

IRISH Trekker



*A glimpse of the Upper
lake with a sprinkling of
snow 31 March 2010*

The Trekkers Mountaineering Club
Glenageary, Co. Dublin
www.trekkers.ie

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Produced By
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Social and Personal...

Grateful Appreciations

Colette Dorgan thanks members for their kind expressions of sympathy on the death of her husband Mike.

Marion Goff thanks members for the kindness shown during the past year and for their attendance at her son Kevin's mass on 20 February.

Mike Sims thanks all those who sent messages of condolence on the death of his father.

Welcome New Member

Trekkers welcome Maura Colleary as a member of the Club.

Birthday Greetings

Congratulations to Tom Gillen on his recent 'special' birthday.

Best Wishes

Members send their best wishes for a speedy recovery to Henry Jack.

Congratulations to:

Warm congratulations are extended to Joe Murray on the birth of his granddaughter Aoife in Rome.

Acknowledgements

I should like to thank all of the contributors to this Issue who put so much time and effort into: writing articles - Fergal Mulloy, Gerry Fogarty and Mary Murray; providing photographs - Paddy O'Duffy, Myles Duffy and Noel O'Reilly; and for ensuring the website, where some of the contents are sourced, is updated - Joe Murray and Roger Kirker. I should also like to thank my fellow members of the Trekkers' hardworking Committee for their valued contributions: our chairman Monty, Colette, Marie and Gerry. Finally, I am also most grateful once again to Ms Caoimhe Mulhall for the high standard of her design and layout work.

T. Duff

Trekker Notes

Programme of walks January to April 2010

Some thirty-three scheduled walks were held in the period from January to the end of April 2010. Over three hundred members and guests participated in these walks despite the severest weather conditions for more than thirty years during January and February. Well done to all of those concerned.

Inchavore River Walkway.

Recently a group of Trekkers explored the Inchavore River area to evaluate the possibility of two tracks outlined on OS Sheet 56 being joined up, thus creating easier access to the entire valley.

The group concluded that with a little initiative and help a track could be developed either through the Coillte Woods or along side it on the riverbank. This would enable both linear and circular walks throughout the area.

A report has been sent to the Wicklow Uplands Council which sought proposals to extend walkways in the county as part of the Coillte Recreation Plan (see Trekker No 38). The group awaits their reaction before taking part in any formal meeting. In the meantime, the route can be walked provided due care is taken, as some parts are quite tricky particularly when the river is in full spate.

GPS session

Arising from a proposal at the Club's AGM one of our experienced Trekkers, Joe Murray, held a small group discussion/training session in February on the use of GPS. The reaction of the five Club members participating was that the session was extremely informative and useful. One of the problems identified by the group was the fact that there are different types of GPS equipment available on the market, the purpose of this training was to make better use of the equipment used by members. During the session the group covered such matters as:

- the suitability of your GPS for trekking;
- basic definitions such as: waypoints and track-log for example;
- displaying maps on the GPS unit; and,
- managing your GPS with PC software

A considerable amount of time was given to making the group aware of the system 'Geolives' that can be downloaded to a computer to help in planning walks giving details of distances and heights, for example. Once the system is mastered it will prove of immense value to the Club. Our grateful thanks are due to Joe for sharing this information. Subject to interest among members it may be necessary to arrange some follow-up sessions in the future.

Summer Dinner

Since 2001, a dinner (F&M) has been held in the Glenmalure Lodge at the end of June of each year. It has been decided to hold the dinner at the same venue at the time of the memorial walks scheduled this year for 10 July.

Website

Many thanks are due to Joe Murray who has set up a new section in the "members only" area of the Club's website. This new data will record the grade, length, climb in metres and the route of every walk undertaken by the Club. It will also hold the names of the leaders and the list of members and guests who did the walk. This information will be very useful for leaders when they are planning new walks, and for members to remind them who exactly went on the walk. The data for this section will be taken from the Insurance Form that each leader fills out at the end of each walk. This form should be sent as usual to Club's Treasurer, Marie McKeown. The form has been modified to include the new data. Leaders are requested to start using the new form immediately (it is available in the "members-only" area of the web site under "insurance forms").

Did you know what's coming up?

At the time of going to print, the following away trips have been organised for interested members of the Club:

- (a) Blackstairs Mountains, South Leinster – Eugene Logan and Brendan Bracken have organised a trip for 24 April.
- (b) Glens of Antrim – Monty Tinsley has organised a trip to Co Antrim for 5/7 May
- (c) Beara Peninsula – Monty Tinsley has organised a trip to Co Cork on 20-24 June
- (d) Tuscany – Brendan Bracken has organised a week-long trip to the Apuane Alps in Northern Tuscany commencing 22 August.

Wicklow's Changed Landscape

By Fergal Mulloy

*What is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare?
No time to stand beneath the boughs,
And stare as long as sheep and cows:
No time to see, when woods we pass,
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass*



Red squirrel Photo by permission of COFORD

When the Welsh poet William Davies wrote these opening lines of "Leisure" in 1911, I doubt if he was thinking about Wicklow – the Trekkers favourite haunt. His invitation to stop and stare is valid however at any location. A century ago Wicklow may have had plenty of sheep and cows but few woods to pass and arguably fewer squirrels to hide their nuts. Today, the squirrels are more likely to be

the alien grey squirrel, particularly in east Wicklow where they seem to have replaced the native red squirrel. The more timid red squirrel is still present, particularly in the more commercial conifer forests where evidence of their presence is seen by discarded or half eaten pine cones.

Ireland's forest cover in the early years of the 20th century was the lowest in Europe. (less than 2%). Today it is 10%; only Iceland and Malta have a lower percentage. Wicklow has 36,260 hectares of forest and although this is under 18% of the county, it is still less than half the European average of 40%.

Trekker walks in Wicklow are mostly above the 700 ft. contour (about the altitude of the Roundwood reservoir). 53% of Wicklow's forests are above this contour and are served by an estimated 450 kms of forest roads. Most of these roads are open to the public, giving enormous opportunities for safe walking with interludes to stop and absorb the surroundings.



Grey squirrel Photo by permission of COFORD

Wicklow's upland trees

It is the presence of trees that has caused the biggest landscape change in the last century. Nobody has ever counted the trees but there are literally millions of them – at least 30 million and probably more than twice that number. 94% of the forests above 700 feet are conifer and the dominant forest tree at these elevations is sitka spruce. It represents the principal afforestation endeavour

of the mid 20th century onwards, and is the main bread and butter species of Irish forestry practice. The objective is to provide a timber resource on land that was too poor for agriculture. Sitka, and to a lesser extent lodgepole pine, suited these constraints. Lodgepole pine is now relatively scarce in Wicklow as it is very vulnerable to deer damage.

Both sitka and lodgepole came originally from northwest America and were introduced into Ireland in the mid 19th century. Sitka spruce (called after Sitka island in southeast Alaska) is fast growing and produces good structural timber while its thinnings is the main raw material for panel boards. However, at the age to which is it grown in these islands (about 45 years – the economic optimum rotation in Ireland), plantations of sitka are unlikely to win a beauty competition. Given sixty years however the appearance improves. Prince Charles is reported to have said once that he loves sitka spruce – at sixty years of age.

Lodgepole pine is mostly confined to the upland peat areas. The abundance of its yellow pollen in early summer and their smallish cones that remain on the branches for many years makes it easily identifiable. It is called lodgepole because the inland variety was used by American pioneers for log cabins.

Wicklow's Deer

Deer, once relatively scarce a century ago, have now increased so much in numbers that they have become a major threat to (tree) species diversification in Wicklow. Red deer for instance has increased its spread in Ireland by over 500% in the past 30 years, sika by 300% and fallow by 170%. Deer are fast becoming the most serious threat to the regeneration of broadleaf trees. This partly explains the dominance of sitka spruce in Wicklow particularly at higher elevations. It was common practice in the mid 20th century to plant more larch and Douglas fir on the lower slopes giving a more diversified landscape. As they mature their replacement is proving difficult because of their vulnerability to damage by deer. The prickly branches and needles of sitka makes it less vulnerable to deer damage.

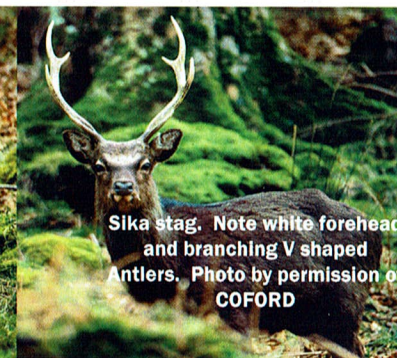
Scientists believe that the present deer populations of Wicklow are mostly descendents of introductions over the centuries. Red deer was introduced into the Royal Forest of Glencree in 1246 from Chester with introductions continuing over the following centuries. Lord Powerscourt added sika deer to Wicklow's deer by his introductions in 1860. Descendants of these are the current sika populations of Ireland, and, indeed much of Britain.

Hybridisation between red and sika was noted in Wicklow in the 1880s and it was believed that several thousand hybrids exist in the Wicklow area. However, a recent preliminary study in 2009 suggests relatively low incidences of hybrid deer in this region. To the casual observer however red deer, with their cream coloured rumps, generally frequent the open ground above the tree line (e.g. Glenealo valley) while the smaller dark grey white rumped sika are mostly woodland animals.

The first introductions of Fallow deer were made in the 12th century and is mostly confined to the lowlands of Wicklow.



Sika hind and calf. Note white rump with black border. Photo by permission of COFORD



Sika stag. Note white forehead and branching V shaped Antlers. Photo by permission of COFORD

Wicklow's Sheep and Cows

But we should not forget about those sheep and cows. The Wicklow cheviot is still the most popular sheep breed in Wicklow with the occasional hardy black faced sheep in the hills. Of the 3.7 million sheep in Ireland last December, there are close to a quarter of a million in Co. Wicklow. Happily there are still plenty of cows in Wicklow, albeit perhaps not in the hills. There are nearly 6 million cattle in Ireland of which about 100,000 of them are in Wicklow scattered among 1600 herd owners.

Although deer and squirrels may be a tad more illusive than sheep or cows and we may not get close enough to stare them out, their very presence reflects the changing landscape of Wicklow and how our access to the uplands, where they mostly abide, has been facilitated by huge national investment in the hundreds of kilometres of forest roads and tracks. These and Wicklow's wildlife are national assets that, thank God, are outside the competence of NAMA.

Special thanks to John Redmond (Forest Service) and John Keating (Teagasc) for their statistics and to COFORD for the photographs.

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Some Safety Basics for Walk Leaders

By Gerry Fogarty & Tom Duff

The August 2009 issue of the Irish Trekker included an article entitled Guidelines for Walk Leaders by Shay Murran¹. Not alone should every Walk Leader be aware of these guidelines but also every person participating in the Club's walks, in order to ensure that our walks are well planned, that participants are aware of the requirements in terms of dress and health for example, and ultimately that we can enjoy the social as well as one of the most enjoyable health exercises. This article elaborates on what was covered in Guidelines for Walk Leaders.

Planning a Walk

Recesses for all walks are essential and should involve first, second and third leaders. One of the purposes of involving the three designated leaders is to help build expertise and competence in route planning and identifying a plan 'B', where such may be necessary, as well as in general safety issues that might arise.

Time is one of the most important considerations in planning a walk (Collie²). What time will it get dark? What time will it take to get to the starting point for the walk and how long will it take to get back? These considerations are essential.

The fitness, experience and equipment of those participating in the walk are other key considerations. Walkers should ensure they have suitable clothing for any prevailing conditions and should satisfy themselves that subject to unforeseen circumstances they are in the type of condition and have the fitness level to undertake in the walk.

The speed/pace of the walk will depend on the level of fitness of the group. 5 km/hour is generally accepted as the pace for a fit group walking on level ground. One minute should be added for each 10 metres climbed. Suitable locations and time for breaks and refreshments should be incorporated. Sweepers should ensure: they have a whistle; keep the group together and avoid them spreading too much; keep an 'eye-out' for any walkers who may be struggling; and, liaise with the leader on pace, if necessary.

Once the area and route for the walk have been decided and having studied relevant maps and/or other guides/books or articles in terms of information on access and possible dangers, care should be taken to identify alternative routes in the event that this may be necessary. Look out for possible hazards particularly in bad weather.

Many experienced walkers recommend the preparation of route cards setting out each leg of the walk and where the group should be at different stages as the walk progresses while having regard to the overall time for the walk. Elsewhere in this current issue of the Irish Trekker there is reference to GPS which is a useful tool for route planning and route cards.

First - Aid

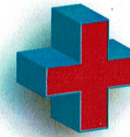
First aid training was provided by the Club last year and members are encouraged to avail of such training when the opportunity arises. A first aid kit is an essential piece of equipment and every walker should carry their own personal pack bearing in mind their own specific needs/ailments (Collie³). Other important equipment should include a bivvy bag, spare compass, pencil torch, spare boot laces, mobile phone (although it should be borne in mind that there may not be coverage in some places).

First aid may be required for anything from hypothermia to heart attack, from a broken ankle to a bee sting. Walkers may be struck by illnesses or conditions such as: asthma attack, diabetes, fainting, heart attack, cardiac arrest, angina, choking, food poisoning and vertigo. In his article, Collie quotes the following definition from a training manual produced jointly by the main First Aid and Ambulance organisations in Ireland and the UK.

First Aid is the initial assistance or treatment given to a casualty for any injury or sudden illness before the arrival of an ambulance, doctor or other qualified person. The aim is to preserve life, to prevent further injury, to limit the effects of the condition and to promote recovery.

In the hills, qualified help may take some hours to arrive and this is complicated by the fact that the other members of the group may have to wait in an exposed remote place in possible severe weather conditions until help arrives. An accident or other such occurrence on the hills requires a series of decisions to be taken and may be influenced initially by the following:

- What is the nature of the illness or injury? How serious is it?
- How far and over what terrain is it to the nearest road or point of help? What time of day is it and how long before dark?
- What resources are available to summon help? Are there farmers or others in the area who may be able to help?
- What effect is the incident having on the other members of the group?



Emergency Telephone Numbers

Ambulance/Mountain Rescue - 999
Gerry Haskins (Bus Driver) - 086-3359961

Our grateful thanks to Colette Dorgan for providing reference material for this article

References

1. Shay Murran (2009) *Guidelines for Walk Leaders*, Irish Trekker. The Trekkers Mountaineering Club, Dublin.
2. Keith Collie (1998) *Planning a Walk*, Walking World Ireland. Athletic Promotions Ltd., Dublin.
3. Keith Collie (2001) *First Aid for Hillwalkers*, Walking World Ireland. Athletic Promotions Ltd., Dublin.

Trekker Profile: Mary Murray

This is the second in a series of profiles of members of the Trekker club. Mary was the first and thus far the only female Chairperson of the Club. The article is presented as a conversation with Mary.

When did you first join the Trekkers?

In August 2000, Brian Brennan invited Tom and myself as guests on the coastal walk. Tom went with the A/ B group and I went with the C Walkers. Of course, I already knew Dick and Joan Needham, Maura Byrne and Teresa Casey – having played bridge with them for years – and also Dick Ryan, as we were both members of the Ramblers many moons ago. So it was like joining a group of friends and we very quickly became regular walkers.

Did it come as a surprise when you were asked to be the first female chairperson?

Yes, it certainly did. The trekkers had been an all male group for years, and so it was with some reluctance and a great deal of trepidation that I accepted the post. However Ita was already on the committee and Breda started with me, so we had a good little female group. In fairness Roger, Pearse and John, who were also on the committee at the time, couldn't have been more helpful.

Did you feel any antagonism towards you because you were a female?

None whatever. Over the three years an extraordinary number of trekkers came forward, without being asked, and volunteered to organise weekends and weeks away. Owen and Marie, Brendan, Dick Ryan, Gaye, Monty and Evelyn all organised trips. Of course, I felt that it was my 'duty' as chairperson to go (and Tom's 'duty' to accompany me), and so we went to Scotland, to the Auvergne, to Kandersteg, to Mountmellick, to the Cheviots, to Zakopane, to Chamonix, and to the Mournes! We missed the last trip to Austria as our eldest son was getting married and we felt obliged to attend. It can be tough being chairperson! .

What were the biggest achievements of your committee over the three years?

- Pearse organised a walk along the whole Wicklow Way over 5 days starting in Carlow and finishing in Marley Park with a presentation of trophies to those who completed the walk.
- Roger and Joe Murray set up the website and brought the group into the 21st century.
- The 25th anniversary dinner. John arranged for us to have the meal in the new Dun Laoghaire Golf Club which was a splendid venue. We were delighted to have three of the founder members with us as honoured guests – Shaun Trant, Terry O'Brien and Ronnie O'Sullivan. There was a great turnout of members and friends. The highlight of the night was Paddy's excellent DVD showing 25 years of trekking memories. And, of course, there was one for everyone in the audience – a lovely memento to keep.

What was the greatest lesson you learned while walking with the Trekkers?

The leader of the walk is very important. It is up to him/ her to call the shots on the day and to change the walk if weather conditions merit it. The sweeper also plays an essential role and can alert the leader if the group is getting a little strung out. This is particularly important when the mist comes down.

Can you recall significant highlights during your membership of the trekkers?

We've been on so many excellent walks that it is difficult to single out highlights. However the following stand out for me:

- Day trip to Avondale. We started with coffee, followed by a tour of the house. Our own Parnell experts, Pearse and Eugene, added to the enjoyment. And then Fergal led us through the estate with lots of information on all the wonderful trees.

- I remember a lovely Christmas walk finishing in the Wicklow Heather and being entertained by the local children singing carols. There were just so sweet!

- Visiting the school and the library in Sedbergh, where the Brendan Bracken (as opposed to our own BB) attended. It was really like being part of history.

- Wednesday walks with Derry O'Hegarty. Better than the Open University any day!

- Struggling to the top of a snow-capped Ben Nevis on a glorious day in April. (Thanks Owen for your patience). There was a real carnival atmosphere at the top and the views were superb.

- Serge. We've had many leaders over the years, but without doubt 'le beau Serge' comes out on top. (Do you agree, Ita?)

- The quiz in Kandersteg. Several teams of Trekkers pitted their wits against the locals. Great fun altogether.

- The packed lunches in the Auvergne. It's hard to beat the French when it comes to food!

- Gilbert took a group of Wednesday Walkers to see the red kites. Absolutely fascinating, even for those of us who know nothing about birds.

- The carpet of bluebells in the Slieve Blooms. They really were stunning.

What part of being a member of the Trekkers appeals to you most?

The great friends we have made, who stand by each other in good times and bad. The great

debates we have on walks – I'm surprised we are not consulted by the government as we could easily solve all their problems free of charge. The family aspect – we have husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, fathers and daughters, mothers and sons, and our latest arrival has four grandparents who are leading lights in the Trekkers. Is this a record? The photos – we are provided with wonderful service. Thank you Paddy, Owen, Gaye, Barry, Derek, Judith, Myles, Noel and all our photographers. The history notes. Some of our leaders – Eugene, Monty, Pearse, Brian, Dick Ryan – provide us with great background and historical facts on our walks. The craic.

Have you enjoyed your 10 years in the Trekkers?

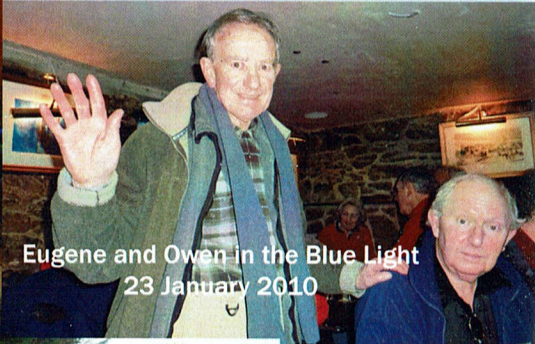
Yes, we certainly have. Several of our members are now over eighty and still full of walking, so we hope to follow their example and keep our legs going as long as we can.



Photo Gallery



Bernadette, Mary D, Catherine and Marlene
23 January 2010



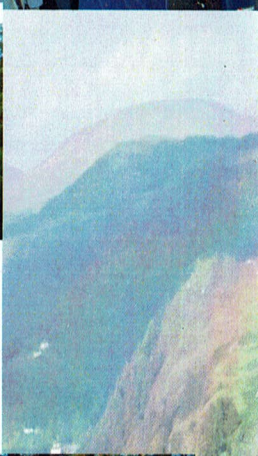
Eugene and Owen in the Blue Light
23 January 2010



Group near Prince William Seat
16 January 2010



Group near Derrybawn
20 January 2010



Lough Dan
10 March 2010



Inchavoire River
10 March 2010



Maeve in China
19 February 2010



Group near Powerscourt Waterfall
17 February 2010



Panda Research Centre China
02 April 2010

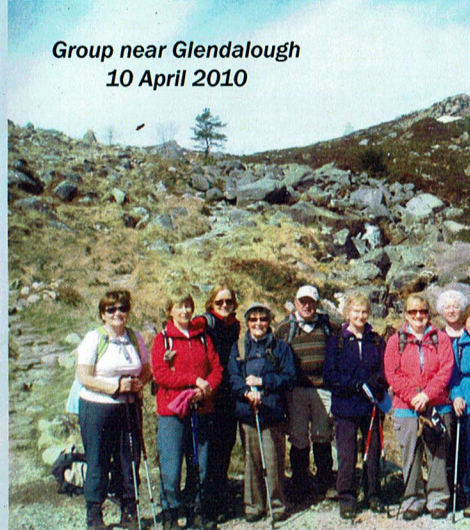


Group at Killruddy Estate
20 March 2010

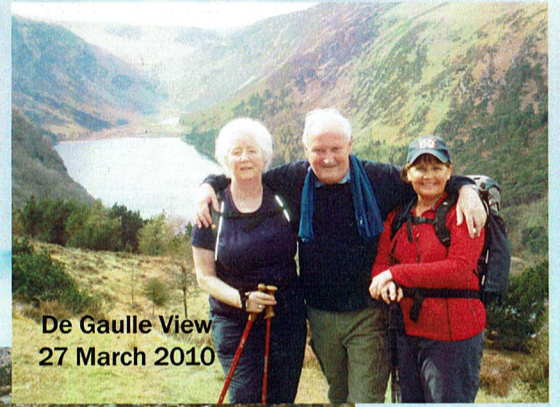


Unusual Combination of Colours
30 January 2010

Sorrel Hill
27 March 2010

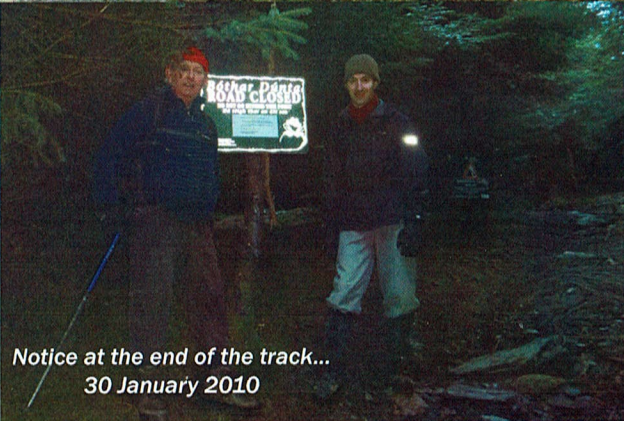


Group near Glendalough
10 April 2010



De Gaulle View
27 March 2010

Sorrel Hill
27 March 2010



Notice at the end of the track...
30 January 2010

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Programme of walks - 1/05/10 to 28/08/10

**refer to page 5 for away walks programme

Date	Grade	Start	First Leader	Second Leader	Third Leader	
May						
1	B	09:00 ¹⁵	Mary Murray	Tom Murray	Valerie Charlton	32
	C	11:00 ¹⁷	Kevin Moore	Bob Curran	Dick Needham	
8	B	09:00 ¹⁷	Niall Humphreys	Shay Murrán	Terry O'Brien	23
	C	11:00 ¹⁶	Kevin Beegan	Hilary Fitzpatrick	Maura Byrne	
15	B	09:00 ¹⁷	Paddy O'Duffy	Mary Dillon	Michael Cotter	25
	C	11:00 ¹²	Myles Duffy	Patricia Duffy	Roger Kirker	
22	A+	09:00 ¹⁸	Shay Murrán	Cliona McCarthy	Dermot Murray	21
	C	11:00 ¹³	Noel O'Reilly	Bernadette Coggins	Teresa Casey	
29	B(Y)	09:00 ⁹	Ita Lawton	Karl Foley	Geraldine Meindl	23
	C	11:00 ¹²	Eugene Logan	Catherine Minogue	Marjorie O'Shee	
June						
5	B	09:00 ⁹	Brendan Bracken	Gaye Maguire	Josephine Cotter	22
	C	11:00 ¹³	Eileen Gallagher	Sheila Cantwell	Cindy Mangan	
12	B	09:00 ¹⁵	Gerry Fogarty	Tom Murray	Cliona McCarthy	29
	C	11:00 ¹⁴	Brian Bracken	Bob Curran	Hilary Fitzpatrick	
19	A	09:00 ⁷	Owen Bracken	Dermot Murray	Jane Sykes	9
	C	11:00 ¹¹	Dick Foley	Theresa Murphy	Mary Delany	
26	B	09:00 ⁷	Niall Humphreys	Michael Cotter	Derek O'Neill	9
	C	11:00 ¹²	Catherine Minogue	Dick Needham	Aidene Duff	
July						
3	B	09:00 ¹²	Tom Duff	Joe Murray	Mary Murray	28
	C	11:00 ¹⁶	John Furey	Cindy Mangan	Claire Flahavan	
10	A	09:00 ¹⁰	Ita Lawton	Karl Foley	Mary Dillon	28
	C	11:00 ¹⁸	Dick Needham	Marie McKeown	Sheila Cantwell	
Memorial walks followed by dinner						
17	B	09:00 ¹²	Sorcha Ryan	Angela McCracken	Monty Tinsley	26
	C	11:00 ¹⁴	Noreen O'Brien	Brian Brennan	Marelene Travers	
24	A+	09:00 ¹²	Gilbert Little	Shay Murrán	Barry Walsh	28
	C	11:00 ¹⁴	Ann Little	Trish Duffy	Paddy O'Duffy	
31	B	09:00 ¹²	John Murphy	Michael Cotter	Pearse Connolly	26
	C	11:00 ¹⁵	Eugene Logan	Noel O'Reilly	Marie Comiskey	
August						
7	B	09:00 ¹¹	Philip O'Neill	Tom Duff	Gerry Fogarty	25
	C	11:00 ¹⁴	Monty Tinsley	Colette Dorgan	Marie McKeown	
14	A	09:00 ⁹	Jane Sykes	Owen McKeown	Brendan Bracken	23
	C	11:00 ¹⁴	Kevin Beegan	Trish Duffy	Marlon Goff	
21	B	09:00 ¹⁶	Derek O'Neill	John Murphy	Monty Tinsley	16
	C	11:00 ¹⁶	Dick Needham	Fergal Mulloy	Catherine Walsh	
28	B	09:00 ¹⁵	Conor Stephens	Gerry Fogarty	Barry Walsh	15
	C	11:00 ¹⁵	Eugene Logan	Colette Dorgan	Aidene Duff	

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