

Special Feature

Orienteering

What is it?

The Irish Orienteering Association describes orienteering in simple terms as finding your way from one point to another, using only a map, a compass and your brain. Orienteering is usually done in the woods, hills or parks, with the participants on foot.

At a typical organised Orienteering event, several courses of varying difficulty are laid out in the woods by the event organisers. Each course consists of a series of checkpoints (or "controls") marked by a brightly coloured, distinctive Orienteering flag. Participants are given a map with the locations of the checkpoints circled. The starting place, the sequence in which you visit the controls, and the finish location are also shown. Then, using the map and a compass, it's up to the participant to find his or her way from one control point to another in the order specified.

The Irish Orienteering Association welcome beginners. If you would like to try it, check out their website www.orienteering.ie for information.



Orienteering is considered a competitive sport by some but for many casual walkers it is a recreational activity. People come out alone, with friends, or with family, admiring the view and taking time to appreciate nature. It can be considered a walk with some mental challenge added.

Courtesy of www.orienteering.ie

Permanent Orienteering Sites in Forests

With the help of local orienteering clubs, Coillte has set up a number of permanent orienteering sites at various forests around the country. Coillte's sites cater for orienteers in the beginners, intermediate and experienced categories and course maps for each category are available for download. These courses are an ideal way of introducing children and adults to orienteering. Go at your own pace and spend as much time as you like figuring out the map and navigating to the controls. Permanent orienteering courses can be used for a more adventurous family stroll, or for training to gain confidence away from the pressure of more organised orienteering competitions.

The forest habitat provides a wonderful opportunity to learn more about nature. To facilitate this, Coillte have developed educational resource material for use at some of their sites: Hellfire Club (Co.

Dublin), Carrickgollogan (Co. Dublin), Farran Forest Park (Co. Cork) and Lough Key Forest Park (Co. Roscommon).



The pages for these sites include the following information:

- Primary and Secondary School Course maps
- a work book, based on the primary science curriculum,
- a more advanced workbook for second level, junior cycle students, and,
- Teachers' Answer Sheets
- Check them out at www.coillteoutdoors.ie



Courtesy of Coillte

Farran Forest Park, Co. Cork, (see map) one of the permanent orienteering sites which Coillte has set up and for which they have developed educational resource material for schools. Check out www.coillteoutdoors.ie for information.

© 2011 Sherkin Island Marine Station & its licensors. All rights reserved.