

Slabh gCuirín
Camlough Mountain
The rock that makes up Camlough Mountain is called granodiorite. Granodiorite, just like the rocks that make up Slieve Gullion, forms from the cooling, deep underground, of molten magma. However, unlike the rocks that make up Slieve Gullion and the Ring of Gullion, which were formed around 60 million years ago, the granodiorites of Camlough Mountain are around 400 million years old. Whereas the younger rocks of Gullion are associated with igneous activity related to the formation of the present day Atlantic Ocean, the rocks of Camlough Mountain are associated with igneous activity

related to the closure of a precursor to the present day Atlantic, the now long disappeared Lapetus Ocean.

Walking near Camlough and Bessbrook

Bessbrook linen
Línéadach an tSrutháin
Linen comes from the flax plant and for around two hundred years flax was a very important cash crop throughout South Armagh. Indeed, the area was particularly well suited to its production. Flax produces two products: linseed oil from the seeds, and linen thread from the fibres of the plant's stalk.
Creating fine linen cloth from these coarse stalks was a laborious process. In those days the work would have started around April, when the flax seed would be sown by hand. This was a skilled business in itself - to ensure the best crop sowing had

to take place at the right phase of the moon. Then, after tending it for several months, there was the slow, back-breaking job of flax harvesting, usually in mid-August. This was often a communal effort, with local farmers helping each other out at harvest time. After the flax stalks had been pulled, they soaked for a while in fresh water ponds called 'flax dams'. This was called retting and its purpose was to rot the tough outer stems.

Next came the smelly, slimy job of taking the flax out of the flax dam by hand, laying it out to dry, then gathering and stacking it in bundles. Rippling was next, which involved dragging the

flax through a thick comb to remove the seeds, and after this, the dry, brittle flax had to be broken by hand. This was also hard work. Then came 'scutching' to expose the tough linen fibres. Scutching mills were dangerous places to work, many a man lost a finger or a hand in the scutching mill, a scutch mill, a hackling house and various other buildings. The Nicholson mill was very successful but in 1839, it suffered a disastrous fire. The buildings lay derelict until 1845, when a Quaker businessman called John Grubb Richardson and his brothers bought the property. The Richardsons were a successful linen manufacturing company with a number of mills in Lambeg, near Lisburn.

After the founding of the linen mill in 1802, many of these processes would have taken place right here in Bessbrook. The property was leased from William Pollock by Joseph Nicholson and he set up a spinning places to work. many a man lost a finger or a hand in the scutching mill, a scutch mill, a hackling house and various other buildings. The Nicholson mill was very successful but in 1839, it suffered a disastrous fire. The buildings lay derelict until 1845, when a Quaker businessman called John Grubb Richardson and his brothers bought the property. The Richardsons were a successful linen manufacturing company with a number of mills in Lambeg, near Lisburn.

Ballintemple viewpoint

Craigmore Viaduct

Camlough Lake

Derrymore House

Fáilte go dtí an Sruthán is Camloch Welcome to Bessbrook and Camlough

The villages and the communities of Camlough and Bessbrook are linked by a shared heritage but also by the Camlough River which flows from Camlough Lake through Bessbrook Pond and under the Craigmore Viaduct, before joining the Newry Canal and reaching Carlingford Lough and the Irish Sea. The water was used to power the many mills along this river and fuelled the linen industry in Bessbrook.

An Sruthán Bessbrook

The Bessbrook you see today dates from 1845 when the mill in Bessbrook was purchased by the Quaker Richardson family. They built the present village in order to provide accommodation for the mill workers. The village was a social experiment based on Quaker ideals of temperance, earning it the title of 'The Model Village'. It was also often called the village of the 'three Ps': no public house, no pawn shop, and consequently no need for police. The streets, terrace houses and squares of Bessbrook are all made from the local hard-wearing Bessbrook granite. Bessbrook was the inspiration for the later model village built by Cadbury at Bourneville near Birmingham

Bessbrook's links with the linen industry date back to the 1750s, when John Pollock established a bleaching business here. It's believed he may even have given Bessbrook its name – Pollock's wife was called Elizabeth, or Bess, and the Camlough River, or brook, runs through the village.

Bessbrook used to have its own hydro-electric tramway, only the second such tramway in the UK and Ireland! It opened in 1885 and was used to transport workers, as well as raw materials and finished goods, between the mill and Newry. It was cleverly designed, the wheels of the tramway could run on both road and rail, so it wasn't necessary to build a line through Newry. The tramway remained in operation until 1948.

The Bessbrook Spinning Company flourished for many years, with linen business peaking around 1900. Production rose during the Second World War, but trade ceased in 'The Brook' in the early 1970s, from which time the mill became an army base until it was vacated in 2007.

Camlocha Camlough

Camlough was an ecclesiastical district in the Barony of Upper Orior. In ancient times this was part of the O'Hanlon's country. At the time of the Plantation of Ulster, 1000 acres or 12 townlands were granted to Henry McShane O'Neill. It would appear that this was the time that the village was developed. Shortly after this period the Church of Ireland erected St Jude's Church, the remains of which are still standing.

Being on the main road from Newry to Newtownhamilton and Crossmaglen, the village of Camlough became and still remains a very vibrant place. Up until the mid 1960s, the monthly cattle and horse fair drew vast crowds of buyers and sellers. The cattle sales are now conducted weekly at the

South Armagh Farming Enterprises premises in the village.

The village is very much to the forefront on the sporting scene, with two boxing clubs, two Gaelic football clubs, a soccer club, and a camogie club. These clubs provide activities for numerous young people each week. Camlough also hosts one of Ireland's top annual triathlon competitions.

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Bessbrook Village

Conair Oidhreacht an tSrutháin is Chamlocha Bessbrook and Camlough Heritage Trail



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The Ring of Gullion Landscape Partnership is part of the Heritage Lottery Fund's programme to conserve and enhance some of the regions's most treasured landscapes.

For further details about the Ring of Gullion and the locality, please see www.ringofgullion.org or email info@ringofgullion.org

For further information on general touring, accommodation, short breaks and activity breaks please contact one of the following Visitor Information Centres or visit our website.

Newry Visitor Information Centre
Bagenal's Castle
Castle Street, Newry BT34 2BY
T: 028 3031 3170

Kilkeel Visitor Information Centre
Nautilus Centre, Rooney Road
Kilkeel BT34 4AG
T: 028 4176 2525

Visitor Information Point
Crossmaglen Community Centre
T: 028 3086 1949

Email: info@visitmournemountains.co.uk or visit www.visitmournemountains.co.uk

Newcastle Visitor Information Centre
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Newcastle BT33 0AA
T: 028 4372 2222

Banbridge Visitor Information Centre
The Old Town Hall, 1 Scarva Street
Banbridge BT32 3DA
T: 028 4062 0232

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They set about restoring and improving the Bessbrook mill and by 1846, they had established a flax spinning, weaving and bleaching business on the site. The Richardsons were known as firm but fair employers. They built the planned village we see today so as to improve the life of their mill workers.

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Camloch - an loch féin

Camlough Lake

The often calm, tranquil waters of 'Cam Lough', meaning Crooked Lake, stretch for just over two kilometres. This narrow, elongate lough provides rich waters for the angler and marks a break in the lines of the hills that surround Slieve Gullion, the Ring of Gullion. In fact, Cam Lough marks the point where the Ring of Gullion is broken, or offset. On the western side, the ring of hills intersects Cam Lough at its northern end at Sturgan Mountain. However, on its eastern side, the ring of hills intersects the lough halfway down its eastern shore.

Raymond McCreesh Memorial
On the eastern edge of Camlough stands a memorial to Raymond McCreesh (1957 – 1981). McCreesh was born in Camlough and attended the local primary school. He became involved with the Republican movement as a teenager and was arrested and imprisoned following an army ambush in 1976. He joined the IRA Hunger Strike in 1981, and died after 61 days on hunger strike. The memorial is comprised of a Celtic cross and a large memorial stone on a plinth, within a memorial garden which also includes ten small memorial stones bearing the names of the ten Republican Hunger Strikers.

Camlough born Frank Aiken (1898–1983) was an Irish politician and a founding member of the Fianna Fáil political party. Aiken was first elected to Dáil Éireann in 1923 and at each subsequent election until 1973. He holds the distinction of being the second longest-serving member of Dáil Éireann.

Teach Siúil Chamlocha

Camlough's Haunted House

The house was built and furnished, but *before* the owner moved in he found all his furniture scattered around the fields. The story goes that the house was haunted and the owner never moved in, leaving the house derelict to this day. But another story tells of how the owner built and furnished the house to woo a woman, when she declined the furniture was thrown out in the fields in fury.

Donn-Byrne (1889 –1928) was a prolific Irish writer, well known for his novels, short stories and poetry . He was born in New York but returned with his family to Ireland and grew up being equally fluent in Irish and English, living in Camlough where some Irish was still spoken.

At University College Dublin, he studied under Douglas Hyde, the famous Gaelic scholar and first president of Eire, he also did work at the Sorbonne and in Leipzig, Germany. He turned down his PhD when he learned that he would have to wear evening clothes to his early morning examinations – a thing no true Irish gentleman would ever do! After Donn-Byrne's marriage to playwright Dorothea Cadogan, the couple lived first in Connecticut before returning to Ireland to live in Coolmain Castle in Co. Cork. Several of his works are still in print, including *The Wind Bloweth*, and *Messer Marco Polo*.

The water from this spring comes from Camlough Mountain through McGrath's spout and was believed to hold healing powers. Local sportsmen (footballers, hurlers, athletes and boxers) would bathe their injuries and wounds in the water and many locals got it bottled and blessed by a priest to use as holy water in their homes.

Originally the well located at the bottom of Gordan's Lane in the townland of Cross supplied the water to the locality. However, in 1926 the local council decided to pipe a water supply to the village of Camlough, the trenches for the pipes were all hand dug by a local man - Mick McGlade. The pumps were installed at various locations in the village. One was outside Carragher's Pub, another at the corner of the Village Green, and a third was placed outside the old school, and is no longer in place. The pumps hold the distinction of being the symbol of the Camlough Heritage Society.

This map illustrates the Bessbrook and Camlough Heritage Trails, which are highlighted in brown. The trails are marked with letters A through S. The map shows the Camlough River flowing through the area, with Bessbrook to the north and Camlough to the south. Key roads include Carrickcroppon Road, Quarter Road, Ballynabee Road, Green Road, High St., A25, Lowes Ln, Church Rock, and St Jude's Terrace. The map also indicates directions to Camlough Lake, Camlough Mt., and Craigmore Viaduct. A key in the bottom right corner defines the symbols used: Hiking Access (brown line), Fishing (blue line), Historic Building (brown building icon), Museums & Cultural Centre (purple 'M' icon), Picnic Area (blue picnic table icon), Car Parking (blue 'P' icon), and Public Art (purple circle icon).

A College Square	H The west / church area	O McGrath's Spout
B The Institute	I Lake view	P Frank Aiken plaque
C The Primary School	J Bessbrook Mill	Q Carnlough village pump
D The Dispensary	K Friends Meeting House	R St. Jude's Church
E The Temperance Hotel	L Derrymore House	S Raymond McCreesh memorial monument
F Charlemont Square	M Carnlough's Haunted House	
G The Tirzah	N Brian Oswald Donn-Byrne's homestead	

Bessbrook Mill

Bessbrook Mill was the centre of the Richardson enterprise in Bessbrook. By 1878, 33 years after its acquisition, it employed approximately 3,000 workers in the mill and 1,500 outworkers (mainly handloom weavers). Linen production continued under Bessbrook Spinning Company until 1972, when the site was taken over by Ulster Weavers, and production finally ceased in 1987. The site was then used as an army base until 2007. Bessbrook Mill was constructed with granite in stages between 1845 and 1880. The architect was W J Gililand and the Mill is a B1 Listed Building. It is an interesting piece of 19th century industrial architecture in terms of its huge size and in the quality of its construction, for example, the former engine house has fine Arts & Crafts-influenced detailing. While access to the site is not possible at present visitors can get a good view of the mill from the small business/shop units off Mill Road and see part of the weaving sheds from the Boiler Hill section of Derrymore Road.

The highest railway bridge in Ireland carries the rail link between Belfast and Dublin. Construction began in 1849 and the bridge opened in 1852. Designed by Sir John McNeill, the eighteen arch viaduct sweeps in a curve across the valley, 126 feet above the Camlough River. The disused track of the Bessbrook to Newry tramway runs underneath the viaduct and is now part of The Ulster Way and The Ring of Gullion Way.

Built in the last quarter of the eighteenth century at the instigation of Isaac Corry. He was the Member of Parliament for Newry from 1776 until 1806 and was Chancellor of the Irish Parliament at the time of the passing of the Act of Union in 1801. It was later acquired by John Grubb Richardson, whose grandson John S. Wakefield Richardson gave it to the National Trust. The surrounding park and woodlands are open to the public.

This two teacher school, built in 1849, originally provided education on an interdenominational basis. Beside the school are the teachers' semi-detached residences, built in a matching style.

This square was the second of the Bessbrook Squares to be built. House No.6 along College Square East, originally a mill worker's dwelling, has been acquired by Bessbrook Development Company (a group of local residents) and restored to what it was like when first inhabited in 1881.

This was opened for use in 1876 to replace the former building in Fountain Street. From here a doctor and nurse, employed by The Spinning Company, gave medical advice and dispensed medicines to the employees. With the introduction of national medical insurance in 1912, the company scheme became redundant and the vacant building became a public bath-house. It is now business premises.

These four large houses overlooking the pond were traditionally occupied by the members of the upper management of the Bessbrook Spinning Company.

This square was the first to be built to realise the Richardson plan of low density housing for his workers. The east side was built with provision for five shops where individuals could set up their own businesses.

Now the Post Office, this large house provided accommodation for commercial travellers, visitors and school teachers until they established more permanent living arrangements.

The major denominations of the latter half of the nineteenth century all had adherents in Bessbrook. The remains of one of the oldest buildings in the area, the Caulfield Bawn, are in the grounds of the Old Convent. Built about 1625 as a place of safety, at the instigation of Sir Toby Caulfield, only a small piece of wall now remains.

Tirzah is a Hebrew word which means 'she is my delight'. The Tirzah in Bessbrook was created as a small park or place of rest and its unusual name refers to it being 'a pleasant place' where the villagers could 'rest a while'.

Constructed from local blue granite in 1885, by local craftsmen. It was erected as a meeting, educational and recreational facility. Soon after its completion, it became known as the Town Hall.

Friends Meeting House

Located in the grounds of Derrymore estate this solid granite structure opened for worship in 1864 and was built by John Grubb Richardson. The Woodhouse, John Bessbrook residence, lies a few hundred yards from the Meeting House.

