

Mourne Rambling Group

Co. Wicklow trip - 10 to 13 August 2018

The 16 walkers who attended this trip enjoyed four days of walking in the Wicklow Mountains. We were hosted by the Irish Ramblers with whom we are beginning to form a strong connection. The Irish Ramblers are based in Dublin and most of their walking takes place in Co. Wicklow. They have over 600 members, although only one third of these are considered active.

The Irish Ramblers looked after us admirably and before I go any further I wish to record our sincere thanks on behalf of the 16 walkers. We will be returning the compliment when we host their visit this coming October.

The 16 walkers were: - Vincent Trainor, Ray Gray, Robert Marshall, Peter McGowan, Alice McParland, Dermot MacDermott, Elaine MacFarlane, Noel Rice, Jana Hnojeikova, Olwen Herbison, Philip Appleton, Carmel Quinn, Victor Knox, Janet Muller, Norman Patton and Kingsley Thompson.

On the first and last days we all walked together but we split into C and B walkers for the middle two days. It would be too messy to state how the split of B and C walkers came about on the middle two days as not everyone walked with the same group on each day. Also not everyone walked the whole four days. Suffice to say that the split was fairly even.

This is how the four days were spent: -

Day 1

Lugnaquilla

This was meant to be a "curtain raiser" for the break and turned out to be quite a strenuous full day! Eleven of us and a dozen, or so Irish Ramblers did the walk which was just short of 15km with over 900m of ascent. We were out on the hill for five and a half hours. There was very little time for breaks but we did enjoy lunch on the summit of Lugnaquilla. As everyone is aware Lugnaquilla is one of the highest mountains in Ireland at 925m asl. It is certainly the highest mountain in Co Wicklow. Whilst it is not especially a hard climb it is uphill all the way straight from the car park and downhill all the way back! There is some respite after the summit where there is a sort of plateau for a couple of kilometres.

However, this was a most enjoyable day, lead by Frank Bradley, Irish Ramblers' Lugnaquilla expert.

Day 2

Trooperstown Hill, incl part of the Wicklow Way

This was a day we could have done without! Seven C walkers attended this walk and all received a good soaking for their trouble! At 16km and 700m of ascent this would have been a cracking walk but unfortunately, due to the incessant rain and mist that came with it we did not see a thing! We were informed that there is a splendid view from the summit of Trooperstown Hill but in the circumstances we had to use our imagination! Everyone was soaked to the skin! Even the ones with the super-duper GTXYZ waterproofs!

Day 3

Camaderry SE Top and The Spink

By contrast to the previous day the weather, with the exception of a light shower at the end was kind to us. Eight of us joined the C Group for this walk and everyone thoroughly enjoyed the day. We started at the same place as the day before (The Visitors' Centre, Glendasan) and the first kilometre was a delightful interlude along a river bank. This was part of St Kevin's Way. The route then took us through a forest and ultimately out onto the open hill along a ridge for over two kilometres to Camaderry SE Top. Here we had lunch before descending over open country to the Glenealo River. It is worth mentioning at this point that we were amazed by the number of wild deer roaming about. Even more surprising was how close it was possible to be to these animals. One reason for this is

that there are an estimated 100,000 deer in the Wicklow Hills. Far too many, apparently, for the space available. Sadly, the only answer is a cull.

After crossing the river we joined a boardwalk for around 5km. This boardwalk has been built to protect the delicate vegetation underfoot. The boardwalk took us above the Vale of Glendasan and we experienced some spectacular views. We walked across an area called The Spink with Derrybawn Mountain on our right. The track ultimately returned us alongside the Lower Lake to our starting point at The Visitors Centre, Glendasan. Has been built to protect the delicate vegetation underfoot. The walk was over 15km with around 850m of ascent. We were out on the hill for six hours.

Day 4

Vale of Glendasan and The Spink

This was the day we returned home and was another joint effort with C and B group members walking together. We were out only three and a half hours to give everyone a chance to get home in reasonable time.

The route was quite similar to the previous day except on this occasion we set off from the Information Centre at the Upper Lake and walked up the Vale of Glendasan alongside the lough itself. At the head of the valley there was quite a steep climb to the river crossing and from there we joined the boardwalk once again, over The Spink and ultimately back to base at the information centre at the Upper Lake.

This walk was 10km with ascent of 570m. A good walk in just over three and a half hours.

In conclusion, this was a very enjoyable break with the Irish Ramblers and we hope there are many more of them in the future!

Ray Gray