



The Island of **Cleenish** is practically uninhabited with just one family living in a homestead just as you enter the island. It is so picturesque and scenic. The island is dotted with about 10 derelict homesteads built for soldiers who survived WW1.

When you cross bridge onto island you have approx. 2 mile walk to the site of the ruins of the monastic settlement. There is no signage and nothing to indicate the real significance of the place.

There follows a 5 mile route into the Monaghan Town which is the Seat of the Bishop of Clogher and the 19th century Cathedral. The town again has a rich history in terms of architecture, heritage and culture.

Armagh as the ecclesiastical capital of Ireland has much to offer the visitor in the two cathedrals and St Patrick's trian. It has its Georgian architecture surrounding the central mall, the Royal School, the Observatory not to mention the ancient site of Navan on the A3 south of the City

All in all this is a beautiful scenic and historical 50 mile route from Cleenish Island to Armagh City. Highly recommended to any would-be explorer. The route is rich in history and places to see and things to do. The route is well serviced with accommodation along the way.

Kells (Irish: Ceannanas) is a town in County Meath, Ireland. The town lies off the M3 motorway, 16 km from Navan and 65 km from Dublin. It is best known as the site of Kells Abbey, from which the Book of Kells takes its name. Kells is also home to a number of famous high crosses. The 9th century Market Cross, the "Cross of the Gate" was originally located at the Eastern Gate of the monastery. It signified that a fugitive could claim sanctuary once inside the boundary of the monastic area. It currently stands outside the old Courthouse. Damage to the cross is attributed to the 17th century army of Oliver Cromwell. Local belief has it that the cross was also used for hanging Croppies after the 1798 rebellion. (The Irish rebels of 1798 were referred to as Croppies, or Croppie Boys, because of their agrarian roots, or for their fashion of cutting or cropping their hair short in the then new revolutionary French fashion

Maynooth
The National University of Ireland, Maynooth (Maynooth University) was formally established as an autonomous university in 1997. Maynooth University traces its origins to the foundation of the Royal College of St. Patrick in 1795, drawing inspiration from a heritage that includes over 200 years of education and scholarship. It is a modern institution, dynamic, rapidly-growing, research-led and engaged, yet grounded in historic academic strengths and scholarly traditions.

National Seminary
St Patrick's College, Maynooth opened its doors as an educational institution in 1795 and, over the intervening two centuries, it has established for itself an impressive reputation for scholarship and learning. Today, as a Pontifical University, the College specialises in the study of theology and philosophy and related areas. St Patrick's College, Maynooth, is the "National Seminary for Ireland", and a Pontifical University, located in the village of Maynooth, 24 km from Dublin.

Kildare Town
Kildare Cathedral is within easy reach of Naas. As a place of interest both historically and religiously, Kildare Cathedral is second only to that of the Cathedral Church of Armagh. St Brigid, the founder of the church, was born in 453 AD and is one of the three most famous Irish saints along with St Patrick and St Colmcille. A deeply religious person, even as a child, she was the first woman who engaged in church work in Ireland.

St Brigid's Well in Kildare Town is reputed to be a "healing well" one of many in Ireland. The well is still a popular place of pilgrimage where healing liturgies are often held. St Brigid's well is situated where the location of her double monastery once stood in Kildare.

Naas: St David's Church
St David's Church is perhaps one of the most important buildings of antiquity to be found in Naas. It is thought that the site, upon which the church was founded, is connected with St Patrick and his missionary work. Indeed, it is a belief that a church dedicated to St Patrick or St Corban stood here, although there are no traces of such a church.

Turas Columbanus begins at the southern end of the village of Bunclody in County Wexford where the small Cloideach river flows into the larger Slaney river. Newtownbarry House and Gardens are close by, situated on the R 746. This visitors' attraction is open each year during the months of June, July and August.

RATHDRUM The R752 runs from Wicklow Town to Rathdrum (14km) through the little village of Gleenely which has a picturesque RC Church. The centre of Rathdrum is best reached by bearing right at the entrance to the village, through a narrow street which climbs a little hill. The village is a base for walking in the Wicklow Hills and it is possible to hike from Rathdrum to Laragh through woodlands and along country lanes. A park in the village features a statue of Charles Stewart Parnell and his estate at nearby Avondale is open to the public and includes a renowned arboretum. The Catholic Church of St. Patrick and St. Mary stands on an elevated site overlooking the village and the surrounding valley.

Navan: St Mary's Church (Built in 1839)
St. Mary's Church in Navan, County Meath is one of two churches that make up the modern-day Parish of Navan in the Diocese of Meath. It was opened in 1839. The modern St. Mary's was one of many Catholic Churches built in Ireland following Catholic Emancipation in 1829, when the last of the Penal Laws was repealed. It is located between Trimgate Street, one of the main streets of the mediaeval town of Navan, and the Fairgreen, with the main entrance facing onto the Fairgreen, where parking is available.

Battle of the Boyne Site
The Battle of the Boyne between King William III and his father-in-law, King James II, was fought on 1 July 1690 (11 July according to our modern calendar). Both kings commanded their armies in person, 36,000 on the Williamite side and 25,000 on the Jacobite side - the largest number of troops ever deployed on an Irish battlefield. At stake were the British throne, French dominance in Europe and power in Ireland. The Battle of the Boyne Visitor Centre is located in the recently restored 18th century Oldbridge House (approximately 1.5 km from Navan) which is on the battle site. Free access to the battle site, parklands and the formal gardens.

St Kevin's Way follows in the footsteps of St Kevin through the hills of Wicklow to the valley of **Glendalough** where he spent the rest of his life in solitary prayer and contemplation. After Kevin's death in AD 618, what had been a hermit's retreat developed into an impressive monastic city which was to continue as a centre of piety and learning for many years to come. Medieval pilgrims came from far and wide to visit Kevin's tomb, and the alternative starting points to the walk reflect the different directions from which they are likely to have travelled.

Here in **Magheramore** you will find the Missionary Sisters of Saint Columbanus Convent on right hand side with driveway leading to Convent and Convent Chapel. Along the driveway, avoid turning for 'Bobbio Centre' and continue to main building.

The first stage of Turas Columbanus has now been completed. We have arrived at a very beautiful location where the public Chapel at the Sisters' Convent is available for a visit and for a prayer. The welcoming Sisters' wish is expressed in their Brochure: 'It is hoped that this small part of the lands of O'Byrnes and O'Tooles, may keep alive something of what its early owners might have wished it to be.'

The Bangor Missionaries
The ascetic life of prayer and fasting were the attractions of Bangor. However, as time progressed, Bangor also became a famed seat of learning and education.

In 580, a Bangor monk named Mirin took Christianity to Paisley, where he died "full of miracles and holiness". In 590, the fiery **Colombanus**, one of Comgall's leaders, set out from Bangor with twelve other brothers, including Gall who planted monasteries throughout Switzerland. In Burgundy he established a severe monastic rule at Luxeuil which mirrored that of Bangor. From there he went to **Bobbio** in Italy and established the house which became one of the largest and finest monasteries in Europe. Colombanus died in 615, but by 700 AD, one hundred additional monasteries had been planted throughout France, Germany and Switzerland. Other famed missionary monks who went out from Bangor include Molua, Findchua and Luanus.

Dromore is a fine example of a plantation town, similar to Lurgan, built around a central square and crossroads with routes north, south, east and west. It is a market town but has a very fine example of a Norman Motte on its outskirts on the B2 route to Ballynahinch. This road through drumlins offers continuous view of the Mourne Mountains in the distance.

Ballynahinch is another example of the Plantation type market town. Its history is tied to the 1798 United Irishmen rebellion with battle of Ballynahinch on the 12th June 1798.

Turas Columbanus



TURAS COLUMBANUS

Over the last decade, a movement to create continent-wide links has developed around the theme of the Irish monks who left their homeland in around 590 AD to found Christian communities throughout Europe. With the approach, in 2015, of the 1400th anniversary of Columbanus' death and, in Ireland, the centenary of the founding of the Order of the Knights of St Columbanus, this initiative has taken form. A coming together of organizations, including local authorities, town councils, religious and education groups with an interest in developing a European Cultural Route from Ireland to Italy through seven countries formed



"The European Association of the Saint Columban Way"

Turas is the Irish word for pilgrimage or journey
Turas Columbanus is the Irish element of the Cultural Route.

Columban was born in the Carlow/Wexford region of south Leinster around 540 and, following his education at a monastery on Cleenish Island in Upper Lough Erne in Co Fermanagh, spent much of his early life at the Abbey of Bangor in County Down, before setting out across France, Germany, Switzerland and Austria, ending his life in 615 in Bobbio, Italy, where his remains are buried. The movement of 'Irish monks' was tremendously influential for early Christianity. The foundation of over 100 abbeys and communities in mainland Europe can be directly attributed to Columbanus and his immediate followers and fellow countrymen. The life of Columbanus was recorded in some detail, as were their journeys across Europe. Turas Columbanus traces a notional route from his home northwards through four clusters highlighting the historic monastic settlements which remain significant to this day while including more modern religious institutions, particularly those with Columban connections and also other attractions within four manageable clusters.