

Sunday Hikes February 2006

<i>HIKE PROGRAMME</i>			
MEET: Burgh Quay		DEPART: Sundays 10.00 am	COST: Private bus. €10
Date	Route Description	Distance	Leader
Feb 12th	Lugduffs Route: Shay Elliot Memorial - Cullentragh - Mullacor - Lugduffs - Lough Firrib - Turlough Hill - Fair Mountain - Wicklow Gap	19km / 650m	Jimmy McCullagh
Feb 19th	Lough Nahanagan Route: Upper Car Park - Glendasan - Camaderry - Northeast spur - Lough Nahanagan - Wicklow Gap - Tonelegee-Brockaghs - Laragh	20km / 1080m	Stephen James
Feb 26th	Mullachleevaun Route: Glenbride - Moanbane - Billy Byrne's Gap - Mullachleevaun - East Top - Duff Hill - Gravale - Military Road	18km / 800m	Donal Finn
Mar 5th	Introductory Hard Hike Route: Ballyross Wood - Bottom of Raven's Glen - Forest wall - GR 167 145 (approx) - Tonduffs - War Hill - Djouce - Powerscourt - Paddock - Djouce Wood Car Park no. 1.	17km / 800m	Warren Lawless

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

Out on the Trails

Pentland Hills

New Year Trip to Edinburgh and the Pentland Hills

27 December 05 - 1 January 06

The excellent Lothian Bus leaflet 'Bus Access to the Pentland Hills' and equally excellent Harveys map of the area were all that was needed to plan the New Year Trip to Scotland. Eight of us headed off for the New Year, following on the tradition set by Seán Dunne.

The Pentland Hills are designated a Regional Park and rise just behind Edinburgh. Just to make you feel at home, the 44 bus takes you to Balerno, from where many of the walks start. With about 10,000 hectares of countryside the Pentland Hills have it all, reservoirs, woods, several peaks over 2,000 ft and over 100km of waymarked paths. Access is not a problem and has been worked on in a sensible manner between landowners and the authorities. Walking, biking and horse-riding as well as fishing, running and orienteering are all enjoyed within the Park. There are panoramic views across the Firth of Forth, the Borders and to the munroes of Ben Lomond, Ben Lawers and Ben Vorlich.

The Youth Hostel at Eglinton Road is well situated for access from the airport and access to the city centre and the hills and was our base for the first two days. We used a B&B for the other three nights, with four to a room – very cosy and intimate!

The first day we took the 44 bus to the terminus at Balerno and walked down a Country lane, past Threipmuir Reservoir, which had a covering of ice, towards a ridge with tops called West Kip, East Kip and Scald Law – the highest peak in the Pentlands. The views were excellent and walking exhilarating due to clear skies and gentle breezes. We rounded Black Hill and visited the small visitor Centre at Harlaw. As there was still plenty of time, I extended the walk to head north-west to pick up a bus at Bonaly in the suburbs. We did 14 miles in the day, which is excellent considering it got dark around 4PM.

There was snow overnight but the roads were clear and we took a bus to Swanton in the outer suburbs. We passed a delightful holiday village of thatch cottages and had elevenses at the ski centre. A steep climb took us over the centre onto a ridge at Caerketton Hill from where we descended for a leisurely lunch at Glencorse. Next day was overcast with much snow and slush about. We took a taxi to West Linton, a lovely Victorian village and proceeded by low level tracks to the villages of Carlops and Nine Mile Burn. Luckily the mist cleared and the rain disappeared. A long circuitous route took us to the continuation of the ridge we were on the first day onto Carnethy and Turnhouse Hills, to the village of Flotterstone, where we waited an hour for the bus in the Flotterstone Inn.

The Water of Leith flows from the Pentlands through Edinburgh to finish at the sea at Leith, the City's port. A 12 mile walkway from Balerno to Leith was the subject of our final day's walking. While pleasant enough, the river quality and scenery disimproves the nearer you get to the city. Still, we managed an indoor lunch at the oddly named 'Tickled Trout' in Slateford.

Hogmanay, or New Year's Eve is of course a big day in the Scottish calendar. The city centre was closed off and traffic diverted from the previous day in preparation for the event. Numbers are controlled by tickets and we got ours from some friendly policemen, who quickly saw off ticket touts. There was a spectacular fireworks display centred on the castle which lasted for about 15 minutes, after which most people went obediently home. As myself and John O' Mahony had yellow jackets on, we were approached by several people looking for information!

The following day there was time to wander around the city centre, having deposited our luggage at the railway station. The tourist business was in full swing and the city had largely been cleared from the night before.

All in all a very enjoyable time and what better way to spend the festive season?
Garry Byrne

Hillwalker's Website

Survey & Feedback

I included a survey in the October 2005 edition of The Hillwalker (with a reminder in the December/January edition) to try and gauge how often people use the club website (www.hillwalkersclub.com), and how they feel about its style and content. Unfortunately I only received half a dozen replies. However, here is the feedback based on those replies:

Q1. How often do you visit the website?

Result: All of the respondents do actually browse the website. 3 people visit the site just occasionally, 2 people visit it once a week, and 1 person visits it just once a month. One person mentioned that they didn't visit the site too often as all the information on the Web version of the programme was already available on the posted-out copy of the programme.

Q2. If you have visited the website before, which is of the following would you tend to look at?

Result: All 6 respondents said they tend to look at the List of Sunday Hikes. 4 people also look at photographs, 1 person looks at the Club news and 1 person looks at Travel articles.

Q3. Do you ever look through the archived Hillwalker programmes?

Result: Two-thirds of respondents do browse through the archived programmes, with just 2 people who don't. One person mentioned that the lists of Sunday Hikes in past programmes often provide ideas for starting points, finishing points or other parts of a route when planning hikes.

Q4. Is the layout of the website easy to use & to navigate around?

Result: A nice response to this one: all respondents said "yes".

Q5. What kind of connection do you have when using the internet?

Result: The response here was split evenly – half used broadband while the other half used dial-up. One person mentioned that he surfed the net in an internet café or in a public library. My purpose in asking this question was to determine if we are adding too much graphic content (mainly photos) to the main page of the website or not – obviously if using dial-up the page would load up slower.

Q6. What browser do you use?

Result: Well, it looks like good news for Microsoft as all respondents use Internet Explorer. This was an important question for me as some browsers can often display graphics and text differently than others, and some functions or features in one browser may not work in others.

Conclusion: While the number of replies to the survey was low, I believe that the results have proved interesting, and it has been a worthwhile exercise. Thanks to all those who participated, and for those who haven't: you can still send in any comments to me at hillwalkerclub@eircom.net

Matt Geraghty

Club News

WALKING WORLD IRELAND:

Back issues are now available, strictly on a first come-first served basis, from An Óige Head Office, 61 Mountjoy St., Dublin 7, Tel: 01-8304555
Available issues run from no. 15 to no. 45 approximately.

EASTER TRIP 2006

Thursday 13th - Monday 17th April

Llanberis Youth Hostel

Snowdonia National Park

NOW FULLY BOOKED

Anyone still interested, please contact:

An Óige Head Office, Tel. 8304555 for Waiting List.

LOST AND FOUND:

Hiking Jacket lost on Hillwalkers' Hike, 3rd January, in the Brockaghs.

Contact: Eddie Russell, Tel. 2840063

Membership 2005-2006

So far, 90 members have renewed their membership for the current year (Oct 1st 2005 to Sept 30th 2006).

- Remember, you have to be a member of the Hillwalkers' Club to avail of the special bus for Sunday Hikes.
- From this edition onwards, only paid-up members will receive the newsletter by post, email or both.
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- The membership renewal form is located at the end of this newsletter.

THANKS!

Navigation Training

Consolidation Weekend 28th & 29th January

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he annual Map&Compass Course finished up with the skills consolidation weekend in the Comeragh Mountains on the weekend of the 28th/29th January. There was a good turnout this year with 14 participants from the course coming down to Rathgormack. We also had three club members who came down, two to refresh their navigation skills and one who just wanted to sample the local scenery. So with the 5 leaders helping on the weekend both dorms were full and a few of us had to bed down in the gym. This was not a problem as the hostel is a community centre managed by the locals, kept in good condition, with plenty of spare bedding and good washing/cooking facilities. Located at the foot of the Comeraghs and only a few miles from Carrick-on-Suir it's a good spot from which to explore the locality (I promised the Warden, Bridget Ann, I'd give it a plug!). Although the Saturday started off cold, the wind dropped to give us one of the nicest weekends in the Comeraghs I've experienced in the last five years of the course. On the Consolidation Weekend we aim to meet the needs of as many of the participants as possible whether that requires covering the basics, doing more advanced stuff or something in between. So we stream the participants according to ability separating them into different groups for their training on hills. We generally find this works best for the last weekend of the course allowing the participants to get the most out of the weekend.

On Saturday morning we separated in to five groups and set off into the hills to do our "Map&Compass" thing, some starting from Coumshingaun and some starting from the Mahon Falls area. The first day was spent on the Comeragh Plateau practising map reading, taking and following bearings and generally getting the students to navigate their own way around what is usually challenging terrain (not so this weekend with clear skies and sunshine!). After a long day in the hills we rewarded ourselves with a good meal in Carrick-on-Suir followed by a night-cap (or two) in our favourite pub in Rathgormack. On the second day of the weekend we usually refresh our

knowledge during a shorter hike. This year the Sunday was another beautiful day so we hiked the Knock an Aifreann ridge which gave plenty of opportunity to practice feature recognition and navigation without a compass. All in all there was a general impression of satisfaction with the weekend/course amongst the participants. I received a number of “thank-you” emails on the Monday following the weekend (which I don’t get every year!), which are always gladly received, and I passed them on to the leaders. The course could not possibly work without the experienced people we have in the club who are willing to help out, namely, Ita O’Hanlon, Tom Kenny, Donal Finn, Joe Kellegher, Mark Campion, Philip Roche and Ciaran King. And I’d also like to thank the club for recognising the importance of self-proficiency in the hills and continuing to support the Map&Compass course.

Jimmy McCullagh
Training Officer

Hillwalker Wedding

Another Hillwalker Wedding in County Cork!

Lillian and I would like to say thanks for all the wishes of good luck on the occasion of our Wedding day, which we received from all our friends at the Hillwalker’s Club Christmas party.

The Wedding took place on Tuesday 3rd January, and everything went smoothly. Even the weather decided to be nice to us, and the sun shone all day. We had a 4 o’clock wedding in the local church in Cloyne, and we then went dining & dancing at the Garryvoe Hotel a few miles down the road.

A few days after the Wedding we went to Prague for a long weekend, so overall it was a nice start to the year!

Matt Geraghty

MCI News

Forthcoming Events

KINGDOMS OF EXPERIENCE

A personal take on the 1985 Everest North East Ridge Expedition

Led by the much-missed, charismatic Mal Duff, this Everest ‘Unclimbed Ridge’ expedition has become historic as one of the last major siege-style assaults, done without sherpas. It was also only the second expedition into Tibet since the Chinese invasion. Joe Tasker and Pete Boardman disappeared on the first ‘Unclimbed Ridge’ attempt – the second was never going to be easy.

Liz Duff gives a witty, earthy, fresh-eyed woman’s account of the expedition’s high times and hard times. Andrew Greig – poet, novelist and writer of ‘Summit Fever’ and ‘Kingdoms of Experience’ – accompanies her slideshow with songs and poems written during the expedition. The evening will be informal, entertaining, guaranteed pre-digital – and celebratory.

Date: Wednesday, 22nd February
Venue: Tara Hotel, Merrion Road, 8pm
Admission: €10 (€7 with MCI Card)

OUTDOOR ADVENTURE SHOW / BOULDERING LEAGUE

This year's Snickers Irish Outdoor Adventure Show is taking place from 17th – 19th February in Simonscourt, RDS. Fast becoming THE event for outdoor enthusiasts, this year's show will have a special focus on adventure travel, as well as a come-and-try-it climbing wall, canoe pool and mountain bike stunt demos. Entry is €12 or €8 concession for MCI members on production of MCI membership card.

CARRAUNTOOHILL SAFETY CONCERN

Kerry Mountain Rescue Team have highlighted a dangerous situation which has developed on Carrauntoohil. A visible false track has now developed leading from the summit directly towards dangerous ground. Kerry Mountain Rescue Team are urging all walkers to exercise extreme caution when navigating from the summit, particularly in poor visibility. Walkers should note that there are no safe descent routes anywhere to the east or north east of the summit.

Mountaineering Council of Ireland
Sport HQ, 13 Joyce Way,
Park West Business Park, Dublin 12

Note from the Editor

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

Social Corner

LONG-AWAITED FABULOUS FOLK NIGHT

Date: Friday, 17th February

Time: 9 pm

Venue: UPSTAIRS in THE 108,
Terenure Road East, Rathgar, Dublin 6 (see map below)

Organiser: Joe Kavanagh, Tel. 087-9875630

All musicians and instruments welcome - and interested listeners, too! For those who wish to take a break from the music occasionally for a chat, there is also space in the ground floor bar!

Getting there:

Although not a city centre venue (always impossible to arrange for a Friday night), it's easy to get to Rathgar Village.

By bus: From O'Connell Street / D'Olier Street, take bus no. 14, 15A, 15B or 15C to Rathgar.

On foot: 3.5 km from town via Rathmines - no problem at all for seasoned hillwalkers!

Indian Food Night planned for March in a Temple Bar restaurant. Details of venue, date and time in the next newsletter!

Suggestions welcome! Please contact our Social Organiser Steve Buckney with proposals for future social outings - don't keep those brilliant ideas all to yourself!

