

3-2 Glencree River to Oldbridge

- Map** panels 1 and 2
- Distance** 18 kilometres (11 miles)
- Terrain** mainly forest tracks and mountain paths (partly on boardwalk); boggy underfoot and exposed in places
- Grade** moderate climb and descent from Glencree River to Glensoulan, then steady ascent to White Hill (630 metres), followed by further uphill and downhill work
- Side-trip** Djouce mountain (725 metres)
- Summary** splendid views of loughs and mountains punctuate a day made strenuous by the gradients, terrain and extra distance to accommodation before start and after finish



Lough Tay



- At the minor road around Knockree Hill, cross over and turn right into the next bit of wood, heading west for 500 m.
- Bear left on to a path, then go over the stile and down a grassy path towards the river.
- At Glenree River, turn sharp left (south-east) to follow the tree-lined path downstream for over 1 km. At the footbridge, cross the river.
- Turn right along the path leading to a forest track that climbs away from the river. This meets the road at a T-junction where you turn left. (To reach Coolakay House, stick to this road for 700 m, turn left for 1 km, then right across the River Dargle for 1 further km, finally left for 1 km.)




Beside Glenree River

- To continue the Way, follow the road for only 300 m, turning sharp right into Crone Woods. Cross the car park and pass the gate to follow the track into the woods, soon turning left at the information board.
- Follow the waymarkers as the road zigzags uphill through the forest, with its mixture of Scots pine and beech giving way to spruce. Higher up, clear felling has left large bare areas, with the compensation of great views toward Great Sugarloaf mountain to the east. The road gradually narrows to a footpath.
- At Ride Rock, you round a corner and a wonderful view over Powerscourt Deerpark opens out beneath you, with Djouce mountain as the backdrop to Powerscourt waterfall. There's a memorial seat from which to view the waterfall, Ireland's tallest at 121 m (398 ft).

Powerscourt Waterfall, seen from the Way



- The path follows a cliff above the valley for a further 600 m, with some closer views of the waterfall. There's a dramatic rocky outcrop to climb over and handrails in places.
- Watch out for waymarkers in the next section (Glensoulan). In March 2008 recent clear felling had left little to guide you down the steep descent to the River Dargle. However you could see, far below you and to the right, a sturdy footbridge known as the 'Watergates'. So you had only to pick your way across the rocks and fallen branches to descend to the bridge.
- Once across the Dargle, which feeds Powerscourt waterfall, the Way continues south, climbing steeply along the line of a stone wall on your right, then veering left.
- One km after the Watergates, the Way turns right (south-west) across a timber stile over the wall, where there's a Wicklow mountains information board.
- Follow the well-trodden path, bearing left where a green track goes straight ahead. You are climbing the shoulder of Djouce mountain, passing an obvious path to its summit (725 m) on the right. On a clear day, this detour is well worth the effort: see panel.
- The Way rises climbs gently around Djouce for 1.5 km to reach a saddle that joins it to White Hill, where the descent path from Djouce's summit rejoins the Way. In clear conditions, you'll see great views, with Dublin harbour and the Howth peninsula in the north, Great Sugarloaf to the east and rolling hills to the south.
- For the next 3 km the Way runs on a raised boardwalk made from railway sleepers, to conserve the blanket bog and its vegetation. The wire netting gives secure footing, but in high cross-winds it can be hard to keep your balance.



Djouce mountain
Of the two paths to the summit from the Way, the southerly one is easier (100 m vertical climb) than the easterly (170 m, with a steep section near the top). Allow an extra hour for the round trip, plus time to enjoy the superb views of the coast and of Maulin and Great Sugarloaf to the north. To descend, avoid backtracking by turning left at the summit and descend southerly to rejoin the Way. Beware of the paths that descend westerly to the Coffin Stone.

North-east toward Great Sugarloaf, from the boardwalk



South-west toward Scarr and Tonelagee mountains

- Finally the boardwalk descends down steps into a valley called the Barr, past a memorial boulder to J B Malone, the architect of the original Wicklow Way: see page 61. There are splendid views over Lough Tay from here.
- After the memorial, follow the newer, left branch of boardwalk with handrail, veering left down a short path with overhanging low branches. This meets a forest lane where you turn right, downhill past an information board and small car park.
- Turn left at the main road and walk along the R759. (The photograph of Lough Tay on page 4 was taken from the roadside viewpoint, a detour to the right.)
- Within 1 km you reach the Pier Gates, from which you may opt for a longer detour along the private road through Luggala Estate to approach the shore of Lough Tay.
- About 300 m after the Pier Gates, the Way turns right into the forest. Follow the heather-lined forest road, bearing right uphill and soon gaining great views of the hills to your right. To your left is Vartry Reservoir, consisting of two artificial lakes at Roundwood, supplying most of South Dublin's water.
- The Way climbs around the shoulder of Sleamaine, and then drops to the saddle between it and the next hill. Follow the waymarkers south-west around the shoulder of Ballinafunshoge for a further 2 km or so.
- The forest road starts to swing left (easterly). In March 2008 the clear-felling looked recent and drastic, but it had opened up glorious views over Lough Dan, with Scarr mountain behind.

- As the road veers further left, slightly downhill, you see views of Vartry Reservoir. Don't miss the waymarker (set back, on the left), where you turn right, down a narrow gravelly path through gorse and spruce.
- The path ends at a ladder stile. Climb over and turn right to follow the field boundary downhill to a gate. If it's still padlocked, climb it at its hinges.
- Turn right to follow beside the gorse hedge and pass through a timber kissing gate. Descend the broad fenced track to cross a stile into a private lane.
- Turn right down the lane, within 300 m reaching a crossroads where the Way turns right. (If you are staying in Roundwood, leave the Way here and walk about 3 km from the crossroads to reach the village.)



Stile at foot of narrow path

Across Lough Dan to Scarr mountain

