

January 2014 - Issue 51

# Irish Trekker



Ardgillan

**Trekkers Mountaineering Club  
Glenageary  
Co. Dublin  
[www.trekkers.ie](http://www.trekkers.ie)**

# Irish Trekker - January 2014 - Issue 51

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## Welcome

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

(apologies if you already feel like part of the furniture)

- David Bourke
- Laurence Connolly
- Bernadette Cronin
- Kevin Halligan
- Dorothy Hannon
- Anne Hayes
- Sylvia Rowe
- Joy Walsh



## Chairperson's Greeting

Noreen O'Brien

I would like to start by welcoming Niall as editor of The Trekker and thanking Michael C for his 2 years. It is a challenging task to produce 3 issues a year and to make them lively and interesting.

Since the AGM we now have 96 full and 8 associate members. Sadly Liam Walsh passed away and a few left the club to pursue other interests or just to retire gracefully as only seasoned Trekkers can do.

I would like to express my condolences to all members who lost family members in the last year.

I would like to gain some new members and my criteria is "Good walkers with a sociable disposition" who will fit into our existing standards of A, B and C.

**Now that the year has turned we can see the stretch in the evenings and the green shoots of the bulbs etc. thoughts are turning to holidays and outings. Shay has his Tenerife trip all organised for February and a few other ideas are beginning to germinate. We welcome suggestions for trips and help in organising same! Don't leave it all to the Committee, remember its your club!**

In this edition we have another crossword and photo caption competition. We expect a large number of completed entries! The prizes of free bus trips are not to be scoffed at. Just think of all the pints or cups of tea/coffee you can get for €18. Since last September or so 4 members have acquired new grandchildren . Sadie for John Kavanagh, Tamsin for Dick Ryan, Tiernan for Niall, and Theo, born on 28th Dec., a first grandchild for members Bernadette Cronin and Eamonn Redahan. Congrats to all.

Personally I'm looking forward to lots of walking in 2014 and hope to see you all out on the hills. Remember the more often you walk the cheaper the bus will get!!!

## Congratulations

Congratulations to Fergal Mulloy who was recently elected an Honorary Member of the Society of Irish Foresters in recognition of his work in the Forestry in Ireland and in Europe.

This professional body was founded in 1942 to 'advance and spread the knowledge of forestry in all its aspects'. Currently there are over 700 members and this unique honour has only been conferred on 27 members during the past 70 years. Fergal worked in every aspect of forestry but his most important contribution was to forest research, he set up the Council for Forest Research and Development (COFORD) in the early 1990s.

He was already honoured by the RDS in 2000 by being declared the 'forester of the millennium'. Fergal has also been honoured in Finland where he was Chairman of the European Forest Institute.

Monty Tynsley

*For the next edition we will have a piece from Fergal himself*



## Editor's Note

Niall Humphreys; niallandeileen@gmail.com

Welcome to this edition of the Trekker. Thanks to all who contributed, particularly Ita for her article on the Comeragh/Knockmealdown Mountains trip, and Owen for his piece on Training, Monty, and for those who took such excellent photos, Owen, Paddy, Mike, Gaye.

*For future editions could everyone keep their eyes open for the unusual, the beautiful, the quirky or interesting local detail and send me photo/description/web link - after all this is a community production with everyone participating.*

# Halloween Hiking in the Comeraghs and the Knockmealdowns

*By Ita Lawton*

What a wonderful way to get fit and ready for the winter months: a long weekend hiking in the Nire Valley and the Knockmealdown mountains – a truly green and pleasant land, even at the end of October, when nine Trekkers visited. The Nire valley, in the heart of the Comeragh mountains in County Waterford, is very popular with walkers, and provides a wide variety of walks, from easy ambles along meandering river beds to wonderfully long ridge walks to excite and challenge the strongest of hikers. We spent two days of our three-day weekend in the Nire Valley, travelling a little further to the Knockmealdowns for the last day of the long weekend.

## **Cold day, warm welcome**

We left Dublin in wet, windy weather, full of enthusiasm – despite the rain belting against the windows – for some good walks over the coming bank holiday weekend. Our destination was Hanora's Cottage, a county house/hotel situated in the townland of Ballymacarbry, a beautiful remote area in County Waterford, but most easily attainable from Dublin via Clonmel in County Cork.

On arrival, our hostess Mary Wall, the owner of Hanora's Cottage, showed us to a spacious lodge, a short distance from the main house, which was to be the Trekker "base camp" for the weekend. What a welcome she had laid on for us when we arrived at the lodge on such a chilly wet afternoon: log fires were burning in the two sitting rooms, and a freshly made apple pie sat waiting for us on the kitchen table.

All our meals were served at Hanora's Cottage, the main part of the hotel. To make best use of the short days, we decided to meet there for breakfast at 7.30 a.m. each morning and be ready to meet our guide at 8.45 a.m. Not seeing any lunches left ready for us on day one, I asked Mary, our hostess, if we were to make our own lunches and she replied with the directness of a woman well used to running an organised and efficient show, "Well, I'm certainly not making them for you!" I



I thought it was a great idea, especially with the array of food we had to choose from on the breakfast table: fresh homemade bread, four types of scones, a variety of rolls and muffins, smoked salmon, eggs, cheeses, an assortment of fresh fruit and berries – and, yes, bananas too! Needless to say we were in Trekker breakfast and lunch heaven!

## **Day 1, 25th October, 2013: Into the Storm**

Loaded with our lunches and sated with an excellent breakfast, we headed back to the lodge to meet our very punctual guide Michael Hickey at the lodge at 8.45 a.m. to discuss the day's walking. Michael, a local man, originally from Clonmel, has a vast knowledge and experience of walking these valleys and mountains in all weathers. He is also an authority on flora, fauna, geology and archaeology, to name but a few of his areas of expertise.

I don't think I have ever met a guide (well, perhaps once before in France!) who was as enthusiastic about hiking and the mountains. Having changed careers – Michael was once a

carpenter making custom-made furniture and one-off fittings such as libraries – he is now a Health and Safety consultant. Very comforting to have someone of Michael’s expertise on the mountains with us, especially on our first hike, when the weather went rapidly downhill, from a relatively benign, if cold, start early in the morning.

By mid-morning it was wet, wet, wet, accompanied by high winds, making walking on the upper ridge, along which we had hoped to hike – and did for some time until we were forced to lower ground by the strength of the wind – a challenge not to be reckoned with. Michael, who has seen many such raging days in the Comeraghs, decided to cut the day’s hike short. Not before, however, we briefly glimpsed some of the vistas we might have seen had the weather been more benign.

Long past our normal (one o’clock!) lunch time, we had the “pleasure” of a quickly gobbled lunch on lower terrain by Sgilloogue lake: Trekkers stood, face to the mountain, back to the wind, rain pelting us from every angle, backpacks deluged inside and out in just the few moments it took to get our lunches out. The wind and rain sweeping across the lake was quite spectacular: a scene from a Hollywood movie, you would have thought, if you hadn’t been experiencing it first-hand. By the time we had moved further down the sodden mountain after lunch, however, the rain finally stopped, and, when we got back to lodge, five hours or so after our start time, the sun was shining. Later, a beautiful starry night would fill the sky.



Despite the arrival of the late sunshine, though, we were wet through. Our drenched gear was splayed over every inch of space around the log fires, on radiators, and even, for a short while, strewn outside in what remained of the late afternoon sunshine. A cup of tea and some of Mary’s apple pie helped to restore energy levels, and, once again, all was well.

We had dinner at the cottage at 7.30 p.m. and then moved on to the cultural highlight of the weekend: a visit to a very old-fashioned pub “in the middle of nowhere” in a place called Ballinamult. It was a step back in time. People from around the area gather there to meet, sing and dance. Anyone with an instrument takes it along to join in the music-making. We were told stories about V.I.P.s visiting this pub, including Brad Pitt, Angelina Jolie, and some U.S. politicians. Our names have, no doubt, been added to the list!



## Day 2. Fortune favours the brave

Because the forecast for the rest of the weekend was so bad, Michael decided to change the planned walk for Sunday – the Knockanaffrin ridge in the Comeraghs – in order to avoid the strong winds. Apart from the winds though, it turned out to be a lovely day: cold, bracing and bright. We could see lots of nasty clouds in the distance but, thankfully, they didn’t bother us. We drove to Clonmel and started our walk

from The Emigrants Rest pub on the outskirts of the town. (And, no, we didn’t have one for the

road!). We climbed to the Marion Cross overlooking Clonmel, with fabulous views of the town and the surrounding area. Michael spent some time pointing out various places of interest below us: the outline of the oldest part of the town, the former army barracks, and the economic mainstays of Clonmel, pharmaceutical manufacturer Merck Sharp and Dohme and C&G, producers of Magners/Bulmers cider. He also told us how the outdoor Stations of the Cross around the Marion Cross had been vandalised but then restored by the local Polish and Chinese communities, who come to the area to pray and have family gatherings.

Shortly after this break, we joined the Munster Way and followed it up and down over low-lying hills to the ruins of Carey's Castle in Glenarey. From there, we headed through a beautiful forest, forded the Glenarey stream and walked beside it upstream. We then headed south over open uplands until we veered east to Lachnafrankee. Day two's lunch was a dry weather affair, with brightness and sunshine to keep us relatively warm. Being Halloween though, conversations, at times, bordered on the macabre. Michael, having such local knowledge, and myself, a "local" from Carrick-on-Suir, and other Trekkers knowledgeable about the area, traded tales of murder, mischief and who-dunnits from local and county legend. Bridget Cleary's mysterious murder by her husband in 1895 topped the list, with tales of ambush and murder during the civil war whetting the appetite for more.

When we left the Munster Way, and with it our tales of mischief and murder, we met a hiking friend of Michael's who told us that the hiking group he had been leading earlier in the day had to come off the Galtees because of the high winds. We were glad to have gotten in such a great hike, even if it meant we didn't get to do the originally planned Knockanaffrin ridge. From the final Munster Way junction, it was a pleasant stroll along a quiet country road directly back to our accommodation, where we were once again greeted with warm open fires, and enjoyed a nice refreshing cuppa with our guide.

### **Day 3. At last the Sun**

Some of our group had to leave after two days of hiking but a few stayed on to complete day three of the long weekend. This was the only day on which the planned hike, the Knockmealdown Loop, didn't have to be altered due to bad weather. And, what a great hike it was: through forests initially, and then into open terrain skirting a hill but with our targeted majestic mountain rising up before us in the sunshine. The summit of the Knockmealdowns is in fact narrow and wedge shaped like a huge piece of cheese. Quite steep on the last uphill pull, but worth every step to enjoy the beautiful views below and around us. We could see toward the sea and Helvic Head on one side, and the Galtees and Slievenamon on the other. Apart from a few light showers towards the end of the walk, we enjoyed pleasant sunshine all day, if a bit cold at times. We had the luxury of going back to the lodge to enjoy a cuppa and a quick shower before heading back to Dublin.



*Brendan can take a bow: he planned the weekend well and all his research into accommodation*

### **Constitution**

There was a single motion carried at the recent AGM: to change the name of the occupant of the chair from 'chairman' to 'chairperson' in the Trekker Constitution, this has been duly done.

# Training in the Club

Owen McKeown

In the Trekkers, training of leaders and potential leaders has always been a priority and this remains an important part of club policy.

It is very important for the long term viability of the Club that we have a pool of expertise that can be called on to regularly lead walks at all grades.

For the year 2013/2014, we are participating in two types of navigational training courses; one of these is with an outside mountain training organisation; "Outdoors Ireland" and one in-house.

*To take the outside training first:-*

We have had already an introductory navigation course with "Outdoors Ireland" on 30th Nov. This was attended by seven members of the Trekkers.

While this was an excellent basis to the skills necessary for navigation, more importantly it forms the basis of a structured mountaineering skills training regime which through "Mountain Skills 1" and then "Mountain Skills 2" courses can ultimately lead to a Mountain Leader qualification. This is highly desirable for the Club and will be encouraged. Already two Trekkers have signed up for the second module of training (MS1) which will be held over two days in Wicklow in March. "Mountain Skills 2" will be held later in the summer.

*All Trekkers seriously interested in improving their navigational skills are encouraged to join this training and full details will be found on the*

**"Outdoors Ireland" website.  
Link:- <http://www.outdoorsireland.com/>**

*As part of course material, the following excellent video was provided by Outdoor Ireland and is highly recommended to all members.*

**<http://tinyurl.com/kfs3myr>**

We have asked "Outdoors Ireland" to structure a Map Reading course for later in the year. This will be targeted towards "C" walkers and will have an emphasis on map reading and following existing tracks. There will be less emphasis on Compass work which is less important at lower elevations. More details when available.

*And for in-house training ...*

On 4th Jan, we held an in-house navigation practice session which was structured around an easy B walk. The arrangement of this day was similar to a session which we held last year and the emphasis was on the walkers themselves using map and compass to follow a set route on the hills. A bonus on the day was that we had a reasonable coating of snow on the Lough Brays and Kippure which added a welcome spice to the more academic work.

It is intended to hold another similar session in March when the emphasis will be on map coordinates and elementary GPS use.

*We hope to repeat these sessions at two or three month intervals into the future. These are open to all Trekkers.*

## Using GPS

We will do some elementary work using a GPS in March. Most members may not have this equipment but these days the majority of people will have a mobile phone. The "ViewRanger" app which will run on both Android and iPhones is an excellent introduction to the subject. The app itself and some maps are free and available from Google Play Store and the Apple App Store. This is good enough for beginners and the Open Cycle Map is good enough for C and many B walks given that the coverage of forest tracks is very good; better in fact than the Ordnance Survey sheet 56! If some people download, we can devote some time to this on the next Navigation day.

The "East/West" maps for Wicklow Mountains are available at €49.99 but these are only really essential for more advanced use on open hillside. We can have a quick look at this but this is not essential at this stage.

Mobile Phone Battery life is a problem however and a spare high capacity battery will be needed for a long session in the hills. I will give details of where to obtain these to those interested. (Android only I'm afraid)

Here a proper GPS is really better but the ViewRanger is a cost effective way to start without having to invest a lot of money initially.

**See you on next session!**

## Competitions

**Submit a caption for this photograph**

**- winner gets a free busride!**

**Another busride for completing the crossword**

*(simpler than before - winner may be out of a hat)*



### Across

- 1,19 Son of King George IV (6,7)
- 4 Mountain top (6)
- 9 Where you find your gear (2,3,8)
- 10 Do the adding sum (3,2,2)
- 11 9am we set ... .. our starting point. (3,2)
- 12 Mountain tops (5)
- 14 Sleep sound (5)
- 18 Mountain side (5)
- 19 See 1 across
- 21 Stalks (5,2,6)
- 22 To tie (2, 4)
- 23 A small piece

### Down

- 1 Boot marks (6)
- 2 Go for shelter (4,3,6)
- 3 Deceive (5)
- 5 What is not 7 down (7)
- 6 Roast (4,3,6)
- 7 Understand (2,4)
- 8 Smart remarks (5)
- 13 What the last man in the group does (5,2)
- 15 Two walking poles, a complete group (2,1,3)
- 16 Quick, a bird.
- 17 Entertained (6)
- 20 Relaxes (5)



# Trig Points

We have seen them on peaks everywhere (not surprising as there are apparently 870 locations) and maybe idly wondered. They are in all sorts of states of disrepair, and many have vanished altogether. They are the triangulation points used for mapping the island of Ireland. Their pillars frequently have the holes or even the plates on top into which the base for the theodolite was fitted. They may also have plates on the side, though I have not seen one.

The full ordnance survey of Ireland, at a scale of 6 inches to 1 mile, was the first in the world to cover an entire country. It was carried out between 1824 and 1846, under the direction of two enthusiastic and resourceful engineers Major General Thomas Colby and Thomas Drummond.

'Ordnance' gives the game away that the origin was military, the mapping function being originally a poor relation to the same military unit's responsibility for procuring weapons and explosives. The earlier



mapping of part of Scotland occurred because the English had such difficulty tracking the Jacobites in the rebellion of 1745 (We weren't the only ones to suffer heavy losses due to the 'Bloodless', not to mention 'Glorious', Williamite revolution). Bonnie Prince Charlie disappeared into the mountains and was never caught, eventually making it to France.

Not surprisingly map making was looked on with suspicion in Ireland, particularly as the second great benefit (?) was to facilitate tax

collection. Brian Friel's play 'Translations' based on the first ordnance survey conveys this mistrust, suggesting a cavalier approach by the English towards the translation of Irish place names. Apparently this was unfair as they used the foremost Irish scholar John O'Donovan who worked with a team of scholars including George Petrie and Eugene O'Curry on place-name researches. They established the correct origin of as many of Ireland's 63,000 townland names as possible. O'Donovan followed the surveyors determining spelling and pronunciation and suggested appropriate anglicised versions. This was no easy task as the name could vary from one side of a hill to the other. James Clarence Mangan, was also involved but was more interested in the poetry than the accuracy so relations were crusty.

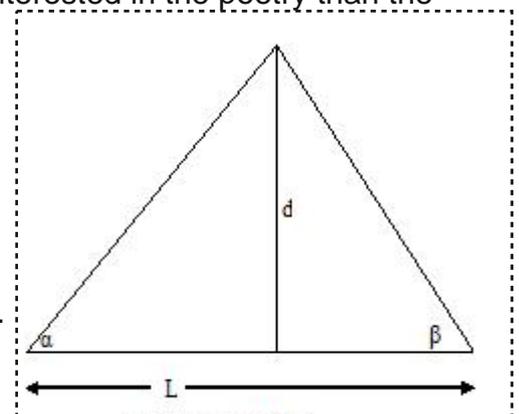


## Triangulation

The approach to mapping based on Triangulation is in some respects quite magical. By accurately measuring a single line, called a 'baseline', and the angles between the end points of the line and a third point (using a theodolite), it is possible to measure a whole country, and, indeed, the world.

Being an application of trigonometry, the idea goes back to the Egyptians, and is in the compass of us all.

In the diagram, 'd' & the position of the apex can be calculated if L and the angles are known. The other sides can then be used as baselines for further measurements.





# THE ASKINAGAP TRAGEDY OF 1867

## Extract from The Wicklow Newsletter, March 1867

..(the Mulhalls) not having made their appearance about noon on Saturday, the neighbours feared something had happened, and made search, when after some trouble in removing the snow and stones washed down by the mountain current they found the six in family lying in bed in the same position as if in a quiet sleep." On their death certificate, the cause of death is given as... "Accidentally smothered in bed by an avalanche."

Sometimes Trekker walks pass this way, one such (B walk 22/9/2012) is shown below



## THE GREAT TRAGEDY OF 1867 ON ASKINAGAP HILLSIDE

Poem by Billy Byrne, Aughrim, June 1992

<http://comhaltasarchive.ie/system/documents/PPP/TRE-1992-4/TRE-1992-4.original.pdf>

It was on a lonely hillside in the Co. of Wicklow  
The greatest snow-storm of all time, brought sorrow, grief and woe.  
The snow-storm lasted for several days, while the stormy winds did blow  
And the snow-drifts were like mountains, round the country high and low.  
And when the storm was over, there came that great snow-slide  
That demolished the Mulhall homestead while the family slept inside,  
The friends and neighbours gathered round, a tragic sight to see  
With nothing left to indicate, where the house it used to be.

But when the snow, they cleared away just where the old house stood  
It's there they found the family, in the rubble stones and mud.  
They were carried down the hillside upon an outhouse door  
And waked in a neighbour's barn, all six upon the floor.  
The day of Mulhalls' funeral a tragic sight to see,  
They were carried by friends and neighbours to a lonely cemetery  
In Pribon there is a massive grave unmarked by cross or sign.  
And it's there, where they laid to rest long long before their time.

How often in my youthful days, as the shades of night did fall ,  
I would go to fetch the cattle home from 'round these ancient walls  
I've stood upon that tragic spot, I've walked and thought alone.  
But Mulhall's old walls, always recall, what was once a happy home.  
But it was there they lived and worked and toiled, without a horse or plough  
And earned an honest living, by the sweat upon their brow.  
The land they tilled, ridged and drilled with shovel and pick and spade,  
And to this day, they are on display in the place where they were made.



# Photos



Lough Bray



2 Rock



17 8 20



11 9 2013



Ardgillen



Croaghanmoir



Lug



Glendalough

6 7 2013