



NEWSLETTER

Social Calendar

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This year's **COC Christmas Party** will take place in the Merriman Inn, Kinvara on **Saturday, 11th December at 8.00 pm.** As usual, there will be a number of activity options available during the day – more details will be published in due course. The cost for dinner and entertainment will be €30 per person, payable in advance to

Pádraig Ward or Damien Kelly. Members will need to self-organise accommodation - there is accommodation available at the hotel for €40 pps, with a supplement of €25 for single occupancy. Other accommodation options can be found at <http://www.kinvara.com/acc.html>.

Attendance at the weekly gathering has been falling, probably for a variety of reasons. Thursday may no longer be the most suitable night, so we're going to re-launch this important club activity with a **Halloween party in Paddy Quinn's** on **Friday, 5th November.** Check the Calendar for details.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

- Weekly gathering changed to **Friday nights.**
- MSA refresher workshop on **30th October.**
- Charity Moonlight Challenge on **20th November.**
- **Book early** for the Christmas party. There's limited accommodation at the Merriman Inn.

New season, new members, new committee!

The AGM was held in the Old Ground Hotel on 16th Sept. A review of our very successful 25th Anniversary year was followed by an introduction for new members and a preview of the coming season.

We'd like to extend a very warm welcome to all new members who joined on the night and to those who have joined in the weeks since then. We look forward to meeting you all on the hills over the next few months!

A new committee was elected following the departure of five of last year's officers. Your new committee is:

Chair: Eoin Cleary

Secretary: Fiona Healy

Treasurer: Pádraig Ward

Communications: Radu Toma

Training: Hugh Carthy

Membership: John McDonnell

Development/Access: Damien Kelly

Asst. Development: Amanda Callan

Moonlight Challenge for Mountain Rescue



Club members will be well aware of the vital service provided by the volunteers of the twelve mountain rescue teams in Ireland.

What is sometimes not as well known is the cost of keeping these teams trained and equipped and ready to respond to incidents when called upon – in excess of €10,000 per year per team. Insurance premia alone cost a whopping

€28,000 per annum! (MRI Annual Report, 2009)

The club makes a donation each year to MRI, but if you'd like to combine an additional personal donation with a challenge, here's your chance! There's a 26 km night hike for teams of four in the Wicklow Mountains on Sat, 20th Nov. All funds raised will go to Glen of Imaal MRT.

Emma Glanville is up for the challenge; if anybody would like to join her, please get in touch or register online at www.wicklowmountainrescue.ie/moonlightchallenge You'll get full details of the challenge using this link, or you can download the flyer by visiting the COC Forum at <http://clareoutdoorclub.net/phpbb2/viewtopic.php?f=17&t=167&p=231#p231>

Watch a great series on **RTÉ1** about the re-introduction of eagles and kites into Ireland – Tuesdays at 7.00 pm.

Mountain Skills Training

Seven club members have so far signed up to do the Mountain Skills Assessment (MSA) on 20th/21st November. There's still one place available if anybody else feels up to doing it.

A refresher workshop designed to let MSA candidates practice skills and prepare for the MSA will take place in Killarney on Saturday, 30th October. This will be followed by a night navigation

exercise which will be open to all club members. Contact Hugh Carthy for details.

MSA candidates will be contacted shortly with details of both the MSA and the workshop.

Quad bikes and off-road vehicles

New regulations were introduced in July to ban the recreational use of quad bikes and other off-road vehicles in designated areas in Ireland. The designated areas most likely to be visited by COC

members include the Galtee Mountains, the Slieve Blooms, Slieve Bearnagh, Castlemaine Harbour (including Inch Strand) and Slieve Aughty. Club members are encouraged to record and report any breach of

the regulations by e-mailing details (including photographs if available) to access@mountaineering.ie, or by contacting the Gardai or the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

MI Summer Meet – Ailefroide (by Mary Conway)

This year Mountaineering Ireland headed to France. The village of Ailefroide in the Dauphine Alps was chosen as the location for their Alpine Meet. It brought together, from all parts of Ireland, North and South, a collection of Climbers, Mountaineers, Alpinists, Adventurers and Us !

Dave Lyons, Paul Curran, Fiona Healy and myself, took the ferry from Rosslare to Cherbourg and meandered our way through France with stopovers in Chateaudun and Vienne before arriving at our destination in Ailefroide.

Virgins all to the M.I. scene we weren't sure what kind of reception we'd get but we needn't have worried. As luck would have it there was a céili organised by M.I. on the night of our arrival and bolstered by a few after dinner bebies, we gave such a dazzling display of footwork that we were instantly accepted into the gathering. Well, three of us acquitted ourselves well and everyone forgave the fourth her total lack of co-ordination in view of her charm and curls, mentioning no names of course !

We spent the next week in the campsite which sprawls along the valley at 1500m surrounded by the

towering peaks of Pelvoux, Barre Des Ecrins and L'Ailefroide. Our days were spent hiking to the various refuges which were located over 1000m above. Paul and Fiona spent a day playing on the Via Ferrata in the nearby Gorges de la Durance while Dave and myself took the spectacular trail to the Refuge du Glacier Blanc. We spent a night in the Refuge du Sele where we dined on generous helpings of delicious soup and chamois stew. In the morning, if 4am is actually morning, an experienced group of five set out to summit L'Ailefroide 3954m while the remaining six of us had a lie in until 7am. After breakfast we took a stroll to the Ancien Refuge du Sele before a leisurely descent to our base to catch up on laundry and sample some ice cream.

On our final day we drove to the Vallee De Fressinieres with some of our new buddies. Our route led us to the tiny hamlet of Dormillous which is only accessible by foot. Continuing through woodlands and alpine meadows to the lakes of Palluel and Faravel at 2400m we were treated to a stunning display of alpine flowers, marmot and a huge flock of sheep with their guard dog which necessitated a slight detour. That night the gathering was at our tents

for pizza and crepes washed down by copious amounts of well chilled water ☺

The highlights of our return journey to Cherbourg included a picnic at the vast Lac Embrun, a visit to Decathlon in Gap and two days in Normandy where we relearned our WW2 history of the Normandy landings and visited Arromanches and Omaha Beach.

Overall it was a fantastic holiday. As it was our first visit to a M.I. meet we were happy to confine ourselves to terrain that was within our capabilities. For those who want to advance their skills there are courses that you can avail of by booking in advance with M.I.

Thanks to the beg, steal or borrow system within the club we had all the technical and camping equipment we needed and the advice of past participants ensured our camping experience bordered on luxurious.

Roll on Mountaineering Ireland Alpine Meet 2011. My bags are already packed !

Last chance to sign up for the MI Autumn Meet in Tollymore next weekend, 23rd/24th Oct.

<http://www.mountaineering.ie/event/viewdetails.asp?ID=399>

COC hosts National Trails Day walk.

The club hosted the Co. Clare walk on National Trails Day on Sunday, 3rd October.

A very successful 26km loop from Fanore via Faunarooska, Gleninagh and Black Head was undertaken by 37 walkers, about half of whom were non-members.

The Red Kite – An Préachán Ceirteach

The Red Kite's striking colours, distinctive shape and graceful flight make it an easily recognisable bird. Its name comes from the fact that the body and inner wings are a deep reddish brown colour. The body colour contrasts strongly with the black and white wing tips and grey head of an adult Kite. In flight the Kite's long wings (1.6-1.8m wingspan) and tail are very apparent. The tail, which is also a deep red, is deeply forked separating it clearly from all other Irish birds of prey. The Kite is a very graceful flier, soaring for long periods but also capable of quick acrobatic flight.

Red Kites were once a common site in Ireland, but are thought to have ceased nesting here over 200 years ago due to

deforestation, trapping and shooting.

In 2007 the Golden Eagle Trust in partnership with NPWS and the Welsh kite trust reintroduced the first Red Kite chicks back into County Wicklow. To date 81 kites have been brought from Wales and released in Wicklow.

In May 2010 the news that the project team was waiting for arrived - a pair of Kites had successfully bred and two chicks had hatched making them the first in over 200 years. The majority of the birds have stayed around Wicklow but some have travelled to Limerick, Tipperary, Clare and even Leitrim!

So where is the best place to see them? Kites need

trees for nesting and prefer undulating farming landscape for hunting. They particularly like forest free foothills and are often seen gliding on thermals. The Golden Eagle trust recommends the countryside around the villages of Rathdrum, Redcross and Avoca as the best place to spot these beautiful birds.

Red Kites have a varied diet and scavenge on carrion. They predate on small mammals, birds and invertebrates and are also known to steal prey from other birds.

For further info log onto www.goldeneagle.ie and check out the amazing footage on the RTE 1 series "The Eagles Return" Tuesday nights at 7pm.

CLARE OUTDOOR CLUB

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Red Kite