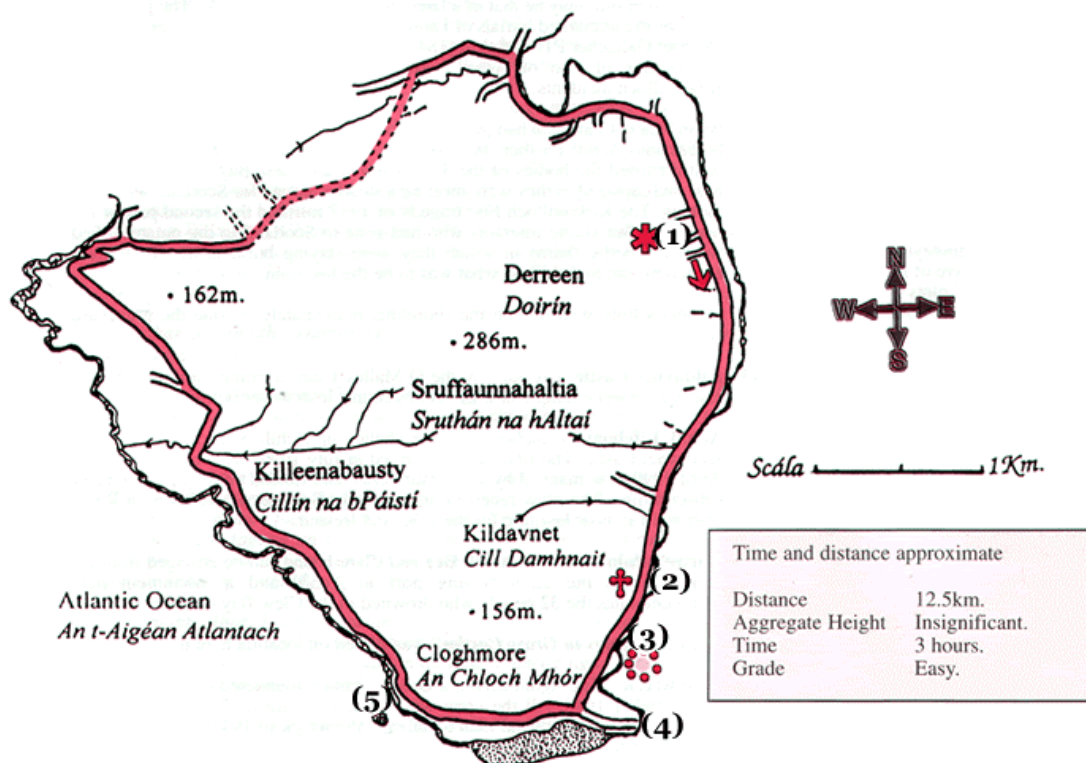


Walk L – The Atlantic Loop

Starting at the carpark at Patten’s Pub (1), turn right and follow the course of the scenic Atlantic Drive southwards. There is a wonderful view of Corraun Hill across the inlet of Achill Sound. As you proceed, the hillside on the right is patterned with drystone walls which once enclosed small fields of rough pasture.

Further along is Kildavnet church and cemetery (2), well worth a visit. Nearby, and overlooking the bay is Kildavnet castle (3) where the legendary Pirate Queen Granuaile is said to have established a stronghold in the sixteenth century. Further on to the left is Darby’s Point and pier (4).

As you continue westwards, the numerous headlands, gashes, creeks and sea stacks make for breath-taking cliff scenery (5). Where the road zig-zags sharply to the north of the picnic area, leave the tarmac road and follow the gravel road on the right. Go straight on to where it meets up with the tarmac road west of the tidal inlet. Turn right and right again at the T-junction and return to the carpark.



Walk L – The Atlantic Loop (page 2)

Points of Interest:

(2) Kildavnet Cemetery: The name ‘downet’ derives from Damhnait or Davnet (Dympna), a seventh-century saint who established a cill or small church here. The present ruin may be that of a later church built in the 1700s. The graveyard contains the unmarked burials of Famine victims (1845/48) and the grave of Fr. Michael Gallagher P.P. of Achill (1847-1867). Here also are the burial plots of the victims of two of Achill’s greatest tragedies – the Clew Bay and Kirkintilloch incidents.

Brian Rua O Cearbhain had prophesied that “carts on iron wheels” would carry bodies into Achill on the first and last journey. In 1894 the first train into Achill carried the bodies of the 32 victims of the Clew Bay Drowning. Their boat had capsized as they were meeting a steamer bound for Scotland for potato picking. The Kirkintilloch Fire tragedy of 1937 fulfilled the second part of the prophecy. Ten young migrants who had gone to Scotland to dig potatoes died when the bothy (barn) in which they were staying burnt down. They were carried by rail to Achill on what was to be the last train.

Davnet’s holy well lies on the shoreline, immediately outside the graveyard wall.

(3) Kildavnet Castle was built by the O’Malley Clan (a ruling family of Achill) and is a perfect example of a fifteenth-century Irish tower house.

Achill Lifeboat is anchored in the shelter of Achill Sound, not far from Kildavnet Castle. The first lifeboat arrived in July 1996 and the present one in April 1999. It is manned by a voluntary crew and funded entirely by voluntary subscriptions. The crew received an award for Services Provided by a Royal National Lifeboat Institute for the U.K. and Ireland.

(4) Darby’s Point: Visits to Achill Beg and Clare Island can be arranged from the pier. This is the main fishing port in Achill and a monument here commemorates the 32 people who drowned in the Clew Bay disaster of 1894.

(5) The film “*Kings in Grass Castles*” was filmed on location here in 1997.

Ship wreck – the Aghia Eirini, a Greek steamer, foundered on the shore here in December 1940. All the crew were hauled to safety. The salvage derrick which was used by a local man to salvage the wreck in 1941 can still be seen on the cliff-top.