

Burrenbeo Trust Monthly E-Newsletter January 2009

Welcome to the first monthly e-newsletter of the Burrenbeo Trust. The Burrenbeo Trust was officially launched on Dec 5th last by Professor David Bellamy, ably assisted by Heritage Council Chairman Dr. Conor Newman, Burren IFA Chairman Michael Davoren and almost 300 Burren enthusiasts. The Trust is a membership-based registered charity with an independent board of Directors and replaces the existing Burrenbeo initiative. Patrons of the Trust include Seamus Heaney, Michael Viney, Bishop William Walsh among others. The Trust aims to encourage a greater appreciation of the Burren as a living landscape of international importance, to engage in research, consultation and dissemination of information and to promote the holistic and self-sustaining conservation and development of the Burren. We hope you can join with us in this exciting work.

Burren Spring Conference 2009: The Burren: Life, Language, Landscape

The Burren Spring Conference 2009 will take place at the Burren College of Art from Feb 6th - 8th next. This year's director is author and journalist Fintan O'Toole and the theme is The Burren: Life, Language, Landscape. The Burren is both a real place and an imagined space. It has been shaped over the millennia by human needs and actions and continues to be a home for communities, for families, and for livelihoods. It is not timeless, but continues to be shaped by history, by politics, and by the radically shifting climate. Yet it is also an image, an inspiration, and a source of endlessly varied representations. In one guise, it belongs to the field of culture; in another to that of art. In one, it is part of the flow of time; in the other it is envisaged as a timeless landscape. In one it is specific and local; in the other it is part of the deeply mythologised West of Ireland.

How do these competing visions relate to each other? Must they always be at odds, or can they be mutually enriching? Can they overlap in the remembering of the past and the conception of the future? How can the imaginative energy of artists enliven the struggle to maintain the Burren as a sustainable living space in a world threatened by climate change? How can the real historical experience of the people who have lived here enrich the ways in which the Burren is represented and understood?

To explore these themes, a stellar cast of speakers has been assembled. Topics and speakers will include Michael Longley (Poems of the Burren and the West of Ireland), Marek Kohn (Climate Change and the Burren), Tim Robinson (Landscape, Memory and Amnesia), Enda Longley (Poetry, Ecology and the Burren), Breandan O'Cathaoir (Violence in the Burren) and Garry Hynes (Questioning the West - in conversation with Fintan O'Toole). Places are limited. For more information, please call 065-7077200 or e-mail brid@burrencollege.ie

In memory...



January 4th was the first anniversary of the sudden death of Burren poet John O'Donohue. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam.

Fluent

I would love to live
Like a river flows,
Carried by the surprise
Of its own unfolding.

(from 'Conamara blues')

New Burren Geopark approved! (source: Fermanagh Herald)

The world heritage body, UNESCO, has approved an application by local authorities in Cavan and Fermanagh to recognise the Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark as a cross-border geopark straddling the Fermanagh-Cavan border. This involves an extension of the existing Marble Arch Geopark in Fermanagh to include sites in Cavan such as the Cuilagh mountains the Shannon Pot, and the Cavan Burren, a karst limestone region similar in character (though not in size) to its more illustrious namesake. According to a spokesman for the park, 'It brings in some very iconic sites associated with Ireland. If you look at the Shannon pot, it is the source of Ireland's biggest river and the Burren will be a famous place when it is developed'. Meanwhile discussions regarding Geopark status for the 'other' Burren are ongoing - see www.burrenconnect.ie/geopark for details.

Know your Burren

The extraordinary wealth of published material generated from the Burren has been further enhanced by the recent release of a training CD ROM by the Burren Connect Project. The Burren Connect Interactive Information CD Rom uses photographs, text, voice-over and a quiz to impart information on the Burren in an enjoyable and accessible way. The information is in 5 sections; *Geology & Landscape*, *Archaeology & History*, *Flora & Fauna*, *Agriculture & Land Use* and *Culture & Community*. www.burrenconnect.ie for details.

Things to do in the Burren this January - some active, healthy options

Things are quiet in the Burren this time of year. What with the recent - and very welcome - dry spell, the fresh cool air and the lovely winter light it's a great time to have a stroll and appreciate the real Burren on your own terms. You'll see plenty of cattle on the hills, most of them suckler cows. They will begin calving in the coming weeks so farmers tend to give them some extra silage or ration to help prepare them. Herds of feral goats are also very visible now, without leaves on the trees to hide them as they seek shelter from wind and rain. In terms of colour on the ground, there's an occasional 'herb robert', chickweed, dandelion or furze bush in flower, but from here on there's always a few early surprises, particular in shaded areas, so keep looking!

Ballyvaughan-Fanore Walking Club January Walks

Jan. 11th Fanore Shore Line (3.5hrs) Shore and Hill, Road and off Road walk. Leader: Michael Queally 086-0767776. Meet: O'Donoghues Pub Fanore at 10.30am walk at 11am.

Jan. 18th Ennistymon-Doolin (3hrs) All Road. Leader: John Sharry 087-2750315. Meet: O'Connor's Doolin 10am

Jan. 25th Noughaville / Kilcorney (3hrs) Flat walk, all road. Leader: Bridie Hehir 087-9625861. Meet:

Noughaville Church, Kilfenora at 10.30am walk at 11am. More info @ www.ballyvaughanfanorewalkingclub.com

Burren Sub-Aqua

The Burren Sub Aqua Club winter training will start in Lahinch pool at 5.30 PM on Saturday, Jan 10th and will include an introductory session for new members and also for those who are thinking about taking up the sport. Anyone who is 16 or over and who can swim is welcome to come along. The club also welcomes divers (e.g PADI, BSAC) who wish to benefit from the facilities of the Burren Sub Aqua Club. More info at 086 8180044.



Parknabinna Wedge tomb, December 2008.

Burrenbeo Trust News and Upcoming Events

Walks 'n' Talks



February 1st, St. Brigid's Day, is planned as the date for the inaugural walk of the Burrenbeo Trust. The walk will last 2-3 hours and will be suitable for all ages. These monthly walks will have a strong educational - and entertainment - element and are also intended as a social occasion for Burren enthusiasts from near and far. More details regarding walks will be circulated to Trust members who are invited free of charge. Others interested in participating should email or visit www.burrenbeo.com to find out more details. The walks will take place on the first Sunday of every month if possible. Monthly talks with a range of Burren specialists will also begin in February with details to be announced shortly.

Fun at your fingertips: New Burren Interactive Heritage Games now-online



A new selection of interactive games was recently launched by Burrenbeo, in association with the Burren Connect Project and ENFO. Games include jigsaws, memory tests and quizzes,

and the games are suitable for all ages and abilities. The real feature of the new games zone is the 'Time Twister' where you must travel back through time to complete a mission to salvage remnants of the Burren, which has been destroyed by environmental disasters. All games are custom designed by Burrenbeo, are highly interactive and educational and are available free to play and/or download. Please visit www.burrenlearning.org

Eco-Beo 09



The Burrenbeo Trust will be carrying out a new round of its hugely successful Eco-Beo Heritage Education Programme in the coming months. This year, the 20-week course will cover communities in Ballyvaughan, Lisdoonvarna, Doolin, Tierneevin among other areas. The course - including field trips, resource packs, expert tutors - is provided free of charge by the Burrenbeo Trust to all course participants. The programme focuses on young people in the Burren, the future custodians of this wonderful landscape, and encourages them to become active leaders in the conservation of their own heritage. For more information see our learning section.

Looking back on 2008

During the past 12 months the Burrenbeo website has had 4m hits and 220,000 unique visitors. The Burrenbeo Resource centre distributed free information to thousands of Burren visitors. Burrenbeo created a range of interactive heritage education games, all available free on-line. Our Eco-Beo educational programme saw 220 new local Burren experts (aged from 10-14) graduate from its 20 week course. All in all, a good year, but with your help 2009 can be even better. The Burrenbeo Trust was successfully launched as a membership-based charitable trust in December 2008 so, remember, now everybody who wants to can have a role to play in Burrenbeo and make a real difference! See below for details on how to join.

Burrenbeo Trust - join us today

Join the Burrenbeo Trust and be a part of the most exciting new conservation movement in Ireland! By joining, you can really help to shape the future of the Burren. Have your say in how the Burren is managed through the Trust by sending us on your opinions, or by giving us feedback on various issues. Join and your resources and support will be invested directly in local educational initiatives, information dissemination (via our resource centre, website, factsheets etc) and consultation (e.g. with Burren farm families). You can join by calling us on (091) 638096, or 087-9689486, by e-mailing us on info@burrenbeo.com or by visiting www.burrenbeo.com