

An Oige handbook was merely "one mile from the village", the choice of an infinite number of directions being left to the imagination. We resorted to an estimated rough average of instructions obtained at various pubs which landed us at one point with our front wheels overhanging a potato-field with the driver quietly muttering 'perhaps that wasn't where they meant us to turn right!' It was with some sense of relief that we saw the Y.E.L. triangle at about 10.30 p.m. The sunset had been superb.

We had come right round the south of the Ring of Kerry from Valentia Is. and Ballinskelligs, through some of the loveliest and most varied coastal scenery. Broad, sandy bays with rocks, and unexpected little sheltered coves give way to heather and broom-covered foothills running practically to the sea; then the sea itself seems to thrust inland among fir trees and bracken, or glances through the tropical type of foliage around Parknasilla; in places the road is flanked with prolific fuchsia hedges and fiery orange sprays of nontbretia. It would be hard to find a route that concentrated so many whole vistas, and almost more striking glimpses of mountain and seascape. But this variety was one of the most attractive features of all S. Ireland. The almost desolate character of the mountains round Black Valley (outside Killarney) with panoramic views over the lakes, had an appeal quite different from Galtimore, where we stayed in the Mountain Lodge Hostel on our way across. The beauty of this area is its subtlety, the mountains are hospitable and crossed with waterfalls forming lush green dips with minutely detailed ferns and rowan trees glowing against heather. The falls were only slightly disenchanting when we found that a supposed "short-cut" from the Hostel necessitated taking off boots and socks and scrambling across trying to keep our gear as dry as possible! The Galty Mountains form a background to a broad agricultural plain, a real "Emerald Isle" valley, which is commanded by the Knockmealdown Mountain Pass, from which there is a marvellous run down the zig-zagging 'V'-road. This view could, I think, claim to rival the Vale of Tipperary, which we saw to great advantage from the tower of Cashel Abbey, a lovely ancient ruin which constituted about the only bit of sight-seeing we did on the holiday.

We altered our plan to stay at Killarney Hostel, in favour of the much more isolated Black Valley. We had originally thought of staying in Killarney to get a bath, but after a week in Ireland, that seemed a very trivial consideration. Running water was quite a luxury, and Black Valley did provide an outside tap, although we had to go to bed by candlelight. The window of our room, lacking glass, was boarded up against a gale that was blowing the night we arrived, but during the night the board blew in, bounced across the beds onto the landing. As the room was such that the beds were exactly jig-sawed in, to return the board from its position in the far top corner meant taking a deep breath and jumping for the doorway. I therefore decided that I wouldn't wake the others by attempting it - though if they could sleep with a