

Giant's Ring /Lagan Valley Regional Park



Route description

This route is a mix of parkland and countryside walking right on the edge of Belfast, following mainly grass paths.

Distance

3.3 miles 5.5 km.

Average Time

2 hrs.

Access

By bus - Ulsterbus 13D, 13H, 313 from Europa Bus Centre.

By car - Shaw's Bridge car park is situated off the A55 outer ring Milltown Road.

Trail Route

From the car park cross the old Shaw's Bridge and take the ramps down to your left. At the bottom turn left under the old bridge and follow the path until you reach the Minnowburn **(1)**.

Turn right across the bridge over the Minnowburn and follow the riverside path: on the way take time to explore the small Edenderry Nature Reserve **(2)**. Continue, passing the Gilchrist Bridge **(3)** just before you reach Edenderry village **(4)**.

Cross the road and continue until you come to a mini roundabout. Take the first street on your left: at the end you will find a narrow path up the side of the church hall. Follow this path round the back of the houses and a grass path across the field.

On reaching a stile, turn right, following the fence line till you reach the Giant's Ring **(5)**. Take time to explore the Giant's Ring and enjoy the views of the surrounding countryside.

Retrace your steps along the field boundary: at the stile continue straight ahead into Minnowburn, until you reach Ballynahatty Road. Watching for traffic, turn right for about 15 metres, taking the stile on your left.

Continue along this path until you reach the Edenderry Road. Cross the road, and follow the path down towards the Lagan. Take the boardwalk to your right and follow it back to the riverside path and retrace your route back to Shaw's Bridge. Adjacent to Shaw's Bridge are Barnett Demesne and Clement Wilson Park (Walks 1 and 8).

Trail 13



History

The Lagan Valley Regional Park was formed in the 1960s to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the River Lagan corridor. The park, which encompasses public and private land, extends from Stranmillis in south Belfast to Union Locks at Lisburn. Its central feature is of course the river and its adjoining towpath.

Things of Interest

Minnowburn (1)

Here the small river flows over gravel beds through picturesque stone arches toward the River Lagan. Grey wagtails and dippers are often seen in the area. The National Trust owns and manages 128 acres of mixed countryside here, with a fine stand of beech trees and a superb range of scenic woodland, meadow and riverside walks.

Gilchrist Bridge (2)

This high wooden bridge is named in honour of the first Chairman of the Lagan Valley Regional Park.

Edenderry Nature Reserve (3)

The Ulster Wildlife Trust manage this area, once the garden of Edenderry House. A number of

interesting trees, wild flowers and butterflies have been recorded.

Edenderry Village (4)

Edenderry village was established in the late 19th century and owned until the 1970s by John Shaw Brown and his family for the production of the world famous fine linen and damask.

Giant's Ring (5)

The big earthwork circle, roughly 200m across, is a beautiful example of a 'henge' monument, built in about 2700BC during the Neolithic period. Similar monuments are found elsewhere in Britain and Ireland, but this is one of the finest. In the middle is a tomb made up of five upright stones and a large capstone, the bare frame of what was originally a chambered grave, covered with a cairn of stones and earth.

Look out for

- dabchicks, or little grebes, on the River Lagan.
- butterflies and damselflies alongside the towpath during the summer.
- jays feeding on acorns in Barnett Demesne during the autumn.