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ROSTREVOR
VILLAGE AND HERITAGE TRAIL



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Mourne Mountains Landscape Partnership

A Brief Story of Rostrevor

In the ancient parish of Kilbroney, meaning 'Church of Bronach', Rostrevor has had many names over the years including Glen Seicis and Castle Rory/Caislean Rhuadhri. Eventually in 1613 the village became known as Rose-Trevor when Sir Edward Trevor married Rose Usher.

Important, among other things, as an early Christian site and fortress of a gaelic clan, Rostrevor's development could be said to have reached a peak in the 19th and early 20th century when it became a fashionable and romantic retreat recommended for its healthy atmosphere and climate.

A prominent family in Rostrevor's story were the Ross family, who came to the area in the early part of the 18th century. The most famous, Major General Robert Ross, was born in the village in 1766. Major Ross was a highly decorated member of the British military and led troops who burnt the White House during the 1812-1814 war. It was the Americans' heroic defence of Fort McHenry at this time which inspired Francis Scott Key to write 'The Star-Spangled Banner'.

Travelling through Rostrevor, you will come across many reminders of the industries which thrived in the area, some of which survive to this day – farming, brewing, linen, pottery, papermaking and numerous cottage industries.

Rostrevor has connections to numerous 'giants' – giants of literature such as C S Lewis (16g), the legendary Finn MacCool (16a) and local man 'Giant Murphy' (9). Rostrevor is also renowned for its associations to 'littler' folk (13) and has associations with leading figures in the political world, with saints and with royalty!

This heritage trail brings to life the village's rich cultural, built, industrial and natural heritage and celebrates these associations.

"That part of Rostrevor which overlooks Carlingford Lough is my idea of Narnia"
C.S. Lewis

1: Old Crag Graveyard and Church Ruins – St. Paul's Church was built here in 1732/3, the bell of which now rests in the porch of Kilbroney Parish Church (7). The large celtic style cross marks the resting place of David Ross, son of General Ross.



2: Ranfurley House and Corner – Built circa 1820, Ranfurley House is noted as a very fine piece of architecture. The terminus for the Warrenpoint and Rostrevor Tramway Company, built in 1877, was located across the road until 1915 when the tramway ceased to operate (18). In one season in the 1890s, it was used by 100,000 people.

3: Presbyterian Church – Originally the Presbyterian congregation met in a house on Mary Street until the present church was built in 1850.

4: Trevor Lodge and Old Hall – Built in 1815 by Mr Smithson Corry to replace the original 'Old Hall', a smaller castle adjacent to the 18th century church in the Crag Graveyard (1).

5: Ross Monument – Was erected in 1826 to the memory of Major General Ross (1766-1814) by his regiment. A smaller version of this obelisk can be found over General Ross grave in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

At this point, there is an option to follow a 4km (2.5 mile) loop starting at the Drumsesk Road (approximately 320m further along the Shore Road towards Warrenpoint from the Ross Monument) and finishing back in the village. On this loop there are a number of residences built during Rostrevor's golden era, all of which are now in private ownership:

5a: Drumsesk House
5b: Arnos Vale
5c: Baymont
5d: Lennon's Corner
5e: Green Park

Drumsesk House, Arnos Vale, Baymont and Lennon's Corner have connections to the Bishop of Dromore, Wolfe Tone, Maria Edgworth, General Charles de Gaulle and the Ross family. The original house at Green Park was built in 1646 and it was here that Robert Ross stayed when he came to Rostrevor in the early 1700s. Other houses of note in the village are Studley (15a) which was home to the Roche family, founders of Armaghdown Creamery in Newry, Fairy Hill (11a) and



Benvenue (7a) which was home to W.J. Watson, the architect of the Mourne Hotel (18), whose ghost is still reported to haunt the grounds - villagers pass the small gate with great trepidation.

5f: Pettit Park – is the home of the local GAA club, St Bronaghs, founded in 1919. The ground was opened in 1962 and was named after the local curate, Father JJ Pettit, who was very prominent in acquiring and developing the land.

5g: Carpenham – was built in 1836 by Henry Hamilton, the brother in law of the Duke of Wellington. He named the house after his wife Caroline Penelope Hamilton.

5h: Rostrevor House – The original house, built by the Maguires, was known as both 'Carrickbawn' and 'Topsy-turvy', the latter name referring to its mixed architecture. In the late 18th century the house was bought by Major David Ross who replaced the original house with the present Tudor Revival mansion. Rostrevor House is home to many rare and important plants and trees. The garden was described in 1919 by Irish Gardening as having "the largest collection of plants growing in the open in the whole country".

6: The Square/Sanxter's – The site of Rory McGuinness 14th century castle is reputed to be on the south side of The Square. The present Sangster's Court is on the site of Sanxter's Hotel where the Yelvertons stayed before their infamous marriage in 1857 (11) and where the Irish novelist, Maria Edgeworth, is thought to have stayed. During the 19th and early 20th centuries, fair days were held in The Square. Vanessa Redgrave and Judy Dench have been filmed on location here and it is from here that General Eisenhower addressed troops during WW2. It is also said that Glenn Miller performed for the troops in The Square.



7: Kilbroney Parish Church of Ireland (St Bronach's) – The site, formerly known as Barrack Green, was donated by the Ross family. The Church was built in 1822 to replace St Paul's in The Crag Graveyard (1). Its splendid peal of bells can be heard throughout the village on Sunday mornings.

7a: Benvenue

8: Dunn's Hill – Tom Dunn, born 1736, was a local hedge-school master and United Irishman. Inspired by 'The Rights of Man' by Thomas Paine, he taught Roman Catholic and Presbyterian adults and children in his barn on Dunn's Hill.



He was flogged at Cherry Hill/Barrack Square and died August 2nd 1798. He is buried in Kilbroney Graveyard (9).

9: Kilbroney Graveyard – A trip through this ancient graveyard is alone a heritage trail! It includes St Bronach's 9th century cross, the remains of her 12th Century church and St Bronach's Well, which is said to have a cure for eye complaints. St Bronach's Bell was discovered in the graveyard in a fallen oak in 1855. The graves of Giant Murphy, who at 8'1" (2m 46cm), was the tallest man in the world in his day, Ross of Bladensburg and Tom Dunn (8) can also be found here. There are numerous other 'stones' of interest. One of note, the Jaimedy stone, is only 38" (96cm) high and has pagan origins.

10: Kilbroney House - The most famous resident was 'Honest John' Martin who, together with John Mitchel, was a member of the Young Irelanders in 1848. Both were tried for treason with Martin being sent into exile. He did, however, return and continue his fight for Irish nationalism. Inscribed on Martin's gravestone in Donaghmore (outside Newry) are the words "He lived for his country, suffered in her cause, bled for her wrongs and died, beloved and lamented by every true Irishman."

11: St Mary's Star of the Sea Church The site for the Roman Catholic church was donated by the Ross family. The

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church was built in 1850 through the efforts of Rev. Bernard Mooney, the priest who officiated at the Yelverton marriage which controversially wed a protestant from Cork to a catholic from Manchester. The marriage foiled and ultimately led to the Marriage Causes and Marriage Law Amendment of 1870 under which a mixed marriage before a Catholic priest became valid and lawful, subject to the normal provisos of civil law.

11a: Fairy Hill

12: Water Street – or 'The Lane' was originally the main street in the village and once housed the local hostelry. The houses overlooking the river are fine examples of Irish Georgian homes with one exception 'Glynn-na-Shee', which is English Georgian. You can tell the difference by the brickwork of the chimneys.

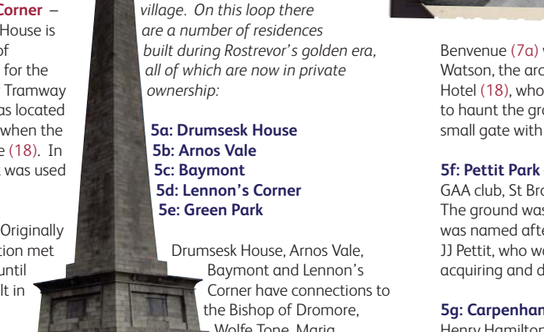
13: The Fairy Glen – The Fairy Glen takes its name from the fairies or 'broonies' who, on moonlit nights, could be seen dancing here. At the top of the Glen at Forestbrook are the walls of an old mill, the owner of which had decided to build a road alongside the river to avoid Chapel Hill. However, the road and factory were never finished. Hence the Fairy Glen path is wide and flat at the start and narrow and undulating for its remainder.

14: Bridge Street – took its name from the bridge which was built in the 1700s and was originally known as Post Office Street. Among its residents were Ben Dunne, founder of Dunnes Stores, and Mary McAleese, President of Ireland from 1997 to 2011.

15: Methodist Church – Built in 1890 and now a cafe/bistro, the site was donated by Joseph Weir who operated the Old Quarry (17) and built the adjacent Syenite Place for his worker. Notice how the houses get smaller as you proceed down the street, reflecting the status of the workers. Strangely, the stone quarried was not syenite but another rock called diorite.

15a: Studley – On the way to Kilbroney Park is Glenview Terrace which was the birthplace in 1916 of T K Whitaker, a civil servant based in Dublin, who was voted as Ireland's 'Man of the 20th Century'.

16: The Lodge/Kilbroney Park – In the park or 'The Meadow' there once stood a residence, 'The Lodge', built by the Ross family in 1716. The Lodge and estate changed ownership a number of times until, in 1977, it was taken over by its present owners, Newry Mourne and Down District Council. During its time The Lodge hosted visits by Charles Dickens and royalty. The Queen Mother (1900-2002) stayed at The Lodge in 1937 with her 11 year old daughter who became Queen Elizabeth II. Unfortunately the house was demolished in 1980. Kilbroney Park is now the focus of leisure interests in Rostrevor. Exploring the park in full will take you to the 7 points below (16a-g).



16a: Cloughmore – 'Clоch Mhór' is irish for 'Big Stone'.

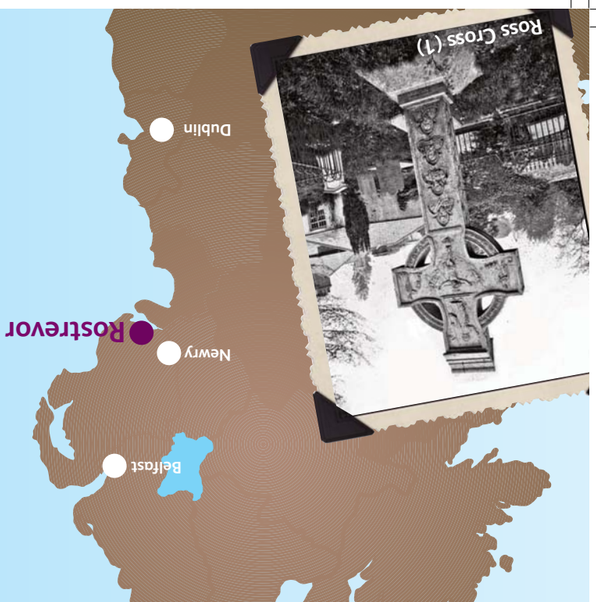
Perched on the side of Slieve Martin at 300m, Rostrevor's 'big stone', weighs approximately 50 tonnes. There are two theories as to how the stone came to be here: One theory is that Cloughmore is an ice-carried granite boulder which has been deposited by retreating ice during the last Ice Age. Alternatively, local folklore tells us that the stone was hurled across Carlingford Lough from Slieve Foy in the Cooley Mountains by the Irish giant Finn MacCool in an attempt to crush his rival, Ruscaire.

16b: Slieve Martin – is 485m high and part of the famous Mourne Mountain range. Accounts from 19th century newspapers told how people hiked to the top to experience the spectacular views, an activity which is still very popular. Indeed 'Cairnuary' challenges local people to scale the summit every day during the month of January.

16c: Ballynageltty – Travelling south west from Slieve Martin and crossing Slieve Meen and Slieve Ban will take you to Ballynageltty or 'place of the crazed woman' where the views of Carlingford Lough and the surrounding area are stunning. The legend behind the name is certainly worth exploring!

16d: Fiddler's Green – Once known as Metcher's Green, this small clearing at the southern edge of Kilbroney's ancient oakwood (16e) was once a focal point for visitors to the area who used to picnic here. It is after this clearing that the local and highly successful annual 'Fiddler's Green Festival' takes its name.

16e: Rostrevor Ancient Oakwood – The 16.63 hectare oakwood, believed to be over 250 years old, is both a National Nature Reserve (NNR) and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The oakwood is a remnant of the old oak woodlands that clothed the lower slopes of the Mournes and is reputed to be one of the few remaining parts of the original forest that once covered all of Ireland.



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An Agency within the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs















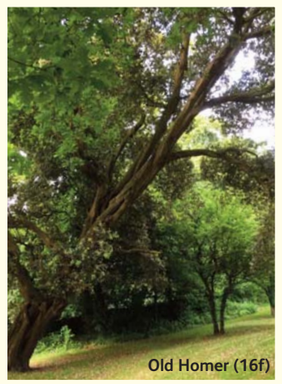

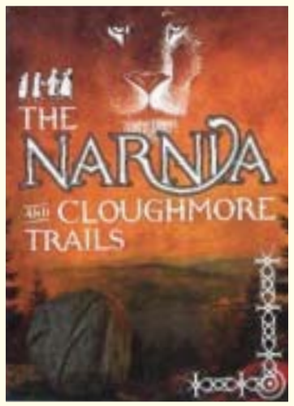

Trail Sites

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2: Ranfurley House and Corner
3: Presbyterian Church
4: Trevor Lodge and Old Hall
5: Ross Monument
5a: Drumsesk House
5b: Arnos Vale
5c: Baymont
5d: Lennon's Corner
5e: Green Park
5f: Pettit Park
5g: Carpenham
5h: Rostrevor House
6: The Square/Sanxter's
7: Kilbroney Parish Church of Ireland (St Bronach's)
7a: Benvenue
8: Dunn's Hill
9: Kilbroney Graveyard
10: Kilbroney House
11: St Mary's Star of the Sea Church
11a: Fairy Hill
12: Water Street
13: The Fairy Glen
14: Bridge Street
15: Methodist Church
15a: Studley
16: The Lodge/Kilbroney Park
16a: Cloughmore
16b: Slieve Martin
16c: Ballynagelty
16d: Fiddler's Green
16e: Rostrevor Ancient Oakwood
16f: Old Homer/Rostrevor Tree Trail
16g: The Narnia Trail
17: The Quarry
18: The Quay
19: Victoria Square

16f: Old Homer/Rostrevor Tree Trail – The Tree Trail guides visitors to a number of trees of note. Included is the Holm Oak or Quercus ilex, named by the Woodland Trust as Northern Ireland's Tree of The Year in 2016. With a distinct angle of 45°, 'Old Homer' has been climbed by generations of local families!

16g: The Narnia Trail – celebrates the area's association with C S Lewis who holidayed here. It is said that Lewis took his inspiration for Narnia from the area, especially on his walks between the Fiddler's Green (16d), Cloughmore (16a) and Slieve Martin (16b). This short family loop is entered, like Narnia itself, through a wardrobe door. Stations along the trail bring to life aspects of the Chronicles of Narnia.

17: The Old Quarry – In the area once known as 'Woodside', the quarry was managed by Joseph Weir (15) from Liverpool and supplied 'setts' (cobble stones) which were shipped to Liverpool from the Quay (18). The quarry closed in 1929.

18: The Quay – is another part of the area once known as 'Woodside'. Built in 1745, its main commercial use was for the landing of coal. It was also a focal point for Rostrevor's once thriving tourism industry. Close by once stood the Mourne Hotel (later known as the Great Northern Hotel). Next to the hotel was a skating rink which was also home to operas and band concerts. Other attractions included picnics on Fiddler's Green (16d), walks to Cloughmore (16a) and boat trips on the lough. These Victorian tourists travelled by train to Warrenpoint and then continued their journey to Rostrevor on Ireland's first horse drawn tramway (2). Remains of the track are still visible here. The building alongside was the terminus where trams were turned on a carousel.

19: Victoria Square – With Victoria and Albert terraces, the Square took its name from the Royals and is a fine example of an elegant period square with solid terraced homes surrounding a broad green where one can easily imagine the residents in the Victorian era having picnics and playing croquet and cricket.

◄ Warrenpoint
Newry

Killowen
Kilkeel
Newcastle
▼

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