

# South West Wicklow Heritage Trail

For more about our Wicklow Heritage visit  
[www.countywicklowheritage.org](http://www.countywicklowheritage.org)

The West Wicklow Heritage Trail project was initiated by the Baltinglass Municipal District office of Wicklow County Council in order to promote tourism in the area. Production was co-ordinated by the Heritage Office of Wicklow County Council in association with ActiveMe Tourism and Heritage Services and the local community. Special thanks to Donal McDonnell, Paul Gorry and Chris Lawlor for their valuable contributions to the content and to West Wicklow Photography for images.



**Baltinglass**  
Baltinglass Heritage Town and the surrounding area is a rich archaeological landscape with several historical sites including the 12th century Cistercian Abbey on the banks of the River Slaney, the fine 19th century architectural streetscape in the town, the old courthouse and Sam MacAllister statue. An interpretation board outside the library is a great source of local information and history.



**Aghowle Church**  
Aghowle Church is the site of one of Ireland's earliest monasteries, founded by St. Finian in the 6th century. The present church is an impressive structure built with cut granite stone in the 12th century. The west doorway of the church is beautifully constructed and is one of the finest examples of Gaelic-Romanesque architecture in Ireland. Access is down a lane, 400m from the public road



**Tinahely**  
Tinahely is an estate village, largely rebuilt in the 19th century by the 4th Earl Fitzwilliam of Coolattin Estate following its burning during the 1798 rebellion. The scenic landscape setting of rolling hills, countryside and the Derry River Valley have contributed to the popularity of the village as a hub for a variety of local looped and waymarked trails, including the Wicklow Way.



**Haroldstown Dolmen**  
Haroldstown Dolmen is an impressive portal tomb, located on the banks of the Dereen River, close to the Acaun bridge. Constructed around 2500 BC, legend has it that marks on the capstone were the hand prints of a giant. Local folklore also recounts that the chamber was used as a makeshift family house in the 1840s. Although on private land, it is visible from the roadside.



**Shillelagh Village**  
Shillelagh village is an architectural heritage gem, laid out as an estate village by Lord Fitzwilliam in the early 19th century in the 'picturesque style'. Coolattin House and Park, lies 2km from the village and was the seat of the Fitzwilliam estate in County Wicklow. The Shillelagh Stick has its origins in this area and is still handcrafted locally.



**Kiltegen**  
is a picturesque village laid out around a crossroads between Hacketstown and Baltinglass. The entrance to the impressive Humewood Castle is located in the centre of the village, while a small lane leads up to St. Peter's Church of Ireland parish church, built in 1806. Its surrounding graveyard includes mausoleums for the Humes of Humewood and the Westbys of High Park.



**Rathgall Hillfort**  
Rathgall Hillfort, known locally as 'The Ring of Rath' is an extensive hillfort from around 800BC. Enclosed and defended by four concentric ramparts (banks and ditches), the outer three ramparts are stone and earthen banks and are likely to be prehistoric in date. The fourth and innermost enclosure is dry stone built and possibly dates to the medieval period.



**Carnew**  
Carnew is a market town in the south of the county near the border with Co. Wexford. Medieval in origins, the town was a former Norman stronghold with the castle a central part of the town's history. Much of the present day town is from a 19th century rebuilding programme initiated by Earl Fitzwilliam of nearby Coolattin House and estate.



Carnew



# South West Wicklow Heritage Trail

80km / 50 miles / Full Day

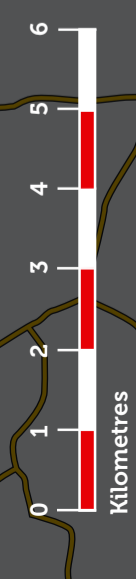
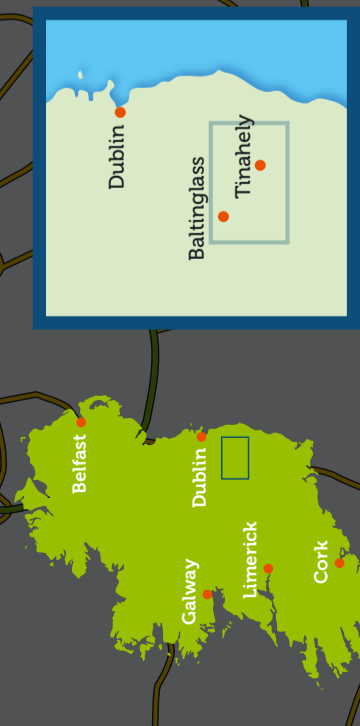
The county of Wicklow is naturally divided by the granite expanse of the Wicklow Mountains, the largest continuous upland region in Ireland which occupies much of the centre of the county.

West of the mountains, owing in part to its topography and remoteness, there survives a highly scenic natural landscape which contains a wealth of archaeological and historical sites, towns and villages. Using Baltinglass as the central point, two heritage trails have been developed to the north and to the south of the town as suggested driving and/or cycling routes to explore this area. For South West Wicklow highlights include Rathgall Hillfort, Aghowle Medieval Church, Baltinglass Cistercian Abbey, the Coolattin Estate, The walks and biodiversity of Tomnafinogue Woods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) as well as the villages of Shillelagh, Carnew, Tinahely and Kiltegan

If you enjoyed this guide pick up the West Wicklow Heritage Trail and the Blessington Lakeside Heritage Trail and continue exploring West Wicklow. For more about visiting county Wicklow see [www.visitwicklow.ie](http://www.visitwicklow.ie), for more about Our Wicklow Heritage visit [www.countywicklowheritage.org](http://www.countywicklowheritage.org)

**Legend**

- South West Wicklow Heritage Trail
- West Wicklow Heritage Trail
- Wicklow Way
- 1 Heritage Trail Place of Interest
- ⊙ Other Heritage Sites
- ▲ Mountain Peak
- Town/Village
- ✚ Walking Area
- ▲ Historic House
- ▲ Golf



1 Baltinglass Abbey



8 Kiltegan



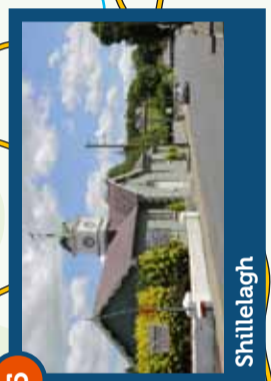
2 Haroldstown Dolmen



3 Rathgall Hill Fort



4 Aghowle Church



5 Shillelagh



6 Rock art at Carnew



7 Tinahely