The Loch a'Dúin Valley from the Com an Áir Valley.

Foxglove, Méaracán dearg, Digitalis purpurea.

Excavated Trench showing pre-bog field wall.

Loch a'Dúin

The Lake of the Fort

ARCHAEOLOGICAL & NATURE TRAIL

Dedicated to
Seán Ó Dubhda
an Maistir.

Contents

RÉAMHRÁ

Fáilte go dtí gleann Loch a'Dúin. Is tre comh-oibriú leis na feirmeoirí atá na siúlóidí seo oscailte don phobal. Ba mhaith linn ár mbuíochas a gabháil le John agus Marion ó Dubhda, Tomás agus Eileen ó Flahárta, Breandán Luibheád agus Caoimhín ó Ceallacháin, as ucht cead a thabhairt dúinn siúl tríd an ghleann. Tugann an leabhrán seo eolas ar scéal an ghleanna ó thús , suas go dtí an lá inniu. Tá dhá turas sa ló le seandálaí, agus tá bealach féin treoraithe tríd an ghleann chomh maith. Molaimid go bhfanfadh daoine are na bealaí atá leagtha amach, agus ná cuirfidís isteach ar ainmhí ná aon rud eile sa ghleann.

Tá suas le deich gcinn de siúloidí leagtha amach ag Comhlacht Bhréanainn Teo. timpeall an Leithriúigh. Cuid acu sna sléibhte agus cuid eile cois cósta nó sna gleannta. Tá mapaí, treoirleabhair agus gach eolas eile le fáil san Ionad Eolas atá lonnaithe sa Chlochán.

Tá CBT thar a bheith buíoch de Údarás na Gaeltachta agus Atlantic Arc ar son na cabhrach a thug siad dúinn an togra seo a bhunú.
Thug M.P. O Connor, Clare McMorran agus Míchéal ó Coileáin cabhair an leabhair seo a scríobh.

INTRODUCTION.

Comhlacht Bhréanainn Teo with the co operation of the local landowners have laid out a guided and self guided trail of the Loch a'Dúin Valley. We are grateful to John and Marion Dowd, Thomas and Eileen Flaherty, Kevin Callaghan and Brendan Lovett for permission to walk through their land.

Loch a'Dúin is an important and unusual archaeological landscape. The aim of these walks is to inform the public of the unique collection of geology, archaeology and wildlife which is to be found here. Please respect the property of the landowners and stay on the recommended route.

Loch a'Dúin is one of several walking routes which have been laid out in the Cloghane/Brandon area. These vary from the lofty summits of the Mount Brandon range to the sandy coast line of Brandon bay. Literature for each walk is available in the Information Centre in Cloghane, along with directions etc. For other information on walks, fishing etc please call to the Information Centre in Cloghane Village, 066-38277. We greatly appreciate the assistance of Údarás na Gaeltachta and Atlantic Arc in completing this project

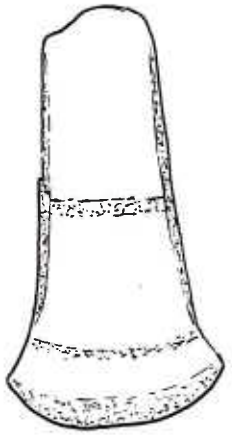
Script by Clare Mc Morran, Michael O'Connor, Míchéal Ó Coileáin. Breandán Ó Brosnacháin, and Conónach P O'Fiannachta.

Photographs supplied by Clare and Elizabeth Mc Morran, Míchéal ó Coileáin, Tom Fox and Ted Creedon.

THE BRONZE AGE IN IRELAND

AN CRE UAMH AOIS IN ÉIREANN

The introduction of new technologies and raw materials can bring about radical changes in a society. Take for example the introduction of electricity or perhaps the micro-chip to modern society. Such inventions generally give rise to revolutionary economic, and social developments which have far reaching consequences for the people living in the society. In prehistoric Europe the pace of change may have been much slower, but that which brought about the introduction of metallurgy was nevertheless very significant.



Bronze Axehead
(Half Actual Size)

INTRODUCTION OF BRONZE.

The introduction of bronze tools and weapons was a major step forward from the previous stone age implements. They first appear in the final centuries of the Third Millennium B.C. The Bronze Age in Ireland is generally dated from 2200 - 500B.C. Their production would seem to have justified the huge investment of time and labour involved. It has been calculated that to produce forty of the simplest bronze axes, it would take seven hundred working days, excluding the mining process. However it must have enabled people to do simple chores, such as chopping or cutting, at a much faster rate.

Parallel with the development of bronze and copper, a new source was discovered from which artifacts of a totally different nature and purpose could be produced. This material was gold, and from it a variety of ornamental objects were manufactured which would be prized and traded throughout the Bronze Age. Ireland has the second largest collection of gold work in Europe from the Bronze Age. (The largest is found in Greece).

AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES.
MODHANNA FEIRMEOIREACHTA

In the Bronze Age, woodland and scrub land were more extensive than today, although even by that time Stone Age and Early Bronze Age farmers had cleared significant areas for agriculture. Possibly the most significant change to occur on the landscape was the growth of blanket bog. This was partially due to climatic changes, namely an increase in the amount of rainfall. However, the impact of intensive farming on the landscape speeded up the spread of the bog. As a result large areas of once fertile land were covered in bog during the Bronze Age, limiting the acreage to be utilised for agriculture.

There were no major changes in the crops sown until quite late in prehistory. Wheat and barley continued to be the main grain crops, with oats and rye being cultivated at a later date in the Iron Age. Flax was also grown early in prehistory, as a source of fibre and also for the rich oil supply contained in its seed. Pastoral farming is more difficult to distinguish but it is highly probable that it played an important part in the social economy. In fact up until the tenth century AD in Ireland, in the absence of money, the central system of wealth revolved around the cow. Land was often divided according to how many cattle it could support.

THE FRENCH CONNECTION.

Along with the new technology of bronze working, novel forms of pottery and new fashions in burial were introduced, probably from the south along the Atlantic sea board. It is possible that the builders of the wedge tombs may have come into the south west from France and possibly from Spain, in search of sources of copper for the production of bronze. Similar monuments known as *Alles Couvertees* are found in Brittany. Early copper mines have been identified and dated in Cork and Kerry, those found in Killarney have provided dating evidence of around 2200BC. One of the noteworthy features of this period is the increasing preoccupation with some pottery types or metal objects which, for their owners, must have been symbols of status and rank.

Gap in a pre-bog wall - Loch a'Dúin.

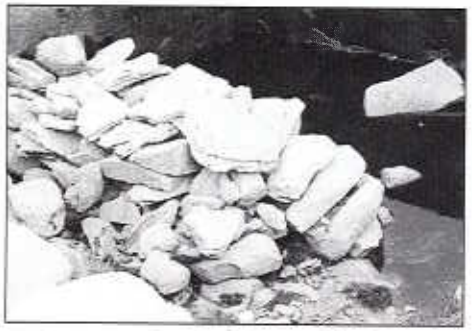
LOCH A'DÚIN.

The Loch a'Dúin Valley consists of one thousand five hundred acres and is located in the north facing mountain range, east of the Conor Pass. It includes the townland of Loch a'Dúin, and parts of Kilmore and Ballyhoneen. The natural resources of the valley would appear to have been exploited from the end of the Neolithic period or the beginning of the Bronze Age, (2500-2000BC). Therefore it is best to view the valley as an archaeological landscape rather than a series of individual, unconnected monuments.

Within the valley there are eighty to ninty stone structures dating from the end of the Stone Age up to modern times. These include a wedge tomb, two standing stones, eight fulachta fiadh (ancient eating places), two possible cist graves, eleven examples of cup and circle rock art, several enclosure sites, numerous hut sites/clochains and a fortified island. Along with these more ancient sites are several structures associated with agricultural practices in the area over the past two hundred years, for example, booley huts and even modern sheep dipping tanks. It is possibly the longest unbroken line of agriculture evidence in the country, with monuments from each period still surviving. Today the valley is mostly grazed by sheep, but during the summer cattle are also to be found in the valley.

It appears that the Loch a'Dúin Valley was an ideal place for settlement. The lake and the River Scorid would have provided ample amounts of fish, while there is evidence on the foreshore at Fermoyle beach of extensive exploitation of shell fish, in the form of shell middens, which have not been accurately dated. There must have been wild deer and other edible animals in the surrounding hills, which would have provided other sources of food. In fact, for many years in the Com an Ár area (Valley of the Slaughter), south of Loch a'Dúin, people have been finding short pointed pieces of timber placed upward in the original ground surface, or low in the bog. These seem to have been used to trap deer or to lame some animals when a herd were driven into the area where these pointed pieces of wood were carefully located. The injured animals would then have been easily killed off. One of these wooden pieces has been dated to the Late Bronze Age, 800-500BC.

What is of special interest in Loch a'Dúin is the high concentration of a variety of monuments in such a confined area. All aspects of life are represented in the surviving monuments, habitation, eating, agriculture, enclosure, ritual, burial, aesthetics and defence. Monuments such as the wedge tomb, fulachta fiadh, rock art and standing stones would all indicate a date in the Bronze Age, (2200-500BC). Many of the other monuments are not datable without excavation, but it seems likely that they date from the earliest habitation of the valley right up to modern times. Within the valley are several kilometres of stone field walls, dividing the landscape into over fifteen fields in some areas, and in other areas dividing the landscape into larger undefined areas. The majority of the walls have been covered by the ever expanding bog, which has protected the walls hidden beneath it. It is only in relatively recent times that local farmers when cutting the peat as a fuel, have revealed the walls which have been hidden for so long. It has been calculated with the help of pollen studies that the peat has been growing in Loch a'Dúin for the past three thousand years.



Excavated pre-bog wall, Loch a'Dúin.

Recently a small excavation was undertaken on a section of wall which had been completely covered by the peat, to determine some form of dating for the construction of the wall. It was possible to date the lowest layer of peat to almost two thousand years ago.

From this information one can imply that the early farmers did not build the

wall on the peat, but rather on the original ground surface beneath. Therefore one can suggest that the walls must have been built at some period before the peat began to develop. Within the past year further studies on the pollens which survive in the peat have been undertaken. These show that up until 1300BC a woody vegetation prevailed in the Loch a'Dúin area, but that shortly after this period grasses and cereal types of pollen appear, suggesting intensive farming involving both arable and pastoral farming. This phase of intensive farming was to last for the next seven hundred years. This would date the main period of agriculture in the valley from the Mid/Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age, (1200-500BC). Although it is impossible to say for certain how many people were living in the valley at this time it is likely to be in hundreds rather than in tens.

Agricultural activity begins to decline after the main period of activity, and between 180BC and 220AD there is very little activity. This is common throughout Ireland and is often referred to as the 'Iron Age lull'. Archaeologists have not come up with a plausible reason as to what caused this lull, it could be famine, disease, climatic change, or perhaps simply a radical change of lifestyle that we cannot trace in the archaeological record. However there is another phase of agricultural activity perceivable from 400-600AD approx. This corresponds with the period when Christianity is introduced into Ireland, and the two would seem to be closely related. The farming associated with this period did not last for more than one hundred to two hundred years, and appears to have been solely arable. From that period up to relatively recent times the farming has been pastoral with a limited amount of arable.

It appears most likely that the walls were constructed during the earliest phase of agricultural activity when intensive pastoral and arable farming are evident. As the field walls enclose large areas it would seem to indicate that they were laid out for the purpose of pastoral farming. Hopefully over the next few years some selective excavation will help with the chronology and dating of the monuments in the valley and also help with sorting out the jumble, of which monuments are contemporary with each other. Other pre-bog field systems have been located along the west coast of Ireland, the most important being located at The Céide Fields in North Mayo. These walls are laid out in a more regular manner and date to the Neolithic period. Other Neolithic and Bronze Age walls have been located in West Galway.

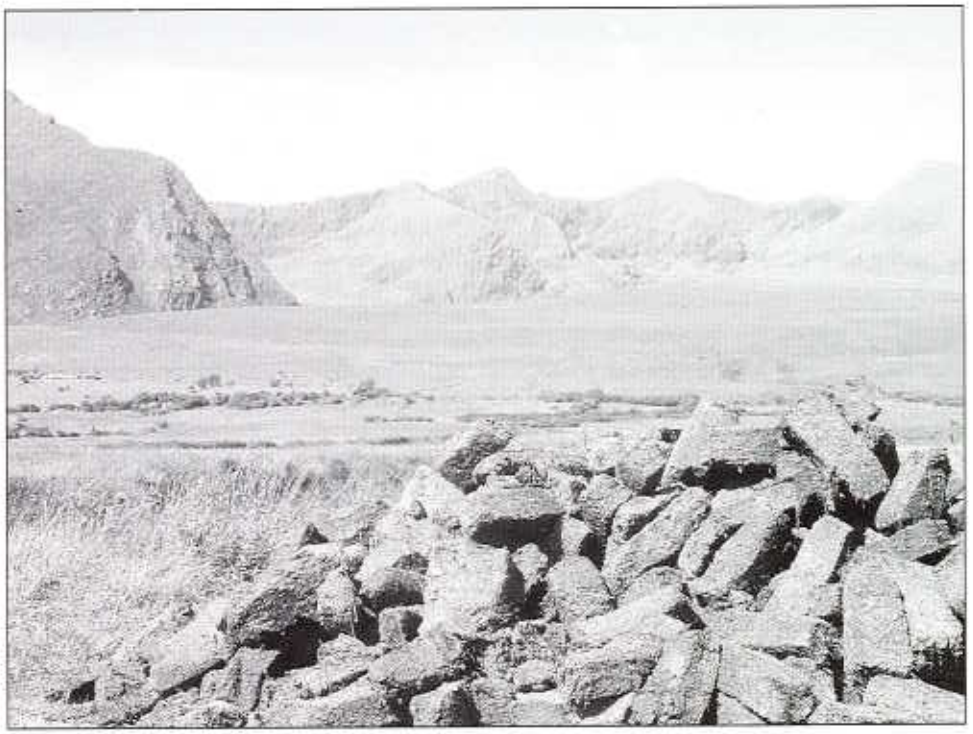
Although the story of agriculture in the valley is important, it is not the only aspect to the archaeology of the Loch a'Dúin Valley. The earliest

Cup and Circle Rock Art in Loch a'Dúin.

monuments in the valley are likely to be the wedge tomb and the examples of rock art, of which there are eleven of the latter (all consist of cup and circle marks). The tomb would have been constructed between 2500-1500BC, at the end of the stone age and the beginning of the Bronze Age. The wedge tomb is located on the summit of a low hillock mid way in the valley floor, and is quite prominent from all parts along the valley. Also located on the hillock are two standing stones, one of which appears to have been broken, and the second, a gable shaped stone, has been deliberately shaped to reflect the outline of the summit of Mount Brandon, on which the tip of the stone is orientated. This incidentally is where the sun is last seen as it sets in the evening time. Is it possible that whatever rituals they practised were part of a sun worship? Interestingly the hillock is almost completely enclosed, except for a few gaps, by a stone wall much of which is hidden beneath the peat. Furthermore, the hillock is divided into three separate sections by cross walls running from one side of the hill to the other. In each section stands one of the monuments already mentioned. On the summit, one finds the wedge tomb, in the second section the damaged stone is located, and in the third section the gable shaped stone orientated on Mount Brandon can be seen. It appears that the early inhabitants of the Loch a'Dúin Valley set aside part of the landscape to be used exclusively for ritual purposes, and if this is so, is the agricultural activity contempory with or later than the ritual activity? Are they even the same social/tribal group involved in such activities? Even with the amount of work that has been carried out on the valley,

we are left with many unanswered questions.

The rock art is another mystery. Because it is so difficult to date, many have ignored the questions it raises. All of the rock art in question is of the type known as cup and circle art. Although this motif is found on Neolithic tombs dating as far back as 3100BC (New Grange), it is generally accepted that cup and circle art on its own, dates to the Late Stone Age/Early Bronze Age. Many theories abound as to what it was used for. It has been suggested that it has some astronomical significance, or that it is a map of possible ritual monuments on the nearby landscape. More plausibly it seems to have had some significance as a fertility symbol on the landscape to ensure the growth of grass or crops. Alternatively it may represent a sun symbol or life symbol. It is also seen as significant that many of the examples in the south west of Ireland are located within sight of water, be it a river, lake or the sea. The fact that three examples of rock art are located on the wedge tomb is also of some interest, but again it is difficult to say if these are contemporary with each other. The closest parallels to Irish cup and circle art are to be found in Galicia in the north west of Spain, and also in Scotland.



The Mount Brandon Range from the south.

Crossing the Scorid river on a guided archaeological tour.

There are eight examples of fulachta fiadh located within the valley. These ancient eating places are dated throughout the Bronze Age, and are accepted as evidence of full time habitation. A trough was dug into the ground near a stream or some other supply of water, this was made of slabs of stone or timber and lined with mud, grasses etc. Stones were then heated in a nearby fire and placed in the trough of water. It has been shown that through this method one hundred gallons can be brought to the boil in thirty five minutes. A joint of meat, wrapped in straw or grass is then placed in the trough of boiling water and by adding a hot stone occasionally, the meat is boiled. A joint of meat weighing 4.5KG will take three hours and thirty minutes to cook, which compares quite well with modern cooking methods. As the heated stone shatters it is removed from the trough and scattered in a horse-shoe shaped mound around the trough. This is what makes them easily recognisable to archaeologists today as kidney shaped mounds near streams or in boglands.

It is difficult to give a definitive account of the complete story of Loch a'Dúin. What we find happening there over time is that people have chosen the same location to build different structures. Presumably this is because the stones

have already been gathered and it saves the labour of collecting them. Therefore at several locations we have evidence of earlier structures that have been rebuilt for varying purposes. For instance several hut sites have been rebuilt as later structures associated with agriculture, this adds to the difficulty of chronology within the valley.

However what is obvious, is that Loch a'Dúin has been lived in and exploited for many generations over the past four thousand years. What remains today in stone is testimony to the people who lived, worked, worshipped and defended themselves within the valley. We may never know the full story, but with continued research we hope to develop our understanding of the habitation of the valley. It will require us to ask new questions and make us look at things in different light. The research already undertaken is an example of co-opertion between the different faculties to create a clearer overall picture of human activity within the valley.. For this help we would like to thank the Archaeology Dept. and the Botany Dept. at University College Galway.

SOME WILD FLOWERS OF THE LOCH A'DÚIN VALLEY

In Cloghane and Brandon the close proximity of mountains, sea and moor land makes for an interesting mix of wild flowers, ranging from seaside plants like **Sea Pink (Thrift)/Rubhán**, which in some locations is actually submerged at high tide, to those saxifrages which inhabit the rocky mountain ledges. In between are the heath land, meadow and roadside plants which, for many, are an attractive fringe benefit to exploration of regions like Loch a'Dúin Valley

The appearance of the moorland flowers often coincides with activities associated with the same region. For instance, in mid to late April the first turf cutters will probably show around the same time as one of the most beautiful of our wild flowers. Sometimes referred to as the bog or Kerry violet because of its bluish purple flower, **the Greater Butterwort/Leith uisce** (Pinguicula Grandiflora), is a member of a group of flowers which disappeared from Ireland as a result of the last ice age, but moved north again, probably from Spain and Portugal, as the ice retreated. They are known as the Lusitanian Flora after a Roman province in the Iberian Peninsula.

The butterwort blooms in May and June but will be found quite high on the mountain in July when it has disappeared from the lower ground. The

Bog Cotton/Ceannbhán

inward curling leaves have two sets of glands. One attracts and traps insects with a sticky substance, the other releases digestive enzymes which break down the body of the insect to provide nourishment for the flower. The name may come from the buttery feel of the bright yellow-green leaves or it may be that the butterwort was once used for curdling milk for butter. It is widespread in the valley with quite dense clusters found on the shores of the lake.

Another plant which feeds on the Loch a'Dúin insects is the **Round Leaved Sundew/Drúichtín móna** (Drosera rotundifolia). Shining drops of sticky fluid on the leaves lure midges to alight and lay their eggs. The leaf curls inward enclosing the midge, and uncurls a few days later to release the dried remains, where upon the trap is made ready once more. It was once believed that the glistening droplets consisted of dew which never evaporated in the sun. So the plant was given magical status and the mystical "dew retention" was incorporated into the name. The sundew can be recognised by its rosette of round leaves covered in red hairs. The slim flower spike may be curled at the top. The white flower parts are in groups of five to eight and appear from June to August.

Weather permitting, turf cutting should be in full swing and previously cut sods being turned to dry the other side when dense clusters of large lance shaped leaves begin to show alongside roads and mountain paths including the path to Loch a'Dúin. These are heralds of Summer and from May to August the spectacular clusters of purple bells which top the stalks of the **Foxglove/Lus mór/méaracáin sí** (Digitalis purpurea), will flank the path to the lake (you can count over fifty flowers on some stems). Although the name suggests paw warmers for foxes, in Ireland the flower is usually associated with the little folk. Indeed the Irish name 'Mearacán na mBan Sí' translates as fairy woman's thimbles. Other names include Our Lady's gloves in France (Les Gants de Notre Dame), Fairy's cap and, in Somerset, Fairy bells. The plant is very poisonous but the leaves do contain a medicinal substance used in small doses for the treatment of heart complaints.

Heath Spotted Orchid. Cearc Breac

Another bloom which shows up on the bog is that of the cotton grass or **Bog Cotton/Ceannabhán** (Eriophorum angustifolium). The nodding white heads reflecting in the water filled hollows all along the turf banks is one of the characteristic images of the Loch a'Dúin valley in May and June.

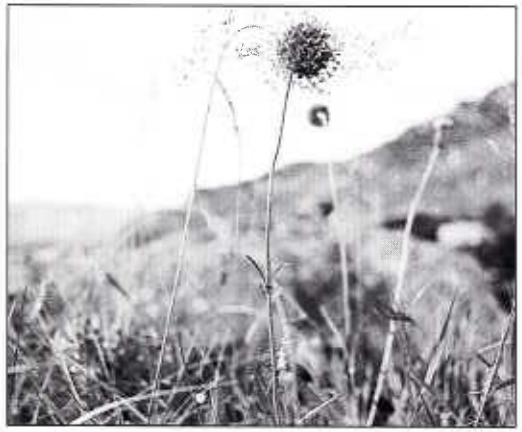
When the bog cotton and butterwort have faded the heathers will provide fresh colour from late Summer well into Autumn. **Heather/Fraoch mór** (Calluna vulgaris), proved a versatile raw material in the past being used for brooms, baskets, bedding, thatch and even fuel. The alternative name, ling is derived from the the Anglo-Saxon word which means fire. As well as ling, cross-leaved heather and bell heather(fraoch cloigíneach, heather of the little bells), which resemble each other, are found in the valley. The bell heather usually has three leaves in each whorl while the cross-leaved heath has four which show as a cross shape from above.

A particularly spectacular colonist of the heath-land is the **Heath Spotted Orchid/Cearc breac** (Dactylorhiza maculata). The almost circular spots on the narrow lance-shaped leaves help to identify this member of the orchid family which flowers from June to August. Its colours range from pale pink to pale purple and sometimes, even white.

Much less showy but no less interesting is the tiny **Milkwort/Na deirfiuiríní/Lus an bhainne** (Polygala vulgaris), with its two sets of very different sepals, three tiny green outer sepals and two large bluish inner sepals which could be taken for the flower petals which they almost conceal. In heath milkwort these inner sepals are actually longer than the petals. The Irish name for the milkwort 'Na deirfiuiríní', (the sisters), is a reference to the four different colours in which the milkwort can be found, white, pink, mauve and blue. The Loch a'Dúin valley is one of the homes of the blue milkwort which flowers from May to September. Herbalists of former times believed that an infusion of this plant increased the milk supply of nursing mothers.

Also blue but much larger than the milkwort are the bright button like heads of **Sheep's-Bit./Duan na gcaorach/Luibh an ghalair cam** (Jasione montana) Indeed the flower is sometimes called "Blue Buttons" or "Blue Bonnets". The name is derived from the fact that the plant is eaten by the moorland sheep. Sheep's Bit is found along the river bank and flowers from May to August. It is very like scabious in apperance but can be distinguished by its narrow and long leaves growing in a spiral pattern around the stem rather than in opposite pairs as in the scabious which can be seen along the ditch at Kilmore Cross.. Farmers believed that when boiled with water it cured sheep of the 'galair cam'.

If the spring showers have been plentiful, the bog land will still be dotted with pools in April and May. Semi-submerged in some puddles will be found the reddish purple flowers of the **Lousewort/Milsean móna/Lus an ghiolla** (Pedicularis sylvatica), which thrives in these damp conditions. It was believed that this flower infested sheep with lice, hence the name. The Irish title for the marsh lousewort is 'Milseán móna' (sweet of the bog), certainly a more flattering name for this attractive plant.



Scabious

Another lover of the water has taken over part of the shallows close to the outfall from the lake. Here the **Bogbean/Bearnán lachan** (Menyanthes trifloliata), with its five white petals ringed with cottony hairs, its pink edged sepals and green leaves, each with

Taking a closer look at the wedge tomb, known locally as the Giant's Grave.

three leaflets, makes an eye catching display from May to July. The seed of the bogbean was used to treat colds, coughs and lung complaints. While the leaves were prescribed for scurvy, gout and rheumatism.

From July to September, the star-like yellow flowers of the **Bog Asphodel /Sceolam na móna** (Narthecium ossifragum), appear along many turf banks and moorland river banks. The flower has long slender leaves and the six orange tipped stamens have a wooly appearance. In Lancashire, England, the bog asphodel was known as 'maiden hair' because women used it to make a hair dye.

In Spring and early Summer it is the golden yellow flowers of the **Gorse/Aiteann gallda** (Ulex europaeus), that provides a blaze of colour on the Kerry moorland. This spiny shrub inhabits the drier parts, often lodging on stony ditches. Known here as 'furze' or by the Irish 'aiteann', it loses its colour at the height of Summer, but the **Autumn gorse/Aiteann gaelach** (Ulex gallii), blooms from July to September to provide a striking complement to the purple heathers. On warm days the gorse pods burst with an audible crack and fling out their brown shiny seeds. The yellow flower was once used to make a yellow dye.

Also yellow, but found at ground level, is the four petalled **Tormentil/Néalfhartach Mianfhartach** (Potentilla erecta). The Irish name 'néalfartach' which also means drowsy, may refer to the plant's habit of closing up

its petals in dull wet weather and at night. 'Niamhnaid', another Irish word used to describe the tormentil, means 'bright sheen', an apt title for this golden flower which blooms from May to September. Decoctions of the plant were used to cure footrot in sheep and as a gargle or mouthwash to treat sore mouth, gums or throat and to fasten loose teeth.

For many the most beautiful flower to be seen in the valley and in the general Conor Pass area is the Saxifrage of which there are two types. These flowers are members of the 'Lusitanian flora'-plants native to Ireland but whose geographical headquarters is in the north-western part of the Iberian Peninsula. **Saxifrage spathularis/ Cabáiste an mhadra rua/Fox's cabbage** has more of a pink flower and very few hairs on the leaf. **Saxifrage hirsuta/Mórán giobach/Kidney saxifrage** has a white or very pale pink flower with long hairs on both surfaces of the leaf.

For many, the wild flowers are an important ingredient in the enjoyment of the Cloghane/Brandon area. In and around Loch a'Dúin, it is this intriguing blend of archaeology, geology, flora/fauna and folklore that makes the exploration of the area such a richly satisfying experience.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE GEOLOGY OF CORCA DHUIBHNE.

Underlying the spectacular, rugged beauty of Corca Dhuibhne is a stony core of rock. This core records a fascinating history that goes back at least four hundred and ten million years to what is called the Silurian Period. The earliest chapters in this story reveal the presence of a shallow sea where small colonial corals, brachiopods and trilobites lived on a soft bottom of fine sand and mud. Nearby, active volcanoes made life difficult by periodically blanketing the region in fine deposits of volcanic ash and an occasional lava flow.

After a few million years, shifts in the earth's crust uplifted the area and the sea withdrew. Following a period of crustal instability, erosion and volcanic activity, Corca Dhuibhne emerged as a vast inland valley basin bordered by upland sand mountains. Slowly, during the the ensuing Devonian Period from four hundred to three hundred and fifty million years ago, these mountains eroded as rivers carried coarse gravel, sand and mud into the valley of Corca Dhuibhne where it accumulated in shallow fresh water lakes, river bottoms, and dunes of wind blown sand.

Gable shaped standing stone with the Brandon Range in the background.

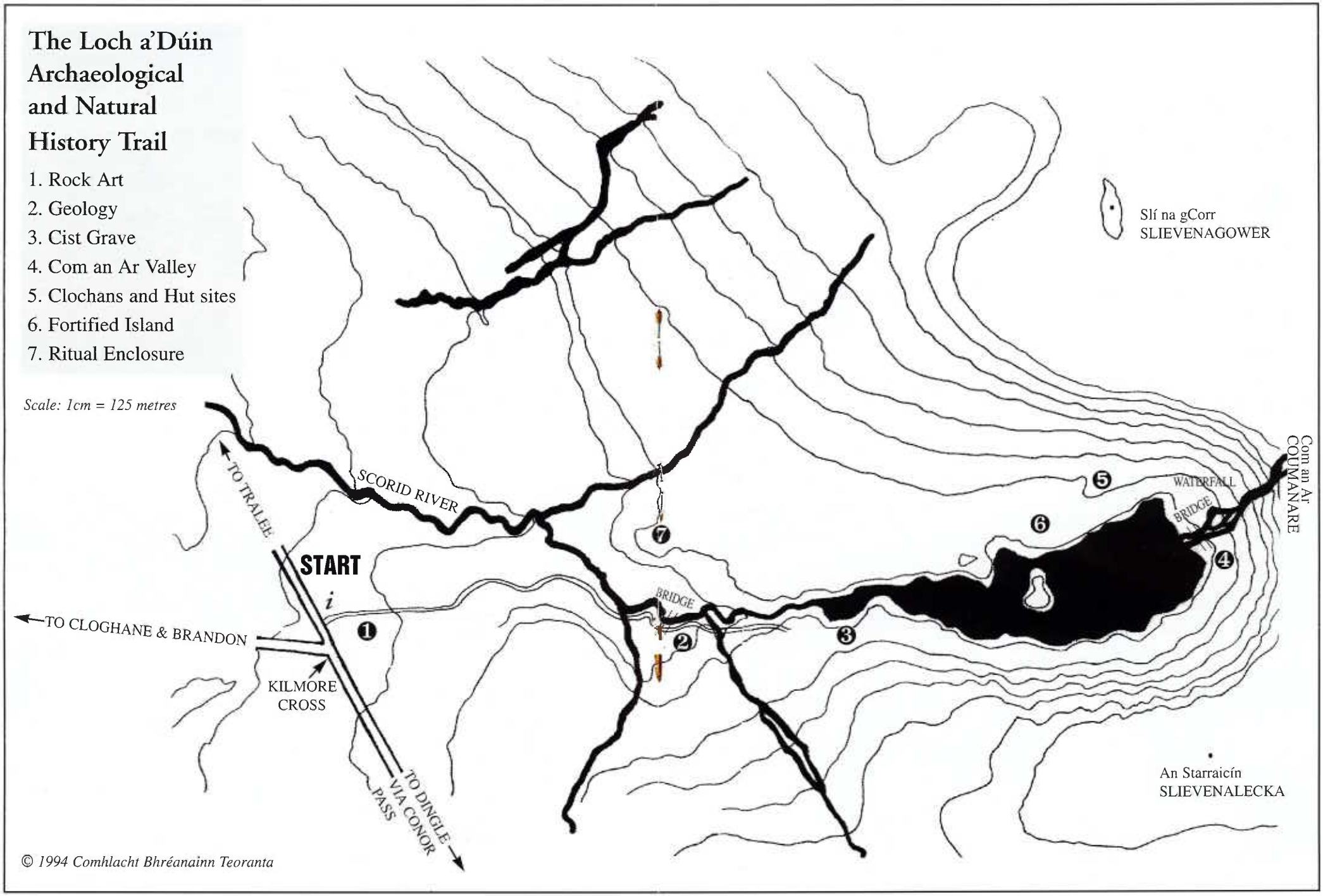
Greater Butterwort, Pinguicula Grandiflora, Laith Uisce Mór.

Fuchsia

The Loch a'Dúin Archaeological and Natural History Trail

1. Rock Art
2. Geology
3. Cist Grave
4. Com an Ar Valley
5. Clochans and Hut sites
6. Fortified Island
7. Ritual Enclosure

Scale: 1cm = 125 metres



Loch a'Dúin - with the fortified Island, water lilies in foreground.

Wedge Tomb

Upper Coum on Mount. Brandon

Not much is known about the life that existed in this inland valley, for only a few tracks and burrows are preserved where unidentified organisms crawled over the soft sands and mud. The lakes were quite shallow most of the time, as is revealed by the numerous wave-formed ripple-marked surfaces preserved in the layers of sediment. Periodically, the lakes dried up completely, cracking the red muds and fine sands into polygonal patterns. Crustal uplift also continued at intervals throughout this period, causing faulting and erosion within the valley itself and resulting in pulsations of eroded gravel being washed down from the mountains to the south.

Towards the end of the Devonian Period, the sea once again encroached over Corca Dhuibhne, and by the Lower Carboniferous Period, three hundred and forty five million years ago, soft lime muds and skeletal debris produced by corals, molluscs, algae and bryozoa were now accumulating in a shallow, warm and crystal clear sea, far from the influence of land.

The Mount Brandon Range from the east

At the end of the Upper Carboniferous Period two hundred and ninty million years ago, major mountain building occurred over Corca Dhuibhne, folding, faulting and contorting the sandstones, mud stones , volcanics, and limestones into the striking patterns we see today. Little is known, however, about the next two hundred and eighty million years of geological evolution that occurred here. The seas must have returned, and more sediment must have been deposited, along with more volcanic activity and periods of mountain building. We will never know for sure, though, because the record has been totally stripped away.

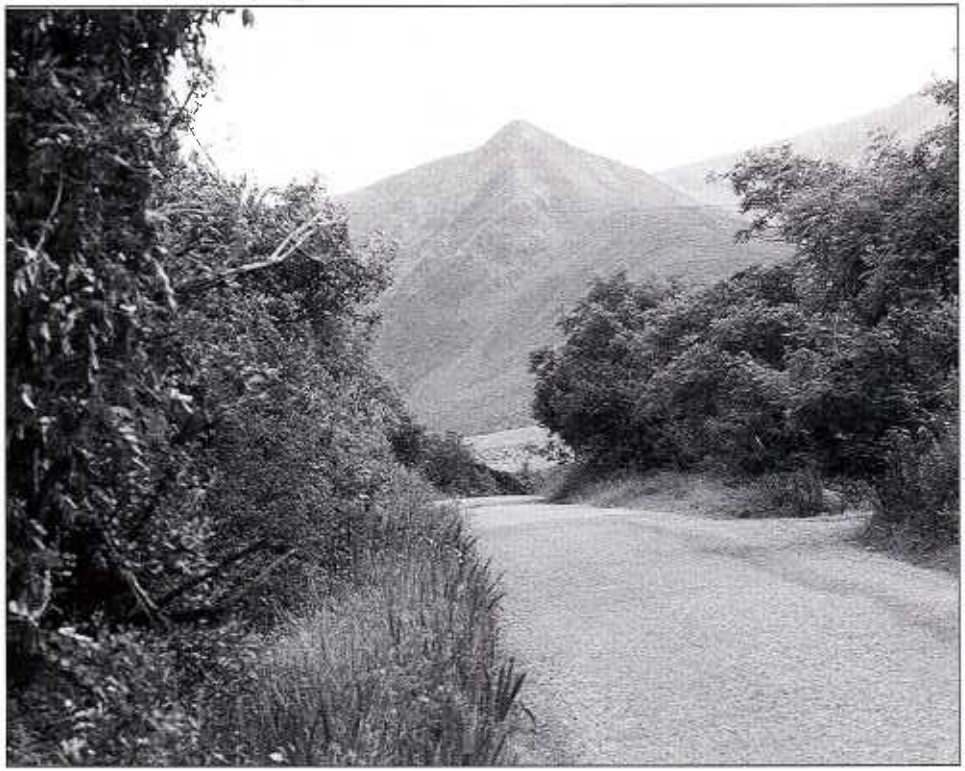
What we do know, is that during the Pleistocene Epoch from two hundred thousand to ten thousand years ago, Corca Dhuibhne was repeatedly scoured by glacial ice. High in the mountains, repeated advances of the ice carved out the beautiful mountain lakes and shaped the striking landscape we see today. Eventually, the last of these glaciers melted away, leaving a blanket of rock debris over the hillsides and valleys, which slowly weathered into the fertile soils that have supported the farming communities of Corca Dhuibhne for over a hundred generations.

THE GLACIAL GEOLOGY AND GEOMORPHOLOGY OF THE MOUNT BRANDON AREA

The panoramic view of the Brandon Mountain area from the top of the Conor pass is one of the most magnificent sights in Ireland. Jagged mountain tops with vertical cliffs, high mountain lakes and cascading waterfalls, knife-shaped ridges, and gentle, U-shaped valley floors, covered with vast expanses of bog, quiet lakes and meandering streams.

It is now known that most of this spectacular scenery is the result of mountain glaciation that occurred over the higher mountains of Kerry at the end of the Pleistocene Epoch, from seventy thousand to fifteen thousand years ago. More extensive ice sheets had shaped the Kerry landscape earlier in the Pleistocene, but it was this final Midlandian Glaciation, as it is called, which shaped the landscape which delights the eye today. During this time, the higher

Examining the recently excavated pre-bog wall at Loch a'Dúin.

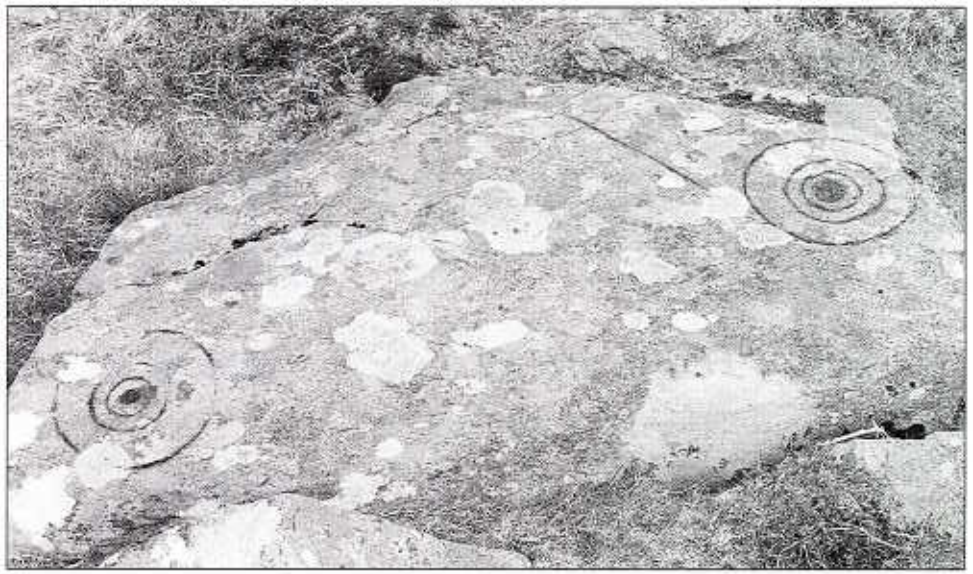


Road from Cloghane to the Loch a'Dúin Valley.

peaks of the Brandon Mountain area and the Slieve Mish Mountains of Corca Dhuibhne underwent extensive glacial sculpturing and scouring. Here, the glaciation was not in the form of a continuous ice cap such as covered the northern half of Ireland, but rather an extensive complex of alpine-type, mountain glaciers which cut deep into the mountain tops, flowed down the upper valleys and crept out onto the lower valley floors before depositing thick deposits of rock debris where they melted away.

THE GLACIAL GEOLOGY FROM CONOR PASS, PEDLAR'S LAKE AND THE OWENMORE VALLEY.

Many of these glacial features can be easily identified from the car park at the top of the Conor Pass. To really appreciate how they formed, a short walk up to Pedlar's Lake is like a journey back in time to the bottom of one of these glaciers, to witness first-hand how they actually did their work.



Rock Art at the first stop on the self-guided trail.

Peddlers Lake marks the spot where the snow first began to accumulate on Sliabh an Mhaca Ré, as the climate gradually cooled. Gradually , the snows deepened until they turned to ice, and eventually, once a critical thickness was reached, the ice began to flow down the side of the mountain. Over countless aeons, the ice grew in thickness and mass, eating back the cliffs to form the characteristic bowl-shaped corrie you see today. At the same time the glacier gouged, scratched and ripped away at the rocks beneath it, as it slowly crept down the side of the mountain into the valley below, carrying with it the rock debris it had carved away. Today, these scratches and gouges are readily seen on the rocks leading from the road up to the lake.

Eventually, the Pedlar's Lake glacier met other glaciers flowing out from Beenabrack and Ballysitteragh peaks to the west and from Brandon Mountain to the north. These formed a much larger glacier which flowed northward down to what is now the Owenmore Valley, scooping away rock and soil on the valley floor. In time, the climate warmed and the glaciers began to melt leaving piles of rocky debris called moraines as they slowly retreated up the mountain sides from whence they came. By ten thousand years ago they were essentially gone.

For the next five thousand years, during what is called the Boreal Period from ten thousand to five thousand years ago, the climate became warm and dry and in many areas extensive forests grew over the landscape. These mild conditions were not to last, however, and gradually, about four thousand years

ago, the climate became much wetter, ushering in the so called Atlantic Period. With this climate change, widespread growth and spread of marshy bogs occurred over Ireland, a process which continues today. Gradually, these bogs replaced and covered up the forests and, ultimately, buried vast areas of the Irish landscape with thick layers of organic peat, up to several metres thick. Peat bogs are extensive over the hills and valleys of the Brandon Mountain area, and have been utilised for hundreds of years as a convenient, local source of fuel for cooking and heating.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL, GEOLOGICAL AND NATURE TRAIL OF THE LOCH A' DÚIN VALLEY.

The land you are about to visit is owned by four local families who still farm the valley. We are most grateful to John and Marion Dowd, Thomas and Eileen Flaherty, Kevin Callaghan and Brendan Lovett for allowing us access to their land. We would ask all those who enter the valley to respect the property and animals of the farmers, and to remain on the suggested route as you view the various items of interest. Please use the stiles to cross wire fences and gates, and take all litter home with you. We hope you enjoy the Loch a' Dúin Valley.

No 1. Rock Art. Ealaine Cloiche.

This example of rock art may not be in its original position, as it appears to lie on a later field wall. Part of the stone has been damaged presumably during its removal to its present location. This particular type of rock art is known as cup and circle art, and it is generally dated to the Bronze Age (2200BC-500BC), although some archaeologists would date it to the Late Stone Age.

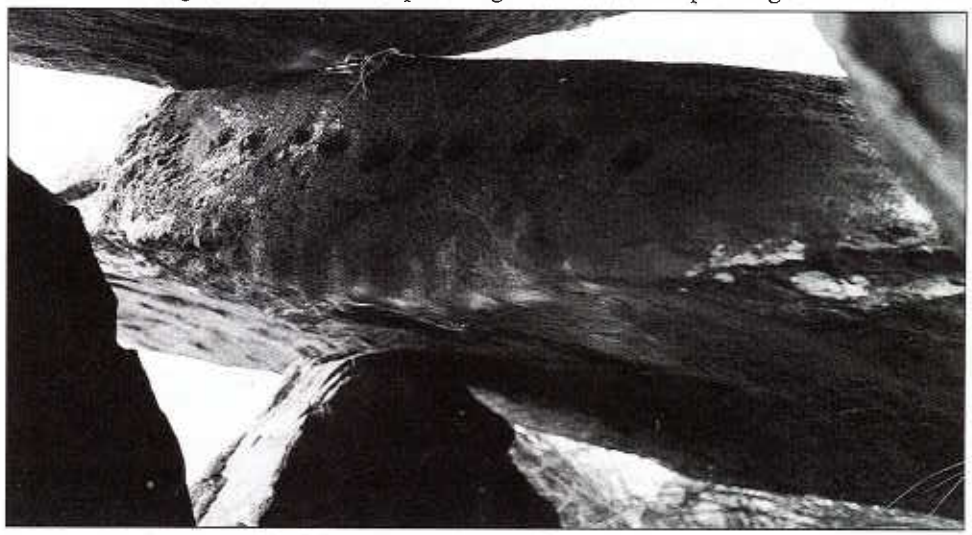
The decoration was created more than likely by a sharp pointed implement hammered by a wooden mallet. The greatest concentrations of the art are in counties Cork and Kerry, and Loch a'Dúin is one of the largest collections in this distribution. Similar type art is also found in Scotland, Galicia and Northern Portugal.

The meaning of the art is unclear, but it is unlikely that it was simply decorative. Alternative suggestions as to its use include astronomical marks, maps of settlement and field systems, copper worker's marks, or symbols associated with a cult of sun worship. As you wander from site to site, examining the ancient stone walls, fulachta fiadh, rock art, tombs and other stone

monuments it is interesting to consider how little the valley has changed in the last four thousand years. Unlike many areas where subsequent erosion often obliterates ancient relics and archaeological sites, the Loch a'Dúin valley is as if it has been frozen in a time capsule. The reason for this, of course, is the thick layer of peat bog which covers the valley floor. Now emerging from the peat for the first time in at least two thousand years, the Loch a'Dúin valley is a fossilized landscape not only preserving ancient cultural remains, but offering the visitor a rare glimse into the Irish landscape as it existed at the end of the last Ice Age.

No. 2 Geology Stop

Standing within the valley, looking up at the surrounding magnificent green vista of towering peaks, cliffs, and knife sharp ridges, it is perhaps difficult to imagine that a river of ice many hundreds of feet thick once flowed slowly northward out of this valley to join an even bigger glacier flowing down the Owenmore Valley. Yet, only fifteen thousand years ago, the glacier was still here, scraping, gouging and sculpturing the maroon coloured sandstones and mudstone rocks you are walking on into the spectacular landscape you see before you. If you look closely, you will see that the evidence is everywhere - from the classical U-shaped profile of the valley itself; to rocks ground smooth, rounded or grooved from glacial grinding; to the piles of clay, sand and gravel left behind when the glacier melted. As you walk through the valley you will notice that the rocks occurring at the base of the peat bog, and in the old pre-bog field walls have



Rock Art on the inside of the Wedge Tomb - stop no. 7.

Com An Ár Lakes

been altered in colour from a purple to a light greyish white. This colour change is due to the effect of chemical leaching of the rock by organic acids present in the bog.

The rocks comprising the mountains and ridges surrounding you are all Devonian in age, of roughly three hundred and ninty millions years old. These rocks originated when fine sands and mud were deposited in a shallow, fresh water basin which covered the area. Several thousand feet of these sediments were laid down, burying them to great depth where they solidified into solid rock. Approximately one million years later, these rocks were then uplifted, folded and faulted during a major mountain building period at the end of the late Carboniferous Period. Today, this folding and faulting is readily seen on many of the cliffs and mountains in the Brandon Mountain area. Looking ahead of you, for example, up on the side of the high mountain rising behind the Loch a'Dúin valley you can see perfectly developed folding on the northeast face of Sliabh an Mhaca Ré

Today some of the sandstone boulders scattered over the landscape, provide shelter for one of the more striking flowers found in the valley, the tall stately

foxglove (Méaracán dearg) with its dense clusters of bell shaped blooms. The plant itself is poisonous, however the drug Digitalin is made from the leaves and used to treat heart disease. The flowers are out in late June, July and August.

While travelling the bogland you may hear but not always see one of its less silent inhabitants. The skylark (fuiseog), hovering high overhead, may serenade you for four of five minutes without pause. these birds like open territory like sand dunes and moorland. Their singing will be heard most frequently between January and July and has a dual purpose, to attract females and defend its territory. The skylark is streaky brown with a small crest and white outer tail feathers which show in flight.

No 3. Cist Grave Uaigh Chiste.

The origins of this site are not entirely clear. It has the appearance of an Early Bronze Age cist grave, which are generally associated with the north and eastern parts of Ireland. This cist grave is defined by upright slabs on edge on all sides, with their tops level with the present ground surface. One cap stone lies in place, the other having collapsed into the cist.

The fact that the tops of the defining slabs are level with the ground surface raises some interesting questions. The area around the stones has a depth of peat up to 1.50m in depth, if the site were to date to the Bronze Age, one would expect it to be covered with peat. One of the local farmers has information from his grand-uncle which suggested that this site was used in the tanning of leather at the end of the last century and the early part of this century. Excavation would reveal which of these two very different accounts were more accurate.

The shallow water here has been colonised by a beautiful bog loving plant, the Bogbean (bearnán lachan). Once recommended as a cure for scurvy, the bogbean is easily identifiable by its large green leaves raised above the water and the white "feather-like" flowers.

From this point follow the lake shore in towards the back of the valley at the waterfall, where there is a crossing point of stepping stones.

No. 4 Com an Ár.

The valley located at the back of the waterfall is known as Com an Ár, which translates as 'The Valley of the Slaughter'. At the lower levels of peat in this area, local people have for many years found short pointed pieces of yew, fifteen

to twenty centimetres in length. They are commonly referred to as The Com an Ár arrows, supposedly used during a battle. It would now appear that they were used in the trapping of wild deer which would have roamed the countryside. One of these pieces has successfully been dated to the late Bronze Age. It is possible that they were placed upright in the ground or low in the developing peat over a wide area. The herd of deer would then have been driven through this area and presumably some were injured in the process, these animals would have been killed off relatively easily. If by chance you find any of these *in situ,* please do not interfere with them.

The ice forming the Loch a'Dúin valley glacier, would have begun its journey high on the Com an Ár plateau, far above the lake and waterfall at the head of the valley, and behind the imposing, glacially-carved pyramidal peak of Sliabh na Leice. Here on the Com an Ár plateau, a massive glacier nourished by consistent snow falls, grew large enough to become the source for several smaller valley glaciers, such as the Loch a'Dúin glacier, spilling over the edge of the Plateau into the valley where the waterfall now flows into Loch a'Dúin.

With the passage of time, somewhere around 10,000 years ago, the last of the Loch a'Dúin glacier retreated from the valley leaving behind a thin covering of boulder clay till. Several hundreds of years later, a thin layer of soil eventually developed at the top of the glacial till. Now once more, vegetation covered the ground, and the valley waited for the coming of humans.

If you are following the trail between April and June you will notice that the damper patches on the lake margin are favoured by the greater butterwort recognisably by its large violet flower and pale green uncurled leaves on which will be seen the tried remains of insects trapped and digested by this attractive flower. Driven from the valley during the period of glaciation, the butterwort eventually returned again when it spread back northward from the Iberian Peninsula.

There is a short climb to the next site as you walk out along the side of the lake, follow the timber stakes until you see the complete clochán/hutsite.

No. 5. Clocháns and Hutsites. Láthaireacha Chlocháin.

As you walk along the eastern side of the lake there are many remains of hut sites and clocháns. One of these has been reconstructed in the past thirty years. It is an example of the corbelling style of construction which was prevalent in Ireland up until the 12th century, and indeed the tradition survived into the

earlier part of this century, when these structures were used as outhouses and shelters . There is a problem with the dating of these structures, some of which survive simply as barely perceptible circular foundations of stone. Some undoubtedly date to the prehistoric period but have been rebuilt and reused several times since then. Others were built over the past two hundred years as places of shelter for herders who brought animals into the valleys during the summer months.

From this point you can also see the fortified island which is No 6 on the trail.

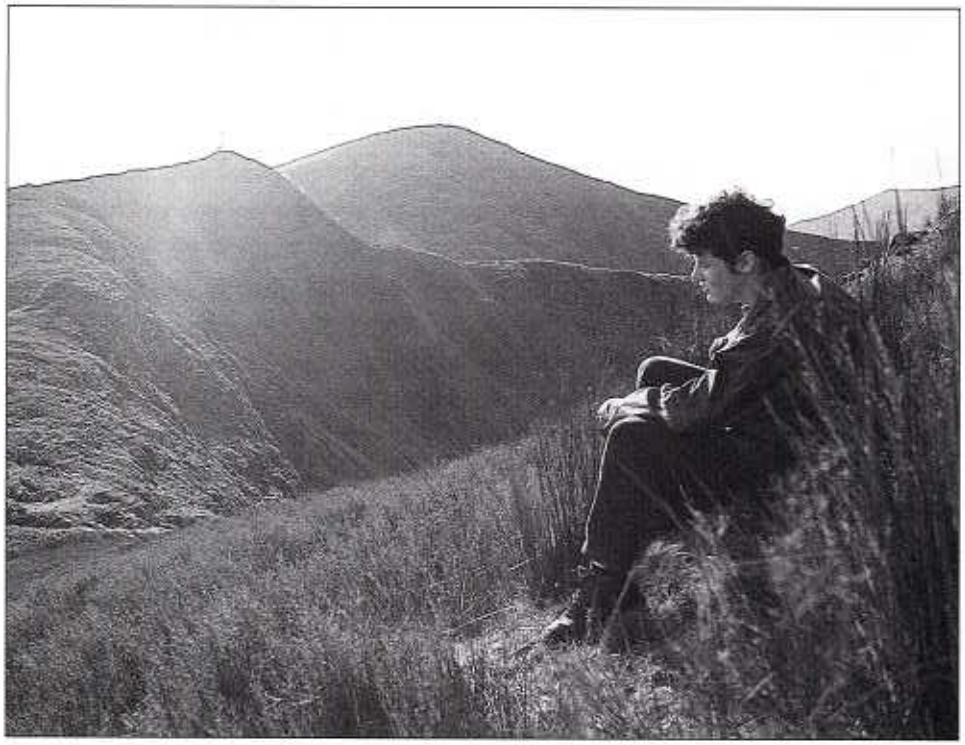
No. 6. Fortified Island. Oileáin Daingnithe

Of the ninty or so structures in the Loch a 'Dúin valley this is the only one that could be termed defensive. On the eastern side of the island, which is the closest point to the shore, a large dry stone wall is visible. It survives in places to a height of two metres and is of a similar width. There is a reference in the last century to a row of timber stakes protruding from the water mid way between the island and the shore, suggesting a second line of defense.

Because of the heavy cover of gorse it has not been possible to identify any structures on the island, although it is mentioned in one of the old legends as having been a place of temporary residence for Oscar, grand son of Fionn Mc Cool during the Battle of Ventry. It possibly dates to the Iron Age or the Late Bronze Age when it was common to build hill, coastal or island defenses.

A pair of mute swans have made the island their home, building their nest every year close to the wall of the fort after which the lake is named (Loch a' Dúin-Lake of the Fort). The workload of home making is shared by the couple, the male bringing the sticks and reeds and the female arranging them in a large pile. The mute swan is distinguished from the whooper swan by its orange bill with black base. The sexes are alike but the black knob at the base of the bill is smaller in the female. Although their name gives the impression that these graceful inhabitants of the lake are silent, they will produce a hissing or snorting noise if annoyed. Approaching the nesting site may produce this reaction or even more aggressive behaviour so visitors are advised not to disturb the island's occupants.

From the shore of the lake nearest the island, you now walk up hill, following the posts, to the stile which will lead you on to another bog road. Have a look at the structure just up slope from the stile and suggest a suitable use for



The slopes of Sliabh na nGabhar overlooking Loch a'Dúin.

it. It is an enigmatic structure for which no specific use has been identified.

As you walk along the bog road a river crosses it, turn to your left and follow the river until it meets a trackway near the megalithic tomb.

No. 7. Ritual Enclosure. Láthair Deasghnathach

One of the most interesting discoveries in the valley was how the earlier population seem to have enclosed a prominent part of the valley for ritual use. The most prominent part of the valley is a low hillock to the east of the Scorid River about half way on the valley floor. This area is almost completely enclosed by a low wall of boulders and large stones, and the hillock is also sub-divided by two cross walls dividing the area into three separate sections. In each of these sections a monument whose prime function is generally accepted as ritual, is located.

On the brow of the hill overlooking the valley to the north is a fine example of a wedge tomb. These monuments date to the end of the Stone Age/beginning

of the Bronze Age and would have acted as a focal point for the community. They contain a certain amount of burial evidence but other finds include pottery vessels, arrow heads, bronze tools and weapons, personal ornaments of gold and enamel, crop seeds, animal bones etc. The burial rite can be both inhumation and cremation, and many of the bones show signs of being exposed to the elements and birds of prey before finally being placed in the tomb.

The other sections on the hillock both contain standing stones. One of these stones seems to have been broken, but the gable shaped stone appears to be of some importance. It has been deliberately shaped and if one stands directly behind the stone, the top of the stone is in direct alignment with the top of Mount Brandon, which is the second highest mountain range in Ireland, and has been the focal point of a pilgrimage going back into the pre-Christian period.

There is a crossing point on the river west of the gable shaped standing stone, the road beyond will bring you back to the starting point once more.

We hope you have enjoyed your walk in the Loch a'Dúin valley. There is also a guided archaeological walk available which includes sites not marked on the self-guided trail. Please enquire at the hut near the entrance, For further information on walking routes in the Cloghane and Brandon area, please call to the Information Centre in Cloghane Village.

BEALACH SEANDÁLAÍOCHTA
STAIR AGUS DÚLRA LOCH A'DÚIN

Is le ceathrar feirmeoirí ón áit seo, gleann Loch a'Dúin agus táid ag feirmeoireacht ann i gcónaí. Táimíd fíorbhuíoch dóibh; John agus Marion ó Dubhda,Tómás ó Flatharta. Caoimhín ó Ceallacháin agus Breandán Luibhéad, a thug caoinchead dúinn dul isteach ina dtailte. Molaimid mar sinn meas a bheith againn ar shealbhas agus ar ainmithe na bhfeirmeoirí agus an cosán marcáilte a leanúint chun na gnéithe suimiúla a fheiscint.

Tá súil againn go mbainfidh síbh taitneamh as Loch a'Dúin. Gabhann Comhlucht Bhreanainn Teo. buíochas le hUdarás na Gaeltachta agus le Atlantic Arc a chuir co-airgeadiú ar fáil don tionscnamh seo.

Uimhir 1.

B'fhéidir nach bhfuil an sampla seo de ealaín chloiche san áit ina raibh sé an chéad lá riamh, mar tá an dealramh ar go bhfuil sé ag luí ar chlaí páirce a tógadh

níos déanaí. Is léir go bhfuil cuid den chloch briste.

Cup and circle a thugtar ar ealaín den tsaghas seo, a luaitear le Ré na Cré - Umha (2000-500BC), cé go ndéarfadh seandálaithe eile go mbaineann sé le ré na gCloch. Usáideadh uirlis go raibh bior air agus casúr déanta as adhmad. Is i gCorcaigh agus i gCiarraí is mó atá ealaín mar seo le fáil, agus tá bailiucháin de aon sampla déag i Loch a'Dúin. Tá a leithéid le fáil leis in Alban, Galicia agus tuaisceart na Phoirtingéile.

Ní dócha gur ar mhaithe le maisiú an ealaíon seo. B'fhéidir go bhfuil baint aige le Réalteolaíocht, mapaí de pháirceanna nó daoine ag adhradh na gréine. Faightear i gconaí é gar a dhóthain do uisce, agus b'fhéidir go bhfuil ceangailt eatarthu.

Uimhir 2

Inniu agus tú id'sheasamh i lár an ghleanna seo, agus tú ag féachaint ar na beanna ard a id'thimpeall, is deacair a shamhlú gur ghluais sruthoighear ó thuaidh tríd an ngleann, go dtí gur bhuail sé le sruthoighear níos mó fós a bhí istigh i ngleann na hAbhinn Móire. Ach 15,000 bliain ó shin, bhí sé anseo ag caitheamh agus ag creimeadh agus ag múnlú na gaineamhchloiche. Cruthaíonn mórán rudaí id'thimpeall tionchar an oighir; an gleann de dhéanamh U, Clocha brúite i bpúdar srl. a fágadh anseo tar éis an t-oighear a leá.

Tabhair faoi ndeara go bhfuil dath an gcloch athruithe toisc go raibh aigead sa mhóin a bhí anuas orthu. Tá na carraigeacha sna sléibhte mórthimpeall ort tuairim is 390 milliún bliain d'aois ón Ré Devonian. Tá siad déanta as ghaineamh agus láib, leagadh síos na mílte troithe díobh. Ardaíodh os cinn na mara iad agus tá scoilteanna le feiscint sna faillte sa cheantar.

Ait ar bith ina bhfuil fothain i measc na gcloch, fásann bláthanna, mar shampla 'An Méaracán dearg' go bhfuil na cloigíní ag fás air i lár an tSamhraidh.

Cónaíonn an fhuiseog sa phortach, í thuas san aer ag spreagadh poirt. Is breá léi scóp an phortaigh.

Uimhir 3 Uaigh Chiste.

Tá an dealramh air go mbaineann an uaigh seo leis an Chré-Umha-Aois. Bíonn clocha ar seasamh ag taobh na hUaighe, agus bíonn sí clúdaithe le leacacha chomh maith.

Tá amhras ann faoin sampla seo, toisc go bhfuil an mhóin 1.5m doimhin timpeall air. Cén fáth nár chlúdaigh an phortach é? Seans gur structúr i bhfad níos nua-aimsire é,

San uisce éadoimhin tá mórán bearnán lachan. Is breá leo portach. Tá duilleoga glasa orthu chomh maith le bláthanna bána. Ar aghaidh leat anois fan an locha chomh fada leis an eas, áit gur féidir gabháil trasna na habhann.

Uimhir 4 Com an Áir

Os cionn an easa tá gleann ar a dtugtar Com an Áir. Fadó fuair daoine píosaí adhmaid 15-20cm ar fhaid, ar a thug siad 'sáighde Chom an Áir'. Ceapadh gur chun troda a d'úsaidtí iad, ach ceaptar anois gur chun breith ar fhianna a bhí flúirseach san ám sin ag deireadh na Chré-Umha-Aoise. Is dócha gur tiomáineadh na fianna tríd an ghleann, agus gur gortaíodh cuid acu agus mar sin b'fhurist iad a mharú. Ná bain le haon cheann acu a chíonn tú.

Is ó Chom an Áir a tháinig an sruthoighear a chreim gleann Loch a'Dúin, agus laistiar de bhinn ard Sliabh na Leice. D'fháig an sruthoighear 'ardchlár' Chom an Áir agus thit sé anuas san áit ina bhfuil an t-eas faoi láthair isteach i Loch a'Dúin. Tuairim is 10,000 bliain ó shin bhí deireadh leis and oighear agus fágadh an gleann faoi bhrat éadoimhin 'boulder clay'. Thosnaigh plandaí, cainn agus féar ag fás agus ní raibh de dhíth ar an áit anois ach daoine.

Idir mí Aibreáin agus mí an Mheithimh sna paistí fliucha cois locha, fásann liath uisce mór. Tá bláth corcra air agus duilleoga glasa. Itheann an phlanda seo feitheid. Bhí an liath uisce mór ag fás anseo roimh Ré an Oighir, agus is ón Spáin a tháinig sé thar n-ais go hÉirinn.

Uimhir 5 Clocháin

Ar an taobh thoir den loch tá mórán iarsmaí clochán. Deineadh ceann acu a athchóiriú laistigh de 30 bliain ø shin. Tabhair faoi ndeara an stíl tógála anseo, 'corbelling' a thugtar air. Bhí an stíl in úsáid ón 12ú aois go dtí tús an chéid seo. Is deacair dáta cruinn a chur leis na struchtúir seo. Cé go bhfuil siad an-ársa, togadh agus atógadh ó shín go minic iad. Tógadh cuid acu laistigh de 200 bliain ø shin chun fothain a thabhairt d'fheirmeoirí nó d'ainmthithe.

Ón áit seo tá radharc breá ar an oileán daingnithe.

Uimhir 6 Oileán Daingnithe

Ar an 90 struchtúir sa ghleann, sé seo an t-aon struchtúr cosanta. Ar an taobh thoir den oileán tá falla mór ard cloiche le feiscint. Suas le 2.00m ar airde agus chomh leathan céanna. Bhí tagairt i leabhair ón aois seo caite do fhalla adhmaid leathshlí idir an oileán agus bruach an locha. Toisc an aitinn ní féidir aon

struchtúr a aithint ar an oileán. Tá cur síos sa bhéaloideas ar eachtra nuair a bhí Oscar, mac mic le Fionn Mac Cumhaill, ar an oileán seo le linn Cath Fionntrá. Is dócha go dtéann sé siar go Ré an Iarainn nó deireadh na Chré-Úmha-Aoise, nuair ba ghnáth áit chosanta a thógaint ar chnoc, cois farraige nó ar oilean.

Tá péire eala ag cur fúthu i nead cois an fhalla san oileán agus is ón oileán seo a fhaigheann an gleann a ainm Loch a'Dúin. Moltar gan dul in aice leis na eala, mar éiríonn siad fíochmhar má chuirtear isteach orthu.

Anois lean na cuaillí go dtí an geata, go dtí an bóithrín portaigh. Féach ar an strúchtúr tamall siar ón 'stile' n'fheadar éinne cad chuige é.

Uimhir 7 Láthair Deasghnáthach

Rud an-shuimúil faoin ngleann ná gur roghnaigh na daoine a mhair anseo fadó, áit faoi leith mar láthair dheasghnáthach. Tá cnocán beag ar an dtalamh taobh thoir don Scórid, leathshlí suas tríd an ghleann. Ta falla beag íseal cloiche mór-thimpeall air. Tá an cnoc foroinnte ag dhá chlaí i dtrí codanna. I ngach roinnt tá íarsma a bhaineann le deasghnáth.

Tá sampla breá de tuama dingeach anseo, a théann siar go dtí Ré na gCloch nó tús Ré na ChréUmha. B'é seo croílar shaol mhuintir an ghleanna. Tá fianaise gur cuireadh daoine anseo, uaireannta agus an corp dóite. I measc na rudaí a bhíonn ina leithéid seo d'áit ta sothigh, cinn saighdeanna, uirlisí airm, ór, síolta agus cnámha ainmhithe. Go minic, d'fhágtaí na coirp amuigh faoin aer le níthe ag éin sula gcuirtí iad.

Tá galláin anseo, tá ceann acu briste agus má sheasann duine taobh thiar den cheann eile(dealramh aige le binn tí), samhlaíonn sé go bhrfuil sé ar aon déanamh le Cnoc Bréanainn, ar ndóigh, ionad mór turasanna i bhfad siar roimh aimsir Chríost.

Tá droichead beag thar abhainn siar ón ngallán deiridh seo, tabharfaidh sé seo tú go dtí bóthar an phortaigh agus amach arís go dtí an áit inar thosnaís.

Tá súil againn gur bhainis taitneamh as siúlóid Loch a'Dúin.

Tá siúlóid threoraithe chomh maith ar fáil agus tá breis láithreacha seandálaíochta ar an tsiúlóid sin thar mar atá ar an tsiúlóid féintreoirithe.

The Country Code

Seachain tine de gach shaghas/Guard against all risks of fire.

Dún gach geata/Close all gates.

Coiméad madraí faoi smacht/Keep dogs under proper control.

Lean na cosáin trasna na talún/Keep to paths across farmland.

Bí cúramach le gach fál agus claí/Avoid damaging fences, hedges and walls.

Na fág brúscar/Leave no litter.

Cosain foinsí uisce/Safeguard water supplies.

Cosain ainmhithe, plandaí agus crainn/Protect wild life, wild plants and trees.

Taistéal go mall ar bhóithre na tuaithe/Drive carefully on country roads.

Bíodh meas agat ar shaol na tuaithe/Respect the life of the countryside.