



The Trekker

Trekkers Mountainering Club Glenageary Co Dublin www.trekkers.ie

Edition 63
July 2018

THE FLEAS THAT TEASE IN THE HIGH PYRENEES

The idea for this trip came in Easter 2017, at the end of our trip to the Cathar castles; when I counted the group onto the bus for Carcassonne airport, and found that we hadn't lost anybody!

Have to try harder the next time, and the Pyrenees would be a perfect spot to lose a few! So, Josephine and I headed for the Pyrenees in July 2017, to recce out walks that we had identified through the internet. Due to difficulty in getting sufficient rooms at hotels, a lack of air-conditioning in those hotels who would take our group, and the savagery of the mosquitoes, we decided to change the timing of the trip to Easter 2018. 40 people signed up for the trip,



which was to be of eight-day duration. Having endured the 'Beast from the East', we were in form for a holiday, so roll on Easter. Weather forecasts were promising, so hopes were rising, that is, if you discount the -18° forecast for the Cirque de Gavarnie for the Sunday, when we were due to be there. A certain amount of planning went into organising the trip, but this was as nothing, compared to that by Brian Snow, who somehow arranged to be have been born 70 years to the day from the start of the trip. This achievement was marked with a cake and a candle at dinner on the first night. [Continued on Page 4](#)

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Chairman Notes

The last five months have been a vigorous period for the Club with a great variety of activities available to members.

One-day Walk Leadership Workshops were undertaken in March and April in Glenmalure hosted by tutor Charles O'Byrne, each catering for six trainees in a blend of classroom and mountain settings.

The inaugural Map-reading & Navigation Training Course got under way in April with 16 trainees who participated in two classroom sessions and two practical navigation sessions in the mountains.

Club members have enjoyed two superb away trips. Michael and Josephine Cotter conceived and led a most interesting and varied week-long trekking trip in each of the three Basque provinces of France.

The trip in early May, led by Terry and Noreen O'Brien, to The Burren was enjoyed immensely by all 34 participants. They climbed to the summit of Mullaghmore along the south-eastern side passing through open spans of limestone pavement and observed the unique array of plants that thrive in this. The Ballyvaughan Wood Loop brought Trekkers into the vicinity of the Aillwee Cave, while the Cliffs of Moher coastal path from Hag's Head to Doolin offered spectacular view of the wild Atlantic ocean crashing ashore.

Mary Murphy and Una Davis are exploring the possibility of a 3-day hiking trip at B Level in north Connemara beginning on 7th September while Paddy MacManus is leading a group on a walk in Yorkshire in late September.

Patricia Byrne, leading for the first time, created an itinerary for the Wednesday Walkers that included a fascinating guided tour of the Memorial Gardens in islandbridge; a relaxing walk along the bank of the Liffey to the Phoenix Park via Chapelizod, where Ordnance Survey Ireland warmly welcome the group and made a presentation on the history of map making in Ireland and the underlying technology. Some were surprised to discover that in 1847 Ireland was the first country in the world to be

mapped entirely.

A, attractive new Trekker logo has been created by Publicity Officer, Mary Murphy. This initiative is part of wider initiative for the Club to foster its public identity.

Club members have been advised of their rights under the General Data Protection Regulation which became effective on 25th May.

A number of Trekkers who have given sterling service to the Club over many years will be honoured with Honorary Life Membership at the Members Summer Party in the National Yacht Club on 14 July. This event will also present an opportunity to present the inaugural Trant Fellowship. The Fellowship is intended to become the Club's supreme accolade that would be presented be offered sparingly and rarely to an individual whose contribution to mountaineering and organized hill walking has been noteworthy and extraordinary.

We have been delighted to welcome new Trekkers Ann Kelly, Ailish Kane, Jimmy Cahill, Ann Keenan, Frieda Finlay, Denis Byrne, Indre Lukosiute and Emer Spillane and hope that they derive much pleasure from the membership of Trekkers. Gail Clark resigned her membership when she returned to Canada.

Myles Duffy
29 June 2018

Welcome our newest members



Jimmy Cahill



Ailish Kane



Anne Kelly



Ann Keenan



Freda Finlay



Denis Byrne



Emer Spillane

Editors Note

Welcome to the second edition of the Trekker magazine for 2018, with its mix of reports on recent trips and contributions from fellow Trekkers.

The content for this magazine relies on your input, photos and news, so keep them coming. A big thanks you to all who contributed to this edition. Appologies if your photograph, one of the vast number submitted, of the French trip wasn't used in the article !!!

High Viz Vests !!!

A gentle reminder to all Trekkers of the importance of having a High Viz Vest in your bag at all times. The majority of walks involve some sections of road walking, usually on small winding roads where the locals can come hurtling around corners at great speed. Vests can be ordered from the Road Safety Authority at no cost. Walking in single file is also essential.

Please send copy and photos to me at marylavellemurphy@gmail.com
Mary Murphy

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Weather forecasts were a great subject of conversation on the first night, as we waited to see what would unfold. Everyone said that the weather didn't matter. Such liars! So, on Saturday, we took on the walk to the suspension bridge, and it was hard to say whether there was more water in the river below than on the track, that we splashed through, to the top. When the requisite number of photos was taken, we headed back down and felt smug that we had been so brave, considering how wet we all got. We tried to ignore the flecks of snow in the rain. One down and plenty to go!

The second day we headed to the High Pyrenees, to Gavarnie, and were treated to lots of fresh snow from the previous day. We braved our way, in lovely sunshine, right up to the avalanche zone, and we witnessed a few of these, further into the valley, "Nature's Colosseum, according to Victor Hugo, as later reported to us by Myles. Lunch was had sitting in the snow, but the honours for today went to Kate McAree who did her "Snow Angel" exercise, back at a restaurant, on our

return towards the town. All the men on the walk stood out, if only for the fact that none of us put on sun screen, and despite the snow, we all shone like beacons with the sun burn from the most welcome sun on the day.

Monday was to be a trip to the Aspe valley and we all crowded into a one-carriage train and off we went. We walked first from Bedous to Accous, and

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on arrival we visited the church and were invited to hear a Pyrenees shepherd choir perform in the church. We did not have the nerve to answer with the "Fields of Athenry". Anyway, we suspect that the 20 or so verses of the first song were all a lament about a certain drop goal, scored a few weeks earlier in Paris. We later met a herd of sheep, but we will not mention these animals further.



Tuesday was the day for the Camino. We won't boast of doing it all, so don't push us on exactly how much of it we actually walked. We take a more holistic view of the event, and mere detail, such as how far we went, is quite beneath contempt! Suffice it to say that, at the end of our pilgrimage, some of the group strayed from the penitential nature of pilgrimage, with their deep-fried calamari,

middle of a gruelling climb. The good nature of the Trekkers was manifest by Pat Chapman, sharing his apple with a horse. A disaster over a lost purse was satisfactorily avoided by Patricia Byrne being eagle-eyed at the end of the walk. By now I was getting quite accomplished at counting up to 40, so to broaden my education, a few did not take the bus today, so I had to quickly learn how to count to 37.

On the prettiest walk at Ainhoe - nature came to our aid with a great flock of vultures, who distracted us in the middle of a gruelling climb

washed down with a cheeky white wine. Then on to the coast, to St. Jean de Luz, where Trish (a non-Trekker guest) matched Kate McAree's Snow Angel with the sand version. When another member of our group went paddling, some locals, out for their walk on the beach, on seeing her, buttoned their coats up to their chins. Wimps!

Wednesday was the day for the prettiest walk, at Ainhoe, and again, nature came to our aid, with a great flock of vultures, who distracted us in the

Thursday saw the group split up as regards walks, after we all had taken the Thomas the Tank Engine train to the top of La Rhune (907 metres). My counting to 37 needed more

work, and I failed to count the numbers walking down (minding mice at a cross roads, comes to mind). The braver souls took the return trip on the train, to continue their adventure, so I had to content myself by having "some" people doing the walk down. The braver ones, having taken the train back down, then walked from La Rhune to the distant village of Ascaïn, and then had the energy, and bravery to face back up the hill to the base of La Rhune. No wonder they were recuperating in a bar, when those who lazily strolled down the mountain,

had the temerity to join our brave companions.

Friday was the free day, and a number of old sea-dog Trekkers bravely took the 10 minute boat trip, minus passports, across to Spain (cost €1.90). Many were later seen in the seafood restaurants, down at sea level, with so sign from most of them, that they climbed up to the touristy places in Hondarribia. The most challenging aspect of the day was getting a taxi back to our hotel that evening. There must be an opening for retired Trekkers to take up a new vocation, as a taxi driver in Hendaye. Maybe, I'll do it myself.

Saturday, our day for travelling home, reminded us what rain looked like, and we clapped ourselves on the back for picking a week of such glorious weather. Off we headed for Bilbao airport, and I am now looking forward to Terry and Noreen's trip to Ballyvaughan, and just following the person in front of me. I hope this person knows where they are going! It is reported on the news this morning that there is a sudden severe shortage of rosé wine in the south west of France.

Any connection to our visit, I wonder ?



Social Walks Making Progress!

The new Social Walks initiative commenced earlier this year with the aim of having them about every 2 weeks.

They are leisurely walks on a flat path of about 4/5 kilometres and participants to date have found them very enjoyable. They are aimed at Retired and Convalescing Trekkers but are also open to any Trekker who from time to time wants a short 2 hour walk finishing around lunchtime for refreshments.

The first walks were to places accessible by Dart or Bus. Recently we pooled cars and went to Roundwood Reservoir. Highlight of that beautiful walk was while admiring the swans and sun reflecting on the water, Hilary spotted a large Heron by the trees across the lake. When Eugene leads a walk we are often treated to insights into the history of the district.

So it is good to know that if you can't make the hills you can always enjoy walking with Trekker companions.

Patricia Duffy

Wicklow Way

Four enthusiastic novice Trekkers – Georgina Bryan, Eileen Fitzmaurice, Vicki Robinson and Frances O'Rourke – walked three-quarters of the 132km-long Wicklow Way over two summers

This short piece about our adventures isn't a how-to guide but a brief description of what we did, how we got on, with some information at the end that could be useful to someone thinking of tackling the Wicklow Way. In August 2016, we walked from Oldbridge to Glenmalure over two days, with two overnight stays; in July 2017, we completed the walk from Glenmalure to Clonegal over four days and four overnights.

August 2016, Georgina drove us to Lynham's Hotel in Laragh, Co Wicklow, where we left our overnight bags, taking a pre-booked taxi back to Oldbridge. Day 1, we walked 10km from here to Glendalough, then walked back to Laragh for the night. The route is one familiar to most Trekkers, going up a spur of Scarr mountain, past an Adirondack shelter on



Paddock Hill before crossing the Sally Gap road and the Glenmacnass River, continuing down into Glendalough. The weather was hot, sunny, perfect as we trekked along through heather and gorse, pausing briefly at the Adirondack shelter before having lunch by the Glenmacnass, admiring the reflection of trees in the water. At the start, a young American had taken our group photo, bidding us to “have an awesome day”. And awesome it was, we all agreed, as we celebrated arriving in Glendalough with cool drinks on an outside deck before trudging back to Laragh for the night.

Day 2 was tougher: we made a few wrong turns before getting on the path to Glenmalure. OPW worker Joe patiently pointed us in the right direction, assuring us darkness would not fall til 9pm and that we’d make it. And so the long day began. . .

The road out of Glendalough leads steadily up through a not-so-interesting wide forest path. We lunched in drizzle, admiring (enviously) Vicki’s veiled anti-midge headgear. It was raining properly as we reached the boardwalk that heads around the shoulder of Mullacor, but beautiful vistas of cloudy mountain raised our spirits. The boardwalk leads to a steep rocky path, down through forest. Nerves were fraying as a promise – in Eileen’s guidebook – that there were only a few kms to go proved optimistic. The track seemed endless – and then we met a dogwalker who assured us we were nearly there.

Minutes later, we were downing G&Ts in the Glenmalure Lodge, swapping notes with a handsome young New Zealand hiker met earlier on the trail, before dinner, music and bed.

Day 3, we planned to walk the short (but steep) distance from here to the Shay Elliott car park. Emboldened by our achievement of the previous day, we decided we might walk all the way back to Laragh. A wrong turning and a wasted walk up a long forest path later, we retraced our steps, recalled the taxi booked to collect us at the car park. After some “jovial” abuse about indecisive women from the driver, we reached Laragh, collected our cases left in the hotel for safekeeping and headed home.

A year later, in July 2017, we got a lift to Glenmalure Lodge for the walk that would bring us to the end of the Wicklow Way in Clonegal.



Day 1, we planned to walk from Glenmalure to Iron Bridge, a 12km/14km hike through pretty hilly countryside, much of it through forest. We relied heavily on the yellow way markers – the little yellow man – as well as on maps to guide us. But somewhere near Aghavannagh – we think – we took a wrong turning, which led to too much road walking, an encounter with the Irish Army and 20km after setting out, to Ballyteige Lodge.

Owner Sean McArdle, a descendant of a nationalist surgeon John McArdle, who built it as a hunting lodge in 1900, was our host. Since moving here from London, he has run the lodge, a large country house on 20 acres in a valley that feels remote, although only a short distance from Aughrim. There were skirmishes on the lawn during the Civil War, says McArdle; nearby Aghavannagh Barracks, now owned by McArdle’s son, was once Parnell’s shooting lodge, then John Redmond’s house.

Day 2 after a full Irish breakfast and a swim in the crystal cold waters of the River Ow by Ballyteige Lodge set us up well for the day ahead. The rain stopped and temperatures rose. Just as one of our group decided to strip off too-hot leggings, there was a rumble – and a convoy of army lorries on war game manoeuvres bore down the wide forest path towards us.

Today’s walk would be 21km, from Iron Bridge to Tinahely, but getting back onto the Wicklow Way from the lodge wasn’t as easy as the guidebook

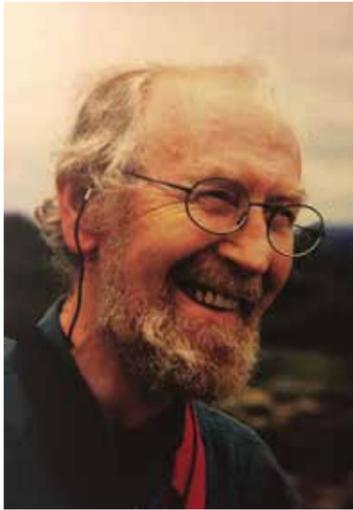
suggested. After meeting the Army we settled into a steady pace that brought us along forest paths to the Moyne turnoff. The second half of the walk to Tinahely took us through rolling grassland and by the hills of Ballycumber: elation crept in as we tramped across springy fields through drifting rain, sheep running up and away from the intruders, as we headed for Mangan’s Lane and our Tinahely guest-house. Elvis impersonator Cathal Byrne entertained in O’Connor’s pub that night, followed by trad music and Irish dancing . . . no one had trouble sleeping.

Day 3 was hot, and short. The road from Tinahely back to the Way is busy and dangerous, but once we got back onto the path, a peacock strolled in front of us, a good augur for the day ahead. We’d booked into Lugnaquilla View, a guest-house right on the WW, but owner Matt had told us no one would be home until 4pm. So when we reached Tallon’s Dying Cow pub at 2.30pm at Stranakelly Crossroads – less than 10km from Tinahely – we settled down. The 300-year-old traditional Irish pub had a continental feel on a hot July afternoon, with sun umbrellas shading picnic tables on the patio outside.

We traded stories with a local visitor and a young woman from South Africa walking the WW by herself from Clonegal to Marlay Park. The pub’s lamb showed up, looking to be bottlefed and several hours passed easily. Suddenly a car screeched to a halt and a burly man jumped out shouting “Where are the four mad women?” Matt, our host for night 3, drove us up to his guesthouse and with his wife Ann, fed and entertained us for the night with stories about his life and career, first as a sailor, later as a Carlow youth worker. Now he’s gone back to driving lorries and the couple don’t run a guest-house business – “but we won’t see anyone stuck” he told me in March.

Matt drove us to Boley Bridge, where we began the last 25km trek to Clonegal. Often said to be the most boring bit of the Wicklow Way walk, we found it pretty enough, leading through wide forest paths down to grassy lanes; the final stretch along a very straight road is tough mainly because you think by now, the walk should be over. As we entered Clonegal village about 3.30pm, we expected Ryanair-style horns and welcomes. But Clonegal is an eerily quiet Tidy Town, a bit Stepford Wives, where nothing much opened til 5pm. The tearooms of Huntington Castle, a lovely castle built in 1625 right in the middle of the village, were open however, and we dallied there as we waited for Osborne’s pub to open at 5pm. This is where – Camino-style – you get certificates proving your achievement. After a few celebratory drinks, we took a taxi to Bunclody, 5km away, and stayed the night, heading home on the train from Enniscorthy – after some light shopping in Bunclody boutiques -- the following day. Our verdict: great sense of achievement – and staying in B&Bs along the way made it a proper holiday. We learnt to expect the unexpected, never to believe anybody who said “go left, go right, sure, you can’t miss it”, to adjust to very varied accommodation and that most of all, we could do it. Four walkers of a certain age, used to 10km to 12km weekly hikes, could walk 20km a day if necessary and still have energy to dance a jig later on.





William (Bill) Hannon

Honorary Life Member
(1929-2018)

The demise at home, in the early hours of Thursday 5th April of William Hannon, known to his Trekker friends as 'Bill', marked the passing of a friendly and gregarious man who had a lifelong passion for rock-climbing, mountaineering and hill-walking.

Born in October 1929 and raised on Clare Road Drumcondra, William was the second eldest of 7 children – three sons and four daughters. Following his education at O'Connell Secondary School North Richmond Street he embarked on a career in public service, starting with the Land Commission, with periods of his career spent in the Department of Posts & Telegraphs and Department of Labour before becoming Director of the National Manpower Service. When the National Manpower Service was absorbed into FÁS in 1988, William undertook a series of manpower services projects on behalf of the International Labour Office, a UN agency based in Geneva, whose role is to set labour standards, develop policies and devise programmes promoting decent work and William executed his mandate in Lesotho, Zimbabwe and Kyrgestan. It was his passion for rock

climbing that, in 1961, determined the location of the home of newly married William and Mairéad. Number 1 Mapas Avenue was conveniently close to Dalkey Quarry for a man whose only mode of transport at the time was a motorcycle! He continued to climb rocks well into his seventies.

But when William and Mairéad acquired their first car a few years later regular mountaineering trips were made to Glendalough and other mountains in Co Wicklow; to The Twelve Bens, the Comeraghs and the Mourne Mountains – to mention just a few. William was a lifelong member of the Irish Mountaineering Club from the 1960's.

A group known as The Dalkey Walkers evolved in the 1970's and William became a regular participant in their hill walks, along with other locals, including Derry O'Hegarty and Bob Curran – another native of Drumcondra. This was the local walking group before the inauguration of Trekkers in the early 1980's.

William's pioneering spirit in his younger days brought him on a series of impressive

overseas forays. His trip to the Alps included climbing Mont Blanc – the highest mountain in Europe west of Russia's Caucasus (4,800M); The Matterhorn which rises majestically to 4,478 metres on the Swiss-Italian frontier. He also climbed in The Hymalayas in Asia during the presidency of Mary Robinson enjoyed another climbing adventure in Greenland.

But a trekking trip that perhaps had the most enduring memory for William was his intrepid trek to The Rockies - specifically Grand Teton, which was tackled from the 310,000-acre Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming. This area is considered a classic destination in American mountaineering circles.

Thanks to the unstinting support of his wife Mairéad a retired Dalkey GP and the family, William managed to achieve a moderately active lifestyle until his final days – meeting his old pals regularly for a drink and a chat and taking a stroll in the vicinity of his home, or along the Dalkey seafront. He participated in Trekker walks before the onset of his illness. William's was a life well led. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam

Myles Duffy

Eileen Trant

Members were saddened to learn that the life of Eileen Trant ended unexpectedly in St Vincent's University Hospital on the morning of Monday, 2nd July. Eileen, a native of Wexford, was widow of Shaun Trant, Founder of Trekkers, who passed away after a prolonged illness in April 2017.

Eileen trained as a teacher of shorthand and typing and worked, before marriage, in the Department of Local Government in The Custom House - where she first encountered Shaun. He was a civil servant in the Department of Health, also working in The Custom House. They were married in 1959 and shortly afterwards moved to one of the newly built houses on Bellevue Road, Glenageary. Like many young couples in that era, they didn't possess a car for several years. Recreation took to the form of long walks at the weekend; typically from Glenageary to the home of Shaun's mother in Rathfarnham, the spouse of a former lighthouse keeper, whose own career involved many home moves around the coast. When their eldest son and former Trekker, the late Kieran arrived, pushing Kieran in his pram enlivened these weekend walks! When they eventually acquired their first car the splendour of Wicklow captured their attention and presence.

Eileen demonstrated unstinting care and attention throughout the course of Shaun's illness – visiting him almost every day and taking Shaun in a wheelchair for walks from The Royal



Hospital in the environs of Donnybrook; sometimes pausing for refreshments in McCloskeys. When Eileen did snatch a spare moment her passions were bridge, gardening and reading.

The sympathy of the Club has been extended to her family – Fergal, Finola, Sinéad, Cormac, Kieran's widow Ingrid and her grandchildren. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a h-anam

Myles Duffy

Commemoration Service



Mairéad Hannon
Mary Murray
The late Eileen Trant



Fergal Molloy

The Annual Commemoration of deceased Trekkers on Saturday 28th April was well attended with the next-of-kin of recently deceased Trekkers invited as guest of the Club. The memory of Club Founder Shaun Trant; recently recruited member Dr Lucille Duignan, and veterans Tom Murray and William (Bill) Hannon being especially remembered with a personal tribute to each from Monty Tinsley, Ann Hayes, Pat Chapman and Fergal Mulloy.

Myles Duffy



Trekkers trip to Ballyvaghan

Still basking in the glory of our wonderful trip to France, thirty-five Trekkers headed for Ballyvaghan on the 7th May for what turned out to be a very successful walking trip to the Burren. Except for Maeve, we all stayed in Hylands hotel and apart from a 'rushed' breakfast on the first morning it did turn out to be very successful stay and was enjoyed by all. Two of our evening meals were taken in the hotel and due to some staff shortages in the hotel the other two were served in a local Italian restaurant called L'Arco (owned by the hotel).

Most people took part in the walks with just a few cases of members visiting local friends, etc. Our first took us to Mullaghmore mountain (200 mtrs approx) in the Burren national park close to Corofin, taking a quick visit to the Poul nabrone Dolmen on the way. We had perfect weather and a memorable trek through vast swathes of limestone with it's clints, grikes, etc. The scenery in every direction is really stunning as can be seen from one of the photos; we even got a distant view of Father Ted's house! We used our own cars and returned to the hotel without a pub visit and this allowed the several drivers to enjoy a pre-dinner drink(s) back at base.

Due to heavy rain up to midday on the Wednesday we opted for plan B, a modest but nevertheless pleasant circuit of the Ballyvaghan surrounding area; en route more than half of the group visited the Ailwee cave centre with several actually taking the cave trip itself; the

remainder, including yours truly, gave the cave trip a miss and hurried back to the Wild Atlantic Lodge where we had a thoroughly enjoyable 'imbibing session'. A potential disaster, Rita's expensive Rayban sunglasses were lost and after frantic phone calls and prayers, and lo! were recovered.

For our 3rd and final walk we availed of bus transport to bring

us to the start of the Cliffs of Moher walk (14k approx) at Hags Head and to pick us up at O'Connors pub in Doolin about 5pm. The walk was truly magnificent and the weather on the day was perfect. It turned

out to be more testing than it was on our last visit; it was very very muddy and waterlogged in many locations on the second half of the walk and progress was understandably slow; on a more serious side there were several places where it was quite dangerous due to erosion and great care was needed. Weary bodies were revived in Doolin but hampered somewhat by a breakdown of toilets facilities in the area so some shortcuts had to be taken (or should that be shorttaken!).

One member had got a second pint just as the bus arrived; not being allowed to bring it on board the said member tried in vain to lower it but failed, and was heard to say, that would have been no problem 20 years ago.

On the Friday morning after

breakfast we all returned home and happily only a few minor incidents. More details of walks are up on the web site with maps, etc.

PS. We did visit a lovely local hostelry, O'Lochainns, one night; worth a visit if you like whiskey!

Terry O'Brien



Recent Walks



WW 20 June



C Walk 30 June



B Walk 17 Feb



C Walk 7 April



A Walk 9 June



C Walk 2 June



B Walk 17 Feb



B Walk 16 June



A Walk 9 June



Recce Derrybawn



B Walk 21 June