

# MOURNE RAMBLERS NEWSLETTER

November 2021

## A message from the Editor

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

Since the last issue of the group newsletter in August 2021, walks continue to happen every week. Numbers attending have been huge, especially in the B and C groups.

Our membership continues to grow. We have had 10 new members since the AGM. This trend continues to amaze and it augurs well for the future of our group.

This issue contains articles which we hope will be of interest to you.

Vincent Trainor, Editor

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NEW MEMBERS SINCE LAST NEWSLETTER UP TO AND INCLUDING  
17 NOVEMBER 2021

Caitlin Buck, Pauline Dunlop, Nigel Garrett, Marion Gunn,

Ann Hall, Colleen Jamison, Dympna Marmion,

Gordon McKenzie, Geraldine Nelson, Jen Rainey, Maura Sweeney

We welcome these new members to the Mourne Rambling Group.  
We wish them many years of enjoyable rambling.

## **IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN**

Membership subscriptions for 2022 become due from 01 January 2022.

Many members are happy to pay in advance of the required date. That is very fortunate as I do not look forward to receiving 100 or more subs in the last week of December. Up until today I have received 46 renewals.

For all who have not yet renewed, I would be most grateful to receive payments during the next few weeks, before Christmas if possible. I attach a renewal form at the end of this newsletter. Please note, you only need to fill in details on the form if there have been changes since last year. This is especially important if you have changed your email address.

I am happy to receive payment by cheque or online. How to pay online is explained at the bottom of the form. Please do not send cash through the post.

Please, let me know if you do not intend to renew your membership.

Regards  
Vincent Trainor

## **TRAINING UPDATE**

With the relaxation of Covid restrictions, we were able to run two navigation courses in August 2021 - one on 6<sup>th</sup> August run by Tollymore National Outdoor Centre (TNOC) for members familiar with navigation techniques, and a basic navigation course on 21<sup>st</sup> August, run by current leaders in the Mourne Ramblers. We had hoped to run the basic navigation course from Meelmore Lodge, but Covid restrictions on numbers allowed indoors meant that the venue had to change to TNOC as well.

### **TNOC Navigation Update**

This course was facilitated by Kieran O'Hara from TNOC with six Mourne Ramblers attending: Philip Appleton, Ray Gray, Domnall McComish, Peter McGowan, Norman Patton and Noel Rice. The course cost £55 per participant, of which the club paid £25.

One of the aims of the course had been to look at using ViewRanger for plotting and navigating a course, but this was overshadowed by the merger of ViewRanger with Outdoor Active and the subsequent lack of ability to download NI maps onto ViewRanger. Instead, the course concentrated on navigation with map and compass (particularly map reading), but also discussed the various technology options and their pros and cons. It also included an outdoor session to put the theory into practice.

### **Basic Navigation Training**

This course was aimed at walkers who had little or no experience in navigation or whose knowledge was shrouded in the mists of time. It covered map reading, including setting the

map, contour lines, grid lines, grid references; using a compass including magnetic variation; and plotting a course to a given point. Some of the participants didn't have a map and/or compass, but the club had purchased some of each and we were able to loan them to participants for training purposes.

Nine Mourne Ramblers turned up for the course, which was run by George Acheson, Peter McGowan, Bert Rima and Ian Stuart. There was no charge to members for this course. Although the content of the course centred around a training handout, the atmosphere was informal and participants were encouraged to ask questions. George used his experience as a teacher to break up the classroom experience with some practical exercises and the morning passed quickly.

The weather wasn't kind to us when we went to the hills beyond Meelmore Lodge: we couldn't see the mountain tops to allow a practical demonstration of how to set a map. However, it was dry and we were able to practise following the bearings that had been worked out in the classroom, as well as map-reading and pacing.

#### Future Training

We intend running the Basic Navigation course again if there is a demand for it. (The course is best run for a small group of people to allow for individual attention.) In addition, we are planning to run a course on leading groups in the hills to support our current leaders and to encourage others to lead.

Peter McGowan

## Mourne Heritage Trust Engagement Rangers

Two New Mourne Heritage Trust Engagement Rangers have been employed. They are responsible for recreation in the Mournes and enthusing people about the Mournes. They will be visible in key locations such as Carrick Little, Trassey, Ott and Bann's Road car parks.

This project is to gauge people's attitudes and take on board ideas and thoughts about the best way forward to enhance and protect the Mountains. It will also give Walkers a better experience of the Mournes. The main things they are looking at are erosion of paths, litter, quads, signage new or out-of-date.

If you come across any problems take photos and send to MHT - [mht@mourne.co.uk](mailto:mht@mourne.co.uk)

Domnall McComish

As one of the clubs which walk in the Mournes on a regular basis the following introduction may be of value to our club. Aly spoke at the UFRC AGM and Autumn Gathering on Saturday past.

*My name is Aly Coyle and I am one of the new Mourne Engagement Rangers along with Stevie Millar and Aaron Caldwell. We are employed by Mourne Heritage Trust and will be out in the hills over winter promoting responsible recreation to all hill users. The main issues we will be engaging with people on are littering, car parking, dogs on the mountains, ensuring people are prepared for the walk they are*

*undertaking in terms of kit and knowledge and ensuring people are aware of the shortening daylight hours coming in to winter. We will mostly be active along the key access corridors of Carrick Little, Ott, Bloody Bridge, Donard Forest, Trassey Track, Hen mountain and Leitrim Lodge. If you see us or our van out please stop and say hi! (We will be wearing orange and blue jackets with Mourne Ranger armbands)*

*I have included our contact details so please feel free to get in touch with any questions or suggestions. We would also be keen to hear from you, as experienced hill walkers, about any issues or concerns you may come across while out and about in the mountains or if there is anything you think we might be able to do to help you or your club in any way.*

*Many thanks*

*Aly Coyle*

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[aaron.caldwell@mourne.co.uk](mailto:aaron.caldwell@mourne.co.uk)

## AWAY TRIPS 2022

Members will shortly be issued with the programme of walks and special events for the first 6 months of 2022. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, a key part of each year's programme was dates for planned away trips. This gave members plenty of notice to keep those dates free if the planned trip was of interest to them. Many members will recall very enjoyable weekends away in previous years to Kerry, Wicklow, Donegal, Connemara, etc. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic and associated restrictions such as advice on non-essential travel and closure of hospitality venues, these trips had to be removed from the programme in 2020 and 2021. The committee has taken a decision to discuss the potential for official MRG away trips in 2022 at our next meeting at the beginning of February 2022. We will be able to make a more informed decision then, based on the Covid situation at the time and official advice around travel. Provided there are no more Covid-19 surges resulting in advice against non-essential travel, hopefully we may be able to re-introduce at least one away trip in 2022 for those members who are interested.

Noel Rice

## BEING PREPARED FOR WALKING IN THE WINTER MONTHS – DO I NEED A BIGGER RUCKSACK?

While the aim of the Mourne Ramblers is for all those walking to enjoy the Mourne Mountains, the most important objective is for everyone to be safe whilst doing so.

With this in mind we recommend that everyone should be prepared for all weathers and possible mishaps.

The following items are advisable for your backpack:

- Compass
- Map
- First aid kit
- Head torch
- Extra pair of gloves
- Waterproof jacket
- Waterproof trousers
- Waterproof backpack cover
- Extra pair of socks
- Extra water
- Emergency food
- Nuts
- Power bank for your phone
- Dry bags for your phone and car keys
- Change of clothes in car

Hope everyone finds this helpful.

Roisin Franklin

**MOURNE RAMBLING GROUP ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - DRAFT MINUTES**  
**3.30pm Sunday, 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2021**

**Venue: Tollymore National Outdoor Centre**

Present: George Acheson, Philip Appleton, Adam Brett, Andy Bolwell, Malcolm Buck, Robert Campbell, Fionnuala Carragher, Irene Cauley, Norman Elliott, Roisin Franklin, Philip Gunn, Joan Hamilton, Helen Henderson, Olwen Herbison, Pat Kelly, Rodney Magowan, Robert Marshall, Dora McCavera, Gordon McCreery, Gillian McClelland, Domnall McComish, Peter McGowan, Vincent McKenna, Mary McLaughlin, Shelagh Murphy, Mel Pettyfer, Pam Quiery, Malachy Devlin, Martin Rafferty, Jen Rainey, Noel Rice, Bert Rima, Ian Stuart, Toni Taylor, Vincent Trainor (35).

Bert opened the meeting by welcoming those present.

**1.** A quorum of 15 people or one fifth of the membership (27), whichever is lesser, was present.

**2. Apologies:** Liam Dean, Marie Doran, Harry Goodman, Ray Gray, Maire Hanna, Pat Hanratty, Victor Knox, Reg Magowan, Gabriel McCauley, Sarah Newell, Carmel Quinn, Robert Roulston, Trevor Russell, Cecilia Sochor, Hazel Smyth, Ray Smyth, Pat Turley (17).

**3. Minutes of the 2020 Annual General Meeting:** draft minutes had been sent out to all members by 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. Chairman's Report:** Bert commented on the year's activities which had been considerably influenced by Covid-19. Throughout this time the club had striven to follow a programme of walks whilst adhering to Covid regulations which included social distancing and keeping a record of those attending walks. Parking at some of our usual starting places was often problematic – to counter this and give greater flexibility, leaders were allowed to select suitable starting points/appropriate starting times - often earlier than the normal 10.30 am starting time. Numbers attending walks were, on average, in the 31 to 38 range – however, due to using different starting points walkers in the four groups rarely met together. Bert went on to say that in the coming year (when probably some Covid restrictions would continue) the club would try to start walks from the same point once a month. He also commented on the deaths of Brian Martin and Loretto Coyle, both of whom had contributed greatly to the club's activities and development over many years – we will miss them.

**5. Secretary's Report:** a copy (Appendix 1) had been circulated prior to the meeting for members to read. George went through the main points of the report – members were given the opportunity to comment and ask questions. No questions were posed.

**6. Treasurer's Report:** Vincent had prepared and circulated a report (Appendix 2). He explained the figures and banking system followed in detail, giving comparisons with the previous year. The balance is £4662.79 – he recommended subs should remain at £25.00 pa. Presently we have 135 members and 5 associate members. No questions were posed. Later in the meeting, Irene explained that the fees for the website included the retention of our email and website addresses.

**7. Committee Business:**

- **Leadership matters:** Bert emphasised the need for leaders and encouraged more members to take on this role. Support will be given to new leaders - a leadership training course is planned for the near future.

- **Membership:** throughout the past year numbers had remained high – with an encouraging number of new walkers joining the club.

- **Training:** Peter referred to recent training courses and to two other courses in the pipeline – an intermediate navigation course and a course on managing groups in the hills.
- **UFRC:** Bert is a member of the UFRC Committee. He referred to their AGM coming up soon and encouraged members to consider serving on this body.
- **Other matters:** Bert referred to our Committee Meetings which are now organised via Zoom. He encouraged members to join the Committee – especially ladies, to create a better gender balance.

Vincent also emphasised the need for more leaders and said he would be contacting present leaders/new leaders soon about next year's walking programme. Those present were asked if the club should organise a Christmas Dinner this year if Covid restrictions allowed – about 90% of those present indicated we should proceed if possible.

George referred to some points raised by a member – advantages of maintaining 9.30am starts; leaders giving more information about the walk they have planned for the next Sunday; the need to carefully consider the appropriateness of the pace and duration of walks. Some discussion followed on from this – perhaps starting times could vary according to the time of year; parking challenges remain a factor; D walks might include more high-level walks; the route of a walk might change at short notice due to extreme weather conditions. These matters would be considered by the incoming Committee.

**8. Consideration of motion/s:** no motions have been received.

**9. Election of Office Bearers and Committee:** at this point all positions were declared vacant and Gordon McCreery took the Chair.

**Chairman** – Bert Rima ..... Proposed by Peter McGowan; Seconded by Robert Campbell

**Secretary** – George Acheson ..... Proposed by Ian Stuart; Seconded by Shelagh Murphy

**Treasurer** – Vincent Trainor ..... Proposed by Rodney Magowan; Seconded by Peter McGowan

**Group Representation** – 9 in total

**A group representative** - Robert Marshall ..... Proposed by Bert Rima; Seconded by Malachy Devlin

**B group representatives** – Noel Rice ..... Proposed by Bert Rima: Seconded by Robert Marshall

Robert Campbell .... Proposed by Robert Marshall; Seconded by Shelagh Murphy

**C group representatives** – Ray Gray, Peter McGowan and Domnall McComish ..... Proposed by Ian Stuart; Seconded by Roisin Franklin

Roisin Franklin ..... Proposed by Vincent Trainor: Seconded by George Acheson

**D group representatives** – Fionnuala Carragher and Harry Goodman ..... proposed by Rodney Magowan: Seconded by Peter McGowan

Irene asked if Robert Roulston wished to continue in the role of Web Manager – the Committee will consult with Robert.

**10. Closure of meeting: the meeting closed at 4.40pm.**

The incoming Committee held a short meeting to organise the first Committee meeting – Tuesday, 9<sup>th</sup> November 2021 at 7.30pm via Zoom.

**MOURNE RAMBLING GROUP****Secretary's Report – 2021**

In many ways this has been a most unusual year for our club - all of our activities have been influenced, in one way or another, by Covid-19. Although committee members were able to meet (socially distanced) in the mountains all committee meetings were organised through Zoom. Five committee meetings took place – all followed the usual format with committee members seeing each other on screen ... and, under Bert's direction, being able to fully take part in discussions and decision making.

The key items of business were:

**1. Finance:** this is monitored throughout the year with financial reports circulated and explained during committee meetings. The club's finances remain in a healthy state – please refer to the Treasurer's Report.

**2. Organising the Programme of Walks and other club activities:** due to uncertainties connected with Covid-19 a decision was made at November's committee meeting to produce an initial programme for January through to June. Members will have noticed that dates were given for each walk – however, the venue for the walk and the starting time was left to the discretion of individual leaders. This allowed greater flexibility to ensure our usual starting points did not cause traffic problems due to the growing numbers of people using the mountains for recreation. On any one Sunday up to 4 MRG groups started off from various locations – with walks often starting at 9.00am rather than the usual 10.30am. These new arrangements were quickly and readily accepted by our members – and, in fact, they have proved workable and successful. Throughout this time the committee kept a close eye on things – ready to adapt if necessary – and always endeavouring to keep members informed. Gradually some Covid-19 restrictions were relaxed allowing the club greater freedom - though always being mindful of Covid restrictions including not sharing cars to travel to the mountains and keeping an appropriate social distance. A second programme was then devised for July to December. This was organised in a similar way to the first 6-month programme – however, we were able to hold a very successful annual picnic outside in Meelmore Lodge in August. It was great to have the opportunity to meet as a whole club rather than in smaller walking groups. The Committee would like to thank Toni and Carmel for safely organising this event. Unfortunately, we were not able to organise any club away trips or "slide" show this year.

Thanks, too, to all our leaders – you all responded positively to the many challenges – you helped hold the club together by leading a wide range of safe, adventurous and interesting walks. It was encouraging to see attendances at walks remain steady and, in some cases, even increase. The highest number of MRG walkers out on any one day was 59 (16<sup>th</sup> May); throughout the year the A group attracted up to 4 walkers; the B group up to 18 walkers; the C group up to 26 walkers and the D group up to 15 walkers. It was fortunate that in 2020 we encouraged the use of a back-marker should numbers or conditions merit it – this system was occasionally brought into play – as was a middle marker and counter to assist leaders. The overall system is kept under constant review.

Throughout this period the MRG continued to encourage and welcome interested walkers to join us. There are 3 main ways aspirant members come to hear of us and learn more about us – word of mouth, our website and through Facebook. Enquiries are always directed towards our membership officers who "chat" with the person about any past hillwalking



experience s/he may have and mountain walking gear. The person is then guided towards the most appropriate group. Current membership of the club is 134 walkers – very similar to the previous year.

**3. Website and Facebook:** both continue to work as before. During many walks photos are taken and some of these quickly make their way onto Facebook. It may surprise people but MRG has a Facebook community of over 2,000 people – they appreciate the mountain scenery, the walking challenge and camaraderie that is evident in the photos.

**4. Training:** it was good to get training up and running again this year. Two courses were organised in August. Both courses started in Tollymore National Outdoor before moving out into the hills. The first (employing TNOC instructors) included the use of ViewRanger as a navigational aid; the second (using instructors from within MRG) was organised as a basic/refresher map reading course. Both were well attended and successful. Hopefully, before the end of 2021, there will be a follow-up intermediate course on navigation and a group management in the hills course for leaders and prospective leaders.

**5. Communications:** this ‘silent’ aspect of our club is vital to the smooth running of our walks, The system is similar that of previous years – however, there is now a new and essential dimension. Each group has a designated person to whom the leader of the next Sunday’s walk sends out basic information about the walk. This information is promptly sent out to walkers in the group asking for the person to respond if s/he intends to go on that walk. In this way we can keep a record of who attends the walk and it gives leaders an indication of numbers.

**6. Ulster Federation of Rambling Clubs and Mourne Heritage Trust:** we have been fortunate for many years to have had representation on both groups and this continues. It is important we contribute to hillwalking matters – from litter picking to attending courses on group management – it is good to share knowledge and experiences – and learn at the same time.

**7. Other matters:** yes, it has been a different year – but, at the end of it we can look back on many great walks in great company – scenery, strengthening old friendships and making new ones, enjoying and learning from new and challenging experiences, creating memories that will last a lifetime – and the magic of that first sip of tea or coffee as we sit down with like-minded people on a mountain slope.

**George Acheson.**

**APPENDIX 2**

**MOURNE RAMBLING GROUP INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT**  
**YEAR ENDING 30 SEPTEMBER 2021**

INCOME	2021	2020	EXPENDITURE	2021	2020
	£	£		£	£
SUBSCRIPTIONS	3400.00	3185.00	TRAINING	446.60	720.00
DONATIONS	220.00	107.50	BANK FEES (FIRST TRUST)	120.79	74.12
BANK INTEREST (NATIONWIDE)	3.05	4.30	NEWSLETTERS	57.64	68.30
JOURNAL ADS	0.00	300.00	PROGRAMMES	73.00	24.00
TRAINING COURSE FEES	0.00	120.00	UFRC AFFILIATION	393.00	396.00
DORA McCAVERA PAINTING	0.00	318.00	INSURANCE	262.00	264.00
			MOURNE RESCUE TEAM	520.00	252.00
			N W MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAM	135.00	126.00
			CHARITABLE DONATIONS	10.00	10.00
			WEBSITE	49.02	32.75
			TREASURER PROGRAMME EXPENSES	164.66	73.72
			NI SPORT (AGM)	292.00	0.00
			PICNIC	140.41	0.00
			MEMBER TAGS & PHOTOGRAPHIC COMP	303.99	329.03
			ZOOM INVOICE	143.88	0.00
			50 <sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY JOURNAL	0.00	2511.17
			PAINTING PRINTS	0.00	302.00
			FLOWERS	0.00	40.00
			TREASURER'S EXPENSES	77.03	75.49
			MISCELLANEOUS	0.00	0.00
<b>TOTAL INCOME (A)</b>	<b><u>3623.05</u></b>	<b><u>4034.80</u></b>	<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE (B)</b>	<b><u>3189.02</u></b>	<b><u>5298.58</u></b>
<b>OPERATING SURPLUS/DEFICIT (A – B)</b>	<b><u>434.03</u></b>	<b><u>-1263.78</u></b>			
<b>CASH BALANCE</b>					
OPENING CASH BALANCE	<u>4228.76</u>	5492.54			
SURPLUS FOR YEAR	<u>434.03</u>	<u>-1263.78</u>			
CLOSING CASH BALANCE	<u>4662.79</u>	<u>4228.76</u>			
<b>CLOSING CASH BALANCE REPRESENTED BY:</b>					
FIRST TRUST BANK	<u>1582.32</u>	1151.34			
NATIONWIDE	<u>3080.47</u>	<u>3077.42</u>			
CASH IN HAND	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>			
	<u>4662.79</u>	<u>4228.76</u>			

## NOTES ON TREASURER'S REPORT 30 SEPTEMBER 2021

### INCOME

SUBS FOR 2021 MADE UP OF:	£
ASSOCIATES 5 @ £5	25.00
FULL SUBS 135 @ £25	3375.00
DONATIONS	220.00
NATIONWIDE INTEREST	<u>3.05</u>
	3623.05

### EXPENDITURE

- TRAINING EXPENSES £150.00 + £59.50 + £237.10
- BANK FEES 4 QUARTERLY PAYMENTS, EACH ONE INCLUDES £9 ACCOUNT MAINTENANCE - £11.80, £42.31, £43.22, £17.46 +3 CHAPS IN FEE, £6
- NEWSLETTERS INCLUDES 3 PAYMENTS – NOV 2020, MAR 2021, JUL 2021
- PROGRAMMES PRINTING - £25 + £48
- UFRC AFFILIATION 131 X £3 BASED ON 2020 MEMBERSHIP
- UFRC INSURANCE 131 X £2 BASED ON 2020 MEMBERSHIP
- MMRT 235 X £2 + £250 ONE OFF PAYMENT
- NWMRT 235 X £1
- CHARITABLE DONATION £10 GUIDE DOGS FOR THE BLIND
- WEBSITE - £7.19 + £28.51 + £13.32
- TREASURER PROGRAMME EXPENSES MORE THAN DOUBLED AS 2 SETS OF PROGRAMMES SENT OUT THIS YEAR; NOT POSSIBLE TO DISTRIBUTE BY HAND SO MOSTLY POSTED
- NI SPORT AGM COSTS – NONE FOR 2020 AS AGM HELD ONLINE
- PICNIC – MEELMORE LODGE – GREAT DAY OUT, THANKS TO CARMEL & TONI
- ZOOM INVOICE - £143.88 FOR PRIVILEGE OF ENABLING COMMITTEE MEETINGS LASTING LONGER THAN 45 MINUTES
- TREASURER EXPENSES COMPRISE STAMPS & STATIONERY PURCHASED THROUGHOUT THE YEAR
- EXPENSES £3189.02, INCOME £3623.05 = OPERATING SURPLUS OF £434.03
- CLOSING BALANCE REPRESENTED BY:

FIRST TRUST	£1582.32
NATIONWIDE	£3080.47
CASH IN HAND	<u>£ 0.00</u>
	£4662.79

- CLUB FUNDS ARE HEALTHY, I RECOMMEND MEMBERSHIP SUB REMAINS AT £25 FOR 2022.

## NOTICEBOARD

- Preparations of the Programme for the first half of 2022 are well under way. I hope to have them with the printer in the next week or two. If everything goes according to plan, members should receive their programmes in good time for the first walk of the new year on 02 January. We also plan to provide member tags for 2022. They should be delivered along with the programmes. UFRC cards are usually sent to me after the start of the New Year. They will be delivered when I have them.

Sincere thanks again to Robert Roulston for printing the annual programme of walks for 2021. Hopefully, this will continue in 2022.

- 27 members have booked and paid for the Christmas Dinner to be held in the Burrendale Hotel, Newcastle, on Sunday 05 December.
- The next issue of the Newsletter will appear in February 2022. If you wish to provide an article for the newsletter, forward it to me and I will include it. My email is [trainorvj@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:trainorvj@yahoo.co.uk)

# Mourne Rambling Group

## Membership Renewal Form (January 2022)

\* **Name(s):**

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(Only include information below if amendments are required)

\* **Address:**

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\* **Postcode**

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\* **Phone No:**

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\* **Mobile No:**

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

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

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### 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.)**

Should you wish to avail of the option to pay your annual subscription by internet banking, bank details are as follows:

Account Name: Mourne Rambling Group, Sort Code 93-83-27, A/c No 12077183.

IBAN: GB81 FTBK 9383 2712 0771 83                      BIC: FTBKGB2B

Please remember to include your name in online banking.

Please email Vincent letting him know you have paid.