

canoe step approx 1km downstream.

- Gain direct pedestrian access to Mountsandel via the through Coleraine.
- Take care negotiating the road bridge as you pass

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION:

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Next access/egress point | 2km |
| Access | Slipway and jetty with canoe step |
| Next access/egress point | Grade 1 moving water |
| Access | Slipway and jetty with canoe step |

British and Irish waters.

Common seals - one of the rarest seal species in the world. About two thirds of the entire population live in Look out for:

gatherers settled here.

Irish Bann around 9000 years ago, Mesolithic hunter Ireland. Having voyaged inland from the sea along the site of the oldest human settlement recorded in Mountsandel (directly opposite this access point) is the

Access Point 13: Somerset Riverside Park

- The river is tidal at this point.
- A good area for practising moving water skills is immediately below The Cuts.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION:

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Next access/egress point | 0.5km |
| Access | Slipway and jetty with canoe step |
| Next access/egress point | Grade 2-3 moving water below |
| Access | Slipway and jetty with canoe step |

Salmon - leaping during their migration upstream to spawn.

Look out for:

trapping of salmon.

The cuts got its name because a passage was cut in the river's bedrock to by-pass rapids, making the river navigable for boats. The cuts in the rock also enabled the

Access Point 12: The Cuts

- Canoes can pass either side of Loughan Island. Extreme caution must be taken approaching The Cuts due to dangerous flood gates and a weir. Entrance to the navigation is on the west bank.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION:

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Next access/egress point | 3km |
| Access | Slipway and jetty with canoe step |
| Next access/egress point | Grade 1 flat water |
| Access | Slipway and jetty with canoe step |


Buzzards soaring overhead.

Look out for:

Kingfishers on the river and Otters on the riverbank.

The remains of Canus High Cross, the only Irish High Cross in County Londonderry, can be viewed at Canus Old Graveyard, approximately 1.6km downstream from this access point. The same site may have been a pagan ritual site, dating from the Bronze Age/early Iron Age.

Access Point 11: Canus



part of a busy water ski zone.

- Exercises caution here, as this stretch of river is also

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION:

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Next access/egress point | 4km |
| Access | Slipway |
| Next access/egress point | Grade 1 flat water |
| Access | Slipway |

Atlantic Ocean.

Look out for:

Salmon, making their way downstream to the salt-water estuary of the River Bann and out into the

place in Vow Graveyard in 1757.

Presbyterian (or Covenantist) minister in Ireland took Martin as the first Reformed

the ordination of Reverend W. mottle of Dunalorchan.

protected by the Norman

Up-river from Carnroe is the

Access Point 8: Carnroe

- Watch out for anglers fishing from the banks of the Movaghagh Canal.
- To avoid the vertical weir at Carnroe enter the canal on the east bank.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION:

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Next access/egress point | 2km |
| Access | Slipway and jetty with canoe step |
| Next access/egress point | Grade 1 moving water |
| Access | Slipway and jetty with canoe step |

the Grey Heron.

Look out for:

The highly spotted Brown

Trout with black, orange or

nests built in high trees by

the Grey Heron.

Look out for:

settlements around it.

They were constructed to

protect this important river

crossing and the

date back to c.500-1000AD.

raths (some now destroyed)

fortified enclosures and

Movaghagh's series of

Access Point 7: Movaghagh



EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS

In the unlikely event of an Emergency use the following numbers: Police and Ambulance 999 (all phones) or 112 (all phones) and ask for the Coast Guard.

* Note that mobile phone reception is unreliable in many areas.

SAFETY

Canoeing is an adventure sport and as such should be treated with respect. If you are new to the sport, it is advisable to join an organised club where expert coaching can be provided. (Details of clubs and courses can be found at www.canl.org.uk)

When taking part in canoeing consider the following safety advice:

- The Lower Bann is a navigational right of way - boats proceeding in opposite directions should pass each other port to port.
- Be aware of the limitations and needs of larger craft that are restricted to deep water channels.
- The Lower Bann is zoned for recreational purposes. Please note the zones indicated on the map - expect to deal with the wake of a fast boat.
- Wear adequate buoyancy in the form of a personal life jacket or buoyancy aid. Canoe buoyancy should be sufficient to keep the canoe afloat if you capsizes.
- It is not recommended to canoe alone - three boats is the minimum required for most rescues.
- Remember - a canoe may be difficult to see from a larger craft - carry a whistle.
- You do not need to be a strong swimmer, but you will need the water confidence to deal with a capsized boat and get ashore safely.
- Wear adequate clothing, prolonged immersion in cold water leads to hypothermia - hypothermia can kill.
- Consider attending a recognised training course, which explores skills, safety and environmental issues.
- Carry and know how to use a map and compass.
- Lough Beg can become rough in strong winds - carrying rafting poles is a sensible precaution (rafted canoes are more stable in rough conditions).
- Water levels can rise very quickly on the River - when levels rise the areas above the weirs and flood gates become extremely dangerous - these are clearly marked on the map and should be avoided by inexperienced paddlers - for detailed information on the river and its levels contact: Rivers Agency: +44 (0) 28 7034 2357.
- Leave details of your journey with a responsible adult.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Tourist Information Centres/Accommodation:

| | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Antrim | T: +44 (0) 28 9442 8331 |
| Ballymena | T: +44 (0) 28 2565 7161 |
| Ballymoney | T: +44 (0) 28 2766 0230 |
| Coleraine | T: +44 (0) 28 7034 4723 |
| Magherafelt | T: +44 (0) 28 7963 1510 |
| Police - non-emergency: | T: 0845 6008000 |

Information Updates:

Any changes to the trail that may occur will be updated on our web site as we are made aware of them. Please log on and tell us what's old, what's new and what you thought of the trail!

www.canoeni.com

www.discovernorthernireland.com

Photography: Alan Pentland, CAAN, Think Studio

Design: g2 design

CANI:

NITB:

Acknowledgements:

Disclaimer:

The information on this guide may not be 100% accurate - it is designed to be used in conjunction with an OSNI 1:50000 map. The publishers, authors and contributors can accept no responsibility for any loss, injury or inconvenience sustained by any person as a result of information or advice given in this guide.

canoe TRAILS

Finding freedom in Northern Ireland on the

Lower Bann Canoe Trail

STRETCHING FROM LOUGH NEAGH TO THE ATLANTIC OCEAN, THIS 58KM CANOE TRAIL PROVIDES A UNIQUE WAY TO EXPERIENCE THE BEAUTIFUL RIVER BANN. PASSING THROUGH CONSTANTLY CHANGING SCENERY THE TRAIL OFFERS CANOEISTS BOTH TRANQUIL WATERS AND SOME FASTER FLOWING SECTIONS.



Immediately downstream from the lock gate is an important game angling beat.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION:

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Next access/egress point | 5km |
| Access | Slipway and jetty with canoe step |
| Next access/egress point | Grade 1 moving water below |
| Access | Slipway and jetty with canoe step |

Atlantic Ocean.

Look out for:

Salmon, making their way downstream to the salt-water estuary of the River Bann and out into the

place in Vow Graveyard in 1757.

Presbyterian (or Covenantist) minister in Ireland took Martin as the first Reformed

the ordination of Reverend W. mottle of Dunalorchan.

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Up-river from Carnroe is the

Access Point 8: Carnroe

- Watch out for anglers fishing from the banks of the Movaghagh Canal.
- To avoid the vertical weir at Carnroe enter the canal on the east bank.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION:

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Next access/egress point | 2km |
| Access | Slipway and jetty with canoe step |
| Next access/egress point | Grade 1 moving water |
| Access | Slipway and jetty with canoe step |

the Grey Heron.

Look out for:

The highly spotted Brown

Trout with black, orange or

nests built in high trees by

the Grey Heron.

Look out for:

settlements around it.

They were constructed to

protect this important river

crossing and the


date back to c.500-1000AD.

raths (some now destroyed)

fortified enclosures and

Movaghagh's series of

Access Point 7: Movaghagh



east bank which is well sign posted.

- Avoid the weir at Movaghagh by using the canal on the
- Take care at the bridge due to moving water.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION:

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Next access/egress point | 4km |
| Access | Slipway and jetty with canoe step |
| Next access/egress point | Grade 1 moving water |
| Access | Slipway and jetty with canoe step |

from which birds feed their young.

special attention to deep pools, rich in young fish.

Kingfishers - found along the river all year round. Lay

Look out for:

Kilrea with its attractive flower-bedded Diamond.

Beside the arched road bridge over the river, Portneal Lodge is just half a mile from the busy market town of

Access Point 6: Portneal Lodge

- Grade 2 moving water is found downstream, below the sluice gates. Watch out for game anglers using this fishing beat.
- Double lock gates at Portna.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION:

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Next access/egress point | 1km |
| Access | Slipway and jetty with canoe step |
| Next access/egress point | Grade 2 (in parts) moving water |
| Access | Slipway and jetty with canoe step |

see Kingfishers.

small woodland birds and insects. It is a good place to

mostly of Willow and Alder. Here you are likely to find

Dense scrubby woodland, known as 'car'. It consists

Look out for:

ailments including deafness and rheumatism.

in past years local people came here to lay eel traps

and collect eel oil which was used to cure many

Access Point 5: Portna

- Paddlers must enter the canal on the west bank to avoid the flood gates at Portna which are extremely dangerous.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION:

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Next access/egress point | 9km |
| Access | Slipway and jetty with canoe step |
| Next access/egress point | Grade 1 flat water |
| Access | Slipway and jetty with canoe step |

butterflies and the Common Spotted Orchid.

June) in Portlengone Forest. Orange Tip and Peacock

Richly scented Bluebells, which bloom annually (April -

Look out for:

and coffee shop.

guesthouse for short retreats, a repository, gift shop

monks live a secluded, contemplative life. It has a

Northern Ireland's only Cistercian monastery where

Our Lady of Bethlehem Abbey, founded in 1948, is

Access Point 4: Portlengone

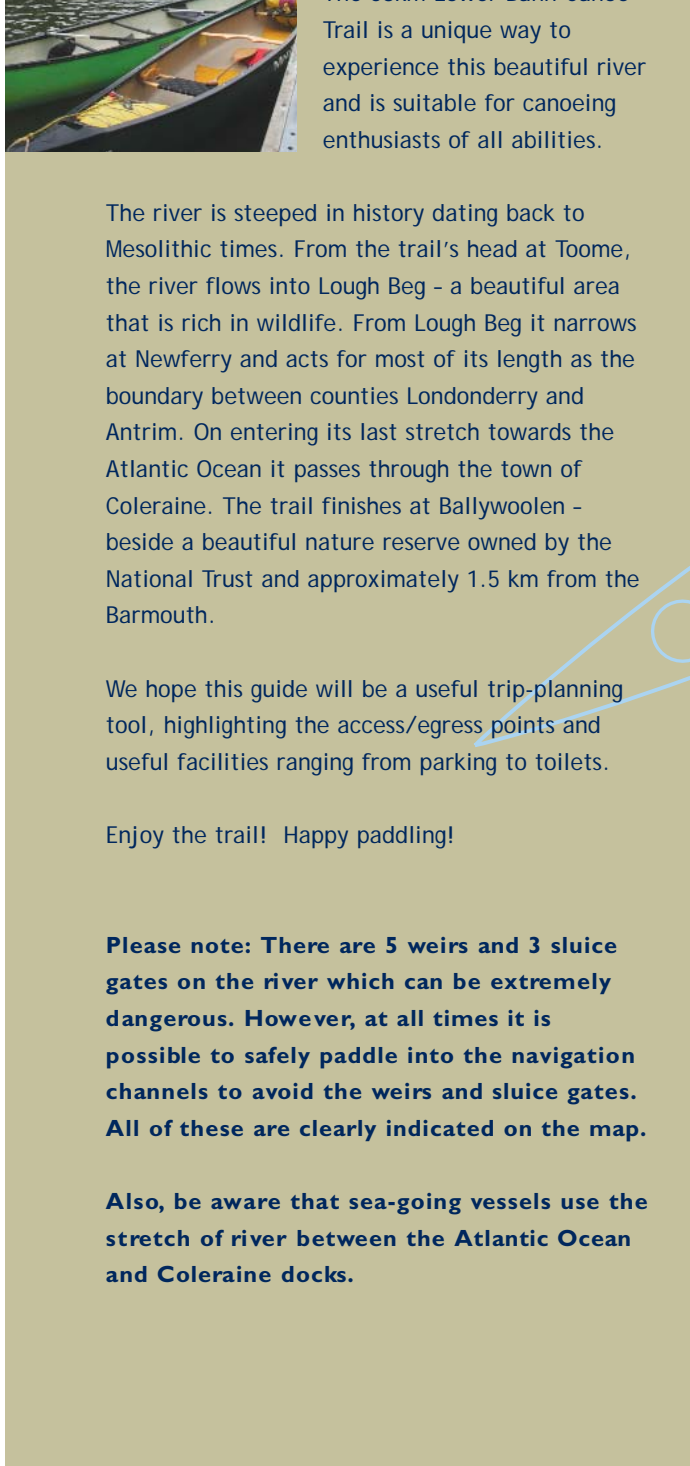


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Access Point 1: Toome

Toome is among the earliest hunter-gatherer sites in Ireland. Archaeological evidence names it as one of the island's first human settlements.

Look out for:

Eels - at this stage in their life-cycle they are yellow/brown in colour and found feeding on invertebrates and maturing in Lough Beg.

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Access | Slipway and jetty with canoe step |
| Next access/egress point | 7km |

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION:

- 200m downstream are eel traps. Avoid them, by staying on the east or right hand bank.
- Lough Beg is very exposed. Take care crossing during strong winds.
- The east side of Lough Beg offers more shelter with a variety of islands.
- Avoid landing on the west bank of Lough Beg especially during the over-wintering bird season from October - March and the breeding season from March - June.

Access Point 2: Newferry West

This site is designated as an Area of Special Scientific Interest due to its deposits of Diatomite, used in the 1940s for products such as dynamite and gramophone records!

Look out for:

Icelandic Whooper Swans migrating annually to Lough Beg in October and departing in April.

Irish Lady's Tresses Orchid - named for its resemblance to the ringlets of an Irish maiden!

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Access | Slipway and jetty with canoe step |
| Next access/egress point | 6km |

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION:

- Water skiers and anglers also use this site - be aware of fast boats and coarse angling competition stands.

Access Point 3: Newferry East

Church Island is home to a number of 'rag trees' - trees covered with scraps of clothing. It is said that a troubled person's ailment will disappear when a piece of their clothing, hung on a tree, rots away.

Look out for:

Breeding Waders including Redshank, Lapwing, Snipe and Curlew. Coarse Fish including Roach, Bream, Perch and Pike.

| | |
|--------------------------|---------|
| Access | Slipway |
| Next access/egress point | 6km |

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION:

- Water skiers and anglers also use this site - be aware of fast boats and coarse angling competition stands.

Lower Bann Canoe Trail

Finding freedom in Northern Ireland on the



Access Point 14: Christie Park

Pre-plantation Coleraine was noted for a large 13th century Dominican Monastic settlement, known as St Mary's Abbey, located on the opposite bank near the Bann Bridge.

Look out for:
Mute Swans - very large white swans with long S-shaped necks and orange bills with black at the base. By law, it is an offence to intentionally injure, take or kill a wild swan.

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Access | Jetty with canoe step |
| Paddling | Grade 1 moving water |
| Next access/egress point | 1.5km |

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION:

- Take care when negotiating the 2 bridges.
- Rowers also use this section of the river.

Access Point 15: Coleraine Marina

Situated beside the Coleraine Borough Council's stunning offices, the marina is just downstream of the railway bridge spanning the river.



Look out for:
Reed Beds - found along the river's edge. In certain parts of the country these reeds are still harvested for thatching.

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Access | Slipway |
| Paddling | Grade 1 moving water |
| Next access/egress point | 6km |

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION:

- Be aware that the river widens into the estuary here, sometimes exposing it to winds.
- A powered watersport zone extends from here to the south of Seaton's Marina.
- Much of the wider area is a Nature Reserve - respect the wildlife at all times.

Access: Ballywoolen

This is the last point on the Lower Bann Canoe Trail.

| | |
|--------|-----------|
| Access | Saltmarsh |
|--------|-----------|

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION:

- The Barmouth can be extremely dangerous. Paddling to sea through the Barmouth is NOT part of the trail, and can only be recommended for highly experienced canoeists.
- This is an important over-wintering and breeding bird site. As such paddlers are asked to adhere to the following:
 - No vehicular access past the public road - parking at car park before the railway line, with portage necessary.
 - Avoid reed bed in breeding season (April to July incl.)
 - Keep in navigation channel & stay clear of the bird hide.

- ### Earning a Welcome
- Please be friendly and polite to local residents and other water users.
 - Drive with care and consideration and park sensibly.
 - Change clothing discreetly, preferably out of public view.
 - Gain permission before going on to private property.
 - Minimise your impact on the natural environment and use recognised access points.
 - Be sensitive to wildlife and other users regarding the level of noise you create.
 - Observe wildlife from a distance and be aware of sensitive times such as nesting or over wintering.
 - Maintain positive, co-operative relationships with other water users and landowners.
 - Please keep clear of anglers, friendly communication can create a positive reaction.
 - Follow the 'Leave no Trace' principles. For more information visit www.leaveonotraceireland.org.
 - Keep the numbers in your party consistent with safety, the nature of the water conditions and the impact on your surroundings.



A land of tranquil beauty shaped by legend and tradition, Ireland's waterways can provide a unique experience for everyone. The natural environment provides excellent opportunities to participate in a huge range of sightseeing, cultural and outdoor activities. High adventure or total relaxation, the options on Ireland's inland waterways are endless. Waterways Ireland manages 7 inland navigation systems on the island of Ireland. All in all it is responsible for some 1,000km of waterway.

The Lower Bann, with canal sections, is navigable from Lough Neagh to the sea. With a fall of 12.5metres along its length and long stretches of open water. Managed by Waterways Ireland the Lower Bann navigation is very popular with watersports enthusiasts, anglers and cruisers alike with a zoning system in place to accommodate varied interests. Access from the sea by both cruiser and sailing vessel is encouraged and the rural stretches of water have no commercial traffic, making it a truly peaceful waterway.

For further details on the Lower Bann navigation or on Waterways Ireland visit our website at www.waterwaysireland.org



Camping Facilities

Overnight camping
Overnight camping may be permitted at Portneal Lodge (a small fee charged). To camp at Portneal Lodge please telephone: Portneal Lodge: +44 (0) 28 9541 4444.

Official camping
Drumaheglis Marina is situated on the eastern shore of the Lower Bann and is approximately 45km from Toome by canoe (45 mins by car). Please call +44 (0) 28 2766 0280 or +44 (0) 28 2766 0227 for further information.

| Site | Parking | Toilets | Showers | Water | Facilities near by |
|--------------------|---------|---------|---------|-------|--------------------|
| Portneal Lodge | • | • | • | • | Kilrea village |
| Drumaheglis Marina | • | • | • | • | Ballymoney town |



CANOE TOURS

| Company | Contact | Services |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|---|
| Action Outdoors | +44 (0) 28 4483 2894 | (instruction, guided tours) |
| Belfast Activity Centre | +44 (0) 28 9060 0132 | (canoe hire, instruction, guided tours, provision for disability) |
| Bluelough Adventure Centre | +44 (0) 28 4377 0714 | (canoe hire, instruction, guided tours, provision for disability) |
| Clearsky Adventure Centre | +44 (0) 28 4372 3933 | (instruction, guided tours, provision for disability) |
| Craigavon Watersport Centre | +44 (0) 28 3834 2669 | (canoe hire, instruction, guided tours, provision for disability) |
| Mobile Team Adventure | +44 (0) 28 9180 0809 | (canoe hire, instruction, guided tours, provision for disability) |
| Outdoor Concept | +44 (0) 28 9753 1343 | (canoe hire, instruction, guided tours, provision for disability) |

*For insurance purposes these companies will only allow you to hire their boats if you have a minimum of a BCU Level 2 coach award (or equivalent) for the craft that you wish to use, otherwise you will need to hire a qualified instructor. Bluelough offer a 50% discount to all CANI, ICU, BCU, SCA and WCA members!



This leaflet has been produced by CANI and CAAN.

CANI
The Canoe Association of Northern Ireland is the governing body for canoeing in Northern Ireland.
Email: office@cani.org.uk
Website: www.canionline.org.uk

The Countryside Access and Activities Network for Northern Ireland
The Countryside Access and Activities Network is responsible for the strategic development and management of countryside recreation across Northern Ireland.
Email: info@countrysiderecreation.com
Website: www.countrysiderecreation.com

Both CANI and CAAN endorse the principles of 'Leave no Trace'.

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This project has also been supported by:

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