



# Stepping out on the Kerry Camino

## DINGLE PENINSULA HOSTS HUNDREDS ON PILGRIMAGE BACK TO ST JAMES'

EFFORTS to revive the old pilgrimage to St James's Church in Dingle are reaping rich rewards with hundreds taking part in the recent annual pilgrimage that's styled on Spain's famous Camino de Santiago.

As with in Spain, the Kerry Camino sees pilgrims picking up stamps as they progress towards a destination named after St James (Santiago) - in Kerry's case the little church on Dingle's Main Street that plays host to the famous Other Voices in the other big annual event there.

"We had a fantastic weekend walking the Kerry Camino along the Dingle Way," secretary of the Camino Group Adrienne McLoughlin told *The Kerryman*.

"For some it was a great opportunity to get out there and enjoy the fresh air in company and for others it provided a chance to walk in contemplative mood," Adrienne added.

Many achieved both at various points over the three-day pilgrimage, which set out from St John's Church in Tralee where Kerry Camino member Mike O'Donnell addressed the

throng, giving those new to the route and area a great sense of what they could expect along the Way.

That throng of walkers provided real evidence of the growing pull of its tourist potential, with walkers present from all parts of Ireland, from Scotland, England and with even a few from the continent in the group also.

The weather was a bit of a mixed bag as the pilgrims hit west, but the few showers that came did not dent the mood one bit. On the contrary, all were fairly buzzing as the Dingle Peninsula opened up underfoot, with the Way taking the group west from Tonevane to Camp for the first night-stop. After that, it was on to Annascaul, Lispolé, Minard as the hundreds eventually made their way along the mountain path to the Church of St James in Dingle. "Since Kerry Camino was launched in 2012, numbers participating have increased every year, bringing new and welcome walking tourism business to the greater Tralee area," Adrienne added.



A group from CaminoWays at the Railway Tavern in Camp on completing Day 1 of the big trek.



TOP: Walk guide Kevin Boyle leading a group up Tonevane. LEFT: St John's PP Fr Sean Hanafin blessing the group at outset of the Camino. BELOW: The Pilgrim's Progress as seen in the succession of stamps earned by one walker along the route.



RIGHT: Walkers approach Minard Castle along the Camino as it winds through the Lispolé countryside.



Mike O'Donnell (far left) and Ingrid Boyle of Kerry Camino with a group at the rest bench and stamping station overlooking Minard. Mike addressed all walkers at the start of the Camino at St John's in Tralee, giving all a great sense of what they could expect before hitting west.



Walk guides Pat and Maura Sullivan and Bill Harnett at one of the low-lying highlights of the route beyond the river crossing in Camp.