

THE HILLWALKER



Deirdre McMahon en route to Pico Ruivo, Madeira. Photo: John Pearson

**Happy
Easter**

*to all Hillwalkers
and Club Members!*

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HIKE PROGRAMME

April 2009

MEET: Burgh Quay

DEPART: Sundays at 10.00 am

TRANSPORT: Private Bus

COST: €12.00 (unless stated otherwise)

2nd pick-up point: *The bus picks up walkers who are already at the designated point. It won't be waiting and places cannot be guaranteed as the bus may be full at Burgh Quay.*

2nd drop-off point: *Where indicated in the programme below, the bus will drop off hikers at the 2nd pick-up point on the return journey, unless circumstances dictate otherwise. We regret that this is not possible on all routes.*

5 April 2009

---Classic Lugnaquilla

Leader: Ita O'Hanlon

2nd pick-up & return drop-off points: Pond at Sean Moore Park on Tallaght By-Pass.

Route: Stranahely Wood * Table Track * Camenablogue * Cannow Mtn. * Lugnaquilla * Camara Hill * Banana road * Fenton's Pub.

Distance: 18km **Ascent:** 900m

Map: OS 56

12 April 2009

---NO SUNDAY HIKE

**Easter Weekend Trip
to the Lake District**

19 April 2009

---Aughavannagh to Glenmalure

Leader: Eoin Moroney

2nd pick-up & return drop-off points: Bus stop before the roundabout at Loughlinstown.

Route: Aughavannagh Bridge * Ow Valley * South Prison * Lugnaquilla * Corrigasleggaun * Kellys Lough * Glenmalure.

Distance: 18km **Ascent:** 850m

Maps: OS 56, 62, Harvey

26 April 2009

---Mourne Mountains

Leader: Tom Kenny

Route: Trassey Track * Hare's Gap * Slievenaglogh * Slieve Corragh * Slieve Commedagh * Slieve Donard * Glen River.

Note: The bus will depart at the earlier time of **9.30 am** and the cost will be **€15**.

Map: OSNI Discoverer Sheet 29

3 May 2009

---May Bank Holiday Hike

**Local hike using
public transport**

Details of route / leader to be confirmed

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.

CO-ORDINATION If necessary, 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, hat, gloves, torch, spare batteries & bulb, 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.

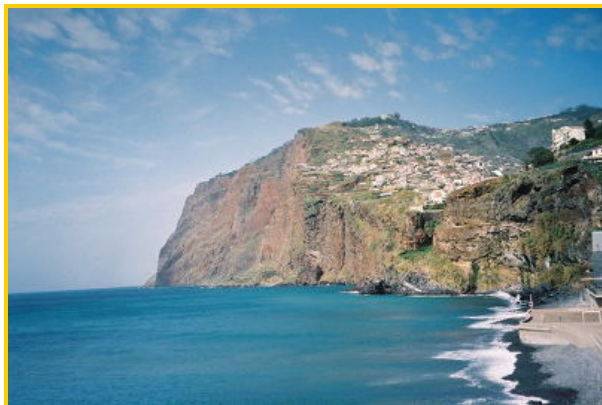
EQUIPMENT It is essential to bring good rain gear (both jacket and over trousers) and to leave cotton t-shirts and jeans at home! Boots must be sturdy with proper ankle support and a rigid non-slip sole such as Vibram.

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.

Any club member interested in leading a hike, please contact *Gerry Walsh*:
hillwalking@hotmail.com

FURTHER AFIELD

A Taste of Madeira



Sea cliffs at Cabo Girao, Madeira. Photo: John Pearson

After a seemingly endless grey snuffle-filled winter, the prospect of any escape from this begloomed and bewildered land seemed irresistible. A week in Madeira, booked last September shone through this foggy gloom like a beacon, ever brighter as it approached.

And so it proved to be! Leaving behind a snow-covered Birmingham airport, we descended from blue skies above Madeira to a wonderful, if scary, view of the new Funchal runway built on stilts out over the sea! Fleeces cast aside and sunglasses donned, we set off for our accommodation, just on the other side of the island's capital Funchal.

'Vertiginous' is the adjective that comes most to mind when trying to describe travel in Madeira. Rising steeply from the sea as a result of volcanic activity, the island combines very fertile soil with incredibly steep slopes and rocky outcrops. The Madeirans have combined ingenuity and engineering prowess to build the most incredible network of roads, bridges and tunnels to make transport around the island possible and convenient. This physical infrastructure has been supported by a network of local buses reaching to all parts of the island. While EU funding has certainly helped in upgrading the road network, the engineering tradition is a long one and has created the system of levadas, canals carrying water from the rain-rich north of the island to the dry south. This levada system is one of the main attractions drawing thousands of walkers to Madeira. Thousands of other ancient paths link valleys and villages supporting communication and trade before the advent of modern transport. It is estimated that on any day there are about

4000 walkers on the paths of Madeira. This is not to say that it feels crowded; you can walk for miles without encountering another soul.

We spent our first afternoon getting our bearings, picking up the comprehensive bus guide and time-table from the tourist office and locating the bus termini for our excursions. There are several bus companies and tickets are not interchangeable so tickets are best bought either on the bus or at the terminus office. Travel on local buses is incredibly cheap; our trip to the eastern extreme cost under €3 and the drivers we met were unfailingly helpful and courteous, reminding assorted foreign tourists of their requested stops.

Ponta de São Lourenço

Our first excursion was to Ponta de São Lourenço, described by Paddy Dillon as 'the shattered, battered eastern point of Madeira'. This area, now a natural park, is very different from the cultivated lush image of the island. Here the land is bare, gritty, with rock exposed revealing the most amazing geological formations. The nearest town, Caniçal, which until 1956, could only be reached by boat or foot, was once the centre of Madeira's whaling industry. It is now the island's container port and retains its fishing village. Many windmills use the plentiful wind to generate electricity for the island. Nowadays the road continues beyond the town to end at a car park at Baia d'Abra. From here we followed a path leading to the tip of the headland.



Headland at Ponta de São Lourenço.
Photo: Deirdre McMahon

The views were tremendous, the *Ilhas Desertas* rising from blue, white-tipped seas, rocky contorted outcrops and folded red and black rocks. While well surfaced with gravel the path is narrow and steep. Very exposed sections are protected by wire fencing. We gorged ourselves on the ever-changing vistas, having forgotten to pack a picnic, there

wasn't much else to gorge on! Metre for metre, this 8km walk delivers a huge variety of views and experiences.

Levada dos Tornos

The following day we introduced ourselves to levada walking with a 16km stretch of the Levada dos Tornos. Taking the bus from Funchal to Monte, where our walk began, we did the 600metres of climbing the easy way!! After exploring the pilgrimage church of Monte, we followed the signpost from the cobbled square reaching the path after about five minutes. Climbing uphill on a broad path, we passed through eucalyptus and pines, hitting the levada where it emerges from a tunnel. We followed it downstream from the tunnel mouth. Some unprotected exposed parts along a cliff face offered an occasional frisson of danger before we reached the tiny village at Curral (valley) dos Romeiros, where a house is built over the levada. Walking through the village, we rejoined the levada to continue our adventure. Views were tremendous and varying between the gaps in the trees, breathtaking down towards the harbour at Funchal or across the valley where the path seemed to cling on as a thread.



*Vertiginous glimpse along the Levada dos Tornos.
Photo: Deirdre McMahon*

The next valley treated us to laurel woods as well as eucalyptus. Having passed alongside an empty and sad looking complex of holiday homes, we passed by farms and were delighted to see signs for the Hortensia Tea Gardens just as hunger threatened to overcome us. Fortified by a sandwich with a view we were well prepared for the long, low and splashy tunnel awaiting us further on.

I can vouch for the lack of headroom and also its echoing qualities as I walloped my head off an outcrop towards the end of the tunnel. Collision and exclamation echoed beautifully off the walls!!! Reaching Camacha we located the bus stop and enjoyed another white knuckle ride down to Funchal.

Pico Ruivo

Madeira's highest peak Pico Ruivo rises 1862m. From Funchal it can be seen intermittently as it emerges from its cloudy shroud. Naturally its lure proved irresistible as we investigated the logistics of getting there. Pico do Areeiro, the second highest peak can be reached by road and while there are no buses to this point, taxis are possible. After investigation and cost analysis (!) we decided to join Madeira Explorers, who organise hikes to Pico Ruivo twice a week. At a cost of €36 per person for the day, it compared favourably with taxi fares to the start and organising a pick-up later in the day. Doing it this way also meant that we gleaned plenty of information on plants, history etc.

Leaving behind a sun-drenched Funchal, we emerged from the mini-bus to a temperature just above freezing and with considerable windchill factor. Our views too had vanished into grey mist! Fortunately the exposed paths, cliffs, caves, tunnels etc offered plenty of excitement. Glimpses of panoramic views in momentary breaks in the cloud cover kept us interested. These paths were built many hundred years ago for farmers bringing their crops from tiny northern farms to the markets at Funchal. For them this was often a two-day journey, travelling burdened with 20-40 kilos of produce on their backs and overnighting in one of the many caves en route. Reaching the mountain refuge just below Pico Ruivo, we decided to continue on to the top where a viewing platform and wooden steps protect the fragile environment. Remnants of snow lay in hollows just below the peak. We had our picnic lunch in the swirling mist enjoying every second-long glimpse of the scenery around us.

Funchal Carnival

Man does not live by hikes alone!! We were keen to absorb local colour, culture and cuisine. You don't get much more colour than at the Funchal Carnival, reputedly second only to that of Rio de Janeiro. The highlight of this festival is the Saturday before Ash Wednesday when the local population takes to the streets of Funchal for fireworks over the harbour followed by the carnival procession. Not over-taxed by our trip to Pico Ruivo, we joined the locals that evening to enjoy the

spectacle. Quite by chance we found ourselves in an ideal viewing position, surrounded by locals and visitors. The fireworks display was by far the most thrilling I have ever seen but was overshadowed entirely by the two-hour parade, which followed it. The carnival floats were amazing, each organised by a Carnival Club and accompanied by groups of dancers and musicians who performed at intervals all along the route. The whole event was inclusive of all ages. While the most spectacular dancers were young, their more mature sisters also had their part to play with equally colourful but more sedate costumes and dances. Children, many in costume played happily along the route and it was clearly fun for all the family.



*One of the spectacular carnival floats in Funchal.
Photo: Deirdre McMahon*

The children had had their special carnival day on the Friday, when every schoolchild and teacher in the area was dressed up and entire schools converged on central Funchal for their own celebrations. Costumes ranged from the commercial to the highly individual and spectacular. We had encountered this event quite by chance en route to our rest day excursion to Curral das Freiras (Nuns' Valley).

Curral das Freiras

Curral das Freiras is one of the most amazingly situated rural settlements on the island, situated almost in the centre and surrounded by a circle of mountains. This village takes its name from the nuns who founded it in 1566 after fleeing their Funchal convent after the town was raided by vicious French pirates. Until 1959 this village could only be reached by a mule track, which snaked its tortuous way up from Funchal, over the col at Eira do Serrada and thence descending to Curral das Freiras. The first road built suffered many landslides and has since been replaced by yet another of Madeira's engineering miracles. Again we took

the local bus and were treated to 75 minutes of amazing views and the whitest of white knuckles!! The nuns have deserted the village but it remains a pretty little place with a lovely square and church. In true tradition of our rest days, we decided we had to do a walk!! The obvious choice was the path leading back up to Eira do Serrada, some 450 metres above. From the village square this looked like a climb up a bare cliff wall. Once we got started though we discovered that it snaked and zigzagged its way up in a surprisingly gentle fashion. Emerging from the trees as we climbed we were treated to a succession of wonderful views of stepped terraces, houses clinging to the hillsides and, of course, Madeira's ubiquitous tunnels and road bridges. Arriving at the top we enjoyed a long beer and the best steak sandwich ever as well as a browse through the retail opportunities of the tourist shop. (Think Moll's Gap of Madeira!) A short walk after lunch brought us to the gravity-defying, vertigo-inducing viewpoint before heading for the bus stop for the trip back to town.

Our week in Madeira offered us a great introduction to the island but left us with an appetite for further explorations. We only scratched the surface of the hiking possibilities. A friendly and relaxed atmosphere, walking potential, wonderful gardens and its history make this a place to come back to.

Logistics

Unfortunately Madeira is no longer served by Aer Lingus flights from Dublin. We investigated booking flight and accommodation separately but eventually found a package offering us flight from Birmingham, airport transfers and B&B accommodation in a small, comfortable and quaint three star hotel for about £430. Hotel Vila Vicencia is situated in the tourist Lido area of Funchal about two km from the centre. It had a beautiful garden and an honesty bar (!) as well as being convenient to bus stops and restaurants.

Madeira Explorers offer a variety of guided walks: www.madeira-levada-walks.com

We used Paddy Dillon's Cicerone Guide Walking in Madeira as well as Rough Guide DIRECTIONS Madeira and Porto Santo. We used Madeira Bus and Touring Map and Walking Madeira Map, both from Discovery Maps.

Deirdre McMahon

More photos from Deirdre and John's trip on www.hillwalkersclub.com

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

In this edition, we bring you the first "letter to the editor" we have received for some time. Hopefully, this will not be the last contribution we receive; it is up to you, our readers, to ensure that this column will continue.



Dear Editor,

I wish to complain about the scandalous levels of smut and filth in the Newsletter. Where has it gone? I laboured long and hard in a by-gone era to lower the tone of this publication, to bring it into the same ranks as the tabloid gutter-press and to produce something that, as one member once put it, had the value and consistency of toilet paper (thanks Philip!). But it was a thing of beauty none the less. Yes, the club finances were somewhat depleted by the legal battles that flowed from my looseness with the truth and other people's good name, but was it not worth it? Now I find the newsletter full of truthful information and colour photos (Oh, what I could have done with colour photos!) and looking all very polished. A disgrace! I will endeavour to do what I can in the coming months to restore the tarnish to the varnish.

Yours deploringly,

Anonymous Ex-Editor

Editor's Response:

Dear Anonymous Ex-Editor,

Thank you for your detailed comments on the state of the newsletter. We do take the opinion of our readers very seriously and seek to address any complaints in a timely fashion, in order to find a satisfactory solution for all concerned.

For this reason, we are delighted you took immediate action and put pen to paper to improve the tone of this publication. Opus 1 and 2 of your acutely observed contributions are reproduced on page 7 of this edition.

Yours gratefully,

Barbara Sudrow
Newsletter Editor

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Easter Weekend 2009

9 – 13 April 2009

Ambleside Youth Hostel

Leader: Jim Barry

Please note new departure & return times!

Meet: Thursday, 9th April, **12:30hrs** at Departure Terminal, Dun Laoghaire, for **13:30hrs** sailing on **HSS Stena Line**.

Return: Monday, 13th April, from Holyhead on **13:50hrs** sailing to arrive back in Dublin Port at **17:00hrs** approx.



JUNE BANK HOLIDAY WEEKEND

29 May – 1 June 2009

ERRIGAL HOSTEL

See full details on page 13.



Pyrenean Haute Route

Early August 2009

Leader: Mark Campion

Hiking 6-8 hours per day for approx. 7 days; high level of fitness required; steep rocky sections and some exposure; overnights in mountain refuges.

Enquiries: campion@ireland.com

See separate flyer on page 12.



Carpathian Mountains in Romania

4th - 14th July 2009

Leader: Frank Rooney

Day hikes each day, approx. 6-8 hours hiking per day. A good level of fitness is required. Rest days available.

Locations: 1 day in Bucharest, 5 days in Sinaia and 4 days in Sibiu

Accommodation: Hotel accommodation in Bucharest and Sibiu; hostel accommodation in Sinaia.

Limited Places available.

Enquiries: rooneyf@eircom.ie

No More Madness!!!

The entertainment world was in shock today when it learned of the retirement of Vinnie Foley's belt.



Veteran attendees of our Hillwalker Christmas Party will be gutted by this news, and no doubt will reminisce with fondness on his contribution to parties past. Whenever the Madness song "Baggy Trousers" came on, it was the cue for Vinnie to do his party-piece, take off his belt and generally give the ground a good thrashing in time to the music. Those of us too young to have enjoyed the Madness-era could only look on in wonderment at this ritual celebration of Ska culture.

While the news may come as a relief to those philistine Hillwalkers who have endured near-misses and eye-injuries at past parties, the more cultured members of our club will feel the passing of this cultural gem. The Committee would not comment on whether the news would affect attendance at this year's party, though one member was heard to mutter "About bleedin' time he packed that in."

EXPOSED, the Hillwalker Club's dedicated entertainment-news team, were quickly on the scene to interview Vinnie:

EXPOSED: "So, Vincent, why, after all these years of outstanding performances, have you suddenly decided to chuck in the belt-act?"

Vinnie: "Well, I am a professional entertainer. In fact, I consider myself more of an artist, up there with other performance artists like Yves Klein or Hermann Nitsch. However, I felt my act was growing stale and I was being regarded as a one-trick pony. I have decided to put aside that which is holding back my artistic development. Besides, at the last party, some second-rate imitators were getting in on my act and lowering the art-form. I am going to explore new forms of expression, such as snake-charming, belly-dancing and mime."

EXPOSED: "And what of the belt, Vincent? Will it reside in the Hillwalker Museum or go for auction? Those old ladies from the Clonmel weekend would doubtless pay a fortune to own it!"

Vinnie: "The belt is currently holding up my trousers. In a way it is a metaphor for how the artist's dignity is upheld by his art. Therefore I cannot fully part from it, to be belt-less would be artless, adrift in a modern world buckling under..."

EXPOSED: "Ahem, thank you, Vincent."

And now over to Tom King for the latest fashion news...

The New Face of Lucozade

In a highly prized sponsorship deal, it was announced that Mark Campion will be the new face of Lucozade. The bidding for his endorsement was fierce, with Duracell seeking to replace their long-running bunny with this hyper-active machine. However, in the end Mark refused to wear the pink fluffy suit ("It was too sweaty when climbing the hills", reported Mark's agent). The value of putting a logo on someone who never slows down long enough to be seen has not yet occurred to the sponsors.

Several other club members are expected to cash in on this concept and no doubt we will all soon be sporting big commercial names on our bags and fleeces. Dave McCann, needless to say is the focus of frenzied attention by O2, Vodaphone and Meteor, Don Reilly has lined up a Hunky Dory deal, Jim Barry is to launch the latest Panasonic microphone range and Mick Heneghan is the new face of Jameson Whiskey. Less successfully, Don Gleeson was to showcase Garmin GPS products but got lost on the way to the promotion.



It is feared though that the influx of funds could lead to a two-tier walking club, where the people at the top will buy the best international boots and walking gear, creating a speed and style edge over the, em, "less-commercially viable" members of the club (Hi Philip!).

Plans are already being discussed at Committee level to deal with this by splitting the Hillwalkers into "Championship Walkers" and "Premiership Walkers", the latter for the top-flight walkers. Relegation will be based on coming in the bottom 3 in the year's walks. Of course, no one admits we keep tabs on this, but have you never noticed that little black notebook rear-leaders carry? Further relegation will see walkers drop to the Mods and Easy Walkers across the river (from whence many struggle to return to top-form). As yet there have being no approaches from SKY to televise the walks but the day cannot be far off now.



Jim Dowling has indicated that he is willing to repaint his bus to tie-in with any lucrative sponsorship deals, "provided they don't pimp my bus", he added. He has already revealed an agreement to have an all-over bus ad for the Blackrock Knee & Hip Specialists. He was adamant that this was no reflection on his Hillwalker passengers, past or present: "Well, it was either them or Wonderbra and I didn't want Brendan Dempsey running after my bus".

[Additional mis-reporting by Warren Lawless]

CHALLENGE WALKS

The new season is about to start! Below is an overview of forthcoming long distance walks and walking festivals organised by various clubs around the country. Follow the links for further details and updates.

11 April 2009 The Maumturks Challenge 2009

Distance: 24 km **Total Ascent:** 2,336m

The Maumturks Challenge Walk is one the strongest tests of endurance in the year's calendar. As it occurs early in the season chances are the weather will be inclement to say the least with demanding navigation through thick mist a very real possibility. This is an unsupported walk so everything you require for a long day including food and water you must carry yourself.

Full and up to date information and registration form with a list of accommodation within close proximity of the starting point is available from the organisers at www.maamturkswalk.com.

<http://www.walkersassociation.ie/node/41>

25 April 2009 Knockmealdown Crossing

This event is being run instead of "The Bogtrot" and there will be three Walks, A, B and C. The **A walk** will be self-navigating requiring a high level of fitness (26km). The **B walk** will be led, requiring a good level of fitness (16km). The **C walk** will be led, requiring a good level of fitness (13.5km). Bus transport will be provided to the start of each walk from Newcastle Village where registration will take place in The Community Hall.

Information: Martha Beardmore,
Secretary Peaks MC, mobile: 087-9107201;
web: www.peaksmcclonmel.ie.

<http://www.walkersassociation.ie/node/152>

1-4 May 2009 Achill Walks Festival

Distances up to 10km and 4 hrs duration; full information will be available in the near future from:

<http://www.achilltourism.com/walksfest.html>

2-4 May 2009 Ballyhoura Marathon Challenge

Distance: 42 km

This walk is organised as part of the annual walking festival. 'A' Walk: A challenging well marked circuit including steep short climbs, forest trails, farmland and magnificent views.

<http://www.walkersassociation.ie/node/122>

11 May 2009 Moyle Challenge Walk

Organised by the Northern Walking Partnership this 12-mile walk takes in forest and road and pretty summits including Slievenanorra with wonderful views of the Antrim coast.

<http://www.walkersassociation.ie/node/201>

23 May 2009 Blackstairs Walk

Distance: 26 km **Total Ascent:** 1,525m

The Blackstairs Walk is organised by the Wayfarers Association. It is a mountain walk along the Carlow Wexford Border following the Blackstairs ridge. The walk begins at Killanure and ends at Byrne's Pub in Glynn. A certificate is awarded to all who participate in and/or complete the walk.

<http://www.walkersassociation.ie/node/40>

23 May 2009 Clare Burren Marathon Challenge

Distances: 6, 13.2 & 26.2miles

Organised by the Ballyvaughan Fanore Walking Club, this challenge has three variations of walk covering road, off-road and the lovely Burren in full bloom.

<http://www.clareburrenmarathonchallenge.com>

13 June 2009 Mourne Way Marathon

Marathon Run and Challenge Walk, both 26 miles, incorporating a half-marathon run and a 10k run/walk; route fully waymarked.

<http://www.mournewaymarathon.com>

More challenge walks in the next newsletter or check out www.walkersassociation.ie

5 HEAD FOR SCOTLAND!



Taking a well-deserved break. Photo: Don Reilly

The trip was a big success in that we managed to avoid Warren hearing about it! It wasn't until we were safely ensconced in Cairngorm snow that we texted him and then only to tease him about the local fauna he was missing out on!

It sounds like some other club members could learn lessons from this...not only did he get to know about the Lake District trip but someone even let it slip about a cancellation that got him off the waiting list! Grr! ;-)

Five of us from the club (Philip Roche, Donal Finn, Paul Miney, myself and some hanger-on by the name of Don Reilly) headed over just before St. Patrick's Day. After last summer's shenanigans each of us packed extra cameras, whistles, flares, bothy bags and satellite phones. We even brought maps with us! We spent the first night in Stirling (too late for a pint having got lost en route - I had forgotten my glasses and was depending on Reilly for sign-reading but he was busy sifting through my CDs in the hope of finding something bearable as the 'Stirling next left' sign whizzed by unheeded!) and on the Saturday morning we headed up to attempt the Ptarmigan Ridge near Lough Tay.

However, we had to abandon proceedings at an early stage as, even at 600 metres above sea level, the winds were way too strong. We were missing the ballast of a few beers and curried chips from the night before. To make up for the disappointment we had a bit of fun in the snow which involved slides, ice-axe arrest, snowball fights and yours truly picking up a cut under the eye from holding the ice-axe the wrong way...not upside down I assure you,

but back to front!...all this after me demonstrating the 'correct' techniques involved to Paul and Don! Luckily, Philip was able to put us right on how 'twere meant to be done.

Thereafter, we headed north to Aviemore and got there just in time to watch the Ireland v Scotland match. There was a good atmosphere in the pub but I could have done without Don cramping my style with the ladies...they might have been more in his age bracket but I had first choice surely as a committee member! We had a tasty curry and crawled off to bed in the local SYHA. Note that I deliberately didn't use the word 'sleep' but it was nice all the same not to have to pay in to hear some quality tuba playing!

The following day we packed our axes and crampons in the hope of finding a decent bit of snow in some of the outlying Cairngorms. High winds were forecast again so we had planned not to go too high. First we walked through the wonderful area of Rothiemurchus, resplendently decked out in huge native pines and dotted with pretty lakes. We then ascended by way of a fine, almost elusive gully packed with elegant Scots Pines and charming waterfalls. Not only did we not have any snow on the ridges but neither did the winds materialise. I fooled the lads into thinking they had done a Munro so they were happy as they slid down through the snow that lay in the valleys. (Sorry lads!) We were wrecked when we got back to the cars with 25 km under our belt.



*Hard work going up, but great fun coming down!
Photo: Don Reilly*

The following day we drove to Glenmore and went up onto the high Cairngorm plateau that culminates in Ben Macdui, the second highest mountain in Scotland - indeed up to the late 19th century it was thought of as the highest until a few coves

from Fort William came over in the middle of the night sometime in April 1896 and sawed off the top 10% so that now it's about 30m lower than Nevis.



*Philip Roche (honest!) on top of Ben Macdui (not Lug!).
Photo: Don Reilly*

There was a lot of snow on the plateau and the cloud was low so care had to be taken with navigation although there was no dangerous ground in the vicinity which eased the stress considerably. After a bit of head-scratching we finally located the summit, took a quick snap and buggered off as quick as we could with the weather due to close in. We split up into two parties - the elder statesmen retraced their steps while Paul and me took an adventurous route back which involved putting way too much trust in our axes! Say no more!

We drove to Fort William that night after stuffing ourselves at an all-you-can-eat Italian in Aviemore. It was their least profitable night since last 1983! The group split again on the final day, Reilly led the aforementioned elders in and out of the local shops, although the local papers reported that Donal and Philip rebelled soon enough and headed off for a scenic drive leaving Don to his hedonistic pursuits!



Paul Miney on Stob Ban. Photo: Mark Campion.

Paul and myself did an exhilarating circuit in the Mamores (an extensive chain of very shapely hills on the opposite side of Glen Nevis from the Ben). We took in Stob Ban and Mullach nan Caoireann at a very brisk pace on what was our one and only sunny day of the trip. We then met the lads in Fort William, stopped in the Drover's Inn for grub (Donal had haggis and remains in the full of his health!), got lost on the M8 and finally made it home just shy of midnight. I hope the rest of the lads enjoyed the few days as much as I - we didn't get much snow but at least we had each other! Thanks again, lads, for the buideal.

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 share your favourite hikes ...
- want to comment on any club matters ...

Why not get in touch? Write or email:



Barbara Sudrow,
24 Glenmalure Park,
S.C.R., Dublin 8,
barbarasudrow@eircom.net

Committee 2008-2009

Chairman
Secretary
Sunday Hikes
Treasurer
Membership/Training
Weekends/Training
Promotion
Newsletter

Frank Rooney
Betty Kehoe
Gerry Walsh
Jim Barry
Donal Finn
Mark Campion
Deirdre Muldowney
Barbara Sudrow



Special thanks to:

Webmaster
Distribution

Matt Geraghty
Pearse Foley & Cyril McFeeney

PYRENEES 2009



The Hillwalkers hut-to-hut trip to the Pyrenees takes place this August.

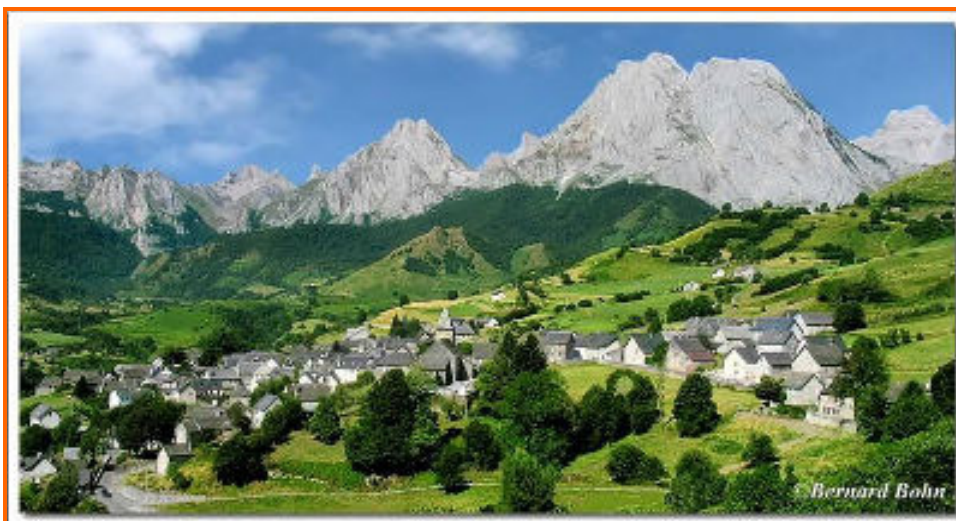
We are doing a section of the Pyrenean Haute Route between Lescun and Cauterets and will be staying in mountain refuges en route... 7-9 hrs hiking per day.

We leave Dublin on the afternoon of Friday July 31 and return the evening of Sunday Aug 9.

The cost is likely to be between €700 and €750.

Email Mark at campion@ireland.com if you have an interest... fit walkers only! At the moment the trip is full but there's only one on the waiting list.

Photos are of Pic Midi d'Oseau, Le Vignemale and the Lescun Valley.



An Óige Hillwalkers Club

June Weekend 2009

Friday 29th May - Monday 1st June 2009
Visit the Highlands of Donegal



Hike Leaders: Donal Finn, Jim Barry and Frank Rooney

Weekend Walking Itinerary to include:

- ◆ Errigal Mountain, Loch Alltáin, Aghla More, Aghla Beg
 - ◆ Slieve Snacht, Muckish Mountain, Dooish Mountain, Poison Glen
- Ordnance Survey Maps 1:50.000 Discovery Sheet Nos. 6, 1 and 2

Accommodation: Errigal Hostel is situated in a stunning corner of Ireland in County Donegal, at the foot of Donegal's highest mountain. The old hostel has been replaced with a new 60-bed, purpose-built, state-of-the-art hostel. Accommodation is in twin, 4-bedded and 6-bedded rooms; some mezzanine, some en-suite. Facilities include a large comfortable common room with plasma TV, a cosy room, internet access, self catering kitchen and more.

Cost: € 210 which includes:
◆ Three nights' accommodation and continental breakfast in Errigal Hostel
◆ Two evening meals in a local hotel (Saturday & Sunday)
◆ Bus transport from and to Dublin
◆ Sandwich provided each day (Sat, Sun, Mon)
It **does not** provide for evening meals on Friday and Monday

Booking: Full amount of € 210 due on booking. NON REFUNDABLE payment to An Óige Head Office, by credit card or cash (01-8304555). Booking opens on **Wed, 18th March 2009**.

Food: Bring enough food to top up the lunch sandwich provided and any addition to continental breakfast you require; local shop available.

Bring: Suitable Walking Boots/Rainwear/Change of Warm Clothing/Towels/Toilet Gear/Flask/Torch/First Aid Kit/Camera/Binoculars etc.

Meeting: Friday, 29th May at Georges Quay (beside Tara Street Dart Station) at 4 pm.

Come along and enjoy the weekend!