

BALLYMOYER

Baile an Mhaoir - town of the keeper.

The parish of Ballymoyer was held by the MacMoyer family from around the middle of the fourteenth century in return for the safe keeping of an *Canóin Phádraig*, the Book of Armagh. This 9th century manuscript is believed to be an authentic source on the life of St Patrick.

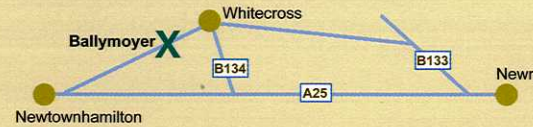
The family held the book until around 1681 when it was pawned by Florence MacMoyer, a Franciscan friar, for £5. He used this money to travel along with others including his cousin, Friar John MacMoyer, to Tyburn to give evidence against Archbishop Oliver Plunkett. Archbishop Plunkett was found guilty of High Treason and sentenced to death.

On his return to Ireland MacMoyer spent a considerable time in prison and was unable to retrieve the Book of Armagh. His grave, in Ballymoyer old graveyard, was reputed to be marked by two ash trees bound by metal bands. Later his headstone was removed to Ballymoyer House.

Ballymoyer Woodland Walk was restored by Glenanne, Loughgilly and Mountnorris Community Development Association in partnership with Regeneration of South Armagh, Conservation Volunteers Northern Ireland and the local community.

How to get there:

Ballymoyer is near the village of Whitecross, Co. Armagh; approximately 4 miles from Newtownhamilton and 9 miles from Newry.



For further details please contact:

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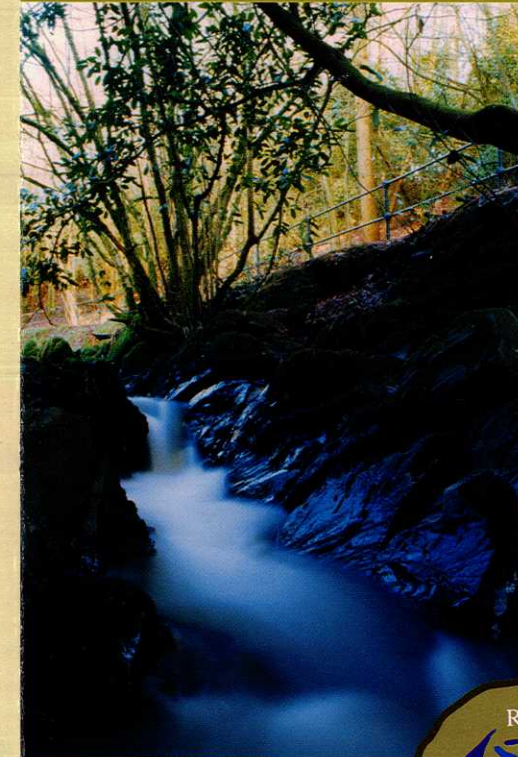
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BALLYMOYER

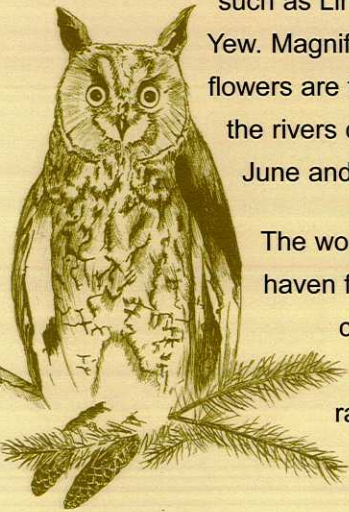


Ballymoyer Woodland Walk

Ballymoyer is a mixed woodland with all the atmosphere and mystique of a fairy glen. Deep mossy, ferned banks are clothed in blankets of primroses, celandines, bluebells and foxgloves in spring and early summer. The woodland walk is approximately 4³/₄ km and explores the wooded glen, once part of the Hart-Synnot demesne, now a community led initiative.

Amongst the modern larch plantations are a number of fine specimen trees. Look out for gigantic Douglas Fir trees, some magnificent Beech and Oak specimens and ornamental trees such as Lime, Sweet Chestnut and Yew. Magnificent Yellow Flag Iris flowers are found near the edges of the rivers during the months of June and July.

The woodland has become a haven for wildlife. Badgers are common as are foxes, grey squirrels and rabbits. Look out for tracks, evidence of feeding and take care around sets and burrows. The long eared owl is also found in the woodland but is rarely active during daylight hours. Insects such as the Orange Tip Butterfly, *Anthocharis cardamines*, the Black Arches Moth, *Lymantria monarcha* and the Forest Bug, *Pentatoma rufipes*, an aggressive shieldbug are found.



The restoration of this glen was made possible by the effort of community volunteers.

The Synnot Family

The Synnot Family first arrived in the parish of Ballymoyer in the late seventeenth century, when they leased eight townlands from the See of Armagh. Prior to their dispossession during the Cromwellian wars, the family had owned considerable estates in the baronies of Forth and Bargy, County Wexford.

In 1778 Sir Walter Synnot (High Sheriff of County Armagh, 1783) built the original Ballymoyer House in the townland of Ballintemple. By the time of his death in 1803 he and his son Marcus had made considerable improvements to the estate and many of the beautiful trees, buildings and structural improvements are thought to date from this time.



"The lands were heathy and barren previously to 1778, when Sir Walter Synnot erected a house and became a resident landlord; scarcely a tree or shrub was to be seen, and the agricultural implements were of the rudest kind. He constructed good roads in the vicinity, [and] planted forest trees to a considerable extent." Lewis S. 1837

The demesne was very ornate and the family were involved not only in the linen industry but also had lead mines in their possession. The Parliamentary Gazetteer of Ireland, 1844 describes the demesne:

"The mansion built . . . by Sir Walter Synnot . . . and the demesne attached to it, is laid out and planted in a tasteful style. Three mountain-streams, after debouching from the glens of their upper course, unite in the lawn of this demesne, and form a scene both beautiful and romantic."



By 1838 the family had bought the eight townlands and continued to improve the estate. By the latter part of the 1870s they owned 7,321 acres of land. In 1901 the demesne had passed through marriage to the Hart-Synnot family who presented it to the National Trust in 1937.

