

# MOURNE RAMBLERS NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2020

## A message from the Editor

Welcome to the latest edition of the Mourne Rambling Group newsletter.

The last few months since the last newsletter in February have been a time of great change in every aspect of our lives. To the best of our ability, the Committee has done its best to keep members informed of developments in particular to the management of the programme of walks.

However, one event which shattered our lives occurred since the last issue of the group newsletter. I refer to the death of David Oldfield, a stalwart and a fixture in the Mourne Rambling Group since he joined in 1972 shortly after the formation of the group.

In memory of David, this issue of the newsletter is dedicated to him with contributions from several members, each one giving their individual memories of how David influenced them.

The last page reminds members of who have paid for the year 2020.

Vincent Trainor, Editor

- DAVID OLDFIELD - TRIBUTES
- LIST OF PAID – UP MEMBERS 2020

## **A Tribute to David Oldfield**

My memories of David who died recently and far too early come in three and altogether different parts.

First the more trivial; I used to meet David regularly in a delicatessen on the Lisburn Road at about 9.00 am on Saturday when he and I were shopping. He always had a list, yes, written of course, of things, which he needed for his own or Irene's cooking and he always seemed to have a lot of people to cook for. We exchanged plans for the weekend walking or his cycling and complained together about the weather or he informed me where they were next going to go. He was always full of plans for trips in the UK or abroad.

The second recollection I have is meeting David regularly at the Thursday evening meeting of HUMANI in the Malone Lodge Hotel. We both were regular attenders to listen to speakers on various issues of interest to the Northern Irish humanists. David never held back if he disagreed and was able to formulate incisive questions without at the same time ever being preachy, rude, belligerent or in need to seek approbation.

The third area of overlap was of course his long membership of the Mourne Ramblers which I joined in the autumn 2014. When I gave up solo-walking in The Mourne I asked Robert Roulston, whom I had long known, to recommend a club I could join and David turned out to be a leading member thereof. I remembered my first trip with the MRG to Mayo in 2015, which was led by David and I quickly learned that if there was a long way David preferred to take that rather than to shorten a walk. One day, we had a great ascent of Croagh Patrick in the mist which opened up just for a few minutes to reveal the Bay with all the islands when we reached the top. Whereas many would have been happy to simply ascend the Croagh or maybe one hill before it, David led us over four before we even started to ascend on the pilgrim's route. We were back seven and a half hours later and I then knew he meant business on his walks. His leadership was always great and demonstrated itself in getting some of the more anxious members of the group over the rather exposed part of the ascent of Mweelrea via the corrie from the East. His preparation was always meticulous and he never took unwarranted risks.

I think David led his life with authenticity. His actions and words were congruent with his beliefs and values. He was himself, not an imitation of what others think he should have been. There is no "should" in authenticity.

Bert Rima

## **Some memories of David Oldfield.**

Although I joined the Mourne Ramblers back in 2002 I cannot remember when I first met David. What I do remember is that in the ensuing years I became aware of a guy who was a very experienced hill goer, someone who had a vast knowledge of many things including all the latest walking equipment, a person who was interested in helping others new to the mountains “find their feet” and a friend who was always good company in the hills ..... this was the David I came to know and respect. Quite often as we roamed the hills together on Mourne Rambler walks we would chat about many topics - from how you should prepare porridge in the true Scottish way and how magnetic variation varied within the Mournes to what made a good whiskey (sorry David, I meant whisky) and the relative merits of different types of education systems. David was a precise thinker and he expected others to be precise too - he kept you on your toes. It was always reassuring to have David in your group if you were leading a walk - you knew, if an accident occurred or a difficult situation arose you could always talk things through with him and he would give you sound advice.

Not only was his bearing distinctive - he had a distinctive voice. Some years ago, whilst walking by myself in a remote part of Florence Court Forest I heard a voice filtering through the trees. I knew immediately who owned it, and sure enough, a few moments later David and Irene came striding around the corner. Later that sunny afternoon we had a cuppa together and chatted - about the mountains ..... of course.

George Acheson.

## **DAVID OLDFIELD**

I feel that I've come somewhat late to the party when talking about David Oldfield, having joined the Mourne Ramblers in 2008, compared to his 1972 (the year I went to secondary school!) This meant that I missed participating in some of his epic walks and trips away (although I think I would have given his Winter Walking trips a miss), but had the benefit of walking with a man who had been seasoned by such experiences.

As a leader in the Mourne Ramblers, I was always delighted when David decided to join my walk. I knew there would be a vast reservoir of knowledge and experience to draw upon if needed, in addition to some cultural conversation about books and plays, as well as the occasional burst into song! (Don't worry, I never joined in.) His manner of coaching when passing on his advice could appear schoolmasterly: it seems that the man may leave the teaching profession, but it never leaves the man!

The last time I walked in a group with David was the Invitation Walk in 2019. (Remember those?) We walked up the gully at the side of Luke's mountain and David led us to a good vantage point where we could enjoy the view and then he showed us a somewhat overgrown track back to the main path up the gully. It was a wonderful experience and typical of the man to pass his love of the mountains on to people starting out in the club.

Peter McGowan

## David Oldfield

The unexpected sad news that David Oldfield had died suddenly came as a great shock. I had had a socially distanced coffee with Irene and David the week before and they had been telling me all about their future trips away to foreign parts. David and Irene have been my friends for many decades and David's love of the mountains and adventure was a thread through his entire life.

As a long time member of the Mourne Rambling Group David had contributed greatly to the club. Because of his great in-depth knowledge of the mountains and his vast experience of walking in so many regions of the world he always had expert advice which he would readily share. He was always ready to assist, he had given me much useful help when I was asked to lead from a starting point in the Mourne I was unfamiliar with. His encyclopaedic knowledge was invaluable when choosing the best route for the group. David always undertook meticulous research when planning any trip, whether leading a walk in the Mourne or trekking in the Atlas Mountains. He had a substantial collection of walking guides and maps and would research all aspects of the history and geography of the region to be visited and he would share these freely.

This level of research always benefited the club when it came to trips away; not only routes were planned but the best accommodation was tracked down, as well as the best eating places. David not only enjoyed the adventure of the outdoors, he greatly loved good food and fine wine (and the odd dram as well). He was also a keen photographer and his contribution to the club's annual slide show was always well received. His excellent slides from the exotic regions of the world always conveyed his enthusiasm for the geography and geology of the planet.

David had a clear view of the correct approach to walking etiquette and safety and he carried that ethos into how to lead walks. The safety of those walking under his care was always at the forefront of his thinking. In the decades he was involved with the Ramblers. I am sure he contributed greatly to the way the club conducted its walks.

I would like to particularly mention David's leadership when it came to the trips away to his dearly loved highlands of Scotland. The Scottish winter trips were precisely planned. Given the serious terrain that we were walking in David always planned with the safety of the group in mind and again he also made sure that the group would be well housed and fed while we were away.

David's death has come too soon, and I know that he is sorely missed by his soulmate, Irene. Their adventures together were an example to us all and showed that there is a great world out there to go and see and experience. His tales over dinner and a glass of wine certainly made me want to go out and experience some of them.

I trust I speak for all club members that his contribution over many decades was truly appreciated and that his sad death will leave a vacuum that will be hard to fill. The Ramblers will miss a valued member who made a great contribution and I am sure they would like to express their deepest sympathy to Irene.

Robert Roulston  
July 2020

## Memories of David Oldfield

My first major encounter with David was when he organised an advanced navigation day. I believe this would have been during the winter five years ago. David was looking for a maximum of around three people to attend this course as a greater number would have diluted the impact. In the event it was such an atrocious winter weatherwise that there was only David and I who braved the elements! We set off from Deers Meadow and our route was up Pigeon Rock, across to the “second summit” of Pigeon Rock on the ridge, back to the wall and back to the car. Not a particularly long trek but packed with valuable information which was put into practice along the way. We had literally no choice but to use David’s instructions as the weather could not have been worse! Bitterly cold, dense mist, deep snow in places and rain most of the day! A valuable day out!

Another time was on a short break that he and Irene had arranged at Westport, Co Mayo. This was five years ago in April 2015 and I had been a member of the Ramblers less than two years. David had planned four walks, the first of which was to summit Ben Gorm. We were part way up the mountain when we heard shouting behind us and at first assumed it was the farmer rounding up his sheep. In point of fact, it was indeed the farmer but he was actually rounding up a group of walkers, namely us! We were apparently trespassing on his land and he was not amused. David tried his best to reason with him but the man’s temper had gone way beyond that by this time. We had therefore no choice but to descend the part of the mountain with our tails between our legs!

The disappointing factor here was that David had taken the trouble to enquire beforehand if it was OK to climb Ben Gorm by this route and obviously had been given the “go ahead”.

The third occasion I can recall was again on a Spring walking holiday in Connemara in May 2018. This time I had organised the trip and was leading the C Group on each of the three days. The last day was to be a linear walk along Killary Harbour but had to be rearranged at the last minute because of access problems. I therefore chose a walk of 11km which summited Benbaun, Benbrack and Knockbrack. This was new territory for me and I have to say I was somewhat apprehensive. I had trialled the walks on the other two days a couple of months previously and was comfortable with those. I therefore breathed a silent sigh of relief when David announced that he was to join the walk on that day. As it happened, all went well and everyone enjoyed the walk. To David’s credit he did not interfere but I knew he was always available if I needed assistance or advice. I did refer to him on a few occasions and this all added to making this another memorable day.

Raymond Gray

## **Some memories of David Oldfield.**

When I joined the Mourne Ramblers in 1976, I was to become a member of a walking group that included men and women from all walks of life. There were very few members from the Mournes and most of the group came from places well outside the Mournes, mostly from Belfast and surrounding areas. The one characteristic common to all members was an abiding love of walking in the mountains, and especially in the Mournes.

As I became acquainted with the different members over the years, one man stood out from the others in his knowledge, his experience, his fitness, his extreme ability to always choose the best, right way of doing things. That man was David Oldfield. What I mean mainly is that when David was in the group on any walk, and especially when he was leading, there was a confidence that very little would go wrong.

My first memory of meeting David would be in October, 1978. The walk was one which happened only once a year. It was led by Francie McKnight, it started in Park Lane in Rostrevor, and it had the title of the Ghann River Valley. David was present that day and it was on that day that I became aware of his great knowledge of walks around the Rostrevor area in his early years. I also got to know he was a teacher in Campbell College and that one of his strong points was taking groups of students on trips in the Mournes. I wondered how many of those students progressed to becoming mountain walkers in their adult years. One thing was for sure – they could not have had a better teacher.

As the years went on, I had the privilege of participating in several away trips outside the Mournes, organised by David and Irene. One stands out which was to the Bluestacks in Donegal in ----. The group did self-catering, while I stayed in Shelagh Murphy's house in Rosstown, meeting up with the group each morning for the wonderful days out in the mountains. On another trip we focused on Dunlewey and the area around Errigal. He showed us how to cross a fast-flowing river by removing our socks and keeping our boots on as we walked through the water up to our knees. My special memory is of how caring David was to one or two members who were, shall we say, struggling, especially going up the North side of Errigal and through 'the window'. The last trip I went on with him was to Westport in 2015. The organisation he and Irene put into that trip was second to none. The walks were superb and the evening dancing sessions only added to the enjoyment.

Sadly, the years take their toll. When I started out in 1976, there was only one Mourne Rambling Group

which walked together each Sunday. This progressed to an A and B group, then an A, B and C group.

Now we have A, B, C and D groups. Because of problems with my pace, I am now an established member of the D group. It was a privilege to also have David as company in the Ds during the last few years. While we may no longer have the pleasure of his presence, we have many memories of a man who made the Mourne Rambling Group the better for his membership of it.

Vincent Trainor

## **Tribute: David Oldfield**

David Oldfield was a long-time member of the Mourne Rambling Group; over the decades he was a regular and strong, determined walker who took part in all the club's activities and essential work on many club committees.

He was known as a leader of walks in the Mournes and on MRG "Away Trips" especially to his beloved native Scotland...its daunting high mountain peaks were tackled by him and fellow ramblers in sunshine, rain, snow and ice conditions.

Of course, David had great knowledge of the Mournes and was always ready to discuss and advise on suggested routes; also his dedication to Mountain Safety and Navigation Skills was impressive. His often forthright opinions on these topics were thoroughly professional in approach.

In later years, episodes of illness and injury did not deter David from seeking recovery and to continue walking on the hills, cycling, going to the gym, and, along with Irene, his wife, to travel abroad. Over the decades, David was an experienced international traveller; he was familiar with most European countries and further afield in continental America both North and South. He was a regular contributor to the club's annual Slide Show ... showing fine images of mountain landscapes from distant places and also nearer to home.

On the club's regular Sunday walks, David was a welcome walking companion (unlikely to get lost if David was in the group!), kind, looking out for the group and easy to talk to ... he will be missed.

Fionnuala Carragher

The following was a message to the Mourne Ramblers that Irene asked us to read at the beginning of our first walks on 28 June of this year. It is followed by the brochure that was printed to celebrate his life.

### **Tribute to David**

I think you all know how much the Mourne Rambling Group meant to David. Moving through the groups from A down to D he relished getting out with friends for a good days walk and good banter. There's nothing he liked better than a lively, sometimes heated discussion even or especially if it meant ruffling a few feathers. You knew where you stood with David. The tributes that I have received are most heart warming and I will gain solace from these.

Here is a short extract that Irene had included in the brochure

“At 6:30 pm on Sunday 14th of June 2020, David suffered sharp shooting pains from the heart to the head, caused by a dissection of the thoracic aorta: he died at about 11 pm. All so quick, so devastating. I was down in the family room in the Royal when he died.”

“There are consolations, which I know will sustain me through difficult times: we had a wonderful happy day that Sunday organising and discussing our plans for the week ahead; I was there with him when the pain started and later I knew he was in good hands. He wouldn't have wanted to cope with a debilitating illness. “

**This was one injury he didn't bounce back from.**





Ceremony to Celebrate the Life of

# David Stephen Oldfield

26th March 1946 - 14th June 2020

James Brown & Sons Friday 19th June 2020 at 2.15 pm

## **In Attendance**

Humanist Celebrant

*Jennifer Sturgeon BEd, MSc*

Representatives Alliance Party *Paula Bradshaw*

Mourne Ramblers

*Terry Magowan*

Campbell College

*Billy McKee*

Friends and Family

*Irene Cauley, Joe Cauley, Teresa Mullan*

# Order of Service

## **Entrance Music**

Bonnie Nancy

*Aly Bain and Phil Cunningham*

## **Words of Welcome**

Good afternoon everyone. You are all very welcome to this ceremony to celebrate the life of David Oldfield who died on 14th of June 2020. I am a celebrant from the Humanist Association of Northern Ireland

and have been invited to conduct this service by Irene in accordance with David's personal philosophy as a long term Humanist himself.

## **David's Life and Career**

David was born in Paisley in Scotland on 26th March 1946 and moved to Scone in his beloved Perthshire at the age of six. He studied Economics at St Andrew's University where he obtained his Honours MA , followed by Dip Ed at QUB. After a brief career in computing with ICL he started his teaching career in Orangefield and later Campbell College from 1978-2005. The tributes indicate he lived life to the full, gave his all both in the classroom, the outdoors, in various societies and hobbies.



## **David's Death**

*Irene Cauley*

At 6.30 pm on Sunday 14th of June 2020, he suffered sharp shooting pains from the heart to the head, caused by a dissection of the thoracic aorta: he died at about 11.00 pm. All so quick, so devastating.

There are consolations, which I know will sustain me through difficult times: we had a wonderful happy day that Sunday organising and discussing our plans for the week ahead; I was there with him when it started and later I knew he was in good hands. He wouldn't have wanted to cope with a debilitating illness. This was one injury he didn't bounce back from.

To the love of my life, my friend, companion who brought out the best in me.

Today David you do not wake up,  
Nor tomorrow, nor tomorrow,  
But I will not say goodbye,  
But welcome you into my heart, mind and soul, Tomorrow and tomorrow.  
I don't want you to have a grave,  
I don't want to see a grave.  
I will head to the mountains;  
I may be alone, but I won't be alone  
And there, with you, I'll seek peace and consolation.



*Garden scene in Seville*

*Paula Bradshaw, Alliance Party*

One of the ways David's commitment to a better future manifested itself was through his work for the Alliance Party. As a veteran of too many elections, we enjoyed his camaraderie and fun. He was always a great support to all of our candidates and eager to help out in any way he could, through delivering leaflets, attending events or contributing to our fundraising efforts. His love for the South Belfast constituency, especially the Balmoral area, was clear to us all and we will remember him fondly, as part of our Alliance family.

*Terry Magowan, Mourne Ramblers*

David was inspirational in his input and enthusiasm for the Mourne Ramblers. He brought with him his mountain experience and knowledge, gained in his early years, in the mountains in Scotland.

He encouraged us by providing training in navigation, weather prediction, mountain safety and promoting good walking gear. Some of his protocols, or as David preferred to call them, 'suggestions', led to rather heated discussions, but eventually he was proved right.

His 'Scottish Mountain Winter Experiences' week long breaks were memorable, real eye openers and the highlight of the year.

We will miss him greatly!  
He made a long day's walk a short one with great craic.

*David on Scottish hill in Winter*

*Teresa McKenna, long time friend*

I've known David since shortly after he first met Irene in 1979, and he has always been a wonderful example of how to live life fully and well. The happiness of his marriage with Irene was obvious, and he had an amazing range of interests, most obviously hiking, climbing, and travelling. But he was also an expert photographer, an adventurous cook, a connoisseur of malt whiskies and fine wines, a keen gardener, a theatre-goer and a lifetime member of QFT. He had a breadth of knowledge and interest in current affairs and politics, and brought vigorous clarity to any discussion or argument. But what I'll remember best is his kindness: he was always very gentle and compassionate when anyone needed help. And he was so good when asked for advice of any kind: he went to all kinds of trouble to find out information on anything I ever asked, like what to do about a bad knee, where to find the best online language courses, where to go on a two week trip to Scotland, and hand-delivered many pages of great information. We'll all miss him.





*Ever the Photographer*

*Billy McKee, Campbell College*

A colleague, Michael Benington's description of David was that he was committed, totally committed, to everything he did especially the complete well being of his pupils.

David joined Campbell College from Orangefield Boys' in 1977 as Head of Economics and Careers which blossomed under his guidance. He contributed to the lives of many boys, ranging from Economics in the classroom to cross- country when his Irish wolfhounds often accompanied him, and the teams enjoyed Ulster Championship successes. His Adventurous Training Group involved activities in numerous mountainous terrains and often in winter conditions, demanding young men to challenge themselves.

A fitness and cycling enthusiast, he did not know when to lie down; anyone who knew him was aware of his determination to overcome incurred injuries with absolute haste. To conclude, David was simply a great guy with a zest for life.



*Getting ready for the Italian Christmas party*



*Family gathering with Errigal in the background*



*Family meal in the Donegal Cottage*

*Joe Cauley, brother-in-law*

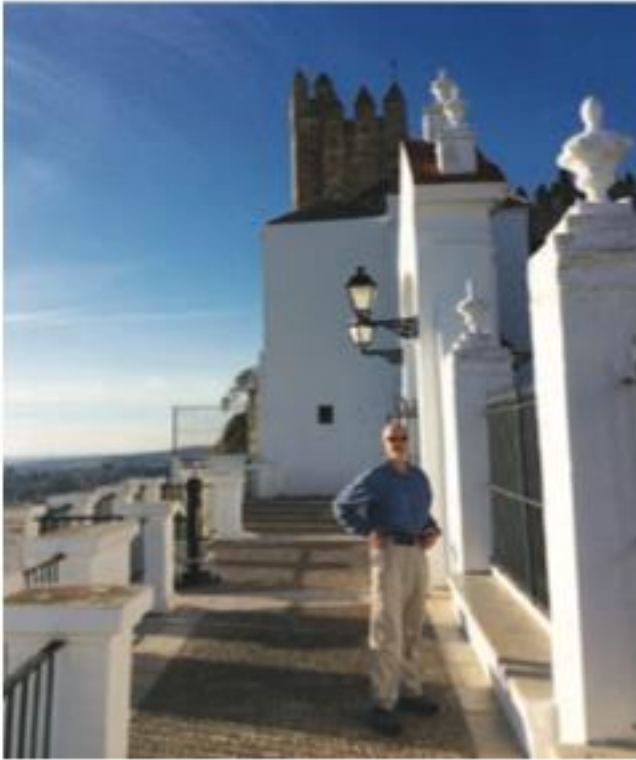
We welcomed David into our family circle when he married Irene in 1987. He was a breath of fresh air, with his love of the outdoors, his Scottish heritage and culture. It was a challenge for him, coming from a family of 2, suddenly to join in, or try to join in, the family discussions involving 7 brothers and sisters. But he did manage to get the odd word in which helped to widen our perspective and take a fresh look at life.

The nieces and nephews, all 22 of them, have a great fondness for him, enjoy the banter, and hold him in high regard, even if he left them exhausted after dragging them up the odd mountain.

**Moment of Reflection**

We will now have a moment of silent reflection.  
Every one of you here shared happy times with David;  
each of you knew him in a different context;  
may you all reflect on those happy occasions with love and fondness. *30-60 seconds of silence.*





## **Closing Words**

On behalf of Irene, I would like to thank you for coming here today to celebrate David's life.

The cortège will now proceed up to Harberton Park where it will pause outside No. 106.

Graham Harris will pipe us the few yards to David's home.

You are invited to come to the gardens to share in a glass of wine or soft drink, take time to appreciate the posters that have been erected

to give you a deeper and some lighthearted glimpses into David's life. But please remember the social distancing restrictions.

The garden and displays will be open until about 6.00 pm.

## **Exit Music**

The Music Of Spey

*Aly Bain and Phil Cunningham*



*A well earned rest - North West Scotland*



## MEMBERS 2020

The list below contains the names of all members who have paid for 2020 (up to and including 31 July 2020). Please check to see that your name is on the list. If your name ought to be on the list and has been omitted, please accept our apologies. Please contact the Treasurer on 078 3512 8564 for clarification.

(120)

Abernethy William	Goodman Harry	Matson Neill	Patton Norman
Acheson George	Goodman Stephen	McAllister Catherine	Pettyfer Mel
Aitken James	Gray Raymond	McAuley Catherine	Pridgen Maggie
Appleton Philip	Greaney Ellen	McCauley Gabriel	Proctor Ian
Bolwell Andy	Green Wilf	McCavera Dora	Quiery Pamela
Brett Adam	Gribbin Rennie	McClelland Gillian	Quinn Carmel
Brett Annie	Gunn Philip	McComish Domnall	Reid Ken
Browne Gary	Hamilton Joan	McCreery Gordon	Rice Noel
Browne Geraldine	Hanna Maire	McDermott Mary	Rima Bert
Calvert Joan	Hanratty Patrick	McGinley Mark	Roulston Robert
Campbell Robert	Henderson Helen	McGivern John	Russell Trevor
Carragher Anna	Herbison Olwen	McGowan Peter	Saunderson Chris
Carragher Fionnuala	Hoeritzauer Marie	McKenna Vincent	Scott Barry
Cauley Irene	Hollingsworth Sandra	McKibbin Andrew	Smyth Hazel
Chapa Patricia	Hughes Seamus	McKnight Joseph	Smyth Raymond
Connolly Gerard	Hughes Teresa	McLean Bernard	Sochor Cecilia
Connolly Patricia	Hughes Thomas	McMahon Hilja	Stapleton Alan
Connolly Raymond	Hulme Joan	McManus Owen	Stevenson Graeme
Coyle Loretto	Hussain Rafia	McParland Alice	Stuart Ian
Cummings Thomas	Jackson Deenagh	Miskimmin Mark	Taylor John
Daly Paula	Jordan Billy	Moore Anne	Taylor Toni
Davis Yvonne	Kelly Pat	Muller Janet	Templeton Helen
Doran Marie	Keown Ann	Mulvenna Conor	Thompson Kingsley
Drinkell Denis	Knox Victor	Murphy Shelagh	Trainor Vincent
Dunlop Anne	MacDermott Dermot	O'Connor Damian	Tumilty Pat
Elliott Norman	Mackey Francis	O'Connor Nuala	Turley Briege
Farrington Gerry	Magowan Reg	O'Dea Mary	Tweed John
Fawcett Laura	Magowan Rodney	Oldfield David	Wales Jackie
Franklin Roisin	Magowan Terry	Overend Martin	Watson Linda
Gilmore Seamus	Marshall Robert	Patterson Wendy	Webb Donna

## ASSOCIATE MEMBERS 2020 (5)

Ciaran Hanna, Liz Osborne, Robert Osborne, Jonathan Shields, Anne Trainor

## HONORARY MEMBER

Christine Mackle, President

## Mourne Rambling Group

### Membership Renewal Form (January 2020)

\* **Name(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

(Only include information below if amendments are required)

\* **Address:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\* **Postcode** \_\_\_\_\_

\* **Phone No:** \_\_\_\_\_

\* **Mobile No:** \_\_\_\_\_

\* **Email address** if available: (for receipt of newsletters and information from the committee)

Please let us have the email address where you wish to be contacted.

\_\_\_\_\_

### Please tick as appropriate:

Full Membership at £25 per year (or part of year)

Associate Membership (non-walking member) at £5 per year (or part of year)

#### Return to:

Vincent Trainor, 34, Grahamville Estate, Killeel, Co. Down, BT34 4DD

(Cheques made payable to Mourne Rambling Group. Please do not send cash in the post.)

Members may pay their annual subscription by internet banking if they wish. Should you wish to avail of this option please e-mail Vincent at [trainorvj@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:trainorvj@yahoo.co.uk) and he will be more than happy to forward details of the group's bank details.