

An Óige Hillwalkers Club

March 2009

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

THE HILLWALKER



*Snowy Glendalough in early February. Photo: Jim Barry.
More photos from Brian Flynn's hike on 8 February
will be available from the club website.*

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HIKE PROGRAMME

March 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.*

8 March 2009

---West Wicklow

Leader: Gerry Walsh

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

Route: Drumreagh * Lobawn * Wexford and Kavanagh Gaps * Table Mountain * Art's Cross * Oakwood * Garryknock Bridge.

Distance: 19km **Ascent:** 750m

Maps: OS 56, Harvey.

15 March 2009

---Greenan to Stump of the Castle

Leader: David McCann

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

Route: Greenan * Strand Bridge * Kirikee * Ballydowling * Clara Vale Chapel of Ease * Avonmore River * Stump of the Castle.

Distance: 17km **Ascent:** 430m

Maps: OS 56, Harvey.

22 March 2009

---Trooperstown Hill to Laragh

Leader: Pearse Foley

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

Route: Trooperstown Hill * Clara Bridge * Kirikee * Shay Elliot Memorial * Ragman's Path * Laragh.

Distance: 18km **Ascent:** 500m

Maps: OS 56, Harvey.

29 March 2009

---Introductory Hillwalkers Hike

Leader: Paul Carroll

2nd pick-up point: Bus stop before the roundabout at Loughlinstown.

Route: Laragh * Brockagh * Tonelagee * Stony Top * Barnacullian * Gorrignagunneen * Ballinagee Bridge.

Distance: 15km **Ascent:** 640m

Maps: OS 56, Harvey.

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 * Camenabologue * Cannow Mtn. * Lugnaquilla * Camara Hill * Banana road * Fenton's Pub.

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

Map: OS 56.

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

NORWAY IN WINTER

**And now
for something
completely different...**



Digging a snow hole.

Norway ... what a spot in winter! Only if you like snow, that is! From the moment we apprehensively touched down to the tearful moment of departure we were besieged by millions of tonnes of snow - deep, soft and powdery. This latter condition kept the bruises at bay but meant we had a tough job both locating and digging out any of the group that strayed off line!

There were 17 of us in all which included 15 students. Of these 14 were from 5th year and one was a 2nd year girl ... bless her! We used a UK adventure company called Adventure 1 which is a very professional set-up run by an ex-army dude. All the guides were ex-army and the tuition was excellent although they weren't as able to empathise as well with teenagers as they were with adults.

On the first 2 days we learned the skills of cross-country skiing. These involved: (a) falling in the coolest way possible; (b) prodding the snow with a puzzled look as if to pass blame for falling onto an out of place crystal ... think batsman prodding a very flat crease after being bowled out by a child!; (c) removing snowfields from inside your boots, jacket and hood while simultaneously dodging a snowball or two from a passing brat! All in a day's work!

It took a while and lots of embarrassing topples to pick up the skills but by the second afternoon most of us were motoring.



Cross-country skiing.

In this form of the sport your heels are not attached to the skis, the skis themselves are skinnier than their alpine cousins with more of a curve at the front to cope with the deeper snow on offer. I had been apprehensive about how tough I thought the uphill element would be but it was quite easy really ... tiring but very satisfying. The skis have scales underneath to facilitate the uphill dynamics. The main problem was trying to maintain a dignified stance going downhill. There's less stability than with the wider Alpine skis but as there were regular fallers I didn't feel so bad.

Having mastered all the skills required we then went on a 2-day expedition into the hills. The conditions were amazing ... a low sun looked down benignly on rolling hills of brilliant white. Forget your shades in these conditions and you'll be off Gerry Walsh's and Marie McDonnell's lists for a long time to come! The going wasn't as tough as I had expected. Downhill was tricky as the temptation was to copy the boyos you'd seen on the telly the night before ... it's hard to do this when you have all the coordination of a drunk in a shopping trolley, though! The uphill sections were manageable when you got a rhythm going. We were supposed to dig and dwell in some snow holes on the first evening but, thankfully, it didn't work out. It was great fun excavating in teams but very slow going so we had to withdraw to a nearby hut as darkness settled. We were (nearly) all disappointed at first but once we got the fire going the spirits were much improved. Every freezing visit to the outdoor toilet confirmed that it was the correct decision to abandon the snow bivi.

A lot of the huts in Norway are run by the DNT which is equivalent to the CAF in France. There are a huge number of them

criss-crossing the countryside and by all accounts they are very popular among Norwegians who do a lot of long-distance treks in summer and winter.



Just try and stop those huskies...

A lot of the huts are unstaffed in winter and are run on a trust basis ... fools! The one we stayed in was very comfortable with a fire and stove as well as a room with spare food. Luckily, we were the only ones staying there as there were just 14 beds for 19 tired bodies. 5 of us were on mattresses on the floor consoling ourselves with thoughts of slumming it in a poorly constructed snow hole!

On day 5 we had an amazing day out with a bunch of Alaskan huskies. We sledged for 4 hours and had a nice meal in a tepee half way through our route. The dogs embarked upon a cacophonous frenzy when we arrived at the farm and we braced ourselves for an old-fashioned mauling but it transpired that they were merely clamouring for our affection! They were very friendly and behaved very well to us nervous strangers as we harnessed them to our sleds. They couldn't wait to get going and it was very tough on the body trying to slow them down ... think trying to slow Karl down as he gets his second wind going up Keadeen! We had a sled between 2 and took it in turns to drive. The route went through remote rolling hills in 2 feet of snow. Downhill was at an exhilarating pace, uphill was slow going and the driver

had to get off and run behind the sled for the steeper sections. The dog farmer had marked out a route at the start of the winter ... early December. The good snow conditions are guaranteed from then until mid-April and sometimes from early November to mid-May.

On the final day we went ice-climbing in Rjukan. This is one of the best ice-climbing spots in Europe and the location of the Heroes of Telemark's amazing feat in World War 2 where they skied cross-country for miles, negotiated the ice-cliffs and managed to blow up the nearby heavy-water plant which the Nazis had intended in using to make nuclear weapons: a pivotal moment and one which I'm sure any historian will tell you I have recounted erroneously! For more details see http://knowledgegerush.com/kr/encyclopedia/Operation_Gunnerside/.



Looks invigorating and extremely tough.

The ice-climbing was a great rush but very tough - especially on the forearms ... exhausted as they were from hauling the recumbent body off the snow for the first 4 days of the trip! Very different from rock-climbing ... brute force will benefit you as much as stylish technique. Me? I fell off after half an hour and twisted my ankle.

*Text & photos:
Mark Campion*

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Easter Weekend 2009

9 – 13 April 2009

Ambleside Youth Hostel

Leader: Jim Barry

THIS TRIP IS NOW FULLY BOOKED.

Reminder: Balance of **€180** is due to be paid to Head Office (01-8304555) before **Friday, 13th March.**

Meet: Thursday, 9th April, 10.15am at Stena Line Departure Terminal, Dun Laoghaire, for 11.00am sailing.



JUNE BANK HOLIDAY WEEKEND

29 May – 1 June 2009

ERRIGAL HOSTEL

See full details on page 8.



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

Elections to the Board of An Óige

Four nominations have been received to fill two vacancies on the Board of An Óige.

Elections will take place at the **AGM on Wednesday, 22 April 2009**, in the Dublin International Youth Hostel, 61 Mountjoy Street, Dublin 7 @ 20:00. Only life members and those who have paid their subscriptions for 2007, 2008 and 2009 are eligible to vote. Voting shall be personal and not by proxy.

Members who wish to **vote by post** should apply for a Ballot Paper to the Company Secretary, An Óige, 61 Mountjoy Street, Dublin 7, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope. Completed Ballot Papers must be returned not later than 14:00 on Wednesday, 15 April 2009.

FUNDRAISING EVENT

Sponsored Parachute Jump 4 April 2009

Omans in Flight: What a Way to Celebrate 90 Years on this Earth

Help Leo and his daughter Aisling celebrate their 60th and 30th birthdays. Our families and friends are sponsoring the cost of the jump. All other monies raised will go to the following registered charities:

- ◆ Cancer Clinical Research Trust
- ◆ Dyslexia Association of Ireland
- ◆ Multiple Sclerosis Society of Ireland



Leo says: *This seemed like a good idea two years ago; now I'm not so sure. I am about to jump out of a plane. I know we are in a recession but I hope I go down slower than the bank shares.*

This madness is to show how hillwalking affects a 60-year-old. Just think, my CV could read Born / Died 4th April.

We have selected these charities because friends and family have been affected in some way. Please give as generously as you can. Go raibh maith agat.

Contact: Leo Oman, 13 Páirc Bancroft, Tamhlacht, BAC 24, email: Leo@wfl.ie



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



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.

14-17 March 2009 St. Patrick's Day Hillwalking Festival

A four-day event featuring three guided walks - including the Achill Two Peaks Challenge - all free of charge.

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

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>

<http://www.walkersassociation.ie/node/195>

More challenge walks (June 09 onwards) in the next newsletter or check out www.walkersassociation.ie



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

8 March 2009

Dublin Mountains Partnership
---Tree Planting Ceremony

The DMP / Coillte hosts a tree planting ceremony of native trees around the car park area of Ticknock Forest Recreation Area.

Contact: DMP Recreation Manager, Karen Woods, info@dublinmountains.ie

Venue: Ticknock Car Park, 2 pm

11 March 2009

Full Moon Walks with Extreme Ireland

Extreme Ireland have developed a new and intriguing idea of organising "Full Moon Walks" in the Wicklow hills. These 3-4 hour guided walks visit some of the best view points in Wicklow and gain insight into what goes on with the local wildlife at night-time.

Contact: Keith at 086-407 6985 or visit www.extremeireland.ie

12 March 2009

Mountaineering Ireland
---Eastern Area Focus Group

The purpose of the focus groups is to allow an open dialogue between members and the MCI about current policies, initiatives and also proposals. It's also an opportunity for you to raise local issues be they related to training, access, conservation, events, insurance etc.

Venue: Sport HQ, Park West Business Park, Dublin 12. Call 01-625 1115 for details.

15 March 2009

Winter Mountaineering Training

This winter skills course will be based in the Cairngorms in Scotland and will run from the 15th to 20th March. The cost is £85 per person, which includes all accommodation, food, use of specialist equipment and in-course transport. Flights to and from Scotland not included.

Contact: Trevor Fisher, Tollymore Mountain Centre, email: Trevor.Fisher@tollymore.com, telephone: 028-372 2158.

MOUNTAIN MEITHEAL Cruagh Mountain Access

Mountain Meitheal, the volunteer trail conservation group, are working in conjunction with the Dublin Mountains Partnership on a new mountain access route to National Park land through Coillte's Cruagh Forest. The work involves the construction of over 400m of bog bridge across badly eroded and wet peat soils along a forest ride line.



Materials are supplied by the Dublin Mountains Partnership (www.dublinmountains.ie). The project is expected to be completed by late April.



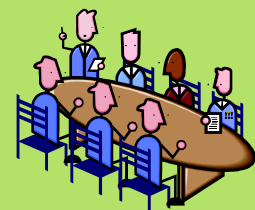
So far, 80 metres of bog have been laid by 15 volunteers who had to deal with very wet conditions underfoot and foggy, cold and snowy weather on Cruagh.

Volunteers are welcome to join the Mountain Meitheal workdays which are held every second weekend throughout the season (February to November). Workdays begin at 10.30am and alternate between Saturdays and Sundays. Check out details on www.pathsavers.org.

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

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:
◆ 3 nights' accommodation and continental breakfast in Errigal Hostel
◆ 2 evening meals in a local hotel (Saturday & Sunday)
◆ bus transport from and to Dublin
It **does not** provide for packed lunches and 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 for packed lunches and any addition to continental breakfast. 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!