### MAAM CROSS



Maam Cross is a settlement on a crossroads surrounded by mountains and lakes and is buzzing with local life and character. The crossroads is the hub of activity and customs which have lasted down the centuries from sheep farmers making deals at the bar counter to sheep and pony fairs held at the crossroads throughout the year. These fairs culminate in the big October fair.

## MAAM





When you start the Connemara Loop you enter Joyce Country the name originating from one of the Galway tribe families who settled there in the thirteenth century. On the right hand side of this drive is the Partry Mountain range and on the other are the Maamturk range (meaning 'the pass of the wild boars'). There is an angling centre in this magnificent valley where the Failmoren, Bealanabrack and Joyce's River come together on their way to Lough Corrib. The Kilmeelickin Church at Maam (Maum) houses the stained glass window of St. Brendan (1950) by Dublin-born Evie Hone (1894-1955).

On the way to Leenane, you will see a signpost for 'Leaba Pháraic' (Patrick's bed) which marks a place of pilgrimage: these were traditionally visited on the first Sunday in August. The well was believed to cure cattle disease as well as some human ills.

# LEENANE



Be prepared to hold your breath in awe as the approach to Leenane is spectacular from all directions. Leenane (An Lionán in Irish) means a ravine, referring to the geographical landscape of the sea as it makes its way through the narrows of the fjord. This pretty, old world village lies nestled between Mweelrea, Devil's Mother and Maamturk mountains and faces onto Killary Fjord, Ireland's only fjord which on occasion held concealed the whole Channel fleet.

You will step back in time to the era of Bull McCabe (the anti-hero of John B. Keane's play The Field which was made into a film, starring the late Richard Harris, by Noel Pearson). The local Cultural Centre in Leenane provides plenty of information on the history, culture and geography of the area. With beautiful walks and scenery, Leenane is well worth a visit. There are plenty of establishments providing excellent fresh food and a good variety of accommodation.

# **KILLARY**





Killary is situated on the southern shore of Ireland's only fjord with unrivalled views of the spectacular bay and across the shore to the Mayo Mountains. There is plenty to see and do here for the visitor with amazing walks, an adventure centre, and a boat cruise on the fjord and, if you're lucky, you may even see some playful dolphins. This part of Connemara was badly affected by the famine in the 1840's and some evidence of the poverty of this area remains. The Killary Famine walk brings you into some beautiful scenery. The local people in return for food constructed this famine relief road, dating back to 1856 The fjord is alive with activity with mussel farms and other fishing activities. You can go down

to the shore to collect your own fresh mussels from the rocks if you wish.

# **LETTERGESH** & GLASSILAUN





Lettergesh is deservedly renowned for its beaches each one more spectacular than the next. If it is white expanses of sand and turquoise water you are after, this is the place for you. There is a choice of beaches and bays to explore along this stretch of coastline. The adventurous at heart can do their exploring under water at the dive centre which caters for beginners and experienced divers in some of the most diverse and interesting waters in Europe. There is plenty here for anglers, both amateur and professional, from deep sea fishing to lake angling on the beautiful lakes Lough Fee and Lough Muc. The scene is completed by the surrounding Twelve Bens – mountains that loom over the beaches and lakes, and the views over to the Mayo Mountains. Lettergesh is a great place to visit at anytime of year and has a good choice of places to stay from the camp site to B&B and self-catering. You can stock up on supplies at the local shop and post office or stop for a cup of tea at the camp site shop.





Tully Cross Tulach na Croise (cross on the hill). The traditional thatched cottages add to the beauty and tranquility of this little village. The local church, with its stained glass windows by the renowned artist Harry Clarke, overlooks the square. A notable feature of this village is the 'Ogham Stone', the ancient script spells out the name of the town land "Gurteenaclough" meaning the little garden of stones. There is a great sense of a thriving community in Tully Cross and the village is well serviced. The Connemara Mussel Festival is held there each May Bank Holiday and has plenty to do for all the family including tons of mussels to eat your way through. Don't miss a night out there; the 'craic' is always mighty!

# **TULLY AND** RENVYLE





Tully is a quaint seaside village on this Peninsula. The little beach 'Trá na mBan' (White Strand) is only a stone's throw away from the village, and its small pier, sheltered corner and rock pools provide a fun place for children and adults to spend the day exploring. There is plenty to keep you busy at Tully, beautiful walks, a horse riding centre, bicycle hire, evening family entertainment, pubs, restaurants and a good selection of accommodation

The Renvyle Peninsula is steeped in history. Archaeological sites include a Stone Alignment (a Bronze Age Solar Calendar) and one of the finest 4,000-year-old forests entombed in peat in Europe. The O'Flaherty Castle, which was once home to the Pirate Queen Grace O'Malley (Granuaile) while she was married to Donal O'Flaherty. Another historic building is Renvyle House, on the sea at Trá na Duirling (or Pebble Beach) which was home to the Blake Family (one of the fourteen tribes of Galway and then to poet, statesman and surgeon Oliver St John Gogarty and was a favourite retreat of poet W.B. Yeats and artist Augustus John.

Watching the sunset on a fine Spring or Summer evening from Renvyle Point as the sun slowly turns the sky crimson and violet behind the ruins of Renvyle Castle is as beautiful a sight as you might see. Renvyle is home to some spectacular beaches in particular 'White Strand', a long expanse of white sand with stunning views across the aquamarine ocean which would rival any beach worldwide. This magical place has inspired writers and artists and draws them back time and again. Archaeological sites such as the Promontory Fort, Well of the Seven Daughters at Cashleen and Ardnagreevagh Chamber Tomb enhance wonderful walks. Fishing (lake and shore) and Golf are also available to visitors in the area. With a great variety of accommodation and eateries, you will be well looked after on this glorious peninsula.

# DERRYINVER





Derryinver can be found on the serene and tranquil Renvyle Peninsula, a hauntingly beautiful coastline etched out by the ebb and flow of countless tides. It contains the archeological site of a Six Pillar Stone Alignment which would have been built to line up with the Winter Solstice. Derryinver Bay an inlet of the beautiful, natural and well-protected Ballinakill Harbour is home to a large number of seabirds – wild duck, cormorants, herons, gulls, terns, oystercatchers, guillemots and curlews. It is also home to a small colony of grey seals and porpoises and dolphins are frequent visitors.

# LETTERFRACK





Quakers John and Mary Ellis founded the small vibrant village of Letterfrack on the crossroads in 1849. The village is near the sea and has a village green surrounded by trees and overlooked by the majestic Diamond Mountain and the Connemara National Park. The village is renowned for its live, traditional Irish music and hosts three festivals a year: Féile Bride, the festival of St. Brigit in February, Bog Week during the last full week in May and Sea Week during the last week in October, where musicians and music lovers congregate for a programme of talks, poetry readings and music as well as hill walking and discussions on environmental matters. The village also has a variety of places to eat and drink and a great selection of accommodation. The Connemara National Park hosts workshops for children in July and August, it also has an interactive exhibition and audio visual centre and hosts guided walks to experience this ancient landscape first hand. The Furniture College holds an exhibition every summer of the fine woodwork and design produced by its final-year students. You can take a boat trip from Dooneen pier to fish or watch the porpoises and dolphins. Letterfrack is a great place for families as all premises are child friendly and special family days are held on the village green during the summer months. Don't forget to tune into the local radio at 87.8FM and 106.1FM for the latest news and to find out what is happening in the area.

# **KYLEMORE**





Kylemore (Coill Mór – The Big Wood). This splendid valley, renowned worldwide for its breathtaking beauty, is dominated by Kylemore Abbey & Garden. It was built in 1864–1871 as a token of love by Englishman Mitchell Henry to his wife Margaret. The building is now a Benedictine Abbey and has many attractions for visitors including the renovated Gothic Chapel and the Victorian Walled Garden. In late Spring and early Summer, anyone walking or driving through Kylemore will be overwhelmed by the abundance of rhododendrons; the massive purple flowers are surreal at times and the purple reflections on the lakes are a scene to behold. You may notice, as you pass the lakes, the hills on the far side are indented with ridges. These steep, rocky hillsides were planted with potatoes before the famine (1840's), when local people sought out a means to feed their families. Kylemore is equally renowned for its lake fishing and walks and enthusiasts have flocked to this area for centuries! There is a good choice of accommodation and refreshment in the area.

### **INAGH VALLEY**





Get your camera out as you are about to embark on one of the most scenic drives in the world. There is a photo opportunity at every turn as the Inagh Valley road winds its way through the magnificent heather covered mountains and around the picturesque lakes. The valley is flanked by the majestic Twelve Bens Mountains on the west and the Maamturk Mountains to the east. The lake itself is widely known for its fishing and businesses along this route provide the opportunity to avail of this. The valley is covered in a blanket bog and turf is cut from it for fuel for local families. You will see the turf stacks drying as you pass by. In 1986 a Bronze Age stone alignment was discovered where over 3,000 years ago people would gather to celebrate the midwinter solstice.

# **RECESS**





Recess is a traditional stopping off point on the way from Galway. The village is situated on the edge of the beautiful fishing lake Glendalough. The holy shrine of Máméan is near-by and is a magical place to walk both for the beauty around you and the sense of a bygone era. The pitch and putt course in Recess is also worth a visit as you would be hard-pushed to find a more scenic location for a game of golf. You will find all the supplies you need at the local shop, post office and petrol pumps and there is a good range of places to stay both B&B and Self-Catering.

#### **Activities along the Connemara Loop**

There are many activities along the Connemara Loop, some requiring more energy than others, these include Abseiling, Adventure Activities, Archery, Angling, Beaches galore, Boat Cruises, Body Boarding, Clay Pigeon Shooting, Cycling, Dance Movement, Deep Sea Fishing, Hill Walking, Holistic Ventures, Horse Riding, Island Hopping, Kayaking, Kite Sports, Massage Therapies, Mountain Climbing, Museums, Park, Reiki, Sailing, Sean nós Dancing, Scuba Diving, Sight-seeing, Swimming, Windsurfing, Zip Wire and much more.

#### **Walking and Hiking**

Some of the many pleasures of Connemara are best sampled by walking and as you walk the road and some of the forestry trails, you will see the golden gorse, red and purple fuchsia, the scarlet of the Rowan, the pink of the Rhododendron and the white of the Hawthorn. You will be able to pick out the lazy beds, as they were called, where tenant farmers mainly grew potato crops, and they are the only sign that is left, maybe, from pre-famine times (1845-1849), of the days when the population far exceeded that of the present.

Two of the Maamturk mountain range walks are the Western Way and the Máméan Walk to St Patrick's Bed, which on your return walk has panoramic views right across to Errisbeg Mountain by Roundstone, Over many of the bogs, which are still used by locals for fuel in open fires and ranges alike, there are tracks which

**Guided Walks** are available throughout the area. Take advantage of the pathway walk up Diamond Hill walk within the Connemara National Park at Letterfrack. Coillte (http://www.coillteoutdoors.ie) also provide great walks in Connemara both on and off the Connemara Loop.

#### Cycling the Connemara Loop

As an example you could commence your trip at Maam Cross and cycle along the Loop towards Maam (8km) then onto the village of Leenane (14km). Here take the left-hand road towards Letterfrack and you will come across the main section of the Killary Fjord (5km). Take a right turn for Lettergesh through to Tullycross. At Tullycross take a right to Tully and continue to Renvyle (4km) continue past the gate of the Renvyle House and follow the road to the end of the peninsula (4km). Just before Renvyle Castle, take a left and cycle up hill to the next left continue straight on. This will take you around the base of Tully Mountain and down to Derryinver (4km) keeping to the left passing Ocean's Alive until you reach a T-junction, take a right back to Letterfrack (4km). At the crossroads at Letterfrack take a left towards the magnificent Kylemore Abbey (4km) and after the Kylemore Pass Inn take a right turn (signed to Recess) and you enter the Inagh Valley and onto Recess (21km). From Recess you can return to Maam Cross (13km). There is a great 40km mountain bike trail (MBT) at Derroura, situated on the N59 between Oughterard and

Maam Cross. Of all the Coillte MTB Trails, Derroura is the most natural and has the most variable terrain.

#### **History and Archeoology**

The Church of the 7 Daughters is located in the old part of Renvyle Cemetery in Ardnagreevagh. The ruin is a small medieval type church easily found from the graveyard that surrounds it and which is still in use today. The Gothic Church at Kylemore Abbey is a church which has been restored to its former glory in recent years, its beautiful interior and exterior design and structure is well worth a visit. Renvyle Castle, this 12th-century tower house was taken over by the O'Flaherty Clan in 1546. The Standing Stone Alignment in Derryinver (aka 'Fairy Fingers') consists of six standing stones, 3 of granite and 3 of local conglomerate and these align with the Winter Solstice. There are numerous Megalithic Tombs dating back to 3,500-2,000 BC as well as a variety of sites from the Bronze Age 2,000–500 BC.

### Spiritual Heritage Sites

"Ruins are not empty. They are sacred places full of presence".— John O'Donoghue MAM EAN – experience the path walked by our ancient pilgrims. The 'PASS OF THE BIRDS' is one of the two main passes through the Maumturk range of mountains. Annual gatherings at Mam Ean predate St. Patrick and Christianity. It is now an established place of Christian pilgrimage with a modern chapel, stations of the

cross, a statue of St. Patrick', all which marries well with the ancient Holy Well (Tobar Phadraig) and St. Patrick's Bed (Leaba Phadraic). Altogether a truly peaceful, spiritual place with magnificent views over South Connemara. It gives a whole new meaning to 'The last place God made,' a reference often used in the past about Connemara, most probably dating back to Cromwell's dictum – "To hell or to Connacht".

All along the Connemara Loop and the islands of Crump, Inishbofin and Inishshark there are many sites of interest which include: Holy Wells, Mass Rocks, Burial Grounds, Megaliths and churches.

# **Boating, Cruising and Island Hopping**

On the Connemara Loop:

Western Explorer boat trips from Derryinver to Inishbofin around the Bay.

Cat na Mara boat excursions and sea angling from Letterfrack

Ocean's Alive Sea Tours: John Mongan's Boat Cruises and Fishing, Derryinver. Ireland's only glass bottomed boat. Killary Cruises, a spectacular trip along Ireland's only fjord accompanied by interesting information on the geology and history of the area and perhaps spotting a dolphin or two along the way.

#### **Off the Connemara Loop:**

#### Information on Inisbofin and Inisturk

A ferry may be taken from **Cleggan** to the Island of Inishbofin. At the entrance of the harbour at **Inishbofin** you will see the impressive ruin of the historic Cromwellian Fort. There are beautiful beaches, breathtaking scenery, food and accommodation on this island.

The **Brazen Hussey** boat trips and deep sea angling trips. Departs from the pier at Derryinver. **Inisturk** is another beautiful, unspoiled island off the Connemara coastline. There are beautiful walks, small sandy beaches and accommodation available on the island.

There are numerous amenities and activities geared towards families along the Connemara Loop. A number of these run courses or special events for children during the Summer months:-

The Connemara National Park, Letterfrack. Walk up to the top of Diamond Mountain or visit the centre to find out more about the geography, flora and fauna of the area. Children's activities run throughout the Summer. Cruise on Killary Fjord, Killary and if you're lucky you'll get to meet a few dolphins

Drama and Dance Workshop and Theatre Productions with Tegolin Tales, Tully. Horse & Pony Trekking, Diamonds Equestrian Centre, Tully. A pony club is run during the Summer months.

**Killary Adventure Centre**, Killary has something for teenagers as well as parents and great fun. Kylemore Abbey, Gothic Chapel and the Victorian Walled Gardens at Kylemore are well worth a visit

Ocean's Alive Sea Tours, Derryinver: Short inshore sea angling boat trips that can be enjoyed by the family. Ocean & Country Museum at Derryinver. Find out about the aquatic life in this region. Ceol Na Mara Summer School for Strings is run by Oonagh Keogh during the Summer months.

Connemara English School in Letterfrack runs English language courses for the whole family from the ages of 3 years and upwards.

#### **Golf Courses**

**On the Connemara Loop:** 9-Hole Golf Course: Renvyle House Hotel, Renvyle

**Off the Connemara Loop:** Ballyconneely – Connemara Golf Club (½ hour off the Connemara Loop) Oughterard Golf Course (½ hour off the Connemara Loop) Westport (¾ hour off the Connemara Loop)

# **Entertainment & Festivals**

Traditional music is played in pubs most nights along the Connemara Loop. For more information please visit the Calendar of Events page on the www.goconnemara.com website on for updates or ask along the way. Some Key Festivals 'on' and 'off' the Connemara Loop

Tar fheis Féile Bride – early February annually The Connemara Marathon – 1st Sunday, April

Mussels Festival, Tully & Tully Cross, May Bank Holiday weekend

The Leenane Walking Festival, May Bank Holiday weekend Bog Week, Letterfrack – Last full week in May ending at June Bank Holiday Weekend.

Nine Fridays – last Friday in every month (September to May inclusive) local and guest musicians held in Letterfrack School.

Connemara Rough Diamond, Letterfrack 2nd June 2012 The Teach Ceoil, Tully – Tuesday nights during July & August

Clifden Pony Show - August

Clifden Arts Week - September

Leenane Autumnal Festival - end of September Sea Week, Letterfrack – Last full week in October ending on the October Bank Holiday Weekend.

Ram Fair, Leenane – October Maam Cross Pony Fair - October **Member Listing** 



MEMBERS IN ORDER OF CORRESPONDING MAP NO. / VILLAGE ROUTE ORDER; TELEPHONE NO AND BUSINESS TYPE. Glenlosh Valley Cottages S/C 091-571117 Self-Catering Leenane: 095-42270 An Carraig Bar B&B 095-42901 / 087-4182608 Mountain View 095-42325 Killary Sheep & Wool Centre 095-42323 Museum & Craft Shop Portfinn Lodge 095-42265 **Guesthouse & Restaurant** Killary House 095-42254 B&B 095-42261 Blackberry Restaurant Restaurant 095-42240 Killary:
11 Thomas Nee - Killary Sheep Farm 087-298 8051 Sheep Farm Experience Boat Trips Killary Fjord Boat Tours 091-566736 The Connemara Hostel (Sleepzone) 095-42929 / 091-566999 Adventure Centre Killary Adventure Company 095-43411 Lettergesh / Glassilaun:

15 Glassilaun Beach House B&B Self Catering 095-43925 Scubadive West 095-43922 PADI Scuba Diving Centre Connemara Caravan & Camping Park Camp Site Ard na Mara Beach Cottage 095-43816 Gerard Heanue S/C house 086-1702568 Self-Catering Self-Catering Carnmore S/C house 00 1 703 4487664 Dolphin Watch Self Caterino 095-43518 Fishing Instructor Tree Surgeon Jackie Coyne, Fishing Instructor Alan Linnane West Coast Tree Surgery 087-2668194 086-2848340 Tullycross: Holistic Therapist 087-7630383 Connemara Holistics Self-Catering 095 43466 / 087 2209155 Casa Connemara S/C house 095 43466 / 087 2209155 Pine Lodge S/C house 095-43453 Patsy's Hackney Service Paddy Coynes Pub 095-43499 29 095-43458 Anglers Rest Bar **Tully:** 30 Seabreeze B&B The Thatched Cottage Self-Catering Horse-Riding B&B 095-43743/086-8115381 Diamond's Equestrian Centre 095-43486 Castle House B&B 095-43431 John Nee Village Store 095-43479 Shop 095-43927/ 087-6573857 Heaven Too S/C house 095-43466/ 087-7768 777 Self-Catering Sunnymeade B&B The Teach Ceoil 095-43491 Irish Music, Dance & Theatre 095-43446 Renvyle: 39 Maud's Pillowcase Designs 095-43454 Crafts Renvyle Caravan & Campsite Campsite Self-Catering 095-43462 087-6142900 Atlantic Vista S/C house Laura Cull Art Studio & Picture Framing Workshop 095-43676 / 086-8688125 Artist Studio & Framing John Joe Hackney Service Renvyle House Hotel & Resort 087-0555222 Hackey Ardnagreevagh Paul Heanue Building Contractor 086-3003065 Self-Catering **Building Contractor** 095-43833 / 086-8102744 095-43460 B&B Self-Catering B&B Atlantic View S/C house 095-43432 Fuchsia House B/B 095-43502 **Self-Catering** 095-43054 / 086 3003065 Debbie Ruddy S/C house Self-Catering Viewing Point Studio 095-43595 Artist & Studio Derryinver: 53 Cat na Mara 087-0929188 Connemara Boat Cruises 095-43473 Oceans Museum, Visitor Centre & Cafe 095-43473 Heritage Centre & Cafe Letterfrack:
56 Post Office, Letterfrack Post Offce Self-Catering 095-41222 | 086 8222447 087-0979055 Heatherhill Cottages - Carmel Walsh Connemara English Language School Letterfrack Lodge-Mike Laffey Dinny B. Stranded Car Services Hackney / Taxi Connemara Environmental & Educational Centre 095-43443(H) | 095-41034(W) Education Dash Dot Development I.T. | Web Design 087-2535587 | 087-6818625 Clover Fox Bar & Restaurant 095-41042 Bar and B&B The Old Monastery Hostel 095-41132 Kane Bicycles - Connemara Adventures Adventure Tourism 087-2767518 087-3887260 Cafe & Bakery The Wildberry Cafe Connemara Community Radio 095-41616 Radio Station Letterfrack Country Shop 095 41850 Letterfrack Furniture College (GMIT) 095-41660 Hairdressers B&B Diamond Hair Studio 095-41999 Mountainside B&B Budget Accommodation 095-41059/087-9710957 Website Design Cuán Mara Design 086-0791918 Furniture College National Park GMIT Furniture College 091-742 650 095-41054 Avoca Handweavers Craftshop 095-41058 Craft Shop Rosleague Manor Hotel 095-41101 Hotel John Mortimer 095-41896 **Kylemore Fishery** 095-41161 Kylemore Abbey & Victorian Walled Gardens 095-41146 Abbey/Gardens 095-41148 Kylemore Lodge B&B Kylemore House & Fishery Fishery and B&B 095-41143 Ben Breac House B&B Kylemore Filling Station & Convenience Store 095-41019 **Shop & Petrol Station** Garage Hotel David Walsh, Mechanic 095-41147 Kylemore Pass Hotel 095-41141 Inagh Valley: 87 Lough Inagh Lodge

The dialling pre-fix code when calling from overseas is +353 and drop the first '0'

#### **Exhibitions**

'Like us'

MAAM CROSS:

Lough Inagh Ranch

Peacockes Hotel

Inagh Valley Cottages S/C Deora Dé 5 Rhythms® Dance Practice

Tommie Joyce-Grocery Shop & Pub Cushlough B&B

Glendalough Pitch And Putt

Furniture Design Exhibition in July & August in Letterfrack Furniture Design College Various Artist Studios and Galleries along the Loop Tune into Connemara Community Radio broadcasting on 87.8 FM and 106.1 FM for news and updates or



www.facebook.com/ConnemaraLoop



visit the Go Connemara website at www.goconnemara.com for updates on what's happening in the area.





095-34706

095-34716

095-31015

095-34669

095-34658 095-34654

091-552 306

086-8753251

https://www.youtube.com/user/ConnemaraLoop

Hotel

B&B

Shop B&B

Hotel

Self-Catering

Pitch & Putt Course

5 Rhythm® Dance Practice

