
Sunday Hikes November/December 2003

MEET: Outside old Irish Press Offices, Burgh Quay, down from Spar shop.

DEPART Sundays 10.00 A.M. (or when the bus is full)

COST: Private bus. Cost **10.00 Euro**.

NOTE: The leader has the right to refuse anyone who is not adequately equipped (*i.e. without adequate rainwear, spare clothes, food, torch and hiking boots*). The leader has the right to extend, curtail or alter the route from that described in the program. The leader sets the pace of the hike and walkers are expected to obey his/her instructions at all times.

During winter months it is essential to bring a (head) torch on all Sunday hikes and weekends away. Don't forget to check your batteries and bulb.

Your club membership card **MUST** be carried and produced, if requested on all Sunday hikes. Numbered tickets will be given out on the quays by a committee member. People with a valid membership card and ticket will be given preference on the bus.

MOUNTAIN SAFETY NOTE

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. The Committee requests that anyone who is on medication or with a medical condition inform the leader before the start of the hike.

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 feet into the scruff where the ground is untrampled, walking parallel to but not on the track.

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

Jim has asked us to include his email for queries regarding the walking schedule including ***offers to lead*** and weekend away queries.

Hike co-ordinator email address: jamesab@gofree.indigo.ie

Date	Route Description	Distance/ Ascent	Leader
Nov 2	Route: Dwyer – McAllister Cottage Car Park (G.R.966 913) -Rostyduff – Keadeen Mtn – Ballinabarney – Ballinfoyle – Ballineddan Mtn – Slievemaan – Camara Hill - Banana Road – Fentons]	17km 900m	Brendan O’Toole
Nov 9	Introductory Hike: Ballynultagh Gap (G.R.045 108) – Black Hill – Cleevaun Lough – Mullaghcleevaun Mtn – Billy Byrne’s Gap – Cock Brook – Turf Cutter’s Track – Lackan Lodge – Lackan.	16km 600m	Brian Madigan
Nov 16	Route: Ballinagee Bridge (G.R.037 024) – St Kevin’s Way Track – Glenreemore Brook – Art’s Plaque – Art’s Cross – Three Lakes – Table Track – Table Mtn – Knocknadroose – St Kevin's Way Track – Ballinagee Bridge.	16km 650m	Ita O’Hanlon
Nov 23	Route: Wicklow Gap Road Carpark (G.R.099 982) – Brockagh Mtn – Brockagh East – Wicklow Way – Paddock Hill - Scarr – Kanturk – Glenmacnass Car Park.	17km 750m	Philip Roche
Nov 30	Route: Road Start(G.R.978 010) – Douglas River – Leagh Brook Track- Round Hill – Table Mtn – Table Track – Wexford Gap – Cavanagh’s Gap - Lobawn Ridge – Captain Bolton’s Yard – Donard.	18km 500m	Noel Kerley
Dec 6	Annual Christmas Party - Glendalough Hostel See separate itinerary	--	--
Dec 14	Introductory Hike: Athdown Wood (G.R.052 858) – Firebreak – Seefin Mtn – Seefingan Mtn – Kippure – Featherbed Track – Noel Lemass – Memorial – Glassamucky Mtn – Killakee Mtn – Cruagh Wood – Pine Forest Car Park.	16km 700m	Prionnsias Mac AnBheatha
Dec 21	Annual Christmas Hike Hollywood Village – Slievemorragh Mtn – Toor Turf Cutters Track – Church Mtn – Drumreagh Forest Track. Hollywood Village for ceol agus craic at 1600hrs. Bus returning to Dublin at 1830hrs.	12km 600m	Don Reilly
Jan 1	New Year’s Day on Lugnaquilla	18km	Jim Barry

Meet at Fenton's car park at 10.45am for 11.00am start.	500m	
Intending participants should arrange their own transport to starting point		

Club Travel

TOUR OF MONT BLANC

Patricia Goodman

The Tour of Mont Blanc (TMB) is a full circuit of the Mont Blanc massif; and is a journey of about 170km with an accumulated height gain and loss of around 10.000m. It takes the walker out of France into Italy, Switzerland, then back into France and takes about 11 days to complete. We followed the route anti-clockwise starting in the village of Les Houches 7km down valley from Chamonix. Well, how do I describe the adventures of 11 days in such a short space? Anyway, here goes.

We found the first few days of the walk very tough, but then we settled into a routine, the aches and pains worked there way out and things seemed to get easier. Every morning we rose at 6.30am had breakfast at 7am and were on the trail by 8am. Even when the walking day was short we kept to this routine, so on a few occasions we arrived at our destination in the early afternoon. This left plenty of time for essential chores such as washing clothes, relaxing in the sun, drinking cold beer and so on.

Our accommodation on the tour was a mixture of refuges (mountain huts) hostels and small hotels. All of these provided similar facilities that is, dinner (usually very good) bed in a dormitory or private room and a continental breakfast. Most places also did packed lunches.

Each day brought different terrain and views, all of them impressive in their own way. But the walk from Courmayeur to Rifugio Bonatti on day six, stands out as a highlight of the tour. From Courmayeur we climbed steeply through forest to Rifugio Giorgio Bartone (1970m) where we had a short rest, from here the climb continued to the grassy crest of Mont de la Saxe. From here, and all the way along the crest of the ridge there are fabulous views of the south side of Mont Blanc. We could see right back to Col de la Seigni which we had crossed on day three, and the Grand Col Ferret, yet to be crossed. We reached the high point of the walk at 2584m and enjoyed the view one more time before descending steeply to Col Sapin (2436m). It was a long day and we were glad to reach Rifugio Bonatti, a comfortable friendly place with more great views and even better food, probably the best we had on the TMB.



Tom Kenny with Mt Sato in the background

Another memorable day was day nine, when we crossed from Switzerland back into France over Col de Balme (2191m). Mont Blanc had been out of view since leaving Rifugio Bonatti on the morning of day five. But as we got close to the top of the Col the beautiful white dome of Mont Blanc began to peep up from behind. The view from Col de Balme was fantastic and we spent a long time enjoying it and taking photographs. Our route to Tré-le-Champ (our destination for the night) took us over the rocky ridge of Aiguillette des Posettes. All the way along we had views of Mont Blanc and the various glaciers sweeping down to the Chamonix valley, plus mountains stretching as far as the eye could see. This was the last of the really clear days. The next day, although still hot and sunny was hazy, and cloud had started to gather over the high peaks.

That night the weather broke with a thunderous bang and the following morning, (our last day) the weather didn't look very promising. About an hour into the walk it began to rain, then thunder and lightning started and the rain got heavier. We decided to descend to Chamonix shortly after reaching Plan Praz (2000m). The path down was through thick forest, not the place to be in lightning! Thankfully, we made it down in one piece. This was our first visit to the Alps and I hope there will be more in the future.

Guide Book: Cicerone – Tour of Mont Blanc.

Maps: 3530 ET Samoens. Haut-Giffre.

3531 ET St-Gervais-Les-Bains, Mont Blanc.

36630 OT Chamonix, Massif du Mont Blanc.

Annual Christmas Party



The Club is holding its annual Christmas Party on **Saturday December 6th** and as in previous years, we are staying in the Glendalough Hostel and eating at the Wicklow Heather. You know the drill: it's get there, walk, rest or drink and then eat and party. You can avail of bus transport (**€55** option) or make your own way down by car or St. Kevin's Bus (**€45** option).

Saturday December 6th 2003

- * Bus at Burgh Quay @ 9.30 am.
- * Arrive at hostel (c.10.30am).
- * Walk in Glendalough area
- * Soup in hostel after end of hike
- * Christmas dinner in the 'Wicklow Heather', Laragh.
- * Raffle and presentations.
- * P A R T Y !!!

Sunday December 7th 2003

- * Walk (or relax or suffer)
- * Bus home after walk.

Cost

€ 55, Bus, Hostel Overnight, & Party Dinner (Burgh Quay at 9.30am).
€ 45, Hostel Overnight & Party Dinner (make your own way).

Book via An Óige Head Office (ph 8304555). Don't forget your tinsel & tinnies!

An Óige Hillwalkers Club 2003 AGM

The Club held its annual AGM at the Arlington Hotel on Thursday, October 9th followed by a tenth anniversary party. The AGM had a good attendance with approximately 30 members. As usual, the club officers reported to the members followed by an interesting discussion session. This year sees relatively significant committee changes as Warren Lawless stands down as Editor and from the Committee, while Jim Barry and Prionnsias MacAnBheatha give up their former roles and take on new responsibilities. Donal Finn and Joe Kellegher both relinquish their former roles but stay on for one further year to help out in a general manner. The AGM thanked all the outgoing officers for their hard work and dedication over the years. Meanwhile, the club is delighted to welcome Philip Roche to the committee who will work alongside Tom Kenny in organising Sunday Hikes, whilst the membership wishes Prionnsias and Jim good luck in their new roles within the club.

The AGM adopted the following committee for 2004.

- 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

- Members-at-Large: Donal Finn, Joe Kellegher

- Editor: Vacant

In addition, three additional members work behind the scenes as follows:

- Distribution: *Cyril McFeeney & Pearse Foley*

- Webmaster: *Matt Geraghty*

Mountain Trivia Crossword Puzzle

Welcome to our first Mountain Trivia Crossword Puzzle! Some of the clues are really easy, others might need a bit more work to find out the answers - but hopefully, it will be an enjoyable way to pass an hour on these long cold nights!

Please let us know what you think of the inclusion of such trivia questions into future newsletters - who knows, we might even run this as a competition ... The solutions to this crossword puzzle will be published in the next newsletter - together with your comments, if any.

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Clues Down:

1. Which mountain peak can be leisurely reached by railway?
2. Colour of the mountain overlooking the Gap of Dunloe
5. Name of the so-called "Welsh Matterhorn"
6. This Greek mountain has a peak called "Throne of Zeus"
7. Highest mountain in Poland
9. Where in Scotland do you find the "Witch's Step"?
11. On which Swiss mountain was the first alpine hut established?
12. Whose party climbed the Matterhorn for the first time in 1865?
13. Name of one of the pair who successfully climbed Everest in 1953
15. This mountain is also known as Chomolungma and Sagarmatha
16. Name of first mountaineer to climb all 8000m peaks

Additional Brainteaser: The initials of the answers to clues 3, 6, 8, 9, 12 and 18 combine (not in that order) to spell the name of a Wicklow hill (at 636m definitely not the highest). © bcs 2003

MCI Membership Cards

The MCI will continue to print personalised MCI membership cards. The first batch of the 2004 MCI cards will be printed in December and sent out before Christmas. Two issues arise from this:

- We can only pass on details to the MCI of those members who have renewed their membership with the An Oige Hillwalkers Club for 2004 by 25th November - so perhaps this is another reason to renew your membership soon.
- The current MCI membership cards have 2003 on the front so members shouldn't have difficulty getting their MCI discount in the run-up to Christmas.

NB: The next newsletter will be published in January 2004 and will be sent to paid-up members only.

Co-Leadership Scheme

To address the perennial shortage of hike leaders the club has set up the Co-leadership scheme to encourage new volunteers to lead hikes. The scheme will consist of a contact list of experienced hikers (co-leaders), each willing to assist a new leader on a first led hike. The scheme is particularly intended for people with suitable navigation skills but limited experience or confidence. Ideally the co-leader would have a passive role on hikes allowing the new leader as much as possible to fulfil their own duties unassisted. However by having a co-leader on a hike a new leader would have the option of assistance should the need arise.

To avail of the scheme a prospective leader need only contact Jimmy McCullagh (contact details given elsewhere in Newsletter) for the names of willing co-leaders. The onus is then on the prospective leader to contact and organise a co-leader for their hike.

The scheme is intended as a natural means of encouraging and developing leadership skills in the club. Its aims are to encourage more people to lead hikes and also to share the wealth of experience within the club.

Jimmy McCullagh

Club Training Officer