

Achill Sionnach

19th - 21st September 2003

"...an air of Romance impossible to describe or to resist, intangible, alluring and tender." ph

MAP OS 1: 50,000 Sheet 30

Getting to Achill:

There is an infrequent Bus Eireann bus from Westport to Dooagh, about 8km from the start of the route.

Drive to Westport, from Westport head to Newport, from Newport take the N59 to Mallaranny. From Mallaranny take the R319 to Achill sound, from Achill sound drive to Dooagh, drive through Dooagh and keep going, when you are at the end of the road (Keem beach), you are at the start of the Sionnach.

Friday

Car Park F562045 to Old Store House F5580444

Park the cars in the upper car park & check in. Walk toward the Coastguard Station, past the toilet block, turn right, where the track crosses a stream, up to the Penal Alter, the Old Store House is two hundred metres on your left.

Saturday

Old Store House to Spot Height 194 F549049

Use the stream on your left as a handrail feature; take care to pay attention to lay of the land as you get up to the col. As you walk up observe the old field lay out, the lazy beds & ditches marking the extent of the plantation.

Spot Height 194 to Croaghaun F554059

This is an extremely steep climb, the highest mountain on the western seaboard of Europe. As you go, look left to the Booley Village, Bunowna. Take great care with how you position your feet and be aware of others walking above & below you.

Croaghaun to Tonacroaghaun 688 F559061

This is a short ridge walk giving spectacular views out to sea. Take great care & look out for the wild goats, as they clamber up and down the cliff. Likewise you may catch a glimpse of seals on the rocky beaches below.

Tonacraughaun 688 to Spur F563066

A short stroll down the hill, again take care as you pick your way down – rocks are slippery when wet. The mountains in front of you, on the mainland, are the Nephins. Over on the right you may be able to see the Twelve Bens, Mweelrea and the Maumturks.

Spur to Bunnafreva (Spot Height 574) F567068

Bog on one side, the Atlantic Ocean on the other; take care on the approaches to the Spot Height.

Bunnafreva (Spot Height 574) to Amethyst Spur F564056

Pay attention to the lie of the land, as it slopes left to Lough Acorrymore and right up to Tonacraughaun.

Amethyst Spur to River Head F561053

This is steep and could be damp. As you descend, look out for pieces of the RAF airplane that crashed here in 1950, they are here.

River Head to River Junction F558048

Again take care this is steep and if damp will be very slippery, as with going up watch where you place your feet.

River Junction to Old Store House F5580444

Contour around keeping your height and watching your feet.

Sunday

Old Store House to Marconi Radio Station (Spot Height 198) F558037

Up hill again, this time on grass, it could be very slippy if it is damp. Note the large ditch on your left, this was used to prevent livestock wandering onto the cliffs, does it work?

Marconi Radio Station to Spot Height 296 F549043

Concentrate on staying the right side of the cliff.

Spot Height 296 to Spot Height 332 F544048

There are whales and schools of dolphins in that there ocean.

Spot Height 332 to Spot Height 194 F549049

Take care on the descent.

Spot Height 194 to Old Store House F5580444

The view of Clare Island and Doega Head is spectacular, ask Paul Henry.

Old Store House F5580444 to Car Park F562045

Don't forget to visit the beach; Keem is undoubtedly one of the most idyllic in the country. Look at the tar on the large rocks on the shore from the repairing of the curraghs used for shark fishing.

"...home" ph