five days in July 2013, twenty-two young people from all over Ireland experienced just how good the traditional climbing and bouldering is in this country. The trip was based in the Irish Mountaineering Club (IMC) Hut in Glendalough – thanks, Sé! – giving us access to the cliffs in the Wicklow Mountains as well as to Dalkey Quarry and Portrane Beach.

Anna Nelson, who started climbing four years ago through participation in a programme based out of the climbing wall at the Ganaway Activity Centre near Newtownards, Co Down, takes up the story:

"We travelled to Wicklow on

Wednesday, July 17th. The kids from up north met in Comber, Co Down. Later, we arrived at the IMC hut where the other kids and instructors met us. When everyone got settled in, we went down to Glendalough; it was a long walk in the blistering heat.

We bouldered on an outstanding rock which had some awesome problems; I got a few but I couldn't quite top one of them.

The next day, Paul took Sakara and me up a classic route called Sarcophagus. It was an amazing route, which was exciting as we had to multi-pitch.

On Friday, we went to Dalkey Quarry in Dublin. It was definitely the warmest day of the trip. The holds were greasy and hard to hold. I completed some routes and some hard boulders. Everyone was very hot and felt quite tired due to the heat.

The next day, we had a choice to go to Glendalough



Pitch of Sarcophagus (HVS), Glendalough. The well-protected nature of this route makes it an excellent route choice for young climbers

leading or practice leading, or go bouldering in Portrane. I chose to go to Portrane; it is amazing for bouldering. We tried a lot of problems; some were easy, some proved much harder. Carson tried an 8a which Michael Duffy had put up, called the Leviathan. He made good progress and is determined to go back to top it. On the way back to the hut we stopped at a shop to get ice lollies.

On Sunday, the last day of our trip, we went back to Dalkey Quarry where we did some top roping. It was cooler, so it felt much easier to climb. Overall, the trip was great and so much fun. We also had warm weather with no rain. The boulders and climbs were extraordinary and enjoyable to climb."

Throughout the week we visited Acorn Buttress, Pyramid Route, the main cliff – Glendalough, Dalkey Quarry and Portrane Beach. The experience and qualifications of the staff present meant that we were able to cater for each individual on the trip, from young people

who were attending their first youth trip, to teenagers who have reached a lead-climbing level and the die-hard boulderers venturing onto their first multi-pitch routes!

This trip was aimed at young people who have an interest in climbing, so they could meet up, build relationships and learn about the health and wellbeing that comes hand-in-hand with climbing, as well as developing their trad-climbing skills in a safe and enjoyable environment. I think all of these boxes were well and truly ticked!

A fitting way to sum up this article is with a few words by Rowan Greig from the Hanging Rockers Climbing Club, Fermanagh. It was his first trip away with Mountaineering Ireland:

"I had such a great time in the Wicklow Mountains and I really miss it. The weather was absolutely amazing. The trip was well organised and well prepared. The teachers were really supportive, caring, fun and helpful. I was scared of heights but they helped me and supported me and told me

there was nothing to be scared of in heights because you're safe on a rope. I took that advice and I simply got rid of the fear. I learned loads of new skills, tips and tricks and it really helped me for the future. I want to thank everyone for their amazing teaching and enthusiasm. I highly recommend this climbing trip to anyone. I really want to come back and work with the

climbing teachers again."

I would like to say a big thanks to the coaches, Mike Smith, Damien O'Sullivan, Eoin Murphy, Ricky Bell and Michael Duffy; both Dolores Horan and Veronica Kelly for helping out at the hut; Mountaineering Ireland for its support; the weather gods; and, most importantly, the young climbers, who were all brilliant! ■

Photograph: PAUL SWAIL COLLECTION



Paul Swail assists young climber on her first trad lead, Honeypot Crack (S), Dalkey Quarry



Sakara Stacey bouldering at Portrane, Co Dublin

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Irish youth perform very well in UK and Europe

Results from the bouldering competitions

For some of Ireland's top young climbers, it has been a busy summer of climbing in a wide range of bouldering competitions across Europe and further afield.

In May, Darragh O'Connor, Jamie Rankin and Dominic Burns competed at the **European Youth Championships** for bouldering in Grindelwald, Switzerland. Dominic was placed 6th overall, while Darragh and Jamie finished further down the field but put in promising performances amongst a very strong field of competitors.

At the end of June, Dominic Burns and Darragh O'Connor travelled to Sofia in Bulgaria to compete in the first round of the **European Youth Cup**. Both climbers put in amazing performances, with Dominic taking 1st place and Darragh taking 10th place – two Irish competitors finishing in the top ten of a European preliminary.

Towards the end of July, a team of five headed to L'Argentière in France to compete in the second round of the European Youth Cup.

Andrew Colligan competed in the Junior category, while Dominic Burns, Eoin Acton, Jamie Rankin and Darragh O'Connor competed in Youth A.

The standard at the competition was sky-high – almost as high as the temperatures! All members of the team put in strong performances. Dominic finished 2nd in Youth A; Eoin just missed the top ten, finishing in 11th; while Jamie and Darragh both finished inside the top 20. Andrew finished just outside the top 20 in the Junior category, a good result for his first big

competition in a while.

Dominic's results over the past few competitions combined to rank him number one in the world in his age category (Youth A). While this is a remarkable feat in its own right, it is even more impressive when you consider that Dominic only moved up into that category this year, making him one of the youngest climbers in the category.

Shortly after the competition in L'Argentière, the team made their way east to Imst in Austria to compete in the **European Youth Championships** for lead climbing, with both Dominic and Eoin competing in Youth A. They both climbed well to finish inside the top half of the field.

On a seemingly unstoppable roll, Dominic Burns competed in the final round of the **Junior British Bouldering Series** in Liverpool. He took second place, enough to clinch overall victory in the series, thereby



Dominic Burns: ranked No 1 in the world in his age category (Youth A)

retaining his champion's title from the previous year.

Throughout all of these events the climbers have been supported and coached by Eddie Cooper, the Mountaineering Ireland Climbing Team coach. Eddie's enthusiasm, expertise, dedication and sheer hard work has helped these climbers to reach levels of

performance previously undreamt of by the vast majority of Irish climbers.

In turn, this élite group of young climbers is inspiring the next generation to train hard, train smart and to realise that, with the right approach and methods, Irish climbers can compete and win at the very highest level ■



Members of Team Mountaineering Ireland at the Youth Climbing Series Grand Final in Edinburgh in June

Climbing competitions

Overview of upcoming competition season

For the 2013/2014 climbing season, Mountaineering Ireland is organising a host of varied and exciting competitions for climbers of all ages, abilities and experiences. From new climbers, who may have only been climbing for a few weeks, to seasoned stalwarts, boulder or route climbers, young and old, there will be a competition there for you to test yourself.

Running since the early 1990s, the **Irish Bouldering League** (IBL) is reputedly the longest continuously-running bouldering competition in the world. It is a competition in which novice climbers can meet and climb with some of the very best climbers in the country. It is like being able to have a kick-around with the national team at the national stadium; I don't think many other sports or competitions can offer that.

The atmosphere at the IBL is almost always supportive and friendly and even the closest rivals help each other to climb at their best. The IBL is also a great social occasion, getting climbers from all corners of the country together on the day. It

is in the IBL that new climbing partnerships will be formed and trips planned; there have even been a few couples who first met at an IBL event!

This year there are four rounds to the league. At each round there will be approximately twenty boulder problems. Each climber gets to try all of the problems. If you manage to climb the problem on your first attempt, you get 10 points; on your second attempt, you get 7 points; on your third attempt, you get 4 points; on your fourth or any subsequent attempt (you have an unlimited number of attempts), you get two points.

The Irish Lead Climbing Championship (ILCC) is now entering its fifth year. Each year, competitor numbers have grown steadily. For the first time, this year there will be a separate competition for junior and senior competitors.

Competitors at the ILCC generally climb two qualifier routes and, depending on how they do on these routes, they climb a final route. Climbers score more points the higher they go on the final route, with



Irish Bouldering League action

the difficulty of the route increasing as the climber progresses. The winner is the person who gets the highest – simple, really!

The Irish Bouldering Championship (IBC) is also establishing itself as an important fixture in the Irish climbing calendar. The IBC has a different format to the IBL. At the IBC, climbers complete an initial qualifying round before competing in a final. In the final, there usually are eight

boulder problems. Each competitor is given an amount of time to attempt each problem. The winner is the climber who completes the most of the problems.

Competition climbing provides the opportunity to get together socially, to find out who has been putting in the training time and effort. Regardless of age, experience or ability, there is a competition there for you to take part in and enjoy. Come along and give it a try ■

Irish Bouldering League

Round 1	Dublin, Gravity Climbing Centre, 12 th October
Round 2	Cork, 30 th November
Round 3	Belfast, 11 th January
Round 4	Dublin, Awesome Walls, 1 st February

Irish Lead Climbing Championships

Juniors	Dublin, Awesome Walls, 19 th October
Seniors	Dublin, Awesome Walls, 23 rd November

Irish Bouldering Championships

Juniors	Dublin, Gravity Climbing Centre, 15 th February
Seniors	Belfast, 22 nd March

Youth Climbing Series

Round 1	
North region	Gortatole, 25 th January
South region	Cork, 25 th January

Round 2	
North region	Tollymore, 15 th March
South region	University College Dublin, 15 th March

Final	Awesome Walls, Dublin, 5 th April
Grand Final	Ratho, Edinburgh, Scotland, 14 th June

Irish Lead Climbing Championship action





Looking west from Cummeenbaun toward The Pocket, Lauragh and Kilmakilloge Harbour, in County Kerry.

Around the Arderins

Words and photos by **ADRIAN HENDROFF**

All photographs by: ADRIAN HENDROFF

Mountain lists in Britain and Ireland have been a subject of continuous interest to generations of hillwalkers for over a century. Reaching the summits on those lists has become an activity of dedication, inspiration and, at times, even obsession to many.

When Sir Hugh Munro published the first list of Scotland's 3,000-foot mountains in 1891, he had little idea the influence this would have on later generations of the hillwalking community. He probably also did not expect his name to become synonymous with those mountains. Sir Munro himself did not complete his own list. That achievement went to Rev AE Robertson in 1901, who was the first Munroist. It then took more than 20 years before the next person completed the list, Rev AR Burn in 1923. Thereafter, the numbers of Munroists increased year by year and, today, about 150 names are added to the register annually.

The number of mountain lists has also increased. Nowadays, hillwalkers have a choice of lists ranging from the Munros, Corbetts, Grahams and Donalds in Scotland; the Nuttalls, Hewitts, Deweys and county tops in England and Wales; the Wainwrights and Birketts in the Lake District; to the Dillons, Vandeleur-Lynams, Arderins and county tops in Ireland.

At the time of writing, 1,900 people had completed the 282 Munros on the Scottish Mountaineering Club's website, and 211 people had summited all of the 2,000-foot mountains (the earliest by Ed Moss in 1951) in England and Wales, according to the Long Distance Walkers Association register. From that same register, it is interesting to note that the first person, Stephen Murphy, to complete Ireland's 2,000-ft mountains did so in 1978, over 70 years after the first Munroist! Today, there are still only 18 names listed there. In a register maintained by **Mountainviews.ie**, only two people have currently completed the Vandeleur-Lynams and the Arderins.

The statistics above prove that peak-bagging is still very much in its infancy in Ireland compared to the UK. However, we have come a long way over the last decade or so, with a tenfold increase in people

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logging 50 summits or more on Mountainviews.ie.

With that in mind, what exactly are the Vandeleur-Lynams and Arderins? The Vandeleur-Lynams are the 269 summits in Ireland over 600m and with a 15m+ prominence ('prominence' is the height of a summit above the highest col to the nearest most prominent summit). They are named after the late Joss Lynam, who originally created the list in 1952 with help from

Rev CRP Vandeleur.

The Arderins, on the other hand, are Ireland's 404 summits over 500m with a prominence of 30m+. A comprehensive discussion on the origins of these lists may be found in *A Guide To Ireland's Mountain Summits* by MountainViews.

I was fortunate to have completed my round of the Vandeleur-Lynams in 2009 on Aghla Beg's South Top ►



THE AUTHOR

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Lough Tay and the mountains beyond from the summit of Luggala at sunset, in County Wicklow.



The wild and complex landscape north of Coomnahorna, in County Kerry.

All photographs by: ADRIAN HENDROFF

in the Derryveagh Mountains, sharing the moment on a wet, windy and misty day with my friends Iain Miller and Caoimhe Gleeson. I was aware of the existence of the Arderins list at the time on Mountainviews.ie, but completing them was something I did not plan on doing, at least not upon finishing the Vandeleur-Lynams.

There were, of course, many hills between 500m to 600m that I had already climbed at that time – the well-known ones like Ben Bulbin, Great Sugarloaf, Luggala, Slieve League and Torc Mountain, and some subsidiary tops like Aghla More, Benlettery, Búcán, Coomacloghane and Mackoght that I did not realise I had done during my round of the Vandeleur-Lynams.

It was not until I visited the summit of Doan in the Mourne in early 2010, during a recce for my book *From High Places*, that I started to appreciate the beauty and value of our 500m to 600m tops. In the book, I described the view from Doan as ‘...a circular cluster of brown peaks that soared like mighty giants, some summits rocky and rugged, other domes protruding in the distance like priceless pearls.’

After that experience on Doan, curiosity got the

IT WAS NOT UNTIL I VISITED DOAN, IN THE MOURNES, THAT I STARTED TO APPRECIATE THE BEAUTY AND VALUE OF THESE TOPS

better of me. I used further recces for my *Dingle, Iveragh & Beara* and *Donegal, Sligo & Leitrim* guidebooks as excuses for visiting more 500m to 600m tops. I was pleasantly amazed by the quality of the landscape at every turn. It brought me to summits such as Beenatoor and Knockmulanane – which features a view of almost all the hills, valleys and coastline of central Dingle – and the majestic coastal scenery with its sea-cliffs and sea-stacks of Slievetooley in southwest Donegal.

It was then that I realised how close I was to completing the Arderins. I was only around 40 summits away from finishing the list, with a collection of tops remaining in the Antrim hills and the Sperrins, and yet more to do in west Cork, Kerry



Rainbow over Errigal as seen from Crocknafarragh, in County Donegal.



Ascending Brassel Mountain with Broaghnbinnia in the background, in the MacGillycuddy's Reeks, County Kerry.

and Donegal. I've had many memorable mountain days during my final push, all savoured either alone or in the company of my wife Una and close friends, and many of them at dusk or at dawn.

These are memories I'll treasure to the end...the exhilarating circuit of Coomnahorna until sundown, with an interesting descent on steep, mixed ground with overflowing mountain streams, all under a night sky full of stars... the lengthy approach along the remote Owencrovarra valley in Derryveagh on a bitterly cold day and then walking off the length of hills from Crockglass to Grogan More, which included waiting with my camera and tripod on the exposed summit of Crocknafarragh for clouds to clear and then being rewarded with a rainbow above Errigal... watching the sun set over Clew Bay, Corraun, Achill and the Nephins from the northeast top of Claggan Mountain in north Mayo on a stormy day laced with spells of dazzling evening light breaking through dark clouds.

Finally, at 17:42 on May 22nd, 2013, I was fortunate to stand on the summit of my 404th Arderin, Coomataggart in the Shehy/Knockboy area in east Kerry. The weather gods have never been kind to me on my final summit days whilst completing the Dillons and the Vandeleur-Lynams, but on this occasion a gentle wind, wispy clouds and blue sky greeted me throughout. The views of west Cork and Kerry went as far as the eye could see. I felt content, happy and humbled at the same time.

Setting out to complete any mountain list is a personal decision and the accomplishment an even more personal occasion. The reward, ecstasy and emotion of reaching such a goal can be quite overwhelming. For hillwalkers in Ireland, what could be better than to have a go at a list that offers the greatest of all hill challenges – a complete round of the Arderins.

MY FAVOURITE ARDERINS

What follows is my Top 10 list of Arderins in the 500m to 600m height range. I've left out the 600m+ Arderins, since they are part of the Vandeleur-Lynams and I wanted to highlight the ones below 600m. It's been a difficult decision to come up with the final 10, with popular hills such as Ben Bulbin, Ben Crom, Benchoona, Raghtin More and Slieve Foye narrowly missing the cut. Here they are anyway, in reverse order:

10. Luggala, Wicklow Mountains (595m)

Luggala happened to be the second hill I ascended in Ireland after Tonelagee in the 1990s. It is a hill that I've shared with members of the family and many friends, so it has a rather special place in my books. It's the perfect Arderin to get your kids and beginners hooked on hillwalking, and a fantastic summit from which to savour a high-level Wicklow sunrise or sunset.

9. Doan, Mourne Mountains (593m)

Doan rises proudly as a singular summit in an area of flat ground between Lough Shannagh and Ben Crom. Its location in the heart of the Mourne makes it ideal to appreciate the Silent Valley and all the surrounding peaks in a circular sweep. The proximity of the Shannagh and Bencrom rivers provides good camping areas for a chance to summit at dusk or at dawn.

8. Brassel Mountain, MacGillyCuddy's Reeks (575m)

Brassel is part of the Reeks massif...and yet it might feel like it's not. Its location and elevation from the main Reeks' ridge presents a slightly awkward approach from the north. From the south, it's a long drive down into the Black Valley and into



The landscape of Achill Island across Achill Sound from Corraun Hill, in County Mayo.

Cummeenduff Glen to begin a steep ascent up its slopes, with fine views dominated by the mighty Broaghnbinnia.

7. Corraun Hill, County Mayo (524m)

Corraun Hill is in one of the finest areas to explore in Achill/Corraun. There are fascinating corries to the east of the summit and one has a choice of spurs to approach the summit plateau, from which glorious high-level views may be savoured. The best view of all awaits on the summit of Corraun Hill itself, where you can fully appreciate the landscape around and beyond Achill Sound.

6. Bencorrbeg, Connemara (577m)

This is the classic Arderin to climb in Connemara, if you had to pick one. It has everything a mountain has to offer the hillwalker: a long walk-in on the west end of Lough Inagh, a steep ascent, scrambling opportunities, glorious views and plenty of rock! Having summited, there's the added bonus of bagging Bencorr and Derryclare Mountain to go with it!

5. Slieve League, southwest Donegal (595m)

In *Best Irish Walks*, Joss Lynam terms Slieve League the "pièce de résistance of the Irish coast." It truly is, for only the sea-cliffs at Croaghnaun on Achill Island can claim to rival it in terms of height. However, for

THE AIRY VISTA FROM BENWISKIN INCLUDES PLAINS, COASTLINE AND HILLS – MAKING THIS ONE OF THE FINEST ARDERINS TO CLIMB

continuous grandeur, Slieve League is probably the finest stretch of sea-cliffs on mainland Ireland. The cliff-edge route to its summit from Amharc Mór over Scregeighter, along the airy crest of Keeringear, and over One Man's Pass, is one of the finest coastal routes the country has to offer.

4. Drumnalifferry Mountain, Derryveagh Mountains (596m)

Plan an approach from the depths of Dunlewy and you'll be in for a treat! Some of Ireland's wildest mountain scenery awaits you by taking in the entire length of the Poisoned Glen and then gaining access to the rocky, granite mountains beyond. A full traverse covering spot heights 454m, 485m and Lough Maumbeg are added bonuses before gaining Drumnalifferry's summit. The views are stunning throughout, and you'll even have rocky slabs and vertiginous pinnacles to play with at the cliff-edge beyond the summit!



Looking across Lough Inagh to Derryclare Mountain, Bencorr and Bencorrbeg at dawn, in County Galway.



Having a snack on the summit of Doan, in the Mourne, Co Down.

3. Coomnahorna, Dunkerron Mtns (590m)

The complex landscape around Coomnahorna in County Kerry is one of the finest mountain areas in Ireland to explore. The horseshoe south of the summit provides a good taste of what the area has to offer: the mighty cliffs east of Coomcallee, the hanging corrie that houses Lough Coomcallee, the magnificent coum between Coomcallee and Coomnahorna, and views from the summit itself, especially of the wild mountain landscape to the north. The remoteness, variety and quality of the landscape firmly places Coomnahorna in my Top 3.

2. Benwiskin, Dartry Mountains (514m)

The stunning profile of this limestone escarpment in County Sligo is best viewed from the road at Keeloges. Thankfully, access is now permitted from Gleniff at the Coillte entrance. This is the most exhilarating approach for the hillwalker, consisting of a very steep grassy slope toward the summit ridge and views beyond the summit down a deep gully. Across this yawning abyss is a sharp fin of rock

projecting northeastward and down an attractive ridge to the plains. The airy vista from Benwiskin also includes a cocktail of wide plains, extensive coastline and surrounding hills – all making this one of the finest Arderins to climb.

1. Cummeenbaun, Caha Mountains (510m)

It was a difficult choice between Benwiskin and Cummeenbaun – but for remoteness, the number of possible route choices and overall views, Cummeenbaun comes up trumps. Its summit overlooks the remote valleys of Glantrasna and Glanrastel. It may be approached directly from either of these valleys, or as a culmination of a more demanding horseshoe over its tops. Walk a few hundred metres westward from its summit and a fabulous panorama awaits you: there's Knockowen towering above Glanrastel, the hills of Knockatee and Knockanoughanish rising above green fields, the sharp peaks of the Pocket, lush green lands around Lauragh, distant views of Hog's Head, Hungry Hill and the spine of the Iveragh Mountains across Kenmare Bay ■

Approaching Benwiskin's sharp northeastern edge, in the Dartry Mountains, County Sligo.



TREKKING THROUGH TIME

Part II: Iron Age to Medieval

Archaeologist **MARTIN FITZPATRICK** continues his series on the archaeological remains that may be encountered in the Irish uplands. In this instalment he looks at monuments from the Iron Age through to the medieval period.

Our forays into the Irish hills often bring us face to face with archaeological monuments, many of which may not have been previously recorded. The previous article detailed many of the prehistoric monuments from the Neolithic and Bronze Ages which may be encountered on our approach to and during our upland excursions. This article continues with monuments from the Iron Age through to the medieval period.

This series aims to inform readers about the types of monuments they may encounter in the hills and to encourage all users of the hills to assist in preserving such monuments by recording and reporting them. Working together in this way, we can ensure that monuments are catalogued and afforded legal protection, allowing them to be enjoyed by future generations.

* * * * *

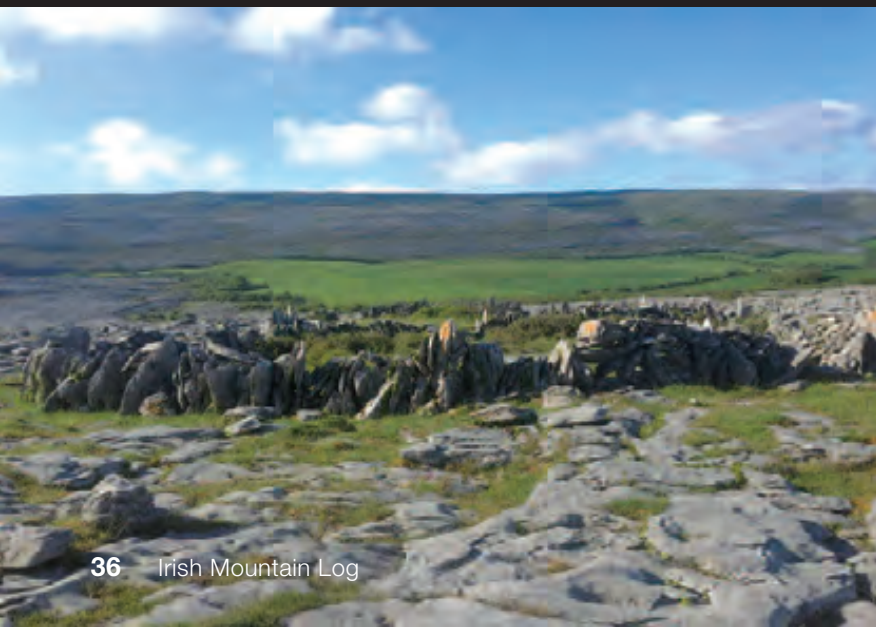
The early farmers in Ireland were drawn to the uplands where the lighter, free-draining soils and thinner woodland suited their basic tools. The transition from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age is often regarded as the 'Dark Ages' due to the apparent scarcity of monuments coupled with a deterioration in the climate after 1000BC.

In upland regions, climate fluctuations led to the development of blanket bogs and a loss of arable land. Studies have shown that there was not a large-scale abandonment of the uplands but that instead the land was used differently and communities adapted. The Iron Age was marked by woodland regeneration, spread of bogs and a reduction in cultivation caused by the decline of the soil quality over a long period of usage.

Archaeological surveys in the Barrees Valley, Co Cork, by William O'Brien* included the excavation of a small hut site that revealed a substantial sub-rectangular house of Iron-Age date. A circular stone enclosure and pre-bog field walls of this period were also recorded and excavated. While the findings highlight the difficulty in identifying and dating hut sites and enclosures without scientific analysis, they also emphasise the need to record the features we encounter in the hills, as it is possible that many are the remnants of our prehistoric landscape.

When the rain pours down in the hills and we seek shelter, it is often in structures associated with the tradition of transhumance that we find it.

Enclosure in the Burren, Co Clare



**Local Worlds: Early Settlement Landscapes and Upland Farming in South-West Ireland*, by William O'Brien; published by Collins Press (2010).

Transhumance is the seasonal movement of people with their livestock between fixed summer and winter pastures. In montane regions there is vertical transhumance, which implies movement between higher pastures in summer and lower valleys in winter. In Ireland, the practice was known as booleying and the term 'buaile' refers to an enclosure that cattle were herded into at night.

The herders lived in small huts or shielings that were constructed of stone. The construction method used in these enclosures and huts is such that it is often impossible to date them precisely and this difficulty is compounded by the fact that the practice continued in some parts into the twentieth century.

The Summer 2013 edition of the *Irish Mountain Log* (IML 106, p59) featured a short piece on a previously unrecorded shelter identified on the slopes of Keadeen, Co Wicklow, with a tradition of usage over 100 years ago.

Winterage is the opposite of booleying and is likely to have been used from an early date, when winter growth of grass and storage facilities did not exist. The practice continues in the Burren today where herds of cattle are left out on the hills during the winter months and brought down to the lower ground with the spring growth. Like the booleying tradition, this would have involved the construction of simple huts and shelters, many of which survive on the ground today.

* * * * *

Easily recognisable monuments of the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age are the hillforts, promontory forts and hilltop enclosures that we occasionally come across in the hills.

HILLFORTS

Usually following the contours, these large enclosures on hilltops can range in size from three to twenty-two hectares and have a single (univallate) or a number (multivallate) of enclosing banks. While the exact dating of these monuments is uncertain, it is believed they were constructed from the mid-Bronze Age onwards. There are some 90 examples known in the country and they are likely to have been used as enclosed settlements, places of refuge or ceremonial sites.

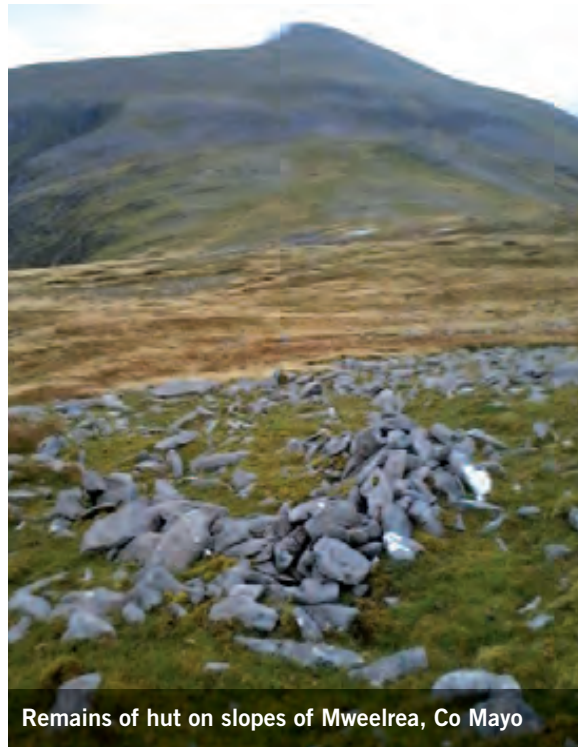
An atlas of hillforts in Britain and Ireland is currently being compiled by the School of Archaeology at The University of Oxford. This survey aims to produce a paper and an online searchable atlas linked to Google Earth. Contributions from the public are welcome and all relevant information can be found on the University of Oxford website.

HILLTOP ENCLOSURES

Hilltop enclosures are similar to hillforts in many respects but are smaller, less well defined and less likely to have been used for defensive purposes. They date from prehistory to the medieval period.

PROMONTORY FORTS

Promontories on the coast, fortified by banks and/or fosses, are known as coastal promontory forts, while

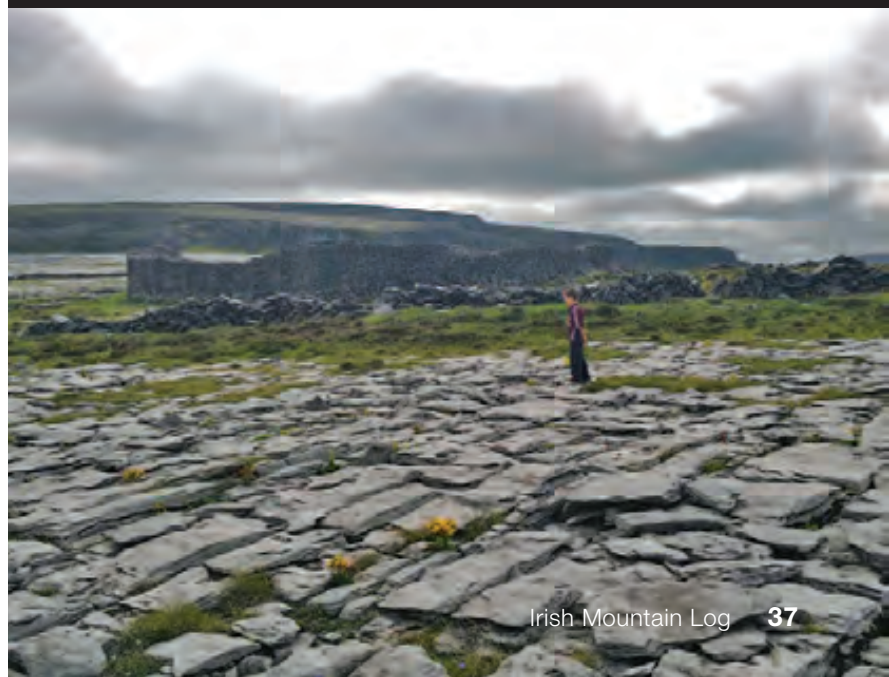


Remains of hut on slopes of Mweelrea, Co Mayo

island examples are also known from cliffs and naturally sloping ground. Those on the coast probably developed from trading centres on the sea. The natural defences are supplemented by building a stone or earthen bank and fosse across the narrowest part of the promontory.

The Early Christian period (circa 500-1000AD) saw the introduction of new technologies and a new religious culture. It also saw a diffused power structure, with the country being divided into over a hundred local kingdoms by the 7th century. These kingdoms were ultimately subject to kings, with the Uí Néill dynasty dominating the political scene from the late 6th century to the 10th century. This period of history saw woodland clearance and an extension of grasslands and, between the 5th and 10th centuries AD, the construction of thousands of ringforts in the Irish landscape.

Ringfort in the Burren, Co Clare





Cashel in the Burren, Co Clare

RINGFORTS

The most widespread and characteristic of monuments in the Irish countryside, the ringfort generally consists of a circular, subcircular, oval or D-shaped area enclosed by one or more banks of earth or stone, or a combination of both. They were often located on sloping ground affording visibility of the surrounding countryside.

Earthen ringforts usually have an external fosse surrounding the bank, and a causewayed entrance giving access to the interior. The bank is generally built by piling up inside the fosse the material obtained from digging the latter.

The construction of ringforts in Ireland dates from the early medieval period (circa 400 AD to 1100 AD) and possibly continued up to the 17th century. 'Rath' is the term applied to those ringforts of earthen construction, while 'cashel' refers to those constructed from stone.

A single bank and fosse is the most usual form of rath, but double (bivallate) and triple (trivallate) banks do occur. The number of banks is thought to be a reflection of the status of the owner/occupier of the monument, rather than an added defence.

The function of ringforts was generally as enclosed

farmsteads, with the defences protecting the houses and outbuildings in the interior, but they may also have been used for social gatherings.

Cashels have the same characteristics as ringforts but differ in that they are constructed entirely of stone. The walls of the cashels can often be up to 6m wide and 3m high.

ENCLOSURES

Enclosures are usually distinguished by their characteristics, such as their large or small size, or lack of entrance features, which sets them apart from ringforts or other classifiable enclosures. The term usually refers to a monument that consists of an enclosing bank surrounding a circular or sub-circular area, and with no apparent entrance, but a number of these 'enclosures' may prove to be raths or cashels. Due to the lack of diagnostic remains, it is difficult to suggest a period of construction or use for these monuments. Sites which are now destroyed but which have been detected from aerial photographs, marked on various Ordnance Survey maps or locally described as circular or sub-circular areas defined by banks and/or fosses, are usually categorised in the archaeological record as enclosures.

ECCLESIASTICAL SITES

Early Christian settlement saw the construction of ecclesiastical sites throughout the countryside. These monuments, which were generally much larger than ringforts, were usually sub-circular in shape and enclosed by earthen banks.

The monastic remains are defined by a simple early stone oratory with a doorway in the wall. Other features include bullaun stones, cross slabs, saint's beds, high crosses, houses and holy wells.

From the 8th century onwards, some of these sites developed into monasteries and in some cases evolved into modern towns. Saint Kevin is thought to have founded the monastery at Glendalough in the Wicklow Mountains in the 6th or 7th century, and its proximity to the surrounding mountains cannot have been by chance. While the scope of this article does not include a commentary on church development, it should be recognised that from the earliest times the hills and mountains played an important role in the church culture.

The record of the death of a pilgrim at Glendalough in 951AD (described in the *Annals of the Four Masters*) highlights another aspect of the life that was connected with higher ground: pilgrimage.

PILGRIMAGE

It seems that we are re-discovering pilgrimage walks every other day now, and many of these lead to or through our mountains. We are all aware of the traditions of pilgrimage associated with Croagh Patrick (Co Mayo), Slieve League (Co Donegal) and Mount Brandon (Co Kerry). However, these and many others are likely to be pre-Christian in origin and were originally associated with prehistoric sites and the Celtic festivals of Lughnasa.

Today, the remnants of the Christian pilgrimages that we experience in the hills include the pilgrim

Gallarus Oratory, Co Kerry: associated with pilgrimage to Mt Brandon



roads, beehive huts, cross-decorated stones, wayside crosses, oratories and churches.

HOLY WELLS

A holy well can be described as any site where the water is used as a focal point of devotion or ritual. While many appear first as Christian monuments, much of the tradition associated with them is pre-Christian. With some 3,000 holy wells in the country, they vary in appearance from simple natural springs in the ground to chambers with steps and



Standing stone inscribed with cross



Holy well in the Burren, Co Clare

surrounding walls. Often dedicated to a particular saint, they usually have a pattern on the saint's day. Votive offerings and specific trees or bushes are sometimes found in association with these monuments, while cures for specific ailments are ascribed to individual wells.

The well at Mám Éan (Maumeen) in Connemara reminds us yet again that the mountains were revered landscapes. Devoted to St Patrick, the well and pattern associated with it are pre-Christian in origin and thought to be associated with the festival of Lughnasa. St Patrick reputedly spent the night at this well as part of his journey through the mountain range. Having reached this spot, he blessed the well and spent the night on a rock bed. Tradition has it that it was the limit of his journey, as next day he blessed Connemara and turned back. Anybody who has ever arrived at the well as part of the Maumturks Challenge will know exactly how he felt! ■



THE AUTHOR

Martin Fitzpatrick is a professional archaeologist, an avid hillwalker and a member of Mountaineering Ireland. If you have any queries in relation to archaeological monuments in the uplands, you can contact him at martin@archconsultancytld.com.

Remains of cloghans on pilgrimage route to Mount Brandon, Co Kerry





Members of the Beyond Horizons 2013 Trek at the IMC Hut in Glendalough, Co Wicklow, last May

Fit for the summit

RAFAL STACHOWICZ led a group of amputees on a ten-day trek through the Wicklow Mountains last May in the Wicklow Horizon 2013 Trek



In the second half of May this year, walkers in the Wicklow Mountains might have come across a quite unusual group of ten hikers. Covering ten to fifteen kilometres each day, the group was heading for the main objective of their ten-day trek: Lugnaquilla, the highest peak in Leinster at 931m. Their pace was quite impressive considering that most of the participants were missing one or more of their limbs. These remarkable hikers were members of the Wicklow Horizon 2013 Trek, an expedition organised by the Polish charitable foundation *Poza Horyzonty* (Beyond Horizons).

The main aim of the expedition was to support the work of the Beyond Horizons foundation, which was established in Poland to help those who, as a result of an accident or a severe illness, have been subjected to the amputation of one or more of their limbs. This time, they were raising funds for ten-year-old Martynka Karbowska, who needed two prosthetic

legs. A secondary aim of the expedition was to promote travel and sports amongst people with physical disabilities, a group who are often unnecessarily excluded from such activities.

Jan Mela (24), the founder and chairperson of *Poza Horyzonty*, is a good example of the way that amputees can engage in sports at the highest levels. Jan suffered an accident in 2002, at the age of 13, resulting in the loss of his left lower leg and his right forearm. Two years later, at the age 15, he reached both the North and South Poles, the youngest explorer ever to do so.

The members of the expedition arrived in Ireland on May 20th and had their first taste of Irish hospitality that night, as they had been offered overnight accommodation by the priest in Clondalkin. The next day, the group had a short warm-up walk in Clondalkin and attended mass there. Then they met the pupils and teachers of St Ronan's Primary School, the local national school. The children and teachers from St Ronan's bade farewell to the hikers at 1:00pm in Marlay Park, Rathfarnham, where the real adventure began.

As the group gained altitude on the Wicklow Way, they started to enjoy the quickly changing scenery

THE BASE CAMP FOR THE ATTEMPT ON LUGNAQUILLIA WAS NEAR THE START OF THE ZIG-ZAGS

and the views over the city of Dublin, the bay and the surrounding hills. It also started to be more challenging. Drainage ditches on the Wicklow Way, easily crossed by ordinary walkers, caused difficulties for those with prosthetic limbs and they had to develop special techniques to cross them. In addition, matching the overall pace of the walk to the degree of disability of each of the participants, so that they could keep together, was not easy.

Coming from Poland, a country where most mountain trails are probably over-marked, so that people usually don't have to use a map, the group had to start making proper use of the 1:30,000 East West Wicklow maps. Mostly, we kept to the Wicklow Way, which was quite well signposted. However, there were several diversions and side-trips planned, so we had to follow the route closely on the map. After a very long first day's walking, which lasted more than nine hours, the group finally reached their camp in the Dublin Mountains. Thanks to the hospitality of Scouting Ireland, we had the use of the scouts' facility at Larch Hill. Despite tiredness and minor abrasions caused by prostheses, the group had a feeling of great satisfaction after completing the first day of their expedition, but there were still nine more days ahead.

The second day started early at 7:00am with the plan to cover about 14km to the scouts' lodge in

Glencree Valley, the Glendale Scout Lodge. The group had also decided to hike up to Prince William's Seat (556m) on the way. This side-trip was the first experience for the group of walking on moorland and through the bogs that are such a part of the Irish landscape. It was certainly not easy for them, mainly because of the uneven and wet terrain. Despite these difficulties, the hikers coped well with the ascent and had a relaxing lunch with great views over the surrounding mountains from the rocks on Prince William's Seat.

The most challenging part of the second day turned out to be overcoming the stony steps of the Wicklow Way in Curtlestown Wood. This is part of the route that usually shouldn't take more than ten minutes but, for members of the expedition, it took more than an hour – mainly because of the height and the number of sand-covered stone steps they had to descend. Fortunately, there were no falls, which could have been dangerous on this type of ground. The rest of the route for that day was relatively easy, especially the last stretch on the back road leading to the final (easily missed) turn to the Scout Lodge, where the group quickly set up their tents.

The next day was spent in Glencree valley, treating abrasions, exploring the surrounding area, the beautiful oak forest, participating in psychological workshops conducted by a therapist, singing songs by the campfire and watching the pattern of the typical Irish weather (five minutes of showers and five minutes of sun). After such a good rest day, the



THE AUTHOR

Rafal Stachowicz organised this expedition. He is originally from Poland but now lives in Dublin, where he is a member of the Irish Mountaineering Club and Mountaineering Ireland. He is an experienced hillwalker, climber and trekker and is a qualified expedition guide. Rafal is experienced in organising and leading hikes in Ireland and abroad.



group was ready to begin a difficult and demanding day 4.

The day started early again at 7:00am, when all members of the group were given lifts by volunteers in their cars to Crone Wood car park, just to avoid the part of the route on the not entirely safe asphalt country road. After two hours' walk, the hikers were able to enjoy a scenic view of one of the national tourist attractions, the 130m-high Powerscourt Waterfall, and then have their lunch beside the bridge in the Dargle valley.

There were more challenges ahead for them that day, including a traverse of Djouce Mountain (725m). Ascents and descents are one of the biggest difficulties for those with prosthetics. They must work hard to maintain their balance and direction of motion on an inclined slope. 'Slowly but surely' became the motto of the group. The day finished with the first wild camping in Wicklow Mountains National Park, at a site with a great view of Lough Tay and the cliffs of Luggala, where their wilderness survival skills were tested.

Days 5 and 6 were relatively easy with just about 19km to cover to Laragh, mostly on gravel and country roads. It was also another chance to experience the great hospitality of the locals, when instead of sleeping in the wilderness of the national park again, the group was invited to use a farmer's field beside a delightful small wood and with basic facilities. It was really exciting when the expedition members saw for the first time the dramatic view of Glendalough and Glendasan valleys from the hills of



A stile presents a challenge for a disabled climber

Brockagh forest.

As camping in this area is legally restricted, everybody was very grateful that the long-established Irish Mountaineering Club (IMC) gave us the free use of their hut in Glendalough. Hikers could enjoy the great scenery of this important tourist site, meet with IMC's very experienced members and spend two days hiking in this beautiful area. So far, the weather had been much better than everybody expected, knowing the stories they had heard about the unpredictable and very wet conditions that prevail on this island. Instead, sunny and mostly dry weather allowed the group to enjoy relaxing breaks and only one hike, the one on the seventh day, had to be cancelled, when there was lashing rain. This served to remind everybody how lucky we had been with the weather. It was also perfect timing, as the group was in the right place, snug and dry in the wooden club hut.

The ninth day's walk from Glendalough to Glenmalur prepared expedition members for the main challenge, climbing Lugnaquilla, called by locals 'Lug.' It was quite a strenuous day, as the group had to climb over Lugduff Gap at almost 600m and then take the very long way down to the Glenmalur valley. Again, unlike a majority of hikers, perhaps, for those with prostheses the descent was more tiring and difficult than the ascent. The day was sunny, but very windy. As we descended, there was perfect visibility with great views across the valley to Wicklow's highest peak, Lugnaquilla, and into the remote Glenmalur valley, which was some





The expedition team poses for a group photo on the summit of Lugnaquilla

compensation for the effort required.

Thanks to the hospitality of a local farmer, the expedition's base camp for the attempt on Lugnaquilla was established on beautiful grassland by the Avonbeg River, just near the start of the Zig-Zags route onto the mountain. The expedition was on a high, with everybody excited about next day's final climbing challenge.

The last day, the tenth of the expedition, started at 7:00am with a fast warm-up and breakfast. The weather was sunny again, the air was clear with perfect views over the mountains, but the very strong winds created quite chilly conditions. This was to be the greatest ascent and descent in one day on the hike and was quite challenging for the group, especially for one of the double amputees.

Once we were past the well-maintained approach trail of the Zig-Zags, the adventure started with route-finding necessary through the heather, bogs and stony outcrops and along the cliffs. Despite the difficulties experienced, only two members of the group had to retreat before the summit, assisted by volunteers. All of the remaining expedition members reached the plateau of Clohernagh (800m) where, after a well deserved lunch break, the group started to walk slowly up to the main peak, Lug. It was an emotional time when the group members all finally reached the top. They congratulated each other and had photos taken with the organisers. This was not the end of the challenge, though. The hikers still had to take on the difficult and time-consuming descent back to their campsite in Glenmalure.

After a tiring ten-hour day, the participants were once again pleasantly surprised by their local supporters, the teachers of St Ronan's School, who had travelled to Glenmalure from Dublin especially to meet and congratulate the walkers, and to donate money towards the prostheses for Martynka Karbowska. Everybody was extremely happy and

The charity trek raised a total of €3,700. As the cost of buying prostheses for Martynka Karbowska will be €8,000, the donations page is still open. If you wish to find out more about Martynka or Beyond Horizons, or to contribute, you can use these secure links: <http://pozahoryzonty.org/martynka-karbowska>; www.gofundme.com/martynka.



The climbers (circled in red) descending to the base of the north spur

Sturrall headland climb

IAIN MILLER leads a team on an ascent of an exposed Donegal headland

In southwest Donegal, halfway between Glencolmcille and the end of the Port road, lies the headland of Sturrall, one of the great anomalies of sea-cliff architecture in Ireland. Sturrall stands head and shoulders above the surrounding clifftops and projects out into the Atlantic Ocean for almost a kilometre.

The headland comprises a knife-edge ridge running for a shade over 800 metres, extending from the mainland to the summit of Sturrall at 180m above sea level and then down into the sea.

The first recorded climb to the summit of Sturrall was by Walter Parry Haskett Smith in about 1895. His route ascended the ridge from the landward side, a route that requires a very exposed 400m ridge scramble to the summit. As WP Haskett Smith wrote in 1895:

“The knife-edged saddle is very rotten but leads to a firm block of rock nearly 1,000 feet above the sea. So defiant is the challenge of this rock that no cragsman can pass it by. The passage is not pleasant, yet even on a second visit the writer was powerless to resist temptation. The tottering wall of rotten rock gives the impression that the whole connection may slither down. Considering what desperate

Atlantic storms this crumbling cliff withstands annually, such fears must be exaggerated. Nevertheless it would be improper to recommend this climb. It is dangerous as well as difficult, very exciting, and exceedingly delightful – after it is over.”

On my first visit to Sturrall I hatched a plan to climb the ridge from the seaward end back to the land, a tad over 800 metres away. The seaward tip of the headland is difficult to access and is a scary place to visit. It is accessed by a steep scramble down to the base of the north spur of the headland and a boat trip from there for 300 metres. The sea passage to gain the starting point is exposed to currents and occasionally high seas. It is quite common for the offshore skerries to ‘take green’ or have 20m swells wash right over them.

My original plan was to climb the ridge alone and to that end I made four reconnaissance trips to Sturrall. I got as far as landing on the seaward tip of the ridge on one visit. It is quite a surreal experience to visit such a wild place and be totally alone, a bit like driving your car very fast through a busy city centre and closing your eyes for a minute. After the fourth visit the decision was an easy one to make – a team ascent was the order of the day.



The climbers (circled in red) making the short boat trip out to the tip



THE AUTHOR

Iain Miller is a Mountain Leader based in Co Donegal. He specialises in leading adventure climbs, notably on sea stacks and sea cliffs. For more details, visit his website www.uniqueascent.ie.

On the chosen weekend, we arrived in Port late on the Friday night with a clear moonlit sky and a trillion stars. We made a swift visit to the Port Hostel to meet Theresa Hughes and Aaron Entringer, who were over from the US and had come to play on the Sturrall that weekend. We discussed our various options for the weekend's wee adventure. The deciding vote would, as always, go to our old friend, Neptune.

On Saturday, we walked to the Sturrall headland and then back via Port to Glenlough Bay, an outstanding stretch of coastline. The planets appeared to have aligned and the mighty Sturrall looked to be in a suitable mood to accept visitors.

On Sunday morning we set off from Port nice and early, for the day was likely to be a long one indeed. A 3km clifftop walk took us to the landward end of Sturrall. We began the very steep descent down the north spur, taking an inflatable boat with us. The north spur was the nearest point of land to our starting point on the seaward tip that was accessible on hands and feet. From here, the 300m sea passage to the tip of the ridge looked mildly terrifying but definitely do-able.

Alas, Neptune was in attendance and in a bit of a strop! However, two emotional boat crossings later found us all at the foot of the seaward tip of Sturrall with, above us, over 300 metres of unclimbed rock. As the seas were now crashing 20-footers from the southwest, we were truly committed to the task in hand – a boat retreat was now out the question – and so we began to climb.

For the first 150 metres climbing up this mind-blowing ridge was not

IT WAS VERY EXPOSED. SEVERAL SECTIONS INVOLVED CRAWLING.... AND PRAYING!

difficult, though it was very exposed and several sections involved crawling – and praying! The exposure was outrageous.

The crux pitch was reached approximately 150 metres up the ridge. This was the most technically difficult part of the climb and involved a very exposed move from a vertical wall to a near featureless slab.

This was followed by a couple of friction moves above the abyss to the mother of all 'Thank God' holds. From there, a jug romp was followed to a monster block belay. Another outstanding slab pitch followed above and we were now on the home



The climbers (circled in red) beginning their climb of the Sturrall headland ridge



Theresa Hughes starts climbing from the base of the seaward tip

straight. A further 100 metres of climbing at about 'Diff,' with monster big air all round, took us to the summit as the sun was beginning to set.

From sea to summit had taken us a shade over eight hours, covering 350 metres of climbing at a grade of XS 4c.

We beat a hasty retreat in the growing darkness but, if light had allowed, we would have followed the skyline ridge back to the landward side of the Sturrall by Haskett Smith's original 1890s route; that would have added over 400m of alpine-type ridge climbing to our route.

Acknowledgments

Many thanks to Caoimhe Gleeson and Oscar Xxxx?? for their clifftop patience and excellent photographs. A special thanks also to Theresa Hughes who completed the route in exceptional style on only her third days' outdoor climbing ever ■

The team (l to r): Iain Miller, Theresa Hughes and Aaron Entringer



All photographs: CAOIMHE GLEESON AND OSCAR WILSON

STURRALL HEADLAND XS 4c, 750m

Climb details

This route climbs the Sturrall headland ridge from sea to summit and continues along the ridge towards the land. Access is by steep descent of the north spur of Sturrall to sea level and a 300m paddle to the base of the ridge.

Pitch 1: 25m. From the recess at the sea-side tower, climb the grooves above the abyss to a large grassy ledge.

Pitch 2: 48m. Climb slabby rock and up airy ground as the ridge narrows – steep belay on blocky ground.

Pitch 3: 20m. Climb ridge to a flattening.

Pitch 4: 25m. Crawl along the ridge with maximum exposure – big gear belay in wide crack at top of slab.

Pitch 5: 48m. Climb steep ground to an excellent pull onto an immaculate slab above big air. Climb slab to twin crack belay on a grassy ledge.

Pitch 6: 40m. Continue up immaculate slab by finger cracks to a large grassy recess.

Pitch 7: 50m. Climb broken, very exposed ground to monster block belay.

Pitch 8: 70m. Scramble to summit.

From the summit, follow the ridge past several towers with maximum exposure for approximately 350m of outstanding alpine-ridge climbing back to land.

First ascents

Summit to land: WP Haskett Smith, c1895.

Sea to summit: Iain Miller, Theresa Hughes, Aaron Entringer, March 17th, 2012.

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Books



EVEREST CALLING: THE IRISH JOURNEY

By Lorna Siggins

The Collins Press (2013), 213pp,
many colour photos, b&w
illustrations, maps, sketches
ISBN 13: 978 18488 91630, €19.99

It is difficult to imagine a mountain that comes close to captivating the attention of mountaineers and non-mountaineers alike quite like Everest does. Everest has been steeped in tragedy, triumph and controversy in equal measures from the first reconnaissance expeditions in the 1920s right up to the present day. For many, including nations in some cases, there is a deep personal interest, history and relationship with the mountain. The Irish are no exception.

It is all too easy to focus on and remember only the destination, only the summit. This revision of *Everest Calling* remembers the struggles – not just climbing the mountain but the oft-forgotten journey and struggle to get to the bottom.

It is now twenty years since the first Irishman climbed Everest. Dawson Stelfox, alone at the summit in 1993, climbed it in a style unlikely to be seen again on this mountain.

This is an important story to be told. While a huge dose of nostalgia for many, it also offers an interesting insight into the huge effort, determination and skill of the men and women who worked together to put an Irishman on the summit of Everest, to a new generation of Irish mountaineers.

This new generation of mountaineers have grown up and honed their skills in a very different environment to that of the last century, particularly with the now extensive commercialisation of the mountain.

This revised edition has had a glossy make-over, with many new colour photographs. It includes a foreword by Dawson Stelfox and a chapter on what the climbers involved in that

ALBERT CONNAUGHTON



first ascent have done since Everest.

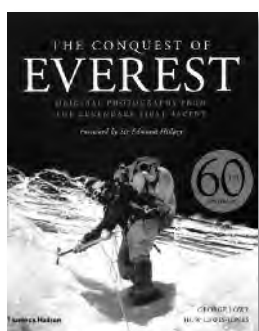
Dermot Somers finishes the book with a new chapter completing the 'Irish Journey' to date, with a review of all thirty-six Irish ascents made so far by the twenty-six men and five women who have climbed it in various styles since 1993. Dermot was part of the original team and, like many, has a deep personal relationship with Everest. He doesn't hide his disdain for the commercialisation and climbing style that is now the norm on the mountain. He also laments

the dearth of Irish climbers seeking high challenges beyond the 'celebrity' summits.

Dawson's successful climb was an inspiration to an entire generation of climbers. This book is essential reading as it tells the story of the team, the effort, the highs and the lows; in essence, *The Irish Journey*.

Everest Calling: The Irish Journey is a must-have on the bookshelf of mountaineers and non-mountaineers alike.

Dr Roger McMorrow Consultant anaesthetist, mountaineer, summiteer on the 2007 Caudwell Xtreme Everest Expedition



THE CONQUEST OF EVEREST: ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE LEGENDARY FIRST ASCENT

By George Lowe & Huw Lewis-Jones

Thames & Hudson (2013), 240pp, 163
illustrations & photos (62 colour),
ISBN 978-0-500-54423-5, €24.95

Published on the 60th anniversary of Sir Edmund Hillary's 1953 Everest expedition, George Lowe's memoir comes from the last surviving climber of the 1953 expedition. Lowe died at the age of 89 in March of this year, before this book was published (see obituary in IML 106, p64). Dr Huw Lewis-Jones provides the accompanying text and worked with Lowe and his family over his final years to put together this memoir with stunning photographs from the climb.

The memoir is fascinating because of both the range and vividness of the photography, and Lowe's own low-key and

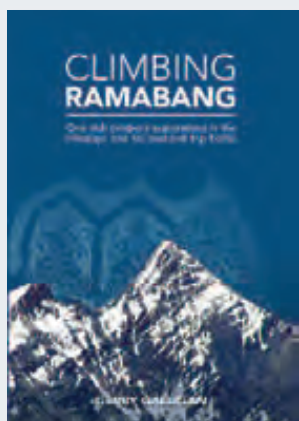
objective perception of events. On first meeting with Ed Hillary they "talked easily about the mountains" and discovered that Lowe's father, who ran a fruit farm, got his queen bees from "a chap in Auckland, someone called Hillary." Thus began a lifelong friendship and climbing partnership.

Lowe felt honoured and lucky to be part of Hillary's life, but Lowe himself was the unsung hero of the expedition. Lowe was master of his craft on snow and ice, and had remarkable endurance at high altitude. He got to within 1,000 feet of the summit, helping Hillary and Tenzing on their final push for the top. It was an

amazing tale of a team of climbers whose unflagging support for each other resulted in the successful ascent.

This is Lowe's story, but other notable figures and mountaineering legends offer contributions and reflections. Reinhold Messner writes that it is right to remember and honour these men, knowing how they approached their mountains. In an age of growing consumerism, this memoir upholds the traditional values of the mountains and it should have a place in all mountaineering libraries.

Bill Hannon Member of the Irish Mountaineering Club and member of Mountaineering Ireland



**CLIMBING RAMABANG:
ONE IRISH CLIMBER'S
EXPLORATIONS IN THE
HIMALAYA AND HIS
OVERLAND TRIP HOME**

By Gerry Galligan

Vicarious Publishing, Dublin (2013), 287pp, 2 sections of colour photos, 3 route maps, ISBN: 978-1-909461-03-1 (hdbk), 978-1-909461-04-8 (eBook), €25 (£20)

Never judge a book by its cover! Gerry Galligan's book looks like an old-fashioned Himalayan expedition book, written by an expedition leader trying to pay off accumulated debts or

promises made to sponsors. Not this book – Gerry has something to say about the world and the society in which he finds himself and this book is his vehicle.

It starts out as an account of a small group of relatively inexperienced Irish climbers, their encounters in the Indian Himalaya and their successful first ascent of a previously unnamed 6,000-metre peak. The book conveys that there is still scope for competent climbers to adventurously explore and pioneer new routes on unclimbed peaks in the Himalaya. The writing style is easy yet compelling; he quickly sucks you in with a self-effacing commentary of his life to date and his pulling together, planning and co-ordination of an expedition to the Spiti region of Himachal Pradesh with three of his friends.

His language is cool and modern, as he competently pads up trails or does a recce up a valley. He is honest about the relatively easy nature of the route to the summit despite a

nasty Tyrolean river traverse and the discomfort of altitude.

With the group expedition over, Gerry continues his Indian mountain sojourn with a visit to Ladakh, where he organises a solo exploration journey and makes another first ascent of a 5,000-metre unclimbed peak.

He is generous in his assessment of the many local mountain people and fellow travellers he meets and befriends, and whose stories and life positions he easily relates, while he shares his regrets regarding his own recent parting with a girl he regards as special.

He is inquisitive and a natural story-teller whose real calling may very well be with his pen as a travel writer. His overland journey home via Nepal, Pakistan, Iran, Turkey and the Balkans provides such an opportunity. His account and observations while attending a Sufi festival at Pakori near Lahore in Pakistan with a group of other tourists makes you wish you were there.

In the remainder of the book, Gerry digresses often from his traveller observations to recount his personal interpretation of the history, and his assessment of the religions and politics, of many states in that vast and complicated subcontinent. While many may not share his views or political perspectives, he uses his travelogue to raise philosophical, political and environmental issues important to him as a citizen of the world. For good measure, he concludes with his interpretation and synopsis of the Ramayana, the ancient Hindu myth.

As I have already said, this not just a book about an expedition. Like the quote he uses from Rudyard Kipling at the outset, Galligan has gone and looked "behind the Ranges" and has come back with his own story to tell!

Frank Nugent Member of Mountaineering Ireland, Himalayan mountaineer, Arctic explorer and author

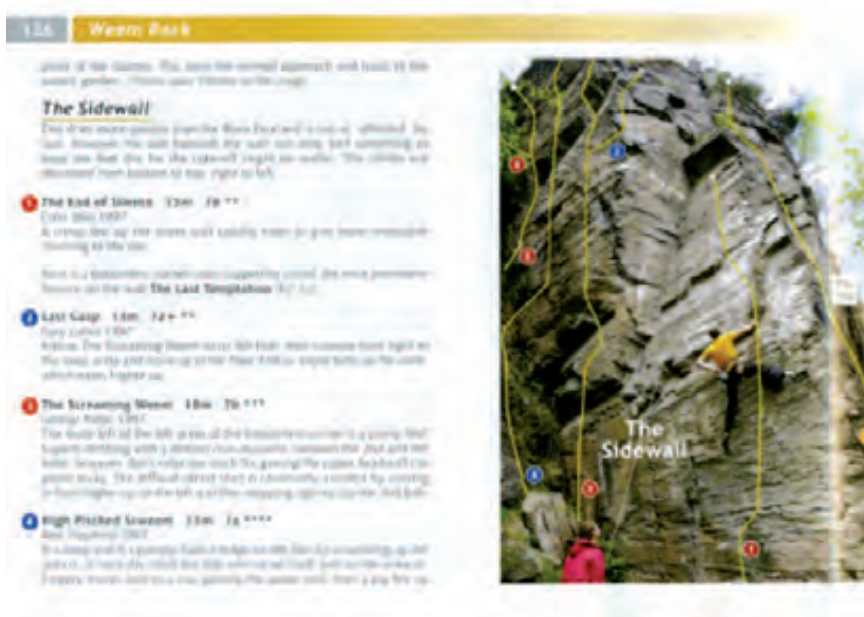


**SCOTTISH SPORT CLIMBS: SCOTTISH
MOUNTAINEERING CLUB CLIMBER'S GUIDE**

By Andy Nesbit, Rab Anderson & Brian Davison

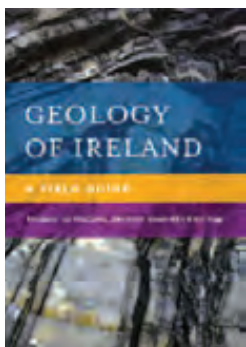
Scottish Mountaineering Club (2013), 342pp, many photos and sketch maps, ISBN 978-1-907233-15-9, £28.00 (€32.00)

If only the routes in every guidebook were shown on photos as clearly as in this one!





Books



GEOLOGY OF IRELAND: A FIELD GUIDE

By Pat Meere, Ivor McCarthy,
John Reavy, Alistair Allen &
Ken Higgs

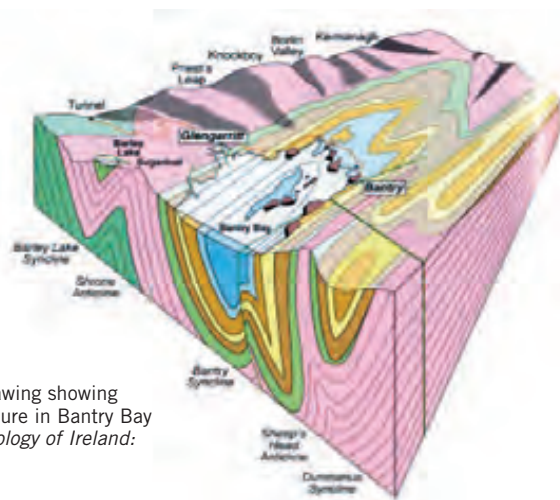
The Collins Press (2013), 384pp,
many colour pictures, diagrams, maps,
ISBN 978 1 848894-166-1, €19.99

As mountaineers and hillwalkers, we are engaged with the landscape more than any other outdoor pursuit group. Having a basic understanding of what has shaped that landscape will enhance the experience for us. Isn't it interesting to know, for instance, that the sandstone at the summit of Carrauntoohil is

all of 400 million years old, laid down in an arid ancient sea, and that the climb via O'Shea's Gully was facilitated by an enormous earthquake that happened when the mountain was being formed? Many geologists never get to where we go, up in the mountains, and envy our excursions there.

Geology can be complicated and, for the uninitiated, it requires some effort to grasp the basics. Thankfully, with this new book, the basics are provided.

The first forty pages are introductory chapters to the science of geology, but the joy of the book is in the field trips. There are seventeen field trips that go around the coast of Ireland. Each trip is then subdivided into specific locations where the geology is described. We can savour the tetrapod footprints on Valentia Island, the oldest evidence in the world of the first creature to emerge onto land. We can walk over the ancient rocks at Belmullet laid down when our Earth was a barren lifeless



Schematic drawing showing bedrock structure in Bantry Bay area; from *Geology of Ireland: A Field Guide*

place. Or we can walk over the Mourne Mountains that were once the base of a mighty volcano. There are good maps and precise grid references showing each location.

The authors are currently or were formerly associated with UCC, a university with a long tradition in geology, and Ivor McCarthy would be regarded as the foremost authority on geology in Ireland, particularly on the geology of Munster.

When I took up geology, the choice was between Geology

and Ireland by UCC's Professor Eamon Dillon ("Rocky" to his students – his successor was "Pebbles") and *The Geology of Ireland* by Trinity College's Charles Holland. The latter was revised and a new edition was issued in 2009. However, this new book excels in bringing the reader to the geology via the wonderful field trips, in pinpointing where particular features are and in the superb illustrations. At under €20, the book is great value.

Jim Ryan Author, guidebook writer



THE LONGEST ROAD: AN IRISH PAN-AMERICAN CYCLING ADVENTURE

By Ben Cunningham

The Collins Press (2013), 271pp,
22pp colour photos, 20pp b&w
photos, maps, ISBN 978-1-84889-
173-9, €14.99

In this interesting book, Ben Cunningham tells us about his cycling adventure in 2008 with a group of friends who had just finished college. They set out from Deadhorse in northern Alaska with the aim of cycling to Ushuaia, in southern Argentina, in a time-frame of about nine months. The route they followed, known as the Pan-American Highway, measures 25,000km and passes through fourteen different countries.

Each country is given its own chapter in the book, with markers indicating how many kilometres and days have been covered. Cunningham makes some interesting observations about the countries' geography and the peoples he meets along the road, and this keeps your interest in the journey going with ease.

What is quite surprising is the group's lack of cycling experience and the lack of training and route-planning that was done before they set out. Admitting that he was not able to assemble a bike and had never cycled more than 100km before, Ben is very honest about his lack of experience at the beginning. However, with the long days spent on the road and the advice of other cyclists the group meet along the way, he is soon up to speed.

As the group was well financed from wealthy backgrounds, they were able to employ a support jeep to follow them with spare bikes for the entire trip and even a security detail to follow them through Mexico and Central America. This sometimes takes away the sense of adventure, when security and back-up teams are

monitoring their every move. Also, no mention of equipment choice or quantity is made, so this book would not be much help to anyone planning a similar trip.

While passing through the Peruvian desert, the group encounters the strong prevailing headwind coming in from the south Pacific. It is mentioned that this journey is usually attempted in the opposite direction for this very reason and one does wonder if this was another oversight in the planning. However, this is not to take away from a fantastic achievement and an interesting read.

Craig Scarlett Member of the expedition to Ramabang with Gerry Galligan, Secretary of the IMBRC (Irish Mountain Bike Racing Club)



Guidebooks: reviewers wanted for the *Log*

Guidebooks seem, at times, to be the ugly ducklings among the books received for review by the *Irish Mountain Log*. While there is rarely difficulty finding reviewers for the more 'glamorous' books, this is not always the case for guidebooks. Yet these same guidebooks are a source of inspiration when planning a trip, often essential companions during that trip and afterwards a reminder of past pleasures.

The ideal reviewer will already know the area or route covered by the guidebook. Such a person may not be easy to find. I have on hand a number of guidebooks for which there have been no volunteers to review them. Would you like to review one of these more fully for the *Irish Mountain Log*? If so, please e-mail me at peter.oneill@ucd.ie.

Even if you are not volunteering to review a guidebook, perhaps you would like to be added to our list of potential reviewers and be kept informed regarding the books which come in for review. If interested, please e-mail me at the same email address, peter.oneill@ucd.ie, with the subject line 'Potential Reviewer,' adding a short note outlining your interests – hillwalking, climbing, botany, geology, ornithology, or whatever – and the name of your club, if you are a club member.

If you would like just to see the list of books for review without volunteering as a potential reviewer at this stage, follow 'MIBooksForReview' on Twitter.

Peter O'Neill Literary Editor, *Irish Mountain Log*



WALKING IN THE AUVERGNE: 42 WALKS IN THE VOLCANIC HILLS OF FRANCE

**By Rachel Crolla
& Carl McKeating**

Cicerone (2013), 250pp, many
photos and sketch maps, ISBN 978-
1-85284-651-0, £14.95 (€17.50)

The Auvergne is not one of the better-known walking regions in France, but this ancient landscape of volcanic peaks and lava domes is well worth a visit. I have stopped here and walked for a day or two when driving back through France. This guidebook, with 42 day-routes, would have helped make best use of those short visits. Clermont, the centre of the area covered, is perhaps better known to rugby fans. If travelling for a match, why not try to combine it with some walking here?

Peter O'Neill Literary Editor



WALKING IN SLOVENIA: THE KARAVANKE: SLOVENIA'S UNSPOILT NORTHERN BORDERS

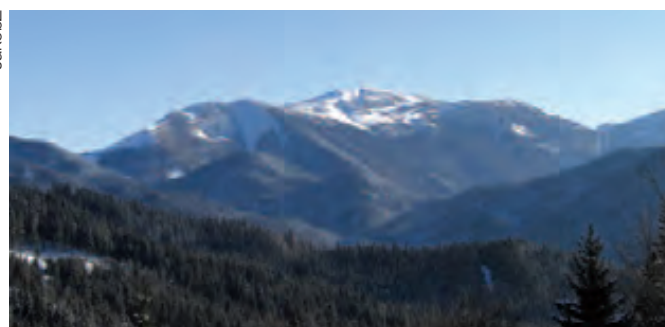
By Justi Carey & Roy Clark

Cicerone (2013), 188pp, many
photos and sketch maps, ISBN 978-
1-85284-642-8, £15.95 (€18.65)

Triglav is better known but the Karavanke, bordering Austria, is described here as "the way the Alps used to be." 21 day-routes and two two-day routes are outlined for those who would like to get away from the commercial development of the Western Alps.

Peter O'Neill Literary Editor

JakobZ



Mount Struška in the Karavanke, Slovenia



WALKING IN ITALY'S STELVIO NATIONAL PARK: ITALY'S LARGEST ALPINE NATIONAL PARK

By Gillian Price

Cicerone (2013), 187pp, many
photos and sketch maps, ISBN 978-
1-85284-690-9, £16.95 (€20.00)

This guidebook describes thirty-eight summertime day-walks, from easy strolls to strenuous climbs, in the Rhaetian Alps, between the Dolomites and Switzerland, an area which is easily accessible from Milan, Verona and Venice.

Peter O'Neill Literary Editor



THE RIDGEWAY NATIONAL TRAIL: 87 MILES THROUGH 5,000 YEARS OF HISTORY

By Steve Davison

Cicerone (2013), 201pp, many photos
and maps, ISBN 978-1-85284-694-7,
£12.95 (€15.00)

The Ridgeway is an ancient trackway described as Britain's oldest road. It extends from Wiltshire along the chalk ridge of the Berkshire Downs to the River Thames at Goring Gap. The route was adapted and extended to form a National Trail in 1972; it is 87 miles (139km) long and passes through ancient landscapes. Over rolling, open downland to the west of the Thames, and through secluded valleys and woods in the Chilterns to the east, it follows the same route used since prehistoric times by travellers, herdsman and soldiers. It takes 5-7 days to pass through 5,000 years of human history. Although written as a 12-stage route, this guidebook can also be used for day trips.

Peter O'Neill Literary Editor



by **Helen Lawless**
Hillwalking, Access & Conservation Officer

Helen Lawless has the beta on the latest developments in hillwalking, access and conservation

Managing recreation in upland areas

Over the last couple of months Mountaineering Ireland members have participated in meetings about the management of recreational activity in two key upland areas: Leenane, taking in the hills of south Mayo and Connemara; and the McGillicuddy's Reeks in Co Kerry. While looking at the same issue, the discussions arose from separate projects.

In Leenane, the local development association commissioned a feasibility study to examine the potential for developing Leenane as a hub for land and water-based adventure activities.

Following completion of the study in May, Leenane Development Association (LDA) decided to form a working group to take forward some of the recommendations, particularly around trail development and mountain access. In conjunction with LDA, Mountaineering Ireland hosted a meeting in July to update local clubs and members on the proposals.

The meeting had an attendance of almost 30, with one member travelling from Limerick. At the meeting, local farmer and community activist Martin Gavin presented the proposals on behalf of LDA and sought two nominees from Mountaineering Ireland to join the working group.

This invitation was extended to local clubs that hadn't been able to send a representative to the meeting. A number of people expressed interest in the role and the Board of Mountaineering Ireland subsequently nominated Elizabeth Gosling (Na Beanna Beola Walking Club) and Paddy O'Leary (Galway-based member of the Irish Mountaineering Club) to represent Mountaineering Ireland in the working group. It is likely that the group will meet in October.

Two pilot areas

As reported in *IML 96* (pp56-57), Carrauntoohil is one of two pilot areas for Comhairle na Tuaithe's Mountain Access

ALAN HILL



Deirdre Lewis (SLR Consulting) (*front row, second from left*) and Helen Lawless (*front row, far right*) with some of those who contributed to the McGillicuddy's Reeks consultation in Killarney, Co Kerry, on September 9th.

project. Progress on this has been frustratingly slow, but in June of this year South Kerry Development Partnership appointed SLR Consulting to advise on the establishment of an appropriate management structure to guide the McGillicuddy's Reeks Mountain Access Project and to ensure its long-term viability.

Consultation with landowners and other interested parties took place over the summer and is ongoing. As part of the process, a meeting for Mountaineering Ireland clubs and training providers was held on September 9th in Killarney. The project also includes research into upland fora and management models already in place in other parts of Ireland and Britain.

Addressing issues at a local level

Mountaineering Ireland welcomes both these projects. As noted in the report of last year's *Helping the Hills* conference (*IML 104*, p9), with the continued growth in outdoor recreation there is a need for some structure at local level to address

the issues that arise, such as demand for parking, path erosion and control of dogs.

Projects such as the ones in the Leenane area and the McGillicuddy's Reeks often arise from a desire to generate local economic benefit from recreational activity. While this is needed, the vulnerability of our mountains to increased recreation activity is clearly evident from the erosion scars on Carrauntoohil and other popular mountains.

Having Mountaineering Ireland representatives on local upland management groups can help ensure that the integrity of the mountain environment is protected; that the host community is aware of the services that hillwalkers and climbers are most likely to avail of; and that these projects are informed by experience in other areas.

► If you or your club would be interested in knowing more about how the Leenane and McGillicuddy's Reeks projects evolve, please contact helen@mountaineering.ie. We will also be providing updates at future Club Environmental Officer workshops ■



PAT SCANLON

Helen Lawless with participants on a recent Leave No Trace awareness hike at Loch an Mhúin, Dingle Peninsula, Co Kerry. As well as enjoying a short walk on a blustery day, the participants added to their knowledge of the mountain environment and discussed how we can help to care for the places where we walk and climb. The group included members from three local clubs: Cumann Sléibhteoireachta an Leith Triuigh; the Dingle Hillwalking Club and Cumann Sléibhteoireachta Annascaul Walkers. (Photo: Pat Scanlon)

Club Environmental Officers

Does your club have an Environmental Officer?

Mountaineering Ireland provides support and some excellent training days for Club Environmental Officers

Most hillwalking clubs hold an annual general meeting (AGM) around this time every year. If your club hasn't appointed a Club Environmental Officer (CEO), then now is the time to think about doing so.

Mountaineering Ireland realises that it is difficult to find volunteers within clubs, but being environmental officer can be a really enjoyable and educational role for a club

member.

If we stop to think about it briefly, the quality of the environment we walk and climb in has a direct bearing on the enjoyment we get from our activities. As users of Ireland's hills, mountains, crags and coast, it is in all of our interests to look after these special places.

Occasionally, that means taking a stand against an unwelcome development, but mostly it is about making sure we carry on our activities responsibly and that the impact we leave is a positive one.

Club Environmental Officers are not expected to

be experts; we are looking for people who are active within their individual clubs and who will help raise the level of environmental awareness amongst their fellow members.

Mountaineering Ireland provides support and some excellent training days for Club Environmental Officers.

► If you would like to know more about the role of a Club Environmental Officer, email helen@mountaineering.ie or contact the Mountaineering Ireland office ■

Outdoor Recreation Action Plans for Northern Ireland

Sport NI has commissioned Outdoor Recreation NI (formerly CAAN) to develop Outdoor Recreation Action Plans for four key areas: the Sperrins; the Causeway Coast; The Mourne and the Glens of Antrim.

The four action plans will be produced between now and April 2014. The process in each area will involve: local consultation; an audit of the current provision and management of outdoor recreation; identification of opportunities for growth; and the preparation of an action plan to guide outdoor recreation development in the area over the next 5-10 years.

Mountaineering Ireland encourages all members to participate in the consultation process for areas that you use regularly, so that the plans that emerge will reflect the concerns and needs of hillwalkers and climbers.

Work has already commenced on the plan for the Sperrins, where a number of Mountaineering Ireland members attended consultation evenings that took place during August. A draft action plan for the Sperrins should be available on www.outdoorrecreationni.com at the end of September. The Mourne will be the next area to be dealt with.

Mountaineering Ireland members are urged to contact helen@mountaineering.ie with views and suggestions on the future of outdoor recreation in these areas, so that these ideas can be incorporated in Mountaineering Ireland's responses ■



Leave No Trace fact: Keep to the path

By keeping to the centre of existing paths we can prevent the erosion scars on our hills becoming wider. Where there's a visible path, the vegetation and soil have already been impacted upon, so it's better to follow that line rather than trampling a wider area. (Based on Bayfield and Aitken, 1992).

Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces



GUY WAREHAM



by **Rozanne Bell**
Member & Training Support Administrator

Rozanne Bell has the beta on the latest developments in mountain training and skills

PATRICK O'SULLIVAN



Mountain Training Conference

Tollymore, Co Down, November 28th-29th 2013

The objective of the Mountain Training Conference is to bring together all those involved in mountain training on the island of Ireland as well as contributions from the other Mountain Training Boards.

The conference will consider the current award framework, look forward to changes in Mountain Training in the future, debate the hot topics, and also provide a range of workshops.

The conference is primarily for those involved in mountain training in Ireland and will be of particular importance to those already providing national

governing body awards. We believe it will be an invaluable learning and knowledge-sharing opportunity and, as such, it will also count as a CPD course for BOS providers.

We are keen to encourage all those who are working in mountain training, in the outdoors industry, in third-level institutions, in outdoor education centres and in adventure centres, as well as Club Training Officers, to attend.

► Full details of the programme and online bookings will be available shortly on www.mountaineeringireland.ie. See also advertisement, page 63 ■

Providers, please note

• Mountain Skills logbooks

A reminder to Mountain Skills Providers that all students presenting themselves for assessment must have completed an official Mountaineering Ireland Mountain Skills logbook. Should additional logbook pages be required, these can be photocopied from the logbook or candidates can contact the Mountaineering Ireland Training Office.

• Put your course dates on the Mountaineering Ireland website

Please upload all courses onto the Mountaineering Ireland website at least two weeks prior to running the course, for moderation purposes. This applies to all courses delivered through colleges and OECs. Please remember to tick the 'full' button on the course set-up page to avoid enquiries ■

2013 Key Dates

- October 18th-20th **Autumn Gathering, Kenmare**
- November 28th-29th **Mountain Training Conference, Tollymore**

Club Training Workshops

These workshops are aimed at Mountaineering Ireland club members who would like to learn some new skills and return to their clubs better informed, to pass on their experiences to other club members. Contact the office for further details.

- November 2nd-3rd **Club Training Officers Workshop, The Burren**
- January 25th-26th **Train the Trainers Workshop, Wicklow** (including evening of 24th)

Winter Lecture Series

- October 24th **Gerry Galligan "Climbing Ramabang"**
Eglinton Suite, Best Western White Horse Hotel, Derry. Hosted by Colmcille Climbers.
- October 25th **Gerry Galligan "Climbing Ramabang"**
Meeting Room 02F06, University of Ulster, Jordanstown. Hosted by UUJMC.
- December 12th **Lynam Lecture Stephen Venables**
Trinity College Dublin. Hosted by Mountaineering Ireland.

We will be putting together a more extensive series of lectures shortly which will include talks from Frank Nugent on his new book, *In Search of Peaks, Passes and Glaciers: Irish Alpine Pioneers*. Please keep an eye on the Events page of the Mountaineering Ireland website and the Winter 2013 issue of the *Irish Mountain Log* in December.

Winter Meet evening

- November 26th **MI Winter Meet Information Evening**
Great Outdoors, Chatham Street, Dublin 2.

A full programme of events is available on our website, www.mountaineering.ie, where you will find full details of all the events and lectures on the Events pages. Please put these dates in your diary.

Lynam Lecture 2013

Stephen Venables, Trinity College Dublin, December 12th

Stephen Venables is a renowned mountaineer, writer, broadcaster and public speaker. He was the first Briton to climb Everest without supplementary oxygen, reaching the summit alone after climbing a new route up the Kangshung Face from Tibet to the South Col with a small American-Canadian team of three other climbers in 1988. On the descent, Venables was forced to bivouac at 8600m before making an epic three-day descent of the Kangshung Face with two of his team mates.

In his distinguished mountaineering career, Venables has climbed throughout the Himalaya from Afghanistan to Tibet, making many first ascents which have included Kishtwar Shivling (1983), Solu

Tower (1987), the southwest ridge of Kusum Kanguru (1991) and Panch Chuli V (1992).

His adventures have also taken him to the Rockies, the Andes, the Antarctic island of South Georgia, East Africa, South Africa and, of course, the European Alps, where he has climbed and skied for over forty years. He has also made first ascents in Peru, Bolivia, Patagonia and South Georgia.

Stephen has written many books including *Higher than the Eagle Soars: A Path to Everest*, which won the award for Best Book, Mountain Literature at the 2007 Banff Mountain Book Festival.

► For bookings, please go to the Mountaineering Ireland website ■



Winter Lecture Series 2013



Gerry Galligan: "Climbing Ramabang"

October 24th: Best Western White Horse Hotel; hosted by Colmcille Climbers

October 25th: University of Ulster, Jordanstown; hosted by UUJMC

Gerry Galligan is from Donegal. He holds an MBA from Henley and works in the IT industry in Dublin. He has served as Chairman of the Irish Mountaineering Club.

Gerry has climbed extensively at home, in Britain and in the Alps, and has developed numerous rock-climbs around Ireland, including Chasing the Dragon (Wicklow); Karmic Retribution (Burren); and Blind Faith (Connemara). Further afield, he has climbed in Norway, the Rockies, the Andes and the Garhwal

Himalaya.

His first book, *Climbing Ramabang: One Irish Climber's Explorations in the Himalaya and his Overland Trip Home*, is an account of a small team of Irish mountaineers' attempts to climb previously unclimbed mountains in the Himachal Pradesh region of India (see review, p49, this issue).

Galligan's films, *Ramabang*, *No Man Before Us* and *Sufi*, have been widely acclaimed at international mountain film festivals ■





by **Damien O'Sullivan**
Mountaineering Ireland Talent Development Officer

Damien O'Sullivan has the latest news on the youth talent development front

Developing talent

Developing young climbing talent in Ireland

The three months that I have been working as Mountaineering Ireland's Talent Development Officer have been challenging, exciting and rewarding – I hope it stays this way! I have been working in three main areas: Talent Development, Coach Development and Competitions.

Talent Development

A Talent Development Squad has been formed. This squad is for young, established climbers who meet certain specified criteria. There is a schedule of organised training sessions for the squad, and invitations have been sent to over forty potential squad members.

For young climbers who are not yet ready for this squad, a second series of training sessions has been organised. These sessions are the **Talent Development Workshops** – they are open to all young climbers who are keen to improve their climbing skills.

Coach Development

The second area I have been working on is Coach Development. It is all well and good having a horde of talented young climbers flying up, down and all over the climbing walls, but what they really need is access to high-quality coaching to help direct their talent and energy. To this end I have been recruiting some of the best and most experienced climbers and coaches, in order to have them coach at the training sessions. So far, the recruitment process has been going well.

A series of **Coach Development Workshops** has been organised; there are four

workshops scheduled. Each one-day workshop will cover a single topic. The topics to be covered are: *climbing movement, lead climbing, injury prevention and competition preparation*.

These workshops are targeted at those coaches who are working with young climbers on a regular basis, be it in local clubs or at climbing walls. It is through these local coaches that the majority of coaching will be delivered, so it is essential that these coaches have access to as many resources as possible.

A **Level 1 Climbing Coach** award is also being developed in partnership with **Coaching Ireland**. Neal McQuaid and Alun Richardson have already done much work on this over the past year. A pilot of the Level 1 Climbing Coach award assessment is scheduled for March 8th-9th, 2014, with the roll-out of the award expected soon after that.

Competitions

There is a very exciting season

of competition climbing ahead. There are competitions for all ages and for all abilities, to enjoy and push themselves at.

The perennial **Irish Bouldering League** will have four rounds beginning at the Gravity Climbing Centre, Dublin, on October 12th. Subsequent rounds will be held in Cork and Belfast before the final round at Awesome Walls, Dublin, on February 1st.

For those who want to test their bouldering skills at a different format of competition, the **Irish Bouldering Championships** may be just what they are looking for. This year, there is both a junior competition on February 15th at Gravity and a senior competition on March 22nd in Belfast.

For those wanting to test their lead climbing mettle, there are two **Irish Lead Climbing Championships**, a junior competition on October 19th and a senior competition on November 23rd.

In January, the **Youth Climbing Series** starts, with

the first round taking place at the Mardyke Arena, Cork, and at Gortatole OEC, Fermanagh, on January 25th.

The level of support and interest from all quarters of the climbing community for youth development and talent development has been amazing. It has been wonderful to step into a job where there is so much help and support from so many quarters: from the climbing walls, the retailers and the equipment suppliers – who are supporting the planning and delivery of all the events – to the climbers and coaches – who are giving their time, energy and expertise to help mentor the young climbers – to the parents, who support and facilitate the young climbers – and, of course, to the young climbers themselves, whose unbridled enthusiasm for the sport makes my job so rewarding. Our thanks to all concerned ■

Talent Development Squad

With the number of young people participating in climbing and the standard they are performing at continually increasing, the time is ripe for the formation of the Mountaineering Ireland Talent Development Squad.

The main goal of the Talent Development Squad (TDS) is to provide young climbers with a high-performance environment in which to improve their skills. The TDS will also serve as a talent pool from which to identify young climbers who may go on to compete at international level or in certain other training trips and events.

Potential members of the TDS have been identified based on certain criteria, including performance and commitment. Invitations to join the TDS have been sent to parents and the initial TDS training session was held on September 22nd at Gravity Climbing Centre, Dublin.

Coaching at the TDS training sessions will be delivered by a pool of experienced coaches who are all recognised by Mountaineering Ireland. Between them, these coaches have a vast wealth of climbing experience and a considerable amount of coaching experience to boot.

TDS training sessions are scheduled to take place about

once a month. They will allow young climbers to be appraised and mentored by the coaches, who will monitor progress and make suggestions to the young climber about what they should be focusing on.

However, it is in between the TDS sessions that the real hard work and gains will be made. Thanks to the huge effort and dedication of so many coaches across the country, many young climbers now have regular access to high-quality coaching at a local level. It is these coaches who will help the young climbers to improve on a weekly basis, in conjunction with the recommendations of the TDS coaches.

For young climbers who are not yet ready to be members of the Talent Development Squad, there is another series of coaching sessions available. The Talent Development Workshops will be open to any and all young climbers who are keen to improve their skills. Coaching at these workshops will be delivered by some of the same coaches that will be coaching at TDS training sessions, so the quality of coaching will be very high.

For young climbers who would like to get more involved in climbing, we would suggest the following:



- Find a climbing club or climbing wall close to you – you can find details of clubs and climbing walls on the Youth pages of the Mountaineering Ireland website.
 - Come along to the Talent Development Workshops – you will meet other young climbers, learn new skills and have a lot of fun.
 - Take part in competitions – again you will meet other young climbers, learn new skills, have a lot of fun – and you might even win a prize!
- For news and updates, check www.mountaineering.ie. Contact Damien O'Sullivan by e-mail at damien@mountaineering.ie or phone 01 625 1117 ■

Talent Development Squad training sessions

These sessions are for members of the Talent Development Squad only.

Sunday	13 th October:	Awesome Walls, Dublin
Sunday	17 th November:	Awesome Walls, Dublin
Sunday	15 th December:	Gravity Climbing Centre
Sunday	19 th January:	Awesome Walls, Dublin
Sunday	9 th February:	Gravity Climbing Centre
Sunday	9 th March:	Awesome Walls, Dublin

Talent Development Workshops

These workshops are open to all young climbers (approximately 8-18 years of age) with an interest in improving their climbing standard. Sessions run from 11:30am to 4:30pm. Each session costs €20 (price includes coaching and entry to the climbing wall).

Saturday	20 th October:	Awesome Walls, Dublin
Saturday	16 th November:	Gravity Climbing Centre
Sunday	8 th December:	Awesome Walls, Dublin
Sunday	12 th January:	Gravity Climbing Centre
Saturday	8 th February:	Awesome Walls, Dublin
Saturday	8 th March:	Gravity Climbing Centre

To book a place on a Talent Development Workshop, email Damien at damien@mountaineering.ie or call 01 625 1117 ■





by Kieran Creevy

ΒΕΤΑ

Kieran Creevy has the beta on gear for hillwalkers and climbers

Layers, approach shoes and boots

Layers

Marmot Nabu (Polartec Neoshell)

The supremacy of Gore-Tex as the top waterproof membrane has been seriously challenged over the last few years with the introduction of Neo-Shell (Polartec), Dry-Q (Mountain Hardwear), Omni-Tech (Columbia) and Event (GE). The main argument for these new membranes is that they start venting moisture from the moment you zip them up, as opposed to Gore-Tex's requirement to have heat to drive your sweat through the waterproof/breathable barrier. I tested a new Neo-Shell entry from

Marmot earlier this year prior to the long-running spell of sun.

Pros ■ Extraordinary breathability (not sweaty at all!) ■ Soft, silent fabric ■ Trim fit, no flapping in the wind ■ Pockets easily swallow a 1:30,000/1:50,000 map ■ Hood turns with your head and protects you against wind-driven rain or hail

Cons ■ Soft shell-like fabric is a little heavier than other waterproofs ■ This fabric also limits the Nabu to autumn, winter and spring use

Ideal for ■ Ski touring, winter walking/climbing, almost year-round use in Ireland and UK



Insulation

Patagonia Ultralite hooded down jacket (Down)

Recommended retail price: €350
(€175 outlet)

The introduction of lightweight and trim-fitting down vests, pullovers and jackets to many clothing brands' collections has been received with scepticism from some quarters and elation from others. This mixed reception has everything to do with the relationship down clusters have with moisture. Most of the time, sweat isn't an issue and, if you're sweating profusely, then you probably need to remove a layer. Rain, however, is a problem, or leastways it was. With better (read more water-resistant) face fabrics and hydrophobic coatings

for the down clusters, many down jackets can shrug off a squall – if it's lashing rain, then maybe you should consider throwing on your waterproof. So, why use a mid-layer like the Ultralite hooded from Patagonia?

Pros ■ Packs up smaller than the best synthetic hoody on the market ■ Down mid-layer breaths better than equivalent synthetics ■ Insulated hood is a godsend when eating on a blustery mountain-side, or when trying to grab a kip on a plane/bus ■ Neat fit, layers brilliantly under shells

Cons ■ More expensive than most synthetic hoodies ■ Needs to be treated with more care

Ideal for ■ Trekking/climbing/snowshoeing abroad, as mid-layer under hardshell during cold hiking/climbing in Ireland



STOCKISTS

■ Smartwool:
www.smartwool.com

■ Icebreaker:
www.icebreaker.com

■ La Sportiva:
www.sportiva.com

■ Salomon:
www.salomon.com

■ Marmot:
www.marmot.com

■ Patagonia:
www.patagonia.com

■ Salewa:
www.salewa.com

■ 5.10:
www.fiveten.com

Insulation.....

€180

Smartwool PhD Smartloft Divide (Wool)

I remember seeing Dermot Somers in a woollen jumper while working as a voluntary instructor in Tiglin almost 20 years ago. Despite some odd looks from us neophytes, who viewed wool as very old-school and nowhere near as good as a fleece, he swore by the advantages of his jumpers! I imagine he will be smiling wryly seeing this fantastic fabric being introduced to a wider audience!

Pros ■ Warm without being sweaty ■ Lack of smell – typical with wool ■ Torso fabric is pretty wind-resistant

Cons ■ Lack of zips on the hand-warmer pockets ■ Not sure if it's a pro or a con, but: The black/black colour combo reminds me of the Charlton Heston era Planet of the Apes

Ideal for ■ Anything really – around town, skiing, year-round hiking, climbing



Merino wool base layers

When merino wool clothing appeared in Irish outdoor stores seven years ago there was a lot of Pavlovian scratching from the memories of itchy wool jumpers and mohair socks that, to paraphrase a Scottish comedian, thought you were edible. Those memories were completely eradicated at the end of my first day's use of a merino top. There wasn't even the slightest hint of an itch and, as a massive bonus, it didn't stink, even at the end of a week-long winter trip which, considering I'd only managed to rinse it once in a shower, was amazing. Now, for anyone who has been made a pariah due to their smelly base layer after only one day of hiking, biking, skiing or climbing, this feature is a godsend. A side-effect of this bonus is that you need to carry less in your pack.

The smell issue aside, the other main benefit of merino layers is their extended temperature comfort range. Normally you would only consider using a thermal layer when it gets cold, then change into a lighter, short-sleeve top for hot weather, but I've happily used the same long-sleeve base layer from +25° to -25° (with the obvious assumption of layering up for colder conditions). The only downside is that a typical long-sleeve merino top costs almost double an equivalent synthetic layer, but I believe it's worth it. Three of the best merino brands on the market currently are:



Smartwool

The first merino brand on the Irish market, Smartwool then disappeared from outdoors shops for a few years but it has since re-emerged with an extended collection. Larger fit than Icebreaker, they have recently introduced the SmartLoft mid-layer collection, which uses a mixed wool and synthetic blend for insulation.

Icebreaker

Massive product range from short-sleeve tees to hoodies, socks, boxers, shorts, bike clothing...and even a collection that wouldn't look out of place at a fashion show (Black Sheep).



Patagonia

Though they produce a smaller merino range than the two brands above – with tees both short-sleeve and long, tights and underwear – Patagonia should not be considered a 'Johnny come lately' jumping on the Merino bandwagon. They are still, to my knowledge, the only brand using merino wool in their wetsuits – to great effect. In addition, their use of merino as part of a layering system ties in with the brand's well-known environmental credentials.



Approach shoes

Salomon Ultra Gtx

I've had many pairs of Salomon shoes over the last fifteen years and loved the feeling of lightness and support, particularly the long-running XA Pro 3d model. So when I tried the X Ultra Gtx out of the box, I was initially dismayed by the heavy weight and clunky feel. However, once out on the hills I quickly realised that it shouldn't be considered a heavy trail runner, rather a lightweight hiking boot/shoe. With that in mind...

Pros ■ Fit – one of Salomon's best features ■ Out of the box comfort ■ Grippy, even on wet grass, which is impressive given the shallow-ish tread pattern ■ Quick lacing system needs little or no re-adjustment during the day

Cons ■ Smell – for some reason I find Salomon's shoes tend to smell after a few months of use, much more so than other brands I've used

Ideal for ■ Long hikes/treks with a daypack, e.g. the Camino de Santiago, the Inca Trail or the Tour du Mont Blanc (after the passes are clear)



5.10 Guide Tennie

The Guide Tennie is an iconic approach shoe, thanks in part to the sticky dot sole, which was a trickle-down from 5.10's line of climbing shoes. I suspect another reason for its popularity is the style – the Tennie doesn't scream outdoor geek, you could perceivably wear this clubbing, though with the sticky sole, you won't be showing off your Moonwalking skills!

Pros ■ Very comfortable ■ Feeling of long-term durability ■ Sticky sole unit works well on most kinds of rock

Cons ■ Lack of waterproof membrane limits it to dry days on the Irish hills ■ Flat sole is great for scrambling and climbing, less so for hiking as it feels a little too rigid

Ideal for ■ Scrambling, long, easy multi-pitch routes; big walls



Boots

La Sportiva Trango S Evo

I've long been a fan of La Sportiva's boots, mainly because they tend to fit my feet from the off, but, and it might cause me grief for saying this, it also has something to do with my dislike of the wall of unrelenting brown boots I see in many outdoor stores. So, like a magpie with a shiny object, so too my eye is drawn to brightly coloured footwear. Luckily, La Sportiva boots are not all mouth and no trousers – they have the heritage, fit and build quality to back it up!

Pros ■ Snug heel cup, no heel lift = no blisters on the heel ■ Neat fit all around, no sloppiness ■ Neat fit is also an advantage when it comes to watching foot placements, especially when scrambling or on via ferrata ■ Sole has some rocker for use on trails ■ Synthetic leather and fabric has enough flex to enable efficient French technique or when traversing steep slopes

Cons ■ Cost – €280 is a lot for a pair of mountaineering boots, but you do get a lot for your money

Ideal for ■ Scottish winter mountaineering (for higher grades, I'd buy the stiffer and warmer Trango Extreme), GR20, HRP, summer alpine mountaineering



Salewa Rapace

Salewa has long lingered on the fringes of the British and Irish market, only appearing when climbers returned from an Alpine trip that happened to include gear shopping! With their acquisition last year of Wild Country, one of the UK's best known and loved climbing brands, they have the ability to expand their influence and offer a wider product range to Irish hikers, climbers and alpinists. The Rapace boot has been designed for lightweight mountaineering, tough trekking and via ferrata.

Pros ■ Wore the boots from the box for eighteen hours straight on the hills with zero discomfort ■ Slight sole rocker allows you to walk on tarmac as well as on the hills with minimal worry about blisters ■ No leaks despite boot being submerged during a stream-crossing ■ Semi-stiff sole unit enables New-Matic style crampon use (semi-automatic) ■ This also means they work great as scrambling boots

Cons ■ None

Ideal for ■ Trekking, year-round use in Ireland, scrambling, via ferrata, summer alpine mountaineering



Make power when the sun shines

Mike Schwartz looks for an effective solar charger to recharge his small electronic devices when hiking

Over the last couple of years, I have been looking for an effective portable solar charger to recharge the electronic devices I take with me when I go hiking, such as my smartphone, head-torch, MP3 player, camera and portable UV water treatment wand. However, I couldn't find such a charger with solid reviews based on in-the-field experience.

I read Alun Richardson's informative article *Power in remote locations* (IML 104, pp 69-70), which offered a helpful overview and was a good place to start my research. Then, for a thru-hike on the John Muir Trail (in the Sierra Nevada, California), which I recently completed, I discovered the **Suntactics solar charger**. I was extremely pleased with the charger's performance during my trip. Based on my experience, this solar charger addresses many, if not all, of the concerns Alun raises in his article.

The five main reasons that I decided to invest in a Suntactics solar charger for my hike were:

- It is a very efficient high-quality solar charger, which uses monocrystalline solar cells, the most efficient type of solar cells available. Other solar chargers use cheap plastic parts and heavy plastic, making them less efficient. If solar cells are covered in thick plastic or glass, some UV light will bounce off the unit and not be absorbed by the solar cells. Suntactics use a thin laminate to cover their solar cells, giving them better UV absorption, which in turn means a higher electrical output.

- It requires no batteries to operate this charger. It is important to have a portable solar charger that does not use batteries. Trickle chargers that use internal batteries first have to charge those batteries before charging a device. In some cases, using a Trickle charger, it could take as long as 15 hours to fully charge even a small device like a smartphone. In addition, the rechargeable internal batteries will eventually fail, especially when exposed for long hours under the sun.

- Suntactics uses auto-retry technology. This is a new technology that allows solar chargers to automatically restart after they have been temporarily blocked from the sun. One of the qualms that people have about portable solar charging is that whenever a solar charger is in the shade or an object blocks the sun from it, the solar charger stops charging. Many solar chargers do not have an auto-retry capability.

- It allows you to use a device while recharging it. One of the most convenient features that Suntactics has is that it will recharge a device, while allowing you to use it at the same time, like a standard



John Muir Trail, Sierra Nevada Mountains, California

wall charging outlet would allow you to do.

- It is durable and long-lasting. Gadgets like solar chargers can be very delicate items, especially when made out of cheap plastic. Suntactics chargers are highly durable and reliable. They are

built of high-grade resin composite boards that are not easy to bend. They are also extremely strong and the thin laminate coating makes them water and weather resistant.

Conclusion

There are many solar chargers out there in the marketplace, but a lot of them do not meet even one of these specifications. In my experience, Suntactics solar chargers meet all of them, which is very important when one is in a remote area or on a long-distance hike like the John Muir Trail.

► See, also, Mike's Hikes advertisement on page 13.

► Mike Schwartz is a member of Comeragh Mountaineering Club ■



Layton Kor

Leading American climber of the 1960s

GALEN ROWELL



Layton Kor topping out on the Salathé Wall, El Capitan, in the Yosemite Valley, California.

Layton Kor, a leading American rockclimber in the 1960s, the 'Golden Age' of American climbing, died in Arizona on April 21st, 2013, at the age of 74, after a long illness due to kidney failure and prostate cancer. He was best known, perhaps, by European climbers for his involvement in the 1966 attempt on a direct route on the North Face of the Eiger, which was ultimately successful but during which fellow American John Harlin II fell to his death.

Kor was one of America's greatest climbers. He came from a small town in Minnesota and was a bricklayer by trade. In the mid-1950s, Kor's parents relocated to Boulder, Colorado, where he took up climbing. He taught himself to climb and put up many first ascents there, especially in Eldorado Canyon, Boulder Canyon, the Flatirons and Lumpy Ridge.

No American climber before or since has completed so many first ascents in such a short space of time. In 10 years, nearly every major cliff in the United States had a route put up by Kor. The rock spires of America's southwestern deserts, often loose and crumbly, were Kor's natural terrain. However, he did go further afield to climbing venues such as Yosemite, where he did the third ascent of the Nose and the first ascent of West Buttress on El Capitan, and to the Diamond on Longs Peak, in Colorado, where he put up Yellow Wall.

Notable among his first ascents were the Kor-Ingalls Route on Castleton Tower and The Finger of Fate Route on the Titan, Fisher Towers, both in Utah and both of which were included in the book *Fifty Classic Climbs of North America*.

In 1966, Kor, who was renowned for his technical skills on steep, rotten rock, teamed up with fellow-American John Harlin II and Dougal Haston to attempt a new direct route on the North Face of the Eiger. They were joined by Chris Bonington, initially as a photographer but then as a full team member. The team aimed to go almost straight up the cliffs and icefields, over the most exposed and difficult terrain on the North Face. Kor led a crucial pitch high up the route, which drained him physically so that he had to return to the ground to recover. While he was down there, tragedy struck when Harlin's rope was severed by a sharp edge and he fell thousands of feet to his death. Kor and Bonington found Harlin's



Kor took part in the 1966 attempt to put a direct route up the North Face of the Eiger.



JIM HERRINGTON

body at the foot of the wall, something which impacted significantly on Kor.

Kor wanted to finish the route but the rest of the team, high up on the North Face, were concerned that anyone using the fixed lines would meet the same fate as Harlin. They jettisoned the ropes and went for the top, leaving Kor behind.

The following year, Kor was back home in Colorado but, after finding Harlin's body, some of his enthusiasm for climbing had deserted him. He made the second ascent of the Salathé Wall, said to be one of the world's most spectacular rock climbs, on El Capitan. However, that was his last major climb. Soon afterwards, he gave up serious climbing and became a Jehovah's Witness, pursuing his religious and spiritual life with the same dedication and passion he had once devoted to his sport. He wrote about his religious conversion in his classic book, *Beyond the Vertical*.

Despite his poor health, Kor put up one last new route in 2009, when he was 70, on a crumbling tower in the Arizona desert. "Climbing is hard to give up," he said.

Patrick O'Sullivan

Layton Kor: born June 11th, 1938; died April 21st, 2013 ■

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