

N.B. Walks and Drives on Achill Island. Insert under Topography.

Taking Keel as the starting place (it being perhaps the best resort on the island) the following are some of the best walks and climbs.

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① To Keem Bay. This is a beautiful small sheltered sandy bay at the foot of <sup>MOYTEOGE</sup> Moyteoge Head. From Keel the walker goes west along the road thro' Pollagh and Doogh and up the mountain road by the entrance to Corrymore House. Beyond this the road rises steeply on the side of Croaghaura Mt. It has many bends and turns and on the left side all the time is an almost precipitous cliff falling to the sea 300' to 500' below. Finally the bay is seen ~~below~~ with its gleaming white powder fine quartz & mica sand. After passing the last bend (immediately on the right of which is the amethyst quarry) the road leads downward by an old coast guard station to the Bay. About 100 yds up the slope at the back of the old station is an altar of built stones on which mass was celebrated all during the penal days. On the side of the altar is a stone in which is a natural oval hollow. This was used as a Holy Water font and to this day when the young folk go to milk the cows grazing around it, they dip their fingers in the rainwater held in the hollow and cross themselves. Just at the east end of the Keem strand is a small cave in the rocks called "The priest's cave". This was the sacrificial and hiding place of the priests who offered mass on the altar above. The Bay is a beautiful bathing place, perfectly safe and good for swimming as the water gets deep fairly quickly, and the waves are very small and mild.

The walk is about 5 miles. A car may be taken all the way but it should be remembered that the road is very narrow and rough and in wet weather, turning at the coast guard station can be extremely difficult.

② For a slightly less strenuous walk, the visitor can take the road from Keel to Doogh where he will turn right over the bridge beside St Colman's knitting industry. This road leads him straight to the southern base of Slievemore Mt. Here the road curves eastward thro' the old village of Slievemore now almost deserted. The ~~that~~ thatched houses he will see here are from 150 to 100 yrs old. They have no chimneys & no windows and are almost the last survivors of the type on Achill Island. At the east end of the village is the graveyard in which are many rude home-made crosses. Beside it is the Holy Well called "Zoban Naoin Coluim" to which, tho' now dry, stations are made. Turning right at the graveyard the Keel-Dugort road is

reached at a point about  $2\frac{1}{4}$  mls from Keel. This circle is  $6\frac{1}{2}$  miles.

(3) Eastward across Keel strand (3 mls long) and up the track to the top of Minaw Hill will give a wonderful view of the south side of the island. To the south is Clew Bay with its hundreds of islands and the Sheefry mountains behind Louisburgh. If one returns at this stage the round trip is about 7 mls. If the walker has brought lunch he may proceed along the edge of the 900' ~~ft~~ high cliffs and finally descend to the village of Doogea. By taking the road leading N.E. from the village the Achill Sound-Keel road is reached where the evening bus to Keel may be boarded. This round trip will take a day to complete.

(4) There is an excellent walk around the shoulder of Croaghnam by the lakes. Take the road from Keel to Doogah and at St Colman's knitting Industry turn right across the bridge. This road leads up the hill thro' the bogs running straight for the ruined signal tower on the hill top. This tower is a relic of the coast guard days when it was ~~was~~ in communication with another tower on Moyteoge head and thus Blackwood bay on the north side of the island was linked with Clew Bay on the south. Cross the ridge of the hill west of the tower and one then looks down onough Nakeeroge which is named after the beetle it resembles in shape. The length of the lake runs parallel with the edge of the sea from which it is separated by hundred yards wide strip of grass & heather. When the tide is out a very pleasant bath can be had on this little beach. If one comes down to the lake level the ground is wet and boggy but can be crossed by jumping from tussock to tussock. It is easier, however, to keep up on the shoulder of the mountain and look down on the sea and the lakes. The next of these met with are Bunafreeva East,ough Timmy and another or smaller ough Nakeeroge. High above these on the edge of a cliff is a small lake Bunafreeva West (1050' above sea level). The outflow from this lake is thro' a subterranean channel the water from which pushes out several hundred feet below.

From the lake of Bunafreeva West one can proceed along the cliff edge, cross the top of Croaghnam Mountain,

descend again into Louffaunbunowna valley, climb the ~~cl~~ cliffs by Achill Head and Benmore and so to Moyteoge Head, and from here the descent to Keem Bay is pleasant and easy. This walk should only be undertaken in clear weather as in mist the cliffs can be dangerous. This route from the lakes round the cliffs to Moyteoge Head is about an 8 to 10 hours walk. However, if after the top of Croaghnam is reached, one descends by Accorymone lake, the road between Keem and Dooagh is easily reached. This shortens the time of walking to about 6 hours.

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- ⑤ The Climb of Croaghnam, 2192' high over the sea is quite unforgettable. Take the road thro' Dooagh up to the entrance of Corrymore House. Follow the avenue into the grounds and from here go straight to Accorymone lake. After passing this bear slightly left and when roughly half way up, bear right again. It is not a very stiff climb. From the top is a sheer drop of 2000' feet to the sea below. On the north is Blacksod Bay with its islands, the Belmullet peninsula and Inishgluaine where the legendary Children of Lir are buried. On the south is Clew Bay in which Clane Island, Inishant, Inishtrunk and Inishbofin ~~can~~ can easily be picked out. The mainland on the south of the bay can also be seen. Eastward is the whole of Achill Island with all its little lakes and mountains backed by the long range of the Nephin Mountains on the mainland. Just below the peak of Croaghnam is Achill Head, a long sharp ridge of rock. The very point of this can be reached but care should be taken on the narrow parts. The return may be made down the valley to Keem Bay and home by the road thro' Dooagh. This walk and climb will take 6 hours.
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- ⑥ Slievemore Mountain (2204 feet) may be climbed from either end but the best and easiest way is to proceed from Keel on the Dugont road to the graveyard at the east end of Slievemore village. From here go straight up the mountain to a large white quartz rock which is more than half way up the slope. From here bear a little eastward along the shoulder of the mountain and so to the top. The descent can be made at the east

end near Dugort village. From here to Keel is about 4½ mls. The walk & climb will take 4 hours. It should only be attempted in clear weather as the mist may descend very suddenly and movement becomes dangerous.

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### Drives.

- ① A short drive is from Keel to Dugort, along by the Golden Strand. Turn to the right at the Valley cross roads and come back to the main road near Buncawerry Post Office. The round trip is 10 mls.
- ② The Atlantic Drive - On the main road near Achill Sound a ~~sign~~ signpost indicates the road to Buncawerry which is to be followed for about 2½ mls. Then take the left fork by the edge of the Sound, pass Kildownet Castle (15th Cent) and continue to Cloghmore, just in front of which lies Achill Beg island. At Cloghmore turn sharply to the right after which the road runs along a sharp and rocky coast for some miles. Clane Island on the south looks very near and in front in the far distance is Achill Head running out from the great ~~is~~ mass of Croaghaura. The two peaks of Moyteoge Head can also be seen. The road is now rough and climbs very steeply but from the top the view is splendid. Down below is Ashleam Bay, on the right in the distance is the northern part of the Sound, the village of <sup>SALIA</sup> Salia and the far distant Nephin Range. The road leads downward again with 2 hairpin bends. Farther on after another sharp climb turn left and continue to <sup>CAMPDRT</sup> Campport. Turn right here to the main road. From Campport one can also go on to Doolga. Turn right there and follow the foot of Mweelin mountain till the main road is reached near Cashel. The distance of this drive is about 25 mls. It is one that should not be missed.

### Boat Trips:-

From Dugort to the Seal caves at the North base of Slieve More mountain. Carraghs can be hired in Dugort for this trip of about 2 miles. The boatmen are excellent guides and it would be their fault if the visitor doesn't catch a glimpse of the seals. The trip can only be made in calm weather.

Boat Trips.

- ② Another very pleasant excursion is from Keel or Doough to Clave Island on the south of Achill. This is a fairly long trip of about 18 mls and will take a whole day including sight-seeing on the island. In very fair weather curraghs will do the trip from Keel or Doough but a better way is to hire the motor boats belonging to the MacNamara's. These are large comfortable boats and are very seaworthy and the journey is accomplished in a very short time.
- ③ Innistofin may also be reached in this way and tho' the island is much smaller it is well worth a visit. This trip ~~should~~ should only be attempted in very settled weather for if the sea becomes rough the visitor will have to remain on the island.

Corraun Peninsula

Starting from Achill Sound a very pleasant drive of 25 miles is the route right round the Corraun Peninsula. Turn right  $1\frac{1}{2}$  mls from Achill Sound on the Mallevanny road and after a further  $\frac{1}{2}$  ml turn right again. This road lead south along the east side of the Sound taking the visitor past Belfersad Church and school and along the base of Corraun Mountain (1715 feet) to the very scattered village of Corraun. This is at the extreme south end of the Sound. A stop can be made here and a walk of  $\frac{1}{4}$  ml to the west brings the visitor to the sandhills on the edge of the Sound where are numerous very early settlement sites marked by mounds of shells, hearth-sites burnt stones etc. If he is lucky he may pick up fragments of bronze ornaments or glass beads etc.

Out in front and thrown across the mouth of the Sound is Achillbeg Island. Here a number of families live out a precarious existence and there is a school. If the visitor wishes any of the numerous curragh owners will ferry him across the  $\frac{1}{4}$  ml of water to the island. On it also are a number of Early Iron Age forts not of great interest to the general visitor. At the right angle bend of the road at Corraun is

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Corraun House. Here are well known gardens where sub-tropical and numerous other plants grow on land reclaimed by hard work from what was originally marshy-Bog. The most noteworthy feature of the gardens is the wonderful display of pink & blue hydrangias. Admission to the gardens is free on request to the owners.

The road now leads along the edge of the cliffs and from it wonderful views of Clew Bay are to be had. All the islands stand out in true relation to one another and it is like looking down on a huge map. 4 miles from Corraun and on the left side of the road are large flat expanses of red sandstone outcrop. On these are the "hoof marks" of St. Patrick's horse left here when he jumped his mount from the top of Croagh Patrick and landed here, according to local legend. Only a mile further on is the village of Dooghney while 2 miles still further is Mallaranny. Turn to the left here and follow the road on the south side of Bellacragher Bay and so back to Achill Sound.