

THE HILLWALKER ~ August 2022

<http://www.hillwalkersclub.com/>



The Bog of Allen club hike ~ Leader Michael Quinn ~ 20th August 2022

A gathering of Clan Hillwalker in the Scottish Highlands ~ May 2022



AGM 2022 ~ October 26th

Please note that the club's Annual General Meeting will be held on **Wednesday evening 26th October**. We will give notification in due course of whether it will be at a venue or a virtual event.

As ever we ask all members to support this important event and perhaps shower your hard-working committee with praise and booze...

Club Trip to Scotland ~ May 2022

The Club's second post-Lockdown Munro-bagging trip went off famously over the last weekend in May. This year we were based in Glencoe Youth Hostel and had a 16-seater coach courtesy of Shiel Busses at our disposal from and back to the Glasgow airport, and for the five days hiking.

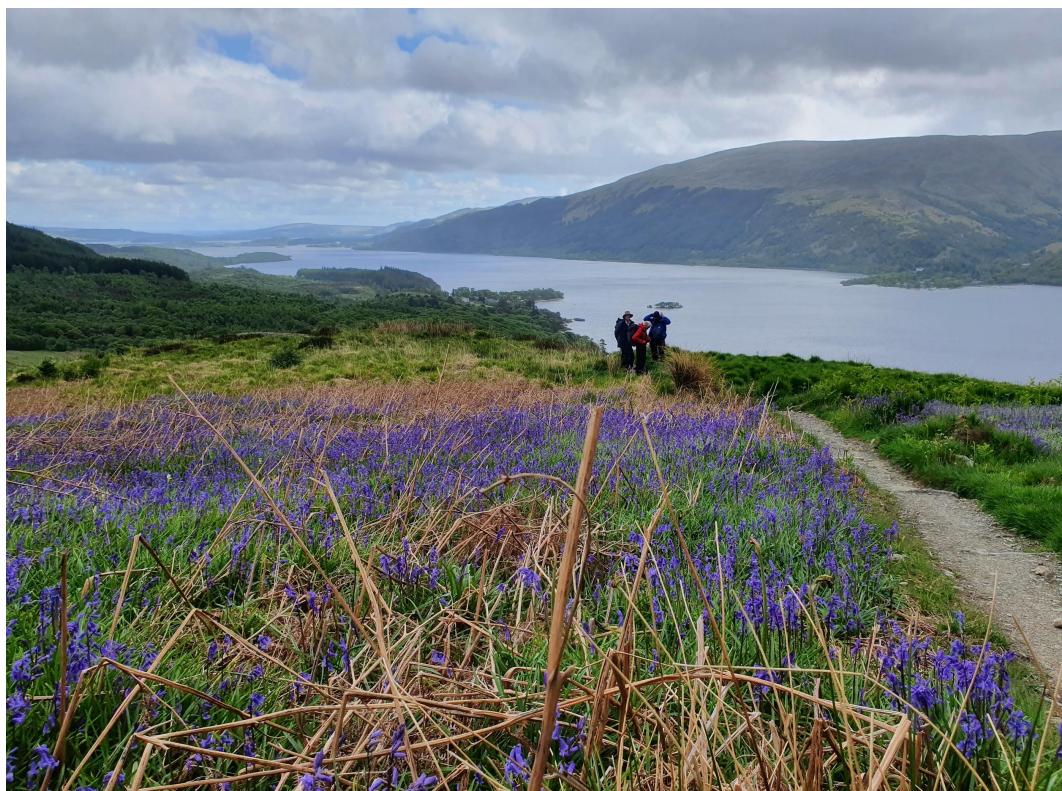
Shortly after touchdown we were hiking on Ben Lomond, the most southerly of the 282 Munros. We were gobsmacked by the views of Lough Lomond and the bounty of bluebells spread all over the lower slopes - like a giant merry skirt.

Over the next three days we were blessed with good weather and bagged Munros in mighty Glen Etive - not as many as we'd planned - but nevertheless we scrambled along stunning ridges and overcame challenging exposures. We wined and dined each night in the comfortable hostel or in the nearby Clachaigh Inn.

On the last day we drove to Cinnlochleven to walk along one of the most exciting sections of the West Highland Way, south to Kingshouse. We enjoyed a fine lunch in the recently expanded hotel by a wonderful big window and toasted a fond farewell to the Scottish Highlands.

It was agreed all round that having the bus was a great success. Shiel Busses have pencilled us in for a similar bus for the last week in May, 2023.

Hast ye back,
Soren and Michael



Paklenica National Park, Croatia

So many trips abroad by members this year (Wales, Greenland, Switzerland, France, Norway, etc)...and yet, so few written articles! Hence I have put pen to paper, to relate my own adventures on the sun-kissed coasts of Croatia.

I had work holidays that had to be used by the end of May and I recalled a trip that Steve Buckney had made years ago to a national park in Croatia. I got the name of the destination from him, Paklenica National Park, saw plenty of trails online and against all hopes threw together a last-minute getaway. The nearest airport was historic Zadar city, followed by a reasonably priced 40 minute private taxi journey.

I recalled looking at Steve's map of the area years ago and asking Steve what were these unfamiliar area-markings with black **xxxxx**'s on the map. Turns-out they were uncleared minefields from the Yugoslav Civil War in the 1990s. Gulp! The news from Ukraine of civilian injuries was a tragic reminder of the deadly threat posed by mines. I got an up to date map on my first day and the minefields are smaller but still present at the northern edge of the Park, with a warning to not stray off the paths (which have been cleared).

It turns out it wasn't mines I needed to worry about, but snakes! I ended up meeting 8 of them and while they are more inclined to flight than fight (and will flee when they sense the footstep vibrations of your approach), they will be defensive if suddenly disturbed ...and the *Poskok* horned-vipers bite is fatal. This and the heat induced a cautious pace and the testing any out of sight handhold with the walking poles before grabbing. This slower pace paid off as on the last day, as I came very close to a huge one as I was putting my recycling out in the bin (which was on a grassy margin). Thankfully it slithered away with a hiss into the undergrowth while my startled senses were still registering its presence.

Hike 1 was more a long recce, getting a 5-day pass for the National Park, buying a map, figuring out the hiking-route signage (turns out a lot signs relate to a famous 1980s German-TV 'Apache territory' western or else climbing, for which Paklenica is very popular). I explored the ground above on the eastern side of the main gorge and I had my first two snake encounters. The trails were good, and once you got out of the gorge, very quiet.

Hike 2 Starting at 7.30am to beat the heat, I had a glorious time hiking and scrambling through *Mala Paklenica*, the smaller, un-touristic gorge to the east. I was 3.5 hours without meeting anyone, until I emerged from the gorge and then followed trails that brought me back to the main gorge. I espied the impressive *Anica Kuk* peak and insanely tried to tag this on the end of my hike as a "dessert" but realised it was a serious undertaking that deserved to be done as a "main course". Oh and there were more snakes (plus some very cool bright green-with-blue lizards).

Hike 3 was an exploration of the ground to the west of the main gorge, bringing me into beautiful, Burrenesque limestone terrain, with stunning vista of mountains and the Adriatic Sea from *Zoljin kuk* (843m) ...a modest peak, but I started all my walks from 26m above sea level! Again, once I left the main trail, I met no one and had the mountains to myself ...not even a snake today!

Alas, on the descent back to the outskirts of Starigrad, my left knee suddenly started hurting sharply (possibly brought on by the steep ascents/descents/ from the gorge) and I had to cancel my plans to spend the next 2 days hiking in the interior via the *Planinarski dom u Velika Paklenica* mountain hut. A day-trip to Zadar city provided a bit of cultural and historical diversion and thankfully the rest did my knee good.

Hike 4 was a modest climb to two small nearby peaks, *Mali Vitrenik* and *Veliki Vitrenik*, to test the knee and was very satisfying. Its broken, scrubby, limestone terrain was empty of all bar one elderly goat-herder. There was a whopper of a snake met on a wide forest track at the end. As ever, they are keen to get away once they know (through foot/hiking-pole vibrations) that you are coming. The trick is not to tramp so fast and heedlessly that you suddenly startle one into feeling threatened.

I had discovered on my second hike that I had a wonderful country taverna, *Konoba Marasovic*, halfway between the national park entrance and my apartment. Being a firm believer in supporting local business, this

delightful taverna was impossible to pass without stopping for refreshment and every hike ended with my sitting outside under a cool shaded tree, drinking and dining (with a lovely attentive cat!).

My last hike was a return to *Anica Kuk*, which was very fitting as my apartment was named for this imposing peak. This time I was doing it early in the day, before the energy-sapping heat, and dumped my backpack at the stage where the trail turned into a very satisfying, prolonged scramble. I descended light-heartedly, retrieved my backpack and checked it for serpents [I've learned you never know what you will find in your backpack if you leave it unattended...] and took a quiet, scenic trail out of the park, enjoying a final beer at my taverna. All in all, a great spot ...but look out for snakes!

Warren Lawless

Change to 2022/2023 Membership Card

We have now added a Next of Kin entry on the forthcoming 2022/23 membership card. Please avail of this feature when renewing. Excited to find out what colour the card will be this year? Then renew now! Membership for 2022/2023 can now be accepted.

Your club membership provides you **Mountaineering Ireland insurance** cover and also partially subsidises **the club bus** and is essential for all new participants after 2 hikes.

See the club website for details: <http://hillwalkersclub.com/online-membership/>

Payment is made the same way as for club hikes. Please ensure you comment your membership payment (and any other payments) with your name and its purpose. The Membership Secretary will then be in contact with your Club & MI membership cards, when ready.

October Weekend Away

Please read all the information below .

*The Club is planning a Three Day hiking trip to Tipperary for the **October Bank Holiday Weekend**.*

*The bus would depart from Burgh Quay on **Saturday 29th October at 8.30** returning on Monday around by **21.00 approximately***



Organiser Frank Rooney

Hike Leaders To Be Confirmed

Three days of hiking are planned on Saturday, Sunday and Monday.

*Hiking in the local areas of the **Galties and Knockmealdown** (hikes to be finalised).*

Coach service from Dublin to Clonmel and return including transport to and from the hikes each day.

We are staying in the Talbot Hotel, Clonmel.

Two nights Bed and Breakfast plus two evening meals.

Leisure facilities include a 20m pool, sauna, steam room & jacuzzi & fully equipped gym.

*Coach departs Burgh Quay, Dublin at **8.30 on** Saturday 29th October and returns on Monday evening for **21.00 approximately***

Accommodation is based on two people sharing a room.

On booking please indicate who your agreed room mate is going to be.

Otherwise your room mate will be assigned on a same sex basis.

Cost of the trip is €260.00/€270.00 approximately.

This is non refundable unless a substitute participant is available.

20 (or more) participants would be required.

If you are interested in this hiking weekend please let the club know as soon as possible.

As it will be necessary to confirm the booking and pay a deposit very soon, it is important to email hikes@hillwalkersclub.com to say you are interested in the trip.

Please type

"October Galtees"

in the subject box of your email as bookings for Sunday Hikes are sent to the same email address hikes@hillwalkersclub.com

If there is sufficient interest we can arrange the booking of the hotel rooms etc.

A decision on whether the trip can take place will be made by 10th September as hotel booking and transport hire will need to be confirmed by the date

Triffids Under Our Feet

Who doesn't remember The Day of the Triffids? "Most of us!!!" you cry. Here Ruth reminds us of the perilous plants at our feet....

Did you know that there are carnivorous plants growing in bogs around Ireland and that we probably step on a few during the course of a hike? An article in "Irish Wildlife", the magazine of the Irish Wildlife Trust, explains that the evolution of carnivorous plants worldwide is a prime example of convergent evolution. "Convergent evolution occurs when unrelated species independently adapt to similar circumstances in the same manner". Habitats such as bogs are low in nutrients. These carnivorous plants have adapted methods of capturing and eating insects, arthropods and other invertebrates to obtain the nitrogen and phosphorus needed for survival.

The boggy nutrient poor landscape of Connemara, Co. Galway.



Ireland has 11 different species of carnivorous plants which belong to four distinct groups; sundews, butterworts, bladderworts and a non-native pitcher plant.

Sundews on Tievebaun, Co. Galway



The sundew, genus *Drosera* has adhesive covered tentacles on its leaves which enable it to capture prey. According to Darwin in his 1875 book *Insectivorous Plants*; "A plant of *Drosera*, with the edges of its leaves curled inwards, so as to form a temporary stomach, with the glands of the closely inflected tentacles pouring forth their acid secretion which dissolves animal matter, afterwards to be absorbed, may be said to feed like an animal".

The bladderwort, genus *Utricularia* is a plant that lives in water and uses underwater appendages, or bladders to capture and hold live insects similar to the action of a suction cup.



Butterwort, genus *Pinguicula*, has pedunculate glands on its leaves that secrete a greasy substance through holes or gaps in the leaf. This greasy substance acts as a glue trap with digestion carried out by a cache of enzymes. The leaves die back during winter while the plant is dormant.

**Butterwort on the lower slopes of Cruach Mhór,
Co. Kerry**

The pitcher plant, *Sarracenia purpurea*, is Irelands only non-native carnivorous species. It drowns insects in a reservoir of digestive juices at the base of the pitcher.

The Irish Wildlife article by Anne Sundermann goes on to explain that there is usually a cost to any evolutionary benefit. In the case of carnivorous plants it mainly comes in two forms;

- 1) Carnivorous plants are restricted to moist, nutrient poor sites that receive ample sunlight. Therefore most of Ireland's carnivorous plants are found in our bogs and wetlands.
- 2) Energy is required by the plant to trap and digest its prey. It has been discovered that the digestive metabolic pathways of these plants use up to one fifth of their respiration capacity.

We need to protect our bog habitats to support these carnivorous plants amongst the myriad of other species of flora and fauna such as sphagnum moss, heather, bog asphodel, bog cotton, frogs, lizards and dragonflies etc. that call our bogs their home. Hopefully we'll think of this when the affects of the fuel shortage become apparent in Winter.

Ruth Murphy

Club Competition

Name the wearer of the t-shirt below and win an exciting prize: a champagne and steak dinner with the Editor, to be paid for by the winner if I can't scrounge the funds out of our kind Treasurer! Did I seek prior approval for this and are there funds set aside for such frivolity? Of course not! Answers on a paper-aeroplane, to land on my desk on the 31st of September.



Navigation Workshop

Congratulations to the participants in the club's map, compass & leadership workshop held in Glendalough on August 27th/28th.

Jedi Masters *Frank Keoghan, Brian Flynn and Frank Rooney* were accompanied by their padawan students *Tara Russell, Brian Farrell & Lisette Heijnen*.

I was very curious to see the photo below of them all practising their foraging skills ... perhaps a "What To Do In Case of Emergency" lesson but hopefully not a reflection on the odds of them getting lost in the wild! :-) Well done all!



Congratulations also to Conor Gilvary who participated in the recent Mountaineering Ireland navigation workshop.