

Bloody Bridge



Although the name **Bloody Bridge** evokes images of battles fought on this site, it is not known how

this wild coastal area derived its evocative name.

Various authorities will attribute it to a massacre in the area about the time of the 1641 Rebellion after which the stream is said to have run red for two days. (An historic old bridge stands across the road from the car park a short distance upstream of the present road bridge).

This is a popular starting point for walkers trekking along the **'Brandy Pad'**, a route taken by former smugglers intent on evading the coastguard or revenue men with contraband, mainly from the Isle of Man, brought ashore and transported on ponies across the mountains to the Hare's Gap, and then onto Hilltown to be distributed further a field.

Grid point Reference: J 389272

Maggie's Leap

Nearby 'Maggie's Leap' is an impressive chasm cut into the rock by the crashing waves of Dundrum Bay, but unfortunately not accessible from the land.

It is said that a young local girl named Maggie leapt from one side of the chasm to the other as she was being pursued by a suitor (or a soldier, or a bull, or a witch, depending on which version of the tale you care to believe). Maggie was carrying a basket of eggs when she performed the jump, but not one of the eggs was broken.

Widows Row

On 13 January 1843, boats from Newcastle and Lower Mourne set out for the usual fishing stations, and were caught in a gale. 76 men perished, 46 of whom were from Newcastle. They left 27 widows, 118 children, and 21 dependents. A Public Subscription was raised and cottages were built for the widows and dependants. The cottages are known as Widows Row. A local song about the disaster says "Newcastle town is one long street entirely stripped of men".

Newcastle

The name of the town refers to a castle (demolished in the 18th century) belonging to the Magennis family, which stood at the mouth of the Shimna River. Originally Newcastle was a fishing village and then used for the export of granite, with cut stone brought on rails straight to the harbour in small trucks, on what were known as "bogie lines". During the Victorian and Edwardian era Newcastle burgeoned as a resort when the railway brought increasing numbers of people to sample the delights of the hotels, the golf course, the promenade and the beach. Newcastle has been made famous in song by Percy French as the place where 'the mountains of Mourne sweep down to the sea'.

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Heritage Made Easy...

'Booley Huts' were small huts constructed of stone and earth in which people lived in the summer months while their cattle grazed on pastures in the High Mournes.

A **Cashel** is similar to a rath. They are early circular farmsteads which used stone walls instead of earthen banks.

A **Clachán** is a cluster of small cottages of farmers and / or fishermen, invariably found on poorer land.

A **Crannóg** is an ancient natural or artificial island constructed of timber and stone in lakes used as a settlement.

Raths, also known as **Ringforts** are circular farmsteads from the early Christian period enclosed by an earthen bank.

Dolmens are early Neolithic or 'New Stone Age' burial chambers dating from the period 4000 to 3000 BC. They usually consist of three or more upright stone slabs (megaliths) supporting a large flat horizontal capstone (table). Dolmens were usually covered with earth or smaller stones to form a burial mound though in many cases that covering has weathered away.

Souterrain (from French 'sous terrain', meaning 'under ground') is an underground chamber or passage used mainly as a refuge and for storage in the Early Christian period.

A **keep** is a strong central tower which is used as a dungeon or a fortress.

Narrow Water Castle

There has been a keep on the site of Narrow Water since 1212, originally built by Hugh de Lacy, first Earl of Ulster as part of the Norman fortifications designed to prevent attacks on Newry via the river. The original was destroyed in the 1641 Rebellion.

Access can be gained to the castle in July and August. Check Northern Ireland Environment Agency website for further information.

Across the dual carriage way is one of the grandest houses in Ireland, also known as Narrow Water Castle.

Grid point Reference: J 125193

Greencastle

Built in the 13th century by the Anglo-Normans under John de Courcy, Greencastle has a colourful past. It was taken by Edward the Bruce, brother of Robert the Bruce in 1316, attacked at least twice by the Irish in late 14th century and maintained as a garrison up to 1590. Greencastle was famous for its **fair days**, considered one of the great Gaelic Fairs attended by traders from all parts of Europe. *'...every road was black with people, hastening thither, and the sea too, was dotted with boats, yawls, and yachts, bringing people from the Louth shore'*.

Access can be gained to the castle in July and August.

Check Northern Ireland Environment Agency website for further information.

Grid point Reference: J 247119

Kilkeel

The 'capital' of the ancient Kingdom of Mourne, Kilkeel takes its name from the old church overlooking the town, St. Coleman Del Mourne, and can be translated as 'Church of the Narrow'.

Kilkeel began to take shape as a modern settlement in the late 18th / early 19th century when Viscount Kilmorey laid out the Square and established a church, meeting house, market house and hotel. By the 20th century it was established as one of Ireland's foremost fishing ports, and the incoming and outgoing trawlers are still colourful daily sights.

Hanna's Close

Hanna's Close is a cluster type settlement or 'clachán' of eight restored cottages with lanes, steps and paths maintained as they had evolved over several centuries. This type of settlement pattern was the norm in late medieval Ireland but was gradually replaced by scattered individual farms as enclosures progressed from 1650 onwards. Many townlands in all parts of Ireland were once held in common by one or more groups of families who lived in house-clusters (clachans).

Grid point Reference: J 313164

The Silent Valley

The Silent Valley reservoir is one of Northern Ireland's 'must see' visitor attractions. Along with Ben Crom, the reservoirs supply approximately 400,000 people a day across most of County Down and a large part of Belfast, with up to 30 million gallons (130 million litres) of water.

These beautiful stretches of water are encircled by the dramatic peaks of the high Mournes and were built at the turn of the 19th century to cater for Belfast's rapidly growing population and sudden industrialisation. Now a tranquil place to visit, the area was a hive of activity during the construction with an entire settlement 'Watertown' temporarily built with its own cinema, shops, and policeman (called Constable Lawless!) and the first electric street lighting anywhere in Ireland .

Grid point Reference: J 310205 (Entrance Gate)

The famous **Mourne Wall**, a listed monument, defines the boundary of a 9,000 acre water catchment area stretching 22 miles and running over the highest peaks of the Mournes. It took 18 years to build (1904-22) and is said to be 'a monument to the skill of the men who built it'. The wall is best seen on the side of Slieve Binnian when driving along the Head Road.

Annalong

Annalong is a small village set against the stunning panorama of the Mourne Mountains, with its name derived from the gaelic *Ath na Long* - 'The Ford of the Ships'. The harbour dating from the early 1800's is one of Ireland's most picturesque. In later years it was the home port of a fleet of schooners carrying granite to English cities and importing coal and other materials used to build the nearby dam at the Silent Valley.

Grid point Reference: J 375198 (Commill)

Tory Bush / Moneyscalp Carpark

Tory Bush, at the junction of the Slievenaman road and Tullyree road, is located close to the modern cottages of the same name. The Tory Bush was so-called because of its reputation as a hideout for bands of Irish outlaws or 'Tories' who roamed the countryside during the Cromwellian period. It is believed that Redmond O'Hanlon, one of the most famous Tories of south Ulster, sought shelter here up to the time of his capture at Eightmilebridge (now Hilltown) in April 1681.

Grid point Reference: J 319323

Bryansford Gate & Follies

Along the Bryansford Road are number of constructions know as follies. Follies fall within the general realm of fanciful and impractical architecture originating as decorative accents in parks and estates. A distinctive granite gothic gate with flanking screens, dated 1786 and known as the Bryansford Gate, is located at the exit of Tollymore Forest Park on the outskirts of the picturesque village.

Grid point Reference: J 345328 (Bryansford Gate)

Leitrim Lodge Car Park

Altataggart (The Hill of the Priest).

In the hills of the townland of Leitrim, parish of Clonduff, is Altataggart mass rock where mass was secretly celebrated during the period of the Penal Laws. Introduced into Ireland from 1695, these laws sought to restrict Catholics and Protestants dissenters in favour of the established Church of Ireland. Sites like Altataggart were used across Mourne for religious worship and education for the best part of a century until the Penal Laws began to be repealed in the late 18th century.

Grid point Reference: J 224257

Rostrevor

Towards the middle of the eighteenth century appreciation of nature became fashionable as the Landed gentry found virtue in the mountain air, and sea-bathing. **Rostrevor** with its old castle and demesnes offered a picturesque setting, now recognised by the designation of a Conservation

Area, centered on the Square.

Saint Bronach's Bell is the subject of a well-known Irish legend of a mysterious, invisible bell that rang in nearby Kilbroney churchyard. For many years the inhabitants attributed the ringing to a supernatural origin. In 1795, a storm ripped down an old oak tree near Old Kilbroney Church, and in its branches was found a 9th-century bell. It seems that the bell was hidden during the Reformation to prevent its removal or destruction. Having served in Old St. Mary's Church, Newry it was returned to the parish of Kilbroney in 1885 and can now be seen in St. Mary's Star of the Sea Roman Catholic Church, Rostrevor. A shrine dedicated to St. Bronach is located in Kilbroney graveyard.

Cloughmore Stone

"Big Stone"
Local legend has it that Finn McCool lived on Slieve Foy or "Giant's Mountain", across Carlingford Lough. Finn's enemy was a Scottish giant known as Ruiscaire "The Giant of Ice and Winter" and also "The Thrasher", as he was renowned for carrying a club. The story goes that after Ruiscaire had taken up residence in the hills above Rostrevor the warriors fought for the best part of a week, before Finn with all his might hurled the big stone across the lough and it landed on Ruiscaire, crushing his great body into the mountain where it melted away like ice beneath the stone. It is said the outline of Finn McCool's face can be seen on the top of Slieve Foy.

To this day "Cloughmor" rests on a relatively flat area on the side of Slieve Meen overlooking the village of Rostrevor.

Grid point reference: J 189174

Warrenpoint

Warrenpoint is a relatively recent town rising to prominence in the Victorian era as a seaside resort made accessible by the coming of the railways. The town was centered upon the Square and the old town dock.

As it grew as a resort town Warrenpoint was carefully planned with a well laid out network of wide streets, neat Victorian terraces, a public park and a promenade where visitors and those who could not afford gardens could enjoy the open space and sea views.

The SS Great Britain

The SS Great Britain, one of the first iron ships and designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel, was on its way from Liverpool to New York in 1846 when it ran aground during bad weather in Dundrum Bay. The captain, the St John's Point lighthouse for another lighthouse and was unable to change course in time to avert the calamity. It took a year to re-float the ship, under Brunel's personal guidance, and after years of misadventure the steamer's speed, and with poor charts, mistook electrical power, the number of mills dependent on water divided insufficient water to run the mills in Banbridge. With the advent of exceptional drought at the height of Ulster's linen boom left originally designed to regulate water levels in the River Ban, after an

run around during bad weather in Dundrum Bay. The captain, Brunel, was on its way from Liverpool to New York in 1846 when it ships and designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel, one of the first iron ships and designed by Isambard Kingdom

1177 by John de Courcy, following his invasion of Ulster.

Leade to the east. The site of the castle was probably occupied as Dundrum Bay, the Mourne Mountains, Slieve Croob and the plains of Dundrum Bay, the Mourne Mountains, Slieve Croob and the plains of rocky hill with commanding views over

Dundrum Castle stands on the top of a Located about 3 miles north west of Leitrim

environment and coast.

geology, archaeology, wildlife, folklore as well as explore an exceptional countryside rich in one loop or in sections. It offers a chance to The (approx.) 100 mile route can be enjoyed as

outstanding landscape.

while enjoying the distinctve character of the help visitors explore the rich heritage of the

Heritage Trail. This leaflet provides a guide to Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Scenic

General Introduction



Grid point Reference: J 290345

Flooded valley forming the reservoir. There is evidence of the existence of a crannog in the mills in Banbridge and the reservoir is used solely as a domestic water supply. Today there are no working from approximately thirty to six by 1960. Today there are no working electrical power, the number of mills dependent on water divided insufficient water to run the mills in Banbridge. With the advent of exceptional drought at the height of Ulster's linen boom left originally designed to regulate water levels in the River Ban, after an

Lough Island Reavy

Lough Island Reavy is a small reservoir built near Killoco in 1837. It was

occurred here in 1954.

of an apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which reportedly

Across the road from the car park is a small shrine marking the site of an apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which reportedly population pressure prior to the great famine of 1845-49.

cultivation of potatoes and other vegetables at a time of great 'lazybeds' which were raised ridges, 2 to 8 feet wide, used for the and Slieve Gullion further south. Here can be seen many examples

panoramic view of the Mournes along with the Cooley Mountains village, this is one of the best places from which to enjoy a

Located about 3 miles north west of Leitrim

for a cave.

Finn's Souterrain is known locally as 'Binder's

during times of strife. In Ireland souterrains are often found inside or in close proximity to a ringfort, however there is no trace of a

Binder's Cove was probably used as a food store or hiding place

Situated in the foothills of Slieve Croob,

approximately 8 miles north west of Castwellan,

the full expanse of the Mourne Mountains.

AONB Management and Mourne Sense

The designation of Mourne as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) brings with it a commitment to safeguard the natural beauty, wildlife and historic heritage of the area whilst promoting its enjoyment by the public. Mourne Heritage Trust provides AONB management. For further information please see our website www.mournelive.com

The Mournes is also a 'working landscape' from which people derive a livelihood. Thoughtless behaviour causes problems for farmers, local residents and visitors. Using a little Mourne sense helps everybody to enjoy the area with minimum disruption. Please,

- Park sensibly
- Leave gates, wall and fences as you found them
- Take your litter home
- Keep dogs under control
- Be careful with fire

Contact Details
Mourne Heritage Trust
87 Central Promenade, Newcastle, Co. Down
Tel: 028 4372 4059
email: mht@mourne.co.uk
www.mournelive.com



Some say the name 'Happy Valley' originated from the latter half of the 19th century when Cornish miners echoed through the valley as they searched for silver and lead (without success). From here you can see the Head of Cultivation Wall. This will marks the former boundary of arable land and mountain pasture, although there is little arable farming left in the area.

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Happy Valley Car Park

Grid point Reference: J 261213

known as transhumance or 'booleying' locally. and then brought down again at the end of September, a practice would have been taken here to graze pastures in the summer months Low Mournes (which drain into Carlingford Lough). In the past cattle Deer's Meadow delimits the geological divide between the Eastern or supply of water for the many mills along the River Ban.

Once the grazing ground for Irish red deer, part of Deer's Meadow was flooded to create Splega dam, completed in 1957, to maintain a

near Newcastle, across the Brandy Pad to the Hare's Gap.

their contraband here having transported it on ponies from the coast is perhaps a legacy from 18th century smugglers who shared out Today there are seven public houses on Hilltown's main street. This the village in 1766 to provide employment in the linen industry.

and one of the largest land owners in County Down. Hill developed member of the powerful Downshire family This area was re-named after Lord Hill, a

Hilltown was originally known as 'Eight Mile

Hilltown

Maghera Church & Round Tower

Since its foundation in the 6th century this monastic site has been associated with St. Donard (Domongart), after whom Slieve Donard, the highest peak in the Mournes, has been named. The ruins of the medieval church and burial ground surrounded by an ancient rath remain. Nearby are the remnants of Maghera round tower. Built about the early 10th century, this once impressive structure (approximately 90 ft. high) was blown down in a storm in the early 1700's.

Please be aware this site is an active place of worship. Please treat with respect.

Grid point Reference: J 372341

Castlewellan

Castlewellan is an 18th century planned town. Its development was linked to the linen industry and it was also famous for its Fair Days especially the Hiring and May Fairs. The planned town centre, now a Conservation Area, was designed by a French architect for the Annesley family. The street plan is unusual within Ireland having two hexagonal tree lined squares as well houses that were not of a uniform style because the sites were sold off to individual owners to build as they pleased.

Dolly's Brae

Dolly's Brae was the scene of one of the most noted sectarian affrays of its time in Ulster. On the evening of 12th July 1849, a 'serious collision' took place between Rathfriland and District Orangemen and a group of locals assembled on nearby Magheramayo mountain to oppose the Orange parade. Several lives were lost and a number of houses destroyed. It is believed that Dolly's Brae was named after a local woman whose son perished there in an earlier sectarian clash about 1815.

Grid point Reference: J 311370

