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Irish Mountain Log

HILLWALKING • CLIMBING • MOUNTAINEERING

Mountains of the East

Hiking the Great Leinster Chain from Dublin to Waterford

Fitz Roy Massif

Solo traverse of five-mile ridge in Patagonia





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Welcome

Sadly, the Covid-19 pandemic is still with us and keeping us off the hills and crags. We still need to continue to take care and follow the public health advice about social distancing and avoiding contact with other people (see current advice for hillwalkers and climbers, page 5).

This year is **Mountaineering Ireland's fiftieth anniversary**. Given the year that's in it, it is difficult to organise any events at present to celebrate this significant anniversary. However, we should certainly mark it (see comment from our CEO, page 9). In the *Irish Mountain Log*, we intend to mark this anniversary by publishing some relevant features, reprints of old articles and some new material, throughout the year.

The fifty years have seen a growth in our sport on this island. The organisation has also changed. From being a purely volunteer-run organisation, Mountaineering Ireland now has a Chief Executive Officer and a professional staff team to service the needs of its growing membership. However, Mountaineering Ireland is still governed by its members through a Board of Directors, elected from the membership.

Initially established as the **Federation of Mountaineering Clubs in Ireland** in 1971, Mountaineering Ireland is now the representative body for hillwalkers and climbers on the island of Ireland. It is recognised as the National Governing Body for mountaineering, hillwalking, rambling and climbing by both Sport Ireland and Sport Northern Ireland.



Mountaineering Ireland's fiftieth anniversary will be marked this year

Mountaineering Ireland sees its purpose as being to represent and support hillwalking and climbing. Its vision is that hillwalkers and climbers will become more skilled, self-reliant and informed, that access will be improved, and that our mountain landscapes will be valued and protected. It aims to inspire all who engage in hillwalking and climbing throughout the island of Ireland, and encourage adventure and exploration in the mountains of the world.

In this issue, given the lack of news, we have again been able to publish more feature articles about trips members have undertaken prior to the pandemic or when the restrictions have been eased. There are several strong pieces. A call for articles by women resulted in several excellent pieces being received as well. We have published some of those in this issue, which will hopefully improve the editorial balance in the magazine.

Keep safe!

Patrick O'Sullivan, Editor



Write for the Log

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

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

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



ON THE COVER

Looking south from Mount Brandon, Co Kerry, at sunrise

PHOTOGRAPH
RICHARD CREAM

ISSUE 137

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PARTICIPATION AND RISK

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



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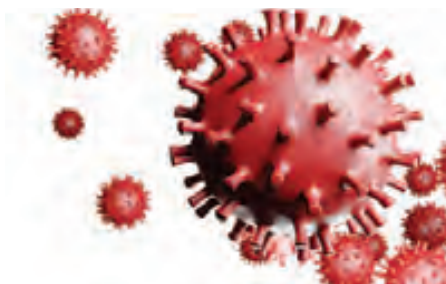
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Newsdesk

Be safe, responsible, considerate

Our latest Covid-19 advice for hillwalkers and climbers in Ireland



This advice from Mountaineering Ireland is for all hillwalkers and climbers. It is based on the current restrictions, in place in March. Our understanding is that, while the restrictions will be reviewed after Easter, it is unlikely that there will be any major relaxation in the restrictions for some time after that.

The purpose of this advice is to highlight the additional considerations that we should be aware of due to Covid-19. It builds on the good practice which is commonplace among responsible hillwalkers and climbers: checking weather forecasts, checking access arrangements, selecting routes that are appropriate for fitness, skill and experience, environmental awareness, etc.

Since the arrival of Covid-19 on the island of Ireland, many aspects of our lives have changed. Together, we have adhered to government restrictions and public health advice. Thanks to this collective effort, progress has been made in the fight against Covid-19. We all still need to play our part in keeping it suppressed. As restrictions ease, our personal and social responsibility becomes ever more important.

Everyone should continue to be aware of the risk factors for getting Covid-19:

- **Distance** The risk of getting Covid-19 increases as the distance between you and others gets smaller. Keep two metres apart, where possible.
- **Activity** How you spend time with people, and what you do with them, can increase your risk. Follow the government's **Stay Safe guidelines** when spending time with others.
- **Time** The more time you spend in close contact with other people, the greater your risk of getting Covid-19. Keep track of who you spend time with, and how.
- **Symptoms** Know the symptoms. If you have any of them, self-isolate and contact your GP immediately.

Landowners, rural communities

When we are able to return to the hills and crags, be mindful and respectful of the landowners and local communities in the places where you walk and climb. People living in rural areas may be nervous to see groups of people in their areas. Consider, too, that upland areas have a higher proportion of older residents.

Keep group sizes small, park responsibly and, if possible, away from residences, and plan your route to avoid passing close to homes or through farmyards.

➡ For current and more detailed advice, see www.mountaineering.ie/covid19 ■

Summary of current restrictions

	Northern Ireland	Republic of Ireland
Travel	Avoid all unnecessary travel. Exercise within 10 miles of home	Avoid all unnecessary travel. Exercise within 5km of home
Hillwalking, rock-climbing	Only individual or household permitted (within 10 miles of home)	Only individual or household permitted (within 5km of home)
Club activity outdoors	No	No
Climbing walls	Closed	Closed



Increase in call-outs in 2020

A year-end report from **Ruth Cunniffe**, Public Relations Officer for Mountain Rescue Ireland

The year 2020 was an incredibly trying year for everyone, and was also a particularly challenging year for members of the eleven mountain rescue teams on the island of Ireland.

On top of the new infection control protocols that teams have had to adopt, and the resulting reduced numbers of team members able to attend call-outs, there was also an overall increase in the number of call-outs responded to by the teams in 2020, compared to the previous year.

When you look at the annual statistics for mountain rescue call-outs, you can see that the number of call-outs actually increased slightly between 2019 and 2020 (see table). In 2019, there were 330 incidents over the twelve-

month period, whereas there were 345 in 2020, an almost 5% increase, with quarterly figures varying in relation to the season and the level of restrictions in place across the country.

During the week or so leading up to the cold snap that was seen earlier this year across the country, some mountain rescue teams were put under enormous pressure by the number of call-outs that occurred. Some of these call-outs were absolutely needless, with people putting themselves (along with the voluntary mountain rescue personnel) in unnecessary danger. Heading out for a hike in bad weather, or going ill-equipped and untrained for some of the conditions likely to be encountered, is not a wise decision to make at any time, but particularly during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.



	2019	2020
Quarter 1	75	61
Quarter 2	95	57
Quarter 3	103	137
Quarter 4	57	90
Total	330	345

All eleven teams on the island of Ireland are represented in these numbers

Mountaineering Ireland, as the representative body for hillwalkers and climbers, has expressed its concern about the increased number of call-outs. They are encouraging all hillwalkers and climbers to adhere to the Covid-19 restrictions in place. When

hillwalking and climbing are permitted, they are advising that people ask themselves the three Adventure Smart questions before venturing out:

- Q1 Do I have the right gear?**
- Q2 Do I know what the weather will be like?**
- Q3 Am I confident I have the knowledge and skills for the day?**

It is particularly important to try to avoid having to call out the mountain rescue teams at this time.

The primary advice from Mountain Rescue Ireland is also to adhere to all government guidelines and to always ask yourself the three questions above each time you are thinking about heading out into the hills ■



Solo traverse of Fitz Roy massif completed

By Patrick O'Sullivan

In February of this year, Irish-Belgian climber **Sean Villanueva O'Driscoll** completed a solo six-day traverse of the **Fitz Roy massif** in Patagonia. The five-kilometre traverse involved around 4,000m of ascent. From February 5th to 10th, Sean followed the ridge south to north, summiting ten peaks in the massif, including **Cerro Fitz Roy** (3,359m). This was the first time that this traverse was completed by a solo climber.



The ridge was first traversed in February 2014 by **Tommy Caldwell** and **Alex Honnold**, who went north to south. They named their route the **Fitz Traverse**. Sections of the route ranged in difficulty up to 6c (5.11d).

Sean's solo climb was the second traverse of the ridge, albeit in the reverse direction. He named his climb the **Moonwalk Traverse**.

Sean started climbing at the age of 13 in Belgium,



Cerro Fitz Roy (3,359m) and the Fitz Roy massif, Patagonia

where he is mainly based. He started sport climbing, but soon moved on to climbing trad routes. Clearly very talented, he has gone on to make first ascents of big walls in some very remote locations around the world, including Patagonia, Pakistan, Baffin Island and Greenland. Since his childhood, he has been making twice-yearly trips to Ireland and, amongst other venues here, has climbed at Fair Head, County Antrim.

Sean Villanueva O'Driscoll received a **Piolet d'Or** in 2010 for an expedition he made to Greenland, together with his climbing partners, **Nicolas Favresse**, **Oliver Favresse** and

Ben Ditto. The team put up nine new big wall routes there, most of which started from a sailboat named *Dodo's Delight*. In 2014, they returned to Greenland on the same boat and put up another ten new routes.

Since early last year, Sean has been living in El Chaltén, a mountain village in Patagonia, Argentina, where he was trapped by the Covid-19 lockdown. He says he could have been repatriated, but it wasn't a bad place to be through the worst of the pandemic in Europe: it was "like being in a giant playground!"

Sean had been thinking about doing the traverse in

reverse for some time, because it would be more adventurous and it hadn't been done before in that direction. He carried a large pack with ten days' supplies and climbing and camping equipment, plus his faithful tin whistle. He rope-soloed all of the climbing, and he free-soloed some of the scrambling, as the pack was too heavy to climb with.

In his traverse, he climbed the seven main peaks on the ridge, and three of the smaller peaks, in six days.

Completing this traverse solo confirms Sean Villanueva O'Driscoll's place among the élite of top world-class climbers ■





The Blackrock Passage West Greenway: it extends from Blackrock Castle to Passage West in Cork city

CORK CLUB CELEBRATES 45th YEAR

Cork Mountaineering Club celebrated its 45th anniversary last November by walking locally. The club's President, **Margaret Kennedy**, reports

These anniversaries seem to be coming around ever faster! November 6th, 2020, was the 45th

anniversary of the inauguration of **Cork Mountaineering Club**. The club is still on the go, with eighty-two members and a few people continuing with unbroken annual membership to this day.

Alas, courtesy of Covid-19, for the past year or so we have mostly been a hillwalking club with no hills to go to. A plan to have a repeat of the club's first official walk on the

Knockmealdowns on the anniversary had to be abandoned.

However, the club's committee was still keen to mark this milestone. Working within the Covid-19 restrictions at that time, members were invited to do a minimum of a 45-minute walk on November 6th and to send a few details on the route to the club secretary. All respondents were entered into a draw for a copy of Mountaineering Ireland's recently published book, ***Irish Peaks***.



Distant view of the Paps, Co Kerry



The Gearagh, Co Cork

Cork Mountaineering Club

Today our club is forty-five years old,
Keeping restrictions, far hikes are on hold.
So I stay close to home, as I head out for my walk,
I miss all my friends and especially the talk.

Out I go, it's a quarter to nine,
fingers crossed, weather stays fine.
Two cyclists I see on their morning spin,
My neighbour outside, taking in his bin.

I keep near the hedge as the cars drive past,
I wish to God they wouldn't go so fast.
The fields each side are lovely to see,
A stream flows through one on its way to the Lee.

Leaves on the trees, all different shades,
green, brown, orange and red.
Two magpies I see, high up on a shed,
Cows out grazing, and also some sheep;
Nice and content, they don't make a bleep.

I approach a house, I know a dog lives inside,
I quicken my pace, my fear I can't hide.
Oops, out he comes, barking like mad,
The gate is locked, I am so glad.

A postman pulls up, some parcels he drops,
shopping online, people missing the shops.
I turn round the bend, another car speeds past,
I pray to myself the Covid won't last,
For I miss the mountains, the company, chats,
Happy anniversary to my club now!
Please raise your hats!

Myra Heffernan

Forty-seven members took up the challenge and enthusiastically clocked up an overall total of 240 kilometres between them. Reports flooded in of walks by castles, bridges, ponds, rivers, lakes, estuaries, beaches, greenways, parks, woodlands, Cork

Harbour and the university. The army firing range in Kilworth even got a mention.

Popular routes in Cork city included Tramore River Valley, the Lough, the Marina and the Atlantic Pond. Further afield, walks were completed along the River Blackwater in

Our 50th anniversary

Mountaineering Ireland marks its 50th year



In 1971, the **Federation of Mountaineering Clubs of Ireland** was established with seven member clubs. Today's

Mountaineering Ireland has grown from those humble foundations and is now the representative body for hillwalkers and climbers on the island of Ireland. It has developed and broadened its reach and support to all those involved in, or looking to get involved in, hillwalking, climbing and mountaineering activities. Indeed, prior to the Covid-19 restrictions, its membership was increasing annually and, by the end of the 2019/2020 season, it had risen to 14,000-plus members, with a total of 191 member clubs.

The year 2021 sees the celebration of **Mountaineering Ireland's 50th anniversary** and, although it is not possible to celebrate with all our members in person on the hills and crags as we would like, we still feel that this major milestone deserves to be marked in some way. For now, we plan to celebrate virtually and share some of the wonderful history, including some of the achievements of Mountaineering Ireland and its members over the years, through video(s) to be aired on our social media platforms in the coming months.

Please note: if you have any old **photographs, video footage** or other interesting materials related to Mountaineering Ireland's history which you would like to share with us, please email us at: info@mountaineering.ie.

It is hoped that, as the year progresses and restrictions ease, we will be able to hold events around the island of Ireland, with our members, to help celebrate and mark this special occasion together.

In the meantime, keep safe and best wishes,

Murrough McDonagh
Chief Executive Officer



Mallow, on the beaches of Garryvoe, and in Inchydoney.

To the west, we heard of walks in Kilmurray Woods and on Sleaveen Hill, known locally as the Turret, near Macroom, overlooking the Gearagh.

One member walked 'The Token Fire' under the Paps, while others enjoyed Tracton Woods near Carrigaline, and a stroll around Cobh.

We learned a bit of history from around Mallow, home of a white deer herd in one of its three castles, and from

Blarney, now a suburb of Cork city, news of recently added amenities.

The richness, variety and diversity of routes not only reflected members' enthusiasm but left us looking forward, when permitted, to the prospect of evening walks guided by our many well-informed members.

Perhaps the poem above, penned by my friend and fellow club member **Myra Heffernan**, sums up that day, like so many others last November ■

DOUG SCOTT CBE

An outstanding British mountaineer and pioneer of big-wall climbing

By Patrick O'Sullivan



Doug Scott, an outstanding British mountaineer, died in December 2020, having been diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumour earlier in the year. He was aged 79.

Scott's impressive list of pioneering first ascents in the Greater Ranges included the first ascent of the **south-west face of Mount Everest** with **Dougal Haston** in 1975.

All told, he took part in forty-five expeditions and made thirty first ascents. Among the many awards given to him, Doug received the third lifetime award of the **Piolet d'Or** in 2011, following in the footsteps of two other



Doug Scott during Everest climb in 1975

mountaineering luminaries, **Walter Bonatti** and **Reinhold Messner**.

Douglas ('Doug') Keith Scott was born in Nottingham, England, in 1941 and was educated there. As a child, he was encouraged to explore the surrounding countryside, particularly the Peak District, by his father, an enthusiastic amateur sportsman. He saw people rock climbing in Derbyshire while on a hiking trip there with the Scouts, and that started a lifelong passion.

He attended Loughborough Teachers' Training College for two years and then taught geography, history and PE for ten years, at the same secondary modern school in Nottingham that he had attended. He was married three times and had five children. Scott ended up living in the Lake District, where he passed away in December.



Doug Scott on summit of Everest in 1975

While initially known as an aid climber on British rock, in the Dolomites and on the Troll Wall, as he became more experienced in the Greater Ranges, Doug Scott became a committed advocate for free climbing and an alpine-style approach to big climbs. He felt that the way you climbed was more important than your success on a route.

His many first ascents included the first European ascent in 1970 of the **Salathé Wall** on El Capitan, in Yosemite,

with **Peter Habeler**; the first ascent of **Changabang** (6,864m) in the Garhwal Himalaya, with **Chris Bonington** and **Dougal Haston** in 1974; the first ascent of the **south-west face of Everest** with **Haston** in 1975, when they famously survived a bivouac in the open, 100m below the then 8,848m summit (now officially 8,848.86m); and the first ascent of the **south face of Denali**, also with **Haston**, in 1976.

In 1977, Scott joined **Bonington** again on **The Ogre** (Baintha Brakk, 7,285m) in the Karakoram, where he broke both ankles in an abseiling accident on the descent from the summit and had to crawl off the mountain on his knees, assisted by his fellow mountaineers, in an epic descent that highlighted Scott's determination to survive, whatever the odds.

In 1979, with **Peter Boardman** and **Joe Tasker**, Scott made the third ascent of **Kanchenjunga** (8,586m), the first without supplementary oxygen and the first via a new route on the north ridge. He subsequently climbed the **north face of Nuptse** (7,861m) in Nepal and **Shivling** (6,543m) in India with **Georges Bettembourg** and various other climbers.

In 1982, Scott made an alpine-style first ascent of the **south-west face of Shishapangma** (8,027m) via the right-hand couloir, with **Alex MacIntyre** and **Roger Baxter-Jones**, in what was the sixth successful ascent of that mountain.

Following his success on El Capitan's **Salathé Wall**, Scott pioneered big-wall climbing with his ascents of **Mount Asgard** (2,015m) on Baffin Island, Canada; **Mount Kenya** (5,199m) in Kenya; and **The Ogre** (7,285m) and **Shivling** (6,543m) in the Karakoram.

Doug Scott wrote several very popular mountaineering books, including *Big Wall Climbing*; *The Shishapangma Expedition* (with **Alex MacIntyre**), which won the **1984 Boardman Tasker Award**; *Himalayan Climber: A Lifetime's Quest to the World's Greater Ranges*; *Up and*



Doug Scott pictured with Chris Bonington, with whom he frequently climbed.



Douglas Haston on the Hillary Step. This classic image among Everest fans is part of Scott's exquisite back-catalogue of mountain imagery.

About: *The Hard Road to Everest*, the first part of his biography; and *The Ogre*. He also contributed to several other expedition books and was an excellent mountain photographer.

Scott was President of the **Alpine Club** from 1999 to 2001, where he promoted ethical mountaineering, and he was made a **CBE** in 1994. He was also patron of the **British Mountaineering Council** until the time of his death.

Scott received many other awards and accolades during his lifetime, including the **John Muir Trust Lifetime Achievement Award** for his mountaineering achievements and his commitment to conservation and supporting mountain peoples. As mentioned above, he also received the **Piolet D'Or Lifetime Achievement Award** in Chamonix in 2011.

Last year, Scott received a prestigious Honorary Membership of the

International Climbing and Mountaineering Foundation (UIAA).

He was also made a **Freeman of the City of Nottingham** in 1976, and received many honorary degrees in the UK.

Doug Scott's life appears to have been a voyage of self-discovery, from his initial discovery that he was a good climber, to his later realisation of his abilities in big-wall climbing and high-altitude mountaineering, and his focus on ethical mountaineering and 'pure' alpine-style ascents. It was also a spiritual journey for him, as his interest in Buddhism grew.

He became involved in supporting mountain communities in Nepal through **Community Action Nepal (CAN)**, the charity he established in 1989. In his later years, he focused very much on raising funds for that charity, and devoted much of his time to working for it and visiting its projects in Nepal.

Whenever he gave a talk, Scott insisted

on having time to sell various items, such as his own posters as well as artefacts produced in Nepal, in support of that charity.

Over the years, Scott visited Ireland several times. The talks he gave were always interesting and impressive, with great supporting images, but in later years his focus in the intermission and afterwards was always on his fundraising for Community Action Nepal. One of his last fundraising initiatives in the lockdown was a **sponsored stair climb** in support of Community Action Nepal.

"Doug was an amazing person and had an absolutely amazing life," said Chris Bonington. "He has given so much to so many people."

May he rest in peace.

Doug Scott: born May 29th, 1941; died December 7th, 2020 ■



Doug Scott and his last wife, on behalf of their charity CAN, officially open a school in Nepal.



An ailing Doug Scott takes part in the stair-climbing Everest Challenge 2020 in the same outfit he wore on Everest in 1975 (see photo opposite).



Active Walkway resource pack with Active School Flag

By Linda Sankey, Get Ireland Walking

Since 2017, Get Ireland Walking has partnered with **Active School Flag** to encourage and support the physical education programme in schools and promote active learning across a wide variety of subject areas.

Research shows that all children and young people need sixty minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day. In Ireland, 83% of primary school pupils do not meet these physical activity guidelines, and 90% of post-primary pupils do not meet the physical activity guidelines either.

Sitting time adds up – sitting eating, sitting doing homework, sitting using the computer, sitting during school, sitting while watching TV or gaming ... the list goes on.

The good news is that physically active children have more active brains!

Sitting Less + Moving More = Learning Better

After twenty minutes of physical activity, students tested better in reading, spelling and maths and were more likely to read above their grade level.

The **Walkway resource pack** was developed for schools to use while working towards the Active School Flag. The resource pack provides everything that schools need to mark out a walking/running route around the perimeter of the school grounds. The Walkway can be used to energise the school day, support physical education and promote active learning.

It can also be used to generate extra **active minutes** for everyone throughout the school day! Students can be encouraged to walk the Walkway with their friends before school starts. Take active break times – walking doesn't require a change

of clothes or footwear, so it's an ideal lunchtime activity for both staff and students. Research suggests there are many benefits to walking meetings. Teachers can bring meetings outdoors on the Walkway route. The Walkway can be used to support the **outdoor** and **adventure** strand (orienteering, walking activities, team challenges) and to help develop children's **fundamental movement skills**.

The Walkway is an environmental cue for inquiry, questioning and the solving of problems during teaching, learning and assessment activities. It facilitates learning activities that support the teacher's role as a leader and a facilitator of subject learning through the medium of physical activity.

In primary schools, key teaching approaches such as play-based learning, inquiry-based learning and cooperative learning are all interlinked and are essential to ensuring our children develop important life skills and competencies.

The Walkway pack includes an **Ideas booklet**, which has lots of different ideas about how the Walkway route can be used to promote cross-curricular learning.

Schools across Ireland have adapted the Walkway to suit their environment, Boston National School in County Clare uses the beautiful dry-stone walls there, while Coláiste Bríde in Clondalkin, Co Dublin, has inspiration quotes on their Walkway. SS Michael and Peter Junior School in Arklow, Co Wicklow, has an Active Fairy Route on its walkway. Why not see if your children's school is working towards the Active School Flag?



Find out more at:

www.getirelandwalking.ie/walkingprogrammes/schools
and www.activeschoolflag.ie ■



Get Ireland Walking podcast

Get Ireland Walking's vision of a vibrant culture of walking throughout Ireland, and our mission to empower people to choose to walk more often for recreation, transport and health as part of their everyday life, informs everything we do as an organisation.

With that in mind, we are thrilled to announce that we have launched our first podcast series!

The podcast will shine a light on the many individuals in Ireland who live, work and play in the walking space. The podcast is presented by Get Ireland Walking's communications officer, **Linda Sankey**, and researcher **Dylan Power**.

We will chat with walking researchers; people who deliver walking programmes and events; policy-makers; and – most importantly, – we'll talk to real walkers to help shine a light on some of their amazing programmes and the groups that walk every day in Ireland.

- ➔ You can find out more at:
www.getirelandwalking.ie/podcast
- ➔ If you have a story that you think might make a podcast, contact us at
communications@getirelandwalking.ie.
- ➔ Find us on **Spotify, Apple Podcast** or wherever you listen to your podcasts ■



AUTHOR: Linda Sankey is Communications Officer with Get Ireland Walking. **Get Ireland Walking** is an initiative of Sport Ireland, supported by Healthy Ireland and hosted and delivered by Mountaineering Ireland.

FIND OUT MORE: To find out more about Get Ireland Walking, visit the website www.getirelandwalking.ie, contact us on (01) 625 1109 or email Linda Sankey at info@getirelandwalking.ie.

‘One from the Hills!’

Brendan Roche has this great proposal: “Let’s remove one piece of litter from the ground every time we go hiking.” He explains why



I imagine that we all get a buzz from hiking in the hills, be it from overcoming a challenge, reaching a summit, seeing a stunning view or simply experiencing companionship with our fellow hikers. We particularly get great pleasure from our interaction with the beauty of our stunning mountains. However, occasionally, when we encounter litter on our hikes, we may experience the opposite – anger and bewilderment at such outrageous behaviour by our fellow human beings. There is no doubt about it: **beauty dies where litter lies!**

Experienced hikers know to leave nothing but footprints behind. Unfortunately, some others are the complete opposite in this respect and leave all sorts of rubbish. For every problem, there are many solutions, but I would like to suggest one simple solution to reducing the growing problem of litter on our hills: we should simply promote the practice that, when we are out on the hills, we bring back home just **one** item of litter for recycling. This **‘power of one’** will work to reduce, and eventually eliminate, this national travesty.

Consider the numbers involved and the possible mathematics. I go out hillwalking perhaps forty-plus times a year, so I would bring home approximately forty-plus pieces of litter for recycling. Now, multiply this by the tens of thousands of regular hillwalkers that there are and it becomes tons and

tons of rubbish being recycled.

The good example of removing one recyclable item from the ground each time we go hiking would also highlight the problem to others with or near us at the time. With support and publicity, the most likely outcome from this campaign would be that there would be little or no litter left on our awesome hills and mountains.

It is important to note that this initiative potentially only works if you confine your efforts to just removing **one** item on each visit to the hills. **Why so?** Removing a greater number of pieces of rubbish on each visit would spoil the hikes for you and ultimately lead to disillusionment and abandonment of the practice. So, stick to **one** item. It is simple and it will work. Try it.

National Spring Clean Week is the time for a club or individuals to perhaps organise a clean-up on a bigger stage, where there is a more serious problem. So, go on! Adopt this simple practice and promote it, so that we will have the cleanest, as well as the most beautiful, hills in the world!

It is so simple to remove one can or piece of plastic or a glass bottle on each hike. We have shown the world how to do it with plastic shopping bags and, surely, we can do the same simply with the litter on our beloved hills? It’s a winner, so let’s do it!

We have Tidy Towns, so why not **Tidy Mountains?** What a novel and simple way to contribute towards putting a bad year behind us, and a wonderful and enchanting environment henceforth before us.

Do it. Think and do. **“One from the Hills!”**

Hillwalker Brendan Roche is the founding Chairperson of Setanta Mountain Goats Hillwalking Club. He is also founder and member of Blackrock Tidy Towns, Co Louth, winner of Ireland’s Tidiest Small Town in 2019 ■



Let's all #CleanTheHills

Let's take responsibility for the hills and crags where we recreate, writes **Aisling Kennedy**

It was raining – a lot. We walked back down to Ticknock car park after being up at the top of Three Rock in the Dublin Mountains. Then we saw it, a wet chocolate bar wrapper lying on the ground. We all considered pocketing it, but none of us picked it up.

We all know that plastic does not ever fully decompose. It just breaks down into smaller and smaller pieces. There is strong evidence to suggest that these tiny pieces of plastic do get eaten and

make their way into the food chain. One of us should have picked up that chocolate wrapper!

There is a **Clean Coasts** initiative, the **#2MinuteBeachClean**. Imagine if every single person collected rubbish for two minutes each time they visited the beach. Imagine if every person who went out hillwalking or climbing picked up some rubbish while they were out! It could be a **#CleanTheHills!**

Of course, it is not possible for all

kinds of rubbish on the hills to be cleared up by hikers. Larger items such as dumped mattresses will not fit in your jacket pocket! However, the county councils provide telephone numbers and email addresses to report these larger pieces of rubbish.

We are the people who benefit most from these beautiful areas. If we want to keep them pristine, then we need to take responsibility for what other people leave behind ■



...and let's start now!

Aisling Kennedy's challenge to hillwalkers and climbers aligns really well with Brendan Roche's **'One from the Hills'** proposal that, when we are on the hills, we should all bring home just one item of litter for recycling – see **Viewpoint**, opposite page.

Mountaineering Ireland has decided to promote the **One from the Hills** initiative. Start now by carrying a small bag with you on your next outing, to take home one item, such as a drinks can or that wet chocolate bar wrapper that we all try to ignore.

Always keep safe – put your hand into the bag and use that to pick up the litter, thus avoiding direct contact with the item.

If you come across bags of rubbish or other illegal dumping, report it to the local council, or the **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), 1850 365 121** (Republic of Ireland), or the **Environmental Crime Unit** (Northern Ireland), **028 9056 9453**. You can also download the EPA's **'See it? Say it!'** app and use that to report dumping, littering or other pollution.



Crossword results

The winner of our crossword in IML 136 was **Maitiú Ó Coimín**, of **Trá an Bhaile Bhoicht, Ballybough, Dublin 3**, who won a set of men's Icebreaker Oasis Crewe baselayers (top and leggings), a prize worth €169.90, from our crossword sponsor, Basecamp. The solution to the crossword is shown below. Mountaineering Ireland will contact the winner to arrange collection of his prize.

1	G	A	L	E	2	S		3	C	R	4	A	C	5	K
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14	A	N	15	D	E	S		16	C	R	E	A	N		
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18	H	E	N				19	A	M	E	R	I	C	A	
	A		G						A						R
20	N	O	O	K	S			21	R	A	D	I	O		



Icebreaker Men's 200 Oasis
Long Sleeve Crewe Top
plus Men's Icebreaker Oasis Leggings



Irish Mountain Log **15**

National walking trails: the beginning

A walk in the English Peak District in 1964 inspired the creation of Ireland's first waymarked way

By Seán Quinn, The Irish Ramblers' Club

In 1964, shortly after the **Irish Ramblers' Club** was established, **Angela Murphy**, the club's Vice-President, and I went walking in the English Peak District with some British ramblers. We were there at the invitation of **Tom Stephenson**, the then Secretary of the **Ramblers' Association** (now The Ramblers) in Britain, who was exploring the possibility of establishing a long-distance walking trail along the backbone of England.

Inspired by the great US trails, this had first been mooted in 1935. It would become the now famous **Pennine Way**, running 256 miles from the Peak District to the Scottish border.

It was officially opened in 1965, after thirty years' work, the first such walking trail in these islands. It was a great honour for our infant club to be involved in this historic event and that I had the opportunity



Members of the Irish Ramblers' Club set off to explore the proposed Wicklow Way in 1965

to address a large outdoor rally of British ramblers. I talked about the need for walking trails in these islands and the benefits and joys of our shared recreational activity.

At that time, access to our countryside in Ireland was becoming a problem for walkers here. With one of our

members, **JB Malone**, the Irish Ramblers' Club decided to explore developing a long-distance way, focusing primarily on County Wicklow, our main rambling area. The first section was established in 1980 and the project was successfully completed in 1982, resulting in the establishment of the now very popular and much appreciated **Wicklow Way**, the first such waymarked trail in Ireland. There are now forty-four **national waymarked trails** in

the Republic, totalling over 4,000 kilometres (2,500 miles) in length – see irishtrails.ie. These include many popular looped walks, such as the Tramline Loop on Howth Head, Co Dublin. More waymarked trails are being developed around the country all the time, as community groups recognise the many benefits that walking brings to rural and urban communities, including the health benefits and the agri-tourism possibilities ■



Tom Stephenson, father of the Pennine Way and then secretary of the Ramblers' Association in Britain, sets off on a walk with Seán Quinn of the Irish Ramblers' Club, and others, in 1964 to explore the proposed Way, which opened in 1965. The notice reads: "NO ROAD: Any Person found trespassing upon the Moor or taking dogs thereon will be Prosecuted."



► **Seán Quinn** is the Founding President of the Irish Ramblers' Club. He is a member of Mountaineering Ireland and An Taisce, a life member of An Óige, and a founder member of Na Coisithe, the family walking group. He was the government's chief environmental adviser for many years



Start of the Wicklow Way in Marlay Park, Rathfarnham, Co Dublin

Winter success on K2

- Nepalese team summits on last 8,000m peak to be climbed in winter
- Noel Hanna reaches over 7,300m on K2 in winter before winds force retreat

By Patrick O'Sullivan

K2, the 'Savage Mountain,' an 8,611m peak in the Karakoram on the Pakistan/China border, has finally been climbed in winter. The first winter ascent of the world's second highest mountain was made on January 16th, 2021, at about 5.00pm local time, by a group of ten climbers from **Nepal**, who walked the last 10m to the summit together, arm in arm, singing the Nepali national anthem!

This is the first time that a first winter ascent of an 8,000m peak has been made by an all-Nepalese team, although many of the winter first ascents by people from other countries have been supported by Sherpas and other Nepalese porters and climbers. It was seen as a joyous and proud achievement for Nepalese people in Nepal and around the world.

* * * * *

K2 is recognised as one of the most technically difficult of the fourteen



K2, the Savage Mountain, in summer



Noel Hanna on the Godwin-Austen Glacier with K2 in the distance

8,000m peaks to climb, winter or summer. Its location is more northerly than the other mountains in this elite club, which results in more extreme weather on the mountain, with lower temperatures and stronger winds. It was first climbed by two members of an Italian expedition, **Achille Compagnoni** and **Lino Lacedelli**, on July 31st, 1954, via the **Abruzzi Spur**, still the most popular route.

By 2018, of the 367 people who had summited on K2 in the summer season, 91, or almost one in four, had died on the descent, sadly including **Ger McDonnell**, the County Limerick man who made the first Irish ascent of K2 in August 2008.

Four separate teams established themselves in K2 Base Camp (4,960m) in mid-December 2020, aiming to acclimatise, establish camps and attempt to summit via the Abruzzi Spur in the official winter climbing period, if a suitable weather window occurred.

Advance Base Camp (5,200m) was then established up the **Godwin Austen Glacier**, at the foot of the Abruzzi Spur. In the following month, Camp 1 (6,100m), Camp 2 (6,700m), Camp 3 (7,300m) and Camp 4 (7,600m) were set up and stocked. Camp 4 is usually located on top of the Shoulder below the Bottleneck and has been seen as essential for successful summit bids.

The four teams attempting the winter ascent were:

- **Mingma Gyalje Sherpa's** team of three Sherpas. '**Mingma G**' has already climbed K2 twice in summer and has previously tried unsuccessfully to climb it in winter.

- **Nirmal Purja's** team, comprising 'Nims' or 'Nims Dai,' who is a Magar, with six Sherpas in support. Nims holds the record for the fastest ascent of the fourteen 8,000m peaks, which he climbed in six months and six days in 2019.

- Iclander **John Snorri Sigurjonsson** with Pakistani **Muhammad Ali Sadpara** and his son, **Sajid Sadpara**, a team of experienced independent climbers, who were joined by Chilean mountaineer, **Juan Pablo Mohr Prieto**.

- The **Seven Summit Treks** forty-nine-person commercial team, comprising twenty-two clients with various experience on 8,000m mountains and twenty-seven climbing Sherpas, including **Sona Sherpa**. This team included **Noel Hanna**, the County Down man who made the second Irish ascent of K2 in August 2018, safely getting back down to base camp the same day.

A winter ascent of K2 was first attempted in 1987 by a Polish expedition. There have only been five winter expeditions to K2 since then, until the attempts this year.

In the week prior to the successful climb, Camp 2 was apparently destroyed by high winds and had to be restocked before the summit bid could be made. As far as I can establish, the successful climbers went up to Camp 3 in the preceding days and then left from there on their summit bid. They put in fixed ropes from there up to the summit cone, in what was possibly a sixteen-hour climb. They reached the summit at about 5.00pm local time on January 16th, 2021.

Along with **Mingma G, Nims** and **Sona Sherpa**, the other summiteers were **Mingma David Sherpa, Mingma Tenzi Sherpa, Geljen Sherpa, Pem Chiri Sherpa,**



Eight of the successful Sherpas after their climb of K2, pictured at Advance Base Camp.

Dawa Temba Sherpa, Dawa Tenjin Sherpa, and Kilu Pemba Sherpa.

"History made for mankind. History made for Nepal!" **Nims Purja** said on Instagram after the ascent. All of the summiteers returned safely to base camp the next day.

* * * * *

Sadly, there were five deaths on K2 this winter. A Catalan climber, **Sergi Mingote**, fell to his death while descending from Camp 1 to Advance Base Camp on the day of the successful summit bid. A Bulgarian mountaineer, **Atanas Skatov**, also fell to his death later, while descending the mountain in February.

After the successful ascent in January, the other mountaineers waited in base camp to see if there would be another weather window. The **Sigurjonsson** team decided to try for the summit in a short weather window in early February. **Sajid Sadpara** turned around at the bottom of the Bottleneck when his oxygen

regulator malfunctioned.

The other three – **Sigurjonsson, Ali Sadpara** and **Prieto** – continued climbing up the Bottleneck and were not seen again, despite various helicopter searches.

At a webinar organised by the **Europe Nepal Chamber of Commerce for Tourism** (www.encct.eu) at the end of February, **Noel Hanna**, who was part of the **Seven Summit Treks**

team, said that the winds on K2 were predicted to be 30 km per hour on the day that the **Sigurjonsson** team went for the summit, and deteriorating the next day. Noel felt that it was not safe to continue climbing that day, so he returned to base camp. The **Sigurjonsson** team felt that it was manageable and set off for the summit.

Noel had arrived at base camp on December 29th, 2020 and spent forty days there or in the higher camps. The temperature at base camp fell to -20°C, resulting in ice forming in the tents.

* * * * *

The Sherpas who summited K2 on January 16th were already acclimatised from other climbs before they went to K2. On their summit day, the winds were 5-10km/hr but rose to 10-15km/hr when they were reaching the summit. Even at those wind speeds, they all had some degree of frost-nip or frostbite due to the windchill. Nims Purja was the only one who climbed without supplemental oxygen, putting himself at greater risk of cold injury.

They climbed up to Camp 3 and then left there at 1.00-2.00am the next day, reaching the summit just before 5.00pm on January 16th, a 16 to 17-hour day. Happily, they all got back down safely to base camp the following day.

After the Nepalese ascent, Noel's **Seven Summit Treks** team rested at base camp, waiting for another weather window. On February 5th, winds were forecast to be 10km/hr till 8.00am, and then 15km/hr till 4.00pm. Noel said that you would need to be fast to avail of a one-day weather window.



Enjoying a nip at K2 Base Camp (Noel Hanna is in the middle)

The team went to Camp 1 and then to Camp 2. Noel felt it was taking longer than it should have to climb between the camps each day. In Camp 2, there was a problem with the gas, and the stove wouldn't light. It was very cold there that night, at -30 to -40°C.

They went on to Camp 3 the next day, but only arrived at 5.00-6.00pm, when they should have arrived at 1.00-2.00pm. The forecast had changed by then and the winds were forecast to be 20km/hr from midnight to 8.00am, and then 30km/hr from 8.00am. Noel felt this was too dangerous. However, the Sigurjonsson team decided they would still try for the summit, despite the forecast.

Noel's oxygen regulator wasn't working properly the next day, so he went back down and was back in base camp the following day, February 6th. The Sigurjonsson team were not seen again



Climbing fixed ropes between Camp 2 and Camp 3

after the son left them at the Bottleneck; it is not clear what happened to them.

Noel waited at base camp to see if there was anything he could do to assist in the search for the Sigurjonsson team. A Pakistani army helicopter attempted to search for the three climbers, but didn't find anything. With the weather conditions deteriorating, the search was abandoned and Noel trekked out to Skardu. He had been above 7,300m on K2 in winter, but felt that it would have been foolish to try to go higher in the winds that were forecast at that time on the Savage Mountain ■

Irish death on Mount Kenya

By Patrick O'Sullivan

A forty-year-old Irishman died from altitude sickness on Mount Kenya (5,199m) at the end of January 2021. Dubliner **Piers White**, an outdoor enthusiast, was climbing Point Lenana (4,985m) on Mount Kenya, the second highest mountain in Africa.

Piers had entered the Mount Kenya National Park through the Naro Moru Gate three days before he became ill. The park is a World Heritage Site. He was overnighing in the Austrian Hut (4,790m) prior to making his summit bid. The hut is near the Lewis Glacier on Point Lenana.

Kenya Wildlife Service reported that Piers developed breathing



problems during the night and was evacuated in the morning by a mountain rescue team to Mackinder's Camp. Piers was airlifted from there in a critical condition to Nanyuki Cottage Hospital. Sadly, he was pronounced dead on arrival at the hospital.

Piers White was a teacher, a charity worker and an entrepreneur. He had a broad interest in sport and

had been a marathon runner. In 2011, he started the annual fundraising **Run in the Dark** in Dublin, an event which is now held in more than fifty cities around the world. He was also instrumental in setting up the **Mark Pollock Trust**.

Mountaineering Ireland offers its sincere condolences to Piers' family and friends on their tragic loss ■

Hill Fever

When winter days are over
And dawns the sun of May,
I love to take a rucksack
And westwards make my way.

To leave behind the city,
The hustle and the work,
To smell again the heather
On Maamtrasna and Maamturk

To see again each furze clad hill,
To hear the honey bee,
To breathe the clear and salty air
On Croagh Patrick and Mweelrea.

To hear again Atlantic waves,
Walk in the woods so green,
And hear the cuckoo calling,
O'er Ben Gower, Ben Ban, Ben Breen.

Then turn my face to Kerry
From care and sorrow free
To stroll where Massatiompan
Slopes down to the sea.

Or climb to Brandon's lofty peak
And watch the young lambs play;
Or walk among the bluebells
On the shores of Brandon Bay.

To wander down a Sligo lane
Where hawthorn blossoms bloom
Or stand again upon that hill,
Where Maeve lies in her tomb

And watch the evening sun go down
As the day draws to a close
Or stroll along the riverbank
Amongst the violets and primrose.

To roam the hills of Donegal
With the wild deer and woodcock,
And hear the sweet song of the lark
High up o'er Altan Lough.

But Oh, that God would grant me
When sweet May dawns again,
To rest awhile on Errigal
Or in the Poisoned Glen.

Peadar O'Riordan



David Sheridan overlooking his lands beside Lough MacNea in County Fermanagh

SHEEP, SUCKLERS AND SAVING LIVES

One farmer's view of volunteering with a mountain rescue team

Rodney Magowan reports



David Sheridan farms across several holdings around Letterbreen and Florence Court in County Fermanagh, with some further acreage just across the border. In fact, one of his fences is the border!

Lowland sheep and suckler cows are the family's main enterprises, but David has a third passion – helping save lives as a member of the **North West Mountain Rescue Team**.

“Back in 2013, the local section of the North West Mountain Rescue Team held an open day at their base beside one of our farms,” David recalls. “Several neighbours and friends were already impressed. One member, the late **Maud Cunningham BEM**, encouraged me to join that day, saying that I knew a lot of the countryside already, was farmer fit, practical and reliable.

“So, with all that praise, joining seemed a great idea – and it was! Eight years later, the North West Mountain Rescue Team are again recruiting and I would urge

country folk to consider applying.

“The North West Mountain Rescue Team is a voluntary body covering all of Northern Ireland other than the Mournes, from bases in Fermanagh, Magherafelt and Ballymena. The Mournes have their own mountain rescue team.

“You do not have to be some sort of super-fit Bear Grylls or latter-day Mary Peters. Just being farmer fit or even vet fit would be an advantage,” David quipped.

But how does he cope if there is a call-out when he is busy in the lambing shed or a cow is calving? Simply by not being on call at very busy times of the year.

“Though, make no mistake, being in the team is a serious commitment, with training two evenings a month at the local section base beside us. Then, there are province-wide courses and exercises most months, often with other organisations such as the coast guards, police, RNLI, fire brigade and ambulance service.

“Some folks even get to higher level courses across the water or in the Republic. Indeed, we all aim to get Rec3 and Rec4, Rescue and Emergency Care and First Aid qualifications.

“Remember, the team's aim is to find those lost in often bleak landscapes and, where necessary, stabilise their condition. Then, if need be, they are packaged on a specialist stretcher and carried to a place of safety for onward transport to hospital.

“Call-outs are mainly local, but, in major incidents, our section has been deployed to back up other teams as far afield as Mayo, the Mournes and Cave Hill. Taking part in actual rescues and potentially saving a life gives me a great buzz, and the whole experience of working in a team is great crack.”

At home, David farms with the support of his father, **Robert**, and his son, **Lee**, across several holdings, miles apart. It is a contrast to being in the mountain rescue team, extracting casualties, often in horrendous weather conditions.

Early innovators in many farming techniques, David and his family were among the first in Northern Ireland to use expanded metal flooring in sheep sheds, and sponging to tighten up lambing. The ewes they have are Cheviot Suffolk



David Sheridan (on the far right) with other members of the North West Mountain Rescue Team and the Air Ambulance Northern Ireland helicopter

crosses put back, almost always, to Suffolk tups, though some Texel rams are used. "We have lambs for sale now most months of the year, with ewes lambing in batches from Christmas through to April. The Suffolk-sired lamb tends to finish and get away sooner than those from a Texel tup.

"As regards suckler cows, these days we supply what the market wants, selling continental-bred, single-suck weanlings in Enniskillen, from ten months old, for others to finish. Bidders want well-forward suckler calves with colour, and prices this year have certainly been pleasing. I guess that makes up for all the Brexit red tape hassle when we, as usual, buy our replacement suckler cows in the Republic."

With the North West Mountain Rescue Team being forty years old in 2021, David would love to see more farm folk and those from rural backgrounds coming forward to volunteer.

"The training is practical, down to earth and suits a wide range of abilities. You will not be asked to handle anything on call-out that you have not already been well trained to cope with.

"Farming is great, and producing stock that suits the market is brilliant. However, so is helping to save a life by bringing a lost, often injured, walker back to his or her family.

"Remember, the team is always delighted to advise those enjoying

outdoor activities on their preparation as regards their gear and their plans. Have they prepared a route, can they map-read, have they told others where they are heading and when they are likely to return? Did they check the local weather forecast?

"As in farming, having a plan and preparing to succeed makes for success and safety on the hill," David affirmed.

"Anyone in difficulties in the hills should ring **999** or **112**, ask for the police and request that they deploy mountain rescue. Our role is to rescue people in difficulties

from places no ambulance can reach."

➡ For an informal chat about joining the North West Mountain Rescue Team, email secretary@nwmrt.org or visit www.nwmrt.org. Both active members (such as David Sheridan) and support staff are required from all across Northern Ireland. While others stand back, as a volunteer member of a mountain rescue team, you will be equipped to step forward and help those in danger ■

David Sheridan tending his sheep on the hills above Lough MacNea in County Fermanagh



ARTEFACTS UNDERFOOT

Why looking at the ground as well as the view could be a good thing

A report by **Matthew Seaver** of the National Museum of Ireland and **Graeme Warren** of the School of Archaeology, University College, Dublin (UCD)

The human use of mountain landscapes in Ireland is varied and complex. Although we

sometimes think of mountains as wild or natural places, they have been lived in and journeyed through by people for centuries. Archaeological evidence is key to furthering our understanding of how people engaged with these beautiful and sometimes challenging landscapes.

Some of this evidence takes the form of buildings, walls and other structures, such as the megalithic tombs which lie on many of our mountains. However, another key source of evidence is the artefacts that can be found in our mountain landscapes. Here, hillwalkers can really contribute to our understanding of Ireland's past.

Most artefacts are

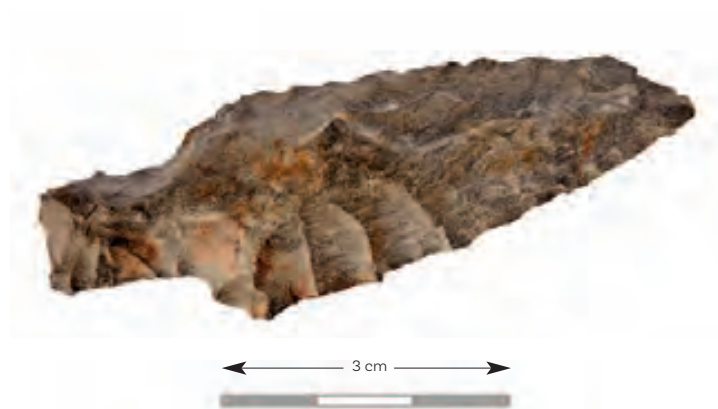


Figure 1. Chert tanged arrowhead, probably Early Bronze Age, from Lackendarragh, Nagles Mountains, Co Cork

comparatively small and mountains are very big. Most of the mountains are also covered in peat, which has often, but not always, formed after a period of human archaeological activity, deeply burying the evidence. Finding artefacts in mountain landscapes is, therefore, very challenging.

We know comparatively little about how the mountains were used over

highlights some of the artefacts that can be found on our hills and why they are important. Critically, we also provide advice on what to do if you do find something: how to record it, what your responsibilities are, and who to report it to.

Reporting is vital. Without it, the find cannot contribute to establishing the story of Ireland's mountains.

There are four hundred and fifteen objects that incorporate the word *mountain* in the 'find-place,'



Figure 2. Early Medieval leather shoe from Lugduff, Glendalough, Co Wicklow

time, and the evidence from artefacts can really help. However, to understand those objects, we first have to find them!

A team of archaeologists undertaking survey work in a mountain landscape might only have a week or two to cover an area, and might only walk each path once. That is no substitute for the kind of knowledge of a landscape many hillwalkers have developed through repeated visits and observation. Items that you find on your walks can be of great importance.

This short summary

in the National Museum of Ireland collection, although many more objects in the museum were found in upland townlands. Of these, two hundred and forty-nine are **prehistoric stone tools**, predominantly made of flint or chert. These distinctive objects often grab the eye of hikers. A **flint arrowhead** in the museum came from the Sugar Loaf in Wicklow, and a **tanged chert arrowhead** was recently found at Lackendarragh, in the Nagles Mountains, in Cork (**Figure 1**).

These finds of stone tools



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► **Matthew Seaver** is an archaeologist working with the National Museum of Ireland (mseaver@museum.ie)



Figure 3. Deer trap from Knockmullgurry, Blackstairs Mountain, Co Carlow, in Conservation Laboratory of National Museum of Ireland

are fantastic evidence of how prehistoric people used the mountains. **Prehistoric bronze tools**, predominantly axe heads, have also been found on mountains, with a recent **Late Bronze Age axe** found at Donard in the Glen of Imaal, Co Wicklow.

As well as burying these ancient tools, blanket bog offers potential for the discovery of organic materials, which have been preserved by the peat. These include the footwear of

previous visitors. A **shoe** from Lugduff Mountain in County Wicklow was radiocarbon-dated to the 8th or 9th century AD and features in the National Museum's Glendalough Exhibition (**Figure 2**).

A wooden **deer trap** from Knockmullgurry, Co Carlow, was found by a walker on the summit of the Blackstairs Mountain and dated to the Iron Age (**Figure 3**).

Items found can raise intriguing questions. A recent

discovery of a lead **papal bulla** or **seal** at Skeheenaranky, Co Tipperary (**Figure 4**), shows that someone, probably in the 15th century, took a document which had come from Rome into mountains at

Galtymore on the Limerick/Tipperary border. Perhaps this shows the use of mountains as refuge or communication routes?

More recent objects could also be of archaeological significance. For example, crashed **World War II aircraft** may be encountered on mountainsides ■



Figure 4. Lead papal bulla or seal of Pope Martin V (1417-1431) from Skeheenaranky, Galtée Mountains, Co Tipperary

What should you do if you find something?

Most of the objects discussed above were found by chance and were reported through the civic duty of hillwalkers. Artefacts are protected by legislation, so this is what you should do if you find an object of possible archaeological interest. Museum curators never object to questions, so if you are unsure don't hesitate to ask.

● **Record the find and the site** Take photographs of the find and of the find location. Stand back from the object and show the location in its landscape context. If you have something you can use for a scale (e.g., water bottle, phone, etc), that can be helpful.

● **Get location information** If you have a GPS, please record the location. If your phone or camera is set to location, brilliant. If you have a map, work out the grid reference as best you can.

● **Take notes** As soon as you can, make notes about what you found and where it was.

● **Should you pick up the object to take home or leave it there?** If the object is embedded in the ground or appears fragile, record its location and get in touch with the contacts below before doing anything further. An object may only be preserved because of the specific environmental conditions of its find spot. Removing it can lead to degradation and ultimately destruction.

● **Report it** Artefacts can only contribute to our developing understanding of the human past in Ireland if they are reported to the appropriate national authorities, so they can be properly evaluated. Finders will be kept informed and engaged with what they have discovered.

■ In the **Republic of Ireland**, all archaeological objects found without a known owner are the property of the State and must be reported within ninety-six hours. Using detection devices to search for archaeological objects without consent or excavating for them without a licence are offences. Contact

the **National Museum of Ireland** at antiquitiesdo@museum.ie or +353 1 677 7444, or **An Garda Síochána** to report objects found.

■ In **Northern Ireland**, archaeological objects found must be reported within fourteen days and, if readily portable, deposited with a relevant authority (usually National Museums Northern Ireland), which can hold them for three months for recording. Disturbing the ground to recover archaeological objects without a licence is an offence. Objects found usually belong to the landowner unless deemed treasure. Contact **National Museums Northern Ireland**, Historic Environment Division, Department of Communities, at HERoNI@communities-ni.gov.uk, or a local **police station**.

■ Possessing a **detection device** at monuments protected by law in both jurisdictions is an offence. Archaeological objects should not be moved between the two jurisdictions without the relevant export licence or/and in the case of the Republic of Ireland, import licence.

MOUNTAINS OF THE EAST

Aidan Ennis sets out to hike the Great Leinster Chain from Dublin to Waterford

It was eerily quiet in front of the GPO on Dublin's O'Connell Street. It was 3.45am on a Saturday morning and the city appeared abandoned, like some post-apocalyptic scene or, in this case, the reality of Covid-19.

It was August 22nd, 2020, and public health restrictions were in place, which ensured that no pubs or nightclubs were open, but inter-county travel was allowed again. There was no reason to be here ... except, that is, if, like me, you were going for a hike. I was eager to get moving. It was going to be a long day.

The proximity of Dublin city centre to the nearby mountains has been referred to by many famous walkers. **JB Malone**, the driving force for the concept and creation of **The Wicklow Way**, observed in his book, *The Open Road* (1951): "Here, within a few hours' journey from O'Connell Street, is some of the finest mountain scenery in Ireland."

The Irish botanist **Robert Lloyd Praeger** wrote in *The Way That I Went* (1947), "You can set foot on the heather six miles from the centre of Dublin and, save for crossing two roads, not leave it till you drop down on Aghrim, thirty miles to the southward as the crow flies."

Above: View of Mount Leinster from slopes of Blackstairs Mountain

Below: Early morning at the GPO on O'Connell Street, Dublin: start-point of the hike

Opposite top left: Perfect overnight shelter spot on day one

Opposite centre: Route of the Great Leinster Chain hike

I really liked the simplicity of the idea of setting out from Dublin's main street, hiking over the 'Mountains of the East' and walking home to Waterford. I had not hiked in the Wicklow Mountains for years. My brother, the late **Colm Ennis**, always maintained that the Blackstairs deserved a full traverse once a year. It had been ten years since I last completed that hike with him.

My planned route was to start at the GPO in Dublin and walk over the Dublin and Wicklow Mountains to reach Lugnaquilla, before descending to follow the Wicklow Way as far as its end point at Clonegall. I would then traverse the Blackstairs, descend to New Ross and follow the River Barrow along quiet country roads to finish at the GPO in Waterford city.



➤ **Aidan Ennis** is a long-distance ultralight hiker who has walked and climbed extensively in Ireland, Scotland, the Alps, the Pyrenees and the Nepal Himalaya. Epic hikes he has completed include the 800-km Haute Randonnée Pyrénéenne, the Chamonix to Zermatt Haute Route (200 km) and a 10-day hike on the Scottish Cape Wrath Trail (326 km), which he did with his brother, the late **Colm Ennis**. In 2019, Aidan completed the Three Peninsulas Hike in Kerry, covering a 461-km route on the Beara, Iveragh and Dingle peninsulas (see IML 133).





My route was best described in **CW Wall's** book, *Mountaineering in Ireland* (1944), as following **'The Great Leinster Chain.'** The Wicklow and Blackstairs Mountains are part of the largest mass of granite in north-western Europe, a geological feature known as a batholith. The geologist **Daphne Pochin Mould** described the batholith in her book, *The Mountains of Ireland* (1955), as a "great structural feature in the bedrock of Ireland, a great arching fold in Ordovician and Silurian sediments into which granite was intruded, and which can be traced for 90 miles from Balbriggan north of Dublin down to the coast of Waterford."

I set off down O'Connell Street and crossed the River Liffey. My hike had begun.

Day One 44.6 km

I made good progress through the traffic-free streets of Dublin, following the R114 to **Rathfarnham**. Apart from a fox crossing the road on its nightly rounds, the only life I saw was two lads closing the shutters on a late-night shop. They asked me, "Are you going to climb Everest with those sticks?" I replied, "No, Lugnaquilla." I guess seeing someone with a fully laden rucksack and walking poles, striding with intent in the middle of the night, looked a little unusual.

As I crossed the bridge over the M50, the mountains could be seen ahead "like the outworks of a great fortress," to quote JB Malone once more.

A herd of deer looked at me inquisitively as I climbed the **Military Road**. The sun was



rising over Dublin Bay with an intense golden glow below inky black clouds, illuminating the unmistakable silhouettes of the Poolbeg chimneys, Howth Head and Ireland's Eye in the distance.

I entered Wicklow Mountains National Park and walked over a small stream, the source of the mighty **River Liffey**, which I had crossed only a few hours previously. A peregrine falcon hovered above and a few very energetic early-morning cyclists passed by me as I neared the **Sally Gap**.

I climbed **Carrigvore** (682m), finally setting foot on heather.

I walked along the ridge over **Gravale** (718m) and **Duff Hill** (720m) and paused at **Mullaghcleevaun East Top** (795m).

I looked up at the higher peak, which was shrouded in dark, angry-looking clouds. Despite that, I climbed on. The wind picked up and with it came torrential cold rain. By the time I reached **Mullaghcleevaun** (849m), it felt like a full-scale storm.

I was utterly alone on the summit. It felt as remote and as removed as it could be from the city centre, which I had been in a few short hours ago. This sudden remoteness was also noted by the ➤

LONG DISTANCE HIKING

author **HV Morton**, who observed during his grand tour of Ireland in 1890, "You could be lost in the hills within an hour of Dublin: you could wander for days without meeting a soul: you could, if injured, lie there and die in the bog, because your chance of finding help would be indeed remote."

I was glad to be navigating downhill to **Barnacullian** (714m) and I heeded Morton's warning by avoiding any rogue bog-holes on my descent to the col below **Stoney Top**. A welcome forest track brought me down to **Glashaboy Bridge**, a short distance above the Wicklow Gap.

Day Two 42.5 km (total 87.1 km)

The car park at the **Wicklow Gap** was empty. I could see Lough Nahanagan, but Camaderry Mountain was in cloud. I walked to the upper reservoir on **Turlough Hill**, Ireland's only pumped storage power station, which has been in operation since 1974. The station can go from standstill to full capacity in just over a minute. It does this by releasing water from the upper reservoir and allowing it to flow through four turbines into the lower reservoir. During periods of reduced demand, water is pumped back to the upper reservoir, ready for the next release.

As I made my way to the summit of **Tomaneena** (681m), the wind had thankfully eased from the previous day. I navigated first to **Lough Firrib** and onward to the **Three Lakes** before climbing to **Table Mountain** (701m) and **Camenabologue** (758m) before following the ridge to the summit cairn on **Lugnaquilla** (925m). I had met nobody on the mountains up to this point but, after a few minutes, I was joined by many walkers who appeared out of the cloud in time for a summit lunch.

I headed in the direction of **Slievemaan** (759m) before following the ridge to **Lybagh** (646m) and gradually descended to join the Wicklow Way near Aughavannagh. The trail followed small boreens and pleasant trails before contouring around the **Ballycumber Hills**. In the distance, Mount Leinster and the Blackstairs were visible across an undulating



Above: On **Lugnaquilla** summit, the high point of the route

Below left: The **Dying Cow Pub**, near Tinahely, Co Wicklow

Below right: **Admiring the River Derry** and the old stone bridge at **Clonegall**, Co Carlow

landscape of fields and forests. My day ended with a delightful evening walk through the peaceful beech forest of **Mangan's Wood** above Tinahely.

Day Three 33.9 km (total 121 km)

It was a warm start to the day and the trail wound its way through beautiful green rolling hills, which reminded me of **JRR Tolkien's** descriptions of the Shire.

I was really looking forward to a morning coffee in a pub with a name that would not be out of place in Middle Earth, **The Dying Cow**. The old pub, which once acted as a stagecoach stop, is over 300 years old. Unfortunately, it was closed due to the Covid-19 public health restrictions.

I sat down and rested in the courtyard for a while. The lady of the house gave me an interesting pamphlet explaining the history of the area. I made a note to myself that one day I would return to explore the area with my family and have a pint in The Dying Cow.

I continued on to **Clonegall**, the end or start-point of the Wicklow Way. I rested on a bench overlooking the Derry River. Another four kilometres over a hill brought me down to **Buncloody**, my stop for the night.





Day Four 0.0 km (total 121 km)

Storm Francis, which had been approaching Ireland for several days, was due to make its presence felt. I took refuge in the Clody Lodge in the middle of town. It was my first time to visit Bunclody, even though I had passed through it many times.

I called into the local hardware store and bought some black duct tape to repair a bad tear in my waterproof leggings. The local newsagent had a very impressive selection of maps.

Charlie, the owner of the Clody Lodge, highly recommended that I visit **Sultan** in The Mango Tree restaurant up the street. The chicken curry there was delicious and I thanked Sultan for his hospitality. I was ready for the Blackstairs Mountains the next day.

Day Five 49 km (total 170 km)

After walking five kilometres from Bunclody, I climbed

Above: View of Blackstairs Mountain with Mount Leinster in the distance

Below left: Entrance to Coonogue Lane and Blackstairs Mountain

Below right: Stopping for a coffee break below Mount Leinster

Black Rock Mountain (599m) on a bright and sunny morning, but **Mount Leinster** (795m) above was in cloud. I was not noticed by a team of very focused engineers, who were repairing one of the cables on the huge TV transmitter mast on its summit.

I continued southward towards **Knockroe** (540m) before descending to the **Scullogue Gap**. I found the small, overgrown track known as **Coonogue Lane**, conveniently signposted 'Blackstairs Mtn' from the road.

The walk from **Blackstairs Mountain** (735m) along the ridge to **White Mountain** (504m) in bright sunshine was spectacular, with views over vibrant green fields and rolling countryside as far as the Comeragh Mountains in Waterford and all along the Wexford coastline.

After crossing the **Pollmounty River**, it was a relatively flat walk along roads overlooking the River Barrow to **New Ross**.





THERE IS A NEVER-ENDING SUPPLY OF ADVENTURES LIKE THIS IN IRELAND

Day Six 31 km (total 201 km)

I followed a quiet country road, which was once the main road from New Ross to Waterford and runs alongside the River Barrow, as far as a feature known as The Pink Rock. **The Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Bridge** now towers over The Pink Rock. This bridge on the N25 over the River Barrow is 887m long and was opened in January 2020. It is not only the longest bridge in Ireland but is also the longest of its type in the entire world. The 230m main spans of the bridge are the longest concrete-only, extradosed box-girder bridge spans ever built.

Suitably impressed, I continued walking and, before long, **Cheekpoint** could be seen ahead, where the River Barrow meets its sister, the River Suir. I was now only a few kilometres from home, yet the views and back roads were all new to me until I reached the North Quays on the River Suir. **Reginald's Tower**, Waterford's landmark monument and Ireland's oldest civic building, was visible on the opposite bank. It was the first building sailors saw as they approached Waterford and was the strongpoint of the medieval defensive walls that enclosed the city.

I crossed Rice Bridge and started walking along The Quay to the GPO. It was a walk I was well used to, the river and marina on one side and, across the road, fine buildings ran as far as Reginald's Tower. As I approached the **GPO**, I could see my wife, **Emily**, and our son, **Alex**, waiting for me.

My Mountains of the East expedition had come to a perfect end in bright warm sunshine. It had been a grand expedition through city, town and village, over

Above: North Quays by the River Suir in Waterford city

Below: Aidan and son Alex at the GPO in Waterford

high mountains and rolling hills, along trails, boreens and the banks of mighty rivers. I had experienced all weathers, from cold rain and wind to warm sunshine, and gales that forced me to take refuge from the storm. I had met wonderful and welcoming people on my journey, on the trail and in the towns I passed through.

I would never have thought that a walk from Dublin to Waterford could be an adventure. You can drive it on the motorway in a couple of hours these days. However, with a little imagination, there is a never-ending supply of adventures in Ireland. The challenge is to dream them up, mark two Xs on the map, grab the rucksack and go dream them with open eyes ■



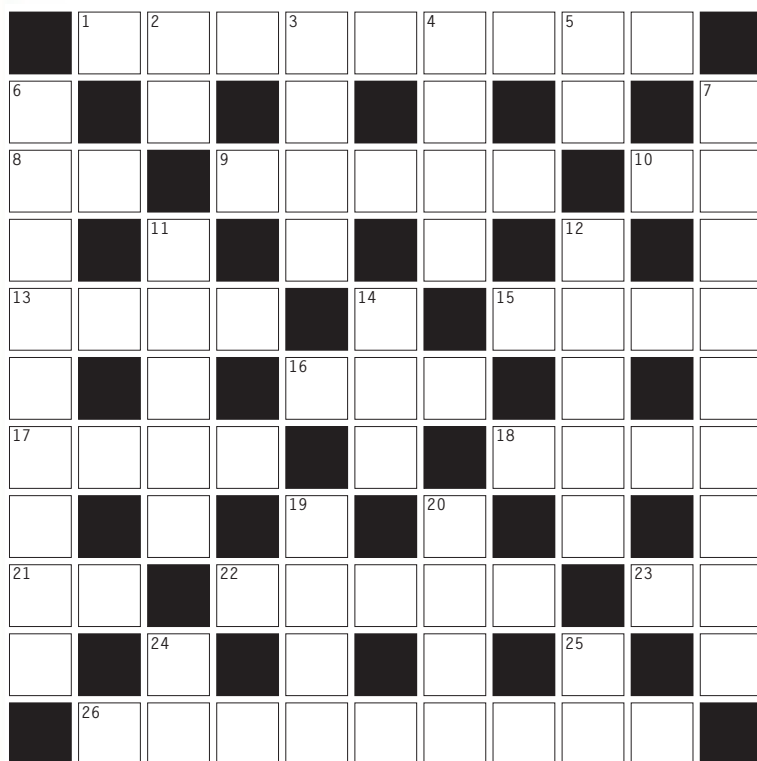


BASECAMP Crossword

Spring competition

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

CROSSWORD compiled by COLIN MacLOCHLAIN



Clues Across

- 1 Mountain range in County Waterford (9).
- 8 Small river valley immediately south of Lugnaquilla (2).
- 9 A degree in a climbing scale of increasing difficulty (5).
- 10 California, in short (2).
- 13 A lough in Donegal, also used to season food (4).
- 15 A steep pinnacle of rock or cliff (4).
- 16 A pass or depression in a mountain range or ridge (3).
- 17 This 'monster' mountain is in the Karakoram range in Pakistan (4).
- 18 A lateral ridge or tongue from a main hill or range (4).
- 21 Where the city of Washington is found (1,1).
- 22 Ancient unit of length based on forearm length (5).
- 23 Third largest of Jupiter's Galilean moons (2).
- 26 Major peak in Swiss Alps, at 4,506m (9).

Clues Down

- 2 Name of one mountain range in Sligo (2).
- 3 Probably the most famous Wyatt who lived (4).
- 4 A small, scenic peninsula in Donegal (4).
- 5 An hour, in short (2).
- 6 Range of rolling hills in the south of England (9).
- 7 Kerry mountain known for its Devil's Punchbowl (9).
- 11 The county where you will find Ailladie sea cliffs (5).
- 12 Journeys or stumbles (5).
- 14 Cloud-like mass that reduces visibility (3).
- 19 Refuges or hostels in the Alps (4).
- 20 Famous Slieve on east side of Dingle peninsula (4).
- 24 Exercising school discipline (1,1).
- 25 Her Majesty, on post boxes, or in emergency room (1,1).

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

Cut out this page or photocopy it and send your completed entry to The Editor, *Irish Mountain Log*, Mountaineering Ireland, Irish Sport HQ, National Sports Campus, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15, to arrive not later than Friday, May 28th 2021. You can also scan the completed page and email it to info@mountaineering.ie. Don't forget to include your full name, address and membership number with your entry as well as a telephone number or email address at where you can be contacted. The winner will be announced in the Summer 2021 issue of the *Irish Mountain Log*.

Competition prize

Basecamp's generous prize offer is for an MSR Elixir 2 two-person tent worth €300.00.



MY MOURNE WALL CHALLENGE

Paul Maguire tackles the 33.5-km Mourne Wall hike after a 24-year hiatus

The **Mourne Wall Challenge** is listed as being 33.5 kilometres long, with an aggregate ascent of 2,860m and a hike duration of 14-16 hours, in Adrian Hendroff's walking guide, *The Mourne & Cooley Mountains: A Walking Guide* (2018).

The hike entails climbing fourteen peaks, half of them being in the range's top ten highest. It is a popular personal challenge, undertaken by experienced hillwalkers, most of whom attempt to complete the full circuit in a single day.

There are two main starting points for this Mourne Wall hike, both with good parking facilities: **Carrick Little** on the south side, and **Meelmore Lodge** at the northern end of the Mourne. I started my most recent hike from Carrick Little and walked in a clockwise direction, beginning with Slieve Binnian. It takes a little longer to complete the walk from Meelmore Lodge.

Above: Summit of Bearnagh with Commedagh and Donard behind

Below: Slieve Binnian early in the morning, as I set off from Carrick Little

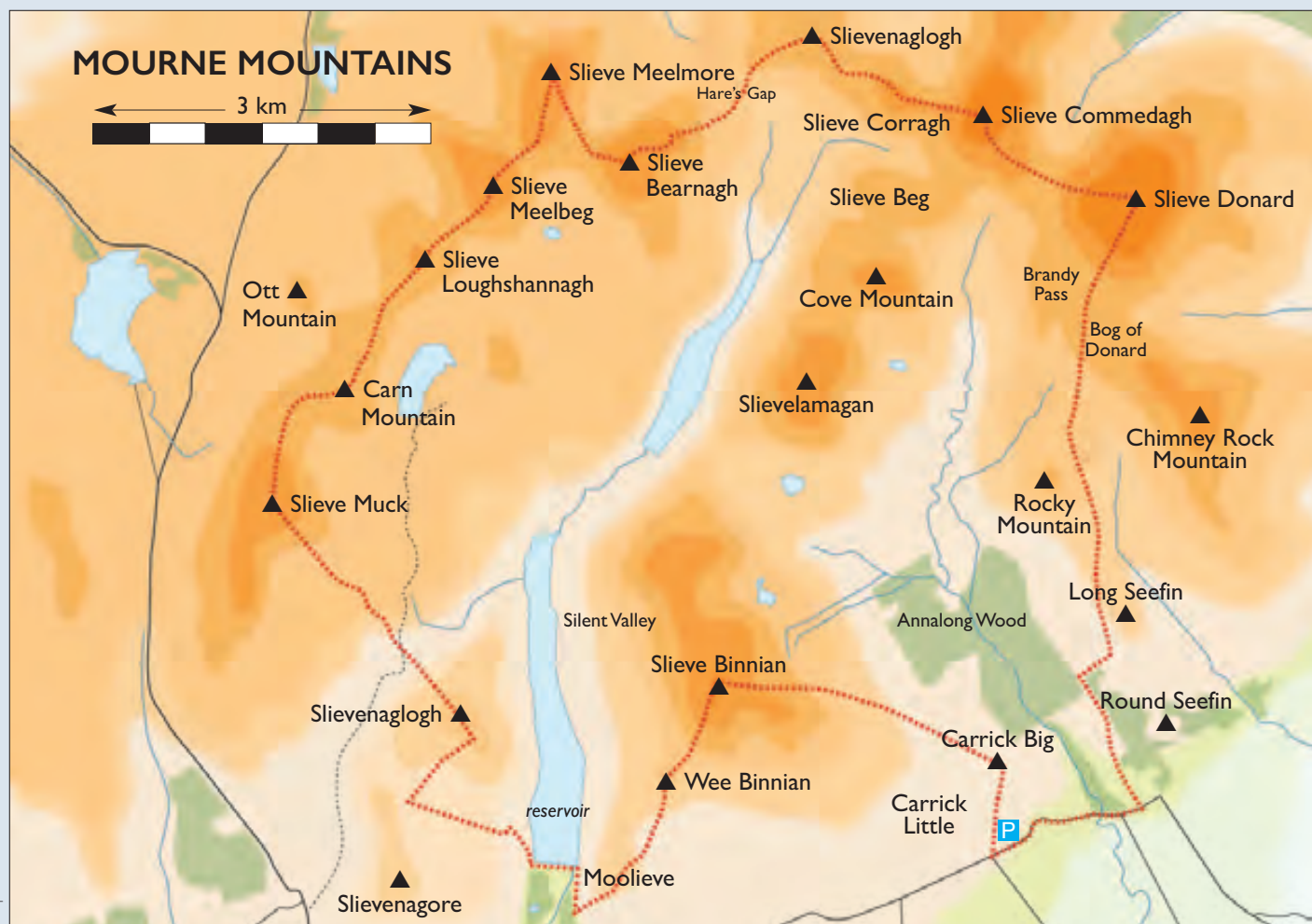
The Mourne Wall is relatively easy to navigate, although in some areas there are several walls, so some research, or having a ViewRanger route as backup, could help, if you are not familiar with the area.

Among hillwalkers, the Mourne Wall hike has a justifiable reputation as a serious undertaking. It had been twenty-four years since I had last done 'The Wall' with my hiking buddies from **Tredagh Trekkers** in Drogheda, Co Louth – Willie Redmond, Donagh O'Brien, Ken King Smith and the late Tony Rooney – and a part of me wanted to know if I could still do it. Twenty-four years ago, it had taken me twelve to fourteen hours of tough hiking to complete the hike.



➤ **Paul Maguire** is a member of **Tredagh Trekkers**, a hillwalking club based in Drogheda, Co Louth. Paul has hiked many multi-day routes, including the GR54 in France, the Haute Route from Chamonix to Zermatt, the Mount Kilimanjaro climb in Tanzania and a 3,500-km 'thru hike' of the Appalachian Trail in the USA.





Now, at the age of fifty-nine, I would be happy to complete the hike in any time. However, I would be delighted if I could complete it in less than twelve hours. There was only one way to find out!

* * * * *

I started walking the hills in 1995, when I first completed the Mourne Wall Challenge. After an absence from hiking for several years, I solo-hiked the **Wicklow Way** between Christmas and New Year's Eve in 2016 and started to research multi-day hikes.

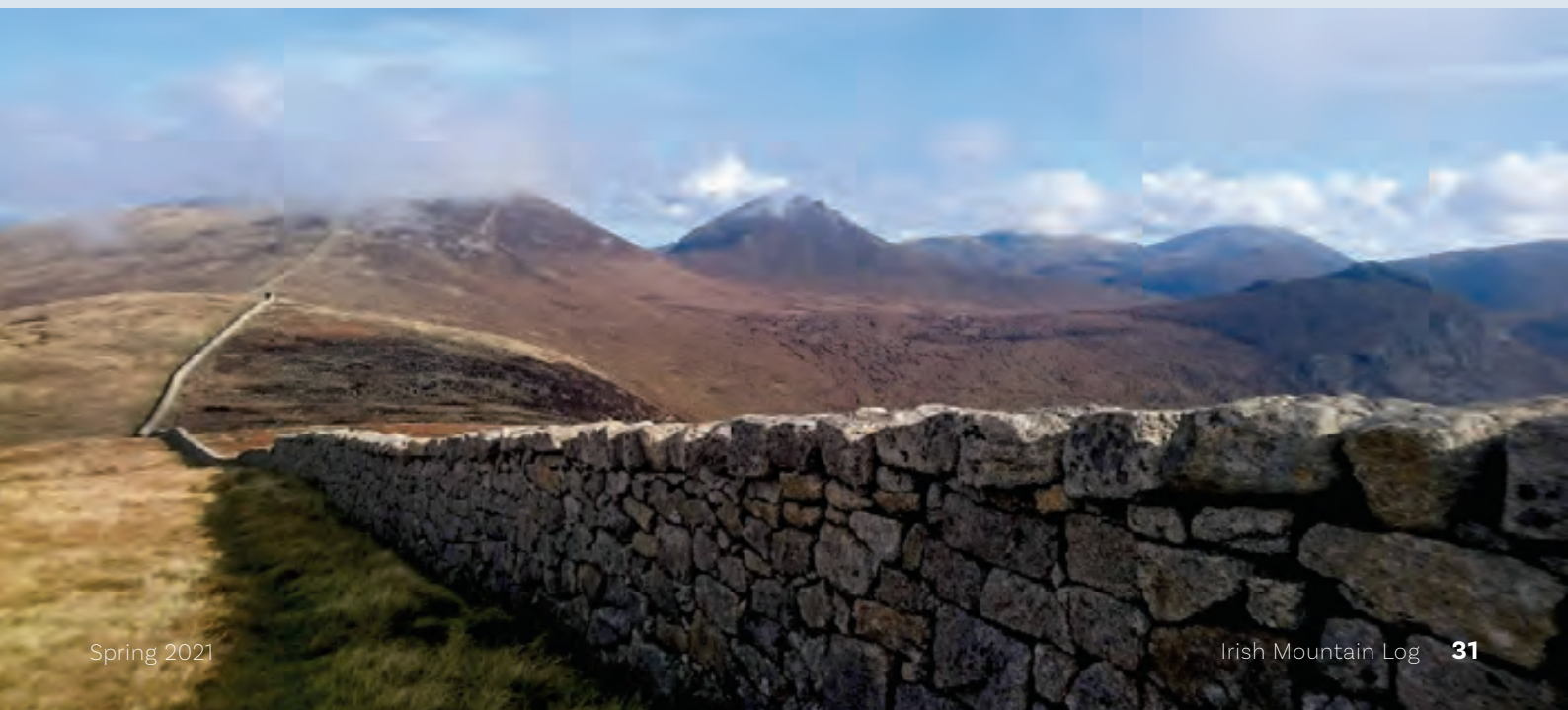
Above: Map of 'The Wall' route

Below: Mourne Wall from Carn Mountain, with Meelmore, Bearnagh and Commedagh in the distance

I bought lightweight hiking gear and did a basic conversion on my van. Then, in March 2017, I boarded a ferry to France with a one-way ticket. I had a five-month adventure as I hiked, kayaked and cycled around France, Italy, Slovenia, Austria, Germany and Switzerland.

A month after I returned, I set off again and stood at 5,895m on the summit of **Mount Kilimanjaro** in Tanzania.

On St Patrick's Day in 2018, I started a five-month 'thru hike' of **the Appalachian Trail** in the USA. I hiked ➤



THE MOURNE WALL



3,500 km through fourteen states as I went across the Appalachian Mountains, from Springer Mountain in Georgia to Mount Katahdin in Maine. I lived in my tent in the woods, and camped on the mountains, for 144 days with all the bugs and wildlife and in all types of weather. A truly amazing trip, where I made lifelong friends and of which I have some fantastic memories.

Following that trip, in September 2018 my wife **Aideen** and I spent the month on a backpacking trip around Italy, but plans for other hikes (and a 30th wedding anniversary trip) came to a sudden halt when I received serious injuries in a cycling accident. It was eight months before I could tackle an easy walk in the Mournes again, and a year until I was back to normal activity.

Then, in 2020, plans for foreign trips had to be postponed due to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. After the spring/early summer lockdown was lifted, my hiking colleagues and I reverted to our weekly walks in the Mournes and Cooley Mountains. A group of us hiked the **Mourne Seven Sevens** and, after that, it was time to hike 'The Wall' again.

* * * * *

I set off from **Carrick Little** on a solo effort on October 2nd, just before the next Covid-19 restrictions were imposed. It was just after 7.00am at daybreak on a fresh, chilly but clear morning, ideal for hiking.

I travelled light, carrying a light pack, wearing lightweight trail runners and using a LifeStraw bottle to filter water during the day, although I did also carry an emergency distress beacon, just in case.

Watching the Mournes come to life in a magnificent sunrise was special and I

Above:
Bearnagh with
Commedagh
and Donard up
ahead

Below:
A look-out tower
on Meelmore

Opposite (top):
View of Donard
from Commedagh

Opposite (bottom):
The Mourne Wall
at the Bog of
Donard - my
highway out!

took the time to soak in the morning light as I ascended **Slieve Binnian** (747m). I met a woman who had spent a cold night camped at the summit, and a couple from Belfast who had come to catch the sunrise and were now descending to the Carrick Cottage Café for a wholesome breakfast.

I took my time on the steep descent from Binnian and enjoyed the views. I crossed **Wee Binnian** and **Moolieve**, and then went through the **Silent Valley Mountain Park** to the dam at the end of the reservoir there (6.5 km). From there, I went over **Slievenaglogh**, and then on to **Slieve Muck** at 674m (12 km), which was steep, slow and wet going, but I enjoyed a break, chatting with some hikers.

After **Carn Mountain** (588m), **Slieve Loughshannagh** (619m) and **Slieve Meelbeg** (708m), I had a half-lunch on **Slieve Meelmore** at 687m (17 km). For the rest of the day, I just snacked as I walked, following the wall up and over **Slieve Bearnagh** at 739m (18 km), where the route ahead looked amazing, if daunting.





It was nice, then, to meet my hiking buddies, Donagh O'Brien and Joe Ryan, for a chat when I descended to **Hare's Gap** (19 km), where they had rested after walking up Trassey Track.

From Hare's Gap the route rose to (the second) **Slievenaglogh** (586m) and then went over **Slieve Corragh** on the way up to Slieve Commedagh. I was going slower as I climbed up to **Slieve Commedagh** (22 km) and then down from there and up to **Slieve Donard** at 853m (24 km), the high point of my hike and Northern Ireland's highest point.

After the steep descent off Donard, I had to negotiate a very wet and boggy section, so I climbed up onto the Wall, which became my highway past the **Bog of Donard**. The Wall follows the contours of the terrain, so walking on it requires a lot of concentration. An accident there would have been a problem, as I was alone and it wouldn't be long until dark.

I passed **Rocky Mountain** (27 km) and took a rough trail at **Long Seefin** towards **Annalong Wood** (28 km). As I was thinking "I'm nearly there," I turned on my left ankle. You just cannot switch off for a second, particularly when hiking alone. Thankfully, I was fine.

Finally, I left the wall for the short walk down a muddy lane and along the road back to my van in the **Carrick Little** car park (32 km). As I approached the end of the hike, I watched a beautiful golden sunset, a fitting end to a great day.

I was on top of the world. I had completed 'The Wall' again after twenty-four years. It was great to have completed it in 11 hours and 45 minutes, and I was so happy I had no aches or pains. I had a coffee and a nice bun and then called home – "I've done it!"

I am very grateful to my hiking buddies. Thanks also to Pamela Harbison for suggesting this walk to me, and to Joe Ryan for encouraging me to write this article from the perspective of a non-competitive 59-year-old.

Whatever age you are, you'll never be any younger, so get out there now. Happy trails! ■





Irish Peaks, Mountaineering Ireland's new hillwalking guidebook, is now available for purchase through Mountaineering Ireland's website. It is a must-have, large format hardback with route descriptions and a beautiful collection of images covering the hundred highest peaks on the island of Ireland. The book can be ordered at: www.irishpeaks.ie.

In his review of *Irish Peaks* in the *Irish Mountain Log* (No 135, Autumn 2020), Mike Keyes, past Chairperson of the Mountaineering Council of Ireland (now Mountaineering Ireland) says: "If you love or are even curious about Ireland's uplands and wild places, this book has to be on your shelf."



Irish Peaks has been produced in memory of Joss Lynam, who died in 2011 and who made a significant contribution to the development of hillwalking and climbing in Ireland. Joss edited the original *Irish Peaks* that was published in 1982. This new book contains descriptions contributed by Mountaineering Ireland members of more than seventy routes taking in the summits on the MountainViews list of Ireland's Highest Hundred Mountains.

The recommended retail price for *Irish Peaks* is €29.95. However, there is a special **10% discount** for all Mountaineering Ireland members who order through the official online website, which means you pay €26.95 plus postage, if it has to be posted out to you. To order your discounted copy, please visit www.irishpeaks.ie.



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GEORGIA'S KORULDI RIDGE

Fergal Hingerty visits one of the most-photographed places in Georgia in the Caucasus

I woke up in a guesthouse in **Mestia**, the capital of **Svaneti**, a mountainous region on the border with Russia, over nine hours by bus from Georgia's capital, **Tbilisi**. Outside, it was cloudy, but I knew that it was going to be a good day. I had a large breakfast and collected my packed lunch, which included traditional bread and cheese.

The Svans have a different dialect, food and culture to the rest of Georgia. Their valley only got its first road in the 1970s, when the country was under Soviet rule. Hospitality is most important in their culture and I certainly found that out, when I stayed there.

My guide, **Merab**, was waiting for me at the door of the guesthouse. We headed off up the road, passing one of the many Svan traditional towers scattered around the town. Then the serious business of going uphill began.

Mestia lies at over 1,400m and, from there, we hiked up an extremely steep track until we got to the cross

Above:
Snow-capped mountains reflected in the Koruldi Lakes

Below:
Pastoral scene above Mestia

on **Tshakazagari Mountain** at 2,200m. We stopped there for a well-earned rest and some water, and admired the view. Snow-capped mountains at heights of over 3,000m soared above us in all directions, over a sea of inverse clouds in the valleys between.

We then headed for the **Koruldi Lakes**. This area is one of the most photographed places in Georgia, as usually the snow-capped mountains reflect perfectly in the lakes. I managed to half-get the photo I wanted, as it was somewhat cloudy, but as we had a long way to go, we moved on.

In front of us, the first section of the **Koruldi Ridge** loomed. A steep climb up a grassy slope brought us to



➤ **Fergal Hingerty** has visited the Caucasus five times and his climbs there have included Mount Elbrus (5,642m) and Mount Kazbek (5,047m). He walked extensively in Wales, England and Scotland while he was living in the UK. Originally from Dublin, he now lives in Mullingar. Fergal is currently finishing a project he started seven years ago, to climb all of the nearly fifteen hundred recognised summits in Ireland. He is a member of the **British Mountaineering Council (BMC)** and of **Mountainviews.ie**.





around 2,800m. From there, it started to get harder and there was a surprise as a sea of scree faced us. It looked as if it reached down from the sky, and we angled right, aiming for the ridge line, two hundred metres above us.

The route was extremely crumbly, which made the scramble up to the narrow ridge interesting, to say the

Above: Merab (the guide) on Koruldi Ridge

Left: Fergal Hingerty on Koruldi Ridge

Below: The glaciated Mount Ushba (4,710m) from the Koruldi Ridge in better weather

Merab reminded me that we had to go down.

We moved back down the ridge gingerly, but, at the halfway stage, we were able to descend the scree quickly, which was much easier going down than going up! Soon, we were back on the grassy ridge.

As we passed the Koruldi Lakes again, there was a man there from Germany, with a very professional-looking camera. He explained that he had been there for four hours, but the clouds had not lifted, so I did not feel too bad about my 'half picture' of the reflection in the lake after all!

We stopped at the lakes for a longer break on the way down. From there, it was a relatively straightforward walk back down to Mestia. The whole trip had taken us about eight hours, up and down.

That evening, I had a Svan *supra*, their traditional meal, and some of their wonderful Georgian wine, a fitting end to a great day in the mountains ■



least. We continued on to reach a cross at 3,328m. By then, it was more than four hours since we had left Mestia. We climbed a little higher on the ridge to the first snowy section at over 3,400m, when the view really opened up.

In front of us, the ridge led up to **Mount Ushba** (4,710m), which could be recognised from many kilometres away because of its 'rabbit ears' twin peaks. It is regarded as the most dangerous mountain to climb in Georgia, due to its steepness and unpredictable weather. It is a technical climb for experienced mountaineers. On this occasion, it was capped by ominous dark-grey clouds, and the wind was picking up.

Even though it would have been prudent to leave quickly, as a storm appeared to be gathering, the sheer vista implored me to stay. From Mount Ushba, several glaciers plunged down into one long glacier that came out in the valley below at **Chalaadi**, which I had visited the previous day. This was easily one of the most impressive sights I have seen in my time climbing. I would have liked to have stayed longer, of course, but



ORLA PERĆ – Path of Eagles

Justyna Gruszczyk attempts an exciting Grade 2 scramble along a mountain ridge in the Polish High Tatras and witnesses a shocking episode when a thunderstorm strikes the mountains there in August 2019

It was 6.00am on an August morning in 2019. I was sitting in an old bus connecting Rybnik to Zakopane in the extreme south of Poland, at the foot of the Tatra Mountains. I had many plans for what I could do in the Tatras, but the most important one was to attempt to hike on **Orla Perć**, the legendary **Path of Eagles** trail. It follows the ridge of the **Polish High Tatras** between two mountain passes, Zawrat and Krzyżne. The weather forecast, unfortunately, was bad.

Orla Perć (pronounced Pertsh) is one of the most difficult trails in the Polish Tatras. Proposed in 1901 by **Franciszek Nowicki**, it was built between 1903 and 1906. It is 4.5 km in length, with sections of Grade 2 scrambling involving use of chains and other climbing aids, but not suitable for via ferrata kit. The trail takes 6-8 hours to complete in summer conditions, but many people do it over two days.

Above: Hala Gąsienicowa

The trail is notorious. It has the highest death rate in the Polish Tatras, and one hundred and forty people have died there since it was established. One or two people die on the trail every year. "Don't worry," said my brother, who had walked it before. "They're probably the kind of tourists who try to walk it in flipflops." However, I thought about the Polish guide who had died from a stonefall there a couple of years before. She was very capable and had been well prepared.

From Zakopane, I took a bus to Kuźnice, where the trail to Murowaniec starts. After about two hours following the pleasant trail, I arrived in the early afternoon at **Murowaniec Refuge**, at 1,500m in **Hala Gąsienicowa**, the northern part of the Gąsienicowa valley. I had booked a bed for four nights there, in a six-person dormitory. By the evening the forecast for the next day had improved.

At 5.00am the next morning I went downstairs in the refuge to the kettle left for the early risers. The water in it was already hot. I set off at 6.00am, following the trail with blue markings, heading for Zawrat Pass. I was not alone on the trail. The Polish Tatras are notoriously crowded and everybody complains about the 'bloody tourists.' I was not complaining, however. As I was going to walk solo over one of the most difficult trails in Poland, I wanted some people around me. After all, it was going to be a change from hiking in the Nephin Begs!

After half an hour, I passed a small lake, **Czarny Staw Gąsienicowy** (1,624m), and then started to climb



► *Justyna Gruszczyk is a visual artist, a member of Westport Hillwalkers and a member of PTTK Gronie Mountaineering Club in Radlin, Poland. She is based in County Mayo.*



THE ORLA PERĆ IS ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT TRAILS IN THE POLISH TATRA

towards the pass. A stone landed one metre from where I was standing. I looked up to find a herd of mountain goats high on the wall above me. It was time to put my helmet on. As I climbed up towards Zawrat, I also put my gym gloves on. The way up was hidden in a deep, cold shadow. The chains were damp and cold, and the stones wet and slimy. I was careful but fast. At 8.00am, I arrived at **Zawrat Pass** (2,159m), between the two valleys, Gąsienicowa and Dolina Pięciu Stawów, and where the **Orla Perć** trail starts along the ridge.

This section of Orla Perć has red markings and is one-way only. I did meet some other people on the trail. After some walking, I arrived at one of the most notorious places on the trail, **the ladder**. The weird thing about it was that it led straight down to a precipice and required a big step to the left when getting off it.

When I reached **Mały Kozi Wierch** (2,291m), the highest point on the route, I took a break. My gloves did not cover my fingers and the skin on them was already itchy and worn.

After my break, I got to what I think is the best place on the trail, **Żleb Kulczyńskiego**, where a harder route up from

Above: Map showing Orla Perć trail.

Justyna's route first appears on the map to the right of the main lake, Czarny Staw Gąsienicowy, in the upper left corner

Below: Czarny Staw Gąsienicowy

Czarny Staw Gąsienicowy joins Orla Perć. There is a twenty-metre chimney leading up to **Czarny Mniszek** below the Black Cliffs. It was a beautiful scramble. Upper body strength is required to use the chains there, to pull up on. It seemed quite short – too short, in fact! It was a great scramble and I wish it could have been longer.

I came to the first difficulty on the route for me, going down a little chimney. My legs were too short to reach the bottom. I climbed back up and searched for another way down, a Plan B. Plan B, however, was even less safe, so I went back to the chimney and tried again. "Grow!" I moaned at my legs and, somehow, they listened! As I stretched, the tips of my toes finally touched the ground.

Eventually, the strategy of searching for chimneys and bridging them to descend turned against me. ➤



HIGH TATRAS



I chose another chimney, but it was unclimbable. I had missed some pretty obvious steps beside it. I needed to go back up again but, as I looked up, I saw a large, male boot twenty centimetres from my face. "Stop!" I yelled. The owner of the boot, who apparently had forgotten to check if there was anybody below him, looked down, surprised.

I was already walking in a little group of fellow-hikers when we arrived at another famous scary place on the trail, the **'step over a precipice.'** It was perhaps a metre wide and a couple of metres deep, and had a chain across it. It posed a psychological rather than a technical difficulty and, in fact, it could be walked around.

When I reached **Skrajny Granat (Extreme Granaty)** (2,225m) at about 2.00pm, I took the trail off the ridge back down to **Czarny Staw Gąsienicowy** and then returned to the **Murowaniec Refuge** in perhaps ninety minutes. That evening, other people in my dormitory told me that the second part of the trail was much more challenging. There were no steps in places and the rock was flaky in places.

On Day 2, I was back on the trail at 6.20am. To start with, I walked with a climber, but we came to a junction where he turned right towards his rock and I turned left, back up to Extreme Granaty, to continue on Orla Perć. When I got there at soon after 8.00am, there was no one else around. I was alone on one of the most crowded trails in the Tatras!

Clouds gathered over the refuge in **Five Lakes Valley** and I started wondering why I was alone. Had I missed something, like a bad weather forecast? I had checked it on three different websites but had no personal experience of the weather in the Tatras, as this was only my third time hiking there. I walked carefully but quickly, waiting for the difficulties to arrive. I was too focused on the route to even take my camera out.

Above left: The Orla Perć path ascending the peaks of Mały Kozi Wierch (2,291m), the highest point on the trail

Above right: Czarny Mniszek

Below: Zadni Granat

I did not want the bad weather to catch up with me. I was alone. I could not see or hear anyone else, only a deafening silence, with masses of air all around me. The air seemed to be pressing down on me. In the end, it was not so different from the Nephin Bogs!

Suddenly, I arrived at **Krzyżne Pass** (2,112m), the end of the trail. I had not come across any of the predicted difficulties. It was 9.30am and I had finished Orla Perć. All I needed then was to get down to the Murowaniec Refuge, again following a trail with yellow markings, which took about two hours.

With the other girls from my room, I checked the



WHEN LIGHTNING HIT GIEWONT, A GREAT MANY PEOPLE WERE ELECTROCUTED

weather forecast. A lady in reception said it would rain at 3.00pm the next day. Someone checked another forecast: also rain at 3.00pm next day. I was trying to make a plan to do something on that day, my last at Murowaniec. A little voice in my head said "Don't be greedy" and I decided to listen to it. I had done all that I had planned to do. In the end, my plan for the next day was simple: a short walk to the final station of the cable car at **Kasprowy Wierch** (1,987m), a quick break to use the wi-fi there and then I would go down. It should take me four hours in total.

I was on the trail by 9.00am. The weather was worse and I was walking in fog. I reached the station at Kasprowy in one hour. I sent my family some photos and then I went down. I walked as far as **Liliowe** (1,952m) and then the rain started. "Odd," I thought. "It is only midday. I should have had three more hours." I descended by the shortest route, walking as quickly as was reasonable. Half an hour later, I heard the first distant thunder. As I approached the refuge, there was the full blast of a thunderstorm around me, but I was already safe.

In the refuge, all of the phones suddenly started ringing, except mine, because I had no coverage. The building vibrated with the cacophony. People answered their phones, all saying the same things. "Yes, I'm alive." "Yes, I'm safe." "What happened?" I asked the nearest person. "Lightning hit **Giewont** (1,895m) and people were electrocuted. Some were killed. A lot of them fell off the trail and they are still searching."

The refuge filled up quickly and, with the new people, more news arrived. Five people were dead and many more were injured or missing. Then I realised that I had sent emails earlier saying that I was safe from the top of a mountain located only five kilometres from Giewont. My family may now be thinking that I am dead or missing. I quickly found a way to send a text to my brother and then I listened to the news.

The thunderstorm resulted in the biggest



Above:
View from
Skrajny Granat
with **Wołoszyn**
and the Slovak
Tatra in the
background

Below:
The author on
the summit of
Świnica in the
Tatra Mountains

search and rescue in the history of the **Tatra Volunteer Search and Rescue**. One hundred and fifty-seven people had been electrocuted, some of them repeatedly. Among the five who had died, two were children. One hundred and eighty rescue workers and five helicopters were involved in the rescue operation.

Was it avoidable? It is hard to say. The trail on Giewont was crowded and it is a difficult route, with chains. The forecast wasn't very good, but the weather wasn't like the usual thunderstorm pattern. It was just foggy. Another factor was that Giewont is the Polish Croagh Patrick and people climb it for reasons other than just climbing a mountain, so some of them are not well prepared, and there are also often too many people on the route at the same time. What certainly would help is if some of them started earlier to reduce the crowding on the trail. There were lessons to be learned and, for me, it means no more lie-ins till 5.00am! ■



STARTING ROCK CLIMBING

Every chess master was once a beginner!

A kayaking trip to Owey Island in Donegal in August 2020 was the beginning of a new adventure in rock climbing for **Audrey Elliott** and a friend. We follow as the raw beginners make the right moves towards their goal of being able to climb independently

After hiking on the highest peaks in Ireland and Britain, the next move was to start conquering Europe. A Mont Blanc trip was booked, but unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it had to be cancelled. It was time to focus on Ireland again and especially the beautiful north-west.

My friend **Teresa Brennan** and I decided we would do a kayaking trip around Owey Island in County Donegal with **Iain Miller** of **Unique Ascent**. However, what we didn't know was that the afternoon would change our lives. We thought the day would be spent exploring the island, but Iain had other plans. He took us to Cruit Island instead and said we were going to go rock climbing!

We had never rock climbed before. Iain described climbing as a game of physical chess, and I certainly felt that I was a pawn then. The first climb involved an ascent of what looked like an impossible slab of granite. However, on further examination, you could see little crevices to put your feet into, and rock edges on which to pull yourself up. We wore helmets and were secured by a rope tied onto harnesses that we wore, so there was really no fear of falling, which is half the battle. Reaching the top was exhilarating and we were literally and physically on a high! It was like capturing the Queen on your fifth move in chess.

For our second ascent, we opted for a climb that was somewhat easier but made a little scarier by the wild Atlantic waves crashing below. We did a third climb, which was equally challenging, yet achievable, and then called it a day. Even though I am a runner, I found the climbing physically demanding, as I was



Above: Audrey's first bouldering taster: the new Meelmore Boulder Circuit in the Mournes

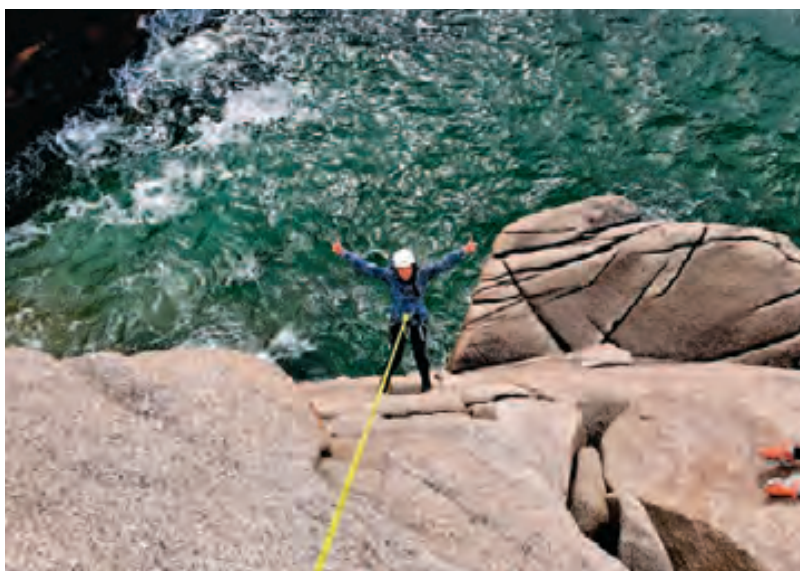
Below: Abseiling on Cruit Island, Co Donegal, with Iain Miller

using my upper body strength more than I would have been used to.

As fate would have it, shortly after this adventure, an 'Intro to Rock Climbing' event popped up on Facebook with **Conall Ó Fiannachta's Carraig Climbing** in our home town of Sligo. We jumped at this and bought some climbing shoes in Call of the Wild Sligo, in preparation. I found it just as scary as before, climbing on a twenty metres' high slab, but it gave an equally super feeling of accomplishment when we got to the top. We learned how to tie a figure-of-eight knot and we climbed three different routes.

We really were getting the bug by this stage, so we bought some more gear, a helmet and a harness each, and did another Intro to Climbing with Conall.

After this, we started searching for climbing courses and, next, we went to Kerry to do a 'Climbing for Beginners' course with **Kerry Climbing**, run by **Piaras** and **Catherine Kelly**. We were hooked by then and, when we returned to Sligo, we booked a lesson with Carraig Climbing on setting up climbs. Then, looking to the long term, we invested €700 between us in some more equipment that we were advised we would need.



➤ **Audrey Elliott** is a member of **Sligo Mountaineering Club**. She is a keen mountaineer and also enjoys trail running and orienteering. Following an introduction to rock climbing in Donegal last year when the Covid-19 restrictions were eased, she is now an enthusiastic rock climber, climbing at Scalp na gCapall in County Sligo every week, dry or wet!

A week later, **Mountaineering Ireland** announced events for women, run by women, as part of **European Week of Sport**. We began with an 'Intro to Bouldering' with rock climbing instructor **Claire Hardy**, on Slieve Meelmore in the Mourne Mountains, and absolutely loved it. A bouldering mat will be our next purchase, when our funds are replenished.

As part of these European Week of Sport events, Teresa and I also spent a morning climbing in Dalkey Quarry with Mountaineering Ireland's Training Officer, **Jane Carney**, and their Women in Sport Coordinator, **Ania Bakiewicz**. There were two climbs set up and I went for the harder one first. It was the first time I had failed. I could not see how to make the move to gain height. People down below were giving me instructions and encouraging me to do it, but I could not understand the way to make the move. I was stretched out, holding on, and time was passing. I could feel that I was getting weaker and weaker, and then, finally, I had to come down. It was funny, because that morning I had said to Teresa that I was not feeling confident that day. Truthfully, I was probably feeling fear and letting it absorb me.

After this experience, I went to do the easier climb, but returned later to try the harder one again. I studied how others made the move. It involved a technique that was called 'smearing.' You use smearing when you do not have an actual foothold, so you rely on your shoe's rubber for friction on the rock. I reached for a good handhold and smeared my feet against the rock as I moved up. It was such a relief to make the move, as it really would have bugged me all the way home if I hadn't tried it again.

We now had greater confidence and, with our new equipment, we could concentrate on becoming independent climbers, which was our ultimate goal. Setting up our first independent climb took us well over an hour, after consulting images and videos we had taken during our lesson. Finally, we completed three climbs each (albeit on the same route) and were overjoyed to have successfully set up and climbed independently. We had come a long way in less than two months. We couldn't even hug each other and had to do a not-so-exciting elbow bump.

Teresa and I now climb every week, climbing on **Scalp**



Above left:
Audrey's first independent climb at Scalp na gCapall, Co Sligo

Above right:
Setting up on top of Scalp na gCapall in the Ox Mountains

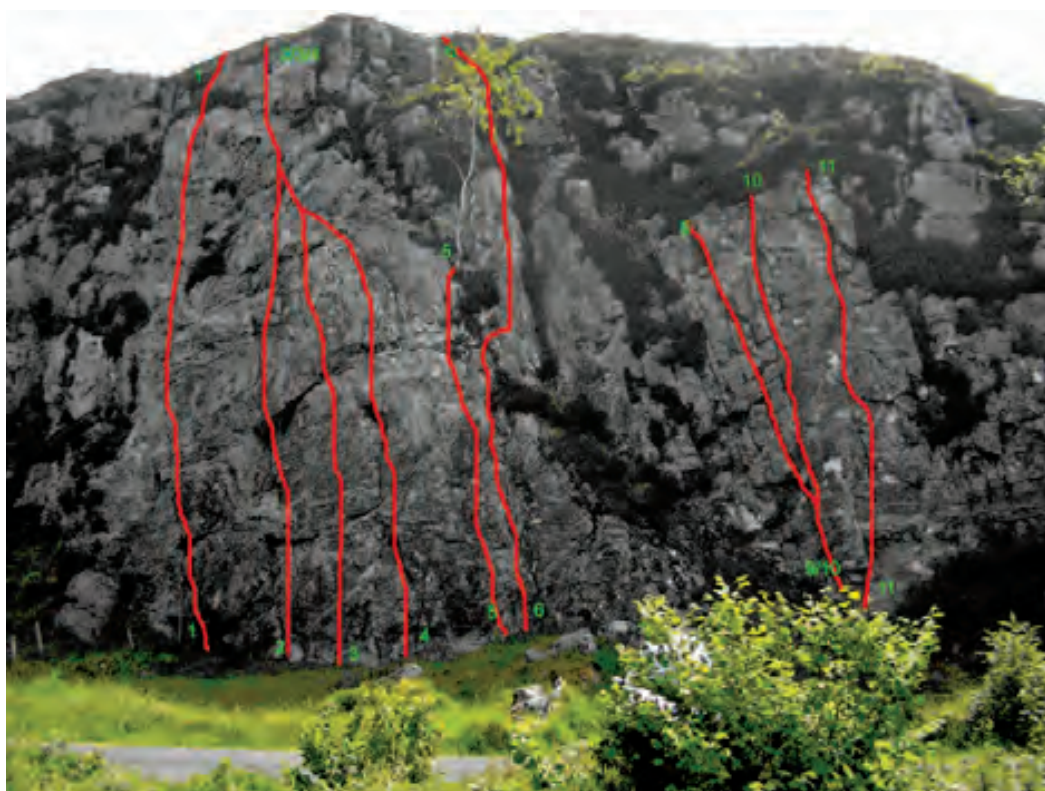
Below: Scalp na gCapall topo

na gCapall in the Ox Mountains, dry or wet! If we don't go climbing at the weekend, we take a half-day off work just to climb. When I do climb, I just want to do more and more. However, each time I start climbing, the fear does not go away: I get a feeling of dread and ask myself, "Why am I doing this?"

However, after I start to move on the rock, my inner strength returns and I feel I can take on the world!

If you are looking for something daring to do, rock climbing will take you out of your comfort zone and challenge your body and your mind. It will also give you a mental boost that will last for days, and an itchy feeling of the need to return.

Checkmate! ■



DIVERSITY IN THE OUTDOORS

Neruja Srikantharajah discovered her true inner strength through mountaineering

‘Where are you from?” When I hear that question, I normally have to gauge the person asking it before answering. I know what people are asking, but it is just such a difficult

question for me to answer. It’s not just about the colour of my skin; I have a story to tell.

I am Tamil, but my parents fled the war in their homeland, Sri Lanka, and went to live in Paris, where I was born. The first language I spoke was Tamil, but I also speak French and hold a French passport. My childhood started in France, I went to school there, and a lot of my family still live there.

However, my parents moved to London when I was nine so that my brother and I could have an English education. I lived in London for fifteen years, where I also went to university. I got dual citizenship eight years ago and, therefore, I am also British.

Above:
Day 11 on the Tour
du Mont Blanc

REGARDLESS OF HOW FRIENDLY EVERYONE WAS, THERE WAS NO ONE ELSE WHO LOOKED LIKE ME

So, what I actually still say when I am asked where I come from is: “London.”

My parents’ focus was always on providing their children with a better life than they had. They worked hard to get us educated, and were very protective. As members of the South Asian community in London, we faced racism and, as a girl, I was vulnerable.

I discovered the mountains when I moved to the Lake District ten years ago for my first job, as an engineer. The change was massive. I was now a Tamil woman in a white-dominated area, in a job dominated by white men, away from what had been a more diversified community in London.

The first mountain I climbed was the highest peak in England, **Scafell Pike** (978m). I didn’t really know what I was taking on and, since ignorance is bliss, I braved it out. What stuck in my mind was how intimidated and out of place I felt at that time. It took me a further three years to really embrace the outdoors.

The first time I really noticed the lack of diversity in the outdoors was on the **Tour du Mont Blanc**. I met so many amazing people while hiking the eleven days of the route through France, Italy and Switzerland



➤ **Neruja Srikantharajah** is an outdoor adventurer, hiker and climber. She is a member of **Mountaineering Ireland** and the **British Mountaineering Council**. She joined the **Feel Good Factor Club**, based in Co Down, in September 2020 and she hopes to complete her Mountain Leadership training in Ireland. She has started an Instagram page, **@so_little_a_time**, to promote diversity in the outdoors.



but, regardless of how friendly everyone was, there was no one else who looked like me.

I subsequently trekked the **O Circuit** in Patagonia's **Torres del Paine National Park** in Chile over eight days, camping every night and carrying all my own equipment and food. It is as dramatic as it appears in the pictures you see in the magazines, and it is as windy as they say it is. I struggled to move on certain sections of the hike, getting blown backwards by the strong winds. There were nights when I thought the tent would collapse, and nights when I wore

Above: Day 6 of 8 on the O Circuit in Torres del Paine National Park, Patagonia

Below: Standing on the summit of Cotopaxi volcano, at 5,897m, in Ecuador

everything to keep warm. Despite all of that, the experience was a very special one. On that trek, I realised that I am stronger than I think and that dreams can come true, if we can find it in ourselves to pursue them. However, when I looked around me, once again I didn't see anyone that looked like me.

By far the hardest thing I have done so far in my life was to summit the volcano **Cotopaxi** in Ecuador, standing at 5,897m. It tested my mental ability to really trust in myself and to realise that it wouldn't be my body that stopped me from reaching the ➤





summit, but my self-belief. For the first time in my life, I trusted myself when others doubted me. I realised that sometimes it is too easy to give up and a lot harder to have the energy to prove the doubters wrong. This was an experience which left me exhilarated, but also humbled by how difficult it was to hike at altitude.

I was one of only two women in a group of six people attempting to summit Cotopaxi that time. I was excited by the prospect, but also nervous, as I was the only brown woman there and I felt it would

Above: Exploring the Mourne Mountains

Below: Switching to more appropriate shoes for a bouldering session at Murlough Bay, Co Antrim

MY FIRST EVER TRAD CLIMB AT FAIR HEAD WAS A TRULY MAGICAL MOMENT

be assumed that I was the weakest person in the group. I feel this is an automatic assumption that people make based on how society portrays us, not one that is spoken out loud, but one that can be felt – a silent judgment.

I moved to Northern Ireland in July 2020 and, naturally, I was apprehensive. I knew about the beautiful coastline and that surfing was popular, but I was pleasantly surprised on my first hike up **Slieve Donard**, where the mountain meets the sea. The Mourne Mountains are designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty for good reason.

At **Fair Head**, it was love at first sight. I had started climbing a couple of years previously, but my first ever trad climb was on those striking sea cliffs, and it was truly a magical moment in my life.

Since then, I have climbed a few routes at Fair Head including **The Black Thief (VS, 4b)**, **The Fence (VS, 4c)** and **Girona (VS, 5a)**. The surrounding beauty alone makes this a special place to climb, but the fact that I am able to do it makes me proud of my ability, to have defied





society's perceptions and to have discovered all of this on my own.

I have achieved so many things. However, to this day I fail to give myself credit for those achievements. Many of my trips have been full of adventure and, each time, I have come back a better and stronger person. I have backpacked around Australia, New Zealand and across seven South American countries, volunteered in Borneo and road-tripped across the USA, Iceland, Norway and the Scottish Highlands. So, why am I still so apprehensive?

I hope that I will inspire others like me to go outdoors and into the mountains. It is never too late. I would like to become the role model that I wish I had had when I was younger.

My ambition is to encourage diversity in outdoor recreation, among participants but also among the providers and other staff involved in the sector. How can others like me feel that the outdoors is a space for them, if they don't see themselves there at all levels?

My dream is to see more people like myself out in the mountains, but also featured in sports magazine covers and represented within the leading gear brands advertising material as part of outdoor culture, and not just as token representation. I want people to hear our voices, understand our cultures and values, and see the changes that will make us feel welcome ■

Left:
Learning to trad
climb at Fair
Head, Co Antrim

Below:
Hiking on Suilven
in the Scottish
Highlands,
standing at 731m





A NORWEGIAN ODYSSEY

Peter Owens finally accomplishes a long-held dream

In Ed Webster's book *Magic Islands of Lofoten*, this archipelago of islands in Arctic Norway is described as the perfect climbing destination, with beautiful expanses of clean rock rising from the sea.

We had acquired a 13-metre sailing yacht, **Danú**, bought for long-distance adventuring. It was in poor shape and first needed two years of a refit in a yard in Galway. During those grim winter days in the boatyard I would imagine a wild archipelago waiting to be explored, routes waiting to be climbed.

The trip was to be composed of three parts: sailing from Galway to Lofoten, climbing what we could, and sailing back home to Ireland.

Above:
Approaching anchorage in Stefjord, below the majestic Stetind (1,392m)

Below right:
Route sailed from Kinvara, Co Galway, to Lofoten, Norway. Return journey followed the same track

The crew of four for the outward leg – myself, **Barry Owens**, **Paddy Griffen** and **Paul Murphy** – set sail on **Danú** from Kinvara, Co Galway, on June 28th. We sailed past Tory and on to the Hebrides and Shetland and, after 14 days, we tied up in **Henningsvaer**, nestled in the centre of the Lofoten archipelago. That night, we all slept with incredible soundness, only to be awoken by **Kev Power** at 7.30am, knocking loudly on the hull. He had just flown up from Dublin. The last climber, **Sean Murnane**, had already arrived in Lofoten some time before.



► **Peter Owens** started climbing with Kevin Street (now DIT) Mountaineering Club in 1988 and has travelled to many places around the globe in search of rock and ice. Despite requests by relatives to grow up and do something safer, he still gets a thrill from the outdoors – from travelling to adventurous places, to pulling hard moves on rock. He is the author of the most recent *Climbs in the Burren and Aran Islands* rock climbing guide and lives in Kinvara, Co Galway.



THE VAGAKALLEN PARTY HAD TALES OF GRAND VISTAS, MAIDENS IN DISTRESS AND AIRY MOVES

Paul, Barry and Paddy aimed to climb **Vagakallen**, an impressive peak dominating the skyline above Henningsvaer. Although just 943m high, the mountain rises straight from sea level, making it spectacular and extraordinary.

Myself and Kev found Sean camped out in a beautiful spot looking across the sea at Vestfjorden to the Lofoten chain. We had coffee, geared up and took in some local rock at **Gandalf Crag**. By 10.00pm we were still going, the midnight sun egging us on and on. Finally, close to midnight, and realising that our fingers

Above:
Cloud spills over the Lofoten chain of mountains and islands

Below:
The yacht that got them there, **Danú**, tied up in Henningsvaer, Lofoten

were losing skin, we headed back to the boat. There we were met by the dusty, parched trio of the Vagakallen party, extolling tales of grand vistas, maidens in distress and airy moves. It was still bright daylight at 3.00am, but the beers flowed as we all sat out on deck, happy with the first day out.

Vestpillaren of Presten

The next day, we planned to climb the classic **Vestpillaren, E2**, on the famous pillar of **Presten**. At 467m, this majestic sweep of rock rises up from sea level, and our route took a devious line up cracks and corners on the right side of the cliff. I led off on the first pitch, and thereafter we swapped leads to make up time. Sean got the famous slanting corner at pitch 9, a fine jamming and layback right-leaning groove. After a long day, we were at the end of the difficulties, 12 pitches done.

A few days later we climbed another of the many ➤





WE SET OUT TO CLIMB THE SOUTH PILLAR OF STETIND, PERHAPS NORWAY'S MOST FAMOUS MOUNTAIN

Left:
Barry Owens
scrambles up
Vagakallen

Below:
Peter Owens high
on the South
Pillar of Stetind

popularity, route finding was difficult, slowing us down when off the line. James led out up a groove and made a difficult traverse to the base of a large corner system above. The corner became increasingly steep and, glancing up, I could see the way above was barred by a blank wall. An exciting, blind fumble around the arête led to a steep slab and on to the central part of the pillar. Now the route finding was easier and the upper pitches clear. Fine cracks led up around an overhanging section and, after 15 pitches, we were on the summit.

Unlike sharp alpine pinnacles, Stetind's summit is surprisingly broad and flat and you could almost have a game of football up there. We gazed down to the fjord and to a small speck, *Danú*, 1,400 metres below. The panorama of peaks as far as you could see was inspiring; there could be a lifetime of climbing to be had in this area alone.

great climbs on Presten, the long and fine **Korstoget**, **6c+**, which ran parallel to our previous climb but with some harder pitches.

South Pillar of Stetind

We next planned to climb the **South Pillar** of **Stetind**, perhaps Norway's most famous mountain. At just under 1,400m, it's not high, but the South Pillar gives 15 pitches up to E2.

In fine weather, we slipped our lines and motored back out to Vestfjord and eastwards to the spectacular anchorage in **Stefjord**, with the return crew of **James O'Reilly**, **John Sweeney** and **Mantas Seskaukis** on board. We approached the anchorage in the evening, sailing towards the tiny hamlet at the head of the fjord, waiting for the depth sounder to register. Suddenly, the depth shoaled to 10 metres, with our boat almost on shore. We dropped the anchor and killed the engine. Surveying the scene, it was arguably one of the most idyllic anchorages I had ever seen, with Stetind's magnificent north face rising directly 1,000 metres above the fjord.

Loaded up with gear, James and I snaked our way through the forested lower slopes, which eventually opened out onto scree and led towards a giant amphitheatre that formed the east side of Stetind. The route traversed a small snow slope and followed a ramp to the **King's Seat**, the start of the South Pillar.

We geared up and led off, the first pitches going quickly, climbing a shattered slab. Despite its





Return voyage

We now prepared for the voyage back to Ireland. We stopped briefly at Scalloway in the Shetlands and then sailed directly to north-west Scotland, a force 9 gale coercing us to hove-to on the way. We observed the sea state and listened to the wind howling through the rig, finding ourselves transfixed and in awe of the surroundings. Like many situations in a mountain environment, once you are committed to a route, there first comes an acceptance of your situation and then clarified thinking.

Above:
Perfect granite corners on the South Pillar of Stetind

Below:
James O'Reilly on the summit of Stetind

When the gale passed, we pushed on, rounding Cape Wrath and sailing southwards through The Minch and on to Tory.

The passage, below the cliffs of Sliabh Liag (Slieve League), was spectacular; at last, we could point off the wind and ease the sheets, giving a fine sail eastward to Teelin, arriving at 8.30pm on the 7th of August, fourteen days after leaving Lofoten. We tied up alongside the harbour wall and immediately made our way to The Rusty Mackerel for some well-earned pints.

Over 3,000 miles sailed from Kinvara! It's nice when a plan comes together ■



ROCK CLIMBING CHANGED MY LIFE

Anastasija Strizakova describes how she had always struggled with feelings of insecurity but, when she started rock climbing, it profoundly changed her life

For the first twenty-four years of my life, I did not have any long-term hobbies, or meaningful interests. I tried many activities, including dancing, volleyball and kitesurfing but, without any immediate progress, I always felt a sense of judgment and embarrassment, and thus quickly ended everything. I was an insecure, shy and socially awkward person and I struggled with this fear of failing continually, so quitting always seemed like the safer option.

However, my mindset changed when I started rock climbing. I am grateful for that, because with it came the realisation that I need adrenaline and adventure in my life in order to feel alive.

I first discovered rock climbing in 2014 at the age of twenty-four, when I booked a taster session at Awesome Walls Dublin. Even though I wasn't great at

Above:
Ecstatic in Patagonia with Monte Fitz Roy in the background

Below right:
Admiring Montserrat rock formations in Spain

climbing, I remember being fascinated by it and thoroughly enjoying solving the mental and physical challenges of getting to the top of a route.

At the time, I needed a new focus in my life, so I decided to pursue the sport and work hard to control my feelings of insecurity, fear and shyness. A few



➤ **Anastasija Strizakova** is half-Latvian, half-Ukrainian, and she moved to Dublin fifteen years ago. She started climbing in 2014 and enjoys all types of climbing, but is most passionate about outdoor sport climbing. She loves getting lost in nature, hiking in the mountains and swimming in mountain lakes.





months later, I noticed drastic improvements in my climbing and knew that there was the potential for even more growth. Eager to push my boundaries, with each new year, I invested more energy and time into progressing through the indoor grades, ultimately leading up to 7c routes by the end of 2018.

In 2015, I started transitioning to outdoor climbing. With trad (traditional) climbing and bouldering being the two main disciplines in Ireland, I began visiting Dalkey Quarry, where I learned the basics of trad climbing. However, I perceived trad lead climbing to be extremely dangerous. Nevertheless, I felt immense happiness being close to nature. As long as I was outdoors, I was happy to just second other climbers or top rope. It wasn't long before I started changing my mind and shifting my goals towards leading trad routes.

With trepidation, I started leading Hard Severe (HS) and Very Severe (VS) routes such as **Street Fighter** in Dalkey Quarry. The more routes I led, the more I wanted to lead. Over time I was leading harder routes like **Gargoyle Groove Direct, Blood Crack** and **Tower Ridge Direct**, by practicing the routes first by seconding someone else or by using a top rope.

Often, I travelled to places like Ailladie, Fair Head, the Mourne Mountains or Glendalough, where I learned to multi-pitch climb, but I would only lead up to VS. The unfamiliarity of new crags and routes was stopping me from wanting to climb harder grades.

In the middle of all the trad climbing fun, I also went on some epic bouldering adventures in Glendalough and Glendasan, at Fair Head and in the Gap of Dunloe, where I was introduced to the art of falling onto crash pads and to mentally challenging top-outs.

Having heard so much about outdoor sport climbing, I soon started traveling to Spain, Sardinia and Croatia with the aim of improving my outdoor sport climbing

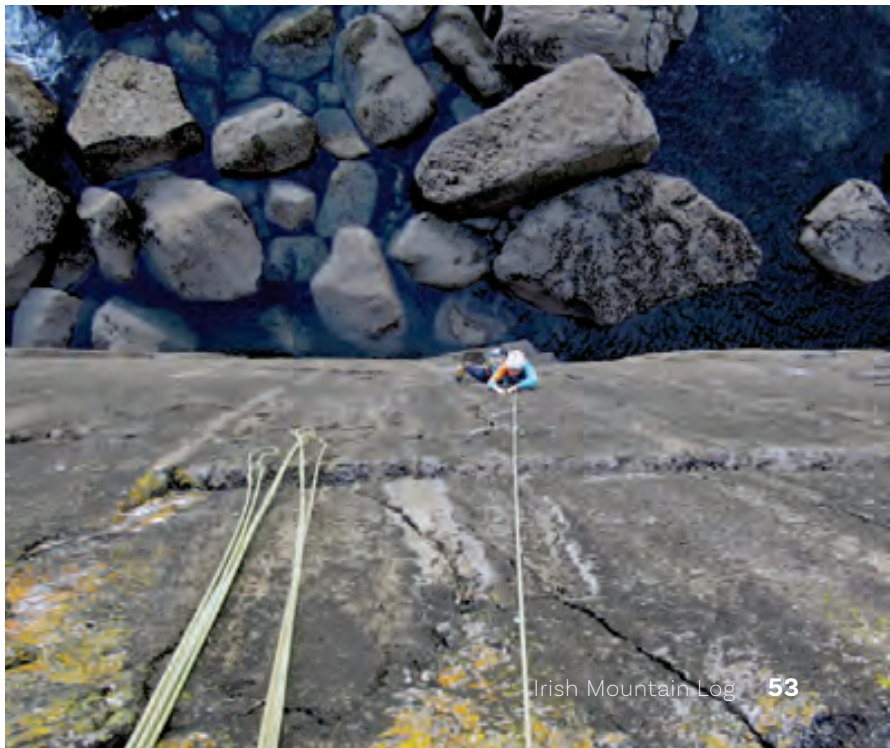
Above:
Tackling the Eat It boulder at Fair Head, Co Antrim

Below:
Seconding Conor McGovern on On Reflection, E6 6a, at Ailladie, in the Burren, Co Clare

skills. With hard work and enthusiasm, I slowly progressed through grades, redpointing my first 6c+ in the Spanish Sella climbing area in 2017. That is also when I took my first outdoor falls, which taught me a bit more about committing to executing a move and not giving up simply because I thought I might fall mid-move.

Through climbing, I discovered the magnificent nature of the world and the diverse lifestyles people live. It made me realise that I wasn't satisfied with my 9-to-5 office job. I was eager to escape and explore the world in order to redefine my values, develop new perspectives and establish my priorities.

Consequently, I saved up, quit my job and went solo backpacking around the world. ➤



ROCK CLIMBING



In January 2019, I travelled around the globe from South America to New Zealand, Japan and lastly France, exploring our planet's various cultures and natural wonders. There was an abundance of sights and activities I wanted to experience, so I deprioritised rock climbing from being my main focus area. Nevertheless, I still climbed in some unforgettable places like Paynes Ford in New Zealand, Valle De Los Condores in Chile, San Carlos de Bariloche in Argentina and Gorges Du Verdon in France, where I learned to adapt to new rock types and to trust complete strangers with my life.

I returned to Ireland in June 2019, right in time for the trad season. Having enough money and no desire to return to the reality of a full-time job, I decided to go trad climbing around the island. I visited Ailladie, Fair Head, the Mourne Mountains, Muckross Head and Owey Island, living a simple and minimalistic van life and experiencing the beautiful lines and wonderful energies of those places. I also ventured over to North Wales, accomplishing more trad goals on crags such as Rhoscolyn, Dinas Cromlech and Gogarth, and in the Slate Quarries.

From the beginning, I knew I was physically able to climb my wish-list routes, but I had to work really hard on managing my headspace. I had to put my fears aside, trust my gear and take the falls. Within three months I

Above:
Multi-pitching in
Gorge du Verdon,
France

Below:
Baking in the sun
on Route 32, E2
6a, at Ailladie

had climbed most of the routes that I had written down in my goals journal. The most memorable were **Sunstone, E3 6a**, at Ailladie and **Left Wall Direct, E3 5c**, at Dinas Cromlech, North Wales. At the end of the season, I led the crux pitch of **Face Value, E4 6a**, at Fair Head, which is my highest graded trad climbing achievement to date.

Additionally, I gained invaluable experience by seconding on some existing harder routes, such as **Lord of the Flies, E6 6a**, at Dinas Cromlech, **Northern Exposure, E5 6b**, at Fair Head and **Very Big Springs, E7 6b**, at Ailladie, as well as on a couple of first ascents, including **Lobster Link, E3 5c**, on Owey Island, and **Rathlin Red, E4 6a**, on Fair Head.



At the end of the trad season, I still hadn't run out of money, and I was psyched to continue climbing. So, I headed off in the van again and took the ferry to Spain for some winter sport climbing on the world-class Siurana, Margalef, Montsant, Chulilla and El Chorro crags. My key goals were to on-sight a 7a and redpoint a 7c route.

I recalled my last sport climbing trip to France, when I was fearful and lacking in strength, confidence and self-belief. I wondered whether I was physically and mentally strong enough to pull it off this time. I really wanted to test my limits and felt that my growth and development in trad climbing should help me work through the barriers I had created for myself previously.

I quickly realised that in order to succeed I needed to stay positive, use the correct tactics, always try my absolute hardest and, most importantly, believe in myself.

During my four-month trip, I on-sighted several 7a and 7a+ routes, and one 7b on the last climbing day of the trip (which I'm convinced was a gift from the universe). I flashed a few 7bs and redpointed several 7b to 7b+ routes. I achieved my 7c redpoint goal within the first month of the trip and led three more shortly after that. I then redpointed two 7c+ routes, after which I started thinking about climbing an 8a.

I wasn't sure how realistic that was, since I had only led two 7c+s, but I decided to try anyway. Three weeks and nineteen redpoints later, I led my first 8a in El Chorro, a beautiful 38m technical face climb with the smallest holds I have ever crimped in my life. I had never invested so much time and energy into one route, but that high sense of achievement and gratification when clipping the chains at the top in total ecstasy made me appreciate why people do this. As soon as I lowered off, I was already dreaming about leading a new one.

With two more weeks remaining, I went to Siurana, where I fell in love with another 8a face climb and redpointed it within six days. Another glorious fight, which initially seemed impossible but which I eventually climbed surprisingly smoothly and easily. I couldn't believe what I had achieved and how much I had grown as a climber. Looking back on it now, it almost seems unreal.

Rock climbing has profoundly changed my life, turning me into a happier, more confident and courageous person in constant search for adventure. It has taught me the importance of connections and relationships with our living planet. It has made me realise that **only I can determine the success of accomplishing a goal** and reap the rewards of self-fulfilment.

Right:
On Very Big Springs, E7 6b, at Ailladie

Below:
On Deseo en Vida, 8a, in El Chorro, Spain



Climbing at my absolute limit has helped me experience that meditative focus – flow – and forget about life's worries, which for me is an absolutely irreplaceable state of being. Through climbing, I strive to create a life that I don't want to run away from. I encourage everyone to try out this sport and appreciate the journey it may take you on ■





Members' support



Hillwalking on Purple Mountain in the Reeks, Co Kerry

Mind yourselves

Here are some ways for hillwalkers and climbers to mind their physical and mental wellbeing



Written by
Ruth Whelan,
Hillwalking
Development
Officer

Minding our mental and physical wellbeing has never been more important. Maintaining positive health and wellbeing can be more difficult at this time of continuing restrictions, particularly when we do not have access to the hills and crags, where we would normally go to rejuvenate and relieve daily or weekly stresses.

There are many factors that can influence our wellbeing, such as exercise, diet, sense of belonging, relationships, career, location and sense of purpose. Many of these have been affected by the current situation. The sense of belonging, and the strength we gain when we walk with our friends in the hills or climb together on the crags, is a wonderful boost to our wellbeing.

We can now look forward to a time when we will be able to get out on the hills and crags together again, hopefully in the not too distant future. Right now, though, in these uncertain times and particularly during the current lockdown, it is important to take time to assess our own wellbeing and replace some of our

normal daily or weekly routines with other positive means of supporting our mental and physical health. Here, below, are a few signposts to help keep us fit and healthy!

Keep well

The **Keep Well** campaign, launched late last year by the government, aims to support people and communities in minding their physical and mental health over the months of lockdown. It shows people of all ages how they could better

look after their physical and mental health and wellbeing by adding healthy and helpful habits to their daily or weekly routines.

The Keep Well campaign provides guidelines, information and tips on how we can all make a plan to do things that can help us to keep well through the lockdown months. Keep Well builds on the **In This Together** campaign, which ran earlier in the year.

Here, below, are the five main Keep Well themes.

■ **Keeping active** Keeping active and going outdoors, even during the winter, is important to help maintain our physical and mental health and wellbeing.

■ **Staying connected** Staying connected with people, addressing isolation, and supporting volunteerism and initiatives that support person-to-person connection are all important to our own wellbeing.

■ **Switching off and being creative** Switching off and being creative or



learning something new, getting back to nature, or finding other ways to relax, can also help our general wellbeing.

■ **Eating well** By nourishing our bodies and minds, we can develop a better connection between the food we eat and how we feel, and positively impact on our physical and mental wellbeing.

■ **Minding your mood** Equip people with information on where to go, if they need support. Or link in with your **local community helpline** to ensure that people can access the support they need.

Resources

Sport Ireland and **Sport Northern Ireland** have resources and signposts to expert advice and guidelines, with practical tips to maintain your mental health and wellbeing.

Sport Ireland 'Be Well':

www.sportireland.ie/covid19/be-well

Sport Northern Ireland wellbeing hub:

www.sportni.net/wellbeing

Zoom Round the Mountains

If you have yet to see our **Zooming Round the Mountains** online video series, you can watch a whole range of them on

Mountaineering Ireland's YouTube channel or at www.mountaineering.ie.

There are lots of videos there to keep you entertained, as well as to help you maintain or brush up on your skills, and maybe learn something new.

You can get some tips on building your hill fitness and confidence, and you can learn more about the flora of the uplands and the glacial features of the Irish uplands.

Hopefully these videos will provide some solace and will help you get geared up and ready for when we get out hillwalking and climbing again! ■

Gearing up to get moving again

By Ruth Whelan

For most of us it has been much too long since we were able to get out into our wonderful mountains. As the evenings get brighter, there is now a pep in our step with the anticipation of restrictions being eased. The idea of finally being able to get back out on the hills and crags either has you very excited or maybe a little bit apprehensive, so here are a few pointers to help you prepare.

Take time to regain your fitness and refresh your skills

There is no better way to regain your fitness or build your skills than being out on the hills and crags. However, after a lengthy break in activity, your fitness and skills might need a little bit of extra help.

As well as cardio exercises and walking long distances (incorporating hills as much as possible), doing specific exercises – focusing on the muscles we use for hiking and climbing – can do wonders for our performance.

Mountaineering Ireland's website and YouTube channel have lots of information and videos to help you refresh your skills. Check out **'Tips on returning to the hills'** for a specific talk on building your confidence and fitness levels, by **Kathryn Fitzpatrick**.

Our staff team members are also on hand to support and provide advice directly, so please drop us an email or give us a call with any questions you may have.



Reconnect

Yes, I am going to mention the "Z" word! Kickstart with a **Zoom meeting** and re-engage with your walking buddies, club or groups. Motivate each other by having an online session. Find out where you are at in terms of fitness, skills and activities, and then make a plan to focus on key areas.

If you are a member of a club, rest assured our clubs are working hard to keep you safe by following our guidelines, in line with government advice, to help protect their members. If you are nervous or unsure about anything, raise it with the group or a committee member.

Small group sizes

When we are able to join each other for exercise in groups again, keep the numbers small and in line with the government's advice. This will help make parking and the necessary social distancing easier, reduce the environmental impact and allow for easier group management. This will also help leaders build up their confidence again, with smaller, more manageable group sizes.

When the day does arrive...

■ **Be Covid-smart** Check out our current guidelines on returning to hillwalking and climbing on our home page.

■ **Be adventure-smart** Ask yourself the three key questions:

- Do I have the right gear for the day ahead?
- Do I know what the weather will be like?
- Am I confident that I have the skills and knowledge for my planned walk or climb?

It has been a few months since you were out there, so start off easy and know your limits.

As people start to move again, there may be more pressure on emergency services, so always be prepared to change your plans to keep safe.

■ **And finally...** Enjoy the adventure! ■



A busy start to 2021

Helen Lawless provides a brief outline of some of Mountaineering Ireland's Access and Conservation activities since the beginning of the year.



Written by
Helen Lawless,
Access &
Conservation
Officer

'Helping the Hills' upland path network event

On January 15th, 2021, Mountaineering Ireland hosted an online network meeting for people involved in managing upland erosion on the island of Ireland. Interest was greater than expected, with fifty-six participants joining online on the day.

The main input to the event came from the **Croagh Patrick Sustainable Access and Habitat Restoration Project**, with presentations from the Chairman of the Croagh Patrick Stakeholders Group, and from the Croagh Patrick Path Manager.

There was a clear desire for continued networking and information-sharing on this topic. A steering group is being formed to progress this. A recording of the event is available on www.helpingthehills.ie.

Watch out for public consultation on access for outdoor recreation in Northern Ireland over the coming months. A strong response will help move this forward.

Blackstairs and Wicklow windfarms

Mountaineering Ireland recently made submissions in response to planning applications for two commercial windfarms, which raised concerns due to their siting and scale. One is on **Croaghau**, north of Mount Leinster in the Blackstairs Mountains, and the other is on **Kilranelagh Hill** in the Glen of Imaal, Co Wicklow.

In both cases, the turbines proposed are larger than any that we're aware of, currently existing on the island of Ireland, and, due to their location, would intrude significantly into scenic landscapes frequented by hillwalkers.

The Kilranelagh site is particularly sensitive as it is rich in archaeology and is part of the **Baltinglass hillfort complex**.

Mountaineering Ireland's submissions on the Croaghau and Kilranelagh windfarms can be accessed on the Downloads page within the Access & Environment section of www.mountaineering.ie.



Frank McMahon (left) and Croagh Patrick Path Manager, Matt McConway, at work on path repair at Croagh Patrick. **Photograph:** Michael McLaughlin

Review of access legislation in Northern Ireland

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland is currently undertaking consultation regarding access for outdoor recreation in Northern Ireland.

Mountaineering Ireland, along with other members of the **National Outdoor Recreation Forum**, is proposing that a new **Outdoor Recreation Bill** be introduced to provide a better legislative framework to support the development of outdoor recreation in Northern Ireland. The bill would make it clear that:

- access to the countryside for the purpose of recreation must be exercised responsibly and sustainably, and
- access to private land should principally be through agreement with landowners.

Zoom talks now online

As part of Mountaineering Ireland's January/February series of Zoom events, we had two excellent presentations by physical geographer **Peter Wilson**.

The first, titled *Glaciation and Glacial Features of the Irish Mountains*, showed how glaciers were powerful agents in shaping Ireland's mountain landscapes.

The second, *After the Ice*, dealt with the natural landscape changes that have occurred in the mountains since the ice disappeared about 12,000 years ago.

In another presentation, *Flora of the Irish Uplands*, **Russ Mills** from mountaintrails.ie looked at some of the more identifiable wild plants to be seen on Ireland's mountains.

All three events had attendances of over 200 people, with 255 online for the flora talk.

These talks have been uploaded to Mountaineering Ireland's website and our YouTube channel and are recommended viewing for all who have an interest in Ireland's mountain environment, especially Mountain Skills and Mountain Leader candidates.

► If you have queries on these, or other aspects of Mountaineering Ireland's Access and Conservation work, please contact helen@mountaineering.ie.

RESPECT

Responsible Enjoyment of Special Places with Empathy, Care and Trust

Say it with flowers

Wildflowers are announcing spring across Ireland's hills and countryside and in our urban wild spaces. With Covid-19 restricting our travel, many of us are discovering details in our local landscape that we hadn't noticed previously – including the wildflowers that grow there.

In addition to the intricacies of the flower's structure, many flowers have a relationship with certain insect species, or we can observe how they respond to the weather.

A bit of Googling will reveal that

every flower species has its own story, such as how it got its name, its use in traditional medicine, or its value to wildlife. Not to mention how they lift our spirits!

Celebrate the beauty of nature by taking photos of wildflowers you see and sharing these with friends and family or on social media.

► For more on wildflowers and their stories, visit www.wildflowersofireland.net or follow Helen Lawless on Instagram at [helen_lawless_mountains](https://www.instagram.com/helen_lawless_mountains) ■



Common dog-violet, our most common wild violet, found on grassy hedgerows, in woodland and on heaths, from March to May. The flower is just 15-25mm across, the plant has dark green, heart-shaped leaves. 'Dog' in its name refers to its lack of scent compared with the **sweet violet**. The **common dog-violet** is the food plant for the larvae of some of our rarer butterflies. **Photograph:** Helen Lawless

Developing a National Outdoor Recreation Strategy

Hillwalkers and climbers are encouraged to participate in consultation on new strategy

Comhairle na Tuaithe, the national advisory body on outdoor recreation, is developing a new **National Outdoor Recreation Strategy**. This new strategy will set out a vision for outdoor recreation in Ireland and provide a framework to guide the growth and development of the sector over the coming years.

But will that make any difference for hillwalkers and climbers?

Mountaineering Ireland is represented on the Working Group that is developing the strategy and we have highlighted a number of issues that we believe should be addressed in the new strategy, as follows:

■ **Benefits** There should be a focus on the very significant benefits that outdoor recreation activities bring – including the health, wellbeing and educational benefits for participants, engagement with the natural environment and local economic benefit.

■ **Increasing numbers** It is great to see more people enjoying the outdoors, but increased participation in outdoor activities is placing a greater strain on the goodwill of private landowners, especially in situations where there are no arrangements in place to permit or manage access. The new strategy should include a commitment to develop legal mechanisms to balance access for responsible recreational users with effective protections for landowners.

■ **Investment** Meeting the increased demand for outdoor recreation in a way that is environmentally sustainable will require continued investment.

Investment is needed in expanded **parking**, the development of new **trails**, maintenance of existing **infrastructure** and interventions to address upland **path erosion**.

We also need more **Rural Recreation Officers** and people on the ground to help manage activity at busy sites.

■ **Responsible recreation** There is a

need to build greater public awareness that enjoyment of the outdoors comes with responsibility attached.

Being responsible means planning your activity, having the skills and equipment you need, and engaging positively with the environment and with other people.

■ **National and local** The National Outdoor Recreation Strategy should encourage the development of local outdoor recreation strategies to guide the development of outdoor recreation at county level. That way, the strategy will have greater impact for all who enjoy the outdoors.

► **You can help** Respond to public consultation on the development of the new **National Outdoor Recreation Strategy**, or contact helen@mountaineering.ie to share your ideas.

Consultation is due to take place in May and will be publicised on Mountaineering Ireland's website and social media and through our members' ezine ■



Training

News for members

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



Written by
Jane Carney,
Training Officer

A reminder to self to be patient, kind, positive and thankful!

While reflecting on the year that has been, it would be easy to forget the benefits and positives of spending less time in my car and more time with my children, exploring my local area, being outside in nature, and much more. The days are stretching out, it's getting lighter, and our senses are

heightened and alert to changes in weather against our familiar 5-km backdrop. It reminds me of my first diving experience and the childlike fascination on first seeing this new world right under my nose.

I wonder about the reflections I might make next year?

Forthcoming meets

■ Summer Alpine Meet 2021

The 2021 Alpine Meet is planned for **Saas Grund, Switzerland, July 4-18th, 2021**. The online information evening on 25th of January attracted a record attendance, with 69 people, albeit all online. This is evidence that alpinists are enthusiastic to get back out there. The event was recorded and is available on the website for anyone to watch. Please spread the word and share the link.

■ Online Winter Skills Series

The January online Winter Skills Series was a great success, with over 1,400 bookings in eight days and 400+ post-event video views. The Winter Skills Series consists of four 60- to 90-minute webinars, the videos of which are available to watch on the Mountaineering Ireland website and YouTube channel.

■ Student and Youth Winter Skills Series

The Student and Youth Skills Series is free and will take place on April 6th, 11th, 13th and 18th, 2021. This will start with a panel discussion and time for Q & A. It will go on to include three webinar sessions focusing on (1) Hillwalking, (2) Mountaineering and Scrambling and then (3) Climbing. The series is advertised on the Mountaineering Ireland website and bookings can be made via the link or directly through Eventbrite.

Please book for each of the stand-alone sessions that you wish to attend. These sessions are free and open to members and non-members alike, so please spread the word to your fellow students and friends and I will make sure there are enough spaces.

■ Self-led movie night and social

Why not select and watch a video or the live session with your fellow club members? Then you can get together on Zoom to have the post-video analysis with your fellow mountaineers or members of your club.

Maintaining friendships and socialising has never been so difficult and important, and we all need help to stay sane in these times. Like any good book club, you don't have to discuss the book, but it can be a good starting point!

■ Please consult the Mountaineering Ireland website, www.mountaineering.ie, for more info, to book or for updates ■

Brief notes

■ Please see the newly launched **Happy Hikers leaflet**, formerly the **Walk Safely** leaflet, on the website.

■ Please continue to share the **AdventureSmart message** about the three questions to ask yourself before venturing out on the hills with those less experienced than yourself in the outdoors.

■ Please continue to observe the **Covid-19 restrictions updates** on the website.

■ Thank you for continuing to provide those newer to the outdoors with positive role models for responsible recreation, particularly in relation to: • Taking home your litter • Leaving no trace • Camping responsibly • Parking considerately • Route selection • Being equipped • Checking the weather • Learning the skills.

■ Please continue to help share the messages, good practice and good example ■

Training opportunities

■ First-aid skills

While Mountaineering Ireland does not administer first-aid courses, it does share information on how to access first-aid training. All too often a near-miss or incident makes you aware of the need for more training, and it highlights the desire to be able to do the right thing in the event of an incident or accident. Please see details of first-aid provision at: www.mountaineering.ie/TrainingAndSafety/FirstAidforAwardSchemes.

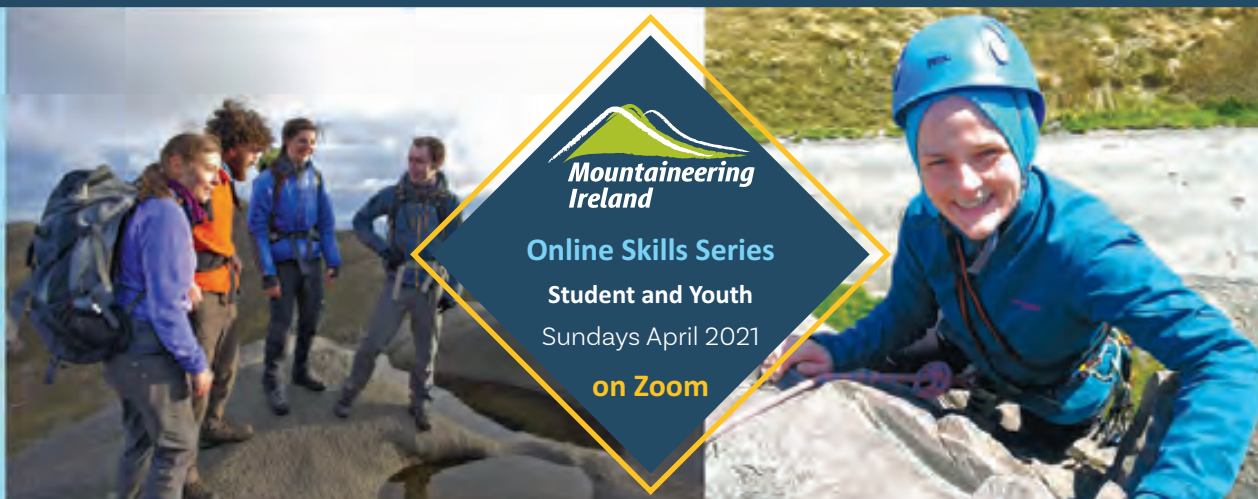
The first-aid providers can deliver bespoke or certification courses to suit your needs, and online provision may be possible.

■ Training grant applications

Please submit your applications for the June-December period. At this stage, the 'skills fade' we are all experiencing needs addressing with a kickstart, and accessing grant support is an ideal way to access a qualified trainer to support your training needs.

■ Training awards, registration

Registrations remain open, but **courses** have ceased to run due to government restrictions. We are back to exploring our areas of 5-km radius in the Republic or 10-mile in Northern Ireland, for recreation. Providers and leaders enjoyed a brief period of return to course delivery, which we hope will be the case again shortly. Participants and candidates will again need to wait for a return to the mountains. Please see the growing suite of skills videos on the training pages of the website, to keep up your knowledge or to refresh ■



News for providers

■ Due to the current Level 5 lockdown in the Republic, with the restriction to essential travel within a 5-km radius of your home, and the current restrictions in Northern Ireland, delivery of the **NGB awards, instruction and leadership** have ceased on the island of Ireland, with specific exceptions.

I would again like to thank all providers for their cooperation and support during this prolonged cessation of work. We will continue to support providers and candidates, pending their return to business and training in the future. The Training Office will continue to monitor the situation as it develops.

■ Protocols during Covid-19

Please see the latest guidance on the Mountaineering Ireland website and check update emails.

■ Move to the MTUKI Candidate Management System (CMS) for training course reporting

Providers are to continue to use the existing reporting system until the go-ahead to switch is given.

■ Safeguarding Level 1 refresher

A reminder to providers to complete the online **Safeguarding Level 1 refresher** before your certificate lapses.

The link has been sent out to you all. Safeguarding Level 1 has been compulsory since March 2018, so certificates are likely to be running out. There is also good news that the full course can be delivered online by our Hillwalking Development Officer, **Ruth Whelan**, if you have lapsed or are a new trainer ■

Call to action

■ Mountain Training Board Ireland is preparing for the next **Strategic Development Plan** and is seeking expertise to support a number of working groups. The topic areas are diverse and include:

- Gender and diversity • Providers and pathways • Environment
- Partnership-working • Quality of workforce and continued development
- Potential new wave of participants and pathways
- Mentoring • Collaboration • Development of the idea of a network
- Youth • Communication strategy.

Please contact the **Training Officer, Jane Carney**, on 01 625 1112 or 01 625 1115, to express your area of interest.

Key dates 2021

- 6th April Online Student & Youth Skills Series, 1. Panel Discussion/ Q&A, 7-8.30pm
- 11th April Online Student & Youth Skills Series, 2. Hillwalking, 11am-12.30pm
- 13th April Online Student & Youth Skills Series, 3. Mountaineering/ Scrambling, 7-8.30pm
- 18th April Online Student & Youth Skills Series, 4. Climbing, 11am-12.30pm
- May Skills Workshops (TBC)
- 8th June Online MTBI Meeting
- 26th June Online MTUKI Meeting
- 4-18th July Summer Alpine Meet, Saas Grund, Switzerland
- September Skills Workshops (TBC)
- 19th September Online MTBI Meeting
- 13th November Online MTUKI Meeting
- 30th November Online MTBI Meeting

*Please see the website for events and bookings or contact the **Training Office** for further details.
Please book early!*

All events depend on what is permitted under the latest government guidance on Covid-19.

Please contact the **Training Officer, Jane Carney**, with any training queries, on 01 625 1112 or 01 625 1115 ■

Stay safe out there!

Mountainviews 2020 annual packed with great articles



THE SUMMIT: MOUNTAINVIEWS ANNUAL NUMBER 6, 2020

By Mountainviews.ie

64pp, numerous photos, ppbk.
Download it free from the website
www.mountainviews.ie.

The Summit, Mountainviews' 2020 annual (their sixth), looks very professional in lay-out and is packed with attractive photos. Continuing with their trademark online ethos, this 64-page publication is available as a download from the Mountainviews website, www.mountainviews.ie.

The annual includes about ten hillwalking accounts of various lengths, four technical articles relating to mapping, navigation and history, plus a report from the **Mountaineering Ireland Hillwalking Committee**. If you thought that Mountainviews was all about day walks, Irish measurements and lists, some

of these articles will cause you to reconsider.

With the year that is in it, Covid was part of our life, so many of the articles tend to reflect the restrictions to which we were all subjected. At home in Ireland, a great variety of interesting walking is presented, from the far west of Donegal, to lowland rambles in the midlands, to Dingle and Killarney in the south-west, and on to the superb Eskatariff horseshoe in County Cork.

Further afield, lengthy pieces on the Thorong-La traverse on the Annapurna Circuit in Nepal, on a Cornish coastal walk, and encouraging

walkers to visit France, all with sumptuous photos, will have us all travelling abroad as soon as we are able to do so.

Many Irish hillwalkers have historically been reluctant to visit the Alps due to the perception that it is all about ropes, crampons and ice axes, but the writer recommends many venues where a pair of walking boots and a sun hat are more the thing.

Altogether, a very worthwhile read.

Margaret Tees Hillwalker, mountaineer and a member of the North West Mountaineering Club. She has 'completed' the Munros in Scotland and more recently has been taking on the Corbetts, also in Scotland

Irishman who reached heights in science and climbing



THE ASCENT OF JOHN TYNDALL: VICTORIAN SCIENTIST, MOUNTAINEER, AND PUBLIC INTELLECTUAL

By Roland Jackson

Oxford University Press (2018),
556pp, 16pp photos, 26 images, £25,
ISBN 978-0-19-878895-9

John Tyndall (1820-1893), scientist and mountaineer, was clearly a very impressive individual. Surprisingly, this is the first biography about him since the first was published seventy-five years ago. However, this book is certainly a substantial and comprehensive examination of

his life, which does justice to this 'high achiever'.

The biography takes us from Tyndall's early days in Leighlinbridge near Carlow to his theories on glaciers, his innovative research on crystal structures, radiant heat and gases, and to his mountaineering successes. His work on radiant heat and gases alerted the scientific community to the effect of greenhouse gases on climate.

He went to England in his early twenties and quickly climbed the social ladder there, exchanging ideas and becoming friends with luminaries such as **Thomas Huxley**, **Michael Faraday** and **Alfred, Lord Tennyson**.

It seems that it was Huxley who sparked Tyndall's interest in the movement of glaciers, when they spent time together in the Alps. Tyndall's work in that area prompted him to make further trips to the Alps, where he started exploring and making first ascents. He enjoyed the freedom that mountaineering gave him and, while initially linked to his

research, it soon became an end in itself.

Tyndall made the first ascent of the **Weisshorn** in 1861, but **Edward Whymper** beat him to making the first ascent of the **Matterhorn**, which they had both attempted before Whymper succeeded in 1865, the end of the golden age of mountaineering. After Whymper's success, Tyndall was the eighth to climb the Matterhorn, when he made the first traverse of the mountain the following year, climbing up from Breuil and back down to Zermatt.

Tyndall became a noted lecturer and author, with many books and papers to his name. A paper that he produced on the structure and motion of glaciers was very well received by his peers.

Tyndall's interest in mountaineering and work in the physical sciences continued throughout his life, and he returned to the Alps



annually until 1890. He died in 1893, sadly from an overdose of medicine administered accidentally by his wife, **Louisa**.

The author, **Roland Jackson**, is well qualified to write this fascinating and authoritative biography of Tyndall, which I certainly enjoyed reading. The book is clearly well-researched and Jackson acknowledges numerous sources, including **Kevin Higgins** from **Tyndall Mountaineering Club**.

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

Exploring the landscapes and rewilding in the Nephin Beg Wilderness in County Mayo



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



WILD NEPHIN

By Seán Lysaght

Stonechat Editions (2020), 281pp, €20, ISBN 978-0-9568918-4-6

Wild Nephin is Seán Lysaght's second collection of prose essays, following on from *Eagle Country* (reviewed in *Irish Mountain Log* 126). In this new work, he quarters the **Wild Nephin Ballycroy National Park** and environs in County Mayo, and describes a series of winter excursions to this remote area.

Accompanied by fishermen, falconers, farmers and friends, he conveys elements of the Nephin Beg mountain range to the reader in an elegant and easy-going style. Always a keen observer of nature, he excels in the avian and botanical spheres. We are treated to accounts of greenshanks, grouse, goshawks and geese as well as his beloved eagles. Trees and plants encountered in 'flow country' (open moorland) and in the extensively forested parts of this ostensibly barren region are given liberal treatment.

A keen angler, yet reluctant hunter, Lysaght introduces us to some of the hunting and fishing lodges that pepper this area and brings us on a nocturnal stalk of the Tarsaghaunmore River by

lamplight, to estimate numbers of spawning sea trout.

He is invited to participate in some falconry and provides the reader with some insights into this form of hunting, for snipe in this instance. He investigates an ancient burial chamber, discovered by chance in the last few years, and manages to convey an excellent sense of the place that is now known as **Wild Nephin**.

He compares the "imported picturesque" form of North American-style forested wilderness with the wide open spaces of the river catchments and the mountain tops, and concludes that "the idea of restoration [is] entirely problematic. If you were trying to restore the great flow peatlands of the Bog of Erris, you would be faced with the impossible task of removing the entire forest." So, better to leave



Forest plantation returning to nature at Srahrevagh in Wild Nephin

In one of the best-written chapters in the book, '**The Nephin Forest**,' the author summarises the National Parks and Wildlife Service's 'rewilding' plans for the **Wild Nephin Wilderness** area. It concludes that Wild Nephin is "a construct of policy rather than a discovery."

Conceding that "rewilding can be either a deliberate outcome of protection, or a by-product of neglect," Lysaght hesitates in becoming overly polemical. Instead, he presents two contrasting views of Wild Nephin: **Robert Lloyd Praeger's** in the 1930s, and American wildlife writer **Jeremy Miller's** in 2017, i.e., pre-afforestation and then the 'modified landscape' of today.

well enough alone and let the existing forest become an "ancient pine and spruce forest" one day.

Already, there are a great variety of bird species and other fauna in Wild Nephin, and Lysaght is optimistic there will be more. In the final paragraph of the book, he advocates retention of the human presence in the wilderness area, to provide "a deeper sense of what it is to endure at the edge of things."

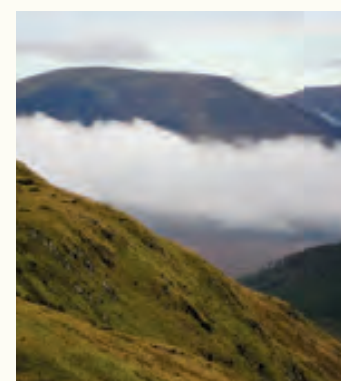
There is plenty for the hillwalker to appreciate in this book. Using **Barry Dalby's** eponymous map as his vade mecum, he describes his walks among the hills and valleys of the Nephin Beg mountain range. Slieve Carr, Birreen-

corragh, Glennamong and Corraunabinnia are all in here.

Lysaght's descriptions of his ascents and descents are more poetic than your average hillwalking guidebook prose, and there are passages that are reflective as well as informative. Channelling his inner **Nan Shepherd**, and name-checking the likes of **Tim Robinson** and other writers in this genre, we get up-close and personal with the mountain terrain and the entrancing qualities of simply being and walking.

In *Wild Nephin*, Seán Lysaght pays fitting homage to one of Ireland's finest and least-visited mountain ranges, in a most engaging and readable style. I highly recommend *Wild Nephin*: it is a most enjoyable read and well worth having in your collection.

John O'Callaghan Member of Clare Outdoor Club and Mountaineering Ireland, experienced hillwalker and mountaineer, widely travelled



View from Mount Eagle looking towards Nephin Beg

Hillwalks in Snowdonia to tempt the adventurous



SNOWDONIA: MOUNTAIN WALKS AND SCRAMBLES

By Mark Reeves

Rockfax (2020), 300pp, numerous photos and maps, £24.95 (pbk), ISBN 978-1-873341-63-6

Snowdonia Mountain Walks and Scrambles by Mark

Reeves definitely lifted my spirits when it arrived in the post a few weeks ago. The stunning cover photo from **Bristly ridge** across to **Tryfan**

epitomised the adventure possibilities in North Wales.

The guidebook has the typical Rockfax format, with 'traffic-light' colour-coded grading, clear descriptions and inspiring photos. Distance, height gain, duration and general terrain details are given for all routes. Parking areas have GPS locations and an associated QR code.

The sections on gear, navigation, scrambling and rope skills are all very comprehensive – comparable to many books that are purely instructional.

The environment section has good basic information on rock type and formations, and also a short piece on flora and fauna.

A glossary of Welsh words, with pronunciations, gives the opportunity to use greetings or ask for assistance in the local language. Translations of Welsh

mountain names, plus features and place names, help the reader to develop a greater understanding of the local area.

The adventures... well, where to begin? These are wide-ranging, from a first foray into the magnificent **Cwm Idwal** with a 4km hike, to some absolutely super endurance outings. The latter include the **Welsh Munros** (45km, 3,720m ascent) and an interesting scrambling itinerary called the **Ultimate Oggie 7**.

Another incredible adventure described is **Snakes and Ladders** in the now abandoned Llanberis Slate Quarries. The **Llyn Peris Circuit**, an 'Easy' walk (8km, 250m ascent), also takes a tour through the quarries, but on the main paths.

All the classic routes are included, but also some less-travelled ones. A route on my

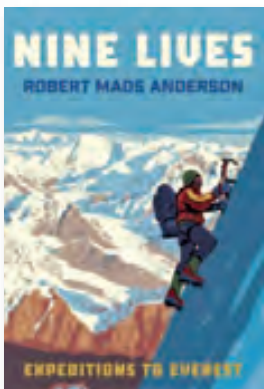
'to do' list now is the **Cyfrwy Arête** (Diff), one approach to **Cadair Idris**, i.e., 'Chair of Idris,' a warrior poet. Two long 'Hard' walks to **Aran Fawddwy** in south Snowdonia are worth checking out, and also the 'lonely and remote' **Cwm Pennant** in west Snowdonia.

There are endearing snippets of Welsh legends about dragons, King Arthur, Gelert the Hound, an enchanted fairy and bottomless lakes.

This is a perfect guide for first-time visitors to Snowdonia and for more frequent visitors, and is also suitable for mixed interest groups. I expect most people will find new routes to enjoy in this guide.

Colette Mahon Mountaineer and climber, a member of Wexford Hillwalking and Mountaineering Club and a member of the Board of Mountaineering Ireland and the Women With Altitude committee

Edge-of-your-seat accounts of Everest climbs in testing conditions



NINE LIVES

By Robert Mads Anderson

Vertebrate Publishing (2020), 220pp, many photos, £14.95, ISBN 978-1-83981-037-4

This is not your usual 'commercial expedition' story with a saga from planning the ascent, getting the team together and acclimatising to the final hours of summit day.

The author **Robert Mads Anderson's** stories of his climbs on Everest are very personal memories, though rather prosaic in style for his first four attempts. There are a lot of repetitive descriptions of his surroundings on these first attempts, with very little on planning, etc. The two expeditions where he was guiding (in 2003 and 2010) are much more readable, giving the reader a better appreciation of a normal Everest expedition.

Robert Mads Anderson was obviously in his element climbing unroped on Everest, making it seem normal and letting the reader feel the terrifying moments when that line between life and death is almost crossed. He manages to give the reader a real feeling of what solo climbing entails,

and especially soloing on Everest.

His description of what it is like to be alone in the freezing cold on Everest's North Face is fascinating. It obviously takes nerves of steel and a total belief in your own ability to take on a solo climb. Robert had that unique self-confidence, going back time and time again to put himself through that torture on the seven expeditions where he solo climbs, and guiding on two further expeditions.

I think "nine lives" is underestimating his experiences and, without doubt, **luck** has played a large part in his survival.

His recall of climbs is without reference to actual days or dates. We do not get details of day-by-day events, but are dropped directly onto

the steep slopes and go from there. His description of the freezing cold conditions encountered in winter makes us shiver, as it is beyond our imagination.

If you are a reader of the usual books on commercial expeditions to Everest, then this book may not suit you. However, if you like teetering on the edge of falling, then you will be on the edge of your seat as you read this.

I was hesitant, reading the first few chapters, but I got drawn in as the climbs progressed to the finale of summiting Everest in 2003. The photographs are also outstanding.

Denis Reidy An experienced mountaineer who has climbed in the Alps, the Himalayas and the Andes

Hamish MacInnes OBE

‘The fox of Glencoe’ – mountaineer, mountain rescue expert, author



Hamish MacInnes in action using his own-design ‘Terrordactyl’ ice tools in 1972

The legendary Scottish mountaineer, mountain rescue expert and author, **Hamish MacInnes**, died peacefully at his home in Glencoe, in the Scottish Highlands that he knew and loved so well, in November last year, at the age of ninety.

Over the course of his long life, Hamish made many first ascents and took part in more than twenty major expeditions to mountains ranging from Everest to Roraima in South America.

He was also prominent in mountain search and rescue and has been described as the ‘father of modern

mountain rescue in Scotland.’

He designed equipment that revolutionised both climbing and mountain rescue, in particular an all-metal ice-axe to replace the existing wooden-shafted ones, and a collapsible stretcher, the eponymous **MacInnes stretcher**, which is still used today by mountain rescue teams.

MacInnes was a prolific writer, with almost thirty titles to his name, including guidebooks, mountain rescue handbooks and novels. His 1972 *International Mountain Rescue Handbook* is still considered a standard text in mountain search and rescue, and *Call-out: A climber's tales of mountain rescue in Scotland* (1973) is an account of his experiences leading the **Glencoe Mountain Rescue Team**.

He also worked as a mountain safety adviser on the sets of a number of big-budget movies, including *The Eiger Sanction* and *The Mission*.

Hamish was awarded an OBE in 1979 for services to mountaineering and mountain rescue in Scotland, and was made an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society in 2007. He also received honorary doctorates from several Scottish universities.

In 2018, a documentary film was produced for BBC Scotland, *Final ascent: The legend of Hamish MacInnes*.

Renowned amongst mountaineers the world over, in Scotland Hamish's reputation as a fearless climber was based on his audacious attempt to climb Everest in 1953. There were two expeditions to the mountain that year, a well-funded official British one, with numerous climbers, Sherpas and porters, and a second one, led by 23-year-old MacInnes, with one other climber, **John Cunningham**, and a solitary porter. Beaten to Everest Base Camp by the official British team, which put Hillary and Tenzing on the summit, MacInnes and Cunningham switched to Everest's neighbour, **Pumori** (7,161m). In the end, they were forced back by avalanches close to the summit. MacInnes always maintained that



the attempt was not hare-brained, and that it was a forerunner of the modern, lightweight expeditions to the Greater Ranges.

Although MacInnes was born in Gatehouse of Fleet in Dumfries and Galloway, he was always associated with the Glencoe area, where he lived for much of his life, becoming known as ‘**the Fox of Glencoe**.’

From an early age, Hamish was a natural climber with innate abilities. He climbed the Matterhorn as a teenager. At eighteen, he did his national service with the British army and climbed extensively in Austria and Italy. Back in Scotland, in 1953 he climbed three impressive winter routes with **Chris Bonington** on Buachaille Etive Mòr in Glencoe, Agag's Groove, Raven's Gully and Crowberry Ridge Direct.

He completed the first winter traverse of the Cullin Ridge on Skye with **Tom Patey**, and he made the first winter ascent of Zero Gully on Ben Nevis in 1957. He was also part of a group, which included **Chris Bonington** and **Don Whillans**, that made the first British ascent of the Bonatti Pillar on the Aiguille du Dru in the French Alps. He was hit by rockfall during the climb and completed it with a fractured skull.

Hamish set up the **Glencoe Mountain Rescue Team** in 1961 and led it for more than thirty years. He persuaded the British government to set up the **Scottish Avalanche Information Service** in 1988.

He returned to Everest three times, including once as deputy leader, under Bonington, on the expedition that made the first ascent of its south-west face in 1975.

Hamish MacInnes' hearse, with two crossed ice-axes on its roof, passed through Glencoe village in his honour before he was cremated in Glasgow.

May he rest in peace.

Gerry Burns

Hamish MacInnes: born July 7th, 1930; died November 22nd, 2020



Hamish MacInnes in front of Everest and Khumbu Icefall in 1975

Peadar Ó Riordán

Hillwalker, poet, accomplished challenge walker and popular member of the Ramblers



Peadar Ó Riordán

Peadar Ó Riordán, an experienced hillwalker and a popular member of the **Irish Ramblers Club**, passed away peacefully in St Vincent's Hospital at the end of January 2021, at the age of 72. Originally from Cloghane, Co Kerry, he lived in Dublin for most of his adult life.

It was with great sadness that members of the Irish Ramblers Club recently learned of Peadar's untimely passing. He was a very endearing person.

Upon joining the Irish Ramblers Club in around 1985, Peadar quickly became very popular. He will be greatly remembered for his company and his friendship. Fellow Ramblers were always glad to chat with him and he was always very welcoming and supportive to new hikers. As an Irish speaker, he loved engaging in the 'cúpla focal' on hikes.

Peadar walked on the club's Grade 1 walks for well over twenty years but, in recent years, he walked on the Grade 3+ and Grade 3 hikes.

Apart from his participation in the hikes, Peadar contributed greatly to the club, leading hikes and organising club weekends away, particularly weekends

that included challenge walks, such as the Glover Highlander, the Galtees and the Burren Walk. He loved going to the Wicklow Heather Restaurant in Laragh after a hike, and the welcome shown to him by those who knew him from the other hikes organised that day revealed the affection he was held in.

Apart from hiking in Ireland, Peadar also hiked with the club in Scotland, Wales and on the continent. He loved the long-distance challenge walks and completed many of them, many times. His favourite long walks included the Art O'Neill Challenge, the Lug Walk and the Maamturks Walk. Peadar completed the Maamturks Walk in record time – 6½ hours for a walk that normally takes 10 to 12 hours to complete, a great achievement. The checkpoint on the last hill, Leenane Hill, had not opened when he

reached it: the crew were still making their way up from Leenane as he descended!

Peadar had a prodigious memory and was able to recall in detail his many hikes here and abroad, the names of the mountains and his hiking companions.

His love for the mountains and nature came from his home area. He was born in Cloghane, near the base of Mount Brandon, and he loved to go back to Kerry and take in Mount Brandon. As a young fellow helping out on the farm, he sometimes walked cattle across the Conor Pass to the Fair in Dingle. Like all Kerry people, he was a fanatical Kerry supporter.

In Dublin, Peadar lived close to Marlay Park and, during his retirement, he enjoyed the benefits of the park. Many other walkers there would stop to say hello and have a chat with him.

Peadar had a great love of poetry and held many poetry evenings in his home. One of his poems, *Hill Fever*, is included in this issue of *The Irish Mountain Log* (see page 19). This poem will awaken your desire to get back to the mountains and it is a fitting tribute to Peadar.

In his later years, when he was not as active, Peadar loved to receive *The Rambler* and *The Irish Mountain Log* to keep up to date with the hikes, news and articles. He fully intended to renew his membership for 2021, but sadly, it was not to be. Peadar passed away on the 28th of January, 2021, at 72 years of age. *Ní bheidh a leithéid arís ann.*

Condolences to Susan, his family and friends.

Gerry Maguire

Peadar Ó Riordán: born July, 1948; died January 28th, 2021

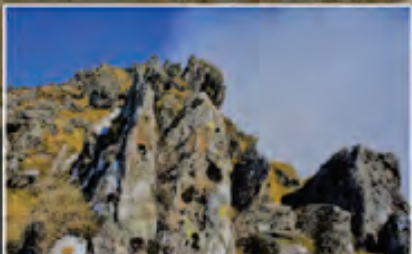


Peadar Ó Riordán



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