

# O'BRIEN'S --- TOWER



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**O'BRIEN'S TOWER** stands near the highest point of the Cliffs of Moher 214m at Knockardakin. It was built in 1835 by the landlord of the locality - Cornelius O'Brien - a descendant of the first High King of Ireland, Brian Boru and a member of the O'Brien clan. O'Brien built the tower as an observation platform for the visitors who were even then flocking to the Cliffs of Moher. The tower was originally made up of four separate sections but these have now been reduced to two with the existing archway, bearing the O'Brien crest, added later. The tower was restored in 1970 and most recently in 2008 and it is once again being used as a viewing point for the Cliffs and the Aran Islands. On a clear day the view encompasses the coast of Connemara to the north across Galway Bay and the Clare coastline to Loop Head and beyond in the south to the Kerry Mountains.

Cornelius O'Brien (1801-1857) was elected Member of Parliament for Clare in 1837 and served as an MP for 20 years. During his life he was responsible for building many local landmarks: the bridge over the Inagh River between Lahinch and Liscannor (1836), St Brigid's Well, St Brigids National School (1845) and the roadside Relievers Well, a Gothic Well house.

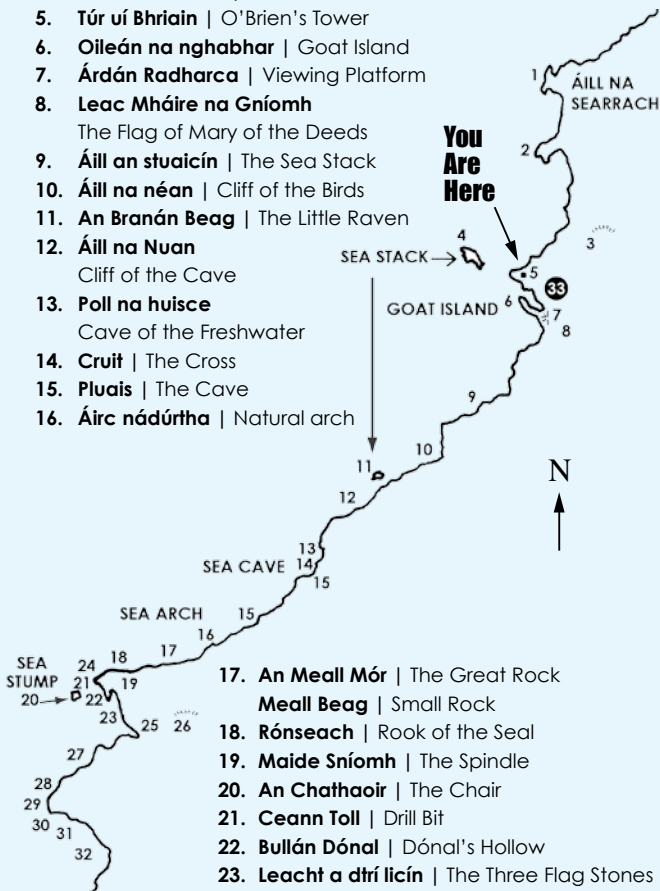


It is said that Cornelius won a bet with another landowner that he could build a wall *"six foot high and one inch thick"* over a given distance. Using the local Liscannor flagstones he claimed victory and the resulting flag fences can still be seen along the cliff edge. The flags were quickly adapted as building material as well as floor covering in farmhouses throughout the 19th century. O'Brien also put up a circular stone table for entertaining guests on the sandstone ledge of the cliff. In the locality it was said of O'Brien that 'he built everything around here except the cliffs'. He died in 1857 and his remains lie in the O'Brien Vault in the graveyard adjoining St. Brigids Well.

**Signature of  
Cornelius O'Brien**

This map marks named points of interest along the Cliffs of Moher from Áill na Searrach to beyond Hags Head. Many of these names are in the Irish language and relate to old Irish myths and legends.

1. **Áill na Searrach** | Cliff of the Foals
2. **Carraig na Trail** | Rock of the Trial
3. **Knockardakin**
4. **An branán mór** | The Great Raven
5. **Túr ú Bhriain** | O'Brien's Tower
6. **Oileán na nghabhar** | Goat Island
7. **Árdán Radharca** | Viewing Platform
8. **Leac Mháire na Gníomh**  
The Flag of Mary of the Deeds
9. **Áill an stuicín** | The Sea Stack
10. **Áill na néan** | Cliff of the Birds
11. **An Branán Beag** | The Little Raven
12. **Áill na Nuan**  
Cliff of the Cave
13. **Poll na huisce**  
Cave of the Freshwater
14. **Cruit** | The Cross
15. **Pluais** | The Cave
16. **Áirc nádúrtha** | Natural arch



17. **An Meall Mór** | The Great Rock
18. **Rónseach** | Rook of the Seal
19. **Maide Sníomh** | The Spindle
20. **An Chathaoir** | The Chair
21. **Ceann Toll** | Drill Bit
22. **Bullán Dónal** | Dónal's Hollow
23. **Leacht a dtrí licín** | The Three Flag Stones
24. **Ceann an tsean chailigh** | Hag's Head
25. **Poll Cam** | Crooked Cave
26. **Cnoc an iolair** | Hill of the Eagles
27. **Áill a' Chaoirigh** | Hill of the Sheep
28. **Colún na Géige** | Pillar of the Birdsong
29. **An Cúinne Mór** | The Great Corner
30. **Poll Gorm** | Blue Pool
31. **Carraig Mháire Chiúin** | Quiet Mary's Rock
32. **Lochan tsagairt** | The Priest's Rock
33. **Ionnad Turasóireacht** | Visitor Centre

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The area immediately north of O'Brien's Tower below Aill Na Searrach (Cliffs of the Fools) has become a world famous surf spot with the famous Aileen's wave drawing world class surfers. In certain conditions the wave can reach 60 foot and has been compared to giant waves such as "Jaws" in Maui, Hawaii. Champion surfers braving this incredible wave have featured in the movies Sea Fever and Wave Riders.


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Family name history and Cliffs of Moher gifts can be purchased in the tower shop. There is a modest charge for a tour to the exhibition on the first floor and the panoramic viewing area at the top. Help us protect our environment by "LEAVING NO TRACE" of your visit.

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## HAVE YOU BEEN TO THE VISITOR CENTRE?

Inside you will find a **Café, Restaurant, Gift Shop, Toilet Facilities, Tourist Information** and **Atlantic Edge Exhibition Area** - *the ideal way to learn more about the Cliffs!*

 Printed on recycled paper

Sketch of the Tower taken from a 1970s brochure

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### CLIFFS OF MOHER VISITOR EXPERIENCE

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