

IRISH Trekker

May 2005 - Issue 27

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Owen takes a
trek in the
Andes

Summer
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Dick tells all!



Cottage among the Wicklow Hills, April 2005. Picture: Paddy O'Duffy

The Trekkers Mountaineering Club

GLENAGEARY CO DUBLIN

<http://homepage.eircom.net/~trekkers>



On top of the World! Breda leads her first hike-February 2005.



John and Kathy.

Bibs and Bobs

Donegal 2005
5th to 9th September

Abbey Hotel, Donegal Town

Cost: € 340 (Approx.) including:

- 4 B/B & 4 D + Packed Lunch
- Transport in Donegal

Single Supplement: € 20 pp per day

Local costs: Transport etc. have been estimated & may vary.)

Deposit: € 60 pp

Names & Deposits to Kevin Moore (Tel: 2856592) before 8/5/05.

New Membership Requests

It's no harm to reiterate the procedures with regard to new membership.

Potential members are invited out as guests after ensuring that there is a place available with the leader on the day. Having completed three walks and assuming the guest would like to join the Club, the Committee discusses their application and, if agreed, an application form is sent to the applicant. Once this is completed and returned with the membership fee, Bob's your uncle!

Date for your Diary

Putting your Foot in it!

Saturday 2nd July Annual F & M Dinner at Glenmalure Lodge. All-in cost 30 euro (bus, dinner, refreshments).

Enquiries/reservations to Eugene Logan on 01-2852548.



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Welcome New Members

Welcome to Helen Warinton, Robert Stuckey, Sheila and Robert Lambkin and Ann Marie Gill.

Whether this is a first step on an assault on Everest or the north face of the Little Sugar Loaf, you are most welcome and we look forward to seeing you the hills.

There is a tradition that new members ply the editor with strong drink, which you are encouraged to continue.



Dreena and Eric. Co-leaders on B-walk, April 2005.

Congratulations!



Our former Club Secretary and "Webmaster" Carol Behan on her wedding day in Ontario, Canada. Every happiness from all of us. Forgot the hiking boots Carol?



"Beware the Ides of March" "C" Walk. Sheila, Catherine and Evelyn.

Dick Needham - the Quintessential Trekker

Last month marked Dick Needham's retirement as Deputy Harbourmaster of Dun Laoghaire Harbour Company also saw him clock up over fifteen years with The Trekkers.

"I joined back in 1989" recalls Dick "Shaun Trant had started the Club some years before with the nucleus of Kevin Beegan, John Furey, Paddy O'Duffy, the late Charlie Ryan and some others "Brian Brennan joined the week after myself and along with Paddy and myself remains active in the Club"



Dick remembers his first walk starting from the Pier Gates, while his second was the slightly more formidable Lugnaquilla! "Generally the walks were twenty plus kilometres and transport was a Hiace van compliments of Tony Graham, who still looks after us"

The walks were of the "A" variety and we had "away" weekends in many mountainous parts of the country. "We had some great times and having spent most of my life at sea, it was a totally new experience"

Such was the growth of the Club that in 1995 it put in place a committee structure to run its affairs. Subsequently a constitution was put in place as was membership of the Mountaineering Council of Ireland in 1997.

Dick served as the first "Walks Co-Coordinator" of The Trekkers. During his term of office, two trips were organised to Wales along with sorties to Kerry, Mayo, the Slieve Blooms and many other destinations." We also broadened the membership and put in place a programme of

"C" walks which have proved very popular and indeed have added greatly to the overall development of the Club". Indeed from that time Dick was able to entice his wife Joan onto the hills where she has too has become an active hillwalker.

"As my successors Eugene and Kevin will know, the main part of the job is to put in place an attractive range of walks, ensure that there is a cadre of leaders to take them on and that the necessary links are maintained between the various levels of walkers. And of course that links are maintained with Tony Graham and his team who oil the wheels to get us there and back. I always received great support from the members who always backed my ideas and suggestions to take on new challenges

Dick stepped down from the Committee in 1998 and continues along with Joan to be an active member leading walks and participating in Club activities.

Dick's seagoing career started almost fifty years

ago in 1956 which brought him to many parts of the globe, particularly the America's. He joined the B & I line in 1966 and was appointed Captain in 1972. "I enjoyed my life at sea immensely" says Dick "and being away from home a lot, I want to pay tribute to my wife Joan who had to take on more than her fair share of rearing the family.

With a family of four and two much loved grandchildren, Joan and Dick have added bridge

and bowls to their hillwalking endeavours while we hear rumours of a regular golf outing comprising Dick along with amigos Shaun Trant, Kevin Beegan, John Furey, Paddy O'Duffy and Brian Brennan.

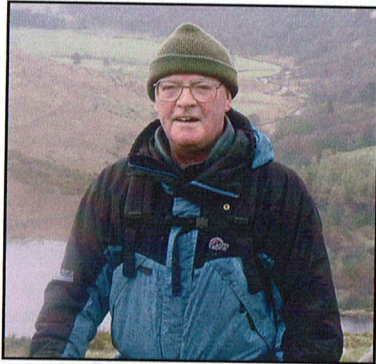
"It's very heartening to see the Trekkers continue it's great tradition and spirit and that we all take such pleasure and satisfaction in the great outdoors and the great friendships that we have made. Here's to the next twenty years!"

Joan, Sheila C, Maria and Eileen. C walk on 12 March 2005.



Freddie, Darcy, Monty and beet at Knockafrumpa

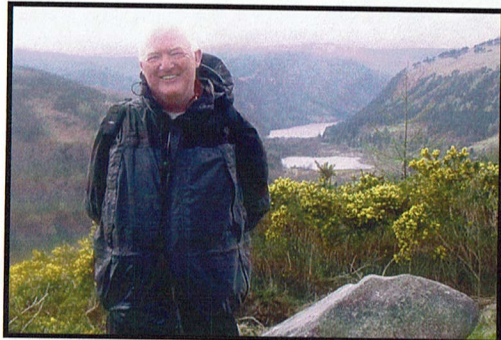
Soft day in April...



Kevin Moore.



Monty with guest Gilbert.



Walk leader Joe near Glendalough lakes.



Tom presents pole to Martin.

Ve have Vays of Making you Valk!

"A" Walk

Can include all types of terrain met with on the mountains, including steep climbs and desents and some scrambling—but excluding rock-climbing.

- Will normally take 6 - 8 hours but this may sometimes be lengthened.

"B" Walk

Puts more emphasis on forest roads and paths and less on rough or very steep ground.

- Will normally last about 6 hours.

"C" Walk

Largely confined to tracks and forest roads with little rough or steep ground.

- Will normally last 4 - 5 hours.



De Gaulle's View, C-walk, April 2005.

Safety and Training



Trekkers will have noticed in recent times the huge emphasis being placed on safety and training for people participating in outdoor sports and activities. Not surprisingly therefore, Clubs are being encouraged to assess local training needs and to encourage active participation by members on relevant training programmes.

Over Christmas 2004, a Questionnaire was circulated to over 60 trekkers to which a total of 17 completed responses were received. Two very positive conclusions could be drawn from these responses, one, that there is an interest in acquiring training, particularly in areas such as Mountain Skills Training and Mountain Leadership. The second conclusion is that the club is fortunate to have a core of walkers all with over 20 years experience.

For all of us walking is about enjoyment, recreation and freedom, free from too many structures and rules. the keyword is enjoyment and that includes safety, because injury or unexpected exposure to any sort of danger will spoil the fun for everyone.

Central to safe walking is the ability to navigate accurately and efficiently in all conditions, particularly in low visibility and on all types of terrain. There is no mystique about good navigation skills.

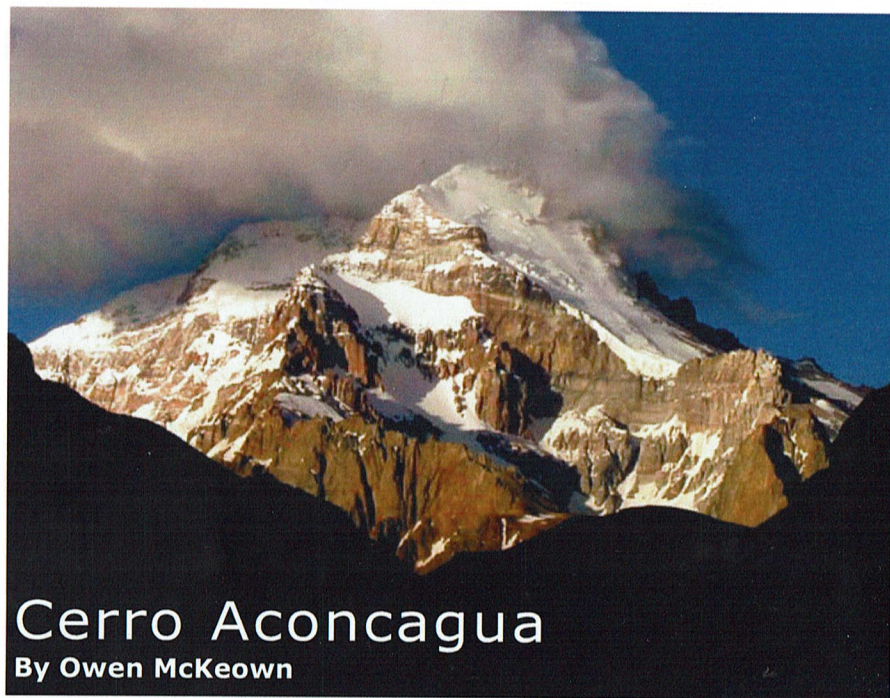
Currently there are many recognised good quality Mountain Skills courses which teach navigation in an easy to understand way.

To this end, the Committee is hoping to have a representative from Tiglin to make a presentation on Mountain Skills Training and Mountain Leadership

Courses to interested club members before the end of April 2005. You will be notified.

In the meantime, keep safe and happy summer walking to everyone.

Pearse Connolly



Cerro Aconcagua

By Owen McKeown

On Sat 5th of Feb, I see from my copy of the "Trekker" that the Club had an "A" Walk led by Mike Sims. On that day, I together with some colleagues, was for the second of four days marooned at 5,200 Meters on the slopes of Aconcagua in 60 mph blizzards.

How we managed to get ourselves into this predicament is of course a long story but I will try to be brief.

Aconcagua is the highest mountain in the western hemisphere and at 6,962 Meters (22,841ft) is in fact the highest in the world outside the Himalayas. It is a peak that some of us have had on our wish list for some time and finally we determined in Jan this year to mount an expedition.

Aconcagua is of course in the Andes, in Argentina about 20 km from the Chilean border. The

nearest sizeable town is Mendoza which is the centre of the Argentinean wine industry and I can vouch for the quality from a previous visit to the country!

On 18th Jan two of us flew to Buenos Aires via Madrid. This is a 20 hour marathon with the Madrid/Buenos Aires leg alone being a 12 ½ hr flight. Luckily the time difference is only 3 hours which means that jet lag is not a major issue. At the airport in Buenos Aires we were joined by the third of our party who had flown in from New York.

We had most of a day and an evening in Buenos Aires and managed to visit some of the major sites such as La Boca and San Telmo (Home of the Tango) and Recoleta Cemetery where Admiral Brown, from Foxford in Mayo who founded the Argentinean navy, and other famous people such as Eva Peron are buried.

Argentinean beef is of course world famous and we had an evening meal of superb steak and equally high quality Argentinean wine. It is amazing that a meal of this quality costs no more than a McDonalds hamburger and chips in this country.

An early morning flight ensured our arrival in Mendoza by noon. We had made arrangements on the Internet to join a larger party complete with guides at Mendoza and we were met at the airport, taken to a hotel and helped with arranging any extra equipment that we needed together with Park Permits. A permit is mandatory to climb and while this costs US\$300, I must say that this money is well spent on facilities in the park. Free medical services are provided and even helicopter rescue is free. While nobody wants to avail of this service, it is nice to know it's there.

Our now larger party consisted of two Irish, three Americans, one English, one Italian and a German; a good mix!

After a pleasant day in the city, we travelled by minibus to Puente del Inca, near to the trailhead where we spent the night at a refugio.

We had decided to attempt the summit by using the Vacas valley approach and to ascend to the top by the Polish Glacier rather than the more popular Normal route up the Horcones valley.

It is a climb of 2,000 meters and a distance of 40 kms from the trailhead at Puente del Vega to base camp at Plaza Argentina. This we did in 3 stages, camping at Las Lenas and Casa de Piedra.

Crossing the Vacas River.

All heavy equipment and provisions are carried by mules on this section. The mules also helped on a crossing of the Vacas river that we had to do on day three.

Quite a contrast with the temperatures that we were later to experience on the mountain was provided by temperatures of 35 C which we had on the first days trek. In fact one of the party suffered from mild heat stroke, not something we would normally expect in January. This approach, while longer than the Normal route is more quiet and beautiful. Several sightings of Condors soaring above the valley were a magnificent sight with their 3 meter wingspan. We also saw a solitary Guanaco (wild relation of the Llama) and on one occasion a "Matamico", an Andean bird of prey.

The guides told us that on the Normal route, the Base camp can have as many as 500 climbers per day in peak season. We had 35 other climbers on our first night at Plaza Argentina and 28 on our second.

Medical examinations are mandatory at base camp and the resident Doctor checks everyone's blood pressure and oxygen saturation before allowing them to proceed.

(Continued on next page)



All of us passed with the exception of two who were prescribed medication to facilitate acclimatisation.

Plaza Argentina is at an altitude of 4,200 Meters and while the noon temperature reached as high as 32 C; at night it dipped to a low as -40 C.

Certainly washing in the morning using melt water from a Glacier is a bracing experience! Mules do not go higher than base camp and from here we had to carry all the equipment and food ourselves. Our packs weighed typically 22 kg each and in hindsight perhaps we should have done more training in Wicklow carrying extra weight. Climbing up ice and scree with this sort of weight was exhausting.

As part of the acclimatisation process, we climbed from Base Camp to Camp 1 (5,200 Meters), left ropes, crampons, and heavier equipment and then returned. After a days rest we ascended again to Camp 1 carrying the rest of our equipment and this time stayed. While the scenery at this altitude is spectacular, we had



View from 6,000 metres.

other preoccupations; as a storm, which is a common feature of the Andes closed in and we were marooned for 4 days. To give some idea of the conditions, I measured the temperature inside our tent at -16 C on the second night. Temperatures outside were of the order of -25 C with wind-chill on top. I made the mistake of going to the mess tent on one occasion without gloves and the instant freezing of my fingers made me beat a hasty retreat. Personally there were no ill effects but we met several parties that had to abandon summit attempts due to frostbite of fingers and toes and in one case, a nose.

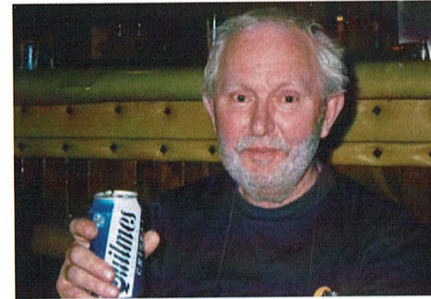
On the 5th day, the weather cleared and we loaded up and began our ascent to Camp 2. This was up a steep slope with a mixture of scree, ice and snow which I found to be one of the toughest climbs that I have ever attempted. I managed to get to Camp 2 (6,000 Meters) but was totally exhausted.

It had been our original intention to have a rest day at Camp 2 before the summit attempt but due to the time wasted at Camp 1, it was now necessary to begin the climb to the top at 5 am the next day.

After due deliberation, I realised that there was no question of my doing this and I had to tell the Guide that I could go no further. One of the Irish party had already dropped out at Base camp and my last colleague, though he left for the sum-



Camp one.



Owen relaxes.

mit, had to return within an hour. Of the remaining four, two returned after 6 hours while the remaining two managed to summit. They took a total of 16 hours for the round trip back to Camp 2. So overall we had a success rate of two from an initial eight starters.

It only remained at this stage to descend; this we did in 3 days, first to Base Camp where we stayed the night and then down to Las Lenas for our last camp on the mountain. Next day we arrived back at Puente del Inca 15 days after setting off. To say we were tired is putting it very mildly.

If anyone is contemplating this mountain, all I can say by way of advice is that though meticulous preparation is essential as on all high mountains, it is not sufficient. It is essential to have a certain amount of luck in regard to the weather and also leave plenty of time for contingencies. Also bring plenty of reading material!

Wicklow Mountains National Park, Glendalough

- Some Upcoming events:

Eco Hike.

Saturday, 21st May, 11am. Take an Eco hike with a National Park Education Officer and learn about environmental issues facing the Wicklow Mountains. Hiking gear and packed lunch. Booking required phone 0404 45656.

Dawn Chorus Walk.

May 15th 5.30am at the Information Office, Upper Lake. Followed by birdsong workshop in the Education Centre.

Summer lectures

All lectures take place on Thursday evenings at 8pm in the Education Centre, Upper Lake, Glendalough.

June 16 Ireland's Climate: past, present and to come. Brendan McWilliams, Irish Times weather columnist.

June 23 Bring back the Woodpecker. Conor Kel leher, President, Irish Wildlife Trust.

June 30 The Irish Hare. Dr Rebecca Jefferys.

July 7 The Pearl Mussel-Ireland's next extinction

July 14 St Kevin in legend and folklore. George Mc Clafferty, Manager, Glendalough Visitor Centre

July 21 The conservation of Lamprey's in Ireland. Dr Ferdia Marnell

July 28 An introduction to the work of a wildlife ranger and wildlife law. Enda Mullen, District Conservation Officer, Wicklow Mountains National Park

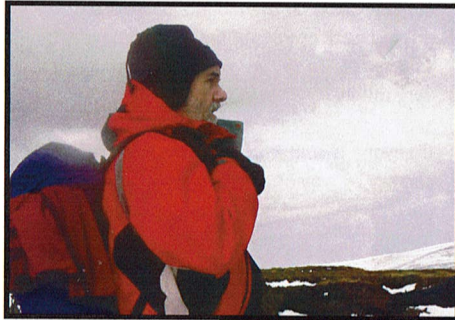
Aug 4 The life of Edward Wilson of the Antarctic. C. J Wilson, Warden, Wexford Wildlife Reserve.

Aug 11 The Red Grouse in the Wicklow Mountains, John Griffin, Wicklow Mountains National Park.

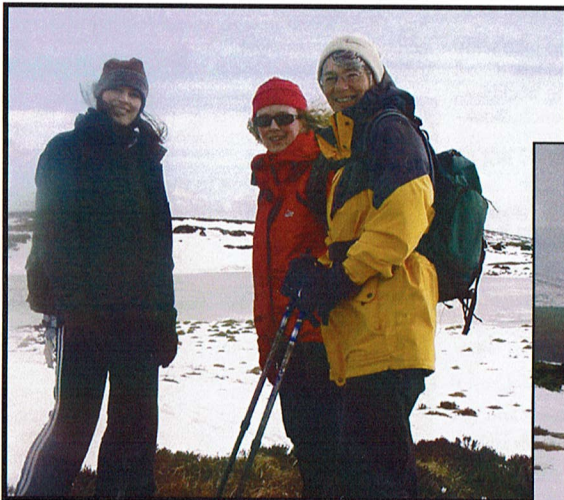
Aug 18 Recent surface and underground investigations of the Glendalough and Glendasan Mines. Dr. Martin Critchley, Chairperson, Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland

For more information phone the Wicklow Mountains National Park, Upper Lake, Glendalough on 0404-45425

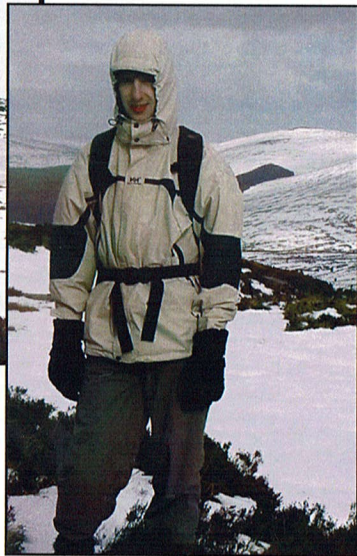
A walk—05 March 2005—Slightly Chilly



Mike, the chief snow bunny!



Ann Marie, Kathy and Mary at frozen Lough Firrib.



Dermot.

Stags at Bay.

Walks Programme

May - August 2005

Date	Grade	1 st Leader	2 nd Leader	3 rd Leader	Time
May					
7	B	E. Gallagher	Gays Maguire	Gerry Fogarty	9.00
14	A	Pearse Connolly	Tom Murray	Dermot Murray	9.00
	C	Eugene Logan	Fred English	Bill Hannon	11.00
21	Nil				
28	B	Brian Brennan	Fergal Mulloy	Derry Hegarty	9.00
	C	Liam Walsh	M'lle Berthiaume	Maura Byrne	11.00
June					
4	Nil				
11	B	Richelle Crowley	Roger Kirker	Dick Needham	9.00
	C	Eugene Logan	Sheila Cantwell	Cindy Mangan	11.00
18	A	Monty Tinsley	Ann Marie Gill	Mary Murray	9.00
25	B	Tom Gillen	Joe Murray	Derek O'Neill	9.00
	C	John Murphy	Teresa Casey	Mary Delaney	11.00
July					
2	B*	Ita Lawton	Paddy O'Duffy	Tom Murray	10.00
	C*	Dick Needham	Hilary Fitzpatrick	Barbara Lane	12.00
9	Nil				
16	A	Mike Slms	Eric Lindstrom	Eileen Gallagher	9.00
	C	Eugene Logan	Ita MCCraith	Jacinta Hamilton	11.00
23	B	Breda O'Hara	Monty Tinsley	Dreena Lindstrom	9.00
30	Nil				
August					
6	B	Brendan Bracken	Kathy Murrin	Ann Marie Gill	9.00
	C	Dick Needham	Jacinta Hamilton	Maria O'Duffy	11.00
Nil					
20	A	Owen McKeown	Conor Stephens	Richelle Crowley	9.00
	C	Eugene Logan	Annette Keegan	Barbara Lane	11.00
27	BY	Maeliosa Ryan	Janette Hooban	Dick Ryan	10.00

* July 2nd—"Foot & Mouth" Dinner—Glenmalure Lodge. Note late starts.

Walks Leaders Should:

- Contact Dick Ryan by the Tuesday prior to the walk to book bus.
- Hand completed Insurance Attendance Sheet to Walks Co-ordinator

PLEASE USE SEAT BELTS ON THE BUS.

20+3
Total Walks 710
50 2003
50 2004
30 2005

840
A Wed.



Lead on Macduff! Derry shows the way!

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