

Away Trip to Dingle Peninsula May 2025

Twenty-five members of the Mourne Ramblers travelled to Co Kerry for our hiking trip in the Dingle Peninsula from 18th -22nd May 2025. As it was difficult sourcing accommodation for a large group on the Dingle Peninsula itself, we stayed in the Rose Hotel, Tralee, which proved to be an excellent base for our away trip. The group comprised 19 C group walkers and 6 B walkers.

Day 1 On Monday 19th May both the B and C Groups travelled to Faha on the east side of Mount Brandon which was to be the main focus of that day's climb along the Pilgrim's Path. The ascent took us past the site where, in August 1940 a Luftwaffe Focke Wulf 200 "Condor" aircraft crash landed on Faha Ridge on the side of Mt Brandon - all 6 crew members survived and the site, where wreckage is still visible, is marked by a bench installed by a daughter of one of the crewmen. Shortly after passing this site we encountered what appeared to be a sheer cliff face but had a zig-zag route to the top of the ridge. It was a difficult enough ascent with some scrambling over rocks near the top but we were rewarded with stunning views in every direction. We were also extremely lucky to be ascending on quite a calm sunny day with blue skies all around.

After reaching the summit of Mt Brandon, the C group completed their walk, following the ridge past Brandon Peak before descending from Gearhane, where some cars had been left earlier to facilitate this linear route. While the C group covered 12km with 1,050m ascent, the challenging climb and the beautiful weather meant that we were out for just over 7 hours

The B group, who had set off earlier, did a longer even more challenging route to finish their linear walk at the Conor Pass. Their walk from Faha to the Conor Pass covered 15.4km with 1308 metres of ascent in 5 hours 20 minutes.

Day 2. Beginning at Lough Annascaul carpark the plan for Day 2 was a circuit including Beenoskee and Stradbally Mountains among others. However, the C group's endeavours for the day were delayed by nearly 40 minutes when we encountered a County Kerry traffic jam, a large flock of sheep being moved along a narrow lane to an upper pasture which corresponded to our own 3 starting point. The weather was not as kind that day as we ascended Beenoskee and Stradbally with some very strong winds near the top and occasional squally showers, though we were able to find a sheltered spot for lunch at the summit of Beenoskee with some stunning views to the north. On completion of the route we rewarded ourselves with some refreshments in the South Pole Inn, Annascaul, the pub/restaurant made famous as being previously owned by Tom Crean a survivor of 3 South Pole expeditions with Scott and Shackleton. This proved to be shorter day timewise, the group walked for 6.5 hours, covering 12.3km with 810m ascent.

On Day 2, starting from Derrymore Beach, the B Group tackled Baurtregaum, Caherconree and Gearhane covering 15.7km with 1097 metres of ascent in 5 hours. They too had poor weather including a heavy hail shower when making their way from Caherconree to Baurtregaum.

Day 3 The C group set off from the carpark at Derrymore Beach to complete part of the Derrymore Horseshoe which includes Baurtregaum. They ascended up the valley to Derrymore Lake before ascending Baurtregaum NW top and returning to the carpark. As is now becoming customary on away trips, a number of group members availed of the opportunity for some sea swimming at Derrymore Beach before returning to Tralee. The C group covered 11.1km with 830m ascent taking 6.5 hours on what proved to be a lovely day in dramatic scenery.

Meanwhile on Day 3 the B group started their walk from Annascaul Lake in good weather and tackled Stradbally and Dromvalley Mountains covering 18.76km with 1057 metres of ascent in 6 hours and 10 minutes followed by beer in the South Pole Inn.

The Rose Hotel proved to be a fantastic base for our trip with great food and was excellent value."