

Experience
Gullion!
www.ringofgullion.org

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"Though the Scotch Horse were in Belmont and Roden's riders too
We forged good steel in Quilly Beside the old Creg-dubh"

During this period Belmont Barracks gained some notoriety as a place of torture and hangings but by 1821 in 1750 but the outbreak of sectarian violence between the Peep O Day Boys and the Catholic Defenders in the Mullaghbane/Forkill area in the 1780s and early 1790s meant that a new barracks was required to house a company of foot soldiers.

The original barracks on the present site was built in 1689 and was known as Shanroe Barracks. It was abandoned away in recent times but the ruined remains of the Rectory were cleared about to be taken over by British forces. The rectory, which is remembered as some of the best views across the Ring of Gullion.

This road leads to Mullaghbane and has a private dwelling and further along the restored Church of Ireland which is now called "The Board Room".

The Board Room was built in 1804 by the trustees of the Jackson Charitable Rectory. Continue up the hill on the left to the site of Belmont Barracks, (although these last three are on private land).

9. Baobis Whitic Shicacais Church of Ireland
7. Eaglais na hEireanna
Richard Jackson (1722-1787), the landlord of the Forkill estate, created the village of Forkill in the townland of Shean. Jackson also owned an estate in Sussanna Barton, in the graveyard to the left of the church. Jackson was mentioned favourably in the song "The Boys of Mullach Bán", though some say this was a canny play from the song's writer to gain favour from Jackson's restored Church of Ireland which is now as "The Fair Hill".

After Richard Jackson's death, his will was so complicated that its administration needed an Act of Parliament in 1879 to sort it out. The arguments about his estate added more pressure to a situation which was becoming increasingly more tense with 200 years and the committee met four times a year to manage the bequest militia groups, the Protestant Peep O Day Boys and Catholic Defenders, and the years which followed saw several outbreaks of violence.

10. Teach Reachtair Fhoirceala Forkill Rectory
Strangely, considering that Forkill Half a kilometre further along the road in a field on the left you will see the late eighteenth century tower known as Jackson's folly. This was built on a small hilllock above a small lake as a place for the ladies and gentlemen to picnic. The rectory had to travel almost two miles on horseback; in rain or shine. Belmont Barracks was later built overlooking the attack from the south.

The remains of the Rectory were cleared away in recent times but the ruined gatehouse is still standing along a laneway to the right on the road from the village to Belmont.

This area is both a historical treasure trove and a vibrant rural community, filled with farms, homes and businesses. Please be aware that Belmont Barracks is now a private residence. The Mass rock is on private land and the Mass rock is in Foresty Land.

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Rian Oidhreachta Fhoirceala agus an Mhullaigh Bháin
Forkill and Mullaghbane Heritage Trail



Fáilte go Foirceal agus An Mullach Bán
Welcome to Forkill and Mullaghbane

Welcome to the historic area of Forkill and Mullaghbane; a region rich with stories, archaeology and folklore. There is much to explore across these townlands: churches, bridges, an old barracks and standing stones. The histories that accompany these treasures are filled with love, anger, conflict and confusion and these are remembered in songs, poems and headstones and also in the living culture, heritage and tradition in the area.

- 1. Urnaí Urney**
Urnaí is a church and graveyard within the townland of Dungooley. The word "Urney" means "prayer or place of prayer". Urnaí was once dedicated to St Patrick and tradition says he built the church himself. During the penal eighteenth century, Urnaí was a place of worship for all the country round about. The church was tiny, only 28 feet long by 16.5 feet wide, but stories tell of congregations of hundreds packed in for mass. Urnaí is the burial place of Peadar Ó Doirín whose grave is marked with a commemorative stone erected by Éigse Oirialla in 1969 in his honour.
- 2. Eaglais Mhódhach Fhoirceala Forkill Methodist church**
Look out for the Wesleyan Methodist Church, just below Main Street near the river. This church was established after the founding of the village but had a tiny congregation of just 5 men and 10 women in 1862. The church, referred to locally as the preaching house, closed and later became The Tech (a technical college teaching woodwork and other practical skills). It has now been renovated and is a private dwelling.
- 3. Beairic Constáblachta Fhoirceala / Páirc Shiochána Forkill constabulary Barracks/ Peace forest**
Over its history, the Barracks has been located in four different places in the village. It was originally in the middle of Main Street, it was then moved opposite the Irish National Foresters hall at the top of the street. The purpose-built barracks that replaced this building was demolished after

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- 4. Scoil Náisiúnta Fhoirceala Forkill National School**
The original school building is on the School Road. It was started in 1856; the principal was James Kirk who was just 21 years old. He taught 40 children in one room measuring just fifteen by thirteen feet. The school is now a vacant building and the school has moved to a modern purpose built building but is still named for St Oliver Plunkett as the original school was.
- 5. An Fháschoill The Plantain**
On the way to the Gaelic Athletic Club GAC/Cumann Lúthchleas Gael CLG, call in to the 'Plantain' for a picnic, to celebrate his love for his wife. Seen from above on the slopes of nearby Slieve Brac they form the shape of a love heart. In the centre of the park there is a kissing stone, be careful who you sit with on this stone, as legend says that within a year a couple sitting here will be married.
- 6. CLG Pheadair Uí Dhóirín GAC Peadar Ó Doirín**
The Gaelic Athletic Club is named after Peadar Ó Doirín one of the finest poets of the eighteenth century. Born around 1700, and buried in Urnaí graveyard on April 5th, 1769, 'Urchnoic Chéin Céaire' in praise of a young woman with whom he was in love.
- 7. "O peerless gem of fairest form, O choicest maid of fairest form, O Doirín's most beautiful poem is people's homes. After many years as master of the hedge school, Ó Doirín was found dead at his desk by his pupils.**
- 8. An Seomra Buid The Boardroom**
Returning to Church road after visiting the Plantain you will find the sensitively pitched tents on what is still known today as "The Fair Hill".
- 9. Baobis Whitic Shicacais Church of Ireland**
Richard Jackson (1722-1787), the landlord of the Forkill estate, created the village of Forkill in the townland of Shean. Jackson also owned an estate in Sussanna Barton, in the graveyard to the left of the church. Jackson was mentioned favourably in the song "The Boys of Mullach Bán", though some say this was a canny play from the song's writer to gain favour from Jackson's restored Church of Ireland which is now as "The Fair Hill".
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Ring of Gullion
Landscape Partnership

The Ring of Gullion Landscape Partnership is part of the Heritage Lottery Fund's programme to conserve and enhance some of the regions' 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
- Newcastle Visitor Information Centre**
10-14 Central Promenade
Newcastle BT33 0AA
T: 028 4372 2222
- Kilkeel Visitor Information Centre**
Nautilus Centre, Rooney Road
Kilkeel BT34 4AG
T: 028 4176 2525
- Banbridge Visitor Information Centre**
The Old Town Hall, 1 Scarva Street
Banbridge BT32 3DA
T: 028 4062 0232
- Visitor Information Point**
Crossmaglen Community Centre
T: 028 3086 1949
- Visitor Information Point**
Slieve Gullion Courtyard
T: 028 3084 8190

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

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12. Cnoc an Mhargaidh

The Market Stone
The Market Stone is a large boulder in Quilly, a subdivision of Shanroe townland. People brought their linen to this stone, on which a rough yard measure is carved, to be sold. Until the cottage linen industry declined in the 1820s, this area was very heavily engaged in processing flax and making and selling linen at small local markets.

According to tradition, Jemmy Hope, Antrim weaver and leading United Irishman, came to the Market Stone to recruit the local Defenders into the United Irishmen. The gathering of rebels was disguised as a linen market. Many such bogus linen markets were used to facilitate political meetings in the lead up to the 1798 rebellion when there was contact between local groups and insurgents in counties Antrim and Down. A local ballad confirms this:

**“I stood beside the market stone
That year of ninety-eight
To meet a man from Shelagh
Whose word would carry weight”**

However, disappointment was in the air and the news was not good...

**“but no man came from Shelagh
Though we got news from Down
Brought by a linen weaver
From Carrickfergus town**

13. Carraig Aifrinn na Ceathramha
Carrive Mass Rock

After passing Belmont Barracks and the Market Stone, about half a kilometre along the Glendesha road there is a rough track on the left through private forestry land which leads to a mass rock (Carraig an Aifrinn), situated among the trees underneath a steep cliff or “spellig”.

From the beginning of the English Reformation in the 1530s, laws establishing state-reformed Christianity (eg. Anglicanism in England and Church of Ireland in Ireland) and punishing those who did not conform were passed. In addition to laws against Catholics, there were statutes relating to Jews, Protestant Dissenters (non-Anglicans), and Quakers. During the period of the Irish Penal Laws in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when Catholic clergy were expelled from the country and the celebration of Mass was outlawed, isolated sites like this Mass Rock were used for secret communal worship. “Priest hunters” were employed to arrest unregistered priests and Presbyterian preachers, so a lookout was usually posted to warn of the approach of crown forces. Captured priests faced imprisonment and, on occasion, death.

The slow process of Catholic Emancipation began with the repeal of some of the Penal Laws by the Catholic Relief Acts of 1771, 1778 and 1793. Yet the penal laws were only finally repealed by the Government of Ireland Act in 1920.

In recent years the custom of holding mass on this site has been revived and there is an annual service held

here. An interpretation panel on the site gives more information.

Backtrack now to the main Forkhill to Mullaghbane Road (Church Rd) again and continue towards Mullaghbane. The church and graveyard are on the right.

Carrive Mass rock still stands in Quilly today – however it is located on forestry service land and can only be accessed with permission.

14. Teach Pobail an Mhullaigh Bháin áit adhlactha Airt Mhic Bhionaid 1793 - 1879
Mullaghbane Church, burial site of Art Bennett 1793-1879

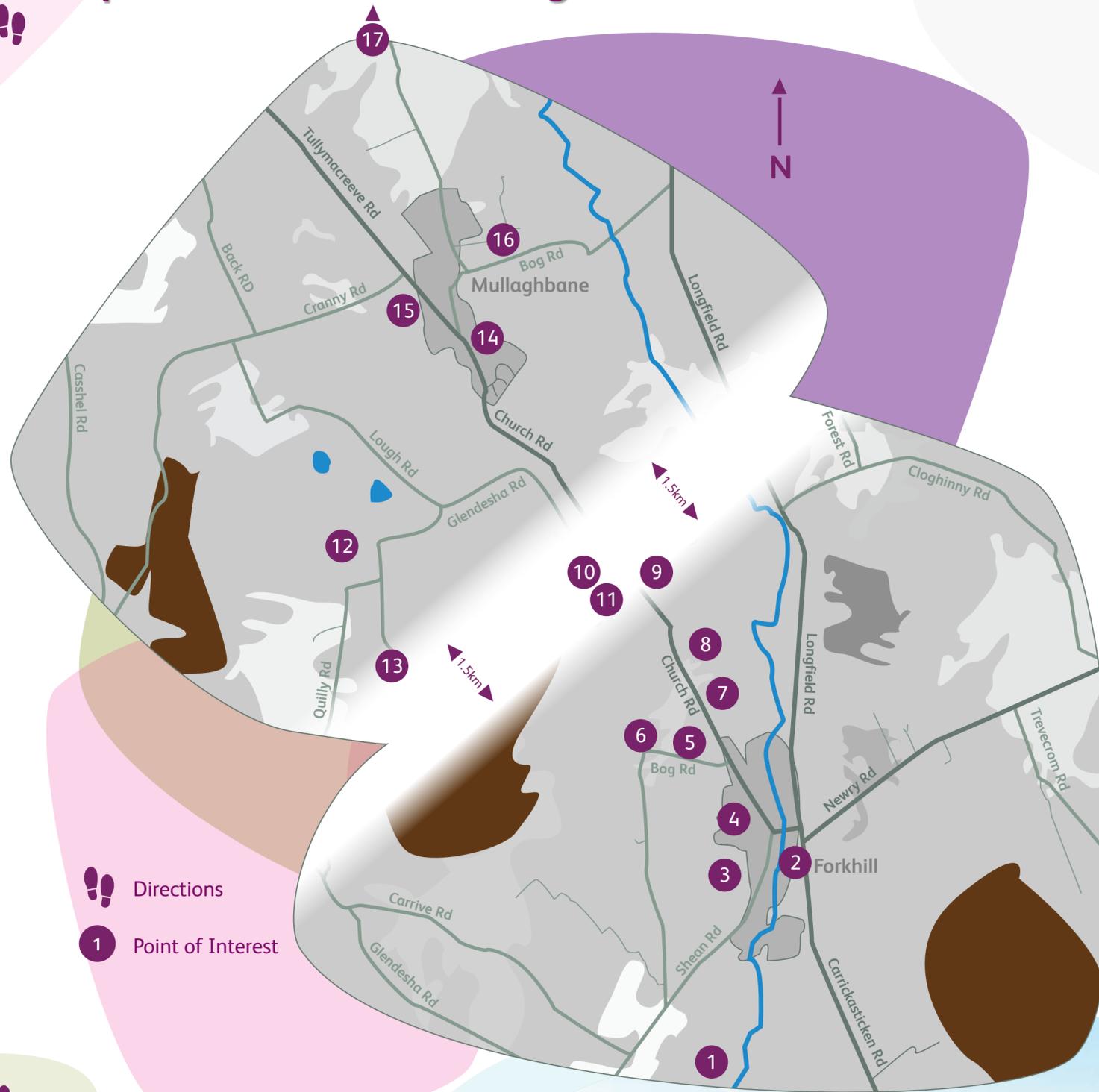
A previous church stood on this site and was replaced by St Mary’s church built in 1862 which has recently been renovated. In the graveyard look out for the gravestone of the poet, Art Bennet. Art carved his own headstone.

Art Bennett of Ballykeel was a Gaelic poet, scribe and stone mason. He collected, wrote out and preserved much literature of periods before his own and was a dependable judge of that literature, especially of the Ulster Poets of the eighteenth century. His admiration of those writers is shown in the immortal words with which he describes them

**“Where are the floods of honeyed sound
Of the smooth-voiced Ó Doirnin
Mac a Liondain’s cheering words
Or the far-famed Dall Mac Cuarta?”**

Art Bennett was born at the end of the decline and fall of the great school of South East Ulster Poets, and this great literary tradition truly died with him. As well as poetry, Art was commissioned by Belfast Gaelic scholar Robert MacAdam to write “A History of Ireland” in the Irish Language. The two men ended up falling out and the book was sadly left incomplete and then lost at a time when it would have been a rich source of the language for the scholars of the Gaelic League era. A draft copy was rediscovered in 1977 when Father Raymond Murray chanced upon the manuscript and happened to recognise Art’s writing. The best-known extracts from the text are about the impact of The Irish Famine in the local area. No one knows the whereabouts of the manuscript now, so the mystery of the lost writings continues. From the church carry on up the road past the village shop until you reach the old Shirt Factory which is now the community centre on the left.

Map of Forkhill and Mullaghbane



15. Áras Pobail an Mhullaigh Bháin
Mullaghbane community Centre
Mullaghbane Community Hall is known locally as ‘The Factory’. In 1905, a shirt factory was opened by Mr Charles Mitchell of Messrs. Hogg and Mitchell, Manchester, in the disused Jackson school in Shanroe townland.

The raw materials for the manufacture of the ‘Metropole’ shirt were brought in through Dundalk port and the finished product was transported by cart to the same port. These shirts were exported as far away as South Africa. At its height, the factory employed forty five girls.

Unfortunately, the venture only lasted for a few years but the building was subsequently a national school, a dance hall, a youth hall and the parochial hall.

16. Ionad Gníomhaíochta Chultúrtha Thí Chulainn
Tí Chulainn Cultural Activity Centre

Head back to the village shop, at the back of the carpark is access to a lovely river side walk. Follow this, looking out for brightly coloured kingfishers, dapper brown and white dippers and possibly even an otter. Continue past St Mary’s Primary School and turn right down Bog Road to Tí Chulainn Cultural Activity Centre which is in Maphoner townland. This unique multi-purpose building, designed by McCusker/Mackle, Belfast, is probably the only centre of its type in Ireland. It combines conference/workshop rooms, an audio visual theatre, an archive room; office spaces, a shop and exhibition area. Tí Chulainn also has catering facilities, a bar and lounge and sixteen hotel standard en-suite bedrooms which can accommodate up to 45 people. The centre is the home of the Michael J. Murphy collection and holds the genealogical records of the Forkhill – Mullaghbane dioceses (open by appointment).

For further information please contact the manager at tichulainn@btinternet.com tel 028 30888828.

17. Dolmain an Bhaile Chaoil
Ballykeel Dolmen

From Tí Chulainn turn right towards Slieve Gullion through the townlands of Maphoner (Maigh Phonaire meaning plain of the beans) and Carrickaldreen (Carraig Chaill Dhraighin meaning rock of the blackthorn wood). Turn left at the first T-junction and take the next left along the Mill Road through the townland of Aughadanove (Achadh an Da nDaimh- the field of the two oxen which is mentioned in the famous tale of the Tain Bo Cuailgne). Turn right onto Ballykeel Road in Ballykeel townland (an Baile Caol meaning the narrow townland) and you will find a classic example of a dolmen which is a great slab set on three uprights. These stones would originally have been buried at one end of a long cairn of stones and soil. This covering cairn has been stripped away revealing only its foundations.

When this site was investigated in 1963 the back stone or rear support had split and collapsed and the capstone, a granite boulder nine feet by eight feet, lay at an angle. The magnificent capstone was reinstated using a mobile crane and the backstone itself was repaired using special cement. The stone that once sealed the tomb was also pulled back into position. A cist (a type of burial container), had been inserted at the far end of the cairn. Other archaeological finds included Neolithic pottery, flint scrapers and a javelin head.

The site has been fenced and is easily accessible. An illustrated storyboard gives further information.

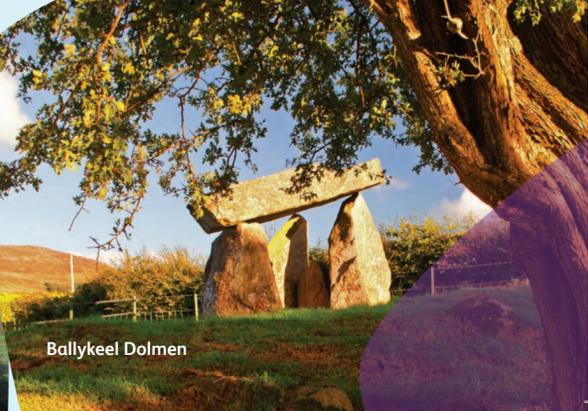
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Urney



Jackson's Folly



Ballykeel Dolmen