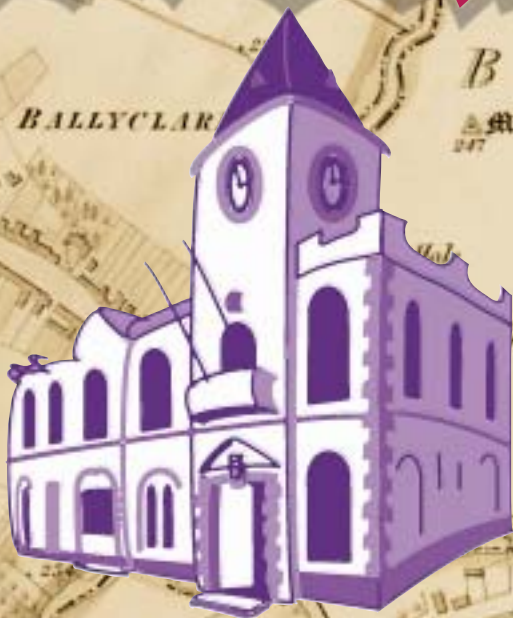


HERITAGE WALKING TRAILS IN NEWTOWNABBEY BALLYCLARE



Ballyclare & District Historical Society



**Museums
& Heritage**

To get to Ballyclare

Take the M2 motorway, leaving at Junction 4 (A8 Larne). From the main roundabout, follow the A8 through Corr's Corner roundabout and after about 2 miles, turn left towards Ballyclare down the Hillhead Road (B94). At the end of this road, turn right and follow the Sixmile Leisure Centre sign onto the Ballynure Road. Turn into the leisure centre on the left just after the War Memorial Park. Pedestrians can reach the leisure centre from the bridge on Main Street.

The walk will take 1 1/2 - 2 hours. Take care on roads at all times, particularly by the river. Children should be accompanied by an adult.

1. Leave the leisure centre and pause on the bridge that leads to the War Memorial Park. The course of the river has been altered and in the past a narrow-gauge railway ran along here in the direction of Ballynure and Larne. As you walk over the bridge, look back towards Ballyclare. Until 1952 the area up to Main Street was occupied by railway yards and sidings where coal was unloaded.

2. On entering the park, turn left and climb the mound. This is a 13th-century Norman motte which was built as a defensive outpost of Carrickfergus Castle. Soldiers reaching the river, once called the Ollar, believed they had travelled six miles and began calling it the Six Mile Water. Across the river are the bungalows of Riverdale where, during building, a hoard of flint arrowheads was discovered, showing that people have lived in this area for more than 4,000 years.



3. Walk around the park to view the war memorial. Leave by Abercorn Drive at the far corner of the park. This road was named after the Duke of Abercorn, who opened the park in the 1920s.

4. Walk down Abercorn Drive, turn left and stop to view Ollar Lodge, a private residence dating to the early 19th century. On the opposite side of the street there was once 'Baird's Pleasure Gardens', a major tourist attraction with fountains and a collection of antiquities, very popular in the late 1800s. To the left-hand side of the pleasure garden was the birthplace of Miskimmin, author of the classic history of Carrickfergus, and to the right, McIlroy's shop. Archibald McIlroy wrote books about local characters and events in 'Craiglinney', a fictional name for Ballyclare.



5. Turn left into Park View, once known as Court House Entry. The end of Ollar Lodge housed the court, a particularly busy place at the end of May Fair days! Some of the jail walls remain but the small houses which originally stood here are gone.

6. Emerging onto the Ballynure Road, you will see a building that began life as a congregational church and for many years was Ballyclare Technical School. Green Road nearby is a reminder of the linen-bleaching green of earlier times.

7. Turn right towards the bottom of Main Street and cross over the road to the landscaped seated area. Baird's Public House once stood on this site but was removed in the 1960s to make the area easier for large vehicles to negotiate. Millburn Mews has been built where Wilson's Row and a blacksmith's shop once stood.

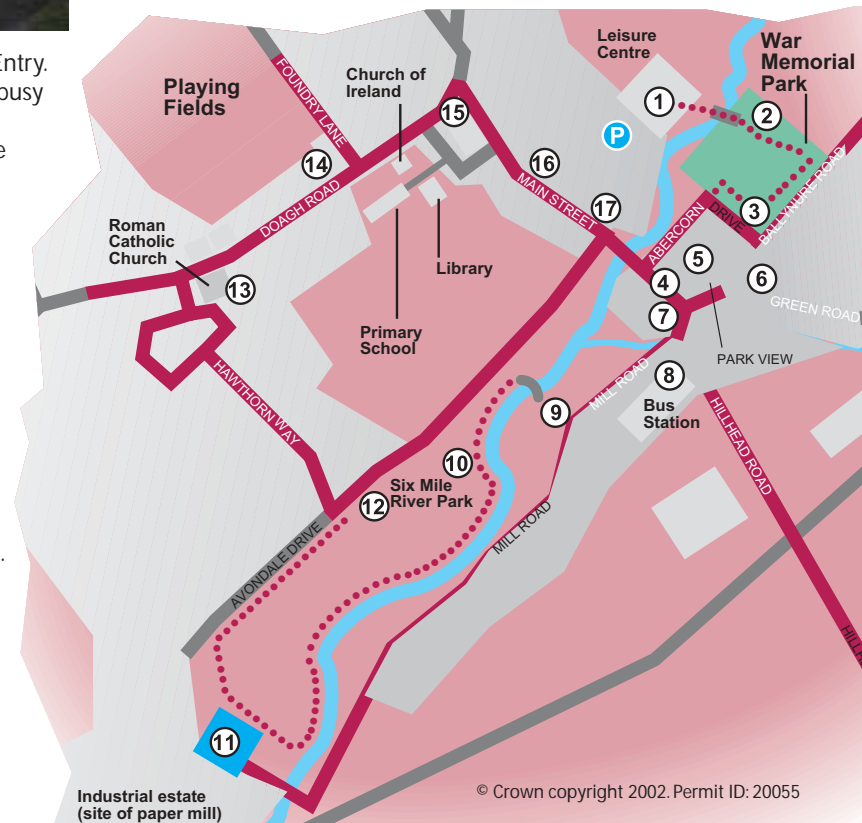
8. Walk past Railway Terrace, turn right into Mill Road and pause to view the railway station across the road. The broad-gauge railway linked Ballyclare to Belfast until the 1950s. Many of the railway buildings remain, including an engine shed now used by the buses.

9. Continue along Mill Road and turn right onto the wooden boardwalk. Stop at the point where it crosses the river with a view of the weir. The channel on the left diverted water to the paper mill dam nearby. The sluice gates remain and water is piped underground.

10. Turn left and follow the river path. Eventually you will reach the industrial estate which now occupies the site of Ballyclare Paper Mill which closed in the 1950s. This was once the biggest paper mill in Ireland.

11. Follow the path towards the dam. This is now a conservation area and home to a variety of wildfowl. Continue along the upper path around to the right. On your left the track of the narrow-gauge railway can still be seen. This line ran to the paper mill and was used for bringing in raw materials and sending out paper to the port of Larne.

12. Leave the park at Avondale Drive, once named Mill Lane because it was part of the mill employees' route to work. Turn left and immediately right into Hawthorn Way and up Ollardale Park through housing built on greenfield sites.



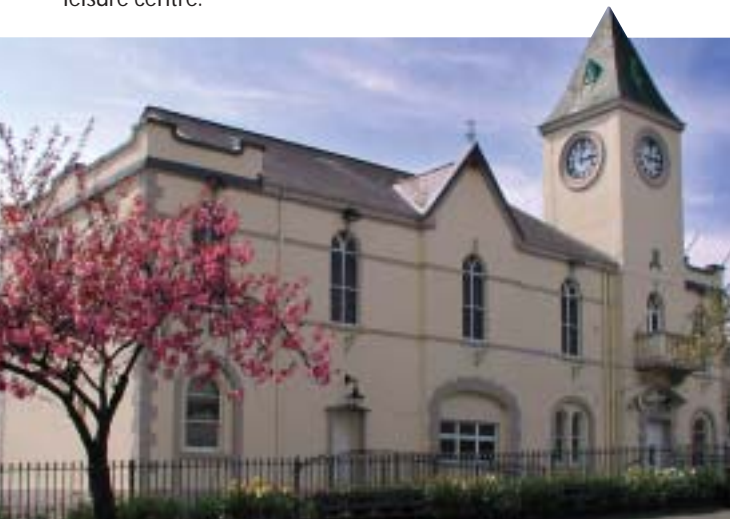
13. On reaching the Doagh Road turn right where the Roman Catholic church stands on the corner. Across the road is the earlier church, built in 1852 on land provided by a local publican when there were only six Catholic families in the town. Behind the church stands the Catholic primary school and beside it is the earlier school named Tir na Nog (land of eternal youth) built in 1886.

14. Walk up the road to the Presbyterian church. Foundry Lane used to lead not only to a foundry but to one of the town's first schools, known as the 'Wooden Box' which was built in 1881. Continue past the primary school and the Church of Ireland towards the Square.

15. From the early 19th century this was the market area and the setting for the May Fair. The Town Hall was originally built as a market house in 1866. In 1873 the Town Hall was built on top of the market house and gradually this became a social centre for dances and events. With the creation of Newtownabbey District Council in 1973 the ballroom became the new Council Chamber but the Council Civic Headquarters has now moved to Mossley Mill. The Town Hall has been developed for both commercial and community use.

16. Walk down Main Street, stopping at the Old Presbyterian church built in 1642. The minister hid some of the United Irishmen in a cottage next door after the Battle of Antrim in 1798. This is probably the oldest building in Ballyclare.

17. On reaching the bridge that divides the Grange of Doagh from the Parish of Ballynure, turn left to return to the leisure centre.



Contacts for more information

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Ballyclare Library
Local History Section
(including historical society programmes and summer walks information)
School Street, Ballyclare
Tel: 028 9335 2269

Selected books

THROUGH THE AGES TO NEWTOWNABBEY
Robert Armstrong, second edition, 1995

OLLAR VIEW
Journals of the Ballyclare and District Historical Society,
1995, 1997, 1999, 2001

ORDNANCE SURVEY MEMOIRS:
Parishes of County Antrim XI, Vol 29
Institute of Irish Studies

THE LIBERTY TREE (1798–1998)
Archie R Reid, 1998



This leaflet has been part-funded by the Economic Development Department, Newtownabbey Borough Council.

* The information in this leaflet is available in large print on request.