

2008 AGM Edition Mountain Meitheal is 6 years old!

Each year has been great fun and very successful including the construction of this new trail near Laragh in 2008. Please come along to the AGM on 11th November and play your part in next year's success!

A big thank you to all volunteers - without you nothing can be done!

New Forest Friends help out at Curtlestown

Volunteer forest rangers from the New Forest in the UK spent a day working on the Wicklow Way at Curtlestown in Glenree with Mountain Meitheal volunteers. The joint crew constructed over 60 metres of stone staircase on the club's annual BBQ weekend of 12/13 July. Joining up two recently



reconstructed sections of the Wicklow Way, the work was very tough requiring crowbars, a winch and lots of muscle. These two ladies from the New Forest (pictured here) show how tough they are! Everyone had a great day in super weather. However later on the "summer" BBQ was moved indoors to Avondale House because of a change in the weather to this year's normal conditions!. It was a great success made all the more memorable by our guests from the New Forest. Some are pictured here entertaining the BBQ crew. As volunteer rangers with the Forestry Commission they were anxious to visit and work with fellow volunteers during their trip to Ireland this July. Their four day visit included a presentation on their volunteer scheme to a large group at the Coillte offices in Newtownmkennedy, time spent with Coillte staff in the Dublin and Wicklow mountains, and a visit to Wicklow Mountains National Park. They also spent a full day working on the trail in Curtlestown. We look forward to a return visit next year.



Mountain Meitheal Christmas Party

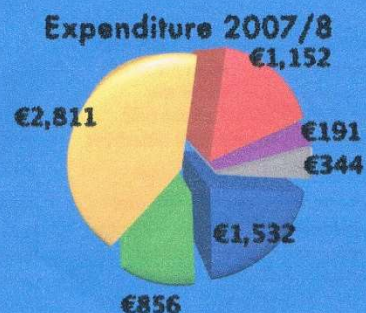
Avondale House Rathdrum
Saturday 6th December

Celebrate the end of another good Meitheal year with your fellow club members over a good meal in convivial company and enjoy a great party afterwards. Overnight accommodation is available with a reviving country walk on Sunday morning.

Murphy's Budget is all GOOD news!



- MCI
- Insurance
- Materials
- Awards
- Admin
- Training Course



2007/8 was another good year under Treasurer Bill Murphy's governance. The current bank balance is just over €8K and the financial outlook for Mountain Meitheal is pretty good. Support from Coillte to the tune of €5K this year is greatly appreciated plus a further €2K from the Irish Ramblers Club. The club's thanks goes to these and all the other very kind contributors who help Mountain Meitheal carry on the voluntary work being done in Wicklow's mountains. Subscriptions and sales of the *Mountain Meitheal Guide to Trail Design and Construction in Ireland* boosted the income stream together with the sale of club tee shirts. A full set of accounts should be available at the AGM

Mountain Meitheal News

Please don't forget your AGM on November 11th. Notice of meeting is enclosed

Zig Zags "Officially Open"

The new and now famous Carawaystick Bridge built by club members and other volunteers, as part of major improvements to the Zig Zags walking trail in Glenmalure, was officially opened last summer. After very short speeches by Shay and Helen Lawless,

Recreation officer with Wicklow Uplands Council, (not pictured) our other partner in this project with the Dunne family for this redeveloped trail. Shay Walsh, Mountain Meitheal Chair and Margaret Dunne, the landowner, are shown cutting the ribbon.



President "tells Europe" about the Irish Meitheals

At the 'Europe in the Coming Times: An Irish Perspective' conference held at Humboldt



University in Berlin last February, President Mary McAleese acknowledged the honour to be at such a revered place of teaching, learning and informed debate about the future of Europe. In

a detailed and interesting speech she said, "In Irish we say Ní neart go chur le cheile: strength comes only when we act together. Our belief in collective action as the source of strength and the common good is interwoven into many traditional Irish sayings, and into the customs and practices of Irish life. Meitheal, for example, is a word we use to describe collective action to meet a challenge, and denotes a community gathering and working together. Meitheal is how generations of our ancestors worked the small farms of Ireland over the centuries, when neighbours rallied around to ensure that the work would be done and the harvest stored in good time. It is today how our communities, urban and rural are organised around neighbour helping neighbour. Without that we are mere strangers to one another. It is our shared focus and shared responsibility that builds us into caring communities."

Mountain Meitheal was inspired by this Irish ethos of community action, and in the club's case, it is set up and organised for the common good of the Irish mountains and forests. The club keeps its aims and objectives very simple and clear:

To protect and conserve the mountain and forest environment by repairing, maintaining and building mountain and forest tracks, while maintaining a challenge for recreational users and striving to preserve a sense of solitude and wilderness experience.

To spread an awareness of sustainable recreation

To provide enjoyable projects and activities for its volunteers.

Situation Vacant: Club Communications Officer wanted!

The Committee is very keen to seek a volunteer to assist in maintaining the website and ensure e-mails to members and other volunteers are dealt with on a timely basis. Initially this will entail the "lucky" person involving themselves with some detailed work to get organised but once they are set up it should become a matter of regular routine! That's the theory and if any member is willing to help their club, please contact a committee member asap or at the AGM on 11th November.

Another Successful Course

Well done to the fifteen participants who took part in Mountain Meitheal's two day course on a trail building weekend held in Wicklow from April 25th to 27th. People from Donegal, Sligo, Cork, Belfast, Carlow, the Cooleys, Wicklow and the Midlands with a mix of volunteers, professional trail builders and outdoor recreation professionals, the course was designed to give participants the basics of trail building and maintenance and some hands on experience. We hope that the



crew found the weekend not only enjoyable (with grateful thanks to the staff at Avondale for the great 4 course dinner on Saturday night) but also educational and that it will assist them in bringing sustainable trail building to the four corners of the country. Since the course, the National Trails Office (NTO) have accredited the course and participants can use this module to advance their trail skills under the NTO programme. The course was led by Bill Murphy and Shay Walsh.

News Briefs:



Ireland's first National Trails Day went off well last September and will prove over time to be a great annual event countrywide. Mountain Meitheal volunteers took part on the day in two events in Wicklow. Angela Sweeney very kindly organised a "Public Viewing" of the work on the Zig Zags in Glenmalure. She was assisted by club member Helen Lawless who is also Recreation Officer with Wicklow Uplands Council. Shay Walsh spent the day on the new trail in Laragh with volunteers and members of the public.



Please renew your club subscription for 2007/8

Mountain Meitheal's subscription year ends at the end of October 2008. The club needs you and really values your membership. Not everyone can come along to volunteer on a regular basis and for some folk the work can be tough and tiring. Whatever you feel about Mountain Meitheal it always needs your support. More members means more activities, more good work, more fun and much much more! This includes more moral support for the more active members: (No more mores! - Ed.) You can rejoin at the AGM or send your cheque/cash €20 to the Club Secretary Chris Avison Brandon 6 Upper Churchtown Road Dublin 14.