

HIKE PROGRAMME

November 2006

MEET: Burgh Quay

DEPART: Sundays 10.00 am

COST: Private bus. €12

Following the feedback received in the recent members' survey and the vote taken at the AGM on 19th October, the bus fare has been raised to € 12.00. Hike Leaders would be grateful if members could have exact change ready on the Sunday bus. Thank you very much!

12 November

Leader: Philip Roche

Route: Fern Hill Tunnel * Three Rock * Fairy Castle * Tibbradden * Cruagh * Glendoo * Knocknagun * Prince William's Seat * Raven's Rock * Pet Cemetery.

Distance: 18km **Ascent:** 650m

19 November

Leader: Pearse Foley

Route: Cloghleagh Bridge * Church and River Liffey * Seefin * Seefingan * Corrig * Seahan * Ballymorefinn * Slievenabawnoge * Stone Cross.

Distance: 17km **Ascent:** 750m

26 November

Leader: Tom Kenny

Route: Car Park (GR 148 088) * Carrigvore * Gravale * Duff * Mullaghcleevaun East Top * Mullaghcleevaun * Black Hill * Ballynultagh Gap.

Distance: 17km **Ascent:** 720m

3 December

Leader: Joe Gilvarry

Route: Little and Large Sugar Loaf * Carrigoona * Crow Lane.

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

10 December: HOLLY HIKE

Leader: Don Reilly

Route: Drumreagh Forest Entrance (GR 937 032) * Drumreagh Forest Park * Church Mountain * Turf Cutters' Track * Hollywood Village.

Distance: 12km **Ascent:** 600m

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 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 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 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

OUT ON THE TRAILS: Stubai Alps, Austria

A PERFECT HORSE SHOE

The Stubaital is an alpine valley in the Austrian state of Tyrol. This 40-km long valley is enclosed by a mountain range with summits over 3000m and is accessible by public transport from Innsbruck. The main town is Neustift (1000m) with outlying villages spread out along the valley floor to Mutterbergalm (1721m) at the foot of the Stubai Glacier. Although most popular during the skiing season, the Stubaital offers splendid summer hiking at all levels, the highlight being the Stubai High Route, a classic hut-to-hut round trip of 7 to 8 stages.

Day 1: Flight to Munich, Train to Innsbruck

On 24th August, we flew from Dublin to Munich, from where we took a 2.5 hour train journey to Innsbruck. A 40-minute bus trip brought us to Neder on the outskirts of Neustift where we had pre-booked accommodation in the Klima Hotel. An early evening thunderstorm brought lots of rain which we hoped would be gone by morning.

Day 2: Neder to Innsbrucker Hütte

And so it was: the next morning was bright and sunny and the walk from our hotel along the Pinnistal was easy, gently rising 1400m over 10km to Innsbrucker Hütte. The scenery changed from broad forest tracks leading past alpine huts offering refreshments to a wilder landscape which opened up views of a steep and narrow track zigzagging up to the Pinnisjoch which seemed to move further away with every step. But what a reward! On gaining the pass, the view into the next valley and the mountains behind was absolutely breathtaking – and Innsbrucker Hütte (2369m) was only a few more steps to the right! A well-deserved shower, hearty food and drink in a convivial atmosphere brought the day to a close.

Day 3: Innsbrucker to Bremer Hütte

Some of the stages on the Stubai High Route are quite short, but stage 2 certainly wasn't one of them! Unlike other stages, this section crosses many ridge spurs and turns the day into a series of ups and downs, some quite steep with a certain amount of exposed sections that are secured with fixed ropes.

As the day wore on, it was at times difficult to see the route ahead. Many unexpected turns and winding paths later, we could actually see Bremer Hütte ahead of us in the distance (see cover photo), perched on top of big slabs of rock with no obvious way to get there. Getting closer, we realised that our track which had been pointing in the direction of the hut was now going to bring us away to the left and down to a river bed from where we would have to scramble over large boulders in order to finally gain the plateau on which the hut was situated. Feeling tired at the end of a long hike, the fixed ropes on some of the more arduous sections provided a certain amount of comfort. And yes, we eventually got there, and very much enjoyed the hospitality provided by Bremer Hütte (2413m).

Day 4: Bremer to Nürnberger Hütte

The next morning started wet, very wet. So instead of leaving the hut at 7.30am, we first waited for weather improvement before abandoning the idea and putting on our rain gear to tackle what was described in the guide book as “an unrelenting scramble up steepish crags safeguarded in places by fixed cable”. Not surprisingly, it took us a while to ascend the ridge (2764m) but just when we got there, the clouds dispersed for long enough to reveal spectacular views all around.

Unfortunately, this was not to last: we had rain and mist, on and off, for most of the day. A great pity, for when we could actually see further than a few metres, the landscape ranged from soft turf along meandering streams to glacial slabs and rocky cliffs. Again, quite a few sections across the rock slabs and along the cliff face were secured by fixed cables, which was very good given the wet conditions but made for very slow progress. Luckily, we met very few hikers along the route so there were no “traffic jams” on the roped sections.

After a slow descent into a river valley, crossing an interesting footbridge and further scrambling up the west flank of the valley, we finally reached Nürnberger Hütte (2297), our resting place for the evening.

Day 5: Change of direction

Next morning, the hut was enclosed by clouds of mist and rain. The weather forecast wasn't promising any changes soon; temperatures were to drop unseasonably low with an approaching cold front. The route ahead was ascending to a pass of 2627m; snow was a high probability. What to do?

There are many escape routes on the Stubai High Route. From most huts, there is a 3 to 4 hour descent into the valley, sometimes assisted by cable cars for some of the way. An easy way out can be very tempting if the weather turns bad – and so, after much deliberation, we decided to descend and discuss our options.

Because of its horse shoe shape and the availability of public transport, it is quite possible to skip stages and rejoin the Stubai High Route at a different point. We decided to go to our intended "finishing point" and walk the route in the opposite direction towards Dresdner Hütte. Once in the valley, we took the bus to Neustift from where a cable car brought us to a point below Starkenburger Hütte. A two-hour hike along a narrow scree ledge saw us reach the hut just before the rain turned really heavy. Two hikers who arrived shortly after us came in dripping wet!

Day 6: Snow in late August

During the night, a storm blew up outside the hut and by morning, everything above 2000m was white! At breakfast, the warden advised hikers to wait until 10am when the sun would have melted some of the snow, leaving the tracks less treacherous. Care would still be needed while crossing the pass ahead (2518m). With these uncertainties in mind, and the fact that moving forward would mean moving away from escape routes, dropping down to lower altitudes seemed to be the best option. And a day spent in Innsbruck suddenly seemed an attractive alternative... We will have to return to complete the Stubai High Route another year!

Barbara Sudrow

Further information:

Austrian Alpine Club www.alpenverein.at

Stubaital Tourism www.stubai.org

ART O'NEILL WALK 2007

The Art O'Neill Walk will take place at midnight on Friday, 5 January, 2007, outside Dublin Castle, beside City Hall. The year 2007 will mark (exactly) the four hundred and fifteenth anniversary of the escape of Red Hugh O'Donnell and Henry and Art O'Neill from that fortress. This walk, which usually happens in the first week of January each year, does not have an organiser as yet, but some individuals will be heading out at midnight from Dublin Castle to commemorate the event. This year the walk will be extended by 11k from the former finishing place at Baravore in

Glenmalure to Greenane, just below Ballinacor, where the Irish chieftain Fiach Mac Hugh O'Byrne, who provided refuge for Red Hugh, had his fortress.

Distance: 64k (note extended distance)

Ascent: 1200m.

If you're a mature, prepared and fit walker you'd be welcome to join us.

Contact: Tom Milligan, email: tomilligan@eircom.net

HISTORY OF AN ÓIGE

A book has just been published on the history of An Óige. It gives an account of all hostels in Ireland, past and present and is lavishly illustrated.

It can be purchased from An Óige HQ, price €20 + €5 P+P. A review will appear in the next edition of "The Hillwalker".

CLUB MEMBERSHIP

Club Membership 2006-2007

Our membership year runs from **October 1st 2006** to **September 30th 2007**. The membership fee includes MCI insurance (further details below), subscription to the quarterly Mountain Log magazine and receipt of ten editions of THE HILLWALKER newsletter (by post, email or both). Currently, 44 members have renewed. Please note, the December/January edition of "The Hillwalker" will be the last newsletter sent to members who haven't renewed for 2006/2007.

Mountaineering Council of Ireland Insurance Cover

On becoming a member of An Óige Hillwalkers Club you are insured by MCI Insurance policy. The Mountaineering Council of Ireland provides mainly Civil Liability insurance - this protects you in the event that a third party makes a claim against you for negligence. Personal Accident cover is also included.

- Civil Liability cover up to £5 million sterling for any one incident.
- Personal Accident cover of £50,000 sterling for permanent disability.

Civil Liability explained

Basically, liability insurance covers you for claims made against you for third party injury or damage caused. It protects you (and your assets) if somebody takes you to court – for example if you dislodge a rock causing injury to somebody else and that person sues you.

Personal Accident explained

Personal Accident cover provides you with a fixed benefit if you are unfortunate enough to suffer a permanent injury while engaged in one of the activities covered by our policy. The MCI Personal

Accident policy also covers injuries sustained while travelling to or from an insured activity in the UK or Ireland.

The benefit for permanent disability or total loss of limbs, eyes, speech or hearing is £50,000. The Personal Accident policy also includes £500 dental benefit for dental expenses if you damage your teeth. There is no death benefit under the MCI's PA policy and no cover for recoverable injuries such as broken limbs.

What activities are covered?

Hillwalking, rockclimbing, rambling (including road walking), backpacking, bouldering, fellrunning, scrambling, Alpinism and all other recognised aspects of mountaineering. Additionally, activities such as downhill skiing, ski mountaineering, mountain biking, canyoning and caving are covered, provided the activities are non-competitive and not the main activities of the club.

This cover is on a worldwide basis, but it should be pointed out that your MCI insurance is not travel insurance – it doesn't cover you for baggage loss, medical expenses, cancellation etc.

For further details on the insurance policy, on reporting an incident, FAQs, etc. please select item 4 ("insurance info") from the menu on the MCI website <http://www.mountaineering.ie>

REPORT ON THE CLUB AGM 2006

The AGM of An Óige Hillwalkers Club was held in the Westmoreland Hotel on 19 October, 2006. There were 20 in attendance and as usual, it proved to be a lively forum for debate. The main areas of concern continue to be the declining membership and numbers attending the Sunday walks. The weekends and social events however still continue to attract good support and the Club finances remain healthy.

A number of suggestions were made on how to improve attendance and these will be examined by the incoming Committee. Eoin Moroney presented the findings of the survey of members conducted in September 2006 and this is covered in detail elsewhere in this edition of "The Hillwalker".

A number of changes were made to the membership of the Committee: Anne Russell (Membership Secretary) and Jimmy McCullagh (Training Officer) have both resigned, though Jimmy will continue to assist in the Map and Compass Course. Garry Byrne will coordinate all Sunday hikes, while Mark Campion will act as Weekend Coordinator. Eoin Moroney is now an 'officer at large' and we welcome Donal Finn who will deal with membership.

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	Eoin Moroney

Special thanks to:

Webmaster

Matt Geraghty

Distribution

Pearse Foley & Cyril McFeeney

CLUB NEWS

Members Survey 2006:

Firstly, I would like to thank all members who participated in the survey which was conducted through September 2006. The response to the survey was really good with approximately fifty questionnaires returned.

So what do our members think and what did we learn? Well, respondents are generally happy with the club, and happy with the variety and length of walks (83% of respondents rated the length of walks "just right"). There is also good participation in the club with most respondents walking fairly frequently (i.e. 2-3 times monthly). Members really like the availability of the bus, and there is an acceptance of a price increase of 2-4€ for bus. On the negative side, respondents had no single strong concern about the club. A cause for concern is our high age profile, and the fact that most respondents are members of long-standing. Some statistics:

When did you join An Óige? This year (11%); 2 years ago (5%); 3-5 years ago (39%); More than 5 years ago (45%)

How often do you hike with An Óige?

Every Sunday (0%); Once a month (22%);

2-3 times a month (50%); 7-10 times a year (9%); 2-5 times a year (17%)

Why did you join An Óige? 1. The bus;

2. Link with An Óige; 3. Choice of walks

What do you like about the club?

1. The bus; 2. The friendliness of the club;

3. The choice of walks

How would you rate the hikes? Too long (5%); Just right (83%); Too short (9%);

Too fast (3%)

Would you come if no bus were provided? Yes (25%); No (43%); Depends on the route/leader (32%)

What price would you pay? 12€ (38%);

13€ (28%); 14€ (2%); 15€ (26%)

Participation in club weekends? Never (22%); Once a year (24%); Twice or more a year (53%)

Age profile? 19-29 (2%); 30-45 (43%);

46-65 (46%); 65+ (7%)

Where do we go from here? To increase club membership, I believe that we should build on what current members see as the club strengths. These are the availability of the bus, the club's link with An Óige, and the friendliness of the Club. So equipped with this information, we will continue to develop strategies to take us forward.

Eoin Moroney

Congratulations to Brian Flynn who won the €50 voucher for his participation in the survey! Many thanks!

SOCIAL CORNER

GOING TO THE DOGS – AGAIN!!!

This will be our third outing to Greyhound Racing. GOOD LUCK to everyone!!!

Date: 24th November 2006

Venue: Shelbourne Park (see map above)

Cost: € 10 (payable on the night)

Further information:

Steve Buckney

Other suggestions welcome!

Please contact our Social Organiser

Steve Buckney

BEHIND THE SCENES

Webmaster

Having never set foot on a hill or mountain before, I joined An Óige in April 1999 having been persuaded by my friend Warren Lawless that there were better things to be doing on a Sunday than having a lie-on, shopping, or going out to the pub. After a few walks with the Moderates I joined the Hillwalker's Club a few weeks later and found that I enjoyed the slightly more challenging walks that the group organised.

During the next few years I made numerous friends (including fellow County Louth-men Shane Branigan and Brian Murphy), went on several bank-holiday weekends away (including Kilkenny and the Burren), attended many house & Halloween parties, and of course I met Lillian who married me earlier this year. So overall I haven't done too badly!

In 2001 I suggested to the then Editor of The Hillwalker, Warren Lawless (yes, him again) that I could set up a website and put the magazine online. Since then I have continued to maintain the website and each month I upload the latest edition of the magazine. Although the content of the website doesn't differ much from the posted programme, it does allow photos to be viewed in all their glory, and allows users to read previous editions from the past 5 years. Updating the website each month takes about 2 hours to format the programme, update the various webpages and links, and add new photos.

I moved to Cork over 2 years ago so I don't get to walk with the club anymore. But I still enjoy having a connection with the club by working on the website each month, and reading about their latest activities. I hope that the club continues long into the future and offers many other people the opportunity to enjoy our wonderful scenery and to make new friends.

Matt Geraghty

Christmas Party 2006

ONLY A FEW PLACES LEFT

Cost: €65 (making your own way) or €75 (using private bus from Burgh Quay)

Saturday, 16 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)
- 6.45 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 Christmas Raffle
Music & Party till late

Sunday, 17 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)

Any changes to advertised leaders or times will be
announced on the day.

Weekend Leader: **FRANK ROONEY**

All queries and payments to An Óige Head Office (01-8304555)