



Autumn Gathering 2023

Hosted by Kenmare Walking
Club



Friday 20th – Sunday 22nd October 2023

About Kenmare Walking Club

Kenmare Walking Club celebrate their fortieth anniversary this year. The club's origins can be traced to 1983 when an informal group of local enthusiasts began exploring the trails and hills around Kenmare in Southwest Kerry. By 1989 the Kenmare Leisure Club had been formed to oversee the annual Whitsun Walking Festival which continued until 2007.

The club has grown in size and in the scope of activities and destinations, both at home and abroad. Current membership stands at eighty plus and activities include:

- Alternating A or B grade walks in Kerry or West Cork on most Sundays of the year.
- Annual week away in Ireland, Britain or mainland Europe.
- Annual October bank holiday weekend away in Ireland.
- Training days for members and, latterly, for transition year students.
- Stewarding for charity walks and availability for mountain rescue callouts.

The club is, of course, blessed with some of the finest hillwalking terrain in Ireland, albeit with a dash of Atlantic climate.

Kenmare Walking Club boasts a diverse and enthusiastic membership who offer a warm welcome and a comprehensive programme of activities and training to anyone who shares their love of Kerry's beautiful landscape and hope to continue doing so for many decades to come.



Autumn Gathering 2023

This year's gathering will be based out of the beautiful Sneem Hotel in Sneem, Co. Kerry. Registration for the weekend is €50 which is subsidised by Mountaineering Ireland and includes talks, activities, workshops, dinner on Saturday evening, a gift, and buses where needed. There is an alternative fee of €20 for those who do not want to attend the Saturday evening dinner in the hotel. Members of Mountaineering Ireland can avail of the following discounted rate through the hotel if they wish to stay:

- The hotel has agreed to include full Irish breakfasts each morning with the apartment rate of €350 for 2 nights. Apartments sleep 4 persons in two rooms en-suite, and can be twin or double.
- Twin/double: Bed & Breakfast in the hotel €330.00 for the 2 nights for 2 people.
- Single room: Bed & Breakfast for the 2 nights €240.00.

Please let the hotel know that you are with Mountaineering Ireland's Autumn Gathering at the time of booking to avail of this special rate. Book before October 1st to avail of the special rate.

The weekend will start with registration from 6.30pm at the Sneem Hotel where you will receive a gift and full details for the weekend ahead. The welcome talk will take place from 8.00pm. Saturday sees a full programme of activities including hillwalking, navigation and climbing in and around the Kerry Mountains. Sunday morning will have a variety of workshops commencing at 10.00am.

Sneem Hotel, Goldens Cove, Sneem, Co. Kerry, V93 XV44

Tel: [+353 646675100](tel:+353646675100) Email: information@sneemhotel.com



The Kerry Mountains

This year's Autumn Gathering takes us to some of the lesser known, yet beautiful, sandstone mountains on the Iveragh Peninsula. The mountains surrounding Sneem have a wild and rugged character, with corrie lakes, rocky ridges, and big skies above. We also have some scenic sections of the Kerry Way for people to enjoy, all from the charming and colourful town of Sneem nestled on the northern side of Kenmare Bay.

Coach transport and car-pooling will be available from the Sneem Hotel to the start and finish points of all walks. There are walks for all abilities and all will be led by members of the Kenmare Walking Club who are very familiar with the area and will be ready with local stories and insights! There will also be an environmental walk, a navigation refresher session, and a climbing workshop on offer on the Saturday. Please read through the descriptions of all the activities outlined below before you start the online registration process as you will be asked for your activity selection when registering online.



Programme of Events

Friday 20th October

15.00 – Bonane Heritage Park Walk – those arriving earlier on Friday can stretch their legs on this gentle walk around Bonane Heritage Park, which is situated a few kilometres south of Kenmare. The walk will take about 2 hours, giving people plenty of time to make it back to the hotel for registration. You can sign up for this walk when registering online.

18.30 – Registration in the lobby area of the Sneem Hotel. There is a bar area in the hotel to grab something to eat when you arrive. If you cannot register on the Friday night, please contact caoilainn@mountaineering.ie.

20.00 – Welcome from Mountaineering Ireland and The Kenmare Walking Club.

Followed by a talk by John Cronin – ‘A Life in the Mountains’

John Cronin needs little introduction – he is well-known to many as the co-owner of Cronin’s Yard, which for over 300 years has been used as the traditional starting point for ascents of Ireland’s highest mountain, Carrauntoohil. John has spent his whole life hiking in the Reeks and is a long-standing member of Kerry Mountain Rescue. John will be talking about his life in the mountains – growing up at the foot of Carrauntoohil, farming in the Reeks, his involvement in Mountain Rescue and of course the story of Cronin’s Yard.

Saturday 21st October

A variety of walks and other activities will be held on Saturday, departing from the Sneem Hotel between 8.00am and 9.00am. Please note that packed lunches are available from the hotel but must be ordered before 8pm on Friday evening (please book with hotel when you check in). Please ensure you have walking gear for all weather with you, including hiking boots with good ankle support and gaiters as the terrain on some of the walks is steep and can be challenging. Please read through the descriptions of all the activities outlined below before you start the online registration process as you will be asked for your activity selection when registering online.

Choose from:

Walk 1.

Coomcallee – Difficult

Beal > Coomcallee > Lough Coomeentiern > Spot Height 590 > Gowlanes East > Kerry way > Beal

Distance: 10km Height Gain: 600m Duration: 6 hrs.

Walk 2.

Boughil Ridge – Difficult

Barfinnihy Lough > Boughil > Spot Height 639 > Spot Height 569 > Lough Fadda > Knocklomena > Cooracoosane > Lough Brin

Distance: 10km Height Gain: 930m Duration: 5.5 hrs.

Walk 3. **Knockmoyle and Knocknagantee – Difficult**
Kerry Way > Spot Height 636 > Knockmoyle > Knocknagantee > Kerry Way

Distance: 12km Height Gain: 800m Duration: 5.5 hrs.

Walk 4. **Esknaloughoge – Moderate**
Beal > Kerry Way > Esknaloughoge > Castlecove

Distance: 12km Height Gain: 200m Duration: 5 hrs.

Walk 5. **Kerry Way – Moderate**
Blackwater Bridge to Sneem along the Kerry Way

Distance: 13km Height Gain: 200m Duration: 4.5 hrs.

Walk 6. **Dromore Woods – Easy**
Blackwater Bridge to Dromore Woods along the Kerry Way

Distance: 8km Height Gain: 100m Duration: 3 hrs.

Environmental Walk **Eagle’s Lough and Knocknagantee**

Join Helen Lawless, Mountaineering Ireland’s Access and Conservation Officer, and Alan Lauder, ecologist and Chair of Mountaineering Ireland’s Access and Conservation Committee, for an environmental awareness walk which will take in Eagle’s Lough and the summit of Knocknagantee. This is ideal for Club Environmental Officers and others who are interested in learning more about access and the mountain environment. This walk will involve steep and rugged terrain.

To help spread the knowledge shared on this walk, we would like to keep it to one person per club, ideally the Club Environmental Officer, or another member with an interest in the environment.

Distance: 8km Height gain: 600m Duration: 6 hrs.

Navigation Refresher Join an instructor from Kerry College, Killorglin Campus for a navigation refresher session. This activity is ideal for those with some navigation experience who want to top up their skills as we head into winter.

Climbing Workshop Join Mountaineering Ireland's Training Officer Jane Carney for a climbing session at the Gap of Dungloe. Anyone is welcome, including those with no previous climbing experience. Climbing helmet and shoes can be provided, please email caoilainn@mountaineering.ie if required.

Saturday Evening

18.30 – Mountaineering Ireland's Members' Forum – The Sneem Hotel

The members' forum is open to all Mountaineering Ireland members whether you are attending the entire weekend of activities or not. This is an open forum led by the Chairperson and CEO of Mountaineering Ireland. It is an opportunity for any member to make suggestions or ask questions related to hillwalking, climbing and the work of Mountaineering Ireland, either individually or on behalf of your club. It is a valuable information-sharing opportunity. Topics discussed are generally of interest to all individuals and clubs so we would encourage as many of those attending the Autumn Gathering as possible to come to the members' forum and bring feedback to your club afterwards.

20.00 – Dinner in the Sneem Hotel (please make sure to choose this option at registration if you would like to attend the dinner).

Sunday 22nd October

10.00 – There will be a variety of workshops available on Sunday morning. You can sign up for either of these workshops when registering online.

1. Club Support Workshop – 'Nurturing New Walk Leaders'

Mountaineering Ireland's Helen Lawless will facilitate a discussion on how best clubs can encourage new walk leaders. We will be inviting input from clubs on what they have learned in tackling this issue.

2. Club Training Workshop

This workshop will be a practical outdoor session that will focus on tips for teaching navigation, movement and leadership along with how to introduce training into your regular walks.

As always, there is the option to walk or climb independently on Sunday morning.

12.00 – Members can disperse once their workshop is over.