

SUMMER 1996

ISSUE 4



Gorse  
(*Ulex Europaeus*)



Bloody Crane's-bill  
(*Geranium sanguineum*)



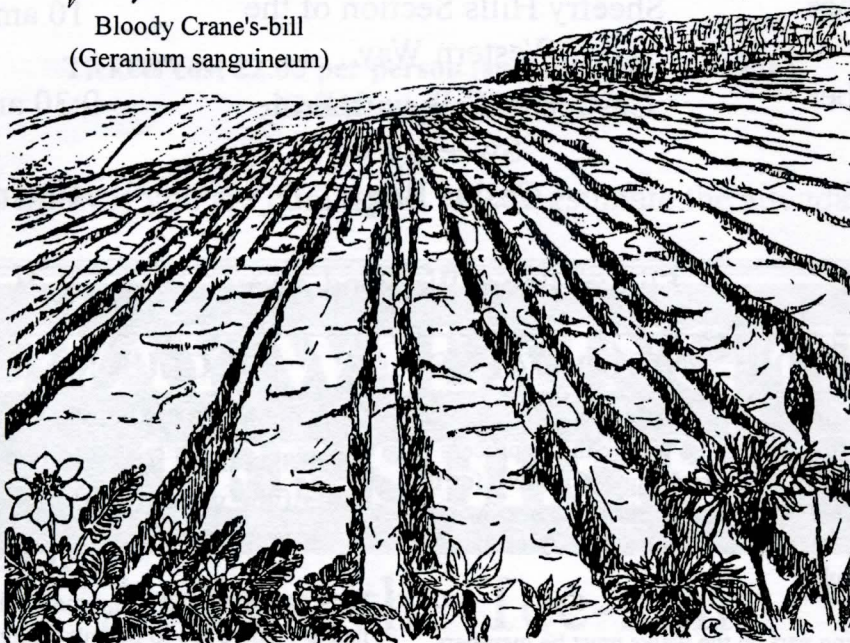
Yellow-petalled Common Tormentil  
(*Potentilla erecta*)



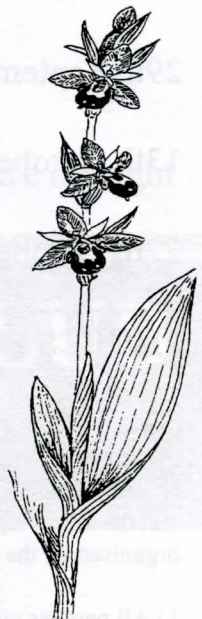
Broom  
(*Cystus Scoparius*)



Harebell  
(*Campanula rotundifolia*)



Gleninagh Mountain overlooking Blackhead



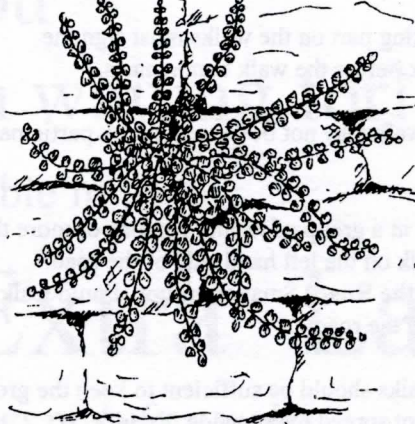
Bee Orchid



Gentian  
(*Gentiana verna*)



Hoary Rock-Rose  
(*Helianthemum canum*)



Maidenhair Spleenwort  
(*Asplenium trichomanes*)



Cottongrass  
(*Eriophorum angustifolium*)



# CLUB ACTIVITIES

## PROPOSED SCHEDULE OF WALKS FROM JULY TO OCTOBER

| <u>DATE</u>    | <u>LOCATION</u>                           | <u>MEETING TIME / PLACE</u> |
|----------------|---|-----------------------------|
| 21st July      | Leenane to Maam                           | 10 am Omniplex              |
| 4th August     | Croagh Patrick + Optional Walk            | 10 am Omniplex              |
| 18th August    | Bellacorick to Treanlaur Lodge            | 9 am Omniplex               |
| 31st August    | Burren Walk with Thomond Orienteers.      | 9:30 am Fanore Caravan Park |
| 1st September  | Moycullen to Oughterard                   | 10 am Omniplex              |
| 15th September | Sheefry Hills Section of the Western Way. | 10 am Omniplex              |
| 29th September | Castlebar Walk with Ernie Sweeney         | 9:30 am Omniplex            |
| 13th October   | Cashla Bog                                | 10 am Omniplex              |
| 27th October   | Slieve Bloom Weekend Away                 | 2. B. Organised             |

### RULES FOR ORGANISED WALKS

The question of insurance and walks has been a topic for discussion at meetings and whilst we are in the process of dealing with the question of obtaining MCI cover for the leaders of our walks it would be appropriate to bear in mind that the following rules will have to be enforced on all walks organised by the club.

- 1) All persons taking part on the walks must be members of the Galway Walking Club without exception.
- 2) All persons taking part on the walks must sign the indemnity book before the walk commences.
- 3) The leader of walk may not be passed out by participants of the walk.
- 4) When walking in a group of twenty persons or more the group must walk on the left hand side of the road.  
(Ref. Rules of the Road) Smaller groups should walk on the right side of the road.
- 5) The pace of walks should be sufficient to keep the group together and not spread over a wide distance.
- 6) At all times, the walk Leader's decision is final.

### CLUB MEETINGS

Club meetings are held at **9:00 pm** in the **Galway Arms** on the **Thursday >>PRIOR<<** to the date of the walks listed in the schedule above.

### WALKS

Where possible we will remain with the schedule of walks listed. If there are to be any changes, the times of meeting will remain the same as those for the day concerned. A bus will be laid on for the more distant walks provided that there is sufficient interest. It should be noted that it is only possible to hire the bus on the assumption that it is filled to capacity. Every effort should be made to occupy seats to cover costs.

### 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 087-451218 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.



# SUMMER BARBECUE

Saturday the 24th of August  
at 8:30 pm

in

## TÍ GEAROLD'S PUB ORANMORE

*The Barbecue will be preceeded by a 6 mile walk in Rinville Park at 7 pm.  
Meet at the Car Park near the Gate Lodge, Rinville Park.*

Tickets cost £2.00 per person (subsidised by the club)  
Children admitted free

Please let us know if you are coming so we can estimate the attendance on night

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## GALWAY WALKING CLUB TEE-SHIRTS

At Last the Tee-shirt  
you  
have all been waiting for!

Available in

Medium Large and Extra Large

*Available at meetings or before walks*

Price £4.00 each



# CASTLEBAR WALK

by Steve Wright.

For some reason our walks of late had become rather "roady" with the walk to *"Almost the Hill of Doon but not quite"* becoming yet another of our road walks. The next walk on our list was to be Lough Greaney. A small group of us had done a "recky" of the Lough Greaney walk and found it to be a 16 mile trek on road around the lake with a small portion of country lane and even less of woodland near the lake side. This would undoubtedly raise a few eyebrows within our rambling circles. A bit of quick thinking led to the idea of taking the group to sample some of the Castlebar scenery and hospitality.

The bus left the Omniplex at around 10:20 with a slight delay least one or two more might decide to travel and bring our numbers up a little. Tom Rea joined us in Headford and Anne Walsh hopped on the bus at Ballinrobe. We arrived at the Welcome Inn at Mid-day along with those who had decided to drive their own cars and created pandemonium when we sought tea and coffee. Ernie Sweeney, our guide, was walking towards the Welcome Inn just as our bus arrived. Elaine Devereau, Susie Fry and Ann Cresham, from the Four Day Walks Committee, joined us and passed around information about the walks to be held in July. They would have joined us for the walk but had only heard about it on the Saturday which was too late for them. Hopefully we will be able to get them to join us for our next walk in Castlebar.

Our party assembled on the bus and we were driven to the point at which the walk was to begin a few miles from the Burren mountain. Ernie laid the ground rules regarding the walk before we proceeded at a reasonable pace along a scenic track. The track brought us to an area near the base of Burren mountain and onto the bog tracks nearby. The weather was not wonderful with a kind of misty rain carried on the breeze guaranteed to pass through the best of weather-proof gear.

About an hour into the walk it was pleasing to note that the walkers had not spread out over distance and were all quite "together" which was a good indication that the pace was right. Ernie had stated that this was not a race and was to be an enjoyable walk for all. We were actually following a zig zag course across bog tracks and roads heading towards Castlebar. At the halfway point we arrived at a small cottage in the Raheen Bar area.

Old friends of Ernie resided here and we were welcomed by Kathleen McHugh and her brother Tom. We were led to an old cottage where a fire was burning in the grate and we sat down to eat our packed lunch. Lunch was most enjoyable in the warmth of the cottage and our hosts. As we were about to leave Kathleen produced a bag of sweets which she insisted that we passed around. We thanked Kathleen and Tom for their hospitality and proceeded to the top of the hill where decisions were taken for the next leg of the route.

There were a couple of alternatives for the route from this half way mark but the morale of the group seemed so good that the bog and hill route was taken. We proceeded into the bog in an uphill direction and still the group was well together. A short rest was taken before reaching the summit of the hill. On top of this hill were the remains of a ring fort which would have a mighty view of the surrounding countryside if there was a lift in weather conditions. Unfortunately we were unable to appreciate the view as the mist was still quite heavy. Ernie was able to tell us about the archaeology of the area and the line of ring forts from all angles on the horizon which indicated the paths of previous generations of settlers.

Our route took us off the hillside and down towards the road and onto our route back into town. The journey was somewhat shortened by the great buzz from the group on this walk. There was no undue pressure on the walkers and the group was never really stretched out over a long distance. The pace had been even at all times with the result that nobody seemed to be unduly tired. Ernie had pointed out that a group in excess of twenty walkers should always walk on the left hand side of the road, as per the "Rules of the Road booklet" whereas a smaller group of two or three, well spread out, should walk on the right hand side of the road. Food for thought on future walks.

We arrived in Castlebar at 6:20 and made our way towards the Travellers Friend Hotel. Personally I think this place was incorrectly named as the service was terrible. The barman, Padraic, was a little uncooperative and seemed to be everywhere but at his station. Every pint pulled was putting him under pressure and spoiling his conversation with colleagues in the backroom. The soup and sandwiches were good but there was total reluctance for anyone to serve us at the tables - we had to go chasing after them.

Ernie was a little distressed with our treatment and did have words with management but it made little difference. This establishment therefore gets 1 out of 10 for friendliness and good service - we won't put them out next time we visit Castlebar. Ernie stayed with our group until about 7:30 before leaving. He made a great speech about our group and we thanked him for the lovely walk and the enlightening chat about the general area. Joe Fadden joined us around the time that we arrived and had a chat with old friends that he had met on previous walks in Galway. Susie Fry and Ann Cresham joined us shortly after we arrived and were able to provide information about the forthcoming walks to anyone who was thinking of taking the plunge.

To date it would appear that there will be at least fifteen, from the Galway Walking Club, participating in this year's walks. Hopefully the feedback from them will encourage others to follow suit next year.



# THE ENVIRONMENT - A SOURCE OF HEALING

by Ann Gannon

**D**id you ever walk in the countryside and feel you were in a dream? Did you feel that the things around you - trees, fields, a bull, or several sheep with lambs took on menacing or fantastic proportions? There are cows on a green hillside and one of them turns to look at you and you shiver in recognition. Have you ever climbed a mountain, feeling tired and lethargic forcing one foot in front of the other - and yet when you come down you are charged with energy? You feel connected to everything around you, your eyes see differently and your breathing is full and satisfying. Have you ever watched the branches swaying in the wind, the waves rhythmically washing the shore, or a young mare gallop across a field and think it was a dance of the gods that you had just witnessed?

Connections with the natural landscape such as trees arise because what we see outside mirrors something in our psyche. The landscape holds symbols that resonate with our inner symbolic life. Identification with the natural world was a normal way of life for primitive societies. In this connection, the landscape was part of their soul. In our world we are more conscious but the inner world of unconscious is still connected.

We have not lost the ability to be awe inspired by a beautiful landscape - the capacity for Participation Mystique. The inner life of the ancient peoples was nourished by their relationship with nature. They created ritual and celebration that linked them to the mysterious forces of life and death, of fertility and to the ever renewing energy of the cosmos.

In society it is harder to renew this part of us. It lies hidden in a deeper part of our psyche. Rituals that tap into this energy are called "Pagan" or "Primitive" and dismissed as childless indulgence and yet it seems to be a natural and healthy phenomenon. Connectedness to nature is physically, emotionally and spiritually healing. The environment itself holds clues to our inner psychological development. If we accept that the outer landscape mirrors and amplifies the inner landscape of our psyche, then it is possible to tap this energy through ritual, theatre and symbolic journeys as a source of growth in Participation Mystique.

In Ireland, the wilderness has not been completely invaded with tea-shops, coloured trails or interpretation centres. There are areas that have been left sacred such as holy wells, stone circles, court cairns and special landscapes being given priority as heritage. It is not only archaeological heritage that is being preserved, but also the sacred heritage. It is part of a natural instinct to preserve that which is dramatic in the landscape and to invest spiritual energy in places of beauty. We are still connected to the extent we enjoy a Participation Mystique with the countryside.

**Participation Mystique : C.G. Jung**, a Swiss Psychiatrist (1875 -1961) who introduced the idea of the collective unconscious and its symbolic contents talked about the Participation Mystique as a force that connects an inner world through the energy of the unconscious.

## THAT BLOODY BUS!

The hiring of a bus is only possible if there is going to be a sufficient number of people to warrant it. Whilst we have tried to maintain the price per person at a ceiling of £5.00 it is no longer viable to subsidise this from club funds. If the numbers are not there to take the bus it is far better to forget it than drain club funds for non existent passengers.

Unless places are booked and paid for at the club meetings and a 60 % uptake is apparent it will be better to forget the hire of the bus. The price of seats will be dependant on the number of passengers divided into the total hire price of the bus.

To date we have tried to be reasonable with departure times after walks and it has worked out well with no complaints. Rather than bring your own car please support the bus if we are to maintain this service for members.

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2-3 person Dome £39.95.

3-4 person Ridge £55.95.

4-5 person Dome £55.95.

5-6 person Ridge £69.95.



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Sleeping Bags  
with Stuff Sac  
from £23.95.**

Full Range of Walking Boots, Gaiters,  
Compasses, Camping Accessories and  
Backpacks also available.

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15, Mainguard Street,  
Galway**

**10% Discount for Walking Club Members**



# THE BANGOR TRAIL

by Anne Walsh

A party consisting of Tom Reddington, Steve Wright and Myself, representing the Galway Walkers, embarked upon the 10th Anniversary walk of the Bangor Trail. An early departure from Galway was necessary at 5:30 am. With very little traffic around, we arrived in Newport at 6:45 am with good time to partake of a few refreshments. Gradually other walkers arrived together with the organisers from the Nephin Beg Mountaineering Club. After registration and payment of the £10.00 fee, we boarded a bus and left Newport at 7:45 am heading for Bangor Erris. The weather was overcast with a few misty showers as we travelled.

On arrival in Bangor Erris, no time was wasted and at 9:00 am we commenced our walk. It should be noted that it is advisable to relieve oneself before the start of the walk as there is little opportunity to do so in private once on the trail! A gradual ascent on a good but stony track led us into the hills. Approximately one hundred and forty in the group soon became spread out as the climb continued. It became necessary to keep a watchful eye on the terrain underfoot as there were some moist areas of bog on the track and they resulted in some persons ending up to their knees in mud. From here onwards the track seemed to take on several lengthy climbs before major descents occurred. The weather had cleared up somewhat and this made for pleasant walking. After approximately an hour and a half, we arrived at the first checkpoint after a long gentle descent. A small narrow bridge took us across a river and we stopped for a few minutes for water and a small break.

The next stage was across bogland for a good distance. The part near the river was a mucky but once out of this area the track became much easier to follow without disaster. The track meandered through the mountains affording splendid scenery which was quite unique. The track was becoming sandy and walking was made difficult as it was necessary to pick ones way through boulders and rocks. At approximately 1 pm, we arrived at the second checkpoint where we had a welcome lunch-break in the ruins of an old farmhouse. At this stage there were a few walkers looking tired and the worst for wear. We gazed at the next stretch of trail and a vast area of bog which we could traverse as an alternative. We opted for the bog route as it would take approximately three quarters of a mile off the journey. Fortunately the weather had been dry and the route across the bog was safe but tedious. If it had been raining for a prolonged time this would have been impossible.

We ascended a ridge which took us to the halfway point and the track seemed to be getting more awkward with rock and boulders to dodge making it necessary to lift the feet higher than normal to continue the walk. At this point we were approximately half way up the side of a mountain heading through a valley. Small stretches of springy bog were most

welcome as it gave our feet a rest from the rocky trail.

We soon arrived at the third checkpoint where a lady offered us some water which was most welcome at this point as our water supplies were almost zero. We continued along a stony track in an uphill direction walking along the edge of the forest for quite some distance before an orange tent became visible. The tent was reached after a steep climb up a grassy bank where we found checkpoint number four. Refreshments were once again offered and we were told that the worst was over. A short distance on bog and then we descended onto a track that took us through forest where midges were in abundance. We reached a stile which was not welcome because of its height - walkers were somewhat weary at this stage. We crossed a bridge and after a short walk through more forest we reached a gravel road where the profusion of rhododendrons was breathtaking. We continued along this road and then followed a track to Srahmore which was our checkpoint number five. Refreshments were available and vehicles for those who wished to return to Newport without doing the last section of the walk.

After a brief stop Tom Reddington and myself embarked on the final stage of the walk which was another nine miles. Again masses of rhododendrons lined our route for a time as we followed the track uphill for a short distance and then the going became easier. A very pleasant afternoon weatherwise and beautiful views of the surrounding mountains made the effort well worthwhile. A lake soon became visible and shortly afterwards we arrived onto a narrow road. With a few unwelcome hills on this stretch my walking companion started to hallucinate. He thought he would see the church tower in Newport in the next few minutes and tried to convince me that he had seen it once already. Alas it was wishful thinking and when we did reach what he saw, it turned out to be a water tower. The going was tough on the road and it seemed endless.

Newport was a welcome sign and the next quarter of a mile we had to walk from there seemed the longest. As we rounded a bend on the edge of the town, Chambers Inn came into view and we had completed the full distance of the Bangor Trail. After ten hours of walking we were more than ready for the complementary soup, sandwiches and two pints available to participants.

Approximately thirty five percent of the participants completed the full walk. Those who made it to the nineteen mile point and those who walked into Newport received a certificate for their efforts.

Tom Reddington wore a pedometer and clocked up 14,103 steps to complete the walk. If I had the choice I would do the walk again only if there had been a long dry spell beforehand - the vast areas of bog would be extremely difficult otherwise.



# HILL WALKING IN THE SHEEFGRYS

by Steve Wright

**E**arly in June, a small group of Walkers consisting of Tom Rea, Anne Walsh, Loretta Needham and myself decided to try something a little more adventurous than a standard ramble. Tom Rea had done a "recky" on the Sheefry Hills section of the Western way for a future walk and had remarked on the fantastic scenery in that direction. After studying the Discovery Series map (37) we decided that the best section to start the climb would be the western (Doolough) end of the hill.

We set off on the Sunday morning towards Leenane, drove past the Aashleigh falls and then towards Doolough. It was necessary to park one car at the end of the walk so that we would be able to drive back to the car at the start of the walk. Our destination on this occasion was Sheefry Bridge. By the time we had the car parked and returned to the location where our walk was to commence it was just after mid day. We parked the car just about 1 km in from the right turn off the R335 at the southern end of Doolough.

The weather was absolutely fantastic with clear skies and blazing sunshine. Our first obstacle was the crossing of the Glenummera River which required a short walk until we found a shallow stretch. From here onward the climb started to become more like walking up stairs. We had to climb approximately 772 metres to get onto the actual top of the hills. Tom Rea seemed the fittest and surged forward leaving a fair gap between himself and the least fit person.

Approximately three quarters up the side of the hill was an excellent resting place where we stopped for a quick snack and a much needed water break. The view down the valley was magnificent with superb views across the valleys to Ben Gorm and Mweelrea. Some excellent photographs of the surrounding countryside were taken at this point. Looking back to the car revealed just a small pinpoint of an object by the roadside.

To plagiarise another contributors words, onward and upward we trudged. There were a number of false peaks on our journey. Just as we thought we were at the top there was a slight drop and then another peak ahead and so on. Eventually we reached the top of the hill - all 772 metres of it! The panoramic view from here was only fantastic. We had lunch here and a well deserved rest for about three quarters of an hour before proceeding.

From this point onward it was a long ridge walk with a slight drop before the next peak for about 6 kms. The sheep had no problem climbing to this area as there was a large number of them on the summit. At points the ridge became a little narrow (3 feet wide) which was a little unnerving for some of us with a fear of heights. Further on there were sheer drops from one side of the mountain. Looking northward there was a



Walking towards the three foot wide ridge with sheer drops on either side. Not my idea of fun to say the least!

good view of Croagh Patrick despite the heat haze. The weather remained very hot and frequent sips from the water bottle were necessary. On the third peak there were a couple of small lakes. There were no short cuts downward from this ridge as the contour lines indicated that the descent would be very steep - they were right too!

After a very enjoyable ridge walk we had to descend via a very steep section before reaching a lower peak. At one point we had to traverse a grassy slope which fell away

into a sheer drop. One slip here and there would be a very fast journey to the bottom of the valley below. The last peak was about 600 metres high and our next descent was following alongside a small mountain stream. At points the descent was quite steep and it was possible to skim down the slope on one's backside. As we journeyed further down, the land became a little more boggy.

The last stretch was along a gentle boggy slope leading down towards Sheefry Bridge which was in the distance. If it had been raining this would have been a really hazardous section and it would have been even more difficult to find any firm footing on which to walk. At this point I was dying of thirst and feeling quite sore from the journey downward. Reaching the car I had a great feeling of achievement.

My only thought now was to get a long cool lager at Keane's in Maam Bridge. Well we couldn't get there quick enough! A very enjoyable few pints were consumed before the journey home.

I had no reservations about climbing the Sheefrys and it was a natural progression from the rambles we had been doing to that point. Indeed it is not easy and there is no harm in pushing the body one step further. Two or three more climbs would bring a few more muscles into play and then one could go from strength to strength. The secret is not to try to go too fast but pace one's self with short steps. Take short breaks, not for too long, and don't forget to bring plenty of water. Two quarter litre bottles of water were insufficient for me.



# CASTLEBAR WALKING FESTIVAL

by Anne Walsh

**A**fter much cajoling by our Treasurer I decided to sample my first Walking Festival in Ireland. Some physical preparation was required so when the opportunity arose to do some hill walking I seized the chance. The month preceding the festival - the Bangor Trail, Sheefry Hills and an impromptu trip which ended at the start of the Twelve Bens saw me through. With inclement weather, new boots were required and a waterproof jacket, the latter was procured direct from the Lowe Alpine Factory in Tullamore - a trip well worthwhile. Accommodation close to the headquarters, the Welcome Inn, had to be arranged and thanks to a friend of our Treasurer I was very lucky in that regard despite the fact that there were so many foreign participants and accommodation was at a premium.

With everything organised, I arrived in Castlebar on Wednesday the 3rd of July in the evening time. The Welcome Inn was buzzing with all nationalities converging for registration and the opening ceremony. This was preceded by a parade of music and locals through the town, unfortunately a heavy shower spoilt that. The entertainment continued in the Welcome Inn until 11:30 pm as people renewed friendships from previous years. There was a choice of walks to be done as follows:

## Road Walks

10km, 25km, 40km - Starting at 2 pm, 8:30 am and 8:00 am respectively

**Rambles of 30 km** - starting at 9:00 and 9:30 am

I chose the rambles

## Day 1 (Thursday) Raheen Bar Walk.

We assembled at the Welcome Inn and had our registration cards punched. Our intrepid leader, Ernie Sweeney was very much in control of such a large group of approximately 250 people. A little after 9 am we walked through the town and out on the Pontoon Road. The atmosphere was one of excitement at the four days to follow. After an hour or so, we arrived at our first refreshment stop for water or orange juice. We re-grouped here and continued uphill and along a bog road for some distance before turning uphill and passing the McHugh's house; remembered from the Walking Club outing to Castlebar. When we arrived at the top of this hill we stopped for lunch and changed into boots as advised for the crossing of the bog - our next stage. So far so good, apart from the

weather which was simply wet! Onward and upward to Raheen Bar which was the highest point of the walk today. Despite the weather, good views were afforded from this point.

We continued downhill, traversing bog, until we reached the road. Time for a rest and refreshment and then a change back into shoes for the one and a half hour's walk back into town. My walking companion for this leg of the journey was Paddy Dillon of "Walking Ireland" magazine fame. Paddy related some interesting stories en route minimising the tedium of road walking on this stretch.

On arrival in Castlebar, one had to check-in having completed the day's walk. The bar appeared to be doing a roaring trade. It was 2:30 pm and there was ample time to prepare for the evening's entertainment. The music started at 9 pm and on presentation of one's registration card entry to the function was free. Around midnight the music ceased and the large crowd retired for the night.

## Day 2 (Friday) Red Hopkins Walk.

We assembled at the Welcome Inn at 9 am for a 9:15 start. The weather was somewhat brighter today, one became aware of some of the characters in the group wearing interesting creations on their heads. The Japanese group leader carried their flag all day. The routine was the same as day one with a longer

distance to be covered on the road. Our aim today was a hill called "Red Hopkins". This walk involved crossing bog, jumping across ditches which was fun. I persevered with my boots all the way and was happy to part company with them when I arrived back at base around 3 pm. After checking in I rendezvoused with members of the Radio Club - our Doctor and Treasurer amongst them. We enjoyed the entertainment and refreshments.

## Day 3 (Saturday) Burren Walk.

A larger group for the ramble, due to some walkers abandoning the idea of four days of 40 km Road walking - blisters and the anti-social aspect not being desirable. Again the routine of refreshment stops was the same as the previous days. Our aim today was the Burren Mountain, the highest of the hills we would encounter during the festival. There was approximately five miles of road and track walking before we commenced our ascent. A very heavy shower at this point



Jim Fahy and Cameraman filming during the Four Day Walking Festival



## Castlebar Walking Festival Continued ....

made for a slippery climb.

An RTE film crew on this leg of the walk, I feel, got some interesting footage as they captured a number of umbrellas approaching them up the hill. Fortunately the rain ceased by the time we reached the saddle affording magnificent views of surrounding hills and lakes. After a slippery descent and quite a lengthy bog walk, we arrived at the road. Refreshments were available and we changed our footwear for the long road home arriving at 4 pm. Our check-in point was altered because of a wedding. The downstairs bar was set up with the facilities of its adjoining function room for the walking group. This area was somewhat crowded and the group chosen to provide the music seemed inappropriate and not conducive to dancing which disappointed many people.

### Day 4 (Sunday) The Last Day.

All ramblers were requested to assemble for a 9 am start. We walked for approximately five miles on the Pontoon Road before turning onto a boreen and heading for Shanvalley. A river crossing was abandoned because of the heavy rain over the previous few days. A detour on the road over a bridge ensued but the scenery took one's mind off that. The going was generally much easier today with the usual fun crossing bog and the excitement of two river crossings. One was warned of nine miles of road walk at the end, so the distraction of the Dutch whistling Irish tunes and singing was a welcome distraction. I persevered with my boots until three miles outside of Castlebar and then was ready to change into shoes which made a huge difference on the last leg of the walk.



President Mary Robinson waving Farewell  
to the Castlebar Walkers

On arrival at base around 3:30 pm, there was music playing and a great sense of achievement. Yes! We had completed four days of walking. Certificates of fitness were handed out along with medals. The bar was extra busy. The culmination of the 30th Anniversary of the Castlebar Four Days Walking Festival was the arrival of President Mary Robinson at 6:30 pm. The red carpet was rolled out and a rostrum set up outside the Welcome Inn and those receiving Silver and Gold Medals and special awards were presented to her. There was much excitement as the crowd jostled for positions to take photographs. Mary Robinson made the closing speech and then left for her home in Kilkelly, Co. Mayo.

Around 9 pm, music commenced and the "Blister Ball" got under way. A feeling of sadness descended as the festival ended when they played "Auld Lang Syne" at 1:30 am.

It was good to see support from the Galway Walking Club in the form of Monica Larkin, Myra Duane, Paul Tyler-Maloney, Mary Barrett, Loretta Needham, Jim Nestor, Deirdre Tobin, Una Sheppard, Tom Rea, and Steve Wright.

Tom Rea, Steve Wright, Joe Fadden, Brian McGowan, Dermot Kenny and Enda Coffey provided the Emergency Communications backup for the event as well as having the pleasure of participating in the Four Day Walks.

## SIAMSA NA GAILLIMHE

So you're awfully occupied on Wednesday evenings? What about a group outing on a Monday, Tuesday, Thursday or Friday night? Give your feet a well-needed rest and top up in the cultural field at Siamsa, the Galway folk theatre. Listen to the sound of the concertina, bodhran, harp, accordion, fiddle, flute or banjo in the company of your Galway Walking Club friends.

The show commences at 8:45 pm and concludes at 10:30 pm and there is still time afterwards for tales of adventure and misadventure in the local brew house. Jigs, reels and hornpipes - Tom Huban might enjoy the songs!

The Siamsa cast have been performing music, singing, dancing and folk drama for nine years and are going from strength to strength. If you think that walking for four to five hours takes stamina, watch the dances in Siamsa and tell me would you even try! The cast take you in music, mime and dance through the folklore associated with St. Bridget's Day and make the crosses from rushes pulled in Tuam and Moycullen. These are afterwards presented to the audience for good luck and good health. The Hallowe'en Puca night becomes more frightening than the oldest of us remember as children, while poitin is distributed in lavish quantities during the wake .... The cast have performed these dramas in Lithuania, Finland, Belgium, Holland, France, and Westminster Cathedral.

Feel free to contact the Taibhdhearc theatre for further information (091-562024 or Fax 091-563195). Admission costs £7.00 for individuals or £4.50 for groups of 10 or more.



# DISTANCE WALKING TRAINING HINTS

By Tom Huban

Train by walking regularly, every day if possible, starting with short walks in the early weeks to condition the legs and the feet and then gradually into longer distances.

Keep a log of distances walked.

Find your own ideal speed. Three miles per hour is generally fast enough for most people if they are to keep it up over a long period of hours. Find your own ideal stride length, too long or too short or too quick a stride can cause blisters and joint soreness.

Good health is important, so rest and sleep well and eat healthily.

Most walking is on track so it is essential to prepare for this. The best preparation is to include walking on rough tracks in undulating country as part of your regular training.

When climbing, slow down to a pace which allows you to keep going without straining too hard. Frequent pauses spoil the training effect. Use the stairs instead of the lift when you visit tall buildings. Walking down is as important as walking up!

The daily targets can be made up during two or more sessions in any one day.

For the training schedule, you may prefer to use time instead of distance for your daily stint. To convert to miles, allow 3 to 3.5 miles per hour for walking on the flat and 2 to 3 miles per hour for hilly walking on rough tracks.

Relax as you walk. Tense shoulders and poor posture increase tiredness and are often caused by trying to walk too fast.

Stretching exercises are important during the training and on long walks.

Stretching exercises should be performed to reduce the risk of muscle injury preventing post exercise stiffness and improving performance in walking. These exercises help restore full flexibility after injury.

Develop a daily ten minute stretching routine to be done before and after exercise. Do a five minute warm up then three repetitions of each stretch prior to each exercise.

Do a five minute cool down stretch when finishing exercise.

Adopt a comfortable position.

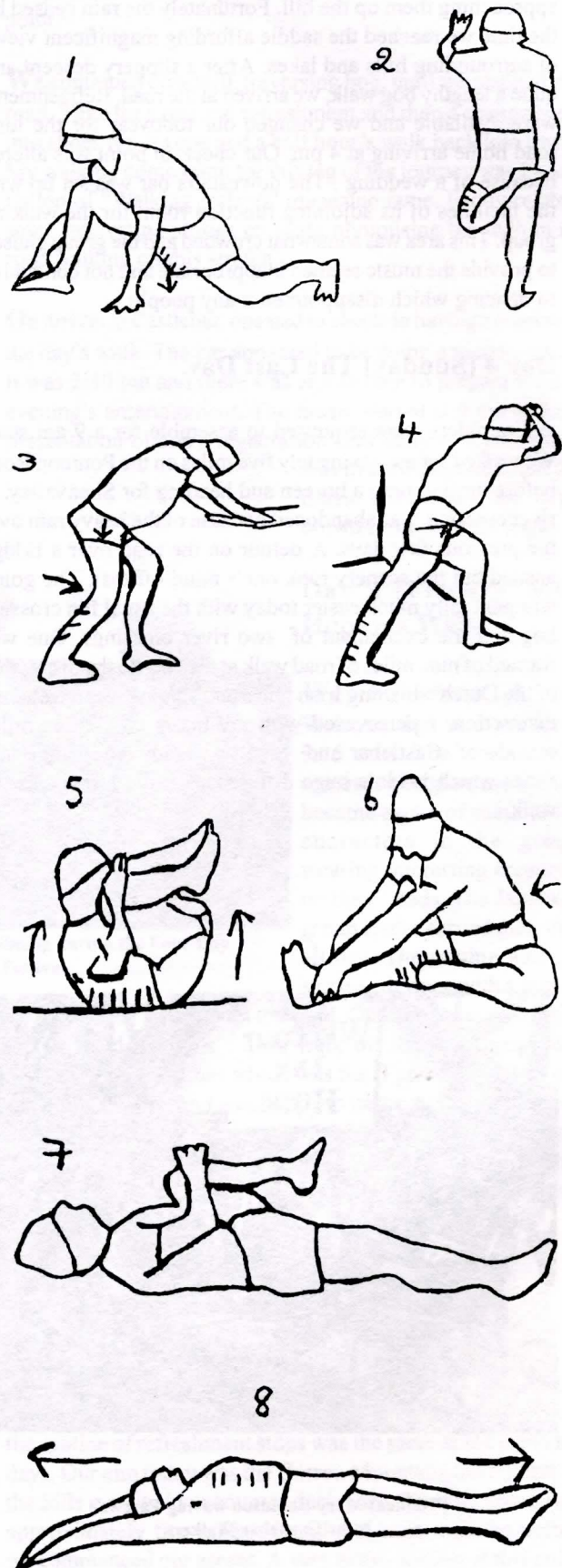
Stretch until you feel a tension in the muscle and hold for 20 to 30 seconds.

Repeat 3 times each side.

Do not stretch into pain.

Do not jerk or bounce.

## STRETCHING EXERCISES







# DOG T\*RDS



by Ollie Sammon

**M**ost mornings I take my dog "Sammie", a Weimeraner for a walk along the Prom in Salthill. Before reaching the Prom, I make sure she does her business in Salthill Park or thereabouts, as it is my experience that there are enough Dog t\*rds on the Prom without "Sammie" adding to them. As you all know, the Prom is one of Galway's favourite walking spots, but at times it can be like trying to walk an obstacle course, one has to be careful, you could have your right foot in Poodle Sh\*t, your left foot in Labrador Sh\*t, and without knowing your right foot again is gone in Yorkie Sh\*t. Really it is not very good for your Nikes, Adidas or in fact, your patience.

When I reach Blackrock with "Sammie" after walking to Blackrock on the Salthill Hotel side of the road, I turn around to attempt the obstacle course. I take off with herself in tow, eyes to the ground, looking for light brown, dark brown, black and sometimes a light puce colour of the hazards of the course.

Looking ahead one sees approaching, a fellow walker, or no, is it a dancer practising some new dance step. Right, left, twirl, left, right and side-step. It must be a new dance, but as you know by now it is called Prom Avoidance. I bump into people like this every few hundred yards, although this early in the morning there are not many around. Ploughing through

the prom one may see, in the distance, a shape. What kind of shape is this, with its arms swinging to the high heavens and its legs moving so fast that it misses most of the dog sh\*t, its hips moving like a Rumba dancer. What is it? Is it man or superman about to take off. Alas, it is only a power walker.

Back to Dog T\*rds, what can we do about them? Some suggestions: Make the owners carry a spade, but then they would probably shovel it into the sea, which is polluted enough already! Tie a little bucket onto the dog's bum - it would probably end up like the first suggestion.

Yes by Jove I've got it - make the dog wear a nappy, a doggy nappy. Inventors would be in line to patent it. Dunnes and Quinnsworth wouldn't be able to keep it in stock. The prom would be Sh\*t-free and we wouldn't have to go so far to find walks on Sunday.

## ITEMS OF INTEREST REQUIRED FOR THE NEWSLETTER A.S.A.P.

Have you taken part in an organised Walking Festival? have you been on a Walking Holiday, or could you write a short article for the newsletter? Feel free to send your masterpiece to Steve for inclusion in the next newsletter which is due for publication at the end of October. This newsletter was slightly delayed whilst waiting for the last of the items to fill the last two pages.



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