

Burren Peaks Walking Festival

Organised by Ballyvaughan Fanore Walking Club

27th to 29th September 2013

**Event Plan
&
Associated risk assessments**

1.0 Outline of the event

The Burren Peaks Walking Festival is scheduled to take place on the 27th to 29th September 2013. This event is a limestone pavement, road, green road & trail challenge across the Burren, one of Europe's most unique landscapes. This is a very special place & it is paramount that all participants respect the terrain & area. In addition they need to be conscious of personal safety of themselves & the people around them at all times.

1.1 Outline of Health & Safety Responsibilities

The organisers acknowledge their responsibilities in ensuring the safety of all participants & will take every action necessary as is reasonably practicable in ensuring the Safety Health & Welfare of all participants & those involved in the event including members of the public.

1.2 The Route

Over the weekend period there will be 7 different graded walks

- Grade A Walks: Wild Burren Western Peaks Sept. 28th.
Wild Burren Eastern Peaks Sept. 29th.
- Grade B Walks: The Burren Fidhan Sept 28th and 29th.
The Karst Loop Sept 28th and 29th.
The Limestone Carpet Sept 28th and 29th.
- Grade C Walks: The Rine Bird Walk Sept 28th.
The Hag of Loughrask and her Fairy Ring Sept 29th.

Route details can be found on the attached festival brochure at the end of this document.

1.3 Start & Finish

The event will start & finish at the base point in Ballyvaughan Co Clare & all participants will start at the times as indicated on the festival brochure

1.4 Refreshments

Participants are advised to carry a quantity of water & food as well as high energy bars with them to sustain them throughout the event. Refreshments will be available at the Base on completion of each walk.

1.5 Medical Support

Trained first aid personnel (Club members) will accompany all walks. On the day medical support will also be on call from local doctors, Shannondoc and the Shannon based Rescue Helicopter is, as always, available in a serious incident.

1.6 Event Walk leaders

Prior to the event all walk leaders will receive a brief outlining their responsibilities in relation to actions to be taken in the event of any serious accident or injury taking place or the removal or retirement of any participant from any of the events.

All walk leaders will have communication while out on the route at all times with the event coordinator through telephone in addition they will be provided with a first aid kit & sufficient food & water to sustain them for the duration of their time on the ground.

1.7 Waste Disposal

All involved participants & organisers are reminded of the sensitivity of the Burren area in relation to the maintenance of a sterile environment & in keeping with the organiser's commitment to the Leave No Trace programme; to this end all participants will take all rubbish off the mountain side with them. Rubbish disposal facilities will be available at the Base.

1.8 Event Vehicles

A number of event vehicles will be present during the course of the event & will consist of a number of cars available for locations accessible by road.

1.9 Actions on serious Incidents

The event organisers have identified 2 potentially serious incidents that could occur throughout the course of the event & to this end they have developed the following procedures for assisting in dealing with them, they include:

1. Broken or dislocated Limb
2. Cardiac Arrest/Heart Attack

Broken or dislocated Limb

- The Walk leader will contact the organisers at the base and will co-ordinate the removal/rescue of the casualty. .
- If access can be achieved by transport (quad or tractor/trailer) this will suffice, if the area is so remote that this can not happen Air Ambulance evacuation will be considered for extraction to the nearest hospital.
- A follow up report will be prepared by the event organisers which will involve a media brief as soon as all facts have been gathered.

Cardiac Arrest/Heart Attack

- The Walk leader will contact the organisers at the base and will co-ordinate the removal/rescue of the casualty.
- First Aid will be dispatched & a Defibrillators unit will be dispatched to the area with trained operators.
- Ambulance or Air Ambulance will be contacted & dispatched to the casualty area from where the individual will be transported to the nearest hospital.

- A follow up report will be prepared by the event organisers which will involve a media brief as soon as all facts have been gathered.

Safety Advice for Participants

There are risks associated with participating in our event & participants need to be aware of these risks and take sensible precautions.

The risks on the course are caused mainly by three factors: weather, terrain and remoteness.

Weather changes occur - the higher you go in the hills, the lower the temperature (drops 1 degree C for each 100 metres of ascent); the wind is stronger up there (2 to 3 times the speed in the valleys); there is more rainfall (3 times that in the valleys) and there is more risk of mist and cloud (mist on the tops 3 days out of 5). Weather conditions can change in minutes in the Burren area and you need to be equipped to cope in different conditions. Get a weather forecast for the Burren area in advance of the event – if you have internet access we recommend www.AccuWeather.com.

You will need: **Walking boots** with good ankle support (not trail boots) which are essential

when walking off-road. Always wear clothing suitable for the outdoors and carry spare warm clothes at all times. Jeans and cotton should be avoided (if they get wet they will not dry, causing loss of body heat and energy and possibly contributing to the onset of hypothermia). A waterproof jacket and over-trousers, warm hat and gloves are essential, irrespective of the weather on starting out.

You should carry: A rucksack for spare clothing, food and a hot drink for the walk plus some spare high-energy snacks such as chocolate, glucose sweets or energy bars. A whistle,

and a small first aid kit should be included as part of your kit. You should inform the stewards at any time during the walk of any **medical condition, injury or medication carried (be sure to bring any medication required).**

Environmental considerations:

Be careful about foot placement, as there is always the risk of concealed holes, rocks, slippery ground and soft bog. Be particularly careful when descending steep ground and when crossing streams and rivers. Streams in flood are deceptively dangerous. Remember you are responsible for your own safety. Most accidents happen on the way down, when people are tired, rushing or no longer paying attention. If you find the pace of the walk too slow, you should not attempt to force the pace.

Use stiles where available rather than crossing walls or fences.

Leave no litter - even biodegradable items like banana skins, orange peel and teabags take years to disappear. Bring them back to the Base and deposit them in the bins provided.

Avoid taking short cuts on zig-zag paths as this creates new lines for run-off of water and increases erosion. If you must use an eroded route, walk along the centre of the path if possible to avoid widening the damage. If this is not possible keep at least 10m away from the eroded route.

1 **Body matters Temperature and water**

In cold, wet weather the greatest danger is **hypothermia** or exposure: this occurs where the body temperature is chilled to a life-threatening level, and is aggravated by wind chill. To avoid it make sure you have enough warm clothing and extra food and plenty of water.

In warm weather, the principle hazards are **sunburn**, **windburn** and **dehydration**. Sunhats, sun cream, and water can prevent serious sunburn or heatstroke.

Don't underestimate the amount of **water** you need. Doctors recommend drinking 1.5-2 litres of water a day even for an ordinarily active lifestyle, and you will need more if you walking strenuously and/or the weather is hot. Don't wait until you're thirsty to drink. Still mineral or tap water is adequate: fizzy drinks are not recommended as they take longer to drink, a problem if you need to rehydrate quickly. Avoid drinking unboiled or unpurified water from streams.

Blisters

Blisters are simply the result of friction, but they can make a walk a miserable experience. To help prevent blisters:

- 1 • Wear comfortable, good-fitting, worn-in Boots,
- 2 • Wear good socks in the right size;
- 3 • Keep your toenails trim
- 4 • Quickly remove any foreign bodies from your socks and footwear
- 5 • Ensure that the tongue and laces of your Boots are arranged correctly and evenly
- 6 • Check your feet carefully and regularly for any sign of rubbing and tenderness
- 7 • Act immediately you feel any friction or discomfort: blisters can form very quickly

If you feel a blister developing, stop walking, take your boots and socks off and examine your feet. Consider applying some material cushioning or padding, or a breathable waterproof plaster, or possibly some strips of surgical tape.

There is some controversy over how to treat blisters when they do occur. Some walkers prefer to burst the blister carefully and immediately apply a sterile dressing. Others argue this runs the risk of infection, and instead recommend keeping the blistered area clean and protected.

Chemists and outdoor shops now supply a wide range of foot care products, including blister kits with 'second skin' dressings providing cushioning from further friction. Use according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Burren Peaks Walking Festival Risk Assessment.

Date: 1 st Sept 2013	Walk Type: As chosen.	Location: Burren Co Clare	Assessed by: Event Organisers
		Risk Assessment Type: Site Specific.	Communicate to: All Participants
Route Title: All walks associated with the Walking Festival as indicated on the Festival Brochure.			
Route Description: The route is on classic Burren landscape rock, grassy surfaces, Burren Way tracks, National Looped Walks routes and public road.			
Associated Hazards:		Controls:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Slippery grassy route 2. Uneven rocky/rough tracks 3. Traffic on public road 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Route has been previously walked to ascertain any hazards or risks 2. All participants to have appropriate footwear 3. All participants to adhere to instructions given by event organisers and walk leaders. 4. All participants to look out for the safety of their fellow walkers. 5. Event walk leaders, first aid personnel and club helpers will wear High visibility vests. 	
Escape Routes: Applicable where an incident occurs & will be coordinated by the event organisers and appropriate emergency services on the day of the event.			
Emergency Plans/Procedures:		Personal Equipment:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As outlined on attached event plan 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strong Boots 2. Emergency high energy foods (where Appropriate). 3. Wetgear/sun protection 4. Dry Clothing 	

Burren Peaks Walking Festival Risk Assessment

Date: 1 st Sept. 2013	Walk Type: As chosen	Location: Burren Co Clare	Assessed by: Event Organisers
		Risk Assessment Type: Event Specific Hazards	Communicate to: All Participants
Route Description: The route is best described as a mountain walk skirting along the shoreline that involves crossing fields & walking along classic Burren landscape where the potential for exposure to grikes will be present. Marsh ground will also be encountered & a part of the route will access public road			

Ref	Potential Hazard/Risk	T	AJ	RR
1	Adverse Weather Conditions	✓		
2	Breakage/dislocation	✓		
3	Falling.	✓		
4	Tripping or Slipping	✓		
5	Access/Egress to main roads	✓		
6	Cardiac Arrest	✓		

Risk Rating

Ref	Specific Risk	Control Measures	Action by	L	S	R
1	Adverse Weather Conditions	Participants should follow instructions and advice from walk leaders/Event Organisers. All walks have been assessed and led by experienced walk leaders. The routes may be changed if deemed necessary.	Event Participants Event Organisers	1	2	2
3,4	Falling, Tripping or Slipping	Participants will be advised that the nature of the landscape means the routes are over rough ground (and slippery surfaces in wet weather) and should take care.	Event Organisers	1	2	2
Ref	Specific Risk	Control Measures	Action by	L	S	R
5	Access/Egress to main roads	Walk leaders and sweepers will be wearing high visibility jackets along with other club member helpers. In an effort to prevent collision between participants and vehicular traffic participants will be advised to follow designated routes to any access with the main road.	Event Organisers Event Participants	1	3	3
2,6	Breakage/dislocation, Cardiac Arrest	As per 1.9 Actions on Serious Incidents in the Event Plan. Experienced Walk Leaders and First Aid personnel will accompany all walks.	Event Organisers	1	3	3

Risk Rating. L-Likelihood (0-5), S-Severity (0-5) R-Rating LxS.

If Rating is 1 to 3 = T (Tolerable), 4 to 6 = AJ (Apply Judgement) 8 to 25 = R (Reduce Risk and re assess)