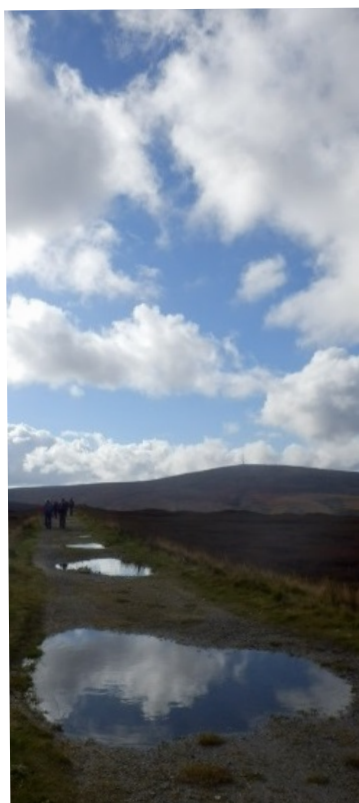


January 2015 - Issue 54

Irish Trekker



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



Welcome

Welcome to recently joined members - we wish you long and happy trekking. (apologies if you already feel like part of the furniture)

- Georgina Bryan
- Gail Clark
- Richard Dean
- Finbar Duggan
- Roisin Fitzgerald
- Eileen Fitzmaurice
- Malachy Hanley
- Aoife McKenna
- Frank Sheridan

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Chairperson's Greeting

Shay Murran

A Happy and Healthy New Year to all and we look forward to an active and progressive 2015. The club has gone from strength to strength over the past few months, we now have 119 members which I understand is the largest membership we have ever had. I take this opportunity to welcome all of our new members and feel free to contact me if you have any problems. The increase in numbers has resulted in some members being disappointed at not being able to get on some of the walks, however we may address this in different ways if the large numbers attending are maintained. The committee have been very active and we propose to offer an information session by **Mountain Rescue Ireland** on mountain rescue procedures very shortly. In addition we will offer a **basic First Aid Course** in early Spring. The walking programme has been very well supported with three walks being offered each week. This is a major expansion of the club which is very welcome. Two of our most experienced leaders Brendan Bracken and Owen McKeown will organise walks in Wales and France over the Spring and Summer. May I thank all of our members for the active support and we can look forward to an exciting New Year.

For your diary: 23 May: Memorial Walks & Dinner

Upcoming Away Trips

19-27 March	9-12 April	June
<i>Malaga with Shay, Grade B</i>	<i>Wales with Owen, Grade A</i>	<i>Pyrenees with Brendan, Strong B</i>

Anyone like to organise an away trip for C walkers?

Editor's Note

Welcome to Trekker number 54. Thanks to all who contributed, particularly Lucia for a great piece on the Burren trip, Anne Hayes' fascinating account of her trip to Ethiopia and Myles for his history of Avondale. We include a reference to the comprehensive training resource provided by Mountaineering Ireland and to 'Leave No Trace' as well as the Guidelines issued by Shay recently for 2nd and 3rd walk leaders. Lastly, and not to be missed, we have the results of the caption competition. Thanks too to photographers particularly Owen, Breda, Myles, Michael - Enjoy - Niall

Niall Humphreys; niallandeileen@gmail.com

Burren trip September 2014

Lucia Shelly

Day 1 Monday Sept. 8th - The Flaggy Shore

A number of us who arrived early to Ballyvaughan got our car-locked legs into action with a lovely 5 km walk in glorious sunshine along the Flaggy shore led by Geraldine Boland. Geraldine showed us the place between the lake and the sea where Seamus Heaney wrote his poem The Flaggy shore. Like all good children we were rewarded with a treat of artisan ice-cream and then made our way to a Martello tower. Then we returned for a hearty meal to Logues Lodge, Ballyvaughan, where we were staying. After our meal we had a most interesting illustrated talk from Emma Glanville, a Burren National Park ranger about the Burren's famous rare plants. This helped us on our walks to try and identify the various plant life.



Burren Clints (fissures)

*And some time make the time to drive out west
Into County Clare, along the Flaggy Shore,
In September or October, when the wind
And the light are working off each other
So that the ocean on one side is wild
With foam and glitter, and inland among stones
The surface of a slate-grey lake is lit
By the earthed lightening of flock of swans,
Their feathers roughed and ruffling, white on white,
Their fully-grown headstrong-looking heads
Tucked or cresting or busy underwater.
Useless to think you'll park or capture it
More thoroughly. You are neither here nor there,
A hurry through which known and strange things pass
As big soft buffetings come at the car sideways
And catch the heart off guard and blow it open*

Seamus Heaney - The Flaggy Shore

Day 2 Tuesday Sept. 9th.



We all collected our packed lunches and set off for our B and C walks starting at Fanore cottages on a loop back to Ballyvaughan via Black Head. The B walk was 17 km and a climb of 250 m. The C walk was 11.5 km and a climb of 200 m. Again the walk was in beautiful weather and when we emerged from the wooded area the walk opened into stunning scenery.

Day 3 Wednesday Sept.10th.

We were able to set off in exceptionally good weather for The Cliffs of Moher. Mary, our very obliging driver brought us to our starting point close to The Hags Head where we had tea and freshly baked scones BEFORE we took a step!!! This coastal walk was extremely well laid out and due to good weather was quite busy.. but we did see the cliffs at their best and not through a haze of mist!! Our lunch stop was at the interpretative centre where we were like children on a school tour at the photo opportunity option. We continued our coastal walk to Fisher Street in Doolin where we had refreshments at O'Connors. 13 km.



Day 4 Thursday Sept. 11th

It was hard to think we could better the walks we had already done but today's walk to Mullaghmore was outstanding. The B walk was 9.5 km and a climb of 250 m and the C walk was 7 km and 200 m. This walk was in the heart of the Burren. We picked our way through the Burren stones again in great weather, but the lunar-like vista peaked as we came over a hill at Slieve Roe.



Mullaghmore

Here we stopped and had our lunch in such an amazing peaceful and tranquil setting. Awesome. Our wonderful talk from Emma helped us to be aware of the clints (fissures) as we hopped over them and thankfully avoided any injuries in the grykes (crevices).... We also took

notice of the Burren flowers that eked out their existence through the rocks. We also saw lots of fossils and wondered at the history of this amazing landscape.



Botanically, the Burren is one of the most fascinating regions in Western Europe. Among the many varied and beautiful flowers which have come to symbolise the Burren are *spring gentian*, *mountain avens*, *shrubby cinquefoil* and *bloody cranesbill* and, on the higher terraces, the *hoary rock rose*. These can all be found in the park flowering in the spring and summer months. Many *orchid* species flourish here also, twenty-three of Ireland's twenty-seven orchid species can be found in the Park.

<http://www.burrennationalpark.ie/Flora.html>

Day 5 Friday Sept. 12th.

Today we set off on a more leisurely walk (B walk 14.5 km and climb 300 m and C walk 10.5 km and 300 m climb) to Fanore via the burren Way and again our 5th day of wonderful weather and finished in O'Donoghue's pub...where there was dancing from 4-7!! And it was busy...another world. Some wandered to a really good coffee shop and visited the poet and philosopher John O'Donoghue's (from Anam Cara fame) grave and could appreciate from the locality the source of much of his poetry.

We returned to Logues Lodge where we were treated so well all week ...but all was not finished yet!!! A group of us finished our fantastic Burren experience in Lisdoonvarna at the Matchmakers festival . This was another “experience”... but what goes on tour stays on tour...great fun.

As you can see this was a fantastic 5 days walking in the Burren but it was so well organised by Noreen and Terry O'Brien, Geraldine Boland and very ably assisted by Noel O'Reilly and Micheál Cotter. We really got the feeling of the wonder of this amazing landscape. A great and most enjoyable experience and a Big Thank you to all the organisers.

Concerning the Circle and Spiral

The Celtic mind was never drawn to the single line; it avoided ways of seeing that seek satisfaction in certainty. The Celtic mind had a wonderful respect for the mystery of the circle and the spiral. The circle is one of the oldest and most powerful symbols. The world is a circle; the sun and moon are too. Even time itself has a circular nature; the day and the year build to a circle. At its most intimate level so is the life of each individual. The circle never gives itself completely to the eye or to the mind but offers a trusting hospitality to that which is complex and mysterious; it embraces depth and height together.

From “Anam Cara: The Book of Celtic Wisdom”



My Ethiopian Walking Holiday

Anne Hayes

Sometime around last April (2014), through the Trekkers, we received an email from a Cork-based registered charity, Africa Direct, giving details of a fund-raising trip to Ethiopia that included 6 days' walking in the highlands. Seeing Cork, Ethiopia and walking mentioned in the one sentence, my interest was piqued. Ethiopia has been on my bucket-list for a long number of years and being from Cork...well what more can I say! After a few enquiries I was on. Following months of looking forward to the trip and probably boring anyone who would listen to me, on October 31st I met the Africa Direct group leader, Jack O'Connell, and ten other intrepid travellers (the majority of whom are Cork based) for what proved to be a truly wonderful holiday experience.

Africa Direct

An Irish, Cork-based charity, run by a membership of volunteers, fundraising to support projects for the poor in developing countries <http://africadirect.ie/>

As you read the following reflections just keep in mind that right now you are doing something that over 62% of Ethiopian adults would love to be able to do...read!

For most of the recent past, what I knew about Ethiopia (with a population of 94 million) was that it was a country of crushing poverty and a symbol of world hunger. But although that poverty still remains (it is one of the top 20 poorest nations in the world), Ethiopia boasts a rich cultural, historic and natural heritage that cannot be measured by money. But in Addis Ababa at least there are signs that things are changing. The streets are in absolute chaos as a Chinese-funded light rail system is being installed and new hotels and office blocks are being constructed. Driving here is not for the faint-hearted; it is like an obstacle course needing to negotiate / drive around pedestrians and drive over / around mounds of dug up earth and deep crevices left by road works. Everyone appears to have right of way! Although the railway is due to be operational next year it is difficult to believe that any semblance of order will be restored anytime soon.

In Addis we visited a number of well-managed and worthwhile NGO projects. Africa Direct supports the Nowali Services Project. Nowali, meaning 'shepherd', was initially set up by the Good Shepherd Sisters and is now run by a group of Ethiopians. This project is dedicated to helping women who through poverty and prostitution are lured and trafficked to other countries. The core of the work carried out includes counseling and support as well as teaching the women new life and work skills that help them to reintegrate and begin a 'new life'. Elsewhere, Sr. Mary from Co. Galway ably manages a schools project run by



the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul. Here hundreds of children attend one of their two kindergarten and primary schools. The energy, enthusiasm, curiosity and zest for knowledge, despite large class sizes (that include children with learning disabilities and special needs) and limited resources, were inspiring. Whereas in Addis, children spend all day in school, in the countryside attendance is more haphazard because the children also have to attend to farm and domestic duties.

Here they attend school either morning or afternoon. It is not unusual to see 50+ children in the class with one teacher and one exercise book between 5 children. But despite all of these challenges the same love of knowledge and learning is evident. Those without numeracy and literacy skills are guaranteed a life of poverty.

Ethiopia can certainly lay claim to be the cradle of modern humans. A nearly complete skeleton dating back 3.5 million years and belonging to a 20-year-old female was discovered in 1974. Locally known as Dinknesh (meaning 'you are wonderful') but popularly called Lucy after the Beatles song 'Lucy in the sky with diamonds' that was playing in the camp when the find was made. The remains are on display in the National Museum in Addis Ababa, which we visited. It was while we were in the museum that we heard that President Michael D. Higgins and Sabina were expected to visit later on the first day of their 3-week African tour. You can only imagine the excitement when permission was granted for us to meet with him! He was very gracious and patient allowing a group photo that appeared on the RTE website later that evening!



<http://www.africanglobe.net/africa/ethiopia/-celebrates-return-iconic-fossil-dinknesh/>

Driving up north to Lalibela (approx. 700 kms), whilst giving us a real sense of life outside Addis, required very early starts and was not without incident. Driving on roads where people and animals strayed to the centre, not to mention the enormous potholes was at times bone- and nerve-shattering! Punctures are not uncommon and so while standing at the side of the road (waiting for tyre changes) we were always surrounded and entertained by dozens of amber-eyed children and toddlers who appeared from nowhere to shake hands and have their photo taken. Sweets were distributed but because the predominant religion in this region is Orthodox Christian where they fast (no meat or dairy products) on a Wednesday and Friday, care had to be taken because of the lactic acid content in sweets. Balloons and pens were substituted! Whilst many of the children appear to be well nourished and healthy, in some areas children were obviously malnourished requiring more medical attention than was apparently available. I visited one healthcare clinic where the staff reported that the main problems they see result from the effects of malnutrition.



After a couple of days in Lalibela visiting the amazing rock-hewn churches that have converted Lalibela into the holy land for the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and reminding one of the connections between Judaism and Ethiopian Christianity, at last we started our 6-day trek in the Wollo Highlands (south of the 1986 famine area). We were now divided into two groups of six, one group starting at one end of the trek and the other at the other end. Initially grant-aided by Irish Aid and organised by TESFA Tours, the trek is part of a scheme that



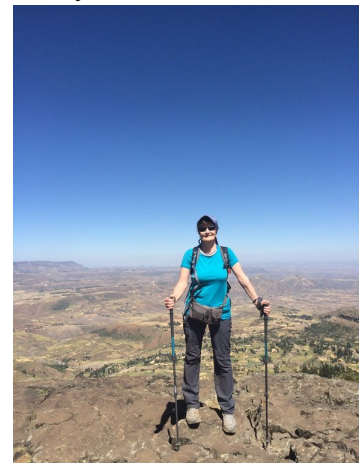


provides income for villagers who guide, provide donkeys to transport luggage and cater for visitors in 'tukuls' that are owned by village communities. The stone thatched tukuls provide three twin-bed spaces and a common dining area, an eco toilet (at times only steps away from the precipice and with a view that would win awards) and even a shower al fresco (a bamboo cubicle with a half bucket of water!). Each tukul sits right on the edge of an escarpment; so on arrival in each village we enjoyed spectacular views with a welcome freshly

pounded Ethiopian coffee or tea in hand. Whereas breakfast and dinner were adapted to the western palate, lunch always included injera. The best way of describing injera (likened by one member to carpet underlay) is that it is both a very nutritious food / bread and an eating utensil that is used to scoop up food. Whilst the vegetable, lentil and bean dishes were delicious, Injera was not one of my favorites no matter how nutritious it was!



The highlands are blessed with a temperate climate (mid 20C) but very chilly at night. The villages where we stayed were situated at altitudes ranging from 2,600-3,500. Whilst days one and seven of the trek were short, up to about 3 hours' walking, mainly on the flat, the other five days ranged from 7 hours with two 10-hour walking days that necessitated early starts at 7 am. The walking in itself was not difficult. But what made it more challenging was the terrain. Boulders, stones and gravel required concentration and were not easy underfoot. Think of the final part of the Sugar Loaf and multiply. One day we had a very long boulder and stone strewn descent followed by (albeit not as long) ascent in the heat of the afternoon. I was dreading the following day, which we had been told, would be our most challenging and longest day. However, I think they must have got the days mixed up! Maybe it was the fact that our ascent was early in the morning or perhaps I had had good training the previous day. But I did experience a smidgeon of disappointment that I was not more physically challenged that day! Overall we covered about 120 km.



The treks took us across a plateau of dry farming and grazing land, returning repeatedly to escarpments offering breath-taking views of the valleys below. Eucalyptus (an imported species) and Juniper dominated, but ancient Olive and Acacia also provided welcome



shade, particularly in the afternoons when it felt as if the land gave off all the heat it had earlier absorbed. We got a fascinating glimpse of rural life, essentially unchanged for centuries; children watching the cattle, sheep and goats, older girls and women fetching water and men stacking hay and caring for crops of mainly wheat, teff, beans, lentils and peas. There is no electricity or machinery in the villages and even plastic is rare. The constant sound across the valleys was of children calling out to each other as they cared for the animals. It gave real meaning to the term bush telegraph where children would obviously let other children know that the faranji (white foreigners) were nearby and therefore there may be sweets to be had and / or

photos to be taken. Although children loved having their photos taken, it was the excitement of seeing themselves and each other in the photo that caused most excitement. Perhaps this was due to the fact that there do not appear to be any mirrors in the highlands and so seeing themselves in photos may give the children an opportunity to see themselves. This is just my theory!



Ethiopians are a very proud (they've never been colonized), gracious, friendly, and hospitable people. They have an amazing physique, walking everywhere either barefoot or wearing simple plastic and often torn sandals. In the highlands it is not unusual for a child or young person to walk one and a half hours to and from school. It is not difficult to see why the Great Ethiopian Run has been so successful in this country of natural athletes. An example of the hospitality afforded us was one day nearing the end of a walk a few in the group were dreaming of sitting out on the escarpment enjoying a gin and tonic! Unbeknown to them the guide had overheard this dreaming and on arrival in the village he asked one of the village men to walk (about 45 minutes) to a village where he knew that gin was available together with well out of date tonic!!



In every way Ethiopia is unique. It has its own languages (about 90 different dialects), its own calendar (where I'm 7 years younger!), its own brand of Christianity (Ethiopian Orthodox) and a landscape that is unparalleled. It proudly calls itself the land of the Queen of Sheba and also claims title to the Ark of the Covenant, the box of gold and acacia



believed to have once contained the Ten Commandments.

Any words I use or photos I show do little to capture the essence and spirit of this amazing country and its people who in the face of adversity are so resilient.

Nevertheless I hope I've given you a flavour of a wonderful experience.



There are three substantial benefits to the Ethiopian locality from this trip: About one third of the travel costs goes to charity; the charity also benefits from tax redemption; and, of course, there is the use of the holiday facilities.

TEFF

Teff's tiny seeds – the size of poppy seeds – are high in calcium, iron and protein, and boast an impressive set of amino acids. Naturally gluten-free, the grain can substitute for wheat flour in anything from bread and pasta to waffles and pizza bases. Like quinoa, the Andean grain, teff's superb nutritional profile offers the promise of new and lucrative markets in the west.

<http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/jan/23/quinoa-ethiopia-teff-super-grain>

The true miracle is not walking on water or walking in air, but simply walking on this earth

- Thích Nhất Hạnh - Vietnamese Buddhist monk - best-selling books include *Happiness and Being Peace*

A Sunny Day at Avondale

Myles Duffy

Trekker C Walkers were blessed with glorious October sunshine when Noel O'Reilly led them on a trek through the 500-acre Avondale Forest Park on the western bank of the picturesque Avonmore River, just south of Rathdrum.



Apart from the distinction of being the birthplace of Charles Stewart Parnell on 27 June 1846, Avondale also deserves recognition in the pantheon of our heritage because it was the first venue in Ireland to facilitate the scientific analysis of the growing of trees.

The elegant Avondale House was constructed in 1777 for Col Samuel Hayes, 67 years before Parnell was born. He inherited the estate, then comprising 4,500 acres and known as Hayesville, from his father. Hayes, a barrister and MP for Wicklow, was also an amateur architect who had a passionate interest in forestry.

He divided the estate into one-acre plots; then planted a perfect specimen of a tree in each plot and cultivated the sapling of the same species in the remaining space. He was also a member of the agricultural committee of the Dublin Society (now RDS), which in 1795 selected the 48-acre site in Glasnevin for the Botanic Gardens. The Dublin Society also sponsored an initiative in the late 18th century to encourage the planting of 70 million trees in Ireland.

The eminent English architect, James Wyatt, who had a thriving practice in the country house sector, designed Avondale House. His other commissions included Farnham House in Cavan (now a Radisson hotel), the renovation of Slane Castle and Frascati House in Blackrock. Its symmetrical style, tall columns and triangular low-pitched gable define the neo-classical character of this Georgian mansion.

Hayes died in 1795 at the relatively young age of 52 and bequeathed the estate to the great-grandfather of Charles, Sir John Parnell MP for Bangor and subsequently Laois and then Offaly. He died in 1801 and bequeathed the estate to his third son, William MP for Wicklow and grandfather of Charles, who was obliged under the terms of Samuel Hayes, will to adopt the name Hayes. William became known as William Hayes Parnell. He died

in 1821. Avondale then passed to the father of Charles, John Henry Parnell, who was a first cousin of Viscount Powerscourt.

The parents of Charles divorced when he was six years old and Charles inherited Avondale when he was 13 years old after the death of his father.

When Charles died in 1891 his brother John Howard Parnell MP for South Meath inherited Avondale. He was obliged to sell Avondale in 1902 by the Court of Chancery and it was purchased by a wealthy butcher, Patrick Boylan, who outbid a lower offer made by the Parnell Memorial Committee after John Redmond had raised proceeds through a mortgage in the United States.

The English Forestry Commission purchased the estate in 1904 and it operated as a forestry school until 1915. It was closed between 1915 and 1934 when it reopened and remained as a forestry school until 1955 when the forestry school was relocated to Shelton Abbey.

By the mid 1950's the proportion of the Republic that was afforested had grown from 1.6% to 10% (1.72 million acres). Today, forest cover is about half this level with the private sector accounting for 45% of the forest cover compared to 28% in 1990. The lineage of Charles Stewart Parnell ceased in 1934 when his only grandson died in 1934 from typhoid when serving with the British Army in India.



Charles Stewart Parnell (1846 – 1891)

No man shall have the right to fix the boundary to the march of a Nation.

No man has the right to say to his country "Thus far shalt thou go and no further".

Why should Ireland be treated as a geographical fragment of England - Ireland is not a geographical fragment, but a nation.

Mountaineering Ireland - Training

The Mountaineering Ireland website contains a very comprehensive section on **Hill Walking** (<http://www.mountaineering.ie/hillwalking/default.aspx>) with sections on:

Walk Safely; Park Safely; Navigation & Skills Videos; Clothing; Footwear; Waterproofs; Walking in winter; Equipment advice; Camping; Guidebooks; Mountain Views; Weather; Is the water safe; Lyme Disease /Ticks; Useful Downloads; Skills Videos.

The Mountain Training section provides details of courses for a range of **leadership qualifications**. Its videos on **basic navigation** are excellent and a link to these is already provided on our website under the Guidelines page.

<http://www.mountaineering.ie/TrainingAndSafety/default.aspx>

Leave No Trace

Leave no trace, so much a part of how we behave, is explained in detail here:

<http://www.leavenotraceireland.org/seven-principles>

Guidelines for 2nd and 3rd Walk Leaders

Since the last issue of the Trekker, Shay issued the following guideline regarding the duties of the 2nd and 3rd leader:

There would appear to be some confusion with regards to the duties and responsibilities of the 2nd and 3rd walk leaders on club walks. The objective of the following guidelines is to increase the experience and confidence in particular of the 2nd and 3rd leaders. This will help to increase the pool of potential walk leaders for future reference.

1. Join the walk leader on the walk recce to familiarise themselves with the route, distance, height gained and any other important elements which may be essential to the safety and success of the walk.
2. When out on the walk the 2nd and 3rd leaders should take up positions of responsibility, e.g. take up the position of sweeper and interchange with the leader at the half way point to experience leading the walk.
3. The walk leader should point out the methods of dealing with difficult situations which you may have to deal with when leading a walk, e.g. sudden change to dangerous weather, illness or extreme tiredness, darkness closing in while on the mountains, changing the route, cancelling the walk, etc.
4. If the walk leader is not available to lead the walk it is expected that the 2nd and 3rd leaders will take over and lead the walk. In such a case, assistance and advice will be provided if necessary.

There are other guidelines (including one for the ordinary walker, which was in the last Trekker) published on the website. We urge everyone to be familiar with them.

Caption Competition

Thanks again for the excellent entries for the Caption Competition.

Rodger: *"If lunch wasn't so late, I might be worried about falling down that Ravine!"*

Karl: *"If Tom asks me one more time what does Peligro stand for... there'll be one empty seat on the plane going home !"*

or *"this is the fifth time we have passed this exact sign"*

Dermot: *... it was only as they began their descent that they came to rue the strange Spanish gentleman's parting words. "Zis way you weesh to go," he had said to them on the eve of their endeavour, "it ees - how you say it? - essentially safe."*

After deep discussion, coming close to fisticuffs, the committee finally emerged to announce the winner who gallops off with a free bus ride:

DERMOT



PHOTOS



Kippure



Lough Bray



Glendalough



Dalkey - Christmas Walk



Bohernabreena



Glenasmole