

May 2016 - Issue 58

Irish Trekker



Art's Cross

Trekkers Mountaineering Club
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Chairperson's Greeting

Hi Trekkers,

It is wonderful to see the evenings have stretched out and are brighter and the weather has improved for the Spring and on into the Summer. The past few months have been active in the club. We had the Memorial Event in April - It is an important event in our calendar and the turnout on the day was excellent.

We had a trip to the Slieve Bloom Mountains led by Brendan Bracken and Dick Ryan with the assistance of many other members. Congratulations to all on a very successful day. The trip to the Sierra Nevada Mountains in Spain was very successful. On this occasion we had the largest number travelling, 13 in all. The walking was demanding on occasions, in particular at the highest point, 2,500m, when we crossed small snow fields.

We have our **Summer Party** coming up on the 18th June in the St. George Yacht Club, Dun Laoghaire. The party will be combined with a presentation of Honorary Life Member Certificates to members who have reached 80 years of age. Their names will be detailed on the web site and membership fees will no longer be required.

We can look forward to a trip to the **Carlingford** area in September which is being organised by Geraldine Boland with the assistance of Terry and Noreen O'Brien. Watch out for e-mails on this subject. - Shay

Welcome

Welcome to recently joined members - we wish you long and happy trekking.

- John Bolton
- Mary Dorgan
- Anne Marie Duggan
- Frances Gillen
- Anne Hanley
- Noel Kelly
- Carmel Meade
- Frances O'Rourke
- Vicki Robinson

Date to Remember

18th June

Summer Party

St. George's
Yacht Club
Dunlaoghaire

AWAY TRIP

Geraldine, Noreen & Terry are organising a Trekkers away trip to **the Cooley's, County Louth.**

(Sept. 9th to 11th.)

Category C

Already largely booked but cancellations happen

See Emmet Oliver's email of April 26th

Ethiopia

Emmet circulated (11th May) information on an Ethiopian trip organised by **Africa Direct** (africadirect.ie) which Anne Hayes undertook in 2014 and which will happen again in October. It funds developmental work as well as being an amazing trip. Anne gave a fascinating account of her journey in the **Trekker issue January 2015**.

Training

Owen has completed two **Navigation** courses and a third is scheduled for 11th June. They are much appreciated and vital, particularly for leaders.

Three **First Aid** courses have been given by the **Order of Malta**. An evening one is to be provided on Monday 27th June. These are excellent and very informative.

Tip from First Aid Briefing:

Nose Bleed: *Do not put head back, this can kill you.* Sit, clamp the nostril, lean forward for 10 minutes.

Faint: This is due to insufficient blood to the brain: lay victim on the ground with raised legs and loosened clothing. Patient generally recovers after 3 minutes.

Editor's Note

Thanks to all who contributed to this issue of the Irish Trekker. We have an account of the recent trip to the Sierra Nevada compiled by Dympna Thunder, Mary Murphy and Pat Chapman with photographs by Fiona O'Sullivan and Jim Bourke; Joe Devine recounts everyone's dream - conquering Kilimanjaro. Emmet gives us a taste of the Civil War in a piece on the Noel Lemass monument. We have the winner of the Caption Competition, to whom goes a free bus trip. A few tips from the 1st Aid briefing are included - to be continued. Thanks to Myles, Ita, Owen, Breda, Fionna, Jim, for photographs - Enjoy, Niall

Walking in the Sierra Nevada April 2016

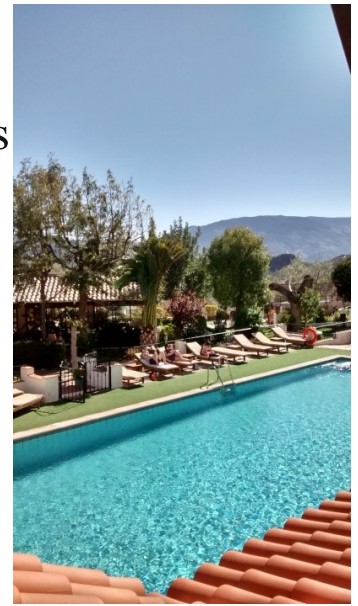
Dympna Thunder Mary Murphy Pat Chapman

Photography: Fiona O'Sullivan Jim Bourke

Lunch by the beach on day 1 in the beautiful resort of Salobrenca was a great start to the holiday, followed by a swim in the pool in the lovely gardens of the charming Alcademia hotel.

Each day's walks proved to be totally unique and different, we encountered orange groves, almond, cherry and olive plantations, we crossed deep ravines, high peaks and snow filled gullies.

Assembling for the first walk in beautiful sunshine watching the swallows swooping over the pool was a good omen for the week to come.



Day 2 started walking into and out of a deep gorge of the Rio Durcal.

We wound our way through some stunning rock scenery. Leaving the gorge we picked up narrow paths by the acequia (water channels that bring water from the mountains to the villages below) skirting almond groves and vineyards to the old Arab watch tower at Atalya which was the highest point of the day.



Descending through orange groves provided rich pickings and delicious oranges for everyone; we finished up with refreshments on a sunny terrace in a little village of Conchar.



Day 3 highlights included passing a Buddhist retreat centre with its shrines; life sizes icons and prayer wheels. At lunch by a big pond we were serenaded by a chorus of mating frogs, which needless to say encouraged some lively conversation. We ended up in the village of Sopotujar renowned locally for its witches.



Day 4 we took a break from walking which provided the opportunity for those who wanted it to go to Granada and visit the amazing Alhambra.



The others headed for to the beach and a delicious seafood lunch with an assortment of deep sea creatures including octopus.

Day 5 we completed a high circuit of Lanjaron, passing the Honey museum, the area is renowned for the production of this sweet treat.

We picked our way through forests above the town and along paths surrounded by an array of lovely spring flowers.

Mike and Jane kindly invited us to lunch on the terrace of their unique mountain retreat high above the town with spectacular views of the surrounding countryside.



Day 6 we took off up corkscrew roads, finally on dirt track, to 2176 meters above the village of Capileira. Initially the walk passed through forests with evidence of wild boar, despite trepidation we didn't spot any and soon came out onto a spectacular ridge to reach our high point

of Alto del Chorillo at 2700m. This afforded magnificent views of snow-capped mountains and the village of Trevelez, the highest in Spain.

From here we descended on paths, at times crossing snow filled gullies, to the remote Refugio Poqueira where we lunched in the sunshine.

On the walk we encountered a herd of Iberian Ibex, wild horses and were serenaded by sky larks.

Everyone was delighted to complete what was a challenging but spectacular walk, one not to be missed.



Day 7 and the weather Gods finally decided that we had too much of a good thing and provide a "little" rain. However we had coffee in a whitewashed village, visited an ancient Arab spring in the village square. On the way back to Lanjaron we stopped to look at a trio of spectacular bridges ravine, that spanned the centuries, the earliest of which was constructed by the Romans.

After a leisurely lunch in the hotel the weather improved in the afternoon and some people ended the week with a walk around the town climbing up to the old castle.



Others chose more leisurely pursuits and availed of the delights of the town Spa.



Many thanks to Shay for organising such a terrific week's walking and to Jane and Mike for being great guides.

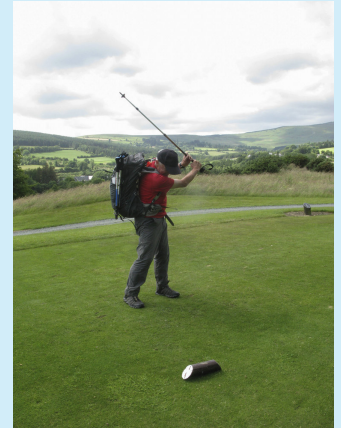
Caption Competition

Many thanks to those who entered the competition. The entries are:

"Fore" - John Murphy

Men can also multi task! - Brendan

"Well, I'll give it a go. Who knows! Maybe I'll be a natural. Maybe I'll have ability. Maybe I'll ... hold on. Isn't there supposed to be a ball here or something?" - Dermot



Now, I'd like to see him climb the hills with his clubs!! - Gail

Go on Gimme a lash, don't be brash..... Get a 'whole' lot in one.... have fun... don't be a worm burner.... join the Trekkers and let your feet do the walking! - Georgina

"Look what I can do with my new walking poles!" - Áine

Again the Committee had differing views but the Winner is **Dermot.**

A couple occurring to the editor are: *"I'm damned if I'll leave no trace!"*; or *"Demonstrating the number zero iron"*.

Tip from First Aid Briefing:

CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation): Pump chest between nipples, **100-120 per minute**, 40 kilos of pressure, compressing chest 5 cms, **straight arm locked elbow**, one hand on the other, shoulders directly above hands using upper body weight as well as arms. Do **30 compressions**, then 2 breaths & **repeat until help comes** - expect vomiting.

***Better to do something rather than nothing**,*

in case of cardiac arrest (ashen face, cold skin, no breath or response) even if untrained - patient has 3 minutes of oxygen

Kilimanjaro- what can I say!!!

Joe Devine

Around 7am on June 27th, the group I was with, led by Pat Falvey and Freddie Tarimo, summited Uhuru Peak (5,895metres high) - Mount Kilimanjaro (“Kili”). It was an amazing feeling but a tough experience all round. The walk and climb over the 5 days to the summit are fine - it is the altitude that gets you and effects everyone differently once you get above 3000 metres.



Anyway, back to the beginning. Some of the trekkers and other hiking friends recommended Kili to me so I bit the bullet in January 2015 and committed to go with Pat in June as he was going to be on the trip himself. I went out a week earlier as I decided to climb (walk) up **Mount Meru** (4,566 metres) the second highest mountain in Tanzania and I think the 6th highest in Africa. I decided I would do this to acclimatise for Kili and it certainly worked out well. Over four days, Freddie, his brother Abel and his son Emmanuel walked slowly up Meru with me. There were three other small groups so we largely had Meru to ourselves. Freddie had briefed me on weather, clothes, food, day bag and overnight bag before we set off. I think it is fair to say that the guides get you up these mountains. They watch out for signs of altitude sickness, and take your day bag if you are struggling and give you tea and biscuits if you need a lift. Before leaving Moshi for Meru I caught my first sight of Kili and wondered how we were ever going to get up it. It looked huge from 20kms or so away.

Meru is in a national park with buffalo, baboons, zebra, ants and other wildlife and as the buffalo can sometimes be awkward you must take a ranger with loaded gun along for the first two days until you get above the jungle phase.

A packed lunch of sandwich, bananas and bars with juice is provided each day. On our first day on Meru we walked 17k and reached 2,600 metres in about 5 hours before arriving at the hut at 2,510 metres. You could see Kili in the distance above the clouds and over the plains - amazing sight.

After an easy enough first day, the guys supply a basin of hot water to wash and a pot of tea, biscuits and popcorn to tide you over to dinner. We were in Huts on Meru but would camp on Kili. Dinner served at

6pm was soup, chicken, meat or pasta or rice and potatoes and fruit. Pat has trained the chefs up to cater for the energy and dietary requirements of the Irish!

We were in Huts on Meru but would camp on Kili. Dinner served at 6pm was soup, chicken, meat or pasta or rice and potatoes and fruit. Pat has trained the chefs up to cater for the energy and dietary requirements of the Irish! The daily routine is the same: 6am call, 6.30am cup of tea, 7am bowl of hot water, 7.30 breakfast most days is local porridge which needs a lot of jam stirred in, eggs and tea and toast. We would usually leave around 8ish.

Meru is a volcano so we will walk up to the rim for two days and then summit day involves traversing the rim until you get we got to the peak.

I had a “once in a lifetime” moment on day 2 as I saw the sun rising over Kili in the east with not a cloud in the sky- amazing sight.

We walked up 1000 metres on the first 5.6km so I guess that was an 18 degree/percent climb so it was slow (4.5hours)- new African catchphrase which stuck with us for the trip “*Poly Poly*”(slowly slowly).

We got to the hut at 3,570 metres and after a break went up little Meru at 3,800 to see the views, another 300 metres but straight up over 1.75km. We returned down to 3,570 metres to sleep and acclimatise.

Lights were out at 6.45pm the night of Meru summit attempt. The route is from Saddle hut (3570m) to Rhino Point(3800m) to Cobra point (4350m) and Socialist Peak (kid you not at 4566m). Back down to Saddle Hut and on down to the first night hut (23km in total). Freddie warned me that I would need 4



layers of clothes on top and 3 on the bottom but it was too much as real cold weather didn't materialise. I got woken at midnight and got walking at 1.15am. The altitude kicked in around 4000m and I felt lightheaded, nauseous and tired so Freddie gave me tea and biscuits along the way. As we approached the top it got very cold so layers went back on. We summited at 6.15am - it was misty. As we came down and the light cleared the scenery on the volcano rim was

stunning - the sheer walls on one side kept one focused. Got back down to Saddle Hut for an hours kip and food and then walked on down to hut at 2510m so that the body could get the oxygen back on board. After dinner, sleep and breakfast we walked in the mist down through the African bush to pick up the transport to town where I had the rest of the day and the following day free before the rest of the group came from Dublin.

In Moshi there are caves, markets, golf and places to massage tiredlegs and of course great coffee and really good vegetarian and Indian restaurants, so filling the couple of days was not a problem.

The group arrived with Pat Falvey and included Kevin **(soon to be the oldest Irish man at 80 to summit Kili)** and his two sons Feargal and Cathal, Sarah and her son Daniel, Emma and Columba, Roisin and Ciaran, Daniel, Ruta, Sarah and Daithi. It started off as a collection of individuals and ended up as a cohesive group all pulling in the same direction with one objective!!!It was a great exercise in the formation of a group and probably worthy of a case study in how a group bonds in the face of a challenge.



After dinner and a briefing from Freddie and Abel we hit the beds full of anticipation for the days ahead. Pat takes the extra day to acclimatise (five days before summit day) and he takes the Machame route and camps all the way. After getting processed at Machame gate we headed off through the rain forest to Machame Camp. No rain thankfully in the rain forest and day 1 was very comfortable.

Next day we headed to Shira camp at 3760m. Since I was acclimatised to 4600m I knew the altitude was unlikely to affect me for another 2 or three days which made for a leisurely hike! We left the rain forest behind and went into alpine meadows. The light at Shira was stunning. The characters were starting to emerge in the group and the four twenty something's were mad and kept us laughing for hours on end.

Day 3 was one of the tough ones as we were going up to the lava towers at 4637m before descending to Baranco Camp at 3850m to sleep. You are right under Kili and it dominates these days and looks more formidable as each day progresses. Three of the group felt the impact of the altitude so I gave them Diamox and lucozade tablets which helped. Even if you are poorly you must keep eating and drinking as energy is paramount. Oh did I say Diamox was a diuretic

so plenty of trips to chemical toilet during the night when temp was below zero! Everyone has an opinion on Diamox, whether you use it all or just take it if you feel the effects. I took it from the day before I started on Meru but who can say whether you would suffer without taking it.

Next day we climbed up the Baranco wall over boulders and steep inclines but the scenery was spectacular and we had loads of photos taken as we were all pleased with ourselves. We finally arrived at Karanga camp at 4035m (altitude below our peak of the previous day). The anticipation was mounting as tomorrow we have a short trip to base camp at Barafa.

On day 5, we got a lie in until 7.30am and a short walk to Barafa at 4650m. You could see all the way over to Meru across the plains but above the clouds and it was odd thinking I had been over there about 10 days ago. We had an acclimatising walk today from the camp on what was going to be our route that night, which was very helpful as we then knew what was ahead of us for the first couple of hours.



Finally the Summit attempt - after considering all possible wardrobe requirements we got going just before midnight. It was very tough walking above 5000m as the altitude sickness kicked in. Your sole focus is putting one foot in front of the other and stepping in tandem with the guy ahead. Temperatures dropped to between minus 5 and minus 15 before dawn so all the layers were on. The 1300m ascent from base camp is literally straight up. We got to Stella Point which is on the top of Kili crater and left our gear for the 45 minute hike on to Uruhu peak at 5896m- Africa's highest peak.

We were all wrecked but emotional as all 14 had made it. Camera battery had frozen but phone worked so a few quick photos before heading back to Stella as it was too cold to hang around given the wind and ice fields. Tried to sleep at Stella but the guides were not having any of it.

It is amazing how the body recovers and as the temperatures rose we were soon flying down shale/scree back to camp for drinks and a kip before heading down to below 4000m where bodies are more

comfortable. It took us 7 hours to get up to top in the dark and cold and 2/3 hours to get back down in warm sunlight.

On day 7 our support group of 45 guys bade us farewell. They were amazing- 3 Africans for every European- and we would not have got up there without them. There were porters, cooks, waiters, guides and they all had their role to play. The logistics of hauling everything for 60-70km is mind-blowing particularly when you go above 4000m and there is no water supply- think about it.



Pat asked me to say a few words on behalf of the group and I thanked them all for their support and help but particularly the seven that pushed, shoved, dragged and cajoled us up the summit and helped us achieve our dream as we couldn't have done it without them. We knew there was no circumstance Freddie hadn't seen in the 20+ years of taking groups up Kili. He was ever vigilant watching out for tell-tale signs of exhaustion or the effects of altitude.

That night we partied hard and got our certificate to prove we had just completed one of the 7 Summits of the World. It was an emotional return to Africa for me after 29 years. I love Africa, the pace of life, the climate, the people and I will go back. Tanzania was great and the coffee in Union Café in Moshi is to die for.

The experience was amazing, scary, exhilarating, challenging, satisfying, tough and exhausting but I would recommend it- JUST DO IT.



Tip from First Aid Briefing: - Diabetes

Diabetics can experience hypoglycemia (blood sugar less than 4 mmol/l) if they take more exercise than normal. Symptoms include shakiness, dizziness, fatigue, sweating, headache, cold/numb hands or feet. Needs sugar, candy, fruit juice, glucose tablets, not chocolate (because of fat). Best is drink with glucose such as sports fitness drink. Christmas cake good for slow release.

Places We Pass - the Noel Lemass Monument

Emmet Oliver

The Dublin mountains harbour many dark secrets.

From the secrets of war and rebellion created many centuries ago to the ghoulish secrets of more recent decades, the hills around our capital city could tell a story or three if they were able to talk.

Many of the walks undertaken by the Trekkers weave around this history. Sometimes we have time to stop, pause and reflect on the history we pass through, other times we're oblivious to it as we meander past old rocks or seemingly empty fields or bog.



Much of this history revolves around the tragic, and often violent, history of the fight for Irish independence. Unfortunately, in line with the practice in many wars and conflicts around the world, mountains tend to be unofficial burials ground for bodies during such blood stained events.

Such was the case on October 12, 1923, when the body of 25-year-old Captain Noel Lemass was found by police in an area we Trekkers know very well, the Featherbed Bog, not far from Glencree. He was the older brother of Noel Lemass, later to become the Taoiseach of Ireland.

Of more importance in terms of his death was that he was a former participant in the Easter Rising and the War of Independence and more crucially in the Irish Civil War, although his precise role in this conflict has never been made entirely clear, although he is believed to have been in the Four Courts when that conflict got underway.

According to the official biography of his brother Sean by Dr John Horgan, Noel's body was found with two gun shots to the head. Clear evidence of torture and mutilation to the body has also been suggested in many other accounts.

But while certain facts of his death are known, much more of what happened that year remains secret and most likely will forever

That is why when Trekker members often stop by the memorial statute to Captain Noel Lemass on a blustery winter walk, there is only so much one can reflect on.

Yes we can think upon the tragedy of a young man's death (Lemass had been an apprentice engineer with the Great Southern Railway) and also reflect on the brutalities of the Irish civil war, but much of what happened Captain Noel Lemass in those final months is not known.

For example why exactly was he killed and by whom? Some say it was linked to incidents during the Irish Civil War, but what were they? Was his body meant to be found? More perplexing of all, why was he killed as part of the Irish Civil War, when that war had actually ended by official ceasefire (May 24th) before he was kidnapped in the street by a group of man in plain clothes in June 1923.

That date is most alarming. Kidnapped in June, Lemass was only killed (and then found) sometime in early October. Where was he during those intervening summer months? If he was being tortured etc, it is frightening to think of how long the period he may have been a victim of such treatment.

Most historians who have studied the period and the killing of Lemass believe he was most likely the victim of Free State forces, possibly the Criminal Investigation Division, which operated during the Irish Civil War period against the so-called Irregulars, or anti-Treaty forces. The Criminal Investigation Division had a reputation for ruthlessness and the death of Lemass may have simply been a case of score-settling, albeit, a bloody form.

What Trekkers may not realise is, the current memorial site (and its predecessors) was visited annually for many years, indeed decades, by members of Fianna Fail and others with a sympathy for the Lemass family. In fact Sean Lemass himself used to lay a wreath at the site in the early decades of the free state.

From accounts in the Irish papers the annual event to commemorate the death was a big affair with lots of cars and buses going to the Featherbed and this was supplemented by many who walked there to pay their respects to their fallen comrade Noel.

The site has unfortunately been vandalised in the past, and nowadays it sits rather forlornly just off the main road (R115) in the bog area. However while the location and setting is bleak, the story of Noel

Lemass is interesting on two additional levels.

One is obviously what might have been. What could Lemass senior have achieved if he had lived- would he have ended up Taoiseach in later decades rather than his brother Sean? He was clearly a big figure in this bloody period, otherwise one wonders why he was abducted and shot at all.

But the more than that, was how his brother Sean reacted to his death and how he reacted to his presumed assassins in later life. That is probably the only uplifting chapter of this sorry story- that from the death of Noel Lemass sprang a strange sense of forgiveness between the bitter enemies of the Civil War period.

Sean Lemass was rarely asked about the death of his brother. The one time he was, later in life, he simply said: ``Terrible things were done by both sides. I'd prefer not to talk about it''.

However at a race meeting in the 1930s he is believed to have willingly shaken the hand of a person who was implicated in the death of his brother Noel. While Sean Lemass never forgot his brother's memory- he had a photograph of him on the mantelpiece in his Dublin home- he learned to compromise with the painful memories of Civil War era and move on. Ireland did too, in ways.

That is probably the most uplifting reflection we can have when visiting the memorial today as we weave around the sometimes dark history these mountains possess.

Places we pass

In the course of our walks we pass numerous places of interest and frequently the leader or other worthy provides fascinating insights concerning them. We have tried to capture some of these in the *Trekker* and hope they are of interest to you and may be helpful if you want to enliven your own walk.

Places covered in previous *Trekkers* are:

Dublin 18th century architects, Jan. 2016;

St. Anne's Graveyard, Glenasmole, Sept. 2015;

Gossan Stones, May 2015;

Avondale, Jan. 2015;

Mining at Glendalough, Sept. 2014; Miners' Village, May 2014;

Askinagap Tragedy, Jan. 2014;

You can access these on the website.

PHOTOS



Turlough Hill



Memorial Day



Navigation Exercise



Slieve Bloom



Slieve Bloom



Hazelhatch