



Walking

The Mourne

Whether a leisurely or serious walker, the Down, Newry and Mourne region is for you. With a wide range of terrain you can choose to explore forests, coastline, mountains or valleys. But a must for any walker has to be to lose themselves in the breathtaking views of natural beauty for which the region is renowned, from the famous Mountains of Mourne to the Ring of Gullion.



Strandford Lough

Listed below are some of the many waymarked lowland and coastal walks in the Down, Newry & Mourne areas. Also available are Forestry and National Trust walks together with routes through the high Mournes. Brochures, route maps and details of these guided walks and Walking Festivals in the area can be obtained from the Tourist Information Centres.

Annalong Coastal Path

Distance: 1 mile

Duration: 1/2 hour,

Rating: Easy Family walk

Annalong is a fishing village 12 km south of Newcastle on the A2. At the north end of the village there are signposts, which give directions to the Marine Park and Cornmill. The Walk starts from the Marine Park and explores the coast northwards.

Ballyhornan

Distance: Approx 6 miles, 10 kms.

Duration: Approx 3 hours

Starting point: Car park on Killard Road, Ballyhornan. This path runs along the Irish Sea coast from Ballyhornan to Ardtole, near Ardglass and forms part of the Ulster Way.

Ballylough, Castlewellan

Distance: Approx 2.2miles, 3.5 kms.

Duration: Approx 1 hour.

Starting point: Ballylough Road, Annsborough Village. A stroll alongside water offers a tranquil outdoor experience to the walker.

Blue Lough

Distance: 5 miles, Height gain 180m,

Duration: 2.5 hrs,

Rating: Easy family walk.

This walk provides an easy introduction to the mountains of Mourne giving a mountain atmosphere whilst following gentle gradients and making use of distinct tracks and pathways. Strong footwear is recommended.

Burrenreagh, Castlewellan

Distance: Approx 5.8 miles, 10 kms.

Duration: Approx 2 ½ hours.

Starting point: Lower Square, Castlewellan.

For outstanding views of Castlewellan, the surrounding countryside and the Irish Sea.

Cnocafeola Wood

Distance: 1 ¼ mile, Height gain 50m,

Duration: 1hr,

Rating: Easy Family Walk

Cnocafeola Wood is a pine forest 8km north of Kilkeel on the B27. It can be reached from the northern Mournes, also via the B27, and is some 4km south of Spelga Dam.

Cranfield, Greencastle, Mill Bay

Distance: 5 miles

Duration: 3 hrs

Rating: Easy

Starting point: At Cranfield and follows the shore west from the holiday centre of Cranfield to the village of Greencastle

Drumee, Castlewellan

Distance: Approx 5.8 miles, 10 kms.

Duration: Approx 2 ½ hours.

Starting point: Car Park, Upper Square, Castlewellan. This network of paths formed part of an intricate transport system connecting the settlements of Castlewellan, Annsborough, Maghera, Dundrum, Bryansford and Newcastle.

Kilclief/ Glebe

Distance: Approx 3.1 miles, 5 kms,

Approx 1 ½ hours

Starting point: Car park opposite Kilclief Castle. The walk begins at Kilclief Castle. Built before 1440, this is the earliest known tower house in County Down.

Killough

Distance: Approx 4 miles, 6.4 kms.

Duration: Approx 2 ½ hours

Starting point: Scordin Car Park and picnic

site. This walk follows a beautiful stretch of County Down coast, from Killough village to St John's Point Lighthouse.

Lecale Way

A 65 km waymarked route that extends from the shores of Strangford Lough through the Lecale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to the seaside resort of Newcastle.

Lough Shannagh

Distance: 5.5 miles, Height gain 210m,

Duration: 3.5 hrs,

Rating: Easy.

The approach to Lough Shannagh is from a discreet car park in the B27, 7km north of Kilkeel on east side of the road. A track locally known as The Banns Road leads to the hills.

Mourne Way

Distance: Approx 58km

The Mourne Way is almost entirely off-road and traverses the foothills of the high Mournes in the north and along the western Mournes to reach to foot of Slieve Martin and Rostrevor in the south. The complete route is located within the Mourne Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Newcastle Challenge Trail

The Challenge Trail is a 44km waymarked long-distance walking route through the Mourne Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Within this small geographical area there is a wealth of different landscapes to explore, with views out over the Irish Sea and across the Mountains. You can undertake this route as a 'challenge walk' in one day, but you don't have to, as the 5 sections can be equally enjoyed over a number of days.



Newry Canal Way

This is a 32 km route that follows the towpath of the now disused Newry Canal, Britain's first summit level canal from Portadown to Newry, passing through 14 lock gates and the villages of Scarva, Poyntzpass and Jerrettspass.

Rocky Mountain

Distance: 7 miles,

Duration: 4 hrs approx,

Rating: Moderate, some rough ground and steep hills.

An outlying dome of the Mountains of Mourne, the walk can include a stretch of the Ulster Way and an ascent of Tievadockaragh.

Silent Valley

Distance: 1 1/2 mile,

Duration: 1hr,

Rating: Easy family walk

This is a 1.5 mile circular walk through the Kilkeel River Valley. The trail is level with an all weather surface with no steps or steep inclines and interpretation panels along the trail will give you information on the wildlife and landscape that surrounds you. Normal entrance charges to Silent Valley apply. The Silent Valley is sign posted for drivers travelling south from Newcastle, and North from Kilkeel.

Slieve Binnian

Distance: 7 miles, Height gain 747m,

Duration: 3.5 hrs, Terrain Good tracks on the lower ground and some good hill paths. The Carrick Little car park is at the junction of the Head Road and Oldtown Road near Annalong. Slieve Binnian has a very rugged crest of Rocky tors, which makes it easy to identify in view around the Mountains of Mourne.

Slieve Gullion

Distance: 8 miles,

Duration: 4 hrs,

Terrain Minor roads, rugged moorland and forest tracks. Leave the car park at Slieve Gullion forest Park and follow the road marked exit. Walk down to a crossroads and turn left.

Slieve Martin

Distance: 2 1/4 miles,

Duration: 2 hrs,

Rating: Moderate family walks. The Walk begins at the high car park on the Rostrevor Forest Drive. Kilbroney Park, adjacent to the entrance to the forest drive provides opportunities for walks, recreation and refreshments and overnight stays at the caravan and campsite.

St Patrick's Way

This area is steeped in history and was

the home of the early Christian Church in Ireland founded by St Patrick when he landed at the mouth of the River Slaney near Raholp. St Patrick's Way can be walked by three different routes and the starting point for all is from the Red Post Box in the hamlet of Raholp.

Route 1: **Distance:** approx 2.5 miles/4 kms.

Duration: Approx 1 and quarter hours.

Route 2: **Distance:** approx 6 miles/9.6 kms.

Duration: Approx 2 and quarter hours.

Route 3: **Distance:** approx 7 miles/ 11.2

kms. **Duration:** Approx 2 and half hours.

The Fairy Glen, Rostrevor and Kilbroney Park

Distance: 1 mile,

Duration: 0.5 hrs,

Rating: Easy

From the centre of Rostrevor Village, go down Bridge Street. The Fairy Glen is on the left immediately after the bridge beside the entrance to Kilbroney Park.

The Granite Trail

In 1824 John Lynn opened a quarry on Millstone Mountain and laid a mineral railway line to King Street. By 1859 the railway was diverted to the more productive quarry on Thomas's Mountain and the Granite Trail follows the route of this funicular railway, known locally as the Bogie Line. Along the route of the Trail there are stunning views out over Newcastle Town and harbour and a diversity of natural habitats. There are also artefacts along the route with information panels explaining more about the route. The Granite Trail to Thomas's Mountain is just over 1100 metres long but because of the steep rise you should allow approximately 1 1/2 hours to complete this stage. An optional return route is available via Donard Wood and Glen River Track.

The Poets Trail (Ballykeel Loop)

Distance: 8 miles

Duration: 3 hrs,

Rating: Mainly minor country roads with moderately steep hills – a small section of Cowan's Road, a disused lane, may get muddy. Park at the Ti Chulainn Cultural Activity Centre in Mullaghbane. The walk follows a country lane and minor roads in the outstandingly beautiful Ring of Gullion where you can follow the life and times of the poets in South Armagh.

The Poets' Trail (Forkhill Loop)

Distance: 6 miles,

Duration: 3hrs,

Rating: Easy

Follow signs out of Newry for Dundalk, at first roundabout take second turn towards Forkhill. At Forkhill, turn left over bridge and park along Main Street. The walk starts at the Welcome Inn, Forkhill.

The Poets' Trail (The Creggan Loop)

Distance: 8 miles

Duration: 3.5 hrs,

Rating: Easy

Follow signs out of Newry for Camlough, then follow signs for Crossmaglen. Continue towards Crossmaglen until you reach a sign for Creggan. Turn Left and continue for approximately 250 yards until you reach Creggan Parish Church on the right hand side.

The Quoile river- Jane's Shore

Distance: Approx 2.2 miles,

Duration: 3.5 kms. Approx 1 hour.

Starting point: Lay by/ picnic site on the Quoile Road. Taking a walk along this route today, it is difficult to imagine that before 1957 the Quoile was tidal.

The Ring of Gullion Way Marked Way

This is a 57km route in and around the spectacular volcanic landscape of South Armagh and the Ring of Gullion's area of outstanding natural beauty. This route offers the walker the chance to explore the exceptional countryside, rich in geology, archaeology, wildlife and folklore. With stunning views throughout, it transverses typical mountain habits of dry gorse, heathlands, blanket bogs and forests.

Ulster Way – Rostrevor to the Deer's Meadow

Distance: 12.5 miles, Height gain 680m,

Duration: 8 hrs,

Rating: Strenuous

The car park in Kilbroney Park, Rostrevor is the starting point for the walk. There is ample parking space and the opportunity for refreshments and family recreation. The Ulster Way is well waymarked for much of the journey through the Mournes. Look for the distinctive wooden posts with orange arrows and often the walking man symbol.

Guided Walking

Mourne Heritage Trust

87 Central Promenade Newcastle

t: 028 4372 4059

f: 028 4372 6493

e: mht@mourne.co.uk

w: www.mournelive.com

Northern Walking

C/O 61 Leyland Road, Ballycastle, BT54 6EU

m: 077 0799 4600

e: walk@northernwalking.com

w: www.northernwalking.com

Guided walks around the Mournes, Strangford Lough and Newcastle. All Year round. Various locations.

Walking

Outdoor Ireland North

Loretto Coyle MLC, 14 Shimnavale,
Newcastle, BT33 0EF

t: 028 4372 5191 m: 0797 3408 056

e: loretto@outdoorirelandnorth.co.uk

w: www.outdoorirelandnorth.co.uk

Qualified Mountain Leader and Blue Badge Tourist Guide, who takes guided walks, hikes in the Mourne Mountains and the countryside of County Down. Easy to moderate family walks, easy to challenging hikes for individuals and groups and navigation training. Available All year. Based in Newcastle. Guided walks meeting point at Donard car park, Newcastle.

Treasure Trails

67 Kingsway Drive, Portadown, Co Armagh,
BT62 3DX

t: 028 3833 6266 m: 079 8085 9028

e: nisouth@treasuretrails.co.uk

w: www.treasuretrails.co.uk

Treasure trails provides walking and driving experiences across Armagh and Down, the aim of which is to get people out and about

exploring, learning and having fun. Trailers complete a walking Murder Mystery Trail, walking Mystery Treasure Hunt or driving Spy Trail in their own time and at their own pace, following our directions around the historic and scenic sights of the location. Each Trail has clues to solve and the answer to each clue is a name that you have to find on a plaque, monuments, war memorial, church etc. Once Trailers have found the name that person is innocent and can be eliminated from the list of suspects. Once the Trail has been completed, Trailers can enter the correct answer online for a chance to win a cash prize. Each trail costs £5.00

Walks in the Mournes

Domnall McComish,
15 Slieve Shannagh Park,
Newcastle, BT33 0HW

t: 028 4372 5143 m: 07855 425 778

e: domnall.mccomish@btinternet.com

w: www.walksinthemournes.co.uk

Guided walks to suit individuals or groups. Learn how to navigate in the Mourne

Mountains. All year round guided walks. Guided walks pick-up point at Donard Park, Newcastle.

Wee Binnian Walking Club

Ms. Ann McArdle

t: 028 9064 1917

e: weebinnians@eircom.net

w: www.weebinnians.com

The Wee Binnian Walkers are a Newry based hill walking group started in 1987 as a direct result of the Northern Ireland "Change of Heart" coronary prevention programme. Founded by Veronica McCann, a lifestyle tutor with the programme, the group which began with 11 women and evolved in a very gradual way over the early years. However as a result of publicity from various initiatives and a pro-active recruiting strategy the attendance never went below the initial 11 and eventually by 1994 had grown to 60 plus. They were the very first group to host a walking festival in Northern Ireland and still are the only independent club to do so.

Silent Valley



The Ring of Gullion