

30. Carron Mountain [Ballyhoura Way]



Mount Carron

To the southwest of Kilfinnane lie the Ballyhoura Mountains, which extend for about 13km towards Charleville. The highest point is Seefin Mountain [528m] overlooking Ardpatrik. The surface rock is Old Red Sandstone and the mountains have the same geological structure as the nearby Galtys.

Carron Mountain is situated on the County boundary with Cork in the heart of the Ballyhoura Mountains. From Ardpatrik take the Ballyhea road. After passing a road on the right, turn left at the next passage, which is opposite a red corrugated

farm building with a red gate. Continue up this tarmac road and pass the Medicine Woman's house. At this point the road becomes a stony forest track. Avoid the first track to the left and eventually you will reach a second forest track on the left, which has a barrier across it. Park here at the start of the walk.

Walking distance 16km, Time 4 hrs (there are options for shorter walks). Terrain moderate. O.S.Map 73: Start grid ref R618193

Starting from the barrier [Point 5] continue along the forestry road until you meet a three-road junction **[Point 6]**. Take the stony road on the left, keeping the plantation on your right. There are some Gorse bushes with a line of telegraph poles further up on the left. The track passes between two fence posts **[Point 7]**, where we turn right, crossing a small stream. An open area of heath appears on the left. As you climb up this track you will be able to see the mast over to the right. At the next junction **[Point 8]** turn right, heading towards the mast. You are now on the County boundary with Cork, and on part of the Ballyhoura Way. After a short distance you will see a yellow arrow pointing to the right. Follow this path up a short steep climb; it can be muddy at the top as you pass the mast. On reaching the next junction turn right, which leads the way to Carron Mountain. The ground here is upland heath of Heather, Deer Moss, Bilberry, Wavy Hair Grass, and Eared Willow. At the Y junction follow the yellow arrow to the left up the steepest part of the climb. This brings you to the top of Little Carron. Follow the path ignoring the next yellow arrow and continue straight ahead for the summit of Carron Mountain **[Point 9]**. It is well worth the effort getting here for the excellent views of County Limerick. The lakes to the west are those at Ballyhea. Return back to **Point 8**, then turn right downhill along the county boundary until you meet a crossroads **[Point 10]**. Turn left here, passing through a barrier [KN19]; there is now forestry on both sides of the track. You will meet an open area of upland heath on the left and then more forestry. The track bends around and finally meets another barrier [KN18] **Point 11**. Turn left uphill and continue on up to a car park **[Point 3]** where there are signboards showing maps of the area. These roads are so bad that they are not suitable for traffic. Above the car park is a blue arrow pointing towards Seefin. Climb up this passing Library Rock and on up to the top of Seefin [528 m]. Return back to the car park **[Point 3]**. Continue along the track in a northerly direction, which starts to descend.

30. Carron Mountain [Ballyhoura Way]



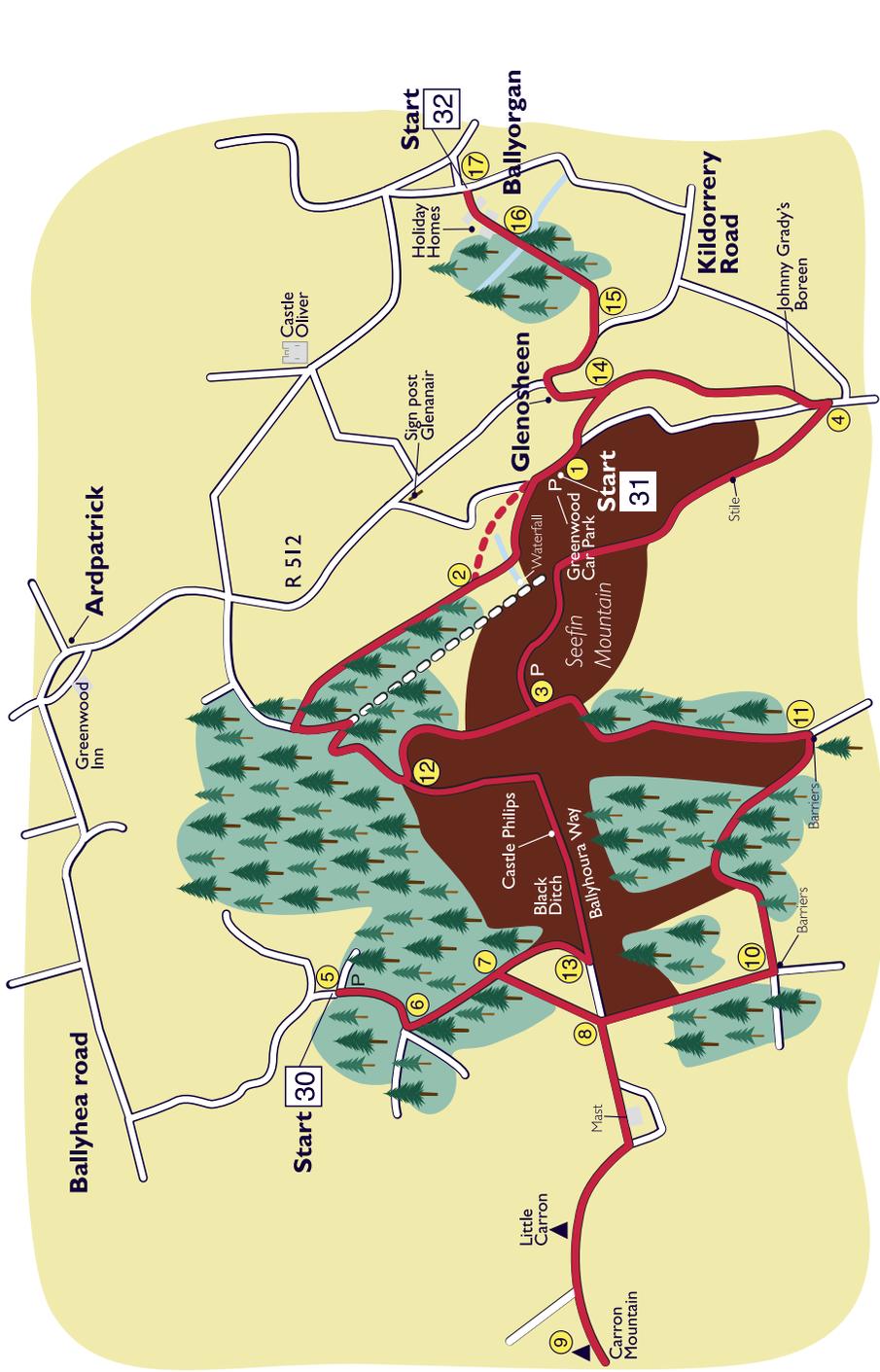
The Black Ditch

Look out for a yellow arrow on a sharp bend **[Point 12]**, where you can rejoin the Ballyhoura Way. This path leads to Castle Phillips, which is not a castle but a prominent mass of rock. Most of the nearby hills have similar prominent rock masses or tors composed of sandstone conglomerate. This is a hard, lumpy rock with large pebbles of quartzite embedded in a sandstone matrix like coarse concrete. Being hard and resistant to weathering, veins of conglomerate project above the level of the surrounding softer sandstone. Note the abundance of lichen on these tors, particularly the Common Crottle and the conspicuous Map Lichen, which is yellow in colour.

Climb over Castle Phillips and follow the path over the heath, which is known as the Black Ditch. This area is the best place in the County for seeing Red Grouse. On reaching a track **[Point 13]** turn right; this eventually runs along a forestry boundary and back to **Point 7**. Continue on down and back to the starting point.



Female Common Darter (Padraig O'Callaghan)



Carron Mountain, Seefin Mountain & Ballyorgan (Ballyhoura Way)

30+31+32

31. Seefin Mountain [Ballyhoura Way]



Seefin Mountain



Heather with Bilberry

South of Ardpatrik, Seefin Mountain rises steeply from the valley and provides wonderful views over the southeast of Limerick. From Ardpatrik take the Kildorrery road south. Pass the crossroads and take the next road on the right. This is signposted as Castleoliver View 1km. The Coillte car park named Greenwood is approximately 1km on the right.

Walking distance 10km, Time 3 hrs (there are options for shorter walks). Terrain moderate. O.S. Map 73: Start grid ref R658183

Start at the bird sign [Point 1]. To the right of this signboard is a path which leads through a wooded area. The first of the boards showing some of the flora (Sessile Oak, Wood Sorrel, Rhododendron) is located here. On the way up there are more signboards of various wild flowers. Look out for patches of Wood Sorrel under the conifers. This plant used to be sold as Fool's Shamrock as it looks very similar. The path passes through Sitka Spruce, Norway Spruce, Lodgepole Pine and Larch plantations. Foxglove, Goldenrod, Wild Angelica, Greater Bird's-foot Trefoil and Bilberry are to be seen

along the track. Eventually you will reach a wooden bridge (follow the blue and white arrows). This crosses a gorge, where there is a waterfall on the left. The path continues up and then descends to a forest road **[Point 2]**. **Option:** From here there is a shorter walk back to the car park by turning right (white arrow) downhill.

To reach the summit, however, we turn left (blue and yellow arrows). A forest track approaches from the right; this is the Ballyhoura Way. Keep on going upwards to the left. When the track bends around to the right, ignore the path on the left and keep right. Higher up on the track is the Large-flowered Butterwort, which is very scarce in County Limerick although it is common in Cork and Kerry. It was in this area some years ago where an infamous Red Grouse decided to attack passers-by. The landscape begins to change as acid bog appears at about 470 m. Hazel can be seen by the track, unusual for such a high altitude and totally out of place. Typical birds to look for are Stonechat, Linnet, Meadow Pipit, Kestrel and Sparrowhawk, while Ravens can be seen high up; listen out for their barking calls. The Meadow Pipit's Irish name is Riabhóg mhóná, meaning little streaked thing of the bog. It is also known locally as the Cuckoo's Servant or Fool.

31. Seefin Mountain [Ballyhoura Way]

The occasional Spring Redtail Damselfly may be seen in the ditch near the car park **[Point 3]**. This is a good place for a bite to eat. A path leads the way up towards the summit of Seefin, which passes Library Rock. This is one of many sandstone tors, which can form ridges up to 7 metres in height. On their summits and in the cracks and chinks many woodland plants such as woodland ferns, Woodrush and Cow-wheat curiously find refuge. Enjoy the view from the top.



Black Rock

Continue along the rough path starting your descent, which is quite steep for a short distance and crosses a boggy area. You will meet a path ahead where you turn right uphill. Eventually this track follows a stream downhill crossing some stiles and finally meets a roadway at the bottom **[Point 4]**. Occasional Common Darter dragonflies may be seen on the stones along here. At the road turn left and after a short distance look for a lane on the right (Johnny Grady's Boreen). This will meet the Ballyhoura Way at **Point 14**. Keep to the left and turn right at the next junction, which will bring you back to the starting point.



Kestrel (John Carey)

32. Ballyorgan [Ballyhoura Way]



The Ballyhoura Way

Beech trees and past the holiday homes. There is an area of forestry and mixed woodland of mainly Beech, Oak, Ash, Willow, Sycamore and Birch with an understorey of Holly and Cherry Laurel. After passing the homes look for a tree stump with Honey Fungus growing on it in autumn. Fungus gets its nutrients from other plants since it does not produce any leaves to gain energy from the sun. On reaching a Copper Beech there is a path to the right. This is rather overgrown with Bramble but you can walk a part of it. St John's-wort is abundant. Return to the gravel path and continue on, crossing a newly constructed metal bridge **[Point 16]** over the Mulanna River. Wood Horsetail, which is the only Horsetail that has branched branches, grows at the damp edge of the woodland near this bridge. Mounds of Greater Tussock Sedge that have sharp-edged leaves grow in a swamp under the Alder by the river near the footbridge. Watch out for the Dipper known as Gabha dubh na nAilt, which translates as the Blacksmith of the Stream. This is because it bears a white breast that resembles an apron. This is one of four species of birds that are of Irish race and it is also known as the Dark-bellied Dipper. Spend some time watching it as it swims under the water looking for the eggs and nymphs of mayfly, stonefly and caddisfly. Kingfisher, Moorhen, and Grey Heron also occur here. As you are walking along listen out for Chiffchaff, Blackcap, Whitethroat, Robin, Wren, Goldfinch, Chaffinch and Song Thrush singing amongst the trees. Sparrowhawks glide through the trees and Kestrels hover up in the skies whilst in the evening Barn Owl and Long-eared Owl may be seen hunting. Meadow Brown, Ringlet, Speckled Wood, Peacock, Red Admiral and Green-veined White butterflies are all common, whilst the occasional Common Darter also makes an appearance. There are open fields on the right and a stream. In spring look out for Bluebells, Primroses and Wood Anemones on the woodland floor.

The purple Primroses are probably hybrids with garden primulas known as Wandas. On reaching the main road our walk ends **[Point 15]**. Return back to the starting point along the route you have just travelled.

Option: This walk can be extended to the Greenwood car park. From there you have a number of walks to choose from. To get there, turn right at **Point 15** along the main road [R512] until you reach the village of Glenosheen. Turn left at the next junction and look for a stony track on the bend of the road, which provides a short cut to Johnny Grady's Boreen. Turn right at the top and right again at the T-junction. The signpost for the car park leads the way to the Greenwood.

Located near the school in Ballyorgan, this walk forms part of the Ballyhoura Way. It is an area of mixed conifer-broadleaf woodland with the Mulanna River passing through it.

Walking distance 3km round trip, Time 1 hr. Terrain easy, O.S. Map 73: Start grid ref R680187

There is an option of starting from the Greenwood car park **[Point 1]**. See map.

The starting point, [Point 17] is under a stand of Beech trees at the entrance to the Trident Holiday Homes. Walk through the

Trident Holiday Homes. Walk through the