

Newcastle Way

The Newcastle Way is prime walkers' country, where warm hospitality and a fantastic mix of scenery await...

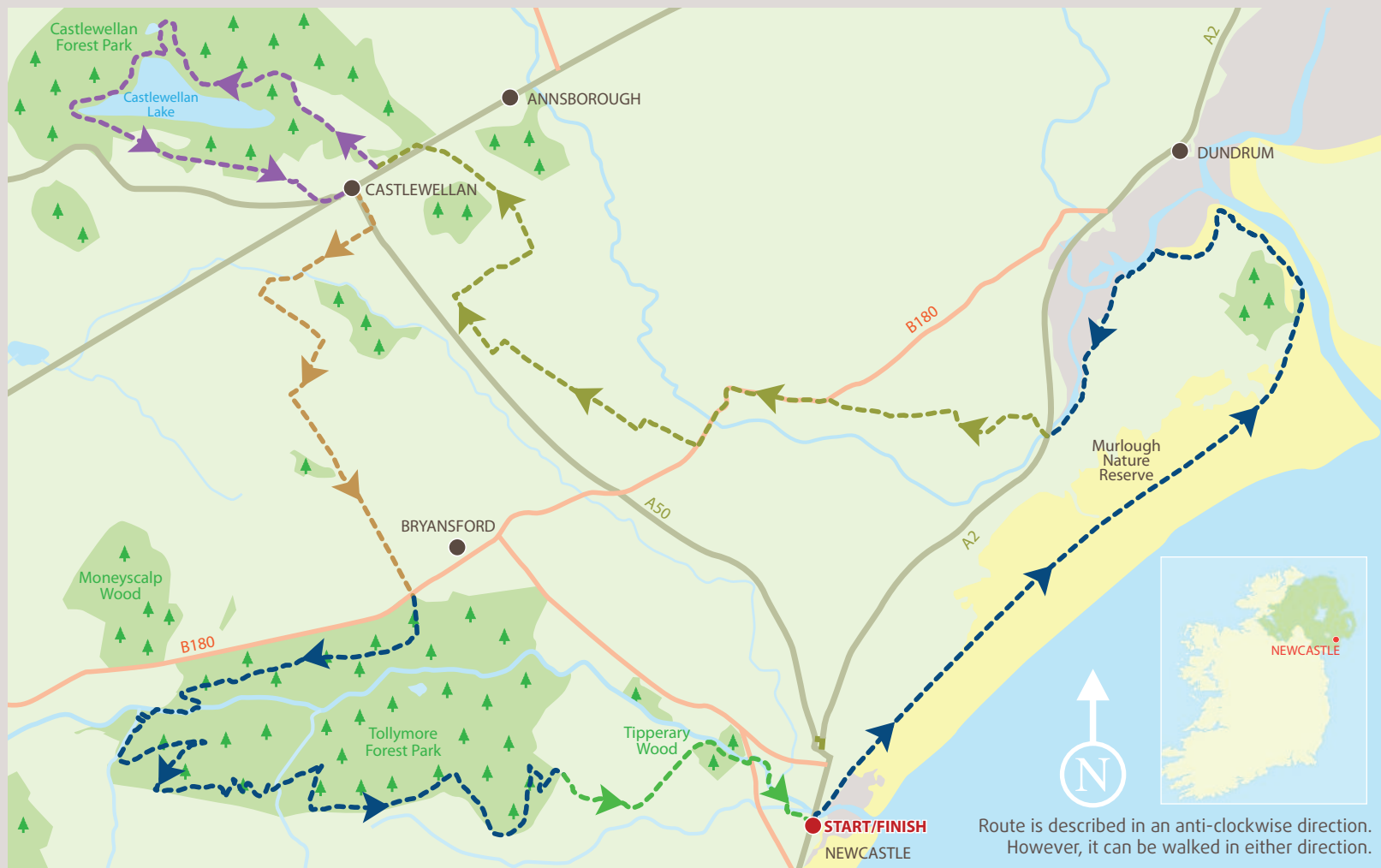


WalkNI.com

Your definitive guide to walking in Northern Ireland



**Mourne
Mountains**



Welcome to the Newcastle Way

Located beside the dramatic Mourne Mountains in Co. Down, this 42.5km route is a great 2-day walk. Beginning with a flat, gentle coastal walk, the route then undulates through quiet country roads before reaching forest trails in Castlewellan Forest Park. More quiet lanes and roads lead to historic Tollymore Forest Park, before descending on the return leg to the seaside town of Newcastle.



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VIEW OF THE MOURNE MOUNTAINS, FROM MURLOUGH NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE

Did You Know?

The ancient sand dune system of Murlough National Nature Reserve is 6000 years old, and was designated as Ireland's first nature reserve in 1967. This area is regularly used by 50 to 130 common and grey seals, with numbers peaking each year between July and October.



Section 1 - 10km

The first section of the walk follows the coastline from Newcastle all the way around the promontory of Murlough.

Leave Newcastle Tourist Information Centre and turn right. Walk through the car park before turning left onto the promenade and over the bridge. The wide pavement carries you easily between town and sea.

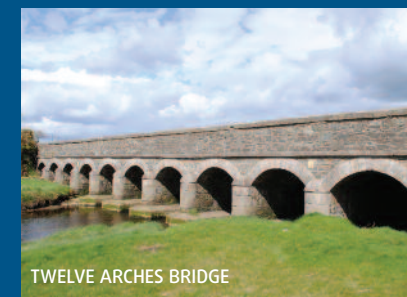
At the end of the promenade, descend the set of steps onto the sand. Continue north along the beach, passing beneath the imposing Victorian facade of the **Slieve Donard Hotel**. The terrain underfoot varies between firm sand and small pebbles, and depending on the state of the tide you may either have a wide space to roam or be confined to a narrow strip at the base of the dunes.

After roughly 2km, the dunes to your left become part of **Murlough Nature Reserve**. Keep ahead along the sand, continuing all the way to the end of the beach. After roughly 5km the coast sweeps left, and you find yourself walking alongside the narrow channel that drains **Dundrum Inner Bay**. Part-way along this shoreline you pass the estate's old boat house, with slipway tracks still running towards the water.

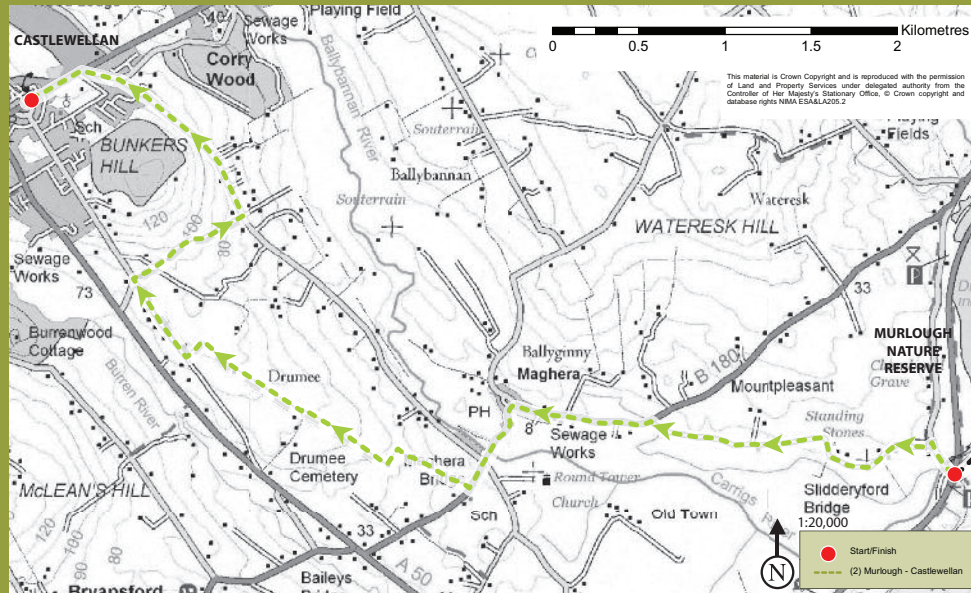
The **village of Dundrum** can now be seen across the estuary, guarded by the hilltop ruins of its medieval castle. The route leaves the shore just before a stone bridge. Here you join a gravel track, which leads along the final stretch of Dundrum Inner Bay before bringing you to a junction with the A2 road, just opposite **Twelve Arches Bridge**.



NEWCASTLE PROMENADE



TWELVE ARCHES BRIDGE



Section 2 - 8.5km

A series of minor country roads and farmland tracks now carry you inland to the town of Castlewellaan.



STANDING STONE, BALLYLOUGHIN ROAD

Begin by crossing carefully to the western side of the A2. Follow the road ahead across the **Carrigs River** and take the first left, joining a quiet country road that winds between high hedgerows and past several farms. At one point a large, prehistoric standing stone extrudes from the verge itself.

At the end of the country road, turn left. Follow a larger road into the charming **village of Maghera**, which makes a great spot for a refreshment break. The road swings left in the village and leads across a humpback bridge. The official route continues ahead, but you may chose to turn left and make an out-and-back detour of 600m to visit the 13th-century **Maghera Old Church** and the base of a round tower.

To continue on the signed route, turn right onto a grassy track some 300m beyond the humpback bridge. The track is sometimes squeezed to a single-file footpath as it climbs between the fields, and the ground can be muddy underfoot. You emerge onto a firmer gravel track, still passing traditional farm buildings that seem unchanged for a century.

A short section of paved lane brings you to a right turn. Another stretch of path now leads over the brow of a hill, with fine coastal views to the south. On the far side of the rise, turn left onto a road and continue to a junction with the A25. Turn left here and climb to the top of the hill. The section ends in **Castlewellaan's Upper Square**, beside the old market house, which his was built in 1764 and now houses the public library.



Did You Know?

Much of this section follows traditional rights of way, old public paths and tracks that are still used by farmers and walkers alike. Some of the more remote tracks offer an evocative insight into rural times gone by, with small fields enclosed by stone walls, isolated stone sheds and even Victorian-style wrought iron gates along the trail.

MAGHERA ROUND TOWER





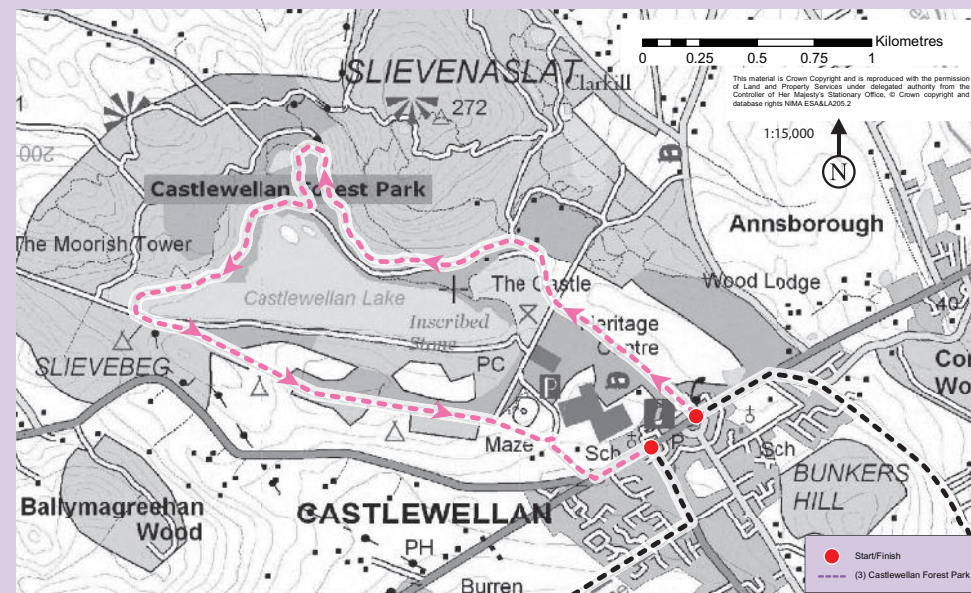
CASTLEWELLAN WALLED GARDEN

CASTLEWELLAN LAKE



Did You Know?

Castlewellan town and forest park both owe their existence to a single family. The Annesley family bought the lands in 1742, and within a decade they had enclosed 350 acres for a park and begun planting it with trees. The family also commissioned a French architect to design the town, which was under construction by 1764.



Section 3 - 6km

The route now embarks on a scenic circuit of Castlewellan Forest Park.

From the old market house, turn right. Pass through the **entrance gates** to the forest park and continue ahead along the tarmac driveway. Grassy meadows border the lane until the imposing structure of the **castle** comes into sight ahead. Constructed from local granite in 1856, the castle was built in Scottish baronial style and is now a private conference centre.

Continue straight ahead at the junction and climb around the back of the castle, passing the entrance to the walled garden on your right. The trail passes almost level with the multiple roofs, turrets and chimneys of the ornate building. The lane now becomes a forest track and continues through mixed deciduous woodland above the lake shore. As with elsewhere in the park, the magnificent beech trees here are thought to be around 250 years old and lend the trail a rather stately air.

At the northern tip of the lake, turn left onto a smaller path that brings you past **Cypress Pond**. Continue descending until you meet the trail that circumnavigates **Castlewellan Lake** itself. Turn right here and trace the wooded shoreline to a fine viewpoint at the lake's western tip, where the mile-long expanse of water is laid out before you. Now turn left and climb gradually away from the lake. Occasional clearances in the trees allow fantastic views across the intervening farmland to the **Mourne Mountains**. At the southwest corner of the park, keep an eye open for a right turn off the track. A grassy footpath now descends past fields to the **exit gate**. Turn left at the main road, then left again at a roundabout to return to **Castlewellan town centre**.



Section 4 - 5km

This section follows a mixture of rural footpaths and quiet country roads as you head towards the back gates of Tollymore Forest Park.

At the roundabout in the centre of Castlewellan, turn right onto the A50 towards Newcastle. Follow this road for 300m, then turn right onto a suburban housing estate. Keep straight ahead, past the houses, to the end of the road. Where the road finishes, a grassy footpath continues on, carrying you down into a hollow.

At the base of the hill, pass over a stile into a field on the left, then cross two metal footbridges. You now need to climb again, crossing two meadows on the western side of the hollow. Given the pastoral surrounds, it comes as no surprise to discover that the name for this section of path is 'Cow Lane'.

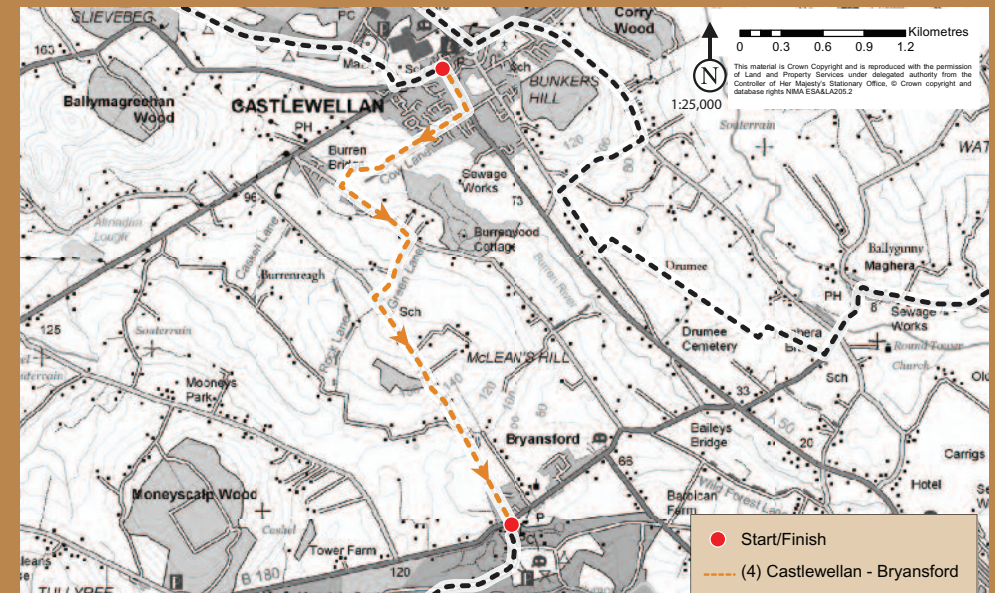
Exit the meadow via the stile and join a country road. Turn left here and follow the road for roughly 800m, where a stone track heads off to the right. This is 'Green Lane', appropriately bordered by hedges and woodland. Climb steeply along the track to reach another road, where the route turns left again. Almost 2km of road now lies ahead, though it sees little traffic. Much of the distance consists of a long, gradual descent towards the village of Bryansford. The section finishes where the lane joins the B180. On the opposite side of the junction lies Bryansford Gate, the ornate gothic arched gate which leads you into Tollymore Forest Park.

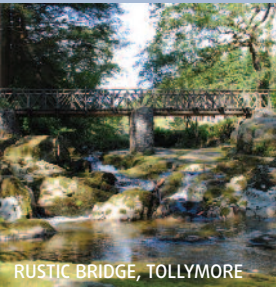
BRYANSFORD GATE



Did You Know?

Take care as you approach Bryansford especially if the evening is drawing in as there have been reported sightings of the dullahan, one of the most fearsome creatures in Irish fairy mythology. A wild, headless horseman who rides a black steed, legend recounts that wherever the dullahan stops, a mortal will soon come to grief.





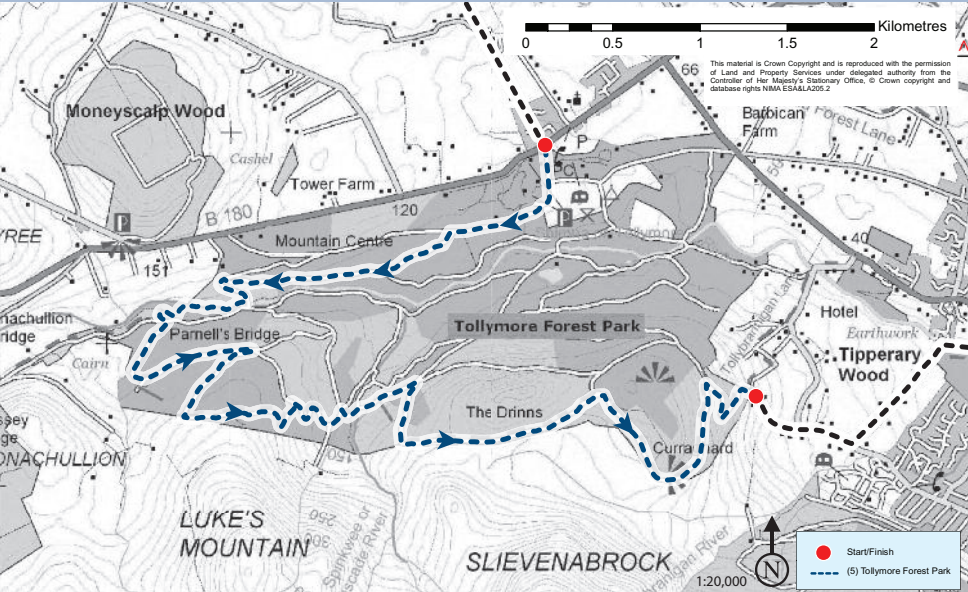
RUSTIC BRIDGE, TOLLYMORE

Section 5 - 10km
A network of woodland trails leads you around this historic forest park.

Pass through Bryansford Gate and continue straight ahead along the driveway. This brings you past 18th-century Clanbrassil Barn to the main parking area. The route now heads over a wooden footbridge and onto a series of forest tracks.

The first section of woodland contains mainly beech trees and is carpeted with bluebells in the spring. Pine becomes dominant as the track draws close to the Shimna River. The chutes and rapids of this river can be seen below before the trail dips across Parnell's Bridge. Once on the opposite bank, turn right and follow a series of tracks around the park's western corner. The route then climbs gradually to reach the stone wall that marks Tollymore's southern boundary, with the wild peaks of the Mourne's rising directly beyond the wall.

The track plunges into dense pines again as it descends through a series of switchbacks to the Spinkwee River, which you cross via Hore's Bridge. Keep right at the next two junctions, climbing steadily and again passing near the boundary wall. The peak on the far side of the wall is Slieve Commedagh, Northern Ireland's second highest summit at 767m. Keep right at the next junction and make the final ascent of the route. The track now sweeps round to the left and begins to descend. Where there are gaps in the vegetation, the panorama extends east over Dundrum Bay and the town of Newcastle. Watch out for a final right turn onto a trail that winds down to a wooden gate, your exit point from the park.



Did You Know?
King James I transferred the estate of Tollymore to local control in 1611. Over the following centuries different owners added their personal touches to its landscape, and on 2nd June 1955 it became the first state forest park in Northern Ireland. Today the park grounds extend to some 630 hectares.



NEWCASTLE PROMENADE

A paved footpath now leads past various recreational facilities and along the river bank, bringing you to a footbridge.

Cross the bridge and continue across another section of parkland to reach the Shimna Road, a busy thoroughfare where care is needed to cross in safety.

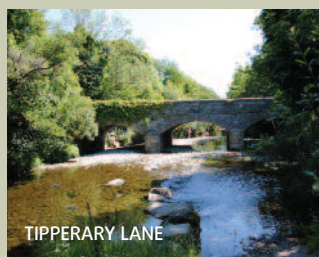
The route now enters Castle Park, an area that was reclaimed from marshland in the 1930's. Pass the boating lake on your left, which was formed by widening the mouth of the Shimna. The path comes to an end at Newcastle's Central Promenade, where you should recognise your surroundings from the start of your journey. The tourist office is just 100m away to the right.

Did You Know?

The Shimna River is a regular feature along the final section of this walk, and its natural beauty is undeniable. Yet many locals have mixed feeling about the river. Along with its tributary the River Burren, the Shimna regularly causes severe flooding across Newcastle town. Despite recent flood management schemes, nature is still proving hard to tame.

Section 6 - 3km

The final part of the route is virtually all downhill, with wooded tracks and parkland paths bringing you back to the centre of Newcastle.

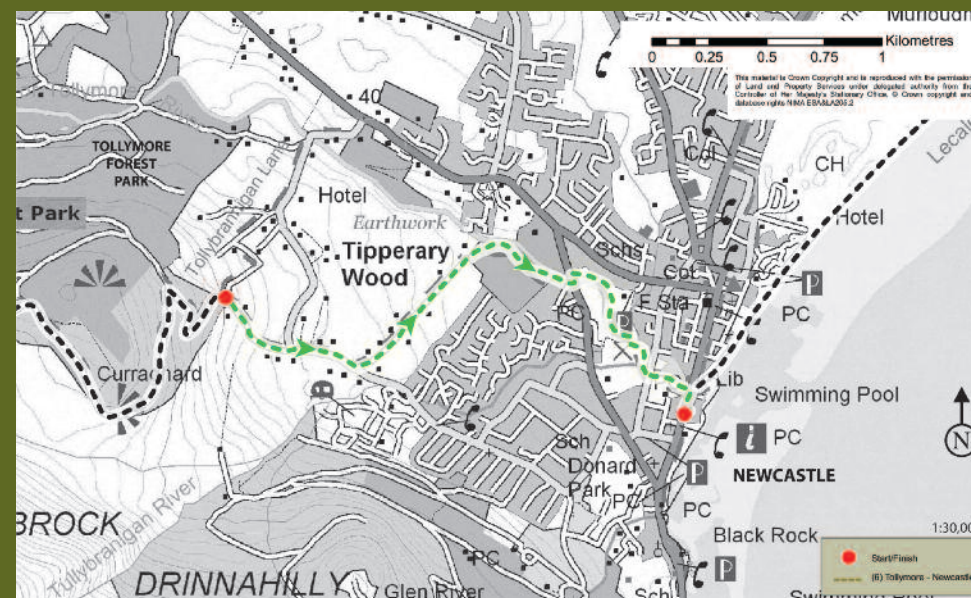


TIPPERARY LANE

From the wooden gate that marks your exit from Tollymore Forest Park, continue ahead to a second gate and stile. Cross the stile, and you will find yourself at the top of a narrow tarmac lane. Follow this steeply downhill to reach a junction with a larger road after 500m.

Turn right and follow the larger road for 400m, then turn left onto a track known as Tipperary Lane. The track descends past several houses before entering Tipperary Wood, an enclave of deciduous woodland on the banks of the Shimna River. Continue to follow the track past the local scout campsite until you reach the tarmac of Bryansford Road.

Turn left at the road and cross the bridge over the Shimna. Once on the river's northern bank, turn right and enter Islands Park.

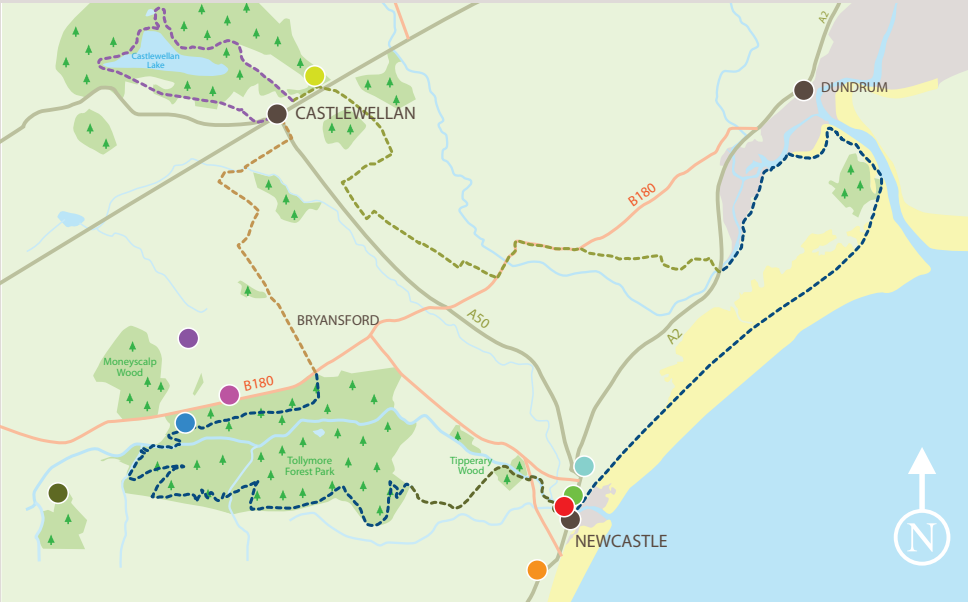


Walker Friendly Accommodation

The Newcastle Way is a great 2-day walk with a range of accommodation options from 5* hotels to self catering cottages...

For a full list visit www.discovernorthernireland.com. However the following accommodation providers offer services and facilities specifically to meet the needs of walkers. These include:

- Location within 500m of the Newcastle Way
- Packed lunches available to take away in the morning – upon request
- Suitable overnight area for drying wet clothes/boots
- Late meal/early breakfast available - upon request
- Detailed walking information available
- One night bookings available
- Approved by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board



- Hillyard House (10 ensuite rooms)
- Mountain Sea B&B (2 ensuite rooms)
- Tollymore National Outdoor Centre (B&B ensuite rooms)
- Tollyrose Country House (6 ensuite rooms)
- Slieve Donard Hotel (5* Hotel, 178 ensuite rooms)
- Harbour House Inn (ensuite rooms)
- Dacara B&B (3 ensuite rooms)
- Broad Cover B&B (3 rooms, 2 ensuite)
- Meelmore Lodge (2 dormitories, 4 ensuite rooms, camping)

Accommodation	Location	Telephone	Email/Website
Dacara B&B	Newcastle	+44 (0)28 4372 6745	info@dacaraguesthouse.com www.dacaraguesthouse.com
Slieve Donard Resort	Newcastle	+44 (0)28 4372 1066	gm@sdh.hastingshotels.com www.hastingshotels.com
Broad Cove B&B	Newcastle	+44 (0)28 4372 7119	mflanagan4@btinternet.com www.broadcovecottage.com
Harbour House Inn	Newcastle	+44 (0)28 4372 3445	info@harbourhouseinn.co.uk www.harbourhouseinn.co.uk
Hillyard House	Castlewellan	+44 (0)28 4377 1999	info@hillyardhouse.com www.hillyardhouse.com
Mountain & Sea B&B	Bryansford	+44 (0)28 4377 0577	michael@oloughlins.fsnet.co.uk www.discovernorthernireland.com
Tollyrose Country House	Bryansford	+44 (0)28 4372 6077	info@tollyrose.com www.tollyrose.com
Meelmore Lodge	Bryansford	+44 (0)28 4372 6657	meelmorelodge@hotmail.co.uk www.meelmorelodge.co.uk
Tollymore National Outdoor Centre	Bryansford	+44 (0)28 4372 2158	admin@tollymore.com www.tollymore.com

Where to Eat

The Newcastle area is home to an extensive range of eateries catering for all tastes. Many are frequented by walkers – where backpacks and walking boots are very welcome! Please see below for places to eat, as recommended by walkers.

- Newcastle**
- O'Hare's Bar - home cooked pub grub, +44 (0)28 4372 2487
 - Anchor Bar - home cooked pub grub, +44 (0)28 4372 3344
 - Sea Salt - deli and bistro, +44 (0)28 4372 5027
 - Café Crème - café snacks and meals, +44 (0)28 4372 6589
 - Maud's Coffee Shop - ice cream and sandwiches, +44 (0)28 4372 6184
 - Broadway Café - grills and fries, +44 (0)28 4372 2263
 - The Strand Restaurant - traditional meals, +44 (0)28 4372 3472
 - Vanilla - varied menu, +44 (0)28 4372 2268
- Dundrum**
- Mourne Seafood Bar – fresh seafood, +44 (0)28 4375 1377
 - The Dundrum Inn – home cooked meals, +44 (0)28 4375 1211
 - Buck's Head Inn - fine dining, +44 (0)28 4375 1868
- Maghera**
- Maghera Inn – country pub grub, +44 (0)28 4372 2236
- Castlewellan**
- Maginns Bar – home cooked pub grub, +44 (0)28 4377 8235
 - Hillyard House – traditional home cooked food, +44 (0)28 4377 1999

For a full list of where to eat in the Newcastle Area please contact Newcastle Tourist Information Centre (see page 19).

Other Information

Other useful maps – available from www.osni.gov.uk/mapstore
OSNI Discoverer Map Series 1:50 000 Sheet 29 and OSNI The Mournes 1:25 000.
Walkers are always recommended to carry the relevant OSNI map.

Forest Parks
Please be aware that Castlewellan and Tollymore Forest Parks are working environments. Sections of the trail may close from time to time to facilitate forestry and other essential operations. Please take care on forest tracks as some are used as bridle paths and all are used by forestry vehicles.

Walking in the Mournes
Adjacent to the Newcastle Way you will find the Mourne Mountains. The range is the highest and most dramatic in Northern Ireland, with summits crowned by granite torrs. The Mourne upland is dominated by 12 mountains, each rising above 600m, with the highest peak, Slieve Donard reaching 853m. To explore the Mournes download ‘A Guide to Walking in the Mourne Mountains’ at walkni.com or contact one of the specialist walking guide below:

Name	Telephone	Email/Website
Mourne Spirit	+44 (0) 7711847125	caroline@mournespirit.com www.mournespirit.com
Mountain Sojourns	+44 (0) 7740285794	info@mountainsojourns.co.uk www.mountainsojourns.co.uk
Outdoor Ireland North	+44 (0) 7973408056	loretto@outdoorirelandnorth.co.uk www.outdoorirelandnorth.co.uk
Walks in the Mournes	+44 (0) 28 437 25143	domnall.mccomish@btinternet.com www.walksinthemournes.com

Tollymore National Outdoor Centre
Tollymore National Outdoor Centre is Northern Ireland’s National Centre for mountaineering and walking, based on the edge of the Mournes. It runs courses on hillwalking and mountaineering, mainly based in the Mournes. Visit www.tollymore.com

Mourne International Walking Festival
This festival takes place annually during the last weekend in June. A range of guided and self-guided walks including some strenuous mountain routes are available.
www.mournewalking.co.uk or Tel: +44 (0)28 4461 0800 (Down District Council) or Tel: +44 (0)28 4175 2256 (Newry & Mourne District Council)

Walkni.com
For further information on the Newcastle Way and all other walks across Northern Ireland, please visit www.walkni.com. Here you will find short, medium and long distance walks, as well as downloadable maps, suggested itineraries and everything you need to know when planning a walking trip in Northern Ireland.

Other Information

Leave No Trace
In order to minimise your social and environmental impacts on the outdoors, please follow the principles of Leave No Trace. Leave No Trace is an outdoor ethics educational programme designed to promote and inspire responsible outdoor recreation through education, research and partnerships. For more information please visit www.leavenotraceireland.org.

Go Prepared
Weather conditions in the Newcastle area can be changeable even during summer months. Waterproof and windproof clothing are essential and strong walking boots are advised.

Emergency
In the event of an emergency call the police on 999, or Police Service NI (central switchboard) +44 (0)845 600 8000
Downe Hospital A&E, Downpatrick +44 (0)28 4461 3311
Daisy Hill Hospital A&E, Newry +44 (0)28 3083 5000

Other Activities & Places to See
The Newcastle area is renowned for its natural beauty, outdoor recreation, culture, tradition, folklore and heritage. In addition to walking, a wide variety of activities and attractions are on offer, including cycling, horse riding, arts and crafts markets, castles, dolmens and ruins. To find out more visit Newcastle Tourist Information Centre (contact details below).

Newcastle Tourist Information Centre
10-14 Central Promenade, Newcastle, Co Down BT33 0AA
www.downdc.gov.uk newcastle.tic@downdc.gov.uk Tel. +44 (0)28 4372 2222

Outdoor Shops in Newcastle
Hill Trekker - Independent Walking Shop selling everything you need for walking in the Mournes - 115 Central Promenade, Newcastle, BT33 0EU. Tel. +44 (0)28 4372 3842

Public Transport
Translink operates the Mourne Rambler (Service 405) during the summer months. Timetables are available from Bus Stations or Tourist Information Centres across Northern Ireland. For more information call (028) 9066 6630 or visit www.translink.co.uk. Over 60’s travel free on presentation of a valid SmartPass.

Taxis:
Donard Taxis, Newcastle+44 (0)28 4372 2823
1st Shimna Taxis, Newcastle.....+44 (0)28 4344 3593
Shimna Taxis, Newcastle.....+44 (0)28 4372 3030
Swift Taxis, Castlewellan.....+44 (0)28 4372 4002
MK Taxis, Castlewellan+44 (0)28 4377 1404
Town Car, Castlewellan+44 (0)28 4377 0935

Disclaimer

Every care has been taken to ensure accuracy in the compilation of this guide. The information provided is, to the best of the promoter's knowledge, correct at the time of going to print. The promoters cannot accept responsibility for any errors or omissions but if any are brought to their notice, future publications will be amended accordingly.

Land Access

Some popular walking routes in Northern Ireland are not formally designated public rights of way. Access is on a de-facto basis and depends on the goodwill and tolerance of local landowners. Walkers are advised to respect that they may be walking on private land and are encouraged to make themselves aware of and adhere to the principles of 'Leave No Trace' www.leavenotraceireland.org.

For any questions on walking in Northern Ireland contact
Countryside Access and Activities Network
The Stableyard, Malone Road, Barnett's Demesne, Belfast BT9 5PB
Tel: +44 (0)28 9030 3930
Email: info@walkni.com

This guide is available on request in alternative formats.

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Route Descriptions by Helen Fairbairn. Design by www.thinkstudio.co.uk

