

AVONMORE WAY

HERITAGE TRAIL

Co. Wicklow is renowned for the many wonderful walking trails which traverse its **spectacular landscape**. These trails showcase the county's wealth of beautiful scenery, its abundant wildlife and echo its fascinating history through its **diverse geological formations** and the built structures remaining from its **past inhabitants**.

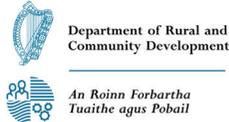
The Avonmore Way begins at Trooperstown car park, outside Laragh village. The trail quickly crosses the **Avonmore River** (from the Irish, 'Abhainn Mór', meaning big river) which makes its way towards the lush wooded valley between **Laragh** and **Rathdrum**.

At 430m high, **Trooperstown Hill** provides stunning views out over the **Wicklow Mountains**. The trail skirts the hill before descending into the picturesque **Vale of Clara** below and into some of the oldest woodland in Ireland. Towards the southern end of the trail, the **impressive 19th century viaduct** and striking **neo-Gothic church** provide visual clues to the historical importance of the picturesque town of Rathdrum. **Avondale House and Forest Park** is also easily accessible from the town.



This leaflet is produced by **Wicklow Uplands Council (WUC)**. The mission of WUC is to support the sustainable use of the Wicklow Uplands through consensus and partnership with those who live, work and recreate there. Other heritage trails to explore in this area include those at **Bray Head to the Great Sugar Loaf** and **Vartry Reservoirs**. For more information visit www.wicklowuplands.ie

To learn more about the wonderful and diverse built, natural and cultural heritage of Co. Wicklow please visit the county community heritage archive at www.countywicklowheritage.org



LEGEND

- Avonmore Way
- # Place of interest
- Town / Village
- 🦉 Bird Watching
- ▲ Mountain



2 Vale of Clara Bridge

Spanning the **Avonmore River**, this six-arch stone bridge dates from the late 17th century and is thought to be the **oldest bridge** in County Wicklow. The fact that the bridge is narrow and can carry just one lane of traffic is testament to its age.

Archaeological excavations in 2014 uncovered evidence of a **watermill** 100 metres upstream of the bridge which was dated to the last decade of the 17th century. The **Catholic Church of St Patrick and St Killian** is adjacent to the bridge and was built in 1799.



3 Vale of Clara

The beauty of the Vale of Clara, where the **Avonmore River** is flanked by acres of broadleaf and evergreen forest, is unrivalled in County Wicklow. This is one of the few large areas of **natural woodland** left in Ireland, some of which has **stood since the last Ice Age**.

Designated as a **Special Area of Conservation**, less common bird species such as **Jay**, **Long-Eared Owl** and **Woodcock** may be spotted. The **Great Spotted Woodpecker** is naturally recolonising Ireland and this woodland is one of its strongholds, listen out for the distinctive drumming sound in spring time. Species such as **Dipper** and **Grey Wagtail** can also be found along the river.

Nestled in the heart of the valley is the picturesque **village of Clara**. The village once had a post office, an inn and a shop, all of which are private residences today.



4 Rathdrum

Rathdrum sits on a high ridge **overlooking the Avonmore River**, its name comes from the Irish '**Ráth Droma**', meaning 'Fort on the Ridge'. Rathdrum became a **thriving centre for wool trade** in the late 18th century.

During the 19th century, Rathdrum developed into a **busy market town**, the corn mill from this era survives today. The impressive **viaduct** over the River Avonmore was built in the 1860s to accommodate the **arrival of the railway**. Around this time, the **neo-Gothic Catholic Church** was also built to a design by J.J. McCarthy, the most prominent architect of his time.

The famed 19th century nationalist leader, **Charles Stewart Parnell (1846-1891)** resided at nearby **Avondale House**.



1 Trooperstown Hill

At **430m**, Trooperstown Hill provides **magnificent views** out over the Wicklow Mountains. An old highway, known as the '**Rocky Road**' from Clara Vale over the hill was once the principal route towards Dublin. A **bullau stone** can be found on the hill's eastern side, in a field known as '**Páirc an Teampail**' or 'Field of the Church'. During **Penal Times**, mass was said in a cave beneath a tree here.

The **origin of the hill's name** is unclear, attributed to the **presence of soldiers** during the Cromwellian Conquest or the 1798 Rebellion. However, perhaps the name has been mistranslated from the Irish, '**Tigh an Tearmainn**', meaning 'House of Church Lands'.

1 Trooperstown Hill (430m)

2

3

4

0 1 2 3 4 5km

