

MOURNE RAMBLERS NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2023

A message from the Editor

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

I hope you will find something of interest in the following pages.

Thank you.

Vincent Trainor, Editor

- NEW MEMBERS SINCE LAST NEWSLETTER
- UPDATE FROM COMMITTEE MEETING IN NOVEMBER 2023
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- AGM 2023: SECRETARY'S REPORT
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- AGM 2023: TREASURER'S REPORT
- MEMBERSHIP FORM
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NEW MEMBERS SINCE LAST NEWSLETTER **UP TO AND INCLUDING 28 NOVEMBER 2023**

Janet Wheelan, Teresa McKay, Deirin Gallagher, Margaret Mulvenna,

Frances Stevens, Kay Carroll, Ronan Carroll, Eloise Cowan,

Susanne Fitzpatrick, Denise Howard, Claire Martin,

Joe Mulvin, Kate O'Hare, Brendan Turley

We welcome these new members to the Mourne Rambling Group.

We wish them many years of enjoyable rambling.

UPDATE FROM COMMITTEE MEETING IN NOVEMBER 2023

Following the appointment of the committee at our AGM in October, we held our first meeting on 14th November 2023. Some items that we discussed were:

- **Frequency of B and C+ group walks.**

For a number of reasons, there will only be A group walks on the first Sunday of every month from January to June 2024, so the walk on the third Sunday of each month will alternate between B and C+ walks: there will be a C+ walk on the first Sunday of each month, and on the 3rd Sunday of January, March and May, and there will be B walks on the second and fourth Sundays each month, and the third Sunday of February and April. (June has five Sundays, and there will be two C+ walks and three B walks.) Don't worry, the programme will make this clearer. 😊

Robert Campbell assures me that C+ walkers will be made very welcome on the B walks.

- **Slideshow**

The slideshow is one of the few social events organised by the club. It has previously been held in the evening after a walk, but in 2024 the slideshow will be held in Tollymore National Outdoor Centre immediately after the walk on 3rd March 2024. In a similar arrangement to our AGM, there will be refreshments laid on for walkers in the main hall, before the show begins in the Bearnagh Room.

- **Trips Away**

We are intending to have two trips away next year: one to Connemara around the time of the bank holiday at the end of May, and the other in September – venue and dates to be decided. Trips away require someone to arrange walking routes and someone to arrange accommodation. In the past these have been done by the same person, but that needn't be the case – and this combined responsibility may have been putting some people off leading groups on away trips.

Noel Rice and Robert Campbell have agreed to help coordinate away trips, but this will be more of an oversight role, rather than being the main organiser.

If anyone has any ideas for trips away, or would like to help organise accommodation, they should contact Noel or Robert.

- **Club Website**

Robert Roulston has been working away in the background, restructuring our website to make it easier to change and update, and to avail of modern designs, using WordPress. He is currently migrating the photographs and other information from the old website, and then will move on to harvesting old photographs to include them in the archive, before starting to add more recent photos. The new website should be available in 2024.

Peter McGowan

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL 2024

An attachment to this newsletter is a list of all members who have paid for 2024. Up until Tuesday 28 November there are 84 who have paid. All members who have not yet renewed for 2024 are encouraged to forward payment to the Treasurer as soon as possible before 01 January. Members are reminded that the renewal fee has remained at £20 for 2024. A renewal form is included at the end of this newsletter. Only fill it in if your details have changed.

Members may wonder why this list is included. As Treasurer, I am aware that some members are unsure if they have actually paid. If your name is on this list, you have paid. Please check to see if your name is on the list. If your name is not on the list and has been omitted, please accept our apologies. Please contact the Treasurer on 078 3512 8564 for clarification. Our Insurance only covers paid-up walkers.

Bank details for payments:

If you wish to pay by cheque, please make it payable to Mourne Rambling Group.

Please, do not send cash in the post.

Return to: Vincent Trainor, 34 Grahamville Estate, Kilkeel, Co Down, BT34 4DD

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.

MOURNE RAMBLING GROUP ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

3.30pm, Sunday, 1st October 2023

Venue: Tollymore National Outdoor Centre

Present: George Acheson, Robert Campbell, Fionnuala Carragher, Norman Elliott, Roisin Franklin, Nigel Garrett, David Johnston, Robert Marshall, Gabriel McCauley, Dora McCavera, Gillian Mc Clelland, Domnall McComish, Gordon McCreery, Dermot MacDermott, Vincent McKenna, Gordon McKenzie, Andrew McKibben, Shelagh Murphy, Maggie Pridgen, Jen Rainey, Noel Rice, Bert Rima, Graeme Stevenson, Ian Stuart, Vincent Trainor, Pat Tumilty and Pam Quiry.(27)

Peter opened the meeting by welcoming those present.

1. A quorum of 15 or one-fifth of the membership (32), whichever is the lesser, was present.

2. **Apologies:** Adam Brett, Marie Doran, Harry Goodman, Ray Gray, Joan Hamilton, Teresa Hughes, Mary Joy, Victor Knox, Mary McLaughlin, Carmel Quinn, Dympna Sands and Briege Turley.
3. **Minutes of the 2022 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:** Peter referred to the purpose/s of the Mourne Rambling Group – to provide an opportunity for people to participate in hill-walking. This is achieved by a combination of supporting leaders and engendering a positive social aspect to walks, whilst appreciating and caring for the environment. The club has been successful in providing over 150 hill walks since our last AGM within a safe, friendly and welcoming atmosphere. Peter encouraged members to support the club’s social events such as the “slide” show. There had been one away trip to The Galtees attended by 35 members – a successful trip; such trips require considerable organisation and help with organising future trips would be appreciated. He commented on the club’s website and Facebook presence – both serving the club well. He concluded by saying we are an active club seeking to bring in new blood – something that every member can be involved in.
5. **Secretary’s Report:** copies were circulated at the beginning of 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. He explained the figures and banking system used, giving comparisons with the previous year. The closing balance is £4,969.12 (£5026.13 in 2022). In light of this healthy financial position he proposed that the present membership fee of £20.00 pa be retained – this was agreed by all.
Some discussion revolved around the posting out of the Programme of Walks/emailing these to members. It was agreed that the incoming Committee would further consider this matter. Some postage is inevitable eg UFRC membership cards.
7. **Committee Business:**
 - **Leadership matters:** our leaders do “sterling” work which is much appreciated
 - **Grades of Walks:** the Committee continues to gather information and consider the appropriateness of the grades of walks as outlined in our programme. Members are encouraged to move to a more strenuous level as their fitness and stamina increases. The C+ walks have proved popular. Every group warmly welcomes new walkers to its ranks.
 - **Membership matters:** Fionnuala and Ray continue to play an essential, and at times a challenging role when speaking with. and guiding aspirant members.
 - **Training:** navigation training and practise within a small group has proved very effective. More training will take place next year.
 - **UFRC:** the club continues to support and work closely with the UFRC.
 - **Other matters:** none
8. **Consideration of motion/s:** no motions had been received.

9. **Election of Office Bearers and Committee:** at this point all positions were declared vacant Norman Elliott oversaw this part of the meeting-
Chairman: Peter McGowan Peter was unanimously elected
Secretary: George Acheson George was unanimously elected
Treasurer: Vincent Trainor Vincent was unanimously elected
Group Representation: the following members of the serving committee had said, if proposed, he/she would be willing to continue to serve on the committee – Robert Campbell, Fionnuala Carragher, Roisin Franklin, Harry Goodman, Ray Gray, Robert Marshall, Noel Rice, Bert Rima and Ian Stuart. These former committee members were unanimously elected.
Jennifer Rainey proposed by Graeme Stevenson; seconded by Ian Stuart.
Robert Roulston will continue to be co-opted to oversee the review and future development of the club's website.
George said he hoped to retire from being Secretary in October 2024 and that to help ensure continuity someone from within the Committee should “work” alongside him throughout the year. Vincent also said that having a second person knowledgeable of the workings of the Treasurer's role would be beneficial.
Thanks to outgoing committee members Paula and Karen for their contributions to Committee work last year.
10. **Closure of meeting:** the meeting closed at 4.40pm.

A date was set for the next Committee Meeting: Tuesday, 7th November 2023 at 7.30pm.

MOURNE RAMBLING GROUP

Secretary's Report – 2023

Even though the legacy of Covid is still with us and we must continue to be vigilant, our club is certainly getting back into the swing of things. We can look back on 2023 as being a vibrant year with many memories of happy days spent walking in the hills the Mournes and beyond. Of course, our activities have not been confined to the hills; the Committee has been active on your behalf attending Zoom Meetings (4 in total) considering how our walks have been going, the suitability of starting points, communication and erosion in the Mournes, among many other things. Outlined below are the main topics covered:

1. **Finance:** This continues to be carefully and systematically monitored. At each committee meeting a comprehensive report is provided. Please study the Treasurer's Report; you will see the club's finances are very healthy.
2. **Organising the Programme of Walks and other club activities:** We continue to plan our programme on a 6 monthly basis - this appears to be working well. Up to 4 walks are scheduled for each Sunday and, as always, we are indebted to members who are prepared to give of their time and talents in taking on a leadership role. We ask much of our leaders – planning a suitable walk beforehand, checking weather etc, often doing a recce walk and then, fine tuning things right up to the morning of the walk. Thanks. This information is then passed on to a “team” within the committee which then disseminates the information to members. This allows us to provide the leaders

with an estimate of numbers hoping to attend each walk and to ensure there is sufficient parking especially on the one occasion each month when we endeavour to have all groups starting at the same point. How have things been going? here are some figures collected during 2022

“A” group – average 4 walkers; max 6

“B” group – average 10 walkers; max 18

“C+” group – average 11 walkers; max 18

“C” group – average 19 walkers, if no “C+” walk; max 29

“D” group – average 8 walkers; max 17.

Overall total for a Sunday including all groups – 12 to 59.

The committee has tried to keep a careful tally with information (including numbers, duration of walk, height of ascent and weather conditions) gathered at the end of each walk. As you can see the “C” group often has large numbers and this can create challenges in the hills. Dealing with these requires good leadership, planning and having experienced back (and sometimes middle) markers. When a leader is planning his/her walk he/she is mindful of the Grade of Walk description in our Programme and will endeavour to stick to this. Walkers in a group need also be mindful of these descriptors; for example, if a walker’s fitness increases and they wish to walk faster they should consider moving to a group taking on a more strenuous walk. We understand that having walked for a while with a group walkers form friendships and may be reluctant to change groups. However, remember that all groups are very friendly and welcoming. This topic is worth further consideration by the club as a whole and will continue to be kept under review.

The range of walks encompassed the Mourne (mainly), Antrim Plateau, Carlingford area, Slieve Croob, Castlewellan Forest and Slievenaslatt, North Down, and Murlough with an away trip to the Galtees. All successful and creating happy memories. An interesting development is the growing number of visiting clubs (Blarney Walking Group, Longford Ramblers, Ballyhoura Bears, Laune Mountaineering Club and Mickey Mouse Walking Group) which have approached us seeking information and assistance in leading some of their walks. We have been complimented by these clubs for our help and advice; they, in return, have offered to assist us if we visit their stomping grounds. It is nice to see the comradeship of hill-goers develop in this way.

Undoubtedly the club is going from strength to strength. At the time of writing club membership stands at 163 (134 in 2021; 157 In 2022). In fact, a steady increase in recent years. Hardly a Sunday goes by without someone new joining us. Friendships are built and fitness improved; and it’s not all just about walking - don’t forget our Christmas Dinner, Slideshow and Picnic; thanks to all involved in organising these events.

3. **Website and Facebook:** Both have become an integral part of our club. Throughout the year a considerable amount of work has taken place and is currently taking place regarding our old website which has served us well for many years. Basically, information is being harvested from our old website/Facebook and will be presented in an up-to-date way on a future website that should be easier to operate and maintain.

After most Sunday walks photos are posted on Facebook – we now have 3,500 followers. Recently WalkNI asked if it could share one of our photos they like happy walkers.

4. **Training:** We encourage all our members to become competent in map and compass work. A navigation training day took place in the Butter Mountain area - taking and following a bearing, aiming off and measuring distance were just some of the skills covered. Further navigation and leading courses are planned for the year ahead; don't miss them. You will learn much and have lots of fun and satisfaction at the same time.
5. **Communication:** Usually every Monday information is sent out via email to members informing them of the following Sunday's walk - venue, date, time and the probable walking route. Certain committee members look after each of the A, B, C and D groups with a list of walkers in each group to be contacted; sometimes members "belong" to more than one group and they will receive two sets of information. There is close contact between our membership officers and walk leaders. Should someone be walking with us for the first time we try to make sure he/she gets a warm welcome and is made to feel at home.

Four Newsletters were sent out to members during the year containing reports of away trips and activities such as the Star Trek. Please let us have your ideas about what articles/content you feel should be included we are always looking for contributors.

6. **Ulster Federation of Rambling Clubs and Mourne Heritage Trust:** Our club has been associated with each for many years. The business of both regularly covers such matters as insurance, path erosion, mountain safety and preparedness, navigation, first aid and leadership courses. We, in the Mourne Ramblers, have a wealth of experience in hill related matters and it is good to make a positive contribution based on practical experience. UFRC is working closely with Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland funded by SportNI; hopefully this will prove a fruitful association.

Yes, we can look back on a successful year. We all hill walk for our own personal reasons fresh air, varied scenery, nature, challenge, a hot cuppa, new experiences, honing our hill skills and the feel of sun, rain, snow and wind on our face. You can probably add others to this list but the one common denominator is the enjoyment of being with a group of like-minded friendly people and sharing the craic as we lace up our walking boots, don our rucksacks and head into the hills for another adventure.

George Acheson

MOURNE RAMBLING GROUP INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

YEAR ENDING 30 SEPTEMBER 2023

INCOME	2023	2022	EXPENDITURE	2023	2022
	£	£		£	£
SUBSCRIPTIONS	3265.00	3935.00	TRAINING	85.00	0.00
DONATIONS	22.46	35.53	BANK FEES (FIRST TRUST)	169.84	161.15
BANK INTEREST (NATIONWIDE)	0.00	3.59	NEWSLETTERS	35.78	59.95
REFUND WEBSITE	0.00	12.24	PROGRAMMES	110.00	103.00
CHRISTMAS MEAL	600.00	838.60	UFRC AFFILIATION	471.00	405.00
MEMBERS OVERPAID	55.00	25.00	INSURANCE	286.00	292.00
SLIDESHOW MEALS + PRIZES	416.00		MOURNE RESCUE TEAM	326.00	314.00
UNCASHED CHEQUE	29.95		N W M R T	163.00	157.00
			CHARITABLE DONATIONS	10.00	10.00
			WEBSITE	100.02	53.27
			TREASURER	197.50	170.93
			PROGRAMME POSTAGE		
			NI SPORT (AGM)	292.00	292.00
			PICNIC	154.98	164.95
			MEMBER TAGS	350.00	303.99
			ZOOM INVOICE	143.88	143.88
			CHRISTMAS MEAL	671.50	778.45
			SLIDESHOW	472.00	0.00
			MEMBERS OVERPAID REFUNDS	55.00	149.75
			CHAPS	6.00	8.00
			JACKSON SPORTS	200.18	769.56
			MISCELLANEOUS	27.99	25.00
			TREASURER EXPENSES	117.75	124.74
TOTAL INCOME (A)	4388.41	4849.96	TOTAL EXPENDITURE (B)	4445.42	4486.62
OPERATING SURPLUS/DEFICIT (A – B)	-57.01	363.34			
CASH BALANCE					
OPENING CASH BALANCE	5026.13	4662.79			
SURPLUS/DEFICIT FOR YEAR	-57.01	363.34			
CLOSING CASH BALANCE	4969.12	5026.13			
CLOSING CASH BALANCE REPRESENTED BY:					
FIRST TRUST BANK	4969.12	5026.13			
CASH IN HAND	0.00	0.00			
	4969.12	5026.13			

NOTES ON TREASURER'S REPORT 30 SEPTEMBER 2023

INCOME

SUBS FOR 2023 MADE UP OF:	£	
ASSOCIATES 1 @ £5	5.00	
FULL SUBS 163 @ £20	3260.00	
DONATIONS	22.46	(£5 + £5 + £5 + £5 +£1.49 +£0.97)
UNCASHED CHEQUE	29.95	

EXPENDITURE

- TRAINING GREENHILL 29 OCT 2022
- BANK FEES 4 QUARTERLY PAYMENTS, EACH ONE INCLUDES £9 ACCOUNT MAINTENANCE - £21.11 + £68.52 + ££48.49 + £31.72
- NEWSLETTERS INCLUDES 3 PAYMENTS – NOV 2022 £18.68, MAR 2023 £7.14, JUL 2023 £9.96
- PROGRAMMES PRINTING - £55 + £55
- UFRC AFFILIATION 157 X £3 BASED ON 2022 MEMBERSHIP
- UFRC INSURANCE 143 X £2 BASED ON 2023 MEMBERSHIP
- MMRT 163 X £2
- NWMRT 163 X £1
- CHARITABLE DONATION £10 GUIDE DOGS FOR THE BLIND
- WEBSITE - £14.39 + £12.24 + £59.71 + £13.68
- TREASURER PROGRAMME EXPENSES – 2 POSTAGES - £82.50 + £93.00 + £22.00
- NI SPORT AGM COSTS – £292, SAME AS 2022
- PICNIC – MEELMORE LODGE – GREAT DAY OUT, THANKS TO CARMEL & TONI £54.87 + £58.11 + £42.00
- ZOOM INVOICE - £143.88 FOR PRIVILEGE OF ENABLING COMMITTEE MEETINGS LASTING LONGER THAN 45 MINUTES
- CHRISTMAS MEAL - £600 + £71.50 COMPLIMENTARY DRINKS
- SLIDESHOW - £384.00 + £38.00 COMPLIMENTARY DRINKS + £18.00 PRIZES + £32.00 REFUND ONE MEAL
- CHAPS IN FEE, £6
- JACKSON SPORTS WERE PAID £120.02 FOR 6 FIRST AID KITS AND £80.16 FOR 80 ROMERS
- MISCELLANEOUS WAS £27.99 FOR POCKETS FOR EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS FOR NEW MEMBERS
- TREASURER EXPENSES COMPRISE STAMPS & STATIONERY PURCHASED THROUGHOUT THE YEAR + EVERY NEW MEMBER WAS POSTED A COPY OF MOURNE MISCELLANY @ £2.15 IN UK AND £5.25 IN REPUBLIC OF IRELAND
- INCOME £4388.41, EXPENSES £4445.42 = OPERATING DEFICIT OF £57.01
- CLOSING BALANCE REPRESENTED BY:

FIRST TRUST	£4969.12
CASH IN HAND	<u>£ 0.00</u>
	£4969.12
- CLUB FUNDS ARE HEALTHY, I PROPOSE WE RETAIN MEMBERSHIP SUB AT £20 FOR 2024

E&OE

Application Form

Notes: New members must contact one of the New Members Officers, Fionnuala Carragher (Tel. 028 9079 5292) or Ray Gray (07929401817) in advance of submitting this form.

1. Membership is for a year or part of a year and subscriptions are due for renewal on January 1st.
2. Two types of membership are available:

Full membership for people intending to walk with the Group. Annual subscription is £20.
Associate membership for people who wish to retain links with the Group but who do not intend walking with the Group. Annual subscription is £5.

Please complete

Name(s): _____

Address: (Please print and **include your Post Code**)

Postcode

Phone No:

Mobile No:

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

Please tick as appropriate:

I am a new member and I discussed my application with _____
On Date : _____

Walking Group Recommended (please circle or highlight) : A B C D

Membership fee of £20 per year (or part of year)

I have received a copy of the **Programme of Walks**

I have received and read the **Advice for Walkers**

If you wish to pay by cheque, please make it payable to Mourne Rambling Group.

Please, do not send cash in the post.

Return to: **Vincent Trainor, 34 Grahamville Estate, Kilkeel, Co Down, BT34 4DD**

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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.

NOTICE BOARD

- 19 members will attend the Christmas Dinner in the Burrendale Hotel on Sunday 03 December. The meal is due to be served at 6.00pm. Any members who were on the walk earlier may wish to avail of showering facilities in the Burrendale beforehand.
- The next edition of the Mourne Rambling Group Newsletter will be published in February 2024. If you have an article you would like to include, please forward to me as an attachment. My email is trainorvj@yahoo.co.uk