

Burrenbeo Trust Monthly E-Newsletter December 2009 (No. 36)

Burren News

Time to have your say on the Burren

So what do you think? Should the Burren become Ireland's next World Heritage Site or are things best left as they are? Well, now is your chance to have your say on this issue. Following the publication of a new Tentative list of World Heritage Sites which includes the Burren, the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government have issued a call for submissions on the Draft Tentative list. The Burrenbeo Trust would encourage all of its members and other Burren enthusiasts to respond to this call either directly to the Dept or via the Burrenbeo Trust who will be sure to forward your opinions and ideas on the Burren's inclusion. The deadline for the receipt of comments and submissions is 5 p.m. on 23rd December 2009. For details, contact www.environ.ie 01-8883956 or 01-8883954.

Burren suffers effects of unprecedented flooding

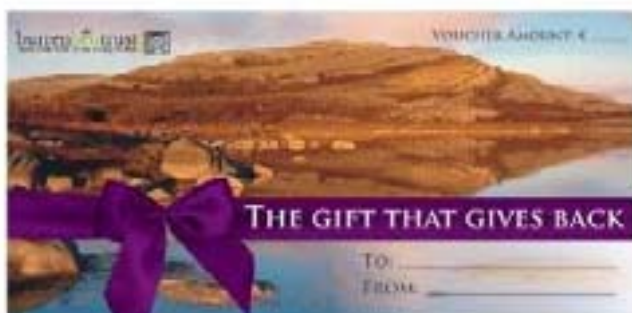


The flooding which afflicted many parts of the west of Ireland over the past week also visited the Burren. Many roads remain blocked, particularly in the east Burren in the hinterland of Gort. There is extensive flooding on fields and several houses have been inundated. A number of reports of water damage to cars has also been reported. Locals have claimed never to have seen such high water levels before. Levels appear to be very slow in receding so it looks as if the problems will persist for some time to come. More info & images on www.theclareherald.blogspot.com

Kinvara Farmers Market will hold its annual Christmas Food and Craft Market on Saturday 5th and Sunday 6th December from 11.00 to 6.00 in the Community Centre, Kinvara. There will be up to 40 Stalls selling a huge variety of seasonal produce and gifts with live music and fun stuff for young and old. This is a great opportunity to get unique hand-made Christmas gifts and to buy or order your Christmas food and drink early, such as your Christmas Turkey, Goose and Ham, Seafood, Shellfish and Cheese, Wine, Deli products and Vegetables, plus Cakes, Puddings and Baked goods. A Christmas Café, will be serving soup, light lunches, teas, coffees and other yummy homemade refreshments.

Christmas Shopping in the Burren - a present with a future

This Christmas, why not buy a Burrenbeo Trust voucher for your friends and family? You can buy a nicely presented gift voucher for any amount and the receiver can use it to buy books or CDs on the



Burren, pay towards a Trust membership or buy some delicious home-baked cakes and great coffees in Cafebeo. This is a gift that gives to the receiver but all proceeds feed back into the Burrenbeo Trust and towards conserving this precious region. If you wish to purchase a voucher or to send one out to someone special, please contact us on trust@burrenbeo.com, or phone 091638096.

Ten years of the Lismorhaun Singers To mark the 10th Anniversary of the Lismorhaun Singers, many of the lead singers including Peter O'Donohue, Kate Daly and Katie O'Donoghue will be returning the region to give a series of festive concerts in North Clare. Each of the three concerts will raise money for a local charity. The concerts will take place on the 12th, 16th, and 17th December in Lisdoonvarna, Ennis and Ballyvaughan respectively. Tickets €15 or €50 for family available from Jordans in Lisdoonvarna, Mooneys in Ballyvaughan, Crosbies in Ennistymon and Sceal Eile in Ennis.

On your bike A cycle loop of Clare featuring the Burren has been voted as one of the world's top 10 cycle routes by the world's biggest selling travel book - Lonely Planet. *Beginning in fertile lowlands flanking the Shannon estuary, this route rolls past golden-sand beaches to the dramatic Cliffs of Moher facing the Atlantic. Next come the music hotbed towns of Milltown Malbay and Doolin, where you enter a pub only if you're in for the long haul - leaving before the last song is sung seems a monstrous breach of etiquette. From here progress to the relentlessly grey, yet captivating, limestone expanse of the Burren, reminiscent of a lunar landscape. Then take a sojourn into Yeats' country before sauntering back in a loop through Co. Clare's gentle patchwork countryside* www.theage.com.au

No time like the present There's no time like right now to capture the essence of the recent past before it slips away. The Clare Oral History and Folklore Group is a volunteer organisation that is been set up to achieve just this. The group is being established to preserve as much of Clare's oral history and folklore as possible through recordings. More info clarememories@eircom.net or 087 9160373.

Special deals in Co. Clare The recent launch of www.clareoffers.com show that special deals that are on offer at any time in the banner the county. The new website aims to give a boost for tourism in Co.Clare and is part of the growing website www.clare.ie More info. from Maureen Cleary 065 6846462

Interested in volunteering? The Burrenbeo Trust has recently received Local Agenda 21 funding to carry out a volunteer programme in 2010. We hope to allocate a day a month when individuals can come to an area in the Burren and help with key conservation issues such as scrub encroachment, rebuilding stone walls, litter picking, taking down mini-dolmens. There is something for everyone, so why not get involved? Volunteer opportunities are also available in our Trust building in Kinvara helping with our information centre and our conservation café. We are currently compiling a database of volunteers. To register your interest and be kept informed of when the volunteer days will take place, please email trust@burrenbeo.com and we will let you know of upcoming events and give you a job! The Burrenbeo Trust would like to give a special thanks to this month's volunteers **Richard and Linda Morrison**. The Trust is grateful their time selflessly given in helping us out with the work that we do.



Farming to conserve the Burren



BurrenLIFE, the Carron-based conservation project which looks at ways in which farming systems can be adapted to help protect the habitats of the Burren, presented some of its pioneering research findings at its closing seminar in Gort recently. The EC-funded project, sponsored by NPWS, partnered by Teagasc and Burren IFA, is scheduled to conclude in Jan 2010.

One of the highlights of the event was a paper from a team of researchers from NUI Galway outlining the significant economic benefits generated – but rarely valued – by farming for conservation as piloted by BurrenLIFE. Using innovative 'choice' experiment techniques, the researchers found that members of the public expressed a high 'willingness to pay' for a range of ecological services generated through farming for conservation including landscape, biodiversity and a clean supply of water. Lead researcher Dr. Tom van Rensburg explained that Burren 'conservation farmers' produce quality food and maintain a heritage that attracts large numbers of tourists but they also deliver a range of ecosystem services for which the public have a 'willingness to pay' estimated at €842 per hectare!

Another presentation was by hydrogeologist Dr. Pamela Bartley who spoke about the development of a Nutrient Export Model for the Burren. This model was used to identify the potential water-quality benefits generated through the BurrenLIFE approach as a result of the different grazing and feeding regimes piloted by the project. Dr. James Moran of Sligo IT outlined these innovative systems, developed in conjunction with Teagasc. The Burren-specific feeding system use Irish sourced GM-free ingredients to sustain cattle on Burren hills over the winter, cutting back on the potentially damaging use of silage. This 'outwintering' system stimulates cattle to graze back rank vegetation which in turn promotes species-rich grasslands in the spring time while minimising nutrient losses.

The project's scientific co-ordinator, Dr. Sharon Parr showcased some of the initial findings of the BLP's ecological monitoring work. She showed data demonstrating how better grazing has helped increase biodiversity of limestone grasslands but noted that scrub encroachment remains a major problem in the Burren, one that will require direct intervention to address. In his paper, former BLP finance and operations officer, Mr. Ruairí Ó Conchúir noted that Burren farmers are 'piloting a farming system which has significantly increased their household income levels through on farm conservation measures including the maintenance of dry-stone walls, scrub removal work and the development of 'conservation grade' Burren beef and lamb'.

Other speakers included local farmers Patrick McCormack and Michael Davoren who spoke about the impact of the scheme on their farms and on their livelihoods. BurrenLIFE Project Manager, Dr. Brendan Dunford, claimed that the 5-year research programme undertaken by BurrenLIFE offered a compelling argument for continued public support. 'We can show that the BurrenLIFE model of farming can help increase biodiversity on our farms while maintaining animal health, water quality and farmer income. What's more we know the costs involved in this and we now know that society is willing to meet these costs as they generate significant public benefits'.

In July 2009, the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Mr. Brendan Smith TD allocated €1 million per year for the next three years to Burren farmers to roll-out a programme based on the findings of BurrenLIFE. It is hoped that additional funding will be secured in 2010 to support an operational budget in order that the programme delivers maximum impact and value for money.

For further info on BurrenLIFE: www.burrenlife.com

Right: local farmers rebuilding a stone wall in order to restore grazing to an area of Burren grassland.



Burrenbeo Events Calendar for Dec 2009 (print and post!)

Sat 5th-6th December, Kinvara. The Kinvara Farmers Market is holding its annual Christmas food and craft market from 11am-6pm each day in the community centre. Up to 40 stalls selling a huge variety of seasonal produce and gifts with live music and entertainment for young and old.

Sat 5th December, Kilfenora. A Transition Towns meeting at 7pm in Vaughan's Barn to spark the creation of a Transition Initiative in Lisdoonvarna, Kilfenora and the surrounding areas. Open to everyone. For more information email boghill@eircom.net

Sun. 6th December Fanore 4.5hrs loop walk to Deserted Village. Leader: Kevin McCormack 086 3272472. Meet: O'Donoghue's Pub @ 10.30 leave @ 11.00am. www.ballyvaughanfanorewalkingclub.com

Sun 6th December, Crusheen. Crusheen Christmas Fair will take place in the community centre from 12.30-6pm. Items for sale include firewood, cakes, vegetables, Christmas trees etc.

Sun 6th December, Slieve Carron. Burrenbeo Trust monthly walk - *Folklore of the Burren* guided walk with Tony Kirby. Meet at Slieve Carron Nature Reserve layby. Free for Burrenbeo Trust members and €5 charge for non-members. More info on trust@burrenbeo.com or 091 638096.

Mon 7th December, Lahinch. The Burren Sub Aqua Club is holding an open night at the Shamrock Inn in Lahinch from 8pm with a try a dive afterwards in the Lahinch pool. Anyone over 16 who can swim is welcome. For more information visit www.burrensubaquaclub.com or call 086 8180044.

Sat 12th December, Lisdoonvarna. Lismorhaun Singers Concert. Tickets €15 or €50 for family from Jordans in Lisdoonvarna, Mooneys in Ballyvaughan, Crosbies in Ennistymon and Sceal Eile in Ennis.

Sun. 13th December Ballinalacken to Ballyvaughan loop walk. Duration: 4.5hrs. One climb. Leader: Michael Queally 086 0767776 Meet: Pier Ballyvaughan @ 10.00am walk @ 10.30am.

www.ballyvaughanfanorewalkingclub.com

Wed 16th December, Ennis. Lismorhaun Singers Concert. Tickets €15 or €50 for family from Jordans in Lisdoonvarna, Mooneys in Ballyvaughan, Crosbies in Ennistymon and Sceal Eile in Ennis.

Thurs 17th December, Ballyvaughan. Lismorhaun Singers Concert in St John the Baptist Church. Tickets €15 or €50 for family from Jordans in Lisdoonvarna, Mooneys in Ballyvaughan, Crosbies in Ennistymon and Sceal Eile in Ennis.

Sun. 20th December Clarinbridge. Town Island. Duration: 4hrs. Flat Coastal Walk. Leader: Kevin McCormack 0863272472. Meet: Clarinbridge Church @10.30am walk @11am.

www.ballyvaughanfanorewalkingclub.com

Sun. 27th December Ballyreen loop walk. Duration: 4.5hrs. Small Climb. Leader: Anne Marie McMahon 0879847025. Meet: Ballyreen, Fanore @10.30 Walk @11.00am. www.ballyvaughanfanorewalkingclub.com

Throughout December, Cliffs of Moher. Tomás O'Maoldomhnaigh will exhibit over 30 pieces of original art including oils on canvas, acrylic on canvas and water colours in Atlantic Edge Exhibition at the Cliffs of Moher. The exhibition is open every day in the visitor centre from 09.00am-17.00.

Tickets available online www.cliffsofmoher.ie

Sun. 3rd January Fanore. Annual Alzheimer's Walk. Duration: 2.5 hrs. Road/Green Road. Leader: Mary/Gerry Howard 087 2446807. Meet: O'Donoghue's Pub Fanore @12.30 Walk @ 1pm

www.ballyvaughanfanorewalkingclub.com

Join the Burrenbeo Trust!

This e-newsletter is a free resource to those interested in the Burren but if you really want to make a difference, please become a Burrenbeo Trust member and your support will be invested directly in local educational initiatives, information dissemination and research and advocacy work on the sustainable future of the Burren.

Join now: 091-638096 / trust@burrenbeo.com

Burrenbeo Trust News & Updates

Cafébeo, Kinvara. Don't forget to visit the Burren's only conservation café - 100% non-profit! Enjoy the feel good factor when you have yummy home-baked muffins and some fair-trade coffee as all proceeds are going straight back into the work of the Trust and thus the surrounding environment! If you are a member you get 10% discount, if you are not a member of the Trust, why not become one! Plus is a great place to pick up some last minute Christmas shopping for friends and family - Burren books, CDs, gift vouchers or a Trust membership. Remember all proceeds go straight back into the work of the Trust! A great present this Christmas!



Winter opening. The Burrenbeo Trust Centre and Cafébeo is open Wed-Sat 10.30-16.00. The offices and café will close for our winter break from the 19th December - 17th February.

Trust's Monthly Walk: This month's walk will be led by Tony Kirby and is titled '*Folklore in the Burren*'. Tony is the owner/operator of Heart of Burren Walks and he has been conducting guided walks in the Burren region for six years now. His first publication entitled "The Burren and the Aran Islands - A Walking Guide" came out this year. This walk will take place at Slieve Carran Nature Reserve (Eagle's Rock) at 2pm on the 6th December. All are welcome. Free to Burrenbeo Trust members, minimum donation of €5 for non-members. More info from Brigid on trust@burrenbeo.com or 087 9689486. We are grateful to Dr James Moran for leading the November walk on Turloughs.

Trust's Monthly Talk: This month's talk will be by archaeologist Dr Michelle Comber from NUI Galway and is titled '*Ringfort landscapes - living in the Burren in the first millennium AD*'. Michelle's research interests lie mainly in the archaeology of Ireland's Early Medieval period, especially its fine metalwork, economy and settlement. She has over 15 years excavation experience and she is currently directing a project examining the settlement landscape of the Burren in the first millennium AD. All are welcome. Free to Burrenbeo Trust members, minimum donation of €5 for non-members. More info from Brigid on trust@burrenbeo.com or 087 9689486. Thanks to Nutan for hosting the November talk

Need a venue? Having a meeting, a presentation, workshop or even a Christmas party? The Burrenbeo Trust is now offering the first floor of the Burrenbeo building to rent out. Tea, snacks, lunch or finger food are also available. Powerpoint facilities available. trust@burrenbeo.com or 091 638096.

Burren talks. Do you have a group of people that wish to know more about the Burren? The Burrenbeo Trust is now available to give talks to groups or tours on the Burren. We have a half hour presentation that is an ideal introduction to the Burren plus you can have a nice cup of tea and some homemade cake. trust@burrenbeo.com or 091 638096.

Information for Burren Businesses. Do you have a business in the Burren and would like more information on what the Burren is about? If so, we can organise an information session for you and your staff on the geology, archaeology, flora, fauna, culture and conservation of the Burren. By being more informed, you could become a champion of the Burren and maximise how you promote your region. trust@burrenbeo.com or 091 638096.

We would like to wish a joyful Christmas to all the Patrons, Friends, Members and Volunteers of the Burrenbeo Trust.

Thanks for your support!

