

## *Walking in South Africa*

Our foreign correspondent - Tom Huban

On Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> October 1998 an intrepid band of eighty-two would be explorers and assorted lunatics from the four corners of Ireland set out for a two hundred mile trek in South Africa. To partake in this adventure we each had to raise £3,350 sponsorship for M.S. Ireland which was no easy task. But, at last we were on our way - under the benevolent guidance of "Fr. Jack" aka Frank Kelly.

After arrival in Durban and transfer by bus we arrived at our base for the next three days in the heart of the Drakensberg Mountains, known by the Zulu as "The Dragons Back". Our walk started the next day from the hotel. I was delighted to be asked to lead this first days walk. We climbed above the hotel and under a huge outcrop aptly named Mushroom Rock and onto the Little Berg Plateau. We traversed the plateau and because today was to be a short five hour walk to acclimatise ourselves to the mountains, we descended past the Ribbon Albert and Doreen waterfalls back to the hotel.

"Mountains make their own weather" an old adage that is true the world over. We may have been in Africa but the weather was reminiscent of winter in Ireland. Alas for the next two days the

(Continued on page 2)

Galway's newest, brightest, most spectacular newsletter is here. Any opinions to the contrary will happily not be entertained but constructive criticism is welcomed IF accompanied by an article, recipe, crossword puzzle, jokes (within reason) etc...

Thanks to those who have kindly submitted articles for this issue (apply ice to those badly twisted arms).



Items for the next issue (floppy disks or neat handwriting) will be accepted at any club meeting with undying gratitude, or something loosely resembling it.

Go raibh agaibh...

## *Galway Walking Club AGM*

The AGM was held on 21 January 1999 in Jamesons Hotel, Salthill. Attendance was very good.

The first item of business was the reading of the minutes for last years AGM by the outgoing secretary Lyn O'Sullivan.

The members present voted to change the constitution to allow for Associative Membership at £5.. Regular Membership fees increased to £10.

Thanks to all last years committee members for all their hard work

### The new committee for 1999:

Chairman:	Tom Rea	093 35523
Vice-Chair:	Noel Browne	091 791738
Secretary:	Ann Walsh	091 552050
Membership:	Tom Huban	091 794802
Treasurer:	Paul Maloney	086 8143031
Ordinary Members:		
	Tom Reddington	091 524126
	Phil Clerkin	091 757460
	Miriam Sheerin	087 2384212
	Mel Faherty	086 8216800

### *Where to find things...*

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## Walking in South Africa

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weather closed in. With visibility down to one hundred metres and drizzly rain, we had to be content with some low level walking which was very disappointing.

However, three days later heading for Port Elizabeth the sun and the sun-cream were out. We were trekking through indigenous forests. Our guide was a small wiry Afrikaner named Jan. He led the walk on old foot and wagon trails first hacked through the forest by wood-cutters, gold-miners and ivory hunters of old.

Wild elephants still live and

roam in these forests. Unfortunately we did not get to see them as they are shy creatures.

After a walk starting in the historical and picturesque town of Stellenbosch and trekking over rolling hills, covered in vineyards, too soon we were in Cape Town at the foot of Table Mountain, preparing for our last days walk.

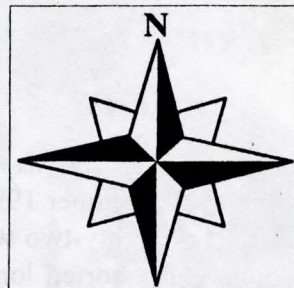
The truly awesome mountain rises some 1300m above sea level, it's cliffs dwarfing Cape Town. The morning was bright and sunny as we traversed inland avoiding steep cliffs to begin climbing on a zigzagging forest trail, shaded by tall trees for which we were grateful. We may have had a damp start to our trek but today we were finally walking under the full brilliance of the African sun.

We climbed ever upwards until faced with a seemingly impassable rock face, we ascended through a narrow crevice and arrived unexpectedly at the summit. The view from the summit of table mountain was incredible. Directly below Cape Town nestled between the mountain and the broad expanse of Table Bay. In the Bay sat Robben Island where Nelson Mandela had been imprisoned for seventeen years.

Our walk that had begun ten days and two hundred miles ago was over. There were hugs, handshakes, kisses and some tears. We felt elation for finishing the walk and sorrow because it was over. Ten days earlier we were mostly strangers, now we were friends.

There was a sense of sadness

on leaving South Africa and many of us hope to return to this vast and beautiful country. And we hope that the money which we raised will in some small way help people with M.S. and their families.



## Weekend Away

Pack your bags! Achill, here we come...

The club's next weekend away is to Achill on the weekend beginning Friday April 23. It is hoped that most people will be able to get there on Friday night because this will allow for an early walk-start on Saturday morning. A welcome dinner has been arranged for us on Saturday night. The self-catering houses are fully booked but enquire at the next meeting for local B&B numbers.

A variety of walks are planned, both rambles and hill-walks, there are also beautiful beaches for strolling on (or swimming if the weather is good) and historical villages to visit. Come along for a fun weekend!



## Advance Warning

The Annual Galway Walking Club Bar-B-Que will be held at Kelehans Bar, Bushy Park. The date for this years event is August Fri 27.

This event is sponsored by the club and so is remarkably good value with wonderful food and beverages of all description in abundance.

Just bring your own charming selves and sunny dispositions.





# The Donegal Week-end

Social Correspondent - Ann Walsh

What part of Donegal should we explore was the question? So, early October I went to do some research. Arriving in Donegal town just before 8 p.m. dictated that's where I should spend the night. After a few refusals I eventually found a B&B. The following day I explored Slieve League, pure magic in perfect weather.

Since I had gone to explore accommodation as well, I stayed in a B&B that night. What to do tomorrow was the question? I chatted with a gentleman in The Abbey Hotel

and as luck would have it he was a member of *The Blue Stack Ramblers* and recommended Lough Belshade. He gave me some vague directions and the following morning I set off to see how far I would get and was delighted to reach Lough Belshade, again in beautiful sunshine.

Before leaving Donegal that evening I researched other accommodation - hostels etc

and bus transport locally. Armed with all my information I presented it to the Members at the next meeting so all we had to do was go and enjoy it - three weeks hence.

We rendezvoused at "Just Williams" restaurant on Friday night, approximately twenty in party and enjoyed their excellent food and a few drinks in the pub afterwards.

(Continued on page 5)

GREAT  
OUTDOORS  
FOR GREAT GEAR



Photo: Tony West

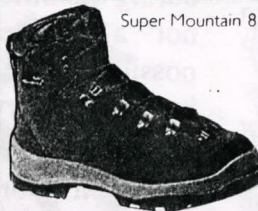
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# Suck Valley Beckons Return ?

Paul Campbell

The Galway Walking Club headed inland and encountered the fourth and final stage of this Suck Valley Waymarked Way yonks ago, but has yet to visit any of the first three stages...the Suck Valley beckons a return ? The menu of the first three stages lists Ballygar to Glinsk, Glinsk to Castlerea, and Castlerea to Donamon. The Suck river flows through the green valley pastures of counties Galway and Roscommon and the total Waymarked Way unites the two counties and their respective quiet, welcoming villages in a sixty two mile circuit. The stage encountered from Donamon (or nearby) to Ballygar is described below as an inducement to return inland to discover the other stages...

A large crowd assembled at the Omniplex for the Suck walk on a sunny day. A pool of cars followed the packed Madge Burke N17 minibus that seemed to magically move in tune with the well known Sawdoctors song. The tune seemed to cease immediately with a sharp right turn onto the narrower N63 Roscommon route. Our target destination of Goldens pub in Castlecoote came into view after having just passed Fuerty where a friendly parish priest was welcoming his congregation for noon mass. We parked-up in Castlecoote and assembled together for a start, with some muscle-warming stretching taking place.

Tom Huban signalled an intention to regroup after every ten stiles that were an integral part of the walk. The walk started out along green pastures, a well-marked route encompassing well-made FAS stiles. The walk had been listed in edition number 20 of the well documented and illustrated magazine, Walking World Ireland. It was described as Stage 4 and fourteen miles in duration. Stage 4 started in Donamon Castle but our group had a short headstart departing from Castlecoote.

As we set out on the walk in a Southerly direction along fresh green pastures on a hazy Sunday afternoon, we started to string out to avoid coagulation at the stiles that were so superbly made. It was a gentle meandering walk and led on to the ruins of Castlestrange. We stopped at the round Iron Age "La Tene" stone, which is a granite boulder surrounded by a tailor made cattle grid.

Onwards we headed through this green and pleasant valley located in the heart of Ireland. The walk took place during Summer so flooding was not a problem which can possibly be the case when there has been heavy and prolonged rain.

Lunch break was at Athleague, near a small waterfall, and the venue was a fabulous picturesque lunch spot. In Athleague, a Heritage Centre is located in an old

church beside the bridge. A ruined mill and a ruined 14th century O' Connor castle can be seen across the river. There was an atmosphere of tranquillity from the calm river and from the relaxing sound of the downstream waterfall.

Near the village of Mount Talbot, the thirty six of us crossed the bridge which divides the two counties of Roscommon and Galway on the N63. The exact border of the two counties can be determined down to the inch as the road surface changes suddenly, being maintained by the respective County Councils.

At Mount Talbot, the ruins of an old castle can be seen and then the group ventured back through woods to Ballygar where we congregated at Nestors bar for the usual social debrief.

The innkeeper in Nestors commented that as far as he was aware, we were the first such large group to trek the final passage which could explain the warm welcome and interest from locals that we met enroute.

Substantial effort was put into the design of the Suck Valley Waymarked Way and the Way invitingly beckons another visit, overdue as it is, from the Galway Walking Club.

ASK TO SEE THE RANGE OF WALK  
RELATED BOOKS AT THE GALWAY  
WALKERS LIBRARY IN TREK & TRAIL





# The Donegal Week-end

(Continued from page 3)

Saturday at 10 am our group increased to twenty five and we departed by bus to the start of our walk up Slieve League. The weather was cloudy but fine as we followed the track which climbed gently. By the time we reached our designated lunch stop the weather had deteriorated, very poor visibility and rain. However, morale remained high and all were keen to proceed towards the summit. Not a hope of getting across "One Man's Pass" though, as only a third of it was visible. But "boys will be boys" and three of the more "mature" had ideas they might chance it but were left in no doubt how the leader felt about that, so God love them they missed their moment of excitement. We retraced our steps back down the mountain where the bus awaited to return us to Donegal town via a stop at a pub and the spectacular cliff road.

A group dinner was organised at the "Abbey Hotel" that evening, additional members had arrived by then bringing our total to twenty nine. A good time was had by all.

Sunday morning at 10 am a bus brought us to the start of the walk to Lough Belshade. In much better weather we commenced our walk on a clearly defined track which skirted a forest at one point and climbed gently to Eas Donnan Waterfall. From here on the track was non-existent and

walkers were warned that their boots would get very dirty. We followed the left bank of the Corabeg River meandering through it's grassy valley and then ascended a very boggy track up the left bank of a stream which drained Lough Belshade. A small stone weir across the outlet of the Lough had raised the surface a little.

This was where we chose to have lunch. The weather after a mighty hail shower had cleared but was very cold so we didn't linger. Views of the Blue Stacks were magnificent, the buttresses of granite on the north shore were once the nesting sites of some of Ireland's last Golden Eagles. Retracing our steps we arrived back at the base where our bus awaited us. A scenic drive around the shores of Lough Eske brought us back to Donegal. The craic was great in the pub that evening with some members "attempting" to sing.

Thanks to all those who participated in the week-end, it made the leaders role well worthwhile.



## Meetings

Meetings are held every second Thursday (the Thursday before the rambles) in **Toner's Bar** 98 Bohermore at 9.00pm sharp.

The next few dates are:

April 15<sup>th</sup>

April 29<sup>th</sup>

May 13<sup>th</sup>

May 27<sup>th</sup>

June 10<sup>th</sup>

## Rambling Gear

People have different requirements but there are certain items everybody should carry with them. Obviously these items will change somewhat depending on the season.

A rucksack is used to carry items for a days outing, all outdoor shops have a great selection. Rain coat and pants are needed both winter and summer for Irish walking.

Comfortable (preferably waterproof) boots are better than runners as they give greater ankle support over rough ground.

Sufficient food and drink (extra water in summer and a flask in winter).

A fleece for extra warmth during stops.

Hat, gloves & scarf in winter, sun hat in summer.

Blister kit, sun block etc.

A bag of dry clothes & shoes to change into after the walk.



# Inaugural National Walking Routes Conference


Anne Walsh


May 5<sup>th</sup>, Ennis Co. Clare


The Galway Walking Club was represented by two members at the Inaugural National Walking Routes Conference in Ennis, Co. Clare.

The official opening was by Sile DeValera, Minister for the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltach. Hosted by East Clare Way Ltd. who initially anticipated fifty people to attend and were overwhelmed by a response of approximately one hundred and sixty.

There were many guest speakers as outlined here, covering several aspects of walking on Way Marked ways.

 Insurance & public liability proved to be one of the more interesting topics. The Beara Way & peninsula is insured against all liability. Landowners of course are now covered by the Occupiers Liability Act 1995. Coillte allow all people to walk in their forests and they are covered by insurance.

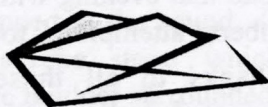
 Rights of Access are not legally Rights of Way which I found to be of interest. On this topic with regard to our Clubs difficulty on the Liscannor to Doolin Walk, it was stated a re-routing of this walk would be in place by the end of the year.

 The setting up of Long Distance Routes was discussed at length and when a Route is complete it will be inspected

but not approved by the Waymarked Ways Committee unless a maintenance plan for ten years can be produced. It appears that the real work begins when the track is open. These ways are inspected on an annual basis and will be excluded from the Waymarked Ways book if they are not up to standard.

The East Clare Way took four years to complete, it is 112 miles long and cost £100,000. They got some assistance but had to raise 25% themselves.

A "long distance walk" is one that is 30 miles or longer and takes two or more days to complete. Wouldn't it be great if The Galway Walkers could create their very own Waymarked Way. I have all the information it entails.



Don't be late, start training now! The Galway Walking Club KIO Marathon is now an International IVV Walking Event and they'll be coming from all over to walk with us.

The route will be the same as last year with some extra check points thrown in.

The walk takes place on Saturday August 21. Funds raised by the marathon are shared by both The Galway Walking Club and Keep Ireland Open.

Volunteers will be needed to help as stewards, organise transport, water and provisions and thousands of other tasks. If you are not walking please give your time, it will be much appreciated.

More information will follow in forthcoming newsletters.

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# Curlews Walking Festival

Miriam Sheerin

The first Curlews Walking Festival began in Boyle on the 20<sup>th</sup> of September 1997 with traditional music as well as story telling from local Seanchai, Barry Feely, in Daly's pub, which was the information centre for the weekend. A large map with details of the four walks was on display on Friday night but it did not seem to frighten too many people as a total 106 turned up at 9.30 on

Saturday morning to register for the first day's walking. The short option (10 km) was chosen by 34 walkers, a decision perhaps influenced by the previous night's partying, all the hardy

Galway Walkers however opted for the longer "Into The Stone Age" walk (16 km).

This walk began near the village of Castlebaldwin where we alighted from the buses and walked along a bothrin which led past working bog to the Carrowkeel Megalithic Passage Graves in the Bricklieve Mountains. Local historian and teacher Frank Tivnan met us at the Passage Graves and gave an interesting talk on the history of the Megalithic site. The hilltop was shrouded in mist so unfortunately we didn't get to see the beautiful view of the surrounding lakes and hills which is visible on a good day, nor could we see all the passage graves which dot the

area. Seamus and I went back up on Monday morning which was beautifully sunny and the scenery really was quite breathtaking. It was also fun to have more time to investigate the many passage graves by torch-light, some of the graves are in very good condition. However, we also discovered that you need to look carefully where you walk as there are some deep holes near the far side of the hill (we couldn't

hear dropped stones touch bottom).

As the walk continued through the Bricklieve Mts. the mist cleared and the sun came out and remained with us for the rest of the day.

All the walkers enjoyed the peace and quiet of undisturbed country walking with beautiful scenery, peaceful that is apart from the slurp of boots as we negotiated a particularly muddy track at one stage that made life a bit difficult for those who had chosen to wear runners. We arrived above the village of Ballinafad for lunch and blister-treatment. Some of the walkers headed off to Ballinafad Castle hoping to hear a lecture on the history surrounding the area but due to a mix-up all they got was an extra miles walking. The route then took us through forest tracks with carpets of deep soft moss to ease the way to the Curlew Mts. From here on a lot of the terrain was heavy bog land, the wetter patches having little wooden bridges to

facilitate crossing. Those who didn't have waterproof boots either quickly learnt the skills of bog-hopping or got very wet and muddy feet, luckily it was still beautifully warm so nobody really minded. Frank Tivnan gave another lecture at the site of the battle of the Curlews (August 1598) which was as good an excuse as any to sit and rest awhile. The last few miles of the walk were along quiet roads with a tea and biscuit stop at a flower bedecked cottage. Unfortunately for me, I didn't know about the tea stop and as my quickly multiplying blisters were getting the better of me I finished the walk at a very slow pace.



Debriefing was in Paddy Dalys pub where Certificates were presented to those who were not walking on Sunday. After a restorative drop of the black stuff Seamus and I went back to where we were staying at the lake to swim, wash and eat and later join everyone else who went to a local bar with an excellent restaurant upstairs. Dinner and music had been arranged allowing the debriefing to continue in style.

On Sunday morning about fifty walkers signed up for the long "Lakes Walk" (24 km) including the Galway Walkers so Seamus & I felt obliged to try the shorter "Cloontykilla Castle

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(Continued from page 7)

Walk" as a reccy - nothing to do with blisters and late nights! Along with nearly sixty other walkers (lots of children) we started near the Castle, which was in good condition with a fine big look-out turret at each corner which I felt compelled to investigate, unfortunately the forest blocked any view of the Lake.

The walk continued through Lough Key Forest Park with blazing sunshine all the way and a lunch stop right beside the lake at the Park's reception building. Debriefing was back in Daly's again where raffles were held and some of the younger walkers received prizes to encourage them to continue their rambles, and everyone received certificates.

The "Lakes Walk" was from Ballyfarnon along part of the Miners Way (which we walked during the Arigna Walking Festival, but that's another story), skirting the shores of Lough Meelagh and Lough Key, via Knockvicar and back to Boyle along the route of the Cloontykilla Castle Walk, arriving back at Daly's for certificates & sandwiches and big pots of tea.



Many of the walks around the Boyle and Arigna areas have been recently developed and are well supplied with non-slip stiles and plenty of way-signs. The area is simply dotted with lakes and there are many interesting features such as ancient sweat-houses and passage-graves to investigate. The friendly atmosphere at the

festival was such that we returned to walk again in 1998 and this article is a combined description of both years.

Walkers came far and wide for the more recent festival having seen the Curlew Walkers website on the Internet. We were delighted to have made contact with this walking club and were also very pleased when some of the Boyle walkers came to lend support on the occasion of our first Marathon. We'll be back...

## Specials

April 24



Maamturks Challenge

April 23 -25



West Cork  
Int. Walking Festival

April 30 - May 3



Ballyhoura  
International Walking  
Festival



Slieve Bloom  
Walking Festival



Glengariff Caha Walk



Miners Way, Arigna



Wicklow Mountains  
Walking Festival

May 22 - 24



Northern Lights  
Festival

May 28-31



Connemara 12 Bens  
Challenge Walking  
Festival

June 6 - 7



Sliabh an Iarainn  
Walking Fest. Arigna

June 19 - 20



Bangor Trail Walk

## Walk Schedule

April 18th

Cong-Clonbur

April 23 -25th

Achill Island

April 25th

Hillwalk

May 2nd

Corkscrew Hill

May 9th

Hillwalk

May 16th

Roundstone

May 23th

Hillwalk

May 30th

Leenane-Maumeen

June 6th

Hillwalk

June 13th

Fanore

June 20th

Hillwalk

June 27th

The Neale

July 4th

Hillwalk

### Meeting Places

*Rambles* - 10.00 sharp

Outside CK Electric

(Omniplex car park)

*Hillwalks* - 9.30 sharp

Mass Path (UCHG)



# The Maamturks Challenge

NUIG Mountaineering Club

The Maamturks Challenge will be run on Saturday April 24. The start point for the walk is the car-park at the base of Corcóg (grid ref. L966 498) where registration will take place from 7 am to 8am or when the walk limit of three hundred is reached. The cost will be £8. All hikers will be expected to be appropriately equipped: maps, compass, strong boots, waterproof jacket & pants, warm clothing and sufficient food.

The maps required are either the Tim Robinson "The Mountains of Connemara" which covers the entire area or the Discovery Series maps No. 37, 38, 44 and 45 (Maps No. 38, 44 and 45 are needed for the first section from Corcóg to Mám Éan and from then on No 37 is used). All walkers must be proficient navigators (with a good level of fitness - this is a tough walk).

The route is from Corcóg to Leenane along the ridge of the Turks, stopping at each checkpoint along the way. **Registration cards must be punched at each checkpoint.** There is a cut off point at Loch Mhám Ochóige, checkpoint 4, the time for which is currently 2pm but is subject to change. If you arrive at the cut off point after the designated time your card will be taken from you and you will be advised to walk down to Finish 1 (located down the road).

The checkpoints are as follows:

<u>Checkpoint</u>	<u>Grid Reference</u>
1. Corcóg summit .....	L 953 492
2. Mám Éan (Patrick's Well).....	L 904 504
3. Binn idir an Dá Log (703m).....	L 888 528
4. Loch Mhám Ochóige (finish 1).....	L 879 536
5. Binn Bhriocáin (699m).....	L 855 551
6. Binn Bhán (Maamturkmore) .....	L 856 568
7. 578m (Leenane Hill).....	L 861 598
8. Finish 2 .....	L 874 617



Failure to obey the stewards directions results in disqualification from the walk. If you finish the hike early you **must** hand in your registration card to a steward immediately (so as to avoid calling out the rescue team). For those of you that do the full walk the finish is located by the hotel (large pink building). There will be some food and drink available at the finish point and a regular bus running from the finish to the start.

Telephone NUIG MC for enquiries: (091) 750497

## Eating for Walking

Little and often is best when eating while walking. Munch on fast release foods such as bananas, raisins, nuts and flapjacks or energy release bars (ex: PowerBar, needs to be eaten with lots of water).

The following recipe provides a lot of calories, perfect for a long strenuous walk.

Try adding mashed banana, raisins or nuts for a change

### FLAPJACKS

Makes approx. 12

Ingredients:

100g/4oz margarine

75g/3oz soft brown sugar

75g/3oz honey or syrup

225g/8oz jumbo/porridge oats

✕ Put the marge, sugar and honey into a saucepan & stir over a low heat until melted.

✕ Add the oats & mix

✕ Lightly oil a non-stick baking tin (8 x 12in) and spread the mixture evenly into it

✕ Bake in the centre of a moderate oven 180 C/240 F gas mark 4 for 20 minutes until golden brown

✕ Cool for five minutes

✕ Cut into 12 pieces and leave in tin 'til cold

✕ Eat, store or freeze



## CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

### Ingredients:

175g/6oz self-raising flour  
¼ tspn salt  
5g/3oz margarine/butter  
25g/1oz soft brown sugar  
vanilla essence  
1 egg  
50g/2oz caster sugar  
100g/4oz chocolate chips or drops

- ✕ sieve the flour and salt
- ✕ cream together butter and sugar, beat in egg and a few drops of vanilla essence
- ✕ add the flour and chocolate chips
- ✕ drop teaspoons of the mixture on a greased baking sheet & flatten
- ✕ bake in a moderate oven (180 C/350F, gas mark 4) for about 10 mins 'til golden brown
- ✕ eat immediately or store in an air tight tin

Add chopped unsalted peanuts, walnuts or almonds for nuttier cookies.

Full of mile loving calories and quick energy sugar (reduce the sugar to taste or use honey)

## Big Hills

Shamelessly plagiarised from MCI Mountain Log No. 50

Last year saw a surprising amount of Irish interest in the big mountains, including first Irish ascents of two of the world's fourteen 8000m mountains.

Pat Falvey and Gavin Bates made the first Irish ascent of a mountain over 8000m without oxygen or Sherpa support. The pair made a successful ascent of Cho Oyu (8201) in Tibet, sixth highest mountain in the world. Pat has already climbed Everest so this is his second 8000m climb. Both lads were a month acclimatising at Advance Base Camp (5600m) and stocking up Camp 1 (6400m) and Camp 2 (7200m). That entailed trekking from 4300m to AB Camp with yaks. Gavin Bates had an encounter with one of the beasts that nearly put a stop to his climb when he was held to the ground by pair of horns but the animal wandered off and let him go, leaving him with a badly twisted knee.

Apart from the help of one Sherpa to carry a "Himalayan Hotel" (big tent I guess) to Camp 1, they carried all their own gear to the camps.

To cut a long (but very exciting) story short, the pair summited at 1.30pm on May 22 achieving a record in being the first all-Ireland team to climb an 8000m peak without assisted oxygen. Mountain Log No 48 (Winter 98) has the full story - well worth a read.

Unfortunately there were two deaths on the mountain while the lads were there, a young

East German climber fell and in a separate incident a young Russian also died. The Russian was part of team who were attempting to hang glide from the summit. His partner did actually hang glide off and landed right at Base Camp.

Eddie Cooper climbed Broad Peak (8028m), the twelfth highest mountain in the world. The climb was done in July without oxygen or porter support (what? No Guinness?), and with two possible cracked ribs! Apparently only five successful ascents were made on the mountain in the year.

Cho Oyu was also climbed on September 26 by Damian Ryan (currently a policeman in Hog Kong), who joined a commercial expedition and made an ascent by the normal route.

Josie Kiernan endeavoured to be the first Irish lady to climb Mt. Everest and she did very well getting to the South Summit. Another team are currently planning an ascent of Everest, including a Galway woman and her husband who hope to be the first married couple to make the climb. More on that attempt later.

February 16 saw Mary Nash summit Aconcagua in Argentina. Standing at 6956m this is the highest mountain in South America.

Peter Owens and James O'Reilly made the first Irish winter ascent of the North Face of the Matterhorn in March. Apparently this was their first winter trip to the Alps so they did pretty well.