

Ring of Gullion Way

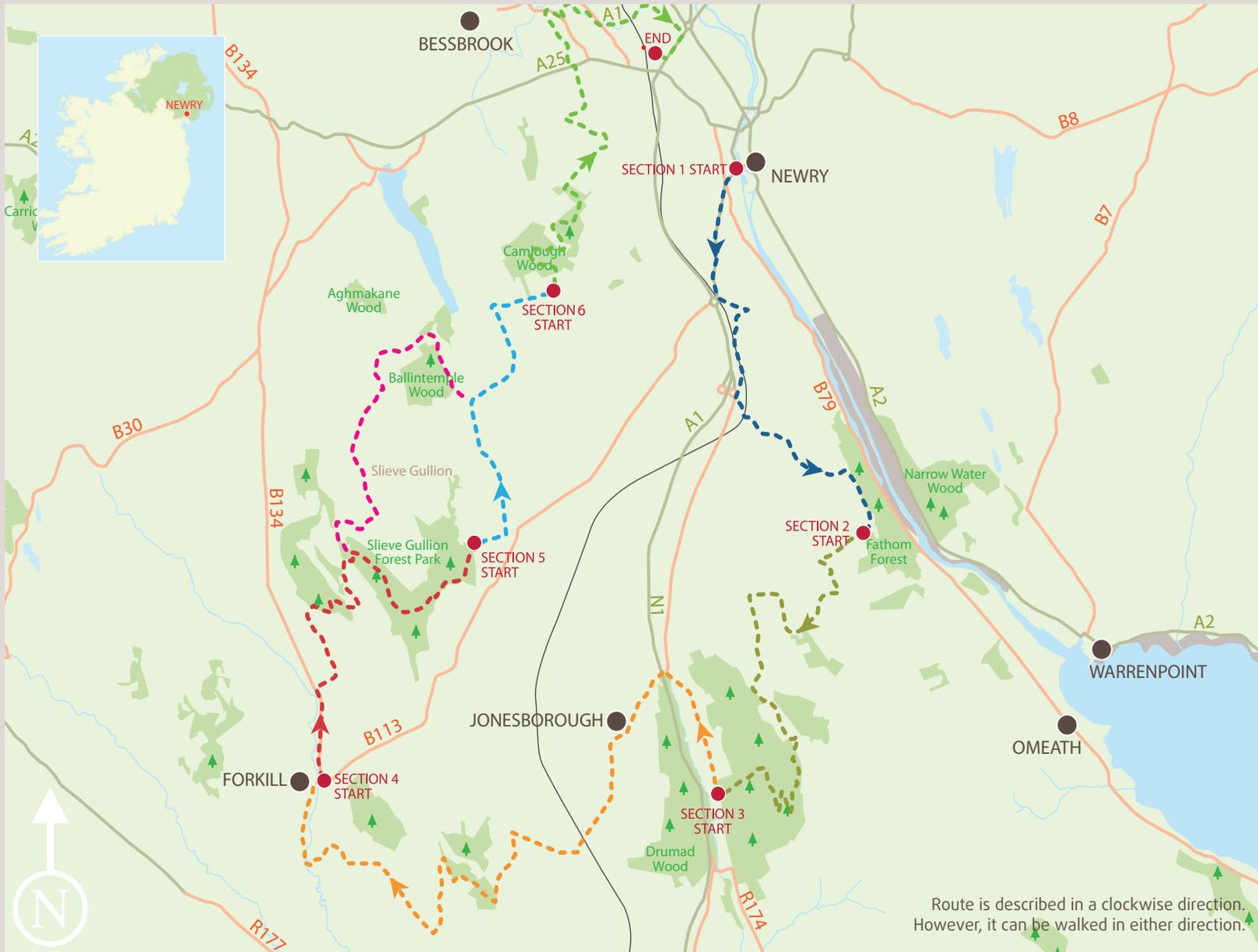
Explore an exceptional countryside rich in geology, archaeology, wildlife and folklore. Stunning views await you on the Ring of Gullion Way



WalkNI.com

Your definitive guide to walking in Northern Ireland





Key to Map

- - - - SECTION 1 - NEWRY TO FLAGSTAFF (8.1km)
- - - - SECTION 2 - FLAGSTAFF TO MARBLE BRIDGE (10.4km)
- - - - SECTION 3 - MARBLE BRIDGE TO FORKILL (15.7km)
- - - - SECTION 4 - FORKILL TO SLIEVE GULLION COURTYARD CENTRE (9.3km)
- - - - SECTION 5 - SLIEVE GULLION COURTYARD CENTRE TO CAMLOUGH FOREST (6km)
- - - - SECTION 6 - CAMLOUGH FOREST TO NEWRY (11.4km)

Welcome to the Ring of Gullion Way

The Slieve Gullion ring dyke has long been celebrated by geologists, and this 61km two-day walking route allows you to explore the area's unique natural history by foot. The route follows a mixture of footpaths and country lanes as it makes its way around the ring, passing numerous historical sites along the way.

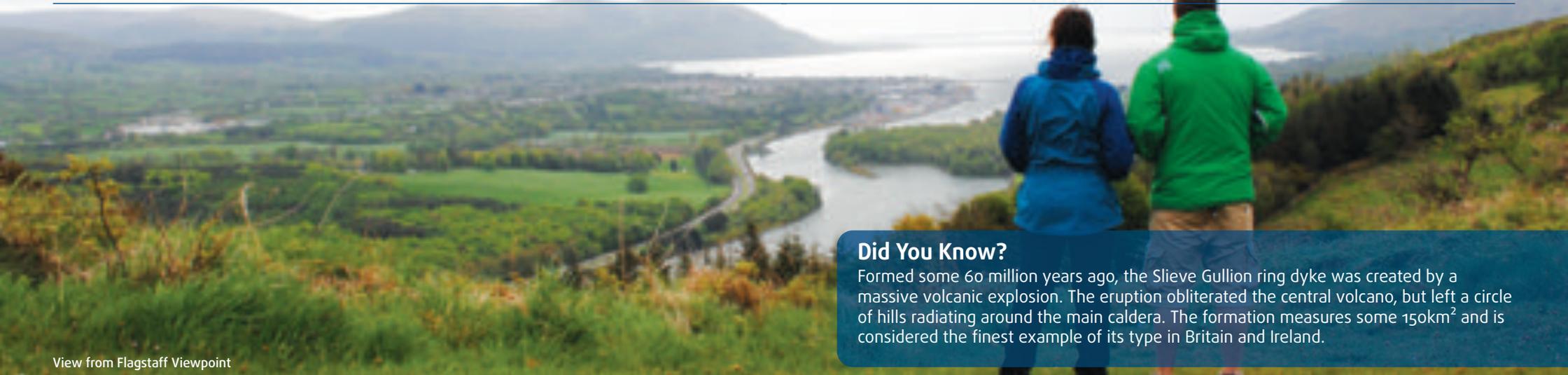


Kilcurry River

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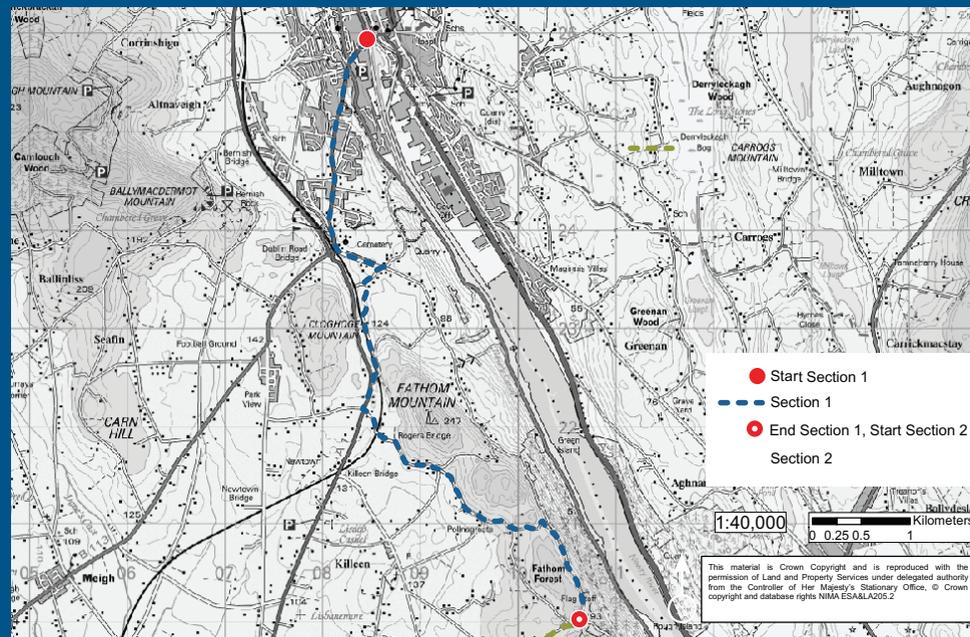
Route is described in a clockwise direction. However, it can be walked in either direction.



View from Flagstaff Viewpoint

Did You Know?

Formed some 60 million years ago, the Slieve Gullion ring dyke was created by a massive volcanic explosion. The eruption obliterated the central volcano, but left a circle of hills radiating around the main caldera. The formation measures some 150km² and is considered the finest example of its type in Britain and Ireland.



The Quays, Newry

Section 1 - 8.1km

The route begins by heading out of Newry and traversing the slopes of Fathom Mountain, the first hill encountered on the ring dyke.

From the bridge over Newry Canal, cross the road towards The Quays shopping centre. Head southwest

along the road signed to Dublin and the A1. Follow the pavement beside the road, climbing gradually for 2km. Just before the railway bridge, turn left onto Flagstaff Road. Ahead there are views to Fathom Mountain, your next destination.

Take the next lane on the right and continue past an old farm building, then turn left onto a 'green road'. This starts as a muddy track, then turns into a grassy footpath that weaves between the fields. Where you rejoin the tarmac, turn right and cross a railway bridge to reach a main road.

Head left here for 300m, then turn left again onto a narrow lane signed as Upper Fathom Road. Climb gently along the road, passing round the side of Fathom Mountain and enjoying good views west over the rolling countryside. After 2.5km the route switches to the eastern side of the mountain, allowing a different panorama to unfold. Beyond Carlingford Lough the clustered peaks of the Mourne Mountains decorate the skyline, with some of the highest summits in Northern Ireland on show.

Continue to a T-junction at Flagstaff, which marks the end of the section.



Cloghogue Church



Brogies Road



Bluebells



Clontygora Court Tomb

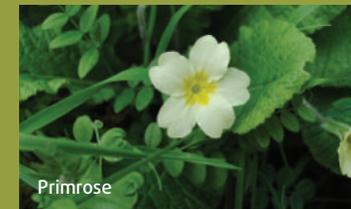
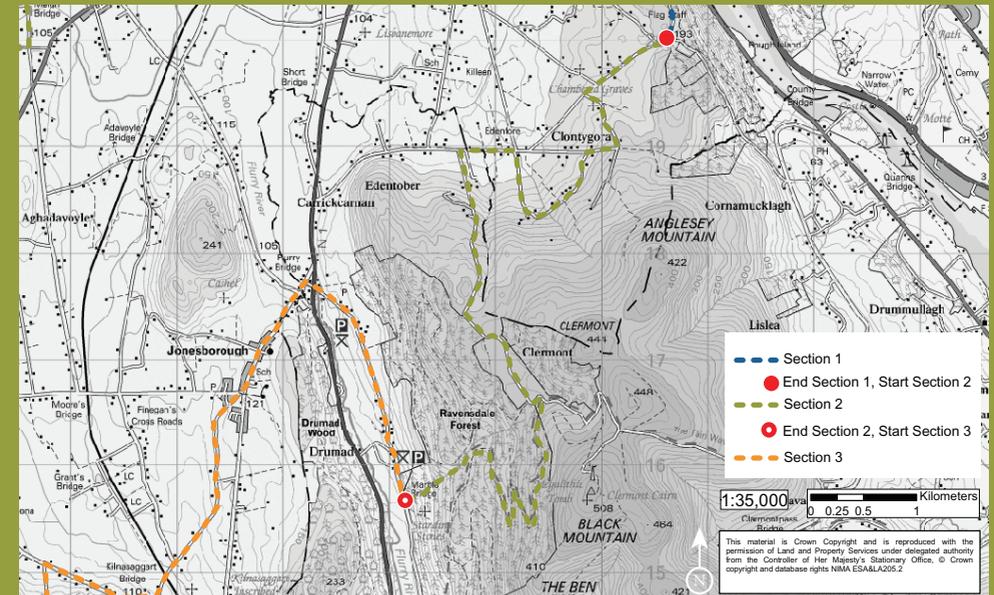
Section 2 - 10.4km

You now climb the slopes of Black Mountain, the second highest peak of the ring dyke.

Turn right at Flagstaff T-Junction and continue for 1km to a narrow lane on the left, signed to Clontygora Court Grave. This neolithic tomb is located close to the bottom of the lane, and is well worth a visit. From here, continue uphill along the lane, climbing between high stone walls. The route takes you on a loop past numerous small farms before descending back to the larger road.

Turn left here, then left again some 500m later. This road climbs to the summit of 508m-high Black Mountain, and though you won't be going all the way to the top, you will be gaining over 200m in altitude over the next 3km. The climb is sustained at first then eases slightly, with the surrounding peat moorland becoming wilder as you progress.

After 3km, the route turns right, past a metal gate and onto a gravel track. You are now within the boundary of Ravensdale Forest. Continue straight ahead at the first track junction and descend into the trees, with great views where there are gaps in the vegetation. Keep left at the next junction, then veer left again onto a smaller track. Descend steeply now through the trees, and where the track bends right, look out for a narrow footpath heading off to the left.



Primrose

This muddy trail weaves between the trunks, bringing you to a fantastic section high above a stream gorge.

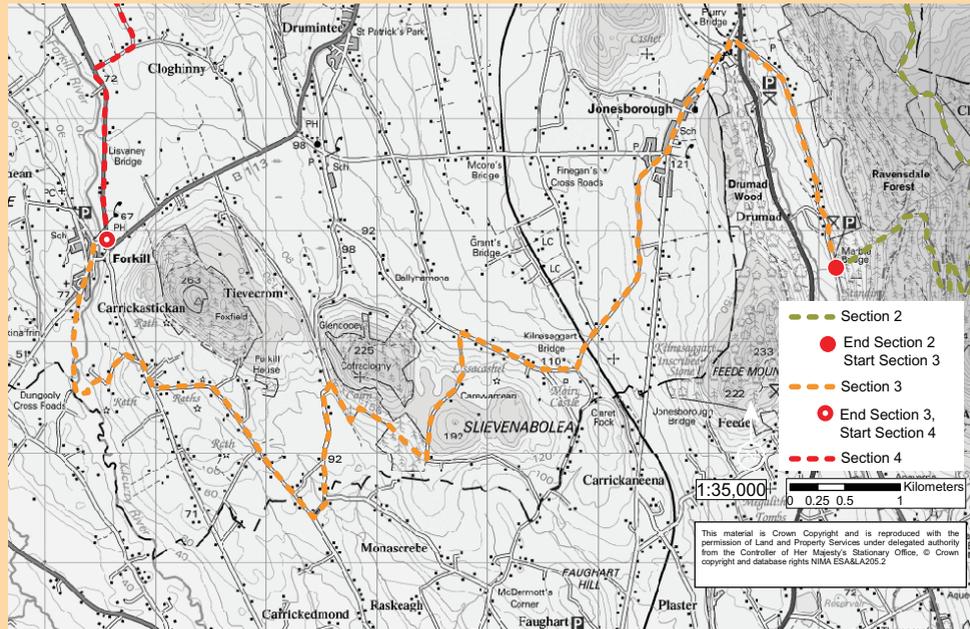
At a junction of trails turn right, descending the final, steep slope to Marble Bridge car park.



Clontygora Country Lane

Did You Know?

Clontygora Court Grave, which is visited on this section, is a fine example of a neolithic tomb. You can still see the massive boulders that once formed the entrance to a more extensive structure, used by an early farming community for collective burial. The site has been dated to between 4000 and 2500 BC.



Section 3 - 15.7km

A mixture of country roads and footpaths carry you to the village of Forkill.

From Marble Bridge car park, turn right and follow the road for 2km. Another right turn brings you to a roundabout, where you should head left, over the motorway towards Jonesborough. In Jonesborough village, turn right then quickly left. This lane soon narrows to a slim strip of tarmac sandwiched between high hedges.

Descend to the bottom of a hill and pass under a railway bridge to a junction. Moyry Castle is a short detour to the left here, though the main route climbs to the right. Keep right then left at the next two junctions. You are now on a lane that climbs over the shoulder of Slievenabolea. Descend the other side, then look out for a stile at the edge of a forest on the right.

Follow a footpath into the forest, where the moss-cloaked understory creates a primeval atmosphere. Cross another stile and negotiate a corridor of gorse, then descend along the forest boundary. Turn right onto a grassy track to return to the tarmac.

Turn left here, then right at the next three road junctions. Around 250m beyond the last junction, veer left down a track. Turn right at a T-junction, then look out for a wooden gate on the left. You now pass around several fields to reach the Kilcurry River, which is crossed via a metal footbridge. Turn right on the opposite bank, then veer left between fields. The path turns into a track and brings you to a road at the edge of Forkill. Turn right and continue through the centre of the village, then turn right again to reach the B134 road.



Track leading to Kilcurry River



Moyry Castle

Did You Know?

Just south of Jonesborough the route passes a mountain saddle known as Moyry Pass, or the 'Gap of the North'. This was once a major thoroughfare between the provinces of Ulster and Leinster. The pass is guarded by Moyry Castle, which was built in 1601, and can be visited in a short detour from the route.



Views of the Ring Dyke from Slieve Gullion

Section 4 - 9.3km

A steep climb now takes you up the side of the highest mountain in County Armagh.



Forkill

At the junction with the B134, turn left and follow the road for 1.5km. Turn right here onto a lane signed as Cloghinny Road. Another left and right turn brings you to the gateway at the boundary of Slieve Gullion Forest Park. Just before the gate, turn right onto a footpath and begin to climb the forested hillside in a series of wide switchbacks. Part way up the slope, cross a stile and continue ahead on a muddy track past open farmland.

The track eventually brings you to the tarmac of the forest drive. Head right here for 600m. Now turn left along a track and climb to the upper driveway. Here you must decide if you want to follow a mountain path across Slieve Gullion summit, or keep to the lanes and roads of the official route.

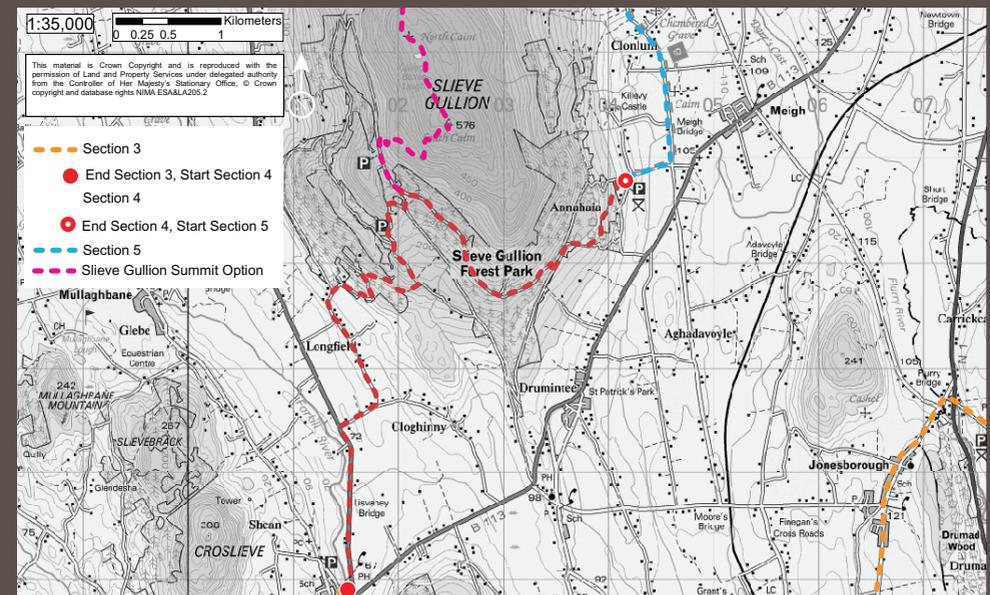
For details of the mountain path, see the following Alternate Route description. To keep following the official route, turn right and follow the upper driveway around the southern slopes of Slieve Gullion. The road descends steadily, with open terrain allowing expansive views over the ring dyke. After 2km you come to a short, gravel link track on the right; follow this to reach the lower driveway. Turn left here and descend for 700m, passing through stands of mature beech trees. Now watch out for a sign indicating a left turn across a bank, followed by a right turn onto a gravel footpath. This winds down through pleasant deciduous woodland to reach the car park beside the Courtyard Centre.



Slieve Gullion Courtyard Centre

Did You Know?

On Slieve Gullion's summit plateau lies Calliagh Berra's Lough. The pool is named after a woman famed in local folklore for bewitching the giant Finn McCool. She tricked him into diving into the lough, and when he surfaced his hair had turned completely white. Legend has it that the same fate will befall any person who swims in the waters today.





Did You Know?

Killeavy Old Churches is located on the site of a former convent, founded by St Monnina in the 5th century. At the time this was one of the most important monastic sites in Ireland. The adjacent holy well is situated at the top of a breen beside the church, and can be visited in a 1km detour from the route.

Killeavy Old Church

Slieve Gullion - Alternate Route 7.4km

This alternate mountain loop passes over Slieve Gullion summit, and is recommended for experienced walkers in clear weather.

When you reach Slieve Gullion upper driveway, turn left and continue to a car park. Fifty metres later, the mountain path leads off to the right. This soon consolidates into an obvious, well-trodden trail marked by wooden posts. Climb past a stone shelter to arrive at the large cairn that marks the southern summit. This is actually a neolithic burial chamber, and the highest remaining passage tomb in Ireland. The trig point provides fantastic 360° views, which include the Mourne Mountains and Carlingford Lough.

Now follow the path northwest across the summit plateau. Pass Calliagh Berra's Lough, then continue to the sprawling pile of stone that marks the northern summit. This cairn dates from the Bronze Age, around 1800BC.

The descent path leads down to the north. At a grassy hollow, veer right and join a green track, then pass through two gates to reach a road. Turn right here, then right again at the next junction to rejoin the official route beside Killeavy Old Church.

Section 5 - 6km Country lanes carry you on towards Camlough Mountain.

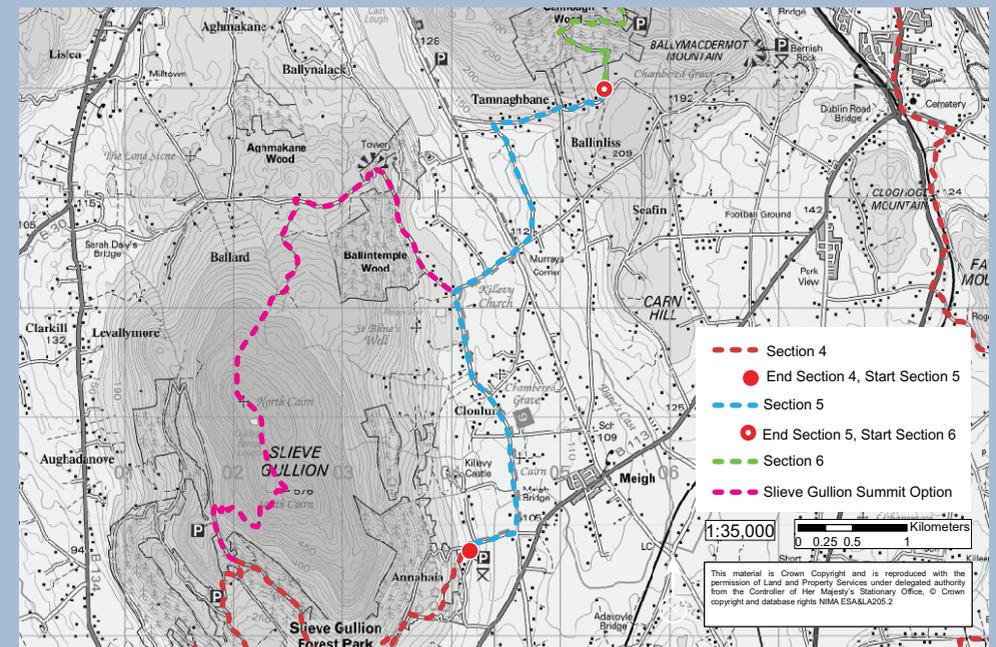
From the Courtyard Centre, descend along the exit driveway to reach a country road. Turn right here, then turn left at the next crossroads. Follow this road for roughly 2.5km, enjoying good views ahead to Camlough Mountain.

Turn right opposite Killeavy Old Church and begin to descend. Now take the third road on the left. Climb steadily along this narrow lane, then turn right at a T-junction.

Continue for 1km to reach the metal entry gate for Camlough Forest.



Camlough Forest





Craigmore Viaduct

Section 6 - 11.4km

A long descent from Camlough Mountain leads to a memorable final section beneath Craigmore Viaduct.



Entrance to Derrymore House

From the southern entrance to Camlough Forest, follow the old forest drive into the trees and begin to zig-zag up the mountain. Where the slopes are open near the top of the mountain, there are fine views over Newry and the ring dyke. Descend the northern slopes, then continue ahead along a narrow lane. There is now a good view over the numerous stone arches of the Craigmore Viaduct, your final goal of the route.

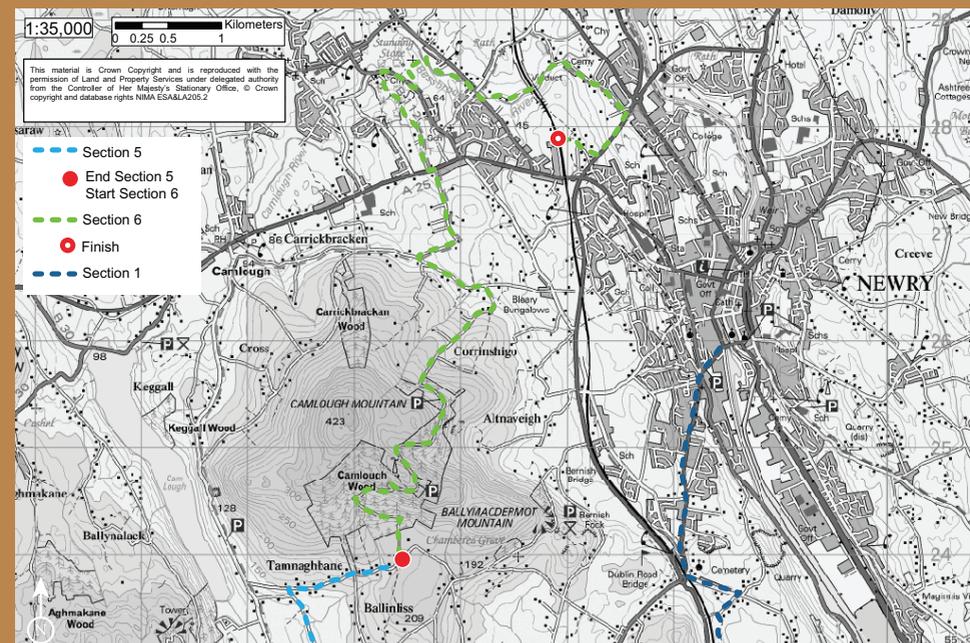
Turn left at a T-junction, then right down Limekiln Road. This brings you to the A25 road on the outskirts of Newry. Turn left, then quickly right to enter the grounds of Derrymore House, an eighteenth century, cottage-style house and demesne now owned by the National Trust. Head along the driveway towards the yellow, thatched cottage. Where the road turns left, continue ahead along a track. Pass between grassy pastures, then through the beautiful planted woodland of the estate grounds.

Now join a road and turn right. Around 250m later, head left along a track to a field. Cross the field, then keep right and follow a woodland path along the bank of Bessbrook River. Turn right onto a road and pass straight over a crossroads, then turn left onto a cycleway and footpath.

This continues alongside Bessbrook River, soon passing beneath the towering Craigmore Viaduct. Now turn right onto a lane, which brings you to the main A1 road. Turn right here, taking great care because traffic travels very quickly along the highway. After 600m, turn right to reach Newry train station, the official end point of the route.

Did You Know?

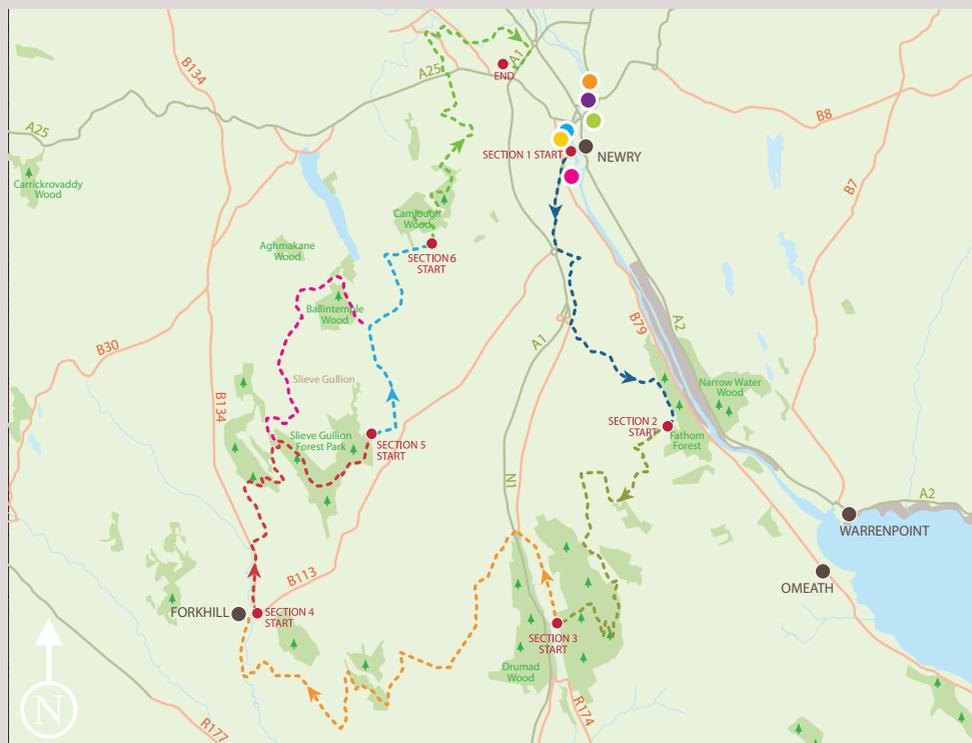
Craigmore Viaduct is a piece of Northern Irish engineering history. It was completed in 1852 to allow trains on the Dublin-Belfast line to span the Camlough River valley. It is around 400m long, and boasts 18 separate arches. The tallest arch is 38m high, making this the highest viaduct in Ireland.



Walker Friendly Accommodation

There are plenty of accommodation options in the Ring of Gullion area – from 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 route
- 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



- Butterfly B&B (2 ensuite rooms)
- Lismore House B&B (4 ensuite rooms)
- Marymount B&B (3 rooms, 1 ensuite)
- Canal Court Hotel (4 star, 112 ensuite rooms)
- Francis Court Hotel (16 ensuite rooms)
- Mourne Country Hotel (43 ensuite rooms)

Accommodation	Location	Telephone	Email/Website
Butterfly B&B	Newry	+44 (0)28 3084 9465	info@ontdekieerland.nl www.ontdekieerland.nl
Lismore House B&B	Newry	+44 (0)28 3026 1984	info@lismorehouse.com www.lismorehouse.com
Marymount B&B	Newry	+44 (0)28 3026 1099	patricia.ohare2@btinternet.com www.marymount.freesevers.com
Canal Court Hotel	Newry	+44 (0)28 3025 1234	manager@canalcourthotel.com www.canalcourthotel.com
Francis Court Hotel	Newry	+44 (0)28 3026 6926	www.therelicnewry.com
Mourne Country Hotel	Newry	+44 (0)28 3026 7922	mournecountryhotel@msn.com www.mournecountryhotel.com

Where to Eat

There is a range of eateries catering for all tastes in the Ring of Gullion area. Many are frequented by walkers – where backpacks and walking boots are very welcome! Please see below for places to eat along the route:

Newry

- The Bridge Bar – freshly prepared bar food and restaurant, +44 (0)28 3026 1777
- The Bank Bar and Bistro – bistro serving lunch and dinner, +44 (0)28 3083 5501
- Red Brasserie – restaurant serving breakfast, lunch and dinner, +44 (0)28 3083 3008
- Deli Lites – sandwich bar, +44 (0)28 3025 6000

Jonesborough

- Carrickdale Hotel – extensive bar snack menu and a la carte - 00353 (0)42 938 0900

Slieve Gullion / Meigh

- Grounded Slieve Gullion – breakfast, brunch and coffee shop, 0044 (0)28 3084 9786
- Murphys – Family run Irish Pub and Restaurant +44 (0)28 3084 8789

Bessbrook

- The Mill Café – coffee shop and restaurant, +44 (0)28 3083 8059

For a full list of where to eat in the Ring of Gullion area please contact the Newry 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. Walkers are always recommended to carry the relevant OSNI map.

Walking Providers

The Ring of Gullion Way is waymarked and should be straightforward to navigate. However, should you wish to explore the wider area including the Mourne or Cooley Mountains, contact one of the guides specialising in this area to guide you.

Name	Telephone	Email/Website
Mountain Sojourns	+44 (0) 77 4028 5794	info@mountainsojourns.co.uk www.mountainsojourns.co.uk
Outdoor Ireland North	+44 (0) 79 7340 8056	loretto@outdoorirelandnorth.co.uk www.outdoorirelandnorth.co.uk
Sean Phillips	00353 (0) 871312342	info@daleviewfurniture.com
Barbara Ferguson	+44 (0)28 3755 1119	info@guidedtoursireland.com www.guidedtoursireland.com
Kevin Murphy	+44 (0)28 3087 8453	kmmur@hotmail.com
Des Murphy	+44 (0) 78 4146 9510	murphydes1@yahoo.co.uk

Walkni.com

For further information on the Ring of Gullion 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.

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 Ring of Gullion 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 Newry +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 Information

Other Activities & Places to See

The Ring of Gullion is an ancient volcanic landscape and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, renowned for 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 Newry Tourist Information Centre (contact details below). For further details about the Ring of Gullion and the locality, please see www.ringofgullion.org.

Newry Tourist Information Centre

Bagenal's Castle,
Castle Street,
Newry,
BT34 2DA
Tel. +44 (0)28 3031 3170 www.newryandmourne.gov.uk
newrytic@newryandmourne.gov.uk

Outdoor Shops in the area

Tresspass
Performance outdoor clothing including rain jackets, camping equipment and more.
Unit 33, Buttercrane Shopping Centre, Buttercrane Quay, Newry, BT35 8HJ
Tel. +44 (0)2830 256 089

Public Transport

Newry is well served by buses from Belfast. Buses from Newry link Banbridge, Kilkeel, Rathfriland, Warrenpoint, Armagh, Whitecross, Bessbrook, Crossmaglen, Forkill and Portadown. Newry bus station is within 200 metres of the start point. Newry is also accessible by train, linking Belfast and Dublin, going via Lisburn and Moira.

The Slieve Gullion Rambler Bus Service runs from July to September each year, stopping at various points around the Ring of Gullion. Please see www.translink.co.uk for further information.

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 60s travel free on presentation of a valid SmartPass.

Taxis:

Sunshine Taxis, Camlough.....+44 (0)28 3083 9999
Village Taxis, Camlough.....+44 (0)28 3083 9100
Cross Cabs, Crossmaglen.....+44 (0)28 3086 8300
Killeen taxis, Killeen.....+44 (0)78 7931 4063

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.leaveonotraceireland.org.

For any questions on walking in Northern Ireland contact

Outdoor Recreation NI

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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