

Happy 40th Birthday Trekkers



The

Trekker

Trekkers Mountaineering Club Glenageary Co Dublin www.trekkers.ie
Edition May 2022



From the mountains to the sea in Crete

Thirty-one Trekkers went to Crete on the club's first major trip abroad since 2018. The 10-day trip from May 16 to 26 was a huge success, with walks at B and C levels in rocky mountains as well as by the coast led by guides from France Outdoors, the company hired by organisers Mary Murphy and Nick O'Loughlin. Trekkers stayed first in Chania in the north of the island, then in Paleochora

in the south. A highlight was a challenging walk through the Samaria gorge, a 16km hike that involved a 1,200km descent into the gorge and 32 river crossings, before coming out at sea level in a village accessible only by boat. Another was swimming in the turquoise sea. The picture above shows Trekkers at the entrance to the Samaria Gorge. Full report in the next newsletter.

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Chair's notes

A roundy birthday is a time, of reflection and a time to remember people we know and miss but it's also a time of celebration and an opportunity to look to the future. So we hope in this Newsletter we are doing both.

As a club we not only survived Covid but have emerged strong and fit for purpose – we had time to get your opinions and wishes for the Club, we increased the number of walks according to demand and saw the return of away trips both at home and abroad.

The recent trips to Crete and the Slieve Blooms were a huge success and there is much excitement about the A trip to Killarney at the end of the month and about Geraldine Boland's B walk to Mount Leinster in August. A special thanks to the organisers, Nick, Mary (Murphy), Ita, Mary (Dillon), Gaye and Joe.

It is very exciting to see

so many new members actively out walking and we extend a warm welcome to you all. It's wonderful to see a growth in the number of younger members joining, many the sons and daughters of our members.

This is a very special month when we have, our birthday party, mystery School Tour, tour of Trinity, tour of Deansgrange cemetery for Bloomsday and our Meet and Chat in Cabinteely Park. Paul O'Kane very kindly will take photos for us but we also ask you to send us your own photos of the different events.

A big thanks to Paul, Padraig and Dara, John and Neasa, Carmel, Mary (Murphy), Fionnuala, Paddy, Dympna and Nick, Myles and Dick and Mary (Murray) for organising the different events.

We commissioned Eudie to paint birthday letters for the Trekkers – they are beautiful

and will be on view on the events and birthday walks so look out for them.

This month also sees our first in-house Leadership course being given by John (Casey), Mary Murphy and Farannan and we will soon see the modules for Mark and Alan's navigation course come online.

We had our first of two clean-up days on May 29th, an initiative brought to the Club by Catherine Almond and greatly helped by Geraldine Boland. It was a big success with eight members clearing 11km of upland minor roads, filling 18 bags of rubbish. The second clean-up day is June 14th.

A huge thank-you to you all for supporting all the different activities. My personal thanks to the committee; Mary Cad, Mark, Anne, Alan and our fantastic editor Fran for all their hard work and dedication to the Trekkers. And don't forget keep walking.

Editor's Notes

Welcome to the May Newsletter and thanks to all the Trekkers who contributed articles, ideas and pictures to it -- with special thanks to Paul O'Kane for his excellent photographs. We celebrate the Club's 40th birthday with a few trips down memory lane -- in particular, a piece about the late Brendan Bracken's hiking legacy. Elsewhere we have Aine Allen's trip to the highest lowest point in Ireland in Westmeath, Alan Kane's description of bagging a Munro and a profile of the indomitable Eudie Power. Please send pictures, articles and ideas for the autumn Newsletter to franorourke@gmail.com.

Frances O'Rourke

TREKKER TIPS

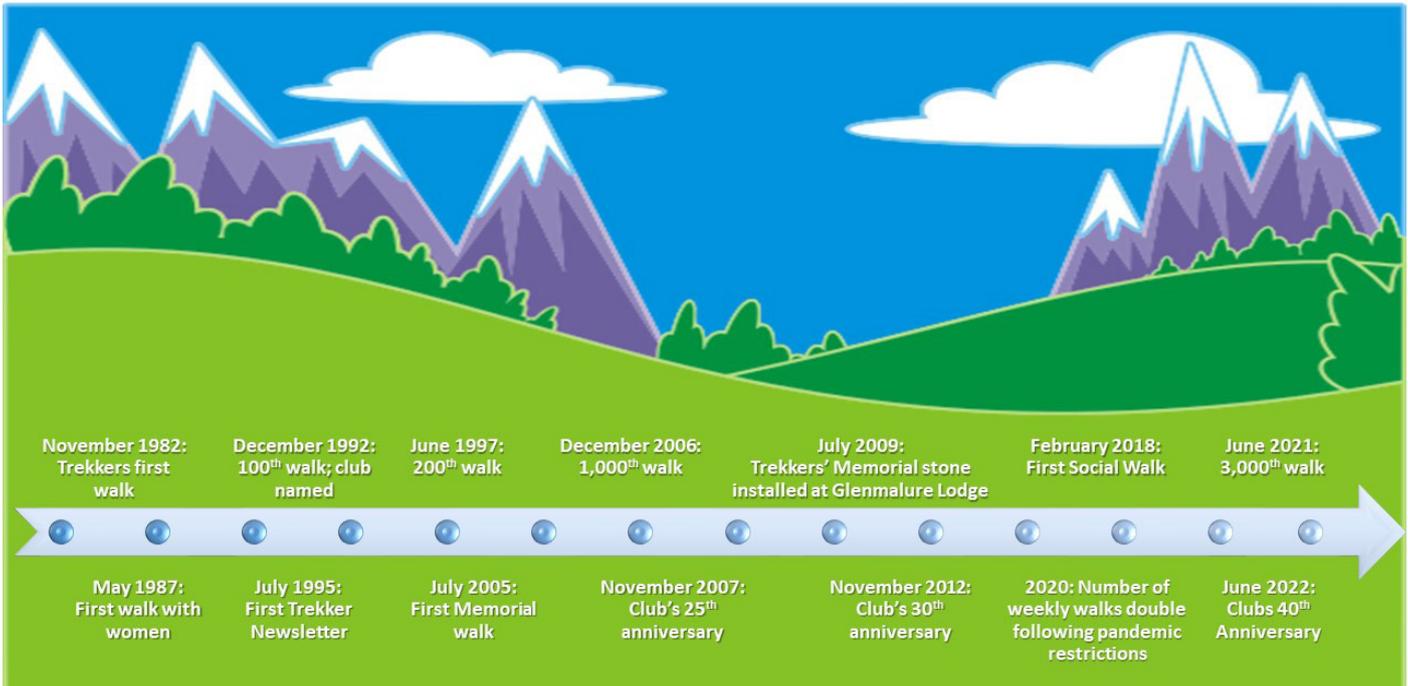
In case of accident, Trekkers should put next-of-kin details onto a small card with their name and phone number. Laminated or in plastic bag, it should be stored in the top pocket of your rucksack

CAPTION COMPETITION

Please send suggested captions for the picture, right, to franorourke@gmail.com. There's a prize for the winning entry.



Trekkers 40th Anniversary Timeline



Trekkers' 40th birthday celebrations

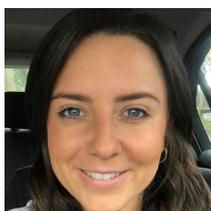
Trekkers is marking the 40th anniversary of its founding in June with a series of special events:

- June 2:** A mystery ultimate school tour
- June 7:** A tour of Trinity
- June 11:** Summer Social in the National Yacht Club
- June 14:** Second Pure Mile clean-up
- June 16:** Bloomsday -- A "real people of Ulysses" walk in Deansgrange Cemetery
- June 21:** Coffee and chat meet in Cabinteely Park

June 25: Coomloughra horseshoe A walk in Kerry

As well as this, walk leaders on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays in June will celebrate our 40th birthday on their walks. Some of the events – the Mystery Tour and Trinity Tour – are already booked up, but watch your emails for information on other events.

Millennials head for the hills with Trekkers



Creina Shovelton



Michael Shovelton



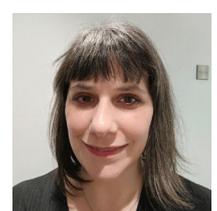
Emma McGuire



Lisa Robinson Sweeney



Molly Joyce



Stephanie Keane

Trekkers has welcomed 46 new members to the club in the past six months, bringing the total membership to 237. The Committee organised a series of guest walks to accommodate the large number of people who applied to join following publication of an article about Trekkers in the Irish Times in November 2021.

The Committee also organised a series of special guest walks for young people, and six

under-40s, above, have joined as a result.

Trekkers is delighted to welcome all the members, many of whom are already walking regularly with us on weekdays and at weekends. The club is still open to membership from people introduced through club members -- just contact trekkersmountaineeringclub@gmail.com.

See page 4 for pictures of all new members

Welcome to new members



Ann
Matthews



Anne
McDonald



Deirdre
Wall



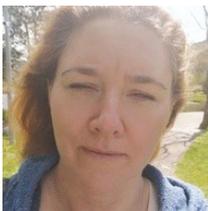
Dymphna
Lynch



John
Davis



John
Quinn



Niamh
Kenny



Tessa
Normand



Anne
Dunne



Ann
Aylward



Audrey
Clear



Barbara
Coughlan



Brigid
McKeever



Carmel
McDonald



Gerry
Aylward



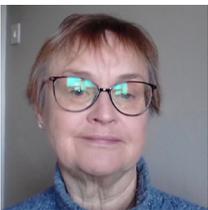
Gerry
Kenny



Katrina
Lawlor



Ken
Hartnett



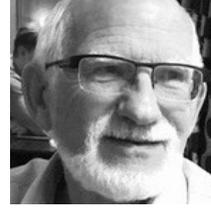
Mary
Herlihy



Niamh
Harrison



Noel
Wall



Noel
Perrin



Patricia
O'Keeffe



Paul
Conlon



Sheila
MacGowan



Susan
Kavanagh



Vincent
Cahill



Vincent
Heagney



Karl
O'Connell



Bernardine
Bracken



Joan
Maher



Niamh
Greene



Shirley
Henderso



Joan
Blackburn



Hugh
Quigley

Trekkers also welcome
Michael Brady
Dara Robinson
Mary Callan
Helen Leavy
Fergal Gaynor

Trekkers join the Pure Mile project

The first group of Trekkers joined The Pure (Protecting Uplands & Rural Environments) Mile project run by Wicklow Mountains National Park on Sunday, May 29th, to clean up a special area of conservation overlooking Glenasmole Valley.

Pure Mile is an environmental, community, heritage initiative that encourages communities and groups in rural areas to adopt a mile, or miles, of road, and keep this area litter/rubbish free, research information about their local wildflowers, plants, trees, animals, and the built, cultural, and social heritage. Catherine Almond, supported by Geraldine Boland, organised Trekkers' involvement; a second group of Trekkers will be cleaning up in the Glenree area on Tuesday, June 14th. <http://www.pureproject.ie/the-pure-mile/>

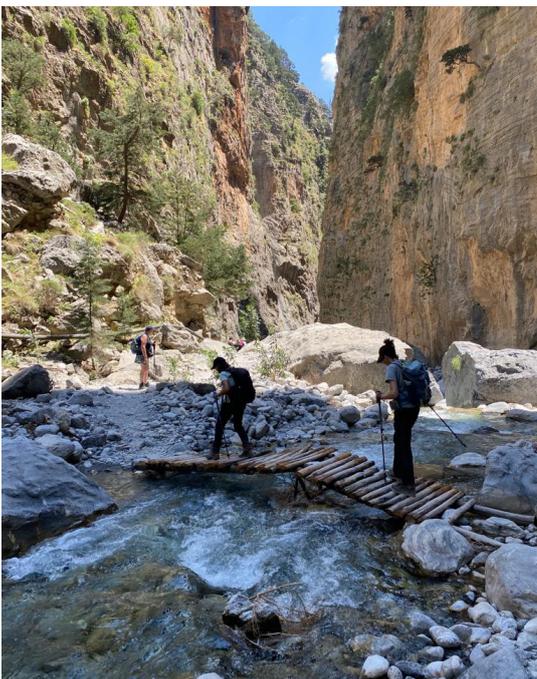


Pure Mile Trekker volunteers from left are Pat Macken, Nuala Bannon, Patrick Howlin, Mary Dolan, Geraldine Boland, Fiona O'Sullivan, Paddy MacManus and Cathal Drohan

Caught on Camera



Left: An A walk on April 2nd from Mullaghcleevaun to Tonelagee. Right: a recce above Lough Tay



Here comes the sun . . .Trekkers on tour in Crete

Bluebells and beech trees

Aine Allen brought Trekkers home to see a secret gem in Westmeath

On 11 May I took a small group of 11 Trekkers on a walk around the beautiful Mullaghmeen Forest in the northern corner of my home county, Co Westmeath. This is a beech plantation of a thousand acres, planted by the Department of Forestry in 1934. There is a scattering of Scots pine, Sitka spruce and fir trees but it is the tall stately beech that predominate. It is the largest beech plantation in Ireland and, according to some sources, the largest in Europe.

At the time of the recce, the trees were just hinting at budding and there was the timid appearance of the first bluebells. But our party of 11 walkers on 11 May were treated to an exquisite display: a canopy of newly-leafed, graceful trees filtering the sun above and a succession of stunning spreads of bluebells carpeting the mossy ground below.

We met in the parking and picnic area for Mullaghmeen Forest, 8km outside Castlepollard and just an hour-and-a-half's drive from home for most of the group. I had designed the walk of 11km to incorporate almost all of the three waymarked trails through the forest, with the minimum of overlap. This took us at times close to the edge of the forest where we could look out over rich, undulating pastureland and at other times we wove and wound our way along wide pleasant forest paths, dappled by the sunlight through the trees.

Early in the walk, we detoured onto a small circular track through an arboretum of native Irish trees, rather convincing in its state of 'neglect' but nonetheless providing us with names like blackthorn, whitethorn, alder, wild strawberry, willow, rowan, wild cherry, whitebeam and more on faded wooden markers.

Near the end of our route, we detoured again to a small Famine Garden but, unfortunately did not get to visit the best-preserved example of a Booley Hut and of a retting pond/flax pit, due to an encounter with a massive digger that had blocked our passage. However, we had already come upon depressions in the ground, with a stone wall



Spreads of bluebells in Mullaghmeen Forest, Westmeath. Below: at the cairn of the lowest highest point in Ireland

backdrop and had debated whether we were looking at the remnants of such huts and ponds, evidence of early pastoral practices and of a flax industry. At many points along the route there were benches to tempt us to sit and revel in the solitude of this magical woodland.

When it comes to identifying the highest point in Co Westmeath, every metre matters! Our walk included an internal loop that took us to the cairn marking this highest point – the lowest highest point of any county in Ireland! It boasts a mere 261m. We stood on the cairn and strained ourselves to look northwards to see Lough Sheelin. Though Mullaghmeen forest itself is frequently referred to as a "hidden gem", sadly, a lovely surprise view from its summit of the lake that defines the meeting point of



Cavan, Meath and Westmeath, is partially hidden by a line of intruding conifers. I have written to the Operations Manager of Coillte in Westmeath, drawing attention to this unfortunate situation.

It was a source of great pride to me to introduce my group of Trekkers to Mullaghmeen Forest and to hear them refer to it as a "gem" and as my "best kept secret". They, of course, had the luck to visit it in its early summer glory but I firmly believe that it has its magic moods in other seasons too.

Bagging my first Munro

Alan Kane trekked to the summit of 1,245m high Cairngorm Mountain on a trip to Scotland

AI n March this year I got the opportunity to spend a week hillwalking in Scotland thanks to Joe Devine who rented a house in Aviemore for a few weeks. Aviemore is 30 miles south of Inverness and is located in the Cairngorms National Park. It is a lovely town with an Alpine feel and very popular with skiers and snowboarders as well as climbers and hillwalkers.

So what is a Munro? A Munro is a summit above 3,000ft or 914.4m if you prefer to deal in metres. The term was coined by Sir Hugh T Munro in 1891. There are 282 Munros in Scotland which compares with 13 in Ireland (11 of which are in Kerry). Getting to the summit of a Munro is commonly referred to as 'Bagging a Munro'.

As you can imagine hillwalkers get interested in Bagging as many Munros as possible. The record for completing all 282 Munros in the shortest time was achieved in 2010 by a chap called Stephen Pyke who completed the task in an unbelievable 39 days, 9 hours and 6 minutes. My goal for the week was to



return having bagged at least one Munro . . . you have to start somewhere!!

I arrived in Aviemore armed with my Cicerone guide to 'Walking the Munros' only for Joe to inform me that my guidebook is only useful in summertime when there is no snow on the ground and you can see the tracks, lesson number one.

Lesson number two was that I needed to hire special boots with a rigid sole and use crampons and an ice axe and furthermore that I would need training to be able to use them.

Our first of four days on the hills was below the snow line and was straightforward, no special gear required for this. The second day was taken up with winter skills training, how to use the crampons and the ice axe and how to self-arrest ie how to stop yourself thumbling down a slope before you reach the cliff edge



Left: Bagging our first Munro. Bottom left, trekking to Cairngorm summit. Bottom right: Daithi chills out in a snow bunker

using the ice axe. That was a lesson worth learning.

The plan for the third day was to trek to Cairngorm Mountain standing at 1,245m starting

from a carpark at 620m. Wind speed is a key consideration when walking in this part of Scotland. Wind was forecast to be in the region of 60 km/hr and to increase as the day progressed. We walked for an hour or so before our guide decided that the wind was stronger than forecast and it didn't make sense to continue. Disappointed we retreated to lower ground and completed an enjoyable alternate walk.

That night I reflected that I had one day left and one chance to Bag a Munro. We set off early on Saturday morning to try again and get to the top of Cairngorm Mountain. Wind speeds were lower but still strong enough to make you work really hard. After a few hours of trekking we finally achieved our goal of 'Bagging our First Munro'. That afternoon Ireland were playing Scotland in the Aviva in the last match of the Six Nations.

We retired to a local hostelry in Aviemore and enjoyed Ireland convincingly beat Scotland and win the Triple Crown ... a nice end to the week's walking.

'Walking, art the next chapter of my life'

At 85, Eudie Power is an inspiration for many Trekkers

Trekkers who've walked with Eudie Power might assume she's a lifelong walker: still walking on B as well as C walks at 85, she seems to glide up and downhill with ease, usually without poles, as relaxed at the end as at the start of a walk. But Eudie only started hillwalking 20 years ago, around the same time she took up art classes.

"Walking and painting was the next chapter of my life" says Eudie, who had run a B&B in her house on Castlepark Road in Dalkey while rearing five children. It wasn't an easy chapter. For three or four of the 20 years, she was also caring for her late husband Barney, who had dementia. "He was an amazing, loving, caring, happy man and I had a long life with him. He died five years ago, but I lost him before that."

Walking with Trekkers helped: "It's what's fab about walking, you can talk about stuff you might not talk about with others. And part of it is how good people were, how kind, how patient." Walking also helped with Eudie's new interest in art. "A friend of Barney's, artist Tom Roche, handed me a pencil and paper and brought me to an art class in Wicklow. They were amazing days – I joined Dun Laoghaire College of Art, did a life drawing class – I loved it. And painting, like walking, makes you look at things you never saw before. When you're walking, you look at the trees, the shapes, the seasons, the birds, you look at colour."

She and Barney built a

house next door to the one they'd lived in for 20 years and it's a testament to their love of art: it's bright and airy, the walls covered in works collected by Barney and herself, as well as her own work. She started walking with Trekkers around the time she moved into the new house.

One of her neighbours, the late Derry O'Hegarty, was a founder member of Trekkers and encouraged her—slightly reluctantly – to join. She started



Eudie Power ran a B&B, reared five children, then took up walking, art and swimming

with the Wednesday walks. "It was nearly all men then. But Derry told me what boots to get, what bag to have, and gave me lifts. I started on A walks right away, am sliding back now. Trekkers is such a fab group, and it's lovely to see it developing. People like Eugene Logan were fantastic, encouraging."

Eudie is an inspiration to a lot of Trekkers, making walking seem effortless. But her fitness is hard won. She learn to swim in her fifties in the Killiney Castle Hotel pool, going on to swim regularly at the Forty Foot. "On one occasion, minded by two seamen I knew, I swam from the

Forty Foot past Bulloch Harbour and kept going to Coliemore Harbour. I had to walk back in my togs: I was so excited to tell the kids, but they were ashamed of me, and teased me over it for a long time."

She also had a bad back, sometimes had to kneel to make beds when running the B&B, and took up yoga 10 years ago. "I had an amazing teacher, Samuel, who was Korean. I do it nearly every day and it certainly helped."

Eudie – christened Eugenie after her grandfather Eugene -- grew up on a farm outside Athlone in a kind of To School through the Fields childhood: "the dog walked us to school, and we carried sods of turf for the fire – you were meant to bring two sods." She studied shorthand and typing and came to work in the Royal Bank in Dublin. "I loved working in town, had a flat with other girls in Donnybrook." She met Barney in the bank, they married in 1963, and lived in Deansgrange, Dundalk, Longford and London before moving back to Dublin in 1979. "We were happy to settle down in Dun Laoghaire -- Barney was a big sailor."

Highlights of her years with Trekkers include a trip to Poland led by Owen and Marie McKeown and walks with Brendan Bracken. "And I love Glendalough and Wicklow, we are so lucky to live nearby." Her five children -- and 10 grandchildren, ranging in age from 20 down – all live in Ireland, the furthest away in Waterford, all of them, like Eudie, active. "I walked recently in the Comeraghs with my Waterford daughter and some of her pals."

She laughs: "The children are happy when I don't cause them hassle."

Frances O'Rourke

Walking around Lake Garda

Italophile Cathal Drohan gives a detailed guide to walks in an area he describes as **Glendalough on steroids**

The purpose of the article is to introduce you to walking in Italy and to show you it's easy to get started. The area I walk in is around Lake Garda. I describe Lake Garda as Glendalough on steroids. Lake Garda is nearly 40km long, 3 to 7 km wide with low hills in the south rising to mountains of 1,500m on the west side and 2,200m on the east side.

Walks are well marked and fall into two categories, local and national. Local walks really only require the ability to see the many markers. National walks require a few more navigational skills but are generally comparable to Irish long distance trails, though much better marked.

The following two walks are representative of each type. I walked these recently with my wife Ruth, who usually restricts her walking to chasing a little white ball.

Manerba district walk.(12km, 375m, classic C)

It started in the town square but within 200m you are in olive fields, part of the nature reserve. The area is a lacustrine park (a reserve part on land and part on water). After 1km we reached the chapel of St Giorgio. The current chapel is dated 1350ish and has part of the wall painted in the style of Giotto.

We then turned north skirting the lake on the top of the cliffs



View south from Larici

for about 2km. There are few barriers to guard the cliffs, a common feature of Italian walks. The path was well marked with regular paint markings (foto). Wildflowers, including its locally famous orchids, were everywhere. After the headland we reached the foot of Rocca di Manerba and began the 150m ascent to the viewing point. Like Dalkey Hill to Dublin Bay, it overlooks the southern part of the lake. We then descended to the beach and arrived later at Porto Del Torchio stopping briefly for light refreshments (Aporols!).

We then continued onto the next beach and from there we cut inland to a farming area called Valee (olive growing). We entered Manerba on the west side and followed the main spine through this classical Italian town, cut left at the post office carpark to enter the olive fields under the

town and eventually returned to our starting point.

Punta Larici (7km, 500m, a B- walk)

This walk is near the north of the lake and is a national route (422B). This walk can form part of many walks. The short version is a B- and that is what we did.

We started at the village of Pregasina, which is about 500m above sea level (400m above the lake).

Pregasina is a typical Lombardian mountain village sitting on a large rocky area overlooking the lake.

We parked at the church and left the village by the graveyard.

We followed Walk no 422B. It's easy to follow the waymarked signs. The walk climbed steeply up a valley covered with beech and oak trees that are really dense so you would not be inclined to leave the forest road before you reach the Bocca (mouth) Larici, the first viewing point over the lake. From the Bocca, we turned left and followed the narrow marked path to Punta Larici.

Though the climb was only 450m, it is steep by Irish standards. You gain the height in about 2.5 km, so you can do the sums. This steep ascent is typical of these mountain walks, so a good day's walking could be as little as 9km.

The views from Punta Larici were superb. To the north, Riva and its sailingboats, to the

Continued on page 10

Little or no climbing on lakeside walks

from page 9

east, Monto Baldo and its snow-covered top, to the south, you are looking down the lake to the plains of the Po valley and finally to the west, PISO Rocchetta with its towering cliffs.



Village square Manerba (start and end of local walk)

Below and I mean

below you, you look down on Limone, reputed to be the most northerly site for growing lemons out of doors in Italy. We then reversed the walk to Pregasina. The descent, as the climb, was steep and we felt it in our knees ("you know we are golfing tomorrow, don't bugger up my knees").

This walk has variations. There is the steep 900m descent from Punta Larici to Limone following the waymarked route (102). It is really steep as Limone is less than 1km away on the map. This is a B walk. The A variation involves walking towards PISO Rocchetta (422B) then turning north on the

Nara

ridge with the highest point 1,376m (430B) and then down to Pregasina (429 and 472). Even this walk is only 11 km but an 833m climb. And there is the Muggera option, 13.2km, 1,376m (101B plus 422B plus part of 430B).

There are lakeside walks with little or no climbing. I would recommend the walk northwards from Limone to Capo Di Reamol as the best of these (8km return, 67m).

But be aware of the ability of Italian engineers to tame the landscape. Part of this walk is a boardwalk attached to a cliff directly 70 metres over the lake. If you suffer from vertigo, this would not be for you. There are variations for this walk too and the one we walked in October was 11km and 180m.

When to go, what it costs, getting the best guidebooks

Walking in Italy is easy to organise and has lots of marked way paths for all levels of walkers. The premium version of Outdoor Active gives you maps of the area, including in my opinion the best version, kompass. You probably need to buy one of their excellent paper maps for perspective.

The best and most comprehensive guides are in German. I recommend Kompass Gardasee 70 touren as the best of these guides; there is a goodish if limited one in English (Round Lake Garda - Wutscher) and the Italian guide gives you the best information on what food and drink is available in the mountain hostels. All the guides will warn you if a walk is a via ferrata (part of the walk -- for accomplished mountaineers -- requires a harness and hooks). There are just a few of these around the lake.

The best time to walk in my view is March to June. After that it's too hot. September and October are months of instability, with lots of lightning. November to February are the cold months, with daily maximums in the mountains of 3 or 4 degrees

and often much lower. Snow occurs from time to time, often lying for days even at lake level. We travel to Lake Garda via Bergamo. Return airfare is usually around €100. Off high season (mid-June to mid-September) hotels do great deals. There is a reasonable public transport system but to gain efficient access to different areas, we hire cars all the time. Cost is now around €40 per day. Eating out in a really good quality restaurant is €50 including the excellent local wines. Takeaway pizza cost around €5.

Finally, we are both Italophiles. The lifestyle is wonderful. Walk finished, a few glasses of Lugana or charetto at Luca's on the square and off to Corta Antica for beautiful high quality Sicilian food. For the really indulgent, the meal is washed down by home-made ice cream afterwards back at the square overlooking the lake. On rest days, you are spoiled with access to Italian culture and art. On our last visit we drove to Mantova (about one hour) and visited one of its galleries (Palazzo Te).

Forgot to mention shopping. La dolce vita.

Brendan's favourite hikes

As Trekkers marks its 40th birthday, **Geraldine Boland** celebrates the treasure trove of hiking routes left to us by Brendan Bracken

When asked by Fran to write a piece on Brendan Bracken's favourite routes, I had no idea of the treasure trove that I would uncover. For newer members who didn't know him, Brendan sadly passed away in 2019. He participated in a total of 180 Trekker hikes. I found 38 hikes he led between 2005 and 2017 recorded for posterity on the Trekkers routes database.

Brendan is credited with opening up hike routes in West Wicklow and working his charm with locals to secure access across private land when needed. His recorded routes also include trips to the Cooleys, the Blackstairs, the Galtees and the Comeraghs, with a particular favourite of an annual visit to the Slieve Blooms during bluebell season.

He also coordinated Trekker trips abroad which remain vivid in the memories of his many Trekker friends - Tuscany, the Auvergne, the Pyrenees, the Austrian Alps, the Picos, Yorkshire Dales and New Hampshire, US.

Brendan's hikes featured in his regular column for walkers in the Irish Times. He was editor of the Trekker magazine for a spell and wrote wickedly funny accounts of Trekkers holidays abroad and some of his own adventures, like the Tongariro Crossing, New Zealand. His account of dancing to Abba in aqua aerobics classes to overcome back



Brendan Bracken in a Slieve Bloom wood

pain and get back hiking made me howl! (See the Trekker Magazine, May 2017, Issue #61, p.16, "Last of the Dancing Queens" under the documents tab on the club website)

Brendan's passion for hiking and commitment to the club shine through in a rich legacy left to his fellow Trekkers. It is a challenge to pick from the range of hikes he led. So I consulted his wife Bernardine (now a club member) and some of his many Trekker friends (who also supplied photos). This helped to narrow his choice down to two hikes

in Ireland.

I take inspiration from Brendan to move outside of our familiar routes in County Wicklow and extend the range of hikes that are possible. Away trips, including overnight stays, are very welcome. However, the hikes featured here are all accessible from Dublin as day trips. The Trekkers website archive of routes is a wonderful resource for us all. Sincere thanks to the committee for maintaining it. Brendan would be happy to know that the hours he spent receiving left a legacy of new routes to the next generation of Trekker leaders.

See page 12



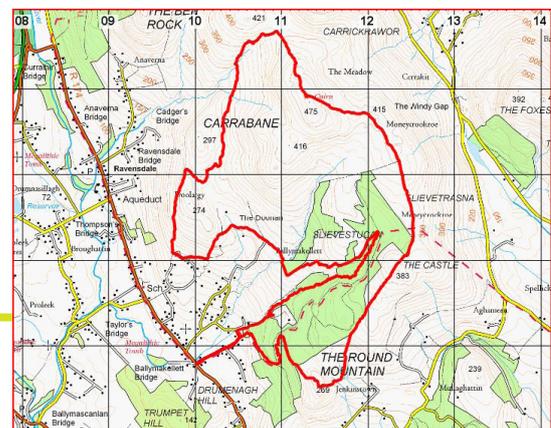
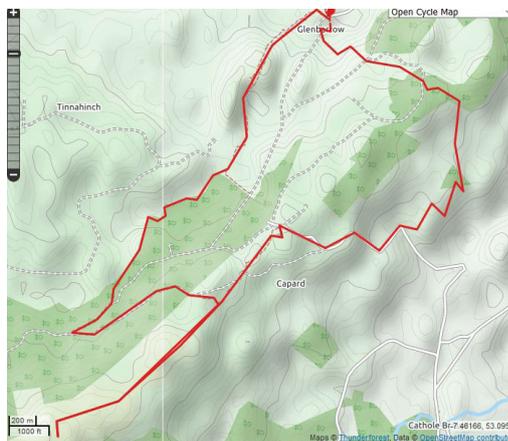
Brendan Bracken and Gilbert Little, left, enjoy a post hike pint on a trip, right, Brendan led to the Auvergne in June 2011





From left: Ita Lawton, Bernardine Bracken and Mary Dillon enjoy the bluebells in the Glenbarrow Wood, Slieve Blooms, May 2022. **Photograph: Breda O'Hara**

Slieve Blooms and the Cooleys: two of Brendan's hikes that are accessible as day trips from Dublin



The Slieve Blooms (Counties Laois & Offaly) Glenbarrow Loop: Clamphole waterfall - Ridge of Capard - Capard Wood – Glenbarrow (Distance: 14.4K; Height Gain: 325M).

There is a gpx file for this route (ID 706) on the Trekkers website archive of routes under the website tab "walk routes". To find it, just select Brendan's name in the search function drop down list, along with typing in the words "Slieve Bloom" and you will find it in the list of hikes he led as primary leader. See map above. The gpx file is in the B hike summary dated 23/04/2016.

Cooley Mountains loop hike: Circuit of Carnavaddy (County Louth).

Distance: 20K; Height gain: 858M.

There is a gpx file for this route (ID 595) on the Trekkers website archive of routes under the website tab "walk routes". Just select Brendan's name in the search function from the drop-down list and type in the word "Cooley" and you will find it in the list of hikes he led as primary leader. See map above. The gpx file is in the A hike summary dated 08/06/2015.

Thanks for the memories



Sing-songs and mighty craic on nights on trips away. Memories of a session in Leenane, above

Breda O'Hara: The good old days

I joined the Trekkers around 2000. My memories - and continuing experience - of the Trekkers are of great times and great people. There were lively lunchtime arguments and debates that could sometimes turn heated, with characters such as Pearse Connolly and Paddy O'Duffy -- members who are sadly no longer with us -- putting forth about an item of interest in the news: politics, the state of the economy, or planning. Planning was the red hot poker back then, we're talking the days of the tribunals, Mahon, Moriarty et al. Brendan Bracken might add his two and sixpence to the debate started by Pearse and Paddy, Tom Murray might smile and add a quiet comment, other Trekkers would have their say, but it was often Mary Murray who had the final word. She would wipe the lads arguments away with a pithy observation and that would be it, the lunchtime debate concluded for that day at least. During the afternoon descent, the talk might turn to films, books, TV or travel, discussions of a more sedate nature. Laughter and craic would roll out as the anticipation turned to the thoughts of a welcome pint or cuppa at the end of yet another great Trekker hike.

There were away trips -- Paddy O'Duffy with his video camera posing the question "Where are we?" to some of the group, or indeed random strangers! Always looking for a colourful and interesting vox pop to add to the final edit. Some were very interesting! Final nights on trips, when all the hiking was done and the craic would be mighty, with many a party piece rolled out and a mighty sing-song ensued.

And there were seasoned leaders -- the generosity and thoughtfulness of seasoned leaders when I started leading, with Monty Tinsley, Dick Ryan, Eugene Logan, Pearse Connolly and many others always on hand to offer quiet, subtle, advice and expert guidance.

Monty Tinsley: O what a beautiful evening

"What a multi-talented group." You'd hear this refrain frequently in pubs and hotels where the Trekkers gathered for a singsong. Many members had their own party pieces; sometimes there would be community singing and dancing. The best one I remember was in the Leenane Hotel in 2002, where recitations were delivered, stories told and songs sung, all in a very professional way. The session lasted just one hour; many of the hotel guests joined us in the main drawing room and were delighted to witness such a spontaneous musical evening. It created a great impression for our tourist industry but was just Trekker camaraderie in action.

Continued on page 14

New memories are made of this



"I've walked on gorse filled hills flooded with sunshine, trudded through mud . . . and want to continue."
Picture of Lough Bray, above, by **Paul O'Kane**

Liz Barry: Nearly one year in

I am not sure what I expected from Trekkers when I joined a year or so ago beyond a way to walk with other people who (a) hopefully knew where they were going and (b) knew more than I did about walking.

I have been amazed by the experiences to date...yes, both of (a) and (b) above were wishes immediately fulfilled, but also I have had so much learning, laughter, interesting company and fun too. I have walked in balmy woods and on gorse flower filled hills flooded with sunshine, trudded through mud, scaled mountains, fallen into bog holes at speed, followed other Trekkers' many inches deep snow tracks in low visibility... become rain soaked, and then fossilised with the cold via wind chill from open windows on the bus.

Do I want to continue? Definitely, although at times it's hard to understand why!

Niamh Greene: A New Memory of an Old Memory from a Grateful New Member

In February on a Trekker hike in Rathmichael Wood , I felt the same excitement, the same thrill as six-year-old me at seeing amazing clumps of frog spawn in a shallow pond. I stare in wonder and vividly remembered the joy of seeing a similar pond up The Hell Fire Club mountain 61 years ago. I returned this week to Rathmichael Wood to see the tadpoles emerge. Thank you to all for the warmth of welcome to the Club and for the opportunity to create more lovely memories.



The day Trekkers formed a choir

by Monty Tinsley

The first trip the Club made outside Ireland was in April 1997. The Walks Co-ordinator, Dick Needham, brought a group of 33 to Wales for a weekend and the main event was climbing Mount Snowdon.

Following the climb on a beautiful day the mountaineers were entertained in the Prince of Wales pub by local people that included a choir who sang very harmoniously. (See Trekker No. 6).

On the return to Dun Laoghaire, Shaun Trant enlisted the following members:-- Carol Behan; Brian Brennan; Colette Dorgan; Eileen Gallagher and Liam Walsh to form the nucleus of the Trekkers Choir. This quintet and Shaun had a number of rehearsals in the British Legion Club in Clarinda Park, a venue frequently used by the Club in the late nineties.

They adapted a song sung by the Wolfe Tones (originally written by Frank O'Donovan) to become their anthem and it was always included in their short repertoire and sung at many Trekker Social events.

However, the idea of 'going on tour' was short lived and this unique ensemble disbanded after a short time but their existence has remained an interesting chapter in the history of the Club.

THE TREKKERS' SONG

Chorus (to be repeated between verses)

On the one road, hauling a big load
On the road to Lug or Scarr
On the long road, never the wrong road
We're together now so far.
A treks, B treks, C treks too
End up together for a pint or two
On the one road, swingin' along
Singin' the Trekkers' song.

.....I
Over Lug, then back to Glenmalure,
Cleevaun, Derrybawn, Glendalough for sure
WE ARE THE TREKKERS
MIGHTY FOR THE CRAIC
Always moving on
We never will turn back.

.....II
Rucksack, anorak, boots and gaiters too
Map and compass safely see us through
WE ARE THE TREKKERS
MIGHTY FOR THE CRAIC
Always moving on
We never will turn back.

.....Chorus

Poem on a sing song in Washington: Niall Humphreys

A poem on a particular memory of a trekkers outing to the Appalachians in 2012. This was my only foreign trip with the Trekkers, but a marvellous one with the late and great Brendan Bracken, Paddy O'Duffy, and Pearse Connolly, where Pearse sang The Wild Rover. The sing song took place in the Washington Hotel and the group which joined us were a wedding party preparing for a wedding the next day.

Interlude at a Trekker Sing Song

He was squat and he was round
Weighed near three hundred pounds
But like a lad he leapt up on the table.

"I'm a soldier, I'm a vet,
I haven't told my story yet
But now's the time, the place, I'm fit and able.

We were a squad, we were a gang,
We fought before we sang
In the sweaty, sweltering, forests deep in 'Nam.
We were comrades, we were brothers,
We fought beside each other,
We'd die to keep another safe from harm."

He sang loud and he sang long,
He sang his bawdy song,
As if still with his comrades in the war.

It was graphic, it was crude,
It used words like "arse" and "screwed",
As once he sang it in the smoky Saigon bar.

She was pretty, she was bright.
Her eyes shone with delight,
As she heard her father sing, she

looked for more.
She was happy, she was thrilled
That the memory was filled -
In forty years he'd never done the like before.

We were stunned, we were aghast,
Longed to make the moment last
For this man who'd waited 'till our song was done.
All his passion, all his heart
Spent on years so far apart -
A funny song from times that were no fun.

We ended as we started -
"The Wild Rover" as we parted
Had now become their song
They clapped, they sang the chorus,
Felt more Irish than the Irish
And cheered us to the rafters and beyond

Second Trekkers chair loyal, kind

KEVIN BEEGAN 1938-2022

Kevin was a man apart in every way, loyal, sincere, trustworthy and above all kind to all that he knew and all those who knew him very well. Kevin joined the Trekkers in 1985. He became the second chairman after Shaun Trant and was an honorary life member.

The children on his street in Glenageary called Kevin "The King of Arnold Grove". He was especially kind to Paul Manning, his young next door neighbour who has since passed away.

Kevin was invited to join Trekkers by another neighbour and Trekker founder Shaun Trant, and was on the core committee that laid the foundations of the club.

Over the years Kevin ensured the C walks became a major part of the Trekker walking schedule and he always laid a great emphasis on the golden rule - 'don't go ahead of the Leader or drop behind the Sweeper'. He particularly loved the circuit of Roundwood Lake. Kevin and his wife Marian – also an honorary life member of Trekkers – went



Kevin Beegan: ensured C walks became major part of Trekkers' schedules. Ita Lawton, far right, said a few words to remember him on the summit of Tonelagee on the B walk on the day of his funeral

abroad with Trekkers on a number of occasions.

Kevin hailed from Limerick and was a great friend of my brother Fr Gerard OFM, RIP, as they were similar ages. The neighbours had great fun growing up in a very simple way. In his business life, Kevin joined the Royal Insurance Company (Claims Department) in Lower Mallow Street in Limerick.

It didn't take long for him to be appointed Claims Manager, a position he held when he came to Dublin as Claims Manager for the island of Ireland.

When we lived in Cork, Kevin visited our home on the Model Farm Road often: there

we would catch up on old times and neighbours and have a general natter. Kevin was a great gardener and gave me many flower seeds to plant regularly. Any spare moment he had, he spent in the garden. It was rumoured that a lovely smell of cigars emanated around the Arnold Grove/Bellevue Avenue area when Kevin went out for his smoke – especially when he had given up smoking!

Kevin's three children, Paul, Suzanne and Claire, adored him and would do anything to assist Kevin and Marian.

Ar Dheis De go raibh a anam delis.

Noel O'Reilly



Social walk from the Arboretum, Kilquade, to Kilcoole in February, left. Above: Ann Marie Duggan, left, and Mary Murray on a walk from Greystones through Kindlestown Wood to Glen of the Downs in April

'Stop, stare, there is so much to see'

HENRY JACK 1927 – 2022

Throughout his life Henry Jack was a keen walker and loved to explore the countryside with family and friends. In 1998, he became the 76th person to join The Trekkers Mountaineering Club and regularly walked with those on the C routes. They benefitted immensely from his knowledge of nature and the environment.

He often told us how we miss so much in our hurry to go from A to B. He encouraged us to Stop and Stare. In fact, he wrote an article on that theme for The Trekker – Issue No. 38 – May 2009.

In it he says "there is so much to see – the shape of the land, interesting rocks, fine trees and beautiful plants" – as well as the local wildlife. Take time and enjoy the opportunities was his constant mantra.

He dispensed his observations with a quiet bedside manner, befitting his medical profession, informative but not overbearing.

His son, Richard,



Henry Jack: 76th person to join the club loved to explore

joined the Trekkers on their first trip to the Slieve Bloom mountains in October 1999 and with his local knowledge led us, on a damp and cloudy day, to find the Iron Man, a unique hilltop landmark.

Henry went to Scotland frequently, staying with his daughter Hazel and walked various tracks and trails. In

Trekker No 44 he wrote a very detailed account of one of his trips -- five days on a Puffer Steamboat looking for Nessie, but alas no show! However, it is a colourful descriptive report of the Great Glen and well worth the read.

In recent years his Trekker outings had been confined to social events, where he was always appropriately dressed, the centre of congenial company and on the dance floor, if possible.

He was given Life Honorary Membership of the Trekkers in 2016, which he really appreciated and wrote to the Committee accordingly to express his thanks.

Another honour that he greatly valued occurred in 2001, when he was inaugurated President of the Irish College of General Practitioners – an organisation to which he gave many years of service.

I hope these few cameos reflect the man who got on well with everyone and has left a legacy of goodwill behind him.

Monty Tinsley

There is so much to see -- take time and enjoy the opportunities was his constant mantra



On Carrickgollogan on a Wednesday walk in March, left. Right: a Social walk in Belmont Demesne

12 BIRDS TO SAVE YOUR LIFE
nature's lessons in happiness

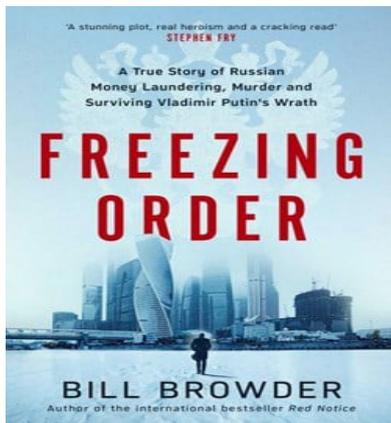


CHARLIE CORBETT

12 Birds to Save Your Life : Nature's Lessons in Happiness by Charlie Corbett -

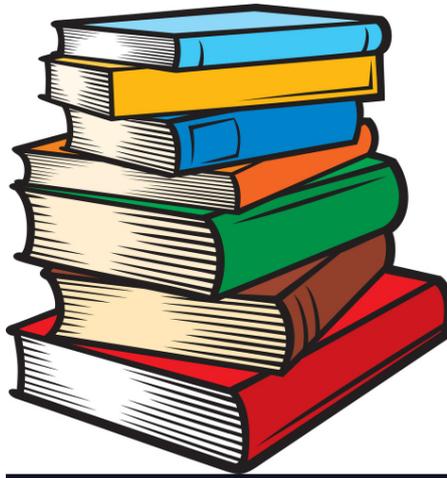
A memoir in which the writer turns to nature for solace and its restorative power after his mother's premature death. It's lovely.

Emma McGuire



Freezing Order by Bill Browder

I recently enjoyed this book by American author Bill Browder, formerly the largest foreign investor in Russia. His book, a gripping thriller based on a true story and personal experience, was number 1 for several weeks on the New York Times hard cover non-fiction bestseller list. Browder describes how he became Vladimir Putin's number one enemy after he exposed Putin's record of stealing and laundering hundreds of billions



**BOOK
BEAT
What
Trekks
are
reading**

of dollars that comprise his vast wealth and killing all who impede him.

Myles Duffy

Languages of Truth by Salman Rushie

I am thumbing through Rushdie's essays from 2003 to 2020, published last year. He does a lot of name dropping but I am pleased that he does. He has shown me a different way to view the works of Beckett, Pinter and even Joyce.

Jim Costello

Putin's People by Catherine Belton

I am recommending this book, published in 2020 which describes in detail how Putin got to where he is now and what motivates him. Fascinating and

scary. And if you want to meet Catherine Belton, she will be at the Dalkey Book festival on 18th June.

Dick Ryan

Kafka on the Shore by Haruki Murakami

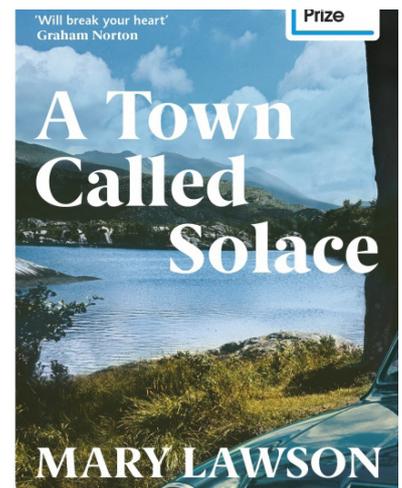
Follows the fortunes of two remarkable characters who are on parallel odysseys. With prophesy, myth and murder, the story will keep you spellbound.

The Clockwork Girl by Anna Mazzola

Set in 18th century Paris among the splendours of Versailles, this is a story of obsession, illusion and vanishing children. Seriously captivating!

Fresh Water for Flowers by Valerie Perrin

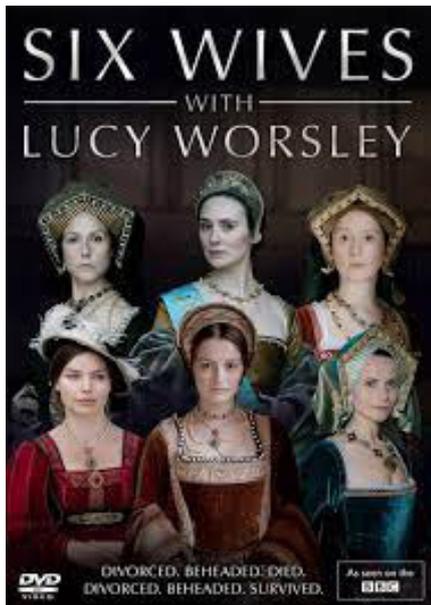
Exquisitely told story about Violette, a caretaker at a cemetery in a small town in Bourgogne. She quietly interacts with visitors who come to bury and mourn.



Town called Solace by Mary Lawson

Set in a small town in Canada, this is a poignant look at three lives that eventually intertwine.

Una Davis



Rebuilding Notre Dame

Lucy Worsley reports expertly on the restoration of Notre Dame Cathedral. **On BBC iPlayer.**

Six Wives with Lucy Worsley

BBC documentary series featuring dramatic reconstruction in which Lucy Worsley revisits key events in the lives of Henry VIII's six wives. Worsley's programmes on Tudor times explain, amongst other things, how Bloody Mary gained her fearsome reputation

SHOWS, PODCASTS What Trekkers are watching, listening to

during her short reign. Available to download on **Amazon Video, Apple iTunes, Google Play Movies.**

Jim Costello

State of the Union

Emmy-award winning short series by Nick Hornby explores contemporary relationships. In each 10-minute episode, a couple meet before going to have their



Brendan Gleeson and Patricia Clarkson in series 2 of *State of the Union*. Below: Chris O'Dowd and Rosamund Pike in Series 1



weekly marital therapy session -and that's where the truth comes out. Season one stars Chris O'Dowd and Rosamund Pike, with Brendan Gleeson and Patricia Clarkson taking the lead in season two. **Both series available on RTE Player.**

Noreen O'Brien



A scene from documentary **Inis Airc: Bas Oileain (Inishark: Death of an Island)**

Inis Airc: Bas Oileain (Inishark: Death of an Island)

Moving 2007 TG4/Screen Ireland documentary about the evacuation of Inishark, a small island near Inishbofin, in 1960. Overshadowed by the evacuation of the Blaskets, it became a forgotten island. Surviving islanders tell the story of their survival up to 1960, with little or no help from government. Its final demise is documented in newsreel footage of the evacuation.

Available on YouTube.

Una Davis



In Your Nature, produced by Birdwatch Ireland

This is a wonderful podcast series with the most recent episodes dating from March 2022 onwards. Presented as a conversation between Ricky Whelan and Niall Hatch, both of whom have a passion and encyclopaedic knowledge of our feathered friends, it is hugely informative, enjoyable and easy to listen to while out and about or even relaxing at home. Recent topics covered include Seabirds, Curlews, Swifts, Crows, Species Reintroductions, Species Extinctions and Bird Eggs. Access through www.birdwatchireland.ie or via your podcast provider.

Jeanne Salter

Summer recipe

Cauliflower Chickpea and Sesame Bake. Serves 4.

Ingredients

1 tin of chopped tomatoes
200mls strong vegetable stock
2 cloves of garlic crushed
2cm piece of ginger peeled and grated
1 tsp sesame seeds toasted
1 tsp honey
1/2 tsp cinnamon
1/2 tsp ground cumin
1 tsp za'atar (optional)
1 tin chickpeas rinsed
1 cauliflower trimmed and quartered
4 tbsp toasted sesame oil
salt and black pepper



Method

1 Set the oven to 180c
2 Take a medium sized roasting dish, add the tomatoes, stock, garlic, ginger, sesame seeds, honey and spices and bring to a gentle simmer on the hob. Cook for five minutes to let all the flavours blend.
3 Add the chickpeas, then nestle the cauliflower in among them.

4 Drizzle the sesame oil over the cauliflower, season, then bake for 1 hour uncovered until the cauliflower is tender.

Judy Humphreys

Wine pairing

I would suggest Riesling and Tempranillo as the best grapes.

Red: Marqués De Riscal reserva is good at €20 on sale in O'Briens and is stocked by other shops

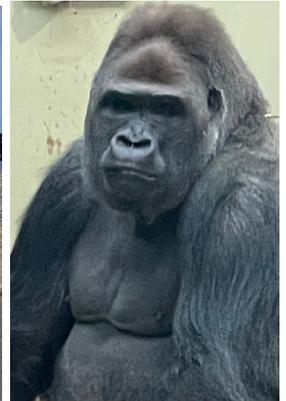
White: I recently enjoyed an Austrian wine- Turk Kremser Weinberge Riesling 2019 at €22 from Whelehans - - may be available elsewhere also. If not O'Briens usually have Trimbach Riesling which is good.

Farannan Tannam

Photo finish



Left: Breda, Paul and Carmel on circuit of Maulin at Ride Rock in February. Above: WW in April from Glendalough to Derrybawn



Above from left: Lucia on a recce in Crone Wood; a day at the seaside in March: gorilla not impressed by Trekkers on trip to the Zoo in May