### Visitor Information Centres

Armagh Visitor Information Centre T: 028 3752 1800

Banbridge Visitor Information Centre T: 028 4062 0232

Downpatrick Visitor Information Centre T: 028 4461 2233

Newcastle Visitor Information Centre T: 028 4372 2222

Newry Visitor Information Centre T: 028 3031 3170

For further, up to date information on accommodation, what to see and do, attractions, activities and events while completing the Pilgrim Walk, please visit www.visitarmagh.com www.visitmournemountains.co.uk

During the walk, we highly recommend that you follow the Leave No Trace principles. Visit **www.leavenotraceireland.org** for further information.



<sup>Comhairle Ceantair</sup> an Iúir, Mhúrn agus an Dúin Newry, Mourne and Down



discover northernireland

### Emergency Contacts

Dial 999 in an emergency requiring Police, Fire, Ambulance, Coastguard or Mountain Rescue

In a non-emergency case, dial 101 for the Police Service of Northern Ireland

## Saint Patrick's Way: The Pilgrim Walk

### Armagh to Downpatrick, Northern Ireland

# PILGRIM'S GUIDE

Walk in the footsteps of Saint Patrick





Saint Patrick's Way:

# Saint Patrick's life, legacy and landscape

Saint Patrick, the missionary who brought Christianity to Ireland, was born around AD 400, near the west coast of Roman Britain. Brought to Ireland as a slave around age 16, he tended animals, possibly on Slemish Mountain in County Antrim.

After escaping his captors and travelling to England and France, he studied to become a cleric, and eventually became Bishop. Patrick returned to Ireland in AD 432 as a missionary, believing he had been called by the angel Victoricus.

Saint Patrick brought his boat ashore on Strangford Lough in County Down, at the mouth of the River Slaney near Downpatrick. He went on to establish Ireland's first Christian church in AD 432, in the barn of a local chieftain at Saul near Downpatrick.

His name and legacy are linked to many spiritual sites in County Down, and Patrick also died in this county. His final resting place is beside Down Cathedral in Downpatrick. Saint Patrick's link with Armagh is equally significant. During his mission, Patrick travelled around Ireland, converting thousands of pagans and baptising royal chieftains. At this time, Ireland was ruled by tribal chiefs. The Ulaid was one of the kingdoms in the north of the country. Its capital was Emain Macha, or Navan, close to Armagh.

Following negotiations with a local chieftain, Daire, Patrick was given a site on the hill at Armagh, where he built his church. The present-day Church of Ireland Cathedral stands in this sacred spot. Patrick established Armagh as a great seat of Christian learning, and today it remains the ecclesiastical centre of Ireland. I bind unto myself today The virtues of the starlit heaven, The glorious sun's life-giving ray, The whiteness of the moon at even, The flashing of the lightning free, The whirling wind's tempestuous shocks, The stable earth, the deep salt sea, Around the old eternal rocks.

Saint Patrick's Breastplate (The old lyrics of this traditional hymn have been attributed to Saint Patrick, and interpreted as a call for protection on a symbolic journey.)



# Walk in the footsteps of Saint Patrick

Saint Patrick's Way:

The Pilgrim Walk

**Saint Patrick's Way:** The Pilgrim's Walk is a 132km (82 mile) trail connecting Armagh and Downpatrick as the two locations on the island of Ireland most closely related to Saint Patrick. Saint Patrick's Way is suitable for leisure walking and pilgrimages. The Walk begins at the Navan Centre outside Armagh City, winding through beautiful landscapes and historic cities, to end at Saint Patrick's final resting place at Down Cathedral in Downpatrick.

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Pick up a Pilgrim's Passport at any of the Visitor Information Centres in the area. Stamp it at the 10 locations along the route, as a souvenir of your journey. When you show your completed Passport at The Saint Patrick Centre in Downpatrick, you receive a Certificate of Achievement.

The Pilgrim's Walk takes between 6 -10 days, depending on your pace. While the Walk is signposted and divided into manageable sections, as detailed here, it is recommended that you accompany this information with Ordnance Survey maps, available from Visitor Information Centres.



Get your Pilgrim's Passport stamped at all 10 locations along the route. Navan Centre & Fort, Navan Follow the signposts along the route.



Starting Location Navan Centre & Fort

#### **ROUTE SECTIONS**

(A) Navan to Armagh & City Tour 5km/1 Day

(B) Armagh to Scarva 20km/1 Day

(C) Scarva to Newry 20km/1 Day

(D) Newry to Rostrevor 15km/1 Day

(E) Rostrevor to Newcastle 38km/2-3 Days

(F) Newcastle to Tyrella 18km/1 Day

(G) Tyrella to Downpatrick 16km/1 Day

All distances are approximate.

#### Every day is different

The route covers varied topography, from rolling hills to canal towpaths\*. Every day offers different views and terrain, with a combination of off- and on-road trails. With plenty to do and see along the way, there are many cafés, restaurants and picnic sites for refuelling.

Armagh, the spiritual centre of Ireland and its oldest city is the starting point for exploring Saint Patrick's life and legacy. Fittingly called the 'Orchard County', Armagh has 4,000 acres of apple orchards. Beautiful pink blossom adorns the trees in May at the start of apple season. Saint Patrick himself planted an apple tree at Ceangoba, an ancient settlement east of Armagh.

**End Location** 

Downpatrick

The Pilgrim's Walk leads you through Armagh and Down's rural, industrial and linen heritage, via canal towpath<sup>\*</sup> to the historic city of Newry.

The Walk takes a scenic route through the stunning Mourne Mountains, through beautiful forest to the seaside town of Newcastle. From here, the Walk travels through the untamed landscape of Murlough Bay Nature Reserve, by Dundrum Castle, Tyrella Beach and finally to Downpatrick.

\*a road/trail along the bank of a river, canal, or other inland waterway.

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#### Saint Patrick's Way: The Pilgrim Walk



Slieve Donard from Murlough Bay

**Mourne Mountains** 



Saint Patrick's Way: The Pilgrim Walk



# Alan Graham

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Founder of the Saint Patrick's Way

# How did I get the idea of an Irish Pilgrimage route?

"Well it goes back many years, after I read the exploits of the famous Irish explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton on his adventures in the Antarctic, in particular his epic journey from Elephant Island to South Georgia, in which he saved his men from certain death. The words that had a big impression on me, were how Shackleton described his inner feelings, that he was not alone. he knew there was another invisible force encouraging him to save his men. As I have been on many Arctic and Alpine exhibitions, I could

understand what Sir Ernest Shackleton meant, and how hardship on a long walk can develop your personality and spirituality.

When I was walking the Camino de Santiago I was lying in my bunk wide awake due to the noise of my fellow pilgrims and it came to me as if from that voice that Shackleton heard, why not develop a pilgrimage route for Saint Patrick?

I thought Saint Patrick should be honoured with a pilgrim route in his name. I asked many pilgrims en route and they encouraged

me to pursue the project. When I got home, I started to plan the route of the Pilgrimage. I looked to Armagh as the starting point. Saint Patrick had made Armagh the most important site for religion in Ireland and as he is buried in Downpatrick it was obvious to me that this would be the initial route for the walk. I did investigate another route from Croagh Patrick in County Mayo to Armagh, but it would need a lot of work to make it happen perhaps someday it will be a great coast to coast route across the Island. What has been developed is a wonderful pilgrim route with many variations of countryside from rural country lanes to canal

towpaths, over hills and wild places, reaching as far as the sea.

Saint Patrick's Way is a walk of many colours, feelings and memories to cherish. It is ideal for those who want to have the experience of nature and time to themselves."

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ALAN GRAHAM

# Navan Centre to Armagh (A) 1 Day

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### 5km

Your journey begins in County Armagh, at the Navan Centre and the ancient city of Armagh.

The area is important archaeologically, with 7,500 years of history discovered here. Earthworks, settlement sites and sacred places have revealed many buried remains.

As Emain Macha, Navan Fort was the ancient seat of Kings and earliest capital of Ulster.

Saint Patrick is thought to have healed a local chieftain, Daire, who then gave him the site on the hill in Armagh to build his church. In Ard Macha, or Armagh, Saint Patrick established the city as a great seat of Christianity, as it remains today, and the city grew around his church. The sacred site on the hilltop is known as Sally Hill, from the Old Irish "Druim Saileach", now site of St Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral.

Brian Boru, last High King of Ireland came to Navan around 1005. In Armagh, a plaque marks the area beside St Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral where he was buried in 1014.

Armagh is the seat of the Primate of All Ireland for both the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of Ireland. The city is rich in elegant architecture and fascinating Christian heritage. The tree-lined Mall, Georgian streets and heritage sites are all must see. Saint Patrick's Way: The Pilgrim Walk



 Download the free 'Armagh Cathedrals' app on Apple or Android and take a self-guided tour

11 Saint Patrick's Way



### Armagh to Scarva (B) 1 Day

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Moving out of Armagh City, you can see the range of mountains ahead and you get a vivid sense of the challenges to come and the prize that lies beyond, when your pilgrimage is complete.

From Armagh, the countryside is scenic, passing Lowry Lakes then Gosford Forest, then on towards Tandragee. The destination for this section of the Walk is Scarva, with its award-winning floral displays and canal paths, close to the town of Banbridge. Scarva Cycle Hire offers a range of bicycle hire options for adults and children (seasonal opening).

The area offers brisk cycle routes and historical trails which trace the history of Newry Canal. Explore the charm and beauty of the local area with 20 miles of leisurely traffic free, family friendly trails.

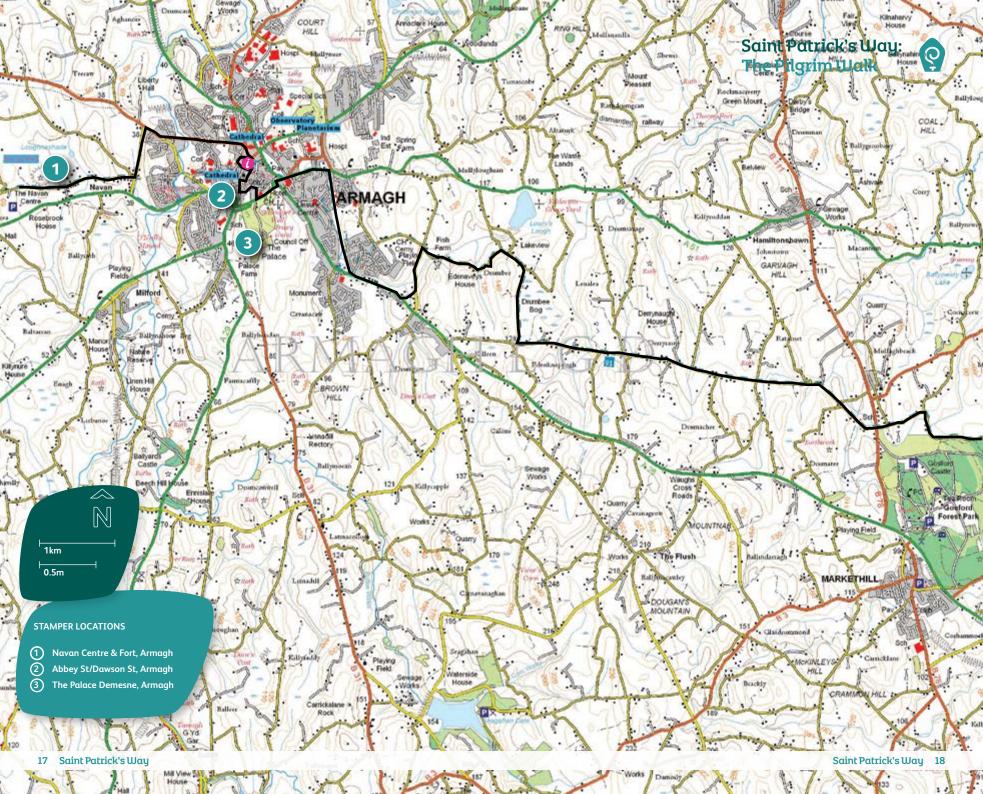
Banbridge is only a short distance from Scarva, and worth the detour. Proximity to the River Bann helped develop the linen industry in the area, and the town still flourishes. It's a friendly place with excellent visitor facilities. The Crozier Monument in Banbridge celebrates the town's most famous citizen - Captain Crozier of the North West Passage. Four polar bears look up at Crozier, who faces north-west.

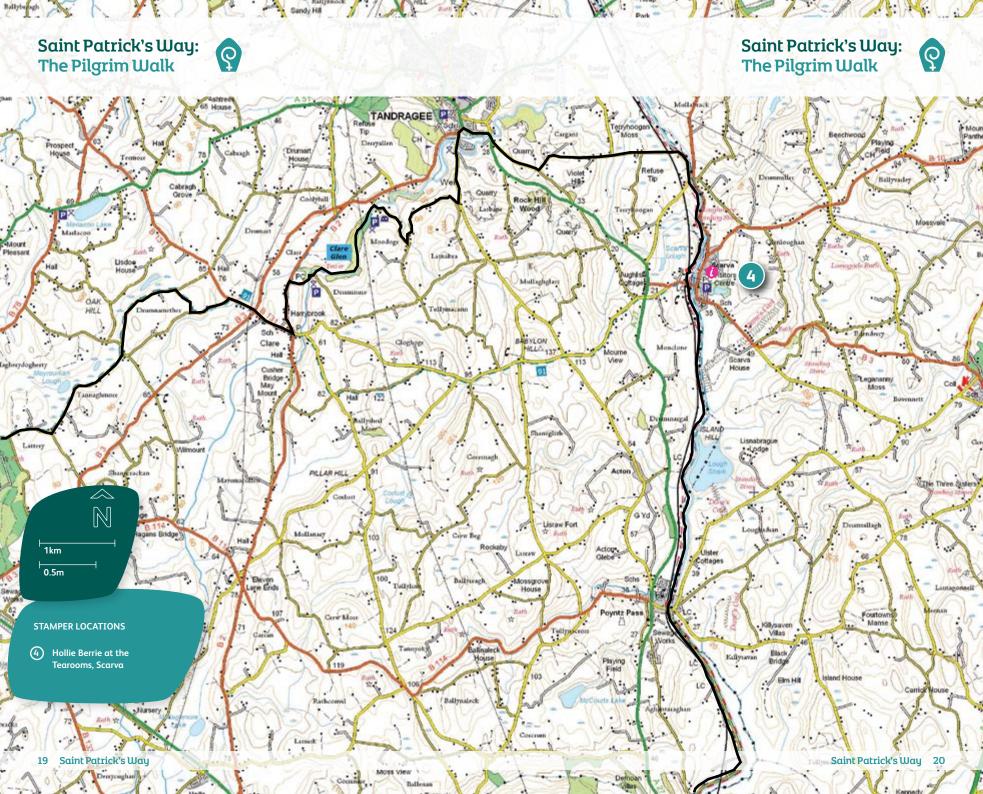
20km

You'll find great shopping in the town centre, with many family-run stores and high street favourites, as well as cafés, restaurants and a Visitor Information Centre.

Come and visit the F.E. McWilliam Gallery and Studio, located one mile from Banbridge Town Centre. The F.E. McWilliam Gallery and Studio is dedicated to the memory of Banbridge-born sculptor Frederick Edward McWilliam, one of Ireland's most influential and successful artists.

Frederick Edward McWilliam was born in Banbridge on the 30th April 1909. He died in London in 1992 and the executors of his estate donated the sculptor's studio and its contents to the town of his birth. The gallery and studio houses the collection in a superb exhibition facility of gallery, garden and reconstructed studio. The Gallery hosts four significant exhibitions per year as well as seasonal displays in the Sculpture Garden. It also provides a Visitor Information Centre, Café and Craft Shop.







PLEASE CHECK FOR OPENING HOURS & SEASONAL VARIATIONS

### See & Do Armagh and Surrounds

Saint Patrick's Way:

The Pilgrim Walk

#### Saint Patrick's Cathedral

[Roman Catholic] Armagh BT61 7QX T: 028 3752 2813 armaghparish.net

#### Saint Patrick's Cathedral

[Church of Ireland] Armagh BT61 7EE T: 028 3752 3142 stpatricks-cathedral.org

#### The Navan Centre

Armagh BT60 4LD T: 028 3752 9644 navan.com

### Armagh Observatory and Planetarium

Armagh BT61 9DB T: 028 3752 3689 armaghplanet.com

#### Armagh Robinson Library

Armagh BT61 7DY T: 028 3752 3142 armaghrobinsonlibrary.co.uk

#### No 5 Vicars' Hill

Armagh BT61 7ED T: 028 3752 3142 armaghrobinsonlibrary.co.uk

#### Royal Irish Fusiliers Museum

The Mall Armagh BT61 9DL T: 028 3752 2911 royalirishfusiliersmuseum.com

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#### Armagh County Museum Armagh BT61 9BE

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T: 028 3752 3070 visitarmagh.com/ armaghcountymuseum

#### Cardinal Thomas O'Fiaich Memorial

Library Armagh BT61 7LY T: 028 3752 2981 ofiaich.ie

#### Irish and Local

#### Studies Library Armagh BT61 7EB T: 028 3752 7851 librariesni.org.uk

#### Craftswirl & Visitor Information Centre

Armagh BT61 7BA T: 028 3752 1800 visitarmagh.com/ visitorinformation

#### Milford House Collections

Armagh BT61 3DS T: 028 3752 5467 milfordhouse.org.uk

#### William McCrum Park - Home of Penalty Kick

T: 028 3752 5467 milfordhouse.org.uk

#### Tayto Factory Tandragee BT62 2AB

T: 028 3884 0249 tayto.com

#### The Market Place Theatre

Armagh BT61 7BW T: 028 3752 1821 marketplacearmagh.com

#### Gosford Forest Park Markethill

Markethill BT60 1UD T: 028 3755 1277 gosford.org.uk

#### The Palace Demesne Public Park

Armagh BT60 4EL T: 028 3752 9600 visitarmagh.com/palace

#### The Mall

Armagh BT61 9AX

#### Clare Glen

Tandragee BT62 2ET T: 028 3884 1110 clareglen.co.uk

#### F.E. McWilliam Gallery & Studio

Banbridge BT32 3NB T: 028 4062 3322 femcwilliam.com

#### Thomas Ferguson Irish Linen

Banbridge BT32 3QD T: 028 4062 3491 fergusonsirishlinen.com

### See & Do Downpatrick and Surrounds

#### Downpatrick - Saint Patrick's Town

C/O Downpatrick Visitor Information Centre Downpatrick BT30 6LZ T: 028 4461 2233

#### Down Cathedral & Saint Patrick's

Grave

Downpatrick BT30 6AB T: 028 4461 4922 downcathedral.org

#### Whilst Travelling on the Pilgrim's Walk take some time out to enjoy the many attractions which lie beyond the trail itself. You can spend time, after any stage, enjoying the beauty of this region. You will find a host of suggestions in visitarmagh.com and visitmournemountains. co.uk



Downpatrick BT30 6AH T: 028 4461 5218 downcountymuseum.com

#### The Saint Patrick Centre

Downpatrick BT30 6LZ T: 028 4461 9000 saintpatrickcentre.com

#### Downpatrick & County Down Railway

Downpatrick BT30 6LZ T: 028 4461 5779 downrail.co.uk

#### St Patrick's Roman Catholic Church

Downpatrick BT30 6DN T: 028 4461 2084 parishofdownpatrick.com

#### Inch Abbey

Downpatrick BT30 9AT T: 028 9082 3207

#### Mound of Down Downpatrick BT30 6AU T: 028 9082 3207

Quoile Castle and Quoile Pondage Nature Reserve

Downpatrick BT30 7JB T: 028 4461 5220

#### **Saul Church**

Downpatrick BT30 6PE T: 028 4461 3101 downcathedral.org /saul-church/

#### **Slieve Patrick**

Downpatrick BT30 7JG T: 028 4461 2525 saulandballeeparish.com

#### St Tassach's

Church, Raholp Downpatrick BT30 7JR T: 028 9082 3207

#### Struell Wells

Downpatrick BT30 6RA T: 028 9082 3207

#### Ballynoe Stone Circle

Downpatrick BT30 6AR T: 028 9082 3207

> Inch Abbey, Downpatrick



#### tnick's Way: rim/Walk

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### Scarva to Newry (C) 1 Day

This section of your journey is via Newry Canal towpath, on mainly flat waterside paths.

Saint Patrick's Way: <u>The Pilgrin</u> Walk

Newry Canal is the oldest summitlevel canal in Britain and Ireland, and opened in 1742, connecting Portadown and Newry. It once had 14 lock gates. The workers who dug the canal were known as 'navvies'. These men lived in camps alongside the canal as they worked.

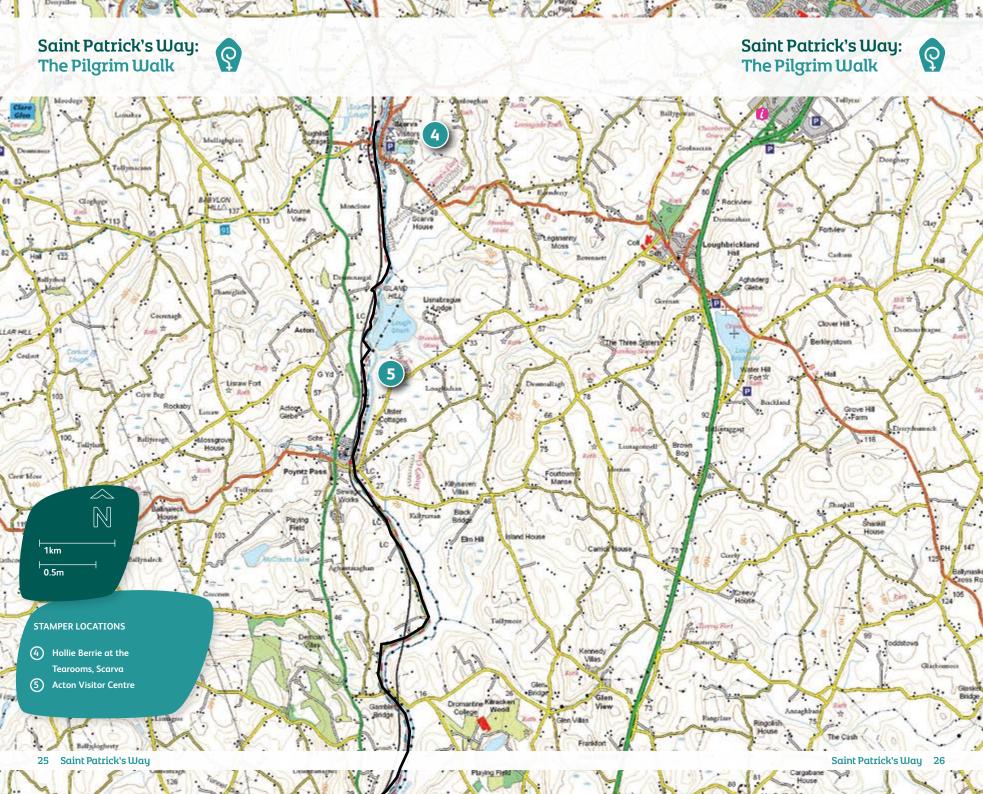
The canal was a vital link to transport coal from Coalisland in County Tyrone.

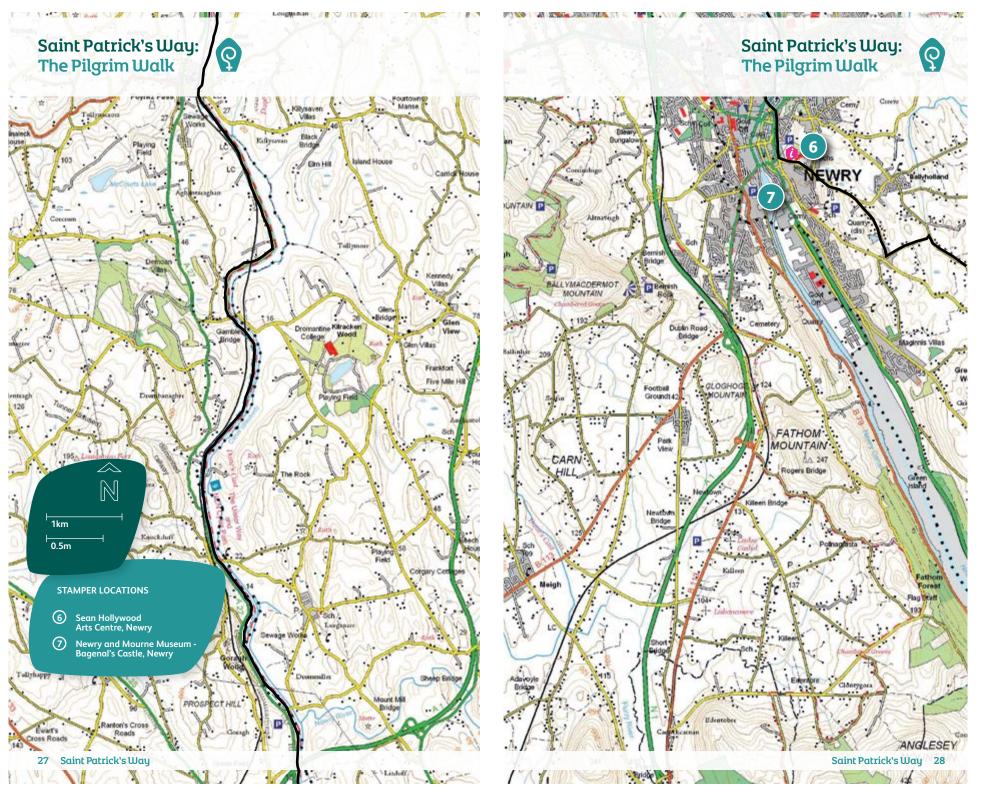
Navigation stopped here in 1946. Around this area is much bogland, making it an important habitat for wildlife. There were once only three 'passes' through the bog - Scarva (once called Scarvagh Pass), Poyntzpass and Jerrettspass. These three villages still flourish today, and you will pass them en route. There are also woods and a lough nearby (Lough Shark or Acton Lake), with plenty of places to stop and enjoy the birdlife and scenery.

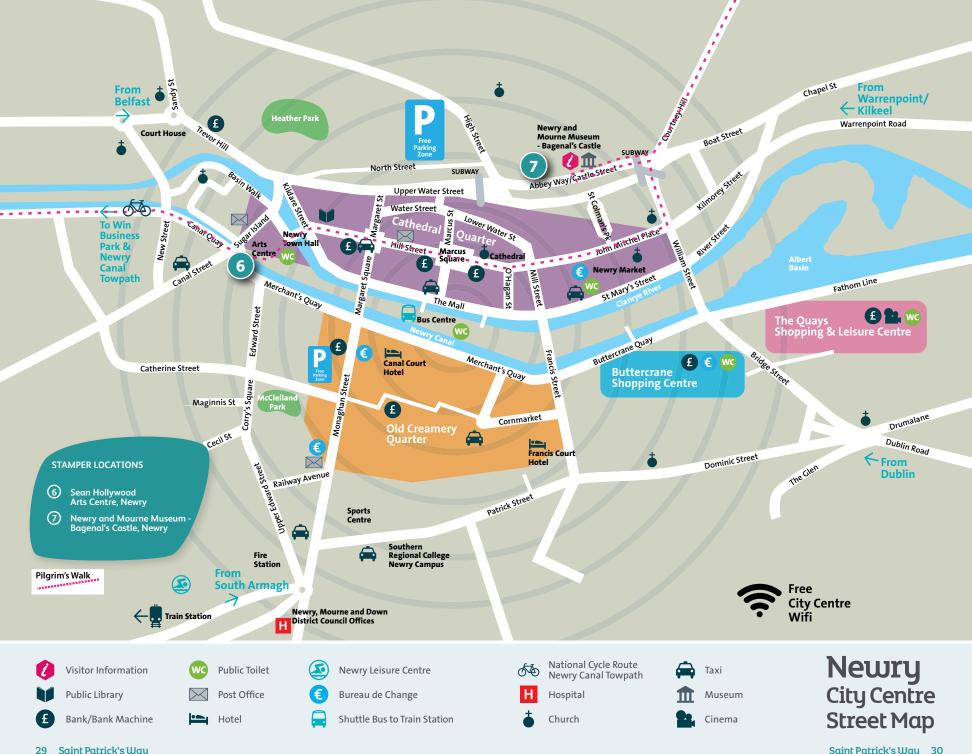
20km

Your towpath walk will bring you to the historic city of Newry. While travelling on his mission in Ireland, Saint Patrick spent time in a place called Glen Righe, or Clanrye. Patrick planted a yew tree here above the Clanrye River that flows through Newry, as a symbol of his faith. Today, Newry city's coat of arms shows Saint Patrick between yew trees.

The city itself is vibrant, with bars, restaurants and plenty of shopping, as well as an interesting heritage trail and flourishing arts scene.









#### Saint Patrick's Way: The Pilgrim Walk



### Newry to Rostrevor (D) 1 Day

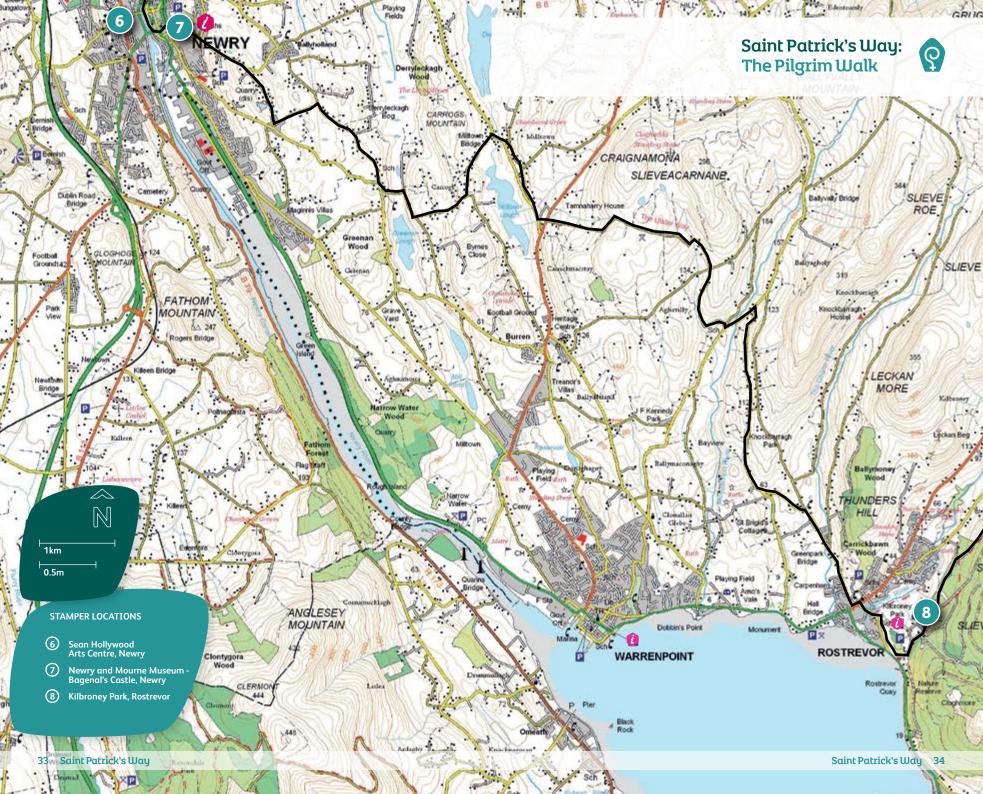
15km

From Newry you can see Carlingford Lough and mountain views on either side.

The Walk takes you through stunning scenery as you approach Warrenpoint and then Rostrevor. Looking across Carlingford Lough you can see the Cooley Mountains, while looking north-east, the Mourne Mountains tower before you. The walk towards Warrenpoint and Rostrevor leads you to approach the Mourne Mountains from the south.

The picturesque village of Rostrevor contains many fine eighteenth and nineteenth century homes. Rostrevor has barely changed from its Edwardian heyday. From the charming C.S Lewis inspired Narnia Trail to its worldclass mountain bike trails, Kilbroney Park in Rostrevor offers a host of attractions. Rostrevor is also home to the Holm Oak Tree, Northern Ireland's representative for the 'European Tree of The Year' competition.

On this stretch of walk, you'll get a great sense of the changing landscape. Where a short time ago you walked along an inland canal towpath, now you are in the midst of mountains, and can see the coastline.



Saint Patrick is believed to have converted local hill folk in the Mourne Mountains. A rock in the small stream which marks the boundary of the Kingdom of Mourne is rumoured to have Saint Patrick's handprint on it, at the spot where he knelt to drink the water. Another legend persists that Saint Patrick banished the snakes from Ireland at the foothill of Slieve Donard.

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This section begins and ends with a scenic town and forest trail, with the drama of the Mourne Mountains in between.

//3Days

Rostrevor to Newcastle (E)

You'll follow parts of the Ulster Way and Mourne Way, through the foothills of the mountains on spectacular terrain. As with all sections of The Pilgrim's Walk, keep your camera close to hand!

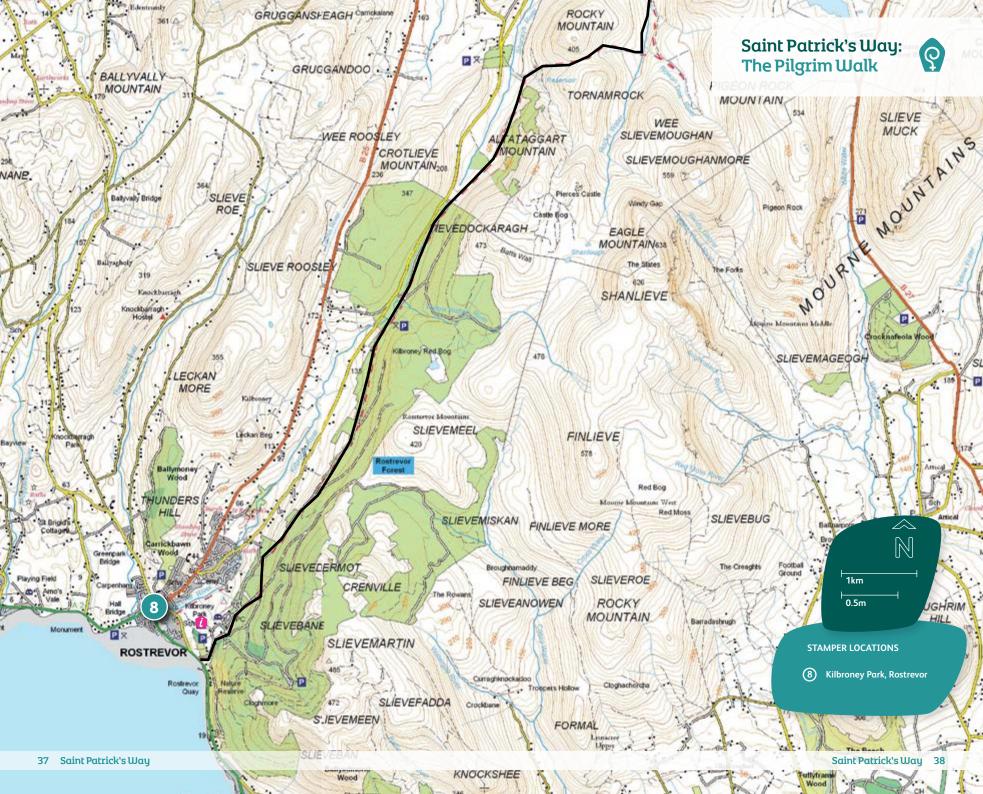
The first part takes you through Rostrevor Forest towards Spelga Dam. CS Lewis, author of The Chronicles of Narnia, holidayed in the Mournes near Rostrevor, and the location inspired his fictional landscapes.

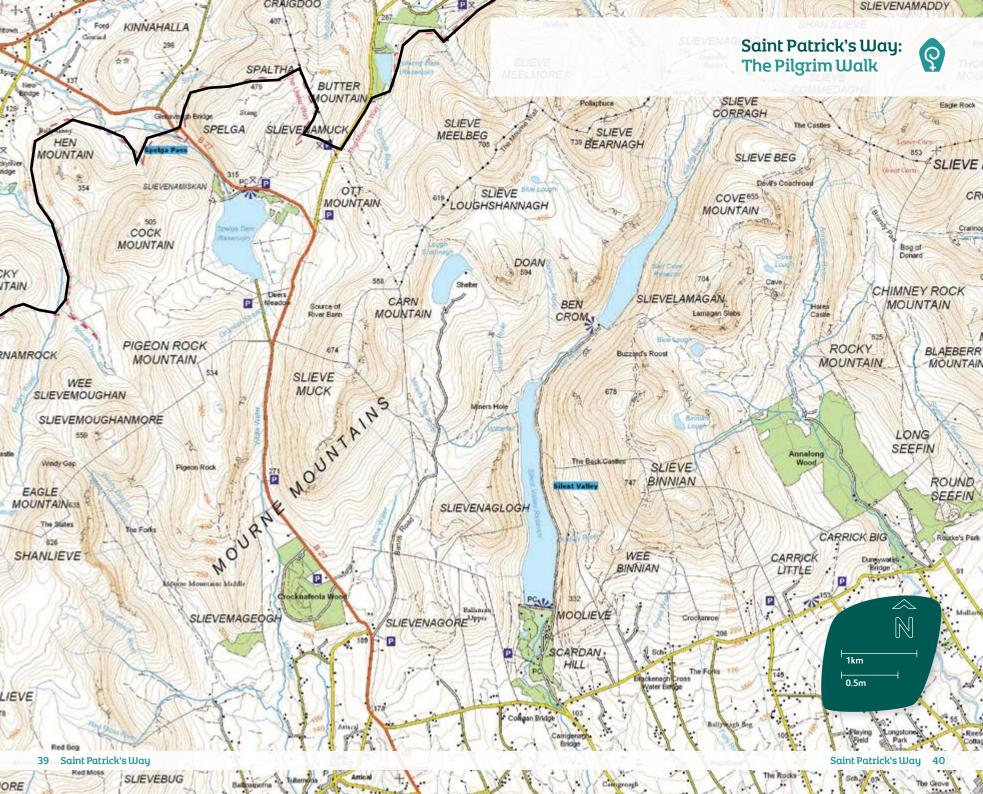
The Pilgrim's Walk then takes you around Slieve Bearnagh into Tollymore Forest Park and following through into Newcastle. Slieve Bearnagh is the fourth highest mountain in the range, with two large granite tors at the summit and a col lying between th<u>em</u>. This is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The town of Newcastle is on the Irish Sea coast, at the base of Slieve Donard, the highest peak in Northern Ireland. Newcastle is the town that inspired Percy French when he wrote the famous song words "where the Mountains of Mourne sweep down to the sea".

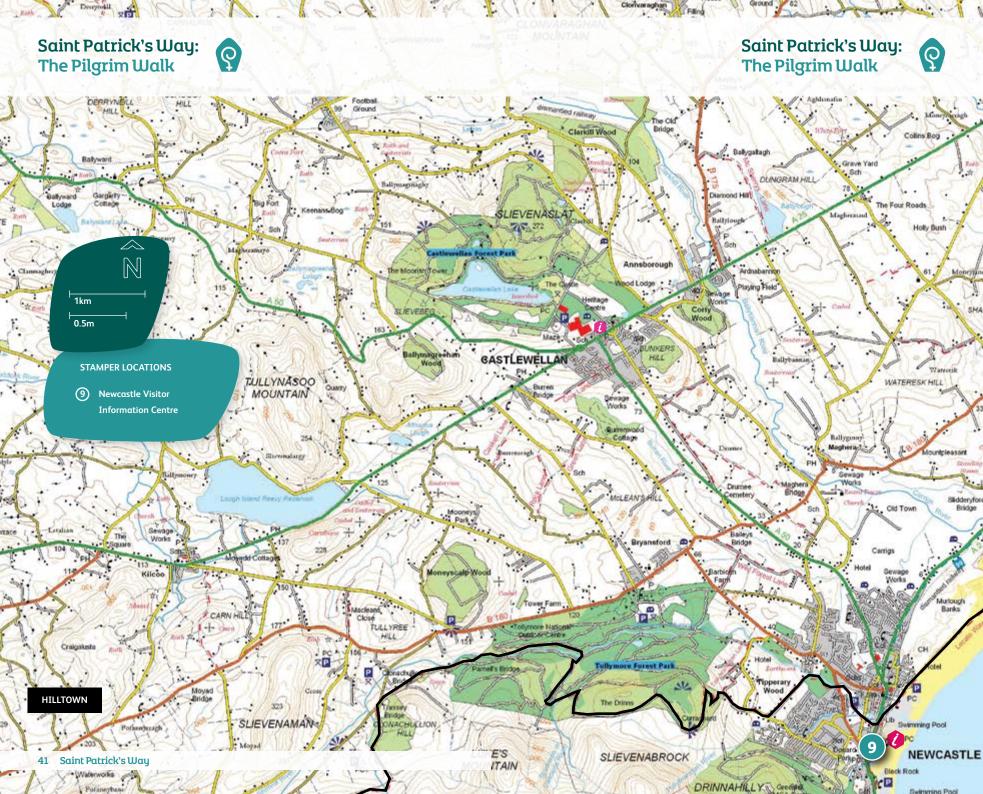
Walking in the Mournes is exciting because of the varied terrain and wonderful views. You'll come across forest, water, sea views, and majestic granite tors and peaks.

Links with Saint Patrick are many. The summit of Slieve Donard has a hermit's cell in the Great Cairn and an oratory in the Lesser Cairn, both constructed by Saint Donard. He was the son of a local pagan chieftain, and an important disciple of Saint Patrick.

Donard's conversion to Christianity is said to have been prompted by Saint Patrick bringing Donard's bull back to life after it had been butchered.







Saint Patrick's Way

#### Saint Patrick's Way: The Pilgrim Walk



18km

### Newcastle to Tyrella (F) 1 Day

The coastal path which follows, runs along a disused railway line

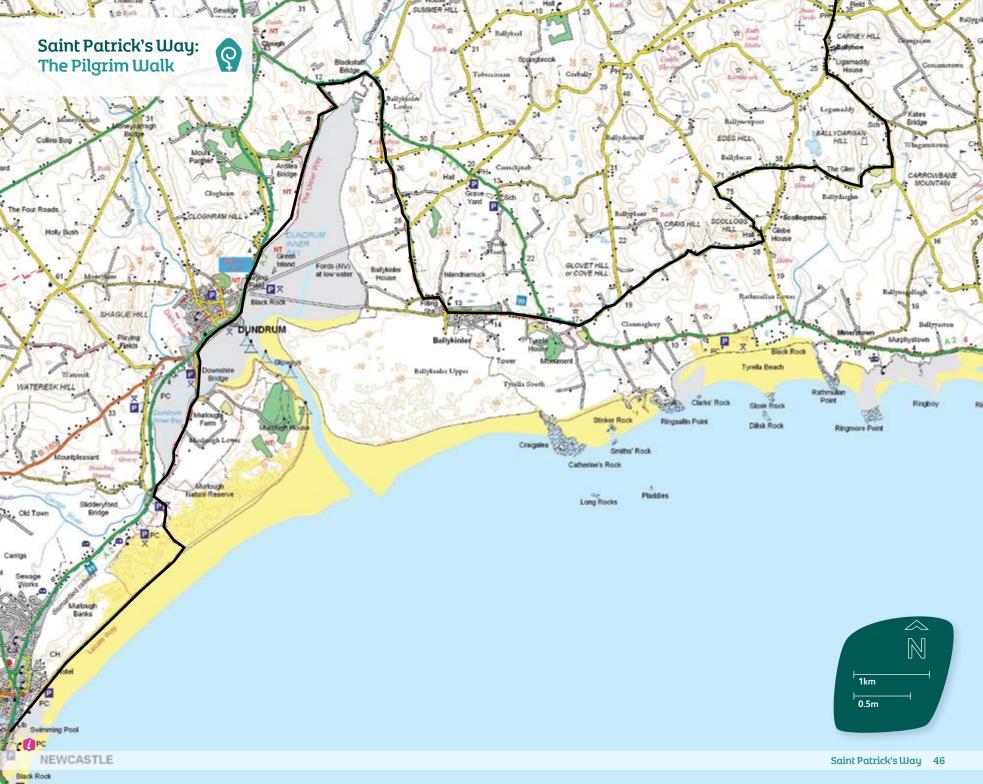
The penultimate section of The<br/>Pilgrim's Walk follows part of<br/>the Lecale Way, giving walkers<br/>fantastic views of the County<br/>Down coastline and rolling hills.The coor<br/>runs ald<br/>that be<br/>to pass<br/>botward

Leaving Newcastle, you pass the elegant facade of the Slieve Donard Resort and Spa, then the world-famous Royal County Down Golf Club that hosted the Irish Open. The path then leads you to Murlough National Nature Reserve.

After exploring the ancient sand dune ecosystem, the Walk follows the inner bay to the villages of Dundrum and Clough. runs along a disused railway line that belonged to the Belfast and County Down Railway. Trains used to pass through here on the route between Belfast and Newcastle.

On one side, you'll see the tidal coastline of the inner bay and on the other a wooded area. Look out for wading birds on the mudflats as this is an important habitat for them.

Ballykinler and Tyrella give another coastal vista, then you head inland to Saint Patrick's Country in Downpatrick, where the patron saint established his first church and was later laid to rest.



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### Saint Patrick's Way: The Pilgrim Walk

# Tyrella to Downpatrick (G) 16km

Downpatrick and the Lecale area, south-east of Strangford Lough, is known as 'Saint Patrick's Country', as the links to the saint's life and legacy are so significant.

The story of Christianity in Ireland began here, where Saint Patrick brought his boat ashore on Strangford Lough. Much of Lecale's Christian heritage is conserved.

Visitors can still walk in Saint Patrick's footsteps, from the site where he established his first church to his final resting place.

The coastal landscape around Tyrella and the rolling green farmland of Lecale is a treat for pilgrims. The landscape of trafficfree roads is dotted with churches and grand estates, as well as holy sites and historic buildings. Many Irish churches were destroyed by Viking raids, but they were often rebuilt. Later Norman invaders built new monasteries and abbeys here, as well as defensive buildings.

The spiritual centre of this section of The Pilgrim's Walk is Down Cathedral, a place of Christian worship since the 5th century. Downpatrick's town centre is compact, and many of the historically important sites are in a small area centred around the cathedral.

Other Christian Heritage sites are within a few miles of Downpatrick. The special atmosphere at these spiritual places is inspirational.



Why not download the app? walkdownpatrick.com



