



The

# Trekker

Trekkers Mountaineering Club Glenageary Co Dublin [www.trekkers.ie](http://www.trekkers.ie)  
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## Walking into the new year



Ten people went on a B- walk on January 8th from Kindlestown Wood to Newtownmountkennedy



A feature on Trekkers in the Irish Times weekend magazine in November sparked interest in the club -- now 37 people have applied to join and currently are being led on a series of guest walks organised by Mary Cadogan. Above: Trekkers on a walk up Down's Hill, Delgany. **Photograph: Dara MacDonail, courtesy Irish Times**

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# Chair's Notes

## Dear Trekkers,

We have another bumper Newsletter for you. Fran has been gathering ideas and contributions from members over the last number of months. This takes time and on your behalf we thank her for all her efforts and hard work. The new Committee have been very busy ensuring that we keep the Club alive and vibrant. The number of members out walking is very impressive.

We are aware that there are members who are not walking at the moment for different reasons –to those who are nursing injuries, we wish a speedy recovery; to others, we hope the Newsletter keeps you in the loop about

Club activities.

What's happening in the Club at the moment?

Alan is working on a fantastic training programme that will have something for everyone, from map reading to doing a recce and full navigation. He is encouraging and guiding everyone in their transition from ViewRanger to Outdoor Active. His advice is one step at a time – practice each level before moving on.

We are very grateful to members who are organising and leading guest walks over the next six weeks. The participants all expressed interest in the Club following the Irish Times article last year. Thank you, John (Casey,) Aine (Allen), Geraldine, Breda, Alan

and their co leaders – Jane, Ita Fran, Farannan, Lucia, and Frances.

Following on from our members survey last year we know there is an appetite for away Trekker trips. We are delighted that there are three planned for this year and hopefully there will be more.

Finally we have a favour to ask you all – please complete the survey Alan and Anne sent out – we are trying to get everyone's view. It's important to the Committee to know if you are interested in leading/co leading, have no interest in leading or might be interested.

Wishing everyone the best for 22.

**Fiona**

## Editor's Notes

Welcome to the first Newsletter of 2022. Once again, thanks to Trekkers who contributed articles and pictures for it. I hope you like the mix of practical information, accounts of walks at home and one abroad, and regular features like the books pages. I also hope you're finding the calendar, right, useful. Please send pictures, articles and ideas on things you'd like to read to [franorourke@gmail.com](mailto:franorourke@gmail.com) for the May Newsletter.

**Fran**



Trekkers Mountaineering Club 2022

## Trekker Tips

Most walking boots come with laces that are 1.6 to 1.7m in length, giving you the opportunity to lace around the ankle section of the boot. However, most of us don't lace around the ankle and as a result have excess lace which creates a trip hazard, either from walking poles catching the looped lace or the loop from one boot catching the eyes of the other boot; either way you are in for a nasty fall if this happens. The easy answer is to buy a pair of shorter bootlaces, typically 1.2m long, available from most of the outdoor stores

**Alan Kane**



## CAPTION COMPETITION

The winning entry for the competition is Paul O'Kane, whose caption (for a picture he took himself) is "Total Gridlock". Please send suggested captions for the picture, left, to: [franorourke@gmail.com](mailto:franorourke@gmail.com). There's a prize for the winning entry.



# Welcome to new members



Daisy Clifton



Susie Kennedy



Padraig O'Fathaigh



Liz Barry



Marie Duffy



Mary Darcy



Pat McGettrick



Pat Nolan



Lianne Donnelly



Sean Boyne



Audrey McAleese



Daithi Humphries



Pat Macken



Nuala Bannon



Thomas Shaw

**We also  
welcome**

**Siobhan O'Loan**

**Eileen Walsh**

**Karl O'Connell**

**Leadership survey deadline on Sunday  
See page 5**

# Me and my mentors

Does leadership mentoring work? New leader Geraldine Boland, one of the graduates of the recent Map Reading & Navigation course, offers her personal reflections

Training courses are great, but do I always put into practice the skills and knowledge I have learned? I had a steep learning curve on Mark Taylor and Alan Kane's comprehensive Map Reading and Navigation course.

My first assigned mentor from the course was Mark, who joined me on some reces and the hikes I led immediately afterwards. I have led in the past, but the course meant that I had a more refined and reliable plan, with a route card. The first benefit of mentoring for me was that Mark pointed out an aspect of my leadership that I was unaware of- my pace was too fast! We all have unconscious patterns in our leadership and unless I am open to constructive feedback, then nothing changes. Other trekkers can see it, but I am unaware.

Mark also offered me encouragement and also pointed out the specific skills that were now part of my practice from the course. Learning what I was doing well was equally valuable.

Peer learning is a second source of this valuable individual feedback. Anne Hayes and I were study buddies on the course. We practiced together using the compass correctly and had a memorable practice session in dense fog up at Fairy Castle when our skills were put to the test! Leading hikes on a fine day is a great pleasure, but on another hike we led there was poor visibility and a few challenges that led to using our escape route. Anne and I did a full debrief the day after the hike and answered the two questions: What went well in terms of our leadership? What would we do differently as individual leaders and as a team next time? There were many points of individual learning for me from this debrief.

Alan Kane has also been an influential mentor for. Before a B hike in West Wicklow he



**Top:** Gilbert Little shares his knowledge of the Blackstairs terrain with Geraldine Boland on a recce. **Above:** Catherine Almond refines her compass skills with mentor Alan Kane

shared his route card and Viewranger gpx route plot with me. As a walk participant, I was able to learn from the detailed plan that he and Aurimas Parsonis had developed from the recce. Following a hike using someone else's route card is a source of great learning and one I hope to do again.

There are many very experienced leaders in the club who are generous in offering guidance. Some are mentors to new leaders from the recent courses. Both Ita Lawton and Gilbert Little have been very helpful when I asked them to mentor me. On a recent recce, Ita guided me on what to take

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## Experienced leaders generous offering guidance



**Above:** Mentor Mark Taylor discusses a route card and map with John Hegarty. Ita Lawton, top left, guided on what to do on winter hikes. Walks co-ordinator Anne Hayes, top right, and Geraldine practiced together after the course

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into account for winter hikes. I can be too ambitious about what I want to fit in, leading to hikes that are too long when dusk is beginning at 4pm in winter. Gilbert offered his detailed knowledge of the local terrain in the Blackstairs Mountains for a Mount Leinster ridge hike.

Finally, participants on hikes are a great source of feedback. Knowing that my pace can be too fast, I asked C trekkers to let me know throughout a hike if the pace suited them. They were very positive about the pace, the number of water stops and breaks. However, I was very pleased when one person advised me on the home stretch that I had speeded up, leaving a tired group lagging behind me on the descent. I guess, without mentoring, old unconscious habits die hard!

I consider that my learning about leadership will be lifelong. I am fortunate to be leading in the Trekkers club, where there is a commitment to high standards and so many generous leaders willing to share their knowledge.

## Leadership survey closing date Sunday Jan 16th

As Trekkers will have seen, we have a survey running this week. So far, we have had a very strong response with 125 members having completed the survey. Thanks to everyone who completed it.

The purpose of the survey is to compile a register of Leaders and potential Leaders and to identify the training support they require. We are interested in obtaining feedback from all members even if you have never led or co-led a walk in the past or do not wish to lead in the future.

The presence of COVID is having an impact on us all

and we are keen to establish if it is discouraging members from leading or co-leading walks. Your response to the survey will not be shared with anyone outside the committee. The survey will be used by Anne Hayes (Walks Coordinator) in preparing the Walks Programme and by Alan Kane (Training Officer) in developing a Training Programme to support Leaders and future Leaders. Over time we would like to encourage as many members as possible to lead walks and are committed to providing the necessary training and supports to enable them to

do so. Leading walks can bring a real sense of achievement and is not as daunting as you might think when you get the appropriate level of support. Our goal is that all members complete the survey so that our database will be complete. If you haven't taken the survey then please do so now, you will find the link to the survey in Trekker emails you received on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> January or Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> January. The closing date is this coming Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> January. A summary of the survey findings will be shared with the membership by the end of April 2022. ....**Alan Kane**

## Switching to Outdoor Active: See page 10

# Pack it in

## What should be in your backpack? A lot more than you might think, says **Pat Macken**

### **Backpack**

Choose between 25l, 35l, 45l etc on basis of length of walks you do, how much equipment to be carried. Ideally it will have easily accessible pockets and an integrated rain cover. Osprey and Alpine are two of the best brands.

### **Waterproof clothing**

Rain trousers as well as jacket, carry even on an apparently good day as weather can change very quickly

### **Extra clothing**

Carry extra clothes to layer up, i.e, better to add layers if feeling cold than to layer down if getting sweaty. Extra socks can be useful. Extra clothing should be packed in a silicone/plastic bag.

### **Water**

Carry at least two 500ml bottles, better still, three. If using "bladder" system, carry two litres. Drink frequently to prevent dehydration.

### **Food**

Enough for lunch and short breaks, and something extra in case of delay, ideally, a protein bar like a Trek bar or peanuts, as salty snacks help with staying hydrated.

### **Protection**

Hat, gloves, scarf, sunglasses, sun cream, insect repellent, treatment for insect bites, possibly anti-histamine tablets, hand sanitiser.

### **Head torch**

In case of mist, returning in dark

### **Whistle**

Sweeper, leader must have to keep in contact with other people on your walk; also possibly to call for assistance

### **Spare laces**

In case a lace breaks – or to tie on sole of boot if it

becomes detached

### **Hi Viz jacket**

For stretches of road walking, or poor visibility

### **First Aid Basics**

Blister relief, Compeed plasters

Dressings, plasters, antiseptic cream for bleeding, cuts;

Some basic painkillers

Disposable gloves

Tick tweezers to remove ticks quickly  
Dioralyte sachets or tablets for dehydration/cramp – carry an empty plastic water bottle with 200ml level marked on it to dissolve Dioralyte.

### **Mobile Phone**

Fully charged. Backup power needed if relying on it for navigation. Various brands, some very expensive – top-of-range is a protective case with built-in charging unit

### **Next-of-kin details**

Small card with name and their phone number. Laminated or in plastic bag, stored in top pocket of your rucksack

### **Walkers should have but leaders must have:**

### **Map, Compass**

Map stored in waterproof case; know how to use compass

### **Survival Bag, Foil Blanket**

Small fist-sized Bivvy bag into which you can get, in case of injury– it maintains body heat while waiting for Mountain Rescue. Ditto the foil blanket.

### **Storm Shelter**

Mountain Rescue says all walk groups should carry one – they're very light. Minimum shelter is for two people but four-person is best.

### **See Trekker website for Pat Macken's detailed guide**



# From Jack of the Rags on an autumn day



## An October B walk began at an intriguingly-named starting point just after a hairpin bend on the road to Drumgoff. Leader **Ronan White** reports

I have always loved poring over maps. When planning a walk, I prefer to open out the map and absorb myself in its detail rather than just dusting off a previous route. I was down to lead the B walk with John Casey on 23 October. At that point, the club was still operating circular walks. Whilst scanning the detail of the Lugnaquilla and Glendalough 1:30,000 map the name 'Jack of the Rags' on the road from Laragh to Drumgoff (the Military Road) caught my eye.

As there was an indication of parking, I had it pencilled in as my starting and finishing point for a circular walk that was to take in a path (the Old Military Road) up towards Cullentragh and then on to Braigue Mountain, Mullacor, Lugduff Gap, back through the first via Boleylug and then across the Derrybawn Ridge.

We organised our recce walk for 16 October, coinciding as it transpires with the first day of the return of the buses. As a result, John had already unravelled our circular route into a linear walk by the time I met

him early that morning! We also planned for a different starting point to add a 'bit of distance and height' but that's another story!

Our starting point at 'Jack of the Rags' is just after a hairpin bend on the road to Drumgoff. John knew it! His doubts as to the availability of parking were correct as the indicated parking spot would have accommodated two cars at a push. However, we had a turning point for the bus. just back from the start.

I have looked for information on 'Jack of the Rags' with little success. The only direct reference I could unearth was from the Moonlight Challenge 2015 – Route Overview on Viewranger as follows

**"Leaving the Military Road just after a hairpin bend at 'Jack of the Rags,' the route climbs up the old Ragman's Road, a rough and at times damp narrow path, crossing open land on the slopes of Cullentragh....."**

I can only presume Ragman's Road is the same as the Old Military Road mentioned

on the map. Enquires through Wicklow County Council's Library Service (Rathdrum and Local Studies branches) have drawn a blank. The lady in charge of the latter, Gerlanda Maniglia, intrigued by my enquiry, has reached out to a local historian, Joan Kavanagh, to see if she can help us at all. At the time of writing this piece we are waiting to hear back from her.

Anyway, we had a good day's walking in clear albeit windy conditions. I was responsible for the two incidents on the day, initially when I took off at a too brisk pace from the starting point leaving my fellow walkers gasping for breath in my wake and secondly when the wind whipped my glasses off, when descending from Mullacor. Thankfully, Breda found them in the heather about 20 feet from where I was standing myopically!

Joining John and I on the day were Louise Woodhouse, Breda O'Hara, Farannan Tannam, Alan Kane, Emmet Oliver, Eamonn Redahan and Dermot Murray. Thanks to all for a very pleasant day.

# Going to Guernsey

Guernsey – and neighbouring islands Herm and Sark – have a lot to offer keen walkers says **Jane Cochrane**, who grew up there



Guernsey, above: stunning coastal scenery and a 20-minute boat ride to the tropical paradise island of Herm, below

Do you speak English? Do you have television? Is that where Bergerac comes from? These were some of the many questions I faced when I headed off to university on “the mainland” (as the big island of Great Britain is called to Guernsey folks).

These questions were a reflection of the Channel Islands being somehow different. Close to France yet British and English speaking but not part of the United Kingdom, how does that work? (I’ll tell you when we are out on the hills; the story takes a while!)

Guernsey may only total 65 sq kms but features a considerable amount of history and stunning coastal scenery; add in the possibility of a 20-minute boat ride to a tropical paradise of an island (Herm) or a 55-minute boat ride to an island of car free enchantment (Sark) and you have quite a bit to offer the keen walker.

My last trip back to Guernsey was in 2018 and amongst family duties I managed to find time for my favourite walk in Guernsey, from St Peter Port to Moulin Huet Bay. Whilst my Outdoor Research app tells me this was 10km with a 360m climb,

I think that these bare statistics do little to convey the nature of a coastal path – steps, steps and more steps!

The walk leaves from St Peter Port and its feature landmark, the 800-year-old Castle Cornet, before quickly climbing up into the woods and winding up and down and around many bays



and inlets whilst affording some stunning views. Fermain Bay is the first opportunity for a coffee or an ice cream and is a stunning little pebble beach with crystal clear azure water that is a feature of the islands.

The ice cream was needed because if, like me, you forget to take the easier route at

Jerbourg you will end up having to ascend nearly 70m of steep steps from sea level to another much needed coffee kiosk. The last section of the walk meanders along the southern coast. More stunning views and more steps will eventually lead to Moulin Huet Bay, a beautiful little cove painted several times by Auguste Renoir during his 1883 visit to Guernsey. The end of my walk featured coffee, carrot cake and attempt at a photo of the cliffs he painted.

Herm is a different world. Only 20 minutes from St Peter Port, it features stunning white sand beaches and water warmed by the gulf stream; take sunscreen, you will need it! Herm is only 1.5 miles long by 1 mile wide and the loop walk around the island is a gentle stroll which will leave plenty of time to explore those beaches and of course, the Mermaid Tavern.

I love Sark, I have always loved Sark; an island where horses, bikes and the occasional tractor is all the traffic you will come across; an island where

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# Sark an island of enchantment

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until very recently the feudal lord (the Seigneur) ruled with the general philosophy of "if you don't like it the boat leaves on Monday", an island where you can slow down and escape the hustle and worries of modern life.

Sark is a place to meander, to roam without a set route or even a detailed map (go on Trekkers, I dare you!), how lost can you really get on a 5 sq km island? Discover small coves, unexpected woodland glades, rolling farmland that ends suddenly at steep cliffs and La Coupee, the narrow steep walkway joining the main island to Little Sark and what should always be your aim – a cream tea at the Sablonnerie Tea Gardens.

I started off mentioning Bergerac, he was of course from Jersey. Jersey is "the other island". Jersey is bigger than Guernsey, Jersey thinks it is better than Guernsey. Guernsey folks have a healthy rivalry with Jersey folks. Jersey folks nearly always beat Guernsey folks in sporting competitions. Oh yes, Jersey has stunning scenery, fascinating history and amazing walks just like Guernsey... but I'm not mentioning Jersey...

P.S. Jersey also has a direct flight from Dublin!

## Practical Information

**Dublin to Jersey flights with Aer Lingus – [aerlingus.com](http://aerlingus.com)**  
**Inter Island flights with Blue Islands – [blueislands.com](http://blueislands.com)**  
**Jersey to Guernsey via boat – [condorferries.co.uk](http://condorferries.co.uk)**  
**Herm ferries – [traveltrident.com](http://traveltrident.com)**  
**Sark ferries – [sarkshipping.gg](http://sarkshipping.gg)**  
**Guernsey Tourist Information – [visitguernsey.com](http://visitguernsey.com)**  
**Herm Tourist Information – [herm.com](http://herm.com)**  
**Sark Tourist Information – [sark.co.uk](http://sark.co.uk)**

## Walking on the banks of the Barrow

Trekkers explored some of the River Barrow Way in October. Now **Paddy MacManus** is looking for suggestions for a 2022 Barrow away trip

I am starting to plan how to trek the 34km stretch from St Mullins to Bagenalstown of the River Barrow Way. I would be very grateful for advice from Trekkers who have experienced some or all of the stretch outlined above and are willing to share information. I'm thinking of two overnights and four days walking: For example, the walk could start from a base in Graiguenamanagh to St. Mullins, and return on Day 1; Graiguenamanagh to Ballytiglea Bridge, and return on Day 2. Moving to Bagenalstown, the walk could go Ballytiglea halfway to Bagenalstown for Day 3, completing it on Day 4. Or some variation of the tunes!! It would be like two separate trips.

I'd be very glad if you could share your experiences.

**Paddy MacManus 087-2482286; [pcmacmanus42@gmail.com](mailto:pcmacmanus42@gmail.com)**



This picture, taken on the 13<sup>th</sup> October last by Ann Carroll, kinda reflects the pleasure we felt on completion of a 16km satisfying trek. We had walked the 8km stretch from Carlow to Milford Bridge along the Barrow Way and reversed for the return. Some of us had walked this in the intense heat of an August day as well. So it was interesting to see nature's changing seasons. The underfoot is soft but firm, grassy path for most of it. And the swans were friendly, like the chatty locals we met on the way. The banks of the Barrow river were marked by lush vegetation and a variety of trees. Pastoral, biscuit tin stuff. Constable, eat your heart out, you missed the Barrow!

# Switching to Outdoor Active app

Tracking the walks you do and saving them as a routes is good fun, says Trekkers' Training Officer Alan Kane: he urges all members, techy or not, to download the Outdoor Active app which enables you to do this – or switch from ViewRanger – as soon as possible.

The ViewRanger app popular with many Trekkers will be turned off at the end of February, replaced by Outdoor Active, the company which acquired it in 2019. It's important to switch soon, especially if you have routes stored on ViewRanger, in order to ensure to you don't lose them.

Alan has put a guide

-- "Outdoor Active, Transition from ViewRanger" -- on the Trekker website under Training & Education Documents. It looks daunting at first glance, but Alan emphasises that the best way to tackle the transition/adoption of the new app is to take it step by step: "take a couple of sections or tasks at a time and get familiar with doing them on your phone before moving on".

When you turn on the app at the start of a walk, it tracks it, shows you stats at the end, like the distance walked and can be saved as a route that you can use whether walking with friends or leading a Trekkers walk in the future. On your computer, on the

Outdoor Active website, you can also create a route from scratch and sync it with your phone.

Outdoor Active is free to subscribe to, but has ads – you have to pay if you want an ad-free account. The Pro and Pro+ accounts have higher quality maps and more functionality, but you can do all the basics on the free version. So far, there are no Irish grid references in Outdoor Active, although they hope that will change. In the meantime, says Alan, everyone should download the Grid Ref app to their phone, which gives your location in the event of being lost/ an emergency, even where there is no phone signal.....**FO'R**

## 94 at Zoom AGM

Ninety-four members attended Trekkers' AGM on October 19, 2021, held on Zoom for a second year in a row. Highlights this year were the presentation of the Future Directions Survey 2021\* by Geraldine Boland and a vote to change the Constitution to create the new role of Training Officer.

The proposal to change the Constitution to include the role of Training Officer as a full member of the committee with voting rights and elected by the membership was put to the meeting; an online poll of the members in attendance resulted in 99 per cent voting in favour of the proposal. Alan Kane was subsequently elected unopposed to be the Club's first Training Officer.

The Chairperson acknowledged the contribution of the two outgoing Committee members, Dympna Thunder, Walks Coordinator, and Alan Kane, Secretary, and thanked them both for their contribution and commitment.

Ita Lawton expressed her thanks to the Chairperson and the Committee for their work during the last year and for managing all the complexities that arose from the Covid-19 pandemic, a view endorsed by a number of members.

The Chair announced that a Trekker 2022 Calendar would be gifted to members by Christmas.

**\*See Future Directions Survey 2021, document 198 under General Documents on the Trekker website**

## 'A hard act to follow'

Dympna Thunder stood down as Walks Co-Ordinator at the AGM after holding the position for three years. Creating the Walks Programme is a bit of a dark art, in which the co-ordinator assigns A, B, C, Wednesday Walk and Social Walk leaders and co-leaders to every walk to be held three months in advance.



This job became even more challenging in May last year, when the committee agreed to increase the number of walks per week from three to seven, with walks now running on Fridays as well as on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Finding enough leaders/co-leaders from the pool of Trekkers willing to lead was a big challenge – and Dympna often stepped in to lead walks herself if leaders couldn't be found or had to drop out. As her successor Ann Hayes said at the AGM "I'm sure you'll agree that the ease and good humour with which she carried out her role belies the amount of hard work she put in. She is a hard act to follow!"



Above and right: record 15 people on A walk on Sat, Dec 4th



Above: B walk, Annamoe to Rathdrum. Right: WW, Fairycastle. Below: C walk, Howth and bottom, C walk, Ballinastoe to JB Malone



Serenade in Dargle Gorge, left.

Below: Glendalough.

More pictures on page 25



# Down the road - but far enough away to be an adventure

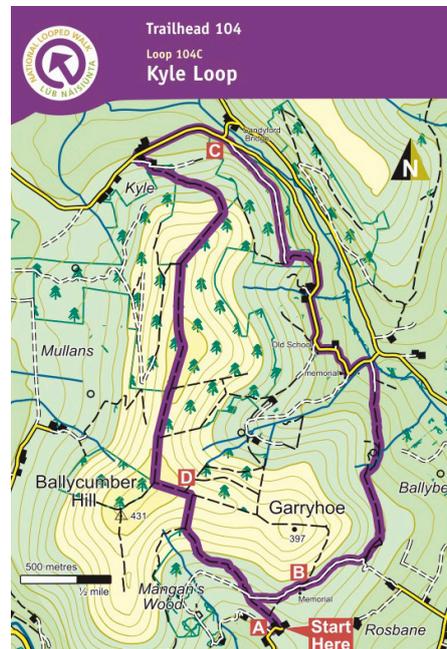
For the third year in a row, **Paddy McManus** led an away trip based in Tinahely, Co Wicklow. He asks Trekkers what they liked about it

## The Recce, July 2021

During recces for the walks, in late July, we noticed the lush untrodden paths, it seemed so few had been this way. On narrower stretches the ferns were united on either side of the paths, and on another ascending narrow gully, near the windmills, the brambles needed a duck, dive and dodge ballet!

The summer air was dry and warm. Thunder echoed far away. Showers were forecast. The Ballycumber recce team was probably nearly back at their cars as we, the Kyle team, descended from the windmills onto the flank of the descent. We were watching two huge dark clouds on our right, rumbling thunder, heading our way. We had left the forest cover and started the descent on our left, losing sight of the clouds, as we tried to descend quickly on a patch of nasty scree. But the noise of the thunder rumbled nearer, faster.

As we scrambled to get our jackets on, there was a mighty crack and flash of lightning and the first cloud burst. The golf balls of hail lashed any available, exposed skin; the



pain on the hands, on any turn of the face to the wrong way. Like cows, we stopped, and let our backs take the peppering. The burst of rain soaked us in seconds, the noise was majestic in declaring its dominance of us, wee mortals, mocking us, with a second burst of dollops of hail and rain.

I thought my sodden trousers were about to slip off my waist. We could only laugh and glance to see if the others were all right. And hope the coming days of August would not be a repeat off the 2020 horror show. The Ballycumber dry folk were sheltering in their cars!

## The Trip, August 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup>: two nights away and two days trekking

We had glorious, warm summer weather for the whole trip. The ground was dry and no rain. The ferns had been beaten back by increased use of the trails. The brambles had been chainsawed. Everyone was in good cheer,

There were B and C walks on a Trekkers' away trip to Tinahely, Co Wicklow, one 17km on the Kyle Loop, the other 12km on the Ballycumber Loop

bursting with the release of the pent-up angst of lockdowns and relentless bad news. Here are some comments made by Trekkers who came on the trip:

"Magic to get away from the maddening crowd, a great shot in the arm after the Pfizer!"

"Familiar faces, smiles all round, animated chatter, craic, camaraderie"

"Being back in Tinahely felt very homely and comfortable. Sure it's only down the road, but far enough down to be an adventure"

"Bucolic scene of a tree in the centre of the field, its branches shielding the huge flock of sheep from the sun"

"Green valleys, crops being harvested, blue and yellow hydrangea that hurt your eyes"

"The glorious spread of purple heather"

"Eerie alien landscape of windmills and swish, swish of the blades"

"Sleek copper cows"

"Anxious bellowing mother cow with its invalided calf" (the herdsman said it was Vitamin B deficiency)"

"The wonderful views afforded a patchwork of bucolic fields, majestic windmills, and rolling skies. Food for the soul"

"Like an annual holiday each year, seems to be more enjoyable although nothing changes"

"Felt on a high since I returned from Tinahely".

Anyone for August 2022?

# They went to the zoo, zoo, zoo

Trekkers saw birds, beasts and heard about Dublin Zoo's plans for the future on an autumn Wednesday walk. **Dermot Murray reports**

If the course of Dublin Zoo's history could be likened to a passage of writing in a book, then it has certainly met with its fair share of troubling punctuation marks down through the years. Miscellaneous commas and dashes are scattered about the pages, and these take the form of a variety of wars, the famine years of the 1840s, and prolonged periods of economic depression.

In more recent times, the zoo was threatened with closure in 1989 and, more recently still, there has been a considerable loss of income due to Covid-19; nonetheless, the zoo has rallied: it is already making preparations for its bicentenary in 2031, and continues to adapt to the expectations that are made of it in the modern era, with a shift of emphasis from the zoo as a place of spectacle to one of ongoing conservation, education and care.

Ah, but who better to investigate than the Trekkers Mountaineering Club!

We arrived there on an overcast and chilly day in early October, under the direction of Ann Keenan (Trekker and Zoo president), who ensured that

we would be provided with fascinating talks from the zoo's Director and also from a hugely dedicated keeper who, it must be said, had truly found his place in the world. After tea and pastries, we were brought around the zoo itself by a young volunteer whose breadth of knowledge was matched only by his enthusiasm. We were treated to all manner of facts and insights: from the composition of the flooring in the elephant-house, to the soap-operatic shenanigans on the chimpanzee island.

Of course, the enclosures are much more spacious now than when I was a child – but more secluded also, which can



**Ann Keenan, centre with umbrella, led Trekkers on a trip to the zoo**

make spotting some of the animals a particular challenge. Gone are the endlessly pacing polar bears, though there are some very worthy newcomers who have settled in their stead, including the much underrated okapi who certainly warrants a special mention here. (For those unfamiliar with exotic fauna, it's a large, hoofed animal related to the giraffe, an endangered species from central Africa.)

However, it would be unfair to say that the zoo's more modern approach puts a sense of distance between the visitors and the animals that they have

come to look upon; indeed, there are novel and exciting installations which provide an enhanced perspective of the zoo's inhabitants, most notably the viewing-windows at the sea lion enclosure, so that these beautifully streamlined creatures can be seen gliding effortlessly beneath the surface of the water.

It was certainly an unusual time to be visiting the zoo. All of the indoor exhibits – including the newly renovated Roberts House – were out of bounds to us due to Covid restrictions. But we could not fail to notice certain other presences in the zoo – for haunting many of the nooks and recesses were what might best be

described as giant, brightly coloured lampshades: great cages of wire that had been overspread with silk-like material, and taking the form of a multitude of beasts and peoples and structures and natural features from every part of the world. Then unlit, it was intended to boldly illuminate these ostentatious likenesses at night-time throughout the zoo as part of the Wild

Lights celebration, which returned after last year's deferral from December 2021 to January 9, 2022.

In spite of all of the changes that have been made to Dublin Zoo in recent years, it retains the ability to awaken a feeling a warmth and nostalgia in all who visit it – and the greyness of the day of the Trekkers' visit did little to detract from this.

A huge thank you must go to Ann for organising such an enjoyable and memorable day, and for opening our eyes to the invaluable work of the zoo. May we spread the word far and wide!

# Trekker events . . . .



## Featured in the Irish Times

On November 20, 2021, Deirdre Falvey wrote a feature about Trekkers in the Irish Times Weekend magazine . As a result, 37 people have applied to join, with more inquiries coming in after Christmas. See [www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/travel/](http://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/travel/)



[ireland/walk-this-way-on-the-trail-with-dublin-s-trekkers-club-1.4724895](https://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/travel/ireland/walk-this-way-on-the-trail-with-dublin-s-trekkers-club-1.4724895)

**Photographs above by Dara MacDonail, courtesy Irish Times**

## Trekkers to the rescue: First Aid course



First Aid instructor Niamh Gaffney, above left, with Paddy MacManus, gave 10 Trekkers a First Aid course at the end of September. The course was held first on Zoom, followed by a practical session on Killiney Hill. A refresher session is due to be held for the Trekker trainees shortly. Training Officer Alan Kane will organise more First Aid training later in 2022.

## Memorial Day

Trekkers' annual memorial day to remember deceased Trekkers was held in Glenmalur on September 11th.

Right: Dympna Thunder, left, and chair Fiona O'Sullivan Far right, from left: Dick Ryan, Colette Dorgan and Fionnuala Martin



# A lifetime of walking, at home and away

## Profile: Trekkers gave me wonderful holidays and lots of fun says Mary Murray

Mary Murray's favourite memories of her years with Trekkers are the away trips: she has been on 17 since she and her late husband Tom joined Trekkers in 2000. "My first away trip was on one led by Brendan Bracken to the Auvergne. It was fabulous. And on a trip to Scotland led by Owen McKeown, I climbed to the top of Ben Nevis on a glorious day, when the top third of it was covered in snow. Later, she organised trips to Tenerife herself, following one organised by Shay Murran.

There were also plenty of trips in Ireland, with one away trip from Dublin organised once a year. "My favourite place at home was Killarney, and climbing Carrauntuohill. Abroad, I'd say my favourite was one of the French trips, to the Pyrenees."

Mary, a former Trekkers chair, has been one of the most active members of Trekkers, especially in the past two years: she was always ready to take on leading walks when it was sometimes hard to find leaders for the increased number of weekly walks being run since Covid.

Her walking life didn't start with Trekkers. Originally from Artane, she joined the then recently-formed Irish Ramblers in about 1963/1964: "Everyone was

young and I took to it right away; there were just A&B level walks then. We'd get the number 44 bus from downtown to the hills."

Then at 20, Mary went travelling, first to Boston, then to Montreal: as a qualified medical scientist, she spent one and a half years working in the lab of the Royal Victoria Hospital there and did a lot of walking with a group from McGill University, to which the hospital is attached. "I also did a lot of skiing, although I was useless at it."

She came home via



Mary Murray with her late husband, Tom,

New Zealand and Australia and began a job in the College of Surgeons. She met Tom at a dance in Palmerston Rugby Club and "got married at 24 in 1970". Parenthood put a stop to Mary's walking life for the next 30 years – her eldest son, Paul, was born in 1971 and her youngest, Aoife, 12 years later. But Brian Brennan, "a colleague of Tom's in RTE and a leading light in Trekkers, kept persuading Tom to join the club".

They joined Trekkers in 2000 and their son Dermot – a stalwart of A&B walks – a year later. "I couldn't believe it when Dick Ryan suggested I stand as chair. It was still quite a male club, with probably less than 100 members when I was chair [from 2005 to 2008]." The club

celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary when Mary was chair – with what sounds like a great party (see Trekker newsletter no 36) with "singin', dancin' and recitin' according to Brendan Bracken's report.

In the early days of Trekkers' Wednesday walks, Mary changed from a full-time job to a four-day week so she could join them. The only condition of the walks was that Mary would be home in time for bridge, her other lifelong love. (During Covid, she's played bridge online with partners at home and all around the world.)

Mary agrees that the club needs new, young members but says "it makes me a bit sad that many members never knew leading lights like Derry O'Hegarty, Paddy O'Duffy and Brendan Bracken".

The club has adapted to changing needs of members: introducing social walks a few years ago, and also – at Mary's instigation -- B minus walks, so that on the days of A walks, there'd be "a walk that might encourage C walkers to try something a bit more demanding". She also likes the limit of 15 people per walk, introduced because of Covid restrictions. "It means you can talk to everyone."

Being in Trekkers "helped when Tom got sick and died, in 2017" – he had been an active member until shortly before that. And she says "I got an awful lot more out of Trekkers than I put into it, wonderful holidays and lots of fun. And Tom enjoyed it as much as I did."

**Frances O'Rourke**

## Walks with History

# Guinness estate now popular park

**Brian Snow** charts the rise, fall and resurrection of St Anne's in Raheny, where some of Trekkers' northside walks begin

WHILE 21<sup>st</sup> century Dubliners enjoy St Anne's Park's 270 acres of parkland and its numerous sports facilities, to fully appreciate the modern park in Raheny, it helps to understand its 19<sup>th</sup> century creation and that requires a dip into Guinness history.

Benjamin Lee Guinness, grandson of the brewery's founder, expanded the business's sales into Britain and that policy is credited with catapulting the Guinnesses into the super wealthy league.

In 1835 he purchased a 52-acre estate from the Vernons of Clontarf Castle and later expanded it to 500 acres. Benjamin replaced the original Georgian house with one built in an Italianate style and renamed his demesne St Anne's, after a historic Holy Well located on the land.

Benjamin's eldest son, Arthur, had no interest in business and so Benjamin was succeeded in running the brewery by his younger son Edward (later the first Lord Iveagh). Arthur, as the eldest, inherited the family home.

In 1871 he married 21 year-old Olivia, a McCarthy descendant and daughter of the Earl of Bantry. Arthur became an (anti-Home Rule) MP in 1876 and in 1880 was ennobled as Lord Ardilaun. The Ardilauns devoted much time and resources to St Anne's development, while also finding time to stay at their country pad -- Ashford Castle.

Olivia's great interest was in planting the demesne



The Clock Tower in St Anne's Park, Raheny: built in 1850, it still works

and many of the park's trees date from the 1870s. She liked grand allées in the French style and she is responsible for the majestic Holm Oak and Austrian Pine which line the main avenue. Most of the park's perimeter has tree-lined paths and there is a good stretch of thick and diverse woodland to the north of the Naniken, a small river which runs through the park.

Wealthy Victorians liked to display their worldly sophistication and, during the 1850s and 1860s, the family commissioned a series of structures based on classical monuments – St Anne's famous follies.

The Annie Lee Tower Bridge, built by Benjamin in 1838 on the birth of his first child, was the first folly. The demesne's main entrance was on the Clontarf Road (i.e the coast road) and the bridge arches over what was originally the main driveway to the house.

Most of the surviving follies can be found along the

Naniken valley, including several grottoes and bowers and a Druidic-type circle of basalt rocks sourced from the Giant's Causeway.

The remains of a folly modelled on a Herculanean House stands above the Naniken. (Herculaneum was a settlement where the Roman elite could get away from city life.) Its windows were of stained glass, its tiled interior was a copy of designs found during excavations of Herculaneum and it contained Roman statuary – all long gone. The Naniken runs into a small lake, now happily home to many ducks.

Beside the lake is a Pompeiian Temple, which was used as a tea house. Nearby is St Anne's Well. The Tomb of the Julii (or Roman Tower) sits in woodland directly above the lake. The Roman original, which is still in excellent condition, was constructed about 20 BC and is

**Continued on page 17**

## Rose Garden crowning glory of park resurrected by Council

### From page 16

located 20km south of Avignon in France. The folly, at 11m in height, is two-thirds scale.

St Anne's originally had several walled gardens, one of which is still intact and is open at limited times. It includes a garden used by special interest groups (medicinal herbs etc) and also an oriental garden donated to the city by the Chinese Embassy. The garden is the site of a Clock Tower, built in 1850 and in working order, which contains a 1.2 metre diameter bell.

The walled garden includes a Parks Dept plant nursery. This area is closed to the public but, if you can talk your way in, you can see the remains of a Shell House. Shellwork was a popular and socially acceptable hobby for wealthy ladies in Ireland and Europe during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The Ardilauns spent lavishly on entertaining at St Anne's. Queen Victoria had been a dinner guest in 1900. But St Anne's ascendancy heyday was about to pass. Lord Ardilaun died in 1915. Lady Ardilaun lived for another 10 years – years of the creation of the independent Irish state.

Lady Gregory described the widowed Lady Ardilaun as 'a lonely figure in her wealth, childless and feeling the old life shattered around her'. A memoir by one of her cousins describes Lady Ardilaun as 'fearful of the world in which she now found herself and, despite the Guinness

money, occupying an increasingly decrepit St Anne's, its gardens falling into decay'. Lady Ardilaun handed over Ashford Castle to another Guinness and she described St Anne's at this time as 'like living in a mausoleum'. She moved out and spent her last years living with two private staff in the Shelbourne Hotel, where she died in 1925 aged 75.

St Anne's passed to Bishop Benjamin Plunkett, who was a Guinness through his mother. By the mid 1930s he could no longer afford the demesne's running costs and taxes and,



The duck pond, above and below, the Roman Tower in St Anne's Park, Raheny

in 1939, he negotiated a sale of the house and 450 acres to Dublin Corporation for £55,000. All the demesne's moveable art works and artifacts, internal and external, were sold off at public auction. Only the trees, the follies – stripped of their contents -- and a cold, damp and deteriorating house were left.

The remaining 50 acres were later sold to the Vincentian order, who built St Paul's School on the land. The unoccupied main house was destroyed by fire during Christmas 1943.

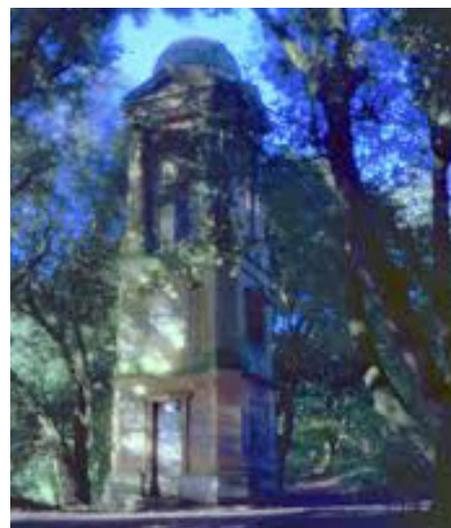
During the 1960s I lived within a kilometre of St Anne's and, having recently returned to the area, I marvel at what

Dublin City Council has done in developing and maintaining the Park. Its Rose Garden, its follies, its playground, its zip line, its allotments, its children's model farm and its vast and diverse sports facilities (which include 35 grass and all-weather GAA and soccer playing pitches, a par-3 golf course, cricket crease, 18 hard tennis courts, boules courts and a model car racetrack) are all an imaginative response to the needs of a more demanding and wealthier general public.

St Anne's crowning glory must be the Rose Garden, which was opened to the public in 1975. In 1981 it was dedicated as a venue for International Rose Trials and, particularly in a good growing year, it is simply stunningly beautiful in mid summer.

In 1988 a 1,000 tree Millennium Arboretum was created to celebrate Dublin's 1,000<sup>th</sup> birthday. The demesne's original Victorian stables, the

Red Stables, have been restored as an arts centre and a cafe. A food market is held here on Saturdays throughout the year.



**A Long Walk South - An Irishman's Trek on the GR 5 by Sean Rothery (Collins Press, 2014).** At 65, architect Rothery walked the 2,300km GR5, the Grande Randonee Cinq, from the North Sea to the Mediterranean.

**A History of the World in 500 Walks by Sarah Baxter (Quintet Publishing, 2016)** From geologic upheavals and mad kings to trade routes and saints' ways, this book relates the tales behind 500 walks.

**Walking Ireland by Tom Lawton (Gill and Macmillan, 1998)** 25 walking routes stretching from Wicklow in a clockwise arc around to Connemara.

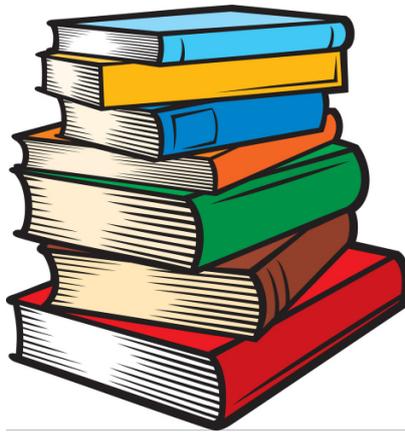
**The Summit - How Triumph Turned To Tragedy On K2's Deadliest Days by Pat Falvey and Pemba Gyalje Sherpa (2008):** comprehensive interpretation of one of modern-day mountaineering's most controversial disasters.

**The Wicklow Military Road by Michael Fewer (Ashfield Press, 2007)**

**Walking Dublin by Pat Liddy (New Holland (UK) 1998):** Scene-setting historical and descriptive introduction to 24 guided walks.

**The Rivers Of Dublin by Clare L Sweeney (Irish Academic Press, 2017)** Illustrated examination of the water routes of Ireland's capital and the ceaseless activity they enabled.

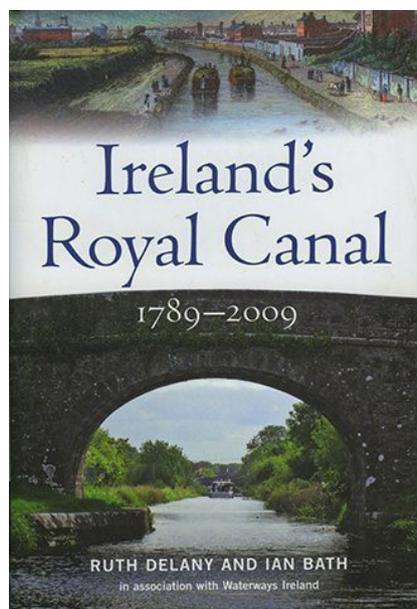
**The Mourne and Cooley Mountains by Adrian Herdroff (The Collins Press, 2019):** Illustrated guide to the highest mountain range in Northern Ireland.



## BOOKS ABOUT WALKING from Seamus Murran's library

**Guide to the Grand Canal of Ireland by Ruth Delaney (The Heritage Service, 1999):** Story of the Grand Canal over two centuries

**Guide to the Barrow Navigation of Ireland by Peter Hanna and Ruth**



**Delaney (The Heritage Service, 1990)**

**Ireland's Royal Canal 1789-2009 by Ruth Delany & Ian Bath (Waterways Service of Ireland, 1997):** Over 100 images -- photographs, engravings, aerial views, posters and maps, document -- celebrate the 200-year-history of the canal.

**The Kerry Way by Donal Nolan (The Collins Press, 2015)** Walking guide to Ireland's longest 200km waymarked trail.

**Shackleton - A Biography by Ranulph Fiennes (Penguin (UK) 2021)** The story of Ernest Shackleton's legendary Antarctic expedition through the words of explorer Sir Ranulph Fiennes.

**Walk Guide - East of Ireland by David Herman and Marian McCarty (Gill and Macmillan 1998):** Detailed guide to the hills and valleys of the south-east.

**The Complete Wicklow Way by J B Malone, Introduction by James Plunkett (The O'Brien Press, 1997.** Campaigning hillwalker Malone was responsible for the establishment of the Wicklow Way as a recognised walking trail, having first proposed it in 1966.

**Hill Walking - The Official Handbook of the Mountain Leader Group of UK by Steve Long (Mountain Leader of UK, 2014):** A manual for anyone walking in the British hills.

**The River Liffey History and Heritage by Christopher Moriarty (Collins Press, 2018):** Definitive detailed on almost every kilometre of the Liffey's journey from Wicklow's blanket bogs to Poolbeg Lighthouse

## **Teethmarks on My Tongue**

**by Eileen Battersby:** EB published wonderfully insightful, knowledgeable fiction reviews in the Irish Times until her untimely demise. "Bold and beautiful . . . The ending truly floored me" is the blurb from Neil Jordan. A gripping read (slightly overwritten in patches), lyrical and I suspect with a dollop of autobiographical inspiration.

## **Dead Man's Walk and Comanche Moon (prequel to the Lonesome Dove series):**

American writer Larry McMurtry's books are vivid, great stories of the Western genre. History told through storytelling. And I had the boxset of the movies for my Christmas viewing!

## **The Forty Rules of Love by**

**Elif Shafak:** An enigma of a book I finished recently. ES if very much a Renaissance modern woman with her talents not confined to fiction writing.

## **Love is Blind by William**

**Boyd:** Anything by British author William Boyd is worth attention. His fictional output has been prodigious, and so gracefully written. Lots of choice available on Kindle.

And I love dipping in and out of the short stories of **William Trevor.**

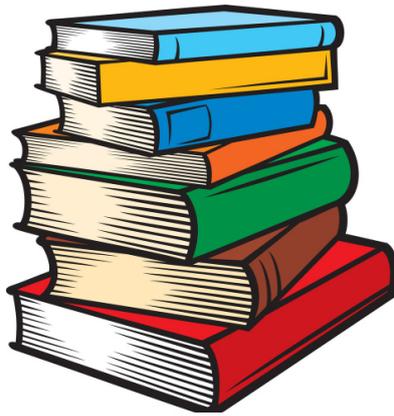
**The Reluctant Taoiseach by David McCullagh:** a biography of John A Costello by David McCullagh is an educational book in these 100-year anniversary times.

## **The Arms Crisis of 1970**

**by Michael Heney:** forensic charting of the Arms Crisis of 1970, à la Jack Lynch and CJ Haughey. I was not fully convinced of the revisionism.

## **The Making of the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985 by David**

**Goodall:** Recent memoir by David Goodall, who was a senior member of the UK negotiators over the many twists and turns. Our fellow Trekker, Frank



# BOOK BEAT What Trekkers are reading

Sheridan, was editor of this fine, absorbing book which shows how exhausting diplomacy is as a profession.

## **The Art of Statistics:**

## **Learning from Data by David**

**Spiegelhalter:** And for the esoteric, a book which unpicks the maxim "lies, damn lies and statistics" ...the first half, great, but the second is for the truly nerdy.

## **Levels of Life by Julian**

**Barnes:** Lastly, this work by an acclaimed author is a colossal confrontation of dealing with the fallout of grief from the loss of a loved one. Written in 2012, after the loss of his wife and just 118 pages long, it's an exquisite series of contemplations. Another dipper for me.

**Paddy MacManus**

## **The Lincoln Highway by Amor**

**Towles:** Written by the author of **A Gentleman in Moscow**, this is a hugely entertaining story set in 1950s America. Four misfits go on a road trip in pursuit of their dreams.

## **Tatty by Christine Dwyer**

**Hickey:** Tatty tells the story of a

young girl struggling to survive in a household being destroyed by alcohol. Set in Dublin through the 60s and 70s, it is a chronicle of our time. Tragic, funny and utterly unsentimental.

## **The Magician by Colm Toibin:**

Toibin writes an intimate account of the life of Nobel Prize winning author, Thomas Mann, who found himself on the wrong side of history, cheerleading the German army in WW1. He was a family man, keeping his homosexuality hidden at great cost to himself. The book spans the history of the 20th century, through the two world wars, Hitler, the Cold War and exile.

## **Matrix by Lauren Geoff:**

17-year-old Marie de France is banished to England to be the new prioress of an impoverished abbey, its nuns on the brink of starvation and disease. The level of detail of 12th century life is remarkable, with lots of violence, sensuality and religious ecstasy thrown in.

## **The Promise by Damon**

**Galgut:** Winner of the 2021 Booker prize, this is a story of a promise not kept. It's a moving and sad tale set against several decades of changes in South Africa, from apartheid to Jacob Zuma.

**Una Davis**

## **The Goldfinch by Donna**

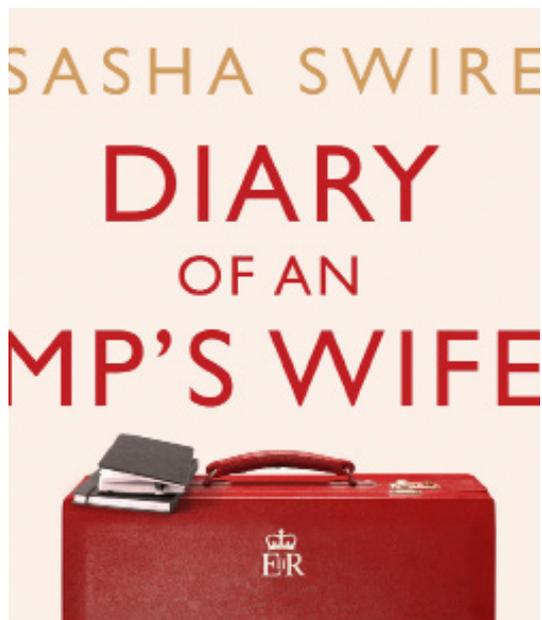
**Tartt:** One of the best books I have ever read! A friend of mine recommended Donna Tartt to me years ago but it is only recently that I got around to taking his advice, also reading her **The Secret History** earlier in the year.

**Ronan White**

## **Diary of an MP's Wife" by**

**Sasha Swire:** fascinating account for anyone interested in politics which I would very much recommend. It covers a very

**continued on page 20**



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interesting period in British politics from 2011 to 2019 (Brexit, Cameron, Boris, etc). She spares very few and could be very cruel about certain people. I have my suspicions that she may have rewritten some of it post event, either that or she was extremely prescient and sharp about many issues (including Boris).

**Michael Deasy**

**Black Sea - Dispatches and Recipes Through Darkness and Light by Caroline Eden:**

Beautiful book for the person who loves travel and food. This is the tale of a journey between three great cities -- Odessa, built on a dream by Catherine the Great, through Istanbul, the fulcrum balancing Europe and Asia and on to tough, stoic, lyrical Trabzon. It has won multiple prizes -- the Art of Eating Prize 2020, Guild of Food Writers' Best Food Book Award 2019, the Edward Stanford Travel Food and Drink Book Award 2019, the John Avery Award at the André Simon Food and Drink Book Awards for 2018 and was shortlisted for the James Beard International Cookbook Award.

**Fiona O'Sullivan**

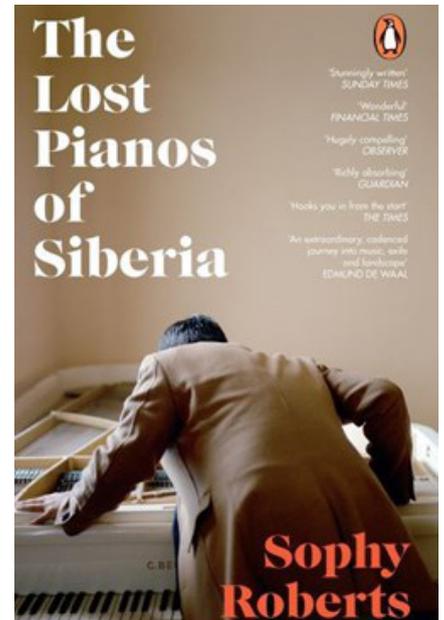


**Small Things Like These by Claire Keegan:**

This is a small book that carries a weight of emotion. We encounter the contrasting responses to the mother-and baby homes, the self-serving gestures of goodwill and the need to 'not know' on the part of many, counterpoised with the compassion of the few. It is a penetrating story, featuring just one circumstance that lets us imagine what we chose not to see in the suppressed atmosphere of a small town in 1980s Ireland.

I would recommend two Claire Keegan's earlier books: **Foster:** A novella about the awakening to tenderness experienced by a young girl, one of a large family, who spends her summer holidays living with relatives, a couple with no children, close to the sea in the south-east of Ireland. The subtle, insinuating way in which her slow discovery of connection and affection is portrayed, is marvellous.

**Walk the Blue Fields** is an exceptional collection of short stories set in rural Ireland that blend tragedy, wit, sorrow, and loss but celebrate a unique resilience. **The Forester's Daughter** must rank as one of my favourite short stories.



**Burnt Sugar by Avini Doshi:**

This book, set in India, is about a fractured mother-daughter relationship. Antara weaves horrific memories from her childhood with incidences of betrayals in her later life, as she now contends with a confusion of rage and love while her mother slowly sinks into illness and memory loss. Sharp, unsentimental but beautifully written. Set across the decades before and after the transition to democracy in South Africa, this story revolves around the broken promise to a black servant. The landscape and the lifestyle are sharply painted and the tension among the family members is almost like an allegory of the new South Africa.

**Blank Pages and Other Stories by Bernard Mac Laverty:**

This is a wonderful collection of beautifully crafted and very affecting short stories, most set in Northern Ireland or Scotland, featuring ordinary people and the extraordinary depth of their emotional response to situations. The one story set in Vienna during the Spanish flu in 1918, **The End of Days**, differs in its rather gothic tone but is memorable.....**Aine Allen**

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**Say Nothing by Patrick Radden Keefe:**

Gripping, unbiased non-fiction account of the Troubles by American investigative journalist Keefe, told principally through the stories of Dolours Price and IRA man Brendan Hughes. New information even for those of us who lived through the 30 terrible years. **Empire of Pain**, his story of the Sacklers, the family responsible for North America's opioid crisis, is equally brilliantly-

researched and compulsively readable.

**The Pages by Hugo Hamilton:**

the narrator of Hamilton's inventive, imaginative novel is a book rescued from a Nazi book burning in 1933. The book is *Rebellion*, by Joseph Roth, and in *The Pages*, it tells the history of what happened to it over the course of a century, opening with its current owner, artist Lena, who inherits her father's copy. It's a device that sounds unlikely but works,

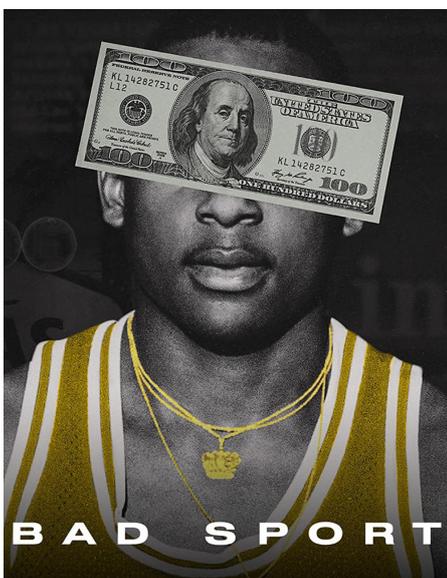
at one level as a compelling mystery, on another as a chilling meditation on the lessons of history

**Frances O'Rourke**

**The Lost Pianos of Siberia by Sophy Roberts:**

Absorbing story about a piano hunt by an English travel writer on a quixotic quest through two centuries of Russian history and eight time zones, described as an exploration of Siberia's terrifying past.

**Sue Ward**



**Bad Sport:** crime series, with six in-depth accounts of the impact of gambling on prominent sports people. For sports enthusiasts, the series is fascinating on how, for example, basketball players have been seduced by professional gamblers into fixing matches for a payoff. Another tells of Hansie Cronje, a famous South African cricket captain who fixed matches both at home and abroad. Compelling viewing. On Netflix.

**Found:** After DNA tests reveal

SHOWS,  
PODCASTS  
What Trekkers  
are watching  
and listening to

them to be cousins, three teenage girls adopted by different US families visit China hoping to meet the birth parents. This is an insightful account of the impact of the Chinese "one child policy" on parents pressured to give up their children, through the eyes of the adoptees. On Netflix.

**Geraldine Boland**

**Dopesick**

Eight-part series dramatizes the shocking story of how the greed of a pharmaceutical company led to America's opioid epidemic. Streaming on Disney+

**Frances O'Rourke**



**The Lost Daughter:** Psychological drama based on Elena Ferrante's novel stars Olivia Colman (and our own Paul Mescal is in the cast.) Fraught story about mothers and daughters. Netflix.

**Narcos:** The story of Colombia's violent drug cartels is told in *Narcos*, a three-series drama about the rise of the cocaine trade in Colombia and the real-life stories of drug kingpins of the late 1980s -- as well as of American and Colombian political and military attempts to fight them. On Netflix.

**Fiona O'Sullivan**

**A HISTORY OF ROCK MUSIC**



**IN 500 SONGS**

**A History of Rock Music in 500 Songs:** Andrew Hickey is releasing one episode per week in these podcasts and has reached the 1960s with Episode No 140, so there's years of entertainment and enlightenment ahead - with something for everyone. I'd recommend these podcasts, found either on Spotify, or directly from [500songs.com](http://500songs.com)

**Paul O'Kane**

# Fettuccine Stanley Tucci

In his book **Taste -- My Life Through Food**, actor Stanley Tucci recommends this classic pasta with a difference by his friend Pino Posteraro, award-winning Italian chef-proprietor of Vancouver restaurant Cioppino's.

The difference is in the stock, made with a rind of Parmigiano cheese.

## Pino Posteraro's Fettuccine with Ragout alla Bolognese

**Serves 4**

### Ingredients

1 tbsp chopped onions; 1 tbsp chopped carrots; 1 tbsp chopped celery; 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil; 25g mixed herbs (such as rosemary, sage and/or thyme), chopped; 2 bay leaves; 50g dried porcini mushrooms, reconstituted; 225 lean ground beef or veal; 25g tomato paste; 3 1/2 tbsp dry white wine; 3 1/2 tbsp freshly squeezed orange juice; 1 tbsp salt; a pinch of black pepper; 700ml chicken stock (or Parmigiano stock)\*; 300g egg fettuccine; 25g butter;



25g 36% fat whipping cream (optional); 35g Grana Padano, grated

### Method

In a large saucepan over a medium heat, sweat the vegetables in the olive oil with the herbs and porcini. Add the meat and cook until brown, perhaps utilizing a lid to achieve a better and faster result. Add the tomato paste, wine and orange juice and

let the liquids evaporate. Add the salt, pepper and stock and let simmer for about 1 1/2 hours. When the ragout is cooked, boil the fettuccine in salted water until al dente. Add the butter and cream, if using, to the ragout alla Bolognese, toss the pasta with the sauce and sprinkle with the grated Grana Padano.

## \*Pino Posteraro's Parmigiano Stock

### Ingredients

1 quart water; 1 large Parmigiano rind (about 750g); 7oz coarse sea salt; 3 small bay leaves

### Method

Fill a large pot with the water. Wrap the rind in cheesecloth; tie tightly with string and secure to the side of the pot (this helps avoid the Parmigiano's sinking to the bottom of the pot and burning). Submerge the wrapped rind. Add the salt and bay leaves. Gently boil for 2 hours, strain, and use for Bolognese.

# Christmas fun



Wednesday walkers repair an outdoor Christmas tree on Dec 29th. Right: B walkers celebrate on Dec 18th

# On the beach on the way to Portrane

There was sunshine, birdsong and history on **Ann Hayes's** first Wednesday walk



Trekkers had full views of Lambay Island on a walk from Donabate to Portrane that included a visit to the grounds of now-closed St Ita's

accommodated 2,000 patients and over 300 live-in staff. It was like a small town having

Although I've been a member of the Trekkers since 2013, I've never been free to join a Wednesday walk. Added to this, although I've lived in Dublin for well over 50 years, I've no recollection of ever having visited Donabate or Portrane. But last May, a favorable stroke of serendipity changed this..

Dympna Thunder advertised a Wednesday walk taking in both Donabate and Portrane.... and I was free! My interest had been piqued listening to others accounts when Dympna had previously led this walk. On a clear, bright and sunny day I felt I was back in the 'rare auld times' meeting up with a number of Trekkers at Glenageary Dart station to take our onward journey and meet with the remainder of the group. Leaving the station in Donabate we followed the (quiet) main road past the golf course and down to the beach. Here we enjoyed a welcome coffee from the kiosk. This gave me time to situate myself . . . expansive beach, the calmest of seas, Sugarloaf in the distance and Howth Head to the south.

There is much evidence of coastal erosion in this area, which necessitated us taking a grassy path that gave us

glimpses of a Round Tower and St. Ita's Hospital surrounded by woodland. This path eventually brought us down to a rocky and shaley beach where Lambay island was in full view. Walking on this path, with grassland to our left and the sea to our right, we were awash with the colourful profusion and sweet aroma of wild flowers.

At times it reminded me of the Burren and at other times, a wild cottage garden. We were too late in the season to see Brent Geese but the occasional noisy tern hovered overhead. Once on the beach, our southside swimmers, Eudie, Fionnuala and Lucia decided to test the temperature of the water. Verdict: warm enough.

Leaving the beach, we made our way to Portrane village. Here Karl showed us the memorial erected to remember the over 300 people who drowned when the RMS Tayleur ran aground and sank on its maiden voyage in 1854 near Lambay island.

Making our way on a right of way, we entered the demesne of St Ita's, a now mostly derelict mental health hospital since de-commissioning of adult mental health units took place circa 2010. Built at the end of the 19th century, it

its own churches for different denominations, fire station, laundry, butcher and extensive gardens and farming and much more. A graveyard of unmarked graves is dedicated to the more than 5,000 people who died in the hospital in the over 100 years it was open. Walking through the grounds, I was remembering the countless people who had lived there for so many years, perhaps forgotten and unknown. It brought to mind the book Sacred Scripture written by Sabastian Barry.

Passing the new National Forensic Mental Health Service Hospital recently built on the grounds to replace Dundrum Central Mental Hospital, we entered woodland accompanied by a chorus of birdsong for the final part of the walk back to the Dart.

Did I enjoy my first Wednesday walk and trip to Donabate and Portrane? Yes. It was a relaxing walk on a beautifully sunny and yes even warm day filled with the beauty of nature and birdsong.

On the beach, I noticed some beautifully coloured shells that were lying lazily in the sand: I put a few in my pocket and treated them like a valuable treasure . . . a memento of my visit to Donabate and Portrane.

# The Trekkers and the King

**From the Archive:** on June 28, 2000 a group of Trekkers visited Tory Island. **Monty Tinsley** on a memorable away trip

I have to thank The Trekkers for giving me the opportunity to explore three offshore islands whose history and life style always fascinated me. I visited the Great Blasket in 1996; Inish Bofin in 2011 and in between, discovered Tory Island off Donegal.

That trip was the highlight of a four-day adventure to North West Donegal organised by Eugene Logan, in his role as Walks Co-ordinator for the Club. The full party of 28 travelled by luxury coach from Dublin to Gortahork, where we stayed in the Loch Alton Hotel.

Both A and C walks were arranged in Glenveigh Park on the first day, with an assault on Mt Errigal and a trek through the Poisoned Glen on the third day. The excursions on the second day included a visit to Tory Island or a magnificent cliff walk around Horn Head with its "many sheer vertical drops and constant dizzy views".

We made the eight mile journey to the island from Maheraroarty. This is a regular and vital service for the very existence of island life, with all major supplies arriving by this route – goods and people. It is the most remote inhabited island off Ireland whose next westerly neighbours live in America.

"Failte romhaibh", duirt An Ri when our party of 17 Trekkers embarked off the boat at the pier on Oilean Toraig on the 28<sup>th</sup> June 2000. It was Patsy Dan Rogers himself who came to welcome our group and he walked us up to the junction

where the roads from East Town and West Town meet, telling us the history and economy of the island and encouraged us to visit the local galleries and shops. He was a great ambassador who was frequently on television in this country as well as the UK and USA expounding about his realm. (He died in 2018 and the title of King has not, as yet, been conferred on anyone else.)

That day on Toraig it was a calm and sunny day, with a light southwesterly wind. We



were blessed as we also knew the weather could have been the opposite. Some members rode bicycles around the island which is three miles long and one mile wide whilst others explored the east or west towns on foot.

I remember walking to the lighthouse at the westerly end of the oilean and passing the Atlantic Cabin that Derek Hill and his school used when painting the landscape. In 1999 Derek Hill, an Englishman, had been made an honorary Irish citizen in recognition of his work to promote Tory as a place of beauty in all weathers and also as a tourist venue. He was the seventh person to receive this national distinction.

I also recall the anchor

that marks the highest point of the terrain and Dun Balor, the fort called after one-eyed giant Balor, who was the Celtic God of Darkness. The other landmark of note is the 1,000-year-old round tower. It is located in the West Town and although now a partial ruin, one can still observe the pinkish hued granite cement. It is believed this is made from lime and sea shells and it has withstood the ravages of time to hold the structure together.

It was easy to see from

this flat near treeless island that life can be extremely difficult with little arable land and the only natural means of survival coming via the sea. Often due to severe weather conditions, it has been cut off from the mainland, even for

weeks at a time.

There was a population of 150 when we visited and a secondary school had just opened. It augured well for the future. Today the population is 120 and the school is still in operation thus avoiding the cost of second level education and boarding on the mainland.

These details are well engraved in my memory, due to the nice day, my interest in historical places and helped by re-reading my notes in Trekker No. 13. In fact, a 14-page supplement of the Trekkers Donegal Trip was produced in that issue.

Thanks to Eugene for his planning and execution of another marvellous Away Trip for the Trekkers.

# Photo finish



Above: Djouce Woods, December. Right: January B- walk from Kindlestown Wood to Newtownmountkennedy. Below: WW on the Boyne Canal



Above left: Una and Noreen go off the beaten track . . . in Powerscourt. Left: Social walkers get on their bikes. Above: time out in Ballinastoe Wood in September. Below left, Djouce Woods. Below right: Devil's Glen, October

