**KENMARE AND SNEEM AREA STORY**

Along the southernmost edge of the Iveragh Peninsula, the Ring of Kerry skirts the peaceful,

sheltered Kenmare Bay.

This richly wooded area, brushed by the Gulf Stream and sheltered by high mountains to the

north, has an almost languorous feel. From the palms and grassy beach paths of Derrynane

National Park at the mouth of the Bay, to the thick canopies of trees along the route, from

the hedgerows of monbretia and rhododendrons to the green forested islands just off shore

–it’s no wonder some call this the Garden of Ireland.

This is great walking country, with lakes, rivers and open sea, and mountains all around –

heather and gorse covered slopes to the north, and dreamy views across the Bay to the blue

peaks of the Beara Peninsula. And it’s crowded with early history – stone circles, stone

forts, standing stones, bullaun stones and ring forts. Visitors take to the water too – on sea

Safaris out into the Atlantic, or staying in the shelter of the Bay to kayak, fish, swim and sail.

Along the Ring, half way up the Bay, tiny Sneem – whose Gaelic name means the Knot – is a

village of colourful houses and two little squares, where travellers stop for sustenance

before heading across the mountains to Killarney or continuing eastwards beside the water

to Kenmare. At a turbulent time in his life, Charles de Gaulles escaped to Sneem, where,

he said, “I was at peace with myself”.

At the head of the Bay, where the two mighty peninsulas of Iveragh and Beara meet the

edge of Killarney National Park, is Kenmare - an elegant 17th century market town – called

“Neidin” or “the nest” in Gaelic. This welcoming, lively place buzzes with 5 star hotels and

chic spas, B&Bs, smart restaurants, arty shops, cosy cafes and dozens of friendly pubs with

live traditional music sessions.

Yet – even in the cente of towns and villages along this southerly stretch of the Ring – you’re

still surrounded by nature, and only ever moments away from relaxing peace and

tranquillity.