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Irish Mountain Log

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**Mountaineering Ireland
50th anniversary issue**



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Welcome

This issue of the *Irish Mountain Log* is devoted almost entirely to celebrating Mountaineering Ireland's 50th anniversary. It has been a difficult year to physically celebrate that anniversary, with the rollercoaster ride that the Covid-19 pandemic has been giving us, but we still felt the need to mark this important year for our National Governing Body.

This anniversary issue includes some very thoughtful contributions from members and staff, who have been involved in various capacities with the organisation over the years, and some articles of interest from past issues. We also have included the second part of the *Climbing Safely* series by Andy Kirkpatrick, where he looks more generally at safety on the hills in winter. This is a timely article that will be of interest to all hillwalkers and climbers, especially given the recent appearance of snow on our mountain tops.

For my part, I have to thank everyone who took the time to write a piece for this issue. As always, we depend very much on the contributions we receive from members and are always looking for articles to include, so please do consider writing an article for the *Irish Mountain Log*.

I particularly want to thank **Ursula MacPherson**, Chair of the 50th Anniversary Working Group, **Kevin Higgins**, **Dawson Stelfox** and **Murrough McDonagh**, as well as **Ruth Whelan**, the staff member who supported the Working Group, for all of their



This issue celebrates Mountaineering Ireland's 50th anniversary

work in bringing this anniversary issue to fruition.

I have to sincerely thank the members of our editorial team: **Peter O'Neill** and **Nicky Hore** for their great editorial work and **Cóilín MacLochlainn** for bringing the *Irish Mountain Log* to life with his excellent work on the layout. They have put a huge amount of work into this issue, as they do to all issues. I also have to thank **Helen Lawless** for her proofreading skills and overall great contribution to the magazine.

I also want to thank **Siobhan Quinn**, Administration Officer, and **Laura Griffin**, Training and Membership Support Officer, for their welcome support throughout the year.

As we come to the end of this important 50th anniversary year, it just remains for me, on behalf of the editorial team and the Board and staff of Mountaineering Ireland, to wish all Mountaineering Ireland members an enjoyable, safe and hopefully Covid-free Christmas and New Year, and all the best for an active 2022.

Patrick O'Sullivan, Editor

ISSUE 140

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

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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.



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



Clockwise from top left: Adrienne O'Keeffe in the Cuillins, Isle of Skye, in 1990; JB Malone memorial, Luggala, Co Wicklow; hillwalker on Seefin, Co Kerry, during Autumn Gathering 2016; Dawson Stelfox approaching Everest summit, May 27th, 1993
Inset: Front covers of Issue No 1 *Mountain Log* (January 1978), Issue No 18 *Irish Mountain Log*, and Issue No 40, celebrating the 25th anniversary of the MCI

PHOTOGRAPHS: Peter Nevin, Patrick O'Sullivan, Jan van Soest (Wild Atlantic Walking Tours), Frank Nugent

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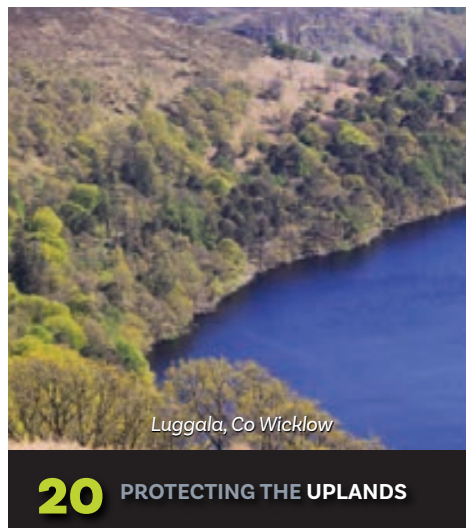
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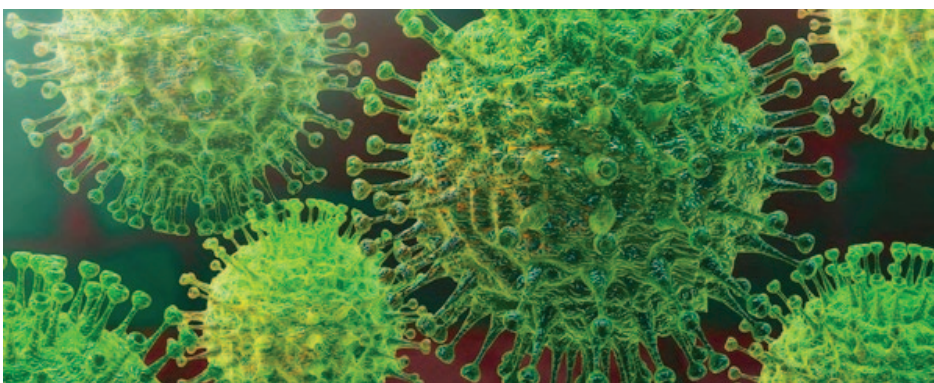
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Newsdesk



Be safe, responsible and considerate

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

The restrictions have been eased, but sadly the pandemic is still with us and, with the increased socialisation, a large number of people are still being infected each day. Certainly, in terms of the hospitalisations, almost half of infections are in people who have not been vaccinated, now less than 8% of the adult population. However, to avoid overloading our hospital system it is up to us all to limit our socialisation as much as possible and to observe the recommended public health precautions as best we can.

For hiking and climbing, while outdoor activities are recognised as being low-risk activities for Covid-19 transmission, we still need to observe the recommended precautions when we are in close proximity to other people or in enclosed situations.

In addition to following public health advice and Government restrictions, Mountaineering Ireland asks all hillwalkers and climbers to consider the following points:

Parking

- Car-parking spaces may be in high demand – consider alternative, less popular areas for parking.
- When parking, be considerate of other road users. Do not block access for residents, emergency services or farmers, who may need to enter fields or farmyards.

Choosing locations

- Consider how popular the location is and whether there is an alternative venue.
- As people who know the mountains, choose less popular venues, which should be less busy.
- Large clubs with multiple groups should use different locations and routes.

Landowners and rural communities

- Please be especially 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 coming into the area. Consider, too, that upland areas have a higher proportion of older residents.

Equipment

- Include face-masks and additional gloves in your first-aid kit.
- Carry hand sanitiser or some means of washing your hands.



On Errigal's North Ridge

Welcome to our 50th anniversary issue

Fifty years of Mountaineering Ireland

By Ursula MacPherson, Chair of the 50th Anniversary Working Group

The year 2021, the fiftieth year of the story of Mountaineering Ireland from its formation as the **Federation of Mountaineering Clubs of Ireland** (FMCI) in 1971, was slipping away. Like 2020, the year 2021 was without the usual annual gatherings and events throughout the country that might have given us the opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate our half-century in a special way. A global pandemic, now part of the story, saw to that.

During the summer, Mountaineering Ireland formed a small **working group** to explore what celebration might be possible, preferably within this anniversary year. Some sort of historical record? No – this would rely on faulty memories and difficult to access archives. Videos – but how and of what? Social media? Not that – whatever we did had to be accessible to all members.

Our small group – so agreeable a bunch that I wondered were we really mountaineers at all – opted to dedicate the Winter 2021 issue of the *Irish Mountain Log* to the fifty years. This gave us that comfortable illusion of having time, which of course we didn't. To produce an accurate historical review would be more challenging than climbing the North Face of the Eiger in high summer in sandals. So, we turned to our members and staff, to a small number of the very many that have been involved in Mountaineering Ireland's story.

We reminded ourselves of the many aspects of Mountaineering Ireland's work, from the areas of hillwalking, rock climbing, training, and access and conservation, to others, such as the various meets and gatherings held in Ireland and abroad,

the publications and the lecture series, the expedition advisory service and the grants, and our connections with our nearest neighbour, the UK, with the International Climbing and Mountaineering Federation (UIAA), with our clubs and individual members, with our Board and subcommittees... and so the list went on.

We asked some members to contribute a short, or in some cases a longer, piece on one of those specific aspects – or indeed on anything they preferred that meant something to them in respect of Mountaineering Ireland's fifty years.

Many obliged, and we received perspectives, reflections, personal opinions and stories, all reproduced in this issue. Some have also cast an eye forward, giving thought to the importance of our choices into the future. Mountaineering Ireland is grateful for all these thoughtful contributions and ideas.

There is no doubt that in these times – times of development and growth, of much greater human impacts on our hills, of funding and finance, of employment and careers, of complexity in our organisational structure unimagined at the time of our formation fifty years ago – a sound governance structure and effective leadership are required.

However, these are the background, the enabler, to what Mountaineering Ireland is about – the mountains themselves and mountaineering, representing and serving the needs of our members and, as is mentioned elsewhere in this issue, meeting the expectations and needs of as yet to be affiliated walkers and climbers. Our essence is our sport and the freedom of the hills.

I extend my personal thanks to our hardworking group – **Ruth Whelan, Kevin Higgins, Dawson Stelfox, Murrough McDonagh** and especially to **Patrick O'Sullivan**, who also had the editor's job of pulling it all together. My grateful thanks also to **Laura Griffin**, Mountaineering Ireland's Training Administrator, for her very willing support work, and to **Helen Lawless** for her assistance in sourcing material, and her comments and corrections where needed ■



► **Ursula MacPherson** is a long-time active enthusiast for mountains and mountaineering. A former President of Mountaineering Ireland, 2012-2016, she was Chair of the 50th Anniversary Working Group set up to deliver this special anniversary issue of the *Irish Mountain Log*.



Declan O'Keeffe, first President of the Mountaineering Council of Ireland, manning a stand at the RDS in 2005

Celebrating our half-century

By Geoff Thomas, Chair, and Imelda Buckley, Vice-Chair, Mountaineering Ireland's Board of Directors

This year, 2021, has been a special year for Mountaineering Ireland as we have been celebrating the 50th anniversary of this wonderful organisation. We are now coming up to nearly two years of living with Covid-19 and all the struggles and challenges that it has brought with it, both for our members and for our organisation. We have also seen through this time how resilient we are when, as a society and indeed as a community, we work towards a common goal.

Over the past five decades, since our formation as the **Federation of Mountaineering Clubs of Ireland**, we have worked towards a common goal of supporting our community of mountaineers, hillwalkers, ramblers and climbers. We have led and supported many national campaigns, all listed in this special edition of the *Irish Mountain Log*, on key issues from unwarranted developments in the uplands to access and environmental concerns.

We have developed as an organisation from our modest beginnings to now being a leading participant in the outdoor recreation sector across the island of Ireland, with affiliations internationally to world bodies and the Olympic Council.

As the representative body for hillwalkers and climbers across the island of Ireland, and recognised as the National Governing Body for mountaineering, hillwalking, rambling and climbing by both **Sport Ireland** and **Sport Northern Ireland**, we can attribute our development to the support of our faithful and passionate club and individual members since 1971.

We are also privileged to have such skillful and experienced volunteer members, who support the strategic direction and

governance requirements now necessary to be an effective National Governing Body of a sport. Our volunteers, including those on the Board, sub-committees and working groups, and our staff team, all ensure that we are focused towards delivering on our aims and goals.

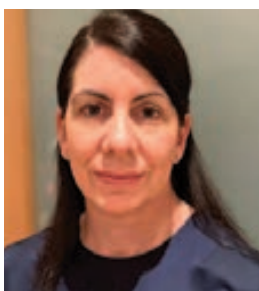
Mountaineering Ireland can be proud of its history and impact; we have seen significant developments in how we engage in our activities on the hills, crags and walls during our fifty years. We will continue to develop our organisation to ensure this legacy continues for decades to come.

As we embark on a new year, we will see our new **Strategic Plan** being launched in early 2022 and we remain hopeful that we will see a return to a full programme of events and activities. We are confident that, as a collective of committed members and volunteers, we will reach new generations to ensure that the next fifty years of our journey have new successes and stories to tell. We are determined that this great organisation should reach all those who engage in our activities.

Like the many hands that helped to create the wonderful *Irish Peaks* book nearly two years ago, the work undertaken by **Ursula MacPherson**, as Chair of the 50th Anniversary Working Group, and **Patrick O'Sullivan**, as Editor of the *Irish Mountain Log*, and all the contributors and supporters, has delivered this anniversary edition of the *Irish Mountain Log* (Winter 2021, IML 140) and it is greatly welcomed. It is a hugely significant way to celebrate our 50th anniversary year together. Thank you all very much ■



➤ **Geoff Thomas** is Chair of the Board of Mountaineering Ireland and has been Chair of the **Climbing Committee** since 2019. He has been an active member of **Colmcille Climbing Club** for twenty years and enjoys exploring the sea cliffs and hills of Donegal as well as the larger mountains of the Alps and beyond.



➤ **Imelda Buckley** is Vice-Chairperson of the Board of Directors and has been Chairperson of the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee since 2018 and of the Strategic Plan Working Group. She has been involved with Mountaineering Ireland as a member and through the Youth Development teams and has been a Board member since March 2018.



Participants in a review of mountain training on the island of Ireland, Tollymore National Outdoor Centre, Co Down, September 2004

Looking back and looking forward

Even brighter days ahead in the next fifty years

By Murrough McDonagh, CEO, Mountaineering Ireland



Be assured, I know very little about hillwalking and climbing! I come from a team sport background – lines painted on a patch of ground, underground drainage, floodlights, spectator stands and changing rooms were my environment. Only when my body broke down, following a lifetime of team sport, did I turn to the hills to mend and recover from injury. One day,

one step at a time, I connected with the mountains and wilderness, and I have not looked back since!

I grew up on the west coast of Ireland. Born into a farming family, I took for granted the work activities of herding cattle and horses on our uplands, with some of the most spectacular views on this island. My view was from the Twelve Bens to Dog's Bay in Roundstone, to the Atlantic islands to the southwest, and to Croagh Patrick and Mweelrea to the northeast. I now understand how privileged I was to have had this as my place of work for so long.

As CEO of Mountaineering Ireland for a number of years now, I understand how special this organisation is and, indeed, how important it is for the national good. I take great inspiration in my work from the people I work with. In the past, I have had experience of being a professional executive in a large National Governing Body of a team sport, and also with yet another organisation with huge volunteer drive, covering

multiple sports activities for youths. I thought that there were none like them in Ireland. Not so. I have seen at first hand, in Mountaineering Ireland, a professional staff executive which is magnificent in its reach and delivery.

With its strong volunteer ethos and commitment, this organisation is a serious operator. I say this having served with senior volunteers over the years on the Board of Mountaineering Ireland, on our sub-committees and in our working groups, in our clubs and with our individual members. The professionalism, commitment, experience, knowledge and dedication that this organisation holds in a sports administration context is of the highest standard.

The organisation's successes and challenges over the past fifty years are recorded throughout this special edition of the *Irish Mountain Log*. As 2022 approaches, I look towards the future and the developments that will help guide and inspire the next generations to take their place as the members and volunteers who will lead this organisation forward.

These include building on some recent successes: actively leading the new **National Outdoor Recreational Strategy** implementation; supporting the pilot scheme for two indemnity areas in the uplands; building relationships with landowners to ensure that continued access is assured, as in Luggala, Co Wicklow; drawing up Climbing Development Guidelines; and building on past successes in the indoor and ice climbing competition arenas, as we look towards coming competitions.

A number of projects deserve special attention for the future. The development of an **indoor climbing facility**, giving our climbers access to the best of training supports and

suited to international competition, alongside a 'mountaineering museum' showcasing our mountaineering history, all located in the Sport Ireland Campus in Blanchardstown, Dublin, have been mooted in recent times.

In the hills, I would like to see continued rollout of the public indemnity pilot scheme, to have open access to all upland regions achieved, and new measures for farmers in upland areas to earn a living from the way they use their land.

Greater collaboration with our partners, including youth organisations, and a national network of Outdoor Education Centres to support our training provision, are necessary to broaden the range across young and not so young involvement in our sport. Enhanced collaboration with the farmer representative bodies and improved communications would be extremely satisfying to achieve.

Into 2022 and the future, membership of our Board and our sub-committees will change. However, the high standards set by them in the past must not diminish. Attaining new heights is our challenge.

I am privileged now to have some small part to play in leading this truly inspirational organisation forward. As we move into the next fifty years and towards the Centenary Anniversary in 2071, I can see even brighter days ahead for Mountaineering Ireland, and for the people who are its heartbeat ■



Frank Nugent near the First Step (8,500m) on Everest, May 27th, 1993

Irish Peaks scoops international book award

Mountaineering Ireland's most recent publication, **Irish Peaks**, a celebration of Ireland's highest mountains, has won the 2021 **Guidebook Award** at the prestigious **Banff Centre Mountain Film and Book Festival**. Banff jury member **Heather Dawe** described *Irish Peaks* as follows:

"A wonderful showcase of the rugged beauty of the island of Ireland's upland landscapes, Irish Peaks made me want to head for these hills. This book combines detailed route guides to the highest hundred mountains with incredible photography and comprehensive guides to their natural and hillwalking history. Ireland is a country where access to the mountains is not a given. Irish Peaks shares the invaluable route knowledge of local experts with the visitor, clearly mapping and explaining established lines into and over the ground. This is an inspirational guidebook that will surely entice many hill-goers to further explore these mountains."

Irish Peaks was published by Mountaineering Ireland as a tribute to the late **Joss Lynam**, who edited the original *Irish Peaks* book, which was published in 1982. *Irish Peaks* celebrates Ireland's highest hundred mountains through an inspiring collection of seventy-one hillwalking routes, contributed by Mountaineering Ireland members. This beautifully illustrated coffee-table guide encourages readers to visit all of Ireland's main mountain areas.

One of Mountaineering Ireland's aims in producing the book is to promote responsible engagement with Ireland's mountains, an engagement that is based on understanding and respect.



On the occasion of this announcement, Mountaineering Ireland also thanks the landowners across the island of Ireland, without whose goodwill and tolerance we would be unable to pursue our passion for hillwalking, an activity that is so good for physical and mental wellbeing.

► **Irish Peaks can be purchased online and directly from selected retailers. For more information, visit www.mountaineering.ie/irishpeaksbook ■**

Noel Hanna to deliver 2021 Lynam Lecture online

This year's **Mountaineering Ireland Lynam Lecture** will be given by **Noel Hanna** online on Thursday, December 9th, 2021 at 7.30pm. Noel is a renowned mountaineer, adventurer and endurance athlete of the highest order. A native of Northern Ireland, he has scaled summits and competed in adventures the world over. To date, he has summited Everest ten times.

Since the inauguration of the Lynam Lecture in 2011 in memory of **Joss Lynam**, many leading national and international mountaineers have delivered enthralling lectures.

We look forward to hearing about Noel Hanna's many mountaineering achievements and adventures and are delighted to be awarding him the **2021 Mountaineering Ireland Lynam Medal**.

Given the current rise in Covid-19 cases and ongoing restrictions for indoor venues, this event will be held online. Due to this, we are able to offer this event free to our members.

➤ **More information and a link for registration to receive a link for the lecture can be found at www.mountaineering.ie** ■



Noel Hanna on K2 climb in February 2021

Alfie Conn library established

By Alan Tees

Following the death last year of **Alfie Conn**, a longstanding member of **Colmcille Climbing Club**, the club inherited his book collection. However, it had nowhere appropriate to keep it. In November, a small group of club members delivered the **Alfie Conn Library** to the **Belfast Climbing Club** hut, Henry's Cottage, at Attical in the Mourne Mountains, where it will be available to all visitors to the hut to read ■



Pictured with some of the books at the Alfie Conn Library in Henry's Cottage (from left): Margaret Quinn (a close friend of Alfie's), George Carleton (Chair, Colmcille Climbing Club) and Alan and Margaret Tees.

Correction

On page 6 of the Autumn 2021 issue of the *Irish Mountain Log* (IML 139), an article on Fergal Hingerty successfully completing ascents of the 1,489 summits on the mainland of Ireland stated that all had a 100m prominence. As was pointed out by various readers, that was not correct. Only 831 of the 1,489 summits that Fergal ascended have a 100m prominence, as recorded on **MountainViews.ie**. Our apologies for the error and for any confusion caused.

BASE CAMP Crossword results

The winner of our crossword in IML 139 was **Kathryn McMahon** from **Tralee, Co Kerry**, who won a Berghaus Hillwalker Jacket, a prize worth €200.00, from our crossword sponsor, Basecamp. The solution to the crossword is shown below. Mountaineering Ireland will post the prize to the winner.



Prize: Berghaus Hillwalker Jacket

Winner of UIAA Mountain Protection Award announced

MacGillycuddy's Reeks project wins runner-up prize



Twenty-four projects from more than thirty countries on six continents were show-cased as part of the **2020-2021 UIAA Mountain Protection Awards**. They represented a range of initiatives, including encouraging youth participation, tackling pollution and climate change, creating sustainable national parks, spearheading clean-up campaigns, and projects focused on women in mountaineering.

The winner of the **Best New Initiative** was

French project **Zéro Déchet Mont Blanc**. This winner is the eighth recipient of the international award since the competition was started in 2013. It received a cash prize of €10,000.

The runner-up award went to Ireland's **MacGillycuddy's Reeks European Innovation Partnership Project (EIP)**. Mountaineering Ireland extends its congratulations to the MacGillycuddy's Reeks EIP on winning the runner-up spot in this important international competition ■

Kathmandu Declaration

The UIAA Kathmandu Declaration on Mountain Activities was adopted in Kathmandu, Nepal, by the international mountaineering community in October 1982. The articles of the Declaration are as vital today, or more so, as they have ever been. In this, our fiftieth anniversary year, it is appropriate to revisit this far-seeing Declaration

Mountaineering Ireland is a federation member of the **UIAA** (Union Internationale des Associations d'Alpinisme **International Climbing and Mountaineering Federation**).

Throughout its long history, the UIAA has drafted and published several ground-breaking papers and declarations designed to address critical subjects and concerns in the climbing and mountaineering world. Those UIAA declarations have addressed diverse issues from protection and preservation of the mountain environment to ethical codes aimed at defining values and providing common standards for conduct.

The **Kathmandu Declaration** was agreed by the UIAA at its General Assembly in Kathmandu [the capital of Nepal] in October 1982. It was reaffirmed in October 2011, almost thirty years later, when the General Assembly was again held in Kathmandu.

The Kathmandu Declaration focuses on the protection and preservation of the mountain environment, and the need to respect and support the indigenous populations of mountainous areas. It is something we should all abide by in our mountain activities.

Articles of the Declaration

- 1 There is an urgent need for effective protection of the mountain environment and landscape.
- 2 The flora, fauna and natural resources of all kinds need immediate attention, care and concern.
- 3 Actions designed to reduce the negative impact of man's activities on mountains should be encouraged.
- 4 The cultural heritage and the dignity of the local population are inviolable.
- 5 All activities designed to restore and rehabilitate the mountain world need to be encouraged.
- 6 Contacts between mountaineers of different regions and countries should be increasingly encouraged in the spirit of friendship, mutual respect and peace.
- 7 Information and education for improving the relationship between man and his environment should be available for wider and wider sections of society.
- 8 The use of appropriate technology for energy needs, and the proper disposal of waste in the mountain areas, are matters of immediate concern.
- 9 The need for more international support – governmental as well as non-governmental – to the developing mountain countries, for instance, in matters of ecological conservation.
- 10 The need for widening access to mountain areas in order to promote their appreciation and study should be unfettered by political considerations ■



Looking across the Kathmandu valley to the Himalaya in the evening light

Mountaineering Ireland needs you!

If you would be interested in getting involved in the work of the Board of Mountaineering Ireland or of one of our sub-committees, please contact the Mountaineering Ireland office on +353 1 6251115 or by email at info@mountaineering.ie

Get Ireland Walking: a review



By Linda Sankey, Get Ireland Walking

Get Ireland Walking is an initiative of Sport Ireland, supported by Healthy Ireland and delivered by Mountaineering Ireland since its inception in 2013. Its core aim is to unify and enable the efforts of all agencies and organisations interested in promoting walking.

Since starting out as a pilot programme in 2013, Get Ireland Walking has grown and is now a nationwide initiative. It has expanded the number and scope of the programmes it offers, with an emphasis on targeting disadvantaged communities and low-activity groups. This is consistent with one of Sport Ireland's key objectives of providing sporting and physical activity opportunities to people of all ages and backgrounds. It also links with Healthy Ireland's goal of reducing health inequalities, and Mountaineering Ireland's values relating to recreation and wellbeing.

Get Ireland Walking's first **Strategy & Action Plan** covered the period 2017 to 2020 and set out the actions to be undertaken by both Get Ireland Walking and its partner organisations. The forty-one actions in the plan are divided between seven thematic areas, reflecting the action areas in the government's **National Physical Activity Plan**.

One of the themes was communities, and, over the last few years, Get Ireland Walking has implemented a locally based and focused **Active Community Walking Programme**, to support the creation of vibrant walking communities throughout Ireland.

This year, Get Ireland Walking and Mountaineering Ireland are developing a **Community Active Hillwalking Programme**, to provide an opportunity for participants to further develop their walking skills and experience hillwalking in a safe environment.

This programme will act as a progression from the Active Community Walking Programme and introduce existing walkers to a new space and environment off-road, on more challenging terrain and on higher ground. It aims to help sustain the interest of more established walkers by providing an opportunity to experience more remote areas on trails and uplands, with an element of adventure and the potential to increase fitness further.

It will also introduce participants to hillwalking within a group setting, with expert tips and support to join existing hillwalking clubs, or to start their own club with support from Mountaineering Ireland. This initiative seeks to empower local communities to increase their experience of physical activity through hillwalking.

As hillwalking does require more planning, skills and potentially a greater level of fitness than walking within the community, the programme will address the individual and social barriers that people face when wanting to transition from general walking to walking more off-road and in upland areas. Communities will be supported in experiencing hillwalking in a group setting with a qualified guide and in developing an action plan for hillwalking in their local area.

Engagement with the Active Community Walking Programme locally ideally will be through existing community-based groups (social, cultural, development or sporting). These groups will operate as hosts or hub organisations for the programme.

Mountaineering Ireland, in conjunction with Get Ireland Walking, will coordinate this programme at national level. We will work closely with **Local Sports Partnerships** and **Mountaineering Ireland hillwalking clubs** and their nominated **County Community Walk Facilitators** at local level.

Now, in 2021, Get Ireland Walking is a nationally and internationally recognised partner, promoter and advocate of walking for the physical, social and wellbeing benefits for all who participate. As the initiative enters a new era – an era of uncertainty with a pandemic that is with us for the foreseeable future – walking provides a **platform of sociability**. It is something that society has turned to and embraced as a way to keep healthy, due to its accessibility and the way it intersects all aspects of life, from schools to the workplace, transport, health and all in between.

In 2022, Get Ireland Walking will publish an updated **Strategy & Action Plan** for 2021-2023 and a new **Communications Strategy** for the same period.

A relatively young Get Ireland Walking wishes its older sibling, Mountaineering Ireland, a Happy 50th Birthday!



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National Walking Day 2021: a review

This year's National Walking Day, held on September 27th, was a major success. Below, we present some of the results from the day in terms of how it played out on social and mainstream media



An item promoting National Walking Day on RTE's Nationwide was watched by 210,000 viewers



An Irish Times letter to the editor by **Seán Ó Cuinn**, Founder President of the **Irish Ramblers' Club**, on National Walking Day, September 27th, 2021

Social Media Performance

627 Organic Posts
Total across all Social Media Platforms



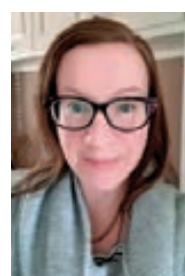
★ 2,435,310 ★
Overall Reach

Twitter Stats #NWD2021

Tweets: 782 Users: 405



Twitter Sentiment Analysis



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.



Seán Ó Súilleabháin and Catherine McMullin in Killorglin in 2016

Seán had devised the Way after he realised that there was a network of roads and paths or boreens that could be combined to form a route around Kerry. The first section, from Killarney to Glenbeigh, was opened in 1985 and the route was completed by 1989; it was the second long-distance route in the country after the Wicklow Way.

We had also been accompanied on that walk by **Catherine McMullin**, who was also involved in establishing the Way. Now, at around 230km, the Kerry Way is the longest way-marked way in the Republic and is also one of the most popular.

Seán is from Killorglin. His brother **Gearóid** was among the group that set up Laune Mountaineering Club in 1966. Seán had been working abroad at the time but, when he returned to Killorglin the following year, he became very involved with the club and has never looked back!

The club was central to the establishment of the **Kerry Mountain Rescue Team** in response to two deaths in the Reeks in 1966. The club was then also one of the six or so hillwalking/climbing clubs that got together in 1971 to form an all-island representative body for the sport of mountaineering, the Federation of Mountaineering Clubs of Ireland (FMCI), a process that Seán recalls as being driven by **Joss Lynam**.

The founding clubs included the **Irish Mountaineering Club, Dublin and Belfast Sections, Queen's University Belfast Mountaineering Club, Spillikin Climbing Club, Glenfoffany Climbing Club** and **Laune Mountaineering Club**.

There were other clubs in existence at that time and they were apparently supportive but unable to attend the inaugural meeting. There was seemingly an ongoing dispute between the Dublin-based clubs, so, as a compromise, Seán was asked to chair the new Federation. He held that position for the first two years, with **Barry Flynn** from **UCD Mountaineering Club** as the Honorary Secretary. The nascent Federation received funding from the **Association for Adventure Sports (AFAS)**, which seemingly settled the disputing and encouraged more clubs to join. From the outset, the FMCI was an all-island body.

Apart from establishing the Kerry Way, Seán was also involved in setting up and running **Cappanalea Outdoor Pursuits Centre**, now Cappanalea Outdoor Education and Training Centre.

At the end of what had been a very pleasant catching-up session with Seán Ó Súilleabháin, the first Chair of what is now Mountaineering Ireland, we talked about our families and it was interesting to hear that one of Seán's sons seemed to be following in his father's footsteps and was working with **Sport Ireland** ■



Cappanalea Outdoor Education and Training Centre

A founder member

**Seán Ó Súilleabháin,
first Chair FMCI 1971-1973**

By Patrick O'Sullivan, Editor Irish Mountain Log

In May this year, I had a very pleasant virtual conversation with **Seán Ó Súilleabháin**. During the pandemic, many of us have become all too familiar with the use of online platforms such as Zoom to keep in touch, and I was very happy when Seán agreed to a virtual interview. In Mountaineering Ireland's 50th anniversary year, it seemed important to talk to one of the organisation's founders. Seán Ó Súilleabháin was the first Chair of the embryo **Federation of Mountaineering Clubs of Ireland**, the forerunner of Mountaineering Ireland.

I had last met Seán when his local hillwalking club, **Laune Mountaineering Club**, had hosted Mountaineering Ireland's Autumn Gathering in Killorglin in 2016, to celebrate their 50th anniversary. He was President of the club at that time and led one of the walks that I went on. The walk followed the section of the **Kerry Way** that goes around Glenbeigh and I was impressed to find that Seán had been involved in the setting up of that now very popular way-marked way.



Reflections

A perspective on the development of Mountaineering Ireland

Dawson Stelfox describes how the organisation broadened our horizons on many different fronts

Mountaineers have always liked to see themselves as different – independent, self-reliant, individualistic, not bound by societal rules but revelling in the ‘freedom of the hills’ and in their own idiosyncratic values.

Although clubs of like-minded enthusiasts have evolved from the earliest days of the ‘sport,’ the concept of a ‘representative’ or ‘governing’ body is much more recent and was met with much healthy scepticism. Even today it is questioned over legitimacy and value.

The **British Mountaineering Council** (BMC) was formed in 1944, the **Mountaineering Council of Scotland** didn’t emerge until 1970, and the **Federation of Mountaineering Clubs of Ireland** (FMCI) came into

Above:
Pictured at the Mountaineering Council of Ireland Meet in Ballyvaughan, Co Clare, in 1999, from left: Nicky Hore, Alan and Margaret Tees, Eileen Brady, Rita Connell

being in 1971. The clue to its origins is in the title – the existing clubs came together to pool their strengths and resources on common interests such as access. The Federation emerged with the formation of the **Association of Adventure Sports** (AFAS), **Cospóir** (the predecessor of **Sport Ireland**) and the **Sports Council for Northern Ireland**. The lure of government grant support inevitably played a part.

Of huge and positive significance was that some of the prominent clubs – the **Irish Mountaineering Club**, with Dublin and Belfast sections, and the **North West Mountaineering Club** – operated across the border, so that even with the rapidly escalating troubles in the North, FMCI clubs were from all parts of the country. It, and its successors, have remained all-island bodies ever since.

I joined **Queen’s University Mountaineering Club**, one of the founding clubs of the FMCI, in 1976. We travelled to mountain areas all over Ireland through the worst of the violence, taking part in meets and gatherings, and increasingly getting involved with the FMCI. From the start, we recognised the ‘internationalist’ approach, rather than a focus on purely parochial interests. This resonated with our ambitions.

Given that we prided ourselves in being ‘different,’ then how come we threw ourselves into the machinations of a ‘representative’ (not a ‘governing’) ➤

➤ **Dawson Stelfox, MBE**, was the first Irish person to climb Mount Everest, reaching the summit on May 27th, 1993. He has served on the board of Mountaineering Ireland for many years and is a past Chairperson. He is a qualified mountain guide and acting Chair of Mountain Training Board Ireland. He represents Mountaineering Ireland at meetings of Mountain Training UK and Ireland.



Showing appreciation

By John O'Callaghan



In November 2002, the **Clare Outdoor Club**, with the Mountaineering Council of Ireland's Hillwalking Committee, hosted a **'Tread Lightly'** Autumn

Gathering in Ennis. The gathering was very well attended and was enjoyed immensely by people from all over the country.

That was four years before the **'Leave No Trace'** concept was formally established in Ireland, and 'Tread Lightly' proved an excellent forerunner. Walks and talks were led and given by **Enda Mooney, Gordon D'Arcy, Paul Gosling** and **Bill Murphy**.

One enduring memento of this event, the first of

many gatherings hosted by the club over the years, was the treasured gift I received two days later of a beautiful hardback coffee-table book, *Ireland's Wildlife: A Photographic Essay* by **Mike Brown**. The gift was from **Mike O'Sullivan** of **Sliabh Luachra Hillwalking Club** and, on the title page, Mike had written: "With sincere thanks for an absolutely great weekend."

Showing appreciation is more important than ever in our world today, for nature and our planet.

John O'Callaghan: Clare Outdoor Club, MCI Executive Committee 2003-2007, Mountaineering Ireland representative on the Irish Uplands Forum

body? At the heart of that conundrum was the fact that we took mountaineering very seriously, passionately, perhaps even self-importantly. It was no mere sport, but a philosophy and a way of life. Any threat to restrictions on our freedom to roam and to take risks, or attempts to sanitise the experience, were to be fought. This inevitably led to campaigns about access and overdevelopment. There were tensions with training schemes and certification potentially restricting individual activities. It was the collective pooling of resources under the banner of

FMCI that started to have an impact.

Reliant on the expertise and commitment of individual volunteers as it was, the ability to be acting on behalf of the 'national representative body' carried weight. Success in challenging damaging upland hydroelectric schemes such as proposed at Coumasaharn in Kerry in 1988, and joining with others to stop new visitor centres in sensitive sites in Wicklow and the Burren in the early 1990s, raised the profile of the organisation and the importance of the integrity of this island's scarce upland landscapes.

Happy memories

By Mary Solan Avison



Anniversaries give us great opportunities to recall happy memories.

My first involvement with the Federation of Mountaineering Clubs of Ireland was around 1973, when the National Training Centre at Tiglin, Co Wicklow, had just started. I organised an introductory mountaineering weekend there for the Wayfarers with **Paddy O'Leary**.

I also had the great pleasure of meeting **Joss Lynam** at that time. His friendship and support after that are some of my most cherished memories. As the first Access and Conservation Officer of the FMCI in the seventies, I really valued Joss's help in setting out policies and priorities.

With the growing number of hillwalking members, in 1999 the Mountaineering Council of Ireland (MCI) set up the **Hillwalking Committee** to represent them, which I had the privilege of chairing for the first few years. That committee gave me the great opportunity

to meet and hike with so many member clubs, to be initially involved with an embryonic **Mountain Meitheal** and, with that, the introduction of **Leave No Trace Ireland**.

Another highlight from those years was representing the MCI at four **European Ramblers' Association** annual conferences. A special one of those was at **Euro Rando 2001** in Strasbourg when, on the opening day of the European Parliament, the **Strasbourg Declaration** of the European Ramblers' Association was adopted under the auspices of the President of the French Republic, the President of the European Parliament and the General Secretary of the Council of Europe.

Notwithstanding the pleasures of my involvement with FMCI and MCI, all I have ever wanted to do is put on my boots and head for the hills!

Mary Solan Avison: a founder member of the Wayfarers



Unlike in many other sports, there is no requirement to be a member of a club or the national governing body in order to participate in mountaineering and, outside of the growing number of competitive events in hillrunning, mountain marathons and indoor climbing, no formal mechanisms to make people 'play by the rules.'

Good practice (in, for example, environmental or access issues) or good ethics (as in the approach to rock climbing practices) emerge from debate, peer group practice and the actions of inspirational leaders.

**Above:
Summit
of Slieve
Bearnagh,
with Slieve
Commedagh
and Slieve
Donard to the
rear, in the
Mourne
Mountains**

The FMCI, from 1971, the Mountaineering Council of Ireland, from 1990, and Mountaineering Ireland, from 2009, have all acted as the catalyst for that debate and development of policy, which flows from the members. However, less than 10% of participants in the wide range of mountain activities are members, either through clubs or as individuals, so there remains a challenge in how to engage with a broader range of mountain users.

I was Chair of the MCI from 1989, at a time when government funding was becoming available to support the employment of professional staff, ➤

The great tradition of meets and gatherings

By Rita Connell and Nicky Hore



After Blayney Ramblers joined the Mountaineering Council of Ireland (MCI) in 1995, they hosted the MCI 'May Meet' in Carlingford in 2003, to celebrate the club's 10th year. In addition to leading walks around the Cooley Mountains, we were delighted to have members of the Irish Everest Expedition there to present a slideshow celebrating the 10th anniversary of their successful climb.

These visits to the May and October Meets, now the Mountaineering Ireland Spring and Autumn Gatherings, have given both of us many enjoyable weekends in every corner of Ireland. They have given us the opportunity to catch up with hillwalking friends, discover new walks and meet Mountaineering Ireland staff and volunteers. The Gatherings have brought us from Inishowen to the Blackstairs, from Kenmare to

the Mournes, and to many other wonderful places. They are a tradition that we hope Mountaineering Ireland will keep going, when we get moving again, after the Covid-19 restrictions end.

Nicky Hore was part of the MCI Hillwalking Advisory Group when it was set up in 1999. He was a member of the Mountaineering Ireland Board 2013-2017 and also Treasurer during that period. He represents Mountaineering Ireland at meetings with organisations such as MORF in the Mournes and currently is Features Editor with the Irish Mountain Log

Rita Connell was MCI Secretary 2001-2006 (when there were fewer staff!). She has been a member of the Women With Altitude team for the last ten years



A strong, well organised body

By Simon Stewart (Mountainviews)



“Mountaineering Ireland has turned fifty. It has become a strong, well-organised body. Hillwalkers have seen much better support from the organisation in recent years. This wasn't always the case. In the late 1990s, Mountaineering Ireland offered little more in services for hillwalkers beyond insurance and training.

I remember sitting through an AGM with reports from the then three climbing committees, wondering if there would ever be proper representation for hillwalkers. Then, as now, hillwalkers were the vast majority of members, but Mountaineering Ireland lacked an appropriate culture or organisational structure.

Things started to improve from the 2010s, in my view. Latterly, MountainViews has found it possible to collaborate with Mountaineering Ireland on initiatives such as the *Irish Peaks* book and the Arderins, and on

access. Mountaineering Ireland's second go at a hillwalking committee has started to work on, for example, promoting the Arderins as the headline list of mountains for Ireland. Judging by the most recent Mountaineering Ireland questionnaire, issues such as purpose and activities represented are now being re-evaluated, such as the organisational line between 'walking' and 'hillwalking.' This is very welcome.

Let's look forward to the future with confidence and, while we should learn from the past, we do not need to dwell there.

Simon Stewart was Editor of the MCI website 1997-2002 and a member of the first MCI Hillwalking Committee, formed in 1999. He is the founder of MountainViews.ie, with which Mountaineering Ireland has a memorandum of understanding, and is Editor of The Summit, a monthly hillwalking newsletter

but most activities were still undertaken by volunteers.

The change in name in 1990 recognised that individual membership was now possible, although most people still became members through the clubs. It was a time of expansion and change, with several exciting developments. **Joss Lynam** had unlocked funding and built European relationships to create the hugely influential **Franco-Irish exchange scheme**, where young Irish climbers benefited from introductory and higher level Alpine courses run by the **École National de Ski et d'Alpinisme** (ENSA) in Chamonix. Recognition of the value of these courses led to many years of youth development courses and programmes, and provided the inspiration for the **Summer Alpine Meet**, which is still going strong. This has the twin aims of encouraging more Irish walkers and mountaineers to visit many alpine areas, and of giving young ambitious climbers an adventurous introduction to the skills needed to climb safely in big mountains.

The availability of modest grants for **expeditions**, and the endorsement of them to cut through the bureaucratic permit procedures, made possible many adventurous trips to the greater ranges. The collective pooling of resulting information in the years before the internet was invaluable. The visiting **lecture programme** provided the inspiration of achievement in the wider world and pushed ambition beyond narrow insular confines.

Activists in rock climbing, alpinism and expeditionary climbing were also activists in the

**Opposite (top):
Looking towards
Brandon from
Great Blasket
Island, Co Kerry**

MCI. They were invariably also active hillwalkers and club members, as passionate about the hills and crags of Ireland as about the Alps or Himalayas. In my experience, it is rare where the leading activists in a sport are also those leading the administrative and technical supporting body, but, when it happens, it ensures a representative body is in tune with its members' needs and aspirations.

A core strength of the MCI was that it brought all the varied strands of mountaineering together. In an era of increasing specialisation, that remains an important role for Mountaineering Ireland. There are common interests between hillwalkers and rock climbers, between those who walk the waymarked trails and those who push boundaries in unexplored ranges, and between those who are members and those who see no need, but benefit from what Mountaineering Ireland strives to do.

At the heart of those common interests is the invaluable resource of the hills, mountains, crags and sea cliffs of Ireland. We want them to remain accessible but not overdeveloped; rich and biodiverse; protected but not sanitised. There are competing claims on them. We have to acknowledge our part in their degradation through erosion, overuse and congestion, while continuing to campaign against intrusive windfarms and other forms of insensitive exploitation. The **Helping the Hills** and **One from the Hills** initiatives are crucial.

Perhaps though, a revitalisation of the **Environmental Defence Fund**, set up in 1989 to support campaigns against the then threats of hydro schemes, mining and fencing of upland commonage,



and to support the more active campaigns against developments which threatened the character and integrity of the Irish hills, is needed.

My period as Chair of the MCI coincided with the first **Irish Everest Expedition** in 1993. Perhaps inevitably, I viewed the two as complementary. We had realised, through a series of 'failures,' that to have a chance of success on a mountain the scale of Everest, we needed to take planning and organisation more seriously. The more spontaneous approach of small teams to big mountains, which we were used to, easily came unstuck when faced with the realities of scale and altitude.

Likewise, the scale of the challenges over access to the Irish hills, sports development pressures and environmental pressures, was beyond the capacity of committed volunteers alone. Professional staff and more formal structures were required. The FMCI/MCI had to change, up its game and fulfil its potential, drawing in the individuals as well as the clubs.

The 1993 Everest expedition was successful because enough skilled and experienced mountaineers set aside individual ambitions to work together for a common aim. The FMCI, the MCI, and now Mountaineering Ireland, have been successful for the same reasons – the collective pooling of talents and experience, staff and volunteers, in the interests of all mountain users.

It is not easy, and the challenges remain, but that joint effort, continuing to draw in the commitment and passion of volunteers – active hillwalkers, rock climbers and mountaineers – is crucial to the legitimacy, credibility and continuing success of Mountaineering Ireland ■



Dawson Stelfox traverses towards the summit of Mount Everest at about 8,680m on May 27th, 1993. **Photograph:** Frank Nugent



David vs Goliath in the uplands

Early campaigns to save Ireland's scenic landscapes

Mike Keyes recalls Mountaineering Ireland's early activities in pursuing access and conservation issues, including taking court action against certain hydroelectric schemes and interpretative centres

Protection of access to upland areas and the conservation of our remote landscapes have always been two of the primary objectives of Mountaineering Ireland and its forerunners – the Federation of Mountaineering Clubs of Ireland (FMCI) and the Mountaineering Council of Ireland (MCI).

In more recent times, Mountaineering Ireland's approach has been to advance policy objectives and positive actions through collaboration with other stakeholders. In earlier times, however, and by necessity, it had to work on the basis of direct action.

Above: Partially constructed interpretative centre at Mullaghmore in the Burren, June 1993. Following a campaign of opposition, the project was abandoned and the site fully restored

The FMCI/MCI were party to two such campaigns that were significant in turning the tide against ill-considered developments in our mountain areas – namely, **hydroelectric schemes** on scenic mountain lakes and **interpretative centres** in the Wicklow Mountains and Burren National Parks.

Access to Lugnaquilla

To the best of my knowledge, the first time the FMCI poked its head above the parapet on an access issue was in 1981, in response to a plan by Wicklow County Council and the Department of Defence to close off road access to **Camarahill** in the Glen of Imaal, the most popular route to the summit of Lugnaquilla.

At a public hearing, FMCI member, solicitor **Dave Walsh**, and FMCI Executive Committee member **Harry O'Brien**, made the case against the road closures. The objections of the FMCI and other outdoor representative bodies were successful, as the Department of Defence abandoned the proposed road closures, except for during army firing exercises.

This was not the only access and conservation issue to arise in the eighties. An EU-funded grants scheme called VALOREN brought the prospect of hydroelectric schemes on mountain lakes onto the scene. There are many reasons that make clean,



➤ **Mike Keyes**, along with his wife **Marian**, is a founding member of the **Limerick Climbing Club** and a former Chairman of the **Mountaineering Council of Ireland (MCI)** (1994-1996). In recent years, he has hiked on the GR20 in Corsica and the John Muir Trail in the Sierra Nevada range in the USA and had some lazy days on the Camino with former MCI colleagues and friends. He is currently an active member of **Mountain Meitheal South East**, who have been working on access routes in the Galtees for a number of years.



non-polluting energy from hydroelectric schemes a desirable objective, but what was proposed at the time was more about availing of generous EU grants than reducing carbon emissions.

The amount of energy that each scheme would produce was minimal, seasonal and, in the opinion of many, did not justify the significant negative impact the schemes would have on some pristine mountain landscapes, as was clearly evidenced by the construction of two pre-VALOREN schemes in the early eighties at Coomloughra in the Reeks of Kerry and Lough Belshade in the Bluestacks, Co Donegal. An unsuccessful objection to the latter scheme was led by **Dennis Golden**, who, to this day, is still involved in environmental issues with the **North West Mountaineering Club** and **Colmcille Climbers**.

Two long-time defenders of the Kerry landscape, **Kevin Tarrant** and **Catherine McMullin** of the **Killarney Nature Conservation Group**, objected to the Coomloughra scheme. They were joined by some engineer, botanist and planner members of the

Above: Members of the Limerick Climbing and Crochet Club (LCCC) visit the site of a proposed hydroelectric scheme in the Reeks in 1988 to mark its layout with bamboo poles

Below: Members of the LCCC group getting to work at the site

Limerick Climbing and Crochet Club (LCCC). Their appeal was unsuccessful. However, the LCCC showed that it had some in-house expertise on the subject of hydroelectric schemes and so were the obvious group to represent the FMCI when similar VALOREN-funded schemes were proposed at six locations in Kerry, two locations in Cork and one each in Leitrim and Donegal.

Successes in Kerry

The first of these arose in February 1988 when Kerry County Council granted permission to the ESB for a hydroelectric scheme at **Loughs Coomaglaslaw and Coomnacronia**, adjacent to the more well-known Coomasaharn Lake. An objection to the development was made to An Bord Pleanála by Bord Fáilte, who were joined by the FMCI, represented by a team from LCCC, put together by this writer.

Some of the preparatory works for the case were unusual to say the least. A group from the LCCC took a leaf out of French environmental installation ➤





Visual Impact Assessment of the proposed OPW Visitor Centre at Roundwood, Co. Wicklow.

artist **Christo's** book and, using bamboo poles and bivvy bags, built a full-scale replica of key points of one of the dams at the proposed location on one of the lakes. This was photographed from the surrounding hills and served to accurately locate the dam, allowing the creation of an artist's impression of the proposed dam.

As we arrived at the oral hearing in the Kerry County Council offices in Tralee, we learned that the Minister for Energy, **Ray Burke TD**, had instructed Bord Fáilte to withdraw its objection, which left us, the FMCI group, there on our own. However, two experts originally retained by Bord Fáilte, the late **Professor Frank Mitchell** of Trinity College Dublin, one of Ireland's foremost naturalists, and landscape architect **Conor Skehan**, became honorary members of the FMCI and joined us in our presentation.

The ESB was represented by two senior counsels who, following the minister's instruction to Bord Fáilte, expected to play the giant's role in this 'David vs Goliath' case. However, owing to the case expertly prepared by the FMCI side, including pictures of the mocked-up dam, ably presented by **Dick Tobin**, whose day job was Senior Planning Officer in Limerick City Council, the ESB team got a bit more than they had bargained for! It would be an understatement to say the FMCI blew the poorly-prepared ESB case out of the water. For me, one

Above: Artist's impression of the proposed interpretative centre for Wicklow Mountains National Park

Below left: The late actor John Hurt, with Garech Browne of Luggala Estate and his wife, Princess Hardshad Purna Devi, outside the Four Courts on the day the court over-ruled the planning decision

Below right: Garech Browne (also known as Garech de Brún) objects to the proposal in a letter to The Sunday Independent in 1991

memorable contribution was when Frank Mitchell stated that one could almost feel the chill wind off the glacier in such places.

We all genuinely thought we had had our day in court and that the scheme would proceed, but to everyone's surprise, especially the Government's, An Bord Pleanála delivered a very strongly worded refusal for the scheme, largely based on protecting the visual amenity and natural beauty of the area.

An application for another VALOREN-funded ESB scheme on two more lakes in Kerry a year or so later was also refused following an FMCI objection. The overall result was the killing off of the VALOREN scheme before it had even started. There is no doubt that the decision and grounds for refusal given by An Bord Pleanála set a significant precedent for preventing ill-considered developments in upland areas after that.

Battles over interpretative centres

If the eighties was the decade of the hydroelectric schemes, the nineties was definitely the decade of the interpretative centres. While the hydro schemes



Peer's protest against Co. Wicklow project

Sir - I have been horrified to hear of the proposal to create a touring and interpretative centre on Djouce mountain situated between Roundwood and Sally Gap in County Wicklow. Letters from John Boorman, Annamie and Roger Garland T.D. (Sunday Independent March 24th). It would seem that the Office of Public Works have decided to do this without any consultation with local councils, farmers, landowners, the people of Roundwood or elsewhere.

They have, it seems, prepared or presented no plans or maps of their proposals to any of these bodies or persons. This is surely the servants of a democratically elected Government assuming autocratic and dictatorial powers!

In the past many of the country's most beautiful panoramas have been destroyed by the indiscriminate planting of conifers.

It is now proposed to let loose hundreds of

tourists on Djouce mountain and the environment.

There are many reasons why this should not be allowed to happen but surely one of the most vital must be hazard of fire during a spell of dry weather. Only one of the numerous tourists has to throw down a burning cigarette end or a lighted match to start a conflagration which could and almost certainly would destroy hundreds of acres of heather and with it grouse nests and other wildlife.

I know Djouce and the mountains in that part of Wicklow very well and have vivid memories of many days (and some nights) wanting to extinguish fires caused by some careless or thoughtless person.

Would it not be appropriate to organise a nationwide lobby of opinion to prevent such bodies as the Office of Public Works adopting such high-handed action? — **LORD ORANMORE AND BROWNE**, 52 Eaton Place, London

location for the Wicklow Centre.

The size of the development falls so far below the thresholds for Environmental Impact assessments that such an assessment is not warranted in this instance. However, an E.I.A. has now been commissioned and will, we are confident, overcome any concerns that remain in relation to the proposal.

O.P.W. are complying fully with their statutory functions under the Planning Acts and will continue to do so.

With regard to Mr. Boorman's letter, O.P.W. officials were happy to attend a public meeting in Roundwood when requested to do so by some local residents. There was no question of O.P.W. having its arm twisted to attend the meeting as was insinuated.

One final point, the site was described by Mr. Boorman as being on Djouce Mountain. This is not correct. It is located in an area of woodland near the entrance to Luggala, approximately half way between Djouce mountain and Roundwood village.

— **CHRIS FLYNN**, Press Officer, Office of Public Works.



happened mostly below the radar of national news, except for a brief appearance by this writer on the national airwaves, the interpretative centre cases were very widely covered and reported. In the 1990s, the then MCI, with strong support from Garech Browne of Luggala Estate, played a part in the case against the proposed interpretative centre for the newly-established Wicklow Mountains National Park, to be located at **Luggala**, Co Wicklow.

The objections to these schemes centred on the location of large, built developments in fragile, undeveloped upland landscapes, developments which could damage a scarce natural landscape resource.

Pat Ewen, a climber and another senior planner, this time with Dublin City Council, prepared a very detailed and professional case on behalf of MCI. Like Dick Tobin, he also took time off from his day job to present the case at an oral hearing. The appeal was successful and the centre was refused permission.

The Luggala interpretative centre proposal rumbled on through both the High Court and the Supreme

Above: Luggala, Co Wicklow. The visitor centre proposed in 1991 would have overlooked this view from a short distance away, a major intrusion on the landscape

Below: Mountaineering Ireland members at the Galtymore cross on the Limerick/Tipperary border, during Mountaineering Ireland's Spring Gathering in 2018

Court, triggering a change to planning legislation, before eventually being rejected. An even more controversial scheme at **Mullaghmore** in the Burren was also abandoned, finally concluding in 2000.

It should be noted that all of the actions by the participants mentioned above, who were acting on behalf of the FMCI/MCI, were, to their great credit, voluntary and carried out in their own time.

The Galtymore cross case

My final and somewhat amusing memory of the involvement of FMCI in upland planning issues was in relation to a proposal in the eighties by local businessmen in Tipperary town to erect a large cross on the summit of **Galtymore**, one that its proponents claimed "would be visible from three counties." This was despite the existence already of a discrete cross erected near the summit in 1976 and painted annually by **Ted Kavanagh** and his wife **Joan**.

The writer got a copy of the 25" OS map covering the summit of Galtymore and noted that the proposed location for the cross, like the summit cairn, was in fact twenty feet inside County Limerick. This

was an important point, as the planning application was made to Tipperary County Council. I can tell you he was the most relieved planning officer I have ever spoken to after I advised him of this little oversight by the applicants. This planning hot potato was not only off his desk but also out of his county. The proposal was abandoned.

The original cross is still in place – and is now painted annually by **Jimmy Barry** – and I'm advised that the new proposed cross is at a much lower elevation, in a Kilshane churchyard, which is definitely in County Tipperary! ■





Way back... *A personal reflection*

Former Chairperson of Mountaineering Ireland **Ross Millar** recalls highlights of his time on the Board

Some thirty years ago, I had the good fortune to be appointed as the civil servant responsible for the development and promotion of countryside access and outdoor recreational activities in Northern Ireland. At that stage, I was not a member of Mountaineering Ireland, but I was a keen hillwalker, largely walking with a group of like-minded friends, so this was a dream job for me.

It was in that official capacity that I first met **Joss Lynam**, who chaired the **National Waymarked Ways Advisory Committee** for the Republic and was a founding member of the Federation of Mountaineering Clubs of Ireland. Joss and I quickly became good friends, and I was invited to join the National Waymarked Ways Advisory Committee, which I duly did. I also decided to join Mountaineering Ireland, as I realised that here was a national body working for the good of all its members and, at times, facing a serious uphill struggle in terms of an appreciation within government circles of the actual issues.

The first issue Mountaineering Ireland embraced at that time was amending the legislation on **occupiers' liability** in the Republic, which had, through a lack of clarity, been used by many landowners as the main

Above: Pictured following a meeting of Comhairle na Tuaithe at Corr na Móna, Co Galway in July 2004, from left: Eddie Davitt (IFA), Joss Lynam of Mountaineering Ireland and the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Éamon Ó Cuív, TD. During the meeting, the Minister outlined the new Rural Social Scheme

reason for not allowing access to, or over, their lands. This process was very much driven by Joss and Mountaineering Ireland, and resulted in the subsequent **Occupiers' Liability Act 1995**, which has proved invaluable.

It is difficult to perceive now how contentious the subject was at that time. The feeling of most hill users across Ireland then was one of unease, except in areas where access had long been accepted, like the Mournes and the State-owned national parks. It was very much the era of the 'Trespassers Prosecuted' signs.

The Board of Mountaineering Ireland, of which I was by then a member, also realised that they needed to employ full-time staff, as the range of issues was becoming too great for simply volunteers, with some part-time back-up, to manage.

Our first appointment in a full-time capacity, **Helen Lawless**, was appointed as Development Officer in 2001, after much internal machination. Many members wanted us to remain purely voluntary, but we clearly needed a lobbying and research capacity, requiring dedicated staff.

On the basis of moving to this more comprehensive role, the Board of Mountaineering Ireland later took the decision to appoint a Chief Officer and subsequently a number of other key staff to cover the full gamut of our activities, whether hillwalking, climbing or whatever. We thus had the capacity to organise events, conferences and meets in a much more structured way, and to support our members. Crucially, it also allowed us to consider all aspects of the use and protection of our upland areas and gave us the ability to interact and interface with the many arms of government and its often conflicting policy agendas.

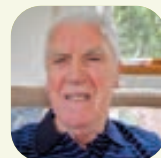
Subsequently, we were able to develop (amongst other things) the **Helping the Hills** initiative, beginning



➤ **Ross Millar** was Chair of Mountaineering Ireland 2012-2016 and a member of the Board for many years. A town planner by profession, he has worked in the field of managing protected areas, including in the Mournes, Glens of Antrim and the Causeway Coast, areas where he was involved in developing access infrastructure and outdoor recreation activities and dealing with visitor management issues.

Finding our voice for mountain access & conservation

By Frank Nugent



The challenge for mountaineers seeking sustainable access to mountains and other wild places had tended, in the early years of the Federation of

Mountaineering Clubs of Ireland (FMCI), to cast us in opposition to hill farmers and private landowners. There is a dichotomy and balance for activists to consider, between concerns for environmental degradation of our mountain landscapes and the promotion and use of them for recreational activity and tourism.

Apart from the degradation caused by increased recreational pressure, afforestation, infrastructural development and agricultural policies, pressures have surfaced which have had to be faced by the organisation since the formation of FMCI in 1971. An early response was to develop a series of policy

documents to guide our thinking and seek public and political support.

The Mountaineering Council of Ireland and the **Irish Uplands Forum** were proactive in the promotion and defence of the **Occupiers' Liability Act 1995** and in the establishment of **Comhairle na Tuaithe**, where all the stakeholders could meet and listen to each other's perspective.

It has been a long, slow burn to build the requisite trust. However, due to sustained efforts and working closely with State and private landowners and with farming organisations over many years, we have combined effectively to obtain a positive government response. Mountaineering Ireland has earned its place as a respected voice that can be heard by government.

Frank Nugent: MCI Chair 1997 to 2000

with a conference in Glendalough in 2012, with a set of agreed principles published in 2014. This has impacted positively on a range of upland erosion control works across the island.

A whole gamut of activities under the Access & Conservation remit continues to this day, including member training, seminars, workshops and publications, creating a very important relationship with our membership. Raising awareness of the issues and the potential solutions is crucial to this process, with the *Irish Mountain Log* being a vital element of this.

Given the desire to specifically deal with issues pertaining to hillwalking, a **Hillwalking Committee** was established as a sub-committee within Mountaineering Ireland. Government now actively promotes not only walking and hillwalking for better health, but it funds

and supports the ever-expanding range of trails through the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme, the Walks Scheme, the Rural Recreation Officer programme and the National Trails Register. Joss Lynam again was the father figure of much of this work, and was always an advocate for working with landowners and seeking consensus where possible.

It has been an honour for me to be part of this dynamic. I urge members to keep abreast of current matters, such as the development of the Republic's first **National Outdoor Recreation Strategy**, now under preparation, and to input as desired. The Covid pandemic has shown us all how vital our sport is for our mental and physical wellbeing, and how crucial access to and the protection of our uplands are. We have come a long way, but the journey continues ■

Legal areas and issues

By David Walsh



My advising FMCI formally began in 1982 with the fight to prevent the army closing the "Banana Road" route over Camarahill, up Lugnaquilla. From then, until I retired in 2019, I was usually there somewhere or other when a legal issue erupted at the centre of the FMCI/MCI/MI universe, or in some remoter corner of our mountaineering world.

I might be tasked when a rulebook had to be rewritten, maybe the constitution itself, or a new youth training policy; anything really. Whether operating in the shadows, or occasionally mouth-piecing out front, in wartime and in peace, sometimes I was official, sometimes not. The work was "different," varied,

interesting and, while mostly enjoyable, at times it was the extreme opposite. I know where the bodies are buried.

Access to recreational uplands is a constantly recurring theme. In my perspective, it surfaces sometimes over a disputed "public" pathway, but perhaps more commonly around occupier's liability - think of Rossnowlagh, the Wicklow Way, bolted crags, etc. It is critically important ongoing stuff, and I particularly acknowledge colleagues - barrister **Cormac Ó Dúlacháin SC** and the ever-effective **Helen Lawless**.

David Walsh: Honorary Legal Advisor 1982 to 2019



Honouring the spirit of the wild

Let's not forget what it's all about

Clare Sheridan recalls the far-reaching changes to the climbing scene wrought by innovators such as Joss Lynam, Paddy O'Leary and others during Mountaineering Ireland's early years

"Here," said my father, handing me a copy of *The Irish Times*. "This man is worth reading." 'This man' was **Paddy O'Leary**, and the year was 1971. The article, about hillwalking, had one very memorable recommendation: *"If you find a spider's web spun across your path, don't just barge through it, walk around it."*

Above, from left: Calvin Torrans, Joss Lynam, Anthony Latham (obscured) and Emmett Goulding at a bivouac on an unclimbed peak in the Kishtwar Himalayas, 1977

Walk around it? This was an entirely novel idea back then, when words like *environment* and *habitat* weren't yet in anyone's vocabulary.

As a keen member of the **UCD Mountaineering Club**, I was alert to any mention of mountains and mountaineering, and I was soon on a mountain skills training course with the same Paddy O'Leary.

The training courses, the first of their kind in Ireland, were organised by **Paddy O'Leary** and **Joss Lynam** through the newly-formed **Association for Adventure Sports** (AFAS).

Joss was everywhere on the Irish climbing scene in 1971 and, that same year, thanks to his boundless capacity for work, he succeeded in setting up the forerunner of Mountaineering Ireland, the **Federation of Mountaineering Clubs of Ireland** (FMCI).

Many climbers and walkers were sceptical of the FMCI, unsure of its relevance and wary of its bureaucracy. For me, my sister **Bairbre** and our friend **Sheila Willis**, it was a link to a wider mountaineering community and, as representatives of the UCDMC, we went along to its meetings with open minds.



➤ Climber and author **Clare Sheridan** has been active on the climbing scene for over fifty years. Along with her husband **Calvin Torrans** she has pioneered many new routes on Irish crags, most notably at Fair Head, where they continue to develop major new lines together. Clare was awarded the **2014 Mountaineering Ireland Lynam Medal**. Over the years, she has held several volunteer positions with Mountaineering Ireland, including guidebook and magazine editor, and Chair of the Irish Alpine Committee. Her acclaimed memoir, *Uncoiling the Ropes*, was published in 2020 and is available to buy from the Mountaineering Ireland online shop.



Representative voice

The meetings were usually very boring, but every so often something of interest would pop up, like the offer from a group of motorbike scramblers to help with mountain rescues. That offer was politely declined, but here, in essence, was one of the vital and enduring strengths of what was to become Mountaineering Ireland – the strength of our representative voice in helping to protect the fragile habitats of our uplands.

Enlightened attitude to women

Another aspect of the FMCI from its earliest days was its enlightened attitude to women. This was also true

Above: The 1980 Irish Andean Expedition team, seated from left: Tommy Irving, Calvin Torrans, Harry O'Brien, Dermot Somers, Joss Lynam. Standing: Pedro (mule handler), Tom Hand, Clare Sheridan and Emmett Goulding

of AFAS and, with Joss Lynam personifying both organisations, we hardly distinguished between the two. The mountaineering world was predominantly male at the time, but in Joss we found a leader, an authority figure, who had the same expectations of all of his students, regardless of gender. This helped Bairbre, Sheila and me to train with confidence as Mountain Leaders and to be amongst the first to qualify as MLs in this country.

Bairbre went on to become chair of the FMCI a few years later, at a time when people still hadn't got their tongues around any alternative to *chairman*. Mountaineering Ireland has honoured this part of Joss's legacy in recent years by its initiatives to

'Because it's there? No. Because I'm here'

By Ken Doyle



They say climbing has changed. Unusually for me, I'd disagree. Climbing hasn't changed at all. In the last fifty years, the equipment has changed, the social acceptance and popularity have changed, but climbing hasn't changed. Face it: when you first put your hands and feet on some rock or holds at a climbing wall, you knew nothing about climbing, nothing about its history, nothing about belay devices, nothing about fall factors or the dynamic quality of ropes. You did know about desire. Can I get up there?

What is there? You probably only thought about getting up, never getting down. The movement felt good, intrinsic, something that reminded you of something else, you just can't remember what. Each time you move up, the same problem, how do I get up that little bit more? But why? It's pointless, I'll just come right back down again! So why? "Because it's there? No. Because I'm here."

Ken Doyle: Mountain Leader (www.madetomove.ie), Rock Climbing Development Instructor, Trainee Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor





support women's involvement in hillwalking and climbing, though the number of independent female trad and alpine leaders remains stubbornly low.

The spirit of the wild

Much has changed in the fifty years of Mountaineering Ireland and its forerunners' existence. **Mountaineering** has become **climbing** and has fragmented into alpinism, rock climbing, ice climbing, etc, while **hillwalking** has morphed into hiking, trekking, trail walking and so on.

Activities that were once the esoteric hobbies of

Above, from left: Orla Prendergast, Christine Moore and Michelle Bracken at a women's meet in the Burren, Co Clare, in 1990

the few are now the mainstream pursuits of the many and, with the increasing demand for the thrills of adventure (and little acceptance of risk), growing commercialisation is leading to a dumbing down of wild places.

Mountaineering Ireland has a lot to be proud of in its fifty years' history but, as it continues to reinvent itself to serve the needs and expectations of its members, and of the huge population of non-affiliated walkers and climbers it now represents, it has to tread a fine line to ensure that it continues to honour the spirit of the wild that it inherited ■

My first Summer Alpine Meet

By Elaine Mullan



I went to my first Mountaineering Ireland **Summer Alpine Meet** in 2012. I'd been a rock climber and hillwalker BC (Before Children!), but had not got the chance to do much since then.

The children were two and four by 2012, and my feet were getting itchy. We had recently converted the attic, where all my mountain and climbing gear lived, and it was a case of use it or give it away. I chose the former, booked myself onto one of the courses to be held at the Summer Alpine Meet, and off I went, to Val Masino

in the Italian Bregaglia Alps, not knowing anyone.

My gear was antique, but I thoroughly enjoyed it, and I met some great people. I loved being me, not Mammy, and just having to look after myself.

I came back with a big list of must-buys, and I have been back almost every year since.

I've really missed it these past two years, and I can't wait to feel the crunch of snow under my boots in 2022!

Elaine Mullan: Comeragh Mountaineering Club member







Mountain training

A reflection

Trevor Fisher marvels at the growth in training schemes since he started out as a trainee instructor

"There is no such thing as a fully trained mountaineer, and it would be a bold man and a foolish one who claimed he had nothing more to learn." – **Eric Langmuir** (1969)

The right place, at the right time.... I look back over the past thirty years, a time that has seen so much change in the world of mountain training, and I clearly remember my own 'right place at the right time.' It was early 1993, and **Marcus Bailie** had

Above:
The old
Tollymore
mountain
training centre

Inset:
The Tollymore
National
Outdoor
Centre,
Northern
Ireland (as it's
now called)
today

► **Trevor Fisher** is Centre Manager of Tollymore National Outdoor Centre. He started hillwalking at a young age in Wicklow and began rock climbing soon afterwards. He has since walked and climbed extensively in Ireland, the UK, Europe and North America.

just offered me a post as a trainee instructor at the **National Adventure Training Centre** in Tiglin, outside Ashford, CoWicklow.

I had close on fifteen years' experience of hillwalking and was a keen climber... but training schemes?

Really?!

Mountain Leader Award?!

Never heard of it.

I had put in my hours on the basic 'climbing walls' of the time. I was inspired by the old black-and-white *Dalkey Guidebook*, with its four XS routes. We ticked them off one by one.

There were very few climbers and we all knew each other. Winter climbs on the North Prison of Lugnaquilla as young teenagers. Early repeats of Shanghai Corner and Great North Road in Glenadalough in the 1980s. Long days in the Bens. All brilliant, but 'Mountain Training'? It was all new to me.

I was suddenly part of a small group of people who would mould and shape the activity over the coming years. Good characters... great friends and memories.

The training nowadays is to be applauded

By Paddy O'Leary



I regard mountaineering training as a vital element in Mountaineering Ireland's important role.

Mistakes have been made along the way, since formal mountaineering training began in Ireland. It was a big mistake to allow ourselves to be saddled with the construction, maintenance and ancillary staffing of the National Training Centre at Tiglin. Training courses are best run at the most suitable location, Irish or foreign, for the particular skills being taught. It is also more viable financially.

That is why I applaud the present arrangement at Mountaineering Ireland, where a capable and experienced Training Officer is enabled to avail of the services of the best instructors at the appropriate locations. For that reason, I urge that this function be further enhanced and financially strengthened.

Paddy O'Leary: mountaineer, past manager of the National Adventure Centre at Tiglin, which specialised in mountaineering, canoeing and orienteering, and author of *The Way That We Climbed* (The Collins Press)

My own Mountain Leader (ML) training soon followed, and then Instructor Training in Ireland, followed by an assessment in Wales. And then trips to the Mourne to deliver multi-pitch courses. And then Mountain Leader weekends across Ireland.

The 'Mountain Leader Preliminary Assessment' would morph into the Mountain Skills Assessment. The 'Rock Climbing Leader endorsement to the ML' would become the 'Rock Climbing Leader Award,' and then the 'Single Pitch Award,' and then eventually the 'Rockclimbing Instructor Award.'

The old BOS meetings – **Bórd Oiliúint Sléibhe**, the then Mountain Training Board – were informal affairs, often in the living room of one of the Board members. Tiglin became a memory, and work took me to Tollymore via Birr OEC, to the **NI Mountain Training Board** and the **UK Mountain Training Board**.

Many meetings led to unified awards. New schemes were piloted and rolled out, notably for climbing walls and for less serious hillwalking terrain.

The two training boards on the island have now become one, and we continue to work through teething problems.

I look back at my forty or more years in the hills, with the original 'Mountain Leadership' handbook in my hand, published in 1969, yours for 10 shillings. Eighty-eight pages of Summer and Winter Mountain Leadership Certificate schemes. A chapter on rock climbing. Nothing on 'leadership' except for the title of the book and a few lines in the syllabus under 'Responsibilities of the Party Leader and Advice on Instructional Method,' and the less than useful sentence: 'Please refer to Mountain Leadership handbook.'

Powerfully inspiring female mountaineers

By Colette Mahon



If she can see it, she can be it. In the 1990s, it was unusual to find many females performing at the higher levels of what was historically a male-

dominated activity. Luckily, I met **Orla Prendergast**, **Jane Carney**, **Joan Dineen** and **Sinead Pollock** through the Mountain Skills, Mountain Leader and Rock Climbing Instructor Awards. All are powerfully inspiring mountaineers, who continue to share their expertise and love of outdoor adventures.

In 2011, **Women with Altitude** (WWA), a Sport Ireland funded initiative, began to address gender imbalance in sport participation. Instructors and guest speakers at WWA events have made lasting impressions on many participants and have encouraged them to set personal challenges. The impressive list of guest

speakers has included well known climber and author **Clare Sheridan** and ice-climbing world medallist **Eimir McSwiggan**. More recently, on WWA-organised training days, I have been inspired by women who have stepped out of their comfort zone, scrambling in the Comeraghs or participating in the Blessington Women's Shed 'Introduction to Hillwalking' programme in the Wicklow Mountains.

Mountaineering Ireland has embraced the **Women In Sport** participation programme. The next step is to increase the percentage of females in leadership and instructor roles.

Colette Mahon: Mountaineering Ireland club member since 1990, member of Bord Oiliúint Sléibhe (BOS) 2012-2018, member of Board of Directors 2018 to present



Candidates were required to lead 'difficult' rock climbs to pass the assessment, and had to hold the ML before achieving a 'Rockclimbing Endorsement.'

I remember that Mountain Skills training weeks used to include a day of rock climbing. I also remember that the Newpark climbing wall used to be 'state-of-the-art.' How things change!

Unfortunately, Tiglin no longer exists as a national adventure training centre. All adventure sports face

Above: Enjoying the mountains on a Summer Alpine Meet

Opposite: On a climb during a Summer Alpine Meet

new challenges and have to adapt to new opportunities.

I am still on that journey, still continuing to meet and learn from great people and to bump into friends from years ago.

Mountain training, too, is still on that journey. It will continue to develop and overcome challenges in the months and years ahead, across Ireland and the UK ■

The Feel Good Factor Club

By Kath Maguire



Seven years ago, a few liked-minded friends formed the **Feel Good Factor Club**, with a view to giving women more opportunities to progress in

mountaineering and mountain biking. The club is aimed at a grassroots audience, but with the aim of providing a pathway to increase the number of active female coaches. Women are under-represented in all of the coaching awards across the club's sports – climbing, hillwalking and mountain biking.

One of my roles in the club has been to create opportunities, by seeking funding strands to enable investment in the training and upskilling of our members. The concept is that building experience and

skills leads to increased confidence and wider participation in the sports that women enjoy. Many members have started their journey of discovering a new sport through the club, and we have seen them progress from beginners through the varying coaching pathways, such as the Climbing Wall Award, Rock Climbing Instructor training, Mountain Skills and the Mountain Leader Award.

My hope is that the club will continue to be sustainable in the future, as the circle of sharing skills and experience continues.

Kath Maguire: Member of the Mountaineering Ireland Training Board, and founder chairperson of the Feel Good Factor club, 2014 to present



Mountaineering Ireland Meets

By Alun Richardson



“The **Mountaineering Ireland Summer Alpine Meet** has been the envy of the other Mountaineering Councils for a long time. It is a mixture of mountain lovers, great conversation, and Irish music and dancing that come together to create the quintessentially Irish form of fun, the ‘**craic**.’

I was fortunate to be the Training Officer for four years, following in the wonderful footsteps of **Tim Orr**. My favourite part of the job was attending the meets, especially the **Summer Alpine Meets** and the **Winter Meets** in Scotland. It was a time when Irish hillwalkers,

mountaineers and climbers gathered together to exchange experiences, learn new skills and celebrate all that was great about Irish mountaineering. Novices and seasoned alpinists exchanged ideas and had adventures together. They then danced the night away with live music, quizzes, lectures, competitions and plenty of tall stories and laughter.

My time as Training Officer with Mountaineering Ireland was one of the happiest of my life, and the Alpine Meets will forever be my favourite part of that.

Alun Richardson: Mountaineering Ireland Training Officer 2010-2013



Summer Alpine Meets

By Gemma Gorman



“The Mountaineering Ireland Summer Alpine Meets were the highlights of my summers in 2018 and 2019.

At those meets, the campsites turned into little Mountaineering Ireland villages, with **Jane Carney's** tent turning into Mountaineering Ireland's HQ.

There were always like-minded people to go out and ‘play’ with during the day, whether sport climbing, joining an alpine mountaineering course, taking a dip in the local swimming spot or going on a shopping trip to the nearest Decathlon.

There was a great atmosphere at the meet and everyone was always happy to share their knowledge.

I loved the training courses and learned so much in a short space of time from the experienced guides working on them. Those guides were always happy to adjust the course to suit your level of experience and fitness.

The highlight of my 2018 trip was climbing the Tête Blanche (3,710m) in the Pennine Alps on the Swiss-Italian border, with a friend, and having the confidence and skills to do so after completing a training course.

I'm looking forward to 2022's adventure already!

Gemma Gorman: Sligo Mountaineering Club member



‘The Log’

Our flagship publication, going strong since 1978

Patrick O’Sullivan delves into the history of the *Irish Mountain Log* and those who have worked on it

The *Irish Mountain Log* is the membership magazine for Mountaineering Ireland, which is recognised as the National Governing Body for mountaineering, hillwalking, rambling and climbing by both Sport Ireland and Sport Northern Ireland.

The magazine has been produced from the outset by a team of volunteers from amongst the members. The cost is included in each member’s subscription and receiving it directly to your home four times a year is one of the benefits of membership of the organisation, both for club members and individual members.



➤ **Patrick O’Sullivan** is Editor of the *Irish Mountain Log* (2004 to present). He has also served as Treasurer for the Mountaineering Council of Ireland (2001-2007).

Above: Pictured at a meeting of the Board of the Mountaineering Council of Ireland in Tiglin Adventure Centre, Co Wicklow in March 2003 (from left, front row): Chris Avison, Declan O’Keeffe, Vincent McAlinden, Máire Ní Mhurchú, Rita Connell. Back row: Kevin Higgins, Mary McNerney, Helen Lawless, John O’Callaghan, Patrick O’Sullivan, Milo O’Kane, Mary Solan, Gay Needham

Throughout its history, ‘*The Log*’ has been an important means of communication with the members. Certainly, in the days before the internet, it would have been the primary means of communication, though these days there are several other ways that Mountaineering Ireland can interact with its members. Some of the newer social media platforms may be age-specific, but, in repeated surveys, the *Log* remains a very effective means of keeping in touch and is valued by members of all ages.

The magazine began in 1978 as the *Mountain Log*, an A5 newsletter for the then Federation of Mountaineering Clubs of Ireland (FMCI). **Joss Lynam** was the first editor of the initially 16-page newsletter, which was published three times a year until issue 27 in Autumn 1986. Joss was supported by a team of various other volunteers.

The first issue of the then 40-page A5 *Irish Mountain Log* was Winter 1986. It was published four times a year. Joss Lynam was again the editor and **Jean Boydell** the assistant editor. The magazine changed to its present A4 format after ten years, with issue 40. Joss remained as editor until issue 50.

Gay Needham, who had been working for some time on the magazine with Joss, then took over as

Voluntary effort crucial in publications output

By Kevin Higgins



Mountaineering Ireland's flagship publication, and the one that immediately comes to mind, is the **Irish Mountain Log**. From its inception in 1978 as the *FMCI Newsletter*, with the provisional title of *Mountain Log*, it was controversial in regard to its title and content. It continued, in A5 format, and with a touch of colour in 1986, to become the glossy, A4, full-colour newsstand magazine that it is today, a match for any of the fully commercial outdoor publications.

In addition, Mountaineering Ireland has published an extensive catalogue of **rock-climbing guidebooks** to many of the crags and climbing venues on the island of Ireland. It has also supported and encouraged numerous **walking guides** to different regions, especially in the late 1970s and 1980s.

Not all of the publications achieve such longevity. *Irish Climber* was a short-lived annual that managed only three issues. **The Journal of the Irish Mountaineering**

and Exploration Historical Society was the product of a Mountaineering Ireland subcommittee. Inaugurated in Kilkenny in May 2000, with me as Chair and with support from other members of **Tyndall Mountain Club**, the streamlining of Mountaineering Ireland meant that the committee was shortlived, but the journal went to four editions (despite its longwinded title), with a fifth still in preparation.

At the recent world-renowned Banff Centre Mountain Film and Book Festival 2021, Mountaineering Ireland's most recent publication, **Irish Peaks**, was awarded first prize in the Guidebook section, surely a vindication of the huge voluntary effort that the area of 'publications' necessitates.

Kevin Higgins: Founder member of Tyndall Mountain Club, set up in 1981. Served on the MCI Executive in the late 1990s and has chaired the Irish Mountaineering and Exploration Historical Society

editor from issue 51 until issue 58. After that, **Chris Avison** assumed the role of editor, from issue 59 until issue 68. Issue 69 was edited by **Gay Needham**. I then took over for issue 70, the summer 2004 issue.

I was also honorary treasurer at that time and was assured that my position would be temporary and that the policy would be to rotate the position of editor at least every three years or so. With the current issue, *IML 140*, for winter 2021, I will now have completed 18 years in the post and am looking forward to that rotation!

Of course, the editor does get a lot of support from other volunteers and staff and, over the years, there have been many members who have contributed

Below: Pictured at the launch of IMEHS in Kilkenny on May 21st, 2000 (from left): Máire O'Connor (Sec, Tyndall MC), Joss Lynam, Tony Patterson (Mayor of Kilkenny), Frank Nugent and Pat Dowling

significantly as volunteers to the work on the magazine. In my term as editor, those volunteers have included **Joss Lynam** – who carried on as literary editor for many years after he stood down from the role of editor – **Gay Needham**, **Rita Connell**, **Dave Kenny** and **Kieran Creevy**. My sincere thanks to all of them and to the many others who have helped us out along the road.

The most important contributors, however, are the people who take the time to share their experiences in the hills and mountains, and on the rock faces, around the world. Without those submissions, which are always welcome, we would struggle to produce a quality quarterly magazine. Members writing for



Cover of Volume 1 of *Journal of Irish Mountaineering and Exploration Historical Society*, 2002. **Note:** Copies of the journal can be purchased through the shop on Mountaineering.ie. They provide interesting reading!



Irish Mountain Log changes down through the years

By Gay Needham



“ There was a significant change to the format of the *Irish Mountain Log* for the 25th anniversary of the FMCI/MCI in 1996. The *Log* had started life eighteen years previously as an A5-sized 16-pager, produced on a typewriter by **Joss Lynam**, with the help of various volunteers over the years.

When I got involved in 1993 as Assistant Editor, it had increased in size and was then produced on Joss's Apple Mac, with the help of **Betty White, Jean Boydell** and **Adrienne O'Keeffe**.

Ernie Brace and **Róisín Mallon** used to go around shops in Dublin and Belfast to drum up advertising.

For the 25th anniversary, it was decided to go to A4 size, with some colour (which would facilitate more

colour photos in the magazine).

There was also an issue with distribution – it was just getting too big a job for Joss's grandson and Adrienne's nieces to do, so it was moved to a printer who could print and distribute it. With the new methods of working, it cost the same to produce as the old A5 format.

Tommy Ellis took over advertising and we were later joined by **Declan O'Keeffe** as News Editor, and over the next few years the *Log* prospered. Joss retired as Editor in 1999 and I took over as Editor for the next two years, when I was replaced by **Chris Avison**.

Gay Needham: Assistant Editor of the Irish Mountain Log 1993-1999; Editor: 1999-2001

members means that this is truly a members' magazine.

Amongst the editorial team currently producing the magazine, **Peter O'Neill** has been involved the longest. Peter is a past chairperson of the Mountaineering Council of Ireland and his involvement predates mine. He has held various roles, including features editor, and is now literary editor of the ever-popular book reviews section.

Nicky Hore, a past treasurer of the organisation, is features editor. The layout of the magazine is done professionally by **Cóilín MacLochlainn**, whose involvement also predates mine. The magazine is now printed by GPS in Belfast, with a current print run of around 13,000. It is distributed to members' home addresses by Sooner Than Later in Dublin ■

Below left: The Spring 1999 issue of the *Irish Mountain Log*, the fiftieth issue of the *Log*, the last one edited by Joss Lynam


Right: Issue 100 of the *Irish Mountain Log*, Winter 2011, Patrick O'Sullivan's 31st issue as editor



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 Climbing in Chamonix, in the Alps

Mountaineering Ireland and the UIAA

Promoting mountaineering and mountain protection worldwide

By Mike Maunsell, Vice-President, UIAA Mountain Protection Commission



Mountaineering Ireland not only represents its members' interests on this island, but it is also part of the global mountain network that promotes the growth and protection of mountaineering and climbing worldwide, through membership of the **UIAA**, the **International Climbing and Mountaineering Federation**, commonly known by its French name, Union Internationale des Associations d'Alpinisme.

The UIAA was founded in 1932 and has a global presence on six continents, representing ninety member associations and federations in sixty-seven countries. Mountaineering Ireland became a member of the UIAA in 2004. The work of the UIAA is conducted through the work of its seven commissions, which consist of members who volunteer their expertise in a particular field of mountaineering. The commissions are: Anti-Doping, Ice Climbing, Medical, Mountain Protection, Mountaineering, Safety, Youth.

As Vice-President of the UIAA Mountain Protection Commission, it has been a privilege for me not only to represent the UIAA but also to represent Mountaineering Ireland at a global level, especially as a speaker at international

seminars, conferences and meetings, such as the UN World Tourism Conference in 2019.

While Mountaineering Ireland is a relatively small organisation compared to the bigger UIAA members, we are viewed very favourably within the global mountain network, particularly for three areas: our strong blend of individual members and club structure; the work of our staff team and their expertise; and for the quality of the *Irish Mountain Log* (the envy of many mountaineering organisations globally). These three areas are recognised as positive examples for other mountaineering organisations. It is important we build on these three strengths into the future.

Being part of a global UIAA mountain community, united by our passion for climbing and mountaineering and by a commitment to improve all aspects of the sport, including health, equipment, safety, competition climbing, access and the preservation of the mountain environment, will help us to achieve a positive future for mountaineering together ■



► **Mike Maunsell** is Vice-President of the UIAA's Mountain Protection Commission and has represented the UIAA at international conferences as a speaker. He represents the UIAA on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change's (UNFCCC) Sports for Climate Action working group. Mike has worked in mountain environments as a mountaineering instructor, environmental scientist and university lecturer for over 40 years. He served as a Board member from 2015 to 2021.



Mike Maunsell and President of the UIAA Mountain Protection Commission, Carolina Adler, at a UIAA conference in Berne, Switzerland in 2017



Reflections

My extended family

Retired SEMRA member **Jimmy Barry** reflects on the support he received from the Mountain Rescue and mountaineering communities at the launch of his book *Under Galtee Skies*

I have been a member of Mountaineering Ireland for around 30 years. Twenty-two years ago, I joined the **South Eastern Mountain Rescue Association (SEMRA)**. I'm retired now. Ten years ago, I published a small photographic book on the Galtees, *Under Galtee Skies*. Book launches are usually very quiet social events, but the launch of my book turned into a huge gathering that took even me by surprise. My good friend **Ferghal Purcell**, who owned the Aherlow House Hotel at the time, said I could have the ballroom and he would provide some light food. He expected 80 to 100 to show up.

The invitations went out to family, friends and then to my "extended family" – Mountaineering Ireland and SEMRA, plus my friends in **Mountain Meitheal, Kilfinane Outdoor Education Centre, Civil Defence** and the **Red Cross**, and a few friends from other **Mountain Rescue** teams, all of whom I had got to know personally through Mountaineering Ireland and SEMRA. In all, around 300 were invited (well you can't

Above:
Mountain
Rescue Ireland
volunteers on
a training
session

leave anyone out, you might need them some day).

On the night, the Mountain Rescue vans were parked up together for the 'just in case' call-out. People started arriving from all over. The night began with me signing books and meeting people: "Thanks for coming John;" "Mary, nice to see you." I saw all the cousins up from Kerry; the Cappawhite crew was in. My brother **Bill** might sing if he was asked; it was going to be a very, very good night. Thirty minutes had passed, and the crowd was still coming in when Ferghal pulled me to one side: "Where are all these people coming from, Jimmy?" he said, with a shocked look on his face. "Well," I answered, "Paddy, Ann and John are from Carlow; Helen from Wicklow; John, Ray and Mick from Waterford; Fergal from Offaly..." He stopped me there with "I'm running out of food." "Well, can you get some more?" said I. "These people will eat anything and everything you put in front of them. Oh, and a supply of Lucozade for Paddy, and there's a few more due from Upperchurch, about fifteen or twenty."

"I have a wedding tomorrow. I'll have to borrow from that." And off he goes.

Everyone I met for weeks and months after said it was the best food they ever had at a book launch (the bride and groom never found out). That's families for you. Free food and they all show up. It was a good night, and I know some of the turkey sandwiches were eaten on top of Galtymore the day after by my Mountaineering Ireland and SEMRA families. We must do it again ■



➤ **Jimmy Barry** is a hillwalker and former member of SEMRA living in west Tipperary. He is a founding member of Mountain Meitheal South East, a trainer with Leave No Trace Ireland, and the author of *Under Galtee Skies*

The organisation's first logo, introduced in 1990 when the FMCI became the MCI:



The organisation's logo from spring 2009 to present:



Officers of Federation of Mountaineering Clubs of Ireland, Mountaineering Council of Ireland and Mountaineering Ireland, from 1971 to present

Year	President	Chair	Honorary Secretary	Treasurer
1971		Seán Ó Súilleabháin	Barry O' Flynn	Sean Darby
1972		Seán Ó Súilleabháin	Barry O' Flynn	Sean Darby
1973		Pat Redmond	Barry O' Flynn	Sean Darby
1974		Martin Mulhall	Joss Lynam	Sean Darby
1975		Martin Mulhall	Joss Lynam	Jane Watt
1976		Martin Mulhall	Joss Lynam	Jane Watt
1977		Bairbre Sheridan	Joss Lynam	Patricia Hamilton
1978		Joe Rotherham	Donal Enright	Patricia Hamilton
1979		Joe Rotherham	Patricia Murray	Robin Merrick
1980		Joe Rotherham	Patricia Murray	Robin Merrick
1981		Robin Merrick	Patricia Murray	Niall Carroll
1982		Robin Merrick	Finola O'Donoghue	Niall Carroll
1983		Robin Merrick	Finola O'Donoghue	Niall Carroll
1984		Harry O'Brien	Finola O'Donoghue	Niall Carroll
1985		Harry O'Brien	Finola O'Donoghue	Niall Carroll
1986		Harry O'Brien	Finola O'Donoghue	Niall Carroll
1987		Harry O'Brien	Finola O'Donoghue	Niall Carroll
1988		Robin Merrick	Finola O'Donoghue	Niall Carroll
1989		Dawson Stelfox	Finola O'Donoghue	Niall Carroll
1990		Dawson Stelfox	Sue Enright	Niall Carroll
1991		Dawson Stelfox	Sue Enright	Peter Coakley
1992		Dawson Stelfox	Sue Enright	Peter Coakley
1993		Dawson Stelfox	Margaret Pailing	Peter Coakley
1994		Dawson Stelfox	Margaret Pailing	Peter Coakley
1995		Mike Keyes	Margaret Pailing	Alex McClenaghan
1996		Mike Keyes	Donal O'Mahony	Alex McClenaghan
1997		Frank Nugent	Donal O'Mahony	Ian Luney
1998		Frank Nugent	Donal O'Mahony	Ian Luney
1999		Frank Nugent	Mary Nash	Ciaran McDonald
2000		Frank Nugent	Mary Nash	Ciaran McDonald
2001		Peter O'Neill	Rita Connell	Patrick O'Sullivan
2002		Peter O'Neill	Rita Connell	Patrick O'Sullivan
2003		Declan O'Keeffe	Rita Connell	Patrick O'Sullivan
2004	Declan O'Keeffe		Rita Connell	Patrick O'Sullivan
2005	Declan O'Keeffe		Rita Connell	Patrick O'Sullivan
2006	Declan O'Keeffe		Seamus O'Hanlon	Patrick O'Sullivan
2007	Declan O'Keeffe	Dawson Stelfox	Ross Millar	Patrick O'Sullivan
2008	Alan Tees	Ruairí Ó Conchúir	Ross Millar	David Batt
2009	Alan Tees	Ruairí Ó Conchúir	Ross Millar	David Batt
2010	Alan Tees	Ruairí Ó Conchúir	Ross Millar	David Batt
2011	Alan Tees	Ruairí Ó Conchúir	David Batt	David Batt
2012	Ursula MacPherson	Ross Millar	Sandra Kennedy	David Batt
2013	Ursula MacPherson	Ross Millar	Sandra Kennedy	David Batt
2014	Ursula MacPherson	Ross Millar	Irene Sorohan	Nicky Hore
2015	Ursula MacPherson	Ross Millar	Irene Sorohan	Nicky Hore
2016	Paul Kellagher	Paul Barron	Irene Sorohan	Nicky Hore
2017	Paul Kellagher	Paul Barron	Irene Sorohan	Nicky Hore
2018	Paul Kellagher	Paul Barron		Nicky Hore
2019	Paul Kellagher	Paul Barron		Nicky Hore
2020	Paul Kellagher	Paul Barron		
2021	Paul Kellagher	Mike Maunsell/Geoff Thomas		



MCI: 'Mental Contortionists of Ireland'?

'The ramblings of MCI Founder Chairman Seán Ó Súilleabháin' [Irish Mountain Log, Autumn 1996]

Asking me to cast the mind back 25 years is an unreasonable demand on a person who prefers folklore (the safely distant past) or looking to the future. There is a serious danger that recollections are warped.

Really, everything is all jumbled up. So much seemed to be happening from the late 1960s to the mid-1970s and, very often, the same personalities were involved.

The pioneering group of Mountain Leadership guinea pigs involved a few from Kerry travelling to Wicklow and Donegal, as required. The **Association for Adventure Sports** [AFAS] was set up. Tiglin was being developed, said to be a pilot project for the proposed national centre, with Kerry providing Cappanalea as the site. Munster AFAS was busy with weekend training courses. Orienteering was introduced to the country, and meets had to be supported, whatever the venue. Do I recall driving from Kerry to a Sunday event in Tallaght?

The **Irish Mountain Rescue Association** was organised, with meetings on both sides of the border. The fortuitous combination – a Kerryman (Dick Spring) as Junior Minister at the correct department (Environment) and the timely occasion (the official opening of the mountain rescue station in Killorglin) – converted prolonged and frustrating negotiations with so many departments (Justice, Education, Defence, Environment) into an announcement of a grant-in-aid for rescue teams.

Somewhere in the middle of it all, somebody decided that a national body for the mountaineering fraternity would be a good idea. I've no recollection of how I got caught as Chairman – probably by opening my mouth too often, as usual. At this remove, and without seeing the minutes, I am left with two strong impressions. The first impression is that every one of the early meetings featured disagreement (a mild word) between representatives of Dublin-based clubs and the need, while driving to Dublin, to psych myself up to act the

Above:
Signposts on the Kerry Way, the longest waymarked way in Ireland, which was established by Seán Ó Súilleabháin

Below right:
Seán Ó Súilleabháin as he appeared in the Autumn 1996 issue of the Log and in 2016

stern schoolmaster. I suppose that we were discussing a constitution and how this might, or might not, bear on the internal autonomy of individual clubs – an obvious area for a clash of ideas, aided by the fact that two strong-willed people (those in the know will know who I mean) were delegates. The experience seemed to confirm the oft-expressed notion of the South Kerry Coroner (the Kerry Mountain Rescue Team was bringing him lots of business at the time, non-mountaineers, of course) that bog-trotters were too individualistic ever to co-operate. Now, it seems to me that any progress was achieved due to the meeting of minds of the Ulster and Munster delegates. However, there may have been another explanation.

The second impression is that day suddenly dawned. News arrived of grants from the Department of Education, and was it the Sports Council or was it Cospóir at that point? At any rate, nothing was better than finance/free grants to crystallise the reluctant minds of even cussed mountaineers. All was sweetness and light. The cracks were smoothed over. We had a national body and legitimately could seek that State hand-out.

Would an examination of the minutes bear out my recollection? I'm not sure. We thought that we could change the world, and maybe we did. Does MCI stand for 'Monumentally Conceited Idiots'? Come to think of it, wasn't it FMCI, rather than MCI, in the early days? Now what could the F stand for? ■





And I become a magnifying glass, even a microscope. The rock has some growth on it, a lichen or a fungus, but minute, flattened; eking out a life, unobtrusive lest it be noticed and obliterated by the mountain. Its tactics are different to ours: Where we plan to rush up, scurry, hurry up-and-down before the old mountain has noticed and rumbled its displeasure. (Actually, much personification is unrealistic. When the mountain rumbles, it is dispassionate, though just as dangerous.) This lichen works so slowly, not to be noticed. Never ambitious, never over-stepping itself. It grows not by hours, but by centuries, is quite happy to watch a season pass without a movement.

While climbing I am so acutely aware of detail; those growths, green, grey, yellow; the rock finely crystalline; hair-line cracks become possibilities and a nick is a hold, so I move up and time changes just a little; a single tick in the act of movement only. When I pause, time stops. This is fun, so we play 'Grandmother's Footsteps' for a while, me and time.

When I move, time moves; when I stop, time stops. In the back of my mind I have a feeling time is sneaking up on me. There are clouds where there were none before and the sun, too, has been moving and will not be going higher, always going down now.

And when I am not climbing?

I am caught up in the great imbalance of rock and space; the impossibility of a mountain on one side and nothing on the other.

And I know he's playing 'Grandmother's Footsteps' out there in front and I'm not that gone on these games with the sun going down and the cloud coming up, and time going past: very steadily now.

It was some time later, walking down the valley from this mountain, that I passed a flower. There was this flower, sudden, quite a surprise amongst scree, the mountain's rubble. I was not wearing snow goggles and my eyes, winced and screwed from the bright snow, could feel the sharp intense colour from each petal; all blue. Not a blue, pale, pallid. Not even a blue, deep, rich and dark, but a blue almost beyond colour; a blue so startling, so utterly beyond previous experience. Here at last was a flower I would bring back. A flower and a gem. I had not forgotten; promises made to a lover.

Slowly I saw it again and knew what I saw. It was not the flower that I must bring back, but my seeing it. The whole sum of the subjective.

I watched it grow more beautiful until I could stoop and pluck without diminishing, not the flower but the possibility of its experience without bounds ■

Answers to a questionnaire

Richard O'Neill Dean, writing in the Winter 1981 issue of the Mountain Log, reflects on heightened sensations during and after a climb in the Dauphiné Alps, France

We climbed yesterday All day in the sun and the snow and the barren rock. Mountains for miles stretching beyond dreams and imaginings. Two small people, perhaps just visible through poor binoculars borrowed from a hut; a hint of movement, catching the sun, metal glinting.

They, lounging, watching our progress not as movement but as a series of stills. Now we are here. And an hour later; now we are here. To them we are not two people, though they could think of us as that, but simply a flash, a reflection, or the bright colour of a rucksack momentarily catching the light. Almost just an imagining lost on a great wall of rock.

And us?

That depends....

When I climb, I sweat and the details of rock stand out like beads of sweat. Minute, perfect formations.

Above: Photo of Aiguille Dibona in the French Alps from Joss Lynam's collection. It accompanied Richard O'Neill Dean's article in the Log in 1981

Right: Richard O'Neill Dean, past and present





A participant's view

Claire Michael, writing in the Autumn 2007 issue of the Log, describes her Alpine Meet experience

We rolled into sunny **Saas Grund** [Switzerland] at about 6.00pm on Saturday, 14th of July. The first thing that struck me was that it was sunny – we'd had torrential rain in Chamonix for the previous two weeks – and the second was how many people were there – loads! Lots of familiar faces too, notably a huge turn-out from UCD. Tents were thrown up, and then off for a Rosti at the Hotel Dom.

On Sunday morning we got up bright and early for our first day's climbing. We drove up to the Dam and walked for 2½ hours to the base of the **Joderhorn** – lovely rock all the way to the summit, a very pleasant reintroduction to the Alps.

Monday started with the spectacular walk up to the **Almageller Hutte**. We ditched some gear, had a quick picnic and then followed the dotted yellow flashes to the base of the **Dri Hornli** (3,096m). What a great climb: lovely solid rock, interesting pitches all the way and a straightforward walk-off – it was great!

When we got back to the hut it was swarming with MCI Meet members: something like four of the five course groups were there for the night. Great banter and discussion about what everyone had done that day and where they were off to the next. **Mick Tighe's** advanced group was doing *big days*!

The following day, we managed to get up and out just ahead of the rest of the crowd! Two hours later and we

Above:
Claire Michael,
Vincent
McAlinden and
Dawson Stelfox
on the top of
the Jegihorn
(3,206m), with
the Lagginhorn
behind, in July
2007

Note: The 2022
Summer Alpine
Meet will be
held as before
in Saas Grund,
an excellent
and popular
location for
the meet

were at '**Port**' (3,290m), the start of the Traverse of the Portjengrat. **Vince McAlinden** had joined us the night before so we were now three: **Dawson Stelfox** and myself with Vince. **Macdara O'Graham** and **John Orr** were not far behind. (John pointed out that we were a proper Queen's University Mountaineering Club alumni team!)

We started off on loose rock, which rapidly progressed to lovely solid, often airy, pitches and sections of moving together along this fantastic and seemingly never-ending ridge. Route-finding was often interesting: one section led to rucksacks off and some less than elegant moves up through an overhanging chimney; the two lads went the correct way and trotted up a little rock face, wondering what all the fuss was about. By the time we had reached **P d'Andolla** (3,653m) and negotiated the soggy snow slope back to the hut, we'd been on the go for 12 hours. A quick cuppa at the hut before our two-hour walk-out back to the valley floor, by which time I was beginning to feel like we deserved a rest day, until I spoke to **Polish Martin** the next day and he told me about his 18hr, 30-pitch day on the **Mitteleruck** with **Mick**!

On Thursday morning we got the cable car up to **Kreuxboden** and climbed the SE ridge on the **Jegihorn** (3,206m) – very straightforward climbing on more solid rock. From here, we walked across and up to the **Hohsaas Hut**. Our next objective was the **Laggenhorn** (4,010m) by the SE Ridge.

Up and out before 4.30am, we reached the **Col Lagginjoch** (3,499m) to gain the ridge, which was a bit crumbly to start with but got rapidly better. Wonderful climbing, a lot of which we moved together on, and continually interesting; there was even a rather awkward horizontal abseil. A great end to a brilliant week, and I haven't even gotten into the high jinks of our last night at the Dom! Roll on next year! ■

➤ **Claire Michael** had, at the time, been living and working at various jobs in the Chamonix Valley (Argentière) for four years or so. Her main focus was on skiing, ski touring, trekking and climbing. Claire is a **Queen's University Mountaineering Club** alumnus.





Darkness into light

Anna Kellagher, writing in the Autumn 2015 issue of the Irish Mountain Log, remembers a great day on that year's Youth Alpine Initiative in Saas Grund, Switzerland

Darkness – The day started rather early, at a quarter to three in the morning, when one of the hut's Guardians knocked loudly on the door of our room. I was wondering to myself "What on earth am I doing up at this time?" but the prospect of the day ahead – but mainly breakfast! – made me drag myself out of bed and get dressed.

The morning went by very quickly and, before I knew it, we were all outside in the cold, fresh Alpine air. We were all very excited, as it was our first pre-dawn start in the Alps. With our head torches on, we all started off down the slope to the glacier and, once we got down, we roped up into groups of four and a guide. In my group, **Paul**, our guide, was at the front, and then me, followed by **Hugh, Niall** and **Kieran**.

We all crossed a dry glacier in the dark, and we were having to put everything we had learned into action – how to move together on a rope; how to cross and navigate a glacier safely; how to get across a crevasse, always being alert in case someone took a slip; and – most importantly – how to work together as a team in order to get to the summit and keep each other safe. Thankfully, we had our guide to help us, along with all of our previous training.

Light – Then there was the sunrise. We stopped for a bite to eat and to admire the sun rise and it really was

Above:
Anna Kellagher
experiencing
the joy of
summitting in
the Alps

the most magnificent thing. All the snow and ice began to glow orange, the stars faded away and the head torches went off. It was about 5.00am.

That was our last stop before the summit. We had a good pace going so we decided to push on for the summit instead of stopping at the col, as originally planned.

As we were nearing the summit I was beginning to regret not stopping for a break, I was so tired; but then the summit came into view and, when I realised how close we were, I forgot that thought.

Instead, my mind was full of pride – because we did not stop when we could have, and I had made it to the top, along with the fact that we were the first group to the summit of the **Fluchthorn**, at a height of 3,790m, that day. It was around 8.00am. The views were amazing and we were in no hurry to get down, so we had a long lunch, or rather a late breakfast, and sat and enjoyed the well-deserved views.

On the Youth Alpine trip, I learned so much and had an experience I know I will remember for the rest of my life. I met so many like-minded people who were of my own age, which was nice, as most of my other friends think I am half-mad! All the guides and instructors were so kind and helpful and such good fun. It was an experience I would definitely repeat ■



Dark matters

The night sky is most visible from the uplands, writes Georgia MacMillan. [This article first appeared in the Spring 2019 issue of the Irish Mountain Log]

It has become a well-quoted statistic that, here in Ireland, over 50% of us can no longer see the Milky Way, our own galaxy, from our back gardens because of light pollution. Fortunately, the remaining almost 50% of us can still enjoy that phenomenon as one of the many advantages of living in rural Ireland and the limited light pollution there. In that respect, the topography of our mountain ranges is a precious resource because of their inaccessibility to urbanisation and encroachment of artificial light. It is no accident that the only 'International Dark Sky' places on this island are in upland environments. These places are havens for recreationalists by day and increasingly so after dark. In Mayo, the Wild Nephin area and Ballycroy National Park enjoy the status of a gold-tier **International Dark Sky Park**, offering astro-tourism trade in the off-season with potential enterprises for local business and accommodation providers. It has sparked a myriad of creative events featuring winter experiences, including the **Mayo Dark Sky Festival**, a three-day feast of dark-sky activities for all the family to enjoy.

The adventurous among us might seek more immersive experiences, such as a night under the stars in the wilderness of the Nephin Beg range. This type of experience is unique to rural Ireland.

The concept of Dark Skies is transferable to rural communities around the country as a sustainable project, providing attractive goals for biodiversity and climate action. The establishment of a network of Dark-Sky groups can influence decision-making by local authorities

Above:
The night sky

Below right:
Electric light
at night in
Ireland

on the type of lighting used to illuminate their localities.

In addition to the increasing energy lost to sky glow, the growth of blue-rich (white) LED lights has begun a transformation of our streetscapes into 24-hour 'daytime.' This is, perhaps, a technological step too far in our diurnal evolution and has implications for ecology through its impact on nocturnal wildlife and our insect populations, as well as our own wellbeing.

Blue-rich light triggers our senses into daytime mode, telling our bodies it is time to wake up, suppress melatonin and get on with our daily habits. However, this interference in our circadian (meaning 'about a day') rhythms can lead to health disorders.

The map of Ireland shown here is an attractive image taken from space of the light emitted from Ireland back in 2015. As one might expect, the naturally dark areas are typically mountainous or rural areas. However, this picture is changing rapidly and a quick glance online at www.lightpollutionmap.info will provide an idea of the spread of artificial light across the country in recent years.

The solution is simple: we can use less light and make informed decisions on how light is used in public places. The Danish concept of 'hygge' (meaning a feeling of coziness and comfort) seems to encapsulate this. If we can apply a strategy of hygge into our lighting design we could be on the road to reducing our light wastage and making our nightscapes more attractive and welcoming.

As with any advocacy, the route to change is not through hardline restrictions but through engagement. Here in Mayo, we stress that light is not the pollutant, but it is the manner in which it is used that can lead to light pollution. We invite communities to experience the darkness of night while we still have this natural resource. Plan a night under the stars on a wilderness camp, take a moonlit hike or gaze at the Milky Way, if you are in the lucky 50%. As David Attenborough famously said, "No one will protect what they don't care about, and no one will care about what they have never experienced."

For more information on the Mayo International Dark Sky Park visit the website www.mayodarkskypark.ie

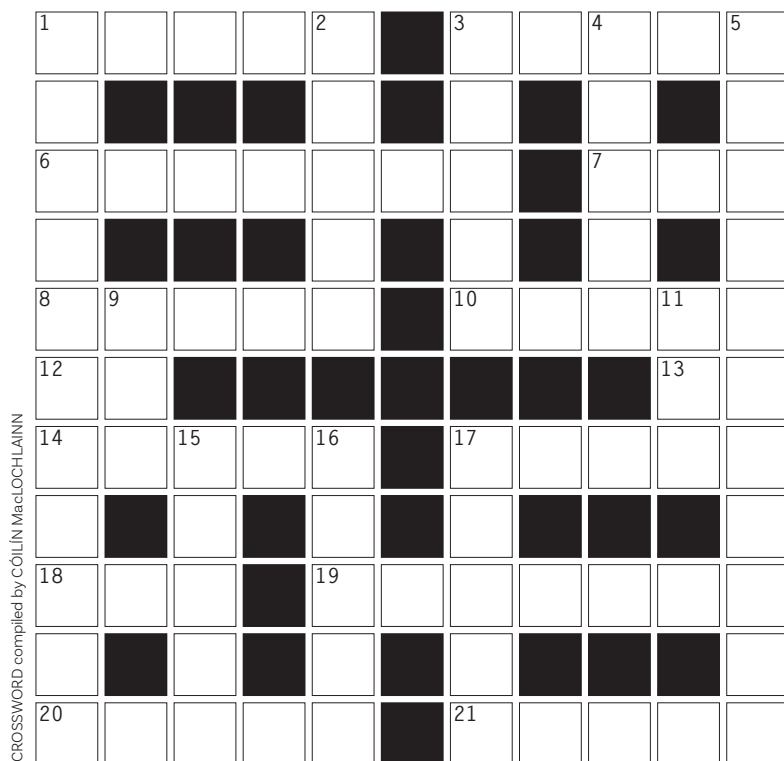


➤ Georgia MacMillan is a Mountain Leader and Mountain Skills provider. She represents Mountaineering Ireland on the Irish Uplands Forum.



50th Anniversary Competition

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



Clues Across

- 1 The highest part of a hill or ridge (5).
- 3 Slang for reaches top, finishes rock climb (5).
- 6 What you do with your steps when you go back the same way you came (7).
- 7 Wise old forest bird (3).
- 8 Once more (5).
- 10 A ski run of compacted snow (5).
- 12 A short preposition expressing direction (2).
- 13 Used to connect words representing alternatives, typically 'either (this) ..' (2).
- 14 Northern Irish climber awarded 2021 Lynam Medal (5).
- 17 You don't want to be caught out in one on the hills (5).
- 18 Highly organised colonial insect of grasslands, etc (3).
- 19 German city renowned for its production of porcelain and lace figurines (7).
- 20 Narrow cliff ledges (5).
- 21 Essential footwear for climbing, for example (5).

Clues Down

- 1 Mountain range stretching from Czechia to Ukraine (11).
- 2 What Mountaineering Ireland's Jane Carney helps climbers and hillwalkers to do! (5).
- 3 Having a high gradient of ascent (5).
- 4 Often noted in association with crannies (5).
- 5 Tipperary mountain range associated with mining for rare metal used in ornaments, tableware, etc (11).
- 9 Western Indian state popular for its tourist beaches (3).
- 11 Exposed granite outcrop on mountain top (3).
- 15 Former province of South Africa, or to do with birth (5).
- 16 Long mountain chain in South America (5).
- 17 Short, vertical rock faces impeding climbs (5).



Pair of Leki Khumbu walking poles

Pair of Sealskinz gloves

Pair of Sealskinz mid-socks

How to enter

Complete this crossword correctly and be in with a chance to win a prize worth €180.00 from Basecamp Outdoor Store, Jervis Street, Dublin.



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

Competition prizes

Basecamp's generous prize comprises a pair of Leki Khumbu walking poles plus a pair each of waterproof all-weather Sealskinz mid-socks and lightweight gloves, a prize worth a total of around €180.00.



Hillwalking



Mountaineering Ireland members on the Coomloughran Horseshoe during the Autumn Gathering of 2016

Reflections

Working to help people get the most from their hillwalking



Written by
Ruth Whelan,
Hillwalking
Development
Officer

Everyone's initiation to the hills is different. As a fresh-faced, twenty-year-old exercise enthusiast, my first introduction to the hills began when I naively accepted an invitation to take on the **Four Peaks Challenge**, to climb the highest peak in each of Ireland's four provinces consecutively, within one day. Fast-forward twenty years and, not only do I continue to enjoy the hills, I am privileged to be working in the sport.

Needless to say, my perspective on hillwalking has changed over time, particularly due to insights gained through working with Mountaineering

Ireland for nearly eight years. This article reflects on my own observations, experience and perspective of hillwalking as it relates to Mountaineering Ireland.

■ Social media

Hillwalking has increased significantly in popularity over the past number of years. This can be attributed to several factors. Most recently, the Covid-19 restrictions led to more and more people finding a love for the outdoors. The increased use of social media platforms, such as Instagram and Facebook, provided ample opportunity for those who wished to

visually showcase their adventures, and often featured amazing shots of sunrises on top of mountains.

There has also been a shift in values in respect of nature and landscape, through increased promotion of the benefits of being in the outdoors and close to the natural world.

This, in turn, has influenced the type of person who goes hillwalking. Previously viewed as an older person's hobby and a minority sport, it is now portrayed as an adventurous challenge, appealing more and more to a younger generation.

Mountaineering Ireland has embraced online social media platforms, to engage with members and all hillwalkers through these channels.

■ Mountain skills

Hillwalking is a sport with inherent risks, and it requires skill and experience to stay safe. One of my first introductions to Mountaineering Ireland was when I attended a Mountain Skills training course with **UCD Mountaineering Club**, an experience that provided me with a good foundation and the confidence to explore more, off the beaten track.

Albeit controversial at times, smartphones and GPS devices continue to grow in popularity and



Mountaineering Ireland members on a walk during the Autumn Gathering of 2019

sophistication, and have contributed to making the hills more accessible.

I believe Mountaineering Ireland has always been a strong voice for the safe and responsible use of the uplands, emphasising the value of map and compass navigation as a fundamental skill for safe hillwalking. That knowledge should never be lost.

Two campaigns aimed at reaching a wider audience were the **Walk Safely** message and, more recently, the **Happy Hiking** campaign. Mountaineering Ireland works to engage with both members and non-members, not only to support upskilling, but also to provide a platform for networking.

■ Events

Mountaineering Ireland has organised many events and initiatives throughout its fifty years. I have had the privilege to be involved in planning a number of these, including **Women with Altitude** events, the **Lynam Lectures** and many **gatherings** and **workshops**.



Ruth meets Sir Chris Bonington

Some of my fondest memories, other than hanging out with **Sir Chris Bonington**, of course, come from working directly with club volunteers as they plan and host our annual **Spring** and **Autumn Gatherings** for other members. These organising clubs, big and small, have been from all parts of the country – Irish Ramblers, Galway Walking Club, Kilmacthomas Walking Club, Limerick Climbing Club, and the multiple small clubs in Donegal, with gatherings based in their local mountain areas.

The gatherings, to me, not only provide an opportunity for members from all over the country to enjoy a variety of walks organised by the host club: they also provide a unique opportunity for clubs and members to network, share ideas and learn from workshops held during the weekend, all the while having a lot of fun.

Clubs themselves have also



Participants at Women With Altitude event in Connemara

encouraged more members to join through all the open days, walking festivals and challenge walks they have held over the years. Some of these events have been in existence for many years. The **Blackstairs Challenge** (Wayfarers Club) and the **Lug Walk** (The Irish Ramblers) are two such longstanding annual events. These, and other events and challenges, have become a central part of many participants' enjoyment of hillwalking.

■ Clubs

Clubs have always been instrumental in providing a pathway for newcomers to become involved in hillwalking. Mountaineering Ireland was originally set up as the **Federation of Mountaineering Clubs in Ireland (FMCI)** by clubs, and for clubs. Indeed, some of the founding member clubs of the FMCI are still going strong as affiliated clubs today – Irish Mountaineering Club, The Irish Ramblers and Laune Mountaineering Club, to name but a few.

■ Non-club members

Although approximately 80% of our membership continues to be made up of club members, this no longer reflects the situation of the many non-members, individuals and informal groups who are now heading to the hills.

Clubs continue to play a vital role, providing the novice hillwalkers and established members with an opportunity to develop their skills in a safe and social environment.

We continue to support our clubs as much as possible, to ensure that this pathway continues. However, we must also acknowledge the growing number of informal groups that are discovering the hills and the attractions and benefits of hillwalking.

■ Our vision

A widening gap between the total number of people countrywide engaging in hillwalking and our affiliated membership is evident. Mountaineering Ireland must continue to work hard to support and represent our existing hillwalking members, while attracting and embracing new participants in this aspect of mountain activity to our organisation. I believe the future is bright for this fantastic activity.

I look forward in hope that Mountaineering Ireland's vision will be recognised ever more widely: to ensure more participants are skilled and self-reliant; that access continues and improves; that our upland heritage and landscape is valued, cherished and protected; and that everyone enjoying the hills does so in a safe and responsible and respectful way ■





Hillwalking on Ben Lugmore, Mweelrea Massif, Co Mayo

Reflections

Working for access and the places we love



Written by
Helen Lawless,
Access &
Conservation
Officer

Background

Growing up on a small farm in Wexford, the Blackstairs were a major element in my local landscape, so it is perhaps not surprising that I was drawn to the mountains. Following a move to Dublin, the 47B bus to Rockbrook enabled me to get back to nature and the outdoors.

After exhausting the bus-hiking options from Dublin, I joined the **Bootleggers Hillwalking Club** (I was intrigued by the name), which expanded my horizons considerably, leading to exciting and adventurous experiences on mountains across the island of Ireland and beyond.

In the early 1990s, while serving as Club Secretary, I found myself attending **Mountaineering Council of Ireland (MCI)** AGMs. In 1996, I joined the MCI's **Environmental Committee**; **Finola McDonald** was the Chairperson, and our task was to develop a full suite of environmental policies for the MCI. The resultant policies were complemented by the first iteration of MCI's **Good Practice Guide for Hillwalkers and Climbers**.

My involvement moved to another level in 2001, when I was appointed as the MCI's **Development Officer**, becoming the organisation's first full-time employee. **Margaret O'Sullivan**,

Anita Gordon and **Vera Quinlan** had preceded me in part-time roles and, a few weeks later, **Mike Dagley** became the second full-time employee.

We soon came to appreciate the magnitude of the work done by volunteers during the first thirty years of Mountaineering Ireland's existence. Despite an expanded staff team, the role of volunteers within Mountaineering Ireland continues to be vitally important, from club level up to the Mountaineering Ireland Board.

Looking back

Access and conservation were central to the concerns and objectives of Mountaineering Ireland members from the early days and, indeed, helped to give the member clubs of the young federation a sense of common purpose.

In May 1978 the second issue of the FMCI newsletter included a robust submission from mountaineering clubs in Kerry regarding Kerry County Council's County Development Plan, a submission published to serve as a model for submissions to other councils. The opening statement from that 1978 submission showed great foresight and is perhaps even more relevant today:

"In our capacity as hillwalkers and mountaineers, we are deeply conscious that the wild and unspoilt areas will become more and more important as an escape from advancing technology and the trappings of urban society... it will not be sufficient that there be countryside to enjoy - the need will be for terrain that is still as virgin, wild and unspoilt as possible."

Concern to protect the wild and unspoilt character of our mountain landscapes has run throughout Mountaineering Ireland's conservation efforts for decades. Elsewhere, you can read of action in relation to **hill tracks**, **hydro schemes** and **interpretative centres**. Later there was opposition to proposals for **windfarms** in prominent upland locations.

While there have been successes, Ireland's stock of undeveloped land has been much diminished over the last 50 years. Although it may be less obvious, the ecological condition of Ireland's upland environment has been depleted too, through factors such as **afforestation**, **overgrazing** and **burning**. This is not a reflection on the actions of individual landowners: it is largely the consequence of policies that did not



Helen Lawless in the MacGillycuddy's Reeks in 1991, left, and in the Burren, 2019, right. **Photographs:** Helen Lawless Collection

respond to the distinct needs of upland areas.

Neither can we ignore the impacts that we make, the most visible of which is **path erosion** resulting from our cumulative footfall. Over the last decade, through the **Helping the Hills** initiative, Mountaineering Ireland has worked nationally and with local stakeholder groups to identify suitable path repair solutions for some of our more iconic mountain routes.

There have been **access issues** throughout Mountaineering Ireland's fifty years, such as the battle in the early 1980s to retain access to **Lugnaquilla** through the Department of Defence lands in the Glen of Imaal, and the collaborative campaign which prevented the sale of **Coillte's harvesting rights** in 2013.

During the 1990s, Mountaineering Ireland worked with the **Irish Farmers' Association** and others to secure the **Occupiers' Liability Act (1995)**, which created a new category of entrant onto land – a recreational user – who is expected to take responsibility for their own safety. This legislation has been strengthened by two seminal judgments – in the **Weir Rodgers (Rossnowlagh) case** and in the **Wall (Wicklow Way) case** – where, on behalf of Mountaineering Ireland, I gave evidence to assist the court.

Despite a lack of successful claims against landowners, access concerns persist, possibly fuelled by a continued growth in numbers engaging in walking and climbing, and fear amongst some landowners of being sued. The establishment in 2004 of **Comhairle na Tuaithe**, as a national advisory body on

outdoor recreation, generated fresh hopes of solutions, as did two ill-fated Labour Party proposals to introduce a **right of access to the countryside** (2007 and 2013).

The launch of a **Mountain Access Project** in 2009 by the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, **Éamon Ó Cuív TD**, offered a different avenue towards the clarity of access sought by hillwalkers and climbers,



based on access being agreed with the landowners. Two pilot areas were designated for this project: **Binn Shléibhe** near Clonbur, Co Galway, and the **MacGillycuddy Reeks**. A frustrating decade of delays and departmental changes ensued, with the main challenge being the delivery of an

indemnity arrangement for participating landowners. An insurance policy for the two pilot areas was finally introduced in summer 2021.

Looking forward

Thousands of people have found escape and solace in the outdoors during the Covid-19 pandemic, bringing a focus onto the benefits of outdoor activities as well as on the need for visitor management in busy areas. The current development, by Comhairle na Tuaithe, of a new **National Outdoor Recreation Strategy** could not have come at a more opportune time.

Throughout 2021, Mountaineering Ireland has been actively involved in this process, discussing with a wide range of stakeholders what is required to make outdoor recreation in Ireland work well for all – including participants, landowners and rural communities. As this strategy is implemented over the coming years, nationally and at local level, the involvement of Mountaineering Ireland members will be important to ensuring that the needs of hillwalkers and climbers are recognised in the plans that will be developed in each county.

Measures to address landowners' concerns and improve access will be included in this strategy, but there is





Simon Gray (Ulster Wildlife) showing participants on a Mountaineering Ireland environmental walk at Cuilcagh how Sphagnum moss can hold 20 times' its weight in water. **Photograph:** Helen Lawless

unlikely to be any silver bullet. Continued respect and consideration for landowners and other local residents will be needed to protect the access that we depend upon for our activities.

In **Northern Ireland**, public consultation on a review of access legislation is due to take place in the coming months. Again, the involvement of Mountaineering Ireland members in expressing what is needed to improve access for our activities will be important.

In the pressing context of the **climate and biodiversity crises**, the outdoor places where we enjoy our activities – mountains, forests, cliffs and coastal areas – are starting to be recognised as significant **natural assets**, which must be better cared for. Upland areas have a major role in water supply; they assist in flood prevention; store much of our carbon in peat soils; and provide valuable space for biodiversity – everyone in society benefits in some way.

Pilot **agri-environment projects** currently underway in some upland areas indicate that, with appropriate policy changes, farmers could have a valuable role in improving the ability of Ireland's upland environment to deliver

these vital **ecological services**.

Mountaineering Ireland and its members have a role to play in ensuring that **recreation** is incorporated within future policies and projects.

Ireland's mountains, cliffs and coastal landscapes inspire, shape and enrich the recreation experiences we enjoy. Mountaineering Ireland members have identified 'peace and quiet,' 'natural beauty,' 'wildness' and 'escape' as the main attributes which make our outdoor experiences special. While access is vital, and parking, paths and stiles may be helpful, the quality of the environment where we walk and climb is fundamental to the quality of our experiences, with undeveloped **natural landscapes** providing the highest quality experiences.

As we look forward, we can be certain that the places that matter to us will change. We should seek to be a part of the conversation about the future of Ireland's mountains and upland areas,

and be prepared to work with other interests to find a balance that will enable people and nature to thrive.

Final reflections

The stamina built up through decades of hillwalking can be an advantage when working on access and environmental issues, as progress is slow! The achievement of Mountaineering Ireland's objectives in the areas of access and conservation depends to a large part on external bodies and factors outside our control. Developing and maintaining **positive relationships** is key to getting the most from the opportunities that arise.

The passion, insight and knowledge of Mountaineering Ireland's members has guided us through the first fifty years, and our organisation is generally well regarded. One of our key challenges now is to involve more members in this work so that we can be a stronger voice for the activities and the places we love ■





Climbing



Participants of the Youth Trad Climbing Camp, Dalkey Quarry, 2013, with instructors Paul Swail, Ricky Bell and Damien O'Sullivan

Reflections

Climbing in all its forms has seen a huge surge in participation and performance over the past two decades



Written by
Damien
O'Sullivan,
Climbing
Officer

What for me started out as a once-weekly distraction from study at college, and training for sailing, quickly and profoundly became a huge part of my life.

Twenty years ago, when I started climbing, it felt like some sort of lunatic fringe activity. The internet was only beginning to go mainstream. There were no YouTube videos to learn how to belay!

At that time, there seemed to be no climbing community in Cork, certainly none that we knew of. The only source of information was a black-and-white instructional climbing book that **Graeme Gallins**, my first climbing partner, had. We learned how to tie our knots, and how to belay, and somehow, with the information contained in that

little book, we survived!

In the space of around two years a small community seemed to coalesce around the wall. Like a little galaxy coming together, the disparate parts of our community were drawn to the climbing wall. Bearded oddballs, skinny legs covered with skinny leggings, huge down jackets, calloused hands and stories of mountains and cliffs. **Moacs, Friends, Vipers, Torrains, Sheridan, Chamonix** – it was all double-Dutch to me at the time.

My grandmother is still alive, and when I chat to her about her life, and the changes that she has witnessed over the course of the past century, I am not so much amazed that so much has changed, but I am gobsmacked about the rate of change that she has

witnessed in her lifetime. Climbing is a sport that is constantly changing, constantly evolving, responding to changes in technology, following changes in society. Change is inevitable; it is the rate of change that seems to change.

Over the course of the first decade of my climbing life I might say that climbing in Ireland was changing, all be it at a relatively modest pace. The two big developments that took place from 2000 to 2010 were the adoption of a new approach to climbing **hard trad routes**, and the exploration and development of **bouldering areas**.

Hard trad routes

The new approach to climbing hard trad routes was exemplified by **Ricky** ➤



Bell and the group of climbers who featured in the movie *Underdeveloped*. Their 'head-point' approach facilitated the climbing of technically difficult routes that were often devoid of adequate protection. Blank faces and arêtes where the climbing was hard and the landings even harder!

The boulders that filled the valleys and slopes below the traditional crags received the attention they deserved from visionary climbers such as the **Hunter brothers – Dave and Rob – Michael Duffy** and a host of others. **David Flanagan** played a key role in both developing new areas and critically cataloguing the problems.

The climbing community at that time was still a relatively small group. Typically, it was the same people that you would meet at your local wall (often a wall at a university), the crag at the weekend, maybe going to Chamonix in the summer, maybe a trip to Scotland in the winter. The Irish Bouldering League provided ample entertainment during the winter months to keep the community together.

Climbing walls

In many ways, it was the opening of commercial **climbing walls** in the early 2000s that changed climbing in Ireland. The first commercial climbing



Marty McGuigan, left, in action in the 2016 Irish Lead Climbing Championships and Eimir McSwiggan, right, competing in the World Ice Climbing Championships in 2015



wall to open was **Play At Height** in Dingle. I remember first hearing about it and being kind of sceptical that it even existed, that it was even possible. The **Gravity Climbing Centre** in Dublin followed next. When it opened, I had been away in France and Spain, climbing for a few months. What struck me immediately when I visited Gravity for the first time was the number of people who were new to the sport. It was a *Field of Dreams* moment for me – “*If you build it, they will come!*”

Over the intervening years, there has been a steady increase in the number of high-quality climbing walls all around the country. These places have

facilitated tens of thousands of people to try, enjoy and progress in climbing. As well as, or maybe even due to, the increase in the number of indoor walls, and the numbers of people participating, many aspects of climbing in Ireland has undergone a very rapid change in the past decade.

It seems that there are now more people trad climbing than ever before, and the standards of performance being achieved by some of these climbers is simply stunning. The same can be said of bouldering – we now have multiple areas with thousands of high-quality boulder problems across all grades.

As well as the new young generation of climbers emerging from the indoor climbing walls, the older stalwarts, such as **Rob Hunter** and **Michael Duffy**, remain at the forefront of bouldering performance.

Sport climbing, too, is taking its place at the Irish climbing family table. The development of bolted routes on Inis Mór has clearly demonstrated not only the potential that Ireland has for sports climbing, but also that sport climbing and trad climbing can co-exist.

Competition climbing

Competition climbing has seen huge changes in the past decade. The longstanding Irish Bouldering League is now joined by a range of other competitions such as the Youth Climbing Series, the Irish Bouldering Championship and the Irish Lead Climbing Championship, not to mention the competitions that are hosted by individual walls.

Over the course of the past few



Dominic Burns, left, in action at the 2014 Climbing World Championships (Bouldering) and Lucy Mitchell, right, competing in the 2016 Irish Lead Climbing Championships

“Behind all these incredible performances, I think we will find stories of community, friendships, support and advice”

years, we have also witnessed some phenomenal performances on the international stage. **Dominic Burns** was an almost unstoppable force in international youth bouldering competitions, reaching the rank of No 1 in the world for a period of time.

In competition ice climbing, **Eimir McSwiggan** has represented Ireland exceptionally well for a number of years, culminating in a world ranking of third.

It is difficult to put exactly into words how much Irish climbing has developed in the past decade or two, but I think the achievements of several climbers in the past few months illustrate how far we have come:

- **Lucy Mitchell** climbing multiple 8a (and beyond) sports climbing routes in France
- **Andy Marshall** climbing a new E9 7a trad route in the Mournes
- **Michael Duffy** establishing a new 8b+ sports climbing route in Kilkenny
- **Michael O'Neil** climbing 8b+ boulder New Base Line in Switzerland



Daragh Hoare in action in the Irish Lead Climbing League in 2016

- **Naoise Ó Muirheartaigh** climbing the Schmidt Route on the north face of the Matterhorn.

These levels of performance are possible largely due to the singular talent, motivation and dedication of the individuals themselves. But behind all these incredible performances, I think

we will find stories of community, friendships, support and advice.

As climbing inevitably changes, my hope is that the spirit and sense of community will remain. Our community is growing, gathering mass, and as it grows, it is up to all of us to play our part in keeping it together ■



The Irish team (with instructor Eddie Cooper) at the Grand Final of the Youth Climbing Series in Edinburgh?? in 20xx?



Training

Fifty years a'growing

Jane Carney on the history of mountain training over the last 50 years



Written by
Jane Carney,
Training Officer

Our 50th anniversary: a training perspective



In 1964, the first **Mountain Leader Training Board** was convened in the UK and administered a Certificate of Competence in Mountain Leadership. Five years later, in 1969, the **Association for Adventure Sports** (AFAS) was established in Ireland. The following year, 1970, saw the first Mountain Leader courses run in Ireland.

In 1971, the **Federation of Mountaineering Clubs of Ireland** (FMCI) was established, comprising eight clubs with a total of three hundred members. In the same year, the FMCI set up its first subcommittee, **Bord Oiliúnt Sléibhte** (BOS), now called **Mountain Training Board Ireland** (MTBI), which is also celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. BOS/MTBI was and remains responsible for training and standards in Irish mountaineering.

The FMCI was renamed the **Mountaineering**

Council of Ireland (MCI) in 1990, having increased its membership substantially over that first twenty-year period. Nowadays called **Mountaineering Ireland**, the membership has grown to 12,500 and it has around two hundred member clubs.

The **Mountain Training** section of Mountaineering Ireland initially covered just the Republic of Ireland for formal qualifications, and the island of Ireland for informal skills training. Mountain training in Northern Ireland was administered under the management of the **Northern**

Ireland Sports Council, via **Tollymore National Outdoor Training Centre**.

The two training boards were members of **Mountain Training UK & Ireland** (MTUKI) and, today, **Mountain Training Board Ireland** is the training board for the island of Ireland. It administers all formal mountain training schemes and awards on the island of Ireland and offers informal training for clubs, individual members and the broader community of hillwalkers, mountaineers, and climbers.

Mountain Training Board Ireland is a sub-committee of

Mountaineering Ireland, making it unique, as the two Mountaineering Councils and three Mountain Training Boards in the UK are all independent organisations.

Mountain Training Board Ireland administers a suite of shared awards and schemes that are recognised across Ireland and the UK, with additional awards unique to the island of Ireland, such as the **Multi-Pitch Award**, the **Level 1 Climbing Coach Award** and the most popular award, **Mountain Skills**.

Since the debut of the **Mountain Leader Award** in 1970, the evolution and development of the mountaineering and climbing training and qualification pathway in Ireland has been significant. Mountaineering Ireland leads the way by offering two annual international meets: the **Summer Alpine Meet** in the Alps, and the **Winter Meet** in Scotland. Pursuing the ethos of adventure and exploration, personal skills development is actively encouraged to facilitate independent adventure. Being skilled increases safety and enjoyment, and it opens up the world to explore. In more recent

Year	New award or scheme introduced
1970	Mountain Leader Award debuts in Ireland
1990s	Rock Climbing Leader (RCL) Award: 0 Introduction 1 Single-Pitch Training 2 Multi-Pitch Training 3 Single-Pitch Assessment 4 Multi-Pitch Assessment
1990s	Mountain Skills Scheme Training and Assessment
2002	Single-Pitch Award replaces RCL 1 & 3 Multi-Pitch Award replaces RCL 2 & 4
2007	Climbing Wall Award (CWA) Walking Group Leader (WGL)
2009	Climbing Wall Leader Award (CWLA)
2014 MTUKI Walking Scheme Review	Lowland Leader Award, MTUKI Hill and Mountain Skills, Level 1 Climbing Coach, Expedition Module, Hill and Moorland Leader (formerly WGL)
2019 MTUKI Climbing Awards Review	Rock Skills Scheme, Indoor Climbing Assistant, Rock Climbing Development Instructor Rock Climbing Instructor replaces SPA Climbing Wall Instructor replaces CWA Climbing Wall Development Instructor replaces CWLA

years, the Summer Alpine and Winter Meets have included targeted **youth programmes** to facilitate increased youth participation in mountaineering. These programmes include skills training in the associated disciplines that mountaineering demands, such as: hillwalking, scrambling, climbing, alpinism, ice climbing, dry tooling and bouldering.

Back in 2000, the **Mountaineering Ireland Millennium Youth Initiative** took place, with twenty-four young people drawn from several youth organisations, who were trained by an experienced team of International Mountain Guides, mountaineering and climbing instructors, and winter and summer mountain leaders.

The participants have since gone on to become qualified mountaineering instructors, and one is an aspirant International Mountain Guide. Most have continued as active and regular visitors to the mountainous areas of Ireland, Europe and beyond.

These young influencers went on to captain their college mountaineering clubs, impress at climbing competitions and be role models for other young people. The experienced team also went on to champion youth and the sport, two as chairpersons of Mountain Training Board Ireland – **Dawson Stelfox** and **Kevin O'Callaghan** – one as Mountaineering Ireland's Training Officer – myself, **Jane Carney** – and two as senior lecturers at IT Tralee – **Tomás Aylward** and **David Gaughran**.

With over 320,000 youth participants engaged in some form of outdoor activity on the island of Ireland, prioritising the youth in our mountaineering community makes sense to ensure an energetic, vibrant and relevant future for our sport ■



Mountaineering Ireland Training Officer Jane Carney and Women in Sport Officer Ania Bakiewicz (second and third from left respectively) delivering a climbing course for Women in Sport in September 2020



WINTER MEET 2022

Onich, Scotland

12-19th February
2022



Mountaineering Ireland SUMMER ALPINE MEET

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For details see www.mountaineering.ie
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SUBSIDISED BURSARY PLACES for 18 to 25-year-olds

CLIMBING SAFELY

Part 2: Survivability

In the second part of his series on climbing safely, mountaineer and big-wall climber **Andy Kirkpatrick** shares advice on how to survive in the Irish mountains during winter

I have been lucky enough, in my life as a climber, to have visited – and attempted to survive in – some of the harshest and coldest places on Earth, including Antarctica, Alaska, Greenland and Patagonia.

Often these trips have been multi-week, or even multi-month sojourns, and have been carried out under canvas, deep within snow-holes or in igloos, or sometimes just out in the open. In such environments, you pick up a lot of survival skills, but really, it's not as hard as you'd think; the dry cold, even at -50°C, was easier to deal with than my first winter living in Bray!

In terms of mountain survival, if it came down to having to stay comfortable up on Norway's semi-arctic Hardangervidda plateau or in the Twelve Bens, I'd pick the Norwegian option. The trouble with Ireland's mountains in winter is that there is a dangerous combination of very short daylight hours, freezing rain and battering winds, a lack of well-used trails and very hostile ground underfoot, that may be steep and boggy, or vertical and deadly.

These problems are often the source of many of the accidents and fatalities in our Irish hills, either directly or due to a failure to understand the risks. It is vital, therefore, to educate ourselves to not be complacent, as well as to be able to help inform and look after others, to support rescue teams in any way we can.

Here are a few tips on staying safe in the hills this winter.

■ Clothing

It won't be the cold that kills you or spoils your day, it will be the wet. So, you need to adopt a clothing system that reduces the ingress of water as much as possible, but without getting wet through sweating as a result.

I know this is pretty much impossible on a hard day out on the hills, so I tend to dress for immersion. I take a 'sea-kayaking approach' to Irish mountaineering: namely, I always carry extra clothing in a dry bag, as well as leaving a full change of clothes in my car.

First, focus on your **base layers**. Ideally, you want base layers that will be warm when wet and damp, and that will feel dry even when wet. The most effective base layer for this is **Brynje polypro mesh underwear**, which, yes, means wearing a string vest.

“YOU WANT BASE LAYERS THAT WILL BE WARM WHEN WET AND DAMP, SUCH AS A BUFFALO SHIRT”

After that, the old-school **Helly Hansen polypro Lifa** still holds its own for wet warmth, followed by **wool base layers**, and then the more traditional **polyester base layers**.

One trick with base layers is to always carry a spare one to replace the one you have on reaching the summit, instantly dumping all the sweat it has soaked up. This also applies to **sports bras** (in very wet weather it's often better to eschew a bra if you can, as it's just another sweat-trapping layer).

One of the best winter layers for Irish hills remains the **Buffalo shirt**, as no other layer has yet to match its ability to feel warm and dry, even after you've just fallen neck-deep into a bog, although you do need to wear it next to your skin to get the full value of the concept.

Most often it is best to start the day cold and to warm up on the move, rather than start warm and just blow up. Doing so creates the dangerous



➤ **AUTHOR** *Andy Kirkpatrick is a mountaineer, author and motivational speaker, who lives in Barna, Co Galway. He is a big wall climber and has climbed Yosemite's El Capitan more than thirty times, including five solo ascents, as well as completing many other significant ascents in the Alps, Patagonia, Alaska and Antarctica.*



Ritted out for winter hillwalking

Winter 2021

“ALWAYS HAVE A HEADTORCH WITH YOU IN WINTER”

feedback loop of getting hot and sweaty, stopping, chilling and getting dangerously cold, and then repeating the process.

One of the most important layers for me is the **booster** or **belay jacket**, a medium to heavyweight (500 to 800 grammes) synthetic jacket that can be thrown over everything. Yes, it is extra bulk and weight, but such an item really boosts your survivability, as well as providing an important confidence boost.

■ Footwear

I have never climbed anywhere where the ground was as treacherous and unhelpful as in the hills of Ireland. I've lost count of how many times I've slipped down some semi-vertical bog, been tripped up by some knobbly tussock, or fallen down into a dirty great hole. Then you have the rock and the screes, which, due to the waterlogged nature of the ground, are generally unreliable underfoot.

All this means that for winter walking you need good quality **boots**, with a solid (but not rigid) sole. It also goes without saying that good quality **gaiters** are also vital, as wet socks in the first kilometre are not conducive to a good day on the hill.

Crampon-wise, it seems that ice and verglas (path ice) are the primary dangers, and often very lightweight, running shoe-style **micro spikes** are all that's required, as full-size crampons can be a hazard in themselves!

Ireland is also great **trekking pole** ground, and poles can do double duty in probing your way through bands of



muddy bog or using them to pole-vault waterlogged stretches!

■ Navigation

I have never been lost as much as I have on Irish hills. The combination of often featureless ground, mist, rain and darkness, plus no path to follow, has left me stumbling around, feeling lost and clueless, more times than I'd like to admit.

Having a working knowledge of your **compass** and **map**, magnetic deviation, etc, as well as having a system that keeps map and compass in constant readiness, is vital.



A top-of-the-range Petzl headtorch

You also need to brush up on your **pacing** and **timings**, which are best printed out and stuck inside your map case.

Also, don't forget to add some **pacing beads** (cord locks) to your compass lanyard, as well as a **whistle**.

Yes, I know it's cheating, but both **phone** and **GPS** are also great tools when you're lost, but neither are as practical as a **map** and **compass**, and a natural feel for **angle**, **distance** and **direction**.

■ Survival gear

The number one piece of gear you need for winter mountaineering is a **headtorch**. Having had many light-losing epics, I always make sure I have a spare one in the group. I also never go on the hill without a spare **rechargeable battery**, because although great and all that, lithium-ion batteries can sometimes just flake out on you.

Next to a headtorch, I'd go for a **bothy bag**, ideally a four-person one. Gramme for gramme, it is the most weight-effective item of survival gear that you have, and it has saved many lives.

A **survival bag**, although very old-school, is also worth carrying, even if it's not you who ends up using it. Avoid tin-foil blankets; they are fine for the end of a marathon but not when you are out in sixty-mile-an-hour Kerry winds!

■ Respect the mountains

In summation, I believe that, although not alpine giants, the hills and mountains of Ireland in winter require a very high level of skill, as well as toughness, and are not to be underestimated. If you respect them, and are well prepared for what they and the weather have to offer, then you can have as good a day as at any premier league mountain destination ■



Be aware of changing conditions ahead



Books

Over the years, the Books section has been one of the most popular parts of the *Irish Mountain Log*. For this, the 50th anniversary issue, we have looked back for reviews of some of the more auspicious publications on the topics of Irish mountains and mountaineering. We hope you enjoy the selection.



Literary Editor
Peter O'Neill
presents previous
reviews of some
historic books

The original Irish Peaks of 1982, edited by Joss Lynam



IRISH PEAKS

**Edited by Joss Lynam for the
Federation of Mountaineering
Clubs in Ireland (FMCI)**

Constable (1982), 230pp,
45 maps, 95 illustrations, £14.95
ISBN 978-1-839810-69-5

At last, we have a definitive account of all the major mountain areas in Ireland, edited by a person well qualified to present it.

All the major ranges are covered, with detailed routes including mileage and time required. The numerous maps make it possible for the climber to vary these routes to their heart's content.

It is assumed that motor transport is available, which means that the mileage and time required is restricted to the actual mountain terrain, in contrast to the 'bad old days' when the starting point for Mullaghcleevaun was Blessington, and for Djouce was Bray.

At the same time, I think it is well to have a mile or two on a road or path to limber up before tackling rough and steep ground. Perhaps I am getting old and stiff!

It is pleasant to see the detailed attention given to the Knockanaffrin Ridge in the Comeraghs. The fine cwms in the lower section get much more notice generally, and rightly so, but the summit ridge around Fauscoum is inferior for the hill walker.

Our author mentions that it was necessary to bypass some of the lesser hills. The excellent detailed routes on our finest ranges made this inevitable – but poor old Mullaghcleevaun and its stout comrades were among the casualties.

Keeper Hill and the Silvermines get adequate attention, but I wonder did Red Hugh and his merry men tackle the former? They certainly crossed the gentler Slieve Felim group further south in their celebrated forced march of more than thirty miles over frozen ground, while Carew was waiting to destroy them at

Holycross with a superior force.

On the way to the great south-western peninsulas, I would like to have lingered among the graceful Paps of Dana, the hills north of Loo Bridge and the area around Gougane Barra.

The treatment of the Dingle, Iveragh and Beara ridges is magnificent, particularly Beara, which does not always get the attention that it deserves.

Moving up to Connemara and Mayo, we are in 'Lynam Country.' I was pleased to note that the somewhat neglected Devilsmother is described both pictorially and in the text.

It is good news to read that a youth hostel has been opened in the Nephinbeg range, the most inaccessible mountains in the country.

As for the north, the lions of Donegal and the Mourne get adequate attention, and it was a particular pleasure to read the late Joe Glover's account

of the 'Sperrin Skyway.'

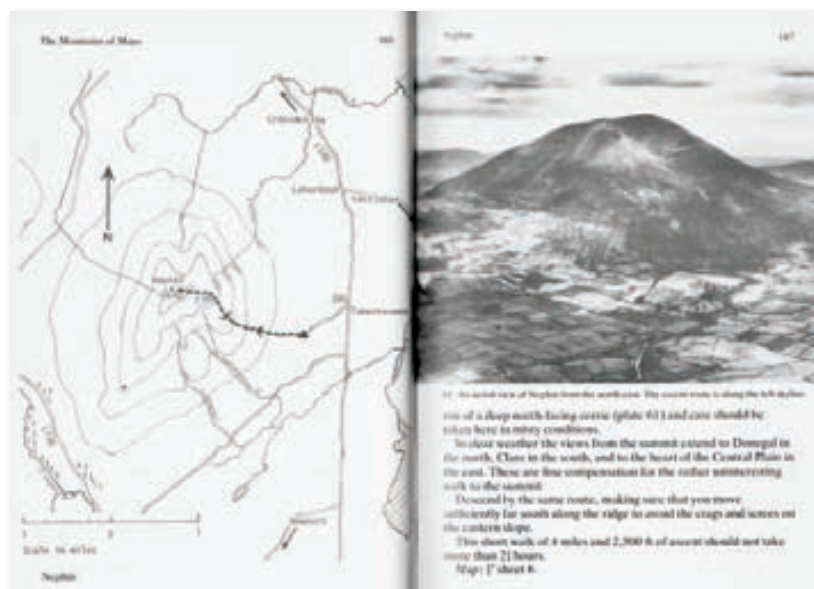
The introduction incorporates excellent sections on geology and the flora and fauna. The vagaries of weather, and its bearing on safety and comfort, are stressed, as well as necessary instructions on equipment.

The book is lavishly illustrated with many miniature but well-produced maps, and it is a handy size. As the editor points out, the maps should not be regarded as a substitute for the Ordnance Survey sheets.

Considering the limitations imposed by the size of the book, the photographs are very good and are particularly apt in enhancing the atmosphere conveyed by the text.

Claude Wall Mountaineer,
author of *Mountaineering in
Ireland* (FMCI, 1976).

*From Irish Mountain Log 16
(Winter 1982)*



Two facing pages from the book, showing details of the route to Nephin summit in Mayo

The new Irish Peaks of 2020, a masterly team effort



IRISH PEAKS

By Mountaineering Ireland

Zest (2020), 256pp, many colour photographs & maps, €29.95, ISBN 978-0-902940-22-2

It has been said that a guidebook description should be a combination of information and inspiration. If that is to be the yardstick, then *Irish Peaks* more than makes the grade. This beautiful book has obviously been a labour of love for all involved, and the result is a quality publication from cover to cover.

Let's start with the information. In terms of the routes selected, the book deals with the highest one hundred peaks in Ireland, which takes any selection subjectivity out of the picture. The key details of each route are presented visually in a two-page spread at the beginning of each walk. We are given some inspirational photos, the place-names in Irish and their meanings, and a 1:50,000 map with the route marked on it. Summary ascent details are also given in a clear graphic style with relevant map references, available parking and alternative routes.

As the book is a large-format hardback, it is not one for sticking in a rucksack. However, a mobile phone photo of the relevant pages will give you all the information you need to take with you.

The descriptions of the

walks are well edited and stylistically diverse (due to the variety of contributors), from those that are purely directional to others that take a more anecdotal approach. There are also very concise and interesting sections on Ireland's upland environment, covering geology, flora and fauna.

However, in my opinion it is at the inspirational level that this book shines. Firstly, the quality and selection of photographs throughout is simply stunning and will fill many a pleasant night by the fire, contemplating future trips to the mountains.

Some contributors enhance the route descriptions in a way that gives you the urge to experience these wild places for yourself. **John O'Callaghan** has an extended quote from Praeger's *The Way That I Went*, describing the Nephin Beg Range as 'the very loneliest place in this country,' an appropriate quote to accompany the directions to climb Slieve Carr, Ireland's most remote mountain.

Peter Wilson weaves the local geology into the description of Errigal, such that one can almost feel the

chill wind off the retreating glacier.

On the route to Masatiompan in the Brandon range, one passes over Sauce Creek, some 300 precipitous metres below. We are informed that people lived down on the shore up to the early 20th century. It is worth the trip there alone to witness and contemplate such a location for human habitation.

The Irish placenames given truly capture the essence of places and can give pause for thought or a smile, such as Cnoc na gCainte ('hill of conversation') and Tóin le Gaoith ('backside to the wind'). Such names and meanings are presented in a beautiful graphic style for all routes and are also neatly interwoven into some walk descriptions.

Finally, *Irish Peaks* is most of all a deserved homage to **Joss Lynam**, who edited the original edition of *Irish Peaks*, which was published in 1982.

Some newer participants in mountaineering and outdoor activities in Ireland might not have heard of Joss, who passed away in 2011. **Patrick O'Sullivan's** excellent and warm biography of Joss in this book will give an

Award

Winner of this year's Guidebook Award at the prestigious Banff Centre Mountain Film & Book Festival

understanding of his dedication and love for the hills and how, in many ways, this book is the culmination of much of what he was about and will form part of his legacy.

Congratulations and many thanks are also due to **Margaret** and **Alan Tees**, who herded the many cats to gather the route descriptions that are the basis of this book. **Helen Lawless** must also be commended for the huge amount of work she put in to bringing this excellent book to publication.

If you love or are even curious about Ireland's uplands and wild places, this book has to be on your shelf.

Mike Keyes Hillwalker and climber, member of Limerick Climbing Club, past Chairperson of the Mountaineering Council of Ireland (now Mountaineering Ireland).

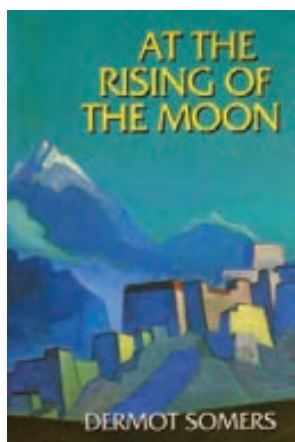
From *Irish Mountain Log* 135 (Autumn 2020)



Two-page spread on Mount Leinster in the Blackstairs, Counties Carlow and Wexford, from *Irish Peaks*



Fascinating collection of short stories



AT THE RISING OF THE MOON

By Dermot Somers

Baton Wicks, Collins Press (1994),
208pp, £9.95,
ISBN 0-906371-14-7

Winner of the Boardman Tasker
Prize for Mountain Literature in
1994 and the Culture and
Environment Award at the 1994
Banff Mountain Book Festival

At the Rising of the Moon is a collection of short stories which show a strong sense of culture, particularly of mountainous places, a delight in the use of placenames and a great mastery of language.

The settings range from Aran, where Buddhist mantras are remembered, to the mysterious Spearhead Face, somewhere in eastern Europe.

While there are wonderful descriptions of climbing, Dermot Somers is even more interested in exploring human relationships. Johann (in the story of the same name) is not the only one in prison – almost everyone in the book is trapped in one way or another. The fox is cornered; the priest on his own island understands it 'like a prisoner knows his prison.' Terry is caught in his search for the past and for Cara, who has scarcely achieved 'total detachment in Freak Street.'

My favourite story is 'Lightning in the Dark,'

although it is probably too long. It follows Helen's journey 'that was going nowhere' despite her successes on two Himalayan peaks and the Annapurna Circuit. The writer observes her relationships with her husband well, and deals sensitively with her loss. She is well paralleled with the Sherpa's widow who had known 'fierce attachment' and the 'unbearable echo of children's voices'. The Himalaya provide a magnificent backdrop, and one of the stories within the story is very good, that of the Dumre porter and the destruction of his community and family.

However, there are too many tangents, too much about other climbers and tourists suffering the 'bleak loneliness of outsiders haunting the tourist world in search of fulfilment.' There are too many perceptive but élitist comments about 'touroids' in Nepal, after visiting Thailand, or bringing 'chocolate cake and potato crisps to the Great Caves of Guinea,' when they were the current places to go.

Nevertheless, I enjoyed the descriptions of the awful KCs

"Somers' stories show a strong sense of culture, a delight in the use of placenames and a great mastery of language"

and the magnetic force it exerted on those who professed to despise it.

In 'John Paul II,' the writer certainly descends to low humour in high places. The ineffable John Paul and Maria should have been allowed to sink gracelessly and permanently into the peat bog of *Mountains and Other Ghosts* (Dermot's first collection). 'As John Paul slid reluctantly down towards her, the four silent men looked at one another, shook their dewy beards and melted into the mist' (from *Mountains and Other Ghosts*). Alas, they survived to run into trouble again in this volume. This time, 'the mist melted silently' and an angel-like figure appeared; 'his dark hair was thick and curly, bejewelled with sparkling drops of dew.' "Dermot bloody Somers," please don't rescue them anymore.

Dermot writes well about

the mountain partisan but at excessive length in 'Johann,' and Michael Hayes is inaccurate in his historical musings in 'The Fox.' 'Two hundred years ago, on the far side of this hill, Michael Dwyer stumbled out of a besieged cottage straight into the muskets of the soldiers to draw their fire and let his companions escape.' In fact, it was Sam McAllister who drew the musket fire. Dwyer survived to be transported, and ended his days as a policeman in New South Wales.

Despite the reservations outlined above, I was fascinated by *At the Rising of the Moon* and look forward to reading more of Dermot's work.

Bairbre Sheridan
Mountaineer and Chairperson
of FMCI.

From *Irish Mountain Log 34*
(Spring 1995)



The Thorong La, a 5,416m pass on the Annapurna Circuit

The story of the first Irish ascent of Everest



EVEREST CALLING: ASCENT OF THE DARK SIDE: THE MALLORY-IRVINE RIDGE

By Lorna Siggins

Mainstream Publishing (1994), 189pp, 62 colour photographs, £4.99, ISBN 978-185158-66-39

Success on Everest in 1993 raised all Irish hearts, and so will this surefire account of the expedition. Stylishly produced on fine art paper with more than 90 colour pictures, this compares well with the best of contemporary mountain publications. Tightly written and covering the highlights of recent Irish expeditions, Lorna Siggins has produced a worthy account of this great achievement. Her focus is crystal clear on the two central issues in such enterprises - how to select a winning team and how to ensure success.

The first problem is addressed in a clinical analysis of past Irish expeditions starting with Rakaposhi (1964) and coming forward in progressively finer detail on Peru (1980), Changtse (1987) and Manaslu (1991).

The background of each team member is clearly spelt out and the question is raised as to why women were not included in the team. The key support functions of base camp management, medical officer and financial

management are highlighted. There can be no doubt as to the vital importance of filling these slots with highly competent and motivated people as early as possible in the planning stage of an expedition.

The importance of diet, and all the pros and cons of using oxygen, are fully explained, as well as why the chosen route on Everest was the **North Ridge**. The narrative moves rapidly after the departure date of 17th of March, 1993. One is spared the long approach march and the inevitable porters' strike that used to be a feature in expedition books.

To the mountain, and how success was achieved

Once the build-up begins, the style of the book changes, with long extracts from the climbers' diaries, bringing the reader closer to the action. By early May the North Col has been reached and Camps 1 and 2 established above it. At the same time, further pressures comes on the team: on May 10th, 37 people reach the top from the South. The outside world wonders what are our lads up to? This

illustrates the enormous difference between attempting Everest from the North, exposed to the searing wind, and from the South, where the ascent is on the lee side. They now know that it will not be possible to re-stock the high camps so that everyone may have a chance at the summit. It is the 'Brave Moment of Truth' - the decision has to be made who will be the summiteers. It comes down to Group 1 - **Dawson Stelfox** and **Frank Nugent**, and Group 2 - **Robbie Fenlon**, **Tony Burke** and possibly **Mick Murphy**.

Then they hear a further 17 people have made the ascent from the South.

By now the days are numbered. The transport arrives to take them home and the expedition is living on borrowed time. The final push is edge-of-the-seat stuff as the groups make their way towards the higher camps. By May 26th, everything is in place, with people in every camp on the mountain. At last the long-awaited window in the weather arrives and, on May 27th, at 05.15, **Dawson Stelfox** and **Frank Nugent** make their bid

on a clear, windless morning. At the first step they fumble for the route and **Richard O'Neill Dean**, watching through a telescope from Base Camp 15 miles away, talks them onto the correct line - the marvels of radio! At 13.30, when they are below the Second Step, Frank Nugent's oxygen gives trouble and he must turn back. Dawson Stelfox now continues alone, reaching the summit at 17.10. Then he begins the solo descent with darkness looming. He finally reaches Camp 3 at 23.15, 18 hours after starting out.

The whole description of this memorable day is quite magnificent. Sadly, the second attempt by **Robbie Fenlon** and **Tony Burke** on the following day ended at 8,500 metres, and they turned back, to lead the others off the mountain.

Lorna Siggins has succeeded in putting on paper a fine balanced account of what was an adventure. ... Buy it. Read it - and then read it again. You will not be disappointed.

John I Murray Climber, mountaineer and member of the Irish Mountaineering Club.

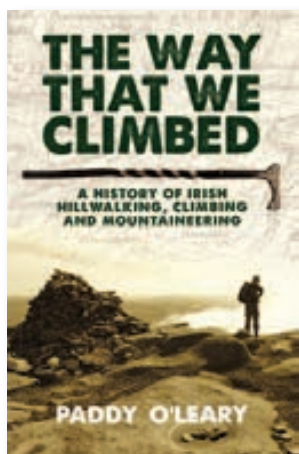
This is an edited version of the review in Irish Mountain Log 33 (Winter 1994)



Most of the members of the 1993 Irish Everest Expedition team leaving Dublin Airport on St Patrick's Day



The definitive history of Irish mountaineering



THE WAY THAT WE CLIMBED: A HISTORY OF IRISH HILLWALKING, CLIMBING AND MOUNTAINEERING

By Paddy O'Leary

The Collins Press (2015), 324pp,
13 colour photos, 107 b&w photos,
€20.00 (ppbk)
ISBN 978-1-898573-89-0

The passing of **Joss Lynam** in January 2011 left many wondering who would compile a history of Irish mountaineering now. Fortunately, **Paddy O'Leary** has risen to the task, and surely no one can equal his credentials. A lifelong activist in all areas of mountaineering, manager of the Tiglin Adventure Centre for many years, and well-known to mountaineers of North and South, Paddy has honed his literary skills on *Servants of the Empire: The Irish in the Punjab 1881-1921* (2011), representing a reworking of his PhD thesis. As they say in Cork, beat that!

The title *The Way That We Climbed* is a nod towards *The Way that I Went*, the classic autobiography by **Robert Lloyd Praeger**, famous Irish botanist and first President of the **Irish Mountaineering Club** (IMC).

Paddy recounts the early history of Irish clubs, and, in the fractious Irish context, the inevitable splits. Tensions were resolved ultimately by the

establishment of the **Federation of Mountaineering Clubs of Ireland** in 1971. The book looks at mountain activities from 1950-2000, in all of which Paddy has had a lifetime's experience at the highest level (no pun intended!).

The first club mentioned is **The Brotherhood of Lug**, established in 1902 and still going strong. The main activists from the 1950s are **Na Fánaithe, Uinseann MacEoin, Dáithí ó Scolaird** and **Tom Quinn**. Amazingly the **Irish Ramblers Club**, Ireland's largest hillwalking club, is barely acknowledged.

Rock climbing in the 1950s was centred on Dalkey Quarry, Luggala and Glendalough, with sporadic excursions to Connemara and Donegal. The IMC Belfast Section concentrated on the Mourne. Moving into the 1960s, Fair Head was the 'in place,' with a big involvement of Dublin-based rock climbers. Later in the 1970s, Ailladie in the Burren and Malinbeg in Donegal were opened up and developed.

The first Alpine trips were led by **Joss Lynam** to Arolla in 1949 and 1951, and to Chamonix in 1950. By the mid-

1950s, IMC members were doing the classic routes in Chamonix and Zermatt. Then, in 1961, the big breakthrough came when **Emmet Goulding** and **Tony Ingram** did a first Irish ascent of the West Face of the Dru – a top-grade route put up in 1952 by a crack, four-man French team, taking six days and spread over two visits. The Irish pair completed the route in three days. Through the 1970s and '80s, even more difficult routes were climbed.

The first major Irish expedition was the IMC's to Rakaposhi in the Karakoram in 1964. Everything that could go wrong did, and the team came home defeated, but enlightened.

For a number of years the focus shifted to Greenland and the Andes. When the high Himalayas were again considered in the late 1980s, an attempt on Changtse failed. The Irish attempt on Manaslu in 1991 showed that an expedition team must be compatible, united and supportive of each other; technical ability alone will not ensure success.

The Everest team of 1993, the nucleus of which was those members of the

Manaslu team who were last to abandon that expedition, i.e., **Nugent, Stelfox, Somers, Fenlon** and **Barry**, proved compatible and their efforts were crowned with **Dawson Stelfox's** magnificent solo success. Another member of key importance, but not mentioned, was **John Bourke**, a retired bank executive, the expedition treasurer and financial advisor. His personal contacts with top level Irish business, financial and media circles ensured a level of funding and interest never before attained by an Irish expedition.

In a few areas the book is either light in its treatment or misses items that merit inclusion. The role of **Joss Lynam** is not adequately concentrated on.

All that said, *The Way That We Climbed* does include a tremendous amount of information and gives a picture of those times when the essence of mountaineering was the development of technique, being completely self-sufficient and being capable of finding one's way over Irish mountains in all weather conditions.

Extremely well researched and copiously illustrated with photos of every major activist, this will stand as a book of reference for years to come. To everyone who was active during any of the decades covered, this book will bring it all vividly alive.

Buy it, enjoy it and relive those magic days. Well done, Paddy O'Leary and The Collins Press.

John I Murray Climber, mountaineer and member of the Irish Mountaineering Club.

This is an edited version of the review in Irish Mountain Log 114 (Summer 2015)



The Anglo-Irish Jaonli Expedition 1991 team members. Back row (from left): Richard Brooke, Mike Banks, Jim Milledge. Front row: Paddy O'Leary, Mike Westmacott, Joss Lynam

Irish climbing legend who broke down barriers produces an inspirational memoir



UNCOILING THE ROPES: THE MEMOIR OF A TRAILBLAZING IRISH CLIMBER

By Clare Sheridan

Mweelrea Press (2020), 200pp, 8 pages of photos, €18.99 (ppbk), ISBN 978-1-78846-159-7

I don't remember the first time I met **Clare Sheridan**, author of *Uncoiling the Ropes*. She simply seemed to materialise at the same time climbing took centre stage in my life. I would see her and her husband, **Calvin Torrans**, climbing together at the wall and I just knew that they were two legends in Irish climbing. More importantly, however, they were also two welcoming, friendly, fun members of the climbing community.

Mountaineering books are my 'go to' and I've read many, but Clare's book resonated with me more than most. In fact, I think my husband might be getting sick of hearing about it! As I write this review, I am 35 weeks pregnant and many of my sentences recently have begun "Clare climbed the Cuillin ridge when she was 30 weeks pregnant, so I should be able for..." (insert non-midwife-approved

outdoor adventure here), or "Clare and Calvin brought their two-week-old baby camping, so we should...", or sometimes I just gesture towards the book mid-argument with a simple "Don't limit me!" and we burst out laughing.

Mark Twain once said, "I didn't have time to write a short letter, so I wrote a long one instead." At less than 200 pages, *Uncoiling the Ropes* is relatively short, and I

the one of their shared partnership. She does this succinctly and modestly, with no fluff, no embellishment and no sensationalism. Clare is not the hero of her own story and I loved that about the book. Serious climbing in Ireland, Yosemite, the Alps, the Himalayas, the Andes and Alaska is recounted well, but unremarked upon, leaving me, the reader, to find it all the more

and good-naturedness in the face of adversity.

At a time in Ireland when women were telling other women "girls don't climb," and it was accepted as fact that, even in the rare cases when they did, they would never have the strength to climb hard routes, Clare climbed anyway and pretty soon she climbed hard.

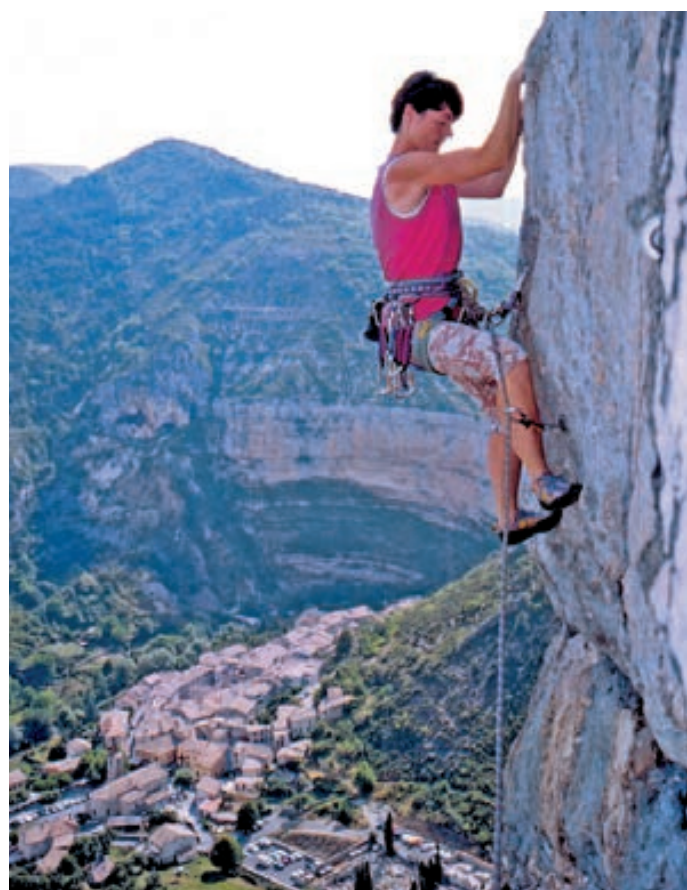
When Calvin was told he'd never climb again, he was back on the rock within a few short months. Yes, we hear stories like this all the time, but what came through uniquely for me in this book was the lack of bitterness or anger. Clare and Calvin didn't climb out of spite, because others said they couldn't. They climbed because they loved it and because *they* knew they could.

I should point out here that this book has something for every reader. You don't need to have a connection with climbing to enjoy it. What is written about life in Ireland (north and south) since the 1950s alone is more than enough to merit the read.

Uncoiling the Ropes inspires; whether it is to climb harder, take up climbing, delve deeper into Ireland's history, or simply ditch the excuses and push yourself that little bit more in life, depends on you. For me, I have to lace up my running shoes, even though I can no longer see my feet, because that's what Clare would do!

Vanessa Kirkpatrick Climber, past member of IMC, has climbed on big walls in Yosemite and Zion and in places like Kenya, Namibia, Oman and Saudi Arabia.

From *Irish Mountain Log 136* (Winter 2020)



Clare Sheridan on Orpierre, in the Hautes-Alpes, France. "With bolts, we could all be heroes of the vertical!"

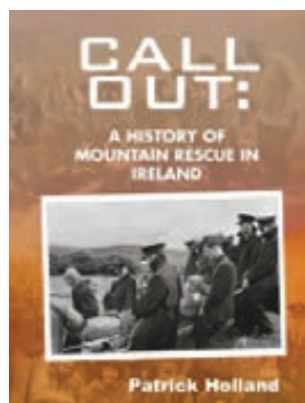
don't know how Clare did that - I'm guessing a combination of natural talent, hours upon hours of work and careful editing. She somehow manages to interweave three inspirational climbing stories here: her own, Calvin's and

remarkable.

Unexpectedly for me, though, it is not the impressive climbs in this book that will stick with me; it is the attitudes to life that permeate through them, the raw passion for the outdoors, and the resilience



A warts 'n' all history of Irish mountain rescue



CALL OUT: A HISTORY OF MOUNTAIN RESCUE IN IRELAND

By Pat Holland

(Mountain Rescue Ireland)

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

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

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



Mountain Rescue personnel at the medical tent on Croagh Patrick on Reek Sunday, 2014

As a past chairperson of the **South Eastern Mountain Rescue Association (SEMRA)**, and of **Mountain Rescue Ireland**, Pat Holland is well placed to write a book on the history of call-outs in Ireland. There are only three chapters, and the first two make very interesting reading as they detail particular call-outs that the Mountain Rescue teams have responded to over the years. These include missing or overdue hillwalkers, injured walkers and climbers, missing patients, plane crashes, people who were lost or disorientated, suicides, medical emergencies and, in one case handled by **North West Mountain Rescue Team**, a cow that had fallen down a gully! On another occasion the author himself required assistance after a fall.

Hillwalkers are accustomed to meeting people on the hills who are less than adequately dressed. Pat has met people walking on ice wearing runners, children in the hills without warm clothing, and sick adults and children attempting to climb Croagh Patrick. He points out that while the mountain rescue services cannot restrict access to the hills, "on

occasion, participation in a Mountain Skills course is tactfully recommended."

The book carefully documents the development of Mountain Rescue Ireland, formerly known as the **Irish Mountain Rescue Association (IMRA)**, since its inception in the 1960s. The author explains how, in the early days, rescue teams were made up of hillwalkers and others with local knowledge. The dearth of resources is shocking by modern standards. In 1985, the **Dublin Wicklow Mountain Rescue Team** had no radio equipment. Teams were alerted by a knock on their door. When SEMRA was founded in the late 1970s, they did not have a stretcher.

The problem of securing funding is documented, as are other issues such as teams not taking up grants, and poor administration. In 2013, **Mayo Mountain Rescue** received only €7,000 in funding from the State. This was brought to the attention of the media after an inquest into the death on Mweelrea of a walker whose body was not found for four days, after a thousand person-hours of volunteer search time had been expended, involving several teams.

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

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

From *Irish Mountain Log 131* (Autumn 2019)



A fascinating history of Irish polar explorers



SEEK THE FROZEN LANDS: IRISH POLAR EXPLORERS 1740-1922

By Frank Nugent

The Collins Press (2004), 292pp, many b&w prints and photos, nine maps, €30.00, ISBN 1-903464-24-2

The Collins Press has built something of a niche with Antarctic books, starting with *Tom Crean*. It is now doubly welcome to greet a book published by them on Irish polar explorers, written by an Irish author who is no armchair compiler but an experienced polar traveller who has sailed and climbed in the Antarctic and threaded the North West Passage.

One function of this book is to catalogue as far as is possible all the Irishmen who were involved in polar exploration, whether they are historically important, like **Shackleton**, or not, like poor **James Hand, AB**, who died of scurvy on the 1875 Nares Expedition. This has involved the author in a huge amount of research, much of it in England. The result is a very valuable collection of material about all the polar Irishmen, including their careers outside their polar work, their families and their connections.

Such a mine of information might be enough to fill a book, but it is only the back-up to the stories of the great Irish sailors who contributed so largely to solving three great polar problems of the last two centuries – the discovery of the North West Passage, the exploration of the coasts of the Antarctic continent and the race for the South Pole.

The book starts a bit slowly, but once it moves to the partnership of **Scott, James Clark Ross** and **Francis**

Crozier from Banbridge, it becomes a fascinating narrative. They sailed together first in the Arctic and then in a four-year exploration and circumnavigation of the Antarctic continent. This is excitingly described, partly in the words of the author, partly in the words of the protagonists themselves, and illustrated by contemporary watercolours of towering icebergs, and ships battered by huge waves, barely avoiding collision.

Three great Irish naval officers were involved in the search for **Franklin** (whose second-in-command was Crozier). They were **McClure**, a fine explorer but who shows up as a selfish man, more interested in completing the NW Passage (which he did!) than in finding Franklin; **Henry Kellett**, repeatedly mentioned in the searches; and **Leopold McClintock**, whom the author considers the finest of the three.

It would not be right to leave this section without saluting **Col (later General) Edward Sabine** of Dublin who

spent much time in both polar regions checking magnetic variations, and was a worthy comrade to the others mentioned above.

Then there's a lull. It is generally known that the pioneer Irish mountaineer, **HC Hart**, was the naturalist on the Nares Expedition, but it was news to me that it also included at least three other Irishmen, including the ill-fated James Hand. It was also a surprise to read that the father of the **Gore-Booth** sisters spent many summers exploring the Arctic.

In the beginning of the 20th century the scene switches to the Antarctic. I pass over this part of the book, not to denigrate it, but because it is well known to most of us, partly through previous Collins Press books. Enough to say that it is as well written as the earlier parts, and that it is very useful to have all four Antarctic expeditions in one book. The author stresses the outstanding contributions of **Shackleton** and **Crean**.

I've already praised the action illustrations; there are also very many portraits, which help to bring the characters to life.

In a coda, Nugent points out how these brave men, imperfect like all of us, "dared for duty and glory." Irish historians have tended to concentrate on our political history, while these men and others like them in many places and professions, lost in the catch-all designation "British," are forgotten. They deserve our national respect and we must thank the author for bringing one group of the forgotten into the limelight.

Joss Lynam Literary Editor of the *Irish Mountain Log* in 2003

This is an edited version of the review in Irish Mountain Log 68 (Winter 2003)



Launching the *James Caird* from the shore of Elephant Island, April 24th, 1916



The writer of this piece, Alan Tees, third from right, on a walk in Gougane Barra, Co Cork, together with Nicky Hore, fifth from right, and an all-female cast of Mountaineering Ireland members during the Autumn Meet of 2008

It's funny the things you remember

First it was the FMCI...

In 1979, the **North West Mountaineering Club** was a member of the **Federation of Mountaineering Clubs of Ireland (FMCI)**, having been seemingly signed up by **Joey Glover** before his untimely death. Our membership only became apparent when we were invited to attend the FMCI's AGM at Tiglin in Wicklow.

The fact that the AGM corresponded with an Ireland v France international rugby match at Landsdowne Road, for which I could get tickets, made the trip an attractive prospect, so **Maurice Simms** and I set off for the capital in my 850 Mini early on Saturday morning.

I have no recollection of the game, which was 9-9 according to my diary, or indeed of the AGM at Tiglin, but I do recall a pub session afterwards. Maurice and I, being rookies at such events, omitted to get a carryout, a serious mistake as it turned out, and we were subjected to sleepless hours by the others carousing through the night in the IMC Hut in Glendasan. The new acquaintances I made that day were, in no particular order, **Pat Hamilton, Alastair McQuoid, Robin Merrick, John Armstrong, Joss Lynam, Pat Murray, John Murray, Mick O'Shea, Mark Henry, Calvin Torrans** and **Alex McIntyre**

(whom I presume was a guest). None of them could sing a note!

Then we were the MCI...

For a club to join the **Mountaineering Council of Ireland (MCI)**, it had to send a representative to a Meet to say something about the club's membership and activities. That club would then require a proposer and a seconder, before being accepted for Aspirant Membership.

A gentleman from an applicant club stood up at a Meet and told us about his ascent of Kilimanjaro, how he struggled to the top just as the sun rose, shedding its rays on a sign which said 'Uhuru.' This means 'freedom', he explained, and there, on the summit of Kilimanjaro, he had an epiphany. When he got back to Ireland, he would form a mountaineering club called Uhuru. And so, it came to pass. The new club met every weekend and had a membership of twenty-three. They would like to join the MCI.

A gentleman with a north Dublin accent stood up to propose the club. "Mister Chairman, ya hoor yuh is a great name for an Irish club and I would like to propose ya hoor yuh for Aspirant Membership of the Council," he said. After the hilarity died down, Uhuru was duly seconded.

And now we are MI...

It was the **Mountaineering Ireland (MI)** Autumn Meet in Macroom, Co Cork, in 2008 and I was out walking with a group on Gougane Barra. Alas, my enjoyment of the walk was greatly marred, because I was in a blue funk about the President's speech, which I had to make after the dinner that evening.

Other than **Nicky Hore** from **Blayney Ramblers** and myself, the group was entirely female. On the way back, we came to the inevitable Irish barbed wire fence. This one had a rudimentary stile, which consisted of three bits of wood, two upright on either side of the fence and one horizontal. I got over safely, followed by the rest, but Nicky, ever the gentleman, waited until last. Poised, one leg either side of the fence, the stile suddenly collapsed. There were sympathetic sounds from the female audience and, perhaps, a snigger from me. Then a voice from the back, "I could give you a plaster, if you'd let me put it on."

This anecdote proved to be my pièce de résistance at the dinner that evening!

**Alan Tees, President,
Mountaineering Ireland, 2008-2012**



Mountaineering Ireland is immensely proud to announce that *Irish Peaks* – a celebration of Ireland’s highest mountains – has won this year’s Guidebook Award in the prestigious Mountain Book Competition at the **Banff Centre Mountain Film & Book Festival**. Banff jury member Heather Dawe described *Irish Peaks* as follows: “A wonderful showcase of the rugged beauty of the island of Ireland’s upland landscapes, *Irish Peaks* made me want to head for these hills. This book combines detailed route guides to the highest hundred mountains with incredible photography and comprehensive guides to their natural and hillwalking history. Ireland is a country where access to the mountains is not a given. *Irish Peaks* shares the invaluable route knowledge of local experts with the visitor, clearly mapping and explaining established lines into and over the ground. This is an inspirational guidebook that will surely entice many hillgoers to further explore these mountains.”



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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