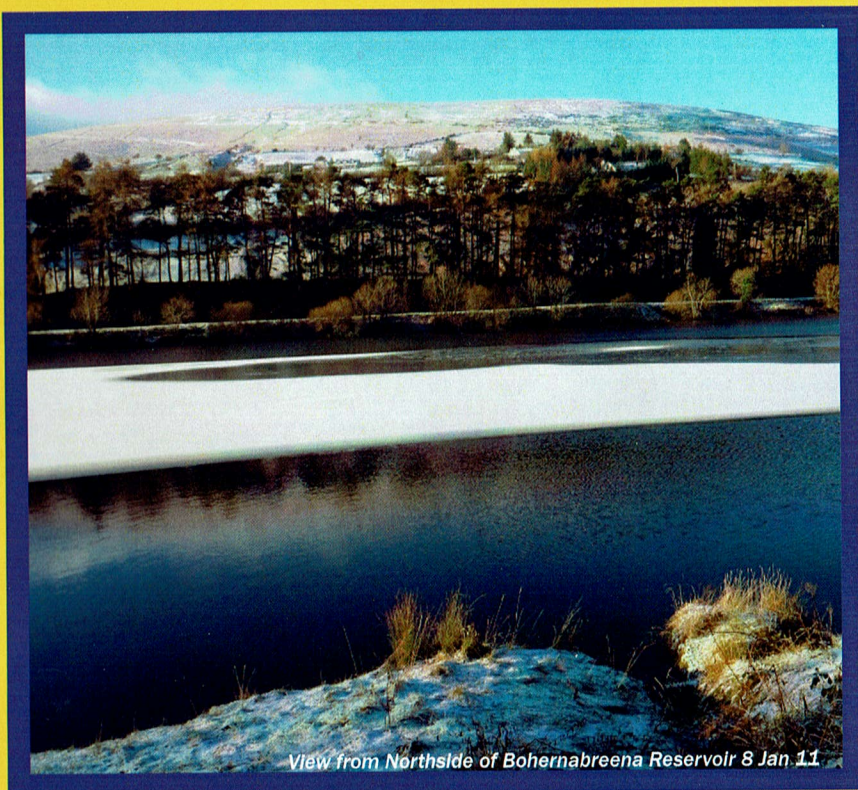


# IRISH Trekker



*View from Northside of Bohernabreena Reservoir 8 Jan 11*

**The Trekkers Mountaineering Club**  
**Glenageary, Co. Dublin**  
**[www.trekkers.ie](http://www.trekkers.ie)**

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May to August 2011	



Produced By  
The Trekkers Mountaineering Club  
GLENAGEARY, CO DUBLIN  
[www.trekkers.ie](http://www.trekkers.ie)

## Social and Personal...

### Welcome New Members

Trekkers extend a warm welcome to new members Mary O'Loughlin and John Kavanagh.

### Condolences

Members of the Club extend their deepest sympathies to Angela McCracken on the recent death of her father Frank and to Colette Dorgan on the recent death of her sister Monica.

### Acknowledgements

I should like to thank all of those who contributed to this 44th Issue of the Irish Trekker magazine. Those who wrote or contributed to articles: Monty Tinsley, Henry Jack and Bob Curran, and to Eugene Logan for agreeing to be interviewed; those who provided photographs: Paddy O'Duffy, Owen McKeown, Myles Duffy and Noel O'Reilly; and to Joe Murray and Roger Kirker for maintaining the Club's website where some of the contents of this issue were sourced. I should also like to thank my fellow Committee members – Monty, Colette, Cliona and Karl for their valued contributions. Once again I am most grateful to Ms Caoimhe Mulhall for the design and layout work on this Issue..

*T. Duff*

# Trekker Notes

## Dates for your diary

### Away Trips 2011

Dates	Trip / Organiser	Walks
16 - 17 April	 Mount Brandon, Dingle (Mary Dillon)	A
25 June - 2 July	 Auvergne, France (Brendan Bracken)	A
2-12 July	 Gorges du Tarn, France (Michael Cotter)	B/C
19 - 21 August	 Mweelrea/Croagh Patrick (Gaye Maguire)	A/A+B
4 - 9 September	 Mulranny, Mayo (Monty Tinsley)	B/C

## Training/Activity Day



The Committee is organising a training/activity day to be held on 21 May 2011. It is envisaged that the training will be in the form of activities with, where possible, practical exercises in areas such as first aid, leadership/mountain skills and navigation exercises.

## Guests walking with the Club

Members are reminded that the Club does not assume any liability for guests walking with the Club. All guests must be responsible for their own actions and their own safety. In walking with the Club it is understood that guests acknowledge and accept these risks and responsibilities.

# THE WHISTLEBLOWER

By Monty Tinsley

Just prior to the commencement of a walk, the first Leader should inform the group of walkers of the name of the designated Sweeper and broadly outline the well-established Trekker rules in terms of walk protocols. - **such as the cardinal rule that no walker goes in front of the Leader or behind the Sweeper, without permission.** A whistle blower is somebody who is alert to any potential dangers and difficulties that may lie ahead: in Trekker terminology it applies to all walkers but especially the Sweeper. Two key responsibilities of the Sweeper are:

- to ensure all the walkers are in front of him/her; and,
- to be alert to any difficulty that may arise on the trek.

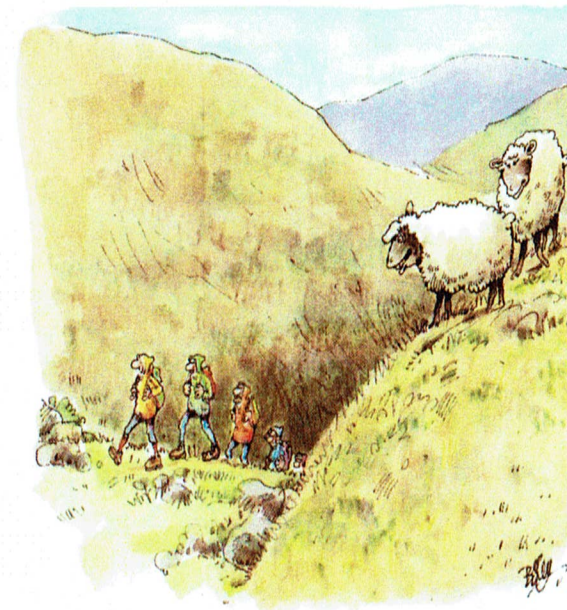
Since the first edition of The Trekker in 1995, there has always been a list of leaders allocated for each Saturday walk. The purpose is twofold:

- to share the responsibility for planning each walk amongst the members; and,
- to act as a navigation training mechanism for all concerned.

Ideally, the nominated leaders should meet, decide the route and together do a recce to ensure the planned walk is feasible and practicable. We know getting all leaders together for the recce is not always easy but it is very rewarding if it can be accomplished.

On the day of the walk the two key positions are that of first Leader and that of Sweeper. The first Leader knows the route and is armed with the appropriate map and compass whilst the Sweeper is armed with a whistle.

It is the first Leader who sets the pace and ensures the correct direction is taken whereas the Sweeper is responsible for keeping the group together and that it does not spread out too far. The Sweeper should never be afraid to use the whistle when a fellow Trekker is in difficulty or too large a gap has developed between the front and the rear. This can easily happen in bad weather. It is vitally important that both the first Leader and the Sweeper keep in contact with each other both visually and having a chat during short breaks. Such communication ensures the enjoyment of the designated walk.



'FUNNY HOW THEY FOLLOW, EACH OTHER, JUST LIKE ..UM..'

# Memories with a Quiet Gentle Lady

by Henry Jack

In September 2009, I booked a five day cruise with Puffer Steamboat Holidays, along the Great Glen in Scotland, sailing through the Caledonian Canal, from west to east. The steamboat is the SL "VIC 32", a Clyde Puffer built in 1943, 66 feet long and about 170 gross tons (a Steam Lighter, Victualling Inshore Craft No. 32). Commissioned by the British Admiralty to supply ships of the Royal Navy in Scottish waters, the cargo would have been mainly ammunition, aviation fuel, water and building material for shore bases. In earlier years these craft supplied the isolated communities on the west coast of Scotland with anything and everything they needed, just as the Galway Hookers did on the west coast of Ireland. The Puffer's hull was built to sit on the sand, if no quays were available, and transfer cargo into horse-drawn carts. Working on coal, they puffed out smoke, like steam railway engines, hence known as "Clyde puffers". In time, when they were fitted with condensers to convert the steam into hot water, there was no "puff" but the name stuck. The normal crew was three: skipper, engineer and deck-hand. Steaming on coal, there is no noise or vibration from the engine so, unless you watch the water or the land slip by, you could still be moored to the quay.

"VIC 32" was crewed by the Skipper, engineer and two "cooks" while "passengers" are free to help, if they wish, to handle mooring lines, stoke the fire, have a spell at the wheel, help the cooks, or just sit and watch. All very relaxing and great fun. The cargo hold had been converted to accommodate 12 passengers, all very comfortable. Excellent food and a well stocked bar, where you help yourself and put it on the "slate" until the end of the cruise, to settle the bill. All very civilised.

The Caledonian Canal, designed by Thomas Telford, opened in 1822 after 19 years in building, was a short cut for ships up to 150 feet in length, to save the difficult trip round the stormy north of Scotland. Normally it took two and a half days to pass through the 60 miles from coast to coast using Loch Lochy, Oich, Ness and Dochfour, plus 22 miles of man made canal and a total of 29 locks. On this trip, "VIC 32" takes five days. Between steaming, eating, drinking, sleeping and socialising, there is also time for walking ashore!

Arrived late Sunday afternoon and went aboard ship, moored in Corpach Basin, at the west end of the Canal, to settle in, meet the crew and passengers, before a great meal and chat. Slept well and ready for Monday morning. After breakfast, we left through the sea lock as the tide was right, and sailed westwards, cruising in part of Loch Eil before returning to the Basin, then negotiating two locks and two swing bridges, one for a road and then the railway. Moored for a buffet lunch in preparation to climb up "Neptune's Staircase", a flight of eight locks which lift us up to 70 feet above sea level.

We set off up the "stairs" at 14.00hrs. Lock-keepers use electric power to control water levels and open and close lock gates, while the

ship's crew handle the ropes. By the time we moored above the "stairs" at 16.00hrs, the "crew" had settled in well to the routine. Dinner was not until 19.30hrs, so the time was spent exploring and walking the canal banks, to view the scenery, with Ben Nevis away to the south, and to wonder at the original stone work in the various tunnels under the waterway, for use of the farmers and the overflows to avoid flooding of the canal.

After walking a good three miles, chatting over drinkies before a fine dinner and chat afterwards, we were ready to turn in by 21.30hrs! I was soon asleep after looking forward to the next day's activity. There were ten of us, six males and four ladies, all retired and including two master mariners, a merchant navy "spark", a teacher and I. The routine was, breakfast at 08.30hrs, buffet lunch, dinner at 19.30hrs with breaks for tea/coffee in between as required, in the very comfortable general saloon.

I was up for a walk at 07.30hrs and following breakfast, we steamed away towards the east, went up in a lock, then through L.Lochy and into a short length of canal with two rising locks, to enter L.Oich. This very pretty Loch, 106 feet above sea level, is the summit level of the waterway and we anchored off Invergarry Castle. Ferried ashore, three at a time, in the one punt by the Skipper, complete with life jackets. Had a two mile walk through the lovely wood by the River Garry before returning on board for dinner, and remaining at anchor all night. The Skipper, the two lady cooks and I stayed up talking until 23.00hrs. Such peaceful surroundings to wake up in next morning, well, until the breakfast chat!

Weighed anchor after breakfast on

Wednesday and steamed the two miles to enter the canal at the east end of the loch and dropped down a lock. Here, those who wished to walk the four and a half miles of bank to Fort Augustus, left ship. From here we dropped down another lock before descending a flight of five locks, actually through the middle of Fort Augustus and moor at the start of Loch Ness. Time to explore this interesting town, have lunch when the shore expedition arrived, then continued east as far as Foyers on the south shore of this famous loch. Loch Ness is about 22 miles long and very deep, nearly 1000 feet, and with the peaty coloured water, you will not see Nessie unless he/she comes up to the surface to see you. As the Gota Canal, in Sweden, is twinned with the Caledonian Canal (same builder), Waterways Scotland sent one of Nessie's eggs to Sweden a few years ago. They have reported several sightings of young Nessie in the Gota since! When I sailed through the Gota five years ago, the weather was very fine but I did not see the youngster, nor did we see Big Nessie here.

We moored at Foyers by 16.00hrs and had another beautiful walk up the woods to view the scenic waterfall (falling a total of 120 feet) before returning to enjoy another fine dinner. More chat as the bar stock began to fall also. The weather was good and Thursday dawned with a fresh breeze from the west. Loch Ness can be very dangerous in gale winds but not today. We set off early and enjoyed breakfast passing Urquhart Castle and soon entered the canal section at the eastern end of L.Dochfour,

arriving in Muirtown Basin at 14.00hrs, having descended five locks and negotiated two swing bridges. This basin is just north of Inverness, and an outing was arranged to visit the Cawder Castle Estate, to walk the woods or explore the extensive gardens. We passed the site of the Culloden Battlefield and visited the 2000 B.C. clava cairns. Returned in time for a special dinner (fancy dress optional) when the Skipper, aided by the Engineer, held court and prosecuted or awarded (with Mars Bars) members of the "crew". I was threatened with keel hauling because I drank the Skipper's special sherry! Got a Mars Bar eventually. Struggled into my bunk at 23.00hrs. Fantastic evening and I'm allowed back next year.

The next day, as the tide was suitable, we went through the two tidal locks into Beaully Firth and steamed out of Chanonry Point watching the seals and dolphins before returning to the Basin, where the cruise ended after tea at 16.00hrs. This is just a short account of the pleasant opportunity for walking in the Great Glen. A really fantastic fun trip and nautical experience is not necessary.

Who was my quiet, gentle lady? Why she was VIC 32, herself!



# Rambling in the Pays Basque Ouest

by Bob Curran

When I heard that my daughter Louise and her family were moving from Brussels to Biarritz I thought that I had it made. Biarritz, that famous sea side resort in the South of France: lots of beaches, sunshine, vineyards and fields of yellow grain, like those in the Van Gogh picture that hangs on the wall before me as I write. As the plane came in to land I noticed that the landscape was not what I had expected: it was too green. But then airfields never have the same landscape as the surrounding area. So we drove to Louise's house about 20km away and I went to bed after a meal.

Next morning, I got a surprise as I looked out the window. Everything was green apart from the red roof of the big barn beside the farmhouse across the road. There were cattle chewing the cud and beyond them more green fields and farmhouses, then a line of hills with forests. It looked like Wicklow or perhaps Cavan. Not a vineyard in sight. I would just have to make the best of it. The first place I went to was the town of Hasparren about 25km east by south of Biarritz and 1km from Louise's house. It is a pleasant town with a bookshop, a bakery, a cosy friendly bar, a micro brewery (in the South of France?) which brews, among other beers, one with the splendid name of Bob's Beer. When I put a Basque beret on I could pass for the guy on the label. And I like the beer as well!

Louise guided me on my first walk on the hills near Hasparren. There are two marked walks on heath land, both taking about two hours, with about 6km and an ascent of 200m. This introduction satisfied me that pleasant walking was to be had here. The ground was dry and not broken and the landscape is pretty and varied. Next, Louise drove me to Biarritz where a very nice friend of her's, Maite, lives. After I had seen the town, an attractive Edwardian place, Maite brought me to La Rhune. This is a steep imposing peak of 905m, 20km south of Biarritz, from which much of the western end of the Pyrenees range, in France and Spain, can be seen. The summits there can be identified, with their heights, with the help of a stone bearing circle. There are cafes and souvenir shops on the summit, though not so many or so ugly as to ruin the place. There is also a rack and cog railway to take you up and down if you don't feel up to the ascent, which is demanding enough, say a B plus in our system. I did it twice, with and without the help of the railway, and I found it very enjoyable.

Louise and I then climbed the peak of Ursuya, 678m, 6km south west from Hasparren. Ursuya is classified as a 'massif' in the local guide



book, understandably so since the peak and the surrounding hills cover a wide area. From a distance the massif outline seems familiar; it would fit into an Irish landscape. Up close it is different. There are a number of mapped paths on Ursuya of varying length with estimated times up to five hours. On Ursuya, I saw 'Pottoks' for the first time. These are wild horses of varying colours, somewhat like those our travellers have, living in groups on the hills. Their survival on terrain which is also used for sheep pasture is remarkable.

Our next climb was up Baigura, 897m. There are tracks to the summit from the principal points of the compass. A ridge goes south of the summit with two other peaks of over 800m. The valleys around are about 300m above sea level. A zig zag track assists in the approach from the north-west. We didn't quite make the summit because mist and rain set in. The summit then looked quite Irish, but neither of us felt like going from the sunshine into Celtic gloom.

A longer walk, which we didn't finish, is up Artzamendi, 926m. It lies 15km south-west of Hasparren. We started from Pas de Roland, almost north of the summit, from which two tracks lead to the summit. One of

them, the easy way which we took, is partly by road. It takes longer, which is why we didn't make the summit, even though we could see it clearly. We will return! Overall our rambles were like walking on a drier, sunnier version of Wicklow, with lots of other hills in all directions, plenty of easily identifiable tracks and few other walkers. The landscape to the north, with farms and many houses, was pretty. There are also marked tracks on the coast. South of Biarritz lies the other resort of St Jean de Luz, which I prefer to Biarritz. The latter is open to the Atlantic rollers which make swimming uncomfortable, though surfing is frequently feasible. St Jean de Luz is on a sheltered bay and has a good beach on which one can lie after the walk of 12km from Biarritz. I also followed the track around the southern side of the bay, and then on down for 8km to another resort, Hendaye, which faces Spain over an inlet. There is also a coast walk north from Biarritz from which the interesting old town of Bayonne on the Adour river can be reached. On the coast walks the changing views of the sea, the sea cliffs, ships and the foothills of the Pyrenees took all my attention.

To judge by the facilities provided, walking in the area is popular. However I saw no groups and few individuals. The name of the area is Pays Basque Ouest – western Basque area. There are walkers' maps, cartes de randonees in French, at the 1: 25,000 and 1:50,000 scales, published by the Institut Geographique National. Tracks are well marked and mapped. A guide book for 42 walks in the area indicates there are more than 4800km of marked pathways, including 1000km of main hiking routes, in the 'Departement' of the Pyrenees Atlantique. For a beginner like me, with only limited French, reading the maps can be demanding. The landscape has many ups and downs, and the network of tracks and roads is

complex. The practice of giving the names of many, but not all rural houses adds to the density of information on the maps. You have to search carefully to find the essential information for your walk.

While French is the language most used in the area, most of the house and place names are in Basque. Basque names are not easily remembered. The Irishman who could remember the name Menditipikobizkarra would deserve a prize. One can of course adopt a version which one might remember, Menditip for example for the one above. For Artzamendi one version might be Artsawonder, which is more polite than another version that occurred to me. (No attempts to guess what it is please!) Many of the buildings in the towns and the countryside are half timbered, with the timbers painted either dark red or green. They look old, and no doubt some of them are, but many must be relatively modern. There are quite a few wooded areas locally which could help explain why half-timbering houses did not die out, as it did in Ireland and England. The initial impression that the trees look the same as in Ireland is dispersed when one looks more closely. It would have been helpful to have a forester, say Fergal Mulloy, who could have identified the unusual looking specimens. An unusual bird which is often to be seen is the vulture. Its survival is remarkable, all the more so when one thinks of the risky life the few Irish eagles live. Pottoks and vultures add a touch of Wild West flavour to nature in the area.

So, good walking, swimming, and food and drink, and fair land and seascapes to stare at for hours. What more could a man want? Thanks, Louise and Maite.



# TREKKER PROFILE: Eugene Logan

## How long have you been a member of the Trekkers and what were the circumstances in which you joined the Club?

My association with the Trekkers began in 1993, when I was invited by Sean Trant and Bill Hannon to join a group of walkers going to Kerry. On reflection, I think that trip was intended as a test of my mountain skills. During the weekend I successfully negotiated Mount Brandon and Connor Hill and so proved I was good enough to join this elite group.

Of course, this wasn't my introduction to hiking as that had begun when I joined the scouts as a young fellow in Dun Laoghaire. Over the years I had a lot of experience of hiking in the Wicklow hills, at other times cycling out there with a group of friends. In later years when I became a scout leader I had extensive experience of organising camping and hiking in many parts of Ireland, also leading scout groups abroad to Spain, France and Italy.

## Can you recall any significant highlights during your membership of Trekkers?

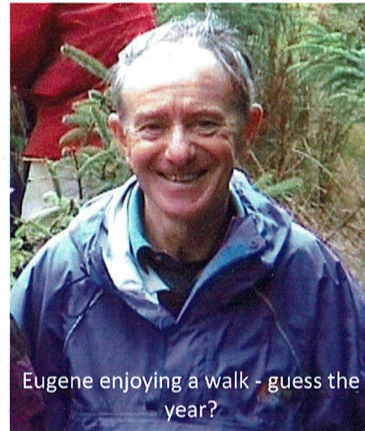
There have been many highlights during my years in the Trekkers. In 1995, I accompanied Sean Trant on a night hike from the Glen of Imaal to Lugnaquilla. Fortunately, the weather was in our favour and it was an adventure to remember. When the Trekkers became an official walking club, the Committee sanctioned a mid-week walk and with the help of Kevin and Jim Moore I started the Wednesday walks. This gave us a great opportunity to recce new routes. I am glad that these walks have continued and are now as popular as the Saturday walks.

A particular highlight of my time in the Club was the walk in 2004 with a group of Trekkers on the Camino de Santiago; this was a most enjoyable experience. Another achievement was to climb the four provincial summits: Lugnaquilla, Carrantuohill, Slieve Donard and Mweelrea. Ben Nevis was another conquest. I must also mention another memorable event. In June 1995, on an away weekend we tackled Galtymore on the Sunday. The going was pretty rough. To our amazement when we reached the summit, the Mitchelstown Brass Band was there – in full regalia – for their annual outing and as we arrived they struck up "When the saints go

marching in".

In 2000, I was appointed to the Committee as the Club's Walks Co-ordinator which gave me the opportunity to organise walking holidays in Donegal, Kerry and Galway. I have happy memories of these away trips to places like Glenveigh National Park and Tory Island in Donegal, Carrantuohill and Mangerton in Kerry and the ascent of Ben Lettery in Connemara, led by Bill Hannon.

In 2001, the Foot and Mouth disease put a temporary halt to our walking adventures. However, in order to keep the Club active we improvised with city and urban walks and I instigated the 'Foot and Mouth' dinner in Glenmalure which was a great success. This annual event continued until 2010, and has now been replaced with the Memorial Dinner. The erection of the Memorial at Glenmalure Lodge is a very fitting tribute to our departed Trekkers.



Eugene enjoying a walk - guess the year?

## Were there any good lessons you learned while walking with the Trekkers?

Due to a fairly strict adherence to a code of safety and related matters when on the hills, I am glad to say the Club has been fortunate to avoid any serious accidents. That is not to say there haven't been a few mishaps and injuries but, thankfully, no major accidents. The Club has always placed an emphasis on first aid training and has encouraged members to avail of opportunities to engage in such training on a regular basis.

Experience also points to the importance of navigation skills – map reading and the use of a

compass. As we all know the weather is so unpredictable, and I strongly recommend ongoing training for members in these skills.

Mentioning the weather, I would like to emphasise the importance of good quality waterproof jackets, over trousers and boots before venturing onto the hills, especially during the winter.

More recently walking poles have become very popular and in my opinion are quite helpful especially when on descending terrain.

## What were the most important factors that have influenced you in remaining a member of Trekkers?

I am convinced of the need for regular exercise and feel that walking is the best medicine for keeping fit and healthy. So I hope to continue with the Trekkers even though I now confine myself to 'C' walks.

Over the years I have been conscious of the great friendships I have made and particularly the comradeship and kindness shown to me by members of the Club.

## Is there anything about the Trekkers that you would like to change or improve?

I think it is important that members of the Committee should, where possible, avail of the opportunity to go on the different levels of walks and make a point of introducing themselves in order to get to know the wider membership and their capabilities.

Overall, I think the Club works very well. As I have said there is a great sense of comradeship within the Club and all of the members contribute to this by way of planning walks and participating in organised events, for example.

Finally, I would like to express my thanks to the members of the Committees who, over the years have put so much effort and time into upholding the high standards of the Club.

Presentation to Eugene, Sept 10



Eugene, walks Co-ordinator, Leenane 2002

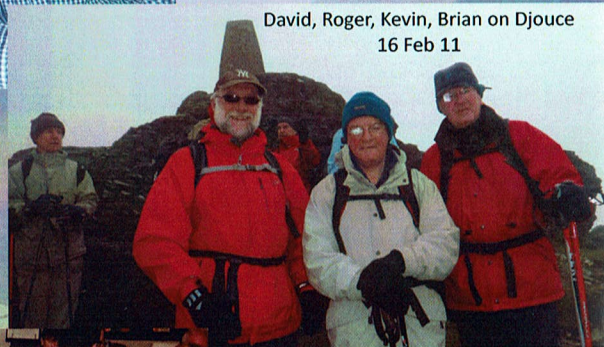
# Photo Gallery



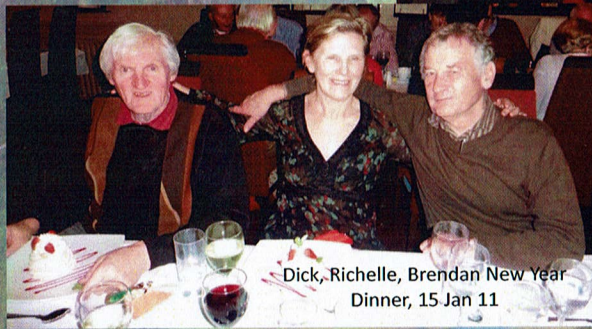
Brian, Geraldine, Pat, Marie, Owen in Crown Bar Belfast 2 Feb 11



Catherine M, Marie C, Eugene New Year Dinner 15 Jan 11



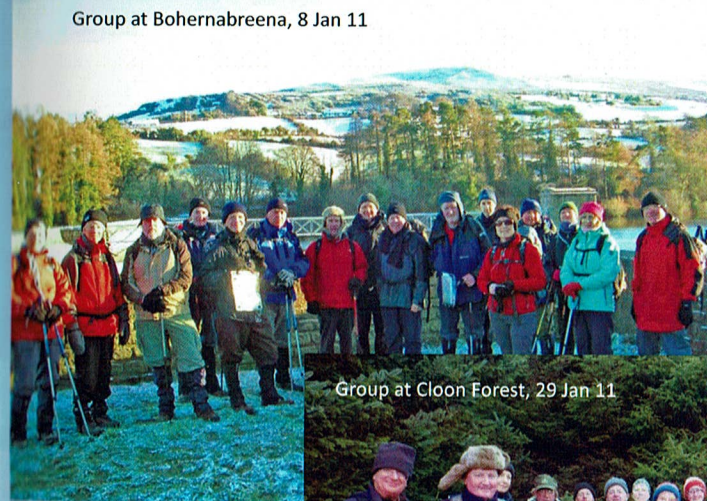
David, Roger, Kevin, Brian on Djouce 16 Feb 11



Dick, Richelle, Brendan New Year Dinner, 15 Jan 11



Cindy, Barbara, New Year Dinner 15 Jan 11



Group at Bohernabreena, 8 Jan 11



Group at Cloon Forest, 29 Jan 11

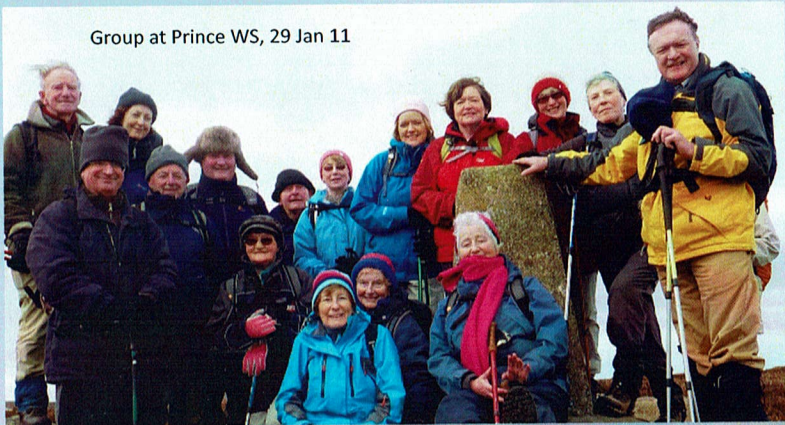


Group at Fairy Castle, 23 Feb 11



Group Near Cruagh Mtn, 8 Jan 11

Group at Prince WS, 29 Jan 11



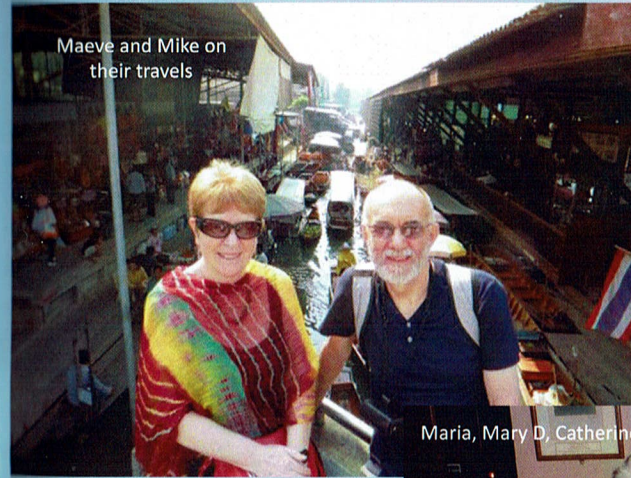
Group on Camaderry, 16 Oct 10



Group on St. Kevins Way, 12 Mar 11



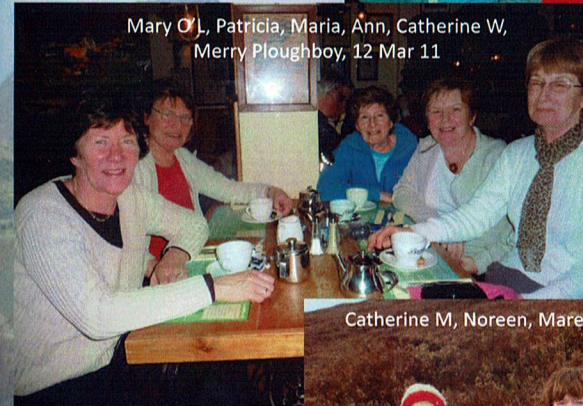
Maeve and Mike on their travels



Maria, Mary D, Catherine W, New Year Dinner, 15 Jan 11



Mary O'L, Patricia, Maria, Ann, Catherine W, Merry Ploughboy, 12 Mar 11



Catherine M, Noreen, Marelene, Maria near Glenree, 29 Jan 11





# Walks programme - May to August 2011

Date	Grade	Start	First Leader	Second Leader	Third Leader
<b>May</b>					
7	B	09:00	Owen McKeown	Jane Sykes	Monty Tinsley
	C	11:00	Fred English	Catherine Walsh	Hilary Fitzpatrick
14	B	09:00	Paddy O'Duffy	Angela McCracken	Richelle Crowley
	C	11:00	Mary Delany	Dick Needham	Marion Goff
21	A / B C	09:00	Training / Activity Day		
28	C	11:00	Eugene Logan	Catherine Minogue	Marie Comiskey
<b>June</b>					
4	B	09:00	Brian Brennan	Pearse Connolly	Terry O'Brien
	C	11:00	Myles Duffy	Marie McKeown	Patricia Duffy
11	B 'Y'	09:00	Gaye Maguire	Mary Dillon	Ruth Cullen
	C	11:00	Roger Kirker	John Brandon	Aidene Duff
18	B	09:00	Tom Duff	Karl Foley	Richelle Crowley
	C	11:00	Ann Little	Dick Ryan	Marelene Travers
25	A	11:00	Away trip	Auvergne	Theresa Murphy
	C		Eugene Logan	Liam Walsh	
<b>July</b>					
9	B	09:00	Gerry Fogarty	Maura Colleary	Cliona McCarthy
	C		Away Trip	Gorges du Tarn	
16	A	09:00	Brendan Bracken	Michael Cotter	Gaye Maguire
	C	11:00	Paddy O'Duffy	Geraldine Meindl	Eileen Gallagher
Memorial Walks Followed by Dinner					
23	B	09:00	Mary Murray	Tom Murray	Monty Tinsley
	C	11:00	Catherine Walsh	Dick Needham	Colette Dorgan
30	C	11:00	Eugene Logan	Fred English	Teresa Casey
<b>August</b>					
6	B	09:00	Cliona McCarthy	Jane Sykes	Marjorie O'Shee
	C	11:00	Fergal Mulloy	Marelene Travers	Dick Needham
13	B	09:00	Shay Murrain	Joe Murray	Tom Duff
	C	11:00	Eileen Gallagher	Noel O'Reilly	Ann Little
20	A	11:00	Away Trip	Mweelrea	Sheila Cantwell
	C		Noreen O'Brien	Dick Ryan	
27	C	11:00	Eugene Logan	John Furey	Marie Comiskey

## Walk Leaders

Walk Leaders should email members at least 10 days in advance of their scheduled walk to advise of the planned route details, including the distance to be travelled and height to be climbed. Where a named leader is unable to lead a walk she/he should arrange for and agree a replacement. Any such changes should be notified to the walks co-ordinator Colette Dorgan.

Please note Bus Driver details: Gerry Haskins Tel: 086 3359961