

MOURNE RAMBLERS NEWSLETTER

November 2019

A message from the Editor

Welcome to the latest edition of the Mourne Rambling Group newsletter. In this issue I hope you will find articles and items of interest to you including:

- NEW MEMBER UPDATE
- FROM SANTIAGO TO FINISTERRE – REMEMBERING ELIZABETH SLOAN
- THANK YOU
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Vincent Trainor, Editor

New members since the last newsletter (July 2019) **(up-to-date as at 29 November 2019)**

We are delighted to welcome these 3 new members since July 2019. This makes a total of 132 paid-up members this year – slightly down on last year.

Mary McDermott, Mark Miskimmin, Melanie Pettyfer

From Santiago to Finisterre **Remembering Elizabeth Sloan**

Liz loved the Mourne Mountains. She got a taste for hill walking through the Wee Binnians but as their walks were twice monthly she headed to the Mourne Rambling Group for her weekly fix. As a leader for the C and then D groups Liz had her walks planned meticulously well but there was no place she knew better than the trails and mountains around Kilbroney, her home turf, which she shared with us.

In preparation her boots were scrubbed clean from the week before, map and compass at the ready and rucksack packed with all the necessities for the day ahead. And sometimes this would include her own homemade bakes, very much appreciated by the group. For Liz the only other necessity to be included each week was her pink lipstick. Before the start of the walk and after lunch she would apply a dab of lipstick saying, "You never know who you'll meet on the mountains and you need to make a good impression."

Liz did make a good impression, she had such a zest for life and it rubbed off on others. Surely, we cannot forget the year of her 70th birthday when she planned, in minute detail, her Camino pilgrimage. She would be walking for 6 weeks and knew day by day where she would travel and in which refuge she would stay that night. She spoke afterwards of the people she met on the way and how, on the actual day of her 70th birthday, when she entered Santiago de Compostela, many of those fellow travellers and members of her own family were there to offer 'Feliz Cumpleaños' (Liz also knew her way round the Spanish lingo). After her sojourn she shared stories, maps, books, routes, photos and Camino advice with other Mourne Ramblers who wanted to set out on their own pilgrimage.

But it was earlier this year when the finality of her illness took hold that there was a sense of urgency about all the projects Liz had set for herself. One such project was to complete the final leg of the Camino — Santiago to Finisterre, a 90km hike. And this she did.

Another project closer to home and almost a year in its preparation was our climb of Lamagan. What started out as an idea made in jest became a reality on a dull but dry Sunday at the end of May. Photos taken at the summit and a celebratory hot chocolate at the Carrick Cottage Café completed that challenge.

Liz was an extremely active woman, regularly taking part in the 'couch to 5k' run in Rostrevor Park, walking on Saturdays with the Down Danderers, Sundays with the Ramblers and on Mondays with a more

select group comprising DDs and MRGs, she played bowls and then in more recent years took up crocheting.

In an email Liz sent me towards the end she wrote, “I want to continue my active life for as long as possible” and I would consider that Liz did just that. She was a remarkable woman and I am glad to have walked the mountains with her.

Dora McCavera

THANK YOU

Since the last newsletter, there have been quite a few events organised by members for the group. We would like to offer our thanks on behalf of everyone for the following:

- Peter McGowan has ended his tenure as Chairperson after 3 years in the hot seat. Thank you, Peter, for your fine leadership of the group and attention to detail. We wish our new chairperson, Bert Rima, a long and successful time in office
- Rather than naming anyone who helped organise the various events held to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Mourne Rambling Group, heartfelt thanks is offered to everyone who helped in any way to organise the very successful and memorable year to be looked back on with fondness
- Sincere thanks to Peter McGowan who organised the September trip to Donegal (see the report on the trip below)

STAR TREK

Weather permitting, our Star Trek will take place around the 13th/14th December when the Geminid Meteor shower will occur. Much, of course, depends on having a clear night. The walk will start at 8.00pm, follow forest tracks and last for about 3 hours. You will need to wear your normal hillwalking gear (head torch essential) and bring a warm drink and something to eat. If you are interested please contact George (tel: 02893340642) on 12th December 2019.

T

Donegal, September 2019

August can be the wettest month outside winter, so this year’s trip to Donegal was planned to take place in early September to take advantage of the fact that the weather gets better when the children go back to school. And so it proved.

This was a C group walking weekend, although the main walks were of B group length. The numbers going on the trip dwindled until there were eight sturdy ramblers left, although we didn't have all eight on any given walk. The eight were: Robert Marshall (A/B walker), Noel Rice and Norman Patton (B walkers), Dermot MacDermott (B/C walker), Kingsley Thompson, Ray Gray and Toni Taylor (C group walkers), all led by Peter McGowan (C group walker). Due to work commitments, Robert couldn't walk on the Friday, and Noel couldn't arrive until Saturday night, while Toni and Norman had the good sense to take time out on Sunday and Monday respectively.

We stayed in Teac Campbell, which the club has been using for many years. It describes itself as a "humble B&B", although it is anything but: we were made very welcome during our stay, and even had time to swap hiking stories with Charlie, while the *bean an tí* ("woman of the house") was making us a cup of tea.

Teac Campbell also has the advantage of being only a few yards away from the Sean Óg Bar and Restaurant, to which we retired each evening.

The weekend started with a curtain raiser walk around Lough Salt on Friday afternoon, with the walk on Saturday being up the Poisoned Glen and over Slieve Snaght, followed by a linear walk over the Aghlas on Sunday. We finished the weekend off with an ascent of Muckish on Monday before heading home.

Lough Salt

We met for lunch at the Mountain Top Service Station on the outskirts of Letterkenny and then drove in a convoy to the car park on the banks of Lough Salt at C120260. The weather was kind and we had a pleasant introduction to walking in Donegal with a walk of 6.7 km and ascent of 320 metres. This took us nearly 3½ hours, with plenty of stops for photos.

Slieve Snaght and the Poisoned Glen

This walk will go down in annals of the Mourne Ramblers as a great "learning experience".

It started beside the ruins of a church on the banks of Dunlewey Lough. We followed a "track" into the Poisoned Glen (the track soon disappeared), but we found the gate through the deer fence easily enough. The climb up the boulder-strewn gully to Ballaghgeeha Gap was challenging but it was good to get out of the wet glen. From here, we could see the outline of the rest of our walk; it appeared to be a decent ridge walk with good views down the Poisoned Glen. However, "ridge" is an interesting concept in the Derryveagh Mountains, if steep descents and ascents can even remotely be described as a ridge.

We started off in blissful ignorance to make our way to Slieve Snaght.

The best I can say is that it was a challenging walk; at the time, that was not the phrase I would have used. The terrain made a mockery of my estimated timings, and we arrived belatedly at Slieve Snaght just as it was being covered in mist. The prescribed route would have involved venturing further into the mist, so we retraced our steps and found a good path down to the valley, thanks to some scouting work by Robert, Noel, Norman and Kingsley.

We then made our way back to the start, only to be held up by a fast-moving river (which none of the guide books had adequately warned us about – maybe it was a mere trickle on the day they did the walk, or maybe there was a conspiracy against us). After searching for a place for tired legs to cross, we eventually followed the river to the start of the valley and crossed it at a suitable point and then used a stone stile over a wall to regain solid ground.

To make matters worse, time was running out if we were going to get something to eat. Fortunately, Noel had arrived from work and was in Sean Óg's, so he was able to charm the staff into keeping the kitchen open for a group of hungry Mourne Ramblers.

We had to down some Guinness to keep our strength up, but retired to bed early, some of us scarred for life. The stats for the walk are 16.4 km with 975 metres of ascent, but this doesn't do justice to a walk that took over 9½ hours to complete.

The Aghlas

This walk forms part of the Glover Highlander Challenge Walk. The route we chose was from the shrine at Muckish Gap (B999268), over Crocknalaraghagh, Aghla Beg, Aghla Beg South (or “Ardloughnabrackbaddy”) and Aghla More, then down to Altan Lough and thence along a track to the R251 road at the base of Errigal (C953205).

A battered and bruised, but undaunted, group of Mourne Ramblers faced this challenge manfully, with a grateful nod to the only woman in the group, Toni, who although not doing the walk, kindly agreed to drop us off at the start, so that we had all the cars waiting for us at the end.

This walk was one of the best of the weekend; the weather was kind (at least until we were on our way back to the cars), there were good tracks to follow, and we could see the route ahead. The walk was 13 km in length with a climb of 890 metres, with Errigal a constant presence in front of us. It took us nearly 7 hours, but we had many stops on this enjoyable hike.

Muckish

We finished the weekend with an ascent of Muckish, via the Miners Track and descending to the shrine at Muckish Gap where we had started Sunday's walk. (This also forms part of the Glover Highlander Challenge Walk.)

The walk up the Miners Track was marvellous; it looks intimidating, but the track is generally well marked, with only one or two places where you needed to scramble over rocks (and even here, there were good hand- and foot-holds cut into the rock). Care has to be taken to ensure that you stay on the path in the early stages where there are many false tracks, but as you get higher up, the main track becomes very obvious, and if you get sidetracked, you should aim to rejoin it as soon as possible.

Once on top of Muckish, good navigation skills are required to stay on course, although we discovered some occasional small red flags that reassured us that we were following the correct route for the Glover Highlander. We descended to Muckish Gap after 2¾ hours having walked 4.3 km and climbed 430 metres.

Peter McGowan

Protect yourself against tick bites

Date published: 19 August 2019

People are being reminded to protect themselves against the risk of tick bites. Ticks can carry Lyme disease which may be transmitted to humans through their bite. There are no vaccines to defend against tick-borne disease in the UK and Ireland. Therefore, the best defence is to avoid being bitten.



Signs and symptoms of Lyme disease

Ticks are tiny spider-like creatures, which feed on the blood of animals and sometimes people.

If you are involved in outdoor activities which take you into the countryside, parks, or gardens with wildlife such as squirrels and hedgehogs, you may be at risk of tick bites.

Lyme disease is a bacterial infection which is transmitted by tick bites.

The earliest and most common symptom of Lyme disease is a pink or red circular rash that develops around the area of the bite, three to 30 days after someone is bitten.

The rash is often described as looking like a bullseye on a dartboard.

You may also experience flu-like symptoms, such as:

- tiredness
- headaches
- muscle or joint pain

Consult [your GP](#) if a rash or other symptoms develop within a few weeks of a tick bite, as early treatment can prevent progression to chronic disease.

If Lyme disease is left untreated, further health issues may develop months or even years later, including:

- problems affecting the nervous system
- heart problems
- inflammation of the membranes surrounding the brain and spinal cord

Preventing tick bites

Late spring, early summer and autumn are peak times for tick bites, which coincide with people venturing outdoors in the warmer weather.

It's important to take preventive measures against tick bites and also look out for ticks after visiting affected areas.

The best way of preventing Lyme disease is to avoid being bitten when you are in grassy or woodland areas known to have a high tick population. The following precautions might help to prevent Lyme disease:

- keep to footpaths and avoid long grass when out walking
- wear a long-sleeved shirt
- tuck your trousers into your socks
- wear light-coloured clothes (to help you spot a tick on them)
- use insect repellent
- check yourself for ticks and remove any promptly
- check your children and pets for ticks

There is currently no vaccine available to prevent Lyme disease.

How to remove a tick

If you find a tick on your or your child's skin, remove it using a pair of tweezers that won't squash the tick (such as fine-tipped tweezers) or a tick removal tool (available from pet shops or vets).

Gently grip the tick as close to the skin as possible and pull steadily away from the skin without crushing the tick. If you use a tick removal tool, follow the manufacturer's instructions.

Wash your skin with water and soap afterwards, then apply an antiseptic cream to the skin around the bite.

Don't use a lit cigarette end, a match head or substances such as alcohol or petroleum jelly to force the tick out.

Leadership in the Hills Workshop

Twelve members of the Mourne Ramblers braved the wind, rain and floods to attend a 'Leadership in the Hills' Workshop at YMCA Greenhill, Newcastle on the 9th November, 2019.

The workshop was led by Jonny Parr and Simon Kennedy who are both highly qualified and experienced mountain instructors. Although a workshop outline had been agreed in advance the format was flexible and able to cover matters of interest which arose during Group discussions.

The Workshop was divided into 4 main sections:

Mountain Leadership – specifically looking at the roles and responsibilities of a leader, the types of hazard a leader and their group could come across in the mountains and styles of leadership.

Planning a walk – covered topics such as identifying an appropriate route, timing of the walk, potential points of risk and associated escape routes. Included in this section was also a review of the equipment and aids a leader should have in their bag which interestingly included insulating tape (it only sticks to itself so is useful for binding dressings and can also be used to make temporary repairs to boots and clothing) and a second torch rather than spare batteries (think of trying to replace batteries in the dark perhaps in the cold and rain with gloves on).

Dealing with incidents on the hill – the actions a leader should take if a serious incident happens on their walk including how to ensure other members of the group remain safe and well as they wait for the Mountain Rescue Team. This is particularly important as it can take hours for Mountain Rescue to reach a group stranded on the hills.

Participants were also made aware of the '999 Text Service' which can be used to reach the emergency services in areas where the mobile telephone signal may be too weak for voice communication. It is a free service which can be accessed using any mobile telephone but you need to register for it in advance of usage. Useful for all hill walkers I think!

Working through scenarios - The plan for the final part of the day was to venture outside into the hills above Donard Park and go through some incident scenarios which were to include a descent from the hills in the dark. However due to the continuing inclement weather the time devoted to outside exercises was reduced and they were held in the forest close to Greenhill. Despite this the Group was tested when Jonny demonstrated his acting skills as he took the role of a casualty with a potential broken leg and we worked through the assessment and recording of the incident in preparation for calling Mountain Rescue. In another exercise Bert risked his wellbeing by volunteering to be the casualty carried over rough, slippery ground in a makeshift stretcher.

Although the workshop was primarily about individual leadership there were a number of 'take away' points for MRG as a club. For example a formal mentoring process might encourage new leaders to come forward and could underpin the adoption of 'best practice' by all leaders in the planning and management of walks. Should an incident happen, this protocol would provide evidence that 'all reasonable

steps' had been taken to ensure the health and safety of members of the group during the walk. There was also discussion on the use of WhatsApp, or a similar platform, to communicate between leaders. This is potentially an easy method to confirmation that groups have safely returned at the end of a walk. The Committee will examine the adoption of these ideas by the club.

Overall, despite the heavy rain when we were in the forest, the workshop was a very interesting and stimulating event which everyone enjoyed and got a lot from.

Joseph McKnight

MOURNE RAMBLING GROUP Secretary's Report AGM 27 October 2019

The Committee met on 5 occasions following the AGM in October 2018. Related sub-committees also met throughout the year.

The key items of business were:

1. **Finance:** this is monitored throughout the year with up to date financial printouts circulated and considered during committee meetings. The club's funds remain in a healthy state – please refer to the Treasurer's Report.
2. **Organising the Programme of Walks and other club activities:** shortly after each AGM committee members meet to draw up a programme for the year ahead. Much thought goes into this with the outcome being based on the suitability of past walks/venues and suggestions passed on to the committee by club members. The programme throughout 2019 has been quite full – basically B and C walks every Sunday. D walks now occur with increasing regularity and A walks take place depending on the availability of leaders. We all recognise that the role of leaders in our walks is crucial – we simply couldn't manage without them. Thanks to all of them. Members are asked to consider taking on a leadership role – help and support will be given.

Some time was spent discussing how leaders should respond if his/her group has over 15 walkers. This matter has been dealt with in several ways over the years – all create challenges and with varying degrees of success. The committee have taken a pragmatic approach – discussion on the day/using backmarker system. A record is being kept of numbers attending walks – this system will be reviewed.

Included within the 2019 programme was a picnic (with a special cake), away trips to Connemara and Donegal and an invitation walk for aspirant members. These were all happy and successful events – lots of tale telling and reminiscing. Write-ups can be read in our Newsletters.

As we are all aware this is a very important year for the MRG – we (the Club) are 50 years old. The Committee (and sub-committees) mind's focussed on organising celebratory "events" everyone could participate in and enjoy – these included the Launch Dinner (Jan), Harry Shaw Challenge Walk (May/26 walkers), Photographic Competition, Anniversary Dinner in the Slieve Donard Hotel which included a presentation about Mourne Wall restoration work

given by Niall McGovern (GEDA Construction) and Alice Whittington; and a raffle for a watercolour painted by Dora McCavera which was won by Irene Cauley (Oct/54 attendees) and 50th Anniversary Journal (hopefully published before the end of 2019)

Yes. It has been an eventful year – our usual walks sprinkled with special activities – all reflecting the ingenuity, hard work, enthusiasm and talents of our members. Thanks to everyone who helped organise and those who participated.

3. **Website and Facebook:** both continue to work quietly and effectively in the background. The website provides a list of walks; and facebook illustrates these by sharing photographs taken by members. Both are perused – not just by members but by people interested in hillwalking (facebook items are usually viewed by several hundred people each week). Our New Membership Officers often get calls of enquiry resulting from these views.
4. **Training:** in March a training workshop was held in Meelmore Lodge (attended by 13 people). In previous years much of our training was based in Tollymore NOC – this year a training course has been organised (November) in Greenhill YMCA, Newcastle with developing leadership skills very much in mind. Topics covered to include navigation and group management – with a descent from the hills in the dark.
5. **Communications:** apart from our shared interest in the hills and chatting together when we are there this is the glue which helps link us all together and promote our club. Mention has already been made of our website and facebook – presently we have 131 paid up members – with a trickle of new members coming in during the year. The MRG is a bit like a person – it has, at its heart interested and committed long term members; however, to continue to flourish we need “new blood” to keep us alive and fresh – fortunately this is the case. On many of our walks we welcome one or two aspirant members – it is always good to share our love for the hills with them and trust they will join us on a regular basis.

Our Newsletter goes out regularly – containing articles relating our activities and keeping us informed and up to date.

6. **Ulster Federation of Rambling Clubs and Mourne Heritage Trust:** several MRG members are involved, on our behalf, in both these bodies. It is important we contribute to matters which focus on or touch upon hillwalking affairs eg the MRG made a financial contribution to path work/pitching in the Mournes; and contributes to the work of Mountaineering Ireland which is considering a review of Mountain Leadership Awards with a view to standardising training throughout the UK and Ireland.
7. **Other matters:** undoubtedly 2019 has been an interesting year for the MRG – lots going on – with more to come. Look out for our 50th Anniversary Journal – it will contain many fascinating features – jogging memories, sharing experiences and raising a smile or two. Enjoy it all – and reflect on the fellowship and memorable experiences that go with days in the hills.

George Acheson.

MOURNE RAMBLING GROUP INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
YEAR ENDING 30 SEPTEMBER 2019

INCOME	2019	2018	EXPENDITURE	2019	2018
	£	£		£	£
SUBSCRIPTIONS	2907.00	2963.00	TRAINING	186.50	37.80
DONATIONS	0.00	4.00	BANK FEES (FIRST TRUST)	78.19	67.21
PARKING ATTICALL	93.00	81.00	NEWSLETTERS	74.58	84.44
BANK INTEREST (NATIONWIDE)	5.15	5.04	PROGRAMMES	300.00	87.00
HARRY'S WALK	389.69		UFRC AFFILIATION	402.00	384.00
JOURNAL ADS	975.00		INSURANCE	268.00	256.00
TRAINING COURSE FEES	360.00		MOURNE RESCUE TEAM	262.00	268.00
			N W MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAM	131.00	128.00
			CHARITABLE DONATIONS	10.00	10.00
			WEBSITE	42.83	19.43
			TREASURER EXPENSES	78.59	47.45
			NI SPORT (AGM)	292.00	292.00
			PICNIC	96.20	106.33
			CHRISTMAS MEAL	131.90	105.50
			MEMBER TAGS	442.00	104.00
			PARKING ATTICALL	93.00	81.00
			HARRY'S WALK	448.56	
			GALA DINNER TICKETS	30.00	
			M.H.T. PATH REPAIRS	200.00	
			SLIEVE DONARD GALA DINNER	300.00	
			MISCELLANEOUS	699.26	22.64
TOTAL INCOME (A)	<u>4729.84</u>	<u>3053.04</u>	TOTAL EXPENDITURE (B)	4566.61	<u>2100.80</u>
OPERATING SURPLUS/DEFICIT (A - B)	163.23	952.24			
CASH BALANCE					
OPENING CASH BALANCE	5329.31	4377.07			
SURPLUS FOR YEAR	163.23	952.24			
CLOSING CASH BALANCE	<u>5492.54</u>	<u>5329.31</u>			
CLOSING CASH BALANCE REPRESENTED BY:					
FIRST TRUST BANK	1052.42				
NATIONWIDE	4260.12				
CASH IN HAND	180.00				
	<u>5492.54</u>				

MOURNE RAMBLING GROUP ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
4.00pm Sunday, 27th October 2019

Venue: Tollymore National Outdoor Centre

Soup and sandwiches were served from 3.30pm paid out of Club funds

DRAFT MINUTES

PRESENT: George Acheson, Adam Brett, Fionnuala Carragher, Irene Cauley, Marie Doran, Harry Goodman, Joan Hamilton, Pat Kelly, David Oldfield, Rodney Magowan, Gabriel McCauley, Dora McCavera, Domnall McComish, Gordon McCreery, Mary McDermott, Peter McGowan, Joe McKnight, Norman Patton, Michael Power, Noel Rice, Bert Rima, Trevor Russell, Alan Stapleton, Helen Templeton, Kingsley Thompson, Vincent Trainor, Pat Tumilty and Joe Wilson.

Peter opened the meeting by welcoming everyone.

1. The quorum of 15 people or one fifth of the membership (28) was present
2. **Apologies:** Loretto Coyle, Gerry Farrington, Laura Fawcett, Ray Gray, Marie Hoeritzauer, Reg Magowan, Robert Marshall, Vincent McKenna, Owen McManus, Sarah Newell, Mary O’Dea, Mark Patience, Maggie Pridgen, Robert Roulston, Hazel Smyth, Ray Smyth, Cecilia Sochor, Ian Stuart and Linda Watson.
3. **Minutes of the 2018 Annual General Meeting:** draft minutes had been sent out to all members via email/post – they were also included in a Newsletter. The minutes were taken as read – it was unanimously agreed that they were a true and accurate record.
4. **Chairperson’s Report:** Peter said that, as he had completed three years as Chairperson he was standing down. He had enjoyed this role and made a request for members to join the Committee – especially lady members to help ensure the Committee was balanced and representative. He drew attention to the range of A – D walks that were organised throughout the year (145 walks/29 leaders) – with at least 2 walks every Sunday and sometimes 4. Referring to the club’s 50th Anniversary he thanked those who had attended the Launch Dinner, Joe and Bert for organising Harry’s Walk, Norman for organising the cakes and Fionnuala and Vincent for their part in organising the Anniversary Dinner – all these events were very enjoyable and successful. More was yet to come this year – including a training day, Star Trek, Boxing Day walk and Anniversary Journal. Peter thanked members for their support throughout the past three years. He also thanked the Secretary, Treasurer and Committee members.
5. **Secretary’s Report:** George gave out copies of the Secretary’s Report (Appendix 1) and summarised the main points. No questions were posed. Members were told that prints of Dora’s painting would soon be available.
6. **Treasurer’s Report:** Vincent had prepared a report (Appendix 2), copies of which were given out. He explained the figures in some detail and recommended that the club membership fee be increased to £25.00 pa. This recommendation was then proposed by Harry Goodman and seconded by Gordon McCreery – unanimously agreed. Peter added that he hoped a significant amount of the club’s funds would go towards training next year.
7. **Committee Business:** Peter referred again to the number of walks organised in 2019. He went on to encourage members to volunteer to become leaders in 2020 and outlined the support provided for members taking on this role, eg,

the training course that would take place in November. The committee always welcomed training suggestions from members – ideas should be passed on to a committee member.

The MRG is still closely associated with the Ulster Federation of Rambling Clubs – with Joe McKnight recently elected as its Chairperson.

Reference was made to the MRG's online presence (website/Facebook) – members were encouraged to visit these, especially Facebook which provided photos of recent walks.

8. **Consideration of motion/s:** although no motions had been received Irene Cauley referred to the forthcoming training day which cost £60.00 pp - £20.00 of which was subsidised from club funds. Irene felt the subsidy could be more generous. Joe Wilson agreed with this; and David Oldfield commented on previous bursaries/need to look at levels of funding and developing skills. Those present appreciated the need for training, appropriate subsidies and the keeping of records relating to courses – such considerations reflected training provision organised in recent years. It was unanimously agreed that the committee should continue to promote these aspects when continuing to deal with training needs.
9. **Election of Office Bearers and Committee:** at this stage Peter stood down and Trevor Russell acted as Chairperson.

Chairperson: Bert Rima. Proposed by Peter McGowan and seconded by Harry Goodman. No other nominations were received - Bert was declared elected.

Secretary: George Acheson. Proposed by Peter McGowan and seconded by Fionnuala Carragher. No other nominations were received – George was declared re-elected.

Treasurer: Vincent Trainor: Proposed by Harry Goodman and seconded by Marie Doran. No other nominations were received – Vincent was declared re-elected.

Bert then took over the election of **Group Representatives:** most of the outgoing Committee (namely Fionnuala Carragher, Harry Goodman, Ray Gray, Robert Marshall, Domnall McComish, Peter McGowan, Joe McKnight and Noel Rice) had agreed to continue if re-elected. It was proposed by Adam Brett and seconded by Norman Patton that these eight people be elected as a group – this was unanimously agreed.

Other members who might be prepared to serve on the Committee were asked to contact the Committee.

10. **Closure of meeting:** the meeting closed at 4.55pm.

The incoming Committee held a short meeting to organise the first Committee meeting – Monday, 11th November 2019 at 7.30pm in Fionnuala's apartment.

50th Anniversary Year Gala Dinner

The final event in this year's 50th Anniversary celebrations was a gala dinner in the Annesley Room of the Slieve Donard Resort and Spa on Saturday 19th October.

Fifty-four ramblers, partners and other guests put on their finery and turned out to celebrate the end of the 50th year of the Mourne Rambling Group, and to look forward to the start of another half century of hill walking.

Seating was at round tables, which encouraged lively conversation, but meant that some of us ended up with a crick in our necks as we looked over our shoulders to enjoy the looped slideshow of all the pictures submitted for the photographic competition that was being displayed at the front of the room. These photographs varied widely, including views from different seasons, away trips, sunsets and pictures of Mourne Ramblers down through the years – both in colour and in black and white.

The competition had been judged by an independent adjudicator and the winning photographs in each section, as well as those commended and highly commended, had been mounted on cardboard and placed on display at the front of the room during the meal. The owners of these photographs were able to take them away at the end of the night – a fitting memento of a wonderful competition. Many thanks to Bert Rima and Harry Goodman for organising the photographic competition and then creating the slideshow – it was the cause of many a conversation during the dinner!

In addition, Dora McCavera's beautiful watercolour of Ben Crom Reservoir was on display throughout the evening. It was admired by many of her fellow ramblers before the meal, and was then won by Irene Cauley in the draw at the end of the night.

The dinner itself was well received, and diners were impressed by the room and the service provided by the banqueting team. We were fortunate to have another mountain-themed cake to celebrate the occasion, once again supplied by one of Norman Patton's large circle of friends. This cake was rectangular in shape and reflected the occasion by being decorated with a map of the Mourne, highlighting the Mourne Wall, with a compass (of course!) overlaying part of the map, and the logo for the 50th Anniversary celebrations.

At the end of the meal, whilst we were being served tea/coffee and pieces of the cake, we had the pleasure of listening to a presentation on the Restoration of the Mourne Wall, delivered by Niall McGivern from GEDA Construction and Alice Whittington from RPS, both of whom were closely involved with the project. Members thoroughly enjoyed the talk, and the questions at the end had to be cut short (or we'd still be there!) Many members took the opportunity of having a chat with Niall and Alice after the formalities had ended.

In short, a very enjoyable night was had by one and all. Many thanks to Fionnuala Carragher for organising the event.



The 50th Anniversary Gala Dinner Cake

NOTICEBOARD

- **Membership Renewal falls due on 1st January. Quite a few members have been wondering when it is due – already we have received 21 subscriptions for next year. Please take note that the annual sub has increased to £25 per annum. A Renewal Form is attached at the end of this newsletter. However, unless your address, mobile or email details have changed, you do not need to fill in the form. Make cheques payable to Mourne Rambling Group. If you wish to pay online, ask me for details. Do not send cash in the post**
- **Plans are well underway to issue the programme of walks 2020. It is hoped to send it out shortly after mid-December to all members. We hope to be able to include member tags for 2020 along with UFRC cards both of which we hope will be ready in time**
- **Andrew McKibbin (A / B group) and Raymond Gray (C group) plan to organise another trip to Connemara in 2020. The proposed dates are 22 – 26 May. Please let Andrew or Ray know as soon as possible if you are going so that accommodation can be organised**
- **Peter McGowan plans to organise a trip to the Galtees around August / September. It is not too early to let Peter know if you are interested**

- **There is a link to the article printed earlier regarding tick bites. The link is**
<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/news/protect-yourself-against-tick-bites>
- **The next issue of the club Newsletter will be in February 2020**
- **And finally, apologies for any articles which have been overlooked. It has been a long and arduous chore to include everything you have read. It has been worth it, I hope. If you notice anything has been missed, please let me know**

**Mourne Rambling Group
Membership Renewal Form (January 2020)**

* **Name(s):** _____

* **Address:** (Only include if amendments are required)

* **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, Kilkeel, Co Down, BT34 4DD

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

We acknowledge that a fair number of our members now conduct their financial affairs electronically. With this in mind the committee has decided to offer members the opportunity to pay their annual subscription by internet banking. Should you wish to avail of this option please e-mail Vincent at trainorvj@yahoo.co.uk and he will be more than happy to forward details of the group's bank details.