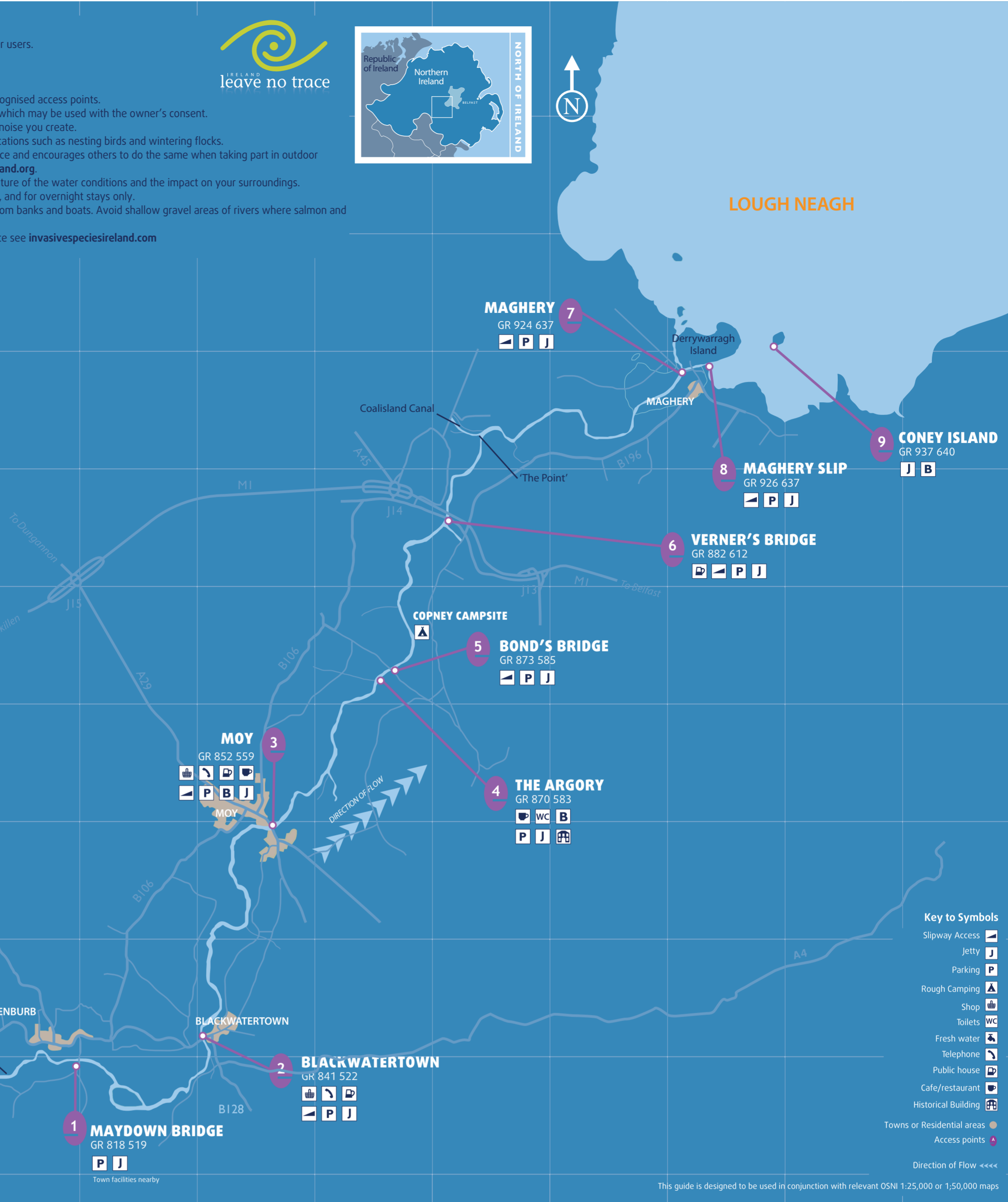
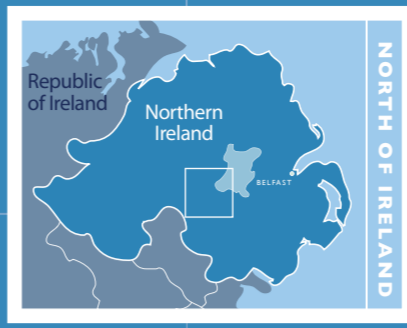


Earning a Welcome

1. Please be friendly and polite to local residents and other water users.
2. Drive with care and consideration and park sensibly.
3. Change clothing discreetly, preferably out of public view.
4. Gain permission before accessing private property.
5. Minimise your impact on the natural environment and use recognised access points. There are also many unofficial access points along the shore, which may be used with the owner's consent.
6. Be sensitive to wildlife and other users regarding the level of noise you create.
7. Observe wildlife from a distance and be aware of sensitive locations such as nesting birds and wintering flocks.
8. Outdoor Recreation NI supports the principles of Leave No Trace and encourages others to do the same when taking part in outdoor recreation. For more information please visit leavenotraceireland.org.
9. Keep the numbers in your party consistent with safety, the nature of the water conditions and the impact on your surroundings.
10. Wild camping should be carried out discreetly, in small parties, and for overnight stays only.
11. Have respect for anglers - keep well clear of anglers fishing from banks and boats. Avoid shallow gravel areas of rivers where salmon and trout may spawn, especially from November to January.
12. Take care to avoid spreading invasive species. For more advice see invasivespeciesireland.com



Camping & Accommodation

- Copney Campsite**
- Copney Campsite is maintained by Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council and offers space for 10 small tents. Booking is not required - space is available on a first come first served basis.
- The site is only accessible from the water via canoe steps at GR H877589
- An Eco Toilet is available.
- Please do not camp outside the fenced off area as this is privately owned land.

A range of self-catering, B&B, hotels and guesthouses are available in the wider area. Please visit DiscoverNorthernIreland.com

Canoe Hire and Canoe Tours

For up-to-date canoe hire and guiding please visit CanoeNI.com

Further information

Tourism Northern Ireland
Visit Armagh
Armagh City, Banbridge
& Craigavon Borough Council
National Trust

DiscoverNorthernIreland.com
VisitArmagh.com
getactiveabc.com
NationalTrust.org.uk

Trail updates: any changes to the canoe trail that may occur will be updated on CanoeNI.com. Please email any feedback to info@canoeni.com

NIEA Water Pollution Hotline Freephone 0800 807060



Provision for people with disabilities

All sites with slips cater for disability access with varying degrees depending on the water level. It is recommended to check before starting a journey.

This guide is available on request in alternative formats.

Disclaimer

Every effort has been taken to ensure accuracy in the compilation of this publication. Outdoor Recreation NI and its partner organisations cannot however accept responsibility for errors or omissions, but where such are brought to our attention, future publications will be amended accordingly. Canoeing may by its nature be hazardous and involve risk; training is essential for safe participation. It is recommended to take out personal accident insurance. Users must undertake and act on their own risk assessments prior to use of any access site or waterway and review and update during use. The guide must be used in conjunction with an Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 or 1:50,000 map. Neither the publishers, funders, contributors, landowners, site managers, riparian owners nor agents of the aforementioned can be held responsible for any loss, injury or inconvenience sustained by any person or persons as a result of information, guidance or advice given in or omitted from this guide.

Acknowledgements

Design: thinkstudio.co.uk
Photography: brianmorrison.co.uk



This project has been developed by



STOP THE SPREAD



Are you unknowingly spreading invasive species on your water sports equipment and clothing?

Invasive species can affect fish and other wildlife, restrict navigation, clog up propellers and be costly to manage. You can help protect the water sports you love by following three simple steps when you leave the water.

- CHECK** Check your equipment and clothing for live organisms - particularly in areas that are damp or hard to inspect.
- CLEAN** Clean and wash all equipment, footwear and clothing thoroughly. If you do come across any organisms, leave them at the water body where you found them.
- DRY** Dry all equipment and clothing - some species can live for many days in moist conditions. Make sure you don't transfer water elsewhere.

For more information go to www.invasivespeciesireland.com



These itineraries have been compiled using an estimated paddling speed of 4 kilometres (2.5 miles) per hour and also allowing time for lunch breaks and the many photo opportunities along the way. Please check forecast and in particular wind strength and direction before departing.

ITINERARY	DISTANCE (Approx)	DAYS	START ACCESS POINT
May to Verner's Bridge	7km (4.5 miles)	0.5	May
Perfect bite sized day trip – flat water			
Blackwater town to Blackwater town (5.5 miles)	9km (5.5 miles)	1	Blackwater town
Manageable day trip – flat water			
Blackwater town to Verner's Bridge (7.5 miles)	12km (7.5 miles)	1	Blackwater town
Longer Day trip			
May – Coney Island	15km (9 miles)	1-2	May
A longer day trip or relaxing overnight including Lough Neagh			
Blackwater town – Coney Island (12.5 miles)	20km (12.5 miles)	2	Blackwater town
Maydown Bridge – Coney Island (15 miles)	24km (15 miles)	2	Maydown Bridge
The trail from start to finish including Lough Neagh			

The Blackwater Canoe Trail is 23 km length and therefore paddling shorter sections allows for an excellent range of day trips. An overnight stay at Copney Campsite allows the entire trail to be paddled in two manageable days. The Blackwater River flows into Lough Neagh from south west to north east. The trail is slow moving downstream of Blackwater town so it is possible to paddle upstream. However, it is strongly advised to take the more relaxed method of journeying downstream.

The CanoeNI team has combined their knowledge with that of many local experts to design a variety of canoeing itineraries to allow you to make the most of your next short break or day trip on the Blackwater Canoe Trail. Full itineraries can be downloaded from CanoeNI.com

Suggested Itineraries & Wildlife



Staying Safe

Canoeing can be a fun way to experience nature, helping you to stay fit and healthy and is always a great way to spend time with friends and family. It can also be a dangerous activity if appropriate safety guidelines are overlooked.

A good way to ensure your safety and get the most out of your paddling is to learn to canoe with a club or centre.

Stay safe: To help make sure you remain safe at all times, be sure to follow British Canoeing safety advice guidelines.

- ALWAYS be certain to let others know where you're going and when you're expected to return
- BE CERTAIN that the journey you plan is within your capabilities
- MAKE SURE you never paddle alone

Wear appropriate clothing: Always wear shoes. Rocks, rough terrain and river beds present serious hazards to boaters without the proper attire. Nearly 90% of all boating injuries are attributed to lack of proper footwear.

Other canoe safety clothing includes: hats, gloves, additional dry clothing and layered items which can easily be removed. Take or wear a windproof top and course always wear a buoyancy aid - for children make sure the crotch straps are used.

Be sure to:

- Know the weather forecast and check the water conditions before you set out canoeing. We recommend checking this before heading out as the river levels can rise and fall quite quickly in wet or dry conditions.
- Check that your equipment is well maintained and ready for the water.
- Check that your boat has the required buoyancy to keep it afloat in the event of a capsized.

Checklist: Always use this canoeing safety checklist to make sure you have everything you need:

- Boat
- Paddle
- Buoyancy Aid
- Bailer/sponge
- Small First Aid Kit
- Phone (in a waterproof bag)
- Drinking water and snacks
- Suitable clothing for the weather

Emergency Telephone Numbers

Lough Neagh Rescue covers Lough Neagh and its tributaries. In the unlikely event of an Emergency use the following numbers: Police and Ambulance 999 (all phones) or 112 (all phones) Coast Guard (Lough Neagh) 999 (all phones) or VHF channel 16. Please note that mobile phone reception is unreliable in many areas.



Legend has it that the island was once accessed by a causeway known locally as St Patrick's Road, as the Saint is believed to have used the island as a place of retreat in the fifth century.

Those seeking a longer journey can link the Lough Neagh Canoe Trail onwards to the Lower Bann Canoe Trail accessed from the north west of the Lough.

Lying between the mouths of the River Blackwater and the River Bann, in the south-west corner of Lough Neagh, Coney Island is beautifully maintained by the National Trust and is accessible by canoe steps. Archaeological evidence indicates that the island has been occupied at various times since the Mesolithic period. More recently it was the summer retreat of James Alfred Caulfield, seventh Viscount since the Mesolithic period. More recently it was the Neo-classical masterpiece. The riverbank here is particularly well kept and provides the perfect venue for a picnic stop. An on-site tea room is open seasonally.

Heading downstream from Bond's Bridge the river is wide and lush. The water here is often shared with other boats with recreational fishing particularly popular. It is a calm stretch frequented with darning kingfishers and signs of other hots on the steeper sections of riverbank. Initially the river is framed by higher banks. These lower as you head downstream where on occasion you will glimpse cattle drinking from the river.

Lough Neagh and Coney Island.



canoe TRAILS

Blackwater Canoe Trail

A genteel 23km trail along the River Blackwater to Lough Neagh that meanders through the velvety green countryside of Counties Armagh and Tyrone. This trail offers wonderful opportunities for canoeists across a range of abilities and an abundance of wildlife.

After 3.5km you reach Verner's Bridge. Named after the Verner family the iron structure was built in 1910. A slipway, jetty and car park make this a popular entry or exit point on day itineraries that require a shuttle.

After a combined 10km paddle through beautiful countryside you will reach Maghera Country Park on the shores of Lough Neagh.

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Bond's Bridge to Maghera Slip



The Blackwater Canoe Trail is one of the most popular canoe trails in Northern Ireland as it is accessible to such a wide range of abilities. As with all canoe trails in Northern Ireland, access to the water is free and no licence is required. This is a superb venue for families or those embarking on their first canoe trip, although some sections require greater ability than others.

The trail can be explored in its entirety or split into shorter sections to suit those seeking a more leisurely trip. Keep a look out too as the river is a haven for all kinds of wildlife including kingfishers, otters, herons and maybe even a barn owl.

The head of the trail is at Maydown Bridge from which a 23km stretch of the river meanders lazily through the countryside acting as a boundary line between the counties of Armagh and Tyrone.

Approximately half way down the trail, situated on the banks of the river, you will find The Arگوی, a beautiful Neo-classical mansion on a wooded riverside estate which is maintained and managed by the National Trust and well worth a visit. A short distance downstream is Copney Campsite, developed especially for canoeists and only accessible from the river. An enclosed grassy area offers pitching for approximately 10 small tents providing the perfect overnight stop.

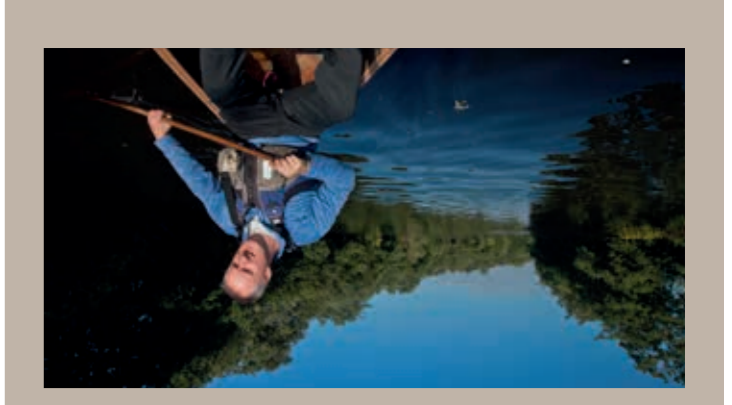
The river comes to an end at Maghera Country Park where it flows gently into Lough Neagh creating a breathtaking view on a fine summer's day.

Lough Neagh is the largest freshwater lake in the UK and Ireland with a circumference of 125km. Coney Island situated in the south west corner of the Lough offers an additional 1.1km paddle from Maghera Country Park. The island is steeped in history with a motte and ancient round tower.

Lough Neagh can be a serious undertaking as large waves build on the vast expanse of water during windy periods. Such conditions are best left to the experienced open water paddler. Those seeking a longer journey can link the Lough Neagh Canoe Trail onwards to the Lower Bann Canoe Trail.

This guide has been designed for canoeists by canoeists. It gives practical advice on everything required for an enjoyable experience.

Happy Paddling!



Just downstream of Bond's Bridge is Copney Campsite, accessible from the water via canoe steps. Located approximately half way along the trail this is the perfect overnight stop off on a two-day trip along the river Blackwater.

at the time, owned both The Arگوی and Derrigally Estate on the opposite shore of the river.

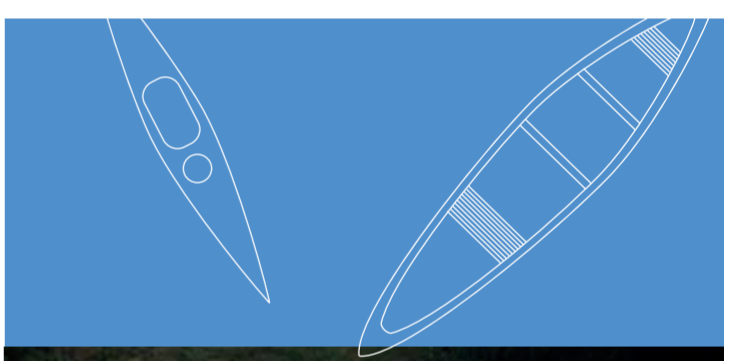
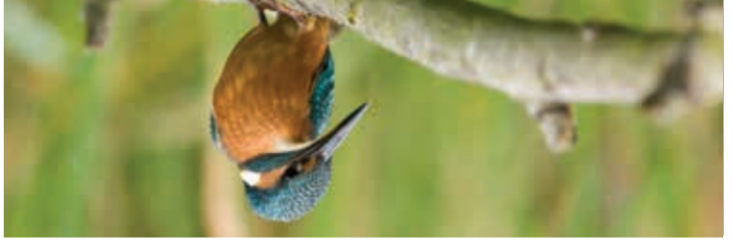
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Blackwater town to Bond's Bridge

At Moy there is a quay on the left-hand side of the river just downstream of the bridge. From here the village is easily accessible and offers many options to stock up on food and drink. From Moy the river widens out a lot, after 4km you will reach The Arگوی, often described as one of the jewels in the National Trust's crown. If you have time why not take a tour of the 19th Century House – a Neo-classical masterpiece.

The stretch of river between Blackwater town and Bond's Bridge provides the perfect one-day paddle with the nearby Copney Campsite adding the option to overnight. Starting at Blackwater town this is a relaxing and beautiful stretch of river and is just a 5km downstream journey to Moy. Otters and kingfishers are a frequent sight here, and the river is teeming with fish.

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Maydown Bridge to Blackwater Town

Maydown Bridge in Benburb provides a nice starting point with historic buildings including Benburb Castle and The Servite Priory of Our Lady of Benburb. The Valley Park hosts beautiful riverside walks and the village provides plenty of facilities.

The section of river between Maydown Bridge and Blackwater town is either feast or famine. A 'bump and scrape' in low water or a Grade 2 after a period of heavy rainfall, so this is an area best left to experts. Shortly after departing Maydown Bridge a mid-stream island prompts a decision to go left or right – both are of equal length and accessibility.

