

Sunday Hikes November 2005

<i>HIKE PROGRAMME</i>				
MEET: Burgh Quay		DEPART: Sundays 10.00 am	COST: Private bus. €10	
Date	Route Description	Distance	Leader	
Nov 6th	Route: Oldbridge - Wicklow Way Track - Ballinafunshoge Mountain - Ballinrush - Lough Dan Track - Knocknacloghoge Mtn - Cloghoge Brook - Luggala - Military Road Carpark at GR 137 087	15km / 900m	Philip Roche	
Nov 13th	Route: Lead Mine Carpark - Brockagh Mountain - Tonelagee - Lough Ouler - Spot Height 536 - Mall Hill - Forest Track - Lynams of Laragh.	17km / 750m	Mark Champion	
Nov 20th	Route: Sally Gap - Carrigvore - Gravale - Duff Hill - Mullaghcleevaun East Top - Mullaghcleevaun Mtn - Black Hill - Ballynultagh Gap	18km / 825m	Brian Flynn	
Nov 27th	Route: Shop River Road - Ravens Rock - Prince Williams Seat - Knocknagun - Old Boleys - Kippure - Lough Brays - Glencree Reconciliation Centre	16km / 700m	Brian Madigan	
Dec 3rd	Christmas Party Leaders: <u>Saturday:</u> Tom Kenny (Hard Hike); Jim Barry (Moderate Hike) <u>Sunday:</u> Garry Byrne Route: Christmas Party Hikes in the Glendalough Area	Various	Tom Kenny / Garry Byrne	

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.

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:
Garry Byrne Email: garry_byrne@environ.ie
Mark Campion: Email: campion@ireland.com

Weekends Away

Trip to Donegal & Derry October 2005

An Óige Hillwalkers Club completed another very successful weekend trip to Donegal and Derry. At times, it is easy to take such successes for granted and not to pay too much attention to the huge effort that certain members of the club have to invest in organising such events. These efforts guaranteed the success of the Derry trip and the preparatory work goes right back to the early part of the summer when rekkies were undertaken.

The initial surveying work was carried out in ideal weather conditions, which at some level could have turned out to be a disadvantage whilst battling through the ferocious conditions that beset us some four months later when the Hillwalkers took on Mount Errigal. Some participants claimed that they had never experienced such severe and unbearable conditions before. Presented with such a challenging scenario, the leaders had to adapt their styles and, I must admit, they rose to the occasion. The hike had to be tackled with a slightly different approach to the norm. As the weather continued to deteriorate, Frank Rooney set up both a rear and middle marker and also, as part of the overall strategy, continuously checked with all participants - while things progressed or regressed - as to whether or not they were willing to continue. At that stage, it is believed that Paul Carroll told him that he would continue with the group, but equally, he was happy to return to a lower and safer base.

Thereafter, it became a team effort that manifested itself from the front of the group, a true display of leadership skills, and in fact something that Irish Industry could learn from. Then, and at the most threatening stage of the expedition, one of the participants got into difficulty when his glasses were blown off. That situation brought out the best in club members when Garry Byrne came forward and sacrificed his own walk by offering to accompany Barry O'Sullivan to safety at the bottom of the mountain.

Further on the heavy conditions dictated that the route had to be changed and I am happy to report that Frank managed to engineer that aspect of the day to a successful conclusion as well. Having met some of the locals later on, they claimed that they *"would not put their dogs out in such conditions"*. It was suggested to another more senior member that we were indeed quite brave, a comment that drew the retort of *"either that or you are totally mad"*.

The media in this country expends most of its energies and coverage on the things that go wrong in our society. As an active member of the Hillwalkers, I can confidently say that this is a club where most things are carried out successfully and I reiterate that to be a true reflection on the people who are running the show.

One would be tempted to say that it was pity that the Irish trip to Sipan was not organised by An Óige Hillwalkers Club. According to Packie Bonner in the play "I Keano" that whole thing went wrong as a result of the fact that the prawn sandwiches did not arrive on time. During the weekend in Derry, all things needed and expected to be available on a hillwalking trip were provided.

Whilst the leaders themselves do not comment too much on their responsibilities it was obvious for everyone to see that both Frank and Eoin were in even better form in the pub on Sunday night, subconsciously aware that the walks were effectively over and that the weekend as a whole was a complete success.

Others were equally as influential. For example, Jim Barry, a regular member of the Hillwalkers, took on the responsibility of leading the easy walk on Saturday. Not to take anything away from an easy walk but regular

members of the hillwalkers group prefer difficult or more challenging walks. From that point of view he would have sacrificed his preferred outing. In addition he also made a huge administrative contribution and took it upon himself to look after both the hotel staff and bus driver alike. It is such considerate gestures that help "An Óige" members to receive more open and welcoming arms on their travels.

In summary I would like to say that organising such a trip can be quite onerous and demanding. The leaders of An Óige Hillwalkers Club deserve great credit for their efforts and the fact that they are willing to accept such responsibilities. They deserve even more credit for the absolute success of such trips.

Eamonn Coyle

EDITOR'S NOTE: If you have been on a weekend trip or Sunday hike with the Hillwalkers recently, why not consider writing a short report for the newsletter?

Christmas Party

Update & Reminder

Date: Saturday, 3rd December 2005
Venue: Glendalough Youth Hostel

Cost: € 55 for those travelling independently
€ 65 for those travelling by Club Bus

IMPORTANT!
Club Bus departs on Saturday morning
at 9.30am from Burgh Quay
(former Irish Press Office)

Price includes bus transport to and from Dublin, light refreshments after Saturday hike, Gala evening dinner in the Wicklow Heather Restaurant and overnight accommodation in Glendalough Youth Hostel on Saturday night.

Booking now via An Óige Headquarters.

Social Corner

Forthcoming Events

Going to the Dogs again!

Thursday, 10th November, Shelbourne Park
€ 10 (includes voucher for one drink)
€ 8 (entry only)

The first race is at 8 pm but those collecting tickets from Steve need to be there at 7:30 pm (meet at the entrance).

Text messages to Steve Buckney.

Annual Don Reilly Holly, Guinness and Refreshments Hike

This cheery, annual hike will take place on Sunday, 18th December, finishing at the Hollywood Inn, Hollywood, Co. Wicklow. More details in the next edition of the newsletter!

Folk Night

We hope to hold another folk music night in

late January. Watch this space and get in tune!! Further details in the next edition of the newsletter!

BUY & SELL

Anyone wishing to sell hiking gear, boots, walking sticks etc. or looking to buy second-hand equipment, please send item description, name and contact details for publication in the newsletter to the Editor: Barbara Sudrow, 24 Glenmalure Park, S.C.R., Dublin 8 or barbarasudrow@eircom.net

Navigation Training

Map and Compass Course 2005/2006

The Annual Map and Compass course started on 1st November 2005 with 21 participants. The course includes three Tuesday evening sessions, 2 hours' duration each, held in An Óige Headquarters, Mountjoy Street. In addition, there are two weekend training sessions as well as one night navigation session, all based in Wicklow. Accommodation for the two Wicklow weekends is provided in the Glendalough Hostel. A separate consolidation session will be organised in the Comeragh Mountains, Co. Waterford, for the weekend of the 28th & 29th January 2006. Course organiser: Jimmy McCullagh

REMINDER OF FORTHCOMING DATES:

Second Weekend: November 19th & 20th, Wicklow Mountains, meet outside Lynam's Pub, Laragh at 9.45am. Accommodation in the Glendalough International Hostel (Saturday overnight is included in the course cost).

Night Hike: December 11th, meet outside Coach House Pub, Roundwood at 4.00pm

Consolidation Weekend: January 28th & 29th January 2006, Rathgormack Mountaineering Hostel, Comeragh Mtns., Co. Waterford. (Costs associated with this weekend are NOT included in course cost.)

Annual General Meeting

Chairman's Report

The AGM was held on Thursday, 6th October 2005, at the Westmoreland Bar, Westmoreland Street, Dublin 1.

The attendance were 22 members, down from last year (33).

Stepping down from the committee were Deidre McMahon, Newsletter Editor; Prionnsias Mac An Bheatha, Chairman; Tom Kenny, Sunday Hike Organiser; Philip Roche, Sunday Hike Organiser. The meeting gave big thanks to the members stepping down, particularly Prionnsias who gave 10 years of service to the committee.

New members Barbara Sudrow, Mark Campion and Garry Byrne were given a big welcome by the meeting. Afterwards Eoin Moroney joined the committee.

Financial position of the Club: Overall the financial position of the club is reasonably strong mainly due to the diligent work of the Treasurer, Jim Barry.

Membership: The membership is at 134 for the year ending. Club membership fee for the coming year is at € 30, which is partially subsidised by the Club funds.

Financial Donations: The club last year continued to make a contribution to An óige bed nights and also made financial donations to Doorus Hostel and Benlettery. Also Mountain Rescue donations of € 500 each to Dublin/Wicklow and Glen of Imaal Mountain Rescue Team funds.

We also continued the Mountain Skills Bursaries fund in which two members received reimbursement of fees.

Social Events and Weekends: Social Events co-ordinator, Stephen Buckney organised many successful events this year. Including a night at the dogs, and a day's horse racing in Fairyhouse.

The club organised four successful weekend away last year in South Wales, Kerry, Sligo and Derry/Donegal as well as a successful Christmas Party.

Map and Compass Course: Training Officer Jimmy McCullagh gave a substantial account of the training for last year. The map and compass course was held successfully with 24 participants attending the course. He is again hoping for another successful course this year.

Overall View: While it can be seen that the overall health of the club is in reasonable good shape both at a financial and at an activity level, the fall-off in membership from two years ago of 160 members to now of 134 is a concern.

A greater concern is the fall-off in Sunday hike attendance. This fall-off impacts on the cost of running the Sunday Bus. Over the last two years the Sunday bus has been subsidised by over € 2000. If this trend continues it has the potential to derail the club.

Even at the present level of membership of 134 if every member came out once every five weeks the bus would be full each week.

Frank Rooney, Chairman

Over the next few months, we will be taking a look behind the scenes: In turn, each member will talk about his or her work on the Hillwalkers' Committee. And - watch out for more photos of committee members - we might even manage a group photograph!

Easter Weekend 2006

This is an early announcement of the Easter Weekend Trip 2006. Jim Barry is currently working behind the scenes to organise a trip to Wales. Travel will be by ferry and bus; the group will be based in accommodation in Llanberis, and shuttle bus transport will be provided to and from the start/finish of the hikes.

Full details in the next newsletter!

Out on the Trails

Hiking Adventures

CHAMONIX TO ZERMATT

The Walkers' High Route

By Noel Kerley & Frank O'Rourke

During September 2005 two (reasonably) stalwart members of the An Oige Hillwalkers Club (Noel Kerley and Frank O'Rourke) did the traverse of the Chamonix to Zermatt Walkers High Route. By any standards, this is a spectacular route – it is also a very tough one, and while we started out with the purest of thoughts and intentions regarding the taking of shortcuts, using mechanical aids, etc., this very commendable line of thinking came to be

modified by practicalities as the trek progressed. As we both arrived in Zermatt whole and entire – if somewhat the worse for wear – we assume we did most things right. Kev Reynolds' book on the route was our staple guide.

The weather throughout consisted of wall-to-wall sunshine (most days) so it was shorts, t-shirt and sun-lotion (lots of) all the way. There was a hell of a lot of climbing involved to cross many mountain passes and the subsequent long descents over rough tracks were just as strenuous. We saw many parts of Switzerland which were well off the beaten track which were scenes of total devastation due to glacial action, rock falls, etc. These areas bore no resemblance whatever to the chocolate-box image tourists usually have of Switzerland. Also, in the earlier stages there were times when we both felt we had bitten off more than we could chew, but this feeling passed as the trek progressed and we both settled into it.

Frank flew to Geneva and caught a bus to Chamonix while Noel travelled overland (as he usually does), via Holyhead, London, Eurostar to Paris, and overnight train to the Alps. We both met up at Chamonix railway station about 09:30 hours, ready to commence Day 1. After full and weighty deliberation we decided to have a "cuppa" first while we wound up our willpower to face the perils ahead. The scenery was already terrific and we hadn't yet covered one metre of the trip.

DAY 1 was an easy "breaking-in-gently" day as far as Argentiere, mainly through woods alongside the River Arve. DAYS 2 & 3 were serious stuff and taxed us fully. From Argentiere we had a long uphill slog to the Col de Balme where we stood with one foot in France and the other in Switzerland – this was the border and we were in Switzerland for the rest of the trip. After a comfortable overnight in Trient we faced another brute of a day to get to Champex. We went the hard way via the Fenêtre D'Arpette involving about 1,400 metres of height-gain alongside the Glacier du Trient – quite a sight, but in hot sunshine all day. A short break at the top for a snack, then a long strenuous descent to Champex, a delightful village alongside a small lake. It is probably true to say that at this point our morale was at it's lowest and we both felt in poor shape.

What helped hugely at this stage was that DAY 4 to Le Chable was a relatively easy day – short distance (13k), very pleasant pastoral terrain and little uphill stuff – in fact, quite the contrary as our destination was 700 metres lower than our starting point, and trees provided much shelter from the sun. This evening we stayed in a small hotel and enjoyed a little bit of luxury – very, very nice. Things were looking up.

DAY 5 to Cabane du Mont Fort was 9k and – on paper at least – looked a very tough day with a long steep climb straight from Le Chable to Les Ruinettes, about halfway along. At this point we decided to get practical and had no difficulty whatever in agreeing to say "up yours" to that long climb and letting a bus and cablecar do the hard work instead of our legs and lungs. These brought us as far as Les Ruinettes and we then thoroughly enjoyed a magnificent walk along the tops to the Cabane du Mont Fort where we arrived during the afternoon. We had a very pleasant hour or two sitting on the terrace in the sunshine with the Mont Blanc range spread out in the distance. The day was terrific and the sunset was excellent.

DAY 6 to Cabane de Prafleuri was the first day of the trek spent in totally wild and desolate terrain. We went over 3 passes (or cols) and each involved quite an amount of uphill slogging. The downhill stretches that followed were equally strenuous. The final col – Col de Prafleuri at 2,965m – was the highest point on the trek. We didn't quite hit 3,000m anywhere. The Cabane de Prafleuri is located in what remains of a vast derelict quarry and the terrain all around has been totally eroded by glacial action over the years. The entire area was a scene of utter devastation.

DAY 7 (16k) brought us to Arolla via Lac des Dix and a diversion to the Cabane des Dix, where we had a lunch stop. We then crossed a glacier via a marked route and had a tough climb to the Col de Riedmatten, a difficult stretch over a chaos of rocks and boulders carrying backpacks. It was then downhill all the way to Arolla to our next little bit of luxury in the Hotel du Glacier.

DAY 8 was a relatively short (10k) and easy day to La Sage. We use the word "relatively" because there was nothing short or easy on this trip, but compared to the others this was not a bad day.

DAY 9 to Cabane de Moiry was a case of "back to normal". A steep climb to the Col du Tsate, downhill to the Val de Moiry, then a tough and long slog up to the cabane, spectacularly situated overlooking the Moiry Glacier

which is right alongside. The cabane was rather basic – no hot water for showers and outside loos, but we were well fed and slept soundly.

DAY 10 was 14k to Zinal and our first day to suffer rain, but this happened right at the very end of the day. Again, not a bad day with a couple of hundred metres climbing to the Col de Sorebois. We then used a cable car to avoid a steep, knee-jarring descent through the forest to Zinal and had another little “fix” of luxury in a hotel.

DAY 11 was back to bright sunshine again and several hours of climbing to the Forcletta pass, at 2,874m. The descent brought us into the German-speaking part of Switzerland for an overnight in Gruben.

DAY 12 was a “missed” day. It was raining heavily from early morning and visibility was very poor. As we had 1,000m to climb to the Augstbordpass we decided to by-pass this stage using a taxi, a cable car, two trains and a bus, and eventually ended up in Gasenried for our next overnight. Gasenried is situated near the start of the Europaweg, a 31k high route which runs all the way along the side of the valley called the Mattertal to Zermatt, and this comprised our final two days on the High Route.

DAY 13 was 14k of high-level walking, along the Europaweg to the Europa Hut, situated at 2,220m above the Mattertal. This should have been a spectacular walk but for the entire day (bar the final hour) we saw absolutely nothing but thick cloud and mist – it was sitting on top of us all day long. The frequent waymarks were the only thing that kept us going in the right direction.

DAY 14 brought us back to sunshine again for our final day on the High Route, which comprised 18k of very pleasant walking with Zermatt in the distance steadily getting nearer, and the Matterhorn putting in an appearance at long last. We had a lunch stop halfway along at a lovely Alpine hamlet, and on arrival at Sunnegga, high above Zermatt, we used the Sunnegga Express funicular railway to bring us down to Zermatt, which it did in minutes as against a couple of hours of descending on foot.

It was with a sense of great satisfaction that we spent our final night in Zermatt, the Chamonix to Zermatt High Route now behind us. A memorable experience.

Noel Kerley & Frank O'Rourke

MCI News

The Future of Tiglin

The MCI wishes to advise its members that the directors of the Irish Adventure Sports Training Trust (IASTT) met with the Irish Sports Council (ISC) on Tues 25th Oct 2005. The ISC has decided to undertake a review of the operation of Tiglin before making a decision on future capital and operational funding. In the context of the possible closure of Tiglin, the MCI is reviewing its own policy and approach to training. To this end the MCI Executive will shortly invite all interested members to put forward their views and recommendations for consideration. Source: www.mountaineering.ie

Editor's Notes

We would like to hear from you!

Whether you ...

- wish to contribute an article ...
- have read an interesting book you'd like to recommend to club members ...
- would like to share your favourite hikes ...
- want to comment on any club matters ...

Why not get in touch? Write or email to:

Barbara Sudrow, 24 Glenmalure Park, S.C.R., Dublin 8, barbarasudrow@eircom.net

Membership 2005 – 2006

This is a gentle reminder for those who haven't renewed their Hillwalkers Club membership for 2005-2006. The annual fee of € 30.00 covers access to Sunday hikes and the receipt of the newsletter. It also includes MCI membership (including the Mountain Log magazine) as well as the MCI insurance. The insurance cover starts from the date on your receipt - one very good reason not to wait any longer: the membership form is attached to this newsletter!

In the next Edition...

December & January Hike Programme;

Easter 2006 Trip to Wales; suggestions for Stocking Fillers; Mountain Trivia and more!