

Sunday Hikes March 2004

<i>HIKE PROGRAMME</i>				
MEET: Burgh Quay		DEPART: Sundays 10.00 am	COST: Private bus. €10	
Date	Route Description	Distance.	Leader	
Mar 7th	<u>Introductory Hard Hike</u> Route: Lead Mines, Brockagh Mountain, Spot height 470, Wicklow Way, Paddock Hill, Scarr, Kanturk, Old Bridge.	17km/ 800m	Frank Rooney	
Mar 14th	Route: Ballinagee Bridge, Glenreemore Brook, Art's Cross, Three Lakes, Table Mountain, Round Hill, Kings River, Granabeg School House.	16m/ 600m	Gerry Walsh	
Mar 21st	Route: Sally Gap, - Carrigvole, - Gravale, Duff Hill, - Mullaghcleevaun East Top, - Mullaghcleevaun, - Black Hill, Ballynultagh Gap.	15km./ 700m	Brian Madigan	
Mar 28th	Route: Barravore. – Fraughan Glen, - Lugnaquilla, - Corrignasleegan, - Carraway Stick, - Drumgoff.	15km/ 900m	Philip Hayden	
Apr 4th	<u>Introductory Hard Hike</u> Route: Trooperstown Hill, - Clara Bridge, - Kirikee, - Shay Elliot Memorial, - Ragman's Path, - Laragh	18km/ 500m	Pearse Foley	

Additional Walk Easter Sunday? Are you due to be in Dublin on Easter Sunday? Are you willing to lead an additional local hike on Easter Sunday? If yes, please contact Philip Roche or Tom Kenny.

New Address of the MCI: Sport HQ, Joyce way, Parkwest Business Park, Dublin 12. Telephone 01-6251115, Fax 6251116

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.

SUNDAY HIKES Participants on Sunday Hikes must be a member of An Óige Hillwalkers Club. If you are not a member of the Club, but are considering joining, we invite you to participate on our monthly Introductory Hikes.

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 **on production of Hillwalkers' Membership Card.**

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 either:

Tom Kenny Mobile: 087-9705726, Email: tomk2003@yahoo.ie
Philip Roche Telephone: 01-6043203, Email: philip.roche@boimail.com

Moving On???? Changing Address? Please let our Registrar Barbara Sudrow know of any change of address

Andorra, Pyrenees – September 2003

Noel Kerley

I had a smashing holiday in Andorra (in the Pyrenees) in September 2003. Many of you have been there so you will probably know the areas involved.

I travelled overland all the way – I regard the journey there as part of the holiday (I like trains and buses). I left Dublin on Monday morning, 1st September, on the 06:50hrs Swift to Holyhead (my wife Ann kindly drove me to Ferryport at that ungodly hour), then Virgin Trains to London, Eurostar to Paris and, finally, an overnight train from Paris to L'Hospitalet, a small station in France very close to the Andorran border which acts as a railhead for Andorra. I had a couchette on the train, so slept pretty well through 900km of French countryside as the train thundered at speed through the night towards the distant Pyrenees.

On arrival at L'Hospitalet, precisely on time at 07:24 on Tuesday morning, my morale hit the ground with a thump as I surveyed the thick, impenetrable wall of wet mist which blotted out everything. The magnificent Pyrenees may have been towering up all around but I could see nowt, no further in fact than the connecting bus which would bring me through Andorra to Soldeu, and then to the nearby Vall d'Incles, where I planned to camp for a week. I got off the bus about 08:45 and spent at least one and a half hours standing in a bus shelter out of the rain, waiting for a "window of opportunity" to make a break for it, and wondering what the hell I was doing here. Eventually I got going, reached the campsite in half an hour, and got the tent up. The rest of that day was a write-off – I just did a bit of strolling about between showers.

After that somewhat dispiriting start, the gods above looked on me more kindly for I then had four days of "wall-to-wall" sunshine, real shorts and tee-shirt stuff, and four days of wonderful walking in a wonderful area, all day-walks using the campsite as a base. I covered several stretches of what is known as the GRP-1, an almost circular waymarked trekking route going round the perimeter of the country and covering some very steep and spectacular terrain.

At this point Plan A went out the window and Plan B came into effect. I planned my walking programme from maps and guides – a wonderful theoretical exercise to indulge yourself in when sitting in a comfortable armchair at home. On leaving the Vall d'Incles after a week, I had intended doing a long stretch of the GRP on a hut-to-hut basis, eventually ending up near Arinsal, in the Refugi de Coma Pedrosa, and then climbing the Pic de Coma Pedrosa (2942m), the highest mountain in Andorra, which was quite near the refuge. What I did not realise, while sitting in my armchair, is that the GRP is no Wicklow Way – there is absolutely no resemblance between the two. The W.W. is pretty horizontal, most of the time – the GRP is pretty vertical, most of the time, and hauling a 50-60lb backpack containing a tent and all the usual hardware along this route was just not on – I'm not a total masochist.

Sunday was another write-off – it was lunchtime before I could get out of the tent, so in bright sunshine on Monday I broke camp and got myself to Andorra La Vella, the Capital, and checked into a small hotel right in the centre of the town. I stashed all of my camping gear in a holdall and left it in the hotel, to which I was returning in a couple of days.

So to Plan B. On Tuesday morning, in very doubtful weather conditions, I got a bus as far as Sispony, a small village a couple of km north of the town, towards Arinsal, and commenced another section of the GRP, which would bring me directly to the Coma Pedrosa refuge for a two-night stay. Today's route was quite high-level stuff, above 2,000m most of the way. About half way along, I was absolutely battered by the weather – rain, sleet, freezing wind – have I left anything out? Ahead of me was very high ground with a good covering of snow. I foresaw difficulty with navigation as the waymarks would not be easy to spot, and getting lost in this wild and desolate terrain and in these weather conditions was NOT an option to be considered, so I decided to abandon, at the only point where I was quite close to a road. This road eventually brought me to a road junction called Erts, just south of Arinsal and on a bus route. As I was fairly whacked at this stage, I checked into the first hotel I came to and felt thankful to be still in one piece. There are times when discretion is the better part of valour, and this was one such. It did not stop raining, nor the wind stop blowing, for the rest of that day or evening. End of Plan B.

It seems to be a rule in Andorra that you do not get two bad days in a row – at least I didn't. It was back to bright warm sunshine the next day (and thereafter) so I did a walk up through Arinsal, through the tunnel and on up to the Coma Pedrosa refuge, a couple of hours of spectacular walking with a light pack – pure bliss. The scenery and terrain was quite incredible.

During the remainder of my time in Andorra, I did two long roadwalks, traversing quiet country roads that wound high up over the mountains from one valley and descended steeply into the next. A good bus service facilitates this kind of thing.

Eventually, "time" had to be called and the curtain came down. I left Andorra La Vella at 5:00pm on a bus for L'Hospitalet to catch the overnight train for Paris, then Eurostar to London and home via Holyhead, bringing with me a huge sackful of wonderful memories.

This was my first solo expedition to the great mainland of Europe and I am afraid that the rot has really set in – I'll be back.

Club News

Karl Schworer R.I.P.

It was with great sorrow that we learned of Karl's sudden death on Sunday, February 22nd. A walker and outdoor enthusiast for many years, Karl was a man who lived life to the full. He had celebrated his 70th birthday last September, but far from hanging up his boots, Karl was preparing for further adventures. He was planning to go to Oregon with An Óige later this year.

Karl shared his enthusiasm and love of the mountains with all with whom he came in contact through his walking and scouting activities.

He is mourned a brother in Australia, his cousin and fellow walker Alice Campbell and his many friends and acquaintances, including many An Óige members. Karl is buried in Rockbrook cemetery in the foothills of the Dublin mountains where he enjoyed many a day.

Congratulations Comhghairdeas Felicitations

We are delighted to congratulate club member Ita O'hlanon on her attainment of the award of European Mountain Leader. This is a rare achievement for someone based in Ireland, involving as it does, leading groups in winter alpine conditions. Well done Ita!

Weekends Away

Easter 2004-02-29	The Lake District	Leader: Jim Barry
June Bank Hol. Weekend	Cashel Hostel	Leader: Jimmy McCullagh
August Bank Hol. Weekend	Cong Hostel	Leader: Philip Hayden
October Bank Hol. Weekend	Derry/ Donegal	Leader: Frank Rooney

Booking for the Easter trip is already open.
For the remaining trips details will be announced in *The Hillwalker* before booking opens through An Óige Head Office.
Watch this space!

Míle Buíochas

Thanks to our busdriver, Jim Dowling, for his gift, included in the Spot Prizes at the Hillwalkers' Christmas Party.

Hike Leadership Seminar

A hike leadership seminar is being organised by the club, probably during May. Further details in due course.

Mountain Skills Self Assessment

The club continues to support members who wish to undertake the Mountain Skills Assessment. Further details from Jimmy McCullagh.

MCI Slide Show 10th March

Doug Scott, Canadian Mountaineer will present a slide show in UCD at 7.30p.m. on Wednesday March 10th. Check MCI website (www.mountaineering.ie for further details). Admission charge is discounted for MCI members on production of membership card.

Irish Guide Dogs Sponsored Walk in Connemara

The Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind are holding a three-day walk, The Percy French Trail Phase II in association with Clifden Station House Hotel and all funds raised go towards the training and upkeep of guide dogs.

The walk, which is in its second year and is a road walk, commences on April 29th from Clifden Walkers are expected to raise a total of €2,000 for Irish guide Dogs. Further information may be obtained from: darcymarketing@eircom.net

Wanted!!

Articles for The Hillwalker are most welcome. If possible articles should be in Word and sent by disc or email. However legible handwritten scripts will not be refused. Articles may be sent to mcmahond@eircom.net or by snailmail to Deirdre McMahon, 11 Aspen Rd., Kinsealy Court, Swords, Co. Dublin.

Articles for Sale/ Wanted

It has been suggested that The Hillwalker publish small adverts. on behalf of members who are selling or seeking mountaineering related articles on loan or for purchase. We'll try to publish such requests but No, we won't help you offload your old TV. Nor do we envisage starting a "personals" Column!!

2004 Committee

Club President and Chairperson: Prionnsias MacAnBheatha
Secretary: Frank Rooney
Treasurer: Jim Barry
Sunday Hikes: Tom Kenny and Philip Roche
Membership Secretary: Barbara Sudrow
Training Officer: Jimmy McCullagh
Editor: Deirdre McMahon
Members-at-Large: Donal Finn, Joe Kellegher

In addition, four club members work behind the scenes as follows:

Distribution: Cyril McFeeney & Pearse Foley
Webmaster: Matt Geraghty
MCI Environmental Officer: Patricia Goodman

