

Archivist's Report to IMC AGM November 2023

Archive

The Club has much material from the past 75 years stored in a filing cabinet in the Cow House at the IMC Hut in Glendassan. While these records are reasonably secure, space is at a premium and there is nowhere to work or store more stuff.

I became aware very early on when I became club archivist three years ago that the issue is in fact bigger than the IMC and is one for Irish Mountaineering in general. I have been working with MI and am pleased to report that the October meeting of the MI Board agreed unanimously to support the creation of an Archive of Irish Mountaineering and to initiate the process of establishing a Steering Group that will define the Scope and oversee the project. Securing and cataloguing the IMC archive material would be a pilot exercise to determine an appropriate methodology.

Finally, there is light at the end of this tunnel and I look forward to working with MI and the incoming archivist on this.

We are conscious that there is much historically significant material from the early days that is in danger of being lost forever. The intention is to make a determined effort to collect and secure such records as soon as we have a suitable location. The collection would include artefacts such as old boots, ropes and other equipment.

Ultimately the goal would be to make everything available to the public modelled on the military archives.

This page on the Club website <https://www.irishmountaineeringclub.org/imc-archive/> has links to IMC films from 1950s and 1960s, historic IMC photographs and oral histories collected in 2010 from some of the pioneers of Irish climbing.

Library

The IMC Library has been part of the Mountaineering Ireland (MI) library, on a loan basis, for a number of years and members may borrow books using this link: <https://www.mountaineering.ie/membersandclubs/MembersLibrary/default.aspx>. I understand from MI that there was about one request for books per month during the run-up to Covid and none since (this from a total MI current membership in excess of 15,000). The IMC has received a number of books as bequests over the past few years but there is no space at MI to store them and consequently they are being stored at various members' houses for safe keeping.

We should investigate the possibility of bringing the MI and IMC libraries under the umbrella of Libraries Ireland <https://www.librariesireland.ie/> who operate nationwide. Membership is free and open to all so our underused mountaineering library might become available to a wider clientele in line with the main object of the Club "...to encourage...mountaineering..." and "to provide services and facilities for its members and others in furtherance of the main object of the Club".

Valuable books and non-duplicates could be put in the library. A decision needs to be made as to the disposition of surplus books – a reading room at the Glendassan Hut, disposal to members or sell-off.