This trail is a simple flat water venue for canoeing enthusiasts of all abilities. From the head of the trail at Maydown Bridge the river meanders lazily through the beautiful countryside acting as the boundary line between the counties of Armagh and Tyrone. Approaching the ferry crossing point down the trail, situated on the banks of the river, you will find the eyrie - one of the National Trust’s beautifully kept properties. The grounds and house of which are well worth a visit.

The river comes to an end at Maghery Country Park, where it flows gently into Lough Neagh creating a brief respite in a fine summer’s day. From here your options are endless!

Laugh Neugh is Europe’s largest island lake spanning 10 miles in circumference. It is possible to paddle all or part of the way to the Irish Sea via the Lower Lough (grade 1 with weary) situated at the North East end of the Laugh. Canoe Island which is located in the south west corner of Laugh Neugh about 1.7 miles from Maghery Country Park, is steeped in history with its native and remote symbols and is a popular wild camping area. Laugh Neugh can be a serious undertaking as large waves build on the next expanse of water during windy periods. The Laugh is a demesne venue for the experienced open water paddler.

For those who wish to know more about the area, there is excellent interpretation at points marked 1-9 on the map. A colour copy of the information is provided in this guide.

This guide has been designed for canoeists by canoeists. It gives practical advice on everything required for an enjoyable experience including details of campsites, water points, places to eat etc.

Happy Paddling!

For the latest updates and discussions, please view the www.nicanoeing.com

Further Information

Tel: 028 9866 2205
Email: Info@nicanoeing.com

Access Points 1: Maydown Bridge

This area is a very pretty lowland farming bird that runs riverbanks as dusk and throughout the night. It feeds on fly and moth signs showing you how to rough and excellent along their

Specific points of interest

Bendhur Castle, Bendhur Valley Park, Senate PRIory and Abbey History.

Access Point 2: Blackwater Canoe Trail

The townland of Blackwater is named “Lisbarr” which is from “Liath Bia Rua” which means “Fair White Fairy”. For the last part of the trail at Lisbarr part of the Blackwater valley is occupied by the ruins of Charlemont Fort, Dermot Cavanagh Painting Workshop.

Access Points 11 & 12: Knockaloe Bridge

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The Blackwater, Coalisland & Ulster Canals

The river Blackwater, draining counties Tyrone and Armagh, has been travelled by thousands of years as a highway. Daily Celtic settlers, Viking raiders and English invaders all used it to their advantage.

In the early 16th century plans were made to construct the first modern inland waterway systems in Ireland. The Blackwater with its navigable basin, was incorporated into the scheme and the two planned artificial channels became the Newry Canal and the Coalisland Canal (known at the time as the Tyrone Navigation). The ‘Coalisland’ Canal was opened in 1797 to exploit the coal fields of Tyrone and Cavan transported coal out of Maghery and down the Newry Canal opened in 1792 to Newry and Dublin.

On entering the River Blackwater from the Canal at ‘The Point’, barges would sail down the river for about three miles to Maghery and move through the mouth of the River by Derrywarragh Island, causing many delays through siltation, flooding and blockages. In 1852 work started under the direction of Daniel Mears to excavate a short channel from the eastern bank of the Blackwater River straight to the lough shore through the lower section of Derrywarragh Peninsula thus turning it into what is now Derrywarragh Island. This Derrywarragh cut, finished in 1853, allowed vessels to avoid the mud banks of the river’s mouth.

A pontoon bridge was soon erected and was later replaced by a fixed bridge to allow access onto the new Derrywarragh Island. This famous cut, lower section of Derrywarragh Peninsula thus turning it into the Blackwater River straight to the lough shore through the lower section of Derrywarragh Peninsula thus turning it into what is now Derrywarragh Island. This famous cut, lower section of Derrywarragh Peninsula thus turning it into what is now Derrywarragh Island. This famous cut, lower section of Derrywarragh Peninsula thus turning it into what is now Derrywarragh Island. This famous cut, lower section of Derrywarragh Peninsula thus turning it into what is now Derrywarragh Island.

In 1797 the Tyrone Navigation Company took over the ownership of both the Tyrone Navigation and the Ulster Canal. The Tyrone Navigation was an attractive prospect for a trading waterway, running into the unique town of Coalisland with its concentration of industries. In 1796 the last commercial vessel left the town and the town of Coalisland with its concentration of industries. In 1796 the last commercial vessel left the town and the town of Coalisland with its concentration of industries.

The Blackwater, Coalisland & Ulster Canals

In the early 18th century plans were made to construct the first modern inland waterway systems in Ireland. The Blackwater, Coalisland & Ulster Canals have played important roles in the development of the local regions and their potential as a network for pleasure boating is being recognised. Landscaping of the ancient Coalisland Basin and improved towpath access has rekindled the age-old tradition of walking, “down the river”. The sheltered canals to redevelop the entire canal as a leisure and tourist amenity is underway and, if successful, will be a major contribution to boating and canoeing in Ireland. On completion, it will be possible to paddle or sail from Limerick to Coleraine.

The Blackwater, Coalisland & Ulster Canals

Overnight camping

Overnight camping is permitted on Coney Island in small fires to charged. To camp on Coney Island please telephone: Coney Island Centre: 028 3832 2715.

Official camping

Overnight camping is permitted on the south shore of Maghery Lough and is approximately 75m from Maghery by canoe using the Maghery Campsite Centre: 028 3832 7519.

Camping facilities

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