

In June, we enjoyed a wonderful two week holiday on the West Coast of Ireland using a walk book called Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way by Helen Fairbairn. We flew to Shannon and drove north and across the bridge to Achill Island in County Mayo where we stayed for 4 nights – our hosts were very friendly and it was a lovely unspoilt area. We walked on Achill Island two days and also further north in a Gaelic speaking area at Benwee Head from Ceathrú Thaidhg where we saw peat cut for drying and burning on home fires – wonderful cliff walking.

From there, we drove south and around the lovely coast of Connemara in County Galway through Clifden and Roundstone into County Clare where we stayed at Clahane for three nights. There we walked the spectacular and famous and popular Cliffs of Moher from the southern untouristy end and went another day to Doolin to walk in the Burren – a famous limestone pavement area but sadly lots of rain on that walk.

We then drove down to the south-west tip of County Clare to walk the Loop Head lighthouse walk and cliffs nearby where we saw spectacular numbers of birds nesting on the cliffs before catching a short car ferry across the River Shannon into County Kerry where we were staying for three nights at Cromane just off the Ring of Kerry. We drove the north Ring of Kerry to walk at Bray Head on Valencia Island across the bridge. We also explored the Dingle area walking along the shores on the Magharees Peninsula on the Dingle Way. We drove back across the very high, difficult and spectacular Conor Pass - sadly in thick fog - via Dingle. The next day we drove all of the Ring of Kerry and walked part of the Kerry Way at Derrynane en-route to Castletown-Berehaven on the Beara Peninsula in County Cork where we stayed for our last four planned nights. There we did a lovely walk on the sparsely inhabited Dursey Island reached via a nine minute six person cable car journey across the Atlantic Ocean – the only such cable car in Europe. We walked parts of the Beara Way both on the Beara Peninsula and on Beara Island which was wonderful reached via a 10 minute ferry.

We had intended to fly back from Cork but due to a week-long pilots' strike we flew from Dublin 4 days later so we were also able to walk at Sheep's Head but sadly in low cloud, in the Skibbereens and on the Wicklow Way in the Wicklow mountains and so we had to drive round the South and East Coasts.

We did lots of spectacular cliff walking on the Wild Atlantic Way which was mostly very unspoilt and beautiful. The weather was sometimes dry sometimes rain; there was low cloud on the hills most days and it was not at all warm –hats, gloves and waterproofs were well used. Heating and log fires were needed on this holiday even in June and July! However, the scenery was often stunning and unique and the people were very friendly there. We drove over 2000km on mainly quiet roads but you may prefer to try one of the Ways – Beara, Kerry or Dingle. A holiday that we shall remember.