

Trekker

February 2018

Trekkers Mountainering Club Glenageary Co Dublin www.trekkers.ie

Edition 62

Snow Birds in Summer



us was covered in snow. As we approached the house it was also covered in snow as was everything around, trees, hedges etc and the sun was shining it was now winter in "Little Women"

We did the same walk in January this year and all traces of the March family and their home had disappeared completely.

Dympna Thunder



Last August Judy, Roisin and myself did a recce near the old Kilpedder Rifle Range, when we came across an old style American home with a garden path, flowers, swing and a wooden post box with the name "March Family". It transpired it was the film set for the BBBC production of Little Women, which was broadcast a few weeks ago. We sat on the stoop and had our lunch in the sunshine.

Imagine our surprise on the day of the B Walk we turned a corner and lo and behold the lane in front of

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Chairman Notes

Your new Committee has been in office for slightly more than three months.

Events

Our first task was to organize the Club's Christmas Dinner, which took place at Killiney Golf Club on Sunday 17th December. This is the second successive year that this annual event took place at the Golf Club. Attendees' enjoyed the evening very much. The next Christmas Dinner + entertainment will take place at the Golf Club on Sunday 16th December 2018.

The Annual Commemoration of Deceased Trekkers will take place in Glenmalure on Saturday, 28th April. This will follow the established format and will conclude with dinner in Glenmalure Lodge. Next-of-kin of three Trekkers who passed away in the past year (Shaun Trant, Lucille Duignan and Tom Murray) will be invited as guests of the Club.

The Committee will start work shortly on arrangements for Trekkers Summer Party, which will take place on Saturday 14th July in the National Yacht Club.

The 2018 Annual General Meeting will also take place at the National Yacht Club on Tuesday 23rd October. Members' will be able to avail of more convenient public transport (bus and Dart) at this venue.

Non-Walking Trekkers

We are mindful that a significant number of Trekkers are unable to be regular walk participants for one reason, or another. Some are impaired by ailments and some are simply not able for the rigour of a conventional walk. A new initiative, in the form of a relatively short 'social walk', to be followed by a café encounter was launched on Saturday 3rd February. The inaugural walk took place in Marlay Park - led by Brian Brennan. Participants take part in social walks on 'an own risk' basis but we believe that those interested will enjoy the social contact with each other.

New Payments Policy

The Committee has decided that events involving third-party providers will operate on a pre-paid basis. Advance payments will guarantee a member a place and in the event of a change-of-mind, prior to a specified date, a refund will be made.

We have opened a new Club account with Bank of Ireland to facilitate online transactions. Members' will also be able to make other payments electronically -including their annual subscription. The Club will also be in a position to make payments to members electronically. Members' will be advised further about the introduction of this regime.

Member Training

The first Leadership Workshop of 2018 took place in Glenmalure on **Sunday 21 January**. The next workshop will be held on **Sunday 11th March**. We believe that these are extremely useful in deepening walk leadership skills in the Club; in broadening the pool of walk leaders and their novel ideas and in integrating new members into the Club walk programmes.

There will be a navigation and map reading course in the course of the year.

Away Trip Guidelines

We are finalizing a review of guidelines for 'away trips' that Club members' participate in. The observations of members who have arranged away trips have been sought to tap their experience and ideas.

Basque Trip

The eight-day trip to the Basque region of France and Spain being arranged by Michael & Josephine Cotter will commence on **Friday 30th March** with 34 Trekkers participating. If any Trekker wishes to be included on a Wait List please advise Michael or Josephine accordingly.

Burren Trip

Terry & Noreen O'Brien and Noel O'Rielly are arranging a walking trip to The Burren Co Clare starting on **Monday 7th May** – full details have been circulated.

Myles Duffy

Welcome our newest members



Nick O'Loughlin



Farannan Tannam



Michael Shiell



Ann Headley



Dolores Shelly



Maeve O'Donnell



Niall McCutcheon



Rita Higgs



Roisin McEvoy

Editors Note

Welcome to the first edition of the *Trekker* magazine for 2018, with its mix of reports of amazing adventures in South America to gentle rambles in Wicklow.

Its a new year and new editor, my thanks to my predecessor Emmet and all of you who have contributed to this issue.

The content for this magazine relies on your reports, photos and news, so keep them coming. Let me know what you would like to hear about and I will listen out on walks for potential articles, at the risk that you might all start avoiding me!!

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

Mary Murphy



Sligo is Surprising

Sligo Natives Lucia Shelly and Karl Foley reflect on Ben Bulbin trip



**Under bare Ben Bulben's head
In Drumcliff churchyard Yeats is laid,
An ancestor was rector there
Long years ago; a church stands near,
By the road an ancient Cross.
No marble, no conventional phrase,
On limestone quarried near the spot
By his command these words are cut:
Cast a cold eye
On life, on death
Horseman, pass by!**

We band of Trekkers made our way to Drumcliff in the heart of Yeats's Country to ascend "Bare Ben Bulben's head" . Amongst our group that weekend were this Sligo native who would be typical of Sligoians who would never seriously consider climbing their majestic landmark. "Why bother ...aren't we fed up looking at it for over the years" would be a typical reaction of locals who use it merely as a weather barometer . "If you can see Ben Bulben its going to rain. If you can't see it ... its already raining." As it turned out, that saturday was a magnificent "pet day" with glorious sunshine and stunning views across Sligo and Donegal Bay.

Lunching on the summit at a height of over 500 metres, I could see clearly my childhood haunts where carefree summers were passed enjoying the beautiful surroundings of seascape, beaches, lakes and hills. We were guided throughout the climb by 2 local Sligo based guides Fran and Liam who were experienced mountaineers .

An added bonus for this author was the swopping stories with Liam of Sligo's more eccentric characters. Yes, Sligo did (does ?) have a particular large contingent of nutters.

I now have lovely memories of old Ben Bulben ... let me add my thanks to B.B. for arranging the weekend and allowing me to wallow in a little nostalgia for what our Scottish cousins would call "my ain place".

Karl Foley





As a proud Sligo woman I was very eager to sign up to the trip as I never climbed Benbulbin, and and was keen to walk an area that I love.

Benbulbin has always held a special gra for me. When travelling to Sligo, the first sight of Benbulbin is being "home".

Karl Foley and I were the "locals" for this trip and very happy to show off Sligo. Benbulbin is our "Table Mountain", and is quite majestic. I was delighted that our wonderful group of Trekkers could appreciate another beautiful part of Ireland. Saturday morning we set off to start our walk and were met by our local guides Fran and Liam. They were fantastic, and their knowledge, enthusiasm, and expertise insured a really good walk.

Our walk started at Lukes Bridge and we went up a gully to reach the plateau, this was generally soft and boggy, but not too difficult. Once on top of the plateau we were continually assailed by magnificent views in all directions....yes you could go quite close to the edge! Depending which direction you looked you had views of Donegal, Sligo town, Sligo Bay Strandhill, Knocknarea with Queen Maeve's cairn. Our guides filled us with folklore stories of Diarmuid and Grainne

and Queen Maeve and many more. We also could see to Drumcliffe where Yeat's is buried "under bare Benbulbin's head"...(as are my grand-parents!) and appreciate how this very scenic area inspired a lot of his poetry, and why Sligo is known as the Yeat's Country.

Karl and I had a "local" moment when our guides showed us a memorial to locals who were killed in the civil war, again this the first time I saw it. We returned to our hostel, where again we had a lovely meal and to bring the a conclusion we went to a local hostelry where local musicians of a very high standard entertained us...what a day"

Day 2 was back to "Irish" weather...yes rain and mist, but we were led by Fran and Liam. to Glencar and climbed above the waterfall. Again we saw Benbulbin from another side, Looking down at the lake it would mystically appear and disappear! so different from the previous day, but again wonderful views.

A big thank you to Brendan for organising this trip, and I hope you all agree Sligo is Surprising!

Walking, talking, sharing views with fellow trekkers was certainly one of my highlights for 2017.

Lucia Shelly



Tom Murray

(1937-2017)

The passing of Tom Murray on 9 December, a Trekker for sixteen years and a very regular participant in Club walks until his illness leaves an immense void.

Tom celebrated his 80th birthday on 11th September last year. He was a native of Belfast; son of a bank manager and one of a family of four sons and a daughter. The mobility of his father's occupation meant many changes of address in Tom's childhood: – Skerries, Rathfarnham and Dundrum, among them. But it was when the Murray family resided in Portarlinton that Tom sat his Leaving Certificate.

Following his graduation in Commerce from Trinity College Tom joined the Personnel Department of the ESB in 1966. The office was located in Fitzwilliam Place where he discovered his colleague Trekker Pat Chapman.

Tom, in those days, was the proud owner of a green VW Beetle and cut quite a dash as a pipe-smoking bon vivant in his stylish Harris tweed jacket. An avid reader his life-long passion for films, jazz and literature was well established.

Tom joined RTÉ beginning in 1967. His first job with the broadcaster was to sell advertising in the RTÉ Guide, which was published in newspaper format in then. He discovered another Trekker among his RTÉ colleagues: – Brian Brennan.

Tom transferred to a different role selling advertising on radio but Brian and Tom remained steadfast friends through their careers and the lunchtime break typically involved a brisk walk either through Herbert Park or UCD Belfield.

Tom and Mary became Trekkers in 2001 and despite being drenched on their maiden walk in Glenmalure they both derived immense pleasure from the Club. They participated in many Trekker away-trips in Ireland including escapades to Kandersteg Switzerland led by Dick Ryan and to the Tatras Mountains Poland led by Owen McKeown.

A trip to Killarney to climb of Carrantuohill from Cronin's Yard via the Devil's Ladder remains a vivid memory for those taking part – Bill Hannon (Leader), Dick Needham, Brian Brennan, Dick Ryan, Paddy O'Duffy and Eugene Logan. The descent is steep enough in places and Tom and Dick intensified their pace down by galloping from boulder to boulder!

A man with a quiet disposition Tom is remembered fondly for his sense of fun. He was so well informed in facets of art, film and music meant there was never a lull in a dialogue with Tom!

The sympathy of the Trekker membership is extended to former Chair, Mary; Trekker Dermot and Paul, Conor and Aoife on their sad loss.

Ar dheis Dé for raibh a anam.

Myles Duffy, Chairperson



South America's Highest Mountain

Trekkers Joe Devine and Eddie Murphy climb Aconcagua

One year on and the significance of the task is still sinking home. Aconcagua (6962m high, one of 7 Summits and highest mountain outside of Asia) is a monster but an amazing experience. After Elbrus in Russia was knocked off my list in July 2016, Eddie Murphy, fellow Trekker, convinced me it was time to do it. Pat Falvey told me I would need to be twice as fit as I was, and I had 4 months to achieve this. There is a very narrow window for going to the summit because of the extreme cold and wind that it's famous for. It is a trekking mountain and does not require any climbing skills. Between 30-40% summit successfully every year. At time of writing the forecasted temperature at the top for this week is Minus 32.

The principal challenges are the altitude, the wind and cold, the tent's confined spaces and the mental readiness for the task embracing no showers for 2 weeks and parking your sensibilities. More than outweighing these are the stunning views, amazing company and the sense of achievement when you get to the top - even if you're too wrecked to appreciate the 20 minutes you're there!!!

South America is amazing and I recommend it to anyone that has not been. We flew into Mendoza in the Malbec wine region via Paris and Buenos Aires (34 hour trip). Our expedition company, Grajales Expeditions opened up Aconcagua 43 years ago and there is nothing they haven't seen. They have weather guys in the valley monitoring every cloud movement, and their support infrastructure includes mules to Base Camp (4200m) on the way up Vacas Valley and down from 4350m on Normal Route, on the way out and of course our expert guides. We had two great

guides in Luco and Julian. We were self-supported from Base Camp to summit and down the other side, so everything we used or consumed had to be carried for over a week. Porters were available and the 5 old guys in the group (over 56 years) shared a couple of porters on the carrying days. We were going to spend all our effort getting ourselves to the top, not lugging loads almost to the top!!!

The group was a mix of ages, thirty-somethings to mid-70s and nationalities included French, German, Swiss-German, Norwegian, Danish-American, New Zealander and Irish - an eclectic mix of 9.

Including a couple of days allowance for weather delays at the summit, the expedition could extend to 19 days but we didn't need the optional 2 days so the 17 days was split up as follows:

So 12 days hiking (10 up and 2 down), 2 rest and 3

One year on and the significance of the task is still sinking home.

other days.

The Start of the Expedition

There was an eventful start when the internal flight from BA had to turn back because of smoke in the cabin, and when we landed fire tenders followed the flight in!!!. The replacement plane landed in Mendoza having gone through a lightning storm- good omen indeed. In Mendoza we got processed and had the best steak and red wine meal and dined as if it was our last! Grajales have a huge depot at the trail head at Penitentes where we organised our gear. We also had

our first taste of empanadas or Argentinian meat pies (a must) and saw some amazing scenery what with waterfalls, white water and mountains everywhere. They don't name anything less than 4000m so if you want a mountain named after you then you have come to the right place.

The group characters were starting to emerge and everyone was getting on fine and a group dynamic evolving thanks to Luco and Julian.

On Wednesday 11th we started walking and the temps got to 35degrees. It was dusty and important to keep throat, nose and mouth covered and free of dust. Drank 3 litres on first day and fell into shade at the first camp. We had snacks before we put up our tent and later got the call to BBQ prepared by the muleteers. Food included a mix of pumpkin, cheese and onion cooked in a pumpkin on the BBQ!

With 4 litres of water on board and lunch we headed the next day along the Vacas River for another 15k and 10 minutes before the end of the hike we got our first sight of Aconcagua It was stunning, exhilarating but frightening all at the same time. That night the sky was clear and there were thousands of stars in the sky- amazing.

The following day at 5.30am we got our wake up calls and an hour later we were getting a lift across the freezing icy river on mules to start our ascent to Base Camp at Plaza Argentina (4200m). The 35k to base



Mules on Day 1

camp took us 2 and half days - the mules do it in 5 hours.

Base Camp

Base camp has to be seen to be believed. It is semi-permanent - set up in November before the season starts, and occupied for 3-4months, then taken down and stored for next season. We were going to be in Base camp for 4 nights for a mix of rest, acclimatisation and carrying stuff up and down to



Fields of Penitentes

Camp 1. Two doctors are ever present and everyone has to have a medical before they proceed. There is a very strict policy now after several fatalities in the past. I monitored my heart rate, PSI and peak flow but with all the dust had developed a cough which Luco have me a local solution for - basin of hot water, eucalyptus, camomile and what looked like mule dung, with my head under a towel a couple of times of day. 5 of the 9 guys in the group had to go back for a second medical

Luco kept telling us about the importance of the journey and to enjoy every day and not stress over whether you could or could not summit which was a good approach and took your mind off the monster in front of us.

On Sunday 15th the common gear was parcelled out and I got 6kg of white gas to carry to Camp 1 (5100m). What a day we had on going up through Rock fields (watching and listening for rocks falling), penitentes (or 3-6 foot high pillars of ice sculpted by the wind) and scree - 6 hours up and 2 and a half hours down having stored all the equipment at Camp 1. Aconcagua is notorious for its scree as you can be going one step forward and two back where it is very steep.

Concern was emerging about the group's pace which was not an issue then, but could become one as packs got relatively heavier the higher we got and also what about the pace on summit day? That was going to be a long day!

This was our last day with Wi-Fi so could Whatsapp photos and messages home on our rest day. Grajales would be posting messages on their Facebook page via satellite phone to keep all the families and friends back home posted on progress.

Base Camp to High Camp

On Tuesday 17th the serious business was starting as we carried the balance of the communal gear, and



would be a self-supporting group from now until we got to the other side. The weather continued to be settled and we retraced our steps back through rock fields, penitentes and scree to Camp 1 where we were issued "poo bags". Everything gets carried out from here on in - yes everything!! The porters charged US\$9 per kg today for the trip but it's well worthwhile. You're in your tent by 7.30pm after dinner and either read or listen to music or chat - a good tent buddy is a must here and I was lucky sharing with Eddie.

Next morning we did a carry to Camp Guanacos (5432m) and had the amazing scenery of Bonete (5281m), Mano (5426m), Fitzgerald and Ameshino (5918m) - high mountains everywhere and also our first close up view of the Polish Glacier. When we got back down to Camp 1 we discovered we were to lose one of the team because of blood pressure. The group was devastated for him and we really felt a sense of loss - amazing really how the group dynamic evolved that a person who had been a complete stranger 10 days earlier could have such an effect. I was feeling strong, the cough was nearly gone and my heart rate, peak flow and psi were all normal.

It was without doubt the toughest, most physical hike I have ever done.

On Thursday 19th we haggled with the porters over the cost of taking the rubbish down - poo bags went free. New guide Cecilia joined the group during the night for the big push to Camps 2 and 3. At Camp 2 we had pizza for lunch and the afternoon free to enjoy the scenery and take loads of photos. With increased focus on the weather and the possibility of a storm on Monday, Luco developed a strategy for carrying to Camp Colera on Friday, moving there on Saturday, summiting on Sunday and go down Monday which would mean no rest day but we were happy to go along with the plan. It was our best chance to summit

unless we wanted to stay where we were for 3 days!

On Friday 20th half of the group achieved new personal bests for altitude as we went higher than Kili to 5966m to drop our communal and personal gear. I think it's a psychological thing this altitude stuff as it didn't cost us a thought to go higher than we had ever been - we were acclimatising well and focussed on 7,000m. It took us 3 hours to go up, as it was very steep but not far, and 40 minutes to come down! The new double skinned boots were doing their job and really felt quite comfortable. I was taking Diamox and since it's a diuretic there were plenty of trips to the great outdoors during the night or use of pee bottles if it was too cold

Saturday 21st - woke to find the tent had sprung a leak or snow melted underneath and come up through. Everything was soaking but once the sun came up it dried everything except for the frozen underwear. It was US\$19 per kilo to the high camp and we retraced our steps to 5966m. High camp was in a volcanic rock formation bowl and you really felt you were in a different world. We had an extensive briefing on the next day in terms of timing, clothing, food, water. 8-12 hours to the top and 4 down starting at 5.30am. I had developed a small cough so Luco gave me a light antibiotic and an extra 2 litres of water to drink. Sitting in the tent listening to Eddie's motivational tapes and feeling strong apart from the cough, I thought I could do it. It was very, very cold so important to have the right layers in the tent and make sure that nothing you needed next day froze overnight.

Summit Day

As the guide book says, when you are at High Camp "only half the work is done". At 5.45am with 4 layers on top and 2 on the bottom we started hiking up the equivalent of "Carrantuohill on steroids". It was a bit of a blur really - putting one foot in front of the other and following the guy in front. We went up 260m to the old Refugio Independencia, another 430m to Ceuve and finally 307m via the Caneleta to the top. We were lucky as the notorious winds stayed away. At the Caneleta we left behind all the gear except for snacks water and a camera. We needed to conserve what energy we had left for the final push which was a steep ascent partly covered in snow. We stopped every two or three steps to catch our breaths while leaning over our poles. We were focused on getting there and nothing else mattered- funny really the power of the mind. We fell onto the top of the Western World at 3.05 pm - 9 hours and 20 after we started. It was without doubt the toughest, most physical hike I have ever done. Relief, joy, excitement, happiness- I was so wrecked I couldn't tell you how I felt. Well after 10 days (+2 rest days) getting here we left the

summit after 20 minutes. I got a jab of some energy stuff and was roped up for some of the descent to High Camp, as a precaution. Most accidents happen on the way down as you are exhausted, less focused and a bit reckless but we made it down safely. I fell into bed where I slept peacefully for 8 hours. The descent was done in 3 hours 20. The only dampener was that 2 of the 8 had to turn back as it appeared that they were not going to make it. It is difficult to know what to say in these circumstances. One of the two sent a photo of his family with us to the top so that he would be there in spirit.



Way Down

On the Top

I woke on Monday 23th and the enormity of the achievement was starting to sink in. Having come up the Vacas route we went down the Normal Route which has even more scree if that's possible. We arrived at Base Camp on that route to a party of beer and pizza. I can tell you that it doesn't take a lot of beers to get intoxicated at altitude. At Plaza de Mulas there is the world's highest art gallery and I purchased a painting from the artist himself who lives and paints there for the season. There is a bar and other facilities here at 4000m+. We had a great night and the guides said some emotional stuff about how great we were and how we respected the mountain and just enjoyed the experience.

Tuesday 24th we hiked over 30k through dusty trails back to the trailhead in 30+ degrees. It was a long tiring day after our exertions two days before but just goes to show you how the body recovers. It took us just under 8 hours to get to the bus, we were wrecked but ecstatic and had some life long memories to take home and friendships made. Retracing our steps to Mendoza we fell into the hotel at 10.45pm and had first shower in 2 weeks.

So after 82 hours of hiking and 7500m of ascent, the great trip to Aconcagua finished, Eddie and I headed off to the beach in Valparaiso via the most amazing bus trip through the Andes from Mendoza to Santiago for some well-earned rest. If you get the chance to go to the Andes, just do it. You will have an amazing experience.

Joe Devine and Eddie Murphy



A Bit Steep



Base Camp on Way Down

Hillwalkers appeal High Court decision on Wicklow Walking Route

Irish Times, Wednesday, Jan 17 2018



Court told of 'new evidence' in 17-year dispute in form of 1799 Powerscourt estate map.

Hillwalkers involved in a 17-year old dispute with a Co Wicklow landowner have asked the Court of Appeal to consider new evidence which they claim shows a right of way in existence from at least 1799.

Noel Barry of Monastery, Enniskerry, and Neil Leonach of Monastery Grove, Enniskerry, both members of the Enniskerry Walking Association, have appealed a High Court declaration that there was no right of way along a 500m stretch of land owned by Joseph Walker at Annacrivey, Enniskerry.

In a decision in 2012 the High Court found there was no right of way and made an order prohibiting Mr Leonach and Mr Barry from walking the land while also awarding Mr Walker a substantial portion of his costs.

However, on Tuesday, Michael Forde SC, with David Leonard, said a map had been discovered in the papers of Lord Powerscourt at the National Library which showed a right of way in existence in 1799.

Mr Forde said it was clear that in advance of the building of military roads in the area around 1800 the route in question was the route from Enniskerry to Glencree and

on to Glencullen. He said it was the only access into the Glencree Valley and "on the balance of probabilities" it was a public road because "if the inhabitants of the valley couldn't get out they would all go bonkers from interbreeding after a couple of years".

Mr Forde also argued the judgment was "fundamentally flawed" in a number of areas and the judge had made "errors in law" and "errors in finding of fact".

He said his clients were asking for the costs of their legal actions.

However, Peter Bland SC, with Ms Sarah Belshaw for Mr Walker, said the High Court judgment had been "mischaracterised". He said the trial judge had considered another map produced by the hillwalkers which was dated 1798, representing a one-year difference in maps which both allegedly showed a route.

He said that on this basis the Powerscourt map did not merit the description as new evidence and in any event a simple "line on a map" did not mean somewhere was a designated right of way. If it did, he said, it would have implications for the driveways and internal farm roads of the whole country.

Mr Bland said there were many "scraps of information" built up over years that gave rise to an opinion that a route was a highway carrying designated rights of way, and not simply an internal estate track. He said there was no evidence that the route was anything other than an internal track and it had disappeared from maps from 1799 to 1912. The court was entitled to the presumption that if it had been a highway it had been extinguished.

He said that when the issue of a right of way had come up and walks were being organised on his land, Mr Walker had erected gates and signs warning people that the land was private property and they should keep off.

Entry to the land was only with permission of the landowner and Mr Walker or his father had never accepted there was a right of way there and one could not be established without the landowner's permission, he said.

The hearing has concluded. Judgment has been reserved.

Contributor John O'Neill

Christmas Party



Recent Walks



Seffan December 2017



B Walk 20 January 2018



A Walk 27 January 2018