



## *Slí ár Sinsear*

### *The Way of our Ancestors (Co. Kerry)*

#### *The Church of Saint James Glenbeigh to Cahersiveen*

Total Distance: 29km

Highest Point: 300m - Total Elevation: 420m

Time: Seven hours or longer

These are the route notes for the qualifying route for the *Celtic Camino*. This route is on well marked sections of the Kerry Way. The OSI (Ordnance Survey Ireland) Discovery Series Sheets 78 and 83 cover the majority of the route. A very short section from V606 886 to V593 880 is on the Sheet 70.

The route is marked with black poles with yellow man and yellow arrows. There is a mix of quiet country roads and trail walking. It can be wet and muddy in places following heavy rain. It can be walked in one day or over two days with a break in *Kells*.

There is excellent walking in the *Cahersiveen* area for those who want to do some multi-day walking to prepare for the Camino. The wonderful Pilgrim Path on *Cnoc na dTobar*, the *Monk's Trail in Ballinskelligs* and of course *Skellig Michael*.

#### **(OSI Sheet 78)**

The route begins at the *Church of Saint James* in the village of *Glenbeigh* on the *Ring of Kerry* (V670 910).52°03'22.0"N 9°56'23.4"W

Follow the Ring of Kerry road for 300m and take the fork to the right for *Rossbeigh*. Cross the bridge over the *River Behy* after another 200m and turn right. After 300m you will see a parking area on your left. The path leaves the road by the small cottage (V662 911).52°03'20.1"N 9°57'07.2"W

The path follows the *Fairy Trail* through the woods of *Rossbeigh Hill*. As you climb this path there is a path to the right after 200m ignore this and stay left. You will continue on a pathway through the woods with the hill on your right with views opening on the left of *Glenbeigh Village* and *Wynnes Folly*. The path meets a quiet country lane after 1.5km (V658 899).

Continue up hill keeping *Rossbeigh Hill* on your Right with views into *Coomasaharn* on your left and *Drung Hill* coming into view ahead as you climb. After 2.5km go straight through the crossroads and continue for a further 1km. There is a marker here for a turn left on a quiet lane (V626 892) and you will cross a bridge over the main Ring of Kerry Road. Turn right at the T junction and after 750m you will leave the road (at V 620 887).52°02'01.5"N 10°00'48.8"W.

The unsurfaced track forks to the left just before a very nice cottage. This follows the route of an Old Coach Road. This was the main route in and out of South Kerry until the new road below you was completed by *Alexander Nimmo* in 1822. It was the route used by *Daniel O'Connell* on this way to and from *Derrynane*. It is also the route taken by pilgrims making their way to the *Skelligs*. The first two kilometres take you through a series of farm gates with the view to the North and West opening before you.

Take time at the gates to take in the views opening behind you to the East. After 30 minutes it is time to take stock of the view. Behind you to the East you have the two fine beaches of *Inch* and *Rossbeigh* spanning the bay. *Rossbeigh Hill* overlooks the beach and *Seefin Mountain* stands behind.

In the distance you will now see the *MacIllicuddy Reeks*. Across the bay to the north you will see the southern shores and hills of the *Dingle Peninsula* from the *Blasket Islands* to the west to the *Slievemish Mountains* at the eastern end.

Note that pilgrims have been travelling from *Dingle* and South Kerry to *Galicia* for hundreds of years and most recently a group travelled on the *Jennie Johnson Famine Replica* ship from *Dingle* to *A Coruna*.

You will see the road to *Cahersiveen* far below and as you continue you will spot the old railway tunnels just above the road. *Drung hill* towers above. After passing the last gate (eight in total) the path levels out and from here to the saddle the remains of the *Coach Road* are carved out of the steep mountain side.

**This is the short section on OSI Sheet 70.** A further 20 minutes or so will bring you to the saddle where the route turns south.

**(OSI Sheet 83)** You are now at the entrance to the ancient *Kingdom of Drung* and a new panorama appears for the first time. The path before you is an ancient pre-christian route that crossed *Drung Hill* on a higher saddle. This is a path that would have its origins in the time of the **Milesians** who came to Ireland from *Galicia*. In the distance you will see the waters of *Valentia Harbour* and the town of *Cahersiveen*.

On your right the hill of *Mount Foley* with the mass of **Cnoc na dTobar** behind it. On your left the steep slopes of *Drung Hill*, *Been Hill* and *Beenmore*. As the route descends towards the forestry, look down to your right for the beautiful curve of *Gleesk Viaduct*. The path continues through the forestry. Continue heading south, passing some ruined cottages on your left before you meet the tarred road. 52°00'02.9"N 10°05'19.1"W

**Here you can detour to the right on the road to *Pat's Craft Shop* which has a nice cafe. it is about 1.5 km each way to return to this point. There is accommodation available in *Kells* if you wish to break the journey into two days.**

The route continues along the tarred road for a short distance before branching off on a path to the right. The next section of the *Kerry Way* is on a mix of quiet backroads and paths it is well marked.

The long *Massif of Cnoc na dTobar* looms over you on the right. The path gains a little height and again you will have views to the south and *Cahersiveen*. To your left and east the valleys of *Caherlehillan* and *Teeramoyle* are opening behind you. The bogs and farmlands of *Filemore* lie ahead.

There is an interesting 6th Century monastic site in the valley of *Caherlehillan*, recent archeological excavations uncovered some *Syrian pottery* on the site. There is a long tradition of trade between **South Kerry** and the *North of Spain*.

After 1km you will reach another tarred road. A long straight stretch of road lies ahead for the next 3km. You are unlikely to meet many cars, the spring time flowers and the fresh green leaves will line the way. You will pass a couple of junctions before you come to a right turn for *Filemore Church*, the way leaves the road on the left by a bungalow and crosses some fields by the *Fertha* river.

You will cross two footbridges to reach the road and turn Right for ***Filemore Community Centre*** and Football Ground.(V 527 821 OSI Sheet 83). After a hundred meters the way goes left. It follows green lanes, tarred roads and paths for the next 2km to cross the road at ***Sugreana***.

(Note you will pass a sign for Kerry Way to Waterville on your left. **Ignore this**).

Watch out for the ruins of ***Bagaghs Workhouse*** about 500m on the right and ***Sugreana Burial Ground*** with a ruined Medieval Church in the distance on your left as you continue beyond this point. Cross the road at ***Sugreana*** and continue on paths, green lanes and some tarred roads. This section is low level and mostly flat.

Some of the way marker poles along here will also be marked with signs for the ***Daniel O'Connell Heritage trail***. You will pass through some working bogland and see stacks of turf (peat). After 1.5 km you cross the footbridge over the ***Carhan River*** you will come across a miniature Irish Cottage by the roadside. This was created by a local farmer for a postcard photo competition some years ago.

A further 1.5 km on this road brings you to a T junction. A right turn here will bring you into ***Cahersiveen*** in 2km. The ***Kerry Way*** however goes left before entering a field by a forestry on the right. The route takes you uphill through the fields to meet with the ***Beentee Loop Walk*** where you will turn right to follow the Loop Walk through ***Carhan Woods***, a lovely native woodland, to town. You will pass the ***Holy Well*** and shortly afterwards a ***Mass Rock*** straddles the path. You will have a lovely view of the town and the Estuary when you exit the woods.

The path circles the waterworks and joins a road which descends steeply. Go left at the junction which brings you to the ***Fairfield*** after 500m. Turn right at the ***Garda Station*** and left at the ***Market House***. The ***official stamping station*** is in the ***Old Barracks Heritage Centre***. Turn right at the crossroads and it is on the Riverbank 200m.

*Congratulations, you have now completed the Celtic Camino route of:*

*Slí ár Sinsear - The Way of our Ancestors*

***Thanks to the late Gerry Enright, historian and pilgrim, and to his friend Michael Walsh, another pilgrim, for preparing these walking and local history notes.***