

IRISH Trekker

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The Trekkers Mountaineering Club
GLENAGEARY CO DUBLIN

Greetings everybody...

At the outset, I would like to express thanks on behalf of everybody to the outgoing committee on their outstanding work under the leadership of Liam Walsh. They have left the Club in a very healthy state from a financial, social and trekking point of view. This makes everything a lot easier for the new committee.

I would also like to thank all those who voted for me - not that you had much choice! (And, yes, I have noted the names). Seriously though, I feel honoured to have been asked to take the position as Chairperson and I hope I can live up to expectations.

In terms of the programme for the year, we will continue with a varied mix of A, B and C walks on most Saturdays, along with some social events and the two away trips to Glenmalure and Clonmel. We have tackled the problem of the parking at our old meeting point at Bellevue with the change to Glenageary Station and we are looking at the issue of encouraging younger members to join.

I will conclude by wishing you and yours a very happy Christmas and a New Year full of good resolutions.

Dick Ryan,
Chairperson



TREKKER OFFICERS

Newly elected officers :

Dick Ryan Chairperson
Kevin Moore Vice Chairperson and Walks-Co-ordinator,
Maeve Sims Secretary
Eileen Gallagher Treasurer
Brendan Bracken Publicity Officer

Initiative to encourage a younger membership

An ongoing discussion within the Club has been the age profile and the question of attracting a younger cohort of members. Looking to secure its long term future, we need to train and develop a new cadre of leaders.

To start the ball rolling, your Committee has decided to set up a younger sub group, working in tandem with the existing structure.

The age group aimed at will be the thirties and late twenties and we would like your help in making introductions.

From January, a monthly walk for the sub group will be organised and led by experienced Trekkers, who will meet up with the regular hike at the end of the day's walk.

We hope to run this experiment over a few months and, all going well, eventually integrate this group into full membership.

China Sojourn

Keeping my feet on terracotta!

By Marion Goff

It's the year of the horse in Chinese lunar calendar and I felt I needed one to break out of a thronged Beijing airport – a quick reminder that I'd just landed in the world's most populous country.

I was immediately struck by how modern the city was – very little coincided with the traditional image of China I had been brought up with. Apparently the local authorities were concerned about the International Olympic Committee delegation. Not taking any chances, they spray-painted the verges green along the 12-mile stretch of road from the airport and planted plastic flowers. Nobody noticed and they won the bid!

Taking to the roads was a near-death experience. The taxi men are incredibly friendly and humourous but make Italians look disciplined. They lunge across lanes without so much as a glance. Often with a cigarette hanging out of their mouth, chatting on their mobile phone, other hand permanently on the horn, they weave through hair-raising mayhem with ease. To add to the fun, over 6 million Beijing cyclists participate. It seems like a sure recipe for carnage but because no one expects anyone else to be watching where they're going, it works. At 12p a km. a thrilling experience! China is

growing at a phenomenal rate and it is Communist in name only; in practice it's a one-party capitalist state. While many people point out flaws in the system, they've never had things so good, certainly compared to the hell of the previous generation.

We went to The Forbidden City and the Temple of Heaven, among other marvels, brought me right back to the days of emperors, kingdoms, concubines and eunuchs. Standing in Tiananmen Square with Mao portrait providing the backdrop, I felt history everywhere. We visited Buddhist monasteries, Confucius University and the unforgettable buzz of the pearl, silk and food markets. The Great Wall is under 2 hours from Beijing. Having reached the summit, I was overwhelmed by its history and surrounding beauty.

We flew over 2 hours to HK, which is still regarded as international, via Shenzhen, a special economic zone and took a train across the border entering the busiest route in the world. As we entered tropical Hong Kong a Typhoon

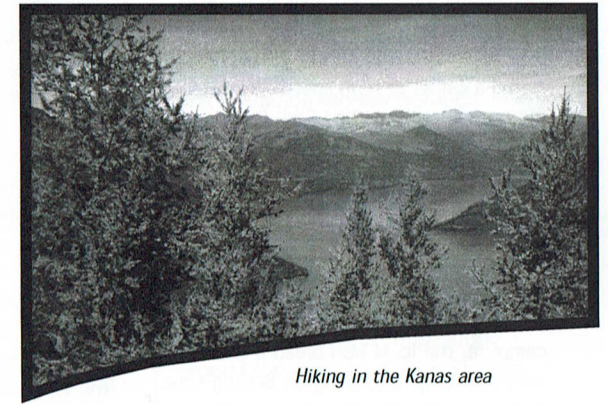
8 warning was hoisted. Typhoon 10 means catastrophe; the eye of the storm is overhead. Hong Kongers were happy to avail of an unexpected holiday and the normally highly efficient city sank into chaos. We ignored the warning and with Irish luck, the storm changed course.

I was amazed with Hong Kong's gleaming skyscrapers jutting out of the hills at seemingly impossible angles mingling with delightful contrasts of old colonial buildings and 100-year-old trams. The bustle is electric, the smells intoxicating, the sound deafening. We took a 10 minute practically vertical train ride to the Peak Restaurant where we had breathtaking views. Almost 60% of the territory is protected parkland and a hiking heaven.

After 5 days we took the ferry up the Pearl River Delta to Guangzhou, (Canton) the capital of Guangdong that is famous for millionaires and seafood. There they say they "eat everything that flies apart from a plane and everything that has legs apart from the table". It doesn't seem to be an exaggeration. Cages of live animals outside restaurants bear testimony to the freshness of the produce too. One restaurant had a sign up saying, "We have a licence to sell all endangered species". We weren't convinced so we went for a seafood option instead.

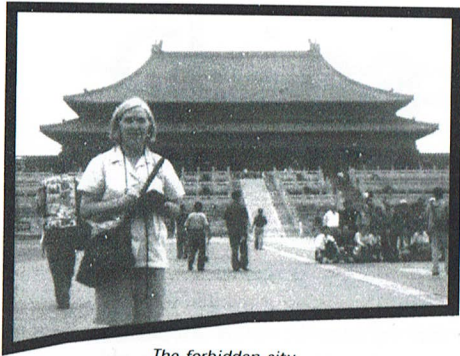
We took a 5 hour flight up to Urumqi the capital of Xinjiang in the NW of the country, the size of Western Europe. It is home to the Uigher moderate Muslim

ethnic minority of Turkish origin. China has 56 ethnic groups. The largest group, the Han Chinese, make up 94% of the population. All moves to promote a separate state have been quickly suppressed. Under the ocean millions of years ago Xinjiang is now a remarkable mix of desert, grasslands and glaciers. Urumqi's greatest attraction for me was the night market with an astounding array of wonderful dishes, spices and fruit. It is further from the ocean than any other city in the world.



Hiking in the Kanas area

"Hong Kongers were happy to avail of an unexpected holiday and the normally highly efficient city sank into chaos"



The forbidden city

Peter's friend, Alex joined flew in from Beijing and we rented a jeep and drive in the city and headed for the Junggar basis. The road was a dirt track and after several bone-rattling hours it was like riding a camel at high speed. Our first stop was Multi-Coloured City. It must be the nearest thing to walking on Mars on this planet. The ground is spongy and at sunrise and sunset the colours seem too rich to be real. With the nearest B & B a few hundred miles away, we pitched tent. A scorching hot evening turned into a very chilly night. Huddled around a campfire, the local Nan bread and wine were heavenly. Operating on Beijing time, it is a perfect place to watch sunrises and sunsets.

Heading north, the desert landscape turns into rolling grasslands. We met the nomads moving south, packing up their tents and herding their sheep, camels and horses to more favourable climates. We came across dozens of Przewalskii Horses, native to Mongolia, considered a national treasure. Here the land is more fertile due to the Aertex River that flows to the Artic Ocean.

Reaching the Altai mountain range we approached the glacial Kanas Lake. The water is so turquoise it looks fake from

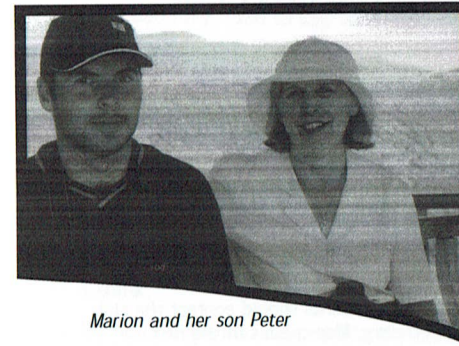
the sediment that slides down from the glaciers. We ascended almost 2,000 m, dwarfed by peaks bordering China, Russia, Mongolia and Kazakhstan. All around the dense forest exhibited a million autumn shades left to the brown bears, leopards and wolf's paradise home. We descended into the Mongolian tent or yurt which had a wood-burner inside. Before we retired, we sat outside with the locals enjoying a freshly slaughtered sheep and local brew. Although Muslims, they're a long way from Mecca. The bucket of water we used to wash with was a giant cube of ice in the morning.

We proceeded to the oasis city of Turpan on the Silk Road on the western edge of the Gobi desert. At 150 metres below sea level, this is the second lowest place on earth, after the Dead Sea. In summer temperatures hit 45°. It's a famous fruit-producing region. During the day we explored the ancient cities, aqueduct systems that would put the Romans to shame, Buddhist caves with frescos, Mummies, while evenings were pleasantly whiled away sipping the local wine under the vine trellises. I felt like Cleopatra reincarnated.

10 days later and 3,000 kms, from Urumqi we flew 3 hours to Xian, home to the 7000 life size 2000 year old Terracotta warriors who stand guard over an emperor's tomb. They are considered to be the most significant archaeological find of the 20th century. From there we got a delightful 14 hour double-decker train to Beijing.

Everywhere we went in the country we had delicious, and incredibly cheap, dining experiences.

When two Chinese people meet on the street, the common greeting is "Ni chi fan le man?" – Have you eaten yet? They take food seriously and all around the country the cuisine takes cultural pride of place and each region stoutly preserves their culinary traditions. Whether eating Beijing Roast Duck, Sichuanese hot and spice fare, Hong Kong's Dim Sum or steamed dumplings from the north east, I marvelled at their passion for fine foods.



Marion and her son Peter

Although developing quickly, traditional China is everywhere to be seen. The parks in particular are a hive of activity. Old men listening to their song birds sing; couples dancing in traditional and ballroom styles; people everywhere practicing Tai Chi; crowds huddled around little tables playing cards and board games; old men flying kites; others singing and playing musical instruments, hairdressers. Time and again I encountered good-humoured and content people. While the history and culture of this great land is fascinating, many of the buildings impressive, and the landscape often breath-taking, it's the people that made the trip truly unforgettable ●

A Fresh Start!

Many of you will be aware that there were difficulties with some of the residents on Sion Road with regard to the parking of cars and at the AGM the new Committee undertook to look into the matter.

The Committee took the view that this could develop into an ongoing dispute and decided to move the starting point to Glenageary Dart Station where there is ample parking both on Station Road and the adjoining Marlborough Road. This came into effect on 23rd November last.

On its way the bus will then pick up at Belleview Store those who notify the walk leader in advance. The bus will pick up opposite the Dart Station, as we want to avoid congestion around the entrance to the Station

If, for any reason, the Leader of the walk cannot be at the first pick-up point, she/he should delegate the task of checking that all walkers who have nominated to be at Glenageary have, in fact, attended there.

The driver may then be given the all clear to proceed.

ESRI Survey

Recreational Walking will be the subject of a forthcoming survey being carried out by ESRI for the National Waymarked Ways Advisory Committee of the Irish Sports Council. The purpose is to establish the extent and attitudes towards recreational walking in Ireland. Should make for interesting reading....

TRIPS planned for 2003

April 12/13th

GLENMALURE LODGE HOTEL

1 B/B + 2 D + 1 packed lunch + transport
Cost €80(pps) approx Deposit: €10

June 23-27th

MINELLA HOTEL & LEISURE CENTRE, CLONMEL

4 B/B + 4 D + 3 packed lunches + transport
Cost €300 (pps.) approx Deposit: €30

interested?

...if so, names and deposits as soon as possible to

Kevin Moore (2856592)

Club Policy on Visitors

Following the discussion at the A.G.M. about recruiting new members, it is useful to reiterate on the guidelines regarding participation of guests in club walks.

The Club uses the opportunity to have invited guests as a source of new membership, particularly for new, younger members with potential as future walk leaders.

Such applicants should contact the club Secretary, Maeve Sims in the first instance.

In the light of the Club current criteria for membership, the Secretary will decide if an invitation to join a club walk should be issued.

If so, invite the applicant to join a particular grade/date of walk following consultation with the walk leader of the day. Further invitations to club walks may be issued if the Secretary/Committee feel that it would be useful.

If members wish to invite guests on a once-off basis - i.e. with no membership implications - the Secretary will clear these as the opportunities present themselves. Club members will, of course, always have precedence in such circumstances.

Compass found after hike
contact Eugene at 2852548

Yes! ...we have no Bananas

Dick Ryan, our current Chairman, introduced me to the Trekkers. "Brendan", sez he" the word is out that your family want to see the back of you on a Saturday". Sad to say, Dick had a point. Something about the neighbourhood's electricity being cut off the time I changed a fuse; though to this day I believe it was a coincidence. As for the bonfire; well, it could happen to a bishop.

My first hike took place on a beautiful autumn day, up around Glendalough, I think.

My new companions were a friendly bunch and everything went swimmingly until we stopped for a mid morning break. Fifteen Trekkers produced fifteen bananas that they started to consume. "A'ha, I thought, "this walking club business is all a front; they're probably some religious

cult, who worship the banana and dance around a cairn at midnight I think I'll stick around!

Later that morning Eugene ambled up and we fell into conversation. At the time both of us were involved in home extensions. "I've just started putting on a Granny flat" says Eugene" with all that entails; organising plumbers, builders and electricians" How about that! if this man still has a granny on the go, I'm definitely sticking around, she's probably leading the C walk.

Lunchtime proved a welcome break, where I was introduced to the Club's founder, Shaun Trant. We chatted away pleasantly, though I never saw him out hiking again. I sometimes wonder about that...

...and now I'm on the Committee!

BB



Participants of the Trekkers 500th walk, which took place in September, 2002

LORD MASSY'S ESTATE

ROCKBROOK, RATHFARNHAM

By Eugene Logan

We have walked the Massy estate on a number of occasions and you may have wondered about its history and the background of its owners.

Well, the story goes like this –

The family name can be traced back to Normandy, France. They joined William at the Battle of Hastings (1066) and as they were on the winning side, they were rewarded with an estate in Cheshire. Their stately home, Dunham-Massy Hal is now in the care of the English National Trust and is a famous visitor attraction in Northeast England.

Captain Hugh Massy came to Ireland with Cromwell and campaigned around Limerick and Tipperary. He was duly rewarded for his services with extensive lands at Dunrileague, Co. Limerick where he built a residence. In 1776 the head of the Massy family was created Lord Massy, 1st Baron of Drimrileague. The third Baron Massy voted against the Act of Union in 1800.

In the early eighteenth century Lord Massy moved his seat to the Hermitage in Castleconnell, Co. Limerick, a mansion of thirty-seven rooms on the banks of the Shannon.

By 1878 the Massy family had extended their ownership to nearly 100,000 acres in Limerick, Leitrim and Tipperary.

The 6th Baron Massy, thro' marriage, acquired Kilakee House in 1883. The house had thirty-six rooms and its appearance was styled like a Mediterranean villa on 2,900 acres. The gardens were laid out in exquisite splendour. The terraced lawns were planted with shrubs and trees. The remains of the large fountain are still visible. There were the usual walled gardens and a curvilinear conservatory.

The 6th Baron Massy (1835 – 1915) was a "big spender" and lived the baronial lifestyle to the full. He was famous for entertaining – shooting parties, hunting, fishing, house parties, especially during the Horse Show ; the Castle soirees and Punchestown. He had a fleet of motor vehicles. The extravagant lifestyle drained away all his resources and by the time of his death in 1915 he was heavily in debt to the bank.

The 7th Baron (1846 – 1926) inherited an appalling situation of debt with very little income to support his mansion at the Hermitage and at Killakee. The country was in the throes of the Republican rebellion. The tenants of the big estates had secured rent reduction and the income of the landlords had fallen dramatically.

In 1919, a large auction took place at Killakee which lasted for days. Unfortunately for the Massys, it was a buyers' market. This country was in a state of turmoil and Britain was in a post-war depression. The proceeds of the auction were less than their real value. In 1920, the burning of the big houses began, to prevent troops being billeted therein. The Hermitage in Limerick was destroyed on 16th June 1920.

As the debts on the properties increased and the family had no income, the Provincial bank obtained an order for possession of Kilakee House and the sheriff evicted Lord Massy (8th Baron 1894 – 1958) along with his wife and family. He was thirty years old and had married a Catholic nurse against the wishes of his family, who were staunchly Protestant.

The bank put a caretaker in Kilakee until 1941 and unable to find a purchaser, sold the house to a builder who demolished it. Lord Massy and family were allowed to live in the Gate lodge until his death in 1958.

His wife was the bread winner and worked in the Irish Hospital Sweepstakes in Ballsbridge. Lord Massy couldn't get a job, had an alcohol problem and was unable to come to terms with the reality of his situation. He was known as the Penniless Peer. When invited to the 1936 Coronation in London he replied "I have not enough money to take me to the nearest pub, never mind to London for the Coronation." He spent much of his time pottering around the estate collecting firewood. Lord Massy dies at his cottage on 20th March 1958 aged sixty-three years, leaving assets of £401 to his wife.

Lady Massy (formerly Nurse Margaret Moran) lived on at the cottage for two years. In 1960 she moved to England to live with her daughter and son. She died in 1971.

The 9th Lord Massy (he didn't use the title) was born in 1921, raised as a Catholic, educated at Clongowes Wood College, joined the British Army and served in the Second World War. After the war he ran a green grocery shop in Leicester and seldom referred to his ancestry. He died in 1955. His children live outside Ireland.

Next time you walk around Massy Woods, look out for ghosts from the past and picture the former glory of the mansion and gardens.

Sic transit gloria mundi ●

Walks Programme January - March 2003

Date	Grade	1st Leader	2nd Leader	3rd Leader	Time
December					
27	Christmas Walk	B. Brennan	N. O'Reilly		10 am
January					
4	B	R. KIRKER	D. RYAN	B. LANE	9 am
11	A	M. SIMS	M. SIMS	T. GILLAN	9 am
11	C	K. BEEGAN	N. O'REILLY	F. ENGLISH	11 am
18	B	P. O'DUFFY	G. FOGARTY	I. McCRAITH	9 am
25	B	P. CONNOLLY	I. LAWTON	W. HANNON	9 am
25	C	C. MANGAN	T. MURPHY	M. BEEGAN	9 am
February					
1	B	E. GALLAGHER	R. KIRKER	C. STEPHENS	9 am
8	A	C. BEHAN	D. MURRAY	D. RYAN	9 am
8	C	J. NEEDHAM	M. O'DUFFY	H. FITZPATRICK	11 am
15	B	E. LOGAN	T. MURRAY	M. MURRAY	9 am
22	B	L. WALSH	S. CANTWELL	K. MOORE	9 am
22	C	D. KIRKER	M. DELANEY	D. BRENNAN	11 am
March					
1	B	F. MULLOY	D. O'HEGARTY	T. CASEY	9 am
8	A	M. TINSLEY	E. TINSLEY	R. CROWLEY	9 am
8	C	C. MANGAN	C. MAC HALE	N. BOYLE	11 am
15	B	D. NEEDHAM	J. NEEDHAM	D. O'NEILL	9 am
22	B	B. BRACKEN	P. OWNES	J. MURPHY	9 am
22	C	C. DORGAN	A. KEEGAN	R. HALPENNY	11 am
29	B	B. BRENNAN	K. O'BRIEN	J. MURRAY	9 am

WALKS LEADERS SHOULD:

- (1) Contact Eileen Gallagher on or before the Tuesday prior to walk to book bus.
- (2) Hand completed Insurance Sheet to Walks Co-ordinator.

PLEASE USE SEAT BELTS ON BUS



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The Trekkers Mountaineering Club
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