



## Top of the grass!



*Some of the Mountain Meitheal volunteers amongst the many who repaired, landscaped and re-seeded the repair site along part of the Wicklow Way*

**Our** repairs and improvements to the Glensoulan/Deerpark section of the Wicklow Way are almost complete. Fifty nine Meitheal volunteers gave over 700 hours of their valuable time to this important project. They constructed over 800 metres of new trail with steps, water bars and landscaping which also involved sowing grass seed specially chosen by the ecologists at WMNP over 2.47 acres of the site. This work was part of a three way

project between Coillte, Wicklow Mountains National Park and Mountain Meitheal under the Wicklow Sustainable Trails Network managed by the Wicklow Uplands Council. A big thank you and well done to everyone involved in this very fitting project for the year celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the opening of the Wicklow Way. The work has been very well received, if all the thanks and positive comments we get from the many hundreds

## Leave No Trace



If you walk or cycle in the Wicklow Mountains you may come across Leave No Trace banners placed on forest

gates and entrances as part of the successful LNT Awareness Day run by Mountain Meitheal at the end of May. Volunteers met and chatted to members of the public and distributed over 1,500 leaflets. These explain how recreational



users who adopt the Leave No Trace principles really can help protect our mountains

and leave them as nature intended for everyone to enjoy. Please practice Leave No Trace and spread the message. More details about Leave No Trace can be found on Mountain Meitheal's website: [www.pathsavers.org](http://www.pathsavers.org) or [www.LNT.org](http://www.LNT.org)

of passers-by who frequently use this section of the trail, are anything to go by.

*Our next project in Wicklow starts on Sunday 23 July and we will work on the east side of Maulin. Steve Mackey will be leading the day. Meet at Crone wood car park at 10.30am. Why not come along and put in some hours towards your fabulous BERGHAUS fleece (see page 4)*

## Mountain Bikers' "big dig" isn't foolish!

**No** one ever complains about too much help, not even last April 1st when a mountain bikers' meitheal saw double the expected number of volunteers turn up to work at Kindelstown. Once tools were sorted out, they got down to clearing 325 yards of Ireland's first authorised mountain bike trail in Wicklow. Mountain bikers have been allowed by Coillte to build the trail. The International Mountain Biking Association standard for sustainable trail construction is high and quite a bit of work still needs to be done to get the trail up to standard. The work was carried out with the support and guidance of Mountain Meitheal who provided tools, equipment and valuable know how on the day. While some finishing work is needed on the new section, and there is quite a bit more existing trail to upgrade, this was very encouraging start to the project. For further information check: [www.irishtcycling.com](http://www.irishtcycling.com)



## LEAVE NO TRACE IRELAND TAKES OFF!

As you read this Leave No Trace Ireland's first development officer will be up and at it.... Jane Helps takes on the job in early July. She brings with her valuable experience has gained as the Green Schools officer with An Taisce. Jane will be based at the Larch Hill Scout Centre Dublin 16 ('phone 01 495 6300) Leave No Trace Ireland is another landmark in the promotion of sustainable recreation - one of Mountain Meitheal's objectives. First mooted several years ago by Mountain Meitheal, the Leave No Trace principles of outdoor ethics was first adopted by Coillte in its recreation policy after which Countryside Activities and Access Network (CAAN) and the Duke of Edinburgh Award in the North proposed making it an all Ireland initiative. Leave No Trace Ireland is now supported by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, the Heritage Council, the Forest Service, MCI, Scouting Ireland, CAAN, Duke of Edinburgh, Coillte and of course us!

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Through the hard work of Ann Fitzpatrick of Wicklow Mountains National Park and who was Ireland's first LNT Master Educator, Leave No Trace Ireland ran the first Masters' course held outside of the USA which had 12 participants from all corners of Ireland and from the Countryside Commission of Wales. Following their week of hard work at Tiglin led by Ben Lowhan, Education Director at The Leave No Trace Centre of Outdoor Ethics in

Boulder, Colorado, there are now twelve Master Educators of Leave No Trace outdoor ethics in Ireland. Master Educators can teach the second level trainer course (2 days) and Awareness workshops (1 day or less). Mountain Meitheal's Vice-Chair, Shay Walsh, who had already completed his LNT trainer course attended and qualified. Well done Shay!.



## BALLYHOURA WALKING FESTIVAL 2006

Simply different



**Mountain Meitheal** was invited to attend the well established Ballyhoura International Walking Festival in County Limerick last April. We were asked to give a presentation at the opening evening of the festival along with other keynote speakers. Bill Murphy gave an interesting illustrated talk about our work and

volunteering. The large audience took an active interest and afterwards we received a number of visitors to our stand at the Ballyhoura Expo alongside exhibitors from well known gear shops and tourism organisations. The following day Mountain Meitheal gave demonstrations of our work at two damaged sites on the Ballyhoura Way.

[www.ballyhouracountry.com](http://www.ballyhouracountry.com)

### .... BRIEF NEWS FROM THE GALTEES

**Our** Meitheal man in Tipperary, Jimmy Barry, sent in these photos of Cush in the Galtee Mountains showing the "before and after" effects of Mountain Meitheal volunteers carrying out repair and maintenance to the damaged trail.

The picture on the right, albeit in a slightly different section of the track, was taken at the end of last year. Hopefully this very positive improvement will encourage more and more recreational users of our hills and mountains to "get out, get dirty and give back" by volunteering for trail maintenance crews in their own mountain areas. If enough people give their time, many hands really can make light work to the advantage of their own hills.





## Water Management



*Studying a trail in the Wicklow Mountains in recent deluge conditions*

The biggest problem facing Irish trails is **WATER**. Our soft ground is prone to water logging causing damage. On all trails, it is important to remove water from the surface. Mountain Meitheal volunteers can build water bars and water cut offs from materials often available alongside the damaged trail. Using timber or stone or both, building water bars and drains can be quite exacting if they are to work well, but it is good fun doing this. The rewards for the hard work are easily seen on trails previously notorious for their wet spots which now remain dry and sound. Not surprisingly it is best to study the trail carefully in wet weather to see where the water causes problems! (See picture above.)

### Leaders' Workshop

Last February, Shay Walsh organised a very successful Leaders' Workshop attended by fifteen Mountain Meitheal leaders and potential leaders. The day was led by BOS approved trainer Tomás Aylward with support from Bill Murphy and Shay. Held at Sport HQ Park West in Dublin, the accommodation, facilities and catering were very kindly arranged by The Mountaineering Council of Ireland. Everyone had a golden opportunity to enhance their knowledge of project management, group dynamics, tools and manual handling and first aid.

### On yer bike Mike!

Mike Dagley is one of the original members of Mountain Meitheal and he is

leaving his job as Administrator at the Mountaineering Council of Ireland after five years serving the MCI and its membership. Mike, whose passion for all things mountaineering, is also an ultra keen mountain biker and will be moving on this month to start his new job with Sustrans, a UK based cycle trail group. Although he will now be based in England, we hope to be seeing him back, wielding his very own favorite mattock from Hebden Bridge in Yorkshire. This pet tool has seen some sterling work from Mike over the years and we wish him all the very best for the future.



*Mike demonstrates his 'pet' mattock while he leads a work day at Lough Dan*

### Countryside Recreation Network

Mountain Meitheal gave talks at two CRN seminars in the UK this year. Bill Murphy spoke at the first one and Shay Walsh at the second one on 28 June. Entitled "Strategies and Practice for Engaging Volunteers in Countryside Recreation and Management" Shay gave a case study on "Volunteering in Ireland" for recreation based activities and an introduction to Mountain Meitheal, its objectives, status and ethos. He outlined some projects and how they are organised and looked at some of the obstacles to greater involvement of volunteers from the volunteers' and land managers' side. The presentation finished with how Mountain Meitheal's future development might progress. The presentation was very well received. Other papers were given by BTCV, the Forestry Commission, Peak District National Park and the National Lottery UK. CRN predicts that volunteering will be one of the main issues in outdoor recreation and land management in the next ten years.

## Calendar 2006

**Sunday 23 July**

**Saturday 12 August**

**Sunday 27 August**

**Saturday 9 September**

**Sunday 24 September**

**Saturday 14 October**

**Sunday 22 October**

**Saturday 11 November**

**Sunday 26 November**

**Saturday 9 December -**

**Xmas Party!**

**Please regularly check our website for up to the minute programme details:**

**[www.pathsavers.org](http://www.pathsavers.org)**

### Apply for Membership today

Please return this form or a photocopy with your subscription of €20 to Mountain Meitheal

Brandon 6 Upper Churchtown Road, Dublin 14.

Any queries 'phone (01) 2986085 or Email: [avison@eircom.net](mailto:avison@eircom.net)

Surname:

Forename:

Postal Address:

'Phone Nos:

(Home)

(Work)

(Mobile)

E-mail address: (if any)

Age: (if under 18 years)

For insurance purposes, are you a member of The Mountaineering Council of Ireland?

If so, are you an individual member/club member?

If in a club, please specify which one?

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

Signed:

Date:

**Question:** Oh grand-mama what does a well dressed Meitheal volunteer wear?

**Answer:** Here's some tips but this extreme case of a little boy who can't grow up doesn't mean everyone needs to look like this!

A suitable old waterproof jacket and trousers - all the better to keep you dry and clean. Ladies may consider using an apron too!

Always wear work gloves - all the better to protect hands and also to keep them warm



A good hat - all the better to keep your brains warm on those chillier days!

Strong arms - all the better to wield the mattock/shovel/spade/crow bar/rake/hazel hoe/pint

Strong boots - all the better to grip on the slippery ground and protect the feet

Not shown - a hose pipe - all the better to let you back into the house again!

## CLAIM YOUR BERGHAUS FLEECE! - WHILST STOCKS LAST!



All current paid up members of Mountain Meitheal can claim their **FREE** fleece by volunteering for twenty hours or more - that's only **four full** days for this year. When you have earned one of these luxurious Berghaus garments please make your claim via our website: [www.pathsavers.org](http://www.pathsavers.org) or contact **Shay Walsh** on 01 821 7216 or 087 238 2581. We have ladies (only a few sizes) and men's (small, medium, large and x-large) in black, grey, navy and cobalt (blue). **Subject to availability.**

## NOTICES

**Mountain Meitheal AGM 2006** - venue to be confirmed but the date is Tuesday 26 September @ 8pm - please make a note in your diary NOW!

**Summer Camp 2006** - by the time "The Mattock" goes to press the annual summer camp will be finished. Mountain Meitheal volunteers camped over the weekend of 7/9 July above Glenmalure in Wicklow. Their task is to build an Adirondack type overnight shelter for walkers on the Wicklow Way. For more information on these shelters do a "Google" search on Adirondack shelters! Better still go for a hike along the lovely Wicklow Way and have a look at ours!

[www.pathsavers.org](http://www.pathsavers.org) - keep this web address firmly in your minds for up to the minute news and information about Mountain Meitheal. Get the latest dates, programme and news with pictures from recent work days. Also you can have your say via the 'blog' page. This is an important resource - please use it!

**The Devil's Ladder Appeal** - Mountain Meitheal has invited the Mountaineering Council of Ireland to join with us in launching an appeal to raise €10,000 to assist with the reconstruction work project on the Devils Ladder route on Carrauntouhill in Kerry - which is being lead by Kerry County Council with support from Fáilte Ireland under the National Development Plan's tourism support measures. **WATCH THIS SPACE!**

**"Volunteer for Trails"** - a DVD has been made for Mountain Meitheal promoting the work we do and the fun that can be had carrying out voluntary trail repairs amongst some of the finest scenery Ireland's mountains have to offer. This short film, made by a volunteer for volunteers, was shown at the Banff Mountain Film Festival in Dublin. A Copy can be obtained by contacting Chris Avison 01 2986085 or [avison@eircom.net](mailto:avison@eircom.net) - price €10 payable to Mountain Meitheal

**Quotable quotes:** - first from Albert Einstein and particularly relevant to what Mountain Meitheal are trying to do: "Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better." Volunteer groups are very important in creating and maintaining quality of life. A sentiment supported by the famous anthropologist Margaret Mead who said: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful citizens can change the World. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has!"