Burrenbeo Trust Monthly E-Newsletter October 2009 (No. 34)

Burren News

A new face for the Trust The Burrenbeo Trust is restructuring its Headquarters in Kinvara and due to open its new café and information centre on the 14th October. We will be offering 10% discount at Café beo to all Burrenbeo Trust members. So bring in your membership card and have an organic fair-trade coffee, a delicious home-baked slice of cake, or one our freshly-made sandwiches and salads. Café beo is non profit - 100% of all the proceeds from the café are fed back into the Trust’s work of providing information, education and conservation in the Burren. So please come along and help support Café Beo - a café with a conscience!

National Landscape Conference 2009 The Heritage Council are hosting this major event on October 14th-16th next (www.heritagecouncil.ie). Among the speakers will be Michael Davoren, Chairman of Burren IFA who will present a case study from the Burren. Burrenbeo Trust, with support from the Heritage Council and Burren IFA, have been very active in addressing landscape management issues including commissioning a report by Dr. Stephen Ward on Strategic Management Options and by conducting a detailed survey of 111 Burren farm families to capture their perspective on the Burren landscape and their role in its future management. The results of this important survey are available now for download on www.burrenbeo.com

Winterage recommences As the last of the summer’s visitors bid farewell and the final blooms of scabious, knapweed, goldenrod and eyebright fade away, herds of cattle are taking to the limestone hills of the Burren once again, as they have done for centuries. The ancient tradition of winter grazing, which normally kicks off from October onward, is not only one of the key cultural traditions of the Burren, but is a practice which has been shown to underpin the presence of much of the Burren’s special plants and habitats.
In times past, herds of shorthorn ‘stores’ (beef animals) were herded onto the hills and were outwintered there until the first spring grass was ready in the lowlands, usually in April or May. Today, herds of suckler cows of mixed breed take to the hills and feast on the remnants of the herbs and grasses so admired by summer tourists, finding warmth on the karst pavements and water in the calcium-rich springs and turloughs. By removing this vegetation when plants are dormant, the cattle clear the way for another rich summer flowering and help stave off scrub encroachment onto the karst and the monuments for which the Burren is famed. For more info on efforts to maintain traditional winterage systems in the Burren visit www.burrenlife.com

Back to work - a herd of suckler cows head to the hills for another winter.
Caherconnell - Prehistoric arrowhead found
A team of archaeologists conducting an excavation at Caherconnell stone fort in the central Burren have uncovered an arrowhead dating from 4,500 years ago. Director of the dig Graham Hull said that the arrowhead dates to approximately 2500 BC. Also found at the site were hundreds of stone tools and pottery dating to the Late Neolithic period or Early Bronze Age, as well as a sandstone saddle quern and a granite rubbing stone that would have been used to grind cereals in the prehistoric period. Visit www.burrenforts.ie for info.

Burren foods receive National acclaim. Heartiest congratulations to the Burren Smokehouse & Visitor Centre in Lisdoonvarna who won the Best Producer accolade at the Good Food Ireland Awards recently and to Inagh Farmhouse cheese who won Best Export Organic Product title.

Playing around St. Josephs N.S. Kinvara has opened its new playground and sports complex. This is a fine community resource and a great social point for parents and children alike, and is open to the public. The playground surface is made from rubber granules from recycled sports shoes.

Congratulations to Dr Maria McNamara who won the prestigious Charles Lyell Award Lecture by the British Scientist Association for her work in the area. Maria worked for the Burren Connect project for the past year, during this time she made a huge contribution towards interpreting Burren geology and teaching adults and children alike about the rocks around them.

Burren Walking Festival Several hundred walking enthusiasts took to the Burren hills last weekend to partake in the first ever Burren Peaks Walking Festival organised by the Ballyvaughan Fanore Walking Club www.ballyvaughanfanorewalkingclub.com Featuring some spectacular walks, from gentle strolls to day-long hikes, the event showcased the best of the Burren, not only in terms of the quality of the walks, but the co-operation of local landowners who generously hosted the walkers on their farms. Well done to all involved.

Reaching the Burren Diaspora www.burrenbeo.com, Burrenbeo’s independent information portal for the Burren, had 770 unique visitors per day to its website in September 2009, a 52% year on year increase. In addition, the Burrenbeo Monthly E Newsletter wings its way to almost two and a half thousand Burren enthusiasts all over the world every month. Please print and display this newsletter if you work in a public place, also please circulate this newsletter to your mailing list. This website and newsletter are compiled by Trust volunteers and represent an independent voice for the Burren, so we appreciate your support in helping us fulfil this important role. We are always happy to include information from local organisations and info on free or fundraising events and we are always interested in hearing from anyone out there with a Burren story to tell.

Autumn hues - Greater knapweed (Centaurea scabiosa) & devil's-bit scabious (Succisa pratensis)
Burren Events Calendar for October 2009

Thurs. 1st October, Ennistymon. An evening of poetry in the Courthouse Gallery, Ennistymon at 8.30pm. A selection of poets celebrate All-Ireland National Poetry Day. Free event, more info. at www.salmonpoetry.com/events.html Also at the Courthouse: ‘Strange the rooms we’ve all lived in’ is an exhibition of new multimedia work by artist Fiona O’Dwyer to October 19th.

Thurs. 1st October, Kinvara. The Pier Head Restaurant is hosting a fundraiser for the new playground in Kinvara. The night includes a four-course meal, entertainment from Carmel Dempsey, along with an auction on the night. Tickets available from St. Joseph’s School.

Sat. 3rd October, Clarinbridge. ‘Wet Paint’ is an exhibition by six local Artists - Mark Dwyer, Jim McKee, Mary Nadon O’ Neill, Joe McCaul, Frank Sanford and Mary Harrison. Opens Sat. Oct 3rd at 8pm. Above Poppy Seed Restaurant. Part of Clarinbridge Arts Festival. Runs to Oct. 11th.

Sun. 4th October, Ballyvaughan. Exploring the Underworld - cave geology with David Drew at 2pm. In conjunction with Allwee Caves. Places limited. Part of National Trails Day 2009. For more information contact trust@burrenbeo.com or phone 087 9689486.

Friday 9th October, Ennistymon. Clare Harvest Banquet is at 8pm in the Falls Hotel. A five-course meal where everything - including the wine - is from County Clare. Live music will also be provided. Tickets are €50 and available on 065 7071004.

Sat. 10th October Corofin. A charity cycle featuring some of Clare’s best known sport personalities hopes to raise in excess of €5,000 for Acquired Brain Injury Ireland and TLC - Tipperary Limerick Clare - for Cystic Fibrosis. The 90km cycle through the Burren will include former Clare All Star Seamus Clancy and Clare hurler Tony Griffin. diarmuid.killeen@gmail.com

Sat. 10th October, Fanore. The Clare Branch of the Irish Wildlife Trust is holding a guided walk on Sand Dune Erosion Protection Work at 11am, meeting at the Fanore National School. Speakers include Sean Ward (ex. Clare County Council), Billy Flynn (IWT Director), Penny Bartlett (NWS ranger), Martin McKeown (geologist), John Murphy (Birdwatch Ireland) and Stephen Ward (botanist). An opportunity to study sand dunes and problems arising from natural and human erosion and also the work done to prevent this happening. Free event 087 9319459.


Sat. 11th October, Kinvara. A Burren Miscellany in Johnston’s Hall in Kinvara at 8.30pm. A celebration of the rich folklore and music of the Burren with poetry, song, stories, reminiscences and a surprise guest. Info at trust@burrenbeo.com or telephone 091 638096.

Sat. 11th October, Cliffs of Moher. Children’s Halloween Party 4-6pm including a Children’s Disco, Halloween Games, pumpkin carving, face painting, tattoos, trick or treat. Prizes for best dressed, free photos taken on the night. Tea/coffee and barmbrack for adults. Kids receive a goody bag and party food. €10 per child, free adult with every paying child (extra adults €4).

All October, Ennistymon. Ennistymon library will hold numerous events throughout October to celebrate Children’s Book Festival, 2009. Various children’s authors will be visiting, there will also be a children’s puppet theatre performed by The Dog and String Theatre Company. More details at www.childrensbooksireland.com or contact the Ennistymon Library on 065 7071245.

Feral Goats fighting for supremacy during the goat rutting season in the Burren
Burrenbeo Trust News & Updates

**AGM:** The Burrenbeo Trust Annual General Meeting will be held on the 31st October at 2pm in the Burrenbeo Trust Information Centre. This will be followed by an evening titled *A Burren Miscellany* in Johnston's Hall in Kinvara. The line-up will include poetry, song, folklore, reminiscences and a surprise guest. This very special show will start at 8.30pm and is open to not just Trust members but everyone with an interest in the Burren. More info to follow.

**Trust's Monthly Walk:** The next Burrenbeo Trust Walk will be on Sunday 4th October with Dr David Drew on *Exploring the underworld - cave geology.* With support from Aillwee Caves as part of National Trails Day. September's walk was led by botanist Dr Stephen Ward who explored the habitats and plants of Muckanagh Lough, ably assisted by local farmer Michael Keane, on what was a very wet and windy outing (picture below).

*[Left: Admiring Autumn Lady's Tresses orchids during the September Walk with Stephen Ward and Michael Keane.]*

**Trust's Monthly Talk:** The next Burrenbeo Trust talk is with local artist Deirdre O’ Mahony and is titled *An artist in the Burren*. The talk will take place at The Burrenbeo Trust Centre, Kinvara on Thurs. 15th Oct at 8.30pm. Free for members and a €5 minimum donation for non-members. More info from [trust@burrenbeo.com](mailto:trust@burrenbeo.com) or 087 9689486. August’s talk was carried out by archaeologist, Dr Marion Dowd in the Michael Cusack Centre on her fascinating excavations in Glencurran cave. Marion recently published a paper on this dig, info@burrenbeo.com for a copy.

**Why not volunteer?** The Burrenbeo Trust are currently compiling a list of people that would be interested in volunteering out in the Burren for an afternoon. If you would like to register your interest please email [trust@burrenbeo.com](mailto:trust@burrenbeo.com) and we will let you know of upcoming events.

**Burrenbeo Trust Resource Centre:** The Burrenbeo resource centre and Café Beo in Kinvara will be open Wednesday - Saturday 10.30am - 5pm from Wednesday 14th October. The Resource Centre contains loads of free information on the Burren - and acts as an office base for Trust Communications officer Brigid Barry so drop in anytime if you wish to discuss the Trust’s work.

**Café Beo:** Café Beo has always been a popular café in Kinvara offering the best cup of coffee in the Burren as well as supporting as many local producers as possible. We are grateful to Ann O’Connor for all her hard work in building up the Café over the past 5 years. Now the Burrenbeo Trust will be integrating the Café into its core functions and hopes to create an environment to read and learn more about the Burren while enjoying excellent food and drinks. Following its re-launch on October 14th, the café will continue to provide free wi-fi, Burren books and maps of the region as well as holding exhibitions from local artists and photographers. Trust members get a 10% discount in the café, another good reason to join the Burrenbeo Trust family!

Join the Burrenbeo Trust! This e-newsletter is a free resource to friends of Burrenbeo Trust, but to become more involved in the protection of the Burren, please join the Burrenbeo Trust. Become a member of this Charity and your support will be invested directly in local educational initiatives (Ecobeo programme), information dissemination (resource centre, website etc.) and work on the sustainable future of the Burren. Members will receive exclusive packs including an award-winning CDROM, a subscription to the biannual magazine Burren Insight, Burren postcards, free entry into the Trust’s monthly walks and talks, 10% Café Beo discount etc. Join by calling 091-638096 / e-mailing [trust@burrenbeo.com](mailto:trust@burrenbeo.com)