



# Scenic Drive

*Narrow Water Castle*

Stunning beauty and contrasting landscapes, charming villages and bustling towns. You are invited to experience the many different aspects of our area. With some of the most dramatic and picturesque scenery in Ireland.

The following section offers some suggested routes for general touring in the area. For further details you should contact the nearest Tourist Information Centre.



Strangford Lough

### Newry through to The Ring of Gullion

Visit Bessbrook – The Model Village and Derrymore House, a national trust property. Drive through Camlough and along Camlough Lake to Aras an Chairdineil O'Fiaich (*Heritage Centre*) in Cullyhanna and enjoy hearing about the life and times of the late Cardinal Thomas O'Fiaich.

Visit Creggan Parish Churchyard and Graveyard where some of the most famous poets of South Armagh are buried including the O'Neill's. Whilst in the area why not take in some fishing at Lough Ross. Lunch can be enjoyed in Crossmaglen, where you can choose from either a meal or a quick snack in a range of establishments.

Visit Ti Chulainn Cultural Activity Centre in Mullaghbane, which is a centre rich in traditional music, song and dance, Irish language, drama, literature, etc.

Continue through the Ring of Gullion, which is designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), to the Slieve Gullion Courtyard and Forest Park. Here you can enjoy a leisurely stroll through the gardens of Slieve Gullion, or for the more enthusiastic, you can take a walk to the top of the mountain and view the magnificent scenery of South Armagh, as well as viewing the Passage Graves, Dolmens and Volcanic Lake at the top of the Mountain walk.

### Newry through to The Mournes

From Newry follow A2 dual carriageway to Warrenpoint, a busy port and seaside resort and one of the best-planned towns in Ireland, built on a grid system by the landlords of Narrow Water. On the approach to the town, Narrow Water Keep guards the Water of Carlingford Lough and was originally built in 1212 by Hugh deLacy, Earl of Ulster. Narrow Water Castle is picturesquely and strategically sited on a promontory in the Newry River. The Tower-house and bawn

were built in the 1560s at a cost of £361 4s 2d for an English garrison, but later in that century it was in the hands of the Gaelic Magennis family.

Other points of interest in the Warrenpoint area include Clonallon Church, built on the site of Saint Dallan's 6th Century Monastic Settlement, and the stone of destiny or Coronation stone of the Magennis Clan.

Following the A2 Coast route from Warrenpoint in an easterly direction you will pass the Ross monument, erected to honour General Robert Ross in 1826 to celebrate his victory over America Farles in Bladensburg in 1814.

Rostrevor has been described as "the sweetest little watering hole to be found in the three kingdoms and one of the most beautiful spots in Ireland" (*Murray's Handbook 1896*). Kilbroney Park in Rostrevor is situated at the foot of Rostrevor Forest. The park offers vast areas of open space, caravan and camping facilities, riverside walks and picnic areas. Cill Bronagh (the 'Church of Bronagh') stands in Kilbroney Graveyard on the B25 Hilltown Road, about half a mile outside of Rostrevor.

Between Rostrevor and Kilkeel, Greencastle is a good example of the numerous strongholds erected in Ireland by the Anglo Normans around the middle of the 13th century. Whilst in the area why not take a stroll along the award winning Blue Flag Beach at Cranfield.

Kilkeel's Harbour boasts the largest fishing fleet in Ireland. The port is a hive of activity and the Nautilus Centre is well worth visiting.

Annalong was home to a fleet of more than thirty schooners, which carried granite and potatoes to the western ports of Britain. Beside its intimate harbour stands Annalong Cornmill, which was built in the 1800's and still welcomes visitors today.

On the main coast road between Annalong and Kilkeel, follow the signs for the Silent Valley. The Dam was built at the beginning of the 20th Century and provides up to 30 million gallons of water per day. Attractive parkland and forest walks provide access to the dams of the Silent Valley and Crom Reservoirs. The reservoir grounds contain the parkland, lakes and ponds that were part of the original landscape design. Most of these areas are open to the public. Today you can enjoy splendid mountain scenery, woodland walks and a range of facilities including an exhibition centre and restaurant. The story of how the dam was built continues to fascinate visitors to the Silent Valley.

From Silent Valley, follow the road through Deers Meadow via Spelga Dam to Hilltown. Originally known as the eight-mile bridge, the town was named Hilltown by the Marquis of Downshire in 1765. The smuggling of brandy and spirits from the coast along 'the brandy path' was a local pastime and Hilltown was the favourite distribution point.

Just 2 miles from Hilltown on the on the B8 Hilltown to Castlewellan Road, is Goward Dolmen. The top stone measures 13ft by 10ft by 5ft and it covers a single chamber.

### Strangford Lough and Lecale District

Start this tour in Killyleagh where the castle is the last in Ulster to be continually occupied for the past three decades. Just outside Killyleagh on A22 you pass Delamont Country Park, then you are travelling along the banks of the River Quoile before reaching Downpatrick. A busy town with many places of interest including The Saint Patrick Centre, the Grave of St Patrick next to the Down Cathedral, the County Gaol in the Down County Museum and the Downpatrick Race Course. Heading east from Downpatrick and on the other side of the River Quoile



St Patrick's Church

## Scenic Drive

you will see where St Patrick built his first church in Ireland. Around the coast, lies the picture postcard village of Strangford. It has good restaurants and pubs, and a cosy harbour from where the ferry to Portaferry departs on the hour and half-hour. Heading along the coast towards Ardglass look out for a small car park (2 miles from Strangford) from where you can see the seals basking on the rocks below. It is 8 miles from Strangford to Ardglass, one of Northern Ireland's three major fishing ports. Seven castles, a marina and golf course make Ardglass well worth a stop. 3 miles along the coast is the very elegant village of Killough with its charming sycamore lined street. Further along you come to the magnificent, award-winning blue flag beach of Tyrella. The area enclosed by Downpatrick, Strangford, Ardglass and Tyrella is known as the Lecale District made famous by Van Morrison in his song Coney Island, which, incidentally is a headline between Ardglass and Killough.

### Mournes Sweep Down to the Sea

One of the most astonishing views of the Mourne Mountains is from Tyrella Beach. From here the Mournes really do look like they are tumbling into the Irish Sea. Follow winding roads 4 miles through Drumlin country to Clough (good example of Motte and Bailey) then through Dundrum, 3 miles. The sand dunes at Dundrum are among the highest in Europe. This is also home to the famous Dundrum Bay Oysters. 4 miles south and welcome to one of Northern Ireland's most famous seaside resorts, Newcastle. Great for families, ramblers, rock climbers, water sports enthusiasts and golf fanatics. Enjoy a stroll along Newcastle's award winning Promenade. This is the start of the Mournes Coastal Scenic Drive, which passes Bloody Bridge and Maggie's Leap en route to the charming fishing village of Annalong, 7 miles, with its old corn water mill back in action. Continue along the coast a further 5 miles to the bigger fishing port of Kilkeel where Northern Ireland's biggest trawling fleet is based. Visit the Nautilus Centre overlooking the

harbour. Skirting the Mournes for 8 miles more you are now on the north shore of beautiful Carlingford Lough. On entering Rostrevor you will pass one of the most ancient woodlands in Ireland, Oak Forest. Boat trips and pleasant waterfront walks at Rostrevor. 2 miles west lies Warrenpoint, another fantastic family orientated seaside resort. Look out for Narrow Water Castle, which stands guard at the entrance to Newry Canal, the oldest in the British Isles. 8 miles from Warrenpoint, along a sweeping dual carriageway lies the bustling border City of Newry, providing a gateway between north and south. Newry is surrounded by magnificent scenery, mountains and coastline. Steeped in fascinating history and heritage with excellent shopping and leisure facilities, Newry offers a warm welcome.

Newcastle

