

irish mountain log

THE MAGAZINE FOR WALKERS AND CLIMBERS IN IRELAND

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Mourne mountains panorama with Slieve Bearnagh (left background) as seen from the summit of Doan.
Photo: Adrian Hendroff.

Reasons to join

What you get from your MCI membership

The MCI (Mountaineering Council of Ireland) is the national representative body for all mountaineers, including hillwalkers, climbers and ramblers, in the island of Ireland. It represents your interests at local, national and international level.

Membership is open to both clubs and individuals. At present, the MCI has some 9,000 members, made up of over 130 member clubs and 1,200 individual members.

The work of the MCI includes promoting mountaineering activities in Ireland; providing a range of services to members; promoting safety and training amongst walkers and climbers; and encouraging responsible use of the upland environment.

In addition to membership subscriptions, the MCI is supported by government grant aid (**Irish Sports Council** and **Sport Northern Ireland**). The MCI is run by an elected voluntary Board of Directors, which in turn appoints sub-committees to deal with specific activities.

The MCI has offices at Sport HQ in Dublin and at Tollymore Mountain Centre in Newcastle, Co Down.

The benefits of joining MCI:

- **A quarterly membership magazine.** *The Irish Mountain Log.*
- **A monthly e-zine.** You can sign up for our e-zine *Mountaineering Matters* on the front page of our website, www.mountaineering.ie.
- **Discounts.** Available in most outdoor shops and a variety of other related retailers. Up-to-date list available from the MCI office or from our website.
- **MCI insurance.** Mainly Civil Liability cover but includes Personal Accident cover for permanent injuries.
- **Access to Travel & Activity insurance** for walking and climbing trips abroad.
- **Personalised membership card** (required for retailer discounts).
- **Access to MCI grant schemes.**
- **Full-time office staff** to handle your enquiries and provide information.
- **Development of training schemes** for hillwalkers and climbers.
- **A channel** for your access, environmental and other concerns.
- **MCI Lecture & Film Series** at venues around the country, with discounted prices for members.
- **Youth Meets** and support for youth training.
- **Annual Summer Alpine Meet** including training courses for beginners.
- **Spring, Winter and Autumn Meets** organised in Ireland and Scotland.
- **MCI website.** Visit our website at www.mountaineering.ie.
- **Access to MCI Library.** Collection of guidebooks and mountaineering books, now based in Dublin office.
- **Expedition grants** and advice. Call the MCI office.
- **Training grant schemes.** Mainly aimed at supporting member clubs.
- **10% discount** on foreign maps and guidebooks ordered through Joss Books.
- **Rockclimbing guidebooks** and other publications available to members at discounted prices online or through the MCI office.
- **Annual indoor climbing competition.** The Irish Bouldering League.
- **Eligibility** for access to Alpine Huts.

Find out more about the benefits of joining MCI at www.mountaineering.ie.

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Mountaineering Council of Ireland

Hot Rock Climbing Wall

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Copy deadline for the Autumn 2008 issue of the Irish Mountain Log is Friday, 1st August, 2008.

PARTICIPATION AND RISK

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



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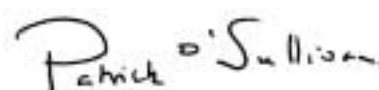
Call for action

I was fortunate enough to be able to attend the MCI's Spring Meet in Glendalough in May (see page 46 for some members' comments on the Meet). Overall, it was a most enjoyable weekend and I was particularly pleased to be able to participate in a 'Leave No Trace' awareness raising session.

While I like to consider myself a responsible user of the great outdoors, it was a privilege to hear experts highlighting the impact we are having on the environment that we cherish so much and to be able to share their enthusiasm for protecting that vulnerable environment. As users of upland areas, we all bear a responsibility to protect the sensitive environment we find there. I would encourage everyone to attend one of these Leave No Trace awareness sessions when you have the opportunity or, better still, to arrange one for your club. I am sure that it will open your eyes to the impact we have on the environment, but it may also increase the enjoyment that you get from your days in the hills.

In a similar vein, we have chosen to highlight the damage being done to upland areas by quad bikes, as we feel that they pose a significant threat to that environment, possibly the greatest threat at this time. The article is also a call for action by MCI members, as we all need to raise this issue with the relevant authorities to ensure that action is taken as soon as possible to prevent further damage to the uplands. This is not just something the MCI can act on alone. You are the MCI and we must all act together on this!

As you can see, we have given the *Irish Mountain Log* a make-over, a fresh new look. We hope that you will like the new look and enjoy the contents.



Patrick O'Sullivan
Editor, *Irish Mountain Log*

ON THE COVER: Howling Ridge, McGillycuddy's Reeks, County Kerry.
Photo: Valerie O'Sullivan.

THIS PAGE: Needles of larch trees turn a beautiful yellow in the autumn beside the spectacular Bugaboo Glacier which flows between Snowpatch Spire and the Hound's Tooth in Bugaboo Provincial Park, British Columbia, Canada.
Photo: Tom Dempsey (www.photoseek.com).

News

Get all the latest news at www.mountaineering.ie

Don't miss these local meetings

Make your input to MCI development plan

During the month of May, MCI staff and Board members took to the roads of Ireland for seven more Area Meetings to get your feedback on the discussion document for the next MCI Strategic Development Plan. Our aim is to have a new plan in place by late 2008, setting out our priorities for 2009-2013. We would like to thank all who took the time to come to the Area Meetings and make their valuable contribution to the future of the national governing body. If you didn't make it to one of the meetings, don't worry; you can still complete the online discussion document: you will find the link to this on the home page of our website, www.mountaineering.ie. If you don't have access to the internet, we can post a copy of the discussion document to you to complete. Simply give us a call in the office on (+353 1) 625 1115.

The next round of Area Meetings will take place in September. Whether you are a club or individual member, this is an opportunity for you to meet the MCI staff and Board, and local clubs in your area, to discuss items of relevance to mountaineering in your region. The meetings will be participative in nature and, in order to make them a success, they will need your active involvement. The meetings will be organised around the

country during September 2008 as follows:

South West Area Meeting

Tuesday 9 September, 8pm Killarney
(venue tbc)

Southern Area Meeting

Wednesday 10 September, 8pm Mallow
(venue tbc)

South Eastern Area Meeting

Thursday 11 September, 8pm Kilkenny city
(venue tbc)

Northern Area Meeting

Tuesday 16 September, 8pm
Kinnego Marina, Oxford Island, Craigavon

Eastern Area Meeting

Wednesday 17 September, 8pm
Sport HQ, Park West Business Park, D 12

North Western Area Meeting

Thursday 18 September, 8pm Sligo town
(venue tbc)

Western Area Meeting

Tuesday 23 September, 8pm Galway city
(venue tbc)

Venues will be announced shortly on the website (check Events section for details), or sign up to our e-zine *Mountaineering Matters* for a monthly update from the MCI by sending your email address to subscribe@mountaineering.ie.

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Buy books online

Did you know that there are now over 35 books and DVDs that you can purchase online from the MCI website at www.mountaineering.ie? Members can get an additional 10% discount off prices by entering the code *promo1* at the checkout.

The latest books to be added include: Carrauntoohil & McGillicuddy's Reeks: A Walker's Guide to Ireland's Highest Mountains; Munster's Mountains: 30 Walking, Scrambling and Climbing Routes; Irish Wild Plants: Myths, Legends & Folklore; Northern Ireland: A Walking Guide; The Fertile Rock: Seasons in the Burren; A Journey to Adventure: Stories I Never Thought I'd Tell; Tom Crean: An Illustrated Life; and An Unsung Hero: Tom Crean, Antarctic Survivor. To see all the titles visit the online shop on our website. **Coming soon:** Climbs in the Burren and Aran Islands; keep your eye on the website to get your copy hot off the press.



An Turas: adventure racing

International adventure race stage held in Ireland

A Turas team negotiates a river.
Photo: Valerie O'Sullivan.



This year, Ireland had the honour of hosting a round of the Adventure Racing World Series, a five-day 650km trial in June, which took the competitors over the mountains of Kerry and Cork from the Sheep's Head peninsula and Schull in the south to the Iveragh mountains and the Dingle peninsula in the north. Thirty teams of four from fifteen countries took part.

Adventure races are based on hill-running, mountain biking and kayaking, but An Turas included some extra refinements, such as swimming, road-cycling, horse-riding, abseiling, climbing, and even, it is rumoured, archery.

These adventure races take place over wild, rough and remote terrain; they vary in length from around 50km (a distance which takes the winner about five hours to complete) to the five days of the Turas. They are normally done (as in the Turas) in teams of four, though some races are for teams of two, and some are solo. The teams of four have to include at least one female. This may sound surprising, but it is well-known that women have more endurance than men, and anecdotes from previous competitions include one of a woman furiously paddling her kayak with three exhausted men draped on it. The mountain experience of men in their thirties and forties may give them an edge over younger competitors.

Before the start, each team is given the coordinates of the check points they have to visit, together with the gear (which they provide themselves) required for each leg. The kayak,

mountain bike or other gear is taken by the organisers to the start of the relevant leg and collected from the end of it.

There are a number of adventure races in Ireland, including an Turas Beag (www.irishadventurechallenge.com), Gaelforce West (www.gaelforcewest.ie) and the Carlingford Adventure Challenge (www.clec.ie). There are also some events run by Adventure Ireland (www.adventureireland.com) and Causeway Coast Adventure Racing (www.causewaycoastar.uk).

Fellow mountaineers; just before you decide to have a go at this new activity, I think you should remember Naismith and his Rule: 5km per hour plus one minute for each 10m of ascent! – (Joss Lynam)

'Underdeveloped'

Film on climbing in Ireland

Underdeveloped is a humble film shot over one year by a bunch of climbers from Belfast. It is a film that shows passion for climbing in Ireland, and perfect lines in beautiful places like Fair Head, the Burren and the Mourne Mountains. It includes extras such as the best problems in the Mournes, Glendalough and Fair Head and extra routes.

Price: €16.50/£13.00 (€15.00/£12.00 MCI members).

IN BRIEF



Scout Jamboree Volunteers Wanted

We are looking for volunteers to operate the MCI stand at the Scout Jamboree at Punchestown Racecourse from 2–10 August 2008.

The stand will be in The Village at the racecourse just south of Naas, Co Kildare, and will need to be manned each evening from 5:00 to 9:00pm. There will be 12,600 Scouts from all over the world attending the jamboree. The stand and materials will be present, so all you will need to do is talk to some enthusiastic young people about mountaineering and the benefits of joining the MCI. Volunteers will receive volunteer expenses and a Berghaus MCI fleece. If you are interested in giving a few hours of your time, please contact stuart@mountaineering.ie. Vetting will be in place for all volunteers.



Lenihan wins Carrauntoohil race for 18th time

John Lenihan leaves Cathair na Féine (Ireland's third highest peak) on the home descent as he heads to victory in the annual Corrán Tuathail Race organised by the Irish Mountain Running Association. He completed the race in a time of one hour, 23 minutes and 46 seconds.

The race starts and finishes near Loch a'Chúis in the Gleancair district of Co Kerry, at the western end of the McGillicuddy's Reeks and the townland of Bréinlí (Breanlee). It follows the "Hydro Road" to Loch Íochtair at the mouth of Com Lothair

before rising to Cathair na Féine and then heading east along the ridge known as An Barra Chaol, to Corrán Tuathail (Carrauntoohil), Ireland's highest peak (behind Lenihan in the left of picture). The race descends by the same route and records the time for the completed journey.

This year, John Lenihan won the race for a remarkable 18th time, at the age of 47. His twenty-year-old record of one hour, 11 minutes and 42 seconds, which he set in 1988, still stands. Comhgáirdeachas, a Sheáin, agus go n'éirí leat! – (Con Moriarty)

Hostel guides

See guide to Independent Holiday Hostels in Ireland on www.hostels-ireland.com, where there are over 100 independent hostels listed all over the country.

See also recently published Independent Hostel Guide 2008, which lists 350 hostels in the UK, 13 in Ireland and 29 in Europe, on www.independenthostelguide.co.uk.



Are you getting the MCI e-zine?

During our travels around the country on the latest round of seven Area Meetings, it came to our attention that a lot of people have not yet signed up for the MCI monthly e-zine, *Mountaineering Matters*. This is our monthly communiqué, sent to all members, which keeps you abreast of events and news. If you have not yet signed up for it, you can either email us your email address or subscribe (or unsubscribe) via the link at the bottom of the home page of our website, www.mountaineering.ie. *Mountaineering Matters* is sent out at the beginning of the month, twelve times a year.



New walks in Monaghan

Launch of Knockatallon looped walks



Launch of the walks
at Knockatallon in June.

Friday, June 13th, saw the official launch of an eagerly awaited set of four looped walks that allow you to explore the bogs and bye-ways of the starkly beautiful Sliabh Beagh hills of north Monaghan.

Here you will find one of the finest examples of blanket bog landscape, an environment that supports some of our most threatened wildlife, including the hen harrier, which has been adopted as the symbol for the looped walks.

The walk distances range from 6-10km, with the Bragan and Rock Walks on quiet roads of the type that have grass growing down the middle of them, that traverse blanket bog and offer great views of the surrounding countryside.

For those who prefer slightly more challenging terrain there are the forest tracks of the Esh Walk or the varied surfaces of the Tra Walk, which includes forest and dirt tracks along with stretches of minor road and blanket bog.

All four walks are well way-marked using colour-coded trail badges and directional arrows that allow you to walk in a clockwise or anti-clockwise direction.

There is a high standard of trail furniture, including interpretative panels, picnic tables and footbridges. A set of walking cards to accompany the routes is available free from the Sliabh Beagh Hotel in Knockatallon (+353) 478 9014. The hotel is the main trailhead for the walks and offers walker-friendly accommodation; it provides a point of contact for the local Knockatallon Rambling Club.

The Knockatallon looped walks are

strategically located in relation to the long-distance Sliabh Beagh Way, the only national route in Northern Ireland that crosses into the Republic. In fact, two of the walks actually share parts of the route through north Monaghan, as the famous Ulster Way is currently being revamped and will now extend into Monaghan, following the line of the Sliabh Beagh Way.

Not everyone has time to tackle long-distance routes, but these looped walks offer a taste of such routes and have the advantage of starting and finishing at one point and being of a distance suitable for a good morning or afternoon's activity.

The development of the walks is part of Blackwater Regional Partnership's Natural Resource Tourism Initiative, funded by the EU INTERREG 111A Programme for Ireland/Northern Ireland, managed for the SEUPB by the ICBAN partnership.

Blackwater Regional Partnership is the official tourism organisation for the River Blackwater area, which traverses the council districts of Armagh, Dungannon and south Tyrone and Monaghan.

This project is the perfect example of partnership-working, with Coillte, Monaghan County Council and the Tydavnet Group Water Scheme all playing their role alongside a very proactive community from the Knockatallon Ramblers and Sliabh Beagh Development. ■

For further information contact Blackwater's project officer Julie-Ann Spence on 048 3756 9104 or visit www.visitblackwaterregion.com.

IN BRIEF

Ring Ouzels: can you help?

The Irish Rare Breeding Birds Panel would be most grateful to receive reports of sightings of Ring Ouzels made between April and September, when these migratory thrushes are present in the uplands. They are now very rare, but there may be some nesting on cliffs or rock-chimneys seldom visited by birdwatchers. While the McGillicuddy's Reeks and Slieve League provided a few records of sightings in 2006, and there were reports from the Nephin Beg range in recent years, no sightings were reported in 2007. We would be delighted if any records of sightings in 2007 were submitted. However, this is primarily an appeal to keep a look-out for these distinctive birds in 2008.

The Ring Ouzel is very easy to identify, being thrush-sized and blackish, with a broad white band across its throat. Females are duller than males, with pale edges to their feathers, giving a scalloped appearance. Please send any records of sightings made in either year to: Dr J Paul Hillis, Irish Rare Breeding Birds Panel, 61 Knocknashee, Goatstown, Dublin 14, tel: (01) 298 6344 (RoI); (+353) 1 298 6344 (NI); email: jphillis@eircom.net.



Walk this Way



New 'Walk Northern Ireland' brochure



Northern Ireland is fortunate to have many beautiful regions, all with their own unique appeal. The new 'Walk Northern Ireland' brochure gives a taste of the vast array of stunning walking routes available. Each county receives its own section, with the walks available in a range of lengths and surroundings. Some walks will be familiar, but a few hidden gems are highlighted.

The publication, which is available free of charge, has been produced by the Countryside Access and Activities Network (CAAN) and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB), with financial support from the Environment and Heritage Service (EHS) and the National Trust. It contains 52 walks, each of which is accredited under the Quality Walks Scheme, meaning that each walk has been assessed on the ground by walkers, for walkers.

By choosing a Quality Walk, walkers can leave home with the knowledge that their selected route is one of the best Northern Ireland has to offer.

A directory in the back of the brochure provides information on over 130 Quality Walks in Northern Ireland. Further information on these is available on CAAN's multi-award-winning walking website, **www.walkni.com**. Keen walkers should check this website regularly as there are new Quality Walks being added every week.

The brochure will be widely available via the Belfast Welcome Centre Tourist Information Centre for Belfast and Northern Ireland and from your local Tourist Information Centre. It can also be ordered online or downloaded from www.walkni.com or **www.discovernorthernireland.com**. – (Chris Scott, Marketing Officer, CAAN)

Breaking down barriers

Facilitating access to the countryside for everyone

Dolores and Phillip Appleby at the launch of *Barriers to Participation*.
Photo: CAAN.

The Countryside Access and Activities Network (CAAN) has launched the findings of a groundbreaking piece of research in Northern Ireland, *Barriers to Participation*, which looked into the barriers which prevent certain groups within the population from accessing and enjoying the countryside to avail of the recreational opportunities there.

CAAN was commissioned to do this research by the Environment and Heritage Service and funded in partnership with Sport Northern Ireland.

The aim of the research was twofold: firstly, to examine the barriers limiting participation in countryside recreation for people with a disability, people from minority ethnic communities and people living within an area of disadvantage, and, secondly, to examine the barriers faced by providers of countryside recreation activities and amenities when working with these communities or groups.

The research resulted in a number of recommendations aimed mainly at policy makers and providers of outdoor recreation, to make them aware of the barriers that a large number of people in Northern Ireland face when trying to access the countryside for recreation. With these recommendations they can try to develop more integrated strategies for facilitating access to the countryside for all. – (Aideen Exley, CAAN, www.countrysiderecreation.com)



Special walks in July

Hiking opportunities for people with physical disabilities

Nathan Kingerlee of Outdoors Ireland (www.outdoorsireland.com) is organising two gentle days of hiking along the Kerry Way especially for people who are visually impaired or deaf, or who have mobility problems. The hikes will take place on Saturday July 19th and Tuesday July 29th 2008. With guidance, it is possible for anyone to explore forest trails, glaciated valleys and mountain paths, and this is one of the best ways of keeping fit and healthy, as well as of experiencing a wonderful sense of wellbeing.

The day's hiking, starting from Killorglin, Co Kerry, will take a leisurely pace through a thick pine forest, along an ancient coach trail and down a quiet country road to the warm sand dunes and crashing surf of Rossbeigh Beach. Qualified guides will accompany the participants throughout the day and share some of the local history and legends with them. The hike is suitable for all levels of ability and walking speed. Four-wheel-drive back-up will be available if anyone decides part-way through the day that they have had enough. Transport will be provided from both Killarney and Killorglin.

For more details, contact Nathan Kingerlee at info@outdoorsireland.com or on +353 (0) 86 860 45 63.

In the Greater Ranges

Two Irish ascents of Everest in late May



John Dowd on the summit.
Photo: Kerry Mountain Rescue.

The sixteenth Irish ascent of Everest was made on May 21st, 2008, by John Dowd, summing on his first attempt. John, a member of Kerry Mountain Rescue Team, has had several notable high-altitude successes in recent years. This was his second eight-thousander; he had climbed Broad Peak in 2006 (see *IML* 82). He arrived home to a hero's welcome at Cork Airport on June 2nd.

Irish climbers Ian Taylor (29) and Graham Kinch (29) also made a bid for Everest, and Ian reached the summit on May 23rd.

Ian and Graham returned to their Base Camp on the Nepali side of Everest on May 25th after ten weeks on the mountain. Kinch had been forced to turn around just above The Balcony at 8,600m, finally giving in to a torn chest muscle that had plagued him for weeks. Taylor went on to reach the summit. In doing so, he became the youngest Irishman and the first Kildareman to stand on the top of the world.

Kinch and Taylor had set themselves the target of climbing four mountains on four continents in one year and raising €85,000 for the Irish charity Fields of Life. They climbed Mt Blanc in June 2007, then Kilimanjaro in September, Aconcagua in January of this year and finally Mt Everest in May.

"We may have completed the climbing side of the project," said Ian, "but we are only half-way through our fundraising. We will spend most of the summer raising funds. People can still donate online at www.everest2008.ie."



Ian Taylor on the summit.
Photo: Fields of Life.

Off to Spiti

Irish expedition wins funding

Four climbers from Dublin have gained backing for their expedition to Spiti in the Himalaya. Gerry Galligan, Darach Ó Murchú, Paul Mitchell and Craig Scarlett won Lowe Alpine's 2008 Irish Expedition Award for their plans to explore and climb in the Debsa valley in the Spiti-Kulu range. The Lowe Alpine Award is made annually to expeditions that extend the boundaries of knowledge and exploration. The Award Committee is chaired by Jim Leonard, designer of many of Lowe Alpine's rucksacks. The Irish India-Himalaya Expedition plans to attempt first ascents of one or more 6,000m peaks in the Spiti region. It is the 50th anniversary of the successful first expedition to this area in 1958, involving an Irish climber, Joss Lynam, and this inspired the team to make their plans. The area has been explored by many Irish mountaineers over the years including Joss, who made the first ascent of Shigri Parbat in 1961, and Paddy O'Leary's team, who climbed Kangla Tarbo in 2000. The present team consulted both Joss and Paddy on planning and logistics and found their advice invaluable. The award was presented at the Irish Banff Mountain Film Festival in Dublin in April by Joe Cotter for Lowe Alpine and Jim Leonard as chairman of the Award Committee.



Children at the new school in Phuleli.
Photo: Mary Solan.



Everest: a new day, a new school

Irish climbers' charity group opens school in Nepal

CHRIS AVISON

Government officials in Nepal have declared that May 29th, the day that the world's highest peak was first climbed in 1953, will be marked as International Mount Everest Day in future.

Earlier this year, Tourism Ministry spokesman Prem Rai said, "The Government has decided to commemorate the historic first ascent. This year will be the first time we celebrate the event and pay our tributes to Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay."

Sir Edmund Hillary died in January this year at the age of 88 and was an honorary citizen of Nepal. "The day will also be an opportunity to promote Nepal's adventure tourism in the international arena," he added. The Nepalese authorities also confirmed that they have renamed the small airport developed by Hillary at Lukla in the Solu Khumbu as the "Hillary-Tenzing Airport." Mountaineers and trekkers regularly use this airport to access the Everest region.

Sir Edmund was patron of the MCI-

supported 1993 Irish Everest Expedition during which Dawson Stelfox became the first Irishman to climb the peak. The climbing team's Nepalese colleagues impressed them with their hard work, good humour and intelligence during the expedition. They decided to spend the residue of the money raised for the expedition on educating some of the Nepalese members of the expedition, including Dhana Khaling Rai. Out of this the Irish Nepalese Educational Trust, or INET, was born, with Dawson Stelfox as its patron.

Wearing his other hat as an architect, Dawson designed a new school in Phuleli, which is Dhana's village high up in the Solu Khumbu. INET organised the fundraising to build this school, with by far the largest donation coming from the students and teachers of Alexandra College Dublin, together with many other donations from other generous people, many of whom are mountaineers themselves. The school was officially opened on March 20th, 2008.

The opening ceremony attracted an enthusiastic local crowd as well as a

large Irish group on a trek organised by Dhana. In his stirring thank-you speech, Dhana said, "We have this beautiful school as the glory of Phuleli now and forever. This is going to support the poor people and their children with better education in the mountainous country in the lap of Mount Everest. We have strong hopes that this will give support to the local children to become successful and responsible personalities in the future for themselves, for the Earth and for human kind."

INET is a registered Irish charity supported by mountaineers and those interested in developing education and community activities in one of the world's most beautiful but least developed countries. Overheads at INET are minimal and everyone involved is a volunteer, with nearly every cent raised being spent in Nepal. A simple website, www.inetireland.ie, was recently set up and has more information about the work of the charity. ■

Chris Avison is a Director of the Irish Nepalese Educational Trust (INET).

MountainSkills

The Mountain Skills Training Scheme is both an informal introduction to mountain training and a formal basis for further training, writes Tim Orr, MCI Training Officer.

Get into training!

Do I need to do all three blocks?

Although the MS scheme is set out in a naturally progressive learning schedule from the initial, very basic introduction to maps right through to the final individual debrief on completion of assessment, there are many different ways that candidates can approach the training according to their needs. You may wish to undertake only part of the training or maybe to complete the two training blocks but not to follow that with the assessment block. Some very experienced candidates may choose to go straight into the assessment block, being able to demonstrate a wealth of experience gained through many years of hillwalking. Whatever approach you would like to follow, the approved training providers will be able to help to guide you into the scheme at a level that will best suit you.



| Photo: Tim Orr.

Who is it for?

The strength of the Mountain Skills (MS) training scheme lies in its adaptability and its ability to be both an informal and a formal training scheme, depending on the needs of the trainee. It should be promoted among the entire mountaineering community, for all levels, for all abilities and for all interests, as a 'foundation' training. Formally, it is a perfect stepping stone to achieving more specific training goals such as leadership qualifications. Its popularity as a user-friendly way of developing a firm foundation for further mountaineering training endeavours has earned it the firm backing of a diverse range of hill users, from Everest summiteers and hardened Alpinists through to Sunday strollers wanting to venture off the beaten track.

How long does it take?

The MS training is generally divided into three blocks: **MS1, MS2 and MS Assessment**. Each of the three blocks is generally run over a two-day period, comprising a mixture of outdoor practical exercises and indoor informal-type lectures. The first two blocks, MS1 and MS2, are seen as the basic training blocks, covering all aspects of hillwalking that the candidate will need to know about to become a self-sufficient hill user. The third block, the MS Assessment, is a consolidation of all of the skills learned in the first two blocks and is structured to allow the candidate to test themselves against a prescribed standard. This standard is the minimum level of experience that is needed to progress to the more formal leadership training of the Mountain Leader Scheme qualification.



Your guide to the foundation training in mountain skills

Who are the approved providers?

There are currently some fifty MCI-approved providers of the Mountain Skills Training scheme. All of these providers are experienced qualified Mountain Leaders who have also completed further training in the specific skills required to teach others in the mountains. The ongoing moderation of these providers by the MCI ensures that all MS courses are delivered at a high standard. The maintenance of these standards presents the candidate seeking a training course with a clearly defined stamp of approval from the national governing body for mountaineering in Ireland. An updated list of approved training providers is available through the MCI office or on the MCI website, www.mountaineering.ie.

Can I book on a course now?

You will find a list of upcoming Mountain Skills training and assessment courses on the MCI website, under the Training and Safety section. Just contact the

| Photo: Tim Orr.



provider listed for each course directly and they will look after you from there on. If you would prefer to organise your own group course at a location and date to suit your needs, you can contact any of the fifty providers listed to see if they can fit in with your dates. The ratio for MS1 and MS2 is one instructor to six candidates, while the MS assessment is run at a ratio of one instructor to four candidates, but sometimes the providers will work with smaller groups.

How much will it cost?

It is up to the individual provider to price their own courses, but you can get a ballpark figure by checking out the current list of upcoming courses on the website. Some providers will also arrange accommodation, food and transport for you, if need be.

Will I get a certificate?

The MS scheme is not a certified qualification and the MCI does not produce certificates upon successful completion of the assessment. However,

many of the providers will be happy to furnish you with a letter of attendance and, in the case of the MS assessment, a letter of completion.

I have never hillwalked before. Will the MS1 be too much for me?

Although the MS1 is pitched at quite a basic level, it should not be approached as an opportunity to discover if you will enjoy the hills or not. It is recommended that candidates booking onto the scheme should already have had some experience. This “try out hillwalking” experience may be gained in a number of ways including by:

- Joining one of over 130 MCI affiliated clubs (see the list on the website);
- Starting out with some low-level walking on easy paths with friends and family;
- Taking part in one of the many walking festivals throughout Ireland;
- Attending an ‘introduction to hillwalking’ course with one of the approved providers;
- Attending one of the MCI’s quarterly meets. ■



*Lazing on a sunny afternoon.
On the coastal walk from Port to
Maghera Strand, Co Donegal.
Photo: Ciaran Connor.*

IMRA News

Get all the latest news at www.mountainrescue.ie



Search and rescue dog trials

Paul Whiting goes to see a SARDA assessment



Dog and handler locate 'body' in SARDA rescue dog trial.
Photo: IMRA.

The **Search and Rescue Dog Association of Ireland (SARDA)** is one of the twelve member teams of the Irish Mountain Rescue Association (IMRA). SARDA currently has about 12 dogs in training to provide search services. It has been shown that one trained dog can cover an area that would take 50 people to search in the same time.

Search and rescue dogs are assessed twice a year. To remain on the callout list, a dog and its handler must pass both assessment weekends. These assessments consist of up to six trial searches over three days, with a dog team generally having two trials per day. One of three results is given to a dog team: pass, fail or pass with reservation. For a dog team to pass the assessment, it must score a pass on four out of six trials.

A trial consists of a 'mock' search. Before the trial, the assessors will have

placed volunteers strategically to act as 'bodies' in the trial search. When I say "strategically," the body locations are chosen so that the only way you can see one is if you are literally standing on top of it. There may be between one and three bodies in a search area, which will be 1,000-1,500 metres long by 500-750 metres wide. The area is selected so that it should take a competent team about 90 minutes to search it.

I had the opportunity to act as a body one weekend and I have to admit it was one of the most relaxing things I'd ever done. The kind folks in SARDA provide you with a hiking mat, a sleeping bag to keep you warm and a bivy bag to keep you dry. You can read, listen to your MP3 player, sleep, meditate or just take in the beauty of your surroundings. I've done quite a bit of hillwalking all over Ireland and bodying for SARDA was a very different way of spending time outdoors.

You have time to listen to the sound of flowing water in a nearby stream, watch birds flying in a valley below you or watch deer pass, all as you are waiting for the dog team to find you. I highly recommend it!

Over the weekend of May 16-18th, SARDA Ireland held its first assessment for 2008 in Glendalough. The assessment was for six of the twelve dog teams currently in training. Three of the teams came from Galway, one from Clare and the other two from Munster.

The assessment is carried out by external assessors from SARDA organisations in neighbouring regions. On this occasion they came from **SARDA England North, SARDA Wales North and SARDA Ireland North.**

The assessment weekend is tough for all concerned. The handlers and assessors are under pressure as all their hard work is at stake. The assessors, being handlers themselves, know how much work the handlers have put in and they don't want to fail anyone. However, the assessors can and do fail teams if they feel that a dog team could not be relied upon in the event of a real search.

At the end of the weekend, two of the six teams had passed and are now on the callout list for mountain rescue teams and An Garda Síochána in the event of a missing person search. Congratulations to **Mick Grant and his dog Bono** for passing their assessment and to new dog team **Caitriona Lucas and her dog Zack** for passing their first assessment.

Our thanks to all those who volunteered to be bodies during the assessment, to the assessors who travelled here, and to **Mountain Ventures Hostel**, Donard, Co Wicklow (www.mountainventures.ie), for their hospitality.

For more information about search and rescue dogs, visit www.sardaireland.com. If you would like to 'body' for SARDA, please contact Liz Alderton (acting PRO), 087-760 7695, info@dogbootsactive.com.

Charity walk raises €20,000

Gardai walk Wicklow Way in four-day fundraiser



Members of An Garda Síochána Hillwalking and Canoeing Club on their Wicklow Way 2008 fundraising walk.

The An Garda Síochána Hillwalking & Canoeing Club have raised almost €20,000 in a sponsored walk to aid the Laura Lynn Children's Hospice Foundation and IMRA. Approximately thirty walkers from the club walked the Wicklow Way, starting in Clonegal, Co Carlow, on Monday, May 5th, and finishing in Bushy Park, Terenure, Dublin, on May 8th, 2008. The walkers were blessed with good weather and had a fantastic time, although there were many sore feet, legs and blisters to be nursed afterwards. The logistics and back-up were impressive, with members of the Traffic Corps taking time off to drive the support vehicles. Anne Geraghty, a member of the public, donated her time to help organise the event. The organisers would like to thank all the donors and companies who supported the club in running this fundraiser. The Laura Lynn Hospice Foundation and IMRA are extremely grateful to the AGS Hillwalking & Canoeing Club for their hard work in raising the money to support their charitable work and look forward to this becoming an annual event.



Members of An Garda Síochána show off their new Berghaus kit at the start of the walk in Clonegal, Co Carlow.

IN BRIEF

Support mountain rescue

If you would like to make a donation to support the Irish Mountain Rescue Association (Registered Charity CHY 10412), the details of our fundraising accounts are:

Republic of Ireland

Bank:

Allied Irish Bank
(Killorglin, Co Kerry branch)

Sort Code:

93-63-40

Account Number:

27101-264

Account Name:

Irish Mountain Rescue Association

Northern Ireland

Bank:

First Trust Bank
(31-35 High Street, Belfast BT1 2AL)

Sort Code:

93-80-92

Account Number:

10557-148

Account Name:

Irish Mountain Rescue Association

All monies received go directly to the benefit of the teams. We are very grateful for any and all support that we receive.

For more information about mountain rescue in Ireland, please visit www.mountainrescue.ie.

Support the rescue teams

Run a marathon or collect Lyons' Tea tokens

Lyon's charity giveaway

Lyons' Tea has launched a programme to donate €10,000 to a different worthy charity each month (see www.lyonscharitygiveaway.ie). IMRA asks readers of the *Irish Mountain Log* to send tokens from boxes of Lyons' Tea Bags and Loose Tea to IMRA so that it can have the opportunity to win one of these grants for the support of mountain rescue teams. Please send tokens to: IMRA, Sport HQ, 13 Joyce Way, Park West Business Park, Dublin 12.

2008 Dublin City Marathon

IMRA asks readers who are planning to run in the 2008 Dublin City Marathon to use it as an opportunity to raise money for IMRA teams. When you send in your registration form and fee to run the marathon with IMRA, we'll send you a sponsorship card and t-shirt. To find out more, contact: Development Officer, Paul Whiting, (023) 59822, dev-officer@mountainrescue.ie, or imra.dev.officer@gmail.com.



Tim Clesham, Chair of SARDA Ireland, presents Caitriona Lucas with the prized 'Mountain Rescue Dog' tag for her dog Zack's collar.

Subscribe to Call Out magazine

IMRA's national magazine *Call Out* is now published quarterly and is available on subscription. We hope that hillwalkers and climbers will take out a subscription to keep abreast of what is happening in mountain rescue and as a way of showing support for all the volunteers who remain in constant readiness for assisting casualties in the hills.

Rescue callouts

January-March 2008

Team	Number
Donegal	5
Dublin Wicklow	7
Galway	1
Glen of Imaal	6
Kerry	7
Mayo	2
Mourne	2
North West	11
SARDA	2
SEMRA	5
Sligo Leitrim	2
Tramore	5
PSNI	9
Total	64

Note: These data are provisional. They are an estimate of the number of incidents handled by Irish Mountain Rescue teams in the first quarter of 2008 and include PSNI team callouts. The reader should not draw any conclusions from this table in regards to a team's ability, the terrain a team covers, or the ability of the walkers/climbers in that area. Information is seasonal and will vary from quarter to quarter.

Write about your rescue

If you've had an IMRA mountain rescue team come to your assistance, would you consider writing about it? We'd love to hear about how we made a difference to you. We'd also like your permission to print either your full article or excerpts from your article in our annual report or in our quarterly magazine *Call Out*.

Climb every mountain

Adrian Hendroff ascends all of Ireland's 2,000-footers.



The 'Matterhorn' of Ireland.
Mullaghanattin, in the Reeks, Co Kerry.
Photo: Adrian Hendroff.

Time seemed to stand still, when the summit cairn on Croaghgorm finally appeared out of the mist and I took my last steps towards it. As I stood on the top on that cold November day, a gust of wind momentarily chilled me, as a flood of emotions rushed through me. Tears of joy and sadness welled up in my eyes. I had done it! This was to be my final, and 212th, Irish mountain over two thousand feet.¹ And I now stood on its summit.

It is not possible to describe in minute detail my ascents of all the Irish mountains over two thousand feet one at a time, in a single write-up, and my intention is not to inundate readers with lists of dates and records of individual ascents, but rather to reveal the highlights of my journey.

All journeys have their beginnings and mine began with an idea that arose one fateful day in 2002, while

descending towards Hare's Gap in the Mourne. We had just climbed Slieve Bearnagh and a friend I was with suggested 'why not do them all?' And so I decided to give it a go. While Slieve Bearnagh wasn't my first Irish mountain, it was the catalyst for future ambitions. I had done a scattering of Wicklow hills before that, Tonelagee being the first. Little did I realise it then, but that defining moment on Slieve Bearnagh was to shape the next four years of my life, culminating in my ascent of Croaghgorm in November 2006.

Indeed, four years of my life with many weekends of packing the night before, leaving immediately after work and driving hundreds of miles in the dark of night or of waking at the crack of dawn and doing likewise, just to be at the bottom of a mountain. All this then followed by many hours of uninterrupted walking, topped off by a late return, driving the hundreds of miles back to Dublin.

Weekdays were spent devouring Paddy Dillon's book, *The Mountains of Ireland*,² and various other relevant guidebooks, plotting routes using OSI

1. There are many lists of Irish mountain tops available, both in feet and metres, but the Long Distance Walkers' Association (LDWA) accepts any of the following published lists: Vandeleur & Lynam (1950s), Wall (1980s), Dillon (1992), Lynam (1990s), Clements (1997) and Edmondson (2005). There is also a website managed by Simon Stewart, <http://mountainviews.ie>, which has a database of 400m to 600m+ mountains in Ireland.

2. *The Mountains of Ireland*, by Paddy Dillon, Cicerone Press (1992), classifies mountains by area: east (36), south (26), southwest (81), west (37) and north (32).

*'Still south I went and west and south again,
Through Wicklow from the morning till the night,
And far from cities, and the sights of men,
Lived with the sunshine, and the moon's delight.'*

John Millington Synge

A Mayo sunset, seen from the Bangor Trail, makes it all worthwhile after a long day summiting Slieve Carr.
Photo: Adrian Hendroff.

and OSNI maps, and digging up information on accommodation and access. I never missed the RTE weather forecast at the end of the nine o'clock news; so much so that my wife labelled me as "The Weather Man." You might ask whether I was mad, but I kept going, following the same routine, week after week, year after year. Was I insane? Was it an obsession to finish what I had started? Or was there something that I found in the Irish mountains that simply gave me no choice but to return, week after week? As I look back here, I will attempt to answer some of these questions and I hope in some way inspire you to embark on your own journey of exploration in these beloved mountains.

Looking back now, I have certainly enjoyed the years spent exploring the mountains of Ireland. Most of the mountains offer a greater sense of solitude than the ones in Wales or England. In Ireland, you can often walk for miles in the mountains without meeting anyone and, when alone, I would enjoy the peace of the surrounding hills and admire them in this splendid isolation. The high places of the Emerald Isle are blessed with scenery to captivate anybody; anyone would be enchanted by the changing array of colours as clouds rolled across these beautiful wild

landscapes, frequently with a backdrop of the vast expanse of the Atlantic in the west and the waters of the Irish Sea in the east. Where else better to leave behind the worries of everyday life? From the wild boglands of north Mayo to the rugged wilderness of the Caha Mountains, spiced up with the rocky landscapes of the Twelve Bens and Maamturks, Ireland's upper regions have more to offer than one could possibly imagine.

I will never forget the day I completed the Cloon Horseshoe. When done from the north, this is a walk of epic proportions and magnificent scenery. Mullaghanattin, a Matterhorn-like shaped peak with superb views, is a good enough reason to attempt it, but in reality it offers much more. Encompassing 10 tops over 2,000 feet, it forms a challenging high-level circuit around the glittering waters of Cloon Lough and the smaller Lough Reagh. This walk has everything: ridges, peaks, valleys, lakes, rivers, bog and, if you're lucky enough to do it on a clear day, spectacular moonscape views of several lakes trapped on rock shelves in the sheer walls at the back of the coum above Lough Reagh. What's more, when I did it, there was not a soul to be seen.

The word "soul" is an interesting

hillwalking ◀

Mweelrea, seen from Benchoona, Co Mayo.
Photo: Adrian Hendroff.



Fabulous Glenade countryside seen from a gap near Eagle's Rock, Co Leitrim.
Photo: Adrian Hendroff.



A lake nestles above the back wall of Lough Reagh coum on the Cloon Horseshoe, Co Kerry.
Photo: Adrian Hendroff.



Mountain scenery of quartzite as seen from Benbaun in the Twelve Bens, Co Galway.
Photo: Adrian Hendroff.

one. The Chambers dictionary describes it as “the spiritual, non-physical part of someone which is often regarded as the source of individuality, personality, morality, will, emotions and intellect, and which is widely believed to survive in some form after the death of the body.” It also describes it as “the essential nature or an energising or motivating force.” Ireland’s mountains are places for the living soul. There are many secret places in the mountains of Ireland where the soul of man can connect strongly with the soul of nature, places that make you wish you could remain there in an angelic state long after you die. One such place is the remote col at Maumina in the heart of the Twelve Bens in Connemara, surrounded by a fortress of peaks in all directions. Another is Loch Mam Ochoige, a lovely lake situated in a delightful location just above a col deep in the

Maamturks. I will say nothing more. Plan a visit, do not delay!

There is a saying that goes something like: “In order to look to the future we must understand our past.” As I walked in the mountains, I realised I was making a journey back in time. A time that was rich in history, myths and tradition. My boots took me down ancient pilgrim routes, past burial sites, mass stones and deserted villages, and along old miners’ tracks. On two occasions, I followed closely in the footsteps of the saints. On the steep scree slope leading to the summit of Croagh Patrick, I imagined St Patrick

ascending in his bare feet. And atop the majestic ridge high on Brandon, I realised why St Brendan the Navigator fell in love with his namesake mountain. These mountains boast commanding views and would instil in anyone an astounding sense of peace; Croagh Patrick with its remarkable views of Clew Bay, and Mount Brandon with its mystical paternoster lakes, stunning ridges, sheer cliffs and views over the Atlantic.

If you asked me what kept me going, ticking these tops off till the very end, I would say that there was never a dull moment. First, there

“There are many secret places in the mountains where the soul can connect with nature.”



Croaghnaun as seen from Slievemore, Achill Island, Co Mayo.
Photo: Adrian Hendroff.

Lough Currane and Ballinskelligs Bay as seen from the west ridge of Coomcallee, Co Kerry.
Photo: Adrian Hendroff.

were the “classic must-dos.” The highest tops in the four provinces: Carrauntoohil, highest in Munster and all of Ireland; Mweelrea, highest in Connacht; Slieve Donard, Ulster’s highest; and Lugnaquilla, highest in Leinster.

Secondly, there were the “essential must-dos,” ones you simply could not afford to miss. I would place the sensational Reeks ridge, the majestic Croaghnaun, the vertigo-inducing Coumloughra horseshoe, the amphitheatrical Coumshingaun, the magnificent Glencoaghan horseshoe, the oratorical Errigal and the lofty Galtymore in this category.

Then there were the ones which their given name begged you to climb them. For example: Dooish, Muckish, Cnoc na Péiste (Hill of the Serpent), The Big Gun, Devilsmother and Hungry Hill.

Last but not least, there were the ones on which you came across something unexpected. For example, en route up Coomnadiha from the track starting from the waterfall at the end of Glaninchiquin, you will

eventually come to a stile, as you near Cummeenadillure Lough. Stiles are not commonplace in the Irish mountains, but this stile has an unusual feature that would distinguish it from all other stiles in Ireland. Not only does it have a comfortable slide for walkers to get over a lowered portion of the fence, but it also has a flap, which opens on the bottom right, with a sign that says “Dog Pass”!

Many Irish mountains also possess romantic associations with myths and legends, which would leave you forever curious if you didn’t climb them to find out what the fuss was about. For example, in the Galtees, as I ascended alone up the steep grassy slopes towards O’Loughnan’s Castle, I could not help but reflect on what I had read on a signboard at the start of the walk. At the base of the impressive cliffs guarding O’Loughnan’s Castle sits the lovely Lake Muskry. Legend suggests that this lake was once home to 150 maidens who were transformed into birds every other year. One maiden



A view of Killary fjord is the reward from the slopes of Devilsmother, Co Galway.
Photo: Adrian Hendroff.





Maumahoge col in the Maamturks, Co Galway. Photo: Adrian Hendroff.

became the most beautiful bird in the world and, to mark this, she wore a golden necklace with a sparkling jewel at the end. The local name of the lake, Lough Beal Sead – the lake with the jewel mouth – derives its name from this legend.

The mountains on the Dingle peninsula are rich with folklore legends as well. The walk on the “green road” along Anascaul Glen is pleasantly decorated by a series of cascading waterfalls and lovely streams with mighty cliffs on both sides. Here ensued a battle between the legendary Cuchulainn and a giant who was said to have taken his love, Scal ni Mhurnain, away. Legend goes, raging Cuchulainn and the mighty giant hurled fire-boulders from the top of either side of these cliffs. At the end, Cuchulainn was struck by one of these fiery boulders and he let out a loud groan. Scal, thinking him killed, drowned herself in the lake.

Leaving the attractions of the natural beauty of the mountains and

the mythical romance often associated with them, I must warn you that setting out to ascend all of Ireland's two-thousand footers is not all joy. There are the bog trots. Miles and miles of tramping on uneven boggy ground littered with hidden holes of different shapes and sizes. You'll find plenty of these in Mayo and Wicklow, for example. Then there is also the changeable weather: you should arm yourself with enough skills to cope with unexpected battles with the elements. For instance, on a clear sunny day high on the slopes of Benoskee on the Dingle peninsula, my wife Una and I were enjoying a straightforward trudge up to the summit. Suddenly, howling gusts of wind blew without warning, such that we couldn't hear our voices. The wind strengthened, became more persistent and at one stage even lifted Una off her feet. We crouched down low, and she had to crawl on all fours for part of the way to the summit cairn.

I still have vivid memories of how difficult it was to get to the finish line. I still feel the astral remoteness of the north Mayo hills in my bones but, more profoundly, I also feel its immense beauty in the depths of my heart. A cumulative distance of approximately 87km was required in five separate days to collect just six tops. One of these, Slieve Carr, is a beast of a mountain, accessible only

by walking a long distance on the Bangor Trail. The others – mystical Birreencorragh, mighty Nephin Beg, magical Corranbinnia's sharp serrated rocky ridge connecting its two tops and misty Glenamong – were just as hard and sometimes as soul destroying, but ultimately their ascents were rewarding. Finally it was over to Donegal, to the Bluestacks, to Croaghgorm, and then there were none left.

As I collected my thoughts for this article, it felt as if a mystical vortex was propelling me into a time-warp and I found myself embedded in the landscape, as if magical doors had opened up on the summit cairns themselves, allowing me to enter once again into the realms of these spellbinding places. The sensation was so real, so tangible, but then in this mysterious land of leprechauns, nothing is impossible. I am sure that the same desire that took me to all of these mountain tops the first time will, without doubt, bring me back to many of them again. ■

Adrian Hendroff is an MCI member and enjoys hillwalking and mountaineering. Besides the Irish hills, he has climbed in England, Wales and Scotland. His mountain travels have taken him to Iceland, Romania, the French Alps, the Pyrenees and the Dolomites.

“I still feel the astral remoteness of the north Mayo hills in my bones.”

On Bugaboo Spire

Gerry Galligan tackles a peak
in British Columbia.

Snowpatch Spire and Bugaboo Spire (10,420ft)
loom behind the Konrad Kain ACC hut.
Photo: Tom Dempsey (www.photoseek.com).

By Canadian standards, the Bugaboos are a relatively small and compact area of granite mountains lying to the west of the Rockies in British Columbia. Although geographically mountains, it would be more apt to describe them as a series of imposing granite towers and spires thrusting dramatically skywards from a glaciated land mass. They are a world renowned centre for alpine rock climbing.

The name Bugaboo is believed to originate from mining parlance,

meaning a seam that yields little or no wealth.

Our expedition to this wonderful area was to be based at the Konrad Kain Alpine Club of Canada (ACC) hut, which sits upon a promontory overlooking the spectacular Bugaboo glacier. The hut is named after the Austrian guide Konrad Kain who emigrated to Canada in the early years of the twentieth century and, in his short life, became one of the founding fathers of Canadian mountaineering. We hoped to follow in his footsteps by climbing the route which bears his name, the Kain route on Bugaboo Spire.

Our approach to the hut was by way of a long, meandering 38km forestry road from the community of

Briscoe, situated in the Columbia River valley. The route proved to be relatively easy to follow and we duly arrived at the parking lot without much trouble. The climbers' guidebook advises car owners to surround their vehicles with chicken wire so as to protect their vehicles from the packrats, who like to chew the brake linings! Some time was therefore spent on anti-rodent protection measures.

The hike from the parking lot to the hut is about two hours by way of a reasonable mountain path. Due to the very hot weather, we decided to abandon our sleeping bags and other non-essentials and travel as lightly as we possibly could. The walk up to the hut proved enjoyable and,



through the trees, we glimpsed our first views of the granite spires and glaciers, a truly dramatic landscape. This approach heightened our enthusiasm for the attempt on Bugaboo Spire the next day.

We reached the hut within the predicted two hours. Most people were still out on the mountains, so we settled in for a quiet afternoon, relaxing and enjoying the surrounding views. The ACC hut was very well equipped with a kitchen and dining area, and sleeping platforms upstairs, and was an excellent base from which to explore the area. The view from the hut of the glaciers, spires and towers was quite breathtaking. The hut is situated just above the tree line and

below the terminal moraine of the glacier, which leads up to the great ramparts of Snowpatch Spire and the couloir approach, which would give access to Bugaboo Spire.

Bugaboo Spire itself can easily be seen from the hut, the Kain route profiled against the skyline and the famous gendarme clearly seen just below the summit. Thus the scene was set; an early night was proposed and a 5:00am start agreed for the following day.

We set off as intended in the first light of dawn; crampons were put on at the foot of the glacier and we made our way up below the great brooding cliffs of Snowpatch Spire, keeping at a discreet distance in order to avoid any rockfall potential.

We soon reached the foot of the couloir and met a four-man Canadian team, who were also based at the hut. After some social exchanges, we roped up and proceeded to climb the couloir to the col, crossing a bergschrund at about mid-height. We reached the col in about thirty minutes to be welcomed by a magnificent view across the Upper Vowell glacier. Pigeon Spire and the distant Howser Towers were all visible in the early morning light.

At the col, we were greeted by another two Canadian climbers, whom we had met at the hut the previous evening. Mike and Joe were also intending to climb Bugaboo Spire that day. They told us of an earlier attempt they had made which ended in defeat due to deteriorating weather. Weather conditions today looked much more promising, so we set off in an optimistic and determined mood. From the col the route is mainly scrambling on generally sound granite. The climbing becomes more interesting as height is gained. After about an hour we moved right along a ledge to belay below a two-tier chimney.

The climb now began to take on a more serious aspect. Rob led confidently up the first chimney to be followed by Jim and lastly by me. I took my turn to lead on the second chimney pitch, which led steeply to the crest of the ridge. Mike and Joe brought up the rear. A real camaraderie was building up between the two teams as the climb progressed and it would prove to be a memorable day. After the two-tier chimney, the climbing continued more easily along the well defined ridge crest, quite narrow in places. This situation afforded some splendid photographs and video footage of the surrounding spires and glaciers.

The famous gendarme crux suddenly loomed up ahead. It stood guardian on the crest of the ridge as a barrier to the summit which lay tantalisingly close above. It would prove to be the *pièce de résistance*. The flanks of the ridge on either side of the gendarme stretched endlessly below to the glaciers; a spot for sober reflection. I was very keen to lead this pitch and the others were happy to follow. Mike and Joe requested that they might join our rope and to this we were happy to agree, so the dye was cast. After sorting the rock gear out, I led off up the steep flank of the gendarme, holds and



The Howser Towers (11,150ft)
reflected in a mountain tarn.
Photo: Tom Dempsey
(www.photoseek.com).

protection always just available. I inched my way up until I crossed the exposed crest and disappeared from sight of the others. After a few minutes, I called out "I'm safe," to the relief of the others. In turn, the others then climbed the gendarme and relished the exposure as they traversed the crux slab.

The video and photo opportunities were taken, a truly spectacular backdrop with the lower ridge and Snowpatch Spire in the background; a moment to be savoured and enjoyed. After one further pitch, the summit yielded and we all gathered atop this lofty point to congratulate each other and celebrate the achievement. For Mike and Joe it was a special moment and laid to rest the ghost of their previous failed attempt. The views from the summit were breathtaking and we lingered awhile to absorb the beauty of this wild mountain scene. Photographs taken, thoughts expressed and shared, a special moment savoured and then time to say farewell and start the long descent.

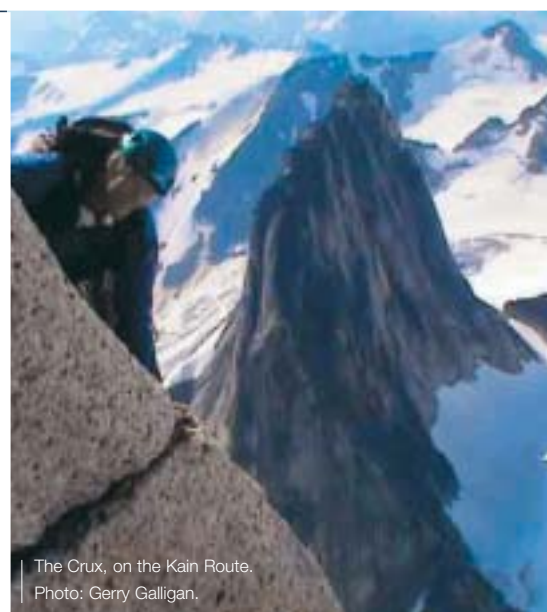
A short abseil from the summit brought us to the ramp above the gendarme. With two ropes we were able to operate a relay system. Rob went down first, carrying the spare rope in order to set up the second abseil, while we followed. The abseil from the top of the gendarme



Au Cheval, on the Kain Route.
Photo: Gerry Galligan.



The Gendarme.
Photo: Gerry Galligan.

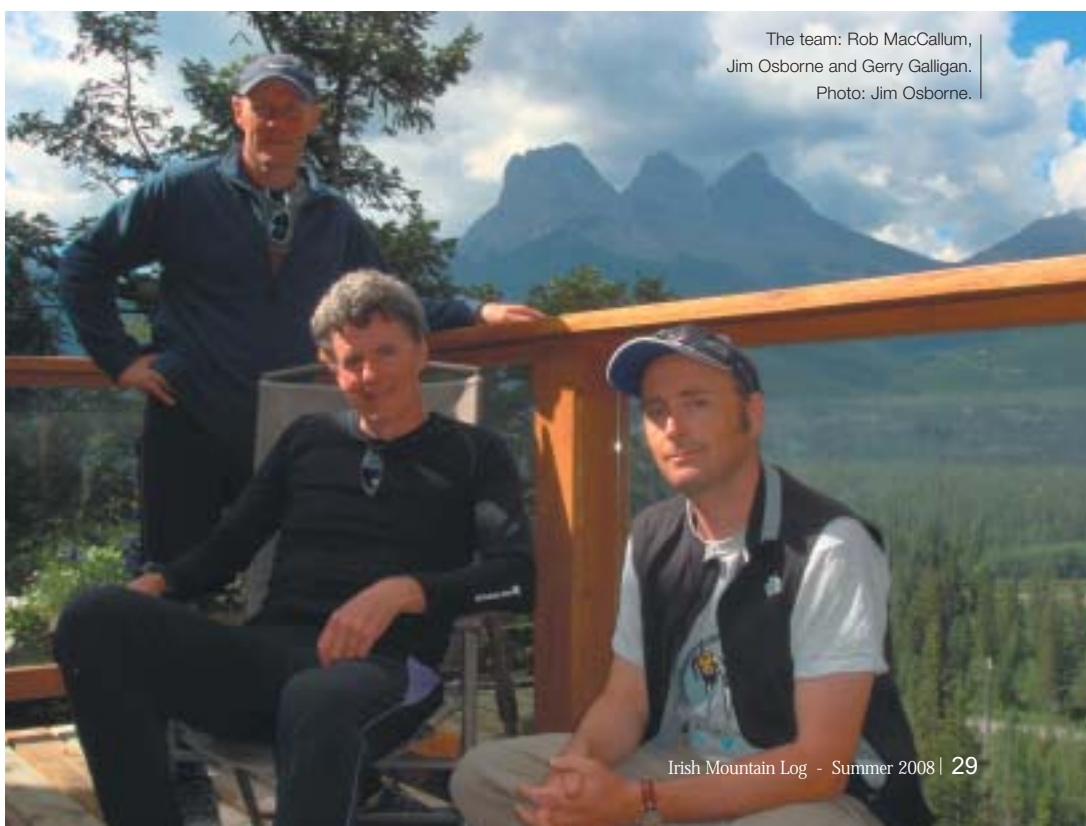


The Crux, on the Kain Route.
Photo: Gerry Galligan.

With the summit now tantalisingly close, we faced the pièce de résistance, the famous gendarme. We relished the exposure as we traversed the crux slab.

provided a magnificent descent and the backdrop, a 2,000-foot rock face falling to the glacier below, was very impressive. Each abseil was set up methodically as our team of five gradually moved down the mountain. As we descended down the two-tier chimney, the going became easier and we unroped and moved more freely down the lower part of the ridge to the col. Mike and Joe made their own way down and rested while we continued down the couloir and across the glacier back to the hut, well satisfied with the success of the climb and the rich experiences that we had enjoyed. ■

Gerry Galligan is a member of the Irish Mountaineering Club. He enjoys rock, ice and alpine climbing anywhere.



The team: Rob MacCallum,
Jim Osborne and Gerry Galligan.
Photo: Jim Osborne.

Quads and scramblers between Table Mountain and Lobawn, Co Wicklow.
Photo: Helen Lawless.

Biker blitz

The use of quads, essentially motorcycles on four wheels, is now widespread in Ireland. Initially, these all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) were used primarily for work purposes. Land managers such as farmers and rangers used them to traverse land. But as affluence has increased, the recreational use of scramblers and other off-road vehicles in forest and upland areas has escalated, causing increasing problems. Aodhnait Carroll and the MCI Access & Conservation Committee report.



Quad and motorbike damage on Lugnaquilla (southwest face), Co Wicklow.
Photo: Ted McGrath.

Due to the lack of protection for sensitive upland environments, and failure to enforce existing legislation, we are currently witnessing the degradation of many forest and upland areas under the wheels of ATVs.

The unregulated use of off-road vehicles has led to worrying levels of damage. Many ATVs come equipped with deep tyre treads, enabling them to navigate rocky, muddy and root-covered terrain. The treads create deep cuts in the ground, leading to draining of boggy areas, erosion of soil and increased sedimentation in streams at crossings.

When quads are used in a professional capacity, their operators are often trained in how to drive the vehicles safely and cause the least amount of damage to the environment they are used in. This is invariably not the case with recreational users. A common appearance now on Ireland's more accessible mountain tops are circular skid marks or 'doughnuts'

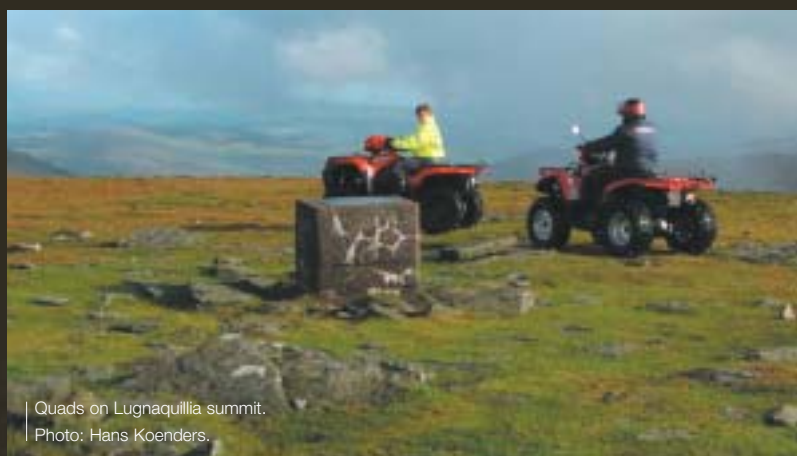
caused by quads and scramblers driving around in circles at speed and spinning their tyres. This is a wholly unnecessary practice that does nothing but vandalise the natural terrain as well as producing eyesores for other upland users.

The law currently states that if off-road vehicles, including quads, are used on public roads, they must adhere to the Road Traffic Act of 1968; this requires that they be operated by individuals holding a valid driver's licence and that the vehicle itself must be licensed and insured. However, when the vehicles are used on private property, the legal stipulations no longer apply. Also, there is no legislation regulating the off-road use of ATVs by children, even though there is clear evidence showing that children in Ireland under twelve years of age lack the physical or mental capacity to operate even the smaller ATV models safely (Curran & O'Leary, *Irish Medical Journal*, 2008).

In their paper, Drs Curran and O'Leary reported that doctors in Accident and Emergency Departments are seeing a significant number of injuries in children under 16 years following accidents involving the use of off-road vehicles. These children were all wearing protective clothing, including helmets, but they still sustained injuries, some of them serious, after being thrown from their bikes. The doctors concluded that children under 12 years of age lacked the physical size and strength, cognitive abilities, motor skills and perception to safely operate ATVs. They also found that many children had been killed or seriously injured in other countries while using ATVs. In the United States, between 1982 and 2005, there have been 7,188 reports of ATV-related deaths and 30 per cent (2,178) of these deaths were in children under 16.



Quad ruts on Keadeen, Co Wicklow.
Photo: Helen Lawless.



Quads on Lugnaquilla summit.
Photo: Hans Koenders.

legislation, including restrictions on recreational use of off-road vehicles in Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). The NPWS conservation rangers carry out monitoring and enforcement work in these protected areas, which cover much of the uplands throughout Ireland. The NPWS also owns and manages nature reserves and national parks, and recreational off-road vehicle use is not permitted in these areas.

Incidents of unauthorised off-road vehicle use can be reported to the local conservation ranger, whose

Can it be stopped?

Under the EU Habitats Directive, it is against the law to damage an area that has been designated a Special Area of Conservation. The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) is responsible for the implementation of wildlife and conservation

contact details are in the telephone directory under the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and on www.npws.ie.

In the Wicklow Mountains National Park, there is ranger cover 365 days per year, contactable by calling 087-980 3899.

We, as walkers and climbers, are in a perfect position to provide the NPWS with valuable information on when, where and how quad and other ATV users gain access to the hillsides and cause damage to the environment.

An integral part to putting an end to the use of the uplands for off-road vehicular recreation is the provision of dedicated areas. These areas would



Quad ruts on Keadeen,
Co Wicklow.
Photo: Aodhnait Carroll.



Quad tracks on Slievemaan,
Co Wicklow.
Photo: Helen Lawless.

have to offer similar thrills to those experienced by ATV users in the protected uplands if they were to be an effective option.

Coillte Teoranta, Ireland's largest forestry company, has taken this into account in creating a policy for managing off-road vehicles on its lands. Coillte's policy regarding off-road motorised vehicles is dealt with in Section 15 of its *Recreation Policy: Healthy Forests, Healthy Nation*, available as a download on www.coillte.ie.

However, a policy position alone will not manage the issue and Coillte, as a manager, is attempting to deal with the problem in a number of different ways:

Bye-laws

Coillte has produced a set of bye-laws covering off-road vehicles. These are awaiting implementation and will be part of the process in dealing with the issue.

Pilot project

Coillte is leading a pilot project

(through the Dublin Mountains Partnership and funded by Comhairle na Tuaithe) to develop a designated scrambler bike facility in the Dublin Mountains/North Wicklow area. This project will seek to engage with scrambler bikers through a formal structure and will include building a trail system and developing an organised club structure, to encourage biker training and improved behaviour.

Physical blockages

Coillte forest managers across the country work continuously to limit access to and through Coillte lands, particularly for quads. This can be as simple as using rocks, fencing and gates to prevent access. However, with such a large land holding, this can be difficult to manage.

The MCI's Environmental Policy states that the off-road use of vehicles is severely detrimental to the upland environment. We believe that the recreational use of vehicles on open uplands should be prohibited. This is

What you can do

MCI encourages its members and other concerned individuals to:

- Contact NPWS conservation rangers when unauthorised off-road vehicles are witnessed in protected areas.
- Contact the Department of the Environment when such vehicles are witnessed causing damage to national monuments, documented or otherwise.
- Assist the MCI in the gathering of information about where the damaged areas are, and particularly how ATVs are accessing those areas.
- Write letters to the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, and local TDs, calling for bye-laws to be put in place and enforced.
- Write letters to the Minister for Transport requesting that legislation be passed stating that ATV operators must hold a driver's licence and that the vehicle must be insured when it is used on private land (not owned by the operator) or on public land.
- Bring the issue to the attention of local and national media.



Quads and scramblers on the Zig-Zags, Glenmalur, Co Wicklow.
Photo: Helen Lawless.

best done by use of effective barriers on hill and forest tracks, user education and appropriate bye-laws.

Bye-laws have been enacted to protect damaged areas against unauthorised off-road vehicle use in both the Cooley Mountains, Co Louth, and the Ballyremon Commons, Calary, Co Wicklow. As these areas are not listed as Special Areas of Conservation and do not receive the protection afforded by that designation, the bye-laws make it an offence to drive an ATV in areas specifically defined. These laws enable An Garda Síochána to prosecute individuals who use quads or scramblers in these protected areas.

The MCI recognises that, in the absence of means to fully implement and enforce the national habitat regulations and local government bye-laws nationally, the laws will have limited effect. The provision of dedicated sites for quads and scramblers would take pressure off sensitive landscapes.

The MCI will liaise with the relevant user groups, encouraging them to promote responsible use among their members, and will support their efforts to secure appropriate areas dedicated for their activities. ■

Quads and scramblers on the Zig-Zags, Glenmalur, Co Wicklow.
Photo: Helen Lawless.



Trapped in Antarctica

Kevin Dempsey experiences extreme
danger and fear on Mount Vinson.

View from High Camp, Mt Vinson.
Photo: Kevin Dempsey.

"In those few moments the harsh reality of what we were facing descended quietly upon all five of us."

Scene: Just below High Camp at 3,700m on Mt Vinson (4,897m) in Antarctica on Sunday, December 3rd, 2006, following an unsuccessful attempt on the summit.

Conditions: Temperature 20 to 40°C below with katabatic* windchill and visibility 5-15m in driving spindrift and snow.

VHF transmission: David Hamilton, rescue team leader, speaking to Ian Barker, our Vinson climbing team guide:

"I'm sorry, Ian, but we simply can't

reach you in these conditions. We've tried, but it's too dangerous. We can't risk people's lives and have a double tragedy on our hands. We will keep trying but, for now, you're on your own. I'm sorry."

As I sat squeezed into our makeshift, flimsy shelter with the four other members of our climbing team, very cold after another night of -40°C and raging 50mph winds, these were very chilling words to hear. In those few moments the harsh reality of what we were facing descended quietly upon all five of us. The Grim Reaper had one hand on my shoulder and this was a time for some serious reflection.

* * * * *

The previous day, when we had got back to the relative safety of High

Camp after our summit attempt, we had waited for the rising katabatic storm winds to ease, which would have made our descent to Camp 1 a little easier, but now, 24 hours later, it was decision time. We knew that if we stayed at High Camp we would be stuck there for at least another 2-6 days in what was building up to be a typical Antarctic katabatic storm. We had less than two days of food and fuel left, but figured that we could eke out these rations until the storm eased, even though we were already very tired after spending seven days on the ice.

The only other option was to break camp and make a rapid descent down the dreaded Ice Headwall back to Camp 1, some 4-5 hours away.

The other two teams stuck there with us had made their decision: they were packing up their tents and were almost ready to move.

"That's it, so; let's get out of here! We don't want to be stuck here on our own in this freezer," came the call from our leader, Ian Barker.

We all agreed and moved to get the tents down and our rucksacks packed.

As we left our temporary home high on the col between Mount Shin and Mount Vinson, the wind picked

* Katabatic winds are most commonly found blowing out from elevated ice sheets of Antarctica and Greenland. A katabatic wind carries high-density cold air down a slope under the force of gravity; it can reach hurricane speeds.



up and blasted us, seemingly from every direction. Snow and ice lifted up and, driven by the fierce winds, ripped into us, sucking the heat and energy out of our clothing and bodies if they could find even the smallest of gaps in the zips. I said to myself, "This is going to be a difficult descent and we had better all be paying attention to the task ahead."

Visibility varied between 5-15m and the teams that had just departed were already out of sight. They had marked their route with wands for us, but it was difficult to make out each of the markers and we had to keep stopping to look for them, which made our progress very slow.

We had only gone some 200m when Fredrik Strang, who had been attempting to complete his Seven Summits bid and who was leading the way ahead of myself, dropped down into a hidden hole. Arrested by his arms and his rucksack, he gave me a thumbs up as I hauled him clear, after which he shook himself down and moved on slowly.

We approached the crux of the descent, the top of the Ice Headwall, where the glacier pours over the steep drop below. In doing so, it opens up crevasses and holes that could be bottomless icy tombs if you fell into one. "Careful now, everyone; rope tight, eyes sharp and look at where you put your feet."

On we went, ever so carefully, crossing snow bridges and stepping over wide open crevasses with nervous jumps. Every time we came to a danger spot, we would each stop, turn around and point it out to the team-mate behind, wait for his acknowledgment and then continue downwards. This was the safest way to get through the steepest and most dangerous section of the headwall. Many of the crevasses were now being hidden by fresh snow bridges, which couldn't be trusted to bear our weight, so each one had to be carefully tested and negotiated.

Midway through this section the route dropped steeply away after a crevasse, which seemed to have a

Midnight camp.
Photo: Kevin
Dempsey.

Kevin Dempsey.
Photo: Kevin Dempsey collection.



"Snow and ice, driven by the fierce wind, sucked the heat out of our bodies."



High Camp
on Mt Vinson.
Photo: Kevin
Dempsey.

good snow bridge over it. As usual, I stopped and pointed the crevasse out to Richard, who was behind me. He waved in acknowledgment and I moved on steeply down and out of sight, even though we only had a 5m length of rope between us. I felt a sharp pull on the rope and knew that this wasn't simply the tug of someone behind stumbling or falling after tripping up – this was a serious fall! I half turned and dropped into an ice axe arrest position, digging my crampons and knees in as far as I could. I looked back up the slope to where Richard should have been, but he wasn't there. He appeared to have vanished into thin air. Maybe I couldn't see him because of the blinding, wind-driven spindrift being blasted onto my goggles, so I wiped them clear and scanned the maelstrom again for a sign of

Richard, hoping that he was just sitting down after a clumsy fall. But he had disappeared and it wasn't into thin air. He had fallen into the last big crevasse.

I called out to Richard but got no reply. Maybe he just couldn't hear me, so I kept calling. I couldn't see any of the three team mates who were behind me, back up the slope; not Richard, not Jon-Jon, who was behind him, nor Ian at the rear. I called and called but got no reply. I was probably 3m down the slope from where Richard must have fallen into the crevasse and Fredrik, who was ahead of me, was only 5m lower than me, but I could barely see or hear him either in the raging wind. With basic hand signals and the odd word above the wind, we managed to start formulating a plan of action. Not knowing what had happened to

the other three on the rope and whether or not they were all dangling from the rope in the crevasse, Fredrik and I decided to lock ourselves down with snow stakes. Fredrik would then move up the rope to see what was going on.

As I lay down flat to spread my weight and swing my ice axe into the ice to get a good secure hold, the axe broke through another hidden, gaping crevasse right in front of my head. I was now lying alongside or across another crevasse. This was not a good place to be and I roared to Fredrik, yelling at him to lock down until I was able to move. Then I slowly rolled over two or three times until I was on what I hoped would be more solid ground. I took a while to calm myself down after this little incident.

When I was secure again, Fredrik moved up to discover that Richard had indeed dropped into a crevasse. Jon-Jon was locked down right on the edge of the crevasse and Ian was behind him, starting to get himself sorted out. We quickly established some basic communications above the noise of the wind, the lack of visibility and the fact that from where I was I couldn't see anything of what was going on or that needed to be done. My role for now was to ensure that the rope was secure and that no one would drop any further. The initial efforts to simply haul Richard out proved impossible for a number of reasons and the crevasse rescue was now going to take some time – too much time, I feared, for all of our sakes.

After setting up some pulleys to assist in the hauling, it was still proving difficult to get Richard out of what was now fast becoming an icy tomb. He was hanging upside down and, with his rucksack on, was getting jammed into the tight space where he was. It took maybe a total of thirty minutes from the initial fall to get Richard out and, when he came out, we were shocked to see that he had lost his gloves in his efforts to free himself of his rucksack. He was already suffering from hypothermia and, worst of all, his hands were now blue and frostbitten. Jon-Jon was also struggling with fatigue and hypothermia and was unable to move freely. Richard had lost his rucksack, which had contained his spare warm clothing, so I gave him



my down jacket from my rucksack and Ian gave him his spare gloves, hoping to at least stop any further deterioration in his condition.

We needed to consolidate and secure our position, and try to get Richard and Jon-Jon warmed up again, if we were to have any chance of continuing this descent. Ian set up his emergency bivy shelter, got Richard and Jon-Jon inside and stuffed me in between them for body heat. He and Fredrik then started to dig out a shelter for us all to get into out of the brutally cold wind and driving snow. This proved to be impossible because the ground was rock-hard ice under the 30cm of snow cover on what was very steep ground all around us. All they could

do was dig out a shelf, line it with our sleeping mats, get everyone to sit on them and then pull the outer sheet of one of the tents over our heads for some protection from the wind. Getting a tent up in these conditions and on this ground was not an option.

Inside our makeshift shelter, we sat almost on top of one another in an effort to retain body heat as the wind tried to rip the flimsy tent sheet out of our hands and expose us once again to its hell-like fury. We appraised the situation and knew that continuing the descent with two much-weakened people, one of whom would need to be carried or at least assisted, was not an option in this storm. We had to sit, wait, hope

and, eventually, pray.

I was sitting at the end of our bench and, having given my down jacket to Richard, the wind coming over my left shoulder was slowly getting deep into my bones. This was going to be a very cold, uncomfortable and worrying night, or longer.

The satellite phone was down and we couldn't raise anyone on the VHF radio. No wonder, in this storm. Most of the retreating teams would now be back at Camp 1 or even at Base Camp, some 6-7 hours away. The hours rolled on, through the night and into the following day, without any relief in the weather that hammered us. We kept our morale up through a mixture of encouragement and constant

On the way to
High Camp.
Photo: Kevin
Dempsey.

Photo: Kevin Dempsey.



“We were shocked to find that his hands were now blue and frost bitten...”



Aerial view of
Antarctica.
Photo: Kevin
Dempsey.

reassurances to one another that this would sort itself out. We had done everything we could and it would turn out okay...wouldn't it?

Between us, we only had a couple of cereal bars and a half pack of glucose sweets. We had a few freeze-dried meals in the rucksacks, which were being used as a wall behind us to keep some of the strength of the wind off us, but we had no chance of getting a stove lit inside our battered shelter. That also meant we had no drinking water.

After some 15 hours or so, we managed to make contact on the VHF radio with Base Camp and this gave us hope that a rescue team would come and help us out of here. But it was not going to be as easy as that. The storm that hammered us up here high on Vinson was also sweeping with its full force down the glacier to the men who had struggled for hours to get to the bottom of the headwall. It would not allow them to go any further, and to attempt to do so would have been extremely dangerous. We could not expect that of anyone. We would have to wait

and pray for a short break in the storm, just long enough for some of these courageous men to get up to us to give us the assistance that we needed, if we were going to survive.

At least we now had some hope and this helped us to maintain our morale as we waited for the storm to abate.

We needed a 1.5 to 2-hour break, or even an easing in the raging Katabatic storm, to allow the rescue team up the ice headwall. The hours rolled on and we stayed in our private thoughts, emerging only to encourage one another to be positive and stay awake. At this stage sleep could have come very easily because I was very tired from the lack of it, but I was afraid to sleep for fear that I would never wake up again. Sometime around 19:00hrs we sensed a change in the wind direction and a slight easing in its intensity, followed by a rise in temperature as the sun seemed to penetrate the slim tent covering that we had over us.

Anxiously, Ian radioed this improvement to the team below at the base of the headwall, and hope in the shelter increased momentarily. Down below, it wasn't quite as good and they still couldn't take the risk of moving up. Eventually the call came that the two Swedish ski mountaineers were on their way up again. The collective roar of relief inside the shelter was nearly enough to lift it right off us, as we clasped our hands and turned our eyes to heaven in a silent yet relieved 'thank you.'

It took them more than one and a half hours to reach us, during which time the wind kicked in again and we feared that they might be turned back. This was the longest hour and a half of my life as initially we all sat in silence, waiting and praying. However, eventually we had some preparation to do to be ready to move as soon as the rescue team arrived and this helped to pass the time.

"Hello, Hello!" Did we hear something outside?

And suddenly the Swedes were there. A roar went up from the five of us as we realised that we now had a chance of getting out of there alive. Our rucksacks were already repacked and within 10 minutes we were out, roping up and getting ready to move off. We had ditched a lot of group gear from our packs in order to reduce the weight to be carried down in our weakened state. The conditions outside were much worse than we had imagined. The wind was still incredibly strong and within minutes our outer clothing had frozen solid. Visibility was still poor, but manageable, and we all just wanted to get out of there.

About one hour later we arrived at the bottom of the headwall where the Swedes had set up their tent. Five of the guides were also on hand, armed with hot drinks and snack bars. It was quite an emotional scene as we hugged our rescuers and shed a few tears of relief. We still had about a one and a half hour trek to Camp 1 but we were able to do that

*"I was afraid to
sleep for fear that
I would never
wake up..."*



Rescuers Martin and Olaf.
Photo: Kevin Dempsey.



Safely back at Vinson Base Camp.
Photo: Kevin Dempsey.

without the burden of our rucksacks because the support team that had arrived took them on the sleds which they had drawn up.

As we trekked downwards we were able to look back at the angry monster of a headwall that had held us captive. It did, indeed, seem angry because it was once again enveloped in a dark swirling tempest of driving wind and spindrift, whilst where we were now was in relative calm by comparison.

We were overjoyed when we finally reached the relative safety of Camp 1. Ian was on his last legs after the huge effort he had put into ensuring that we all escaped from the icy clutches of Antarctica. As we settled into our tents, little did we know that the imminent return of the fearful Katabatic would pin us down again in Camp 1 for a further two days.

I managed to phone my wife, Joyce, on the satellite phone after I got down and it was a huge relief to hear her voice.

Richard was given some basic treatment for his badly frostbitten hands during these two days in Camp 1. He was remarkably composed about his dire situation and never over this period, or the following week or ten days, once complained or moaned. He simply said, "Look, I'm alive. Okay, so I might lose a few fingers or the tops of them, but I'm alive." He was a truly courageous, brave man with a huge strength of character.

At 20:00hrs on the second day at Camp 1, the guides decided that we

had best make our way down to Vinson Base Camp because we had no food left and VBC was just 2-3 hours away. When we arrived there, it was 23:00hrs and we were unexpectedly greeted by everyone there, as though we were a triumphant army returning from a victorious battle, such was their relief at our escape from our icy prison.

Richard had good medical care in VBC and was in good spirits, but he really needed to be in a hospital in the UK as soon as possible. However, it was to be a full 13 or 14 days after his accident before he got to the Serious Cold Injuries Unit in Coventry. Such is the reality of being in Antarctica, if anything goes wrong.

My last night in Antarctica was a beautiful, calm one. I was reluctant to get into my sleeping bag and I just took some time to gaze out, marvelling at the incredible landscape stretching out before me. It was a privilege to be there and I felt humbled by my surroundings, one in which Mother Nature rules with an iron fist but occasionally shows a little compassion. ■

Kevin Dempsey is 53 years old and married with two grown-up sons. He is a relative newcomer to mountaineering, having only taken it up as a 40-year-old. Since then he has been on numerous summer trips to the Alpine 4,000m peaks and he has also climbed in Bolivia and Chile. He participated in expeditions to Antarctica in 2004, 2006 and 2007, reaching the South Pole on the last

of these in December 2007. He plans to go to Kilimanjaro in 2008 and the North Pole in 2009. Kevin is a regular Wicklow hillwalker and a member of the Beanna Beola Hillwalking Club. He can be contacted by email at Kevin@kdd.ie. See also the website www.south2thepole.blogspot.com.

Travel Information

Trip organisers

Jagged Globe UK, www.jagged-globe.co.uk, or direct with Antarctic Logistics Company, www.antarctic-logistics.com.

Timing

There is a short season when this trip is possible, from late November to early January.

Duration

Minimum 3 weeks, could be as long as 4-5 weeks.

Cost

\$32,000, excluding travel to and accommodation in South America (c\$3,000).

Difficulty

Very demanding trip, big loads to carry, no porters and very cold and windy conditions. Must be self-sufficient.

X-Factor

Guaranteed heaven and hell in a very unique place. Extreme adventure travel and mountaineering at its best!



Best Sella

Padraig Love goes walking in Spain's Aitana mountains.

The village of Sella.
Photo: Terry Kenny
(www.sterling-adventures.co.uk).

The village of Sella is 16km from the coast on Spain's Costa Blanca. It lies in the shelter of two mountains, the Aitana (1,557m) and the Puig Campana (1,407m). The water is clean and pure, the people are friendly, and the views, across the almond terraces of the Sella valley, are spectacular.

At last, the day of our walking trip had arrived and our group of eight walkers arrived early for the afternoon flight to Murcia. It was to be our fifth walking trip as a group. Our last holiday in Poland, while wonderful, was very cold, so we had vowed that this year we would get some sun on our bones. Our guide, Jonathan, of Aqua Ventura, was there to meet us in Murcia as arranged and we piled onto the bus, full of expectation.

As we got closer to our destination one mountain in particular seemed to dominate the landscape. Our guide informed us that it was Puig Campana (Bell Mountain), the second highest mountain in the area. This mountain would haunt us during our stay, until we finally climbed it.

The road down to the guesthouse was not for the faint-hearted and had to be seen to be believed. Needless to

say, it posed no problem for our guide. Our home for the next seven days was a 300-year-old Moorish farmhouse. It had a beautiful garden and freshwater pool and overlooked a valley of olive and almond trees. The views were amazing. That first evening, we planned our walking schedule for the week. We decided to start off with a leisurely stroll and build up to the Puig Campana on the last day.

The next morning, we headed off on our first walk. It was a five-hour circular trip from the guesthouse, finishing up in the village of Relleu. It was very pleasant, with tracks to follow the whole way. I was amazed at how green the area was, with an abundance of butterflies, wild flowers and herbs. I had always thought of Spain as arid and dry. We picked and ate nisperos at an abandoned farm. These are juicy, yellow, peach-like fruit that grow very well in this area. The farm had been abandoned because the water supply was too salty, yet the fruit had survived and returns each year. After a few ice-cold beers in the laid-back village of Relleu, we returned to the guesthouse and had a swim in the pool. I have to say it was the coldest water I have ever swum in. That evening, after a lovely home-cooked meal, we relaxed with a glass of wine and admired the beautiful

valley below.

We awoke the next day full of the joys of spring, and without an ache or pain, thanks (I suspect) to the ice-cold swim. Our guide for the second day was Pau on an 18km walk, taking in the Pollop Valley. Starting at the Refugio, the hut where the rock climbers based themselves, we headed immediately upwards. There was quite a hard pull uphill for at least an hour, though, as on the previous day, we had a gravel path all the way. It was a most beautiful and tranquil place and we passed a Buddhist community who are based there. We descended via El Contador, which is an area used by shepherds for counting their sheep. Although we had been out for five hours and had reached 1,220 metres, we still had some energy left, so Jonathan suggested that a spot of rockclimbing was in order. We agreed, reluctantly, as all of the group were novices at this. Under the scorching heat of the evening sun, our patient guide persevered in coaxing us to scale heights varying from four to 12 metres. That evening, we slept like logs!

We were joined on the third day by a Spanish walker and her very reluctant 13-year-old daughter, Maria. Our objective was to be the Aitana Ridge which, at 1,557m, is the highest mountain in the area. As it was a very

warm day, we commenced the walk at Port de Tudons at 900m. We headed up a forester's track for the first 7km. Up and up we went, the sun beaming down on the backs of our necks and not an inch of shade in sight. We passed some local people picking wild herbs in the ditches, releasing the wonderful scent of thyme and camomile into the air.

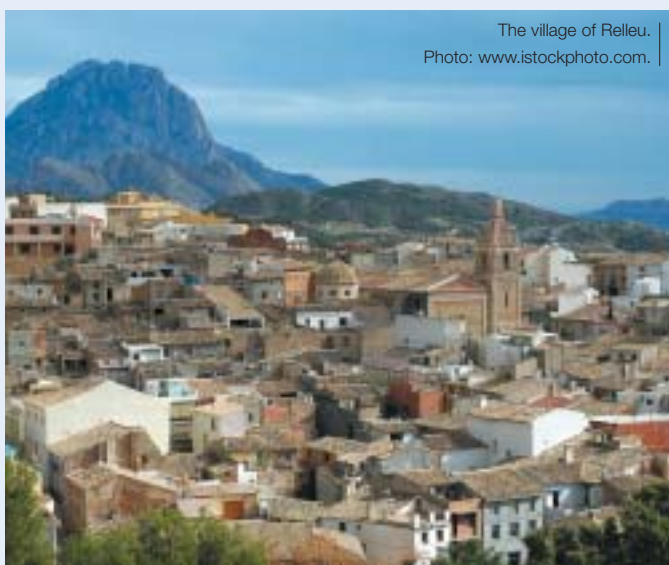
At the Font de Forada we stopped to watch two elderly locals filling thirty plastic 5-litre bottles with water. At this point we berated Jonathan for telling us to carry three litres of water with us when he knew that we could have refilled at the Font. He replied that he reckoned we needed the challenge!

From there we took a shepherd's track for 5km up to the bottom of Paso de los Rabosas. There was only a small gap at the top and we had to remove our rucksacks so that we could squeeze through. While a couple of members of the group found this unnerving, we all passed slowly through and arrived safely at the top at Las Semas.

Las Semas is a geological fault running in changing directions. It was 1m wide but about 300m deep, so we had to be very careful where we walked. Our guide informed us that some climbers go down into the cracks, where they can experience a totally different microclimate. Fortunately, this was not on our agenda. Instead we relaxed in the beautiful sunshine, amid the wild flowers, and shared some sweets.

Our path down was by way of a forester's track. This proved to be quite challenging as it was very long and difficult to walk on, with lots of small stones underfoot. At this stage, our little Spanish friend became very tired and cross with her mother for bringing her on such an endurance test. Even the last of the sweets could not comfort her. Eventually we spied the bus, and as Maria ran over to hug her father we all happily removed our walking boots and piled onto the bus. We were very pleased with our time of 6.5 hours for the day's walk.

Due to the heat, the next day we cancelled our planned walk in the Barranc Del Infer (Hell's Canyon) in favour of a coastal walk from the seaside town of La Villa Joyosa to Benidorm. With the sun beating down on us, we headed down along the coast. There was a path all the way and, other than having to relocate the path at times, the walk is very manageable. With the cool breeze and the lovely unspoilt views of the Mediterranean coast, it proved to be a very pleasant four-hour walk. We climbed down to a little hidden cove where we had a swim. After a lovely lunch of tapas at the Yacht Club, we had the opportunity to go sea kayaking, a speciality of Aqua Ventura. This proved to be a great experience as, unlike some of the others, I had never tried it before. I discovered that, unfortunately, I am a better walker than kayaker, but some of the



The village of Relleu.
Photo: www.istockphoto.com.



A view east from the
Aitana Ridge (1,557m).
Photo: Jackie Price
(www.btinternet.com/~dandjwalks/).

women in the group proved to be quite good at kayaking and we all had a very enjoyable day.

Our fifth day was free for R&R and, having availed of all the bargains at the local market, we relaxed on the beach.

Then, at last, the day had finally arrived for us to tackle Puig Campana. At 1,407m, it is the second highest mountain in the region and legend has it that a giant called Roldan kicked a piece of rock out of the mountain to give his wife more sun,

otherwise she would die.

As it was estimated to be an eight-hour walk, we started off at 8:00am in the hope of being ahead of the sun. We started the walk at the Buddhist retreat, taking the forester's track up to an abandoned farmhouse at La Carrasca. After admiring the amazing views from the farmhouse, we found the shepherd's track that leads up towards the base of the Puig. We arrived at a junction of many paths and chose the one that would take us up the mountain. The path was very steep and winding and the walking was very tough for an hour and a half. An abundance of wildflowers on each side of the track proved a pleasant distraction. One would swear they had been planted and tended by a gardener, so wonderful was the colour coordination, blues with yellows, pinks with whites. It made me believe that nature is the best gardener of all.

At last we reached the top and were rewarded by the most amazing views of the Mediterranean – on a clear day Ibiza is a hazy ghost in the distance. Our other reward was a swarm of tiny black flies that appeared as soon as we produced our lunches. We took our photograph for posterity, signed our names in the notebook that is kept in a plastic bag on top of the Puig, and beat a hasty retreat.

We returned to the base of the mountain by the same path, taking a different shepherd's track down around the Castelletts (Castle Mountains). On our way down, we passed two different groups just beginning the climb up (mad dogs and Englishmen, as the saying goes). For my own part, I was very happy that we had made an early start as it was now very hot. The walk back to the bus was pleasant enough and we were delighted to have completed the 17km and 1,200-metre ascent in seven hours.

That evening, we hit the highlights of Benidorm. The hustle and bustle of the resort was in complete contrast to the peace and tranquillity that we had got used to and, personally, I was very happy to head home to the hills that night. Our flight was not until Saturday afternoon, so Jonathan had arranged to bring us abseiling in the morning. After a lovely lunch on the terrace of the farmhouse we took some last photographs of the beautiful valley below and bade our farewells. The journey back to Murcia was quiet enough, with each of us deep in our own thoughts about the wonderful holiday we had had. ■

“The Puig Campana would haunt us during our stay, until we finally climbed it.”



The Puig Campana (1,407m).
Photo: Terry Kenny
(www.sterling-adventures.co.uk).



AlpineMeet

MCI Summer Alpine Meet, Vicosoprano, July 5-19th, 2008

Some expert Alpine tips

Points to note before you go

Are you planning to go to the Alpine Meet?

Are you planning to travel to Vicosoprano this July to join your fellow Irish walkers and climbers out there and take part in the MCI Summer Alpine Meet but not to participate in a course? If so, you should still register for the meet and pay the registration fee by completing the application form. You only need to complete your name and contact details (Sections A and C). For more information and an application form, visit the MCI's website, www.mountaineering.ie, and select MCI Summer Alpine Meet under Training. You can also register your interest in attending the meet at alpinemeet@mountaineering.ie.

ANGELA CARLIN

With the MCI Alpine Meet just around the corner, we asked for some expert advice on alpine climbing from some MCI members who have had lots of practice. Here are some top tips from Ian Rea, Dawson Stelfox and Ronnie Smith...

Ian Rea says...

- Generally, you can never start too early – it is sometimes possible to start too early, but not often!
- You can never go too fast.
- Make sure that you suss out your route really well in advance.

Dawson Stelfox says...

- Keep it light – the less weight you carry around, the more efficiently you will move and the more you will enjoy it.
- Don't be over-ambitious at the start – choose routes well within your technical ability, so that you can travel fast and light, and learn about all the other aspects of alpine climbing. Start on low altitude routes, up to a maximum of 3,000m, and work up in height as you get acclimatised.
- Have a hit list of routes prepared in advance, by reading guidebooks, talking to others, doing web searches, etc, so that you have clear aspirations before you get out, but...
- Be flexible – change your plans according to the weather, the conditions on the route, what other people have found and how you are feeling, rather than following a rigid plan.
- Find out how to get local weather forecasts, learning the local language as required!
- Spend a night in the mountains, camping or bivouacking (rather than scuttling back to the valley), maybe as part of a traverse of a range, to give you a better understanding of living and surviving in the mountains.
- Take out rescue insurance and know how to call for help.

Ronnie Smith says....

- Keep cool! Managing your body temperature is really important. If you overheat you'll end up dehydrated and your muscles won't function effectively. Find clothing that works for you – your helmet is particularly important, so get one that won't boil your head!
- Do all your practicing at home on the crag. Alpine routes are not the



Pinnacle in Vicosoprano.
Photo: Mick Tighe.

place to practice being slick and fast. Push yourself at home to build quick and effective belays in safe situations. There is no point in finding out that the latest textbook trick doesn't seem to work the way you imagined it, with many pitches still above you!

- Being organised cuts out so much faff! Golden rule is to keep your ropes tidy, not like a ball of spaghetti.
- Make changeovers at belays as fast as possible; 1-2 minutes extra at every belay can make a big difference at the end of the day. ■

Angela Carlin is MCI's Northern Ireland Youth Development Officer.

TrainingLog

The latest advice and information from Tim Orr, MCI Training Officer



TIM'S BLOGSPOT

At the end of April, I was "encouraged" to attend a seminar in Plas y Brenin, the UK national mountain centre. The title, "UIAA Training Standards Seminar," did not, I must admit, over-excite me when it arrived on my desk. The UIAA is the Union Internationale des Associations d'Alpinisme or, for

those of us (including myself) who struggle with that, it's the International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation. If it still sounds a bit grand and intimidating, just look on it as a group of like-minded mountaineers from throughout the world who have great passion for the future of their sport.

So I was packed off on the slow ferry to north Wales with my best clothes, a handful of coins from the petty cash and strict instructions to be on my best behaviour.

This three-day seminar brought together twenty representatives from many of the mountaineering federations across the globe, including Italy, Spain, Portugal, Finland, Belgium, India, Quebec and South Africa. Each day was considerably divided into a gentle mix of indoor lectures and discussions, and outdoor practical workshop-type meetings. Evening time was reserved for debate, drink and a bit of cultural slagging.

Through these Eurovision-type evening sessions I learnt about such diverse subjects as the training and assessment structure for the sport of tree climbing in Denmark (I kid you not!) and, even more impressive, how my counterpart in Quebec manages his position without a mobile phone or email.

I came away from this gathering with a completely refreshed opinion of the politics of mountaineering. Its simplicity creates its sturdiness and permits its survival in a world overcome by correctness, policy and standardisation. By comparison, it appears that Ireland is doing well, in fact very well. We have the structure, we have the standards, but most importantly we have the passion to be out there doing what we enjoy doing: mountaineering.

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE

I hope that you have found my blog on the MCI website, www.mountaineering.ie. I hope to keep this going in future to help inform you all of the ongoing work that I am involved in. I am having a good look at the training section of the website. I feel it needs to be uncluttered and made more user-friendly. I have a lot more information to add, but am also wary of it getting overloaded and confusing. Your assistance and feedback would be greatly appreciated on what you would like to see in the training section.

It's all work, and my mind drifts to the Quebec Training Officer, sitting there on his hilltop wondering what the postman will bring. The good news for me is that the MCI are getting me a part-time assistant. This position of Training Administrator will hopefully allow us to move forward a lot of the backlog of paperwork that keeps threatening to topple the training desk. Getting on top of this is important, but sharing this work will allow me to dedicate more quality time to the promotion of mountain training for all.

Our most recent BOS board meeting in April was a lively affair. All ten members of the board attended, including Trevor Fisher, observing for MLTNI and Tollymore. It was my chance to present an annual review to the board of the current standing of our training initiatives. Many important matters were discussed, which subsequently led to many new matters being raised. It is undoubtedly the way such meetings will always go. The more discussion you have, the more discussion you create.

If you would like to know more about the board of BOS and the work they do, I would suggest that you look through the MCI Training Policy, which is available for download on the MCI website. This document presents a clear and detailed picture of what the future plans for the MCI are in mountain training during the next five-year development plan. If you have questions, queries or suggestions, I would be happy to hear from you by email or phone – or, in the true spirit of Quebec mountaineering, by pigeon! – or you can visit us in Sport HQ.

Delegates on a climb during the UIAA seminar.
Photo: Tim Orr.





Members' Support

Ciara Hinksman, MCI Members' Support Officer, reports

Spring Meet

**Glendalough,
May 17-18th, 2008**

The mobile climbing wall was already going up outside the Glendalough International Hostel as the Saturday morning sun was burning off the haze in the valley behind. As the first people started to arrive to register for walks at the MCI Spring Meet, the walk leaders congregated to greet them and talk about the activities being run that day.

Thanks again to the local clubs that got involved, not only for their expertise but for their style of delivery! The general consensus and smiling faces indicated that An Óige, Glenwalk, Imaal Walkers, Irish Mountaineering Club, The Wayfarers' Association and UCD Mountaineering Club organised informative and enjoyable activities for those who participated.

In order to replace any calories lost out on the hills, we dined together in the Glendalough International Youth Hostel. The food was excellent and, if that wasn't enough to satisfy you, Clive Roberts was showing slides and relating his experiences in Nepal, of the treks, peaks and people that he met there. Following that, we had a night walk for those who didn't head for the pub.

On Sunday, we had workshops covering all sorts of interesting topics including the Dawn Chorus, GPS, Leave No Trace



Vince McAlinden at the MCI Spring Meet in Glendalough making a Billy Graham-style delivery on the 'Leave No Trace' awareness course. Vince assisted with the delivery of the Mountain Skills Providers workshop, run and fronted by Jane Carney over the two-day meet.

Awareness and Club Mountain Skills Training. The latter was very successful, with twenty-five MCI club members attending. Some hardy souls braved the soggy dawn and gathered near Glendalough's Upper Lake to hear the dawn chorus.

Thanks to the providers of mountain skills training for sharing their training

techniques and for teaching some mountain skills. The climbing wall was availed of by anyone interested in trying out a harness and helmet for the first time. Whether over tea in the kitchen or steaming apple pie and ice-cream, everyone I talked to seemed happy with the weekend and to be having a good time – so come along next year and experience it yourself!

FeedbackQ&A

Q. Why did you attend club training at the Spring Meet?

A. Sheila: I decided to attend the club training because, as a complete beginner in terms of navigation skills, I was interested in finding out about the basics and what a Mountain Skills course might offer me.

A. Orla: I completed Mountain Skills 1 & 2 at Tiglin some years ago, but due to lack of practice I wanted to refresh

some of the navigation techniques that I had let get rusty.

Q. What were the benefits of the morning session with the trainers?

A. Sheila & Orla: It was a condensed session from 9:30am until around 12:30pm, but we got a good overview of map reading, pacing and timing – including Naismith's Rule – and taking and following bearings with a compass. There were five instructors to 25 students and, while the instructors each led on a

specific topic, it was also possible to work on the techniques one on one, which was bonus.

Q. What will you bring back to your club?

A. Sheila: There is a high level of mountaineering skills in our club, Killarney Mountaineering Club, and the members are very supportive of attempts to get to grips with navigation skills and so on, but practically, it can be difficult to find the time to do this effectively on club walks.

GPS workshop

A modern navigation aid

This was a very interesting workshop, including both an overview and practical demonstrations of using GPS and PC-based mapping software. The trainers adapted the workshop to the participants' interests and shared many useful tips and tricks on how best to use GPS as a standalone navigation tool; they also showed how to connect a GPS system to different PC-based software including the OSI Trail Master, Gartrip and MapSource. One handy trick I learnt was a naming system for waypoints when the GPS only allows you six letters for the name of the waypoint.

I found the most impressive part of the workshop was the demonstration of the use of OSI Trail Master software to plan and visualise in three dimensions a walk route, and then to download the waypoints of that walk to a GPS unit.

The limitations of GPS units were also discussed and, while I learnt about hybrid batteries whose charge is not affected by the cold, we were also strongly advised to keep compass and map in our backpacks and to know how to use them. Many thanks to the trainers for providing this workshop. – *(Colm McMahon, Glenwalk)*



Photo: Tim Orr.

One of the instructors is based in Kerry, so I am hoping to arrange further training through him. I can get plenty of practice in the mountains with the club.

A. Orla: The session reaffirmed for me the value of doing the Mountain Skills training and boosted my confidence in terms of taking the initiative to volunteer to lead walks.

Sheila O'Connor and Orla O'Brien are members of Killarney Mountaineering Club.

On the Spink, Glendalough.
Photo: Tim Orr.



'Leave No Trace' experience

The focus of the 'Leave No Trace' workshop was how we can enjoy the hills while minimising the impact of what we do in that sensitive environment. I thought the morning might be given over to prescriptive guidelines, but there was more to it than that, as the workshop encouraged us to debate what informs people's ideas of what is acceptable and appropriate behaviour in the hills.

'Awareness' was a key message brought to us by Leave No Trace instructors Vincent McAlinden and Shay Walsh in an interesting and engaging way. The morning included a field experiment on the impact of the footfall of 50 people on grassy terrain and comment on the latest must-have item – a human waste catalyser called a *Wag Bag*; it defies description, but is very clever!

The workshop was a good mix of practical information and thought-provoking discussion. The result was to encourage us to question what we were doing in the hills, to be aware of the impact we have on our environment and to spread the message, and it left me keen to learn more. That, and sighting a red squirrel, made for a worthwhile morning. – *(Labhaoise Ní Fhaoláin, MCI Individual Member)*

Lunch break above the Spink.
Photo: Tim Orr.



Access & Conservation

The latest news from Aodhnait Carroll, MCI Access & Conservation Officer

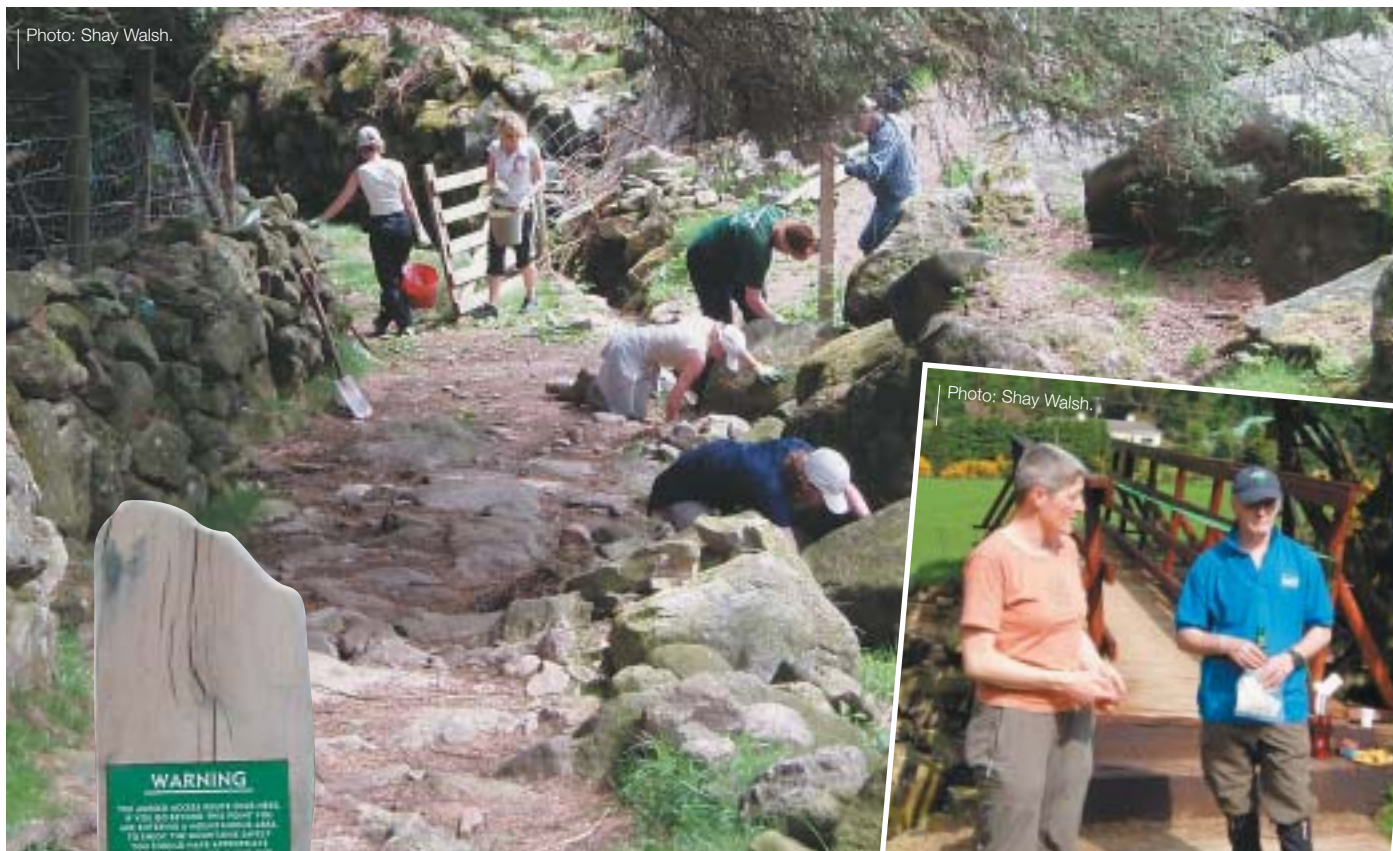


Photo: Shay Walsh.

Photo: Shay Walsh.

Volunteers do final tidy-up. *Inset:* Helen Lawless (Wicklow Uplands Council) and Shay Walsh (Mountain Meitheal) at the new footbridge.

Mountain Meitheal success

Work completed on Zig-Zags



Mountain Meitheal has finished work on its project in Glenmalure, Co Wicklow, building a footbridge across Carrawaystick Brook and restoring the deer-stalkers' track commonly known as the Zig-Zags. The work was undertaken in partnership with the landowner and Wicklow Uplands Council, who provided the materials. Mountain Meitheal provided the labour, putting in a monumental 2,414 hours of work by volunteers. The project was completed on Sunday, May 11th 2008, after one and a half years. A total of one hundred and fifty volunteers gave varying amounts of their free time to improving this important access route to the uplands of Lugnaquilla, the highest mountain in Leinster. They must all be congratulated for the very impressive work they have done. (See also the Mountain Meitheal website at www.pathsavers.org.)

Sign at end of access trail.
Photo: Shay Walsh.

'Leave No Trace' booklet

With this edition of the *Irish Mountain Log* you will find a copy of the new *Leave No Trace Ireland* information booklet. The booklet was redesigned to help create a strong, more recognisable brand for Leave No Trace in Ireland. You can download copies of the new booklet from the website www.leavenotraceireland.org or request copies free of charge by emailing info@leavenotraceireland.org.



MCI Autumn Gathering

Macroom, County Cork

Friday-Sunday 10-12 October 2008

Gougane Barra, Co. Cork.
Photo: Máire Ní Mhurchú,
Cork Mountaineering Club.

The MCI Autumn Gathering 2008 is being hosted by Cork Mountaineering Club and will take place in Macroom, Co Cork. The meet will be based in the Riverside Park Hotel on the Killarney Road to the west of Macroom. Macroom is an attractive town set in the beautiful countryside of the Lee valley. The immediate area surrounding the town is excellent for hillwalking and rambling. To the southwest are Gougane Barra, Inchigeela Lakes and the Gearagh; to the northwest are Mushera Mountain, Millstreet Country Park and The Duhallow Way; and to the west are Ballyvourney, the Paps and Caherbarnagh. Activities available in the Macroom area include water skiing at Carrig Water Ski and Wakeboard Club (www.carrigwaterski.com); fishing on the River

Sullane; and golf at Macroom Golf Club (www.macroomgolfclub.com). The Riverside Hotel has offered a discounted accommodation rate for the weekend and will provide a four-course meal on Saturday night. Accommodation: 2 nights B&B pps €68 (limited availability). Four-course evening meal and entertainment: €30 (vegetarian option). Tel: (+353) 26 20090. Web: www.riversideparkhotel.ie. Families and young people are particularly welcome. Activities will include: orienteering/treasure hunt, mobile climbing wall, board games. Updates on the programme of activities for the MCI Autumn Gathering, accommodation options and directions can be found on the website, www.mountaineering.ie.

Friday 10 October

7:00pm—9:00pm Registration for activities.

Saturday 11 October

8:30am—9:30am Registration for activities.

9:30am Departure from the Riverside Park Hotel for walks and climbing: Gougane Barra, Caherbarnagh, Duhallow Way, Boggeragh Mtns.

5:00pm Return to the Riverside Park Hotel.

6:00pm MCI Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM):

Strategic Development Plan 2009-2013.

8:00pm Dinner, audio-visual presentation and entertainment.

Sunday 12 October

9:30am Departure from the Riverside Park Hotel for short walks to Clara Mountain or The Gearagh.

10:00am—1:00pm Mobile Climbing Wall — Come along and give it a try!

9:30am—1:00pm Free Club Training Workshop.

9:30am—1:00pm MCI Environmental Officer Training Workshop.

Alternative Accommodation Options – Hotels:

Castle Hotel & Leisure Centre, €70 pps 1 night B&B, Tel: (+353) 26 41074, W: www.castlehotel.ie. Lee Valley Hotel, €50 pps 1 night B&B, Tel: (+353) 26 41082, W: www.leevalleyhotel.ie. Abbey Hotel, Ballyvourney, €50 pps 1 night B&B. Tel: (+353) 26 45324 (Single supplements apply for all)

Guesthouses: Richaldine House (+353) 26 41966, Coolcower House (+353) 26 41695, Sliabhín (+353) 26 41161, Fountain House (+353) 26 43813, Hillview (+353) 26 41878, Findus House (+353) 26 40023, Firmount House (+353) 26 41186, An Cusan (+353) 26 40018

Autumn Gathering Registration

(€10 MCI members, €20 non members) €

Name

Address

.....

Phone

Email

Club name

or individual member ☐

www.mountaineering.ie

Dinner on Saturday evening & entertainment in the Riverside Park Hotel (€30 per person) €

Vegetarian option ☐

Total enclosed €

Please return this form (photocopy if you wish), with payment made payable to Cork Mountaineering Club, to: Margaret Kennedy, Cork Mountaineering Club, 87 Summerston Road, Wilton, Cork. Tel: (+353) 86 1673577.

InsuranceFocus

The MCI provides insurance cover for its members. It is included in individual membership fees and most of our clubs take the MCI insurance cover for their members. Stuart Garland reports.

We have you covered!

MCI insurance is mainly Civil Liability cover: this protects you if another person sues you (e.g. for negligence), but some Personal Accident cover is also included. MCI members can also avail of the specialist Travel and Activity insurance policies offered by the BMC (British Mountaineering Council) without having to join them. After the United States, Ireland is the most litigious country in the world, a good reason to ensure that you have Civil Liability insurance cover for hiking, climbing and other outdoor activities. This article is intended to give members an understanding of the insurance cover that is available through the MCI. We have tried to present the information in clear, non-technical language.

What do you get for your money?

The policy includes:

1. Civil Liability Insurance – covers you for damages and legal costs arising out of third party loss, injury or damage.
2. Personal Accident Insurance – regardless of who is responsible, insurers agree to pay a stated amount in the event of one of a list of injuries.

Civil Liability explained

Basically, civil liability insurance covers you for claims made against you for third party injury or damage caused. It protects you (and your assets) if somebody takes you to court – for example, if you dislodge a rock causing injury to somebody else and that person sues you. Civil liability is a very broad term that includes:

- **Public Liability.** Injury or damage to third party property or persons.
- **Professional Indemnity.** Errors and omissions, e.g. providing advice, even simple route advice, or failure to act.
- **Directors' and Officers' Protection.** Cover for bad decisions while acting as an executive of a club or association (without which your personal assets could be at stake; a separate limit of up to £1 million per period applies for this).
- **Libel and Slander.** If clubs or individuals are sued for unintentional libel/slander (e.g. emails, published material and websites), and all other matters under Civil Law. The usual limit of cover under the MCI's Civil Liability policy is UK£5,000,000 for any one occurrence.

Personal Accident explained

Personal Accident cover provides you with a fixed benefit if you are unfortunate enough to suffer a permanent injury while engaging in one of the activities covered by our policy. The MCI Personal Accident policy also covers you for injuries sustained while travelling to or from an insured activity in Great Britain or Ireland. The benefit for permanent disability or total loss of limbs, eyes, speech or hearing is £50,000 (€73,655). This does not necessarily require the physical loss of a limb (e.g. severance), it also covers loss of use. The main thing that is covered under this policy is "Permanent and total disablement from your employment for which you are fitted by education/training/knowledge." The Personal Accident policy also includes €736 dental benefit for dental expenses,

if you damage your teeth. There is a €74 excess for dental claims (i.e. you pay the first €74). There is a death benefit under the MCI's Personal Accident policy of €7,000 and Medical Expenses sustained in a claim detailed above. There is no cover for recoverable injuries such as broken limbs.

What activities are covered?

Hillwalking, rockclimbing, rambling (including roadwalking), backpacking, bouldering, fellrunning, scrambling, alpinism and all other recognised aspects of mountaineering. Additionally, activities such as downhill skiing, ski mountaineering, mountain biking, canyoning and caving are covered, provided the activities are non-competitive and not the main activities of the club. This cover is on a worldwide basis, but it should be pointed out that your MCI insurance is not travel insurance; it doesn't cover you for baggage loss, medical expenses, cancellation, etc.

Exclusions

- Commercial activity, professional guiding and instruction.
- Persons under the age of three or over the age of 75 are excluded from the Personal Accident cover.
- Persons aged 70-75 were previously excluded from Personal Accident cover but now have 50% benefit, i.e. £25,000 (€36,830) cover.
- Personal Accident claims arising from sickness/illness (as opposed to accidental injury, which is insured), HIV, drugs, etc.
- Exclusions under the Civil Liability cover include any accident involving a motor vehicle, injury to employees and the usual war and nuclear

Your guide to MCI insurance cover

clauses (full details available from the MCI office).

Reporting an incident

All incidents involving injury or damage to an MCI member or a third party must be reported to our brokers (Perkins Slade) within 21 days. This is a requirement under the Civil Justice System in the UK (our insurers are UK-based). If you, or your club, are involved in any incident that could lead to a court case, play safe and report it immediately. In the case of a possible liability claim, the incident must be notified to the insurers by the party likely to be sued (e.g. the club, leader, etc) rather than by the injured party. With Personal Accident claims the injured party is the claimant and they should report the incident to the insurers.

In the event of a claim

You must report every claim and any incident that is likely to give rise to a claim in the future. Please contact Perkins Slade Ltd on (+44) 121 698 8040 and complete the necessary report/claim form as soon as possible to avoid prejudicing your claim. Please copy your notification to the MCI office. The insurers state that no admission, offer, promise or indemnity must be made by the insured in the event of a claim. Do not admit liability; do not make an offer or promise to pay.

Insurance for clubs

Our insurance scheme is on a compulsory basis; therefore, clubs that opt for MCI insurance must pay a premium for each of their members, not just the committee, leaders, etc. If we were just to insure those most likely to be sued, the premium would be much higher and we would be placing an unfair burden on voluntary leaders. Besides, any member could cause an accident, e.g. by leaving a gate open, allowing

animals to stray onto the road. If a club does not declare all its members to the MCI, the declared members are insured on an individual basis but the club itself has no insurance against liability, leaving the undeclared club members uninsured and personally vulnerable to a claim.

clubs that currently have no insurance are strongly advised to consider taking out insurance. Where school or university mountaineering clubs are operating under the parent body's insurance they should check that they have adequate cover for their activities.



Take care out there!
Photo: Tim Orr.

As well as walking and climbing, other club activities such as fundraising and social events are covered by your MCI insurance. New members are insured from the day they pay membership to the club, provided that the club clearly records the date of payment (e.g. by using a receipt book) and that the money and member's details are passed on to the MCI within four weeks. MCI clubs that have their own insurance policies are advised to check the limit of indemnity on their liability cover – awards of over £2 million have been made abroad, and others are pending. You should also check if you have Public Liability or the wider Civil Liability cover, and in particular check if you have cover for member-to-member liability (this is one of the benefits of our Civil Liability policy).

If re-considering your insurance options, bear in mind that if there is a claim against your policy, the MCI will be in a better position to support and advise you if you have taken out MCI insurance. Any

Footnote: This article is intended to give assistance to clubs and members in understanding the insurance cover that is available through the MCI. We have deliberately tried to use clear, non-technical language. This article is not intended as a legal interpretation of the MCI's insurance scheme and should not be used as such. For this purpose, reference should be made to the insurance policies themselves, which are available from the MCI office.

Contact details

If you have any queries on the MCI's insurance cover, please email info@mountaineering.ie

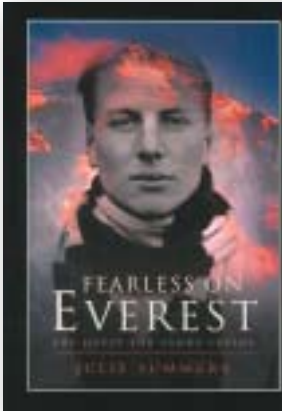
The MCI's insurance brokers are:
Perkins Slade Ltd, 3 Broadway, Broad Street, Birmingham B15 1BQ, UK
Tel: (+44) 121 698 8000
Fax: (+44) 121 625 9000

Books

Literary Editor Joss Lynam presents reviews of some recent publications.

An evocative page-turner

Frank Nugent



Fearless on Everest: The Quest for Sandy Irvine

(3rd edition)
By Julie Summers
Ripping Yarns.com, 290pp.
40pp b&w photos, maps
and illustrations.
£24.00
ISBN: 978-1-904466-31-4

*"... the goal was all but won.
God and the stars alone
could see you die."*

These lines from a verse by FT

Prior from 1924 which prefaces this republished biography of Sandy Irvine sets the tone for this telling of perhaps the most famous tragic mystery in high-altitude mountaineering history.

It is written by his grand-niece, a good storyteller, who was born into a family that possesses a unique family legend which even today echoes the mystery of Mallory and Irvine. Summers decided to share her family's insights and archive to tell us the story from Sandy Irvine's unique perspective.

Sandy Irvine was only 22 years of age when he died and this biography, in a quiet way, does his short, explosive life justice in its telling. His winning achievements as an Oxford rower in the 1923 Oxford and Cambridge university boat race showed him to be a competitive and resilient athlete. His mountaineering experience appears to be unbelievably short for his inclusion in the Everest team

of 1924, but he had impressed the influential Noel Odell during the 1923 Merton College (Oxford) Arctic Expedition to traverse Spitzbergen and he recommended Irvine to the Everest selection committee.

Irvine also clearly impressed George Mallory, the climbing leader on the mountain, with his single-mindedness, his fitness and his unselfish dedication to success for the team. He put in all of his waking hours in cold, miserable conditions trying to improve the oxygen equipment by reducing its weight, eliminating leaks and routing the tubing in the most efficient way, which reduced the possibility of the equipment getting snagged in rocks or ropes when climbing. He made himself indispensable by becoming the breathing equipment expert and the 'Mr Fixit' of the expedition. In between his climbing activities, he was daily engaged in repairing stoves, crampons, clothing and anything else that needed fixing.

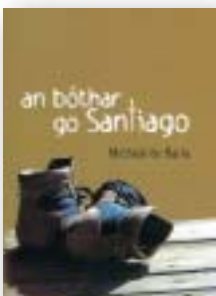
Julie Summers has told the story from Irvine's perspective in a factual way, evidenced from the considerable family correspondence with Sandy, his photographs and his personal diaries.

Did they or did they not make the summit before they died? Summers does not speculate but presents the evidence to date. The book starts slowly but grows into an evocative page-turner with a freshness and clarity not often achieved in a family biography. Irvine's reputation on the mountain with the porters and team was rated alongside his mentor Odell's for showing the rest "how to play for the team" (Norton). Summers also does Odell justice – he spent a staggering eleven days above 23,000ft searching gallantly for his two missing friends when he climbed twice to 27,000ft without oxygen.

This is how history should be written: factually yet quietly stirring. This book will find a place on my bookshelf, and my esteem for the 1924 Everest team has been greatly elevated.

Dialann ar thuras stairiúil Críostaí

Liam Convery



An Bóthar go Santiago

By Mícheál de Barra
Cois Life Teoranta, 340pp.
c100 pictiúirí daite, 1 léarscáil daite.
€18.00 ISBN: 978-1-901176-72-8

Shiúil mé féin agus Bill Hannon an bealach stairiúil seo deich mbliain ó shin. Rathaim go bhfuil craiceann na fírinne go láidir i gcúntas Michealeni Antonium Barry a léiríonn 35 lá gur chaith an t-údar ag

siúl an 900 ciliméadar ó St Jean Pied de Port sna Piréiní go

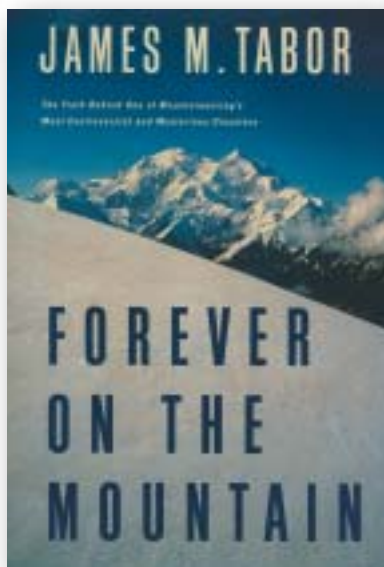
Santiago, agus siar arís go Deireadh an Domhain (Finistere).

Leabhair álainn dea-léirithe atá ann, é breac le hagusíní suimiúla, ina measc ceann a dhéanann tagairt den ghaol fada saibhir atá ann idir na Gaeil agus an Camino. Tá aistear an údair léirithe go maith le flúirse grianghrafanna, grianghrafanna a éiríonn níos lú agus an t-aistear ag dul ar aghaidh! Mar chuid den leabhar tá liosta de láithreáin ghréasáin úsáideacha ach fágadh cúpla suíomh suantasach ar lár: Cumann Chairde San Séamus in Éirinn ag www.stjamesirl.com agus an Confraternity of Saint James sa Bhreatain ag www.csj.org.uk.

Is féidir an saothar seo a léamh mar dhialann phearsanta nó mar threoirleabhar don turas stairiúil Críostaí. Rianaíonn an t-údar a chonair féin, na dúichí agus na daoine a bhuaileann leis. Tá léaspairtí gaoise ann, agus noda praiticiúla, léirithe go beacht aige. Saothar do lucht taighde agus lucht taistil, spreagadh meoin agus anama.

America's 'most tragic disaster'

Joss Lynam



Forever on the Mountain

By James M Tabor
WW Norton, 401pp.
16pp b&w photos, 3 maps.
npq. ISBN: 978-0-06174-1

The subtitle for this book is "The Truth Behind One of Mountaineering's Most Controversial and Mysterious Disasters." It is a dissection and reconstruction of the Wilcox Mount McKinley Expedition in 1967 during which seven of the twelve members died.

The original party comprised nine members, who mostly hardly knew each other, and some of whose climbing capacities were suspect. The National Park Service required a minimum of four members in any team and, when one member of another party of four dropped out, the remaining three were attached to the nine, some of whom resented the newcomers.

The leader (who had incurred Brad Washburn's disapproval) was weak and, though the original nine mostly supported him, the threesome were openly contemptuous. It was a collection heading for trouble. When combined with a hurricane-strength storm of unusual duration and the reluctance of the Park Service to believe that the party was in danger, it resulted in what has been called America's most tragic disaster.

When the storm struck, it found the leader and the threesome (who had already summited) back at the 15,000ft camp with another climber. They survived. Five seem to have been caught descending from the summit; two more were probably at a camp at 17,900ft. All seven died. A rescue party found two bodies on the summit slopes, and a third in the top camp.

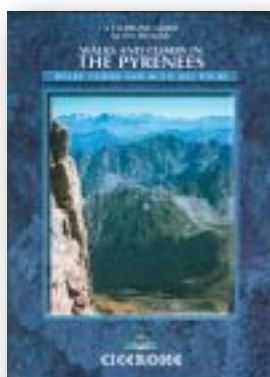
The leader was blamed, particularly (and not unexpectedly) in a book by the leader of the threesome.

The author of the book has interviewed all the living members and studied all the NPS radio records. But, using the experiences of others in similar conditions, he has also reconstructed the possible thoughts, conversations and actions of the dead mountaineers. However, I feel this is out of place in a book searching for truth.

Tabor is endeavouring to discover the truth; he finds errors and inconsistencies in reports, articles and one book, but he is compassionate, never critical. He has produced a 400-page book of such interest and intensity that it is hard to put down. It is easy to see why it was short-listed for the Boardman-Tasker prize.

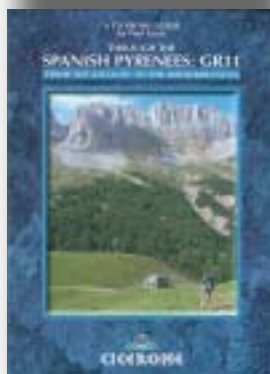
Two top-grade guidebooks for the Pyrenees

Joss Lynam



Walks and Climbs in the Pyrenees (5th edition)

By Kev Reynolds
Cicerone, 415pp.
Numerous colour photos,
area maps.
£15.00 978-1-85284-470-7



Through the Spanish Pyrenees: GR11 (4th edition)

By Paul Lucia
Cicerone, 250pp.
Many colour photos,
46 route maps.
£12.95 ISBN 978-1-85284-524-7

These are new editions of two top grade guidebooks by the best authors. They are both very well illustrated and are in the usual Cicerone style.

Kev Reynolds manages to fit 170 routes into this pocket-sized,

plastic-covered book, with a largely rewritten text and including three new areas in the Central Pyrenees. He includes a wonderful variety of good routes, from Grade 1 walks to mountain scrambles (including an AD climb, the Vignemale) and from one-hour strolls to multi-day walks. There are simple area maps that basically only tell you where the routes are, so you would need to take the IGN 1:25,000 map for whatever area you choose to visit.

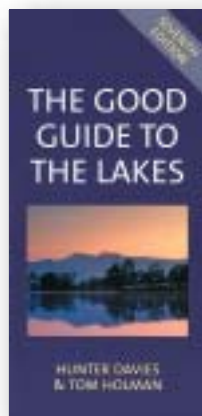
Some areas have enough routes to keep a good walker or a relaxing mountaineer busy for a week, but others only have two or three. There is information about the huts on both sides of the frontier.

Paul Lucia's book is quite a contrast, detailing the day-by-day trekking along the Spanish side of the range, from Irún on the Atlantic to Cadaqués on the Mediterranean. There is a description and map (occasionally two) for each of the 46 days of the trek. The walking time each day is mostly around six hours. The maps, though small, are good; every facility from bar/restaurant to manned refuge is marked, but you are still recommended to carry the relevant 1:40,000 or similar-scale maps. The author warns that, especially in Navarre, the waymarking may be poor. In addition to the hut at the end of each stage, details are given of all huts or camping possibilities on or near the route. All this is packed into 250 pages with a plastic cover, total weight 300g, not an excessive load for a backpacker.

Sadly, the author died in July 2007 after completing this edition. He had walked the whole La Senda, as the route is called, the previous year.

Certainly a good guide...

Ruth Lynam



The Good Guide to the Lakes

By Hunter Davies & Tom Holman

Frances Lincoln, 304pp.

Many small b&w photos.

£7.99 ISBN: 978-0-7112-2861-0

The authors of this guide have set the bar very high with the name, *The Good Guide*, and it is just asking to be read more critically than an ordinary guidebook. And the introduction is rather too pleased with itself for my taste.

On persevering, though, this is a very readable guidebook, Hunter Davies and/or Tom Holman invest something of their own

personality in much of the book, and are open with their opinions. For example, the criteria for a “family walk” are clearly laid out, so

that one knows what to expect, though only the toughest families will undertake the 16km option.

In a general guide, the mountains and fells must take their place among the many other attractions of the Lakes. They are covered well from the casual walker's point of view, but this is not a mountain or a walking guidebook.

To quibble: top 10 lists (of, for example, fells) are rather restricting, forcing exclusion or inclusion to make up the numbers. And, surprisingly, swimming in the lakes, one of the pleasures of my trips to the Lakes, is pretty much discounted.

Particularly enjoyable are the background information sections on dry stone walls and sheep, advice on how to move into the Lakes and, of course, the list of daft tourist questions.

Presumably on cost grounds the pictures are limited to (very effective) old photographs, but a much more serious omission is maps! There is one very small general map near the start which gives little help in locating most of the places mentioned.

Without reading all the myriad of other guidebooks to the Lakes I cannot make comparisons, but apart from the lack of maps this is certainly a good general guide to the Lakes.

Treks in a remote and enchanting country

Patrick O'Sullivan



Bhutan: A Trekker's Guide (2nd edition)

By Bart Jordans

Cicerone, 332pp.

Many colour photos & maps

£15.00 ISBN: 13-978-1-85284-551-7

The first edition of this guide to trekking in Bhutan was only published in 2005 (see *IML* 77), so this second edition has been produced less than three years later, seemingly because of the rapid pace of

development in Bhutan. It is by the same author, Bart Jordans, and it seemed to me, in fact, that you had to look quite hard to spot any

major differences in this new edition.

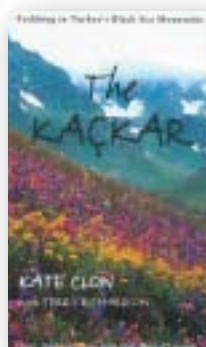
In the three years since the first edition, there have admittedly been improvements in the infrastructure in Bhutan, a remote Buddhist kingdom at the eastern end of the Himalayan chain, and the numbers of tour operators, hotels and restaurants have all increased, as have the numbers of tourists visiting each year, up from 9,249 in 2004 to 17,344 in 2006, only a small proportion of whom (c1,500-2,000) actually do any trekking.

Some of the treks described in the first edition have been left out because they have either not been opened to trekkers or they have been replaced by new routes which are included in the new edition. The popular routes, such as the Druk Path and the trek to Jhomolhari Base Camp, remain unchanged.

The book retains its user-friendly Cicerone format and its strong point is still the abundance of information that it contains about the culture and the environment in this enchanting country.

For hillwalkers looking for somewhere new

Joss Lynam



The Kackar: Trekking in Turkey's Black Sea Mountains

By Kate Clow, with Terry Richardson

Upcountry

(Turkey), 176pp.

15 colour plates,

folded map.

£13.99

ISBN: 978-0-9639218-5-0

The Kackar is a granite massif in the northeast of Turkey overlooking the Black Sea. It is probably not known to many, if any, Irish hillwalkers, but the text and photographs in this guide show that it is a very attractive area for hillwalkers looking for somewhere new.

There is a very comprehensive introduction, including how to get there, when to go (July and August are probably best), local supplies and shopping, how to deal with the locals (friendly, but Muslim, so not too much bare flesh), looking after yourself (including how to deal with large dogs), Pontic history and what to look for.

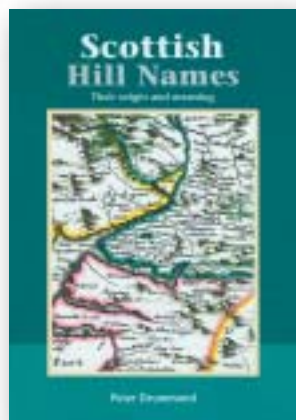
The book describes 32 walking routes in

these mountains. Split up into five areas, the walks described vary from a couple of hours in length to multi-day treks and peaks on which an ice axe is advisable. They are not way-marked but GPS points for the routes are provided in the guide – an up-to-date touch indeed. You can't buy large-scale maps – it seems the army have them tucked away – but there is a very fine contoured fold-out map in the guide which the authors assure readers will suffice for following the routes.

The guide is illustrated with some lovely colour photographs; one depicts a metre-high cairn of single stones perched one above the other.

A fascinating work on Scottish hill names

Michael Fewer



Scottish Hill Names: Their Origin and Meaning

(2nd edition)

By Peter Drummond
Scottish Mountaineering Trust,
241pp.

Many line drawings,
colour photos and maps.

Index, bibliography.

£15.00

ISBN 978-0-907521-95-2

A fascinating work, but then Joss Lynam knew I would find it such when he asked me to review it!

Apart from informing us about

types of terrain and imparting clues to history, an understanding of the names of the places through which we pass creates a certain romantic conspiracy between ourselves and the landscape. They also tell us a little of how the people of long ago saw and

understood their surroundings.

Much of this material, certainly at the scale of field names, was lost in Scotland at the time of the clearances, but the names of impressive features such as hills and mountains have thrived.

This is a reader-friendly and certainly a hillwalker-friendly book with explanations, some of essay length and fascinating, of over 1,600 Scottish highland place names. Many of the references will ring familiar, on the one hand to those who have walked and climbed in the uplands of Scotland, but also to those with some vestige remaining of the Gaelic they learned in childhood.

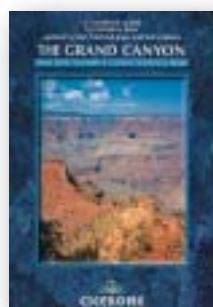
Scots Gaelic is a close cousin to our own, and even those with long-ago school Irish will understand many of the words that form the place names. It is particularly interesting to see that, after exporting Gaelic to the north of Britain all those centuries ago, we later re-imported words, but in an altered form, and how some common Irish Gaelic words, such as Slieve, for some strange reason, didn't spread beyond the coastal hills of Scotland.

Drummond deals with what might be a boring subject for some with a refreshing lightness and a wealth of good humour.

The text is decorated by a mixture of colour photography, beautiful pen drawings and fragments of fascinating old maps: a nice addition to any bookshelf.

'A gigantic statement for even nature to make'

Joss Lynam



The Grand Canyon with Zion and Bryce Canyon National Parks

(2nd edition)

By Constance Roos (updated by Sian Pritchard Jones and Bob Gibbons)
Cicerone, 278pp.

22 full-page colour photos,
numerous sketch maps.

£14.00 ISBN: 978-1-85284-453-0

"A gigantic statement for even nature to make" is how John Muir once described

the Grand Canyon. The Indian Paiute tribe call it Kaibab or "mountain lying down" and certainly it feels like a mountain climbing out of it. This second edition was updated by Sian Pritchard Jones and Bob Gibbons, after Constance Roos had been killed by lightning in Corsica.

The guide describes some 80 trails in the three canyons. First-time visitors will probably be most interested in the rim-to-river trails of the Grand Canyon – they list seven from the very popular South Rim and five from the less accessible North Rim. Descent is around 4-6 hours; getting out again will take you 7-9 hours and quite possibly longer.

As well as a description, each trail has a sketch map and route profile. An important feature of the description is where you can get water, very important when the summer temperatures can reach 38°C. The trail profile is useful since height differences are of the order of 1,500m. The maps make effective use of hill-shading to give a good idea of the topography.

The photographs are excellent, bringing out the red, purple, blue,

brown and grey colours of the canyon, showing the near-vertical prows of rock, contrasting with the level rim, sharp against the sky.

Hard to see the other canyons as anything but anti-climactic, but the photographs belie that – amazing, swirling rock formations in Zion, while in Bryce there are more massed pinnacles than even Gaudi could conceive.

Got your summer holiday
guidebooks yet?

The MCI 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 MCI office on (01) 6251115 or email info@mountaineering.ie.

Joss Books

Mission: Nepal

INET is helping to shine the light of education in Nepal

High up in the Solu Khumbu region of Nepal, but below the popular tourist airport at Lukla, you will see a very different Nepal than the one you experience on the popular tourist trails above the airport up to Everest Base Camp.

Here, a network of tracks winds through the countryside, past farmers working in their fields, brightly dressed women on their way to markets or to the nearest settlement and children in uniforms making their way to school. The Nepalese people use these tracks for their daily business and they are mainly well-maintained by the villagers.



Krishna Rai, head guide at Wilderplaces Nepal, on his visit to Ireland in May.
Photo: INET.

There are few tourists in this area but treks can be organised by local people, who know the trails intimately. These treks follow spectacular ridges where you can look down into the deep river valleys and have views up to Everest and the other high Himalayan peaks in the distance. Among the other pleasures of such a trek will be trekking through cultivated terraces and small fields where organic farming methods are practised. These valleys are home to people from several distinct tribal groups, including the Kaling Rai, who are farmers, although now they are also becoming involved in mountain tourism; the Dalits, who often work as blacksmiths; and the better known Sherpas.

Unlike many treks in Nepal, on these treks you will have an opportunity to meet local people and to move through the countryside appreciating their lifestyle at close quarters. These friendly and

resourceful people have only recently emerged from a difficult period when they were caught between Maoists and the military forces, during an uprising against what the Maoists regarded as an outdated monarchy and a corrupt government. Now that peace has returned to the countryside, there is a sense of optimism and a constructive energy abroad. A quiet revolution has manifested itself in the building of more schools and in other educational projects. More rural electrification projects are also being developed using mini-hydroelectric schemes.

Irish hillwalkers and climbers who would like a different and more complete Nepalese experience, while also supporting sustainable mountain tourism, should try a trek through the Kaku valley to meet the communities there for themselves. Or perhaps you would prefer to climb peaks in more remote parts of the country or maybe trek to Everest Base Camp. Whatever your preference, you should try doing it with these hardworking and cultured people who will give you a very different insight into Nepal than many other trekking companies do. On these treks, all of the cooking staff have been well trained in hygienic practices and are ruled over by an indomitable head cook or *sirdar*, Jehta. The trekking staff are mainly members of the Rai community and are skilled in looking after tourists. All are paid a reasonable wage and are well-equipped for the various weather conditions you may meet on trek.

Dhana Khaling Rai, a qualified teacher, is on the school management committee in

Phuleli, where a new school has just been opened, supported by INET. He also runs a trekking company, Wilderplaces Nepal (www.wintreks.com), which organises very enjoyable trekking and mountain climbing trips in Nepal. Last month, INET facilitated a visit to Ireland and Europe by Krishna Rai, the head guide at Wilderplaces Nepal, who arrived in Ireland on May 2nd. His visit will broaden his considerable skills with experience of European climbing and Alpine mountaineering, and also improve his already excellent English. He will go to Gartan Outdoor Centre in Donegal under the guidance of MCI Board member Ursula MacPherson and will also be climbing on many Irish crags. After this, he is off to Chamonix to spend some time with mountain guide Robbie Fenlon, of UIAGM, as well as to attend this year's MCI Alpine Meet in July. ■

Jane Fenlon is a Director and the Secretary of INET.



Dhana Khaling Rai trekking to Phuleli.
Photo: Mary Solan.

Make INET the mountaineers' project

The Irish Nepalese Educational Trust (INET) has built and refurbished schools in the Solu-Khumbu region of Nepal at the request of its Nepalese friends and the community at Phuleli. It has also provided financial support for various educational projects; sponsoring children's primary and secondary education, funding third level education and contributing towards community projects. With Alexandra College in Dublin, INET has funded a Montessori school for under 6s, which means that older children in families can attend school instead of staying home, minding the younger ones, while their parents work in the fields. INET also collaborates in raising funds for Cerebral Palsy Nepal who have built a fine hospital and recently a school near Kathmandu. Tralee Mountaineering Club already contributes an annual sum towards INET's work. If every mountaineering club in the country were to collect just a small sum, it could make a huge difference to the lives of some of the Nepali people living in remote rural areas. If you would like more information, look at the INET website, www.inetireland.ie, or contact Jane Fenlon, INET's secretary, at jane Fenlon@eircom.net. She will be happy to send material to you.

Uinseann Mac Eoin

Ardent protector of Ireland's built heritage



Uinseann Mac Eoin.
Photo: Mac Eoin collection.

UINSEANN MAC EOIN was born into a strongly Republican family in Pomeroy, Co Tyrone, but his family moved to Dublin while he was a child and he was a boarder at Blackrock College. Although not closely involved with the IRA, he was imprisoned for a year in Arbour Hill in 1940 and then spent three years interned in the Curragh. He made use of this time to do a correspondence course in architecture. He qualified as a town planner in 1948 and, after working for Michael Scott and Dublin Corporation, set up his own architectural practice.

As a member of the Irish Georgian Society and the Dublin Civic Group, Uinseann became what has been described as the tireless protector of Dublin's heritage. As editor first of *Build* magazine and then of *Plan*, he campaigned fiercely for the conservation of Georgian Dublin with a fine flow of invective, castigating planners, developers and all the other bodies bent on its destruction. He also made good use of the correspondence columns of *The Irish Times*. He loved being, as his

eldest son Nuada said, "the sand in a machine."

He did not just write; with his wife Margaret he formed a company that bought houses which were at risk of demolition. Eventually they owned three houses in Henrietta Street and five in Mountjoy Square. Some were let cheaply to artists; his architectural practice was based in one of the Mountjoy Square houses.

Uinseann was a very competent mountaineer. In 1987, he became the first Irishman to climb all of the Munros and he also climbed all of the Irish 2,000-foot mountains.

A close friend, Dáithí Scolard, catches well the spirit of Uinseann on the hills:-

"My first sight of Uinseann was at the rear of Aughavannagh Youth Hostel at An Óige's 21st birthday celebrations in 1952. He was standing quietly to the side of a throng of eager young workers preparing to make their way back to Dublin's Mansion House as a finale to the celebrations. Later that night we greeted the group as they filed in tired and dusty.

"Later that year, in September, Tom Quinn invited me to take part in a weekend in the west. The word Connemara flashed before me as the Simca sped westwards piloted by Uinseann. My sense of euphoria was shattered as a casual remark revealed that the weekend's promenade over the Mám Torc ranges was in fact planned by Uinseann and Tom as a record attempt for the walk from Mám Cross to Leenane. Finding a small hayshed for the night did little to still my misgivings. Sunday dawned bright and clear and our expectations were fully met by a glorious day.

"Fast moving saw us together that evening at Leenane. We were very warm and I remember my glass of Guinness tasted dry. Uinseann, to my amazement, had a small whiskey. Although we had separated on the peaks during the day, our plan of covering all the ins and outs of the ridge paid off as I half-ran the long pull-up to Leitir Briceáin. A glint of light caught my eye and I picked up a very fine knife which later proved to be Uinseann's. The knife had been bought on a walking trip to Greece sometime

previously, and he assumed that the knife was gone for good. We shared his delight at finding his knife again.

"That initial encounter set the scene for a lifelong association which never faltered. It took us all over the Scottish highlands in winter and summer conditions, especially Nevis, Glencoe, Glen Affric and Torridon. Numerous visits to Alpine areas especially gladdened his heart and gave him ample scope for a favourite pastime, enjoying the craic and repartee after a testing day and looking forward to a meal washed down by a bottle of red wine. He added the Pyrenees to a lengthening CV and was always receptive to fresh ideas and suggestions for extending his range. When resting in a tent he always had at hand the latest issue of *Inniu* and *Comhar*, as well as a favourite book. The evenings were never dull or lacking in controversy. At such times, life was good.

"Ar ndóigh, bhí a chroí go hiomlán taobhach leis an náisiúnachas agus d'fhan sé dílis ar feadh a shaol.

'Sé mo laoch, mo ghile mear; Sé mo Sheasar, gile mear.'

"Is cinnte go mbraitheann Margaret agus an clan go mór uatha é, mar a braithead féin go deo.

"Ar dheis Dé go raibh a h-anam dhílis."

Uinseann Mac Eoin, born 1920, died December 28th, 2007.



On the hill.
Photo: Mac Eoin collection.

Barbara Lennon

Wayfarer leader who cared for the environment



Barbara, who was for many years a very active member of the Wayfarers' Association hillwalking club, died unexpectedly last December.

She joined the Wayfarers in 1979 on her return from England and soon became an active member.

She loved walking in the mountains and the company of her fellow hikers, and she quickly became an accomplished hillwalker, rising to the challenge of long-distance hikes such as the Lug Walk, the Glover, and others. She also became a skillful and caring leader, and an expert navigator, unflustered by challenges or setbacks.

Barbara treasured hillwalking, and the Wayfarers became very precious to her. She joined the committee at an early stage and over the years served many times in various positions, including as Chairperson and as Secretary. She also served for a time on a sub-committee of the MCI.

As a Wayfarer, she competently organised many weekends away and was always a willing and regular leader. As recently as last November, she led a

short Sunday hike from the Shay Elliot memorial.

She had a great love of the hills and the countryside, the plants and wildlife. She delighted in introducing people to new walks but was always aware of the impact we can all have on the delicate environment.

She was an active member of Mountain Meitheal and an enthusiastic advocate for 'Leave No Trace.' Woe betide any walker leaving behind more than a footprint!

Barbara is sadly missed by her sisters and their families, her fellow Wayfarers and hillwalkers, and her wide circle of friends.

May she rest in peace.

Ted McGrath, Wayfarers' Association

Barbara Lennon, born 1951, died December 2007.