

HIKE PROGRAMME

December 2007 / January 2008

MEET: Burgh Quay

DEPART: Sundays 10.00 am

COST: Private bus. €12
(unless stated otherwise)

2nd pick-up point: The bus picks up walkers who are already at the designated point. It won't be waiting and places cannot be guaranteed as the bus may be full at Burgh Quay.

NEW 2nd drop-off point: Where indicated in the programme below, the bus will drop off hikers at the 2nd pick-up point on the return journey, unless circumstances dictate otherwise. We regret that this is not possible on all routes.

9 December 2007:
---HOLLY HIKE 2007

Leader: Don Reilly

2nd pick-up & drop-off point: Bus stop near pond at Seán Moore Park on Tallaght By-Pass.

Route: Drumreagh (GR N937 032) * Church Mountain * Turf Cutters' Track * Toor * Scalp * St. Kevin's Way * Hollywood Village.

Distance: 12km **Ascent:** 600m **Map:** OS 56

16 December 2007
---Christmas Party (see separate notice)

23 December 2007
30 December 2007 ---NO HIKES---
6 January 2008

Wednesday, 26 December 2007
---St. Stephen's Day Hike

Leader: Frank Rooney

Route: Meet outside the Marine Hotel, Sutton Cross (note revised meeting place), at 11.00 o'clock, for a walk around the Hill of Howth; public or own transport.

Tuesday, 1 January 2008
---Lug at New Year

Leader: Jim Barry

Route: Meet outside Fenton's Pub at 11.00 o'clock, for the traditional New Year hike up Lugnaquilla; own transport.

13 January 2008
---Introductory Hike East Wicklow

Leader: Mark Campion

2nd pick-up & drop-off point: Bus stop before the roundabout at Loughlinstown.

Route: Carrigoona (GR O238 147) * Rocky Valley * Glencap Commons * Great Sugar Loaf * Calary * Downs Hill * Kilpedder.

Distance: 16km **Ascent:** 650m **Map:** OS 56

20 January 2008
---Northwest Wicklow, South Dublin

Leader: Philip Roche

2nd pick-up point: Bus stop near pond at Seán Moore Park on Tallaght By-Pass

Route: Cloghleigh Bridge (GR O049 166) * Shankill River * Seefin * Seefingan * Corrig * Seahan * Ballymorefinn * Slievenabawnoge * Stone Cross.

Distance: 16km **Ascent:** 700m **Maps:** OS 50 & 56

27 January 2008

---**South Dublin, North Wicklow Rambles**

Leader: Brian Madden

2nd pick-up point: Bus stop before the roundabout at Loughlinstown.

Route: Start GR O244 214 near Rathmichael C of I Church * Carrickgollogan * Barnaslingan * Scalp * Killegar * Knocksink * Ballybrew * Ravens Rock * Prince William's Seat * Knocknagun * Oldboley's * Glencree Centre.

Distance: 17km **Ascent:** 750m **Maps:** OS 50 & 56

3 February 2008

---**Introductory Hike Glenmacnass Valley**

Leader: Pearse Foley

2nd pick-up point: Bus stop before the roundabout at Loughlinstown.

Route: Glendalough * Wicklow Way * Paddock Hill * Gosson Stones * Scarr * Kanturk * Carrigeenduff * Oasis.

Distance: 16km **Ascent:** 550m **Maps:** OS 56, Harvey and Healy.

GENERAL HIKE NOTES

PLEASE NOTE: The hike leader has the right to refuse anyone who is not adequately equipped (e.g., without appropriate boots, rainwear, food, hat, gloves, etc). As daylight may be fading towards the end of the hike, please don't forget your torch, spare batteries & bulb!

Any club member interested in leading a hike, please contact: [Garry Byrne](#)

WEEKENDS AWAY October Bank Holiday Trip

Hillwalkers' Journey to Armagh City

This year the An Óige Hillwalking Club organised its annual October bank holiday weekend hiking trip to the Mourne Mountains in Co. Down. A total number of 50 hikers set out from Dublin city centre around 6.00pm on Friday the 26th October on board a brand new luxurious 07 coach as hired in from M & A coaches in Kilkenny. Accommodation was provided in Armagh's modern youth hostel. The trip north was both relaxing and enjoyable providing no hiccups whatsoever until the assigned destination was reached around 8.30pm that evening. All hikers were allocated their respective rooms and were therefore able to settle in fairly quickly. The rooms provided were all en-suite, hosting around an average of four hikers each.

Once settled in on the first night of the trip it was then decided to taste the local cuisine, music, and beer. Two suitable spots in particular were discovered in one of the main streets in Armagh City. The Charlemont Hotel provided the food on the first night of arrival and the Station Bar was to become the source of both beer provisions and sing-songs alike for most nights thereafter. Making contact with the locals presented no great challenges since they proved themselves unbelievably welcoming and friendly, showing particular interest in both hillwalking and the Irish language.

Day 1: Saturday

On the first day of hiking all walkers arose around 7.30am so as to present themselves in the canteen for a fully cooked breakfast around 7.45am. The food was well presented, tasty and above all plentiful and certainly sufficient to last until midday when one could then avail of the neatly packed lunch which was also provided by the hostel. Once fed, packed and ready for the challenge ahead all hikers boarded the bus again and set off in an easterly direction towards Newry, Warrenpoint and then on to the starting point of both hikes at the foot of the Mourne Mountains at Head Road. The weather on Saturday was quite challenging and visibility was therefore reduced to a very limited yardage making both climbing and navigating more awkward. It really became a matter of concentrating on the task ahead sort of a day.

On that day both the hard and moderate hikes followed similar routes along Slieve Binnian with the former group taking in some higher contours in certain locations and also venturing around Slievelamagan. In any event all hikers arrived safely back at the bus in Carrick Little Car Park around 4.30pm. Both groups then made their way back to the hostel to get showered in preparation for the four course meal that was provided by the hostel. Later on the group headed out towards the city centre where some local musicians provided the night's entertainment with a traditional musical session aided by some of the hikers, namely Martin on tin whistle and Gerry on vocals.

Day 2: Sunday

Sunday morning arrived one hour later than normal and I am sure that the hikers were quite appreciative of the extra hour in bed. A fully cooked breakfast and packed lunch was provided again by the hostel and then the hikers safely made their way to Newcastle so as to take on Slieve Donard. Fortunately the weather was much more friendly and accommodating on that day of hiking and everyone was able to absorb and further appreciate the beauty from the tough ascent towards Slieve Donard taking in the coast line all the way along to Carlingford Lough.

Both groups took on Slieve Donard, with the hard hikers venturing on the more challenging route up by the steep waterfall where all faculties in the form of arms and feet were called upon to aid the ascent, with Newcastle and Castlewellan plus the attractive Co. Down landscape always in range. The weather turned quite blustery at the top of the mountain and that was to last for the remainder of the day but fortunately did not unduly interfere with the breathtaking local scenery. Nevertheless, and, on a clearer day, hikers would be able to sample some sights of Scotland in the distance.

Having conquered the top of Donard, the group was then faced with the challenge of Hare's Gap along the great wall which fortunately sheltered everyone from the strong and heavy breeze. Hare's Gap on its own would not normally be that difficult but coming straight off Donard proved teasing enough. The destination at Trassey Road was again safely navigated by all around the 5.00pm mark and again the group headed back to the hostel to once more sample the appetising four course meal that was warmly laid on for everyone.

The local Station Bar was to be the venue for Sunday night's entertainment. The hikers, in conjunction with some extremely gifted local singers, provided great entertainment in organising and partaking in an impromptu sing-song. Claire, Frank and Gerry were to provide the best entertainment from the visitors where even some songs were recited as gaeilge.

Stephen James was to part early from the party in preparation for the following day's marathon back in the capital. Stephen partook in the event to raise money for a permanently handicapped relative of a work colleague. We learned later on that he successfully completed the event.

Day 3: Monday

Monday morning, and the hostel was vacated around 9.30am. Some members headed back to the capital via private transport whilst the remainder of the group took on Slieve Gullion around Camlough. The climb was to prove challenging enough particularly on the back of the previous two days' tough challenges. The summit of Slieve Gullion around the 800m mark provided some excellent scenery of the Mourne Mountains, Newry and the picturesque Co. Down and Armagh landscape. Again and fortunately the weather was to be in the hikers' favour.

On the way back to the capital that evening the group stopped off at the Carrickdale Hotel for their usual evening return meal thereafter arriving safely back in Dublin around 7.30pm.

The group would again like to extend their sincere gratitude to both Frank Rooney and Brendan Magee for organising such an enjoyable and seamless trip to Armagh City and the Mourne Mountains.

The hikers are also indebted to both the bus driver and the staff of the hostel, all of whom put the hikers' needs before their own, and therefore generally added to the overall quality of the weekend.

Eamonn Coyle

See Eamonn's photos from the weekend trip by selecting the **New Photos** link on the main menu.

Book Reviews

TEN WALKS IN THE DISTRICT OF ENNISKERRY

Raven's Rock Publications, 2002/2006

Reviewed by Brian Madden

This booklet of walks by Albert Smith and Kevin Warner came to be known as 'the forbidden book' in hiking circles. Due to a dispute on rights of way, and threat of High Court action, the first (2002) edition was withdrawn from the market. Meanwhile clandestine photocopies circulated. The landowner concerned, Neil Collen, mounted a legal challenge to the right of way at Lamb's Lane, which crossed his land. Two of the routes in the first edition were affected. Later, Mr Collen took a case against Neil Leonach (Chairperson of Enniskerry Walking Association); the Circuit Court found in favour of the right of way. After this, Collen appealed it to the High Court, and the judgement was reversed in his favour.

In the second edition (2006), the two disputed routes have been replaced with new walks. Information on the recent legal history of the Lamb's Lane track is also given.

Interestingly enough, the Kilmolin-Curtlestown-Raven's Rock loop (Walk 7, 2nd Ed.) has been retained. One of the landowners at Curtlestown is known to have an objection to walkers using the 'old road' near Curtlestown WW exit. He was invited to substantiate his objection prior to publication of the 2nd edition, but did not take up the offer. In the opinion of the authors, there is overwhelming evidence to support this access, so they are including it.

The hikes in 'Ten Walks' are short, 1-2 hours typically, and usually circular. They are incredibly rich in feature, local history and heritage. The Dargle-Loop walk is a real 'wow', with dramatic views of the Dargle Gorge, on a track blasted from the rock for the visual benefit of royal visitors from England early in the nineteenth century. The Mass path from the Texaco station to Killegar churchyard is a highly precise piece of navigation, traversing fields, with precise entry and exit points at quaint stone stiles. Have the guidebook with you for this!

Although the walks are short, they can be built into some of our An Óige hikes to great advantage. Last June, I led a Moderate group from Kilcrouney bridge to Jonnie Fox's pub in Glencullen using three of the Ten Walks: Lovers Leap track, the Dargle-Loop (with a raft ferry to cross the Dargle river), and Knocksink Wood.

The walk descriptions are excellent, with fine maps by Yanny Petters and sketch illustrations by Kate Warner. It's available at most Dubray Books outlets (e.g. Dun Laoghaire, Stillorgan, Blackrock, Rathmines), 'Spar' in Enniskerry and Stepside, the Scalp Petrol Station, and elsewhere. Cost is €5.00. You can also order the booklet from the authors for the same price (alberts@iol.ie). They will cover the postage and packing.

THE WICKLOW MILITARY ROAD

History and Topography
by Michael Fewer

Ashfield Press

Reviewed by Garry Byrne

An interesting new book on the history of the Wicklow Military Road was recently published by Ashfield Press for €20. Built around 200 years ago, just after the 1798 uprising, it runs for over 60 kilometres from Rathfarnham to Aghavannagh.

The architect-turned-author, Michael Fewer, will be well known to many walkers through his frequent articles in *Walking World Ireland* and his books on the Wicklow Way, Long Distance Walks, Marked Trails and many others. This book certainly feels like one written by an enthusiastic walker with a real interest in the hills. Throughout, there are repeated references to well and lesser known hills, brooks and place names we know so well.

Michael helps bring the past to life as he uses the Military Road as a route to access and explore the natural and local history of the south Dublin and Wicklow hills. The historical events that led to the building of the road are considered, together with events along it since. It is however far from being a dry history, with numerous stories and anecdotes of those who worked on the road or lived near it. The book is lavishly illustrated with maps and photos, both old and new. Included are two poems on Lough Bray and on Aghavannagh written in 1892 in memory of Parnell who died the previous year.

The An Óige hostels at Barravore and Aghavannagh both get a mention. While most walkers will be aware of Parnell's association with Aghavannagh, few will be aware of the literary associations of Barravore. The book informs us that the area inspired the writing of Synge's play 'In the Shadow of the Glen' and that the cottage, which was to become the hostel in 1955, was frequented over the years by many literary and political personages such as Countess Markievicz, Lennox Robinson and W B Yeats.

All in all, whatever your interests, you are sure to find something of interest in this book.

CHRISTMAS WORD SEARCH COMPETITION

Our Christmas competition focuses on two articles in this edition:

Hillwalkers' Journey to Armagh City (pp. 3-4) and *Way of St. James: From Logroño to Burgos* (pp. 10-12).

The 21 names in the word search can be found in either of the two articles. In the grid below, the names are printed horizontally (left to right or right to left) or vertically (top to bottom or bottom to top) but not diagonally. The clues below may help you find the answers!

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| X | D | N | E | W | C | A | S | T | L | E | N | Z | |
| Z | R | E | X | Z | E | Y | M | P | Y | R | I | A | 1. Mountains of M... (5) |
| C | A | S | T | I | L | C | R | H | E | N | D | Y | 2. Northern Irish town connected by ferry to Omeath, Co. Louth (11) |
| A | N | W | R | A | T | A | M | O | S | E | R | G | 3. Slieve B... (7) |
| S | O | G | Y | J | R | M | E | A | S | A | O | M | 4. Northern Irish seaside resort (9) |
| T | D | U | A | O | A | I | E | C | A | J | F | L | 5. Slieve D... (6) |
| I | D | T | N | I | M | N | O | N | R | A | G | A | 6. Lough on the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland (11) |
| L | E | N | A | R | F | O | Z | A | T | R | N | P | 7. One of the tracks through the mountains (7) |
| L | Y | I | I | E | N | E | W | R | Y | D | I | K | 8. Slieve G... (7) |
| A | U | O | R | S | H | E | F | F | I | E | L | D | 9. Village in Co. Armagh, near Bessbrook (8) |
| Y | K | P | A | T | P | M | T | A | S | P | R | E | 10. Northern Irish city on the main Dublin-Belfast route (5) |
| L | C | N | T | N | O | I | L | L | U | G | A | N | 11. Spanish for "Way" of St. James (6) |
| E | X | E | U | G | R | E | B | L | A | X | C | R | 12. Type of pilgrims' accommodation (8) |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | 13. Spanish province where Frank started (5) |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | 14. Where Frank met Elliot and Justine (6) |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | 15. Elliot's final destination (7) |

- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|---|
| O | P | R | T | B | I | N | N | I | A | N | J | U | 16. | Name of a river and mountain range (3) |
| N | O | R | U | E | L | L | I | V | E | S | Z | O | 17. | Largest region in Spain (8-1-4) |
| O | C | A | M | L | Z | I | M | I | X | D | B | M | 18. | Frank's "home town" (11) |
| N | E | W | C | A | M | L | O | U | G | H | Q | U | 19. | At 1200m the highest peak en route (7) |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | 20. | Home town of Nirvana impersonator (9) |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | 21. | Airline suspected of planning flights to Burgos (7) |

This competition is **open to all currently paid-up members** of An Óige Hillwalkers Club.

To enter, please send the completed word search with your name and address to: Barbara Sudrow, 24 Glenmalure Park, South Circular Road, Dublin 8. **Closing date:** Monday, 28 January 2008

Name:

Address:

Prize to be won: A copy of the books reviewed in this edition (see previous page).

CLUB NEWS

Congratulations!

from the Hillwalkers
to Eoin Moroney and Maria Jose
Puche Soriano on the birth of Atore



Membership 2007-2008

An Óige Hillwalkers Club organises hikes on Sundays with bus transport to and from hikes, weekend trips away, social outings and map & compass training for its members. Club activities depend on the voluntary work of committee members and hike leaders. Members may like to support their club by participating in Sunday hikes regularly to help cover the cost of the bus.

The current membership year runs from 1st October 2007 to 30th September 2008.

Hillwalkers who haven't yet renewed their membership will find an application form and renewal notice included with this edition of THE HILLWALKER. Remember that membership includes MCI insurance, discounts and issues of the Mountain Log magazine.

The membership form is also available to download from our website <http://www.hillwalkersclub.com/>

Basic First Aid Course

This course is primarily intended and recommended for Hike Leaders. Places on this course are limited to 15.

The course will include seven Tuesday evening sessions of two hours each and will take place in the Dublin International Hostel, 61 Mountjoy Street, Dublin 7, commencing on Tuesday 15th January 2008 and continuing on 22nd & 29th January and 5th, 12th, 19th, & 26th February.

The subjects to be covered include:

- CPR
- Fractures
- Unconsciousness
- Burns and Poisons
- Epilepsy
- Panic Attacks
- Wounds and Bleeding

Evening Sessions (7): 7.15 pm for 7.30 start

Venue: Room 102, Dublin International Hostel, 61 Mountjoy Street, Dublin 7

Each participant will be supplied with a first aid booklet. There will be on-going demonstrations and assessment after each module. A certificate will be awarded to those who successfully complete the course. This certificate is valid for three years and is valid across Europe.

Requirement: Wear loose, comfortable clothing, e.g., track suits.

Course Cost: €120

Booking: It is essential that interested persons book in advance through An Óige Head Office. Phone 01-830 4555; credit card bookings accepted.

Dates for Your Diary

Christmas Party

Please note that this year, the Christmas Raffle and Prize Draw will take place earlier, from 6.15 to 6.45pm, before we leave for Lynam's Pub and the Wicklow Heather Restaurant. Don't be late!
For details of the programme, please see flyer below.

Easter Trip 2008

Jim Barry's very popular Easter Trip will bring Hillwalkers and Moderate/Easier Hikers to the Yorkshire Dales in 2008. For details of accommodation, hike programme, cost and booking information, please see flyer below.

FURTHER AFIELD El Camino de Santiago Part 2

Last year, Frank Rooney described his adventures on the first 168km of the Camino, from St. Jean Pied de Port to Logroño. This year, Frank and Claire returned to Logroño to continue along the Way of St. James.

Way of St. James: From Logroño to Burgos

Claire and I returned to the Camino, this time for a five day walk. We were to take up where we left off after last year, this time our souls less innocent of the Way ahead, with our pilgrim passports in our hand, decorated with the engraved stamps from last year's albergues. We started off in Dublin and took a flight to Vitoria and a bus to Logroño.

Day 1: 22/08/2007

Logroño to Najera, 29 km

Logroño was our starting point. We finished our meal at 14.30 and had a decision to make either go to Navarrete 13 km away and stop there or go on a further 14 km to Najera.

To pick up the Way in Logroño was going to be handy, or so I thought. Not so, for we wandered the old city for half an hour before we saw the scallop shell sign for the Camino. The walk through Logroño suburbs and into the wine growing countryside was delightful. After a little climbing and a good track we reached Navarrete by 5.15pm. At this stage we felt good and decided that we would walk on to Najera thinking it would take about three hours. This turned out to be a hard walk; it was another 3km longer than indicated. Road works into Najera had confusing signage and we went the wrong way, also the albergue was the other side of the town and added to this, darkness was descending. This added on extra time to our walk. We did eventually reach the albergue at 9.15pm tired and hungry. That was a long day starting in Dublin airport at 04.00am and finishing with lights out at 10.00pm in the Albergue in Najera in the province of Rioja in Spain. This day was to catch up on us.

Day 2: 23/08/2007

Najera to Santo Domingo de la Calzada, 22 km

Up early the next morning at 07.30am, a look at Najera was a must; my memory from the previous night was of a busy town full of young people in the bars. In the morning I looked at the attractive town built around a river named Rio Najerilla and where the monastery of Santa Maria La Real caught your attention. We left the town and into the countryside and as we were one of the last to leave we could see many pilgrims ahead of us. The countryside changed, no more the black grapes of Rioja but more recognisable crops of vegetable and potatoes. Our destination was to be Santo Domingo de la Calzada 22 km away. This was drumlin country, similar to Monaghan, the path in the distance could be seen to waver as it cut through the countryside. Before reaching a little Pueblo called Azofra we met two young people, Elliot and Justine.

Our paths were to cross for the next four days. Elliot was living with his father in Germany and decided to start the Camino there. He was already walking for thirty days. And he was not content to finish his walk in Santiago de Compostela as he intended to continue walking to Seville where his mother lived. Justine was from California and, as she said herself, she was at 'a quarter life crisis'. She was 'doing Europe' and would finish off in India before she returned home. As the rain thundered down on us we went our separate ways after Azofra. We continued on to reach Santo Domingo by 3 o'clock and to finish early. As with a lot of other Spanish towns the old quarter is special and it is protected as traffic is shunted around the centre rather than through it.

One of the most revered saints along the Way founded Santo Domingo de la Calzada. Santo Domingo founded this resting-place in medieval times for the pilgrims and in doing so allowed the Way to go through the Oca Mountains thus avoiding any detour. There are many fine buildings, a city wall and the 13th century Cathedral which has an unusual feature in that its baroque tower standing 69 metres high is located outside the Cathedral building.

Santo Domingo has a legend, "where the cock crowed after it had been roasted". Legend has it that a roasted rooster and hen sprang back to life and crowed as a sign that a pilgrim who had been unjustly tried and hanged had been brought back to life. Since then these birds were added to the town's coat of arms. And from that date onwards a live cockerel and hen have always been kept in the Cathedral.

We stayed in the albergue in the Cistercian Monastery. The next morning the sudden intrusion of the Hospitalario (warden) woke me - Claire and I were the only pilgrims left in the room! We should have been gone, it was nearly 9 o'clock, and his rapid mouthing of Spanish words with his high octave tone left me in no doubt what he thought of us still in bed. A hurried exit ensued with bag and clothes in hand as we stumbled out to the narrow street below. He banged closed the thick 16th century wooden door of the convent. We were left on the cobble-locked stoned-covered Calle filling our bags and sheltering coyly from the rain. Still in shock but undaunted we staggered up to the nearby restaurant. Two coffees "con leche" and toast steadied us and as he handed us our coffee a big smile from the owner restored our faith in Spanish friendliness. Our first day had finally caught up with us.

Day 3: 24/08/2007

Santo Domingo de la Calzada to Belorado, 26 km

As we left Santo Domingo the rain continued. The bad summer this year in Ireland was matched by the unusually inclement weather of Northern Spain. As we exited Santo Domingo we crossed an attractive modern bridge that

stepped across two wide river banks. But lo and behold, no river existed, the river bank was as dry as a pancake and Rio Oca existed only in name.

Today's walk would bring us through the small towns of Granon, Redecilla, Vitoria de Riola, Villamayor del Rio, and finally Belorado - a distance of 26km. The landscape had changed once again and this time it was drowned by large scale growing of hay.

Between the villages of Granon and Redecilla we entered the region of Castilla y Leon which is the largest region of Spain and also of the European Union. Castilla y Leon came together in 1983, when the regions of Castilla la Vieja and Leon were united. Both have been central to Spanish medieval history, which is still evident in many cathedrals, monasteries, castles and fortified towns.

The rain began to let up and sunshine came through and we dried out. As the sun shined we got thirstier. Luckily all the villages had taps or fountains to get water. That meant we could cut down on the amount of water we carried.

Belorado was reached in the late afternoon. It is at a height of over 900 metres and can be a cold place in winter. Unlike our walking companions we decided to stay at the official pilgrim albergue in the town centre. It is part of the 12th century church of Iglesia San Nicolas and was once a small theatre. The odd thing about it was that the theatre could easily be visualised with the stage now converted to a kitchen. The Hospitalario was from Belgium: he was a domineering type and had to be obeyed; he prided himself on his knowledge of spoken 'Eenglish'.

That evening we met our companions Elliot and Justine for dinner in the local square. Belorado is similar to most Spanish towns: it has a well designed Plaza Mayor and in the evening is brimming with life of all ages. This town was to be no exception, and added to normal evening activity, it was also fiesta time. The meal was delightfully Spanish and not too expensive. The owner had a great knack of entertaining his customers with the discrete aim of encouraging them to spend more. We were no exception as we ordered another bottle of wine. He reminded me of a cute Kerry man in Killarney as he entertained the American tourists. We finished off the evening waltzing with the locals to a live band outside in the plaza.

Day 4: 25/08/2007

Belorado to San Juan de Ortega, 26 km

As usual we started off early in the morning at around 07.30. After the welcoming bright sunshine of yesterday the familiar rain had returned. It is hard to forget about Ireland even for a short time when drizzly rain comes at you first thing in the morning. Our rain gear was modest and hardly kept the rain out. We soldiered on; some of the bars were still open from the fiesta of the previous night.

Our aim today was a small monastery open to pilgrims in the heart of the Montes de Oca, San Juan de Ortega. This walk could be divided up into two halves, the first half up to Villafranca Montes de Oca and the second half to San Juan de Ortega. We entered Villafranca, the 'Village of the Franks' – ah' for me, home at last. It was named after traders, artisan settlers who took advantage of reduced tax rates by monarchs to repopulate Muslim territories after the Reconquista. You could say it was a village built on a medieval 'Section 23'.

After Villafranca we walked for the next 12km to San Juan de Ortega and climbed to the highest point of Alto de la Pedraja at nearly 1200 metres. At the start of the climb we met a local old man sitting on a seat listening to his radio. With our small smattering of Spanish we conversed. As we talked we figured that about two years ago he found a pilgrim from the Canary Islands lying down on the same path on which we were walking. This pilgrim had had a heart attack and died soon after. He walked with us to the very spot and showed us the flowers which he leaves there regularly in memory of the deceased. We then continued on to the highest point of Alto de la Pedraja where we saw a monument dedicated to victims of the Spanish Civil War.

San Juan de Ortega was reached in the late afternoon. We stayed in the monastery, nothing fancy. The local 12th century church of San Nicolas contains the sepulchre of San Juan. It uses the winter and summer solstice sun to light up and shine on a figure of Christ. This is similar to the Megalithic mounds of Newgrange in the Boyne Valley in County Meath which uses the winter solstice sun to illuminate the mound and the inner chamber.

San Juan de Ortega is a very small village and luckily there was a restaurant. All the usual peregrinos whom we had met over the last few days had assembled there. As by this stage most of us were on first name terms, we pulled

some of the restaurant tables together so that we could sit together. The owner of this establishment took great exception to this and divided us all back into little groups at our own tables. With a few bottles of wine consumed the party went outside for a sing-song. Andy from Sheffield in England had a guitar; however, his repertoire was all the songs from the rock group Nirvana. As he sang he imitated Kurt Cobain, the lead singer of the group. This setting was in front of the monastery, and with peregrinos on the Camino as his audience, it seemed as though John Cleese in Monty Python had returned.

Day 5: 26/08/2007

San Juan de Ortega to Burgos, 21 km

On our fifth and final day's walking, this walk would take us to Burgos, a town closely linked to the legendary figure of El Cid. By all accounts he was a brilliant medieval commander, initially for the province of Castilla. But depending on the political arrangement at the time and his own ambition he would fight alongside or against the Muslims.

We passed the village of Atapuerca, where archaeologists found the remains of Atapuerca Man in a historic burial ground. Atapuerca Man is believed to be the oldest remains of a Homo sapiens. 2 km after leaving this village, we ascended an 1100 metre summit. From there, we could actually see Burgos although the city was at least another 5 hours of walking ahead of us. We continued on through the dry but gentle countryside that took us past some empty small villages. On the outskirts of Villafria, 7km from Burgos, the route went missing and a construction site was in front of us. My Spanish companion had a row with the site foreman and insisted that his group should walk through the site, so we followed. The laying of some type of new road was under construction; my companion said it was for a motorway. I thought it was too broad for a road; it looked more like a runway. I later saw an entrance to a small airport. My conclusion is that there may be a new route planned by Ryanair to Burgos!

The day had turned hot and we were now walking beside the main N1 route into Burgos. This was a difficult part of the Camino for us as it was like walking for 7km beside the industrialised Long Mile Road in Walkinstown in Dublin. We eventually reached the outskirts of Burgos and the old quarter. Luckily we were early enough to get a place in an albergue in the old quarter. Burgos needs time to be fully appreciated. It has many fine Plazas and buildings and it has of course a magnificent Cathedral that would rival any other Cathedral in the world with its fine altars and architectural beauty. And how could I forget the large statue to El Cid on his horse in his battle gear raging as he does war!

But our battle had come to an end; it's sad to leave the Camino: its unique historical and religious connection makes it a very special route. The following day we got a bus to Madrid and flight home to Dublin.

Frank Rooney

For photos of Frank's trip see the [New Photos](#) link from the main menu.

COMMITTEE 2007 - 2008

Committee 2007 - 2008:

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Chairman</i> | Frank Rooney |
| <i>Secretary/Sunday Hikes</i> | Garry Byrne |
| <i>Treasurer</i> | Jim Barry |
| <i>Membership/Training</i> | Donal Finn |
| <i>Weekends</i> | Mark Campion |
| <i>Promotion</i> | Deirdre Muldowney |
| <i>Newsletter</i> | Barbara Sudrow |

Special thanks to:

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>Webmaster</i> | Matt Geraghty |
| <i>Distribution</i> | Pearse Foley & Cyril McFeeney |

CHRISTMAS PARTY 2007

An Óige Hillwalkers Club

Christmas Party 2007

**Cost: €75 (making your own way) or
€85 (using private bus from Burgh Quay)**

Saturday, 15 December

- 9.30 am** Depart from Burgh Quay, Dublin (club bus)
- 11.00 am** Arrive at Glendalough Youth Hostel
- 11.30 am** Depart Hostel for Hikes in Glendalough Area
Hard Hike: Tom Kenny
Moderate Hike: Jim Barry
- 4.30 pm** Welcome Back Hikers' Soup
at Glendalough Hostel
- Opportunity to renew club membership and/or
book optional breakfast for Sunday morning (approx. € 7.50)
- 6.15 pm** Christmas Party Raffle & Draw
- 6.45 pm** Depart Hostel for Lynam's Pub in Laragh
(club bus)
- 8.30 pm** Christmas Dinner
Wicklow Heather Restaurant, Laragh
- 11.30 pm** Depart Wicklow Heather (club bus),
return to Glendalough Hostel
- 12.00 am** Music & Party till late

Sunday, 16 December

- 10.30 am** Depart Hostel for Hike in Glendalough Area
Hike Leader: Garry Byrne
- 3.30 pm** Depart Hostel, return to Dublin (club bus)

Weekend Leader: FRANK ROONEY

**Any changes to advertised leaders or times will be announced on the day.
All queries and payments to An Óige Head Office (01-8304555) – booking now open!**

EASTER WEEKEND 2008

Easter Weekend 2008

Thursday 20th – Monday 24^h March 2008

Visit to the Wild and Scenic Yorkshire Dales National Park

Ingleton Youth Hostel, Carnforth, Lancashire, England

Moderate, Hard and Easy Walkers Welcome

Two grades of organised hikes daily including Monday plus numerous short walk options for easy walkers

Leader: Jim Barry

Boat & Bus Trip Only

Weekend Itinerary will be chosen from the following:

- **Pen-y-ghent from near Horton in Ribblesdale**
- **Inglesborough and Whernside from Ingleton**
- **Gordale Scar and Malham Cove from near Malham**
- **Thornton Lansdale Waterfalls from near Ingleton**
- **Low Level walking facilitated at each of the above locations**
- **Social Events**

British Ordnance Survey Maps: 1:50.000 Landranger Series Sheet 98.

Notes

Hostel Accommodation: Ingleton Youth Hostel (within the town)

Cost: €360 (approx.) (includes 4 bed nights, all meals, packed lunches & transport costs)

Meals: available at hostel (included in the price of the weekend)

Food: as above - stopping at local shops for extras (STERLING CURRENCY REQUIRED).

Bring: Suitable Walking Boots, Winter Rainwear & Clothing/Towels/Toilet Gear/Flask/Torch/ First Aid Kit/Camera/Binoculars/Valid An Óige Membership Card.

Meeting Place/Time: Stena Line Departure Terminal, Dun Laoghaire at **10.15am**

Departure: Holy Thursday from Dun Laoghaire at **11am sharp** on **HSS Stena Line Ferry to Holyhead**, then onward by bus to **Ingleton Youth Hostel**.

Return: Monday evening from Holyhead on **1530hrs Ferry** after bus journey from Llanberis to arrive back in Dun Laoghaire at **1720hrs** approximately.

BOOKING: €220 NON REFUNDABLE deposit to An Óige Head Office by credit card or cash deposit (Tel. 01-8304555).

Balance of €140 to be paid before Friday 15th Feb. 08, as the hostel has to be paid in full at this time. Booking facilities are available from 29th Dec. 07.

Welcome Aboard