

USEFUL INFORMATION

Maps:
 Relevant OSI Map – Discovery Series Map 26. It is recommended that walkers always carry relevant OSI map.

Clothing:
 Be prepared for changeable weather conditions. Ensure you have waterproof/windproof clothing as well as sturdy boots.

Emergencies:
 In the event of an emergency call 999 or 112. Tourist Information: There are a wide variety of activities and attractions on offer in the Geopark and the wider Cavan area.

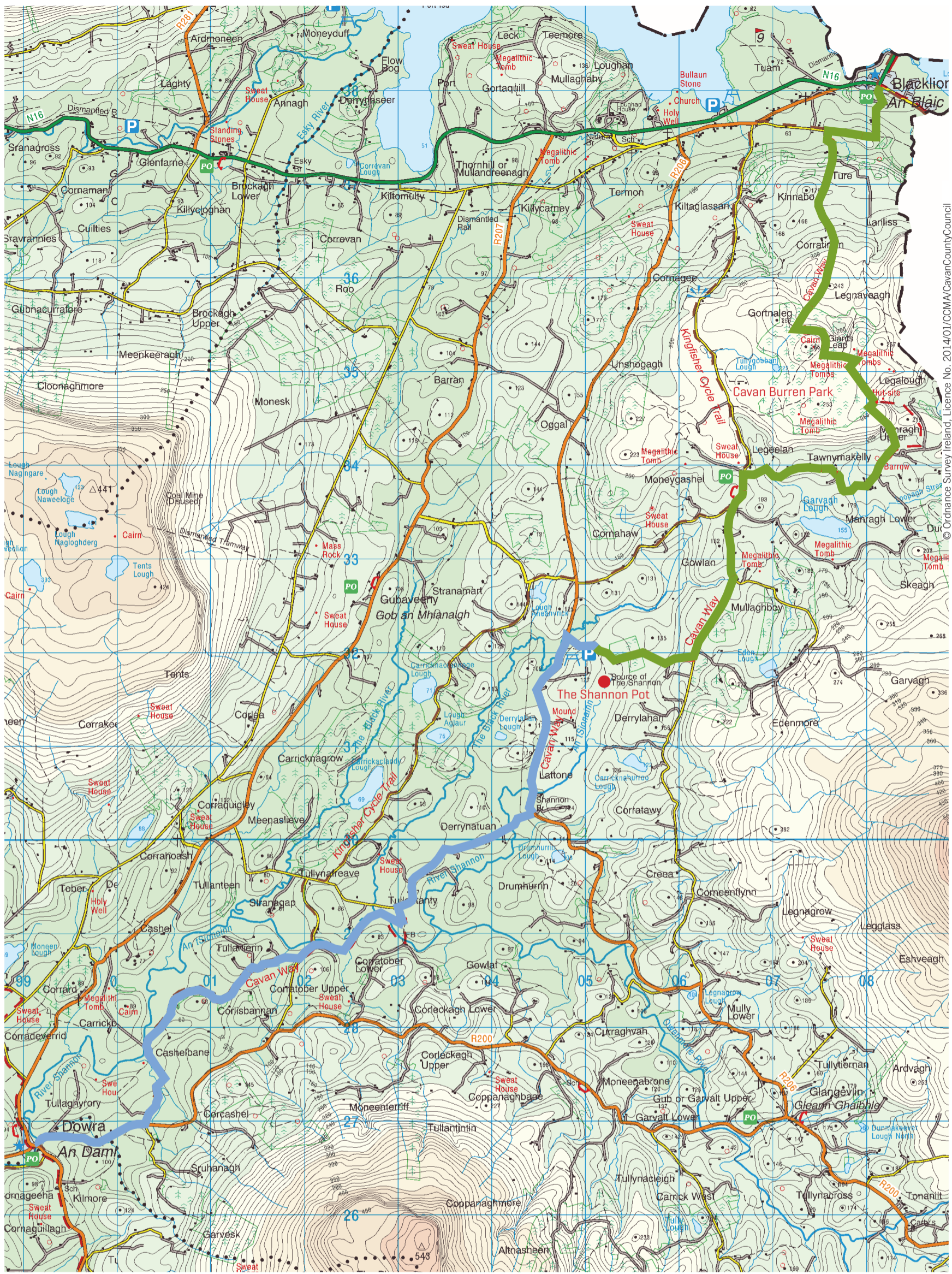
To find out more visit;
 The Market House Tourist Information Centre, Blacklion, Co. Cavan.
 T: (+353) 719853941
 Tourist Information/Tea & Coffee and walking guides/maps available.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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THIS IS CAVAN!



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This project is supported by the EU's INTERREG IVA Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body

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WELCOME TO THE CAVAN WAY

WELCOME TO THE CAVAN WAY

This superb walking route takes you to the heart of west Cavan from the beautiful village of Blacklion through Cavan Burren Park across karst limestone pavement, underneath the shadow of Cuilcagh Mountain, past the rising source of the River Shannon and onto the quaint village of Dowra - Welcome to the Cavan Way.

OVERVIEW

The Cavan Way, is a National Trail situated in the centre of a great inland recreation area stretching from the Erne Lakes in Fermanagh to the North Leitrim Glens. It links the Ulster Way at Blacklion with the Leitrim Way at Dowra and is part of the Beara-Breifne Way. It also links many of the important sites of the Marble Arch Caves UNESCO designated Global Geopark.

The Cavan Way is a 26 km [16 miles] linear walking route that progresses from the village of Dowra northwards to the magical Shannon Pot, where the great river rises.

The route then ascends from the Shannon source into the limestone karst landscape of the northern Cuilcagh through Cavan Burren Park, which is one of the finest relict landscapes in Ireland, before descending to the village of Blacklion. The terrain consists of predominantly quiet roads, forest trails and open moorland. The total aggregate ascent on the route is 330 metres, including two short, steep ascents. The walk is divided into two sections;

Section 1 - Blacklion to Shannon Pot [13km]

Section 2 - Shannon Pot to Dowra [13km]

The walk can be commenced from either Blacklion or Dowra village. This guide is prepared taking Blacklion as the starting point. The Cavan Way was set up in 1984-85 by Blacklion Community Council and the Cavan County Development Team, with the co-operation of Irish Sports Council. It is managed by Cavan County Council and part of the Marble Arch Caves UNESCO Global Geopark.

SECTION 1 – BLACKLION TO SHANNON POT [13KM]

BLACKLION TO CAVAN BURREN PARK

The Cavan Way runs approximately from north north-east to south south-west. The name Blacklion originated from an inn - the earliest records of which date to 1777. The route starts from the Market House, going south from Blacklion crossroads, rising steeply, then falling before rising again to make a sharp turn right [H081/375].

Heading west now for about ½ km there are already wide views north over Lough MacNean, into Fermanagh, before a turn left is made, going south again, up a narrow, steep tarmac breen, which ends at a farm in Corratirrim, reached by a fork left [H076/365].

The cliff which dominates the skyline to south east as you climb is the Hanging Rock. A large rock which was blown down 'the night of the big wind' in 1839, was once balanced on the edge of the cliff, hence the name.

From the gate east of the farmyard, the Cavan Way goes uphill to the right, over grazing fields, keeping near stone walling on the right until the broad crest of the hill is reached [H075/360].

The view here ranges, not only over Upper and Lower Lough MacNean and Fermanagh, but also west to the Sligo and North-Leitrim Mountains, while to the north-west in clear weather the summits of South Donegal are seen. This remarkable section of the trail goes past a considerable stretch of limestone pavement similar to that in the Burren, Co. Clare. Over the grassy crest the Way continues south,



with views ahead to Cuilcagh Mountain and Tiltinbane, rising above a belt of forest.

Crossing a stile over the stone wall on right, the Way next slants south-west down a fairly rough slope with clumps of rushes [boggy after rain], then across another stile into Cavan Burren Park, and onto wooden boardwalk onto the internal trail system of the park.

'Burren' means rocky place and is strategically placed at the head waters of the Shannon in limestone country. Cavan Burren Park is unusual in the large number of different types of tombs located here and is in every respect a 'relict' landscape. Its funereal monuments, habitation sites and fields survive from prehistoric times. Its glacial erratics survive from the last ice age while its dry valley and associated doline bear testimony to a pre-glacial river. The site now boasts four internal walking trails, an interpretation centre and toilets. Spend time to explore Cavan Burren Park.



Following the signage for Cavan way passing Legnaveagh Sinkholes and the promontory fort before ascending up the Giant's Leap - a mystical pre-glacial relict dry river valley.

This leads up north-east to a small grassy plateau where a very fine wedge tomb is seen - traditionally the burial place of a giant who collapsed and died after attempting a second jump across the 'Giant's Leap'. [This structure is marked as one of a group of megalithic tombs, on 1/50000 Sheet 26, at H079/353].

CAVAN BURREN PARK TO SHANNON POT

The Way goes south-east from the Giant's Grave to the south-east corner of the forest, through an old stone wall looking down into the hollow of Legalough, with a view extending away east into Fermanagh. The route goes down steeply to a quiet public road and then west for about 1.5 km to reach Legeelan Crossroads [H068/339]. The impressive northern face of Cuilcagh recalls that this was a major station for the original Ordnance Survey of Ireland in 1828.

Beside Legeelan Cross is the former Moneygashel post office, beside an abandoned limestone quarry. Moneygashel means 'the Thicket of the Cashels'. The thicket is gone and of three original cashels only one now remains in good condition, 800m west, off the Way. This also is a UNESCO Geopark site.

100m west behind the quarry is the remains of a sweat house, last used in 1923. In it a turf fire would be set alight for six hours until the stone structure heated. Two people then entered the house for one hour to sweat the 'poisons' out of their systems. On leaving the sweat house they would sometimes take a dip in a nearby stream.

Returning to the Cavan Way turn right at the crossroads to start going southerly, avoiding all turns for nearly 2km until 'Cavan Way' stile is seen on right. Turn right here, level at first, then downhill, the Way being clearly marked by another stile and a footbridge, before entering another small forestry, heading west by a ride line, then turning left to come down to a ruined farmhouse [shown as a sound house on Sheet 26 [H054/318].

Here the route turns sharp right, heading west / north-west. You will soon reach a car park, from which a concrete path leads to the Shannon Pot.



SECTION 2 - SHANNON POT TO DOWRA [13KM]

The Irish name for the Shannon Pot is Log-na-Sionna. The Shannon Pot is a large spring resulting from the confluence of many underground streams [see information panels]. According to legend, the Shannon is named after Sionnan, who was the granddaughter of Manannán Mac Lir, the god of the sea. She came to this spot to catch the Salmon of Knowledge [Bradán Feasa] which ate the forbidden fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, which was planted by the Druids. As she tried to catch the salmon, it became angry and the waters of the pool sprang up and overwhelmed her. She was drawn down into the pool and its water began to flow over the land, forming the River Shannon.

Back on the trail the track from the ruined farmhouse continues westerly, to join a road and turn left. This is about the half-way point on the Cavan Way [H048/322].

There follows about 1¼ km on tarmac crossing the Shannon Bridge. Then ¼ km further south you go right, along a narrow tarmac breen west south-west over a slight ridge into Derrynatuan, with the view south now dominated by the Playbank Mountain [542 m].



Almost 2 km from the Shannon Bridge road the Way turns left, leading at once to the 'Sixty Pound Bridge' [H031/289], a concrete structure built in 1948, the only footbridge over the Shannon. Immediately south of the concrete bridge, turn right across a stile, then follow a path on the edge of the Shannon. There are stiles, and the Way briefly quits the river bank to avoid farm lands, then reaches another bridge linking Corratubber Upper to Tullynafreave [H021/289]. A stile gives access to tarmac here, turn left here, going south-west at first, then forking right to follow a narrow breen mainly south-west to Cashelbane.

WALKER FRIENDLY ACCOMMODATION

Please note that the accommodation providers listed below range from guest houses to self catering. All offer walker friendly services i.e. proximity to route [walking distance or short drive], packed lunches available upon request, suitable overnight area for drying clothes/boots, approved by Fáilte Ireland etc.

ACCOMMODATION	LOCATION	TELEPHONE/EMAIL/WEB	TYPE
MacNean House	Main St., Blacklion, Co.Cavan	[+353] 71 9853022 www.nevenmaguire.com	Guesthouse/ Restaurant
Killinagh House	MacNean Court, Blacklion, Co. Cavan	[+353]71 9853855 www.killinaghhouse.com	B&B
Olive Grove	Main St., Blacklion, Co.Cavan	[+353] 71 9853443 www.olivegrove59.wordpress.com	Guesthouse/ Restaurant
The Keepers Arms	Bawnboy, Co. Cavan	[+353] 49 9523318 www.keepersarms.com	Guesthouse/ Restaurant
Lake Avenue House	Port, Bawnboy, Co. Cavan	[+353] 49 9523298 www.lakeavenuehouse.com	B&B
Maggie's Cottage	Gortaquill, Blacklion, Co. Cavan	[+44] 79 80608571 www.maggies-cottage.com	Self Catering
The Old Schoolhouse	Meenaslieve, Dowra, Co.Cavan	[+353]86 2548901 www.theoldschoolhousecavan.com	Self Catering
The Village Cottage	Kilsob, Bawnboy, Co.Cavan	[+353] 49 3523298 www.lakeavenuehouse.com	Self Catering

This Cashelbane road is notable for the ruined cottages due to the high emigration in the past. From one of these cottages a family left for America in the 1880s without telling the neighbours.

At a T-junction another bridge is seen on right [H003/278]. Do not cross this but bear away south, to left, and just about a kilometre brings you to the Dowra-Glangevin road where a turn right brings you to the final stretch of the Cavan Way, westerly into Dowra, the first town on the Shannon. Dowra Bridge was built with stones from Carrick-on-Shannon jail, and from the village itself.



The village of Dowra or An Damhshraith, meaning The river valley of the Oxen was formed in the late 1800s after another village close by, Tober, was washed away by floods. The remains of the Black Pig's Dyke can be seen outside the village. The village stands on the River Shannon marking the boundary between County Cavan in Ulster and County Leitrim in Connaught.



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON WALKS AND ATTRACTIONS IN THE AREA PLEASE VISIT;

www.thisiscavan.ie
www.marblearchcavesgeopark.com
www.irishtrails.ie
www.cavanburren.ie

The 7 basic Principles of the Leave No Trace ethics offer a guide to all trail users:

- Plan Ahead and Prepare.
- Be Considerate of Others.
- Respect Farm Animals and Wildlife. Please do not bring dogs on the Cavan Way.
- Leave What You Find. Respect property. Leave gates as you find them.
- Dispose of Waste Properly. Take home all litter and leftover food.
- Minimise the Effects of Fire.

www.leavenotraceireland.org