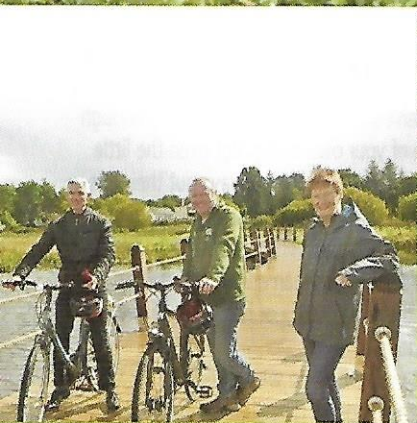


Walkways & Cycleways

Compiled by Myra Reynolds



The Shannon Blueway Cycle Route

The Shannon Blueway Cycle Route is approx 18 km round trip along the bank of the Lough Allen Canal. It now links Leitrim Village to Drumshanbo Village by way of a very impressive floating boardwalk at Acres Lake. The boardwalk is 160m in length and is a great attraction in the area.

There are also plans to develop approx 5 km of cycle way on the Shannon Erne Waterway from Leitrim Village to Kilclare. The funding (just under €1 million from the Department of Rural and Community Development and a further €76,000 under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme) has been awarded to Leitrim Co. Council and Waterways Ireland, to complete these projects. Work has to be complete by June 2018. It is great news for the area, making up on 40 km of traffic free cycling in the Leitrim Village area.

In North Leitrim there is a 1 km stretch of the Sligo Leitrim Northern Counties Rail (SLNCR) line developed into a walking and cycling route at Dromahair, with funding applications being sought from Fáilte Ireland for the section between Sligo and Leitrim. Further development of Greenways in the County are in the pipeline with pro-

posals for a demonstration stretch on the Cavan Leitrim Rail at Ballinamore Town to Corgar Lake.

Upgrade work on the Leitrim Way is planned in the coming year with funding granted to construct a bridge over the Yellow River in Ballinaglera and some other minor works to enable its inclusion as a National Trail.

Leitrim Recreation Forum

Leitrim Recreation Forum is a county wide partnership with stakeholders representing community organisations, recreational enthusiasts, recreational businesses, tourism development, policy and decision makers, local and statutory authority members in County Leitrim. Padraic White is chairperson of the Recreation Forum. Members include but are not limited to Leitrim County Council, Leitrim Development Company, Waterways Ireland, Inland Fisheries Ireland, Coillte, etc.

The Recreation Forum focuses on the development of recreational infrastructure which improves the quality of life of residents in the county and in turn adds value to the overall tourism experience in the county. There are four working groups

operating under the Recreation Forum focused on the following themes; Walking Trails and Cycling, Angling, Shannon Erne Waterway/ Lough Allen & Water Based Activities and Rail to Trail/Greenways.

Walking Trails & Cycling Working Group

The Walking Trails and Cycling Working Group seeks to advance the development of accessible quality walks/cycles and hill trails for the benefit of visitors and residents and to ensure that Leitrim and its hinterland has an attractive range and network of such amenities. Ultimately the development of these facilities adds to the tourism offering for Leitrim and enhances the quality of life for residents of the county.

The working groups of the recreation forum are working in collaboration with all partners on the ongoing development of the trails and routes such as Dromahair's Troll Wood and SLNCR Demo Stretch; Leitrim Way; Miners Way; Bothar na Naomh, Cloone; Canal Side Walk, Ballinamore; Board walk at Acres Lake, Drumshanbo -Leitrim Village to Drumshanbo; Milltown Woods, Lurganboy; and Fowley's Falls, Rossinver.



Poll an Eas

Pol an Eas means waterfall bath or bathing place as gealige. Locally it is said that the waters could "pull an ass" which is pure Leitrim vernacular. The two waterfalls are separated by a water pool where locals swim when the weather gets warm.

The Devil's Chimney Waterfall

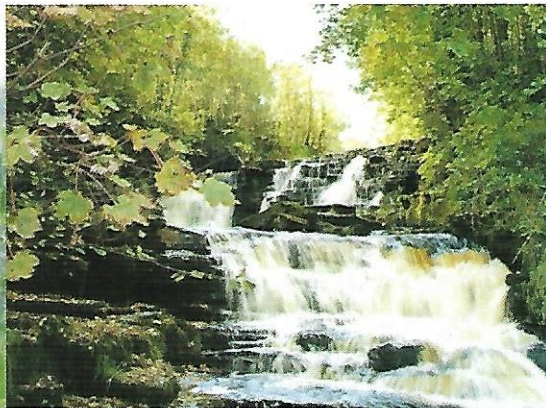
The waterfall 'Sruth in Aghaidh An Aird' lies on the Sligo/Leitrim border in the Glencar valley, only stones throw from its more famous neighbor Glencar waterfall. At 492 feet (150m) Sruth in Aghaidh An Aird (also known as the Devil's Chimney) is listed on the World Waterfall database as Ireland's Tallest Waterfall. Its name means stream against the height and reflects the observed phenomena that during certain weather conditions (when the wind blows from the South) the waterfall is blown upward and back over the cliff from which it falls. Thus it became known as the Devils Chimney.

Glencar valley has a wide variety of plants and animals. Both the lands above the trail and the lake are designated as a Special Area of Conservation due to their own rich ecological value. Species range from Otter to Peregrine Falcon. Keep an eye out for the lovely donkeys in the fields. They make a great picture opportunity with the backdrop of the lake. Also of interest are the yew trees, that stretch their arms up the steep slopes. The waterfall does not flow during periods of dry weather; but it is particularly spectacular during or immediately after periods of heavy rainfall. So it's a perfect off-season location to visit.



Glenfarne Woods

This site lies on the shore of Lough Macnean which forms the natural boundary between the counties of Leitrim, Cavan and Fermanagh. The wood forms part of what was once the Tottenham Estate, that existed from 1780 to 1919. The "big house" known as Glenfarne Hall was built in the 1800s. The estate was later acquired as a hunting retreat for Sir Edward Harland, founder of the Harland and Wolfe shipyard in Belfast. A feature of the trail is the presence of a section of the Lough Macnean sculpture trail. The sculpture trail comprises eleven pieces which are to be found around upper and lower Lough Macnean. Other features to be seen along or adjacent to the trails, include the Ladies Rest, Myles Big Stone and the Badgers Well.



Derrycarne Woods

This woodland is situated in an area that was formerly part of the Derrycarne Demense. The lands were owned by the Nesbitt family in the early 1800s. They were subsequently acquired by Edward Willis and William Ormsby Gore MP. The lands around Derrycarne were sold to the Irish Land Commission in 1924. There is very little physical evidence left of these times, Derrycarne House having been demolished in the 1950s. The woodland provides a very pleasant walk along the shore of Lough Boderg. Cruisers have access to this lake through the Shannon water system. The remains of an ice house can be seen along the shore. The trail passes through mixed wood land of beech, oak, and holly together with Sitka spruce and Lawson cypress.

Scardan Waterfall

The Scardan waterfall can be found on the Arigna Miners Way hiking trail route where you can walk in the footsteps of the original track taken by coal miners. The closeby Arigna Mines in County Leitrim were exploited for over four hundred years to extract iron and coal. The village of Arigna was the centre of the industry, and the Miner's Way and Historical Trail is an 118km-long figure-of-eight walking route that starts and ends at Arigna. It is said that the precise meaning of the word scardan is "mist that comes off a waterfall as the water rushes down". From the site of the waterfall you will find a lovely vantage point for panoramic views of Lough Allen.

Sheebeg and Sheemore—Sacred hill of the Fairies

Sheemore and Sheebeg in South Leitrim are hills steeped in mythology. Sheemore known as the hill of the fairies is speckled with fairy trees and tombs on the ascent. It has inspired musicians and artists including the composer O Corolan who penned a tune later to be made famous by Planxty. Sheemore is the larger mound and still the best formed. There are said to be three cairns on the summit, which is lit up at night by a huge crucifix mounted on its peak. Sheebeg is a much smaller mound and very accessible. Both hills are said to be mystical.



Lurganboy Forest Walks

Leaving Hamilton's Castle Manorhamilton, the walk takes you to Cranny Wood in Lurganboy and across Shanvaus hill affording stunning views of Benbo mountain, the last big outcrop of the Ox mountain range and Glencar Glacial Valley. The difference in geological formations is easily visible in this area. Passing through Lurganboy village with its historical church and battle site into Milltown Wood along the river Bonet where there is a range of plant and wildlife to see. Jays, dippers, the occasional buzzard and bat species will be your company on these walks. Milltown Wood has also been made famous in meditation circles and beyond by the soothing properties of its famous waterfall, viewed by over 19.5 million people worldwide on the artist Johnnie Lawsan's YouTube channel. Both woods are managed by Coillte. The length of this

walk is 8Km.

Lurganboy has a number of recreational walks developed around the village of Lurganboy. They consist of three loops centred on the village. They go through forest property owned by Coillte and in some cases follow forest access roads. Some of the walks have steep inclines and give elevated views over surrounding countryside. The loops can be combined for a long walk and various parts can be taken in isolation for shorter less demanding walks.

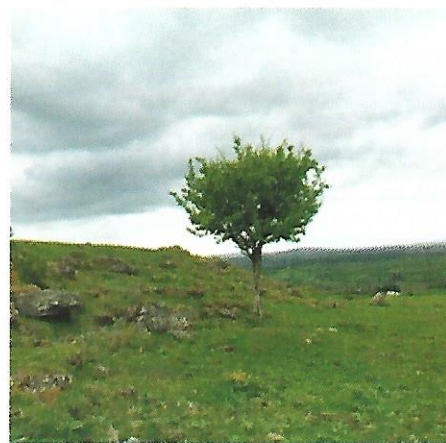
O'Rourke's Table

O'Rourke's Table is a mountain located on the outskirts of Dromahair, North Leitrim. Walkers who make the effort to climb up O'Rourke's Table, helped by several hundred steps cut into the side on the ridge are rewarded by amazing views of Lough Gill, Parkes Castle and Sligo Bay. For those eagle eyed visitors keep an eye out for 'the sleeping warrior' a rock formation that looks like a mythical figure from folklore, snoozing on



the ridges of Keelogyboy, Leraan and Benbo. But be careful in case you just might wake him!

There are a couple of legends surrounding O'Rourke's Table; one involves the local chieftain who used to live nearby. It is said that Tiernan O'Rourke used to climb the verge when returning home from hunting expeditions to check if his wife had left a candle in the window for him, as a symbol of her love. However, one day there was no candle in the castle window. Devorgilla (wife of Tiernan O'Rourke) had eloped with



Dermot McMurrough (the King of Leinster) in 1153 an act, which brought about a feud and McMurrough's eventual exile from Ireland.

There's a metal box hidden on the top of the O'Rourke's Table. Inside, there's a notepad for people to write down their musings as they sit at the top. Leave Dromahair on the R286, just before Parke's Castle, take the slip road to your right and the site is signposted from this point.

St Georges Heritage

It is always a pleasure to tour Leitrim's county town and administrative hub, Carrick-on-Shannon and view its heritage amenities, which include the Heritage & Visitors Centre in St George's Church; The Restored Famine Workhouse Attic and Reading Room; The Memorial Cairn and Time Capsule at the Famine Graveyard / Garden of Remembrance; The Costello Memorial Chapel (second smallest chapel in the world); and the Local History Centre in the Market Yard.

