

INTRODUCTION

These walks have been laid out with the co-operation of the land owners. We are very thankful to them for granting us permission to walk through their land, without their help this project would not have been possible. Therefore we ask all walkers to respect farmer's property and to remain on the route suggested. We have placed simple timber stiles over all wire fences, to prevent damage. We would also ask walkers to close all gates. As this is primarily a sheep rearing region, we would prefer if dogs were not taken on any of the walking routes. Children should not be unaccompanied on any of the walks.

This guide book provides a sketch map of each walking route. Under no circumstances should they be used on their own, but always in conjunction with the No. 70 Discovery Series, which is available in the Information Centre. There is good accurate detail in the No. 70, and should be an essential companion for all walkers. The guidebook gives basic directions, and also highlights items of natural history, place names, personalities etc., along each route. Each route is marked on the landscape with discrete direction posts, an arrow gives the direction along with the name of the route.

Weather. There is no real advise to give on weather that could claim to be 100% accurate. The best I can say is that when you can't see Mount Brandon, it's raining, and when you can see it, it's going to rain! Seriously, the weather is changeable and rain gear should be included in any day pack. Unless you are experienced with a compass and proficient in map reading, then stay off the mountains in foggy weather. Accidents happen all too easily, never get into a situation that you cannot get out of. Daily forecasts can be found in all newspapers, and it is also possible to phone 1550 123 850, to get a daily forecast for the south west region.

As this is a new walking guide, we would appreciate suggestions on how to improve the walking routes and guidebooks. Please inform the Tourist Information Centre in Cloghane or write to Comhlacht Bhréanain Teo, Sliabh a'Droichid, An Clocháin, Co. Chiarraí. 066 38277. C.B.T. is a non profit making community development company.

The Information Centre will also be able to arrange accommodation, food, information on local pubs, shops, transport and other attractions in the area. It is open from Easter to the end of October from 10.00am 5.00pm, and it remains open until 8.00pm during July and August.

Mountain Safety. 1. Wear suitable clothing. It is always better to carry extra warm clothes as there is a change of 2-3 degrees for every 300m gained. In this area there is always a threat of rain, so be sure to pack rainproofs. It has been said that the area has little climate but much weather! Suitable walking boots are also recommended. 2. Check weather forecast before leaving, remembering it can be very changeable at times. Plan your walk carefully and estimate the time it will take to complete. Always tell someone of your planned route and what time you expect to return at. Bring a compass, map, torch, first aid kit, extra food and a whistle. Six blasts per minute of the whistle is the signal of distress. (Walking times have been calculated at 12 minutes per kilometre, and one minute for every contour line climbed on the Discovery series maps, No. 70). 3. Avoid walking on your own, except on routes where there are other walkers. It is on the descent from summits that most accidents occur.

Maps. The Ordnance Survey have recently resurveyed the whole country and have issued new maps on a scale of 1:50,000 in the metric system. These maps are far more

accurate than the old half inch ones. The Discovery Series No. 70 covers the Cloghane/Brandon area. It is recommended to use the sketch maps in this guidebook, only in conjunction with the No. 70.

Údarás na Gaeltachta and the European Union have been instrumental in starting this EcoTourism project in the Cloghane and Brandon area. We would like to thank them for their support over the past two years. This walking guide, along with the trails, has been produced with help from LEADER T/W/O. The committee of Comhlacht Bhréanain Teo are grateful for the assistance. We would also like to acknowledge support from Fás, Kerry County Council and Cork Kerry Tourism.

Translation to Irish by Pádraig Ó Siochruí.

Important Notice

There have been a few occasions during the past few years, where the rescue services and Gardaí have been called out on false alarms. This happened because people who had planned to return to their car or B/B at a specific time, changed their mind, and either stayed on the other side of the mountain, or camped overnight on the hill. To prevent such occurrences from happening again, please phone the Gardaí or your B/B to inform them of any changes in your plans. For those leaving a car overnight, a short note, giving details of your return, on the dash board, could save people the trouble of mounting an unnecessary rescue.

Dingle Gardaí; 066 51522

Tralee Gardaí; 066 22022

Cloghane Gardaí; 066 38122

Emergency Services; 999

Tralee Hospital; 066 26222

Cloghane Tourist Information Centre; 066 38277

Grading of Walking Routes.

For the purpose of this guidebook we have invented a three tiered system of grading for the walking routes, based on their level of difficulty. This grading is to be used as a guideline to help you choose a walk that is manageable and within your ability. This is a rough guideline, not a hard and fast rule.

Grade No.1 can be applied to Loch a Dúin, Loch 'a Mhónáin, Mullach Bhéal, Fermoyle Beach walk, all of the short walks and Alternative 3 of the Gleann na hUamha trail. This grade of walk should be manageable for all age groups as there is no danger or high level of fitness involved.

Grade No. 2 can be applied to Sás creek trail, Más an Tiompáin trail, Old Green Road Trail (except for a short, top section which is a grade 3). This grade involves some good walks of greater length and are a little more strenuous.

Grade No. 3 This applies to all routes on Mount Brandon, and the top section of the old green road walk to Dingle. This grade involves some strenuous but ultimately very rewarding walking trails. They should not be attempted in bad weather or by those suffering from vertigo. Brandon should not be attempted by first time walkers without a guide.

These walks are designed to insure that all ages and abilities can enjoy the hills and glens around Cloghane and Brandon. The graded system is to help you chose a suitable route, within your capability. However for the experienced walker it is possible to join two walks together to ensure a longer day, for example Sás Creek and Más an Tiompáin.

Terms Used. Bog Road; Refers to a roughly surfaced (untarred) road. Ideal for easy walking. **Green Road;** Refers to an early roadway no longer in use that has become over grown with grass. **Pilgrim Trail;** This is the age old route to the summit of Mount Brandon. It is marked from the grotto at Faha, with red and white poles. This route is well worn and is visible on the ground, but is not a pathway in the strict sense of the word.

There are no artificially built pathways or trails on any of the walking routes.

Short walks in the Cloghane /Brandon area.

1. From the church in Cloghane to Clocháin Sidh, and back along the Mullach road. Time; Less than One Hour. Distance 4km. Classification; Grade 1

This walk is suitable for all ages and is on tarred or bog road at all times. It should take less than one hour to complete. Take the secondary road to the right of the church. This is a circular road which will lead you through the townland of Cloghansee, and Doire na Muice. It is in the latter townland that St. Brendan banished the wild boar, who is interpreted as a pagan figure, who protected the magical wood of oak. The boar was banished to Loch Geal where legend has it he appears once every seven years, and lights up the whole valley. It was also from this oak wood that St. Brendan is reputed to have built his boat in which he sailed to America in the 6th century via Scotland, Iceland and Greenland.

Once you get on the tarred road turn left and it will bring you back into the village once more.

2. From the old church in Cloghane along the old path way to Faha. Return by the public road to Cloghane Village. Time; One Hour. Distance 5km. Classification; Grade 1

This walk begins in the village of Cloghane at the remains of the old medieval church and 19th century Protestant church. This is known as Boithirín na Marbh (The Road of the Dead). St. Brendan founded his monastery on this site in the 6th century and it was from the summit of Mt. Brandon that he had a vision of a wonderful land to the west, which was America. The story of St. Brendan's voyage was translated into several European languages and was even referred to by Columbus before he departed on his voyages to the west. Within the walls of the medieval church, until August 1993 a Celtic stone carved head of Crom Dubh was located. Unfortunately it was stolen and has not been recovered. Crom Dubh was the Pre-Christian god in the area and was converted by St. Brendan.

This pathway was the route of the ancient pilgrimage to the summit of Mt. Brandon. It leads to the townland of Faha. At the point where the pathway meets the tarred road, turn right and follow this road back down to the outskirts of the village once more.

3. From Brandon Village via the public road through Lios and Teer and back to the village. Time; One Hour Distance 5km Classification; Grade 1.

This walk begins in Brandon Village, which was once the centre of a thriving mackerel fishing industry. Take the road which leads to Srón Bhróin (Brandon Point). Approximately half a mile outside the village take a left turn at a stone built house. This leads you to the village of Lios na Caol Mhaighne (The fort of the narrow level plain), once famous for its football team, and accompanying song. It was also an area known for the richness of Irish language which was to be heard there. There is also a ring fort which may have named the townland, located on your right hand side as you walk through the village. There is the foundation of a hut site and a souterrain located within the fort. This road is known locally as "Tochar", which is the name also given to wooden track-ways which are uncovered beneath peat, and functioned as track-ways over bogs in times past. Several of those found in the midlands have been dated to the Celtic period over 2000 years ago. Continue along this road until you come back out on the main road once more. Turn to your left and this will bring you back along to Brandon.

4. The Ballyquin Circuit.

Time: One hour approx.

Distance: 5km approx.

Classification: Grade 1

The walk begins from Ballyquin Strand parking place, 4km. north of Clophane Village. An early burial ground is located nearby the strand (no longer visible), in it was said to have been the entrance to the 'other world'. Turn left on to the strand and follow the shoreline to the little footbridge spanning the Abha na Féinne (River of the Fianna). The Fianna were warriors celebrated for their great feats in Irish mythology and led by the legendary Fionn mac Cumhail. The river estuary is reputed to be one of the eyes of the Celtic God Bran, whose name is incorporated into local place names such as Tír Bhróin (Bran's Place), Sron Bhróin (Bran's Nose), and also possibly the 952m high Mt. Brandon which dominates the whole region. It was also said that there was an entrance to the other world (Bran's Home), here by the river mouth. Cé Bhr anaimn (Brandon Quay), is visible from here and can be reached by following the shoreline if the tide is out. If you are not taking the shore route to Brandon, follow the path to the Post Office, where a right turn will take you to the village and pier. A pleasant round trip can be completed by returning past the Post Office and continuing on the main road, past the shop and petrol pumps, to the stone bridge where the River of the Fianna is re-crossed. Upriver from the bridge, the skyline is dominated by the great bulk of Masatíompan, (Más an Tiompan: Buttrock of the Hump). Scattered on the hillside below Más are the remains of several planes which crashed into the mountain in 1943. Small pieces of the wreckage can still be seen glittering in the clear water of the river's higher reaches. The pink flower with five rounded petals and fernlike leaves seen along the ditch is the Herb Robert which is widespread from May to September, but can be seen blooming here even in February. The stems and leaves turn red in Autumn which gave rise to the belief in medieval times that the plant could be used to treat disorders of the blood. The 'Robert' may be a corruption of 'ruber' the Latin word for red. The Irish name for this flower is Ruithéal Rí (Royal Herb), which may be a reference to the Duke of Normandy for whom a famous medical thesis was written in the middle ages. The Duke's name, incidentally, was Robert. The large building by the bridge is Halla le Chéite, once a National School, now used for community activities and also housing a craft shop. Turn left here and follow the un-tarred road from which there are good views of Brandon Bay and the Maharee Islands, one of which was home to an early monastic settlement. On linking up with the tarred road to Ballyquin Strand, turn left to arrive back at your starting point.

An Bóithrín Glas / The Old Green Road.

Start Point: From Car park at Kilmore Cross.

Finish Point: Dingle Town.

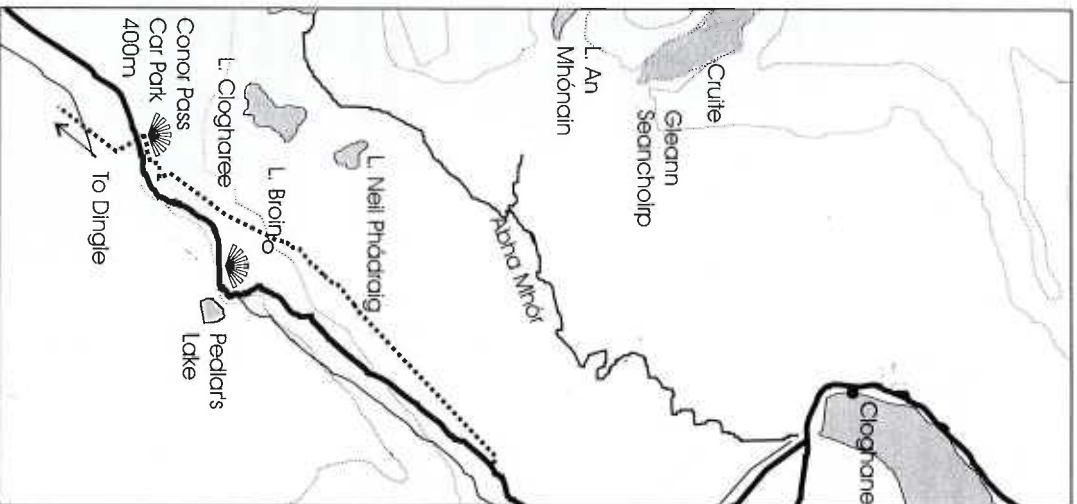
Maps: No. 70 Discovery Series.

Length/Time: 16km, allow 4 hours.

Highest Point: 1500ft/450m.

Colour Code: Orange.

Classification: Most of this Route is Grade 2, except for the final 300m of the ascent to the car park, which carries a Grade 3.



Brief Description: A great walk with wonderful views of the Conor Pass and the Owenmore Valley. It is also the finest approach to Dingle Town. The Route follows a green road all the way to Dingle. Care should be taken with the final section of the climb, as it has a Grade 3 classification. The last section of the walk to Dingle Town crosses the main Conor Pass road near the Sugarloaf, and leads into the town on an old tarred road.

This route links the villages of Cloghane and Brandon with Dingle Town along an old roadway which appears to have been built in the 16th century. The poet Spencer who accompanied Walter Raleigh to the siege at Dún an Óir mentions travelling along this route. It was also travelled by the Black Earl when he pillaged and burnt much of the peninsula. On the old maps it runs almost in a straight line from Fermoyle Beach to Dingle town. It runs almost parallel with the modern Conor Pass road which was built in the middle of the 19th century. However it offers all the views of the local landscape without any of the traffic or congestion of the main road. This road is sign posted from the main Conor Pass road, approx. 1 km to the south west. The walk

begins at the sign posted entrance 1 km south west of Kilmore Cross. This route is well defined by the outline of the old green road, which is marshy in places. It runs in a straight line until just north of Loch Bhroin, where it turns off in a south westerly direction. It begins to rise at this point where the road is cobbled and delineated by low stone walls on either side. In fact written on one of the cobbles, presumably from the time it was constructed is the word 'Conar', making it the earliest signpost on the peninsula! The only difficult part of the walk is the zigzag path towards the highest part of the walk as you emerge onto the main road a hundred metres from the Conor Pass car park. Care should be taken in this section as the path rises, there are a lot of loose stones etc. Please take note that you are emerging on to the main road, albeit for a hundred metre, but it can be busy with traffic. From the car park summit, take the dirt road directly across from the car park and after 30m turn to your right and follow the obvious green road which leads all the way to Dingle town. The path runs parallel with the Garfinny River, until it eventually crosses the stream and on to Dingle town. The pathway runs beside a farm house and actually crosses the main road once more and follows the 'low road' to Dingle. If transport is required for a return to Cloghane or visa versa please contact the Information Centre in Cloghane 066 38277, and arrangements can be made.

Local Information; The Owenmore Valley is one of the most spectacular on the peninsula. A colourful mixture of mountain, bog rock and water. Home to a myriad of flowers, birds and animals. There is even the legend of the wild pig who is said to dwell Loch Geal, the largest of the lakes in the valley. This wild pig is said to have protected the magic wood in Doire na Muice from Crom Dubh, which is located west of Cloghane village. On the arrival of St. Brendan the pig was banished to Loch Geal, where in he resides, only to appear once every seven years. There is also a story of Neil Phadraig after whom a lake is also named. She was a woman who worked on one of local farms, and after being accused in the wrong of stealing a ball of thread (ceirtin snátha), drowned herself in the lake.

There was a father and son team of engineers in charge of the construction of the Conor Pass road. Apparently they had originally decided to blast a tunnel through the top section, but decided against it. The boring holes for the explosives used to blast the cliffs can still be seen.

Pedlar's Lake: One of the many corrie lakes in the Conor Pass area. It was the first place in Ireland where glaciation was identified. John Ball, an Alpine Mountaineer is credited with the observation in 1849. Mr. Tom Finn, a well known walker from Tralee, has the following version of how this lake was named.

Close to Conar Pass is a lake shown on the map as Lough Doon but universally known as 'The Pedlars Lake'. The story of how it came by this name dates back to the 1830's when English rule was well established in Ireland and when, in particular, there was a close watch on our coastline to prevent smuggling. To guard against any illicit importation of wine or such goods there was a coastguard station near the old castle in Minard manned by a crew of six. Among them was a likeable Cornish ex seafarer named Pritchard.

Now, it transpired that the coastguards frequently turned a blind eye to the activities of the smugglers and when they suspected that the authorities had found out about this they decided it was time to go. So, one night they slipped quietly away from their station and took the old road across the hills through Gleann a'Uaigh to Annascaul, to a new life

far away. On their way, they stopped at Ballinclar where the big local fair was taking place.

Years went by during which time the Gleann a'Uaigh Road was replaced by the Conar Pass as we know it today. Once again, the time for the Ballinclare Fair came around. Its eve was wild and wet and people in Castlegregory were surprised to see a stranger going through their village and heading off for the range of hills that divide their side of the Dingle Peninsula from the Annascaul and Minard side. The man wore clothes of a naval cut, but as he had a wooden box slung across his back everybody assumed he was a Pedlar. They were not to know that he was none other than James Pritchard coming back to keep a very special appointment.

As he made his way upwards through the rain and the darkness he found himself confused. He was, of course on the 'new line' not the Gleann a'Uaigh path that he knew. It was with relief then, that he saw a flickering light ahead and soon reached a campfire round which were crouched two rough looking tramps. It was Pritchard's misfortune to encounter two well known thieves and blackguards, but he unknowingly was glad to sit with them and take directions on how to continue his journey. The brigands had different plans. Here was an easy prey that had come unexpectedly their way, so when the opportunity arose, the 'Pedlar' was dealt a severe blow on the head with a rock and his body thrown into the waters of the dark tarn beside their camp.

Next day, the thieves were at the Ballinclare Fair, not skulking at the edges as was their habit, but centre stage and spending. The constable took note of this.

It was a week before Pritchard's body surfaced and a hue and cry began because obviously a foul deed had been committed. The wooden box was missing. Inevitably, suspicion fell on the well known thieves, and sure enough, when their shack was searched the box was found. It was empty except for a sixpenny coin concealed in a secret drawer. The two were arrested and brought to Annascaul where they were imprisoned for the night in Webb's Hotel, still to be seen. This building had a thatched roof and before morning the two had burned their way through it, never to be heard of again.

The police were seeking to identify the murdered stranger and circulated whatever information they had. Then, one evening a young woman came to the barracks and asked to see the segment of coin that had been found. Sergeant Madden showed it to her. With a deep moan she took a string from around her neck, and at its end was half a sixpence that perfectly matched the half held in the sergeant's hand.

She was Mary Farrell from Annascaul who had fallen in love with James Pritchard when he was in Minard. They had planned to marry, and settle in Corrwall. On the night of the desertion of the coastguard station, he had just time to bid goodbye to his beloved and to share a coin with her as a token of his promise to return.

They buried the 'pedlar' in Killiney graveyard and before the next Ballinclare Fair Mary, too, had been laid to rest beside him.

Their story lives on in the name given to this mountain lake.

Síniúid a tSáis/Sauce Creek Walking Trail.

Start / Finish: Brandon Village.

Time: 4-5 hours

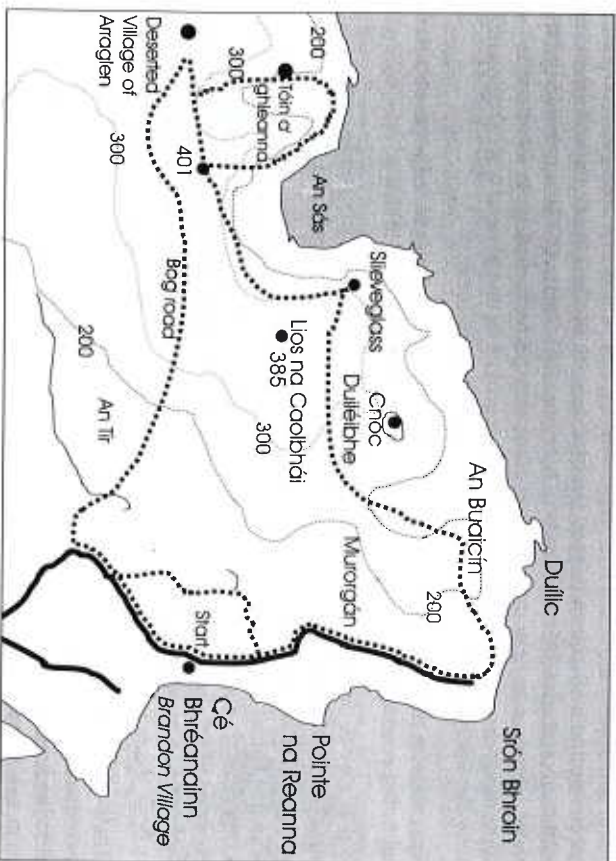
Map No. 70 Discovery Series.

Max Height: 401 m.

Colour Code: White.

Classification: Grade 2

Brief Description; This is a grade two walk over public road, bogland and also uses a well surfaced bog road. Please do not bring dogs on this route, even on a lead. The cliffs at An Sás are dangerous, do not cross the wire fence along the edge of this coast line. With regard to the Terrain, it is easy walking, over bogland on a fine day, but dangerous if foggy.



An Sás, literally translated means 'a trap', which refers to how much flotsam and jetsam is washed into this narrow little cove. Although difficult to comprehend, people lived in An Sás up until the earlier part of the 19th century. There is part of one green field remaining from that settlement, however the other green fields in this area are now completely eroded. We do not recommend that you attempt to descend into An Sás, as it is dangerous, especially in wet weather.

Begin at Brandon village, follow the public road which is sign posted, for Srón Bhróin/Brandon Point. Turn left at Srón Bhróin over the stile near the gate and up along the green trackway to the lookout post from the second World War. Follow the green trackway for a few hundred meters before breaking off to your right, to gain the famed summit of An Buaicín (251 m). To get to the spot height 324m at Sliabh Glas, there are two routes. The more difficult, simply goes down hill and straight up the steep slopes of Cnoc Duiléibhe (311 m). The easier route goes downhill and follows the river around

Cnoc Duiléibhe to the south. Follow the river to the source, and the 324m Sliabh Glas (marked as Slieveglass on map), is a short distance to your right (north). From here there are views into An Sás, which I will not even attempt to describe. Do not cross the wire around the creek as there is a great deal of land subsidence and it is highly dangerous.

Follow the wire fence south and later south westwards along the top of An Sás, until you reach the spot height 401m at the south-western corner of An Sás. Directly west is a river, the line of which can be clearly seen. Walk in this direction, at first downhill, and then rising slightly to follow the river, crossing a wire fence on the way, until you meet the Teer Bog Road. Turn left and it will bring you back to the petrol pumps at Teer Cross. Turn left again and Brandon Village is one mile from here.

If you wish to add another two hours to your walk, the following can be used as an alternative route. From the spot height 401 m, follow the wire fence north along the western side of the Creek. Keep the wire fence on your right at all times, and come up through the next glen, which is called Tóin a'Ghleanna. Follow the river uphill, passing some settlement evidence from the 19th century, along with some visible crop marks. Be careful as the ground rises when following the river towards the top of the valley. It may be necessary to go further out to your right. Continue until the river crosses the bog road, turn left and it leads back to the main road at Teer Cross. Turn left here, and Brandon Village is less than a mile away.

Local Information; Brandon point is known as Srón Broin - The Nose of Bran. Bran is often associated with the sea, and he and his crew spent several years sailing around the oceans before finally landing at Srón Broin. However when one of his followers set foot on land he turned to dust. The place name originates from a tale that Bran lay along the coast off Brandon Point to protect all those living in the area. The point is said to have been his nose and Más na Triompán refers to the hip joint.

The lookout station near Srón Bhróin dates to the second world war, when it was manned to keep watch for foreign boats in Irish neutral waters. It was numbered as look out station 40, which was written on the ground in white stones, to enable planes to confirm their location along the coast.

There was a population of people living in Sás Creek during the earlier part of the 19th century, and even later than this in the village of Araglen, where one thatched house is maintained as a shelter by one of the local sheep farmers. There were up to thirteen families living in Araglen at one time. This area has a remarkable store of place names which survive in the memory of a few farmers.

West of Brandon Point there is a hill referred to as Cnoc Duiléibhe. This is named after a Bean Sf or a Cailleach called Dora Duiléibhe. She could be heard crying when there was a death in certain families in Brandon. Sometimes she cried as a warning of an impending death. She is said to have lived in the hills west of Brandon Point.

Watch out for the large number of Choughs (members of the crow family), which can be seen around Sás. They have distinctive red beaks and legs. The largest number of these birds in Western Europe is to be found on the Dingle Peninsula.

Síúíóid Loch a'Mhónáin.

Walks in the Loch a'Mhónáin and Mullach Bhéal Area.

Start / Finish; Information Centre, Cloghane Village.

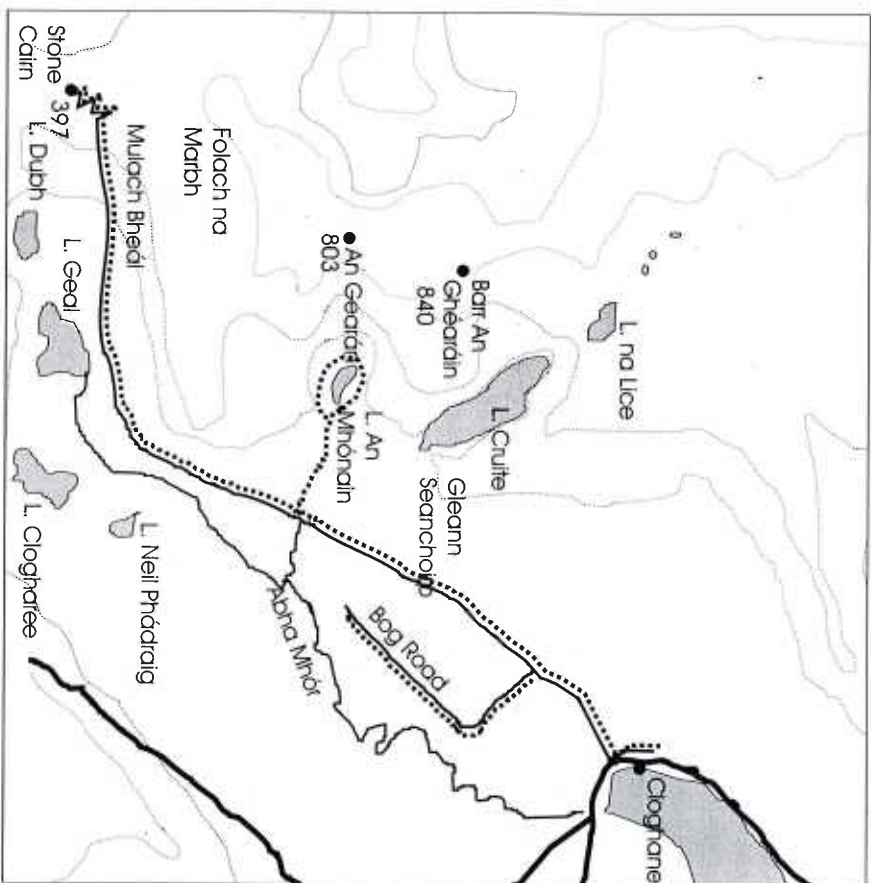
Time; A casual 2-3 hours for each of the Routes - Route 3 may take longer).

Map; No. 70 Discovery Series.

Colour Code; Yellow Classification;

Classification; Grade 1 for all Routes.

Brief Description; Again suitable for all ages these walks are a mixture of bog road and public road, albeit a very quiet one. It brings the walker through a landscape where the cutting of turf is still the main source of fuel. There are wonderful amounts of wild flowers and bog insects and other wild life. This series of short walks from Cloghane are designed to facilitate those who do not wish to encounter any steep slopes, and who do not want to wander too far. Although all routes in this area are partly on the road, it is not a busy main road, but still allows one to feel as if they are far away from it all. The walk is sign posted (Síúíóid Loch a'Mhónáin), from just outside Cloghane on the eastern side of the village. Take the right turn at this point and follow what is known as the 'Glen' or 'Mullach' road.



Route No. 1 Bog Road Walk. Take the first right turn a few hundred metres east of Cloghane Village. On the No.70 Map this is marked by a red dotted line referred to as 'The Pilgrim's Route', and is known locally as the 'Mullach road' or the 'Glen road'. Take the first left turn along a bog road, and this will bring you to a wonderland of wild flowers and bogland. This bog road can be followed for up to two kilometres, it is recommended that you return along the same route. Evidence of turf cutting can be seen along the route. For many people turf is still the main source of fuel. Bogslands provide ideal conditions for flowers which can only be found in such locations keep an eye open for them, especially in the Summer months.

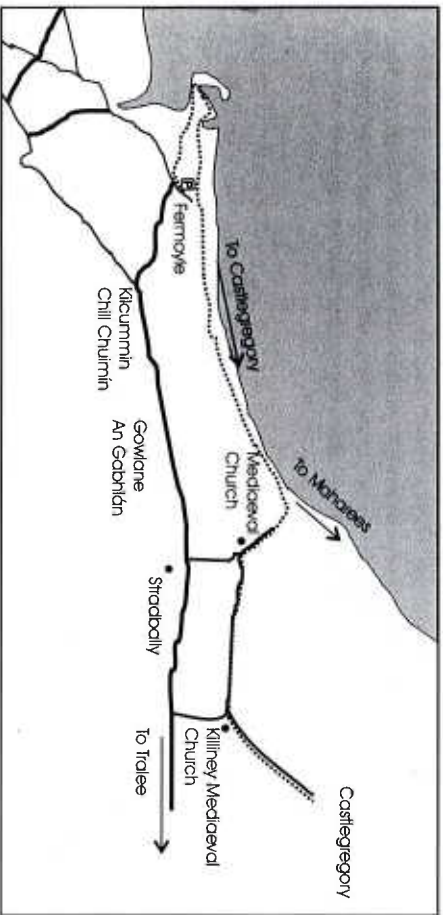
Route No. 2 Síúíóid Mullach Bhéal

Take the Glen road all the way to the back of Mullach Bhéal, approx. 5 km. The first section of this walk is suitable for wheelchair bound people, who can travel to the end of the tarred road. It is possible to turn at the cluster of houses at this point. Alternatively it is possible to follow a green road to the saddle between the hills, and view the western part of the peninsula. At the centre of the lowest point between the hills a cairn of stone is located (marked on the No 70 map). Climbing to the cairn will add up to two hours to your journey. There is some climbing involved in this section, but it is not too severe! Return via the same route.

Local Information; The Mullach road was the route taken by Colonel Zouze with a regiment of soldiers on their way to Dún and Oir in 1580. They passed through Gleann Sean Choip (the glen of the dead body), and out through the saddle in the hills between the Gearáin and Cnoc Bhaile Uí Shé at Mullach Bhéal. This pass is still known as 'Com Aouse' after the Colonel. Walter Raleigh and the poet Spencer who accompanied him travelled through the Conor Pass region over the mountains to the same destination, and Aodh O'Neill travelled over Más an Tiompán through Cuas, to Dún an Oir at the same time. There are also references to coffins being carried through this route. This would occur when a person who had married into the area from the 'other side of the hill', died. The body was often returned to their original home and would be carried by the in-laws to the top of the pass, and from there, the persons kin would take it and carry it home. Apparently there was a dispute at the top of Mullach on one occasion, and they could not agree on who was to carry the coffin to the other side. The body was temporarily buried until it was resolved as to was going to carry the coffin. A cairn of stone now marks the spot. Those passing by the cairn, are asked to 'caith cloch ar an leacht' (throw a stone on the grave) This route offers wonderful views of the Brandon Range and the Abhan Mhór Valley, with its lakes and marsh. One of these lakes, Loch Geal is said to be inhabited by a 'wild boar', who was banished there by St. Brendan. The boar originally guarded a magical oak wood behind Cloghane Village. He is reputed to reappear every seven years and light up the valley.

The village of Mullach was inhabited up until relatively recently. Those who collected folklore in this area often remarked on the richness of the Irish language, and on how content people were to live there. They were almost four miles from Cloghane village.

As one walks along the 'Glen road', there is a tradition of a Mass Rock being located nearby, where mass was celebrated during the Penal Times. The many stones scattered along the foot of the hills are said to have dropped from the apron of a 'Caillach' who was walking close by. The Caillach translates as 'hag', or old woman. However in origin, she was undoubtedly one of the goddesses, or a special manifestation of the land goddess.



Trá Fhormailleach/Fermoyle Beach.

Route; Circular Walk.

Start / Finish; Fermoyle Carpark.

Time; 1 - 2 hours.

Map; No 70 Discovery Series.

Colour Code; Blue Classification;

Grade 1 for all routes.

Brief Description; These walks are suitable for all age groups. Route 1, is a short circular walk along the coast which has many points of interest for those interested in natural history. It is also a superb beach for Shore fishing, as are all of the beaches in this area. It is suitable for swimmers and surfers. Route 2, is a coastal link with the village of Castlegregory, and Route 3, is a stage of the Dingle Way from Cloghane to the Maharees also finishing in Castlegregory. All follow the sandy coast, with occasional use of the public road.

Route No. 1 Directions. From the car park at Fermoyle Beach, The short hour long walk swings to the left (west), along the beach, around Ceann Duimheche, and returns along by the back beach. It is straight forward route, the only possible difficulty may occur during high tides when it may not be possible to complete the route-check beforehand. The bird watcher will find numerous species along the walk to interest him/her, as will the archaeologist who may find shell middens in the sand dune system. There is one extensive shell midden right on Ceann Duimheche which appears to have some stone structures built into it, and there is also evidence of a lime kiln close by. Middens can become more obvious after a storm, but can also be easily hidden by sand being blown against the coastline. They vary in date from 5000BC up to Medieval times. Follow the route along the back beach and it leads on to a small arched gate. Turn to the left and after a short distance on the road turn left again which brings you back to the carpark at Fermoyle.

Route No. 2 A longer route along the coast links up the two villages of Cloghane and Castlegregory using the long stretch of sandy beach from Fermoyle through to Stradbally. From the car park at Fermoyle the walk follows an easterly route along the beach. There are some sites of interest on the route. At Kilmummin, where a little stream flows onto the beach the memorial of the Port Yarrook is located. This was unveiled in January 1993 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of its loss with 23 hands in Brandon Bay. Regardless of the season there are numerous birds to be seen along the coast. During the summer the waters along the coast are tempting to swimmers, divers and more recently surfers. The walk leaves the beach at Stradbally, and takes a quite country road. Along the route call to see the beautiful ivy clad remains at Stradbally medieval church. The church dates to the 15th century and was one of many parish churches on the Peninsula. The eastern window is a fine example of the style of the time. In the corner of the graveyard a head stone marks where the captain and the first mate from the Port Yarrook are buried. After leaving the church site, cross the humpback bridge, turn right at this point if you wish to visit Stradbally village. However the walking route continues straight on, along the tarred road. This joins the main road after a mile and a half. On your right is the Church of Ireland at Killiney, with the remains of another medieval church. There is a fine memorial stone to the victims of the Port Yarrook. The final mile of this walk is along the main road into Castlegregory, therefore due care must be taken.

Route No.3 A further extension of this walk is to remain on the beach and follow the Dingle Way out the western side of the Maharees peninsula to Kilsenanagh, and returning to Castlegregory via the eastern side of the sandy peninsula. This will add about four hours to your journey

Local Information; Castlegregory Village. At the Beginning of the 16th century a chief of Norman origin named Gregory Hoare built a castle thus giving Castlegregory its name. Over three hundred years later Archdeacon Rowan in the Kerry Magazine describes how, on driving through the village on the way to Dingle, he spotted "a curious arched stone" forming a corner of one of the houses. On making enquiries, he learnt that this and a few other stones were all that remained of the castle of Gregory Hoare. He subsequently built from the stones he managed to recover, an arched doorway which today can be found in the Information Centre in the village. The doorway bears a curious inscription consisting of a series of letters. Archdeacon Rowan gave the meaning of the strange inscription as:

Hugh Hoare et Ellen Moore me effecire Quinto Die Maii

A.D. 1566 Johannes Barret Minister Hujus operis.

This was according to the Archdeacon's story, to commemorate the wedding of Hugh Hoare and Ellen Moore whose fathers were old enemies. Hugh's father tried to bar the wedding party from entering his castle but, being infirm, the rage and excitement overcame him and he fell dead on the threshold. The sequel to the unhappy tale took place at a banquet given by a Black Hugh for the English forces on their way to Fort del Oro at Smerwick. Hugh's wife to whom the guests were hated enemies was locked away but managed to escape and empty his best wine over the cellar floor. Hugh enraged, lost his senses momentarily and stabbed her to death. The following day, leaving the castle for his own trial, Hugh collapsed and died on the same threshold where his father had fallen on the day of the wedding thus bringing the tragic story to a close. Black Hugh's daughter married Walter Hussey and he commanded the castle when it was attacked by Cromwell's forces. Hussey made his escape with the garrison over the mountains to Minard castle on the southern side of the peninsula. Minard was later blown up and Hussey and his followers all perished in the explosion. After the war, surviving members of the Hussey family lost everything and were reduced to poverty, a broken family with a shadowy estate. Castlegregory was granted to Captain Anthony Shortcliffe, a Cromwellian officer, from whose descendants it passed George Rowen, a Derryman, who settled at Tullaree in the early years of the 18th century. Around 1800 Thomas Mullins of Dingle, the first Lord Ventry, purchased the estate from John Rowen and it remained in the possession of the Ventry family until 1913.

Castlegregory Pattern. This event was originally held in Stradbally between the Medieval Church (Cill Mhuire na Duimhche) and the beach. It was later moved to The Maharees and finally to Castlegregory, where on the 15th of August it is still celebrated. It is said that only the men attended the pattern on the 15th, and on the 16th the ladies celebrated what is known as Sheila's Day. The pattern is held in honour of 'Muir na Duimhche' (Mary of the Sand Dunes). The Medieval church at Stradbally was one of thirty parish churches on the Dingle Peninsula. They range in date from the 12th - 15th Century. In the 12th century the organisation of the church changed from being Monastic to Diocesan. As a result the peninsula was divided into 19 parishes, and new churches built, mostly on virgin soil, but some were built on earlier monastic sites. There is literary evidence which tells us that there was a parish here by 1302, and in

1398 'Thomas son of John de Geraldinis' was rector of 'Stradbalybog'. However by the middle of the 18th century the church was in ruins. The remains of the church as seen today, date to the 15th & 16th century. There is a beautiful double ogee-headed east window, and there are also ogee headed windows in the north and south wall. There is a well carved piscina located in the south wall, this was used for washing the sacred vessels. Outside on the walls the drainage system to take water from the roof is visible. These pointed stones with channels carved in them are known as 'water spouts'. One survives at the eastern end of the north wall and 6 survive on the south wall. In the northern eastern corner of the graveyard three members of the Port Yarrook, including the Captain and first mate are buried. This Barque sank off Kileummin during a Storm in January 1894.

Killiney Medieval Church. At Killiney there are interesting remains at the church site. The earliest remains of the Mediaeval church would indicate a 15th century date. There were however, extensive alterations in the 15th century when a residential tower was added to the south-east corner and a garderobe tower to the south wall. The other church located at this site is the present Protestant church and was built in 1812. There is also a monument to the Port Yarrook in the graveyard, along with a possible Early Christian cross, indicating that there was a monastic site located here under St. Enna. There is a Holy Well dedicated to the same saint a short distance to the north and people visited the well on the 24th of June.

Loch Gile. Loch Gile always provides the bird watcher with many species of birds, both in winter and summer. This general area is one of the breeding grounds of the natterjack toad. This is easily identified by its distinctive mating call in early summer, and by the distinctive yellow stripe on its back.

Síúilóid GLEANN NA HUAMHA AGUS MACHA NA BO.
(Glennahoo and Maghanaboe Walking Trail).

Route NO. 1; Circular route anti clockwise direction.

Start/Finish: Scraggane.

Time: 3-4 hours

Max height: Binn an Tuar (526m).

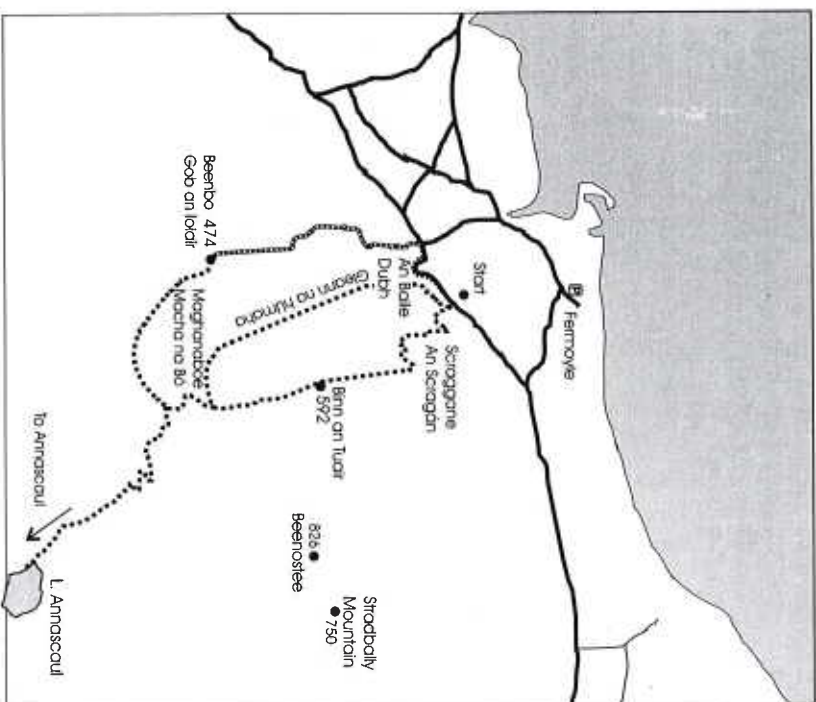
Map: No. 70 Discovery Series.

Colour Code; Red

Classification; Grade 2

Brief Description; This is an easy 3-4 hour walk in one of the most spectacular glaciated valleys in these mountains. However despite the fact that much is on an old green road, the walk does bring people to a height of 526m, on the summit of Binn a Tuar, so due care should be taken. Avoid this route in fog as it is easy to go astray. Park your car, in a location which will not obstruct the local land owners or the public roads. This circular route is to be completed in an anti clockwise direction.

The walk is sign posted from the main road at Scraggane. Follow the route up behind the flat roofed house. This route swings to the left as it brings walkers into the valley. This



well defined green road runs straight to the back of the valley. At the back of the valley the route climbs to the left of the stream. Continue on this path as it goes uphill, and take a sharp turn to the left at the direction post. This is the most difficult section of the walk as it is all up hill until you reach the summit of Binn a Tuar (592m). It looks more daunting than it actually is, and the slope gradually becomes less steep. It is important to follow the direction poles on the descent to the north west, as you may go astray easily. The direction posts bring the walker to the junction of two wire fences where one can cross via the stile. A short distance from the stile one meets a bog path which zig zags all the way to the finishing point. Please close all gates that you pass through, and use the stiles for crossing wire fences. The farmers may have sheep in the lower fields, so extra care should be taken when passing through. If you wish to do a longer version of this route, it is possible to walk from the summit of Binn a Tuar, to the twin summits of Binn os Gaoith (826m), and Cnocán (Stráidbhaile (798m), directly to the east. This will add three to four hours to the walk, and it is recommended that a full day is allowed to complete such a walk. This latter section of the walk is not marked on the landscape, and should only be undertaken by experienced walkers.

Route 2

Start/Finish An Scragán or Baile Dubh.

Time 3-4 Hours.

Max Height; 474m.

Map: No 70 of the Discovery Series.

Classification; Grade 2

Brief Description; This is a circular walk of the valley in a clockwise direction. There is a tough short climb from the green path at the back of the valley to the summit of Gob an Iolair. The recently cut bog road is easily located a short distance to the west of the summit. Please take care when walking on the public road from Baile Dubh to An Scragán.

Follow Route 1, in along the floor of the valley to the point where the path begins to rise, keeping the river to your right. Continue on this route as far as the direction post for Binn Bó. Turn right crossing the river and continue along the path which is still clearly visible. After crossing the next stream the path leads off for Annascaul, leave the path here and head in the direction of Binn Bó. The bog can be wet here, making the walk a bit of a plod. There are two more streams to be crossed so keep to the south where it is easier to cross them. There is a low ditch visible on the bog after the last river, it is convenient to walk on this as it leads to the final slope of the summit of Binn Bó 474m. Head directly west from the summit until you meet the mountain road, turn right on meeting the road and it will take you back to the main road at Baile Dubh. If you have difficulty getting down onto the mountain road, go further south, where it is easier to get onto it. On reaching the main road at Baile Dubh, turn to your right, and Scraggane is less than one mile.

Route 3; Walk on the Valley Floor.

Start/Finish; Scraggane

Time; 2 hours.

Map; No 70 Discovery Series.

Classification; Grade 1

This is a suitable walk for all ages and involves no steep climbing. It is simply a walk on level ground to the back of the valley returning on the same route. Starting at the same point as in Route No. 1 this walk brings people along the green road to the back of the valley known as Macha na Bó, (The plain of the cow). This place name refers to the Glás Gabhneach, a magical cow whose supply of milk never dried. She lived at the back of the valley and grazed in the surrounding countryside. She is reputed to have passed through a pair of standing stones in Drom, and when both sides of her stomach touched the stones she had satisfied her appetite. She eventually disappeared into the sea when she was tricked into trying to fill a sieve with milk. Walkers can return via the same route. There is some evidence at the back of the valley of attempted drainage which was undertaken by Hickson, a land agent during the 19th century. Also take note of the evidence of settlement scattered throughout Macha na Bó

Route No. 4

Start/Finish; An Scragán Annascaul or visa versa.

Time; 5-6 hours

Max Height; 350m.

Map; No 70 Discovery Series.

Classification; Grade 2.

Brief Description; This route links the north coast of the peninsula with that of the south. One follows the green road at all times, although it is difficult to find in the middle flat section between both valleys. However it becomes visible once more as you descend along the Garbh Ath river on the Annascaul side.

This fourth alternative, links the Clophane area with Annascaul, following an ancient roadway through the central mountain range of the peninsula. Some experience required for this route, and it should only be attempted if visibility is clear. Follow Route No 1 to the back of the valley, and climb up along to the left of the river. The path crosses the river and continues to climb up directly above the back of the valley. The path way is not very clear along stretches of the bog along the plateau, but the opening to the south west of Coum Dubh is the direction to aim for. This path is marked on the No. 70 map, except for one short section. The path is easily picked up at the back of the valley, and the bog road will take the walker down through the valley to Annascaul. The bog road is in poor condition in places due to heavy rains, care should be taken. This walk can also be done in reverse, i.e. starting at Annascaul and walking northwards to Gléann na hUamha.

Local Information; The valley gets its name from a souterrain (underground passage) which was located in a field near the entrance to the valley. The souterrain was associated with a ring fort (Known as líos a phuca) that has since been destroyed but local accounts tell of it having three enclosing banks which would suggest it was of some importance. The Irish term for a souterrain is 'uaigh', therefore "The valley of the souterrain" is how it translates to English. There were local stories claiming the people of the next world lived in the líos, there is also a pool in the river close by called 'poll

a phuca. There is also a report that the last wolf in Kerry was shot high up on the western slopes of the valley, at a place known as 'Céim an mhadra allaiagh' which translates as "the step of the wild wolf dog". There is also a reference to a Stone alignment west of 'The Wolf's Step' in the Seabac's book on Corca Dhubhane. He refers to Paric na Galláin, but there is no surviving evidence today. The valley can be a noisy place after a heavy fall of rain when the many waterfalls are in flood.

At the entrance to the valley, on a bad bend in the road is a bridge known as Droichead Gort an Ath (The bridge of the field of the ford). This according to Sean Ó Dubhda, a local folklorist, is a reference to the location of where an old military road crossed the river. Close by is a field known as Paric Barr Neoin (the field at the top of the Souterrain). This is the field where St. Brendan is said to have converted Crom Dubh the pagan figure of the area (Baile Dubh is named after him). This occurred when Crom Dubh sent his notoriously fierce bull to be weighed against a piece of parchment on which St. Brendan had written the 'Ave Marie'. The latter outweighed the bull and Crom Dubh submitted to the control of St. Brendan.

This road, through Gléann na hUamha, was used by a judge from Farran, Brandon, who travelled to Annascaul regularly to attend court there. It was classified as a bridle path suitable for horses and those on foot only. This valley was said to have been forested until medieval times when it was settled. Some of the houses are still to be seen at the back of the valley where the last inhabitant of the valley, 'Mary Macha na Bó' lived until the earlier part of the 20th century. A local landlord from Fermoyle, Hickson, cleared 12 tenants from the valley to make more grazing available for his sheep and cattle which were fetching a big price at the time. A Shepherd from Scotland by the name of Brown was employed to look after the animals. The O' Donnell's were left in the valley by Hickson the landlord as caretakers. The best known member of this family was Mary Macha na Bó. She lived here with her sister Nóirín and two brothers John and Tadhg, the latter was well known for fixing clocks. Mary, because she was equidistant from both Annascaul and Clophane, had a choice of churches to attend on a Sunday morning. She is remembered for her striking long white hair which she plaited.

As one walks in along the valley floor there are fine examples of 'lazy' beds', or crop marks which are the remains of where the inhabitants of Gléann na hUamha once grew potatoes along with flax, possibly dating as far back as the Great Famine in the middle of the 19th century. There is a strong tradition of flax growing in the valley to support the considerable Linen trade in Dingle town. As further evidence of this trade, some of the place names echo the planting of flax, Binn a Tuar translates as the 'pinnacle of the bleaching'. There is also a very distinctive protruding feature high on the slopes to your right as you walk in the valley. This is known as 'Fadhb a'Mhail'.

Many people who lived in or near the valley claim to have heard 'The Shrieker of Gléann na hUamha'. No one is sure what it looks like but has been described as a bird, animal or puca that made a loud noise. Norín Macha na Bó described it as 'rattling like a barrel full of stones', and claimed it went among the cattle and frightened them. Dogs ran indoors from it, and a local priest advised people to go indoors when they heard it, as he believed it was evil. Others described it, as some form of creature screaming, as it flew through the air.

Síoláid Más an Tiompáin/Más an Tiompáin Walking Trail.

Start / Finish: Brandon Village.

Time: 4-5 hours.

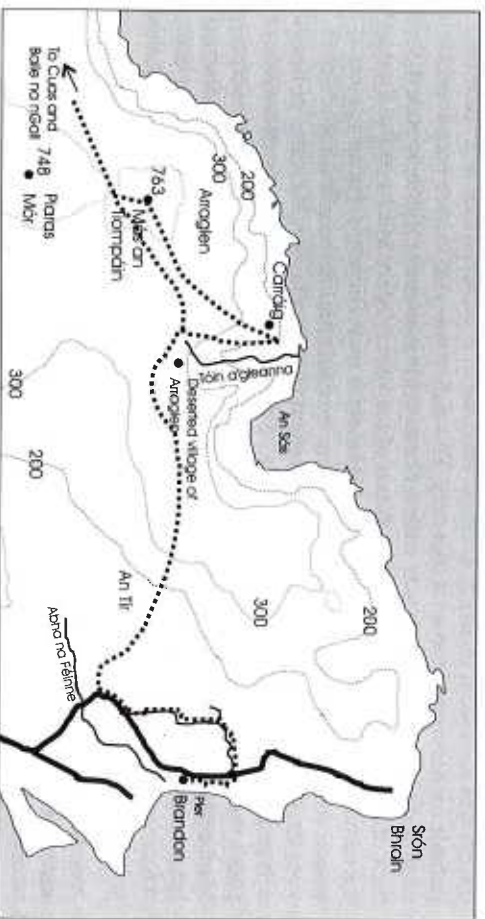
Max Height: 763m.

Map: No 70 Discovery Series.

Colour Code: Red.

Classification: Grade 2 for all Three Routes.

Brief Description: This is a wonderful walk into a wilderness of bogland, that should be manageable for almost everyone. It follows a bog road for a good deal of the walk, and the highest point, which is optional, is 763m. Alternatively one can walk to the Ogham Stone in the saddle of the hills between Más an Tiompáin and Piaras Mór which is just over 650m. A third alternative is to walk across the mountain range to Cuas on the western side of Mount Brandon. This route follows part of the Dingle Way, this is marked with yellow arrows and the symbol of a walker.



Route No. 1 This walk begins in Brandon village and follows the Dingle Way through Líos na Caol Bhuí, (meaning a narrow level strip of ground), and Teer. Walk north from Brandon Village and take the first left turn at the Stone built house. This road is known as 'An Tochar' and will bring you to the main road at Teer Cross (shop and petrol pumps at this point). Turn right (Walk is Sign posted), and this tarred road becomes a bog trackway at the top of Teer Village. This bog track is over 3km in length and is quite suitable for all age groups. Follow the Dingle way signs which lead to the end of the track (at the thatched building), and then leave the track and begin to climb to your left. The rounded mountain to your right is Más an Tiompáin (763m), and the route leads to the saddle in the hills to the left of the summit. This is the location of the Ogham Stone at Arraglen. Return home via the same route.

Route No. 2 Follow Route No 1 to the Ogham Stone. This route swings to the right and climbs the short steep slope of Más an Tiompáin (763m). Spectacular views in all directions are to be had from the summit. The descent follows the nose of the mountain to the north east, which is marked with direction posts, to the point known as 'Carraig' and follows back along a wire fence to the thatched structure at the end of the bog road. Walk, via the bog track, back through Teer to the finishing point at Brandon Village.

Route No.3 This is a walk linking Brandon with Cuas, across the mountains. Follow Route No. 1 to the Ogham Stone, cross the wire via the stile and simply follow the old military road, now with a blanket of grass all the way to Cuas on the western side of The Mount Brandon Range. This is a section of the Dingle Way (Map 10 on the Dingle Way Guide), and can be followed using the direction posts with yellow arrows. There is a separate map available for the Dingle Way.

Local Information. Ogham Stone. This is a most unusual location for an Ogham Stone and we can only presume that it is associated with the Pilgrimage to the summit of Mount Brandon. The inscription reads "Roman, the priest son of Comgall". Both sides of the stone are inscribed with crosses. One face bears a Maltese cross with a hooklike expansion at the right side of the upper arm, this is a monogram form of the Chirho symbol. The opposite face bears a Maltese cross within a circle. The earliest recorded form of the Irish language is provided by the inscriptions on Ogham stones. They appear to date from the 4th-7th centuries. This suggests that they originate in the Pagan Celtic period but their use extends into the Early Christian Period. Indeed some examples show evidence of being 'depaganzized' and given a Christian context. The stones generally give the name of an individual, his fathers name, and some examples in West Kerry carry the name 'Duibhne' (Dovinnias), a Goddess of the Corca Dhuibhne.

Más an Tiompáin: This name is also associated with Bran, a God associated with the sea. When he lay down along the coast line to protect the inhabitants of this area, his nose was at Brandon Point (Srón Bhróin), and Más an Tiompáin refers to the angle of his hip or rump. His two eyes were at Sáis Creek and at the entrance point of the Abha na Féinne (Owennanateana River) to Brandon Bay. The story of Bran's Sea Voyages predate the story of St. Brendan's journey to the New World. Many similar motifs occur in both stories, suggesting that parts of St. Brendan's story is a retelling of an earlier story.

Macha an Mhíl. The area where the Abha na Féinne rises is known as Macha an Mhíl (the plain of the hare). It is recorded in folklore that a severe cold period of weather killed many of the cattle grazing in that part of the valley. It was so cold that Loch Dubh was frozen over for several weeks and cattle walked upon it right through the Spring time. This spell of Cold weather is still remembered as Scrób a'Liathaigh.

Airghleann/Arraglen. The deserted village of Arraglen is a reminder of times when the population of the area was much greater. It appears that this village was last inhabited during the 19th century when 13 families lived there. In several places visible traces of crop marks can be seen indicating that potatoes and possibly flax were grown here. Only one structure is maintained today as a shelter for the land owner, the thatch roof is maintained. There is a rich collection of place names from this area, with practically every patch of land labelled with an appropriate name.

PILGRIMAGE TRAIL TO MOUNT BRANDON

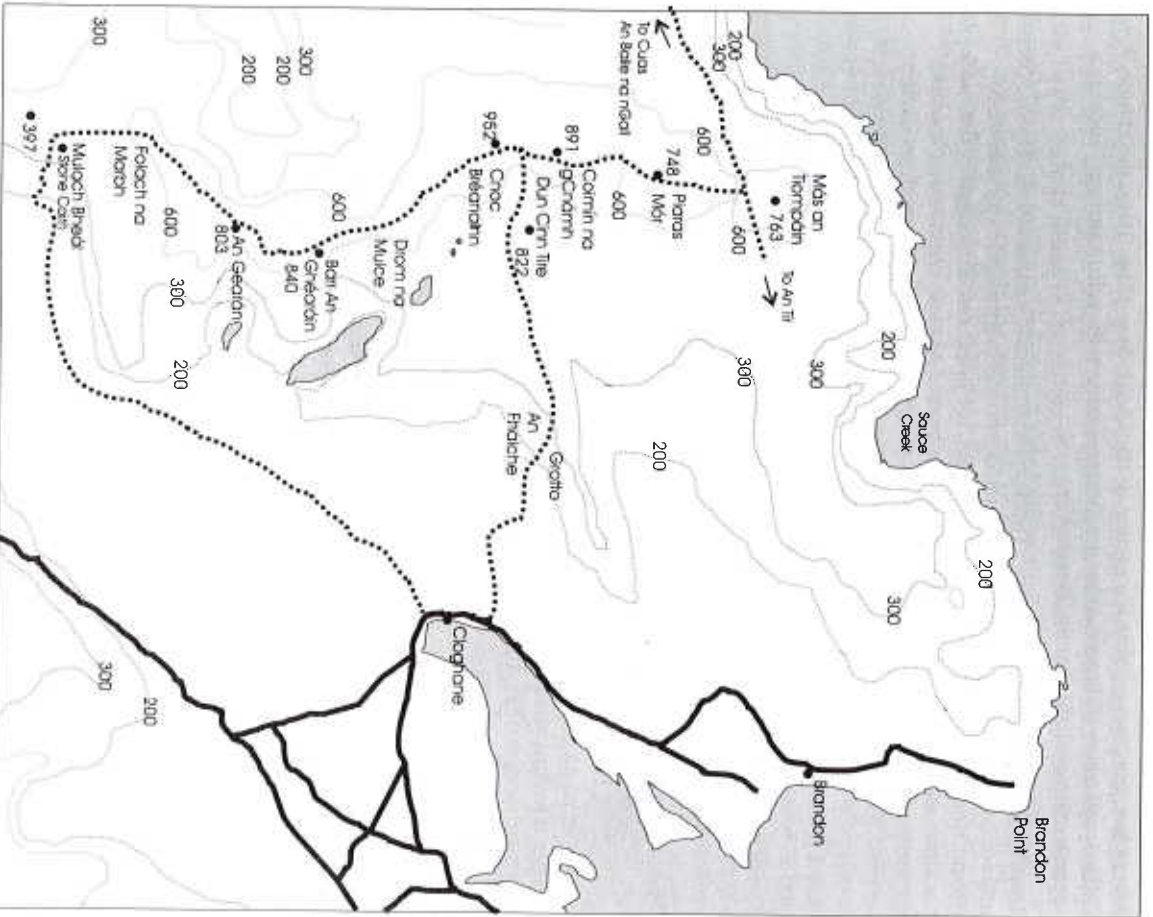
Route No.1 Start / Finish: Information Centre, Cloghane or Faha Car Park.

Time; Take six(6) hours to complete the walk.

Max.Height; 952m. or 3127 ft.

Map; 1:50,000 Sheet No. 70 of the Discovery Series.

Classification; Grade 3



Brief Description: The route follows a series of red and white metal poles which are laid out at regular intervals on the mountain. Because it is a popular walk there is a well worn route, no pathway as such exists, but it is easily followed. The initial section is tough as you gain height quickly, it later levels off, and finally rises sharply as the route zigzags through the eask. From the top of the eask the final section is relatively easy, but stay clear from the cliffs on your left. Be very carefully coming back down the eask.

This is one of the most rewarding walks in Ireland. However, it is not to be attempted in bad or foggy weather by those who have no experience of the mountain. Do not climb on your own. Always tell someone your intended route and estimated time of return. Wear suitable clothes, keeping in mind that the weather is unpredictable and colder at the summit. It is advisable to use this guide in conjunction with Map No. 70 of the new Discovery series, available in the Information Centre at Cloghane.

Directions. 1. The walk begins in Cloghane Village. Take the old pilgrim trail by the ruined medieval church behind the row of houses. This leads to the grotto at Faha. An alternative is to drive to Faha and begin the walk from the carpark (take the first left after the village then left again and continue to the end of the road). 2. The route from the grotto is marked by red and white metal poles at intervals of several hundred metres. Walkers should keep to this route. The path rises rather quickly before levelling off at the mouth of the coom. At the highest point of the ridge above you to the right is located the Benagh Hill fort which probably dates to the late Bronze Age or the Celtic period (about 500 BC). 3. From here the pater noster lakes are visible below on your left, the largest one is Loch Cruite. The terrain becomes more rocky as you walk in along the coom but there is little difficulty in following the path. 4. Care should be taken here as there is a steep drop to you left. The river should be crossed at the point marked. 5. The path crosses between the highest lakes to the foot of the eask, The path then zig zags steeply up along the eask. This is the most difficult part of the route so care should be taken. 6. On reaching the top of the eask, turn left and the summit is a 15 minute walk over some easy terrain. The views on each side are equally spectacular. Stay clear of the cliffs on the eastern side of the summit. 7. Most accidents happen when descending so please be careful and keep to the path at all times.

Route No. 2 Brandon Ridge Walk. Via Mullach Bhéal Star/Finish Point; Information Centre or Faha Car Park.

Length/Time ; 11.5 miles/18.5km. Allow 7/8 hours.

Max Height; 952m.

Maps; No. 70 Discovery Series.

Classification; Grade 3 For experienced walkers.

Brief Description; The same route is used to the summit, as in Route No. 1. Remainder of route is along cliff tops, keeping Drom na Muice to your left, with no clear route visible. From the 'cairn' to the west of Mullach Bhéal, (marked on No 70 map), there is a vague green road which leads the walker Mullach. The final section is along the tarred third class road to Cloghane Village. Take care not to come down along the Drom na Muice ridge, as marked on the No. 70 Map. Continue to Mullach Bhéal.

This walk is recommended for those with some experience of the mountain, and should

not be attempted in poor weather conditions. It is a six to eight hour walk, over peaks 950m, in height. We have designed it so that walkers can start and finish in Cloghane village. It is undoubtedly one of the finest walks in the country, and when cloud free, offers the finest views of the peninsula from its lofty vantage point. However while the route is generally safe, as with all mountain walks, care should be taken. The route follows the 'Pilgrim's Path' from Cloghane Village (See The Pilgrimage Trail walk), to the summit of Mt. Brandon. From the summit of Mount Brandon, your route is southwards following the main ridge to Brandon Peak. The steep cliffs of the east are on your left and the more gentle western slopes on your right. A broken down wire fence leads the way at first, and soon it gives way to a large stone wall. Keep to the left of the wall and unless you intend climbing up on the three or so little peaks on the actual ridge itself, your way is steadily down hill until you meet the rise in ground to Brandon Peak. Here the stone wall swings away to the south-west (right), and after crossing a wire fence and keeping the steep cliffs to your left the stony ascent to the peak is made. Leaving the stone cairn on the peak, you're heading for the sister peak of Gearán, southwards following the obvious ridge. Stony at first, it later becomes a grassy arête. Little height is lost or gained on this breathtaking section with wonderful views on all sides. Continue until you meet the gate at the top of the Gearán. Two wire fences emanate from the gate. Follow the one to your right down hill over the grassy slopes.

Follow the spur as it swings to the left and descend to the gate in the saddle of the hills. From this point swing to the left and descend through the wet marshy area to the cluster of houses at Mullach Bheal. Take the tarred road out through the valley, turning to the left at the junction, which takes you back into Cloghane village.

Route No.3 Brandon Ridge via Coimín na gCnámh.

Time: 6-7 hours.

Max. Height: Mount Brandon at 952m.

Map; No 70 Discover Series.

Classification; Grade 3. For experienced walkers.

Brief Description; **Stiff walk to the summit along the pilgrimage trail. Ridge walk across stony ground, keeping the cliffs over Coimín na gCnámh to your right until you get to the Ogham stone.**

Again follow the Pilgrims Path to the summit of Mount Brandon. For this route head back down the same way as far as the 'Abstreig' sign, however instead of going back down the east, continue straight ahead along the ridge via the top of 'Coimín na gCnámh. Climb over the distinctive outcrop known as 'Piaras Mór, and at the Ogham stone turn right and follow the Dingle way back to Cloghane via Teer. A second alternative on this route is to turn left at the Ogham stone and follow the Dingle way to Cuss, which is clearly marked along the old military green road.

Local Information; This military road was built during the 16th century and Aodh Ó Néill is said to have travelled this route on this way to Dún an Óir in 1580. It was also used during the Napoleon Wars for access to a look out post south of the Ogham Stone. The project was abandoned after a short time when they realised that the mountain was covered in fog the majority of the time. The remains of the building can still be seen as a rectangular shape of collapsed stone.

History of the Pilgrimage to Mount Brandon. Maire Mac Néill in her brilliant book 'The Festival of Lughnasa' lists 195 locations countrywide associated with the

celebration of this festival of the harvest, which would appear to go back over two thousand years to the Celtic Period in Ireland. Among the mountain top assemblies listed, is that at Mount Brandon, which along with Croch Patrick, was one of the most important celebrations in Ireland. We are not sure when the mountain first became the site of worship, but there is, in a nearby valley, a standing stone deliberately shaped to resemble the mountain, and appears to be directly in line with the summit. This monument is generally associated with the Bronze Age (2200-500BC), and may indicate that the mountain was of some significance at this early period. It was certainly the centre of an important Celtic Festival, held on Dornnach Crom Dubh, which always fell on the last Sunday of July. This festival was later adapted by the Early Christians and it became associated with the cult of St. Brendan.

The Celtic Connection. Lughnasa was one of the quarterly feasts of the old Irish year. The other three were Samhain (1st of November), Imbolc (1st of February), and Beltaine (1st of May). Lughnasa is August first. So is Anglo-Saxon Lammas, and there is some ground for believing that Lammas was a Celtic feast adopted by the Anglo-Saxons in England, and by them given a Christian name. It means loafmass. None of the other Germanic or Nordic peoples celebrated Lammas, and the first of August seems to have had no outstanding significance amongst them. In Roman Gaul a festival on the first of August was celebrated at Lugdunum, modern Lyons, in honour of the Emperor Augustus, and French celticists think it may have been substituted for a Gaulish festival in honour of the God Lugh. Lugh's name is also attached to several other towns in the old Celtic regions, for example Laon, Loudun and Leiden. The folklorist Dathí 'O hÓgan tells us that Julius Caesar wrote of the Gauls, and tells us the Celts most worshipped a god whom he equated with the Roman Mercurius. 'They declare him the inventor of all arts, the guide for every road and journey, and they deem him to have the greatest influence for all moneymaking and commerce'. All the evidence points to Lugh as the deity in question. Historical records and, in some cases, modern day remnants of ancient Lughnasa festivals are known from many parts of the ancient Celtic world, most notably in Scotland, England, Wales and France. In several places the festival was associated with hilltop gatherings. On the Isle of Man, for example, strong Lughnasa traditions were celebrated up until the end of the 19th century on the 1st of August or Laa Luany's on the hills of Snaefell and South Barrule, and at St. Maughold's Head, where a pilgrimage assembly was held.

In Scotland, on the island of Inis Maaree in Loch Maaree north of Skye, the festivals and gatherings were held on the 1st of August, known as Lammas Day or Lìnuasadal, and consisted of a variety of activities centering on the first harvest theme. Likewise in England, Lammas Day was celebrated in many places. Notable examples include the gathering at the Askrigg Hill Fair in the north Riding of Yorkshire, the St. Mary Magdalen Fair, celebrated on Magdalen Hill at Hedon near Hull. Mountain assemblies are known to have taken place in Wales on Gwyll Awst, the 1st of August, in central and southern Cardiganshire and the Beacon Mountains in Brecknockshire. In Cornwall, the first Sunday of August was the day for a major festival on the Morvah Hills at the last promontory of Land's End. In France, where the dominating presence of a well organised church prevailed, Lughnasa festivals were largely transformed into Christian celebration. Here the festivals continued as the feast day of St. James or Saint Christopher, on the 25th of July, or St. Anne's Day the 26th of July, and took on many aspects of the older harvest festival, such as first fruits being brought to the church and blessed and barefoot pilgrimages being made to high places. Some of the places where

these festivals are known to have taken place include Reims, Metz, Verdun, Toul and Lillers .

On Mount Brandon the route you are taking has been followed by pilgrims since before Christianity arrived in Ireland in the 5th century. Mount Brandon is one of the most important of the 195 sites associated with pilgrimages to celebrate the harvest festival of Lughnasa, a Celtic celebration of the victory of Lugh, the God of light, over the power of darkness, Crom Dubh. The early pilgrimage was undertaken on the last Sunday of July known as 'Domhnach Crom Dubh'. The original pilgrimage appears to be associated with the Celtic Era (300BC-400AD.), but may date back further into prehistory. One possible reason for the importance of the Brandon site is that the mountain is the last point in Europe to catch the light of the Setting sun, an event of special significance to the early inhabitants of this area. Modern day remnants of ancient Lughnasa festivals are known from many parts of the ancient Celtic world, most notably in Scotland, England, Wales and France. In many instances the festivals were continued under a different name by the Christian church. Another name of this festival was Brontógáin, which translates as the bringing forth of the fruits of the earth. In the Book of Leinster a reference to the importance of celebrating the pilgrimage, and a warning of disaster if ignored.

St. Brendan the Navigator. The religious and ritualistic importance of the pilgrimage to Mt. Brandon continued into the Early Christian period. St. Brendan set up a monastic community in the 6th century in the village of Clohane, where now stands the remains of a medieval church,(the stone head of Crom Dubh was located here until stolen in August of 1993). St. Brendan is also reputed to have built an oratory and beehive hut on the summit of the mountain, where a holy well is also found. It was from the summit that he had a vision of an island to the west, and was encouraged to travel there. The written account of his journey across the North Atlantic 'Navigatio Sancti Brendani Abbatis' the Voyage of Saint Brendan was originally written around 800AD, was translated into every European language and was a very popular book in medieval times. The idea that the voyage to Newfoundland could have taken place in the early Christian period was further enhanced when Tim Severin constructed an original style skin boat and successfully completed the journey in the early 1970's proving that 6th century monks could have reached America long before Columbus. The Navigatio was one of three such tales. The other two being Bran who sailed around the world unaware that time was passing, when he finally landed at Stron Broin, one of his followers turned to a heap of dust when he put foot on land. The other tale is of Maelduin, and it appears that the writers of the Navigatio borrowed heavily from the story line of the adventures of Maelduin. Early manuscripts conclusively reveal that Saint Brendan, who was born north of Tralee in Co. Kerry in 586, was a widely travelled and famous religious personage, having founded the monastery of Clonfert in Co. Galway, as well as important sites at Lough Derg and Lough Corrib. He is reportedly to have been in Wales, Brittany and in Scotland, and a number of place names derive from him. During his lifetime and following his death, St. Brendan's fame was spread far and wide by maritime peoples along the coasts of Ireland, Scotland, Brittany and Wales. With the writing of 'Navigatio Sancti Brendani', his deeds became known to the entire Christian world, and Brandon Mountain became an important destination for Christian Pilgrimage. The exact number of those who made this long and incredibly arduous journey to what was for them the end of the world, is not known, but according to the ecclesiastical taxation list of 1302, Teampaillin Bhréanainn at the top of Mount Brandon

(referred to at the time as Ecclesia Montis Brendani), was liable to a larger taxation than all but two other churches in the diocese of Ardfer, a liability most reasonably interpreted as resulting from the offerings of large numbers of pilgrims. As further confirmation of the pilgrimage's importance is the fact that it was designated a shrine to be visited by the Armagh penitent in 1544.

The Clohane Patron. Traditionally a patron (or pattern), day was held in Clohane after the dawn service at the summit. This day is remembered as one of the main festivals of the year on the Dingle Peninsula. A huge gathering participated in games, dancing, singing, feasting and faction fighting .

The Change of Date. In 1868 a dramatic attempt was made by Bishop Moriarty of Kerry to reverse the declining pilgrimage. 20,000 pilgrims attended. High mass was sung by the cathedral choir from Killarney and the Bishop himself was carried to the summit. Although the event was never repeated, due to the debaucheries associated with the celebrations in the local villages after the pilgrimage, from that day forward the date of the event was moved back one month to the last Sunday of June thus breaking the chronological connection with the ancient Celtic assembly on the mountain. In recent times the pilgrimage was celebrated by small numbers of people up until the 1940's. There was an attempt by Bishop Eamon Casey in the 1970's to celebrate mass on the summit on the last Sunday in June, however the weather did not co-operate. Comhlacht Bhréanainn Teo have recently revived the pilgrimage and the pattern days on the original dates for the festival, as part of the cultural traditions of the area. It is hoped to make an annual festival of this event during the last weekend of July.



Returning from a stroll through Loch a' Dhuin



Old Green Road



The Mount Brandon range



Brandon Ridge



Masainionpar Trail



Fermoyle Beach Walk



The Mount Brandon range