

# Woodland Walk Whyte Estate

## Loughbrickland, Co Down



### Introduction

Enjoy 'a green thought in a green shade' along this woodland walk in Loughbrickland. This beechwood walk is at its best in spring when the blue bells are out and the first green leaves on the beech trees are unfurling but its pleasant at anytime of year. It offers a short peaceful retreat from the hustle and bustle and, as an added extra, the walk takes in Coolnacran Fort.



### How to get there

From Banbridge take the A1 south to Loughbrickland, take 2nd turnoff to Loughbrickland which takes you along Dublin Road. Take L at junction with Scarva Street and drive to near the junction of Scarva Street and the Old Newry Road, parking along the street. Look out for the wall and entrance gate to Loughbrickland House on R – you will see a wooden fingerpost reading 'woodland trail', along the avenue from the entrance.

### Points of interest

Loughbrickland Fort, in the townland of Coolnacran is a highlight of the walk. It is a scheduled ancient monument dating from Early Christian times AD 500 -1200. Although raths (fortified farmsteads) are very common this is a 2 ringed fort indicating status or wealth. The ditches and banks provided 'a defence against wolves, hostile neighbours and Vikings'. Recent clearance of the overgrowth of laurels on this site has allowed the fort to re-emerge and it provides a quiet place for contemplation. The fort is about 100ft/30.48m across, with an inner bank of up to 5ft/1.52m high in places, and a ditch of up to 12ft/3.65m deep in places. It has a further massive bank and outside this, in places, is a well preserved ditch (HMSO (1966) Archaeological Survey of County Down). However, the northern boundary of the gardens of Loughbrickland House, created long ago in the history of the house, appear to have 'flattened' the southern boundary of the fort. Coolnacran, derives from the Irish for 'little wooded place', 'wooded place' or 'meadow of the trees'.



During World War II the estate was occupied by troops – this accounts for the bits of concrete and the old vehicle inspection pit you will see along the route.

### Tourist Information

The walk is part of the longer Loughbrickland Historic Trail, which is a 2.5 mile self-guided historic trail (trail guides are available from Banbridge Tourist Information Centre). Loughbrickland Park, off the Poyntzpass Road in the village is a pleasant, small park and worth a visit.



## FACT FILE

### Distance:

Just under a mile/1.5 km

**Grade:** Easy – bit of a climb towards the fort.

### Advice:

This access is by kind permission of the landowner along the way-marked trail only. Sensible shoes recommended. Pedestrian access only. The peaty soil is fairly fragile so no bikes! Please do not trample the bluebells as this can kill them. Dogs are permitted but must be kept on the lead at all times. Please note the path will be closed from time to time to accommodate archery competitions which take place in the woods – notices will be posted at entrance points by the archers.

### Start:

Loughbrickland is approx. 3 miles SW of Banbridge. Entrance to Loughbrickland House at the junction of Scarva St and the Old Newry Rd, at old gatehouse.

### Finish

Entrance to Loughbrickland House, off Scarva St.

### Parking:

On street car parking only. Park with care and consideration on Scarva St and walk to path entrance.

### Grid Ref:

J104424 OSNI Discover Series Maps  
1:50000 Sheet 20 Craigavon

### Terrain:

Woodland trail – there are steps and uneven surfaces along the route and a number of 'rambler stiles' – stiles which you do not need to climb. The path can be muddy at times.

### Refreshments:

Daytime – the garage in the village does hot drink and food to takeaway. Tearooms at Scarva Interpretative Centre approx. 2 miles to west (seasonal only) and F.E. McWilliam Gallery & Studio, 200 Newry Road, Banbridge.

# Woodland Walk Loughbrickland House

Loughbrickland, Co Down



photo courtesy of Matt Cummins

Enter the grounds of Loughbrickland House, off Scarva Street, near entrance gate look out for wooden sign and entrance to walk beside the old gate house. Simply follow the waymarkers around the trail.

There is a good display of spring flowers along the walk including blue bells and the distinctive smelling wild garlic.

Once past the fort, follow the waymarkers down the avenue, away from the house and towards the Coolnacran Road turning L before the gate leading onto the road.



Follow the trail past the rookery. Rooks are members of the crow family. They are found across the UK and are very

sociable birds nesting in colonies known as 'rookeries' which vary in size from just 2 nests to a 1000 or more. They are one of the first birds to nest building their nests in the early spring when you will hear their harsh 'caw' call as you walk through this section of wood. The eggs hatch in April.

