

IRISH **Trekker**



Trekkers in Mayo, September 2011.

The Trekkers Mountaineering Club
Glenageary, Co. Dublin
www.trekkers.ie

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Produced By
The Trekkers Mountaineering Club
Glenageary, Co. Dublin
www.trekkers.ie



*Wishing All Our Members
A Happy Christmas &
A Prosperous New Year*

Acknowledgements

I should like to thank all of those who contributed to this issue of the Irish Trekker. Those who wrote articles: Pearse Connolly, Bernadette Coggins, Monty Tinsley, Owen McKeown; those who provided photographs: Paddy O'Duffy, Theresa Murphy and Bernadette Coggins; to Joe Murray and Roger Kirker for maintaining the club's website. I would also like to thank my fellow committee members - Noreen, Cliona, Karl and Owen. I would also like to thank Ms Gwen Taylour for her design and layout of this issue.

M. Cotter

On behalf of Shaun, family and myself, we wish to acknowledge our appreciation to the Trekkers for their good wishes and support during his illness. He particularly enjoyed the presentation and the photograph to mark his 80th birthday.

Shaun is always interested in hearing accounts of your treks and adventures and is delighted that the club has grown to the extent that it has.

We wish you all a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year.

Eileen Trant.

Notices

Congrats to Marie and Owen McKeown for their new gran daughter.

Welcome to one New Member:
Eamon Redehan.

Acknowledgements and Thanks to the outgoing Committee and trust the new Committee will continue the good work!

IRISH
Trekker

Newly Appointed Committee

**The committee for 2011-2012
comprises:**

Noreen O'Brien - Chairperson

Cliona McCarthy - Secretary

Karl Foley - Treasurer

Owen McKeown - Walks Co-ordinator

Michael Cotter - PRO (Magazine Editor)



The following two notices were carried in the Trekker of January 2009, (Issue No 37), but it was felt that it was appropriate to repeat them, just to keep these issues fresh in peoples' minds.

Admissions to the Club

It is customary for prospective members to come as guests for 2 or 3 walks, of B or C Grade, before being admitted to membership. Members who propose guests should accompany them on their initial walk and should not raise their expectations of membership, as their names will go on a waiting list once they have officially applied to join.

It is important that each guest has appropriate gear for the walk and has the permission of the Walk Leader in order to participate. Members bringing guests should print off the Insurance Waiver form and have them fill it in and give it to the Walk Leader.

Membership is decided by a vote of the Committee after a guest has been out for 2 or 3 walks and shown a willingness to participate in the spirit of the Club and follow the guidelines of the Leader of the walk.

Our very comprehensive website www.trekkers.ie contains full details of the types of walks undertaken, club history and overall programme as well as a large selection of photographs and of course, the current weekly walks programme.

Buses and Bus Fares

Members have already been advised in relation to bus arrangements. The Walks Leader contacts the Walks Co-ordinator no later than the Tuesday prior to their designated walk. The buses are then booked for the Saturday walk(s). This commitment obliges us to pay Tony Graham the full agreed fee. At present it is necessary to have 12 Trekkers @ €20 to make the bus self-financing.

If a member cancels after the Wednesday and is not replaced it has become the custom for that person to pay the full fare. This system allows for smaller groups between 10 and 12 members to hire the bus without any increase in the normal rate. The Leader will confirm with the 'member cancelling' whether or not the €20 is required. Transport for groups of less than 10 will be arranged between the Walks Co-ordinator and the Walks Leader.

SOME SAFETY NOTES FOR WALK LEADERS

By Owen McKeown

Of late there have been several reports in the national press concerning parties of hillwalkers that have got into difficulties while out walking in Wicklow. Thankfully, there have not been any fatalities, though in one case there was a major call out of rescue services. For the next few months, we have a combination of short days and unpredictable weather which makes a few reminders of best practice in leading winter walks very opportune.

When doing a recce for a walk, always try to have “Plan B”, ie an escape route ready for the unexpected. One of the group may be unable to continue due to fatigue or medical problems. Equally, a stream that is relatively easy to cross in the morning can be in spate only a few hours later and the intended route back can be blocked. In both cases, an escape route can avoid a situation such as happened recently in Glenmacnass. Good planning can give the leader options. In the former, the Trekker in difficulties can be sent back by the escape route or in the latter the whole group have an alternative way home. Needless to say, if a Trekker is being sent out by an alternate route he/she must be accompanied by at least two competent persons. These must be fully conversant with the area and have map and compass.

Particularly with A and longer B walks, it might be an idea to consider an early start. Personally, I have found that a start at 0830, combined with arranging to start walks no further south than Laragh is a good idea if one is to finish before 0430pm. Put another way, it is probably not a good idea to plan a long walk in Glenmalur if you are leaving Glenageary at 0900! (Sorry for stating the obvious.)

Walks Grading:

Grade A:- “Covers steep gradients, mountain tops and open hillside. The emphasis is on length and elevation. Normal time is six to eight hours, the distance 18 to 20 kms with a total climb of >800 mts.”

Grade B:- “This covers forest tracks, some open hillside but less mountain tops. The elevation in general would be less than “A” walks. Normal time is five to six hours with a distance of 15 to 18 kms. Total climb 500 to 800 mts.”

Grade C:- “This is confined to forest tracks and quiet roads. Gradients relatively gentle. Normal time is four to five hours with total climb up to 400 mts.”

THE STORY OF GLENDALOUGH

By Pearse Connolly

Glendalough as we know it today is a popular tourist centre and is visited by hundreds of thousands of visitors every year. Many aspects combine to make Glendalough the attractive place it is, such as, the landscape, special features like the stillness of the two lakes surrounded on three sides by mountains and the sense of spirituality most visitors experience knowing they are at the monastic church of a medieval period in Irish history.

Glendalough is synonymous with St. Kevin or 'Ceomghan', the Fair-begotten or Well-featured. Most of the details that have come down to us about St. Kevin's life contain more legend than fact. We are told that he was born in 498 into a noble family and that he came to Glendalough first while still a young man. At that stage in his life he seemed determined to find his own way and live his own dream. He ended up living in a tree but from there he was brought back home and put in the care of three holy men who tutored and guided him for the priesthood. Incidentally, home we are told was Kilnamanagh near Tallaght.

Following his ordination, Kevin set out with a few companions to found a new monastery near Cluainduach, located south of Derrybawn. Once that monastery was established he made his

way back to Glendalough where he lived as a hermit for seven years on the shore of the Upper Lake. Probably at this period he occupied the hole in the rock above the Upper Lake, now called St. Kevin's Bed.

Small monastic communities grew around as Kevin established churches at Templenaskellig and Reefert. The date of his death is given as 618. We are told that this is probably a more accurate date than the year 498 which is given for his birth. In any event, it is very unlikely that anyone lived to the great age of 120 years in the harsh conditions of life in the 6th Century. Stories abound about Kevin and his love of nature and of course his rejection of Kathleen, whose amorous advances he repulsed with a bunch of nettles.

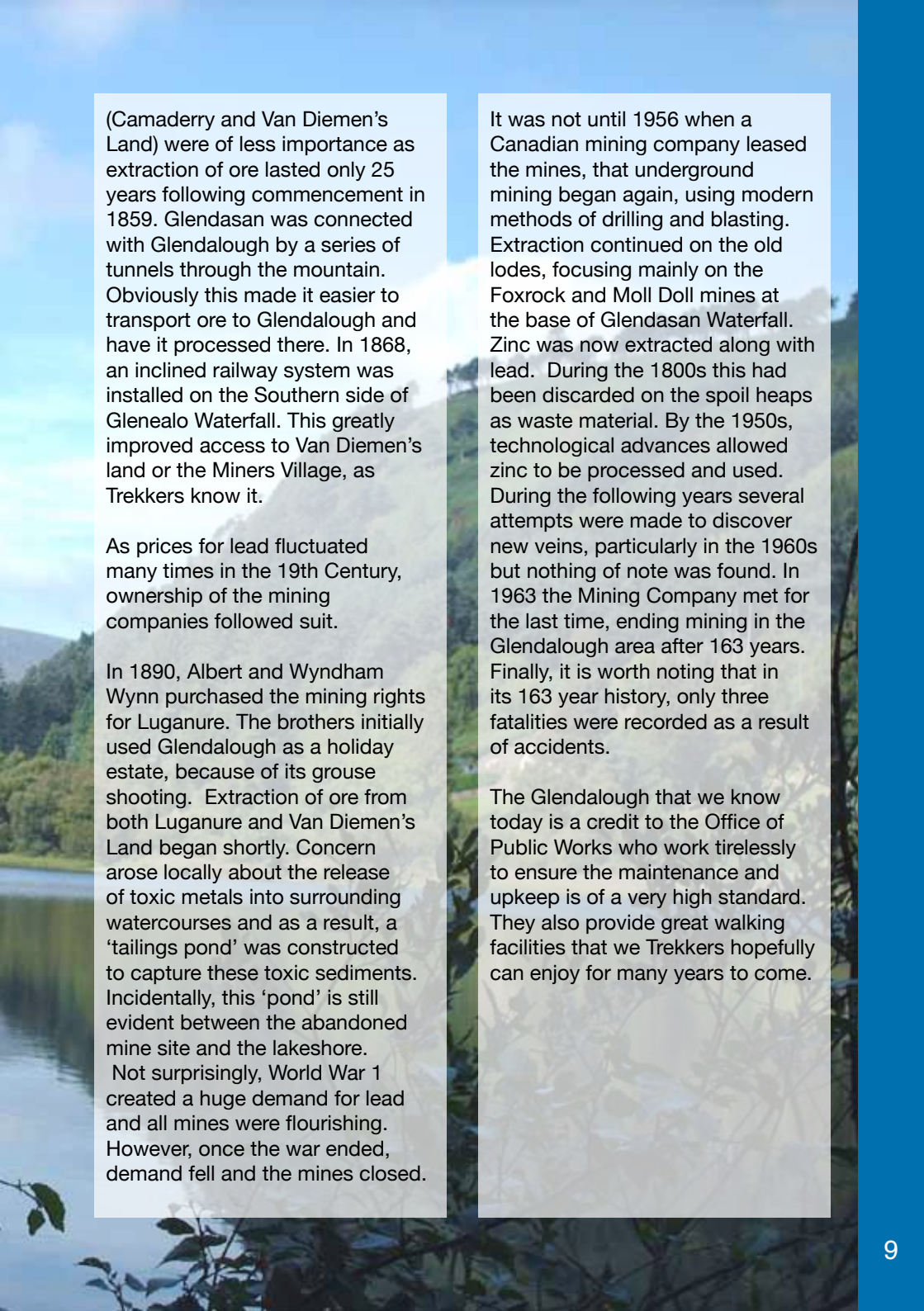
Following Kevin's death, Glendalough continued to flourish and expand, so that by the 10th Century, all seven churches and the round tower were an established part of the 'City' or Monastic Settlement. For a couple of hundred years the Valley of the Two Lakes continued to be the centre of a flourishing school. However, in the 9th and 10th Centuries, Glendalough suffered, as did other monastic settlements, from frequent plunderings and burnings by the Danes and lawless Irishmen. The 'City' of

Glendalough, with its churches was also consumed by accidental fire no fewer than four times, in the years 1020, 1061, 1071 and 1084. It is useful to observe that practically the only ruins we see today are those of the churches, yet there were many other buildings in the ancient 'City', stone beehive cells, writing room, refectory, workshops for carpenter, smith and fine-metal workers, dairy, bakery, kiln for drying corn and the mill on the river for grinding it. All are gone, because easily demolished by invading forces and because they supplied the means of subsistence and were the material life of the monastery.

At this stage in the history of Glendalough we leapfrog over 37 abbots or successors to Kevin to the year 1163. The date of the promotion of Laurence O'Toole from the abbey in Glendalough to the Archbishopric of Dublin. During his period as Abbot, Laurence O'Toole spent much of his patrimony on church rebuilding and maintenance. It is said the embellishment of the Cathedral Chancel and the erection of the priest's House are due to him. However, in 1216 with the union of the dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough, under the anglo-Norman Archbishop of Dublin, Henry of London the Irish monastic system in Glendalough was ended. No longer a centre of attraction for Irish scholars

and by reason of wars between Wicklow Chiefs and the English Government, its buildings soon fell into ruins. Indeed the 'Annals of Clonmacnoise in the year 1398 record: Glen-da-Logha was burnt by the English in Summertime this year. While the diocese of Glendalough was re-established in the mid-15th Century, the later reformation saw the suppression of the monasteries and the demise of Glendalough as a centre of organised religious practice and learning was complete.

In later centuries, however, Glendalough became famous as a mining centre and this industry was to flourish and fail many times over. In 1798, Thomas Weaver, an engineer working on the construction of the Military Road, discovered lead in the hills above Glendasan. Mining had started by 1809 and the first lode to be exploited was the Luganure Mine situated high up the slopes of Camaderry. By 1820 the mine was proving unprofitable and was closed down. Several companies set up as a consequence of an Act of Parliament (1791) to encourage and develop mining, set about exploiting the area. The most successful areas of mining in the Wicklow Mountains were in the Valleys of Glendalough and Glendasan where the Luganure vein ran through the mountain, separating the two valleys. Although better known today, the mines of Glendalough



(Camaderry and Van Diemen's Land) were of less importance as extraction of ore lasted only 25 years following commencement in 1859. Glendasan was connected with Glendalough by a series of tunnels through the mountain. Obviously this made it easier to transport ore to Glendalough and have it processed there. In 1868, an inclined railway system was installed on the Southern side of Glenealo Waterfall. This greatly improved access to Van Diemen's land or the Miners Village, as Trekkers know it.

As prices for lead fluctuated many times in the 19th Century, ownership of the mining companies followed suit.

In 1890, Albert and Wyndham Wynn purchased the mining rights for Luganure. The brothers initially used Glendalough as a holiday estate, because of its grouse shooting. Extraction of ore from both Luganure and Van Diemen's Land began shortly. Concern arose locally about the release of toxic metals into surrounding watercourses and as a result, a 'tailings pond' was constructed to capture these toxic sediments. Incidentally, this 'pond' is still evident between the abandoned mine site and the lakeshore.

Not surprisingly, World War 1 created a huge demand for lead and all mines were flourishing. However, once the war ended, demand fell and the mines closed.

It was not until 1956 when a Canadian mining company leased the mines, that underground mining began again, using modern methods of drilling and blasting. Extraction continued on the old lodes, focusing mainly on the Foxrock and Moll Doll mines at the base of Glendasan Waterfall. Zinc was now extracted along with lead. During the 1800s this had been discarded on the spoil heaps as waste material. By the 1950s, technological advances allowed zinc to be processed and used. During the following years several attempts were made to discover new veins, particularly in the 1960s but nothing of note was found. In 1963 the Mining Company met for the last time, ending mining in the Glendalough area after 163 years. Finally, it is worth noting that in its 163 year history, only three fatalities were recorded as a result of accidents.

The Glendalough that we know today is a credit to the Office of Public Works who work tirelessly to ensure the maintenance and upkeep is of a very high standard. They also provide great walking facilities that we Trekkers hopefully can enjoy for many years to come.

Trekkers in Mulranny

Bernadette Coggins

An adventurous group of 28 Trekkers meet in the Mulranny Park Hotel on Sunday 4th September 2011 for five days of walking, eating and enjoying the best of Co. Mayo's many delights. Everyone having arrived safely, checked into their comfortable rooms and explored the many facilities of the Mulranny Park Hotel then gathered in the bar, of course. The holiday started with dinner – since this was the first dinner of five I will resist all temptation to wax lyrical so soon, suffice to say we ate well, drank well and were served with attentiveness and style.

Monty was our leader for the week. He had undertaken huge research and many reeves over some months, accompanied by John Murphy who had the added advantage of home territory knowledge. Monty and Evelyn with John and Theresa had hunted out the routes, eateries and transport for our holiday. We were merely required to enjoy. As became customary over the week Monty spoke each night about the plans the coming day. As also became customary all plans were subject to rain staying in the clouds and the wind staying behind us. Mayo is a most beautiful county with glorious scenery, wonderful light but apt to an overabundance of rain and wind

which she generously shares with amazing regularity.

Monday dawned dry but threatening! We ate a hearty breakfast and then drove in convoy to our starting point for our first Mayo walk. This was in Derradda; one of the well organised and signposted loops walks of Burrishoole. Our route took us away from roads and habitation and into the hidden heart of Mayo, where many lakes abound unseen unless you approach on foot. Monty led us past lakes, bogs, and serene spaces – it was an introduction to Co. Mayo that seduced the senses. With lunch over the rain came out to say hello but was greeted as a friend and so on we walked. We arrived at the Marine Institute Research facility in Furnace where Monty, in consideration of our on-going educational needs, had arranged for the ranger to meet with us and give us an overview of their history and current research into the movement and status of salmon and eel stocks in Ireland. The size of the salmon we saw in the trap was a revelation, and the ranger was patient with our many questions. That Guinness family sure get about and they were partly instrumental in setting up this research facility in 1955.

By now the rain was falling with increased vigour and so we bet a retreat to our cars and back to the comforts of the Mulranny Park. We then instituted a sort of end of walk ritual for some – Canadian hot tub, sauna, steam room and a cold shower if you dare, which in fairness some hardy souls did. Then powdered and puffed we approached another evening meal. It was divine with deserts that were such visual works of arts it seems criminal to disturb their beauty, however it would had been unmannerly to return plates untouched so we all tucked in with delight.

Tuesday's plans ebbed and flowed as the forecast promised gales and rain. However with such preplanning done Monty led a walk out from the hotel to the Salt Marshes back towards mountains where we crisscrossed over the new 'Greenway' which has added such a wonderful amenity to the local area. The Greenway is a dedicated 43.5 km cycle-walking track which was opened in July this year and follows the old Great Western Midland Railway line. Then through rain clouds we all drove to Newport for lunch in the Grainne Uaile pub which we followed with sightseeing in the locality. The Catholic Church in Newport has some magnificent stained glass windows. The Last Judgement by Harry Clarke, which we all were reluctant to leave, is all jewel bright colours set in some uncomfortable



*View From Newport Church Tower
by Theresa Murphy*

scenes. Then it was off to Burrishoole Abbey where Monty regaled us with the history of the Abbey from its foundation in 1469 up to the burial of Fr. McSweeney following his hanging for his part in the 1798 rebellion. The sea views through the gothic arched windows at the rear of the church were a reminder of times past and the continuity of community.

Our old friend the rain had returned to join us so we paid a brief visit to Carrickahowley Castle before heading back for our circuit of water delights in the hotel spa. One understated word will sum up dinner – wonderful.

Wednesday saw our group divide up for our activities. Two walking groups went to Achill Island. One group went with a friend of John's from Ballina, Michael who led a wonderful walk from the deserted village up to a headland approximately 300 meters overlooking Lough Nakeerogue. A planned descent to the Lough was abandoned due to the unfriendly

weather conditions of the day. And so the group returned to the deserted village and met up with the second group for the return to Mulranny.



Lunch in wet Deserted Village Achill

The second group took the route out to Achill Island to view its amazing landscape and mystic light. The mysticism was initially held at bay by our old friend the rain; however coffee, scones and some retail therapy passed the shower away and the trekkers marched off again. Their walk took in the deserted village and was a poignant reminder of the harsh times past. A third hardy group of six took to the bikes and cycled the new Greenway route out and back to Achill Sound, a mighty achievement of 13 km which was described by an non-participant as 'suicide jockeys cycling in the teeth of a storm and surviving to tell the story'. If Napoleon was correct and an army marches on its stomach then we now know how all the Trekkers got such stamina for their achievements on Wednesday. Dinner on Wednesday night

reached the anticipated high of our now considerable expectations.

Thursday dawned and we had an early start to fulfil the extensive day's itinerary planned out by John. Sean, our driver, gathered us all and off we headed in direction of Benwee Head on the north Mayo coast. This journey took us through Bangor Erris where we had the spectacle of the sheep fair in full flow. On to Ballinaboy Bridge where our driver gave us a careful history of the Shell-to-Sea controversy and on to Rinroe point. From here we saw the differing views of modern technology where shell gas is coming ashore, to radio beacons for Shannon and back to the timeless Ballyglass lighthouse.

Now it was time to stop sitting and start walking. This was a day - dry, blue sky, sun shy but appearing and still air – a glorious day to be out following our leader. We saw some wonderful sights on our walk not least was Kid island which tantalised us all with the question of how do the sheep get landed onto the island? Then we had the counting contest to get the correct number of rocks make up the Stags of Broadhaven was it 4 - 5 or 7? We walked on to the Children of Lir sculpture, which was unveiled in 2005 and dedicated to the emigrants from Erris, where we stopped for lunch and a long discussion of the tales and folklore of the Children. We carried on walking onto Carrowteige where we

happily met our bus – reversing up the bog road to meet us – a most welcome sight.

We went onwards to the Ceide Fields where we enjoyed the exhibition and film of their findings. The Ceide Fields can be viewed in two ways – a collection of fields with humps, or a majestic window to our past ancestors of 5,000 years ago. It is difficult place to leave without having a sense of life continued and also life suspended. A place to be revisited at leisure I think. We then headed to that most significant of places – the Murphy birthplace where refreshment was taken in ‘backroom’ pub of Polkes in Ballycastle. Our homeward journey took us past the musical bridge in Bellacorrick where we all tried to play ‘the stones’ with sadly no great success. And so we came back through Bangor Erris – all sheep sold – and on to Mulranny.

Our final day was one of fantastic views, ancient and sad history, and some wonderful walking. We rounded off our day with the now customary magical dinner where each trekker was happy, relaxed and joined in the sincere thanks expressed to our intrepid leaders and their spouses for all the forward planning on our behalf.

Mulranny Park Hotel was an inspired choice for our holiday base, it was located in wonderful scenic location, had great leisure facilities and a kitchen that provided the most wonderful meals. All of this was enhanced by a staff that excelled at great service in a seemingly effortless way. However, as usual, the Trekkers’ holiday was made so enjoyable by the company, the craic and the combined good humour of all. An experience to be treasured and remembered.



Group at Costa del Mayo September 2011

ANOTHER TREKKER NOVEMBER

By Monty Tinsley

November 2011, the month to recall people, places and events, has been a strange one for me from a Trekkers point of view. Having passed on the 'chain of office' I headed to Rome to relax, unwind, pick olives and eventually to return as an ordinary Trekker foot soldier without any major responsibilities. This was my plan until the Editor cornered me for 'some thoughts' for his first edition. Could I let him down?

Well, I will let into some of my musings. Sitting in my son's garden on a warm day and fortified by good Italian cuisine and home produced vino di casa my mind began to reflect on the events of the past three years (many of them listed in Trekker No 45) and the interaction of different personalities.

I thought about our constitution and rules that guide us and about the walks and social events that are like building blocks, for everyone to climb. Then I realised that it is our ethos that acts as the cement to keep the Club structure in place. After another glass of chilled vino bianco and a nibble of the local formaggio it occurred to me that this spirit is caught not taught.

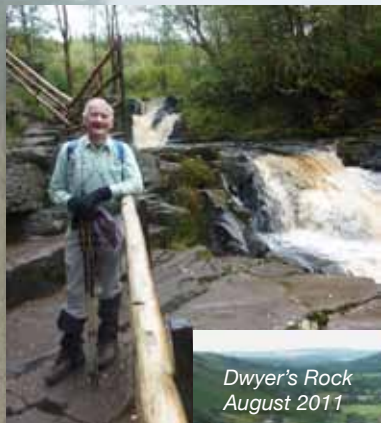
I feel that every member has an obligation to develop the Club ethos. I believe it starts by getting to know the name of ones fellow walkers. Then one gets to know their strengths, interests and characteristics. These all vary, like the white clouds that were passing overhead – some linked together, some apart – as members look out for each other on the hills. This can expand and form a new circle of friendship that will be very beneficial 'off the hills'. Since it was started in November 1982 this ethos and willingness to share responsibilities has been the corner stone of our Club. Long may it continue and move as freely and effectively as the cirrus clouds that drifted above me. So there is the link between the Trekkers and the Heavens!

Later in the afternoon Evelyn woke me, suggesting another glass of water and queried if I had had a good siesta or was I still in cloud cuckoo land.



PHOTO GALLERY

*Brendan at waterfall near
Glenbarrow September 2011*



Group at Coffin Stone September 2011



*Dwyer's Rock
August 2011*



*Group at JB Malone
September 2011*



*Eugene checking the route
October 2011*



*Group at Killiney Hill
October 2011*



Group at Knocknagun November 2011



*Group at Slieve Bloom dinner
September 2011*



*Group at Upper Glenasmole
Reservoir September 2011*



*Jim near tower
at Glendalough
September 2011*



Joe and Tom October 2011

John in full flow at Broadhaven Bay





Karl shows us how to cross the Avonmore River

Sorcha, Brendan, Owen, Ita, and Gerry
at Glenmalur Pub August 2011



Pearse at Carrigeenduff
November 2011



Top group start to divert
watercourse November 2011



Tom and Noel November 2011

View of Lough Tay in a gale September 2011



Walks Schedule January to April 2012

Date	Grade	Start	1st Leader	2nd Leader	3rd Leader
7/1/2012	B	0900	Paddy O'Duffy	Terry O'Brien	Karl Foley
	C	1100	Dick Needham	Catherine Walsh	Teresa Casey
14/1/2012	A	0830	Owen McKeown	Gaye Maguire	Tom Murray
	C	1100	Dick Ryan	Carmel Meade	Cindy Mangan
21/1/2012	B	0900	Michael Cotter	John Murphy	Ruth Cullen
	C	1100	Myles Duffy	Marion Goff	Hilary Fitzpatrick
28/1/2012	C	1100	Eugene Logan	Theresa Murphy	Bob Curran
4/2/2012	A	0900	Seamus Murrin	Michael Lane	Barry Walsh
	C	1100	Monty Tinsley	Marie Comiskey	P O'Duffy
11/2/2012	B	0900	Pearse Connolly	Dympna Thunder	Maura Colleary
	C	1100	Kevin Beegan	Mary Delany	Teresa Casey
18/2/2012	B	0900	Philip O'Neill	Joe Murray	Tom Gillen
	C	1100	Fred English	Dick Needham	Dick Ryan
25/2/2012	C	1100	Eugene Logan	C. Minogue	Aidene Duff
3/3/2012	A	0900	Brendan Bracken	Barbara Lane	Ita Lawton
	C	1100	Noreen O'Brien	Josephine Cotter	Myles Duffy
10/3/2012	B	0900	Cliona McCarthy	Gilbert Little	Maeliosa Ryan
	C	1100	Roger Kirker	John Brandon	Maura Byrne
17/3/2012	B	0900	Brian Brennan	Richelle Crowley	Derek O'Neill
	C	1100	Mary Delany	Dick Needham	Sheila Cantwell
24/3/2012	B	0900	Gaye Maguire	Sorcha Ryan	Marjorie O'Shee
	C	1100	Eileen Gallagher	Colette Dorgan	Marelene Travers
31/3/2012	C	1100	Eugene Logan	Fred English	Marie McKeown

7/4/2012	EASTER SATURDAY ---- NO WALKS				
14/4/2012	A	0900	Mary Dillon	Ita Lawton	Tom Duff
	C	1100	Paddy O'Duffy	Noel O'Reilly	Myles Duffy
21/4/2012	B	0900	Niall Humphreys	Michael Cotter	Mary Murray
	C	1100	Fergal Molloy	Marie Comiskey	Teresa Casey
28/4/2012	C	1100	Eugene Logan	Josephine Cotter	Kevin Moore

Walk Leaders.

Walk Leaders should email members at least 10 days in advance of their scheduled walk to advise of the planned route details, including the distance to be travelled and height to be climbed. Where a named leader is unable to lead a walk, he/she should arrange for and agree a replacement. Any such changes should be notified to the Walks Co-Ordinator Owen McKeown.

Please note Bus Driver details: Gerry Haskins Tel: 086 262 8857.

