

Paddy's Day and the only way is up

Contributed by Calvin Jones
Tuesday, 16 March 2004

The only way was up this St. Patrick's Day for three members of the Reenascreena Community Action Group who headed for the summit of Carrigfadda hill. Jim Hayes, Andrew O'Sullivan and Calvin Jones took up the challenge to investigate possible routes for a public walk to the top of the hill. Coillte, who own a substantial piece of ground in the area that includes the summit of Carrigfadda, responded enthusiastically when approached about a public footpath to the cross on top of the hill.

It was a beautiful spring morning as the three men set off, picking a route up the east side of the hill through the rough terrain left behind by the felling of conifer trees. A peregrine falcon took flight from a nearby rock-face and wheeled twice overhead before dipping over the trees and out of site. Once they reached the trees the trio found the going easier and made good progress until they reached the exposed scrubland near the summit. Here briars, gorse and uneven ground barred the way, making things more difficult. With Jim Hayes leading the way, however, it wasn't long before the intrepid explorers crested the summit and sat at the base of the cross to catch their breath and take in the magnificent views.

With the intention of defining a path that followed a circuit, rather than going straight up and down the hill, the group headed west along the crest of the hill before choosing a more gradual zigzagging route through the trees to join up with their original starting point.

The next step in the process is to meet with a representative of Coillte with the proposed route marked on a map and to iron out potential problems. It is envisaged that the walk will eventually have a number of picnic spots, a long circuit with one relatively direct route on the east side of the hill and a more circuitous route to the west. There are also plans for a shorter, flatter circuit to be incorporated into the scheme with paths and picnic areas suitable for buggies and wheelchairs.

Keep an eye on this website or subscribe to the community mailing list for updates on this exciting project as things develop over the coming months.