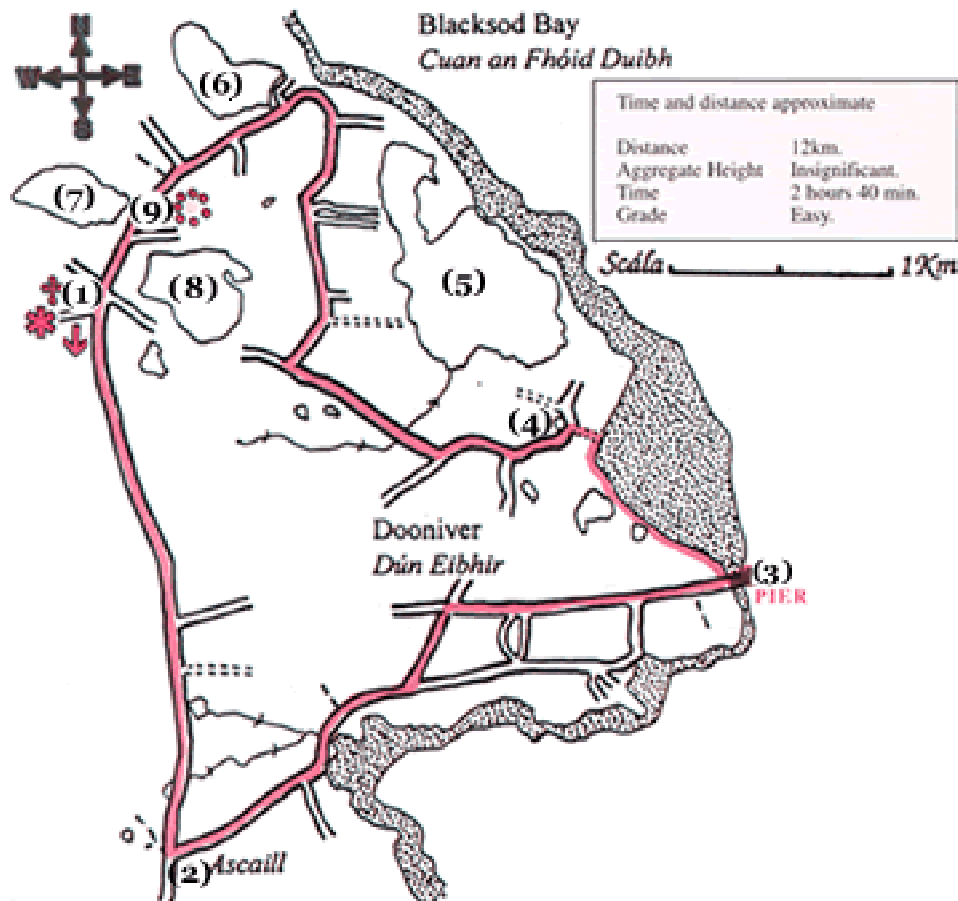


Walk G: The Valley - Dooniver Loop

N.B. A section of this walk is tidal. It is advisable to check the tide timetable beforehand.

Start at the carpark at Valley church (1). Turn right and follow the road south for 3km. Take the second tarmac road on the left at the boulder signposted for Ascaill (2). Continue towards the townland of Cladach and take the first road on the left. Walk towards the crossroads and turn right. Continue straight on to Beal a' Bhulain ie. Bull's Mouth (3). At the end of the road is a slipway where examples of currachs (traditional canvas-covered boats) can be seen. A ferry to the island of Inishbiggle across the channel operates from here. Ballycroy can be seen across the bay to the north-east, and to the south-east is the Nephin Beg mountain range and the Corraun Peninsula.

From the slipway follow the shoreline to the left for approx. 1km. Turn inland onto a sandy track which leads to the tarmac road, opposite is a reed bed (4). Turn left here. Continue on for 1.5km and take the next tarmac road on the right at the T-junction. Sruhill Lough (5), which almost borders the sea, comes into view. As you continue along the road other lovely lakes appear, namely Lough Doo (6), Lough Nambrack (7) and Lough Gall (8), all of which contain brown trout. Keep an eye out also for Valley House (9) as you return to the crossroads, your starting point.



Walk G: The Valley - Dooniver Loop (page 2)

Points of Interest:

(3) **Bull's Mouth** – The former coastguard station is now a private residence.

Formerly currachs were the main sea craft used on the island, and were built locally. The frame consisted of lats or hoops of timber, which were covered with canvas and then tarred. Canvas had the advantage of being inexpensive, watertight and easy to repair. Holes were bored in the gunwale for thole pins into which the oars fitted. Currachs were generally 1.2m wide and the length was determined by the number of rowing positions – thus you had two, three and four-man currachs. A noteworthy feature of the Achill currach was the pronounced bow. Although light, the craft was flexible, tough and durable. It was this ability to absorb impacts which ensured its continued use over a long period of time. Currachs were used mainly for fishing. On their return from fishing, the fishermen carried the currachs to a currach pen where they were upturned and anchored down. They were also used for transporting passengers, goods and animals. Today they are used mainly for inshore fishing on a small scale. Many have outboard engines which have eliminated the need for oars or paddles.

(4) The **reed bed** supports many species of birdlife.

(9) **Valley House** operates as a hostel today. It was once the home of local landowner Agnes McDonnell, who was the 'Yellow Lady' in James Carney's book 'The Playboy and the Yellow Lady' (1986). The film 'Love and Rage', which is based on the book, was shot on location here in 1997. The playboy in question was a local man named James Lynchehaun, who was born in Polranny, Achill, around 1858. He became associated with Agnes when he was appointed her land agent. However, a dispute arose and he was discharged of his duties. In 1894 he allegedly set fire to Valley House, which was burned to the ground, seriously injuring the lady. Lynchehaun was found guilty and sent to prison, from where he escaped to America and lectured on his innocence. In 1903 he was arrested but extradition efforts failed. He died in Scotland in 1937.