



Autumn Gathering 2017

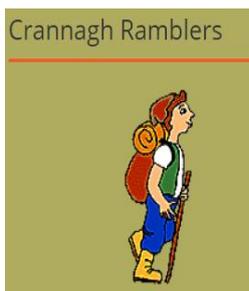
Hosted by

Crannagh Ramblers

Donegal Co Co Hills & Trails Walking Club

North West Mountaineering Club

Individual Members



Donegal County Council  
Hills & Trails



Walking Club



Individual Members



Friday October 13<sup>th</sup> – Sunday October 15<sup>th</sup>

## Organising Committee

Helen Donoghue, Seamus Dohan, John Grant, Rosemary Mc Clafferty, Catherine Mc Loughlin, Norman Miller, Diarmuid Ó Donnabháin, Mary O Hara.

## Crannagh Ramblers

The Crannagh Ramblers, 20 Years a-Growing....Fiche Bliain ag Fas

The Crannagh Ramblers's inaugural walk took place on Sunday 15th June 1997. The late John Doherty, the club's founder, led the walk of 12 members on Mamore Hill, Urris. 3 of those 12 founding members are still regular walkers with the Ramblers! Since then the club has grown to 38 members. Based in Inishowen the group got its name from the Crana river on which the town of Bunrana is built.

The Crannagh Ramblers is a Cross-Border club with many of its members from Derry. The club is an active hillwalking group which meets regularly. Memorable club holidays include trips to Austria and Slovenia. Our annual holidays have brought us to the Mourne Mountains, Slieve League and the Wicklow Hills. On our 20th anniversary we reminisce on the very many happy occasions we have enjoyed and the new friendships we have made. We remember in particular our founder and leader, the late John Doherty. The club has erected a plaque in his memory on Mamore hill, the hill he chose to launch the club. We are delighted that our club has grown over the years and is still very much a lively, vibrant club.

Walks are scheduled on Sundays fortnightly. For more information visit: [www.crannaghramblers.com](http://www.crannaghramblers.com) or <https://www.facebook.com/crannagh.ramblers>.



## Donegal Co Hills & Trails Walking Club

DCC Hills & Trails Walking Club is a newly-formed club, just four years in existence consisting of employees, former employees of Donegal County Council and of their family members. Albeit it a new club, DCC Hills & Trails Walking Club has already several kilometres trekked and climbed both in Donegal and beyond. The club operates bi-monthly walks, offering a mix of trail walks and hill climbs from moderates to strenuous levels.

The Club is proud to have completed the Donegal section of the International Appalachian Trail (IAT), starting in the spectacular Slieve League Mountain, traversing the beautiful landscape of the county, including the Bluestacks, Lough Eske before crossing into N.I.

The Club is also proud to have completed the Bluestack Challenge in June 2017 while at the same time, having made a worthy contribution for those with special needs in the county.

The Club continues to go from strength to strength and new members are always welcome!

For more information visit: <https://www.facebook.com/DonegalCountyCouncil/>



## North West Mountaineering Club

On a Tuesday evening on the 26th April 1955 at a meeting in the Strand Cafe, Derry, a group of hiking and Mountaineering enthusiasts formed a club to be known as the North West Mountaineering Club. They are one of the oldest clubs in the country and (much later) a founding member of MI (then FMCI).

Perusal of the early club log books would indicate an interest in exploration and climbing in the North West area, more particularly Donegal, but in recent years hill walking has become the primary activity. Sunday walks form the club's backbone, but many members walk and some climb regularly abroad, including the greater ranges.

The club is probably best known for running the Glover Highlander for some 25 years, a tough walk (an even tougher social event) in memory of founder member Joey Glover. Mr Joey B Glover, ACA, was elected as the first Chairman, and Mr DAR Johnston and Mr Dennis Helliwell were elected to the offices of Secretary and Treasurer respectively. For more information visit: <http://www.nwmc.ie/>



## Mountaineering Ireland Individual Members

A number of local Donegal individual members have also been instrumental in organising this year's Autumn Gathering.

### Autumn Gathering 2017

This year we invited all clubs and local members in Donegal an opportunity to be involved in hosting the gathering to create an event which showcases the local area from a walking and climbing perspective as well as supporting the local economy. Letterkenny is ideally situated close to the Glenveagh National Park as well as other beautiful mountains and crags which provides wide ranging and challenging walking routes to suit all abilities.

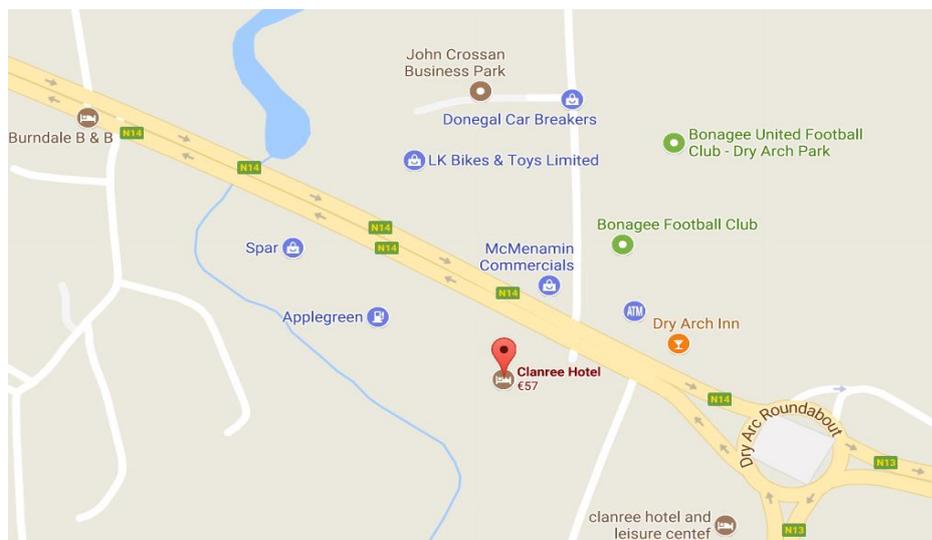
We will be based out of the Clanree Hotel in Letterkenny for the entire weekend. The Hotel provides meeting room space as well as a large dining area for the Saturday night dinner and entertainment. The hotel has full leisure facilities and a separate bar and restaurant area. There is also a car park at the Hotel which will act as a pick up and drop off point before and after walks on Saturday. We have booked a number of rooms for the Gathering. Please let the hotel know you are with the Mountaineering Ireland Autumn Gathering at the time of booking to avail of a special rate. **Any unallocated rooms will be released back to the hotel so be sure to book early.**

As always, Saturday is the main day of activities during the weekend with walking, climbing and an environmental workshops available to choose from. We limit numbers on most of our activities so please make your selection at the time of booking online. The **member's forum** will take place in the MacGrainna Suite at **18.30 on Saturday evening**. We will go straight into dinner and entertainment at **20.00**.

Sunday morning will again see a range of 3 hour workshops. Again, please book your choice of workshop online as places are limited.

**Alternative Accommodation:** There are plenty of accommodation options in Letterkenny itself including B&B and self-catering. <http://www.letterkennyaccommodation.net/>

See below map



## The Donegal Mountains

Donegal in the northwest of Ireland is a playground for hillwalkers and climbers alike. Boasting several diverse mountain ranges and crags there were many routes to choose from. This year's Autumn Gathering will be centred around the Glenveagh National Park and the surrounding mountains as well as Urris Ridge and Slieve Sneacht & Slieve Main. Depending on the weather we will also be climbing in some near by crags, alternatively retreating to the close by Foyle arena. There is a wide variety of levels ranging from easy, moderate and more challenging offering something for everyone and weather permitting, stunning views along all routes, making this Autumn Gathering well worth the journey.



## Programme of Events:

### Friday October 13<sup>th</sup>

- Rock Climbing:** Meet at the Clanree Hotel. Options available to climb single or multi-pitch climbs with two experienced climbers. Advanced online booking required.
- 09.00**
- 19.00** Registration in the lobby area of the Clanree Hotel. There is a bar area/restaurant in the hotel to have something to eat when you arrive.
- 20.00** Opening of the Gathering by Mountaineering Ireland's President Paul Kellagher followed by the following guest speakers;
- Inga Bock** County Donegal is one of 12 regions in the country to have been allocated the services of a Rural Recreation Officer (RRO) in 2008. The RRO works with communities, landowners, local and national agencies to support the development, maintenance and promotion of trail based outdoor recreation opportunities in County Donegal for residents and tourists alike. Inga Bock Rural Recreation Officer for Donegal will introduce us to Donegal's trails and landscape and will discuss current projects and the future of walking in Donegal.
- Kevin Kilroy** Mountaineering Ireland's Youth Development Officer for Northern Ireland, Kevin is a Donegal native with a passion for rock climbing and a significant knowledge of climbing in Donegal who will discuss the fantastic crags and mountains on offer to climb in Donegal.

### Saturday October 14<sup>th</sup>

Variety of walks, climbs and workshops departing from the Clanree Hotel. Please note that packed lunches @ €7.50pp are available from the hotel for those staying there but must be ordered upon check in before Friday 13<sup>th</sup> at 9pm. Please ensure you have walking gear for all weathers with you including hiking boots with good ankle support as the terrain on some of the walks is steep and can be challenging. We have given an indication of the level of difficulty of each walk below, however, please read the description to choose one which is more appropriate for you.

#### Choose from:

- Walk 1.**                    **Atlan Farm to Gleannaneor (Challenging)**
- Starting from Atlan Farm the walk would take in Aghla More, Aghla Beg then across Na Leargacha down to Gleannaneor.  
**Distance: 12km Walking Time: 5 hours Height gain: 802 m**
- Walk 2.**                    **Urris Ridge (Challenging)**
- One of the best ridges in Ireland, with astounding 360° views stretching from the Antrim coast to the Inner Hebrides, Tory Island, the Derryveaghs and the Bluestacks.    **Distance: Walking Time: 6 + hours.**

### Walk 3.

#### Dooish Mountain (Challenging)

Glenveagh National Park - *Dooish Mountain* would be a strenuous walk also finishing at the car park in Glenveagh National Park - This walk takes in one of the many mountains in the Derryveaghs, *Dooish Mountain* the views from here are amazing! We would descend from the mountain on the stalkers path which was used back in the day for taking game home. Down to the stalkers hut and then walk back to the castle along the bridal path - weather permitting. Hikers may like to bring some money with them for the Castle Tearooms.

**Distance: 15km Walking Time: 6 -7 hours Height gain: 550m**

### Walk 4.

#### Knockalla Ridge (Challenging/Moderate)

This is an A to B walk taking some of the best views in County Donegal. From Muckish in the SW, Mulroy Bay, Lough Swilly, Urris Ridge and not forgetting remote Malin Head. As we near the finish, we will have views over Scraggy Bag, made famous as a brand name by our local micro brewery. The walk will be on open mountain.

**Distance: 8km Walking Time: 3 - 4 hours Height gain: 367m**

### Walk 5.

#### Environmental Walk

##### Muckish Mountain via Miners Path (Moderate)

A hillwalk on Muckish (667m; the pig's back) with an insight into the mountain's rich mining heritage and its geology and landforms. The walk involves a very steep ascent on the Miners' Path, which is rough and loose underfoot. We'll pause along the way to hear about how sand was quarried from the mountain to make glass. On Muckish's rockstrewn plateau we hope to see some of the other features which have led to Muckish being described as 'possibly the most diverse mountain in Ireland in terms of its landforms'.

The walk finishes at Muckish Gap or Gleannaneour where we will see granite boulders (erratics) deposited by a glacier as it moved from Glenveagh National Park towards the coast. Along the way we will discuss, flora and fauna, access and conservation issues and the role of Club Environmental Officers. Our aim is to have an enjoyable walk where we learn from the landscape and from each other.

**Distance: 6km Walking Time: 5 hours. Height gain: 440 m**

### Walk 6.

#### Slieve Snacht & Slieve Main (Moderate)

This is a fantastic walk in the heart of Inishowen peninsula. It incorporates the peninsula's highest summit Slieve Sneacht 615m and Slieve Main 514m. On this spectacular linear walk participants will learn about a few points of interest along the way!

**Distance: 8km Walking Time: 4-5 Hours**

## Walk 7

### The Bridal Path Walk (Easy)

Based in the *Glenveagh National Park - Jewel in the Crown of Donegal* this is mainly a track walk - great for family and friends. Soft soles are recommended. Hikers may like to bring some money with them for the Castle Tearooms. **Distance: 11km Walking Time: 4 – 5 hours**

## Walk 8

### Ards Forest (Easy)

A visit to Ards Forest Park will reward everyone at any time of the year. The park covers approximately 480 hectares (1200 acres) and includes a variety of habitats, among them sand dunes, beaches, salt marshes, salt water lakes, rock face and, of course, coniferous and deciduous woodlands. With such a variety of landscapes, it is possible to spend many hours exploring this wonderful park. The walk we will be doing will start and finish at the Friary. The trail will follow the shore around the headland and finish by following the trails through the forest.

**Distance: 10km Walking Time: 3 - 4 hours Height gain: 280m**

## Rock Climbing 09.00

**Beginners Session** – This is an opportunity for members to try rock climbing and acquire the fundamental skills of rock climbing and movement. 4:1 ratio

## Rock Climbing 09.00

**Improvers Session** – For adult climbers who have a level of rock climbing experience. This session will provide practical advice and guidance while out on the crags. Ratio 2:1

## Independent Hillwalking/Climbing

Participants head out to walk and climb the hills, cliffs and crags of the area in self-led groups.  
Please bring your own equipment and leave details of locations, expected return time and contact details at the registration desk.

## 18.30

### **Mountaineering Member's Forum** – MacGrainna Suite, Clanree Hotel

The member's forum is open to all MI members whether you are attending the entire weekend of activities or not. This is an open forum led by the Chairperson and CEO of Mountaineering Ireland. It is an opportunity to air any concerns or queries with the Board, staff and other members either individually or on behalf of your member club. It can also be used as an information sharing facility. Topics discussed are generally of interest to all individuals and clubs so we would encourage as many of those attending the Autumn Gathering as possible to come to the member's forum and feedback to your member club afterwards.

20.00 Dinner in MacGrainna Suite, Clanree Hotel

**Sunday October 15<sup>th</sup>**

There will be a variety of workshops available from 10:00 to 13:00 on Sunday morning. Please choose from the options below and make sure to include them when booking online.

**1. Club Development Workshop – Clanree Hotel**

This workshop is open to all club members and will look at a variety of current topics which affect all clubs. Club Development Workshop is an opportunity to bring specific questions to the forum.

The workshop will offer advice on events, best practice and risk assessment. If there is a particular area you would like to discuss or get information on please send an email to [ruth@mountaineering.ie](mailto:ruth@mountaineering.ie) beforehand so we can prepare the necessary material.

**2. The Future of Errigal - Bus departs Clanree Hotel at 9.00am arriving back in Letterkenny at 2.00pm.**

An opportunity for Mountaineering Ireland members to meet with representatives of Coiste Forbartha Dhún Lúiche, a local community development group in Dunlewey. The community group, along with Mountaineering Ireland, Donegal County Council and others, is participating in a project looking at how best to care for Errigal, and in particular how to address the erosion that results from increased footfall on the mountain.

This event will involve three short indoor presentations in Dunlewey, followed by a visit to the lower part of Errigal to get the feedback of walkers on options being considered. Participants should wear clothing and footwear suitable for being outdoors and walking on boggy ground.

The event is open to all who are interested. Mountaineering Ireland is strongly encouraging clubs that regularly walk in Donegal to participate in the event. Club Environmental Officers, and those who represent Mountaineering Ireland on upland stakeholder groups in other areas should also find this particularly useful.

As always, there is the option to walk or climb independently on Sunday morning.

13.00 /14:00 Gathering Ends

\*\*\*\*\*