

CHARLES BARRINGTON
150th ANNIVERSARY

The Eiger Ascent

we take the right turn onto Meath Road. The first junction we come to is Convent Avenue, on our left is a house "Ravenna", once the home of novelist Richard Power. Further along is Milward Terrace, an imposing Victorian terrace built in 1864 where Joshua Pim, the tennis champion once lived here as did the Labour Leader Roddy Connolly.

Across the road is a housing estate called Aravon Court, the original site of 'Aravon School', amongst its pupils were John Millington Synge, the dramatist and Roger Casement, the Patriot. The novelist Monk Gibbon taught here at one time. Further on is a house called 'Glenard' where Peggy Dell lived who was a concert artist and member of the 'Tisdell Concert Party', on the right hand side at No. 27 lived author and playwright, Philip Rooney. Turning left at junction of Sidmonton Avenue we walk past Glenard Avenue and Meath Place until we reach the junction with Sidmonton Square and Kingsmill Road. On our left, No.1 Sidmonton Square was once home to the painter Paul Henry. The gardens of this area are rich in birds such as Sparrow, Thrush, Blackbirds, Robin and Wren. Also Foxes, Grey and Red Squirrel are often seen in this area. A variety of Butterflies can be spotted in summer with Speckled Wood, Large, Small and Green Vented Whites, Small Tortoiseshell, Hollyblue and Peacock all in evidence as well as migrants such as the Red Admiral and Painted Lady. Walking on past Sidmonton Square we turn right into Novara Avenue and walk until we come to the Main Street. Almost directly opposite us is a restaurant called 'Jasmine House', this building was once the home of Cearbhall O'Dalaigh, an Irish past-President.

Crossing the Main Street we turn right into Parnell Road and walk to the junction of Herbert Road. At No. 4 novelist James Plunkett Kelly lived. At junction of Herbert Road we turn right, walk back toward the Main Street, where we come to Herbert Terrace, No. 2 Herbert Terrace is presently home to Dick Roche TD, and was once home to Sir Herbert Hamilton Harty, conductor of the Halle Orchestra 1920-1930. No. 1 was for a time the home of the actor Cyril Cusack (1910-1993). Crossing through the lights we walk down Quinsborough Road past the shops until we come to Prince of Wales Terrace. At No. 2 lived William Larminie, Folklorist and at No. 11 lived Captain Albert A. Bestic, Third officer of the 'Lusitania'. At No. 12 Goldsmith Terrace lived Sir Arthur Purves Phayne, a one time Governor of Mauritius. We are now back at Railway Station and hope you have enjoyed our stroll around the Historic Streets of Bray.



On Monday 11th August 2008 in Grindelwald, Switzerland a group from Bray & Greystones gathered to commemorate the 150th Anniversary of Charles Barrington's achievement of being the first man to climb the Eiger Mountain.

Charles Barrington (1834-1901) was a 24 year old from Fassaroe, Bray, Co. Wicklow on holiday in the Swiss town of Grindelwald in August 1858 when the golden age of Alpine climbing was at its height.

A risk-taker who loved a wager, Barrington arrived when most of the salient Swiss summits had already been claimed. Instead he turned to what was still unclimbed above Grindelwald. The Eiger, at 3,970 metres, was certainly not the highest mountain locally but it possessed the twin advantages of being unclaimed and accessible. And so, with local guides Peter Bohren and Christian Almer, Barrington set out at 3am on August 11th – 150 years ago – up the west face of the mountain and by noon the three were on the summit – the Eiger was theirs. Soon afterwards, Barrington returned to Ireland and never climbed seriously again. Without the perspective of later events, it is likely that his main claim to fame would have been his ownership of the racehorse Sir Robert Peel, that he bought, trained, rode and was winner of the inaugural Irish Grand National in 1870. Charles Barrington died on April 20, 1901 and is buried in Mount Jerome Cemetery.

But Barrington's considerable achievement wasn't forgotten by either the Irish or the Swiss. The group made up of members of the Barrington family, Councillors Burrell, Grant & Byrne, and Bray Town Clerk Christine Flood met and erected two memorials to him in Grindelwald & Kleine Scheidegg in co-operation with the local mayor, the local mountain guide, museum curator and members of the local Tourism Board. The bronze plaques commissioned by Bray Town Council and the Barringtons were created by local Bray artist James Hayes.

An achievement like this should be marked and Bray is very proud that Charles was the first man to climb the Eiger. Bray Town Council and the Barrington family were delighted to erect two plaques in the Grindelwald community which include a picture of Charles Barrington's face, the Eiger and details of his achievement on it. Up to this time it was not known what he looked like until a portrait was unearthed a



few months ago when a relative of the Barrington's passed away. Ron Barrington, great-grand nephew of Barrington, took a digital photo and put it onto canvass and presented copies to the Museum Curator, the Mayor and the Kleine Scheidegg Hotel, where Barrington stayed, who were all delighted to see at last what he looked like.

A reciprocal event was organised in Bray in October 2009 when a Swiss Delegation came for the erection of a third plaque in Bray. Other events included an Exhibition about Charles Barrington and Grindelwald, a Photo Exhibition and in December 2009, the annual Charles Barrington Commemorative Race takes place. Barrington donated a gold watch for a race up and down the Sugarloaf in 1870. For the past two years, Bray Town Council & the Barrington family have sponsored and organised the run with the Irish Mountain Runners Association.

The Barrington Walk:

Starting and finishing at Bray Railway Station

Distance – approx 5K - Time – 1.1/2 hours

Degree of Difficulty – Very Moderate

Leaving Bray station we cross the road, turn right, walk to the corner, and across Quinsborough Road to the War Memorial. This Memorial commemorates 155 Bray men who died in 1st World War. Turning left we pass Carlisle Grounds home of Bray Wanderers A.F.C. (The Seagulls) est. 1922. Then turning right brings us onto Seymour Road, named after the Seymours, a family of merchants. The Seymours were ship owners and brewers who built a dock at the mouth of River Dargle late 18th century. Unfortunately this dock became landlocked in 1850's with the building of the railway bridge.

The building on the left hand side, the corner of Seymour Road and Duncairn Lane was the studio of sculptor and painter Yann Renard Goulet. At the end we reach the junction with Seapoint Road, where Liam O'Flaherty, author of 'The Informer' lived on this road for a short time in 1920's. Turning right onto this road, walk down the hill towards the railway bridge, you'll see a Martello Tower on our right. These towers were built by the British as a defence against Napoleon in the 19th century. Walking under the railway bridge we pass the 'Harbour Bar' pub on the left, which has been used as a location for many films. A short distance away is Bray Harbour. A small harbour, dry at low tide, is home to Mute Swans as well as Duck, Geese, Herons, Cormorants and a variety of rare Gulls. Walking across the road we come to Martello Terrace where No. 1 was home to James Joyce who lived here from 1887 to 1891. It was here that the Christmas dinner scene in 'Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man' took place. Martello Terrace was also once the home of film director Niall Jordan.

Walking now along the Victorian Promenade, on our right we first come to O'Driscoll's Seaside Bar, currently owned by Jacky O'Driscoll, a grand nephew of James Joyce. During the summer months we can observe Common, Little and Sandwich Terns fishing along the coast where grey seals are seen from time to time. Passing the Sealife Aquarium, we come to Brennan's Terrace, a one-time summer home to playwright Lennox Robinson. The novelist Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu also lived here while recuperating from a serious illness. Walking on we come to the Esplanade Terrace between Victoria Avenue and Convent Avenue. It was here in 1835 workmen uncovered what was believed to be a Roman Burial site. Sir William and Lady Jane Wilde built Esplanade Terrace and Elsinore (now Strand Hotel) as an investment. Oscar Wilde inherited the properties in 1876 and sold them in 1878. Oscar had promised one of these properties to two different people and it ended up in Bray Court. Sir William Wilde and Lady Jane Wilde were believed locally to have rented 'Tower Cottage' on the corner of Strand Road and Putland Road while their other properties were let out.

Walking on past the Terrace we come to the Esplanade Hotel built on the site of the Old Coastguard Station in 1897. Walking as far as the Coastguard boathouse, we cross the road and proceed up Putland Hill. The red brick building on our left is the new Coastguard Station. As we go up Putland Hill