

## NATURE AND SPORTS EURO'MEET 2015

The European Network of Outdoor Sports (ENOS) was formally established in 2013 to be an open network to all organisations involved in the development, promotion, employment and management of outdoor sports across Europe.

The ENOS aim is "together to increase the visibility of outdoor sports in Europe." [www.nature-sports.eu](http://www.nature-sports.eu)

It was developed as an output of the Nature and Outdoor Sports "Euro'meet" conferences that were held in 2011 in Annecy, France and in 2013 in Liptovsky Mikulas, Slovakia.

The highly popular "Euro'meets" are held every 2 years and provide great opportunities to explore the current issues relevant to those who promote, develop and practise outdoor sports throughout Europe.



The 2015 "Euro'meet" will be held in Newcastle in the fantastic [Slieve Donard Hotel](#) where the Mountains of Mourne sweep down to the sea.

The hotel is an iconic building in an iconic and much celebrated landscape. The delegate fee includes all workshops, transport to site visits and great hospitality and meals in this amazing building and represents tremendous value.

More detailed information on the purpose of the conference and the details of speakers, contributors and the site visits are detailed in the pages to follow.

### WHY COME TO THE "EURO'MEET"

This conference combines a range of practical and theoretical sessions and workshops that highlight the benefits for individuals and communities from outdoor sports. The target audience are local and regional authority staff responsible for recreation and/or tourism, university researchers and academics, staff from national federations or governing bodies of sport, outdoor business owners and managers.

The 3 day event will show case best practice from across Europe and provide insights, toolkits and practical information on the projects and schemes that have worked well to develop opportunities for participation in outdoor sports or how economic benefits from outdoor sports have been identified and realised.

The event will also look at the realistic challenges that need to be managed to develop outdoor sports and practical workshops and site visits will provide a great opportunity for delegates to see the opportunities and issues that are being tackled around the Mournes, as well as providing excellent informal networking opportunities.

Outdoor sports are growing in popularity all across Europe and can make a real difference to individual's health and especially mental well-being, can create opportunities for employment and have had a long and very positive association with education and youth services. The Euro'meet will not only look at how such benefits are being optimised but will also provide insight into how these can be embedded into European and National Sports Policies.



Outdoor sports can make a significant contribution to regional development especially in mountain areas across Europe, so the conference will highlight how these can be further developed in ways that are sensitive to the environment, but genuinely benefit people.

The Mourne Mountains is a very compact area of upland moorland, forest and coastline. There is access to mountains, forests, rivers and the sea all within a half hour radius of travel time and so this conference provides a really unique opportunity to explore a number of different facets of outdoor sport development.

The Mournes area is also an extremely sensitive and highly designated series of eco-systems and habitats that are incredibly important for wildlife and yet are still actively worked for agricultural production. Balancing social, community, environmental and economic issues will be a key topic for discussion throughout the 3 days.

**The currency for the Euro'meet will be in £ sterling**

## **Speakers and topics**

We have arranged some great speakers and will highlight a tremendous range of projects and experiences that have been successful in getting people active outdoors or have demonstrated good opportunities for economic benefit from outdoor sports.

The Directorate General for Education and Culture (which comprises the Sport Unit) of the European Commission has agreed to attend the event and will give a keynote presentation on how Outdoor Sports can be an important facet with EU sport policies. This presentation will provide insights and advice to policy makers and sports managers about the current priorities within the EU sport policies and how outdoor sports can contribute to these, creating opportunities for EU funding, support for initiatives and ensuring that our sector is effectively contributing to targets within the Europe 2020 vision. ENOS has regular communication and engagement with the Sport Unit and will seek to continue to use opportunities such as the Euro'meet to promote the value of outdoor sports.

The programme was developed by a steering committee of members of ENOS from across Europe following a call for projects and experiences. We have speakers and experiences from a range of European countries from France to Albania and Greece to Germany. Through a tremendous range of projects we will learn about diverse issues such as the challenges of engaging people with disabilities in outdoor sports, how certain areas have developed their facilities to be top climbing destinations, why the financial crisis in Greece has resulted in an increase in participation in outdoor sports and how the South of France has developed quality accreditation to encompass outdoor sports providers and connected them with other service providers.

## **Technical Conferences**

We are also running a series of "technical conferences" that will provide very specific practical information on an aspect of the management or development of outdoor sports. These will range from info on how to carry out economic impact assessments in line with EU Sport Unit guidelines to toolkits for monitoring facilities or for the development of community trails and path networks.

## **Poster presentations**

There are a range of university and research institutes that are carrying out important research in the field of outdoor sports, a number of whom are already now members of ENOS. The poster presentations will provide information on some of the research that is being carried out by individuals from organisations across Europe.

## **Networking**

However, the value of the Euro'meet is not just in the learning that takes place in the formal presentations, but there is tremendous value in the opportunities for networking and informal learning that take place over coffee, during site visits and even when out just walking along the beach. We have built in time to facilitate these networking opportunities and the venue is located beside a wonderful promenade at the beach which leads to a number of excellent little coffee shops in the town – perfect for networking opportunities! We will also be arranging early morning walks, runs and possibly swims for those who like to wake up in the fresh air before breakfast!

## **Visitor Give Back**

The Mournes are Northern Ireland's premier location for hillwalking, climbing and a range of other activities. As such they are extremely heavily used and electronic counters have recorded over 215,000 counts of people at 5 key access points last year. The management of the trails and facilities in the area falls to the Mourne Heritage Trust – a small charity tasked with "caring for Mourne." At the Euro'meet we will aim to give something back to the area that we use so much for recreation and so there will be a number of opportunities throughout your stay to support the work that the Heritage Trust does. This will include a raffle of outdoor equipment and a chance to leave your left over £ sterling behind!

## **Weather in the Mournes**

The Mournes are located beside the coast and on the Western Fringe of Europe and so we do occasionally get some (or quite a lot) of rain. Therefore for the site visits and outdoor elements of the programme please do ensure you come prepared with waterproofs and strong footwear. All specialised equipment will be provided. Temperatures in Autumn average temperatures are 12.7°C during the day and lows of 6.7°C at night.

## The Site Visits – Exploring the Mournes

There are 10 different site visits planned to help delegates gain insights into how issues associated with development, opportunities and connecting people with environments have been tackled in the Mournes.

These practical workshops will be run twice and so delegates will have the opportunity to attend two different visits. Some will be very active and quite strenuous and others will be more passive in approach

### 1. Community rowing initiatives (Active - rowing)

This workshop will be led and facilitated by the Strangford Lough and Lecale Partnership who developed the Down Coastal Rowing Association and Row the Erne – a group from County Fermanagh in Northern Ireland.



Both of these groups were enthused to provide opportunities to get local people who live either beside the coast or around Lough Erne to have the opportunity to get out on the water through rowing traditional boats that were hand built by the communities.

At the site visit you will hear the story of building these boats, how it has captured the imagination of communities. You'll also get the chance to try your hand (and arms) at rowing these beautiful boats. Find out more at

<http://www.downcoastalrowing.org>

<http://www.rowtheerne.com>

### 2. Sustainable trail construction – Castlewellaan (Active – mountain biking)

This workshop will be led and facilitated by Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland (ORNI) whose role is to develop, manage and promote outdoor recreation at a strategic level across Northern Ireland.

In 2013 ORNI developed a series of trail design guidelines to ensure a better standard of trail construction and to mitigate against long term maintenance and management issues.

At this workshop you will gain insight into these trail design principles and have the chance to ride and experience the design features on the trails.



### 3. Forest Parks and Natural play – Castlewellaan and Tollymore (Passive – gentle walks)



This workshop will also be led and facilitated by Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland (ORNI). There are a number of forest parks around the base of the Mournes which are owned and managed by Forest Service Northern Ireland whose primary focus has been planting and harvesting a timber product.

However, these forest parks are tremendous assets and the local authority is now working in partnership with ORNI and FSNI to further develop these forests for greater opportunities for developing recreation and economic development.

This workshop will highlight the work that has been done to develop play opportunities in these forests, develop walking trails and to enhance signage to existing features such as the Peace Maze in Castlewellaan.

### 4. Upland path initiatives – Glen River (active walk)

This workshop will be led and facilitated by the Mourne Heritage Trust, a registered charity established to meet an identified need for locally based, strategic management of the Mourne Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

The Mournes are Northern Ireland's most accessible areas of upland hills and are extensively used for recreation. Due to the somewhat "moist" climate of Northern Ireland the Mournes are prone to issues of erosion caused by sheer footfall and the MHT has been working hard to develop, create and manage a network of sustainable trails around the hills and right up to the summits.

This workshop will give you the opportunity to walk sections of the trails, meet the rangers responsible for their management and see how innovative techniques have been used to ensure that erosion from very wet conditions is minimised.



## 5. Farm diversification for activity tourism – Meelmore Lodge (Passive)

This workshop will also be led and facilitated by the Mourne Heritage Trust in partnership with the owner and managers of Meelmore Lodge and Tory Bush Cottages.

Dessie Patterson a local farmer realised that there were opportunities for opening up parts of his farm land for a secure car park and campsite on the edge of the hills. Dessie will show how he has created a successful business facilitating hikers and walkers while also running a productive farm. Similarly David Maginn, across the valley, saw the growing demand for self-catering accommodation as society in Northern Ireland 'normalised' after the peace process. Reflecting the location of his development, he has striven to adhere to the principles of green tourism and to minimise the ecological footprint of visits.



## 6. Murlough beach (Passive – gentle walks)

This workshop will be led and facilitated by the National Trust, a UK charity protecting historic places and green spaces, and opening them up for ever, for everyone.



Murlough National Nature Reserve is a fragile 6000 year old sand dune system is Ireland's first Nature Reserve designated in 1967.

The dune fields at Murlough are the best and most extensive example of dune heath within Ireland with over 600 species of butterflies and moths and the site is internationally important for wintering wildfowl and waders.

However, it also one of the most extensively used beaches in Northern Ireland with a network of paths and boardwalks through the dunes, woodland and heath. The National Trust will highlight how they encourage use of the area and yet still manage effective conservation strategies in this fantastic landscape.

## 7. Bouldering and Coasteering – high impact activities (Active – strenuous water based activity)

This workshop will be led and facilitated by staff from Tollymore National Outdoor Centre which is Northern Ireland's national centre for skill and leader development in outdoor sports.

This workshop will look at the issues of effectively managing a high risk combined rock and water activity for which there is no national governing body, no formal qualifications and potentially a high impact on the environment.

This will involve getting very wet – but all equipment for the activity will be provided.



## 8. "Game of Thrones" – outdoor recreation and film tourism (passive)

This workshop will be led and facilitated by the National Trust in partnership with Clearskies, a private company that offers activities linked to the Game of Thrones filming sets.



Game of Thrones was filmed in Tollymore, Castleward and Inch Abbey in Northern Ireland and there is a growing tourism market combining outdoor recreation and film tours.

This workshop will transport you to an exact replica of the 'Winterfell Archery Range' which has been masterfully recreated in the courtyard where the filming took place

Transporting you into the world of Westeros, you can dress up in character costume and step into the movie set while gaining an insight into an entrepreneurial approach to outdoor recreation to capitalise on this television series' popularity.

## 9. Geotourism – The Ring of Gullion AONB (Passive)

This workshop will be facilitated by staff from the Ring of Gullion Landscape Partnership.



Geologically Slieve Gullion and the encircling 'ring dyke' hills are considered to be the best example of a volcanic ring dyke system in the UK or Ireland. Geotourism is a unique product. It celebrates and promotes aspects of the Mourne-Cooley-Gullion region that make it special – its geology and the related fields of archaeology, mythology and heritage.

The project is part-financed by the European Union's European Regional Development Fund through the INTERREG IVA Cross-Border Programme and this workshop will practically show how the ERDF can be used to develop opportunities for outdoor recreation through Geotourism.

## 10. Trails with tales – the Narnia experience in Rostrevor (gentle walk)

This workshop will also be led and facilitated by the Mourne Heritage Trust Landscape Partnership Team.

The 97 acres of open spaces and pathways leading into oakwoods and conifer forests make up Kilbroney Park, which lies close to the shores of Carlingford Lough in Rostrevor.



It is claimed to be one of the most beautiful parklands of the area, inspiring thoughts of scenic wonderland in C.S. Lewis who, in a letter to his brother, wrote 'that part of Rostrevor which overlooks Carlingford Lough is my idea of Narnia'.

The team will provide insights as to how they are building the cultural connections between CS Lewis' Narnia stories and the landscape here that inspired them.

The workshop highlights the importance of culture, sense of place and the connections that they can bring to local people and visitors alike.

Ten great site visits to choose from – but only 2 able to be done at the Euro'meet. If you think that you'd like to see more – do consider staying on in the area after the event or explore more of Northern Ireland.

Find out more to see and do at [www.discovernorthernireland.com](http://www.discovernorthernireland.com) or [www.outdoorni.com](http://www.outdoorni.com)

Alternatively stay on here in the Mournes and find out about all the other opportunities here at [www.visitmournemountains.com](http://www.visitmournemountains.com)

## **ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS**

There are lots of options for accommodation near the Slieve Donard Hotel. The Slieve Donard itself is doing a special rate for delegates of £100 per person per night, but other options for accommodation in the town of Newcastle are below

A map of Newcastle town and all the accommodation can be found at [http://www.visitmournemountains.co.uk/MourneMountains/media/MourneMountains/Publications/Files/NMDT\\_Nwcstl\\_Map\\_V7.pdf?ext=.pdf](http://www.visitmournemountains.co.uk/MourneMountains/media/MourneMountains/Publications/Files/NMDT_Nwcstl_Map_V7.pdf?ext=.pdf)

In it you can see all the accommodation in the town but the closest hotels and B&B's etc. to the conference are listed below by 5, 10 or 15 minutes' walk from the event. The code for each is in brackets and matches the map. Most will also be willing to provide a special deal for more than 2 nights:

The following ones are only 5 minutes' walk from the Slieve Donard Hotel

Name	Price	Email address
The Beach House (BH)	£40	beachhouse22@tiscali.co.uk
Innisfree House (IH)	£35 sharing	innisfreehouse@hotmail.co.uk
Coolgreeny (CG)	£35 sharing, £45 single	info@coolgreenyhouse.com
Amble In (AI)	£35 sharing, £40 single	info@newcastlebandb.com
Cherry Villa (CV)	£35	cherry.villa@btconnect.com
The Donard Hotel (DH)	£40 per person	donardhotel.com@btconnect.com

These ones are approx. 10 minutes' walk from the Slieve Donard Hotel

Name	Price	Email address
Ryans B&B (RY)	£34	info@ryansnewcastle.com
Number 10 (NT)	£38	numbertenbandb@gmail.com
Fairy Glen (FG)	£35 sharing, £50 single	fairyglen@hotmail.co.uk
Golf Links House (GL)	£30 sharing, £40 single	info@golfinkshouse.com
Avoca Hotel (AH)	£40	<a href="http://www.avocahotel.co.uk/">http://www.avocahotel.co.uk/</a>

Finally these ones are approx. 15 minutes' walk from the Slieve Donard Hotel

Name	Price	Email address
Castle Corrigs House (CC)	£30	corrigs@btinternet.com
Dacara (DA)	£35 sharing, £40 single	info@dacaraguesthouse.com
Harbour House Inn (HI)	£40 sharing, £60 single	info@harbourhouseinn.co.uk
Burrendale Hotel	£49	<a href="http://www.burrendale.com/">http://www.burrendale.com/</a>