

# IRISH Trekker

August 2003 • Issue 22

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...stepping back to 1798

ski(ing)  
...in the  
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**lots more**



**USEFUL INFO**  
**trekker poles**  
using them the right way

*A Teams at Stevenamon, 24 June 2003*

**The Trekkers Mountaineering Club**  
GLENAGEARY CO DUBLIN

# Glenmalure Weekend DIARY

By **Richelle Crowley**

## **Friday** *The Challenge...*

Approximately 34 Km of trekking ahead as the crow flies this weekend and it's too late to start that fitness programme or cancel out. Pack (night before!) trying to remember it's only for 2 days ...not a week!

Set alarm especially as I'm collecting Saturday's leaders.

## **Saturday** *The reality...*

Almost instantly vertical when the alarm clock sounds! Our small group departed Glenageary at 8.50am promptly.

The baggage logistics were brilliantly managed by Kevin Moore courtesy of Joan and Dick Needham. So thanks to that, it was only necessary to bring the usual small rucksack along.

Our arrival at 10.30 am approx at the Glen of Imaal was the effortless part all credit to the minibus. We had studied the itinerary and noted that the ground to be covered was 17 Km with a height gain of 800M. So, with Mike Sims leading we set out from Fenton's pub near the Army Information Centre. The first landmark was Camarahill, which is only a small peak on the way up to Lugnaquilla. Some of us felt glow of achievement here. But it was onwards and upwards.

A steady climb to the summit of Lug itself where we lunched but not for long due to a slight wind chill factor.

From the summit of Lug we made our way along the ridge in the direction of Clohernagh, but after a kilometre on that tack, we turned right and headed towards Corrigaslegau.

From there we ambled on towards Carrawastick Mountain staying on the left side of the ridge with a marvellous view of Kelly's Lough. On cue out came the sun and so did the cameras!

We walked around the ever diminishing plane wreck and skirted around Clohernagh Mountain and eventually we came off onto a forest road that led us down to the valley past Drumgoff barracks and finally to one of the best views of the day - "Glenmalure Lodge" at 16.50pm

**IRISH**  
**Trekker**

**The Trekkers Mountaineering Club**  
Glenageary, Co. Dublin

<http://indigo.ie/~behanc>

The Lodge was everything an Inn should be for weary yet contented walkers.

After dinner, refreshed and recharged, chords from a guitarist, playing some tribute Beatles and Stones numbers lured many into the bar. Some even jived "the night away"..They had of course willingly been lulled by Eugene's talk of a relaxed walk around Kirrakee on Sunday (after Lug wouldn't it be a doddle!!)

### Sunday

The next morning saw Eugene Logan leading us gingerly through a moist and misty emerald jungle to Kirrakee. The sky was leaden and some trekkers feet even more leaden. The buds and leaves were dripping sap down onto our faces, would that they were not already so green. A gentle trek ahead, some wildlife to be glimpsed, and woolly creatures you couldn't miss. It was a pastoral idyll – a small drama being the sudden loss of a pearl earring, swiftly spotted by Drina

Returning to the real world, the gentle rain still drumming into our faces, a short gradual slope was leading us back down the valley to our Inn, when suddenly some of us were abruptly waylaid and kidnapped by some shady characters driving high speed cars and brought back to "The Lodge". Fair play to those who resisted the kidnapping and completed the walk. They really deserve medals!

And it wasn't over yet! Not only a banquet and fine wines awaited us but also a nail biting rugby final. The tension was almost unbearable at first, as Leicester Tigers looked very threatening as if they were about to repeat last year's victory. However Munster saw off last

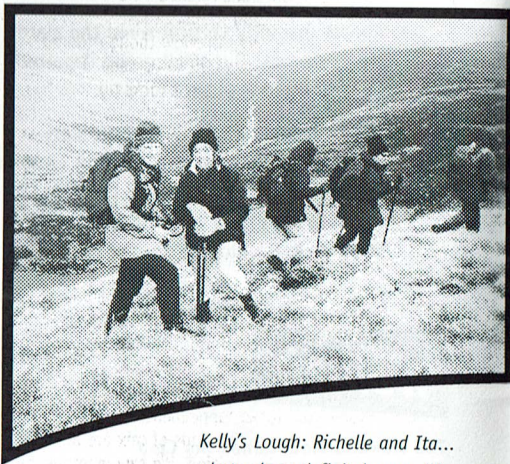
year's champions to bask in the delights of revenge. However, if it wasn't for Kevin waving that Munster banner, anything could have happened!

But we got a result! Can anybody really remember but did Paddy O'Duffy get us all singing "Alone it stands" etc. He probably did, but didn't have to try very hard. You couldn't stop Annette Brennan, Eileen Gallagher, Liam Walsh, and Brendan Bracken once they get going.

It was a miracle that anybody actually got into those minibuses and actually went home at all!

### FOR THE RECORD...

The "A" Walk on Saturday was led by Mike Sims and on Sunday by Eugene Logan. "C" leaders were Joan Needham (Saturday) and Kevin Moore (Sunday). The entire enterprise was superbly organized by Kevin Moore. ●



*Kelly's Lough: Richelle and Ita... photo shoot definitely over, it's time to go!*

## A ski(ing) holiday in the **Cairn Gorm** and Trossacks mountains of Scotland

By Dick Needham

On 6th July we set off for Scotland. Being intrepid Trekkers, afraid of no challenge, we set off to Larne to catch the ferry to Troon. Intrepid or not we found the number of Union Jacks and Red Hand of Ulster flags flying from every house and lamppost somewhat daunting and off putting. However after a very comfortable ferry trip we arrived in Glasgow safely, (Troon is 30 miles south of Glasgow) and spent the night with family. Next day we set off on a 175 mile drive north to Aviemore (20 miles south of Inverness), staying with friends in an oddly named place called Boat on Garten. This is a very attractive area which derives its name from an ancient ferry (rowing boat) crossing of the River Spey which flows into the Moray Firth at Inverness. We are now in the area of the Cairn Gorm mountain range. Cairn Gorm is 1275 meters high and is a very popular ski area. There is a funicular railway that takes skiers up to almost the top and then there are a number of different (graded) ways for skiers to come down. Being summer these slopes were of course not covered in snow though there were some snow patches still to be seen. I was rather surprised to see numerous rocks up to 2 feet above the ground on these slopes, thinking that this would be quite dangerous ground for skiing. On questioning this we were told that these would in the season be covered with 4/5 feet of snow. The last few winters have been comparatively mild and the season has been shortened to January / April.

There are some great walks around this area. Many of these are on paths set up to conserve the integrity of the ground. Whereas here at home our mountains are preserved using old railway sleepers, there they use the natural stones and rocks supplemented with a sandy / fine gravel mix. The bags of mix are air lifted by helicopter into position. We saw many people working on this restoration work which is being carried out by a local contractor. Walks we did included starting at the carpark (conveniently located at a height of 600 mts) along to Corrie Bharraig 975 mts, carpark to Corrie Lochan 990 mts. These corries were formed by glacial action

many thousands of years ago. These walks were described to us as flat walks. We soon discovered that flat in the Highlands means anything up to about 40 degrees incline. Our next walk took us from the Sugar Bowl on the side of Cairn Gorm along tracks through Eigg Naisht to the shores of Loch Morlick. We were fortunate that our friends had other friends in this area and we met and walked with many local people. Time came to end our stay in this area and we headed south to Creiff where we completed the Lady Mary Murray walk. This was a walk through pasture, forestry and alongside the River Tay. The walk was named after the daughter of an 18th century landowner. On again this time to stay in Lochearnhead at the western end of Loch Earn and about 50 miles above the Glasgow / Edinburgh belt. This is magnificent country in the heart of the Trossack Mountains. We walked on the Ogle Trail along a disused railway path, to reach which we climbed steeply about 300 mts. This is part of the UK's National cycling routes (No.7). You walk along here for 4 miles and then back through the valley. It is a circular route.

Another days walking in this area brought our holiday to an end, and it was time to head home. From arrival to departure we were blest with virtually wall to wall sunshine and temperatures in the 25/26 degree range, as the country was having exceptionally good weather. From what we could see Scotland is very well equipped for walkers. There are discounted fares for walkers on appropriate railways. The Royal Mail operate a Post Bus to the more remote parts of the Highlands and this will also take walkers. Compared with some continental countries Scotland is a little more expensive especially as currency has to be changed. We referred to this as a ski holiday. Skiing to some people means sliding down the mountain on a couple of planks of wood with a couple of sticks to keep you steady. (The editor of this illustrious publication might describe it differently). To others S.K.I.ing means SPENDING the KIDS INHERITANCE... which is another form of enjoyment! ●

# the Comeraghs

"Here on the hill

Only the indifferent wind may dare to play

Only the curlew make abiding stay"

By Dermot Murray

It was the morning of Wednesday 25th June, and we had been promised a day of warm and kindly weather for the second walk of our Clonmel Trip, and I was eager to get going.

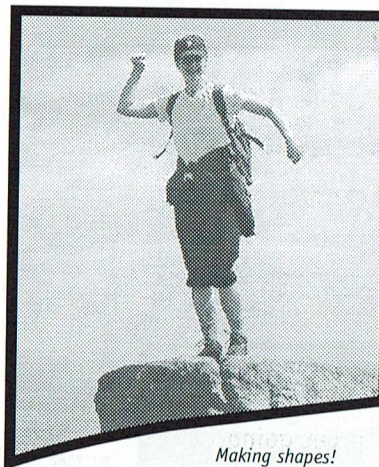
Whether I speak for the group as a whole, however, is a matter of some debate; I missed out on the first walk, but the trials and tribulations of that epic trek were described to me over the dinner table with both gusto and eloquence. All agreed that the C walk was in all honesty an A walk, and that the B walk belonged to a class above and beyond anything that had been attempted before. Tales abounded of encountering all manner of challenges and obstacles: tall gates that could not be opened but that shook menacingly when one tried to clamber over them, vegetation that was so dense and rampant that one rued not bringing a machete along with one's leggings and egg sandwiches, and paths that appeared to have no end at all and that reached hungrily for the horizon.



The happy trekker...  
Theresa

Our walk immediately dipped, something that always troubles me as it inevitably implies that a climb must follow. And a climb was exactly what we got – once we had successfully negotiated the river Lyre. This was a long, energy-sapping slog, albeit one that was punctuated, thankfully, by lots of short breaks. These breaks were partially justified by turning around and surveying the landscape behind us (some of us with the help of binoculars) to see if we could pick out the C-walkers in the far distance. Up and up we trudged, until we finally reached the top of an enormous, bracken-clad shoulder. Our reward for tackling this monster of a hill was lunch – crunchy chicken and salad sandwiches as supplied by the hotel.

When we got going once again, we began what was for me the best part of the walk. Beneath us were two adjoining, natural amphitheatres – the first somewhat smaller than the second. The stages of these great arenas were lush and green, and blotched with small, silver-blue lakes; the stalls were of naked and rugged rock, and looked almost as if they had been



Making shapes!  
Jeanette at top of Slievenamon

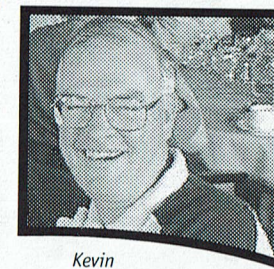
savaged by vast claws at some point in the distant past. We remained, however, up in the gods – keeping to a path that ventured mischievously close to the edge from time to time. At length, this path veered away into an area of hags – these were firm underfoot and somewhat stony – before crossing a boggy hollow, and then descending into the Coumlara valley by a rather treacherous and winding path. As we picked our way downward, we had an audience of a few dozen sure-footed sheep, and two helicopters buzzed in and out of sight overhead. A path of fragmented stone became one mantled in luxuriant ferns, and finally we came to a wood, and we stopped for water. The day had been a little dull earlier, but now it was bright and hot.

It was at this point that we began to lose our way. Our path had led us to a river hidden by thick foliage and shadows – a dead end of sorts – and it was not immediately clear which was the best way onward, or if indeed there was a way onward at all. Some members of the group plunged bravely into the aforementioned shadows, while others produced mobile

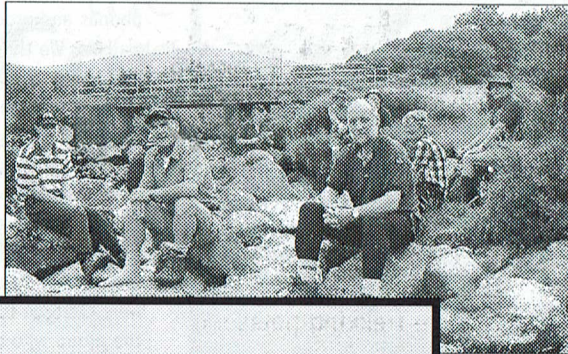
phones and proceeded to ring the C-walkers. We then discovered that they were in a similar predicament – I am not entirely sure whether this gave us some solace or not. Alas, there seemed nothing we could do but to join those who had been thrashing about in the jungle-like bushes and undergrowth. For those in the group who were a mite superstitious, it may have crossed their minds that there were thirteen in the party; or for those in the group who believed in omens or portents, it may have crossed their minds that we passed (by my count) no less than five sheep-skulls.

Ultimately, we found ourselves in a field full of sheep who – judging by their vehement bleating – were not at all pleased to see us. Hope began to return when we stumbled upon a path, although it soon became apparent that we were truly in the middle of nowhere, and that this path was reaching about as hungrily for the horizon as the paths in the stories of Day One's hike. On and on and on it went. There was still a good deal of warmth in the air, although it was now so late the trip to the pub would have to be skipped (or at the very best greatly rushed) and that dinner would almost certainly have to be deferred, which, in the end, it was.

When we finally got to the small pub in Rathgormuck and met up with the C-walkers, there was just enough time for a 7-Up with ice – and after a long day in the June sunshine, this was simply glorious. ●



Kevin  
...the contented leader



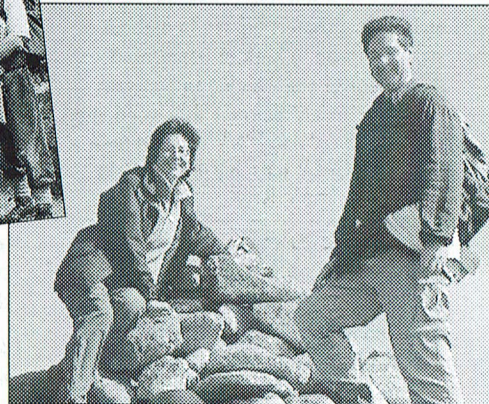
*Elevenses!  
21 June 2003*



*A view of the majestic  
Lough Dan  
on 29 March, 2003*



*C walkers at Clara  
26 July, 2003*



*Dreena, Eric at Sorrel Hill 22 March 03*

# using trekker poles in the right way

**M**any in the Club now use trekking poles so these few paragraphs might be useful...

**But walkers should pay attention to other aspects...**

**Trekking poles can be very dangerous to other walkers, particularly while walking in a big group.**

**Primarily poles reduce stress on the knees because the whole body instead of just the lower part carries the weight.**

For example, the pointed metal tips can be lethal in a fall, when tripped over and when strapped to a pack. Eye damage is only one thinkable accident when a rucksack with two unguarded poles is swung onto someone's back in a crowd. Poles should also not be used as pointers when admiring scenery.

They relieve the big strain on one's knees especially if you go downhill wearing a heavy pack. One point to avoid is lengthening the poles, the problem is that the tips hit the ground at an oblique angle and tend to slide forwards. Therefore the poles should be shortened by about 10cm, you should put your hands through the wrist loops from the top downwards and turn the poles the opposite way from normal so that the grips curve towards you. As you go downhill, each pole tip should be placed at an angle outside the line of walking and about half a pace ahead of the foot on the opposite side.

Especially in poor light it is very easy to trip up other people. To avoid injuries caused by poles it is recommended to keep distance from others, which is, however, a problem within walking groups. Groups need to be spread out more, so chatting becomes more difficult or impossible.

**Secondly, the poles are very helpful as an aid to balance when crossing rivers, on rocks, probing when seeking the best place to cross a bog and in other such situations.**

Another problem is that **people using trekking poles put extra strain on shoulders and elbows, which may not be as well developed as the lower limbs in regular walkers.** Some cases are known where serious elbow problems have resulted from the use of poles for extended periods.

So even if you don't normally use trekking poles it could be a good idea to carry always one pole with you.

However, most of these problems mentioned above can be avoided if the trekking poles are used in the right way and if some sensible guidelines are observed.

## New Members

Welcome to **Catherine Minogue** and **Hazel Welch** who joined the Trekkers recently.

Catherine has spent many holidays walking in the Alps and walks regularly in the West of Ireland with her sons. Other interests include reading, swimming concerts, and bridge

Hazel was born and raised in England and has lived in Ireland for the last three years. She is a Lecturer and Scientist in UCD and started walking seriously while a student at Manchester University.

She has walked regularly throughout the UK and in Crete. Her ambition is to join the A walks and climb Carrantuohill. Over to you Kevin!



*Glenmalure:  
trekkers off duty... of course!*

## Dates... for your **Diary**

The autumn walking season kicks off with a dinner in the **Glenmalure Lodge** after our walks on 27th September. The cost is €15 per head.

Eugene is looking after the organisation of the event and if you are attending you can give him your name. Names for the walk should be given as usual to the Leader on the day.

The **Christmas Dinner** will be held on 13th December in the **Wicklow Heather**. Brendan Bracken will be in touch closer the date.

# rebel encampment and **guerilla tactics**

## A short look at the Wicklow mountains in 1798

**The Dublin and Wicklow mountains provide a wonderfully peaceful retreat for city folk who spend their week looking forward to their escape from noise, traffic and crowds. But while – especially at the weekends – many Dubliners enjoy walking the hills, probably only a few are aware that about 200 years ago the Wicklow mountains were also used as a retreat, but of course for some different reasons...**

During the 1798 rebellion many Irish rebels escaped into the Wicklow mountains from loyalist troops. "**Whelp Rock**", near the Blessington lakes, is one of these historical places. In the early summer of 1798 a great rebel encampment was maintained there, at one time housing more than a thousand Wicklowmen. After the brief and bloody Wexford phases of the rebellion, the rebels hoped to survive until the general insurrection that would be the result of a promised French invasion.

Anyone who has walked through the Wicklow moors and hills can easily imagine how these mountains provided many advantages to the Irish rebels. They were familiar with the age-old routes and able to move about without having to maintain a supply line as the crown forces had to. Also, the landscape of the relatively unexplored bog and woodland was certainly not the best condition for the royal cavalry, which was the most effective weapon of the British. For the same reasons it was next to impossible for the crown forces to use their big guns. To make things even worse the uniforms of the redcoats, brighter against a moorland backdrop than the most garish modern fleece, could be seen for miles,

allowing the rebels plenty of time to either set up ambushes or make themselves scarce. The Wicklowmen's way of fighting is today known as "guerrilla warfare". They consolidated their hold on the highlands, destroyed mountain farm establishments that might become crown strongpoints, raided loyalist outposts and generally harassed the crown forces.

Two men stand out as the most effective rebel leaders of the time. **Michael Dwyer**, a Catholic from the Glen of Imaal, and **Colonel Holt**, a Protestant from near Roundwood. They didn't always see eye to eye, but were both a thorn in the side of the British, and long after the actual rebellion was over they were still free men, carrying out their own operations from the mountains.

Two important British decisions finally brought an end to the state of affairs in Wicklow. The first was to seek negotiated peace with Holt and later with Dwyer, and the second to build the Military Road and its associated barracks. This allowed the speedy deployment of an army from Dublin into the heart of Wicklow and made it possible to establish strong supply lines and marked the end of the rebel mountain sanctuary.

Considering the fact that this road was built to prevent rebels from escaping, it is quite ironic that today many Dubliners use it to escape from Dublin. Even if you normally don't want to be reminded of brutal battles while enjoying a walk through the hills, knowing you are walking on historical ground can nonetheless enrich the whole experience. ●



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