The Cliffs of Moher stretch downwards to the Atlantic for almost 200m. The cliffs take their name from an old promontory fort, Mothar, and extend some 8km from Hag’s Head, west of Liscannor, to a little beyond O’Brien’s Tower, which was constructed by a local altruist in 1835 at their highest point. Access to the cliffs remains unrestricted, but, if you’re travelling by car you’ll be compelled to pay Clare County Council’s extortionate parking charge of €8 for the privilege. Said sum “entitles” visitors (though exactly the same facilities are available if you arrive on bike or foot) to free entry to the controversial €31.5million visitor centre and to the infrequent “cliff edge” guided tours – enquire at the main desk for details. Tucked away within the hillside, there’s no doubting that the centre is an impressive architectural feat – and its first-floor restaurant does offer panoramic seascapes and a reasonable choice of meals – but to reach it you’ll pass a somewhat tacky range of souvenir shops and find more of the same kind of “Oirish” gifts on sale within. The centre also houses the Atlantic Edge exhibition whose interactive touch-screens, computer games and 3-D film (all to the accompaniment of ethereal “Celtic hush”-style music), do in part provide lucid explanations of the cliffs’ evolution and wildlife, but overall form a ludicrous electronic counterpoint to the actual glories outside. All told, the best bet is to head straight past the centre and to the steps which curve upwards towards the cliff-top. Then you can opt for turning south towards Hag’s Head or in the opposite direction to O’Brien’s Tower where the latter’s viewing platform offers the best sight of the wave-battered cliffs below, enhanced by the resonant roar of the Atlantic waves pummelling the rocks at shore level. The optimum time to visit is around sunset when the heights and sea are spot-lit by the rays of the evening sun. Alternatively, you can gain a different perspective of their prodigious stature from one of the regular boat-trips run from the pier at Doolin by the companies operating ferries to the Aran Islands.