



Autumn Gathering 2018

Hosted by

Galway Walking Club



Friday October 12th – Sunday October 14th

Galway Walking Club was founded in 1995. Its founding members were already avid long-distance walkers, so the aim was to provide regular extended rambles. By the year 2000 a demand for hillwalking in our amazing Connemara mountains was evident, and by 2002 the option of two hillwalks per month was offered. In 2018, with increasing membership numbers and a wider range of age and fitness levels, Galway Walking Club offers five different walk options in a variety of landscapes in three counties, Galway, Mayo and Clare; three levels of hillwalks, A, B and C, rambles, and a short Sunday afternoon walk. GWC has been running an annual Connemara Marathon since 1996. There has always been a strong social aspect to our club. GWC has an annual Christmas party, a summer barbecue, Bank Holiday weekends away in different parts of Ireland, trips to off-coast Irish islands as well as a week's hiking holiday every year in a European location. Galway Walking Club now has a membership of over 300.



Autumn Gathering 2018

The village of An Fhairche (Clonbur) sits between Lough Corrib and Lough Mask. Two kilometres to the west rises Binn Shléibhe (Mount Gable) where, according to legend, the Firbolg gathered on the hilltop before their clash with the Tuatha Dé Dannan at the Battle of Moytura.

Joyces Country, a hilly region to the west of Lough Mask, takes its name from an Anglo Norman family who settled here in the 13th century. Thomas Joyce (originally spelt Joys from the French Joyeuse) immigrated to Ireland and settled here. His son married an O'Flaherty, and this allegiance allowed the Joyce clan to take control of the whole barony of Ross.

Close to Clonbur lie the remains of the Petersburg Estate, seat of the Lynch family of Galway, one of whose members, Thomas Lynch Jnr, was a signatory of the American Declaration of Independence. Located on the southern shore of Lough Mask, with Lough Corrib to the south, the Maamturk and Partry Mountains to the west, Petersburg House is now the Galway-Roscommon ETB Outdoor Education and Training Centre, offering a range of adventure sports activities and challenges for all age groups. One of its specialisms is the study

of the landscape and it offers a superb location for all types of field studies including geology, geography and ecology.

The Community of Clonbur is immensely proud of the natural resources on its doorstep. This village was a winner in its category in the Pride of Place All Ireland competition in 2016. The



Community is now working hard to develop and promote these assets in a sustainable way. Local farmers and landowners have been incredibly accommodating to outdoor enthusiasts and the Binn Shléibhe Pilot Access scheme is an example of this. In 2018 this community will launch its 'Clonbur Welcomes Walkers' campaign with five new or upgraded trails on Coillte land, a

timely celebration of underpasses or tunnels built in 1918 by the Guinness family of Ashford Castle which help link the villages of Clonbur and Cong in a beautiful woodland walk. Help celebrate this anniversary by attending the MI Autumn Gathering promoted by Galway Walking Club.



We will be based out of Lynch's Fairhill House Hotel, Clonbur for the entire weekend. The Hotel provides meeting room space as well as a large dining area for the Saturday night dinner and entertainment and a separate bar and restaurant area. We have booked a number of rooms for the Gathering. Please let the hotel know you are with the Mountaineering Ireland Autumn Gathering at the time of booking to avail of a special rate.

Any unallocated rooms will be released back to the hotel so be sure to book early.

As always, Saturday is the main day of activities during the weekend with walking, climbing and an environmental workshops available to choose from. We limit numbers on most of our activities so please make your selection at the time of booking online. The **member's forum** will take place in the Lynch's Fairhill Hotel at **18.30 on Saturday evening**. We will go straight into dinner and entertainment **at 20.00**.

Sunday morning will see a range of 3 hour workshops. **Again, please book your choice of workshop online as places are limited.**

Alternative Accommodation: There are accommodation options in Clonbur itself including B&B and self-catering:

VENUE
<p>Lynch's Fairhill House Hotel An Fháirce, Clonbur, Co Galway www.fairhillhouse.com 094 9546176 Rate: €75 for 2 nights, B&B, on Saturday night, per person sharing Single supplement €20 per night</p>
CLONBUR
<p>Petersburg Outdoor Education and Training Centre Clonbur Co Galway www.petersburg.ie €10 pp sharing Contact Máiréad Fahy at 094 9546483 or email mairead.fahy@gretb.ie</p>
<p>Burke's Bar B&B 094 9546175 Contact Colette/Patsy/Hazel Tomás Burke tburke@gmail.com €35.00 per person including breakfast</p>
<p>Noreen Kyne B&B Clonbur Co. Galway 094 9546169 Noreen.kyne@live.ie €35.00 per person including breakfast</p>
<p>Island View House B&B (1 km from village) Dooroy Clonbur 094 954 6302 islandviewclonbur@gmail.com Contact Mary 087 2852734 €40 pp sharing €50 single</p>
<p>Lakeshore House B&B Ballard Clonbur 094 9548311 www.lakeshoreconnemara.com lakeshoreclonbur@gmail.com Contact Bernie Feerick 087 7611481 €35 pp sharing €45 single</p>
<p>Apartment/House Hugh O Donnell 0870537791</p>
<p>Ballykine House FULLY BOOKED</p>
<p>Additional accommodation in Cong (6km from Clonbur) and Ballinrobe (14km from Clonbur) Hotels/B&Bs in Cong Ryans Riverlodge Tel 094 9546057 Lydon's Lodge Hotel Tel 094 9546053 Ryans Hotel Tel 094 9546243 Michaeleen's Manor B&B Tel 094 9546089</p>

Programme of Events:

Friday October 12th

Why not start the weekend with a short informal walk with members of Galway Walking Club and GMIT Castlebar Outdoor Education. When registering online please select “additional options” to let leaders know you will be attending and just meet them in the reception area of Fairhil House Hotel just before 2.00pm. Directly walking from Clonbur there is a 7km way marked loop walk near the shore of Lough Mask on forest trails through mixed forest, limestone pavement and out to White island with lovely views and interesting geology.

18:30 – Registration in the lobby area of the Fairhill House Hotel. There is a bar area/restaurant in the hotel to grab something to eat when you arrive.

19:30 – Opening of the Gathering by Paul Kellagher President of Mountaineering Ireland and a welcome by Tom O Connor, Galway Walking Club Chairperson.

Panel Discussion

This year will take on a different and exciting format which will be a panel discussion with participants confirmed to date as: Sean Kyne Minister for State for Rural Affairs and Natural Resources, Eamon O Cuiv TD for the Galway West constituency, Trish Walsh Director of Petersburg OEC, with the panel being chaired by Lorna Siggins Journalist with The Irish Times. The discussion will be about the role that access, and outdoor recreation can play in the future of Ireland’s mountain areas.

Saturday October 13th

Variety of walks, climbs and workshops departing from the Fairhill House Hotel. Please ensure you have walking gear for all weathers with you including hiking boots with good ankle support as the terrain on some of the walks is steep and can be challenging. We have given an indication of the level of difficulty of each walk below, however, please read the description to choose one which is more appropriate for you.

Choose from:

Walk 1.

Maumtrasna – Difficult - Grid Reference:- L999 601

Start the climb at IL 999 601. We will head up via Skeltia to Point 681 and across to Maamtrasna triangulation pillar, height 673 metres. Terrain can be very soft after wet weather but is a great mix of glacial and volcanic landscape. Across to Glenlaragh and Knocklaur and on to Spot height 492. Views both to Croagh Patrick and the Nephins, and a panorama of the Turks and the Bens. We will begin our descent into Tawnaleen village. A walk of about 2k to the road at IL 948 602. Total distance approx 15k.

Distance: 15km Time: 6 hours Height gain: 1200 m

Walk 2. Corcóg and Mullagh Glas – Difficult - Grid Reference:- L 966 498

Corcóg, at the southern end of the Maamturks Range. The climb begins mid-way between Maam Cross and Maam. After a strong ascent to the summit of Corcóg, head north along ridge for 1km before descent to base of Mullagh Glas. Ascend Mullagh Glas 525m West up to 661m before a descent to Maimean and onto the Western way.

Distance: 12km Time: 5 hours Height gain: 1250m

Walk 3. Leenane Hill – Moderate - Grid Reference:- L872 617

A 4-5 hour loop walk, starting and finishing in the picturesque village of Leenane. Map OS 37. Start from the N59 in the village at L 872 618, follow a small road by a stream. Climb onto the ridge, the predominantly grassy ridge can be steep in sections and care is required when wet underfoot. Walk in a south/south westerly direction until you reach the summit of Leenane Hill @618m at L 874 593. Proceed SW initially and then West and NW direction to spot height 578m at L 861 598. This is an exposed boggy section. Continue North to spot height 556m at L 862 604 and descend East of North direction to a little lake at L 863 611. Descend from the little lake in a westerly direction and pick up the Laghtyfahaghaun river, follow the river north until it meets the Western Way. Walk East along the Western Way and N59 back to the village. Weather permitting great views of Killary Harbour (An Caolaire Rua) one of Ireland's true fjords which lies on the border between Galway and Mayo. Also Mweelrea to the north west and the Maamturks and Twelve Bens to south and south west respectively.

Distance: 12km Time: 5 hours Height gain: 618m

Walk 4. Bunacunneen & Bunbeg – Moderate - Grid Reference:- L 929 588

The walk will start at Ail Dubh and climb Bunacunneen (575m) and Benbeg (560m). Then along the ridge with a gradual descent to finish in Finny. The terrain is primarily grassy and high bog.

Distance: 8km Time: 5 hours Height gain: 675m

Walk 5. Buckaun – Moderate - Grid Reference:- M029630

Part of the Maamtrasna range. There is a nice walk in with a gradual ascent to 625 m and a long ridge walk with rocky terrain. There is a gradual descent on good ground to base.

Distance: 8km Walking Time: 4.5 hours. Height gain: 625 m

Walk 6. Ben Shléibhe (Mount Gable) – Moderate - Grid Reference:- M096537

A loop walk starting from the village of Clonbur . Following the roadway there is a gradual ascent to the summit with mainly grassy terrain . Fantastic views of Lough Corrib and Lough Mask . Dropping down to a famine Village and Lough Cualainn and a gentle walk out.
Distance: 13.4km Time: 4.5 Hours Height gain 461m

Walk 7

Lough Inagh to Leenane – Easy

Walk from Lough Inagh to Leenane along the Western Way. The Western Way moves through beautiful wilderness areas on old bog tracks, then along a forest track and into Leenane via the old green road, opposite the stunning Killary Fjord.

Distance: 16km Time: 4.5 hours

Walk 8

Clonbur/White Island – Easy - Grid Reference:- M093559

From a forest track in Clonbur that brings us to White Island facing onto Lough Mask in Co Mayo. A full circle of the island with great views of Mount Gable. We walk to Ross Hill Graveyard a historical site, at this point we turn right for about 300 meters where we visit our second Island of the day “Big Island” with excellent views of Lough Mask before we return to Clonbur.

Distance: 10km Time: 3 hours

Walk 9

Environmental Walk - Maumtrasna

A moderate mountain walk with lots of learning, including a bit of (avoidable) scrambling on Maumtrasna. The group will walk in to the glacial coum holding Lough Nadirkmore, ascend a steep slope above the lake and follow the Buckaun ridge westwards up on to Maumtrasna’s extensive plateau. Depending on time and weather conditions the group will descend either by the Skeltia ridge, or the Srahnalong valley.

Participants will learn about the formation of Maumtrasna, the glacial activity that subsequently shaped the mountain, the history of Maumtrasna’s stone walls and other traces of traditional farming practices such as booleying that are still evident in the landscape today.

Along the way we’ll look at the flora and fauna of Maumtrasna (hoping to find two species of clubmoss) and talk about the interaction between recreational activity and the places and people where we walk and climb.

The walk will be led by Trish Walsh, geographer and Director of Petersburg Outdoor Education Centre who is also involved in the Joyce Country & Western Lakes Aspirant Geopark, with additional

input Mountaineering Ireland's Hillwalking, Access & Conservation Officer, Helen Lawless.

Distance: 12km, Time 5-6 hours, Height Gained 570m.

Multipitch Climbing Srahnalong Valley of Maumtrasna – V Diff/Severe

The climb is a beautiful atmospheric route on clean sandstone. Experience of leading multipitch routes and own rack/rope essential. A local climber will be on hand to show the way. It's 90 minute walk-in to reach the climbing and a longer walk off. We will try to pair up climbers if you don't have a partner for the day. Meet at 9am and back for 4pm. Max of 6 people . There is also single pitch climbing on the north side of Killary Harbour if the weather doesn't suit in the mountains.

18.30 Mountaineering Member's Forum – Dining Room Fairhill House Hotel

The member's forum is open to all MI members whether you are attending the entire weekend of activities or not. This is an open forum led by the Chairperson and CEO of Mountaineering Ireland. It is an opportunity to air any concerns or queries with the Board, staff and other members either individually or on behalf of your member club. It can also be used as an information sharing facility. Topics discussed are generally of interest to all individuals and clubs so we would encourage as many of those attending the Autumn Gathering as possible to come to the member's forum and feedback to your member club afterwards.

20.00 Dinner in dining room, Fairhill House Hotel

Sunday October 14th

There will be a variety of workshops available from 10:00 to 13:00 on Sunday morning. Please choose from the options below and make sure to include them when booking online.

1. Club Development Workshop – Fairhill House Hotel

This workshop is open to all club members and will look at a variety of current topics which affect all clubs. Club Development Workshop is an opportunity to bring specific questions to the forum.

The workshop will offer advice on GDPR, Insurance, club renewals, encouraging new members . If there is a particular area you would like to discuss or get information on please send an email to ruth@mountaineering.ie beforehand so we can prepare the necessary material.

2. Environmental Workshop

Visit to the Binn Shléibhe Mountain Access Area and walk around Lough Coolin.

Following on from Friday evening's panel discussion about access and how outdoor recreation can assist the viability of rural communities, we will visit the Binn Shléibhe Mountain Access Area just outside Clonbur to see how a Mountain Access Area would work in practice. While gaining an understanding of this agreed access model, participants will be able to enjoy a scenic walk on the lower slopes of Binn Shléibhe and around Lough Coolin, a walk that dates from when the Guinness family owned Ashford Castle estate and developed a pathway around this corrie lake. During the walk participants will be encouraged to contribute their own ideas as to how recreational access in Ireland could be better managed in the future.

The walk will be led by with Trish Walsh, Director Petersburg Outdoor Education Centre and Chairperson of Clonbur Community Council, with input from Helen Lawless, Mountaineering Ireland's Hillwalking, Access & Conservation Officer.

Note: Much of the walk is on an old track, which is rough in places, and there are some sections of bog and wet ground around the lake.

3. Club Training Workshop – Petersburg OEC

This workshop will be a mixture of indoor learning and practical outdoor sessions. Initially we will look at some suggested models for in-club training and what resources are available from Mountaineering Ireland to support club training. The outdoor session will focus on practical tips for teaching navigation, movement and leadership along with how to introduce training into your regular walks.

As always, there is the option to walk or climb independently on Sunday morning.

13.00 Gathering Ends
