

10km/6¼ miles

4 hours

moderate

Winner by a head

The calm waters of Lough Foyle meet the turbulent Atlantic Ocean here at the most northerly part of Ireland, on just one of the rugged peninsulas which make up the county of Donegal. Separate from the rest of Ireland, it was once a little kingdom with its own prince. It is said that St Columba took his last steps on Irish soil here, before sailing to set up a monastery on the Isle of Iona. It is said he left his mark in the form of a cross, carved only with his finger, on a stone at Portkilly. You can walk across barren moorlands using bog roads, and overlook the bay where the Armada ship La Trinidad Valencera was wrecked in 1588. A lighthouse on Dunagree Point at Stroove warns today's sailors of the dangers.

downhill between fences, and is later flanked by fuchsia and gorse, creating a riot of colour in early summer. You'll be walking on tarmac again by the time you reach the first few houses, and the road leads down to a junction.

6 Turn left at the road junction and follow the road back through Stroove. Turn right at the junction at the end of the road to return to the White Bay Take Away, car park and lighthouse.

2 A plaque above Portkilly tells about the ecclesiastic site on the rugged slopes below. This is where you can find a cross supposedly carved with St Columba's own finger, and it remains a place of pilgrimage. The tarmac expires soon afterwards and a clear track continues, usually bounded by fences and flanked by bracken, heather or wiry moorland grass. Cross a concrete bridge at Torcrom and continue climbing gently. When the crest of the track is reached, there's a view along the coast to the island of Inishtrahull. Closer to hand is Kinnog Bay, where La Trinidad Valencera foundered and sank after the defeat of the Armada in 1588.

The walk

1 The little village of Stroove is reached by occasional Swilly Bus services, but if you arrive by car, park near the lighthouse on Dunagree Point, near the White Bay Take Away. Follow the road uphill and continue further uphill along a narrower road from a junction. The road climbs past a farm and reaches a small parking space on top of Inishowen Head, close to an old lookout post. There are extensive views to sea, taking in distant Scottish islands, as well as Rathlin Island off the Antrim coast. The seaside resorts of Portrush, Portstewart and Castlerock are seen, while across Lough Foyle is the rugged cliff line of Binevenagh and the rolling Sperrin Mountains. Follow the narrow road onwards to a point above Portkilly.

5 This track runs

DETAILS
Country Walking ID 1648
Mag Route 26, April 2000
Region Ireland
Area Donegal
Length of walk 10km/6¼ miles
Time needed 4 hours
Difficulty Moderate

IS THIS WALK FOR YOU?

Terrain Minor roads and broad gravel bog roads, with gentle gradients along cliffs and across barren moorlands
Suitable for children, dogs

PLANNING

Parking By the lighthouse on Dunagree Point, Stroove

Nearest town

Camdonagh

Refreshments

The White Bay Take Away is at the start of the walk. There are bars and restaurants in other towns and villages on the Inishowen peninsula.

Public toilets

None

Public transport

Swilly Bus, Derry, tel 028 7126 2017

MAPS

Ordnance Survey of Ireland Discovery Sheet 3, Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland Discovery Sheet 4



PADDY DILLON