

# GALWAY WALKERS

## Newsletter

"Walking is very beneficial.  
It's good for your legs and  
your feet.  
It's also very good for the  
ground. It makes it feel  
needed"

- Snoopy



### CHRISTMAS PARTY

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4TH, 1998

This years Christmas party is being held in the Menlo Park Hotel, Terryland. Tickets are £15 and are available from the Committee, at meetings or from Trek and Trail.

This includes a five course meal, bar extention and disco and the price is being subsidised by the club to the tune of £5. Partners, friends, even walkers who haven't walked all year - all are welcome. (More details inside)

This will be the last newsletter of the year - how sad! I'll tell you one thing - it hasn't been easy throwing it together at the last minute! I'm off on holidays for the month of November so I'm leaving the planning of the Christmas Party to someone else this year! [If anyone fancies hiring a Christmas Tree outfit for the night the number is 582088]

There's been plenty going on over the past few months: the Marathon, the Bar-B-Que, the Week-end Away in Donegal as well as all the usual walks. The Meetings are well attended at the moment and Tonery's is working out well. Don't forget the "surprise" wine do some time before Christmas.

A big thank you to Mel for printing the newsletter as usual. And thanks to Anne Walsh for doing the recky for Donegal.

See you at the Christmas Party!!

**A.G.M. 8.00pm**  
**January 21st, 1999**  
**Jameson's Hotel,**  
**Salthill**

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## Meetings

Meetings are held every two weeks at 9.00pm on Thursday night before the Rambles. Meetings are held upstairs in

### Tonerys Bar in Bohermore

Dates for the meetings are:

November 12th & 26th  
 December 10th  
 December 24th - no meeting  
 January 7th

**January 21st - AGM**  
**Jamesons Hotel, Salthill**

**Any changes to the proposed walks will be announced at the meetings and previous walks are reviewed and discussed. We usually hang around afterwards for our mandatory de-briefing session. If you're not a regular why not pop in some evening and check out what goes on!**

## Contact Numbers

Contact Numbers for the committee are as follows:

Tom Rea	093 35523
Noel Browne	791738
Lyn O Sullivan	521504
Una O Connell	522232
Tom Huban	794802
Óg Cunningham	562719
Peter Martin	520539
Anne O Connor	529447
Tom Reddington	524126

You can contact any of the Committee members for details of walks etc.

## KIO Contacts

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## MEETING PLACE

The meeting venue for the rambles and short walks is the Omniplex Car Park in front of CK Computer Store.

## SHORT WALKS

Short walks are normally scheduled on alternate Sundays, on the day when there's no ramble and to co-inside with the hill walks. the arrangement is fairly informal with the group that meet deciding what route to take.

Anyone who knows of any short walks (approximately 6 miles long) which is within a half an hour's drive of Galway please let someone on the Committee know or else just turn up some Sunday.

## HILL WALKS

Meeting venue for Hill Walks is the University College Hospital side entrance Car Park at Newcastle Park ("The Mass Path") @ 9.30 am. The U.C.H.G. Social Club organises a bus and the cost for this is £5 which is collected on the way back. Walkers should be reasonably fit and wear boots and bring wet weather gear. Also, a change of clothes which is left on the bus is useful.

Walks are decided by the leaders on the day and are usually in Connemara, Mayo or the Burren. The bus stops in Oughterard on the way back for refreshments for half an hour to an hour.

## WALK LEADERS

Volunteers who are willing to lead walks would be most welcome as the commitment of the existing walk leaders is considerable.

If you feel you know a good walk well and feel confident to act as Walk Leader please offer your services. This applies to any type of walk or ramble, new or old.



# LIST OF WALKS

Date	Location	Meeting at	Transport
November 1	Gleninagh, Burren - Moderate	Omniplex @ 10.00	Own
November 8	Hill Walk - Difficult	U.C.H.G.	Bus
	Short Walk - Easy	Omniplex @ 14.00	Own
November 15	Caoran na gCaorach - Moderate	U.C.H.G. @ 9.30	Own
November 22	Hill Walk - Difficult	U.C.H.G.	Bus
	Short Walk - Easy	Omniplex @ 14.00	Own
November 29	Seannaphestin(Short version) - Moderate	Omniplex @ 10.00	Own
December 4	CHRISTMAS PARTY *Tickets from Committee*	Menlo Park Hotel @ 8.00pm	Own!
December 6	Hill Walk - Difficult	U.C.H.G.	Bus
	Short Walk - Easy	Omniplex @ 14.00	Own
December 13	Deserted Village, The Burren - Moderate	Omniplex @ 10.00	Own
December 20	Maimean - Christmas Walk	To be decided	Bus
December 26	Croi Walk - Annaghdown - Walk off the turkey	Details at meeting.	Own
January 10	Ballynahinch - Moderate	Omniplex @ 10.00	Own
January 17	Hill Walk - Difficult	U.C.H.G.	Bus
	Short Walk - Easy	Omniplex @ 14.00	Own
January 21	GALWAY WALKERS A.G.M.	Jameson's Hotel, Salthill @ 8 pm	Own
January 24	The Neale - Moderate	Omniplex @ 10.00	Own
January 31	Hill Walk - Difficult	U.C.H.G.	Bus
	Short Walk - Easy	Omniplex @ 14.00	Own

These Walks are only proposed and may change at short notice.

Where possible last minute changes will be announced at the Club Meetings held on the Thursday Night prior to the rambles listed.



## GIANT'S CAUSEWAY

The chances are you've seen pictures of the North's number one tourist attraction long before you ever get to see it. A bishop of Derry, who became interested in geology after seeing Vesuvius erupt, commissioned the paintings of the site that led to its fame. Today, school geography books still regard its inclusion as mandatory. The hexagonal basalt columns are impressive, and do look as if a giant might have playfully tipped out all 37,000 of them, if you count the ones under the water. According to legend the giant in question, Finn Mc Cool, fancied some stepping stones to the Scottish island of Staffa where, indeed, similar rock formations are to be found.

The modern story is that red-hot lava erupted from an underground fissure and crystallised some 60 million years ago into the shapes that we see today. The phenomenon is clearly explained in the visitors' centre, alongside the surprising fact that the Causeway only came to general notice as late as 1740. Different areas of the rock formations have their own names, most of them invented by the many Victorian guides who made a summer living by escorting the tourists who arrived on the electric tram from Coleraine.



Past the main spill of columns, the pathway brings into view a formation that does deserve its own name. Chimney Tops was identified by ships of the Spanish Armada in 1588 as part of Dunluce Castle, and consequently fired upon.

Two well-established footpaths at different levels start from just outside the visitor's centre, but a landslip means that it is not possible to join them up as a circular walk for the time being.



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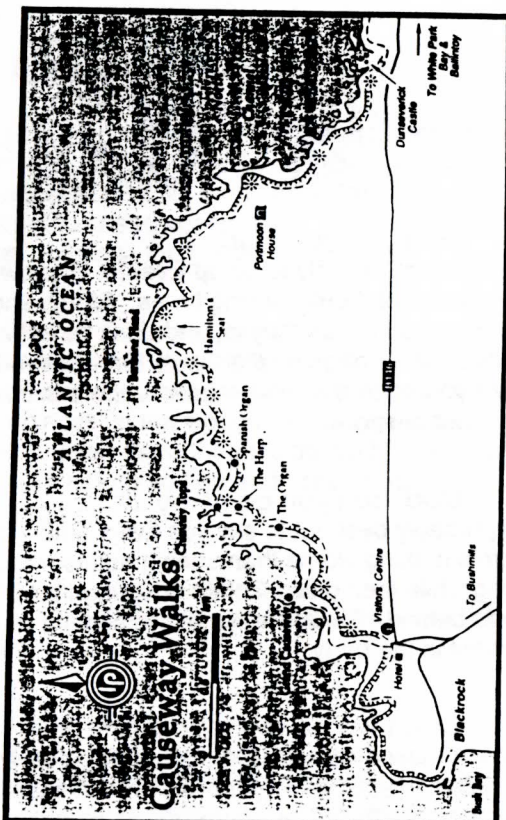


From the cliff top at Hamilton's Seat, there is one of the best views of the Causeway and headlands to the west, including Malin Head and Inishowen. If you want to go farther, the path continues around Benbane Head, and the sandy beach of White Park Bay comes into view. On the right is Portmoon House. The headlands become lower and lower until the path reaches the main road near Dunseverick Castle. The walk from the visitors' centre to the castle and back is around 15 km.

From below the remains of the castle a path winds up and round to the east, ending at Ballintoy. It crosses a number of small wooden bridges before reaching the beach of White Park. There is YHANI hostel here, so the whole 16-km journey from the Giant's Causeway could be done in one day.

The walks follow the North Antrim Cliff Path, which actually begins west of the visitors' centre at Blackrock, a short walk of about 2.5km. A useful 45p map from the visitors' centre details the walks, including the various rock formations that can be seen along the way.

The club spend a week-end in this area a few years ago, but Peter Martyn was up there more recently and I managed to persuade him to write down how he got on!



## Giants Causeway To Dunseverick

by Peter Martin

On Sunday, 30th August, I experienced a most fabulous walk at the Giants Causeway. AS you may know the Causeway is Northern Ireland's principle tourist attraction and as such it has a number of walking routes devised for the tourist. These are short historical walks of about 30 minutes which bring you to the basalt columns of which we are all familiar.

Being a regular walker and not wanting to lower the tone of the Galway Walking Club we decided to follow the walking route to Dunseverick Castle. This is for experienced walkers and is about 5 miles along the upper cliff face.

The only word to describe it is breathtaking. The route is along the cliff path and rises to about 600 feet above sea level at various points. the views are stunning as the path winds dramatically along the coast and is ideal for photo opportunities. As you head in an easterly direction on the way out you get good views of the Antrim Coast and Rathlin Island. On a particularly good day you can see the Scottish Isle of Islay.

The geology of the area is obviously the main interest to the visitor, but even the amateur will enjoy and appreciate the excellent basaltic columns cut out of the cliffs and remains of old kelp pits and drying walls may also be seen. As you stop to take photographs and enjoy the views you are surrounded by the sounds of birds flying around the cliff face and water lapping relentlessly against the sea wall.

As you would expect from an historical location the maps available at the tourist centre are very good with plenty of interesting information. I would highly recommend this walk to anyone who is in the area and one point worth noting, the Antrim Hill Walkers have a special annual walk there on the 1st Sunday of May and according to member whom we met we would be more than welcome.

Worth thinking about I suggest.



## "Are we there yet, Dad?"

If you've tried going walking with your children, you're probably used to playing Twenty Questions. Here's a few suggestions of how to answer them to encourage the little folks along. Passing on the walking bug gives children a love and respect for the countryside and it also means you may not have to stash your boots in the attic for the next 15 years!

### 1 Dad, I'm tired. Are we nearly there yet...?

It's vital to tailor walks to your child's abilities. A mile too far can spoil the whole experience. Circular routes will mean there's always something new to see. Plan in a short cut, and if the weather closes in or fatigue strikes, take it. Scan the map beforehand to avoid roads or long, featureless stretches. From where a child sees the world, it's even more dispiriting to see a path drifting off into infinity. Don't assume kids want flat, easy going; they get much more excited about scrambling over boulders or about scrambling over boulders or jumping a brook. Try a two-mile walk up to a waterfall to introduce them to some uphill stuff.

### 2 Mum, I'm hot...

We can learn a lot from our kids when it comes to the layer system. They'll take off a jumper when they're too hot... only to stop and demand it back again a hundred yards later! Put them in several light layers, so temperature control is flexible.



If they're going to be high up - that's on hills or on shoulders - make sure jackets are windproof as well as waterproof. In hot weather a hat is a must, as are a good sun cream and lotion for bites and stings. And take a basic change of clothes in the car. If somebody gets wet, it will prevent a miserable journey home.

### 3 I'm hungry again, Dad...

Children's energy reserves become depleted much quicker than ours, so keep topping them up with muesli bars, fruit and chocolate. Handy as an incentive to keep going too.

Kids love picnics. Let them help to choose and prepare the food, and don't spoil it by eating in the car park - pick a green, sunny spot en route. If you expect ducks, take bread - not mould stuff; it's bad for them.

### 4 Dad, can I carry that...!

Invest in a bumbag or small rucksack of their own. They'll have fun deciding what to pack, and it all helps them feel like 'a real walker'. Don't baulk if they want a Spice Girls bag instead of a Lowe Alpine one. Compromise is all. Restrict the jigsaws, dollies and Lego though, 'cos muggins will probably end up carrying it all later!

### 5 Mum, it's raining. Can we go home...?

The feeling of wind and rain in their faces won't bother children who are used to it from an early age. When they're tiny, dress up in your walking gear and take them out for a half-mile hike, even if it's round the block. The neighbours will think you're barmy, but for the kids it'll be their first big expedition.



### 6 Mum, my feet hurt...?

Since you're unlikely to be up Everest in snow, they don't need £99 walking boots. Sturdy shoes are okay so long as they fit, and don't be ashamed to stick their wellies on if it's wet. Do what you did when *you* started walking - take runners in case their feet get sore.

### 7 Dad, can you carry me...?

It's probably best not to say yes every time. But there's nothing worse than seeing adults marching along while their disconsolate offspring trail 20 yards behind. Always move at the pace of the slowest in the party.

### 8 Can't we go to the zoo instead?

No, but maybe as *well*. Do try to include an added attraction to your walk. It needn't be an expensive theme park - they'll love hide and seek in some castle ruins or making a den in the woods.



**9** Dad, I'm bored...

Not everyone is prepared to humiliate themselves by singing 'I love to go a-wandering' in public. Carry a small bag for collecting bits and pieces at the pathside.

You can even draw up a list and award points for the best treasures - 1 pt for a pine cone, 2 pts for an acorn, 3 pts for a snail shell, 4 pts for a dinosaur egg, etc...

Encourage older children to use a camera or binoculars, too.

**10** Why can't we go this way, Mum...?

Even little ones are fascinated by maps. Sit them down beforehand and point out rivers, roads and paths. On the walk, let them find their location and fiddle with the compass.

Cultivate the illusion they're taking part in directing the route.



**11** Dad, can I go and see what's up there...?

Young children are used to walking to heel along busy roads. The countryside has dangers too, but its greatest appeal for them is the freedom. So they want to chase ahead a bit; flip stones in the stream; splash in the puddles? Let them.

**12** I want a story, Dad...

Kids have keen imaginations, so pander to them. If they like spooks and witches, talk about the 'secret places' in the woods. They'll love the local folk tales even more than we do, so brush up on the history before you go and dress it up accordingly.

**13** Can I carry a stick too?

For reasons unknown to science, kids love sticks. Say yes.

**14** Dad, What's a "view"?

There's a fundamental problem here - youngsters are interested in different things than we are. They prefer the tangible stuff at their feet to far-off hills.

Be prepared to carry home a hundredweight of featureless stones. A close interest in seven types of animal droppings is not to be encouraged, however.



**15** Can I watch telly with Johnny next door instead...?

No, but Johnny can come out with us if he likes. Nothing spices up an adventure like a pal to share it with. And who knows, you might get a day off to climb Mweelrea when Johnny's folks offer to reciprocate.

**16** Mum, it's just a flower...

It's no good getting earnest about flora and fauna. Instead, nurture interest by hunting out books at the children's library which show characters exploring in the outdoors. Children love to emulate what they've seen in their picture books. And let the wee one stay up half an hour later to watch Eamonn de Butlair with you, and talk about the creatures featured.

**17** WHAT rabbit? I can't see it mum...

Quietly let *them* be first to notice the interesting stuff you have them primed them to look out for. On waymarked trails send them out as scout to find the next post.

**18** Dad, can I help...?

Younger ones will love helping plan your first camping holiday in the hills. Put the tent up on the lawn to practice, and let them play with the billy-cans.

**19** Oh, I HATE walking...!

Most of all, get the atmosphere right and be keen yourself. Instead of "We're going for a walk today", try: "We're going exploring!" If they seem to be enjoying it, tell them they're a real walker now and buy them a whistle or a torch.

**20** If all else fails, you could always play I-Spy.



## Week-end Away in Donegal Town

Full report on the shennanigans that went on over the week-end was not available at time of going to press - but I'm sure the details will unfold over the coming weeks.

Many thanks to Anne Walsh who organised the recky and generally oversaw events at the weekend.

The walk on Saturday was on Slieve League and the Sunday walk was in the Blue Stack mountains.

## AGM

The AGM is due to take place on the 21st of January next so please mark it in your diaries. The election of the Committee members happens at the meeting.

If you are interested in becoming more involved in the Club next year please let us know in advance so your name can go forward. The only condition is that you have been a member of the club for at least one year.

Committee members are involved in (among other things) organising the walk schedules, leading the walks, booking buses, planning and organising week-ends away and the Annual Marathon, doing the newsletter and keeping the social side of things going.

So if you have some spare time and plenty of energy and enthusiasm you could be just what the club needs!

## ADVENTURE IN PERU

In the last newsletter Bairbre Ann Mulry gave a taste of her travels in Peru earlier this year.

You'll be delighted to hear that the full account is now available in paperback for a donation of £1. All funds raised are going to missionary work in Peru. Copies can be got from Bairbre directly or at any of the Walking Club Meetings.

## CHRISTMAS PARTY

This year's Party will be on the Friday the 4th of December in the Menlo Park Hotel at the roundabout on the Headford Road (It's the new yellow one). The deal is that we'll have a private function room with a bar.

There's a five course meal with a menu as follows:

Vol au vent of Chicken Mushroom and  
Tarragon  
or  
Egg and Seafood Hors d'oeuvres

Homemade Cream of Mushroom Soup

Roast Stuffed Turkey and Ham with Cranberry  
Jus and Chipolata Sausage  
or

Poached Corrib Salmon with Lemon and Leek  
Sauce

Selection of Veg and Potatoes

Menlo Park Dessert Place

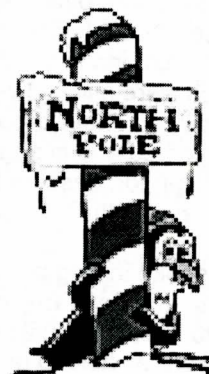
Tea or Freshly Brewed Coffee  
Mince Pies

The hotel are charged £20 per head and the club is subsidising the cost by £5 each. So tickets will be on sale for £15. Available from the usual outlets.

This also includes a disco (so Anna can strut her stuff), bar extension (always welcome), party hats, crackers and novelties.

As usual if everyone can bring a spot prize - it will add a bit of fun to the whole proceedings.

### PHOTOGRAPHS



All Members are invited to submit any photoes of walks which will be displayed on the night of our Party. Please sign names on the back of photoes to be returned.



## TRAVELLERS TALES

*If you've had exciting/adventurous holiday why not share it with us, even just a photo a few notes. We're all very nosey really!*

### SAMARIA GORGE, Crete

by Berna Reddington

The highlight of a week's holiday in Crete last May as undoubtedly the day we spent walking through the Samaria Gorge. This is one of the most beautiful gorges in the world and traversing it is one of the most famous long-distance walks in Europe. It is 18 Kilometres in length, not terribly long. What makes it so spectacular is the great height of the surrounding mountains, the depth of the gorge itself, 600 metres on average and its extreme narrowness. At its narrowest point it is only 3 metres in width. One begins the walk high in the mountains, and on completion, one has descended from a height of 1225 metres to sea level.

Because of the geography of the walk, the trip can be made by tour bus only, which suited us fine. We bought our all-in tickets for the Thursday and prepared for an early start, as the Gorge is in the eastern part of Crete and we were staying towards the west. We packed enough sandwiches for a long day but only a half litre of water as there would be water taps along the way.

On the morning we were up at 5 am and waiting at the nearby cross-roads in the chilly dawn for our bus to pick us up at 5.45 am. Sometime before 8 am we had a motorway stop for hot coffee and freshly fried doughnuts. Soon afterwards, the bus left the coast-line and began to climb into the mountains. Already the scenery was spectacular.

The roads were lined with pink flowering oleander bushes, we passed through olive and orange groves laden with fruit and in the distance some great peaks which were still snow-capped. After many hairpin bends and sheer drops, we reached a small plateau. We had a final pit-stop and were ready at last to begin the descent from a height greater than Carrauntuathail down to the sea.

Our guide (who spoke in English to a mixed crowd of Dutch, German, Irish and English) very sensibly did not attempt to keep her busload together on the trek, so we were all able to go at our own pace. She gave us plenty of good advice and said

she would meet us in a café in the seaside village where the walk ended. She would then give us our tickets for the ferry. So, at about 10 am, among a few hundred more walkers, we set out in glorious weather.

The White Mountains towered steeply above us and we descended sharply at first through scented forests of cypress and pine. You cannot get lost as there is a rough but well-defined path all the way and anyway there is no escape route out of the Gorge until you reach the end. For emergency rescues from within there are two mules and a helipad!

The Gorge is a National Park, patrolled by park rangers and is extremely well-run. There are regular rest places with seats and taps where one can refill water bottles. Surprisingly the big "through-put" of walkers impinges in the least way possible on the landscape; there are very strict rules about no radios, no noise, no singing, no litter, etc. This is really the magic of the place; it is a peaceful paradise of tall leafy trees, sparkling streams, birdsong and fragrant herbal scents.

At the half-way point, where we ate lunch, the gorge widened a little and we were sitting among the very old houses of a little village whose people had been moved out when it became a National Park. It was a chance to cool down, compare notes with fellow-travellers - and join the inevitable queue for the ladies' toilet!

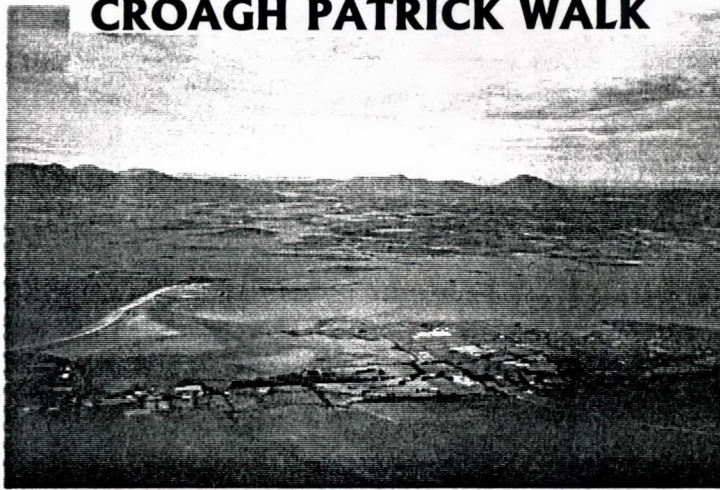
After this, the day got hotter, the path drifted into scree-like rock and we crossed and recrossed the river many times. Towards the end we came to the narrow Sideropores where there is barely room for a little board walk beside and sometimes over the water. Soon after there are glimpses of the brilliant blue sea. We left the Gorge behind and arrived into the village of Aghia Roumeli, which is bustling with busy tourist cafés at about 4 p.m.

Our first thought is a long draught of ice-cold beer - heavenly! Then everybody moves like lemmings to the sea-shore for the most refreshing swim ever in crystal clear water. Then there is plenty of time to relax and enjoy a simple meal as there is nowhere to go yet! The rocky mountains on both sides are impassable, so there is no road out. We must wait for the evening ferry which will bring us to another port where the bus will be waiting to bring us home. This sea-trip, as the evening sun was setting into the Libyan Sea, was another memorable part of the day.

So all in all, it was not quite as strenuous a walk as the tourist guides make out, but altogether a most enjoyable day.



## CROAGH PATRICK WALK



## FLORA OF THE BURREN

by Mike Fogarty

The Burren, when it is flowering, has become famous as one of the finest botanical phenomena in Europe, not least for the enigmatic contrasts which this giant rock garden provides. Here, in an area covering less than one per cent of the surface area of Ireland, can be found examples of over six hundred different flowering plants and ferns, more than three-quarters of the country's entire native flora. Many of the Burren's plants are found nowhere else in Ireland, some do not grow in Britain, and there are plants that ought to be growing on the Burren but are not, but can be found in similar conditions nearby. High mountain flowers grow at sea level, Arctic and Alpine plants grow side by side with species from the Mediterranean region. Plants that require acid conditions grow within a few inches of lime loving plants, acid and lime being diametrically opposite soil types.

Nowhere else in Ireland, Britain or even north-west Europe can such quantities of the blue Spring Gentian, creamy Mountain Avens or yellow Shrubby Cinquefoil be encountered.

### Arctic-Alpines

One of the most arresting sights occurs in late May when millions of Mountain Avens flower all over the Burren hills and along the shores. Mountain Avens is an arctic-alpine which means that it grows on the tundras of the Arctic. The plant has adapted to a strenuous regime of long cold winters and short summers. It is not a "flower" but a dwarf shrub, and like many northern plants, it is evergreen. The Spring Gentian is most often associated with the high alpine meadows of Switzerland, although its range does just extend over the arctic circle in the former European Russia. It is not an arctic flower, and does not occur in Scandinavia. One of the enigmas of the Burren is that like the Mountain Avens it too grows at sea level, but whereas Gentians are to be found on the Aran Islands - ten miles off the Clare shore - Mountain Avens is not.