

A Walk in the Woods

The Woodland League along with the **Natural Resources Protection Alliance** are organising this walk in Avondale Forest Park, Rathdrum, Co Wicklow as part of an effort to stop the government's plan to sell off the harvesting rights to Ireland's public forests under the EU/IMF "Troika" programme and to maintain them in public ownership.

Avondale House and Park was the onetime home of land league founder, Charles Stewart Parnell, and is a prominent Coillte property. It was for a long time a forestry school and is symbolically connected to Ireland's forests and history.

It is vital that we stop this plan to privatise Ireland's public forests. Ireland's forests are a priceless part of our natural and cultural heritage and a precious public amenity. They are also an invaluable economic asset supporting over 12000 jobs, attracting over 18 million individual visits and generating over €2 billion of economic activity annually.

Forests can also play a critical part in mitigating global warming and climate change. Instead of selling our forests to pay the gambling debts of bankers and speculators, we need a major programme of public works and investment to expand Ireland's forests.

Some estimates suggest this could generate up to 100,000 jobs over 10 years as well as protecting this vital environmental amenity.

Avondale was originally planted with trees in the 18th

century by Samuel Hayes- a relative of Parnell. In 1794 Hayes wrote the only Irish book on tree planting, care and management – written to inspire Irish people about the importance and value of trees and the necessity to reforest Ireland.

Parnell himself continued the planting of Avondale and was known affectionately as *the Great Oak of Avondale*.

After Parnell died, broken and bankrupt, a butcher from Phibsboro, possibly acting on behalf of a business syndicate, bought Avondale and cut down its trees for short term profit ... It seems nothing changes! We must not let the financiers and bankers do the same again to Ireland's forests.

A Walk in the Woods takes place on Sunday 28 April and is a family day out to show solidarity with the campaign to stop the sell-off of Ireland's forests. There will be songs, poems and words from prominent artists, musicians and activists

Bring raingear and suitable footwear.

Sign the petition to save Irelands forests at
www.woodlandleague.org

Supported by:

People Before Profit, Keep Ireland Open, Stephen Rea, Friends of the Earth, Socialist Workers Party, United Left Alliance, Sebastian Barry, Socialist Party, Patrick Nulty TD, Thomas Pringle TD, John Halligan TD, Senator Fiach Mac Chonghaill

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