Welcome to the Cavan Way

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Cavan, Fermanagh and Leitrim are ideal for walking.

With a vast array of terrains, mountains, lakes, forest and castle walks there is something to suit all strengths, abilities and interests.

Emergencies:
In the event of an emergency call 999 or 112. Tourist Information: There are a wide variety of activities and attractions on offer in the Geopark and the wider Cavan area.

To find out more visit;
The Market House Tourist Information Centre, Blacklion, Co. Cavan.
T: (+353) 719853943

Tourist Information/tea & coffee and walking guides/maps available.

USEFUL INFORMATION

Maps:
Relevant OSI Map - Discovery Series Map 26.
It is recommended that walkers always carry relevant OSI map.

Clothing:
Be prepared for changeable weather conditions. Ensure you have waterproof/windproof clothing as well as sturdy boots.

Toilet Information:
There are a wide variety of activities and attractions on offer in the Geopark and the wider Cavan area.

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This is Cavan!

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SECTION 1 - BLACKLION TO SHANNON POT (13KM)

BLACKLION TO CAVAN BURREN PARK

The Cavan Way runs approximately from north-east to south-west. The name Blacklion originated from an inn – the earliest records of which date to 1777. The route starts from the Market House, going south from Blacklion, towards Crossroads, rising steeply, then falling before rising again to make a sharp turn right (H031/375).

Head west now for about 1 1/2 km there are already wide views north over Lough Macchain, into Feighman, before a turn left is made, going south again, up a narrow, steep tarmac road, which ends at a farmstead, reached by a fork left (H076/385).

The cliff which dominates the skyline to south east as you climb is the Hanging Rock. A large rock which was blown down ‘the night of the big wind’ in 1839, was once balanced on the edge of the cliff, hence the name.

From the gate east of the farmyard, the Cavan Way goes uphill to the right, over grazing fields, keeping near stile walking on the right until the broad crest of the hill is reached (H076/360).

The view here ranges, not only over Upper and Lower Lough Macchain and Feighman, but also west to Dowra and North-Liffin Mountains, while to the north-west in clear weather the summits of South Benalee are seen. This remarkable section of the trail goes past a considerable stretch of limestone pavement similar to that in the Burren, Co. Clare. Over the grassy crest the Way continues southwards, with views ahead to Cuilcagh Mountain and Tithribane, rising above a belt of forest.

Following the signpost for Cavan way passing Laghenvaikloops and the promontory fort before ascending up the Giant’s Leap – a mystical pre-glacial relict dry river valley.

This leads up north-east to a small gravel plateau where a very fine wedge tomb is seen – traditionally the burial place of a giant who collapsed and died after attempting a second jump across the ‘Giant’s Leap’. This structure is marked as one of a group of megalithic tombs, on 1/20000 Sheet 36, at H091/351.

CAVAN BURREN PARK TO SHANNON POT

The Way goes downhill from this steep ridge to the south-east corner of the forest, through an old stone wall looking down into the hollow of Leghag, with a view eastward away into Feighman. The route goes down steeply to a quiet public road and then west for about 1.5 km to reach Ledgeenan Crossroads (H068/338).

The impressive northern face of Cuilcagh recalls that this was a major station for the original Ordnance Survey. Survey Ireland of 1828.

Beside Leghag Cross the former Moneygash post office, beside a abandoned limestone quarry. Moneygash means ‘the Thicket of the Cashel’. The thicket is gone and of three original cashels only one now remains in good condition, 800m west, off the Way. This is also a UNESCO Geopark site.

100m west behind the quarry is the remains of a sweathouse, last used in 1939. In it a turf fire would be set alight for six hours until the stone structure heated. Two people then entered the house for one hour to sweat the ‘poisons’ out of their systems. On leaving the sweat house, the stones would sometimes take a dip in a near by stream.

Returning to the Cavan Way turn right at the crossroads to start going southerly, avoiding all turns for nearby Shanlough. The Cavan Way site is seen on right. Turn right here, level at first, then downhill, the Way being clearly marked by another stile and a hedges edge, before leaving another small forestry, heading west by a ride line, then turning left up to a small hilltop farmhouse (shown as a sound house on Sheet 28) (H054/318).

Here the route turns sharp right, heading west / north-west. You will soon reach a car park, from such a point path leads to the Shannon Pot.

Almost 2 km from the Shannon Bridge road the Way turns left, leading at once to the ‘Sixty Pound Bridge’ (H031/289), a concrete structure built in 1938, the only footbridge over the Shannon. Immediately south of the concrete bridge, turn right across a stile, then follow a path on the edge of the Shannon. There are stiles, and the Way briefly flies the riverbank to avoid farm lands, then reaches another bridge linking Carratubber UPPER to Tullyknafuse (H051/289). A stile gives access to tarmac here, turn left here, going south-west at first, thenrising fork to follow a narrow bemoen main south-west to Cashelbrine.

SECTION 2 - SHANNON POT TO DOWRA (13KM)

The Irish name for the Shannon Pot is Log- na-Sianna. The Shannon Pot is a large spring resulting from the confluence of many underground streams (see information panels). According to legend, the Shannon is named after Sianna, who was the granddaughter of Manannan Mac Lir, the god of the sea. She came to this spot to catch the Salmon of Knowledge (Blaithin Fasaus) which are the forbidden fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, which was planted by the Druids. As she tried to catch the salmon, it became angry and the waters of the pool surged up and overwhelmed her. She was drawn down into the pool and its water began to flow over the land, forming the River Shannon.

Back on the track the track from the ruined farmhouse continues westery, to join a road and turn left. This is about the half-way point on the Cavan Way (H068/320).

There follows about 1 1/4 km on tarmac crossing the Shannon Bridge. Then 1/4 km further south you go right, along a narrow tarmac byre west south-west over a slight ridge into Dowra. There is a view south now dominated by the Playbank Mountain (540 m).

WALKER FRIENDLY ACCOMMODATION

Please note that the accommodation providers listed below range from guest houses to self catering. All offer walker friendly services i.e. proximity to route (walking distance or short drive), packed lunches available upon request, suitable overnight area for drying clothes/boots, approved by Failte Ireland etc.

ACCOMMODATION LOCATION TELEPHONE/EMAIL/TYPE

Macn operators have included House Main St., Blacklion, Co. Cavan (+353) 71 8830232 www.lakeavenuehouse.com Guesthouse/Bed and Breakfast

Kilduff House MacNean Court, Blacklion, Co. Cavan (+353) 71 8938505 www.kilduffhouse.com Bed and Breakfast

Olive Grove Main St., Blacklion, Co. Cavan (+353) 71 8834943 www.olivegrove092.wordpress.com Guesthouse/Bed and Breakfast

The Kapers Arms Bawnboy, Co. Cavan (+353) 49 952318 www.theoldschoolhousecavan.com Self Catering

Lake Avenue House Port, Bawnboy, Co. Cavan (+353) 49 9532988 www.lakeavenuehouse.com Guesthouse/Restaurant

Maggie’s Cottage Gortaih, Blacklion, Co. Cavan (+41) 79 8609278 www.maggies-cottage.com Self Catering

The Old Schoolhouse Meenadavine, Dóiré, Co. Cavan (+353) 98 2548614 www.oldecoldschoolhousecavan.com Self Catering

The Village Cottage Kibbi, Bawnboy, Co.Cavan (+353) 49 9532988 www.lakeavenuehouse.com Self Catering

This Cashelbrine road is notable for the ruined cottages due to the high emigration in the past. From one of these cottages a family left for America in the 1880s without telling the neighbours.

At a T-junction another bridge is seen on right (H031/378). Do not cross this but bear away south, to the left, and just a kilometre brings you to the Dowra-Slangiven road where a turn right brings you to the final stretch of the Cavan Way, westerly into Dowra, the first town on the Shannon. Dowra Bridge was built with stones from Carrick-on-Shannon jail, and from the village itself.

The village of Dowra or An Dambhraigh, meaning ‘the river valley of the Dorn’ was formed in the late 1800s after another village closed by, Tober, was washed away by floods. The remains of the Black Pig or Dun can be seen outside the village. The village stands on the River Shannon marking the boundary between County Cavan in Ulster and County Leitrim in Connaught.