



The Trekker

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The trekkers
Mountaineering Club
Glenageary, Co. Dublin.

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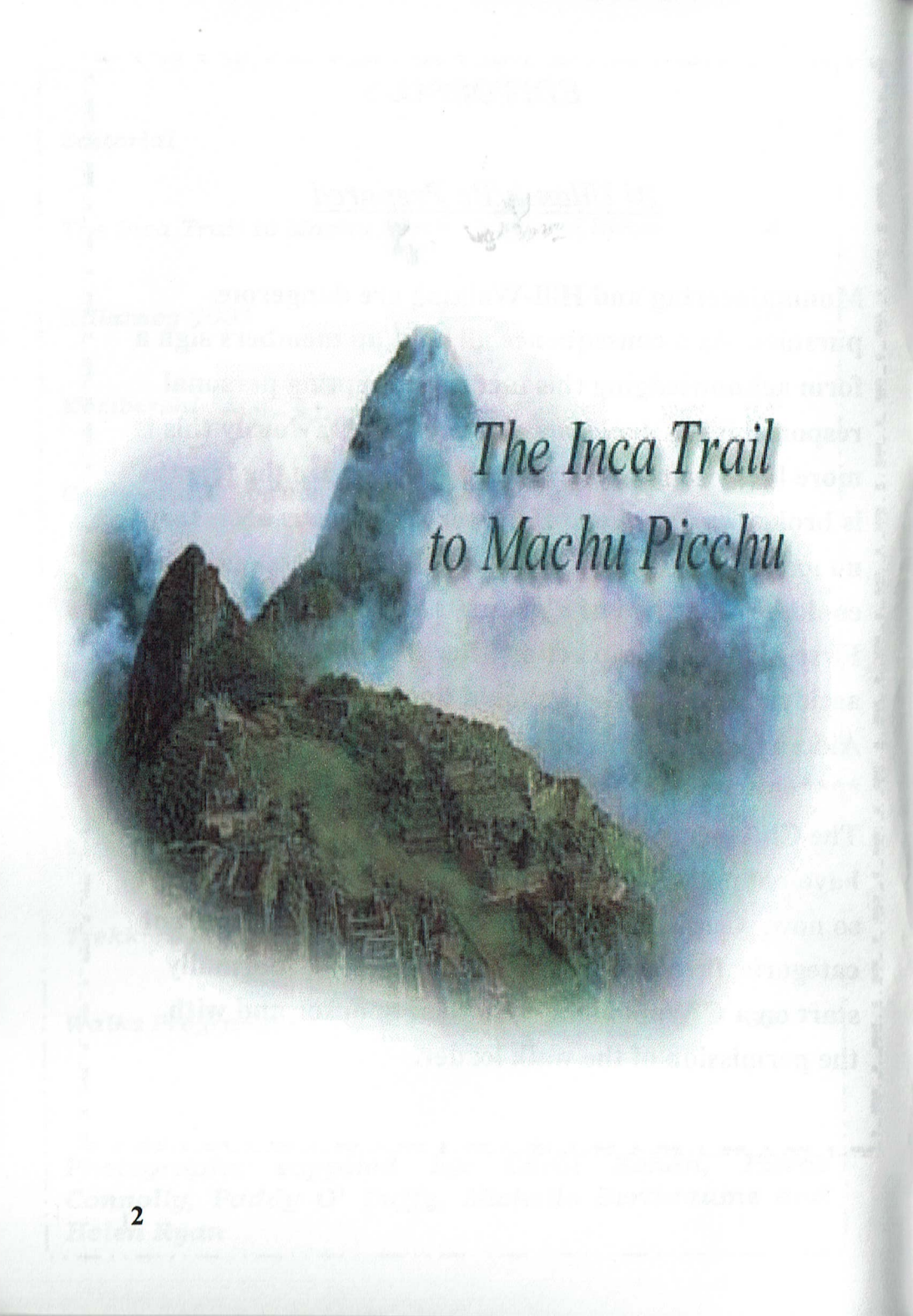
Photographs supplied by: Carol Behan, Pierce Connolly, Paddy O' Duffy, Michelle Berthiaume and Helen Ryan

EDITORIAL

Bí Ullamh/Be Prepared

Mountaineering and Hill-Walking are dangerous pursuits. As a consequence all paid up members sign a form acknowledging this fact and accepting personal responsibility. *Accidents can happen.* Obviously this is more likely to happen on an A Walk where the terrain is broken and uneven. However vigilance is necessary no matter what type of walk is being undertaken. This could be described as a preventative measure whereas First Aid comes into action after there has been an accident. All Trekkers should know the basics of First Aid and details for a new course are on page 24.

The Club insurance covers paid up members so if you have not paid your new subscription (£20-00) please do so now. Guests and prospective members (2 different categories) receive temporary cover. They normally start on a C Walk along with their sponsor and with the permission of the walk leader.



The Inca Trail to Machu Picchu

The Inca Trail to Machu Picchu

Machu Picchu....., The very name evokes images of a fabulous lost city deep in the jungles of Peru. For most people, a trip to this site is the reason they visit Peru, and they usually travel there by train from Cuzco, a wonderful journey by the banks of the Urubamba River, a tributary of the Amazon, passing beneath towering mountains and through misty cloud forest. However there is another way of reaching this site, and that is by hiking the Inca Trail over the mountains for four days, finally descending into the lost city from the Sun Gate at the end of the fourth day.

This was my own experience, and it began at the starting point of Chilca, 45kms from Machu Picchu. I was in a group of 15, plus tour leader and trek guide and a 30 strong team of porters and cooks. Our guide had completed the trek many times before and was a competent authority on the plants, animals, Inca ruins and other items of interest which we would be seeing for the first time.

The route followed the Vilcanota River, another name for the Urubamba, sometimes by its banks and sometimes on precipitous paths high above its course. With frequent stops to allow us to acclimatise to the altitude and catch our breaths, Freddy, our guide, pointed out to us the various cactuses, bromelia, fushia, broom and other plants that we would not otherwise have noticed. We were captivated by the magnificent scenery all around us. Far below us in the valley, the river coursed its way over white-water rapids, while opposite us, we could clearly see the terraced mountain sides, and marvelled at how the ancient farmers could manage to cultivate what seemed to be no more than narrow strips of land on sheer mountain faces. Most of the trekking on this first day was on undulating ground with a few very steep ascents.

We arrived at a high ridge at about 4:00 that afternoon and caught our first glimpse of an Inca ruin, Llactapata, far below us, catching the rays of the afternoon sun. This site, like most others, was situated on a steep slope at 2,700m altitude, and made extensive use of terracing, both to prevent erosion and for cultivation. All around us, the mountains rose to staggering heights, sometimes shrouded in cloud, other times, clear and starkly outlined against a deep blue sky. The snow-capped Nevado Veronica was in our view for the first two days. At over 5,000m, it is one of the highest mountains in the region. Our first campsite was nearby, and we arrived there, exhausted from the effects of the altitude. However, the magnificent team of porters had arrived ahead of us and had set everything up: tents, dining tent, toilet tent, and had even prepared a snack for us. They also handed us basins of hot water for us to wash with, for which we were extremely grateful. They then set out to cook our first evening meal, which we were almost too tired to eat! We caught our first glimpse of a condor that evening, gliding silently overhead.

The porters were fantastic. They carried absolutely everything in 25kg packs on their backs! After we had set out each day, they'd soon catch us up and pass us out, even with their much heavier loads. On the downhill stretches, they'd pass us, running, in flimsy flip-flops, made from old car tyres, finding no difficulty whatsoever on the narrow, uneven, steep steps, which were absolutely killing our knees, even in our trekking boots!

As there are only about 12 daylight hours in the Tropics, lasting from about 5-30am to 5-30pm, we got up early to take advantage of the light, so still sleepy and not fully rested, we'd be up at sunrise each morning to start the days trek.



Llamas and Porters



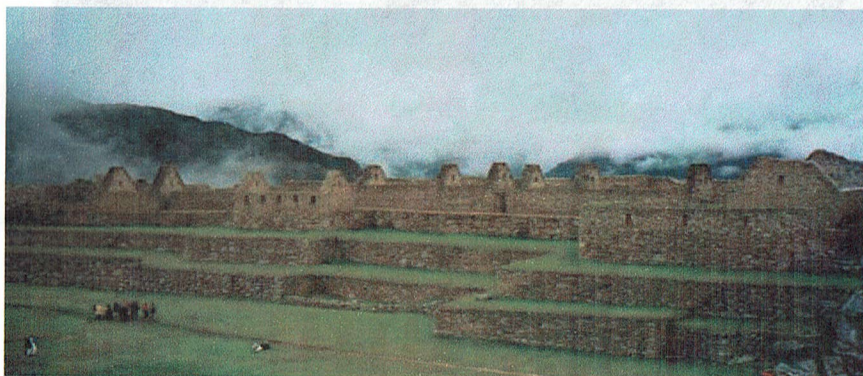
Dead Woman's Pass



Wiñay Wayna



The Classic View



Building & Temples

The second day was mostly uphill, as we were heading towards the highest pass which we would reach the following day. We stopped for a break at Huayllabamba, the last village on the trail, while gazing with trepidation at the track winding steeply uphill ahead of us. At our lunch break, a herd of llamas passed by, carrying packs on their backs. These proud-looking animals, with colourful ribbons in their ears, are quite curious and stopped to stare at us, just as we stared back at them, and took photos of them as they posed for our cameras.

From here, we had a 400m climb to our next campsite at Llulluchapampa at 3,760m. The going was steep and we were glad to arrive. Far above us lay the pass we had to tackle the next morning, the "Dead Womans Pass", at 4,200m, the highest point of the trek. This pass is named for the shape of the mountain to one side, which looks like the silhouette of a reclining woman. The temperature fell swiftly once night had fallen, and we were just about warm enough in our sleeping bags.

The most challenging day was the third, where we had to climb about 500m from our campsite to the pass, first thing in the morning. Due to the exertion of the previous day, and the increasing effects of altitude, this 500m took a few hours to climb, at a very slow pace. Even the porters slowed down! We were hard pressed to put one foot in front of the other and had to stop for frequent rests. Those who arrived first sat in groups and shouted encouragement at those approaching. Great cheering greeted each person who eventually arrived, and joined the welcoming committee already in place. Quite a few groups had set out that morning so the pass was a fairly crowded place by the time we all arrived there!

After a group photo, we descended almost as far as we had risen, on a steep flight of steps, had a snack and then ascended to the next set of ruins, a small oval-shaped site called Runcuracay, used as a resting place for the Inca travellers. Another ascent and descent brought us to the Sayaqmarca ruins on a rocky promontory, which were accessed by a narrow stairway. At this height, the weather was constantly changing, and swirling mist filled the valley below and blotted out the sight of the mountains for a while, only to lift again a few minutes later, and allow us a view back over the steep paths we had already taken. Altogether that day, there were three steep ascents and two descents, before we arrived at our campsite, totally exhausted. We were asleep by 8-30pm!

The last day started out with an early morning rise to watch the sunrise over Nevado Salcantay, at over 6,700m, the highest mountain in the region. Our path plunged 900m on narrow, steep, slippery steps, made even more dangerous from the night's rainfall, into the dense humid forest. Far below us, we could see one of the loveliest ruins, Wiñay Wayna, meaning "forever young", named after a lovely orchid.

We were now on the far side of Machu Picchu mountain, in the realm of the rain forest, and the beginnings of the Amazon Jungle. Exotic, luminous butterflies, tiny hummingbirds and furry caterpillars were our companions on this stretch, as well as an array of beautiful orchids and other unusual plants. By lunchtime, we had reached Winay Wayna and spent some more time exploring it. We entered it at one of its highest points and were amazed at how the ancient builders had constructed such a site on a steep slope, incorporating a series of descending pools, where water would have cascaded from one to the other, as well as terracing used for cultivation, and dwellings with gable ends, set out in neat rows.

Excitement mounted as we knew we were nearing the 'Intipunka' or Sun Gate, a notch in the mountain, which we reached at mid-afternoon. This gave us our first view of Machu Picchu in the distance, not the classic picture card view, but a much wider view, taking in unfortunately, modern buildings and a winding road. However, as we descended, the modern intrusions disappeared from sight, and the classic view spread before our eyes. Luckily the day was clear and the views fantastic. I felt privileged to be there, to be actually taking in a view I had read about and seen in pictures and on TV so many times, but never really expected to visit. We walked down through the site, with a tour planned for the next day. That evening, in the town of Aguas Calientes or 'Hot Waters' we took advantage of the hot mineral baths, and soaked away the aches and pains of the trek in an open-air hot pool.

Next morning Freddy led us around the city of Machu Picchu, which is really quite a huge site, and pointed out to us the main buildings and temples, as well as the amazing stonework, consisting of megalithic blocks cut and shaped so precisely, and fitted together so tightly, that it would be impossible to insert even a knife blade between them in places. We also had some free time to explore by ourselves, or to climb the peak in the background, Huayna Picchu, before heading back to Cuzco, this time, by helicopter!

Although this trail is extremely popular, and can at times be overcrowded, it is the most wonderful experience, and I would certainly recommend it to anyone with an interest in the ancient past, who wouldn't be put off by the effects of high altitude.

Carol Behan

KILLARNEY 2001

Fine weather, fine walks, fine food and fine wines. This was the wonderful menu available to the 28 Trekkers who stayed in The Lake Hotel, Killarney, last September.

The glorious sunny weather, with light south westerly winds, was the order of the week. The 5 walks were all varied and interesting from ground level to Irelands highest peak with the evening menu matching it with a selection of choices. However it is the comradeship that develops on these annual outings that is most important and that was obvious throughout the week.

Thanks Eugene for all your hard work in organising such a successful venture. You will have a hard job to surpass it next year.



The Friday Morning Boat Trip



SHEILA CANTWELL



BILL HANNON & TOM GILLEN ON THE TRAIN TO KILLARNEY



12 DAVID KIRKER, EUGENE LOGAN AND DICK NEEDHAM



Relaxing at the Lake Hotel



*Bill Hannon, Tom Murray, Mary Murray,
Dick Ryan and Sheila Cantwell*



*Colette, Michael, Ita, Maria, Evelyn, Mary, Joan,
in Muckross*

The Conquest of Carrauntoohill

I was very reassured to learn that we were going to climb Carrauntoohill by way of "The Tourist Route". This sounded like something I could cope with, although I knew it included something called "The Devil's Ladder". The sun shone from an almost cloudless sky as we set out to conquer Carrauntoohill. The bus dropped us at Cronin's Yard which is the starting point for the walk. Here there is a small wall plaque which carries some good advice for climbers and includes a stern warning that most accidents occur while descending from the mountain.

We had a perfect day for walking and climbing – not too hot and not too cold. The terrain was very rocky and we were accompanied by the happy sound of running water from the River Caddagh. We crossed the river at a ford and walked on through the Hag's Glen which looked very welcoming in the sunshine but which I'm sure could be quite forbidding in bad weather. Up ahead we could see the summit of Carrauntoohill, capped in white mist, looking down on us as we approached respectfully. The ground was gradually becoming steeper as we passed between two lakes and got our first view of Devil's Ladder. Some people, even younger and more energetic than ourselves, could be seen bounding up and down the ladder. However the Devil is the father of lies and deception and we approached it with caution.

The nearer we got, the less inviting it seemed. The Devil's Ladder stands at the end of a glaciated valley, according to the excellent notes I was given. Here we stopped to look back at the beautiful scenery through which we had come. Having steadied our resolve, we started to climb.



*Reading the Trekker
at the Peak*



*Dick N, Eugene, Liam, Sheila, Eileen, Dick R, Tom M, Tom G, Monty,
Brian, Pierce, Joe, Paddy & Bill*

There are lots of loose, sharp edged stones which are easy to dislodge and send clattering on following climbers, so care must be taken. As you ascend, the climb becomes steeper and steeper until it is nearly vertical at the top – *don't look down!* The ladder is very narrow at the top and badly eroded by the traffic which is concentrated here. After a couple of attempts, I managed to scramble on hands and knees to the firm ground at the top with a great sense of relief. I was surprised to see a number of lone walkers on the upper slopes who were breaking one of the golden rules of mountaineering that, one should always walk with a group.

We were now on the saddle of Carrauntoohill and Cnoc na Toinne and here we stopped for a pleasant lunch. From here we set off in a north westerly direction and followed a series of cairns to the summit. Lots of rocks and scree here as well but, between picking our steps, we admired the view. The mist had vanished and even at the summit of Ireland's highest mountain (as if you didn't know!) there was little or no wind. We basked in the sunshine and looked around at the magnificent blue panorama of mountains, lakes and sea inlets. It was a day when you could almost see forever.

Now it was time to start our descent and I was not looking forward to seeing the Devil's Ladder again. I remembered the warning about accidents occurring during the downward climb. Bill Hannon's benign presence at the head of the ladder had a calming effect. In the event the descent was less scary than I had anticipated, once the bad patch at the top and the vertical stretch had been negotiated. In my case this was accomplished by clinging to the rocks on either side and keeping my behind an inch or so above the surface.

Each step had to be chosen with care and we were greatly relieved to reach the bottom of the ladder safely in spite of shifting stones and slippery slopes. We had a last look at the Devil's Ladder and the peak of Carrauntoohill towering above us (had we really been up there?) and set out in the evening sunshine to the walk back to Cronin's Yard. Here the bus was waiting to carry us back to our hotel where no doubt a heroes' welcome awaited us.

Tom Murray



The climb up Devil's Ladder

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Congratulations to Brian and Annette Brennan on the birth of their first grandchild, Adam.

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Michelle's Pacemaker

In Killarney Michelle took an average of 21,000 steps per walk. That could mean that with the entire group 2,300,000 steps were taken on all 5 walks. Incidentally, using this ready reckoner. Eugene estimates that for this years programme to date the figure is 13,122,349 steps.

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Ita's Illuminations

On a recent walk Carol brought us into the clouds and whereas with the aid of the compass & GPS we found 3 Lakes and Lough Firrib, it was the illuminous gloves which kept us together.

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KILLARNEY THERAPY

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This was my first time to be part of the Trekkers' annual five day holiday trip and I enjoyed it. From the word go the information and organisation was quietly and efficiently taken care of by Eugene and as an extra bonus I was collected and delivered back to within a few feet of my front door. Well so were most people, but it was a very nice touch.

Killarney itself has never been on the top of my favourite places' list. Sometime in my youth I got the impression of a town full of tour buses, jaunting cars, leprechauns, shillelaghs and shamrocks etc. so I was inclined to give it a miss and head on down the peninsula. How wrong I was. Killarney is so much more, placed as it is in the middle of such wonderful scenery, and with access to many various and magnificent walks and climbs. We were lucky of course, the weather was bright and warm all the way through and the Lake Hotel itself, being aptly named, has panoramic views of mountains, lakes, colourful trees and to top it all, a couple of deer who paraded gracefully across the lawn as we sipped our pre-dinner drinks each evening. I won't be cynical and say they came on cue.

My first walk was the B/C walk to Middle Lake, Dinis Island and Muckross. It was a lovely easy-paced walk. Time to listen to the birds, see wild flowers, enjoy the stillness around our lunchtime break at Dinis Island. Michelle has a great picture of this. This walk was led by Michael who, just because he made one little wrong turn, was threatened with an unexpected plunge into the lake.

The next day we all opted for the Gap of Dunloe A/B Walk. It was spectacular. At the very beginning, where we waited for the second coach load to arrive. Some people sat and waited, some talked and waited, but I found myself drifting off to a quiet spot under the bridge where the gush of a waterfall met the huge boulders and bustled and splashed its way down through them and down into calmer waters below. I was experiencing some turmoil in my own life at the time and this whole scenario seemed to reflect that back to me. For some time it was overwhelming and then I found myself trying to go with the flow and imagine myself as part of the turbulence that eventually flowed quietly into the calm waters of the lake and it worked. Somewhere nearby Joan was doing a quick sketch from another viewpoint and she very kindly did one for me. Memories are made of this.

Other memories of that walk to the Gap include the flow of multi-coloured horses romping past us in a giddy mood and the discovery of finding a well run Coffee Shop in the middle of nowhere, well nowhere I knew about anyway. Once again we had perfect views and good chat all the way.

I had planned to climb Mangerton on Thursday, it being only a mere 839m, but some fault in boot lacing system had left a tender spot on my foot. Even with Evelyn's magic sock, kindly offered, I was afraid to chance it, so I had to opt out. I was very disappointed at the time, but when I saw the cut and shape of

those who did the climb, I began to be quietly pleased, because I don't think anyone would have had the energy to carry me if needs be. Instead a small select group had a very pleasant walk around the Ross Castle area. We had time to bask in the sun, admire the views, especially Mangerton where everyone else was, and talk to the birds..... the feathered variety. Despite the weariness of the A walkers earlier on, after a rest and a shower, etc. everyone appeared bright and breezy later on and after another mighty meal we had singing and reciting and even a bit of a dance til late into the night.

And it wasn't over yet. A boat trip was organised by Brian for Friday morning and the first 12 with their hand up got to go. It was well worth while. From a different perspective we viewed the mountains, with some awe, and admired the bird life around the lake. The level of water in the lakes was at its lowest for many years, the boatman told us. So his skill at manoeuvring and cajoling his boat through many dodgy passages was really impressive. And at the same time he pointed out interesting rock formations and special flora and fauna in the true Kerry dialect, it was magic. It was also a very gentle last look at where we had been, what we had achieved, high and low, and a realization that this trip had changed my impressions of Killarney for good. Even the Jaunting cars are OK, but I still draw the line at leprechauns.

Thank you, Trekkers all.

Ita McCraith

Retail outlets offering a discount to MCI members

<i>Army Bargains, 30 Little Mary St. Dublin 1.</i>	10%
<i>Capel Camping, 132 Capel St, Dublin 1.</i>	10%
<i>Great Outdoors, Chatham St, Dublin 2</i>	10%
<i>K2 Camping & Clothing, 101 Talbot St, Dublin 1</i>	10%
<i>Milletts Camping, 61-61 Mary St, Dublin 1.</i>	10%
<i>Milletts Leisure, Unit 308, The Square, Tallaght. Dub.24.</i> <i>(Discount does not apply to Watersports Department)</i>	10%
<i>Outdoor Adventure Store, 34/35 Upper Liffey St, D 1.</i>	10%
<i>Patagonia, 24-26 Exchequer St, Dublin 2.</i>	10%
<i>Ramblers Way, 57-58 Mary St, Dublin 1.</i>	10%

All Retail Outlets :- Discounts are not available on sale prices or the purchase of Gift Vouchers.

Please note that you need to present a current MCI membership card to avail of your discount.

The Trekkers' Song

Chorus

*On the one road, hauling a big load,
On the road to Lug or Scarr
On the long road, never the wrong road
We're together now so far
A treks, B treks, C treks too
End up together for a pint or two
On the one road, swingin' along
Singin' the Trekkers' song*

I

*Over Lug, then back to Glenmalure,
Cleevaun, Derrybawn, Glendalough for sure
**WE ARE THE TREKKERS
MIGHTY FOR THE CRAIC**
Always moving on
We never will turn back*

Chorus

II

*Rucksack, anorak, boots and gaiters too
Map and compass safely see us through
**WE ARE THE TREKKERS
MIGHTY FOR THE CRAIC**
always moving on
We never will turn back*

Chorus

Walks Programme January 2002 to April 2002

Date	Grade	1 st Leader	2 nd Leader	3 rd Leader	Time
05/01/02	B	D. Kirker	D. Needham	B. Brennan	9-00am
12/01/02	A C	Mike Sims J. Needham	Maeve Sims H. Fitzpatrick	R. Crowley M. Goff	9-00am 11.00am
19/01/02	B	T. Murray	M. Murray	K. Moore	9-00am
26/01/02	B C	L. Walsh S. Cantwell	P. Connolly C. Mangan	M. Dorgan A. Keegan	9-00am 11-00am
02/02/02	B	Maeve Sims	Mike Sims	E. Gallagher	9-00am
09/02/02	A C	D. Needham C. Dorgan	T. Gillen C. Stephens	K. Trant M. Delaney	9-00am 11-00am
16/02/02	B	D. O'Hegarty	F. Mulloy	G. Fogarty	9-00am
23/02/02	B C	P.O'Duffy E. Tinsley	I. Lawton N. Boyne	N.O'Reilly M. Tinsley	9-00am 11-00am
02/03/02	B	B. Brennan	D. Brennan	R. Halpenny	9-00am
09/03/02	A C	E. Gallagher P. Connolly	C. Behan J. Brandon	K. O'Brien D. Shariff	9-00am 11-00am
23-03-02	∴	MOURNE		MOUNTAINS	
06/04/02	B C	C. Mangan K. Beegan	Maeve Sims M. Beegan	P. Owens M. O'Duffy	9-00am 11-00am
13/04/02	A	K. Moore	B. Bracken	D. Needham	9-00am
20/04/02	B C	D. Ryan M. Berthiaume	C. MacHale I. McCraith	G. Fogarty E. Logan	9-00am 11-00am
27/04/02	B	M. Tinsley	J. Hamilton	T. Tuthill	9-00am

~~398~~ 396

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Advance notice

Re : Summer Trip

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Location : Connemara