



NEWSLETTER

NEXT WALK

Saturday 07 April

**Keeper Hill, Tipperary
(Moderate)**

Leaders: Paf O'Connell, 086 308 6898, (+1)

Meeting: 8:45am, Roslevan

MONTH AHEAD

SUNDAY 08 APRIL

Fanore Beach Clen-Up

13-15 APRIL

REC 2/3 Training

SUNDAY 22 APRIL

Club walk - Knockmealdown Traverse

CHECK OUT CALENDAR ON THE WEBSITE FOR MORE DETAILS

Dates for your Diary!

01-04 June: Summer Party in North Mayo.

Mix of walking and water sports. More details to follow.

BEACH CLEAN-UP

Fanore Beach Clean-Up in collaboration with the Fanore Beach Clean-Ups Group

SUNDAY 08 APRIL
14:00

MEETING AT FANORE
BEACH CAR PARK

CONTACT SUSAN ON 087 6131497

walk Reports

Walk Report - Carrauntoohil, Kerry Sunday 25 February

A: The Full Loop

Sunday February 25 broke with a cool but sunny disposition. Mutterings of bad weather in Killarney were ignored en masse as twenty four hardy souls departed Roslevan.

A scouting trip the previous week had provoked a cancellation of the loop (someone's fingers got cold), with the new plan being for a simpler out and back over Caher to Carrauntoohil. Fortunately Jim McHale started the rumour mill of a rebel breakaway by the time we reached Killarney.

Promises of a forced march and Siberian Gulag conditions ensured that only nine nutters attempted the loop. Tearful, famine ship-like farewells were said and we charged up the concrete path, determined to establish a mighty lead, or at least make sure that the Caher group didn't catch us before the lake.

Initial ascent from Lough Eighter to Skregmore and on to Beenkeragh reminded me of the reason I love this country, scenic views, mild weather and great company. Snow drifts abounded as we ascended into the clouds, jealous of the group we met coming the other direction that would be finished within the hour.



Frantic phone calls from the Caher bound group with dire warnings of groups turning back from Caher ridge as well as Kerry mountain rescue recommendations not to traverse the ridge in high winds, were promptly ignored. Winds were howling, temperatures low and spirits high as we crossed Beenkeragh ridge, relishing the difficult conditions. Kicking footholds in the snow and Fegus' attempt to form a splinter group were all ably managed by Jim, providing an exhilarating crossing.

Meeting a bewildered Connor wearing crampons at O'Shea's gully brought a welcome five minutes respite. A final ascent to Carrauntoohil was quite easy, finding a non-windy spot for lunch was not. Only fools took off their gloves.

Phone calls, plans, counter plans and strategies were all made to figure out how to allow the Caher group to get home after aborting because of the wind. In the end, they just left without us.

Crossing to Caher over ice and compact snow was an exercise in caution that extreme winds didn't take us over the edge. Thankfully, the South-easterly wind was mostly to our backs. To be honest, we lucked out with that.

An easy descent to Lough Eighter was marred only by Jim trying to push his hiking pole fully underwater. We were also extremely grateful for those of the Caher group that didn't abscond with the cars and waited for us. A brilliant experience compared to the whiteout that was the same walk in five metre visibility of the previous year.

Paul Kinnane

B: Via Caher

We left Clare that morning with clear skies above and the hope that it was similar conditions around McGuillicuddy reeks. The thoughts of a clear day brought out a big crowd of eager walkers, 24 in total.



After our usual brief stop for morning refreshments in Killarney we headed for the Hydro Road car park and pulled in to find the sun basking us with very warm sunshine. It was to be a little deceiving! The group split in two here with a number heading up to tackle Beenkeragh and the infamous ridge. The rest of us took the planned route up Caher to hopefully guarantee us landing atop Carrauntoohil. How wrong we were.

On turning the corner to the lakes at the top of the dreaded hydro road we got a taste of the wind that was going to wreak havoc with our nice sunny morning. It must have been 60 or 70 km gusts coming down the valley and we started our ascent up to Caher West (975m).

As we slowly made our way into the headwind up Caher, we met small groups of walkers who had made Caher top but found it was better for their overall health to not try and cross to Carrauntoohil. At that point we were thinking we could be doing the same.

At about 850m we came to the snowline, with large patches of snow and verglas on the rocks. Although we were out of the wind at this stage, verglas made the going very dangerous and slippery. We arrived at Caher West to get hit with the wind that was coming from the south-west, to a point where it was quite difficult to stand up and very hard to traverse the slippery rocks. Navigating across to Carrauntoohil was not possible in those conditions, the head wind was too severe. The leaders made the decision to turn back around to prevent any accidents. We gingerly made our way down below the snow line and back to safer terrain.

Meanwhile the second group were successfully crossing Beenkeragh ridge and successfully made it onto Carrauntoohil (1040m). The trek over to Caher (1001m) was a not as easy due to the winds and verglas rocks and involved the group having to revert to the skill of using all fours on numerous occasions, but made it they did. Big achievement and well done to those involved.

The main group were back at the top of the Hydro Road (Lough Eighter) after 2 o'clock and a number of walkers headed for the cars. The remainder had their drivers in the second group and so they took a stroll up Skregmore and got some nice sunshine while they awaited the arrival of the group off Carrauntoohil.

It was disappointing to have to return without touching the cross, but in such conditions atop the mountain it was the best decision for the main group. Maybe it will have to be conquered again before the end of season, when it's a little warmer!

Paul Curran



St.Patrick's Weekend



BIRTHDAY CAKE, SNOW, RUGBY AND A FEW HILLS—ANOTHER GREAT WEEKEND AWAY!

TO SEE MORE PHOTOS FROM THE WALKS, CHECK OUT THE

WWW.CLAREOUTDOORCLUB.NET WEBSITE GALLERY.

THIS MONTH LOOK OUT FOR: Barn Swallow - *Fainleog* - *Hirundo rustica*

Every year from St Patrick's Day on, this beautiful sub-Saharan migrant arrives back to us from its winter home of southern Africa. A small flock have already been spotted this Tuesday in north Clare. It's hard to believe this tiny bird weighing just 14g travels between 6,000 and 10,000 km one way to get here. Along the way it meets many challenges like storms, drought, predation and crossing the Sahara Desert. All things considered every returning swallow is a champion! Why do they come? To feed themselves and their youngsters on our flying invertebrates.

The swallow has a warm place in Irish hearts and is often referred to in our folklore. It's a welcome sight and heralds the revival of life that spring brings and an end to winter and colder days. It was once believed that when you had your hair cut you should be careful in disposing of the clippings, because if a swallow lined her nest with them you would be afflicted with headaches the whole summer.

Photo of swallow fledgling taken by Susan O'Donohoe under license from NPWS



2018 National Lyme Disease Conference

Taking place on **Saturday 02 June** in UCD. For more information, email: conference2018@ticktalkireland.org or find the event on Facebook, registration costs €40.