



GALWAY WALKERS NEWSLETTER



SPRING 1996

ISSUE 3

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Galway Walking Club, held on the 25th of January in the Galway Arms, was very well attended with a total of 57 members present. The meeting followed standard protocol, commencing with the Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer's reports, followed by the Election of Club Officers and Committee Members and an Any Other Business discussion.

The Election of the Club officers was as follows: Chairman - Ollie Sammon, Vice Chairman - Noel Browne, Secretary Anne Walsh, Treasurer - Steve Wright, P.R.O. - Ellie Keating, Membership Officer - Tom Huban, and Committee Members - Muire McLoughlin, Mel Faherty and Ann O'Connor. The Committee has increased in size this year, making the delegation of tasks somewhat easier. Ellie has since resigned and her position has been filled by Kay Smyth.





Any Other Business resulted in a lively discussion with many new ideas being proposed from the general membership. It was good to hear the views of the members for a change - normally they are so quiet during the year! If you have any ideas or grievances please feel free to air them at the meetings as it is better to get them out in the open rather than bottle them up for a whole year.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

The annual Subscription remains at £5.00 and became due following the Annual General Meeting. Subscriptions may be sent to:

**Tom Huban,
Derrydonnell,
Oranmore,
Co. Galway.**

Paid up members will, by now or with this newsletter, have received their 1996 membership card which looks like the sample shown below. Remember, if you are not paid up this will be the last newsletter posted out to you.

	Galway Walking Club	
Name		
Address		
.....		
.....		
 		
Valid for year 1996		

If you have not received this card it may have been an oversight on our part or we have not yet received your details and subscription. If this is the case please send a postcard to **Tom Huban** with your **NAME** and **ADDRESS** and mention the **DATE** on which you paid your subscription and to **WHOM** you gave it. We will rectify the matter by return post. Subscriptions received prior to the AGM may not be on our current listings making it difficult to keep track of the newer members.

GALWAY WALKER'S TRIP TO GUADALUPE

At a recent committee meeting of the Galway Walkers, it was decided that we would organise a Club trip to Guadalupe, a small town situated 200 km west of Madrid. The proposed trip would be of 8-10 days during which we would participate in walks and visits to areas of Guadalupe, Trugillo, Caceres, and Merida. The obvious time to travel would be at the end of the low season around the first weeks of May. The costs will be held as low as possible and all quotes regarding this trip will be available for examination by members.

Guadalupe is surrounded by beautiful scenery and contains a very historic Franciscan Monastery in which there are many wonderful art treasures.

Trugillo was the birthplace of many of the conquistadors of South America and therefore has many historic connections. From the walking point of view, there is a natural reservoir in Monfrague Park which is very scenic and also a sanctuary for eagles and other wild fowl.

Merida was one of the provincial capital cities in Roman times and has many Roman ruins, an amphitheatre and also houses a Roman Museum containing jewellery, sculptures and artefacts belonging to the Roman nobility who populated the area.

We will be staying on a Full Board basis, breakfast, packed lunch and full evening meal. The price of the Full board will be £21 per head sharing. At present we are attempting to find a reasonable air fare from Ireland to Madrid Airport.

Further information may be obtained from Steve Wright, Anne Walsh, Noel Browne or Tom Huban.

CLUB ACTIVITIES

PROPOSED SCHEDULE OF WALKS UNTIL JULY

DATE	LOCATION	MEETING TIME / PLACE
7th April	Dooras	10 am @ Omniplex
21st April	Mauméan	10 am @ Omniplex
5th May	Burren (B'lacken-B'Vaughan)	10 am @ Omniplex
12th May	Hill of Doon	10 am @ Omniplex
26th May	Lough Greaney	10 am @ Omniplex
9th June	Weekend Away T.B.A.	10 am @ Omniplex
23rd June	Liscannor - Doolin	10 am @ Omniplex
7th July	Cong	11 am @ Omniplex

The above walks are subject to change but the meeting times at the Omniplex will not vary
The next update of the Walks List will coincide with the July issue of the Newsletter.

>>>> CHANGE OF MEETING TIME <<<<

All Club meetings will be held at 8:30 pm on the Thursday **PRIOR** to the date of the walks shown in order to discuss the itinerary for the day and transport.

GUADALUPE HOLIDAY

As you see from the front page, we are delighted to offer our members an opportunity to travel to Guadalupe with reasonable accommodation rates. Arthur, our Spanish member, owns two Hostels in Guadalupe and has made us a very reasonable offer of £21.00 per person sharing per night for full board. This figure includes Breakfast, a good packed lunch plus drink, and a substantial evening meal. The Spanish palate is not unlike our own and I was told not to worry about the food. There are one or two local delicacies which may be a little strange but, as they say, "when in Rome do like the Romans"! No harm in trying anything once. We are told that the weather will not be too hot at this time of the year and that the countryside is at its best. The summer months tend to take their toll on the countryside resulting in a rather burnt appearance.

There are numerous walks around the area of Guadalupe and also in the areas of Trugillo, Caceres and Merida which are neighbouring townlands. These areas are also an abundant source of historical interest with many places to visit. Trugillo has a Sanctuary for wild fowl which is also a beautiful area for walks. The Portuguese border is not much more than 200 km from Guadalupe. Regular public bus services, at an affordable price, are available and if it were necessary, we would be able to organise our own bus for some of the more obscure places.

Arthur's family own a VINEYARD and we have been able to organise a visit to this location which will also include the sampling of their produce. Arthur recommends the local brew as it retails at only £2.50 a bottle as opposed to the pint of

beer which retails at £2.00 a pint. Near the vineyard there is an Olive Grove where their own olive oil is produced.

The duration of the holiday could be either eight or ten days and we would look to those interested in the holiday for their opinion. The only other major expense will be the flight from Ireland to Madrid which may be in the order of £250.00 mid-week. These are early days yet but we are seeking further quotes. If there are any "freebies" offered we will divide the effective cost of these amongst those who are participating in order to reduce costs. As the bulk of the bus journeys will be on public transport the fares are not included. It may be necessary to hire a bus for some of the trips off the main routes, in which case we will divide the cost among the travellers - it should not be a major expense.

We will open a savings club for those wishing to save on a regular basis. More information as it becomes available.

Please contact our Secretary, Anne Walsh, or Steve Wright, Treasurer, in her absence, if you wish to participate in this holiday.

Items For inclusion in the Newsletter

Items for inclusion in the Newsletter should be sent to:

Steve Wright
18, Sylvan Avenue,
Fairlands,
Newcastle,
Galway.

Phone 091-528215 or Fax 091-524216.

The views expressed in this Newsletter do not necessarily represent the views of the Galway Walking Club or those of the Editor.

ANNUAL DINNER

25th November 1995

Forty members, in sartorial elegance, assembled at the Corrib Hotel, Oughterard, for the Galway Walking Club's first Annual Dinner. Mike and Deirdre Webb, playing the perfect hosts for this event, supplied a welcome glass of punch as a pre-dinner drink.

At approximately 9 pm, dinner began with tasty home-made soup followed by Turkey and Ham with a variety of fresh vegetables. Dessert came in the form of a delicious apple pie served with cream followed by tea and coffee that rounded off the meal nicely. My only complaint was the enormity of the main course; sadly I had to leave some. The quality of the food was excellent. One was left wondering what Ollie, Mel, Paul and Jim were doing or saying to Mary and Carmelita during the meal as their peals of laughter drowned out all other conversations.

Presentations of club awards followed the main meal. Owen and Tiernan Brown for junior walkers of the year. Mel Faherty for all his effort on behalf of the Club. Steve Wright for being Editor of the Newsletter and last but no means least Muire for Walker of the Year. The "funny" awards followed with Jim Nestor being awarded a sizeable piece of cheese for being a mouse. Ellie - for all the hassles over the bus - received a bus money box. Tom Huban received a brick to slow him down a bit and also a bottle of wine to quench his thirst. Mel Faherty received an award for being legless - an enlarged photograph of the occasion. Dad received an award for showing signs of ageing - an enlarged photograph of himself fast asleep in a chair. Ann Walshe received a bottle of Whiskey because her birthday fell on the day of the Annual Dinner. All awards were received very well and in the spirit for which they were intended.

Carmel Dempsey, our entertainer, arrived a little after 10 pm - the music and dance began. Spot prizes were handed out throughout the night. Carmelita walked away with the prize for the sexiest dancer - poor Noel's back! The most imaginative dancing prize went to Paul and Mary. Matt and Ellie scooped a prize for their most wonderful impression of Jean Butler and Michael Flatley. Matt's hairy chest drove the women wild after he swapped shirts with Ellie to bring more realism to his attire.

Music ceased at 1:00 am and members who had not booked to stay for the night left for home. Those remaining staged a sit-in with Dad trying to outdo the females present. I returned at 3:30 am and I'm told that Dad managed to keep his eyes open until approximately 5:00 am.

The Dinner and entertainment was a huge success and those who did not attend missed a lot of fun. Sincere thanks to Mike and Deirdre Webb for a splendid evening and for all their support. Special thanks to Tom Reddington for so many spot prizes and also to all other members who were kind enough to contribute. A raffle was held and the proceeds of

£50.40 were collected for the club.

The results of the Photographic Competition judged in the Galway Camera Shop were as follows.

- 1st Prize Ellie Keating.
- 2nd Prize Muire McLoughlin
- 3rd Prize Tom Rea

WALKER'S QUIZ

- 1) Approximately how many people have climbed Mt. Everest?
- 2) Where is Muckcross House?
- 3) What year did the Galway Arts Festival begin?
- 4) Who is the new singer in the Woman's Heart concerts?
- 5) Where was Seamus Heaney born?
- 6) What is the capital of Brazil?
- 7) Who wrote "Dancing at Lubhnasa"?
- 8) What lake runs through Chicago?
- 9) What is the world's longest running play?
- 10) What year did the statue move in Ballinspittle?
- 11) What year did the Lusitania sink off the Old Head of Kinsale?
- 12) What is the most numerous surname in Ireland?
- 13) What year did the Irish Late Late Show start?
- 14) Who was the only person to win both the Nobel and Lenin Peace Prizes?
- 15) What name did the Romans give Ireland?
- 16) Who refused an Oscar in protest with the American Indians?
- 17) Who celebrated their 21st birthday at last year's Arts Festival?
- 18) Which French city is Galway twinned with?
- 19) What year did Pope John Paul II visit Galway?
- 20) What is a female Fox called?

Answers to:

Ollie Sammon,
6, Lenaboy Gardens,
Salthill.

The first two lucky winners drawn will receive a prize each.

THE BOOK BORROWER

Written by Robert Service.

I am a wild man, you'll agree
But red my rage is,
When folks who borrow books from me
Turn down their pages
Or when a chap a book I lend,
And I find he's loaned it to a friend
As if he owned it,
But worst of all I hate those crooks
(may hell-fire burn them)
Who beg the loan of cherished books
And don't return them.
My books are tendrils of myself
No shears can sever ...
May he who rapes one from its shelf
Be damned for ever.

BALLYNAHINCH CASTLE

by Ollie Sammon

Our first official walk for the New Year took us out to Ballynahinch Castle in Connemara. On a wet, drizzly morning 36 people left the Omniplex for the walk. Before I describe the walk, here is a brief history. The castle was built around 1546 by Donal O'Flaherty, who later married Grace O'Malley, the pirate queen of Connacht. A portrait of Grace hangs over the fire place in the bar. The Martins were the next owners of the castle. Richard Martin, also known as "Humanity Dick", moved there around 1813 after extensive renovations to the house.

As an MP, Richard Martin introduced a bill to the House of Commons in 1822, The "Cruelty to Animals Act". As a result of this bill being passed, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was formed. It is for this reason that Richard Martin is most fondly remembered as "Humanity Dick".

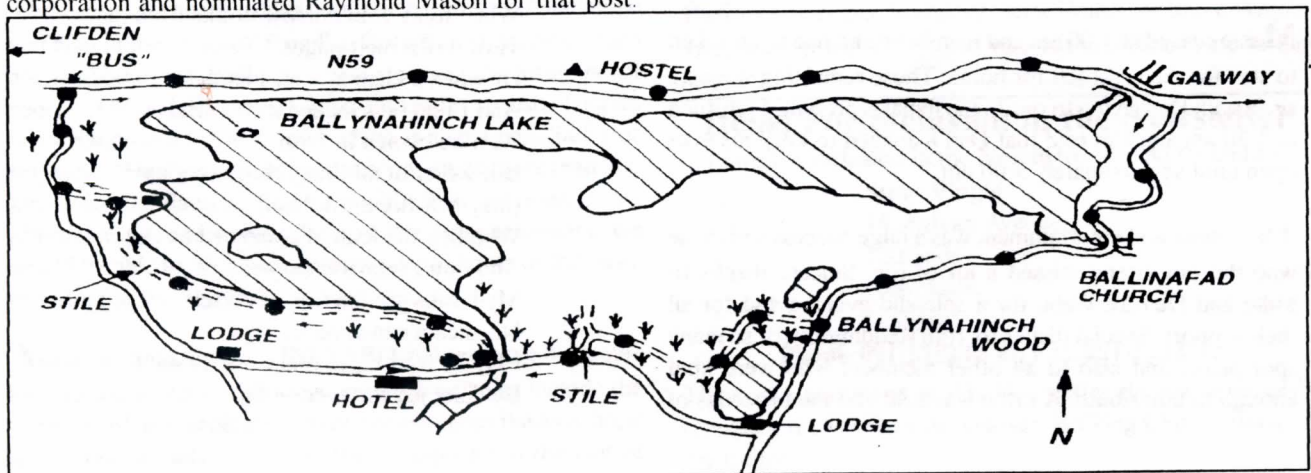
One of the most unusual owners of the castle was His Highness the Maharaja Tam Sahib of Newanger, better known as Ranji Prince of Cricketeers. He purchased the property in 1924 from the Berridge family. He was responsible for most of the landscaping of the gardens and woods, plus the erection of the fishing piers and huts along the river. After the death of Ranji the castle passed into the hands of his nephew Dulipsinhji who sold it to the McCormack family from Dublin. It was in 1946, when the Tourist Board took possession that the many years of private ownership came to an end. The Tourist Board held the castle until the early 1950's when Mr Noel Huggard took over the running of the Hotel in conjunction with Ashford Castle. Mr Huggard sold Ballynahinch in 1957 to an American businessman, Mr Edward Ball who in turn sold shares in the castle to his friends. In 1978, when he was 89 he resigned as President of his corporation and nominated Raymond Mason for that post.

Under his direction the castle has undergone renovations and all round standards have improved.

Now, after the history lesson, back to the walk.

We began the walk at 11:45 with maps supplied to everyone. (Take particular notice Carmelita of the "Maps supplied bit"). On leaving the castle we turned right and made a circular route around Ballynahinch lake and back to the castle, a distance of some 8 miles. We headed out into a slight drizzle which turned into a heavy, driving rain as we approached our lunch break, which we took in the sanctuary of the local church. It was a welcome respite, although we did not stay long as we were very wet and damp. The castle was not too far away, so we walked with purpose into the

rain to reach the warmth of a log fire. Some of the harder walkers, on reaching the grounds of the castle, decided to walk the paths around the gardens. Those that headed, instead, to the log fire etc. missed the best part of the walk. The paths were stone, wet fern, pine needles and logs that had rotted into humus - a carpet effect so different from the main road. We crossed a pedestrian bridge over the lake, a lake with a sheen like a mirror. On the edge of the lake they are beginning to build cottages, expensive cottages which we duly had to inspect. After our inspection some of the comments are worth repeating: "wouldn't it be nice to win the lotto" or "in what year do you think the club could afford one of those". I would imagine that the same odds would apply to both quotes. As Sean O'Casey said, "Our world has beauty and our life has hope". Returning to the hotel, we rejoined the rest of the walkers in refreshments and with Hiro playing the piano. It was a fitting end to our first walk.



WALK REPORTS

By Anne Walsh

KILLARY WALK 10th December '95

On a glorious December morning, thirty two members met at the Omniplex car-park and arrangements for transportation were organised. Mary Ryan, the leader, gave instructions for the car park, at the gravel pit on the Leenane road, from which the walk would commence. In convoy, we set off towards our destination and on arrival, at the appointed spot, it soon became evident that one of our members had gone astray. We waited for a while but time was ticking by and we decided to press on. Morale of the party was high, the sun was shining and the air was chilly as we walked amidst spectacular scenery of Mweelrea and Killary Harbour - "Gods own Country" to coin a phrase. Lunch was taken at the Youth Hostel Pier. It was not the best of places to choose as a cold breeze blew in from the harbour so we did not linger. We set off at a brisk pace to warm up once again in an uphill direction with splendid views of mountains and lakes. Around 3:15 we arrived back to the cars after maintaining a brisk pace from the pier.

Keane's Pub, at Maam Bridge, was designated as the place to de-brief as we knew they always had a cosy fire and warm atmosphere. After a couple of rounds some of our group were mellow enough to sing. Noel, Tom Huban, and Padraig and last, but no means least, Carmelita. A rare sighting at the bar was Steve consuming a cup of Coffee which had to be captured on film. Poor lad was on medication and that was the sole reason for such a light refreshment.

A great day was had by all with special thanks to Mary for leading such a beautiful walk. Some ladies took the scenic route to Joe Keane's via Westport and our "Walker of the Year" was one of them.

THE NEALE 28th January '96

On a brisk winter morning 41 members made a rendezvous in the Neale at 11:00 am and wasted little time in commencing our walk. Our fearless leader, on this occasion, was Noel Browne who set off at a good pace.

The walk commenced opposite Gibbon's Pub and historical points of interest were brought to our attention such as the ruins of Lord Kilmaine's house and the Gods of the Neale. A pleasant detour on road, then on breen which led us back onto the main road. After walking about a quarter of a mile we turned left onto the Clonbur road with little traffic to worry about. After climbing over a gate some time later, we made our way to a lunch spot at the far end of a field. The place was perfect as it was sheltered and there was plenty of seating here. Owen Browne's delight was finding a big slab of ice here which he managed to carry some distance.

Having had lunch, we climbed over a wall, Tom Langan with his guide dog did a great job. We traversed Fir Bolg country after admiring the huge stone fort and emerged adjacent to Noel's birthplace. At this point it was decided to extend our walk by an extra mile or so as we had plenty of time on hand. We crossed another couple of fields and then made our way back onto the main road arriving back at the Neale around 3:30 pm.

Gibbons' Pub was chosen the chosen venue for refreshments doing us proud with tea and biscuits on the house. We learned, from Fintan the Barman, that the police had done a raid on the place at 2:30 pm having spotted all of our cars parked outside. They thought the place was full. The handful of people that were in the pub had to leave which was a shame.

We had our usual sing song - Tom Huban, Jennifer, and Hiro and a poem from Avian who had arrived later with Ronnie. A good time was had by all and special thanks go to Noel for organising yet another lovely walk.



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KILLARY WEEKEND

A rendezvous at the Omniplex was arranged for 11:15 am with a view to departure at 11:30 am on the Saturday morning. The number originally booked in was 28 which diminished to 22. In less than ideal weather conditions, we made our way to Killary Lodge where we arrived at 1:00 pm. Rooms were allocated before lunch and after a change of clothing we commenced our walk to Leenane. The walk was across country via part of the Western Way. A fair amount of climbing was done before we reached the actual path and the scenery would have been quite interesting if it weren't for the deluge of rain.

By the time we arrived in Leenane, we were all ready for some alcoholic, liquid refreshments - Hot Whiskeys, Hot Ports and of course the few pints. Gayner's Pub was a pleasant venue with a good fire around which some of our group attempted to dry their clothes and warm up. We spent a good hour there before we decided to face the elements and return to the comfort of Killary Lodge.

We decided to walk along the road as there was no improvement in the weather. The headwind was so strong that it was difficult to remain vertical. The walk back was long and hard but to our surprise, we learnt that some had decided to withdraw from the walk and accept a lift back to the lodge! The brave continued along the road with the cute ones slipstreaming behind their fellow walkers. The last of the WALKERS arrived back to the Lodge at around 6:00 pm with plenty of time to get ready for dinner. Oh the bliss of the lovely hot shower!

Dinner commenced at 8 pm with delicious home-made soup and brown bread followed by a choice of roast beef or trout with a variety of fresh vegetables. The profiteroles, for dessert, were delicious and the meal was rounded off nicely with endless cups of tea and coffee. There was mention of some members venturing out to a pub but the idea faded as the weather continued to be wet and windy.

After the dinner we adjourned to the lounge where a log fire burned. There was an attempt at a sing-song but nobody came to the support of Tom Reddington and "Broom Rider" Maire. They tried so hard, bless them! Trivial Pursuit was produced with Bernie Reddington as it's Quiz-master. She could have done with a microphone to be heard above the din of the

participants and her patience was to be admired. £5.50 was at stake and one would think it was £1,000. By a stroke of sheer genius didn't Team B win it - Maureen, Elizabeth, and Kay. A second game followed with the Secretary as Quiz-master this time. The din was no less than before, and I was convinced those who went to bed early would have been unable to sleep. I must point out here that the Treasurer's job

is a tough one as he almost fell asleep over his dinner and had to retire at 9:00 pm. The second game of Trivial Pursuit resulted in Team E winning - Paul, and Kay. No genius here as they won by devious means. It was good clean fun! I chose to retire about 1:30 am and Maire was in full flight on her broom, telling fortunes and



Killary Lodge

consuming much red wine.

Sunday morning breakfast was served between 9:30 and 10:00 am with people slowly appearing with the exception of one member who was already consuming a Heineken when I arrived. After a hearty breakfast we had to vacate our rooms and be ready to commence our walk at 11:30 am. Three members arrived from Galway to join our walk and are to be commended for their effort as the weather was still bad. A further heavy shower at 11:30 delayed our departure by half an hour. We commenced our walk and the weather did improve for a couple of hours. Even on a wet day the scenery in this area is really outstanding. We walked round Lough Fee and uphill towards the Recreation Centre where we decided to take a break for lunch. After a pleasant and relaxing break, we continued on the track which took us along the route parallel to Killary Harbour and back towards the Lodge completing the circuit of this delightful walk.

The "Heineken" person had somehow lost the party at the start of the walk but we met up with him on this section, in good "spirits". Another heavy shower towards the end of the walk meant that we arrived back in the Lodge ready for hot showers again. Our Hostess, Mary, had made this facility available to us which was most appreciated.

A debriefing session was held in Joe Keane's Bar at Maam which was both welcome and enjoyable. The journey home was a challenge in the torrential rain. Despite the weather it was a grand weekend and all enjoyed the comforts and hospitality of Killary Lodge. Hopefully we will be back for another weekend in the not too distant future.

Casla Bog

10th March '96

With snow on the ground, 24 members braved the elements and met at the Omniplex around 11am. In convoy, we travelled to Spiddal and then on to Casla. No snow evident here, and a beautiful day greeted us. We commenced walking just after mid-day. With Tom Huban as our leader, we traversed the bog on a secondary road which was rather pleasant. There was one short stretch of bog we had to cover before walking across a stream then on towards a spot to eat our lunch. The weather was so good that it was almost like a summer's day. One of the group had met us at the Omniplex and then disappeared on the road from Galway to Casla however, a body on the horizon tuned out to be our lone walker who had followed the set of instructions on Tom's handout to eventually join us for lunch. In the distance there was a weather front brewing on the horizon.

As we journeyed half way along the homeward stretch a shower of hail stones came forth from the heavens catching a couple who had come unprepared for the occasion. Fortunately the shower was short lived and we managed to get back to the cars at around 3:15 pm without becoming too weather beaten. We headed to a pub only a short distance away from the end of our walk. Alas this "joint" was a little unsuitable for our purposes and we headed towards Galway finally coming to rest in the Twelve Pins, Barna. A much better venue with some of the home comforts.



Tom Huban and Mel Faherty helping Elizabeth across the stepping stones

The party re-grouped in the Twelve Pins with orders fast and furious for soup and sandwiches followed by something stronger when they had all warmed up. Tom and Maura organised our first post walk raffle. The response to the draw was excellent and congratulations to Ann Wright on winning the £15.00 Voucher for Radar Stores - this was her first walk with the club. Now there is an incentive to continue. Special thanks to Tom Huban for organising this lovely walk and the raffle as well.

WALKING FESTIVAL KILORGLIN

by Ann Lantry

I had long heard that Kerry was a good place to walk and ring in the New Year and was immediately interested in the "Go Ireland" New Year Walking Festival in Killorglin.

Travelling conditions looked dubious from St. Stephen's Day but, undeterred, we headed south from Galway on the Friday Afternoon. We arrived ahead of the posse at Kingston's Bar - the venue for the slide show. Our enthusiasm was noted by the organisers! By the time we had finished our first drink, a full house of walkers had arrived from all over the country. Food drink and an excellent slide show fired up our enthusiasm for the days ahead.

We convened at 10 o'clock Saturday Morning with a total of 130 in the group. There were three options: Carrauntuohill, part of the Kerry Way, or Bird watching at Rossbeigh Beach. A small group opted for the Bird Watching at Rossbeigh Beach, the rest had obviously done enough bird watching whilst cooking the Christmas Turkey!

I joined the Kerry Way - Kells to Glenbeigh which lasted about four hours. The walk included a part of an early Christian route, spectacular views across Dingle Bay and the Blasket Islands with a photo-call for the Irish Independent and the Cork examiner. We finished our walk with a few drinks at the Glenbeigh Inn.

The night's entertainment began with a meal in the Bianconi restaurant where most of the walkers assembled including those who had braved the gales on Carrauntuohill. There were some great stories of the days adventure. In spite of the exertion, some went set dancing while most were happy to retire to the pub until the early hours of Sunday morning.

We were fairly subdued when we met on Sunday Morning and most of the party opted for another leg of the Kerry Way. We walked, in pouring rain, along Seefin Mountain overlooking the lower and upper Caragh lakes with views of Carrauntuohill and Mount Brandon. Pauline Bewick's cottage was pointed out on the route as was the spot where the biggest glacier in the world had formed. We walked through the old oak woods of Lickeen and waded our way through bog to the green road of Curraghbeg.

At 4:30 pm, we all arrived safe and sound at the Climbers Inn, Glencar to a traditional music session. Spirits were high and our dinner booking had to be postponed to a later time.

The real New Year's Eve celebrations got underway with dinner in Bunker's. There were no real signs of aches, pains or blisters from the gyrations on the disco floor to the music of the 70's. Many new acquaintances were formed but fear of libel prevents me from expanding further thereon!

We began 1996 with a workshop covering Map and Compass reading by the well known author Séan O'Suilleabháin. After this everybody headed to their respective corners of Ireland.

WICKLOW WAY

by Anne Walsh

On a club walk at Renvyle, on which I was a sweeper, I walked with two other ladies and during the course of conversation the Wicklow Way was mentioned. By the end of the walk proposed dates were being discussed with a fourth member now showing interest. A week or two went by and the 22nd of May was chosen as the day to commence this walk. The Wicklow Way starts at Marley Park, South of Dublin and ends at Clonegal on the Wexford border.

Day 1

We departed from Galway by bus at 9:00 a.m. heading to Dublin. On arrival we had a snack and took a bus to Marley Park. The driver advised us to get off at the Old Mill which would save a lot of road walking. On a pleasant afternoon we commenced walking at 3:15 p.m. with a steady climb up through forest with a great view of Howth and surrounding areas once out of the trees. We missed a track marker to the right and found ourselves at Two Rock approximately 1 Km off course. We retraced our steps and were careful to stay on course; the going was easy across bog-land. It is advisable to carry drinking water since there is no chance of obtaining any on the way. Knockree Hostel was our aim but with such a late start we decided to head for Glencullen arriving at Johnny Fox's Pub, the highest in Ireland, at 7 p.m. A fascinating place and well worth a visit. Food and drink was available but alas no accommodation. We dined and the waitress obliged by phoning a B & B at Kilternan Cottage. To get to this location involved a 2 mile walk to a main road, catching a 44 bus, a 10 minute journey and a short walk to the cottage. The accommodation was very comfortable.

Distance Covered - 10 kilometres.

Day 2

After a hearty breakfast we caught the 9:55 a.m. bus to Glencullen Road and re-traced our steps to pick up the "Wicklow Way". Lack of track markers, just past Johnny Fox's Pub, resulted in our heading in the wrong direction. It was 12:30 p.m. before we commenced the walk proper for the day - it doesn't pay to deviate! Knockree Hostel was our destination and after a pleasant walk, Sugarloaf Mountain came into view. The weather had been ideal for walking. At 5:00 p.m. we arrived at the Hostel which was a very modest place in an ideal setting. Facilities were inadequate! No showers operating in the female block although there was plenty of hot water in the hand-basins. It was essential to carry ones own food as the nearest town was 3 kilometres away with infrequent transport as discovered by my colleagues. I relaxed by the open fire and chatted with volunteers to the Simon Community, Dublin, who were staying in the hostel for a week.

Distance Covered - 9 Kilometres.

Day 3

We got up around 9:00 a.m. and, following a modest breakfast, we packed up and left the Hostel at 10:30 am. We headed down across some fields directly opposite the Hostel to locate the track markers. Ambiguous directions from the lady at the Hostel had us heading in the wrong direction for half an hour. The sheep looked suspicious as we backtracked. It was a beautiful sunny day and the correct track passed through woodland with a steady climb that afforded a mighty view of Powerscourt Waterfall. Views of the Wicklow Mountains were only magnificent after travelling across moorland for much of the way. At 3:00 p.m. we arrived at the J.B. Malone Memorial Stone overlooking Lough Toy - a great view. We chose to have lunch at this spot. A fresh breeze was blowing by this time and we did not linger. It was essential that water and food were carried as there was no hope of obtaining anything on the route.

We descended towards a forest near Roundwood and some of the party were becoming weary. We emerged from the forest near the Forest Lodge B & B. We should have stayed there but our planned destination was Glendalough and we pressed on. A considerable distance of road walking followed and a sign which should lead us into the forest seemed elusive. At 7:00 p.m. two members of the party were totally exhausted and hitched a lift. The other lady and I pressed on and eventually found the marker. Once in the forest, there were no follow up signs. With time fast approaching 8:30 p.m., common sense prevailed and we abandoned the forest to enter Glendalough by road via Laragh.

We arrived at 9:45 p.m. somewhat weary. We met up with the other two ladies and found that soup and sandwiches was the only sustenance available. I was more tired than hungry at that point. After a short respite we made our way to the Hostel at 10:30 p.m.. We were accommodated in the overflow section as the main part of the Hostel was full. The overflow section was only very basic accommodation with concrete floors and cold water in the hand-basins. The showers were located in the main block which involved walking across the courtyard. We would have done better in Laragh as there was more choice of accommodation and shops.

Distance Covered - 30 Kilometres.

Day 4

For a payment of £2.00 per person, we were able to obtain a cooked breakfast at the Hostel. A discussion ensued regarding two members of our party withdrawing from the walk. With a promise of less distance to be covered today, they decided to continue. Leaving our pack at Glendalough, we walked 2 kilometres back to Laragh to buy food for lunch. It was a

beautiful morning for a stroll, especially without a backpack.

By 11:30 we were ready to start the day's walk. Our destination was Glenmalure. We took the pace nice and steady around the lower lake and then proceeded uphill for sometime. There was lovely scenery and waterfalls en route with a lot of forest walking. At 4:30 p.m. Hotel Glenmalure was reached. We checked in and the accommodation was delightful. We had plenty of time to relax in such peaceful surroundings. A little later on we had dinner which was excellent and then chatted with some locals before retiring for the night.

Distance Covered - 16 Kilometres.

Day 5

All very rested after our relaxed evening and after a hearty breakfast we were ready to leave at 10:00 a.m. A pleasant day we made our way past the old barracks and up through felled areas of forest which proved to be magnificent mountain scenery. As the day wore on the weather closed in and a couple of heavy showers made sure that we got very wet. By 3:30 p.m., we had reached Aughavannagh with the weather having cleared sufficiently for us to have a snack near the bridge. Two of our party decided to hitch a lift to Tinahealy at this point. The next part of the Wicklow Way afforded some of the best scenery on the walk - wonderful panoramic views and endless fields of bluebells. A beautiful afternoon and the walking was on boreens for quite a distance before Tinahealy, our destination, came into view. This was a welcome sight at 8:00 p.m..

We headed towards a forest and, yet again, track markers were elusive. With the Derry River to cross before reaching the village it became frustrating to be so near and yet so far. We eventually made our way through a farm arriving in Tinahealy at 10 p.m. to conclude another long day. The two ladies, who decided to hitch, had to walk 9 miles before getting a lift. We rendezvoused with them in Murphy's Pub and discovered that they had obtained a good meal in a "take away" nearby. After some refreshment, I adjourned to our resting place for the night in the Orchard Hill B & B. I didn't feel like venturing out again for some food and hinted to our hostess Alice; regrettably to no avail, not even a cup of tea. I improvised and consumed some food from my backpack. The accommodation was spotless but lacked the homely feeling.

Distance Covered - 31 kilometres.

Day 6

At 9:00 a.m. we had breakfast and Alice tried to convince us that we should go and do our day's walk and return to her in the evening. Shillelagh was our destination although Alice had advised us that there was no decent accommodation there. We decided to leave and at 10:30 a.m. we were on our way. A lot of road walking on today's route with respite in Fallon's

Pub, the smallest that I have ever been in, which came as a nice surprise in the middle of nowhere. The weather was rather inclement so a change of clothing was necessary for some of us. A snack followed by hot port adequately prepared us for the next stage of the walk. We arrived in Shillelagh at 4 p.m. and had a look for accommodation. We were advised against the "Avalon" but decided to check it out anyway - nothing fancy but adequate for our needs and it was the only place in town to get a meal so we were grateful for the little that they had to offer. We had a relaxing evening watching T.V.

Distance Covered - 12 Kilometres.

Day 7.

Two of our party were heading home today so breakfast was consumed at 8:00 a.m. with transport arranged to Tullow at 8:30 and from there, a bus to Dublin at 9:10 a.m. and then a bus to Galway.

With the remainder of the Wicklow way to be completed, we set off at 10:00 a.m. with very overcast weather and the promise of rain. Soon it fell from the heavens and never let up for the rest of the day. Walking was unpleasant because of the gusty winds and heavy rain. We stopped in the forest for a break but it afforded little shelter. At 3:30 p.m. we squelched our way into Clonegal hailing the end of our journey down the Wicklow Way.

A quick change of clothes in Dunne's Pub and a hot whiskey restored our morale. The fire was lit for us making it nice and cosy although a short time later all hell broke loose. The chimney caught fire. The Fire Brigade were on strike and we were getting smoked out of the place. Pat, one of the customers, came to the rescue; extinguishing the fire by pouring buckets of water down the chimney. Later we danced the night away in the Pub before resting in Monk's B & B., a fascinating 500 year old residence.

Distance Covered - 19 kilometres.

We obtained a lift to Bunclody from Mr Monk and took a bus from there to Dublin and connected with the Galway Bus

It is a pity that the "Wicklow Way" is so poorly marked. It is a magnificent walk and I would love to do it again with an earlier start on each day. The distance of the walk is given as 129 kilometres but with our detours I would say that our total was closer to 160 kilometres.

CASTLEBAR WALKING FESTIVAL

The Castlebar Walking Festival will be celebrating its 30th Anniversary this year and is expecting huge support from many countries. With this in mind, it would be advisable to book accommodation as soon as possible before it is all taken. The entry fee for the walks is £20.00 which is not going to murder any pocket. The duration of the Festival is four days with a 30 km ramble on each day. In addition to the walks there are social functions held every evening for the participants in the walks. A good time will be had by all!

THE SLIEVE BLOOM TRIP

by Steve Wright

Some months ago, Tom Huban asked me if I would like to assist him in his fund raising efforts for the M.S. Walk to Goa. The plan was a weekend in the County Arms Hotel Birr and a sponsored 12 mile walk on the Saturday followed by an evening meal and then an 18 mile walk the following day through the Slieve Bloom Way. I reckoned that I would be able to complete a card or two for those who were having difficulty. To my surprise, I had no problems completing a card for Anne Walsh and I actually managed to complete two more. I was quite chuffed as it meant that I would be able to participate in the weekend's walking also.

The Friday night was hectic as I had to take off almost as soon as I had finished work. I hastily packed my gear and was on the road by 6:30 pm with Anne Walsh. We stopped off at Tom Huban's house where we met up with Mel, Tom and Paul Tyler-Maloney. In no time at all we were on the road heading towards Birr. The County Arms Hotel was our destination. The Hotel was quite a pleasant location and in no time at all we organised our rooms before settling in for a nights refreshment and entertainment. My first consideration was a fine meal in the restaurant plus a bottle of Chardonnay.

In the bar the clans were gathering friends from Dublin, Cork, The Galway Walking Club, Des Forde (RTC Chaplain) and many more settled in for a good session. Alas, I missed a little of the activity as I fell asleep at the bar for an unspecified length of time only to be woken by the flashing of cameras recording the event. I think it was the combination of a "busy day at the office" and my excellent meal catching up on me. The cat-nap enabled me to stay awake for the rest of the evening to enjoy music and song from our local talent.

On Saturday we had a really hearty breakfast before heading out on our walk. We collected our lunch consisting of sandwiches, chocolate bars, and Galway Water courtesy of Tom and Maura Huban. After a short drive from Birr to Kinnity we met outside the Slieve Bloom Bar where Monika joined us. We left Kinnity, took a right turn and made for the Slieve Bloom way. Within a quarter of an hour we were into some really picturesque countryside as we passed the entrance to Kinnity Woods. There was a small pond in the field opposite which was populated by literally thousands of frogs spawning. A number of them had not quite made it to their destination judging by the number of splat marks on the road! Onwards and upwards we trekked with the land rising either side of us before reaching a way-marked path leading us into forestry.

This was a particularly scenic area with huge pine trees reaching for the sky. To our right there was a small stream running parallel to the path. Nearly all extremes of forestry plantation were encountered in this area from clearing, planting and the stages of growth from sapling to the tallest of "ESB poles" ready for cutting. The path passed in and out of the tree line with views of other routes in the valley to our left. Another way-mark brought us down to a small stream.

Continuing along the path we crossed a second stream before

walking uphill out of the valley. This section led us out of the forest and onto mountain road. We reached the picnic area where we stopped for lunch. Our picnic lunch was delicious and we can only thank Tom and Maura for their efforts.

After a long chat the walk got underway and we turned to a westerly direction. After a small walk uphill we were able to see Shannonbridge in the distance. Our route followed the minor mountain road downhill towards the main road which would then bring us back to Kinnity. A three mile walk followed along the main road where we finally ended at the Slieve Bloom Bar. This was a warm and comfortable location and little time was wasted ordering up a favourite "bevy". The proprietor of the Slieve Bloom produced soup and sandwiches which was an extremely nice gesture. Some of the party got waylaid in another establishment further down the road and were more interested in the rugby match. Our session continued until we finally had to leave and ready ourselves for the meal in the evening.

Des Forde (The RTC Chaplain) held mass for a small congregation before the evening meal. An excellent beef dinner was served followed by a dessert which escapes me at this point - I did eat it and it wasn't profiteroles as far as I can remember! Spot prizes were given out during the meal to add to the festivity.

On Sunday we were joined by Mary Ryan and Tom Rea for the 18 mile Slieve Bloom Walk. Our group was down in numbers as many had to travel homeward. Carmel, Ursula, Una and Tommy from the Dublin group, with Tom Huban, Tom & Bernie Reddington, Dave Walsh, Anne Walsh, Tom Rea, Paul Tyler-Maloney, Mel, Mary Ryan and Myself. We drove out to the picnic area, our lunch stop on Saturday, and walked in an easterly direction along the mountain road. To our right we entered a forestry track which was marked as part of the Slieve Bloom Way. This track took us in an uphill direction towards some dense forestry. The views from here were only fantastic. As we walked out of the forest we crossed a stream and a small valley before climbing onto a boggy plateau. Markers were placed at odd intervals and it was definitely a case of "spot the pole" navigating. The going was a little rough through dense heather.

After deviating slightly we became geographically embarrassed and descended into a vally where we had lunch. We were not totally lost but had wandered off the route slightly. Mary Ryan disappeared for ages while we ate our lunch but she returned and managed to place us back on the approved route. Strangely enough we had travelled further than anticipated which threw us off a little. After re-joining the track we continued along a very attractive route before arriving back at the entrance to Kinnity Woods. Our walk took us back to the main road and into Kinnity back to the Slieve Bloom Bar where we celebrated our beautiful walk. A musically compromised "diddle-i-doe" duo were performing much to the mirth and merriment of the local clientel.

Maybe this walk could be considered for our list during the summer months. Special thanks to Tom & Maura Huban and also Mel Faherty for organising a really wonderful weekend of walking and Craic.

KILLARY

by Ollie Sammon

I left Galway in the good company of Paul, without our fellow travellers Mel and Carmelita, who were absent due to personal reasons. We were joined by Loretta whose company was appreciated as it meant that I didn't have to listen to Paul postulating all the way to Killary. The drive was fairly normal which is unusual because Paul usually thinks he is taking part in an International Rally. We had to wait for Muire, who is possibly Ireland's most careful driver. Now I know why lady drivers get cheaper insurance.

Eventually we arrived at the Lodge, where I shared a room with Tom Rea. Before we set out on the walk, we were all supplied with a map beautifully laminated by Steve. After studying the maps for a while, off we trudged into the swirling mist. First we went up the driveway and onto the main road where somebody decided we would cross some rough terrain where we would reach the western way. We finally did, but not before getting soaked wet in the process. Oh but there was worse to come, halfway down the track the wind and rain increased like a speeding locomotive.

Finally we reached the warmth and hospitality of Gaynor's Pub in Leenane. Was there ever a fire more welcome, even though it would have taken the combined efforts of the Connacht Laundry and a steaming sauna to dry ourselves

and our gear. Then we even had the audacity to contemplate getting a lift back to the Lodge, but after a few phone calls, thanks again to Gaynor's, we were out of luck. We had to hike the four miles back to the Lodge. About a mile up the road, a sharp driving wind, with rain as tough as hail blew at us. We were taking one step forward and two steps back until, at last, we reached the sanctuary of the Lodge. Tom and I were offered a lift on the way back but, dedicated walkers as we are, we politely refused. Of course there were four certain ladies from the vicinity of Oranmore who availed of the above lift.

Later on, after the shower we had a lovely meal compliments to Mary Young. Afterwards we debated whether we would go back into Leonine but, the night being so bad, we decided to stay put. Instead we put the walkers' store of knowledge to good use by going through a complete set of Trivial Pursuit. Some of the answers were truly amazing, probably due to the abundance of grape consumed before, during, and after the dinner; in fact into the wee hours of the morning. Finally, special thanks to Paul Moloney whose brain-child this weekend was.

Disclaimer.

With reference to the outgoing payments in the Treasurer's report given at the A.G.M., Mel Faherty would like to clarify the point; "That under no circumstances did he, or has he ever charged, the Galway Walkers Club for Photocopying, Printing or Stationary" and that the payment of £133.00 was not received for his services which were, as always, 100% voluntary".



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