



walking: valleys, vales and views

Carlow's natural beauty, unspoilt landscapes and sweeping vistas make it an ideal place to get out of the car and into the great outdoors. This tour combines mountain and river – fabulous mountain views can be enjoyed from a walk at Kilbrannish Forest on the Blackstairs Mountains while flat walking is available near the River Barrow in Clashganny Forest. Both forests are most easily accessed from the south Carlow town of Borris.

The charming town of **Borris** with its traditional Irish street-front and spectacular mountain setting is home to **Borris House**, built by the McMorrough Kavanagh clan who were Celtic Kings of Leinster. A house tour which covers all aspects of the history of the house, from the original 15th century castle, through its many subsequent changes and alterations, comes highly recommended. Open most Wednesdays – Fridays and occasional weekends May – September. Visit www.borrishouse.com for exact opening times. Visitors are also invited to explore this charming town by following a series of storytelling panels located at the upper and lower end of the town.

In Borris pass the **Bank of Ireland** and take the next left turn under the **Borris Viaduct**. This spectacular structure carried the Great Southern and Western Railway Line as it travelled between Bagenalstown and Palace East in County Wexford in the 19th century. Follow this road for approximately 5km until you come to a left hand turn signed **Mount Leinster and RTÉ TV Transmitter**. Continue past the **Nine Stones Viewing Point** (though a short stop to view some of the spectacular scenery from this point should be considered!) in the direction of Bunclody. At the next crossroads (**Carroll's Crossroads**) turn to the right and **Kilbrannish Forest Recreation Area** is located on the left hand side of the road approximately .5km away.

Kilbrannish Forest Recreation Area features three signposted trails ranging in length from 3 – 11km. The route offers really wonderful views of the surrounding countryside – walkers will be rewarded with particularly fine views from the summit of Croaghaun (455 metres) northwards over the plains of Carlow with the villages and towns of Myshall and Tullow spread out below. A large car park and picnic facilities are available to visitors.

Return to Borris Town where lunch can be enjoyed in the four star **Step House Hotel** or one of the **charming public houses** on the Main Street. From Borris continue south on the R729 for approx. 5km until you see signs for **Clashganny Forest Looped Walks** on the right hand side of the road where car parking and public facilities are available.

Clashganny Forest Trails offer the user gentle walks on forest roads alongside the River Barrow. Once a commercial waterway, the River Barrow is now a relatively undiscovered gem, punctuated by ancient bridges, 200-year old navigation channels, locks and pretty lock houses. The Clashganny Lock Loop, covering a distance of 3.5km runs through deciduous woodland with glimpses to the river below. Clashganny is a hub for river activities on the Barrow so expect to see anglers, canoeists and kayakers as they enjoy the river. For those who still have the energy, Clashganny Forest also offers a 6km walk with secluded forest trails and some historic land marks including a mass rock. This route leads you to the Clashganny Viewing Point car park where wonderful views of the surrounding countryside and Blackstairs Mountains can be enjoyed. For more details visit www.carlowtourism.com