
Sunday Hikes February 2004

<i>HIKE PROGRAMME</i>				
MEET: Burgh Quay		DEPART: Sundays 10.00 am	COST: Private bus. €10	
Date	Route Description	Distance.	Leader	
Feb 1st	<u>Shay Elliot Memorial to Wicklow Gap</u> Route: Shay Elliot Memorial, Cullentrath Mtn., Mullacor, Lugduffs, Lough Firrib, Turlough Hill, Wicklow Gap Car Park.	16km/ 450m	Tom Kenny	
Feb 8th	<u>February Introductory Hillwalkers Hike</u> Kippure Bridge, Athdown Wood, Seefinegan, Kippure, Lough Brays, Glencree.	16m/ 700m	Jim Barry	
Feb 15th	Route: Glendalough Visitors Centre - Glendasan - Forest Track - Camaderry Mountain - Turlough Hill - Lough Firrib - Oakwood - Kings River track - Ballinagee Bridge.	14km./ 700m	Philip Roche	
Feb 22nd	Route: Stepside - Fernhill Tunnel - Three Rock - Fairy Castle - Tibradden Mountain - Pine Forest - Cruagh Mountain - Glendoo Mountain - Knocknagun - Ravens Rock - Forest Track - Pet Cemetary - Shop River Road.	18km/ 900m	Jimmy McCullagh	
Feb 29th	Route: Ballinfoyle - Ballineaddan Mountain - Slievemaan - Lugnaquilla - Cannow - Camenabologue - Table Track - Stranahely Wood - Knickeen Ford. Distance 17km Ascent 900m	17km/ 900m	Ita O'Hanlon	
March 7th	Route: Lead Mine Car park (GR 099 982) - Brockagh Mountain - Brockagh East - Wicklow Way Track - Paddock Hill - Scarr - Kanturk - Oldbridge.	18 km/ 750m	Frank Rooney	

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.

SUNDAY HIKES Participants on Sunday Hikes must be a member of An Óige Hillwalkers Club. If you are not a member of the Club, but are considering joining, we invite you to participate on our monthly Introductory Hikes.

INTRODUCTORY HIKES An Introductory Hike is organised once per month for aspirant members. Participants on these hikes must be a member of An Óige.

CO-ORDINATION 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.

TORCH During winter months it is essential to bring a (head) torch on all Sunday hikes. Check your batteries / bulb.

ENVIRONMENT Try to reduce the erosion and widening of trails, e.g. do not walk on the edge of worn tracks; walk through the centre of the original track or go several meters into the scruff where the ground is untrodden, walking parallel to but not on the track.

LITTER Litter is unsightly and dangerous to animals. Even bio-degradable items like orange peels and banana skins take years to disappear. Bring all your litter home and try to include at least one extra item from each day out. Do not bury litter – animals will dig it up.

WALKING STICKS In the interest of safety and comfort please keep the pointed end of your walking stick covered, especially when travelling on the bus.

HIKE LEADERS If any member is interested in leading a hike, please contact either:

Tom Kenny Mobile: 087-9705726, Email: tomk2003@yahoo.ie

Philip Roche Telephone: 01-6043203, Email: philip.roche@boimail.com

February Hike Notes

Additional Walk Easter Sunday? Are you due to be in Dublin on Easter Sunday? Are you willing to lead an additional local hike on Easter Sunday? If yes, please contact Philip Roche or Tom Kenny.

Trip to the Julian Alps

Pearse Foley

The twin attraction of walking in the Alps and exploring a new EU country (Slovenia joins up in May) was irresistible, so Martin Fagan, Frankie Comerford and I set out last August on a memorable two week holiday, spending 8 days in the mountains.

We flew to Salzburg (Austria) and then had a spectacular 3.5 hr. train journey over and under the Austrian Alps. We spent the first night in Bled, noted for its lake and castle, and next day bussed south to Lake Bohinj. an hour away, getting accommodation with some difficulty in Stara Fuzina. This village is the perfect base, lying at the foot of the Julian Alps. Our target, Triglav - at 2864m, the highest mountain in Slovenia - could be seen from the front door. The clockwise circuit can be done in 3/4 days, but we took our time, preferring to enjoy the mountains at our leisure.

The first day was a tough introduction under searing heat (30 C), with a steep climb and heavy back-packs. We didn't book any hostels in advance, which worked out fine, although we did change our minds near Triglav, as we were arriving there at a weekend. The first hostel was Planin Dom Vogar (1053m). As with all the 8 hostels, hot meals were available, which is a terrific plus. This is remarkable at the remote hostels, where food, water and staff are flown in by helicopter. Naturally, the food is a little more expensive there, but still cheap by Irish standards.

Day 2 was a more gentle hike to Planina Pri Jezero (1450m), an idyllic location, surrounded by mountains and forests, and overlooking a lake. The constant ringing of cowbells added to its charm. We had joined the Austrian Alpine Club in advance, which enabled us to avail of up to 33.3% discount on the overnight charges, as well as giving us generous insurance.

Next day we reached Koci Pri Triglavski Jezerih (Triglav Lakes - 1685m) after some more easy trekking. This hostel was very full and the beds were uncomfortably side by side on the floor, so, with a thunder and lightning storm and some noisy snoring, it was not a restful night.

A complete change of scenery on Day 4, as we moved above the tree-line into rocky terrain, with overhanging limestone crags and massive soil spills, yet the track was a riot of colourful flowers. Prehodavci Hut (2071m) is just stunning, perched delicately on top of a ridge, overlooking the Trenta valley. From a distance, one feared it might fall over the cliff edge. Panoramic views abounded.

Day 5 was easily the most difficult one so far. A long steep climb to the Hribarice Polje (depression) first - passing some mountain goats- and then across this strange barren rocky desert with no track but well signalled route markings. We reached the top of the pass - Cez Hribarice (2358m) -and then faced a dangerous steep descent, finally taking us to Dolic Hut (2152m), another spectacularly located hostel, with a steep drop on its western side leading to Kovita valley.

The following day introduced us to our first "via ferrata" and wire ropes (not seriously difficult) en route to Planika Hut (2408m), one of two hostels at the foot of Triglav. Having arrived there at noon, we decided to tackle Triglav that afternoon. What a climb! There are many exposed sections and consequently lots of wire ropes. The last 30m was frightening, climbing almost vertically. Without the ropes, it would have been impossible. The sight of many memorials to people killed on the summit ridge was not re-assuring! So, it was with a sense of elation we reached the summit. Cue many photos, stamping of cards and even a certificate! Descending was even scarier, but we managed it and had great celebrations back at Planika. We took two more days to complete the circuit, visiting Vodnikov Hut(1817) and Voje(680) on the way.

We intended to stay at Bled again but it was booked out so we carried on to the capital, Ljubljana (pop. 330,000) for 2 days. It is a charming city, very laid-back with some wonderful buildings, although the dominating castle was disappointing. Eating out was a delight, sitting out of doors on a warm evening, enjoying a nice meal and watching the world go by.

We took the train back to Salzburg and spent two days there, too. It is very tourist-oriented, with the Mozart motif flogged to death. The Mozart connection is, of course, one of the reasons why Salzburg is on the tourist map but one can get too much of it.

A sincere word of thanks to Martin and Frankie, who were fabulous companions on a great trip. Finally, a thank you to Cathal O'Higgins, who kindly lent us several detailed maps of these Alps, which he had used many years ago. These were an invaluable help to us.

Rainy September in the Pyrenees

Nellie Cullen

The journey began at Gatwick. As we were due to take a Saturday 8.30 flight for Toulouse, I overnighted at the airport, determined not to miss my flight. I had been to Toulouse before so I felt happy going. On my arrival in Toulouse I met my nine other companions for the trip and Andrew the Exodus agent, who saw us on to the minibus for Lochon, a lovely place about two hours drive from the airport. In the group there were six men and three other girls, all English. We all got on well together, luckily.

Having settled in, we had dinner there and sat down to discuss the next two days of walking. Both days involved local walks. Both were beautiful, we set out each day at 8.30a.m. and returned to base at 5.00p.m. Sunday, our first day was fine, but on Monday the rain started.

After our two days of local walks we had to pack enough gear for three days backpacking, where we would be staying in mountain refuges. After three and a half hours drive, we got to Gavarnie, the start of our backpacking adventure. After lunch we set off to climb the Cirque de Gavarnie (1300metres). I have never seen or felt such rain. The only good thing about it was that it was warm so we were happy rather than cold as we walked downhill to our first mountain refuge. This refuge could sleep thirty people. After a well-earned dinner we played cards by the light of our head torches and went to bed at 10.00p.m.

Next morning breakfast was at 7.30a.m. It was a lovely day as we packed our bags to move on again. The rain soon found us though! After breakfast we climbed up to the Breche de Roland; this is an extraordinary gap in the frontier wall. It looks as though a giant cleaver had spilt it. This was a tough climb but the beautiful scenery made up for it. Then we climbed to Pic du Taillon (3149metres) This was like being in heaven but when we reached the top there was a lot of mist. Then we climbed down to our next mountain refuge for another night of cards. This place had lights however!

Next day's walk was beautiful, though it rained from the start. This didn't stop us as we walked into the Ordessa Canyon. We sat down and enjoyed our lunch in the rain as thunder crashed and lightning flashed. Walking down was tough on our knees.

We were glad to head back to Lochon for a change of clothes and a good wash. Friday was our day off. Some people decided to go paragliding but I chose mountainbiking, which was great fun. After lunch I found time to post off my cards. At 7.00 we met up for our final dinner and a lovely evening. We exchanged emails and addresses and packed as we were to leave at 8.30 in the morning.

This was a wonderful holiday – good food, exciting walks, great company and a leader who was great fun. I enjoyed it very much.



Trudging through the rain in the Pyrenees (Photo: Nellie Cullen)

MCI News

MCI Annual General Meeting 2004

Date: Saturday 7th February, 2.30pm

Venue: Ormond Quay Hotel, Dublin 7.

The agenda and other AGM materials are published on the MCI website www.mountaineering.ie

MCI Slide Shows during Spring 2004

Dublin-based MCI slide shows and lectures normally take place at the Tara Towers Hotel, Mount Merrion at 8 pm, unless otherwise stated. Check MCI website (www.mountaineering.ie) for further details. Admission charge is discounted for MCI members (bring membership card).

18 February: “*Against the Sky*”: Irish Everest Expedition 2003 (Pat Falvey)

10 March: UCD, 7.30 pm: Doug Scott, Canadian Mountaineer

2004 Committee

Club President and Chairperson: Prionnsias MacAnBheatha
Secretary: Frank Rooney
Treasurer: Jim Barry
Sunday Hikes: Tom Kenny and Philip Roche
Membership Secretary: Barbara Sudrow
Training Officer: Jimmy McCullagh
Editor: Deirdre McMahan
Members-at-Large: Donal Finn, Joe Kellegher

In addition, four club members work behind the scenes as follows:

Distribution: Cyril McFeeney & Pearse Foley
Webmaster: Matt Geraghty
MCI Environmental Officer: Patricia Goodman

Ballyhoura International Walking Festival

Dates: 30th April-3rd May (May Bank Holiday weekend)

Outline: 7 guided walking events held over three days. This year we will also hold workshops in establishing best practice in organising Walking Festivals.

SPECIAL INFO: 26 Mile mountain marathon challenge. Day on the Galtee Mts. Ireland's highest inland mountain. Special Family Nature walk.

LOCATION: Ballyhoura Country straddling the counties of Limerick, Cork and Tipperary

CONTACTS: Tel: 063 91300 email: info@ballyhoura.org Web: www.ballyhouracountry.com

Accommodation: Kilfinane Outdoor Education Hostel Tel:063-91161

Mountain Skills Self Assessment

The club continues to support members who wish to undertake the Mountain Skills Assessment. Further details from Jimmy McCullagh.

Míle Buíochas

Thanks to all who helped out on the Map & Compass 2003/2004. Muchas gracias to Donal Finn, Joe Kellegher, Tom Kenny, Philip Roche, Philip Hayden, Carmel Ní Chatháin, Bernard Chanilou, Eoin Moroney, Ciarán King, Ita O'Hanlon, Mark Campion, Frank Rooney and anyone else who helped out.

Jimmy McCullagh
Training Officer

Christmas Party Sponsorships

Thanks to the Following shops who sponsored our Christmas Party by donating the following prizes:

Shop	Prize
Outdoor Adventure Centre	70litre Rucksack
The Scout Shop, 146/7 Capel St.	Gelert Trek 20litre bag
Lowe Alpine 17/18 Temple Lane	Fleece Jacket
Millets Camping, Mary St.	Gift Voucher
Great Outdoors, Chatham st.	Gift Voucher
Palace Bar, Fleet St.	Bottle of Whiskey
Capel Camping, Capel St.	Energiser 2in1 light
Army Bargains, Little Mary St.	Hat and gloves
K2 Camping & Clothing	Polycarbonate water bottle

Thanks, merci, go raibh maith agaibh, grazie bene, Danke, dank u wel

Editor's Note

Thanks to all those who contributed articles and photos for this issue of The Hillwalker. The new editor is on a learning curve at the moment, no doubt hoping to reach the heights scaled by her predecessors! Comments and contributions are most welcome to mcmahond@eircom.net or by snail mail to: 11, Aspen Road, Kinsealy Court, Swords, Co. Dublin.
Hope you enjoy this edition and that the next one will be better!

Deirdre McMahon
Editor