



An Óige Hillwalkers Club

September 2011

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

THE HILLWALKER



*YMCA! Warren, Paul, Karl and Martin do their pre-hike warm up!
Photo: Brian Murphy*

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HIKE PROGRAMME

September 2011

MEET: Burgh Quay

DEPART: Sundays at 10.00 am

TRANSPORT: Private Bus (*unless stated otherwise*)

COST: €12.00 (*unless stated otherwise*)

2nd pick-up point: *On the outward journey, the bus will stop briefly to collect walkers at the pick-up point. Should the bus be full on departure from Burgh Quay, this facility cannot be offered.*

Return drop-off point: *On the return journey, where indicated, the bus will stop near the outward pick-up point to drop off any hikers. We regret this is not possible on all hikes.*

Sunday 11 September 2011

Leader: Kevin McGinley

2nd pick-up point & return drop-off point:

Beside the pond in Sean Walsh Park on the Tallaght By-pass.

Route: Lugnagun * Spot Hts 446 and 427 * Sorrell Hill * Car park * Black Hill * Moanbane (via Billy Byrne's Gap) * Silean * Ballyknockan

Distance: 16 km **Ascent:** 780 m

Maps: OS 56, Harvey, East and West Mapping

Sunday 18 September 2011

Leader: Mel O'Hara

2nd pick-up point & return drop-off point:

Beside the pond in Sean Walsh Park on the Tallaght By-pass.

Route: Aughavannagh Bridge T 056 861 * Forest Track, Doyle Street * Corrigasleggaun (Lough Mountain) * Lugnaquilla * Slievemaan * Ballincedan, Ballinfoyle Cross Roads S 986 903.

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

Maps: OS 56, Harvey, East and West Mapping

Sunday 25 September 2011

Leader: Warren Lawless

2nd pick-up point & return drop-off point:

Bus stop before the roundabout at Loughlinstown.

Route: Knockree * Glenree * Ballycrew * Stonecutt's Glen * Tonduffs * Glensoulan * War Hill * Djouce * Glasnamullen.

Distance: 15.5 km **Ascent:** 790 m

Maps: OS 56, Harvey, East and West Mapping

Sunday 02 October 2011

****Introductory hard hike****

Leader: Gerry Walsh

2nd pick-up point & return drop-off point:

Bus stop before the roundabout at Loughlinstown

Route: (Glendalough Circuit) Upper Lake Carpark, Glendalough * Spink * Lugduff * Spot Height 702m * Lough Firrib * Turlough Hill * Camaderry Mtn * Glendasan * Glendalough Visitors Carpark

Distance: 16.5km **Ascent:** 550m

Maps: OS 56, OS 62, Harvey, East and West Mapping

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, 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.

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.

★★ *Introductory hard hike* ★★

This hike is tailored for non-members who are considering joining the *An Óige Hillwalkers Club*. It offers the opportunity to sample a typical club hike, as well as meeting club members.

Interested individuals should equip themselves appropriately for a day in the hills: adequate hiking boots, waterproof coat and leggings, hat, gloves, lunch and hot / cold drinks. *In order to enjoy the hike, you need a good level of fitness.*

Membership forms will be available, should you wish to join the club on completion of the introductory hike. *Enquiries: 086-356 3843.*

Please be advised that you should not undertake any club hiking activities: (i) if you have any known medical ailment which may impair your ability to participate in club activities, or (ii) if you are taking any form of medication that will put your health or safety of others at risk. Should you be in any doubt on these matters, a doctor should be consulted prior to undertaking any club hiking activity.

Committee 2010/11

Chairman

Frank Rooney

Secretary/Project Support

Betty Kehoe

Treasurer

Jim Barry

Sunday Hikes Coordinator

Vacant

Weekend Coordinator

Vacant

Training Officer

Dónal Finn

Membership Secretary

Don Reilly

Club Promoter

Barbara Monahan

Newsletter Editor

Simon More

Special thanks to:

Webmaster

Matt Geraghty

Distribution

Pearse Foley & Cyril McFeeney

FUTURE TRIPS AWAY

October long weekend

****Bookings open on Tuesday 6 September 2011****

The club will be heading to Donegal for the long weekend in October (29-31 October 2011). We'll be staying at the Central Hotel in Donegal Town, with walks to be organised in the local area. *Further details on p18 in this Newsletter.*

AN ÓIGE HILLWALKERS AGM

Teacher's Club, Friday, 21 October 2011, 8pm

The Annual General Meeting of the An Óige Hillwalkers will be held at the Teacher's Club, 36 Parnell Square, D1 on Friday 21 October 2011, starting at 8pm.

A number of vacancies will arise on the committee for the 2011/12 season. We would invite anyone who is interested in serving on the committee to contact the current President, Frank Rooney, at 085 174 2119 for further information on what is involved in committee work.

Please note that nominations, using the format below, must be received at least 24 hours before the AGM.

Format for nominations:

I nominate [name] for the position of Committee Member of the An Óige Hillwalkes Club 2012

Signed.....Proposer

Signed.....Secunder

I accept the nomination.....Nominee

All of the above must be full members of the An Óige Hillwalkers Club.

Membership 2011/12

This is a gentle reminder that your membership fee for 2011/12 is now due. The membership fee includes: *Mountaineering Ireland membership • Mountaineering Ireland insurance cover • Subscription to Mountain Log magazine • Regular newsletters per year by email • Postage of magazine.* Please see p19 in this Newsletter.

PAST TRIPS AWAY

Gran Paradiso, Italian Alps (1-10 July 2011)

Not since Hannibal crossed the Alps has a more audacious expedition arrived in Italy. After months of physical preparation, mental anguish and panic buying, sixteen brave club members, led by Mark Campion, had come to savour the delights of Italy's Gran Paradiso National Park. Our first night was spent in the historic city of Milan and the good vibes were already flowing as we gathered in our hotel to toast our hopes for a great holiday.

Next day took us on a pre-booked bus to Aosta and then a local bus to up the mountain village of Cogne. We had a short rest, with some of us exploring openings in the area, and then set off on Alpine Way Route 2.



*Cogne ... starting off
Photo: Mel O'Hara*

Prior to departure, the working title of this article had been "They came, they saw, they suffered" and the first days trekking almost proved me right as I struggled under my bag's oppressive weight. I was rarely so happy as when I saw the Italian flag fluttering over *Rifugio Sella*. The post-hike beers and craic at Sella that evening were excellent, matched by a beautiful mountain setting. Several of the group volunteered to scientifically test the effects

of prosecco at high-altitude, while Karl and Paul ran a parallel experiment for beer. Later on, my bag and I were in the Circle of Judgement and subjected to the sniggering forgiving comments of wiser packers. In truth, I was still haunted by the experience of cold, wet Irish "Summer" days and packed too many excess layers. I then conducted a bloody purge to rival Stalin or Mao, throwing out food, sun cream, clothes, papers, anything that lightened the load. This paid off and next day's hike to *Col Lauson* was pure pleasure.



*Barbara & friend
Photo: Simon More*

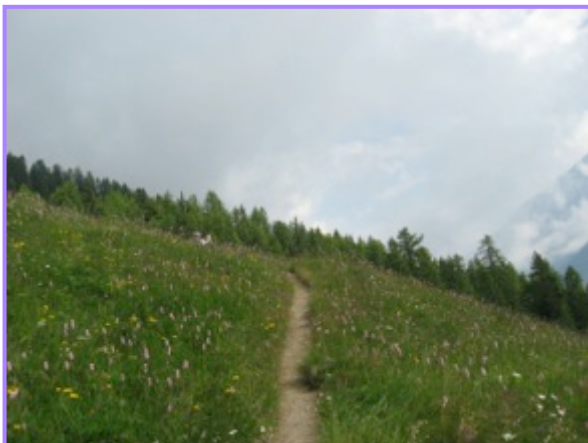


*Shepherd's hut
Photo: Brian Murphy*



*Leaving Rifugio Sella
Photos: Søren Stuhr Mandrup*

The 750m climb brought us to 3296m, the highest I had been before. Our decent included some fun, optional snow-sliding and a very lengthy siesta. Some of us had our snooze interrupted by an icy aerial projectile and I lay there a while theorising on its origins (snow-bearing Chough?) when I should have looked nearer to hand for the source (*snowballus flingus Philipus*). We eventually sauntered down to our hostelry Hostellerie du Paradis at *Eaux Rosses*.



Path through the alpine meadow

Photo: Brian Murphy

Day 3 of hiking was the beginning of our assault of *Gran Paradiso*, starting with a climb up from Pont 1960m to our rifugio Victori Emanuel II (2725m). This gentle stroll left us time to relax before the big one, though most of us chose to do a stroll up the valley to help acclimatise. lashings of food were also the order of the day and I had 2 pasta dishes and 3 deserts as part of my preparations.

There was a great buzz at the rifugio, with lots of experienced-looking mountaineers strutting about. We met our guides who instructed us in the use of harnesses and crampons. We are used to feeling on top of our game in the hard hike, but combined with the new equipment and unknown physical conditions ahead I felt a bit of a novice and initially was fumbling about with the gear. However, practice makes perfect and it was time well spent to be able to put on the gear smoothly and confidently once the time came.

There plenty of nerves and restless anticipation as we headed to our rooms/boxes and sleep came to few. Eventually 4am arrived and there was already plenty of movement in the hut. Time for a quick cup of chocolate and some bread and jam to keep me going. Weather conditions when we had reached the hut had turned grey and wet and did not bode well for our ascent, but happily we awoke to clear starry sky; it was a wonder to behold the sky as it changed from black to deep blue to early light, with Venus rising and then the mountain tops being touched by the first rays of Sun.

We started out at 5am at 2732m and over the distance of 3km were climbing to above 4050m. We were divided into three pre-assigned teams, led by our guides, consisting of:

- Team V for Victory (or Vertigo): Fiona, Barbara, Anna and Simon, guided by Giovanna;
- Team M&Ms: Mark, Mel, 'Mini' Paul and Karl, guided by Marko;
- Team Raven: Eithne, Sandra, James and Warren, guided by Eddy [cue sound of ladies swooning].

We roped up when we reached the snow field and put on our crampons. These were

surprisingly easy and natural to use and my sense of balance, grip and control were fine (except for when I forgot I still had them on at the end and tried to walk across rocks). Combined with walking-poles and it was no tougher than normal snow hiking, except for the added discipline of staying at rope's length from the people in front of you (and not repeatedly standing on the rope, oops). There were plenty of others on the trail and we could see some early risers well ahead by the light of their head-torches. Our guides moved us at a brisk pace, with only a few brief stops to drink, eat snacks and grab a precious photo. Our guide Eddy (stop swooning!!!) gave us instruction in the use of crampons on-the-go and also pointed out to us some of the other famous Alpine peaks coming into view.



Dawn on Gran Paradiso
Photo: Mel O'Hara

I found my energy draining away for the last 200m of the ascent, with not enough strength to dig in with either my walking poles or crampons, but somehow I made it up. It was a moment of pure elation when we reached the top and took in the stunning scenery, including Mont Blanc and the Matterhorn. Our three "chain-gangs"

arrived close together and it was handshakes, high-fives and happy-faced photos all round.

There was a congested queue of roped walkers trying to get the last few metres to the official high-point and our guides advised us against waiting to navigate the narrow ledge with so many milling about, and we concurred. The descent took us across a glacial field and this technically was the more dangerous part of the walk



Looking back
Photo: Simon More

due to crevices and rising day-time temperatures; hence the continued fast pace. However, we negotiated it without difficulty. Groups behind us may not have been so lucky, as they now had to negotiate the Campion Crevice (or "la Crevice Jaune"), a new natural feature that formed in our wake.



At the summit
Photo: Simon More



solitude that left me very elated (my fellow hikers told me they felt a great elation in my absence too, hmmm...). One of highlights of my trip was glancing back to see a Chamois silhouetted against the skyline on the ridge, while across from me lay the wide canvas of our last few days walking. Thankfully when I got back late that evening, my companions had saved me dinner which I tore into with relish while hearing and sharing tales of everyone's adventures that day.

*Pictured on the Summit of Gran Paradiso are from left to right: Mark Campion, Paul Miney, Mel O'Hara (directly behind Paul), Karl McGovern and Aosta Valley guide, Marco Camandona. Marco is also a renowned Himalayan mountaineer who as climbed 6 peaks over 8000 m including Everest (2010), K2, Cho Oyu, Shisha Pangma, Manaslu and Annapurna
Photo: Paul Miney*

Once off the ice, we removed our ropes, harnesses and crampons (and scampered behind rocks for relief!). It was then an easy stroll along standard stony trails to *Rifugio Chabod*. It was very strange to be reaching our end-point about mid-day, not long after most Sunday hikes would be just starting. Here we met the rest of our band, Brian, Philip, Soren and Martin, who had had a good walk around from Victorio Emanuel II. The day was young so we all scattered to read, wash, eat and siesta. Chabod was a lovely situated hut with good food and a very relaxing spot and we spent the rest of the day pleasantly.

The next day had everyone back up to strength thankfully and we descended back to *Vallone di Seiva*. Mel, Brian, Soren and Sandra did a walk around *Eaux Rosses* while I headed on a solo-trek in *Valle delle Meyes*. Most of the remainder joined Mark in thrilling "air-walking" in the gorge of the river *Savara*. From what I gathered, this involved zipping across wire-ropes, with much screaming, cajoling and laughter. My own walk took into an isolated, little valley with a beautiful stillness and sense of



*Gran Paradiso from Rifugio Chabod.
Photo: Søren Stuhr Mandrup*



*Ready for action
Photo: Simon More*

Days 6 and 7 took us roughly north-east from *Vallone di Selva* over *Col de l'Entrelor* (3007m), down to *Val di Rhemes*; then up to *Col le Fenetra* ("only" 2840m but a killer climb) and down to *Valgrisenche*. Wildlife sightings included Ibex, Chamois and Marmots. There was an abundance of Alpine Chough (a cousin of our own Chough) plus a few other small birds, including Black Redstart, but there were very few raptors: just one kestrel and a spectacular buzzard/eagle? sailing through the mist in *Vallone di Entrelor*.



Warren having a power nap
Photo: Brian Murphy



Enjoying a well-earned drink at the end of a hike. Photo: Brian Murphy

One of the constant pleasures of the holiday was the abundance of Alpine flowers along our trails; even high up in barren, rocky terrain there would be small, delicate explosions of colour, with their attendant butterflies. But the true flowers of the mountains were our own An Óige ladies; Their graceful presence encouraged the lads to at least try and maintain their appearances above the Neanderthal-level. Such efforts were tested in some huts by the use of coin-operated showers: it was

like pouring away good beer money! Some privations did creep in, with Mel reduced to shaving with tea and sharing rooms with the masses. But he used his charm, resourcefulness and bare cheek to reduce his sufferings; Martin was also pouring on the charm with our waitress at *Valgrisenche*. We know Mel got some *cáca milis* for his efforts, but we're not sure if Martin got to sample the desert menu...



Greater Knapweed (Centauria scabiosa)
Photo: Mel O'Hara

Days later, as he sat in his tuxedo enjoying the opera at La Scala, Mel must have thought it a far-cry from the hardships he had endured. He has since been inspired to compose "*Uovo Ladro delle Montagne*", an operatic epic of one man's conquest of the Alps, rough accommodation and rough companions; a tale with heroes and villains, stolen eggs, palatial rooms (with tv), magical maps with tricky shortcuts, and of course extra thick slices of cake. The grand premiere will be the highlight of La Scala's 2012 season.

Mark's proudest moment as leader was surely the morning we started out from our hotel in Chanavey. Gathered close to the bar's loudspeakers, we couldn't help our bodies swaying to the beat and before we knew it we were all doing the "Y.M.C.A" and giving it welly. Simon is to raise the matter at Committee-level that it become a standard warm-up routine on all hikes. Mark could only gaze in amazement at this early-morning display of energy and co-ordination (while probably wishing we had displayed as much gusto when clearing the lightning-stroked pass at L'Entrelor).

Our last night was spent enjoying the historic town of Aosta and was rounded off with a mad night in the local pub, where

they bizarrely played the YMCA again, triggering general mayhem among our group.

If I had to pick a theme for the holiday, it would be 'Constant Beauty': wherever one looked there were towering peaks, rugged cliffs and snow-capped mountains, interspersed with woods, rivers, lakes, flora and fauna: Plenty of food for the soul. For those thinking of hiking there, temperatures were pleasant, water was freely available at the rifugios and in the valleys, trails were well-marked and maps used were the No. 101 & 102, Carta Dei Senteri E Dei Rifugi, 1:25000. All accommodation was booked in advance.

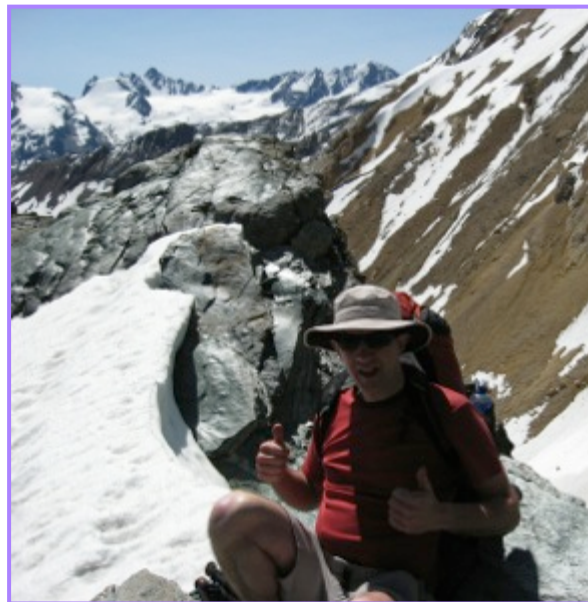


Photo: Simon More

There are more tales and details I could liberally add to this account; I shall skip lightly over how we reached one mountain hut, only to discover it was being used as a discrete setting for one of Berlusconi's *bunga-bunga* parties. Details of our participation will no doubt surface in the Italian courts but for now, alas, the bonds of friendship forged by the trip are too strong for me to commit a betrayal; besides, the bloody horse's head in my last night's bed sent a very clear message as to

how much "free-press" would be tolerated by my fellow Alpinos.

Thanks to our leader Mark for organising and leading us with patience and gusto on what was a most memorable holiday. And to the whole gang I say thanks for your good cheer and company. I raise my glass to you all.



*Master & Commander
Photo: Brian Murphy*

Dublin Hikers in Palace Shocker

A class action is being taken by Messrs Lawless, Reilly and Burke against none other than the Palace Bar itself. This follows a shocking act of discrimination after the Dublin-Tipperary Hurling semi-final. Mr. Lawless had no sooner left the pub when the Palace (a staunch Tipperary stronghold) gave a free round to everyone. Mr. Lawless' legal team feel their client was discriminated against on the basis of his Dublin jersey. The fact that he's waited 14 years to *enjoy* a free pint has added to the disgruntlement (the previous one having been stolen by Mr. Reilly). Mr. Reilly and Mr. Burke have joined in the action on the basis that they should normally have been there to be discriminated against.

Text: Warren Lawless

Deutschland: *Douze points!!* (11-18 July 2011)

Füssen was the base camp for this trip. It lies in the state of Bavaria close to the Austrian border, roughly 3 hours by train from Munich, or in our case Menningam, the Ryanair hub.

The town has many museums and places of historical interest. There are several lakes all set up for public use and the entire area caters for outdoor tourist activities: ski in winter or hike in summer. The public transport was most efficient and Vickie discovered that you can go anywhere you want in Germany for just €6.50 a day. And so she did!



Not far from the ice-cream shop!
Photo: Victoria Tishkina

We stayed at the local Youth Hostel. The youths were a bit of a shock. Apart from the teachers and staff, we were the only adults, the other inmates were 100 primary school going children. We had some teething problems initially with the kids but the sight of an irate Irish woman wearing sensible PJs and a head torch, knocking on your door in the middle of the night shocked them into good behaviour.



All dressed up at the hostel
Photo: Jim Barry

The accommodation was good quality and the breakfast most generous. The rooms varied in size, the girls got the short straw. The boys' room was much bigger, and in fairness, maintained in impeccable condition. The girls' room - well, space was an issue and we did our best under the circumstances and confines. In our defence, with 6 women in a confined area, things are going to get messy. Our key frequently went missing and always turned up in the bin. The family of ants that moved in towards the end of the week weren't complaining anyway.

Day 1

I suspect Frank's strategy was to put this bunch to the test to see what he had to contend with for the week. We headed off by bus to the nearby village of Pflach, home of the Sauling mountain. At 1693m high and in 26 degree heat, it was a fair climb. By lunch time we had made good progress and reached about three quarters of the way. We enjoyed lunch at a hut, admiring the beautiful views of the hills and valleys. After we were sufficiently fed and watered Frank gave us an option to finish the climb or hang at the hut. All the boys and Eileen were up for it, but Anne and I were slightly dubious as it was practically a vertical climb. I signed up for hill climbing, not rock climbing.



*Everyone says Schnitzel!
Photo: Liz Carey*

Frank gave us a quick tutorial in health and safety and something about 3 points of contact. I realised after 5min, that I was out of my depth but turning back was not an option so the only way down was up. We managed on our own going up, but knew coming down was going to be the issue.



*Frank on High Sauling
Photo: Jim Barry*

At the top we devised a strategy. I looked around at my fellow male hikers, and recalled who had beers at lunch time & how many. I decided I was in safe hands with Simon. John kindly assisted Anne. The descent was the scariest ever. I didn't look down once and just followed the instructions, the main one being, "DON'T

LET GO OF THE CHAIN". It was noted that I was silent, for the first time ever.



*A very quiet descent!
Photo: Eileen Whelan*

It was a challenging descent for even the more experienced hikers, and Jim lamented having those 2 pints at lunch time. We all made it down safely, rejoined the gang at the hut, and there was great sighs of relief when it transpired that Anne's 2 week manicure remained undamaged. We headed for home and the chattering recommenced.

Day 2

We took advantage of the damp weather and headed to the famous castle Neuschwanstein, former home of King Ludwig for all of 172 days. It's been fully restored and it even has a coffee shop so we didn't miss out on our daily coffee and cake. You'll see from our photos it's very fairy tale like and apparently Walt himself used it as a template for the Disney Castle. The rain cleared up so we headed back to Füssen by foot via a picturesque lake and forest track.



*Neuschwanstein castle
Photo: Victoria Tishkina*

Dining out at night was highly entertaining and you really needed your wits about you to ensure that you got what you ordered. The issue wasn't the kitchen but the table. As the nice looking dinners were presented the table, people were claiming the food as theirs. Things got tense on night 3 as Paul claimed Eileen's carefully chosen dinner and she was forced to eat a boiled sheep's head instead. On further investigation it turned out Tony had claimed Paul's dinner. Tony and Lisa had the whole ordering situation sussed, you arrive last and just claim the first dinner that comes from the kitchen. All in good humour of course and no one starved.



*Ten around the table
Photo: Jim Barry*

The local beers were top class: no additives or preservatives so not a hangover in sight. The big treat every night was a visit to the ice-cream parlour which stayed open especially for us. There was no shortage of conversation at dinner every night, with all

topics on the table from sport to foreign travels and tales from the life and times of Jim Barry. We couldn't seem to escape the great debate of women drivers and women hikers, women in general really. Simon took the lead from Joe and soon learnt that "a closed mouth catches no flies". Joe remained suspiciously silent on a lot of topics now that I think of it.



*Jim and the girls
Photo: Victoria Tishkina*

Day 3, was a damp one also, so we headed to another near by village, visited the local coffee shop and bakery and walked back towards base camp. After lunch the ladies and one man, took a detour home via a pub where we sampled the local beverage "Hunters Tea". It was served piping hot and was totally intoxicating. It would kill off any germs or strip paint off a wall. Hilarious. Just as we were settling in for the afternoon and the decibels from our table were getting louder and louder, we got funny looks from the waiter, who was dressed in traditional Bavarian uniform (men in tights). We decided it was best to leave.

Day 4 was everyone's highlight. Frank pulled out all the stops, (and a muscle, but that's another story). We travelled to the mountain resort town of Garmisch, right on the Austrian border and joint host of the 1936 winter Olympic games. We got a cable car up the mountain, all 1754m high. We loved the cable cars. The start of the descent was down through the Partnach gorge, where the Partnach River surges spectacularly through a narrow, mile-long gap between high limestone cliffs.



*Male contingent on the Zugspitze massif
Photo: Eileen Whelan*

There is a spiral walking track - steep enough - but a chain provided for the health and safety of the hikers, so you really could take in and enjoy the view. The scenery was spectacular, like something from a movie set. As we got closer to the bottom, the track brought us through caves that went on for ever and ever with fresh water falling from the roof tops to cool us down. It was just what we needed at the end of our hike.



*The track through the caves
Photo: Jim Barry*



*Belles at the waterfall
Photo: Jim Barry*

Just to make the day even more memorable, we travelled home via Munich - only a 200km detour. We dined a la carte in Muehenhauptbahnhof, best pizza ever. It also gave the ladies time to see to the patient Frank, who remember, pulled a muscle earlier in the day. Mary Magic Fingers, carefully massaged the offending muscle. Eileen prescribed him with about 2000mgs of Neurofen but an ice cream cone really sealed the deal. Pain, what pain?



*Magic Mary Fingers!
Photo: Eileen Whelan*

We stayed more local for *the final 2 days*, with different scenery and terrain on offer every day, from rolling hills and meadows to forest tracks and lakes. On our last day we had a lazy lunch and stroll around Memmingen, a busy spot now thanks to Ryanair.



*John plays the xylophone
Photo: Liz Carey*

Hats off to the Germans. They make great use of their local amenity, The Alps. The efficient and easy to use public transport system, courteous service providers and good quality food, accommodation and beer, make a visit to Füssen highly recommended.



*The bike lady out on the town
Photo" Jim Barry*

Many thanks to Frank for organising the trip. His work made it a great experience for everyone.

*Text: Liz Carey
(from notes taken by Liz Carey
and Eileen Whelan)*

BMC insurance

The BMC is pleased to announce that our travel insurance products are now available again to members in the Republic of Ireland.

You can apply online at:
<http://www.thebmc.co.uk/modules/insurance/Landing.aspx>

Thanks to our webmaster Matt Geraghty, a mobile phone friendly version of the hikes page is now available to download from <http://m.hillwalkersclub.com/>

facebook

Please note that you can also follow An Óige Hillwalkers Club on facebook
<http://www.facebook.com/pages/An-Oige-Hillwalkers-club/153861187966138>

Club members interested in leading a hike, contact Frank Rooney: rooneyf@eircom.ie

Cuireadh chun siúil

An bhfuil Gaeilge agat? Ar mhaith leat deis a fháil í a labhairt amuigh ar na sléibhte agus aithne a chur ar dhaoine nua? Más maith, beidh fáilte romhat teacht amach ag siúil leis **Na Cnocadóirí**.

Club siúil sléibhe lán-Ghaeilge is ea na Cnocadóirí, atá lonnaithe i mBaile Átha Cliath. Eagraímid siúlóidí sléibhe ar an Domhnach gach coicís, turais cnocadóireachta in Éirinn agus thar lear agus imeachtaí sóisialta chomh maith. Reáchtáladh sraith siúlóidí éasca tráthnónta Déardaoin i rith an tsamhraidh agus d'éirigh thar barr leo.

Fáiltítear roimh dhaoine atá mar bhaill de chlubanna eile teacht amach linn agus tá córas comhbhallraíochta ann, le táille laghdaithe, chun freastal orthu siúd atá cláraithe le Sléibhteoireacht Éireann (MI) cheana féin trí chlub eile. Ach féadann daoine teacht amach ar shiúlóid nó dhó chun aithne a chur orainn agus triail a bhaint as an gclub ar dtús, sula gcuirfí aon cheist orthu ballraíocht a ghlacadh ann.

Más spéis leat tuilleadh eolais a fháil faoi Na Cnocadóirí tabhair cuairt ar ár suíomh gréasáin www.cnocadoiri.com agus téigh i dteagmháil linn ag cnocadoiri@yahoo.com. Beimid ag siúil le bualadh leat.



An invitation to come walking

*Do you speak Irish? Would you like the opportunity to get to know new people and use your Irish out on the hills? If so, **Na Cnocadóirí** invite you to join us on one of our walks.*

Na Cnocadóirí is a Dublin based, Irish speaking, hill-walking club. We organise fortnightly Sunday walks, hill-walking trips in Ireland and abroad, as well as social events. Our first ever series of easy walks on Thursday evenings in the summer was also a great success.

Members of other hill-walking clubs are welcome to join na Cnocadóirí, and there is a special co-membership rate to facilitate those who are already members of Mountaineering Ireland (MI) through other clubs. However, anyone is welcome to come along on a couple of walks to get to know us before they would be expected to join the club.

If you are interested in finding out more about Na Cnocadóirí have a look at our website www.cnocadoiri.com and contact us at cnocadoiri@yahoo.com. We look forward to meeting you.

In Praise of Hazel (2008 –)

Hazel was one of many but I made my choice quickly attracted by shape, colour and girth. Like Moses' discovery in the reed bed, it was an inauspicious beginning. Yet as with Pharaoh's daughter and her find, the relationship developed from the moment she was plucked from a hedgerow in Kilcorney, a town land in The Burren, County Clare.

Her kind has had a long association with authority (the *fasces* of Rome), the occult and the physical: barriers, baskets and boats. To me, this merely enriched the association and attracted me further quickening an incipient sense of promise.

I had brought – don't we all - all senses to bear on the first encounter. But, the sense of touch brought dulled my expectations. My fingers moved searchingly over the attenuations only to discover all was not so well. Could I live with less than excellence? I steeled myself (knowing how perfect I was) and mused that I should be patient. But how could I put up those sharpnesses, the pricklinesses? Only time could tell.

A good year or two on, I can only report on my experience. The silver hue of the skin has changed: it has mellowed in many parts into a mottled bronze. And no more so than where the eye rises towards her head where contact with my hand has burnished a rich and endearing tan. The girth has narrowed somewhat: no doubt, regular exercise in the bracing air of heathered hills. And the shape? Well, to paraphrase Professor Higgins in *Pygmalion* when talking to Eliza: 'I have grown accustomed to your shape.' But I had, of course, an advantage over him: I had selected and made my choice at the outset.

At the level of the mundane now, do you know any walker who has not been stopped on the hills and asked to adjust a pole: to undo it, to redo it, to shorten it, to lengthen it, to assemble it, to reassemble it. Meanwhile, the phalanx of breathable plastic increases the catch-up distance causing minor panic: Murphy's Law again! The last straw for me was when I extracted a new pole (*sans* end disc) from soft ground and left the bottom shaft, red innards exposed, sunk in like a misaimed arrow. And prior to the purchase, I had researched the wide polar range and the bewildering but ultimately transient variety of features: 'carbon', 'easy grip', 'anti-shock', 'more dependable', 'no parts to lose' (what?). With regard to most hill-walking gear, I suspect there's more than a grain of substance in Oscar Wilde's saying that 'Fashion is a form of ugliness so intolerable that we have to alter it every six months.'

There had to be something simpler. How had travellers in the past managed? Depictions of St Christopher invariable shows him with a stout, but longish, pole – nay, staff. Imagine walking through the polite, urbane streets with such a menacing rod! Maybe, when I think of it, that's the secret of modern poles: being slender and narrowly functional, they could not/would not be using for long-hallowed practices: that is, cracking, whacking or thwacking anyone. In later ages, the cane/rod replaced the sword as an accoutrement of dress. A major literary dandy, whom we celebrate in mid-June of each year, was

often pictured with the fashion accessory of the cane, which he insisted came from Ireland. If, post mortem, Dublin were really 'written on his heart', surely among his range of rattan and ash sticks would have been the rod that replaced ash when native supplies had become exhausted (this last assertion is from an apocalyptic source). That's when I hit upon Hazel.

A double warning about Hazel. Do not be tempted to carry extension pieces like a chimney sweep's; nor should you fit end discs (for Hazel has a better grip on slippery surfaces than you-know-what); and only enhance her minimally if at all. That would be gilding the lily. Let her be in all her beauty! If there are imperfections, remember it is only by sensing variance can we fully appreciate excellence. And the second and more serious warning? I referred earlier to associations with the occult or magic, for Hazel is a living creature. You should not on any account, or with the greatest circumspection, introduce another to Hazel, that is, a second of the kind. The first may resent the second, leading to potential strife or worse. After all, you want to feel safe on the hills.

Lastly, when Hazel has come to the end of her natural life, it is important to give her a fitting send off. I suggest the very top of a pyre. As the flames lick around her, you can rest assured that emissions are minimal, unlike *les arrivistes* (the modern poles) whose manufacture and disposal contribute to global warming no less! Just a reminder and warning to all users. My God, how can you? Now that you know, I expect to see Hazel's kin on the hills. Each one an individual, bespoke and - like all beauty - understated. Then, you have the anticipation of the pleasure of selection once again!

So, here's to Hazel! One of a kind! Of ancient and unflawed pedigree! Choice of the ancients (and not so ancient) and now undisputed queen of the Irish coppice! Awaiting the pleasure of a firm hand on the hills!

Text: Kevin Mc Ginley

An Óige Hillwalkers Club

October Bankholiday Weekend 2011

Friday 28 - Monday 31 October

Staying at the renowned Central Hotel, Donegal Town

**Moderate/Hard lead Walks
Low Level Walkers Facilitated**

Two Grades of Walks Daily

Leaders: Frank Rooney & Jim Barry

Bus Trip Only

Proposed Weekend Itinerary:

- ✓ **Slieve League (Donegal Coast):** Start GR 558757
OSI Discovery Series 1:50,000 Sheet 10
- ✓ **Central Blue Stack Mtns. (South Donegal):** Start GR 937826 **OSI**
Discovery Series 1:50,000 Sheet 11
- ✓ **Benwiskin – Dartry Mountains (Co. Sligo):** Start GR 736487 **OSI**
Discovery Series 1:50,000 Sheet 16

Notes

Hotel accommodation: Central Hotel (Twin Rooms)

Cost: EUR 240 (Approx.) (Includes Bednights, Meals, Transport)

Booking: EUR 160 NON REFUNDABLE deposit to An Óige Head Office by credit card or cash deposit (01-8304555).

****Bookings open on Tuesday 6 September 2011****

Balance of EUR 80 to be paid before Friday 7 October as hotel has to be paid in full at this time.

Meals: B&B, Dinner and Lunch Sandwich included in the price

Food: as above - stopping at local shops for extras etc.

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

Meeting Place/Time: Luke Street (off Georges Quay, *the bus will be waiting on Luke St approximately halfway between Georges Quay and Townsend St*) at 1545hrs

Departure: Friday 28 October at 1600hrs sharp

Return: Monday evening after walk, arriving back in Dublin at approximately 2000hrs.

Welcome Aboard



Membership Application Form

An Óige Hillwalkers 2011/12

Name (*Applicants must be over 18*)

Address

Were you a member before? Yes, last year Yes, some time ago No

New members: How did you hear about the club?

An Óige Membership Number (*Applicants must be a member of An Óige*)

[Further information at <http://www.anoige.ie/membership>]

Contact Telephone Numbers (*optional*)

Daytime Evening Mobile

Email Address (*required*)

The Club issues a regular newsletter by email. The newsletter is also available through the Club webpage [<http://www.hillwalkersclub.com>].

Please read and sign the following PERSONAL DECLARATION

PERSONAL DECLARATION

I am over 18 years of age and wish to apply for membership of An Óige Hillwalkers Club. (*)

(*) *Please note that personal accident insurance is only available to members between 18 and 75 years of age.*

I accept that mountaineering is an activity with a danger of personal injury or even death.

I am aware of and shall accept these risks and wish to participate in these activities voluntarily and shall be responsible for my own actions and involvement.

I accept that An Óige Hillwalkers Club establishes the bounds on its activities through the constitution and rules of the club [available at www.hillwalkersclub.com/constitution.htm] and I agree to abide by these.

Members should not undertake any club hiking activities if:

- (i) they have any known medical ailment which may impair their ability to participate in club activities or
- (ii) they are taking any form of medication that will put their health or safety of others at risk.

If a member is in any doubt on these matters, a doctor should be consulted prior to undertaking any club hiking activity.

If you agree and accept the terms of the PERSONAL DECLARATION, please sign and date here.

Signature Date

The 2011/12 membership year runs from 01 October 2011 to 20 September 2012

2011/12 Membership Fee €35.00

Please send this form with the membership application fee (cheque or postal order *only*, payable to *An Óige Hillwalkers Club*) to **Don Reilly, Dunany, Santry, Dublin 9**. Please allow two weeks for processing of the membership application.

NB: PLEASE DO NOT SEND YOUR APPLICATION BY REGISTERED POST!