Welcome to the Summer 2015 IMC Newsletter.

So far it has been a strong year for the club with a great intake for the New Members Programme, ably organised by our Training Officer, Jon Smith. A sizeable core group of new members are now frequent visitors to Dalkey as well as attending the Midweek Meets, making that transition into lead climbers and getting scratches on their shiny new gear. Within this issue, five such members give their impressions of the programme and what climbing means to them.

No sooner had our Indoor Meets finished in March than Ian Christie organised a trip to the Costa Blanca, in search of sunny sports climbs. And whilst they didn't always get that sun, the most was made of it all, taking in a classic ridge walk or chasing down the elusive sun to other venues; as reported in our first article.

At the end of May, Gerry's trip to the Lake District set off in search of classic climbs. Again the weather was not the most amenable but we got out climbing on all but the last day when the winds upset the ferry schedules and forced an early retreat. A full report will be in the next newsletter.

As this issue goes to press, Jon's Fairhead Meet will be happening and in mid-August Dave Madden's trip to Norway takes place.

As soon as the evenings permitted, the Midweek Meets got underway demonstrating that Dalkey is not the only evening venue, including a successful trip to Lough Dan (with a return visit planned before the summer is out).

By the time you receive this newsletter, work on the new, improved Hut will be complete and to celebrate this fact, the barbeque will be held on August 15th. We look forward to seeing you all there.

Looking to the future, the Joe Reville Ireland's Eye Meet is planned for the second weekend in September (see a report on last year's within these pages) as well as Gerry's other classic meet to Snowdonia in October. And as well as all this, other trips both at home & abroad are being planned, watch the forum & events pages for details.

In the midst of all this, some 40 years on, Steve Young paid a return visit to Dalkey Quarry in June and climbed a few classics. More details on this in next newsletter.

Gary Smith, IMC Publicity Officer
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Front Cover: Bartek & Austin at Aran de Bastistot, Echo Valley, Costa Blanca.
Back Cover: Hugh topping out after climbing Chuckling Pig, Lough Dan

Inside Front Cover: A selection of photos from Dave Keogh’s endeavours to climb, well, just about everything. This quartet from Ben Nevis in March 2015.

This Newsletter would be nothing without you, the writers & photographers, as well as the organisers of all the IMC trips & events, so many thanks to everyone for their contributions.

Newsletter designed, complied & edited by Gary Smith.
Part I: Climbing in Costa Blanca by Martina Fahey

This report is based on memory of the IMC’s 2015 trip to Calpe. It will be at times wildly inaccurate and may even stretch to being entirely fictional at points.

Dublin Airport, silly o'clock in the morning, my tired head held up with pride. Here I stood achieving a personal goal for 2015. I was en route to climb some foreign rock. Take that, failed New Year resolutions! ‘Muchos gracias’ to the author of A Four Hour Work Week. My pride and pre-emptive sense of achievement aren’t sitting alone. A nervous excitement and list of fearful ‘what-if’s’ balanced unsteadily against them.

My first task, find the Polish man I’d agreed to car-share with. This agreement came via an email conversation which happened thanks to an address passed on by Ian, the trip organizer. My second task, board a flight to Madrid. On landing in Madrid I was allevied of my first ‘what if’ fear. En route I gathered that Bartek was unlikely to murder me, mutilate my body and drive around Spain with the body in the boot. The B-man’s most deviant characteristic as it happens is to be insanely organized. This trait stood in sharp contrast to my own approach to life. While I showed up with a travel plan of ‘follow the signs towards Valencia and figure out the route from there,’ the B-man had the route pre-programmed into his GPS with toilet and eating stops also included. Team Bartina was up and functioning!

After a few hours of scenic driving which included some brief detours, a couple of pit stops, thousands of roundabouts, and a raid on an orange grove, we arrived at the apartment complex in Calpe. Here we were graciously welcomed by James who was the first of the party of 14 to arrive. James had taken on the tasks of assigning us all to our lodgings and preparing a meal. The lodgings came in the form of three apartments within the same well-serviced complex. They were compact but perfect. They also featured the luxurious addition of poorly working showers. This feature was multi-functional. It gave us all something to complain about when we needed a moan, thus preventing us from turning on each other. It also served as something to give Ian stick about. Ian was of course gentleman enough to later save us the bother as he invested in his own selfie-stick.

It was just James, Bartek and I for the dinner on evening one. The next arrivals were to be in late that night and the following day. It was now time to start thinking of rock! In other words it’s time to consider the next “what-if” fear. Having gone on the trip to Spain without really knowing any of the other travellers I hadn’t addressed the question of climbing partners. I was hoping that through some cosmic alignment, and perhaps a little kindness, it would all work out! In truth I was petrified that I’d either be a burden to some pairing or be left on my lonesome with no one to play with!

When Bartek and I had been chatting on our journey I realized that Polish wasn’t the
only language he spoke that was foreign to me. He was fluent in a climbing dialect that was entirely beyond me. “Climbes” rolled off his tongue and he was on the trip with ambition to stretch his well developed climbing ability. While I thought I should feel inspired by this, in reality it made me want to curl up in a ball. What if the whole group climbed like him! On night one, the conversation about climbing demonstrated that Bartek, James and I were all miles apart. The B-man was ambitious and capable, James experienced but risk adverse and I clueless. I headed off to bed with no arrangements made, still wondering what the next days would bring.

In the morning one answer presented itself as a gray sky outside my window. Rain. I trudge over to the apartment of Bartek and James. There I find two additional arrivals and plans in place. The rain is to clear in the early afternoon. The new arrivals, Eoin and Austin, were to partner up with the B-man and take on challenges that were far beyond me. James and I were to team up and take on something more suited to mortals.

We drive to “Sierra de Toix”, the local crag. The rain is still coming. Climbing isn’t an option so we drive cross country and have lunch at a nearby village. A blue sky presents itself as we get to know one another, exchanging stories, dining on a variety of tapas. Afterwards we retrace the route up the windy lanes to the Toix crag. Here, to test ourselves, we take on a couple of single pitch routes. James seems happy or at least willing to answer my numerous questions. He fills in the gaps in my knowledge, born of both my novice status and of pure nerves.

We spend the remainder of the evening here. Our final climb has three or four pitches. It’s horribly close to dark as we begin to descend from the top pitch. My hands are trembling so much at the prospect of becoming benighted (of course I forgot a head torch) that I end up watching in horror as my belay hops down the ridge. Thankfully James is resourceful enough to manage the situation. We make it to the car-park as darkness takes over entirely.

The next day we venture to another crag and take on a trad multi-pitch with four or five pitches. Rain is threatening through the day. James again manages to overcome some really dumb mistakes that I make across the pitches. On the final pitch I’m designated to lead. The sheer exposure of the pitch, combined with the weather and uncertainty
about the line I’m supposed to follow, fuel my imagination with all the possibilities of what could go wrong. Turns out I have limited faith in my ability and I bottle it. The wise words of “there are bold climbers and there are old climbers” echo in the back of my mind. That evening sees a nice meal out with stories exchanged with a large fraction of our group of 14. Across the table we exchange tales, take a few selfies and make plans for the following day. Memory tells me that it was Echo Valley and Penon D’Ifach which kept the others busy for the day. James and I are considering the Penon for the following day. I’m bricking myself but in agreement.

As the next day arrives the plan is adjusted and James, Kevin and I head for Toix again where we take on Magical Mystery Tour. I’m feeling confident, thinking I’ve landed on my feet with two experienced climbers there to give me plenty of direction. The previous Training Officer of the IMC, Kevin, is full of helpful wisdom which he willingly shares. As the day progresses I realize that many of Kevin’s tales of warning end with untimely deaths of climbers. I’m second checking every move I make from here on! It takes some effort to keep the scenarios he has described far from mind as we make our way across and up the multiple pitches of the exposed sea

The comforting glow of Esther’s Chimney
cliff. Here I truly find what it is to 'live in the moment' as anything my mind conjures up, apart from what's straight in front of me, is far too frightening to entertain. Nonetheless we live to tell the tale. That evening over dinner Eoin shares a phrase which perfectly sums up the climbing experience; *Type Two Fun*. Not so enjoyable while you’re doing it but enjoyable afterwards. That evening, tales from the other climbers of their feats in Guadalest inspire us to head there the next day.

Kevin, James and I take on an enjoyable multi-pitch which sees a re-birthing experience through Esther’s Chimney. Throughout the day I’m not sure whether I get more tips on climbing or literature as my two partners exchange quotes. Either way, it’s the first day I spend on the rock where I’m not actually considering death as a plausible, if unlikely, possibility. Eoin, Austin and Bartek have also chosen Guadalest as a destination that day. After our climb we head over and join them. It’s inspiring to watch them climb. Our party take on to climb a couple of single pitches close by. Kevin opting for a couple of more challenging routes which the ‘advanced group’ are doing. He’s still got it! Under the supervision of Bartek, Kevin and James, and their conflicting advice, I also grapple my way on a top rope to the top of a route which is graded higher than those we’ve been taking on. As it turns out this is to be our last day all climbing as a group. The weather is threatening to turn. The idea of heading north emerges among some of us as bonds are formed over Pina Coladas while celebrating James’ birthday that evening.

Not wanting to miss out on the cultural side of Spain, four of us head off on an adventure. Or at least after hangovers are nursed we head off. The grand plan involves a night in Valencia, where La Fallas festival is underway, and then a couple of days in Siurana, where Eoin was familiar with the rock and sunshine is promised. Bartek’s description of the following days does justice to the antics which ensued.
First of all, chapeau bas to Ian for organising this great trip. Everything was top-notch like the location, transport to crags, restaurants, bars, shops, apartments with Internet for addicts. Well, the weather could be better, but it made four of us trip partakers explore a little more than Costa Blanca, and drive north to Siurana with one night’s pit stop in Valencia for Las Fallas. The (great ;-) four were Martina, Austin, Bartek and Eoin.

The final decision of going to Siurana was taken on Wednesday morning as the weather forecast was supposedly to be better in the north on the next two days. Valencia old town at night was full of people – autochthons and tourists – taking part in Las Fallas. After strolling around town, climbing in sector Jardí del Túria a new route named MaBa Eostin Valenciana and unanimously graded 6b+++++ (first ascent Austin, OS, ground up), drinking some craft beer and cider (no piña collada this time), eating tapas and paella valenciana, the last one only for flesh eaters, watching fireworks, even more drinks and we called it a night.

On the next dry, cloudy day we set off to our main destination – Siurana. We arrived there quite late around 1600hrs, and then we searched for the right crag. Thanks to...
Eoin who was our guide there we found the place – L’Herbolari (http://osm.org/go/xUTM11whR-?m) – quickly geared up and started climbing. Team Austina did a really nice looking line 30m, 6a. Team Bartoin climbed 25m 6c that felt more like 6b at most, and then 6a+ and that was all for the first day of climbing in Siurana. We headed to our hotel in Tarragona, had a big, big, late dinner in some Japanese restaurant.

On Friday, there only three left went climbing to Siurana, because Eoin left us and went to Barcelona. We climbed at the other crag named Can Marges de Baix (http://osm.org/go/xUTM3suZF?m) and climbed two 6a’s and one 6c. While Martina was climbing 6c (yes Kevin, Martina climbed 6c :-)) it started raining so the route must have felt like at least some 7a for her. After this climb we had to call it the day and went to have some late lunch before we split. Austin headed back to Calpe routing through fog and Bartina had a long drive to Madrid.

No one day was spent without climbing at least a one route, no skin left on fingers and litres of blood and sweat left on rock, so to sum up the trip finished as planned.

Part III: The Bernia Ridge

by Ian Christie

The Bernia Ridge is a 4km long ridge near the town of Calpe in the Costa Blanca, Spain. Mainly grade 3 scrambling with a couple of abseils and one easy bolted climb, it is something that most people in the IMC would be well able to do and I would highly recommend it. It could be a longer trip in Spain or maybe as a weekend with also a bit of climbing.

Parking at the Bernia Restaurant on the North side and using the marked path best accesses the ridge. It is followed from East to West. The way is well marked with red dots and arrows.

We did the ridge on the last day of a one-week climbing trip to Spain back in March, Áine O’Riley, Liam McCarty, Marie McCarty and myself.

It had been a week of mixed weather and the forecast for that Friday was not looking promising. Liam and Marie, fair play to them, had scoped out the approach the day before and we were well prepared. This is highly recommended. Because of the weather forecast, we did not expect to be getting out and doing much in the last day, so I had a late night with a “sex on the beach” and a little too many margaritas the night before.
So when I got a call from Liam at 6:30 AM the next morning that the trip was on I was not exactly overjoyed. Nevertheless I got up, breakfasted and out to the car. Bags on and on trail by about 9 AM with a spring in our step and a bit of a sore head in my case. The walk in was quite short and before long we found a spot where we could put our harnesses helmets and gear on. Around here we came across a massive tunnel, which ran right through the ridge from one side to the other.

Liam took the lead and the beginning was slightly hard to route find but we were soon away and before long came to the first abseil. We were carrying one half rope which we doubled on the abseiling & pitched climb.

After the abseil things began to be a bit tricky as the drop-offs were very high and scrambling was steep in places. We soon came to the pitch climb. Liam led off and anchored himself at the top and untied. We then pulled down the rope and Áine lead and brought up Marie and myself. A bit unconventional but we reckoned this was the best way to do it.

We found ourselves walking in clouds with brief glimpses of beautiful views down the coast as the clouds cleared here and there, we all felt privileged to be in such a beautiful place on such a day.

Soon we came to near the top where we found a little box containing various messages that people had written. We added to this with a message of our own. Then lo and
behold we found an IMC sticker on the box. This amazed us all as the IMC stickers had only been printed weeks before, a mystery we may never solve!

On and on we scrambled and soon got to our next abseil, which was handy enough. Route finding became a little tricky again, mainly as we were in cloud, and alternatively Liam might lead or I might lead or Aine or Marie. It was beginning to get dark. I was a little worried as we were within 20 minutes of darkness and still had not reached the top and from the top it was a good walk back down but then the clouds lifted for a minute and I could see that summit cairn in the distance.
Hallelujah!

We stood there briefly congratulating ourselves and headed back down towards an old fort, which was the marker for the track back and the end of the ridge. This took us no more than a half an hour. From the fort it was quite an easy track back to the car, the last forty minutes walking in darkness.

I can tell you by now I was pretty tired, my feet were screaming at me but I had had a great day with a great bunch of people. We celebrated that evening in Calpe. I was pretty knackered so I had to forgo the “sex on the beach” and had a great meal in the local French restaurant.

Flying home back home the next day tired, happy and contented.
The Summit Box with fresh off the press IMC Sticker!

The Guides: Liam & Marie
Cedric Spegagne:

My first climbing experience was around the age of 15 at school, a few hours of top rope indoor climbing. At the time I had no fear, totally enjoyed it and always kept a good memory of it. When last summer, 15 years later, a friend of mine offered to visit him in the south of France and go climb outdoors with him I jumped on the opportunity.

How disappointed I was when I found I was afraid! Not really a fear of heights, just scared of falling I guess. It took me a few climbs before starting to feel somewhat comfortable after which I started to really enjoy the whole experience: the effort, the moves, being outdoors, the rewarding views from the top.

Coming back to Dublin I decided I wanted to take up climbing and started looking at clubs in the area. The IMC and its new members programme attracted me, and that’s how I ended up in Awesome Wall on the first evening of the programme.

Tying a figure of eight and belaying was about all I really knew. I had no idea about setting up anchors, placing gear, rope work, and all the new jargon (cams, nuts, slings, etc). The first Thursday in Awesome Wall was a good introduction to what was to come over the next few weeks in Dalkey.

What a great location! I had been to Killiney Hill before but never got down to the quarry. I was really surprised to find this spot so close to the city centre. With the advice and coaching from several of the existing (Vincent, Cillian, Sinead, David and many more) and new members I have made great progress. From my first climb (minus the few in France the previous summer) to my first lead in just a few weeks! I still lack elegance (some of my moves are more than questionable!) but I can feel that I am improving every time I get out there, and finally starting to ‘trust my feet’!

My first lead was 3 weeks ago on Yorkshire Pudding. Shane had been offering me to lead a climb all evening, I kept refusing and saying I’d do the next one. We finally decided to go for an easy one that I’d feel comfortable (sort of!) on. Was I happy when I got to the top? Absolutely! Since then I’ve lead a few routes, nothing crazy, but a small achievement every time I reach the top.

Having missed the weekend in the Mourne’s my first introduction to multi-pitch was in Glendalough following Gerry together with Derek on Prelude Nightmare. Amazing! I think I reached my own limits on that last pitch. I was all shaking and breathless from the adrenalin when I got over the top. What a feeling, and what a view! Thanks again Gerry for leading us up this route and thanks Derek for the moral support, it certainly made the difference! Still some way to go before I can lead this route myself!
One of the things that struck me throughout the new members programme is the patience, availability and generosity of the existing members. There was always someone to climb with, to give good advice, share gear, and more importantly their enthusiasm for this sport. Special thanks to Jon for organising this programme and for his availability…and his love of belay!

I hope that one day I will be a competent enough climber to share my knowledge and experience with people new to the sport. In the meantime I still have a few challenges lying ahead. Looking forward to the next day out!

Derek Hendrick:

I spotted a familiar face in the car park. It was Shane. We walked, chatting away together, towards the zig zags. Up ahead we could see people making their way up to the base of some cliffs. 'Jesus, don’t tell me that’s the multi-pitches'.

We arrived at the foot of the climbs saying hello to everyone. ‘Who else wants to second Prelude with Cedric’ I jumped at the chance because I didn’t want to be left waiting nervously while the cliffs seemed to get higher and higher. Gerry led the climb with uncanny dexterity and complete ease of movement. We followed him awkwardly and precariously up to the third pitch with the abseil rope in tow.

‘Did you take up the rope yet Cedric.’
‘No there’s no room, until you climb.’
‘Oh yea! I see what you mean.’
‘I'm a bit nervous.’
'I'm nervous too...
….where do you live?’
‘Temple Bar.’
‘That’s pretty cool – I used to go there a lot, years ago.’
‘I use to go out a lot when I first moved in but not so much now.’
‘Climb when ready,’
[Oh shit] ‘OK, OK, OK climbing…see you at the top Cedric’
‘OK Derek.’
And off I went climbing the last pitch.

We both ended up in this precarious situation perched on a narrow ledge fifty meters up as a consequence of the training course we had embarked on which began on a miserable, wet, windy day a few weeks earlier in Dalkey Quarry.

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Driving out to the quarry that Saturday morning in the pouring rain I though to myself, \textit{well I must be completely mad – there’ll be no one there}, but sure enough the place was teeming with people, beginners and experienced climbers alike. I thought to
myself, we must all be mad.

Jon, who successfully organised the New Members programme, was there to meet everyone. We put on our rain gear and off we went. Some of the experience members showed us how to abseil and tie anchors. Eventually the miserable weather got the better of us so we all headed to the Queen’s pub to dry off, warm up and get to know one another.

Me and my pal arrived at the quarry on the following Thursday. Dublin Bay was bathed in warm sunshine, reflected by the flowering yellow gorse which covered the quarry. ‘You should’a seen the weather on Sunday Gar - it was horrific.’ We were both paired off with experienced climbers. This was it; we were officially on the learning curve along with all the other beginners. The curve was pretty steep but the leaders put us at our ease. We belayed down, climbed back up, down and around again to Paradise Lost, Exertion, Street Fighter, Porcupine and, yet again, we all ended up in the Queen’s.

‘What’s that you mean, a carabiner.’
‘Oh yea, that’s what it’s called.’
‘Wire’s, someone told me they used to be called nuts’,
‘Did you get to do a lead climb?’
‘Already! Well done.’

All the beginners agreed that the climbing was seriously good fun.

After a few more Thursdays in the quarry it was the weekend of our first trip to the Mourne Mountains to climb the Bearnagh Slabs and practice multi-pitching. I gave Aine a lift in my car. A couple of hours later, which included a stop for fish and chips in Hilltown, we met up with the other members at Meelmore Lodge right at the foot of the mountains. We sat around that evening and got to know one another.

Next morning each beginner was paired off with an experienced climber and we hiked to the foot of the slabs. I stood at the bottom with Aine and we picked our route.

‘I hope I’m able for this.’
‘You’ll be fine.’ and off she went to the first pitch.
‘Do you want to lead the next pitch Derek?’
‘I don’t know. I’m not really confident about setting up the anchor when I get there.’
‘We can practice setting one up here.’
‘Ok we’ll do that.’

Aine talked me through it and I felt ready. Off I went clinging to the rock placing gear carefully. Ok Derek, remember what Aine showed you. Shit that’s wrong – think, think OK that’s it, I got it.

‘OK Aine, climb when ready.’
‘OK climbing.’

That evening back at the Lodge we put some tables together and everyone sat around and had dinner, swapping stories about the days climbing. As the night drew on the beginners began to disappear off to bed one by one exhausted from the long day. Some of the experienced members stayed up till the early hours.
Next day we all headed back into the Mourne's and hit some different climbs. It was another successful day out with lots of great climbing achievements made by new and experienced members alike.

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Gerry greeted me at the top, ‘Well done’
‘Jesus, that was more difficult than I thought’
‘Well done Cedric - sorry I was so concentrated I forgot to take out some of the gear’
‘Oh don’t worry – did you enjoy it’
‘Yea it was great’
‘Right lads we have to set up the abseil rope’
Gerry, whose apparent expertise had put us at our ease, set up the rope.
Cedric volunteered to go first.
‘How long have you been climbing Gerry?’
‘Fifty years.’
‘Fifty years! Wow that’s a long time.’
He abseiled down next and then it was my turn. I got to the bottom.
‘Where’s Gerry, Cedric.’
‘He had to leave early. He left his rope. We have to leave it with Jon.’
Suddenly I realised; that must be the Gerry that I heard mentioned about the place – my first multi-pitch with a climbing legend – pretty cool.

After a good rest, me and Cedric decided to do a lead climb on our own. We made our way to the bottom Expectancy.
‘I don’t mind if you lead and I belay. Gar’s going to be here tomorrow. I can lead then’. Off he went placing his gear carefully. I followed him up removing the gear as I went. At the top we sat in the sun and had a chat while we were waiting to abseil down.

That was the first day of a two day climbing meet. The next morning I picked up Gar and we made our way across the M50, out towards Roundwood, through Laragh and on to Glendalough.

‘Wait till you see these cliffs, Gar.’
‘Is that them!?’
‘That’s them alright.’
‘Holy shit!’
We made our way up the steep path to the base of the cliffs and met some of the other members. Eugene lent us some of his gear and off we went to climb Expectancy. I led and Gar seconded.

We abseiled down and had just finished lunch when Cearbhall turned up.
‘Do you want to climb something lads, how about climbing Fanfare?’
‘Yea, why not, let’s give it a go.’
Cearbhall flew up, neatly placing his gear. Then me and Gar made dreadful attempts with Cearbhall practically hauling us up the face. We opted to abseil down from the first pitch because we had no strength left in our arms after our energy sapping, panicky attempts. Eventually Cearbhall abseiled down.
He just said, ‘As long as we’re safely down; that’s what matters.’
‘Yea sorry but my arms were wrecked.’
‘You’ll need to start climbing more with your legs and not so much with your arms.’
‘I think your right.’
‘Did you ever see some women climbing; they might not have huge strength but they have great balance.’
‘Gar, we’ll have to practice climbing like two women.’

So we decided that we would go back to Dalkey, practice climbing with footwork, better balance and less use of our arm strength. The following Thursday evening we arrived in the quarry. Dublin Bay was ablaze and the yellow sun was splitting the rocks.

**Kasia Grabek:**

Over the last couple of years I have slowly started to gain interest in climbing. Every time friends would go to an indoor wall I would decide to tag along, but moving from one country to another didn’t make it easy to find any climbing partners. Climbing indoors seemed complicated enough to find another person to climb with and climbing outdoors just seemed like something very inaccessible.

As soon as I moved to Ireland and realised the amazing landscape full of cliffs and rocks I started digging around for possible places to climb. When I stumbled upon the website of the IMC and the course that was starting in two weeks time (lucky me), I was signing up for it before I knew it. I remember walking into a Polish climbing store with the list of required gear and just waving it and saying “I need it all but I have no idea what half of it is”.

On the first day in Awesome Walls I was really excited and nervous at the same time. I was wondering if the members wouldn’t be annoyed having to explain over and over again how to do the clover hitch (or how I like to call it “the Mickey Mouse”) and the eight knot. Of course, I couldn’t be more wrong as Áine and Hugh were patiently explaining to me how to move on climbs and how to set up anchors with huge smiles.

The first day outdoors however was a real challenge. First trip to Dalkey - huge wind and huge rain. I remember spending the whole morning in the west valley learning lots of technical tips from Peter and Ines while my shoes were slowly turning into a river. The first climb the following week was much nicer. I started off with the Grave route. At the
time, the step over about half way up seemed like the most paralysing and scary move but once I made it up I couldn’t be more excited. The Thursday meets flew by extremely fast and with time the group of 50 new members narrowed down to about 15. I have to say it was amazing to come each week and find all the IMC members in the quarry and learn new moves on yet new climbs. Dalkey was slowly becoming a playground where the crags and slabs started to become familiar.

Two climbing days have particularly stayed in my memory. The first was the first day of the trip to the Mournes. After a hike up to Bearnagh Slabs, despite the wind and gentle rain we decided to go up on Crooked Chimney with Peter and Ines. About halfway towards the first pitch we had an unexpected guest: hail. Once we made it to the second pitch most of us couldn’t feel their hands or feet because of the cold. Then as I was climbing up to the third pitch another unexpected guest flew right past me all the way down to the hands of another climber below. Let’s just say it was not something you see fly or fall very often and it will remain one of the most surreal stories that has ever happened.

I guess the second one was one of the best meets - the weekend in Glendalough. The day started off cloudy and grey but it turned out to be a warm and sunny day in the end. Jon took a seat up on one of the climbs and has probably earned the title of “Belayer of the Month” after belaying for a good 5 hours straight. On that day I was climbing with Connor and we went up Quartz Gully with an amazingly beautiful quartz vein and then up Prelude-Nightmare where after the second pitch I got tangled up in ropes and had some issues moving up. Finally, after taking a step down and repositioning my feet and hands I made it past the tricky move. It’s also on that day that I did my first lead thanks to Connor, on one of the VDiff routes on the side. Leading for the first time has shown me a whole new aspect of climbing. Solving puzzles and really thinking through every move you are making and it was brilliant.

Overall even though the beginners session are now over, most of us still go out to climb regularly and I hope that this awesome programme is just the beginning of many more climbing adventures! A massive thank you to all the trainers!

**Pamela Morrison and Gina Spaight:**

Our adventure in learning to rock climb came by accident, as we were initially looking for a hiking and trekking club! And what a fortunate accident it was. Since the beginning of this year, we (teacher 1 and teacher 2!) have both started on a fantastic journey, discovering the joys of rock climbing!

It all started back in January, with a trip to Teacher’s Club and a fascinating talk with ultra runner John O’Regan. This was where we realised that this club was about much more than just hiking, and we decided to give wall climbing a try. The following week took us to Awesome Walls, where we looked at the highest climbs and wondered if we had made the right decision and whether or not we would ever be able to reach the top! Flash forward 7 months and we were climbing multi-pitches in Glendalough and leading climbs in Dalkey and on some of the Tuesday night meets in Wicklow. All of this was
due to the New Member’s Programme and the incredibly friendly and supportive experienced members, who patiently guided and helped us along the way.

Following our introductory presentation and first night in Awesome Walls, there was an ominous beginning with a freezing and wet day in Dalkey. With numb fingers, we tried to make knots, abseil and attempt our first climb on rock. Was this the right sport for us? After this day, we really weren’t sure! A major positive that we took away from this day was how fun, patient and welcoming all of the current members were. After some warming soup and tea in the Queen’s Inn, we were beginning to feel a bit human, and even a bit excited about the next climb.

Then came the regular Thursday jaunts to Dalkey. It all started with Yorkshire Pudding, and with shaky legs, pounding heart and great guidance and patience by Tony Barry, it was conquered... and with that, we were hooked! Jon Smith (Training Officer) always ensured we had a lead climber and motivated us each week to conquer new and more challenging climbs. “Jon, I’m not sure I’m able for this one” was always answered by “Of course you can” and thus instilled confidence in us. And true to his word, more often than not we were able for each climb. From Paradise Lost to Mahjongg to Streetfighter (Thanks Tony) we gradually became more and more confident. The Queen’s Inn became a regular spot, where us newbies shared stories of all that we managed that evening, sometimes we were feeling proud, other times we were disappointed, but every time we were all excited and happy that we had made the trip out.

Unfortunately, other commitments meant that we could only make the Sunday of the venture to the Bearnagh Slabs, but we still managed to get a few climbs in, and I had the cuts and scrapes to prove it! A glorious weekend of sunshine hit for our introduction to multi-pitch in Glendalough. “Have you got me tight, I’m going to fall!” rang out regularly around the valley, but the feeling of accomplishment, sitting at the top, looking out at the incredible view, was second to none.

This past 7 months has been a baptism of fire! The New Member’s Programme has been full of highs and lows, fear and triumph. We have embarked on a steep, yet incredibly enjoyable learning curve, and I cannot wait to continue on it. Finally, we would like to say a very big thank you to all of those who helped along the way. Without your patience and support, we would not have achieved the heights we did.
On the 24th May, more IMC climbers than I could have hoped for (because at one point I was really worried it was just going to be me), assembled in Awesome Walls to Climb for two Nepal charities.

We shook buckets, drank a lot of very fresh juice and ate a lot of very nice cakes.

And we climbed, putting a lot of “5”s in boxes, as we made our way from Sea Level to the height of Everest.

And in the end we reached the top and raised much needed monies (€4,455 at my last count) for “Concern’s Relief Effort in Nepal” and “The Juniper Fund” who support Nepali workers involved with climbing and expeditions.

But you know all that, because you were there or you sponsored the effort. All this article really needs to convey is two words from the charities “Thank You”.
As I walked home in the rain late on the Friday night before the meet my hopes drooped. The rain was soft but unrelenting. The tiny island where as children we had spent long summer evenings wading the lagoons from sandbank to sandbank convinced we could swim to it, was to go another year before I could climb it.

The beauty of the morning took me by surprise. The sky was blue. The sun was bright and warm and Sinead Patten's enthusiasm was decidedly infectious. My body was aching from the previous days training and I was slow to move but half a breakfast roll and a coffee en route and I was back on form. A short debate about which was the "east" pier and a couple of adorable puppies later we'd located the gang.

There looked to be about 20 people from our lot there and Gary informed us the first boat had already gone over. Excellent turnout. We were impressed. Aine had a printout of the climbs and we gave it a read and had a giggle about some of the more intimidating names; "Skyhook Wall", "Inaccessible Pinnacle" while waiting for the boat.

The island itself is quite scrappy in places but the crag has a rugged beauty and the ground drops off dramatically to meet its base. There were many more faces at the crag; familiar and otherwise. Vanessa Sumner and Sinead Rickerby waved across to us and quickly offered to pair up with myself and Sinead Patten which suited us perfectly.

Sinead Rickerby lead up Theft and I followed while Vanessa Sumner took Sinead Patten up Hamilton Crack. The crag was packed and
there was plenty of people traffic so we did the climbs as two pitches and chilled out on
the rather sociable large belay ledge where we met Kevin Coakley and were joined by
Colm, Sole, and Javier among others. The leisurely pace suited the mood of the day
and the shared ledges were taken with good humor and camaraderie.

We abbed off for a sandwich and Ms Rickerby communed with the seals briefly before
we made our way up Southeast ridge which provided more lovely, if somewhat smellier
climbing. The seabirds were certainly making their presence known this side of the
crag. This time Cillian Russell climbed along with us. We found it hard to believe it was
nearly time for the ferry as we abbed off and joined the others. We gathered up our
gear and made our way towards the ferry.

Things got a little strange, silly and otherworldly towards the end of our adventure.
Colm's bright yellow kayak which he planned to return home in had been plundered by
a "clean up" crew with pirate flags on their boats (We later learned they, in error, had
thought it to be flotsam and it was returned with profuse apologies and bonus wine). As
I'd discovered on Gola, island adventures are not complete for some without taking a
quick swim so mermaids Vanessa and Sinead took to the water joined by Ian Christie.
As the ferry came in and we were stood by the Martello tower, John Duigan took out his
uilleann pipes and began to play completing the picture.

Another magic outing with the IMC
Memorable Climbs: The Great "Great Gully" Route
by Herbert Herzmann

Where in Ireland do you find long climbing routes like in the Alps? By this I mean technically not very difficult routes with at least five pitches to be climbed with the rucksack on one’s back and a decent walk in and walk out. I can think of three routes of that kind. Howling Ridge on Carrauntoohil in Kerry, Carrot Ridge in the Twelve Bens in Connemara and the Great Gully Route in County Wicklow.

The name Great Gully Route is somewhat misleading as it actually goes from Fraughan Rock Glen up to Benleagh over the ridge on the right of the so-called Great Gully.

This route was my first ever multi pitch climb. I did it in the late nineties with Brendan Burke who led most of it. We had terrible difficulties finding the start, began climbing much later then intended and reached the top just as it was getting dark and beginning to rain. We descended in pitch darkness for almost two hours through forest and muck and reached the car by 11 o’ clock at night.

Since then I have climbed it many times with different partners: Brendan and Rose Burke, Michael Scott, Mary Reilly, Donald Gill, Paddy Kavanagh, Willie Whelan, Patricia McGuirk, Frank Creedon, the late Joe Reville and, most recently in August 2014, with Liam McCarthy. I now know the best way to get to the start and the best way to go down.
Here is what I would advise:

**The way up:** When leaving the track walk straight on in the forest until you reach the crest of the ridge, then turn right and follow the steep ascent to the rocks. By not turning right too early you avoid the awful field of boulders.

**The way down:** Turn left after the end of the climb (there is a chain with an abseil ring in situ) and walk towards the waterfall. Before reaching the waterfall find the path leading down to the main track. It is a scenic route and offers excellent views of the climb you have just done.

Some people leave the rucksacks at the bottom of the climb and abseil back into the gully. They have to scramble down the rest of the wet gully to get to the start and then walk back the rather unpleasant way they came up. Climbing with the rucksack and walking up and down a different way is a much better and more satisfying option.

The route is, in my opinion, best broken up into seven pitches. The hardest pitches are the first, the third and the sixth. I would rate them as respectable S (not quite HS). No. 1 is very short and a bit physical, no. 3 is a delicate tower ridge with good exposure and no. 6 consists of an exposed corner and finishes on a small ledge where one has to build a solid three point anchor for a safe belay. Pitch no. 2 is VD, pitch no. 5 is only D but has a rather awkward move up a ramp on the left of which pitch no. 6 begins. The last pitch (no. 7) leads round a big spike and then left up an easy grassy gully to the fixed chain.
If you want to remain in close contact with your partner you could break up the second pitch into two sections and thus arrive at a total of eight pitches. On the other hand, if you wish to be fast, you can condense the first and second as well as the fifth and sixth pitch, thus arriving at a total of five pitches. The shortest time it took me to do the climb was two and a half hours. This was with Paddy Kavanagh leading in turns and reducing the number of pitches to five. With most partners I climb it in between four and four and a half hours. This allows for leisurely climbing and enjoying the marvelous views over Fraughan Rock Glen and Arts Lough.

If you decide to do it, choose a day with a good weather forecast and take your time. An early start is a good idea. The last time I did it with Liam we left Dublin at 7am and arrived at Barravore Youth Hostel where we parked the car at 8:30. We started to climb at 10:30 and reached the top at 3pm. We were back at the car at 4:45 pm and arrived home at 6:45. It was a long and satisfying day and thoroughly enjoyable.
Winter stretched into spring this year as the IMC winter camp began on the 7th of February. At 3:15 PM, 25 hikers sprang from the IMC hut and crossed the river below. It was a majestic sight to see the huge IMC herd sweeping down the hillside on their migration to winter camp and crossing the river as gracefully as gazelles.

The true professionals regarded the normal route on stepping stones with utter contempt and chose instead to wade across. A healthy herd is a happy herd so they were all wormed and scoured by Sinead on their way up the hill.

On the walk in we got a chance to practice night navigation which mainly involved standing around while reading the collected works of Gabriel García Márquez by torchlight.

I normally operate a ‘be no trace’ policy which involves stealth infiltration to the campsite in a ghillie suit and avoiding ridges to keep a low profile so the openness of the IMC camp was a refreshing change. One camper was even blasé enough to inscribe his sexual preferences on both the front and rear entrances to his tent.
On arrival we were greeted by our hosts Tony and Noel who served us with a range of
dessert wines along with pheasant and other seasonal game.

Lough Firrib was frozen hard and looked very solid although requests that I confirm its
solidity by pitching camp on the lake were politely refused.
Niall got the fire going helped by volunteers who had carried in fire logs. Then the creatures of the night came from the shadows on cloven hoof and feathered wing, descending from all directions in a chorus of flapping and squawking to wet their thirsty beaks by the campfire.

Silence stole over the hills as the disciples gathered to listen to the Gospel According to Kevin which continued for 127 hours until the entire camp had fallen into a deep coma due to the colossal tedium of the subject matter. Only when the sermon was ended did two lesser spotted creatures emerge from a restless sleep lasting six days and sixty six hours and dart furtively towards the dying embers of the fire. Niall then took one for the team by diving on the fire to put it out.

The morning was clear and sharp. Most of us melted snow for breakfast coffee but North Face John, being a true creature of the Wicklow wilds, brewed a refreshing herbal tea composed of pond mud, animal dung and leaves.

On the exfiltration route we paused to help a confused elderly gentleman who had mislaid his backpack. On arrival at the hut we discovered that one member of the herd was still at camp having thrown a horseshoe. This caused some concern as we were already running late for mass. With a little help the herd member was located and escorted back to his horsebox.

Thanks to Niall for organising a great winter camp, to the pack animals for carrying in the fire logs and to those who followed the leave no trace policy to the last drop by drinking the camp dry.
Springtime in Connemara
by Sinead Rickerby

Being that this was my first IMC meet in Connemara, I figured it essential to do my research in an attempt to compose a short tale about this ‘Heavenly Place’. So I hold myself guilty of and accountable for plagiarism!

This meet has attracted young and old over the years, both hikers and climbers in our club. Christy Rice even described his first ever IMC meet in Connemara back in the summer of 1969. He mentioned names like Paddy Boggan, Joss Lynam, John Gleeson and Jimmy Lenard, along with climbing Carrot Ridge and camping in Glen Inagh [Rice, C. 2015]. I’m sure he has a poem about it up his sleeve. It was the late legendary Hugh Sharkey who organised this meet in springtime going back to about 1994. He would then size up potential candidates to return later in the year for another weekend of climbing. A tradition that still remains today....

‘We come in February and leave with dreams to fulfil in summer’ [Duignan, J. 2015].

.....and sure enough John Duignan later returned for a weekend this May to climb Carrot Ridge in Glen Inagh.

During and previous to Hugh’s time the meet was based in various An Óige and independent hostels. John took over the running of the meet in 2007 and the Monastery attached
to the Old Letterfrack Borstal (over 160 years old) has continued to host us since [Moss, G 2015]. There are many reasons why we keep returning; Steven’s freshly baked bread with breakfast in the mornings, his home-cooked feasts for hungry bellies on the Saturday night and the wealth of character the hostel oozes. It is cluttered with an abundance of interesting and peculiar artworks, stuffed animals and various other nik-naks for people’s amusement. Don’t be surprised if you see women’s bras hanging in confession boxes in the bedroom and fairy lights illuminating the bathroom. I was told the IMC party used to share this Hostel with a Welsh choir that came over to celebrate spring time on more than one occasion. Reports of how the singing would deteriorate as the night went on and the whiskey went down, and how the out of tune “Hey Jude” at 4am drove the IMC to change their trip to a later weekend [Duignan, 2015]. Not a patch on our very own Barney Crampton and Sinead Dunphy! Besides, we ‘serious mountaineers’ need our sleep!!

Despite hope, the warned forecast of stormy gales arrived, but spirits remained high! Everyone was up and had left the hostel early Saturday morning their different missions that day. With plans to climb Carrot Ridge quashed, Vanessa and I happily joined the 3-Amigos (for those who don’t know, aka Conor O’Connor, Nick Keegan and Jason Ahern) on a quick adventure up Croagh Patrick. A first for me. Being a pilgrimage, hiking in our bare feet
was mentioned but thankfully nobody pushed that idea. We enjoyed a short and challenging hike up St Patrick’s sacred mountain with a nice view of Clew Bay. We huddled together at the back door of the summit chapel, penguin-style, for a few moments to share our snacks. It’s almost customary now to have Vanessa’s potent lemon and ginger tea, and nibble on some dark chocolate and walnuts before our descent. The usual tuna and sweet corn and rice cakes had to wait till later as fingers were falling numb. We only barely escaped the gale winds which more than lifted our skirts on our descent......always an ‘epic’ in our eyes? A nice sense of achievement having ticked Croagh Patrick from my bucket list.

John and his party went hiking around the Ben Creggan and Ben Gorm circuits in misty conditions. While Áine O’Reilly, Peter Wood and Eoin Rafter went hiking near Carrot Ridge. Reports came back that it was difficult to stay upright in places as the wind and rain was as per weather warning!

‘It’s amazing who you bump into on the side of a mountain in a storm’ [O’Reilly, 2015].

They came across Paddy O’Leary, Donal O’Murchú and Sé O’Hanlon, who all shouted lots of interesting details about the geology and the history of climbing in the area across the gale force winds. They were on route to Gleninagh to go to the crag at Binn Braon to re-visit routes some of them had put up. After a couple of hours of making their way they decided they were satisfied with the extent of their extreme mountaineering experience for that day and agreed to head back to comforts. They also bumped into Christy Rice and Gerry Galligan, likewise on route to Gleninagh. They invited Áine and her gang to continue with them ‘in much the same way as Mrs Doyle invites people for a cup of tea’ [O’Reilly, 2015], but Peter’s hiking boots had packed it in at this stage. The sole had fallen off so it was agreed for this team to retreat back down the pass. On reaching their car, they passed a farmyard where the local farmer was also very eager to chat through the torrential rain. Eventually, they made it back to the car and retired to a cosy warm pub in Clifden.

Another party included our very own IMRA star Emma Hand, Barney Crampton, Sinead Dunphy and David Butler. They had planned a route in the Maumturks, that would bring them up to the top of Knocknahillion and then onwards across the ridge to Letterbreckaun. Their route to the top of Knocknahillion took in a worthwhile short detour up to a viewpoint over Maumahoge Lake. They battled the winds from the top of Knocknahillion.
At one stage they were huddled together discussing the potential risks of going on across the ridge, when one of the party was lifted off his feet and carried a few meters away. They agreed to cut the day short and retraced their steps, bailing off the high ground around Benadolug. They got back to the car just before the really heavy rain started and delighted in this mini-triumph over the weather that had spoiled their fun! In the afternoon, they also treated themselves in Clifden with tea and cake and bookshop browsing! [Crampton and Dunphy, 2015]

'A glimpse of beauty that will certainly bring me back' [Dunphy, 2015].

Saturday evening was spent relaxing around the cosy fire. A few hearty drinks, games of chess and Spit were played, amongst the general chit chat and everlasting giggles. Everyone was exchanging their days adventure with belly’s rumbling in anticipation for what Steven was preparing for us downstairs. Just as the aroma was getting too much, we were called and quickly scampered down stairs to the dining area. There was plenty of food to go around the large gang of us. We were encouraged to dig in but not to waste. With satisfied bellies, we returned to the common room to
finish out the night, chatting over night-caps and a sing song lead by Barney and Sinead.

Waking up to rain on Sunday morning dampened talks of Diamond Hill. Most parties decided to get on the road back to Dublin where there were greener skies promised and a rugby match to catch. Emma, David, Vanessa and I decided to take a chance and headed in the direction of Diamond Hill.... eager to not miss an opportunity. After a short spell of rain, we were delighted to get clear skies and a snow capped summit. Weather in Connemara can be mixed at this time, and all these elements play their part in making these weekends so memorable (even one unforgettable flooding stopping a climber’s car), so come prepared for all conditions!!!

“THERE’S NO SUCH THING AS BAD WEATHER, ONLY BAD CLOTHES!”

Referencing List

Crampton, Barney and Dunphy, Sínead (2015) IMC
Duignan, John (2015) IMC
Moss, Gerry (2015) IMC
O’ Reilly, Áine (2015) IMC
Rice, Christy (2015) IMC
Well, where did you go?

The usual answers to that question would be fairly predictable. A package trip to somewhere sunny, preferably with beaches and something of cultural interest. Or, for the more active, possibly a trek along the Inca Trail or to Everest Base Camp. Whatever the choice, one is wrapped in a bubble of some degree of comfort, with minimum time spent away from access to iPads, emails, baristas and coke (of either kind). As mountaineers, we are not supposed to be satisfied with everything being done for us, with a life devoid of real challenges and encounters with nature at its loveliest, and we accept, perhaps welcome, the dangers implicit in facing up to these challenges.

Of course we can enjoy less committing winter-shortening ventures such as sunny rock-climbing trips to the Costa Blanca or Joshua Tree but, as pleasant as these are, we all know that these do not extend us to any great degree. In life, in mountaineering, many of us want to know what it is like to stretch our imaginations beyond previous experience, to know what it is like to come alive, to feel the pulse race as one faces challenges beyond the ken of Trailfinders and Trip Advisor. Some of the classic Alpine routes allow one to get a glimpse into this wonderful world of real adventure where it’s just you and your acquired skills facing natural hazards in awe-inspiring settings. But,
there are the bright lights of towns below with telepheriques to get you there quickly, there are queues on some routes and pushy guides on the more popular peaks. And all the summits have been reached many, many times. The Alps remain as probably the greatest of mountaineering playgrounds. If you are satisfied with that you need venture no further. Indeed, if you are limited in time or resources you will hardly find a better place.

However, if one is to fully satisfy that built-in desire to explore, to experience the unique, to apply all one’s honed mountain skills in the pursuit of the challenging unknown then one must venture into one of the rapidly diminishing number of places where that desire can be fulfilled.

Yes, there are still many unclimbed peaks, even a few unexplored or little-known valleys and passes. Most of these are in the Himalaya. India especially, but also Pakistan, China, Bhutan, Tibet and Nepal have many unclimbed peaks over 5,000m. There are dozens of un-ascended 6,000m peaks in India alone and, of course, a myriad of unclimbed routes. There are places like the Bogda Ola in China where culture, scenery, history and fantastic climbing on peaks of Caucuses scale combine to satisfy the most adventurous. I know of nothing more satisfying in mountaineering than
to research, prepare and complete an exploratory trip into little-known areas and to have the thrill of attempting an unclimbed peak. One is thrown on one’s own resources in a way which is simply not to be experienced in any other way except perhaps in trans-ocean sailing.

The choice of peaks and passes is such that one does not have to be a highly skilled or very experienced climber, although there are plenty of challenges for those with such talents. An Alpine trip or two, a knowledge of glacier and river crossings, the kind of skills a Mountain Leader has, are quite sufficient to allow an experience of a lifetime among high peaks and uncrossed passes. Common sense and a spirit of enterprise are probably one’s best assets.

Not all club members are prepared to take on all that is entailed in the ascent of little-known peaks. For them the possibilities of trekking are wide open, not the well-serviced and well-trodden routes like the Annapurna circuit which are certainly enjoyable, but the real and life-changing opportunities which lie in the exploration of rarely or never-visited valleys and high passes. Just imagine descending into lonely valleys which lead to villages where westerners are seldom or never seen. Many club members will have delighted in the daily rhythm of the trek, of each day seeing somewhere new; that feeling of wonder and constant movement is greatly enhanced when even one’s indigenous helpers don’t know what lies over the next rise.

Where can one go? There is Alaska, Peru and the former Soviet republics of Central Asia. But India and Pakistan are probably the best places, with the former being politically the most secure. There are places in India where week-long treks over rarely-crossed passes can be linked together to provide a trip of any length you like. Some of these will be glaciated, others not but all will entail the application of a range of mountain skills, not necessarily of a high order.

And when you come back that question at the beginning can be answered with some smugness.

[Don’t forget that the club provides some funding for enterprising climbing and exploratory ventures, as does Mountaineering Ireland.]
Guidebook route descriptions can be strange beasts. For something seemingly so crucial as describing which way a route goes and what can be encountered along the way, the language employed can be a little obscure at times and especially confusing to the beginner or climber whose first language is not English.

With the new members in mind, it seemed timely to publish this glossary. I started it for my own use at the beginning of last year in an attempt to understand the language used to describe the physical features on a route. It subsequently expanded into the wonderfully euphemistic keywords used in guidebooks together with climber’s idioms for specific types of movement or holds.

Whilst some of these terms may be self-explanatory (e.g. bulge, crack, ledge, etc) others are not always obvious, especially in the ways they may be used within a climbing context (e.g. roof, cave, etc).

**Part I: Feature Definitions**

The terminology used in describing the physical features & morphology of a climbing route.

**arête**
A ridge or a sharp outward facing corner on a steep rock face or mountain.

**break**
A horizontal crack.

**bulge**
May refer to a small rounded steepening or even overhang or a larger protruding area on a crag.

**buttress**
A prominent feature, possibly a steep arête, that juts out from the side of a mountain on which climbs are located. Sometimes called a crag.

**cave**
A distinct hole in the rock face, larger than a pocket but not necessarily as large as ‘cave’ may imply. For example, may be significantly smaller than that required to accommodate a bear (which is a good thing).

**chimney**
A passage in the rock with mostly parallel sides. Large enough for a climber to fit into. May be vertical or at a much lower angle.

**chockstone**
A piece of rock which is lodged in a crack or chimney

**choss**
Poor quality climbing material - may include soil, vegetation, stones, or friable rock, etc

**col**
A pass between two peaks. Also referred to as a saddle or gap..

**corner**
Corner on its own generally refers to an inside corner of rock, a deep groove like an open book. See also dièdre/dihedral.

Less frequently, an outside corner can be used to refer to a small arête.

**crack**
A split or fissure in the rock face, the separation of two rock faces. Can
be as wide as a chimney down to so narrow it cannot take protection.

crag An outcrop of rock with climbing routes. Often used to describe a buttress.

dièdre/dihedral An inside corner of rock with an angle of more than 90-degree between the faces. See also corner.

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e edge A thin ledge.

flake A thin slab of rock which may or may not be attached to the main face. The fact that it is not attached may only become obvious once you commit your weight to it.

flared A crack or chimney whose sides are not parallel, thus forming two converging planes of rock.

friable Delicate, easily broken and consequently dangerous rock.

gendar me A pinnacle or isolated rock tower, often found along a ridge.

groove A long indentation in the rock face. Not extensive or acute enough to be regarded as a corner or deep enough to be considered a crack. Sometimes it may be so slight as to be only identifiable by the first ascensionist and the word was used when they were trying to conjure up a route description.

gully A wide, shallow ravine on a mountainside. Sometimes carries water flow, permanent or seasonal.

headwall A steeper section at the upper part of a rock face especially at the top of easier-angled slabs etc..

niche A shallow recess in the rock.

nose A protrusion in the rock, larger than a bulge. Also, more rarely, a synonym for buttress.

off-width A crack that is too wide for hand or foot jams but is not as large as a chimney.

overhang A section of rock that is angled beyond vertical. See also roof.

overlap A step on a slab where an upper layer of rock lies on an exposed lower layer. Also under cut or under cling.

pillar An isolated finger or tower of rock which need not be detached from the main face. But also can be a synonym for buttress.

pocket A (small) hole in the rock face which can be used as a hold.

ramp An ascending ledge.

re-entrant A small valley-like terrain feature, formed between two parallel ridges or spurs.

rib A short, small buttress. An outside corner is even smaller.

ridge A high divide extending out from a peak.

roof A horizontal overhang.

runnel A groove in a rock face, often caused by water erosion.

sentry-box A square sided niche, usually large enough for a body. Classic example at the base of Helios in Dalkey.

slab A section of rock face with a relatively low-angle (significantly less than vertical). Often barren of features & protection.
spike/spilikin  A significant finger of rock protruding (usually vertically) from the rock face.

tufa  A protruding limestone rib formation that may grasped in a pinch.

zawn  A coastal sea inlet, the sides of which often form climbing crags.

Part II: Terms & Euphemisms

The vernacular used in describing a climbing route. Important clues to your success on a route can be lurking behind a single innocuous word.

airy  See exposed.

anchor  Whereby a climber makes themselves safe by placing protection and tying to it so that, for example, they may build a belay to then bring up a second safely. Think IDEAL (Independent, Directional, Equalised, Angles & Loaded)

belay  The point between pitches in a multipitch climb. A belay is build from multiple anchors (2 or more). See also stance.

beta  Obtaining prior knowledge & advice on aspects of a particular climb.

bold  Similar to committing. A term used to describe unprotected moves at the limit of the grade which would cause serious consequences if not carried out successfully. Pilaster in Dalkey Quarry is graded VS(4c) but the "bold" initial moves have resulted in many broken ankles.

bomber/ bomb-proof  A resoundingly satisfying gear placement that can result in near euphoric joie de vivre.

committing  That point in a climb when you have to progress from point A to point B whilst every part of your body is questioning your adoption of this sport.

crux  The most difficult portion of a climb. Often you may be given an idea of how well protected a crux may be.

delicate  A section relying on poise, balance and technique rather than strength and enthusiasm. Holds may be minimal, as may be protection (see runout below).

eliminate  A route between two pre-existing lines which scrupulously avoids both.

exciting  If it says it’s exciting, you likely won’t be disappointed. Bold and possibly difficult with it. Stay calm.

exposure  The degree to which one feels one is clinging to the edge of something tenuous over a large drop. Also airy.

gear  Nuts, hexes, cams and all that climbing paraphernalia. As with protection, a route may have good or poor gear. Gear suggestions may also be noted, such as, “thin wires” or “large cam” or even Tricam #3.

interesting/ “with interest”  A puzzling section of a climb, requiring a period of contemplation before proceeding.

memorable  You’ll never forget the first time.

peg  A metal spike (piton) from the times before nuts & hexes & cams and
all that. As such, it will be old and quite possibly unsound; although often corrosion may not be visible.

**pitch**  
A section of a climb between two belay points.

**polish**  
The curse of popularity. Rock repeatedly smoothed & eroded by climbing traffic. At its worst some rocks (like limestone) can attain a marble-like patina. Can lead to sandbags (see below). By its nature, more common on lower grade, roadside crags.

**protection**  
Use of gear. May distinguish between part of a route being well protected or poorly protected (or you may have to infer that, see runout)

**runout**  
A long portion of a route with minimal protection.  
This may be indicated by a lower technical grade than expected for the associated adjectival grade. For example, VS(4c) is a common grade pairing and so to the novice a grade of VS(4b) may, upon first glance, appear to be easier (because the hardest move is 4b) but it still requires VS skills due to the lack of protection.

**sandbag**  
An undergraded climb, leading the climber to believe it is within their abilities, only to find to the contrary at a usually inconvenient moment. A sandbag may be genuinely misgraded or may have achieved it over time due to essential parts of the climb falling off or becoming unduly polished due to popularity.

**stance**  
See belay.

**thoughtful**  
See interesting.

**thread/threadbelay**  
Protection that can be achieved by threading a sling through a passageway in the rock. Common in limestone.

**traditional**  
In the context of route descriptions, this means an old route and as such may be a sandbag or polished. Or both.

**vegetated**  
Those unpleasant sections of a rock climb that are not rock. Generally green and either slippery and/or prickly. May possibly be addressed by gardening (in moderation)

### Part III: Holds & Movements

Terms used to suggested an approach to a climbing route, less frequent as it can be regarded as a form of beta (see Part II for beta). Can also be used to provide insight into navigation on a route.

**bridge**  
Using two widely space footholds for support, typically in corners. May allow hands free rest.

**campus**  
Climbing without using ones feet.

**cup**  
See guppy.

**crimp**  
A hold that uses just the tips of the fingers.

**downclimb**  
To climb downwards (typically reversing a route).

**drop knee**  
See egyptian.

**dyno**  
A dynamic move, using your momentum to gain a hold that would
otherwise be out of reach.

**edging** Using edge of shoe on small features.

**egyptian** Position acquired by twisting the body against the wall so that one knee is dropped below the foot. See also drop knee.

**flag** Using a leg as a counter-balance (can employ normal, reverse inside & reverse outside flags).

**gaston** A reverse side pull. That is, pushing away to maintain balance/grip rather than pulling towards. A Double Gaston resembles prying open the doors of a lift. (Named after a famous picture of Gaston Rébuffat).

**guppy** A hold formed by cupping ones hand over a feature and squeezing. See also cup.

**hook** Technique of placing toe or heel on a hold to improve balance.

**jam** Insert various bodily appendages into sympathetically sized cracks. May use fingerlocks, hands, toes, feet, arms, legs, shoulders, etc. Use of head not recommended.

**jug** A large, easy, immensely reassuring hold.

**layback** A technique whereby hands side pull on a crack whilst feet walk up close to them. Check the wall your feet will be using for small bits of vegetation growing from the crack, as to step on said vegetation mid-layback can result in dramatic failure.

**mantle/ mantleshelf** Technique used to gain a ledge by initially pulling up and then pushing down with hands so that feet can be placed on ledge. Best practised at your local swimming pool rather than on your fireplace.

**match** To place both hands (or feet) on the same hold.

**mono** A pocket with room for just a single finger.

**pinch** As it suggests, a hold that can be pinched.

**smear** In the absence of defined footholds, placing the full sole of the shoe on the rock and relying on friction for adhesion.

**thrutch** A non-graceful move generally associate with mucky chimneys. Normally accompanied by a certain degree of grunting and possible blue language.

**traverse** A sideways movement. Be aware of the potential for both lead & second to take a swing if adequate protection not available. And even if protection is available, be aware of creating debilitating rope drag that you will curse further up the pitch.
I am always looking for new articles for both the Newsletter and the Blog.

Have you ever thought of writing an article?

One regular feature with plenty of scope that you might like to consider is “Memorable Climbs” (previously called “My Favourite Climb”). If you have strong memories of a climb (be they good or bad), or a climb that you have a particular affection for, then this is the place to reminisce.

Then again, you may have a hankering to write about a specific aspect of climbing - equipment, training, technique, history, a new climbing venue or trip you have been on...you get the idea; all proposals are welcome.

Alternatively, you may like to publish something on the IMC Blog.

Whereas posts on the forum can quickly get lost in the noise of everyday conversations, the blog offers more permanency whilst still having scope for feedback via the readers comments section (a much under used feature at present).

The blog works especially well for articles containing lots of images, so even if you are not very comfortable writing a piece you can create a post with minimal text but many pictures.

Creating an article on the blog is surprisingly easy, however, if you wish to post a piece but are still uncertain of using the blog, just email me the text & images and I will happily upload & format the contents.

So, if you feel you would like to write something, please get in touch at

publicity@irishmountaineeringclub.org

Many Thanks
Gary