

IRISH Trekker

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**Algonquin
Canoe Trip**

trekkers
go
Alpine!

DATES
for your
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...and
lots more

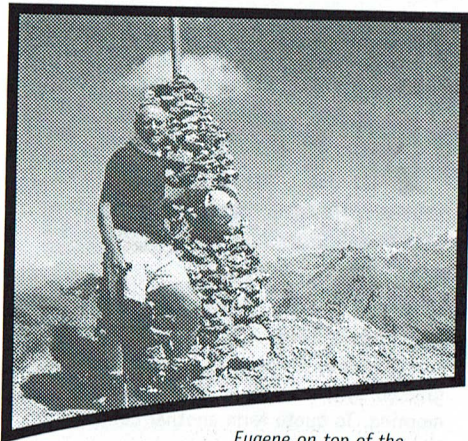
USEFUL INFO
precautions for
winter walks



The Trekkers Mountaineering Club

GLENAGEARY CO DUBLIN

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



Eugene on top of the Bunderspitz

This is an ancient trade route through the mountains. Starting at Kandersteg 1200m it climbs to the **Sunbuel** 1930m passing a dairy farm and the hanging valleys of Gasterntal.

A welcome respite, halfway, is the Hotel Schwarenbach built in 1742. Moving on, the largest Bernese lake comes into view The Daubensee – a beautiful scene.

The Pass is reached at 2322m where refreshments are available in the summit restaurant. The round trip lasts seven hours. It can be shortened by a cable car lift to the high ground.

On other days we conquered the **Bunderspitz** 2546m and the **Doldenhorne** hutte at 1915m.

We had a most pleasant day's outing to Bern where we were entertained and given a guided tour of the capital by fellow Trekkers Ita and Colm Lawton.

Contrary to expectations, accommodation and expenses are not overly priced and a visit there works out quite reasonable for a very rewarding experience. ●

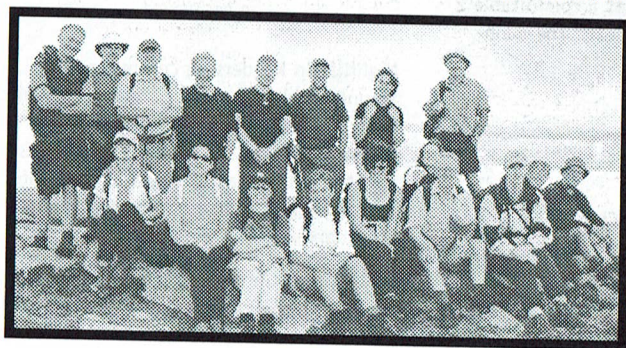
New Members

Welcome to **Gaye Maguire, Breda O'Hara, Maeliosa Ryan and Sorca Ryan.**

All cut their teeth with the Young Trekkers Group and now feel its time to be with the "Grown-Ups"



Brockagh, Toneleague, Mllaghcleevaun



B and youth teams on Camaderry

Walking into Winter

Winter is the time when walking conditions can change quickly and a bad decision or taking a chance can be serious.

...any one of these on its own is of no great consequence but taken in combination, add the effects of the mountains, and you have a challenging environment with little room for error.

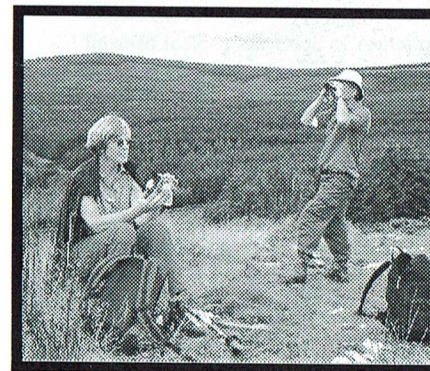
In winter:

- It is colder, much colder
- There is more rain, snow, etc.
- It is windier
- There is more mist and fog
- It gets dark earlier
- Weather conditions change more rapidly
- There are fewer people around

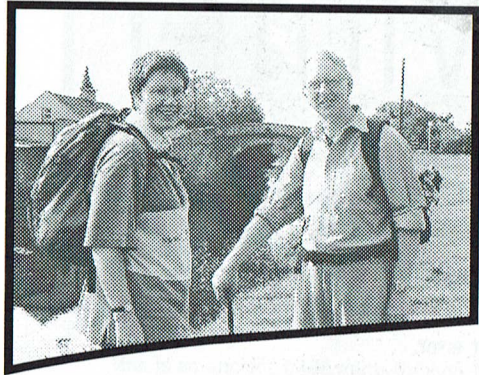
In winter:

Remember that temperature drops 1 degree Celsius per 100 meters ascended, that precipitation is about 5 times greater and the wind 3 times stronger on the tops than it is in the valleys.

The first rule is to listen to the weather forecast and pick some appropriate route for your walk. Start early and get back early. Change your plans if the weather deteriorates or for any other circumstance which increases the risk. Take a good look at your map and see if there is anything likely to be a hazard: rivers, crags, etc. in the area. Rivers in flood are the greatest danger to the hill walker.



Richelle has her lunch while Pearse looks on



Hazel and Monty on canal walk

Be equipped for worse conditions than you are likely to meet, always have that little extra in hand. This includes clothing, food, torch and spare time before it gets dark at the end of the day. There should be at least two maps and two compasses in every party on the hills.

Know your limitations and stay within them. For some odd reason, many people stop on the top of a mountain to eat their lunch irrespective of the weather. Sitting down for half an hour in the most exposed place for mile around when one is sweated up from climbing is not very smart. Most accidents happen when people are cold on a descent.

Wear appropriate clothing and boots. Avoid jeans or other cotton garments. A tracksuit bottom or trousers made of thick polyester or wool/synthetic mixture are great. Fleece jackets are now universally used. A good waterproof mountain jacket with a well fitting hood and overtrousers which can be taken on and off while wearing boots are essential. Gaiters are highly recommended. A brushed wool or waterproof cap which can cover the ears and a pair of good gloves completes the outfit. ●

the secret
of enjoying winter walking is knowing
what conditions can be like and being
prepared for them.

a stormy passage

By Dick Needham

"I have known the sea too long
to believe in its respect for decency!"

Joseph Conrad, 17th century navigator

Every year we do the coastal walk either to or from Wicklow and with one exception we have always had good weather, this speaks well for the skill of the organisers. We look out toward the east and observe a benign sea with vessels sailing either north or south or perhaps fishing, and it all looks very pleasant. But do not be fooled, as anyone who has taken a ferry journey will know the sea is not always calm.

On 14th January 1974, in the port of Bilbao in Northern Spain, the m.v. 'Kildare', a vessel of 1479 gross tons, finished loading her cargo of containers destined for Felixstowe on the east coast of the UK. A small vessel with a crew of 12 she made ready for sea. As the crew finished securing the cargo the harbour pilot boarded and the vessel proceeded down river to sea. The weather was W'ly force 7/8 and the pilot disembarked inside the piers as the sea was too rough for the pilot boat to come alongside in the open sea. This was going to be an uncomfortable, but not unusual, passage across the Bay of Biscay.

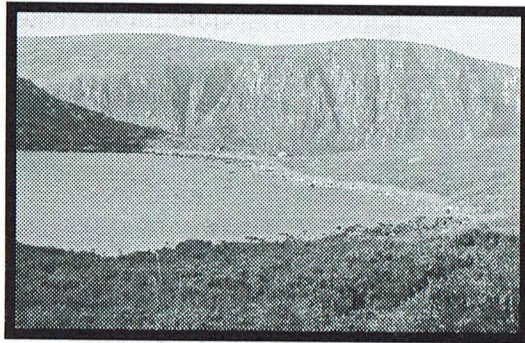
As the vessel crossed the 100 fathom line off the Spanish coast the swell became very heavy.

In the early hours of the 16th the weather began to worsen with previously unforecast imminent very severe storms warnings from the French and British marine radio stations being continually broadcast. In the early afternoon the wind veered to the NW with very heavy seas and swell. With over a 50 miles to go before reaching the Ushant Light off the west coast of Brittany and on a lee shore, the 'Kildare' was hove to heading in a W'ly direction with the weather on the starboard shoulder in order to ride out the storm. All external steel doors, watertight doors, porthole deadlights were closed as was the engineroom sky light so that seas breaking over the vessel would not cause flooding. She was to stay hove to for the next 3 days before passage could be resumed with a moderation in the weather and eventually rounded the Ushant on the 19th January and continued her voyage up the English Channel without further event towards Felixstowe.

At about 1900 hrs on the 16th, the first of many Pan (a warning of a possible emergency) & Mayday calls were heard on the VHF and MF radios. It came from a 2000 ton Danish vessel who was heading east up the English Channel bound for her home port of Felixstowe. He was advising that he was attempting to turn 180 degrees in order to head west and heave to. The vessel was in danger of being pooped with heavy seas breaking over the stern. Tragically she did not make it and just before she was overcome by the sea and swell the Master said good bye and thanked other ships for their support. She sank with the loss of 16 lives, the master, his wife, two daughters and 12 crew. She was the first of many vessels to have serious problems over the next 3 days when the winds reached speeds of 150 mph and the swells were 60 feet high. The cause of this very severe weather was a ridge of very high pressure sandwiched between three very deep lows and this caused the exceptionally high winds, large seas and swells. The barometer in this period ranged between 1038 & 1041mbs.

The 22000 ton m.v. 'Prosperous', a Greek freighter was abandoned in the English channel as the crew thought she was doomed when she lost her engines and steering. 22 men lost their lives. The ship itself fetched up on the west coast of Guernsey and was a constructive total loss. The 'Kerry', a sister ship of the 'Kildare', on passage Dublin to Rotterdam was fortunate in that she found limited shelter with many other ships and fishing

vessels behind Lundy Island in the Bristol Channel. There were many other vessels in trouble over those few days with some foundering with the resultant tragic loss of nearly 60 lives. All ferry sailings in the Irish Sea, English Channel and southern North Sea were cancelled due to the weather.



Art's Lough

After a rough and very tiring voyage the 'Kildare' arrived in Felixstowe on 22nd January without too much damage to herself or the cargo. Two containers were washed overboard. She was in port for about 10 hours before sailing for Rotterdam and then back to Bilbao and Lisboa for the next trip. The crew had one more trip to do before they would be relieved for home leave.

On 23rd January a Memorial Service was held for the crew of the Danish vessel who mostly lived locally in Felixstowe. That week Joseph Conrad's words were never more true. ●

Algonquin canoe trip

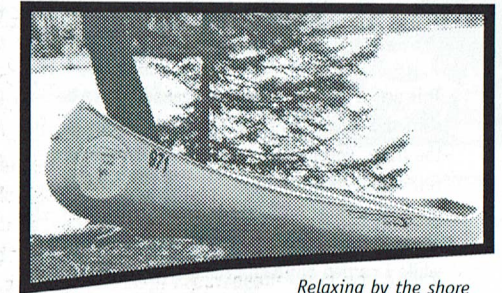
By Carol Beehan

The chirp of birdsong and the gentle splash of the paddle of your canoe on the calm surface of the water are the only sounds breaking the perfect silence of this paradise.

The sun is warm on your arms and the breeze gentle on your skin. You're paddling a canoe on a lake with forested shores, where neat cottages lie tucked away among the trees, and the only other creatures you're likely to see are a pair of loons on the surface of the water, calling to each other with their haunting cry.

Using a paddle gets tiring after a while, as my untrained arms soon found out, as the breeze picked up and slowed our progress. So we sometimes let the canoe drift in order to rest our arms while we took photos and looked for any signs of life in the water.

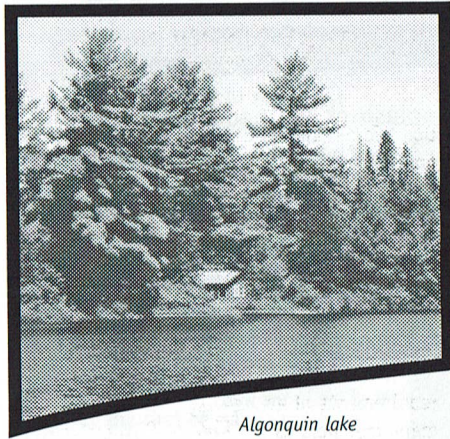
Welcome to Algonquin Park, where time stands still, and the outside world is far away. This vast area, over 7,000 square kilometres of forest, lake and river, is located about two hours' drive north of Toronto, in a remote part of Ontario, far from the noise and clamour of urban living. It's a favourite destination for city dwellers, for a day trip, a weekend, or longer, and offers activities such as hiking, canoeing and camping or simply bird and nature watching. With hundreds of species of animals, birds, trees and plants, it's not surprising that people are drawn there to catch a glimpse of a moose or a beaver or to see and photograph a rare plant.



Relaxing by the shore

Alex and I spent a day there last June. We arrived mid-morning and hired a canoe, paddles and life-jackets from the Portage Store, the supply station, a few miles inside the park. We set out to cross Canoe Lake, and to enter one of the river systems that flowed into that lake.

On one of these occasions, the perfect stillness was suddenly broken by the yodelling wail of a loon in the distance, followed immediately by its companion, taking up the call. We sat transfixed, listening to this unbelievably beautiful sound echoing across the lake, loud and clear. Then as suddenly as it started, it stopped and silence returned. We waited for a while, hoping in vain for a repeat performance, then headed up one of the arms of the lake and after a mile or so, pulled in at the shore.



Algonquin lake

This was a portage, where the canoe had to be carried overland, to avoid a series of rapids on the river. Portages can vary in length from a few metres to a few kilometres, but thankfully, this was a short one. Alex heaved the canoe upside down onto his head and shoulders, while I carried our bag, cameras and paddles along the trail to the riverbank. After a snack, we set off again up the river, which was even calmer and warmer than the lake. Here, sounds travelled for enormous distances.

We could hear other canoeists chatting and laughing, but couldn't see them, and closer by, the chirping of cicadas in the afternoon heat and the lazy plopping sounds of fishes breaking the surface to catch flies were magnified by the perfect acoustics.

On our return, we paddled into a marshy area, with its shallow muddy bottom full of fallen, moss-covered tree trunks, which scraped the underside of the canoe as we passed over. Water lilies carpeted the surface, and frogs lounged in the sunshine on their broad leaves. We weren't prepared for the symphony that greeted us! In the distance, a frog croaked "ribbid", while another close by answered in a higher pitch. Others quickly joined in, building up to a crescendo of raucous calls, punctuated here and there by the bass tones of a toad, and ending with a single, isolated "ribbid", like a grand finale. I almost expected to hear a round of applause, as they congratulated themselves on their performance. We paddled on, amused by what we had heard. Ahead of us, the surface of the water was broken by a little head popping up, and looking around. A beaver, carrying a stick in his mouth, eyed us curiously, then slapped his tail on the water and swam on, no doubt to carry on with his construction work.

We crossed the lake again, with the breeze in our favour this time, and arrived back at the pier, hot and exhausted, to have a meal in the café before setting off on the journey home.

Outside, the light was changing, and evening shadows rippled across the lake. With the sunset, the night shift would appear – owls would start their nightly hunt, foxes and raccoons would be on the prowl, and even a shy and elusive moose would appear from the shelter of the forest. The moon's light would cast a silver path across the water and silence would return to paradise. ●

looking backward ...looking forward

By Dick Ryan

This is the time of the year when it is customary to take a backward glance at the year coming to a close and to look forward to the twelve months ahead of us.

The backward look sees highlights such as the Glenmalure weekend and the wonderful trip to Clonmel with its wealth of walking and socialising. The real highlight, in retrospect, was the great number and variety of walks, virtually every weekend throughout the year. The number of walks has almost doubled in two years to meet the varying needs of our members.

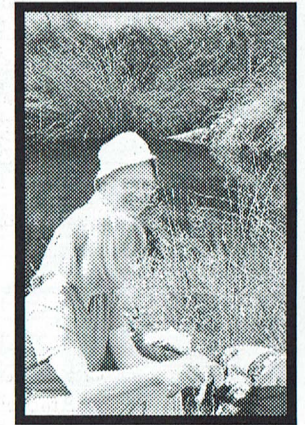
One of the challenges given to the new Committee a year ago was to see if we could develop a way of attracting younger members into the Club to provide a better age mix and to ensure the continuation of the Club into the future. To this end, special monthly walks led by Club members were started in January and a number of people in the thirties age group, attracted mainly by word of mouth, participated.

Four of these have now joined the Club as full members and others will be encouraged to join in the months ahead.

These monthly walks will continue into 2004 and will be designated as B walks with a 10.00am start and open to all members (as well as the target age group of non-members).

Don't forget that the one-hour later start and the younger age profile imply a brisk pace.

Throughout 2004 we will attempt to put forward a walking programme that meets the requirements of as many members as possible and I would encourage leaders to try out new routes in new areas to complement the tried and trusted walks that we all love so much.



Dick an Ita take a break

We have co-opted two new members onto the Committee – Roger Kirker who looks after the Club's website and Pearse Connolly who will have responsibility for safety and training. Expect to see initiatives in these areas during the year. The Dublin and Wicklow Mountain Rescue Team has asked for volunteers for their call-out list when extensive searching is required. If you would like to volunteer, contact Pearse.

In conclusion, may I wish all of you a very happy and peaceful Christmas and a great walking year in 2004.

Walks Programme January - April 2004

Date	Grade	1st Leader	2nd Leader	3rd Leader	Time
January					
3	Nil				
10	A	Monty Tinsley	Pearse Connolly	Liam Murphy	9.00
	C	M/elle. Berthiaume	L.iam Walsh	Hilary Fitzpatrick	11.00
17	B	Carol Behan	Gaye Maguire	Bill Hannon	10.00
24	B	Sheila Cantwell	Paddy O'Duffy	Gerry Fogarty	9.00
	C	Kevin Beegan	Annette Keegan	Cindy Mangan	11.00
31	B	Conor Stephens	Dick Needham	Jacinta Hamilton	9.00
February					
7	A	Eileen Gallagher	Richelle Crowley	Ita McCraith	9.00
	C	Gerry Fogarty	Bill Hannon	Nancy Boyne	11.00
14	B	Tom Gillen	Fergal Mulloy	Janette Hooban	9.00
21	B	Dick Ryan	Maeliosa Ryan	Sorcha Ryan	10.00
28	B	Derry O'Hegarty	Joe Murray	Barbara Lane	9.00
	C	Colette Dorgan	Mike Dorgan	Clare Brandon	11.00
March					
6	A	Mike Sims	Maeve Sims	Carol Behan	9.00
13	B	Richelle Crowley	Eugene Logan	Fred English	9.00
	C	John Murphy	Theresa Murphy	Reggie Halpenny	11.00
20	B	Brendan Bracken	Hazel Welch	Maeliosa Ryan	10.00
27	B	Mary Murray	Tom Murray	Dermot Murray	9.00
April					
3	A	Pearse Connolly	Monty Tinsley	Conor Stephens	9.00
	C	Joan Needham	Brid Dunne	Mary Delaney	11.00
10	Nil				
17	B	Roger Kirker	Eileen Gallagher	Dreena Lindstrom	10.00
24	B	Ita Lawton	Brian Brennan	Eric Lindstrom	9.00

2-1 WALKS LEADERS SHOULD:

- Contact Eileen Gallagher 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.



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