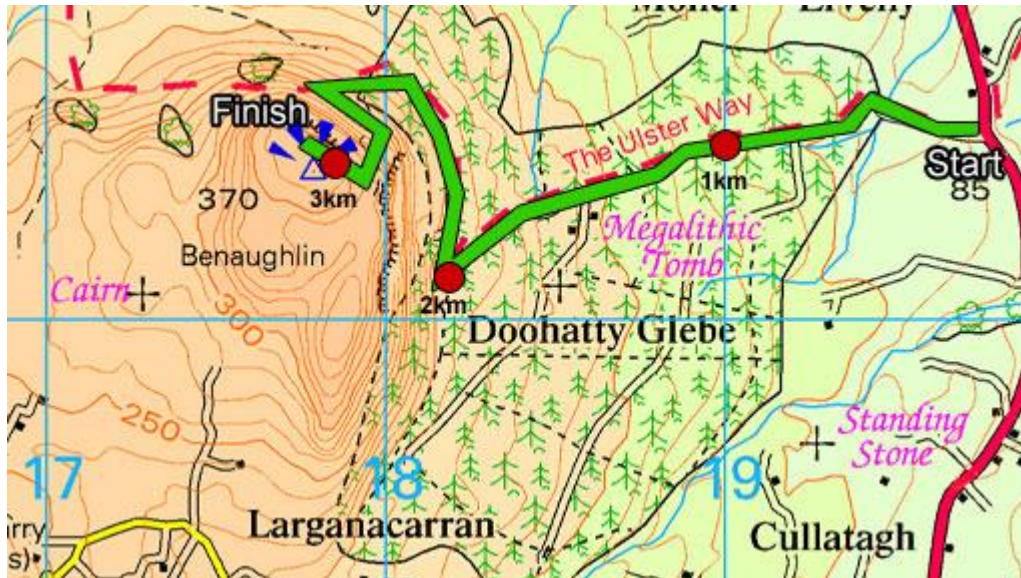


## Off the Beaten Track:



**\*Crown Copyright. Route and Distances are approx. Only for guidance.\***

## Benaughlin Mountain

Binn Eachlabhrha - "Peak of the Speaking Horse"

There are many myths and legends surrounding Benaughlin. It was thought to be a fairy mound, the dwelling place of "Donn Bin", a fairy king who roamed the area on horseback every May eve, looking for "changelings". If you hadn't a piece of mountain ash above the door it was "God help you". The mythical white horse or "copal ban" was a powerful figure and came out once a year on the last Sunday of July, "Bilberry Sunday" to speak oracles to people. Up until recently there was allegedly a large white outline of a horse carved into the hillside, visible for miles from the road from Swanlinbar.

**Height:** 373 metres (1221 feet)

**Round trip:** 6.3 Kilometres (3.9 miles)

**Time:** 3 to 4 hours

**Level 3:** Moderate

This is a good, slightly more-than-beginners walk for an afternoon.

**Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland Discoverer Series 1:50 000**

Map 26 Lough Allen

Map Coordinates: 178315

### Refreshments

There are no cafes or restaurants in the near vicinity. Best to bring a packed lunch with you.

### Start and Finish

Take the Enniskillen to Swanlinbar Road (A 32). The actual start (198316) is about 4 km (2.5 miles) past the crossroads where you turn to Florence Court and Marble Arch Caves. Look out for a forest type road entrance on the right after passing a shop/filling station. It is almost exactly 800 metres (0.5 miles) from the shop to the entrance.

## **Terrain**

This is forest road to start and rough, mostly unsurfaced track. The gradient on the forest road is moderate but after that is fairly steep but steady, along an established zigzag track up the mountain. Keep to this track. It has been slightly eroded in parts and is partly covered in heather, which can make the going slippery particularly in wet weather.

## **Route**

Go up the forest road and once in the plantation, continue straight on past two side roads. Approaching the cliff face go round a sharp right bend and at a sharp left bend your route goes straight on to the end of the forest road. Going round the sharp bend would take you into the quarried area at the bottom of the cliffs. There are great views of Upper Lough Erne and its islands from here and on the way up the mountain you will be afforded great views of Floencecourt house and Estate. Belmore mountain and Lough Macnean. Head north towards a dense forest and follow the fence line on the left to a stile to the left. Cross over that and follow the narrow zigzag path which hugs the side of the mountain. The route eventually follows the line of a fence and near a left turn in the fence so to the right and follow a roughish, not well-defined path to the top, part of which is along a sunken gully/track which can be slippery and muddy. Eventually you will see the pillar or trig-point on the top.

## **Local Walking Contacts and Association**

Walk Ni

<http://www.walkni.com/>

Ulster Federation of Rambling Clubs

<http://www.ufrc-online.co.uk/>

Northern Ireland Tourist Board

<http://www.discovernorthernireland.com/>

National Trust

<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main>

Ordnance Survey Northern Ireland

<http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/lps/index/gi.htm>

Fermanagh District Council

<http://www.fermanagh.gov.uk/>

Fermanagh Ramblers Association

<http://www.fermanaghramblers.co.uk/index.html>

## Points of Interest

From the top there are wonderful 360 deg views of County Fermanagh. To the east is Upper Lough Erne. To the south-east you can see the wind farm on Slieve Rushen. To the west the skyline is dominated by Cuilcagh Mountain and to the north is Florence Court, Lough MacNean and Belmore Mountain.

On a flattish area near to the pillar, is a mystery memorial but broken stone, lying flat. When it was intact it is supposed to have read:

"Maxwell and Stewart. This stone was erected here on 3rd November eighteen hundred and one, by Lord E. Stuart as a memorial to his esteem the above first mentioned officer. The virtues that men have live after them; so it may be with Caesar. Si quid novisti rectius illis candidus imperti si non, his utere mecum (the last two lines of the poet Horace's letter to his friend, Numicius translated as - If you know anything more honourable than these, be frank and let me know. If not, then you must agree with me about this). What deserved this homage on top of Benaughlin is unknown.

## Safety Information

### Be Prepared

With a bit of forethought, common sense, the right equipment and knowledge, hill walking can be a fun, sometimes challenging and hugely rewarding experience. It is remarkable how many people go out hill and mountain walking, without the proper skills, information, clothing and equipment and preparation. National Outdoor Adventure Centres and rambling or walking clubs will always give advice.

- Whether walking with friends or alone, ensure you plan well and allow plenty of time for your walk. Be realistic in your estimates, allowing ample time for navigating/route finding, stops and breaks etc.
- Check the weather reports before you set off. Take note of extremes, especially heavy rain, high winds and high and low temperatures.
- Let someone know your intended route and when you expect to be back (and let them know when you have returned).
- A change of footwear and dry clothes left back in the car (if that is how you arrived at the start) will always be welcome.
- Don't take on too much and enjoy your day.
- Follow the Countryside Code, "Leave No Trace".

### The following items should always be carried.

- A comfortable well fitted rucksack with a waterproof liner will allow you to carry all the basic equipment for a safe and enjoyable day on the hill.

- The straps should be suitably padded and sit on the shoulders without rubbing. It should have a supporting waist belt and chest strap to keep it in place. As a general rule of thumb, a 30 litre sack will be plenty for a day walk and 45 - 60 litres should suffice for most multi day camping trips.
- Warm hat and gloves or mittens (sun hat in hot weather) - preferably thermal insulated. Up to 33% of heat is lost through the head. waterproof jacket, waterproof trousers, fleece or jumper. Sunglasses may be beneficial during the summer months.
- Thermal Base layer. Quick drying layers worn against the skin which can transport moisture away from the skin are an important addition in all sorts of weather conditions.
- A fleece is a useful thing to carry, either as a "mid layer" between base layer and outer jacket in cold weather or as an outer layer in slightly warmer conditions.
- Dehydration is an issue at any time of year so ensure you take adequate fluids for the day ahead. Consider the forecast temperatures and how strenuous your day is likely to be. For a full day in the hills 1 litre of water should be the minimum.
- Food for the day. Sandwiches are the easiest to prepare and fruit and chocolate are always good additions.
- Emergency survival bag. This is a brightly coloured plastic bag designed to reduce the loss of body heat.
- A compass and suitable map of the area (with waterproof cover) - and know how to use them.
- A small personal first-aid kit including plasters, bandages, dressings, insect lotions or sprays and sun screen lotion or sprays in the summer months.
- A whistle for attracting attention in an emergency (six shorts blast on the whistle is the internationally recognised distress signal).
- Head torch and spare battery and bulb
- A fully-charged mobile phone (signal strength can be weak or non-existent in some areas, but better to have it than not). Do not rely on the mobile phone be self-sufficient in your planning.
- Tissue/toilet roll for sanitary requirements (and a lighter or matches to burn them afterwards). These can also be buried (away from water supplies) after use but that may require a small spade to be carried.

## Footwear.

- Comfortable mountain boots with a suitable sole, and ankle support.
- There are many types available in leather or fabric often with a breathable waterproof membrane.
- Boots also vary in their rigidity. Generally speaking the more technical the terrain the stiffer the boot,.
- To avoid blisters and rubbing they should be laced snugly and broken-in over a series of progressively longer walks.
- To help minimise blisters use medical tape or sticking plasters on the normal rub points - back of the heel and sometimes where the top of high ankle boots rub against the leg.
- Do clean and dry them afterwards (slowly - overnight if possible) and waterproof them regularly with a suitable agent.
- Good quality wool mix socks often help avoid blisters especially on warm sweaty days.

## Waterproof Clothing.

- Jacket and trousers should be waterproof and preferably breathable. The jacket should have zippered pockets and a roomy hood with draw cord.
- Trousers should not be restrictive and should have lower leg zips to ease fitting over boots.
- Waterproofs act as a barrier against rain and wind/chill.

The following items are not essential but advisable to have them.

- A pair of adjustable walking poles. These certainly help with balance and support when ascending a mountain and are particularly helpful when descending
- Binoculars
- Personal GPS (Global Positioning System). This should only be used as an addition and never a replacement for map and compass.
- Well fitted and adjusted gaiters are very useful when travelling through bog land. They help to keep the mud and moisture away from the boots and are an extra waterproof protection. In warmer, drier conditions they are a good alternative to over-trousers, especially when walking through rough gorse, brush or thorn bushes!

If you are intending to camp overnight you will need:

- Tent or Bivy Bag
- Sleeping bag
- Insulating mat (or inflatable mattress)
- Spoon, knife and fork. Bowls and mug.
- Stove, fuel and pans.
- Food (boil-in-the-bag packs are light to carry and provide good hot meals)

## Do's and Don'ts - the Countryside Code

### Land and its owners.

- Keep the number of cars to the minimum (use public transport where possible) and park appropriately allowing for easy access to property, especially for farmers and landowners. Farm machinery and emergency rescue services may need wide space to turn into a field or gateway.
- All land is owned by somebody. Agreed access to that land is often with the goodwill of the owner, not as a legal right. If unsure, check with the owner and observe signs regarding access agreements/restrictions.
- Use agreed routes in these areas.
- Be friendly and courteous when you meet landowners and local residents.
- Respect private property and do not interfere with machinery, crops or animals.
- Avoid taking dogs into the hills, especially with livestock around.
- Keep noise to a minimum.
- Be careful not to damage fences, walls or hedges.
- Use stiles and gates where they exist.

### The Environment

- Take care not to disturb plants, birds and animals and in particular, nests.
- Where possible stick to tracks, or the most durable surface available.
- In heavily used areas, walk in single file in the middle of the path, even if it is wet and muddy. This helps reduce soil erosion and minimises path widening.

- In more remote areas, disperse use to prevent the creation of new tracks and campsites and try to avoid places where impacts are beginning to show.
- Avoid taking short cuts on zigzag paths as this creates new lines for run-off water and increases erosion.
- Leave cairns as they are: old cairns could have archaeological value.

### Litter, waste and camping

- Apart from being unsightly litter is a hazard to wildlife. **As a general rule take out what you bring in.**
- Leave no litter behind: even biodegradable items like banana skins and teabags can take a long time to disappear and they are unsightly.
- With caution, pick up and remove litter when you see it.
- Human waste should be buried 6 inches deep and at least 30 metres away from watercourses and walking tracks and shelters. Toilet paper takes a long time to biodegrade. It and sanitary towels and tampons should be taken home in a sealed bag. Even if buried, they may be dug up by animals.
- Washing should never be done directly into a water-course, even if biodegradable soap is used. It is better to use a pot for washing and dispose of the dirty water away from the bank.
- Always ensure landowner's permission before wild camping.
- Choose unobtrusive sites at least 500m away from roads and buildings.
- Use a stove for cooking. Campfires leave their mark and poorly set fires, especially in hot summer may be dangerous.

To prevent damage to vegetation, tents should not be left on the same spot for more than two nights. In many wild areas tents should only be pitched between dusk & dawn.