

## CRUAGH WOOD – PROJECT 1



On Saturday 13 June the last sleepers were put in place completing the 400m bog

bridge at Cruagh Wood. Over a period of seven work days 65 individual volunteers worked on

this project, clocking up a total of 759 volunteer hours. All of 490 sleepers were carried to their required position and wired into place and 240kgs of staples were hammered in to provide a non-slip surface. Anyone visiting this project should take note of the regeneration of the vegetation already taking place at either side of the bog bridge. Without our intervention this would not have occurred and the relentless erosion would have continued. This project was organised in partnership with the Dublin Mountain Partnership who provided all the materials including the trail head sign. Many thanks to all the volunteers who participated; you can be justifiably proud of a job well done. Don't worry about the shortage of 200 staples, this has been sorted!

## CORPORATE VOLUNTEERS

CIT Group, a provider of commercial and consumer finance based in Blackrock, Co. Dublin, chose to volunteer for Mountain Meitheal as part of their May volunteer month. The volunteers joined us for our two May workdays working on the access route in Cruagh

Wood. This was the third year we have had the support of the CIT. It is safe to say that their contribution in helping with the stapling of the bog bridge kept us on schedule with this project. In total 240kgs of staples were hammered into the sleepers by hand. As yet we have not been able to source a satisfactory machine to do this laborious task so all the extra hands were more than welcome. Mountain Meitheal

would like to thank all at CIT who volunteered especially organiser Jo Fox.



**NEW  
BADGE**



A new badge has been designed for presentation to volunteers and members. By displaying the badge it is hoped to spread recognition of Mountain Meitheal and it will serve as a conversation opener giving the wearer a chance to encourage the curious to come out on a workday. There will be one for everyone in the audience!

## HERITAGE AWARD

On 17 June Mountain Meitheal won the South East Heritage and Culture award sponsored by the *Munster Express* and Dooley's Hotel. The award was made for our work over the last number of years and for our contribution to the protection of our natural heritage. The award was accepted on behalf of all our volunteers in recognition of their tireless efforts in making Meitheal the

success it is. The statuette is one of four specially commissioned and is carved from five thousand year old bog oak. Photos and articles subsequently appeared in the *Munster Express*.



## LARAGH PROJECT



The above photograph shows a recent view of a section of bog bridge which was constructed as part of the Laragh Project and completed in August 2008. Walkers doing the Wicklow Way now use this section instead of the open road.

## NATIONAL TREE WEEK

To celebrate National Tree Week, Mountain Meitheal organised in partnership with Coillte to plant 1000 native birch trees at Curtlestown Wood. The site was chosen to compliment the trail work which we completed last year when we constructed a stone pitched section of trail using only existing materials. Twenty three volunteers were shown the correct procedure for planting the trees by Jesper Peterson, the Recreation Trail Manager for Coillte. Coillte also supplied the trees. The good news is that the trees are now in leaf and together with the new trail should make an interesting section of the Wicklow Way for many years to come. The trees were a mixture of Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*) and Hairy Birch (*Betula pubescens*). Hopefully, we will do something similar for National Tree Week next year.

**MAILING LIST** – If you wish to have your name added to our e-mailing list or if you know of anyone who might like to have their name added to the list, please forward the e-mail address to [shaymwalsh@eircom.net](mailto:shaymwalsh@eircom.net). Also, if your e-mail address has changed don't forget to let us know.

# TAKE ME TO YOUR LEADER

There I was, minding my own business, when the innocent sounding request appeared in my e-mails... 'would I be able to be leader on 17<sup>th</sup> May workday?'

Before actually thinking about it, I said yes and promptly wished someone had chopped off my typing fingers.

Up to this point I had been happy to turn up, listen to the introductory speech on a workday and then just get stuck in. What did I know about leading a voluntary chain-gang?

I therefore took some time out to review my memories of what 'Leaders' actually did when out in the mountains and realised that most people who came out to work were, in the most part, sensible types who needed, and were happy to take, the mildest of direction. Other than making sure we had access, that the tools and materials were on site and were cleared away afterwards, the job seemed to be about giving the safety talk, organising initial division of labour, overseeing progress during the day, re-assigning people or just changing them about for variety and calling time for lunch as well as day's end.

The procedure involves being assistant leader the work day before to ensure continuity, so I resolved to pick up as much from Shay that week as possible. At the start of the day Shay asked me to follow him to the 'Lock-up' so I would know where to go in future. After driving for a rather surprisingly long time through the forest I began to wonder if I shouldn't

be laying a trail of breadcrumbs to find my way out and whether Shay wasn't some sort of witch's familiar. On the other hand perhaps I was to be introduced (or sacrificed) to a secret society whose headquarters lay deep in the forest. Of course we could just be going to find a large rusting freight container used as a lockup and filled with damp tools covered in a fine mould.

Well...! You just wouldn't believe which of those three options it happened to be. After my initiation wounds had been bandaged, we brushed off the fine mould, loaded the tools into our cars and followed the breadcrumbs back to the car park.

The next interesting moment came when Bill let me know that where we were driving to was accessible but very narrow with a precipitous drop to the left. Of course, not knowing my wife (whose car I had borrowed for the day), he wouldn't have understood why I was less concerned with the drop 12 inches from the left hand side than with the gorse scratches on the paintwork I was getting on the right.

Anyhow, it was a great, if windy, day and the forecasted rain held off. The only sour note I guess, was the disappointment in Bill's eyes that he hadn't found a *really* impossibly large rock for us to shift.

So! Assistant day over and my turn next. Silly to worry really; the ever present Shay and Bill would be there, as well as countless experienced others to stop me screwing up and to help should a crisis emerge. Nevertheless, every virgin hopes the first time will be

memorable for all the right reasons.

As it happens, it was an enjoyable experience despite the weather doing its level best to wash us off the hillside. It started well enough (if a little chilly) and we even managed to get our lunch in the dry, just, but it was downhill from there. As usual, all the volunteers put in a lot of effort and although we numbered only a few, we got a lot done.

The upside to being a leader was that I could organise my own day as long as I made myself self visible and available. I carried a few sleepers, wired some of them down, stapled a couple, did a little of that, then a little of something else, all the while interspersing the activity with meeting everyone and actually taking the time to talk to them.

So, at the end of the day, to sum up and in conclusion, the day was actually quite fun. Being a leader with so many experienced and well wishing people was never going to be a chore. Although I didn't spend as much time doing the physical work as usual, I did get to talk to all the people that until then had been just pleasant acquaintances (I might now remember everybody's name as well, even the big bloke with the braces..... Bill something-or-other). I actually came away feeling quite good about the experience and am very happy to repeat it as well as recommend it to any who might be thinking of volunteering.

Thanks to everybody who turned up, the regulars, and those brave souls from CIT.

David Dare

# CRUAGH WOOD – PROJECT 2

Our latest project which started on 11 July 2009 is the construction of a raised thread

way (page 16 of *The Mountain Meitheal Guide to Trail Design and Construction*) in Cruagh Wood.



The trail is part of the new Dublin Mountain Way. The project is in partnership with the Irish Ramblers Club who are providing the funding, the Dublin Mountain Partnership (DMP) and Mountain Meitheal. The section of trail will be 370m in length and will connect Massey's Wood to the forest trail near the entrance to Cruagh Wood. The construction is similar to the work we completed at Laragh in August 2008. Although many walking club members come out on workdays this is the first time Mountain Meitheal has worked in partnership with a club representing the hill walking fraternity on a specific project. We are looking forward to an exciting and successful project.

# MULLACOR SHELTER

We have replaced the log book in Mountain Meitheal's first shelter. The shelter which is on the Wicklow Way between Glenmalur and Mullacor was constructed back in August 2006. The log book contains comments from people from all over the world who have stopped and rested at the hut either for a break or to stay the night. There are signatures from all over Ireland, UK, USA, The Netherlands, Spain, Germany, Belgium and France. The entries began in August 2007 and finished in May 2009. Some folks appear to have been moved to writing 'poetry' –

*Leave No Trace, that's what's bidden  
But that, alas, I cannot obey,  
A piece of my heart is in these hills  
bidden,  
Whether I go or whether I stay'*

The final entry is signed *Fabian, Germany* and sums up how much the shelter means to those travelling the Wicklow Way:



*Maybe Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2009.  
11.13am*

*Dublin to Clonegal. It's my 4<sup>th</sup> day  
now and this is the first sign of  
human beings for a long time.  
Running out of food and water, I  
can't stay here the rest of the day. I  
hope I can make it to the next town  
and wish there would be more butts  
like this one on the Wicklow Way.*

*I think no other Way can show so  
much different, beautiful sides of  
Ireland. You really learn who you are,  
walking this all on your own.  
Greetings to all who follow this way....*

Another shelter was constructed in 2009, it is located at Paddock Hill – a comfortable day's walk from the first one.

# GRAND DESIGNS ON PADDOCK HILL

Due to the phenomenal success of our Mullacor Hut in Glenmalure (see *Mullacor Shelter*) Meitheal volunteers built a second hut on Paddock Hill on the Wicklow Way under the direction of Gerry Patterson and Bill Murphy. The hut was constructed as part of our traditional mid summer weekend camp – this year the weekend of 27–28 June. Because of the success of the first hut it was decided that Mountain Meitheal would fund this project itself and allocated €2300 to the project.

Permission was granted by Coillte, on whose land the hut is sited, following consultation with local neighbours under their Sustainable Forest Management programme. The design was based on similar huts along the Appalachian Trail in the US and is familiarly known as **Adirondack Shelters**, which provide simple shelter for hikers from storms or for over night use.

Gerry's back garden in Laragh was used as an outdoor workshop, with easy access to materials and power where the base, back and two sides were prefabricated. Unlike the Mullacor Shelter where we remodelled an old forest hut the new shelter was an entirely new build. This time we used locally sawn **larch** (from Annamoe) and the very effective **board on board** method on **tanalised** studding to build the three side walls. Board on board gives a water tight and wind proof finish and we think gives a pleasing Scandinavian look to the mountain shelter. The base is constructed on tanalised Baltic pine to ensure longevity and fixed in place with ground anchors. Inside we used tanalised decking to build the sleeping platform



which is sufficient to sleep four (or six if they're very friendly!)

After a long day 'the workshop' was then transformed into a campsite for those staying over for the weekend and the chat went on late into the evening on what was a beautiful mid summer's night.

Next morning the construction was disassembled and thanks to Gerry's contacts a tractor and driver (Johnny) were on hand to transport the sections to the site. It required two trips to move all the materials.

On site, the base was levelled and the wall sections were bolted into place while other volunteers added the finishing touches to the sides. The roof boards were screwed on to the frame, covered in felt to add to the heat retention and finished with profile metal roofing.

At the end of a second long day the hut was usable, although not complete, requiring one more day to snag the work.

It appears that this hut will be very popular with walkers using it for their mid day break if the feedback from passers by is anything to go by. We hope that the Hut will also offer long distance walkers an over night option and have a take up like the hut in Mullacor.

**Many thanks to all who participated, especially those with the skills, tools and knowledge of carpentry and to those who lifted, fetched and tidied. Without the combined efforts of all involved the Wicklow Way wouldn't have its second shelter.**

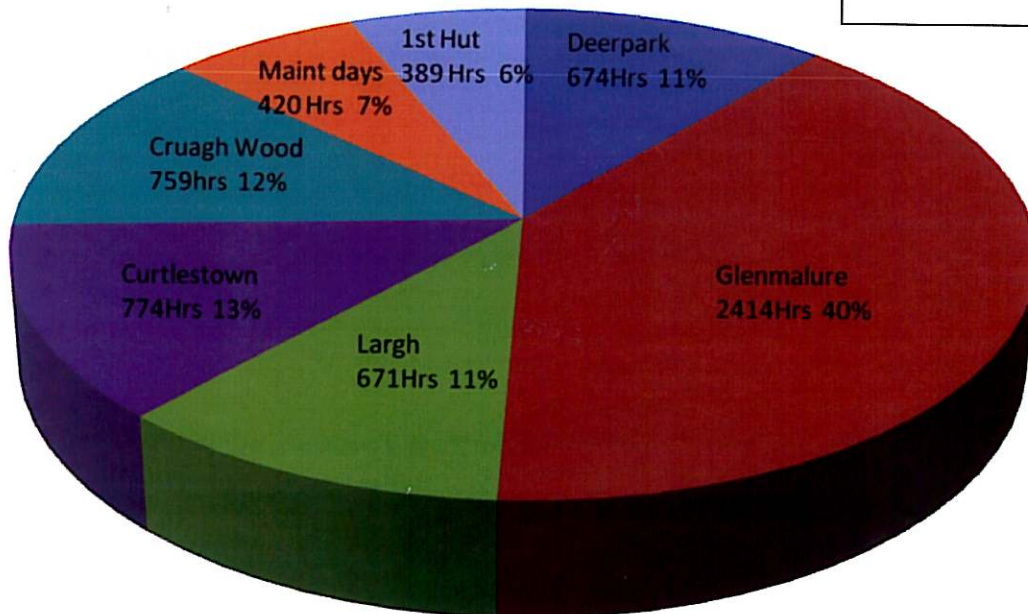
# WHERE THE TIME WENT

Below is a chart showing the volunteer hours worked since 7 July 2006 when we constructed the first hut on the Wicklow Way between Glenmalure and Mullacor to the completion of the first Cruagh Wood project. To clock up over six thousand hours is a magnificent

achievement; the body of work speaks for itself. Each project contributes to enhancing the experience of those making use of the fruits of our labour while protecting and conserving the mountain and forest environment.

## PROJECT

PROJECT	Total hours
Deerpark	674.00
Glenmalure	2414.50
Laragh	671.50
Curtlestown wood	774.50
Cruagh wood	759.00
Maintenance days	420.00
First hut	389.00
	<u>6102.50</u>



## INTERNATIONAL APPALACHIAN TRAIL VOLUNTEERS VISIT CRUAGH SITE

In June, five volunteers from the **International Appalachian Trail/Sentier International des Appalaches** visited Ireland as part of a longer trip to Ireland and Britain to explore the possibilities of extending the IAT/SIA to this part of the world. During their visit they spent a day hiking in the Dublin Mountains along with Dr Peadar McCardle from the Geological Service of Ireland and Cormac McDonnell of the National Trails Office. They were accompanied by Shay Walsh (Chairman) and Bill

Murphy who showed them some of the recent trail work by Mountain Meitheal, Coillte and the Dublin Mountains Partnership. They also had the



opportunity to see the types of problems faced by trail managers and maintainers under Irish conditions – which are not unlike those encountered in Northern Maine and Newfoundland. During the hike they visited the bog bridge on Cruagh and were extremely impressed with the quality and volume of work and felt that the bog bridge would have applications in some of the fragile environments of Newfoundland and Maine. For more information click on to [www.internationalat.org](http://www.internationalat.org).

# THE DUBLIN MOUNTAINS WAY

With the formation of the Dublin Mountains Partnership, the Dublin Mountains Way has started to become a reality. The Massy/Cruagh link will form a short, but significant, part of the overall trail. By the autumn, this link will allow a continuous hike off-road from **Montpelier Hill** (the Hellfire Club) to **Fairy Castle** and on to Glencullen village via **Ballyedmonduff**.

With work progressing well on the **Massy/Cruagh** link trail, several Meitheal volunteers have asked what route the trail will take when eventually finished. This East-West route has been an objective of both South Dublin and Dún Laoghaire - Rathdown County Development Plans for over twenty years and when complete will run from Shankill in the east to Tallaght in the west, a distance of approximately 38km. Starting at **Seán Walsh Park**, just a short distance from the **Luas** line, it will follow suburban roads via **Kiltipper**, along the **River Dodder** crossing the **Brittas Road** to enter the **Bohernabreena** Reservoir. The route follows the reservoir roads and crosses the upper embankment to run along the east side of the reservoir before heading for **St Ann's Churchyard**, **Piperstown** and on to the '**Hellfire Club**' where the walker will be rewarded by an excellent view over the city. Hellfire leads on to **Massy's** and a very pleasant hike by the mountain stream that tumbles down through the wooded valley. At **Cruagh Bridge** the route crosses the road and goes along the new link route to join the forest road through Cruagh to enter **Tibradden forest**.

From here it's an excellent hike through mature forest onto open mountain land on **Tibradden Mountain** to join the **Wicklow Way** before heading to **Fairy Castle**. Here the route will continue towards **Ballyedmonduff** (and hopefully with land owner agreement) will drop down to the **Stepaside/Glencullen road**. Then it will follow the **Glencullen/Kilternan road**, past **Johnny Fox's Pub**, before turning at **Ballybetagh** to head to **Killegar**. The

**Scalp** will provide difficult trail construction problems but on the eastern side the route is already waymarked to **Barnaslingan Car Park**. The route then follows forest trails through **Carrickgollogan forest** (with a short detour to take in Carrickgollogan summit) to **Rathmicheal Wood**. The last kilometre or two will follow quiet suburban roads to finish at the main street in **Shankill**. For additions and improvements to the trail see [www.dublinmountains.ie](http://www.dublinmountains.ie)

*Trailblazer*





**Mountain  
Meitheal**  
www.pathsavers.org

## MEMBERSHIP / RENEWAL APPLICATION FORM

Please return this form with the requested details with your subscription to  
Clóna Ní Bhréartúin, 12 Beechview, Edmondstown Road, Dublin 16.

Surname: \_\_\_\_\_ Forename: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone no. (home): \_\_\_\_\_ Phone no. (work): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone no. (mobile): \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Age (if under 18 years): \_\_\_\_\_

For insurance purposes, are you a member of the Mountaineering Ireland? Yes  No

If so, are you an  
**individual** member  
or a **club** member? \_\_\_\_\_

If you are in a **club**, \_\_\_\_\_  
please specify  
which one? \_\_\_\_\_

Can you bring any relevant experience to *Mountain  
Meitheal* (e.g. engineer, forester, farmer, previous  
voluntary trail maintenance experience, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I wish to apply for/renew my membership of *Mountain Meitheal* and enclose my subscription of €20  
(cash, PO or cheque) and agree to support the aims and objectives of the club.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_