
HIKE PROGRAMME

February 2007

MEET: Burgh Quay

DEPART: Sundays 10.00 am

COST: Private bus. €12

11 February 2007

---Glendalough Circuit

Leader: Brian Flynn

Route: Glendalough * Tracks and Ragman's Path to Shay Elliott * Carriglineen * Drumgoff * Coolalingo Bridge * Cullentragh * Derrybawn Forest * Glendalough.

Distance: 17km **Ascent:** 550m

18 February 2007

---Little and Large Revisited

Leader: Joe Gilvarry

Route: Little and Large Sugar Loaves * Rocky Valley * Carrigoona * Crow Lane.

Distance: 18km **Ascent:** 800m

25 February 2007

---County Dublin Rambles

Leader: Brian Madden

Route: Rockbrook Graveyard * Massey Estate * Killakee Mountain * Featherbed Road * Old Bog Road * Castlekelly Track * Bohernabreena Waterworks.

Distance: 17km **Ascent:** 600m

4 March 2007

---Introductory Hillwalkers Hike

Leader: David McCann

Route: Greenan * Strand Bridge * Kirikee * Ballydowling * Clara Vale Chapel of Ease * Avonmore River * Stump of the Castle.

Distance: 17km **Ascent:** 430m

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. Any participant on these hikes must be a member of An Óige.

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.

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 untrampled, 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 AND RUCKSACKS Remember that walking sticks and rucksacks cannot be brought onto the bus and must be stowed away in the boot during the journey.

HIKE LEADERS Any club member interested in leading a hike, please contact:
Garry Byrne

LONG DISTANCE CHALLENGE

THE ART O'NEILL WALK 2007

It's always exciting making one's way to Dublin Castle for the Art O'Neill Walk. What adds to the anticipation is wondering how many are going to turn up on the night since this is a no fee/no pre-entry event. Sometimes the plans made after too much Christmas pudding and turkey fade away as the night of the event approaches. In 1998, before the walk was promoted on the internet, only four people turned up. Since then things have changed somewhat. Indeed, on this Friday night, 5th January, 2007, four hundred and fifteen years after the escape of Red Hugh O'Donnell and Art and Henry O'Neill in 1592, over sixty walkers turned up for the challenge. The challenge consists of forty-six kilometres by road and track and 18 kilometres over open mountain, with half the walk taking place in darkness.

Starting out at midnight

Without any fanfare (we didn't want to awaken Queen Elizabeth's guards) the long column of widely varying shapes and ages headed off into the night as the midnight hour arrived. Very soon a few runners from Belfast careered into the night, leaving the main body of walkers in wonderment at their fitness. Up Patrick Street, out to Harold's Cross, on to Templeogue and past

the Old Mill in Tallaght, the group soon found itself without street lights, in outer darkness, as the Dublin Hills were reached. Passing by the Kilbride Army Camp at 3.30am, a welcome cup of soup and a slice of cake was generously supplied by the small group of regular volunteers from the Wayfarers Hillwalking Club, led by Grace Dobson. Pat Lynch, who was to provide backup throughout the length of the walk, and also other Wayfarers, had transported carloads of backpacks to this point. With a quick change into boots and head torches, the journey through fields and along country roads to Ballynultagh Gap began. Very soon, however, it started to rain and would continue for the next three or four hours. It's at Ballynultagh Gap that the first mountain, Black Hill, is tackled. Up till now the hikers had been walking at their own individual paces without concerning themselves about whether they were in touch with the group. However, at Ballynultagh Gap nobody seemed to want to wander up Black Hill alone and around to Billy Byrne's Gap in mist and darkness. They gathered here waiting for someone with a compass to appear, looking as if he knew how to use it. One fast-footed pair nevertheless headed off ahead of the group and soon disappeared into the murky night. Unfortunately, lacking a compass and only equipped with 'a good sense of direction', they soon found themselves sitting on the slopes below Billy Byrne's Gap waiting for daylight so that they could find out where they were! Fortunately, the main group of fifty-eight (two had fallen behind at Kilbride) spotted their head torches as they contoured, using a compass, around to the Gap and all were united again. Daylight came on the descent to the hamlet of Glenbride, and the tiring walkers stretched out in a long line as they made their way downwards through broken ground and rough heather.

Glenreemore Brook and Art's Cross

It was 9.30am at Ballinagee Bridge and the forty kilometre point had been reached. It was time for a rest, food and drink and a change of socks, etc. Unfortunately, two walkers withdrew at this point due to blisters and knee problems. The other two who had fallen behind at Kilbride were also out of the equation. With a bright day and pleasant weather, everyone now proceeded at their own pace up along the Glenreemore Brook to Art's plaque and the final climb of the day to Art's Cross.

The biggest group at this stage was the slowest moving, but gradually they made their way at a relaxed pace over to Three Lakes, down the Avonbeg river and along Table Track to Baravore in Glenmalure.

Baravore and beyond

Many withdrew at this stage (formerly the finishing place) while others made their way to the finish at Greenane (64k) and the remnants of Fiach MacHugh O'Byrne's fortress. The runners from Belfast finished around 2pm while the earliest walkers were in Greenane after 3pm. Most would have finished between 4pm and 5pm. Once again, Pat Lynch of the Wayfarers provided transport from the finish to anyone who required a lift to the train in Rathdrum. As a long-distance walker himself, only he could appreciate small mercies like this at the end of a long trek. The next train to Dublin wasn't until 7.30pm, but those who made their way to Rathdrum mixed with the Saturday afternoon café society as they enjoyed a well-deserved meal and a pint or two in the salubrious environs of that town.

Fifty-seven of the starters got at least as far as Baravore, the finishing place until this year, while about a dozen from that group went all the way to Greenane at sixty-four kilometres. Everyone who made a serious effort to do his or her best came away from the event very pleased to have participated in this commemoration of the journey of the two Irish Princes to the valley of

Glenmalure (Henry O'Neill parted from their company in Dublin), although Art O'Neill unfortunately died of exposure and exhaustion in the valley below the present-day Art's Cross. This walk has a lot of road and track in it and half of it happens in darkness. Hillwalkers normally don't like that arrangement of terrains, but the strangeness and unusual nature of the Walk, allied with the dramatic story it commemorates, makes it a journey everyone remembers with satisfaction, especially those who joined us from far-flung places like Sweden, Germany and the Sultanate of Oman.

Here's to next year!

Tom Milligan

This article also appears in the February 2007 newsletter of the Irish Ramblers Club and on Simon Stewart's website <http://simonstewart.ie/>

NAVIGATION TRAINING Refresher Weekend 2007

The Hillwalkers finished their 2006 Map and Compass course with an excellent weekend excursion to the Rathgormack Community & Hiking Centre in Co. Waterford. It's ideally located within 5km of the Comeragh Mountains, which has been the winter training ground for the course since 1995! This year, ten members along with five leaders enjoyed two great days, accompanied by relatively dry but sometimes cloudy weather - excellent for training!

Over the course of the weekend, we re-visited all concepts studied during the long nights in November: Naismith's rule, 100m paced stretches, 12 minute kilometres, 100m ascents, bearings taken and corrected, stop watches set and read, all accompanied by detailed examination of Sheet 78. Search parties of a different kind were established – this time seeking out re-entrants, knolls, obscure crags, and other micro features that were chosen to tax our now well-honed students. However, it was not all "Map and Compass": by 7pm on Saturday night we had adjourned to an excellent hostelry in Carrick-on-Suir for dinner before gracing the local pub in Rathgormack. A great weekend all around! Thanks to Jimmy McCullagh - the course organiser and to various leaders who helped on the weekend – Donal Finn, Tom Kenny, Ita O'Hanlon and Philip Roche.

Committee 2006/2007

Chairman	Frank Rooney
Secretary	Garry Byrne
Treasurer	Jim Barry
Membership	Donal Finn
Sunday Hikes	Garry Byrne
Social Events	Steve Buckney
Weekends	Mark Campion

Officer-at-large
Newsletter

Eoin Moroney
Barbara Sudrow

Special thanks to:

Webmaster
Distribution

Matt Geraghty
Pearse Foley & Cyril McFeeney

CONGRATULATIONS!

The winners of our Christmas Crossword Puzzle are:

Philip Roche and Don Reilly!

The prize, a copy of John Martin's book, "An Illustrated Survey of An Óige's Youth Hostels", will be sent to our winners shortly.

Solutions to the Christmas Crossword Puzzle below!

See also Garry Byrne's review of the book in the Dec/Jan edition of THE HILLWALKER.

1) P	Y	R	2) E	N	E	E	3) S		4) M	
	5) E	6) J	D				N		A	
	7) C	A	I	R	8) N	G	O	R	M	9) S
	R	C	N		E		W		M	T
	I	K	B		P		D		O	U
	N	S	U		A		O		T	B
	S	O	R		L		N		H	A
		N	G				I			I
		S	H	10) D	O	N	A	R	D	

BEHIND THE SCENES Membership Secretary

I have been a member of the Hillwalkers Club since almost its foundation. Over the years, I have been involved in the club in various roles including secretary, chairperson and more informally through organising various weekends and other events. I have also contributed to the club's training programme which I enjoy very much. Having spent a few years "off the playing field", I

was asked to become membership secretary when Anne Russell stepped down from this role at the AGM 2006.

The tasks of the membership secretary kick off each year at the Club's AGM in October with about 25 renewals. After that, approximately 5 renewals are processed per week. Currently, club membership stands at 150 members with over 30 new members joining this year alone. In order to process all this information reliably, the club keeps a membership database, which allows us easily generate postal labels for distribution of the monthly newsletter, create email lists and update our records with the MCI. All in all, it's pretty straightforward as long as you keep on top of it, and not let things slip!

Donal Finn

A BIG THANK YOU!

To all members of An Óige Hillwalkers Club who helped and supported our recent Quiz Night in aid of Sri Lanka School Project. Without their support and help it would not have been the success it was.

Mick Heneghan

SOCIAL CORNER

PAST EVENT: Smithfield on Ice

We had a nice night for the skating event in Smithfield on Friday, 5th January. As there is a narrow window of opportunity when the skating is available, our night out was soon enough after Christmas.

Even so, there were 17 people skating and close to 50 in the Cobblestone pub afterwards. The first thing that I noticed about skating is that it is very hot. Within minutes I decided to fork out the Euro for the cloak room and dump a few layers of clothes. Skating lasts for an hour, which is long enough for those of us not used to this sort of activity.

Around half an hour into it, the rink was more crowded than the M50 on a bad day. It was a lot less crowded later as people started to drop out. A rare chance to do the leaning forward and swinging arms from side to side technique, which I learnt by observing people who seemed to know what they were doing.

Steve Buckney

FUTURE EVENT: Neil Delamere, Comedian

Venue: Vicar Street
Date: Thursday, 8 March 2007

Cost: 25 Euro
Contact: Anyone interested, please contact Don Reill

Neil Delamere is an Irish comedian who began his career in 2004 at a festival in Edinburgh. Since then he has worked in programmes such as BBC comedy series One Night Stand and RTÉ comedy news show The Panel.

Other suggestions welcome!
Please contact our Social Organiser Steve Buckney

IRISH MOUNTAIN RESCUE

Among the challenges facing the Irish Mountain Rescue Association are increasing insurance premiums, the need for volunteers to devote a lot of their time to fund-raising, and more call-outs as many casual walkers are not prepared for conditions on the hills.

The following extracts are from an article published in the Irish Times, 22nd January 2007. The future of the voluntary mountain rescue service is threatened by crippling insurance premiums. During the organisation's weekend conference and AGM in Co Tipperary, outgoing chairman Pat Holland said "over 90 per cent of government grants we receive goes to pay insurance". The Irish Mountain Rescue Association, which represents 12 teams which provide a 24-hour year-round service, also said that Government grants covered just 30 per cent of running costs, with the other 70 per cent coming from public donations.

Mr Holland said the 300 volunteers made "a substantial commitment" but were forced to spend long hours fundraising to pay for specialist vehicles and equipment, first-aid training and protective clothing. Mary Mullins of the southeast rescue team said: "The public are very generous on flag days but are surprised to discover that the service is staffed only by volunteers." The scale of their contribution to the State's emergency services was outlined by figures for 2005. The teams responded to 179 incidents, with the highest number of call-outs (45) in the Glen of Imaal area. Overall, 240 people were rescued unharmed, 63 were injured and there were 12 deaths.

The busiest periods are weekends in summer and autumn. The volunteers also assist Gardaí in searches for missing persons. The association warned that mobile phone use was lulling some hillwalkers into a false sense of security as people believed they would be able to alert the emergency services if they got lost. David Williams (31), a volunteer with the Dublin-Wicklow team, said a mobile phone signal could only be traced to within a 6-km radius and that "many mountain ranges do not have any mobile phone coverage". Mr Williams has been a volunteer for nine years. He trains twice a week and has assisted in 400 call-outs.

Conference organiser Jimmy Barry, Tipperary, said that despite the decline in volunteering in Ireland, "our teams are not having problems recruiting". He described volunteers as "experienced hillwalkers and mountaineers who want to give something back to the hills and the people they meet on the hills".

Mr Barry advised prospective walkers and climbers to "take a compass, take a map, learn your hillcraft and don't rely on your mobile phone".

An Óige Hillwalkers Club supports the Irish Mountain Rescue Services by making regular donations on behalf of club members. The club also runs regular Map & Compass Training Courses, usually in the autumn, followed by a refresher weekend in January (see page 4).

MCI NEWS

Forthcoming Events

AGM 2007

Date: Saturday, 10th February 2007
Venue: Moran's Red Cow Hotel, Dublin 22
Time: 2.00pm – 3.30pm Members Forum
3.30pm – 4.00pm Tea & coffee
4.00pm – 5.30pm AGM

All members are encouraged to attend, in particular all clubs are asked to nominate representatives to participate. The Members' Forum, like the AGM, is open to all members. This is a good opportunity to meet MCI's new Chief Officer, Stuart Garland, as well as other MCI officers and staff, hear what's happening around the country, discuss MCI's priorities for 2007, and raise any questions or concerns.

MCI ALPINE MEET 2007

SAAS GRUND - July 7th to 21st

The Saas Valley (Saastal) is situated in the south of Switzerland on the border with Italy. Its popularity dates back to the early 19th century when pioneering mountaineers were drawn by the magnificent array of snow and ice peaks that curve around the valley. With an extensive network of hiking trails, via ferrata, valley crags and a high concentration of easy to mid-grade 4,000m peaks within reach, Saas Grund (1,559m) makes an excellent base for the MCI's 10th Alpine Meet.

Mountaineering Council of Ireland,
Sport HQ, 13 Joyce Way,
Parkwest Business Park, Dublin 12.
Tel: +353-1-6251115
Fax: +353-1-6251116
Email: mci@eircom.net
<http://www.mountaineering.ie/>

BANK HOLIDAY WEEKEND

An Óige Hillwalkers Club

Easter Weekend 2007

Thursday 5th – Monday 9th April 2007

Visit to the Wild and Scenic Snowdonia National Park, North Wales

Llanberis Youth Hostel, Llanberis, Brecon, Caernarfon, Gwynedd

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

Fully Booked – Waiting List Only!!

Weekend Itinerary will be chosen from the following:

- Carneddau Ridge from Ogwen (G.R. 649604)
- Glyders Ridge from Ogwen (G.R. 649604)
- Glyders Y Garn & Elidir Fawr from Nant Peris (G.R. 608582)
- Moel Hebog and Nantlle from Rhyd Ddu Village (G.R. 571526)
- Cnicht and Moelwyns from Croesor Village (G.R. 632447)
- Low Level walking facilitated at each of the above locations
- Social Events

British Ordnance Survey Maps: 1:50.000 Landranger Series, Sheet 115

Notes

Accommodation: Youth Hostel close to Llanberis Town

Booking: €180 NON REFUNDABLE deposit to An Óige Head Office by credit card or cash deposit (8304555). Balance of €150 to be paid before Friday 9th March 07, as hostel has to be paid in full at this time. Booking facilities will be available from 3rd Jan 07.

Cost: €330 (approx.) (includes 4 Bednights, Meals & 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: 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 Llanberis Youth Hostel.

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

Welcome Aboard