

Hike Programme

March 2006

MEET: Burgh Quay

DEPART: Sundays 10.00 am

COST: Private bus. €10

12 March: Daffodils at Clara

Leader: Garry Byrne

Route: Shay Elliott * Kirikee Mountain * Vale of Clara * Old Coach Road * Trooperstown * Annamoe.

Distance: 20km **Ascent:** 590m

19 March: North West Wicklow

Leader: Pearse Foley

Route: GR 105 130 near Coronation Plantation * Kippure * Seefingan * Seefin * Shankill River * Cloghleagh * Butter Mountain * Ballyfolan * Track around Dowery – Brittas.

Distance: 21km **Ascent:** 780m

26 March: Circuit of Ballynultagh

Leader: Kevin McGinley

Route: Ballylow Bridge * Ballydonnell Brook * Burnasglerrlagh Brook * Duff Hill * Cleevaun Lough * Boleyshemushboy Brook * Ballynultagh * Ballydonnell North.

Distance: 19km **Ascent:** 490m

2 April: Southern Loughs

Leader: Tom Kenny

Route: Glenmalure * Art's Lough * Cloghernagh * Kelly's Lough * Carrawaystick * Military Road * Fananieran Ridge.

Distance: 20km **Ascent:** 850m

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 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 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
Mark Campion

Charity Trip

Irish students travel to Zambia

In the middle of February, 3 teachers and 16 students headed off to Zambia. This was the culmination of 12 months hard work, both in terms of logistics and fundraising. Our project was focused on building a pre-school and clinic for Aids-orphaned children. We provided our contact out there with €85,000 - a figure which was about double what we had hoped to raise! Money left over will go to sustaining the vaccination and feeding program as well as digging some extra wells in the more deprived areas.

To that end I would like to sincerely thank all those Hillwalkers and Moderate Hikers who kindly contributed to the cause, be it through the treasure hunts, leg waxing (yum!... thanks to Ali, Enid and Warren), table quiz (thanks Mick!), weekend trip to Connemara or just unsolicited donations. I have estimated that I managed to squeeze nearly €5,000 from people involved in An Óige for which we are extremely grateful.

As you can see from the photos, the school is well on the way to being finished. The kids photographed having their dinner on the floor will be the lucky ones who will move into the new school which is in their part of the township. The old school will be used just for kids in that area. Ironically most of the kids wearing the blue tops don't want a school at all!

We did a lot of work while we were there - mainly visiting the children in school and the adults in the hospice. We were expecting to be very depressed by the whole thing but instead left with a lot of positive vibes... In general people are happy despite the fact that they have nothing... Also we got a great reception wherever we went, as whites are seldom seen in this part of Zambia...

Nobody begged for money or food; they were genuinely amazed at the fact that we were there at all and were doubly struck by the project that we undertook. The best moments were when they lined up for a photo and were shown the image on the display. That freaked most of them out.

It wasn't all about work. We spent a couple of days in Livingstone where we went to see the Falls, did a safari drive and cruise and spent a day white water rafting. We also got in 80km of hikes to satisfy the requirements of the President's Award scheme. Unfortunately, there are no hills but the mid 30's heat made up for that!

All in all it was a great trip... Thanks again for all your support.

Mark Campion

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

Club News

LOST AND FOUND: Nordic walking pole found lying on Georges Quay after bus drop-off, October Bank Holiday Monday.

Ring Paul at 086-1713982.

Membership 2005-2006

So far, 107 members have renewed their membership for the current year (Oct 1st 2005 to Sept 30th 2006).

Remember that ...

- ... you have to be a member of the Hillwalkers' Club to avail of the special bus for Sunday Hikes.
- ... only paid-up members will receive the newsletter by post, email or both.
- ... the renewal form is located at the end of the printed newsletter and on the website.

Congratulations

to Jimmy and Ruth McCullagh on the safe arrival of their beautiful six-pound baby girl!

Best wishes from all the Hillwalkers!

Forthcoming events

2006 IRISH MOUNTAIN FILM FESTIVAL

The Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour is presented in Ireland by Summit Sports with the support of sponsors Lowe Alpine and MSR. The tour includes award-winning films from the Banff Mountain Film Festival, an annual event held in early November at The Banff Centre in Banff, Alberta, Canada.

Films in this year's tour bring the spirit of adventure to life on the screen. A wide variety of stories - from mountain and water sports, mountain culture and the environment - will entice and inspire viewers. The tour's line-up includes films from Canada, the United States, Poland, Norway, Slovakia, the United Kingdom, Europe and Australia.

Venue: Astra Hall, Students building, UCD

Date & Time: 5th and 6th April. Start: 7.30pm

Tickets: €15 from Great Outdoors, Chatham St., Dublin 2

Films range from 3 minutes to 52 minutes in length.

Social corner

GREAT SUCCESS IN RATHGAR ...

The folk night on the 17th February was a great success. Approx. 60 members turned up at the 108 in Rathgar to hear great music and singing from Joe Kavanagh and Terry Cartin, among many other talented people. The craic started at about 9 pm and finished for this writer at about 1 am.

Anne Russell

Indian Food Night

Location: Indian Restaurant

Temple Bar, City Centre

Date: Friday, 31st of March

Time: Evening

Ring Steve Buckney after the 12th of March for details and to book a place

Suggestions welcome!

Please contact our Social Organiser Steve Buckney with ideas for future social outings.

Trip Announcement 1: Scottish Highlands

This is a pre-announcement of a forthcoming trip to Scotland for a small group of fit hikers.

Dates: Sat, 22 July – Sun, 30 July 2006

Leader: Mark Campion

Area: Glencoe / Fort William / Cairngorms

The ultimate choice depends on the people involved and subsequent transport arrangements

Cost: In the region of €370, excluding food

Accommodation: Hostels and Glasgow hotel on the last night.

Transport: Private cars or minibus, depending again on people involved

Numbers: 15 max

Possible hikes in Scotland:

Meall Chuaidh (short hike for day 1 off the A9) / Ben Macdui / Easains / Creag Meagaidh /

Ben Nevis via Carn Mor Dearg / Ring of Steall / Bidean Nam Bian / Ben Lomond / The Cobbler

These hikes may change. It is likely that we will do seven hikes weather permitting, with a rest day or two in the middle. There will obviously be scope for those who want extra rest days. Also, there may be scope to do two grades of hikes depending on the make-up of the party.

The average length of the hikes will be 20km with plenty of ascent, so a good level of mountain fitness and stamina will be required.

Further details and booking arrangements in the April newsletter.

In the meantime, anyone interested contact:

Mark Campion

Trip Announcement 2: Spain – Camino de Santiago

"It's hard to imagine a better way to enjoy Spain".

Eoin Moroney is planning a small walking trip to the old pilgrim route of the Camino de Santiago de Compostela in northern Spain some time in August this year. The group will be at most ten people. This trip will last approximately ten days, and is intended to cover the first stages of the Camino from Saint-Jean-de-Port to Logroño.

This walk on a dedicated walking trail will cross the beautiful mountain scenery at the north of Spain. However, conditions on this walk will be quite difficult. Walkers will have to carry all their supplies including clothes for ten days.

Temperatures may be quite warm (in the high 20's to low 30's). We will not have prearranged accommodation although there are refuges along the way offering accommodation to Pilgrims.

Cost of the flights to Biarritz, and returning from northern Spain, i.e. Bilbao, is approximately €180-200. Participants in the walk will be responsible for booking their own flights, and for all expenses (including accommodation) on the trip.

If you might be interested in this exciting and challenging trip, please call Eoin Moroney

EASTER TRIP 2006

Thursday 13th - Monday 17th April

Llanberis Youth Hostel

Snowdonia National Park

FULLY BOOKED

Anyone still interested in putting their name on the waiting list, please contact:

An Óige Head Office, Tel. 8304555

And a reminder for those who are booked on the trip but haven't paid the full amount yet:

BALANCE OF € 150 NOW DUE!

Inside the Committee: Weekend Coordinator

Eoin Moroney is the member of the committee responsible for coordination of weekend trips, and with a special interest in accessibility issues. He has been a member of the Hillwalkers for over ten years (tempus fugit), and is still as keen as ever on the mountains. Outside walking, Eoin lives in the Arbour Hill area, and loves the finer things in life: good food, music, books, and above all, conversation.

Travel Abroad

Yellowstone National Park

Yellowstone is America's best known National Park, drawing over three million visitors yearly. Established in 1872, the Park has five entrances and 370 miles of paved road. Situated in the North Western corner of Wyoming (96%), Yellowstone also reaches into Montana to the North (3%) and Idaho to the West (1%).

The Yellowstone landscape is defined by a giant caldera, a large depression caused by the collapse or explosion of a volcano. The Yellowstone caldera is one of the world's largest, measuring 72 by 48 km. Because of its geology, the Park is home to thousands of active thermal features including more than 300 geysers. Approximately 2,000 earthquakes are observed annually, and the whole landscape is shifting and changing constantly.

Vegetation

We arrived at Yellowstone via the South Entrance, having left Grand Teton National Park at mid-day. By late afternoon, the park seemed quiet but we were immediately struck by how different the park looked from Grand Teton: Instead of luscious green broad-leafed foliage we were greeted by remnants of lodgepole pine trees that looked like an army of toothpicks standing to attention. We later found out that the Park is still recovering from the numerous wild fires in 1988 which destroyed 36% of the area.

We stayed overnight in a motel a few miles outside West Yellowstone, close to the Montana-Idaho border. The next day, we used our National Parks Pass (\$50) to return for further exploration of Yellowstone. This pass card which gives access to all National Parks across the U.S. for one year is very good value as the entrance fee for YNP alone is \$20 (\$25 from May 2006).

Old Faithful Geyser

It was a brilliant morning, not too hot for August, with crystal clear air. As we were driving along the road we could see many plumes of smoke rising in the distance and at the side of the road – the whole area seemed to be alive with steam, hot springs and bubbling mud. We stopped many times, joined other visitors on the boardwalks around hot springs, took lots of pictures and listened to the roar of “dry geysers” – rocky holes from which pressurized steam escapes instead of scalding water.

And then it was time to visit “Old Faithful”, so called because of the predictability with which it erupts – every 90 minutes – so that the clock in the visitors’ centre is set to announce the time of the next “show”. We were in luck: just 15 minutes to go to the eruption! And sure enough, “Old Faithful” did not disappoint... It erupted on time and for the required length of time: approx. 4 minutes during which the water fountain rose to about 40 Meters. It seemed so precise that I couldn’t help wondering whether it was all a scam – perhaps they pay someone to turn the pressure valve? Although Old Faithful Geyser is the most visited, the honour of being the tallest active geyser in the world goes to Steamboat Geyser. Steamboat can erupt to more than 90m, but this doesn’t happen very often. Too unreliable to be a great tourist attraction!

For me, the most fascination feature of Yellowstone was actually situated outside the caldera ring close to the Northern end of the Park. The Mammoth Hot Springs area is connected to the main volcanic basin but its features are quite different from thermal areas elsewhere in the Park.

Mammoth Hot Springs

Bizarrely shaped, colourful terraces grow rapidly around these hot springs, covering large areas. This is due to the chemical processes involved: underground water combines with hot gases from the volcanic chamber. The resulting acidic mixture dissolves surrounding limestone before coming to the surface. On contact with air, the process is reversed: gas escapes and solid chalky mineral deposits form. The colour of the deposits is due to various heat tolerant bacteria and can range from yellow, red and brown to deep turquoise. The rate of growth of these calcite terraces is much higher than that of cave stalagmites and stalactites. So much so that boardwalks, constructed for safe viewing of the Mammoth Hot Springs area, have been known to become overgrown by the rapidly shifting calcite deposits! However, in the afternoon light of our visit there, all seemed serene and extraordinarily beautiful.

Wildlife Viewing

Yellowstone National Park is also a pristine mountain wilderness and an open refuge for wildlife, including grizzly bear, black bear, elk, bighorn sheep, American bison, moose, wolf, and even a small family of mountain lions. Wild animals seem to love resting on the ground heated by volcanic activity – we saw many deer sitting in the tall grass near hot springs. For most of the time, visitors and wildlife peacefully co-exist. Problems arise when drivers don’t adhere to speed limits – 100 and more wild animals are killed by cars every year – and when people chase after that special photo opportunity and forget to keep a safe distance from wildlife.

There are approximately 3,500 bison (or buffalo) in Yellowstone National Park. An adult bull bison can be up to six feet tall at the shoulder and weigh 2,000 pounds. Although they may appear tame, buffalo are unpredictable and have been known to gore people. Despite their bulk they can sprint at 50 km per hour!

Walking & Hiking

We visited the area as part of a two-week, 3,500-mile driving holiday across the U.S. This might explain why we didn’t get to do any serious walking in Yellowstone National Park - apart from trundling along boardwalks - although there is ample opportunity for hiking. In fact, the Park has 1,529 km of backcountry trails and 287

campsites for which hikers need a backcountry overnight permit. The trailheads provide car parking, information leaflets and sometimes even restrooms. Park rangers are generally friendly and very helpful; the visitor centres provide maps, weather information as well as tips on where best to view wildlife.

Barbara Sudrow

