



10 Years Old!

November 2012

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10 Year Anniversary

2012 is an especially important year for Mountain Meitheal. It was ten years ago, during the International Year of the Mountain, that Bill Murphy of *Coillte Meitheal* opened up the membership to include the hillwalking community to give everyone a chance to be involved in giving back to the mountains. Subsequently a day of trail repair work was organised for the Wicklow Way in Laragh. The 34 volunteers who turned out that day completed 600m of trail clearance and upgrading of a section of the Wicklow Way. Towards the end of 2002 a committee was formed

formalising Mountain Meitheal as a separate entity with Bill as the first chairman. With the dedication and the commitment of this group, Mountain Meitheal took on more project work as well as sponsoring surveys of paths in the Wicklow Mountains and with Heritage Council sponsorship organised a survey and recommendations for repair to the Devil's Ladder on Carrauntuohill. This showed the strategic imagination and philosophy of the group. Throughout the years since 2002 Mountain Meitheal has continued to pursue best practice (e.g. two published editions of the



Trail Repair Handbook) when it comes to path repair and conservation of the uplands. But Mountain Meitheal would be nothing without the continued dedication of all its volunteers. It's their commitment, good humour and generosity of spirit that stands out as the greatest achievement of Mountain Meitheal. With this in mind we look forward to the next ten years and beyond, to the continued presence and relevance of Mountain Meitheal's Volunteer work for the mountains.



No. of volunteer Hours = 2549
No. of individual Volunteers = 153
No. of work days = 30
Average no. of Volunteers per work day=18

2011 Statistics and Achievements

2011 Work & Achievements

Completed repair of section of Wicklow Way at Knockree.
Published 2nd edition of *The Mountain Meitheal Handbook of Trail Design and Construction*.
Commenced repair of zig-zag trail above Miners Village at Glendalough.
Constructed Andirondak type shelter at Mucklagh.
Won 2nd prize at the ERA ECO Awards.
Received the ERA Certificate of Honour for Walking and Environmental Issues.
Repaired the bridge on the Dargle River at Glensoulan.



Karl Boyle (MI), Lis Nielsen (ERA), Robert Grandon (Mountain Meitheal)

ERA Prize

Mountain Meitheal received recognition for their work from the **European Ramblers Association** in 2011. We entered the Eco Award competition, promoted by the ERA and sponsored by GDF Suez. Early in 2011 we were contacted by Karl Boyle, Chief Officer of Mountaineering Ireland. He encouraged us to enter the competition as he felt it suited our aims regarding our environmental work in the mountains. We decided to enter the competition and submit the work we did for the Dublin Mountains Partnership as our entry. We chose our work on the Cruagh Woods Spur (Bogbridge), the Cruagh Woods (Raised Treadway) and Three Rock (Raised Stonepitched Treadway) for our entry. Shay Walsh prepared a very comprehensive dossier of information, including photographs, maps and technical details and statistics about the three projects for our entry. We completed the application form and sent the complete package to the ERA. Then we waited for some time and actually put all thoughts about our entry to the back of our minds and got on with our ongoing busy work projects.

We were greatly surprised and delighted to receive news in August 2011 to tell us that we had taken second prize in the competition. 17 entries in total competed for the prize. The ERA has members in 30 countries. We were the smallest group to enter. The group from Germany that took first prize has 90,000 members. Just to prove that a dedicated, committed and focused group like Mountain Meitheal can achieve great things the prize of €1,000 and Certificate was deserved recognition for the dedicated and hard work of all Mountain Meitheal Volunteers. On 23rd October Lis Nielsen, President of ERA, accompanied by Karl Boyle, visited us at our project in Glendalough where she warmly addressed the gathering of Volunteers and presented us with our prize and certificate. To mark her visit we presented her with a Mountain Meitheal T-shirt, hoodie and cap. (We later sent her on copies of our trails repair handbook as well). Lis kindly brought some chocolates which were swiftly devoured on the day. All in all it was a wonderful tribute to Mountain Meitheal Volunteers. And we are delighted to say that we came second again in 2012 with a second submission. Well done to all who volunteered!

Wicklow Way Partnership

In 2011 Mountain Meitheal continued with and expanded its philosophy of partnership by joining with others to set up the Wicklow Way Partnership. The aim of the group is to bring together organisations with an interest in and a dedication to better management of the Wicklow Way, (Ireland's 1st and premier national waymarked way). We joined with Coillte Teo., Wicklow County Council, County Wicklow Partnership, National Parks and Wildlife Service and Dublin Mountains Partnership to achieve this. A Memorandum of Understanding was agreed and signed by all. To prove its effectiveness as a group and with regular meetings and consultation the Partnership drew up a Strategic Plan for the Wicklow Way, completed a reroute of the Wicklow Way in Ballinastoe and upgraded the Way from Tibbradden Mtn down to the Glencullen Road before the end of 2011. With Mountain Meitheal Volunteers' assistance the Partnership repaired and restored the badly damaged bridge, returning it to its place over the Dargle River on the Wicklow Way at Glensoulan in time for the busy 2011 Christmas season.



To have a dedicated management partnership for the Wicklow Way is very important and already it has proved its effectiveness.