

# The Monaghan Way

Slí Mhuineacháin



The hilly highways and byways of County Monaghan are the perfect place for a relaxing walking holiday. You are always bound to meet a friendly face and are never too far removed from a place to eat and drink. As Patrick Kavanagh himself put it "A road, a mile of kingdom, I am king, of banks and stones and every blooming thing".

*Dympna Condra*

**Dympna Condra**  
**Monaghan Tourism**



# to get How to MonaghanTown



## Distances:

Dublin 120.5 km/ 75 miles  
Belfast 80 km/ 53 miles  
Larne 127.9km/ 79.5 miles  
Dun Laoghaire 143.4km/ 89.1 miles  
Shannon 261.8 km/ 162.7 miles  
Rosslare 282.8 km/ 175.7 miles  
Knock 164.1km/ 102 miles

## Transportation:

Coach/Bus  
Bus Eireann Public Bus Service -  
Monaghan Bus Station - tel: (047) 82377  
or log on to [www.buseireann.ie](http://www.buseireann.ie) for timetable information

McConnon Coaches - Service from Dublin. Tel: (047) 82020

Collins Coaches - Service from Dublin. Tel: (042) 966 1631  
or e-mail: [collinstravel@eircom.net](mailto:collinstravel@eircom.net)

## Train Service

Irish Rail Service to Dundalk - log on to [www.irishrail.ie](http://www.irishrail.ie) for  
timetable information. It will be necessary to then get a  
Taxi or take Bus Service to Monaghan.



# Monaghan

**Monaghan** is a lively town with some wonderful architecture that can best be appreciated on foot.

Incorporated by James I in 1613, Monaghan was once the base of the MacMahons who ruled this territory for centuries, setting up here formally in the 14th Century.

The 17th Century was a tempestuous one for Monaghan with power over it changing hands between the Irish and English several times before finally residing in English hands after the Williamite conquest of the early 1690s. For the next two centuries it was basically a Presbyterian town and a colonial centre of commerce and local government.

On Hill Street at the town centre is the County Museum, which is home to a vast array of historical artefacts, including the important Cross of Clogher dating from the 14th Century. The museum is the proud possessor of a prestigious Council of Europe Award for its outstanding historical displays.

St. Macartan's Cathedral was built in the neo-Gothic style in 1862 and contains interesting Stations of the Cross and tapestries. It was constructed using limestone from a local quarry near Old Cross Square.



# Monaghan

Other buildings of particular note around the town include the original 17th. century Market House, the Courthouse, St. Patrick's Church of Ireland, and the First Monaghan Presbyterian Church. The Rossmore Memorial and the Market Cross are also of historical interest.

There is a signed Heritage Trail in place in the town which includes these interesting buildings and a podcast of the tour is available for download on [www.monaghantourism.com](http://www.monaghantourism.com).

The town also boasts a Leisure Complex, a pitch & putt course and good shopping facilities. It also has excellent entertainment facilities with varied year-round programmes on offer at the Market House and the Garage Theatre.

Just south-west of Monaghan lies Rossmore Forest Park, the former estate of Robert Cunningham, MP for Monaghan (1769-1796). With its hardwood, broadleaf and conifer trees, mixed grasses, lakes and rivers and short loop walks, it is a popular local and visitor amenity. Within this beautiful setting is the Rossmore Golf Club which offers an exceptional 18-hole championship course.



# Worth a visit Castleshane & Clontibret

**Castleshane** is from “Caisleán an tSiáin” after the gaelic chieftain Shane O’Neill. It was an old estate that now offers gentle forest walks. The landlord of Castleshane in 1702, Edward Lucas, was one of the first landlords in the country to react to the opportunity to sell Irish linen duty free in England. Monaghan county was very well suited to linen production.

**Clontibret** takes its name from the Irish “Cluain Tiobrad” meaning “the meadow of the little well.” It was the site of an important battle in 1595 between the forces of the Tyrone Chieftain, Hugh O’Neill and those of Queen Elizabeth I led by Sir Henry Bagenal. It was a resounding victory for Irish forces in what became known as the 9-Year War.

**The Wild Life & Heritage Centre** at Listinny, Clontibret displays one of the largest privately owned collections of mounted birds and mammals in Ireland. There is also an interesting display of vintage machinery. Please phone in advance to arrange a visit.



# Mullyash

**Mullyash** or “Mullach na hÁiseanna” meaning “the hilltop of the forest” has a large cairn (hill of stones) on its summit. It is likely that it covers a passage tomb from megalithic times. It faces north-eastwards towards similar megaliths on the summit of Slieve Gullion. “Sliabh gCuillinn” or “mountain of the steep slopes” has volcanic origins. The mountain we see today is the eroded core of a volcano that was active here around 58 million years ago. The Harvest festival of Lughnasa was celebrated with gusto on Mullyash summit – there are many accounts of games, music, laughter and courtship here from the 19th Century.



# Castleblayney

**Castleblayney** was founded on the site of an early Christian Church and the area was originally controlled by the local Hanratty chieftains.

Legend has it that St. Patrick visited the area on foot of an invitation from King Eóghan of the local kingdom of Uí Méith, and proceeded to raise his grandfather from his grave in order to baptize him before reburying him.

The town was built in 1607 by the Blayney family and the Courthouse, Market House and Church of Ireland church were added in the late 18th, early 19th centuries. The Blayneys were a Plantation family granted the lands here by Sir Henry Bagenal.





# Castleblayney

Castleblayney's Gaelic name is "Baile na Lorgan" meaning "Town of the Hill" and the English placed great strategic importance on it in the 16th and 17th Centuries as it was equidistant from Armagh, Newry and Monaghan.

The town flourished as a centre of the linen industry in the 18th century.

At the edge of Lough Muckno is Hope Castle, built near the site of the original Castle Blayney. It's named after the banker, Henry Hope, the one-time owner of the then largest diamond in the world – the Hope Diamond. Now residing at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History, it weighs in at 45.52 carats (9 grams).

Henry Hope bought the estate in 1870 and it is now part of Lough Muckno Park which incorporates a Waterski and Wakeboarding Centre, forest, picnic areas and is also an important angling water for the region.

Other activities in the area include bowling, clay-pigeon shooting and two wonderfully scenic and challenging golf courses. The Lontas Centre offers a varied year-round programme of music and drama. In nearby Annyalla, Swallow Studios and A Healthy Choice Spa, are well worth a visit.



# Inniskeen

**Inniskeen** was the birthplace in 1904 of the poet and novelist, Patrick Kavanagh. Places such as “Shancoduff Farm” or “My black Shanco” and “Kednaminsha School”, which are associated with the poets’s work, are all clearly signposted.

The Patrick Kavanagh Rural and Literary Resource Centre, located in the church where he attended Mass, interprets the area’s geology, mythology and history. Visitors can also access the adjacent graveyard where the poet is buried. The annual “Patrick Kavanagh Weekend” is a major literary festival which takes place in Inniskeen each November.



# Inniskeen

Inis Caoin – the pleasant island – might seem like an odd name for the village of Inniskeen that we know today, but at the time of its christening there was an island in the river Fane that gave rise to the name. A monastery under the tutelage of St. Daig sprung up here in the 6th Century and it is thought that St. Columba (Colmille) blessed the monastery at its foundation. Its site is marked by the stump of a Round Tower in the village. During the 12th century, Augustinian monks built a second monastery beside the Norman motte that still exists today and overlooks the village. Other activities nearby include Quad Biking and Pitch & Putt.



# Landscape & Ecology

The landscape of much of Monaghan is characterised by small, rounded hills from which the county takes its gaelic name, Muineachán. These hills are known as drumlins and were moulded into shape as the great ice sheets of the last Ice Age advanced over this area around 18,000 years ago. The word “drumlin” is derived from the gaelic “droimnín”. For centuries farming has been the dominant land use in the Monaghan countryside and it has contributed handsomely to the attractive rural landscape we see today. For instance, hedgerows play a very important role in the landscape heritage of the county and they have survived because of various farming needs e.g. they contain and provide shelter for livestock as well as acting as windbreaks for crops; they mark boundaries as well as providing colour and character to the landscape. In addition, hedgerows are a habitat for a variety of wildlife. It is generally believed that the wider the variety of tree, shrub and wild flower species existing in a hedgerow the older it is. Some of the hedgerows that you pass as you walk the Monaghan Way could be over 300 years old. Some might even be the last remnants of the great deciduous forests that once covered most of the Irish countryside.



# Wildlife

There is plenty of wildlife to be found along the Monaghan Way; of course, you'd have to walk silently and spend patient time at intervals looking out for it. Foxes, fearless and feared predators, are abundant. The Irish Hare is also quite plentiful along the route. A sub-species of the blue or Arctic Hare they find ample opportunity for shelter and cover amid the gentle rolling countryside here. The Reed Bunting is a sparrow-sized, slim, farmland and wetland bird with a long, deeply notched tail. The male has a black head with a white collar. The Grey Heron can often be seen at the edge of the rivers and lakes along the route. Often standing quite motionless it can sometimes be mistaken for a crane. It breeds amid a colony of nests built on tree-tops. Cormorants too have found their way here inland from their more natural coastal habitats. They can be seen sometimes along the lakes and rivers spreading their wings to dry or hanging over the waters, their wings flapping furiously. That most elegant of birds - the Swan - is often seen too. You may or may not hear them singing but if you do, take note of the tone and depth remembering that some of the ancient greats like Aristotle and Socrates believed that the singing prowess of the swan was enhanced as death approaches, giving rise to the idea of the swan song - the final performance!



# Monaghan to Castleblayney

## **Trail Overview / *Achoimre ar an gConair*:**

The Monaghan Way is a long-distance walking route that explores just some of county Monaghan's rich heritage. The walk is a stimulating combination of quiet country roads, cross-country trekking, riverside walkways and lakeshore approaches. The perfect way to enjoy the Monaghan countryside, the walk mixes gentle sloping hill gradients with flat stretches of open countryside. There are no long or steep climbs and the route reaches a maximum altitude of 317m at the summit of Mullyash. The walk from Monaghan to Inniskeen is **40 miles/64km** in length and should be tackled over two or three days. The Monaghan Town to Castleblayney section is **25.5miles/41km** long. For the fit individual it is possible to walk this section in one day. However it is also possible to split the walk across two days by stopping either at Castleshane or at the battle of Clontibret site and booking transport from (and back to) the route for the two day circuit.

**Nearest town this section / *An Baile is gaire - an chuid seo*:** Monaghan

**Start / *Tús*:** The starting point for the walk is at St Macartan's Cathedral. From the Cathedral grounds follow the Dublin road until you reach McElvaney's Garage. Just after the garage, turn left onto a small by-road where you pick up the Monaghan Way route signage

**Finish / *Críoch*:** Castleblayney;

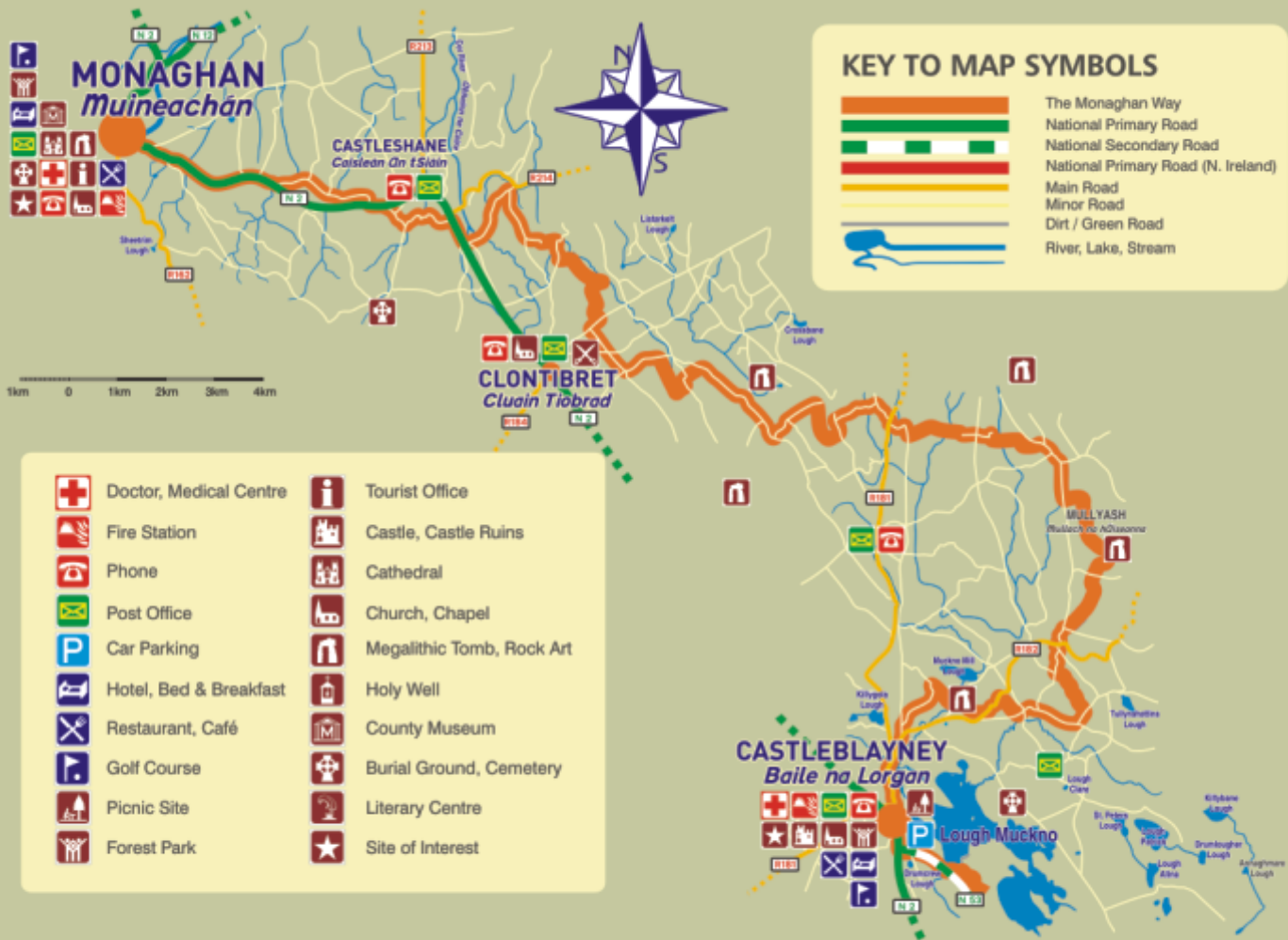
**Grade / *Céim dheacrachta*:** Moderate

**Points of Interest this section / *Bail Suintais*:** Heritage Trail Monaghan Town; Rossmore Forest Park and walks; Castleshane; Battle of Clontibret site; Mullyash cairn; Wildlife along the route

**Route Shape / *Cruth an Bhealaigh*:** Linear;

**Route Type / *Cineál Bealaigh*:** Country roads, cross-country trekking, riverside and lakeside





# Castleblayney - Inniskeen,

## **Trail Overview / Achoimre ar an gConair:**

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**Nearest town this section / An Baile is gaire - an chuid seo:** Castleblayney

**Start / Tús:** If starting this section from Castleblayney then proceed east along Muckno Street and through the gates of Lough Muckno Park. Take the first turn on your right to pick up the Monaghan Way signage.

**Finish / Críoch:** Inniskeen

**Grade / Céim dheacrachta:** Moderate

**Points of Interest this section / Bail Suintais:** Patrick Kavanagh Centre; Round Tower; Lough Muckno Park

**Route Shape / Cruth an Bhealaigh:** Linear

**Route Type / Cineál Bealaigh:** Country roads, cross-country trekking, riverside and lakeside, abandoned railway line.







- |  |                        |  |                           |
|--|------------------------|--|---------------------------|
|  | Doctor, Medical Centre |  | Tourist Office            |
|  | Fire Station           |  | Castle, Castle Ruins      |
|  | Phone                  |  | Cathedral                 |
|  | Post Office            |  | Church, Chapel            |
|  | Car Parking            |  | Megalithic Tomb, Rock Art |
|  | Hotel, Bed & Breakfast |  | Holy Well                 |
|  | Restaurant, Café       |  | County Museum             |
|  | Golf Course            |  | Burial Ground, Cemetery   |
|  | Picnic Site            |  | Literary Centre           |
|  | Forest Park            |  | Site of Interest          |

### KEY TO MAP SYMBOLS

- |  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
|  | The Monaghan Way                   |
|  | National Primary Road              |
|  | National Secondary Road            |
|  | National Primary Road (N. Ireland) |
|  | Main Road                          |
|  | Minor Road                         |
|  | Dirt / Green Road                  |
|  | River, Lake, Stream                |

### Walkers Checklist

1. Have you checked today's weather forecast?
2. Do you have suitable clothing for the expected weather, the time of year and the type of walk you are planning.
3. Do you have enough food and drink for the day?
4. Do you have a map or guide for your intended walk?  
The following OS maps are required: 28B, 35 and 36.
5. Have you left details of your planned walk with someone reliable?

### Walkers Country Code

- Plan Ahead and be Prepared
- Be Considerate to all who live in, work and visit the countryside
- Respect private property – always leave gates as you find them
- Respect and protect all plants and animals
- Keep pets under close control
- Keep children under close supervision at all times
- Dispose of Waste properly
- Minimise the Effects of Fire
- If driving, park smart



# Useful Contact Details

**Wildlife & Heritage Centre** Tel: +353 47 80632

**A Healthy Choice Spa & Clinic** Tel: +353 47 80222

**Swallow Studios** Tel: +373 42 9746614

**Blayney Bowls** Tel: +373 42 9745555

**Inniskeen Pitch & Putt** Tel: + 353 42 9378230

**Irish Country Quads** Tel: + 353 42 9378997

**Castlebayney Golf Club** Tel: + 353 42 9749485

**Rossmore Golf Club** Tel: + 353 47 71222

**Quads, Monaghan Leisure Complex** Tel: + 353 47 81734

**Monaghan Valley Pitch & Putt** Tel: + 353 47 84928

**Monaghan County Museum** Tel: + 353 47 82928

**The Garage Theatre** Tel: + 353 47 81597

**The Market House** Tel: + 353 47 38158

**Sam More Open Farm** Tel. + 353 47 57397

**The Iontas Centre** Tel: + 353 42 9753400

**Mourne Clay Shooting Ground** Tel: + 353 42 9745953

**Monaghan Tourist Office**

at Monaghan Leisure Complex

Clones Road

Monaghan

Tel: + 353 47 81122 (May to October)

[www.monaghantourism.com](http://www.monaghantourism.com)

**Fáilte Ireland North West,**

Temple Street, Sligo.

Tel: + 353 71 91 61201

[www.irelandnorthwest.ie](http://www.irelandnorthwest.ie)

**Patrick Kavanagh**

**Rural and Literary Resource Centre**

Tel: +353 42 9378560

e-mail: [infoatpkc@eircom.net](mailto:infoatpkc@eircom.net)

[www.patrickkavanaghcountry.com](http://www.patrickkavanaghcountry.com)

Every care has been taken to ensure accuracy in the compilation of this guide, Monaghan County Council, Monaghan Tourism, All Visual Solutions its servants or agents are not liable for any loss, injury or damage which may arise.

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