

irish mountain log

The magazine for walkers and climbers in Ireland

No 99 Autumn 2011

ISSN 0790 8008

€3.95 (£3.40)

*Mountaineering
Ireland*

www.mountaineering.ie

ISSN 0790-8008



9 770790 800005



Winter Lecture Series 2011/2012

Mick Fowler 1, 2 & 3 December 2011

Mountaineering Ireland, in association with **berghaus**, is delighted to announce that Mick Fowler, the “mountaineers’ mountaineer,” will be visiting Ireland as part of our 2011/12 Winter Lecture Series. Lectures will take place in Tollymore National Outdoor Centre, Great Outdoors Dublin and Kerry Outdoor Sports Killarney on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd of December 2011, respectively. Tickets for these lectures can be purchased on www.mountaineering.ie.

Described by Sir Chris Bonington as “one of the greatest mountaineers,” Mick Fowler was previously voted the mountaineers’ mountaineer. He and his climbing partner, Paul Ramsden, won the Piolet D’Or eight years ago for an audacious first ascent, by its north face, of a little-known mountain in China called Siguniang.



From the age of 13, Mick gained a traditional grounding in climbing on 12,000ft peaks in the Swiss and French Alps. He has climbed all the classic north walls including the Eiger North Face, Walker Spur, Dru Couloir, Matterhorn North Face, Freney Pillar, Cima Ovest, Piz Badile and the Croz Spur on the Grandes Jorasses. He has also climbed a new line on the Eckpfeiler Buttress of Mont Blanc and, further afield, in the Caucasus range, a new direct line on the West Face of Ushba, the highest mixed face in Europe.

Mick has been vice-president of the Alpine Club and a director of the Mount Everest Foundation. All his mountaineering is done during his holidays from his career in the UK tax office, where he is currently Assistant Director of Capital Taxes.

Other speakers in the 2011/2012 Winter Lecture Series will include Iain Miller of Donegal sea-stack fame and Jim Ryan, author of many walking guides, including *Carrauntoohil and MacGillycuddy’s Reeks: A Walking Guide to Ireland’s Highest Mountains* and, most recently, *Aconcagua and the Southern Andes*.

see www.mountaineering.ie
for venues and dates.



The Matterhorn.



Vehicle security

Prevention is the key

Mountaineering Ireland staff recently met with the county wicklow Joint Policing committee to discuss break-ins to vehicles parked in the wicklow mountains and to clarify how hillwalkers and climbers can reduce their risk of being affected by this crime.

On behalf of Mountaineering Ireland, Helen Lawless outlined the impact that such break-ins have on our members and on other visitors to the Wicklow uplands. The implications for local businesses were highlighted and possible solutions were discussed with the Committee. Suggestions included car parks with CCTV and the belief that small enterprises operating in car parks would reduce the incidence of anti-social behaviour.

Chief Superintendent Thomas Conway outlined the progress that has been made through Operation Uplands, a joint initiative between the three policing districts in Wicklow to tackle this problem.

As detection is difficult, the Gardaí are focusing on prevention. Patrols (marked and unmarked cars) and checkpoints have been put in place over the last year. The number of break-ins to vehicles parked in the Wicklow uplands over the first eight months of 2011 was 227, reduced from 238 for the same period in 2010.

Car crime in the uplands is typically opportunistic and fast, with most incidents taking place in the afternoons, between Thursday and Sunday. The Gardaí have appealed to people parking in the uplands to take the following measures to protect their vehicles:

- Avoid leaving bags, clothing, etc, on view within the vehicle.
- Open the glove box and, where possible, the lid on the boot, to show there is nothing in the vehicle.
- Remove portable sat navs, including cradle and suction pads. Also wipe any suction marks off the windscreen.
- If you must leave valuables in the boot, put them in before you arrive at the parking location.
- Secure the vehicle (23% of these

thefts last year were from unlocked vehicles).

- Report all break-ins or damage to vehicles.
- Watch for and report any suspicious activity by dialling 999.

In addition, Mountaineering Ireland reminds groups that car-pooling reduces exposure to this crime and eases pressure for space in small or busy car parks.

Mountaineering Ireland appeals to hillwalkers and climbers to follow this advice and pass it on to others. By doing so, we will be playing our part in reducing this type of crime.

**karl boyle, chief officer,
mountaineering ireland**



WeLCOMe TO...

ISSUE 99

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

mountaineering ireland

Mountaineering Ireland Ltd is a company limited by guarantee. Registered in Dublin No 199053. Registered Office: Sport HQ, 13 Joyce Way, Park West Business Park, Dublin 12, Ireland
Tel: (+353 1) 625 1115
Fax: (+353 1) 625 1116
info@mountaineering.ie
www.mountaineering.ie

hot r ock c limbing wall

Tollymore Mountain Centre
Bryansford, Newcastle
County Down, BT33 0PT
Tel: (+44 28) 4372 5354
youth@mountaineering.ie

editor: Patrick O'Sullivan

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

l iterary editor: Peter O'Neill

iml-literaryeditor@mountaineering.ie

advertising: Mountaineering Ireland
logads@mountaineering.ie

Production: C  il  n MacLochl  inn
iml-production@mountaineering.ie

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

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

c opy deadline for the Winter 2011 issue of the *Irish Mountain Log* is Friday, October 21st, 2011.

Par TiciPaTion and r isk

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



Features

26 The mount brandon pilgrimage: in the footsteps of c rom dubh
M  che  l    Coile  in

28 mind the gap: the untapped potential of a kerry climbing venue
Richard Creagh

30 alpinism: go for it!
Dawne Steede

32 seniors having alpine moments
Donald Gill

36 slieve carr: ireland's most remote summit?
Bryan McCabe

40 helicopter rescues: mercy missions in the mountains
Jim O'Neill

44 c athar castles: on the c athar Trail and gr 10
Dennis Golden

Regulars

6 News 18 MRI news 48 Books
52 Access & Conservation news
56 Training news 62 The last word

Routes appeal

Welcome to the autumn 2011 issue of the *Irish Mountain Log*. The evenings are drawing in, there is a chill in the air and memories of summer's adventures are fading.

In this issue, we carry an appeal from Mountaineering Ireland to individual members or clubs to describe their favourite route up an Irish mountain (see pages 14-15). President of Mountaineering Ireland, Alan Tees, starts the ball rolling with a description of a route up Slieve Snaght.

Alan invites members to contribute to the publication, by Mountaineering Ireland, of a guide to the 156 'separate mountains' in the Vandaleur-Lynam list of Irish peaks. This guide is to be published in memory of Joss Lynam and in recognition of the significant contribution he made to the development of our sport nationally and internationally. It is hoped to include some of Joss's own route descriptions in the guide.

One of this issue's features focuses on the role of helicopters in mountain rescue. Written by experienced winchman and paramedic Jim O'Neill, it gives a great insight into how we, as mountaineers, can best be prepared for the hopefully unlikely event that we some day need assistance from a mountain rescue team or have to be evacuated by a helicopter.

The improvements in the availability of helicopters for mountain rescue in Ireland in recent years do not detract from the importance of the service provided by the members of our twelve volunteer mountain rescue teams, but, in suitable weather, the helicopter service can clearly add to the effectiveness of the service offered by those teams. The article highlights the ways in which we, as mountaineers, can facilitate the work of Mountain Rescue Ireland teams.

I hope you will enjoy this issue and are able to stay active on the hills as we move into autumn.

Patrick O'Sullivan



Patrick O'Sullivan
editor, *irish mountain log*

on The cover : Participants at the Summer Alpine Meet 2011. Photo: Alun Richardson.

This Page: The Mount Brandon range as seen from Conor Pass road, Co Kerry. Photo: Tom Fox.

News

get all the latest news at www.mountaineering.ie

Staff updates

Patrick O'Sullivan

We WOULD like to offer our congratulations to Karl Boyle, Chief Officer, and Paul Whiting, Development Officer with Mountain Rescue Ireland, and their partners on the safe arrival of recent additions to their families. At the same time Paul has announced that he will be leaving Mountain Rescue Ireland in

the coming months to return with his family to his native Melbourne. In his time in the post, Paul has made a significant contribution to the development of mountain rescue services nationally, something we should all be grateful for. Finally, Angela Carlin, who worked initially as Youth Development Officer and latterly as Coaching Development and Talent Identification Officer, will also be moving on. We wish Angela and Paul all the best for the future ■

angela carlin makes a move

karl boyle

MOUNTAINEERING IRELAND'S Coaching Development & Talent ID Officer, Angela Carlin, recently left Mountaineering Ireland to set up a private bouldering facility in Inchicore, Dublin 8. All in Mountaineering Ireland would like to wish Angela the very best in her new venture, the Gravity Climbing Centre.

Angela originally joined Mountaineering Ireland in 2006 as Youth Officer, when she was based at the Hot Rock Climbing Wall in Tollymore. In 2009, she was appointed Coaching Development & Talent ID Officer. In both of these roles, Angela has displayed a massive enthusiasm and energy for the sport, and she has supported and encouraged the involvement of young people in our sport in many parts of Ireland.

In 2010, Angela rolled out the "FUNDamentals of Climbing" programme to coaches in youth clubs and at climbing walls. She has also been central to improving standards and international participation in competition climbing in Ireland. Angela has also been responsible for the national Lead and Bouldering Championships.

The Gravity Climbing Centre will open its doors in early October. With more than 800m² of bouldering walls, it will be able to boast of being one of the biggest



angela carlin.

bouldering facilities in the world. Angela's colleagues in Gravity are Graeme Alderson, Percy Bishton, Nigel Callender and Ricky Young.

While Angela has now left the staff, she is eager to remain involved as a volunteer, displaying the loyalty and commitment she has always shown for Mountaineering Ireland ■

general enquiries

info@mountaineering.ie

board of directors

President

Alan Tees
president@mountaineering.ie

chairman

Ruairí Ó Conchúir
chairperson@mountaineering.ie

honorary secretary

Ross Millar
secretary@mountaineering.ie

honorary Treasurer

David Batt
treasurer@mountaineering.ie

board members

Sandra Kennedy
sandra-board@mountaineering.ie
Stephen McMullan
stephen-board@mountaineering.ie
Jerry O'Dwyer
jerry-board@mountaineering.ie
Patrick O'Sullivan
patrick-board@mountaineering.ie
Dawson Stelfox
dawson-board@mountaineering.ie

staff at sport HQ

chief officer

Karl Boyle
karl@mountaineering.ie

administrator

Una Feeney
una@mountaineering.ie

accounts administrator

Terry Canavan
terry@mountaineering.ie

Training administrator

Nicole Mullen
nicole@mountaineering.ie

Training officer

Alun Richardson
alun@mountaineering.ie

hillwalking, access & conservation officer

Helen Lawless
helen@mountaineering.ie

staff at Tollymore youth development officer

Paul Swail
paul.swail@mountaineering.ie



www.mountaineering.ie



Lynam Lecture 2011

harish kapadia to speak in dublin

speaker: harish kapadia
edmund burke Theatre, Tc d
24 november 2011

karl boyle

THE LYNAM LECTURE is aimed at continuing the legacy of Joss Lynam (1924-2011), in recognition of his enormous contribution to mountaineering, walking and outdoor adventure activities in Ireland over some 60 years. He was the initiator of numerous developments in these areas, the strong advocate for a number of generations of Irish mountaineers and the representative of Irish mountaineering on a world stage through his involvement with the UIAA.

For 2011, Mountaineering Ireland has invited Harish Kapadia, the distinguished Himalayan mountaineer, to deliver the Lynam Lecture. Harish is a well-known name in the field of climbing and trekking in India. His main contribution to Himalayan climbing has been to explore unknown areas and, in a number of cases, to open up climbing possibilities in previously unknown or restricted areas.

He has led six international joint expeditions, four with British climbers and two with French, to high peaks like Rimo (7,385m), Chong Kumdan I (7,071m), Sudarshan Parbat, Panch Chuli and Rangrik Rang groups.

In 1974, Harish fell in a crevasse at 6,200m, deep inside the formidable Nanda Devi Sanctuary. He was carried by his companions for 13 days to the base camp where a helicopter rescued him. He was operated on for a dislocated hip-joint and had to spend two years walking on crutches.

He has published twelve books. His *Trek the Sahyadris* is the standard reference for all trekkers in the Western Ghats. His other books, *Exploring the Hidden Himalaya* (with Soli Mehta), *High Himalaya Unknown Valleys* and *Meeting The Mountains* cover his various trips to the Himalaya, while *Spiti Adventures in the Trans-Himalaya* covers climbing and trekking in that region. He has been the editor of the prestigious *Himalayan Journal* for the past 28 years, bringing the journal to an international standard and continuing it as a major authentic reference on the range.



harish kapadia.

He was elected an Honorary Member of the Alpine Club and was a Vice-President of the Indian Mountaineering Foundation (1997-1999). He was awarded the IMF Gold Medal in 1993 and the Patron's Medal of the Royal Geographic Society in 2003.

The Lynam Lecture will be held in Trinity College, Dublin. Joss was a civil engineering graduate of Trinity and, on 14th December 2001, he was conferred with an honorary doctorate from the college. Mountaineering Ireland would like to thank Trinity College for supporting this lecture by making available the Edmund Burke Theatre.

For more information and to purchase tickets, visit www.mountaineering.ie ■



harish kapadia on indira col, northernmost point of india.

Discount for members

Mountaineering Ireland members can avail of a 50% discount on Lynam Lecture ticket prices. The discount code is available when you email your name and membership number to lectures@mountaineering.ie.



**Mountaineering
Ireland**

Autumn Gathering 2011

maumturks walking club to host this year's gathering in Leenane, Co Galway

members of maumturks walking club.

MAUMTURKS WALKING CLUB will host this year's Autumn Gathering on 14th-16th October 2011 in Leenane, Co Galway.

The gathering will provide an opportunity for Mountaineering Ireland members from around the island to get a real taste of Connemara from the local host club and local members.

The programme for the weekend includes a variety of walks, rockclimbing, workshops and guest speakers. Notably, there will be a keynote talk by **michael gibbons**, Ireland's leading field archaeologist, who is also a writer, broadcaster and mountaineer.

The walks will be led by members of the Maumturks Walking Club and will range from easy to moderate and hard.

The walks will take in Mweelrea, Maumeen, Devil's Mother and Leenane Hill, to name but a few.

The rockclimbing will be supported by local climbers. For a taste of Connemara climbing, see the www.climbing.ie route database, which includes Killary Crag, Gleann eighneach, Inagh Valley, Little Killary and the Maamturks.

Workshops

Two workshops will be delivered on Saturday: (1) **s scrambling for walkers**, with Alun Richardson, Mountaineering Ireland's Training Officer, and (2) **enjoying the mountain environment**, with Helen Lawless, our Access & Conservation Officer, and with ecologist Dave Hogan.

Book now

For full programme details and to register, go to www.mountaineering.ie.

Advance online registration is €35 (includes Saturday night dinner, bus hire and T-shirt). Advance registration is €16 if you are unable to attend the dinner. Registration at the gathering will be €40.

The Leenane Hotel is offering a special discounted weekend rate of €64 for two nights bed and breakfast. Visit the site www.leenanehotel.com for more information or contact 00 353 (0)95 42249.

A variety of other accommodation is also available in the local area, details of which are available on www.mountaineering.ie ■

Programme of led walks

from	To	distance	height gain	start Time	estimated duration	rating
	Killary Famine Walk	7.39km	76m	10:30	3 to 3.5 hrs	easy
	Leckavrea	4.45km	360m	10:30	3 to 3.5 hrs	easy
	Leenane Hill	7.5km	615m	09:30	4 to 5 hrs	Moderate
	Devil's Mother	11.1km	643m	09:30	4 to 5 hrs	Moderate
Glencraft	Leenane	10.5km	574m	09:30	4 to 5 hrs	Moderate
Derryclare	Bencorr	10.5km	707m	09:00	6 hrs	Hard
Corcog	Maumeen	12.26km	646m	09:00	7 hrs	Hard
	Mweelrea	14km	807m	08:30	8 hrs	Hard

Burren Youth Trip

skills developed on burren rock

david cussen

A GROUP of enthusiastic young climbers from all over Ireland assembled at the Burren OeC on July 24th for a week of rock climbing and bouldering. The old schoolhouse-turned-hostel was our base for the week.

After unpacking the contents of a small branch of Tesco from the back of the minibus (Question: "Can we really eat this much in six days?" Answer: "Yes!"), we were happy to turn in for the night, all very excited at the prospect of climbing the next morning.

The morning was a little cloudy, but not to worry; during the week the dark clouds spent more time threatening rain than raining. Breakfast eaten, lunches made, we wasted no time in getting to the Doolin boulders, which sat right at the water's edge.

It was really cool to climb so close to the ocean, which was boiling and frothing at our backs as we made our way up the rocks. We discovered that, at high tide, the Atlantic can actually roll around the enormous boulders, sometimes washing them away altogether. We also found it was best to make sure that the boulder we were climbing was facing in the same direction as in the guidebook, or you could spend twenty minutes wondering why a "3+ warm-up" left your fingers so tired that you could hardly tie your shoelaces!

The limestone boulders had many worthy problems for us to tackle: technical traverses, short, steep overhangs and even an exhilarating highball problem on the Reardon Wall.

Doolin was only one of the areas we visited during the week. The huge, dark sea-cliffs at Ailladie were a fun place to try some harder climbs while on a top rope. These routes varied from technical slab lines to small (painful!) finger cracks, and some



matt dorian during the mountaineering ireland burren youth Trip in July.
Photo: Paul swail.



david cussen during the mountaineering ireland burren youth Trip in July.
Photo: Paul swail.

routes even had difficult overhanging sections; great for getting completely pumped!

For those of us who had never climbed on sea-cliffs before, it took a little while to work out that on cliffs frequented by seabirds you can't always assume that the white patch above you is a massive, chalked hold: there's a thin line between grabbing a much-needed jug and making a slimy mistake!

A few hundred feet inland was Ballyryan, a smaller crag with shorter, easier climbs. While the routes weren't of the same calibre as Ailladie's, they were perfect for practicing placing gear and making anchors. Because of this, they were more popular and starting to polish. For some of the group, this was their first time placing gear on lead, and the many different cracks, threads and spikes on the routes made sure that we quickly became familiar with using all sorts of protection.

Many thanks to Mountaineering Ireland instructors Paul, Kris, Michael and Tara for keeping us safe and, more importantly, well fed for the week. Their hard work made the trip (and the banter) as good as it was and I'm sure I speak for everybody when I say that we'd all love to go climbing in the area again ■

Newcastle: gateway to the Mournes

Chris Armstrong

LYING 'WHERE the Mountains of Mourne sweep down to the sea,' the small coastal resort of Newcastle has long been seen as the gateway to the Mournes. It is a popular base for walkers visiting this picturesque area of southern County Down.

The town of Newcastle nestles quite dramatically beneath the domineering backdrop of Northern Ireland's highest peak, Slieve Donard (853m). It is also well-situated in relation to the major population centres, being 50km south of Belfast and 140km north of Dublin.

The town's name derives from a castle which was built at the mouth of the Shimna River by Felix Magennis in the late 16th century. Sadly, this castle has long since been demolished.

In the 17th century, the area grew as a port and was famously used as a landing point for smugglers who docked their ships, full of illicit cargo of alcohol and tobacco. These illegal goods were then transported through the Mournes to be sold in the bustling market village of Hilltown. This route was used so much that the hooves of the smugglers' horses defined a distinct track which still exists today and is a popular walking route through the high Mournes now known as the Brandy Pad.

With the proliferation of granite mining during the early 19th century, Newcastle's harbour was constructed to load cargo ships full of giant granite blocks which were used to build the famous docks in Belfast and Liverpool, as well as the Albert memorial in London. The harbour still stands today at the southern end of the town and is still used for small fishing boats and leisure cruisers. The sea-front promenade has recently received a multi-million pound makeover.

Starting point

Newcastle deserves its name as the gateway to the Mournes because it is the starting point for a large variety of walks in the high Mournes, surrounding forests and nature reserves. From **donard car park**, walkers can follow the Glen River on a reasonably steep ascent through



newcastle, c o d o w n. Photo: Patrick haughian.

Donard Forest to meet the **mourne wall**, where the mountains really open up and offer spectacular walking in every direction.

Turning east, walkers can follow the Mourne Wall up to the summit of **slieve donard**, with this ascent offering uninterrupted views out over the Irish Sea and down towards Murlough Bay and Newcastle itself.

Heading west, walkers can also follow the Mourne Wall in the opposite direction, summiting **slieve commedagh** and **slievenaglogh** before descending to Hare's Gap. From here there is either the option to take the **brandy Pad**, traversing back towards The Castles with views down towards Ben Crom Reservoir, or opt for the longer route home along **Trassey Track**, joining the **mourne way** which leads back to Newcastle via **Tollymore forest Park**.

Alternatively, for those looking to enjoy more low-level walking, there are options to either follow the **ulster way** from the town centre across parkland and minor roads to **Tollymore forest Park** or follow the **leale way** along the strand towards **murlough national nature reserve** where there is a 4km circular walk across an ancient sand dune system with panoramic views of the Mournes.

Newcastle plays host to the **mourne**

international walking festival every other year. This festival generally takes place towards the end of June and alternates each year between Newcastle and Warrenpoint on Carlingford Lough. The festival attracts walkers from all over Ireland and beyond, offering three days of fantastic walking balanced with a vibrant social scene.

Such is the compact nature of the Mournes that there are a number of other, smaller, gateway villages within easy driving distance of Newcastle.

bryansford is a quaint, sleepy village located next to Tollymore Forest Park with great access to the mountains; it is a popular spot for walkers looking for a bit more peace and tranquillity. Along the coast are the smaller towns and villages of Annalong, Kilkeel, Warrenpoint and Rostrevor, with **hilltown** being the main access point to a number of walks in the western low Mournes.

To find out more information about the vast array of walker-friendly accommodation, walking routes and other useful information designed to help you plan a walking trip to the Mournes, visit www.walkni.com ■

● Chris Armstrong, Countryside Access and Activities Network (CAAN)



heading off to the garrán ceoil r idge and brandon Peak. Photo: dingle hillwalking club.

Castlegregory Walking Festival: 8-9th October 2011

DINGLE HILLWALKING CLUB in association with Castlegregory Community Council is pleased to announce the inaugural Castlegregory Walking Festival, which will take place over the weekend of October 8th-9th, 2011.

The club has devised a programme of six graded walks in beautiful west Kerry. each day there will be three walks: difficult, moderate and easy. The difficult walk on the Saturday takes in the spectacular Garrán Ceoil ridge with its sheer drop on the northwest side. There are dramatic views of the Paternoster Lakes, Tralee Bay and beyond. Ahead are the great rock towers. The view is magnificent all the way, following the ridge to An Gáráin (Brandon Peak) at 840m and to Mount Brandon (956m), the second highest mountain in Ireland outside of the MacGillycuddy's Reeks. The descent is on the steep track from Mount Brandon until it meets the stream. From there, the route followed continues until it reaches the south-easterly ridge, which is parallel with the Paternoster Lakes, or if the conditions are favourable it leaves the path and follows the stream to the various ponds and corrie lakes and back to the start point.

To find out more about the weekend and how to register, visit www.dinglehillwalkingclub.com and click onto the link to the Castlegregory Walking Festival, or visit the Facebook page at Dingle Hillwalking Club ■



The difficult walk takes in the garrán ceoil r idge on brandon Peak (an gáráin). Photo: dingle hillwalking club.



Tyndall Mountain Club celebrates first 30 years

Tyndall mountain club members in the Pennine alps, switzerland, with monte rosa (4,634m) in the background. Photo: martin o'r eilly.



John Tyndall in 1864
Courtesy of the Royal Institution

TYNDALL MOUNTAIN CLUB, which was named to commemorate the Irish mountaineer and physicist John Tyndall from Leighlinbridge, Co Carlow, celebrates its 30th anniversary this year.

Naming the club after an individual was unusual and came after a number of other suggestions had been considered, the most interesting of which was "Starkers." On a warm and very wet gully climb in the Comeraghs it was felt that 'starkers' was the best attire for such hiking conditions and might make a suitable club name! However, since propriety might have been compromised by the suggestion, it was not adopted.

The first decade, the 1980s, saw a number of traditions being established by the club, some of which continue to the present day. The annual **wales Trip**, to Huw Walton's, has become part of club folklore, not just for the climbing but equally for the tales of Huw's mountain hut-style of accommodation – to wit, sixteen mattresses laid side by side.

Search-and-rescue became an interest for the club after a light aircraft crashed in the Blackstairs. In subsequent years, many members made important contributions to the early work of the **south eastern mountain r rescue association (semr a)**.

The **st stephen's day f amily hike** became established as an annual event and the youngsters of the early days now return for it. On the post-Christmas hike up Brandon Hill, they can relate their

own experiences of the world's wild places.

The **holly hike** was another annual fixture but, when collecting holly became frowned upon, it turned into the **whiskey hike**.

From early on, rockclimbing was an important activity within the club and, following a trip to the Old Head of Kinsale, Co Cork, there was a vigorous search around Kilkenny for any kind of rock outcrop. The Black Quarry was within the city limits and, when that was filled in, attention turned to **ballykeeffe quarry**. The club played a significant role in its early development. Gerry Fogg's subsequent work on the quarry and the resulting guide to the climbs there were important stages in its progress as a climbing venue.

In recent years, interest in rockclimbing



ice-climbing in the comeraghs. Photo: benny dowley.



Pic du midi in the Pyrenees. Photo: kevin higgins.

has waned in the club. Only a minimum number of members are climbing at present, but the recent **ballykeeffe c limbfest** may have reignited interest.

The **g reater r anges** have always been of interest to members. The 1980s saw trips to the **Pyrenees** and **mont blanc** as well as an independently organised trip to **everest base camp**.

1993 was the centenary of John Tyndall's death. The club celebrated his centenary with an **alpine meet** when about a quarter of the membership descended on Randa and Zermatt in the Pennine Alps, Switzerland, by train, plane, bus and bike. A number of summits were climbed by normal routes, including the **weisshorn** (4,506m), in memory of Tyndall's first ascent of it. Calvin Torrans acted as trainer and guide and introduced many to the delights of snow and ice and the skills of climbing on big mountains.

Numerous return trips were made to Zermatt in subsequent years; **monte r osa** (4,634m) was climbed, and members became regulars in the Biener establishment in Zermatt.

So far, no member has reached the summit of the Matterhorn, but this year's anniversary attempt to reach **Pic Tyndall** (named after John Tyndall) may bring one member very close.

The club's **white week** has become another annual event. During this week a group of Nordic-style ski enthusiasts go in search of the perfect ski trails. With winters like the past two, maybe it won't be necessary for them to go to Finland, France, Germany and Austria as they did in previous years.

Club members have been on **expeditions** to the Alps, Canadian Rockies, Aconcagua, Atlas Mountains,

elbrus, Kilimanjaro, Annapurna Circuit, everest Base Camp...all of which means that there is a combined wealth of mountaineering experience within the club.

Possibly as a result of the rising age profile of the members, or of a greater need for comfort, most of the recent trips have been closer to the horizontal. The annual wine-tasting **easter pilgrimage** to the Camino de Santiago in Spain has clocked up well over 1,000km – and nearly as many litres. Madeira and the Canary Islands have also attracted club members on hiking trips. Wine and warm weather may have been motivating factors!

Another annual feature of the club's year is the organisation of the **g us Tobin g alty walk**. One of Ireland's main challenge walks, it attracts a great voluntary effort from many members and is a significant social event in the club's calendar. Its origins are a bit obscure, but the club has been involved in its organisation since the mid-1980s. Gus Tobin was a significant figure in the walk from the start and, on his sudden death in 2002, it was felt appropriate to name the walk in his honour.

Surprisingly, Kilkenny has a strong connection with the Canadian town of Banff. A Kilkenny man who lived there was co-founder of the prestigious Alpine Club of Canada. As a final 30th anniversary event this year, Tyndall Mountain Club is hosting the **banff mountain f ilm f estival** on October 8th (see page 21 in this issue for details). After that, the club will begin looking forward to celebrating its 50th! ■



c lub expedition to kala Pattar, the h imalayas, in 1986, with Pumori in the background. Photo: ed mahon.



walking along a levada on the island of madeira. Photo: martin o'r eilly.

Lough Slieve Snaght with summit of Slieve Snaght to right and Errigal in the distance, Derryveagh, Co Donegal.
Photo: Alan Tees collection.



Appeal for contributions for routes guide

mountaineering ireland to publish guide to ireland's 2,000ft (600m) mountains



The new guide will be dedicated to the memory of Joss Lynam (1924-2011).
Photo: colm wright.

THE LATE JOSS LYNAM and the Rev CP Vandeleur compiled a list of Irish 2,000-foot mountains (before the metric system was adopted) and added it to the back of Claud Wall's republished book *Mountaineering in Ireland* in 1976.

There were 257 peaks in all, but these were further subdivided into "Separate Mountains" and "Subsidiary Peaks." Of the former, there were 156, spread reasonably fairly between Leinster, Ulster, and Connaught with Munster having a somewhat bigger share!

As a tribute to Joss Lynam, Mountaineering Ireland has decided to publish a guide to these peaks. So, we are asking Mountaineering Ireland members and clubs, with their unequalled local knowledge of the terrain, to contribute descriptions of suggested quality, access problem-free routes on these mountains.

It is hoped that this publication will be along

the lines of the very successful Scottish "Munro" and "Corbett" guides, with a high-quality photo, map and factual description of each route.

An example of the type of article or contribution we need is presented here. We would ask interested member clubs or individuals to go online at www.mountaineering.ie, look at the list of peaks and download the template for your route description. To avoid duplication, please let us know which peak you will contribute a route description for.

The *Irish Mountain Log* will publish selected contributions from these route descriptions over the next few issues.

Notification of your intention to describe a route and your route descriptions should be sent to: margarettees@eircom.net.

alan Tees, President

This example by alan Tees follows the template to use when making contributions to the mountaineering ireland 2,000-footers database:

name of mountain (english & irish):

Slieve Snaght (Sliabh Sneachta, i.e. Mountain of the Snows)

height:

678m (2,240ft)

grid reference:

B 923 148

ordnance survey (o s) sheet number:

Sheet No 1

introduction/setting:

Slieve Snaght, the second highest mountain in Donegal, is best viewed from Dunlewy. From here, its rounded granite summit looms up behind the dramatic precipices of the Poisoned Glen.

Text (with appropriate grid references) include start, summit and return:

The recommended route starts from the base of the Poisoned Glen, just beyond the roofless Dunlewy church, where a short track runs up the glen. Cars can be left here (GR B 930 181) and the track followed for a short distance before it is necessary to find stepping stones across the stream.

Head due south to gain spot height 225m. Continue up the broad ridge forming the western flank of the Poisoned Glen in a series of rising steps to Maumbeg (GR B 937 160). Continue along the broad, rocky, undulating ridge in a SW direction, over the unmarked Rocky Cap mountain, descending to Lough Slieve Snaght at GR B 932 152, from where the eastern slopes of the mountain are accessible.

Proceed to the summit, from where there are fine views of Errigal and the Donegal highlands to the north, and the Donegal coastline and islands to the west.

An easier return can be made by descending the gully from the north end of Lough Slieve Snaght towards Lough Maam but retaining the height and traversing to cross a col at GR B 931 1615 to regain the broad ridge towards Dunlewy.

alternative(s):

A somewhat shorter approach leads from the south, up the Horseshoe Valley from parking at Lough Barra slipway (GR B 9295 1235), following the Scardangal waterfall, to Lough Slieve Snaght.

Time, distance and type of terrain:

2.5 hours; 5.5km to the summit.

Rough and rocky underfoot and frequently wet.

access advice and issues, if any:

No access issues known

access advice and issues, if any:

No access issues known

contributed by (state if anonymity preferred):

Margaret and Alan Tees

contact details (email, please):

alantees@eircom.net

graphics: please attach basic sketch map and/or a route card:

Photocopy of map with route sketched on it (see below)



alan's photocopy of part of ordnance survey map showing route (and an alternative route) to summit of slieve snaght marked in red.

Photo(s): please attach, with caption(s):

2835: errigal from Lough Slieve Snaght (see page 14)

2826: Slopes of Slieve Snaght from Rocky Cap (see below)

2845: Slieve Snaght from Lough Maam



Dramatic decline in curlew numbers nationwide

birdwatch Ireland

The CURLeW, a large wader with a long downward-curved bill, got its name from its haunting “*cur...lee, cur...lee*” call. Curlews are found mainly in coastal areas during the winter, while in summer they breed in wet grassland and uplands.

A new BirdWatch Ireland survey to find breeding curlews in counties Donegal and Mayo has uncovered worrying results. During survey work for the last Atlas of Breeding Birds, in 1988-1991, Donegal and Mayo still held good numbers of breeding curlews and the Irish population as a whole was estimated at around 5,000 pairs. This spring, over 60 sites occupied by breeding curlews during that survey were revisited and, shockingly, the results indicated that only six still held breeding pairs.



adult curlew. Photo: colum clarke.

A total of just four pairs were recorded in Donegal and four in Mayo. This would indicate that there are likely to be less than 200 breeding pairs left in the whole country – a 96% decline in 20 years. The decline in resident breeding curlews may have been masked by an influx of Scottish and Scandinavian curlews each winter.

Anita Donaghy from BirdWatch Ireland says loss of habitat in the uplands is likely to be one of the main reasons for the decline.

“The marginal upland areas where curlew breed have been widely destroyed or fragmented by a range of land-use pressures,” she said. “Afforestation, commercial peat-cutting and windfarm developments are all factors that have probably contributed to the decline. As their habitat becomes more fragmented,



curlew chick hiding in wet grassland. Photo: anity donaghy.

curlews also become more vulnerable to predation.”

Curlews nest in damp, rushy pastures and on open bogland. Using their long bills, they probe for food in soft, wet areas along ditches or shallow pools where their chicks can easily find insect food.

As part of a cross-border project, BirdWatch Ireland is currently working with farmers in Donegal to maximise the breeding success of the dwindling curlew population.

Woodpeckers thriving

On a more positive note, Dick Coombes (BirdWatch Ireland) reports that great spotted woodpeckers have again had a successful breeding season, with 17 nests found this year in Co Wicklow and another in Co Dublin. In addition, woodpeckers have been sighted across a wider area.

“The growing number of reports from the surrounding counties of Meath, Louth, Kildare and Wexford suggests that there has been a steady expansion in the woodpecker’s range since breeding was first proved in Wicklow just three years ago,” said Dick. “They have now survived

two severe winters and apparently actually increased in number, so it looks like the great spotted woodpecker has established a firm foothold as a breeding species in Ireland.” ■

● For more information, or to report a curlew or woodpecker sighting, visit www.birdwatchireland.ie.



female great spotted woodpecker brings food to a nest, Co Wicklow. Photo: shay connolly.



upcoming mountain meitheal workdays: • Saturday 8th October 2011 • Sunday 23rd October 2011
• Saturday 12th November 2011 • Sunday 27th November 2011 • More information at www.pathsavers.org

ian kelly, chairman of glenwalk, speaks at the official opening of the new hut on carrickashane mountain, near aughavannagh, c o wicklow.

New shelter constructed on the Wicklow Way

another great job by mountain meitheal volunteers

MOUNTAIN MeITHeAL has erected an Adirondack-type shelter on the Wicklow Way on Carrickashane Mountain (grid ref T 074 861), between Glenmalure and Aghavannagh, Co Wicklow.

The project was financed by Glenwalk Hillwalking Club and permission to locate the shelter on their property was kindly given by Coillte. The site has amazing views looking across to Lugnaquilla and the Ow Valley and down on Aghavannagh and beyond.

The shelter was prefabricated by Mountain Meitheal members in the Coillte property in Glenealy over two weekends and transported in sections to the site where Mountain Meitheal members were joined by members of Glenwalk to reassemble it and apply wood preservative.

As the name suggests, the Adirondack shelter originated in the Adirondack Mountains of New York State. They are also a popular feature in Nordic countries where they are used as temporary accommodation during hiking and fishing

trips. The shelters are constructed with three sides, a pitched roof and a raised platform which can sleep four to five people. There is usually a fire ring, and those using it are reminded to follow the principles of Leave No Trace by minimizing the use of dead and downed wood.

This is the third shelter in the series: the other two are situated at Brusher's Gap (Paddock Hill), grid ref T 149 991, and at

from the visitors' book at brusher's gap:

"If you see a boy here, about 6 or 7, don't worry, he is harmless. We have left him here due to his whingeing and complaining. Do not feed him! He has a look of mischief, so beware of his tricks." – anon.

"Thanks for the water fill up. Wished we knew this was here. Slept in between farmers' fields last night. Beautiful trail. Well done, Ireland!" – Peter and Laura (Canada)

Mullacor, grid ref T 092 924. Each of these shelters has a visitors' book which now has signatures from all over Ireland, Europe, North America and further afield. They are regularly used by young people doing the Gaisce award, and by more senior members of the walking community who use them as their destination for lunch and a rest before starting on their return journey. Many Mountaineering Ireland clubs also use them for their drum up on their weekend walks.

At the official opening on 24th July, Ian Kelly, chair of Glenwalk, dedicated the hut to the memory of the late Ciarán King, a much-respected member of Glenwalk whose untimely death saddened his many friends in the club.

Robert Grandon, chair of Mountain Meitheal, thanked Glenwalk and Coillte for their participation and support, stating that without such willing partners the project would not have been accomplished.

If using any of the shelters, please leave them as you would have liked to have found them. For more information on Mountain Meitheal, see www.pathsavers.org ■



One rescuer's day on Reek Pilgrimage 2011

robin atkinson

I HAVE JUST returned from a weird and wonderful adventure as a member of the South eastern Mountain Rescue Association (SeMRA). It was the annual summer pilgrimage to Croagh Patrick, when up to 30,000 people climb its stony, well-worn routes.

This year was my first visit. We travelled six hours to sleep on a gymnasium floor at Rice College in Westport – camping indoors was how they described it!

We rose while it was still dark and reported to the Mayo Mountain Rescue base to be tasked with work on the mountain. Mountain rescue teams from all over Ireland were sent up in shifts to maintain the cover they offered on the upper parts of the peak. Studying all the different teams was interesting in itself.

Cloud came down and we had fog, drizzle and rain continuously until the mountain path was churned like ready-mixed concrete!

The devoted pilgrims looked like a procession of characters from some strange carnival. Many walked the long route barefoot! One scrambled on all fours. There were little ones, old ones, yoga gurus, the disabled, young roughnecks, women in skimpy outfits, travellers, an American wearing a T-shirt with the slogan "I make stuff up" who held an audience all the way. He confronted people with "Hey, don't I know you from Tinseltadt in Germany?" and then flashed his T-shirt.

There were whites and blacks, fatties and skeletal, cameras and TV crews, sponsored walkers and ancient eccentrics – it was mindblowing to watch all of this. every so often we were applauded as mountain rescue crews "doing the good work," "carrying such heavy loads," and so on. It was mildly



Pilgrims and rescuers on the pilgrimage route, croagh Patrick.

embarrassing as we plodded up and down. We made our way to our appointed station on the mountain, carrying our heavy necessary gear, while taking care not to fall ourselves on the slippery rocks as they slid beneath our feet. Our team did two stretcher carry-offs and there were sixteen casualties in all taken off during our shift, some of them babies and young children.

Our team finished at 6:30pm and the pilgrims were still coming up the mountain as the day was ending. everyone was muddy and dirty from falls and scrambles. We saw large, grown women fall

headlong among the rocks, caught off balance, and we already had our hands full carrying a casualty.

Amazing. Incredible. I slept hardly at all and arrived home at 1:00am after the long drive back, filthy, wet and worn out, yet exulted at having been able to take part in this exciting event ■

● Robin Atkinson is a member of the South Eastern Mountain Rescue Association (SEMRA). SEMRA is an emergency 24/7/365 voluntary search and rescue team covering the mountains of the southeast.

mourne mr T revisits its history

THE MOURNE Mountain Rescue Team will celebrate its 50th anniversary next year. They are asking that, if any member of Mountaineering Ireland is aware of any information or history of the team dating back to its inception in 1962, they should contact the team at: infommrt@yahoo.com.

Anyone who was in the team in its early days or who has stories from rescues in the 1960s, '70s or early '80s should get in touch to share their memories. Any information which members can provide will help them fill in the blanks. – (Jeremy Purdy, Hon Secretary, Mourne MRT)

Glen of Imaal mountain rescue team builds new rescue base

GLEN OF IMAAL Red Cross Mountain Rescue Team was formed in 1983, when the need for a quick-response, local mountain rescue team in the Glen of Imaal, Co Wicklow, was recognised. During that year, there were three accidents in quick succession in the area, including one fatality.

The team's primary response area now covers all of the mountains in County Wicklow. They also assist the neighbouring teams, the Dublin/Wicklow Mountain Rescue Team and the South eastern Mountain Rescue Association, and respond to requests for assistance from any of the nine other member teams in Mountain Rescue Ireland.

While seeking first-aid support and training, the founding members of the team contacted the Irish Red Cross Society and, recognising the merits of such a connection, the team became a branch of the society.

The Glen of Imaal Red Cross Mountain Rescue Team started work on a new mountain rescue base last year with a sod-turning in April. The rescue base is the result of years of planning, fundraising and a major effort by the team. It will comprise a fully enclosed and secured vehicle storage area, a rescue equipment cleaning, drying and storage facility, a training room and an operations room with all the necessary communications equipment to provide coordination and back-up for complicated or extended emergencies.

In 2010, the Glen of Imaal Red Cross Mountain Rescue Team helped 96 people in 66 incidents and, as one of the busier teams in the country, they believe that their new mountain rescue base will be more of a necessity than a luxury.

Mountain rescue is a 24/7 voluntary emergency service, available to assist



almost completed: the new rescue base at kilafin, near laragh, c o wicklow.

anyone in trouble on the hills any time of the day or night. The new rescue base will be a key asset for the team, as the number of incidents they deal with is increasing steadily each year.

Last year, as part of their fundraising for the new rescue base, the team organised a Moonlight Challenge, a 26km moonlight hike, mostly on the Wicklow Way, in November. It was very successful, with all but one of the teams that entered completing the challenge. The teams included the Dodgy Knees, the Lost Girls, the Happy Penguins, the Wild Wicklow Walkers, and many more. There were solo runners, solo walkers, teams of postal workers, teams from the Defence Forces, actuaries, Search & Rescue Dogs Association members, participants in their twenties and in their seventies. The 300

people who registered raised just over €35,000, the team's most successful fundraising event so far.

With the first phase of the construction completed, the team has now started the final phase. To help fund this, they are planning to organise another Moonlight Challenge this year on Saturday, 12th November. Pre-registration is essential and can be done on the website at www.wicklowmountainrescue.ie/moonlightchallenge, or by sending an email to fog@wmr.ie. All funds raised will go directly towards completion of the new mountain rescue base ■

● For more information on the Glen of Imaal Mountain Rescue Team, visit www.wicklowmountainrescue.ie or www.glenteam.ie.



a happy fundraising team celebrates completing the moonlight challenge charity walk last year.



Scottish Winter Meet 2012

inchree centre, western highlands, 17-26th february 2012

Next Year, Mountaineering Ireland will again be basing the Scottish Winter Meet at the Inchree Centre in Onich, between Fort William and Glen Coe in the Western Highlands of Scotland. This is a great location from which to climb Ben Nevis and the Three Sisters of Glen Coe.

Inchree Centre offers a variety of accommodation including bunk houses, hostels, chalets and B+B. There is also a restaurant and bar on site – check out www.inchreecentre.co.uk.

Like the massively successful 2011 Mountaineering Ireland summer Alpine meet, all walkers and climbers are encouraged to participate, whether on

one of the instructor-led training courses or on a more informal “do your own thing” basis.

We hope to bring together like-minded people to share in the experiences of days on the hills, evening talks and slide-shows, and plenty of late-night discussions.

Last year, we had a few disappointed people who booked very late and couldn't get accommodation, or who missed out on one of the courses because they were full, so this year could you let us know before Christmas if you are coming on the meet, please?

Book early to get your discount

20% price reduction for booking (with deposit) before 21st december 2011.

There is a booking fee of €10.00. This is deducted from the total cost of the course when the balance is paid.

● For further information, contact Nicole Mullen, Training Administrator, at the Mountaineering Ireland office.

Three different courses on offer:

1. basic winter skills (self-catering)

ratio 1:6

cost €250 for 3 days

(price for instruction only)

minimum number participants 4

This course is for summer hillwalkers who would like to learn basic snow skills and try winter walking for the first time.

2. winter mountaineering (self-catering)

ratio 1:4

cost €275 for 3 days

(price for instruction only)

minimum number participants 4

This course is for those walkers and climbers who have done some basic winter walking and who want to try something a little more challenging.

3. winter climbing (self-catering)

ratio 1:2

cost €450 for 3 days

(price for instruction only)

minimum of 2 participants required

This course is for those who would like to tackle routes requiring the use of an axe and hammer. Previous rock-climbing and winter experience required.

Banff Mountain Film Festival

kilkenny, o ctober 8th 2011

TYNDALL MOUNTAIN CLUB will present Ireland's only screening of the 2010 Banff Mountain Film Festival when it is shown in Kilkenny city on October 8th 2011. The venue will be The Set – doors open 6:30pm.

Attracting sell-out audiences across the globe, the Banff Mountain Film Festival is a collection of extraordinary short films from the world's most prestigious mountain film festival.

Through the big screen, you will visit remote cultures and the world's last great wild places, as well as experience amazing footage of adrenaline-packed action sports such as climbing, kayaking, skiing and mountain biking.

exhilarating and thought-provoking, the 2010 World Tour is a must-see for mountain enthusiasts and those with a spirit of adventure. An awe-inspiring evening with great prize give-aways, sponsored by Padmore & Barnes, Kilkenny, and Shielbaggan OeC, Wexford ■



Glencree café welcomes walkers

THE GLeNCRee area of Co Wicklow remains a hugely popular destination for hillwalkers and ramblers. A good starting point is the Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation.

Built in the early 19th century as a barracks for the British Army, these buildings are now used for peace work. Conflict resolution and peace-building programmes have been undertaken by the Glencree Centre since 1974.

You may have heard that the centre recently stopped providing residential accommodation. However, walkers will be pleased to learn that the charming **armoury café** remains open every day from 9:00am to 5:30pm. Visitors can enjoy coffee, light lunches or a hot meal and, if you are in the mood, you can even get a drink, as beer and wine are also served.

The surrounding area has other treasures: the Glencree Grotto is beside the centre, as is the German Cemetery where German soldiers and civilians who



The armoury café, glencree centre for Peace and r econciliation, glencree, c o wicklow.

died in Ireland during the first and second world wars are interred.

A short walk on the hill to the south of the centre will reveal tranquil Lower Lough

Bray and provides excellent views down the Glencree valley. Whether hiking, rambling or just having some lunch, the Glencree Centre is well worth a visit ■

International Winter Climbing Meet



cairngorms, scotland, 22 to 29th January 2012

BMC PReSiDeNT Rab Carrington has announced that next year's BMC International Winter Climbing Meet will be based at Glenmore Lodge, Aviemore, in the centre of the Cairngorms. Mountaineering Ireland has been invited to nominate two representatives to attend this meet.

Visiting climbers will be paired with UK host climbers, who will take them out during the days to show them the full delights of Scottish winter climbing. As you will see from the account of the last BMC International Summer Meet in this issue (see page 27), these meets are truly memorable events.

To take part in this event climbers will need to have experience of climbing routes in winter conditions (using ice axes and crampons), using leader-placed protection. The event is highly subsidised by the BMC and the nominal fee of £100 per person and travel costs will be covered by Mountaineering Ireland. The £100 fee includes all meals and accommodation.

If you think you are suitably experienced and would like to be considered to attend this meet, please contact the Mountaineering Ireland Training Office ■



The cairngorms from geal charn. Photo: Joe downward.

BMC travel and activity insurance available

be prepared!

TRAVeL AND ACTIVITY insurance is once again available for Mountaineering Ireland members through the British Mountaineering Council (BMC).

The BMC scheme provides excellent cover for mountaineering activities, from hiking to high-altitude trekking. For example, the 'Trek Policy' includes all mountain-walking trips, including adventurous treks in the Alps and Himalaya; on via ferrata; recognised trekking routes with simple glacier crossings and scrambles; and non-technical ascents of easy trekking routes on peaks that do not require the use of technical climbing equipment.

For more details, see www.mountaineering.ie ■



bmc insurance would cover your participation in the mountaineering ireland summer alpine meet. Photo: alun richardson.



UIAA surveys its members

EVERY YEAR, the UIAA surveyed its member federations to help define the future direction of the international mountaineering body over the next five years.

The results of the survey were encouraging, with more than 75% of UIAA members taking the time to complete the detailed survey.

When asked how the UIAA can support its members, 79% said they looked forward to receiving help on training standards, with information on a reciprocity agreement for mountain huts (64%) and insurance issues (61%) also considered very important.

The emphasis placed on training standards confirms the efforts currently being made to develop a UIAA Training Standard label. It is designed to promote good practice in the training of voluntary mountaineering leaders and instructors. When completed, it will be awarded to federations that meet the UIAA standards.

Asked about the image of the UIAA, an overwhelming majority of respondents

saw the UIAA as a modern, reliable, competent and credible organisation. However, only 53% regarded the UIAA as member-oriented, with 47% thinking the body is too autocratic.

On other issues, 70% agreed that the UIAA should initiate a programme to support small federations.

The work of UIAA commissions (Access, Medical, Mountain Protection, Mountaineering, Youth, Safety, Ice Climbing, Anti-doping) and working groups was well received. The Ice Climbing and Medical Commissions were the most highly regarded, with 60% of respondents being "highly satisfied" with their work. However, 56% said they thought communication between the commissions and member federations could be improved.

The whole report will be presented to member federations during the General Assembly in Kathmandu in October. The results will form the basis for setting the priorities for the UIAA as part of a strategic plan that is under development ■

Who's afraid of the dark?

never be left in the dark again!

THERE IS a new safety marker that uses photoluminescent pigment to make it highly visible, even in total darkness.

The **nitestik** has a small rod of an aluminate silicate inside it that will give continuous light for over 12 hours by absorbing natural or artificial light. This rare alkali will charge and emit light 365 days a year for more than 10 years.

Unlike other fluorescent 'glow sticks,' the Nitestik is non-toxic and contains no radioactive material. It needs no power source as it charges from natural light, the charge time being dictated by the strength of the charge light source and, unlike other chemical products, it can be re-used, so they are not just one night stands.

Nitestiks (SRP £5.99) are available from Cotswold Outdoors (www.cotswoldoutdoor.co.uk) and other leading outdoor retailers ■



Recall alert

A recall alert has been issued for the inspection of all Petzl Scorpio via ferrata lanyards.

Petzl has advised that a Scorpio L60 lanyard was involved in a via ferrata accident in Grenoble, France. Details can be found on Petzl's website (petzl.com).

The probability of this defect recurring is very low, but climbers who have one are asked to immediately stop using the Scorpio lanyard and send it for inspection to: After Sales Department (UK & Ireland), Lyon equipment Ltd, Junction 38, M6, Tebay, Cumbria CA10 3SS, England. Phone: 015396 25944 (Scorpio returns only). email: scorpio@lyon.co.uk.

It is essential that you include contact details with any returned items – name, phone number, email and a postal address (for receiving parcels).

Correction

In the article 'Help stamp out forest fires' by Dáithí de Forge from Coillte Outdoors on page 3 of *IML* 98 it was incorrectly stated that the contact numbers for the emergency services are 999 and 911. In fact, of course, the only numbers with which to contact any of the emergency services in Ireland are 999 and 112.

ViewRanger discount for Mountaineering Ireland members

Members of Mountaineering Ireland can now avail of a 15% discount off all mapping purchases from the ViewRanger mobile app, on the company's website www.viewranger.com. The discount code is available when you email your name and Mountaineering Ireland membership number to: viewranger@mountaineering.ie. You will then be sent the discount code and directions on how to proceed with your purchase.

Mount Corrin Trail opens in West Cork

The RURAL Recreation Officer for the West Cork Development Partnership, James O'Mahony, reports that a partial re-route of the Sheep's Head Way has been completed, taking in Mount Corrin, south of Durrus, Co Cork.

Although a modest 284m in altitude, Mount Corrin is topped by an impressive cairn and offers 360 degrees of great views. Looking south, you have Roaringwater Bay, Cape Clear and Sherkin Island, while Mizen Head lies to the southwest. To the northwest, you look across Dunmanus Bay to Sheep's Head peninsula, while to the north there are views of Beara, Bantry and the hills of Kerry.

The new trail follows the high ground northeast to Barnageehy, but also offers a number of shorter loop walks from Durrus village. Archaeological sites along the trail include the Dunbeacon stone circle and standing stones.

Information on these loop walks is available on map boards in Durrus village and in Dunbeacon, and on the Sheep's Head Way website at

www.thesheepsheadway.ie ■



dunmanus bay and sheep's head peninsula from mount corrin, c o c o r k.

How to 'Leave No Trace' when organising an event

LeAVE NO TRACe Ireland held a workshop on the theme of managing large events in the outdoors at Kilfinane Outdoor education Centre on Wednesday, 4th May 2011. The workshop provided an opportunity to discuss the considerations that are important in managing the environmental and social impacts of an outdoor event.

Speakers at the workshop included representatives from: Mountaineering Ireland, Coillte, Ballyhoura Development and the Mourne Heritage Trust, each offering their organisation's view on the sustainable management of outdoor events. Presentations from the event are available to download from the address below, by clicking on the 'May 2011' tab:

www.countrysiderecreation.com/publications/leave-no-trace-network-meetings/

Over the day, the following points were suggested as being important in managing an event that takes place in the outdoors:

- Plan well in advance.
- Consult with landowners regarding permission and permits/licences, etc.
- If an area is protected by a nature conservation designation, consult the appropriate authority.
- Minimise erosion by choosing robust routes.
- Time the event appropriately: avoid seasons of breeding, lambing, etc.

- Consider limiting participant numbers.
- Incorporate and promote the principles of Leave No Trace in the planning of the event and on website, leaflets, etc.
- Consider safety issues, e.g. by providing clear information on the nature of the event and skills and equipment required.
- Promote good practice to participants in the event.
- encourage local spending.
- Remove all litter.
- examine any damage after the event and consult appropriately.
- Consider making a financial contribution to the local community or land management body.

Following the presentations, attendees worked in groups to identify the factors to consider when organising different types of events, from walking festivals to road cycling events.

Useful websites on the management of events in the outdoors include **www.outdooreventsni.com** and **www.bobw.co.uk** ■





International Summer Meet 2011

neil wilson

ON A WeT SUNDAY evening in May, sixty-five climbers from around the world assembled in a field outside Llanberis and were welcomed to the biennial British Mountaineering Council Summer Meet. Men and women of varying climbing abilities from as far afield as Pakistan, Slovenia, the US and South Africa were joined together by a single common thread: a love of climbing.

Our home for the week was the Climber's Club Hut at Nant Peris or, for most of the Europeans and their hosts, a tent in the waterlogged field outside. No matter, the food and the company were great, and the climbing was even better.

For many, it was a case of learning the basics of trad climbing rather than sport climbing. For others, it was an opportunity to finally climb some famous Welsh classics or to revisit routes climbed possibly twenty years previously.

Legend has it that the weather is always good for the Summer Meet week, but no such luck for us! However, despite raining every day, to some degree, spirits at the meet could not be dampened. Thanks to the enthusiasm and local knowledge of the hosts, everyone managed to climb somewhere (relatively dry) for each of the six days.

During the week, we climbed classics at Tremadog, edged up routes at the slate quarries and battled steep cracks on Holyhead Mountain.

Most popular with the visitors was Gogarth, where the exposure and quality were irresistible. Its reputation amongst the locals led to much anticipation and excitement, before even reaching for a hold!

Watching the ferries sail back and forth from Ireland reminded me of how easy it is to for us at home to visit these cliffs and it made me wonder why more don't. The Strand is as good a route as you will find on these islands – 50m of excitement which turns to fear very quickly!

At night, we shared stories and climbing adventures, or were treated to slideshows and presentations from our fellow climbers. Jonas from Sweden



gogarth, holyhead. Photo: Jonas Paulsson.

showed us a film he had made about Yosemite-style crack climbing in Scandinavia. Radek showed us how they protect the sandstone towers of his native Czech Republic with knots tied in cord. Rehmat from Pakistan showed us beautiful images of his homeland accompanied by his native music. Another night, we debated the validity of climbing ethics in the modern world. Chaired by Pat Littlejohn, it was a lively evening indeed!

A highlight for me came at the end of the week on South Stack at Gogarth. Watching the rain steadily approaching across the Irish Sea with new trusted friends, quick decisions were made and with some mutual encouragement we set about abseiling down to the base of The Northwest Passage – a two-pitch e1 which kept on delighting at every turn. The first pitch got us up close and personal with the local razorbills and up to a perfect belay ledge. From there, an unlikely traverse led to a hidden corner and beautiful moves right the way to the top, with seconds to spare before receiving our daily drenching – at least two per day was par for the course!

everyone let their hair down on the final night at a barbeque and party at the hut, where stories were shared and climbing plans made.

Many thanks to the **bmc** for organising the week and to **mountaineering**

ireland for the opportunity to attend. Thanks also to **mountain equipment** for providing the tents that kept those of us camping dry and warm! ■



on the northwest Passage at the south stack, gogarth.



Participants on the mount brandon pilgrimage, dingle peninsula, co kerry. Photo: mícheál Ó c oileáin.

The Mount Brandon pilgrimage

in the footsteps of crom dubh

mícheál Ó coil eáin

The eMINeNT ARChAeOLOGIST Dr Peter Harbison, in his seminal book *Pilgrimage in Ireland*, refers to the archaeological remains on the Dingle peninsula as a “veritable microcosm of monuments which can be associated with pilgrimage traffic in early Ireland.”

However, it is unlikely that the most visible type of monument of that era, the round tower, which may have been built to attract pilgrims, was ever built on the peninsula. Instead, it had a natural beacon in Mount Brandon, standing almost 1,000 metres high, which could be seen from a far greater distance from both land and sea.

This rugged mountain became one of the great pilgrimage routes in Ireland during the early Christian Period and its origins may well have pre-dated the arrival of the first Christians on these shores.

It is said that pilgrimage is an irrational religious exercise, filling a void in our explanation of what it means to be alive in the world. Whatever the reasoning behind it, pilgrimages have been undertaken since long before the foundation of all the major world religions as we know them today. The pilgrimage to the summit of Mount Brandon has been linked historically, from at least the 12th century, to the early Christian figure Brendan.

Although he lived in the 6th century, his name is not linked with the mountain until much later, when the cult of Brendan spread into the south-west. Legends spread far and wide of how he was given a vision of a ‘promised land’ to the west from the summit of Brandon, and how he later navigated the Atlantic and landed in North America. The story was translated into many of the vernacular languages of Europe, making people aware of a land to the west known as Saint Brendan’s Isle long before Columbus set sail in 1492.

In pre-Christian times, the mountain was known as Sliabh Daidhche and there is some evidence of activity in the area adjacent to the mountain range, suggesting that Brandon was a pilgrimage route from much earlier. In the nearby valley of Loch a’Dúin, where considerable evidence has been recorded from about 2000 BC, a gable-shaped stone has been carved to resemble the outline of Brandon and is aligned with the summit. The mountain has been the focus of attention from at least that period.

The pilgrimage to the mountain was linked to the Festival of Lughnasa, which was celebrated on the last Sunday of July to mark the beginning of the harvest. This particular Sunday was known as Domhnach Crom Dubh.

The festival of Lughnasa marked the first day of the harvest. To cut any corn or dig any potatoes before the 1st of August was considered improper. Lughnasa fell



Looking down on the Paternoster lakes, coum a'c'noc, mount brandon, co Kerry. Photo: Tom fox.

on August 1st but was also celebrated on the last Sunday of July. It was on this date that the pilgrimage to Brandon traditionally took place.

The Anglo-Saxons celebrated Lammas on the same day, but it is generally believed that they adopted the Celtic festival of Lughnasa and gave it a Christian name. The festival celebrated the God Lugh, possibly the most important of all Celtic deities, who gave his name to the cities of Lyon, London and Leiden.

In west Kerry, Crom Dubh Sunday was celebrated by walking to the summit of Mount Brandon before dawn. Crom Dubh was the pre-Christian figure associated with the occasion. Mythology informs us that he was Christianised by St Brendan in the townland of Baile Dubh and became a follower of Brendan. The story of the conversion relates how Brendan wrote a prayer on a piece of parchment which outweighed the wild bull of Crom Dubh. The latter then realised that his power was waning and allowed himself to be Christianised. A stone head, said to be that of Crom Dubh, was located in the medieval church in Cloghane village until it was stolen in 1993.

Mt Brandon is one of the three great pilgrimage sites located on mountain tops along the west of Ireland, the others being Slieve League in Donegal and Croagh Patrick in Mayo. The pilgrimage falls on what was known as the Cloghane Pattern Day and was a great occasion of eating, drinking and games, or general debauchery. People visited the well of St Brendan near the village (the well no longer survives), doing rounds at the medieval church, before climbing the mountain. Traditionally, people reached the summit for the dawn, where there were the remains of an oratory (Teampaillín Bhréanainn), a hut site and another well also dedicated to Brendan (Tobar Bhréanainn).

Records show that people travelled from many parts to participate in the pilgrimage. Indeed, numbers may have been significant as the ecclesiastical taxation list of 1302 shows that the mountain church on Mt Brandon was liable to the third highest taxation in the diocese. This would indicate that it drew a large revenue from the offerings of pilgrims.

The last great pilgrimage to Mt Brandon was held in the 1860s, when Bishop

Moriarty of Kerry was carried to the top of the mountain on a súgán (rope) chair, where he celebrated mass for 20,000 pilgrims. The cathedral choir from Killarney sang High Mass on the summit. Pilgrims came by boat from Counties Clare and Cork and from all over Kerry.

Such was the level of debauchery in the villages on all sides of the mountain for several days after the walk that the bishop banned the pilgrimage. He had also tried to break the link to the pagan date of celebration of the harvest by moving the date of the pilgrimage to June 29th, the feast of Saints Peter and Paul.

In the 1990s, the local community group in Cloghane and Brandon, Comharchumann an Leithriúigh, revived the tradition, albeit on a smaller scale. However, for the past two years, Cumann Sléibhteóireachta Chorca Dhuibhne (the Dingle Hillwalking Club), in particular eoghan Ó Loingsigh and David Chippendale, have organised the pilgrimage walk to the summit of Mount Brandon and it is now firmly part of their annual programme. It is hoped to continue the tradition of walking in the footsteps of Crom Dubh for many years to come ■

Mind the Gap

The untapped potential of a Kerry climbing venue

Richard Creagh

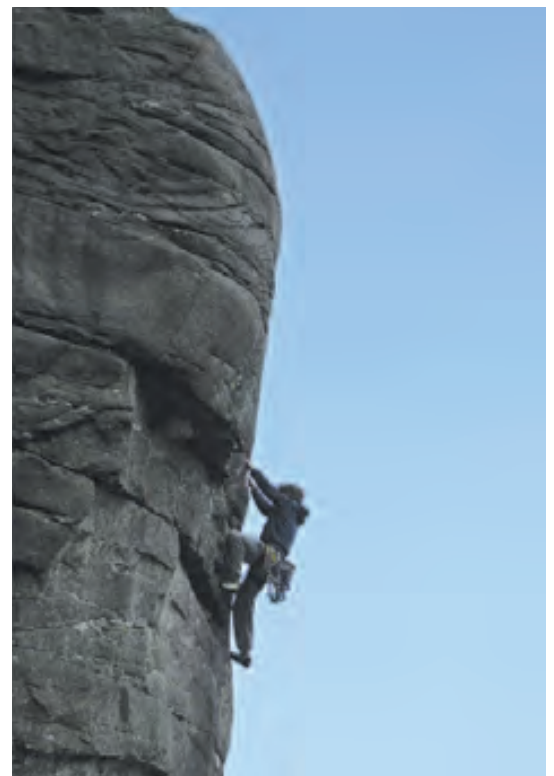
Juan o'r aw climbing echinacea (e3 5c) in the gap of dunloe, killarney, co kerry. Photo: r ichard creagh.

“Rope below!” I shouted, but it was useless. The breeze carried the words away to the north as soon as they left my mouth. No worries, though; it also carried the ropes away from the line below us and onto a ledge full of holly trees. We had just finished Demasiado, a brilliant 40m E1 and the only outdoor route where I’ve got full use from a heel hook.

The Gap of Dunloe is full of such gems: Out of My Reach, Mighty Mouse, Titanic, Seventh Heaven and The Stoop are all high-quality climbs at amenable grades in a stunning location.

Despite this, the Gap doesn't seem to get much of a mention on the Irish climbing scene. Apart from Dalkey, Glendalough and the Mournes, climbing venues near to the population centres, and the justifiably popular climbing at Ailladie in the Burren, we don't hear a whole lot about climbing in Ireland. This fact may even contribute to what is special about the Gap of Dunloe: queuing for routes is rare, and often you may be the only ones at a crag.

In recent years, the profile of the region has been raised with the annual Gap Meet in April, when generally we've been blessed with good weather. These meets have been very successful, with repeats of some of the test pieces in the valley and new lines,



eoin kennedy on mother of Prague (e1 5c). Photo: r ichard creagh.



the abseil went smoothly. I'd rather have the wind anyway to drive the midges away; they're probably the biggest drawback of the area, making climbing on calm evenings possible only for those with Zen-like tolerance or garlic blood. The southwest of Kerry is usually windy enough, though, and the valley funnels the breezes, making it hard for midges to come out most days. Even if the winds don't blow on a summer's evening, a trip to Kate Kearney's to relax with a drink isn't a bad alternative option either ■

**Below: brian hall on f ree t'ast (h vs 5a).
Photo: r ichard c reagh.**



scott archer on Titanic (vs 4b). Photo: r ichard c reagh.

both bouldering and trad, being put up too.

The craic at the campsite has been great, also. Many of the people there were having their first, and probably not their last, taste of Kerry's most popular climbing venue.

So, if one of the charms of the Gap is its lack of climbing traffic, then why promote it? Surely it would be best to keep things quiet and have the place to ourselves? Well, that's probably true to an extent, but it's nice to share a good secret with those who will appreciate it. Also, since exploration is one of the reasons for going climbing, the Gap is a place that should definitely be mentioned to those looking for an adventure. There are many different crags in the valley – from the picturesque setting of Céim; the more open crags around and above Rescue Rock; and Bothán, which gets the evening sunlight – there is great variety in terms of grades (both single- and multi-pitch), length and atmosphere. There is also huge scope for discovering new lines further up the valley.

In spells of good weather, the high mountain crags offer dry rock in surroundings with a remote feel, as impressive as any mountain location in the region. Those with more of a sense of adventure will take to these areas, and the list of climbs in the Gap will increase in the coming years thanks to those who do. Those who don't can still enjoy the many classics that are there.

Thankfully, our ropes came free from the trees easily and

Alpinism: go for it!

Dawn Steede

Looking towards the Trient glacier, Argentière basin, French Alps. Photo: Alun Richardson.

Readung Mountaineering Ireland's noticeboard at the summer Alpine meet this year in Argentière, I had good reason to be excited. Alun Richardson was taking a group out to hike on the Vallée Blanche and there were still a few places available! I had been in the area to rockclimb on the Aiguilles Rouges but I was developing an overwhelming curiosity to experience an alpine route. Filling with apprehension, I sheepishly scrawled my name on the whiteboard.

I hired the necessary crampons and an ice axe and my friends at the campsite gave me a crash course on how to use these bizarre new tools. Equipped with my limited

knowledge and having already stabbed myself in the calf with a crampon, I wondered if I had done the right thing in signing up. When 5:00am arrived, I was full of trepidation but there was no time to be indecisive as we had to make the early cable car at the Aiguille du Midi.

Being herded on and off the cable car was enough to disorientate this novice. However, Alun ran a slick operation and I followed his instructions in a daze. Crampons on, roped up and clutching my ice axe, I began the adventure feeling cold and cringing at the scratching noise of crampons on rock.

The route took us from the Aiguille du Midi, over the Glacier du Géant, traversing the Vallée Blanche and crossing the French-Italian border to Punta Helbronner. Exiting the Midi station, I caught

sight of the first obstacle, the knife-edge ridge we had to descend to get onto the open snow. I could feel my heart racing but was uncertain if it was the effects of the altitude or simply fear – I knew this day was going to be an adventure.

Carefully placing my crampons on the snow, I was surprised how well they gripped. When I felt comfortable with this new way of walking, I chanced a look over the edge of the ridge to see the snow fall away into the valley below. Immediately, I was struck by the absolutely breathtaking views: Grand Capucin, Dent du Géant, Mont Blanc and Aiguille du Midi all looked magnificent. Huge red rocks emerged from the perfectly white glacier under the blue sky. It was just breathtakingly beautiful and it was just the beginning.

My heart began to race again, so I

“With the noise of a distant avalanche and the sight of deep crevasses, I realised the glacier was enormously powerful”

returned my concentration to the feet in front of me, took a deep breath and continued my careful descent.

When we reached the open snow I could feel the full benefit of my crampons. It felt like four-wheel drive for my feet: every step strong and certain. As I settled into my stride, I really began to appreciate the amazing views. The rock faces in the distance appeared so close, with every detail crystal clear; it was like seeing the world in high definition.

I was completely exhilarated by the new environment which I was in. Looking all around me, I couldn't get enough of the beauty and magic that had been hiding up there.

We walked over the glacier with Alun pointing out the tremendous masses of Tour Ronde, Mont Blanc, Les Droits, Aiguille Verte, Grandes Jorasses and the Gervasutti Couloir. When Alun paused for us to take in the awesome view of the Dent du Géant, I could see the reaction of my climbing partner who was on the rope in front of me. When I followed her gaze, I knew what she was thinking: the rockclimbing routes on the Dent du Géant looked so inviting. With a silent nod we both knew we'd be back to rockclimb in this mystical environment.

Our shared daydream was interrupted by a smiling French team who cheerfully greeted us with "C'est magnifique de voir des femmes sur le glacier!" (It's wonderful to see women on the glacier.)

We continued our journey over the glacier, weaving a careful path through huge crevasses, our team of six all walking as one. Some were old friends, some were new faces, but on this occasion we were all dependent on each other to get across safely. This new world had come alive for me. With the noise of a distant avalanche and the sight of deep crevasses, I realised the glacier was an enormously powerful phenomenon and I considered myself fortunate to be able to experience its magic.

We crossed to Italy and boarded the Helbronner gondola to travel



back to the Midi station, this time getting a panoramic view from high above the glacier. From this vantage point I could see the enormity of the crevasses and where the large stacks of snow hung precariously, as if suspended in the air. I watched as other teams crossed the glacier, each person so tiny compared to this outstanding mass of ice and snow. It made life appear insignificant but I thought about each individual person crossing, making their own unique journey, and I wondered

how many others were experiencing the excitement of their first time on a glacier.

At the end of the journey, I took a look back at this enchanting new environment and knew I would be back. I have seen the beauty it holds and it is luring me back to explore its magic further ■

dawn steele wishes to acknowledge the assistance of clare strawson in the preparation of this article.

Looking across the Trient glacier.
Photo: Alun Richardson.

Below: Aiguille du Midi poking through the early morning cloud. Taken from Mont Blanc.
Photo: Alun Richardson.



Seniors having alpine moments

Donald Gill

View across Lac Blanc to the main Chamonix peaks.
Photo: Donald Gill.

The phrase “chronologically challenged” caught my eye in a piece in the *Irish Mountain Log* about the Mountaineering Ireland summer Alpine meet at Argentière last June. Attracted by the concept, I signed up for a three-day climbing course for the over 50s with my climbing partner, Mary Reilly.

I had enjoyed previous Mountaineering Ireland meets but felt that my alpine readiness, i.e. ability, nerve, etc, was diminishing with the passing years. Here was an opportunity knocking. My preparations included upping the ante on hikes and a week in Scotland at Easter, which was good training for the Alps, together with regular trips to the UCD climbing wall and Dalkey Quarry, when

minor injuries allowed.

After an early morning flight to Geneva, we took a minibus to Argentière. The minibus was run by the efficient Alpybus company, who were expecting us, and we arrived at Argentière by mid-afternoon. Our lodgings this year were not under canvas as heretofore but luxuriating in a small hostel-type hotel, Les Randonneurs, near the campsite. Facilities were basic, i.e. one loo per landing, but at least it was nearer than the campsite loo might have been, and the food and service were excellent! Mont Blanc was even visible from the bedroom, if one leaned out a little!

A quick recce of the town was followed by a walk to stretch the

legs – we would need to do lots of stretching in the days ahead! A longer hike with some altitude was arranged for the following day to Lac Blanc, a jewel of a lake up in the Aiguilles Rouges mountain range on the northwest side of the valley, across from Mont Blanc.

Views across the valley to many of the big peaks and the glaciers flowing down from the Mont Blanc massif were magnificent. I got my nearly new Canon into action and this was followed by a quick drink in the mountain hut beside the lake. This had been an eight-hour hike at a steady Alpine pace with no cable cars. It was a little longer than anticipated, but we had eased into the Alpine hiking with no ill effects.

“The view from the top of the Aiguille du Tour (3,554m) was magnificent, with high Alps all around the horizon, including Mont Blanc”



Now it was time to meet our guide for the next three days, Alun Richardson, Training Officer with Mountaineering Ireland. We presented our packed rucksacks for a critical inspection. “Travel light” was the message – Mary was advised to ditch part of her contents! We also met Rory Canavan, the last member of the group.

By mutual agreement with Alun, Day 1 was to be an Alpine climbing day on a rock ridge leading to the Aiguilles Crochues at 2,871m. The weather was good and the initial ascent was by cable car to L'Index. After walking upwards for about one hour, we arrived at a gully and roped up. We continued in teams of two, with Mary and myself together, to practice in moving together alpine-style, and Rory joining Alun. Fixed protection was placed on steep sections, but mostly the rope was just run around the outside of projecting rocks for protection, as we transversed up and down, along the arête. There were other groups ahead and behind us, which resulted in some small delays, which

Alun Richardson
and Mary Reilly
en route to the
Trient Hut.
Photo:
Donal Gill.





View of Switzerland from the Mont Blanc range.
Photo:
Alun Richardson.

were photo opportunities!

The route ended by descending to Lac Blanc (again!). But this time we headed for the cable car, as we had return tickets. It was a good day, as our sharp-eyed leader ensured that our sometimes slack alpine techniques were tightened up. Roll on, Day 2, when we would be heading for the high glaciers and snowfields above the Chamonix valley!

Below:

The team on the summit of the Aiguille du Tour.
Photo:
Donald Gill.

Due to seasonal high demand, the hut on the Tour Glacier was booked out. So we piled into Alun's car and he drove up the valley into Switzerland, down into the Rhône Valley and up again to the start of

our route at Champex, a beautiful village beside a blue lake. The journey took about one hour and we had time for coffee in a small hotel.

A cable car saved about 700m in altitude of slog, and the route to our destination, the Cabane du Trient, followed a scenic track along a ridge and up a valley past the Cabane d'Orny. This was a great stopping point for a drum up and we sat outside the hut in warm sun drinking bowls of tea.

The route continued upwards for a while until we descended to the Glacier d'Orny, where we put on crampons and roped up with ice

axes in one hand. The ascent to the rocks below the Cabane du Trient was on the snow-covered glacier, known to alpinists as a wet glacier. We were going over 3,000m at this point and we felt the higher altitude in our breathing. It was a relief to reach the hut and sit on the patio in the hot sun where we organised our gear for an early start in the morning and for our share of the long beds upstairs in the dormitory.

The view from the hut across the glacier to the surrounding peaks was magnificent and we could see our route for the morning. A surprisingly good dinner was followed by an early night.

In the morning, at about 5:00am, when the sun had just about risen, we climbed down the rocks to the glacier and roped up in the usual manner. Alun was concerned that everything was done the right way. Maybe I was half asleep, but I seemed to get a blank in taking in about a dozen coils around my shoulders and tying same securely in to my harness. Alun wasn't amused and I was getting addled. I had done this operation my way many times in the Alps before, but that wasn't quite Alun's way!

Anyway, we eventually set off in the soft glacial light of the early morning, which had to be seen to be believed. We were heading for the Aiguille du Tour at 3,544m, which is the high point of a rocky ridge separating the Glacier du Trient from the Glacier du Tour, and





also Switzerland from France. We made very steady headway up the glacier, following a narrow trail on the snow-covered glacier which avoided the crevasses.

At this hour of the morning, the snow with yesterday's footsteps on it was frozen hard. After a couple of hours we arrived at the base of the rocky peaks and removed our crampons. We climbed the chunky boulders, moving together on the rope. I felt we were moving quite efficiently up to the summit as the first day's training on rock had sunk in! Alun was happy enough with our progress! The view from the top was magnificent, with high Alps all around the horizon, including Mont Blanc. A couple of flat rocks on the summit were the perfect place for a drum up. Going down, we met more teams, mainly French, going up. Who said the Irish were usually last up?

Several more adventurous days followed, with some good mountain and glacier routes, which were curtailed a little by deteriorating weather conditions. On the social side, we met the campers at the meet regularly at the campsite and especially the few who came up to the hotel for a meal or a drink. Alun organised a barbeque each week, which was a great way to meet one's fellow walkers and climbers. I felt it was a very successful meet and I would strongly support similar follow-up courses for those of us who are chronologically challenged! ■

donald gill is an experienced hillwalker, and is a member of the wayfarers and of mountaineering ireland. he edited the wayfarers' newsletter, *The Wayfarer*, for some years and has served in various positions on their committee.

Sunset view across the Trient Glacier towards the Aiguille du Tour.
Photo: Alun Richardson.

Left:
Climbing the rock ridge on the Aiguilles Crochues.
Photo: Alun Richardson.



Slieve Carr

Ireland's most remote summit?

Bryan McCabe

Slieve Carr
(541m), Co
Mayo.
Photo: Bryan
McCabe.

Described in **Adrian Hendroff's** *From High Places: a Journey Through Ireland's Great Mountains* as “a beast of a hill,” Slieve Carr in Co Mayo is widely believed to be Ireland's most remote mountain.

It towers over the north Mayo wilderness at the northern frontier of the Nephin Beg range. The closest public roads west, north and east are all over 5km from the summit cairn as the crow flies, with access to the mountain from these roads hampered by either vast forestry plantations or low-lying bogland which is very difficult to negotiate unless there has been a long dry spell beforehand.

In this article, I will describe a 27km round trip to Slieve Carr from

the south, which takes advantage of the Bangor Trail and Western Way, which pass west and east of the mountain, respectively. This hike is one of the highlights of my hillwalking experience to date.

From Newport, drive towards Mulranny on the N59 and after about 1km, turn right (IG 98092 29500) and head north, passing Furnace Lough and Lough Feeagh to your left and the curiously-named mountain Buckoogh (588m) to your right.

Eventually turn left at IG 97288 05536 and you will find spaces for a few cars at the Brogan Carroll bothy (IG 96882 05576) which serves as an excellent starting point for many walks in the Nephin Beg range (e.g. the Letterkeen Loop walks, Glennamong and Nephin Beg mountain itself).

The route to Slieve Carr described here crosses the Altaconey River near the bothy and follows the undulating Bangor Trail. The Bangor Trail is the old route between Newport and Bangor Erris that was used for centuries before the road was developed around by Mulranny and Ballycroy. The trail is rough in places and frequently wet.

Two further bridges are crossed in the first 3km of the walk. At the end of the woodland on the right after approx. 4.2km (IG 93710 07290), those wishing to include Nephin Beg (627m) can venture right off the trail and ascend toward spot height 410m and beyond. The Bangor Trail continues to the right of the Bawnduff River and skirts around the western fringe of Nephin Beg, with the cliffs on the flanks of Glennamong emerging over 1.5km to the left. At this point, the landscape opens up considerably and exposes expansive open bogland and a dramatic view of the peaks on Achill Island; in particular the distinctive triangular form of Slievemore.

It is only after 6.7km from the start of the walk that the imposing bulk of Slieve Carr's plateau comes into view. Descend to the lowest point of the trail where there is a grey marker post (8.3km approx). At this point, the elevation is approx. 155m, yet you will have accumulated approx. 370m height gain so you will be well warmed up for the forthcoming ascent! If the midges and horseflies have been biting, as they were on our

trip, you will be glad to head for airier heights.

From here, depart from the Bangor Trail and follow a relatively direct line initially towards the bottom of the steep, southern slope of the part of the plateau labelled Corslieve on the OS map. This will cause you to contour round the spur but then keep left of a short, deep channel cut by the river flowing from Scardaun Lough.

Soon after, brace yourself for the toughest section of the walk, a steep, thigh-burning 180m or so ascent towards the spot height (541m, IG 92041 12242) associated with Corslieve. Scardaun Lough and another adjacent lake will come into view in the saddle behind you as you gain height on this slope.

Although the imposing summit cairn of Slieve Carr is still about 2.5km distant, the gradient thereafter is much kinder. Lunch at the summit cairn (IG 91495 14490) will be well deserved after an outward journey of 13.2km with an accumulated height gain of 970m; this took 4 hrs 15 mins for two of us. In my opinion, the isolation and solitude of the surrounding landscape west, north and east is unique in Ireland.

Returning south initially, Connaught's second highest mountain, Nephin (806m), is visible roughly in an east to south-easterly direction, with the northern part of Lough Conn peeking out to its left. There are a few descent options to the east of the plateau; the spur falling south-east immediately north of the unnamed lake (level marked as 389m on the OS map) offers a gentle gradient and remarkable views of the eastern cliffs and up to four lakes at a time, two of which are corrie lakes. Not all of these lakes are named on the OS map. This ridge has the additional benefit of pointing you over a knoll (IG 93190 12462) towards the point of egress from the open mountainside onto a forest track which skirts the edge of the forest for a short distance. In good visibility, this forest road will be visible from the ridge as you descend, amidst a vast area of Coillte forest.

Approaching the forest edge, the exact exit point may not be immediately obvious, however (as the track is not quite at the very edge, as implied by the OS map). However, where there is a 'step' in the forest perimeter, you will notice a small, cleared area behind (IG 93613 12462), which will channel you to the road quite quickly. Beware



of the deep forest drains that may be hidden in long grass.

This may be a good point to change from boots into trainers if you had been willing to add extra weight to your backpack at the start, as 10.2km of walking on hard surface remains, which can be uncomfortable with 16.7km already complete!

Turn right onto the track and follow it for 1.7km, and turn right again onto the Western Way (signed Nephin Beg,

IG 94800 12558). A further 8.5km will return you to the start point. You will know you are close to the end (and will probably be relieved, as the Western Way becomes a little monotonous!) when the brown peaty water of the Altaconey River joins you on the left before crossing over to the right.

Don't be fooled by the modest height of Slieve Carr at 721m; the accumulated ascent for the circular



“In my opinion, the isolation and solitude of the surrounding landscape west, north and east of Slieve Carr is unique in Ireland”

Southern end of Slieve Carr plateau from Bangor Trail.
Photo: Bryan McCabe.

Below:
Slieve Carr plateau looking south to Nephin Beg and Glennamong.
Photo: Bryan McCabe.

route described is 1,266m; consistent with a long day in MacGillycuddy's Reeks, taking in several peaks, for example. It took the two of us just under eight hours to complete the 26.9km trip, including lunch and photo stops. However, the distance is worth enduring and adds to the sense of adventure associated with experiencing a summit probably only scaled by a few dozen people each year (anecdotal evidence from a local hillwalker we met at the end of the walk).

For those interested in a dual-mode adventure, it is possible to cycle along the Western Way and the forest track to the edge of the forest already mentioned, and leave the bikes there before proceeding on foot to Slieve Carr's summit, returning by the reverse route. The 20.4km cycle would reduce the amount of walking on the mountain to only 7.0km! In my opinion, the track (the forest track in particular) is not suited to anything other than a mountain bike; a hybrid bike would not be suitable.

Many of us associate particular songs with events in our lives, and I had associated one with Slieve Carr from the planning stages long before I managed to climb it! The haunting instrumental track *North* by Paul Mounsey, featured in the Visit Scotland TV advertisement, is my "Slieve Carr track" and for me encapsulates the emotions of a venture into the unknown! Given that the start point was the Brogan Carroll bothy, the title "North" was very appropriate! I brought my iPod and listened to it in





the car on the way and for a few minutes approaching the summit! ■

Bryan McCabe is an avid hillwalker and has been a member of Galway Walking Club and Mountaineering Ireland for four years. Upon summiting Slieve Carr in July 2011, Bryan had completed 105 of the 268 summits on the Vandeleur-Lynam list of Irish summits of 600m or higher.

Bryan McCabe in front of eastern cliffs on Slieve Carr plateau and its mountain lakes.
Photo: Bryan McCabe collection.



Summary details

Map: OS Discovery Series No 23.

Terrain: Bangor Trail, open mountain, forest track, Western Way.

Distance: 26.9km approx.

Total height gain: 1,266m approx.

Time: Suggest plan for eight hours minimum.

Warning: Due to the isolation of this area, it is imperative that hillwalkers have sufficient food/drink, suitable clothing for inclement weather and adequate navigational experience.

Far left: Slieve Carr's summit cairn.
Photo: Bryan McCabe.

Helicopter rescues

Mercy missions in the mountains



Jim o'neill

An Irish Coast Guard Sikorsky S-16 search and rescue helicopter. Photo: Jim McShane (Donegal MRT).

“Climb if you will, but remember that courage and strength are nought without prudence, and that a momentary negligence may destroy the happiness of a lifetime. Do nothing in haste; look well to each step; and from the beginning think what may be the end.”

– Edward Whymper
(*Scrambles Amongst the Alps*)

With the right combination of training, equipment and experience, the chances are that the majority of climbers and hillwalkers will never have to be rescued. However, in the mountain environment safety can never be fully guaranteed. Indeed, for many of us part of the attraction of mountaineering is the management of risk and the feeling of living intensely that comes with the combined challenges of the mountains and the weather they may be immersed in.

Raise the alarm

In the event of getting into trouble in the mountains in Ireland the first thing to do is to raise the alarm. A simple precaution that can increase the ease with which this can be done is to leave details with someone of your proposed route, approximate timing and the size of your group.

You should also plan that at least two members of the group have mobile phones which are protected from the elements (e.g. inside a ziplock bag) and fully charged. If you feel that assistance is needed, raise the alarm sooner rather than later and call 999/112 and ask for mountain rescue. Resources will then be dispatched after the incident has been assessed. It should be noted, though, that mobile phone coverage in the mountains can never be completely relied upon.

Be appropriately equipped

You should also ensure that your group members are appropriately equipped for the worst conditions that you might encounter. This should include survival bags and at least one emergency shelter. Also carry spare food and spare clothing, and everyone should have a head torch regardless of how long you expect to be on the hills.

Even a minor leg injury could lead to the group being caught out by darkness as it takes time to raise the alarm and time for the emergency services to respond. Trying to carry out a rescue at night of someone without a source of light can greatly delay a successful outcome.

Carrying navigation equipment and knowing how to use it will also greatly increase the chance of the rescue being carried out swiftly. The evacuation of casualties is sometimes delayed due to inaccurate information about the location of the incident. Sometimes groups in difficulty are even unsure about which mountain they are on.

Take note!

There are currently twelve volunteer mountain rescue teams on the island of Ireland, and the PSNI also has a team. These selfless volunteers give up of their own time and energy to provide a professional 24/7 service that any country would be proud of. They are highly trained and well equipped. As a registered charity, the majority of Mountain Rescue Ireland's funding comes from its own fundraising efforts. The ultimate beneficiaries are those of us who regularly enjoy the Irish mountains.

Countdown to rescue

Useful information to give before your rescue is:

- Your exact location (if possible). Give a grid reference, if you can, and a verbal description.
- If lost, where you think you are or basic route information.
- Number of people in the group.
- The nature of any injuries and the number of people injured.
- The weather conditions on the scene (even the most basic of information is useful).
- Your contact details.

If a mountain rescue team is on the scene before the helicopter arrives:

- They will provide guidance and assistance to ensure that the extraction will work safely and smoothly. They will also provide medical care before handing over to or working with the winchman, who will be a trained paramedic.

If the helicopter arrives before the mountain rescue team:

- Ensure all loose items (survival bags, emergency blankets, tents, etc) are secure, as the downdraft

from the helicopter can be substantial.

If the crew decides to land:

- They may fly over the scene several times to assess the area, so be patient.
- Once the aircraft has landed, do not approach unless a crew member has signalled that it is safe to do so.
- Generally, the winchman will be deployed to assess the situation and to decide on a course of action.

If it is decided that the winchman will be deployed, using the rescue hoist:

- Under no circumstances reach out to him or attempt to grab the hook or equipment. There is a substantial build-up of static electricity while flying. The winchman has a static discharge lead attached to the hoist hook. However, if you touch him or the lead before it has discharged, you will get a nice reminder!

Depending on the steepness of the ground, the winchman will disconnect, if it is safe to do so. This will allow the aircraft to move away, making it easier to assess and treat the casualty by reducing the downdraft and noise level.

If the crew deems that it is not safe for the winchman to disconnect from

A search and rescue helicopter locates a flare lit by a mountain rescue team during an emergency drill. Photo: Jim McShane (Donegal MRT).





in virtually all weather conditions.

The Coast Guard currently uses Sikorsky S-61 helicopters. They are fitted with a FLIR (forward-looking infrared camera) which gives us vision at night. The aircraft also has a powerful “nightsun” searchlight, which can be used for lighting up large areas. The aircraft is also fitted with two rescue hoists. The main hoist has 290 feet of cable and can operate at variable speeds of up to 325 feet per minute. The back-up hoist has 164 feet of cable and operates at a speed of 150 feet per minute. The second hoist gives an increased level of safety for both winchman and survivors during rescues.

The aircraft has a crew of four. There are two pilots (the captain and

Search and rescue team on a training exercise. Photo: Jim McShane (Donegal MRT).

Right: Helicopter arrives to pick up patients in a training exercise. Photo: Jim McShane (Donegal MRT).

the hoist (e.g. the ground is too steep), then the aircraft will remain overhead until the lift is completed.

If a member of your group is injured, the winchman will assess the member with a view to stabilising that casualty for extraction. The nature of any injuries and the nature of the ground will dictate the nature of the lift to be carried out.

Never false-alarm

In the event that you see a rescue helicopter while in the mountains, don't attempt to signal to it unless it is looking for you. On a mountain rescue I was on several years ago, while en route to two seriously injured climbers, a walker (who had no involvement in the rescue and was on the wrong side of the valley) set off an emergency strobe light. After making a difficult approach to the area, the walker informed us that they had activated the strobe in order to see what we would do! This cost us valuable time and delayed the evacuation of the climbers.

The Irish Coast Guard service

The Irish Coast Guard currently has four helicopter rescue bases in Ireland. These bases are located in Sligo Airport, Shannon Airport, Waterford Airport and Dublin Airport. Each base has a helicopter on standby 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. They can carry out rescues anywhere on the island of Ireland and up to 200 miles offshore, both by day and night and





the co-pilot), one winch operator and one winchman. The objective of the crew is to provide the same level of medical care on the side of the mountain that you would expect from an ambulance crew. The crew are Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC) registered paramedics and Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs). The aircraft is fitted out with a wide range of medical, rescue and trauma equipment and has the ability to carry up to eighteen survivors, if needed.

Helicopter upgrade

From July 2012, the Coast Guard will commence a transition to the newer Sikorsky S-92 helicopters. The upgraded service will be operated by CHC Ireland, who also operate the current service, under contract to the Irish Coast Guard.

The new aircraft has a range of over 300 miles, which can be increased (by adding auxiliary fuel tanks) to 395

miles. Both variations allow the S-92 to stay on scene for 30 minutes, to lift 22 survivors and to return to base.

The risk of ice build-up on the rotor blades is a constant threat to helicopter crews during winter mountain rescue operations. The S-92 is the first helicopter in the world to be fitted (and FAA-certified) with full de-icing protection on the rotor blades up to 10,000 feet. This will greatly enhance our ability to operate in the mountains during winter. The S-92 is also fitted with a rear ramp, which will allow for quicker deployment and recovery of mountain rescue personnel and stretcher parties. The new aircraft will enhance and expand the ability of the Irish Coast Guard to respond to emergencies at sea and on land.

It must be said that those of us who know walkers and climbers who have been rescued, encourage them to learn from their experience and get back out in the mountains, once they have fully recovered.

It is easy to be knowledgeable about an event after it has happened or to pass judgment on the decisions made by others, especially without knowledge of the full circumstances.

The quote from Edward Whymper is as relevant today as it was during his own time. Always remember it is seldom that someone sets out for a day in the mountains with the intention of being rescued ■

Jim O'Neill is an aircrew trainer working with CHC Ireland at the Shannon Coast Guard helicopter base. He is also the chairman of the Clooney-Quin Hillwalking Club (Co Clare) and an ML/RCL holder.

Irish Coast Guard Sikorsky S-16 search and rescue helicopter at Sligo Airport. Photo: Jim McShane (Donegal MRT).

Cathar castles

On the Cathar Trail and GR 10

*Flights between Dublin and Carcassonne offered **Dennis Golden** the possibility of exploring parts of the Cathar Trail and the eastern end of the Grande Randonnée 10 (GR 10) in southern France.*

Château de Quéribus, near Arles-sur-Tech, Perpignan, one of six Cathar castles or frontier fortresses on the Cathar Trail in the eastern Pyrenees.

Like the Camino de Santiago, the Cathar Trail (le Sentier Cathare) has been promoted as a tourist attraction to bring business to the villages along the route. It runs from Port-la-Nouvelle on the Mediterranean coast through the lower Pyrenees to Foix in the Ariège valley, linking many of the hilltop castles which featured in the 13th century “crusade” by the Catholic Church and the French monarchy against the Cathar or Albigensian “heresy.”

However, while the GR 10 is also promoted as a tourist trail, it is by no means an easy walk: there are many steep and rugged ascents and descents along the way.

The GR 10 is a long-distance walking route on the French side of the Pyrenees from Hendaye on the Atlantic coast to Banyuls-sur-Mer on the Mediterranean. It is paralleled on the Spanish side by the GR 11 and by the Haute Route Pyrenees (HRP), which follows the highest line along the range, taking in many of the peaks. While the GR 10 is served by reasonably well-spaced refuges and gîtes d'étape, the GR 11 and HRP entail camping for much of their lengths. The three routes coalesce in places, particularly where they run along the French-Spanish border.

After arriving at the youth hostel in Carcassonne's spectacular medieval old town, I spent a day exploring the town and buying and studying maps. While there are excellent maps at scales of 1:25,000 and 1:50,000, I would have needed to carry quite a lot of them to cover my intended routes. Therefore, I bought two 1:100,000

maps and found them to be quite adequate for my needs. The contours were at 40-metre intervals on these maps, and the GR and HRP routes were highlighted. The locations of mountain refuges were also shown.

I took a train and a bus to Quillan, 50km from Carcassonne, and then walked westwards directly to Espezel, where I was the only occupant in a rather shabby gîte. The adjoining restaurant was closed, so I bought some food in the nearby shop and cooked for myself. The following day took me to Comus. I overnighted in a quaint gîte there in an old school where the food was outstanding and plentiful.

I then descended steeply through the Gorges de la Frau and climbed up again to arrive at Montségur, the last of the Cathar castles to fall to the “crusaders,” when three hundred Cathars chose incineration rather than conversion. There were several gîtes and hotels in the village, and I chose one managed by the nearby hotel.

Roquefixade, with its excellent gîte run by the village council, was my next stop before the long descent to



Foix from where I took a train southwards to Ax-les-Thermes. Arriving in the main square just as it started to rain, I got a room in the Petit Montagnard hotel.

The next morning, I set off in heavy rain along the road up the Orlu valley, hoping to get a lift to the road end where I would meet the GR 7. After some time the rain stopped and eventually a car skidded to a stop, slewing across the road, reversing violently and crashing into the range wall. I was being offered a lift! I hesitated for a moment but then decided to take the risk and accept the lift. The young driver dropped me off at what appeared to be the end of the road. I set off walking up a track and after two or three kilometres was surprised to find the road again. I realized then that the road had continued parallel to the track. A car stopped and took me the last couple of kilometres to the real road end.

As I walked up a rough mule track I was surprised to hear a vehicle behind me. Even a Land Rover would have been out of place there. Incongruously, a white Renault hatchback was lurching and bouncing up the track. Jokingly, I stuck out my thumb. The car stopped and I got in with the driver and four dogs. He was a farmer from the next valley looking for sheep which had strayed across the intervening mountain. We lunched up the track for several kilometres before spotting the flock of sheep high up on the mountainside. The

farmer drove me to the end of the mule track where a signpost indicated the direction of the path to the Refuge de Beys, 400 metres above.

The path became a steep boulder-field and I had to stop at each waymark to spot the next one before moving on. As I climbed I could see rain clouds moving up the valley behind me. The rain finally reached me as I came level with the refuge, although I was still out of sight of it. The signpost had indicated one hour to the refuge but it took me two hours to get there. I arrived at the

refuge at about 2:00pm but, without the lucky lifts, I doubt if I would have got far enough before the poor visibility would have made the ascent of the boulder field hazardous or impossible. It rained all evening and throughout the night.

The next morning dawned clear and chilly. Due to a steep climb of about 400 metres over another boulder field, it took four hours to cover the four kilometres from the refuge to the col at the head of the corrie. By that time it was much warmer. The gradual descent across

Above:
Map of GR 10 route across the Pyrenees (adapted from Paul Lucia's Cicerone guide *The GR 10 Trail*) with the approximate route of the Cathar Trail included.

Below:
Quillan, a picturesque village on the Cathar Trail.





Dennis Golden
on the ascent
of Canigou
(2,784m).
Photo: Jeu
Spreeuwenberg.

the grassy southern side of the col then became steeper and rougher as I neared the upper end of a lake, the Estany de Lanòs, where I expected the GR 7 to meet the GR 10.

Reaching the valley floor, I met two Dutchmen following a faint path which they said was the GR 10. After a few hundred metres it petered out. As they retraced their steps to where they had last been sure of being on the GR 10, I took a beeline across open country to where I could see the path rising to the next ridge. Looking back from the ridge I saw that the GR 10 passed to the south of a small isolated hillock. I had met the Dutchmen on the north side of the hillock, while I was still on the GR 7.

A long descent down a broad valley brought me to the head of the Lac des Bouillouses. Distracted by a cow gingerly picking its way through boulders, I stumbled and fell headlong, stopping with my face just touching a rock. I lay there for a few moments, unhurt but slightly shocked at how close I had come to being seriously injured, and realising how tired I was. Walking through the trees along the lakeside reminded me of Loch Lomond and I arrived at the refuge at the bottom end of the lake just in time for a shower before dinner was served. The Dutchmen, Will and Jeu, arrived some time later, having backtracked to where the GR 7 met

the GR 10.

A walk through wooded country brought me to a broad high valley with many large villages near the Spanish border. On the far slope was the pretty village of Planès where I met the Dutchmen again at the gîte. The next day's route was also mainly through forest. Above the treeline at the Coll Mitjà, I caught up with Will and Jeu. They had lost the route again and had made a long detour. We continued on together, descending steeply to the Refuge du Ras de la Carança, a very basic hut with no electricity and an outside bioloo about 100 metres away. Ablutions had to be performed in the nearby river.

As usual, the Dutchmen were away before me the next morning but I met them again at a gîte in Mantet. Arriving early in the afternoon I was able to wash my clothes and get them dried in the sunshine. I caught up with them the next morning below the village of Py and we walked on together to the Refuge de Mariailles. By now we had melded into a threesome.

From Mariailles, the GR 10 circumnavigates the Canigou massif to reach the Refuge de Cortalets. Will and Jeu suggested leaving packs at Cortalets, climbing Canigou (2,784m) by the regular route on its northern side and being back at

Cortalets in time for dinner. I was more sceptical of the time factor. About four kilometres from Mariailles, on the southern side of Canigou, we came to a junction with a sign indicating a route to Cortalets via the Pic du Canigou. We weighed the shorter length of this route against the extra height to be climbed with full packs and decided to go for it.

Passing the unmanned Refuge d'Arago (a bothy), we climbed through a wide valley to its steep headwall, up which the path zigzagged until the final 50 metres became a hands-on scramble. The top was crowded with people who had come up from the northern side. We reached Cortalets in the early afternoon, long before we would have got there by the main route, and we had climbed Canigou.

We were surprised to meet again a German woman and her daughter who had been at Carança with their husband/father. They had set off to follow different routes to ours and to camp. That morning, the two women had fallen behind their man and had inadvertently taken the wrong route. Belatedly realising their mistake and realising that it would take too long to backtrack, they had continued on to Cortalets where they decided to stay the night, their man having the tent. Fortunately, they were able to make mobile phone contact with him and arrange a rendezvous for the following day.

The next night was spent in a gîte at Batere, a derelict iron-mining area. Trees here and elsewhere showed, by the girth and extent of regrowth from coppicing, that coppicing for fuel had been going on here for hundreds of years. We arrived shortly before it started to rain. A long descent brought us to Arles-sur-Tech where we stocked up on picnic essentials for the next few days before continuing to La Pallete, signposted as having an "ecogîte." Situated in a hollow in a forest, the ecogîte was unfinished and appeared to have been so for some time. The only "eco" evidence was the supermarket brand bio-yoghurt provided at breakfast.

Las Illas was our next stopping place. The council-run gîte adjoined the village hall, where a wedding was taking place. We ate in the local hotel and were joined by the wedding party who entertained us with bawdy songs, which we, of course, did not



understand.

A climb up and a long descent brought us to Perthus, a horrible border town full of tatty gift-shops and tourists. A steep climb out and we arrived at the gîte and restaurant at the Coll de l'Ullat. Will and Jeu needed to be in Banyuls-sur-Mer the following day to collect their rail tickets in the post office before it closed. They opted to push on for another couple of hours to an unmanned refuge and make an early start. I opted for the comfort and cuisine at the gîte as I didn't have a sleeping bag and there were unlikely to be blankets in the bothy.

I inspected the unmanned refuge the next day. It had a two-tier wooden sleeping platform, a table and a couple of benches, and was similar to a Scottish bothy. The Flying Dutchmen had left me a message and a Mars bar. They had found the place left in a mess and had cleaned it out.

The route from there followed the border for much of its way before a long and spectacular descent to the sea. Arriving in Banyuls, I asked the first person I met about accommodation. He introduced himself as the regional president of the Federation des Randonneurs, the body responsible for maintaining the waymarks and representing walkers' interests. He told me there was no budget accommodation in Banyuls. The Federation had wanted to

convert a nearby building to a gîte for walkers but had been unable to get planning permission. He took me to one of two hotels which are mentioned in the GR 10 guidebooks.

On an impulse, I decided to go to the water's edge before getting ready for dinner. As I turned into the seafront plaza I spotted Will and Jeu at a café table. They had arrived early in the afternoon and had collected their train tickets. Their train would leave at 21:30; it was now 18:30. We arranged to meet in half an hour, after I had had a shower, and had a last meal together. Will and Jeu had

walked the entire length of the GR 10. I accompanied them to the railway station and checked train times for my own trip back to Carcassonne for the following day at the end of my own grande randonnée ■

Dennis Golden is a longstanding member of the North West Mountaineering Club, where he has held various positions on the committee over the years, and of Mountaineering Ireland. He has walked and climbed in Ireland and in various other countries, including at Alpine Meets and as a member of the 2008 Garwhal Expedition.

Dennis Golden (centre) with Will and Jeu on the summit of Canigou (2,784m). Photo: Jeu Spreeuwenberg collection.

Below:
Canigou massif (2,784m) in spring.





short, scenic walks in west cork

seán Ó duibhgeannáin



Scenic Walks in West Cork: A Walking Guide

By Damien enright
Collins Press (2011), 169pp
Many photos and sketches
€14.99 (£12.99)
ISBN 978-1 – 84889-104-3

Damien enright has great knowledge and love of West Cork and covers it well in this short book. He is a keen walker and has written frequently on the area before.

This sturdy guide will fit into a large pocket or a car dashboard. It is clearly laid-out around six main

centres. The walks are short, varying from 1.5 to 13 kilometres.

each route has a sketch map, colour photographs, clear description of main points on the route and background points of

interest. The sketch maps are excellent and would avoid the need for a larger map. Despite this, enright carefully notes the relevant Ordnance Survey sheet map for each route. The expected walking time is also outlined.

The photographs are of good quality and the author balances well-known views with his own delightful photographs of what make the area attractive to him. He has a good eye for birdlife and flowers that might brighten your walk, and he tells you the season you should expect to see them.

It is particularly helpful when he outlines the many beautiful island walks in the area: Sherkin, Bere and Cape Clear are well known, but he provides attractive information on lesser-known gems such as Dursey, Long and Ringarogy islands. The index of ferry and cable-car timetables is also helpful, where relevant.

This attractively designed and carefully crafted guide to short scenic walks in West Cork is the work of an author who clearly loves his subject, and it shines through in his writing. It will make an attractive and inexpensive guide for anyone who plans to visit the area. A walker planning a long route, such as the full Sheep's Head Way or the Beara Way, will need to look for a guide that covers them ■

walking guide to dingle, iveragh and beara peninsulas

barry o'f lynn



The Dingle, Iveragh & Beara Peninsulas: A Walking Guide

By Adrian Hendroff
Collins Press, 154pp
Many photos and sketch maps
€14.99 (£12.99)
ISBN-13: 978-1-84889-103-6

Before car ownership became general and roads were upgraded, a visit to Kerry was a major undertaking and we tended to concentrate on the area around Carrauntoohil – the peak itself, the ridge of the Reeks, or various

isolated summits. Because of the time factor and difficulty of access, other areas in the Dingle, Iveragh and Beara Peninsulas were largely neglected. A few made it to Brandon and the Glenbeigh Horseshoe but it was considered not worth bothering with isolated mountains such as Knocknadobar. However, things have changed and now that the southwest corner of the island is more accessible, it merits

greater exploration.

That said, Hendroff's guide was a revelation to me, as in my wildest dreams I never suspected that there were so many locations in the area worth a visit. Unlike the author's *From High Places*, this useful guide is small enough to fit in the glove compartment of a car or into a rucksack, which makes it an indispensable item of equipment when heading for Kerry. Be sure to read the Introduction, which contains much practical information and a brief survey of the geological history of the peninsulas (but don't be put off by strange words such as 'orogeny,' the formation of mountain ranges by upward displacement of the earth's crust).

Accompanying the description of each walk are photos of spectacular views or close-up shots of interesting features encountered on the route. An estimate of the time needed to complete the walk, the distance involved and the total ascent are listed. For those who have difficulty in comprehending the metric system, the author gives the equivalent in Imperial Measure.

A useful feature for the novice or less experienced walker is the grading of the walks; this ensures that the walker will not be stretched beyond his or her ability. Throughout the guide, grid references are given for special features and landmarks, as are the numbers of the OS maps required for the route. This is important as the guide must be used in conjunction with the appropriate OS maps because the guide's sketch-maps lack detail and merely indicate the extent of the territory to be traversed ■

coastal and island walks in connemara and mayo

denis beakey



Connemara and Mayo: Mountain, Coastal and Island Walks: A Walking Guide

By Paul Phelan

The Collins Press, 160pp

84pp colour pages, 38pp colour maps

€14.99

ISBN-13: 9781848891029

A trip to the West is always a considered affair for those travelling greater distances. Financial and time pressures have to be dexterously managed to cope with weather, fitness and inclination.

However, Connemara and Mayo offer an unrivalled variety of island, coastal and hill or mountain walking and this publication offers plenty

of ideas to make any trip worthwhile.

There are thirty-three suggested walks, with a number of worthwhile “alternatives and variations” which will appeal to a broad range of walkers. The emphasis on detailed route description will assist the less experienced whilst newly-identified locations will dilute traffic on “the classics.”

With a dozen straightforward walks, mainly island and coastal, there are also some testing mountain walks, which are well photographed. It also includes the introduction of an “extreme” graded walk, but I won’t spoil the surprise here!

This guidebook is fit for purpose with a good splash-proof cover and quality-feel pages; it will survive, with some care, when used while out and about on the hills. Many of the low-level walks can be completed using the well-illustrated maps – a real bonus as the area is covered by seven different OS maps. Whilst a passing mention is made of the natural and social worlds, this book is primarily a very portable walking guidebook.

Well-crafted printed guidebooks still have an important role and this book should provide all with new ideas for exploration and adventure in this exceptional area for walking ■

Pocket guide to heritage sites in the burren

shane delaney



Burren Archaeology: A Tour Guide

By Hugh Carthy

The Collins Press (2011), 176pp

4 maps and many colour photos

€12.99 (£11.99)

ISBN: 978-1-84889-105-0

This useful guide includes an excellent précis of the archaeological heritage of the Burren region in County Clare. The Burren contains one of the densest concentrations of visible archaeological

remains in the country.

The book is laid out by area, enabling the prospective visitor a chance to efficiently plan their tour or route.

The book’s Introduction provides a good introduction to the Burren’s evolution and its association with people from the Mesolithic period to the present day.

A description of forty sites is given, spanning all archaeological periods, and, usefully, the author has indicated whether the sites have public access, access by landowner consent or are visible from a public place.

All the major and well-known sites are included, from Poul nabrone Portal Tomb, Poulawack, Cahercommaun Cashel, Corcomroe Abbey and

Leamaneh Castle to some lesser-visited tombs, barrows and ecclesiastical sites in the area.

The descriptions are short and to the point, and the main objective is to guide you to the sites so that you can see them for yourself. Personally, I’d have liked a bit more detail on the sites, but realistically, that is for a different kind of publication. Having said that, though, the book is packed with interesting information.

A list of GPS coordinates is provided for the sites for the technically-minded, and a useful glossary of terms is also included.

One negative point is that there is no index. The book is well-written and is produced in a handy, pocket-guide size, which will fit handily into a rucksack when visiting the sites it describes.

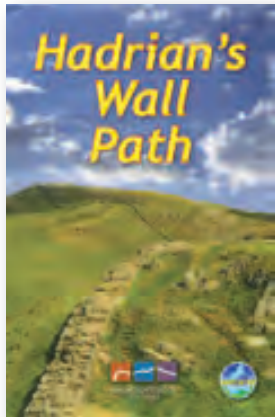
This is a useful new introduction to the Burren and is a welcome tool for those intending to visit the area ■



Poul nabrone Portal Tomb. Photo: ingo mehling.

Follow in the Romans' footsteps along Hadrian's wall

bernard delaney



Hadrian's Wall Path

By Gordon Simm & Jacquetta Megarry
Rucksack Readers (2011), 64pp
Many colour photos and maps
Stg£10.99
ISBN 978-1-898481-43-0

Hadrian's Wall path was opened in 2003 and follows Hadrian's Wall from Wallsend (near Newcastle) on the North Sea across to Bowness on Solway on the Irish Sea coast.

Hadrian's Wall originally marked the northern boundary of the Roman empire and it is now a

World Heritage Site. The wall took six years to build, but the path took 10 years to develop due to the sensitivity of this UNESCO designated landscape!

The trail is 86 miles long, but most walkers will clock up more than 100 due to off-route site visits and accommodation requirements. It would therefore be useful to also carry an Ordnance Survey map, in addition to whatever guide you are using. Most walkers walk from

east to west (as we did in June) but an increasing number are returning to complete the walk in reverse. This guide caters for those west-east walkers.

Because days can be long and surprisingly tiring, a guide for this type of walk should be user-friendly so that it can easily be referred to on the hoof. This guide is in a handy A5 size, conveniently top spiral-bound, with handy fold-down contiguous maps and, very importantly, it is waterproof.

A brief but very adequate history of Roman Britain and of the building of the wall is provided, and this helps in interpreting a lot of the sites on the trail. The trail traverses the pastoral and delightful landscape of Cumbria, the wind-blasted moors of Northumberland and the salt marshes and mudflats of the Solway Firth. The guide provides a short but adequate introduction to the rich and varied fauna of each area. Among the wildlife we encountered were buzzards, woodpeckers and roe deer! But surprisingly, there is no description of the flora of the region!

However, it is on the actual route description that this guide excels. Each of the six days of walking is clearly and meticulously laid out in Ladybird Book fashion, with reference to the appropriate map panel. So clear are the instructions that it would be virtually impossible to go astray and, of course, this adds immensely to the enjoyment of the walk. I look forward to using this guide on my west-east adventure! ■

Thirty mountain walks in Catalonia

Paul e. donnelly



Mountain Walking in Southern Catalonia: Els Ports and the Mountains of Tarragona

By Philip & Vivian Freakley
Cicerone (2010), 183pp
18 colour sketch maps, many photos and useful appendices
Stg£12.95
ISBN 978-1-85284-582-7

This is a welcome addition to the Cicerone range of walking guides. It covers a mountain area in Spain particularly suited to winter walking;

easily accessible from Barcelona (180km) but relatively unfrequented to date by Irish or British walkers; indeed, other walkers are generally scarce here.

The authors, former academics, have lived and walked in the area since 2004. The thirty walks outlined in this guide are mostly easy to moderate walks (some with easy scrambling) in the mountains grouped around the ancient town of Tortosa, at the mouth of the Ebro in southern Catalonia.

Most of the walks in the guide are in the Els Ports mountain range south of the Ebro, a Natural Park area. The mountains are a complex range of limestone ridges and valleys with much of the high terrain over 1,000m. Caro, the highest summit, is at an altitude of 1,442m.

"The lower slopes [of the Els Ports] are a jumble of wooded valleys and terraced fincas [country estates] overlooked by steep cliffs and fantastic pinnacles. The paths find their way up, down and around some apparently impossible slopes onto the main massif, where views are extensive and dramatic.... The nature of the terrain is extremely diverse, often passing from stark karst features to dense pine and holly-oak woodland within a few hundred metres of walking, but with a pleasingly low proportion of the thorny scrub which characterizes most Mediterranean walking."

There is a rich variety of flora and fauna in the area, which includes Spanish ibex, wild boar, golden eagles and vultures, and the extensive Ebro Delta Natural Park is nearby with its famous birdlife.

The area has a developed network of walking and climbing routes, including some long-distance routes. This guide, however, contains a selection of twenty-eight easy-to-moderate day circuits from a start-point accessed by car. There is also a two-day out-and-back itinerary and a coastal day walk.

The guide follows the usual Cicerone walking guide format with separate walk descriptions, including sketch maps. However, it only has a card cover and not the usual plastic one. In addition, the guide includes useful information about the area's history, transport, accommodation, environment, wildlife, flora and language and it also includes useful contacts.

The visiting walker will find Tortosa the most convenient base. It is on the mainline rail link to Barcelona, has a range of accommodation and restaurant options and offers car hire and a bookshop where guides and maps can be bought (one guide in Catalan covers 40 walks in the Els Ports range). It is near the Els Ports Natural Park Information Office, where information and maps can also be obtained ■

benefits of using walking guides in the local language

Peter o'neill



Le Guide Rando, Rando éditions

Series of seventeen (so far) local walking guides in French. Ten cover areas in the Pyrénées (Ariège, Aspe-Ossau, Canigou-Cerdagne, Cauterets Val d'Azun, Gavarnie-Luz, Haut-Aragon, Luchon, Néouvielle, Pays Basque and Pyrénées-Orientales). Six cover areas in the French Alps (Beaufortain, Chartreuse et Belledonne, Écrins [Vols 1 & 2], Mercantour, Pays du Mont-Blanc). One covers the Vosges. The guides are widely available in the areas they describe. Selected volumes for other areas are also often available in French outdoor

shops and can be bought online (see www.editions-sudouest.com/nos-editions/rando-editions/le-guide-rando.html). €17.50 per volume.

Why review a series of French language guidebooks here? It is, perhaps, a personal hobbyhorse.

I've ranted on occasion about english-speaking users of english-language guides risking missing a lot by not trying to find and use a local guidebook; and particularly about the use of english language guidebooks which attempt to cover too wide an area at the expense of detail.

Although the situation has improved in this respect, some have been, at least in the not so distant past, sometimes badly out of date.

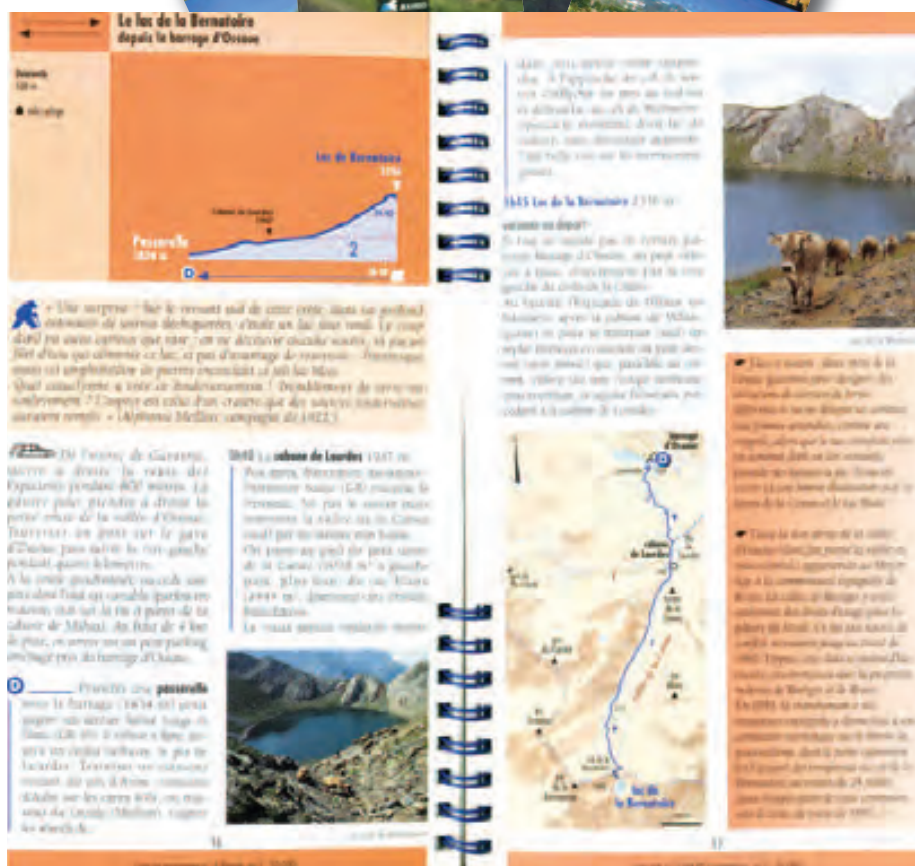
I've bought and used five of the ten Pyrénées volumes, starting with the Gavarnie-Luz volume (pictured above) on my first trip to the Pyrénées. I much regretted having set out immediately with only an english guidebook and finding Le Guide Rando only on a rest day in Gavarnie after starting with the Vignemale, Brèche de Rolande and Casque du Marboré. I would have loved to have tried the much more interesting approach to the Casque, my summit the previous day, via a "subterranean chimney" rather than the longer and much less interesting normal route.

All the guidebooks in the series follow a common formula: individual volumes for different areas, 40 to 65 routes per volume, graded as one of four levels, ranging from easy, undemanding walks of 2½ to 3½ hours up to much more demanding routes requiring 10-11 hours or more, which may involve glacier crossings or easy scrambling, and are recommended for experienced walkers only.

The Gavarnie-Luz guide, for example, includes the Vignemale by the Moskowa route, the route of the first ascent(s), with a note describing how the guide, Cazaux, "sold" the same first ascent to his clients. Such notes are an interesting part of many of the route descriptions in these guides, along with excellent illustrations, route profiles and maps.

As an example from the easiest grade, the three-hour return walk to Lac de la Bernatoire is accompanied by notes on some Gascon words used to describe land forms, and on the use of this route to bring Spanish cattle from Broto to summer pasture in France, in accordance with a right dating from the middle ages, a source of conflict until resolved by treaty in 1862.

Reading a guidebook in another language is far easier than reading a general text in that language. The fine detail may require more familiarity, but the geographic terminology and general drift of the route descriptions can often be followed with very little familiarity with the language and a few minutes with a dictionary to find the frequently used words. Try it! ■



sample pages from one of the guides and, above, more examples of the guides.



Access & Conservation

The latest news from helen Lawless, hillwalking, access & conservation officer

It's good to talk



Helen Lawless

to the Irish countryside. Those who enter onto land that is owned by others, for the purpose of recreation, do so due to the goodwill and tolerance of the landowners. Although there are relatively few places on the Irish hills where people cannot enter, the growth in the popularity of hillwalking and other recreation activities is putting a strain on the goodwill that we depend on.

The inclusion of a route description in a printed or online publication, or a track on a map, does not mean that there is a right of entry or that the owner has given permission. It is best not to take access for granted, even in areas that you or your club have used for years. If an opportunity arises to speak with a landowner, check if access is permitted on your intended route. This type of engagement makes a positive contribution to the relationship between recreational users and the local community. In the vast majority of cases access will be allowed.

Situations where permission is critical

It is understandable that farmers who have allowed recreational activity over the years could feel they are being taken advantage of when they see large groups on their land, if somebody is operating a commercial activity without their consent, or if they see a route on their land published in a newspaper. Walking festivals crossing land without the owner's permission have been a factor in a number of recent access issues.

Where there are plans that involve any alteration to the land, such as the erection of marker posts for a walking route, or the placement of fixed protection for rockclimbing, every effort should be made to secure the permission of all landowners affected.

Inadequate consultation with landowners may result in the erection of 'Private Property' signs and loss of access. It must be acknowledged that it is not always easy to identify landowners, and that in cases where there is commonage, or a patchwork of small holdings, you could have many different owners on one

Mountaineering Ireland has dealt with an increased number of access issues across the country during the past few months. While we have no reason to believe that this is anything other than a coincidence, it has highlighted some recurring themes in relation to access difficulties. One thread that runs through more than half of our recent access problems has been a failure to communicate well with landowners.

Helen Lawless reports

Let's not take access for granted

All land in Ireland is in private or state ownership. Walkers and climbers should be aware that there is no legal right of access



Private property sign aimed at hillwalkers.
Photo: helen Lawless.

hillside. In general, if you ask locally you will be directed to the people you need to speak with. The Countryside Officers employed by the District Councils in Northern Ireland and the Rural Recreation Officers working in twelve areas in the south may also be of assistance.

A framework to manage access?

The **mountain access scheme** currently being piloted by Comhairle na Tuaithe, on Carrauntoohil and at Binn Shléibhe near Clonbur, has the potential to provide a framework for the management of access (see *IML* 96, pages 56-57). This is something which Mountaineering Ireland sees as necessary in the context of increased recreational pressure and, while we are working through Comhairle na Tuaithe to have the Mountain Access Scheme extended to other areas, that will take some time.

One of the key attractions of the Mountain Access Scheme is that participating landowners will be indemnified against any claims by recreational users who are injured on their land. Although the law on occupiers' liability makes it clear that

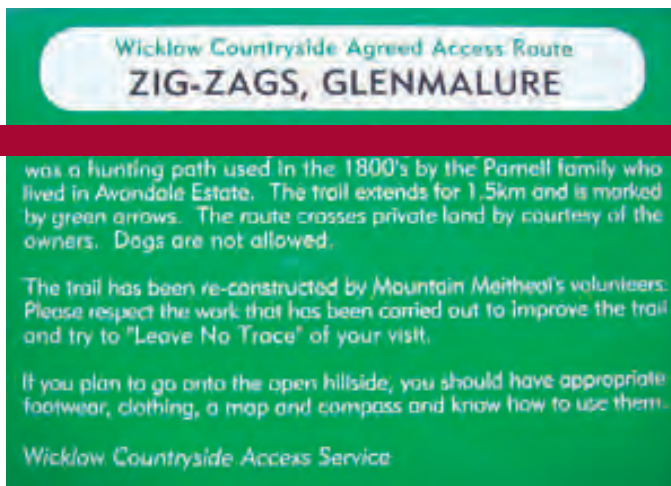
participants in outdoor recreation activities should be aware of the risk that is inherent in their activities and take responsibility for their own actions, some doubt remains and you may come across landowners with genuine fears that they could be held liable.

Mountaineering Ireland has drafted a public information leaflet on the subject of access and occupiers' liability to deal with the main questions and misunderstandings that arise for both landowners and recreational users. It is hoped this leaflet will be published by Comhairle na Tuaithe later in 2011 and promoted by Comhairle members within their respective organisations.

We all have a responsibility

In the absence of a framework to manage recreational access, Mountaineering Ireland is working to improve the situation at a local level by supporting members in resolving access issues that arise in their area, liaising with Rural Recreation/Countryside Officers and occasionally getting directly involved. An important lesson from this experience is that it takes a lot more time and energy to resolve issues than to prevent them in the first place.

While it is not always practical to speak with every person whose land you're going to cross, when an opportunity arises, walkers and climbers are urged to engage with landowners. As



sign on agreed access route at the zig-zags, glenmalure, c o wicklow.
Photo: helen lawless.

one farmer said at a Mountaineering Ireland meeting in Galway earlier this year, "It's nice to be asked. Farming today is a quiet life – you only have your dog to talk to. You don't like to see the walkers turning away from you."

This and other practical actions, such as taking care not to block gateways or narrow roadways when parking, not taking dogs on the hills, and avoiding damage to walls and fences, will help to maintain the quality of the relationship between the recreational community and the landowners that we rely on for our activities ■



Green Tip

The building boom is over

Why do some of us feel a need to make our mark by building or adding to cairns when we visit the mountains?

If it's to guide others on their journey, think again. Cairns can give less experienced walkers a false sense of security or even mislead them. For example, a new cairn towards the west side of Lugnaquilla's summit plateau is mistaken by some as being the true summit.

Summit cairns are an established part of our mountain landscape, but do we need to add a rock to the cairn? Why not just touch it or take a photograph? Some of our larger mountain-top cairns are burial sites which are thousands of years old and should be respected as archaeological sites.

Moving stones can exacerbate erosion by exposing soil; it also disturbs the small creatures that live beneath the stones.

Some people see a profusion of cairns as a form of graffiti. A tower of stones or a long stone turned to point skywards make unnatural shapes that detract from the character of the hills. Let's show more respect by leaving the mountains as we find them ■

Review of events policy

TO ENCOURAGE best practice in organising the many walking festivals, fundraising and challenge events that take place in the Irish mountains Mountaineering Ireland is currently reviewing its events policy (see *IML* 97, pages 62-63).

As these events have an impact on everybody who uses the mountains, all members are urged to take a few minutes to read the revised draft policy and to give their feedback. The draft will be published shortly on www.mountaineering.ie.

Members are also encouraged to participate in one of the following **consultations** on the draft policy:

belfast	Tuesday, 25 th October
dublin	Wednesday, 26 th October
clonmel	Tuesday, 15 th November
killarney	Wednesday, 16 th November

each consultation will take place at 8:00pm. Venue details will be published on www.mountaineering.ie and a summary note will be posted on the website after each consultation.

The draft policy will also be discussed briefly during the Members' Forum at Mountaineering Ireland's **autumn gathering** in Leenane – at 6:00pm on Saturday 15th October.

It is intended that a final draft of the policy will be published early in 2012 with a view to adopting it at Mountaineering Ireland's AGM in March 2012 ■

Meet the hill farmer: Pat Dunne

helen lawless interviews Pat Dunne, a hill farmer who lives beside Carrawaystick Waterfall in the Glenmalure valley, Co Wicklow. Pat's farm includes the popular Zig-zags agreed access route which leads towards Lugnaquilla.

have you always lived in glenmalure?

I was born further down the valley; my wife Margaret was from here. Both our families have lived in Glenmalure for a couple of hundred years.

what type of farm do you have?

It's mainly sheep. We have some suckler cows, but a lot of the farm is hill land so it wouldn't be suitable for anything other than sheep. The hill above is a Special Area of Conservation, so again you're limited in what you can do with it. You couldn't plant trees, for example. Our farm includes Kelly's Lake and the hills either side of that valley.

have you seen much change in how the hills are farmed?

Sheep numbers on the hills in Wicklow have reduced a lot. There would have been eight farmers with sheep on our hill, now it's mainly ourselves. One other farmer puts up a few sheep for a short time each summer. It takes time to farm the hills; that doesn't really suit farmers who have another job. During the boom a lot of the younger farmers didn't put sheep to the hill. Each flock gets to know their own part of the hill, they stay around that area and they build up immunity to disease. If you lose that link, it's hard to get the sheep back on the hill.

what would you like to see for the farm in the future?

I would hope that one of the lads would be able to make a living from the farm. In general, I would love to see more people hill-farming and more sheep being put to the hill.

with lugnaquilla nearby, this is a popular area for hillwalking. have you noticed any changes in that regard?

There are a lot more hillwalkers; more people are enjoying the benefits of hillwalking. Margaret and I lived in the cottage at Kellystown [below the waterfall] in the 1980s; the walkers went through the yard and it would have been common for people to knock at the door on their way up the hill. During the Celtic Tiger years people got more arrogant. The vast majority of hillwalkers are very decent people who don't want any kind of confrontation, but there were a number of times I stopped somebody going up with a dog and the response was abusive. I think there is better awareness in recent years, though we still get people trying to push in with dogs.

what sort of problems have you had with dogs?

People are constantly losing dogs on the hills. If the dogs were on leads, they wouldn't lose them. Loose dogs like that are a worry for sheep farmers. We did have a sign that said 'dogs on lead,' but very few people kept their dog on a lead once they got out of sight. Now our policy is strictly 'no dogs.'

The dog doesn't have to touch the sheep to cause a problem. We would have sheep grazing around Kelly's Lake. If a dog runs through the sheep and rushes them, some will fall into holes, get injured or die of hunger. Those sheep are our bread and butter,



The dunnes' cottage below carrawaystick waterfall, glenmalure. Photo: garrett byrne for wicklow uplands council.

but it's also an animal welfare issue.

The zig-zags agreed access route is on your land. how is that working out?

It is working very well. When you have walkers coming in anyway, it is better to have them organised and all following the one route. The situation is clear for the walkers and clear for the farmer. Some people call it the Glenmalure Bypass because it goes around the cottage. Mountain Meitheal's wooden footbridge withstood a massive flood last September; it's a credit to the team that built it. The number of walkers has multiplied since the access route went in. The bank holiday weekends are the worst; you get huge numbers and more strollers, who wouldn't have the same awareness as regular walkers. It can cause problems if people park on both sides of the road, as there sometimes isn't enough room for wide vehicles to get through.

i noticed you're renovating the cottage. what are your plans for it?

We didn't want to let it fall down; Margaret's ancestors came to



Farmer Pat Dunne discusses the Glenmalur agreed access route with participants on an Irish Uplands Forum/Wicklow Uplands Council field trip. Photo: Garrett Byrne for Wicklow Uplands Council.

that cottage in 1789. We have a lot more work to do on it. We're doing our best to retain the character of the cottage; we've kept the stepping stones and we went all the way to Sligo to source the red roof. We hope that eventually one of the family will live in it. In the short term, we might let it to hillwalkers. You could hardly get a better location!

Do you and your family gather you do some hillwalking yourself. Do you have any favourite spots?

Margaret and I both do a bit. One of the men we walk with, Mick Sheehan, has this saying: 'we should do what we can when we're able.' I did a walk in the Sheeffrys once, maybe it was the good day, but I thought they were great hills to walk on. That said, the scenery in Glenmalur is as good as you'd get anywhere. It's one of the longest U-shaped valleys in Britain or Ireland and the area is steeped in history. The battle of Glenmalur took place across the way in 1580, where the Irish, led by Fiach Mac Hugh O'Byrne, defeated an English army. The song *Follow Me Up To Carlow* was written about it.

You've been involved in the Wicklow Uplands Council for a long time. Has that been useful to you?

The Wicklow Uplands Council has done a great amount of work. The main benefit is that it provides a forum to bring various stakeholders together and realise that for the most part they have the same objectives. Understanding builds between the members and with that a respect for each other's views.

Do you have any final comments?

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

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

Joss Books



TrainingLog

Training news presented by Training officer **alun richardson** and **nicole mullen**

See you out there!



"You can please some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time, but you can't please all of the people all of the time" – The Training Office

I SPeNT most of July dodging raindrops on the Mountaineering Ireland summer Alpine meet and smiling as a wonderful mix of people from all sides of the Irish mountaineering community supported, helped, encouraged and enjoyed each other's company. The comments I have had from a number of people suggest that the rest of the world looks on in envy at the growing popularity and diversity of the Irish meets.

I am now back in Dublin watching the nights draw in as autumn creeps up on us. The consolation for the shortening days is that a new bouldering wall is soon to open in Dublin, run by Mountaineering Ireland's ex-Coaching Development & Youth Talent Identification Officer, Angela Carlin. Good luck to her and to her team.

The other consolation is that the crisp, cool days of autumn are one of my favourite periods of the year for hillwalking. I love the changing colours, bettered only by the crisp, cool days of spring. See you out there!

Alun Richardson

Our course providers meet the highest standards

The success of the year so far, for the Training Office, must be the culmination of a few years' work by a whole team of past and present volunteers and staff to bring Bord Oiliúint Sléibhe (BOS) awards and our providers into the Adventure Framework. Our MSA/SPA/ML/WGL providers are soon to be assimilated as Coaching Ireland Tutor Trainers through a three-day course, shortened from eight because of the amount of training they have already gone through.

BOS has developed a good reputation with the other Mountain Training Boards, Coaching Ireland, FeTAC and other sports

bodies for its innovative and respected training programmes, delivered by a network of committed providers. BOS awards are used by a diverse spread of the outdoor community – from clubs training their members to outdoor activity businesses and college courses – as professional qualifications for instructional staff. This diversity has required some difficult negotiations and decisions to balance the need to maintain and improve the standard of BOS courses against an increase in syllabus content and the requirements to be a provider. The Training Office has worked hard to limit any increased burden on our course providers and on candidates, but some change is inevitable.

However, we must remember that the training offered by the Training Office goes beyond BOS instructor/leader awards to Club Training Officers, youth development, workshops, meets and skills training, to name a few. If your club has any training requirements or has any ideas, please let us know.

Whatever view we have of mountain training, for Mountaineering Ireland/BOS to maintain its status as a leading mountain training organisation, it must maintain its quality assurance standards. The office does this by auditing the course paperwork, and providing advice and support to providers through its CPD and moderation. These quality assurance methods are not only required of us by outside organisations, they are useful vehicles for us all to exchange ideas and views.

I am always looking for suggestions on how to offer more support to clubs and providers, how to make CPD appealing, how to make moderation work, and how to ensure that club members and providers are kept up to date with developments. I would, therefore, like to thank those club members and providers that find the time to share their views via phone or email, even if it is a tiny part of their otherwise busy lives. I welcome questions and different points of view on all subjects. I may not always agree with you, but I will take the time to listen.



The Irish alpine meets are hugely popular. Photo: **alun richardson**.

Fair Head meet

The Fair Head meet was well attended again, and for those who arrived on the Thursday evening, two days of superb weather was had. I lost my Fair Head virginity and left impressed with the quality of climbing, especially Bealach a Runda. This climb was first put up by Calvin and Claire Torrains and epitomises the bold approach climbers had in the days before Friends. I am also impressed by the amount of unclimbed rock. As Arnie said, "I will be back."

Calvin Torrains steps down from BOS

At the last meeting of BOS, the most significant event was that Calvin Torrains stepped down. He is being replaced by Andy Callan. The board will sorely miss Calvin's vast experience, wisdom and knowledge, and we all owe him a big debt of gratitude for the many years of stalwart service he has given. However, don't relax too much, Calvin; we will still be calling on you to give feedback and advice and read or review new and old syllabi.

Youth training at Dalkey

I had the great pleasure of working alongside Paul Swail with a very keen group of youngsters preparing for the youth Alpine meet. It was great to see enthusiastic young climbers eager to learn new tips and tricks. I know they had a great time in the Alps and I will watch their progress with interest.

Climbing-wall in-house training

Just before going to the Alps, I had the pleasure to visit Mardyke Wall in Cork and train a group of volunteers to safely instruct on the climbing wall. We had drawn up an in-house training syllabus to satisfy the needs of the club and the Mardyke Wall. For any clubs or providers interested, we have some guidelines for in-house training and assessing people. email me, if you would like a copy.

Becoming an assessor

To direct or work on a BOS, ML or WGL assessment you must be active in the hills, up-to-date with the training syllabus and have relatively recent experience instructing on relevant training or observation on assessment.

New provider agreement

The new provider agreement is ready and will be sent out soon to those providers due to renew their provider status. This document explains what the Training Office and BOS can do for you and what we expect from providers. It should be read carefully, filled in and returned to BOS. Those of you that recently became providers will also need to read, sign and return the documents ■

Important clarification

Insurance, and gaining experience for your WGL and MLA

The recent change to the WGL and ML consolidation period requirements are important to maintain parity with awards in the UK and to maintain the status of the ML as the gold standard award for leading others in the hills of Ireland. The changes have been greeted with support from most of the people who have commented.

The requirements for ML are: **"Evidence of leading a minimum of six walks with the majority with groups with whom the trainee is unfamiliar."** That means some walks can be with club members and friends but at least four should be with people you are unfamiliar with. The word 'unfamiliar' and the phrase 'don't know' are very different. To find a minimum of four walks with people you are unfamiliar with is not an onerous task. Remember, there is nothing preventing you gaining further experience with friends and family. I stress it again: *these requirements are the minimum*. I would also recommend gaining experience of walking with a group of youngsters.

A question I have been asked is, how do I gain the experience with people I am unfamiliar with, without an award or insurance? First of all, there is no legal requirement to hold any award in the UK or Ireland, and this should be clearly pointed out to people you are walking with. With regard to insurance, here is the response from our insurers:

"We can confirm that a candidate, whilst gaining the relevant experience and/or during the consolidation period, would have cover in place providing he/she is a member of Mountaineering Ireland. He/she would also be covered if he/she was leading others (whether Mountaineering Ireland members or not) during the consolidation period."

"When they have gained the qualification and are leading and receiving income for the activity, they would then have to join the appropriate association in order to access the correct cover."

I am not in a position to interpret the statement for individual cases, so please don't phone the office asking for more clarification. Like all situations in the murky world of law and insurance, it is open to interpretation and misinterpretation. It is, however, clear that you are covered for any third-party negligence claims against you while gaining experience.

I would, however, still be very clear with the people you are leading, or their parents/guardians, so that they understand the situation and your level of training and experience. If you are working for someone else, even in a voluntary capacity, I would ask if you are covered under their liability insurance, because the situation is complicated by who the contract is with, especially when there has been an exchange of money somewhere.

When a client asks "am I insured?" the answer is no, they are not personally covered. If they are injured through no fault or negligence of yours, they do not have Mountaineering Ireland's personal accident cover unless, of course, they are members of Mountaineering Ireland.

So, here are just a few ways that ML candidates can gain leadership experience:

- Lead walks with other clubs and members that you don't know.
- Offer your services to help with other experienced leaders. You don't necessarily have to be the organiser to be the leader.
- Offer to take new members of your club out or those just trying it out.
- Talk to your local outdoor centre or college and offer to assist.
- Ask your local scout or guides organisations.
- Ask a friend or fellow ML trainee to organise a group for you consisting of people you don't know ■



Training news presented by Training officer **alun richardson** and **nicole mullen**

Book early to avoid disappointment

registering for training schemes, booking your place

One of the most common calls for information we get in the office is how to register for certain training courses, *writes Nicole Mullen*

mountain skills

For Mountain Skills courses there is no need to register with Mountaineering Ireland. In order to see what courses are running, you can visit the **course calendar** in the Training and Safety section of our website. You can search the calendar for courses based on course type, location, provider and date, as you can see in this image here:



mountain leader, walking group leader, single-Pitch award and multi-Pitch award

To register for any of these courses, the process is slightly different. All the registration forms can be downloaded from the Training and Safety section of the website, under **Training downloads**. On this web page, you will be looking for **scheme registration forms**, as illustrated here:



The registration process

All the scheme forms have the requirements that you should have met set out at the top of the form. Please read these requirements carefully before filling out the form to make sure you are eligible to register for the scheme.

mountain leader

- Download the ML registration form
- Have the relevant section signed by the provider who did your Mountain Skills Assessment
- Complete the form
- Post to the Training Office with payment

walking group leader

- Download the WGL registration form
- Complete the form
- Post to the Training Office with payment

single-Pitch award

- Download the SPA registration form
- Have the form signed by the relevant SPA or RCL climber or other experienced climber
- Complete the form
- Post to the Training Office with payment

multi-Pitch award

- Complete the SPA award
- Download the MPA registration form
- Complete the form

- Post to the Training Office with payment
up-to-date membership

For all awards, you must make sure your Mountaineering Ireland membership is valid. If you need to become a member or renew your membership, you can do this on the Scheme Registration forms in the relevant section.

allow two weeks for processing

After you send the form to the office, there is a two-week processing period before your logbook will be sent out to you. If you are planning to book onto a training course, make sure to send in your registration form in advance of your training so that you are registered and have received your logbook in time for the training. To find a training course for these schemes, use the **course calendar** to find out when and where courses are running ■

Course Calendar

CPD workshops

In response to requests for further dates, the CPD workshop dates below are being organised. The minimum number of participants for a CPD workshop to run is four.

ms cPd	9 th October	Donegal
ms cPd	16 th October	Galway
ms cPd	9 th December	Kerry
ms cPd	27 th January	–
ms cPd	28 th January	–

Course dates

wgl assessment	23-25 th September 2011
club Training officer workshop	5-6 th November 2011
Train the Trainers workshop	21-22 nd January 2012
scottish winter meet	17-26 th February 2012
wgl assessment	24-26 th March 2012
ml assessment	17-19 th March 2012
summer alpine meet	1-15 th July 2012
ml assessment	27-29 th October 2012



Club Training Officers Workshop
Wicklow 5th & 6th November

These workshops are an opportunity for clubs' nominated Volunteer Training Officers to come together with Mountaineering Ireland, discuss their clubs' training needs, and work toward designing an effective training structure.

Workshops are open to any club member who is willing to act as a Volunteer Training Officer for their club. The course cost is only €50.

For more information visit www.mountaineering.ie or contact the Training Office at training@mountaineering.ie



5 Minute Interview

karl boyle

Karl Boyle is the Chief Officer of Mountaineering Ireland. As Chief Officer, Karl ties together the work of Mountaineering Ireland staff and volunteers, deals with Mountaineering Ireland's partners, the sports councils, and gets forwarded lots of the tricky questions!

Interview by Alun Richardson

karl, what did you do last holiday?

Walked in Connemara.

where is your next holiday to be?

I have a baby on the way, so I guess I will be getting used to a different type of holiday!

if you could climb any mountain, what would it be?

I'd like to explore the Simien Mountains in northern ethiopia.

why do you love walking in the irish hills?

The sense of escapism and connection with nature.

where is your favourite place to walk in ireland?

Connemara.

where is your favourite place outside of ireland?

Canada.

what is you favourite piece of outdoor equipment?

My Mendl boots.

what is your favourite hill food?

No food especially. Big fan of water, though.

have you ever been lost?

Yes, a murky night in the Reeks.

have you ever been scared in the mountains?

Yes, and frustrated – watching people in their Sunday best or high heels go up Croagh Patrick!

what does adventure mean to you?

It is an opportunity to build confidence.

water bottle or bladder system?

Water bottle.

f rosties or muesli?

Muesli.

beer or l ager?

Beer.

who do you most admire in the outdoor world?

Volunteers, especially those who inspire young people.

who has inspired you most in the outdoor world?

Mark Pollock.

what is the greatest threat to walking and climbing in ireland?

I would prefer the question 'what is the greatest opportunity?' In my opinion, that would be the pilot Mountain Access Scheme ■

Death of well-known British mountaineer

mountaineer, skier, author and access and conservation activist alan blackshaw died in inverness on august 4th, 2011, at the age of 78. Patrick o'sullivan reports.



alan blackshaw relaxes in the rondvassbu hut, norway, 2009.

ALAN BLACKSHAW, a career civil servant, was also a former president of the British Mountaineering Council, of the Alpine Club and of the International Climbing and Mountaineering Federation (UIAA), where he campaigned for the inclusion of mountaineering disciplines in the Olympic sports. He was also a former editor of the *Alpine Journal*. However, it is as the author of a definitive early

mountaineering handbook, *Mountaineering: From Hillwalking to Alpine Climbing*, published in 1966 by Penguin, that he will be most remembered by mountaineers in Ireland.

Blackshaw was born in Liverpool and went to Oxford University where he obtained a degree in modern history. In the 1950s, he climbed in the Alps, making ascents of the north-east face of Piz Badille, the north face of the Aiguille du Triolet and the south face of Pointe Gugliermine. He also climbed in the Caucasus, Greenland and the Garwhal Himalaya. In 1972, he made a continuous ski traverse of the Alps and, between 1973 and 1978, he traversed Scandinavia by ski.



alan blackshaw on the summit of larindaz, switzerland. Photo: robert Pettigrew.

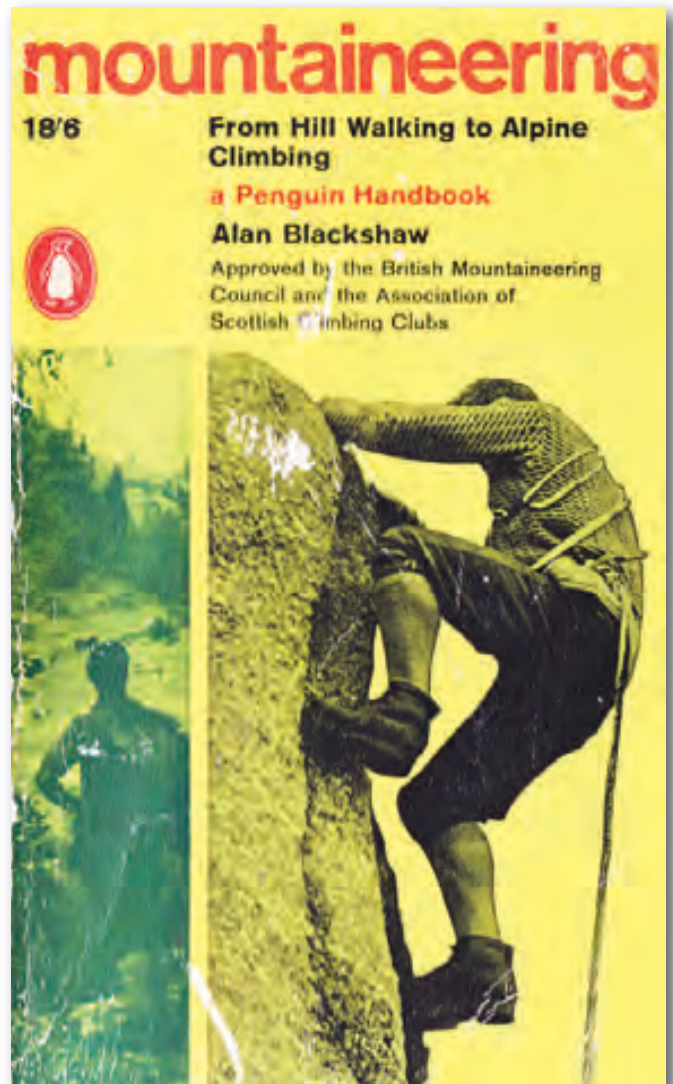
In later years, Alan was a successful activist and an advocate for both conservation in, and public access to, the uplands. He pursued the concept that it is a fundamental human right to have access to enjoy nature by land, mountain, cliff and sea, and believed that this right should be recognised by the United Nations. Blackshaw's biggest contribution in this area was to the

development of access legislation. As an adviser to Ramblers Scotland, his knowledge of the political and legislative process was invaluable in the build-up to the Land Reform (Scotland) Act of 2003. This Act formalised the tradition of unhindered access to open countryside, giving an enviable right-to-roam in Scotland. Many attributed its passing to Blackshaw's skill and perseverance.

Although he developed cancer, a non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, Alan Blackshaw remained active until shortly before his death, sailing across the Atlantic to South America last year.

The Board of Mountaineering Ireland offer their sincere condolences to Alan's family and friends, including our colleagues in the BMC.

May he rest in peace ■



first edition of alan blackshaw's bestseller, *Mountaineering: From Hill Walking to Alpine Climbing* (1966).

A World of Adventure!

Mt Elbrus - Russia £1390
 Kilimanjaro - Tanzania £1195
 Mt Kenya - Kenya £650
 Africamp - Kenya £1695
 Kinabalu - Borneo £1450
 Aconcagua - Argentina £2300
 Everest Base Camp - Nepal £1195

Plus:

Volunteering Holidays in Kenya
 Charity Expeditions
 Youth Expeditions

Tel: 048 70 83 1258 (ROI) | 028 70 83 1258 (NI)
 Email: office@adventurealternative.com

Ireland's Leading Adventure Company!
www.adventurealternative.com
ADVENTURE
ALTERNATIVE
 expeditions • treks • safaris



Setanta Adventure Training

Dave Gaughran & Ann O'Connor

visit our website www.adventuretraining.ie

Mountain Sports

- ★ Hillwalking
- ★ Rock Climbing
- ★ Mountaineering
- ★ Mountaineering Ireland Qualifications:
 - ★ Mountain Skills
 - ★ Walking Group Leader
 - ★ Mountain Leader
 - ★ Single Pitch Award
 - ★ Multi-Pitch Award



www.adventuretraining.ie

info@adventuretraining.ie



Icicle Guides www.icicleUK.com
 UK 0845 058 98 78 climb@icicleUK.com
'inspirational mountain adventures'

CLIMB - Mont Blanc, Ice Climbing, Alpine Intro, Eiger
 TREK - Kilimanjaro, Tour Mont Blanc, Snowshoeing
 SKI - Off Piste, Ski Touring, Heli-Skiing, Haute Route

El Hierro 2001-2011

Ten years on - 10% off!

~~€425~~ Now only €382

Join us in celebrating!



The three little hidden Canaries:
 El Hierro, La Gomera, La Palma

7-DAY ESCORTED TRIPS - OCTOBER-MAY

Holiday includes:

Ferries + Transport
 Accommodation (appts) + Daily Meals
 Barbecues + Drinks + €362

Walk For Fun - In The Sun!

Tel: 086 604 9836 (Summer)
 Tel: 0034 922 719 261 (Winter)
 Email: shvtenen@elshane.com.net

www.shane-gray.com

Book your Tenerife flights online early with Ryanair or Aer Lingus and avail of lower than ever fares. Holiday includes all ferries, transfers and transport, accommodation and daily guided walks.

Price €382

Stalwart of south-east mountain rescue for 34 years

garry f arrell (1956-2011)

GARRY FARRELL, who was from Ballinakill in Waterford city and a prominent member of the South eastern Mountain Rescue Association, sadly died at the end of May, aged 54.

Garry Farrell played a fundamental role in the development of mountain rescue in Ireland, nationally and locally. In early 1977, he was a founder member of the south-eastern team, which was established in response to a fatal airplane crash in the Galty Mountains the previous September. The team was composed of members from a number of mountaineering clubs in the south-east.

A great believer in volunteering and in education in a broad sense, Garry was a member of South eastern Mountain Rescue Association (SeMRA) from 1977 until his death, an impressive thirty-four years. Over the years, he served in a number of positions in the team, both operational and administrative. He was one of the communications experts in the team, spending much time and effort on equipping the mobile base vehicle.



In the early years, when call-outs and new members were very few, Garry was one of the stalwart members who kept the team going, reminding us that every day was another day closer to the day when we would be needed.

In recent years, he got a lot of satisfaction from the fact that the team had developed to the point where he knew it was soundly based. Not that this meant that he gave up his involvement. In fact, having finished a Masters degree, he returned to the team with enthusiasm, immersing himself in computer programmes and radios.

Garry also took up operational roles, commanding several searches and rescues over the years. He was instrumental in the start of search-planning training in Ireland, bringing Skip

Stoffel from the US emergency Response Institute to Waterford a number of times to teach how to better search for the casualty. This led to the introduction of small, fast-moving search parties to replace the long, slow, inflexible search lines controlled by a stressed search leader, something which members were very grateful for.

SeMRA's tradition of taking an active part in national mountain rescue was started by Garry and others in the early 1980s. He served as both national secretary and chairman of the Irish Mountain Rescue Association and dealt with many difficult issues, one being the rare occasion when the national body stood down a team, and another being the discussions regarding coordination of mountain rescue in the Wicklow area, where six teams then operated.

However, it will be as an extraordinarily active member of SeMRA that Garry will be most fondly remembered, whether it was wrestling with the radios and computers in the base vehicle or expressing his firm beliefs in his own way at committee meetings.

Garry was one of the team's foundation stones, well known for his meticulous attention to detail, a consummate perfectionist. The present strong state of the team is the best testament to his thirty-four years of service.

May he rest in peace ■

Thomas PG Farrell, born 31st October 1956; died 31st May 2011



Garry at an exercise in Rathgormack, Co Waterford.



WE WERE THERE...
AS EQUIPMENT SPONSOR
FOR MARK POLLOCK &
JOHN O'REGANS SUCCESSFUL
EVEREST MARATHON 2007.



WE WERE THERE...

GREAT OUTDOORS DUBLIN 35TH ANNIVERSARY

WE WERE THERE...
AS SPONSOR TO THE
RTE CLIMB FOR KIDS KILI TREK
IN AID OF CMRF 2010



GREAT OUTDOORS

www.greatoutdoors.ie
chatham street : dublin 2 : 01 6794293

WE WERE THERE...
NOW HERE WE ARE, CELEBRATING
35 YEARS & LOOKING FORWARD TO
SUPPORTING THE NEXT
GENERATION OF IRISH EXPLORERS
& ADVENTURERS.



Reaching new heights!

Tollymore National Outdoor Centre provides a wide range of courses for individuals and groups. The state of the art facility, funded and managed by Sport Northern Ireland, has now reopened following a major redevelopment.

- Skills, introductory, leadership courses
- Mountaineering
- Canoeing
- Mountain bike skills course
- Orienteering
- Expeditions
- Indoor climbing wall
- High level ropes course
- Indoor canoe rolling pool
- Pre-season training camps
- One day and residential courses
- Fully catered