



THE HILLWALKER

August 2020-October 2020



In This Issue:

**Editorial: Covid 19
Club Update**

**Ruth Murphy's Adventures in
Forest Hooch**

**The Hillwalker's Wall of
Nostalgia**

**Michael Quinn Reviews *The
Living Mountain* by Nan Shepherd**

October Weekend Away

COMMITTEE POSITIONS 2020/2021

Committee 2020/21

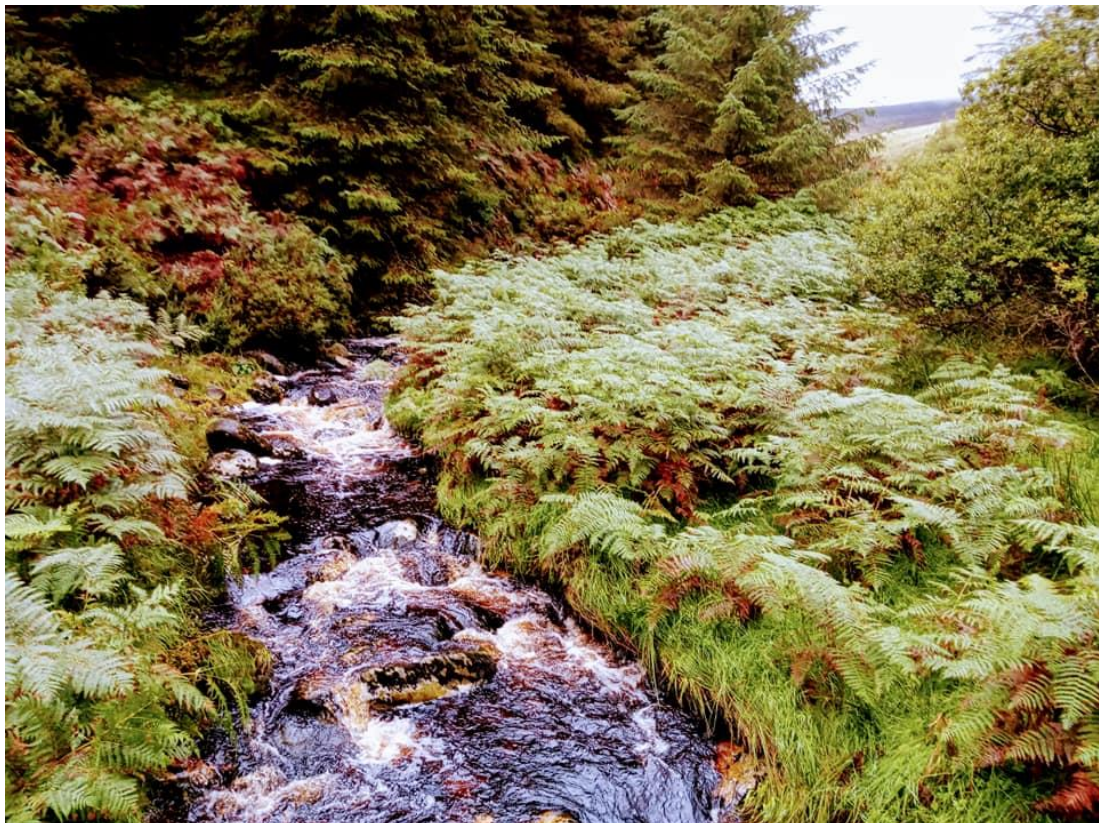
Chairman
Treasurer
Secretary
Sunday Hikes Coordinator
Environmental Officer
Membership Secretary
Weekend Away Coordinator
Club Social Coordinator
Assistant
Social Media Coordinator
Newsletter Editor

Ruaidhrí O' Connor
Ita O'Hanlon
Caitríona Burke
Frank Carrick
Michael Quinn
Gerry Walsh
Søren Stuhr Mandrup
TBA
Gavin Gilvarry
Laura Grealish
Aisling O' Keefe

Special thanks to:

Webmaster

Matt Geraghty



Editorial

We hope that all of our members are doing well during these challenging times. We would like you all to know that The Hillwalkers Club has been doing everything it can to keep the club as active as possible during the current ongoing situation.

We returned to the hills for the first time since on Sunday the 21st June after a period of complete inactivity since Sunday the 8th March. The committee has been meeting weekly via Zoom meetings to review the situation and adapt our planning to adhere to any government restrictions as they are recommended. For this reason, we are not currently able to advertise our hiking schedule for months in advance in the newsletter, as we have done previously. Notifications and details of upcoming hikes will now be advertised on a weekly basis on social media and will be emailed to all members. Our return to activity was initially a tentative one with a local hike in the Dublin mountains as restrictions dictated that we stay within our counties. As the restrictions eased we have since been able to bring the bus back into commission for a few hikes and even enjoyed a day trip to the Cooley Mountains.

It is of the utmost importance to us as a club that we behave responsibly and keep our members and those they subsequently associate with safe at all times. To ensure safety for all, we have had to adopt new procedures. We need to ensure that contact tracing is possible for every member who attends any hike. For this reason, we now require that places are booked in advance with names and contact phone numbers given. We also need to ensure social distancing on the bus, so a strict maximum number of people per bus can only be allowed. For this reason, you will notice a slight price increase.

On a positive note, we are delighted to have got the club moving again. While our social calendar, not unlike everyone else's worldwide, has been upended, we will endeavour to bring a little joy into what is left of 2020. Read on to see what we have to look forward to on our trip to Dingle in October. And if we can't hike....we can read about how to philosophise about it with Michael Quinn. And if all seems completely lost, Ruth Murphy will show us how to we can forage to get floatered.....



Soren says; "Get yourselves over to our social media pages to see what's planned"

MEET: Corner of Burgh Quay and Hawkins St
DEPART: 10AM (*unless stated otherwise*)
TRANSPORT: Private bus (*unless stated otherwise*)
COST: €20.00 (*unless stated otherwise*)

2nd pick-up point: *On the outward journey, the bus will stop briefly to collect walkers at the pick-up point. Should the bus be full on departure from Burgh Quay, this facility cannot be offered.*

Return drop-off point: *On the return journey, where indicated, the bus will stop near the outward pick-up point to drop off any hikers. We regret this is not possible on all hikes.*

If you wish to avail of the 2nd pick-up point, it is advisable to contact the hike leader or someone else who will definitely be on the hike, to let them know.

GENERAL HIKE NOTES

PARTICIPATION Mountaineering is an activity with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants should be aware of and accept these risks. People who take part in our club activities do so at their own risk and are responsible for their own actions and involvement.

CO-ORDINATION If necessary, tickets are given out on Sundays to ensure that participants reserve a bus place as they arrive.

LEADER The leader has the right to refuse anyone who is not adequately equipped (e.g., without appropriate boots, rainwear, food, torch, hat, gloves, etc.). The leader may alter the route from that described in the program. The leader sets the pace of the hike and walkers are expected to obey the leader's instructions at all times.

EQUIPMENT It is essential to bring good rain gear (both jacket and over-trousers) and to leave cotton t-shirts and jeans at home! Boots must be sturdy with proper ankle support and a rigid non-slip sole such as Vibram.

WALKING STICKS AND RUCKSACKS Remember that walking sticks and rucksacks cannot be brought onto the bus and must be stowed away in the boot for the duration of the journey.

Covid 19 Information

All hillwalkers are required to bring:

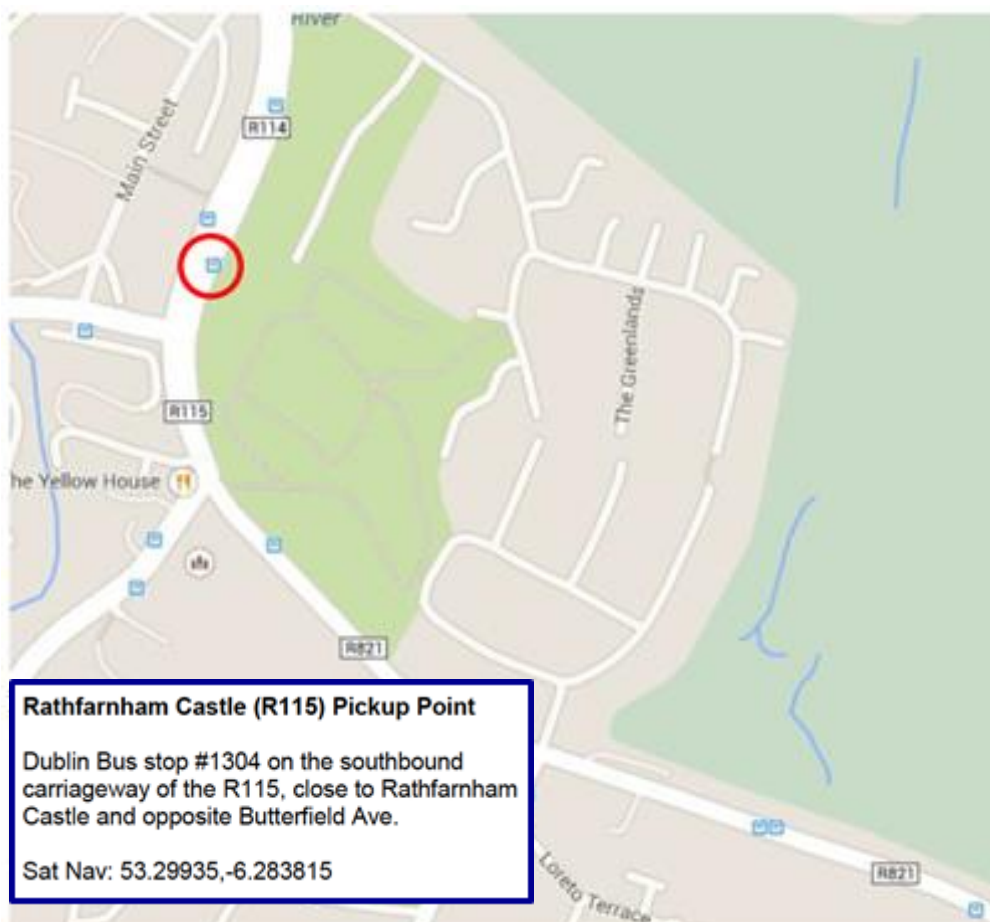
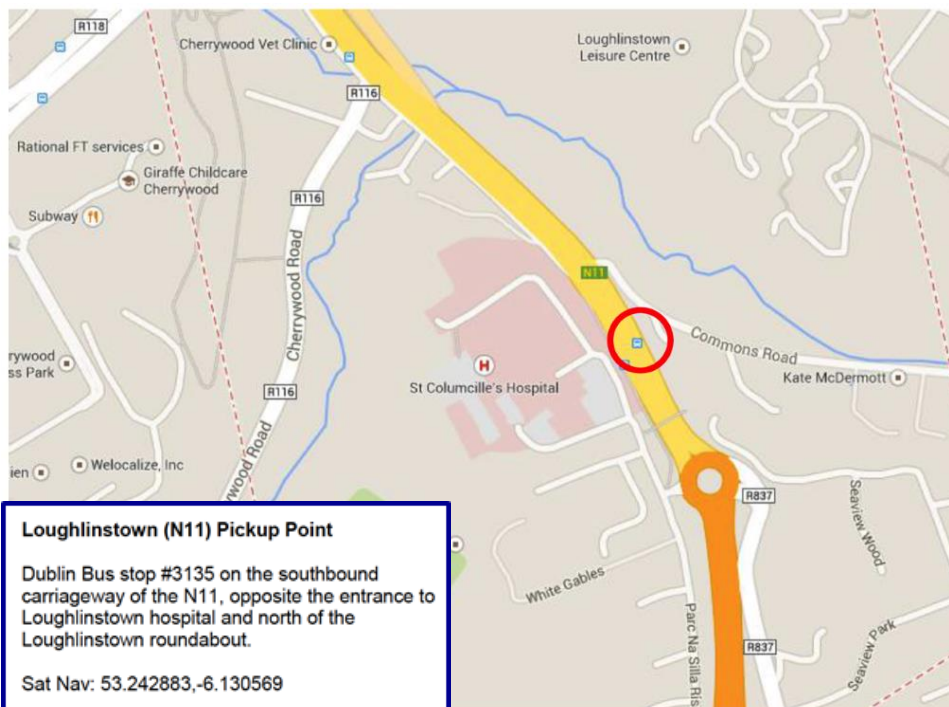
- Hand sanitizer
- Basic first aid kit
- Face covering
- Gloves
- Sunblock

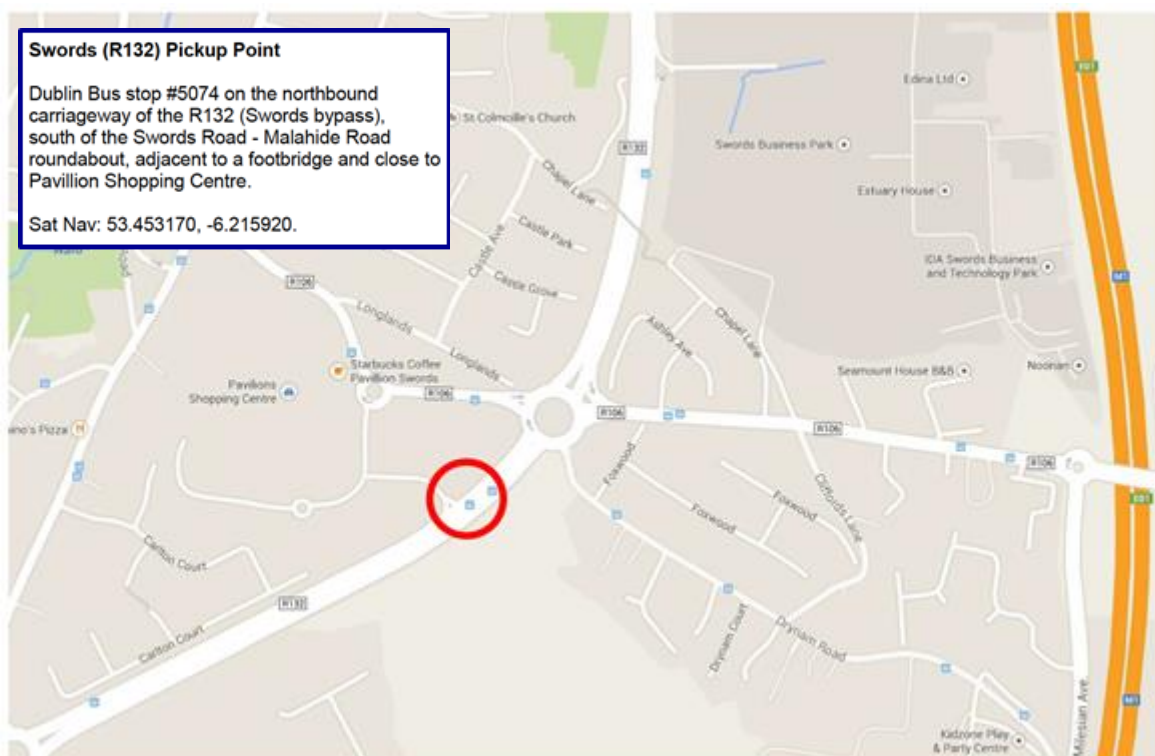
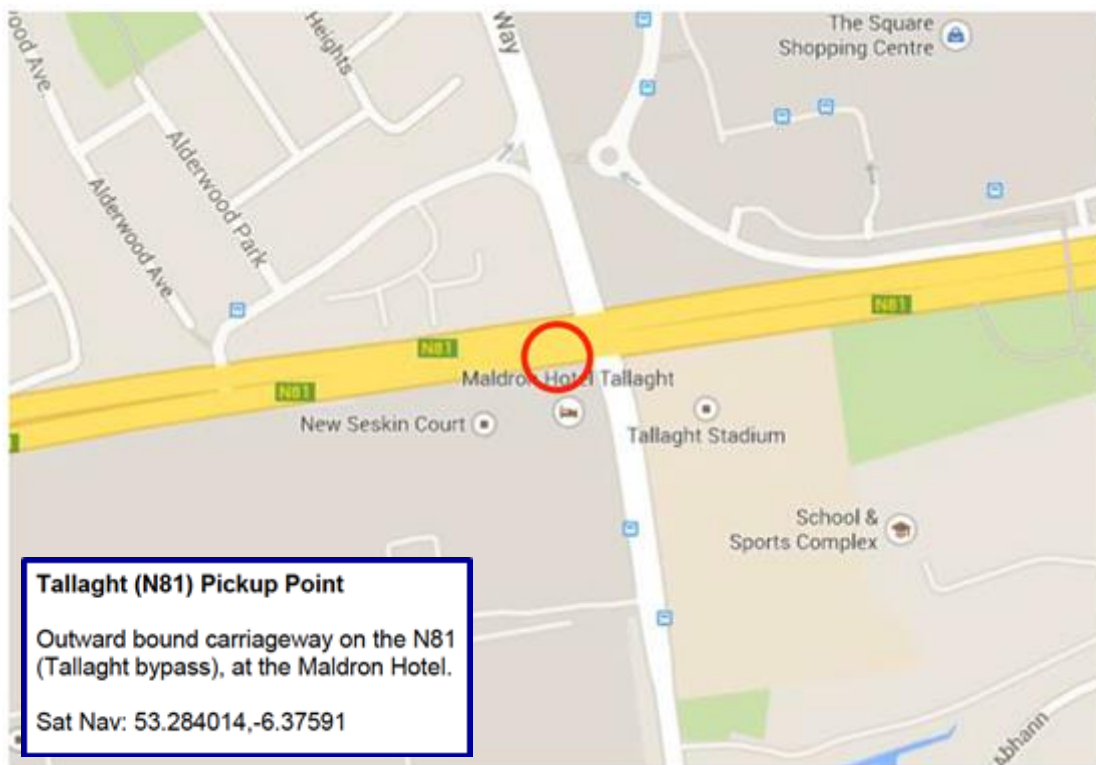
*Members are requested not to share equipment & drinks with others.

Covid 19 Questionnaire

- 1.If you answer YES to any of the following, please do not attend any of our scheduled walks:
- 2.Do you have any symptoms of cough, fever, high temperature, sore throat, runny nose, breathlessness or flu like symptoms now or in the past 14 days?
- 3.Are you a close contact of a person who is a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days (i.e. less than 2m for more than 15mins accumulative in 1 day)?
- 4.Have you been recommended to self-isolate or restrict your movements at this time?

Pick Up Points





“The Living Mountain” *A book review by Michael Quinn*



Nan Shepherd

While the Scots hillwalker, writer and college lecturer, Nan Shepherd (1893-1981), travelled widely in Europe and South Africa, she was essentially a dedicated localist. She lived all her life in the village of North Cutts, within a few miles of the Cairngorm Mountains – north east Scotland's majestic Arctic granite massif. She attended Aberdeen High School for Girls, obtained a degree from Aberdeen University in 1915 and lectured in English for the next forty-one years at Aberdeen College of Education. She authored three modernist novels, *The Quarry Wood* (1928), *The Weatherhouse* (1930) and *A Pass in the Grampians* (1933). Yet, it is her *Living Mountain* that continues to enthrall so many of us who have had the privilege and pleasure to tread in her footsteps. She wrote the manuscript in the latter

years of the Second World War but upon receipt of a negative reply from her publisher it lay in a drawer for over thirty years. When she returned to it in 1977 she wrote:

Now an old woman, I begin tidying out my possessions and reading it again I realise that tale of my traffic with a mountain is as valid today as it was then. That it was a traffic of love is sufficiently clear; but love pursued with fervour is one of the roads to knowledge.

To achieve her aim of revealing the mountain's substance, its strength, and its feasts for all five of the human senses she ordered her slim masterpiece of just 108 pages into twelve short chapters, commencing with 'The Plateau'. Even though the Cairngorms National Park of 4,528 square kilometres boasts fifty-five Munro tops (each over 914m), she asserts that the plateau is the true summit of these mountains. The towering tops are mere eddies, separated from one another by fissures and deep descents across the expanse of the massive plateau. For half the year the plateau is covered in snow, and by June, when clumps of Silence – moss campion – burst into brilliant pink, it is blanketed in lichens and sedges. Hardy ptarmigans live up here all year long, and small colourful dotterels fly in from Africa to breed and feed on the plateau's bounty of summer growth.

To best appreciate the Cairngorms' substance, 'their lift, their proportions and bearing' she recommends viewing them from the slopes of Geal Charn in the neighbouring range of the Monadhliaths, across the Spey valley. She describes the sensation: 'one watches the high panorama opposite settle into itself...It enchants me alike a juggler's trick. Every time I come down I want promptly to go back and see it all over again.'

Shepherd loved the mountain's water for its flashing gleam, its musical sounds, its slap against her body as she forded streams – but she feared its power when snows melted or rain lashed down incessantly:

The water which streams down the hillsides, tears deep grooves in the soil, rolls the boulders about, brawls, obliterates paths, floods burrows, swamps nests, uproots trees, and finally reaching more level ground, becomes a moving sea.

Her eleventh chapter, 'The Senses' is a revelation. She insists that all senses must be deployed, commencing with the ear. Occasionally on the plateau, the silence is almost absolute in mist or snow, or on a September dawn. She recalled the sound of a soft thud: a tawny owl had landed on her tent pole, turned his head to stare at her before melting away 'so silently that had I not been



Ptarmigan

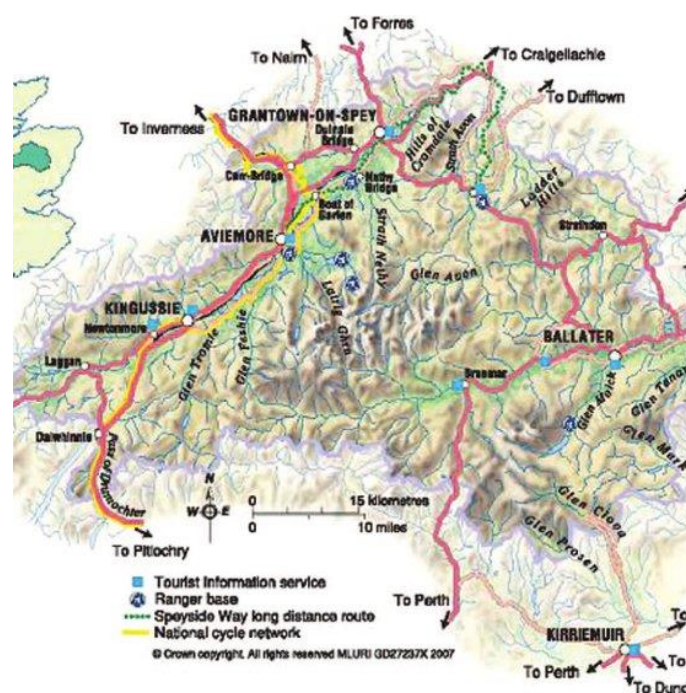
watching him I could not have known he was gone.' The palate can ingest the glorious flavours of wild berries, chiefly the blaeberry and the cloudberry, whose name and taste are dreamlike. Similarly, the scents – fragrances of pine, birch, bog myrtle, juniper and wild thyme mean nothing at all on the page – they are there to be smelled. The eye held a great potency for Shepherd. The sight of cloud formations, the bark of naked birches, a golden eagle sailing upwards to a crag, a wavering rainbow and the plunging line of mountain cliffs are but a few of her memorable images. But touch was the most intimate of all. Cold water stung her palate, frost stiffened the muscles of her chin, and she walked through long heather to feel its wetness on her bare legs. She used her hands to feel the rough surfaces of cones and bark, the smoothness of stalks and feathers, the scratchiness of lichen, and the blunt blow of tumbling streams. And she rejoiced in walking barefoot on grasses and sun-dried mud flats.

Most mountaineering books have been written by men, often imbued with a sense of 'summititis' as they recount tales of conquering the highest and remotest of pinnacles. Shepherd too admits that she once had been fixated upon making for the summits, until she met a walker on mighty Braeriach (1296m) who took her aside to the 'incredibly withdrawn and tranquil' corry, Coire an Lochain. To bear witness to the hidden loch you must stand almost on its lip. Like 'white threads', it has two cataracts: one falls from the brim of a hanging ridge to feed it, as the other drains it from below. She came away a wiser walker, grew to approach the plateau in circles, and came to believe:

The mountain gives itself more completely when I have no destination, when I reach nowhere in particular, but have gone out merely to be with the mountain as one visits a friend with no intention but to be with him.

Nan Shepherd's sensuous book is available to borrow from libraries, or to purchase in the best of bookshops and online.

Michael Quinn
Environment Officer
An Óige Hillwalkers' Club
12 July 2020



Map of Cairngorm National Park

Adventures in Forest Hooch by Ruth Murphy



This is my third attempt at making wine, the previous attempts resulting in Elderberry vinegar and unpalatable grape wine. Elder “*Sambucus nigra*” is a many stemmed shrub native to Ireland and rarely more than 4 ½ metres in height. Around May/June it becomes laden with masses of scented creamy flower clusters and later in Autumn it produces a rich display of shiny black berries. I got my recipe from “Wild and Free”, a brilliant book of recipes and information on foraging and folklore, first published in 1978 by Cyril and Kit Ó Céirín. I had two 30 litre fermentation vessels, an airlock and two siphon sticks from my previous attempts and was able to purchase sodium metabisulphite (for sterilising equipment), yeast, a corker, corks and a hydrometer (measures alcohol content) online from www.thehomebrewcompany.ie and www.homebrewwest.ie. On the first of June I collected branches of elder flowers from around the Wonderful barn allotments outside Leixlip, Co. Kildare.

Recipe:

- 1 ½ pints (3/4 litre) stripped elder blooms
- 1 gallon (4 ½ litres) boiling water
- ½ cup cider vinegar
- 1 tspn. yeast
- 2 pieces root ginger or 2 tbspn. ground ginger
- 3 lb (1 ½ kg) sugar
- 2 lemons
- 2 oranges
- 1 tbspn. cold tea

Method:

Wash and slice the lemons and oranges and add to the blooms, sugar and ginger in a sterilised container (I used one of the fermentation vessels). Pour on the tea, boiling water and cider vinegar and, when cool enough, add the yeast. At this stage, I posted my photos on facebook only for it to be slandered as “Prison Hooch” or “Pruno” by members of the club! Fairly fitting though given the situation we were in. Prison hooch is generally fermented in a plastic bag using crumbled bread as a substitute for yeast, hot running water and a towel or sock to conceal the pulp during fermentation.



A couple of hours after mixing all the ingredients, bubbles emerged from the water filled airlock at the top of the fermentation vessel. It's alive! This is carbon dioxide produced by yeast breaking down the sugar anaerobically.

Strain after fermenting for four days into a fermentation vessel. When it clears, siphon or rack again i.e. separate the clear liquid from the sediment that settles out. The recipe says if you're a novice, which I definitely am, it's best to ferment to a finish and rack before bottling. I had a sample at this stage and it tasted like a fruity alcopop.

During a cold spell 25 days later the bubbles ground to a halt. I gave it a swirl which temporarily restarted the fermentation only for it to stop again and restart when the weather warmed up.

A month and ½ from the start I used a hydrometer to measure the specific gravity. A reading of 0.990 from the hydrometer indicated it was ready to bottle. Subtracting 0.990 from the starting specific gravity; 1.127 and multiplying by 131.25 gives an alcohol content of 18%.



Ruth's Tasting Notes:

I drank a glass yesterday and although it had a fruity nose (had to look that one up!), the sweet alcopop flavour was replaced with a dry refreshing taste. I'm storing it in the fridge to prevent any accidents. My sister made elderflower cordial one year only for the bottles to explode when natural yeasts in the cordial fermented in the sunshine.

Chateauneuf du Covid 2020, it was a good year after all.

Dingle Peninsula Trip, October Bank Holiday Weekend

Thursday October 22nd to Monday October 26th 2020



The trip to the Dingle Peninsula next October will be based in the Mount Brandon Hostel, Cloghane (<http://www.mountbrandonhostel.com/>). The hostel nestles close to the shoreline in Cloghane village, in the shadow of Mount Brandon. Accommodation includes breakfast (tea/coffee, choice of cereal ,toast and yogurt).

Recommended travel is via return train to Tralee and organised taxi transfers from Tralee to Cloghane.

There will be organised hikes on the Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Dinner on both Friday and Saturday evenings will be in O'Connor's pub, Cloghane (100m from the hostel).

The cost for the weekend trip is €215 per person. This includes:

- 4 nights B&B in the hostel (all rooms based on a maximum of 2 people sharing on a twin or double basis in en suite rooms)
- 3 course dinner on both Friday and Saturday
- Bus hire for 2 hikes plus
- Sunday evening bus trip to Dingle
- Taxi transfers to and from Tralee/Cloghane.

N.B. Train fare cost and dinners on Thursday and Sunday are not included.

Club members are now invited to book their places for this weekend (max. 20 members) by e mailing Ita O'Hanlon at itaohdubs@gmail.com .

A booking deposit of €50 will be required to confirm places.

HIKING PROGRAMME

Day 1 – Friday

A long but exhilarating traverse of the Brandon ridge beginning and ending in Cloghane. The hike passes the grotto at Faha and onwards above the paternoster lakes to Mount Brandon, Brandon Peak, An Gearán and Folach na Marbh, before zigzagging downhill and a final 4kms on the road back to Cloghane.

Length: 20kms. Ascent: 1,200m.



Day 2 (Saturday) Beginning in Ballyferriter village the hike will climb Cruagh Mharthain high above the Atlantic, cross over to ascend Mount Eagle with stunning views over Dingle Bay across to the ring of Kerry and the Magilicuddy reeks, and then conclude with a glorious ridge walk and descent to Sleat Head with fantastic views of the Blasket Islands.

Length: 13kms. Ascent: 885m.

Day 3 (Sunday) Conor Pass to Annascaul village, climbing high across the cliffs above Peddlers Lake to Sliabh Mhacha Re, and across to summit An Cnapán Mor, and on to Annascaul valley and Annascaul lake before a final 4kms walk on road to Annascaul village and well deserved refreshments in Tom Crean's South Pole Inn.

Length: 20kms. Ascent: 620m.

Sunday evening

After a return to the hostel we plan to travel by bus for an evening of fun to Dingle where there are numerous restaurants and pubs, many with Irish music. There are no hikes planned for Monday but there are plenty of options for short to long hikes in the area for anyone with any energy left before the return to Dublin.

The hiking programme planned will be weather dependent, with alternative safer hikes organised in the event of stormy weather.



THE HILLWALKER'S WALL OF NOSTALGIA



Lambay 2013 – Photo submitted by Don Reilly



Zip Lining 2013– Photo submitted by Don Reilly



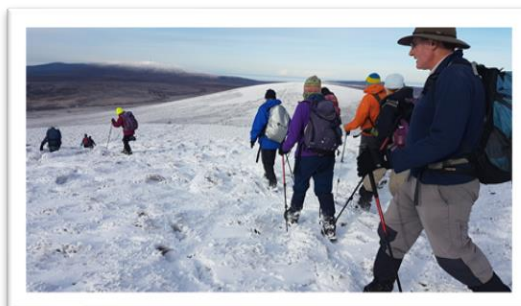
The Palace July 2013 – Photo submitted by Don Reilly



Slieve Blooms– Photo submitted by Don Reilly



Lugnaquilla 2012 – Photo submitted by Don Reilly



November 2016 – Photo submitted by Don Reilly

