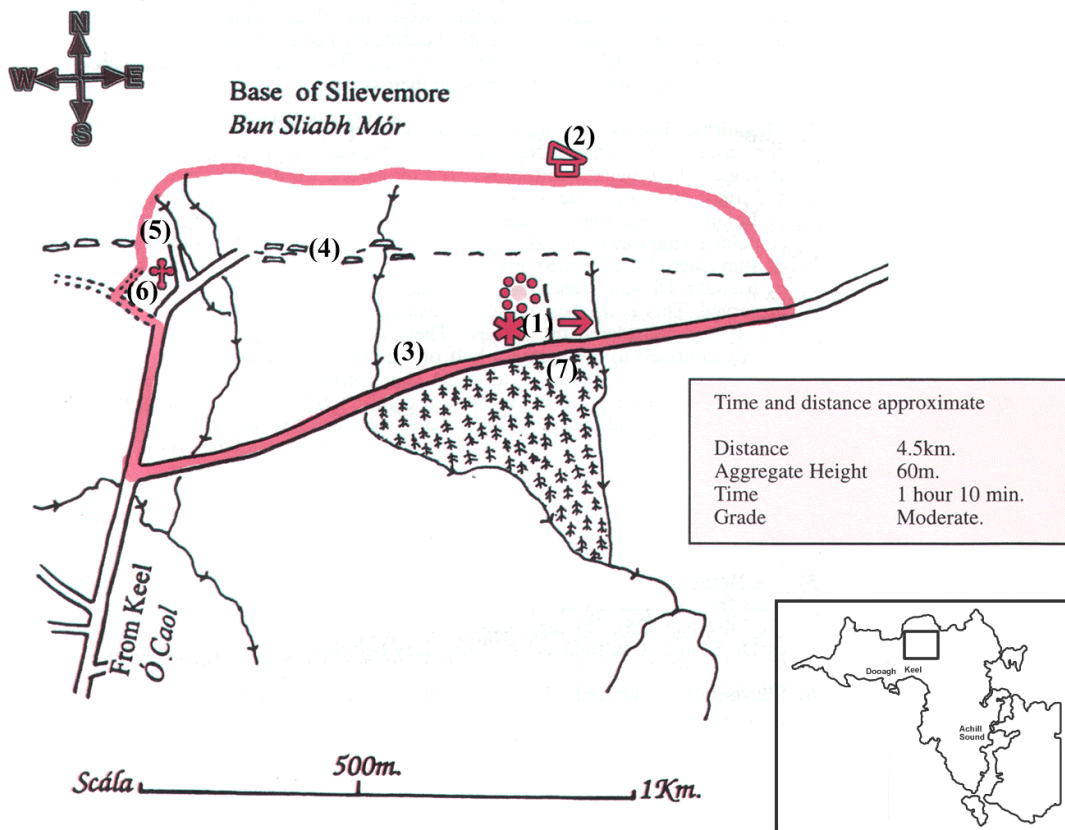


## Walk E – The Slievemore Loop

The walk starts at the carpark at McDowell's Hotel (1). Leaving the carpark turn left, and follow the tarmac road for approximately 500m to the end of the field system on the left. Turn left here, and walking parallel to the field fence continue in the direction of Slievemore. Turn left at the top of the fields and continue as far as the megalithic tomb (2). The view from here is superb. To the south-east are the Minaun cliffs and Minaun Hill. To the south is Keel Lough. Looking westwards are the remains of the signal tower and further west Croaghnaun mountain.

Walking parallel to the field fences but at a higher elevation continue westwards. The scree-covered slope of Slievemore is on your right and below lies Baile Slievemore holiday village (3) and the eastern end of the Deserted Village known as Faiche (4). Many of the fields have become overgrown with gorse. Continue towards the Deserted Village (5) descending at the two white quartzite boulders which lie on the hill above the village. Walk towards the gravel track. Turn left and passing Slievemore graveyard (6) continue to the tarmac road, and turn right. Follow the next road on the left at the T-junction, and passing a small conifer plantation (7), continue back to McDowell's Hotel.



## Walk E – The Slievemore Loop (page 2)

### Points of Interest:

**Slievemore** (672m), the highest mountain in Achill, is composed mainly of quartzite, which is Middle Dalradian in age. It is believed the high elevations of Slievemore and Croaghaun (further west) left them standing as nunataks throughout the advance of the ice sheet during the last glaciation of Ireland (The Midlandian), which occurred 10,000 years ago. The effects of earlier glaciations account for the formation of corries on their slopes.

(2) **Megalithic Tombs:** During the third and fourth millennia B.C., in what is known as the Neolithic or New Stone Age, the custom of building great tombs of stone called megalithic tombs (from the Greek word *megas* meaning great a *lithos* meaning stone) was widely practised by the first farmers who came to Ireland. These tombs were used for collective burial where each tomb contained a number of burials. Four such sites are located on the southern slopes of Slievemore (three to the north of the Keel-Dugort road). They were examined by Ruaidhrí De Valera and Seán O Nualláin in 1950. Two of the sites are poorly preserved. This is the best preserved example and is a court tomb. The court variety are considered the earliest. There are 330 examples in the country, mainly confined to the northern half of the country, and 60 of these occur in Mayo. There are a variety of forms. A characteristic feature is a courtyard or semi-circular open space, set in front of a gallery which is divided into two or more chambers and roofed by large flat stones. The roof-free court, usually at the eastern end of the cairn or mound, is flanked by standing stones. It was presumably used for ceremonies connected with the burial of the dead, usually cremations. Grave goods, such as Neolithic pottery, flint scrapers, arrowheads and knives, were placed in the tombs as offerings together with the ashes of the dead.

(5) The **Deserted Village** on the southern slopes of Slievemore is divided into three areas from west to east known respectively as Tuar, Tuar Riabhach and Faiche. The lazy beds surrounding the village have been described by Dr. Séamus Caulfield as “the finest lazy-bed field system in the country”.

(6) **Slievemore graveyard:** Here are a holy well dedicated to St. Colman and old crosses.