

## LAST RESORT

DINGLE  
PENINSULA

### Rocks of ages



IRELAND HAS no single, obvious choice for Land's End but in my book the ultimate is the Dingle Peninsula which points forlornly towards America.

We turned our trip to the peninsula into a search for archaeological remains. Our guidebook and local literature told us that "clochan" meant a "beehive" hut built in the manner of a dry stone wall without mortar, but cleverly shaped so that the stacked stones met at the apex of the roof and rendered a weather-proof home. We also worked out that a "gallan" is a standing stone.

In between our explorations we ended up walking a spectacular coastline where we watched gannets dive-bombing fish and seals rolling with the swell.

After five days exploring the peninsula we headed for a site on top of a hill overlooking Dingle harbour where the red Gaelic lettering on our map promised a whole collection of "oghaim" stones, representing the earliest form of written Irish. The gate into the field bore a notice, "Beware of the Bull: visitors enter at their own risk". Just as we were deliberating whether or not this was a real warning a large reddish bull with a ring through his nose appeared and blew disapprovingly at us. We tried another approach. At a second gate a local asked, "Do you know where you're going?"

"Yes but we weren't sure about the bull."

"Mmm, well the wind is in our direction so you have the advantage."

We risked it and found the hilltop littered with rounded stones each more than a metre long and each carved with series of parallel lines. Not exactly a sight to die for.

JANE WILSON-HOWARTH