

3-3 Oldbridge to Glendalough

48 49

Distance 9.4 km (5.8 miles)

Terrain over 2.5 km of road walking, then forest track and some mountain paths, boggy in places

Grade moderate gradients, maximum height 350 m (1150 ft)

Food and drink Laragh (1.2 km offroute), Glendalough

Side-trips Glendalough Monastic City

Summary a short and fairly undemanding section, allowing plenty of time to visit the atmospheric Monastic City and explore the scenery and wildlife of the upper valley of Glendalough



- At the crossroads, turn right and follow the road for the next 3.7 km. Cross the River Avonmore by Oldbridge at km 40.8, and note this junction with many signs. (To reach Lough Dan House, turn right here and go uphill for 2 km.) The Way bears left, soon passing Wicklow Way Lodge, and climbs steeply up a spur of Scarr mountain.
- The road climbs, dips and rises again before reaching Wart Stone field: the name is from a hollowed-out stone or *bullaun* that collected water that was believed to cure warts. This is 2.3 km after Oldbridge: turn right.
- Follow the rough track uphill for 430 m up a boreen, over the stile and through the farm gates. You reach the cow byre at Brusher Gate (km 44), with fine views behind you: see the photo on page 25.
- Cross two stiles roughly at right angles, turning left (south) to cross Paddock Hill. Follow the clear path alongside the wall, at first beside a plantation. On the shoulder of Paddock Hill, you'll find Brusher Gap Hut (a timber shelter) with picnic bench and water butt (km 44.5).



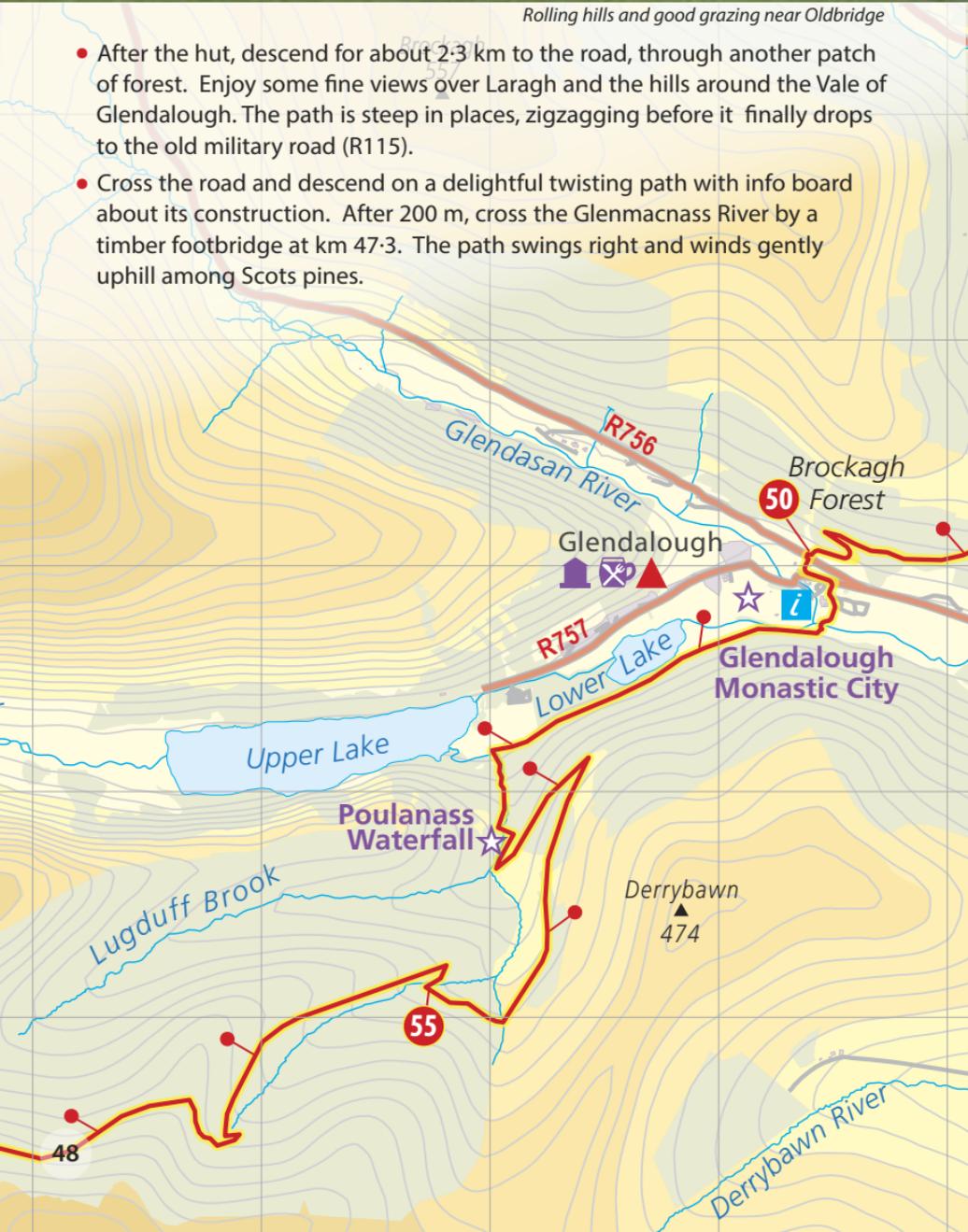
The Way crossing the shoulder of Paddock Hill





Rolling hills and good grazing near Oldbridge

- After the hut, descend for about 2.3 km to the road, through another patch of forest. Enjoy some fine views over Laragh and the hills around the Vale of Glendalough. The path is steep in places, zigzagging before it finally drops to the old military road (R115).
- Cross the road and descend on a delightful twisting path with info board about its construction. After 200 m, cross the Glenmacnass River by a timber footbridge at km 47.3. The path swings right and winds gently uphill among Scots pines.



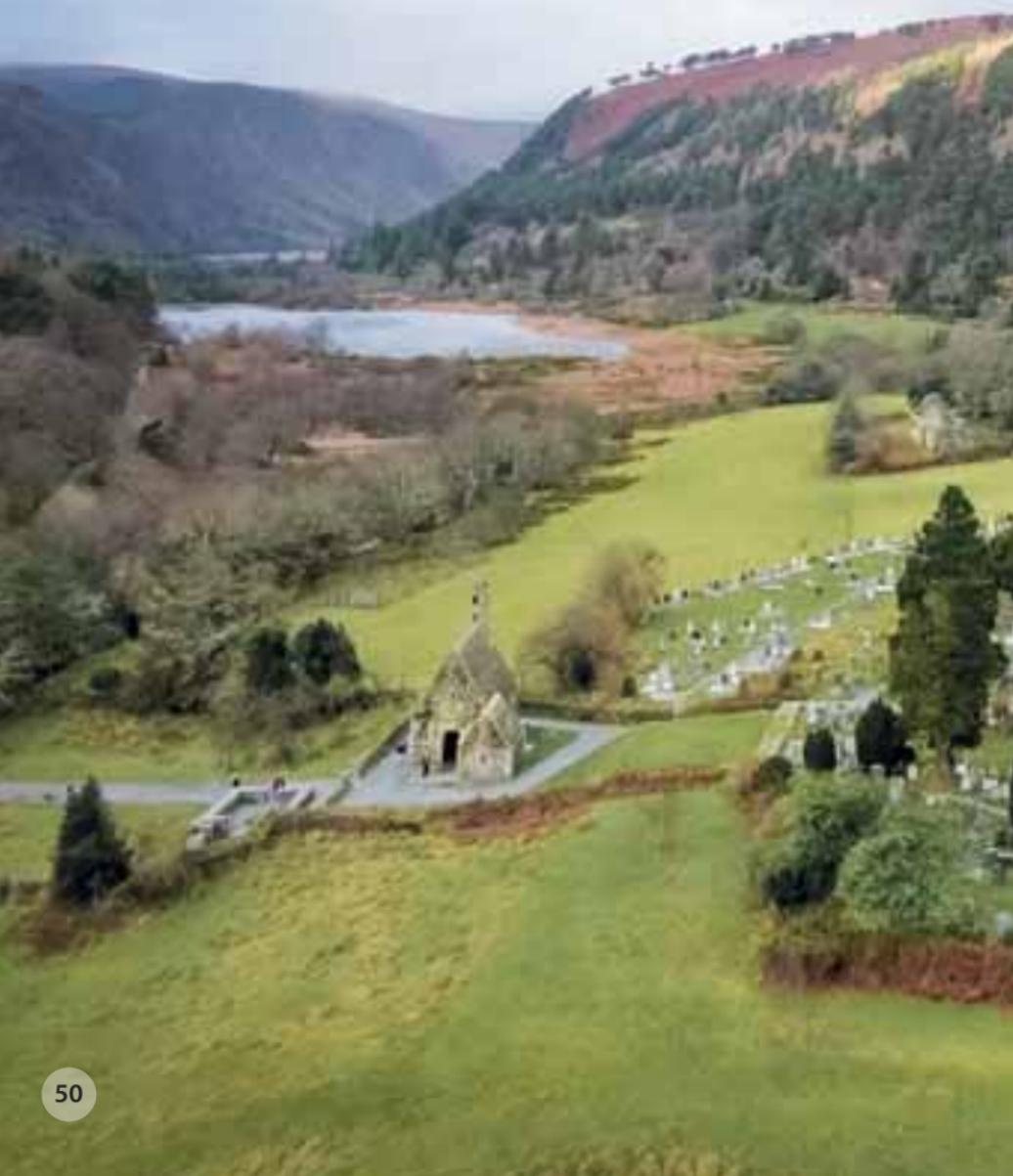


Glenmacnass valley

- At first the path heads upstream near the river, then it bends away uphill to meet a forest road: turn right onto it and continue to climb. Follow the hairpin bend at km 48.
- About 500 m beyond the bend, the road levels out at a turning circle. Keep ahead on a narrow path that undulates. On a stony ascent you gain your first inspiring view of the two lakes and Monastic City.
- Continue on the rocky path/road for 1 km from the turning circle. At km 49.6 look out for a left turn down a path that zigzags on its descent through the trees, very steeply at first.



Stony ascent leading to great views



- Exit Brockagh Forest by two stiles to reach the Wicklow Gap road (R756).
- Cross straight over the R756 with care, and follow a short boreen down to meet the next road opposite the Glendalough Hotel. Turn left here – unless heading for the youth hostel, which is nearby to the right.
- After 150 m, turn right at a fingerpost pointing into the car park for the Glendalough Visitor Centre. The Centre (on your right) is well worth a visit: see the panel on page 19.
- Afterwards, cross the Glendasan River by a footbridge, soon reaching a sign for the 'Green Road to Upper Lake': turn right.
- After 180 m a sign points right across a footbridge for the Monastic City. Give yourself at least an hour to enjoy this wonderful place: see pages 19-24. In season, aim to visit in the early morning, to enjoy some peace before the coachloads arrive.

