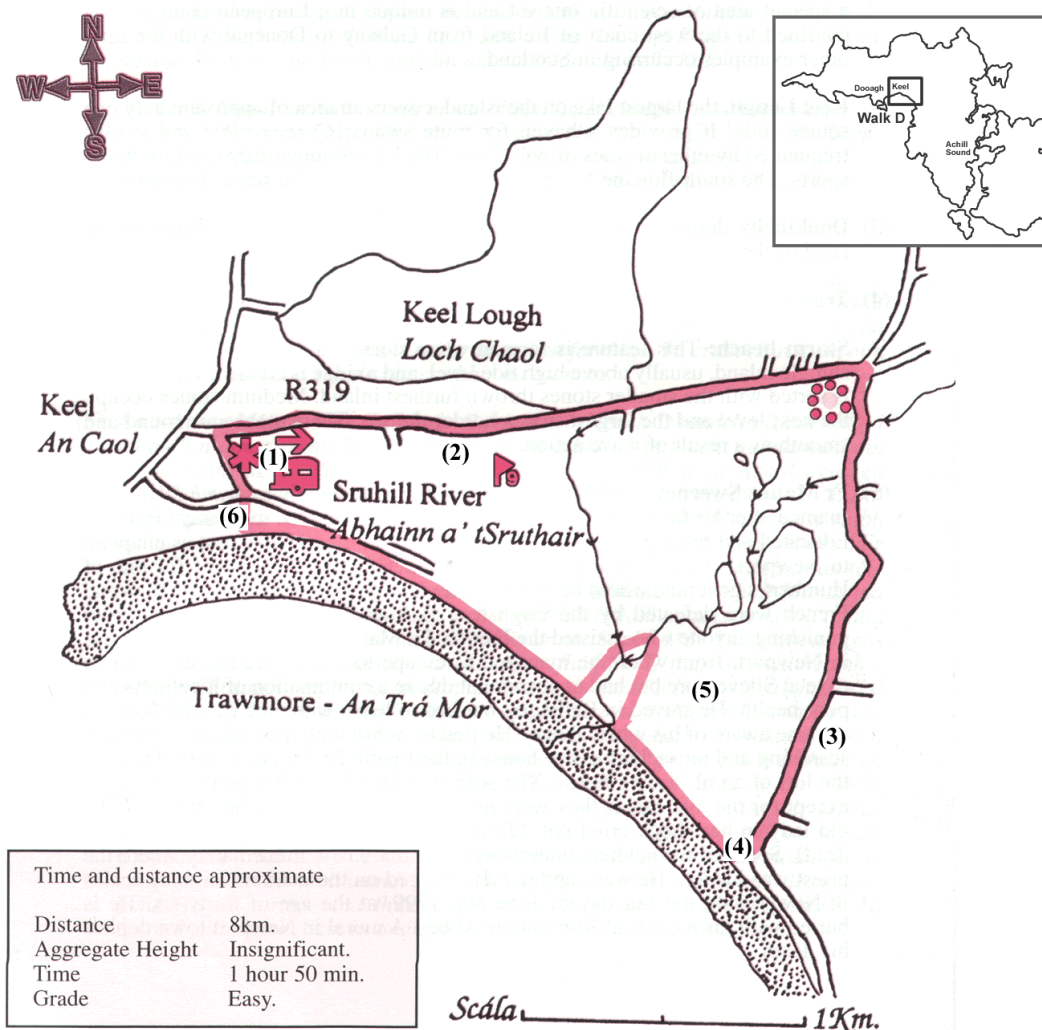


## Walk D – Keel-Trawmore Loop

The walk starts at the caravan and camping park in Keel (1). From here travel north-eastwards along the R319, walking on the grassy plain (2). The beautiful, freshwater Keel Lough lies to the north. Opposite the lake on the other side of the road is Achill Golf Club, a nine-hole links. Continue on to the crossroads and turn right (The Crossroads Inn is at the junction). Walk through the village of Dookinelly (3) to where the road emerges north of Trawmore (4), a fine sandy beach. The Minaun cliffs stand at the south-eastern end of the beach.

Turn right and follow the stony track above the storm beach. A monument to Fr. Manus Sweeney (5) lies inland to the north.

Continue on as far as the Sruhill river. Travel upstream and cross the river at the stepping stones or at the metal bridge further up. Return to the beach and follow the beach towards Keel. Travel inland at the information panels (6) and return to the caravan park.



## Walk D – Keel-Trawmore Loop (page 2)

### Points of Interest:

(2) **Machair:** The area of flat level ground between Keel Lough and Trawmore Beach has machair status. The term machair refers to an area of level, stable, coastal dune grassland. It has developed over thousands of years. This habitat is a special area of scientific interest and is unique in a European context. It is confined to the west coast of Ireland from Galway to Donegal with the only other examples occurring in Scotland.

**Keel Lough**, the largest lake on the island, covers an area of approximately one square mile. It provides a haven for mute swans (*Cygnus olor*) and is also frequented by other species of wild fowl. The lake is sometimes used for water sports. The south-flowing Shruhill river connects it with the sea at Trawmore.

(3) **Dookinelly** derives from *Dumhach Cinn Aille* meaning the sandbanks at the head of the cliff.

(4) **Trawmore** is a fine sandy beach, 4km long.

**Storm beach:** this feature is formed when storm waves throw boulders and shingle inland, usually above high tide level, and a ridge is created. The material is sorted with the smaller stones thrown furthest inland. Medium stones occupy the next level and the largest stones border the sea. These stones are round and smooth as a result of wave action.

(5) **Fr. Manus Sweeney** was born in a house referred to locally as Teach Dhonncha (named after his father Denis) which stood beside where the monument is today. Educated and ordained in Paris, he returned to Achill and was sent as chaplain to Newport. During the Rising of 1798 he acted as an interpreter for one of Humbert's generals, whom he had met previously in France. After the Irish and French were defeated by the English at Ballinamuck, the English set about punishing anyone who assisted the French. Fr. Manus was captured in his house in Newport, from where he managed to escape to Achill. He hid in a remote cave in Slievemore but had to abandon it due to a combination of loneliness and poor health. He stayed in Ballycroy but had to leave when the English soldiers became aware of his whereabouts. He fled to Achill with the soldiers in pursuit, searching and ransacking every house in their path. Fr. Manus sought refuge in the loft of an old lady's house. The soldiers ransacked every part of the house except for the loft, but as they were leaving one of them shot into the loft. The old lady in her shock cried out "Ta an tAthair Manas marbh" (Fr. Manus is dead). Some of the soldiers understood Irish and knew immediately where the priest was hidden. He was captured and hanged on the market weighing scales in Newport on the Fair Day of June 8<sup>th</sup>, 1799, at the age of 36. He is buried with his parents at Burrishoole Abbey. A mural in Newport town depicts his death.