

THE PURE MILE ANNACURRA



7/1/2013

A project by Annacurra
Community Development
Committee

The Pure Mile Annacurra

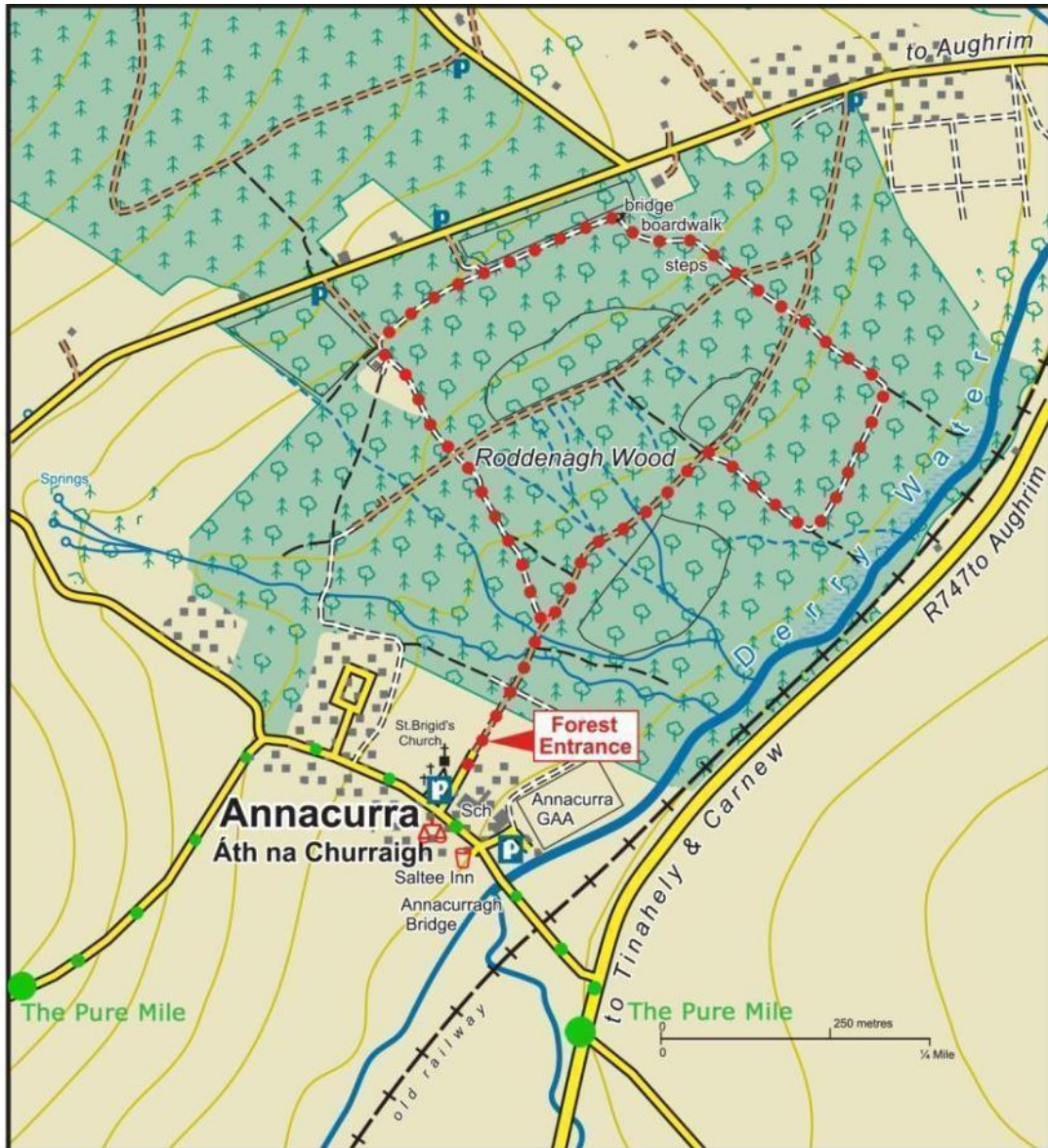
BACKGROUND TO OUR PROJECT

Annacurra Community Development Committee

Our committee was set up in 2009 to focus on 'not for profit' projects for the benefit of Annacurra and its wider communities. The committee is made up of local volunteers voted in by the community at the AGM, a great cross section of people who together with the volunteers possess many and varied talents. Our first project was The Ciarán Shannon Walk, situated in the heart of Annacurra it was 2.5km of walkway through Roddenagh Woods, it took us four years to complete from initial planning stage liaising with Coillte to its official opening in 2012. Over this period of time we raised over €20,000, enough to finance the construction of the walkway with boardwalks and bridges, we have been told it is the best example of a community built walkway in the country as all the work was carried out on a voluntary basis with only supplies and materials being paid for. The standard of workmanship second to none.

Having finished our first project we had put together a great team of people, rather than let the momentum pass we decided to pursue another project almost immediately. We had heard about The Pure Mile initiative and thought this was a great opportunity to enhance our village and tackle a few areas of the community that we knew could benefit from our combined talents and efforts. We also felt it was a great opportunity to get the whole community involved, from the school children to the older generation; everyone could have an opinion and help in our efforts for The Pure Mile.

MAP OF THE PURE MILE ANNACURRA



- | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|---|--|
|  | Príomhbhóthar / Main Road |  | Carrchlós / Car Park |  | Réadmhaoine Coillte / Coillte Properties |
|  | Mionbhóthar / Minor Road |  | Ball páirceála / Parking Spot |  | Foraois Crann Buaircínigh |
|  | Bóthar Foraoise / Forest Road |  | Láthair Oidhreacht / Heritage Site |  | Conifer Forest |
|  | Raon Foraoise / Forest Track |  | Láthair Phicnicí / Picnic Area |  | Foraois Crann leathanduilleacha |
|  | Cosán / Path |  | Bia agus Deochanna / Refreshments | | Broadleaf Forest |
|  | Ionad Amhairc / Viewpoint | | | | |
-
- | | | | |
|---|---------------------|---|---|
|  | Lúb Ciaran Shannon |  | The Pure Mile, starts at the postbox on the Tinahely Road up through Annacurra Village finishing at the junction with Kilballyowen. |
| | Ciaran Shannon Walk | | |

OUR PURE MILE

We decided our Pure Mile would start at the post box at the crossroads of Annacurra, then turn into towards the village, over the railway and smaller bridge, up through the village, up the hill overlooking the valley and finishing at the junction meeting the townland of Killballyowen.

When we first took on this project we instantly knew the key areas which we wanted to address and the key areas were agreed at a general meeting in March 2013;

- The general area of Annacurra crossroads.
- The fencing at the crossroads of Annacurra.
- The Railway bridge and River bridge coming into the village of Annacurra.
- General tidy of the village
- The Holy Year Cross.



Pictured Left to right – The Post Box in Annacurra, the gate and fencing beside the postbox in need of replacement.



March 2013 – Annacurra Crossroads, dilapidated fencing, out of date road signage and generally upkept after years of neglect.



March 2013 – Annacurra Crossroads on the Aughrim side, again generally upkept and not an appropriate introduction to our village.



March 2013 – photos of the railway bridge which is the first bridge you go over coming into the village of Annacurra from the Tinahely road.





March 2013 - more photographs of The Railway Bridge which shows years of overgrowth





March 2013 – a view from the top of the railway bridge into the village of Annacurra





March 2013 - Two beautiful Wrought Iron gates to the railway, dated we think circa 1890 -1900





March 2013 – an old structure beside Carr’s shop due for demolition, the owners said it was a great incentive to do this to coincide with The Pure Mile



March 2013 – present – The area opposite the church in Annacurra, owned by someone who doesn’t live in the village, unfortunately the owner was non – cooperative to our endeavors and our committee weren’t allowed to touch anything along this small stretch.



The Holy Year Cross which sits on top of the hill overlooking the valley and the village of Annacurra

WORK COMMENCES

After all the rain early in 2013 we finally began work at the end of May. We agreed that we would start off by working every Saturday and if anyone wanted to join in they could do so, we kept everyone informed by text, there were a lot of people who couldn't physically help but were very much part of the project, especially the older generation who had waited to see improvements in the village for a long time.

Annacurra Crossroads

Annacurra Crossroads is where 90% of traffic approach Annacurra, over the years this has become overgrown and for people passing on the main road they would never have any idea that there is a picturesque village situated just over the bridge. The land on both sides of the bridge which meet the main road is owned by a man who lives in a different locality and has it rented out to a local farmer. Over the years the fencing has become dilapidated, the wood is rotten and various sections have been patched up along the 195metres of fencing. We approached the owner and he kindly said we could do whatever we wanted to clean up the piece of land.



FENCING

We all unanimously agreed we should try and replace the fencing, member of our group volunteered to build the fence and a local supplier of wood gave us a discounted rate for all of the wood required and two new wooden gates.

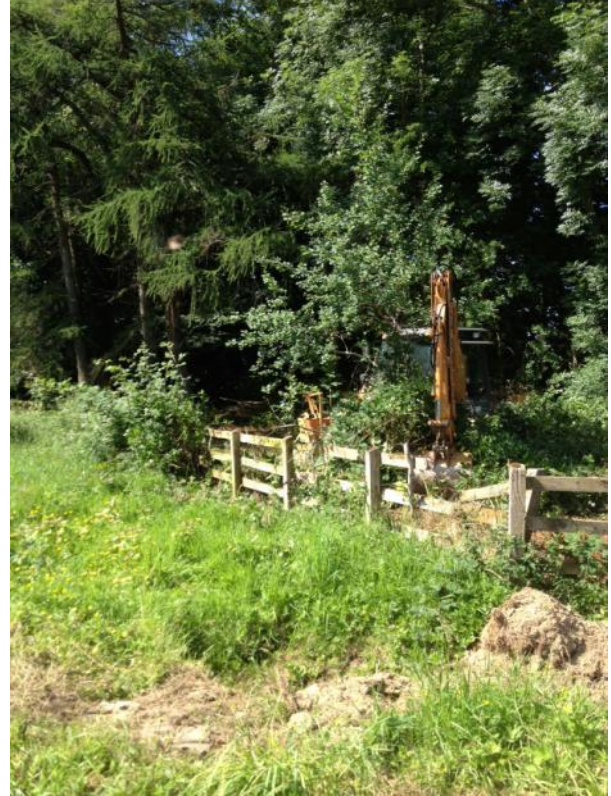


May 2013 – Clearing back the overgrowth at Annacurra Crossroads

The first job was to clear away years of overgrowth;

- The overgrowth had caused problems for years as it impaired car drivers vision when driving from Annacurra onto the busy main road.
- It covered the view of the beautiful old beech trees which once lined the old road into Annacurra (from the postbox straight to the bridge).
- It had become a dumping ground for bottles, tyres, old election posters.

We spent a full day taking the rubbish out of this section, we had to use a chainsaw to get at the overgrowth and then a local digger driver volunteered to clear the inside of the fence away allowing us to take down the old fence and replace it with the new one.



June 2013 – above – Gerry Doyle and TJ Doyle working on clearing away for fencing



July 2013 – the old fence is taken down, on right Noel Shannon carrying the new fencing



July 2013 – left – Our new wooden gate and on right – some of the fencing team!



July 2013 – left – Alan and Jonathan Byrne volunteered with their post driver to help with fencing, right – the first section of 100metres of fence was completed in one day.



July 2013 – left Alan Byrne in his tractor, Adrian and Noel Shannon look on, right: Jonathan Byrne, Tony Doyle and Willy Shannon



Above: left – Willy Shannon, Noel Shannon, Tony Doyle and Jonathan Byrne with Joe Kelly, Nigel O’Toole, Darragh Harpur and Adrian Shannon in the background. Right: Noel Shannon and Adrian Shannon trying to bend a plank while discussions go on in the background.



July 2013 – above left – Dermot Byrne and Padraig O'Connell, right: Jack O'Toole, Joe Kelly, Alan Byrne, Willie Shannon, Tony Doyle, Nigel O'Toole and Jonathan Byrne take a break.

Below; Willy Shannon and TJ Doyle, these days and evenings of work were a social occasion also!





August 2013 – some views of Crossroads Annacurra as it now looks, new fencing, clearing of years of overgrowth, grass cut and years of hidden rubbish cleared away.

THE RAILWAY BRIDGE AND THE NARROW BRIDGE

There was a time if you stood at Annacurra crossroads you could see into the village without any obstruction, you could see the beautiful stonework on the bridges, you could walk down from the wrought iron gates and sit beside the river. This is only about 30 years ago when some of us were school children, we remembered it well. When we began our project we committed to try and bring back the bridge to its former glory, little did we know the task ahead, maybe just as well we didn't!!

Our aims;

- To access the river and under the railway bridge again, they were inaccessible due to years of overgrowth.
- To tackle the growth on the bridge, the ivy which had set deep rooted into the stonework and causing some stones to shift.
- To cut back new trees compromising the foundation of the walls and bridge.
- To uncover the beautiful side walls which meet the bridge.
- To restore the antique wrought iron gates so they could be used again.



May 2013 – from left; Brian Moran, Darragh Harpur, Dermot Byrne, Fr. James Hammel, Breda O'Neill, Declan Byrne and Killian Byrne.



May 2013 – above left – Killian Byrne, Dermot Byrne & Joe Kelly, above right – a normal Saturday morning scene in Annacurra for summer 2013. Below left – Tom Dalton, Below right – Pdraig O’Connell and Mick Lott.





June 2013 – above left – Joe Kelly trying to get to grips with 30 years of overgrowth. Above right – Jack O'Toole and Brian Moran tackle the ivy.





Above left - the magnificent brick and steel detail underneath the railway bridge, right - Padraig O'Connell, Fr James Hammel and Jim Hedderman have a look underneath.

It took at least two months working every Saturday and Wednesday evening to bring the growth on the bridge under control. The extent of growth of ivy was so bad it was recommended that we spray with an environmentally friendly spray which could be used with rivers, which is what we did. Also underneath the bridge was doing an equal if not more damage, we were shocked at how many stones were coming loose and how much repair was required, some trees were actually growing in through the side walls of the bridge. We cleared away as much as we could in the given time frame but this is an ongoing process. The Railway Bridge is now on Wicklow County Council's list of needing urgent attention after it was looked at by Mr Paul Byrne. There is still a lot of work to do on The Railway Bridge and we look forward to continuing this in 2014.



Above – June 2013 – Joe Kelly, Jack O’Toole and TJ Doyle try to clear away growth from the delicate side walls of the railway bridge with digger driver Gerry Doyle working underneath.



GATES

There are two beautiful wrought iron gates on the bridge, one of each side between the railway bridge and the narrow bridge. When we started our project these gates hadn't been opened in years, they were embedded into the ground, they needed to be restored, they needed new 'spud stones' at the base for them to open and close and they needed a good cleaning. Jim Hedderman took this project upon himself, as an experienced welder he was delighted with the challenge and we were very grateful to have his experience and expertise.



March 2013 - The wrought Iron Gates on the Bridge and below July 2013





July 2013 – New ‘spud’ stones and welding on the base of each gates which sees them functioning again after over 30 years.



August 2013 – above left – Luke Hedderman helping his Dad Jim finish off the Wrought Iron Gates.



August 2013 - Our new view over The Railway Bridge in Annacurra and below the other side





August 2013 - Our beautiful restored Antique Wrought Iron Gates.



August 2013 - The view into the village of Annacurra

SOME HISTORY – THE FITZWILLIAM RAILWAY

The article below is taken from a history of the Woodenbridge to Shillelagh railway, the full article appeared in the June 1986 issue of 'Journal of the Irish Railway Record Society' written by Gerard Hayden. The train only stopped in Annacurra once, on the occasion of St. Brigid's Church in 1865, there is a platform still visible underneath the railway bridge which was erected just for this occasion. Since we've started taking the overgrowth away and can walk underneath we are becoming more inquisitive as to the history.

At a meeting of the Dublin, Wicklow and Wexford Railway company on 23rd May 1860, it was decided to pay Earl Fitzwilliam the sum of £585 compensation for the houses, roads and bridges on his land required for the railway extension between Rathdrum and Gorey. The sum was later increased by £90, a final payment in view of extra demands by his Lordship in relation to forestry valuation, and a hint that he was hoping to bring a branch line to his home town of Shillelagh.

The matter of a branch line from Woodenbridge to Shillelagh was discussed at several DW&WR Board meetings and on 12th October 1862, one of the directors, on behalf of Lord Fitzwilliam, agreed to offer the land for the railway line free of charge and to subscribe to the cost of putting a Bill through Parliament. The secretary was instructed to see Lord Meath, who was Fitzwilliam's agent, and to learn his views on the matter and on the 16th October a reply was received, confirming the offer mentioned, that the company should at once go to parliament to promote approval of the Bill for the 16.5mile long branch line. The promotion of the Bill to become an Act was successful, and in June 1863 it passed into law, but it needed a second Act that following year to adjust some minor details.

In March 1864 construction commenced and progressed so well that Aughrim was reached by June of the same year, Ballinglen by September, and Tinahely was reached in January 1865. The entire line to Shillelagh was completed on 3rd July 1865.

When the branch line was officially opened in 1865 large crowds assembled at the four stations to welcome the entourage who travelled on the first train. At Aughrim the town band played on the platform and an address of welcome was read. The most enthusiastic welcome was at Shillelagh where an address of welcome was delivered by Lord Fitzwilliam.

The construction of the line proved to be fully justified, as throughout its existence, commercial and social activities were catered for. Regular and special trains catered for fairs, markets, football matches, race meetings, religious outings and demonstrations. Cheap fares for shopping and leisure were the norm.

Tinahely Station was built for £530. It had been considered as a possible junction for a line to Hacketstown, but despite lobbying in Parliament and requests from local interest groups the Board of the railway did not favour the idea. As a gesture of goodwill towards the people concerned the directors of the company travelled to Tinahely to explain their reasons for the decision and informed a meeting that they intended to cater for all types of traffic and to give precedence of the carriage of grain to either Aughrim or Dublin. A special grain loading bank was constructed and 12 ordinary goods wagons were converted to grain carriers. Tinahely was regarded as a good station for business and in 1872 the railway company increased its donation to the local races from £10 to £20.



Train entering Aughrim Station in June 1939.

Aughrim and Ballinglen stations cost £490 and £90 respectively. In the case of Aughrim the complex consisted of a Station House, one platform 250ft long, a cattle bank which held 18 wagon, a goods store which catered for 3 wagons at a time, a carriage dock, and a down siding wagon loads of goods traffic. The station handled grain, pollard, flour, livestock, beer and spirits, sundries, mail and newspapers. It's main feature was a loop line 470 yards long which ran across the Aughrim River to Fogartys Mill.

Up to 1912 five passenger trains per day ran in each direction between Woodenbridge and Shillelagh, while during the summer months a Sunday service of two trains each way ran to connect with the up-down Harcourt St. to Wexford passenger service. Livestock provided a steady income, especially on Wednesdays when wagonloads of cattle and sheep were transported for the Dublin weekly markets. On Fair Days an engine and brake van left Bray at 11am and returned for 3pm with laden wagons for various destinations. The largest daily input recorded from Tinahely and Aughrim was 20 and 22 wagons respectively.

The influenza epidemic of 1918/19 took its toll throughout the country and the railways were not excepted. At Shillelagh the station master, plate layer and assistant guard all died from flu and at Tinahely the station master and ganger, while at Aughrim and Woodenbridge both station masters died from the flu epidemic. Only Ballinglen station escaped without fatalities.

In 1940, due to petrol rationing, rail traffic increased and things looked decidedly bright for the Railways, but in 1941 a coal crisis in Britain was imminent, due to the war. The first sign of decline was on the 28th July 1941, when services on the branch were reduced from three to two each way, serving all stations and also running as a mixed passenger/goods service. Subsequently, the left one driver and fireman at Shillelagh. In 1911 there had been three of each category based at the terminus

Things steadily deteriorated as another fuel crisis worsened the already difficult position of the country in respect of food and energy supplies, and notices appeared in the daily newspapers which stated that it was necessary to withdraw rail services on 23rd April 1944 from several parts of the railway network, including the Woodenbridge to Shillelagh branch line. The last passenger train to run between Shillelagh and Woodenbridge was the 8.40am up, returning at 12 noon. The section was cleared of all wagons on Monday 24th April, it was stated, that it was hoped to re-open the line as soon as coal stocks permitted. But this never happened.

VILLAGE OF ANNACURRA



The Entrance to The Ciaran Shannon Walk in Roddenagh Woods where we trimmed the entrance grass and verges.



Some photographs from the village.

In the village of Annacurra there wasn't any tasks that we could undertake apart from ensuring it was kept litter free and as tidy as possible. Everyone co-operated with this and the village has a new awareness thanks to The Pure Mile.



February 2013 - an old building which was due for demolition, the owners ensured its replacement was up for The Pure Mile.



August 2013 - Donal Byrne strimming grass verges in preparation for The Pure Mile.

ST. BRIGIDS NATIONAL SCHOOL



With thanks to Ian Davis from The Pure Project the children in the local national school all watched the DVD's from PURE, this was great inspiration for them as they were given the task of designing the temporary signage at each end of The Pure Mile. They were asked to design posters which would be incorporated into the sign, all of which would be put up on our Facebook Page.



Artwork by Isabella NiChonail - St. Brigids National School



Top - artwork by CJ O'Neill, Bottom - artwork by Eoghan Murphy -both used for our signage

For our temporary signage we used wood, we asked Cathal Quigley who is a local artist who burns pictures and text onto wood to put the children's artwork onto two panels of wood. Local carpenter Richie Doyle voluntarily made up frames for the signs and one was placed on each end of our pure mile.



TOP SECTION OF OUR MILE

As you drive up through the village of Annacurra you veer to the left which takes you up the hill overlooking the valley and the beautiful scenery. It's a fabulous place to stop the car and take in the view, so much so there is a spot specifically for cars to do so. You can see from the left The Sugar Loaf, a view of Aughrim, Croghan Kinsella straight ahead with the townlands of Killacoran, Kilpipe, Toberpatrick all in full view. To the right a view towards Ballinglen and Tinahely. It's a beautiful view. We didn't have to do anything of any great significance up here, we trimmed the grass verges and we tidied up the Holy Year Cross but this is temporary as we plan to do a full re-paint of this in 2014.



The gorgeous view from the hill overlooking Annacurra, the top of our Pure Mile



*The Holy Year Cross, we tidied it up and replanted flowers,
we plan a full refurbishment for 2014*



*August 2013 – the Grass verges which we tidied up, careful not to disturb the hedgerow with
it's wild flowers, ferns and blackberries!!*

CONCLUSION

Our project has gathered pace from when we initially put in our application form last December, there were only a couple of people involved, since we started work we found more and more people just turned up and are not eager to build on what we have started this year. We are happy with the work we have completed but know there is plenty more to do in our little village, our bridge is an ongoing project, we have other ideas we would like to implement and hopefully will do so in 2014.



Photo left – Jimmy Cullen who has been helping source a suitable stone which could be engraved to put at the entrance to the village, this is an ongoing mission but it's been narrowed down! Photo right – Darragh Harpur and his son Euan busy stirring grass and picking up rubbish.

A big thank you to all our helpers!!

Committee Members; Tom Dalton, Fr. James Hammel, Linda Hannay

Volunteers	Alan Byrne	Joe Kelly	Willy Shannon
	Jonathan Byrne	Breda O'Neill	Mick Lott
	Donal Byrne	Jack O'Toole	Michael Duffy
	Christina Byrne	Padraig O'Connell	Irene Ni Chonail
	Dermot Byrne	Jim Hedderman	Ann Byrne
	Declan Byrne	Luke Hedderman	Seadna MacSeoin
	Killian Byrne	Darragh Harpur	Jimmy Cullen
	Tony Doyle	Ewan Harpur	
	TJ Doyle	Brian Moran	
	Gerry Doyle	Dorothy Shannon	
	Richie Doyle	Noel Shannon	
	Tom Doyle	Adrian Shannon	

Thanks to Abbeylawn Garden Products