

## **Venture Scout Expeditions in Ireland**

**This listing of expedition suggestions was put together in 1997. Since that time addresses and phone numbers may have changed however the original idea or suggestion is still a valid consideration. Most of the routes suggested are along or loosely follow long distance footpaths and trails these trails are developing every year so contact local tourist boards for current information on routes,accommodation, hostels, campsites etc.**

**We would also be interested in hearing from any Venturer Group who has completed any of the suggested routes or who can tell us about a new route so that in time we can develop this resource**



**Expedition 1**

**Expedition 2**

**Expedition 3**

**Expedition 4**

**Expedition 5**

**Expedition 6**

**Expedition 7**

**Expedition 8**

**Expedition 9**

**Expedition 10**

**Expedition 11**

# Venture Scouts - Backpacking

## Expedition 1 Burren Way - Aran Islands - Galway

This expedition involves a number of elements. The first part of the journey brings you across the Burren from Ballyvaughan to Doolin. From Doolin we travel by ferry to the Aran Islands and explore each island in turn. Lastly we return by ferry to Galway. This expedition will take up to 10 days to complete.

Day 1 Travelling to Ballyvaughan  
Day 2/3 Walking along the Burren Way from Ballyvaughan to Doolin  
overnighting along the route

Day 3/4 Overnighting in Doolin, a haven of traditional music and travelling to the Aran Islands

Day 4-8 Exploring the Aran Islands in turn Inis Oirr, Inis Meain, Inis Mor. This exploration maybe done on foot along pathways (Aran Ways) or by bikes hired on the islands.

Day 9 Return by ferry to Galway - Rossaveal, 42 Kms from Galway) - overnighting in Galway area

Day 10 Returning home



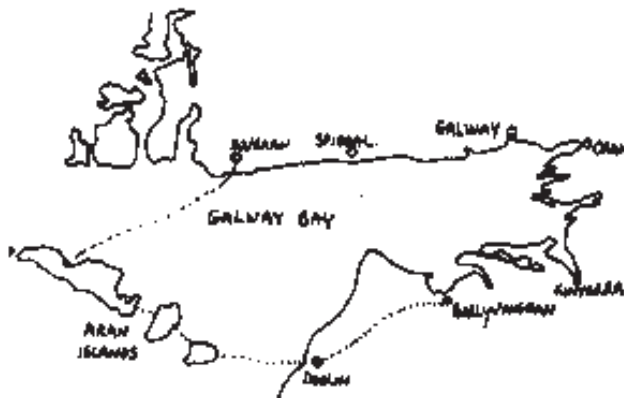
### Travelling to area

Trains and Buses Expressway and budget buses) operate to the main centres of population. The best deals travel wise, are on budget buses particularly at the weekends.

A regular bus service exists from Galway to Ballyvaughan from Galway train station

A regular bus service exists from the ferry port to Galway and the surrounding areas.

Details of bus and rail services are available from Irish Rail and Bus Eireann. Local Tourist Offices can advise on other services in the area.



### Accommodation

A number of privately owned hostels exist in the area 2 in Doolin, a number on the Aran Islands. On this expedition we suggest that you combine camping with hosteling accommodation. Camping is possible in remote areas along the Burren Way, however, under no circumstances should fires be light , all cooking should be done on stoves, and if possible permission should be sought to camp on land.

A lot of hostels also have land adjoining the hostel on which you can camp.

This area of the country is extremely popular in the summer season therefore it is advisable to pre book all hostel accommodation.

### Food

It will be necessary to plan meals and food stocks around towns you will travel through. Stock up in Ballyvaughan with supplies to last till Doolin. Stock up in Doolin to cover first day on Aran Islands etc. Careful planning of menus and supply points will ensure the easy replenishment of supplies.

### Further Information.

Local Tourist Offices in area

Irish Long Distance Walks Handbook by Michael Fewer

Independent Hostel Guide ( available from Bord Failte offices)

Siuloid Arann: a guided tour of the Aran Islands (available from book shops)

The Burren Way leaflet is available from Shannon Development, 62 O'Connell Street , Limerick.

# Venture Scouts - Backpacking

## Expedition 2 - Sli Culann (Wicklow Way)

The Sli Culann Adventure has been designed to enable an expedition to take place from Larch Hill to Lough Dan campsites. The adventure is recognised by the European Scout Region and is included in their Footsteps to Europe Programme. It is a worthy challenge for any Venturer Group.

Day 1 Travelling and arrival at Larch Hill

Day 2 Travelling to City to explore and complete city tours and experiences

Day 3 Service project - Larch Hill

Day 4-7 On the trail. Overnighting along the way. Arriving in Lough Dan on 7th day

Day 8 Adventure Sports activities in Lough Dan

Day 9 Service project - Lough Dan

Day 10 Travel to Glendalough to explore area

Day 11 Return to Dublin by Bus. Return Home



### Travelling to area

The best way to start the Sli Culann way is to approach it from Dublin. Therefore your starting point is Larch Hill. Trains and buses travel to Dublin from every corner of the country. A number 47 bus will bring you to Rockbrook Tibbradden a short distance from Larch Hill. The trail finishes in Lough Dan and a bus service is available from Roundwood a short distance from the campsite.



### Accommodation

This adventure is completed under canvas, that means camping. Some indoor accommodation is available in both campsites. The wardens can advise on availability.

### Food

Supermarkets are close to both sites or an arrangement can be made with the wardens about food supplies and deliveries. While on the trail it will be necessary to bring all your food requirements with you. Shops are available in Enniskerry but it is a good distance from the trail route.

### Service

It is purposed that the Group undertake a service project in each campsite. The warden will advise as to suitable service projects. One day of service to each campsite is expected. All tools and equipment will be supplied by the campsite.

### Adventure Sports Activities

It is possible to avail of adventure activities in Lough Dan such as canoeing, sailing, rock climbing. There is a charge for these activities which will have to be built into your cost for the expedition. Details available from camp warden.

### Further information

The Camp Wardens of Larch Hill and Lough Dan can provide details of Sli Culann Adventure. The Complete Guide to the Wicklow Way by J.B. Malone

# Venture Scouts - Backpacking

## Expedition 3 - Grand Canal - Barrow Way

This route follows a long distance walk we which starts in Hazelhatch outside Celbridge, Co Kildare and runs to Graignamanagh in Co. Kilkenny. Outline of route if walking. If you are travelling by bike or canoe itenerery will differ.

Day 1 Arrive at Hazelhatch, Celbridge, Co Kildare via Heution Station Dublin.

Get a few miles under the belt - camping perhaps near Sallins

Day 2 Continue along the way camping near Rathangan

Day 3 Rathangan to Monasterevin and beyond. Camping between Monasterevin and Athy

Day 4 Proceeding to Athy. Exploring Athy and camping nearby

Day 5 Athy to Carlow

Day 6 Carlow to Muine Bheag (Bagnelstown)

Day 7 Muine Bheag to Graiguemanagh

Day 8 Canoeing on River Barrow in Graiguemanagh

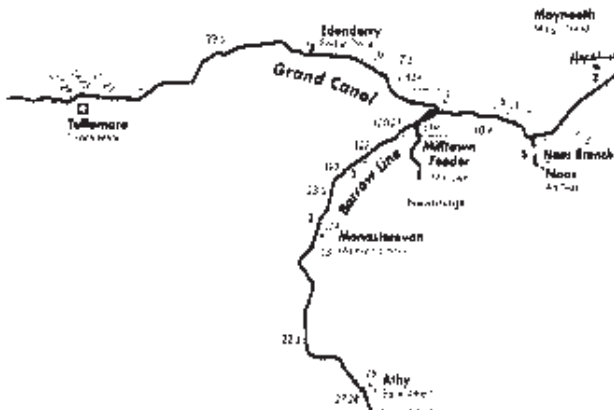
Day 9 Relaxation

Day 10 Return Home



### Travelling to area

The Grand Canal Way starts at Hazelhatch, Celbridge, Co. Kildare and proceed towards the Shannon. At Robertstown you branch off the Grand canal Way onto the Barrow Way with brings you to St Mullins, 5 miles from Graiguemanagh, Co. Kilkenny. Hazelhatch can now be reached by the Arrow Rapid Rail Service from Heuston Station. The Canal is approx. half a mile from the station. Celbridge the nearest town is approx. 2 miles from the station. It is suggested that you finish the Way in Graiguemanagh rather than at its end in St. Mullins. Bus Services from Graiguemanagh can bring you to a variety of locations either Thomastown or Kilkenny from which a train can be got or by bus back to Dublin.



### Food

You should have no problem obtaining food supplies on this route as you are constantly passing through town and villages as you travel along the route. You may however have difficulty with water. There are a number of water points along the way for boats, these are indicated on the O.P.W. map of the canal. You can also get water from lock keepers. Don't drink water from canal or river.

### Accommodation

There are no hostels along the Way so camping is the only option unless you are considering B&B. There is a hostel on the quay in Graiguemanagh from which you can also hire canoes and an instructor for day or half day trips on the river. If you are using mountain bikes it should be possible to travel further a field and maybe seek accommodation or campsite elsewhere.

### Information

Irish Long Distance Walks by Michael Fewer  
Guide to the Barrow published by the Inland Waterways Association available in book shops  
Waterways Visitor Centre, Ringsend Basin  
Government Publications Office  
Bord Failte Tourist Offices in Kilkenny, Carlow, New Ross

# Venture Scouts - Backpacking

## Expedition 4 - Connemara

- Day 1 Arrive in Westport. Overnight in hostel or campsite.
- Day 2 Climb Croagh Patrick. Arrange bicycle hire.
- Day 3 Cycle to Delphi via Louisburgh. Camp at Delphi Leenane/ Private hostel
- Day 4 Adventure sports activities in Delphi Adventure Centre. Perhaps two sports/activities) Camp at Delphi / Leenane/ Private hostel
- Day 5 Cycle to Maam Cross (restock food). Set up camp at Maamturk valley
- Day 6 Hillwalking along Maamturk ridge. (M.P.C. route). Overnight on ridge.
- Day 7 Hillwalking along ridge. Camping in Maamturk valley.
- Day 8 Cycle towards Westport along Lough Mask and surrounding area. Camping along the way.
- Day 9 Return to Westport. Overnight in Westport
- Day 10 Return home



# Venture Scouts - Backpacking

## Expedition 5 - Craggaunowen - Killaloe

The Craggaunowen Project coupled with a few days sailing and walking in the Killaloe area makes an interesting and varied expedition for your Group. Both locations are separate (but only a short distance from each other which can be covered on bicycles with ease) and arrangements will have to be made with both Craggaunowen and the National Water Activities Centre at Killaloe.

Day 1 Travel to Limerick and onwards to Craggaunowen. Set up site. Review of project.

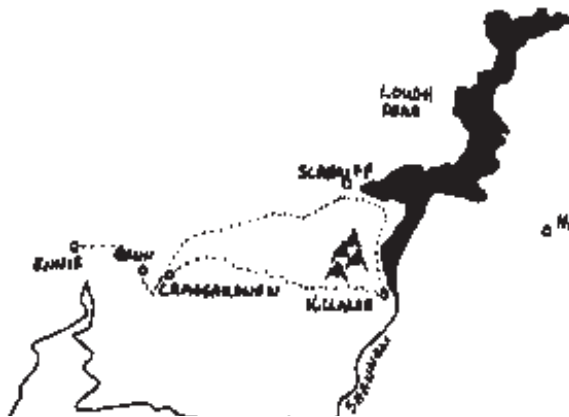
Day 2 to 5 Work on Craggaunowen Project

Day 6 Cycling to Killaloe. Sailing/ canoeing at Killaloe. Overnight in Killaloe. (Bikes can be hired and delivered to Craggaunowen)

Day 7 Sailing / canoeing in Killaloe. Walking along mountain trail. Overnighting in mountain hut or returning to Killaloe.

Day 8 Return to Craggaunowen. Local activities in Craggaunowen.

Day 9 Visit to Limerick (Historical Tour)



### Travelling to area

The nearest large town to Craggaunowen is Ennis. This can be reached by train or bus. From Ennis you can be picked up or you may wish to hire bikes for getting around the area for the time of your stay.

### Work and Play

The Craggaunowen Challenge should not be seen as a project based on the concept of 'All work no Play'. There is a time for work and equally a time for play and for that reason we encourage visiting Groups to avail of the many activity opportunities which exist in the surrounding countryside. Your time in Clare can be as active or as placid as you choose - all the ingredients are here.

### Food

Food can be bought locally or in Ennis. The delivery of food can be arranged with the manager on the site who can advise of details.

### Accommodation .

Accommodation will be two fold. While at Craggaunowen you will be camping. In Killaloe it is possible to stay in the centre or in the mountain hut. Details of accommodation can be had from the warden in Killaloe. Early booking is advisable in summer months. It is only suggested that you use Killaloe for other activities. It is not part of the Craggaunowen Project therefore you must arrange this part of your expedition separately with Killaloe warden.

### Bike hire

In order to get around area comfortable it is advised that you avail of bike hire or bring your own. Craggaunowen can advise and arrange delivery of bikes to site.

### Further Information

Further information on Craggaunowen can be had from Tom Cassidy, Craggaunowen Project. Quin, Co Clare, Tel. (061) 367178

Bord Failte can provide information on local attractions

Killaloe Camp Chief can be contacted by writing to

# Venture Scouts - Backpacking

## Expedition 6 - Royal Canal Way

The Royal Canal Way is considered the more scenic of the two canal ways as it passes through more varied countryside. It is possible to tackle this trail by a number of methods. Each method will have a different travel rate, so what takes 5 or 6 days to walk may take 3 - 4 days to canoe or 2 - 3 days to cycle in one direction. We outline therefore our suggestions for backpacking only. You can judge the other modes of transport from this basis.

Day 1 Arrive at Maynooth. Proceed along Way to Enfield. Maynooth and Kilcock are now built up areas of Dublin City therefore it is suggested that you set up camp beyond Kilcock

Day 2/3 Proceed along trail passing through Enfield and Thomastown towards Mullingar

Day 4/5 Mullingar to Ballynacargy and onwards to Ballymahon

Day 6/7 Ballymahon to Cloonsheerin Junction. From here the canal branches. One branch brings you to Longford town. The other brings you to Clondra and onto the Shannon. The distance to each one is similar so its a matter of choice which one you choose to finish at.



### Transport to area

It is suggested that you start the route at Maynooth, Co Kildare. It is possible to get to Maynooth by Bus from Dublin or by train from Connolly station in Dublin. The station and the railway line follows the route of the Royal Canal Way for much of its distance from Dublin to Mullingar. The trail therefore starts just in front of Maynooth station. At the other end of the trail the canal branches to Longford or Clondra and on to the Shannon it is possible to get a bus to Longford from Clondra and from there by train back to Dublin or by long distance bus services to Dublin and other locations.

### Food

You should have no problem obtaining food supplies on this route as you are constantly passing through town and villages as you travel along the route. You may however have difficulty with water. You should keep an eye on it. You may have to ask at a local farm or house. There are a number of water points along the way for boats, these are indicated on the O.P.W. map of the canal. You can also get water from lock keepers. Don't drink water from canal or rivers feeding the canal.

### Accommodation

There are no hostels along the Way so camping is the only option unless you are considering B&B. If you are using mountain bikes it should be possible to travel further a field and maybe seek accommodation or campsite elsewhere.

### Information

Guide to the Royal Canal published by the O.P.W. and available in book shops  
Waterways Visitor Centre, Ringsend Basin  
Government Publications Office  
Bord Failte Tourist Offices in Mullingar.

# Venture Scouts - Backpacking

## Expedition 7 - North - West Passage

When It comes to canoe expeditions in Ireland we only have the possibility of taking a number of routes. The Barrow, the canal network, and the Shannon.

The Shannon is not considered a canoe route as the waterway is too dangerous except for very experienced canoeists. The route - the northwest passageway - is a suggested route only. With the recent opening of the Shannon Erne link through the Ballyconnell canal it is now possible to complete a route from Lough Oughter perhaps starting at Killykeen Forest park a short distance from Cavan and finishing in Lough Key Forest Park outside Boyle.

The route combines canal link to small and large lakes making for a very interesting and varied journey. At the time of writing this booklet we know of nobody that has completed such a route however in theory it is possible.



In time some Group will take up this challenge and we hope they will tell us of their experience and advise us of the details of their adventurer.





# Venture Scouts - Backpacking

## Expedition 8 - Leitrim Way - Cavan Way - Ulster Way

This route combines parts of three long distance trails so providing a route from Drumshambo to Dowra on the Leitrim Way, Dowra to Blacklion on the Cavan Way and Belcoo to Donegal on the Ulster Way. The route passes through the glens of Leitrim and Fermanagh In countryside rarely visited by tourists. Along the Cavan Way we visit the Shannon Pot ( the source of the Shannon). Then crossing the border we pick up the Ulster Way as It proceeds around Lough Erne. Lastly we cross back over the border at Pettigo and trek a short while In the foothills of Donegal before completing our journey In Donegal Town.

### Route details

The Leitrim Way starts in Drumshambo and travels to Manorhamilton The Way is left at Dowra whereupon you follow the Cavan Way to Blacklion. You then cross the border to Belcoo and pick up the Ulster Way. This is followed to Pettigo where a branch of the Ulster Way is followed towards Donegal. This branch finishes in Falcarragh on the west coast of Donegal. This branch of the Ulster Way is considered by many to be the most difficult. It is suggested therefore that you terminate our route at Lough Eske as you cross the main road between Donegal and Letterkenny. It is after this point that the route becomes difficult to transverse.



### Transport to area

Drumshambo and Dowra are serviced by bus from Sligo and Longford. Services are limited so it is a wise precaution to contact local bus depot for details of times etc. Belcoo and Pettigo are served by bus from Enniskillen and there is a summer service to Pettigo from Donegal town. Donegal town has a service to Sligo and Derry from which trains can be had

### Food

The route passes through a number of villages and towns however there are sections where you could be out of reach of shops for 2 days depending on rate of travel, therefore plan your food supplies carefully. As a lot of the route passes through state forests stoves should be used at all times when cooking.

### Accommodation

There are no hostels in this area and little B&B accommodation, therefore the only option is backpacking and camping. There is an independent hostel in Donegal town if you want to take it easy on your last overnight ( Booking is advisable). The Scouting Ireland Group in Dowra have a small campsite beside there den which can be used

### Further information

Irish Long Distance Walks by Michael Fewer covers in detail the Cavan Way. The Leitrim Way map and guide is available from local tourist offices or Leitrim County Council The Ulster Way by Paddy Dillon a booklet outlining the way is available along with other details of local attractions in Northern Ireland from The Northern Ireland Tourist Board. 59 North Street, Belfast BT1 1NB. This guide explains in detail the route from Belcoo to Pettigo and the Donegal Branch

# Venture Scouts - Backpacking

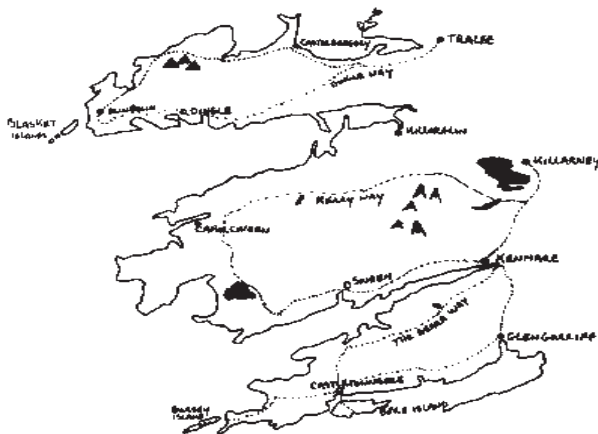
## Expedition 9 - Kerry Ways

There are 3 long distance footpaths In Kerry each way approx 100 miles in length. It will no be possible therefore to do the whole lot in one go. Each way follows a route around each peninsula that makes up the county of Kerry. The countryside is particularly beautiful In this part of the country and of all the walks offers the greatest opportunity to experience the raw beauty of Ireland.

It is possible to cover the same area and nearly the same routes by bicycle along ring roads of the peninsulas.

It Is also possible to cover parts of the route by pack ponies ( the ponies carrying the gear ). This might be an Interesting diversion on part of the route. Details are available from local tourist offices re agents , costs etc.

The 3 ways In Kerry are The Beara Way from Glengarriff to Kenmare. The Dingle Way from Tralee to Dunquin and back to Tralee and the Kerry Way from to Kenmare following old droving paths and coach roads to complete a different Ring of Kerry from that normally seen by tourists.



### Travelling to area

This area of the country is well provided for by way of transportation. Tralee and Killarney are serviced by train and bus services. Other towns and villages are serve by bus only. Irish Rail and Bus Eireann can provide details of times and services. On the Beara Way there is a cable car service to Dursey Island and a regular ferry service to Bere Island

### Travel Distances

The Kerry Ways are particularly long and the suggested breakup of the Way given overleaf is only a guideline. It is possible to do only portions of any of the Ways as all of the Ways have may points from which you can join or leave the route. In doing any Way or route it is important not to overstretch the capabilities of the Group or the individuals doing the route. Kerry offers the traveller an enormous array of places to visit and see and in doing any route the important factor is to get the mix right and at the same time contain the challenge of the route.

### Food

All of the routes pass through or near to towns and villages where food supplies can be replenished. On certain sections of the route it will be necessary to bring enough food and supplies for 2 days just in case.

### Accommodation

There are a number of hostels available in the area from An Oige hostels to privately owned hostels. With careful planning it is possible to avail of hostel accommodation. It is wise however to consider camping as your primary accommodation and supplement it where possible with hostels. There are 24 privately owned hostels and 7 An Oige hostels in Kerry.

### Further Information

Irish Long Distance Walks by Michael Fewer  
The Beara Way Strip Map available from Cork Kerry Tourism  
Cork/ Kerry tourist offices in Killarney and Cork

# Venture Scouts - Backpacking

## Expedition 10 - Western Way

The Western Way runs from the fjord of Killary, Leenan to the Ox Mountains in north Mayo. This route will take the walker through some of the most magnificent scenery in Ireland. From rugged mountains to the wild and desolate bogs of Erris and Tirawley, from Croagh Patrick to the landscapes of the first farmers of north Mayo and the Ceide fields, passing the ruined grandeurs of Sheskin Lodge and the futuristic windmills that will produce new energy when the bogs are exhausted.



This route is considered to be one of the toughest of the long distance walks. Certainly there are sections where there are no traces of civilisation for many miles. It is advised that those attempting this be well prepared for tough conditions (across bogs) and changeable weather.

### The Western Way

Total Distance 177km/110 miles

Leenan to Westport 45km / 27 miles

Westport to Newport 15km / 10 miles

Newport to Ballycastle 67km / 41 miles

Ballycastle to Killala 16km / 10 miles

Killala to Ballina 15km / 10 miles



### Travelling to the area

Access to the area is via Galway, Westport and Ballina. Trains and long distance buses terminate at Galway station. It is then possible to get a connecting bus to Leenan from Galway station. It is also possible to get a bus from Westport (summer only) but it tends to go all over the place before you arrive at Leenan. It is therefore suggested that you travel via Galway or alternatively do the route in reverse from Ballina to Leenan.

The official route terminates in Tobercurry in North Mayo. We suggest however that you terminate your route in Ballina as it offers better opportunity for transport out of the area or into the area as the case may be. Buses are infrequent and it is advisable to check with Bus Eireann for times and details. A number of private bus companies operate services from Dublin, Cork, and Galway at budget prices. Details available from tourist offices.

### Food

Food is one of the biggest difficulties on this route. Therefore only major centres of population such as Westport, Newport, Killala, Ballycastle, Ballina should be considered as food replenishment locations. It is possible to drop off the route to such places as Louisborough and Bangor Erris. However, this will mean travelling there and back which can be some distance.

### Accommodation

There are a number of hostels available in the area from An Oige hostels to privately owned hostels. With careful planning it is possible to avail of hostel accommodation. It is wise however to consider camping as your primary accommodation and supplement it where possible with hostels. There are 3 privately owned hostels and 3 An Oige hostels on route. The hostels are in Leenan, Westport, Killala, and at Traen Lodge, Lough Feeagh. The Scout Den in Ballina is also an option for accommodation. Contact can be established through Headquarters.

### Further Information

The Western Way Booklet is produced by Mayo County Council and is available from them at a fee.

Glenans Irish Selling Club can provide details of sailing courses at tel. (01)6611481

Delphi Adventure Centre is contactable at Delphi Adventure Centre, Leenan, Co Galway.

Bus Eireann and Irish Rail can advise on train and bus routes and times.

Tourist Offices in Galway and Westport can advise of local attractions and details of hostels.

# Venture Scouts - Backpacking

## Expedition 11 - Ulster Way

The Ulster way is the longest way marked route in Ireland. It is 570 miles / 917 kms long. It would take an experienced walker perhaps 4 - 5 weeks to complete the full circuit. Most people opt to do sections of the Way. The scenic beauty and the variety of the landscape make Northern Ireland a great place to explore on foot. The wide scatter of villages and small towns across the country means that it is possible to co-ordinate a days walking with the comforts of towns and villages at night. The Way is broken into sections -North Eastern, North Western, South Western, Southern, and South Eastern.

In presenting the Ulster Way we recommend the North Eastern Section or the South Eastern Section for the variety and adjoining facilities such as hostels, campsites, other activities.

### Further Information

The Ulster way has been in existence for some time and unlike other long distance pathways in the south of Ireland there is a lot of information and guide books available to explain in detail sections of the Way. Your first stop therefore has to be the Northern Ireland Tourist Office and the Countryside information section of the Environment Service.



### Further Information

The Ulster way has been in existence for some time and unlike other long distance pathways in the south of Ireland there is a lot of information and guide books available to explain in detail sections of the Way. Your first stop therefore has to be the Northern Ireland Tourist Office and the Countryside information section of the Environment Service. They have a number of excellent guides to the Way. Some are free while others have a nominal charge.

The Ulster way - Accommodation for walkers Where to stay in Northern Ireland

The Ulster Way by Paddy Dillon

Walking - 14 great walks on the Ulster Way.

There are also a number of excellent guide books available from book shops.

Walking the Ulster Way by Alan Warner is recommended.

If you are opting to do the South Eastern section you may wish to obtain Moume Mountain Walks published by the Department of the Environment. It outlines a number of excellent walks in the Mournes which could be used to supplement your trip to this section of the Way

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board 59 North Street, Belfast, BT1 1NB

Countryside Information

Environment Service,

Countryside and Wildlife

Calvert House. 23 Castle Place, Belfast, BT1 1 FY.