

Burrenbeo Newsletter March 2008



Minister Gormley to actively pursue World Heritage Site Status for the Burren

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government John Gormley T.D. has announced that his Department will actively pursue efforts to make the Burren Ireland's next UNESCO World Heritage Site within the lifetime of the current Government. In a significant address delivered at the BurrenLIFE conference in Ennistymon, Co Clare, Mr. Gormley stated that as a first step, his Department would shortly begin work on a draft management plan for the Burren.

The Minister stated that the Burren would make a "different type of UNESCO site" compared with the Republic's two other World Heritage Sites - Newgrange and Skellig Michael - due to its size (60,000 ha) and the fact that a relatively large number of people lived and farmed there. However the Minister insisted that the designation would allow for "dynamic living and working environments" as was seen on other areas, most notably the island of Öland in Sweden, another limestone region of great ecological and cultural importance.

According to the Minister's statement "The Burren is the finest example in western Europe of a landscape moulded by the combination of glacial activity and the solution of limestone by water. Besides its unique landscape and geology, the Burren is also renowned for its botanical and archaeological richness and for its wide variety of bird and animal species". However, the Minister warned that efforts to achieve UNESCO status could be threatened by inappropriate farming methods and the removal of large quantities of water-worn limestone pavement for sale.

World Heritage Site status was one of a number of options presented by the Burrenbeo Trust in a recent Heritage Council-funded report titled 'Strategic Management of the Burren - Exploring the Options'. Burrenbeo would love to hear what you think of the merits and drawbacks of this proposal: info@burrenbeo.com

The living farmland: new publication launched

IFA President Pdraig Walsh recently launched a new reference book aimed at Clare farmers providing advice on nature conservation and the protection of important habitats in the context of practical farming. 'The Living Farmland - A Guide to Farming with Nature in Clare' features profiles of nine farmers - including the Casey family from Fanore - who have successfully incorporated environmental management into their farming enterprises.

The publication is a joint initiative between Rural Resource Development (Clare LEADER), Clare IFA, Teagasc and Clare County Council. 'The Living Farmland' profiles the main farm habitats found in Clare, including limestone pavement and orchid-rich grasslands as well as fresh water habitats. Among the topics covered by the book are hedge laying and native tree planting, the management of invasive species, the protection of rare species and the protection of sites of archaeological and heritage importance. The book also highlights common environmental issues confronted by farmers, including greenhouse gases, water quality and agricultural wastes. For copies of this superb publication, please contact Rural Resource Development at 061-361144 or see www.rrd.ie

Burren Walking Marathon Planned

The inaugural Burren Marathon Challenge will take place in Ballyvaughan on Sat. 24th May 2008. The event is being billed as Clare's First Cross Country Marathon and is expected to attract over 300 walkers and runners and to bring €150,000 to the local economy as the area hosts one of the biggest one-day events in the area for a long time. The Marathon will have three separate routes that will cater for all abilities. Route One will extend over 26.2 Miles of Road, Green Road and Rough Terrain, Route Two will run for 13.1 Miles of similar terrain, while Route Three will run along 6 Miles of road. For full details of the routes, please see www.clareburrenmarathonchallenge.com or contact Kevin Mc Cormack from the Ballyvaughan-Fanore Walking club on 086 - 3272472 or 087 - 2691147.

Some flowers in bloom in the Burren this March

Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), Herb robert (*Geranium robertarium*), Dandelion (*Taraxacum* spp.), Herb Robert (*Geranium robertarium*), Common chickweed (*Stellaria media*), Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*), Rue-leaved saxifrage (*Saxifraga tridactylites*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*), Dog violet (*Viola rivinianna*). **Below (l-r): Lesser celandine (*Ranunculus ficaria*), barren strawberry (*Potentilla sterilis*) and blue moor grass (*Sesleria caerulea*).**



Upcoming Events:

Kinvara Thurs. March 6th – Sun. March 9th. Kinvara Drama Group presents 'Dancing at Lughnasa' by Brian Friel. Kinvara Community Centre at 8 pm. Admission: 10 euro, 7 euro concession.

Ennis Wed. March 12th, 8pm. Clare Council Chambers (above County Museum). Janice Fuller (Ecological consultant) 'Buds of the Burren and the Banner' Part of the BurrenLIFE/NPWS Spring Lecture Series. Admission Free. Details at 065 708 9000 or 087 292 54 87. E-mail info@burrenlife.com

Crusheen Wed. March 12th Cúirt sa Cistin with Tony Diviney (Beagh Integrated Rural Development Association). Community Centre, Crusheen. 'The restoration of the holy wells around Seanaglish & Tubber' and 'The Butlers of Cregg'. Contact Anne, tel: 065-6827172, email: heritageinchicronan@gmail.com, website: www.aughty.org

Ennistymon March 31st 8.30pm. Falls Hotel. *With the Cuckoo and Others - Séamus Ennis in Clare*. Lecture by Rianach úí Ógáin. Presented by The North Clare Historical Society. Final lecture in Series.

Kilnaboy Sunday April 13th. [Sonny Murphy Memorial Race](#). The 24th Annual Michael Sonny Murphy Memorial 10 mile road race and 10k fun walk at takes place on at 2pm in Kilnaboy. Contact 065 - 6837875 for details.

Connecting with people with Tourism in the Burren

The Burren Connect project is seeking submissions from members of the public on tourism in the Burren and how it might best be managed. According to project manager Carol Gleeson, 'a truly sustainable approach to tourism can only be achieved with involvement and contribution from local communities'. The Project intends to roll out a number of initiatives in the coming months, including the provision of digital information hubs, designated viewing points for tourists, an information booklet for hospitality businesses, new car parking facilities at the world famous Poulnabrone Dolmen, traffic management initiatives, market research, and an exploration of the suitability of the Burren for designation as a Geopark. Opinions on any of these initiatives or other tourism issues would be greatly welcomed at cgleeson@burren.ie or 065-7072296, or alternatively at emccarthy@burren.ie or 065-7072295.

Eco-Beo: My Burren Heritage

The Eco-Beo programme of heritage education events, delivered by Burrenbeo with support from the Burren Connect Project, is now entering its tenth week. Five modules of the 10-module, 20 week course, have been completed by the 200+ course participants: A Burren introduction, The Geology of the Burren, the Burren in prehistory, the Burren in historical times and Farming and Conservation in the Burren. The next installment of the course will deal with the Culture of the Burren. Fortnightly newsletters containing revision material and assignments are being sent by e-mail to participating schools and are completed by the budding experts. These assignments, along with some useful colour checksheets describing some Burren heritage features, can be downloaded from <http://www.burrenbeo.com/learning-ecobeo-links.aspx>. Go ahead, pit your wits against the new Burren experts! Also: The Burrenbeo Resource Centre & Café Beo is now open from Wed - Sun, 11am - 4pm.