

The Trekker



The Publicity Officer is responsible for:

1. Production of the Club Newsletter
2. Distribution to members of available material relevant to mountaineering and hillwalking.
3. All matters relating to publicity of and information relevant to the Club's activities.

The Walks Co-ordinator is responsible for:

1. Arranging programmes of Club walks and leaders.
2. Grading the Club walks.
3. Organising Club outings of two or more days duration.
4. Leader training.

The Chairperson will:

1. Lead and co-ordinate the work of the committee.
2. Set an agenda for meetings of the committee in consultation with the Secretary.
3. Preside at and chair meetings of the committee and General Meetings of the Club.
4. Be responsible for reporting on the Club's activities to the members present at any General Meeting.

Section 5.3 of the Constitution is the Section that deals with the three year consecutive rule.

This rule assures that there is movement in committee membership. It is an attempt to make sure that the committee does not go stale, that there is no elite group, no cliques.

In accordance with rule 6.9 of the Constitution, Eugene Logan has been co-opted, as a non-voting member to the committee.

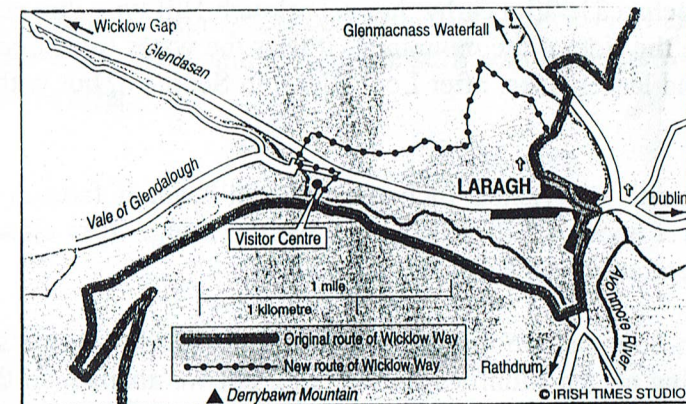
Future co-options will be announced in due course.

Kevin Beegan
Chairperson

THE WICKLOW WAY

Earlier this year the National Way-Marked Ways Committee decided to re-route the Wicklow Way from going through Laragh. This followed complaints from a local landowner. The re-drawn route, marked with arrows every few hundred yards, now takes walkers directly into the car-park in Glendalough run by Dúchas. According to the National Way-Marked Ways Committee complaints were received from a business premises south of Laragh village that walkers were leaving cars outside the premises all day. This left the committee with no option but to re-route the trail.

The Wicklow Way was officially opened in 1984. The route was laid out by the late J. B. Malone. A monument to the memory of Mr. Malone, who died in 1992, overlooks Lough Tay.



Scotland and the English Lake District

On a recent visit to Scotland we travelled through the Lake District, staying at Windermere for two nights. Taking a ferry across to the west side of the lake we climbed the ridge between the lake and Hawkshead. This was an eight mile waymarked trail through woods and farmland. The trails were very easy to follow with the help of Collins Guide to Lake District walks and good markers. Whereas this walk was enjoyable, the Windermere area is not ideal for walking. A drive through the whole area brought us to Lake Buttermere and Grassmere. Here the mountains are magnificent peaks with long ridge walks between them. They were lovely on a bright sunny day.

Continuing up into Scotland we stayed in Taynault, a one horse village close to Oban. This area is great for walking. We walked along the south shore of Loch Etiff, a sea loch. This loch extends from the sea at Oban for about 60 miles inland towards Glencoe. Ben Cruachan 3160ft, nearby, has a Turlough Hill type Power Station built into the side of the mountain. It uses the water from Loch Awe, the second largest lake, after Loch Ness, in Scotland, but without the monster.

Further north we visited Inchcree waterfall, which falls in several layers over about a half mile and is worth seeing. It is close to the western entrance of the Caledonian Canal.

Whilst in Scotland we thought we would challenge George's record of climbing all the Munros in Scotland, but we abandoned this idea having failed to make a start on the first one. Incidentally George, they have designated a further ten mountains as Munros so we hope you have taken these into consideration.

A drive through Glencoe was most interesting. This is an area where in 1672 the Campbells inflicted a terrible massacre upon the MacDonalds. In an effort to make peace between the warring clans, the Campbells accepted an invitation to visit the MacDonald's stronghold. Once there, their intentions were less than honourable

and they set upon the unsuspecting MacDonalds, killing 40 members of the clan. This incident is recorded extensively in song and poetry.

On the homeward journey we went across to Edinburgh Castle. This is rich in history. In our short stay there you could only get the gist of the place. You would need a week to see it properly. Onward again until we reached Keswick in the northern end of the Lake District. This is more mountainous country and we enjoyed walks up Lattrigg and Walla Crag, both close to Derwentwater.

We would like to thank Paddy for his very detailed instructions giving road directions all the way up to Scotland. However, we were wondering was he trying to tell us something when he did not tell us how to get back again.

Members of the Club have asked about going to the Lake District. It is truly worth a visit, but the logistics of getting there and the costs involved are serious considerations. A longer period of say a week would be necessary to make it cost effective. However, if anybody is interested let me know and if there are sufficient numbers we will see what can be arranged.

St. Anthony and the Trekkers

When Dick Needham booked 24 Trekkers into the Downhill Hotel, Ballina, Co. Mayo for the 25th-28th June weekend, he did not realise that there would be one extra with us – St. Anthony. Having spent most of his monastic life in Padua in Northern Italy, this Franciscan monk was well used to dealing with the Trekkers. However, it was in his capacity as detective and finder that he was required this weekend. The first occasion was to search for the wedding ring of Killala and the second time St. Muredach's anorak.

My wedding ring was mislaid at the start of the Friday walk which saw the troops walk the same route as Genreal Humbert's men on September 1798 on their way to the Races at Castlebar. Due to the marvellous weather that day it was decided to travel light and let the coach carry most of our impedimenta. It was during the exercise of moving bags within the bus that my ring was lost. Chairman Beegan led an evening search party to discover the band of gold, but to no avail. However, on returning to the Hotel, Liam Walsh calmly informed everyone that he had the ring. It had fallen into a side pocket of one of his bags. Eveyln and I were delighted to have our marital status reinstated!

Saturday dawned and, as predicted, was a typical Mayo soft day and it stayed somewhat inclement throughout. However, it did not deter 10 "A" walkers to climb Nephin and return without any visual satisfaction save for finding the trig point. The "C" walkers set out to discover the suburbs of Ballina. The common denominator between both groups was wet anoraks, bags and boots, but the heat of the boiler house did wonders for the garments. Some of the members decided to go to evening Mass and pray for better weather on the Sunday and they succeeded. However, it was at breakfast time on Sunday that Paddy O'Duffy realised he had left his new anorak in St. Muredach's Cathedral. Once again Chairman Beegan and St. Anthony were pressed into action and again the results were positive. After that St. Anthony kept a good eye on everyone and nothing further was mislaid or lost.

The Sunday trips saw the "A" walkers traverse virgin territory to reach the top of Birren Corragh and descend near the scene of an IRA ambush on the Black and Tans at Skerdagh. Whilst the "C" walkers went on the Bangor Trail along Lough Feeagh viewing iron age forts and famine age lazy beds. The remainder guided by Jack Langan went out to Achill for a few hours drinking in the scenery, tea and Guinness. Neat time keeping ensured that we all were collected at the appointed spots and returned to the Hotel for dinner and a singsong.

On Monday everybody took the opportunity to view the Ceide Fields and see the remains of the 5000-year-old Neolithic settlement.

Once again thanks to Dick Needham for organising another successful and enjoyable weekend.

Monty Tinsley

NAME	MOBILE NO.	E-MAIL ADDRESS
Beegan, Kevin	087 832 6040	
Behan, Carol	087 239 2476	behanc@indigo.ie
Berthiaume, Michelle		paulbert@gofree.indigo.ie
Bracken, Brendan		tippy@iol.ie
Brennan, Brian	087 237 4549	
Brennan, David		brennand@irishpermanent.ie
Brett, John	087 233 2378	
Condon, Michael	087 256 4907	michael.condon@boi.ie
Furey, John		jfureys@indigo.ie
Gallagher, Eileen		eileen.gallagher@wl.com
Kirker, Roger	087 225 9836	rogwendk@tinet.ie
Kirker, David	086 832 5191	
McKean, Brian		bmckean@tinet.ie
Moore, Kevin	087 281 4692	dkmoore@clubi.ie
Mulloy, Fergal		fergal.mulloy@tinet.ie
Owens, Philip		philipowens@tinet.ie
Ryan, Dick		dick.ryan@ida.ie
Sims, Maeve & Mike	087 235 6880	msims@orygen.com
Tinsley, Monty		frg@iol.ie
Tuthill, Tony	086 812 2007	

GO NORTH!

Saturday October 23rd saw the Trekkers head to the Northside of Dublin for the first time. The occasion was a walk around the Hill of Howth. With passports at the ready they boarded the "DART" and headed North for Sutton.

The walk began at Sutton DART Station following the road along the seashore toward Sutton House Hotel. Just before the hotel the cliff walk begins. The day was bad, it was pouring rain as we headed up the cliff path past the Martello Tower towards a large rock where the path split in two. Here a sign declared that the cliffs were dangerous and that there was no way through. After a short discussion three went the safer way and the rest carried on over the rocks.

At lunchtime the weather cleared and we went by Drumleck Point to Doldrum Bay, where we saw a seal, on by Lions Bay to the Baily Lighthouse. From here on the path climbs steeply giving magnificent views over the sea. We carried on by Gaskins Leap, Fox Hole, Pipers Gut to the Nose of Howth. At this point Lambay Island appears and then a marvellous view of Ireland's Eye. Coming down by Puck's Rocks we again saw some seals. This left a short walk down Balscaden Road to Howth Harbour where the walk finished.

The distance covered was eight miles and a tougher eight miles than one would expect. At times you felt as if you were in the middle of Wicklow not on the outskirts of Dublin. The Abbey Tavern makes an excellent finishing point or alternatively the pub at the DART station. Definitely a walk to be repeated by the "C" team again, preferably during the summer.

Brian Brennan

Walking in the land of the Cathars

The province of Aude in the Languedoc in the South of France is beautiful, wild and rugged, with soaring mountains and dense forests, deep red soil, extensive vineyards, picturesque villages...and Cathar castles perched like eagles' nests on the tops of high mountains.

It is a remote and peaceful land, bathed in warm sunshine, and a visitor could easily feel that it has always been so. However, in the 13th century, this lovely countryside was the scene of one of the cruellest and most shameful events in the history of the Catholic Church, and one for which it has never apologised - the Albigensian Crusade, in which tens of thousands of people were tortured, burned and massacred for their beliefs. They called themselves Cathars (meaning "pure") - Rome called them Arians, Albigensians and heretics. Their only crime was to refuse to submit to the orthodoxy of the Roman Church and their punishment was total annihilation. There are no Cathars today, but their memory remains deeply engrained in the folklore and language of the region, a language called Occitan. They left nothing but some texts, and those amazing castles.

Our six days' hike was to take us along a waymarked path called the Sentier des Cathares or the Way of the Cathars. It takes in a variety of scenery - forest, mountain, gorge, village, river as well as a hard climb up to two or three of the hilltop castles. Our accommodation was in "gîtes" or farmhouses, varying in comfort from the fairly basic to the comfortable, and providing an evening meal, breakfast and a packed lunch. Our gear was moved on each day, so we just had to carry our rucksacks on each of the hikes.

We spent the first night near the tiny hamlet of Bouriège, south of Carcassonne, and set out the next morning to walk through a limestone landscape, into the valley of the Aude River. This was followed by a steep climb up to the hilltop village of Rennes-le-Chateau, a tiny place, but one with a curious mystery.

About 100 years ago, the parish priest was renovating the church, and discovered mysterious encoded parchments inside a pillar. He took these to his superiors, who sent him to Paris, where he met with

delegates from the Vatican and the nobility of Europe. When he returned to Rennes-le-Chateau, he had changed completely. He started spending money on a vast scale, in carrying out elaborate building projects, redecorating the Church in a most bizarre and grotesque fashion and building a library. Yet he never disclosed the source of his wealth, and when he died, he was revealed to be penniless.

The locals today have various theories - that he discovered the Treasure of the Temple of Jerusalem, or a secret so detrimental to the history of the Catholic Church that he blackmailed the Vatican with it, and was paid to keep quiet. Others say that he also secretly became a Cathar. Whatever the truth, the source of his wealth remains to this day a mystery.

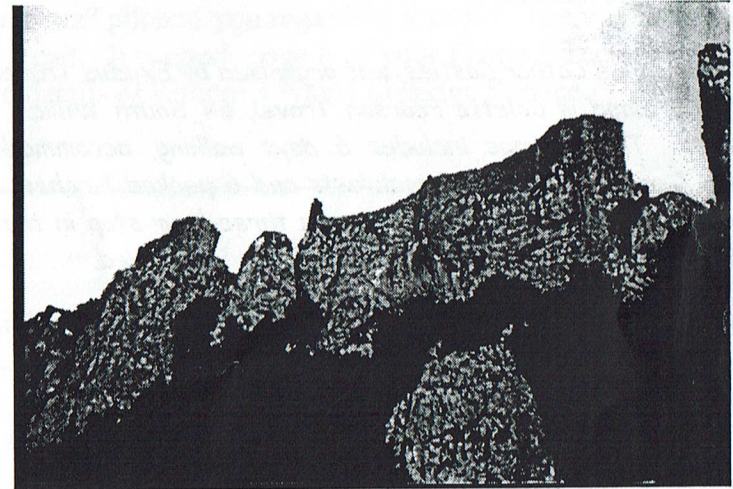
From Rennes-le-Chateau the view is spectacular - in the distance the jagged peaks of the Pyrenees rise above the nearer Corbière Mountains. A few miles away, the isolated peak of Pech de Bugarach rises sheer from the plain to a height of 1,230 metres, while below us stretched miles of vineyards, their soil a rich red colour. Here and there lay small villages with their red tiled roofs and yellowish stone walls.

The highlight of our third day was the climb to the top of the Pech de Bugarach. It was hot, the track was steep, but on the lower slopes it zig-zagged through forest, which provided some welcome shade. Higher up, the going was more difficult, and we ended up scrambling over rocky outcrops for the last few hundred metres. At last, four hours after we started, we reached the summit, only to find a cloud of flying ants had arrived there before us, and prevented us, to a large extent, from enjoying the feeling of having made it, not to mention spoiling our photographs! A steep two-hour descent brought us to the hamlet of Le Linas, where we gladly refilled our water bottles at the village pump.

We left our gîte the next morning, to be accompanied on the first part of our journey by a wild boar, a pet, owned by the owners of the gîte! After reaching the boundary of its domain, it trotted back and left us to walk unaccompanied through the beautiful Gorges de Galamus, a steep-sided ravine cut by the river Agly through the limestone

landscape typical of the region. The road wound its way through the gorge about halfway up from the river at the bottom to the cliff at the top, and in places cut through the rock so that the ceiling overhung us with a clearance of only about 3 metres. As we rounded a bend, we were surprised to see a tiny hermitage carved into the rock, below the road but above the highest level the river can reach during a flood. Later our path brought us upward through scrubland to emerge in a valley with breathtaking views of two of the most important Cathar Castles - Quéribus and Peyrepertuse, perched like fortresses on the highest ridges.

Our next day's walk took us up a steep, narrow path to Peyrepertuse, a castle shaped like the prow of a ship, running along the top of an 800m



high crag. From below it looks almost inaccessible, and it is easy to see how it was never besieged during the Albigensian Crusade. It fell, however, to French forces in 1240, through negotiation rather than force of arms, and was then used as a base to harass the remaining Cathars in the region.

On our final day, we climbed to another castle - Termes - near the village of the same name. It held out boldly against Simon de Montfort in 1210, eventually succumbing for lack of water. 140 Cathars were burned here. In Villerouge-Termenès, our next stop, the castle had

been recently restored, and housed an audio-visual exhibition telling the story of Guillaume Bélibaste, the last of the Cathars to be tried by the Inquisition; he was captured and burned alive here in 1321.

I suppose it was fitting to finish our trek in a village where a period of history also ended. We had walked about 100 kms in the six days, through a variety of scenery, visited numerous villages and talked to some of the people. We had also learned a little about a religion relatively unknown in modern times, which in its various forms had held sway over much of southern Europe in the Middle Ages. In an era of violence it preached peace and tolerance, and in this land of Occitania its memory lives on in those lofty memorials to those who died so cruelly for their beliefs.

This trek, called Cathar Castles, was organised by Exodus Travel. Their agent in Ireland is Colette Pearson Travel, 64 South William Street, Dublin 2. The package includes 6 days walking, accommodation in "gîtes", 7 evening meals, 7 breakfasts and 6 packed lunches. Flights are to and from Toulouse airport and a three-hour stop in the city of Carcassonne on the return trip to the airport is included.

Carol Behan

Dublin City Marathon

David Brennan wishes to thank The Trekkers Mountaineering and Walking Club and all the members of the Club who sponsored him recently. He walked the Dublin City Marathon in 6 hours 15 minutes and raised £700 at the same time for the Irish Cancer Society. Well done David.

Missed Calls?

How many times have you been away from home when a member of the "Trekkers" phoned you regarding a walk? There is now no need to miss a call. Just check page 8 of your Phone Directory where you will find details of Eircom's Phone Message Service.

Conservation Notes

"The higher the fewer" is an old saying with special relevance to hillwalking. As we climb out of the Wicklow valleys we find that the natural vegetation turns from fern to heather and furze. Sedges and coarse grass replace denser cover, particularly in high undrained ground. On the heights of Lugnaquilla a hardy sward of short grasses is all that covers stony soil. These changes relate to the increasingly severe conditions as ground rises. At higher levels increasing cloud and rainfall combine with a much shorter season for the growth of grass and other cover. All this makes for very slow regrowth of damaged vegetation. So please take care not to extend such damage when you walk in high areas. Don't tread down the sides of established tracks, walk centrally on them as far as possible. Even though this may seem a muddy alternative it helps to sustain the trackway, and sustainable recreation is what we need for the future.

"O What A Lovely Day"

The intrepid group of "walkers" alighted from the bus on the seafront in Bray. Suddenly another member of the group appears. . . alighting from a car. "Sorry I missed the bus", he said. Sorry? I glare at him. "Well you should have let me know you would be late." He shrugs it off and we get started. Around Bray Head we trek, with its magnificent views down the cliffs, as we head for Greystones. We stop for a breather. "This is the scene of Ireland's worst train crash," says Dick Needham and he goes on to relate what happened. Suddenly a voice from the back "are you sure about all this?" "Well as far as I'm aware it was," says Dick. "I think you're wrong," says the voice from the back. "Ireland's worst train crash was in Co. Armagh." Confusion reigns. It's agreed maybe the Armagh disaster is the worst one.

Off we go, reaching Greystones nearly an hour later. A recovery stop takes place in "Poppy's" coffeeshop and the long haul to Wicklow Town gets underway. This is a delightful walk on a fine summers day with its panoramic view of the sea, sky and distant hills. Near Newcastle we break for lunch and shortly after a seal is spotted basking in shallow water a few yards off shore. The weather is magnificent. Not a cloud in the sky

and we're beginning to feel the heat. Just as we decide to stop for a short break, away in the distance we see another group of walkers. It's the "Trekks C Team" who started in Kilcoole. "We'll catch them shortly," I announce, but just as I say it John Furey realises he has lost his glasses. He has an idea where and goes back with David Kirker.

Keeping the "C" team in sight we head onwards and shortly after John and David catch up. John has recovered his glasses and all is well.

Half an hour later we overhaul the "C" team. Are they striding purposefully forward? Not on your "Aunt Nelly". There they are lolling around taking their ease while two other "Trekks" go swimming. Less than an hour later and we're all enjoying drinks in the Bridge Tavern.

O what a lovely day and our seaside walk finished for another year.

Brian Brennan

WALK LEADERS
January – June 2000

DATE	WALK	LEADER 1	LEADER 2	LEADER 3
8 th January	A	D. Kirker	R. Doyle	
	C	K. Pierce	J. Brandon	N. O'Reilly
22 nd January	B	E. Logan	F. English	R. Crowley
5 th February	B	Mike Sims	Maeve Sims	T. Tuttle
12 th February	A	J. Furey	G. Barry	C. Mangan
	C	D. Ryan	C. Dorgan	M. Beegan
26 th February	B	R. Kirker	K. Moore	C. Brandon
4 th March	A	P. Owens	K. Pierce	J. Furey
11 th March	A	C. Hannon	E. Gallagher	B. Lane
	C	H. Jack	C. Stephens	M. Berthiaume
25 th March	B	J. Moore	M. Byrne	M. Lane
1 st April	B	F. Mulloy	L. Walsh	J. Brandon
8 th April	A	M. Condon	B. McKean	R. Doyle
	C	R. Needham	H. Fitzpatrick	M. Forde
Dates to be Confirmed		APRIL WEEKEND		
23 rd April	B	T. Gillan	Mike Sims	T. Tuttle
6 th May	B	D. O'Hegarty	J. Brett	C. Stephens
13 th May	A	F. Trant	C. Behan	P. Owens
	C	R. Needham	M. O'Duffy	A. Keegan
27 th May	A	B. Bracken	D. Kirker	L. Walsh
	C	M. Dorgan	D. Ryan	M. O'Duffy
3 rd June	B	P. O'Duffy	J. Needham	N. O'Reilly
10 th June	A	E. Gallagher	M. Tinsley	K. Trant
	C	Maeve Sims	D. Brennan	M. Berthiaume
Dates to be Confirmed		JUNE WEEKEND		