



# Tríochoa Bliain ag Siúl









## History of Kenmare Walking Club

The foundation of any club or organisation is not necessarily the day the formal structure is agreed. In most cases years of hard work and organisation is carried out by a group of enthusiasts and so it was with the Kenmare Walking Club. In the early 1980's a local group began to explore the tracks and hills around Kenmare, some of these walkers were members of The Kenmare Literary and Historical Society. They resolved to invite Sean Ó Suilleabháin, author of walking guide book – Southwest of Ireland, as a guest speaker during their Winter Lecture Series.

Those that attended the lecture were enthralled by Sean's knowledge of walks in the Kenmare / Killarney area as well as his detailed knowledge of the folklore of Kerry. Maura Murphy attended the lecture and decided that their walking group should expand their horizons. Maura prevailed upon local scout leaders to lead them on hill walks.



**Below:** Picture of walking club members 1983. Front row from left: Peggy Fitzgibbon, Maura Murphy, Ann Fitzgibbon, Mary Fitzgibbon. Back row from left: Brenda O'Brien, Eileen Daly, Rose Poff, Maeve O'Brien, Mary O'Brien, Catriona O'Neill, Mike Murphy, Nell Crushell, Donal Sleator.





Up to this point The Old Kenmare Road and The Famine Road had been their regular ramble. In 1983, with compass and map, Mike Murphy led the group to the high points of Peakeen, Killaha, Mucksna and Knockanaguish.

While there was no formal structure to the group or walking calendar published, a route would be decided and notice put on "Cliffords Bakery" window. Cliffords window was the recognised notice board for many organisations in the town. In the absence of texts or emails, notice of football team selection, drag hunts, badminton matches or dances were displayed and word spread quickly. Once a month notice of the next hill walk or trek would be posted and walkers assembled at the appointed day and time.

**Below:** Walkers enjoying a break at the top of Hungry Hill 1986.





On the 13<sup>th</sup> May 1985 Sean McCarthy led the group's first walk to Mangerton, a late snow fall left the summit of Mangerton decorated with pockets of snow. The group returned to base flushed with success for a celebratory glass of beer.



From 1985 to 1987 regular walks continued, the walking group took opportunity to mark international events with European music day being the focus of one summer walk. The event was marked with an après walk barbeque and refreshment.

## The Walking Festival Beginnings



During the 1980s Kenmare hosted an annual arts festival on Whit weekend, the *Cibeal Cincise*. As this festival faded local priest Fr. O' Connell proposed that a walking festival should be held during the whit weekend. This led to the formation of Kenmare Leisure Club, with a formal club structure being created in 1989, the first club officers were; Mickey Ned O' Sullivan Chairman, Bernie O' Driscoll Secretary and Julia O' Connor Treasurer. Hill walking was considered a hazardous sport and it was difficult and very expensive to get insurance for running a walking festival.

**Top Left:** Sponsors of the first walking festival

**Right:** The famous Walking Club boot in the Square.

**Above:** Donncha O'Dulaing opening the first Walking Festival in 1989.





And so the Kenmare Leisure Club became a limited company, this afforded a level of protection to the organisers of the walking festival. The first Whit walking festival was held in 1989, it was held over 3 days, highly successful and enjoyable for organisers and participants.



**Above:** Walking Festival guided walk on Cnoc na Toime.

## Striding into the 1990s

In 1990 Mike Murphy took over as chairman from Mickey Ned O'Sullivan, the number of shareholders in Kenmare Leisure Club Ltd increased from two to eleven. The activity of the club increased with hill walks every two weeks and family rambles being introduced on alternate Sundays during the summer. We even have a record of one family ramble being cancelled because the day was too hot!

The club decided to hold a walking festival at Easter and Whit, this led to the formation of a guides group with more club members being coached on navigation. The



expansion of the festival necessitated the purchase of radios (this was pre mobile phone). A five year membership was offered in an effort to increase funds and in 1991 the club purchased four two way radios. Such was the success of the Whit Festival it moved to a week-long event. To celebrate the success of the club the first walking weekend away was organised in October 1991. Benners Hotel in Dingle was the base with many of the group climbing Mount Brandon for the first time.



**Left:** Enjoying the craic at Benners Hotel in Dingle during a successful weekend away.

Family rambles proved very popular during the summer of 1992, the whit festival expanded to take in the English Whit weekend and the following Irish Whit weekend. A walking calendar was produced for June, July and August with a monthly calendar for the autumn and winter. The club applied to become aspirant members of the Mountaineering Council of Ireland.

The Beara and Kerry Ways were still developing into the magnificent walking routes they are today as club activities continued to grow.





**Below:** Group on Maol celebrating Dawson Stelfox's successful ascent on Everest 1993.

By 1993 the Whit Walking Festival had become a ten day event. The practice of holding A and B club walks fortnightly on the same Sunday was changed to A and B on alternate Sundays resulting in walks every Sunday. Dawson Stelfox became the first Irish Man to reach the summit of Everest. The event was appropriately celebrated by the club with a champagne reception on Maol in less than ideal conditions. Service was by waiter and two hostesses in full uniform to the surprise of all the walkers.



The club became a full member of MCI in 1994 and in the same year held its first annual Christmas party. Media attention increased in 1995 and The Cork Examiner, The Kerryman, The Kingdom, the cross channel Evening Post and The Times carried feature articles on walking in Kenmare. Numbers at the 1995 Festival reached an all time high with 113 walkers reaching the summit of Carrauntoohil on one walk. It was also the year Mike Murphy was presented with The Walking Ireland Achievement Award.



To reinforce the safe walking ethos of the club fifteen members attended Mountain Skills courses in Cappanalea . In- house training and field exercises were introduced and extra safety equipment was purchased. Night navigation and Rescue and Emergency first aid courses are regularly carried out by the club. This practice has continued and our walk leaders now maintain a high level of leadership, navigation and first aid skills.



Pat Falvey reached the summit of Everest for the first time on 27th May 1995 and the highlight of the 1996 Festival was his lecture and participation in some of the walks. He joined the club on that occasion and has been a Honorary Member since.



**Left to right:** Paddy Coleman (Festival Chairperson), Pat O'Sullivan, Pat Falvey and Donal O'Sullivan.

**Right:** Pat Falvey and Peter O'Sullivan on Carrauntoohil 1996.







## Walking Away

Our first adventure overseas was to Snowdonia Wales in 1997. This then became an annual event with visits to The Lake District and Scotland in alternate years. Overnight camping trips were introduced with twelve members undertaking a two day Beara border trek. Camping was at Rams Hill deep in the Caha Mountains.

Weekends away through the 1990's included Glenbeigh, Dingle, The Burren, Clonmel, Clifden and Glendalough.

**Right:** Belgelert c1997. From left: Peter O'Sullivan, Paddy Doyle, John Sheppard, Catherine Shortall, Declan Foley, Finbar Smith, Ger Canty, Terry Barrett, Sheila Harrington, Mike Murphy.



The outbreak of Foot and Mouth disease in April 2001 brought a halt to all walking activities. Walking Festivals were cancelled and some club members resorted to cycling and even golf. An Extraordinary General Meeting of the club was held in October to discuss the future of the walking festival. The decision was to resume all activities.

Tragically in 2002 John Lucy and club member Joan O'Leary died while walking Lough Dubh Circuit with their friends. In 2005 Gerry O'Connor lost his life while on a solo walk on the Reeks. To mark their passing we hold an annual memorial walk.





September 2003 saw the club make another great leap, Pat O'Sullivan and Hans Bescancon (Besi) organised the clubs first trip to Europe. This trip to the Alps has become an annual event with trips to France, Switzerland, Austria, Slovenia and Italy completed to date.

A website was activated where all club activities can be seen. Club calendar with a six month programme of walks is published here. Communication nowadays is by e-mail.

In 2007 the club felt that the Walking Festival had run its course and a decision was made to discontinue it.

Training continues to be very important activity for the members. Everyone gets an opportunity to train with approved trainers in Mountain Skills and First Aid on a regular basis.

Members regularly assist in charity events locally and a number of "A" walkers are on call to Kerry Mountain Rescue to assist in searches and recovery. Two people are tasked each week to plan and lead the walk on Sunday. A walk has never been cancelled for lack of walk leader or sweep.



**Top left:** First trip to Lenk, Wkdstrubel summit 3243m in Bernese Alps

**Middle:** Club members on a first aid training course.

**Above:** Hans Bescancon (Besi) in Chamonix.





It would be remiss of us to commit any document to print without expressing our thanks and appreciation to all the land owners who allow us access to the hills and mountains in South Kerry, West Cork and further afield.

What we have presented in this booklet is only a brief snapshot of the past thirty years within the club. There are many more stories to tell and details of walks to recall. The strength of the club for the past 30 years has been the commitment of the officers, committees, organisers of events and walks and particularly the members themselves.

The club started with a group of individuals having an ambition to explore the tracks and hills around Kenmare and it has grown to the point where Snowdonia, Glencoe, the Lake District and the Alps are considered familiar territory. The club will continue to thrive while we have members who look to the high ground, have a sense of adventure and wonder "what is the view like on the far side".

***Left to right:***

Donal O' Sullivan, Sean O' Sullivan & Pat O'Sullivan  
on the Cantilever, Wales





## With thanks to the dedicated committee members 1989–2013

<b>Chairman</b> Michael O Sullivan Walking Festival (3 days) held in June 1989	<b>Secretary</b> Bernie O’ Driscoll	<b>Treasurer</b> Julia O’ Connor		
<b>1990</b>				
<b>Chairman</b> Mike Murphy	<b>Secretary</b> Bernie O’ Driscoll	<b>Treasurer</b> Julia O’ Connor		
<b>Committee</b> Fergal Hayes Nancy Price	James Crushell Donal Sleator Mary Cronin	Conor Daly Tom Buggle Donal O’ Sullivan	Margaret Hanley Martina O’ Shea Pat O’ Sullivan	Mary O Sullivan Jimmy O’ Sullivan
<b>1991</b>				
<b>Chairman</b> Mike Murphy	<b>Secretary</b> Bernie O’ Driscoll	<b>Treasurer</b> Julia O’ Connor		
<b>Committee</b> Mary Cronin	Pat O’ Shea Donal O’ Sullivan	Con Hodnett Pat O’ Sullivan	Fergal Hayes	Tom Buggle
<b>1992</b>				
<b>Chairman</b> Mike Murphy	<b>Secretary</b> Bernie O’ Driscoll	<b>Treasurer</b> Julia O’ Connor	<b>Vice Chair</b> Donal O’ Sullivan	<b>PRO</b> Martina O’ Shea
<b>Committee</b> Mary Cronin	Pat O’ Shea Donal O’ Sullivan	Con Hodnett Pat O’ Sullivan	Fergal Hayes Mary O’ Donoghue	Tom Buggle Donal Sleator
<b>1993</b>				
<b>Chairman</b> Mike Murphy	<b>Secretary</b> Bernie O’ Driscoll	<b>Treasurer</b> Julia O’ Connor	<b>Vice Chair</b> Donal O’ Sullivan	
<b>Committee</b> Mary Cronin	Michael O’ Sullivan Pat O’ Sullivan	Ornait lynch	Joop Duyn	Tom Buggle
<b>1994</b>				
<b>Chairman</b> Donal O’ Sullivan	<b>Secretary</b> Bernie O’ Driscoll	<b>Treasurer</b> Julia O’ Connor	<b>Vice Chair</b> Pat O’ Sullivan	<b>PRO</b> Mike Murphy
<b>Committee</b> Mary Cronin	Joe Crowley Mary O’ Donoghue	Ornait lynch	Paddy Coleman	Hilde Rischbode
<b>1995</b>				
<b>Chairman</b> Donal O’ Sullivan	<b>Secretary</b> Pat O’ Sullivan	<b>Treasurer</b> Julia O’ Connor	<b>Vice Chair</b> Joe Crowley	<b>PRO</b> Mike Murphy
<b>Committee</b> Mary Cronin	Bernie O’ Driscoll	Ornait lynch	Chris Walsh	Hilde Rischbode
<b>1996</b>				
<b>Chairman</b> Donal O’ Sullivan	<b>Secretary</b> Pat O’ Sullivan	<b>Treasurer</b> Con Hodnett	<b>Vice Chair</b> Joe Crowley	<b>PRO</b> Mike Murphy
<b>Committee</b>	Julia O’ Connor	Mary Cronin	Chris Walsh	Hilde Rischbode
<b>1997</b>				
<b>Chairman</b> Joe Crowley	<b>Secretary</b> Pat O’ Sullivan	<b>Treasurer</b> Con Hodnett	<b>Vice Chair</b> John Sheppard	<b>PRO</b> Mike Murphy
<b>Committee</b> Bernie O’ Driscoll	Donal O’ Sullivan Ger Canty	Julia O Connor	Trevor Langley	Hilde Rischbode
<b>1998</b>				
<b>Chairman</b> Joe Crowley	<b>Secretary</b> Trevor Langley	<b>Treasurer</b> Con Hodnett	<b>Vice Chair</b> John Sheppard	<b>PRO</b> Mike Murphy
<b>Committee</b> Dermot Corkery	Donal O’ Sullivan Ger Canty	Julia O Connor	Pat O’ Sullivan	Bernie O’ Driscoll



**1999**

<b>Chairman</b> John Sheppard	<b>Secretary</b> Trevor Langley	<b>Treasurer</b> Dermot Corkery		<b>PRO</b> Mike Murphy
----------------------------------	------------------------------------	------------------------------------	--	---------------------------

<b>Committee</b> Bill Glover	Donal O' Sullivan Ger Canty	Joe Crowley John Cooper	Pat O' Sullivan	Con Hodnett
---------------------------------	--------------------------------	----------------------------	-----------------	-------------

**2000**

<b>Chairman</b> John Sheppard	<b>Secretary</b> Trevor Langley	<b>Treasurer</b> Dermot Corkery		
----------------------------------	------------------------------------	------------------------------------	--	--

<b>Committee</b> Bill Glover	Donal O' Sullivan Ger Canty	Peter O' Sullivan John Cooper	Pat O' Sullivan	Julia O' Connor
---------------------------------	--------------------------------	----------------------------------	-----------------	-----------------

**2001**

<b>Chairman</b> John Sheppard	<b>Secretary</b> Ornait Ni Loingsigh	<b>Treasurer</b> Dermot Corkery	<b>Vice Chair</b> Ger Canty	<b>PRO</b> Peter O' Sullivan
----------------------------------	---	------------------------------------	--------------------------------	---------------------------------

<b>Committee</b> Bill Glover	Donal O' Sullivan Kathleen Cooper	Peter O' Sullivan John Cooper	Pat O' Sullivan	Meredith O' Connor
---------------------------------	--------------------------------------	----------------------------------	-----------------	--------------------

**2002**

<b>Chairman</b> Ger Canty	<b>Secretary</b> Ornait Ni Loingsigh	<b>Treasurer</b> Paddy Daly	<b>Safety Officer</b> Peter O' Sullivan	<b>PRO</b> Mike Murphy
------------------------------	---	--------------------------------	--	---------------------------

<b>Committee</b> Dermot Corkery	Donal O' Sullivan Leonie Lyons	John Sheppard	Pat O' Sullivan	Meredith O' Connor
------------------------------------	-----------------------------------	---------------	-----------------	--------------------

**2003**

<b>Chairman</b> Ger Canty	<b>Secretary</b> Ornait Ni Loingsigh	<b>Treasurer</b> Paddy Daly	<b>Vice Chairman</b> Bill Glover	
------------------------------	---	--------------------------------	-------------------------------------	--

<b>Committee</b> Dermot Corkery Danny Long	Donal O' Sullivan John Skilling	John Sheppard Peter O Sullivan	Pat O' Sullivan Mo Glover	Meredith O' Connor Bernie O' Driscoll
--	------------------------------------	-----------------------------------	------------------------------	--

**2004**

<b>Chairman</b> Ger Canty	<b>Secretary</b> Mary O' Farrell	<b>Treasurer</b> Paddy Daly	<b>Vice Chairman</b> Bill Glover	
------------------------------	-------------------------------------	--------------------------------	-------------------------------------	--

<b>Committee</b> Dermot Corkery Dave Kingerlee	Donal O' Sullivan Ornait Ni Loingsigh	John Sheppard Peter O Sullivan	Pat O' Sullivan Mo Glover	Meredith O' Connor Eilis Mahony
--	--	-----------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------------

**2005**

<b>Chairman</b> Bill Glover	<b>Secretary</b> Mary O' Farrell	<b>Treasurer</b> Paddy Daly	<b>Vice Chairman</b> Peter O' Sullivan	
--------------------------------	-------------------------------------	--------------------------------	---	--

<b>Committee</b> Dermot Corkery Dave Kingerlee	Donal O' Sullivan Ornait Ni Loingsigh Kathleen Lynch	Ger Canty Helen Corkery John Skilling	Pat O' Sullivan Mo Glover	Meredith O' Connor Eilis Mahony
--	--	---	------------------------------	------------------------------------

**2006**

<b>Chairman</b> Bill Glover	<b>Secretary</b> Mary O' Farrell	<b>Treasurer</b> Kathleen Lynch	<b>Vice Chairman</b> Peter O' Sullivan	
--------------------------------	-------------------------------------	------------------------------------	---	--

<b>Committee</b> Dermot Corkery Dave Kingerlee	Donal O' Sullivan Ornait Ni Loingsigh Denis O' Sullivan	Ger Canty Helen Corkery John Skilling	Pat O' Sullivan James O' Farrell	Meredith O' Connor Eilis Mahony
--	---	---	-------------------------------------	------------------------------------

**2007**

<b>Chairman</b> Bill Glover	<b>Secretary</b> Peter O' Sullivan	<b>Treasurer</b> Kathleen Lynch	<b>Vice Chairman</b> Helen Corkery	<b>PRO</b> John Skilling
--------------------------------	---------------------------------------	------------------------------------	---------------------------------------	-----------------------------

<b>Committee</b> Dermot Corkery Dave Kingerlee	Mary O' Farrell Ornait Ni Loingsigh Donal O' Sullivan	Ger Canty Denis O' Sullivan	Pat O' Sullivan James O' Farrell	Meredith O' Connor Eilis Mahony
--	---	--------------------------------	-------------------------------------	------------------------------------



**2008**

<b>Chairperson</b>	<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Vice Chair</b>	<b>President</b>
Helen Corkery	Peter O'Sullivan	Kathleen Lynch	Ger Canty	
<b>Committee</b>	Mary O'Farrell	Margaret Ryder	Pat O'Sullivan	Meredith O'Connor
Dermot Corkery	Ornait Ni Loingsigh	Denis O'Sullivan	James O'Farrell	Eilis Mahony
Dave Kingerlee	Donal O'Sullivan	Hilde Crushell		

**2009**

<b>Chairperson</b>	<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Vice Chair</b>	<b>President</b>
Helen Corkery	Peter O'Sullivan	Eilis Mahony	James O'Farrell	Ger Canty
<b>Committee</b>	Mary O'Farrell	Margaret Ryder	Pat O'Sullivan	Meredith O'Connor
Dermot Corkery	Ornait Ni Loingsigh	Denis O'Sullivan	Kathleen Lynch	
Dave Kingerlee	Donal O'Sullivan	Hilde Crushell		

**2010**

<b>Chairperson</b>	<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Vice Chair</b>	<b>President</b>
Helen Corkery	Jane O'Brien	Eilis Mahony	James O'Farrell	Ger Canty
<b>Committee</b>	Mary O'Farrell	Mary O'Sullivan	Pat O'Sullivan	Meredith O'Connor
Dermot Corkery	Ornait Ni Loingsigh	Denis O'Sullivan	Kathleen Lynch	Peter O'Sullivan
Tina O'Sullivan	Hilde Crushell	Besi Besancon		

**2011**

<b>Chairperson</b>	<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Vice Chair</b>	<b>President</b>
James O'Farrell	Jane O'Brien	Eilis Mahony	Pat O'Sullivan	Ger Canty
<b>Committee</b>	Mary O'Farrell	Mary O'Sullivan	Daphne Bracken	Paddy Mahony
Dermot Corkery	Helen Corkery	Denis O'Sullivan	Kathleen Lynch	Peter O'Sullivan
Tina O'Sullivan	Geraldine Maybury	Hilde Crushell		

**2012**

<b>Chairperson</b>	<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Vice Chair</b>	<b>President</b>
James O'Farrell	Jane O'Brien	Mary O'Sullivan	Pat O'Sullivan	Ger Canty
<b>Committee</b>	Mary O'Farrell	Margaret Ryder	Daphne Bracken	Eilis Mahony
Dermot Corkery	Helen Corkery	Denis O'Sullivan	Kathleen Lynch	Peter O'Sullivan
Tina O'Sullivan	Geraldine Maybury			

**2013**

<b>Chairperson</b>	<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Vice Chair</b>	<b>President</b>
James O'Farrell	John Skilling	Mary O'Sullivan	Pat O'Sullivan	Ger Canty
<b>Committee</b>	Mary O'Farrell	Margaret Ryder	Daphne Bracken	Eilis Mahony
Dermot Corkery	Helen Corkery	Denis O'Sullivan	Kathleen Lynch	Peter O'Sullivan
Tina O'Sullivan	Geraldine Maybury	Jane O'Brien		



Back cover, clockwise from top left: Austria 2010, Lake District 2005, Lenk 2005, Bere Island 2006, Ben Nevis 2006, Austria 2009, Beara Way 2004.





1983



2013

