

Kerry Camino Gets Huge Boost As International Journalists Sample The Walk

Posted by **Dermot Crean**



Pictured at the launch of Irelandways.com at the Tralee Bay Wetlands Centre on Wednesday night were, from left; Grace O'Donnell, Kerry Camino; Roland Monsegu, Irelandsways.com; Frank Hartnett, Kerry County Council; Mayor of Tralee, Jim Finucane, Ingrid Boyle, Kerry Camino; Emmett Roche, Irelandsways.com and Maria Golpe, Irelandsways.com. Photo by Dermot Crean

THERE was a fantastic boost for a local tourism attraction this week as journalists from Ireland, the UK and the US sampled the delights of the Kerry Camino.

The Kerry Camino is described as a "walk in the footsteps of St. Brendan, the Navigator, as a walker or pilgrim, on this journey of contemplation and fun".

It is held on the May Bank Holiday weekend and has grown in popularity every year as it takes in the beautiful scenery of the west Kerry peninsula, from Tralee to Dingle.

On Thursday a group of eight journalists were invited to take part in a leg of the walk from Camp to Inch and they had glorious weather to enjoy the spectacular scenery.

They also had a historical tour of Tralee on Wednesday guided by Johnnie Wall and Mike O'Donnell.

The journalists were from the Huffington Post, the Mail, Business and Finance, a video blogger and other media outlets in Ireland.

The group were brought to Kerry by Irelandways.com, a new website showcasing the many beautiful walkways in Ireland. They chose the beautiful surroundings of the Tralee Wetlands to launch the website on Wednesday evening.

We asked Ingrid Boyle, a member of the Kerry Camino group, about how this came about.

"I suppose we were kind of copying the Camino de Santiago in Spain," she said. "Thousands of people do that walk every year so I suppose we hoped they'd use our Camino as a warm-up. So I googled it and the website that kept coming up was Caminoways.com," she said.

Ingrid started liking and sharing their posts on social media and the people who run the company took notice. They contacted Ingrid to find out that the Kerry Camino was about. By chance, Ingrid was in Dublin back in February and called into their offices.

Coincidentally, they were in the process of creating a new website based around Irish walkways and thought the Kerry Camino would tie in nicely with the launch and would be ideal to bring journalists down to see it.

"They are advertising our walk on their new website which will bring more people down. We feel it's a fabulous walk and not enough people sample it," said Ingrid.

Mayor of Tralee, Jim Finucane, said it was an exciting development for local tourism.

"It's letting people explore what we have to offer. I believe these type of walking holidays are critical to the future. There's a great health benefit to it and it allows people to relax and clear their thoughts in the open. We have the magnificent scenery from here to Dingle. They're the ideal tourists – people who stay and explore and refer other people to the area," said Mayor Finucane.

The group received huge support from Kerry County Council and Tralee Chamber Alliance who were hosting the journalists during their stay.

"We're supporting the Camino in any way we can," said Frank Hartnett of Kerry County Council. "We've arranged for the erection of new signage to guide people out along the way and also we intend to upgrade the walkway in places. It showcases Tralee, as well as the Wetlands here which is a wonderful facility," said Mr Hartnett.