

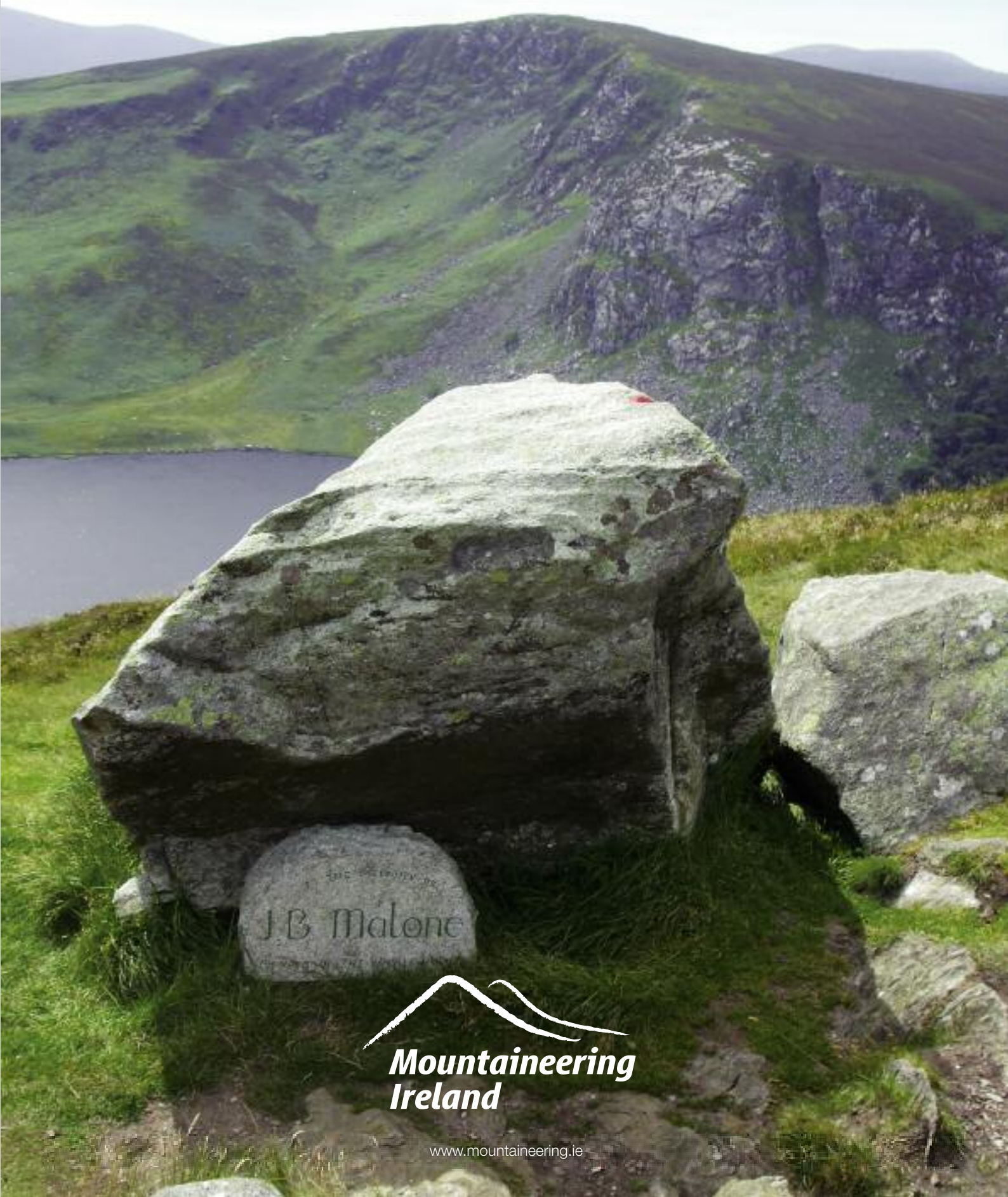
# irish mountain log

THE MAGAZINE FOR WALKERS AND CLIMBERS IN IRELAND

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*Mountaineering  
Ireland*

[www.mountaineering.ie](http://www.mountaineering.ie)



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The cross on Carrauntoohil,  
Co Kerry, in a mid-winter sunset.  
Photo: Tim Gallys.

# Name change

## The MCI changes its name to Mountaineering Ireland

**M**OUNTAINEERING IRELAND, the new name for the MCI, was voted in by the members present at the MCI's Annual General Meeting 2009 at Knockree Youth Hostel, Glencree, Co Wicklow on Saturday 21 February.

Work had been going on behind the scenes for some time on the rebranding of the organisation. It was felt that the word "Council" was too stuffy and that the Council structure was no longer part of the organisation.

As part of our Strategic Development Plan 2009-2013 consultation process, it was felt by members that a more inclusive name would better engage new members and reflect the sport and activity of mountaineering.

Mountaineering is the sport, activity or profession of walking, hiking, trekking and climbing mountains. We work for

and represent those involved in hillwalking, climbing, bouldering and alpinism. Mountaineering Ireland is a 32-county organisation which has a membership in excess of 9,650 individual and club members in over 130 clubs.

Mountaineering Ireland is the national governing body for the sport of mountaineering in Ireland and is recognised as such by the Irish Sports Council, Sport Northern Ireland, the International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation (UIAA) and the International Federation of Sport Climbing (IFSC).

While the name change comes into effect immediately, primarily you will see the new identity first on our website and in our e-zine. It may take some time before you see our new identity on our paper-based resources, as we will run down our stocks before introducing any new materials in order to keep our costs

in the change-over as low as possible.

As a consequence of the name change, a new Memorandum of Association and Articles of Association of the organisation were approved at the AGM to reflect the name change. An additional element was also added into the Mountaineering Ireland Grievance Procedure at the AGM which uses Just Sport Ireland as a mediation and arbitration process. Copies of both documents can be downloaded from our website, [www.mountaineering.ie](http://www.mountaineering.ie).

**Stuart Garland**  
Chief Officer





## WELCOME TO...

### ISSUE 89

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

#### Mountaineering Ireland

Sport HQ, 13 Joyce Way  
Park West Business Park  
Dublin 12, Ireland  
Tel: (+353 1) 625 1115  
Fax: (+353 1) 625 1116  
info@mountaineering.ie  
www.mountaineering.ie

#### Hot Rock Climbing Wall

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

#### Editor: Patrick O'Sullivan

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

#### Features Editor: Peter O'Neill

iml-featureseditor@mountaineering.ie

#### Literary Editor: Joss Lynam

Tel: (+353 1) 288 4672 (pm)  
iml-literaryeditor@mountaineering.ie

**Advertising:** Mountaineering Ireland  
logads@mountaineering.ie

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

**Printing:** Kilkenny People Printing  
Tel (+353 5677) 63366

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

**Copy deadline** for the Summer 2009 issue of the Irish Mountain Log is Saturday, May 16th, 2009.

#### PARTICIPATION AND RISK

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



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# Get more involved

**S**pring is here and our thoughts are turning to the wide open spaces. With the stretch in the evenings, it is possible to be more ambitious during the days that we do get out on the hills, and even the longer evenings give us the opportunity to get a short walk in while returning in safety before darkness falls...or before we do!

For those who are still planning their summer holidays, apart from information about the usual Mountaineering Ireland Alpine Summer Meet which this year is being held at Innertkirchen in the Swiss Bernese Oberland, in this issue we also have reports of walking trips to various other parts of the European Alps, which may also whet your appetite for trips further afield. For the rock climbers, we have a report on the joys of climbing in southern India.

Apart from the sense of turning the corner and heading into the halcyon days of spring and summer, the first three months of the year also bring the AGM season. We have various reports from this year's MCI AGM when the name change to Mountaineering Ireland for our sport's National Governing Body was approved. Sadly, despite being held in the splendid surroundings of Glencree in the recently refurbished Knockree An Óige Hostel, the AGM was very poorly attended again.

Those present heard reports of the significant progress made in the last year by Chief Officer, Stuart Garland, and the other staff members, supported by President, Alan Tees, Chairperson, Ruairí Ó Conchúir, the Board and the other volunteers who clearly make such an important contribution to our organisation's development and work. 'A lot done, a lot more to do' was the message that came through repeatedly, together with an emphasis on the importance of the contributions of the volunteers.

As the NGB for our sport goes from strength to strength, in these difficult times financially we should all give a thought to contributing to its work. Perhaps, you can start by planning to attend next year's AGM or one of the other meets planned in the coming spring, summer and autumn months?

Patrick O'Sullivan  
Editor, Irish Mountain Log

Patrick O'Sullivan



**ON THE COVER:** The JB Malone memorial on the Wicklow Way overlooking Lough Tay and Luggala, County Wicklow.  
Photo: Patrick O'Sullivan.

**THIS PAGE:** Descending from Lugnaquilla, Co Wicklow, in the aftermath of the big snowfall in February 2009.  
Photo: Declan Carolan (UCD Mountaineering Club).



# News

Get all the latest news at [www.mountaineering.ie](http://www.mountaineering.ie)

## Alpine Meet

### Come along this summer

HAVE YOU made your plans for the summer yet? If not, why not join us in Innertkirchen in the Bernese Oberland, Switzerland, this July for Mountaineering Ireland's Summer Alpine Meet? There is an even wider range of courses on offer this year, from a five-day walk from Meiringen to Kandersteg, through to our new, one-day walking climbing courses and right up to our Alpine courses.

There is something to suit everyone no matter what your interest or budget. Alternatively, if you would like to do your own thing in Innertkirchen, you can join us on the campsite any time between Sat 4 July and Sat 18 July. Please remember that if you want to stay on the campsite you must reserve your place with us by completing the application form. If you'd like more information or have a question, please email us at [summeralpine@mountaineering.ie](mailto:summeralpine@mountaineering.ie).



### GENERAL ENQUIRIES

[info@mountaineering.ie](mailto:info@mountaineering.ie)

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### President

Alan Tees

[president@mountaineering.ie](mailto:president@mountaineering.ie)

#### Chairman

Ruairí Ó Conchúir

[chairperson@mountaineering.ie](mailto:chairperson@mountaineering.ie)

#### Honorary Treasurer

David Batt

[treasurer@mountaineering.ie](mailto:treasurer@mountaineering.ie)

### BOARD MEMBERS

Tomás Alyward

[tomas-board@mountaineering.ie](mailto:tomas-board@mountaineering.ie)

Pat Kenneally

[pat-board@mountaineering.ie](mailto:pat-board@mountaineering.ie)

Vincent McAlinden

[vincent-board@mountaineering.ie](mailto:vincent-board@mountaineering.ie)

Deirdre McCarthy

[deirdre-board@mountaineering.ie](mailto:deirdre-board@mountaineering.ie)

Jerry O'Dwyer

[jerry-board@mountaineering.ie](mailto:jerry-board@mountaineering.ie)

Patrick O'Sullivan

[patrick-board@mountaineering.ie](mailto:patrick-board@mountaineering.ie)

Ross Millar

[ross-board@mountaineering.ie](mailto:ross-board@mountaineering.ie)

Dawson Stelfox

[dawson-board@mountaineering.ie](mailto:dawson-board@mountaineering.ie)

### STAFF AT SPORT HQ

#### Chief Officer

Stuart Garland

[stuart@mountaineering.ie](mailto:stuart@mountaineering.ie)

#### Administrator

Una Feeney

[una@mountaineering.ie](mailto:una@mountaineering.ie)

#### Accounts Administrator

Terry Canavan

[terry@mountaineering.ie](mailto:terry@mountaineering.ie)

#### Training Officer

Tim Orr

[tim@mountaineering.ie](mailto:tim@mountaineering.ie)

#### Training Administrator

Kate Hebblethwaite

[kate@mountaineering.ie](mailto:kate@mountaineering.ie)

#### Access & Conservation Officer

Aodhnait Carroll

[aodhnait@mountaineering.ie](mailto:aodhnait@mountaineering.ie)

### STAFF AT TOLLYMORE

#### NI Youth Development Officer

Angela Carlin

[angela@mountaineering.ie](mailto:angela@mountaineering.ie)

## We join sport climbing federation

WE ARE delighted to announce that the International Federation of Sport Climbing (IFSC) Plenary Assembly has formally accepted the application of Mountaineering Ireland for membership. The IFSC now spans 75 countries and has 83 member organisations. Membership of IFSC will allow Mountaineering Ireland members to participate in European and world championship climbing events, which ties in with our Strategic Development Plan for 2009-2013.

At the same Plenary Assembly session, Arco di Trento (Italy) and Imst (Austria) were elected to host the World Championship 2011 and the World Youth Championship 2011 respectively.

The IFSC was established in 2007 in the place of the International Council for

Competition Climbing, which had been in existence since 1997. In April 2007, the General Association of International Sports Federations General Meeting accepted the IFSC as a new member. A few weeks later, the International World Games Association also did the same, confirming that there would be a climbing competition in the 2009 Kaohsiung World Games. In December 2007, the International Olympic Committee granted provisional recognition to the IFSC, welcoming sport climbing into the Olympic movement.

● For more information on the IFSC, please visit the website [www.ifsc-climbing.org](http://www.ifsc-climbing.org).



# Scaling paper mountains

## Mountaineering Ireland catalogues its library

OFT-RUMOURED but rarely seen, the Mountaineering Ireland library holds near-mythical status among the membership. Reports of lofty vaults lined with dusty tomes of mountain lore have given rise to comparisons with the Library of Alexander because of its elusiveness and inaccessibility.

Last year, I donned horn-rimmed spectacles and leather-elbowed cardigan and began the mammoth task of cataloguing the piles of diverse books that make up the library. Several months later I emerged, spectacles askew and cardie slightly moth-eaten, to announce that the herculean task was complete. Forgotten accounts of Irish first ascents had been plucked from obscurity and strange volumes on long-obsolete climbing techniques found.

The library contains almost 2,000 volumes and includes texts on national and international climbing and walking routes, maps, mountaineering biographies and travel literature. It also holds a comprehensive range of back issues of many outdoor adventure magazines such as *Walking World Ireland*, *Outsider*, *Trail* and *Climber*. The collection is now all held in the Mountaineering Ireland office at Sport HQ and is open for any member to come and browse through. Most texts are available for (free) loan, although p&p will be charged on all items that members require to be posted.

A full library catalogue will be added to the website over the coming months, with regular updates made as further books are added. Copies of all books reviewed in the *Mountain Log* are put in the library. Requests for loans of items from the library can be made by members by phone, fax or email and they can either be posted or held for collection.

With your help, the intention is to establish the

library as Ireland's premier collection of mountaineering literature and an unrivalled resource for all enthusiasts, be they armchair travellers or expedition planners. To this end, if anyone has any unwanted copies of a hillwalking magazine, an unread copy of Krakauer's *Into Thin*



Melk Abbey Library in Melk, Austria. Easily confused with the Mountaineering Ireland library.

*Air* or a duplicate copy of OS Map 52 that they would consider donating to the library, please contact us on the new Library Hotline at [library@mountaineering.ie](mailto:library@mountaineering.ie). No item will be refused. Similarly if, in perusing the online catalogue, you see any glaring omissions, get in touch and we'll endeavour to plug the paper gap.

Great adventures are often inspired by the written word. In *This Game of Ghosts* (1993), Joe Simpson recalls reading Heinrich Harrer's *The White Spider* at age 14 and vowing that he would never be a mountaineer. He recalled that "the book held me spellbound and terrified." However, it was to these very accounts that he subsequently turned in preparing for his own ascent of the Eiger's North Face. "Reading the books had been my way of breaking down the psychological baggage associated with the wall," he wrote (*The Beckoning Silence*, 2002).

I hope that the library may help to inspire exciting adventures or, at least, adventurous daydreams. – (Kate Hebblethwaite)

## MCI Annual Review 2008 available now

THE ANNUAL REVIEW 2008 for the MCI (now Mountaineering Ireland) is now available for download from our website [www.mountaineering.ie](http://www.mountaineering.ie). Launched at our AGM in February, the report highlights our achievements, activities and programmes for the year of 2008. A limited number of hard copies of the review have been sent to club secretaries for circulation to their members. If you would like to receive your own copy, please call the office on (+353 1) 625 1115 or email [info@mountaineering.ie](mailto:info@mountaineering.ie). Available while stocks last.



## Calendar of events

For more information about any of these events, please see the relevant section of this magazine or the events section of the website, [www.mountaineering.ie](http://www.mountaineering.ie).

### Fri to Sun 10-12 April

Mountain Leader Assessment, Kerry

### Sat 25 April

Youth Climbing Competition, Gortatole, Fermanagh

### Sat & Sun 25-26 April

Walking Group Leader refresher workshop

### Sat 6 June

Single Pitch Award refresher workshop, Dublin

### Sat 4 July to Sat 18 July

Summer Alpine Meet, Innertkirchen, Switzerland

### Sat 11 July

Multi Pitch Award refresher workshop, Wicklow

### Sat & Sun 1-2 August

Multi Pitch Award assessment, Wicklow

### Sat 8 August

Single Pitch Award refresher, Clare

### Sat & Sun 12-13 Sept

Volunteer Training Officer workshop, Donegal

### Fri to Sun 2-4 October

Walking Group Leader assessment

### Fri to Sun 9-11 October

Autumn Gathering, An Daingean (Dingle), Kerry

### Sat & Sun 10-11 October

BOS Providers Symposium, Kerry

### Sat & Sun 17-18 October

Mountain Leader refresher workshop, Kerry

### Sat to Mon 24-26 October

Mountain Leader assessment, Connemara

Free taster sessions in hillwalking and rockclimbing will run throughout July and August. Dates and locations will be advertised in the Training and Safety sections of the website.

## Annual Accounts for November 2007 to October 2008

WHEN VIEWING the annual accounts, it should be remembered that they are a presentation of 'Income and Expenditure' and that they are not a 'Profit and Loss' account.

One of the main reasons why the expenditure of Mountaineering Ireland increased in the 2008 financial year (November 2007 to October 2008) was that a full complement of professional staff had been recruited since the previous year and they were busy developing their programmes and work areas, which involved additional costs.

There are perhaps three main areas of expenditure in the accounts that are showing an excess of expenditure over income in the current year. They are:

**1. Guidebooks** During the year, the we produced and published *Climbs in the Burren and Aran Islands*. As this was published quite late in the year, there was only a small element of sales prior to the end of the financial year on 31st October. We are currently carrying a stock of these guidebooks and expected sales of these over the next three years will not only cover the cost of production but return a profit. The 2008 accounts also reflect the costs of the new *Rockclimbing Guide to the Mourne*s, but this has yet not gone to print. As part of our cost-saving plan, we are currently reviewing the options of digital printing, which will allow shorter print-runs, meaning that we will not take the charge in a single year for printing a large stock of guidebooks.

**2. Bord Oiliúint Sléibhe (BOS – Mountain Training Board)** During 2008, BOS revamped the Mountain Skills scheme and produced a new handbook for participants. This was printed in large volumes and we are currently carrying a stock of these handbooks, which will be sold in the coming years.

**3. The Irish Mountain Log:** During the year, editor Patrick O'Sullivan and his team spent a good deal of time revamping this publication. The addition

of pages has added to the cost of printing, but we are currently reviewing the printing costs to see if we can bring this publication closer to cost-neutral.

**2009 Accounts** We received the same grant allocations in 2009 as we did in 2008, but we are well aware of the impending mini-budget and the possibility of this being cut. We are also taking the view that there will be a cut in the 2010 allocations. To counter this, there was a

proposal of a €5 increase in membership fees, but the board of Mountaineering Ireland has taken a very firm decision that it will not raise membership fees at this time but instead will try to make cost savings in the coming year and to achieve greater value for money within the current budget.

**David Batt,**  
**Honorary Treasurer**

### The Mountaineering Council of Ireland

(A company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital)

#### Supplementary information relating to the Financial Statements

##### Income

Alpine Meet	31,750	28,377
BOS	25,473	12,900
Lectures & library	2,471	3,562
Membership Subscriptions	227,451	224,788
Mountain Log	71,911	67,485
NIYDP Programmes	17,986	25,250
Sale of Publications	11,639	-
Spring Meet	1,700	-
Other Income	14,189	7,172
Irish Sports Council Grants	257,000	197,550
Sport Northern Ireland	37,741	37,624
Sponsorship	3,863	-
Environmental Defence Fund	2,348	2,762
	<b>705,522</b>	<b>607,470</b>

##### Expenditure

Wages and Salaries	249,295	170,356
Rent Payable	18,526	18,526
Marketing & Exhibitions	24,636	5,513
Audit	4,500	5,105
Bank Charges	2,913	2,322
General Expenses	6,356	260
Administration Expenses	38,801	34,930
Access and Conservation	7,621	2,136
AGM	2,332	-
Alpine Meet	33,810	30,633
Area Meetings	4,113	-
Board Expenses	10,042	17,121
BOS	35,532	17,900
Chief Officer	8,473	-
Climbing Wall Seminar	1,224	1,869
Guide Books	29,960	11,651
Expedition Grants	2,476	-
Members' Support Officer	951	-
Membership Costs	86,136	81,989
Mountain Log	93,978	81,073
NIYDP	63,287	78,801
Special Projects	5,723	4,531
Spring Meet	2,653	-
Lectures & Library	8,615	-
UIAA Membership	2,629	-
Girls Outside Programme	15,000	-
Subscriptions	1,821	-
Depreciation	4,098	-
	<b>765,501</b>	<b>564,716</b>
Net (deficit)/surplus	(59,979)	42,754



## AGM of Mountaineering Ireland, February 21, 2009

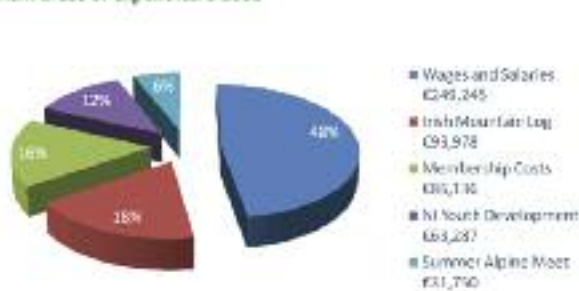
THIS YEAR'S AGM was held in the impressive facilities of the new An Óige Hostel at Knockree in the Glencree valley, Co Wicklow. The hostel is spacious, luxurious and ideal for meetings of this nature.

A separate Extraordinary General Meeting was held to consider a proposal by the Board that the name of the organisation be changed to reflect its current structure. The proposed name was approved by those present and Mountaineering Ireland was born.

The day had commenced with organised walks of historical interest around the Glencree valley. When the formal proceedings started, there was a presentation by Mountaineering Ireland's insurance brokers, Perkins Slade, about the cover provided to members. Many questions were raised from the floor, with members anticipating every possible contingency including angry farmers and bulls.

The Members' Forum and a presentation of the work reports of Mountaineering Ireland's staff followed, which showed the vast amount of work being undertaken on behalf of members by Chief Officer Stuart Garland and his staff. The work on implementing the training policy and on issues relating to the environment was impressive, together with that on youth development, where the focus has been on Northern Ireland but is now coming south of the border. Again, there was much debate

5 main areas of expenditure 2008



5 main sources of income 2008



by members on these crucial areas, including discussion about the role for Mountaineering Ireland in regard to the many foreign walkers who visit Ireland to access our uplands. Stuart and his team have clearly added a vibrancy to the organisation in the last year and the future is bright as we, the members, have had our input into the strategic Development Plan for 2009-2013.

The honorary officers presented their reports for what has been a busy year. There were no elections this year. The accounts showed a shortfall for the year of about €60,000, related to increased costs and to the increased activity by the new staff members. It is hoped that additional government grants will be available this year from Sport Northern Ireland. No increase in fees was proposed this year, but it is possible one may be sought next year.

**Donald Gill**  
**Wayfarers' Association**



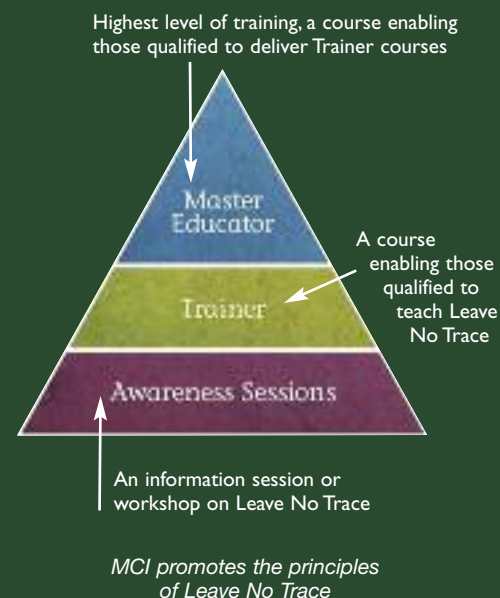
Members of the staff and Board of Mountaineering Ireland meet at the AGM in Knockree in February.

## 'Leave No Trace' – the word is spreading!

MORE AND more people are engaging in a wider range of water- and land-based activities than ever before. We are really fortunate in having the fantastic range of environments for this that we do – our coasts, rivers, lakes, forests and mountains. However, these environments are fragile and vulnerable to damage. For example, trampled vegetation, polluted waters, damaged tracks and campsites, and litter are just a sample of the impacts that can be linked directly to recreational activities. Even the most thoughtful of visitors leave footprints and unintentionally disturb wildlife.

The Leave No Trace organisation relies on training to promote and raise awareness of the principles and practices of Leave No Trace in order to reduce these unwanted impacts on the environment. It has now almost doubled the number of Leave No Trace Master Educators available to deliver Trainer Courses in Ireland and, in 2008, delivered thirteen Trainer Courses, a 54% increase compared to the number in 2007. It also delivered over 50 awareness sessions, a 68% increase on 2007. Leave No Trace Ireland would like to thank all its Master Educators and Trainers for spreading the message of Leave No Trace in Ireland.

The Leave No Trace programme is backed up by a tiered education programme with three different levels of training. For more information on the training courses and awareness sessions, please visit the training section on [www.leavenotraceireland.org](http://www.leavenotraceireland.org).





Walking in Lough Navar Forest on Lower Lough Erne, Co Fermanagh, part of the Ulster Way.

## Ulster Way re-opens

### New route, new signage, new website

A SERIES of events will be organised during 2009 to promote and celebrate the re-opening of the Ulster Way.

The Ulster Way now has a revised route, new signage and a website, the latter being available as a link from the home page of the WalkNI website ([www.walkni.com](http://www.walkni.com)), operated by CAAN. There is not, as yet, a printed version of the route and accompanying information, but this will follow in due course.

On the website, the Quality Sections (marked in red on the accompanying map) will have detailed route descriptions, 1:50 000 interactive maps, accommodation details, and information on points of interest.

Alternative Sections to Quality Sections, or parts thereof, will be similarly supported.

Link Sections (marked in blue), are those still in the process of being revised, or which may remain mainly on-road. These will have maps which are not interactive and route descriptions without detailed instructions.

Every Link Section will have accompanying transport information so that walkers can avoid the long, on-road sections, if they so wish.

The NI Environmental Agency has

already established a warden system, with the help of the Ulster Federation of Rambling Clubs, which will monitor stretches of the Way and report on maintenance issues, usage, and access problems, etc. Any other interested party, group or club would be very welcome to join the scheme.

The website will facilitate walkers who complete the whole Way, or possibly individual sections, to record their achievements, which in turn will provide feedback for future funding for continuing development, revision and maintenance.

– (Margaret Tees)



## Walking festival

### Mourne International

THE 2009 Mourne International Walking Festival will take place from 26-28 June, based in Warrenpoint, Co Down.

Now in its 11th year, the festival traditionally attracts walkers from all over the world; this year is no exception, with walkers from a host of other countries already registered. This year, however, the committee is also actively inviting those closer to home to get involved.

There are a range of both guided and self-guided walks to suit various levels of fitness and experience so that families, strollers and serious walkers alike can take part. Under-16s must be accompanied by an adult. The lowland routes will be pre-marked, allowing you to walk at your own pace, and are perfect for those wishing to take kids along. There will also be control points with refreshments at intervals along these routes.



Over the festival weekend there will be twelve defined walks including a 10km road walk around Warrenpoint and Burren, a 20km moderate mountain ramble around the Rostrevor and Killowen area and a more strenuous 20km mountain hike around Spelga.

Full details can be found on [www.mournewalking.co.uk](http://www.mournewalking.co.uk) or contact Warrenpoint Tourist Office tel 028 4175 2256 (048 from ROI) for more details.



# The Trailtrekker challenge

## Complete 100km in 30 hours and raise funds for Oxfam



IRELAND WILL become the ninth country in the world to host an Oxfam TRAILTREKKER event when this tough team challenge is held here for the first time in September 2009.

Teams of four will have to complete a challenging 100km course, requiring stamina and teamwork, within a time limit of 30 hours. The participants will raise money for Oxfam Ireland, to help it overcome poverty and injustice around the world.

The first Trailwalker (as it was then called) was established in 1981 as a military exercise for the elite Queen's Gurkha Signals Regiment in Hong Kong. The teams used the 100km route as a

training exercise to test their soldiers' stamina and teamwork skills. There are now an impressive eleven trails in nine countries (Hong Kong, Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Netherlands, Canada, Belgium and now Ireland), with more planned for the future.

The Irish TRAILTREKKER will take place from 26-27 September 2009, starting in Kilbroney Park, Rostrevor, Co Down, and finishing in Carlingford, Co Louth. Participants will cover 100km of rugged countryside, trekking together in their teams by day and by night.

Along with the physical and mental challenges, TRAILTREKKER will offer the opportunity to take in the dramatic cross-border scenery of the Mourne Mountains, the Ring of Gullion and Tain Way, as well as points of special archaeological

interest along the way.

The event is supported by both Newry & Mourne District Council and Louth County Council.

Registration for the event is just €200/£200 per team and participants must also commit to raising a minimum of €2,000/£2,000 sponsorship per team. Oxfam Ireland is aiming to recruit 200 teams to take part in TRAILTREKKER 2009 and there will also be opportunities for those who don't want to walk the 100km but would like to volunteer at the event.

- Full details are available on the website [www.oxfamireland.org/trailtrekker](http://www.oxfamireland.org/trailtrekker).

**PLEASE NOTE:** Mountaineering Ireland encourages the organisers of walking festivals and challenge or fundraising walks to ensure that the principles of Leave No Trace are observed by participants, and it is happy to advise organisers about ways of adhering to these principles.

- For more information, contact Aodhnait Carroll at [aodhnait@mountaineering.ie](mailto:aodhnait@mountaineering.ie).

## Other challenge walks this year

### Bóthar fundraising treks in Antrim and Wicklow

BÓTHAR, the Irish international aid organisation, is offering those interested two unique opportunities to walk with a purpose this summer and get to experience up close the beautiful Wicklow Mountains and the Glens of Antrim.

The first of these two challenge treks will be held in the Glens of Antrim on Saturday-Sunday 23-24 May, with walkers overnighing in the Glens Hotel, Cushendall. The two-day trek will follow a spectacular route through the hills, and there will be time to relax and enjoy the company of new friends.

The second fundraising trek will take place in August in Wicklow. Bóthar are currently looking for entrants for either or both events.

For more information, contact Pat McCarrick (Director of Fundraising Projects), Bóthar, Tubbercurry, Co Sligo (tel: +353 (0) 719120100) or visit the website [www.bothar.ie](http://www.bothar.ie).

### Knockmealdown Crossing, 25 April 2009

PEAKS MOUNTAINEERING CLUB in Clonmel, Co Tipperary, is organising a challenge event in the Knockmealdowns on Saturday, 25 April 2009. It will follow beautiful mountain ridge that traces the county boundary of Tipperary and Waterford and looks down on the Vee.

Three walks of varying distance and difficulty are being held. The longest walk, the A Walk (26km), begins on the Avondue Way, is self-navigating, and should take about nine hours to complete. The B Walk (16km) is a led, seven-hours walk, while the C Walk (13.5km) is led and should take five hours. All walkers must check in at the Community Hall in Newcastle village in Clonmel, Co Tipperary, for a bus to the start of each walk.

For more information, contact Nuala O'Connell (086 835 7290) or Jim O'Flaherty (086 257 6788), email [peaksmc@hotmail.com](mailto:peaksmc@hotmail.com), or visit the website [www.peaksmcclonmel.ie](http://www.peaksmcclonmel.ie).

### MORE CHALLENGE WALKS MAY-JULY 2009

(For more information, see [www.walkersassociation.ie](http://www.walkersassociation.ie))

**Achill Walks Festival** (Galway)  
1-4 May 2009

**Donegal Bluestacks Walking Festival**  
2 & 3 May 2009

**Ballyhoura Marathon Challenge**  
2, 3 & 4 May 2009

**Moyle Challenge Walk** (Antrim coast)  
Sun 10 May 2009

**Blackstairs Walk** (Carlow-Wexford)  
Sat 23 May 2009

**Clare Burren Marathon Challenge**  
Sat 23 May 2009

**The Lug Walk** (Wicklow)  
June 2009

**Comeragh Crossing** (Waterford)  
4 July 2009

**Joyce Country Challenge** (Connemara)  
18 July 2009

**Hart Walk** (Dublin-Wicklow)  
Fri-Sat 24-25 July 2009



Damyon (6324m) SW face,  
Mekong-Yu Qu Divide, an area  
documented by Nakamura.

## Explorer visits Dublin

### Nakamura explored East Tibet and Sichuan

TAMATSU 'TOM' NAKAMURA gave a lecture on his exploration of East Tibet and Sichuan in Dublin in February.

On a memorable evening in the Stillorgan Park Hotel on February 20th, Nakamura showed us a magnificent series of slides of 6000m peaks in the East Tibet/Sichuan area, almost all of them unclimbed.

This is a fascinating area where four of the greatest rivers in Asia, the Tsangpo, Salween, Mekong and Yangtze, are squeezed into an area of less than 400km, separated by ridges with high snow and ice peaks. It is an area with so few tracks and passes that it defied great explorers like Frank Kingdon-

Ward and has only recently been mapped by modern air surveys.

Nakamura has a unique knowledge of the region. He has made thirty trips there in the past twenty years and has prepared a collection of Kammkarte maps that would be useful to anyone considering visiting the area, either to trek or to climb.

Unfortunately, most of the unclimbed peaks (200 out of 250) are in the Nyainqentanglha range in Tibet and, like all climbing in that country, require permission that is often difficult to obtain. Climbing in Sichuan has no such problems but there are few unclimbed 6000m peaks remaining, although "countless alluring rock and snow peaks from 5000m to 6000m are awaiting visits from climbers and trekkers," he said.

Nakamura's visit was arranged through Joss Lynam, who knows him as a fellow member of the UIAA Expeditions Commission. Tom was visiting England to receive honorary membership of The Alpine Club and was happy to extend his European trip to Ireland at his own expense, for which Mountaineering is very grateful. Joss Lynam has copies of recent Japanese *AC Journals* in his personal collection that include many articles (in English), maps and pictures, and a fine, well-illustrated book (in German) about the region, which are available for study at his home.



Joss Lynam (right)  
meets Tamatsu Nakamura  
at his recent talk in Dublin.  
Photo: Patrick O'Sullivan.

## Aconcagua success

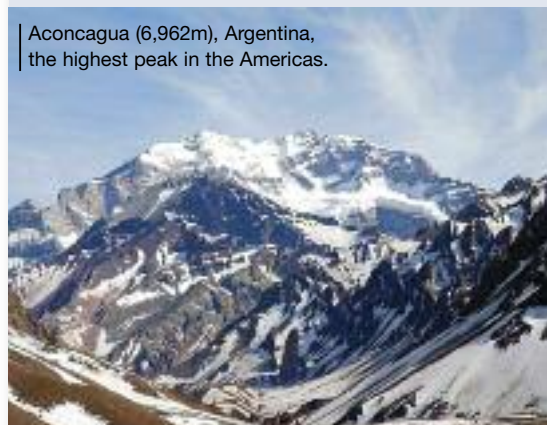
### Thirty degrees below zero

THREE IRISHMEN, Gavin Bate from Belfast, Richard Casey from Cloyne, Co Cork, and Derek Fanning from Birr, Co Offaly, were part of a group of five mountaineers who took part in an expedition to Aconcagua in January. The trip was organised by Gavin Bate's company, Adventure Alternative.

Derek Fanning reports that it was a wonderful expedition and the views from the summit were awesome! There was a good atmosphere in the group, with Gavin Bate being a relaxed presence. While they were in Mendoza, they were informed that five climbers had died on the mountain a few days before, including two Italians who had become lost and a 42-year-old Englishman who died of a heart attack just below the summit.

On summit day, one of their group turned back because he was worried about getting frostbite. He had developed frostnip with blackened toes, but his toes subsequently recovered. Starting from Camp 3 (aka Berlin Camp) at a height of 5,900m, the rest of the group joined up with a team of about fifteen Americans led by Wally Berg. Several of the Americans turned back and when one of them slumped into the snow, exhausted, as Derek walked by, he said 'Go bud, go!' Derek says that these words gave him an adrenalin rush and made him more determined to reach the top.

Just beneath the canaletta, one of their party wanted to turn back, but they persuaded him to continue. At the summit, where the temperature was -30°C, another of their party was unsteady on his legs and vomited. Coming down from the summit, he slipped on a steep, rocky slope and banged his head; luckily, it was just a superficial cut and bruising. During the descent he remained unsteady on his feet and fell down in the snow a few times, but eventually they all arrived safely back at Berlin Camp, exhausted but filled with a great sense of achievement.



Aconcagua (6,962m), Argentina,  
the highest peak in the Americas.



# Complete rebuild for Tollymore

New mountain centre will open in April 2010

| Artist's impression of the new Tollymore Mountain Centre, currently under construction.

## TREVOR FISHER

TOLLYMORE MOUNTAIN CENTRE is Sport Northern Ireland's National Training Centre for Adventure Activities. It provides a range of skills and leadership training and assessment courses in mountaineering and canoe-sport, introductory and multi-activity courses for groups, and some development courses for large organisations. Tollymore is the sole provider of hillwalking, climbing and mountaineering leadership/instructor training



Tollymore Mountain Centre plan.

courses in Northern Ireland and one of three National Mountain Centres in the UK and Ireland to provide Mountaineering Instructor Award training and assessment courses.

Tollymore was opened in the early 1970s and has had a number of upgrades since then, the most recent being in 1993. However, it was clear that course participants no longer wanted to stay in dormitories, the dining room was too small, catering facilities were not up to scratch, we could not cater for people with some disabilities, we could not cater for young people and adults at the same time...something needed to be done.

Initial discussions looked at the possibility of complete refurbishment, but as we began to look at costs, it became clear that refurbishment was putting off the inevitable.

Options appraisals were carried out, applications were made to various government departments through Sport NI, and finally, our business case was approved by both the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and the Department for Finance and Personnel; we had a budget and could continue the process.

We tendered for an initial design team and had wide-ranging consultations with user organisations, governing bodies, local groups and other sporting bodies.

In 2008, contractors were appointed to build the new centre. Further consultations followed,

costings were made

and our design

was finalised.

Work is now

underway and the

new building is due to

open in April 2010.

The new building will cater for up to forty course participants, with accommodation in en-suite twin bedrooms. There will be plenty of meeting rooms, large equipment storage facilities, drying rooms, a canoe-rolling pool, a training area with kayak machines, a bouldering wall, campus boards, etc. Tollymore will be able to provide a wider range of courses, in an

environment appropriate to the needs of all course participants. The building will be built in an environmentally sustainable manner, with heating provided by a wood-pellet boiler, solar water heating for the rolling pool and a modern building management system to ensure efficient running of the building. Hotrock, the Mountaineering Ireland-owned climbing wall at Tollymore, will be fully integrated into the redeveloped centre and will remain open during the redevelopment. Due to the increase in size and the layout, we will be able to cater for a wide number of courses at the same time, something we cannot presently do.

We are due to move into the new building in April 2010, but until then, we continue to operate as the National Training Centre for Adventure Activities and deliver our range of courses ([www.tollymore.com](http://www.tollymore.com)). Some of the upcoming highlights include our annual performance climbing seminar (March 27-29) and the full range of Climbing Wall, Single and Multi-pitch, Walking Group and Mountain Leader training and assessment courses, Hill and Mountain Skills courses, as well as canoe-sport, mountain-bike and orienteering courses. Contact the centre for further information: [admin@tollymore.com](mailto:admin@tollymore.com).



# IMRANews

Get all the latest news at [www.mountainrescue.ie](http://www.mountainrescue.ie)



## National Conference

### Biggest turn-out to date

#### PAUL WHITING

IMRA's ANNUAL CONFERENCE and AGM was hosted by the Mourne Mountain Rescue Team at the Burrendale Hotel in Newcastle, Co Down, on January 9-11, 2009. This year's event was the most successful to date, with over 70 attendees and every team represented. Representatives of the PSNI SAR team, SARDA Ireland North, Mountain Rescue England and Wales, the Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland and Mountaineering Ireland also attended.

The National Conference took place on the Saturday. The theme was "Working Together," reflecting the work currently being done at national level to establish Service Level Agreements with our key stakeholders, the Gardaí, Irish Coast Guards, Irish Air Corps and the HSE.

In the morning session, Pat Holland (previous IMRA Chair) discussed "Working within a Mountain Rescue team." Ann Fitzpatrick (Team Leader, Glen of Imaal MRT) and Mark Flynn (Team Leader, Dublin & Wicklow MRT) gave a joint presentation, "A review of two recent major MR incidents." The two incidents involved multiple MR teams and multiple government agencies including the Gardaí, IRCG and Air Corps. In "Gear, gadgets and gizmos," each of the conference exhibitors had five minutes to present their new products to the conference.

Seamus Bradley (Chair, IMRA Training & Development Group) broke attendees into small groups to discuss three possible future scenarios for IMRA in 20 years' time:

- things stay exactly the same;
- IMRA continues to develop as a self-funding, autonomous organisation to become an RNLI-like SAR organisation;
- IMRA becomes part of an existing government agency.

The first half of the afternoon saw three break-out sessions:

- a media training workshop;
- a Training and Development Sub-committee meeting;
- a Medical Sub-committee meeting.

The mid-afternoon session "Something Different" saw the Mourne Team continuing the practice introduced by the Mayo Team at last year's conference, with attendees split into groups and participating in a number of activities both inside and outside the hotel. This session was hosted by Mourne Team member Marty McMullen who owns an adventure management company called Life (formerly The Highpoint Group).

The late-afternoon session consisted of:

- a Team Leaders meeting;
- a Treasurers/Fundraising meeting, including a demonstration of the new online accounting package IMRA is using, called SQL-ledger (made available through The Wheel/Enclude);
- a presentation by Donal McNamara (IMRA Development Officer for Search & Tracking) reviewing the latest developments in Search Management.

In addition, there were exhibition stands from Keela, Paramo, Mountain Equipment, Jackson Sports, Arqiva, the Highpoint Group and Expand-a-Sign to visit.

Later, IMRA held the annual presentation of awards for individuals nominated by their teams for their contributions to the development of their team. The recipients

Reinhold Dörflinger, president of Austrian Mountain Rescue Service, with the Donegal MRT vehicle during his recent visit to Ireland.

Photo: IMRA.



of the 2008 "Distinguished Service Awards" were:

- Ben McCabe and Joe Moore, Glen of Imaal MRT;
- Helen McNamara, SARDA;
- Suzy Carson, Ed Kilgore, James McEvoy and Stephen Synott, Mourne MRT;
- Brendan Maher, Dublin & Wicklow MRT;
- Colm Byrne, Mayo MRT.

### IMRA AGM

The AGM took place on the Sunday. Besides the obligatory reports from the elected IMRA officers and the teams, the financial summary was presented, and there was a presentation from Sheila Norden of the Irish Charities Tax Reform Group entitled "The new charity regulations and how they will affect MR teams."

- *IMRA would like to thank the Mourne MRT for their great work in organising and hosting this event. We would also like to thank the Irish Coast Guard for its financial support through our 2008 Development Grant.*



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# Exchange visit

## Austrians praise IMRA systems

UNDER THE EU Programme for Exchange of Experts, IMRA was visited by members of the Austrian Mountain Rescue Service (AMRS), aka Österreich Bergrettungsdienst ([www.bergrettung.at](http://www.bergrettung.at)) in February.

The visit followed participation in an international Mountain Rescue conference in Chamonix last October by Chris England and Mark Flynn of Dublin & Wicklow MRT, representing IMRA. This conference is an annual event of the International Commission of Alpine Rescue ([www.ikar-cisa.org](http://www.ikar-cisa.org)).

During a presentation by the French Police Mountain Rescue Team (PGHM) on their GPS radio system, the IMRA representatives asked about some features of the radio system which were already in use by IMRA teams but which the French Team were not aware of, impressing the Austrian participants, who then requested the exchange visit.

The delegation was like a who's who of international MR dignitaries and consisted of: Reinhold Dörflinger, President of the AMRS and Vice-President of ICAR; Gebhard "Pablo" Barbisch, Vice-President of the ICAR Terrestrial Rescue Commission; Franz Marx, Deputy Country Director AMRS; and

Caroline Tomasch, Austrian Ministry of the Interior.

During discussions with IMRA representatives, the Austrian delegation acknowledged a number of new ideas that they took away with them:

- the use of GPS radios;
- the flexibility and breadth of the Irish National Training Curriculum;
- the fact that some of our teams aren't based in a rescue base but operate out of vehicles, which means they are a lot more flexible and cover larger areas than the traditional AMRS unit;
- displaying text on MR vehicles with the message "This vehicle has been provided through public donations."

They were also surprised at the unique Irish phenomenon of the annual Croagh Patrick pilgrimage and the scale of the operation that IMRA organises to care for the 30,000-40,000 pilgrims.

The Austrian visitors enjoyed the hospitality they received during their Irish visit and plans are now being made for a return IMRA visit to the Österreich Bergrettungsdienst later in the year.

## Do the Mini-Marathon for Mountain Rescue

FOG (FRIENDS OF GLEN), a newly established fundraising section of the Glen of Imaal MRT, is seeking participants for their first official fundraising event – the ever popular Flora Women's Mini-Marathon in Dublin on Bank Holiday Monday, June 1 2009.

All the money you raise will go towards building the Glen Team's much-needed Mountain Rescue Base near Glendalough, Co Wicklow, where the majority of the team's call-outs occur. The Glen Team's volunteers have already been called out to help in sixteen incidents in the Wicklow Mountains in the first two months of the year, an average of two per week.

Why don't you join forces with FOG and with Glen of Imaal Mountain Rescue personnel on the 10km route around Dublin city and help them raise much-needed funds to build their base?

Willing participants should contact FOG at [friendsoftheglenteam@gmail.com](mailto:friendsoftheglenteam@gmail.com) or phone 087 634 7286 for their fundraising pack, information on training walks/runs and transport to and from the event. You can also sign up for the event online at [www.womensminimarathon.ie](http://www.womensminimarathon.ie).

# A special donation

## Ger McDonnell remembered

LAST YEAR, we were all saddened by news of the death of Ger McDonnell on K2. The family asked those attending his funeral service in Limerick to make a donation to Ger's favourite charities rather than bringing flowers. The charities identified for support included IMRA.

In February, John Dowd of the Kerry MRT visited Ger's family in Limerick on behalf of IMRA. John, who summited Everest himself last year and knew Ger personally, accepted the donation of €1,124.97 from Ger's mother, Gertie.

IMRA would like to thank the family and friends of Ger McDonnell for their generosity and kindness in remembering Ger in this way. The donation will be placed in our fundraising account for distribution to teams and national projects in our budgeting meeting in the first quarter of 2010.



| Ger McDonnell.



| Ger McDonnell on K2 in 2008.



| John Dowd of Kerry MRT (on behalf of IMRA) receives donation from Ger's mother, Mrs Gertie McDonnell.





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Juan O'Raw leading on an ice wall.  
Photo: Ronnie Smith.

# Sacré bleu! Quelle glace!

International Ice Meet, France, January 2009

**Juan O'Raw is a talented young Irish climber. At just 18, he has climbed at most of the major crags around Ireland, leading up to E3, and has also climbed the North Ridge of the Piz Badile. In January 2009, he received a Mountaineering Ireland subsidy to attend the International Ice Meet in Argentière-la-Bessée, with Ronnie Smith, an MIC and experienced ice climber. This is his report.**

## JUAN O'RAW

DINNER-PLATING, as I discovered, is when ice shatters into large, plate-like discs when excessively beaten with an ice-axe. To call them dinner plates in this case would have been a bit of an understatement, as at the time they felt more like dinner tables!

Standing like an arthritic pensioner with a lump of ice the size of a microwave temporarily resting on my knees, it occurred to me that I may have been banging my ice-climbing tools into the ice with a little too much enthusiasm!

Standing half a rope's distance below me was Ronnie Smith, attentively belaying from the classic rusty peg and frayed tat. I am not implying that Ronnie's methods were unsafe – in fact, he is the safest, most efficient person I have ever climbed

with. This trip was not only a learning curve for myself but also in some aspects for Ronnie, too, who had to take my mistakes and mishaps on the chin, so to speak, or on the shoulder and knee, as we were soon to find out.

The transparent block slid ever so gracefully from my burning thighs, as I watched in wonder. Glancing up from his shivering belay, Ronnie didn't appear to be as entranced as myself. A swift bracing against the ice-plastered rock and an even swifter slip of the tongue, which I can only describe as French, told me that somehow he didn't find it quite as enchanting. With a shattering crash, the missile collided against the ice fall, increasing its already breathtaking velocity and inducing a firework-type effect. Generous lumps of ice whizzed at the speed of light past the victim of my clumsiness, three of them making contact with the target below. Thankfully, Ronnie wasn't phased...and so went my first lead on ice!

Early starts, clear skies and the masochistic pursuit of those hot aches that were felt at the end of each day may give the impression that this trip was all fun and games...and believe me it was! Although the ice meet was held in the town of

Argentière-la-Bessée, we based ourselves in the small, charming village of Le Bez, snuggled against the powder-laden slopes of Serre Chevalier. Paul Swail, a talented and dedicated winter enthusiast, kindly put us up for the week in his climber-style chalet overflowing with ice tools, skis and drying jackets. This cosy little house was situated in a perfect location half-way, as the crow flies, between the famous valleys of Le Grave and Fournell.

Le Grave was truly the best venue, in my estimation, first and foremost due to the fact that walking was kept to a minimum. Awe-inspiring lines were a stone's throw from the road and screaming out to be climbed. From single-pitch grade 3s to 500m grade 6s, from broad gullies to narrow cigars, Le Grave truly was an ice climber's nirvana.

Following a few days' climbing at these "roadside venues," we decided to venture into the secluded yet magical valley of Fournell. The 40-minute drive felt like an adventure in itself as we crept and slid our way along the powder-enveloped forest floor, the overwhelming cliffs on either side casting ominous shadows upon the dormant dwellings below.

After what felt like an age and a half of secluded wilderness, we were amazed to find a car park overflowing with like-minded climbers. Obviously they knew we were coming as every classic, easy access or intriguing climb had been taken, leaving us to wallow in knee-deep powder (shoulder-deep in my case!) before reaching our unmistakably Scottish-looking line. Without hesitation and to my surprise, Ronnie leapt onto this smattering of rotten ice and commenced to gleefully thrash his way up this frozen death trap, indicating to me that he was in his element as pick and point ripped through the unpredictable mess.

As we slid on our backsides down in the direction of the car, Ronnie, grinning from ear to ear as I tried to recover from my "experience," spotted a pristine cigar which hadn't yet been sieged. Eager as always, the half-man, half-machine blitzed the short, dead-on vertical formation, which left me for pumped, although I won't deny the fact that the climbing was absolutely superb.

All in all, my first ice-climbing trip was an absolute dream. Endless blue skies, immaculate conditions and, more importantly, a great atmosphere and even greater company, all made for a fantastic time!

Paul Swail seconding.  
Photo: Ronnie Smith.



The newly refurbished Wicklow Way, Kilmashogue, Co Dublin.  
Photo: C  il  n MacLochlainn.

## Dublin Mountains Trail

### Repairs, website, newsletter

The Dublin Mountains Partnership has rerouted and upgraded a one-kilometre section of the Wicklow Way in Coillte's Kilmashogue property. This section of the trail was badly eroded and washed out; the refurbished section follows a slightly different route to the old route. The work on the trail was delayed in early February by the heavy snowfalls but has since been completed.

Elsewhere in the Dublin Mountains, the Tibbradden trail upgrade has been completed, and Mountain Meitheal has commenced work on the mountain access route on Cruagh. Here it is building a 400m bog bridge to provide access from the Coillte forest property to Cruagh and the uplands as far as Prince William's Seat. The materials for the project are being supplied by the Dublin Mountains Partnership. The work will continue for the next two to three months.

Meanwhile, the Dublin Mountains Partnership has launched a newsletter and website to provide information on recreation in the area. The website, [www.dublinmountains.ie](http://www.dublinmountains.ie), provides information on events, sites, trails and how to access them, maps, conservation work and the promotion of better behaviour through the Leave no Trace programme. The chairman of the Dublin Mountains Partnership, Bill Murphy, said the website is about giving people the tools necessary to access the forests and trails in the mountains for outdoor recreation and to use the public lands in a responsible and sustainable way.

The newsletter, *Viewpoint*, is helping to create awareness of the Dublin Mountains Partnership and its objectives. It will outline the progress being made and report on events being held in the area.

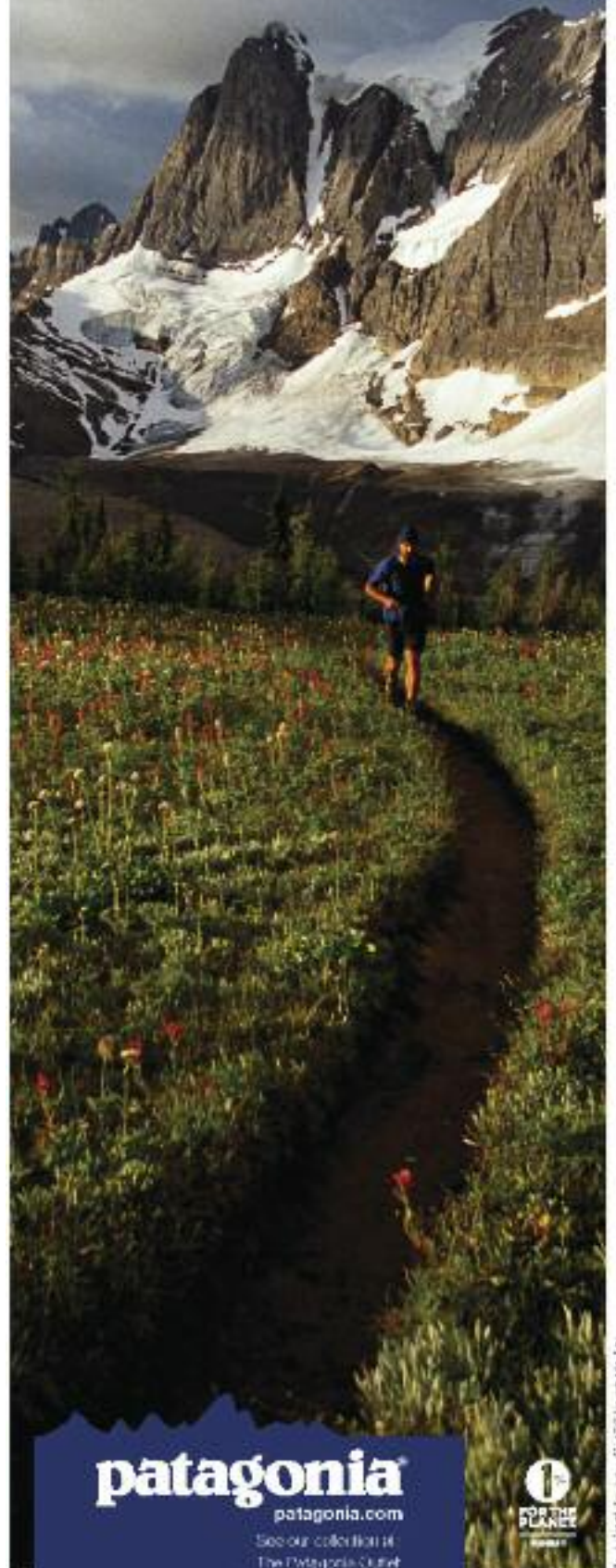
The Dublin Mountains Partnership was established to improve the recreational potential of the public lands in the Dublin Mountains while balancing recreation with the needs of the various landowners, both public and private. The partnership's members are Coillte, the National Parks and Wildlife Service, D  n Laoghaire Rathdown Co Council, South Dublin Co Council, Dublin City Council and the Dublin Mountains Initiative.

For more information, contact Karen Woods, Recreation Manager, Dublin Mountains Partnership, c/o Coillte Teoranta, Newtownmount-kennedy, Co Wicklow; (01) 201 1187, 087-050 7022, [karen.woods@coillte.ie](mailto:karen.woods@coillte.ie), [www.dublinmountains.ie](http://www.dublinmountains.ie).



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# Upland sky-dancer

## The hen harrier, a bird under threat

**BARRY O'DONOGHUE**

THE HEN HARRIER (cromán na gcearc) is one of, if not *the*, most elegant and graceful, spectacular and exciting birds in the world. It is an asset to the life, biodiversity and heritage of any country in which it is found. It is the jewel in the crown of Irish upland wildlife.

The hen harrier is a rare and threatened bird of prey. It is native to our uplands and can be seen in the rolling farmland countryside and heather bogs during the breeding season, throughout the spring and summer, at elevations typically between 100 and 500 metres.

One of the most striking things about the bird is that the male and female differ markedly in size and colour, so much so that for many years the two were thought to be separate species.

As with most birds of prey (e.g. peregrine falcon, sparrowhawk, kestrel), the female is larger than the male. The male is a stunning-looking white or silver bird, with black tips to the wings. The female is a larger bird of a beautiful rich brown plumage with a white rump and brown and barred patterns or rings on the tail. To compare it in size with a bird that mountain enthusiasts would be well familiar with, hen harriers are roughly the same size as the raven, though harriers are a much lighter and more graceful bird.

Two most spectacular traits single out the hen harrier from all other birds. Coming into the spring on our uplands, those who are tuned in to the awakening of nature around them will be treated to awesome aerial displays by the silver male as he tries to impress potential mates with a show of agility, stamina and prowess. These aerial courtship displays, known as sky dances, are rivalled by no other. They involve the birds travelling to insane heights before plummeting like a meteor to Earth, spinning, gyrating and somersaulting many times more than an Olympic diver or one of the Red Arrows. When just feet from the ground and in almost certain danger of

death, the male will pull himself out of this controlled frenzy and rise up again, only to drop again in the same manner, and continue this exhibition for up to 10 or 15 minutes! The female may decide to partake in the sky dance herself, which I guess is only courteous, really!

Another unique and spectacular trait of the harriers is the food pass. As the male is the sole provider of food for the mother and young at the critical stage when the mother is guarding the nest, the harriers need a way of getting the food from father to mother. This is not simply done by a transfer on the ground or at the nest...there is nothing ordinary about these magnificent and rare birds! The male, carrying prey in his talons, will call to the female as he approaches the nest area. The female will rise to meet the male and, as she comes near him, will somersault over so as to take the prey from his feet with her own feet. This "aerial re-fuelling" really is out of this world and no words could do this acrobatic



feat justice (see illustration).

Occasionally, a male may be partner to more than one mate at the same time (polygyny), but the Casanovas who do so must almost invariably regret all the extra work of having to supply so many hungry mouths.

The harriers will typically raise 1-4 chicks by the end of the summer. Too often, unfortunately, they will raise none. This is a species which has declined in Ireland mainly due to clearance and afforestation of their habitats, restricting the amount of land available to the species. Further threats arise from poor summer weather, predators and lack of food availability. Being birds of prey, they will capture mice, rats, shrews and bank voles. They will also take small birds, such as skylarks and meadow pipits,

Hen harrier breeding habitat.  
Inset: Hen harrier with wing tags.  
Photos: Barry O'Donoghue.





which co-exist with them on their upland and boggy territories. Despite the name, hen harriers will not take hens or any other poultry.

The hen harrier exists in the most remote parts of the countryside and will shy away from human contact. This is why reports from upland enthusiasts are so important.

The stronghold of the species in Ireland is in the south and west, particularly on the Mullaghareirk Mountains in Co Cork and Limerick and across to the Stacks and Glannaruddery Mountains in Co Kerry, where approximately one-third of the Irish hen harrier population can be found. Counties Clare, Tipperary, Laois, Offaly, Galway, Leitrim, Monaghan, Tyrone and Donegal also hold important breeding populations. Today, over the whole island of Ireland, there are thought to be less than 200 breeding pairs of this special and endangered bird. Under the European Union Birds Directive, to preserve what is left of the species, Ireland is obliged to implement Special Protection Areas for the hen harrier and apply appropriate land management directions and other measures within these areas. These measures mainly concentrate on preserving the traditional or the present methods of farming and land use.

Custodians of the countryside have a most important part to play in continuing to support this beautiful element of Ireland's natural heritage, which has been here throughout the ages, in the same way that the people of the Irish uplands look after other aspects of our heritage such as folklore, traditional music and the very mountains themselves.

In an effort to better understand the species' biology and requirements, to ensure the hen harrier remains a sight in our upland landscapes, the National Parks and Wildlife Service is involved in research with UCC and is urging hillwalkers, climbers and ramblers to report any sightings of these birds at any time of the year. Particularly of interest are a select group of Irish harriers which have been colour wing-tagged so that they may be followed through reports from the public.

This tagging consists of putting a coloured strip on the back of each wing, the colour on the left wing signifying



what year the bird was born in, and the colour on the right wing signifying where the bird is from.

Already, birds tagged in west Clare have been sighted in Donegal and Antrim (possibly heading to Scotland), birds tagged in Kerry have been seen in Wexford and Offaly, and birds tagged in Cork have been found in Limerick and Galway.



Movements of hen harriers within Ireland were never known or understood properly prior to this tagging programme, and so sightings are being sought from the public. It is just one way in which those who pursue outdoor interests can directly add to our knowledge of this and other rare wildlife in the uplands, and also benefit the milieu which we all enjoy so much and that we hope will remain for future generations.

- Anybody wishing to report sightings of hen harriers or to simply learn more about the species can contact Barry O'Donoghue of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, at [harriers@environ.ie](mailto:harriers@environ.ie) or 087-911 0715, or log-on to [www.npws.ie](http://www.npws.ie) and/or [www.ucc.ie/planforbio/en](http://www.ucc.ie/planforbio/en).

## Fly-tipping tackled

### 800 tonnes removed

SOME 800 tonnes of rubbish has been removed from the Dublin and Wicklow uplands since 2007 by an environmental project to tackle fly-tipping and illegal dumping in the uplands. This is equivalent to 114,000 standard black bin bags of waste.

The PURE (Protecting Uplands & Rural Environments) project was set up by the Department of the Environment in 2006 and has made over 1,700 collections. The project office has received over 1,800 reports of illegal dumping, many of them through a dedicated Lo-Call phone line, 1850 365 121. PURE ensures a quick response to all incidents of dumping and removes all of the material.

In response to claims that, by collecting the rubbish, PURE is just cleaning up after those who are responsible, project manager Ian Davis said that if dumped rubbish is left in the landscape "it only attracts further dumping."

PURE, the first project of its kind in Ireland, is collecting information on the type of material being dumped, which areas are most affected and, where possible, who is responsible for the dumping. It has rolled out a public awareness campaign and issued a primary schools education pack to all schools in the Wicklow, south Dublin and Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown county areas. It also has a website, [www.pureproject.ie](http://www.pureproject.ie).

The project has embarked on a regional advertising campaign to alert people to unauthorised waste collectors and the effects of illegal dumping on the environment. The Department of the Environment is to fund the project for a further three-year period, and Fáilte Ireland has become a stakeholder.



• PURE urges the public to report dumpers and dumping on Lo-Call 1850 365 121.



# Youth Leading and Bouldering Series

## High standards set at first series on Ozone Wall, Belfast



Climber at the Ozone.  
Photo: Angela Carlin.

OCTOBER 2008 saw the first Youth Leading and Bouldering Series at the Ozone climbing wall in Belfast. The four preliminary rounds took place over the dark winter months with competitors having a month to master each of the sixteen routes and boulder problems ranging in grade from 'surprisingly tricky' to 'surely you're joking!' Points were awarded on the basis of how many attempts were required for a successful ascent.

An added bonus of this section of the competition, for those ineligible to compete, was the opportunity to test themselves on the competition routes and find out at first hand how strong and talented these youngsters really were.

The series concluded on Sunday 15 February 2009 with the final, which took the standard competition form of one attempt at each of the four lead routes and three attempts at each of the four boulder problems. With a squad of volunteer judges and belayers in place, the hard training of the previous months was now put to the test.

Junior (14-18) female category was, as usual, a close-fought battle with just twelve points separating the top three places. In the end, the honours went to Katie Maxwell who scored maximum points, with Rachel Cooper a close second and Jenny Wright just a further four points adrift.

Junior (14-18) male category was again a close event with Jake Haddock securing victory with the best performance of the day on the final male F7c competition route. Andrew Colligan came in second, with Tim McGlinchey close behind to complete the top three.

Anja Jones took first place in the Senior (18-25) female section with a perfect score, narrowly beating Michelle O'Loughlin who dropped just one point at the top of the final route. Jane Gallwey took third place.

The senior male (18-25) category was another close competition, with four points separating Michal Wronka in first place from Maciej

Sulek and Jonathon Gibson, who tied for second.

Performances on the day were of the usual extremely high standard that we've come to expect. However, particular mention needs to be made of both the male and female junior winners, Katie Maxwell and Jake Haddock, who both turned in performances that would have seen them placed first in the respective senior sections.

The success of the competition series was only possible with the tireless route-setting of Eddie, Ricky and Rob; the support of the sponsors: Mountaineering Ireland, Northern Ireland Youth Climbing Team, Belfast City Council, Surf Mountain, Jackson Sports and Tiso; and above all, the young climbers who, over this past winter, showed the rest of us just what's possible with hard work and dedication, and let's not forget talent, strength and youth as well! – *(Dave Hamill)*

## Climbing Courses Ozone Wall, Belfast

The Ozone is running a new series of six-week climbing courses, to suit beginners and improvers. The classes are held on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings (for adults, beginners and improvers respectively) and Saturday mornings (for adult beginners 10am, juniors 11:30am) over six weeks.

Neil Thomas  
lead climbing at  
the Ozone Wall.  
Photo: Angela Carlin.

### Course prices

£54.90 (regular users)  
£27 (those receiving  
means-tested benefits)  
£27 (over 60s)  
£45.90 (students)

All places on the courses are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. Enrolment is now open. To reserve your place, call us on 028 9045 8024.

## Climbfest 2009

### Glencolmcille, Co Donegal, May 1-4, 2009

THIS YEAR, the Climbfest will move from its traditional base at Culdaff to Glencolmcille in southwest Donegal. Climbers are invited to sample the routes at nearby Malinbeg, Skelpoonagh Bay, Port Bay, Sail Rock and Muckcross. Camping has been arranged beside the GAA pitch, and there are toilets and water available. The campsite is only a

couple of minutes from shops and pubs in the village, and there is a new independent hostel at the entrance to the ground for those who do not wish to camp.

The area around Glencolmcille boasts the finest coastal walking and scenery in Ireland, and the campsite is near a sandy beach. There will be a barbeque on the

Saturday night and it is hoped to provide t-shirts for those attending. Registration will be €10, and the camping fee (to GAA) will be €5 per tent per night. The event endeavours to comply with the Leave No Trace policy adopted by Mountaineering Ireland. Further details will be posted on the Colmcille Climbers website. – *(Alan Tees)*





Paul Harrington competing  
at DCU round of IBL  
in February 2009.  
Photo: Patrick O'Sullivan.

## IBL results

### Irish Bouldering League 2008/2009

THIS YEAR'S IBL was a great success, with some really enjoyable rounds and more than 300 individual competitors entering the various rounds. The round in Kerry was particularly successful as this new venue, Play at Height in An Daingean, is well-suited to providing the facilities that the Bouldering League competitors need. Being out of Dublin, it also attracted a lot of new competitors.

**Round 1:** DCU (Dublin), Sat 11 Oct

**Round 2:** Play at Height (An Daingean, Co Kerry), Sat 1 Nov

**Round 3:** NUIG (Galway), Sat 29 Nov

**Round 4:** St Colman's Community College (Midleton, Cork), Sat 24 Jan

**Round 5:** DCU (Dublin), Sat 28 Feb

### Results

#### Male

Placing	Name	Points
1	Harry Fogg	900
2	Kevin Power	890
3	Hamish Graham	887
3	Jan Hurdzan	887

#### Female

Placing	Name	Points
1	Cornelia Holzer	898
1	Hannah Fogg	898
2	Maggie Chojan	896
3	Polina Panicheva	893

#### Junior

Placing	Name	Points
1	Andrew Colligan	899
2	Naoise Ó Muircheartaigh	895
3	Ciaran Rogers	893



| Winners in the Belfast Schools Competition.

## Belfast Schools

### Climbing Competition 2009

MONDAY, MARCH 23rd, saw young climbers from Aquinas Grammar, Little Flower Girls School, Methodist College and the Royal Belfast Academical Institution arrive at the Ozone in Belfast to compete in the final of the first ever Mountaineering Ireland under-15s Schools' Climbing Competition.

With ten weeks of coaching completed, no one could have guessed just how closely fought the final would be. Having been tested by three routes and three boulder problems, only 10 points separated the first four girls. Lucy Mullan claimed 1st place, Emma Bogues was just one point behind in 2nd, and close behind in 3rd and 4th were Aoife Shirlow and TJ O'Neill.

Not to be outdone, the top six boys were separated by a mere eight points and a super final was needed to decide 1st place between David Hopkins and Jamie Rankin. On this occasion Jamie won on his final attempt, leaving David in 2nd, with Eoin Acton and James McLaughlin sharing 3rd.

I would like to thank all the young people who took part in the scheme, along with the teachers and volunteers who made it possible, and Dawson Stelfox for presenting the cups, kindly provided by Mountaineering Ireland. Finally, a special thank you to Margi Maxwell who single-handedly looked after all the administration. We now look forward to next year when we hope the event will be expanded to include more age groups and schools. – (Angela Carlin)

• The competition was run by the NI Youth Climbing Team with the aid of a Support for Sport grant from Belfast City Council. Cotswolds provided the prizes.

### Results

#### Girls under 15

Placing	Name	Points
1st	Lucy Mullan (Aquinas GS)	476
2nd	Emma Bogues (Aquinas GS)	475
3rd	Aoife Shirlow (Aquinas GS)	472
4th	TJ O'Neill (Little Flower)	466

#### Boys under 15

Placing	Name	Points
1st	Jamie Rankin (MCB)	477
2nd	David Hopkins (MCB)	477
3rd	Eoin Acton (MCB)	475
3rd	James McLaughlin (RBAI)	475
5th	Jordan Singh (RBAI)	473
6th	Joshua Lyness (RBAI)	469

## IN BRIEF

### Seeking rescued climber

Would the man who was rescued from Carrauntoohil and subsequently airlifted to hospital in Cork on September 27, 2008, please contact Kerry Mountain Rescue Team at [info@kerrymountainrescue.ie](mailto:info@kerrymountainrescue.ie), as they believe they may have located some of his possessions.

### Walking sticks found

A pair of wine-coloured Hitec walking sticks was picked up at Oldbridge on Sunday, March 1, 2009. Contact: Marguerite Davey, 087-239 7409.

### Competition winners

Congratulations to Daniel McAuliffe and Brendan Bullen who won Berghaus rucksacks at the Irish Bouldering League competition rounds held at Play at Height in An Daingean, Co Kerry, and at the Marathon Expo in Dublin. Many thanks to Berghaus for providing the prizes.

### Corrections

In the last edition of the Mountain Log, the photograph on page 25 was incorrectly credited; the photographer was, in fact, Melanie Heather. On page 13, the article "Dublin Mountains plan" was by Stuart Garland and the photograph was taken by Carol Ryan (and not the other way around). Our apologies for these errors.

## Just how active are we?

### Irish Sports Council issues Irish Sports Monitor report

THE 2007 *Irish Sports Monitor* report was published in February. It is the first in an ongoing series of annual reports that will measure and track participation in Irish sport.

Based on a nationally representative sample of nearly 10,000 adults aged 16 and over, the *Irish Sports Monitor* offers the most detailed picture yet of sporting life in Ireland.

The report represents the latest in a series of research collaborations between the Sports Council and the ESRI on sport and physical activity. The report contains a wealth of information which will be of great interest to policy-makers and everyone involved in the promotion and development of sport in Ireland.

Findings include:

- 24% of the adult population is highly active, 18% is sedentary.
- Participation rates in Ireland are broadly in line with developed countries but lag behind the best performers.
- Personal exercise activities (gym, fitness classes, exercise machines) have become the most popular form of physical activity.
- Income and education are significant determinants of participation.
- There is a high level of social participation in sport, involving volunteering, attendance and club membership numbers at sports events.

## Scholarship fund in climber's memory

### DCU plans scholarship in honour of Ger McDonnell

DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY (DCU) in Glasnevin, Dublin, is setting up an access scholarship fund in memory of Ger McDonnell, the Limerick climber who died tragically on K2 last year.

Ger McDonnell was the first Irishman to reach the summit of K2 and died on his descent after coming to the aid of his fellow climbers.

Ger had studied at DCU, and graduated in 1993 with a degree in electronic engineering. He was a main driving force in the setting up of the DCU Climbing Club during his time there.

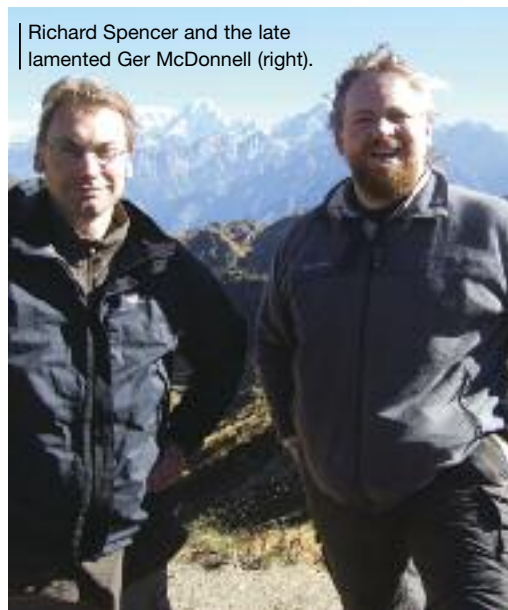
His friends in the Faculty of Engineering decided to set up an access scholarship in his memory and set about raising the €50,000 required by DCU to establish an endowed perpetual Access Scholarship. They have already raised over €40,000.

The Rock Climbing Club recently lent a hand with the fundraising when it held a special charity fundraising event at the DCU climbing wall in March.

The funds raised on the day are being presented to the DCU Educational Trust, a registered charity and the fundraising arm of DCU, which is setting up the Ger McDonnell Memorial Access Scholarship, a fund that will benefit deserving students participating in the DCU Access Scholarship Programme.

The Memorial Access Scholarship will be a

Richard Spencer and the late lamented Ger McDonnell (right).



wonderful way to remember Ger's passion and determination to succeed – a passion and determination that will inspire future students for generations to come.

Those wishing to contribute to the Ger McDonnell Memorial Access Scholarship Fund should contact Claire Whelehan at the DCU Educational Trust, tel: +353 (1) 700 5467, email: [claire.whelehan@dcu.ie](mailto:claire.whelehan@dcu.ie). – (Richard Spencer, PRO, DCU Rock Climbing Club)



# New database for facts and feats

## Submit your records to Mountaineering Ireland

MOUNTAINEERING IRELAND is proposing to set up a database, a sort of "Guinness Book of Irish Mountaineering Records," which would include successful Himalayan, or other, expeditions, first alpine ascents, first Irish alpine ascents (both historical and recent), and, more locally, a Munroists' register, Irish 600m completion register, Cuillin Ridge Traverse, Irish 3000s in 24 hours, long-distance walks, feats of skill or endurance, etc, etc. Basically, anything of interest pertaining to mountain-climbing Irish nationals resident either here or abroad, or non-

Irish who are part of the Irish mountaineering community.

Rockclimbing first ascents are already dealt with elsewhere in climbing guides.

Please submit details of anything you think should be included, with the name of the person, place of residence, date of ascent/completion, and anything else which might be of interest (e.g. last Munros and length of time taken to complete them).

Please submit the details to the Mountaineering Ireland office by mail or email ([facts@mountaineering.ie](mailto:facts@mountaineering.ie)).

## North to the Pole

Irish adventurer Kevin Dempsey set out for the North Pole with his team-mates in the North2thePole expedition on April 10th. In this Last Degree trek, the team flew from the base camp at Camp

Barneo on the moving pack ice to their starting point from where they expect to take nine days to reach the Pole. We wish Kevin and his companions a safe journey. You can follow his progress on [north2thepole.com](http://north2thepole.com).

# Did you win?

## Christmas quiz winners

The winners of the Christmas Quiz in the *Irish Mountain Log* (No 88), sponsored by Berghaus and OSI, were:-

1st prize (€500 worth of Berghaus vouchers):

**James McBride**, Cookstown, Co Tyrone

2nd prize (€300 worth of Berghaus vouchers):

**Pauline Darcy**, Leixlip, Co Kildare

3rd prize (€200 worth of Berghaus vouchers):

**Colm Hughes**, Tallaght, Dublin 24

Five runner-up prizes for OSI's Trail Master DVDs (worth €100 each) were won by:-

**Karen Westermann**, Waterford; **Richard Casey**, Clyne, Co Cork; **Brian Ringland**, Ballinode, Co Monaghan; **Sean Freeman**, Fermoy, Co Cork; **Paddy Leahy**, Skibbereen, Co Cork.

Winners' names were picked out of a hat at the Mountaineering Ireland AGM in Knockree in February. Many thanks to Berghaus and Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSI) for supplying the prizes.

# Glen of Aherlow Walking Festival '09

May 29th – June 1st



*The 3 Day Glen of Aherlow Walking Festival promises you a memorable walking experience across the magnificent Galtee Mountains, Slievenamuck Hills and Glen of Aherlow Valley.*



- All walks led by the Galtee Walking Club
- A Walks: across all peaks over two days
- B Walks: to Galtymore and lower peaks
- C Walks: to Lakes, Dolmen Loop on Slievenamuck
- GPS Training walk on Monday; also A & B walks on Slievenamuck
- Family Nature Walk on Sunday

- Launch night on Friday May 29th; meet your guides; check your routes and sample local food produce and enjoy local entertainers.
- Excellent Accommodation

For brochure contact:  
Helen Morrissey  
**The Glen of Aherlow Fáilte Society**  
Coach Road, Tipperary  
Tel: 062 56331  
Mobile: 086 8314443  
Email: [info@aherlow.com](mailto:info@aherlow.com)

[www.aherlow.com](http://www.aherlow.com)



# The crosses of Galtymore

Jimmy Barry recounts the history of the crosses on a famous County

Galtymore as seen from a mountain track on Cush.  
Photo: Jimmy Barry.

**T**ake a walk or climb to the top of any mountain in Ireland and you will find that someone has been there before you and that they have probably left their mark. These marks vary in size from a church, such as the one on Croagh Patrick, to a simple cross.

If we look back further in time we see that our ancestors did exactly the same thing thousands of years ago, only then it was piles of stones known

as cairns that they left. Some of these cairns were used as burial sites, some were put there as statements: "I live here" or "Stay away; this is my mountain."

Over the last thirty years or so, I have come to know the summit of Galtymore, Co Tipperary, very well and, in doing so, I have unearthed some of the rich history of the marks that have been left there. Talking to hillwalkers and local people from around the Galtee Mountains, I was told that the mountain only had two small stone cairns on it until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As more and more people started to climb the mountain it was only a matter of time before they started building.

## The 1933 cross

The first cross was erected on the summit of Galtymore in 1933 by the Christian Brothers from Mitchelstown, Co Cork. It was an iron cross set into a triangular plinth on a base. Brother Dominic McKenna, who was Brother Superior, had decided to erect a cross there to celebrate the 1932 Eucharistic Congress. Work commenced on June 10<sup>th</sup> 1933 and the cross was blessed by Fr W. Ryan (C.C.) of Galbally on July 2<sup>nd</sup> of that year.

The location of this first cross was not far from the broken 'trig' pillar at the eastern end of the mountain, and the remains of the plinth and the base can still be seen there. A testimony was placed under the base giving the



**“The 1962 cross weighed in at three quarters of a ton...the story of how it was brought to the summit is an epic.”**

reasons why the cross was put up and the names of the people who were responsible. It is probably still there. This cross stood for nearly thirty years and fell just before Br Dominic's death in 1962.

### **The Marian Year cross**

In 1954, a wooden cross was erected at the western end of the mountain by “The Tipperary Galtee Climbing Club.” This cross was Celtic in design and later became the inspiration for the cross that stands on the summit today.

It was built by the Galtee Climbing Club, which was formed in 1952 after a group of friends climbed Galtymore. The group included Con Breen, John Kett (who proposed the founding of the club), John Vaughan, the late Mattie Kennedy, Jimmy (now Father) Costello, Conny Carroll, Paddy Kelly and others from around the Tipperary town area. It was John Kett who came up with the idea of putting up a cross to mark the Marian Year, 1954, and it was the same John Kett who made the cross; he was a cabinet-maker.

I will let Con Breen take up the story from here....

“On the day of the climb to erect the cross in 1954, we cycled out of

The Marian Year cross, built in 1954.

## **Tipperary mountain top**



The 1933 cross.







Galtybeg and Galtymore.  
Photo: Jimmy Barry.

town and, with permission, through the grounds of Moore's Castle near Kilshane. We wore berets with a white tape around the rim. Further materials were collected from O'Brien's farm in Glencushnabinnia (Gleann Cois na Binne; 'glen at the foot of the ben'). Two brothers from the CBS, Br Carr and Br Tracey, carried the main shaft of the cross to the top. The cross was then assembled and erected on site. The event was photographed and was also captured on 16mm cine-film. An engraved plaque was placed on the cross. The timber cross didn't last very long, though. In 1977, I found some rusty bolts, but the plaque was long gone...."

Members of Galteemore Climbing Club in 1954 on their way to build the Marian Year cross.

When Con told me the story of the wooden cross and mentioned the plaque, he wondered who had it now. I was happy to report that I had been

given the plaque just last year for safe keeping! A story for another day.

### The Patrician Year cross

A limestone cross designed by Cork sculptor Seamus Murphy was erected in 1962, the Patrician Year. The story of how it was taken to the top of Galtymore is, to say the least, an epic. The cross was driven to around 70 feet below the summit in a Bren gun carrier called "The Katie Daley" and then carried the rest of the way to the top by five men: Tom Mullins, Robert West, John King, Tom McGrath and Jim Blake. It weighed in at three quarters of a ton. The Katie Daley took a route up from King's farmhouse under Knocknagaltee. It took three days to get the cross up as the Katie Daley variously got stuck in the bog or her tracks came off en route.



Mitchelstown Creameries sponsored the cross and all related work. On Whit Sunday, June 1962, over 1,000 people climbed the mountain for the blessing ceremony. Some of those in attendance on the day were Richard Hayward, author and historian; Dr Daphne Pochin Mould, author of *The Mountains of Ireland*; and Lieutenant-Colonel Blake, who started the annual climb of Galtymore which continued for many years. Members of St Brendan's Mountaineering Club, Tralee, came all the way from Kerry, a nice drive in 1962. One newspaper reported that "the mountain was black with people." John Coughlan and Tom Fox from Boston, USA, also captured the event on film. The cross was placed in a location known as Dawson's Table, in between the two crosses that already stood on the summit.

But yet another cross was to be built in a little over 13 years, as the limestone cross was damaged beyond repair after it had fallen in winter gales....





## Ted Kavanagh's cross

Ted Kavanagh of Scallagheen, in Tipperary town, was determined that a new cross should stand on the summit as soon as possible, and he designed and built a cross at his home, using 4-inch hollow steel sections.

In June 1975, it was taken to the summit and assembled with help from members of the Tipperary Adventure Sports Club. It is estimated that over 130 individual climbs were made up the steeper north side of the mountain to get all the material up. The names of all those involved in the work, aged from six years upwards, were sealed into the top of the cross, which is over seven feet in height and Celtic in form. On September 14th, 1975, the cross was blessed by Fr T Breen and unveiled by Ted's wife, Joan.

Ted and Joan Kavanagh climbed Galtymore every year thereafter to paint the cross, until Ted passed away in 1998.

\* \* \* \* \*

## Joan Kavanagh's cross

WITH JOAN'S blessing, I started painting the cross in 1999 and have done so every year since then. Just before my first trip up, Joan asked me to paint *her* cross also. Yes, there is one more, and it's as precious as any of the rest. Joan told me that when Ted and herself went to paint the cross, she also painted a small cross on a stone to mark the spot where the Mass was said on the day of the unveiling back in 1975.

Where was this one, I asked her? "You will have to do a bit of looking around, Jimmy, but you're good at that," she replied.

So, armed with a photo taken during the Mass, I eventually found Joan's cross, hidden under a small pile of stones. It was a pleasure to paint it for her, even more so when I was able to return with a photo of it for her.

"Did you use good stuff on it?" she asked. "Yes, Joan," I replied, "only the best."

Last year, on Easter Monday, I painted the cross and afterwards called into Joan to tell her the job was done for another year. As we stood in her back garden looking up at Galtymore and talking about some small repairs that were needed to the base of the cross, we weren't to know that Joan was to pass away two days later. I'll never forget her kindness and



The steel cross in snow, 2009. Photo: Jimmy Barry.

the warm welcome I received every time I visited her and her brother Bill, who died just a few months after Joan. We became friends the first moment we met, because we shared a passion for the Galtees and for a cross that thousands pass every year and may never know the story of how it came to be there. A true friend, sadly missed, but I know where her spirit can be found.

\* \* \* \* \*

## Epilogue

THIS YEAR, if we ever get a dry day, I'll be back up painting the cross, using the 'good stuff,' and every brush stroke will remind me of the man and woman who carried out this labour of love, year after year, long before I knew the pleasures of walking on the Galtees. I'll spare a thought also for all the others that helped to erect the crosses on Galtymore. If you're around, I'll have a spare brush and a bin liner to cover your jacket, and you can become part of this amazing story. I might even show you where Joan's cross is.

## Acknowledgments

Thanks to Con Breen and Paddy Kelly for filling in the blanks and for putting names to faces for me; also to Maureen O'Brien, a friend and my source of information on the 1933 cross; and to Joan Kavanagh, fellow hillwalker and a lady I will never forget. I dedicate this to her memory.

Con is actively retired in Dublin and still enjoys walking on Irish and foreign mountains. Paddy is back living in Tipperary town after many years living in the US. The "Tipperary Galtee Climbing Club" lives on. ■

Jimmy Barry, self-styled "hillwalker and part-time cross painter," is a member of Mountaineering Ireland and of Mountain Meitheal and is the PRO of the South Eastern Mountain Rescue Association. He lives just outside Tipperary town, a few minutes' from the Galtees and the Glen of Aherlow, and has been hillwalking for the last thirty years in Ireland and Europe.

Joan and Ted Kavanagh on Galtymore.



# Walking in the Provence Alps

Ian Kelly goes hillwalking in France with the Glenwalk Hillwalkers Club

Mountain track  
across the  
Morgon Ridge  
in Provence.  
Photo: Ian Kelly.

**M**ost hikers visiting the Alps will be familiar with the popular areas such as Chamonix but, far away from the popular tourist destinations, the region of France between Briançon and Nice offers some of the finest walks in the Alps and is still largely undiscovered by the majority of hikers.

The region includes one national park, Parc des Écrins, and two regional parks, Parc Naturel Régional du Queyras and Parc Régional du Mercantour, where there are specific rules intended to protect the wildlife. These parks provide beautiful scenery (glaciers and other geological features of interest) and abundant flora and fauna. They are also ideal places to engage in many outdoor activities such as walking, rockclimbing, skiing, snowshoeing, paragliding and much more besides. Among the many attractions of the region is also the local architecture, and preserved

villages like Saint Veran are well worth a visit as they are real masterpieces of Alpine architecture.

The road access to the region has improved significantly over the last ten years, which makes it easy to get there from the airports at Nice, Lyon, Marseille, Grenoble, Milan and Turin or, more recently, Cuneo. A perfect holiday also requires great food and this region is well renowned for its local Provençal cuisine. As to where to stay within the Provence Alps, the area around the Serre Ponçon Lake, the biggest artificial lake in Europe, caught our attention, with the option to engage in watersports there as well as in a multitude of mountaineering activities.

We designed the itinerary for our week so that we would get a good overview of the region and could minimise the bus transport involved because that can be tiring and difficult to manage with a large group. Our plan was to explore different areas around Embrun and the Serre Ponçon Lake, and the Queyras Regional Park.

We flew into Nice and travelled north to Embrun with a stop-over along the way at the Domaine de Régusse vineyard to sample some of

the local wines. To shorten the bus transfer on our return trip, we flew back from Lyon airport. We stayed close to the town of Embrun in a three-star, three-logis de France (a quality label for good food and comfort) hotel. The wonderful food there was just what we needed to make sure we had a perfect holiday.

Each day, we planned three challenging walks to cater for all fitness levels within our group of 38 walkers so that we all had a good appetite for the well deserved meals served by the hotel in the evenings.

## Day 1

### *Boscodon Abbey to Martin Jean, Charance and Morgon peaks*

As an introduction on the first day, we picked walks that started just above Boscodon Abbey. This abbey, located in a beautiful mountain environment, is a masterpiece of 12th-century architecture. In the late 18th century, the abbey was used as a place to control the production of timber. The timber logs were then transported on the river Durance to the rest of Provence and down to Marseille harbour.

The three walks all started from the



over the lake with a splendid panorama that spread from the Écrins National Park down to Provence. The way back followed the south ridge off the Morgon summit.

## Day 2

### *Ceillac to Saint Anne Lake, Col du Girardin and Girardin peak*

We spent the second day in the Queyras Regional Park. This park is located between the Italian border and the town of Guillestre. The cembro pine tree is an emblematic species for the park, with its large trunk and a soft timber that is used to make furniture and handicrafts. The price of this timber is so high that sometimes helicopters are in charge of bringing dead trunks back down to a safe place where they will later be used by the local handicrafts industry.

The short walk went to Saint Anne Lake, an ascent of 448m over a distance of 8km. Starting from the car park at 1967m, the walk took a very clear path through the Cembro pine forest where there were a lot of fairly tame wild deer. This forest is amazing to visit in June when all the Alpine rhododendrons, so small compared to those in Ireland, are in full bloom.

The Saint Anne Lake (2415m) is a clear example of what a glacier mountain lake can be. The lake is squashed between the sheer cliffs of Font-Sainte (3292m), the highest summit in the Queyras Regional Park, and Pic des Heuvières (3271m).

The medium walk went to the Sainte Anne Lake and then on to the Girardin pass (2699m), an ascent of 732m in 10km. From the pass we had a wonderful view over the mountains of the Queyras Regional Park and the Écrins National Park. In particular the Pelvoux, Aillefroide and Glacier Blanc could be seen.

The long walk climbed Girardin peak, an ascent of 909m in 12km. Starting from the car park, this walk went to the Girardin pass past the Saint Anne Lake and then finished on the summit of Girardin peak (2876m), a perfect alpine walk with the combination of a lake, a pass and a summit!

## Day 3

### *A multi-activity day*

For a day's break from hiking, we had a choice between a wide range of activities. Some of us went to the local market in the town of Embrun to rest

Clouds on the way up to Peak Girardin.  
Photo: Ian Kelly.

car park of La Fontaine de l'Ours, 'the bear fountain.' The short walk was to Martin Jean peak, a distance of 9km, with an initial stroll through the Boscondon forest. The effect of the altitude on the vegetation was clear, with a succession of trees such as beech and birch giving way further up to a variety of alpine trees such as acacia, alpine pines, larch and cembro. These trees are a perfect host for woodpeckers such as the great spotted woodpecker and the black woodpecker, and the holes dug by these birds were clearly observable on the trunks.

The medium walk also went to Martin Jean peak first and then on to Charance peak, a total distance of 11.5km. Looking south, this walk offers superb views over the Ubaye valley, with its river joining the Serre Ponçon Lake at its southern side.

The long walk went to Col de la Baisse and then on to Morgon peak, an ascent of 964m and a distance of 17km. The ascent of the Morgon peak from the "Col de la Baisse" is fairly straightforward. We could imagine the very open landscape there would be a perfect playground in winter for snowshoeing and ski touring. The views from the top were breathtaking



Stopping for a photo at the Cirque de Morgon.  
Photo: Colm McMahon.



our legs or to try to find some miracle remedy for sore feet or to enjoy shopping in the typical French boutiques. The other, more adventurous ones went to a Via Ferrata in Chateau Queyras, which offered amazing views over the Guil river gorge, famous for its extreme kayaking courses. The beauty of this Via Ferrata was its finish at a fort. Then, in the afternoon, we sampled some of the local watersports with a whitewater rafting trip on the river Durance.

## Day 4

### *The Serre Ponçon Lake region*

This day took us to the region at the border of the Écrins National Park overlooking the Serre Ponçon Lake. The walks started from the ski resort at Reallon, probably one of the smallest ski resorts in the region! The short walk went along the Chabrières ridge, 452m of ascent and a distance of 6km through the larch tree forest so typical of the Southern Alps. The larch trees were used in the past to build ships but are now used mainly as a base material for many of the mountain chalets in the area. The main advantage is their resistance to bad weather, cold and rain over time. Some chalets built with larch are more than 500 years old and still in very good condition! The walk then

continued up to the Aiguilles de Chabrières ridge from where there was a superb view over the Serre Ponçon Lake. Being a loop walk, the descent went down the ski slopes back to the start.

The medium walk initially followed the same track as the short walk and then continued from the view point up to the Chabrières gully and on to the other side of the ridge where there was a wild limestone desert type of landscape. The flowers there were very beautiful, as limestone soil is usually more favourable for flowers than acid soil. For the lucky observer, a couple of golden eagles can sometimes be seen there, but unfortunately we did not spot them that day.

The long walk was practically the same as the medium walk except that it went to the top of Chabrière peak. It required care since the last 50 metres was quite exposed scrambling, but the view from the top was amazing.

## Day 5

### *Andiamo to Italy*

For the second-last day of our trip we planned a long and tough day, with an objective for most to break the barrier of 3000m. So we headed to Saint Veran, the highest village in Europe, at an altitude of 2042m. We took a shuttle bus up to the traffic

limit in the valley of Saint Veran, to get closer to the starting point for the walks and high altitude. These walks took place at the eastern part of Queyras Regional Park. This area is particularly interesting from a geological viewpoint since this is where the African and continental plates came into contact, which explains the presence of so many minerals in the area.

The short walk was to Col Blanchet, starting from where the shuttle bus dropped us near an old copper mine; this walk took us to the fine valley of La Blanche, dominated by the Tête de Toillies (3175m), very famous according to the local guidebooks for its interesting and difficult climbing routes. The first part of the walk went to the mountain refuge of La Blanche, which we would not recommend due to the unfriendly nature of the tenants, and the last part was a steep ascent to the Col Blanchet (2897m) from where Italy could be seen on a fine day. On the way down we saw a multitude of marmots, an Alpine species that hibernates in winter and has great digging abilities, judging by the size of their burrows.

The medium walk went straight up to the Col de Chamouissière (2881m) from where the Col d'Agnel could be seen, situated on the French-Italian border. From the Col, the route went





along the ridge south to the Peak de Caramatran (3021m). The Mont Viso (3841m), with its isolated position, was really spectacular. We had a bit of fun there by having one foot in France and one foot in Italy. The French/Italian border is full of military forts, some of them going back to the Vauban during the reign of Louis XIV, and some of which were used during the Second World War.

The long walk was a tour of Tête des Toillies, a long and challenging walk to complete in a day, which brought us from France to Italy and then back to France. It offered a magnificent view of the Queyras Regional Park in France and the valleys going down to Chianale in Italy. From the copper mine, we went to the Col de la Noire (2955m) and from there we went towards Tête des Toillies to reach our 3000 metres target. Then we came down the other side to the Ubaye river valley before walking up to the Col du Longet (2670m). From the Col du Longet we crossed the border to Italy, enjoying

the lakes around us, and walked up to the Col Blanchet to return to the copper mine. This walk was the fantastic highlight of a superb week of hiking in a part of the Alps previously unknown to most of us but which turned out to be a really worthwhile area to visit.

## Day 6

### *Near the ski resort of Les Orres*

For the last day, we stayed close to the hotel and walked beside the ski resort of Les Orres. This walk started near Les Orres resort, at Prés Bois, and followed the track leading to the Sainte Marguerite Lake. Some of us went on to the Col de l'Ane from where the view on Ubaye Valley was fantastic.

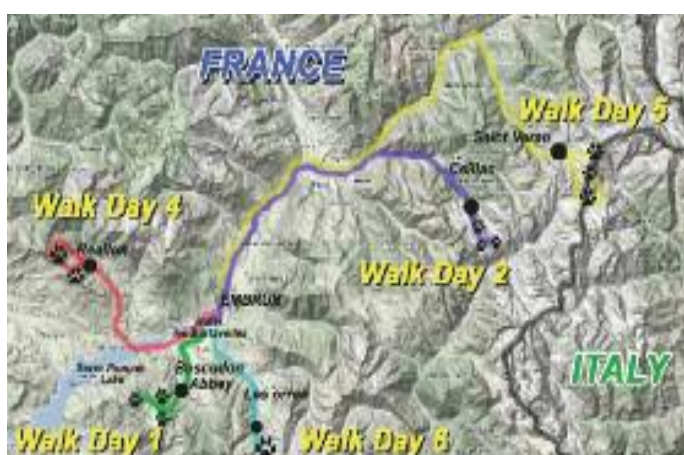
Some went swimming and established a record by swimming for 40 minutes in Glacier Lake, which left all the locals very impressed! The rest of us just enjoyed a long nap beside the lake, took photos and watched the swimmers. ■

**Notes:** This wonderful week-long trip in August 2008 was organised by Glenwalk member Olive Harrington with help from fellow member Vincent Lamy, who has set up the activity holiday company France Outdoors ([www.franceoutdoors.com](http://www.franceoutdoors.com)). Vincent knows the Provence area very well and was of great assistance to us in the planning and organisation of this trip. Vincent accompanied our group during the week as our guide.

**Maps:** OS maps as follows:  
IGN 3437ET, Orcières-Merlette  
IGN 3438ET, Embrun  
IGN 3637OT, Saint Veran

Ian Kelly is a committee member of Glenwalk Hillwalking Club and a member of MI. Besides walking in the Irish hills, he has climbed in England, Scotland, Wales and the French Alps.

A view over the Écrins National Park.  
Photo: Ian Kelly.



The week's walks with Vincent Lamy of France Outdoors.



Hochmoor in the  
Wilder Kaiser, Austria.



## In the Wilder Kaiser

### Aodhnait Carroll and Angela Carlin visit the Tirol

**W**e were invited by Topflight and the Wilder Kaiser Tourist Association to spend two days in the Tirol region of Austria, finding out what is available there for the walking enthusiast.

Angela, Aodhnait and companions on a hilltop in the Austrian Tirol.  
Photo: Angela Carlin collection.

In fact, the Wilder Kaiser has much to offer walkers, and the variety of walking opportunities on offer there appears to be almost endless. There is an extensive network of trails in the area, varying from a one-hour walk through the town to multi-day trips,

overnighting in mountain huts. All of the trails are well signed and mapped, which gives visitors greater choice when it comes to picking a route. To help familiarise the visitor with the area, the tourist office also offers free, guided half-day walks in the local mountains.

The Wilder Kaiser region's tourist association are promoting summer walking in the region, better known as a winter ski destination, and have just launched an impressive new, interactive mapping website, [www.wilderkaiser.info](http://www.wilderkaiser.info).

And so the trip began. After a short visit to the tourist office, we met up with our local guide, Peter Moser, and a small group of tourists from around the world. Peter led us out of the village of Ellmau towards the Hart Kaiser. Throughout the day the pace was relaxed, with plenty of time to take photographs, hear stories about the local landscape and history, and even to sample the local schnapps (served from Peter's ingenious hollow ski pole!). We had a generous lunch stop at the Bergkaiser panorama restaurant, where the excellent local cuisine was served with a fantastic alpine view. The walk would definitely be suitable as a gentle first day to get your bearings or for families or novice walkers (or schnapps connoisseurs!)

On the second day, we found ourselves once again heading for the hills. The plan that day was to venture a little further into the mountains, this time on the northern side of the valley. We began the day's walk on some beautiful forest trails which led towards the small peak of Winterum (1142m), from which we were afforded a fabulous view over the Hintersteiner See and east towards the impressive rocky ridge of the Wilder Kaiser itself. On the trek up, we saw a variety of traditional cottages where the inhabitants produced their own cheese and milk and sold it to the walkers who visited the area during the summer. Our guide explained to us how the traditional hill farmers worked together to ensure their survival in the harsh winter months.

The return journey brought us along the developed tourist area on the lakeshore, where we were greeted with the sweet smell of apple strudel. We stopped there to sample some of the delicious local cheeses. The area has much to offer, from gentle forest trails to multi-day hut-to-hut walks. 1:25,000 maps and a walking guide booklet are available free from the tourist office in Ellmau, which is also the meeting point for the free guided walk to the Hart Kaiser, three days a week.

This area is an ideal place to visit with your family. It has plenty of activities for both the young and the young at heart. The area has a lot to offer for outdoor kids – we were really impressed by the Hexenwasser, a water park with a difference, built of natural materials and with the motto “Marvel, Contemplate, Comprehend.” It includes a ‘barefoot path’ and a ‘wading pond’ as well as a chance to see traditional bread and cheese making. The Hexenwasser is accessible by cable-car from Soll, though entry is free if you walk up the 3km! The park is one of six ‘mountain parks’ in the area.

Topflight are now offering packages to suit walking enthusiasts in the Wilder Kaiser area, with a discount for MI members. Following a flight to Salzburg, the Wilder Kaiser is accessible by car in just under two hours! ■

**Aodhnait Carroll is Mountaineering Ireland's Access and Conservation Officer, and Angela Carlin is Youth Development Officer.**





# The long march

Lindsay MacVean takes on a 60km hike in the Reeks of Kerry

**W**hen we finally arrived at Kate Kearney's, after completing our 'long march' from Waterville, we ordered two whiskeys in loud, proud voices to celebrate our success on the mountain ranges of southwest Kerry, which had been achieved in an impressive time of just over 36 hours.

Our adventure was the brainchild of my companion John O'Sullivan, or 'Jono' for short. Together, we had achieved what had seemed impossible: 60km of hiking taking in several peaks over 900m, including Carrauntoohil, with a total height gain of 8761m, about 100m less than the height of Mount Everest. At times, when my feet had given up, I had wondered if we would ever succeed, but finally we were here.

We had set out 36 hours previously from Beenarourke View Point at 5:15am, striking west with our head torches pointing straight up at the ridgeline. The buzz of initial excitement had made us move quickly

and I marvelled at the seemingly metropolitan cluster of lights around Waterville, even at that hour. Eventually daylight started to creep onto the horizon and, by 8 o'clock, the dawn had broken with little fanfare but enough to raise our spirits as we rested atop Eagle's Hill and looked at the first of the saddles which we would have to cross.

I was feeling good, but that would soon change. On the far side of the saddle, Jono took the lead over some steep ground and, as we continued, I felt my legs begin to get tired. We eventually made it to a point where we could get our bearings but, as anyone walking in Kerry will quickly discover, fence lines and forests rarely stand still for long. We had a quick puzzle over the disappearance of the trees that the map told us were there but which in reality had been cut back by about a kilometre. Then we set off again along the ridge.

Our first target was to reach Coomcallee (650m) in six hours and we were determined to meet that target. As we walked by the side of Lough Sallagh, I eyed the steep ascent up through Eagle's Pinnacle and onto the side of Coomcallee. The natural bedrock of the mountains had formed ramps of grass that made a trail up the

side of the mountain, but this didn't mean it was going to be easy. I took the lead with a steady plod that eventually earned Jono's respect in its ability to 'make pieces of the ascent.' Yet this first real test of endurance still took its toll. As we reached the top of a particularly steep rise, with sweat streaming down my face, I commented: "I think I left a part of me on that one." Jono looked back at me and, with a casual calmness, said "Oh, I thought that seemed easy." It was a bad omen of things to come but at least we had made it to our first objective on time.

We had some lunch and set off again, rounding the top of Coomcallee and heading into what we thought was going to be the most difficult stage of the trek. Some evil-looking contour lines, that made nonsense on the map and looked even worse in real life, were interspersed with lakes that often looked too similar. Eventually we reached a cwm with a dog-leg lake at the bottom. We had already made a preliminary walk there a few days before and Jono had taken the opinion that we should follow a spur to the left, while I had decided that a spur on the right looked easier. After topping up on water from a stream, we decided to compromise

John O'Sullivan and the Reeks.  
Photo: Lindsay McVean.



Lindsay McVean with  
Caher Ridge  
in background.  
Photo:  
John O'Sullivan.

and go straight up the middle.

This turned out to be another soul-wrenching climb and, when my laces came undone half-way up, it was a welcome excuse for a rest. Jono, however, plodded on and, when I finally gained the top of the rise, I had a moment of panic as I called out for Jono without response. I checked the map and peered at the rocky faces around me. Then, just as I began to ponder on the ease with which we had become separated, Jono appeared at the top of some steep ground to my left.

When I finally reached him, he was peering down into a deep valley on the far side of the spur with a mystified expression. "I'm sure that's the way. You remember all those rock faces?" As I checked the map, I was glad to see that I wasn't the only one that was tired and that he had made a minor mistake by heading slightly too far left. We corrected ourselves and headed off towards the next peak, Knocknagantee. This came to be the way things worked: while Jono continued to pull me through the expedition, I occasionally managed to help out with the navigation and my persistent plod, which slowly but surely got us up the mountains.

We thought the worst of the first day was behind us and that it would be easy navigation from there on in, but we thought wrong! We rounded the top of Knocknagantee and began our trek along the ridge towards the

imposing Mullaghanattin. Then, trouble struck. What we thought was going to be easy terrain turned into a nightmare of peat bog. With each sucking step, the energy was sapped from our legs and, to my horror, I realised that I was now consistently falling behind.

### Tiredness sets in

We had spent months planning this and I had been confident, even cocky, that it would be no problem as long as we took it a step at a time. Now I felt the fingers of fear that maybe I had been wrong. Maybe I was going to let Jono down and have to bow out of this challenge, disgraced? To make matters worse, Jono constantly spoke as if I was just behind him and, although I could hear his murmurings, I had absolutely no clue what he was saying. I settled for the occasional grunt or loud 'yes,' which I thought would keep him contented. I hoped that I didn't agree to anything too serious. It did seem that at one point he was even making animal noises, the context of which was completely beyond me.

Slowly the landscape changed from featureless bog to rocky outcroppings sticking out from the side of the ridge we were following. As we went up and down over these rock hurdles, I began to notice a distinct lack of confidence in my feet, which was very uncharacteristic. By degrees, from my

hips outwards, my body began to ache in all the wrong places. Now, I have trekked in the Atlas Mountains and in the Himalayas but never have I encountered such hostile terrain as I did in those last few hours.

As we carried on for kilometre after kilometre, my pace continued to slow. By now, Jono was going ahead and then waiting for me to hobble up. The light started to leave the sky and reaching our next objective was looking less and less likely. Finally, after twelve hours of walking, we stopped to take a look at the valley where we wanted to bivvy that night, and decided that it was time to get down out of the mountains instead of pushing on to Mullaghanattin. Continuing in the dark, in our current state, would be treacherous. The only question now was what the safest route down into the valley would be.

We opted to head down using the next re-entrant and then follow the edge of the lough until we reached a track. As we descended, I felt despondent as I realised my slow pace had caused us to fail to reach our target on Mullaghanattin. Darkness overtook us as we began to descend the increasingly severe rock faces which had been hidden from view when we initially chose the route. I found that I was now moving at a snail's pace, frequently sliding on my bottom in the darkness to try to keep up with Jono, who was finding the way ahead of me.

After slipping on my bottom for the umpteenth time, all my self-doubt coalesced into a decision. I would quit this evening and make another attempt at a later date! The instant I made this decision, I felt my first major blister form. I spent the rest of the time coming down the mountain trying to think up excuses for all of the people who knew I was doing this, and then planning my exit strategy. I don't think Jono realised how close I came to quitting that evening.

The descent finally bottomed out and, as we stumped along beside the lough, I mentioned to Jono that I wasn't sure about the next day, if this was the best pace I could manage. Without missing a beat, Jono told me to forget about tomorrow and just think about reaching our campsite for the night. I don't know why, but this simple comment changed me completely and I began to regain my confidence. By the time we reached



the track, I was positively buoyant. I chatted on about anything and everything to take my mind off the pain, to such an extent that I began to make Jono concerned I was suffering from hypothermia or some form of shock. Eventually, however, I settled down and became silent, beginning instead to count my paces as a way to focus my mind. We turned off our head torches to save batteries and in the bright moonlight made good time along the roads until, after three and a half meticulously paced kilometres and 16 hours in total of walking, we reached our chosen bivvy spot.

Originally we had planned to sleep only a few hours and then push on. However, after the gruelling experience of the last few hours, I left it up to Jono to decide when to start the next stage. We bivvied using a strict 'leave no trace' policy and, quite frankly, I only had the energy to force down some cold pasta before stripping off my boots and sliding into my sleeping bag. We were lucky with the conditions, which were dry with little wind. Wind is the killer of any good bivvy as it presses the layers of your sleeping bag and the bivvy bag against your body, draining the heat from your body. As it was, I actually warmed up so much that I was forced to remove some layers of clothing halfway through the night. At seven the next morning, I was woken up by Jono in what was apparently his sixth attempt in two hours. However, he didn't seem that annoyed, considering my previous evening's performance. We got ready in the dark and used a little gas to heat up some disgusting ready-made porridge I had purchased from the local shop. It was a useful reminder to at least sample some of the expedition food before you pack it.

We made our start just as light was breaking and began heading up one of the many shoulders of Carrauntoohil to the peak of Caher. My body had given up complaining and, using a slightly slower but still steady pace, the day passed quickly as we rose above Kerry. We were presented with some of the most stunning panoramas of this beautiful county. Then, as we headed along to the second peak of Caher and onto Carrauntoohil proper, the wind, which had been deceptively quiet, picked up significantly. To save energy we decided not to climb the 80m to the peak of Carrauntoohil and instead descended to the top of the

Devil's Ladder, where we found shelter for lunch.

### Tortoise vs hare

Instead of descending the Ladder after lunch, we headed up onto another chain of the Macgillicuddy's Reeks. As we traversed along the precarious ridges between the peaks, Jono pointed out their names, even though they weren't on the map. "This is Big Gun ridge leading up to Big Gun over here." He had undertaken this leg of our trip several times before. The weather, however, got worse. We were soon encased in cloud, battling against the increasing wind as we made our way along the chain using only compass bearings. Eventually the peaks got lower and the cloud base got higher. At the bottom of the final ascent of our trek, Jono had stopped once again, waiting for me to catch up. To my surprise I realised that this time he was lying down in exhaustion. Finally, I thought, the tortoise wins over the hare, but he was quickly up with me as we raced up the final peak.

From the last peak, we made our descent onto the broad plateau above the Gap of Dunloe and, with just an inkling of smug satisfaction, I led the way to the top of the track leading down into the luscious valley. As we reached the road and the last ½ km to Kate Kearney's licensed premises, neither of us cared who was in front

and we strode triumphantly abreast into the quiet car park and the end of our seriously challenging trek.

As we sat mulling over our drinks, once the jubilation had changed into a numbing exhaustion, I thought about the emancipating effect of physical tests of endurance such as our long march. In its completion, I felt a release from my own ego's suffering and from my persistent attachment to bodily pain. I also had a sense of achievement and the beginnings of a belief that the world was my oyster and that I truly could accomplish anything. Although, perhaps more likely, it was just the whiskey and exhaustion going to my head!

My thanks to the staff at Moractive for facilitating the walk (see [www.moractive.com](http://www.moractive.com)). ■

Lindsay MacVean lives in Waterville, Co Kerry. He is interested in a wide range of adventure sports, including hillwalking, and his blog is [www.littlemansuccess.com](http://www.littlemansuccess.com).

It was a cold night but the bivvy was warm.  
Photo: Lindsay McVean.

**“We strode triumphantly abreast into Kate Kearney's car park – the end of our seriously challenging trek.”**

# Kaçkar journey

Margaret Scully goes eco-trekking in the Kaçkar Mountains of Turkey.

*“Thirty-two new trekking routes offer opportunities to see rare fauna and flora, including bears”*

**L**ocated alongside the Black Sea coast in the far northeast of Turkey, close to the Georgian border, lies the rugged Kaçkar (pronounced ‘katch-kar’) Mountain range. The highest summit, Kaçkar Dag, stands at 3,932 metres amid ranges which are snow-blanketed from November through to April, and into June on the higher passes. Thirty-two new trekking routes, ranging in duration from two and a half hours to several days, have just been marked as part of a project that aims to attract eco-tourists into the region.

The Kaçkar is the third long-distance trekking trail in Turkey that Englishwoman Kate Clow has marked. She has also waymarked the St Paul’s Trail and the Lycian Way, which *The Sunday Times* rates as ‘one of the world’s ten best walks.’

Although the term ‘eco-tourism’ is subject to interpretation and alteration, there are officially recognised international principles that the tourism providers must follow. The projects should be: based in nature; environmentally friendly; provide interpretation and information; contribute to conservation and local communities; be responsibly marketed; and be culturally respectful.

Greenbox ([www.greenbox.ie](http://www.greenbox.ie)),

Ireland’s Eco Tourism Network, based in Co Leitrim and the surrounding counties, started in 2002 and has now become the national standard and accreditation authority for eco-tourism in Ireland, as recognised by Fáilte Ireland.

Kate Clow and Sevil Oren are paving the way for a similar network in Turkey, and the Turkish Ministry for Culture and Tourism are now embracing the idea of promoting niche destinations that need economic assistance, as opposed to five-star resorts near the coast.

In addition to waymarking trails and pioneering eco-tourism, Clow has been working with a Turkish NGO specialising in biodiversity, forestry conservation and tourism projects. Based in the Kaçkar Mountains and the Yusufeli basin, the TEMA (Turkish environmental protection) organisation is bringing environmentalists, conservationists, biodiversity experts and scientists to the region, which is internationally recognised as a biodiversity hotspot.



The aims of the current TEMA project include controlling and reducing the impact of tourism in the area, which boasts “one thousand shades of green and one hundred and fifty bears.”

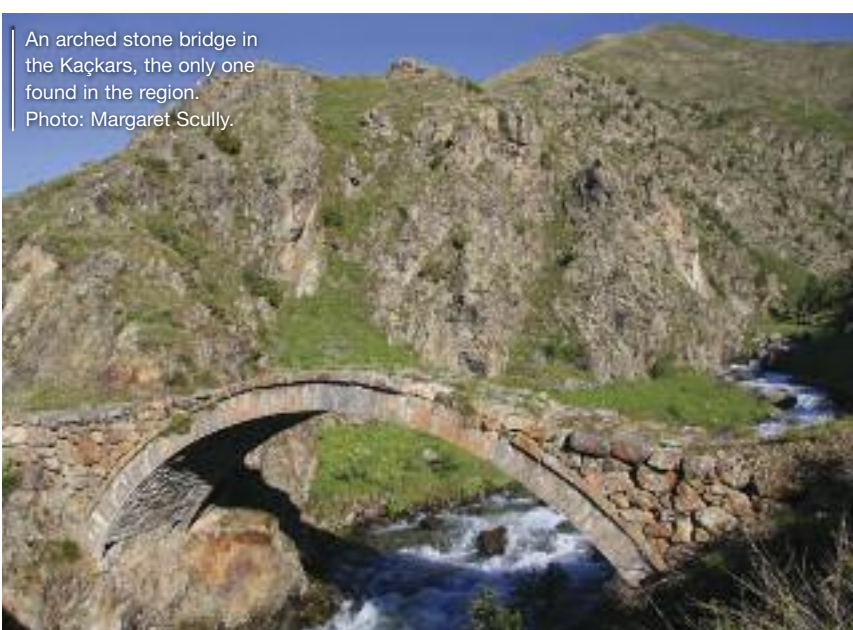
However, the many shades of green and the unique flora and fauna are not enough to sustain the local population and in recent years the Kaçkar Mountains have experienced a mass migration. Due to falling livestock prices, school closures and the lack of winter employment, the culturally diverse mountain people are heading for Turkey’s urban hubs in order to find work. The remaining population enjoys a life in pristine nature, fresh air, clean water, with organic food and

traditional skills, but the lack of financial resources is making it almost impossible to raise a family in the remote outposts. In fact, in the seven days that we trekked through the mountains I saw only a handful of children, all in the one village.

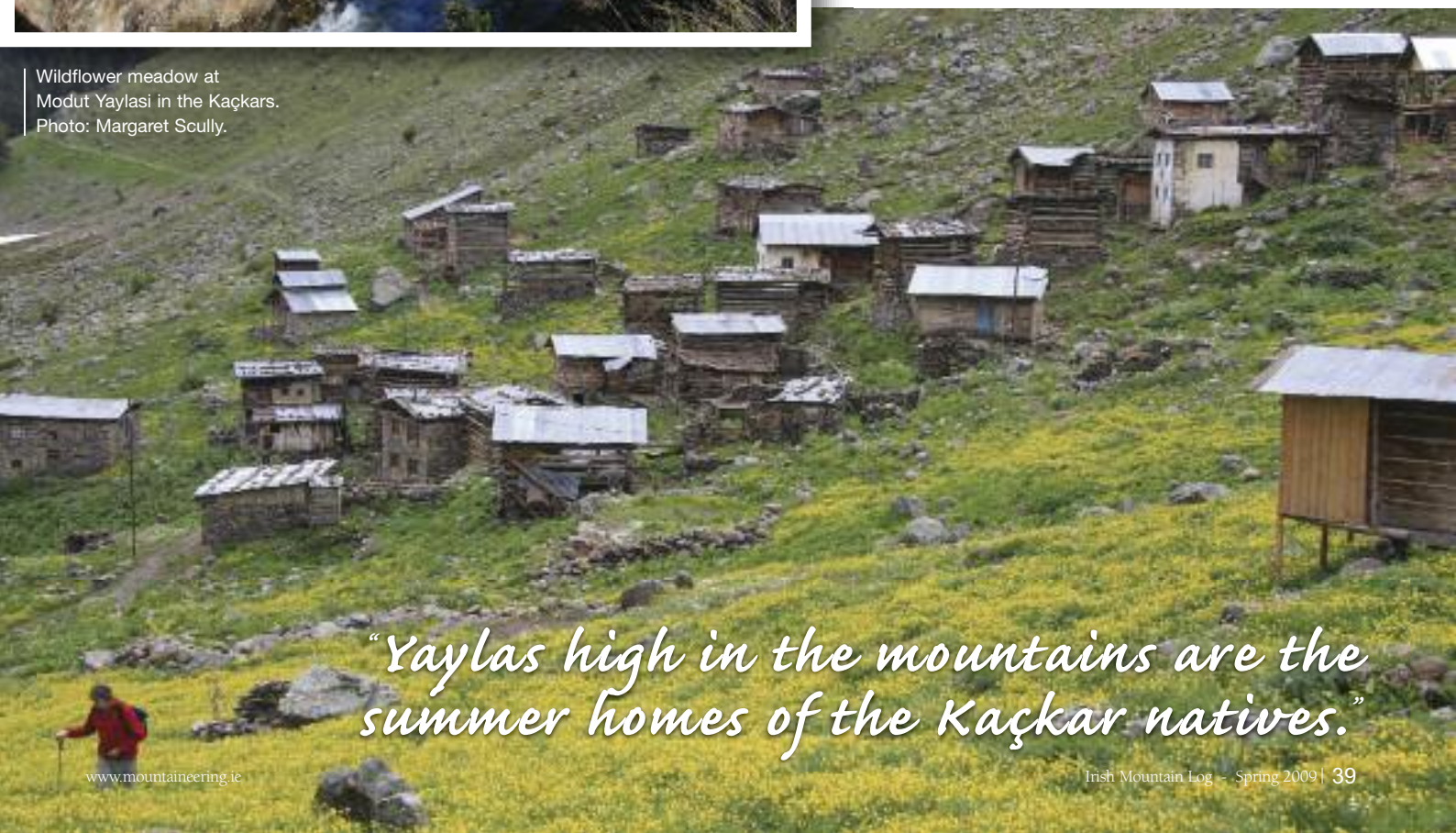
Our starting point on the seven-day trip was the valley town of Yusufeli, famous for whitewater rafting, due to its location at the confluence of the rapid Coruh and Barhal rivers. After a drive to the nearby village of Tekkale, we were soon lost in the wonderful wilderness of lush green hills, wildflower meadows and fast-flowing streams, as we made our way up the mountain. June is a good month to visit the Kaçkar as the freshly-melted snow creates voluminous gushing rivers and the high peaks are still snow-capped, giving a beautiful backdrop to the colourful wildflower meadows. As we walked through forests and hills, we inhaled the aromas of mountain fennel, garlic, sage and thyme.

Above the tree-line we came across small villages surrounded by pastures, which made excellent picnic spots, complete with fresh spring water for us walkers. Locally known as yaylas, the dwellings built from stone and timber are the summer homes of the Kaçkar natives who move uphill for two to three months each year, when the snows melt. Family members,

An arched stone bridge in the Kaçkars, the only one found in the region.  
Photo: Margaret Scully.



Wildflower meadow at Modut Yaylasi in the Kaçkars.  
Photo: Margaret Scully.



*“Yaylas high in the mountains are the summer homes of the Kaçkar natives.”*





Uban Yaylas.  
Photo:  
Margaret Scully  
collection.

animals, bees and hives all make the journey to the summer home where the cows graze the lush meadows and the bees collect pollen from the abundant wild flowers. Alas, due to the dwindling local population, many of these summer villages are unused and are going to rack and ruin. Kate Clow sees potential for the development of these deserted dwellings into trekking huts which could be a perfect eco-tourism solution for both owners and visitors.

According to one local man, Mahmut Yasar Pasali, there are over one hundred different edible wild plants around his yayla, which the family eat and use for cooking. This is a very exciting prospect for a food enthusiast like me and I can't think of anything better than a wild food and wilderness holiday in one of these scenically located vernacular homes. For the duration of our visit, we mainly stayed in family-run guesthouses which served us plenty of the local home-made fare. In addition to the excellent Kaçkar honey, all the cheeses, butter and preserves were locally made and extremely tasty. The natives have become deservedly famous for their cuisine throughout the country and some of the best restaurants in Istanbul and Ankara are owned by ethnic Hemsin people from the Kaçkar.

Our trek guides, Kate Clow and Kerem Kerecherek, are both keen amateur botanists and birdwatchers, so we got to share their excitement at spotting rare species on several



Margaret and Kate on their way  
to Naletlem Geciti.

occasions. I am no expert on flora but I couldn't help but notice the number of Irish garden and hedgerow plants that were growing there in the wild such as peonie roses and elder trees. As fascinating as the plants and birds were, the one creature that captured most of our interest and imagination was the bear. After hearing of the 150 bears living in the area from the TEMA people, then tracking their droppings, seeing their footprints and hearing the many tales of their beehive raiding expeditions, bears had become a focus of the trek.

Not until day five were we eventually rewarded, after a beautiful walk from Yaylalar, through the stunning flower-covered Olunglar and Dibe Valley to our encampment beneath the snow-line. The smell of Kerem's cooking lured two hungry

bears to the edge of our tents while we were inside eating. Thankfully, we caught a close-up look at the mighty animals before they retreated back up the snowy mountainside. This was a blessed moment for all present and a rare one, according to our guides, because bears are nocturnal and rarely appear in the light of day.

Knowing the bears had gone uphill, the next morning we commenced our ascent to the Naletleme Pass, which took us from the south side to the north side of the region. With the help of snow-shoes which flattened and enlarged our feet, we plodded safely across the deep snow, which was dangerously soft in places. We spent a stunning five hours walking through the mists and snow before

eventually descending the Black Sea side of the range. True to fame and form, it was raining in the wettest part of Turkey and we walked through stony, soggy ground for several more hours before reaching the highland spa town of Ayder. I can't think of anything better than a relaxing dip in a piping hot pool of therapeutic waters to ease the aches and pains after an enduring week in the mountains.

As an outsider coming in to this beautiful area, rich in scenery, nature and fresh clean water, it would appear that the Kaçkar is naturally adapted to most of the internationally recognised principles of eco-tourism, apart from one very important one, being 'environmentally friendly.' However, it is not so long ago that we, too, were unaware of the need to separate and



## *"Disused yaylas may soon be developed as trekking huts for eco-tourists..."*

recycle our waste, to cut down on plastics and develop renewable energy resources. If the people who are still waiting for work to commence on Ireland's first eco-village in Cloughjordan, Co Tipperary, were to see Yaylalar, they would be gone in the morning. It still has the original essence of the eco dream, complete with cow-dung plaster and hand-milked, happy cows. Hopefully, with the help of TEMA and other groups in the area, these natural places and people will be preserved and their environmental friendliness developed.

However, beside every beauty there is often a beast, and in the Kaçkar's case it's the proposed damming of the Yusufeli basin which has been in the pipeline for the last fifteen years. People have had to live under the threat of a mass eviction in order to flood their homeland, which is destined to become a hydro-electric dam. As it is now a well-known fact that the life-span of such large-scale dams is shortlived due to silting, we can only hope that the powers that be will wake up to the fact that there is ample scope for micro-hydro systems in the towns and villages, which could generate ample power without causing damage and disturbance to the area and its inhabitants. One saving grace is that, with time, the threat of the dam is dwindling. Another is the fact that Yusufeli's administration is now in the competent and ethical hands of Governor Mevlut Ozmen, who is very

supportive of TEMA and Kate Clow's pioneering projects.

With careful management and sustainable development, Kate Clow is hopeful that these mountains will survive the many threats and continue to attract responsible, nature-loving visitors. TEMA and the United Nations Development Programme are working in the area, protecting and encouraging the breeding of rare species, which in the Kaçkar Mountains case includes children. Being aware of the damage caused by trekkers and mountaineers in the Himalayas, Clow, Ozmen and many others are adamant that the Kaçkar is not going to be similarly ruined by insufficient sanitation facilities or by being littered with plastic bottles and debris. At present, the Kaçkar is a blank, unspoilt canvas upon which they are planning to create an eco-friendly destination.

Margaret Scully originates from the lowlands of Laois but has an affinity with the mountains. She has trekked in the Himalaya and done numerous short trips in the mountains of New Zealand and Ireland. She is passionate about ethical travel to interesting destinations.

### **Explore the Kaçkar**

Trek and Tour – June 2009  
Info: [www.missusushi.com](http://www.missusushi.com)  
Contact: Margaret 085 165 5575



Margaret with an Israeli journalist and a Lebanese trekker.  
Photo: Margaret Scully collection.

trekking ◀



## *Fact file*

### **Getting there**

Turkish Airlines ([www.thy.com](http://www.thy.com)) fly five times a week direct from Dublin to Istanbul (4hrs) with onward connections to Erzurum or Trabazon (1.5hrs). Yusufeli is a three-hour drive from Erzurum Airport.

### **Independent travel**

Turkey is a very hospitable country and excellent for backpacking, with regular and inexpensive bus services. Walks can be completed with the aid of a GPS and Kate Clow's *The Kaçkar* trekking guide. Accommodation ranges from €20-€50 per night including breakfast (please check with provider as prices vary according to number and season). See [www.trekkinginturkey.com](http://www.trekkinginturkey.com).

Yaylalar is an excellent base for day-walks and for access to Dibe Valley and Naletleme Pass. Rooms and self-catering riverside cottages are available for groups/families. Ismail at Cam Yuva Pansiyon can arrange mule hire (tel: +90 466 832 2001) or contact Kerem in Middle Earth Travel ([www.middleearthtravel.com](http://www.middleearthtravel.com)).

### **Organised travel**

Our excellent guide Kerem Karaerkek from Middle Earth Travel ([www.middleearthtravel.com](http://www.middleearthtravel.com)) runs seven-day guided treks in Kaçkar between June 15<sup>th</sup> and Sept 15<sup>th</sup> for €475 including food and accommodation (and airport pick-up and drop-off). For more information on Yusufeli, see [www.yusufeli.gov.tr](http://www.yusufeli.gov.tr) (check out the video). See also [www.tema.org](http://www.tema.org), website of TEMA (Turkish Foundation for Combating Soil Erosion, for Reforestation and the Protection of Natural Habitats).

Special thanks to the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism ([www.gototurkey.co.uk](http://www.gototurkey.co.uk)).



Margaret and Kate crossing Naletleme Pass.  
Photo: Margaret Scully collection.



# Bouldering in Hampi

Naomi Sturdy goes climbing in India

Naomi Sturdy on a traverse, Hampi. Photo: Neal McQuaid.



**Whether you go to India for the climbing or**

**not, you are most definitely guaranteed an adventurous experience. It is a huge country that can be challenging, scary and exciting, and that's before you even get to the crags!**

All in all, our trip to the sub-continent was most definitely memorable and insightful. Due to time constraints and aiming for quality rather than quantity, we concentrated our climbing in two main areas, Hampi and Badami. Both locations are in south India, roughly 300km from Bangalore.

The Ali Baba café in Hampi is a meeting place for rockclimbers. Photo: Neal McQuaid.



## Hampi

Now a designated world heritage site, Hampi was once one of the largest Hindu empires in India. In the Hindu legends of Ramangan, this area was Kishkinda, the realm of the monkey gods. Today, with a landscape of boulders stretching for miles, it is attracting climbers from all over the world.

Bouldering has been developing here for around ten years and, with the help of Big Up Production's film *Pilgrimage*, featuring Chris Sharma, Hampi has been launched into the consciousness of many travelling climbers interested in a wilder experience.

A lot of Hampi bouldering is based on exploration, but to assist visiting climbers, a topo is available from an old lady called Begum. There are almost 200 problems in the current topo and, with an official guidebook also "supposedly" on the way, there is still endless potential for new problems in Hampi.

Currently, the developed problems range from 5c-8a (V0-V12) and there are certainly many problems of above this grade.

The boulders here are a rough granite and the climbing takes its toll on the fingertips! Most boulders are of similar style, with small crimps and very little in the line of footholds. Coming to Hampi as an introduction to bouldering is not recommended!

Boarding the train in Bangalore with literally up to one hundred or more people pushing their way on, we knew our journey to Hampi would be interesting, to say the least. Nine hours later, we pulled into Hospet. We refused every offer of a rickshaw and got the bus to Hampi. It is a laid-back town (being in India, that is a compliment!), so we were more than happy to settle in when we arrived.

There are many ruins of ancient temples which are amazing to visit on rest days, and now with the increasing numbers of tourists visiting the place, there is a range of restaurants and cafes to choose from on both sides of the river.

Most of the bouldering at present is across the river from the main town and a boat runs over and back each day, with a ten-year-old scrupulously collecting the over-charged 'foreigners' rate from visitors. We rented mats off a guy in the Shiva café who also makes a fine banana lassi. So with mats and shoes ready, we headed for the boulders where there was an eclectic mix of climbers, so one is never left lacking for motivation or interesting conversation.

At the end of our first day, having shredded most of the skin from our fingertips, the sun went down over Hampi. The monkeys jumped from boulder to boulder with style and agility, while the local wild dogs howled at the moon. Going to Hampi,



I was not sure what to expect as regards the climbing. However, having been there now, I have to say I was impressed by the place. One could spend months there and still have endless problems to find and try, and on top of that it is in India and comes with all the strange and wonderful experiences that this country has to offer.

## Badami

Eager to get on some routes after the bouldering, our next destination was Badami. Badami is about a five-hour bus journey from Hampi and in true Indian style we managed to have at least three near-escapes with oncoming traffic en route! Badami, like Hampi, was once a settlement built around the glory of ancient temples. In contrast with our previous destination, however, the atmosphere was not as relaxed. Badami does not seem to attract the same number of tourists, so, without any of the touristy trimmings, it left for a more 'real' Indian experience. The climbing here is on quality sandstone. There are a few main crags with sufficient development (over 100 routes) and there is a guidebook currently being worked on, which is due to be published in 2009. All routes have been bolted with in-situ lower-offs. There are, however, bolts missing on some of the routes, most likely having been stolen. The work that has been put into development here is of really good quality and leaves for safe, enjoyable experiences. For routes where bolts are missing or gear is required, a little more caution and perhaps guts are needed and, having seen the hospital down in the town, I opted for the former!

Coming from the granite in Hampi, the sandstone here was a welcome change. It was amazing to see such red rock, steep, with perfect features and perfect lines. Going on a topo we received from a German climber, we started out on the first day. We had not been walking long when I realised

**“We were eager to go rockclimbing after the bouldering...”**



we were in the centre of the town's slums. Little ramshackle huts side by side, rabid dogs, pigs and rubbish everywhere promptly encouraged me to turn on my heels and return to the safety of our hotel room. It was a stark introduction to Badami. The sights, the smells and the people, made me question what I was doing there and, with the gear in my bag worth more than some of their houses, I found it hard.

After some reflection, we decided to get on with our goal and reassessed the topo. We found two main areas which we concentrated on for the next few days, Hermit Wall and the Temple area. Hermit Wall is a big face rising above the lake in the centre of town. We were not climbing there long when the locals started to gather around to watch. I found myself belaying with about ten Indian men standing around me, chatting away in Hindi, watching our every move, with kids asking me if they could have a go, a quickdraw, a school pen, chocolate or whatever, all while I'm trying to watch the rope and my bags – a very strange experience!

Two of the guys, Vickram and Singh, decided it was their duty to become our friends and act as tour guides during our stay! They brought us to some of the local temples, which I have to say were worth the visit. In the other climbing area we visited, we escaped the crowds and the sun by climbing in a nice shaded gully. During our week in Badami, we found enough to keep us entertained and, like Hampi, there were many possibilities for new development there. ■

Naomi Sturdy is a member of IMC and Mountaineering Ireland and has been climbing for four years. Based in New Zealand, she is currently on a round-the-world climbing trip.

### USEFUL WEBSITES:

[www.hampi.in/bouldering-in-hampi.htm](http://www.hampi.in/bouldering-in-hampi.htm)

[www.gerhardschaar.com](http://www.gerhardschaar.com)

(Gerhard are publishing a guidebook on Badami later this year)

[www.ukclimbing.com/articles/](http://www.ukclimbing.com/articles/)

(This site has good photos)

[www.dreamroutes.org/etc/badami.html](http://www.dreamroutes.org/etc/badami.html)

### BEST TIME TO GO:

November-February

### EQUIPMENT NEEDED:

60m rope, harness, shoes, chalk, 10-15 quickdraws, 1 set of nuts and cams (for routes where bolts are missing or not present) and an open mind!

The Hermit Wall and Temple, Badami.  
Photo: Neal McQuaid.

Bouldering in Hampi.  
Photo: Neal McQuaid.



# Paradise next door

*Colm Ennis takes part in a BMC Meet in Wales*

The breathtaking  
Llanberis Pass  
as seen from  
Dinas Mot.  
Photo:  
Colm Ennis.

**E**ach year, the British Mountaineering Council (BMC) holds a week-long International Climbing Meet, with summer and winter meets taking place in alternate years. Their aim is to put the best of Scottish winter climbing, north Wales' cragging and all of the British climbing ethics and traditions on show. In May of last year the MCI was represented at the summer meet by Eoin Kennedy from Cork and Colm Ennis from the Rathgormack Climbing Club in Waterford. Here, Colm Ennis recounts his experiences.

The last time I had touched the rock of north Wales I had been caught up in a rather excellent epic involving a popular Tremadog arête, a hefty shower of rain, stuck climbers, stuck gear, stuck ropes and eventually a head-torchless darkness. I have a great memory, too, of an easier day's cragging down in the Llanberis Pass, which I had followed up with a pilgrimage to the ledge beneath the historic Cenotaph Corner and of standing there desperately wanting to climb it. The chance to get back to it all as a guest of the venerable BMC at

their 2008 International Climbing Meet therefore couldn't be passed up.

The meet got off to an auspicious start when the whole ground floor of Manchester airport was inundated with a flood of rainwater which distracted us from our easy game of 'spot the arriving international climbers.' Fortunately, at Plas y Brenin, the national mountain centre and our base for the meet, the forecast for the next day was looking very good, which made for enjoyable plotting by the 44 climbers from 24 different countries, who were all now teamed up with a UK host.

I had decided that a few routes on Dinas Mot down in the Pass would ease me into the week. My host, Robert, was, however, a bit shaken by the pace of a wound-up Irish climber used to travelling quite a distance for good, dry rock and who likes to get plenty of value and at least three multi-pitch routes out of his day. There was a bit of everything in the climbing, with the delicate, slabby traverse on Superdirect and the blind swing onto the arête of the meaty Plexus being the highlights. Meanwhile, across on the sun-drenched Dinas Cromlech, we watched the queue for Lord of the Flies, an E6 that had probably never had so many ascents in a single day. We heard, too, that Nico Favresse

from Belgium had taken a 50-foot fall during an on-sight ground-up attempt on the nearby Nightmayer (E8)! Later, we might have got our abseil ropes stuck and missed dinner, but it was worth it for that late evening light in the valley and that satisfying tiredness provided uniquely by a good day's climbing.

Sitting down to breakfast with a hundred psyched-up climbers who are confronted with endless possibilities for climbing is quite an experience. North Wales seems to have a bit of every type of rock on the planet and I was determined to experience it all, so the famous Dinorwig slate quarries sounded like the perfect suggestion from my host Naomi Buys for the second day. As you pass the quarries on your drive out from Llanberis to Snowdon, you might consider them a bit of a blot on the landscape, but getting in amongst those immense piles of slate is quite an experience. Firstly, there is the incredible history of the place, which shouts out to you as you pass by the small, stone huts used by the quarry workers and their families. Then you have to stop to investigate all those strange cables, tubes, cranes, tracks, holes, tunnels and caves that represent the technology and the fabrications which helped those workers chew their way through the mountain. Each climbing



*“Joe Brown had said the Vector was ‘tricky, polished and precarious,’ but I just went and climbed it.”*

area had a unique feel to it, too, like the green and cavernous Vivian quarry, the strange, white tentacles reaching up from the pool at Dali's Hole and the monolith of rock at Serengeti. You could spend the whole day just exploring the great heaps of slate in what seems like a post-apocalyptic world, but eventually you have to do a bit of climbing! Some of the routes demand trad gear while others are bolted or pegged, but this is no sport-climbing crag and there is often quite a bit to be done before you reach that first clip. A short, sharp corner called Holy Holy Holy at E2 5c provided one of the highlights of the day. I was surprised that I couldn't just bridge up it and, like quite a few other routes that we did that day, I had to resort to using fingers and technique, actually doing some real climbing.

On the slate, Naomi had proved to be an excellent and incredibly calm climbing partner and we were together again the next morning for a trip up to the Cromlech. Our first two routes were to be Cenotaph Corner and the equally famous Cemetery Gates. I quickly tied in below the Corner. Joe Brown's classic route has a huge amount of history and folklore attached to it and I was determined to climb it perfectly. It is well protected, climbs like a dream and, like all of the best routes, has its crux right at the top. A few quick and tricky moves and I was over it, well pleased with myself. Cemetery Gates felt more exposed and was another great piece of climbing. Left Wall, on the other hand, was quite a long, lonely lead and I kicked myself later for taking the easier variation finish at the very top. Not the next time!

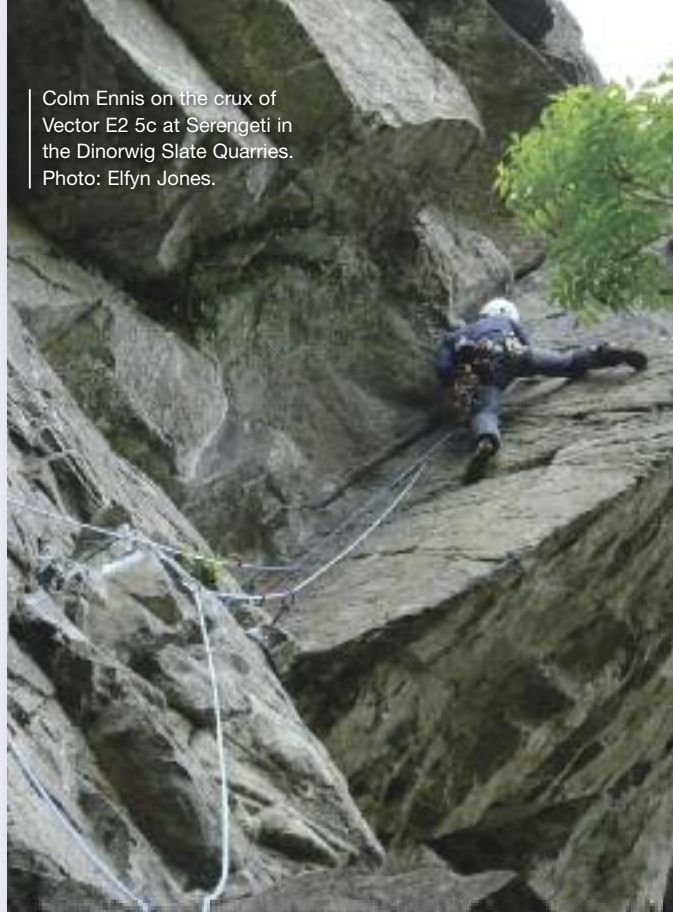
The evenings were just as hectic as the days, with lectures and presentations from the likes of pioneering climber Pat Littlejohn who spoke about the adventurous climbing on the Llyn peninsula, where he assured fans of loose rock that they would find plenty to keep them entertained. In his talk, Nick Bullock warned us about Pat, who he said “seems like a nice, mild-mannered

gentleman, but don't mind that, he's actually stark raving mad.” Pat, that week, seconded a 17-year-old Belgian climber on the Axe (E4 6a) on Cloggy, having made the first ascent 30 years earlier. Many of the other international climbers gave talks about their own countries or places that they had visited. They were only too happy to give advice and offered help in organising expeditions. My guidebook to the Crimea is on the way.

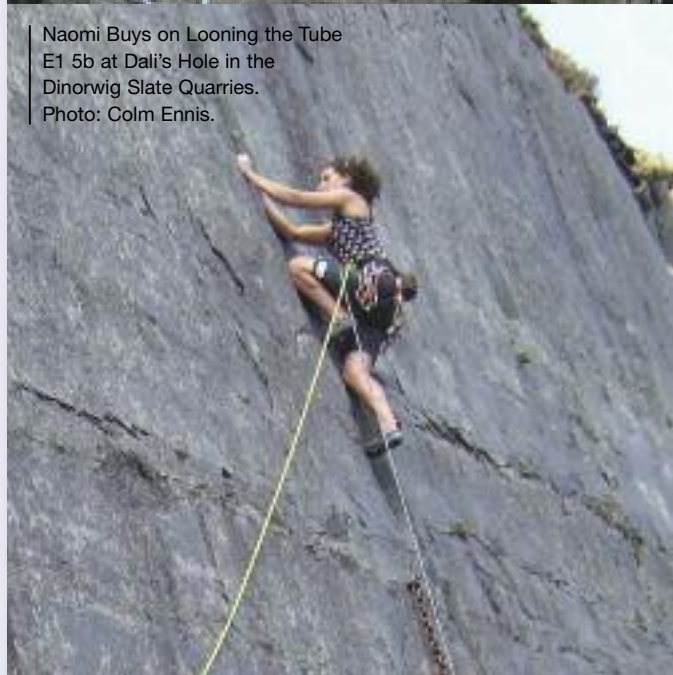
The next morning, I dug out my five-year-old but never-used Gogarth guidebook; it was time to hit the coast. After the hour-long mini-bus trip, I was in the company of the tough-as-nails local expert Elfyn Jones who promptly pointed me at an extravagantly named route called the Park Lane/Doomsville Connection. It took a while to adjust to the sea cliffs after the last few days in the mountains. It wasn't just the quartzite you had to get used to, there were the circling gulls and the crash of the sea, and everything just seemed so big and initially even a bit scruffy. I struggled up the cruxy ramp and finally caught my breath – different, but good! After that, it was right out over the sea to a multi-pitch route actually called Gogarth, which flashed by, and then it was back to The Strand, a stunning crack line just beside Park Lane, which turned out to be an excellently sustained and enjoyable pitch. What a place! I definitely would have stayed climbing there until sunset, but we had a bus to catch. As we waited in the sun at the car park, one of the hosts was discussing his study into what motivates climbers. He had gathered together research from all over the world and had decided that we were all very badly adjusted, developmentally stunted, daft, mad, messed up and so on. I didn't contribute much to the debate and instead just looked forward to my next really long day at Gogarth. Great routes, good rock and all in the sun by the sea.

It was back to Tremadog the next day, the site of that previously mentioned epic. I was raring to go but was slowed down by the tough

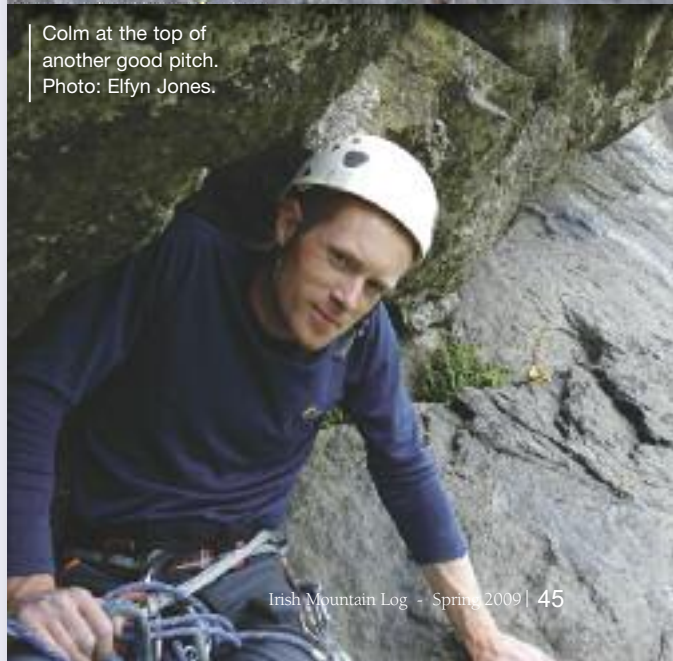
Colm Ennis on the crux of Vector E2 5c at Serengeti in the Dinorwig Slate Quarries.  
Photo: Elfyn Jones.



Naomi Buys on Looning the Tube E1 5b at Dali's Hole in the Dinorwig Slate Quarries.  
Photo: Colm Ennis.



Colm at the top of another good pitch.  
Photo: Elfyn Jones.







The dramatic Dinas Cromlech in Llanberis Pass.  
Photo: Colm Ennis.

bouldery start to the Plum. It turned out to be an excellent arête, which we followed up with the strenuous, thin crack of Extraction. It was my turn to lead again for Vector, another Joe Brown classic. I managed to forget the descriptions of ‘infamous, tricky, polished, precarious’ and so on and just went and climbed it. To finish up, Elfyn punished me for finding Vector so easy and had a laugh as I groaned my way up after him on the pumpy Grasper. At the top, I admitted that my arms and fingers were just a bit tired, so it was down for tea and cakes at Eric’s café.

Apparently, they always get superb weather for the BMC Meet but it looked like there could be a bit of rain for the very last day. Fortunately, it seems there is always a dry crag in north Wales, so it was off to the coast again but this time to the limestone cliffs of The Orme, which is beside the seaside town of Llandudno. Lo and behold, it stayed dry, and after three climbs and seeing it was the last day, I decided it was time to jump up another grade. It’s easy to say that you shouldn’t get too bothered with grades, but it’s nice to tick a more difficult one every now and again. In the previous week I had climbed 37 pitches on 27 routes and managed to lead about 20 first-class routes a grade or two above my usual level. The continuous crack line of Plumblin was in my sights but unfortunately one of those young, rocket-powered Slovenian climbers had just failed on it. To hell with him, and up I went

straight away. As advertised, the route got harder with every move upwards, but it went, and while it’s not quite a big route on Cloggy, it felt good all the same. The nearby, similarly graded Firefly brought me back down to Earth quickly, though, and I even stopped the traffic on the road just below as it looked for a while like I was going to hit the ground. I held on. Scary fun!

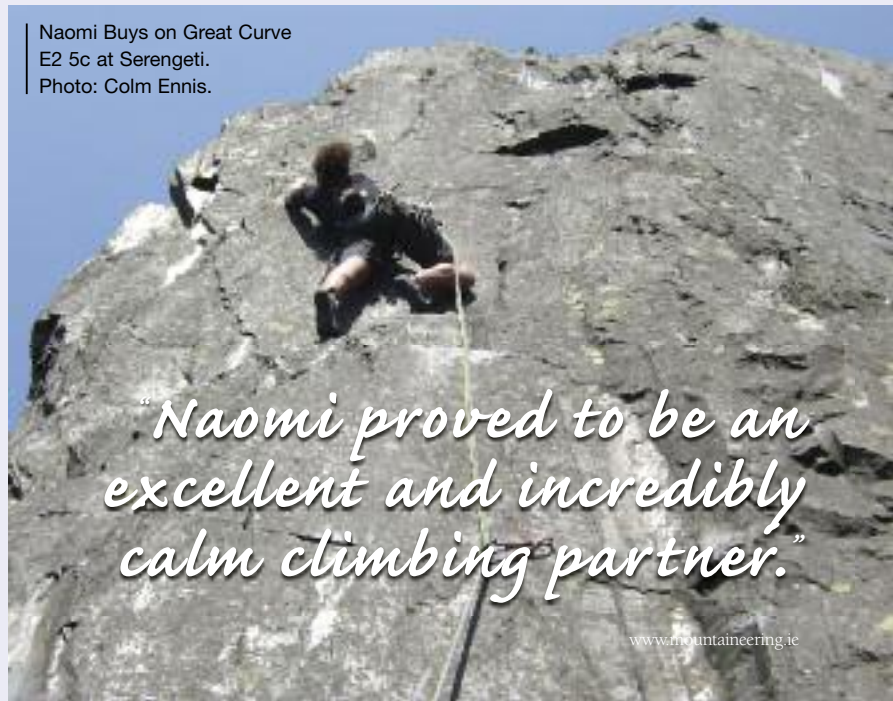
For the last night, there was wine and local ale, too much good food, plenty of talking and debating, dodgy dancing and a small acoustic guitar that had been on the recent first ascent of a big wall in Pakistan. Everybody was asked to write down his or her three best routes of the week...and what a list there was! It seemed every iconic and classic route

on every crag in north Wales had been climbed from the mad slate test-pieces, to adventurous outings on the wild sea-cliffs and, of course, the big multi-pitch mountain routes. Amazingly, routes like Authentic Desire (E7 6b) on Cloggy had been onsighted. It had all been done in glorious sunshine and there were even rumours of a new route or two. For me, it had been an incredible experience to have been so immersed in climbing with so many different top-form climbers. Fortunately, I managed to bottle some of the momentum and form, which in the coming months saw me up a few big Irish routes that I had never dared stand beneath before. So if you are trying to track down a superb location for your next trip or are considering applying for the next excellent BMC climbing meet – don’t think twice and get yourself across to the paradise next door!

**Colm Ennis is a member of the Rathgormack Climbing Club in Waterford. He has had a wide-ranging involvement in mountaineering and has been rockclimbing for the past eight years, particularly in the Comeraghs, but also in many other parts of Ireland. He has been walking on the Pyrenean Haute Route, winter mountaineering in Scotland and ice-climbing in Slovakia, and has climbed a few of the Alpine 4000ers.**

**Recommended guidebook**  
*North Wales Rock – Selected Rock Climbs in North Wales*, by Simon Panton, published by Ground Up Publications, 2006.

Naomi Buys on Great Curve  
E2 5c at Serengeti.  
Photo: Colm Ennis.



*“Naomi proved to be an excellent and incredibly calm climbing partner.”*





# TrainingLog

The latest advice and information from Tim Orr, Training Officer



## TIM'S BLOGSPOT

### Changes in BOS

This edition of the *Irish Mountain Log* marks the beginning of another change for our organisation in its progress towards fully serving the needs of mountaineering in Ireland. Change has also occurred within Bord Oiliúint Sléibhe (BOS), the training wing of Mountaineering Ireland.

With the customary biennial change in the chairperson of the BOS board, we must acknowledge the unyielding commitment of time and expertise that Tomás Aylward has given to the post throughout the past two years. The guidance Tomás has offered over this period, based upon his many years' involvement in mountaineering as both a professional and (more importantly) a passionate mountaineer, will undoubtedly continue to influence mountain training in Ireland well into the future.

At the same time, we welcome Pat Kinneally to the chair of this board. As an active mountaineer, Pat joins us from the Clare Outdoor Club where he has held the role of club chairperson for the last number of years.

If you would like to learn more about BOS, its roles and structure, please visit the Training and Safety section of the Mountaineering Ireland website, [www.mountaineering.ie](http://www.mountaineering.ie).

### Planning the year ahead

The principal role of the training office is to continue to implement the training policy ratified in 2007 by the organisation's members. Supporting current projects and exploring new ways to promote and assist the delivery of training and safety in Ireland is paramount to our ongoing work. It is, however, primarily the drive and enthusiasm of our members that will progress our training initiatives. As this is a fundamental objective of our organisation, all members are encouraged to play a part.

There are many ways that you can become involved in mountain training:

- Develop your own skills further by attending an organised training course.
- Come along to one of our annual meets.
- Attend one of the free taster sessions during the summer.
- Promote further in-house training within your club.
- Refresh and practice skills already learnt.

The Training Office staff are here to help and advise you. If you don't know where to start, or if you have an idea for a new initiative but are not sure how to get it off the ground, contact us here and we will do our best to assist you.

## Busy schedule for 2009

The Training Office has witnessed a significant increase in the number of people registering for official training courses this year. The Walking Group Leader Award, especially, has undergone a revival, with as many people signing up for it in the opening months of this year as did in the whole of 2008. The Mountain Leader Assessment, due to take place in April, is fully booked with 12 candidates – one of the biggest MLA groups ever seen by BOS – and we are already taking bookings for the October MLA.

Our Scottish Winter Meet, held in March in Onich, also saw an increase in participants tackling both the snowy hills and the courses on offer. In 2009, BOS also has the largest number of approved course providers to date, with 50 individuals currently approved to deliver the range of National Governing Body qualifications. All of these factors are indicative of increasing demand for formal and informal mountaineering training and of an upsurge in the popularity of all aspects of mountaineering in Ireland.

In response to such an encouraging start to the year, BOS is undertaking a comprehensive overhaul of its administrative system. A new Course Providers structure is now in place which will develop a more substantial foundation for it, including a nationwide consistency of standards.

The Training and Safety pages on the Mountaineering Ireland website have also been updated with a new, user-friendly Course Calendar. This is now the main port of call for forthcoming training events, and searches can be made by date, course, location or provider. We would appreciate any feedback about your experience of these changes.

The Training Office will be continuing two particularly popular projects started in 2008. The free Taster Sessions in hillwalking and rockclimbing will return in the summer months. These are a fantastic way for people to get an introduction to mountaineering and, hopefully, put them on the path to a new enjoyment of the Irish uplands. Also, the Volunteer Training Officer weekends will return in 2009. Mountaineering Ireland now has over 130 affiliated clubs and over 9,500 members. A priority requirement that has emerged from discussions with many clubs is to ensure that all their members are trained in the necessary hill skills to safely enjoy their days in the mountains. In response, Mountaineering Ireland is working towards having Volunteer Training Officers (VTOs) in all of the affiliated clubs.

Two extremely successful VTO weekends were run in 2008, with two further being planned for this year. Keep an eye on the website for further details on both these ventures.  
– (Kate Hebblethwaite, Training Assistant)



On a Multi-Pitch Award course.  
Photo: Tim Orr.

# MountainSkills

Training Officer Tim Orr reports on the Walking Group Leader and Multi-Pitch Awards

## Group leader and multi-pitch schemes

In the last three issues of the *Mountain Log*, I took an in-depth look at some of the well-established Bord Oiliúint Sléibhe (BOS) training schemes that are overseen by the MI within the Republic of Ireland, namely the Mountain Skills, Mountain Leader and Single-Pitch Award. The final two awards delivered through BOS are the Walking Group Leader (WGL) and the Multi-Pitch Award (MPA). These are equally well embedded within the overall qualification structure, but they are also sometimes viewed as sub-stages within a greater system.

Interpretations about where exactly the WGL and MPA schemes fit into the BOS structure have undoubtedly created some confusion in the past. The labels sometimes tagged to these awards as the 'sub-ML' (WGL) and the 'stepping stone to the Mountain Instructor Award' (MPA) do not always do justice to the uniqueness of these qualifications.

### Walking Group Leader (WGL)

The WGL scheme is aimed at candidates wishing to lead groups of hillwalkers in non-mountainous hilly terrain within Ireland and the UK. Covering such skills as navigation, emergency procedures, group management and remote supervision, this qualification is designed for use on terrain generally described as hill, bog or moorland. The restriction to non-mountainous terrain should not be classified by height but rather by the objective hazards that might be encountered. The WGL will not be suitable if you are looking to lead groups through terrain without obvious and clearly defined boundaries, or areas that



On a Walking Group Leader course.  
Photo: Tim Orr.

contain steep or broken ground requiring particular movement skills. Although the WGL does not include wild remote camping, if used within the terrain restrictions stated, the standard of its syllabus can be equalled to that of the Mountain Leader (ML).

### Requirements & Training

To register with BOS for the WGL you must be at least 18 years of age, have a genuine interest in leading groups and have at least one year's walking experience. Once registered, candidates are provided with the WGL logbook through which they must present evidence of a minimum of 20 days' walking before booking on to the three-day training course, generally comprising

30 hours' contact time. A list of training providers and upcoming courses are available from the Mountaineering Ireland website, [www.mountaineering.ie](http://www.mountaineering.ie).

### Consolidation & Assessment

On completion of training, your course director will assist you with an individual action plan towards gaining the further personal and leadership experience necessary for the assessment. WGL assessments are organised directly through BOS over a three-day period during which candidates are tested on all aspects of the syllabus. Prior to booking for an assessment, candidates must hold a current first-aid certificate and present evidence of a minimum of 40 hillwalking days within their logbook.



## Your guide to mountain skills training

### Moving on from ML to WGL

Candidates who have completed their formal ML training can choose to register for the WGL scheme and will gain automatic exemption from the official three-day WGL training course. However, candidates moving onto the WGL scheme should fully familiarise themselves with the WGL syllabus and its requirements.

### WGL as stepping stone to ML?

Although, as already stated, the WGL is a stand-alone qualification, some candidates might find attending a WGL assessment a useful stepping stone within the ML consolidation period. With many similar standards including navigation, the WGL assessment can help prepare candidates for the somewhat more intense ML assessment.

### Multi-Pitch Award (MPA)

This award is for experienced climbers who have an interest in leading others in the multi-pitch rockclimbing environment throughout Ireland and the UK. The MPA syllabus covers such topics as group leadership and management, incident procedures, varying rope systems, stance management and belaying.

### Requirements & Training

Before attending a training course, candidates must first register with BOS, showing evidence of holding the SPA award and completion of a minimum of 10 multi-pitch lead routes of "severe" or above. Formal training is generally held over a two-day period and delivered by BOS-approved MPA instructors. Upcoming courses and a list of current providers can be found on the MI website, [www.mountaineering.ie](http://www.mountaineering.ie).

On a Multi-Pitch  
Award course.  
Photo: Tim Orr.



### Consolidation & Assessment

On completion of training, your course director will assist you with an individual action plan towards gaining the further personal and leadership experience necessary for the assessment. MPA assessments are organised directly through BOS over a two-day period during which candidates are tested on all aspects of the syllabus. Prior to booking for an assessment, candidates must hold a current first-aid certificate and present logged evidence of their experience.

### Mountain Instructor Award

You may plan on stepping up to the Mountain Instructor Award (MIA). Although the MPA is not a prerequisite for attendance on the MIA training, it has over time proved an exceptionally useful stepping stone for gaining further experience in line with the required level of experience needed for MIA registration.

### And finally...

All of the BOS training schemes described in this series of articles in the

*Mountain Log* – MS, ML, WGL SPA and MPA – are just part of a far greater training structure recognised and approved through the MI. Just as a more informal introductory approach assists candidates' preparation for these awards, there is also a formal structure of speciality leadership and instructor qualifications beyond the BOS awards that leads all the way to the UIAGM Guide, the highest mountaineering qualification. Many of these higher level schemes are administered through the Mountain Training Boards of the UK and are delivered through the different UK National Mountain Training Centres.

For further information on these awards, contact Tollymore, the National Mountain Training Centre for Northern Ireland, [www.tollymore.com](http://www.tollymore.com). ■

## Contact details

If you have any queries on these training schemes, please email [info@mountaineering.ie](mailto:info@mountaineering.ie)



The latest news from Aodhnait Carroll, Access & Conservation Officer

## Children benefit from nature

### Outdoor activities are vital to a child's wellbeing

*"I like to play indoors better 'cause that's where the electrical sockets are."*

– **Twelve-year-old child**

I RECENTLY CAME ACROSS a quote by the author Richard Louv that really caught my attention. He was speaking about a group of young people after they had participated in an outdoor adventure weekend. He stated that "these are the kind of memories that will last a lifetime, and we have a responsibility to make sure all kids get this kind of access to the outdoors. I believe that children have a moral right to the gifts of nature."

This quote really hit home with me. From my own experience in working with young people and from the experience of outdoor activity providers, it is apparent that there is a dramatic shift in the health and wellbeing of young people in Ireland today. There is a lot of evidence to suggest that this shift is being caused, in part at least, by the removal of nature from the day-to-day lives of children. The term coined for this effect is 'nature deficit disorder,' and is explained by Richard Louv as follows: "There are human costs to alienation from nature, including attention difficulties, diminished use of senses, and higher rates of physical and emotional illness."

### Nature deficit disorder

One of the most obvious signs of nature deficit disorder is that we are seeing a deterioration in the physical health of our children, often related to an excess weight gain. In general, the term "overweight" refers to children who are 15% above their desirable weight, while the term "obese" is used to describe children who are at least 20% over their desirable weight. In Europe as a whole, one in every six children is suffering from obesity. In Ireland, it is one in five, and in America one in every four children are classified as obese. This phenomenon can be attributed to the reduction in unstructured play in open areas that has occurred over the last forty years. A recent study in the UK showed that children's access to areas where they can roam freely has decreased by ninety per cent since 1940.

One often tends to focus on physical wellbeing over mental wellbeing as we feel that we have a greater level of control over our physical wellbeing. If we need to improve our health, we can walk more or eat healthier food. However, dealing with mental health problems can be a lot harder. Recent statistics show that one in eight boys and one in ten girls aged eleven to seventeen have been diagnosed with a mental health problem. Could these nature-deprived children be suffering from cultural autism, the symptoms of which are tunnelled senses and feelings of isolation and containment?

Individual children test themselves by interacting with their environment, activating their potential and reconstructing human culture. As Robin Moore put it: "The content of the environment is a



Teaching young people about the upland environment.  
Photo: Tim Orr.

critical factor in this process. A rich, open environment will continuously present alternative choices for creative engagement. A rigid, bland environment will limit healthy growth and development of the individual or the group."

For those of you who like to see the cold hard facts, below are some statistics that show the shift in lifestyle that Irish children are facing. These changes in daily life can be directly related to a restriction of the access to the natural environment that young people are experiencing.

- In 1971, 80% of seven-to-eight-year-olds walked to school; today the figure is just 10%.
- The obesity level for six-year-olds has increased by 100% in the past decade. It has trebled among fifteen-year-olds during the same period.
- There was a 36% reduction in tree-related injuries presenting to hospitals between 1999 and 2006.
- There has been a 35% increase in the number of children being treated for repetitive movement injuries, often associated with using computers.

This article has painted a somewhat dismal picture of what is happening to the health and wellbeing of young people in Ireland today. Nature deficit disorder is clearly a very significant problem affecting the health of these young people, with no one cause and no single solution. There are, however, a number of things that we can do to help in working towards an improvement. We need to encourage parents to bring their children to the outdoors and to allow them the freedom to connect with nature. We must also do all that is possible to make these wild places inviting and accessible to individuals who may already be suffering from a detachment and fear of nature. ■



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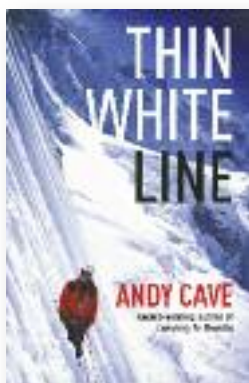


# Books

Literary Editor Joss Lynam presents reviews of some recent publications.

## Is serious climbing really worth it?

### Harry O'Brien



#### Thin White Line

By Andy Cave  
Hutchinson,  
225pp  
8pp b&w and  
colour photos  
h/b £18.99  
ISBN: 978-0-  
091-79572-6

This is Andy Cave's second book – his first, *Learning to*

*Breathe*, was joint winner of the Boardman Tasker Prize in 2005. The final section of *Learning to Breathe* was his gripping account of climbing the north face of Changabang – an incredible feat. Tragically, Brendan Murphy, his companion and good friend, was killed on the descent. *Thin White Line* commences

with Andy's attempts to overcome the physical and mental trauma of the climb on Changabang. His style is always easy to read and his account of his journey from the gritstone edges to the mountains of Sweden, Patagonia and Alaska gives a remarkable insight into a sensitive and committed climber who tackles the perennial questions that mountaineers face: Is serious climbing worth it? Do I really want to continue to put myself in danger?

Cave intermingles historic details very successfully within his climbing adventures, e.g. the pioneering exploits of aviators in Patagonia and Alaska. His description of climbing in Norway with the young Leo Houlding is a great example of his relaxed style of writing and attention to detail. The pictures he paints of extreme, nail-biting rockclimbing make for compelling reading. His account of climbing in Scotland invokes all that is good about modern, mixed Scottish climbing, including the traditional tramp in and out. His portrayal of the horrific storms in Patagonia shows his descriptive

talents at their best. It is in Patagonia also that Andy confronts the many questions in his mind regarding his future climbing and his commitment to the sport.

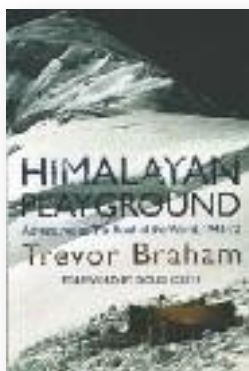
The finest climb in the book is the first alpine-style ascent of the north ridge of Mount Kennedy in the St Elias Mountains in the Yukon with his good friend, Mick Fowler. The climbing style shows their total commitment in a hostile and demanding environment. Again, Cave's writing allows the reader to gain a good insight into his mental attitude in coming to terms with the trauma of Changabang.

Cave's descriptive pieces on Andy Parkin, the brilliant British climber who lives in Chamonix, and Kurt Gloyer, the pilot who flew the climbing team to Mount Kennedy, are superb examples of the talent of an accomplished writer who provides such depth and insight into his characters.

I would recommend this book highly and, where possible, suggest reading *Learning to Breathe* first.

## A knowledgeable mountaineer living in India

### Joss Lynam



#### Himalayan Playground: Adventures on the Roof of the World 1942-72

By Trevor Braham  
The In Pinn,  
107pp  
24pp photos  
£9.99  
ISBN: 978-1-  
906476-00-7

Trevor Braham was both far-seeing and lucky. He was at school in India and, after World War II, took a job with plentiful leave in his father's firm in Calcutta. The element of luck was that this was the beginning of the Golden Age of Himalayan climbing and

that in 1947 a prestigious Swiss expedition to Garhwal, led by the famous André Roch, invited a guest member from the Himalayan Club. Braham, who was living in Calcutta and had previous experience of trekking in Sikkim, got the job. He climbed Kedarnath Dome with Roch, Graven and Dittert, and returned on his own over various high passes with two Sherpas. What a wonderful start to a Himalayan career!

It established Braham as a knowledgeable mountaineer living in India and so he was invited to join several other expeditions. He was also perfectly placed to organise his own mountain trips, especially when he moved to Pakistan in 1961. The climbs in this book span in time the thirty years he was living in the east and in geographic spread from Sikkim to Waziristan, including the tragic Minapin expedition of 1958.

It was of special interest to this reviewer that he visited Spiti in 1955 with Peter Holmes, whose book inspired the reviewer's

expedition there in 1958. It is surprising that he has drawn his own map with sausage glaciers, when Holmes' much better map was available in 1958, and my own in 1962.

In this book, Braham covers the same expeditions as in his 1974 *Himalayan Odyssey*, but, as an octogenarian, considers "the maturity of later years has led to a deeper appreciation of the pleasures, heightening the awareness of the good fortune that has enabled me to develop a more profound relationship with mountains."

It has certainly led in this short book to a vision of enjoyable climbing on the lesser Himalayan peaks, climbing in a way that has become much more difficult since the mountains became draped in bureaucracy and commercialism, as Doug Scott laments in the foreword. Even if you have read *Himalayan Odyssey*, this is a book not to miss.



# The wonders of nature as seen in the Irish mountains

## Sheila Willis



### Ireland's High Places: From the Mountains to the Sea

By Rob Beighton

The Collins Press, 160pp

Colour photos on every page

h/b €28.95 ISBN: 978-1-905172-45-0

Rob Beighton has produced a wonderful collection of colour photographs on the wonders of nature as seen in the Irish mountains. He has divided the photographs

into seven themed sections, the second of which is devoted to a brief explanation of how the images were captured.

Dreams over the Horizon, A Journey of Discovery, Sea to Mountain and Mountain to Sea, The Beauty of Form, The Nature Within and the Soul's Longing are the titles of the selections of pictures and, while they form a frame to enable the author to give us some understanding of his personal views on the impact of nature, they are not necessary for an appreciation of the beautiful images in the book.

From the images of mountain regions round the country, I particularly liked the composition of the view of Tonelagee, and the images of looking towards Galtymore across Lough Curra and a view of the Allihies. I was less impressed with the North Prison on Lugnaquilla and Ben Crom reservoir.

In the sixth section, Beighton reflects on "the spectacular in the ordinary" and produces beautiful images of leaves, rocks and water. In the same section, the rainbow over Clew Bay and the variations of colour

in a pool in Killarney National Park are among the best images of the collection.

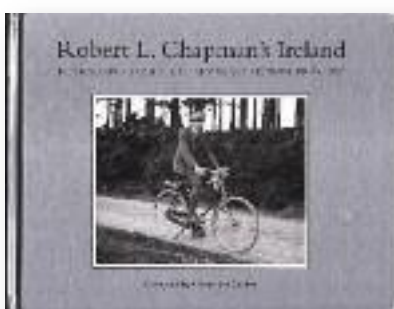
The final section is a series of impressive two-page spreads of land and sky 'scapes. The late morning on the summit of Galtymore and afternoon in the Twelve Bens looking north appeal to me, but the sunrise in the Bens and the other images are also impressive.

This book contains a beautiful collection of images. The sections are somewhat artificial but give an essay approach to the project. The quality of the pictures is high and has a mixture of familiar and more novel views. However, the colour balance did not appeal to me and I wonder if the purple cast in a number of the pictures was caused by digital effects, whether by accident or design.

Rob Beighton's book will be of interest to nature lovers, walkers and those who love the mountains as well as to photographers who may be interested in seeing the scope of images available in Ireland's uplands, particularly in changing light.

# Every time I pick it up I find something new

## Michael Fewer



### Robert L. Chapman's Ireland: Photographs from the Chapman Collection 1907-1957

Compiled by Christiaan Corlett

The Collins Press, 133pp

h/b €24.95 ISBN

13:978-1-905172-77-1

Photography was an astonishing invention, the power of which is difficult to grasp in the image-rich world we live in today. By the early 20th century the magic of creating images by photography was widely available for those with a few bob, but unlike in our contemporary pixelated world, the relatively high cost of film and developing then guaranteed that great care was taken with every exposure. As a result, photographic material of that period generally tends to be of a very high standard. This must be said of this collection of photographs by the late Robert Chapman, compiled by the ever-busy Christiaan Corlett. The cover photo sets the standard: it sharply depicts Chapman as a young man seeming to pass by on his bicycle, stockings to his knees, raincoat tied to the handlebars. Looking closely, however, you will spot the rock wedged under the offside pedal to support the bike in an upright position for the long exposure.

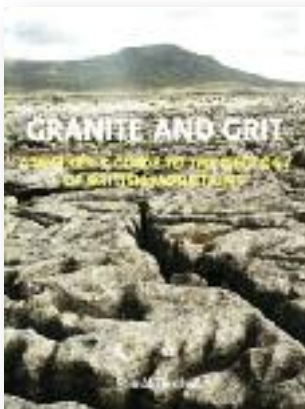
There is great variety here, from portraits of putteed cycling club members in tweed suits and shirts with celluloid collars (with tie, of course), flat cap or homburg, unique shots of the burning of the Custom House in May 1921, regattas in Kingstown, and long-gone steam engines puffing into stations. Shots of the Wicklow Mountains, of Glenmacnass, Glencullen and Glencree, naked without their contemporary clothing of conifers, and the condition in the 1920s of mountain roads such as the Wicklow Gap, are eye-openers. A great browser's book, this, and every time I pick it up, I find something new.



Glendasan, west of Laragh, on the Wicklow Gap Road on the 30th of July 1922. – From 'Robert L. Chapman's Ireland.'

## A comprehensive discourse on British mountain geology

**Ruth Lynam**



### **Granite and Grit: A Walker's Guide to the Geology of the British Mountains**

By Ronald Turnbull  
Frances Lincoln, 208pp  
Many large & small colour photos

and diagrams  
£20.00 ISBN 978-0-7112-2914-3

This is not merely about granite and grit; Ronald Turnbull has written a comprehensive discourse on the geology of the British mountains – mountains being in general above 600m (because that's where you can see the rocks) and British meaning UK (the Mournes get a few mentions).

This is not a field guidebook; it would look very well on the coffee table, since it is prolifically illustrated with some really magnificent mountain scenes, but it is much more than a coffee-table book. The pictures complement the text, which is both informative and highly readable with some lively turns of phrase ("gneiss is a scotch broth of a rock").

There is a brief and clear overview of geological history and plate tectonics, a chapter on glaciation and one chapter for

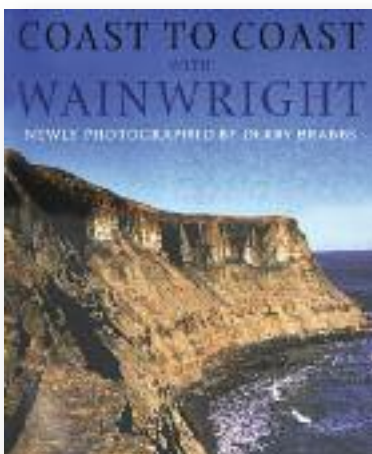
each of seventeen major, mountain-forming rock types. Discussions of the micro-details of mineral composition mix comfortably with landscape descriptions, mountaineering stories, historical geology and scientific theory. There are also plenty of simple, effective, explanatory diagrams and many smaller technical photos of geological features – though it might have been worth defacing some of these with superficial lines to better illustrate the points being made.

The index of places makes it easy to look up references to any particular area, and Turnbull's contagious enthusiasm for the mountains, and the gorgeous photos, make one wish to just get up and go there. But locating these mountains will be more difficult.

Remarkably in a book about mountains and geology, there are very few maps, a major flaw in an otherwise informative, entertaining and beautiful book.

## A very beautiful book...and a companion handbook

**Jean Boydell**



### **Coast to Coast with Wainwright**

By Alfred Wainwright, with new photographs by Derry Brabbs  
Frances Lincoln, 270pp  
Very numerous colour photos, drawings & sketch maps  
£25.00 ISBN 978-0-7112-2934-1

### **Coast to Coast: A Walker's Handbook**

By Alfred Wainwright  
Frances Lincoln, 160pp  
Sketches, maps & tables  
£9.99 ISBN 978-0-7112-3020-0

*Coast to Coast with Wainwright* is a very beautiful book. It is an update of the first collaboration on this walk between Derry Brabbs and Alfred Wainwright, published in 1987, which was a progression from Wainwright's original *Coast to Coast Walk Pictorial Guide*. This edition has many more photographs newly taken by Brabbs.

The text has been updated by Derry Brabbs and, without comparing the editions, it is impossible to identify the changes because they are integrated so seamlessly. In fact, there have been remarkably few changes to the route or text.

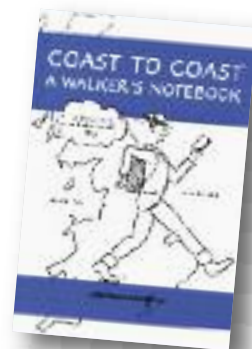
The foreword is Brabbs' and the introduction is Wainwright's (from the last edition). The latter includes his hand-drawn map of the complete route with suggested overnight halts. There are also sketch maps showing the three national parks areas, communications and access, and altitudes. The route is divided into 14 days' walking. Each section starts with Wainwright's hand-drawn map showing that section, followed by the detailed route description.

As well as the many wonderful photographs, images of Wainwright's original sketches and "handwritten" passages that were included in the 1987 version are scattered throughout. The text is liberally interspersed with photographs of scenery, towns, villages and items along the route, and many are breathtakingly beautiful. They

were taken during all seasons, which adds variety and emphasises Brabbs' dedication. Many are double-page spreads, which enhances their impact and dramatic effect. The colours of most are superb and vibrant. Two sections of the walk are recorded pictorially.

The book is in coffee-table format so, although it describes the route in detail, it is likely to be left at home by anyone walking, not only for its size but also to preserve it. It is a book to treasure and will be coveted as a reminiscence for those who have done the walk, a place to plan and dream for those who are thinking of doing it, and a book to admire for those who like walking books with fabulous photographs, particularly of scenery.

*Coast to Coast – A Walker's Notebook* is for those who keep records and journals: they can record Arrival and Departure Times, Weather and Companions for each section, Walker's Notes, Sketches, Places to Eat and Sleep, and People You Meet. Included also are Useful Information and Other Useful (Web) Sites. It is the same size as the original *Pictorial Guide* and so is suitable for a back pocket or rucksack.





## The exhilaration can easily turn to tragedy...

**John Breen**



### **Staying Alive in Avalanche Terrain**

By Bruce Tremper  
Baton Wicks, 313pp  
Numerous photos & diagrams  
£14.99 p/b  
ISBN: 978-1-898573-75-3

I was a bit surprised when asked to review this book as I have had a copy for a number of years. It has become the book of first choice when wanting to refresh my knowledge of avalanche safety. However, a quick look revealed that this is the second edition

and the first to be published in Great Britain.

As skiers, snowboarders or climbers, we normally take time before we embark on a trip to the Alps to refresh the various skills that we will require such as navigation, climbing or skiing/board

ing skills. How much time do we give to learning or updating our knowledge for assessing avalanche potential or do we assume that it will not happen to us? The exhilaration of travelling in wild, snow-covered terrain can easily turn to tragedy for those caught in a sudden avalanche. Statistics indicate that, in a high percentage of avalanche fatalities, either the victim or someone in the victim's party has triggered the avalanche. A lot of avalanche accidents can be avoided if one knows what to look for and develops the skill of reading "nature's signposts."

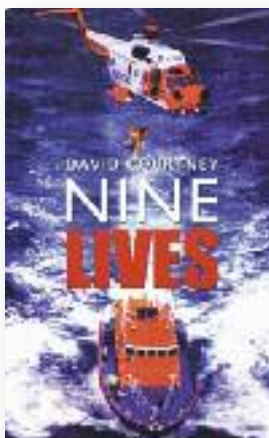
Following the introduction and an outline of the basics of avalanches, the three critical variables of terrain, weather and snowpack stability, which determine whether or not an avalanche is possible, are examined in detail. While avalanches occur all the time in the mountains, it is the introduction of a fourth variable, namely man/property, which introduces the potential for a hazard.

Chapters on hazard evaluation, route finding and safe travel as well as rescue techniques and the human factor are also included and are very well laid out. The chapter on route finding and safe travel outlines how route finding varies with different activities, including skiing, boarding and climbing, and identifies the considerations and advantages/disadvantages for each activity.

This is an excellent book for both climbers and skiers who venture into snow-covered mountains and wish to refresh their knowledge of safe travel in avalanche terrain.

## The euphoric highs when everything goes well...

**Mike Sandover**



### **Nine Lives**

By David Courtney  
Mercier Press,  
384pp  
14pp colour photos  
p/b €16.99  
ISBN: 978-1-85635-602-2

As someone who has been involved in mountain rescue for some years now, I have had the privilege of working with David Courtney and his Coast Guard rescue helicopter colleagues on many occasions in the mountains of Kerry and west Cork, and have always been impressed by their courage and professionalism. I thought I knew a lot of what was involved in helicopter rescue...until I read *Nine Lives*, that is!

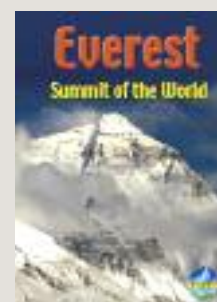
This gripping book lets the reader know from a first-hand perspective what it is like

to embark on rescue missions on land, but more particularly at sea, in the most appalling and challenging conditions, knowing that very often the lives of other people are totally dependent on the rescue crew being able to carry out their mission successfully, sometimes at significant personal risk. David describes with considerable literary skill the pressures and mental strain of working in these circumstances – the euphoric highs when everything goes well and lives are saved, and the dismal lows when, despite the best efforts of the helicopter crew, human souls perish.

Whereas Lorna Siggins' 2004 book *Mayday, Mayday* (also an excellent read) gives a well-researched outsider's perspective of air & sea rescue, *Nine Lives* tells the story from the inside – straight from the pilot's mouth, so to speak. David Courtney spent thirteen years as a search and rescue helicopter pilot for the Air Corps and the Coast Guard and, in writing *Nine Lives*, draws on his wealth of experience, not just of the many missions that he has been involved in but also of the emotional aspects of the job and how it has impacted on his life.

This mixture of autobiographical passages covering David's personal life and career history, melded together with detailed

descriptions of the more notable missions he has been involved in, works very well and the resulting book is a fine read which I'm sure will be enjoyed by a wide range of readers, active or sedentary. In addition, the colour photographs in the book are well chosen and tie the text together very nicely.



### **Everest: Summit of the World**

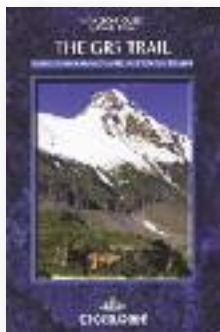
By Harry Kikstra  
Rucksack Readers,  
96pp  
2pp map flap  
50+ photos  
hdbk £9.99

ISBN: 978-1-898481-54-6

Rucksack Readers have recently published this guide to climbing Everest. *Everest: Summit of the World* is by Harry Kikstra, who has also written guidebooks to Aconcagua and Denali. The author, a successful 'seven summiteer,' explains how to prepare for this challenge. He describes in detail the popular ascent routes from Tibet and Nepal, including the trek from Lukla to Base Camp. See: <http://rucksacs.com/books/everest>.

## One of the great mountain walks of Europe...

**Sean Rothery**



### **The GR5 Trail**

By Paddy Dillon  
Cicerone, 314pp  
Many colour plates and maps  
p/b £14.99  
ISBN-13: 978-185284-533-9

This 31-day trail has to be one of the great mountain walks of Europe.

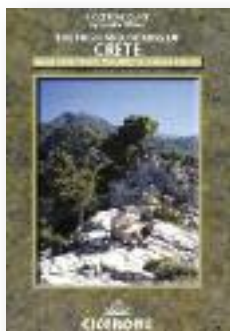
In the introduction, Paddy Dillon points out that this "grand traverse of the Alps" from Lake Geneva to the

Mediterranean coast is just part of the GR5 that starts on the North Sea coast at Hook of Holland and traverses Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg and France. The highlands of the Ardennes, the Vosges and the Jura are foretastes of the grand finale, described here.

This one-volume guide must be praised for its comprehensive nature; large-scale maps followed by more detailed sections; lists of accommodation; a useful summary of the routes with a breakdown of times and, last but not least, a glossary of basic French. The Alpine section of the GR5 is also covered by four French topoguides, which are excellent, but this one volume would save weight. The author rightly praises the GR55 High Level Route, which is a superb variation. The photos are seductive and the whole guide makes a highly interesting read. It is a pity that the author could not list the worst restaurants – one in Plampinet was well up to medieval standards!

## Indulge in a pleasant walking holiday in high mountains

**Gareth Ll. Jones**



### **The High Mountains of Crete: White Mountains, Psiloritis & Lassithi Ranges**

By Loraine Wilson  
Cicerone, 379pp

Many colour photos, 13 maps  
s/b £14.00 ISBN: 978-1-85284-525-4

This second edition has expanded the *Crete White Mountains* guide with more walks. It also covers the two further major 2,000m Cretan mountain ranges of Psiloritis and Lassithi.

Previous comprehensive descriptions are reset in a smaller, clear font to increase the room available. The maps have improved in clarity, though the lack of shading or contouring makes it impossible to visualise the terrain without using a map alongside.

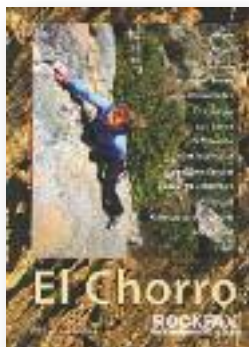
Loraine Wilson gives us an extensive and comprehensive introduction that deals with how to get to Crete, travel to the trailhead and find places to stay. She advises on how to trek in the remote arid mountains and, as before, underlines that you must have good

understanding of mountain navigation. As well as mountain walks, she covers the famous Samaria Gorge and other fabulous gorges, formed by winter torrents cutting down through the southern edge of Crete as it is forced upwards by the African plate pushing northwards beneath it.

It is a great pleasure to revisit in these pages peaks that I have climbed and to read her references to the landscape features that characterise each route. She clearly knows these mountains backwards. So, with your copy of Wilson's guide in hand, take a package flight to Crete and indulge in a wonderful walking holiday in high mountains.

## Entices the climber to the area...

**Conor O'Connor**



### **El Chorro**

By Mark Glaister  
Rockfax, 200pp  
Numerous full-page colour photos & route diagrams  
s/b £20.95  
ISBN: 978-1-873341-81-0

Oh, how digital photography has elevated the look of rockclimbing guides, simplifying route finding and providing excellent templates to more clearly indicate the line of

the routes! This guide covers a little more than its title suggests, sweeping in an arch from Mijas to the excellent crags of Loja, incorporating all the best main climbing areas.

I'm a little biased to a good system and Rockfax's guidebook structure and simple systemisation does make this book easy to follow, providing comprehensive details, complemented with the visual addition of those photos I mentioned. Its only failing in this area is to put the main map on the back page, a departure from its otherwise ordered structure. Routes are colour-coded within defined grades, with abseils and lower-offs easily identifiable. The two previous guidebooks mentioned on page 36, *Andalucía* (2005) and *El Chorro* (2004), either suffer from poor topos or difficult-to-interpret photos, so this guidebook is a

better purchase. The inclusion of a brief analysis of each crag, grades of routes, aspect to the sun and access (on page 42) is invaluable, coupled with a highlighted tab for each area, making this is one of the best guidebooks to this wonderful climbing area that I have seen. The general information and accommodation sections are concise. Difficulties encountered in access at El Chorro are explained, but I would highlight that the Camino Del Rey needs to be treated cautiously, those recently added wires standing testament to the continual disintegration of this "walkway."

Overall, this guidebook is excellently put together and sets a standard most suitable for general use. Its main delivery system is a visual format which, coupled with concise details, produces an attractive layout that effectively entices the climber to the area.



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## Pat McElligott

# Climber, sailor and irrepressible optimist

PAT McELLIGOTT was a founder member of the Limerick Climbing and Crochet Club (LCCC) but, as his friends, colleagues and, most of all, his family realise, there was so much more to Pat.

His father, Jack, was from Foynes, a west Limerick village which enjoyed a brief moment of glory in the era of intercontinental seaplanes. He worked as a mechanic, travelling with the planes, which explains why Pat was born near Jerusalem on December 25th, 1953.

It was thus that an unquenchable thirst to experience new places and people was in Pat's genes. After qualifying as a teacher, he worked briefly in Dublin. Then his sense of adventure combined with his spirit for social justice to bring him to Nigeria, where he taught for two years. While in Africa, he travelled and climbed extensively, which merely served to whet his appetite for further adventures. Returning to Limerick, he abandoned teaching, took up a new career as a systems analyst and helped to found the LCCC with a handful of like-minded friends. Its formally adopted constitution set out its purpose as "to climb the mountains of the world and to enjoy ourselves while doing it," which epitomised the spirit of the group. We have wonderful memories of those times.

It was through the LCCC that Pat met Eileen, who became his wife, mother of

their three children and, above all, his faithful companion through the peaks and valleys for over twenty years. It was typical of his irrepressible optimism that he convinced Eileen to embark with him on a cycle ride to China in 1988; equally typical was their pragmatic realism which saw the venture end in southern Italy. Pat's first experience in the Alps happened around this time and he returned many times with family and friends. He and Eileen never lost their love of the mountains and they also climbed in North Africa, Spain, the UK and the USA.

In the mid-1990s, Pat became interested in sailing and found, to his great delight, that he could combine sea and mountain in two wonderful trips from Kinsale to Scotland. Particularly memorable was a dawn voyage from Islay to Jura where, with Pat's gentle encouragement, some old sea dogs achieved what they thought impossible and scaled the Paps of Jura.

The sharp intellect which he displayed in his professional life was most obvious when Pat managed Dell's Y2K program in Europe. At a personal level, it manifested itself in discussions of issues great and small, ever open to new ideas, a self-deprecating smile always on his face. After leaving Dell, he moved to academia, completed his MSc and was in the process of completing his PhD at the University of Limerick.

| Pat McElligott.



When Pat was diagnosed with a brain tumour in August 2008, he responded with his usual optimism and fortitude. Sadly, the treatment was not successful but this did not change his outlook. He died on 24 November 2008. His last weeks were an inspiration, raising the bar for all of us in coming to terms with our final destiny.

Pat is sadly missed by Eileen, his children Helen, Michael and Olivia, his parents, brothers and sister, his work colleagues past and present, and a wide circle of friends.

May he rest in peace.

### Friends of Pat McElligott

*Pat McElligott, born 1953, died 2008.*

Pat McElligott  
on the Tsa at the  
Mountaineering Ireland  
Meet in Arolla  
in 1999.



## Derry O'Crowley

We have learnt with sadness of the death of Derry O'Crowley, a leading member of the Irish Ramblers Club for many years. There will be an obituary in the next issue. May he rest in peace.



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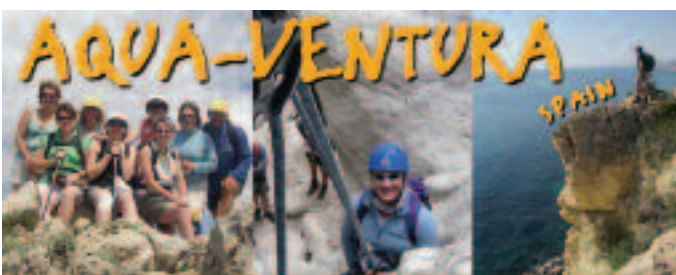


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